RFP-020-25 FOR WEBSITE REDESIGN SERVICES

Q&A for answering vendors questions[1]

Lot 4

No.	Questions	Responses	Additional Information
1.	At what point in the procurement process will you decide if samples of brochures and/or website systems are required?	Samples or demonstrations will only be requested after the initial proposal evaluation and prior to final award, if clarification is needed.	
2.	Does RTA have guidelines for the general idea of how the website should look?	Refer to scope of work.	
3.	What is acceptable for proof of financial capability?	For example, the Offeror's most recent audited or reviewed financial statements.	
4.	Will all Offeror's with an evaluation score of 75+ participate in discussions/negotiations?	Yes	
5.	Please confirm that Form #5 (Disadvantage Business Enterprise) should not be included with proposal submission?	Yes.	
6.	Please indicate if Forms #2, 3 and 6 are to go in the Technical Proposal or Financial Proposal?	Technical proposal.	
7.	What types of functions do your content editors perform?	Creates and updates content, manages menus, adjusts layouts, adds plugins and handles basic SEO.	

[1] These answers are informational and don't change the RFP-020-25 for Website Redesign Services.

8.	What are your plans for maintenance after the initial redesign is complete, e.g., will your internal team manage future updates?	Content maintenance will be performed internally. System updates will be handled by our third-party hosting.	
9.	What is the average number of users that access the website per day, week, month, year?	Not available at this time.	
10.	What are your expectations for content management (e.g., ability to change homepage content, add new pages)?	Expectation is that all content management will be performed internally.	
11.	What is the current state of the website, and which features (i.e. bus tracking) do you want to keep, change or enhance?	The current website is functional, and we want to keep most features. The possible enhancements and addition of features will be discussed as part of the development of the new website.	
12.	Do you prefer hosting in-house or using a platform such as Azure, AWS, etc.?	We do not want hosting in-house.	
13.	Are you open to a hybrid delivery model with a mix of offshore and onshore resources?	No.	
14.	Work will be onsite or remote?	Remote.	
15.	Can you please give us an extension of 1-2 weeks to submit our proposal?	Yes. See addendum no. 1	
16.	Is this contract intended to be awarded to a single vendor or to multiple vendors?	A single vendor.	

17.	What user personas are top priority: commuters, seniors, paratransit users, students, tourists?	We are a community based public transit agency that serves all user groups.	
18.	Multilingual: Which languages are a must-have at launch?	English should be the default language but be able to be easily translated all other languages (i.e. google translate).	
19.	Do you have updated branding/identity assets (fonts, iconography, new logos for “DRIVEN”)?	No.	
20.	Should we preserve existing URLs for SEO, or will restructuring be prioritized?	Restructuring shall be prioritized. Must maintain critical URLs (e.g., www.transitrta.com, www.transitrta.com/routes, www.transitrta.com/fares).	
21.	Hosting: Who will own and pay for hosting (RTA or vendor)?	RTA.	
22.	How many environments are required (dev / staging / production / pre-prod)?	Multiple environments - Development, Staging, and Production; Pre-Prod is optional but preferred.	
23.	Do you expect to host GTFS/GTFS-realtime feeds, GIS files, or large downloadable PDFs on the same hosting?	Yes.	
24.	Chatbot Consideration: Does RTA have a preferred platform or existing technology stack for chatbot integration (e.g., Microsoft Bot Framework, LiveChat, etc.), or is vendor selection open-ended?	No. RTA is uncertain about the effectiveness of a chatbot and would require the vendor to demonstrate its value and convince us of its benefits before implementation.	

25.	If multiple firms collaborate on the proposal (e.g., prime and subcontractor), how should experience and capabilities be presented—jointly or separately?	Separately but clearly identify the prime and any subcontractors. A summary of how the team's qualifications complement each other should be included.	
26.	Will Year 1 Maintenance & Chatbot Add-ons be considered in the cost evaluation or evaluated separately after award?	Separately.	
27.	Proposal Submission: If we email the proposal, can we combine the Technical and Financial proposals into a single email with two separate attachments, or do you require two separate emails?	One email with two separate attachments.	
28.	Is RTA open to accepting errors & omissions/professional liability insurance instead of general liability for the website design work?	Yes.	
29.	Federal Clauses: Are any Buy America or specific FTA compliance certifications required for this IT service contract?	No.	
30.	For the Paylocity integration, what level of integration is required (simple link redirect vs. deep integration with job posting feeds)? Will RTA provide API credentials and technical liaison support from Paylocity?	A simple link redirect. RTA will provide any necessary credentials.	
31.	Are there any existing API rate limits, security protocols, or data refresh requirements we should plan for in our technical approach and pricing?	No. Not beyond standard HTTPS.	
32.	Form #1 (Standard Sealed Bid Price Sheet) breaks pricing into 12 distinct line items (tasks 1-9, plus optional add-ons). Will the 40-point price evaluation be based solely on the	Total price, but line items will be checked for reasonableness/appropriateness.	

	total aggregate price, or will RTA also evaluate the reasonableness and balance of individual line-item pricing?		
33.	For the two optional add-ons (Maintenance/Support Year 1 and Chatbot Feature), will these be evaluated separately or included in the overall price scoring?	Answered previously.	
34.	Given Section B.16(d) states "if unit prices are obviously unbalanced either in excess or below reasonable cost analysis values" this may result in disqualification, what constitutes "unbalanced pricing" in RTA's assessment?	Unbalanced pricing means unit prices that are significantly higher or lower than reasonable market cost without justification.	
35.	What is the expected duration and format of "post-launch Q&A support" (e.g., 30 days, 60 days, email-only, phone support, response time SLAs)?	Yes, 60 days via email and/or phone support with 48 hours for non-critical issues and 24 hours for critical issues.	
36.	Should this post-launch support be included in the base project price (Tasks 1-9) or priced separately?	The post-launch support pricing should be included in the “Others” section.	
37.	Does RTA anticipate requiring any additional training beyond the initial 4 hours (two 2-hour sessions), and if so, should we propose additional training as an optional line item?	No.	
38.	Are there specific CMS features or integrations (e.g., service alerts, event calendar management, GTFS updates) that require specialized training emphasis?	No. RTA site uses service alerts and GTFS-RT feeds.	
39.	Are there any critical dependencies, blackout periods, or seasonal considerations (e.g., academic calendar, peak ridership periods) that should inform our proposed timeline?	No. Service changes noted in April, July, and November; no blackout periods listed.	

40.	Does RTA require phased deliverables with incremental reviews/approvals, or is final delivery expected as a complete turnkey solution?	Yes, phased deliverables with incremental reviews/approvals.	
41.	What constitutes "acceptance" of the website for purposes of final payment and warranty commencement (soft launch, full launch, post-launch stabilization period)?	Acceptance is expected after full launch, all deliverables are met, and critical issues resolved during a short post-launch period.	
42.	Will RTA require a formal User Acceptance Testing (UAT) period, and if so, what duration should be planned?	Yes, RTA requires a formal User Acceptance Testing (UAT) period of two weeks.	
43.	What is the makeup of the Website RFP evaluation committee? We understand you may not be able to provide names, but it would be helpful to understand their roles in the organization and connection to the project.	Procurement, IT, Operations, and Marketing.	
44.	Can you provide an evaluation timeline? When do you plan to identify finalists and award the contract?	See the schedule in the solicitation.	
45.	As it relates to the brand and the instruction to “incorporate the slogan ‘DRIVEN’ in design,” can you provide more details on this direction?	The slogan ‘DRIVEN’ should be featured prominently in the hero section as a core brand message, using bold typography and design elements that convey energy and forward motion. It should set the tone for the site’s visual style and be reinforced subtly in supporting content.	
46.	What is the size of the marketing team or the team that will be managing the website?	One person.	

47.	Does the bidder has to be located in the state of Maryland?	No.	
48.	We are a DBE firm and we are applying as prime contractor, will this satisfy the DBE goal?	There is no DBE requirement.	
49.	Is the current content structured or tagged in a way that would support automated migration, or will migration need to be primarily manual?	Primarily manual.	
50.	How many stakeholder groups or departments typically manage content updates today?	Internal stakeholders include Marketing and IT.	
51.	Please confirm whether the proposal is limited to https://www.transitrta.com/ and does not include any associated subdomains, microsites, or portals.	Answered previously.	
52.	Does RTA currently host its website internally, or should the proposal include hosting recommendations/migration?	See the previous answers.	
53.	Is there a staging or development hosting environment already in place, or should vendors include hosting setup in the proposal?	No. Vendors should include hosting setup for a staging environment in their proposal. Please note that the production website is hosted on GoDaddy.	
54.	Has an accessibility audit of the current website been conducted? If so, can findings be shared?	Answered previously.	
55.	What analytics or reporting tools does RTA currently use (e.g., Google Analytics, Tag Manager, Hotjar)?	None.	
56.	How does RTA feel about using a component-based framework that promotes modularity and long-term flexibility, as opposed to plugin heavy architectures that may affect performance?	RTA prefers a component-based framework. However, we would also like to see cost estimates for a plugin-heavy architecture for comparison.	

57.	What level of post-launch support/training is expected for internal staff?	Level of post-launch support will be dependent on the number of technical issues with the site. Training of internal staff is outlined in the RFP	
58.	How many RTA staff members are expected to receive CMS and accessibility training?	3	
59.	Does RTA anticipate a soft launch or phased rollout, or should the new site go live in full upon completion?	RTA anticipates a soft launch to allow final testing and feedback before the full public rollout.	
60.	Could you please clarify the expected scope and functionality of the Trip Planner feature?	We expect the Trip Planner to leverage Google Maps, using our GTFS feed (which automatically updates on Google) to provide accurate, real-time transit routing for riders.	
61.	Aside from linking to the Careers section, could you specify the desired level of integration with Paylocity - for instance, should the website pull and display live listings from the ATS or simply redirect users to Paylocity's hosted career portal?	Current site redirects to Paylocity-hosted portal.	
62.	Are out-of-state firms eligible to submit proposals if they register to do business in Maryland prior to award?	Yes.	
63.	Will RTA accept electronic (email) submission only, or is a printed copy also required?	If you submit electronically, a printed copy is not needed.	
64.	Does RTA have a preferred feedback portal tool (e.g., custom web form, SurveyMonkey, Formstack), or should the vendor propose one?	No.	

65.	Does RTA expect the vendor to provide ongoing helpdesk support after launch, or only during the warranty period?	60 days of support after launch.	
66.	The current RTA website appears to be built on WordPress. Are you satisfied with the current CMS, or are you considering migrating to another CMS platform as part of this redesign project?	We are generally satisfied with WordPress but may consider other CMS platforms.	
67.	What percentage of total website traffic currently comes from mobile and tablet devices?	Not available.	
68.	Do you require a specific caching or Content Delivery Network (CDN) solution to improve performance and availability?	RTA currently uses GoDaddy hosting, which provides basic caching and optional CDN services. Vendors may recommend enhanced performance solutions if they offer measurable improvements in speed, scalability, and reliability.	
69.	What search capabilities should the new website provide—such as filtered search, document (PDF) indexing, keyword synonyms, or search analytics reporting?	The new website should provide robust search capabilities, including keyword-based search with support for synonyms, filtered results by category (e.g., routes, schedules, news), and indexing of documents such as PDFs. Search analytics reporting should also be included to track user behavior and improve relevance over time.	

70.	How important is mobile optimization to your success criteria, and are there specific mobile first features or tasks that should be prioritized during design?	Mobile optimization is critical; trip planning and service alerts should be prioritized.	
71.	Which content areas or user functions are most critical for mobile users and should be optimized for small-screen devices?	Trip planner, real-time alerts, route schedules, and fare info.	
72.	Of the interactive features listed in the RFP (trip planner, interactive system map, real-time service alerts, events calendar, feedback forms, careers section), which ones are the highest priority for Phase 1 go-live?	Careers section, Trip planner, interactive system map, real-time service alerts.	
73.	What user engagement metrics will be most important to track after launch (for example, successful trip plans, service alert subscriptions, page interactions, task completion rates, or search success)?	Trip planner usage, alert subscriptions, and page engagement.	
74.	Which tools or platforms should be used to track and visualize these KPIs (e.g., Google Analytics 4, Looker Studio, or other reporting systems)?	RTA recommends using Google Analytics 4 for tracking KPIs and Looker Studio for visualization and reporting. Vendors may also propose additional or complementary solutions if they offer enhanced functionality or ease of use.	
75.	Which workflows and processes should be emphasized during training (for example, creating alerts, updating route information, publishing homepage content, running accessibility checks, managing redirects, or reviewing analytics)?	Creating service alerts, updating routes, and homepage content updates.	

76.	Is teaming of equal partners (beyond contractor/subcontractor relationship) allowed for this project?	Yes.	
77.	Given that there is no pre-bid meeting for this solicitation, is it possible for RTA to share any information on the number and/or company names of vendors interested in this project?	No.	
78.	Can RTA give instructions on where in the technical and/or financial proposals Forms 2, 3, 5, and 6 should be placed?	Answered previously.	
79.	What types of evidence will the RTA accept to prove that the Offeror has the financial capability to provide the services required in this RFP?	Answered previously.	
80.	The RFP states “The bidder’s proposal shall be written in ink or typewritten on the form provided” (p. 5, Section A, 4. Preparation of Proposals). Are we correct in our interpretation that we will submit a full, written response that addresses all the sections specified under Section B, 26. Proposal Format, incorporating/inserting forms 1-6 where appropriate?	The reference to “written in ink or typewritten” simply means proposals must be clearly typed and submitted in the required format, not handwritten.	
81.	“Service alerts (disruptions, detours)” — Are these to go out to users who subscribe, or will these be displayed on a static web page within the site?	Service alerts should be displayed on the website and sent in real-time to subscribers and Transit app users.	
82.	“Public Feedback Portal (forms/surveys) with routing to RTA inbox(es)”: a. Can we get more information on the Portal requirements?	a. The Public Feedback Portal should provide front-facing forms and surveys for riders and community members to submit feedback	

	b. Will these be forms/surveys that are front facing, or will this portal have a login required to access? c. In order to cleanly deliver the emails from the forms to the RTA boxes, what sendmail delivery platform will be used? Are you open to a third-party service such as Mailgun or Sendgrid to ensure clean delivery of site form emails?	easily. Forms should allow routing to designated RTA inboxes based on topic or department. The portal should be simple, intuitive, and mobile-friendly. b. Forms and surveys will be public-facing and should not require login. However, optional CAPTCHA or spam-prevention measures are recommended for security. c. We do not have a preferred sendmail delivery platform. Vendors may propose a reliable solution to ensure clean and secure email delivery from site forms. d.	
83.	"Social media integration (e.g., Twitter/X; Facebook optional as directed)" — Does Integration mean embedding a standard feed from these accounts within the site on pages where directed?	Integration means embedding live social media feeds from RTA's official accounts on designated pages. Vendors may also suggest enhanced options if they improve engagement and accessibility.	
84.	"Trip planner using open web resources (e.g., Google Maps/GTFS) and interactive system map" — Will the RTA provide a Google Maps API paid service/account? What	RTA currently has a Swiftly API key, and the Trip Planner should use GTFS data to provide route planning, stop selection, and real-time arrivals,	

	specific tools and features will the Trip Planner need to offer?	ideally integrated with Google Maps or similar tools.	
85.	“Support integration with RTA’s chosen method (e.g., Token Transit/QR)” — Will an ecommerce engine/system be required? Can we get an idea of how this should function?	RTA uses Token Transit as the backend for fare processing, with the Transit App as the front-facing platform for riders. The website should link to or provide instructions for purchasing fares via the Transit App; a full ecommerce engine is not required.	
86.	For Task Area 8, has the RTA definitively selected the payment system (e.g., Token Transit or another QR system)? If so, please provide the name of the final system and clarify if the scope includes integrating the payment gateway (Current site is using Paypal)	RTA uses **Token Transit** as the backend for digital fare payment via the **Transit App**, which serves as the front-facing platform for riders. The website currently sells physical passes (e.g., 10-ride books) through **PayPal**. The new site should continue PayPal integration for physical pass sales, while also providing links or instructions for using the Transit App for digital fare payment.	
87.	Can RTA provide access to the current website's analytics (e.g., Google Analytics) and any existing user feedback reports to better inform the initial Discovery and UX Strategy phase?	Answered previously.	

88.	Please elaborate on the required functionality for the "public feedback portal." Is this a simple contact form that emails RTA staff, or does it require a more complex ticket/case management system or database integration?	Current site uses simple contact forms; no ticketing system.	
89.	Will RTA provide a third-party accessibility audit for final verification, or is the selected contractor responsible for engaging and managing a third-party auditor to confirm WCAG 2.1 AA compliance?	Selector contractor shall provide accessibility audit and certification of compliance.	
90.	Page 14 #18. Please elaborate on the following: It mentions that if an awardee does not execute the contract within 7 days…… Does this mean that the awardee doesn't return the signed contract within 7 days? It also goes on to say that if so, the awardee is responsible for the difference between his bid and the next higher bid who I guess will be awarded. Please indicate how the original awardee will be responsible for the difference and how he will be asked to pay?	Yes, it means the awardee must return the signed contract within 7 days. If not, RTA may award to the next proposer and charge the original awardee the price difference.	
91.	Work location. It is our understanding that the awardee will work at their site of convenience. Please indicate if there are any restrictions to the locations.	Yes, the vendor may work from their site. RTA does not require on-site work but may request occasional virtual or in-person meetings as needed.	
92.	Will RTA continue using the existing hosting after the redesign, or should hosting setup and migration be part of our proposal	RTA anticipates continuing with our current hosting.	

93.	Does RTA plan to include Token Transit or other payment-related features at launch, or should this be considered as a placeholder setup only?	RTA plans to include digital fare functionality at launch by providing links or instructions for using the Transit App, which uses Token Transit as the backend. The website will continue to handle physical pass sales through PayPal, ensuring both digital and physical fare options are accessible to riders from day one.	
94.	How many design review and feedback rounds does RTA anticipate before final approval?	RTA anticipates two to three structured review rounds before final approval.	
95.	Are there any existing design references or mockups that RTA wants the new layout to align with?	Yes, refer to Scope of Work.	
96.	For accessibility compliance, does RTA have an internal reviewer, or should the vendor handle full testing and documentation?	Vendors should handle full accessibility testing and documentation.	
97.	Should the training focus only on content editing and publishing, or include technical administration as well?	Training to include content editing and publishing and technical administration.	
98.	Are there any approval processes or checkpoints RTA follows for design and content sign-offs?	Yes, RTA will require phased reviews and approvals for key design and content milestones. Specific checkpoints to be proposed by vendor.	
99.	Does RTA expect any custom icons, infographics, or illustrations as part of the design work?	Yes.	

100.	Should the chatbot (if included later) be basic rule-based or integrated with CMS FAQs?	The chatbot should ideally integrate with the CMS FAQs for dynamic, accurate responses.	
101.	Can we include case studies?	Yes, no more one page.	
102.	Is there someone on the team who has knowledge of editing CSS?	Yes.	
103.	Will user interviews be needed?	No.	
104.	Would you like a sitemap, competitive analysis, or any other UX things done?	Answered previously.	
105.	What specific features do you like on both websites (Los Angeles Metro and STM Montréal)?	Specific feature preferences will be discussed and defined during project planning.	
106.	The pricing chart on RFP page 23 includes several items that may involve third-party integrations or APIs. Should vendors interpret the listed pricing categories as labor-only costs (installation, customization, and programming), excluding the underlying third-party subscription or license fees?	Yes, vendors should price the listed categories as labor-only. Any third-party subscription or license fees should be identified separately as optional or estimated costs.	
107.	Could the RTA clarify how it would like third-party or outside costs (e.g., Swiftly, Paylocity, Google Translate, Token Transit/QR, chatbot subscriptions, etc.) to be handled in the pricing proposal? Should such items be priced directly by the bidder within the cost chart, or will the RTA pay those vendors directly?	RTA prefers that third-party costs be listed separately as optional line items. Do not include them in labor pricing. RTA will pay those third-party vendors directly.	
108.	Since translation costs may vary by total content volume, number of supported languages, and bandwidth usage, would RTA prefer that bidders estimate translation	RTA suggests the use of Google Translate for basic site translation.	

	integration and support costs as part of their proposal, or treat those as optional/variable add-ons?		
109.	Could RTA confirm where the current website (www.transitrta.com) is hosted on-premises or with a cloud service provider—and whether the intent is to continue using that environment or to migrate to a new hosting platform as part of this engagement?	The current site is hosted on GoDaddy. RTA anticipates using current hosting service.	
110.	If the existing hosting environment will continue, please provide details (operating system, storage, bandwidth, component specifications, etc.). Alternatively, should bidders propose complete hosting specifications and pricing, including a best-practice development/staging/production setup?	RTA is currently hosted on GoDaddy. Proposing alternative hosting options is not required and is completely optional.	
111.	The RFP references certain federal requirements (e.g., nationality laws) but does not explicitly list cybersecurity or regulatory frameworks. Please confirm whether Federal or Maryland security governance requirements such as FedRAMP Moderate, NIST 800-53, or other comparable standards apply to this procurement.	Other than what is explicitly stated in the RFP, no additional security controls are required.	
112.	Will RTA's internal departments (Operations, Customer Service, HR, etc.) each have representation in the discovery phase, and what level of decision authority will they hold on content and functionality?	Yes, key departments will participate in discovery. Final decisions on content and functionality will be coordinated through RTA's project lead.	
113.	Has RTA conducted any user or accessibility testing on the existing site, particularly with seniors or riders with disabilities, that could inform the redesign?	No.	

114.	Should the proposal include a formal third-party WCAG 2.1 AA compliance audit, or will internal RTA review be sufficient?	Answered previously.	
115.	Are there specific Maryland IT or cybersecurity compliance standards (e.g., SOC 2, OWASP, MARS-E) that the web platform must meet?	RTA does not mandate a specific standard but expects industry best practices for cybersecurity.	
116.	The RFP specifies two training sessions for three staff members. Would RTA be open to additional micro-trainings (e.g., accessibility refreshers or "train-the-trainer" modules) to ensure long-term independence?	RTA will only require the two training sessions specified in the Scope of Work.	
117.	The price form suggests a delivery window of 120–150 calendar days. Is RTA open to phased releases (e.g., MVP launch followed by feature rollouts) to accelerate value and reduce risk?	Vendors will propose a delivery timeline. Phased releases may be acceptable if they meet project goals and stay within that timeline.	
118.	RTA's website is often the first point of contact for new riders discovering transit options. Would RTA be interested in integrating lightweight rider-sentiment or trip-feedback loops directly into the site to inform continuous service improvement?	Yes. Adding a quick feedback feature—like a one-click sentiment button or short survey—on the RTA site is a best practice.	
119.	Should we retain the current website structure and page hierarchy as the baseline, or are you open to a full content restructuring (for example, merging/relabeling sections)?	The "Scope of Work" defines flexibility for restructuring.	
120.	The current site's Fares section includes links to purchase passes — do you expect this to evolve into full e-commerce (cart, checkout, etc.), or should we mirror existing flow?	Mirror existing flow.	
121.	Are there any page limits specified for the technical proposal submission?	No. Proposals should be concise and focused on the RFP requirements.	

122.	How many resumes are required or permitted to be included? Is there a page limit for individual resumes or for the entire staffing section?	Submit resumes for key project staff only. No page limit is required, but brevity is encouraged.	
123.	Does RTA have any preferred technologies, frameworks, or development tools for the proposed website redesign and implementation?	No.	
124.	Should the optional chatbot integrate with any existing RTA data systems (e.g., service alerts feed, contact form), or serve as a standalone Q&A/FAQ assistant?	RTA prefers to integrate the chatbot with existing RTA data systems like service alerts and the contact form.	
125.	Does RTA have a preferred tool or testing protocol for ADA/WCAG 2.1 validation (e.g., WAVE, axe, SiteImprove)?	RTA does not have a single preferred tool but follows best practice by using industry-standard accessibility testing tools such as WAVE, axe, or SiteImprove to validate ADA/WCAG 2.1 compliance.	
126.	Will RTA require the contractor to configure analytics dashboards (GA4, Power BI, or other) as part of ongoing governance?	RTA expects the contractor to configure analytics dashboards (e.g., GA4 or Power BI) as part of ongoing governance to support performance monitoring and reporting.	
127.	Would RTA be open to a brief joint discovery workshop post-award to confirm user personas, accessibility goals, and content governance parameters before final design begins?	Yes, RTA plans to hold a kickoff meeting post-award, which may include discovery discussions to align on goals and requirements.	