Request for Proposal
24-57

for

City Website Redevelopment and CMS Migration

ADDENDUM No. 1

November 6, 2024

Any and all changes to the Request for Proposal are valid only if they are included by written addendum to all potential respondents, which will be emailed prior to the proposal due date. Each respondent must acknowledge receipt of any addenda by indicating in its proposal. Each respondent, by acknowledging receipt of addenda, is responsible for the contents of the addenda and any changes to the bid therein. Failure to acknowledge receipt of addenda may cause the submittal to be rejected. If any language or figures contained in this addendum are in conflict with the original document, this addendum shall prevail.

This addendum consists of the following:

1.	Addendum No. 1 is attached and consists of a total of twelve (12) pages including this cover sheet.

Please contact me at 847-866-2935 or lithomas@cityofevanston.org with any further questions or comments.

Sincerely,

Linda Thomas
Purchasing Specialist

RFP No. 24-57

City Website Redevelopment and CMS Migration

Addendum No. 1

November 6, 2024

This addendum forms a part of the RFP Documents for RFP # **24-57** and modifies these documents. This addendum consists of the following:

Clarification regarding vendor evaluation for RFP 24-57:

The City of Evanston recognizes that the optimal solution for our website and digital accessibility needs may rely on a **configuration of different tools and vendors**. For this RFP, we are interested in responses from website/CMS vendors who either (a) offer a full suite of accessibility tools and services, or (b) offer a partial suite *or* do not offer any accessibility tools and services, but whose product is compatible with third-party accessibility tools/services.

For the purposes of this RFP, our minimum expectations for a website vendor's accessibility compliance are as follows:

> The vendor is responsible for ensuring that all employee- and public-facing digital interfaces are ADA compliant, meeting WCAG 2.1 AA standards or the latest applicable requirements for accessibility. This responsibility pertains to all code-based, structural, and functional elements of the interfaces outside the City of Evanston's direct control.

> The City of Evanston will be responsible for ensuring ADA compliance for content they create, upload, or manage within the system. The vendor should have a reporting process in place for instances where the City identifies any non-compliant elements within the vendor's scope of responsibility. Upon receiving such reports, the vendor must promptly remediate these elements to ensure full ADA compliance.

> If the vendor's solution does not natively provide accessibility tools or services, their product should be compatible with those that could be provided by a third-party vendor.

We are interested in learning about any current VPATs that vendors have in place, the place of accessibility in a product roadmap, partial accessibility tools/services, remediation, or accessibility tool discounts that the vendor has access to, or recommendations and/or examples of third-party accessibility tools working in conjunction with the RFP vendor's website solution.

Regarding PDF Remediation: We recognize that this service is not usually included in a website redesign; however, because some vendors have agreements or discounts with PDF remediation services, we are interested in factoring these partnerships into our evaluation.

We will take all of these factors into consideration during the evaluation process and will competitively evaluate a vendor's pricing based on their proposal plus what it would cost to purchase additional third-party services to meet our requirements. We have ballpark estimates for a variety of third-party

accessibility vendors, including PDF remediation, which we will consider during this RFP's evaluation process.

1. **Question:** What is the expected project budget?
   Answer: The City declines to provide budget information at this time.

2. **Question:** What is the most recent annual spend for website maintenance support?
   Answer: The City declines to provide this information.

3. **Question:** Is there a (CMS) platform preference?
   Answer: While the City is open to various CMS solutions that meet our requirements, we have a preference for Drupal over WordPress. The selected platform should balance robust functionality with ease of use for content editors.

4. **Question:** Is Evanston amenable to using open source technologies such as WordPress or Drupal?
   Answer: We are open to this possibility. Note that our website model relies on the website vendor providing full hosting and development for both the front-end and back-end, and we do not have a website developer on staff. We expect that the website vendor will be responsible for addressing and troubleshooting technical issues within the CMS, and will serve as the direct point of contact for the City regarding any of these issues.

5. **Question:** CMS Preference: Does the City have a preferred CMS or any specific requirements related to CMS selection and features (e.g., specific workflows or permission settings)?
   Answer: See #3 and #4; with content editors across departments, we would like the option for drafting and approval workflows and some kind of permission tiers. An example of this potential tier structure would be: (1) Admin, (2) Website Editors (can create new pages, delete pages, manage their department's Content Contributors), (3) Content Contributors (can only update content on preexisting pages).

   An ideal scenario (though not required) would be for an accessibility proofing tool to be integrated into the content editor, and we would require all content to "pass" the proofing tool before it can be published.

6. **Question:** Current Platform Compatibility: What are the primary third-party platforms the current website integrates with, and are there any plans to expand or change these integrations?
   Answer: Please refer to Section 1.B "Third-Party Platforms" in the RFP for a comprehensive list. Our Parks & Recreation Department is in the process of procuring a new registration software, which is the largest known upcoming change to these integrations.

7. **Question:** Hosting Requirements: Does the City have existing hosting preferences, or are they looking for recommendations on a secure and scalable hosting provider?
   Answer: Please refer to Section 2.0.H in the RFP. The City expects the vendor to provide secure cloud hosting and CMS management to ensure clear accountability for site functionality.

8. **Question:** Accessibility Tools: Are there any preferred tools or services for ongoing ADA and WCAG compliance monitoring beyond initial implementation?

Answer: The City is interested in reputable accessibility compliance monitoring, reporting, and proofing tools/services through providers such as Siteimprove, Silktide, Monsido, Deque, Level Access, DubBot, etc. We are not interested in implementing accessibility overlays.

9. **Question:** <u>Data Migration Volume:</u> What is the estimated volume and type of data that will need migration, specifically regarding legacy content and PDFs?
   Answer: Based on information from our current CMS, we believe there are approximately: 1,500 webpages (currently being audited/archived, anticipating 30-50% reduction); 40,000 PDFs; 300 other documents (.csv, .doc, etc.); 7,000 images; 2,000 news items; 8,000 calendar events. All of these, especially the PDFs, have high potential for archiving prior to migration. We would appreciate insight from our selected vendor in terms of strategy or priorities as to what should be migrated vs. archived.

10. **Question:** <u>Security Requirements:</u> Are there specific security standards or certifications that the site must meet beyond typical SSL, firewall, and monitoring protections?
    Answer: SAML 2.0 integration for Active Directory authentication is preferred.

11. **Question:** <u>Performance Metrics:</u> Does the City have defined KPIs (e.g., page load time, uptime, and user engagement metrics) that the new website should meet post-launch?
    Answer: KPIs have not been defined, but we expect to meet or exceed industry standards. We need a platform that can accommodate high-volume traffic (especially during high-traffic events, registration periods, etc.). Post-launch, we will focus on user engagement metrics including successful information findability.

12. **Question:** <u>PDF Remediation Needs:</u> Approximately how many PDF documents are expected to be remediated, and are there existing standards or guidelines for document accessibility?
    Answer: We are still assessing the number of PDFs requiring remediation, per the archival exceptions policies in the DOJ ruling. For the purposes of this RFP, you can provide general information about bulk pricing for PDF remediation. Remediated PDFs will need to comply with WCAG 2.1 AA.

13. **Question:** <u>Maintenance Scope:</u> Are there specific tasks or update frequencies expected in the ongoing maintenance plan (e.g., monthly updates, quarterly security reviews)?
    Answer: The City invites vendors to propose their recommended maintenance schedule and scope based on industry best practices and their experience supporting similar municipal websites.

14. **Question:** <u>User Data Protection:</u> What protocols or standards does the City have in place or require for managing and protecting any user data collected on the site?
    Answer: Please refer to the City's current privacy policy. Most sensitive information is submitted via secure external forms. The City seeks to refine its approach to user data management and cookie policies as part of this project.

15. **Question:** <u>Stakeholder Involvement:</u> Could you clarify the departments and stakeholders who will provide feedback or approvals throughout the project phases?
    Answer: The vendor will work directly with the Digital Services Specialist (in Evanston's IT Department) as project manager, supported by a task force consisting of the Community Engagement & Communications staff and the ADA Coordinator. Additional stakeholder

engagement will include departmental Web Leaders, community feedback sessions, the City Manager's Office, and the City's ADA Advisory Committee. It is likely that our City Council will be interested in providing feedback at some point, as this project is of interest to them. The project manager will coordinate appropriate stakeholder involvement throughout the project lifecycle.

16. **Question:** Key Pain Points: Beyond the issues of navigation and accessibility, are there other specific frustrations or limitations with the current website from a user or administrative perspective?
    Answer: Please refer to Section 1.A "Website Survey" in the RFP for an overview of identified pain points and priorities.

17. **Question:** Content Consolidation Goals: Are there particular content categories or areas of focus that should be prioritized or de-prioritized in the content audit?
    Answer: Content consolidation priorities will be determined collaboratively during the project's content strategy phase.

18. **Question:** Branding Guidelines: Does the City have a branding guide that includes specifics on logo usage, color palette, fonts, or other visual elements that must be incorporated?
    Answer: Yes, the City has a branding guide with logos, colors, and fonts. During the website overhaul, we would like to refine some of these elements (*for example: expand color palette for better color contrast options, developing an attractive footer graphic, etc.*). Offering UI/design support would be viewed as an added benefit; alternatively, we have access to local design vendors whose paid services would complement this project.

19. **Question:** User Personas: Has the City developed user personas for its website, or would you like us to assist with identifying and refining these?
    Answer: We do not currently have personas developed, but have the capacity to do so.

20. **Question:** Training Requirements: What level of training is required for City staff—are you looking for multiple training sessions, written guides, video tutorials, or all three?
    Answer: We need an initial orientation and onboarding session for current staff, ideally via at least one live training session. Ideally there would be a general training session for all site users, and a follow-up training just for Web Editors with a focus on more advanced CMS features that pertain to their work (see Question #5 for notes about preferred website editing tiers).

    We also require some kind of resource library/documentation for future reference (updated as needed), which may be a mix of written documentation and/or video tutorials. Note that if proposing the use of an existing CMS system (Drupal, etc.), some of their preexisting documentation might address this need. Our priority is to have a way for content editors to autonomously find information about how to complete common tasks in the CMS, such as "How to add a post expiration date," "How to add alt text to an image," "How to navigate the CMS dashboard," etc. The City will contribute to the creation of City-specific documentation for content creation processes that are informed by specific City policies and processes (such as what information is required for a new event, where to access City logos and branding materials in the CMS, etc.). But we expect the vendor to locate or create instructional materials for standard usage of the CMS.

21. **Question:** <u>Communication Expectations:</u> What are the City's preferred channels and frequency for progress updates and communication throughout the project?
    Answer: The City expects regular project updates and clear communication channels. Specific schedules will be established during project planning.

22. **Question:** <u>Content Ownership:</u> Will City departments manage their own sections, or will content management be centralized?
    Answer: Each City department manages their own content, overseen by the Digital Services Specialist. Departments have a combination of designated Web Leaders (who have more permissions re: ability to create pages, manage other users, etc.) and general website contributors (overseen by departmental Web Leader, no permission to create pages or make infrastructural changes).

23. **Question:** <u>Success Criteria:</u> Beyond the basic functional requirements, what criteria would the City consider essential for project success?
    Answer: We would like to see an increase in user engagement, positive feedback from the community, successful user testing, and a decrease in 311/departmental contact for information that can be found on the website.

24. **Question:** <u>Future Site Enhancements:</u> Is there interest in building flexibility into the design for potential future enhancements or additional features?
    Answer: Yes, the City seeks a scalable solution that can accommodate future needs and enhancements.

25. **Question:** <u>RFP p. 10, B. Qualifications and Experience of Firm and/or Team:</u> The City requests that vendors describe 5-10 similar contracts, as well as provide references.
    a. How many references are required?
    b. Can vendors use a client as both a similar contract AND a reference?
    Answer:
    a. It is up to the vendor's discretion as to how many references to provide. At least 3 seems reasonable.
    b. Yes, references can be the same as cases referenced in described similar contracts.

26. **Question:** <u>RFP p. 45, Exhibit K: This form is called "Proposal Bond Submittal Label (if applicable)."</u> Is a proposal bond applicable to this project? If so, please provide more information on the bond requirements (amount, type, etc.).
    Answer: No Bonds are required for this project. The label Exhibit K does not need to be included in the proposal.

27. **Question:** Will the City accept electronic signatures such as DocuSign on proposal forms requiring signatures?
    Answer: Yes.

28. **Question:** Will the City accept the use of an electronic notarization platform on proposal forms requiring notarization?
    Answer: Yes.

29. **Question:** Content Reduction: Since there is an expected reduction of 30-50% in the number of pages, would the City provide guidance on which pages to consolidate or remove, or should the vendor recommend this based on the audit?
Answer: The City expects this to be a collaborative process between the vendor and City staff during the content strategy and audit phases of the project.

30. **Question:** Content Audit Responsibility: Will the City conduct the initial content audit, or is the vendor expected to perform this task?
Answer: The City is conducting an initial webpage audit, but we are interested in vendor input and strategy for further refinement of the content auditing and consolidation process.

31. **Question:** Third-Party Integrations: Can you specify which third-party integrations (e.g., Accela, Laserfiche, Municode) will need direct functionality on the site versus simple links?
Answer: Currently, the SnapEngage chat bot is the only platform definitely requiring direct integration. However, we are open to vendors' recommendations for additional integration opportunities that would enhance user experience; at the very least, we want to develop a more consistent, seamless process for linking to third-party platforms throughout the website.

32. **Question:** CMS Preference: Is there a preferred CMS or platform for this project, or is the vendor expected to recommend one based on requirements?
Answer: See Questions #3-#5 for CMS-related responses.

33. **Question:** Accessibility Compliance: The RFP emphasizes ADA compliance (WCAG 2.1 AA). Are there specific tools or processes the City prefers for accessibility testing, proofing, or ongoing compliance?
Answer: See Question #8.

34. **Question:** Language and Translation Requirements: For the multilingual requirement, which languages should the CMS accommodate, and are there any translation tools or plugins the City prefers?
Answer: We are open to translation tools and plugin suggestions from the vendor; currently, our site uses Google Translate, which is decently satisfactory. Currently, our users most frequently use Spanish, Chinese, and Korean translations on the website.

35. **Question:** Mobile Optimization: What percentage of users are expected to access the site on mobile, and are there specific mobile capabilities that are prioritized?
Answer: Roughly 49% of our website's users are mobile users. Specific capabilities can be discussed during the project, but we are interested in adhering to best practices for responsive design and accessibility.

36. **Question:** Stakeholder and User Feedback: Will the vendor have direct access to community and ADA advocate groups for feedback sessions, or will this be facilitated by the City?
Answer: The City will facilitate stakeholder engagement (including a virtual community forum planned for early 2025, along with continued engagement with our ADA Advisory Council, Commission on Aging and Disabilities, and other groups as needed). As appropriate, the vendor will be invited to participate in, attend, and/or facilitate these discussions. We are open to this engagement being a collaborative effort.

37. **Question:** <u>Decision-Making Process:</u> Who will be the primary stakeholders for approvals, and what is the expected timeline for receiving feedback during design and development phases?
   Answer: See response to Question #15. The Digital Services Specialist will serve as project manager and primary point of contact, coordinating necessary approvals and feedback from stakeholders throughout the project lifecycle. The City will coordinate with the selected vendor to determine an appropriate feedback timeline for both parties.

38. **Question:** <u>Content Management Workflow:</u> Could you clarify the approval and workflow process within the CMS for content updates by multiple department editors?
   Answer: The City will be refining its web governance policy alongside the website update project. See Question #5 for preferred workflow processes.

39. **Question:** <u>Training Scope:</u> What is the expected level of training for City staff and web editors, and will it be a one-time session, ongoing, or provided in phases?
   Answer: See Question #20; the City will work with vendor to identify a training schedule that suits the project.

40. **Question:** <u>Training Documentation:</u> Does the City require detailed documentation for training, such as user guides or tutorial videos, or is hands-on training preferred?
   Answer: See Question #20.

41. **Question:** <u>Budget Limits:</u> Is there a fixed budget for the initial implementation phase, or are proposals encouraged to outline pricing based on anticipated requirements?
   Answer: The City declines to provide budget information at this time.

42. **Question:** <u>Additional Phases and Maintenance:</u> Are the renewal years strictly for maintenance, or could they include additional development phases?
   Answer: The City is open to proposals that include both maintenance and potential development phases during renewal years. However, development and launch of the new website should occur in 2025.

43. **Question:** <u>Payment Schedule:</u> What is the anticipated payment schedule, and are payments tied to specific deliverables or milestones?
   Answer: Payments will be tied to milestone deliverables. The specific schedule will be negotiated during contract development.

44. **Question:** <u>EBE:</u> We are an Evanston Based Business, is there a networking event for M/W/D/EBE to connect with other vendors?
   Answer: Please visit the [M/W/D/EBE Development Committee](#) webpage; you can also request a list of Evanston Business Owners from the City's Economic Development team or Evanston Chamber of Commerce as a resource to connect with other vendors.

45. **Question:** <u>Budget:</u> Could you share a budget or range of acceptable costs for the project? (e.g. $50k-100k, $100-250k, $250k+). Knowing your budget or at least a range of potential costs helps determine if we're a good fit for the project, how we should approach it, and a sense of your expectations as well.
   Answer: The City declines to provide budget information at this time.

46. **Question:** <u>Timeline:</u> Do you have a set, or hoped-for, timeline for the project?

Answer: We are planning for the full redevelopment and migration to take 6-8 months. The new website should launch in 2025, and the City will work with the vendor to set appropriate timeline expectations and deadlines.

47. **Question:** <u>Data Integrations:</u> Can you describe any external integrations more complex than an iFrame or embed code? (e.g. API integrations, data integrations, third-party services.) This gives our team a better idea of the technical and design requirements for the project, and where you might need additional consulting.
    Answer: See Question #31.

48. **Question:** <u>Remote Work:</u> Can we assume that most of the work may be conducted remotely, without a need for in-person meetings? We are open to travel as needed and/or required.
    Answer: Yes, remote work is acceptable for this project.

49. **Question:** <u>Existing Content:</u> Do you wish to keep or migrate all existing content to the new site build "as is", or do you plan to review, edit and/or cut any unused or outdated content beforehand?
    Answer: See responses to Questions #9, #29, and #30 for information regarding content audit and reduction strategy.

50. **Question:** <u>PDFs/Bulk Remediation:</u> How many PDFs exist on the current site and how are they managed? Can you say more about the need for bulk remediation of these PDFs?
    Answer: See Question #9 and the notice at the beginning of this addendum.

51. **Question:** <u>CMS:</u> What is driving your move away from Granicus? Do you have a short list of other systems you are leaning towards? Would you consider open source solutions?
    Answer: See Questions #3 and #4. The priorities for this project in the RFP reflect the needs we have identified in our current website/CMS.

52. **Question:** <u>Multilingual:</u> The RFP mentions making the site available in multiple languages – how many languages do you anticipate? Are you planning on maintaining manual translations for all content or are you open to automated translations?
    Answer: Automated translations; see Question #34.

53. **Question:** <u>M/W/D/EBE Goals:</u> If we had a M/W/D partner who was not located in Evanston, would this not meet your goal? Just clarifying the request.
    Answer: Yes, if the Evanston business meets the Evanston Business requirements. An Evanston Based Enterprise (EBE) is a firm located in Evanston for a minimum of one year and which performs a "commercially useful function. The 25% MWDEBE goal can be met with a subcontractor holding a current M/W/D certification from the City of Chicago or State of Illinois.

54. **Question:** <u>Content Editors:</u> Approximately how many different editors interact with the current site and how many editorial roles do you require?
    Answer: Please refer to Section 1.A of the RFP regarding the number of active web editors; see Question #5 for information on editorial roles.

55. **Question:** <u>Editorial Access:</u> Is there a need for regulated editorial access sections where an editor in one section or department would not be able to edit work in another section?

Answer: Yes, that would be ideal.

56. **Question:** <u>Site Complexity:</u> In your experience are there certain areas or sections of the site that you perceive as complex or otherwise difficult to work with? Are there any known problem areas on the current site?
    Answer: Please refer to Section 1.A "Website Survey" in the RFP for identified challenges and pain points.

57. **Question:** <u>Your Team:</u> Who will be involved in the project from your team? Who would be the project lead? Do you have technical staff versed in your current system available to help as needed?
    Answer: The project team includes the Digital Services Specialist (project manager, IT), two Community Engagement/Communications employees, and the ADA Coordinator. Departmental Web Leaders will support content management throughout the project. The Digital Services Specialist will serve as the primary point of contact for the vendor. Site development and hosting is through our current vendor, and the Digital Services Specialist and other IT staff will be available to address technical questions when possible.

58. **Question:** What is the city's preference regarding local proponents or near the city versus out-of-state proponents?
    Answer: Unless based in Evanston (see M/W/D/EBE sections of RFP), location does not make a difference.

59. **Question:** What would be the place of execution of the service, would it be in the city facilities or open to remote work?
    Answer: See Question #48.

60. **Question:** <u>Project Scope and Objectives:</u>
    a. Can you provide a detailed description of the primary objectives and goals for the new website?
    b. Are there any specific functionalities or features that are essential for the website?
    Answer: Please refer to Section 1.C "Project Objectives" and Section 2.0 "Scope of Services" in the RFP, along with the "Project Requirements" spreadsheet attachment.

61. **Question:** <u>Target Audience:</u>
    a. Who is the primary target audience for the website?
    b. Are there any specific user personas or demographics that we should consider during the design and development process?
    Answer:
    a. Evanston's primary audience is its residents.
    b. See Question #19.

62. **Question:** <u>Content Management:</u>
    a. What content management system (CMS) are you currently using, and are you open to switching to a different CMS?
    b. How will content be managed and updated on the new website? Will there be a need for training on the new CMS?

Answer: See Questions #3, #20, and RFP Section 1.0A.

63. **Question:** <u>Design and User Experience:</u>
    a. Do you have any existing brand guidelines or design preferences that we should follow?
    b. Are there any specific websites that you admire in terms of design and functionality that we can use as references?
    Answer: See response to Question #18 regarding brand guidelines. Reference websites are under review.

64. **Question:** <u>Technical Requirements:</u>
    a. Are there any specific technical requirements or constraints we should be aware of (e.g., hosting, security, integrations)?
    b. What are the expected performance and loading time standards for the website?
    Answer: See responses to Questions #7, #10, and #11.

65. **Question:** <u>SEO and Analytics:</u>
    a. What are your SEO goals for the new website, and do you have any existing SEO strategies in place?
    b. What analytics tools are you currently using, and what metrics are most important to you?
    Answer: The City uses GA4 and focuses SEO efforts on ensuring that accurate information appears in search results and across the website. Analytics priorities include increasing user engagement across pages and reducing user friction points.

66. **Question:** <u>Project Timeline and Milestones:</u>
    a. What is the desired timeline for the project, including key milestones and deadlines?
    b. Are there any critical dates or events that the website launch needs to align with?
    Answer: Please refer to Section 1.0 of the RFP for and Question #46 for project timeline information. The City aims to ensure digital assets meet accessibility requirements prior to April 24, 2026, recognizing that accessibility compliance is an ongoing process of continuous improvement.

67. **Question:** <u>Budget and Cost Management:</u>
    a. Can you provide a budget range for the website development project?
    b. Are there any specific cost constraints or considerations we should be aware of?
    Answer: See Question #1.

68. **Question:** <u>Stakeholder Involvement:</u>
    a. Who are the key stakeholders involved in this project, and what are their roles?
    b. How will feedback and approvals be managed throughout the project?
    Answer: See Question #15.

69. **Question:** <u>Post-Launch Support and Maintenance:</u>
    a. What are your expectations for post-launch support and maintenance?
    b. Are there any ongoing services or updates that you anticipate needing after the website goes live?

Answer: Please refer to Section 2.0.H in the RFP regarding ongoing maintenance, hosting, and security requirements. The City invites vendors to propose their recommended support and maintenance approach based on industry best practices.

<u>**Note**</u>**: Acknowledgment of this Addendum is required in the Proposal.**