TO:	**CHAIR AND MEMBERS** **CORPORATE SERVICES COMMITTEE** **MEETING ON SEPTEMBER 21, 2020**
FROM:	**PATTI MCKAGUE, DIRECTOR, STRATEGIC COMMUNICATIONS AND GOVERNMENT RELATIONS** **AND** **MAT DALEY, DIRECTOR, INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY SERVICES**
SUBJECT:	**City of London Website Redesign Development and Implementation– Update**

RECOMMENDATION

That, on the recommendation of the Director, Strategic Communications and Government Relations, and of the Director, Information Technology Services, Finance and Corporate Services, the following report with respect to the Website Redesign Development and Implementation for City of London BE RECEIVED for information.

PREVIOUS REPORTS PERTINENT TO THIS MATTER

Corporate Services Committee Meeting, August 13, 2019, Agenda Item 2.2.2
https://pub-london.escribemeetings.com/Meeting.aspx?Id=08530b61-aa9f-4ea0-b583-f6199888d945&Agenda=Agenda&lang=English

STRATEGIC PLAN 2019-2023

This project supports the organization in its Strategic Area of Focus of **Leading in Public Service**.

Expected results that will be achieved by developing and implementing a new website include:
- Increase community and resident satisfaction of their service experience within the City.
- Increase responsiveness to our customers.
- Increase efficiency and effectiveness of customer service.
- Increase opportunities for residents to be informed and participate in local government.
- Enhance the ability to respond to new and emerging technologies and best practices.
- Reduce barriers to residents accessing information and relevant City services.

Redeveloping and implementing a new website for the City of London supports multiple strategies outlined in the Strategic Plan 2019-2023, including:
- Develop and deliver a Corporate Communications strategy, including staff training and tools to enhance communications and public engagement.
- Continue to maintain, build and enhance a high-performing and secure computing environment.
- Deliver and maintain innovative digital solutions to increase efficiency and effectiveness across the organization.

The website is an important tool that will support the City in achieving these results.

Purpose:
The purpose of this report is to provide Council with an overview of the process that was used to develop and redesign the City's web site, www.london.ca as well as to highlight the features that will support the new site in better serving people who access it. This report also provides an overview of the immediate next steps as the City prepares to launch a new site.

Background:
Providing easy access to City information and services is at the heart of ensuring an engaged and informed community. As technology evolves and becomes more accessible, residents, customers and visitors to the City's website have increasing expectations about the way they can access London online.

In developing a new site, the City has an opportunity to enhance the way it serves customers, residents and community. Although it has served the community and provided information about City services and initiatives to groups and individuals since it was launched in 2013, customer research consistently identifies an improved website as an opportunity to connect residents to City services and information more effectively. As the front door to many City services, our municipal website routes visitors to over 100 separate applications to meet their needs.

As staff considered the need for a renewed website, they identified four key opportunities:
- Engagement – engage the community and staff, recognizing the diversity of people and groups who use the website in the development and redesign process.
- Enhanced customer service – the outcome of acting on these opportunities will be a site that offers enhanced customer service and improved sharing of information.
- Accessibility – ensure that accessibility is a principle that is embedded throughout the development of the new site, and that content is fully compliant with the AODA WCAG 2.0 AA Standards as required by January 1, 2021.
- Technology – build on a platform that will be sustainable and secure into the future and will have agility built into the support process so that the City can continuously introduce minor enhancements to be more responsive to community needs.

On August 27, 2019, City Council approved the proposal submitted by Digital Echidna to work with City staff to develop and implement the new site. To complete this work, Digital Echidna worked together with two additional London-based firms, rTraction and ResIM. Through this collaborative approach, this project drew on the experience and knowledge of these firms collectively, supporting the City in the development of a site that will better serve the community and its residents.

Research Activities:
One of the guiding principles of the work to develop a new web site was the importance of looking at the City's site from the outside in. This meant ensuring that the site was developed using language and a navigation that was built from the perspective of the community and of people who regularly visit the City's site for transactions and for information about City services.

Engaging the community took many forms. An online public survey was launched in late 2019, and was promoted through the City's web site and social media. As well, this survey was also shared at all public research events. In addition to the survey, a total of seven public drop-in sessions were held at locations throughout London. Beyond broad public engagement, structured groups sessions were held with Ontario Works clients, members of the age friendly network, as well as women-focused and accessibility-

focused groups. The final step of research included in-person conversations and usability interviews with a property developer, a property manager, and members of the City's Service London team. In total, there were 1,500 points of data that informed the early development of the site.

The final two steps in the external research included a card sorting exercise and a tree test. Through the card sorting exercise, participants were asked to sort content into categories based on where they would expect to find information or complete a transaction. Through the tree test, participants were provided with a list of common tasks that visitors to the City's site would want to complete, and the navigation was tested to determine whether content was sorted in a way that was intuitive to a visitor to the site.

In parallel to external research activities, significant research was done to identify municipal best practices and to review existing municipal sites from across North America to establish key elements that were common among those sites, and that would benefit the City of London in developing a new site.

In addition to external research, there were also 11 discovery sessions held with employees from across the organization. The goal of this was to identify limitations of our current site and to introduce features that better supported service areas as they provide content and services through the City's web site. The key finding through this process was the need for flexibility as the current site provides limited options in how information is presented.

Decisions about content and navigation were also based in data analytics. Using information available about the pages that were frequently visited helped inform placement in the new navigation, as well as helped inform prioritization for content to be included in the new site. Redeveloping the web site was not an exercise in creating a new shell and moving all content over to it; content has been carefully reviewed, with content that was visited most frequently, and content that is legally required taking priority for launch. We will continue to add content moving forward, with an ongoing focus on data to drive decisions.

What we heard:
At a high level, some of the key findings include:
- The current content groupings, particularly in the main navigation are unclear for some users.
- Users wanted more visibility before making a selection. They wanted a way to know whether they were going to find the information they were looking for before clicking through to links.
- Old and outdated content was frustrating.
- Time-sensitive content is important. Visitors are looking for content that is timely and relevant.
- Content organized by service area or department is not as helpful as content organized by the task the user wants to perform when they visit the site.
- There are unnecessary clicks and layers of pages for users to find the information they are looking for.
- Dead ends existed and disrupted the task completion.
- Navigating multiple city sites could be confusing.
- The language used didn't always make sense to the users.

Principles:
Based on the input received through research, the team developing the web site adopted principles to guide all of the work that was done on the redeveloped site. At the heart of this was the foundational principle that through the web site, the City is delivering a digital service that consists of both content and connecting users with existing applications to complete transactions. With that in mind, a good service should do the following:

- Be easy to find
- Enable users to complete what they set out to do
- Be agnostic of organization structure and language
- Be usable by everyone, equally
- Require the minimum possible steps to complete
- Have no dead ends
- Be consistent throughout
- Clearly explain its purpose
- Make it easy to get human assistance
- Set the expectation the user has of it
- Work in a way that is familiar
- Require no prior knowledge to use

(These were adapted from Lou Downe's '15 principles of good service design'. Ms. Downe is the author of Good Services, *a book about how to design services that work.)*

Key Features of the New Web Site:
To deliver on the principles noted above, a number of features have been integrated into the new site. These include:
- Enhanced search capabilities with the ability to suggest alternatives ('Did you mean…')
- A search bar that is featured prominently on the new site, with the language 'What can the city help you with today?'
- A structure that is focused on the services and information residents look for as opposed to being built based on the organizational structure
- Use of icons and action-oriented language to help residents identify the actions they want to take and the content they are looking for more easily
- Reduction in the number of pages of content on the new site
- Requirement for content being posted to be AODA WCAG 2.0 compliant
- Quick links on the home page. These have been identified based on site analytics and user data, and can be changed if there are emerging issues or to reflect seasonal changes in content that users will be looking for.
- A standing feature on the home page is 'The Latest'. In this section, visitors will find the most recent news or information.
- A wide variety of content page types, providing the flexibility to host and present services and information in a number of different ways.
- As well, a wide variety of content page types also reduces the need for microsites. This provides cost savings, allows for brand consistency and is easier for the public to navigate.
- More flexibility in publishing content, which allows staff to make updates quickly. As well, there is now the ability to schedule published content which reduces staff time on content administration and management.

Images that highlight these features can be found in Appendix A.

Accessibility:
One of the critical opportunities that came with creating a new site was the ability to meet WCAG 2.0 Accessibility Standards. With our current site, there are many PDFs hosted on the site that are not accessible. With the introduction of a new site, the City has the ability to convert many of the PDFs that do not meet these standards to text. As well, the City has the ability to ensure that any new documents either meet the standards when they are posted. For some of the more complex documents that are required at launch, they may be posted now, with a plan in place to ensure they meet the standards by January 2021, when the new legislative requirements will be in effect.

Launching a Beta Site:
As the City prepares to launch the new site, it's important to note that there are continued opportunities for community engagement. At noon on September 21, a beta site will be launched to provide an opportunity for visitors to www.london.ca to provide input and identify any issues with the new site. This site will be a test site that will be

available in parallel to our current site. It will provide an opportunity for visitors to test the site and provide feedback about any aspects of the new site before it is live. The beta site will be available on the homepage of London.ca, through a banner that will provide a link to the new beta site. The link will also be shared on our social media channels as well as well as promoted through our e-newsletter and through targeted communications with stakeholders.

The revised www.london.ca will be launched on October 7. Initial plans had contemplated a longer timeframe for beta testing. The shift in priorities that was required to respond to and communicate about COVID-19, combined with a firm deadline created by the fact that the technical support for the current platform will be discontinued in mid-October, caused this timeline to be compressed. It's important to note that the flexibility of this new site design will allow staff to adapt a continuous improvement approach and make modifications as opportunities are identified.


CONCLUSION

The City of London's web site is an important means of providing service to and engaging with the community and with visitors to London. Through a process that was driven by external research that provided insights into user priorities and perspectives, the City is preparing to launch an enhanced web site that addresses many of the shortfalls identified through research. With the launch of the beta site at noon on September 21, 2020, there continue to be opportunities for community input and feedback that will shape the final site when it launches on October 7, 2020. As well, the flexibility of the new site will allow staff to take a continuous improvement approach; going forward, when there are concerns or opportunities for improvements, we will be able to make modifications more quickly, and in most cases, with no costs or technical assistance required.

With the guidance and support from the vendors who were contracted to develop and redesign our site, ResIM and rTraction under the leadership of Digital Echidna, the City has been able to develop a site that will better meet the needs of the community, and that has been delivered on time and within budget.

RECOMMENDED BY:	RECOMMENDED BY:
Patti McKague **Director, Strategic Communications and Government Relations**	**Mat Daley** **Director, Information Technology Services**

CC:
Lynne Livingstone, City Manager
Senior Leadership Team
Lori Kolodiazny, Manager IV, Information Technology Services
Meagan Geudens, Manager, Public Engagement (Digital)
Matt Ross, Manager, Artificial Intelligence
Melanie Stone, Accessibility Specialist, Human Resources.
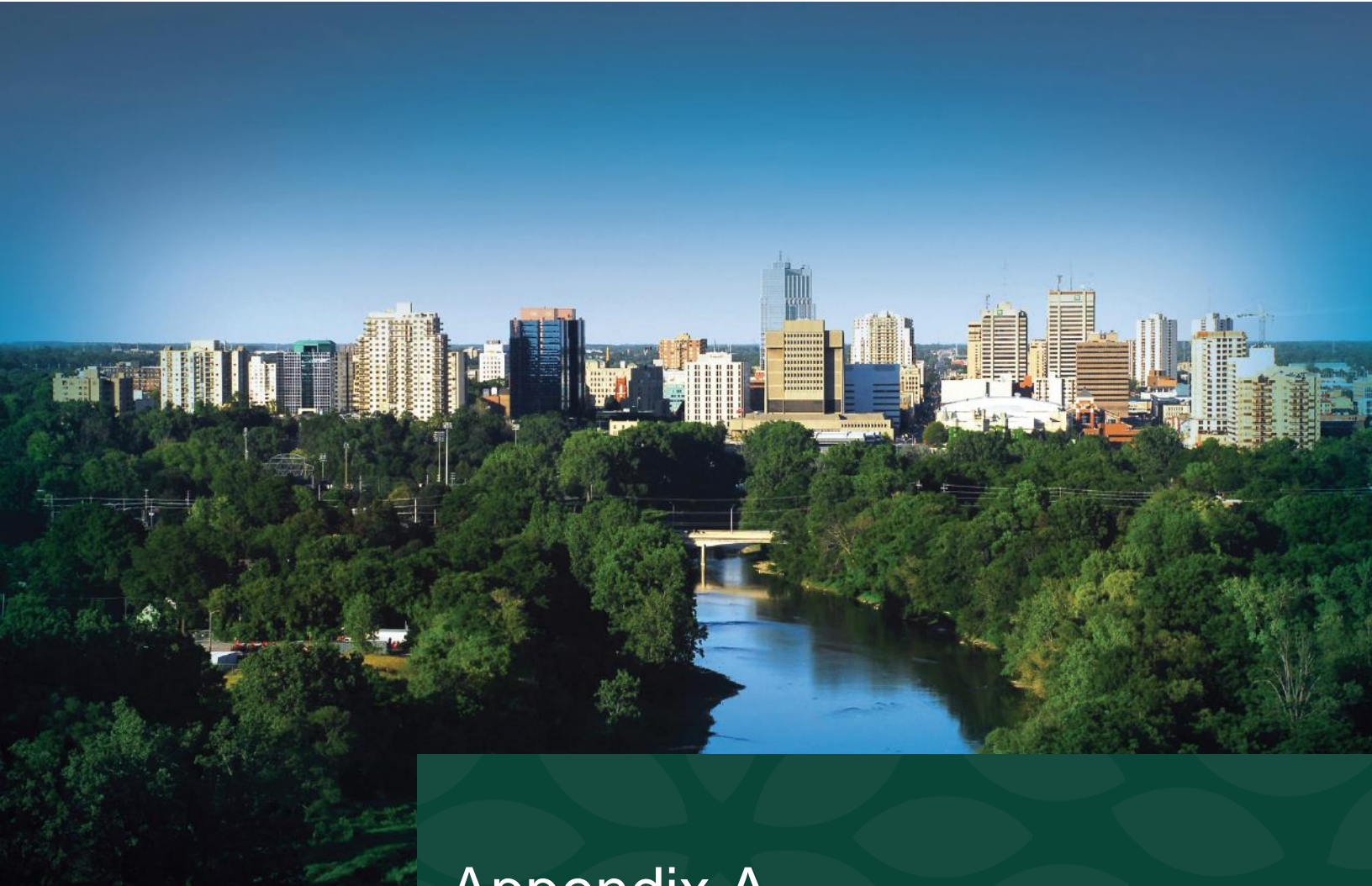
Appendix A
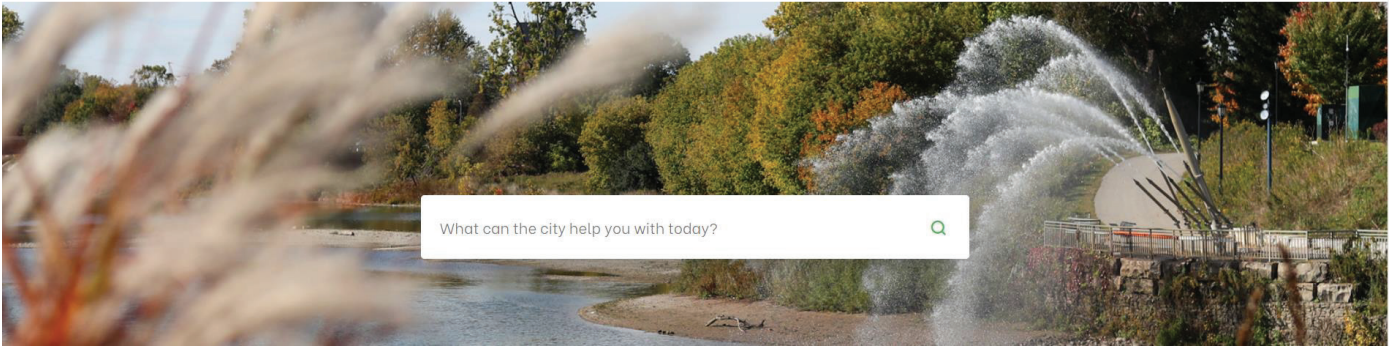## London.ca Redesign - Sample Screens

london.ca

Homepage:

News   Contact

London
CANADA

LIVING IN LONDON   GOVERNMENT   BUSINESS & DEVELOPMENT

What can the city help you with today?

QuickLinks

COVID-19 updates

Visit our COVID-19 (Coronavirus) update page for information on all City services.

Council meetings

Find links to Council's schedule, agendas and minutes and stream council meetings.

Jobs with the City

View current job openings, apply online and learn about working with us.

Reporting an issue

Report common issues such as potholes, garbage collection, slippery conditions and more on our Service London Portal.

Recreation programs

View recreation programs and classes, swim and skate schedules and register for winter 2020 programs.

Parking

Learn about our parking rules and regulations, pay tickets online and request enforcement.
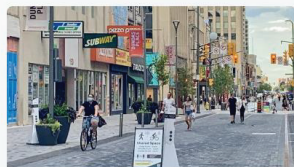
Garbage pickup

Find your garbage zone and schedule, learn what goes where and report missed collection.

Maps

Find addresses, streets and city places of interest like community centres, libraries, City facilities and more.

TheLatest

Dundas Place open on weekends until mid October

LEARN MORE

Select recreation facilities will reopen for fall programming

LEARN MORE

Two-hour free parking downtown this fall

LEARN MORE

London
CANADA

300 Dufferin Avenue
519-661-CITY (2489)
3-1-1 (within London)

Living In London   Government   Business & Development

Section page:

London
CANADA

🏠 **LIVING IN LONDON**   🏛 **GOVERNMENT**   ⚲ **BUSINESS & DEVELOPMENT**   🔍

Recreation

Find information related to programs and courses, day camps, community centres, arenas, seniors' centres, drop-in programs, skating, swimming, golf, cancellations, rentals and warming centres.

Programs, classes and lessons

Find registration options for swim lessons, fitness classes, leisure activities and more.

Day camps

View upcoming day camp opportunities offered throughout the fall during school breaks.

Drop-in programs

Pick from several recreation programs and locations without having to sign up for an entire season.

Swimming

Find schedules, fees and admission rules for public swims and pool activities.

Golf

Book a tee time, reserve a cart and buy a membership at one of our City owned golf courses.

Skating

View ice times, register for skating lessons and find skating locations throughout the city.

Last modified: Saturday, September 05, 2020

London
CANADA

📍 **300 Dufferin Avenue**
📞 **519-661-CITY (2489)**
ℹ **3-1-1 (within London)**

Living In London   **Government**   **Business & Development**

COVID-19 Landing Page:

LONDON CANADA

🏠 LIVING IN LONDON   🏛 GOVERNMENT   🔍 BUSINESS & DEVELOPMENT   🔍

COVID-19 (Coronavirus) Information

As part of our ongoing efforts to slow the spread of COVID-19, we are committed to providing timely information to Londoners on City services effected by COVID-19.

2m

Impact on City services   Health resources   Supports for basic needs   Face Covering By-law   Business supports

Current Situation

As part of our ongoing efforts to slow the spread of COVID-19, and in keeping with the Province of Ontario's declaration of a State of Emergency, the City of London is maintaining minimal operations and delivering essential services.

City facilities including libraries, Provincial Offences Court, Tourism London offices and social services offices are closed to the public until further notice.

Access to some services in person and by appointment are available at City Hall and at 206 Dundas Street.

The City will be gradually reopening select community centres and arenas throughout the fall to accommodate recreation programming. Programs and details will be advertised bi-weekly through the london.ca/playyourway and the City's Facebook and Twitter starting Friday, August 28. Participants can register for these programs one week in advance of a program.

Splash pads, park playgrounds and select outdoor and indoor pools are open.

If you are in our parks or on pathways, maintain the safe physical distance of at least two metres apart from others.

> **Please report concerns and COVID-19 order violations to CovidOrderConcerns@london.ca**

Impact on City services

Most up to date information on COVID-19 impacts on City services.

Mandatory Face Covering By-law

Review our Mandatory Face Covering by-laws and frequently asked questions.

Ongoing health and safety precautions

The best sources of information are health officials. We've provided helpful links for you.

Business supports

Supports to assist businesses during COVID-19.

Supports for basic needs

Supports available for London's most vulnerable.

Media releases

All City COVID-19 related media release and public service announcements.

Venue page:

📰 News 📞 Contact

🌳 London
CANADA

🏠 LIVING IN LONDON   🏛 GOVERNMENT   👤 BUSINESS & DEVELOPMENT   🔍

Hamilton Road Seniors' Community Centre

📍 **ADDRESS**

525 Hamilton Road
London, ON
N5Z 1R3

📞 **CONTACT**

Recreation Customer Service
Business hours from 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

recreation@london.ca

Phone:
519-661-5575

The Hamilton Road Seniors' Community Centre is currently closed in response to ongoing health and safety precautions for COVID-19.

- Parking at Hamilton Road Seniors' Community Centre is free
- Check **London Public Transit** for public transit locations, times and fees
- Call 519-661-5758 or email **seniorscentres@london.ca** for customer service

Hours of operation ▶

About Hamilton Road Seniors' Community Centre ▶

Registered programs

Check our **Play Your Way website** to register and pay for programs that take place at Hamilton Road Seniors' Community Centre.

Cancellations and closures

Check our **cancellation page** to ensure your program is running as scheduled.

Memberships

Visit our **seniors' centres page** for more information.

Upcoming special events

Hamilton Road Seniors' Community Centre hosts several events each year.

There are no special events currently scheduled at Hamilton Road Seniors' Centre and Community Centre.

Last modified: Wednesday, September 09, 2020