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Date: September 5, 2025

Bidder:

The Traverse City Downtown Development Authority (DDA) will receive sealed bids in the DDA Office: 303 E. State Street, Traverse City, MI 49684 until **Friday, October 3, 2025** for the following:

**Website Design Services and Development  
For The  
Downtown Development Authority**

**Introduction**

The Traverse City Downtown Development Authority (DDA) is seeking proposals for website design services and development for the DDA website: <https://dda.downtowntc.com>

**Background**

Downtown Traverse City is located within the Grand Traverse Region of Northern Lower Michigan on the shore of picturesque West Grand Traverse Bays. While the City's population hovers around 15,000, it holds a daily population of over 30,000 and a micropolitan statistical area of approximately 150,000. Traverse City typically receives around 3.2 million visitors annually.

The DDA's current website has a custom content management system that allows staff the ability to develop and edit unique pages. The DDA website contains information on downtown projects and services, funding mechanisms and meetings. In addition, the DDA's website serves as the landing page for the DTCA (our downtown merchants association) - information about downtown events, seasonal promotions, a member directory and our robust online gift certificate program (capturing over \$500,000 each year) generate extensive online traffic. Due to the large amount of content and the need to facilitate the purchase of downtown gift certificates, we are seeking more efficient navigation tools and additional elements that will help our constituents.

**General Project Scope and Website Features**

**Navigation**

Reorganization of current content with the addition (and possible deletion) of new content by creating drop down menus or other organizational tools with option for navigation searches for the entire site on the homepage and name anchors on applicable pages.

**Modern Design**

Utilize existing branding themes to develop a colorful and engaging design that promotes navigational ease.

**Alerts and Notifications**

Display alerts prominently with the ability to send via email or text to subscribers.

**News/Projects/Programs/Services**

Prominently display news items as well as current and upcoming projects, programs and services.

**Project/Funding/Service Pages**

Develop specific project, funding and service pages. This would also include a unique page(s) for downtown events and activities.

**Site Search**

Internal site search engine and log of search terms.

**Communication Engagement**

Opportunities for online community engagement.

**Software Integration**

Ability to integrate various software programs, such as Simpleview, BS&A and more.

**Online Forms and E-Commerce Capabilities**

Solution for online forms and gift certificate orders with integrated payment capabilities.

**Content Scheduling**

Ability to create unpublished drafts and set dates for content to automatically publish and ability to expire.

**Responsive Web Design**

Create a responsive mobile friendly interface - site adjustments to the screen size of all devices it is being viewed on, including forms, calendars, etc.

**Printable Pages**

Print-friendly function.

**E-Notification**

Electronic subscription to e-news on site.

**Calendar**

Update and publish calendars for permitted events, public meetings and related items.

### **ADA Compliance**

Create an ADA compliant website.

### **Security**

Implement SSL encryption to protect user data and ensure online transactions.

### **Content Management System**

Have a CMS that provides ease for users to update their own content on the website and provide training. CMS should feature a section for a blog (or ability to add a plug-in) for regular updates.

### **Admin. Rights/Permission**

Allow system administrators to establish levels of permission for staff to update/manage/access content based on roles, as needed.

### **Search Engine Optimization (SEO)**

Incorporate SEO best practices (e.g., content keywords, sitemap, optimized and tagged images, etc.) to help potential members and customers find the website organically.

### **Integrated Marketing**

Include email signups and social media profiles or feeds to drive traffic, increase brand awareness and boost cross-platform engagement.

### **Intranet**

Develop a member-focused area that allows for the integration of Simpleview, CRM software, featuring member benefit pages and links to forms.

### **Analytics**

Provide robust analytics.

### **Content Conversion**

Convert content from the existing website to the new website.

### **Launch Plan**

Provide launch-plan strategy and plan including process for data migration, copywriting (SEO), QA, and process/timeline for staging to launch.

Additional items may be required or recommended.

### **Minimum Qualifications**

At a minimum, contractors shall meet the following qualifications:

1. Have been in the business providing website design and development for a minimum of five years.
2. Have a proven expertise in responsive website – design for website & design for a mobile and tablet

3. Familiarity with municipal and CRM software integration
  4. The ability to add and change content is very important, therefore a user-friendly content management system that offers the technical capability to add content
  5. Consistent and agreed upon communications platform or structure to ensure regular progress updates.
  6. Provide training and access to DDA staff to make content changes
  7. Developmental support is provided in a reasonable amount of time
  8. Have provided such services for at least three clients – provide three references
  9. Provide ownership of intellectual property rights to the custom-developed code and design assets.
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If the specifications of this RFP are obtained from the DDA's website link at: <https://dda.downtowntc.com/> It is the sole responsibility of the Bidder to check the website for updates and addenda prior to the bid being submitted.

The DDA reserves the right to accept or reject any or all bids, waive irregularities and to accept the bids either on an entire or individual basis that is in the best interest of the DDA.

The DDA accepts no responsibility for any expense incurred by the Bidder in the preparation and presentation of a bid. Such expenses shall be borne exclusively by the Bidder. Only the successful Bidder will be notified.

You must submit two (2) sealed copies of the bid to the DDA office prior to the indicated above date and time or the bid will not be accepted. You must indicate on the outside of the sealed envelope that the bid is for the **DDA Website Design and Development**.

If you have any questions, please contact DDA Executive Director Harry Burkholder before the bid is submitted. Phone: 231-922-2050 Email: [harry@downtowntc.com](mailto:harry@downtowntc.com)

**PLEASE SUBMIT BID TO:**      **Downtown Development Authority**  
Harry Burkholder, Executive Director  
303 E. State Street  
Traverse City, MI 49684

## **Bidder – Please Complete and Return**

### **BID SUMMARY**

**TITLE:** Downtown Development Authority Website Design Services and Development

**Due Date: October 3, 2025**

Having carefully examined the attached RFP and any other applicable information, the undersigned proposes to furnish all items necessary for and reasonably incidental to the proper completion of this bid proposal. The undersigned understands and agrees that they must be licensed to do business as Professional Engineers in the State of Michigan. The undersigned submits this proposal and agrees to meet or exceed all requirements and specifications listed in the RFP, unless otherwise indicated in writing and attached hereto. The undersigned understands and agrees, if selected to be awarded this work, to enter into an agreement with the DDA to supply this work.

The Bidder certifies that none of the following circumstances have occurred with respect to the Bidder, an officer of the Bidder, or an owner of a 25% or more share in the Bidder's business, within 3 years prior to the bid:

- (a) conviction of a criminal offense incident to the application for or performance of a contract;
- (b) conviction of embezzlement, theft, forgery, bribery, falsification or destruction of records, receiving stolen property, or any other offense which currently, seriously and directly reflects on the Bidder's business integrity;
- (c) conviction under state or federal antitrust statutes;
- (d) attempting to influence a public employee to breach ethical conduct standards; or
- (e) conviction of a criminal offense or other violation of other state, local, or federal law, as determined by a court of competent jurisdiction or an administrative proceeding, which in the opinion of the City indicates that the bidder is unable to perform responsibility or which reflects a lack of integrity that could negatively impact or reflect upon the City of Traverse City, including but not limited to, any of the following offenses or violations of:
  - i. The Natural Resources and Environmental Protection Act.
  - ii. A persistent and knowing violation of the Michigan Consumer Protection Act.
  - iii. Willful or persistent violations of the Michigan Occupational Health and Safety Act.

- iv. A violation of federal, local, or state civil rights, equal rights, or non-discrimination laws, rules, or regulations.
  - v. Repeated or flagrant violations of laws related to the payment of wages and fringe benefits.
- (f) the loss of a license or the right to do business or practice a profession, the loss or suspension of which indicates dishonesty, a lack of integrity, or a failure or refusal to perform in accordance with the ethical standards of the business or profession in question.

The undersigned understands that the DDA reserves the right to accept any or all proposals in whole or in part and to waive irregularities in any proposal in the interest of the DDA. The proposal will be evaluated and awarded based on best value to the DDA. The decision criteria to be used, but will not be limited to, is price, accessories, options and overall capability to meet the needs of the DDA. The undersigned agrees that the proposal may not be withdrawn for a period of 60 days from the actual date of the opening of proposals.

### Costs

| Task                                         | Cost            |
|----------------------------------------------|-----------------|
| Server Setup:                                | \$ _____        |
| Install/Setup Web Content Management System: | \$ _____        |
| Website Design/UX:                           | \$ _____        |
| Convert data from existing website:          | \$ _____        |
| Content Strategy & Development               | \$ _____        |
| Development and Coding                       | \$ _____        |
| Training:                                    | \$ _____        |
| Expenses                                     | \$ _____        |
| Consulting & Implementation:                 | \$ _____        |
| <b>Total Costs</b>                           | <b>\$ _____</b> |

### On-Going Costs

|                                            |                 |
|--------------------------------------------|-----------------|
| Consulting Support:                        | \$ _____        |
| Maintenance/Support Contract:              | \$ _____        |
| Storage/Access Fees:                       | \$ _____        |
| Foundational Elements (e.g., domain, host) | \$ _____        |
| <b>Total Costs</b>                         | <b>\$ _____</b> |

Submitted By:

|                |                                          |                    |
|----------------|------------------------------------------|--------------------|
| _____          | _____                                    | _____              |
| (Signature)    | (Name & Title – Print)                   | (Telephone Number) |
|                |                                          |                    |
| _____          | _____                                    |                    |
| (Company Name) | (Company Address, City, State, Zip Code) |                    |

REFERENCES: (include name of organization, contact person, and daytime phone number).

1. \_\_\_\_\_  
Contact Person: \_\_\_\_\_ Telephone: \_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_  
Contact Person: \_\_\_\_\_ Telephone: \_\_\_\_\_

3. \_\_\_\_\_  
Contact Person: \_\_\_\_\_ Telephone: \_\_\_\_\_

SUBCONTRACTORS: (include name of organization, contact person, daytime phone number, and services to be performed).

1. \_\_\_\_\_  
Contact Person: \_\_\_\_\_ Telephone: \_\_\_\_\_  
Services to be Performed: \_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_  
Contact Person: \_\_\_\_\_ Telephone: \_\_\_\_\_  
Services to be Performed: \_\_\_\_\_

3. \_\_\_\_\_  
Contact Person: \_\_\_\_\_ Telephone: \_\_\_\_\_  
Services to be Performed: \_\_\_\_\_

**A response to each of the following should be included in your proposal. Provide detailed explanations for each item.**

### **1. Hosting & Reliability**

- How do you make sure our website stays online with minimal downtime?
- Where will the site be hosted, and is hosting U.S.-based?
- How is the site backed up, and how quickly could it be restored after a failure?
- What steps do you take to keep the website secure?

### **2. Content Management (CMS)**

- What CMS do you use (open source, proprietary, WordPress, Drupal, etc.)?
- How easy is it for our staff to update content (pages, images, events) without coding?
- Does the system support scheduled publishing and automatic archiving of content?
- Can we easily manage menus, page layouts, and templates ourselves?
- How are updates handled—are they automatic, and are they included in ongoing costs?

### **3. Website Features**

- Does the CMS include a calendar system? How flexible is it (recurring events, merging multiple calendars, custom views)?
- What form-building tools are included (applications, polls, surveys, registration)? How is the data stored and exported?
- Can the site handle e-commerce (online payments, event registrations, store)?
- Does the system allow email signups and list management? Will it connect to tools like Mailchimp or Granicus?
- Can we embed or display social media feeds on the site?
- Does the site include search that works across all content, including PDFs and other file types?
- Does the system support multiple languages or translation?
- Will the site be mobile-friendly and accessible (ADA/WCAG compliance)? How do you test for this?

### **4. Design & User Experience**

- What is your approach to design and branding? How will you ensure the site reflects downtown's identity and serves merchants, visitors, and residents?
- How do you approach accessibility and usability testing with real users?
- How do you handle content migration from our current site?
- How do you ensure the design stays consistent even when multiple staff members add content?

### **5. Administration & Permissions**

- How does your system handle user permissions (who can edit, approve, publish)?
- Is there a record of who made changes and when?
- Can workflows (like requiring approval before publishing) be customized for different departments or turned off if not needed?

## **6. Training & Support**

- How will our staff be trained to use the CMS? (initial training, documentation, ongoing support)
- What kind of support is included after launch (bug fixes, software updates, call/email support)?
- How often do you release new features, and are they included in the support package?

## **7. Project Approach & Delivery**

- What is your typical project timeline from kickoff to launch?
- What is your process (discovery, design, development, testing, launch)?
- How do you communicate progress with clients during the project?
- Who owns the site, content, and design after launch? Can we move the site to another host if needed?

## **8. CRM Integration (Granicus/Simpleview)**

- We are newly contracted with Granicus/Simpleview. How would you ensure a seamless integration between our website and this system?
- What specific experience do you have working with Granicus or Simpleview? Please provide examples.
- What kinds of data can flow automatically between the website and our CRM (e.g., events, forms, email signups, merchant info)?
- What limitations or challenges should we be aware of, and how would you address them?