



## **Request for Proposal**

Website Design, Development, & Hosting

### **City of Forest Acres**

5209 N. Trenholm Rd.  
Columbia, SC 29206  
(803) 782-9475

[www.forestacres.net](http://www.forestacres.net)

**Due Date:** November 20, 2020 at 3:00 p.m.

## **Overview**

The City of Forest Acres (The City) is seeking to update its website ([www.forestacres.net](http://www.forestacres.net)) to enhance the user experience, simplify content management, and provide better information and customer service to its community, while meeting high standards for design quality and visual appeal.

The City seeks the assistance of an experienced company that can accomplish all of the functionality identified in this RFP, while integrating additional features and functionality that may be identified in the future. The experienced company should have a team of experts who understand local government (including citizen engagement, transparency within the public sector, and economic development), to help us achieve our vision – all while providing 24/7/365 support.

## **About Forest Acres, SC**

The City of Forest Acres (population 10,000+) was incorporated in 1935 and is situated in the midlands of South Carolina along Interstate-77 and contiguous to the City of Columbia. With respected and desirable schools, convenient commercial areas, vibrant parks and public events, and a safe and inviting atmosphere, the City is particularly appealing to families with school aged children. While maintaining its coveted small-town feel within residential areas, the City's growing commercial thoroughfares—Forest Drive, Trenholm Road and Beltline Boulevard—generate enough traffic to support retail activity the scale and quality of which are rarely found in towns our size.

The City of Forest Acres operates under the Mayor–Council form of government. The City Council includes a Mayor and four additional members who are elected at-large for four-year, staggered terms. The City Administrator, serving at the pleasure of City Council, is the Chief Executive Officer of the City and is responsible for budgeting and related financial planning, economic development, planning and zoning, and the overall operation of the City.

## **Intent**

It is the City's intent, through this RFP, to engage a company to accomplish the following:

1. Evaluate the current website and provide a transition plan to implement a new website using a Content Management System (CMS) based application.
2. Implement modules within the CMS that deliver specialized capabilities to improve the City's support to our current and prospective residents, businesses, and other constituents.

3. Develop a customized, modern template for the website that includes a 100% responsive design so it can be displayed on any size device.
4. Assist the City with transition of content from the current website to the new website.
5. Provide all hosting and security services for the new website.
6. Provide training to administrators, department heads, and content managers.

## **Guiding Principles**

To facilitate effective decision making and analysis throughout the process, a series of four principles are to be used to guide the design, content and management for the development of the new website:

1. Develop an easily understood and navigable web site which combines all City services.
2. Balance design, effectiveness and ADA accessibility.
3. Improve communication, and access to City information.
4. Provide improved services to the community.

## **Selection and Criteria for Evaluation**

Selection of a qualified contractor will be made at the discretion of the City of Acres, which reserves the right to accept or reject any and all proposals. The following items will be considered in making a selection of the contractor, though they may not be equally weighed in the review process:

<b><u>Item</u></b>	<b><u>Maximum Points</u></b>
Experience, skills and qualifications	20 points
Merits of the Proposal including scope of work and approach to addressing tasks	20 points
Timeline and proposed schedule	15 points
Hosting and Security	15 points
Customer support, responsiveness, and timeliness	10 points
References and prior experience with similar work	10 points
Pricing structure and overall cost	10 points

## **Vendor Qualifications**

The City of Forest Acres will evaluate vendor experience, qualifications and capabilities for developing and implementing a new website. The desired qualifications are outlined below. Responders are required to submit a written narrative corresponding to each of the underlined section items:

### Introduction

- Overview and summary of how your company will assist the City of Forest Acres in reaching our website goals

### Company Profile

- Company overview and history
  - How long has the company been in business
  - Number of current employees
  - Number of clients in the past 5 years
- Capabilities of company - Why should your company be chosen

### Management Team

- Name, title, role (e.g., project management, training, design)
- Specifically identify the main point of contact for this project
- Education, years of experience

### Scope of Work

- Project phase deliverables
- What will be expected of the City
- What the City of Forest Acres can expect from the company

### Project Development Approach

- Average timeline
- Detailed explanation of all project phases including consultation, design, development, training, implementation
- Statement that website will meet Accessibility Compliance requirements
- Training options
- What role the City of Forest Acres will play in the project

#### Hosting and Security (describe all available)

- Data Center
- Hosting
- Bandwidth
- Disaster Recovery
- DDoS Mitigation
- Upgradable security packages

#### Support and Maintenance (describe all available)

- System ownership
- Ongoing training opportunities and availability of robust, self-service documentation and technical support (videos and training manuals, etc.)
- Availability of continued communications post website implementation (with consultants and support staff)
- Support services - emergency and non-emergency situations

#### Project Pricing Estimate/Cost for Services Outlined

Specify amounts of items below:

- First Year development fees including:
  - Days/hours of training, number of employees to be trained, on-site or webinar
  - Amount of content migration (entire website or a specific number of pages)
  - Additional products/functionality
- Ongoing fees for hosting, maintenance and support for Year 2 and beyond

#### Description of Features and Functionality Included with the CMS

At minimum include:

- List of all features and functionality included in the proposed CMS. Must address all features and functionality listed in Required Features and Optional Features section of this RFP

#### Additional Products offered

- Give brief descriptions of other products offered by the company

## Municipal Website Design Experience

- References (minimum three references, including all contact information below)
  - Client name
  - Website URL
  - Client contact person and title
  - Phone
  - Email address

## Required Features

The information below represents required functional capabilities in the selected CMS. It is not all inclusive, other functionality may be recommended or added. The City's new website vendor must be able to provide at a minimum, the components shown.

- Agenda Management – Upload, create and manage agendas
- Alerts & Emergency Notification – Alerts posted on website and public notifications sent out through email, text message and social media
- Approval Rights – Allow system administrator to establish specific rights and capabilities for internal staff to update content based upon the role they have in updating the website.
- Archive Center – Store agendas, minutes, newsletters and other documents
- Automatic expirations – The ability to set a date for content to automatically expire
- Calendar – Update/publish calendars. Includes unlimited number of event listings, single or reoccurring. Viewable by list, week, or month
- Content Preview – The ability to preview content before publishing live
- Departmental Home Pages – The ability for departments to have dedicated pages within the site that follow the same design as the other interior pages
- Directories, Listing for Staff and Businesses – Ability to allow citizens to search for staff or business information
- Document Center - Upload/download capability, back-end ability to search within
- E-Notifications – Electronic subscription, scheduled notifications for email and SMS
- Live Edit – Create and edit pages live from the front end
- Mobile Friendly – For smart phones and tablets
- Multi-Lingual Support – Using Google Translate

- News & Announcements – Ability to post press releases, what's happening, feature stories, and announcements, as well as emergency messages
- Online Forms - Forms/publishing/tracking
- Photo Center - Display community photos in a central location on website
- Printable Pages - Print-friendly function
- Responsive Design - fully mobile responsive design - site adjusts to the screen size of all devices its being view on, includes forms, calendars, etc.
- RFP/RFQ/Bid Posting – Allow for easy posting of bids to the site, along with amendments and updates. Schedulable with ability to set auto-expire date
- Rotating Photos/Banners - Dynamic image display
- Quick Links - Links can be placed directly on the pages
- Service Directory – List of services by function. Allow users to search by keyword
- Site Search – Internal site search engine, site search log
- Site Statistics - Analytics and site audit reports
- Sitemap & Breadcrumbs – Dynamically generated
- Social Media Interface – Ability to integrate Facebook and Twitter
- Spell-check – The ability to spell-check content via the editor
- Spotlight - Ability to highlight important text on one or more pages
- Third Party Integration – Ability to integrate third-party applications
- Unique Department Home Page – Ability for departments, associated organizations to have a unique separate design and URL
- Video Center – Live streaming video capabilities

## **Optional Features**

The features below are not required by the City at this time, however, please include information and availability of integration in the future.

- E-Communication platform - Integrated within the centralized CMS for creating visually rich, fully responsive, non-emergency e-communication. Create unlimited subscriber lists, and communicate over multiple channels – e-mail, text and social media from a single point of access.
- LDAP Integration – Lightweight Directory Access Protocol (LDAP) integration
- Online Payments - Secure online transaction by department
- Citizen Sourcing Tool – Encourages citizen idea submission, engaging discussions, voting, etc.
- Website Visitor Profile - Visitors can pick and choose the information that automatically becomes fed to their profile upon site login
- Online Job Postings and Application - Applicants can also create an online profile, fill out application and attach additional documents

## **Format for Proposal**

The response should address all items in the Vendor Qualifications section and be formatted to follow the Selection and Criteria for Evaluation.

## **Submittal Requirements**

The deadline for RFP responses is Wednesday, September 30, 2020 at 3:00 p.m. EST.

Submit five (5) hardcopies of the proposal to the address shown below, plus an electronic copy in PDF format to [asmith@forestacres.net](mailto:asmith@forestacres.net), no later than 3 p.m. EST on Wednesday September 30, 2020. Proposers are solely responsible for ensuring that proposals are delivered on time.

City of Forest Acres  
Attn: Andy Smith  
5209 N. Trenholm Rd.  
Columbia, SC 29206  
[asmith@forestacres.net](mailto:asmith@forestacres.net)

Submittals that are not received on or before the specified deadline will not be accepted (no exceptions). The City of Forest Acres reserves the right to request follow-up information or clarification from vendors in consideration. Vendor is responsible to ensure delivery by the date and time included.

The City of Forest Acres reserves the right to reject any or all submittals, to compare the relative merits of the respective responses, and to choose a vendor, which will best serve the interests of the City.

Each response to this RFP shall be done at the sole cost and expense of each proposing vendor and with the express understanding that no claims against the City of Forest Acres for reimbursement will be accepted.

All materials submitted in response to this RFP will become the property of the City upon delivery.

## **Selection Process**

The selection process will involve the following phases:

Phase 1: A City of Forest Acres review team will evaluate vendor submittals. The initial review will determine conformance to submission requirements and whether responses meet minimum criteria established. Review will



include the vendor's acceptance of RFP terms and completeness of submissions.

- Phase 2: Review team may elect to Interview of most qualified applicants. Firms interviewed may prepare a presentation of up to one half hour in length. (Optional)
- Phase 3: Review team will check references given, and the selected firm will be invited to submit a draft scope of work to accomplish the tasks identified. This draft scope of work will form the basis of further contract negotiation with the selected firm.
- Phase 4: Once the contract has been agreed with the selected firm, it will be presented to the City Council for approval and a Notice to Proceed issued soon thereafter. Please note that City of Forest Acres may require contractors to use the City's standard contract language. If negotiations between the City and the selected firm fail to produce a contract agreeable to both parties, the City reserves the right to cease further negotiation and commence negotiations with another firm.

## **Schedule**

The approximate RFP schedule is summarized below:

- Issuance of RFP: October 19, 2020
- Vendor submittals due: November 20, 2020 at City Hall via U.S. mail or delivery, with electronic PDF version due via email
- Vendor interviews, reference checks, draft scope of work: December 2020 – January 2021
- Contract agreement, Vendor approval, Notice to Proceed: January 2021 – February 2021

*Dates may be subject to change*

## **Inquiries**

Inquiries about this Request for Proposal must be in writing and directed to:

Shaun Greenwood  
City Administrator  
(803) 782-9475  
[sgreenwood@forestacres.net](mailto:sgreenwood@forestacres.net)

Andy Smith  
Asst. City Administrator/Finance Director  
(803) 782-9475  
[asmith@forestacres.net](mailto:asmith@forestacres.net)