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# Request for Proposal (RFP): Website Creation, Hosting, and Ongoing Support for Hoffman Estates Park District

## 1. Introduction and Background

Hoffman Estates Park District (HEParks) is seeking proposals from qualified vendors to design, develop, and host a modern, mobile-first, responsive website. The selected vendor will also provide ongoing consulting services for future development needs and site maintenance. The new website should provide a fun, engaging, and family-oriented experience.

The new website will integrate seamlessly with Vermont Systems RecTrac/WebTrac API to manage registrations, memberships, facility rentals, and billing, while being optimized for performance, SEO, scalability, and ease of use by both staff and users. It should cater to a diverse audience, including Hoffman Estates residents, nonresidents from adjoining communities, job seekers, elected officials, local businesses, volunteers, and visitors.

Our current website presents challenges related to performance, user experience, and scalability during peak periods like program registration. We aim to develop a solution that improves usability, enhances the user experience, and maintains seamless integration with our backend systems.

### Hoffman Estates Park District Mission/Vision Statement

Our mission is to provide the best in parks and recreation by adhering to our values of integrity, innovation, cooperation, accountability, respect, and excellence. We are committed to enriching our community through parks and recreation.

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## 2. Project Scope

### 2.1. Modern and Family-Oriented Design

- **E-commerce-Like UX:** The website should deliver a seamless and engaging user experience similar to leading e-commerce platforms with advanced search capabilities, intuitive browsing, and advanced filtering for Hoffman Estates Park District programs, events, memberships, and facilities.
- **Mobile-First, Edge-to-Edge Design:** The design must prioritize mobile responsiveness with

edge-to-edge layouts optimized for all devices. The website should offer visually dynamic experiences across mobile, tablet, and desktop platforms.

- **Simplified Top Navigation Menu:** Implement a clean, user-friendly top navigation menu that allows users to quickly access key sections like programs, events, memberships, and facility rentals.
- **Advanced Search and Filtering Functionality:** Implement a robust, intuitive search engine with advanced filtering capabilities that enable users to filter results by categories such as programs, events, facilities, locations, and dates and provide search functionality across the main domain and subdomains (e.g., Vermont Systems RecTrac/WebTrac pages). The functionality should include administrative reporting metrics capabilities to track search queries and improve content strategy based on user behavior. For inspiration, we like [Oak Park Park District](#).

## 2.2. Design Aesthetic and Branding

- **High-Impact Visuals:** The design must include large, high-quality, full-screen visuals, especially in the hero section and on key pages. These visuals should create an immersive and engaging experience for users. For inspiration, we like [Wilmette Park District](#).
- **Dynamic Hero Section with Video Shutoff Capability:** The homepage should include a full-screen hero section with an autoplay video, similar to [Pure Michigan](#), which includes the ability for users to toggle between the video and a static edge-to-edge image. Prominent calls-to-action (CTAs) should drive users to key sections like program registration or event details.
- **Card-Based Layout for Featured Sections:** Use a card-based layout to showcase key programs, events, facility rentals, and promotions. These cards should be visually appealing and feature strong CTAs that encourage user interaction.

## 2.3. Interactive Parks and Facilities Map

- **Searchable Parks and Facilities Map:** Develop an interactive, searchable parks and facilities map (similar to the current map at [HEParks Park Map](#)). The map should allow users to filter parks by amenities, location, and facility type. It must be mobile-responsive, easy to navigate, and visually appealing, providing detailed information on park locations and features.

## 2.4. Integration with Vermont Systems RecTrac/WebTrac API

- **Core Functionality Integration:** Seamlessly integrate with Vermont Systems RecTrac/WebTrac API to manage:
  - **Billing and Payments:** Handle transactions for program registrations, memberships, and facility rentals.
  - **Customer Data and Membership Management:** Manage user profiles, memberships, and customer data through the API.
  - **Facility Rentals and Scheduling:** Allow users to browse and reserve facilities with real-time availability pulled from Vermont Systems.
- **Known Limitations:**

- Final transactions (registrations, payments) must be completed on the WebTrac subdomain, requiring user redirects for the final steps.
- Vermont Systems has bandwidth limitations during peak registration periods, which can cause performance issues.
- For further details, vendors should refer to the official Vermont Systems documentation provided at the following link:
  - [Vermont Systems RecTrac API Documentation](#)

Additionally, the **attached PDF file** contains further API interface details and capabilities.

## 2.5. SEO Optimization and Metadata Control

- **SEO Capabilities:** The website must be built with **SEO best practices** in mind, ensuring fast load times, mobile-friendly design, optimized images, and clean URL structures.
- **Admin Metadata Control:** Admins must have the ability to edit metadata (e.g., page titles, meta descriptions, and keywords) through an SEO management tool such as **Yoast SEO** or a comparable platform.

## 2.6. Performance and Scalability

- **GTmetrix Performance:** The website must be optimized to score at least a **Grade B or above** on GTmetrix testing.
- **Load Management:** Implement caching, load balancing, or other performance optimization strategies to handle high traffic during peak periods, particularly during quarterly registration events.

## 2.7. Content Migration

- Provide a plan for transferring the current website content (text, images, documents, and metadata) to the new platform.
- Ensure existing SEO metadata (page titles, descriptions) is preserved or improved during migration.
- Handle URL redirects from old pages to new ones, with monitoring and fixing any broken links.

## 2.8. Beta Testing and Rollout

- **Beta Testing:** Manage a beta testing phase for the new website before launch. Collect feedback, make adjustments based on testing, and fix any issues.
- **Updates:** Outline your plan for post-launch updates, including bug fixes or performance improvements.

## 2.9. Ongoing Monitoring, Maintenance, and Support

- **Training:** Provide a comprehensive training plan for Park District staff to manage the CMS, update content, and use site features.

- **Ongoing Monitoring:** Vendors must provide a plan for ongoing monitoring of the website to ensure optimal performance, including regular checks on uptime, speed, and overall site functionality. The proposal should outline how the vendor will monitor for issues such as broken links, server outages, or degraded performance over time.
- **Maintenance:** The vendor must provide details on regular maintenance services such as security updates, software patches, CMS updates, and performance optimization tasks. Proposals should specify the frequency of maintenance tasks and how any downtime will be communicated and minimized.
- **Technical Support:** Include the level of technical support that will be provided post-launch, such as response times for support requests, escalation procedures for critical issues, and how vendors will handle urgent matters like site outages. Vendors should also detail any available support packages (e.g., 24/7 support, business hours only, etc.).
- **Performance Reporting:** Proposals should include a strategy for delivering regular performance reports, covering key metrics such as website uptime, traffic, and user engagement. Vendors should provide details on how often these reports will be shared and what they will include (e.g., security incidents, speed optimization).

#### 2.10. Web Page Translation Capabilities

- **Google Translate or Similar:** Implement a web translation tool (e.g., Google Translate) that allows non-English speaking users to easily translate the entire website into their preferred language. The feature should be easily accessible and prominently displayed to ensure inclusivity for diverse users.
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### 3. Proposal Requirements

**Proposals must include the following details. Failure to include these items may be grounds for proposal rejection:**

#### 3.1. Company Profile

Provide a brief overview of your company, including relevant experience designing websites for public agencies, parks, or recreation organizations.

#### 3.2. Project Approach

**Design Philosophy:** Describe your approach to creating a visually immersive, user-friendly, and mobile-first website with a dynamic video-capable hero.

- **Vermont Systems API Integration:** Provide a detailed plan for integrating Vermont Systems RecTrac/WebTrac API, including how you will address subdomain redirects and manage load during peak traffic periods.
- **Advanced Search and Filtering:** Outline how users will easily search for programs, events,

facilities, or documents with sophisticated filtering options.

- **SEO Optimization:** Outline how you will ensure the site follows SEO best practices and enables admin metadata editing through tools like **Yoast SEO** or similar.
- **Performance Optimization:** Outline your strategy for achieving a **Grade B or higher** on GTmetrix and ensuring scalability and optimal performance during high-traffic events.

### 3.3. Detailed Feature Implementation

- **CMS Capabilities:** Describe the features and usability of the proposed CMS, focusing on how staff can easily manage and update content, images, and event listings.
- **Search Analytics:** Explain how search query tracking and reporting will be implemented, including how administrators can access and customize reports.
- **Hero Section with Video Shutoff Capability:** Detail how you will implement the video autoplay and static image toggle feature in the hero section, as seen on **Pure Michigan**.

### 3.4. Timeline

Provide a detailed timeline from discovery, design, and development to testing and launch, including key project milestones and deadlines.

### 3.5. Cost Proposal

Provide an itemized breakdown of all costs, including design, development, hosting, and ongoing maintenance.

### 3.6. References

Include at least three references from clients for whom you have developed websites with similar scope and complexity, particularly those involving API integrations and advanced search functionality.

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## 4. Proposed Project Schedule

- **RFP Released:** January 14, 2025
- **Proposals Due:** January 31, 2025
- **Vendor Selection for Presentations:** Week of February 3, 2025
- **Vendor Presentations:** Week of March 3, 2025
- **Vendor Recommendation to Rec Committee on:** March 18, 2025
- **Board Approval on:** March 25, 2025
- **Contract Awarded:** March 26, 2025
- **New Website Launched:** December 2025

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## 5. General Terms & Conditions

- **RFP Response Costs:** HEParks will not be responsible for costs incurred in the preparation of proposals. All submissions become the property of HEParks.
  - **Confidentiality:** Proposals are subject to Illinois Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) and Local Records Act.
  - **Subcontractors:** Vendors may use subcontractors but must disclose their use. HEParks reserves the right to approve or deny subcontractors.
  - **Reserved Rights:** HEParks reserves the right to negotiate terms, seek clarification, or reject any or all proposals.
  - **Non-Discrimination:** Vendors must comply with the Illinois Human Rights Act and other relevant state and federal laws.
  - **Award of Contract:** The contract will be awarded based on the evaluation of the proposal that best meets the needs of HEParks.
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## 6. Evaluation Criteria

Proposals will be evaluated based on the following:

### 6.1. Design and User Experience

- The quality of the design approach, particularly in delivering a modern, mobile-first, and visually engaging experience that meets the needs of our diverse users and families.

### 6.2. Advanced Search Functionality

- The ability to deliver robust, intuitive, and user-friendly search capabilities with advanced filtering options. The search should support seamless navigation across the main domain and subdomains (e.g., Vermont Systems RecTrac/WebTrac) while allowing administrative reporting on search queries for data-driven decision-making.

### 6.3. Technical Expertise

- Proven ability to handle third-party API integrations (especially Vermont Systems RecTrac/WebTrac API) and ensure high-performance website delivery during peak periods.

### 6.4. SEO Optimization and Metadata Control

- Demonstrated capability to implement SEO best practices and provide admin control over metadata (e.g., page titles, meta descriptions) using tools like **Yoast SEO** or equivalent to ensure high search engine visibility.

### 6.5. Performance Optimization

- Strategies for achieving optimal site performance, fast load times, and scalability, with a focus on handling peak traffic periods, particularly during quarterly registration events. The proposal should ensure the website will achieve a **Grade B or higher** on GTmetrix.

#### **6.6. CMS Usability**

- The ease of use of the Content Management System (CMS) for HEParks staff, including the ability to easily manage and update content, events, and images on the website without technical assistance.

#### **6.7. Accessibility and Compliance**

- Adherence to **WCAG 2.1 AA standards** for accessibility, ensuring that all users, including those with disabilities, can fully engage with the website.

#### **6.8. Cost Effectiveness**

- Overall value for money based on the scope of work, including design, development, hosting, and ongoing maintenance.

#### **6.9. Client References**

- Quality and relevance of references, particularly those for projects that involved complex API integrations, performance optimizations, and user-focused design.

#### **6.10. Language Accessibility**

- Proposals should include the implementation of a translation feature (such as Google Translate or similar) that allows users to translate the website content into multiple languages. This feature should be easy to use and accessible from any page on the site.
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### **7. Submission Details**

- **Deadline for Proposals:** January 31, 2025
  - **Submission Format:**
    - Proposals should be submitted electronically in PDF format to Marisa Anstey at [manstey@heparks.org](mailto:manstey@heparks.org)
  - **Contact Information:**
    - For any questions or clarifications, please contact Marisa Anstey in writing at [manstey@heparks.org](mailto:manstey@heparks.org)
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## **Appendix: Vermont Systems Documentation**

- Vendors are advised to review the Vermont Systems API documentation to ensure proper integration with [RecTrac/WebTrac](#). The API documentation can be found online via the link above, or you may refer to the attached **Vermont Systems API Interfaces 3.1 PDF** for more detailed information.