Recommendation 8- Website Redesign

**Overview**

From parking tickets to budget information, municipal websites offer a broad variety of information to constituents. The sheer amount of information leads to a web presence that can be unwieldy, disorganized and difficult to interact with. The Bridgeport website, in attempting to provide valuable constituent information, attempts to display everything you might need to know at one time in a visually unappealing layout that is cluttered and not user friendly. The website is also very information driven, but not interactive. For example, someone looking to participate in a recreation activity can find out about the types of programs available, but then is directed to call the recreation office for more information. Some of the more important items such as trash and recycling pickup schedules have not been updated since 2012, are not searchable by address and take you to third party websites with embedded advertisements.

**Recommendation**

Municipal websites should be reflective of the needs of the constituents. The current design must be simplified, information can still be there, but a prioritization of needs must take place. The City should examine, not just from an online standpoint, which departments receive the most inquires and actions and design the website with those activities at the forefront. Priorities might include-

* Paying fees, taxes or fines
* Reporting a problem
* Trash and recycling pickup information
* Emergency information
* A status dashboard of city services: schools, public works, parking

The City’s website must serve as an interactive portal to municipal data systems. From bidding to parking tickets, the website is a tool for connecting constituents to the back end systems that support the work of the departments. These interactions must be seamless, with the goal of reducing manual and duplicate entry by staff, and decreasing the number of steps necessary on the public interface. The City must investigate systems that directly integrate with the website. For example, event calendars populated directly from scheduling software, permitting status populated from Energov, online job applications integrated into HR software, and a Bridgeport 311 widget embedded into the man page of the website.

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| **Summary** The demands of connected citizens requires that the City’s website become an interactive and informative platform, capable of quickly providing constituents with pertinent information and extending the reach of City services. For too long government has been perceived as inefficient and the website is a reflection of these inefficiencies. Simply posting information and requiring follow-up steps, phone calls or trips to City Hall, is neither efficient nor adequate. Citizens are now accustomed to placing an online order and have same day delivery; they expect the same of government. Cities must embrace e-commerce like processes for constituent engagement and the website provides the storefront. Cities like Louisville, KY, Los Angeles, CA, and Atlanta, GA, have embraced municipal storefronts to engage and inform constituents, creating an environment that is efficient, effective and easy to use.  |

Explore the role of a Chief Data Officer-

One of the main takeaways from this assessment is the need to create a data architecture that is efficient, decreases the amount of data silos, produces relevant outputs and enhances the transparency between the city, its constituents and policy makers. In order to accomplish this goal, it is necessary to have an organizational structure in place to facilitate a comprehensive data strategy.

The notion of a comprehensive data strategy is typically associated with the MIS or IT department, but a modern data strategy is an organizational strategy with tools and processes supported by MIS. In Bridgeport, tools and processes have been siloed at the departmental level and communication between departments is manual and time consuming. The main goal of the data strategy would be to work with departments to refine processes and create integrations between departments. Bridgeport is moving in the right direction with initiatives such as Energov, and Open Budget/Checkbook, but more must be done to ensure data at all levels is accurate, organized, standardized and flows efficiently between departments.

Bridgeport has also made an effort to add a position within the MIS department to coordinate data initiatives and support applications. This position is important, as the MIS department is significantly understaffed to support any major data integration or application rollout undertaking. The currently posted position would assist in alleviating some the application rollout and support burden felt by the MIS staff. Data has become the centerpiece of government operations and policy decision-making; the role is too large for the traditional role of CIO. The CIO’s role has expanded greatly and the operational responsibilities of the organization are so large that there is simply enough capacity to move the organization forward while “keeping the lights on”.

Recommendation-

It is recommended that the city of Bridgeport explore creating the position of Chief Data Officer (CDO). This position would report to the Chief Administrative Office and be a peer to the CIO. Although a computer science background would be helpful, a background in statistics, public policy or public administration would be appropriate. The CDO will look at data as a service, a service that is available to all consumers of data; both internally and externally. To attain a high level of service, standardization is key. The CDO will work on data standardization and management. The CDO need not be an expert in all departments, but should have an understanding of the business objectives and the overall goals of the city. The CDO will then work to align business processes through open data with those overarching goals.

It is important that the role of the CDO expands to one that elevates the work that occurs at the department level. In many instances, department level work in Bridgeport has been conducted using the same tools, processes and culture for a number of years. One of the main goals of the CDO should be to work with department staff on establishing buy in and instituting cultural change that is reflective of the goals of the administration. If departments are unaware of the big picture and how their work impacts governance, institutional change will be difficult to implement.

The city of Louisville, Kentucky, recently hired their first CDO. This is an example of the job posting for that position.

Data is an asset. When data is leveraged for insights and decision-making, it has the power to revolutionize government; enabling government to proactively meet the needs of individuals, allowing stakeholders to track the city’s performance and helping residents better engage in community building.

The responsibilities of the Data Officer are threefold: constructing a comprehensive strategy for citywide data collection, usage, and storage; partnering with the city’s analytical assets to facilitate data-driven decision-making through sophisticated analytics; and promoting transparency through open data. An ideal candidate for this position would have an advanced degree in computer science, economics, statistics, or mathematics as well as experience in public service and business processes.

The DO is the face of the city’s open data effort, and will be an advocate for open data and innovation both inside and outside municipal government. This is an ideal position for an entrepreneurial executive interested in leading the adoption of innovative data-informed strategies that have the power to transform Louisville!

As a member of the leadership team of the Office of Performance Improvement and Innovation, the Data Officer will have the following responsibilities:

\*\*Develop policies and practices for departments to use to identify, review, publish and maintain open data sets for internal and external consumers.

\*\*Develop standards for implementing websites, applications and other technology projects by city agencies in a way that supports open data.

\*\*Develop standards for implementing public facing APIs.

\*\*Oversee the management of an open data portal that serves as the central directory for open data made available by the city.

\*\*Engage data producers (city departments) and other internal stakeholders to convey the strategic importance of sharing open data, both internally and externally.

\*\*Engage with external consumers of open data to ensure awareness of available data, solicit feedback on data quality and obtain new ideas for future data releases.

\*\*Pilot data analysis and mapping projects that demonstrate the value of data-driven decision making.

\*\*Provide education and analytic tools for City departments to improve and assist with their data efforts.

\*\*Coordinate the creation and sharing of internal City data sets.

\*\*Serve as an advocate for open data within the city and articulate the innovation opportunities that can be realized by leveraging the city’s data.

A successful candidate:

\*\*Will have a strong sense of urgency to achieve results, a quick work pace, and the ability to be flexible in meeting changing priorities.

\*\*Must have a collaborative approach to problem solving, balancing analysis with action, and the ability to communicate effectively and professionally across all levels of the organization.

A Master’s degree from an accredited college/university (MBA, Statistics, Public Policy, Public Administration or related field) and two years of performance improvement coordination or management experience are required, however, an equivalent combination of education and experience may be substituted. Proven results in managing and developing employees and experience or certifications in Lean, Six Sigma, and/or Project Management are preferred.

Summary-

With the number of data driven initiatives currently underway in the city of Bridgeport, it is necessary to have the proper strategies in place for data transparency, standardization and communication. The addition of a CDO would allow for a comprehensive data strategy to be implemented while working with the current IT/MIS leadership to support current and future initiatives. The CDO would work with all departments to refine processes and support the goals of the administration; departmental efficiencies would be realized while information exchange and interoperability would be established across all areas of government. While there is some overlap, the role of a CDO is very different from that of a CIO. The CIO is responsible for supporting the infrastructure and strategies of the administration, while the CDO develops strategies and creates efficiency through business process enhancement and alignment.