



MEMORANDUM

To: MCWD Board of Managers
From: Sarah Bhimani and Telly Mamayek
Date: February 11, 2019
Re: Website redesign

Purpose:

To review and receive Managers’ feedback on the draft goals, scope, and process for a website redesign to be coordinated with the work of an IT consultant and the strategic communications plan.

Background:

The MCWD’s 2017 Watershed Management Plan identifies the strategic priorities of building high-impact capital projects and integrating land use and water planning while also remaining responsive to needs and opportunities across the watershed district. MCWD’s current website does not effectively communicate or market our new strategic direction or our most impactful work as it is limited by its structure and design.

MCWD’s current website design was last updated in 2011. Since then there have been changes in mobile technology, accessibility standards, and design standards. Additionally, new functionalities have been identified that would improve the user experience of the site and better share MCWD’s data and stories.

The website redesign is being moved forward in coordination with the recruitment of consultants for the organizational IT plan and the 2020 strategic communications plan. Systems and software identified by the IT consultant will need to integrate with a redesigned website. The website redesign will be informed by research that is done and recommendations that are made for the 2020 strategic communications plan.

To assist with the website redesign, staff is proposing issuing a Request for Proposals (RFP) to hire a website designer that will work with the IT consultant and staff to plan and build a redesigned website. MCWD has \$125,000 budgeted in 2019 for IT work, which includes preparation work for the website redesign. This preparation work, which includes coordinating with the IT consultant on systems integration; informing the 2020 budget for the website build; and developing a content strategy and preliminary site navigation; is anticipated to cost \$25,000 in 2019.

Staff, in conjunction with the IT Team, began preparing for this project in 2018 by reviewing the current website’s analytics to identify current audiences and most-used content. The IT team determined the redesigned website’s target audiences based on the organization’s strategic priorities and current users,

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and identified must-have and nice-to-have features for a functional and robust website. Using the draft strategic communications plan goals as a guide, the IT team and leadership team determined the draft overarching goals for a redesigned website (summarized in the section below). All of this information will be included in the RFP.

Staff has been getting input from other watershed districts and local governments that have recently completed website redesigns to learn from their experiences and to review their RFP examples. Staff has also discussed the RFP and the website redesign project with three website design firms to learn about their process and what information they need in an RFP to put together a successful proposal. All of the firms who have been contacted have expressed interest in responding to the RFP.

Summary:

Draft Goals:

The redesigned website will help meet the organization's strategic goals by:

- Using a visually appealing website design to tell concise and compelling stories
- Structuring content to be intuitive for easily finding information relevant to the entire watershed and our target audiences
- Improving accessibility and transparency of publicly accessible data
- Incorporating interactive customer service features
- Improving backend administration
- Facilitating community engagement

Scope:

The website redesign will be a two-part process that will involve the website designer working closely with staff and the IT consultant.

- A. Preparing for redesign - 2019
 1. Coordinating with the IT consultant to ensure third-party application integration
 2. Informing the MCWD 2020 budget for website build
 3. Facilitating staff to develop a content strategy and preliminary site navigation
- B. Website build - 2020
 1. Finalize content strategy and site navigation
 2. Build and implement redesigned website

We envision involvement of the board liaisons during proposal selection, at key points during the development of content strategy and site navigation, and during major iterations of the website build.

Process and timeline:

Staff proposes the following process and timeline for selecting the consultant and beginning the website redesign:

February: OPC and Board review

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March: Issue RFP

April – May: Interview applicants and select consultant

May - July: Coordinate with IT consultant; provide budget estimates for 2020 website build

August - December: Coordinate with IT consultant; facilitate staff to develop content strategy and preliminary site navigation

January 2020: Finalize content strategy and site navigation; begin website build

Next Steps:

Pending Board input, staff is planning to bring the RFP to the Board for approval on February 28.

If there are questions in advance of the meeting, please contact: Sarah Bhimani at (952) 641-4520 or sbhimani@minnehahacreek.org.

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