

# **REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL (RFP)**

## **PATAPSCO HERITAGE GREENWAY, INC. Website Update and Redesign**



**PATAPSCO HERITAGE GREENWAY, INC.**

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**P.O. BOX 96, ELLICOTT CITY, MD 21041**

**AUGUST 2021**

## **1. SUMMARY AND BACKGROUND**

As the non-profit, managing entity for the Patapsco Valley Heritage Area (PVHA), Patapsco Heritage Greenway, Inc. is dedicated to preserving, protecting, interpreting, and restoring the environment, history and culture of Maryland's most dramatic river valley for all. The PVHA is one of 13 state-certified heritage areas in Maryland. Maryland heritage areas are locally designated and managed regions where public and private partners commit to preserve historical, cultural and natural resources for sustainable economic development through heritage tourism. PHG's programs are focused on the valley's historical, environmental, cultural and recreational resources, as well as the education, health and safety of users. Our partners include community organizations and businesses in collaboration with Howard County government, Baltimore County government and the Maryland Heritage Areas Authority.

## **2. PROPOSAL GUIDELINES**

This RFP represents the requirements for an open and competitive process. Proposals will be accepted until **October 15, 2021**. All proposals must be signed by an official agent or representative of the entity submitting the proposal. If the entity submitting a proposal must outsource or contract any work to meet the requirements contained herein, this must be clearly stated in the proposal. Additionally, costs included in proposals must be all-inclusive to incorporate any outsourced or contracted work. Any proposals which call for outsourcing or contracting work must include a name and description of the organizations being contracted. All costs must be itemized to include an explanation of all fees and costs. Contract terms and conditions will be negotiated upon selection of the winning bidder for this RFP. All contractual terms and conditions will be subject to review by PHG and will include scope, budget, schedule, and other necessary items pertaining to the project.

## **3. PROJECT PURPOSE AND DESCRIPTION**

PHG invites proposals from a firm or individual designer/website developer for a professional update and redesign of the organization's current website, [patapsco.org](http://patapsco.org), to enhance overall public awareness of the PVHA's resources as well as PHG as an organization.

### **Project Description:**

In redesigning the [patapsco.org](http://patapsco.org) site, PHG's goals include:

- Position the PVHA as a leading heritage, recreational, eco- and cultural tourism destination
- Present the PVHA's historical, environmental, cultural and recreational resources in a dynamic way that educates and informs about the area and encourages visitation to the region
- Implement a design architecture that allows for easy accommodation of in-house updates
- Integrating social media channels into the website to encourage engagement and make up-to-date content accessible
- Improve user experience of the site
- Increase traffic to the website
- In sum, we want the site to orient and introduce people to the PVHA, share upcoming events, attract visitors, encourage exploration of the PVHA both in-person and virtually and invite participation while also highlighting PHG as an organization with a diverse set of programs and mission.

## 4. PROJECT SCOPE

PHG's marketing and communications strategy aims to reach two distinct audiences:

- 1) **PVHA Visitors and Potential Visitors:** Through a dynamic, responsive, image-rich, easy-to-navigate redesigned website, PHG aims to appeal to visitors of all ages, including young students and families planning travel to the PVHA as well as heritage, eco- and recreational tourists. Our current events calendar focuses on PHG-led events geared to local audiences but a redesigned site must include a calendar that also highlights partner events and programs. PHG utilizes social media outlets Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, YouTube and SmugMug to increase awareness of PVHA partners, events and programs. The target audience for this section wants to find what they are looking for quickly and directly, without wading through information about PHG as an organization.
- 2) **PHG Partners, Stakeholders and Community Members:** These users access the website for information related to PHG's grant programs, environmental and educational programs, research resources, publications, and to learn more about organizational initiatives. Staff frequently make announcements and edit information on these pages. The target audience for this section will seek out what they want and return frequently for updated information. Due to the organization's two audiences, the project requires a single website that affords the "look and feel" of two distinct sites, with different desired outcomes.

As described above, we envision the site having (1) a PVHA menu that clearly indicates it is for PVHA and covers all things PVHA and (2) a PHG menu that clearly indicates it is for PHG and covers all things PHG. The PVHA menu should only promote the heritage area (to residents and visitors), concentrating on learning, seeing, recreating, and visiting. Any necessary mention of PHG should be accompanied by an explanation of the relationship between the PVHA and PHG. The PHG menu should concentrate on how PHG undertakes efforts for the good of the PVHA, highlighting PHG as an organization, including its news and programs, how to donate, how to become a member and volunteer, along with partner resources.

**Scope of Work -- Process:** The contractor must deliver to PHG a fully operational, updated website, utilizing the following steps:

- **Research/Site Structure:** Work with PHG team to determine goals, customization needs, style preferences and outline a new site structure/number of pages.
- **Design:** Present PHG with 3 new creative options for review, revision, and selection.
- **Programming (front-end and back-end):** Using WordPress/PHP, programming will be completed based on the approved design and site structure layout. Existing backend ties to PayPal and Little Green Light must remain.
- **Search Engine Optimization:** Register website at both free and paid sites (when feasible), and ensure key search terms appear in title tags, headings, page text, and images throughout the site.
- **Beta Review Stage/Final Changes:** Test the site in various Windows and Mac browsers and operating systems, validate HTML/CSS coding, check all links, and test site functionality. PHG will review the site and clarify any necessary changes before launch.

- Server Transfer and Launch or Future Hosting: Upon final approval, transfer all website and database files to PHG's preferred hosting server OR contractor to maintain hosted site with annual hosting and maintenance fee

#### **Scope of Work -- Additional requirements/expectations:**

- Mobile optimization (responsive design): Create a responsive site that is well-designed, fully functional, and easily viewable on mobile phones and tablets.
- Secure site certification: Build site with "https" security; at minimum, using SSL certificate that we have currently (DV, Domain Validated).
- Accessibility Standards: Site must be compliant with American Disabilities Act Section 508, passing validation tests to ensure accessible compatibility.
- Navigation: An optimized navigational layout for the entire website (PHG will sign off on this before the vendor proceeds).
- Site Search: Google Site Search incorporated into website.
- Social Media: Integrate PHG and PVHA social media (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, YouTube, SmugMug) into website.
- Events: New events calendar with ability to provide event spotlight on homepage. Separate ongoing events from one-time events and distinguish between PHG events and PVHA partner events.
- Partner Listings: Pages or listings for each partner, with password-protection for partners to edit their own listings (if feasible).
- Photography/Video: Showcase striking scenes from PVHA by integrating images/videos into the entire site. PHG has substantial photo/video content not currently on the website.
- Analytics: Install Google Analytics and Google Webmaster Tools/Search Console.
- Display: Correct display in all major browsers (minimally including Internet Explorer, Firefox, Chrome, Safari).
- Content Conversion: Conversion of all content and documents from the existing website into the CMS-based website/templates.
- Training: Adequate back-end and/or CMS training for PHG team.

#### **Scope of Work -- Website Additional Features:**

- Homepage with image rotation
- Timeline: Develop a simple PVHA history timeline using content from PVHA brochures, current website and staff input, providing links to additional information.
- Map: Establish an infrastructure that allows for the construction and inclusion of an interactive map of heritage, recreational and cultural attractions based on content from PVHA brochures, current [patapsco.org](http://patapsco.org) website, staff input and user-generated content
- Bilingual User Experience: Establish an infrastructure that includes current Spanish language elements of the website while allowing for the site to be completely experienced in English or Spanish pending future content development
- Integrate existing donor tools (currently PayPal and Little Green Light integration) for "Donate" and "Join" functionality
- Educational resources listings for teachers, home-school parents, and lifelong learners
- Media Gallery: Create a gallery of downloadable high-resolution images (including logos for publication) for media and editorial use.

## **5. PROPOSAL DEADLINE, EVALUATION AND PROJECT TIMELINE**

Formal proposals in response to this RFP are due no later than **October 15, 2021**. Questions regarding the proposal and the RFP should be addressed to Aaron Shapiro, PHG Executive Director at: [director@patapsco.org](mailto:director@patapsco.org).

### **Evaluation of Proposals:**

Evaluation of proposals will be conducted from **October 15, 2021-October 29, 2021**. If additional information or discussions are needed with any bidders during this window, the bidder(s) will be notified. The selection decision for the winning bidder will be made no later than **October 29, 2021**. Upon notification, the contract negotiation with the winning bidder will begin immediately. Our goal is to complete contract negotiations by **November 5, 2021**. Notifications to bidders who were not selected will be made in a timely manner.

### **Project Timeline:**

The Project is scheduled to begin no later than **November 8, 2021** and conclude by **April 30, 2022**.

## **6. BUDGET**

Each bidder should respond to this RFP with a detailed budget to complete the project by **April 30, 2022**. Annual hosting and maintenance should be quoted separately from the redesign price. Proposals should include preferred payment method and schedule, including payment requirements, available discounts, and/or other invoicing details the bidder deems significant.

## **7. SUBMISSION GUIDELINES AND REQUIREMENTS**

Candidates should submit a digital proposal to Aaron Shapiro at [director@patapsco.org](mailto:director@patapsco.org) or utilize Dropbox, Google Drive or another file sharing service to deliver the proposal.

The proposal must include the following:

- Name of organization, a point of contact, email address, address, and telephone number.
- Overview of the organization and its history (one page). If applicable, note minority or women business enterprise (MBE/WBE) designation.
- A brief (no more than one page) description of the relevant experience of the principal(s) who will perform the work. A copy of their resume(s) and any appropriate product examples may be included.
- A concise (no more than four pages) description of the approach to the work, including the tasks defined in “Scope of Work: Process” and a definition of deliverables for each, a schedule and any suggested modifications to scope of work elements, if appropriate.
- Relevant samples of similar web design work that illustrate the contractor’s ability to meet the technical and aesthetic qualities required. Provide URLs for previous works demonstrating the design and technical capabilities outlined in this request for proposals.
- Cost estimate: totaled and subtotaled for each task and proposed deliverables.
- Quoted price should be inclusive. If your price excludes certain fees or charges, you must provide a detailed list of excluded fees with a complete explanation of the nature of those fees. Also, please describe any ongoing fees or charges associated with the proposal. *Note*

*that annual hosting and maintenance fees should be quoted separately from the redesign price.* PHG will not pay for any travel costs incurred by the contractor.

- If the execution of work requires the hiring of sub-contractors, please state this in your bid. PHG will not refuse a proposal based on the use of sub-contractors; however, PHG retains the right to refuse the sub-contractors you have selected. If applicable, note minority or women business enterprise (MBE/WBE) designation for any subcontractors.

## **8. PROPOSAL EVALUATION CRITERIA**

A contractor will be selected based on a combination of creativity, vision, technical approach, professional experience, sensitivity to our mission, and price/value relative to the deliverables. Additional consideration will be given to bidders based within the PVHA and/or the Patapsco watershed. For a PVHA map, see: <https://patapsco.org/pvha-boundary-map/>. For Maryland watersheds: <https://mde.state.md.us/programs/water/tmdl/datacenter/pages/8digitwatershed.aspx>

PHG will negotiate terms upon selection. All contracts are subject to review by legal counsel and will be considered awarded only upon signing of an agreement or contract, which outlines terms, scope, budget, and other necessary items. This RFP does not obligate PHG or the selected contractor until a contract is signed and approved by both parties. PHG will not be responsible for work done, even in good faith, prior to the final approval of the proposed contract.