



August 5, 2021

Re: Responses to Questions Submitted on CVFiber's Request for Proposals FTTP Developer and Operator

Q1. Is CVFiber looking for a single source provider for design, engineering, construction, operation and maintenance or will you consider individual companies bid specific parts of the RFP?

A1. CVFiber seeks proposals from a firm or jointly from a group of firms to be our operator, construction manager, internet service provider (ISP) and business manager of our fiber-to-the- premises (FTTP) network

Q2. Is it the intent to simply sub contract the design, build, operations and maintenance or are you looking to partner and or share costs/revenue with the selected vendor?

A2. We are looking for a partner who is our contracted developer/operator/manager. We are interested in paying the costs for such services that we will incorporate into our subscriber costs. We are not looking for a partner with whom to share costs/revenues.

Q3. If partnership, what would the deal structure look like?

A3. See above.

Q4. In the event WEC does not secure the funding for the middle mile what is the contingency plan?

A4. We will finance with Grant Funds to complete as much as possible. After 3 years of operation we would be in a position to issue Revenue Bonds to secure the necessary funds for the completion of the network.

Q5. Is CVFiber coordinating with NEK, DVFiber or others to connect these networks via an overall middle mile, dark fiber network/provider to reduce backhaul cost for all?

A5. Yes. We are looking for guidance from the new Vermont Community Broadband Board.

Q6. Has the State of Vermont updated its list of served vs. underserved that is on its website recently?

There was a great disparity between the number of unserved/underserved address points other CUDs counted as underserved vs compared to the broadband data the State was showing.

A6. At this point the States broadband speed by location is still the official data. They now include sites that have been served by projects from CARES funding.

Q7. Does CVFiber plan to provide the address point data for the addresses they want served or should we rely on the data the State has?

A7. We will provide you with the data. We have built a robust ArcGIS Pro project that contains all the relevant data we want the operator/manager to continue to use.

Q8. Is there a plan to address the high cost of installing drops to residences that are more than 1000 ft from the serving road?

A8. The usual default is to charge the subscriber actual labor and materials cost. However, we will apply grant funds if available for that purpose, and where possible will work with programs like Equal Access to Broadband to reduce the cost to a qualified subscriber.

Q9. The RFP specifies proposed miles needed. Was that calculated via GIS road centerline or was a high level design done showing the actual cable routes/paths?

A9. The mileage specified in WEC Area is distribution line mileage. For the non-WEC area it is based on the VTrans official road mileage for town roads.

Q10. Is this primarily just to serve the underserved residences or will underserved businesses need to be served as well?

A10. The underserved, residents and businesses, are our first priority, however we intend to serve everyone passed regardless of the status.

Q11. Has CVFiber determined the percentage of spare fibers that need to be planned for in the fiber cable plant for future use?

A11. Not yet, however our high-level design specifications call for a design anticipating future uses

Q12. Does CVFiber have any GIS files showing address points, poles, proposed routes/miles etc than can share for respondents to perform a high level design to more accurately estimate build costs?

A12. Yes. All of the above.

Q13. RFP states... The District's high-level design is expected to be completed in the fall of 2021. A detailed engineering and construction plan for Area A's 300 miles is expected to be completed in October 2021..... Basically the same dates. The high level design can be done in weeks via GIS and fiber design tools and really should be done by vendors responding to provide actual aerial vs underground miles to be built, poles needed, etc. No problem meeting the fall of 2021. It takes months to convert the high level into construction drawings due to the field verification. Can you explain how both are due same time and if not what is a more accurate date for completion of detailed construction drawings?

A13. Sorry for the error. We expect the detailed design to be completed by early December.

Q14. Has CV Fiber engaged the pole owners? If so, are they willing to expedite the attachment applications, make ready work, etc?

A14. Yes. WEC and GMP have indicated a willingness to expedite attachment applications and make ready work. Pole inventories are currently underway. Shortly we will be soliciting contractors to do the necessary make-ready work as WEC or GMP may not have sufficient capacity to meet our build schedule.

Q15. Should vendors estimate make ready costs or will they be paid by CVFiber directly and need not be in the proposal?

A15. CVFiber will pay for all make-ready costs.

Q16. Will CVFiber be obtaining any municipal permits or ROW agreements required? Has CVFiber contacted the municipalities to determine costs of said permits and or timelines to process them?

A. No. WEC has all the necessary ROW agreements. Each municipality is aware of the project as they all belong to CVFiber . We will be determining these needs in the next month. For GMP poles we believe that they are all on municipal ROW.

Q17. Do all the locations listed in Appendix D as potential hub locations have environmental controls and back up power sources? If not, can you identify the ones that do as they would be more suited for tech space?

A17. Not yet identified. But that is the plan.

Q18. Is there room at those sites for the vendor to utilize to install equipment? If so, is the 24 hour access to the potential sites?

A18. We have asked the towns for use of these sites. WEC has already agreed to allow a pad and structure to be built outside their Substation fence.

Q19. Will CVFiber secure said planned hub space in the buildings or must the vendor coordinate the use of or lease of said space?

A19. We will secure the initial five town hub locations. Our Developer/Operator/Manager will be responsible for the future build sites.

Q20. Should applicants with only one respondent complete Section 5.2, "Previous Experience of Team Relationship," in the RFP Response form?

A20. No.

Q21. Do proposals have to follow the routes that the RFP indicates that CVFiber has identified if we believe those routes are not the most efficient based on our existing plant?

A21. Yes.

Q22. What latitude would the operator have in pricing/charging the customer to complete non-standard installation, i.e., would these be subject to CUD approval?

A22. Customers would be billed for such installation by CVFiber, so non-standard installation charges would be set by and subject to CVFiber approval.

Q23. Can you describe in further detail CVFiber's role in "collaboration and coordination to develop and execute marketing and sales campaigns and ...pricing," (p.11)?

A23. As in the previous question, these are CVFiber customers, so marketing and sales would be branded with the CVFiber logo, name, etc. We hope that our operator will be able to assist us and implement such outreach. CVFiber will set subscription rates.

Q24. Could you elaborate on the requirements for "diverse" backhaul in the Technical Standards, specifically items 11 and 13 on page 34 of the RFQ. Could you provide examples of what would and would not meet these standards?

A24. Operator may have to find more than one backhaul provider to provide redundancy and failover in the event that one upstream provider fails.

Q25. Please define premises. Is CVFiber using the state's E911 data or has CVFiber studied the area and has independently created this list of premises?

A26. We use the state's E911 data primarily, but have selected the premises in each phase deliberately.

Q26. Is leasing all of the fiber from WEC that is or will be built using RUS funding a requirement? Has WEC constructed any fiber that is anticipated to be used in the CVFiber network? Does CVFiber intend for the winning Operator to build dedicated, new fiber on new strand even if a bidder has existing, assignable fiber in the CVFiber area?

A26. If there is existing, assignable fiber with sufficient capacity to serve CVFiber subscribers at affordable rates, we would consider acquiring it, or leasing it under an irrevocable right of use. The selected operator will be expected to work in conjunction with WEC's fiber build schedule, to be determined.

Q27. Is it understood and acceptable, based on a fiber construction, that could originate at a central technology connection point in a town center, that there could be some locations that are not considered underserved or unserved that will qualify for FTTP services before all 6,811 underserved and unserved locations are served by FTTP?

A27. We are committed to primarily serving underserved premises first, but we recognize that there will be some exceptions. The grant funding we currently have and expect to receive over the next several years requires us to bring service to underserved/unserved premises. It is acceptable if there is an incidental

amount of overbuilding. Per Vermont's Act 71: "any overbuild is incidental to the overall objectives of the universal service plan required for funding." In those cases service may be offered to those locations up to 400' from the existing distribution system. See Page 39 of the RFP.

Q28. Would CVFiber consider assisting with private property access and easements if necessary?

A28. Yes. Some of this can be done in conjunction with WEC's existing rights of way.

Q29. Does area A include any fiber that is planned to be built by WEC?

A29. The selected operator will be expected to work in conjunction with WEC's fiber build schedule, to be determined.

Q30. Will CVFiber consider design changes and if so, what will the process be to communicate these types of design modifications?

A30. In general, no. The service areas and phases were chosen deliberately. Because CVFiber is a municipality and decisions are made democratically, large-scale design changes would need to be approved by (at least) our Planning and Development Committee, Executive Committee, and possibly by the entire Governing Board.

Q31. What is WEC's dark fiber construction schedule?

A31. The selected operator will be expected to work in conjunction with WEC's fiber build schedule, to be determined.

Q32. Just to confirm, Operator shall complete customer premises installations based on customer service orders only, not to locations that have not submitted an order for service?

A32. Correct. We expect the fiber infrastructure to have sufficient capacity to serve virtually all premises passed, but we recognize that not every eventual subscriber will sign up immediately.

Q33. Can you explain in detail what WEC's AMI and outage needs entail and what type and historically how frequently this work would need to be coordinated?

A33. The selected operator will be expected to work in conjunction with WEC to determine needs.

Q34. If the Operator has existing Hub locations in the CVFiber service territory that meet the requirements for OLT, power supply, battery backup, generator, etc., can those existing locations be utilized?

A34. Possibly. We would need to know more details about those locations and the terms and conditions for their use.

Q35. Is there a repair interval requirement such as 24 or 48 hours?

A35. Yes, to be defined. We will entertain recommendations based on operator experiences, but like any municipality we need to be very responsive to our member needs

Q36. On page 12 under "Administrative Support" operators are required to "advise CVFiber's Governing Board on major subcontracting choices." Does this mean we would need the board's approval on these choices?

A36. Yes. We need to ensure the qualifications of the subcontractors and have some expectations about subcontracting that will be laid out in the contract that primarily involve conflicts of interest and being good stewards of public resources.

Q37. On page 12 under "Administrative Support" the operator is required to "Request Governing Board approval of all financial choices that may affect costs, revenues, and payments." Would this include selection of sub-contractors?

A37. Yes. See A36.

Q38. On page 36 under “Voice Services,” who is responsible for paying for the battery backup costs?

A38. We have not addressed this at this time. We will consider customary practices and take recommendations.

Q39. On page 39, item 1a: we interpret this item to mean that during construction in the “vicinity” a customer can place an order for service and we would have to complete installation within 10 business days. How does CVFiber define “vicinity” and how far does that extend?

A39. Yes to be defined. We will entertain recommendations based on operator experiences.

Q40. On page 39, item 1b, states “If the network has been constructed in the vicinity of the customer but a connection to the customer’s premises does not yet exist, a standard installation shall be completed as rapidly as possible, but not later than five (5) business days.” How does CVFiber define when construction is complete? In other words, what criteria would be used to determine when a scenario falls under item 1a and when a scenario falls under 1b?

A40. We will entertain recommendations based on operator experiences.

RFP Clarification/Additional Information

We anticipate all pole inventory work will be completed by January or February 2022.

We will be issuing an RFP for Make-Ready Contractors in the next month.