



Harrisonburg Downtown Renaissance

Request for Proposals: Website Restructure & Implementation

Introduction & Background

Company Overview:

Harrisonburg Downtown Renaissance (HDR) is a nonprofit organization whose mission is to build a downtown where businesses thrive and people enjoy memorable and lasting experiences. Our organization utilizes our website, downtownharrisonburg.org, as a destination marketing tool, providing information about our work with the downtown community, including community events, small business assistance, downtown beautification, and other special projects. Our audience spans from locals in Harrisonburg and surrounding communities (residents, business owners, vendors, volunteers, sponsors, donors, students) as well as day-trip visitors and families connected to James Madison University.

Project Background:

Persisting technical issues with usability, performance, and functionality presents complications for our staff and audience, has prompted a need for a new website. The frequency of issues experienced impacts our mission to provide the accuracy of information, ability to make prompt updates to events and other marketing engagements, causes loss of engagement with slow page load times, and staff productivity hindered by having to rework content lost due to errors in the page and publishing features. Our organization is looking to restructure and improve the implementation of our website using the current Downtown Harrisonburg branding in a refreshed design, and rewrite content into a new content management system (CMS) where reliability, updated software, and resolution to technical complications are possible in a timely fashion. In turn, this would allow the management of information by staff and businesses, as well as the speed and accuracy of content, to be a reliable source for our audience and compatible with their devices.

Project Goals & Objectives

Our organization is looking for restructuring the current website's functionality to support our mission while utilizing our recognizable branding elements into a refreshed design. The implementation of our website would ideally be with a new proposed and supported CMS, not the restructuring of our current iteration the Wordpress site. Usability for HDR staff to operate and manage the website, publishable content, copy, and necessary features listed below, and our audience to access public-facing functionalities are key. On the follow pages are the "needs" and "wants" for a proposed technical solution:



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Project Goals & Objectives (continued)

Needs: Our organization requires the following criteria to be met in the proposed CMS for the website:

- 508 compliance and accessibility standards integrated into the theme of the website and publishable copy and content.
- Modern SEO standards to support search engine crawlers, social media network sharing, human-readable URLs, and the ability to update or modify SEO properties of a given page. Social media network sharing should be available for pages and publishable content for audience interaction to like, follow, pin, and share. Marketing integration should be available to include analytics, campaign tracking for pages and events, and the ability for our audience to subscribe to our MailChimp newsletter.
- Responsive design for computers, tablets, and mobile devices and using HDR's current branding and the ability to present videos, graphics, or other media in a visually pleasing manner front-and-center of a given web page.
- Page templates to support the publishing of notable content such as, but not limited to: social media, press, and media kits; form submissions for vendors, events, event sign-ups, business in-take information; residential and business resources; business information and directory; integration to external services for our yearly Friendly City Fortune Raffle website, United Way Listings for volunteering, and JMU Handshake for internship listings; and media-intensive event content such as our Art Walk, Cookie Tour, and Downtown Happy Hours.
- Functionality for an events calendar section to display current and upcoming events to our audience. The events section will display a calendar overview of events, listing view of events, links to the page of a specific event in greater detail including a link to the venue's directory page, and a form for public submission of an event for HDR to moderate and publish the submission to the calendar.
- Functionality for e-Commerce to sell event promotional tickets, Downtown Dollar gift certificates, and accept donations via Stripe, Square and/or GiveButter.
- Functionality for a blog/news section to display current, upcoming, and previous postings.
- Support for the website and related software products, add-ons, plug-ins, or features available in a timely fashion with on-call support available for quick turnaround resolutions for key dates.
- Hosting platform and CMS software for the website needs to provide stability and availability when events, dates, and times experience significantly increased web traffic. The hosting solution must also include automatic back-up scheduling and the ability to restore if needed.



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Project Goals & Objectives (continued)

Wants: Our organization is looking for a website that meets the ability to or can provide with as many of the following criteria:

- Functionality for a business portal, where businesses login with their account to access downloadable content can verify their “Downtown Friends” donor status.
- Functionality to support interactive parking information and locations for the downtown area.
- Functionality to support interactive map-based information for tours, walks, and special events.
- Functionality to support the management of attendees for a ticketed event.
- Functionality to support integration with the Friendly City Fortune raffle microsite.

HDR is open to suggestions for other features that will help the organization meet its goals of promoting events, businesses and organizational information.

Success Criteria

The new restructuring and implementation of a CMS should demonstrate significant improvement in usability and stability for our public facing and back-end administration portions of HDR’s website. Plans for maintenance, software updates and license renewals (if applicable), and technical support, especially your ability to be available around a few of our specific key times and dates (live raffle drawing and the days leading up to our major community festivals) and timely responsiveness for technical problems outside of these specific dates should be included.

Project Timeline

Deliverable Milestones & Deadlines:

- Discovery – close of RFP through the first week of January 2025.
- Design for restructure and implementation of the website – January/February 2025
- Development of the website and content integration – February/March 2025
- Testing and review – March/April 2025
- Launch of website – April 2025

Project Budget

Our organization is looking for a solution that fits within the proposed budget range. Consideration of proposed solutions above our target range may also be considered.

Budget Range: \$30,000 - \$35,000



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Proposal Submission Requirements

Submission Deadline: January 6, 2025

Required Information & Documents:

Please include the following information and supportive documents with the RFP submission:

- Company profile and relevant experience
- Case studies, portfolios, or other documented work with similar organizations (i.e. Main Street organizations)
- Team member biographies and qualifications
- Detailed project approach and methodology
- Pricing and payment terms
- Website hosting terms and any applicable software licensing fees
- Technical support and maintenance terms

Optional Documents:

- Customer testimonials

Evaluation Criteria

Proposals will be evaluated based on the proposed solution integrates the listed function needs and wants within the budget range for the project. Special consideration will be given to vendors that have created previous solutions for other Main Street communities and have demonstrated timely and effective troubleshooting and problem resolution.

Vendor Instructions

Contact Information:

For any questions or clarifications regarding the RFP, please contact HDR's Director of Marketing Emily Winter by email at emily.winter@harrisonburgva.gov or call **540-432-8936**.

Submission Method:

Please email vendor proposals to Emily Winter at emily.winter@harrisonburgva.gov with the subject line to include **"RFP Submission"**.