

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

FOR

**Fleet Electrification Assessment
and Strategic Plan**

March 14, 2025 Ride
Connection, Inc.
9955 NE Glisan St.
Portland, OR 97220

Section 1 – Request for Proposal for a Fleet Electrification Assessment and Strategic Plan (FEASP)

The project will perform the stakeholder engagement and the operational and financial analysis necessary to facilitate Ride Connection’s transition to a zero-emission fleet by 2035. The project will include public and stakeholder engagement, including collaboration with utilities and agency partners to create a FEASP that is supported by the diverse communities Ride Connection serves, as well as Ride Connection’s agency partners and local utilities.

Section 2 – Description of Ride Connection

Ride Connection provides free customer-focused, safe, reliable transportation options to older adults, people with disabilities, and low-income individuals in Multnomah, Clackamas, and Washington Counties. Our mission is to link accessible, responsive transportation alternatives with community needs. Our vision is to create independence and community connections through the gift of mobility. We meet the transportation needs of each individual served by offering a variety of transportation options, helping people access the goods and services they need to survive and thrive. Ride Connection is often described as a lifeline by the people we serve, connecting them to healthy foods, medical services, relief from social isolation and much more. Ride Connection provided over 320,000 rides and served over 4,200 unduplicated individuals last fiscal year on our door-to-door services, Community Connector shuttles, travel training on public transit, fare assistance and transportation resource referrals.

Section 3 – Procurement Schedule

The following is the timeline for the procurement process:

Date:	Activity:
March 14, 2025	Request for Proposals Issued
March 20, 2025, by 3:00 p.m. (PST)	Deadline for Submitting Questions
March 24, 2025	Response to Questions Posted
March 31, 2025, by 3:00 p.m. (PST)	Deadline for Submittals
April 04, 2025	Evaluations Completed
April 08, 2025	Notice of Intent to Award Contract

**All dates are subject to change at the discretion of Ride Connection.

Section 4 – Proposal Requirements

Form of Proposals:

Interested entities are to provide Ride Connection with a thorough Proposal using the following guidelines. The proposal should be straightforward, concise and provide “non-expert” explanations of technical terms that are used. Emphasis should be concentrated on conforming to the RFP instructions, responding to the RFP requirements, and on providing a complete and clear description of the offer.

The following Proposal sections are to be included in the Proposer’s response:

- 1) Cover Letter:** A cover letter, not to exceed three pages in length, and include:
 - a. Name, address and telephone number of the firm's contact person; and signed by the chief executive officer, owner, or chair of the firm.
 - b. A company profile including the proposer’s name, business address, and telephone number, as well as a brief description of the proposer’s size (nationally and locally), date of establishment, type of organization, and local organizational structure.
 - c. A summary of the proposal.
 - d. Statement of acknowledgement of having received all addenda, if any are issued.
 - e. Whether or not the firm is a certified DBE or Small Business Enterprise.
 - f. Age of the firm.
 - g. If the annual gross receipts of the firm are less than \$500,000, less than \$1 million, or more than \$1 million.
 - h. Specifically indicate any requirements in this RFP which are not acceptable or cannot be performed.
 - i. Discuss project understanding, approach to the Scope of Work, communications with Ride Connection during the project, and identify assigned staff.
 - j. Specifically indicate any provisions in the form of the agreement (**Attachment C**), including insurance and indemnification provisions, which are not acceptable and propose any alternative language or terms.
 - k. Provide a signed copy of the Certification Regarding Debarment, Suspension, and other Responsibility Matters (**Attachment D**).
 - l. Describe your experience and provide references, including the type of agency, fleet size, types of vehicles involved in the transition, and the size of the service area (in square miles).
 - m. Provide a statement which discloses any past on-going or potential conflicts of interest that the firm may have because of providing the goods and services.

- 2) Background and Project Summary Section:** The background and project summary section should describe the firm’s understanding of Ride Connection, the work to be done, and the objectives to be accomplished. Refer to Attachment A (Scope of Work) of this RFP.

- 3) Company Experience and Capabilities:**
 - a. Identify the years of experience the firm and the principals who will be assigned to work with Ride Connection have in providing these services. Please indicate years of experience both on a firm and individual basis.
 - b. Briefly discuss and provide examples that illustrate the firm’s resources, commitment and demonstrated ability to complete all components of all projects in a timely manner, including, but not limited to, attending meetings, advising staff on matters specific to the scope of service, preparing and presenting reports to Ride Connection staff, Board of Directors, and agency partners, and assist with due diligence and disclosure

processes relevant to the scope of services.

- 4) Methodology Section:** Provide a detailed description of the approach and methodology to be used to accomplish the Scope of Work of this RFP. The methodology section should include:
- a. An implementation plan that describes in detail the methods, including controls by which the firm or entity manages projects of the type sought by this RFP, methodology for soliciting and documenting views of internal and external stakeholders, and any other project management or implementation strategies or techniques that the respondent intends to employ in carrying out the work.
 - b. Detailed description of efforts the firm will undertake to achieve client satisfaction and to satisfy the requirements of the Scope of Work.
 - c. Detailed project schedule, identifying all tasks and deliverables to be performed, durations for each task, and the overall time of completion, including a complete transition plan.
 - d. Detailed description of specific tasks that will be required from Ride Connection. Explain what the respective roles of Ride Connection staff and the firm's staff would be to complete the tasks specified in the Scope of Work.
 - e. Proposers are encouraged to provide additional innovative and/or creative approaches for providing the service that will maximize efficient, cost-effective operations, or increased performance capabilities.
- 5) Staffing:** Provide a list of individuals who will be working on this project and indicate the functions that each will perform and anticipated hours of service for everyone. Include a resume for each designated individual.

Upon award and during the contract period, if the contractor chooses to assign different personnel to the project, the contractor must submit names and qualifications, including information listed above to Ride Connection for approval before they begin work.

- 6) Qualifications:** The information requested in this section should describe the qualifications of the entity, key staff and sub-contractors performing projects within the past three years that are similar in size and scope to demonstrate competence to perform these services. Information shall include:
- a. Names of key staff that participated in named projects and their specific responsibilities with respect to the scope of work.
 - b. A summary of your entity's demonstrated capability, including length of time the firm has provided the services being requested in this RFP.
- 7) Disclosure:** Please disclose any past or current business or personal relationships you have with the following:

- Current Ride Connection Board members
- Current or former employees of Ride Connection
- Immediate family members of Ride Connection employees or board members
- Contractors, vendors, or partner agencies affiliated with Ride Connection

For each disclosed relationship, include:

1. The nature of the relationship (business or personal).

2. The duration and timeline of the relationship.
3. Any potential conflicts of interest or ways the relationship could impact impartiality in your dealings with Ride Connection.

This information is necessary to ensure transparency and to identify any potential or perceived conflicts of interest.

Section 5 – Process for Submitting Proposals

- **Delivery of Proposals:** Proposals must be submitted to Ride Connection no later than 3:00 p.m. (PST) on March 31, 2025. Proposers must transmit one (1) portable document format (PDF) version of its proposal to contracts@rideconnection.org or submit the required PDF on a USB flash drive to Ride Connection, Inc., Attn: Dean Orr, in person, overnight or regular mail to 9955 NE Glisan St., Portland, OR 97220. It is the proposer’s responsibility to confirm receipt ahead of submission deadline. Please title the e-mail or mark the envelope as “Fleet Electrification Assessment and Strategic Plan.”
- **Proposal Preparation Costs:** Issuance of this RFP does not commit Ride Connection, in any way, to pay any costs incurred in the preparation and submission of a proposal. Ride Connection will not reimburse responding firms, including the selected firm, for any expenses incurred in preparing or submitting proposals. All costs related to the preparation and submission of a proposal shall be paid by the respondent.
- **Changes, Additions or Clarifications:** Any changes, additions or clarifications to the RFP will be made by amendments (addenda). Any additional supporting materials and addenda will be posted on Ride Connection’s website, <https://rideconnection.org/rfq/>

Requests for clarifications about this RFP may be submitted at any time before 3:00 p.m. (PST) on March 20, 2025. Questions and/or requests for clarifications may be submitted in writing via email to: Dean Orr, Asset and Contracts Director, contracts@rideconnection.org.

Responses will be posted on March 24, 2025, on Ride Connection’s website: <https://rideconnection.org/rfq/>

This RFP does not commit Ride Connection to award a contract. Ride Connection reserves the right to accept or reject any or all proposals. No proposal shall be binding upon Ride Connection until after a contract is executed by duly authorized representatives of Ride Connection and the selected proposer.

- **Licenses, Permits, Taxes:** The price or prices for the work shall include full compensation for all taxes, permits, etc. that the respondent is or may be required to pay.
- **Public Record/Confidential Information:** All responses become property of Ride Connection. All responses, including the accepted proposal and any subsequent contract, become public records per the requirements of state public records laws. Proprietary material must be clearly marked as such. Pricing and service elements of the successful proposal are not considered proprietary information.

Ride Connection will treat all information submitted in a proposal as available for public

inspection once Ride Connection has selected a contractor. If you believe that you have a legally justifiable basis for protecting the confidentiality of any information contained within the proposal, you must identify any such information, together with the legal basis of your claim in the proposal and present such information separately as part of your response package. This portion of the submittal must be clearly marked “Confidential.”

The final determination as to whether Ride Connection will assert the claim of confidentiality on your behalf shall be at the sole discretion of Ride Connection. If Ride Connection decides that the information does not meet the criteria for confidentiality, you will be notified. Any information deemed to be non-confidential shall be considered a public record.

- **Historically Excluded Business Enterprises (HEBEs) [also known as Disadvantaged Business Enterprise (DBE)] Requirements*:** Ride Connection is committed to ensuring that Disadvantaged Business Enterprises (DBEs) have equitable opportunities to compete for contracts. No firm will be discriminated against based on race, color, gender, disability, LGBTQ+ status, or national origin during the award process. Furthermore, Ride Connection encourages self-identified DBEs and non-certified businesses to submit a proposal.

*At Ride Connection, we are advocating for a change in the language from Disadvantaged Business Enterprises (DBE) to HEBE, and therefore we will be using HEBE in this document. DBE emphasizes deficits rather than the systemic barriers these businesses face. We aim to adopt terminology that recognizes their strengths, resilience, and the need for equitable opportunities. Therefore, throughout this document we use the phrase Historically Excluded Business Enterprise (HEBE.)

A HEBE is a small business with at least 51% ownership and operational control by socially and economically disadvantaged individuals. For publicly owned companies, this includes having at least 51% of the stock owned by such individuals. Eligible groups include women, Black Americans, Hispanic Americans, Native Americans, Asian-Pacific Americans, and Asian-Indian Americans, LGBTQ+, and or a person with disabilities.

- **Equal Employment Opportunity:** Each proposer must agree that it will not discriminate in hiring, promotion, treatment, or other terms and conditions of employment based on race, sex, national origin, age, disability, or in any way violate Title VII of the 1964 Civil Rights Act and amendments, except as permitted by said laws.
- **Review of Proposals, Selection Criteria and Award:** Upon receipt of the proposals, Ride Connection shall review and evaluate the proposals for responsiveness to the RFP to determine whether proposers possess the qualifications necessary to provide the goods. Ride Connection may request clarifications of proposals directly from the proposers.

In reviewing the proposals, and negotiating with selected firms, Ride Connection reserves the right to reject all proposals. Ride Connection may negotiate directly with qualified proposers and may request a final best offer from one or more proposers.

Ride Connection will review and evaluate the submitted proposals for responsiveness to the RFP to determine whether proposers possess the qualifications necessary to provide the services. Following the evaluation of RFP's, Ride Connection will check references of the top firm(s) prior to making a selection. Virtual interviews, if deemed necessary, will be scheduled.

Submitted proposals will be evaluated using the criteria established below.

CATEGORY	MAX POINTS
Responsiveness to RFP	5
Project understanding	20
Response to questions	45
References	15
Pricing	15

Ride Connection shall award a contract to the responsible proposer whose proposal is most advantageous to Ride Connection, i.e., the “best value.” Ride Connection reserves its right to award to other than the low bidder. Ride Connection reserves the right to reject all proposals and to waive any irregularity, informalities or oversights in the RFP documents, or any corresponding proposals at its sole discretion.

- Negotiation and Award:** Ride Connection will work with the selected firm to finalize the scope of work and negotiate a contract between Ride Connection and the selected firm. All costs incurred by the firm in connection with this work and negotiations shall be borne by the firm and the firm shall have no right to reimbursement from Ride Connection.

If Ride Connection and the selected firm fail to finalize the scope of work and cost, or fail to negotiate a contract, Ride Connection will reject the selected firm’s proposal. In the event of rejection, the firm shall have no right to reimbursement for costs incurred by the firm in connection with any work and negotiations. Ride Connection will then select another firm that staff believes will provide the best value, qualifications, and work and negotiate with that firm.

Ride Connection reserves the right to award any number of contracts it deems necessary to achieve success. This RFP does not commit Ride Connection to award a contract. Ride Connection reserves the right to accept or reject any or all proposals. If Ride Connection decides to award, the agreement will be sent to the firm for signature. No proposal shall be binding upon Ride Connection until after a contract is executed by duly authorized representatives of Ride Connection and the selected Contractor. No minimum amount of work is implied or guaranteed under the contract.

- Contract Term:** Duration of contract is eight (8) months from date of execution.
- Additional Contract Provisions:** The proposer and Ride Connection will enter a contract in the form attached as **Attachment C, Agreement for Services**. The proposal must specifically indicate any provisions in the form of the contract which are not acceptable and propose any alternative language or terms.
- Required Review and Waiver of Objections by Responding Firms:** Responding firms should carefully review this RFP and all attachments, including but not limited to the form contract (Attachment C) for comments, questions, defects, objections, or any other matter requiring clarification or correction (collectively called “comments”). Comments concerning RFP objections must be made in writing and received by Ride Connection no later than the date specified above.

Protests based on any objection shall be considered waived and invalid if these faults have not

been brought to the attention of the Ride Connection, in writing, by the deadline for written comments.

If a Contractor that has not been selected wishes to dispute the award recommendation, the protest must be submitted in writing to contracts@rideconnection.org no later than five (5) calendar days after announcement of the selected proposer, detailing the grounds, factual basis and providing all supporting information. Protests will not be considered for disputes of proposal requirements and specifications. Failure to submit a timely written protest will bar consideration of the protest.

Protest procedures will apply to all procurement actions whether by sealed bid, request for proposal or sole source and regardless of the stage of the procurement process at which the protest is filed. All protest procedures can be found on Ride Connection's website:

<https://rideconnection.org/rfq/>

ATTACHMENT A – SCOPE OF WORK

Fleet Decarbonization Assessment and Strategic Plan

1. Overview and Objectives

Ride Connection aims to conduct a comprehensive fleet decarbonization assessment and develop a strategic plan to transition its 140-vehicle fleet to battery-electric vehicles (BEVs) or other zero-emission fuel source vehicles. The goal is to achieve a 100% zero-emission vehicle (ZEV) fleet by 2035, aligning with the Advanced Clean Cars II (ACC II) standards. Currently, Ride Connection’s vehicle usage contributes significantly to greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions and air quality pollution.

This project will provide a roadmap for transitioning to a zero-emission ADA accessible fleet, significantly reducing GHG emissions through the adoption of battery-electric and alternative fuel vehicles. Transitioning the fleet will not only contribute to improved environmental health but will also reduce carbon emissions and air quality impacts in neighborhoods predominantly inhabited by communities of color.

By promoting clean energy solutions, Ride Connection seeks to address the disproportionate environmental burdens these communities face while increasing access to new, climate-friendly transportation technologies.

2. Fueling Strategy and Infrastructure

The assessment will include a detailed focus on the fueling needs associated with the vehicle transition, whether through the development of an electric vehicle (EV) charging strategy, hydrogen fueling infrastructure, or other alternatives. Many fueling locations will be established in collaboration with Ride Connection’s partner organizations and field offices, ensuring an equitable distribution of fueling opportunities to support the transition.

3. Vehicle Availability and Compliance

The assessment will also identify the availability and sourcing of battery-electric or other zero-emission ADA accessible mini-buses and vans that meet the Federal Transit Administration’s Buy America requirements. This ensures compliance with federal funding requirements while supporting the transition to sustainable vehicle options.

4. Equity and Accessibility

Accessibility is a fundamental aspect of Ride Connection's equity and anti-racism philosophy. Low-income individuals and people of the global majority are disproportionately likely to have disabilities due to systemic inequalities. This project emphasizes the importance of integrating accessibility into the electric vehicle sphere.

Through ongoing conversations about accessibility and Ride Connection's commitment to identifying climate-friendly and accessible vehicle options, the organization hopes to influence industry priorities to better serve marginalized communities.

5. Engagement with Community Partners

As part of this assessment, Ride Connection's community partners must be engaged to ensure the plan reflects the needs and priorities of the communities served. Collaboration with these partners will inform equitable and effective implementation strategies for the zero-emission transition.

6. Final Report and Presentation

The findings and recommendations from this assessment will culminate in a final report to Ride Connection's Board of Directors. This report will outline the roadmap for fleet decarbonization, the proposed fueling strategy, and compliance with accessibility and equity goals. A presentation to the Board will provide an opportunity for discussion and alignment on the next steps.