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Title:	Update on Town of Carrboro Website Redesign PURPOSE: The purpose of this item is to update the Town Council on the Town of Carrboro website redesign and related improvements.		
Indexes:			
Code sections:			
Attachments:	1. Attachment A - Carrboro Website Redesign Project 2021-2022.pdf, 2. Attachment B - Carrboro Website Redesign 2021-2022.pdf, 3. Attachment C - Website Survey Results 2021, 4. Attachment D - UNC-Chapel Hill Website Usability Report		

Date	Ver.	Action By	Action	Result

TITLE:

Update on Town of Carrboro Website Redesign

PURPOSE: The purpose of this item is to update the Town Council on the Town of Carrboro website redesign and related improvements.

DEPARTMENT: Communication and Engagement

CONTACT INFORMATION: Catherine Lazorko, Communication and Engagement Director, clazorko@carrbornc.gov, (919) 918-7314

INFORMATION: The purpose of this agenda item is to provide the Town Council with an update on the redesign of the Town of Carrboro website at www.carrboronc.gov <http://www.carrboronc.gov>. The new redesign is anticipated to launch on April 22, 2022. It will feature a new aesthetic and improved navigation. The Town's website is a content management system designed and hosted by CivicPlus, a national website development company that specializes in city and county website design. Our current website design has been in place since 2014.

The Communication and Engagement Department began the work on the website redesign in May 2021, involving the Town Communications Team with representation from all departments.

To better understand our user preferences, staff reviewed website analytics, conducted a communitywide survey to gather input about people's observations and feedback about the website, and engaged with a UNC-Chapel Hill Hussman School of Media and Journalism user experience design class led by Professor Laura Ruel for assistance. Four class teams conducted research on a variety of areas of the website. In their research, users were asked to perform website tasks, and questioned about the efficiency and enjoyment of the experience.

This research has influenced the new website redesign and has helped set a plan for improvements anticipated in the near future. Town staff will continue to refine various elements, rebuild webpages and streamline content.

Some of the questions that we posed include whether the homepage links work well for user needs; to determine if the overall navigation is usable and efficient; and to determine if formats are consistent and accessible in mobile format. Another step is ensuring that our design is visually relevant to the user. By referencing culturally significant themes -- including photos from the Carrboro Music Festival, an illustration along all webpage footers of Elizabeth Cotten, invitations to engage with local government, and a language access webpage -- we aim to make our design more welcoming and responsive to our users.

As part of continuing efforts to increase access to information, resources, and civic processes by all people in our community, we focused attention on what analytics revealed about translation browser formats. For example, our analytics tools can determine the languages that people are translating our website into from their browsers. Other than English, the primary languages of our website visitors are Spanish, Chinese and Korean. We are planning to create a webpage to assist with language access and to explain what services are offered both by the Town or available technologies.

Additionally, one of the journalism teams involved in usability testing focused on accessibility for people with disabilities (visual impairments). As a result, we are ensuring that screen readers can use heading structures to navigate content and improving descriptive text with key words and alt tagging on webpages. Alt text and keywords provide search engines like Google additional information about what is on a particular page to help people find our webpages when conducting searches. These tags are also useful to people with visual impairments who use screen readers, helping them to better understand the content on the website.

This update includes the following:

- o Attachment A - Redesign Schedule 2021-2022
- o Attachment B - Homepage Redesign Before/After
- o Attachment C - Communitywide Survey of Town Website
- o Attachment D - UNC-Chapel Hill Journalism Usability Report

Acknowledgements for this project are paid to the Town Communications Team including the Website Redesign Executive Team (Catherine Lazorko, Robert Douglass, Charles Harrington and Julie Eckenrode), working with our developer CivicPlus; and user experience design class of UNC-Chapel Hill Professor Laura Ruel.

FISCAL & STAFF IMPACT: There is no fiscal or staff impact related to this update.

RECOMMENDATION: Staff recommends the Town Council receive this update and provide feedback.