

## Appendix B

### **BUDGET COMMITTEE REFERRAL:**

That staff report back on options to consult with Members of Council on the oakville.ca website rebuild.

### **RECOMMENDATIONS:**

- That the report entitled Oakville.ca Council Consultation be received.

### **KEY FACTS:**

- The town's primary website, oakville.ca, is the preferred channel of engagement for residents and business owners for the purpose of finding information and accessing services.
- The town's website was last fully redeveloped in 2012 and was made mobile friendly in 2017.
- The current content management tool is outdated; it does not allow for scalability and modernization, is no longer meeting operational needs and cannot support the town's strategic goals.
- The current search tool is difficult for staff to maintain and is not user friendly; it does not consistently provide expected search results for users.
- The town has standardized its web management technology (content management and search). These standards are the same tools successfully implemented with the Oakville Public Library.
- The town worked with ForwardVu Solutions in 2019/2020 on the first phase of the oakville.ca redesign project, which focused on extensive stakeholder engagement, website audits and assessments. The findings from this work formed the basis of the business and technical requirements for the Request for Proposals (RFP) for the build phase.

### **BACKGROUND:**

2019 to early 2020:

- Hired ForwardVu Solutions to conduct extensive user engagement, user research, site assessments and analysis. Work included:
  - Engagement:
    - 15+ in-person engagement/consultation sessions (staff, Mayor, public, including outreach with the Oakville Youth Advisory Committee, and individuals/families in our vulnerable communities)
    - 2 online engagement opportunities (open to all)
    - 1,200 participants
  - Assessments, analysis and reports:
    - Current state assessment, content audit, governance and operational model assessment, competitive analysis (six other

government sites), content management system review and recommendation

- Findings report:
  - Validated need for significant improvements
  - Findings informed the RFP business and technical requirements for the redesign and rebuild phase in 2022
  - High-level findings/requirements include:
    - New design: Simpler, more consistent and fewer templates
    - Updated navigation: More intuitive, streamlined, breadcrumbs
    - Improved search: More expected search results, additional search aids
    - Less content: Key information easier to find, relevant, concise; instructional for online services
    - Improved access to services: Provide easy access to online services and sign in from any page
    - Improved accessibility: Bigger font, better contrast, more accessible on mobile
    - New technology: Modern content management system, more intuitive search tool
    - Structured engagement: Transparent and ongoing consultation with staff, Council and the public
- Prototype and draft designs:
  - Wireframes and prototype, draft designs, site map and style guide developed.
  - These deliverables were completed in the early days of COVID-19 and are to be used as the starting point for the implementation vendor. The next phase will include a validation of the prototype and draft designs through user consultations prior to build.

Early 2020 through 2021:

- Web project paused in spring 2020 due to COVID-19. The web team's priority focus shifted to operations in support of facility and service impacts, staff redeployments that impacted web and social media, and service recovery. The web team worked on smaller continuous improvement initiatives during this time.
- Project work resumed in summer 2021, with budget and resource planning, confirmation of new web technology standards (the town has standardized the same content management system and search platform that the OPL is successfully using for opl.ca), and preparation of procurement documents for the build phase.
- After the successful launch of opl.ca in June 2021, the town web project team consulted with OPL project staff on lessons learned and continue to have ongoing discussions regarding their site, technology performance and opportunities to partner.

2022:

- Procurement for the next phase of the website rebuild project is scheduled to begin mid-January, pending budget approval.

- Contracted resources are to be hired to support the web project team in relation to quality content development and standards, and front-end web designer/developer needs.
- Vendor award is scheduled for no later than March 2022.
- Key consultation opportunities will occur during the build and implementation phases.

#### **COMMENTS/OPTIONS:**

- The project team will provide regular opportunities for Council engagement and project updates. This will include:
  - In December 2021, meetings with Council on the consultant report and findings, project work completed to-date, and request for Council input on key outcomes and requirements for the website rebuild.
  - Council updates at key project milestones throughout the rebuild and implementation phase.
    - Specific timing and milestones are dependent on the successful vendor's project schedule but will likely include: validation of prototype/designs, review and testing at key implementation stages, pre-launch user testing, post-launch testing.
    - An update will be provided to Council upon finalization of the schedule.
  - Regular project updates will also be provided through the CAO Update and CAO weekly emails, as required.
- In addition, to support public information and engagement on this project, details about the project (such as a milestone roadmap, timelines, progress/status, opportunities for public engagement and user testing, etc.) will be posted on oakville.ca once the vendor project schedule is confirmed.