QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

RFP – DF – 02 – 18 – 21 CITYWIDE BROADBAND IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM

The text that follows includes a list of questions received related to the City of Victoria's Request for Proposals for a Citywide Broadband Improvement Program and the associated responses. This list may not be exhaustive but does include all information deemed to be substantial or relevant to submittals. In cases where questions were similar in nature, some responses were combined for the sake of brevity. Additional questions may be submitted prior to the submission deadline, but there are no guarantees that an answer can be provided in time to assist in developing a submission. Please submit any additional questions or feedback to dferrell@victoriatx.gov.

As a reminder, there will be an optional Pre-Proposal Conference via Zoom on February 3, 2021 at 10:00 AM. That meeting may be accessed at https://victoriatx.zoom.us/j/97754472643?pwd=T2Y5SVZTYVZnVjdhN3I0bE83ZTRHZz09.

1. What is the population and land area of the City of Victoria? And Victoria County?

The 2019 Census estimate for the population of the City of Victoria is 66,916, and the City covers 35.48 square miles.

The 2019 Census estimate for Victoria County is 92,084, and the County has a land area of 882.1 square miles.

2. Is there an option to submit responses by mail?

All responses must be submitted electronically through BidNet Direct, by uploading the Adobe PDF files of:
• Response Form A – Proposal Signature Page,
• Response Form B – Proposal Form,
• All other required forms,
• All items specified in the Proposal Content section of this RFP, and
• Any Specifications/Drawings that are required as part of the proposal.

3. Is there a list indicating approximately how many fixed-wireless locations are in the City of Victoria?

No. There is currently no consolidated list of fixed wireless locations in Victoria. Limited information can be found at www.towercoverage.com and at https://connectednation.org/texas/mapping-analysis/

4. Are the Fixed-Wireless installations point-to-point or point-to-multipoint?
   a. If PtMP, is there a list of approximately how any subscribers per access point? What type of services are currently been provided by the access points?
   b. If PtP, in what FQ band these links are operating, Unlicensed or Licensed? If Licensed, what FQ? Can the City of Victoria provide us with call signs of these links?

In the absence of a consolidated list the answer to these questions cannot be determined.

5. Are there documents available that shows existing Fiber Optic Infrastructure, capacity been used, capacity reserved, type of services been provided?

There are no documents or records of service capacity. Existing, publicly-owned fiber optic lines may be viewed at https://maps.victoriatx.org/MapViewer/PublicMap.html. Route maps, extracted from Fiberlocator (a subscription based service) are available upon request.

6. Map with locations of central offices (CO's), hubs, type of equipment (ie: muxes, routers, fiber terminals, etc.), antenna supporting structures own by the City?

The only maps that are available are through the City at https://maps.victoriatx.org/MapViewer/PublicMap.html and through Connected Nation at https://connectednation.org/texas/mapping-analysis/.

7. Does the City of Victoria own fiber infrastructure?

Yes, the City does own segments of fiber.

8. Is there an agreement between the power distribution pole owner and City of Victoria, in case the designed requires attaching new fiber optic and/or RF equipment?

No. There is currently no agreement in place for the use of electrical poles.

9. In the case where the proposed design network requires new attachment to power distribution poles, are there any requirements (ie: pole loading analysis) by the utility owning these poles?

The City has a positive relationship with AEP and the Victoria Electric Cooperative (VEC), the two electric providers inside the City. There are currently no special arrangements for the use of these poles, however.

10. Is there a map showing the connection points to the eleven (11) ISP's currently providing services to City of Victoria?

The only maps that are available are through the City at https://maps.victoriatx.org/MapViewer/PublicMap.html and through Connected Nation at https://connectednation.org/texas/mapping-analysis/.

11. It is our understanding that part of the SOW of this RFP is improve the Broadband network for Victoria and surrounding "Golden Crescent Region". It is also our understanding that there's a Golden Crescent Regional Planning Commission established (7 counties). How does the design, planning, and implementation of this project will be affected (if any) by the GCRP Commission? Does the contractor have to present the plan to the council, or will it be the City of Victoria responsibility?

Proposals submitted in response to this effort will be shared with the Golden Crescent Regional Planning Commission representatives who serve on the Victoria Broadband Commission. As they see fit, requests will be made to share these proposals with other jurisdictions (cities, counties, etc…). Assuming that permission is granted, any additional arrangements or extensions to the work being completed in the City of Victoria may be negotiated separately with the appropriate entities.

12. Phase 1 – "Existing Capacity for Connectivity" does not include assessment of the Public Safety Infrastructure, however part of Phase 2 – "Enhanced Network Feasibility" states "expandable public safety communications technologies that may be adopted throughout the region, including interoperability with FirstNet". Can we get clarification if part of Phase 1 should include assessment of the Public Safety infrastructure in order to present a plan on Phase 2?

An assessment of the public safety network is not a direct requirement but will be preferred.

13. Regarding submission, what "All other required forms" are required besides Form A and Form B?

As applicable these would include, but may not be limited to, Form CIQ (see RFP page 11), Form 1295 (see RFP page 12), and Attachment C (see RFP page 12).

14. Has the City or Victoria Broadband Commission already performed any kind of broadband or technology research, market assessment, demand aggregation, or feasibility studies beyond Connected Nation's efforts?

No. There have been no additional studies or assessments outside of the work of Connected Nation and the U.S. Census Bureau.

15. Has the City established a date of completion for the three phases of the project referenced in the RFP? Does the City desire/require a date of completion for construction and implementation of any subsequent phases?

No. The City will negotiate a timeline with the selected development partner. Where feasible, it may be helpful to provide a general proposed timeline along with your response.

16. Are there any preliminary designs you can share?

No. Designs will be negotiated with the development partner and are subject to the proposal of the selected development partner.

17. Referencing MapViewer/PublicMap, are there three (3) independent networks, or a single network with three (3) owners? Does the City already own or operate optical fiber or wireless equipment? Does the City or County have any available conduits or fiber strands? Please describe the architecture (providing more detail than MapViewer/PublicMap) and what it serves (municipal locations, businesses, residences, etc.).

There is one network that has multiple independent owners. The network does have available fiber strands within some certain segments of the network. This network is used exclusively by Public Entities to serve their own locations, no businesses or residences are connected to this network.

18. Does the city provide internet service or connectivity to commercial and residential sites, or also for cellular/wireless/smart solutions (lighting, AMI, SCADA, etc.)?

No. The City is not currently an internet service provider of any kind.

19. In contrast to partnering with or deferring to private 3rd party, does the City have an interest in owning, maintaining, and/or operating a lit or dark network, related infrastructure (like vacant duct), or services (internet access or other)?

Ownership of the infrastructure is not ideal for the City and may provide equity and value to the development partner. Where necessary, the City is not opposed

to owning the infrastructure, but it has been our assumption that infrastructure ownership would be valuable to the selected development partner.

20. If the goal(s) of this project are best accomplished through a wired solution, would the City also want to own/manage drops (extending the network from the Right of Way to private properties)?

Ownership of the infrastructure is not ideal for the City and may provide equity and value to the development partner. Where necessary, the City is not opposed to owning the infrastructure, but it has been our assumption that infrastructure ownership would be valuable to the selected development partner.

21. What is the current process for placing equipment within current easements? What will be the process to improve the easements for broadband applications?

Although telecommunications throughout Texas are governed by the Public Utilities Commission, cities maintain full control of the rights-of-way within their boundaries. The City of Victoria regulates access to existing rights-of-way in Chapter 20, Article VII of the Code of Ordinances, which can be found at https://library.municode.com/tx/victoria/codes/code_of_ordinances?nodeId=CICO_CH20STSICUGU_ARTVIIRI-WMA.

Given the unique nature of this project, amendments will be made as necessary.

22. What network database(s) is/will the city use (GIS, CAD, etc.) for any city-owned or managed assets (fiber, duct, utilities, streets, trees, etc.)? What data will be available to RFP candidates?

The City will utilize a GIS database for any city-owned infrastructure.

23. Does the City expect ubiquitous coverage within City limits (service to every premise)?

Ubiquitous coverage would be ideal. However, the extent of coverage feasibility is expected to be determined in conjunction with the selected development partner.

24. The RFP states 29% population doesn't subscribe to internet. Has City performed a demand aggregation study?

This information is provided by the U.S. Census Bureau in a report titled Presence and Types of Internet Subscriptions in Household American Community Survey 1-year estimates.

25. Is network diversity/redundancy a requirement and if so, for what type locations (Police, Fire, Municipal, etc.)?

Respondents are encouraged to consider all factors that would benefit the strength and reliability of the service. The most competitive proposal will be selected.

26. Has the City communicated with local property owners about the RFP? Have there been any service studies or surveys completed for businesses or Multi-Dwelling Units (MDU's)? Does the City have any additional information for planned/unconstructed greenfield projects?

The City has not had communications with existing property owners. All available information has been published online at www.victoriatx.gov/broadband.

27. Are there existing service contracts for City buildings? If so, when do they expire?

Yes, AT&T Fiber on Demand for point to point fiber – expires within the year. Suddenlink for Internet– also expiring this year.

28. Does the City desire to partner with communities outside City limits for a regional plan (in Victoria County or with Victoria Electric for example)?

Yes, the RFP references a connection to the Golden Crescent Region. The City finds a great deal of benefit in being connected to neighboring communities.

29. Does the City already have real estate identified for network electronics/data center?

No. No sites have been selected.

30. Does the City own a co-location facility where 3rd-party Service Provider would interconnect/aggregate fiber connections from subscribers? If so, will this facility provide racks, cooling, UPS, generator backup, or will these facilities be the responsibility of the Service Provider?

The City does not currently own a co-location facility. Where necessary, the City is not opposed to owning the infrastructure, but it has been our assumption that infrastructure ownership would be valuable to the selected development partner.

31. What sources of funding has the City already pursued/acquired to support this RFP and any subsequent programs? Would the City fund the fiber network build using bonds, private funding, P3 partnership, or other methods?

Funding avenues will be determined based on needs associated with the selected proposal. The City will explore all options and asks that potential development partners assist in the identification of outside funding opportunities.

32.   Does the City already have a dedicated communications service provider?

The City currently uses AT&T for telecommunications.

33.   Does the City have any franchise agreements or legal limitations with incumbent communication service providers? Has the City been approached by an incumbent communications service provider to build out the city? Who are the existing incumbents in market and primary points of contact?

Information regarding the incumbent provider technology and website is listed below. Each respondent should conduct their own due diligence. The City of Victoria offers the following websites for your research:

https://www.txcable.com/about-2-2/member-companies/
https://tta.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/01/TXTR_TXTR0018.pdf
https://www.tstci.org/tstci-members
https://www.puc.texas.gov/industry/communications/directories/Default.aspx
https://members.wispa.org/members/directory/search_bootstrap.php?org_id=WISP

34.   What other utilities does the City already support (water, gas, power, etc.)?

The City is the provider of water and wastewater systems. Gas and electric services are primarily provided by private entities.

35.   What is the City's relationship with the local power provider?

The City maintains a positive relationship with AEP and Victoria Electric Cooperative (VEC).

36.   Does the City have any special relationships with pole owners for attaching cable or antennae?

The City does not have any special relationships with pole owners.

37.   Would the City be able to provide free access and power to pole locations for smart city applications (such as public Wi-Fi)?

Where appropriate, the City is would entertain an arrangement for providing free access and power for public Wi-Fi.

38. Does the City have a pre-determined list of core applications (Smart City, IoT) it expects to result from this project?

The City does not have a pre-determined list of core applications, but respondents are encouraged to be creative in their proposals for smart city initiatives.

39. Please provide a list of all smart/advanced applications today? Such as traffic monitoring & control systems, smart lighting, cameras, etc.

The City currently utilizes traffic monitoring and automatic meter read (AMR).

40. Does the City already have a preferred Construction company?

State procurement laws prevent the City from engaging in preferential treatment for construction contractors.

41. Will the City have any special requirements for the employment of Union and Non-Union construction services?

No. The City will not require the use of union or non-union construction services.

42. Does the City have any restrictions for construction activities (downtown or historic districts, moratoriums, special events, seasonal events, weekends, special hours, etc.)?

The City has regulations requiring advance written approval for communication infrastructure installed in design districts or historic districts. These regulations can be found in Chapter 20, Article VIII of the City's Code of Ordinances, which are online at https://library.municode.com/tx/victoria/codes/code_of_ordinances?nodeId=CICO_CH20STSICUGU_ARTVIIIDEMA.

43. Can the City provide a preferred list of City/County department contact list?

A list of contacts will be provided to the selected development partner with the aim of making construction, permitting, and research as efficient as possible.

44. Can City/County permits be processed under a blanket permit for this project?

Permits requirements will be based on the work proposed. For development on private sites, site plans are generally a requirement. Electrical permits are also a typical requirement, if electrical work is necessary.

Currently, installation of fiber and other telecommunications infrastructure in easements is done through a franchise agreement rather than a permit. The agreement with the selected development partner will include a franchise agreement. For any associated work performed outside of the City limits, the appropriate entity would need to be consulted about specific permit requirements.

45.   What is the current interval for review of City permits?

The internal review for City permits varies with the type of permit to be issued. Generally, the process includes the City's Development Department and the Fire Marshal's Office.

46.   What is the current interval for review of County permits?

The internal review for County permits varies with the type of permit to be issued, but Victoria County does not issue building permits.

47.   What is the size of the staff involved in processing permits for the City/County?

In the City's Development Services Department, we have a Plan Reviewer and 3 Development Specialists. However, the Assistant Building Official and Assistant Director/Building Official also get involved in complex commercial jobs. Fire Marshal's office have staff that also review plans pertaining to fire code and Public Works also has staff involved in reviewing plans pertaining to pre-treatment and utilities.

Victoria County does not issue building permits, but there are four (4) staff involved in general permitting activities.

48.   What is the current volume (daily/weekly/monthly) of permits submitted to the City/County?

Victoria County does not issue building permits, but some recent permitting data from the City can be found here. Additional data is contained in monthly reports for the Planning Commission – available online here.

49.   How would volumes exceeding capacity be handled?

For this project, existing staff will be made available to address any building or permitting concerns. There are no anticipated concerns with staff capacity.

50.   Is the City looking for responses primarily from Internet Service Providers?

The City welcomes responses from ISPs and non-ISPs and has no preference between them. For non-ISPs, a relationship with service providers will be important eventually, however.

51.   Is there a possibility of seeing multiple awards from this process?

Given the nature of this project, the City is open to any and all possibilities. If responses are received from compatible companies, the City may entertain a relationship with more than one development partner. This, of course, assumes all parties have an interest in working together.

52.   Are respondents expected to submit proposals alone or is it acceptable for a proposal to be submitted by a partnership?

Proposals will be accepted from individual firms or partnerships.

53.   Is the City of Victoria hoping to become an Internet Service Provider?

The City of Victoria has no interest in becoming an Internet Service Provider currently.

54.   Will respondents who are not selected still be able to serve the City of Victoria if they chose to do without a partnership?

Yes. Respondents not selected as the City's development partner are encouraged to do business in the City of Victoria and/or surrounding region.

55.   The RFP asks for evidence of authority to do business in Texas – is that due with the submission or in the event of selection?

Evidence of authority to do business in Texas may be submitted either with the proposal or at the time of an interview, if selected. No contract will be awarded without this submission.

56.   Why is it beneficial to a respondent to enter a development partnership with the City?

The City maintains existing rights-of-way and other resources that may be beneficial to a development partner. There may also be advantages related to the franchise agreements and costs associated with construction inside the city limits. Further, the Victoria Broadband Commission will serve as a link to many other entities that operate within and around the City of Victoria.

57.   What is the City hoping to achieve with this RFP?

The City's goal in this effort is to provide reliable, affordable, and available broadband service throughout the community. There are many varied and diverse needs for connectivity, many of which have been encapsulated within the Victoria

Broadband Commission. This Request for Proposals is intended to provide respondents with a blank canvas for how they may envision a solution to meeting those needs. Respondents are encouraged to be creative, comprehensive, and innovative in their proposed method of achieving connectivity throughout Victoria, and potentially the surrounding region.