

INFORMATION REPORT

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| TO: | Mayor and Members General Issues Committee |
| COMMITTEE DATE: | November 17, 2021 |
| SUBJECT/REPORT NO: | Hamilton.ca Website Redevelopment - Status Update (CM20011(a)) (City Wide) |
| WARD(S) AFFECTED: | City Wide |
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| SUBMITTED BY: | Matthew Grant Director, Communications and Strategic Initiatives, City Manager's Office |
| SIGNATURE: |  |

COUNCIL DIRECTION – Not Applicable

INFORMATION

On December 9, 2020, Council received Report CM20011 which highlighted stakeholder and resident feedback and expectations for an updated City website and staff's plans to issue a Request for Proposal for vendor support.

Report CM20011(a) provides a status update on the progress made to date on the Hamilton.ca Website Redevelopment initiative as well as the anticipated next steps.

Staff issued a Request for Proposals for a City of Hamilton Website Redesign & Content Management System replacement and implementation on February 1, 2021.

The RFP included provisions for a new site build and a five-year hosting and maintenance contract until 2026. The contract also includes five optional, one-year extensions at the sole discretion of the City.

Eight proposals were received upon closing of the RFP that underwent a technical evaluation and product demonstration evaluation process.

Evolving Web Inc. was selected as the Successful Proponent. Evolving Web has been in operation since 2007 and specializes in web design and development services for public sector clients such as Tourism Quebec, Government of Yukon, Princeton University, Ontario Securities Commission and the Government of Canada.

<https://evolvingweb.ca/>

Project progress & timelines

Since winning the competitive bid process in July 2021 Evolving Web and City staff have made significant progress on the web development project.

The following goals represent key drivers in the web development process, which are in line with the consultation conducted by the City prior to issuing the RFP:

- Ensuring information, services and documents housed on the City website are easy to find
- Make the website accessible. Driven by user experience and legislative requirements - <https://www.ontario.ca/laws/regulation/r11191#BK15>
- Prioritizing user experience by ensuring minimal disruption for users who access information across various platforms and devices
- Ensuring the website supports continuous improvement by offering ongoing opportunities and tools for citizens to provide feedback
- Providing improved opportunities to have information of interest proactively delivered to residents, through features such as newsletters and RSS feeds

The web project will undertake several phases, referenced below, and staff anticipates a go live date for the City's renewed website in June 2022.

| Work Phase | Target completion |
|-------------------------------------|--------------------------|
| Strategy & Discovery phase | November 2021 |
| UX & Design phase | December 2021 |
| Development & testing | March 2022 |
| Staff Training & knowledge transfer | March 2022 |
| Content migration | April 2022 |
| Go live | June 2022 |

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The City's web redesign project was first approved in 2012 with a budget of \$954,800. Additional funding was approved in 2014 for \$1,350,200.

In June 2015, the City launched what is the current Hamilton.ca after a comprehensive web assessment, municipal benchmarking exercise and CMS review recommended Drupal 7 as the CMS platform of choice.

Operational management and maintenance of the site was split between multi-disciplinary teams with Digital Communications based in the City Manager's Office overseeing the day-to-day publishing of content and public messaging and Information Technology based in Corporate Services overseeing site maintenance, development (internal and local vendors who delivered specific components), security and hosting contracts.

Over the last 6 years the City has faced challenges and issues with the current Drupal 7 implementation.

In 2019, City staff received leadership approval to move forward with a plan to decouple content management and online services/products from the same platform and move to a simplified platform and best tool for function solution to be able to satisfy customer requests more effectively.

FINANCIAL – STAFFING – LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no staffing or legal implications associated with Report CM20011(a). Incurred project costs will be covered through the existing Council approved capital budget.

The City of Hamilton website program is focused on delivering a key communications tool that provides a variety of information about programs, services and operations to its citizens, businesses and other stakeholders.

The evolution of transactional online services, such as online payments for products/applications/services, appointment/facility booking and user account status lookup, is a separate but closely related program being led by the CMO's Digital Innovation Office.

POLICY IMPLICATIONS AND LEGISLATED REQUIREMENTS

A new public website privacy policy will be developed or revised in accordance with the policy recommendations presented and approved at November 5, 2020 Audit, Finance & Administration Committee. [A Privacy Breach Review \(FCS20097\) \(City Wide\):](#)

- Review and update the privacy statement on the City's website to ensure it governs the collection, use, storage and protection of personal data provided by users of the City's website.

As directed by Senior Leadership Team on September 15, 2021, internal operating policies and procedures will be developed to address:

- the planning, creation, delivery and governance of web content
- clarifying roles and responsibilities (contributing content, user experience, privacy and accessibility)
- all 3rd party software integrations on the City's website are vetted for compliance prior to implementation
- In accordance with Ontario Regulation 191/11 made under the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA)*, 2005 as it pertains to the Information and Communications Standard a City of Hamilton Digital Accessibility Policy will be developed.

ALIGNMENT TO THE 2016 – 2025 STRATEGIC PLAN

Community Engagement & Participation

Hamilton has an open, transparent and accessible approach to City government that engages with and empowers all citizens to be involved in their community.

- Promoting civic engagement and continuous feedback
- Removing barriers to information about government operations & services
- Making services and programs available, accessible and easier to find

Healthy & Safe Communities

Hamilton is a safe and supportive city where people are active, healthy, and have a high quality of life.

- Promoting services that meet the needs of its diverse community
- Providing curated content to specific targets (children & families, youth, seniors)
- Ensuring an inclusive experience for an aging-population
- Ensuring accessibility of site for all abilities

Culture & Diversity

Hamilton is a thriving, vibrant place for arts, culture, and heritage where diversity and inclusivity are embraced and celebrated.

- Promoting services that help create a community that brings together all people, cultures and lifestyles
- Providing equitable access (multi-modal, abilities, comprehension/low literacy)
- Multi-lingual supports

APPENDICES AND SCHEDULES ATTACHED - None