

Request for Proposals for a Cloud-Based Customer Information System for Summerside Utilities

Introduction

The City of Summerside, PEI (“The City”) is requesting proposals from qualified firms for Software as a Service (SaaS) and professional services to implement a new software solution to address the City’s needs related to utility billing and customer information functionality. Requirements are outlined below in section 1.4

Proposals shall only be submitted **electronically** to Kristen Dunsford at kristen.dunsford@city.summerside.pe.ca. Complete proposal responses must be submitted based on a two-document system. Proposals must be received on or before 12:59:59 AST, Wednesday, October 21, 2020. The proposal responses shall be provided in two documents clearly named “technical proposal” and “cost proposal”. No hard copy proposals are to be submitted.

Any questions related to the Request for Proposals must be directed to Kristen Dunsford. Questions should be submitted in writing by email to kristen.dunsford@city.summerside.pe.ca. Any correspondence related to the RFP should refer to the RFP number, page, and paragraph number.

Tentative RFP Schedule

September 30, 2020	RPF Release
October 14, 2020	Proponent Question Deadline at 12:59:59 AST
October 21, 2020	Proposals Due Electronically by 12:59:59 AST
October 26, 2020	Notification, if Required, of Short-listed Firms
November 3, 2020	Recommendation to Council
November 16, 2020	Resolution by Council
November 17, 2020	Award of Proposal to Successful Proponent

Not a Tender Call

This Request for Proposal (RFP) is not a tender call, and the submission of any response to this RFP does not create a tender process. This RFP is not an invitation for an offer to contract, and it is not an offer to contract made by the City. By this RFP, the City reserves to itself the absolute and unfettered discretion to invite submissions, consider and analyze submissions, select short-listed Proponents or attempt to negotiate an agreement with the Successful Proponent, if any, as the City considers desirable. Without limiting the generality of the foregoing, the City reserves the right to:

- a) reject, consider or short-list any submission whether or not it contains all information required by this RFP;
- b) require clarification where a submission is unclear;
- c) reject any or all submissions without any obligation, or any compensation or reimbursement, to any Respondent, intended Proponent, or any other person associated with this RFP process;
- d) all or any proposals not necessarily accepted, as the acceptance remains within the exclusive discretion of the City;
- e) disqualify or reject any submission without discussion with the submitting party;
- f) reject any or all submissions that the City considers are not in its best interests;

No Obligation to Proceed

Though the City fully intends at this time to proceed with the provision and implementation of **a cloud-based Customer Information System (CIS)** as contemplated herein, the City is under no obligation to do so. The receipt by the City of any information (including any submissions, ideas, plans, drawings, models or other materials communicated or exhibited by any intended Proponent, or on its behalf) shall not impose any obligations on the City. There is no guarantee by the City, its officers, employees or agents, that the process initiated by the issuance of this RFP will continue, or that this RFP process or any RFP process will result in a contract with the City for the provision of and implementation of **a cloud-based Customer Information System (CIS)**.

City's Decision-Making Power

The City has the power to make any decision, or to exercise any contractual right or remedy, contemplated in this RFP at its own absolute and unfettered discretion, and no public law duty, whether arising from the principles of procedural fairness or the rules of natural justice, applies to the City.

Selection Process

The selection process will include a proposal rating evaluation based on several items included in the proposal such as:

- Completeness of existing functionality to meet the city's stated functionality and goals
- Company viability as a software provider with proven history of SaaS solutions to municipalities
- References
- Timeliness of implementation proposed
- Pricing for implementation services and annual SaaS license fees (for a five-year period)

Bidders are required to submit their pricing section of this proposal in a separate document. The rating of proposals will be completed by the review committee on all other items, before opening the pricing document. Please see appendix A for details of the evaluation process.

Proposals will be considered only from vendors who are firmly established as a proven solution provider to municipal utilities, financially responsible, and who have the resources and ability to deliver the services in a professional and expedient manner. The City may request additional information as deemed necessary. Failure to provide such information may result in the proposal being considered non-responsive.

Questions

Written questions regarding this RFP shall be submitted by e-mail to Kristen Dunsford at kristen.dunsford@city.summerside.pe.ca up until **12:59:59 AST, October 14, 2020**. Questions received after this date and time may not be addressed.

1.0 Proposed Solution Scope

1.1 General Information and Background:

The City of Summerside is responsible for by providing electric, water, sewer, and other municipal services to approximately 15,000 residents. Responsibilities and roles within the municipality include: operation and maintenance of the electric, water, and sewer systems; utility financial monitoring, planning, customer billing, and revenue collection and administration. The City owns and operates over 7700 meters and bills utility accounts on a monthly basis. Additional information, including facts, figures, and policies, may be found on the City website at the following link: www.summerside.ca.

1.2 Purpose and Goals:

The purpose of this Request for Proposal (RFP) is to procure a fully supported and configurable cloud-based solution configured to the City's needs. The goal of this procurement is to secure a proven solution that can be implemented without customizations and achieve a go-live date no later than February 1, 2021.

The City is looking to identify a new customer information system (CIS) to replace a legacy system that supports the Finance and customer service operations. The CIS should encompass customer service and utility billing for electric, water, sewer and other municipal services. The CIS will provide a platform to support operations and management of City utility services, which includes, but is not limited to, enrolling new customers, generating billing, managing payments, administering customer service transactions, tracking meter reading and consumption, generating service orders, billing multiple cycles with multiple rates for electric, water and sewer, and enabling access to a variety of customer account information.

The City's current processes include integration or compatibility with several external programs through an import/export procedure. Existing integrations include: GIS, meter reading, smart meter and banking programs. In addition, the current environment includes integration with SpryEngage, an external customer portal which is used to manage customer interactions such as e-billing, payments, usage, program offerings, energy efficiency goals and more.

The City has identified needs in a potential future solution, including but not limited to:

Greater transparency and visibility into the CIS system:

- User-friendly reporting tools and queries directly from the application
- Better data analytics specific to different users and roles
- Better interfaces into the CIS system with SpryEngage Customer Portal, service orders through mobile application, payments, meter reading, charges, GIS, Smart Meters and Electro Thermal Storage (ETS) devices
- Automated scheduling, dispatching, and order management through a mobile application
- An audit trail to determine who made changes and updates
- Greater data integrity checks during meter reading, billing, collection processes
- Meter and equipment lifecycle management to improve City processes across departments

Additional areas of improvement the City has identified in a new solution include:

- Redesign the responsibilities of the applications, such that the vendor manages the application, upgrades, environment, uptime, security, redundancy, and monitoring.
- Flexibility in the account/customer/premises/services data model to better handle the many scenarios the City is faced with in delivering its services to citizens.
- Tools to directly communicate with citizens in their choice of communication.
- The ability to schedule, dispatch, complete, create or modify work orders from a mobile application integrated as part of the solution with the CIS.
- Less work arounds and more configurable processes to meet the city's business processes
- Limited ability to generate a listing of impacted customers from a particular event (e.g., using GIS tools, lists, queries)

The overall goal of this project is to enhance existing business processes using modern technology and progressive vendor service delivery models. The primary objective is to procure, implement, and jointly manage with the Vendor a system that achieves the goals listed above.

1.3 Scope of Work:

The scope of work consists of providing a fully functional cloud solution with full configuration to meet the City's needs. The proposed system must be supportable on all common mobile and web architectures and must provide an exceptional customer experience by being intuitive and collaborative in nature, integrates seamlessly, and accessible and has a successful history of installation and utilization.

The selected vendor will provide the necessary services, including:

- Project management
- Testing
- Training
- Configuration
- Data conversion, including extraction from current system
- Integration development
- Technical and user documentation for the system components.

The scope of work includes services for the implementation but also to support the ongoing solution as a Software as a Service support model. SaaS services include user support, upgrades, release management, application monitoring and management and high availability.

1.4 Requirements:

The new solution must deliver as a minimum the requirements identified below as representative of a progressive solution the City is wishing to procure. Please use this list in your response to validate whether you meet the requirement and explain in enough detail on how you meet this requirement.

Technology

- A true Software as a Service, cloud model solution offering
- Must utilize a responsive design, browser-based user interface
- All upgrades are deployed and managed by Vendor
- An API-first design; highly extensible application design
- Provide process computing scalability: multi server processing to accommodate process intensive routines
- Embedded Dashboards and business intelligence tools that are configurable
- Embedded workflow to distribute, track and complete actions within the organization
- Communication templates for mass query selection and delivery of messages both in email and text delivery to customers.
- Multiple environments available to support the project needs for testing, conversion, training and production.
- High availability of application, utilizing a top tier cloud platform service such as AWS.
- Ability to complete multiple types of integrations between the City's existing programs: Alexander Meter Reading, Tantalus Smart Meters, ESRI GIS, Moneris, Dynamics GP, SpryEngage Customer Portal.

Customer Care

- Ability to set up and create a customer billing database that allows for:
 - a. Retaining existing account numbers and premise structure
 - b. Maintaining existing route and sequence structure for customer billing
 - c. Keeping existing outsourcing specifications
 - d. Transferring service between customers
 - e. Multiple rates and fees on the same account
 - f. Multiple billing calculations per account
 - g. Tracking and display of transaction history
 - h. Tracking and display of historic water consumption
 - i. Tracking and display of financial history including account aging
 - j. Secure storage of customer personal information
- Ability to process payments from credit/debit cards, checks, cash, and EFT transactions
- Ability to complete billing on a monthly basis for a system of the City's size with the ability to expand with demand
- Ability to enter transactions directly on accounts; examples include: credit adjustments, payments, fees for service, write offs of bad debt
- Broad search capabilities that quickly narrow searches and filtered records designed like current browser technologies available.
- Embedded communications, including Email/Text bidirectional communications from customers directly in CIS;
- Efficient delivery of customer communications from CIS including options to create templates and attached reports with click of a selection; all messages back from customer are brought into CIS.
- All Audit logs of changes, both systemic and manual edits from users are logged for easy viewing
- Log of Screen views by user and date tracked
- Logging of note categories with embedded task and order initiation from the note comments
- GIS integration on the Account and Premises with overlay of GIS attributes available
- Services views include installed all meter and equipment and consumption history
- Search queries across entities, responsive lists and filters
- Easy editing of customer and account attributes from main screens
- Provide the ability to easily transition accounts from a current status to a terminated status
- Flexible Wizard based processes such as move in/move out, allowing for configuration of process flows based on frequent types, accounts, etc. and the flexibility to determine on a service by service basis what action to include in the move process.

Premises/Meters/Equipment

- Mass import features using spreadsheet like entry of entities such as premises, meters, equipment, payments, etc. to more efficiently manage City data into the CIS.
- GIS based map views on premise page
- Extensible attributes per entity type; prepopulated drop-down fields relevant per sub-type (e.g. electric meter vs water meter attributes)
- Premise services entity allow for consistent history of services provided, meters and equipment attached over history, unique service and billing attributes to that service point.
- Equipment and equipment types allow for intelligent relationships per type and if rate impacting (chargeable equipment, credits on installed equipment such as electro thermal storage appliances)

Billing

- Intelligent meter validation rules checking against multiple configuration variables (consumption same period last year, last month, last 3 months, last 3 years same period) to refine the potential alerts on high usage or incorrect reads.
- Proven interface to meter reading system, Alexander (<https://www.alexander-co.com/csst.php>).
- Dynamic reading validation page to manage estimates, initiate orders, comment and approve readings for billing
- Holistic view of metering, billing, penalty dates, final billing processes on a dynamic user interface.
- Intelligent user interface on processes (calculation, posting, generation of statements, etc.) to view and see status of processes. Dynamically manage the exceptions and action items.
- Multi-service billing, including electric, water and sewer billing and municipal services.
- Provide flexible budget billing options
- Complex billing such as net metering, Electric thermal storage electric rates and large industrial electric programs.
- Logical rate schedule program to reduce the complexity of variants of rates currently managed at the city.
- Run any process at any time of day without impacting users in application; User can also access and perform other actions in system at same time processes are running
- Smart statement generation that segments electronic billing batches from print batches, automatically storing all statements as attachments to the account statement records in the CIS for easy retrieval/view/reprint as needed.

Collections

- Intelligent user interface on collections processing, responsive processing speeds and views of returned values, easy filtering on values
- Multi-media delivery of collection steps; define delivery methods (Email, Text, IVR, Letter, Service Order)
- Wizard based actions on accounts: payment plans, extended due dates, payments, transfer balances, etc. to efficiently action collections
- Bankruptcy processes specific to utility configuration

Payments

- Receipt Batches overview provides complete view of all batches in progress regardless of source; drill down easily into the batch details
- Flexible import routine to allow for multiple formatting of import batches and validations

Financial

- A financial reporting system that allows for flexibility in accessing data. Reporting examples include:
 - a. General Ledger summaries
 - b. Daily transactions
 - c. Accounts receivable
 - d. Deposits held for others
 - e. Dates and types of transactions with flexible prompts
- Full financial ledger capabilities, providing complete general ledger balancing and reconciliation views to the exported values provided to the City's financial system (current Microsoft Dynamics GP)
- List view of transactions for easy filtering on type, date, amount, etc. to quickly drill to desired query
- Concepts of Fiscal Periods and Service Periods to control the posting and reporting quality in the system
- Generation of Payable vouchers
- Calendar view of all reports generated either on schedules or upon process completion; allows users to look up by date the relevant reports at that date

2.0 Vendor Response Instructions

Vendors are asked to submit in electronic format only, a concise proposal that sufficiently covers the required project scope, implementation services, and SaaS solution being proposed. The Response document must be digitally signed by a person authorized to sign the offer and included in the Response.

The City asks that vendors include the following in the response.

2.1 Qualifications & Experience

1. Executive Summary: Include a one-page summary of the entire proposal describing the most important elements of the proposal.
2. Identification of the Lead Entity, including:
 - I. Legal name and address of organization or individual proposing to conduct the business.
 - II. Legal form of organization (e.g. partnership, corporation, non-profit status, etc.). If joint venture, identify the members of the joint venture and provide all information required within this section for each member.
 - III. Disclosure of “parent company” if proposer is a wholly owned subsidiary (or subject to other partnerships).
 - IV. Physical address(es) of office(s) working on this project.
 - V. Name, title, address, email, and telephone number of the person to serve as project manager and a proposal contact (if different).
3. Project Organization and Key Personnel
 - I. Describe proposed project organization, including team structure and identification and responsibilities of key personnel. Include resumes for key personnel as attachments.
 - II. Describe type of availability and hours, including office location/hours, phone and fax numbers, and email addresses. Provide an indication of the approximate staffing level(s) for the project.
 - III. Describe the contractor’s ability to work with City staff to meet the projected timeline for services and implementation of the software.
4. Company background: include experience, size, location and other relevant company information. What changeover of staff has been experienced in the last year and what do you expect over the next five years?
5. Proposed Solution Scope: how does the solution match the scope listed in section 1.2
6. Implementation approach: how would the proposed solution be implemented in a timely manner to meet the outlined timing of February 1, 2021. Does the proposal cover the required services listed in scope?
7. Requirements: per section 1.4, list how your proposed solution meets these requirements and explain in enough detail how it meets these.

8. References: please provide at least three references of your solution. Please include company, reference name, title, phone number, email, and information about the reference solution.
9. Pricing: please complete “RFP Pricing Worksheet” as the Cost Proposal for complete pricing details and **save and submit as a separate document**.
10. Terms of Service: please provide a template of Vendor’s terms of service for both implementation and ongoing SaaS services proposed. The City reserves the right to modify and append the contract to meet the City’s requirements.

3.0 Evaluation of Proposals

Proposals will be evaluated by a review committee. Each member of the review committee will rate each proposal according to this procedure and the weighting table included (Appendix A).

The evaluation procedure is as follows:

1. Open the technical proposal document, evaluate and score each proposal as per the Rating Table Report (see next page). The three top rated proposals (excluding price), will be selected for the next stage of the review.
2. A proposal rated as poor on any one of the categories is unacceptable regardless of its final score.
3. The second stage will consist of opening the cost proposal document and evaluating the one-time and recurring costs over a five-year period. The pricing and the qualitative scores will be given equal weighting in the final evaluation.
4. Selection among proposals having identical overall scores will be based on the lowest price.
5. If necessary, a meeting with the best scored proponent may be required to obtain additional information, clarification and agreement.
6. If an agreement cannot be reached, discussion with the next best overall score.
7. Make final recommendation for acceptance.
8. Upon approval by City Council, notify all consultants that submitted proposals.

In the event that none of the proposals are found to be acceptable or an agreement cannot be reached with any firm, then the review committee must re-evaluate this request for proposal.

Evaluation of Criteria and Rating Table Report

Criteria	Rating %	Actual Score
Functionality to Meet Stated Purpose and Goals: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cloud-Based Solution Go-Live Date Achievable Integration Communication Tools 	30	
Qualifications of Company: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Experience History of SaaS Solution to Municipalities Municipal Experience Staff Changeover 	30	
Scope of Work and Adherence to Requirements (section 1.4): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Technology Customer Care Premises/Meters/Equipment Billing Collections Payments Financial 	25	
Implementation: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Proposed approach Covers Required Services Listed in Section 1.3 	15	
Total Qualitative Value	100	

Total Score:

Qualitative Value (out of 50)	
Pricing Value (out of 50)	
Total Score	

The following guide to rating (based on a maximum of 10) will be used:

- Poor (1-3)
- Fair (4-6)
- Good (7-8)
- Excellent (9-10)