



City of Zanesville, Ohio

Request for Qualifications

for

**Partnership for Deployment of
Wireless Broadband to Underserved Areas
in the City of Zanesville**

Issued: April 15, 2017

I. Introduction

The City of Zanesville, Ohio (“City”) issues this Request for Qualifications (RFQ) to convey its interest in partnering with a motivated, high-caliber partner to make wireless broadband service available in three underserved areas of the City of Zanesville over privately or publicly-constructed infrastructure. The City seeks proposed approaches from private sector partners who seek to provide this coverage and envision a long-term relationship with the City.

City leadership is committed to ensuring that the City continues to prosper and evolve as the global economy shifts, and the need for ultra-high-speed broadband access becomes increasingly evident.

The City seeks a partner who will collaborate to provide wireless broadband in three underserved areas of the City (the Downtown area, the greater Putnam area “Putnam”, and the State Street area, collectively “the Underserved Areas”). In return, we pledge our support and facilitation of any necessary processes and potential grant opportunities, access to community assets, commitment to providing right-of-way (ROW) access and assistance with permitting, and any other advantage we may be able to bring to the partnership. In addition, the City is willing to consider a contribution to the capital costs of deploying service in the Underserved Areas, or constructing at its own costs some of the key infrastructure (such as towers) necessary to serve the Underserved Areas.

Given the deficiency in service in the Underserved Areas, deployment in these locations will enhance the broadband connectivity of the City’s residents, visitors, and businesses by expanding the range and quality of available broadband and data transport services.

The City has initiated this RFQ to identify one or more potential partners to enable or directly provide high-capacity wireless broadband to end users within the Downtown, Putnam, State Street areas. Responses to this RFQ should state how the respondent’s approach will result in a financially sustainable business model that furthers the City’s goals of ensuring that residents and visitors to these areas have access to affordable, market-leading broadband services that can easily and inexpensively scale to provide higher-speed services as demand for bandwidth increases.

The City seeks input from potential partners regarding the terms and conditions under which they would participate in such a project. We seek partners who will consider a variety of business models that share technological and operational responsibilities and financial risk between the partners and the City in innovative ways.

We encourage respondents to share their expertise, which may be used to shape the direction and form of the network. Respondents may work together to respond to this RFQ. The City is open to creative solutions that will maximize investment while providing reliable and high-quality services to meet its citizens’ needs.

We welcome the responses of all prospective partners, including incumbent service providers, as well as competitive providers, nonprofit organizations, public cooperatives, and entities that are not traditional Internet service providers (ISP) but are interested in acting as a partner in offering service under innovative business models. Nontraditional providers may respond as part of a partnership with an ISP, or may provide separate responses outlining their approaches.

The City will review responses based on the respondents' experience, how well the responses address the City's objectives, how the proposed business model balances and shares risks and rewards, and other factors. The City may provide more detailed information on available assets to one or more respondents, and ask those respondents to refine their responses.

Following the evaluation of responses, the City may begin negotiations with the preferred RFQ respondent(s) relating to the City-initiated project, cancel or delay plans to deploy an FTTP network, or choose another direction that is deemed in the City's best interest.

Responding to the RFQ is not a guarantee of a contract award. The City reserves the right to withdraw the RFQ, or to decline to award a contract.

II. The City's Vision

We envision world-class community communications infrastructure for Zanesville's businesses, visitors, and residents, for the 21st century and beyond. Broadband is critical infrastructure—just like roads, water, sewer, and electricity. Providing equal and affordable access to communications infrastructure and service is essential to promoting equal opportunity in business, education, employment, healthcare, and all other aspects of day-to-day life.

Zanesville's leadership is committed to being intentional, providing our residents and local businesses to be network economy producers— not just consumers of network information and data services. Further, we intend to provide our stakeholders with the broadband capacity they need to compete successfully in the global marketplace.

To that point, by the end of 2017, Zanesville will have formed an "Intelligent Community" forum. This group will be comprised of a network of government, educational and business leaders, with a think tank at its center. Its mission is to help Zanesville use information and communications technology (ICT) to create inclusive prosperity, tackle social and governance challenges and enrich our quality of life.

The City, over decades invested financially to shape itself as a regional hub for several key business sectors such as health care, food processing, government, and transportation. More recent has seen new business sectors emerging through a flourishing art/cultural scene and associated tourism in the downtown area.

Looking to aide this movement, the City submitted and received a 2016 "Cool & Connected" grant from our federal partners at USEPA/USDA/ARC. The technical assistance project created an

investment plan for a more robust, sustainable Zanesville Downtown.

One of the items in the plan is the development of a Downtown “Wi Fi” network. The City is committed to providing wireless broadband in the Downtown area which will allow existing businesses and tourists to experience uninterrupted connectivity in the area. Doing so will advance the City’s standing in the regional economy as a travel destination and further the migration of the return of small business and more residential living in the downtown.

The City Development staff sees the benefit of extending a wireless system along the Putnam area along the Muskingum River corridor as a catalytic ingredient, transitioning the area into mixed use development patterns. Lastly, the City is in the early stages of developing planning materials for a new live/work job center in the State Street area and recognize that broadband is also an important driver for business investment, attracting and retaining highly skilled residents to this area, and creating sustainable new jobs in an entrepreneurial economy based on innovation and creativity.

Zanesville’s broadband initiative will be shaped by the community’s values. The City seeks a partner(s) (“Partner”) to operate fast, affordable wireless broadband Internet and data services to meet the City’s broadband goals. City officials have prioritized pursuing the deployment of a mobile wireless network or enhancement to an existing network that will provide adequate bandwidth for visitors and residents in the three underserved areas of the City.

The City will consider a range of construction, operation, and ownership models for the wireless network. The City and selected Partner(s) will collaboratively determine the most mutually beneficial partnership structure, which may include cost-sharing, infrastructure leasing, and profit-sharing arrangements. The City is prepared to consider various business models, including one in which the City makes a financial investment to address the need for wireless broadband in the Underserved Areas.

The City will also consider any combination of these models as well as alternative suggestions proposed by respondents.

III. Background: Underserved Areas

Downtown Zanesville

Downtown Zanesville, the seat of county and municipal government and the one time seat of state government, is a district of ebbs and flows. The Downtown is bounded by the Muskingum River and its historic canal on the west and south sides and Interstate 70 on the north side. Two eastbound exits and one westbound exit service this area directly. Prior to the era of suburbanization and shopping malls, Downtown could truly be called a central business district as the area was the destination for not just services, but for all things retail and entertainment as well. Downtown Zanesville is quite large in area compared to most other cities this size at about 32 blocks, featuring unique neighborhoods within its boundaries. The 1970's and 80's saw the largest decline of this district with a majority of the store fronts, and certainly upper floors, becoming vacant and blighted. This era saw numerous demolitions of some once prominent structures, leaving surface parking in their footprints.

Today, Downtown Zanesville is on an upward trend. Investment has been made in the Interstate corridor with county offices, a large public library, and an event/tourism center. Storefronts are being filled and upper floors are being redeveloped into housing units. There are nearly 300 businesses and 400 residents of Downtown, with these numbers continually growing. Much of the recent investment in upper floors has come from the development of the Zanesville Artist Colony (ArtCOZ). In addition, Nestle Purina, Ballas Egg, Dutro Dealerships, and Quality Care Partners have collectively invested millions of dollars into facilities within the Downtown boundaries. The City of Zanesville, over the past several years, has invested in streetscape enhancements which included the installation of empty conduit along 4th, 5th, 6th, Main, and Shinnick Streets. Existing overhead fiber runs through a portion of the northeastern side of Downtown and includes a POP near the intersection of 6th and Shinnick Streets. The City of Zanesville was awarded technical assistance through the Cool and connected program to create a planning document for utilizing broadband as a tool for revitalization of the Downtown. This planning document identified numerous goals, including the creation of an app. In partnership with the Convention and Visitors Bureau, the City of Zanesville will be filing an application to the Appalachian Regional Commission

for funding of an app. In addition to the Cool and Connected document, there are numerous sections within the Comprehensive Plan identifying Downtown as a priority area.

Putnam

The Putnam neighborhood is an area that is historically unique in Zanesville. Originally a separate municipality, this was a town that housed the very wealthy, the areas first physician, was in the running to become the State Capital of Ohio, and had an established industrial base due to its proximity to the river. With its abolitionist values, Putnam established itself as an important center for the Underground Railroad and has since been listed as a Network to Freedom site with the National Park Service. In addition to this listing, the northern portion of Putnam is also a National Register Historic District and is a locally designated Historic Overlay for zoning purposes.

Today, 95.24% of the residents of Putnam are in the low to moderate income range and a majority of the housing has become rental units. The local school system has consolidated elementary districts and has closed the local elementary school, which removed a community resource from the district. With this being said, Putnam Ave, being part of US 22 and SR 93, is a heavily traveled corridor for north/south traffic and is a key entry point into the Downtown. The Historic District has seen investment into some of the housing stock, and the museums remain very active. There is a Planned Unit Development (PUD) in the Northwest corner of Putnam that includes two restaurants, art gallery space, and a very successful microbrewery. The Land Use section of the City of Zanesville Comprehensive Plan has listed the Putnam area riverfront as a “high value” area for redevelopment, calling for mixed use zoning classifications. Fiber is present within this district, with a point of presence (POP) being located on the north side of Muskingum Ave near the PUD and one of the historic museums, and close to the 6th St Bridge connecting Putnam with Downtown. This fiber line runs overhead along Muskingum Ave to the POP, and then runs underground across the bridge into Downtown.

State Street

The State Street/Lee Street neighborhood can be defined by its strategic location and already built infrastructure. This area is largely flat, has a full interstate exit, existing rail lines, riverfront

property on two rivers, and direct access to Downtown via the famous “Y” Bridge. Historically, this was a strong residential neighborhood that included some industrial facilities. Over the years, and especially after Interstate 70 cut through, the residential aspect of the area has sharply declined with a majority of the housing stock becoming blighted and/or demolished. This area currently consists of numerous industrial and commercial uses including a large food distributor, a trucking company, several automobile related businesses, and several brownfield sites, as well as some remaining housing units. 76.27% of the remaining residents are low to moderate income.

This area has been targeted by multiple land use plans for redevelopment. A 2006 Downtown Master Plan called for a total remake of this area, as an important peripheral area to the Downtown, as a center for medical and office space. The City of Zanesville Comprehensive Plan also calls for redevelopment within this neighborhood with an emphasis on mixed use. The City feels that this area, given its location and amenities, can be a prime area for large scale redevelopment within the already built environment. Above ground fiber runs through a significant portion of this neighborhood, running along a majority of State Street and Lee Street. In addition, ATT has underground fiber lines’ running through this area, only adding to the list of amenities this area offers.

IV. City Contributions and Assets

The City recognizes that access to broadband is necessary in the community to support our residents', visitors', and businesses' participation in a global economy. We are in the early stages of determining exactly what the City's role will be in promoting enhanced broadband access, and we are willing to consider various levels of public involvement.

At a minimum, the City anticipates that it will be necessary to assign a point of contact (POC) for each Partner and/or its contractor(s), and we commit to providing services to help prevent or lessen conflicts in the Partner's construction schedule. City staff will be prepared to assist the Partner(s) in navigating necessary permitting to streamline planning and construction efforts. Once we have selected our Partner(s), the City is prepared to promptly move forward with the partnership. The City will work with its Partner(s) to facilitate the smoothest possible access for construction and installation of the network.

For the selected Partner(s), the City will provide access to non-public resources that identify City infrastructure and, where available, access to existing conduit infrastructure. Such information includes but is not limited to traffic, sewer, water, and storm-drainage facilities.

Other City and private assets that may be available include:

- Existing site infrastructure (poles for traffic signals, street lighting and power).
- Remote, "macro" site locations in neighborhoods
- High water tower site access.
- The City is also open to a potential public investment if such an investment will clearly deliver wireless broadband services to the Underserved Areas. The City hopes that respondents will propose innovative models to address its goal, including those that suggest potential sharing of investment and risk as between public and private sectors. We welcome creative ideas for how the City and prospective partners can share financial and operational risks.

V. Potential Technologies

We recognize that wireless solution options are continually increasing as the broadband industry moves toward solutions that are less intrusive to construct, and often less expensive. Some of the technologies that are available in myriad licensed and unlicensed spectrum include:

1. Cellular LTE
2. Point-to-point wireless
3. Point-to-multipoint wireless
4. Microwave middle mile/LTE last mile
5. Fiber middle mile/wireless last mile

The City encourages responses that consider these and/or other innovative solutions that enhance wireless broadband in the Underserved Areas.

VI. RFQ Response Requirements

The City of Zanesville requests the following information—in as much detail as is practicable—from respondents.

1. **Cover Letter:** Please include company name, address of corporate headquarters, address of nearest local office, contact name for response, and that person's contact information (address, phone, cell, email). Keep response to one (1) page.
2. **Business Model Summary:** Summarize the business model you intend to use for the partnership. This should be a concise explanation of the key components of your business model, including but not limited to the division of network and operations responsibility and ownership. Keep response to two (2) pages.
3. **Affirmation:** Affirm that you are interested in this partnership and address the core project goals. Keep response to two (2) pages.
4. **Experience:** Provide a statement of experience discussing past performance, capabilities, and qualifications. Identify other networks your firm has designed, built, maintained, or operated; include the levels of broadband speed, availability, and adoption among different categories of end users and unique capabilities or attributes. Discuss partnerships with other service providers, government, or nonprofit entities you have undertaken, particularly any involving the provision of a wireless network. Describe the nature of the projects and your firm's role. For entities currently providing communication services in or near Zanesville, describe your current service footprint in the City, including a description of the type of infrastructure and services you currently offer and the technology platform(s) used. Explain how your firm is a suitable partner for this project. Keep response to two (2) pages.
5. **Technical and Operations:** At a high level, summarize the technological and operational approach you would use for this project.
6. **Business Structure:** Summarize the business approach you would use for the project. How would your business plan help to meet the City's goals? What are the key assumptions? What are your main areas of risk, and how can the City help reduce the risks? What are the City's main areas of risk, and how will you reduce the risk to the City? Keep response to two (2) pages.
7. **Schedule:** Describe your proposed schedule for implementing service. Offer a timeline with key milestones. Would you be able to begin service before the entire network is constructed? Are there portions of the Underserved Areas you would recommend be constructed first? Keep response to two (2) pages (one for response, one for schedule).
8. **Privacy:** Describe your ability to provide secure network service or infrastructure that complies with public safety and other security and privacy regulations and requirements.

Keep response to one (1) page.

9. **Financing and Funding:** List any requirements the City must meet for you to partner with the City on this project.

Please also provide a one-page flow chart that shows the flow of funds between all parties in your response. Include all sources and uses of funds.

If you do not address this question, it will be assumed that you are interested in the partnership but have no financial requirements whatsoever of the City.

10. **Services:** Describe the service options you plan to offer over this network. Keep response to two (2) pages.
11. **Pricing:** Provide your approach to pricing the proposed services. Keep response to two (2) pages.
12. **Local Participation and Economic Development:** Provide a statement of how your proposed participation would help the City's economic development goals. Describe your interests and plans to hire local contractors and providers in the City, and how your participation would help local job creation. Describe your relationships with local businesses in the City, if any, as well as your interest and plans to engage them in this project. Keep response to two (2) pages.
13. **References:** Provide a minimum of three (3) references, including contact information, from previous contracts or partnerships. Keep response to two (2) pages.

VII. Response Process

All correspondence regarding this RFQ should be directed to:

Jay Bennett, Public Service/Community Development Director
(740) 455-0601 x 101
jay.bennett@coz.org

The City cannot guarantee that correspondence directed to other City staff or departments will be received or considered.

Letter of Intent

All interested respondents are asked to submit a letter of intent via email by May 18, 2017 to Jay Bennett jay.bennett@coz.org

Questions

Questions related to this RFQ must be in writing and should be emailed to Jay Bennett, jay.bennett@coz.org no later than 4:00 PM EST on May 25, 2017.

Response Deadline

Final RFQ submissions must be received by email no later than 4:00 PM EST on June 30, 2017. Please send to Jay Bennett, jay.bennett@coz.org

Late responses will not be considered.

Please identify any proprietary and/or confidential information as such.

Summary of RFQ Process Deadlines

The following is the schedule for responding to this RFQ. The schedule is subject to change:

April 15, 2017 – RFQ issued

May 18, 2017 – Deadline for submitting letter of intent to respond to RFQ

May 25, 2017 – Deadline for submitting questions

June 9, 2017 – City response to questions

June 30, 2017 – RFQ responses due

The City of Zanesville thanks you in advance for your thoughtful response.

VIII. Personal Presentations

At its discretion, the City may request that vendors and other parties that provide a timely response to this RFQ make an individual and personal presentation to better explain information or solutions identified in the response. These presentations, if requested by the City, shall be held at a time and place of mutual convenience.

IX. City Rights Reserved

1. The City reserves the rights to accept or reject all or portions of any response(s) to the RFQ, to waive any formalities of the RFQ process, to re-advertise the RFQ, to amend the terms of the RFQ, to extend the dates provided herein, to suspend the procurement if the desired outcomes are not achieved, to award the contract to the most responsive and responsible respondent(s) as deemed in the best interest of the City, and/or to proceed to provide the services otherwise, as the City may determine in its sole discretion is in the best interest of the City.
2. No reimbursement will be made by the City for any costs incurred in responding to this RFQ, developing or submitting responses to the RFQ, or attendance at a site inspection, pre-bid conference or interviews.

3. The City reserves the absolute right to conduct such investigations as it deems necessary to assist in the evaluation of any response to the RFQ and to establish the experience, responsibility, reliability, references, reputation, business ethics, history, qualifications and financial ability of the respondent(s), proposed sub Consultants, independent Consultants and suppliers. The purpose of such investigation is to satisfy the City that the respondent has the experience, resources and commercial reputation necessary to perform the work and support any warranties in the prescribed manner and time.

4. In the event the RFQ responses are considered for an award, the City reserves the right to award the Project to the firm that demonstrates the best ability to fulfill the requirements for the performing the subject services. The successful firm will be chosen based on the qualifications, evaluation of submittals and a possible interview. The City reserves the right to conduct such discussions or negotiations with Proposers or other entities as it deems necessary to assist in the evaluation of any proposal, to secure maximum clarification and completeness of any proposal, and select the proposal that best meets the requirements of the City and the public interest.