

City of Owosso — Website Redesign & Hosting RFP

Compiled Clarification Questions from All Vendors

RFP 2026-05 | Compiled March 2026

Addendum 02 – List of Questions

Current Website Data and Hosting

1. Has the City conducted a recent content audit, or should vendors include content analysis and recommendations as part of their scope? **No content audit needed.**
2. Is a content audit expected as part of the vendor's services if a detailed inventory is not available? **No. However, pertinent material from the old site should be migrated to serve as a starting point for content on the new site.**
3. What is the current website technology stack and hosting environment? **Todd**
4. Are content owners assigned per department or should the vendor define governance roles? **I'm not sure what this means. Ownership is the city. Department heads work for the city. If you are asking who should have access to edit, that would be department heads and city manager.**

Content Management System (CMS)

5. What CMS platform is currently used for the websites to be integrated? **.net nuke (DNN)**
6. Does the City have preferred or disfavored CMS technologies? **No**
7. Are custom-built CMS platforms permitted if they meet requirements? **No. Continuity is preferred over one-off proprietaries.**
8. Does the City have a preference for a CDN or hosting infrastructure? **No, Vendors may propose their recommended infrastructure solution provided it meets the RFP requirements for uptime, security, redundancy, and long-term support.**
9. Does the City prefer cloud-hosted, on-premise, or vendor-recommended solutions? **Cloud-Hosted**
10. Is real-time translation required for user-generated content and chatbots? **No user generated content. Content shall be controlled by the city, not site users.**
11. How many existing online forms need to be migrated? **156**
12. Are backend integrations required for online forms? **Possible, depending on application and context.**
13. Will the City provide photography and videography assets? **Yes. After the site is designed but before it is activated.**

AI Integration and Data Handling

14. What is the AI conformance needed? **Any proposed AI functionality should comply with applicable **data privacy, accessibility, and security requirements**, including WCAG accessibility standards where applicable. AI features should operate within controlled data environments and should not expose City data to unauthorized external systems.**
15. Are cloud-based LLM services permitted for AI features? **Yes, cloud-based AI services may be proposed provided that **data privacy, security, and confidentiality requirements are maintained** and the service does not store or reuse City data for external model training.**
16. Is on-premise AI required? **No**
17. What is the expected functionality and training timeline for the AI chatbot? **If proposed, the AI chatbot should provide **basic informational assistance and navigation support** for users accessing City services and information.**
18. Is voice-enabled functionality required for the AI assistant? **No**

Stakeholders / Approvals / Project Logistics

19. How many stakeholders are involved in approvals? **1-3**
 20. How many design revision cycles are anticipated? **1-3**
 21. Does the City have branding guidelines available? **Yes. City logo and colors**
 22. What training format is preferred for City staff? **On site workshop. How-to documents.**
 23. What are the data storage and sovereignty requirements? **All website hosting and data storage must occur within United States–based data centers.**
 24. What is the post-launch support expectation? **Explained in RFP**
 25. What is the expected project timeline and go-live window? **3-6 months**
 26. Is a phased or single launch required? **Single**
 27. What budget guidance is available for the project? **N/A**
 28. Should AI operational costs be included separately? **Yes**
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1. Scope of Work – Is the expectation to fully rebuild the City's website on a new CMS platform, or to modernize the existing framework? **Full rebuild**
 2. Accessibility Standards – Should vendors plan for WCAG 2.1 AA compliance, or is WCAG 2.2 anticipated as the benchmark? **WCAG 2.1**
 3. Functional Requirements – The RFP lists extensive features (alerts, calendars, payments, translation, etc.). Are all items mandatory, or may vendors propose phased/optional enhancements? **Optional. Separate these as alternates to show added cost to project.**
 4. Budget Guidance – Could the City provide an anticipated budget range, or should vendors independently propose itemized pricing for one-time and annual services? **The RFP process precludes budgetary amounts. We are looking for a full rebuild to modern standards on a platform that will last and provide needed support and hosting.**
 5. References – The RFP requires three municipal references. Will references from U.S. municipalities outside Michigan be acceptable? **Yes. Certainly**
 6. Pre-Proposal Meeting – For the February 27 virtual meeting, should vendors email you directly to request the meeting link? **Meeting was cancelled in RFP addendum.**
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1. Could you specify which third-party platforms (e.g., ERP, utility billing, tax software, or building permit systems) require integration? **We use BSA Online Payments and refer to their website. We currently do not store any e-commerce data on our website.**
2. What is the City's current or preferred payment gateway for secure online payments? **BSA Online Payments through BS&A Software.**
3. Is Single Sign-On (SSO) authentication (e.g., via Microsoft or Google) required for staff accessing the password-protected intranet? **Not required but could be proposed.**
4. What is the estimated volume of content to be migrated from the current site (e.g., number of pages, total GB of documents/media)? **Approximately 400 total. Mostly, these are documents.**
5. Does the City have an established brand identity guide (official logos, color palettes, typography), or should the vendors include brand/logo development in the proposal? **Yes. Logo and colors. We have them. This is not a rebranding opportunity.**
6. Has a specific taxonomy or metadata structure already been defined for document indexing and search optimization, or is the vendor expected to develop this? **Unknown. Please review our current site.**
7. Beyond the anticipated award date of April 6, 2026, does the City have a target "Go-Live" date for the new website? **No.**

8. Approximately how many City employees will require administrative training to manage content across different departments? **6-10**
 9. Does the City have a defined budget range or a "not-to-exceed" amount for the initial redesign and the subsequent annual hosting/maintenance? **No**
 10. Could you provide further detail on the evaluation scoring or weighting? How will the City weigh technical qualifications and experience against the proposed pricing? **Experience, tech qualifications, support, continuity, etc will be weighted along with cost. Our goal is a long lasting product with extensive support and continuity with adaptability and DIY capability.**
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11. Given the City's emphasis on design quality and visual appeal, would it be considered an advantage or value-add if the vendor includes initial design prototypes or wireframes within the proposal to demonstrate the proposed user experience? **This would help but is not necessary and will not affect scoring/selection.**
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Initial Questions

1. Section 3.E requires a minimum of three municipal references. Could the City clarify whether references must be municipal governments specifically, or if references from other public sector organizations (such as counties, state agencies, universities, or public authorities) that have implemented similar website redesign and hosting solutions would also be acceptable? **Government examples are pertinent. They do not have to be city examples specifically.**
2. Will the City be responsible for reviewing and identifying which existing content should be migrated, archived, or retired, or is the selected vendor expected to perform content auditing and cleanup as part of the project? **Yes. City will be doing this with the vendor. Vendor is not expected to do it alone. For the most part, everything will migrate and staff will change content as needed.**

Additional Questions

3. What level of content migration is expected? (Entire site? Agendas/minutes database? Historical documents? Media library?) **Everything. Staff will make changes after the migration but before site goes live.**
4. Will the City provide content cleanup, rewriting, or restructuring, or is the vendor expected to include those services? **Yes. Staff will provide direction here.**
5. Does the City require migration of legacy Flash-based components, and if so, how should those be converted or replaced? **The City is not aware of any active Flash-based components on the current website.**
6. Should forms support payments, signatures, or integrations with external systems? (The RFP mentions secure payments B1.5 but does not state whether forms tie into that.) **No**
7. Is the City currently using any notification/email platform that the new site must integrate with? (RFP references SMS/email subscriptions.) **The City does use Microsoft 365 for business operations. Vendors may propose solutions for email or SMS subscription services as part of the project as it pertains to website functions..**
8. Is integration required with a third-party meeting management system (e.g., Granicus, CivicClerk)? **No**
9. Does the City currently use a preferred payment provider or gateway? (B1.5 mentions "secure online payments" but no provider is named.) **BS&A Online Payment Systems by BS&A Software.**
10. Which City departments will use online payments? (Utilities? Parks? Licensing? Taxes?) **Utility Billing, Tax, Cash Receipting, Building Dept, Public Safety.**
11. The RFP specifies a U.S.-based Tier II data center (F1.2). Will the City accept Tier III or cloud-hosting (AWS/Azure) equivalents? **Yes**

12. Does the City require a dedicated environment, or is a secure multi-tenant environment acceptable? **A secure multi-tenant environment is acceptable**, provided the vendor demonstrates appropriate security controls, data isolation, and compliance with the hosting requirements outlined in the RFP.
 13. Is the stated 22 Gb/s bandwidth requirement tied to any specific forecasting or compliance rule? **The bandwidth specification reflects a general expectation of modern hosting capability and resilience rather than a specific forecasting model. Vendors may propose equivalent or stronger infrastructure that meets or exceeds performance requirements.**
 14. Beyond WCAG 2.1 AA, does the City require ongoing automated accessibility scanning and reporting? (RFP references ADA compliance but not maintenance expectations.) **No**
 15. Does the website need to integrate with any existing City systems? **There will be links to the Water Portal, Online Payments, BS&A Tax and Utility bill lookups and community engagement portal. Possible future video streaming of city council meetings and other video streaming services.**
 16. Does the City expect the vendor to create new content or only migrate existing content? **Migrate only. But staff will provide photos for vendor's redesign.**
 17. How many total pages exist on the current website? **50-60**
 18. How many City users will require CMS training (both administrators and editors)? **See above**
 19. Does post-launch support require specific SLAs beyond 24/7 availability? **Yes, Launch day and the day after, near real time support. 4 hour response time for the week following and next business day thereafter.**
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1. What platform and hosting environment is the City's current website built on, and is the incumbent vendor eligible to submit a proposal? **The City's current website is built on the DotNetNuke (DNN) platform in a vendor-hosted environment. The procurement process is open, and the incumbent vendor may submit a proposal if they choose to participate.**
 2. Approximately how many total pages and documents are currently published on the existing website, and what percentage is expected to be migrated to the new platform? **50-60 pages. Approximately 300 forms/documents. Most documents are under "forms and documents" but there are also minutes, agendas, and meeting packets posted.**
 3. For the "Secure Online Payments" requirement (Section B1.5), is the City currently using a third-party payment processor that must remain in place, or is the selected vendor expected to recommend and implement a solution? **The current payment processor must remain in place.**
 4. Does the City currently use external systems for class registration or facility reservations that must integrate with the new website, or is the expectation that this functionality be native within the proposed platform? **The City does not currently use a dedicated system for these functions. Vendors may propose either native platform capabilities or integrated solutions.**
 5. Does the City require third-party WCAG 2.1 Level AA certification at launch, or is vendor self-attestation acceptable? **A certification would be helpful to us for liability reasons. If the vendor can assume that liability, self-attestation is acceptable.**
 6. The RFP outlines specific hosting and redundancy requirements (99.9% uptime SLA, disaster recovery, DDoS mitigation, geographically redundant backups). Is the City open to commercially managed cloud infrastructure environments that meet or exceed these requirements? **Yes. As long as these solutions are resilient and long lasting. Continuity in this type of service is paramount.**

General / Unattributed Questions (Submitted via RFP Process)

Strategic Objectives and Success Criteria

1. What measurable outcomes will the City use to determine whether the new website project has been successful after launch? **Legal compliance, resilient hosting, strong support when needed, ability for staff to easily change the content of the site (text, format, videos, attachments, etc)**

2. What are the City's top three priorities for the new website (e.g., citizen engagement, accessibility compliance, operational efficiency, transparency)? **Accessibility compliance, operational efficiency, transparency.**
3. Are there known pain points or user complaints from residents or staff regarding the current website that the City expects the new platform to resolve? **Current site is not mobile friendly/scalable.**
4. Does the City have target performance metrics for usability, search effectiveness, accessibility compliance, or page performance? **Other than WCAG compliance, no – not really.**

Scope, Content, and Deliverables

5. Is the vendor responsible for conducting a full content audit and information architecture redesign for the website? **No. The format and ability for staff to make changes is important. But we do not expect the vendor to generate the final product on their own as to actual content. We are open to suggestions to assist us with quality content, though. Those vendors with extensive municipal experience should be able to help there.**
6. Approximately how many pages, documents, and media assets must be migrated from the existing website to the new platform? **50-60 pages. 300 documents (docs, forms, minutes, meeting packets, audits, budgets, reports, agendas, etc)**
7. Will the City provide updated content during the migration process, or is the vendor expected to restructure or rewrite existing content? **Yes. Although we would invite suggestions from vendors.**
8. Are vendors expected to perform usability testing or stakeholder workshops with City departments during the design phase? **That would be helpful. But at the least, the handful of department heads who will have editing capability on the site should have one in person workshop and how-to documents should be provided.**
9. Are there any legacy systems or external platforms that must integrate with the new website (e.g., agenda management systems, payment systems, GIS, permitting systems)? **At this time, the City does not have any required legacy system integrations for the new website. Vendors may propose integration capabilities where beneficial, particularly for services such as online payments, notifications, or future digital service platforms. The City would prefer a solution that maintains flexibility to support integrations if needed in the future.**

Content Management System (CMS)

10. Does the City have a preferred CMS platform or technology stack, or are vendors free to propose their recommended solution? **The City does not have a preferred CMS platform or standard. Vendors may propose their recommended solution provided it is widely supported, maintainable, and not a proprietary one-off platform.**
11. Does the City require role-based publishing workflows with departmental approvals prior to content publication? **No**
12. Does the City require version control, audit logs, and rollback capabilities within the CMS? **yes, These features are desirable and should be included if available and affordable.**
13. Will the City require API capabilities or integration support to enable future digital services or third-party integrations? **Yes. The proposed platform should support API-based integrations to allow future expansion of digital services if needed.**

Technical Architecture and Hosting

14. Does the City require the hosting environment to be on a specific cloud provider or infrastructure platform? **The City does not require a specific cloud provider. Vendors may propose infrastructure that meets the reliability, security, and continuity requirements defined in the RFP.**
15. Will vendors be required to provide separate environments for development, staging, and production? **No**

16. Are vendors expected to provide CDN services or performance optimization for high-traffic periods? **Yes.** Vendors should include appropriate **performance optimization measures**, which may include CDN services or equivalent solutions. However, our traffic expectations should be calculated by the size our community and demographics that would use this system.
17. Will the City require system performance benchmarks such as maximum page load times or uptime monitoring dashboards? **No**

Security, Privacy, and Compliance

18. Are vendors required to comply with specific cybersecurity frameworks (e.g., NIST, CIS, or other municipal cybersecurity standards)? Vendors should follow **recognized cybersecurity best practices and frameworks**, such as NIST or CIS, where applicable.
19. Will the City require periodic security assessments, vulnerability scans, or penetration testing of the website platform? **These services are recommended and may be proposed as part of the vendor's hosting or maintenance services.**
20. Are vendors required to implement encryption for data both in transit and at rest? **Yes. Encryption should be implemented for data in transit and at rest** using industry-standard security protocols.
21. What incident response and breach notification requirements will apply to the vendor if a cybersecurity event occurs? **The vendor must promptly notify the City of any security incident affecting the website environment and cooperate fully with incident response and remediation procedures.**

Staffing and Subcontracting

22. Are vendors permitted to subcontract portions of the work to specialized partners (e.g., hosting providers, SMS notification services, accessibility tools)? **Yes**
23. Are there any restrictions regarding the geographic location of development or support personnel? **No**
24. Does the City require disclosure of subcontractors and their roles within the proposal? **Yes that would be helpful information.**

Project Governance and Responsibilities

25. What internal City roles will serve as project sponsor, technical lead, and decision authority during implementation? **The city has an full time IT employee.**
26. What responsibilities will City staff have during implementation (e.g., content preparation, testing, approvals)? **All of the above. For the most part, the beta version of the site will be manipulated and populated before it goes live. Some of this material will have to be migrated to the new site. Other sections will be populated by staff with text and photos.**
27. Will the City require formal project governance meetings or status reporting during the implementation phase? **That would help. Yes.**
28. What approval process will be used for design milestones, functionality demonstrations, and final system acceptance? **Approval will come from the City Manager at milestones, demos, and final acceptance.**

Implementation Timeline and Acceptance

29. Does the City have a preferred or target launch date for the new website? **No. We understand it could take a while (2-4 months or longer)**
30. Will the City conduct formal user acceptance testing prior to launch? **Yes**
31. What criteria will determine successful completion of implementation and acceptance of the website? **Legal compliance, resilient hosting, strong support when needed, ability for staff to easily change the content of the site (text, format, videos, attachments, etc)**
32. Will the vendor be responsible for maintaining the existing website during the transition period? **No**

Training and Knowledge Transfer

- 33. Approximately how many City staff members are expected to participate in CMS training? **6-10**
- 34. Does the City require separate training sessions for administrators, departmental editors, and general staff users? **No**
- 35. Are vendors expected to provide written documentation, video tutorials, or online training resources for ongoing staff training? **Yes. This would be very helpful.**

Pricing and Commercial Structure

- 36. Does the City have an estimated budget range allocated for this project? **The city has budgeted some funds but they are more of a placeholder. This process will help the city decide but there are obviously more criteria than just cost.**
- 37. Should implementation pricing be provided as a single fixed price, milestone-based payments, or another structure? **Single price would be best.**
- 38. Should hosting, support, and maintenance costs be proposed as annual recurring services beginning after launch? **That would be helpful, yes.**
- 39. Are vendors permitted to propose optional enhancements or additional modules beyond the required scope? **Certainly. As long as these are listed as alternates in the cost proposal.**

Evaluation and Award Process

- 40. Will the City conduct vendor interviews, product demonstrations, or presentations during the evaluation process? **If the city has questions before award, yes.**
- 41. Will technical proposals and pricing proposals be evaluated separately? **No. Pricing – while not the only consideration – must be considered as part of the overall evaluation process.**
- 42. Will references be contacted as part of the evaluation process, and are there specific evaluation criteria for municipal experience? **Yes. Municipal experience encompasses cities, townships, counties, public authorities, public agencies.**

Legal, Contractual, and Operational Terms

- 43. Will the selected vendor be required to enter into a standard municipal services contract following award? **Yes**
- 44. What insurance coverage limits will be required for the selected vendor? **General Liability: minimum of \$1 million. City of Owosso must be named additional insured.**
- 45. Who will retain ownership of the website source code, design assets, and website data after implementation? **The City will retain full ownership of all website content, data, and design assets created for the project. Vendors may retain ownership of proprietary software platforms used to operate the website.**
- 46. What transition assistance will the vendor be required to provide if the City later moves to another platform or vendor? **None**

- 1. **Boards/Commissions document priority.** Owosso notes difficulty locating Boards and Commissions materials (agendas, minutes, packets, member information). Could the City identify which boards/commissions and document sets are the highest priority for improved organization, search/filtering, and publishing workflow in phase one? **City Council, Planning Commission, DDA/Mainstreet are the three main boards and commissions that meet regularly.**
- 2. **Content migration scope and source readiness.** To help us provide a precise scope and cost, could the City clarify the expected migration volume by category (pages, documents, calendars, forms, news items, meeting archives), and whether content is currently exportable from the existing system or if portions

should be assumed to require manual migration/reformatting? **50 pages approximately. 300 documents (reports, agendas, packets, budgets, audits, retirement system information, applications, forms, etc.). we believe the content is exportable.**

3. **Alerting platform preference (built-in vs integrated).** For resident alerts, subscriptions, and scheduled SMS/email notifications, does the City prefer these functions to be fully native to the website platform, or is the City open to a vetted third-party notification integration if it improves deliverability, opt-in management, and reporting? **Third party is fine.**
4. **Class registration / facility reservations launch phasing.** The functional requirements include class registration (with enrollment caps) and facility listings/maps/reservations. Are these expected to be included at initial launch, or would the City consider a phased implementation if policy decisions, staffing workflows, or integrations need to be finalized first? **Phased implementation is fine. We don't offer any classes currently but we do handle facility reservations.**
5. **Online payment scope and integration constraints.** For the 'safe online payments' requirement, could the City clarify which transaction types are in scope for this project (permits, fees, class registrations, reservations, utility-related payments, etc.), and whether there is an existing payment processor or municipal finance platform that the new website must integrate with? **The City currently utilizes the BS&A online payment processor and expects the new website to maintain compatibility or integration with this existing system rather than replacing it.**
6. **Department ownership and editor training assumptions.** To align our permissions model and training plan with City operations, could the City share which departments will actively manage website content after launch and an estimated number of editors/approvers/admins to assume in the proposal? **6-10 editors. 3-4 admin from among the editors.**
7. **Hosting/security requirement equivalency.** The RFP outlines specific hosting/security expectations (including infrastructure, uptime, backup/disaster recovery, and mitigation requirements). Is the City open to equivalent or stronger modern cloud-based approaches, provided the proposal clearly maps how each requirement is met or exceeded? **Yes**
8. **Procurement timeline and launch target.** Could the City share its anticipated timeline for proposal review, interviews (if applicable), vendor selection, project kickoff, and desired launch window? Also, are there any seasonal, budget-cycle, or civic-calendar constraints we should consider when proposing milestones/phasing? **Depending on the amount of submittals, 3 weeks to 2 months.**
9. **Workshop and training format preference (in-person vs remote).** For discovery sessions, stakeholder workshops, and editor training, does the City have a preferred format (in-person, remote, or hybrid), especially given the importance of cross-department coordination during implementation? **Either is fine.**