



Title: MCWD Outreach Strategy – Next Steps

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Purpose:

To provide a summary of the website planning process to date and frame discussion questions for the committee.

Background:

In February 2020, the Board of Managers approved a new strategic direction for MCWD's Outreach program based on extensive input from Board and CAC members, stakeholders, staff, residents, and advisors.

The new strategic direction calls for an increased emphasis on supporting high-impact interpersonal outreach that is tied to key District initiatives, and a decreased emphasis on broad-based outreach. As a result, the program can better help the organization deliver value to its residents and stakeholders by providing more tailored and effective outreach around its key initiatives.

However, the realignment plan recognizes a variety of other "customers" that MCWD must serve as part of its core mission. To achieve this shift in emphasis while continuing to meet the needs of residents and partners, MCWD's website must effectively serve many of the common requests for information that were often addressed by MCWD's previous broad-based outreach emphasis. It must do so by effectively connecting people to the information they want or need.

To achieve this, MCWD has been preparing to re-launch a new website in 2021, replacing a site that is almost 10 years old and suffers from bloat, information overload, and outdated design. This re-designed website has the potential to deliver value to the District's variety of stakeholders by satisfying their requests for information while communicating the value MCWD's work delivers and providing transparency around its practices.

To ensure the website achieves these goals, MCWD selected the marketing firm Vendi in a competitive process to help develop a content plan which sets the stage for designing and building the site in 2021. MCWD has sought input from a variety of sources to inform this plan. In particular, MCWD sought to tap the expertise of the CAC at the beginning of the process to provide directional input on goals, strategy, and key content. Input from CAC members included:

- Participating in an online user survey
- Participating in focus groups
- A website work session at the Feb. 5, 2020, meeting
- An invitation for volunteers to participate in a series of consultant-led planning workshops, attended by CAC members Brian Girard and Richard Nyquist

Based on the input gathered, MCWD and Vendi defined the following overarching website goals, in order of priority, which the CAC reviewed at its Feb. 5 meeting:

1. Connect people to the information they value
2. Highlight the value MCWD provides
3. Provide transparency and organizational information

With those goals established, MCWD and Vendi have collaborated on a content planning process known as Vendi's "Core Model Process" to define the architecture of the site and the core content required to achieve its goals.

At the September 2 CAC meeting, staff will summarize the results of the Core Model Process plan and seek the committee's counsel on the following questions:

- How well do the stated goals of the website support MCWD's realigned outreach strategy?
- How well does this content plan achieve the stated goals of the website?
- In February the CAC provided guidance to "focus on doing a small number of things well and then scaling up" to avoid historic issues of bloat and information overload. How well does the plan achieve this aspiration?
- What aspects of the website content plan are exciting?
- What aspects of the website content plan are concerning or confusing?
- What content elements are missing that would advance the core goals of the site while following the principle of starting small and scaling up?