City of Austin, Minnesota

Request for Proposals
Website Redesign

Proposals Due:
July 3, 2014 – 5:00 pm

For more information, contact:
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MIS Director
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507-437-9960

Issue Date: June 2, 2014

www.ci.austin.mn.us
Addendums to this request for proposals, if any, will be available on the City of Austin website.

Contents

Introduction

The City of Austin, located in southeastern Minnesota, is soliciting requests for proposals (RFP) from qualified, experienced website design experts to redesign and implement its public website to meet current and future requirements. The City of Austin is seeking a cost-effective method to achieve the project goals with primary focus on streamlining content, compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), incorporation of modern website features and characteristics, all with ease of navigation in a welcoming, friendly, aesthetically pleasing new professional design.

Background

The current website at www.ci.austin.mn.us was launched in 1998. It resides on a Unix FreeBSD server and is maintained by the MIS Director.

Scope of Work

The scope of work assumes current content, applications, mapping system and payment engine will be preserved and moved to the new website in the implementation. Requirements include but are not limited to the following list. Recommendations from the successful firm that best meet current and future needs will be considered within budget limitations.

- Develop a modern, easy-to-use, interactive, visually appealing, architecturally sound and flexible website that meets customer needs.
- Create a standardized page format that can be replicated and maintained site-wide, including font style for titles, content; unified color scheme, and layout.
- Provide a content management system to multiple non-technical internal staff. City of Austin will own all content on site.
- Provide written content management standards and training for internal maintenance staff across multiple departments.
- Provide a framework and architecture that allows addition of new features and online services as budget, technology, and future demands indicate.
- Incorporate design elements that make the website easy to navigate, appealing, functional and searchable.
- Provide a secure site that meets emerging industry standard guidelines on privacy and accessibility.

The information on City of Austin's website is intended for the following audiences:
- Citizens
- Businesses
- Prospective residents
- Prospective businesses
- Prospective developers
- Civic groups & associations
- Youth & senior citizen groups
- Other government agencies
- Any person or agency seeking information about City of Austin

Content Components

Content will come from existing webpages, as well as new information provided by staff and/or developed with the assistance of the selected consultant. A broad range of information will be accessible through the City of Austin website, including, but not limited to the items listed below. It is critically important that these features are easy to manage and update by non-technical city staff.

1.   Home page
2.   Robust search feature, include ability to search PDF files
3.   Welcome statement
4.   Frequently asked questions
5.   Department homepages
6.   Informational pages for a variety of topics within each department
7.   Periodic use of a pop-up box or similar function to display emergency information on the homepage, such as weather, closures, or other City of Austin notices
8.   I Want To…..link
9.   Interactive forms that can be developed by staff and submitted by users through the website
10.   A – Z listing or site map
11.   News or What's New section on homepage and certain department homepages to display upcoming events or important topics
12.   Press release section
13.   Employment section
14.   Links to agenda materials for city board and other meetings
15.   Ability for citizens to register for and receive emails through the website
16.   Links and quick links
17.   Intranet or other secure portion of the site for information for City of Austin employees

Design Components

Design includes the conceptual development of the look and format of the site, the scope of information and identification of how pages will be accessed. It includes accessibility, interactivity, search capabilities, a metrics system or ability to track hits to various pages on the site and is to be developed as a content management system so that city staff can update and change content easily. City of Austin strives for the highest degree of professionalism and best possible use of current technologies in the design of the site. Included in the design phase of this project will be regular meetings with designated staff, which may be conducted in person, by phone or other means. The following basic design components should be incorporated:

1.   Use of unified or common themes.
   a.   The basic design package will be provided with banners, logos, signature icons and action buttons for the main page design. These features will be adaptable for each subsequent page on the site.
   b.   The site will have a unified graphics theme and a consistent and unique color theme throughout the entire site.
   c.   City of Austin brand identity should be apparent on every page.

2. Provide a user-friendly site.
   a. With logical, intuitive navigation and links with no need for the user to understand the government structure.
   b. The site should be designed for use on major web browsers and mobile devices.
   c. The site should not overwhelm the user with visual clutter.
   d. Design should be accessible to all individuals.
   e. Content improvement wherever possible to integrate and train internal staff on plain language standards.
3. Provide convenient, modern navigational tools, menu hover options where appropriate.
4. Allow for interactivity including email response options and interactive forms.
5. Graphic files should be relative to site, designed with simplicity to allow for the quickest possible loading of the site. Web pages should be tested at lower connection speeds to ensure each webpage can be accessed in a timely manner.
6. Include a robust search feature, allowing users to search through webpages and PDF documents contained on the website through an easy to use search function.
7. Incorporate tracking analytics comparable or greater to the present website, such as number of users, top common pages, locations users are coming from, for example. The analytic function must be easy for the average staff member to use with minimal training.
8. Provide system and process for reporting and tracking of issues and bugs.
9. Content management.
   a. The site must have a content management system, where authorized staff at the department level can update web pages from individual workstations.
   b. The content management system must be hierarchical, allowing certain supra-users and various permissions for sub-users who can update certain pages, but not publish without review and other pages where the same sub-user may have the ability to directly publish content.
10. Pages should have a printer friendly option, as well as adjustable text size options
11. Ability to add RSS Feed
12. Ability to incorporate social media platforms
13. Ability to add videos, podcasts
14. Ability for site to be viewed from mobile platforms, or separate mobile site, user convenience and cost considered.

Recommendations about content, features, or design components not included in this list will be considered. City of Austin encourages respondents to submit ideas for content, approach, style and alternatives.

City of Austin Responsibilities

Project management on behalf of City of Austin is assigned to Don Tomlinson, MIS Director. As the contact person for this project, he will coordinate contract issues, approve invoices for payment, review progress, schedule team meetings and other tasks necessary to complete the project on time and within budget. City of Austin will use a team approach when making decisions regarding the design and content of the site, and provide feedback to the selected vendor throughout the project.

Proposal Requirements

Proposals should include the following information, and any other information to be considered in the selection process:

1. Company resume, including relevant governmental website redesign projects completed in the last three years.
2. Name, contact information, and background for the primary project contact and team members that will be responsible for the project.
3. Explain the process to be used, including applications and software.
4. Provide a sample home page illustrating a vision for City of Austin's website. The company selected may be asked to provide multiple graphic design options until a final selection is made by City of Austin.
5. Provide a sample site map showing the number of levels envisioned.
6. Estimated project schedule, which will become a part of the final agreement.
7. Training plan to transition content management to internal city staff.
8. Provide any technical Information relevant to the project. (Content management software used, browser compatibility or limitations, integration of third party portals, for example.)
9. Fees including any monthly/ongoing charges.
10. References

Submission of Proposals

Proposals may be submitted by the deadline by email to dtomlins@ci.austin.mn.us. Paper submissions may be mailed to Don Tomlinson, City of Austin MIS Director, 500 4th Avenue NE, Austin, MN 55912.

Disclosures

City of Austin reserves the right to accept any proposal or to reject any and all proposals without cause or reason. Proposals may be accepted outright or negotiated in part or whole in awarding the contract in the best interests of City of Austin.

City of Austin is subject to the Minnesota Government Data Practices Act and the Minnesota Open Meeting Law and cannot assure confidentiality of responses or other information provided by respondents.

The successful respondent will be required to enter into a written agreement including indemnification clause; comply with all applicable laws, ordinances and regulations; and provide evidence of insurance in form and substance satisfactory to City of Austin.

Additional Considerations

The City of Austin reserves the right to reject any or all proposals and the City further declares that it will incur no financial obligations for any costs by any company in preparation of the proposal. The City reserves the right, in its sole discretion, to select the firm based on the City's sole evaluation and review of the proposals and such other relevant information as the City shall have before it, and based upon the City's own determination as to which proposal best meets its needs.

During the performance of any contract awarded as a result of this RFP, the contractor agrees to the following: No person shall, on the grounds of race, color, creed, religion, national origin, sex, age, marital status, public assistance status, veteran status, physical disability, sexual orientation, or political affiliation be excluded from full employment rights in, participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be otherwise

subject to discrimination under any program, service or activity under the provision of any and all applicable federal and state laws against discrimination including the Civil Rights Act of 1964.

The Contractor shall defend, indemnity and hold harmless the City against any and all liability, loss, damages, costs and expenses incurred by the City as a result of the Contractor's acts or omissions. The Contractor shall ensure that any work-product produced during the performance of any contract awarded as a result of this RFP shall not be an infringement of any other party's intellectual property rights nor a violation of any contractual or other right held by any such third-party. Once completed, all content contained within the finished product shall be solely owned by the City of Austin.

It is agreed that nothing contained herein shall be constructed as creating or establishing the relationship of co-partners or joint venture/enterprise between the City and the Contractor for any purpose or in any manner whatsoever. The Contractor is to be and shall remain as an independent contractor with respect to all services performed. Further, the independent contractor shall be responsible for its own taxes and benefits of its employees and/or agents.

Estimated Project Schedule

June 2, 2014	Release RFP
July 3, 2014	Proposals due by 5:00 pm
July 11, 2014	Review of proposals
July 18, 2014	Interviews with top ranked respondents
August 4, 2014	Award and contract approval by City of Austin
December 1, 2014	City of Austin website public launch

A more detailed project schedule will be developed with the successful respondent as a part of the final contract. It is expected that the city team assigned to the project will review alpha and beta releases prior to final deployment. Please include a reasonable estimate of time and fees for post launch support for any issues or bugs that may be detected after the new site is live.

Evaluation of Proposals

Evaluation criteria:
1. Project costs
2. Demonstrated ability to meet requirements outlined in the RFP
3. Aesthetic appeal of completed website redesign projects
4. Ability to meet desired timeline
5. References

Inquiries
All inquiries regarding this RFP must be submitted in writing via email to dtomlins@ci.austin.mn.us.