CITY OF SOMERVILLE, MASSACHUSETTS
Department of Purchasing
JOSEPH A. CURTATONE
MAYOR

To: All Parties on Record with the City of Somerville as Holding RFP 15-67,
        Web Usability and User Testing

From: Michael Richards, Procurement Analyst

Date: January 22, 2015

Re: Answer Questions

Addendum No. 1 to RFP 15-67

Please acknowledge receipt of this Addendum by signing below and including this page in your non-technical 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: _____

Please acknowledge receipt of any and all Addendums (if applicable) by signing below and including this form in your proposal package. Failure to do so may subject the proposer to disqualification.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF ADDENDUMS:

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

Addendum No. 1 to RFP 15-51

1. Questions and Answers

- I have a question about the cost projection: $10,000 to $18,000. Are you expecting that contractor will bid the 8 months of work in that price range? Testing will occur for short intervals at specific points in the project as defined in the RFP. So, yes, the work being bid will occur at specific times during the 8-month period, but work will not take place on an ongoing basis for the entire 8 months. The City is also assuming a good deal of coordination and facilities costs to keep this within our budget by taking on the recruitment of participants, the provision of testing space and most testing devices and translation/interpretation, so vendors should factor that in.

- When specifically do you think the usability and user testing phase would start and end, as well as the phase for technical development of the new platform? Do you think there would be any overlap here? User testing will begin with validation of the proposed information architecture, and will likely begin at the end of March or beginning of April. Testing on the pattern library and templates (not in a prototype website, but as mockups, static images, card sorting exercises etc.) is expected to occur in May and June. User testing of the prototype site in development will occur between July and September. Again, testing will occur for short intervals at specific points in the project, and will not be ongoing or intensive throughout this entire window.

- Can companies from Outside USA can apply for this? (From India or Canada) Yes, but please be aware that due to the additional financial and legal logistics as well as the potential difficulties related to time zone differences that could arise when managing a contract with a company outside of the U.S., applications from outside of the U.S. will be considered less advantageous, though they will not be ruled out for this reason.

- Whether we need to come over there for meetings? Most interactions will be conducted online using the project management tools outlined in the RFP (e.g. Google Hangouts, JIRA etc.), but vendors must have the capability to work on-site to meet and troubleshoot should it become necessary for the successful development and launch of the website.

- Can we perform the tasks (related to the RFP) outside the USA? ((From India or Canada) Yes, but please be aware that due to the additional financial and legal logistics as well as the potential difficulties related to time zone differences that could arise when managing a contract with a company outside of the U.S., applications from outside of the U.S. will be considered less advantageous, though they will not be ruled out for this reason.

- Can we submit our proposals via email? Unfortunately no. Due to the requirement that all bids meet sealed bid requirements, all proposals must be submitted in sealed envelopes with original signatures to the Purchasing Department at 93 Highland Avenue Somerville, MA 02143 by 11:00am ET on 1/27/2015. A digital version of your proposal submitted on a thumb drive or CD, however, would be greatly appreciated.

- If I can't get some pieces, is it OK for me to either submit through email or when I return? There may be some delay on that type of stuff. The insurance requirements and Certificate of Good Standing are not binding requirements to be submitted with your proposal. Rather, these documents will be required from the selected vendor as part of the contracting process. If you are able to provide them with your proposal, it will be helpful. If not, note that they will be required post award.

- The reference form asks for 3 references from similarly sized municipalities. I have done business with the state of MA, but my other work is non-government. Can I provide corporate references,

or am I out of the running if I don't have municipality experience? References from both similarly sized municipalities as well as similarly complex nonprofits, universities or other organizations or businesses will be considered equally advantageous. In short, we want to see references from entities that developed websites of similar complexity or that serve populations/users with a similar level of diversity. Previous municipal or other government experience is advantageous, but quality work for others will be seen as advantageous as well.

- Living Wage form - I have no employees. Do I still need to submit this form? – If you have no employees, we will require you to submit a sole proprietorship declaration. This form will be provided as part of the contract process for the selected vendor.

- The Certificate of Good Standing request link is broken and brings up a blank page (http://www.sec.state.ma.us/corp/certificates/certificate_request.asp) The Secretary of State also provides a link to apply for the certificate via web portal http://www.mass.gov/dor/businesses/programs-and-services/certificate-of-good-standing.html This document is not a requirement to submit a proposal but will be required from the selected vendor as part of the contract process.

- Price Bid submission: are you looking for just the one sheet with a total proposed cost, or do you want that portion to include itemized costs as well? The total proposed cost will be used to determine the project cost but you may include itemized costs as well.

- Payment question: can invoices be submitted after each of the 3 phases is complete, or will payment not be received until all 3 sets of testing are completed? What are the payment terms from receipt of invoice? Invoices and payment terms are generally finalized between the selected vendor and the department during the contracting process. We view a request for payment after each of the three phases as entirely reasonable.

- Information architecture: will this be provided in the form of a proposed site map, or are we testing the city's current website navigation? The information architecture will be provided in the form of a proposed site map. The vendor will be testing the proposed architecture and not the City's current website navigation.

- Pattern Library/Templates: will this be a clickable prototype or wireframes? Or will they be static screens that the user may need to see in person? User testing of the information architecture, pattern library, and templates will primarily take place prior to the development of the prototype website. These items will be tested as static screens that the user may need to see in person.

- Website development: assuming that this means a working version of the updated website. If not, please clarify. Correct—testing of the website in development refers to the user testing of the updated website, although the testing of certain features will likely occur prior to the website being fully operational.

- Do you expect to compensate the research participants? If so, whose budget will that come from? If not, should I be planning slightly shorter sessions (half hour vs. 45 min) since they will be

giving of their own free time for this? Research participants will perform on a volunteer basis (with the exception that the City will hire a screen reader tester if needed). If it is the vendor's experience that shorter sessions would yield greater participation (in the form of higher quality responses or more reliable engagement), then shorter sessions would be fine.

- You mention a large number of audiences. Do you foresee all the audiences working through the same tasks, or a subset that's relevant to them? In the interest of time and testing resources, it may be beneficial to give certain audience members tasks that are more specific to their needs. For example, when testing the site with participants using assistive devices, the vendor may design the study so that these participants are focusing on their ability to use interface elements/buttons, read items on the screen etc. instead of their general opinion of the site's design, structure etc. Likewise, tasks targeted to the needs of non-native English speakers will be different from the general testing populations. Otherwise, we expect all other users (seniors, teens, adults, bilingual, etc. users) to work through the same tasks unless the vendor advises otherwise.

- You mention ASL. Do you also wish to involve users with visual impairments, and if so, would you want to test using screen readers or just magnification for low sighted users? What proportion of the study needs to be users with disabilities? I ask because there are obviously logistical challenges to conducting those sessions that I'd have to plan for. We wish to involve both users who require magnification (low vision) as well as those using screen readers (no vision). We are securing participants with the help of our Council on Aging staff, ADA Coordinator, and the Mass. Commission for the Blind and have identified participants who own assistive devices that can be used in the tests either at a testing facility or via a remote test designed so that they can access it from their own device at home/work. According to the National Federation of the Blind, the prevalence of visual disability across the US population is approximately 1 in 50 (or about 2%), but 1 participant would be the minimum for testing a variety of screen readers regardless of sample size. If needed, the City will both hire an individual to test screen readers as well as rent screen reader devices with additional City funds to participate in testing exercises. So the recruitment and device rental should not result in an additional expense for the user testing vendor. The design and evaluation of testing for these users, however, will be a contract requirement for the vendor.

- Non-native speakers: will a translator be available for live translation during the sessions? Does each phase need to involve non-native speakers? Do you have guidelines for how many/what proportion of these users need to be involved for you to meet your guidelines for inclusiveness? As above, this adds logistical and analysis complexity. The City of Somerville is home to a large number of residents for whom English is a second language and more than 52 languages are spoken by students in our schools. The three main second languages in the city are Spanish, Portuguese, and Haitian Creole. We cannot practically test for every language, but our primary concern is to ensure that interface elements, major headings, navigation tools etc. are able to be understood with an intermediate comprehension of English and that our version of "Translate this Page" buttons and links to sections of the website prepared with original content in Spanish, Portuguese, and Haitian Creole are user-friendly, allowing non-native English speakers (NNES) to find any content as well as content that is targeted to them.

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- We expect that testing for non-native speakers will mostly occur during the testing of the beta website in development and to a much smaller degree during the information architecture and design phases. Your advice on the best approach will guide us in this. But for now, we are assuming that NNES users will need to review the templates to determine if they can easily navigate and find "Translate this page" buttons as noted above. Then they will be brought back in once the beta site is developed to test full navigation and the Spanish, Portuguese and Creole sections.

- The City's SomerViva immigrant outreach program will recruit all such participants and provide translation for any outreach, survey, and/or testing materials as well as on-site interpretation at any testing sessions and translation of test results all at City cost (not the vendor's) as long as these services are requested in a timely manner as noted in the RFP.

- In short, it seems that one separate session (or survey?) for NNES users during the template testing phase, and one separate session for NNES users to test the developed beta site would be sufficient. But again, we will follow your guidance on this, which you are welcome to detail in your proposal.