

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

Municipal Website Design, Hosting, and Content Management System

INTRODUCTION

The Town of Mountain View is seeking a new website designer. Designers are invited to submit proposals to the Town Clerk, Margy Greer, to be considered for the project. The deadline to submit a proposal is: April 25, 2022.

Questions about the scope of the project and any clarifying details may be sent to Mayor Emilie Mitcham, at EMitcham@tomv.org. For transparency, please no phone calls or in-person queries.

All emailed questions and answers regarding this project will be published as addendum information, so that any interested vendors will have access to the same information.

Although the project may evolve, the Town is seeking a designer who will deliver a finished, polished website for a set fee, and be available in an on-going way afterward, for an hourly fee, with an annual renewable contract.

The following elements are likely to be included in a satisfactory final product:

1. Simple enough interface and secure log-in for two Town employee users to:
 - Make updates to the calendar
 - Add banner announcements (for timely announcements by the Town)
 - Change dates of previously scheduled events
 - Share photos of events
 - Add public announcements
 - Remove and archive older public announcements

2. A table that contains a list of meetings and the different formats for documents associated with the meetings. For example, the date, the title, the meeting link, a recording, an agenda, and the minutes.

3. Account login capacity for residents to view their sewer and trash bills, and to pay them online in a secure way. (The Town recently contracted with Xpress Bill Pay as a third-party vendor which is linked on the Town website. Residents go to the third-party vendor site to pay their bills online but they do not currently have access to see their accounts or what is due online. The Town used Caselle Government Accounting Software for management of the resident utility bills.) Building this functionality, if it is possible with Caselle, could reasonably be bid as a separate project after the formation of the primary website.

4. A calendar that has a database aspect to it so that a site user can filter for what types of events they want to see on the calendar, and that is able to show a graphic (ie: a copy of the flyer) produced for the event if this is applicable. In the case of Council Meetings, the meeting agenda would also ideally link to the event in the calendar. If possible, the packet of information supplied to Council Members to prepare for the meeting could also be available via the calendar. Keeping the calendar up to date is something an entry level staff person should be able to be trained to do.
5. A place to highlight current or recent Town happenings/events. (For example, a slideshow of photos of the picnic.)
6. Simple, straight-forward functionality.
7. Submittable forms integrated throughout.
8. ADA compliance.
9. Ability to upload photographs on a page devoted to reporting code violations.
10. A Mayor's newsletter page.
11. A link to the external site for the *Neighborhood Gazette*, a physical newspaper with an online component that will be highlighting timely Town news and should be able to be accessed from our internal site as well.
12. Accurate and complete search capabilities within the site so that if a community member would like to find content that mentions a particular word or phrase, they can enter this into the search bar and receive a list of results that is accurate and complete.
13. A place to share YouTube content as a link, at least, so that community members may access recordings of the meetings that are posted to the Town YouTube channel.
14. Photographs of all police officers, staff, and appointed and elected officials with pertinent information about their role. Website provider will not be expected to provide the photographer, as the Town is currently searching for this contract but if the provider has a photographer available, this might also work. The Town envisions the Council Members photographed in front of their homes and the staff and Police Officers photographed in the course of their work (at their desk, on their police bike, in front of Town Hall, etc.)
15. A visual style that agrees with the current brand unification process that is being undertaken simultaneously by another contractor in the program CanvaPro.
16. A place to post RFPs, help wanted, and other such outreach to the community.
17. Content management support at an hourly rate, after the initial launch.

SUMMARY

The Town of Mountain View seeks a new website design with full content management system and website hosting management. The design of the existing site is not user-friendly and does not have the flexibility in page layouts and interactive features to support the needs of our residents and other site visitors. Additionally, the technical task of content management is too laborious for current Town staff, and the current website provider is not responsive to requests for assistance.

BACKGROUND

The Town of Mountain View is a small neighborhood community of 12 square blocks situated inside the Denver Metro Area. The Town has roughly 270 households and between 550 and 600 residents. Mountain View is a working-class residential community with the feel of a small town but with access to all the benefits of a sophisticated large city due to the location within the Denver Metro Area.

The website has not been heavily utilized in the last 10 years due to the fact that it has not been very functional, nor kept up to date. This results in frustrated residents and a lack of consistent communication between Town Hall and the community. The website is supplemented by three bulletin boards in Town and the small size of the Town makes it possible for people to get information they require, in person.

The majority of the current website visitors are likely residents seeking core services such as Town calendar dates for trash/recycling/clean-up dates, community event programs, public meeting agendas and minutes, permit application processes, code research, and various other public announcements. Additional visitors are developers and contractors seeking building permits or information about planning and zoning. And some visitors might also be potential employees or new residents seeking to learn more about the Town. It is not known how many visitors use the current website, as this information is not shared by CivicLive, the current website vendor.

The Town domain is TownOfMountainViewColorado.org. Additionally, tomv.org is directed to the same site.

The Town does not have a full-time website manager. Responsibility and management of the website and social media is shared among a small group of 3-4 elected and appointed officials, led by the Mayor and the Chief of Police who is particularly adept at Facebook social media, and has used this as another tool to supplement the communication that would normally be presented about the Town culture on a website.

OTHER DIGITAL COMMUNICATIONS PLATFORMS

The Town of Mountain View and associated resident or department groups maintains social media accounts which should be linked on the new website:

[facebook.com/TownOfMountainViewColorado](https://www.facebook.com/TownOfMountainViewColorado) (official Town page)

[facebook.com/ tomvNeighbors](https://www.facebook.com/tomvNeighbors) (resident group page run by Mountain View United)

[facebook.com/MountainViewPoliceColorado](https://www.facebook.com/MountainViewPoliceColorado) (official Police Department page)

https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCwO2xkL7YZ_f07b-UOXDYQQ/featured (official Town channel for recorded meetings)

<https://www.instagram.com/TownOfMountainView/> (official Town page – currently inactive)

THIRD PARTY PLATFORMS AND HOW BUSINESS IS TRANSACTED ON THE CURRENT TOWN WEBSITE

The Town has recently contracted with Xpress Bill Pay, a third-party payment system to handle online payments, giving residents the ability to log in to make Xpress Bill Pay. Those payments will all be done through a link to Xpress Bill Pay, not connected directly to the Town website. It must be able to be a smooth transition to the new website.

The Town used Caselle Government Accounting Software to manage utility invoices. Ideally, the new website would allow residents to log into a secure part of the system to view their own invoices, and from there, click a link to the external bill pay system of Xpress Bill Pay to make the payments.

The Town has also contracted with Code Publishing, a third-party municipal code management vendor, to codify and publish the Town Code. It has not yet been linked to the existing website and can be rolled out with the new website or prior to development and then transitioned over to the new website. The Town Code will not be fully approved as website content until the end of May, 2022 at which point it will be put on the website and should transition over to any new website smoothly.

There are no other relevant third-party systems currently being used or anticipated.

Most other Town business is handled via email or downloadable PDF forms. For example, if a community member wishes to apply for a permit, they can look at information online, and download a form for this specific type of permit they need, print

it, fill it out, and then scan or photograph it again and email it to the office where it should be submitted.

Most of the forms are currently PDFs and are not readable, fillable PDFs.

Some forms are not supplied on the website and the Town office or Police Department emails them to a community member when requested. (For example, the Vacation Alert form from the Police Department.)

It would be helpful if these forms were fully writable and submittable on the new website. One of the larger strategic goals of the Town is to reduce paper usage and help with achieving this goal in the context of the website forms would be highly valued.

CHALLENGES OF CURRENT WEBSITE

1. Unnecessarily clumsy and confusing design.
 - a. To view the most current version of the document community members might be seeking, the site visitor must click on the menu without seeing the document they are seeking as one of the options, even though an overly extensive list is visible, going both up and down.
 - “Government > Council Meeting Minutes” shows a list going both up and down, that ranges from September 20, 2021 to January 2017. But in order to get the most recent minutes published, the site viewer must click on the secondary menu of “Council Meeting Minutes” to be offered the full range of available minutes, with the new list switching from the right side to the left side. At this point, November 2021 Minutes become available on the list to the left, and December, 2021 Minutes become available as an opened document taking the main space of the website, but not appearing on the list to the left. (In other words, the December and November 2021 Minutes are not visible as options, although they are the most recent available documents, until the seeker clicks on the entire list to actually open the document itself. It never appears as an available document until it is opened.)
 - b. The secondary menus that appear to the right of the primary menu options, which list possible documents a site visitor might be seeking, are listed in a column that goes both up and down vertically, making it confusing for a site visitor’s eye to know where to start in their search for the correct document.
 - For example, hovering over “Government > Council Meeting Agendas” triggers a list of Agenda documents in date order that appears and takes up space from the top of the screen to the bottom of the screen, so that the site visitor’s eye must

enter the list in the *middle* of the date order rather than at the most recent date. From there, the site visitor's eye must *choose* to go up or down on the list, creating clumsy and difficult/unusual action. Most menu lists like this would start at the point of entry, allowing the eye to simply then scan *down* from the most recent dated document, which would appear as one of the options available.

- c. Some bulky information is provided that is not explanatory but nonetheless takes up space.
 - For example, under "Government > Town Code," the code chapters do not have explanatory headings but all repeat the words, "Code: Chapter..."
 - For example, under "Government > Council Meeting Agendas" the dated agendas named sometimes have to take up two lines of space due to the additional and completely unnecessary preface word, "Agenda" at the beginning of each title, creating a bulky and awkward list of dated documents to choose from.

2. There is a lack of interactive content.

- a. Forms provided are not fillable or submittable via the website and community members must download, print, fill out by hand, photograph and email them back to complete a request, when many websites would allow a submittable form from within the website. The only integrated submittable form on the existing website is the comments form at the bottom of the "Town Contacts & Office Hours" page.
- b. Only rudimentary ADA/WCAG compliance since many of the forms are not readable PDFs, although some of the prior design problems in this area have recently been corrected.
- c. There is no public information that site visitors might expect to interact with regularly on a municipal website and no indication where it should go if the Town was wishing to provide it.
 - Recordings of meetings.
 - Newsletters.
 - Highlighted current events.
 - Form to sign up for email communications.
 - Place to pay resident bills for sewer/trash/permits.

3. The site is difficult to use.

- a. The site is slow to load.
- b. The website is hard to keep up to date, too technical of a challenge for busy office staff, with poor support from CivicLive.

- c. The search tool does not appear to work consistently.
 - d. There is no place to put older, archived documents (such as Agendas, Minutes, Event Announcements) so out of date items simply accumulate until the site becomes very busy and the more up to date documents get lost visually.
 - e. Most current announcements are not highlighted or easily found.
 - f. Difficult to manage users and assign permissions because everything requires CivicLive, and the company is not responsive.
 - g. Very time-consuming to upload new content and update pages.
 - h. Not clear tools to identify broken links or duplicate files.
 - i. Community members are unable to upload photographs to the form they use to report code violations.
4. Content is incomplete and out of date.
- a. Links for photographs of staff are broken or photos are missing altogether.
 - b. The page that explains when a construction project must apply for a building permit is incomplete, for example. (Services > Building Department > Building Permits)
 - c. FAQs page is very incomplete.
 - d. Many of the meeting minutes are missing and it's unclear why some months are available and other months are not, from older years.

DIGITAL AUDIENCE

The new website function and design must be accessible to a range of users, from the Town staff to the community members who have a range of experiences and needs.

1. **Language:** The current website is translatable into 10 different languages, using a tool in the top. This should be maintained.
2. **Internet Access:** A majority of Town residents have internet at home, the speed and reliability of that internet access is highly variable. Furthermore, some residents still have no internet connection at home or no computer at home to access the internet. As a result, residents who do use the internet are sometimes highly dependent on mobile phones for all of their internet access. The mobile version of the site must work equally to the desktop version, and a slow internet speed should be accommodated, ideally.
3. **Digital Literacy:** Community members include seniors who have low comfort with technology and prefer to call or visit Town Hall in person as well as other members who are fully digitally literate and prefer to have all Town services provided online. Therefore, nearly all services available online will also have a mail-in or in-person option. Town staff must be able to easily retrieve and

process information submitted through the website, but should also be able to print a form for a community member who prefers to conduct their business in person, at Town Hall.

4. **Resident Accounts:** The Town envisions residents should be able to log into their account with the Town to view their sewer and trash invoices, make payments, and print their payment history for their records. As mentioned previously, this element of the website could be broken into a second phase of the full website project. However, online bill-pay via the third-party vendor Xpress BillPay must be transitioned smoothly with the initial phase of the project.
5. **Social Media:** The Town is trying to increase its presence on social media, as some residents are mobile app users but would have difficulty navigating a complex website, filling out online forms, and uploading documents. In other words, much of the content will be formatted to share on social media at some point in the future, in order to expose the broadest audience possible to the services and tools available to them at their most local level of government. It will be helpful to have content that can be shared on social media, and to have links to social media channels that can be added to, as the Town increases this competency.
6. **Resident Group:** The Town would like to make a page available to solicit involvement in Mountain View United, a resident group that is not under the control of the Town but which is endorsed by the Town. This content will be developed and maintained by another set of users than the official Town staff. It will only consist of an announcement and explanation about the existence of the group, contact information for the lead member, and a submittable form to sign up for email communication or to volunteer with the group. All other group communication will happen outside of the Town website.
7. **ADA Compliance:** This is very important to the Town, and is part of the Town Code that all content must be ADA compliant.
8. **Internal Customers:** The Town employees will ideally take responsibility for posting updates to the website, as needed. However, initial training will be important to accomplishing this goal. Additionally, the staff should be able to reach out to a responsive website manager for ongoing assistance.

TIMELINE

Due to the contract with the current website vendor, notice can be given that we will not be using their services on or before August 30, 2022 and we must have the new website in place by September 30, 2022. Therefore, the following timeline is envisioned.

Date RFP issued:	April 1, 2022
Follow up questions from vendors submitted:	April 15, 2022
Responses to vendor questions:	April 20, 2022
Proposal submission deadline:	April 25, 2022
Period for proposal evaluation:	April 25-27, 2022
Final selection announced:	April 28, 2022
Work with vendor on new website:	May through September, 2022
Provide end of contract notice to current vendor:	On or before August 30, 2022
End of prior website, launch of new website:	September 30, 2022

PROCEDURE

This RFP will be posted to the Town website, shared on the Town Facebook page, and emailed to potential website vendors.

All questions from vendors should be directed to: Mayor Emilie Mitcham via EMitcham@tomv.org

Note that all questions from vendors will be published as addendum to the RFP to allow equal access to information.

Proposals should be emailed to Town Clerk Margy Greer at the following address: MGreer@tomv.org.

Thank you.