Request for Proposals
Feasibility Study
for
Balance Utah

a daily commuter flight from Vernal, UT to Salt Lake City, UT and/or Provo, UT

To discuss Balance Utah contact:
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**Balance Utah - RFP - Feasibility Study**

**Introduction**
UBAOG and Balance Utah project partners (Uintah County, Vernal City, Naples City, Vernal Regional Airport and Uintah Transportation Special Service District) are seeking the services of a qualified consulting firm (or team of firms) to prepare a Market Analysis and Financial Feasibility Study for a scheduled daily commuter flight from Vernal, Utah to Salt Lake City, Utah and/or Provo, Utah. This daily flight will provide the opportunity for local Uintah County and surrounding residents to commute daily to work along the Wasatch Front.

**Background**
Balance Utah is an initiative that is supported by Uintah County, Vernal City, Naples City, Uintah Basin Association of Governments (UBAOG), Uintah Transportation Special Service District (UTSSD), and the Vernal Regional Airport. The purpose of this initiative is to help balance rural and urban economies across the entire State of Utah. In the State of Utah, the urban areas are experiencing a robust economy with low unemployment rates and economic growth while the more rural parts of the state are experiencing economic distress and high unemployment. With ongoing concerns of air quality, transportation infrastructure, affordable housing, and Governor Herbert’s push for 25K jobs in rural Utah, Balance Utah has been initiated.

Balance Utah will establish a daily business flight path from Vernal, UT to Salt Lake City, UT and/or Provo, UT. The estimated flight time is 30 minutes. The flight will allow rural Uintah County residents to be employed by businesses and organizations along the Wasatch Front with jobs generating median to high incomes. This initiative reduces commuter traffic and other vehicles along the Wasatch Front by providing an additional mode of transportation. Balance Utah reduces air quality emissions and the strain on continuous expansion of transportation infrastructure. The initiative creates job opportunities in rural Utah by expanding the amount of jobs that are available to rural residents. Even though the jobs will be in the Salt Lake City area, the employees will be home in the evenings and weekends in rural Utah and making the majority of their household expenditures in Vernal area businesses. Housing costs are significantly lower in Vernal than in Salt Lake City. This initiative provides the opportunity for anyone looking to invest in affordable housing to move to an area where rents and homes are reasonable for a median household income all the while being able to work in a career that interests them. No matter where the jobs or people are located, this initiative has the ability to provide the daily connection to allow residents to live where they love and
work where they want. Balance Utah originated in Uintah County, however, the model will work for other rural communities in Utah.

Area Background
Uintah County, UT is located in Northeastern Utah approximately 180 miles east of Salt Lake City. The Vernal Regional Airport provides access to air service for the area. The Vernal Regional Airport is a 14 CFR Part 139 certificated airport with a design category of C-II. The airport is part of the DOT Essential Air Service Program and currently has daily service to Denver with full TSA screening services. Over the past 14 months, the airport has seen almost 100% growth in commercial travel (comparing monthly passenger count in early 2018 to current month). The airport has an ARFF team that operates an index B truck. The Airport finished a complete runway and parallel taxiway rebuild in December 2017 with an increase load bearing capacity and overall length. The airport also serves a large variety of General aviation and Corporate jet operators. Please reference the airport master record (5010) for more information on airfield services, conditions and other information. The airport is active in promoting aviation growth in our community.

Desired Services
- Airline holding a part 135 or 121 certificate with the possibility of the local government operating as a charter service, however the committee is open to all possibilities that meet the program goals
- Ability to begin service in 2020
- Daily operation 5 days a week, Monday through Friday, with scheduled service leaving Vernal, UT at about 6:00am and returning from Salt Lake City, UT around 6:00pm
- Ability to transport 30 to 100 passengers. Desired aircraft examples include Dornier 328, CRJ-200/700/900, Embraer ERJ 135/140/145, Embraer 170/175, and other similar sized aircraft.
- Guaranteed 3 year contract. Partners recognize that a ticket subsidy may be necessary during start-up phase.
- Possibility of cargo hauling services to the area to increase feasibility
- Possibility of ticket subsidy for passengers traveling to SLC for medical treatment
- Ability to negotiate a set ticket price for the entire contract period

Scope of Work

A. Balance Utah Market Validation - Evaluate the market validation of a daily flight path from Vernal, UT to Salt Lake City and/or Provo, UT Monday thru Friday
leaving early in the morning and returning in the evening. This portion of the study will address the need and opportunity of such a transportation service and the feasibility of the service.

a. Provide a summary of other similar transportation services currently in operation in other areas of the United States, including their capacity and utilization rate.
b. Estimate the approximate current need including an analysis of current employment, unemployment and underemployment.
c. Project the probable usage with the proposed air service in place based on statewide employment needs.
d. Based on the market validation analysis, recommend the approximate aircraft type/size and estimated number of people that will use the transportation service.
e. Evaluate other possible rural regional airports in Utah that have an interest in sharing this service or starting a similar service, such as Price, Logan, Richfield, Moab, etc. Another regional spoke route or cargo destination will reduce passenger ticket cost by keeping the plane and crew in-service throughout the day.
f. Assuming the Balance Utah flight service is put in place and follows the recommendations put forth, provide a summary of the potential positive and negative impacts this service will have on the local economy and employment in Uintah and Duchesne Counties. Also provide a summary of the potential positive and negative impacts this service will have on Utah statewide employment, air quality, emissions and affordable housing.

B. Capital Analysis

a. Based upon a project scope as called for in the market validation analysis, provide a general estimate of capital costs including aircraft acquisition, associated fees to establish service into Salt Lake City International Airport and Provo Airport, preparation costs for service to begin and any other costs identified.
b. Project annual (each year over 20 years) ongoing revenue sources that may be available for the initial capital costs including affordable commuter ticket prices, freight and parcel services.
c. Based upon the market validation analysis, separately project annual (each year over 20 years) on-going operating expenditures for this new service.

C. Operating Analysis

a. Based on the market validation analysis, separately project annual (each year over 20 years) daily service and operational revenues.
b. Based on the market validation analysis, separately project annual (each year over 20 years) daily service and operational expenditures.
c. Prepare a net operating income statement (by year over 20 years) that incorporates the operating revenues and expenditures to arrive at a project surplus or loss.

Project Management and Responsibilities
The selected consultant will be responsible for working closely with the UBAOG and Balance Utah Project Partners (Uintah County, Vernal City, Naples City, Vernal Regional Airport and Uintah Transportation Special Service District). Doug Brown, Vernal Regional Airport Manager, will be the Project Manager and will serve as the primary contact and coordinator between the consultant and the project partners. Other UBAOG staff will be available as necessary.

Anticipated Schedule
Tuesday, September 24, 2019: Release of the Request for Proposals (RFP)
Thursday, October 10, 2019: Deadline for Submission of RFP 4:00pm MST
End of October: Phone interviews and follow-up information with finalists
End of October: Provider selected
November 2019: Contract drafted and approved
November 2019: Feasibility Study begins

Proposal Content
Consultants’ response to this RFP must include a detailed, step-by-step description of the methodology intended for use in performing the scope of work as defined. This description shall include:

1. **Cover Letter**: Briefly describe the firm / owner, history, size, past experience with similar projects/services, your areas of expertise and your interest in this initiative.

2. **Scope of Services**: Briefly describe your approach to this project, implementation strategy, the services your firm could provide, and how your firm will address the goals of the initiative;

3. **Statement of Qualifications (SOQ)**: Include the following information:
   a. **Resumes** of key personnel who will participate in the project including educational background and employment history, not to exceed two pages per person;
   b. **Past Experience** with similar projects for other clients for the past five (5) years with references, contact names, and telephone numbers;
c. Example of work: One (1) complete copy of the final report from the project the firm has completed within the past five (5) years that is most similar to this project.

d. **Statement of Availability** and location of key personnel to work on the UBAOG assignment;

4. **Project Task and Schedule Matrix:** Provide a matrix/spreadsheet that identifies project tasks and milestones; estimated date for completing each task; personnel and their hours planned for each task; total number of hours for each task; and costs for direct expenses and sub consultants.

5. **Subcontractors:** If you propose subcontracting any portion of the work, clearly identify all the subcontractors, the responsibilities of each party, and the assurances of performance offered;

6. **References:** List clients / firms you have provided similar services for the past five (5) years with references, contact names, and telephone numbers.

7. **Contact Information:** Designate an individual for point of contact and include information needed for selection committee to set up an interview.

**Fee Statement:** The proposal shall include a SEPARATE fee statement for the work to be performed. The fee statement shall include a cost for each of the tasks to complete the work outlined in the Scope of Services and additional tasks the consultant feels are necessary to complete the work. Information shall include a version of the matrix described in item 4 above with hourly rates and fees calculated for each task. The consultants team may modify, combine, or otherwise change the tasks in the Scope of Services as they see fit in order to meet the needs of the UBAOG. The consultant shall be paid on an hourly rate plus direct expenses with a “not to exceed” amount. The consultant shall break down the proposed labor cost for each phase or task by hours for each person involved in that phase or task. The UBAOG reserves the right to negotiate with the consultant to determine the amount of work and fees to be included in the contract. The fee statement shall include a schedule of fees on an hourly basis for each of the key personnel and subcontractors, as well as a schedule of other basic costs, should additional services be necessary. The consultant should estimate the nature and cost of additional services deemed necessary to complete the project. The Balance Utah partners have been awarded a grant from Utah Governor’s Office of Economic Development to complete this feasibility study. The amount set aside in the grant to fund the study ranges from $20,000 to $30,000.
Submitting your Proposal
Please submit a PDF digital file to keviny@ubaog.org containing your proposal by Thursday, October 10, 2019 by 4:00pm MST. It is the respondent’s responsibility to verify the digital submission was received.

OR

Submit six (6) paper copies of the proposal. We will accept these copies by mail after the due date, provided the mailing is postmarked no later than Thursday, October 10, 2019.

Kevin Yack - Laurie Brummond
Uintah Basin Association of Governments
330 East 100 South
Roosevelt, UT 84066

If you wish to discuss the work in more detail or have questions, you may contact:

Doug Brown
Airport Manager
Vernal Regional Airport
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Selection Process
Bids will be opened on Thursday, October 10th, 2019, at 4pm at the Uintah Basin Association of Governments Conference Room at 330 East 100 South in Roosevelt, Utah. A selection committee, made up of UBAOG, Uintah County, Vernal City, Naples City, Vernal Regional Airport and Uintah Transportation Special Service District partners, will review the submissions at a later date and choose a consultant. The committee may request phone interviews or for additional information.

The UBAOG reserves the right to select the most responsive bid, although not necessarily the lowest bid, through the selection process.

After the selection is made, the successful bidder will receive a letter notifying them of the announcement. The announcement will also be posted to the UBAOG website at www.ubaog.org. Questions about the selection committee’s process will not be fielded after the selection.