

Southeastern Regional Planning and Economic Development District (“SRPEDD”)

Questions & Answers

For

TRN #2025-01

Website Accessibility & Transportation Department Updates



SRPEDD

Southeastern **Regional Planning**
& **Economic Development** District

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Vendor Qualifications

- 1. Can our commercial project experience be considered as relevant domain expertise for the website development/redevelopment requirement?**

A: Experience relevant to public/government website development/redevelopment is preferred but not required.

- 2. Is there an incumbent web design & development contractor? Are there any incumbent vendors, previous RFPs, or documentation available that could help inform our understanding of the current website infrastructure and performance?**

A: We are not currently under contract with a web design company.

- 3. Is there a preference for local or in-state vendors? (Or will out-of-state vendors be equally considered?)**

A: The proposals will be evaluated based on the matrix provided in the RFP, which does not allow for rating based on location. A license to do business within Massachusetts is a requirement as outlined in the RFP.

- 4. We understand that a license to do business within Massachusetts is a requirement of this project. Does that license need to be secured prior to proposal (for eligibility), or just prior to the award of a contract, if selected?**

A: The vendors need to be registered by the time of the award.

- 5. Can you please share what SRPEDD considers to be the key qualities they are looking for in a website development partner?**

A: We are looking for a vendor with relevant experience, that is responsive and provides regular communication. Expertise with WordPress is also preferred.

- 6. Is it possible to split the RFP to have an accessibility vendor and a web developer vendor that will then work together? This can often provide the best solution so that each vendor has the appropriate credentials.**

A: We would consider the use of a subcontractor, but our preference would be for one vendor.

- 7. In addition to what has been outlined in the RFP, are there any operational bottlenecks or stakeholder interaction challenges/opportunities for improvement that we should consider in our proposed solution?**

A: The main challenges are as outlined in the RFP.

Remote Work

- 8. Is offshore or fully remote development permitted for all phases of the project?**

A: Fully remote development is permitted for all phases of the project; however, our website security does not allow for offshore access.

- 9. Can all project activities—including stakeholder interviews, training, and presentations—be conducted virtually?**

A: Virtual activities are preferred.

Budget, Evaluation, and Contracting

- 10. Is there an estimated project budget?**

A: To ensure competitive proposals, each proposal will be based on its own merits considering both price and nonprice aspects to obtain the most advantageous offer. As outlined in the RFP, all other criteria will be assessed before the budget.

- 11. Does SRPEDD prefer a fixed-price engagement model, or a time & materials (T&M) model tied to milestones?**

A: We don't have a preference as long as the model is logical, meets required deadlines and includes all deliverables.

- 12. Can you provide clarity on how the cost will be weighted relative to technical expertise and experience during evaluation?**

A: As outlined in the matrix provided in the RFP, cost will be evaluated last. The primary focus of the evaluations will be on technical expertise and experience.

- 13. Should proposals include future scalability recommendations beyond the Transportation pages (e.g., potential site-wide redesign), or should focus remain only on the specified scope?**

A: This proposal should focus on the Transportation pages.

14. Without having done a comprehensive assessment of the website, how would you propose we present the pricing for the “Implementation of improvements?” At this time, that estimate would likely be speculative, and a further refinement could be done at the completion of the assessment.

A: It is expected that estimates should be based on previous experience with similar websites, but there could be opportunity for further refinement if needed.

15. Section 5.1, subitem 3: Does the following: “estimated cost of each work element,” refer to the individual deliverables in Section 3.3?

A: Yes.

16. Section 5.1, subitem 2: “Consultants should identify key individuals to be assigned to this project...” Can you clarify which roles at a minimum SRPEDD considers to be “key” for this project?

A: Project management, main points of contact and any technical experts for meeting accessibility standards.

17. Is this contract intended to be awarded to a single vendor or to multiple vendors?

A: It is preferable to have a Single Vendor.

18. Are subcontractors permitted, and if so, are there DBE/SDO participation targets vendors should be aware of?

A: Subcontractors are not disallowed but we would prefer to work directly with the contractor. SDBE/SDO information is provided in Attachment E of the RFP.

19. Will ongoing post-launch maintenance and support be part of the awarded contract, or will it be procured separately?

A: Post-launch maintenance and support is not intended to be part of the awarded contract and if needed would be procured separately.

20. Are there any formatting restrictions in either the Technical or Cost Proposals?

A: No.

21. Should the Cover Letter be submitted as part of the Technical Proposal?

A: Yes.

22. Please confirm that we should exclude price information from the Scope of Work section of the Technical Proposal.

A: Yes, all price information should be in a separate file labeled [Proposer Name] – Price Response to Request for Proposal TRN #2025-01.

23. Can respondents combine the References and Website References sections into a single section?

A: Yes, as long as information for both are provided.

24. Should direct costs such as hosting, licenses, plugins, and subscriptions be included in the cost proposal?

A: SRPEDD is planning to keep our existing hosting, all other direct costs should be included in the cost proposal to the extent practicable.

25. Should Attachments A through G of the RFP be included in the Technical Proposal or the Cost Proposal?

A: Attachments A through G should be included in the Technical Proposal.

26. The proposal selection process, does SRPEDD follow a lowest-cost or best-value approach?

A: An RFP process is a “Best-Value” approach.

27. Although it’s initial stated in the RFP that SRPEDD is seeking an update to an existing website, we notice website “redesign” and “development” is mentioned through the RFP, coupled with other key requests that all suggest a more comprehensive effort is involved. To meet the needs requested, can we offer a website redesign and development proposal?

A: As we are looking to only update one section of the website, we are seeking an update and the development of modules /templates for this section only, not a redesign of the agency website.

Timeline

28. Can you please give us an extension of 1-2 weeks to submit our proposal?

A: Our timeline is tight based on availability of funding and the need to meet the accessibility deadline outlined in the RFP. At this time, we will not consider an extension.

29. What is the expected process and timeline for the review and approval of deliverables such as accessibility reports, design mockups, and implementation plans?

A: SRPEDD expects to review and approve deliverables in a timely manner. Exact review timelines can be negotiated at the time of contract.

30. Do you have any timeline in mind or deadline we need to meet?

A: All timelines and deadlines are outlined in the RFP.

Hosting and Servers

31. Should the vendor propose a new hosting plan, or will SRPEDD continue with its current provider?

A: SRPEDD will be continuing with its current provider.

32. Is SRPEDD open to a complete redesign on a new server, or are they strictly looking to update the existing website?

A: SRPEDD is strictly looked to update the existing website.

33. Are there existing and separate staging and production hosting environments? If existing, what level of access will the awardee be expected to obtain? Will there be a need for any hosting migrations, expansion, or support from the awardee?

A: We do have a staging and production hosting environments that can be available to the awarded vendor. Once the contract is awarded, we will provide access to the vendor. SRPEDD intends to keep our existing hosting, so there will be no need for hosting migration or expansion.

Technology and Development

34. Are there any restrictions or preferences beyond the listed programming languages (HTML, CSS, JavaScript, Python, Ruby) that vendors should consider?

A: None as long as it doesn't interfere with existing coding.

35. Could you please confirm the CMS platform and version currently powering your website? Also, if applicable, can you please share any issues or opportunities for improvement associated with the current CMS/infrastructure?

A: We are using the latest version of WordPress and host with WP Engine. We have no issues with current infrastructure or technical stacks.

36. Will SRPEDD provide administrator or staging access to the CMS, including any password-protected areas, for audit and remediation purposes?

A: Once the contract is awarded, we will provide access to the vendor.

37. Are you open to adjusting the authoring UI to potentially be more restrictive, if it helps with ensuring accessibility? (i.e. removal of the "no code" (Beaver Builder) page builder)

A: We would like to keep the current page builder, as we have non-technical staff update the web on a regular basis and have existing templates that use Beaver Builder.

38. Can you provide a list of the current plug-ins in use on the site?

A: This is a list of the current plug-ins we are using on our site currently: Admin Columns Pro, Admin Menu Tree Page View, Advanced Post Types Order, Assistant, Beehive Pro, Branda Pro, Defender Pro, Easy Social Icons, Enable Media Replace, Gravity Forms, Gravity Forms Constant Contact Add-On, GTranslate, Image Map Pro, Multiple Themes, Page Builder, Page Builder - Themer Add-On, Rank Math SEO, Real Media Library, Redirection, Relevanssi, Simple History, Smush Pro, The Events Calendar, The Events Calendar Pro, The Events Calendar: Filter Bar, Toolset Maps, Toolset Types, Toolset Views, User Role Editor, WP Accessibility, WP Engine Smart Plugin Manager, WP Offload Media, WP Rocket, Yoast Duplicate Post.

39. Please share any additional information about the technology currently in use (WordPress, multisite, etc.)

A: WordPress – Plugins listed in question #38

40. For the Google Analytics (GA4) Integration, does SRPEDD leverage Google Tag Manager as well?

A: No.

41. What platforms make up your current martech stack? How integrated is your current CRM and marketing automation stack (e.g., HubSpot, Salesforce, Pardot)?

A: We are a public non-profit regional planning agency. We do not market our services we primarily focus on supporting our communities and public outreach using constant contact and social media platforms.

42. What analytics platforms do you currently use? (Looker, Adobe Analytics, Hotjar, etc.)

A: Google Analytics.

43. What is the technology stack used for the current website? Please describe the front-end and back-end technical technologies.

A: We are using WordPress, HTML and some Java, the plug-ins listed in question #38, and AWS for offsite document hosting.

44. The proposal asks for an updated design of the main landing page and a cohesive design across 35 pages. Are you asking for improvements utilizing the same technology stack, or would you allow the use of a different technical stack?

A: As we are looking to only update one section of the website, we are seeking an update only. We will maintain the current technology stack as this is an update to one section of an agency website. WCAG 2.1 AA compliance is for the entire srpedd.org website.

Existing Site and Documentation

45. Will SRPEDD provide access to current website content, analytics, and user feedback to guide redesign and migration efforts?

A: Yes, once the contract is awarded.

46. Who is currently responsible for maintaining the SRPEDD website, and are incumbents participating in this procurement process?

A: SRPEDD Staff and in-house IT Manager.

47. Do you have internal IT stakeholders that we would need to coordinate with?

A: We have an internal IT manager who is outlined as a project manager in the RFP.

48. For the purposes of the initial ADA Accessibility Assessment, will a copy of the website and supporting files be made available so that the assessment can be performed in our development environment? Our assessments leverage a number of tools to capture any violations, however, some tools that we leverage for this service are licensed products and are only able to be used in the environment the license covers.

A: Yes, Once the contract is awarded, we will work with the vendor to give the needed file access to the development and staging areas of our website, so the assessment can be performed.

49. How many pages from srpedd.org would you consider to be a representative sampling?

A: Our website has 5 department sections plus administrative pages, sampling 5 pages from each section would likely be representative.

50. How many support tickets or content/feature requests do you typically make per month per site?

A: Support is handled in-house through the IT dept. We have had 2 support cases with our hosting company in 18 months.

51. When was the current version of the website created?

A: 2020.

52. Can you please share what are considered the top attributes of the current website?

A: We are asking for an update for a section of the existing website. We like the current design but would like to provide better navigation for transportation department

pages and to apply a standard operating procedure across multiple pages so that they are consistent.

53. Are the itinerary boards on the webpages iframes, a widget and update automatically?

A: Our website is a combination of design templates, some custom coding, and some plugins/widgets. Most updates run automatically.

Design Guidance

54. Could you please clarify whether the requirement is for the complete design and development of a brand-new website from scratch, or for enhancing the existing website with a new design and content migration?

A: The requirement is for enhancing the existing transportation section of the website with a new design and content migration. The goal is to have a cohesive look with the current website design but with more consistency across transportation pages. The current design uses templates, but over time the appearance has become inconsistent and the look is no longer cohesive.

55. The RFP references approximately 35 pages requiring updates. Can you clarify whether these are existing pages needing redesign only, or if new content creation is expected?

A: These are existing pages requiring redesign only. Content creation is not expected. If update to content is needed, SRPEDD staff will provide the content.

56. Is there a current brand guide or style guide that will be used as the basis for the new designs? Including things such as logo usage, typography, color palettes, and design components?

A: Yes, we have both a brand guide and an SOP for pages that will be shared once a vendor is selected.

57. Regarding the main landing page and subpage templates, are there specific layout constraints, content blocks, or accessibility-focused features that must be included in the templates?

A: Any development needs to maintain continuity with our existing main site, but may have some individuality with the aim of providing unique identity. An SOP identifying specific features required on all pages will be provided at the time of the award. All features must meet accessibility requirements as outlined.

58. Will the awardee be responsible for visual assets such as photography and video?

A: Visual Assets will be provided by SRPEDD.

59. Are there any brand, messaging, or positioning changes planned in the next 12 months?

A: There are none planned.

60. What are 3 websites you would like to use as reference for web design you like?

A: The websites for reference are the [SRPEDD](#) website. We are not looking for a complete website redesign, we are looking for an update of approximately 35 pages under the transportation department to be cohesive with the existing design and possibly some features that would signify a unique identity under the umbrella of the agency.

Transportation Section

61. Do the updated Transportation Department pages need to strictly follow the current SRPEDD brand guidelines, or can vendors propose refinements to enhance accessibility and usability?

A: We are trying to maintain the existing brand guidelines as much as possible but would be open to refinements based on improved accessibility or small changes that allow for a unique identity under the umbrella of the agency.

62. Should the redesigned Transportation section establish a distinct identity within SRPEDD's branding while remaining fully responsive across devices (desktop, tablet, and mobile)?

A: Yes, for example, SRPEDD's [Economic Development](#) section has a unique identity while maintaining SRPEDD branding and remains fully responsive across devices. Organization and navigation is a key component of Phase II, and has higher priority over the distinct identity.

63. Are there any known user experience challenges or feedback from stakeholders that the consultant should address while designing the updated Transportation pages?

A: Navigation of transportation related content is a known user experience challenge that we have received feedback on from stakeholders and should be addressed by the consultant, as outlined in the RFP.

64. For the 35 Transportation pages, should the consultant also address SEO considerations such as redirects, metadata, and alt tags as part of migration?

A: Yes.

65. Can you clarify the issues with the current Transportation Department section of the website?

A: The current issues with the Transportation Department section of the website are navigation of subpages and lack of standardization across pages. The non-standardization has led to inconsistent information being provided and a departure from the original design and cohesiveness of the overall website.

Content Development

66. Will the consultant be responsible for content migration, formatting, and quality assurance, or only for developing templates and functionality?

A: The consultant will be responsible for a portion of content migration, formatting and quality assurance. Any new content would be created by staff.

67. Is a formal content inventory and ROT (redundant, outdated, trivial) analysis expected from the consultant, or will this be managed by SRPEDD staff?

A: This is expected to be handled by SRPEDD staff, but we are open to input and discovery of ROTs during the update process.

68. Will the awardee be expected to use a plugin or similar integration for automatic multi-language translation, or will translations need to be made manually? What languages?

A: We currently use GTranslate for translations but are open to consultant recommendations.

69. What's the current content governance model (roles, approval workflow, etc.)?

A: There are admin level roles and assigned editing privileges per departments.

70. The current site contains several PDF files. Do you have a count of the total files or pages present in the PDFs? Will these PDFs be included in the updated site? How often are additional PDFs created? Have you performed accessibility audits on the existing PDFs?

A: We do not have a count of the total files or pages present in the PDFs. Many of the PDFs will be included in the updated site. Some documents do meet accessibility standards based on existing federal requirements, but the majority of documents likely do not meet standards. Identification of documents that do not meet standards is expected as part of the proposal, remediation of the files is not. We would be open to add on options for document accessibility. Consideration could also be given to removing older files or migrating content to non-PDF format moving forward.

71. Are there any other media / document types besides PDFs, for example videos, and can you provide some example URLs?

A: Yes. Mostly we link to videos or embed code from other media:

- [Demographic dashboard \(embedded from ESRI\)](#)
- [Video embedded under latest news - Route 28 Corridor Study - SRPEDD](#)

72. How do you segment your audience across different business lines? Are there any particular audiences you wish to grow as part of this project?

A: We are a public agency, and our overall goal is to make the information provided on our website easier to access by the general public. We do not currently segment our website.

73. What are your top business goals over the next 12–24 months?

A: We are a public agency, we do not have business goals. Our overall goal with the website is to make our public information easier to access by the public.

74. What digital channels do you currently run paid media on?

A: Occasionally we run paid media on social media sites such as Facebook.

Accessibility and Compliance

75. Beyond the approximately 35 Transportation Department pages, are there additional sections, subdomains, or non-HTML content (e.g., PDFs, videos, GIS maps) that should be included within the scope of WCAG 2.1 AA compliance?

A: WCAG 2.1 AA compliance is for the entire srpedd.org website. There are no sub-domains. We expect the SRPEDD website to be fully WCAG 2.1 AA compliant. We expect to have non-HTML content identified by the consultant. Identification of documents that do not meet standards is expected as part of the proposal, remediation of the files is not. We would be open to add on options for document accessibility. Consideration could also be given to removing older files or migrating content to non-PDF format moving forward.

76. For ADA Section 508 and Title VI compliance, does SRPEDD already use a preferred translation tool for multilingual support, or should we recommend one?

A: We currently use GTranslate for translations but are open to consultant recommendations.

77. For WCAG 2.1 AA compliance, does SRPEDD require formal third-party certification or internal testing documentation as sufficient proof? Are there specific accessibility testing tools, methodologies, or reporting formats you prefer for the compliance assessment and validation process?

A: Internal Testing documentation with sufficient proof.

78. Regarding Title VI translation requirements, could you clarify which specific languages are considered “relevant” for compliance in the region?

A: The six Safe Harbor languages spoken by Limited English Proficient populations in the SRPEDD region include Portuguese or Portuguese Creole, Spanish or Spanish Creole, French (Haitian) Creole, Traditional and Modern Chinese, and Mon Khmer Cambodian. These are the required languages; however, services that provide more options for translation are encouraged.

79. Will SRPEDD provide existing accessibility audit reports (if any), or is the awarded vendor expected to begin with a full assessment from scratch?

A: The awarded vendor is expected to begin with a full assessment from scratch.

80. Are there performance benchmarks or accessibility score thresholds that must be met for compliance to be considered successful?

A: We do not have performance benchmarks or accessibility score thresholds, but internal testing documentation with sufficient proof that the site would pass a check on WCAG 2.1 Level AA standards. must be provided by the consultant.

81. Is SRPEDD expecting a change order as part of the project once the remediation estimate is produced?

A: No.

82. Are there any third-party modules used on the website, such as for calendars, dates, maps, etc, which were not yet tested for WCAG compliance? Is it possible that these components will need to be updated or redesigned?

A: The website has not been tested for compliance.

Integrations

83. With respect to integrations, can you confirm whether Google Analytics, Constant Contact, events calendar, and GIS maps are standard plugins/modules, or if any of them are custom implementations?

A: They are standard plugins/modules.

84. The RFP mentions integrating GIS maps and overlays — does SRPEDD have preferred GIS tools/platforms to be embedded, or is vendor recommendation expected?

A: We use ESRI products for our mapping and embed the maps to our website through the provided embed codes.

85. For Google Analytics and Constant Contact integration, will SRPEDD provide access credentials, or should vendors include setup in their proposals?

A: We will provide the needed credentials to the selected vendor upon award.

Testing and Training

86. Will SRPEDD require user testing with community stakeholders for the Transportation section prior to approval of design updates?

A: It is not required but we would be open to that option if time and contract allows.

87. Will SRPEDD provide accessibility testing with users (e.g., individuals with disabilities) for usability feedback, or should the consultant coordinate this?

A: SRPEDD will not be providing accessibility testing with users.

88. Could you clarify whether the vendor is expected to provide ongoing content support post-launch, or only training for SRPEDD staff?

A: The vendor is expected to provide support launching the new pages, staff training and guidance. Once staff is trained, it is not expected that the vendor will provide ongoing support post-launch.

89. For staff training, how many staff members should the vendor plan to train, and will SRPEDD prefer virtual, in-person, or hybrid sessions?

A: We would have all staff doing webwork at the training. Virtual meeting is fine for training sessions.

90. How many SRPEDD staff members are expected to be trained on WCAG compliance and the use of new templates? Will SRPEDD prefer virtual, in-person, or hybrid sessions?

A: We are expecting all staff that edit the website to be trained on WCAG compliance. The use of new transportation specific templates will be limited to transportation specific staff members. Trainings are expected to be in a virtual format, with recording for future purposes.

91. Are there specific training topics that SRPEDD is interested in?

A: As outlined in the RFP, the training would be specific to maintaining WCAG 2.1 Level AA compliance and use of new templates/plugin-ins.

92. Which stakeholders or departments will influence or approve final decisions (e.g., IT, compliance, legal)?

A: The Project Managers outlined in the RFP will influence or approve final decisions.

Deliverables

93. Regarding deliverables, please confirm which file formats are required for designs, reports, and supporting documents, and whether SRPEDD expects full transfer of intellectual property rights upon project completion.

A: The deliverables are Wordpress ready-to-go pages, subpages, templates, modules and plug-ins. Supporting documentation should be in either Microsoft Word or PDF. SRPEDD expects full transfer of intellectual property rights upon project completion.

94. Could SRPEDD clarify expectations regarding documentation deliverables — is a full technical manual required, or will shorter guides and SOPs suffice?

A: Shorter guides and SOPs would suffice if they provided enough information to effectively provide instructions on maintaining accessibility and using deliverables moving forward.