Request for Proposals
for the
Towns of Winter Harbor and Gouldsboro
Broadband Project

Request for Proposals
Schoodic Peninsula Broadband Project
Schoodic Peninsula Broadband Committee

Issue Date: 9/18/23

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1. Executive Summary

The Schoodic area is a remote and rural region located in Hancock County in Downeast Maine. The Schoodic Peninsula itself is bound by Gouldsboro Bay to the east and Frenchman Bay to the west. A Schoodic section of the Acadia National Park (ANP) consists of over 2000 acres of land with a 7.2-mile shore drive. The largely scenic coastal landscape is made up of dense forest, blueberry barrens, pink granite outcroppings, rocky ledges, great ponds, tidal flows, harbors, coves, fishing villages and small towns.

The Schoodic Peninsula includes the towns of Gouldsboro (population 1680, median age 59) and Winter Harbor (population 474, median age 65). It is a unique destination that includes an "unspoiled" section of ANP, across Frenchman Bay from the main section of the park which sees 4 million annual tourists. The Schoodic region can be accessed by a daily ferry service from Bar Harbor and free bus service around the peninsula from May to October. Although there are several quaint villages, subdivisions, associations and neighbors, a significant geographic distinction for Schoodic is much of its acreage is water with a multitude of islands and thousands of acres in land conservation.

Schoodic's economy is mostly fishing and tourism including 42 fishing vessels served through multiple Lobster Coops and a local fish processing business, 79 local business members of the Schoodic Area Chamber of Commerce, plus those non-member and Non-Profit Organizations not listed as SACC members. Research, Art and Cultural experiences are found at Schoodic Institute, Gouldsboro Shores, Schoodic Arts for All and Gouldsboro and Winter Harbor Historic Societies.

It is uncertain how many remote workers contribute to the economy of our region. But it is evident following COVID-19 isolation, many remote workers migrated to the region to escape congested regions. Schoodic is seeing a construction and real estate purchasing boom; as a more enticing summering place to the more expensive and congested Bar Harbor and other Mount Desert Island area towns.

The Schoodic Peninsula was home of a former Naval Base NAVSECGRUACT Winter Harbor until it closed in 2002. Many Naval veterans have retired to this region. Since that closing 20 years ago, the surrounding communities have collaborated on services and programs that would support economies of scale. The significant decline in year-round population and increase in summering and vacationing migration continues to create a larger gap in "access for all" including affordable housing, food, education, medical services, and utilities. Prospect Harbor, one of the villages of Gouldsboro, remains home to former NAVSOCDET ALFA, now a part of the United States Space Force, supporting satellite telemetry, tracking, and commanding.

Economic sustainability and thriving community for the region may be significantly improved with strong broadband infrastructure. The youth of Schoodic Peninsula attend schools of Regional School Unit No. 24, a geographically large district RSU #24 school district, including the towns of Eastbrook, Franklin, Gouldsboro, Mariaville, Sorrento, Steuben, Sullivan, Waltham, and Winter Harbor. As of October 2022, the Peninsula Elementary School (grades K-5) in Prospect Harbor had 83 enrolled students, primarily from Gouldsboro and Winter Harbor; the two towns combined have approximately 220 students in area schools.

Community needs and expectations for fast, reliable Internet connectivity are quickly outpacing the available cable-based solutions. The Schoodic Peninsula Broadband Committee, hereafter referred to as "the Committee", has identified the need for reliable, affordable, and fast "future-proof" connectivity for our community to improve the daily life of our year-round population, promote the development of new small businesses, retain existing businesses, and attract new businesses from outside the towns and region.

The Committee is issuing this Request for Proposal (RFP) to obtain information, recommendations, and pricing for business models to deploy a fiber-to-the-premise (FTTP) solution that would serve the towns of Winter Harbor and Gouldsboro. The broadband network is expected to be capable of providing 1Gbps symmetrical access throughout the communities with options for 10Gbps access in the future.

The selected bidder will explore all financial/business related costs for a broadband solution to provide the Towns with the information needed to inform the community. The committee is familiar with business/ownership models that provide revenue to the towns to cover any needed loans or other costs and ultimately provide long-term revenue. A notable example of this is the Downeast Broadband Utility (DBU) project in Calais, Maine. The committee is also interested in exploring sources of funding at the private, local, county, state and federal levels to implement a FTTP network.

The Committee has defined the performance standards desired in this request for proposal. The Committee is seeking a partnership that provides exceptional customer service to its residents and is mutually beneficial to the towns and the winning vendor(s). Please Note: While the Committee is open to considering different ownership models for the Towns-wide network, the Committee would prefer a town or utility-owned open-access network with an effective partnership and a profit-sharing agreement that will more than cover the network's operating expense and debt requirements tied to the potential financing requirements. The Committee desires to negotiate a revenue and profit-sharing agreement as part of this process.

Many factors need to be considered in developing a Towns-wide broadband plan, to include ownership models, capital expenses, operational expenses, financial feasibility, end user take rates, variations in end user costs, outside plant facilities, rights of way, central office facilities, electronics, etc. A determination of long-term success will be the utilization of the network as well as applications supported on the network and how those applications and services help to shape Winter Harbor and Gouldsboro's future. All discussion and research to date supports that a robust, high-speed broadband network can positively impact education, economics, healthcare, transportation, and other important aspects of a vibrant 21st century community.

In this RFP, the Committee is soliciting proposals for the design, construction and/or operation of a robust broadband network throughout the Towns, and provision of services over the network that achieve the broadband vision of the community, the community's anticipated usage requirements, and other specified outcomes. The Committee will entertain proposals from individual vendors or vendor teams in response to any or all the components of this solicitation.

The Committee recognizes that there are a variety of viable technical approaches and technology solutions available that could potentially achieve the desired outcomes. Rather than prescribing a network design, the Committee has defined required and desired quality and performance standards including, but not limited to, key network technical characteristics, performance requirements, life expectancy, and ownership structures. All technology solutions proposed must be permissible under the zoning, land use, and other ordinances of the two towns. An end-to-end fiber-optic solution is the strong preference of the Committee.

The Committee is committed to maintaining an objective perspective on the technologies and operational models to be considered for achieving its desired outcomes. All qualified vendors are invited to propose innovative solutions to achieve the desired outcomes and request that all proposals provide the detail necessary for a fair evaluation of alternative proposals and determine whether and how each proposed solution will satisfy the Committee's expected outcomes.

In summary, the Committee's objectives below will guide us in reaching an operating agreement with the selected Operator/ISP:

1. Offer internet access via fiber-to-the-home (premise) network architecture to the households, businesses, and government offices in Winter Harbor and Gouldsboro.
2. Support high-speed, high-quality data, voice, TV, educational, telehealth, and video services at an affordable price.
3. As stated in the Executive Summary, the Committee would prefer a town or utility-owned open-access network with an effective partnership and a profit-sharing agreement that will more than cover the network's operating expense and debt requirements tied to the potential financing requirements. The Committee desires to negotiate a revenue and profit-sharing agreement as part of this process. Additionally, the Committee asks for a list of providers who would be willing to provide service on this open access network.
4. Also, as an estimated 751 of the 1,722 locations in the towns are eligible for funding under the Maine Connectivity Authority guidelines, the Committee is open to proposals that will define phases of work that prioritizes eligible locations that can be undertaken immediately, while identifying areas that could be built at a later date.
5. Be operational in 2024-2026 timeframe.
6. Promote the long term economic, social, and community interests of the towns.
7. Facilitate the development of work-from-home residents and home businesses.
8. Be financially viable; not relying on the towns for any long-term funding, by comfortably servicing all financial obligations, and building adequate reserves to cover reinvestment financing and contingencies.
9. The Maine Connectivity Authority has indicated a strong interest in communities working together to implement fiber-optic Internet connectivity within a region. As such, Winter Harbor and Gouldsboro are willing to collaborate with towns located in and around the area surrounding the Schoodic Peninsula to find consensus to improve broadband in the region.

2. Statement of Purpose

2.1 The Towns are seeking proposals for the design, buildout, and operation of a fiber-based broadband network in the communities of Gouldsboro and Winter Harbor.

2.2 The network will cover approximately 90 road miles in the two towns, providing access to around 1,722 single-family residences and apartment buildings and serve local businesses in the towns. [Please also note there are eligible locations for the FCC's Rural Digital Opportunity Fund (RDOF) in the towns.]

2.3 The desired network design is a full fiber-optic network delivering symmetrical upload/download performance tiers up to 1Gbps initially and the capability to upgrade to 10Gbps service in the future.

2.4 The Committee also seeks responses on the deployment and management of access and transport electronics for the network and will seek the services of a qualified partner to manage the day-to-day operations.

2.5 Mission Broadband, an independent telecommunications consulting firm, has been hired to assist the Committee throughout the RFP process.

2.6 The components requiring responses are detailed in sections 8 through 13 and are as follows:

- 2.6.1 Towns-Wide Broadband Access Network: Outside Plant Design and Implementation – RFP Section 8.
- 2.6.2 Towns-Wide Broadband Access Network: Access and Aggregation Electronics Design and Implementation – RFP Section 9.
- 2.6.3 Internet Connectivity and Transport – RFP Section 10.
- 2.6.4 Central Office or Colocation Facility with Access to Service Providers – Section 11.
- 2.6.5 Service Providers – RFP Section 12.
- 2.6.6 Network Operator: a qualified operator to manage and operate the network – RFP Section 13.

3. Project Correspondence and Questions

3.1 All project correspondence and questions shall be by email to:

RFP Administrator
Mission Broadband
Suite 4
145 Exchange Street
Bangor, ME 04401
Email: Schoodicrfp@missionbroadband.com

4. Timeline and Submission Requirements

4.1 RFP Process Timetable

Milestone	Target Date
RFP Posted	September 18, 2023
All Written Questions Submitted	September 25, 2023
Responses to All Questions Posted	October 2, 2023
Proposals Due by 5:00PM Eastern	October 30, 2023
Town Select Board/Council Meeting / Award Date	TBD

4.2 Proposal Submission Requirements

4.2.1 An electronic copy shall be emailed to the RFP Administrator, Mission Broadband at Schoodicrfp@missionbroadband.com and received by 5:00PM Eastern time on the Proposal Due Date noted in the Timetable above. The subject line of the email must read "Schoodic Broadband Project". Vendors are responsible for confirming the timely receipt of their correspondence by the RFP Administrator.

4.3 Proposal Addendums and Q&A

4.3.1 Vendors should submit any questions, noted errors, discrepancies, ambiguities, exceptions, or deficiencies they have concerning this RFP by emailing such requests, with "Schoodic RFP Inquiry" in the subject line, to RFP Administrator, Mission Broadband at Schoodicrfp@missionbroadband.com.

4.3.2 The Committee will post any addendums to this RFP, as well as any question received and any response thereto, on the Committee's website at www.schoodicbroadband.org.

4.3.3 For clarity of response, the Committee may restate or combine questions received from multiple Vendors.

4.3.4 Vendors shall include all addendums in their responses, and all instructions in Section 5 that apply to the issued RFP also apply to any/all addendums.

5. Instructions to Vendors

5.1 Any and all information provided to Vendors by the Committee is considered to be proprietary information and must be used solely for the purpose of preparing the proposal and is not to be released outside the Vendor organization without written permission from the Towns.

5.2 All proposals submitted shall be valid for six months or until a contract is signed, whichever comes first.

5.3 The Committee understands Vendors do not need to respond to each section of the RFP. A Vendor can team with another vendor and/or respond to some or all of the RFP. No advantage will be assessed for a proposal that addresses all RFP components, and conversely, no disadvantage will be assessed for a proposal which does not address all RFP components.

5.4 All proposals shall provide a straightforward, concise delineation of the Vendor's understanding of and capabilities to satisfy the requirements of this RFP. Vendors must state which sections of the RFP they are responding to. By responding, it is assumed the Vendor complies with all RFP requirements unless specific exceptions are noted in the response. The preference is for Vendors to reference the numbering convention in the RFP when formatting their responses. Formatting exceptions to the above preferences will be allowed knowing Vendor is responsible for providing clarity in their response. Responses that are incomplete or unclear will be disregarded. The Committee reserves the right to seek clarification of each Proposal or to make an award without further discussion of the Proposals received. Therefore, it is important that each Proposal be organized and submitted in a clear and complete manner.

5.5 Professional references are not required in response to this RFP. As the selection process progresses, Vendors will be asked to provide professional references from similar projects, including contact name, mailing address, phone number, email address, and description of the projects.

5.6 The Committee requests an Executive Summary that summarizes the Vendor's approach to a prospective partnership with the Towns for this project. Vendors are asked to provide their understanding of the project along with relevant knowledge and experience.

5.7 By responding, the Vendor states that the Proposal is not made in connection with any competing Vendor submitting a separate response to the RFP and is, in all aspects, fair and without collusion or fraud.

5.8 The preference is for Vendors to use the accompanying file entitled *Schoodic Peninsula Broadband Project RFP Pricing Matrix.xls* that is referenced in Exhibit A.1 for the pricing of their proposed solutions. The tabs on the spreadsheet are named to match the RFP sections requiring responses. Exceptions to the above preference will be allowed knowing Vendor is responsible for providing clarity in their response. Responses that are incomplete or unclear will be disregarded.

5.9 This RFP document is the property of the Towns of Gouldsboro and Winter Harbor and shall not be reproduced or used without permission of the Towns.

5.10 All materials submitted in response to the RFP become the property of the Towns. If there is any concern about confidentiality, mark the appropriate pages of your response "Confidential."

5.11 The Successful Vendor may be required to post a 100% Performance and Payment Bond.

6. Authorized Negotiator

6.1 The Proposal shall be signed by the person authorized to legally bind the proposal.

6.2 The Proposal shall designate the Vendors authorized negotiator, who shall be empowered to make binding commitments.

7. Insurance

7.1 Each Vendor selected by the Towns shall comply with all rules, regulations, ordinances, codes, and laws relating to its work or the conduct thereof and shall secure and pay for any permits and licenses necessary for the execution of its work.

7.2 Each Vendor selected by the Towns shall be responsible for implementing precautions for the safety and security of, and shall provide reasonable protection to prevent damage, injury or loss to Vendors employees, any subcontractor's employees, town personnel, and the general public. Each Vendor shall comply with all applicable safety regulations including Dig Safe, traffic safety laws, OSHA, and regulations of the Towns. Each Vendor shall comply with and give notices required by applicable laws, statutes, ordinances, codes, rules, and regulations, and lawful orders of public authorities bearing on safety of persons or property or their protection from damage, injury, or loss.

7.3 A certificate of insurance (COI) **is not** required as part of the proposal submission. The following will be required of winning vendor(s) with the amounts to be determined with the agreed upon scope of work.

- 7.3.1 General Liability Insurance
  - 7.3.1.1 Premises/Operations
  - 7.3.1.2 Products/Completed Operations
  - 7.3.1.3 Contractual
  - 7.3.1.4 Personal Injury
  - 7.3.1.5 Bodily Injury / Property Damage
- 7.3.2 Automobile Liability
- 7.3.3 Professional Liability Insurance
- 7.3.4 If the above insurance is written on a claim-made form, it shall continue for three years following termination of this agreement. The insurance shall have a retroactive date of placement prior to or coinciding with the effective date of this agreement.

7.4 Workers Compensation and Employers' Liability – per Maine Statute

7.5 The Towns must be named as additionally insured on the COI.

7.6 Each Vendor selected by the Towns further agrees to require its subcontractor(s), if any, to maintain General Liability Insurance, Worker's Compensation and Employer's Liability Insurance, where applicable. The amounts of such coverage shall be as reasonably determined by such Vendor selected by the Towns.

7.7 Proof of policies shall be provided with the proposal.

8. Towns-Wide Broadband Access Network – Outside Plant Design and Implementation

8.1 The Towns are seeking proposals for the design and construction of a Towns-wide fiber-to-the-premise network with sufficient capacity to provide tiered 1Gbps symmetrical Internet service to approximately 1,722 single-family residences and apartment buildings and local businesses in Gouldsboro and Winter Harbor.

8.2 The Towns are not predisposed to a particular optical access technology and will consider all solutions that meet the requirements laid out in this RFP, including hybrid designs that involve wireless components in areas where new fiber construction is not feasible. The design must provide tiered 1Gbps symmetrical access speeds with options for 10Gbps access in the future.

8.3 The Towns desire the network to be constructed with additional capacity beyond the infrastructure required to provide broadband services to subscribers. There are several identified applications for this additional capacity as follows:

- 8.3.1 Connectivity to existing or future municipal locations.
- 8.3.2 New residential and commercial subdivisions.
- 8.3.3 Future smart municipal and municipal IOT applications.
- 8.3.4 The sale of dark fiber and wholesale services.

8.4 Vendors proposing any fiber optic outside plant, design, and implementation must adhere to the requirements below.

- 8.4.1 All fibers will be single mode.
- 8.4.2 The vendor must provide a high-level explanation of the OSP requirements for this project and explain any powered field equipment required to provide the solution proposed.
- 8.4.3 Vendor must provide all required Outside Plant (OSP) materials, Fiber Distribution Panels (FDP) and Racks to accommodate implementation of the physical network and termination of fiber within a Central Office or Head End facility.
- 8.4.4 Fiber cable must be installed per manufacturer's specifications.
- 8.4.5 Fiber drops will be terminated into Network Interface Devices (NIDs) on the outside of residential structures. Electronics may be placed inside or outside depending on Vendor and customer preference.
- 8.4.6 Fiber drops will be a combination of aerial and buried.
- 8.4.7 Where aerial drops exist, Vendors may use aerial solutions. Where existing utilities are underground, drops must be buried.
- 8.4.8 For buried drops, conduit such as microduct is required.
- 8.4.9 Vendor to provide drop length detail.
- 8.4.10 Vendors will need to engineer drops accordingly to structure, (i.e., residential, business, multi-dwelling, condominium, etc.
- 8.4.11 Vendors proposing fiber will install slack loops in sufficient quantity to ensure all current and future service needs can be met. Explain your standard practice and distance for placing slack loops.

8.5 Vendors proposing any wireless technologies or wireless-hybrid technologies for access or aggregation shall adhere to the requirements below:

8.5.1 Vendors should clearly mark the locations and state the mounting method and the necessary provision of power supply and backhaul connection for each Access Point or Fixed-Wireless Access device proposed.

8.5.2 Vendor must provide all required Outside Plant (OSP) materials, Fiber Distribution Panels (FDP) and Racks to accommodate implementation of the physical network and termination of fiber within Central Office or Collocation facilities.

8.5.3 All outdoor equipment will be weatherproof.

8.5.4 Each subscriber must have access to at least 1Gbps of symmetrical bandwidth.

8.5.5 All field electronics must have sufficient battery to run for 8 hours if commercial power is lost.

8.5.6 Access Points will be capable of providing 360-degree coverage as a baseline or option.

8.6 The successful network construction Vendor will be responsible for the preparation of all necessary pole attachment licensing applications for this project.

8.7 All Vendors must provide Gouldsboro and Winter Harbor the industry standards that they will adhere to for installation of all network components such as Fiber Optic Association Standards (FOAS).

8.8 Successful Vendor(s) will secure permits and approvals and finalize construction details with the Towns' support as needed.

8.9 Successful Vendor(s) will be required to deliver engineering maps and as-builts of final network including documents detailing all poles, drops, slack loops, splice and termination points in paper and digital formats as determined by the Towns.

8.10 Optical Time Domain Reflectometer (OTDR) acceptance testing for all fibers shall be completed after fiber installation and industry standard acceptance results will be provided for the Towns to review and approve.

8.11 Vendor pricing may be provided by filling out the pricing matrix entitled *Schoodic Peninsula Broadband Project RFP Pricing Matrix.xls* referenced in Exhibit A.1 or optionally using their own pricing format.

9. Towns-Wide Broadband Access Network – Access and Aggregation Electronics Design and Implementation

9.1 The Towns are requesting design and implementation of the hardware and electronics necessary to provide 1Gbps symmetrical Internet access to approximately 1,722 single-family residences and apartment buildings and local businesses in Gouldsboro and Winter

Harbor. The design must provide tiered symmetrical access speeds up to 1Gbps with options for 10Gbps access in the future.

9.2 The core network must provide scalability and flexibility to adapt to changing bandwidth and application needs over time. The desired characteristics of the network are as follows:

9.2.1 The network must scale to meet short-term and long-term traffic demands. It is expected that the enablement of high-speed broadband throughout the Towns will result in an increase in bandwidth intensive applications such as telecommuting, telehealth, Artificial Intelligence (AI), gaming, streaming video, video conferencing, and distance learning. IoT applications will be important as well. The network must have sufficient capacity and scalability to meet increasing consumption habits.

9.2.2 Vendors must ensure that high availability, redundancy, and hot swappable common components (i.e., control cards/processors, power supplies, etc.) are built into the core electronic components.

9.2.3 The network must be flexible enough to provide different types and classes of services to meet different customer and Service Provider requirements.

9.2.4 The Towns desire that the network is open access. The core and access platform solutions must be capable of logically segmenting traffic to/from different Service Providers via separate VLANs, VPNs or some other mechanism.

(Note: If the Vendor does not want to participate in an open access network, please describe reasoning and desire for a closed network.)

9.2.5 Vendors proposing solutions based on Gigabit Passive Optical Network (GPON) technology must explain any backplane or uplink bandwidth constraints as take rates increase and individual PON ports become oversubscribed.

9.2.6 Vendors proposing solutions involving wireless technologies must explain the frequencies, channels, and licensed or unlicensed spectrum proposed.

9.2.7 Fiber-to-the-premise solutions must be capable of supporting access utilizing a single strand of fiber except where dual strands are required for a specific application or customer.

9.2.8 Support for IEEE 802.3ad/802.1AX link aggregation on all uplink ports.

9.2.9 Support for IEEE 802.1Q VLANs throughout entire network.

9.2.10 Support for IEEE 802.1p QoS (minimum four traffic classes) throughout entire network.

9.2.11 SNMP management capabilities throughout entire network.

9.3 Network Termination Equipment (NTE) on customer premise.

9.3.1 NTE is defined as the electronic devices that are installed at the customer premise, either inside or outside of the structure.

9.3.2 NTE shall include options for 1G and 10G services.

9.3.3 NTE shall include single port and multi-port model options for different types of uses (i.e., single unit, multi-unit).

9.3.4 Vendors will need to engineer NTE according to the type of structure, (i.e., single unit, multi-unit, hotel, etc.).

9.3.5 It is required that Vendors provide NTE options capable of supporting Wi-Fi for customer use inside the premise.

9.3.6 Vendors should explain compelling advantages and features of their solution beyond the baseline listed above.

9.4 Vendor pricing may be provided by filling out the pricing matrix entitled *Schoodic Peninsula Broadband Project RFP Pricing Matrix.xls* referenced in Exhibit A.1 or by optionally using their own pricing format.

10. Internet Connectivity and Transport

10.1 For Vendors proposing new construction of broadband facilities, it is assumed that the core electronics used for direct connectivity to the internet will be housed in the Central Office that will be constructed; however, the Towns are open to other solutions.

10.2 For Vendors proposing to expand existing broadband facilities within the Towns, please explain the architecture that will support the expanded services that will be provided within the Towns.

10.3 Explain your solution for transporting bandwidth to and from the Towns' network.

10.3.1 Please explain the physical route of the fiber connection that will provide Internet service to the Towns.

10.3.2 The initial solution must support multiple 10Gbps circuits upstream and downstream facing the core aggregation equipment. It is required that the architecture connecting the Towns network to the Internet be redundant with physically diverse upstream routes. Please explain your approach to providing diverse upstream connections to the Towns network.

10.3.3 Explain the capabilities the system has to handle speeds and interfaces beyond those required for the initial project launch.

10.3.4 Explain any redundancy or failover capabilities of the system.

10.3.5 Explain the capabilities of the proposed network and the upstream arrangements to the internet and any peering agreements you may have.

10.4 Vendor pricing may be provided by filling out the pricing matrix entitled *Schoodic Peninsula Broadband Project RFP Pricing Matrix.xls* referenced in Exhibit A.1 or by optionally using their own pricing format.

11. Central Office or Colocation Facility with Access to Service Providers

11.1 The Towns require rack space in a Central Office or Colocation Facility within the municipal boundaries of the Towns. This space will be used for all the head end and access electronics required to operate the network. This location and equipment will be used to provide transport of bandwidth to and from the Internet and access to Service Providers who will provide services in the community. The Central Office or Colocation facility shall have the following characteristics:

11.1.1 The facility shall run in a High Availability (HA) configuration, with fully redundant power and cooling.

11.1.2 The facility shall include uninterruptible power source (UPS) batteries, and backup power generation for survival through sustained commercial power outages.

11.1.3 The facility shall have strong physical security, with limited/controlled access.

11.1.4 The facility shall have environmental controls for humidity and temperature, and fire suppression systems.

11.1.5 Equipment shall be mounted securely in racks and cabinets, in compliance with national, state, and local codes. All equipment shall be connected with uninterrupted cutover to battery and generator.

11.2 Vendor pricing may be provided by filling out the pricing matrix entitled *Schoodic Peninsula Broadband Project RFP Pricing Matrix.xls* referenced in Exhibit A.1 or by optionally using their own pricing format.

12. Service Providers

12.1 The Towns are requesting Service Providers to provide services to subscribers in the communities. The Towns seek vendors who will provide a superior customer experience for the communities' population and needs.

12.2 Service Provider must have a strong track record of providing outstanding customer service and support and any vendor chosen by the Towns shall provide the following items to demonstrate this track record. (Note: as the selection process progresses, Vendors may be asked to provide the following information, but this information is not required with the initial proposal):

12.2.1 Three municipal customer references.

12.2.2 Summary of organizational programs or initiatives aimed at improving the customer experience.

12.2.3 Annual Key Performance Indicator (KPI) goals and achievements for Customer Service and Technical Support for the past three years.

12.3 The Towns are requesting Service Providers to provide the following services:

12.3.1 Internet Bandwidth. Vendor pricing may be provided by filling out the pricing matrix entitled *Schoodic Peninsula Broadband Project RFP Pricing Matrix.xls* referenced in Exhibit A.1 or by optionally using their own pricing format.

12.4 The Towns plans to negotiate final Service Level Agreement (SLA) requirements with the winning Vendor(s). Please explain your approach to SLA guarantees for residential, commercial, and municipal subscribers 24x7x365.

12.5 Service Provider Vendors must perform the following functions:

12.5.1 Sales and marketing activity to sell services to subscribers.

12.5.2 Billing, collection, and payment of all monthly recurring charges to include Federal and State taxes, surcharges, and assessments.

12.5.3 Standard Customer Service functions.

12.5.4 Technical Support Level I / II / III: Vendor must have a Network Operations Center (NOC) or Technical Support call center to take calls from subscribers with service and repair issues.

12.6 Vendor pricing may be provided by filling out the pricing matrix entitled *Schoodic Peninsula Broadband Project RFP Pricing Matrix.xls* referenced in Exhibit A.1 or by optionally using their own pricing format.

13. Network Operator

13.1 The Towns are seeking proposals from qualified operators for the operation, management, and maintenance of the broadband network that will be constructed in the Towns. The network is intended to be an open access network allowing Service Providers who wish to provide services over the network to do so provided they meet the Towns requirements, including performance and customer service standards. The operator must have experience working with and managing relationships with multiple Service Providers. The Towns desire subscribers to have an excellent customer service experience. (Note: If the Vendor does not want to participate in an open access network, please describe reasoning and the desire for a closed solely run/operated network.)

13.2 The Towns recognize that Vendors may be unable to respond solely to this section of the RFP due to the unknown architecture of the final network. The Towns understand that qualified Vendors who wish to respond solely to this section will be required to partner with other Vendors for the network architecture to be defined. In the event that the Towns do not receive the desired responses for this section, it is possible solicitation of these services may occur through a future RFP process.

13.3 The primary functions that will need to be performed are listed below. It is assumed that the winning vendor will have existing Operation Support Systems/Business Support Systems in place and strong experience turning up, onboarding, and managing greenfield networks.

13.3.1 Operator will work with Service Providers to perform the following activities related to service delivery and trouble resolution:

13.3.1.1 Network to Network Interface (NNI) Design and Activation.

13.3.1.2 Coordination and scheduling of all activities related to a service installation with internal and external parties including splicing, trenching, traffic control, etc.

13.3.1.3 Provision of access and core network components to facilitate turn up of new subscriber services.

13.3.1.4 Coordination and scheduling of test and turnup/service activation.

13.3.1.5 Providing detailed installation information to customer and Service Provider.

13.3.1.6 End user service requests for all adds, moves, and changes, as well as disconnects (MACD).

13.3.1.7 End user service requests concerning all trouble resolution.

13.3.1.8 Communication with all affected parties during outage events.

13.3.2 Platform Engineering Support: The operator must have core and access equipment expertise.

13.3.3 Network Engineering – Physical Layer: Operator must have expertise in outside plant and systems capable of maintaining accurate plant data for all physical components of the network. Please provide an overview of the system that will be used to house the Towns' inside and outside plant data.

13.3.4 Network Engineering – L2/L3: Operator must have Network Engineering expertise and experience dealing with complex layer 2 and layer 3 issues.

13.3.5 Inventory: Operator must maintain sufficient inventory to perform new activations within 14 business days of initial order by customer.

13.3.6 Response Times: Operator must maintain all tools, testing equipment, and critical spares in a manner that allows both installation and trouble response time commitments to be adhered to.

13.3.7 Please explain your network change control processes.

13.3.8 The operator must have a process for performing maintenance on the network and a maintenance notification process for informing all relevant parties. Please explain.

13.4 Specific Operator Requirements

13.4.1 The Towns require ongoing configuration, management, and maintenance of the physical network as well as the electronics

supporting the network access platform. Please explain any functions listed above/below that would be outsourced.

13.4.2 Operator must have a strong track record of providing outstanding customer service and support and the winning Vendor shall provide the following items to demonstrate this track record: (Note: as the selection process progresses, Vendors may be asked to provide the following information, but this is not required for the initial responses.)

13.4.3 Summary of organizational programs or initiatives aimed at improving the customer experience.

13.4.4 Annual Key Performance Indicator (KPI) goals and achievements for Customer Service and Technical Support for the past three years.

13.4.5 Physical Plant - The Towns require a contractor to provide ongoing maintenance of any physical plant (aerial and underground) including backbone segments, laterals, drops, field cabinets, Access Points, Fixed Wireless Devices and all other associated OSP hardware in the network. It is the Towns' desire that the network be repaired quickly. A Service Level Agreement (SLA) will be negotiated with the Successful Vendor upon selection.

13.4.6 Electronics - The Towns require a contractor to provide ongoing operation and maintenance of the broadband network including all access and aggregation electronics.

13.4.6.1 Operate, manage and monitor the network on a 24x7x365 basis.

13.4.6.2 Vendor will make all network monitoring data and statistics available to the Towns either through reporting or portal access.

13.4.7 Vendor will facilitate the open access network. (Note: If the Vendor does not want to participate in an open access network, please describe reasoning and desire for a closed network)

13.4.8 Vendor must have trouble escalation procedures in place.

13.4.9 Security Incidents: Vendor shall list any programs and procedures in place specifically for monitoring and resolving security incidents.

13.5 Vendor pricing may be provided by filling out the pricing matrix entitled *Schoodic Peninsula Broadband Project RFP Pricing Matrix.xls* referenced in Exhibit A.1 or optionally using their own pricing format.

14. Evaluation and Selection Criteria

14.1 The Towns seeks a Towns-wide robust, scalable, and future-proved broadband network. There are several components requiring proposals in this RFP and the Towns will select the most appropriate vendor for each component. Each Vendor is encouraged to provide detailed responses to demonstrate its experience and expertise in providing services as requested in this RFP. The selection will be based on all factors listed for each component

and may not go to the lowest price proposal if price is outweighed by a combination of other features and factors in the successful Vendor's proposal.

14.2 The Towns reserve the right to select proposals that in its sole judgment most nearly conform to the specifications set forth herein, best serve the needs of the Winter Harbor and Gouldsboro and provide the most cost-effective means of producing those results.

14.3 The Towns are not obligated to accept or select any proposal received in response to this RFP. In particular, the Towns may select proposals in whole or in part, or it may disqualify any and all proposals received.

14.4 The Towns will use selection criteria including the following for each section of the RFP: Vendor Viability, Technical Merit, Implementation Timeline and Cost. The selection decisions made by the Towns under this RFP are final.

14.4.1 In evaluating Vendor Viability, the Towns will score vendors based on the following criteria:

14.4.1.1 The Vendor's previous experience with complex projects of a similar size, scope, and characteristics and/or their experience with the element(s) of the project for which they are providing proposal(s).

14.4.1.2 Documentation from the Vendor that demonstrates the Vendor's experience with similar projects (or element thereof) of the same size and scope.

14.4.1.3 Any other information that bears on the Vendor's suitability for this project.

14.4.2 Technical Merit of Proposal scores will be assigned based on how well the proposed solution meets the currently understood and projected needs of the Towns. This may include, among other things, service performance characteristics (SLA terms), technology description, continuity of network platform, diversity and redundancy in the Service Provider's network, diversity from existing services, transport technology, reliability, technical support capabilities, scalability, expandability, future network capabilities, and the appropriateness of the design proposal for the Towns and how well it meets the stated priorities of the network.

14.4.3 In evaluating the Implementation timeline, the Towns will consider, among other things, the projected starting date, the overall time to install, the disruption of existing services, the complexity of the installation and the projected completion date as well as the reasons for these projections. If appropriate, a starting date relative to completion of a prior milestone may be used.

14.4.4 Costs may include, among other things, monthly recurring costs, non-recurring costs, fees, the termination liability associated with existing contractual obligations, and any additional costs that the Towns may potentially realize based on any given Vendor

selection. All costs that can reasonably be anticipated over the desired 20-year lifecycle should be addressed. Note: The Towns of Gouldsboro and Winter Harbor are tax exempt.

15. Rejection/Negotiation Rights

15.1 The Towns reserve the right to reject any and all proposals, to waive any informalities or defects in proposals or to accept a higher cost proposal if it is deemed to be in the best interest of the region.

15.2 The Towns reserve the right to accept or negotiate the contractual terms of any proposal(s) in response to this RFP.

15.3 The Towns reserve the right to select multiple Service Providers.

15.4 The Towns reserve the right to select multiple equipment providers.

15.5 Each proposer shall make their proposal from their own examinations and estimates and shall not hold the Towns, their agents, partners or employees responsible for any information received from them.

Exhibit A: List and Description of Associated RFP Documents

A.1: Schoodic Peninsula Broadband Project RFP Pricing Matrix.xls

This file is an Excel spreadsheet to be used by Vendors in pricing out their solutions. There is a corresponding tab for each section of the RFP with instructions for pricing out the proposed solution. The use of this Pricing Matrix is preferred but not mandatory.