



Yakima Valley Conference of Governments

Metropolitan and Regional Transportation Planning Organization

Requests for Proposals (RFP) RFP for the Development of Yakima Valley Regional Transit Feasibility Study

November 1, 2021

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Proposals Due:

December 8, 2021, 4:30 p.m.

Late applications not accepted.

Submit an electronic PDF of your proposal by email to info@yvcog.org

Request for Proposals: Development of a Rural Mobility Strategic Plan

The Yakima Valley Conference of Governments (YVCOG), a Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) and Regional Transportation Planning Organization (RTPO) is seeking proposals from qualified public transportation planning consultants or consulting teams to complete the development of a Yakima Valley Regional Transit Feasibility Study to determine current transit funding, equipment and operational resources and how those resources can be better utilized to address current and future public transportation needs and gaps; and identify applicable mobility strategies, which may be implemented over time. The study will be undertaken in parallel to the ongoing update of the Coordinated Public Transportation - Human Services Transportation Plan (CPT-HSTP) conducted by YVCOG staff. Both plans are to be completed in 2022.

This Request for Proposals (RFP) does not constitute a contract for services performed or to be performed. Following the selection of the consultant, the YVCOG will negotiate a contract, including a final scope of services and fee structure.

Agency Background

Established in 1966, the Yakima Valley Conference of Governments was then and is today, a group of community members who are committed to working on land use, transportation, environment, and human services issues that impact the quality of life for the communities of the Yakima region. Yakima Valley COG serves as an intermediary between the communities it represents and the state and federal government entities that are responsible for ensuring the decisions made at the local level are aligned with state and federal laws, and that government resources are managed.

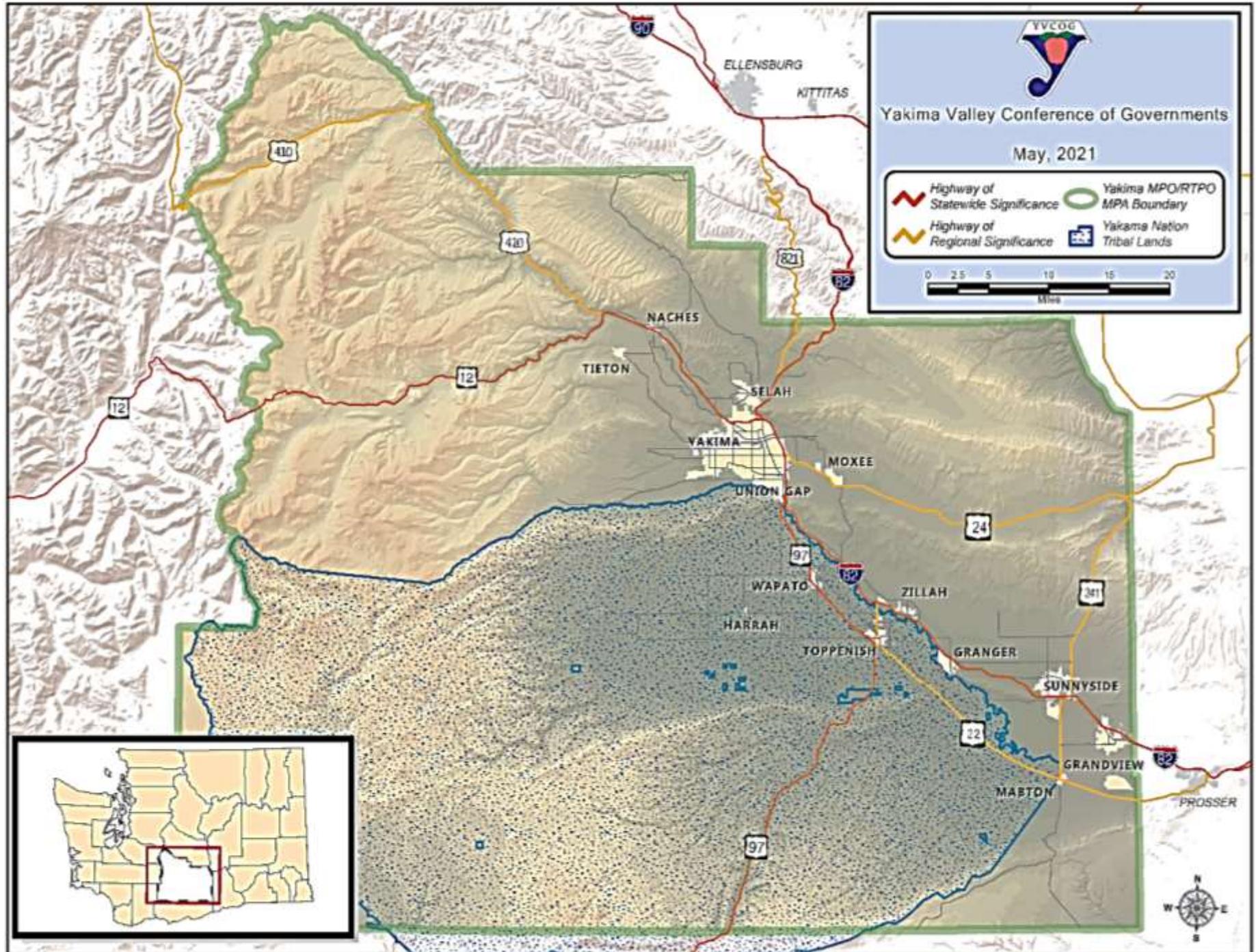
The overall mission of Yakima Valley Conference of Governments is, 'We strengthen our members with regional solutions on matters of mutual concern.'

Federal regulations ([23 USC 134](#)) require that the YVCOG develop a regionally coordinated long-range transportation plan and short-range improvement program to ensure efficient use of federal transportation funds. The YVCOG planning area, shown in the figure on the next page, includes the cities of Grandview, Granger, Harrah, Mabton, Moxee, Naches, Selah, Sunnyside, Tieton, Toppenish, Union Gap, Wapato, Yakima, and Zillah, along with metropolitan and rural (urbanized) residential areas throughout Yakima County.

Other regional entities not depicted on the map include the Mobilizing Public Access to Countywide Transportation (MPACT) Ports of Grandview and Sunnyside, Yakama Nation (Pahto Public Passage Transit Service), People for People (PFP) Rural Transit Programs, Yakima and Sunnyside Airports, and the Washington State Department of Transportation.

Funding for YVCOG planning activities comes from the Federal Highway Administration, the Federal Transit Administration, Washington State Transportation funding sources, and required local matching funds.

Metropolitan and Regional Transportation Planning Organization Boundary (MPO) - Metropolitan Planning Area (MPA)



Rural Mobility - Problem Statement

Within Yakima County, the majority of public transportation services is focused on the Greater Yakima Urbanized Area, which encompasses the cities of Yakima (Yakima Transit), Selah (Selah Transit), and Union Gap (Union Gap Transit) with limited, regularly scheduled connections by People For People's Community Connector and Yakama Nation's Pahto Public Passage Transit Program. Union Gap and Selah Transits are funded solely through sales tax sources while Yakima Transit is funded through a variety of federal/state grants, local sales tax, and fares.

Transportation options within rural areas are more limited, with services provided by People for People's no fare required routes: "Community Connector – Route 200" providing service along segments of Interstate 82 (I-82) and State Route 97 (SR 97) in Yakima, Wapato, Toppenish, Zillah, Granger, Sunnyside, and Grandview, then continuing to Prosser (Benton County) to complete the loop. PFP also operates "Route 201" which provides limited transit loop service between Sunnyside, Grandview, and Mabton; "Route 202", an express route along only I-82, serving Yakima, Zillah, Granger, Sunnyside, Grandview, and Prosser; and "Route 203", a limited loop route between Yakima and Naches.

The Yakama Nation's Transit System, funded through federal tribal transit grant funds, primarily serves three municipalities (Toppenish, Wapato, and Harrah) and various unincorporated communities and businesses within the Yakama Nation Reservation boundary with connector service to the metropolitan transit services with a stop near the Valley Mall in Union Gap and overlapping stop connections with PFP's Community Connector "Route 200". YN Transit also provide a 3-day a week service between their governmental headquarters in Toppenish south along SR 97 to Georgeville and Goldendale in Klickitat County, WA.

While this "patch-work" transit network provides transit service to most of the municipalities, those with service access must consider limited frequency of stops within their cities which make scheduling appointments outside their communities or elsewhere in the county difficult, if not impossible. Transit users traveling between cities may find themselves stranded if they cannot arrive at their connecting transit stop on time. Many municipalities with bus stops may only have a few within their city limits which makes "First Mile/Last Mile" access a significant transportation issue. Finally, two municipalities, Moxee and Tieton, and the heavily urbanized, yet unincorporated Terrace Heights community has no public transit service.

Yakima County, the second largest county in Washington State in terms of land area, is located east of the Cascade Mountain range in South Central Washington, with a geographic area of 4,295 square miles, or approximately 2.75 million acres. For perspective, the entire state of Delaware and two (2) areas the size of Rhode Island would all fit into Yakima County at once. Yakima County has a population density of 59.9 persons per square mile compared to King County, which has a population density of 1,018 people per square mile.¹ The scattered population and geographically spread-out nature of the county contributes many transportation challenges for special needs residents and for those organizations attempting to serve them.

The Washington State Office of Financial Management estimates total county population at 253,000 with 34% of residents living in unincorporated areas and the remainder living in fourteen incorporated cities and towns.³ In Yakima County, Yakima is the largest city with 37.2% of the County total population. In addition to its permanent residential base, the county has a large seasonal population related to the agricultural industry. This temporary population has been estimated at up to 50,000 during peak activity.

Scope of Work - Services Requested

The chosen planning consultant or consulting team will be responsible for working with YVCOG staff to develop a Regional Transit Feasibility Study report that encompasses the following key components and deliverables:

- **Preparation of a transportation services inventory** – including formal and informal providers.
- **Assessment of rural and under/unserved urban transportation needs** – evaluating level of current and latent demand.
 - **Definition of need** – including consideration of specific groups or geographic areas
 - **Revenue/Expenditure Analysis** – including current capital, operational, and maintenance needs for existing and expanded services, such as more frequent stops, accessing unserved populations, equipment, and maintenance projections.
 - **Stakeholder Analysis** such as community organizations, businesses, and elected bodies.
 - **Focus Group Meetings** to assist with the formulation of unmet needs.
 - **Prospective Rider Surveys** – including questions on perception and knowledge of services, as well as determination of barriers to public transportation use
- **Completion of a public transportation gap analysis** – considering existing services, community needs, and individual mobility concerns
 - **Determining service gaps** are absence of service, funding, human resources, and/or information
 - **Evaluation of effectiveness and identification of preferred strategies**, such as –
 - **Partnership agreements and contracts** among existing service providers
 - **Improved travel information**
 - **Provision of flexible service options**, i.e. contracted cabs and/or “guaranteed ride home”
 - **Enhanced marketing and outreach**
 - **Provision of community outreach events** to showcase successful models implemented elsewhere and to build grass-roots support for selected mobility strategies
- **Consider opportunities to coordinate current and future transit services** with other transportation modes such as passenger rail, passenger aviation, trails, and paratransit/rideshare.
- **Preparation of an executive summary and a detailed multi-year implementation plan** with strategic recommendations designed to meet rural and underserved urban resident’s public transportation needs.

It is important to note that for the purpose of this project, the selected consultant or consulting team shall be to focus on developing a comprehensive inventory of all transit related resources (both material and financial), identifying service gaps and opportunities to bridge those gaps, and potential strategies and best practices to improve transit accessibility to underserved and unserved Yakima County residents.

Minimum Qualifications

A qualified consultant or consulting team will have completed several similar studies within the recent past. In general, the competence of a prospective consultant will be evaluated relative to having a project manager and supporting staff, including any and all sub-contractors, with the qualifications needed to successfully complete the project; the qualifications of the assigned professional staff will be measured by both education and experience, with particular reference to experience on similar projects. It is therefore important to note that the professional staff identified in the submitted proposal, must also be the team to work on the project. If the selected consultant or consulting team undergoes a change of key personnel, the YVCOG reserves the right to approve any substitute personnel or terminate the services at the YVCOG's sole discretion.

Resources

The following resources are available:

- [2016 – Yakima Valley Metropolitan and Regional Transportation Plan 2016 - 2040](#)
- [2016 – Washington State - Public Transportation Plan 2035](#)
- [2018 – YVCOG Human Services Transportation Plan](#)
- [2019 – WSDOT Travel Washington Intercity Bus Program Study](#)
- [2020 – Yakima Valley Metropolitan and Regional Transportation Plan 2020 – 2045](#)
- [2020 – WA State Feasibility Study for East-West Intercity Passenger Rail System](#)
- [WSDOT Active Transportation Plan Part 1: 2020 and Beyond](#)
and “Part 2” when available
- [2021 Yakama Nation Heritage Connectivity Trail \(HCT\) Concept Plan](#)
- GIS databases and maps. Please inquire.

Roles and Responsibilities

The YVCOG Transportation Manager shall act as the project manager, and will be assisted by a MPACT, YVCOG's Public Transportation steering committee consisting of regional member entity representatives. The YVCOG project manager will provide all project direction, assistance with scheduling, and access to existing data. The steering committee will work closely with the YVCOG project manager and provide guidance for project related decisions.

The consultant shall be responsible for all technical work, public participation, identification of recommendations and strategies, report preparation, and presentation of findings, as agreed to in the final scope of work. All work to be performed must follow federal and state laws, regulations, and guidance; and the selected consultant shall be responsible for having knowledge of, and ensuring compliance with, all applicable requirement

Proposal Timetable

November 1, 2021	Request for Proposals is issued
November 15, 2021, 10:00 a.m.	Pre-Application Workshop, via Zoom.
November 19, 2021	Deadline for Questions
November 30, 2021	Posting of FAQ, Frequently asked Questions and Answers
December 8, 2021, 4:30 p.m.	Closing date and time for receipt of proposals
January 7, 2022	Finalists contacted; interviews scheduled as needed
January 31, 2022	Final consultant selection; start of contract negotiation
February 7, 2022, 4:30 p.m.	Deadline for submission of Aggrieved Appeal form
February 28, 2022	Contract execution; notice to proceed
September 30, 2022	Desired end date of contract

Technical Assistance: Agencies are encouraged to attend the pre-application workshop. If additional assistance is needed, a phone or in-person conference is available. **The deadline for technical assistance, including submitting questions is November 19, 2021.**

- Pre-Application Workshop: A pre-application workshop will be held on **Monday, November 15, 2021, at 10:00 a.m.**, via Zoom. The information session will cover application requirements.
- Any questions and answers communicated will be made available in an FAQ posted to the YVCOG website <https://www.yvcog.org/transit-feasibility-rfp/>. Final edits/additions to the FAQ will be posted on the website by close of business November 30, 2021.
- Technical Assistance: Technical assistance is available to potential applicants through pre-application conferences. Assistance available includes answers about funding regulations and application requirements and discussing the proposed project's compliance with program regulations and eligibility for funding. If you would like to submit questions, please email them to alan.adolf@yvcog.org or call Alan Adolf, Program Manager at 509-759-7981.

Estimated Budget - Federal Funding

The YVCOG estimated a \$106,075 budget to complete the development of the Yakima County Regional Transit Feasibility Study. Respondents should be aware that the completion of this study is funded, in part, by the Federal Transit Administration, and that awarded consultant will have to fully comply with all requirements and certifications that are imposed by federal funding sponsorship.

Proposal Requirements

Limit the proposal to no more than 12 pages, not counting professional resumes, and include the following information:

1. Proposed Project Manager or Team

- a. Name and address of submitting public transportation planning consultant or consulting firm.
- b. Identify the project manager and as needed, the name of the supporting,

- professional staff who will be directly responsible for task completion.
- c. Provide a brief resume or similar description for the project manager and each team member, which details their experience and qualifications.
 - d. If different from the main address, provide the location of the office from which the assigned project manager or team members will be working.
- 2. Experience**
- a. Provide a narrative description of the consultant's related experience.
 - b. b. If specialized resources are available (in addition to the named team) to meet unusual needs, identify such individuals and their area of expertise.
 - c. Provide three references from comparable entities where consultant or consulting team has previously provided similar planning services.
- 3. Scope, Project Management and Quality Control**
- a. Provide detailed work plan and list of key deliverables.
 - b. Include task-based schedule and identify significant milestones.
 - c. Outline communications strategy to facilitate ongoing coordination among the consultant project manager, potential sub-contractor(s), and the YVCOG.
 - d. Describe quality, budget, and schedule controls to be implemented.
- 4. Proposed Cost**
- a. Submit detailed cost estimate, including overall cost, cost by subtask, subtask and hours assigned to proposed team members, number of trips to the project area, and number of days on site. (Please note that the YVCOG recognizes that travel cost for the needs assessment and community outreach may be substantial and therefore encourages respondents to consider sub- contracting with a qualified regional firm for those activities.)
- 5. Other Documentation Required at time of award**
- a. General liability insurance certificate (\$1,000,000)
 - b. Contractor Status that any personnel providing services towards project participated in 2008 Early Retirement Factor (EFR) retiree under the Department of Retirements Systems.
 - c. Contractor may not be disbarred and ineligible for to receive federal contracted funds

YVCOG will consider the proposed compensation as "best and final offer," although YVCOG reserves the right to negotiate terms as needed to improve elements of the proposal to best meet the needs of the region, including cost. The proposal and associated cost shall be valid for a minimum of 180 days.

**Submittals must be received no later than 4:30 p.m. (PST),
Wednesday, December 8, 2021**

Late submissions will not be considered.

Submit an electronic PDF of your proposal by email to info@yvco.org

General Conditions

Reservation of Rights

The YVCOG reserves the right to modify the RFP schedule described above or to withdraw this RFP at any time without prior notice. The YVCOG also reserves the right at its sole discretion, and without penalty, to reject any and all proposals received. Furthermore, the YVCOG may reject proposals without providing the underlying reason(s).

This RFP does not obligate the YVCOG to contract for services described herein. The YVCOG reserves the right to not issue a contract as a result of this RFP. A failure to award a contract to the lowest bidder will not result in a cause of action against the YVCOG.

The YVCOG reserves the right to select more than one consultant or consulting team. The YVCOG also reserves the right to award the contract to the proposer that best meets the needs and interests of the region, which the YVCOG Policy Board will determine in its sole discretion. The YVCOG also reserves the right to waive immaterial defect or informality in any response or response procedure.

The YVCOG reserves the right to disqualify any respondent who fails to provide information requested in the RFP or who provides inaccurate or misleading information or data.

Conflict of Interest

The consultant or consulting team shall agree to ensure that they have no interest, direct or indirect, that would conflict in any way with the performance of the requested services; furthermore, the consultant or consulting team shall not employ any person, or subcontract with any entity, having such known interest.

Non-Discriminatory Practices

Consultants, by submission of a proposal, agree to not discriminate against any current or prospective employee, subcontractor, or a member of the public because of race, color, creed, national origin, sex, disability, sexual orientation, gender identity, status as a parent, or age.

DBE Participation

The selected consultant will not be required to meet a specific Disadvantaged Business Enterprise (DBE) utilization goal. However, consultants are encouraged to use services provided by DBE firms to accomplish tasks required to complete this project.

Proprietary Material

The YVCOG assumes no liability for disclosure of proprietary material submitted by respondents. Proposal submittals are considered public documents.

Financial Requirements

The selected consultant or consulting team will be required to submit certified hourly rates and last year's financial information and overhead schedule in accordance with Federal Acquisition Regulations.

Pre-contractual Expenses

The YVCOG will not be liable for any costs incurred by applicants in the preparation or submittal of a proposal in response to this RFP, in the conduct of an interview presentation, or any other activities related to responding to this RFP.

Contract Requirements

The YVCOG complies with federal contracting requirements. In turn, the YVCOG expects all contractors to adhere to Federal contract provisions through the specific inclusion and certification of applicable clauses in the final planning services agreement as prescribed by the Oregon and Washington State Departments of Transportation, the Federal Highway Administration, and/or the Federal Transit Administration.

Review and Decision-Making Process

- **Staff Review and Assessment**

YVCOG staff will review applications for threshold criteria and completeness. Staff will also review and assess specific sections of the application, such as project outcomes (prior agency performance). YVCOG reserves the right to request additional clarifications from applicants, both in writing and in person.

- **Project Review Committee Scoring & Recommendations**

The Project Review Committee (PRC) will independently review and assess requests using a scoring matrix. Each scorer is provided a scoring matrix to ensure standardized assessment. The scoring matrix is used as a screening tool for applications and does not necessarily dictate which application is awarded. YVCOG staff will provide final ranking based on scoring. The PRC will make recommendations to the YVCOG Policy Board.

Each of the major sections of the proposal will be reviewed and weighed against criteria designed to help judge the quality of the proposal.

- **Evaluation criteria** include the following considerations, which are listed in order of relative importance:

1. Clarity of project approach, identified key deliverables, and significant milestones – **up to 30 points**
2. Experience related to similar rural mobility planning efforts – **up to 25 points**
3. Qualifications of assigned professional staff – **up to 25 points**
4. Schedule and fees – **up to 10 points**
5. References – **up to 10 points**

If necessary, proposers may be contacted and asked for further information, and may be expected to appear for oral interviews. The YVCOG will select the preferred provider and negotiate contractual agreement, which will be considered for approval by the Policy Board prior to its execution. If negotiations are unsuccessful due to unresolved issues, negotiations with the consultant will be formally terminated. Negotiations will then commence with the second-highest ranking firm.

Applicants will be notified of award recommendation by January 31, 2022. An applicant who feels aggrieved in the scoring of their grant application may appeal, by completing the

appeal form located on YVCOG's website and submit the completed form by email to YVCOG no later than 4:30 p.m. (PT), Monday, February 7, 2021. If there is an appeal by an agency, an independent appeal committee will re-score all applications in that project category; all applicants will be notified of the appeal. If the appeal committee scores the applications differently than the original scoring committee, both recommendations will be taken before the YVCOG Policy Board for final decision.

Final Decision by YVCOG Policy Board

Final approval of funding decisions under this RFP are made by the YVCOG Policy Board.

Threshold Criteria

Applications must meet threshold criteria to be considered for funding. Threshold review, which will be completed by YVCOG staff, will be included in the materials provided to the Project Review Committee.

Criteria:

1. Application is submitted on time.
2. Application is complete. All Required Materials are included.
3. The work plan met the objective of RFP

If an application does not meet any of the three above criteria, the application will not be reviewed for funding.

The YVCOG does not discriminate based on race, color, creed, national origin, sex, disability, sexual orientation, gender identity, status as a parent, or age.

Participation by minority and women-owned firms is encouraged.