

**CITY OF HOUSTON**  
**REQUEST FOR INFORMATION (RFI)**  
**(Publicly-Accessible Electric Vehicle Support**  
**Equipment Business Models for the Administration**  
**and Regulatory Affairs Department)**  
**SOLICITATION NO.: S63-I03320**

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**Date Issued:** July 10, 2020

**Solicitation Due Date:** August 7, 2020 by 4:00 p.m. CST

**Pre-Submission Questions** N/A  
**Deadline:**

**Solicitation Contact Person:** Eloise Gonzalez  
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**Project Description:** The City of Houston, (the “City”), acting through the Administration and Regulatory Affairs Department (“ARA”) Office of Sustainability, is issuing this Request for Information (“RFI”) to gather input on business models and potential partnership opportunities for owning, operating, and managing publicly and privately accessible Electric Vehicle Support Equipment (“EVSE”) on City-owned property, as it seeks to modernize and expand its EVSE infrastructure to meet the projected increase of electric vehicle (“EVs”) ownership and usage in the greater Houston area.

## **1.0 GENERAL INFORMATION**

- 1.1** The purpose of this Request for Information (“RFI”) is to gather information about business models and potential partnership opportunities with third-party Electric Vehicle Support Equipment (“EVSE”) providers for owning, operating, and managing publicly accessible EVSE on City-owned property, in addition to privately accessible EVSE on City-owned property. The City is interested in:
- Enhancing its understanding of EVSE, including currently available equipment hardware, including the Open Charge Point Protocol (“OCPP”) as well as other standardized protocols (e.g. OSCP 1.0), and the ability to add, remove, and update hardware to the EVSE network as the City sees appropriate.
  - Furthering its understanding of EVSE purchase and warranty options, including extended warranty coverages and costs (e.g. coverages that include, but are not limited to, inclement weather, natural disasters, vandalism, etc.).
  - Setting expectations for future EVSE technology developments as they relate to the increasing growth of electric vehicles (“EVs”) over the next ten years, and accordingly, how to plan for EVSE network updates and expansions.
  - Learning what local policies would be useful for EVSE investment in the region and how the City can attract EVSE partnership opportunities.
- 1.2** The findings from this RFI will inform the scope and requirements for the issuance of a future Request for Proposal (“RFP”) to deliver a comprehensive plan for owning, operating, and managing EVSE in the City, including, but not limited to design and engineering services, original equipment manufacturer hardware procurement, a comprehensive software network platform, construction and installation, commissioning, bill payment, mobile application support, and maintenance.

## **2.0 BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

- 2.1** In 2017, the City set a goal to become carbon neutral by 2050. In 2019, the City launched EVOolve Houston, a public-private partnership with the goal of accelerating clean transportation through electrification. In April 2020, after extensive community input, the City issued its Climate Action Plan, which identifies accelerating the transition to cleaner and more efficient vehicle technologies as a priority action to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. To further enable EV ownership and ensure its viability for all residents, sufficient infrastructure must be put in place.
- 2.2** The City operates 63 publicly available Level 2 (240-volt) charging stations. Most of these charging stations are located in City-owned parking structures and surface lots. The City also operates several Level 2 (240 volt) charging stations for private use for vehicles in a city-wide motor-pool program. Some of the private stations have been damaged in Hurricane Harvey. However the City is looking to replace/add to existing infrastructure for a total of approximately 40 private charging stations. According to a 2019 study by the International Council on Clean Transportation, the Houston area has 31-40% of the charging infrastructure in place to meet the demand needed by 2025.
- 2.3** In 2019, the City’s agreement with Blink Network, Inc. (“Blink”) expired. Blink is the owner and operator of the currently available public-facing Level 2 EVSEs, and a small portion of the private Level 2 EVSEs and has been under contract with the City since 2014. Blink is currently operating under a month-to-month extension to service the City’s EVSEs.

### **3.0 SCOPE OF SERVICES**

**3.1** The City is interested in exploring business models and potential partnership opportunities with third-party EVSE providers for the installation, operation, maintenance, and possible ownership of publicly accessible EVSEs on the City's property. Publicly accessible sites may include off-street parking lots and garages, curbside parking spaces, as well as other sites with longer dwell times such as at public parks, community centers, libraries, and other sites as determined by the City. Privately accessible sites will include parking garages and surface parking lots on City owned or leased property.

Business models should primarily focus on increasing access to EVSEs and must reflect an ability to adapt to rapidly changing technologies and customer demands. Equipment, installation, operation and maintenance, on-site payment, and web-based mapping platforms should be described in detail.

**3.2** The City is also requesting that respondents include a cost methodology for determining budget of: (1) site preparation, (2) make-ready construction requirements, and (3) infrastructure deployment.

#### **3.3 Information Focal Areas for Submission**

Respondents to this RFI should include details around the following criteria:

- Respondent experience and qualifications, including reputation and financial soundness
- EVSE functionality and deployment processes
- EVSE maintenance, operations and support best practices
- EVSE management and resilience, including risk mitigation for inclement weather, natural disasters, and other damages
- Warranty, replacement, and upgrade options for EVSE and related hardware and software
- Transition processes between EVSE management contracts, including any associated costs and system changes
- Data and reporting, including equipment usage reports for the City
- Privacy and security protocols for consumer and the City
- Pricing structure and methodology for consumer and the City
- Retail electricity procurement methodologies for EVSE providers
- Potential additional revenue generating avenues to offset expenditures by the City
- Other strategies to lower costs of EV charging deployment (e.g. energy management, supply chain logistics, etc.)
- Other technologies or programs that contribute to the City's mission to achieve carbon neutrality and advance sustainable transportation
- Customer interface, community engagement, and education
- Requirements of the Americans with Disability Act as they pertain to EVSE infrastructure

**3.4** The City welcomes comments from all vendors. The City does not intend to award a contract based on responses, nor otherwise pay for the preparation of any information submitted or the City's use of such information. The information collected in this RFI will be used to refine the City's requirements, technical specifications and anticipated budget for a future RFP.

### **4.0 PROCESS**

**4.1** The City's Administration and Regulatory Affairs Department ("ARA") Office of Sustainability will review the submissions for this RFI to gain knowledge of the technologies and services available on the market that address the purpose of the RFI. The City will review information and recommendations received to assess our needs and define our requirements. Respondents to this

RFI may be asked to provide a demonstration to City staff seeking to gain a better understanding of product offering.

- 4.2 This RFI is issued solely for information and planning purposes. It does not constitute an RFP or a promise to issue an RFP in the future. The City will not pay for any information or administrative costs incurred in response to this RFI. All costs associated with responding to this RFI will be solely at the interested party's expense.
- 4.3 If you are interested in receiving a copy of the consequent RFP, we encourage respondents to register on the Strategic Procurement Division's website, as a supplier with the applicable NIGP code(s). <http://purchasing.houstontx.gov>

## 5.0 RFI INSTRUCTIONS AND FORMAT

- 5.1 The City welcomes respondents to submit pertinent information, as specified in the Scope of Services (Section 3.0), as well as any information considered directly relevant and supplemental to the focal areas provided. This information should be labeled separately as "additional documentation." Please submit the requested information by email to the City's Strategic Procurement Division, as provided below. Respondents may also contact the City's Strategic Procurement Division with any clarifying questions in regard to this RFI.
- Email responses to: [Eloise.Gonzalez@houstontx.gov](mailto:Eloise.Gonzalez@houstontx.gov)
  - Responses must be no more than ten pages, not including "additional documentation" which must be no more than five pages.
  - Please include the identification number **S63-I03320** on any responses.
- 5.2 The deadline for responses to this RFI is Friday, August 7, 2020 at 4:00 P.M. Central Standard Time. The City reserves the right to cancel, amend or extend the deadline for the RFI at its' sole discretion.
- All costs directly or indirectly related to the preparation of a response to this RFI shall be the sole responsibility of and shall be borne by the entity or individual responding.
  - Information submitted in response to this RFI will not be released by the City, through (TPIA) Texas Procurement Information Act.