



REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS (RFP)

Zero Emission Vehicle Transition Plan for Demand Response Transportation

RFP No. 26-1

Issue Date: March 36, 2026

Questions Due: May 1, 2026

Proposal Due: May 4, 2026 10:00am

Anticipated Award Date: May 14, 2026

Contract End / Completion Date: December 31, 2026 (extension possible as the RFP is later than expected)

Budget: \$75,000

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Background and Context

Via Mobility Services (Via) is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization based in Boulder, Colorado, with an operations facility in Denver. Via's mission is to promote independence and self-sufficiency for people with low mobility by providing caring, customer-focused transportation options. Via provides demand response transportation services for older adults, people with disabilities, and others, and also operates public transit and microtransit services through contracts with government entities, including the City of Boulder's fixed route, The Hop.

Via is seeking proposals from qualified firms to develop a Zero-Emission Vehicle (ZEV) Fleet Transition Plan. Via established a 100% ZEV fleet transition goal for 2035 around 2020. However, this project recognizes a key reality: battery and electric vehicle technology has not advanced at the pace anticipated, and a 100% battery-electric vehicle (BEV) transition is not currently feasible for Via's operations without substantial impacts to service. The goal of this plan is to determine how much of Via's fleet can realistically transition to ZEVs under existing technology, cost, and operational constraints, and to provide implementable guidance to support phased deployment.

Via operates demand-response and contracted services with significant day-to-day variability in mileage, duty cycles, and vehicle/run assignments. Traditional fixed-route electrification planning approaches may not translate directly.

Snapshot fleet electrification history (2018–2026)

- **2018:** First Gillig diesel bus converted to electric by Lightning eMotors. First 50kW ChargePoint charger installed.
- **2021:** Three Proterra buses begin service on The HOP; three Proterra chargers installed. Concept design completed for a solar busport microgrid. First electric body-on-chassis (BOC) procurement initiated (RFP issued).
- **2022:** Purchased a 4.5 acre vacant lot (adjacent to Boulder facility) to build a zero-emission vehicle charging, maintenance, and training facility
- **2023:** Awarded \$1.3M from Xcel Energy (PRI/EVSI) for four electric BOCs plus chargers/infrastructure. Two BOCs ordered from Lightning eMotors; one ordered from Phoenix Motorcars.
- **2024:** Lightning eMotors and Proterra both go out of business; reliability issues escalate across buses/chargers. Lightning buses never delivered, deposit lost.
- First electric BOC delivered by Optimal in October 2024 (over three years after initial ordering process began).
- **2025:**
 - Awarded ZEV transition plan funding and microgrid construction from Clean Transit Enterprise.
 - Three Lightning eMotors BOCs acquired from Fleet E-Force.
 - One BOC delivered from Motiv and one additional BOC from Optimal.
 - First two Level 2 chargers installed at the Denver facility.
 - Xcel Energy completes a major charging infrastructure project at Via, including eight DC fast chargers (DCFCs) and a new dedicated 700 kW EV transformer service.
- **2026:** Seven electric Gillig buses delivered for The HOP service in Boulder. Microgrid project begins (planned groundbreaking July 2026, completion expected by end of 2026). First DC fast charger installation at the Denver facility planned/underway in March 2026. Phoenix BOC ordered three years ago still pending delivery.
- **2027:** Adding microgrid connected charging infrastructure and ordering 2-3 ZEVs

Project Purpose and Central Questions

What portion of Via's fleet and service can be reliably supported by zero-emission vehicles under current technology and operational conditions, without materially sacrificing service delivery?

Key Decision Goals

The following are some of the main questions we expect to have answered in a plan:

1. Fleet Replacement Strategy

- Which vehicles should be replaced and when?
- Which replacements can be ZEVs now, which later, and which should remain/be replaced with ICE?

2. ZEV Operations and Deployment

- How can Via deploy ZEVs reliably in a demand-response environment using current scheduling tools and operational practices?
- What operating protocols are needed so dispatchers, drivers, and managers can make confident day-to-day decisions?
- Do service areas and routes need to be redesigned for EV operations?
- How can Via plan for operating EVs on new services (simulations, real-world testing, etc.) to determine operational feasibility?
- How can we plan for and assess battery degradation? What should we do when batteries are degraded by 20% or more?

3. Cost and Funding Reality

- Given constrained grant funding and typical match requirements (e.g., 20% local share), what replacement approach is financially viable, assuming the 20% share is coming from Via rather than additional funding sources?
- At what price point is it worth replacing vehicles with ICE vs BEV.
- What does total cost of ownership (TCO) look like for key vehicle classes under realistic conditions? At what price point is it worth replacing vehicles with ICE vs BEV.

Existing Conditions and Constraints

Via's demand-response environment differs from traditional fixed-route operations. Vehicle assignments and route mileage vary substantially day-to-day, and vehicles frequently change

runs. As a result, standard “route + vehicle” analysis alone may not adequately determine ZEV suitability.

Market Constraints and Cost Context

Vehicle availability and affordability are central constraints. For example, Via experiences pricing on the order of:

- 14-passenger body-on-chassis (BOC) ICE vehicles: approximately \$175,000
- Equivalent electric BOC vehicles: approximately \$330,000
- Some low-floor electric models: up to \$500,000

Via typically must provide a local share for grant-funded purchases of 20%, making vehicle cost a major decision driver. Via is also monitoring uncertainty in the ZEV market (e.g., limited ADA-accessible options; discontinuation risk; range limitations).

Current ZEV Operations

Via currently operates four electric BOC vehicles most days:

- Two operate on microtransit contracted services
- Two operate in smaller service areas (City of Boulder and Westminster)
- Two more expected to operate on a new microtransit service May 2026.

Via has piloted a “zoned deployment” method using its scheduling software (Ecolane) to confine these vehicles to smaller geographic service areas and prevent boundary crossing that would jeopardize range. This has made mileages more predictable, but buses still run out of battery on the Westminster route. This approach may be scalable but requires analysis to determine whether expansion would reduce service performance (e.g., trips completed). Given Via’s large service area, deadhead mileage is a major consideration for EV deployment.

Data Availability

Via can provide the consultant access to:

- Vehicle telematics via Samsara
- Scheduling and operational data via Ecolane and related reporting
- Maintenance records and vehicle inventory
- Funding and financial information
- Operational staff knowledge through interviews and working sessions

Scope of Work

Task 1 — Fleet Replacement Planning and Decision Framework (Primary Deliverable)

The consultant shall develop a fleet replacement strategy that functions as an ongoing decision tool, not merely a static report.

Required elements:

1. Fleet Inventory and Baseline

- Compile baseline fleet inventory, condition, usage, maintenance trends, and replacement needs by vehicle class.

2. Replacement Decision Framework

- Define criteria and a repeatable method to determine replacement timing and replacement type (ZEV vs ICE vs interim).

3. Phased Fleet Replacement Plan

- Provide a multi-year replacement plan indicating:
 - which vehicles to replace
 - recommended replacement type/size (including right-sizing considerations)
 - recommended timing (including alignment to typical grant cycles)
 - risks and dependencies (infrastructure, operations, vehicle availability)
 - Adding expansion vehicles should also be considered—new service contracts and operations funding levels are expected to increase, requiring more vehicles

Deliverable

- Provide a living replacement tool or suggest other methods that allows Via to track:
 - upcoming replacements
 - recommended replacement type (ZEV now/later/ICE)
 - route/run suitability considerations
 - notes on whether vehicles should be reassigned to different service types or zones
 - decision flags and triggers for revisiting assumptions

Task 2 — Demand-Response Suitability Analysis and ZEV Deployability

The consultant shall analyze Via's service patterns to determine where ZEVs can be deployed reliably, acknowledging variability in demand-response runs. We expect this to include analysis of existing EVs in service.

Task 3 — ZEV Operations: Protocols, Dispatch Rules, and Staff Usability

Operations is the core challenge. The consultant shall develop practical protocols that enable staff to deploy ZEVs reliably without compromising service.

Required elements:

1. Operations Interviews and Workflow Assessment

- Conduct structured interviews with operations staff to understand how runs are created, scheduled, and adjusted, and why.

2. Deployment Recommendations

- Provide recommendations for scaling ZEV deployment using existing scheduling tools (including zoned deployment approaches), with explicit tradeoffs.

3. ZEV Operations Protocol

- Produce an operating protocol (SOP-style guidance) that addresses at minimum:
 - when to assign a ZEV to a run (or not)
 - state-of-charge (SOC) decision thresholds (e.g., when to return to base; when to charge on-route, how much to charge—from what-to-what SOC%)
 - cold-weather operating guidelines (including conditions under which ZEV operation should be limited or avoided)
 - dispatcher decision rules for switching between ZEV and ICE before route deployment

4. Implementation-Friendly Format

- Protocols should be written in a format usable by dispatchers, drivers, and managers (e.g., checklists, decision trees, quick-reference pages).

Via is seeking outputs that increase staff confidence and reliability, not abstract recommendations.

Task 4 — Total Cost of Ownership and Financial Feasibility

TCO is not required, but respondents should state whether they propose a TCO component, what classes it would cover, what assumptions/methods they would use, and what the output would look like (editable assumptions preferred).

Task 5 — High Level Facilities Charging Infrastructure Assessment

Via does not require engineering design in this phase, but does require a high-level review:

- Review existing and planned charging at both facilities.
- Provide feedback on whether the planned buildout supports the phased fleet replacement plan.
- Identify major risks/gaps and what additional analysis would be needed in a Phase 2.

Via will have charge management software installed on all chargers. The main things we want to know at this time are related to appropriate kW sizes of charges and EV to charge port ratio. For the next two years we should have a 1:1 ratio but realize this may not be feasible as the fleet becomes more and more electric.

Deliverables

1. Fleet Replacement and ZEV Deployability Report (narrative findings, assumptions, recommendations)
2. Phased Fleet Replacement Plan (multi-year roadmap, decision triggers)
3. Fleet Replacement Tool or other mechanism
4. ZEV Operations Protocol (dispatcher/driver/manager usable guidance)
5. TCO Summary and Assumptions
6. Final Presentation to Via leadership and operations staff

Deliverables may be negotiable according to the consultant's area of expertise, but these are our basic expectations.

Proposal Requirements

Proposals should include:

- Understanding of Via's constraints, demand response operations, and the central feasibility question
- Proposed approach by task and deliverable
- Plan for operations engagement (interviews, workshops, protocol development)
- Project team and roles
- List of recent similar completed projects
- Budget and level of effort (by task/deliverable). Also include any recommended tasks if outside the budget
- Project timeline

- Sample Work Product
 - One (1) ZEV transition plan excerpt or comparable fleet electrification planning document. This will be evaluated based on organization and communication quality, not content or applicability to Via's scope
- Identify any tools/software they intend to use (e.g., fleet modeling, routing simulation, charging optimization, TCO tools), including:
 - what each tool does
 - whether it is proprietary or third-party
 - the vendor/provider name (if third-party)
 - what outputs it generates
 - what inputs it requires from Via
 - whether a demo can be made available during the bidding process

Evaluation Criteria

Via will evaluate proposals using the following weights:

- Understanding of Via's service areas and demand response operations — 20%
- Relevant Experience and Expertise — 20%
- Proposed Approach and Methodology — 50%
- Cost and Value — 10%

As a private nonprofit public transportation and human services transportation provider, Via Mobility Services is a highly complex organization compared to public transit agencies. Therefore, creative and custom solutions are highly desired. Because of this complexity, proposers may ask questions, schedule discussions with Via staff, and conduct site visits until the proposal due date for the purpose of collecting information and gaining a better understanding of our goals and purpose from a ZEV plan.

Proposed approaches outside the scope of work in this RFP will be considered.

The following fleet inventory shows active Via owned vehicles only. There are approximately 30 other vehicles used for staff, volunteers, or spares that are on their way to the scrap yard. Right sizing the fleet in size and quantity is a high priority. Via operates, maintains, and stores The HOP fleet for the City of Boulder, which comprises 10 BEBs. These should only be considered in planning related to charging and infrastructure.

Vehicle Inventory

<u>Vehicle ID</u>	<u>Current Service Area</u>	<u>Year of Mfr</u>	<u>Type</u>	<u>Model</u>	<u>Seat Cap.</u>
VPT-E03	Boulder	2022	BOC	Chev Exp GM4500/Lightning	12
VPT-90	Boulder Community Health	2018	BOC	Ford Senator II	14
VPT-139	Boulder County	2024	Minivan	Chrysler Voyager/BraunAbility	3
VPT-129	Boulder County	2023	Van	Driverge 350EL Ford Transit	7
VPT-124	Boulder County	2024	BOC	Forest River Elkhart ECII	14
VPT-123	Boulder County	2023	BOC	Forest River Elkhart ECII	14
VPT-119	Boulder County	2021	BOC	Forest River Elkhart	14
VPT-118	Boulder County	2021	BOC	Forest River Elkhart	14
VPT-117	Boulder County	2021	BOC	Forest River Elkhart	14
VPT-84	Brighton	2017	BOC	Ford Senator II	14
VMT-160	Brighton	2016	BOC	Ford/Glaval Universal	12-2
VPT-81	Carbon Valley	2016	BOC	Ford/Startrans	8
VPT-131	Carbon Valley	2023	Van	Driverge 350EL Ford Transit	7
VPT-95	CU Buff Ride	2019	Van	Norcal Ford Transit	6
VPT-94	CU Buff Ride	2019	Van	Norcal Ford Transit	6
VPT-128	CU Buff Ride	2023	Van	Driverge 350EL Ford Transit	7
VPT-126	CU Buff Ride	2023	Van	Driverge 350EL Ford Transit	7
VPT-159	Denver Metro	2016	BOC	Ford/Glaval Universal	7-2
VPT-138	Denver Metro	2024	Minivan	Chrysler Voyager/BraunAbility	3
VPT-134	Denver Metro	2023	Van	Driverge 350EL Ford Transit	7
VPT-133	Denver Metro	2023	Van	Driverge 350EL Ford Transit	7
VPT-125	Denver Metro	2023	Van	Driverge 350EL Ford Transit	7
VPT-121	Denver Metro	2023	BOC	Forest River Elkhart ECII	14
VPT-116	Denver Metro	2021	BOC	Forest River Elkhart	14
VPT-115	Denver Metro	2020	Van	Norcal Ford Transit	6
VPT-114	Denver Metro	2020	Van	Norcal Ford Transit	6
VPT-112	Denver Metro	2019	Van	Norcal Ford Transit	6
VMT-200A	Denver Metro	2018	Van	Ford/Transit	8-2
VMT-199A	Denver Metro	2018	BOC	Ford/Senator II	6-2
VMT-198A	Denver Metro	2018	BOC	Ford/Senator II	6-2
VMT-173	Denver Metro	2020	BOC	Ford/Elkhart Coach ECII	8-2
VMT-172	Denver Metro	2020	BOC	Ford/Elkhart Coach ECII	8-2
VMT-171	Denver Metro	2020	BOC	Ford/Elkhart Coach ECII	8-2
VMT-170	Denver Metro	2020	BOC	Ford/Elkhart Coach ECII	8-2
VMT-169	Denver Metro	2019	Van	Ford Transit	8-2
VMT-168	Denver Metro	2019	Van	Ford Transit	8-2
VMT-166	Denver Metro	2019	BOC	Ford/Elkhart	14
VMT-165	Denver Metro	2019	BOC	Ford/Elkhart	14
VMT-164	Denver Metro	2019	BOC	Ford/Elkhart	14
VMT-163	Denver Metro	2018	BOC	Ford/Senator II	12-2
VMT-162	Denver Metro	2018	BOC	Ford/Senator II	12-2
VMT-161	Denver Metro	2018	BOC	Ford/Senator II	6-2
VPT-E06	Erie Bee	2025	BOC	Optimal/Turtle Top Terra Transit	12

VPT-E04	Erie Bee	2023	BOC	Chev Exp GM4500/Lightning	12
VPT-137	Erie Bee	2024	Minivan	Chrysler Voyager/BraunAbility	3
VPT-136	Erie Bee	2024	Minivan	Chrysler Voyager/BraunAbility	3
VPT-127	Estes Park	2023	Van	Driverge 350EL Ford Transit	7
Omni-1502	Littleton	2017	BOC	Startrans Senator II	13
Omni-1501	Littleton	2017	BOC	Startrans Senator II	13
VMT-167	Longmont Housing	2019	BOC	Ford/Elkhart	18/2
VPT-992	Lyons Flyer	2025	BOC	Champion Defender	22
VPT-E05	Majestic Commuter	2024	BOC	Motiv/Ford E450/Turtletop	14
VPT-122	Majestic Commuter	2023	BOC	Forest River Elkhart ECII	14
VPT-120	Majestic Commuter	2023	BOC	Forest River Elkhart ECII	14
VPT-132	Mountain Ride	2023	Van	Driverge 350EL Ford Transit	7
VPT-E01	Ride Free Lafayette	2024	BOC	Optimal/Turtle Top Terra Transit	12
VPT-135	Ride Free Lafayette	2023	BOC	Forest River Elkhart ECII	14
VPT-85	Spare	2017	BOC	Ford Senator II	14
VPT-83	Spare-Boulder	2017	BOC	Ford Startrans	14
VPT-991	Special Contracts	2022	BOC	Turtle Top Terra	18
VPT-99	Special Contracts	2017	BOC	Turtle Top Terra	22
VPT-98	Special Contracts	2019	BOC	Ford 450 Champion	26
VPT-97	Special Contracts	2020	BOC	Ford E450 Champion	26
VPT-111	Staff	2019	Auto	Ford Edge SE AWD	4
VMT-179	Staff	2019	Minivan	Dodge Braun Entervan	3-1
CLI-959	The Climb	2021	BOC	Forest River - Champion Challenger 4x4	17
CLI-958	The Climb	2013	BOC	Ford E-350 4x4	14
VPT-96	Volunteer	2019	Minivan	Braun Entervan	5
VPT-130	Weld County	2023	Van	Driverge 350EL Ford Transit	7
VPT-113	Weld County	2021	BOC	Elkhart E350	14
VPT-E02	Westminster	2023	BOC	Chev Exp GM4500/Lightning	12

Coming Soon

VPT-E07	TBD	2024	BOC	Phoenix	12
VPTE08	Erie Bee	2023	BOC	Optimal E1	12

Charger Inventory

Make	Ports	kW	Line	Location	Service
ABB	2	120	Dedicated	Boulder	Fixed Route
ABB	2	120	Dedicated	Boulder	Fixed Route
ABB	2	120	Dedicated	Boulder	Fixed Route
ABB	2	120	Dedicated	Boulder	Fixed Route
ABB	1	24	Dedicated	Boulder	Demand Response
ABB	1	24	Dedicated	Boulder	Demand Response
ABB	1	24	Dedicated	Boulder	Demand Response
Proterra	1	60	Building/Microgrid	Boulder	Fixed Route
Proterra	1	60	Building/Microgrid	Boulder	Fixed Route
Proterra	2	125	Building/Microgrid	Boulder	Fixed Route
Chargepoint	1	50	Building/Microgrid	Boulder	Inoperable
Chargepoint	2	14	Building/Microgrid	Boulder	Cars
ChargeTronix	2	60	Dedicated	Boulder	Demand Response
ABB	1	19.2	Denver	Denver	Demand Response
ABB	1	19.2	Denver	Denver	Demand Response

Near Future Charger Inventory

Make	Ports	kW	Line	Location	Service
ABB	2	120	Building/Microgrid	Boulder	Mixed
ABB	2	120	Building/Microgrid	Boulder	Mixed
ABB	1	24	Building/Microgrid	Boulder	Demand Response
ABB	1	24	Building/Microgrid	Boulder	Demand Response
ABB	1	24	Building/Microgrid	Boulder	Demand Response
ABB	1	24	Building/Microgrid	Boulder	Demand Response
ABB	1	24	Building/Microgrid	Boulder	Demand Response
ABB	1	24	Building/Microgrid	Boulder	Demand Response
ABB	1	24	Building/Microgrid	Boulder	Demand Response
ABB	1	24	Building/Microgrid	Boulder	Demand Response
ABB	1	24	Building/Microgrid	Boulder	Demand Response
ABB	2	120	Denver	Denver	Demand Response

Facility Transformers

Location	Size	
Boulder	500kW	Building
Boulder	720kW	EV Dedicate d
Denver	720kW	Building
Battery Storage System (2027)		
Boulder	1MW	

Service Area Boundaries

