



Subject: Single Source Acquisition for the Richmond Hill Public Library (RHPL) Website

For: Approval

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To: Richmond Hill Public Library Board

From: Mirza Mehdi, Manager, Digital Products, RHPL & Warren Quan, Project Manager, Information Technology, City of Richmond Hill

SUMMARY

The redesign and redevelopment of Richmond Hill Public Library's (RHPL)'s website represents a crucial strategic investment in the future of library services for the Richmond Hill community. Over the last two years RHPL has moved through two of three phases of the website project, and is now entering the last phase, which entails website development that will bring new functionality and features to fruition. This initiative is part of our commitment that the library remains relevant in an increasingly digital world and continues to enhance the user experience for our existing patrons, while attracting new users with modern, in-demand services. Additionally, the new website will streamline operations by reducing unnecessary resource expenditures and providing a scalable, responsive platform that integrates seamlessly with both internal and third-party systems, aligning with RHPL's evolving digital transformation and website strategies.

This procurement is deemed a single source acquisition as per Appendix "B" Part II a) of the Procurement By-law - "in the absence of receipt of any Submissions in response to a request."

To move forward with this acquisition, CRH Information Technology and Richmond Hill Public Library teams collaborated to identify Mugo Web as a suitable vendor that meets both our business and user functional requirements. The project team is prepared to move forward with the contract and implementation, having completed the necessary due diligence processes, including a cybersecurity assessment. Insurance verification is yet to be confirmed, and the contract execution is contingent upon CRH being satisfied with the vendor's insurance coverage.

The total cost of the project over a 5-year period (3 years plus 2 additional optional years) will be \$293,500 which includes development, implementation, warranty, and hosting from the vendor. Board approval will allow us to advance through the remaining due diligence steps without risking unnecessary delays. This approval will also enable us to finalize the contract promptly once due diligence is complete, ensuring an efficient and timely development process.

The timing of this project is critical because RHPL currently relies on ongoing support and maintenance from an external contractor, which is costly and is scheduled to conclude by April 2025. Onboarding the vendor as quickly as possible will ensure that RHPL's new website will be live by the time the external contractor contract ends.

RECOMMENDATION

That the Richmond Hill Public Library Board:

Approve a single source acquisition for the development and implementation of the RHPL's Website from Mugo Web.

RATIONALE

Background and Context

One of the key strategic objectives in the RHPL 2021-2025 Strategic Plan is "Accelerated Digital Experiences," which is to be achieved through the following strategies:

- Redevelop the RHPL website
- Integrate personalization into the user experience
- Develop a digital product strategy that modernizes the customer experience

Upon completion of the Strategic Plan, RHPL staff promptly initiated the first of these strategic activities: the redevelopment of the RHPL website. In early 2022, digital strategy and design firm Cinnamon Toast Media was engaged for the first phase of this project, which involved creating a new website strategy and design aimed at modernizing the customer experience and meet customer needs, such as enhanced search functionality, robust self-serve features, and increased user engagement among other objectives.

To ensure a comprehensive approach, a holistic review of the old website was conducted, including extensive user research involving both staff and customers (customer surveys with 600 respondents, focus groups with 20 participants, and 10 one-on-one interviews). Based on these findings, a website strategy was developed, along with a site map, wireframes, page designs, and functional requirements. These elements form the foundation for the new website's development, which will incorporate many features and functions identified as important and desirable by Library users. The implementation of these features is expected to increase satisfaction among current users and attract new patrons.

Following the completion of the first phase, a second phase, known as the Minimum Viable Product (MVP) Website Refresh, was initiated to address some of the most urgent needs identified in the website strategy and to align with the library's new brand launch. The MVP was realized collaboratively by internal members of the City's Application Services team and RHPL. This second phase of the website focused on updating the look and feel in accordance with the website strategy, procuring and implementing the new BiblioCommons discovery layer and events platform, launching a new mobile app, and introducing an online booking platform for meeting rooms and makerspace services.

The third and final phase will fully realize the comprehensive vision of the website strategy, which includes:

- **Universal Federated Search:** Internal customer research, including user journey mapping and interviews, revealed that users want a single search feature that can query the catalogue, other library resources, website content, and the programming calendar in one place.
- **Improvement of Information Architecture:** Enhancing the website's structure to better align with patrons' needs.
- **E-commerce Integration:** Development and integration of an e-commerce store within the RHPL website, allowing merchandise to be sold online to patrons.
- **Online Library Card Registration:** Implementation of an online address verification system for new library card registrations and renewals, in accordance with RHPL's library card policy.
- **Single Sign-On (SSO) Functionality:** Seamless sign-in experience across the RHPL website, Bibliocommons suite of products, and other third-party tools (i.e., e-resources), eliminating the need for users to re-authenticate.

To achieve these objectives, an experienced web development firm is required.

Rational for Pursuing Noncompetitive Acquisition

This procurement is deemed a single source acquisition as per rationale in Appendix "B" Part II a) of the Procurement By-law - "in the absence of receipt of any Submissions in response to a request."

To move forward with this acquisition, CRH Information Technology and Richmond Hill Public Library teams collaborated to identify Mugo Web as a suitable vendor that meets both our business and user functional requirements. Mugo Web has a proven track record of developing websites for Canadian libraries, including Collingwood Public Library, East Gwillimbury Public Library, and Haliburton County Public Library.

Budget Impact

The proposed contract between RHPL and Mugo Web would span three years following a 90-day post-launch warranty period, with the option to renew for two additional one-year terms.

The total cost of the project over a 5-year period will be \$293,500 which includes development, implementation, warranty, and hosting from the vendor. While the final costs will be confirmed in the contract, the City IT's 2021 Capital Budget request for this project is \$299,000 which adequately covers the total projected contract cost of \$293,500.

Next Steps

The City IT team is currently working with Mugo Web to complete their due diligence review, including insurance verification.

Board approval at this time-sensitive stage will allow us to continue to move forward with the remainder of the due diligence process without the risk of wasted effort, will give us the ability to quickly and efficiently move into contract once that due diligence is complete, will enable a best practice integrated development process and avoid duplicative development work, and will improve the customer experience in the ways customers are demanding.