

Mount Royal Improvement Association in Bolton Hill, MD

Website Redesign & Development Request for Proposal

This RFP is for design and development services for a new website for the Mount Royal Improvement Association and the community of Bolton Hill, MD, a unique, historical neighborhood in Baltimore, MD.

RFP Sent: 9/9/2016
Responses Due: 10/17/2016

Send any questions on the RFP requirements to: Linda Rittelmann, linda.rittelmann@gmail.com. Please send technical questions to Linda Ferguson, linda.ferguson@gmail.com.

Send proposals to:

Linda Rittelmann
248 Waxter Way
Baltimore, MD 21217
Linda.Rittelmann@gmail.com

Budget for new website: Not to exceed \$3,000

Goal for new website launch: March 2017

MRIA / Bolton Hill Overview

Located directly northwest of downtown Baltimore, Bolton Hill is one of Baltimore's premier neighborhoods. Elegant homes, landscaped boulevards, decorative civic monuments, and lovely religious buildings are distinctive characteristics of this community. Major development took place in Bolton Hill between 1850 and 1900. Bolton Hill's neighborhood association, the [Mount Royal Improvement Association](http://www.boltonhill.org), a 501(c)4 non profit organization, represents the community. It serves as liaison with City departments, addresses concerns of the community, and coordinates communications including the Bolton Hill Bulletin, Bolton Hill E-Mail Network (BHEN), and our current website: <http://www.boltonhill.org>

Our Audience

Our primary audience is our residents and the businesses and organizations within our community. The community, consisting of approximately 2,000 residents and several shops, has a rich history. Primarily a residential community of single-family homes, Bolton Hill also includes schools, churches, the Maryland Institute College of Art, grocery

stores, restaurants, hardware and drug stores, and more. We represent a very diverse community of all ages, races, and cultural backgrounds, and include students, professionals, retirees, and families with young children. All of this should be reflected on our website.

New Website Objectives

- Our website's number one objective is to facilitate communication to, from, and between residents in the community and the city of Baltimore.
- The second objective is to get people involved in their community by becoming a paid member of MRIA.
- Additional objectives for our new website are to inform, educate, and engage our residents, provide direct links to vital City Services such as law enforcement, public works, city planning, etc., and position MRIA as a leader in community relations and support.
- We'd also like to include e-commerce activities that will help make the website budget-neutral or add revenue to MRIA.

Current Website

The MRIA/Bolton Hill website was created by various volunteers over the years. The software used to update the pages is out of date and needs to be replaced with something more current and easy to use. Also, the Bulletin Board, which was widely used and very popular at one point, has largely been replaced by social media apps such as Facebook and Next Door. The entire site has been backed up and is secure, so no content is in danger of being lost.

Other features on the current website that are useful and/or necessary to maintain include:

- **Membership Portal:** Currently, MRIA memberships are renewed via the website and a PayPal portal. This is a mission critical function that needs to be maintained and enhanced where needed. Residents can select from a variety of membership types, and are also asked to complete an interest survey to determine where their time and talents can be spent on a wide variety of committees and projects.
- **Apartment Rentals:** Listing apartment rentals is both a service to folks in the neighborhood and a source of revenue to MRIA, as landlords pay a nominal fee to list their apartments for rent. The landlord completes a form on the website and it goes to an email address. There are usually only a handful of apartments listed at any one time. Requests to post or to remove a post only come at most a couple of times per month, but this might change if the site were easier to use.
- **Bulletin Board:** The Bulletin Board is part of the MRIA website, but is separate

in terms of the software used to run it. The Webmaster currently maintains it. There are a few requests from folks who have forgotten their passwords (only required to post, not to read posts). A long while back, an administrator was necessary because of the inordinate amount of spam, but this was resolved by moving to different software. There were also on rare occasions conversation threads that needed monitoring.

- **HIRD (Home Improvement Resource Directory):** This was once a popular and much used resource which started out as a print resource ages ago, and was updated and published on an annual or semi-annual basis. Moving it to the website was a big step forward, but the resident who once maintained it has moved out of the neighborhood, and subsequently, commercial on line apps such as Angie's List (which is now free) and social media have made it somewhat redundant and it's hard to maintain.
- **Other:** There is a lot of useful and necessary information on the current website that needs to be retained, updated, and enhanced for the benefit of Bolton Hill:
 - **MRIA information** – including minutes and archived minutes; Board members; Committees; etc.
 - **Calendar** – Currently, the MRJA Secretary currently maintains the calendar and is simply a Google calendar attached to our email account. The new website will have the capability of posting more elaborate announcements with live links to registration, tickets, etc.
 - **Community Resources:** These pages are great for promoting all the resources within Bolton Hill: Arts, Religion, Restaurants, Education, etc. They also serve to promote the neighborhood to an outside audience.
 - **Useful Links:** These links make are provided for the convenience of residents. They link to City Services, Parking Information, Trash and Recycling info, etc., and as well as pages that are relevant to Bolton Hill and MRJA.

New Website Functionality Requirements

We are committed to developing the new site in **WordPress** for various platform continuity and cost reasons.

The new website will require:

- New logo / branding
- Clean and focused design
- Intuitive navigation: e.g. clear path to membership application and payments
- Integration of current WordPress bulletin into the new main website
- Native social media integration and applicable share and follow buttons
- All applicable content imported from current site
- Optimized with SEO best practices
- Email update sign-up / unsubscribe form
- Contact form

- Ability for ongoing client maintenance and development (adding pages, updating content, etc.)
- E-commerce capability (ad space, apartment rentals, donations, tickets, etc.)
- Robust calendar / event page: This may require a plug in for WordPress Calendar Pro, or other application, but we would like to move away from the current Google Calendar to something that will integrate with Google, Outlook, iCal, etc., but has more of an EventBrite look and feel to it.
- Blog for alerts and time sensitive information to coordinate with the current BH Bulletin
- Crowd Sourced Home Improvement Directory: Ideally, this would be a form driven app within the website that allows people to submit recommendations for contractors, home repair, and other services, with links to the business and its website (if applicable), and searchable ratings system

Ecommerce Details

- We currently sell MRIA Memberships online at various levels, but would love to expand this to include ticket sales for events and registration for other activities.
- We would love the ability to accept donations for various causes and activities with the appropriate non-profit language when applicable.
- Support ad space and advertising revenues
- Supports secure payment methods: e.g., major credit cards, PayPal, Stripe, other secure payment methods

Budget Details

As listed in the summary, our budget for this project is up to \$3,000. While we of course prefer the most cost-effective solution, all proposals that fall reasonably within this range will be considered and weighed based on their merits. Proposals that offer optional elements to be added to the website after initial launch will also be considered as we may be able to fund additional website elements/marketing efforts after this fiscal year ends on 4/30/17.

All invoices for this project must be billed before 4/30/17.

Proposal Requirements

Please include the following in your proposal response:

- Overview of your experience
- Overview of how you will meet our objectives
- Proposed website timeline with deliverables schedule from kickoff to launch
- At least 2 recent design & development examples
- References
- Any key differentiators about you
- Itemized cost breakdown including optional elements itemized

- Terms & conditions

RFP & Project Timeline Details

RFP Sent: 9/9/16
Responses Due: 10/17/16
Winner Selected & Contacted: 10/31/16
Project Kick-off: 11/16
New Website Launch Target Date: Feb / March 2016

If you have any questions about the RFP requirements, please contact Linda Rittelmann at Linda.Rittelmann@gmail.com. For technical requirement questions, please contact Linda Ferguson at <mailto:linda.ferguson@gmail.com>.

Thank you for your interest in responding to this RFP with a proposal for our new website. We look forward to your response.