



Summary

Yellowstone Business Partnership (YBP) is requesting statements of qualifications and proposals from Website design and system/software engineering professionals. YBP is administering ARRA funds to test the feasibility of a Greater Yellowstone transportation system called “Linx”, critical to which is a central online trip planning and reservations website.

Background and Purpose

Yellowstone Business Partnership

The Yellowstone Business Partnership is a nonprofit organization of businesses and community partners seeking to enhance the social, economic and environmental well-being of the Greater Yellowstone region. YBP believes that to achieve long-term profitability in this special place, businesses must help resolve complex challenges across state boundaries and care for the region as a whole. More information can be found on our website at www.yellowstonebusiness.org

Project background

YBP is currently working to improve resident and visitor mobility across the Yellowstone-Teton region. From July- December 2009 YBP studied whether a multi-state network of public transportation services could be managed under a member-based business cooperative. The study area included the 27 counties that surround Yellowstone and Grand Teton national parks, in Idaho, Montana and Wyoming. The idea was that under a co-op model, willing public and private transportation providers could coordinate and market their operations through one integrated system. The YBP feasibility study was supported by \$200,000 in rural transit stimulus funds under a grant from the Idaho Transportation Department (ITD).

The recommendation of the feasibility study was to move forward into a pilot phase, which through 2010 will be supported with rural transit stimulus funds from ITD. Linx was incorporated in the State of Idaho on January 26, 2010, and a founding board was formed to oversee the pilot phase.

The feasibility study process involved extensive public involvement, including a series of public roundtables held in different communities across the region. YBP facilitated a 50-person, volunteer steering committee that cut across geographical, jurisdictional, and private-public sector boundaries in Greater Yellowstone. The wisdom and experiences of these stakeholders

are reflected in the final feasibility study. The steering committee was divided into six teams each with a different focus: Local Demand/Human Services; Recreation and Tourism; Agency Coordination; Supply/Transportation Providers; Multi-Modal; and Marketing.

During the feasibility study phase, the marketing team vetted a brand name and developed a logo for the Co-op.

Purpose of the website

The marketing team identified the Linx website as critical to the realization of the Co-op's vision and goals. Transportation providers interested in joining Linx have identified technology and marketing as the two main benefits of their prospective membership. The website is where better marketing and better technology intersect in this project. Linx will consolidate and make accessible on the website information about transportation routes and services currently available, but not widely used or understood by the public. Providers and riders will interface with the innovative technological aspects of the Linx system such as trip planning capability, live tracking of vehicle location, and online ticketing on the website as well.

The website will anchor Linx's online presence and allow for the creative use of social media, which we expect to be especially effective in reaching youth, and connecting with other online resources used by visitors to the region. Due to the novelty of some of the proposed technological solutions, YBP expects that it will take a phased process to ramp up to the full implementation communications technology. This phased implementation will likely continue past the pilot phase.

Scope and Guidelines

We expect that the website functions may need to be introduced in the following order:

1. Trip planning – serve as information clearinghouse and broker, although riders would still contact transportation provider to book their trip.
2. Take trip reservations online but rider pays provider (info relayed to provider).
3. Reservations and payment on the Linx website. The domain name "linx.coop" has been registered. (information directly relayed to provider).
4. Purchasing and printing ticket off of website, to be scanned by provider.
5. Online selling and on-board processing by provider of rider passes (10-day, monthly etc.)

The user interface requirements for the website are as follows:

Phase 1	Desirable –Phase 1	Phase 2	Phase 3
1.Trip Planning	7. Provides details on activities along rider’s route. Provides ability to make reservations and pay online.	10. Lets users make a reservation for the parts of the trip that require one	15. Creates a ticket for printing
2. Web 2.0 design (e.g. Ajax, etc.)	8. Provides details on activities at the destination. Provides ability to make reservations and pay online.	11. User accounts with saved itineraries, ability to edit user profile.	16. Lets users display their ticket barcode on mobile device so that it can be scanned
3. Ability to submit an online comment form	9. Live tracking of vehicle location.	12. Provider reports (e.g. on time status)	17. Facilitates pass holder use – scanning and tracking use.
4. Search engine optimization		13. Is usable on mobile devices	18.Next stop information
5. Social networking integration		14. Lets users pay by credit card.	
6. Usable by a call center.			
<i>Phase 1 to be completed by May 17, 2010</i>		<i>Phase 2 to be completed by October 15, 2010</i>	<i>Phase 3 completion to be negotiated with contractor</i>

1. Trip Planning. Lets riders plan a trip from point A to point B showing different provider options and routes. There may be more than one provider for any given route, which will need to be differentiable.
2. Web 2.0 design (e.g. Ajax, etc.)
3. Ability to submit an online comment form regarding service, experience or particular driver/provider.
4. Search engine optimization.
5. Social networking integration (Facebook, twitter, etc.)
6. Usable by a call center environment. Not all users of the system will be want, or be able to access the website. Some will dial a number that will take them to a contracted call center. A call center representative will then have to use the website to get the person on the other end of the line the information, and ride confirmation number needed.
7. Provides details on activities along rider’s route. For example, a map of the route between the point A and Point B indicated by the user would have icons showing

recreation areas, historical sites etc. Provides ability to make reservations and pay online.

8. Provides details on activities at the destination. For example, if a trip ends in West Yellowstone, there would be links to the Grizzly and Wolf Discovery Center and the Chamber of Commerce Visitors' Center. In the winter months information on snow coach and snowmobile tours and cross country skiing would come up, and in the summer, fly fishing and other seasonal activities would appear. Provides ability to make reservations and pay online.
9. Live tracking of vehicle location.
10. Lets users make a reservation for those parts of the trip where one is required. There will be links in the system for which reservations will not be needed (e.g. call Angie at the senior center to reserve a ride on the 5/5/10 bus to Pocatello (800-123-3456)).
11. User accounts with a login to access saved itineraries, ability to edit user profile etc.
12. Provider reports (e.g. on time status, etc.) Communicates with the ITS System via web service interfaces and XML, either from the client or server side.
13. Usable on mobile devices.
14. Lets users pay by credit card.
15. Creates a ticket for printing.
16. Lets users display their ticket barcode on mobile device so that it can be scanned.
17. Facilitates passholder use – scanning on vehicle and tracking revenue for provider.
18. Next stop information – e.g. being able to access online or on screen at bus stop when the next vehicle will arrive.
19. Preferred environment: Windows 2003/2008 server (either PHP 5 or ASP.NET/.NET 3.5/C#).

The underlying ITS System will have the following requirements:

1. Route Info: Takes route information in a Google Transit format and expands routes into the Route database. Has some proprietary extensions to the Google Transit format to handle additional information such as pricing, etc. Has some web interface for in-house staff to use.
2. Activity Info: Takes activities information in an XML format and stores in database. May optionally have pricing, reservation and payment information. Has some web interface for in-house staff to use. Provides activities information in an XML format and web service.
3. Routing Engine: Interfaces with the Route database to provide routing options. Provides route option information in an XML format and a web service.
4. Reservation System: Takes itinerary information and performs reservations with each provider, supplies itinerary information for ticketing in an XML format and a web service, sends confirmation email to user. Collects credit card payment.
5. Communication System: Provide communication with the mobile bus system via web service for ticket validation, barcode scanning and GPS location. Uses XML as the communication medium.

6. Provider Interface: Handles ticket reservation, payment and validation with the different providers. Each provider will most likely have its own interface.
7. Ticket Validation: Takes ticket information and performs ticket validation for a segment of a trip. Returns ok/not-ok information.
8. Payor Interface: Provides the ability to process credit cards.
9. User Info: Handles user login, user profile and itineraries.
10. Preferred environment is Runs on Windows 2003/2008 Server and .NET 3.5/C# SQL Server 2005/2008 and Linq for all database and XML queries.

Audience

Primary:

Commuters and large employers, visitors to the region, youth

Secondary:

Seniors

Target Audience	Need
Professionals (includes commuters and large employers)	Precise scheduling, status updates (delays etc.), and links to other forms of transportation; reliability; Wi-fi on provider; monthly pass option
Visitors	Info on tourist destinations; good links with other sites that visitors already use – Travelocity, Orbitz, travel agents; 10-day/2-week pass option
Youth	Phone application; hip and exciting look/feel; student pass
Seniors	Ease of use; accommodations for vision impaired, hearing impaired

Ownership

Yellowstone Business Partnership/Linx will own the website, associated graphic elements, source code, algorithms, processes and intellectual property. YBP reserves all rights associated with their use.

Timeline

Since this RFP includes several components that could be dis-aggregated to be worked on by several teams/firms, YBP expects that it will be important to have a team meeting early in the process to clarify roles and lines of communication. We also anticipate the need for an early design review to further refine the question of target audiences. Due to the compressed timeline of this project, we will schedule frequent check-ins to ensure that any problems or potential areas of delay are identified as soon as possible.

Phase 1 timeline components and dates:

Website Design and Development

Award project(s) 2/24/2010

Website Design Review 3/8/10

Website Review 3/29/10

Beta site completed 4/19/10

Feedback by 4/21/10

Final Site 5/3/10

Integration and testing 5/3/10-5/17/10

Go live 5/17/10

ITS System

Award project(s) 2/24/2010

System Design Review 3/8/10

Milestone 1 3/29/2010 (milestone content to be negotiated with contractor based on proposal)

Milestone 2 4/19/2010

Integration and testing 5/3/10-5/17/10

Go live 5/17/10

Required Proposal Elements:

- A list of three to five websites that you have produced that best represent why you are well-suited to this project
- Names and contact information for three professional references
- A brief description of your staff, what type of team would be assigned to work on this project, and what percentage of your web staff would be working on this project
- Discuss any software/hardware vendor partnerships
- Design options presented for selection by client
- Cost of providing services, including travel and per diem rates
- A timeframe for completion, which would form the basis for negotiation of contract, should your firm be selected

Evaluation Criteria

Proposals will be evaluated with the following criteria:

- Suitability – the proposal meets the requirements and criteria set forth in the RFP
- Expertise of the applicant as demonstrated in recommending and communicating solutions in the proposals and by references
- Aesthetic Capabilities – Prior work is visually creative and appealing and user-friendly
- Experience- candidate has the qualifications and experience necessary to complete project in proposed timeframe
- Proposal presentation – the proposal is clear and well-organized
- Value/Pricing – the price is commensurate with the product offered by the candidate and fits the project budget

Submittal Information

Proposals are due by **5:00 PM on Friday, February 19, 2010**, and should be submitted in electronic format to Jeff Osgood, YBP Mobility Project Manager at:

josgood@yellowstonebusiness.org.

Questions should be directed to Jeff: (work) 208-528-0269 (cell) 208-881-3523 (e-mail)

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