

REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL
ExploreAsheville.com Web Design Consulting
for the
Buncombe County Tourism Development Authority
Explore Asheville Convention & Visitors Bureau

Introduction

The Buncombe County (NC) Tourism Development Authority (BCTDA) under the auspices of Explore Asheville Convention & Visitors Bureau is seeking proposals for web design consulting for its website, ExploreAsheville.com.

Background

The Buncombe County Tourism Development Authority is an 11-person board charged with oversight of the tourism marketing and sales efforts of the Asheville area. The BCTDA oversees Explore Asheville in managing the execution of marketing and sales strategies and tactics, as well as the destination website. ExploreAsheville.com is Explore Asheville’s official tourism website, with 5.2 million user sessions per year. Key pages of the ExploreAsheville.com site include Things to Do, Places to Stay, Event Calendar, Outdoor Adventures and Food & Drink.

Project Overview

Explore Asheville is preparing to refresh its website, ExploreAsheville.com, to be unveiled in March 2020. Explore Asheville has two web developers on staff that will implement design changes for the site refresh, and they are **seeking graphic design assistance with changes to the visual style of the site.**

ExploreAsheville.com uses the Simpleview Content Management System, which uses a panel and widget system to display site content. The CMS offers fairly broad styling opportunities but is mostly limited to the functionality you see on the site currently. Screenshots are provided for each scope item below.

What Do We Mean By “Refresh?”

For context, our broader “web refresh” project will include three primary efforts:

1. Modernizing the design/style of site elements to:
 - a. improve usability on both mobile and desktop devices (mobile use makes up about 70% of site traffic);
 - b. match the website to recently refreshed brand and ad campaign elements;
 - c. bring the site up to current web best practices and trends.
 - d. (This comprises the scope of this RFP.)
2. Improving the usability and searchability of our partner business listings by upgrading to a new Simpleview widget that will offer improved filtering. (Not a part of this RFP, though design recommendations will be extrapolated to style this new widget.)
3. Making small adjustments to the site architecture/sitemap in response to findings of a recent usability study. (Not a part of this RFP.)

This web refresh will NOT include:

- Significant changes to the overall user experience of the site
- Significant changes to page templates and/or site architecture
- Changes to the CMS the site is based on

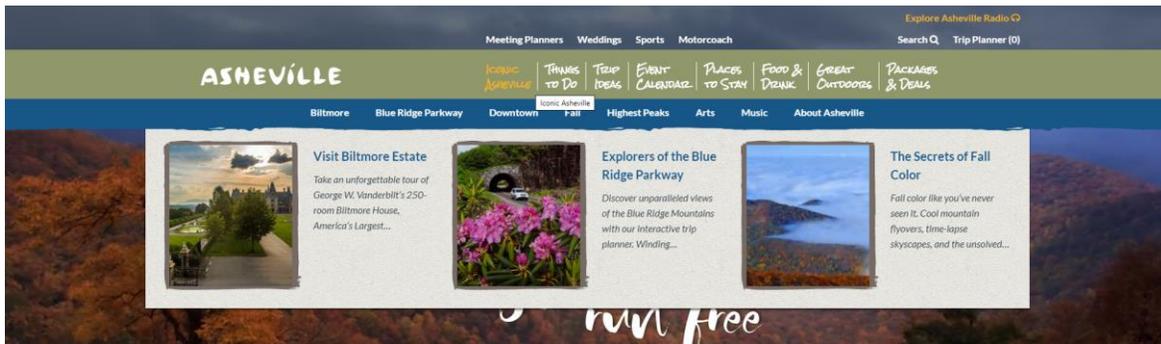
Deliverables

At the conclusion of this project, vendor should deliver site comps/mockups in a layered file format (Photoshop, Adobe XD or Sketch), plus a mockup of one full page of the site (ex: homepage). Vendor should also deliver files for any associated fonts, colors, artwork, etc.

Scope of Work

Create design/styles for each of the following front-end elements for the **mobile and desktop** layouts of the site:

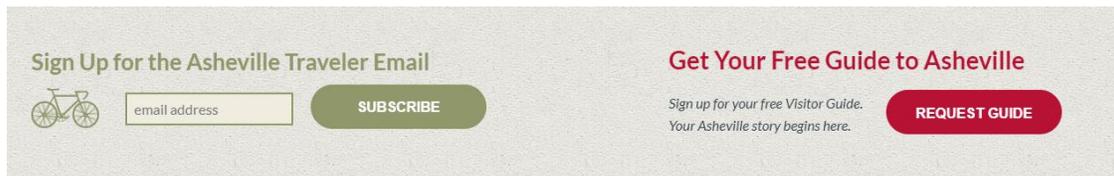
1. **Navigational Menu** – This will have the greatest impact on overall user experience on the site. Please note that the opportunities here are limited by the way the data pulls in from CMS (ie: the content of the menu will always match sub-page structure). However, the menu can be styled and customized via CSS (animation/appearance) and HTML to operate as a vertical dropdown or mega menu (in contrast to our current horizontal subnav in the blue bar). Mobile menu has some additional limitations.



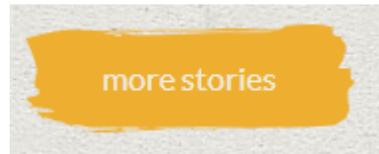
2. **Header Layout** – Design the “above the fold” visual experience of the homepage and interior pages with options for both hero video and a hero photo slideshow.



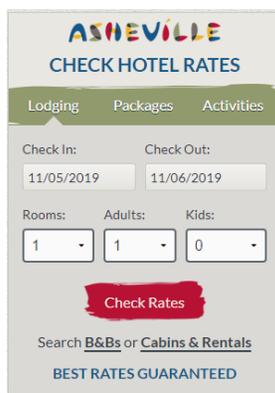
3. **Calls to Action** – Design visual styles for the Email Newsletter Signup and Travel Guide Signup, including any mouseover states.



4. **Button Styles** – Design the look and feel of buttons, including any mouseover states. Our current brushed buttons are available in the five brand colors. There is also a coordinating play button for video widgets.



5. **Ribbon-style Booking Widget** – Replace current box/sidebar-style widget with a ribbon-type widget that could be placed at the top, bottom or middle of a page. Widget will feed parameters (check in/check out dates) to a URL on click. An interim ribbon-style version of this widget is in use on the homepage.



6. **Content Box Widgets** – Create an updated look for these widgets, which are used to deliver a deep catalog of destination content on many pages of the site. The data that can be fed into these widgets is determined by the CMS and includes:
- Label (currently between arrows at the top—we’re ready to replace the arrows with something new!)
 - Photo
 - Content title/headline
 - Byline/Author
 - Description/excerpt
 - Publish date or event date

← itinerary →



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by Jennifer Saylor
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ASHEVILLE

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Top 10 Ways to Experience Fall in Asheville



→ event →
Downtown Abbey: The Exhibition



7. **List Widget Styles** – List widgets display feeds of content throughout the site and appear primarily in two formats, a list and a grid. Available parameters are the same as above, and these lists need a fresh style that complements the rest of the site.



50 Things to Do in Asheville, N.C.
by Del Holston

If you're looking for things to do in Asheville, then consider this list your primer to the many activities available in the Blue Ridge Mountains. Whether you're a first-time visitor, or perhaps well acquainted with the flair of this ... [read more](#)



Visit Biltmore: A True American Treasure
by Elizabeth Sims

Discover an American fairy tale, complete with a castle. Asheville's crown jewel, Biltmore, was created by George Vanderbilt in 1895 as a retreat reminiscent of the grand castles and estates of France and Britain. Vanderbilt fell in love with ... [read more](#)



Asheville's African-American History Tours Uncover Voices from Past & Present
by Ami Worthen

Take A Walk Around "The Block" With Hood Tours Founder DeWayne Barton! It's a festive Saturday afternoon in Asheville, N.C.'s Triangle Park on South Market Street, just a few blocks from the city center, and we are greeted by the ... [read more](#)



Thrills for Everyone: A Zipline Guide to Asheville
by Shayla Martin

Find Your Perfect Zipline Tour in Asheville Take in the sites of Asheville from a new perspective – by soaring hundreds of feet above the ground. From strictly tree-based courses to courses fit for little ones, here's a guide to the ... [read more](#)



Great Tours for Fall in Asheville, NC
by Asheville Insider

Fall is a magical time in Asheville. The city and surrounding Blue Ridge Mountains offer one of the longest fall color seasons in the world – giving you ample time to explore! A guided tour can be the perfect way to experience the stunning fall foliage in unique and unforgettable ways. These tours, some of them brand new in 2019, are perfect for experiencing autumn's glory in [Continue Reading](#)



Skinny Dip Falls
by Jason Tarr

A refreshing, easy hike to one of the area's most favorite swimming holes While the name may raise a few eyebrows, Skinny Dip Falls is not a clothing optional waterfall but rather one of the Asheville area's most popular swimming holes for people of all ages. This short and easy hike just off the Blue Ridge Parkway offers a chance to explore a beautiful hardwood forest before reaching a [Continue Reading](#)

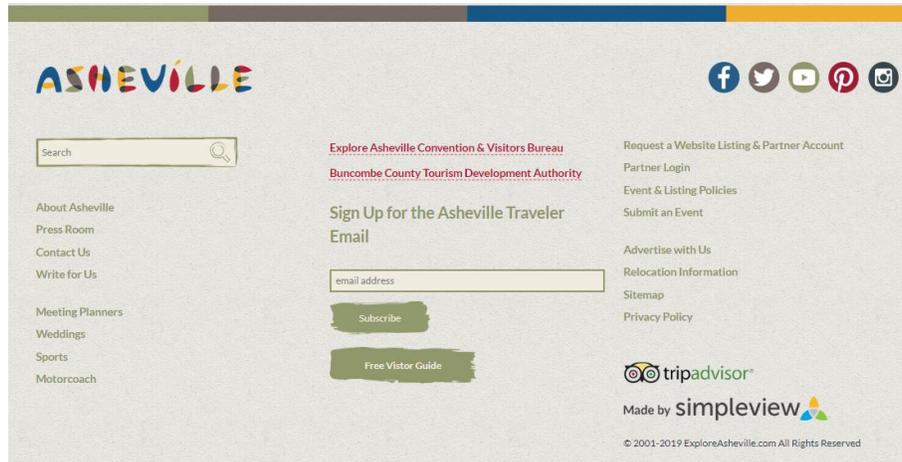


11 Places to Eat Ice Cream in Asheville, NC
by Asheville Insider

In a town known for its incredible dining scene, it's no wonder you'll find an array of ice cream shops, creameries and chocolate shops offering up delicious sweet treats sure to cleanse the palate. Imagine how refreshing it would be after a day of Asheville adventure to savor a scoop (or two, or three, or more) of housemade ice cream. In Asheville, you have many options when in search [Continue Reading](#)

8. **Neighborhood Map Layout** – We're looking for a graphic representation of a Buncombe County map, as well as designs for mouseover states or pop-ups that may be a part of the map's interactive implementation. The team will provide examples as a starting point (see Process below).

9. Footer Layout – Updated styling for the website footer.



**** Please note that project scope does not include implementation of site design which will be handled in-house by Explore Asheville's web developers.**

Process

Upon selection, the Explore Asheville team will schedule a kick-off/discovery call with the vendor in order to share brand attributes and usability data relevant to the project. The team will also share examples of comparable sites and site elements to guide the design process and answer any outstanding questions.

A first draft of design elements should be presented to the team, with a scheduled call to capture feedback and additional direction.

A final draft will be approved by the web refresh team and Explore Asheville leadership.

Proposal Requirements and Content

1. Executive Summary
2. Prior Relevant Experience
 - How long has your company been in business?
 - What is your experience with web design?
 - What's your relevant experience in work that attracts visitation or in the tourism industry?
3. At least two (2) client references for the firm, including primary contact name, telephone number, location and e-mail address for each contact.
4. Case Studies
 - Provide at least three (3) case studies for web design projects, with at least one reflecting work in the tourism industry. This should include projects that transformed existing brand attributes into design elements and should include a summary of the process undertaken with the client.
5. Quote
 - Provide pricing based on the Scope of Work provided.
6. Timetable and Delivery
 - Provide a project start date, noting that Explore Asheville is anticipating a quick start following the selection of the vendor, and we have scheduled to launch in March 2020.
7. Note the timeframe for project completion, including the revision, feedback and approval process.
8. Outline the design review process including follow up questions, revisions, etc.

9. Identify the key point person for the project.

Proposal Submission & Selection Timeframe

Responses to this RFP must be delivered electronically to Explore Asheville by 5 p.m. ET on November 25, 2019. Responses submitted after 5 p.m. ET will not be accepted. Responses must be submitted electronically via email to: ewhite@exploreasheville.com with **RFP Submittal for Explore Asheville Web Design Assistance**, in the subject line.

Individual questions regarding this RFP will be responded to only as follows: questions regarding requirements and scope of work will be received up to 5 p.m. ET on November 18, 2019 via email only at ewhite@exploreasheville.com and answers will be posted on the ExploreAshevilleCVB.com website no later than 5 p.m. ET on November 20, 2019. No further questions will be answered after that time.

Main Project Contact

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