



Title: Website Rebuild: Beta Testing

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Purpose:

To provide background and an overview of the status and next steps of the website rebuild project for the May 17, 2023, Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC) meeting.

Background:

Following a request for proposals, on February 10, 2022, the Board of Managers, approved [Resolution 22-009](#) authorizing a contract with Love Communications (Love), to design and build a new website for MCWD. Love's work builds on an [organizational outreach strategy](#), and a [website content strategy](#), previously approved and adopted by the Board of Managers, both of which drew on guidance from the Citizens Advisory Committee, public and private stakeholders, residents, staff and advisors.

At the [May 18, 2022, CAC meeting](#), Love Communications presented two potential design directions for the new website. CAC members provided feedback and recommendations to inform the Board of Managers in selecting a final design direction. On [May 26, 2022](#), the Board of Managers received an update from Love and staff that included MCWD's goals for the website, audience segments, website visitor goals, content pillars that served these goals, and design options.

Within MCWD's Outreach Strategy, the overarching goals for the website included:

- Connect people to the information they want quickly and intuitively with a visually engaging design
- Highlight MCWD's Balanced Urban Ecology vision, partnership approach, and project portfolio throughout
- Focus on curating the most important content, and move the website away from being an archive

Users of the website were segmented, and generally fit into the following categories:

- Land Use Community, Policy Makers, and Community Leaders
- Property Owners and Permit Applicants
- Water Advocates, Paddlers, and Interested Public

More discrete goals of the site map included:

- Serve as a hub for key data sets that people frequently want
 - Water quality information about their local waterbody
 - Water levels in relation to Gray's Bay Dam and paddling conditions
- Connect residents to resources that support local clean water action (previously delivered by Outreach staff)
 - Volunteer opportunities and partner resources
 - Resources to support best management practices
- Improve online permitting process navigation
 - Clearer process and connection to resources
 - Integrating the MCWD permitting portal
- Provide high-quality communication of MCWD's balanced urban ecology, partnership and project emphasis

Work Since May 2022:

The workplan for the website build called for content creation and development to be completed by October 2022, to support subsequent testing and launch by the end of the year. Driving this timeline was a deadline for sunseting security support for a critical component of the District's existing website, which would leave the site vulnerable to malware and other exploits. It was estimated that updating all dependent components to maintain a secure website would cost as much as a full rebuild. However, the District was not alone – an estimated 10% of websites were facing the same expiring security support issue. Due to this potential impact, backward compatibility was developed and rolled out, making updates to new versions financially and technically feasible. As a result, the security threat that prompted the October 2022 timeline for launching the District's new website was removed. Last fall, the current website was updated with needed component updates that provide security support through November 2023.

Following presentation to the Board of Managers in May 2022, the team encountered a series of project challenges that impacted the project's schedule. While the project is behind schedule, progress has been made on building out content for the website. As remaining content is finalized, the MCWD website team is prepping for the beta testing period, a critical step before the launch of the new site. Beta testing is a type of user acceptance testing in which a product team gives a nearly finished product to a group of target users to evaluate product performance and uncover bugs or issues before general release. MCWD will engage staff, the Board of Managers, the CAC, and a group of trusted external stakeholders in the beta testing process.

Summary:

At the May 17, 2023, CAC meeting staff will provide a brief walkthrough of the draft website, an overview of the beta testing process, and share the next steps for the launch of the new website.