



REGIONAL DISTRICT OF NORTH OKANAGAN

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS - RFP-2015-C02

Electoral Area "D" – Internet Service Provider

INSTRUCTIONS TO PROPOSERS

The Regional District of North Okanagan (RDNO) is requesting proposals for the selection of an Internet Service Provider (ISP) to receive a one-time grant. The grant will facilitate provision of affordable, secure, high-speed Internet service and customer support for businesses and residents in Electoral Area "D" (Rural Lumby). Ultimately this initiative seeks to service approximately 800 residences, in an area of approximately 450 square kilometres.

Proposals, rather than tenders, have been requested in order to afford proposers a more flexible opportunity to employ their expertise and innovation, and thereby satisfy the community needs in a cost-effective manner.

Residents prefer a "wire-line" solution for the majority of Electoral Area "D", which can include ADSL, cable, or other forms of similar or innovative high-speed delivery.

Proponents will be required to obtain their own point of presence, which may or may not be available within the community.

Proponents may be expected to provide multiple points of presence to provide an acceptable level of coverage to as many of Electoral Area "D"s residents as possible. Proposals may include a phased approach in order to expand Internet service into the more remote areas of Electoral Area "D".

Proponents will be expected to provide affordable services to residents and businesses that will maintain independently certified 'high speed' standardized speeds, using Canadian methods of standardization such as those established by Industry Canada and/or CRTC regulations. Standards expected for this proposal are a continuous minimum of 5 Mbps downstream and 1 Mbps upstream.

The RDNO intends to have initial provision of service to Electoral Area "D" by spring of 2016.

The definitions contained in Appendix 'A' apply throughout this Request for Proposal.

1.0 Background

Electoral Area “D” residents and businesses are among an estimated seven percent of British Columbians without affordable high-speed Internet access. The mountainous terrain, sparsely populated groups of residences spread over large tracts of land, dense tree cover with related line of sight issues and cost-prohibitive build proposals have prevented the implementation of broadband solutions explored over the past several years.

Electoral Area “D” is home to many self-employed home-based businesses, which brings the need for high-speed Internet access to enable small business owners to compete in the broader marketplace. Providing access to high-speed Internet connectivity in Electoral Area “D” is crucial to the economic viability of residents in the region, by enabling residents to connect with social, health and development websites and to access government services, education and job opportunities.

Some members of the community are currently serviced by satellite providers. A very small portion of residents have connectivity to cellular service on the back of Silver Star Mountain, and may utilize either cellular network boosters, and/or cellular modems. Many residents and businesses continue to utilize dialup access.

While the RDNO is uncertain of the level of voluntary participation an ISP will immediately receive, community businesses and residents have actively sought and requested more affordable broadband options for many years.

Mountainous terrain, mature trees ranging from 80 to 100 feet tall, and numerous ridges will require a proponent to establish multiple points of presence, and ISPs may encounter significant access issues.

The proponents’ network engineer will need to determine the viability of a wire-line solution, leasing requirements, and establish community or privately-negotiated agreements for land access, and/or power requirements.

2.0 Scope of Work

The Regional District of North Okanagan is seeking a qualified Internet Service Provider (ISP) to provide high speed, unlimited access service to businesses and individual subscribers.

The ISP will be expected to provide the following services:

- a) Provide affordable high-speed Internet access in the Coverage Area
- b) Market the system to the community
- c) After system is deployed, provide network monitoring and reporting services
- d) Provide customer technical support
- e) Provide customer account services, including billing
- f) Provide a consistent rate structure regardless of location within the Coverage Area

3.0 Coverage Area

The coverage area is located within Electoral Area “D” of the RDNO) as identified on the map attached as Schedule “A”. Service(s) provided would be independently selected by businesses and/or residents; the RDNO makes no warranty as to levels of participation.

4.0 Coverage and Maintenance

The ISP will provide a “best effort” to provide high-quality, reliable, affordable Internet service. The ISP will be expected to regularly monitor the performance to each customer as well as the backhaul to ensure sufficient capacity to support next generation applications and services.

5.0 Customer Support

The ISP will be expected to provide telephone, web and mail support for:

- a) Sales enquiries
- b) Order status
- c) Service setup
- d) Service cancellation
- e) Connectivity problems
- f) Service interruption / degradation
- g) Credit and refund processing
- h) Account and billing enquiries
- i) Disconnection and relocation requests
- j) Support for escalation of unresolved issues
- k) Proactive and reactive network status information

6.0 Customer Premise Equipment

It is anticipated that Customer Premise Equipment (CPE) will be necessary to extend the wireless signal into homes and businesses in the coverage area. The ISP will be responsible for service from the CPE to the point of presence and will make equipment available for rental or purchase by the customer.

7.0 Network Sustainability

The ISP will submit a plan for the sustainability of the network through subscription fees and other sources of funding to maintain it as a strong, financially viable entity.

8.0 Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy

The RDNO is subject to the provisions of the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act*. As a result, while Section 21 of the Act does offer some protection for third party business interests, the RDNO cannot guarantee that any information provided to the RDNO can be held in confidence. All proposals, after closing time and date, become the property of the RDNO.

9.0 Indemnity

The successful proponent (ISP) and any Sub-Contractors shall at all times indemnify and save harmless the RDNO and/or any of its officers, employees or agents from and against all claims and demands, losses, costs, damages, actions, suit fees, or other proceedings by whomsoever made, brought or prosecuted, in any manner based upon, occasioned by or attributable to the execution of this assignment, or any action taken or things done or maintained by virtue of this assignment or the exercise in any manner of rights except claims for damage resulting from the negligence of any officer, servant or agent of the RDNO while acting within the scope of their duties of employment.

10.0 References

Each Proponent is required to provide three (3) client references that are related to service delivery operations of a similar size to the scope of this opportunity. References should include:

- Company name and address
- Contact name and contact information
- Date of work undertaken and nature of services provided

The RDNO reserves the right to not enter into an agreement with the successful Proponent in instances where the references are not satisfactory.

11.0 Submission Requirements

Proponents are asked to describe how they would achieve the objective of providing high-speed wireless Internet coverage to businesses and residents in Electoral Area “D”, in the context described in the Scope of Work. Proposals should also include the following details:

- a) Installation timelines and milestones
- b) Example hardware equipment list and customer premises equipment
- c) Cost of installation and fiber transport / backhaul
- d) Proposed bandwidth, and coverage map, of the expected number of homes to be serviced
- e) Qualifications and experience of the ISP with network management
- f) Qualifications, three-year financial performance statements, and experience of the ISP with customer service
- g) Proposed setup for customer service activities, including nature and definition of those services to be provided
- h) Proposed pricing plans and over limit fees - including service, equipment, packages, and initial and recurring charges, for both residential and business customers
- i) Proposal for financial stability of the network
- j) Proposed contract terms and conditions with end users

All proposals shall be submitted in a sealed envelope marked:

**“RFP-2015-C02
Electoral Area “D” - Internet Service Provider”**

Addressed to:

Regional District of North Okanagan
9848 Aberdeen Road
Coldstream, BC, V1B 2K9

no later than 4:00 p.m. Friday, April 24, 2015. The RDNO reserves the right to reject any and all proposals.

Proposals received after 4:00 p.m. Friday, April 24, 2015 will be returned (unopened) to the proposer without consideration. The RDNO does not accept proposals received via facsimile or in any electronic format.

All proposal submissions should include three (3) copies preferably in an 8.5 inch x 11 inch format. Proposal submissions must be suitable for black and white photocopying. Proponents are solely responsible for any costs or expenses related to the preparation and submission of proposals.

12.0 Evaluation Criteria

1. Proponent Qualifications	
a) Corporate Capability	5 points
b) Corporate Capacity	5 points
c) Corporate Financial Viability	10 points
	20 points
2. Installation Delivery Approach	
a) Proposed connectivity method	25 points
a) One-time cost of installation of network infrastructure	15 points
b) Bandwidth, installation and equipment provided to users (customer premise equipment)	10 points
	50 points
3) Customer Interface	
a) Pricing plans (affordability), variety of service packages available to the end user, and contract requirements	30 points
	Total - 100 points

The RDNO reserves the right to accept any or none of the proposals submitted and will evaluate proposal submissions based on “best value” according to the Evaluation Criteria.

Contact Information

Questions regarding this Request for Proposals may be forwarded to Leah Mellott at (250) 550-3722 or leah.mellott@rdno.ca.

Appendix ‘A’

Definitions

“**Broadband**” means ADSL, cable, or other forms of similar technology used in the provision of Internet services

“**Customer**” means a residential or business customer that subscribes to Broadband or High-speed service, including installation of Customer Premise Equipment to the customer’s unserved location from the ISP, whether by sale, lease or otherwise, and has entered into an agreement with the ISP for such services.

“**Customer Premise Equipment**” means any terminal and associated equipment (including cabling and wiring) on the Customer’s premises requiring installation and connection to the ISP’s network for Broadband or High-speed service at a demarcation point.

“**High-speed**” means an ‘always on’ fast connection to the Internet supporting data transmission at a minimum download speed of 5 Mbps and upload speed of 1 Mbps to the end user.¹

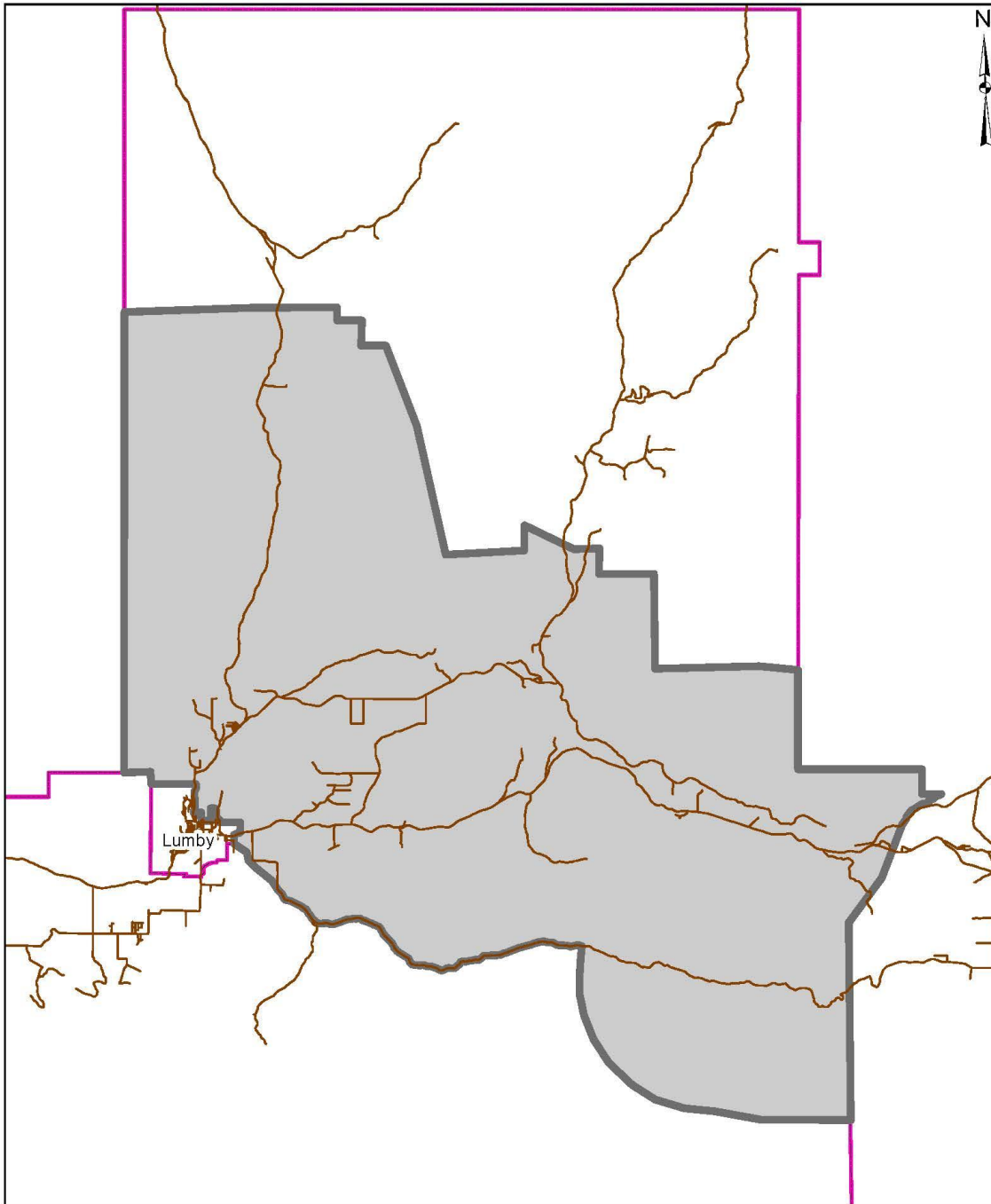
“**Proponent**” means an individual or company that submits, or intends to submit, a proposal in response to this Request for Proposals.

“**Request for Proposals**” or “**RFP**” means the process described in this document

¹ Source: CRTC – November 2011: In Telecom Regulatory Policy 2011-291, the Commission established a universal broadband Internet access target download speed of 5 Mbps, and 1 Mbps upstream. <http://crtc.gc.ca/eng/publications/reports/broadband/bbreport1111.htm>

SCHEDULE “A”

Coverage Area within Electoral Area “D”



Schedule 'A' - Coverage Area

