THE WOODLANDS TOWNSHIP

Website Development: Redesign, Content Management System, Hosting & Engagement Tools for the Official Township Website

Contract No. C2023-0273

The meeting will begin promptly at 10 a.m. CST. Please mute your microphone.

INTRODUCTIONS
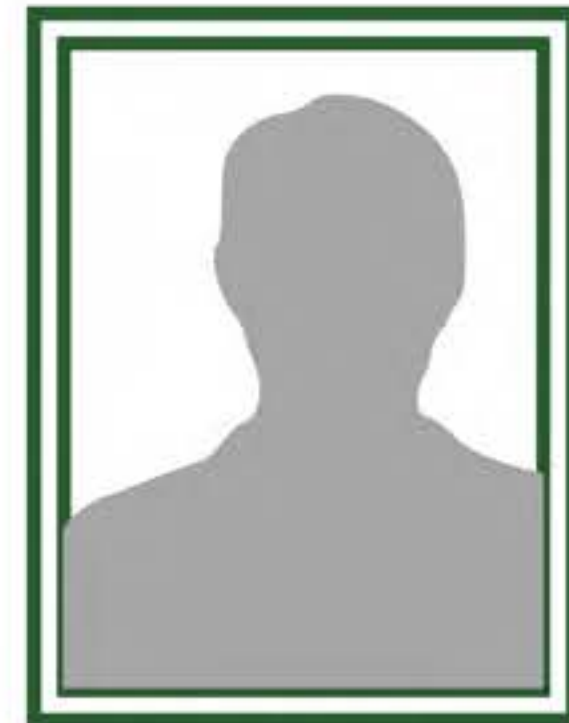
LeaAnn Petersen

Mary Connell

Kacie Gurney

Perry Frank

Tamara Bean

Barbara Ryan

NOW HIRING

Social Media

Video Producer

RECORD OF ATTENDEES

When your name is called, please state your:

- **First and Last Name**
- **Title**
- **Organization**

This meeting will be recorded and the attendees statements will serve as the record of attendance.

PURPOSE OF REQUEST

- The Woodlands Township is seeking qualified firms to submit proposals for the development and redesign of www.thewoodlandstownship-tx.gov.

- The redesign has been identified as a Strategic Priority by the Board of Directors with the intent to redesign every four to five years.

- The redesign must include a robust Content Management System (CMS) allowing staff to update the website easily.

- The redesign should be responsive and mobile-friendly. Recent analytics indicate 86% of website visitors access the site from a mobile device.

- The redesign should be easy to navigate, beautifully designed and functional for all users.

BACKGROUND

- The Township is an unincorporated community, with 120,000 residents in Montgomery and Harris counties, operating as a special purpose district.

- The Township serves as the primary service provider for the community.

- The Township is funded by property tax, sales/use tax, hotel occupancy tax and other programs.

- It has one of the lowest property tax rates in the state.
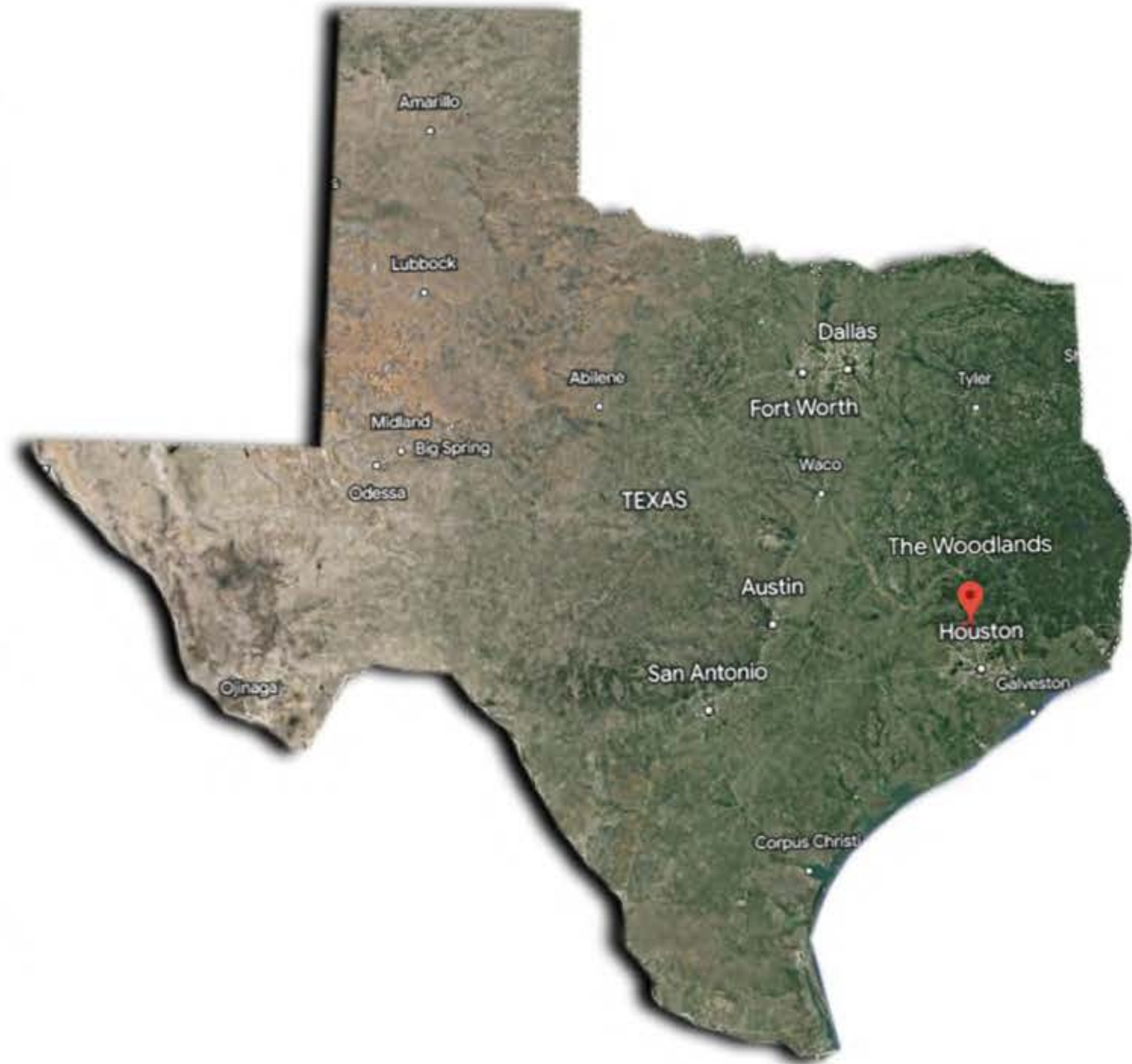
BACKGROUND

- The Township organization was formed in 2010 with the merger of the Community Associations of The Woodlands, and its entities with the Town Center Improvement District (TCID) of Montgomery County.

- The first design of www.thewoodlandstownship-tx.gov was launched in 2010.

- Since 2010, the website has undergone one website redesign.

- Both the original and the redesign were implemented by CivicPlus. Future redesigns were not negotiated into the 2016 contract.

- Additional engagement and online tools provided by CivicPlus include Monsido, ChatBot and ArchiveSocial.

- Additional 3rd-Party applications supplement and enhance the website.

PROJECT OBJECTIVES

- Replacement of the current Township website with a website that offers the latest in technology to government organizations.
- A website that utilizes current web-based and mobile technologies to engage with the community.
- A well-designed, easy to use website that provides a positive end user experience.
- Development of internal department/micro/subsites for the Fire, Parks, and Transportation departments.
- An intuitive system for content creators that are publishing to the website.
- Implementation of electronic workflow for website postings.
- Redesign of the information architecture and navigation of the Township's website.
- Replacement or upgrade of the existing website CMS software.

PROJECT OBJECTIVES

- Functionality with currently integrated programs.
- Easy integration with future programs, particularly those that allow for virtual services and engagement tools.
- Creating a brand-recognizable website using the Township's logo and branding guidelines.
- Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) compliance and accessibility consistent with federal, state, and local requirements.
- Capability of website translation.
- Security in compliance with local, state, and federal standards.
- Identify and provide web-based information management tools to comply with the Township's retention and access to public information requirements.
- Identify and provide web-based management tools to enhance website services for the community.

PROJECT SCHEDULE

Key Dates	Activity
Thursday, August 31, 2023	Distribute RFP.
Monday, September 18, 2023 at 10 a.m.	Mandatory Pre-Bid Meeting
Friday, September 22, 2023 by 4 p.m.	Deadline to submit written questions.
Friday, September 29, 2023 by 4 p.m.	Township to provide posted answers on website.
Friday, October 6, 2023 by 4 p.m.	Deadline to submit Proposals and all required forms.
November 1–2, 2023 – Times TBD	Shortlist selected firms to provide onsite or web-based demos.
Wednesday, November 8, 2023	Additional and final interview if needed
November 15 – December 31, 2023	Contract negotiation.
Thursday, January 18, 2024	Anticipated bid awarded to selected firm. Date subject to negotiation of contract terms and Board of Directors meeting schedule.

SCOPE OF WORK

Proposals should include development, configuration, start-up services, migration of existing content, training and ongoing technical and service support. The phasing for the project are as follows:

- **Discovery**
- **Design**
- **Development**
- **Content Migration**
- **Review & Testing**
- **Training**
- **Launch**
- **Support & Hosting**
- **Website Analytics**

DISCOVERY

- Meet with Township staff to identify and understand the Township's mission, vision and branding and how these criteria will impact the website.

- Conduct a website audit and review audit findings with Township's internal audit.

- Identify and analyze the effectiveness of online resources and 3rd party applications.

- Review historic website analytics and data.

- Develop a detailed project schedule.

DESIGN

- Create a mock-up design based on the Township's branding guidelines and collaboration with staff.
- Design internal micro/sub-sites for three internal departments (currently identified as Parks, Transportation and Fire). Ensure pricing per micro/sub-site is included in the proposal.
- Ensure mock-up designs include versions for mobile, tablet and desktop views.
- Design should include three revision cycles.
- Develop new and refined site information architecture to prioritize content, simplify discoverability, provide an optimal user interface.
- Develop a comprehensive Style Guide for the website design.
- Ensure new design complies with ADA requirements and the fundamentals of Universal Design to provide optimal accessibility to all users.

INSPIRATIONAL EXAMPLES

The Communications Team has provided the following examples for vendors to draw design and development inspiration from.

- Silverthorne, Colorado - silverthorne.org
- Anna, Texas - annatexas.gov
  - Parks Department Site
  - Fire Department Site
  - Police Department Site
- Township of Abington, Pennsylvania - abingtonpa.gov
- Miami, Flordia - miami.gov
- Syracuse, New York - syr.gov
- DuPage County, Illinois - dupagecounty.gov
- Cedar Park, Texas - cedarparktexas.gov
- Lufkin, Texas - cityoflufkin.com
- West Hartford, Connecticut - westhartfordct.gov

DEVELOPMENT

- Develop a fully operational, responsive and functional website framework (staging site) using a comprehensive CMS solution.

- CMS features should include:
  - Content Editor
  - Content Management
  - Navigation
  - Calendar Functionality
  - Forms
  - Security/Authorization
  - Additional Functionality - RSS, CSS, social media sharing, easy integration for 3rd party apps, internal search engine, ability to manage design features, content tagging.

DEVELOPMENT

While the development of the website is the primary objective, the Township does encourage vendors to provide additional features that will enhance website services. These services may include but are not limited to:

- Robust forms
- Chat bots
- Citizen request applications
- Accessibility testing
- Email and texting notification systems
- Online permitting
- Facility and park reservation system
- Recreation registration

These features should be priced separately in the proposal.

CONTENT MIGRATION

The development phase should result in a full staging site so that content can be easily migrated. During this phase:

- Migrate all content from www.thewoodlandstownship-tx.gov.

- Upload and add content provided for micro-sub-sites.

- Ensure migrated content is optimized for search engines and in compliance with ADA requirements.

- Create user roles, groups, permission and approval levels as outlined by staff.

REVIEW & TESTING

- Validate the integrity of the site to ensure that it is safe and secure.

- Ensure site themes and style sheets display correctly on ALL pages.

- Define testing objectives to include performance, compatibility testing, accessibility testing and security testing.

- Create testing scenarios for user groups to perform testing.

- Create user testing groups for residents, staff and community partners and organize and administer usability testing sessions.

- Collect feedback, analyze the results and provide testing report to staff.

- Implement changes based on the feedback of testing and analysis.

LAUNCH

- Develop a soft launch between one to four weeks prior to the official launch.

- Identify an official launch date.

- Launch on the agreed-upon launch date.

- Provide additional technical support during soft launch and after official launch.

SUPPORT & HOSTING

- Host and connect primary and micro/department/subsites to domain names. Work with the Township's IT Department for domain and DNS record management.
- Provide technical report outlining hosting and support features.
- Provide technical assistance with website-related technical issues, such as server errors, broken links, database problems, and other technical glitches.
- Regularly update the website software (CMS, plugins, themes) and implementing security measures to protect against vulnerabilities and hacking attempts.
- Create and maintain regular backups of the website's data to ensure quick recovery in case of data loss or system failure. Develop redundancy plans and identify where and how backups are conducted, stored, and scheduled.

SUPPORT & HOSTING

- Optimize the website's speed and performance to improve user experience and search engine rankings.
- Address and resolve any bugs or issues that may arise on the website.
- Manage and maintain web servers including hardware management, server updates, and security configurations.
- Ensure the website remains accessible to users with minimal downtime.
- Provide sufficient bandwidth and storage space to accommodate website traffic and data needs.
- Implement security measures to protect the website and data from cyber threats.

WEBSITE ANALYTICS

- Connect the website to Google Analytics 4 (GA4) to gather information on the following:
  - User behavior
  - Traffic sources
  - Audience insights
  - Content performances
  - Conversion tracking

- Include instructions on how staff would access and create analytic reports.

PROPOSAL INSTRUCTIONS

Proposals shall contain a thorough description and analysis as follows:

- Cover Letter/Letter of Introduction
- Executive Summary
- Lead Project Contact
- Project Team
- Firm Experience and Qualifications *(see Demonstration of Experience)*
- Budget Estimate *(break down pricing by phase and feature)*
- Project Schedule *(project to be completed between 9 to 12 months)*
- General Contract Requirements and Forms

**PROPOSALS MUST BE SUBMITTED VIA EMAIL BY
FRIDAY, OCTOBER 6, 2023 NO LATER THAN 4 P.M. (CST)**

EVALUATION OF PROPOSALS

Criteria	Points
Website CMS functionality and development capabilities.	25
Digital tools/applications and capabilities to to connect and sync with third-party applications.	20
Design and functionality of municipal organization website; references	20
Support and training	20
Costs and fees	10
Technical compliance with RFP requirements	5
TOTAL POINTS	**100**

The Communications team will serve as the committee to review proposals and select vendors for demonstrations. Committee will consult with other departments as needed.

VENDOR DEMONSTATIONS

- Up to four (4) vendors will be selected to provide a full demonstration of their products and services.

- Demos will be conducted November 1-2. Times to be provided to selected vendors.

- Vendors should be able to demo all products and solutions outlined within their proposal.

RIGHT TO REJECT

The Woodlands Township expressly reserves the right to: (1) reject any and all proposals, in whole or in part, received in response to this RFP; (2) accept any proposal(s) that it determines shall best meet the Township's goals, objectives, and standards, regardless of whether or not said bid/proposal is the lowest priced option; (3) waive any non-material defect, informality, or irregularity in any proposal or proposal procedure; and/or (4) negotiate separately the terms and conditions of all or any part of the proposals as determined to be in The Woodlands Township's best interest and at its sole discretion.

NOTIFICATION OF BID

Upon conclusion of final negotiations with the successful candidate, all candidates submitting proposals in response to this RFP will be informed of the name of the successful candidate. At this time, the bid is anticipated to be awarded on Thursday, January 18, 2024.

QUESTIONS

We will now take questions. To ask a question, please type it into the Chat feature. When your question is answered, you may unmute your microphone to discuss your question further.

Additional questions not asked during this meeting must be submitted via email by Friday, September 22, 2023, by 4 p.m. (CST).

Answers to emailed questions will be posted online at www.thewoodlandstownship-tx.gov/bids by 4 p.m. on Friday, September 29, 2023.