

Request for Proposals for Design/Engineering Support Services

(RFP No. 2017-MBI-01)

Bidders' Conference Questions

September 26, 2016

Deadline: September 29, 2016

	Question	Answers
1.	Will the Network Operators be responsible for distributing services to the homes when design and engineering and construction is complete? Have the Network Operators been determine already? If not, will there be a separate RFP to determine Network Operators?	It is the responsibility of the Internet Service Provider (ISP) to deliver end user services. A Network Operator may take on the responsibility of delivering end user services if the firm performs the combined functions as both Operator and ISP. There have been no Operators or ISP's procured by any towns to date. A town or potentially a group of towns will be required to competitively procure an Operator and ISP before the network is turned over.
2.	Section 2.3.3.3 - Will pole data collection firm be responsible for pole analysis? If not, who is responsible for pole analysis and make-ready solution?	Yes, MBI's Pole data collection firm will be responsible for pole analysis. Make ready ride-outs will be conducted by our Pole data collection firm when applicable with the utility companies. Pole load analysis will be the responsibility of National Grid when required. The Make ready "solution" will be physically performed by the Utility companies and any third party attachers.
3.	Per PowerPoint slide, a baseline town network design will be provided to the D/E firm. Who is to provide this information and in what format will the data be available (e.g., GIS, CAD, etc.)? In addition, what information will be included in the baseline data?	The baseline Town Network Design Decision Tree will be provided by MBI, based on input from the town. This decision tree file is in Visio format. This file is a simple check box style questionnaire which outlines baseline FTTH/Wireless decisions towns are considering around the type of Network Technology, Service Coverage, Service Drop, Network Services, Network Availability and Redundancy, Hut

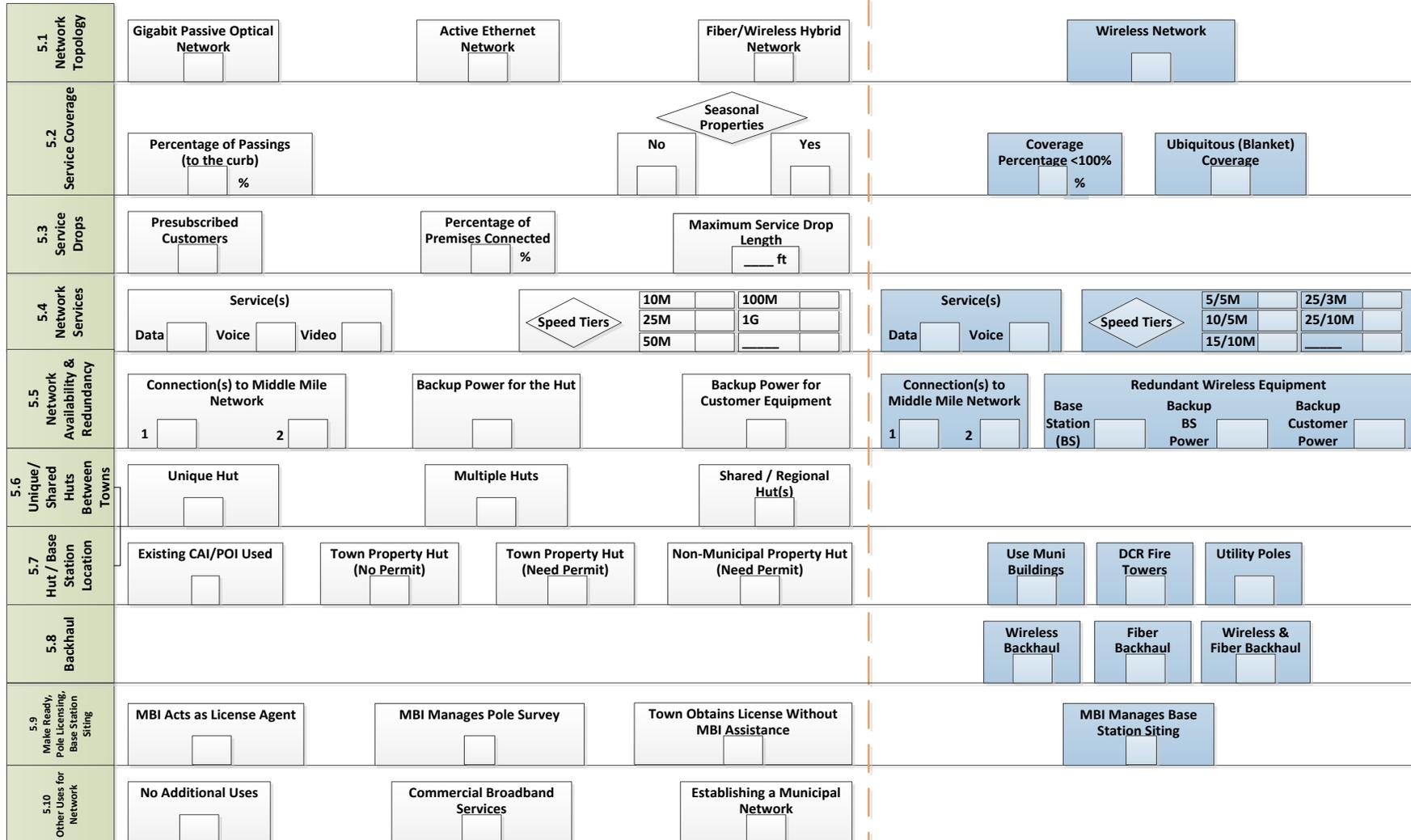
	Question	Answers
		<p>type/quantity, Hut/Base Station location, Backhaul, Pole Survey/Licensing, and Other Uses for the Network.</p> <p>See blank version of the Town Network Design Decision Tree below.</p>
4.	<p>Section 3.1.5, second bullet, 2nd sub-bullet - Who will provide existing wireless propagation study? What format will it be in?</p>	<p>As part of Planning Grants awarded by MBI, Interisle was hired by certain towns to provide propagation studies to support preliminary designs of wireless Last Mile networks. These documents are in Excel format. MBI will provide copies of these documents to the selected D/E firm.</p>
5.	<p>Section 3.1.8 - What scope is required of the D/E firm for back-up power generation of huts, wireless backhaul locations, etc.? Are there preferred types to be used (e.g., fuel cell, battery, solar, diesel, etc.)?</p>	<p>The selected D/E firm will make recommendations for back-up power generation, wireless backhaul locations, etc. and MBI and towns will approve/deny these recommendations.</p>
6.	<p>Is there an overall project schedule with milestones that can be shared with the D/E to better understand the project's resourcing needs?</p>	<p>This is a complex project with various scheduling constraints and multiple stakeholders. Therefore, MBI cannot provide an overall project schedule. The overall schedule will also be impacted by the number of towns that participate in the project. The 40 towns are considering a wide range of options. We expect the number of towns that ultimately participate in a MBI-managed project to be considerably less than 40.</p>
7.	<p>Will the D/E firm be responsible for lease negotiations of hut and wireless locations?</p>	<p>No, the D/E firm will not be responsible for lease negotiations of hut and wireless locations. This will be handled by MBI and the Towns.</p>
8.	<p>When will city funding appropriations be certain? This drives our overall cost based on quantity of miles, etc.</p>	<p>During the "Readiness" process which towns are proceeding through at this time, towns have or will have completed voting required for debt authorization and debt exclusion based on desktop cost estimates provided by MBI per town.</p> <p>Funding for the project will be a combination of MBI and town monies. The town will make milestone payments to MBI. All funding represents the project budget and the D/E firm will propose designs that are within said budget.</p>

	Question	Answers
		Also, please note the answer to question #6 as it relates to the potential number of participating towns.
9.	Can we see the decision tree, mentioned during the mandatory bidders' conference, to address design criteria based on selections made?	See blank version of the Town Network Design Decision Tree below.
10.	Will there be a special single point-of-contact for each city, or does MBI manage the end city communications for standards resolution?	The selected D/E firm will interact with a single designee from MBI (i.e. a Project Manager per town) that will manage the end city communications for standards resolution.
11.	When will cities have to firm up their decision on participation in the final service group? Can cities decide to join later and/or new cities not on the list, or cities that are on the list come back in if funded later (e.g., cut-off list)?	The list of towns provided is the list of unserved towns that may participate in the Last Mile project. MBI has a rolling project enrollment process in place that allows this specific list of towns to opt in/out of the Last Mile project. It is possible for a town to opt out now and opt in at a later date if the enrollment process is still available. Also, please note the answer to question #6 as it relates to the potential number of participating towns.
12.	Do we negotiate the pole attachment agreements with providers and what is in place today?	No. Pole attachment agreements are negotiated between the towns and the utilities. Only a few towns have agreements in place thus far. Pole attachment agreements must be executed by the town prior to pole application submittal.
13.	Will cities be given a sequential priority?	Yes, the sequencing of work will be determined based on the order in which towns exit "Readiness." Afterwards, towns will be grouped into construction clusters and each cluster. The sequential priority for construction cluster buildout will initially be proposed by the selected D/E firm and determined by MBI per section 3.1.10.
14.	Are there any take rate and subscribers' services or business models we can review to determine demographics and service model metrics for design volume assessment?	The selected D/E firm will receive from MBI estimated take rates and desired subscriber services per town based on presubscription campaigns, surveys and other sustainability analysis conducted by the towns, if any, during the "Readiness" phase.

	Question	Answers
15.	What factors are necessary to cover growth in the areas?	Growth factors are yet to be determined. The selected D/E firm, MBI and the towns will discuss the factors necessary to cover growth during preliminary design discussions.
16.	There were six (6) preferred project business models mentioned during the mandatory bid conference and we would like to fully understand the models each city may select. Only four models were mentioned in the slide deck, could we get a brief description of all six models?	See six preferred project business model table below. Further information can be found on our website; http://broadband.masstech.org/building-networks/last-mile/program-unserved-towns
17.	Who will perform make-ready construction – pole owners or third parties?	Pole owners and third party attachers will perform make ready construction.
18.	GPON networks have splitters and an oversubscription model. What is the specific bandwidth delivery commitment for the GPON network – Active Ethernet? Wireless?	It is MBI policy that all Last Mile networks meet the FCC minimum bandwidth requirements for broadband (i.e. 25/3). The selected D/E firm, MBI and the towns will discuss GPON, Active Ethernet, and Wireless bandwidth requirements during preliminary design discussions.
19.	Are any of the cities considering RUS funding? Does the work require RUS compliance? Are there any other federal/state funding sources being considered?	No towns are currently considering RUS funding. MBI is investigating options with the USDA's Community Facilities Direct Loan Program and FCC CAFII funding.
20.	Who has final authority on design questions/standards – Massachusetts Technology Collaborative or city service providers?	The towns ultimately have the final authority to approve the design of each of their Last Mile networks.
21.	Are there current City facility/site route and fiber contributions?	There are municipally owned facilities and rights of way in the towns. There are no existing municipally owned fiber contributions available for any Last Mile towns.
22.	Who develops the Disaster Recovery Plan?	The development of a Disaster Recovery Plan is not a requirement of this RFP.
23.	Are there construction contractor delay remedies in place? Does the engineering close-out and retainage	The selected D/E firm will be required to support MBI in the creation of construction bid packages. Construction contractor agreements,

	Question	Answers
	paid after the final construction and testing is complete?	which will address delay remedies, will be developed as part of the construction bid packages. Engineering close-out and retainage will be paid upon completion of construction, testing, and acceptance of town turnover package.
24.	Do we (or will we) have access to any existing GIS data that is relevant to the project?	Yes.
25.	Will each part of the Project Team (e.g., Design/Engineering Firm, Construction Management Firm, etc.) report directly to Mass Tech Collaborative, or will any part of the Project Team report directly to another part of the Project Team?	MBI will contract with the following firms: the pole data collection firm, D/E firm, and construction management firm(s). Each firm mentioned above will be part of the project team. The selected D/E firm will support MBI by monitoring the progress and performance of all project vendors per section 3.1.12.2. The Network Operator and ISP will report to the town.

Town Network Design Decision Tree



Model A: Expansion by Private Provider	Model B: Extension of Existing Cable Infrastructure	Model C: Multi-Municipal Network	Model D: Independent Municipal Network	Model E: Pilot Projects	Model F: Other
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ownership: The private party would own the network • Operations: The private party would operate the network • Financing: Likely a combination of state and private funding with a possibility for CAF II funding • Technology: Fiber, coax or wireless depending on provider • Operating Considerations: Sustainability concerns would be minimized • Challenges: Effectively incenting the private sector to invest with modest public investment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ownership: Incumbent cable provider • Operations: Incumbent cable provider under existing franchise agreement • Financing: Likely a combination of state and private funding with a possibility for CAF II funding • Technology: Likely the same as existing technology provider deploys in that town • Operating Considerations: Minimal • Challenges: Effectively incenting the private sector to invest with modest public investment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ownership: Municipal • Operations: Outsourced and based on consortium model • Financing: Combination of state/MBI funds and municipal borrowing; unlikely availability for CAF II funds • Technology: Fiber, wireless or hybrid • Operating Considerations: Emphasis on attaining broadband speeds with maximum coverage at affordable prices while focusing on long term sustainability • Challenges: Fostering a flexible structure that will allow a town to exit with its assets 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ownership: Municipality • Operations: Outsourced • Financing: Combination of state/MBI funds and municipal borrowing; unlikely availability for CAF II funds • Technology: fiber or wireless • Operating Considerations: emphasis on attaining broadband speeds with maximum coverage at affordable prices while focusing on long term sustainability • Challenges: Achieving a sustainable network • Option may be available to join a regional model in the future 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ownership: Variable, but likely the applying municipality • Operations: Variable, but preferably outsources • Financing: Variable depending on project • Technology: Dependent on pilot program (wireless, fiber, hybrid, etc.) • Operating Considerations: Ensuring that the pilot model will foster long term sustainability • Challenges: Balancing the need to invest in new programs with a desire to be responsible stewards 	<p>(Attach a description of the proposed project model)</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Town Preference <input type="checkbox"/></p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Town Preference <input type="checkbox"/></p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Town Preference <input type="checkbox"/></p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Town Preference <input type="checkbox"/></p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Town Preference <input type="checkbox"/></p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Town Preference <input type="checkbox"/></p>