

Addendum No. 1 to RFP 25-78



CITY OF SOMERVILLE, MASSACHUSETTS
Department of Procurement and Contracting Services
KATJANA BALLANTYNE
MAYOR

To: All Parties on Record with the City of Somerville as Holding
RFP 25-78 Drupal 10 & 11 Website Managed Hosting and Development

From: Thupten Chukhatsang, Senior Procurement Manager

Date: 7/10/2025

Re: Q&A

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Please acknowledge receipt of this Addendum by signing below and including this form in your proposal package. Failure to do so may subject the proposer to disqualification.

NAME OF COMPANY / INDIVIDUAL: _____

ADDRESS: _____

CITY/STATE/ZIP: _____

TELEPHONE/FAX/EMAIL: _____

SIGNATURE OF AUTHORIZED INDIVIDUAL: _____

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF ADDENDA:

Addendum #1 _____ **#2** _____ **#3** _____ **#4** _____

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Questions and Responses:

1. What was the annual spend for the previous year on this Project?
 - A: Our previous year spend was \$100,800. This represents \$64,800 dollars for 480 hours of development/consultation services, and \$36,000 for managed web hosting and WAF/CDN services.
2. Are you open to a hybrid delivery model with a mix of offshore and onshore resources?
 - A: Yes, but the teams must be able to operate in alignment with Eastern Time.
3. Work will be onsite or remote?
 - A: Remote.
4. Can you please give us an extension of 1-2 weeks to submit our proposal?
 - A: Unfortunately, we are not able to adjust the submission timeline due to an urgent need to initiate the project.
5. Is the assumption that the site would be transferred to a new hosting location, or will the existing hosting environment(s) be used? If the latter, who is the existing hosting provider?
 - A: Yes, our assumption is that the site would be transferred to a new hosting location. The site is currently hosted on Pantheon. We pay the current vendor to purchase and administer the Pantheon service on our behalf.
6. Is the hosting cost part of the proposed budget(s)?
 - A: Yes.
7. Does the City currently have WAF/CDN services, or will this be new for the City?
 - A: Yes, WAF/CDN services are part of our current hosting agreement, and both are part of the Pantheon service that our current vendor maintains on our behalf.
8. What is the current annual hosting cost?
 - A: We paid \$36,000 for hosting, WAF, and CDN services for August 2024 to August 2025.
9. Can you provide the number of page views per month, currently, for the site?
 - A: ~240,000 page views per month.
10. What is the average bandwidth usage per month?
 - A: ~140 GB/mo.
11. Can you provide current storage requirements for both database and files?
 - A: Our code base is approximately 190 MB, and the total storage footprint including the code, Drupal database, and files is approximately 225 GB..
12. "The City of Somerville must have direct access to change website views, blocks, content types, and other site configuration settings." – to clarify, Somerville staff would have access to the administrative tools, but is access to the code repository also being requested here ("change...content types")?

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- A: The City does not need to be able to modify the code repository, but does need to have access to download the latest version at any given time.
13. How many people currently administer content?
- A: There are currently 23 users with varying levels of administrative controls.
14. What is the current number of levels of editorial approval workflow?
- A: The Workbench Moderation States for our site are Draft, Needs Review, Published, and Archived. All user accounts, user roles/permissions, and content generation/refinement workflows are managed directly by the City and do not require vendor involvement.
15. How many distinct administrative roles are in the current City site?
- A: 6 roles.
16. How many custom and contributed modules does the current City site have?
- A: A listing of the installed modules can be [found here](#).
17. Whether companies from Outside USA can apply for this? (like, from India or Canada)
- A: Vendors outside of the U.S. may bid on the contract, but must be able to operate in alignment with Eastern Time.
18. Whether we need to come over there for meetings?
- A: No, all meetings will be held remotely.
19. Can we perform the tasks (related to RFP) outside USA? (like, from India or Canada)
- A: Vendors outside of the U.S. may bid on the contract, but must be able to operate in alignment with Eastern Time.
20. Can we submit the proposals via email?
- A: No, proposals must be submitted by mail as outlined on pages 1 and 2 of the RFP.
21. Please share the exact version of Drupal including minor version i.e. 10.5.1
- A: Drupal version 10.4.5.
22. Are you currently using any platform / utility for translation? if yes please share the details.
- A: We are using a simple block that provides users with a drop-down selection of language choices, and when one is selected, opens the current page in Google Translate.
23. What are different third party integrations being used?
- A: We do not have any major integrations between our website and third-party tools or services. We do call on third-party services such as Google Analytics, Font Awesome, and Adobe Fonts using JavaScript code in the HTML head section. We also embed content from platforms like Flockler and YouTube, as well as utilize features like Google Maps and Drive folders via JavaScript and iframes. Additionally, we have straightforward content import feeds that primarily import data in CSV or XML format.

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24. Would you provide Business Requirement Document, Software design and Requirement document, test cases and test results document with us?

- A: No. This is not a redesign or new development project, so such documents are not applicable. We will provide technical access, existing configuration, and prioritized issue lists.

25. What are the current tools or methods you use to run security scans and updates, check website speed, and report SEO recommendations?

- A: For monitoring website performance, usability, accessibility, and SEO, we currently use tools including Google Search Console (Webmaster Tools) and Siteimprove.

In the interest of maintaining system integrity and minimizing potential vulnerabilities, we do not disclose the specific tools or methods used for security scanning, patch management, or endpoint monitoring.

26. Could you please update us about the current versions of PHP and MySQL?

- A: PHP Version 8.2.28, MariaDB Version 10.6.8.

28. Is existing system running on Apache? If yes, please let us know the version, if no please let us know which OS are you using.

- A: Our web server currently uses Nginx 1.27.1. The site is hosted on the Pantheon platform, which runs on Google Cloud Platform infrastructure using a container-based architecture.

29. The existing website seems to be responsive. What challenges are you facing with existing responsive design?

30. In the existing website/Drupal setup, do you not have access to Site Configurations?

- A: We do have access to site configuration currently, and it is important to us that we maintain this access.

31. For Large File Management, what is maximum file size you would like to be allowed for upload? Would you be able to tell number of files currently being used?

- A: Our current AWS S3 bucket contains approximately 200 GB of data, spread across about 206,400 objects, with an average object size of roughly 1 MB. The vast majority of files are under 10 MB. Occasionally, we may need to upload files ranging from 10 MB to 200 MB. In very rare cases, we may need to upload files up to 5 GB in size.

We aim to keep file sizes as small as possible to ensure an optimal user experience, and in most cases, uploads are relatively lightweight. That said, we would like the system to support uploads of up to 5 GB if needed. While large uploads would be rare, we want to ensure the platform can accommodate them when necessary.

32. Is the development team allowed to work remotely (outside city of Somerville, off shore development center) with a presence of key POC available locally as needed.

- A: Yes.

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33. Is version control a requirement for the proposed solution?

- A: Yes.

34. We request clarification on the desired Recovery Point Objective (RPO) and Recovery Time Objective (RTO).

- A: We target an RPO of 24 hours and an RTO of 1 hour, ensuring no more than one day of data loss and no more than one hour of downtime.

35. Will there be any expected downtime during the migration process? If so, what duration is considered acceptable?

- A: Our expectation is that, like during our 2023 migration process, there would be no service downtime.

36. The place of performance noted on the solicitation document states that all work must take place in Somerville, MA. With the nature of web development work, would working remotely be acceptable? Our team could conduct the kickoff meeting and other key meetings in person, however the work dictated by the scope would typically be done remotely.

- A: Yes, we apologize for the misstatement of the place of performance. All work can and will be conducted remotely.

37. What hosting platform is currently being used on Somerville's website? (IE, AWS, Pantheon, etc.)?

- A: Our site is currently hosted on the Pantheon "Performance" plan.

38. Can you confirm if the Insurance requirement is negotiable?

- A: The insurance specifications sheet is attached and the City expects that all aspects of the Insurance requirements are to be met as prescribed by the awarded vendor.

39. Do different teams/departments manage their own sites? Or does one team own all web work?

- A: The City's internal management of the site is led by the Office of Web Content and Development, a team that includes technical users with varying levels of development expertise. In addition, select staff from individual departments are responsible for maintaining their own content, such as text, images, and documents, within their areas of the site.

40. Please describe the internal team who will be responsible for the website post-launch (developers, non-tech users, etc)

- A: As noted throughout this document and the RFP, this is not a website redesign or relaunch project. The website is already live and in active use. The City's internal management of the site is led by the Office of Web Content and Development, a team that includes technical users with varying levels of development expertise. In addition, select staff from individual departments are responsible for maintaining their own content, such as text, images, and documents, within their areas of the site.

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

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- A: At this time, just one theme carries across the entire site. We may elect to add a sub-theme down the line and would expect the vendor to provide that through hourly development work.
42. Do you have high-quality photography/media assets available for the new site?
- A: This is not a website redesign project.
43. How detailed are the existing branding guidelines?
- A: This is not a website redesign project.
44. 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: This is not a website redesign or information architecture overhaul project, so we do not.
45. Do you expect copywriting or editing services as part of engagement?
- A: No.
46. What is your plan for editing/creating content during the redesign?
- A: This is not a website redesign project.
47. What percentage of the current content is obsolete and won't be migrated to the new site?
- A: This is not a website redesign or relaunch. It is for a Drupal version upgrade, hosting support, and enhancements. All content is to be preserved.
48. Are tables used for layout in the existing content?
- A: Tables are used across our site to present information, but not for template purposes.
49. Would you describe the existing content as structured, with consistent separation of content and code?
- A: Yes.
50. Do you require specific response time SLAs for critical issues? If so, please specify expectations.
- A: Yes.
51. Do you require 24/7 support access in the case of critical (site availability) issues?
- A: Yes, please see page 11 of the RFP.
52. 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, we have not.
53. Do you experience frequent surges of traffic that impact performance at critical times?
- A: No.
54. Does search need to index the contents of pdf/Doc files?
- A: Yes. The search solution must be able to index and return results from PDF file content. Inclusion of DOC files is not required.
55. Are there multi-lingual requirements? Is Google Translate or similar sufficient?

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- A: We currently use Google Translate, and that approach is sufficient
56. How many levels of users are needed?
- A: Six.
57. Can you provide information on your workflow needs?
- A: Our site uses Workbench Moderation to move contents between four different moderation states. Those states are draft, needs review, published, and archived.
58. Are survey/voting tools required?
- A: No.
59. Are paragraphs in use on-site? If so, please advise on migration needs related to paragraphs.
- A: There are 14 paragraph types in use: Accordion Tiles, Accordion Tiles Items, Anchor Links, Button Tiles, Button Tiles Items, Contact Information, Event Document, Homepage Key Services Item, Homepage Status Items, Jump Links Bar, Jump Link Title, Page Alert, Rich Text/Content, Tabbed Content. We expect to continue to use all of these.
60. Please describe media entities (videos, etc) that need to be migrated.
- A: Most media is stored in AWS S3 and referenced within content nodes. We do not anticipate needing to migrate media separately, but references must remain intact post-upgrade.
61. How many user accounts need to be migrated?
- A: All existing user accounts will remain in place. There are currently 90 user accounts.
62. Please describe any existing taxonomy that needs to migrate to the new site.
- A: There are 6 taxonomies in use: Official (City and State Official), Precinct (City Precincts), Ward (City Wards), Service Category (Categories used to arrange topics in FAQs and Services by Category), Tags (Use tags to group articles on similar topics into categories), Icons (Taxonomy contains Font Awesome icons). We expect to continue to use all of these.
63. How many content types are in use on the current site?
- A: There are 19 content types in use: Article, Basic page, Bid Posting, Board/Commission Vacancy, Building, Document, Elections Finance Report, Event, HPC Case, Job Posting, News, Official, Organization, Program or Initiative, People, Reports And Decisions, Resident Address, Reusable Component, Street Sweeping Section, Trash Pickup Section
64. Do you expect to reuse a lot of the existing Drupal configuration, or should we plan to start over with a new Drupal config?
- A: Yes, we expect to reuse the majority of the Drupal configuration.
65. Can you confirm that core and contributed modules are all unmodified at the code level?
- A: Yes.

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66. 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 at this time.

67. Is there a plan (or desire, if it's easy to do so) to create more sites in the future?

- A: There is not.

68. How many websites are in-scope for this project?

- A: Only one: www.somervillema.gov.

69. Is there any preference for local vendors?

- A: Being a local vendor does not by itself confer any advantage. Vendors are encouraged to explain how proximity could enhance their performance on specific scoring criteria that we outlined in the RFP. For example, operating in the same community can enable more immediate responsiveness, closer collaboration, and deeper insight into local needs. When supported by concrete details, such factors may positively influence the evaluation.

70. What are the boundaries of “ad hoc development support”?

- A: **Ad hoc development support** refers to on-call, as-needed technical services that fall outside of planned project phases. For the City, this can include a broad range of tasks necessary to maintain, enhance, or troubleshoot the Drupal-based website. These tasks may vary in scope and complexity and may be initiated with short notice depending on operational needs.

Examples of tasks that fall under ad hoc development support include, but are not limited to:

Minor adjustments and styling fixes, such as CSS tweaks or layout updates to improve presentation or accessibility

Drupal best practices guidance, including recommendations on content structuring, permissions, workflows, and module selection

Bug fixes and resolution of front-end or back-end issues, including browser compatibility and responsive behavior

Custom module development to meet specific business or content requirements

Theming and template development, including new page templates or content display modes

Integration of third-party tools or APIs

Content model adjustments, such as modifying content types, taxonomies, views, and blocks

Performance optimization, including caching strategies and database indexing

Security updates, including applying Drupal core and contributed module updates

Support for multi-site configurations, where applicable

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Database operations, such as data migrations, batch operations, content cleanup, or view exports/imports

Accessibility improvements, including fixes identified through automated tools like Siteimprove or manual audits

Form development, including conditional logic, data validation, and integration with backend systems

Workflow configuration, including role-based access, content approval workflows, and editorial tools

Analytics and tracking, including integration with Google Tag Manager, site search tracking, and custom event tracking

Ongoing compatibility updates related to browser updates, screen readers, and evolving WCAG requirements

Consultation or technical input on new features, platform updates, or emerging city initiatives

In essence, ad hoc support is intended to give the City flexibility in maintaining and enhancing the Drupal environment without requiring a formal change order or project plan for each individual item. All tasks must be scoped, tracked, and billed in accordance with the contract terms and service-level expectations.

71. Are there specific tasks (major new features, integrations, redesigns) that are explicitly excluded?

- A: No.

72. Is there a prioritized wish list for improvements beyond accessibility, hosting, security, and the Drupal 11 upgrade?

- A: Yes, the City maintains a prioritized wish list for features and improvements.

73. Can you share the full list of known issues flagged by Siteimprove?

- A: The [overview here](#) lists the currently known accessibility issues.

74. Will vendors receive access to the Siteimprove dashboard?

- A: Yes, the winning vendor will be granted access to the Siteimprove dashboard.

75. Are any content types, modules, or custom code changes anticipated beyond the Drupal upgrade and accessibility work?

- A: Yes, the City's wish list of website changes will be used to request hourly development work once the Drupal upgrade and accessibility goals have been met.

76. How does the City define “basic maintenance”? (e.g., module updates, minor bug fixes, performance tuning)

- A: Basic maintenance refers to the routine, ongoing tasks required to keep the City’s Drupal website secure, stable, and functioning as intended. This includes applying Drupal core and contributed module updates (particularly security patches), fixing minor bugs, performing basic performance tuning (such as cache configuration and image optimization),

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and monitoring for system errors or vulnerabilities. It may also include small content display corrections, upkeep of existing third-party integrations, verification of backup processes, and general site health monitoring.

77. Are there ongoing SEO, analytics, or reporting requirements the vendor should be prepared to maintain or enhance?

- A: The vendor only needs to provide reports of development hour usage to coincide with invoices.

78. What is the expected division of responsibilities between the vendor and the City's team for ongoing content management and editorial tasks?

- A: The City is responsible for all ongoing content management and editorial tasks.

79. Does the City have a preferred hosting provider or location?

- A: The City does not have a preferred hosting provider. The service should be located in the United States, and the City would prefer that the servers are located in the eastern US.

80. Are there specific data residency or compliance requirements for hosting?

- A: Yes. The City requires that all website hosting and related data services comply with applicable local, state, and federal laws regarding data security and privacy. At a minimum, all data must be hosted within the United States. Hosting providers must follow industry-standard security practices, including encryption of data in transit and at rest, regular patching, and secure access controls. In addition, vendors must be prepared to comply with any applicable Massachusetts public records and data protection laws, and may be required to assist in responding to public records requests involving hosted data.

81. Can you share the current storage size, bandwidth, and anticipated growth statistics?

- A: The City's website currently uses approximately 140 gigabytes of bandwidth per month and receives around 240,000 page views monthly. The Drupal codebase is about 190 megabytes, and the total storage footprint, including code, database, and file assets, is approximately 225 gigabytes. Our AWS S3 bucket holds around 206,400 objects, with an average file size of about one megabyte.

We do not have formal growth projections at this time, but we anticipate modest and steady growth across traffic, content volume, and file storage based on historical patterns and overall usage trends. The platform should be scalable enough to accommodate gradual increases in demand over the coming years without requiring major reconfiguration.

82. Are any third-party integrations (beyond S3, Swiftype, Elasticsearch, Siteimprove) required or likely?

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- A: We don't anticipate any in the immediate future, but vendors should be prepared to meet any emerging integration needs with hourly development support.
83. What specific issues have been experienced with Swifttype/Elasticsearch?
- A: Our primary concern with the current SwiftType and Elasticsearch-based search implementation is poor search relevancy. The system often fails to return consistently useful results, and improving relevance through ranking, weighting, and synonym management is complex, time consuming, and difficult to maintain. In addition, users do not have access to meaningful search faceting, which makes it hard to filter or narrow results by content type, date, topic, or other useful categories. While not the most critical issue, the current setup also does not support searching within PDF content, which limits the overall effectiveness of the site search.
84. Can you outline the desired search outcomes or administrative features that you would like to implement?
- A: We are looking for a search experience that delivers relevant, accurate results based on the structure and priorities of our content. Users should be able to filter and refine their results through useful faceting options, such as content type, department, topic, and date. A key requirement is the ability to search the contents of PDFs. Users should have the option to include or exclude PDFs in their searches, and administrators should be able to control which PDFs are indexed and which are not. We also want the ability to manage relevance settings, such as weighting certain content types or boosting specific pages. Administrative tools should make it easy to adjust synonyms, monitor search analytics, and respond to patterns in user behavior, all without requiring custom development for routine changes.
85. Does the City require periodic security assessments or penetration tests? If so, how often?
- A: No, any such testing would be performed by the City or another vendor.
86. What level of incident reporting is required in the event of a security issue or breach?
- A: In the event of a security issue or breach, the City requires immediate notification upon discovery—no later than 24 hours after the vendor becomes aware of the incident. The initial report must include a clear description of the issue, the systems or data affected, and any immediate mitigation steps taken. A full incident report must follow within five business days, detailing the root cause, scope of impact, corrective actions, and any recommended changes to prevent recurrence. The vendor is also expected to cooperate fully with the City's IT and legal teams, including participation in any post-incident reviews or required disclosures.

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87. Will the vendor be expected to coordinate with legal counsel or external auditors to validate WCAG 2.1 AA status?
- A: No
88. Will the incumbent vendor be contractually obligated to support handoff and onboarding?
- A: Yes.
89. What information and access will be guaranteed?
- A: The selected vendor will be provided with full access to the Drupal codebase and database, as well as the contents of our AWS S3 file storage. They will also be given direct access to our Siteimprove dashboard for accessibility monitoring and reporting. In addition, they will have access to the current SwiftType implementation to support search-related development and evaluation. We will coordinate closely to ensure all necessary credentials, endpoints, and configuration details are shared at the appropriate stages.
90. Will the City's IT support DNS/network configuration in the transition, or must this be fully managed by the vendor?
- A: Yes, the City administers its own DNS and IT will coordinate with the vendor during any transition.
91. Are there flexibility options in support hours (8 a.m.–6 p.m. EST) for distributed or remote teams?
- A: Some flexibility is allowed, but the vendor's support team must maintain substantial overlap with the City's business hours (8 a.m.–6 p.m. EST). A minimum of five hours of daily overlap is required to ensure real-time collaboration, timely responses, and effective coordination. Teams may be distributed or remote, but they must be staffed and available to meet this availability requirement.
92. Are escalation paths or ticket systems already in place, or should the proposal address these?
- A: The ticketing system currently in use (Basecamp) is provided by the incumbent vendor. Bidding vendors should outline their approach to ticket intake, triage, and management.
93. Is direct City staff training or documentation required at onboarding or after the Drupal 11 upgrade?
- A: No.
94. Is the May–July 2026 window for the Drupal 11 upgrade flexible? (e.g., if dependencies or module compatibility issues arise)
- A: Yes, we realize that the roadmap for Drupal core/modules etc., can be a moving target and we can be somewhat flexible.
95. Will the City provide a detailed schedule for major initiatives, review cycles, and acceptance processes?

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- A: The City will provide a prioritized list of issues, along with full access to our Siteimprove dashboard. From there, it will be the vendor's responsibility to effectively resource and carry out the work necessary to meet those goals. The target is full WCAG 2.1 Level AA compliance by the federal deadline of April 24, 2026. We do not plan to provide a detailed schedule of initiatives or formal review cycles. Vendors are expected to manage timelines and workflows accordingly to ensure compliance by the deadline.
96. How should monthly hours be calculated (calendar month, rolling 30 days, etc.)?
- A: Our preference would be to calculate monthly hours by calendar month.
97. Is there a cap on or a policy for unused hours rolling over?
- A: There is no cap on unused hours. We expect a continuous stream of work and full utilization of the team's capacity, so any unused hours indicate a vendor resourcing gap. If the vendor needs guidance on what to work on next, they must contact the project manager to identify additional tasks.
98. Should annual renewals be based on fixed hourly rates, or is there a cap on potential increases?
- A: Annual renewals are generally expected to continue at the fixed hourly rates proposed in the original contract. If a vendor anticipates any rate increases, those should be clearly outlined in the original proposal, including any formulas or maximum percentages. Any adjustments are subject to review and must be reasonable, justified, and within budget constraints. Renewal is not automatic and depends on performance, cost, and overall value to the City.
99. Can the City elaborate on the scoring or rubric for "Highly Advantageous," "Advantageous," etc.?
- A: Rubric definitions appear on page 13 of the RFP. Each Evaluation Committee member will independently score every proposal against those definitions, and the individual ratings will then be averaged to determine each proposal's final scores.
100. What is the anticipated process and timeline for possible vendor interviews?
- A: We do not anticipate conducting vendor interviews. Vendors will be assessed based upon their proposals, portfolios, and references.
101. Are there any requirements or preferences for MWBE, minority, or diversity participation in scoring?
- A: While we encourage participation from Minority and Women Business Enterprises (MWBEs) and will consider it as part of the overall evaluation, the primary scoring is based on the technical and performance criteria detailed in the RFP. MWBE status, like being a Somerville-based business, is considered a value-added factor. It's something we look at positively, but it carries less weight than the core scoring elements.

----- End of Addendum No. 1 -----