Minnehaha Creek Watershed District   *REQUEST FOR BOARD ACTION*

MEETING DATE: March 14, 2019

TITLE: Authorization to Release RFP for Website Redesign

RESOLUTION NUMBER: 19-026

PREPARED BY: Sarah Bhimani and Telly Mamayek

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REVIEWED BY: ☐Administrator   ☐ Counsel   ☐ Program Mgr. (Name):_____
                          ☐ Board Committee   ☐ Engineer   ☐ Other:

WORKSHOP ACTION:

☐ Advance to Board mtg. Consent Agenda.   ☐ Advance to Board meeting for discussion prior to action.

☐ Refer to a future workshop (date):_____   ☐ Refer to taskforce or committee (date):_____

☐ Return to staff for additional work.   ☐ No further action requested.

☒ Other (specify): **Final Action on March 14, 2019**

PURPOSE or ACTION REQUESTED:
Staff request the authorization to release the RFP for website design services as part of the District's website redesign.

PAST BOARD ACTIONS:
Communications staff provided an update to the OPC on February 14, 2019. Feedback received in this meeting has been incorporated into this request for action. This is the first time the website redesign is being brought to the Board.

SUMMARY:
The MCWD's 2017 Watershed Management Plan identifies the strategic priorities of building high-impact capital projects and integrating land use and water planning while also remaining responsive to needs and opportunities across the watershed district. MCWD's current website does not effectively communicate or market our new strategic direction or our most impactful work as it is limited by its structure and design.

MCWD's current website design was last updated in 2011. Since then there have been changes in mobile technology, accessibility standards, and design standards. Additionally, new functionalities have been identified that would improve the user experience of the site and better share MCWD's data and stories.

The website redesign is being moved forward in coordination with the recruitment of consultants for the organizational IT plan and the 2020 strategic communications plan. Systems and software identified by the IT consultant will need to integrate with a redesigned website. The website redesign will be informed by research that is done and recommendations that are made for the 2020 strategic communications plan.

Staff, in conjunction with the IT Team, began preparing for this project in 2018 by reviewing the current website's analytics to identify current audiences and most-used content. The IT team determined the redesigned website's target audiences based on the organization's strategic priorities and current users, and identified must-have and nice-to-have features for a functional and robust website. Using the draft strategic communications plan goals as a guide, the IT team and leadership team determined the draft overarching goals for a redesigned website.

Staff has been getting input from other watershed districts and local governments that have recently completed website redesigns to learn from their experiences and to review their RFP examples. Staff has also discussed the RFP and the website redesign project with three website design firms to learn about their process and what information they need in an RFP to put together a successful proposal.

Staff provided an update to the Board Liaisons on January 31, 2019 on the website redesign process and work done to date. Communications staff provided an update to the OPC on February 14, 2019 to initiate the website redesign process and to review the purpose, goals, scope, budget, and timeline for the redesign and to set shared expectations on roles. Communications staff met with Manager Shekleton on February 25, 2019 to review the information presented at the OPC meeting and to answer questions. Communications staff also presented an overview of the website redesign process to the Citizen Advisory Committee on March 6, 2019.

RFP - Website Redesign

Goals
The redesigned website will help meet the organization's strategic goals by:
- Using a visually appealing website design to tell concise and compelling stories
- Structuring content to be intuitive for easily finding information relevant to the entire watershed and our target audiences
- Improving accessibility and transparency of publicly accessible data
- Incorporating interactive customer service features
- Improving backend administration
- Facilitating community engagement

Scope
The website redesign will be a two-part process that will involve the website designer working closely with staff and the IT consultant.

A. Preparing for redesign - 2019
   1. Coordinating with the IT consultant to ensure third-party application integration
   2. Informing the MCWD 2020 budget for website build
   3. Facilitating staff to develop a content strategy and preliminary site navigation

B. Website build - 2020
   1. Finalize content strategy and site navigation
   2. Build and implement redesigned website

Selection Criteria and Timeline
The vendors' proposals will be reviewed based on the qualifications of the vendor, proposed approach, and fees. The final scope of work will be negotiated after the qualification based selection.

The IT Team has identified the following timeline for the RFQ process. This maintains a fairly aggressive timeline in order to bring the website designer onboard by mid-May to provide the maximum amount of time to inform the 2020 budget by July 15, 2019.

- Board Approval of RFP: March 14, 2019
- RFP Posted: March 15, 2019
- RFP Submissions Due: April 11, 2019
- Review Proposals: April 12 – 15, 2019
- Summary and Recommendation to Liaisons: April 17, 2019
- Interviews: April 23, 2019
- Summary and Recommendation to Liaisons: April 25, 2019
- Selection, Recommendation, and Contract to Board for Approval: May 9, 2019

The RFP will be posted to our website, posted on the League of Minnesota Cities and Minnesota Department of Administration websites, and provided to interested firms in our area.

Attached:
RFP for Website Redesign

RESOLUTION

RESOLUTION NUMBER: <u>19-026</u>

TITLE: **Authorization to Release RFP for Website Redesign**

WHEREAS,   the current Minnehaha Creek Watershed District website was launched in 2011; and

WHEREAS,   technology, design, and accessibility standards and requirements for websites have changed in the past eight years; and

WHEREAS,   in February of 2017 the Minnehaha Creek Watershed District adopted a strategic plan to achieve its mission of protecting and improving land and water by building high impact capital projects, and changing local, regional and state policy to further integrate land and water planning; and

WHEREAS,   a 2019 update to the organization's strategic communications plan is needed to support the organization's new strategic direction; and

WHEREAS,   the website is a key outreach tool that must utilize current technology and design to effectively communicate the organization's strategic priorities; and

WHEREAS,   in 2018 staff reviewed analytics of the current website to identify current audiences and most-used content, and

WHEREAS,   using this information, an IT team comprised of staff across all functions of the organization determined the redesigned website's target audiences based on the organization's strategic priorities and current users, and identified must-have and nice-to-have features for a functional and robust website; and

WHEREAS,   using the draft goals for the 2020 strategic communications plan as a guide, the IT Team and the staff leadership team determined the following overarching goals of the website redesign:
- Using a visually appealing website design to tell concise and compelling stories
- Structuring content to be intuitive for easily finding information relevant to the entire watershed and our target audiences
- Improving accessibility and transparency of publicly accessible data
- Incorporating interactive customer service features
- Improving backend administration
- Facilitating community engagement; and

WHEREAS,   staff collected input from other watershed districts and local governments that have recently completed website redesigns to learn from their experiences and to review their RFP examples, as well as discussed the RFP process with website design vendors; and

WHEREAS,   the Board Liaisons to the IT team (Managers Shekleton and Olson), the Operations and Programs Committee, and the Cititzen Advisory Committee have been briefed on the process for redesigning the website.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, the Minnehaha Creek Watershed District, Board of Managers hereby authorizes the staff to solicit proposals for website redesign services.

Resolution Number 19-026 was moved by Manager _____, seconded by Manager _____.
Motion to adopt the resolution ___ ayes, ___ nays, ___abstentions. Date: _____.

_____ Date:_____
Secretary

Request for Proposals
Website Redesign

Organizational Background

The Minnehaha Creek Watershed District (MCWD) is a local unit of government responsible for managing and protecting the water resources in one of the largest and most heavily-recreated urban watersheds in Minnesota. The watershed stretches 178-square miles and encompasses 29 cities from Minnetrista to south Minneapolis and includes Lake Minnetonka, the Minneapolis Chain of Lakes, Minnehaha Creek, and Minnehaha Falls. It includes eight major creeks, 129 lakes, and thousands of wetlands. Over the past 50 years, MCWD has collected and maintained extensive water and natural resources data which have supported implementation of over 70 capital projects resulting in the conservation and restoration of over 700 acres of land.

MCWD's primary business functions are: capital project development and implementation, project maintenance, planning, permitting, data collection and analysis, communications, education, and operations. The organization's strategic direction is focused on implementing high-impact capital projects to improve water quality and ecological integrity and changing local and regional policy to better integrate land use and water planning.

Project Overview

MCWD seeks a contractor to design a new website that will provide a rich, engaging, and successful user experience. The redesigned website will reflect MCWD's identity as a leader in implementing high-impact water quality projects and policy change to integrate land use and water planning. MCWD desires a website that is visually compelling, easy to navigate, accessible to all users, and easy to administer and maintain.

In tandem with the website redesign, MCWD is beginning the process of a comprehensive organizational IT update. As a result, the selected website designer will be working closely with an IT consultant. This will ensure IT systems selected for other organizational purposes will easily and seamlessly integrate into a redesigned website. Two of the organizational IT systems that are being explored are a permitting system that allows an online permit application process (including payment) and a centralized geospatial system of organizational data that will push data and information to an interactive map available to the public on the redesigned website.

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Preliminary Scope of Work

The website redesign is a two phase process and each phase will be contracted separately. In 2019 (phase one), the selected contractor will:

- work with MCWD staff and the IT consultant to evaluate third-party systems to ensure integration with the redesigned website. This will require regular communication with the IT consultant and MCWD staff. The IT consultant, MCWD staff, and the selected website designer will work together to evaluate potential applications and solutions for easy integration into a redesigned website, considering functionality, training, security, and maintenance;

- provide budget estimates by July 15, 2019 for the website rebuild to occur in 2020 (phase two); and

- facilitate the development of a content strategy with MCWD staff and produce preliminary wire-frames for the redesigned website, with the goal of starting the website build in early 2020 (phase two). To help inform the website design, the selected contractor will have access to user research and other information gathered by MCWD staff and a strategic communications consultant.

The actual website build will begin in phase two and will occur as a separate contract in 2020. The selected contractor for phase one will have the option to continue into phase two if phase one work is satisfactory. During phase two, the contractor will be responsible for evaluating and making recommendations on:

- graphic design
- information architecture
- third-party integration
- conducting additional wire-framing (if needed) and creating mockups
- developing the website
- conducting quality assurance testing, including accessibility testing
- providing follow-up support and maintenance after the website launch

Website Background and Analytics

MCWD's current website, https://www.minnehahacreek.org, is built on open-source Drupal content management software and was last designed in 2009. It is an outdated design, is not mobile responsive, is not fully accessible per Section 508 and WCAG 2.1 AA accessibility standards, fails to meet the content and data display needs of MCWD staff and its communities, and is not intuitive for administering, maintaining, or updating. The website has a lot of content and is currently serving, in part, as an archive.

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Website analytics (Feb. 2018 – Feb. 2019)

- Number of sessions: 92,080
- Desktop traffic: 59.5%
- Mobile traffic: 33.5%
- Tablet traffic: 7%

Approximately 10 people add content to the existing site. This includes content such as new project pages, press releases, public notices, board materials, job postings, etc. These individuals have been trained on how to use the site and add content as needed.

Project Goals

As part of our organizational strategic communications plan, the website must help achieve the organization's strategic goals:

- The MCWD has the support and assistance of local and state officials for its major capital project initiatives
- The MCWD has the support of local government officials and developers for early coordination on land use change
- The MCWD receives more funding and leverages more partnership contributions for its capital projects, operations and programs
- The MCWD's responsive model has the support of its key stakeholders across the District, especially those outside the Six Mile Creek – Halsted Bay and Minnehaha Creek subwatersheds
- The MCWD is perceived by its key stakeholders and the general public as a credible, transparent, and responsive agency that adds value in its communities

Specifically, the redesigned website will help meet the organization's strategic goals by:

- Using a visually appealing website design to tell concise and compelling stories
- Structuring content to be intuitive for easily finding information relevant to the entire watershed and our target audiences
- Improving accessibility and transparency of publicly accessible data
- Incorporating interactive customer service features like online permitting
- Improving backend administration
- Facilitating community engagement

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Website Audiences

The identified target audiences for the redesigned website and their primary uses of the website are:

- People who have to visit the website:
  - Homeowners applying for a permit
  - Developers applying for a permit
  - Public agencies and organizations applying for a permit

- People who want to visit the website:
  - People interested in recreating in the watershed (specifically paddling Minnehaha Creek)
  - Homeowners in search of best practices for managing stormwater and protecting water quality
  - Volunteers in search of volunteer opportunities and requesting interactive displays and exhibits

- MCWD target audiences:
  - Individuals looking for information on MCWD's policy and project initiatives

Website Requirements

Desired Functionality

This is a preliminary list of desired functionalities for the redesigned website. Additional functionalities, prioritization, and third-party integrations in accordance with budget and timeline will be refined in coordination with the selected contractor, IT consultant, and MCWD staff during the design process and may be influenced by user research done as part of the organization's strategic communications plan.

Must-have features:

Display of information
- Mobile responsive design
- Image and video integration
- Embedded GIS storymaps
- Google Analytics tracking

Navigation and accessibility
- Compliant with Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended, and WCAG 2.1 AA accessibility standards
- Compliant with GDPR privacy requirements
- Easy and intuitive site navigation
- Effective search function

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Interactive features

- Interactive map integration that is fed by data compiled in a centralized organizational system, which will be a key component of the IT consultant's work in coordination with MCWD's GIS Technician. The interactive map will:
  - Identify if the individual is located in the watershed based on inputted address
  - Include various accessible data layers
  - Be responsive to inputted data (i.e. curates nearby projects and data based on inputted address, click on spot, or zoom)
  - Allow exploration of a subwatershed (narrative, projects, data, photos, video, etc)
- Display of interactive graphics and graphs that are easy to publish
- Online permitting portal that integrates with MCWD's internal permitting system that includes, but may not be limited to, online applications, permit status tracking, payment, and security (to be determined in coordination with the IT consultant)
- Real-time display of water levels based on flow gauge data
- Social media sharing integration
- Online form and calendar for reserving interactive displays and exhibits
- Integration with other third-party vendors as defined by IT consultant's work

Page templates and forms

- Calendar for meetings and events
- Ability to build online forms that collect and store data and notify staff via email
- Ability to assign different levels of editing/access for backend website users
- Display board meeting materials and minutes that can be filtered by date (optional integration with MCWD's Laserfiche to be determined with IT consultant)
- Page and content templates for standardized information, such as map listings, project pages, etc.
- Public notices display

Nice-to-have features:

- Language options (i.e. individual homepages for major languages in the watershed)
- Ability to schedule article publishing and expiration
- Integration of community engagement tools like polling, Q&As, and forums

Security

Security will be needed for staff logins to the website and for any data being entered on the site via forms or payment applications to ensure privacy of user data and to protect the site from unauthorized access.

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Content Management System and Web Hosting
MCWD is open to options for different open source content management systems and web hosting. Minimal disruption to access of the site during the transition is required.

- The content management system should be easy to administer and maintain
- Ownership of the website design and all content and elements should be transferred to MCWD upon completion of the project.
- The web host must complete backups of the website on a weekly basis and must keep, at a minimum, the 10 most recent backups.
- The web host must have a tested disaster recovery mechanism and provide emergency or after hours support availability.
- Support must be provided by the web host to maintain the security of the site, fix issues, provide disaster recovery capability, and implement new features if needed.

Design Style and Content
MCWD would like a polished, easily-navigable website that reflects the organization's brand standards. The website will use MCWD's brand manual including logo, fonts, and color scheme. MCWD's brand manual will be made available to the selected contractor.

The selected contractor will work with MCWD staff on content strategy, but will not be responsible for content creation. MCWD staff will identify, revise, and create new content as needed for the new website and target audiences. The contractor will be responsible for quality assurance testing.

Budget and Timeline

The website redesign will be undertaken in two phases and in coordination with MCWD's organizational IT update and organizational strategic communications plan. As a result, MCWD anticipates the work for the website consultant in 2019 (phase one) will primarily be focused on informing MCWD's 2020 budget for the website build, coordinating with the IT consultant on third-party integrations, facilitating staff to develop a content strategy for a redesigned website, and some preliminary wire-framing. MCWD has $25,000 budgeted in 2019 for phase one work.

The actual website build is anticipated to occur as phase two in 2020 and will be contracted as a separate scope. The selected contractor for phase one may be offered the "option to continue" based on performance during phase one.

Anticipated Timeline
- April 11, 2019, 4:30pm (CST): Proposals due
- April 17, 2019: Finalists notified
- April 23, 2019: Interviews of finalists
- April 26, 2019: Selection of contractor

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- May 9, 2019: Board approval of phase one selection and contract
- May 2019: Onboarding with MCWD staff and IT consultant to understand scope of project
- May – July 2019: Coordination with IT consultant and staff as needed on third-party integrations, estimation of budget for website build, staff content strategy facilitation if needed
- July 15, 2019: Phase two budget estimate due
- July – December 2019: Coordination with IT consultant and staff as needed on third-party integrations, staff facilitation to develop content strategy and site architecture
- January 2020: Begin phase two (website build)

Submission Requirements

Proposals must be submitted in an electronic form. No paper submissions will be accepted or considered. Final deadline for submissions is **4:30pm (CST) on Thursday, April 11, 2019**; all respondents will receive an email confirmation of receipt. Interviews of finalists will be held Thursday, April 23, 2019.

Proposals must include the following sections:
- Company background:
  - Brief description of the company and website design team
  - Description of work with websites of natural resource organizations, such as local government agencies or non-profit organizations, whose needs are similar to MCWD

- Qualifications:
  - Contact information and resume for designated project manager
  - Resume and credentials of members of project team
  - List of clients and website addresses
  - References (contact person and phone number) for at least three clients, preferably with different content management systems to show the range of proficiency

- Phase One (2019):
  - Coordination with IT consultant and staff:
    - Provide an hourly rate for coordinating with the IT consultant to evaluate third-party system applications identified by the IT consultant as part of the organizational IT update to ensure integration with a new website if necessary
    - Provide a process and estimated cost for estimating the budget for the website build (phase two) to inform the organization's 2020 budget by July 15, 2019
    - Provide a process and estimated cost for facilitating with staff the development of a content strategy for the redesigned website

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- Phase Two (2020) Preliminary Scoping:
    - Describe the process, steps, and activities to carry out the redesign project including the timeframe and estimated cost for each step in the process and deliverables after the completion of each. Please also include a total estimated cost for the website build, keeping in mind the desired functionalities and necessary integrations
    - Define the information that will be needed from MCWD staff and when it will be needed
    - Provide recommendations for a content management system, web hosting, community engagement features, and other new technology features or tools to be considered for the newly designed site as relevant
    - Describe recommended usability testing with users of the website in prototype and pre-launch phases and estimated costs of testing
    - Explain the level of service including estimated cost and response time for fixing bugs after website launch, for regular maintenance, and for emergencies and disaster recovery
    - Provide options and estimated costs for training staff on website features
    - Proposal must take into account all items under Website Requirements and address requirements in a complete and concise fashion
    - Name and contact information for the person(s) to be contacted for clarification of the proposal if needed

Review Criteria

Methodology
1. Project understanding: does the proposal make it clear that the consultant fully understands the scope, goals, and requirements of the project?
2. Completeness and specificity: how fully does the proposal explain what the consultant will do to meet all facets of the project, including coordinating with the IT consultant, facilitating staff, and designing and implementing the new website?
3. Identification of needs: does the proposal carefully consider what resources will be required to complete the tasks, including staff time, additional technical information, etc?

Experience
1. Company experience: what other similar projects has the consultant performed that are directly related to the proposed project?
2. Staff experience: what qualifications and work experience do the proposed staff members bring to the project?
3. Area knowledge: the contractor should be a talented web designer and developer. They should possess a solid grasp of usability and user-centered design principles. The contractor should be knowledgeable about various content management systems, web hosting, and third-party system integrations.

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At a minimum, the selected contractor must demonstrate expertise in the following areas:

- Web development
- Graphic design
- Responsive web design
- Section 508 and WCAG 2.1 AA accessibility standards
- Content management systems
- Information architecture
- Usability testing
- GIS-based web applications
- Search engine optimization

Cost

1. Cost estimate: what are the proposed fees and estimated costs proposed to complete all aspects of this project?

Project Contact

All questions and proposals shall be directed to:

Sarah Bhimani
Communications Coordinator
Minnehaha Creek Watershed District (MCWD)
15320 Minnetonka Blvd
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Attachment 1: Supplemental FAQ

This supplemental Q&A refers to MCWD's Website Redesign RFP.

Will MCWD require ongoing website support after the site is built?
Yes. We are interested in options/packages for ongoing support services.

Does MCWD have a preference in terms of which content management system (CMS) you would like to use?
No. As long as the CMS meets our needs, is open source, is intuitive and easy to use, and is cost-effective long-term, we are open to all options. Ideally, we are looking for a website designer who is proficient in more than one CMS to ensure that we get a CMS that will work for a robust design and third-party integrations.

Does MCWD need/plan to stay with your current web host?
We are open to alternatives.

What kind of accessibility standards are MCWD looking to incorporate into the site?
Section 508 compliance is our main focus, but we want to design the site to ensure it is accessible to all users, regardless of any disabilities. The site must also meet WCAG 2.1 AA standards.

Does MCWD have an existing database and/or maps of the information you want to display on an interactive map?
We do have a consolidated existing database, however, some of the data is out of date and the data structure is not well designed. The database is stored on a cloud-based server, along with ArcGIS for Server 10.2.1, which publishes REST services that are used in the current interactive map. The GIS database will be updated by the GIS Technician and the IT consultant as part of the organizational IT upgrade.

What kind of interactive graphics and graphs are MCWD interested in?
We are potentially interested in creating graphics and graphs that are interactive and/or responsive, similar to how data is displayed on https://fivethirtyeight.com.

How much of the content on the current site does MCWD plan to migrate to the new site?
We currently have a lot of content on our site. Because we are refining our target audiences, we anticipate rewriting, condensing, and/or discarding a significant portion of the content before (and possibly after) deploying the new website. These decisions will be part of the planning phase in coordination with the selected website designer.

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Will the selected contractor need to produce original content for the website?
No. MCWD staff will handle those tasks.

Does MCWD need pre-IE11 compatibility?
No. Our Google Analytics show that pre-IE11 browsers represent a small minority of our site traffic.

Would the calendar of events need to pull in data from external sources?
No. We anticipate maintaining this calendar manually.

What types of usability research/testing are MCWD interested in pursuing?
The website designer will have access to user research and information gathered by MCWD staff and a strategic communications consultant. We are open to proposals for other research. We are potentially interested in a card sort activity to help inform the new structure for the site. We are also potentially interested in accessibility testing to ensure we fully meet the accessibility standards we are aiming for. We work with SiteImprove and that platform could be available for accessibility and quality assurance testing.

Are there any third-party integrations or application user interfaces (APIs) that will need to be considered?
Yes. As we develop the framework, design, and content for the site, we anticipate there will be things we want to consider, such as an online permitting application and payment system. This will be figured out in coordination with the IT consultant.

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