Website Design and Development
Request for Proposals

The Northwest Power and Conservation Council is requesting proposals to redesign and develop its websites, nwcouncil.org and rtf.nwcouncil.org. Vendors will have experience in successful website design, development, migration, and deployment. Proposals should include the costs related to such services, the planned resources needed to complete this work, and identify the internal and/or external resources needed to maintain the website.

Project Timeline

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The Council may choose to hold a pre-bid question and answer conference to hear and respond to potential questions from respondents regarding the bidding process, the scope of work, etc. No questions or communications, written or oral, relative to the contents of this RFP will be responded to prior to or after the pre-bid conference to ensure potential bidders have equal access to information about the bid process.

Proposals must be delivered electronically, no later than 5:00 p.m. PST on Monday, July 31, 2015, to:

Sharon Ossmann
Administrative Division Director
Northwest Power and Conservation Council
sossmann@nwcouncil.org
Overview

The Council was established by Congress, through the Pacific Northwest Electric Power Planning and Conservation Act of 1980, to assure the Pacific Northwest of an adequate, efficient, economical, and reliable power supply; to protect, mitigate and enhance the fish and wildlife, including related spawning grounds and habitat, of the Columbia River and its tributaries; and to give the citizens of Idaho, Montana, Oregon, and Washington a greater role in energy planning and fish and wildlife protection in the Columbia River Basin. The Council has three primary responsibilities under the Act: (1) Developing a regional power plan for meeting the electric energy needs of the Pacific Northwest for the next 20 years; (2) Developing a regional program to protect and enhance fish and wildlife affected by the development and operation of hydroelectric facilities in the Columbia River Basin; and (3) Educating citizens and regional stakeholders on energy and fish and wildlife issues and involving them in the development of both the Council’s regional power plan and fish and wildlife program.

Our Audience

Our users include the general public and stakeholders in the energy and fish and wildlife fields. They include utilities, state energy commissions, public interest groups, fish and wildlife managers, tribes, and political offices. They come from diverse backgrounds and hold varying points of views. Much of the website’s content is directed toward technical peers and specialists, and isn’t always easily understood by the layperson. Being able to meet both needs—ease of use for stakeholders, as well as transparency for the general public—is an overarching goal.

New Website Objectives

The primary objective for our website is to inform the public and our stakeholders about our work and how they can participate in decisions about energy and fish and wildlife.

A secondary objective is to make it easy for specialist groups—advisory committees, the Regional Technical Forum, fish and wildlife managers, and science panels—to share their work.

A third objective is to enhance the site’s ability to involve the public and stakeholders through social media and forum-style engagement.
Current Website

In 2013, the Council migrated its primary public website, www.nwcouncil.org, into Umbraco, our current content management system. The Regional Technical Forum’s website, rtf.nwcouncil.org, is built on classic ASP and ASP.NET, and uses ExpressionWeb for content editing. The Council also maintains several non-Umbraco sites on other servers. Those sites use various SQL databases in some capacity, built on ASP.NET and ColdFusion and are programmed in a combination of Razor, C#, MVC, Javascript/JQuery, ASP.NET, classic ASP, and PHP.

All of the Council’s websites are on premise and supported by Council staff.

The Council also uses several cloud applications and services, such as PayChex payroll, audio conferencing, GoToMeeting, GitHub, and Constant Contact. The Council is in the process of deploying Okta (Active Directory Integrated IDaaS), Box cloud storage / collaboration and will be migrating its contacts lists from Constant Contact to MailChimp.

This March, the Council decided to move from Umbraco and Expression Web to WordPress to make it easier for staff to create and update content. The Umbraco-based website is managed part-time by an FTE, with content provided by only a few Council staff. No one is currently managing the design or development of the site. As a result, we haven’t been able to create a central hub for news and communication on our site. We need a content rich newsroom, integrating social media, for our blog, newsletters, and media.

The rtf.nwcouncil.org website is updated separately by one employee and includes a Google calendar that should continue to be functional. File sizes uploaded to either site can be as large as 1 GB for video files. Another employee in our public affairs division manages the Council’s Facebook, Twitter, and LinkedIn accounts.

The Council is obligated to retain some of the documents in perpetuity for purposes of maintaining a historical record of significant decisions made, policies implemented and activities undertaken since the agency was authorized by Congress in 1980. The ability to provide this content in a searchable format is also critical to the Council’s mission. However, our site’s weak search function seriously hampers our ability to do this.

The Council has eight internally-created and managed databases residing on more than one SQL server and the data is kept current using Microsoft Access.
Some examples of issues include the inability to search data in our Excel workbooks, which are used extensively by our stakeholders. Our internal databases also interact with external databases. One scientific review database tracks 400 fish and wildlife projects in the Northwest using data supported by a database on www.cbfish.org. Problems include frequently broken links and cumbersome searches.

The Council holds regular public meetings, but content can only be searched by date, not by content or tags. In many instances, stakeholders call or email the Council to get information that had in fact been posted on our website(s) but is not easily found. Time stamps on uploads are not easily available or captured either.

**New Website Functional Requirements**

- **Design**
  - Clean and focused design informed by visioning exercise
  - Intuitive navigation
  - Provide a “News” feature to highlight updates prominently on the site’s front page
  - Newsroom for our blog, newsletters, and media
  - Functions within the context of the Councils public domain and integrates where applicable with the Council’s IT infrastructure.
  - Identify primary workflows and document processes from source staff, files, or other content to website content endpoint

- **Content Management System** (*WordPress*)
  - Integrate the design and maintenance for both nwcouncil.org and rtf.nwcouncil.org
  - Enable in-house content creation using a variety of design templates
  - Intuitive and easy-to-learn interface for the non-technical user
  - WYSIWYG and Drag-and-Drop interfaces wherever applicable and possible
  - Draft and publish functionality
  - Page review by specific users prior to publishing with commenting capabilities
  - Auto-archive pages when they reach a pre-determined age. Configuration of age-out should be controlled via the administration
  - Version control with revision history: time stamp and username captured along with version number
Generous ability to change configuration by the semi-technical and customization by the technical partner firm (you)

Social media integration – Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, Instagram (How would you recommend we bring social media elements into our website?)

Forum-style engagement

Automated subscribe and unsubscribe through the Council’s MailChimp contact management system

Program or system-level access to ensure the proper operation of the site internally and across stakeholders

**Search Engine Optimization**

SEO-friendly development, including at a minimum: appropriate use of alt tags, content-specific URLs (custom override URLs a nice-to-have feature), header tags, clean and hierarchical page architecture, and use of quality metadata

**Search**

Search capability that allows users to find content easily, including from uploaded media and sister websites

Users should be able to search our website for content on our sister websites. Search results should provide links to the sister site content. (Visibly seamless integration of a tool that does this is acceptable – e.g. Google’s site:***. Please describe solution.) This should be configurable in the administration to enable sites to be added/edited/removed. This could be enabled from the advanced search page via checkboxes (“Search this site, this other site, and the third site”)

**Uploading Files**

Easy uploads and website management by our general staff

Document Library for accessing, searching, and archiving files

Upload/Save/Organize various types of files including, but not limited to: zip, Microsoft Office documents, pdf, images, text files, video

File sizes range from small to very large (1GB+)

Easy batch upload (minimal clicks)

Drag & Drop interface (e.g.: Windows Explorer) to upload and organize files in a hierarchical library system
Maximize the potential of integration with Box; include in your proposal any prior examples of integration with file sharing services

- **Permanent/Perpetual URLs**
  - Links to pages must remain the same over time to ensure that they function properly in perpetuity

- **Calendar**
  - Develop or integrate with the Council’s Outlook calendar system so multiple calendars throughout the site can be added/edited/removed by the non-technical administrator
  - Calendar items should have at a minimum: Event Title, Date, Time, Location, Details
  - RSVP’ing and reminders are nice-to-have features

- **Analytics**
  - Integrate Google Analytics and best practices development for easy access to analytics
  - A portal to a Google Analytics dashboard in the admin panel is a nice-to-have feature

- **User-Based Permissions**
  - Document and page access permissions set by user and/or role. Permissions could include view/read/write
  - Private pages and private files that are only available to those with specific permissions derived from the Council’s Microsoft Active Directory.

- **Data Import**
  - Excel spreadsheet upload with data extraction to database and applicable metadata
  - Integrate existing websites [nw council.org](http://nw council.org) and [rtf.nwcouncil.org](http://rtf.nwcouncil.org)

- **3rd Party Database Integration** (see diagram)
  - Integrate with multiple public online databases to access and display data according to non-technical, end-user queries (form-style query creation – dropdowns, text fields, radio buttons, etc.)
  - According to the specific query, join multiple databases and present the resulting data in a single, unified set
  - Graceful degradation when data from 3rd party sources is either limited or unavailable.
• **Data and Content Migration**
  o Review and create a data migration plan with risk mitigation factors to ensure data integrity in order to bring all current content from the old sites and databases into WordPress

• **List of the roles/skills that will be necessary to maintain the site upon completion**

• **Nice-to-Have**
  o Basic data visualization engine integrated into site or as a module of the administration to enable a non-technical user to select specific data and select how that data should be presented on the front-end
  o Interactive map of the hydrosystem so users can navigate by location to find information. (Click on Oregon to receive search results for Oregon-related pages, documents, multimedia, etc.)

**The following are assumed to be out of scope for this engagement:**

• Intranet
• GoToMeeting
• HR Functions (travel and expense reporting, forms, contract management)
• GitHub (no integration, links can be created in content)
• SharePoint
• Content, Copy

**Project Timeline**

The project will have two phases.
The first phase will be an initial exercise to work with the Council staff, and possibly our stakeholders, to identify a vision for the website. This first phase is expected to begin on or around October 15th 2015.

The second phase of the project will be the development of the website, including the training of internal staff to ensure its successful launch on August 1st 2016 and ongoing management. This phase will also include the migration of agreed upon databases, content, and files to WordPress. The Council may decide to execute additional post-launch migrations with the same contractor in later phases.

**Training**

Proposals should include comprehensive training to technical staff on configuration, audit reports, and management of the site. The team member responsible for training department managers on using the new site should be included in the proposal.

**Support and Maintenance**

Identify the resources needed internally and externally to support the new website after its launch. Include a budget for the external resources and describe the internal resources, i.e., skills, anticipated workload, roles, responsibilities, and workflows. Ongoing support costs should be included in the proposal and should include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Content management system upgrades, including minor fixes to custom code or design to accommodate deprecated features or CMS changes that negatively affect the page design or function
- Work with IT department to ensure that proper backups are in place for the site
- Implement new features
- Maintain compatibility with social media sites as APIs are changed or updated
- Improve site performance and compact/repair database as required

**Proposal Review**

All proposals meeting the RFP’s requirements will be evaluated by a proposal review panel consisting of members of Council staff. Proposals meeting the requirements will be evaluated on the following criteria:

- Proposer’s capabilities, experience, and qualifications
- Proposed method and approach
• Price
• Ability and commitment to complete the project on time

Following the due date for proposals, the panel may initiate additional communications and/or meetings with proposers if necessary. Proposals should be sufficiently comprehensive as to not require additional communications, however, in order for the review panel to evaluate it against other proposals.

Interviews and Selection

The review panel may choose, if necessary, to conduct a face-to-face interview with the top bidders following review of the proposals.

Selection of Winning Proposal

The review panel will make a recommendation to the Council for its consideration. The final decision on proposal selection, if any, will be made by the Council at a regularly-scheduled Council meeting (anticipated to occur in October 2015).

Proposal Instructions

Proposals should be sufficiently comprehensive for the Council to evaluate without requiring additional meetings or communication. All proposals must be organized according to the following topics and sequence:

i. Overview of your company
ii. Overview of how you will meet our objectives
iii. Project approach
iv. Proposed project schedule
v. Pricing
vi. Details on your team, their qualifications and roles, including any sub-contract arrangements
vii. Recent design and development examples
viii. References
ix. Any key differentiators about you
Pricing is preferred to be submitted on an hourly basis for all resources identified. Also include expected hourly totals for all resources. Where costs may be a one-time charge or a cost incurred beyond an hourly basis, identify these in your proposal.

**Disclosure Notice**


Discussion of the proposals with the Council will take place at a regularly-scheduled Council meeting that is open to the public. The Council will consider requests for non-disclosure of confidential commercial or financial information submitted with a proposal. Any such information considered by the submitter to constitute confidential commercial or financial information should be clearly marked and separate and distinct from the rest of the proposal. Any such confidential commercial or financial information will not be disclosed to persons outside the Council or Council staff. Be aware, however, that the Council strives to be as transparent as possible when conducting its business and therefore encourages submitters to be as transparent and open as possible about their work especially as it relates to factors submitters may want the Council to consider in selecting the winning proposal.

**Council Bears No Costs or Obligations**

Prospective or actual respondents shall bear any and all costs and risks of participation in this RFP process. The Council shall not be obligated to procure any services resulting from this RFP.