



Request for Proposals for Eastern Slopes Regional Broadband (ESRB) Project

Request for Proposals
Issue Date: 11/10/22

Eastern Slopes Regional Broadband Committee
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1. Introduction

The Eastern Slopes Regional Broadband (hereafter ESRB) is a coalition serving the towns of MSAD#72 in Maine, which includes Brownfield, Denmark, Fryeburg, Lovell, Stoneham, Stow, and Sweden. Chatham, NH is also part of MSAD #72 but is not participating in this initiative. ESRB was formed following an initial investigation into the challenges of upgrading broadband services by the town of Denmark. Research showed that providers would have better ability to offer efficient proposals for building infrastructure and providing services for a larger population and geographic area. The school district, with its existing connections and affinities between the municipalities, provides an easily defined territory that affords both proximity and common interests. ESRB has a committee made up of volunteers and municipal leaders from the member towns. Subcommittee work in communications, grant writing, community engagement, and other tasks is moving forward with representation from each town.

The ESRB Committee is soliciting proposals for the design and implementation of the hardware and electronics necessary to provide a robust and reliable broadband solution for the region as well as the ongoing management and maintenance of the entire network. The long-term goal of the project is to enable access to Fiber-to-the-Premise (FTTP) services for every household in the region. However, the financing and economics of the project may dictate a hybrid or phased approach to providing the desired coverage. As such, this hybrid approach may require other technologies such as fixed wireless to be part of the solution; at least on an interim basis.

Mission Broadband is an independent telecommunications consulting firm retained by the ESRB Committee to manage the RFP process for the regional broadband project. Mission Broadband will collaborate with the ESRB participating vendors throughout the RFP process and will provide consultative support, as necessary.

2. RFP Process Timetable and Proposal Submission Requirements

Milestone	Target Date
RFP Posted	November 10, 2022
All Vendor Questions Submitted	November 18, 2022
Response to All Questions Posted	November 29, 2022
Proposals Due by 4:00PM PM Eastern	December 12, 2022
Award Date	TBD **

** The goal is to make an award in January of 2023, however, there are many factors that could affect or delay the timeline of this decision including delays due to the holidays and the logistics of scheduling any required town meetings.

2.1 Proposal Submission Requirements

An electronic copy shall be emailed to the RFP Administrator, Mission Broadband at rfp@missionbroadband.com and received by 4:00 PM Eastern time on the Proposal Due Date noted in the Timetable above. Vendors intending to submit a response must register by submitting an email with said intention to the following address: rfp@missionbroadband.com with the following subject line: “ESRB Broadband RFP Registration” prior to submission of a proposal.

2.2 Proposal Addendums and Q&A

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

2.2.2 The RFP, Pricing Matrix and all addendums and any questions received and any response thereto, will be posted on the ESRB web site at <https://esrbroadband.org/rfp/>. The link to all mapping files will be provided to vendors who submit an intent to bid.

2.2.3 Vendors shall include all addenda in their responses, and all instructions in Section 6 that apply to the issued RFP also apply to any/all addendums.

2.3 Late Proposals

Any Proposal, portion of a Proposal, or unrequested Proposal revision received after the time and date specified will be returned to the Proposer unopened.

2.4 Withdrawal of Proposals

No Proposer may withdraw their Proposal for a period of ninety (90) days from the date of opening. All Proposals shall be subject to acceptance by ESRB during this period.

To withdraw a Proposal prior to the opening, the Proposer shall request the withdrawal in writing. All costs associated with the withdrawal (i.e., mailing fees) will be borne by the Proposer.

2.5 Rejection

ESRB reserves 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 or a particular town. ESRB also reserves the right to negotiate with the successful Proposer.

2.6 Information for Proposers

All Federal and State taxes must be excluded from the Proposals. A tax exemption certificate for the ESRB and/or individual town ESRB shall be furnished to the successful Proposer upon request.

Before submitting a proposal, all prospective Proposers are encouraged to carefully examine the specifications, research the area, and fully inform themselves as to the existing conditions and limitations under which the work will be performed. Failure of the above will not release a Successful Proposer from the Contract Documents or the requirements to complete the contemplated work for the consideration set forth in the Proposal.

Each Proposer shall make their Proposal from their own examinations and estimates and shall not hold the ESRB, its agents, or employees responsible for any information received from them.

3. Executive Summary

The ESRB coalition of Towns is committed to participating in a united approach to closing the broadband gaps within the region. While existing incumbent providers do provide some level of service in all seven towns, the region is largely underserved and unserved by today's broadband standards. The ESRB Committee has done extensive legwork in preparation for the grant application that will be submitted to the MCA authority in the spring of 2023 with the vendors chosen as a result of this RFP process.

The ESRB committee consists of a town lead from each of the seven towns and other participating members of the public who share an interest in this project. At the time of the writing of this RFP, a member of the Select Board from each town has been assigned to participate in the project meetings as the initiative moves forward. Extensive public outreach is being conducted to educate the citizens of the region on the needs for broadband as our society moves forward and on the potential options that will need to be considered in order to close the gaps.

The ESRB committee has conducted online and paper-based surveys about the quality and use of broadband within the seven towns and the results of the surveys are outlined in Appendix B. The results show that roughly 55% of respondents are somewhat dissatisfied or very dissatisfied with their internet service. The surveys also showed that 55% of respondents experienced reduced speed issues daily or all-the-time and that 87% believe that access to reliable internet service in the community is extremely important. The survey results help to reenforce the message that the quality of broadband in the region is poor and residents believe improvements are vital to the future of the region.

Additionally, extensive mapping exercises have been conducted with the assistance of Mission Broadband to identify roads and premises that will be served and also to identify those premises that fall into the various unserved categories. A gap analysis outlining the results of these efforts is provided in Section 9. Additionally, GIS shapefiles with the roads, poles, e911 addresses and designation of served or unserved are available as part of the documentation set for this RFP and are explained in Appendix C.

Like many rural counties and regions in America, the Eastern Slopes Region is feeling the effects of gaps in broadband service within the area. There are limited Internet Service Providers (ISPs) offering broadband services within the region and data gathered shows that nationally recognized problems such as the Homework Gap, insufficient access for remote workers and students, minimal investment by existing providers, affordability, and the digital divide are real and present issues in the region.

The impact of the pandemic has also deepened the need for broadband infrastructure improvement within the region. Significant upgrades to the available broadband in the ESRB communities is one of the most significant strategies to advance the region's goals and priorities. Its economic vitality, community vibrancy and workforce development will be possible only with increased broadband investment.

The ESRB is soliciting proposals for the design and implementation of the hardware and electronics necessary to provide a robust and reliable broadband solution for the region as well as

the ongoing management and maintenance of the entire network. The long-term goal of the project is to enable access to FTTP services for every household in the region. However, the financing and economics of the project may dictate a hybrid and phased approach to providing the desired coverage. As such this hybrid approach may require other technologies such as fixed wireless to be part of the solution, at least on an interim basis.

Many factors need to be considered in developing a region-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 the future of the Eastern Slopes Region. All discussion and research to date supports that a robust, high-speed broadband network that can positively impact education, economics, healthcare, transportation, and other important aspects of a vibrant 21st century region.

The Eastern Slopes Region recognizes that there are a variety of viable technical approaches and ownership / partnership models available that could potentially achieve the region's desired outcomes. Rather than prescribing a network design or ownership model, ESRB has defined required and desired quality and performance standards including, but not limited to, key network technical characteristics, performance requirements and life expectancy.

The ESRB 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 ESRB's 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 ESRB's expected outcomes.

The ESRB currently has interlocal agreements in place between the participating towns for this initiative and is working to strengthen the agreements to support a range of potential business model options.

4. Statement of Purpose

- 4.1 The ESRB Committee is issuing this Request for Proposal (RFP).
- 4.2 The ESRB is soliciting proposals for the design and implementation of the hardware and electronics necessary to provide a robust and reliable broadband solution for the region. The long-term goal of the project is to enable access to FTTP services for every household in the region, however, the financing and economics of the project may dictate a hybrid and phased approach to providing the desired coverage. As such this hybrid approach may require other technologies such as fixed wireless to be part of the solution.
- 4.3 The ESRB also seeks responses on the deployment and management of access and transport electronics of the network. The ESRB seeks a relationship with an organization that will provide services on the network and fulfill all of the operational functions of the network. The components requiring responses are detailed in sections 8 through 13 and are as follows:

5. The Digital Divide

The digital divide is defined as the gap between those segments of the population that have access to affordable Internet and other communications technologies and those that have limited or no access. The digital divide also speaks to the disparity of technology skills present across different segments of society. The digital divide is a significant issue throughout the Eastern Slopes Region and the ESRB seeks long term assistance in developing and implementing a program to help close the digital divide.

The ESRB is interested in vendor programs and resources that will help close the digital divide. Vendors are asked to outline any resources, educational programs or other supporting information and activities that would assist in helping to close the digital divide. The ESRB is not soliciting pricing for any of these services at this time but would like to understand at a high level the different strategies and approaches that vendors would use to resolve the issue.

6. Instructions to Vendors

- 6.1 All information provided to vendors by the ESRB 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 ESRB.
- 6.2 All proposals submitted shall be valid for nine months or until a contract is signed, whichever comes first.
- 6.3 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.

- 6.4 The ESRB recognizes that developing and implementing a region-wide broadband solution will take several years to complete, at best. Due to the severity of insufficient broadband throughout the region the ESRB is asking vendors to be creative in their responses for providing solutions and to explore all options for providing improved broadband services on an interim basis in areas where network construction will not occur for some time. The ESRB is open to all technology solutions, including wireless and fixed wireless technologies that may provide services on a multi-year interim basis.
- 6.5 Wherever possible, Vendors shall use the numbering convention in this RFP when formatting their response. The Vendor response shall be explained in detail and shall indicate how the Vendor proposes to satisfy each requirement, where necessary. It is desired that Vendors indicate compliance, non-compliance, understood or exception for each line item in the RFP, however, it is recognized that some vendors may propose solutions with narratives that are difficult to fit into the format of the requested response. As such, where appropriate Vendors are encouraged to provide alternate responses. The ESRB is interested in exploring all options to achieve the desired outcomes.
- 6.6 As the selection process progresses, vendors may be asked to provide professional references from similar projects, including contact name, mailing address, phone number, email address, and description of the projects.
- 6.7 As a separate document, but included in the RFP response submittal, the ESRB requests an Executive Summary that summarizes the Vendor's approach to a prospective partnership with the ESRB for this project.
- 6.8 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.
- 6.9 The ESRB 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.
- 6.10 Vendors may use the accompanying file titled *ESRB RFP Pricing Matrix.xls* that is referenced in Appendix C.1 for the pricing of their proposed solutions. Using this matrix is preferred but not mandatory.
- 6.11 Vendors are asked to provide pricing for the **entire region** and also to provide pricing on an **individual town basis** so that each community can understand their share of the overall costs.
- 6.12 Vendors shall explain the implications or ramifications to cost and project timeline in the event that one of the seven participating towns does not decide to move forward with a broadband project. The towns

are unified and committed to the regional effort, however, a final commitment to move forward cannot be made until final costs are known as a result of this process.

- 6.13 This RFP document is the property of the ESRB and shall not be reproduced or used without permission of the ESRB.
- 6.14 All materials submitted in response to the RFP become the property of the ESRB. If there is any concern about confidentiality, mark the appropriate pages of your response “Confidential” and the information will be kept confidential to the extent permitted under Maine and Federal law.
- 6.15 The Successful Vendor may be required to post a 100% Performance and Payment Bond.

7. Authorized Negotiator

- 7.1 The proposal shall be signed by the person authorized to legally bind the proposal.
- 7.2 The proposal shall designate the Vendor’s authorized negotiator, who shall be empowered to make binding commitments.

8. Insurance

- 8.1 Each Vendor selected by the ESRB 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.
- 8.2 Each Vendor selected by the ESRB shall be responsible for implementing precautions for the safety and security of, and shall provide reasonable protection to prevent damage, injury or loss to Vendor’s employees, any subcontractor’s employees, ESRB 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 municipalities in the ESRB. 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.
 - 8.2.1 General Liability Insurance: \$1,000,000 per occurrence; \$2,000,000 in the aggregate.
 - 8.2.1.1 Premises/Operations
 - 8.2.1.2 Products/Completed Operations
 - 8.2.1.3 Contractual

8.2.1.4 Personal Injury

8.2.1.5 Bodily Injury / Property Damage

- 8.2.2 Automobile Liability: \$1,000,000 per occurrence; \$2,000,000 in the aggregate.
- 8.2.3 Professional Liability Insurance: \$1,000,000 per occurrence; \$2,000,000 in the aggregate.
- 8.2.4 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.
- 8.3 Workers Compensation and Employers' Liability – per Maine Statute
- 8.4 The ESRB must be named as additionally insured on the COI.
- 8.5 Each Vendor selected by the ESRB 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 ESRB.
- 8.6 Proof of policies shall be provided before contractual agreement is reached.

9. Mapping Information and Gap Analysis

Mapping exercises were conducted with publicly available data in order to identify the households in each town that would be eligible for service and where each household fell in terms of being served or unserved. A map of each town was created and reviewed with members of each town at a detailed level in order to confirm the accuracy of the maps and households using people who were locally knowledgeable about the roads and structures in each town. The data presented and included in this RFP is considered to be as accurate as possible without a detailed ride out of each road and road segment; however, it is up to the respondents to do their homework and verify their network design with their own tools.

A link to the RFP mapping files outlined below will be provided to each vendor who submits an intent to bid. The following information is included in the files:

- 9.1 SHP files containing E911 address locations, poles and roads;
- 9.2 Excel files with addresses and road mileage per town;
- 9.3 PDF files containing high resolution images of each town map.

The table below provides high level data about each town:

ESRB Town	Road Miles	Households / e911 Addresses	Unserved Households	Seasonal Households
Brownfield	74.6	946	946 (100%)	315
Denmark	80.2	1212	359 (29.62%)	613
Fryeburg	100.9	2151	167 (7.76%)	500
Lovell	88.6	1125	293 (26.04%)	641
Stoneham	24.8	299	299 (100%)	100
Stow	18.1	237	237 (100%)	47
Sweden	39.8	283	283 (100%)	142
Totals	427	6253	2,584	2358

10. Proposed Solution Overview

The goal of the project is to make affordable, reliable, high-speed broadband available to every residential and business location in all ESRB member towns. Vendors must provide an overview of the proposed solution, in narrative form, including explanation of the following elements:

- 10.1 Technology – describe the technology you are proposing to deploy.
- 10.2 Describe the proposed ISP and Network Operator components of the solution.
- 10.3 Describe the business model you are proposing. The ESRB is committed to maintaining an open perspective on potential business models that would support the provision of affordable, reliable, high-speed broadband services throughout the region. All potential business model options will be open for consideration. Describe the proposed funding mechanisms and financial relationship or partnership you are proposing for the region.
- 10.4 ESRB plans to begin onboarding subscribers as soon as possible. While the construction of the entire network may take several years, the goal is to have active subscribers within 12 months of construction beginning.

11. Region-Wide Broadband Network Characteristics

The desired characteristics of the network are outlined below.

- 11.1 Technology:
 - 11.1.1 Network infrastructure – an optical network is required.
 - 11.1.2 Bandwidth – Initially, the ESRB requires a minimum 100 Mbps download / 100 Mbps upload speed be available to every subscriber. At no time shall any Vendor submit a proposal for any portion of the network having available speeds lower than this for any customer, for either upload or download. Proposals that cannot guarantee availability of these speeds for any and all customers of the ESRB will be immediately disqualified from further consideration. This requirement may NOT be cited as an exception in any proposal.
 - 11.1.2.1 Lower tiered bandwidths/speeds will be allowed as an *affordability* option, provided that the customer has the technological capability of selecting service of at least 100/100 should they later desire to do so; however, the 100 Mbps download / 100 Mbps upload *availability* requirement remains as a minimum technology availability requirement for every subscriber.

- 11.1.2.2 At no time shall any speed slower than 50 Mbps download/50 Mbps upload be offered to any subscriber as an affordability option.
- 11.1.2.3 Vendors are encouraged to submit proposals that will allow for faster internet speeds than the minimum speed (100/100) noted, and the ability to provide faster speeds will be a factor in the selection process.
- 11.1.2.4 If the Vendor is not submitting a proposal that will allow for service including speeds up to 1 Gigabit per second for both upload and download speeds at this time, the Vendor should note whether their proposed design will allow for future upgrades to includes these speeds without the need to replace the fiber optic cables themselves.
- 11.1.3 Options for synchronous services up to 10 Gbps will be considered, and Vendors should comment on their ability to provide such service, either now or in the future. In particular, Vendors should comment on whether an increase to this speed is likely to require changes to the fiber optic cables themselves, or simply changes to electronic equipment operated by the ESRB and/or individual customers.
- 11.2 Offerings:
 - 11.2.1 The ESRB desires voice as an optional service offering. Describe your residential and commercial voice service offerings and the ability to port phone numbers for new subscribers.
 - 11.2.2 Provide an overview of any additional current service offerings in the region.
 - 11.2.3 State if you are currently able to meet the bandwidth requirements outlined above in any of these areas.
 - 11.2.4 Data Caps shall not be permitted for any residential service offered by the ESRB. If data caps are to be provided for business/commercial service, clearly state all applicable limits, tiers, and proposed pricing (to the ESRB, not to the end user) for each of these data cap tiers.
 - 11.2.5 Bursting Capabilities – Will ISP allow bursting? Provide details per bandwidth package offered.
 - 11.2.6 Oversubscription – Define the ISP’s oversubscription methodology.
 - 11.2.7 Roadmap / Future technology - What plans exist to expand or upgrade facilities in these areas?
- 11.3 Customer Service and Service Level Agreements (SLA) and Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) - Provide your standard SLA commitments to a) residential customers and b) commercial/business customers.

11.4 Customer Premise Equipment (CPE)

- 11.4.1 Customers must be permitted to, but not required to, supply their own router, switches, Wi-Fi devices/access points, and on-premise ethernet cabling.
- 11.4.2 Vendors must describe the home installation process for your solution. Vendor should comment specifically on their requirements and definitions regarding customer site installations before additional fees will be charged to the ESRB or customer. For example, first “x” feet of aerial cabling, first “y” feet of underground trenching, location of ONT within building, building height restrictions, limitations on drilling through masonry/stone walls, etc.
- 11.4.3 Vendor must describe the equipment they will make available to customers, including the cost of each of these pieces of equipment on either a one-time or ongoing cost basis. and included with their service (i.e., router, Wi-Fi devices, remote access points, and so on).
- 11.4.4 Vendor must describe the features they will make available to customers, including the cost of each of these features on either a one-time or ongoing cost basis. For purposes of clarity, features are defined as services such as voice or streaming services, full “mesh” Wi-Fi availability (number of devices beyond first Wi-Fi device to be included, cost of each additional mesh device, and limitations on number of mesh devices), antivirus/anti-malware services, setup assistance, training, and so on.).
 - 11.4.4.1 Note that at no time shall any customer be required to use or accept any additional features/services offered, such as antivirus/anti-malware services, equipment beyond the ONT device, etc.
- 11.4.5 At no time shall any Vendor be permitted to collect data about the sites or locations visited by any customer of the ESRB, whether for resale or internal use. The ESRB and any and all Vendors associated with the service shall not engage in any form of customer tracking related to the customer’s use of the internet, and all Vendors should create and offer proposals with this requirement at the forefront of their planning and proposals.
- 11.4.6 Outline costs for the following in the accompanying pricing file:
 - 11.4.6.1 Drop installation costs for subscribers.
 - 11.4.6.2 Equipment installation costs for subscribers.
 - 11.4.6.3 Bandwidth service tiers and monthly costs for each.
 - 11.4.6.4 Any additional features or services (Wi-Fi, voice, and so on).

- 11.5 What is the a) average and b) guaranteed maximum after service ordered installation timeframe for new subscribers?
 - 11.6 What is the a) average and b) guaranteed maximum after repair requested repair time for subscribers?
 - 11.7 Would a subscriber ever be charged for repair of service? Describe the conditions under which this might occur.
 - 11.8 Do you have published Escalation Procedures? If so, describe as part of your proposal.
 - 11.9 In the accompanying pricing file, outline the following costs:
 - 11.9.1 Upfront costs required to build the network infrastructure to all residents in all of the seven member towns.
 - 11.9.2 Recurring costs the ESRB would incur on an annual basis with your proposed solution for all ongoing expenses related to the operation of the network. Break this down according to maintenance, repair, upgrades, operation of the utility, and marketing, showing each of these as a separate line item.
 - 11.10 Would you participate in assisting the ESRB with Federal and State grant applications? If so, provide a detailed description of the type of services you would provide, and a narrative that explains your past efforts and success with grant applications for similar initiatives. Please note that Vendors that can offer significant assistance with this process will be given additional consideration as part of the selection process.
 - 11.11 The ESRB desires the network to be constructed with additional capacity beyond the infrastructure required to provide broadband services to subscribers, and Vendors are asked to comment on their ability to serve these future needs. There are several identified applications for this additional capacity as follows:
 - 11.11.1 Connectivity to existing or future municipal locations within each community.
 - 11.11.2 New residential and commercial subdivisions.
 - 11.11.3 Future smart-city and municipal Internet of Things (IOT) applications.
 - 11.11.4 The sale of dark fiber and wholesale services.
 - 11.12 Aesthetics: The ESRB requests that all infrastructure fit into the existing landscape to maintain the rural and scenic ambience. Use of existing infrastructure is recommended. If a building or tower needs to be erected, then a review to gauge the aesthetic impact may be required.
- Evaluation and Selection Criteria

12. Evaluation and Selection Criteria

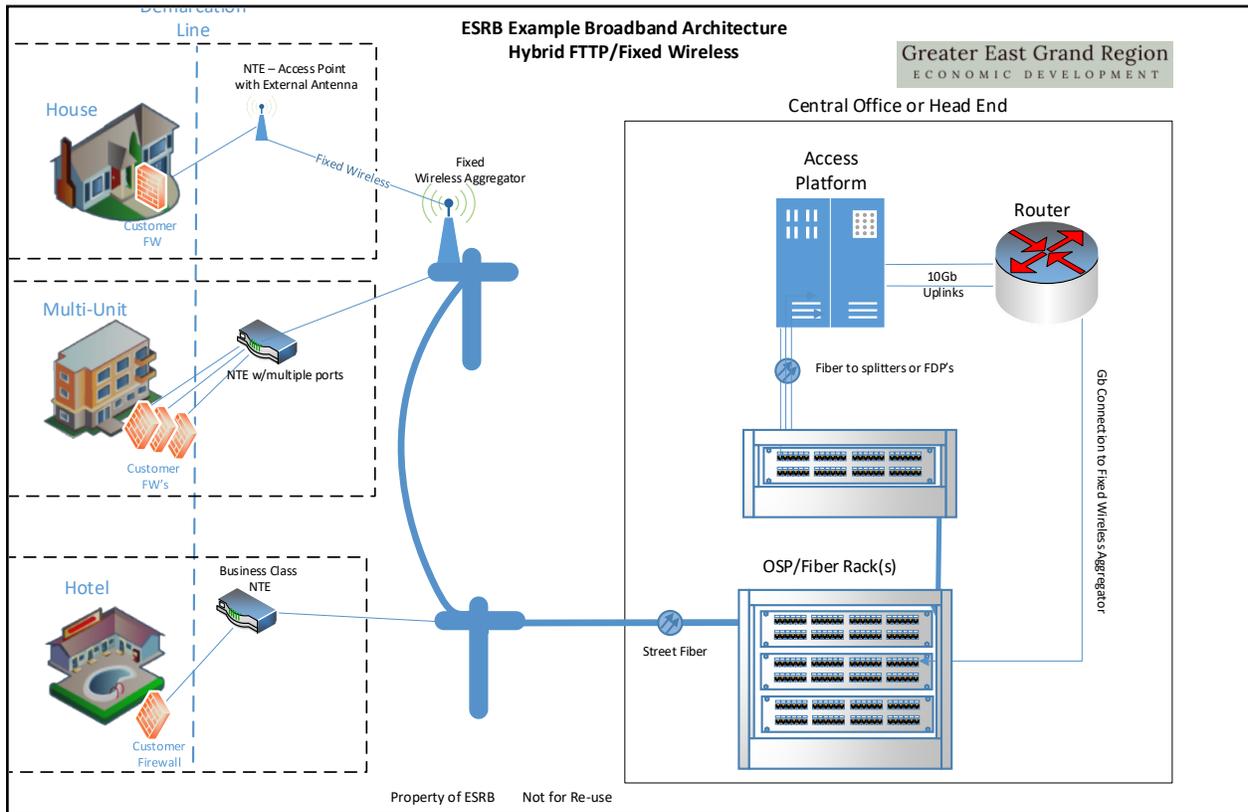
- 12.1 The ESRB seeks a robust, scalable, and future proofed broadband network that will serve all residents across each and all of the seven member towns. Each Vendor is encouraged to provide detailed responses to demonstrate its experience and expertise in providing services as requested in this RFP. 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.
- 12.2 The ESRB is not obligated to accept or select any proposal received in response to this RFP. In particular, the ESRB may select proposals in whole or in part, or it may disqualify any and all proposals received.
- 12.3 The ESRB will use selection criteria that includes the following for each section of the RFP: Vendor Viability, Technical Merit, Implementation Timeline and Cost. The selection decisions made by the ESRB under this RFP are final.
- 12.4 In evaluating Vendor Viability, the ESRB will score vendors based on the following criteria:
 - 12.4.1 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).
 - 12.4.2 Documentation from the Vendor that demonstrates the Vendor's experience with similar projects (or element thereof) of the same size and scope.
 - 12.4.3 Documentation of any other information that bears on the Vendor's suitability for this project.
- 12.5 Technical Merit of Proposal scores will be assigned based on how well the proposed solution meets the currently understood and projected needs of the ESRB. 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 ESRB and how well it meets the stated priorities of the network.
- 12.6 In evaluating the Implementation Timeline, the ESRB 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.

- 12.7 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 ESRB 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 ESRB is in the process of becoming tax exempt.)

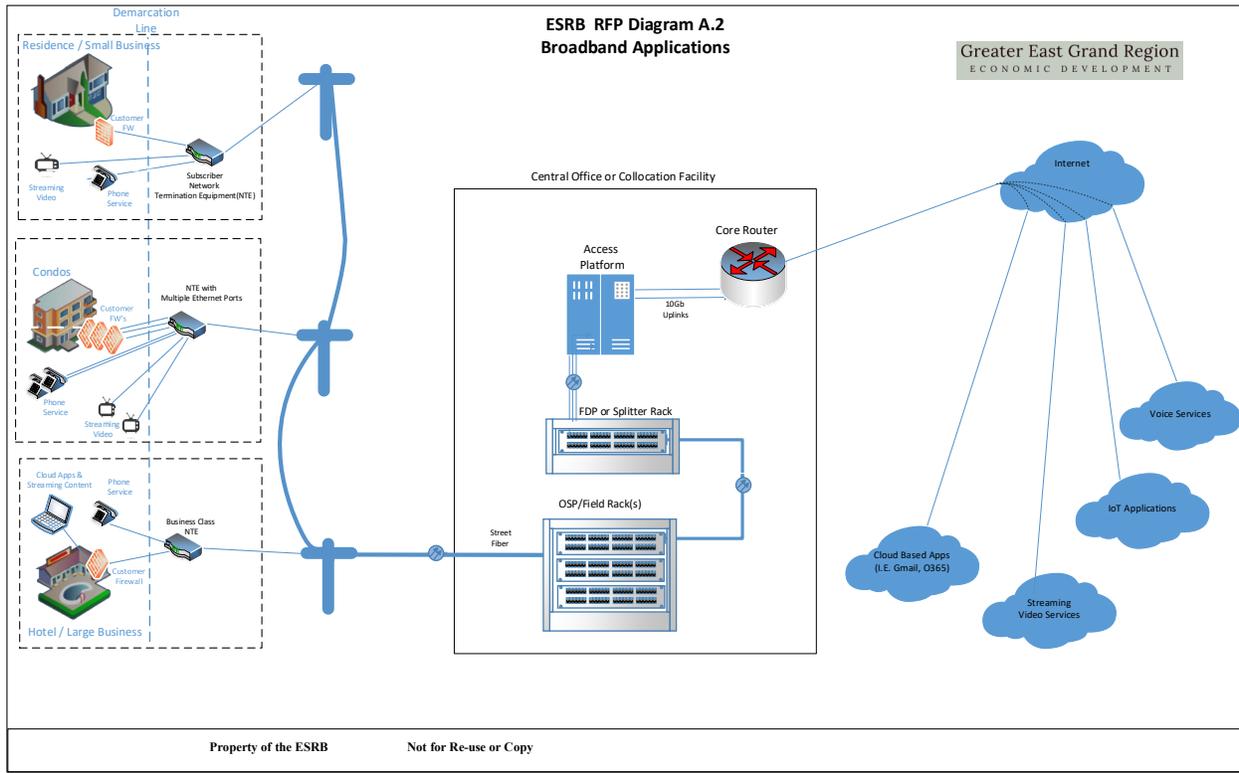
12. Rejection/Negotiation Rights

- 16.1 The ESRB reserves the right to disqualify any proposals for substantial non-compliance with the terms of this RFP. The ESRB reserves the right to accept or negotiate the contractual terms of any proposal(s) in response to this RFP.
- 16.2 The ESRB reserves the right to select multiple Service Providers.
- 16.3 The ESRB reserves the right to select multiple equipment providers.

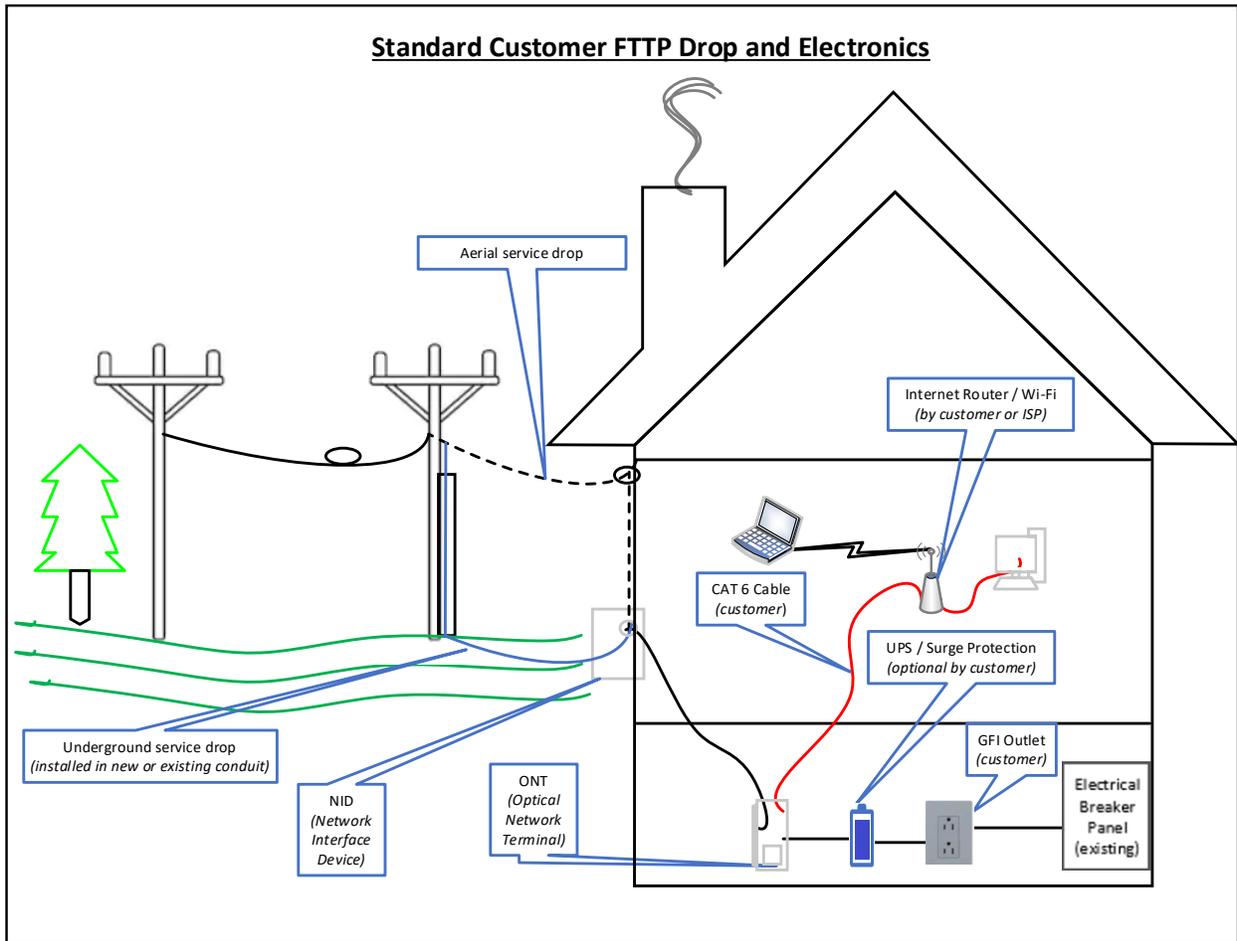
Appendix A.1: Example Broadband Architecture



Appendix A.2: Examples of Network Applications



Appendix A.3: Example of FTTP Standard Drop Configuration



Appendix B: Summary of Survey Statistics

Survey response data for surveys conducted across all seven towns was provided by the ESRB Committee. The survey data was combined and sorted to provide the following high-level statistics.

- There were 647 total respondents;
- 87% of respondents stated they have internet service.
- Those with internet service have the following ISP:
 - 35% have Spectrum.
 - 54% have Consolidated Communications Inc. (CCI)
 - 4% use their cell service as a hotspot.
 - The remaining 7% of respondents had satellite or did not know.
- Satisfaction Level – Overall
 - 56% fall into Somewhat-Unsatisfied or Not-at-all-Satisfied
- Satisfaction Level – Reliability / Consistency
 - 56% fall into Somewhat-Unsatisfied or Not-at-all-Satisfied
- Satisfaction Level – Speed
 - 62% fall into Somewhat-Unsatisfied or Not-at-all-Satisfied
- Satisfaction Level – Customer Service
 - 47% fall into Somewhat-Unsatisfied or Not-at-all-Satisfied
- Satisfaction Level – Capacity of Business or Telecommuting
 - 61% fall into Somewhat-Unsatisfied or Not-at-all-Satisfied
- 55% of respondents experience reduced speed issues Daily or All-the-time.
- 74% of respondents said their cost of internet service was not reasonable.
 - 7% of respondents pay less than \$40/mo
 - 24% pay between \$45 and \$60/ mo
 - 23% pay between \$60 and \$75/mo
 - 22% pay between \$75 and \$90/mo
 - 19% pay over 90\$/mo
 - 6% did not know
- Would you pay more for faster, more reliable internet?
 - 23% said “No”
 - 40% said “Unsure”
 - 38% said “Yes”
- How important is it to you to have reliable internet service available within your community?
 - 87% said “extremely Important”

Appendix C: List and Description of Associated RFP Documents

C.1: ESRB RFP Pricing Matrix.xls

This Excel file is to be used by Vendor's in pricing out their solutions. There is a corresponding tab for each section of the RFP with instructions for pricing out the proposed solution. Use of this Pricing Matrix is preferred, but not mandatory.

C.2: ESRB Mapping Files

A link to the mapping files outlined in Section 9 will be provided to those vendors who submit an intent to bid for the RFP.