

Update #3

Vendor Questions and Answers to Skagit County Website Design, Development, and Hosting RFP

1. The current Skagit County Website is not accessible.. Any specific reason?
 - A. It's based in static html and dated, highlighting the need for a new system.
2. What is the current Skagit County Landscape or Tech Stack?
 - A. We are currently moving into a development model implementing React for our web applications...this should have no bearing on our new website.
3. No of departments, employee details, divisions etc?
 - A. At least 42 departments/divisions needing landing pages online – most of these departments have multiple divisions.
4. Do we need to consider data migration from any existing eco system?
 - A. Yes, we will need to migrate approximately 400 pages. Data and apps will be stored in-house. If an API is available on new system, we would consider implementing it for various apps and tools.
5. Features list / Pages to be developed / migrated as part this engagement
 - A. Outlined in the RFP
6. The infrastructure for the application and the CMS to be hosted within Skagit county eco system?
 - A. Applications will be self-hosted in-house. The CMS will ideally be cloud-hosted by the vendor or 3rd party.
7. What is the sign-in capability for internal employees. Any SSO?
 - A. Currently it is through SSO AD Azure integration – it recognizes the VPN and allows access to the internal site. With an Azure AD app we can connect with SSO.

8. Multi step approval for publish – Is this for content pages and expectation is to publish from any CMS platform?
 - A. Yes, this is for the content pages. Yes, ideally, we are able to administer approval content updates in the CMS. For example, user 1 makes submits a change for approval, admin gets notified prior to publishing on public site.
9. Is the expectation to build the website using WordPress?
 - A. WordPress or any viable CMS is preferred.
10. What is the expected payment use cases expected in additional features?
 - A. None
11. Please let us know your website hosting preferences. Do you want it to be hosted on your on-premises or private cloud? Or do you want the vendor to host it for you?
 - A. We prefer cloud hosting by the vendor or 3rd party such as AWS.
12. Is the preferred location for website hosting in the USA, or can it be outside USA?
 - A. Preferred USA
13. Please also mention if the website will be used for County citizens to enter information or make enquiries. Is personally identifiable information (PII) expected to be hosted by the CMS?
 - A. Currently we utilize third party software for citizen requests (Granicus, Tyler Technologies, etc.) - I do not think we plan on the website host to store PII.
14. Will there be any payments or card-based transactions performed through the website?
 - A. No, all transactions occur on third party vended solutions web site/apps. We do not process credit transactions on our current site. We would like to utilize Stripe in the future
15. Would you need an AI assistant /chat bot to answer standard questions and route calls to agent after that? If yes, what kind of data will be stored in the CMS from this feature.
 - A. Not required but we are open to chat bot recommendations. Storage of data is TBD depending on how this would be implemented.

16. Since the website is connected to a backend database, please indicate the security integrations you would need e.g., IAM with Active Directory or similar, MFA /SSO, log management, firewall and network, and tools like IPS/IDS, SIEM, as necessary.
- A. The current website uses a database for managing department links only. This would be replaced by the vended website. The web apps that use databases will not be part of this project.
17. Can you share if there is a defined or anticipated budget range for this project?
- A. No more than \$250,000 in 2025
 - B. No more than \$150,000.00 annually moving forward
18. Could you provide an approximate number of pages or an estimate of the volume of content on the current website that is expected to be migrated?
- A. 400 pages to migrate
19. Is Skagit County open to various CMS platforms, or are there preferences or restrictions based on current IT infrastructure?
- A. No preferences, open to any Viable CMS platforms that meet security needs.
20. Are there specific third-party tools or platforms (e.g., Granicus, payment gateways, GIS mapping tools) that must be integrated into the new website?
- A. Yes, these will all be integrated along with other self-hosted apps. These can be iframed/embedded in. Direct integration isn't required.
21. Is there an incumbent? Will they be bidding? Is there any preference for local vendors?
- A. No incumbent. A local vendor that meets the requirements and expectations would be great to work with.
22. How many websites are in-scope for this project?
- A. One, skagitcounty.net
23. Is there a plan (or desire, if it's easy to do so) to create more sites in the future?
- A. No but open to recommendations.

24. Are there any sites (or web apps) that are not directly referenced in this RFP that the county would benefit from consolidating into this new platform? If so, approximately how many?

A. Not aware of any

25. Is there an organizational preference for open source vs. a proprietary CMS?

A. Open to both

26. If open source is a consideration, is there a preference for a specific CMS (i.e., Drupal, WordPress)?

A. No preference

27. How many user accounts need to be migrated?

A. We don't have user accounts, but would need access through a GUI for editing and publishing for representatives from 20 departments and our IT admins

28. How many files (PDF/Word /Etc.) need to be migrated?

A. 500

29. Please describe media entities (videos, etc) that need to be migrated.

A. No videos will be housed on the new website at the writing of the RFP

30. Are there multi-lingual requirements? Is Google Translate or similar sufficient? How many levels of users are needed?

A. Yes google translate or similar will be needed. User levels needed are minimum: Super Admin, approver, editor, viewer.

31. Can you provide information on your workflow needs? Are survey/voting tools required?

A. We currently use Granicus for forms.

32. Are you requiring photo/video galleries? Is there need for a document library?

A. Not required but both would be very useful.

33. Do you want email newsletter distribution capabilities?

A. We use 3rd party for this, not needed.

34. Could you clarify what is meant by 'a utility that allows for the processing and emailing of web forms using a system that is browser and email agnostic'? Specifically, what kind of processing is expected, and what 'browser and email agnostic' means in this context.
- A. This is meant as a web form that sends an email. This would be a 'Contact Us' type form.
35. Are Ecommerce or personalization features desired? Does search need to index the contents of pdf/Doc files?
- A. No ecom or personalization needed. Search index of files is ideal.
36. Does the site search need to index content from other domains?
- A. No – I don't think so but that would be a bonus if we could index our web application server.
37. Please describe all integrations with other sites or data sources more complex than an iFrame or embed code.
- A. None
38. Will single-sign-on be used to control administrative access to the site? If yes, please elaborate. Is accessibility a desired or mandated requirement?
- A. Yes – internal site similar to questions above 7 and 16
39. Is the accessibility target WCAG 2.1 A or AA?
- A. Minimum, A, targeting AA
40. Are there special security requirements or audits involved?
- A. Yes, outlined at the end of the RFP in security details. SOC II minimum.
41. Are there granular levels of permissions needed where certain people should only have access to certain sites? Or, even certain areas of sites?
- A. Yes exactly, we need staff users to be able to access their respective content only.
42. Where is the CMS/website currently hosted? Are you open to a cloud-hosted CMS?
- A. There is no online CMS, it's self hosted on local servers. We prefer to move to cloud based CMS.

43. If yes, do you have an existing relationship with a cloud provider like AWS, Azure, etc?

A. No

44. Are there any security standards required for your CMS platform? i.e. HIPAA, PCI, SOCII, Fedramp, etc?

A. These are outlined in the RFP at the end in security notes. SOCII minimum.

45. Do you experience frequent surges of traffic that impact performance at critical times?

A. Rarely: when we have experienced disasters in the past our website traffic quadruples

46. Have you dealt with any security issues or malicious traffic on your sites like DDoS attacks, SQL injections, etc? If so, what was the impact?

A. No.

47. Are you using anything for CDN or WAF currently?

A. We are currently using local servers, no cloud based CDNs.

48. Would you describe the existing content as structured, with consistent separation of content and code?

A. No, it's mostly static HTML

49. Are tables used for layout in the existing content?

A. Yes

50. What percentage of the current content is obsolete and won't be migrated to the new site? What is your plan for editing/creating content during the redesign?

A. Not sure of percentage but approximately 400 pages will be migrated. We will continue to publish content on our current website until the cutover to the new site.

51. Do you expect copywriting or editing services as part of engagement?

A. No

52. Do you need us to conduct an extensive discovery process that includes extensive research into user persona development - or a more streamlined discovery based on the web team's input and best practices?

A. More streamlined, we have a good sense of user needs.

53. Can you provide examples of sites that are good models for what you want? How detailed are the existing branding guidelines?

A. Existing brand guidelines are very basic and somewhat dated. It covers the logo, fonts, photography, messaging, and colors. We are open to recommendations and evolution to improve our web presence.

Sites with good brand/experience:

<https://www.ebparks.org/>

<https://www.minneapolismn.gov/>

<https://www.utah.gov/index.html>

<https://www.hamilton.ca/> <https://www.ms.gov/>

54. Do you have high-quality photography/media assets available for the new site?

A. Yes

55. Please confirm that one design theme will carry across the entire site. If we need sub-themes of any type please specify.

A. Yes, but it would be nice to have the option of minor variations

56. Please confirm that the awarded vendor will primarily work remotely, with regular web conference meetings as needed.

A. Primarily remotely is okay but the ability to visit onsite may impact RFP scoring.

57. We are a US company with some remote team members working from outside of the US. Is there any restriction on their ability to contribute to the project?

A. As long as they can work during Skagit County business hours and/or provide prompt responses as outlined in the agreed upon SLA, it is not a problem.

58. How do you envision the relationship with the developer post-launch? Do you need a maintenance contract to keep sites patched and secure?

A. Yes, we require ongoing maintenance on an as-needed basis for code and hosting updates, depending on the server and CMS solution.

59. In the RFP under section “E. Timeline and Project Schedule” are the Gantt, description of deliverables and description of tasks all requested at proposal submission?
- A. Proposed timeline and project schedule is requested – this will impact RFP scoring.
60. Does the County want our proposal to include pricing for an intranet, or was the County checking to see if the capability was available for future use (i.e., not needed at this time/as part of this RFP)?
- A. Yes, include pricing for an intranet site. It IS needed at launch.
61. Could you clarify the budget - Is it \$250,000, \$200,000 or \$150,000?
- A. No more than \$250,000 in 2025. No more than \$150,000.00 annually moving forward
62. Could you let us know if you have a local preference or are you open to a Canadian agency that has done similar work with clients across the United States, with some currently being the States of California, Colorado and Wyoming?
- A. We do not have a preference. Though the selected vendor does need to be able to do business in the State of Washington.
63. Would you need any copywriting?
- A. No
64. Would you need any original or stock videography or photography?
- A. Possibly, we do have Adobe Licenses and county owned photo/video that we could use as well.
65. Is there a CMS that you have a preference for over the other?
- A. No preference.
66. Please describe your current content management system and web application. If this is a custom-developed database/template solution on ASP.net/IIS, please describe how page data, attachments/media, and other elements are stored in the database and rendered for HTTP requests.
- A. There currently is no CMS as outlined in the RFP.

67. How many forms will need to be ported from the current site?

- A. We host most of our webforms in a 3rd party provider, those will be embedded on the new site.

68. Does the county wish to have the vendor re-create the form processes from the current site, or would county-assigned editors be expected to create the forms using easy-to-use but powerful form-building tools?

- A. Yes existing forms will have to be recreated. Several of our webforms in a 3rd party provider, those will not need to be rebuilt. Existing HTML Forms can be addressed on a case by case basis.

69. We notice that the site appears to be quite old and uses tables for layout. This makes for challenging automatic migrations, especially when attempting to differentiate actual tables of data from layout tables. Please indicate your preferred migration approach, placing a balance on work responsibilities between the vendor and the county:

Option A - Vendor provides templates and facilities within the new content management system to affect a gradual migration. County-assigned editors would create/update content on the new website while a static snapshot of not-yet-migrated content would be marked as "archival" and displayed in a sandboxed container. It's less "streamlined" from a user's perspective, but may be the only viable choice.

Option B - County provides dataset of "clean" (semantically correct) content, as an SQL dump or other machine-readable format. Vendor migrates source content with minor transformations per a migration plan. Any broken or legacy mark-up remaining in the dataset will be the responsibility of county-assigned subject matter experts to edit.

Option C - County provides raw dataset of content as an SQL dump or other machine-readable format. Vendor processes each page through automatic means to strip direct formatting, tables, and other presentational markup from the inputs before migrating content per a migration plan. Some tables or essential markup may be omitted or broken in the process and it would be the responsibility of county-assigned subject matter experts to edit.

Option D - Vendor performs an automated crawl of every page of the site, stripping direct formatting, tables, and other presentation markup before migrating content per a migration plan. System and non-content pages may be caught up in this

process. Some tables or essential markup may be omitted or broken in the process and it would be the responsibility of county-assigned subject matter experts to edit. Option E - Vendor is entirely responsible for identifying, cleaning, and migrating content for each page.

- A. Our site is built in tables with basic HTML, none of the above options fit our current needs.

70. Please indicate how much content (including media) is present on the current county website. Please omit non-content pages like search results, indices, system pages, or pages that are generated from non-content datasets (e.g. marriage license records in the Recorder's database). Also, please indicate any rough goals you have for reduction/simplification of the content model.

- A. We aim to migrate approximately 400 pages. Media is TBD but over 10,000 files.

71. We see that the current website relies heavily on the display of record-based data. Which specific non-page-content datasets will the new site need to access, process, and display? For example: property records, marriage records, permits, recorded documents, court dockets, PRR requests, and wells.

- Please describe the data model, generally, for each of these data sources and the means by which they are accessed/queried.
- A. None of the examples above will be included in the new website.

72. The RFP requests fixed costs to be proposed. Does this indicate that you're looking for a flat project cost billed at specific milestones, or an hourly rate with a not-to-exceed/contingency clause?

- A. Proposal must specify a fixed or not-to-exceed cost in order to submit

73. What staff levels would you have available for:

- Key project management and resource assignment?
- Final decision-making?
- IT professional services?
- Content/subject matter expertise?

- A. Each of the areas listed above have separate individuals tasked with these responsibilities.

74. What is your estimated budget for this project? Do you already have money set aside? This helps us determine the complexity of various features.

A. We have budget set aside

75. Is there a main executive sponsor for this project? Are they from Information Technology, Communications, or another department?

A. Information Technology is the main driver of this project. There is a Steering and Ownership committee to execute this project.

76. Who will be responsible for evaluating responses (people and/or roles)?

A. An in-house team of technical advisors

77. Who built your current site, and when was the last refresh?

A. Internal staff built the website which has operated for many years without a large overhaul/refresh.

78. Do you have a preference for a highly secure, open-source CMS like Drupal?

A. No preference but must be secure.

79. Please describe your current hosting setup.

A. Hosted on local servers, we seek a cloud-based solution.

80. Who currently provides you with ongoing support services?

A. Internal staff

81. Do you have a separate budget for hosting and ongoing support?

A. Support is in our yearly budget

82. Will the County consider extending the submission deadline by one week? This will allow our firm the time to update our proposal based on Q&A Responses.

A. We cannot as outlined in the RFP. However, if no vendors are selected this round, we will repost the RFP with a new deadline.

83. Please describe the below:

- Monthly Total Bandwidth - NA
- Monthly Page Views – 700,000
- Monthly Hits (e.g. html, css, js, images, docs)
- CMS Number of content pages - 400
- CMS Database size - NA
- CMS File asset size - NA

84. We are a Canadian company. Are you accepting proposals from foreign entities?

- A. Yes, though agency needs to meet the necessary requirements to do business in the State of Washington.

85. Do you have a preference for local vendors?

- A. A local vendor that meets the requirements and expectations would be great to work with but not given preferential treatment.

86. Do you have any examples of competitors that you admire or would like to differentiate from?

- A. Sites with good brand/experience:
<https://www.ebparks.org/>
<https://www.minneapolis.gov/>
<https://www.utah.gov/index.html>
<https://www.hamilton.ca/> <https://www.ms.gov/>

87. Could you tell us how this project would fit within the greater organizational strategy?

- A. Clearly outlined in the RFP

88. What are your success criteria for this project?

- A. Clearly outlined in the RFP

89. Do you have any preference for the content management system (CMS) to be used?

- A. No preference, open to recommendations

90. Are there any specific technologies or platforms you'd like to utilize?

- A. None preferred, open to recommendations

91. Will vendors outside Washington State be considered, and are there additional compliance requirements?
- A. Yes, all vendors must meet needs of the RFP scope and security requirements.
92. Does the County have a preference for a specific CMS (e.g., Drupal, WordPress, proprietary)?
- A. No preference, open to recommendations.
93. Is the County open to a headless CMS approach?
- A. No preference, open to recommendations.
94. Is it safe to assume that the County already has a brand guidelines document and the vendor must follow it?
- A. Existing brand guidelines are very basic and somewhat dated. It covers the logo, fonts, photography, messaging, and colors. We are open to recommendations and evolution to improve our web presence.
95. Will the vendor be required to create a new brand guidelines document?
- A. Existing brand guidelines are very basic and somewhat dated. It covers the logo, fonts, photography, messaging, and colors. We are open to recommendations and evolution to improve our web presence.
96. How many pages need to be migrated?
- A. Approximately 400
97. Will all existing content be migrated, or only selected content?
- A. Only selected content, approximately 400 pages.
98. In what format will the existing content be provided (JSON, XML, CSV, database export, etc.)?
- A. Currently content is all static.
99. Will there be any automated migration support, or will content need to be manually transferred?
- A. Open to recommendations. Most current content is static, based in HTML tables.

100. Do you want a dedicated hosting server, or will a shared instance be acceptable?
- A. Open to both, but must meet hosting and security needs.
101. In order to generate accurate hosting costs, we need current website traffic details. Can you share this data?
- A. We can attach/publish a Google analytics report
102. Beyond SOC 2, are there additional cybersecurity frameworks (e.g., NIST, ISO 27001) that must be followed?
- A. Please view the security questionnaire on page 14 of RFP.
103. Will the County require multi-language support? If so, which languages?
- A. Yes, Google Translate or similar function is needed.
104. Is there an expectation for AI-powered chatbots or automation tools?
- A. Not required but nice to have as stated on page 8 of RFP.
105. What level of post-launch support is expected? Should vendors provide SLAs?
- A. Post launch support to include hosting, code base updates, possible development updates. Please do include an SLA.
106. Is there an incumbent vendor competing for this initiative? If so, is it possible to know which vendor?
- A. No
107. Is there any circumstance where Skagit County would split the scope and award more than one vendor?
- A. Highly unlikely since the proposal must meet the RFP requirements to be awarded as a vendor. The vendor will need to handle entire scope.
108. Are there any requirements or limitations on the location for where aspects of the work is performed? In other words, could our dedicated teams include near-shore and off-shore consultants during certain phases of the project?
- A. No requirements so long as they meet our needs and communicate during PST working day hours 8am-5pm.

109. Are there requirements for US citizenship, residence, or visas for the deployed resource(s)?
A. No
110. Is there a preference for any of the leading consultants to be onsite? If so, which roles?
A. No
111. What is the anticipated gap to project start from the date of vendor selection?
A. Depends on vendors proposal, as stated by them. We aim to start as soon as possible.
112. How many Skagit County employees or teams will be dedicated to this project that we would be collaborating with?
A. 6-8 total with 3-4 key points of contact.
113. Who are the key internal stakeholders and / or functional leads from Skagit County that will be involved in this initiative?
A. There is a Steering and Ownership committee to execute this project.
114. Are there requirements for Skagit County provisioned hardware to be used?
A. No
115. Are there requirements for the system to be hosted on-premises?
A. No, preferred cloud-based solution
116. Does Skagit County have a preferred hyper-scaler partner such as AWS, Microsoft Azure, or Google Cloud?
A. Open to recommendations
117. Are there specific RPO and RTO requirements?
A. Shown in RFP
118. Are there specific availability requirements, such as zero downtime upgrades?
A. Stated in the RFP

119. Is there a known peak transaction rate, and if so is there a latency requirement during peak usage?

A. No

120. Are there requirements with respect to the geographical location of data (like it must reside in Skagit County, Washington, USA)?

A. No