**TO:**        Chair and Members of the Public Engagement Commission

**FROM:**    Kelly Hoover, Community Relations Manager/PIO

**SUBJECT:**    Update on City's Website Refresh Project

**RECOMMENDATION:**

Receive a presentation and provide input on a project to refresh and update the City of Goleta website.

**BACKGROUND:**

Due to rapidly changing technology, municipal websites typically need to be updated every five years or so. An update can take the form of a "refresh," modernizing the look and content of an existing site and making minor functionality changes, to a more costly and time-consuming "redesign," which gets into the underlying structure of the site and may include switching content management systems and making major upgrades to functionality.

The City of Goleta's last website update occurred seven years ago, in May 2015. Since the last update, the City's website has become outdated and there have been concerns related to the mobile device access and related to access for people with disabilities. Also, as is inevitable over time, the site has become encumbered with outdated pages making it increasingly difficult to navigate and locate information.  These issues are a continual source of frustration for users.

The City has contracted with Granicus for many years for various web and government transparency services, such as Legistar, govMeetings, and govDelivery.  Granicus also hosts the City's website.  In December of 2019, Granicus notified staff that the City had a credit of $8,000 to update the City's website. The credit needed to be used within 12 months of the end of the City's five-year agreement with Granicus, which was coming up on July 1, 2020. Due to the pandemic, the City was able to get an extension to use the credit.

Considering the feedback received from staff, elected officials, and the public about the current site and the need to make it more accessible and easier to navigate, it became apparent that the City was an ideal candidate for a website refresh and should take advantage of the credit being offered. However due to the pandemic and the need to focus on other more critical issues first, the project was put on hold.

In of May 2021, the Community Relations team was able to re-focus on the need to improve the City's website and was given approval by management to begin working with Granicus to use the credit before it expired. The goal was to be time and cost effective by doing a refresh versus an entire redesign. Also, since staff and the public are already familiar with the Granicus website platform's "front facing" system, and it integrates with the City's other Granicus applications, staying with Granicus versus going with a new vendor was deemed less disruptive and time consuming.

After looking at other well-done municipal websites and using data analytics on the City's current site, it was decided that in order to make the refresh worthwhile, the City would need to pay for some additional upgrades, including a more organized and carefully laid out wire frame, enhanced search finder feature and an improved language translation feature, Bablic, to replace Google Translation. Also, during the course of deciding what improvements were needed, it was determined that the City's popular Goleta and Santa Ynez Valley Library website was also in need of an update. The Library website contains the same issues as the main City site in terms of "clutter" and access issues. Both websites will need to be upgraded simultaneously for branding consistency and functionality.

Once the $8,000 credit was applied, the cost with the additions resulted in an extra $16,000 to be paid over the course of two fiscal years. The amount is still far less than what it would have cost to start over with a complete redesign of the City's websites.

**DISCUSSION:**

In June 2021, the Community Relations, Library and IT staff began working diligently with Granicus to begin the update process. As part of the process, Granicus conducted an extensive data analytics and heat-mapping study on the current site to determine how it was being used. The studies (described more fully below) revealed which pages were most popular and which were not being used and could potentially be deleted. Also, an internal survey was done to gather input from staff on what features were most important for their departments. All of the information collected during this phase was important to help inform what the main navigation buttons and call to action buttons should be to reflect the needs of website users. Staff has developed some initial recommendations for these buttons, with final decisions pending input from the public, the Public Engagement Commission, and ultimately the City Council.

At this time, staff are working with departments to clean up, consolidate and update the content of their pages and working with local photographers to capture new images of the City to use as hero images on the sites.

Now that the groundwork has been laid, the project has reached a point where staff would appreciate input from the Public Engagement Commission and members of the public on how the website update is looking so far. The Council will also have an opportunity to provide input.

While the City may choose to do a full re-design in the future, this refresh will be a welcome upgrade to the current site and will allow users of the main City site and Library site to have a much better experience whether it be from their desktop, tablet, or mobile

phone. It will also provide the needed ADA access and provide full Spanish translation of site content at the click of a button.

## Heatmap Data:
As mentioned above, the design refresh so far was informed by data. Granicus, using the capabilities of Granicus's govAccess tool, provided a heatmap of main website homepage at the beginning of the website refresh process. A heatmap is a graphical representation of data where the individual values are represented as colors. govAccess uses a heatmapping software that tracks the coordinates mouse activity such as hovers, clicks, and scrolling over a span of a few weeks. The data is then aggregated into hotspots of color and placed over a screenshot of the homepage.

Granicus's conclusions, based on analysis of the data about the current website from govAccess, by section, include:

### Header
- The links in the emergency banner show little activity.
- The top navigation links show low user engagement, especially "Home" and "Emergency Information," which show no clicks.
- The social media links are seldomly clicked, "YouTube" being the least popular.

**Recommendation**: Consider moving the social media to the footer to reduce clutter while retaining the social media's presence on the homepage.

- The Google translate feature shows moderate activity.
- Users are hovering over all main navigation items and looking at their mega-menus. Users are especially interested in "I Want To..." where they go to visit "City Jobs" (a top performer, ranked #3) and "Online Payments" (a top performer, ranked #9).
- "City Hall" is also a popular main navigation item, users are interested in "Human Resources" (a top performer, ranked #8) and "CEQA Review" (a top performer, ranked #10).
- The search bar shows very high engagement (a top performer, ranked #2). It remains a high priority on mobile.

### Content Area
- All call-to-action buttons directly below the header are being clicked. Three stand out in particular: "View Agendas & Watch Meetings" (a top performer, ranked #1), "Goleta Laws Municipal Code" (a top performer, ranked #4), and "Permits & Licenses" (a top performer, ranked #7). "Connect With Us" is the least clicked.
- The image slider shows user activity; mostly on the first slide.

**Recommendation**: Clicking the first slide brings users back to the first image, this may suggest the auto-rotation speed of the slider is too fast. Consider adding a play/pause button to give users a sense of autonomy. This makes the slider more accessible.

- Users only show interest in the first event listed, most activity in the "Events Calendar" section is devoted to the "View All Events" button. Similar findings are revealed on mobile.

**Recommendation**: Consider adding a full calendar to the homepage where users can view events a month at a time.

- The content of the "News" section is seldomly clicked.

- The "Monarch Press" and social media feeds are also seldomly clicked, though "Twitter" shows a moderate increase in activity on mobile.

**Footer**

- The only footer link that shows activity is "Connect With Us." Its activity is low.
- Users are clicking on the unlinked address.

**Recommendation**: Users expect the site to function similar to other sites they visit. Consider following the common practice of making the address an active link.

**Website Analytics (Google):**
Google Analytics shows that there were 496,199 pageviews to the City website from July 1, 2021, to May 8, 2022. The top visited pages during that time were:

| Rank | Page | Pageviews |
|------|------|-----------|
| 1 | Homepage | 57,930 |
| 2 | Goleta Valley Library | 56,794 |
| 3 | Ellwood Mesa Habitat Project (was being redirected from GoletaButterflyGrove.com but no longer is) | 17,990 |
| 4 | Government Meetings | 14,829 |
| 5 | COVID-19 (now redirects to the County) | 8,149 |
| 6 | Permits | 5,231 |
| 7 | Job Recruitment Information | 4,848 |
| 8 | Staff Directory | 4,288 |
| 9 | Business License Program | 4,231 |
| 10 | Picnic Area Reservations | 4,029 |

Staff would like to hear the initial impressions the Public Engagement Commission has on the progress of the updated website, which is in the development phase. Staff also seeks input on what should be prominently featured on the homepage and what the public will find most useful.

Reviewed By:


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Kristy Schmidt
Assistant City Manager


**ATTACHMENT:**

1.  Ideas for the Call-to-Action Buttons, Spotlight Section and Top Navigation Links

# ATTACHMENT 1

Ideas for the Call to Action Buttons, Spotlight Section and Top Navigation Links

**Website Refresh Call to Action Buttons / Spotlight / Top Navigation Link Ideas**

- Apply for Permits
- City Assist
- City Jobs
- Goleta Valley Library
- Group Picnic Reservations
- Monarch Butterfly Grove
- Monarch Press
- Municipal Code
- Online Payments
- Parcel Information
- Sign-Up (for GovDelivery messages)
- Staff Directory
- Stay Connected