

# CITY OF BURLINGTON & BTV IGNITE COMMUNITY INNOVATION PROPOSAL

## Smart City Initiatives – Phase I

*Translating Technological Advances to Address Local Challenges More Efficiently*

**Date Posted: July 15, 2019**  
**Questions Due: August 16, 2019**  
**Answers Posted: August 30, 2019**  
**Proposals Due: September 12, 2019**

### 1. PURPOSE

The City of Burlington’s Innovation & Technology Department, BTV Ignite, and their partners seek the services of qualified private and non-profit organizations, as well as professional researchers, to partner with the City and BTV Ignite participants to support and expand Burlington’s ongoing “Smart City” initiatives and to address one or more of the short series of challenges articulated in this first Community Innovation Proposal (CIP). This CIP is envisioned as the first phase of several CIP, RFP, or RFI releases seeking to help focus community attention on Smart City opportunities in Burlington. This phase highlights opportunities that are primarily code-based, which will not be the case in each phase.

### 2. BACKGROUND

#### *City of Burlington*

Burlington has succeeded in implementing a number of innovative solutions modernizing service provision over the last several years, including the Parkmobile app allowing meter payment by phone, the SeeClickFix app and online reporting tool for residents, new online tools for building inspection scheduling and the creation of an in-house app for tracking inspection results, a partnership with a new firm that opened City bond issues to resident investors by reducing transaction costs, the in-house creation of a new Construction Portal that allows residents to monitor construction progress of all types across the community, and the successful transition to a computer-aided dispatch system for Fire emergency responses. While these advances are helpful improvements, the Mayor would like to build on this success by implementing new “Smart City” initiatives that utilize new technologies or developmental solutions to improve the services the City offers residents and visitors while reducing the City’s costs and making the community more accessible.

Numerous challenges remain where the implementation of nascent technological solutions or the development of new technological solutions in partnership with outside parties, including those represented on the BTV Ignite Board, could solve problems while reducing costs incurred by City taxpayers.

#### *BTV Ignite*

Building on Burlington’s world class fiber infrastructure, BTV Ignite helps ensure the community is a great place to live, work, and innovate. The organization helps entrepreneurs launch and grow businesses, residents and newcomers find great job opportunities and develop new skills, researchers discover new knowledge and built innovations, and students prepare for the world of today and tomorrow.

BTV Ignite is a non-profit organization sponsored by the leading business, academic, and government stakeholders of Burlington. Founded in 2014, BTV Ignite was created to help take advantage of Burlington's city-wide fiber-optic gigabit infrastructure and bring together a crucial group of stakeholders to focus the community's institutions on job creation, skill development, and STEAM education that exists at the intersection of Burlington's world-class tech infrastructure and growing digital and tech sector.

The organization's board regularly convenes representatives from community institutions to coordinate and identify shared opportunities for those organizations' often overlapping work related to the digital economy. In addition, the work of the Board and the Project Manager is focused around the following four lines of effort:

- Support and expand Burlington's ongoing "Smart City" successes and leverage partners and networks to attract vendor and local interest in additional Smart City efforts (the focus of this and future CIPs).
- Support the development of a cohesive marketing plan to highlight the community's different research, start-up, and growth stage successes and attract additional talented people, new resources, strengthen workforce training opportunities, and more innovative companies build on that success.
- Strengthen the tech ecosystem by (i) leveraging new community investment funds to support early and growth stage companies; (ii) making new investments in STEM and skill-building opportunities for Burlington's youth and workforce, principally for those who do not have existing opportunities; and (iii) coordinating Innovation Week, linking entrepreneurs, investors, and institutional players from across the community, state, region.

### 3. THE PHASE I CHALLENGE

This first phase CIP focuses on challenges and opportunities of a limited scope that would offer a meaningful improvement for residents or other users, if realized. It was designed with feedback from BTV Ignite stakeholders as well as community organizations such as Code for BTV and Code Academy. Future phases could focus on problems of greater scale or different emphasis. In all phases, the fundamental goal is to identify partner(s) who can support, supplement, or make use of City data to make Burlington a more welcoming, efficient, effective, and modern community and enable the City to improve the services provided, engage new technologies, and make the community more accessible within the context of a constrained budget.

Within the scope of this particular CIP, the City and BTV Ignite Board are particularly interested in empowering residents to better understand, engage with, and shape city priorities and service. For this phase, the City plans to provide information publicly so that more than one respondent could engage the work simultaneously (i.e., though the City may choose a "winning respondent" to work with primarily, the data will be made publicly available for all respondents to engage; some respondents and some users of the data may only need or desire to engage the City in limited ways). Respondents could respond to all or any component of the CIP described below:

- **Enabling resident evaluation of rental housing quality:** With the support of the City Council, over the last several years the City has begun evaluating rental housing

by providing compliance certificates after inspection good for between one and five years. A five-year certificate is indicative of a well-managed property that does not require re-inspection for five years, while a one-year certificate indicates a property that requires additional City attention. This information is updated regularly on the City's AMANDA permitting database and available for public access via <https://www2.burlingtonvt.gov/dataservices/>.

The City would like to encourage the development of a lightweight app that could readily provide would-be renters with this information as they evaluate a potential apartment. The City would further request that the app be designed such that its presentation of the quality of the apartment would be readily understandable to a non-English speaker (i.e., language translation plugins, language agnostic UI, etc.). An emphasis on this design element in any response would be noted.

The information in the database includes SPAN numbers, GIS coordinates, and street addresses, and unique identifiers within the City database for each property (PropertyRSN). The CoCYears field indicates the length of the certificate of compliance (i.e., how many years until the City will return to inspect the rental unit). We recommend designing any data query around SPAN numbers as this is a value independently verified by the State and unique to each parcel. Additional potentially helpful public data is available as part of the Vermont Center for Geographic Information's Open Geodata Portal, <http://geodata.vermont.gov/>. Any application or API will need to verify street address against the SPAN number to ensure accuracy.

- **Improving voter access and awareness during 2020 election:** Burlington is a unique community – especially in its electoral districting. The City has eight wards, and residents vote at a polling station within their ward for every level of election (City, State, Federal). However, the State legislative districts do not correspond to the ward boundaries. A single ward could have several legislative districts cutting across it, so your neighbor may vote for the same City candidates but different State legislative candidates.

The City has an existing electoral map that is available at polling stations and online (as a shapefile, <https://www2.burlingtonvt.gov/Clerk/Elections/Map/>), and would like to improve voter access by making this information about what ward and legislative district a voter lives in available in an easy to use mobile app or web-based application. The idea would be to allow both voting residents as well as election workers assisting voters at the polls quickly and easily determine the correct ballot to give a citizen.

- **Event calendar coordination:** Multiple City and BTV Ignite Partner websites contain a wealth of knowledge about upcoming public events that could be of interest to community members. These calendars – often running on drupal or WordPress sites or based on Google calendar – are not linked in a way that would allow centralization of event opportunities in one “community calendar app,” automatically updated and readily accessible to residents online or through an associated mobile app. Connecting even a subset of these calendars could enable residents’ better insight into upcoming events at, for example, City Arts, Champlain

College, UVM, Parks and City Waterfront events, or the Chamber’s entrepreneurship series. The City seeks to encourage the development of such an app, using as a basis the following websites. The City further seeks an app that could accommodate additional private, public, or non-profit entities seeking to highlight different events beyond those offered by the City and BTV Ignite partners on the same platform.

<https://enjoyburlington.com/events/>  
<https://www.burlingtoncityarts.org/events>  
<https://www.burlingtonvt.gov/calendar/>  
<https://www.fletcherfree.org/programs-event/agenda>  
<https://www.churchstmarketplace.com/calendar>  
<https://www.vermont.org/chamber/lcrrc-events/>  
<http://www.uvm.edu/eventscalendar/?Page=EMS>  
<https://www.champlain.edu/eventlisting>  
<http://www.burlingtonvt.gov/cedo>  
<http://www.burlingtonvt.gov/CEDO/Business-Assistance-Overview>

#### **4. SCOPE OF WORK/DELIVERABLE**

A successful respondent who wishes to work with the City on all or any component of this CIP should outline their proposed work plan conceived in response to one or more of the needs outlined above in Section 3. The City seeks primarily to engage volunteer organizations or organizations for whom this work would provide intrinsic value – respondents that are seeking funding to support their work will be at a disadvantage. This CIP intentionally limits the required “deliverable” at the outset of the work recognizing that volunteer or non-profit groups are interested in engaging this work in an episodic fashion, and there is no value creating barriers to such participation.

Successful respondents could also include representatives from BTV Ignite’s partner institutions, but review and evaluation of such proposals will require the recusal of any Board member associated with that institution from the Selection Committee (described further in Section 5).

A successful respondent work plan should:

- Provide some limited background on their organization (or skills, if an individual);
- Explain how their work will engage the concept outlined in Section 3;
- Explain how they intend to access the City data (i.e., any requirements) and the steps they would take to code an application and address any design requests the City has (i.e., design that reduces language barriers)
- Speak to how they see their engagement improving community access to data, City productivity, and/or City service provision in a measurable way; and
- Be feasible on a relatively short timeline (i.e., over a 9 to 12-month period).

For example, successful respondents should be prepared to show tangible progress within 9 - 12 months of selection, details of which would be outlined on a case by case basis in a Memorandum of Understanding between the City and selected respondent(s). Additional criteria for selection are outlined in Section 5, below.

Again, however, this CIP is designed so that regardless of who the City engages with as a primary partner, the data will be available to all interested respondents. The City can also provide a limited coordination function connecting respondents with similar project interests and a range of skills or backgrounds.

#### *Deliverables*

Proposed work plans should be no more than 10 single-sided pages, but can include technical appendices if required. Shorter proposals are welcome. Proposals shall be submitted via email by **September 12, 2019**. Respondents may submit a hardcopy proposal via U.S. Mail, but must also provide an electronic PDF copy; all digital and print proposals must be received by the deadline to be considered. Contact information provided below in Section 6.

This RFP does not commit the City to pay any costs incurred by any proposer in the submission of a proposal. The proposer is responsible for all costs associated with the response to this RFP. The City reserves the right to reject any or all proposals at any time with no penalty, to negotiate with any qualified source, to waive any formality or cancel the RFP in part or in its entirety if it is in the best interest of the City of Burlington. This solicitation of proposals in no way obligates the City of Burlington to award a contract. All materials submitted in response to the RFP will become property of the City upon delivery.

#### *Timeline*

Selection is expected to conclude at a Fall 2019 BTV Ignite Board Meeting, with applicants notified shortly thereafter. The length of any engagement would be spelled out in an MOU between the City and the successful respondent(s).

## **5. EVALUATION AND SELECTION**

All proposals seeking City engagement will be evaluated using the criteria listed below by a Selection Committee made up of City of Burlington staff, including the Chief Innovation Officer, and members of the BTV Ignite Board or their designees as determined by the Board. The Selection Committee may elect to interview respondents prior to final selection. The Selection Committee will provide an update for review to the full Board.

Should an organization participating in BTV Ignite also put forward a proposal (i.e., a research professional at the UVM Medical Center or a professor at UVM), the Board representative affiliated with that organization should be recused from any decision related to that proposal.

The City and BTV Ignite partners may or may not contribute funds to support one or more proposals in response to this RFP, or the City or individual partners may pursue certain proposals independently. Please note, any expenditure of City funds related to this RFP must follow the City's purchasing policies.

Criteria for Selection:

- Demonstration of overall project understanding and knowledge of the specific subject area (15 pts)
- Qualifications of the responding team and key personnel to be assigned to this project and related experiences (10 pts)

- Clarity around how the project will improve productivity in a measurable way as a result of its implementation (15 pts)
- Clarity within the written response as to how a non-technical member of the community could readily understand the benefit of the project (10 pts)
- Feasibility of the project, and feasibility on a relatively short timeline – i.e., tangible progress within 12 months (25 pts).
- If a private or non-profit organization, demonstrated history of implementing successful projects with similar scopes of work (25 pts)
- **Alternatively**, if a researcher, markers of prospective development success, to include prior grant or research awards or recognitions, successful pilot implementations, or simulations completed (25 pts)

## 6. CONTACT PERSON

Please submit all questions and submissions related to this Community Innovation Proposal to:

Brian Lowe  
 Chief Innovation Officer  
 City of Burlington, VT  
[brian@burlingtonvt.gov](mailto:brian@burlingtonvt.gov)

## 7. TERMS & CONDITIONS

While this proposal seeks community engagement, not necessarily resulting in any funding, the following terms and conditions apply and would become important particularly if the project grows into some kind of funded effort. Additional requirements, around workers' compensation, professional insurance, and an independent contractor relationship would be addressed in an MOU, if applicable.

### Communications

It is important that all respondents are given clear and consistent information. Therefore, all respondents are required to submit any questions related to this project or RFP process via email. Responses to all submitted questions will be posted on the City of Burlington website at: <https://www.burlingtonvt.gov/RFP>. Questions concerning this RFP must be received via email per the schedule outlined on page 1. Inquiries received after this date will not be considered or answered.

### General Compliance with Laws

The respondent shall comply with all applicable Federal, State and local laws, including but not limited to the Burlington Livable Wage Ordinance and City insurance requirements, if the project result in any kind of funded work – not a guarantee. Details about the City's livable wage ordinance can be found at the following link (<https://www.burlingtonvt.gov/CityCouncil/Livable-Wage-Ordinance>) and begin for projects in excess of \$15,000.

### Ownership of Documents and Public Records

Proposals, plans, specifications, and other documents prepared and submitted under this RFP shall become the property of the City. Any and all records submitted to the City, whether electronic, paper, or otherwise recorded, are subject to the Vermont Public Records Act. The determination of how those records must be handled is solely within the purview of City. All records considered to

be trade secrets, as that term is defined by subsection 317(c)(9) of the Vermont Public Records Act, shall be identified, as shall all other records considered to be exempt under the Act. It is not sufficient to merely state generally that the proposal is proprietary or a trade secret or is otherwise exempt. Particular records, pages or section which are believed to be exempt must be specifically identified as such and must be separated from other records with a convincing explanation and rationale sufficient to justify each exemption from release consistent with Section 317 of Title 1 of the Vermont Statutes Annotated.

#### Other terms

Costs for preparing your proposal in response to this request are solely the responsibility of the respondent. The City of Burlington, VT or the BTV Ignite organization assume no responsibility and liability for costs incurred by parties responding to this CIP or responding to any further requests for interviews, additional data, etc., prior to the issuance of the contract. The City of Burlington reserves the right to accept, modify in whole or in part, or reject any or all Statement(s) of Qualifications or proposals, with or without cause, and to waive immaterial defects and minor irregularities in responses. All decisions related to this solicitation by the City and BTV Ignite will be final. The City reserves the right to request clarification of information submitted and to request additional information of one or more respondents. All materials submitted in response to this CIP will become the property of the City upon delivery. This solicitation in no way obligates the City of Burlington to award a contract.

#### Equal Opportunity

The selection of respondent shall be made without regard to race, age, color, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, marital status, veteran status, disability, HIV positive status, crime victim status, genetic information or political affiliation. The City of Burlington is an Equal Opportunity Employer and encourages proposals from qualified minority and woman-owned businesses.

#### Indemnification

Respondents will act in an independent capacity and not as officers or employees of the City. To the extent permitted by law, the Respondent shall indemnify, defend and hold harmless the Municipality and its officers and employees from liability and any claims, suits, expenses, losses, judgments, and damages arising as a result of the Respondent's acts and/or omissions in the performance of professional and non-professional services under this contract. As used herein, "non-professional services" means services provided under this Agreement other than professional services relating to the design and/or engineering of all or part of the project.

#### Reservation of Rights

It is the intent of the City to select the proposal that it deems to be in the best interests of the City. To that end, the City reserves the following rights:

1. To accept or modify any proposal in whole or in part;
2. To accept multiple proposals, in whole or in part, if doing so is in the City's best interests;
3. To reject any or all proposals in whole or in part;
4. To waive any informalities, omissions, or irregularities in any proposal;
5. To terminate and reissue this RFP for any reason;
6. To remedy any error in the RFP process without reissuing it; and/or
7. To change or negotiate any specifications in the City's sole discretion.