

# Chatham County Request for Information

Chatham Municipal Network Expression of Interest Solicitation # 18-0100-1

## Purpose

A first step in evaluating the feasibility and level of interest for a public-private partnership for building and maintaining a fiber optic network throughout Chatham County.

## Scope

The primary focus for this endeavor is to discover the feasibility in creating a fiber network for the interconnectivity of all governmental and educational facilities within Chatham County.

The intent is to build out related infrastructure, but other means to achieve buildout should be included.

This request is open for related opportunities.

## Background

Chatham County is nestled on the Georgia coast along the South Carolina border with access to two major interstates, rail and ports. The total population is estimated at 292,924 with approximately 10.8% of those between ages of 18 and 24 per 2016 U.S. Census Bureau. The population growth of Chatham County from 1790 to date has been relatively consistent. Chatham County has a long tradition of planning, and the community plans to continue maintaining its historic character and natural resources while welcoming new residents, many of whom become the strongest advocates of local planning.

Chatham County average per capita income for was at \$25,690 as compared nationally at \$28,930 as reported by American Community Survey in 2016.

Chatham County is the largest county in a three county Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA) that also includes Bryan and Effingham Counties. The area's economy has grown to serve regional, national and international markets in a variety of sectors. The manufacturing economy has been surpassed by the service economy in the past several years. Economy service includes health and medical facilities, retail, hospitality, and business services such as insurance, banking, and advertising. A Work Source Coastal study projected that the greatest number of jobs in the coastal region (and 20% of the workforce) by 2021 were all in areas where entry-level positions are plentiful. These include A) Combined Food Preparation and Serving Workers, Including Fast Food, B) Retail Salesperson, C) Waiters and Waitresses, D) Laborers and Freight, Stock, and Material Movers, Hand, or E) General and Operations Management. Industry in Chatham County primarily consists of logistics import/export, government, restaurants, health care, and retail trade. Those with the most projected growth are construction machinery, logistics, motion picture and video production, and artificial/synthetic fiber.

The Chatham Community Blueprint; the local long-range strategic plan identifies four areas of priority; Economy, Education, Health and Quality of Life. The overarching vision is that Chatham County

promotes opportunities for economic mobility, safety, lifelong learning and exceptional health for all residents. Within the Blueprint there are goals, suggested activities, and community indicators specific to strategically impact our community for each priority area. This request for expression of interest directly aligns with one of the Quality of Life goals aimed to promote and provide neighborhood connectivity and build environments that encourage active and healthy lifestyles and indirectly impacts goals contained in the area of economy, education and health.

One of the initial steps in addressing this goal was to complete a broadband/fiber-optic feasibility study. Magellan Advisory was selected to complete the study along-side a contract already in place with City of Savannah; presented to the Board of Commission May 2017. While Chatham County and the City of Savannah initiated separately researched and modeled feasibility studies, the collaborative spirits exhibited by both during the process made it clear that true partnership is critical to the success of any project but especially a fiber partnership. Furthermore the demonstrated cooperation with the various municipalities and stakeholders suggest a bright fiber-optic future is well within reach of the residents, businesses, and community organizations across all of Chatham County.

Recommendations of the study advised the formation of a county-wide collaborative group representative of the various municipalities and stakeholders. The group, once formalized, would work to recognize fiber as long-term infrastructure to include incorporation of broadband friendly public policies and coordinate capital projects with development of fiber. As a result, the Chatham Municipal Network has been created.

During the first few meetings, the group has come to include: Chatham County, City of Savannah, Tybee Island, Chatham County Board of Education, Garden City, Bloomingdale, and Pooler.

Through several planning meetings, the association has developed some objectives, principles, and guidelines on the vision for this network.

## Project description

The primary purpose of this municipal fiber network is to elevate the data capabilities of the local governmental agencies beyond what is economically feasible today. Limitations in high data bandwidth significantly limit the ability to affordably expand governmental services and are, in many cases, wholly unavailable.

Alternatively, this network will also be used to promote competition, increase coverage, improve quality of services, and foster competitive prices. We will support the development of broadband telecommunications services to regional/local resellers to provide a wider assortment of broadband access services, promote competition in locations served by only one fiber optic operation, and promote services in unserved locations.

## Objectives

1. Provide underground fiber-optic connectivity between all related governmental buildings and communications infrastructure throughout Chatham County. Please see exhibits for map and endpoint information.
2. Increase coverage, capacity, and quality of telecommunications through one or more partnerships with telecommunications vendors
3. Community investment/longevity; ultimate ownership of fiber lines (sheath)/conduit
4. Provide value to a potential partner

## Principles

1. The CMN group will not be providing Internet services to citizens
2. No one jurisdiction will control the network
3. Transparency

## Guidelines for response

A conference will be held on October 4, 2018 at 10:00 a.m. to discuss the project and answer any questions from interested parties. The location of the meeting is the Purchasing and Contracting Department at 1117 Eisenhower Drive, Suite C, Savannah, Georgia 31401.

- A. We seek the following information from interested parties:
  - a. Cover Sheet
    - i. Company information
    - ii. The names of all owners with substantial holdings in the company must be listed. This should include any shareholders with more than 10% ownership.
  - b. Capabilities and experiences in similar projects
    - i. References

- c. Views on best strategies, recommendations for a successful implementation, growth, deployment and commercial use of this network.
  - d. Preliminary proposal for fiber connectivity at all municipal locations referenced in Exhibit I.
    - i. Provide a preliminary description of how vendor would deploy fiber network and over what timeframe the work could be accomplished.
    - ii. Proposed routes of fiber strands, with demarcation points.
    - iii. The pricing structure offered, including any cooperative build-out models.
    - iv. Service level agreements for maintenance of the resulting network.
  - e. Areas for cooperation – to the extent not covered in previous sections, this section opens the ways where the CMN could cooperate with respondents to improve the business case for proposed solutions. We encourage respondents to be creative and suggest other types of partnerships or business opportunities of interest.
    - i. Facilities – Explanation of need for access to community assets and resources. Respondents should also address the relative importance and impact of variations in terms with respect to accessing the following types of community assets, facilities, and policies:
      - 1. Towers
      - 2. Rights of way
    - ii. Other partnership or revenue opportunities – discussion of any other types of partnerships or working relationship between respondents and supporters which could improve the business case for respondents to partner with one or more supporters.
- B. Responses must consider all applicable laws and/or regulations for levels of participation. Any assumptions made should be documented as such. Please describe any federal, state, or local regulations which could impact the feasibility or underlying economics associated with the proposed solutions.
- C. Any contractual considerations or expectations which respondents have, such as intellectual property, insurance, etc.
- D. Services may be provided through the use of the PPP infrastructure, but any portions of the publicly owned infrastructure must first have approval of the Chatham Municipal Network.
- E. We expect to see quality control parameters and how such parameters will be monitored and corrected, in cases of infraction.
- F. Infrastructure created as part of this initiative is required to be contiguous and holistic, without leases and/or access fees. At no point will the usability and/or availability of the network be “at the mercy” of a single private entity.
- G. The communications must be underground and adequate space available for future expansion.
- H. There may be no provisions preventing other service providers from participating in the use of the network, provided they pay a fair leasing rate to the Chatham Municipal Network governing body.
- I. Maintenance of the network will be awarded to the private partner and a flat rate be paid for such work. We are open to separating participation in build out and maintenance, if feasible.

- J. The Chatham Municipal Network entity is open to considering all manors of achieving the goals of this initiative. We encourage the inclusion of any proven methodologies and/or public-private agreement structures to accomplish the overall goals.
- K. The County welcomes responses to this RFEI from ALL interested or potentially interested parties. Since this is only to solicit preliminary interest and ideas, this RFEI should not be interpreted as an invitation for bids or request for proposals. For the purposes of this RFEI, the terms “respondent”, “providers”, “Vendor” mean an entity or entities submitting a written response to this RFEI.
- L. Due to the trade secrets inherent in responses, we will need any confidential information to be so declared

Responses should follow the format provided within a 10 page limit, using 12 point font. Attachments such as financial information or certifications are in addition to the 10 page limit and should be titled with the applying organization name. Completed applications can be submitted via postal service, hand delivery or electronically to Purchasing & Contracting, 1117 Eisenhower Drive Suite C, Savannah, Georgia 31406 or [pjoyner@chathamcounty.org](mailto:pjoyner@chathamcounty.org). The **deadline for submission is 5:00 pm, Friday October 21, 2018**. Please label the envelope or email as a submittal for “Chatham Municipal Network Solicitation No. 18-0100-1.”

Questions regarding this solicitation may be submitted to [pjoyner@chathamcounty.org](mailto:pjoyner@chathamcounty.org) up to 5:00 p.m. on October 14, 2018. Responses will be submitted via written addendum.

#### **Eligibility and Funding Criteria:**

Chatham County funds will be used to support organizations who provide a documented direct service to the residents of Chatham County. Organizations possessing the capacity and demonstrated ability to perform the scope of services contained in its application are eligible to apply. Successful applicants will provide a program outline that aligns with the Chatham Community Blueprint, community’s priorities and should be transparent on revenues, expenditures and proposed use of funds. Eligibility is considered for organizations who submit required and requested documents by defined/published deadlines.

Organizations should be prepared to provide a copy of the most recent financial report/audit, IRS 990, agency bylaws, Secretary of the State registration and or conflict of interest statements if requested in additional to their application.

#### **Selection Process**

1. RFEI - The County will evaluate the information gathered through this Request for an Expression of Interest (RFEI) process and make a determination on whether to proceed

with a formal request for proposals related to the buildout of this municipal fiber network.

2. Decision to proceed – provided interest is discovered and the feasibility validated, recommendations will be put forth with associated costs and/or commitments required. Each member jurisdiction will then provide a clear decision on the desire to proceed.
3. RFP – once the decision to proceed is determined, the next step will involve a formal Request for Proposals to award the contract for related services in the design and build out of the fiber network to one or more entities. This will likely be a phased approach spanning several years.

## Tentative Time Table

### **FY19 Projected Timeline:**

September 19, 2018	Announcement & Distribution of Application Packet
October 4, 2018	Meeting with potential respondents to discuss the project
October 21th, 2018	Responses Due
October 31, 2018	Decision To Proceed
November 15, 2018	Request for Proposals Release
December 15, 2018	Proposals Due
January 1, 2019	Award and Contract negotiations completed
January 1, 2019 – December 30, 2020	First Contract Period – Phase I

## Additional Reference Material(s)

- I. Savannah-Chatham Broadband Study
- II. Chatham Municipal Network Charter

## Exhibits

- I. Proposed Network Points of Connectivity

# Exhibit I – Proposed Network Points of Connectivity

Points of connectivity.

