

**openairboston.net**  
**Response to RFI Questions**

1. While it has been stated that there is no guarantee that the City of Boston will purchase service on the openairboston.net network, would the City contract directly with OAB for service, or would they purchase service from one of the Retail Service Providers?

A: The City has not completed its determination of its needs nor preferred contract arrangement. The City of Boston may, at their discretion, contract directly with OAB, or with a Retail Service Provider. We anticipate that the service agreement for the City (as well as for other very large customers) will need to be different; the RFI therefore includes questions regarding service for major accounts and large customers.

2. After RFI submission, what is the process of evaluation? Will there be individual meetings with each submitting entity? Will the results of any evaluation be provided to the submitting entities?

A: The purpose of the RFI is to gather information about the capabilities of vendors and integrators. The responses will not result in any “decision” or “evaluation,” but will be used to shape the final RFP. After reviewing submissions, we may meet in person with respondents who wish to provide additional information, and we may request additional informational meetings with RFI respondents.

3. As the OAB is not a City entity, what protection does it afford an Network Integrator (NI) responsible for deploying and operating a WiFi network (presumably with performance SLA’s to OAB) that the City will not provide a similar license to another entity to deploy a similar network in all or part of the city with the consequential interference implications. What about other public safety networks with similar infrastructure (e.g. CIMS)?

A: OAB's partnership with the city provides OAB with rights sufficient to accomplish its mission. While the city is free to grant additional rights, we believe that once the network is complete this is unlikely. As part of our ongoing relationship with the city, we will seek to leverage common infrastructure where feasible. However, public safety and homeland security networks often require special purpose and possibly redundant infrastructure.

4. It is cumbersome to separate items in the RFI Response that are confidential. Would labeling the entire RFI Response as “Trade Secret” negatively impact the evaluation of that RFI Response?

A: No, labeling the entire RFI as a “Trade Secret” will have no impact on the evaluation. It would simplify the task of OAB in preparing the RFP if sections that were trade secrets

were specifically labeled as such. We are also willing to enter into a Non-Disclosure Agreement with respondents, in consultation with counsel.

5. What assumption should the NI make with regard to the City of Boston's service/traffic requirements for government and public safety use?

A: At this time, we have made no assumptions about the City of Boston's use of the network. If you do choose to include City use in your response, please clearly state your assumptions.

6. Are traffic signaling structures available as mounting assets? If so, can their locations be provided (preferably in GIS or other electronic format)?

A: We believe that those structures will be available, but we cannot offer any specific information at this time. This data should be available with the RFP.

7. Are the city school buildings and libraries included in the "City Owned or Managed", building assets?

A: Yes.

8. Will the OAB be responsible for facilitation and scheduling access to various city facilities?

A: Yes, these agreements will be pre-negotiated as part of the cooperation agreement between OAB and the City of Boston.

9. In Section 2.1, the RFI states that the NI will offer wholesale service to retail providers and major accounts or customers. Does this imply an end user sales/customer support function for the NI. In case of the City of Boston government, public safety, etc. who will be responsible for securing these anchor accounts? OAB? The NI? Who will provide customer support? Billing?

A: The expectations of the Network Integrator are that they will maintain Service Level Agreements sufficient for wholesale service only. These expectations are described more fully in section B.5-9 of the RFI. OAB is ultimately responsible for securing anchor accounts, though we welcome assistance from respondents.

10. Section 2.1, the first paragraph states, "providing low-cost high-speed internet access in the City of Boston to schools, nonprofit organizations and other community organizations." Can additional detail be provided on requirements for schools?

A: We cannot provide any additional detail at this time.

11. Section 2.1 it states “In turn, the NI will offer the whole service to Retail Service Providers and major accounts or customers.” What specifically will be the business relationship of the NI and Retail Service Providers?

A: We anticipate that Retail Service Providers will purchase wholesale service through OAB. However, we welcome proposals for other business models or arrangements that will improve service or lower cost for the end user.

12. While it is understood that additional detail will be available for the RFP phase, greater detail in the design will create more accurate models for the RFI response. Can any data (e.g. GIS data, spreadsheets, diagrams etc.) be provided on the City infrastructure listed in section 2.3?

- Approximately three hundred fifty (350) city-owned or city managed buildings
- Rights to various dark fiber assets throughout the City
- More than twenty-five thousand (25,000) light poles with usable power
- Another forty thousand street (40,000) light and/or utility poles, which are accessible but may lack continuous power (e.g. bank switched).

Of particular interest are locations and height of city-owned or city managed buildings, location of dark fiber assets, location of light poles with breakdown of which have full-time usable power.

A: We are currently in the process of assembling this data and will provide it with the RFP, but we cannot provide this data at this time. However, preliminary demand estimates are available upon request.

13. In Section 2.3 a reference is made to the City’s infrastructure including light and power poles. Are there other light/power poles not owned by the City? If so will OAB secure use rights from the relevant utility (e.g. other power poles, cell towers)? Will OAB negotiate suitable rates for the use of power and light/electric poles?

A: Building a network that will provide access throughout the city will require additional assets that are not owned by the City of Boston. OAB will secure rights and negotiate rates with the relevant property owners. We would welcome assistance from respondents in the site selection and site acquisition phase.

14. While it is understood that additional detail will be available for the RFP phase, greater detail in the design will create more accurate models/budgets for the RFI response. Can any additional data be provided for the Third Party Assets and Services mentioned in Section 2.4?

A: No, we cannot provide any additional data at this time.

15. Section 2.6: Is the “University” partner selected? Would OAB accept proposals from vendors regarding potential University partners?

A: We encourage respondents to include potential partners for the Wireless Innovation Center, including universities and other entities, in their response. However, OAB plans to select the anchor university for the WIC and announce this selection prior to issuing the RFP.

16. Section 2.8: What SLA does OAB contemplate to meet retail, and anchor tenant requirements given the best efforts nature of the network?

A: We hope that the RFI responses will assist us in identifying which SLA components would be appropriate to meet the unique mission of our network.

17. Please elaborate on the RFI’s use of the terms “contention/collision models” and “site splitting” as it used in Section 3.3.

A: Contention refers to possible interference between the OAB network and other wireless devices in unlicensed spectrum in OAB's service area. Collision refers to conflict between multiple concurrent users of the OAB network. Site splitting describes techniques to increase spectrum re-use within a given geography, such as directional antennas, power reduction, and adjustment of cell size.

18. Section 3.3: What is the meaning of “subsidized network elements”?

A: Subsidized network elements refers to any network component that is available at a reduced cost from a vendor for whatever reason, such as for marketing purposes or other revenue sharing agreements.

19. Exhibit B.1.3 indicates that “OAB will make available” mounting assets, rooftop usage, and electricity. Should a cost for these items (for OAB or the Winning Bidder) be included in business models or budgets created for the RFI Response?

A: Yes, these costs should be included, including the assumptions used to estimate these costs.

20. Exhibit B.2: Can you please elaborate on the WIC’s intentions as described in RFI to “Also create standard hardware platform for radio/access points.”?

A: The WIC is focused on innovation. To innovate, OAB will give strong preference to RFI recipients’ ability to provide a platform (hardware, software, firmware, from AP to NOC) that will allow the WIC to research, develop, test new technologies and business models based on that platform. The vendor may keep specific intellectual property apart from this, but the more “open” the platform is to the WIC, the better. “Standard” refers

not only to specifications developed by IEEE or similar bodies, but “standard” in that the WIC may assume the platform will be supported and maintained by the Integrator/Vendor.

21. Exhibit B.3: Please clarify “Perimeter Room coverage.” Does this include the non-street facing side of a building particularly a multi-dwelling unit?

A: Our goal is to provide each household in Boston with access to the service in one perimeter room. This includes households without windows facing the street in multi-dwelling units. We encourage respondents to offer innovative solutions to meet this goal, such as in-building wiring or repeaters.

22. Exhibit B.3 and B.4:

- a. Certain City areas may have few usable mountings, e.g. parks, golf courses, and zoos. What are the coverage expectations for these areas?
- b. The City contains a number of Universities and Hospitals, each with both secure and open networks. What relationships will OAB establish for interoperation/roaming with these networks? What about interference?
- c. What is OAB’s view regarding 4.9GHz for public safety applications?
- d. What arrangements will OAB make for interoperation/roaming with neighboring communities for both commercial and public safety applications? What expectations should the NI consider for platform/NOC interoperation?

A:

a. We hope to provide coverage in city-owned public spaces such as parks and plaza. The RFI describes several offerings for Retail Service Providers including both Residential, and Nomadic. Our goal is to offer coverage to 95% of the city. If you believe a location should be excluded, please explain why in your response.

b. We believe that universities and hospitals are potential customers of OAB or RSPs if we are able to offer services that meet their needs. Because the network will utilize unlicensed spectrum, we have little control over interference from any source.

c. OAB has no specific plans for using 4.9 Ghz. We are open to platforms supporting that equipment, to the extent the city can take advantage.

We encourage solutions which allow roaming between neighboring municipalities and networks. Please see section 4.5 of the RFI.