



Response to Inquiries

Request for Proposals

Regional Economic Development Website Design, Development & Marketing/Advertising

General questions regarding MetroCOG's RFP for a Regional Economic Development Website Design, Development and Marketing Strategy were to be directed to Colleen Kelleher, Finance Director, in writing via e-mail to ckelleher@ctmetro.org no later than 3:00pm on Friday, September 16, 2022. The RFP stated that inquiries and responses would be e-mailed as well as posted at <http://www.ctmetro.org/aboutus/for-vendors/> no later than September 21st, 2022. The Connecticut Metropolitan Council of Governments received the following questions regarding the RFP:

BUDGET

1. What is your estimated budget for this project? Do you already have money set aside? This helps us determine the complexity of various features.
2. Do you have a separate budget for hosting and ongoing support?
3. Would you be able to provide budgeting information for this project?
4. What is the budget/range for the project?
5. Do you have a budget you are able to share? Does the budget include tech support and hosting? What was the investment in the previous website?
6. The RFP mentions providing fee schedules as well as a price negotiation. Can/should the response include fixed costs or estimates or should that be left out from this initial submittal?

Response to Questions 1-6: There is no budget or constraints for this project. We will be choosing the vendor who is the most fair and reasonable, and fulfills the requirements laid out in the RFP. Proposals should include the upfront cost to develop the website as well as options for ongoing maintenance and support.

SCHEDULE AND TIMING

7. Has a Q&A or an addenda been released yet? **No.**
8. Is the due date still the same? **Yes. Proposals are still due by September 30th, 2022 by 3:00PM.**
9. Do you have a desired launch date? Is there a specific event driving the launch date? **MetroCOG's top priority is a well-designed site that the public can easily navigate. We envision a comprehensive development process between 6 and 9 months. However, if the vendor estimates a shorter or longer timeline that will achieve this priority, please do not hesitate to propose a different schedule. There is no specific targeted launch date. We do not want to launch during a holiday weekend.**

10. Is there a mandatory pre-proposal meeting? **No.**

EXISTING WEBSITE

11. Who built your current site, and when was the last refresh?
12. Who currently provides you with ongoing support services?

Response to Questions 11-12: This is a brand-new website and will not replace www.ctmetro.org.

13. Do you have any reference websites which you would like us to refer to? **MetroCOG envisions a website with similar features and functionality to the following:**

- **MetroHartford Alliance (www.metrohartford.com)**
- **Choose Stamford (www.choosestamford.com)**
- **Hampton Roads Alliance (www.hamptonroadsalliance.com)**

QUESTIONS ABOUT OUR PREFERENCE FOR A VENDOR

14. Are there any specific tasks or deliverables related to marketing for the awarded vendor? If so, could you please list them? **Each vendor should propose a marketing plan to ensure that the new website is being utilized to the maximum extent possible so the intended audience can access the information.**
15. Is there a scoring matrix/grid for RFP evaluation? If so, what is it? **MetroCOG has specified evaluation criteria in the RFP.**

LOCATION FOR A VENDOR

16. For support and maintenance, do you want staff to be based out of the USA or we can provide remote support working as per your time zone? **MetroCOG evaluates all proposals based on the qualifications of the firms and ability of the consultants to work collaboratively with MetroCOG and our municipal partners, but there will be a need for in person meetings as part of the development process.**

FUTURE FUNCTIONALITY & OPERATIONS

17. Who will be responsible for evaluating responses (people and/or roles)? **A Selection Committee comprised of representatives of MetroCOG and local and regional economic development stakeholders will evaluate the responses.**
18. What will be the target audience for a new website? **The target audience includes businesses, entrepreneurs, economic development stakeholders, and the public.**
19. Would you like detailed research in terms of your audience in the form of an audience needs assessment? **No, detailed research is not required.**
20. For the new website do you wish to use the existing brand style guide, or you would require our support is creating a new brand style guide? **MetroCOG will not be utilizing the existing brand style guide and we are requiring support for a new brand style guide for this website.**

21. What are the current technical challenges (if any)? **No technical challenges currently exist.**
22. Will there be any payment gateway integrations? **No.**
23. Who are your primary and secondary users? **Please see Question 18.**
24. Do you expect copywriting or editing services as part of engagement? **We do not anticipate the need for copywriting and editing, however we welcome quotes.**
25. How will you measure the success of the new website? What are some KPIs? **Success will be measured by the number of visits and other factors to be determined by the Selection Committee.**
26. Is a compliance audit required? **No, a Compliance Audit is not required.**

MAINTENANCE AND SUPPORT

27. How long does MetroCOG expect vendors to provide ongoing maintenance and support for the website?
28. Are you looking for ongoing maintenance and developer support?
29. How many internal developers & resources do you have to support this project, and what is their anticipated role in the initial development of the solution, ongoing maintenance, and feature enhancements to the website?
30. Please describe your technical / IT staff. How many members do you have and what is their level of experience, particularly with Drupal and/or PHP. This helps us determine the level of support you may require
31. Is there a main executive sponsor for this project? Are they from Information Technology, Communications, or another department?
32. How many site administrators will you have?
33. How many staff members are maintaining the website? Will training be needed?
34. What level of expertise do staff members have with website updates and HTML?
35. Will you require different levels of admin permissions?
36. Can you let us know how many user roles will be there on the front end and back end of the website?

Response to Questions 27-36: MetroCOG looks forward to estimates for maintenance. Please provide estimates for 1, 2, 3 and 5 years. We currently have one user dedicated to updating calendar, news/announcements, uploading documents and adding pages. A minimum of two logins will be required. We do not anticipate levels of users and various permissions, with the exception of the party responsible for maintenance and CMS updates.

HOSTING/DOMAIN

37. Please describe your current hosting setup. Are you interested in hosting services?
38. What is the current hosting environment?

Response to Questions 37-38: MetroCOG currently uses Wordpress but welcomes proposals with various hosting solutions.

39. Please describe the below:

1. Monthly Total Bandwidth
2. Monthly Page Views
3. Monthly Hits (e.g. html, css, js, images, docs)
4. CMS Number of content pages
5. CMS Database size
6. CMS File asset size

40. How many visitors does the current website receive on a monthly basis?

Response to Questions 39 - 40: This is a new website with no reference data available. This will be a standalone website, separate from www.ctmetro.org.

41. Do you have a preference for a highly secure, open-source CMS like Drupal?

42. Do you have any preference for the CMS of the new website?

43. Do you have a preference for the CMS, such as Drupal or Wordpress?

44. Should hosting services be included in the proposal or will you host the site on your own?

45. If you plan to host the site yourself, are there any technical requirements or limitations we should know about the hosting environment (i.e. any Proxy servers to be aware of, specific versions / flavors of PHP/Apache/MySQL that are required, etc)? Can the hosting environment support any/all these services: Redis, Solr, Varnish?

46. If hosting is part of the scope of work, can you provide a projected monthly average number of sessions, users, and page views?

47. Does the organization have a CMS preference? Open source? Drupal/WordPress?

48. What CMS options have you considered (if any)?

49. Do you have the capability to host your website internally? If so, what platforms are available?

Response to Questions 41-49: The vendor will propose various hosting solutions. Annual costs should be included in the proposal.

50. Do you prefer an open source content management system as opposed to a commercial, proprietary system? **Open Source CMS.**

51. Could you provide more detail on the level of interoperation with other software applications, databases, and platforms you desire? **ESRI ArcGIS Mapping Integration is required.**

52. What internal systems must the site be connected to, and can you provide the technical details / programming languages / database for each? **We do not anticipate internal systems being connected but are willing to review ideas.**

53. How many users or content providers will the CMS have?

54. Can you let us know how many user roles will be there on the front end and back end of the website?

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Response to Questions 53-55: There will be one user and content provider.

CONTENT

56. Do you have a brand for the new site, such as a logo, colors and fonts or do you need a brand created as part of the design process?
57. If the brand already exists will you be able to provide brand guidelines showing the logo, colors and fonts?
58. Are there existing brand guidelines that should be followed?
59. Do you have a style guide or a brand guide?

Response to Questions 56-59: There is no style guide or brand for this website. We request that proposals include a scope of work and budget for a brand style guide.

60. Can you provide a list of pages, sections or content types you would like to have on the new website? For example, do you need an About Us page, a blog, or a resources section? **Pages should include About the Region, Business/Entrepreneurial Resources, Data & Research, etc.**
61. Can you identify websites that have a purpose, content or features similar to the website you envision? **MetroCOG envisions a website with similar features and functionality to the following:**
 - **MetroHartford Alliance** (www.metrohartford.com)
 - **Choose Stamford** (www.choosestamford.com)
 - **Hampton Roads Alliance** (www.hamptonroadsalliance.com)
62. The RFP states that MetroCOG will want to provide” resources such as data, contact information, virtual presentations, entrepreneurial outreach and education” on the site. How do you envision each of these types of content to be presented on the website? Could you elaborate on types and amount of content for each item? For example, does "data" mean raw data in a database or data in files / documents? **We don't anticipate raw data in a database, please refer to Question 59.**
63. Do you envision having a Resource section where visitors can search / browse through a large amount of resources or pages where visitors can download data or presentations, view a list of contacts and read about how you support entrepreneurial outreach and education? **Yes.**
64. The RFP states that “the website should also focus on the region’s key industry sectors, quality of life, investment opportunities, educational institutions, and other economic opportunities and to leverage those assets.” Can you elaborate on how this information should be presented on the website? For example, will there be a list of industry sectors with a web page for each sector or will the website have general content about key industry sectors? **Please see Question 61.**
65. How many pages of content do you anticipate transferring to the new site? **No content will be transferred at this will be a new site.**
66. Will you need the vendor to help develop content? **No. MetroCOG will develop content for the website, but we welcome ideas.**

67. Will you need the vendor to help develop content? **See response to Question 66.**
68. What are your current pain points with the existing website? **None.**
69. Content migration: is there any content migration to be performed from other systems? If so, what are the needs/requirements? **No content migration is needed from other systems.**
70. Do you need documentation for governance of the website? **Yes, we would like to work with the selected vendor to develop specifics.**
71. What type of social media integration are you looking for in the new website?
72. Can you share the URL of websites that you feel are successful? **Please see Question 61 for examples.**
73. Is there any existing user research or user feedback available? **No existing user research or feedback is available.**
74. Are you interested in having user research and usability testing to ensure a user-friendly website? **MetroCOG is not interested in user research or usability testing, however, this website needs to be user-friendly.**
75. Are you able to provide participant recruitment if user research is desired? **Not Applicable. See Question 74.**
76. Can you provide a list of features you would like to have on the new website? For example, do you need a newsletter sign up form, downloadable documents, social share feature or language support? **Please refer to examples in Questions 13 and 61 as well as the RFP for examples and features.**

SCOPE OF WORK

77. If the scope of work on a page / feature level has yet to be determined, do you envision finalizing the scope of work during the project with the vendor or during the proposal process? **MetroCOG will finalize the scope during the project with the selected vendor.**
78. Can you elaborate on the scope of work for the advertising/marketing component of the RFP? **Each vendor should propose a marketing plan to ensure that the new website is being utilized to the maximum extent possible so the intended audience can access the information.**