

Website Redesign & Development Services:
BID Expansion Rebranding Initiative
Vendor Inquiries

Due to the volume of submitted questions, the Partnership has consolidated its Q&A responses to best address common and important RFP topics. If a specific question was asked and not answered below, please revisit the Marketing & Rebrand FAQ which may have already addressed the inquiry.

ADMINISTRATIVE:

- 1. Is this RFP only for New York certified bidders? Will any preference be given to NYC firms?**
We are open to working with qualified firms beyond New York. The submissions will be judged by the quality of the submission as laid out in the RFP.
- 2. Is your timeline at all flexible?**
We plan for the website to roll out in conjunction the launch of our expanded BID services as we introduce ourselves to a wide range of new stakeholders, which will happen in January 2022. The new website will serve as a showcase for our new branding and positioning as our district grows to nearly double the size. We are open to recommendations on how best to achieve these goals given the current rebranding project timeline.
- 3. Will the LaPlaca brand strategy be complete by the time we begin the website strategy and redesign?**
Yes, see [Appendix D: Rebrand Initiative Timeline](#).
- 4. For the proposal, do the examples of services need to align with the references provided? We would like to showcase some work from our past that best aligns with the initiative, and may not be the work from our client references.**
Case studies and references do not have to align. We agree that the most effective case studies are those that best align with our initiative and or showcase work similar to what is being proposed.
- 5. Who on your team will be the primary contact for this project?**
The Director of Marketing & Outreach.
- 6. What approval process will you have? Who will the decision makers be for key deliverables such as design?**
Decision makers include Megan Garcia, Director of Marketing & Outreach/Chief of Staff in consultation with Executive Director James Mettham, and Marketing & Program Manager Kimberly Lynch. We also have a Rebrand Task Force to help guide the full initiative and provide feedback along the way.
- 7. Who will manage the new website on a daily or ongoing basis post launch?**
The website will primarily be managed by the Marketing Team, with most staff members contributing to content pertaining to their department.

- 8. What do you see as the most important functions of the selected firm for post-launch support?**
Ongoing maintenance and update support, multiple path support for outages. Occasionally there may be assistance with the implementation of a new feature and/or third-party integration
- 9. Are you looking to conduct interviews in person or via Zoom?**
Interviews will be held via zoom.
- 10. Will you accept a budget range for costs taking into account the website (structure, content features etc.) has not been planned out yet?**
Yes.

PENTAGRAM COLLABORATION:

- 11. It's mentioned that Pentagram will work collaboratively with the selected web development team on the new homepage and an additional 5-10 interior/sub-pages. Is the redesign work limited to homepage and 5-10 interior /subpages? Please confirm.**
No. There will be additional interior/subpages. The 5-10 interior/subpages provided by Pentagram are intended to be enough variation in design intent for most uses and/or give a jumping off point for additional pages. If more are needed that can be discussed but may result in us having to approve additional expense, which is not preferred.
- 12. To ensure we scope our response appropriately, could you clarify whether Pentagram or the selected firm will be creating the design assets (homepage, 5-10 interior/sub-pages and so on)?**
Alternate version of this question: Are you asking the selected firm to design all the pages based on guidelines provided by Pentagram or will Pentagram deliver approved page designs (desktop and mobile) for all site templates and the selected firm will program the pages?
Pentagram will be creating brand design assets (e.g., logo, wordmark, etc.). They will provide design intent for the webpages and are happy to provide live artwork files of this design intent, but would not come in the form of web templates but rather an InDesign or Illustrator file. The selected firm will program the pages.
- 13. Given the branding partnership with Pentagram, who will provide final approval on the website and web assets created?**
The Partnership will provide final approval with guidance from Pentagram.
- 14. The RFP mentioned Pentagram will provide the look and design intent of the homepage and 5-10 sub-pages. Will this be the expected designs for the site or just as reference/inspiration?**
These will be the expected designs for the site with the understanding that some things may need to change slightly to ensure the best user experience/functionality.
- 15. We have identified many design templates for the existing site. Can you confirm if you are looking for a new site that will be constructed in more of a templated format and only featuring high-traffic pages as uniquely designed pages?**
See Questions 11-14 above. We're open to recommendations.

DESIGN/USER EXPERIENCE:

16. What other websites do you hope your new website emulates in terms of look, content or overall vibe?

We don't have a specific type of site we hope to emulate, I think in many ways we're hoping to avoid common BID tropes (the Live. Work. Play style for instance). The inspiration for the site should really come from the new brand direction.

Here are a few that we think have successful elements and serve as interesting inspiration, the most successful of which really lean into the specific brand for inspiration, are easy to navigate, and provide a consumer-friendly interface without overwhelming with text.

<https://www.downtownsm.com/>

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

<https://dumbo.is/>

<https://loopchicago.com/>

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

17. Do you want visitors to be able to translate website text into multiple languages?

Nice to have, not need to have. See [Marketing & Rebrand RFP FAQ](#) Question #58

18. Can you please identify what is considered the top attributes of the current website?

See [Marketing & Rebrand RFP FAQ](#) Question #58 for a good snapshot of pre-pandemic usage. During the pandemic there has been more traffic to our deals as we've used that section a lot for business support.

I think the images in the header slider on the homepage, and in other sections of the website were a real strength and something that stood out when it was new in 2014. Looking at it in today's context I think we'd love to lean into imagery and video and look for opportunities to reduce text in a way that still remains informative.

19. If applicable, would you be able to identify the biggest issues/opportunities of improvement with the current website? What are some of the major and minor functionality issues you're experiencing with the current site?

See [Marketing & Rebrand RFP FAQ](#) Question #47, #50, #56 (particularly the note on desktop analytics).

20. What is the primary purpose of the website? Secondary purpose?

Primary purpose: Serve as a resource for the workforce, residents, and visitors for all things to do and explore in the neighborhood while promoting district businesses.

Secondary purpose: is to communicate Partnership resources directly to stakeholders, including property owners, business owners/managers, Board members, and civic leaders.

21. What do you want current customers to know or do on your site? What will they accomplish by visiting the website?

Ideally, consumers would visit the site frequently (or in anticipation of visiting) for inspiration for places to eat, shop, get drinks, have experiences, attend events, and find new, interesting things to do in the neighborhood. Stakeholders would easily be able to find business related resources.

22. What are some things about the current user experience and/or design that you don't like?

The search function is not fully functional and does not pull from the whole site, nor is it intuitive. The header slider on the homepage is very eye catching but the extreme horizontal format (1600x564) with an events and title overlay can be challenging for impactful photo selection.

There is nothing about the website that pulls you from one section to another or encourages you to intuitively move around. If you don't spend time clicking through the drop-down menu, you might miss content that would otherwise be of interest. Would like something that encourages additional page views and session length.

Content is very text heavy.

Related to UX, because each article can be read in full from their parent section on the desktop version (home page, newsroom, Discover Flatiron, Flatiron Faces) our analytics only capture the readers that click a permalink or visit from a direct URL, but wouldn't account for anyone that reads the article in full from the main section.

23. What need or business goals do you have for your website that aren't being met by the current version?

Clearly and quickly communicate new and exciting things happening in our neighborhood, while also communicating quickly and easily to stakeholders who we are and what we do on their behalf. This is happening now, but not necessarily "quickly, easily, or clearly".

Also, the goal of working efficiently on content, as CMS issues commonly waste staff time and create inefficiencies.

24. You reference a search feature. Are you looking for keyword search of all site content and/or additional search or filtering on specific content i.e., businesses, events etc.?

Open to recommendation. Our current website did filter based on specific content, and there were pluses and minuses to that approach.

25. Are you open to alternatives to LiveXYZ for business mapping and directory?

Unless it was extremely cost and time effective, likely not, but good to discuss potential backup options.

CONTENT MANAGEMENT SYSTEM

26. You mention WordPress as a preference in A.8 but then say it is a requirement in B.4a. If the latter please indicate why WordPress is required.

WordPress is strongly preferred. WordPress is attractive as CMS that is very well supported, user friendly, and commonly used (i.e., a high likelihood any new hires may have familiarity for fast onboarding) and highly intuitive. It is also routinely managed and monitored. We're not looking for a bespoke CMS, but could consider an alternative if we felt it truly ticked all of the boxes mentioned above.

27. If applicable, what are the challenges of the current CMS/website infrastructure?

See [Marketing & Rebrand RFP FAQ](#) Question #47. For everyday use, the interface is glitchy, dummy proof to the point of being extremely limiting, and very non-intuitive. Formatting either requires a lot of work arounds and guessing and checking, or in some instances basic html tags. There is a lot of time wasted in just getting a page to post correctly.

Images are generally restricted to very specific sizes and can be used in limited ways. Very challenging to create visually appealing new pages when needed for new content outside of the content buckets.

Examples include special program landing pages (Summer Series, 23 Days of Cheer) or the BID expansion section which was extremely limited in design and time consuming to format. There is a very non-intuitive series of steps needed to add in header images on new pages, involving components and widgets that can be challenging to navigate and remember for the next time.

28. In addition to what has been expressed in the RFP, are there any operational bottlenecks, marketing, stakeholder interaction, etc. challenges/opportunities of improvement that are being faced which we may factor in our proposed solution?

See Question #27. We think some of these questions may be informed by the brand strategy recommendations in terms of adjustments to audience, positioning, tone and brand associations. We're open to exploring recommendations of what to keep and what would be best to retire based on this new brand direction.

29. How often does content get updated on the site?

Multiple times per week, often daily.

CONTENT

30. Will content such as photography and/or videography need to be created for the website or will assets be supplied to the winning vendor? If the former, should we include that in this scope of work?

We have a vast library of images for potential use, but understand that a cohesive look and feel for initial launch might be beneficial, and we may need additional images of the newly added expansion area. It may make sense to include in the scope as an add on or itemized option, so that we can discuss and include or exclude as needed.

31. To what extent would website strategy be needed, in terms of site architecture and content strategy.

We welcome strategic recommendations in terms of architecture and content based on the new brand strategy and positioning.

32. For copywriting, will brand TOV be provided from LaPlaca Brand Strategy for our team to use? Or will this need to be developed by our team?

Brand tone of voice will be provided by LaPlaca Cohen as a part of the brand strategy.

33. Is copy to be rewritten for every page? If not, is there an expectation that the site will be repurposing some of its current copy? Relevant existing content/information articles in our current content buckets will be migrated over/repurposed as it makes sense. More static pages (i.e., programs) may need to be rewritten and/or edited to better fit the new brand voice.

34. How are the photographs used in the site currently stored and managed?

Current photos are uploaded directly to and saved with the article/page being published, or if inserted in the text, stored in the File Explorer section of our website.

35. Are you planning to use video on the website?

Yes

36. How are you currently collecting deal submissions from businesses? Via email, into a database?

As part of the Business Owners Portal (Events are also submitted this way) See [Marketing & Rebrand RFP FAQ](#) Question #50.

37. Are you planning to populate the new site with the content or are you looking for the selected firm to carry that out? Note there is a large amount of archived content, for example reports and news.

We are open to recommendation regarding migration. Not all archive content may need to be migrated, we can discuss internally how much archival content makes sense for each section, depending on relevance and likelihood of accuracy. Based on the new brand strategy, some content buckets may also change or no longer be needed.

- 38. Is there a need to bring a copywriter/editor to help with content transition from the old website to the new? Or does the Flatiron 23rd St team have a communication team who can work on the editing/adaptation of content for the new website?**

We do anticipate there may be a need for copywriting assistance prior to the launch, see number B.6.a. under scope of work.

MISCELLANEOUS

- 39. How will you measure the success of the new website? Are you looking for us to assist with KPIs?**

We'd love to discuss KPIs with the selected firm as we finalize the strategy.

- 40. Are there long-term SEO plans in order to accomplish indexation?**

We would look to the selected firm to advise.

- 41. Can you provide any further details on the Live XYZ and Ginkgo integrations?**

- a. Does the team already have these two integrations running or will set-up and support be needed to get these integrations up and running? In other words, we would like to gauge the amount of time on our side for implementation - is the expectation that we will be starting from scratch in the integrations or repurposing the current integrations?**

Both [Live XYZ](#) and [Ginkgo](#) (formerly Citiesense) maps were embedded fairly quickly and easily into our current site using an embed code that we will be able to provide.

- b. MapBox is currently running on the site, will this be used on the new site as well?**

It may no longer be needed due to the LiveXYZ integration. I believe this was mainly a function of our previous flatiron map/business listings that was replaced by Live XYZ

- c. Are Ginkgo and Live XYZ currently being used on the site? If so, which pages?**

Live XYZ powers our [Flatiron Guide](#), Ginkgo powers our [Retail Opportunities](#) map.

- 42. Should website redesign extend to and include a POV on social media channels?**

No, although I'm sure our new website design will naturally inform our social media, along with our new brand strategy, positioning, tone of voice, etc.

- 43. Are you using or planning to use any CRM software such as Salesforce that will need to be integrated with the website? We use PBID Manager as a CRM and it currently has no integrations with our website, nor do we anticipate one, but we are open to suggestions.**

- 44. Do you plan to use Eventbrite for event registration? It is currently used for the Fitness series.**

Yes, we do often use Eventbrite for events that require registration.

- 45. What devices and browsers [desktop and mobile] do staff currently use? Are these standard across the organization? Desktop PC, PC Laptops, Mac Laptops, iPhone, Android. Browsers are mostly chrome, sometimes Safari. The Desktop PCs are currently standard.**

- 46. Currently what percentage of your site visitors are using mobile devices?**

See [Marketing & Rebrand RFP FAQ](#) Question #57. Although it's just less than half, mobile first/mobile friendly is very important to us.

- 47. Do you have multiple content editors across the company or does one team member carry out all the edits? Multiple.**

ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS ADDED 8/16:

- 48. From our perspective, for this engagement and scope of work, we'd need to allocate 3-4 months after designs are completed. From the timeline, it looks like designs are planned to be finalized in December, putting us likely at a March-April launch. Are you open to a proposal which includes this timeframe, or is the January 2022 launch date nonnegotiable?**

See Question 2. Our goal is to launch this website in January 2022 to coincide with the BID boundary expansion and the rebrand rollout. Proposals that meet that requirement will likely have preference over those that do not, but a team is free to submit a proposal with an adjusted timeline for consideration.

To clarify the [timeline](#), Pentagram will be working alongside the web development team to provide the graphic designs for the website and will be front-loading the website designs to the extent possible to ensure the project can move forward and stay on timeline. The goal would be for Pentagram to begin handing off the graphic design for the website to the web team at the Nov 1st work session.

- 49. I wanted to see if you had the expectation that the proposal would be organized in the specific order that was listed in the RFP under "Submission Content". In other words, are you looking for the proposal to first start with the items listed under "The Proposal" and address each sub-item and then move to "About the Proposer" and address each item thereafter in the order listed, or were these just listed for the purposes of providing a reference of what content you would like to be included?**

The proposal need not be organized in the specific order listed; we will just be checking to confirm that all of the required submission content is included.