

ADDENDUM 2

Whistler.ca website redesign

RFP Number A101-0590-01-001

Issued February 12, 2024

Question 1

The terms UI and UX are sometimes used interchangeably.

To clarify, the "UX Consultant" tasked with overseeing the research and collecting community feedback is already affiliated with the RMOW and is not the UI Designer that the RFP seeks to employ.

The responsibility of the UI designer will be to work alongside the UX consultant, previously identified as the Accessibility Consultant, to create the user interface designs based on the directions provided by the UX consultant. Have I understood this correctly?

Answer

We have a user experience consultant for the project and have also identified an organization to supply accessibility consultancy. The user experience consultant is starting work conducting user research. The RFP is searching for a user interface designer to create designs based on the results of this user feedback. These user interface designs will also consider accessibility requirements.

Question 2

In section 1.0 under "RFP purpose" the RFP states:

"The planned process will require a **developer** and **user interface designer** to work with a **user experience consultant**, **accessibility consultant** and the **RMOW Communications team**. This **website redesign team** plan to conduct stakeholder interviews to identify current user experience issues, research into improving the user experience, content planning and organization during the information architecture design process. Then we plan to wireframe the templates and iteratively test the prototypes with users to improve the design based on feedback."

We have bolded the various roles.

Are we correct in assuming that the user experience consultant and accessibility consultant are both consultants that have been (or will be) hired separately of this RFP? If so, have they already been hired?

Are the user experience consultant and accessibility consultant from one company, or separate individuals/companies?

Answer

Yes, the user experience consultant and accessibility consultant roles are being hired separately from the RFP.

The user experience consultant and accessibility consultant are separate people from separate organizations. We are looking at a couple of different accessibility solutions at present, to ascertain the strongest path to an AA Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) rating.

Question 3

Is the user experience consultant also referred to as a user experience designer in Section 1.0 in the second bullet under “User interface design”? (Are those the same roles or different roles?)

Answer

Apologies. This is our error. Yes, the user experience consultant is what is meant in the second bullet point. It is pasted in the list below:

User interface design

- Working with the user experience consultant, developer and Communications Team, create the design for the new whistler.ca
- Following guidance from user experience consultant ~~designer~~, the RMOW brand and WCAG accessibility standards, creates initial interface design
- Evolution of interface design, following the design validation phase and accessibility testing is completed
- Preparation of development brief

Question 4

In section 1.0 under “Planned steps of website front-end redesign” the project has the following steps that we have added numbers to:

1. Content inventory by Communications team
2. UX consultant leads stakeholder interviews, resident interviews to research current website pain points

3. UX consultant works on wireframing
4. Content re-writing by Communications team
5. Website template design, wireframing, key page layout
6. UX consultant works on information architecture
7. Usability testing on wireframes and information architecture
8. User interface designer does interface design
9. Design validation phase and accessibility testing by accessibility consultant
10. Evolution of the interface design
11. User interface designer prepares development brief
12. Website development
13. Developer testing, final changes, followed by launch
14. Developer training of Communication team
15. Developer website maintenance following launch

Are we correct that:

- the selected UI Designer proponent from this RFP would be involved in steps 7, 9, and 10?
- the selected Developer proponent from this RFP would be involved in steps 11-13?
- The selected Website Maintenance proponent from this RFP would be involved in step 14 only?
- Steps 1-6 are handled by the UX consultant, accessibility consultant, and the RMOW Communications team? (No involvement from proponents selected through this RFP.)

Answer

The user experience consultant will be leading the research into how the public experiences whistler.ca. So yes, the user interface designer would be included on steps, 7 and 9, but would mostly be focused on steps 8, 10, and 11.

Yes, the selected Developer would be involved in steps 11 to 14.

The selected Website Maintenance Proponent would be included on steps 14 and 15.

Steps 1 to 4 and step 6 would be handled by the UX consultant, accessibility consultant and RMOW Communications team. Step 5 could benefit from developer and UI designer support. The successful RFP Proponents would be involved in regular check-in meetings where this would be finalized.

Question 5

If our assumptions are correct in question #2, what is the expected start date of Step 7 and 11, if the RMOW is desiring a website launch in December, 2024? The Evaluation criteria lists “confirm the feasibility of a December 2024 site launch” and asks for a “A detailed GANTT... with completion dates” so having guidelines of when the project could start is essential.

Answer

When we roughly mapped the timeline, we estimated usability testing would happen around July.

We estimated the user interface designer would prepare development brief late summer, around August.

Question 6

For Section 7, Appendix B:

Are all of the bullet points under “Summary of front-end redesign process” meant as scope for the developer?

The first bullet point includes “create and implement the new design” which would overlap with the role of the UI designer.

Are all of the bullet points under “Summary of user interface design process” meant as scope for the UI designer?

Answer

Yes, the Summary of front-end redesign process are scope for the developer. The developer would be more involved in implementing the new design than creating it.

Yes, the Summary of user interface design process section is the scope for the user interface designer.

Question 7

Is there a rationale available for why the RMOW is separating the projects between 3-5 different proponents? (UX Consultant, UI consultant, plus one to three proponents for UI design, website front-end development, and ongoing website maintenance.)

Are you currently, or have you in the past experienced issues having one organization manage the complete project that you are hoping to avoid?

Answer

We are dividing the project into user experience consultant, accessibility consultant, and then one to three Proponents for user interface design, website front-end development and ongoing website maintenance. We had wanted to have the choice to select individuals with a high level of expertise in each field.

We are very open to having one organization manage the three elements of the RFP.

Question 8

Can you please provide us a list of the existing WordPress plugins, along with any feedback (if available) on your satisfaction with each? Are there any that have proved to be problematic or not ideal? (In particular if there is feedback on how workflows and permissions are managed.)

Answer

We're happy to email a confidential list of our existing WordPress plugins. We will email it directly to potential proponents upon request.

Question 9

In Section 5.0 Evaluation one of the criteria under "Vendor fit" is "Team size". In your assessment what is considered a desirable or undesirable team size? (How will proponents be ranked based on their size?)

Answer

Team size is one component. The key considerations are implementation experience, service and support track record—and references. This is connected to the support availability and service level, which is important to keeping the project moving forward.

Question 10

Is there information available on why the RMOW is looking at redesigning the website at this time? Have problems been identified with the previous process, the design, hosting, accessibility, or other aspects of the website? Or is it simply to stay modern?

Answer

We recently transitioned our content to a new CMS; however, the content itself is unwieldy for many users and we want to improve the accessibility following WCAG standards. The primary motivation is to balance the needs of the municipality and the needs of the user to deliver better quality of service.

Question 11

Are you able to disclose the budget or budget range for this project?

Answer

The budget is \$100,735, as laid out in our municipal budget project and listed in our 2024 projects list [here](#), page 9. This is the total budget for the entire project and includes a contingency fund.

Question 12

Who are the main stakeholders in this project, and what are their roles?

Answer

Whistler.ca is the Resort Municipality of Whistler's primary communications tool. It is an organizational and Council priority to communicate effectively with Whistler's community and visitors to the region. In addition to the importance of routine communications, the website is important for regional safety, since it would be used during local emergencies.

A user-centred website is part of effective community engagement, which is a [Council strategic priority](#).

In summary, the main stakeholders are RMOW leadership and departments, Council, the Whistler community and visitors to Whistler.

Question 13

What motivated you to migrate from Drupal to WordPress?

Answer

We were using Drupal 7, which had an end of life within the year. We moved to WordPress, due to its widespread use. It has a strong and proven track record.

Question 14

Are there any specific integrations (CRM, ERP, third-party services) that need to be implemented?

Answer

These are covered in the Third-party integrations section of [Appendix B, starting on page 21](#).

Question 15

Are we right to assume that the backend migration from Drupal to WordPress is complete, thus this RFP is for UX/UI design, front-end development, and ongoing maintenance and improvement only? Do you foresee any backend development required for this project?

Answer

Yes. We are not anticipating significant backend development, but we are leaving this door open, pending the findings of our wireframe work and community engagement. Our goal is to be more user-friendly.

Question 16

There are three distinct work streams identified in Appendix D. Elsewhere, in Section 1.0, SEO improvements are also mentioned. Are we right to assume that SEO improvements are expected to cross all three streams i.e. SEO should inform UX, front-end development technologies and techniques, and ongoing improvement including technical and non-technical (content related) SEO tactics? Or will any of this be handled in-house?

Answer

Yes, consideration of SEO should inform all streams. SEO is also supported in-house.

Question 17

In Section 1.0 the RFP mentions “developer training.” Are we right to think that this is related to “site administration” training? We pride ourselves on detailed technical documentation but only in rare instances do we provide training related to it (at a developer level).

Answer

“Developer training of Communication team” means that the developer trains the RMOW Communications team on how to administer whistler.ca to ensure the Communications team can manage routine content updates following the website redesign.

Question 18

Are there websites you consider benchmarks for the look and functionality you aspire to?

Answer

There isn't one website we consider to have an ideal look and functionality.

We admire the content flexibility of the gov.uk website and their simpler, clearer, faster philosophy; however, we are targeting a more visual-centric look, aligned to Whistler's beautiful and inspiring outdoor brand. It should form a robust foundation for our future and, most critically, provide a great user experience for many years to come.

For certain functions, we would be looking at other local government examples for industry best practices, such as the sharing of building information. In other areas, like emergency management, we want to effectively balance the needs of our globally visible brand and the urgency of the moment.

Question 19

What is the process for reviewing and approving work at various stages?

Answer

The Communications Team will project manage, reviewing and approving work at appropriate intervals, on timelines discussed with the redesign team. There will be regular project check-ins to keep track of progress and timelines.

Question 20

What level of investment has been set aside for this initiative?

Answer

Please see the answer to question 11.

Question 21

What are the quantifiable measures of success for this project?

Answer

The success measures are:

- improved user feedback on the website user experience
- analytics proving core content is consistently consumed
- WCAG rating of AA for most pages
- stronger search engine performance

Finally, the goal is redesign completion by the end of 2024.

Question 22

Are we right to assume standard 30-day payment terms?

Answer

Yes, this is typical in our contracts, but we are open to discuss other common payment terms.

Question 23

Appendix B mentions 24/7 support. As standard, we provide 24/7 access to a Support Portal to log Support issues. In addition, we offer Extended Hours Support packages but not 24-hour support. We can provide information on both packages but more clarity on what is expected of 24/7 support would help us to tailor our response to your specific needs. For example, we see that peak traffic hours are listed as 4am to 10pm. Are you looking for total coverage within this window?

Answer

We want whistler.ca to be reliably available to the public. Whistler.ca would be the RMOW's key communication tool in an emergency or disaster.

We are looking for timely responses, within a few hours, during regular working hours: Monday to Friday 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. in our time zone. We are also looking for support with urgent requests outside of working hours. For example, if the website crashes because of a programming glitch, we would want someone available urgently.

Due to the highly visible nature of our brand, we also require an emergency backup measure in case our community experiences a largescale emergency. We are very conscious the Whistler brand attracts attention around the world and a major event, such as a wildfire evacuation, might send millions to the website with little notice. We need a route to access help with bandwidth and problems in these cases. The municipal website is the number one communication tool we have for catastrophic emergencies. It is critical that we keep this line functional.

Of note, we do have a basic backup website for whistler.ca.

Question 24

Is the User Experience consultant someone already hired, or can we provide the user experience consultant if we have the expertise?

Answer

We have hired a user experience consultant.

Question 25

Do you have a preferred project start date?

Answer

We anticipate being ready for website template design, key page layout, as well as some early development work, in June. Then have the user interface designer begin the preliminary interface design work in July.

Question 26

Will you need any support with content writing? Has a content strategy been developed as part of the project, or should that be considered?

Answer

We have an in-house content writer; however, submissions with contract writing support or guidance would be looked at favorably.

Question 27

Can you clarify who is working on the steps in "Planned steps of website front-end redesign" and what is included in this project? For example, will the UX consultant be creating the IA separately and providing it to us or working with us to create the IA together?

Answer

Planned steps of website front-end redesign

- Communications team: Content inventory by Communications team
- UX consultant: UX consultant leads stakeholder interviews, resident interviews to research current website pain points
- UX consultant: UX consultant works on wireframing
- Communications team: Content re-writing by Communications team
- UX consultant: Website template design, wireframing, key page layout
- UX consultant: UX consultant works on information architecture
- UX consultant: Usability testing on wireframes and information architecture
- User interface designer: User interface designer does interface design
- Accessibility consultant: Design validation phase and accessibility testing by accessibility consultant

- UX consultant and user interface designer: Evolution of the interface design
- User interface designer: User interface designer prepares development brief
- Developer: Website development
- Developer: Developer testing, final changes, followed by launch
- Developer: Developer trains Communication team on how to manage routine website updates
- Developer on maintenance contract: Developer website maintenance following launch

Question 28

The RFP references a user experience consultant. Has that role been filled, or is there an option for your chosen vendor to provide user experience consulting services?

Answer

The role has been filled.

Question 29

What is the estimated funding / budget for the project?

Answer

See question 11.

Question 30

Have you conducted any user research?

Answer

The user experience consultant is beginning user research soon. The goal is a website designed to meet user needs, and informed by user research.

Question 31

How much time are you hoping the vendor will spend onsite?

Answer

The work detailed in the RFP should all be possible remotely. Meetings and check-ins will be online.

Question 32

What early stages of the project have begun already as indicated in the RFP?

Answer

The Communications team is working on the content inventory. And the user experience consultant is starting work on the user research and stakeholder interviews soon.

Question 33

Is there an incumbent applying for this opportunity? If so, are you open to new vendor relationships?

Answer

The incumbent has submitted an Intent to Submit.

Submissions will be judged based on the Desirable Criteria detailed in section 5 of the RFP (page 13).

Question 34

What are your specific pain points or challenges that users currently experience when navigating through Whistler.ca?

Answer

As described in the RFP Purpose (page 3), the website user experience and content need an upgrade. We reduced the site from 8,000 pages to about 800, but only 200 pages receive significant and consistent traffic. The information is substantively outdated, and the architecture no longer meets user needs or organizational objectives. Our goal is to provide a strong, consistent product anyone in the community, and our resort visitors, can access and navigate with ease. We are targeting a WCAG rating of AA for accessibility to align with corporate values, and would like the product to be emblematic of our globally renowned outdoor brand.

Question 35

How do you envision the user experience evolving with this redesign, particularly in terms of accessibility and ease of navigation for diverse user groups?

Answer

We need to be selecting our brand colours that provide adequate contrast. We'll be needing to minimize use of image sliders and accordions. We also need to ensure images are correctly labelled with alternative text and headings are correctly formatted. In addition, we need to consider the presentation of data in tables and images. We want to write content in plain language, wherever possible. Most of these changes benefit all users.

Question 36

Could you let me know if you've defined your key user groups already? If so, it would be great to hear what audience types you are focused on.

Answer

Whistler is a resort municipality, this means we consider the needs of both the community and visitors to Whistler, as well as people who own second homes in Whistler. The resort has a large number of customer-service workers, reaching those individuals has the additional benefit that they can share information with visitors.

We also want to consider different age groups.

Question 37

Can you provide more details about the training needs of the Communications Department staff, particularly regarding their roles in managing and updating the website post-launch?

Answer

To ensure the Communications Department is ready to update and manage the redesigned whistler.ca, they need to understand any new functionalities in the website.

Following the transition from Drupal to WordPress, this was achieved with a series of videos on the new functionalities, and a single staff training session online.

During ongoing maintenance, staff will sometimes require support if questions come up.

Question 38

Could you outline the intended timeline and milestones for the website redesign project, including key deliverables and expected completion dates?

Answer

We won't be able to finalize the timeline until all contracts are in place. The rough timeline has:

- User experience content mapping research and stakeholder interviews, followed by information architecture and wireframing in the spring.
- Website template design and key page layout, then testing of these early summer.
- User interface preliminary interface design, and the design validation phase in summer.
- Content writing from mid to late summer.
- Development from summer to winter.
- Delivery of the fully updated site by the end of the year.