



City of Mason City Website Redesign Request For Proposals (RFP)

INTRODUCTION AND PURPOSE

The City of Mason City, Iowa (hereinafter referred to as “City”) is soliciting Request for Proposals (RFP) from experienced, responsible and qualified vendors for services to redesign, develop and implement a multifunctional web site.

The City’s current website (www.masoncity.net) was developed in 2002 to provide basic electronic information about the City to citizens. Since that time, citizen demand for expanded content and additional services are being requested. The City does not currently maintain the position of a webmaster.

The City seeks a redesign of the website with a new graphic appearance, organization, and content to reflect the services delivered by City staff. This entails a modified design for the City’s website that is dynamic, visually appealing, informative and easy to navigate. The new design and content management system should be intuitive for a wide variety of users and allow quick access to information on a broad array of services and programs. The new site should incorporate the latest web technologies in an effort to gain operational efficiencies and improve customer service.

City staff believes that the continued development of our web presence represents a significant opportunity to more efficiently and effectively deliver services to citizens. Because of this belief, the City is committed to looking at the website as an evolving process rather than a project with a specific beginning and end.

The current web site is organized by department, which can be difficult for the general public to find specific information on the site unless they are familiar with the City’s organizational structure. City staff in each department/division is responsible for maintaining and updating the information on their portion of the site. It is the desire of the City for staff to continue to update the site content and it is imperative that the site be easy to update and modify by City staff with varied technical knowledge.

The City and vendor will develop a specific project plan and identify budget for equipment and other products. The City is seeking a vendor that has considerable experience in web design for a streamlined solution and approach. The City anticipates that experienced and qualified vendors will be able to offer design templates, standardized solutions and other cost-efficiencies favorable to the City in order to keep costs at a minimum and allow the City to achieve many of the primary requirements within the given budget.

SCOPE OF SERVICES

The following acts as a preliminary scope to generally communicate the City's expectations for the website redesign. A final scope of work will be developed between the City and vendor submitting the selected proposal.

The City wants to completely redesign its current website with the following objectives:

- *Business, residents, and visitors can easily navigate and access information;
- *Content management is self-supporting, consistent, and user-friendly, capable of being updated and maintained by City staff with varied levels of technical knowledge;
- *Content management allows for City staff to easily add pages, forms, new sections and the ability to add and/or change photos, possibly using an interface that mimics Microsoft Word in form and in function; and
- *The homepage is uniquely designed with easy access to a majority of the content of the site.

The successful respondent to this RFP must be prepared to:

- *Facilitate discussions with various City departments regarding their needs, develop an implementation plan based on the department output, design an attractive and functional site, and provide testing and implementation of the site;
- *Aid the City in transitioning to the redesigned website including staff training and guidelines for selected Content Management System (specify whether training takes place in-person, online, and/or at additional cost). The City intends that a majority of the content on the existing website may be used in the new website; conversion of the existing content will need to be addressed;
- *Maintain timely and regular communication with the City during the development and redesign process;
- *Provide service for the continued support in upkeep and maintenance of the website;
- *Provide a secure access to the site by City staff for daily updates;
- *Supply proven skills with the latest tools, technology and capability to provide technological advances as future add-on options to the City's website;

SPECIFIC REQUIREMENTS

Responses should demonstrate an understanding of the service, a proposed solution or range of solution options and breakout pricing for each of the following elements listed in this section.

Website system design and support: Provide a new look and “feel” for the City’s website that is dynamic, appealing, informative and easy to navigate; this should include any fees associated with the transition from the existing site to the new site;

Website maintenance and hosting fees: The chosen vendor will host the web site or will provide a partner to host the site. The vendor should provide a description and explanation of all fees, including an outline of all monthly fees associated with the requirements in the maintenance and hosting of the site from the vendor and the fees of a subcontractor/third party for hosting the site, if applicable, and any other additional fees;

Subscription function: Service that allows website visitors to subscribe for one or more alerts/notices or newsletters created by the City – City must be able to create additional alert/notice options on its own after the website is developed; some of the items to subscribe to would be agendas, job postings, news releases, construction updates, and other information of importance to the subscriber;

Search function: Search function for the entire website;

Staff directory: Listing of City staff and the Mayor and City Council members with a link to contact personnel via their e-mail address to increase local government’s communication with constituents;

Calendar of Events: Should include a viewable calendar that is searchable by date and/or event and should allow for the title of event as well as a description to include the capability to link to the event source. Page content should have functionality to set time-outs so that content will automatically “expire” and no longer appear after the date;

Frequently Asked Page: Page would be dedicated to answer the questions most frequently asked by citizens. The content should be capable of being organized by the user based on department, alphabetic, or function. City staff should be able to easily add questions and answers as the need arises;

City Announcements/Events: Similar to the ‘What’s New’ on the current website, short list of upcoming meetings or events with a link to view additional information;

Public Meetings: Page would list items such as the Agenda, Minutes, Meeting Packets & Audio/Video choices for City Council, the various Boards and Commissions and other public meetings;

City Services Directory: Page would alphabetically list services offered by the City. Users would be able to link to the service by clicking on the service from the list;

Public Documents Center: Comprehensive page to increase public access to all forms, permits, documents, public records, and other government information available to be downloaded. (This center could lead to a potential future goal of on-line financial transactions.);

Online Job Application: A form that would allow individuals to fill out a job application online to be automatically submitted to the Human Resources Department;

On-line Incident Management System: To provide citizens an easy to use portal for the purpose of reporting incidents or directing questions to the appropriate staff, similar to the “Citizen Service Request” on the current website;

File Transfer Protocol (FTP): Service that provides the ability to transfer large documents via the website for both City staff and outside entities. This should be accomplished while maintaining the security of the site by the use of password management.

Resources Page: Dedicated to providing useful links to various city/county/state agencies, school districts/schools, civic organizations, and other agencies;

Streaming Video: To provide citizens with access to local government meetings and programs by providing the ability to view live and archived local government meetings and programs (specify any limitations to this capability).

The following function is not a requirement of this RFP, but may be addressed at the discretion of the vendor.

Mapping Portal: The City intends to contract with a third party to provide citizens, developers and other interested partner organizations an easy to use interactive web-based mapping portal utilizing the City’s Geographic Information System. It is anticipated that citizens, developers and other partner agencies will utilize this portal for creating and printing maps. This web-based mapping application will be accessible from the GIS homepage of the hosted website for the City.

SUBMISSION ELEMENTS AND FORMAT

All vendors interested in submitting a proposal should include the following information:

1. Demonstrate an understanding of the services outlined in the RFP. Provide a description of the project phases and the roles of the vendor and the City for each phase of the redesign project, including design, conversion, training, implementation, and a timetable for each the proposed phases of the project.
2. Components and features designed to enable access and use of the website by persons with disabilities and offer suggestions to reach Section 508 Compliance.
3. Description of successful projects of website development for other municipalities or government entities similar to the proposed project outlined in this RFP. Include a listing of project clients including client name, contact telephone number, description of the work performed, and work completion date(s).
4. A cost estimate & method for the conversion of the current website's content to the proposed format.
5. A total not-to-exceed contract amount to include breakout pricing for the elements on Pages 3 & 4 under the **Specific Requirements** section. All quotations shall be in both words and figures. In case of discrepancy, the amount in words shall govern.
6. Any additional fees explicit in listing and describing any services or items not covered in the proposal amount.
7. The necessary software and/or hardware, any integration needs and potential costs necessary to maintain the website.
8. Detailed profile of the vendor, including name, years in business, contact person(s), mailing address, telephone number, e-mail and web site address, number of full-time employees and technical support personnel, and other relevant information.
9. Identification of any additional project components to keep current with technological advances that would improve the quality of the website.
10. Identify a single vendor as the lead vendor and clearly indicate subcontracted/third party services required to meet the needs of the proposal. Any services covered by a subcontracted/third party vendor should be included in the proposal.
11. Statement describing any potential conflicts of interest with respect to the proposed project, if applicable.

SUBMISSION

Vendors are asked to respond to this RFP by submitting at least three (3) paper copies of the written proposal (plus one (1) CD containing the information from the proposal) in an 8 ½ x 11” format. The proposal submittal packet shall be placed in a sealed envelope and clearly marked “Website Proposal” on the exterior of the packet. The written proposals must be received no later than 4:00 p.m., CT, on Friday, February 20, 2009, at the address below:

Submit proposals to:

Ms. Pamela Stecker
City of Mason City
10 First Street NW
Mason City, IA 50401

*Vendors should insure that their proposals arrive at the correct location on or before the stated deadline.

*Late proposals or proposals delivered to the incorrect location may be disqualified from further consideration.

*No oral, telephone, fax or email proposals will be considered.

*No costs associated with the preparation of this proposal, or incurred in any manner by the proposer, may be charged to the City.

*All materials submitted in response to this RFP will be considered the property of the City.

EVALUATION CRITERIA AND SELECTION PROCESS

EVALUATION AND INTERVIEW

The City's Web Page Redesign Committee, consisting of City staff from a variety of departments and divisions, shall review all proposals based on the vendor's qualifications and project characteristics, as well as submittal requirements set forth in the RFP. The committee will select finalists deemed best suited to address the needs of the City based on the proposals received. The finalists will be notified in the week of March 9, 2009, via e-mail.

The City reserves the right to require any vendor to clarify its proposal or to request any additional information deemed necessary to assist staff in the evaluation of the proposal.

SELECTION

Finalists will be invited to come on-site to provide a presentation to the committee. Interviews are tentatively scheduled to occur during the week of March 30, 2009. Presentations shall be limited to a maximum of 30-minutes, plus a question and answer session by staff immediately following.

Upon selection, final contract amount will be subject to negotiation to determine exact scope of services to be provided. Selection does not guarantee award of contract.

It is the intent of the City's Web Page Redesign Committee to make a recommendation to the City Administrator, who will forward his recommendation to the City Council at its April 7, 2009, meeting. The City Council will have the ultimate approval of the selection.

SCHEDULE

Project Schedule

It is the City's desire to begin the project upon finalization of a contract and complete the effort based on a mutually acceptable time period, not to exceed 6 months.

The tentative timeline for this proposal is as follows:

February 20, 2009	Formal written proposals due by 4:00 p.m. CT
Week of March 9, 2009	Proposals evaluation and finalists contacted
Week of March 30, 2009	On-site interviews of finalists
April 7, 2009	Recommendation to the Mason City City Council

ADDITIONAL CONDITIONS

GENERAL PROVISIONS

- ✓ All information contained in this RFP is subject to change by the City.
- ✓ It is in the intent of the City to enter into a not-to-exceed contract with the qualified vendor. At no point will pricing be allowed to rise above the stated contract amount with the conversion, application, hosting, maintenance and other services included as part of the costs outlined.
- ✓ The City reserves the right to reject any and all proposals, to accept in whole or in part, to waive any formality in proposals received, to cancel or modify the RFP in part or its entirety, and to accept proposals separately or combine proposals when it is in the best interest of the City.
- ✓ All material submitted regarding the RFP becomes the property of the City and will only be returned at the City's option.
- ✓ The City would also be responsible for securing and maintaining any domain names associated with the application. All data would remain owned by the City regardless of where the data resides.
- ✓ The City is not liable for any cost(s) incurred by any vendor prior to the issuance of an agreement, contract, or purchase order. Any cost(s) incurred may not be charged as a separate charge or as part of the services provided.
- ✓ Quotation of fees and compensation shall remain firm for a period of at least 90 days from the RFP submission deadline.
- ✓ Upon completion of website, all content and site templates become the property of the City (if not acceptable, explain in proposal).
- ✓ Staff may disqualify a vendor at any time, if it was determined that significant special conditions have not been disclosed or if any primary member of the firm withdraws.

*All questions regarding the RFP should be directed in writing to Pamela Stecker at pstecker@masoncity.net no later than February 9, 2009. A complete list of answers will be sent via e-mail to all recorded holders of the Request For Proposal if a substantive clarification is necessary.