



## Staff Report Item 6

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| <b>To:</b>     | Ava Community Energy Authority  |
| <b>From:</b>   | Annie Henderson, Chief Customer Officer   |
| <b>Subject</b> | Updating the Executive Committee on the status of the Customer Programs Roadmap RFP process |
| <b>Date:</b>   | November 5, 2025  |

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### **Summary/Recommendation**

This Staff Report provides an update on the progress of a request for proposals from consultants to support the development of a strategic Customer Programs Roadmap.

### **Financial Impact**

The FY25/26 Budget included an approved allocation of \$500,000 towards this effort. Additional funds may be available, if needed and approved by the board, from the previously allocated budget to the Local Development Fund – such as the \$4M allocated to “Future Roadmap Funding” in the approved FY25/26 budget ([slide 21 of the budget presentation in June 2025](#)).

### **Analysis and Context**

#### **Background**

Ava Community Energy has a Local Development Fund with approximately \$100M in existing budget to support beneficial energy programs within our community. Ava has offered a wide variety of energy related programs and services to our customers and municipal members since launch in 2018. Ava currently has active programs in the market and under development for near-term launch. These include the Ava Bike Electric (e-bike rebate program), SmartHome Charging (EV managed charging program), Ava Charge (DC fast charging sites), Critical Municipal Facilities, Health-e Communities Pilot, Building Efficiency Accelerator, SmartHome Battery (a solar & storage incentive program), and Resilience Hub initiative. While some of these programs will remain active for many years to come, staff are initiating a year-long strategic planning process for customer programs and services to look into the next 5-year

phase. A strategic plan is necessary to a) identify key goals and priorities, b) support resource planning, and c) promote collaboration with stakeholders such as our member cities and counties, regional energy networks, and other community stakeholders.

#### Request for Proposals

On September 5<sup>th</sup>, staff issued a request for proposals for a consultant to support the development of a Customer Programs Roadmap that will provide strategic direction for the timeframe of 2027-2032.

The following timeline was included in the RFP:

| Action   | Date                     |
|--|--------------------------|
| Issuance of RFP                                | September 5, 2025        |
| Bidder's Webinar                               | September 10, 2025       |
| Deadline for questions/clarifications          | September 15, 2025       |
| Question responses posted online               | September 17, 2025       |
| Deadline to submit proposals                   | September 29, 2025       |
| Finalist selection/interviews                  | Week of October 13, 2025 |
| Final Negotiations and/or Best and Final Offer | November 3, 2025         |
| Award of Contract by Board of Directors        | November 19, 2025        |

Staff facilitated a bidder's webinar and posted responses to questions received, per the timeline.

#### Responses

Five conforming and two non-conforming proposals were received by the deadline. Five staff members reviewed the conforming bids and scored based on the criteria indicated in the RFP. Based on staff scoring, three bidders were invited for interviews during the week of October 13<sup>th</sup>. Staff requested additional information from bidders following the interviews. Staff are currently completing an internal review prior to bringing their final recommendation to the November full board meeting.

#### Key Information in Responses

Staff evaluated the five compliant proposals using an assessment rubric that identified a standard set of evaluation criteria:

- Understanding of scope, goals, and Ava's role as a public agency
- Technical expertise and strength of proposed methodology
- Project management and facilitation expertise

- Stakeholder engagement approach
- Cost
- Alignment with Ava procurement preferences.

All conforming proposals included a local firm and/or non-profit to support aspects of the scope of work, most commonly assigned to stakeholder engagement. Proposals varied significantly in their strategic methodologies, project management approaches, and integration of a local partner throughout the process

The description and approach to stakeholder engagement was a key consideration in the review, scoring, and recommendation of proposals. There was variation in stakeholder outreach across the proposals.

- Timeframe: All proposed approaches had touch points with internal and external stakeholders throughout the development timeline.
- Channels: Tactics for engagement included workshops, listening sessions, surveys, focus groups, interviews, pop-up events, community meetings, as well as Board and CAC meetings. These tactics were proposed to be conducted in person and/or online and to cover Ava's diverse geography and customer base. In some cases, bilingual support was proposed.
- Reach: Proposals included targeted interviews with specific stakeholders, community-based organizations, and industry-focused groups as well as a broad survey of the general public.
- Level of Effort: Dedicated hours were proposed as low as 115 hours and as high as 1450 hours, with an average of 640 hours and a median of 415 hours.

Staff plan to work with the selected bidder to find the best balance of stakeholder outreach that addresses community needs, provides valuable input to the process, and aligns with the desired timeframe. It is anticipated that a minimum of stakeholder outreach will include:

- Engagement with Staff, Board, and CAC
- Targeted stakeholder interviews and/or focus groups
- Broader customer survey

#### Next Steps

Staff intend to bring a recommendation to the Board in November, as indicated in the original timeline.