QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

for

BERKSHIRE COUNTY, MA OUTDOOR RECREATION WEBSITE DISCOVERY, DESIGN, AND DEVELOPMENT

Berkshire Regional Planning Commission

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	Question	Answer
Eligibility		
1	• Whether companies from Outside USA can apply for this? (like,from India or Canada) • I was wondering if Canadian companies can bid on your RFP Website Discovery, Design and Development • Are you considering agencies based outside of the state of MA? We are a minority-based organization in Texas, USA, so would you welcome our proposal in response to your RFP? • Could you let us know if you have a local preference or are you open to a Canadian agency that has done similar work with clients across North America?	Companies outside the US and Massachusetts can apply for this project.
2	• Whether we need to come over there for meetings? • Are you looking for the selected agency to come in person for Project Kickoff and Status Meetings or can they be conducted virtually. • What is the process of meetings, reviews, feedbacks etc. Is it done remotely or on-site?	There is no need for in-person meetings. All meetings can be virtual.

3	• Can we perform the tasks (related to RFP) outside USA • We have leadership and client servicing team based in the USA and development team based globally. Will this impact our evaluation score? • We are a US company with some remote team members working from outside of the US. Is there any restriction on their ability to contribute to the project? • Does the BRPC requires the contractor team to be present in person for the whole project? Or 100% remote is permissible?	Tasks in the RFP can be performed outside of the USA. This will not impact the score.
Bid Sumittal and review		
4	• Can we submit the proposals via email? • Can we submit the proposal documents electronically or does it need to be only submitted as a physical copy mailed to your location? • In consideration of environmental sensitivity and sustainable practices, will the BRPC consider accepting an emailed submission and waiving the requirement for a mailed hard copy submission? • Could we request an electronic submission in light of the lifting of all delivery guarantees from all the courier companies?	Per the RFP and Massachusetts Procurement regulations, bids must be delivered in hard copy. Price bids have to be sealed, which is impossible with email; thus, the hard copy (mail or hand-delivered) requirement.
5	• In the document you sent, it mentioned that a hard copy of the proposal needs to be submitted. Can we mail the proposal? or do we have to present it in person?	Proposals can be mailed to BRPC.
6	• Under section X - Proposal evaluation, the instructions read *"Any "No" will exclude the bidder from receiving the award."* One of the questions under this section is "Is the vendor from Berkshire County?". We request you clarify if	This evaluation question falls under the "The following evaluation items are Yes/No criteria. Any "Yes" will provide the bidder an extra point in the review." BRPC is open to vendors from outside of the county. In an effort to support local companies, we are giving them an extra point in the review, but this does not mean they will be awarded the contract.

	the Commission is looking only for contractors located/incorporated within Berkshire County. If so, would the Commission consider removing this requirement to allow a diverse range of offerors from different states to participate in this bid? • Will local or in-state agencies be given preference?	
7	• Under Section X - Proposal evaluation, the instructions read *"Any "No" will exclude the bidder from receiving the award."* One of the questions under this section is "Does the vendor have experience with Outdoor Recreation websites?" We request the Commission to consider removing this requirement as web development/design is unique for each customer based on the need. Mandating vendors to have experience specifically with outdoor recreation websites will create an undue advantage for specific offeror(s).	This evaluation question falls under the "The following evaluation items are Yes/No criteria. Any "Yes" will provide the bidder an extra point in the review." BRPC is open to vendors who do not have outdoor recreation website experience. As with any subject, there is a learning curve associated with Outdoor Recreation. If a vendor has that experience, that's a bonus (thus the extra point), but it is not a requirement.
8	• How many points out of the total evaluation points are allocated to the following questions. 1. Is the vendor from Berkshire County? 2. Does the vendor have experience with Outdoor Recreation websites?	Each of these questions is worth 1 point out of 26 total points.
9	• Will the interview of the finalized vendor be conducted at your office or virtually?	The interview will be conducted virtually.
10	• How many firms have received this RFP?	We are aware of 99 firms that have received the RFP, of which 20 have submitted questions.
11	• How many stakeholders will be involved in the project and all decisions made throughout?	The website team has eight individuals representing five organizations. At various points in the development process, we may bring in additional people to get their ideas on specific items.
12	• What is your "not to exceed" budget?	Per the RFP, $80,000

13	• Re: Page 5 and page 12, "Bidders must have developed at least three (3) different websites similar in scope…" Regarding "similar in scope," do we need to have developed 3 websites specific to Outdoor Recreation, or is this scope more loosely defined? If the latter, could you please provide bounds for what qualifies as "similar in scope"?	We do not expect bidders to have outdoor recreation website experience specifically. By similar in scope, we expect bidders to have experience with the variety of items on this website, such as a searchable database or online maps.
14	• Re: the selection criteria provided on Page 6, could you please provide the percentage breakdown /weights of each criteria?	Pages 12-14 of the RFP that has the full breakdown of how we will evaluate the bids we receive. Starting at the bottom of page 12, you will see the criteria for evaluating the proposals. Each section (such as "Relevant experience of proposer and/or proposed project staff", or "Evaluation of the proposed plan") will be rated by each reviewer and given 1,2, or 3 points. Total points will be added up for each bidder for each reviewer and then averaged across all reviewers.

Hosting and Maintenance

15	• Given the budgetary restrictions, how much development and support do you anticipate after the launch? Will there be additional funds allocated for these efforts in the future? • In the document, it talks about maintenance for the website for 3 years. How frequent the maintenance is going to be? Does the maintenance encompasses making new pages and what response rate does the BRPC require from the contractors regarding the maintenance requests?	After the website is launched, we expect minimal development. Three years of maintenance is expected to be included in the proposal. We expect the vendor to keep the CMS updated and patched and ensure the website stays running. Any new development that we need would be paid separately.
16	• To confirm, this is a new website, there is no existing site?	Correct. This is a new website, and there is no existing website.
17	• How many pages of content will be migrated to the new site?	There is no existing site, so no content will be migrated.
18	• We noted that the RFP includes hosting. Can you provide the average number of monthly sessions and pageviews? Also, are there any periods where traffic spikes	As this is a new website, we do not know how many sessions, pageviews, or when traffic spikes occur. We are hoping for 5,000 visitors and 10,000-12,000 page views by the end of year 1.

	significantly from normal? If so, how much and when? • Do you have estimated monthly visitors and page views for the new site. • What is the expected traffic to the site (visitors, page views)?	
19	• What security requirements do you have (SOC2, WAF, etc)? • For website security will you provide secured framework or it's up to our decision?	We defer to the chosen website developer to advise us on security requirements.
20	• Do you have any uptime SLA requirements?	We defer to the chosen website developer to advise us on SLA Requirements.
21	• What are your expectations for hosting support SLAs?	We defer to the chosen website developer to advise us on hosting support SLAs.
22	• What is your expectation for ongoing SEO support during the three-year support agreement?	We anticipate the inclusion of SEO plugins for the site, with ongoing core, plugin, and theme updates as part of the support agreement. We will consider SEO keyword strategies on a monthly or annual basis as part of a proposed support agreement.
23	• You have mentioned a preference for WordPress as your CMS - would you be open to Drupal?	We are open to considering other platforms if the responding vendor can provide evidence that there would be significant advantages to utilizing an alternate platform such as Drupal in terms of user experience and ongoing content managagement.
24	• Are we providing hosting recommendations?	Yes
25	• Do you already have a hosting provider?	No
26	• Have you purchased the domain name yet?	Not yet, but we will be purchasing it soon.
27	• Who is your current vendor for your web projects?	BRPC currently has three agency-maintained websites, all maintained by different providers – locally and nationally.
28	• Will you provide any domain name for testing purposes?	We will provide full access to the domain name to the chosen vendor at the beginning of the contract.

29	• What do you use for project management, images storage, mock-ups?	We have no project management, image storage, or mockup tools. We expect the chosen vendor to manage these items.
30	• What are your reasons for preferring the WordPress CMS?	We prefer WordPress as the three other websites BRPC maintains are in WordPress, and staff are familiar with that interface.
31	• Re: Page 5, "An easy-to-use CMS, such as WordPress": Could you please provide examples of what makes WordPress easy to use for you?	The interface for editing calendar events, pages, posts, etc. is intuitive and familiar to our staff. We utilize WordPress for the core BRPC website as well as some auxiliary projects.

Multi-lingual

32	• Are there multi-lingual requirements? Is Google Translate or similar sufficient?	Google-translate is sufficient.

Content

33	• How do you intend to provide the content to us? (Word Docs, Google Docs, etc.)	Text content will be provided through Word.
34	• Are you willing to add content directly to the website throughout the development process?	Yes, we can add content directly throughout the process.
35	• Do you expect copywriting or editing services as part of engagement?	There is no need for copywriting or editing services.

Discovery Process

36	• Do you need us to conduct an extensive discovery process that includes extensive research into user persona development - or a more streamlined discovery based on the web team's input and best practices?	There is no need for extensive research into the user persona. A streamlined discovery based on the web team's input and best practices is sufficient.
37	• How often you meet with vendor agency?	We would expect meetings with the vendor to be every 2-3 weeks depending on what website work is currently occurring. Some of these meetings will be with our entire team (especially at the branding stage), and others will be with a subset of 1-2 team members.

Branding

38	• Is logo design & creation of a branding guidelines document part of the project scope? • During the branding phase, can you produce brand guidelines for? If not, can you tell us who created berkshires.org?	No logo will be developed. The Berkshires.org branding guidelines will be given to the vendor upon award.

	• In requesting the same brand style as berkshire.org for this new site, will your chosen vendor have access to the brand book/logo/iconography for berkshire.org?	
39	• Do you have an existing logo you want to use or any marketing materials you've used in the past for this project?	There is no existing logo or previous marketing material used in the past.
40	• For branding, do you need a logo created or do you already have one to use? For the branding guidance, it sounds like you want a brand guide created documenting the logo, colors and fonts, which would be derived from the existing berkshire.org brand. Can you confirm if our understanding is correct?	There is no need for a logo on the website. You are correct that the colors, fonts, and other notable characteristics from the berkshires.org website will be used to develop the brand guide.
41	• Do you consider Outdoor Recreation to be a sub-brand of berkshires.org? Can you tell us more about your connection to berkshires.org?	The Outdoor Recreation website will be a "companion" site to Berkshires.org. Elements of Berkshires.org should be considered for emulation on the new site so that there is a visual connection for the users when viewing both sites as part of a trip/experience planning process. Berkshires.org is managed by 1Berkshire, the state-designated Regional Tourism Council for Berkshires County, Massachusetts. 1Berkshire is a partner of BRPC in creating the outdoor recreation website, and 1Berkshire staff sits on our website working group.
42	• For iconography, we noted you provided the nps.gov symbol library as an example. Should the vendor assume that you want the designer to select icons from a pre-existing source, such as your example or one of several others, such as flaticon.com or create custom icons.	We want the icons to coordinate with the overall palette and style of the website, which in turn needs to coordinate visually with Berkshire.org. The iconography on Berkshires.org are stock files, some with slight modification. We anticipate using the same suite of stock files, and may need some additional icons developed to represent some activity types not currently included on Berkshires.org. Under Task 1 in the RFP, a nearly complete list of needed icons is listed.
43	• Does the iconography on the new rec site need to exactly match the style of iconography found on the berkshire.org site? If so, were stock icons used or custom icons? May we	The iconography on Berkshires.org are stock files, some with slight modification. We anticipate using the same suite of stock files, and may need some additional icons developed to represent some activity types not currently included on Berkshires.org. We

		have access to the iconography used for berkshires.org?	are willing to arrange access to the same set of existing icons.
44	• Do you have a sense of how many icons you think you'll need?	Between 35 and 40 icons will be needed.
45	• Should we use our sub-domains to create the 3 different layout themes for them or can they provide any testing domains?	The three layout themes can be static images and do not need to be live. However, if a vendor wants to develop the three themes on a testing domain, we would expect this to be within the vendor's sub-domains.
46	• Re: Pg 3, In "developing" three themes, we would like to confirm that this development refers to the design of the theme, and not necessarily the coding of the theme?	Correct, this is just the design of the theme, not the coding.
47	• Could you please provide more clarification about this phrase: (pg 3) "…consultant should develop this theme used on the homepage…" Does this mean that these three themes should be developed only for the home page until one is selected? If so, could you please provide more clarification about this requirement: "…this design should accurately reflect the pages and components described in the Website Outline" (our concern being that many of the requirements may not be fully represented by the home page.)	We will primarily focus on the homepage design while reviewing the three themes. However, we will want to see how the vendor will interpret that theme for the sub-pages and areas of the site, such as viewing the database and the map.
48	• Are you envisioning these three themes being delivered simultaneously or can they be iterative, developed in succession based on feedback from a prior theme delivery? If the former, should we account for design revision phases on all three themes?	We expect three initial designs to be delivered simultaneously. Our website team will then meet with the vendor to review and provide feedback. Only one theme would move forward for further iterative revisions.
49	• Would you able to provide URLs for the Berkshires.org icons?	We will work with the selected vendor to obtain access to the icons on Berkshires.org.
Database		
50	• How often will you need to update the database of recreation assets / locations? (Weekly, monthly, etc)	The database will be updated on an as-needed basis. It is assumed that there may be significant changes at the beginning, but then only a few changes a year.

51	• We were unable to easily access the database you included - does all data for the database already exist, or is generating this data this in process? If in process, how much data do you envision being added to the database before it is finalized and provided to your vendor? • Would you able to provide URLs for the Database?	Here is the direct link. https://berkshireplanning.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/10/outdoor_rec_database.zip. It is a zip file that will need to be extracted. Inside is a Microsoft Access database. All of the data already exists, but there will be changes over time. The vendor is not expected to gather or change any of the data. There are currently over 700 records in the relational database
52	• Do you have a content manager or content team for managing database content?	BRPC staff (1-3 members) will manage the database content.
53	• Under the "Task 2: Database" section, you say you want a site that allows the "BRPC to modify outdoor recreation asset information, including name, contact information, allowed recreation, multiple website links, description, and visibility to the public through an easy-to-use interface." This sounds like a "gallery" of outdoor recreation asset information that a visitor could search / filter a page(s) and then click on an asset and view detailed information? Would an example of this feature be the filterable page type on https://berkshires.org?	Correct. Another good example is Boulder parks https://bouldercolorado.gov/locations/parks-recreation-facilities?title=&type=605&parking=All
54	• Can you clarify the description of the "Explore by Recreation Type or Park" found on Page 7? See the bolded text below. I thought the bolded text was describing the information you wanted on an individual recreation type page. But then you add that each recreation type should have its own page - which is described further down the list. So it sounds like this information should appear on the explore landing page. If so, can you elaborate on how the information in the bolded text will be included on the "explore" page, which I assumed would list assets with only a name and image, or something similar - such as the	Each recreation asset does not need its own page. Each asset should have this information on the explore landing page. In the case of the Boulder example, there is an image and the park's name. We would want a short description under the name, the external website link, and the icons of recreational uses. The AllTrails site gives a closer approximation of how we want the assets displayed. The recreation-type pages will be very similar to the Explore page but prefiltered to the specific recreation type. Additional information on the recreation-type pages will not be related to the assets/database.

	example you just sent - bouldercolorado.gov. "We will design an Interface allowing visitors to search the recreational database by location (park) and/or activity type. **Each location will have an image, a brief description, a list of available recreation activities (using icons), and a prominent link to the property owner's website (multiple links needed).** Each recreation type should also have its own page (see Recreation Type Pages)."	
55	• Regarding "Develop a Site Map" on page 5, please define all the anticipated database connections.	The database will connect to the Explore by Recreation Type or Park (Page 4), would be brought into the map (Lat/Long provided in the database) where it can be viewed/filtered (Page 5), and would show on the recreation type pages (pages 8+).
56	• "Explore by Recreation Type or Park" (page 4): Is there any particular feature associated with the term "Limited Use" mentioned in the warning section related to an asset?	There is no particular feature associated with Limited Use. It will be used if a park is closing itself to a specific activity for a while (such as closing the trails to ATVs as the owner evaluates trail damage).
Explore by Map		
57	• Is the sample map by BRPC an example of everything the new map should do? What's missing from this map, if anything?	The sample map provided by BRPC contains the data but not the functionality needed. The ability to filter the data by recreation type is essential but is not included on the current map. In addition, when you click on a point, the list of recreation is a long list of 1's and 0s and should ideally be presented as icons. Finally, the ability to search (enter a name) is not on the current map. One item that we would like fixed on the map is that as you zoom in, parks get labeled multiple times, which is visually distracting. The map should only show one label per park within a reasonable distance.
58	• I'm looking for more information about the map features you need, specifically the level of complexity. For example, the Bend map is quite simple, while the All Trails map is quite complicated. The Montana Parks map is simple but looks like it includes some custom green spaces. Can you be more	Our preferred map detail level is BRPC's current map, which is the same platform as the Montana Parks map (ArcGIS Online). The Bend map shows a good example of filtering by activity and sub-region, but the map itself is too busy. The layout of the All Trails map provides the preferred user experience with the scroll of assets on the left instead of the bottom.

		specific about map features, layout, and behavior?	
59	• If an existing map platform, like Google Maps, shows parkland and trails, is the vendor's map going to overlay BRPC parkland and trail data?	Yes, BRPC's parkland and trail data is more current and needs to be overlaid on previously existing maps.
60	• What are your recurring costs for ArcGIS?	We currently pay $5,200/year for one license to ArcGIS Desktop Advance, two licenses to ArcGIS Basic, one license to Spatial Analyst, and one stand-alone creator license to ArcGIS Online.
61	• I'm looking into developing the map with Mapbox, used by All Trails. Would you prefer to continue using ArcGIS, expanding the map you have, and embedding it into the new website, or are you open to using something new?	Ideally, we would keep the map in ArcGIS Online as that seamlessly integrates into our existing mapping software; however, BRPC lacks the programming ability we need to bring the Outdoor Recreation map to its full potential in ArcGIS Online. As such, we are open to using something new, such as Mapbox. All of our map production work occurs within ArcGIS, so we must be able to convert our GIS layers (parks, trails) to whatever format is required regularly without too much work.
62	• What would be the average monthly traffic to this section (the map) of the new site? (ex: 30k per month versus 1mm)	We expect the map section to see upwards of 500-1,000 hits per month.
63	• Can you provide an example of the sample data in a shapefile format? • Could we have an example of your map overlay graphic?	Yes – it is available on our BRPC website at https://berkshireplanning.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/10/OutdoorRecGIS.zip. Three shapefiles are included in the zip file – Open Space, Trails, and Inventory (derived from our database).
64	• Regarding the map, what are your expectations in terms of granularity? Are you expecting users to be able to navigate to a point on the map (such as this)? Or are you expecting users to use the map as a trail map (such as this)?	For functionality, we want users to be able to navigate to a point (such as the trip advisor link), but we want users to see the level of detail in the AllTrails map. We do not need users to use the online map as a trail map.
65	• You mention that you can provide the trails and parkland geo data as a shapefile, geodatabase, or ArcGIS service. Will BRPC be managing all ArcGIS licensing, data, and service configurations?	If the vendor chooses to use ArcGIS, BRPC will manage the licensing and data and seek input from the vendor on service configurations.

66	• Regarding the maps, does the BRPC need to collect the mapping data? Is it already present or does the contractors need to collect the mapping data?	The data is already collected and mapped. The contractor does not need to collect any mapping data.
67	• Do you want us to work on your ArcGIS account to develop the interactive maps? Or Would you provide access to your ArcGIS account to embed it in the new website?	BRPC can provide access to our ArcGIS account to the vendor through sharing or as a named user.
68	• Do you wish to have any control over the embedding ArcGIS maps through the website back-end?	As long as BRPC can modify the map, we do not need control over embedding ArcGIS maps in the back end.
69	• As per the sample map link, it includes all the locations. Do you wish to embed the same map on any other pages except the main asset listing page?	A filtered version of this map will be displayed on the Recreation Type pages.
70	• "Explore by Map" (page 5): We could see a search option in the sample ArcGIS map link where users are able to find the address within the map iframe. Is that the same requirement mentioned under the title "Explore by Map (Page 5)" on page number - 7 (Berkshire-Outdoor-Recreation-Website-RFP-221017.PDF)?	Users should be able to use the website map to get a coordinate or address for the asset so they can get directions (or link the asset to directions in an external route finder, such as Google Maps).
71	• Does all of the map functionality need to be present in the first launch of the site, or are there requirements for the map that could be phased out?	The map must be fully functional when the website goes live (December 2023 or earlier). Draft versions of the site can have a map that is not yet fully functional.
72	• Is your team expecting to map out the outlines within the CMS? (hoping that your new CMS could do what arcGIS could do in terms of plotting the trails and outlining parks, .etc.)	We expect the map developed by the vendor, regardless of the software used, to show trails and park outlines.
73	• Requirements mentioned ArcGIS will be provided, but we need more clarity on access and what we need to use for mapping and analytics	We have an ArcGIS account and can create a user for the vendor to access the data, or we can share it with the layers with the vendor if they have their own ArcGIS account.
74	• Can we use the ArcGIS map you provided?	The ArcGIS map we provided has the geographic features we need, but it does not have the functionality that is needed. If a vendor wants to use

		the map we have already developed, they will need to program it to work as required.
Calendar		
75	• How is the data available from the property management tool(s) in order to be accessed and then imported into this new system?	Most property managers appear to have their events just as website text, but there are exceptions. Here are a few examples: https://www.bnrc.org/upcoming-hikes/ https://www.massaudubon.org/program-catalog/results/pleasant-valley https://berkshirerunningcenter.com/races-and-events/ https://thetrustees.org/events/ (select locations only) https://www.nmlandtrust.org/events
76	• For the event calendar, can you provide a list of event features you want to support? For example, can visitors register for events? Do you want visitors to be able to add an event to their personal calendar? Should visitors be able to filter events by categories or search events via text search?	Users should be able to add an event to their personal calendar and filter /search the calendar. No registration will occur from this website; however, they need to be able to follow links that are in the calendar to the organizer's websites for registration.
77	• Do we have to hide those events that are expired? Do we have to create a separate page for the expired events just for informational purposes for the users?	If the events are in a calendar format, they can stay visible. If the events are in a list format, expired events needs to be removed. We do not need a separate page for expired events.
78	• Will the events be paid or unpaid events?	We are not hosting any events; we are just linking to other websites that are having events. As such, we do not need to be involved with a payment system.
79	• Calendar events might be updated with registered users. Does that mean we need to search for a good third party calendar tool. If so, we might more details of it.	We would ask the vendor to use a calendar tool that meets our needs. This could be the WP calendar, an embedded Google calendar, or some other tool as recommended by the vendor. We are aware that WP calendars can be set up to allow "external" event submissions (established as draft) that then go through an approval process before being published, and this is one possible approach rather than establishing user access to external parties.
Recreation Type Pages		
80	• On page 8, under recreation type pages, please clarify: ○ Regarding "Overview map showing where the assets are located," is this	This is the same map as Task 3 but filtered to show only the recreation type specific to that page. For example, if it is the hiking page, it would only show the hiking assets on the map – not other assets such as boating.

		the same map referred to on page 3 (Task 3)? ○ If so, is this functionality part of the primary quote, or is it an "add on?"	This is part of the primary quote.
81	• "Recreation page Types (Page 8+)": Could you please elaborate on the point "Blog posts by activity (linked from other websites)"? • "Links to blogs from other organizations": Is it just some links to display as a list on your website or would you like to include any specific details (excerpt content) related to each external post?	We want to be able to provide links to content that others develop. For example, on the hiking page, we may want to include a link to: https://berkshires.com/guides/outdoor-adventure-guides/best-hikes-in-the-berkshires/#page=1. We are open to suggestions from the vendor if this would be a simple link or if it would provide more context and imagery.
82	• Overview map showing where the assets are located.: We believe that the overview map is the same as the AGOL map BRPC created.	Correct. This is a filtered view of the map, showing just the relevant recreation type.
Other Items			
83	• The RFP covers the bigger ticket items you want on the website such as a the outdoor asset database, map and calendar, but we can imagine there could be other pages and features you'd need. For example, the bnrc.org website has pages for staff and board members, contact page, newsletter signup and many general content pages. Can you provide a list of any features and page types, other than the map and event calendar, you would like included on the new site?	We will not need staff, board, contact, or newsletter signup pages. If we need any pages beyond what is listed in the Website Outline, it would be for the general content for each recreation type, such as links, regulations, blog posts from other organizations, etc.
84	• Do you want to include any utility features such as a contact page, links to social platforms, sharing content or newsletter signup?	A contact form should be included. There may be links to social media, but not immediately. There will be no newsletter signups. The ability to share content should be included as a utility.