Municipal Website Development
Project Overview

Project Overview

- The Town website serves as the primary source of information and method of communication for residents and stakeholders

- In 2019, a review of the Town website was identified as a strategic priority for the Communications Department. Staff have worked closely with the current website provider to implement changes to improve the user experience, but many efforts have been limited by the existing platform and technological capabilities

- Through consultation with internal staff departments, the Senior Management Team and Council it was determined that developing a new municipal website was the most appropriate course of action

- Through the 2020 Budget process, Council approved funding for the development of a new Municipal website for the Town

Project Overview

- The new website will replace the existing Town website and will be focused on:

  - improving the end user experience;
  - streamlining and simplifying site navigation;
  - improving website content searchability;
  - increasing staff back end productivity; and
  - ensuring full accessibility and security compliance.

Current Website

- The current website was launched in June 2018. The website was developed between 2015 – 2018 under two separate contracts for a total budget of $60,000 and $67,250 respectively

- The current Town website operates on a proprietary platform that is maintained by an external contractor

- The website could significantly benefit from various upgrades that would improve the navigation, functionality, features and most importantly the user experience for residents

- The current challenges and technical limitations with the Town's website have resulted in decreased public satisfaction and reduced operational effectiveness

Website Development Team

To oversee the development of the new municipal website, the Town will form an internal website development team consisting of staff from various departments:

- Communications Staff (Two Staff Members)
- Administration Staff (One Staff Member)
- IT Staff (One Staff Member)
- Administrative Assistants (3 Staff Members)

Draft Project Timeline

- Request for Proposal Issued: Late September 2020

- Vendor Presentations: Mid October 2020

- Vendor Selected: Late October 2020

- Site Development: November 2020 – June 2021

- Website Launch: July 2021

Role of Communications Committee

- The involvement of the Communications Committee will be essential within the development, review and testing of the website

- Town staff will provide regular update reports to the Committee regarding the project process

- The Communications Committee will be engaged at various project stages to work collaboratively in reviewing aspects such as website navigation, design / appearance, content review and testing

- In accordance with the purchasing policy, one member of the Communication Committee may sit as an observer during the shortlisted website demonstrations and provide their feedback to staff

Consultation

To ensure effective consultation with both the public and internal staff, two surveys will be issued:

1) Public Survey
   - Through consultation with the Communications Sub Committee, staff will launch an online survey to gain public feedback regarding improvements to the new municipal website including new features and functionality

   - In addition, staff will review the comments received through the website feedback survey that was issued in 2018 after the launch of the current website

2) Internal Staff Survey
   - Through the focus of improving staff productivity, an internal employee survey will be issued to gain feedback and insight from staff and the various municipal departments. The goal is to better understand how each department utilizes the website and to identify areas of improvement

Highlight of Key Features

- Externally hosted with technical support and security agreement
- Ensure that the website is AODA, MFIPPA, CASL and PCI Compliant
- Responsive and mobile friendly design and compatibility with common browsers
- Redesigned homepage layout and interior page layout
  - Recently Posted News with link to more news
  - Upcoming Meetings with link to more meetings
  - Featured Projects Section
  - Meeting Live Stream Alert box
  - "Most Popular Content" section that is updated dynamically based on user activity
  - Municipal Twitter Feed
- Restructured and simplified menu navigation
- Addition of "What's New" page
- Page templates to ensure consistent branding (look and feel)
- Online Service Integration

- Improved Searchability with automatic keyword generation
- Website email subscriptions and individual page subscriptions (CASL Compliant)
- Incorporation of Special Project Pages (Your View, The Blue Mountains)
- Content scheduler / out-of-date content notification tool
- Workflow process for internal staff content review including audit history
- Web based editing capabilities
- Document directories with search and filtering capabilities

… And much more!

What's Next?

- Initial feedback from Communications Committee
- Development & Launch of Public Survey
- Development & Launch of Internal Staff Survey
- Internal Meetings with all Municipal Departments
- Final Draft of Request for Proposal approved by Senior Management Team
- Request for Proposal Issued

Questions for the Committee

- What do you like about the current website?

- What do you not like about the current website?

- What features / functionality would you like to see on the new website?

- Do you have examples of other Municipal websites that you like?

Questions?