

DISTRICT OF KITIMAT

Website RFP Enquiries



- 1. Are there any existing pain points or challenges that you want to address? E.g., usability, accessibility, outdated design, lack of flexibility, security concerns?**

The current website is difficult to navigate on the backend. This creates some issues in how the website displays information for members of the public and complicates how they can find what they need. Success for this new website in addressing the current pain points will look like:

- A simplified user interface for staff on the website backend. This includes modern design and media features that allow automatically resized images in different sections of a webpage.
- Better in-house ability for customization. This includes the ability to remove modules (like social media links/buttons) without leaving gaps on a webpage and internally updating the homepage layout if needed.
- Strong SEO optimization that prioritizes recent pages and information.
- Stronger email/newsletter capability
- Streamlined workflow to approve website edits among different departments with the flexibility to adjust the workflow for staff turnover and organisational structure changes.

- 2. What are your preferred processes for revisions and feedback?**

Revisions and feedback after each project phase will be sufficient.

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

The District of Kitimat strives to communicate with the community in the easiest and most accessible way. Communication surveys have revealed that residents rely on the website as one of the most authoritative sources they receive verified information. Furthermore, Council's Strategic goal includes a mandate to continue to engage citizens and youth in Kitimat governance. The website is an important tool to achieve this.

- 4. What are your success criteria for this project?**

- Success for this project will be simplifying our project mapping so residents and staff can find information better
- Having a clean modern user interface that isn't overwhelming to navigate
- A CMS that is easy to navigate and allows website editors make changes seamlessly with variations in how they present information
- A CMS that requires minimal interaction with the provider's customer support staff to make changes or improvements

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5. Are you looking to design from an existing template or are you looking for a custom design?

We are open to a custom design or a hybrid (part template, part custom design). It is important that the content management system is capable of being locally hosted in our on-premise Nutanix AHV environment eventually. Nutanix supports Windows and most Linux virtual servers.

6. How much content will need to be migrated from your existing website?

The current website has approximately 200 regular (static) pages listed as Published, and approximately 650 news posts which our existing site counts as a page.

We are actively merging and editing information on our current website, and we would not anticipate migrating the majority of our news posts.

We would anticipate not more than 450 pages to migrate.

7. With regards to content, how much will be newly developed vs pulled directly from the old website. What is the content writing (not migration) expectations of the chosen proponent?

The District can provide content for the website. We anticipate most of the content – namely the writing - that is migrated will remain. When new content is desired we can provide the content for placement.

8. The RFP asks for site maintenance and support to be included in the budget of \$100,000. Would this include the first year of maintenance and support renewing yearly? What are your expectations for ongoing maintenance, updates, and technical support after the website is launched?

The RFP budget of \$100,000 includes the first year of maintenance to be renewed annually. The District expects hosting, regular website maintenance, updates and support provided by the successful proponent at an annual cost separate from this budget after the first year. Preference will be given to proposals that provide a fixed rate/cost for maintenance over 3 to 5 years.

9. Do you have an existing user testing group?

No.

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

There is no specific technology we would like to utilize. We however want a website that is future-proofed and can incorporate other potential services we may adopt, such as AI search engine integration, a new website system for archiving council meetings or posting jobs, as examples.

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11. Could you please specify if any integrations with third party services will be required for the website?

We have an integrated search engine provided by Cludo. The website also has integrations with third party systems, other than some media embedding from Vimeo and YouTube.

We have a separate microsite called Get Involved Kitimat, run on a platform called Social Pinpoint, which has no current integrations available. We intend to keep using the Get Involved Kitimat platform on a new website.

We also have our Kitimat Bound website linked to the municipal website and a Local Intel microsite that is embedded into the website to provide investment and site selection data.

Our Leisure and Recreation Services department uses a recreation registration site called Activenet that is linked to our website. We will also soon link to a building permit portal service called CloudPermit which through a link to their service.

Long term, we anticipate adding online payment systems for fees like business licences or dog licences.

12. Would it be possible to fulfil the in-person engagement requirement virtually instead?

One public engagement session must be in-person. We welcome a presentation to Council during the in-person public engagement. However, the one in-person Council meeting mandated in the RFP is to be at the project end. We can consider a virtual presentation to Council at the end of the project if travel costs are prohibitive.

13. What are the biggest challenges your team faces with the current website? E.g., usability, accessibility, outdated design, lack of flexibility, security concerns?

Usability for District staff on the website backend. Customizability. Outdated design and media features on existing system. That includes inability for system to automatically resize certain image features. Also difficult to streamline workflow for website edits among different departments.

14. How is the website currently maintained, who maintains the site, how frequently are updates made, and what are the bottlenecks?

The website is largely maintained by the Business and Communications Manager and the Economic Development and Communications Administrative Assistant. Certain departments also have designated staff with their own access to update certain sections of the website with approval from the Economic Development and Communications department to publish edits. Additions to our News module (RSS compatible) and calendar is quite frequent. Otherwise, there are periodic updates to our static pages.

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15. What is the primary purpose of the website today, and has that changed over time?

I. Is it mainly for communication, public engagement, compliance, or service delivery?

Primary purpose is to communicate authoritative community information and provide residents and businesses access to municipal services/information. Users of the website access news updates on the site and subscribe to these news updates through email (whenever a news update is made, subscribers can receive it by email). The website also hosts a variety of forms, reports and policies. Requests for maintenance of municipal infrastructure (Light posts, bus stops, sidewalks etc.) and indicating an interest in volunteering to join a committee or commission can also be done through forms on the website. Public engagement is done through an external site provided by Social Pinpoint that is linked to the website.

16. What feedback have you received from residents, Council, or internal departments about the website?

I. Are there complaints or requests that frequently arise?

- Common complaints from staff are that the website is hard to use and changes can inadvertently affect other elements on a page. The public finds the website hard to navigate due to website mapping with layered pages that embed information in a way that isn't intuitive. There are also scattered pages that do not link correctly to any major website sections further complicating the process of finding information for staff and members of the public.
- RTMP video streamed on the current website doesn't show a proper thumbnail and shows a download file link.
- Personally identifiable information can be scraped from documents on the website. Can they be obfuscated or detected?

17. Can you elaborate on the restricted access sections of the website? Is this a membership portal with hidden content or is this in reference to back-end access?

- I. If back-end, how many user roles do you anticipate the website requiring?**
II. If a membership portal, how many members do you anticipate needing logins?

Restricted access refers to the backend of the website. We anticipate having 4 users with universal access including administrative management, and 10 additional users with editing access to specific pages on the site.

18. Are there any limitations in the current website that hinder public engagement or accessibility?

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- I. **(For example, is it difficult for users to find information, or does it fail to meet WCAG compliance?)**



Information can be hard to find. We have many sub-pages on existing site, and sometimes details can be scattered on different pages. The District's Accessibility Committee have flagged concerns with the website being accessible for all users.

- 19. What are examples of other municipal websites that you admire? What are they doing that you like? What are they doing that you don't like?**

Some examples of sites we admire:

- Regional District of Fraser Fort George, uncluttered front page and very fast loading.
- Town of Smithers and City of Prince Rupert: website very nice looking, aligned to their brand and colours.
- City of Prince George – our staff have indicated they appreciate how information about zoning and development is presented

Other sites:

The District of Vanderhoof has a very nice looking website, however it looks more tourism-focused. Kitimat.ca redesign still should focus on resident services and news.

- 20. Are there any key dates or milestones that will occur before the final CMS phase out date?**

The end-of-maintenance date for the site is December 30, 2025 and the end-of-life date for the site is June 30, 2026.

- 21. The RFP mentions that there is no hosting. Do you have an internal IT team who manages the hosting or is it outsourced to an external provider?**

No, the internal IT team will not be able to host the website. We would require the successful proponent to provide hosting for the website.

- 22. Would the District be open to an electronic proposal submission that provides a proposal format that is interactive? For example, a digital format with a Scope of Work section that provides information as required by the RFP, as well as the option for the District's evaluation team to 'select' checkboxes of optional items and add-ons or value-additions? Please note this interactive proposal could also be saved as PDF and printed by the District if desired.**

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Yes, an interactive proposal with value-adds that exceed the RFP requirements is welcome. Please include equivalent pricing for these add-ons to help us evaluate comprehensively.



23. What format should the Workplan and Schedule be presented in?

A project scope of work plan providing a phased approach with corresponding weeks, and project milestones, will satisfy the mandatory proposal criteria for Workplan & Schedule.

24. What format should the Price be presented in?

A fixed price with fees by phase format will satisfy the mandatory proposal criteria for Price.

25. How many website visits does your main municipal website currently experience in an average month?

86,000 annual visits on average over the last three years.

26. Can the District further clarify its expectation for "online engagement opportunity for residents to share their priorities for the website". For example, does this mean an online webform tool for users to submit their questions/feedback for the website, or otherwise.

Our preference will be for an online navigation test/survey for residents to better understand how they click through to find information, so our site mapping is practical. Rocky View County in Alberta went through a similar process to structure their new site map.

27. Would the District prefer to have a functionality for an online engagement opportunity as part of the website, or would the District be open to a new, standalone online engagement platform in addition to the main website?

The District already has a separate online public engagement platform provided by Social Pinpoint. We are not looking to adopt a new one and would prefer to integrate our existing platform to the new website.

28. Your current website seems to be written with .NET among other things. Do you have a preference to stick with .NET? Or are you open to other technology stack?

No preference.

29. Do you manage Kitimat Bound and how do you want to use it moving forward?

The Kitimat Bound website is our tourism, business and workforce attraction site managed by a consultant. We prefer to have it linked to this website and do not foresee combining both platforms.