

# Maritime Washington Website Design Request for Proposals

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The Washington Trust for Historic Preservation—a statewide advocacy nonprofit organization—is accepted proposals to design and develop a new website for its recently launched program: the Maritime Washington National Heritage Area.

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## PROJECT OVERVIEW

Spanning 3,000 miles of Washington State’s saltwater shoreline, Maritime Washington recognizes our state’s unique and diverse maritime cultures. Managed by the Washington Trust in partnership with the National Park Service, this heritage area builds a region-wide network and increases collaboration to support our coastal communities in celebrating, maintaining, and sharing their water-based stories.

After a three-year planning period, Maritime Washington is ready to set sail with an official launch in early 2023. A well-designed and engaging website will be at the core of Maritime Washington’s external messaging goals and functions. This website will serve as a platform for multi-media storytelling projects from Maritime Washington and its partners; a one-stop shop for those looking to explore Washington’s maritime sites and activities; and a hub for Maritime Washington partners to access and share information about the maritime community.

The Maritime Washington website will be independent from the existing Washington Trust website ([www.preservewa.org](http://www.preservewa.org)). Any current Maritime pages on the Washington Trust site will be linked out to the new Maritime Washington site.

To learn more about the Maritime Washington National Heritage Area, its goals, and communication strategies, we encourage interested parties to review the following sections of the heritage area's Management Plan, available at [www.preservewa.org/mwnha-plan](http://www.preservewa.org/mwnha-plan):

- *Executive Summary*, pages 10-15
- *Purpose of Maritime Washington*, pages 18-23
- *Directional Guidance*, pages 50-75
- *Interpretive Themes and Strategies*, pages 102-131
- *Branding and Marketing Plan*, pages 178-217

## RFP AND HIGH-LEVEL PROJECT TIMELINE

- RFP posted: August 8, 2022
- **Responses due: September 18, 2022**  
Please send proposal and any questions about the RFP to: Alex Gradwohl, [alex@preservewa.org](mailto:alex@preservewa.org), 206-735-3932
- Finalist agencies selected: September 23, 2022
- Chosen agency selected: September 30, 2022
- New website target launch date: February 1, 2023
- Maintenance and hosting: through 2027

## ORGANIZATION & PROGRAM OVERVIEW

The Washington Trust for Historic Preservation is a nonprofit organization dedicated to saving the places that matter in Washington State and to promoting sustainable and economically viable communities through historic preservation. We are Washington's only statewide nonprofit advocacy organization working to build a collective ethic that preserves historic places through education, collaboration, and stewardship.

The Maritime Washington National Heritage Area is a program of the Washington Trust, facilitated in partnership with and support from the National Park Service. National Heritage Areas are designated by Congress as places where natural, cultural, and historic resources combine to form a nationally important landscape. National Heritage Areas build public-private partnerships to better tell the stories of these places and support communities in maintaining and sharing their unique resources. Although supported by the National Park Service, National Heritage Areas are unique in that they are locally run and completely non-regulatory. There are currently 55 National Heritage Areas in the country.

In 2019, the Maritime Washington National Heritage Area was designated by Congress to help share and preserve our state's unique maritime heritage resources and stories. Its purpose is to support those who celebrate, maintain, and share our water-based experiences; to strengthen partnerships and increase collaboration; and to enhance the way residents and visitors alike think about and experience our maritime heritage. Maritime Washington includes 3,000 miles of Washington State's saltwater shoreline from Grays Harbor County to the Canadian border.

## NEW WEBSITE OBJECTIVE, AUDIENCE, AND GUIDING PRINCIPLES

The primary objective of the new website is to serve as the forward face of the Maritime Washington National Heritage Area. The site will be a hub to access stories, activities, itineraries, maps, and news from the heritage area. The new website must:

- Serve as an ambassador for the Maritime Washington brand
- Provide clear paths for visitors to access information relevant to them
- Showcase the resources offered by Maritime Washington
- Present a visually interesting, modern, and appealing aesthetic
- Maximize search engine optimization
- Provide staff with an easy and intuitive back-end user experience

The website will support Maritime Washington's five short-term implementation goals—particularly goals 3 and 4, which center on external messaging:

1. Build a network of cross-sector partners dedicated to advancing, honoring, and stewarding Washington's maritime stories and resources.
2. Provide support and resources for organizations, communities, and Tribes working to enhance and share their maritime heritage.
3. **Share diverse stories and increase visibility of maritime heritage, past and present.**
4. **Encourage sustainable experiences of maritime heritage for residents and visitors alike.**
5. Preserve our region's unique maritime identity, resources, and lifeways.

The primary audience for the Maritime Washington website is the general public rather than practitioners. While Maritime Washington serves all those who live, work, and play along our state's saltwater shores, we envision the primary users of the website to be people with some existing connection to or interest in heritage, culture, the maritime community, or maritime-related activities such as boating, beach walking, or fishing. Typical users will likely live within 10 miles of the shoreline. They may be looking for ways to explore the region with travel itineraries, maps, and activities/events, or they may be interested in learning more about Washington's maritime heritage through articles, videos, and photos.

An important secondary audience for the website will be partners and potential partners of the Maritime Washington network. Maritime Washington will build and support a formal network of non-profit organizations, businesses, industry groups, government entities, and Tribes. The website will highlight content from/about these partners and will also serve as a repository for partner-facing resources such as grant opportunities, event calendars, and educational content.

Through the website—and through all Maritime Washington’s communications—our guiding principles are to:

- Connect communities across the heritage area.
- Amplify the voices and stories from within the heritage area, rather than telling a group’s story for them.
- Ensure that our diverse maritime communities see themselves in our communications.
- Share the content of our partners as well as our own content.
- Build and protect brand equity and brand guidelines. (See the “Brand Identity Guide” on page 189 of the Maritime Washington Management Plan: [www.preservewa.org/mwnha-plan](http://www.preservewa.org/mwnha-plan))
- Keep it simple and relevant, use clear language, and eliminate jargon and acronyms.
- Synchronize communication with key program milestones to support the successful implementation of the Maritime Washington Management Plan.

## CURRENT WEBSITE/PAGES

The current Washington Trust website, launched in 2017, can be found at [www.preservewa.org](http://www.preservewa.org). It was designed by [Civilization](#) and uses WordPress. It includes integrations with our donor/customer relationship management (CRM) system, Neon. For the past two years, we have maintained several pages on the site focused on Maritime Washington, found at [www.preservewa.org/maritime](http://www.preservewa.org/maritime). These pages were sufficient to get through the public planning period but were never intended to be a permanent home for Maritime Washington content.

Because Maritime Washington as a program includes distinct goals and audiences from the overall Washington Trust brand, we have opted to have a fully independent Maritime Washington website, with separate design and aesthetics. The current Washington Trust website also does not include the features desired for the Maritime Washington site, such as an interactive map and a variety of customizable page types.

During planning for Maritime Washington, we developed an interactive online “Maritime Mapper” where members of the public could identify maritime sites that are important to them or their communities: <https://map.preservewa.org>. The Mapper was developed by digital media firm [Surface Impressions](#) and uses WordPress. While intended as a short-term planning tool (meant to replace traditional methods of public outreach generally conducted at in-person meetings), the Mapper proved highly popular. We would like to see a similarly interactive, filterable—but more closely curated—map as a central piece of the final website.

## PROJECT SCOPE AND FUNCTIONALITY REQUIREMENTS

**Brand identity:** the Maritime Washington web design should align with the program's Brand Identity Guide, available on page 189 of the Maritime Washington Management Plan: [www.preservewa.org/mwnha-plan](http://www.preservewa.org/mwnha-plan).

**Site architecture:** the Maritime Washington website should include the following sections:

1. **Homepage** with eye-catching imagery that clearly directs users to different sections depending on their interest
2. **Story bank:** organized and/or tagged by interpretive theme or story type, this section will host curated content from partners as well as original content from Maritime Washington. Stories will come in multiple formats, including articles, photo essays, short- and long-form videos, and audio recordings. Many of these stories will be linked as a "story series." Examples include:
  - a. A series of six short video interviews about the relationships between communities of color and Washington's waters
  - b. A series of three photo essays (each including 10-15 images, captions, and short text) highlighting working waterfronts
  - c. Monthly articles (including 500 words and several images) about different partners within the Maritime Washington network
  - d. A virtual exhibit on Filipino-American maritime history, comprised of 10 articles (with text, photos, and audio recordings) profiling individuals or families
3. **Activities and experiences:** this section is aimed at people looking for things to do within the heritage area—residents and visitors who want to engage with Washington's maritime resources. It should include/be centered around an interactive map of the area with various maritime-related sites, such as museums, beaches, or historic ships (see "Key Sites from Resource Inventory" beginning on page 132 of the Maritime Washington Management Plan for a full list of sites to be featured: [www.preservewa.org/mwnha-plan](http://www.preservewa.org/mwnha-plan)). The map should be searchable, filterable, and mobile-friendly. In addition to the map, this section will include a repository of suggested travel itineraries.
4. **Partner section:** this section should be accessible only by formal Maritime Washington partners, as a "perk" of partnership. It should include resources such as a partner directory, a list of upcoming events and meetings, an archive of previous newsletters, recordings of workshops, a page of funding opportunities, and forms to submit news.
5. **Educator's section:** this section will be dedicated to connecting teachers and other educators with existing maritime sites, curriculums, field trips, and experiences for students. This will include information about current K-12 curricula with maritime elements and links to partners who offer field trips. *This section is not a priority for the initial web development, as we do not aim to launch until Year 2. Therefore, in your proposal, it can be included as a separate line item for future maintenance/updates.*
6. **Virtual store:** Maritime Washington will sell limited branded merchandise, such as hats and T-shirts. This section will need to have basic e-commerce capabilities.

## Requested capabilities/features

- A range of flexible page templates
- Mobile responsive
- User-friendly on-site search functionality
- Blog/news page
- Interactive map—can modify existing Maritime Mapper (<https://map.preservewa.org>) or build new
- Ability to create password-protected sections—ideally with individual profiles/login information
- Photo galleries, slideshows
- Embedded videos and audio recordings
- Document/asset library with ability to filter, tag, and/or sort
- A user-friendly content and keyword optimization tool compatible with the website's content management system
- Ability to create forms and easily access information submitted
- Directory of partner contact information
- E-commerce capabilities
- Integration with CRM (Neon)
- Integration with email marketing (Mailchimp)—sign up forms and ability to customize mailings

**Content management system preferences:** the current Washington Trust website uses WordPress, although we are open to other options for this new website. Any new system must be intuitive and easy for program staff to use.

**User testing:** at minimum, we request user testing of website prototype before finalization of site. Ideally, we would supply a group of partners/known stakeholders for testing *and* the selected firm would test the site on users unfamiliar with Maritime Washington.

**Content, copy, and imagery:** provided by Washington Trust.

**Trainings:** at least 2 training sessions with Washington Trust staff on use of site.

**Maintenance and hosting:** if design/build is separate from maintenance/ongoing development, we require a reliable and responsive partner experienced working with the design/build agency.

## WEBSITE EXAMPLES

Examples of websites we like:

- **MOHAI:** <https://mohai.org>. Colorful, visually interesting, and includes different ways to access information.

- **Mountains to Sound Greenway National Heritage Area:** <https://mtsgreenway.org>. Great imagery, includes clear separation between “Explore” and “Learn” and a simple interactive map.
- **State of Washington Tourism:** <https://stateofwatourism.com/>. Visually appealing with good looking map, easily navigable with clear sections.

Examples of other National Heritage Area websites can be found on the Alliance of National Heritage Areas page: <https://www.nationalheritageareas.us>.

## TEAM ROLES AND COLLABORATION

- **Alex Gradwohl**, Project Manager for Maritime Washington National Heritage Area, will manage this project and create much of the written content for the new site. She will be the primary point of contact for the selected designer.
- **Farah Momin**, Washington Trust Communications Coordinator, will provide input on design, social media integrations, and relationship with Washington Trust website and brand. She will also provide written content for the site.
- **Kristy Conrad**, Development Director, will offer input on donor/sponsor perspectives and integration with fundraising strategies/needs.
- **Chris Moore**, Executive Director, will provide general oversight, including input in visioning process and final sign-off on site.
- **Future program staff** of the Maritime Washington National Heritage Area (including a Program Director, expected to begin in January 2023, and a Communications and Outreach Manager, expected to begin in Spring 2023) will be looped into the process upon hiring. They will be the main managers of the website after its launch.

## BUDGET

We are budgeting \$50,000-60,000 for initial website design, development, and launch, with an additional \$10,000-20,000 per year for at least the next five years for maintenance and continued feature development. We have a potential additional \$5,000-15,000 for digital marketing components that could be incorporated into the scope of the project depending on the selected team’s proposal and expertise. When constructing your budget, please list the website and any additional items (including digital marketing) as separate components.

## PROPOSAL REQUIREMENTS

Please include the following in your proposal response:

- Overview of your company
- Overview of how you will meet our objectives
- Scope of your work (research, design, development, post-launch errors correction, etc.)
- Outline of your project management approach and website design/development strategy

- Explanation of your proposed platform/CMS
- Examples of 3-5 most relevant recent projects
- Proposed website timeline
- Proposed budget/pricing, with optional elements line-itemed. 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
- Details about your team
- Any additional resources required for support. If the execution of your proposal includes the hiring of sub-contractors, this must be clearly stated in your proposal and included in your budget. Sub-contractors must be identified and the work they will perform must be defined.
- Any key differentiators about your agency
- Terms & conditions