Ro Royal Oak

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS (RFP)

WEBSITE DESIGN & DEVELOPMENT

CITY OF ROYAL OAK, MICHIGAN

INTRODUCTION

Royal Oak, Michigan, is a vibrant and active city of 60,000 located in the Detroit metropolitan area. It's known regionally for its thriving downtown, diverse population, and eclectic mix of residential neighborhoods.

The city has undergone significant development in recent years, enhancing its appeal as a community that combines small-town charm with urban amenities. The City recently adopted its 2050 Master Land Use Plan, outlining its vision for affordable and attainable housing (including workforce and aging-in-place housing), active and walkable residential districts, and sustainability advancements.

The City uses its websites to communicate this vision in plain-spoken, user-focused language. Our sites are also used to promote the unique brand and messaging of key partners, including the Royal Oak Public Library, Royal Oak Police and Fire Departments, Royal Oak Farmers Market, and others.

PROJECT SCOPE & DETAILS

PROJECT SCOPE

The City of Royal Oak seeks the services of an experienced website design company to redesign, develop, implement, host, and maintain the City's website. This project will involve utilizing information on the existing website as well as the implementation of new information and features as suggested by the City and the firm selected.

The City is committed to redesigning and building a new website or websites that are designed on best practices for usability from the viewpoint of our citizens. We're looking for strong, clean designs that aid website visitors who

- (A) generally know what information they need or service they want to secure, as well as by
- (B) visitors who may not understand how to find the information or services they seek.

AUDIENCE

The information on the City's website should be directed towards citizens, visitors, businesses, prospective businesses, prospective residents, elected officials, other government agencies, civic groups and associations, community groups, developers, and any person or agency seeking to conduct business with, or obtain information about, the City of Royal Oak.

Internal users and opinionated stakeholders have a tendency to creep into the web design process; we seek a designer/developer who will help us keep our primary external audiences at the center of our focus.

OBJECTIVES

The goal of the City's website is to provide simple digital access to public services, serve as public information and communications tools, serve as the platforms upon which to tell City stories and news, and streamline business operations. The current romi.gov site structure and design was developed approximately 10 years ago and no longer fully achieves these goals. The site requires design and usability improvements, specifically:

1. Improved architecture—fewer dropdown options and a more-strategic site navigation structure.
2. Improved search functionality, with results weighted by relevance or importance versus random.
3. Content and design that meet or exceed current accessibility standards and guidelines.
4. A smart calendar that helps us balance special events, government meetings, library and parks/rec events, public safety dates, and more.
5. A comprehensive brand amongst departments and divisions, while offering unique design options for individual entities, including the Library, Farmers Market, and others.
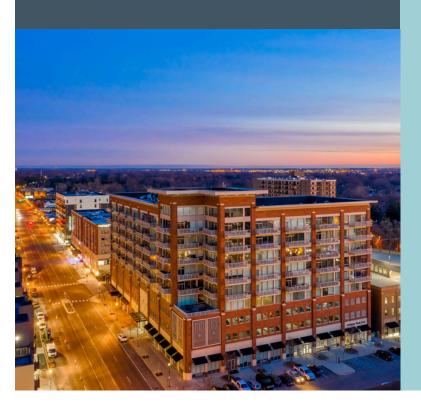
The City's website should provide easy access to services, be adaptable to current and changing technologies, provide content management capability for staff, and be used as a public communications tool. The website(s) shall meet the following criteria:

- **Visually appealing** – The site must have an attractive treatment of text and whitespace with the ability to easily add/mix photos, video, and graphics.
- **Easy digital access** to public information that includes information architecture and content organization that enhances usability, navigation, and search capability (concise information that is simple to understand and easy to navigate).
- **Easily updated** and managed by staff with a content management system (CMS).
- **Compatible with multiple browsers** including, but not limited to, Chrome, Internet Explorer, Firefox, and Safari.
- **Provide options for alerts**, eBlasts, eNewsletters, etc.
- **Enhance delivery and awareness** of public services and facilitate a clearly accessible process for public inquiry.
- **Collaboration** with SeamlessDocs/GovOS or provision of a similar service option (note that the City has used SeamlessDocs for several years and would have much crossover work to do if switching to a new digital document platform).
- **Compliance with ADA requirements.**
- **Support** for delivery of web content to mobile devices.
- **Meet all modern website security standards** such as allowing only HTTPS connections.
- Bonus points if you can provide an **easy training guide** or process for new CMS users.

CURRENT WEBSITE

WHAT WORKS

- Generally bright, nice contrast, easy to read.
- Banners on the tops of homepage and major landing pages are easy to update and well utilized—staff use these to provide alerts, changes to processes, new functionality, new processes/programs, etc.
- Departments and divisions are similarly branded; all pages "look like Royal Oak."
- Staff enjoy the "live edit" feature.

CHALLENGES

- Site is "too busy"—Users tell us that there is way too much information in the dropdowns, the site feels disorganized, there "seems to be no rhyme or reason" to where things are located or what nomenclature is used to refer to departments and services, and there is much duplication of info.
- Accessibility– Our websites do not meet current accessibility and readability standards.
- Search—Users complain that searching the site brings up pages mentioning the search word(s) in no particular order and with no weight given to one result versus another.
- Scalability on mobile—We hear that the looks and features of some pages don't work on mobile.
- Calendars—One of the biggest complaints we receive is about our calendar system, which requires users to toggle options to get all results. Doing so isn't intuitive, so a user looking for government meetings may find festivals or vice versa. We also struggle to find a calendar option or options that allows us to advertise family events at the library, Recreation athletics, etc.

GENERAL & DESIRED ENHANCEMENTS

- Recreate and enhance the City's existing web presence to be resourceful, informative, and serve as a marketing asset that provides a citizen-/business-friendly environment that emphasizes access to services, departments, and information.
- Develop robust, cost-effective, easy to use, interactive, and architecturally sound website(s) that are flexible enough to support the City's resources for a minimum of three to five years.
- The City's preferred website model calls for authorized staff to have some ability to perform routine content management. Staff webmaster(s) should have comprehensive ability to provide quality control and the ability to update routine information.
- Create a consistent and standardized format and enhanced graphic look for all pages, thereby establishing a unified theme throughout the City's website(s). The established theme should also provide the flexibility to allow for some level of thoughtful individuality and/or functionality between functions and departments.
- Recommendations on the development and coordinated launch of a community text alert system, ideally built in/plug-in capable on our website and with multi-channel functionality (opt in to categories using RSS-style or similar).

- For ease of use, the City's website(s) must provide consistent orientation and navigational aids, such as hierarchical menus ("breadcrumbs") that tell users how deep they are into a topic or subtopic as well as a homepage link or icon on each page in the same position.
- Allow for interactivity. Include the ability to integrate email response, surveys, feedback, forms (SeamlessDocs), online payments (BSA, Point&Pay), meetings and minutes, and more.
- Allow for robust desktop and mobile search capabilities.
- Train technical staff in the maintenance and support of the new website.
- Develop instructional guide for onboarding staff back-end users.
- Develop style guidelines for maintaining the website post design.
- Capability to maintain an archive of existing and past records such as press releases, newsletters, files, etc.
- Follow all City of Royal Oak communications and style guidelines, including logo, fonts, and colors.

PROPOSALS & SUBMITTAL PROCESS

PROJECT SCOPE

The City of Royal Oak Communications Department will be actively involved in providing information and support throughout the redesign process. Respondents are encouraged to contact the Department with any questions or concerns.

Services required after selection:

- The selected firm's representative(s) may be required to attend a public meeting(s) during the approval process, and deliver presentations of any prepared website information during the development process.
- The selected firm's representative(s) will be required to meet regularly with the City's project manager and/or Communications Department to discuss and plan the project(s) and provide progress reports as needed.
- In conjunction with performance under the approved contract, the contractor may be required to attend additional progress meetings.

- A testing period and subsequent acceptance testing period, either period not to exceed 15 business days, shall be provided, during which the City may evaluate the website on City property to ensure satisfaction with the website functions and conformance with the RFP. At the completion of each testing period, a letter of acceptance or failure will be provided to the firm selected. Items requiring correction at either testing period must be corrected within 15 calendar days by the firm selected.

REQUESTED INFORMATION & PROPOSAL FORMAT

- Provide a company summary providing general overview of your organization and a high-level description of your company's vision and/or mission. As with all projects, the City will take into consideration each organization's culture, values, mission, vision, and commitment to accessibility and inclusiveness.
- Provide a description of the services proposed and approach to the work that addresses the issues elaborated above.
- Provide resumes for key staff performing the tasks, design, project management, and project administration for this project.
- Highlight past experience that demonstrates familiarity with the issues that this project addresses. Provide a list of comparable websites, including municipalities and governmental agencies, designed by your firm.
- Please state how you intend to gather all the required information, format preferred, and assistance expected from the City in order to complete this project.
- Provide references (include contact name, phone number, email) for a minimum of three assignments of a similar nature and scope performed within the last five years.

- If a team approach is proposed, please provide information for all firms and staff members who will be involved in the process.
- Provide a comprehensive timeline for each phase of the website redesign, including meetings with City staff, redesign, development, draft presentation, implementation, and training.
- Provide a lump sum fee proposal for all services and deliverables described in this RFP, which shall include the cost for all labor, materials, and deliverables required to complete this project. The City shall not further reimburse the consultant for miscellaneous expenses (mileage, travel, phone expenses, printing, photography, etc.).

SELECTION PROCEDURE

- Selection will be based upon professional qualifications, experience in performing similar work, and the firm's ability to complete the project in a timely manner.
- Fees quoted will be considered in determining the firm's ability to render services to the City.
- The City desires that these services be completed by May 1, 2026.
- The following will be considered in the evaluation process: concrete understanding of project objectives, technical approach and expertise, qualifications of personnel, personnel organization and availability, related experience of the firm, schedule to reach each milestone and to complete project, and budget.
- The City may reject any/all proposals solely at its own discretion if deemed in the best interest of the City.
- The respondent may withdraw all or any portion of a proposal at any time during and after the review and award process, up to ratification of an agreement between the City of Royal Oak and the designated agency.
- The City of Royal Oak retains at all times the right to cancel or withdraw this RFP, to refuse to accept a proposal from any respondent, and to modify or amend any portion of this RFP.
- Submitted proposals are public records to the extent required by the Michigan Open Records Act.

PROPOSAL SUBMISSION

Final proposals are due no later than 5:30 p.m. on Friday, October 10, 2025 at the following email and/or mailing address:

Kara Sokol, Communications Director
kara.sokol@romi.gov

Kara Sokol
City of Royal Oak
Communications Department
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