



December 9, 2013

To: Fox Cities Transit Commission

From: Deborah Wetter  
General Manager

Subject: Approval to Award Contract for Strategic Plan to SRF Consulting Group for \$60,000

**Background:** Valley Transit was awarded a federal planning grant from the Wisconsin Department of Transportation (WisDOT) to develop a strategic plan for Valley Transit. In July the Transit Commission and the Appleton Common Council accepted both the WisDOT grant and a grant from the Community Foundation for \$12,000 which provided the local match for the WisDOT planning grant.

An increase in the diversity of the Fox Cities area and an aging Baby Boomer population means that demand for transit services will continue to increase for the foreseeable future. With significant funding challenges to just maintain the Valley Transit system, it is important that Valley Transit have a plan for the next 10 years that has community support. Valley Transit, the community and the funding partners need to determine what type of transit system the community wants and needs, how transit fits into the overall transportation system in the Fox Cities and how the desired system will be funded. As the economy continues to improve and expand, it is important that the transit system services keep pace with the expansion of the economy and enhance the ability of the Fox Cities to attract and retain businesses and the workforce needed to sustain those businesses.

In September Valley Transit issued an RFP to create a Strategic Plan for Valley Transit. The RFP was emailed to 21 potential vendors, was posted on the State of Wisconsin's VendorNet website and the City of Appleton website and advertised in the Post-Crescent. Seven responses were received by the October 25, 2013 deadline. The RFP's were scored on technical merits by an evaluation panel consisting of: Nick Musson, Transportation Planner – East Central Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission, Marti Hemwall, VP of Community Engagement –Community Foundation for the Fox Valley Region, Ian Ritz, Wisconsin DOT Bureau of Transit, Local Roads, Railroads & Harbor, Sal La Puma, Asst. General Manager – Valley Transit and Deborah Wetter, General Manager – Valley Transit. Deb Ebben, Administrative Services Manager – Valley Transit served as the RFP Administrator and scored the cost proposals which were kept separate from the

technical scorer's packets. Criteria included personnel qualifications and experience of the firm, project implementation and technical approach, administrative procedures and controls and cost. The technical and cost scores were added together and the three top scoring firms were invited to an interview on December 5, 2013 where they made a 10-15 minute presentation to the evaluation team on their proposal and then answered questions asked of all three firms as well as questions that resulted from their presentation. The SRF Consulting Group, Inc. proposal received a score of 466 out of a possible 500 points (proposal cost was \$60,000). RLS and Associates received a score of 460 points (proposal cost was \$59,950.85) and Innis/Red Shoes PR received a score of 402 (proposal cost was \$60,000). References were checked on SRF and RLS. SRF had two good references and one acceptable reference. RLS and Associates had two good references and one negative reference.

The evaluation panel felt that SRF Consulting Group, Inc. had more direct transit operations experience than the RLS and Associates team and stronger technical skills. They also had more in-depth knowledge of the Valley Transit operation. The evaluation team felt that they could deliver a good solid plan for Valley Transit.

SRF Consulting Group, Inc. was established in 1961 and employs 250 engineers, planners and designers who work with public sector clients across the country. Joe Kern heads the transit planning practice for SRF which is headquartered in Minneapolis, MN with offices in La Crosse, Madison and Milwaukee, Wisconsin as well as offices in North Dakota and Nebraska. Joe Kern, the project leader, has more than 30 years of experience in a broad spectrum of transportation planning activities. He has lead numerous complex transportation projects involving multiple jurisdictions and stakeholders. Also part of the team is Bob Bourne (Bourne Transit Consulting, LLC) who has extensive experience in all facets of transit operations and management. Bob directed the Ames, Iowa Transit Agency for 25 years and now assists communities with service planning activities and management reviews. The third member of the team is Anita Gulotta-Connelly (Connelly Coaching and Consulting, LLC) who has more than 30 years of experience in the transit industry and recently retired as President and Managing Director of the Milwaukee County Transit System. She is also immediate past chair of the Wisconsin Urban and Rural Transit Association (WURTA).

**Recommendation:** Staff recommends and requests approval to award the contract for the Valley Transit Strategic Plan to SRF Consulting Group, Inc. at a cost of \$60,000.