City of Somerville

Request for Information

Introduction

In Somerville, we like to say that while others have innovation districts, we are the Innovation City. University and industry partnerships have been critical to establishing Somerville as a citywide incubator of smart, forward-looking ideas—whether within industry or good governance. That innovation and creativity is backed up by know-how and follow-through.

In October 2014, Somerville launched Somerville GreenTech to meet the City's ambitious goal of carbon neutrality by 2050 and released an RFI in an effort to both support this vital industry and to help the city reduce its contribution to climate change. We piloted two green technologies developed by local companies; WrightGrid and Understory.

Through this effort, the City learned how difficult it is for innovators to find opportunities to test and gain support for the commercialization of their product. Because our goals overlap, the City of Somerville can help change this. The City is interested in learning from, piloting, and—when it's the right tech for the right need—implementing technological innovations to better and effectively deliver in a range of areas. They include but are not limited to, housing, social equity, economic development, sustainability, arts, education, government innovation, smart city infrastructure, and public health. Likewise, we work daily to help our local businesses thrive and create jobs for our residents, and as part of this effort, we are also committed to facilitating pilots with Somerville businesses, nonprofits, and educational institutions working in a vast array of fields and innovation areas including tech, biotech, healthcare, nonprofit services, mobility, net neutrality, and much more. Collaboration with emerging technologies will help us lead the way in finding paths to greater municipal sustainability, equity, and economic growth.

We believe that the creativity needed to spur the economy of the future shouldn't be confined to the lab or incubator but should take place on city streets and in public and private spaces, both benefiting and receiving benefits from urban life.

Members of our community and region are developing innovative ways to solve the most challenging problems and the City wants to explore and pilot cutting-edge technologies in a real environment to support the quality of life our residents want, need, and deserve. Collaborating with emerging technology companies and private entities will help us lead the way in becoming a true Innovation City; offering a more comprehensive approach by creating a public-private-people partnership.

We invite you to respond to this Request for Information and be a part of our urban laboratory in Somerville.

General Information

- Online Submission Process: The RFI process will be completed through our website: www.SomervilleMA.gov/UrbanLab
- Your Website: Provide a link to your website, if available.
- Your Video: Include a video or other visual materials that demonstrate your company and product, if applicable.
- Your Insights: The more information we receive, the more we can tailor the Program to meet your needs. Please submit questions online. We will collect most frequently asked questions and post them at this location along with our response. Ideal questions are under 250 words and include an opportunity or issue, observations or facts to support point, suggested actions for City, your interest in being involved, and bullet points are encouraged.
- There is no funding component included in this program.

Timeline & Process

Listed below is the RFI timeline as of 9/12/18; these dates are subject to change.

Timeline for Submission

RFI Issued	9/17/2018
Deadline for Submitting Questions	10/15/2018
Information Session	10/30/2018
RFI Submissions Due	11/12/2018 – 11:59 P.M.
City Announcements of Summary of Findings and Next Steps	Early 2019

Follow Up

The City may request for you to come in for an interview	12/12/2018

Submission Delivery

Responses must be delivered by **November 12, 2018 at 11:59 PM EST** by submitting an electronic copy of your response materials through our website www.somervillema.gov/UrbanLab

Solicitation Questions

For questions concerning the City of Somerville, please visit our website: www.SomervilleMA.gov. The City of Somerville dashboard contains data and information on our community which may be helpful to you in thinking about your company's role in collaboration with the City: http://somervillema.gov/dashboard/. As we determine frequently asked questions, we will note these along with a response.

For questions regarding this solicitation, contact Sunayana Thomas, Senior Planner, at (617) 625-6600 x2561 or sthomas@somervillema.gov **before October 15, 2018 at 11:59 PM EST.** Written responses will be posted at www.SomervilleMA.gov/UrbanLab

Our Perspective

The City of Somerville has established a reputation for using data and other evidence-based insights to analyze issues important to our community, to improve City service delivery and effectiveness, and to help catalyze local innovation. The City of Somerville is a city where new ideas happen, and via this initiative we want to further grow the City an urban laboratory, a place to experiment and develop new ideas. As part of this greater effort, the City is testing a program to partner with the private sector to pilot and demonstrate projects and technologies on City property and in City offices where appropriate. Through this program, the City will engage with entrepreneurs and create a model for municipal-innovator collaboration.

- The purpose of this RFI is to gain information that will be used to aid the development of a program for the City to engage with emerging companies and foster innovation. The goal is to identify innovations that can be applied and tested in Somerville to further both your and our efforts.

- Responses to the RFI will be used to identify emerging technologies (and the companies that develop them) that can benefit the people and institutions of Somerville. Through responses to this RFI, the City wishes to identify methods to leverage local entrepreneurship and creativity to meet Somerville's goals in our Somervision 20-Year Comprehensive Plan, as well as our2050 net-zero emissions target and our 10-year Capital Improvement Plan. Collectively, this includes goals around affordable housing, mobility, diversity, green and open space, social equity, education, infrastructure and utilities, internet access and neutrality, smart infrastructure, sustainability, and more. The City will also develop an understanding of emerging tech companies' needs for developing technologies and growing their business in Somerville.

- Participation in the program will help emerging companies validate their prototypes, connect with other organizations and institutions, and gain credibility and visibility from participating in a City-sponsored, mission-driven program.

Your Response

All Welcome: The City encourages a broad range of companies and academic projects and labs to participate in this RFI, including:

- Startup companies
- Sole proprietors
- Companies that have not done business with a municipality before
- Companies that have a product that has been designed but not yet manufactured or brought to market
- Companies that have engaged with City programs such as the Engineers in Residence grant program
- Companies located in Somerville and surrounding communities

- Academic research labs
- Technology transfer programs

Broad Areas of Interest: All industries or product types will be considered. Potential projects, products and partnerships will be evaluated based on the benefits to Somerville, benefits to the proposing company, and feasibility of collaboration. Projects may include but not be limited to:

- Clean technology
- Smart Government
- Smart City
- Infrastructure

- Education
- Internet of Things

City Based Pilots: Proposed products must be able to be piloted and installed on City property or in City functions with little to no financial cost to the City and with no safety risk to city residents. All necessary permits will be needed if required. The duration of deployment will depend on the product and proposal and will be agreed upon by relevant parties before moving forward with installation or implementation.

Process: Selected applicants will meet with City Economic Development staff and the Mayor's volunteer innovation advisory committee, the Innovation and Opportunity Lab, to discuss their proposal and the feasibility of deployment. If all groups agree to move forward, City staff will work with the applicant to coordinate deployment with relevant City agencies or private parties and assist the applicant in managing the site and stakeholder relationships. This may require regular meetings and project updates as needed.

Following the conclusion of the demonstration project, Economic Development staff will follow up with the applicant for a debrief interview and impact survey on the success of the project. Survey data will be aggregated and be made anonymous. Interview information may be used in case studies and marketing material with the consent of the applicant.

Past projects have included:

- Understory: Weather sensor installed on the roof of the high school powered with a solar panel and secured with cinder block weights.
- WrightGrid: Phone charging station installed in various areas of the City, powered by solar panel and secured with hammer drill.

Response Submissions

Respondents are asked to provide responses only to the questions indicated herein, together with a brief cover letter. Respondents are required to address all questions. Total page count for the Response shall not exceed ten (10) pages.

Marketing materials from respondents are not required or encouraged as part of a written response. All responses shall be submitted via electronic form: https://form.jotform.com/82546285241155

Respondent's form submission must be received by Monday, November 12, 2018 at 11:59 p.m. EST

Requested Information

In your response, please answer the following questions. Please use the following headings and no more than 300 words per heading. Bullet points appreciated when appropriate.

A. *Your company and technology**
a. Address, primary contact person, and email.
b. What is your company's unique value proposition?
c. Describe your company's technology.
d. Who is the end user?
e. Is your company looking to sell a product, test a prototype, publicize a new technology, or other?
f. Have you conducted market research? Please describe.
g. Describe your business model and financial structure.
h. Is your business a minority or woman-owned business?

B. *Impact and benefits**
a. What is the benefit of your product to customers?
b. What is the potential economic benefit to the local economy? Could your company create additional local jobs through employment or manufacturing?
c. Is there an educational component to the development and/or deployment of your technology?
d. How will the pilot deployment of this technology benefit Somerville residents and/or low-income and underserved populations?
e. Please provide an evaluation of your ideas strengths and weaknesses.

C. *Doing Business**
a. Have you worked with a city before? What would be the one thing you would change about working with a city?
b. In developing, testing, or deploying your technology, what obstacles (economic, technical, or regulatory) have you faced or do you foresee?
c. Who can we help you network with? List the entities or types of entities with whom your company would work to develop and deploy your technology?
d. If there is no business plan, please help us understand the level of resources your idea would take to pilot or scale. In either case, please provide a general timetable for design and construction.

D. *Stage of Development*:
a. Let us know what stage of development your idea is. (i.e. concept, prototype, pilot, production, commercial ready)
b. How long do you need to test your product? Has this new idea been tried before?
c. What non-financial resources would the City provide to test your product? For example, a utility connection, active participants?
d. Where would your test take place? In a city building, the public realm, a commercial building, a residential building, etc.?
e. What data will you collect?

f.   When will you be ready to test your product and when do you expect to see results?
g.   What are costs to your company and others associated with your project?
h.   What benefit would the demonstration project provide your company?
i.   Is your product being designed or manufactured locally or in Massachusetts?

Potential Future Phases

The City will use information received through this RFI to develop different components of the Innovation Economy Program.

Possible components of the future program include:
- Events that connect emerging companies with partners, collaborators, and potential customers.
- Semi-annual contests for pilot projects hosted by the City.
- Semi-annual contests for demonstration projects hosted and/or sponsored by the City.
- Solicitation of innovative products or services for City procurement.
- Events that increase visibility of your product and provide feedback from technical experts.
- Collaboration with private corporations to pilot products

Effect of this RFI

This RFI is for information and planning purposes only and shall not be construed as a solicitation or as an obligation on the part of the City to issue any competitive procurement or award a contract. The City will not award a contract on the basis of responses to this RFI nor otherwise pay for the preparation of any information submitted, for any vendor presentation, or the City's use of such information. All responses to this RFI will be public record under the Massachusetts' Public Records Law, Mass. Gen. L. ch. 66 s. 10, regardless of confidentiality notices to the contrary.