



CLARK COUNTY

RFP #870

CLIMATE CHANGE PLANNING

QUESTIONS and ANSWERS

UPDATED: SEPTEMBER 7, 2023

	QUESTION	ANSWER
1.	Is the County able to share the available budget for this project?	<p>The county will be paying for this project with a climate planning grant from the Department of Commerce. The county is eligible for \$800,000. These funds can be used for implementation planning related to HB 1181 in addition to development of the county's Climate Element. As such, the county is interested in not spending all of its grant funds on this project. We are requesting that proposals provide consultants' best estimate of the cost of the scope of work. We expect to use the contract negotiation period with the preferred consultant(s) to weigh the tradeoffs of the scope of work and costs.</p> <p>Similarly, each city noted in the RFP is eligible for grant funds from the Department of Commerce, for varying amounts related to size and legislative requirements. All jurisdictions' grant amounts are posted on the Department of Commerce website climate grant instructions: https://www.commerce.wa.gov/serving-communities/growth-management/growth-management-topics/climate-change/.</p>
2.	Is the County open to receiving electronic proposals? We are attempting to reduce our environmental impact as much as possible, including by reducing printing and paper use.	We are required to follow the county's Purchasing Department procedures for RFP submissions and they do not accept electronic submissions. Please follow the submission directions as provided in the RFP.
	Pre-Submittal Meeting Q&A	
3.	<p>Do you have a preference for whether we submit as a team or, for example, for a firm to just apply for the facilitation piece?</p> <p>If we do apply for one element or another, would the county split up teams? If a group applies just for facilitation, could you be partnered with a technical firm even if you didn't submit together?</p>	We do not have a preference. If you present a team of firms that cover all the tasks, and we think you all are great, we may move forward with a contract from that approach. If we have firms submitting for separate tasks, we may form a team, selecting firms per task. We wanted to give ourselves the option to choose, that's essentially why we set it up that way. Our plan is to pick firms that cover the tasks. Whether that means piecing together different firms that don't submit together or selecting a team that submits together, we are to be determined about how that happens. For the process tasks we want really good process

		people and for the technical tasks we want really good technical people. We are going to be looking by task on who we think will help us meet our needs the best.
4.	There was no budget listed in the RFP, but we know there is Commerce funding available for these comprehensive plan updates. Are you planning to take advantage of that funding and how you are funding this project?	See response to Question 1 above.
5.	Noticed stakeholder engagement is a part of one of those four tasks. Are there specific requirements around the scope of that as well as the specific timeline or expected timeline for that?	For public engagement, interacting with the general public or specific groups to talk about this project, most of that is not in the scope of work. What is in the scope of work for this RFP is, in terms of public engagement, is focused on working with the three stakeholder groups that are outlined in the RFP. That's where we're seeking additional support. Additional outreach and engagement in the community beyond those groups is very minimally covered in this RFP. We may use information that's coming out of this process to help us with that outside work, but county staff and city staff will be directly engaging with community groups and the general public ourselves.
6.	Of the three community groups being formed now, can you share what you expect their status to be by the time this project starts? Will participants have been identified, will they have already met? How far along will those groups be in their forming?	<p>In the RFP we mentioned we hired a short-term consultant to help us with interviews to help us identify who should be in those groups. That work is currently underway. We are working with JLA Public Involvement who is conducting interviews starting this week. Their work will be happening over the next month or so. We will then use that information to develop a Public Participation Plan (PPP) that will go before the County Council. We will be seeking the County Council's approval on who needs to be represented in each of those groups. Once the County Council approves that, we will then begin the process to form those groups and identify the specific people to be a part of those groups. In terms of timing, we are hoping we can confirm who's in those groups by the end of the year. There is a slight possibility it won't wrap up until January, but as of right now we are still on track for that process. If we can get the EJC group formed by November we may try to meet with them before the end of the year, but we're not sure realistically if that is going to happen or not. The bulk of the meetings are going to have to happen in 2024.</p> <p>Whoever is hired for Task 1, while we might physically know where we're meeting and who's going to be involved, we will want consultant help on the group forming as a group and setting expectations. Those initial group process pieces, we would like that help as part of Task 1. Actually getting the people to the table, we are hoping we will be done by the time this RFP work starts.</p>

<p>7.</p>	<p>In Task 2 it talks about doing the GHG emissions inventories and a lot of the discussion around that has to do with VMT data and data coming from RTC, I'm reading this as primarily focused on transportation-based emissions. I'm wondering if that was the intention or if this is also looking for inventory of emissions beyond transportation as well?</p>	<p>We are expecting the GHG inventory would be beyond transportation, but we know transportation will be a big piece of that. In the RFP we ask you to assume the emissions inventory will cover scope 1, 2, and 3 emissions. In terms of budgeting and planning for what you're proposing, we're asking you to assume that's what we want. It may not be exactly what we end up with, but please assume the larger scope in proposals. As we have time to talk with you and make some decisions we'll decide if that's actually how broad we want to go with the inventory.</p>
<p>7b.</p>	<p>Follow-up on the previous question #7, you've got the county and I think four additional cities, do you want a unique inventory for each city and the county and try to determine the separateness of those four entities from the whole county's inventory? Is that how you're imagining it?</p>	<p>Our interest is that for these inventories, we're going to then be doing policy work afterwards. Because each city and the county are going to have separate batches of policies, we need to know what we have control over and can impact. We are envisioning that we can separate out emissions for each jurisdiction.</p>
<p>8.</p>	<p>Following up on the stakeholder groups – it's practice in some places to give stipends to people who are participating in stakeholder groups, particularly if it's not part of their job. Is that something we should budget for or is that an expectation that Clark County will have for the people participating in those groups?</p>	<p>County staff are currently figuring out our systems. We are checking if our grant funds can cover things like stipends, and assuming they can, we do think we'll probably pay stipends to the advisory group. We're also trying to figure out our method of payment for the EJC as well, but we are planning for both of those items to be covered in-house. In your proposals, you do not need to include stipends in your budgets.</p>
<p>9.</p>	<p>Beyond following the exact observation of guidance from Commerce, do you see places that you may want to go in different directions to honor what Clark County's needs are, or do you see more of an approach that would just follow the state's methodology? Do you see something unique to your area that you think you'll want to take on beyond that and that might be in alignment with other nearby parties?</p>	<p>We tried to spell this out in the RFP, but it's very confusing. There is early guidance right now from the Department of Commerce, which we reference in the RFP because it is the current, existing guidance. It's our understanding that a lot of that guidance is going to be applicable to our work. The actual guidance that Commerce will be publishing that is for jurisdictions with our timeline is due in December of this year, so we don't know exactly what it is going to say.</p> <p>To answer your question, we would like to follow the Commerce guidance, however, if there's a really good reason to deviate from it or do something slightly different from what it says, I think we want to consider it. We don't want to blindly follow it. It's a little bit hard to say we want to follow it exactly having not seen it yet. In general, what we want to do is be consistent with it.</p> <p>An example of where we've already started to deviate a little bit. In the early guidance that they issued in June of this year, they are recommending a single stakeholder advisory group. When we started thinking about doing this work, it became very apparent to us that would be too many people for our county and the number of interests</p>

we see involved. We've put together this approach of three advisory groups. In that way we feel like we're consistent with what they're recommending but we are maybe not following exactly the proposed approach they are suggesting.

The other piece -- reading through the legislation, if we deviate from the Commerce guidance, we are going to need to provide the documentation that backs up what we're doing. There will be extra work that comes with, for instance, coming up with policies that are not on the policy list that Commerce has already created. We just want to be really careful that we are using processes and approaches that are consistent. The legislation is the thing we have to be consistent with. The guidance is the thing we want to be as consistent as we can be with, but there's a little more flexibility there.

You asked if we're going to do this based on Clark County's needs. The County's needs have changed because the GMA added the new climate goal, so it's brand new territory for us. We need to be compliant with the RCWs and the GMA so our growth management plan is GMA-compliant. That's our ultimate goal. How we get there, we want to follow as much as we can what Commerce has given us with the guidance. Our needs have changed. With having our three different advisory groups, we want to be able to show our County Council we have done our best to gather as many people to the table who have traditionally not been at the table. We want more inclusive interaction. This is all brand new territory for us. It's not something we've done in the past. We've done several comp plan updates and this is all new to us.

10. No specific question. County staff comment.

Additional context to having the cities involved with us: in 2012 we updated our Shoreline Master Program. We had a grant from the Department of Ecology and we worked with the cities to come up with a baseline so all of us had the same baseline information to put into our Comp Plans, because the cities have jurisdiction inside the shorelines of the cities and the county has their own jurisdiction in unincorporated areas. But all of our baseline information was the same. That's kind of similar to what we will do with this work so that cities can go off and create goals that would align with the county's baseline information.

We think it makes sense to have consistent approaches as much as possible. It also seems if we're all doing the same work, if we can do it together, for us that is a better use of resources. We have a lot more staff than a lot of the smaller

cities. By us teaming together, it can be helpful for us a regional group in several ways.

10. Could you share about some of the work that's going on now leading up to the project and how that's going? Also curious about the expectation to build in the budget for things like language translation? There's language around an equity-centered approach, how has Clark County and some of your jurisdictional partners talked about that or are you relying on those who submit to define what that means? Curious about the environment and landscape of equity and environmental justice conversations as it relates to both the jurisdictions and the work that's happening now.

Clarification: There's a lot of different ways to describe equity approaches. I'm trying to get a sense – different jurisdictions, different clients, audiences receive language and information in lots of different ways. We've written some proposals where it might feel a little radical to what they're probably wanting to receive. Maybe if you could share exactly where you're at? Or where you would send me to get a sense of how the county is talking about racial equity?

We are just getting started with the stakeholder assessment process, so we don't really have a good sense of what's coming out of that just yet. We'll know more in the next few weeks with that.

If it makes sense to have interpretation at meetings, the County is prepared to pay for that, so that wouldn't need to be in your budgets. But, it is recommended that if you want to make sure that is considered as part of the process it would be good to mention that in your proposed approach. You can articulate that you're assuming the county would pay for that. We do have some funds set aside to help with that. We have some translation/interpretation contracts that we would probably use to support that. We don't have a sense yet to what degree that will be needed or make sense, but we are prepared that might make sense and might be needed. We'll find out to what degree that will be involved.

Clark County hasn't done a project like this because historically there hasn't been any political will to do it. We are doing this because legislation passed and we have to. It's good to know that is what's driving this work. The City of Vancouver very recently went through a climate planning process and that was driven by their council over the past few years. That's one piece of context.

Another piece of context is with the climate legislation that just passed that's driving this work, it also added language into the GMA around needing to involve overburdened and vulnerable communities. That language has never been in this law before. There's a lot of – it hasn't been done before because it wasn't been required. There's a lot that's very new here. With that said, Clark County has quite a mix of people and perspectives on this topic. The county Board of Health declared racism is a public health emergency. In the past couple of years there have been some steps taken like that. Even recently, Gary was sharing how for transportation projects that county does a good job following federal guidelines for environmental justice. It's a bit piecemeal. There are things happening in some parts of the county and not in others, but overall, culturally, the county is not equity-focused. There's not much countywide going on, but there are various things happening in different places.

As far as equity goes, when we start writing policies, we want to make sure we're not going to hurt any of these

groups who haven't traditionally been at the table. We want to write policies that are equitable and fair. Not to say that our policies are not currently equitable and fair. We want to make sure that whatever we do is equitable and fair and taking that extra step of what's the end result, who will it impact and what are the benefits.

We're taking the legislation seriously, and the fact that they did intentionally write in these pieces about making sure we really are speaking to and not worsening conditions for our overburdened populations. As a project team we're really trying to build that into the process of this project knowing that some of these processes don't exist at the county and they're not all explicitly laid out in the guidance either. We are trying to build that as we go, being respectful of all of those pieces. A key component we've heard from our different colleagues at the county is that we want to build the relationships with those different community groups. We have some relationships, but one piece we've been trying to tease out in this process – if we can get it right using data and finding the right groups that can speak to these vulnerable populations we want that help and that expertise from the consultant, part of that is from JLA and some will be for the RFP consultant, but then we want to be working closely with the consultant as staff continue building the relationships so we can carry those on beyond this project. But we really are leaning on the legislation to drive all of those decisions.

When people ask me what I think will come out of this process, I keep telling them I don't want to try to guess. I want to do really good process and see where the process gets us to. I can't emphasize enough, whoever is helping us with Task 1 is really going to help shape the approach. The technical piece is what we're actually going to do, but we want people from a wide variety of backgrounds from a lot of different perspectives to say, hey, we did really good process as part of this. That's a big goal for us. We're assuming good process will lead to better outcomes.

11. Have you thought about the schedule and the EPA effort with the Portland-Vancouver Metro area and do you feel like there's a conflict there or anything you've pre-thought to make sure that's going to be okay? Just wondering because we've got to assume that process is going to tie up a lot of the folks who would need to be involved in your project.

This project is solely tied to the Washington state legislation. It's totally separate. It may be helpful for future EPA-related work, but we have to be careful what we use our funds for, it can only be for the Climate Element.

This team, and in terms of this project and this work, we know the timing is interesting and overlapping but we're totally focused on the state's timeline for this. We understand that there's similar work being done through federal funding in other ways. As of right now we're keeping it totally separate. This timeline we're under is

		overwhelming. The amount of work and amount of time we have to do it, is very challenging so we're going to have to be very focused on what it is we have to accomplish.
	Q & A Post Pre-submittal Meeting	
12.	Can you share a copy of the Sep. 6 pre-submittal meeting recording?	Yes, the recording is available upon request. Please contact Jenna Kay at jenna.kay@clark.wa.gov .
13.	The RFP notes that consultants may submit for all or select project tasks. We may be interested in submitting a proposal for only select tasks. Will proposals on only select tasks be at a disadvantage as compared to proposals from teams that propose on all tasks? Is it still possible to get as high a score if we do not submit on all of tasks?	The review committee does not have a preference if you submit a proposal for all or some of the tasks, or whether you submit a proposal as a single firm or build a team to submit together for the whole proposal. We will score each proposal using the scoring matrix in the RFP for the tasks that the proposal covers, so any proposal team, no matter how many tasks they cover in their proposal, will be eligible for the same number of points.