

Does the Vermont Public Service Department (VTDPS) envision that the Vermont 10-Year Telecommunications Plan dated June 2021 and the survey results contemplated therein will serve as a starting point to the development of the 10-Year plan to be developed under this RFP? Or, rather, does the VTDPS prefer that previous data sets, survey methods, procedures and results be entirely supplanted?

The Department envisions that the 2021 plan will inform the development of the 2024 plan. To the extent that any datasets used in the development of the 2021 plan remain current and relevant the Contractor may employ them. However, it is the Department expectation that the Contractor will use the most up to date and current datasets available in the development of the 2024 plan.

The most recent broadband deployment information is posted on the PSD website. It is expected that this information will be used by the Contractor in the development of the plan.

<https://publicservice.vermont.gov/telecommunications-and-connectivity/interactive-broadband-map>

Has the VTDPS identified specific portions of the Vermont 10-Year Telecommunications Plan dated June 2021 that were/are inadequate and should be replaced/excluded from the next Vermont 10-Year Telecommunications Plan to be developed under this RFP?

No, the department has not identified inadequate portions but since the past 10-year plan was written additional statute have been passed related to broadband access which impacts the 10-year telecom plan.

Act 71 (H.360) from the 2021-2022 session was enacted since the 2021 Telecom Plan was adopted and this included several significant changes to state telecom planning statutes.

By what dates must the Public Comments Draft Plan, and the Final Draft Plan referenced in Section (2) of the RFP be completed?

The Plan must be adopted on or before June 30, 2024. Before adoption, the Contractor must prepare the Public Comments Draft Plan, and the Final Draft Plan.

Historically the Public Comments draft plan was completed 6 months prior to the adoption date. Details concerning the Public Comments Draft can be found here.

<https://legislature.vermont.gov/statutes/section/30/005/00202d>

The Final Draft Plan has historically been completed 3 months prior to the adoption date. Details on the final draft plan can be found here.

<https://legislature.vermont.gov/statutes/section/30/005/00202d>

Please provide the total budget, expenses and costs related to all aspects of the development of the Vermont 10-Year Telecommunications Plan dated June 2021.

The total budget is not to exceed 400K for all portions of this project.

Has the VTDPS established a “Not to Exceed” budget for this RFP? If so, what is that Not to Exceed budget?

The total budget is not to exceed 400K for all portions of this project.

Section 3.2 of the RFP references “one or more surveys.” Is it true that the surveys are not considered part of the project and work effort sought under this RFP, and that expenses related to surveys will be incurred under a separate budget and that those surveys are to be conducted by contractor not selected under this RFP?

The RFP specifies “One or more surveys of Vermont residents and businesses, conducted in cooperation with the Agency of Commerce and Community Development”. This work is expected to be performed by the winning vendor. The department will facilitate the cooperation with ACCD.

To ensure proper evaluation of bids, the Contractor should relate whether or not the surveys that it will conduct will be statistically valid.

When will the surveys contemplated under Section 3.2 be conducted and when will the results be available to the contractor selected under this RFP?

The RFP specifies “One or more surveys of Vermont residents and businesses, conducted in cooperation with the Agency of Commerce and Community Development”. This work is expected to be performed by the winning vendor. The department will facilitate the cooperation with ACCD.

Does the VTDPS plan to coordinate activities between the selected contractor and the contractor performing surveys under Section 3.2? Will the survey contractor be directed to coordinate with the contractor selected under this RFP?

The RFP specifies “One or more surveys of Vermont residents and businesses, conducted in cooperation with the Agency of Commerce and Community Development”. This work is expected to be performed by the winning vendor. The department will facilitate the cooperation with ACCD.

Please confirm that the VTDPs will coordinate activities between selected contractor and other agencies referenced in the RFP (e.g., Secretary of Education, Secretary of Human Services, Commissioner of Labor, etc.)

The department will facilitate the cooperation with other agencies.

Does the VTDPs expect to select a single bidder or multiple bidders for this project?

The department expects to award a single contract for this project.

(Section 3.1) - Will the Department make available forecasts for Economic and Demographic data or does the vendor need to compile that?

The vendor will be responsible for the compilation of this data.

Section 3.2) - Would the Department consider allowing the selected vendor to complete the survey task (instead of seeking a separate vendor) If so, what form is expected (online/e-mail/mailling/...)?

The RFP specifies “One or more surveys of Vermont residents and businesses, conducted in cooperation with the Agency of Commerce and Community Development”. This work is expected to be performed by the winning vendor. The department will facilitate the cooperation with ACCD.

(Section 3.3/3.4/3.5) - Will the Department provide information regarding current telecommunication infrastructure or does the vendor need to compile that?

The vendor will be responsible for the compilation of this data. The department will provide published, publicly available broadband deployment information.

(Section 3.9 (b) 10) - Can you confirm the requirement is to have 100 Mbps symmetric service to every location by end of 2024?

30 VSA 202c states that it is the purpose of the Telecom Plan to support measures designed to ensure that by the end of the year 2024 every E-911 business and residential location in Vermont has infrastructure capable of delivering Internet access with service that has a minimum download speed of 100 Mbps and is symmetrical.

30 VSA 7515b states that it is the purpose of the Connectivity Initiative is to provide each service location in Vermont access to broadband that is capable of speeds of at least 100 Mbps symmetrical.

(Section 4.1.3 – Retainage) What is the Retainage percentage anticipated for the contract?

There is no specific retainage schedule for this contract.

Will the awarded vendor(s) be precluded from bidding on potential future work resulting from this project?

No

What are the Department's requirements and expectations for the vendor resources to be onsite in Vermont during the project?

There are no on-site expectations for the writing of the report.

What is the Department's budget for the vendor work associated with this RFP?

The total budget is not to exceed 400K for all portions of this project.

Should the tasks for developing the Plan be addressed in the same order as they are listed in the RFP, or can they be organized in a manner that best suits the strategic planning process for the project?

The department is open to all responses which meet the requirements of the RFP and welcome responses with a full strategic plan to achieve the goals spelled out in the RFP.

Regarding the method of award, will the State utilize a scoring system to evaluate proposals? If so, could you provide more information on the scoring mechanism?

Awards will be made in the best interest of the State. Consideration shall be given to the Bidder's project approach and methodology, qualifications and experience, ability to provide the services within the defined timeline, cost, and/or success in completing similar projects,