

## Report to Council

**Report Title:** Build Your Brockton Community Engagement Website Statistics 2022

**Prepared By:** Sarah Johnson, Deputy Clerk

**Department:** Clerk's

**Date:** December 13, 2022

**Report Number:** CLK2022-32                      **File Number:** C11CL

**Attachments:** N/A

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### Recommendation:

That the Council of the Municipality of Brockton hereby accepts Report Number CLK2022-32 - Build Your Brockton Community Engagement Website Statistics 2022, prepared by Sarah Johnson, Deputy Clerk and in doing so approves proceeding with Option 1, further authorizing pre-budget approval for staff to renew the contract with Bang the Table for management of the Build Your Brockton community engagement website.

### Report:

#### Background:

Brockton entered into a two-year contract with Bang the Table for the use of a community engagement website software in October 2019. The site was formally launched in January 2020.

In November 2021, Council authorized proceeding with a one-year contract renewal with Bang the Table for our community engagement website, Build Your Brockton.

#### Analysis:

From January 2020 to November 2021, 15 projects were launched on the website. Staff brought forward Report Number CLK2021-36 reporting on the project statistics and recommending a one-year renewal for the website.

From late November 2021 until December 2022, a total of 9 projects were launched on Build Your Brockton, including the Recreation Master Plan which was launched on December 7, 2022.

Project Title	Launch Date
Accessibility Plan	November 29, 2021
Budget Consultation 2022	January 7, 2022
Riversdale Bridge	May 31, 2022

Project Title	Launch Date
Greenock Bridge 0006	May 31, 2022
East Ridge Business Park Road Naming	April 19, 2022
Cemetery By-Law Update	June 23, 2022
Community Improvement Plan Update	July 28, 2022
Walkerton Hometown Christmas Market	September 9, 2022
Recreation Master Plan	December 7, 2022

### Levels of Engagement on Build Your Brockton

Engagement Type	Statistics
Registrations (Individuals created a login for the website)	108 (28 new in 2022)
Website Visits	1,500
Engaged Users (Directly participated in a project)	125
Informed Users (Clicked on aspects of a project)	382
Aware Users (Viewed a project)	1,146
Forum Participation	164 contributions
Photo Views	163 *Hometown Christmas Market received the most views
Survey Participation	91 submissions *Total for all surveys launched on the website)
Document Downloads	76 *Downloads were the Budget documents, Cemetery By-Law and CIP
Key Date Views (Timeline/Calendar of dates for a project)	57 *Top key dates were for Christmas Market, ERBP Road Naming, and Budget
FAQ Views (Viewed FAQ's on a project)	11

### Yearly Comparison of Engagement:

Year	Website Visits	New Registrations	Engaged Users	Informed Users	Aware Users
2020	1,400	47	142	495	1,000
2021	2,300	24	313	747	1,800
2022 (YTD)	1,500	28	125	382	1,146

### How are Users Accessing Build Your Brockton Website ("Traffic"):

Direct Access	Social Media	Email	Search Engine	Referred by another website
686	106	25	623	37

## **Top Projects:**

The top projects launched on Build Your Brockton were:

- 1) Walkerton Hometown Christmas Market – 616 participants
- 2) Budget Consultation 2022 - 410 participants
- 3) East Ridge Business Park Road Naming – 269 participants
- 4) Community Improvement Plan Update - 52 participants
- 5) Cemetery By-Law Update - 36 participants

The Walkerton Hometown Christmas Market included information on the event, a link to the Vendor Application Form (on the Municipal website using FormBuilder), and a few photos advertising the event.

The Budget Consultation 2022 project involved a survey, ideas, and Q&A as has been launched over the past three years. The survey received 91 submissions, and 1 idea was provided. Budget documents were also downloaded by viewers, and the budget meeting dates were viewed.

The East Ridge Business Park Road Naming project featured a forum where participants could suggest names for one of the proposed roads. The forum itself was viewed 107 times, with 164 contributions (road names, votes, comments on names).

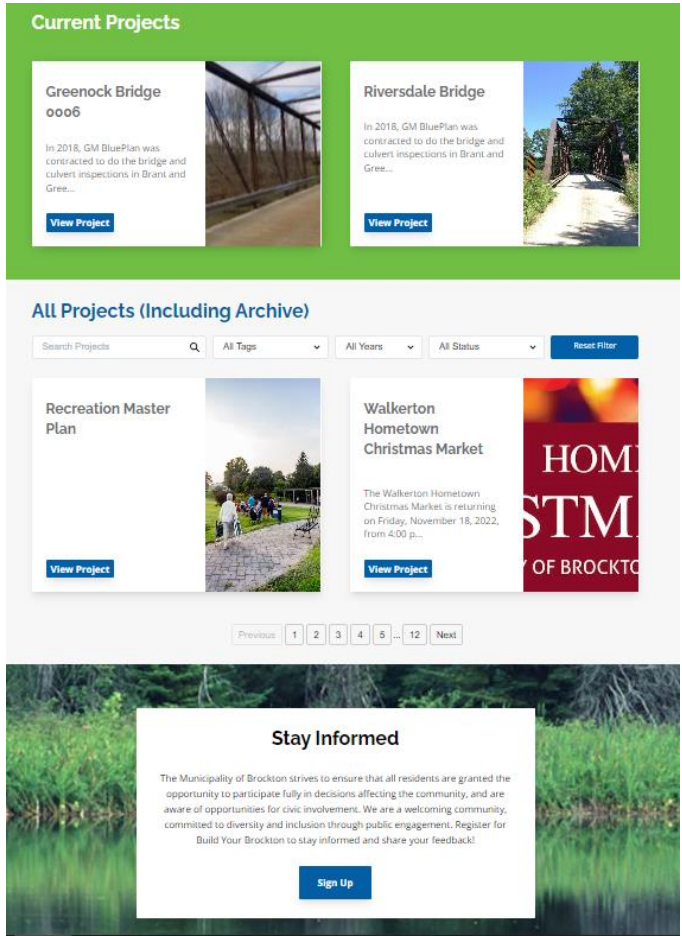
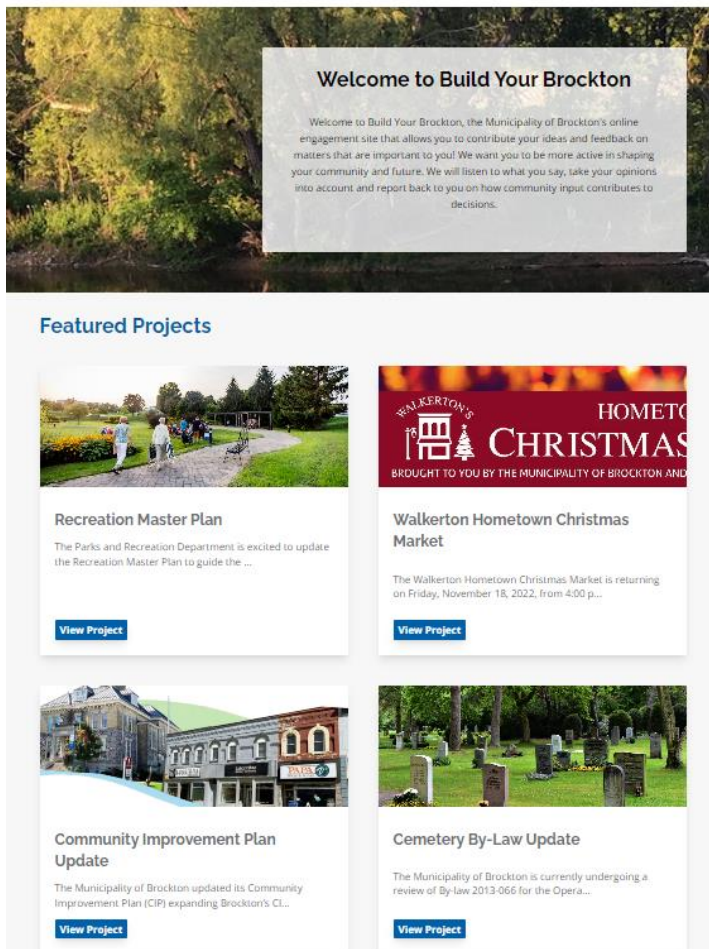
The Cemetery By-Law Update project received views, and document downloads; however, staff did not receive any comments on the updated Cemetery By-Law.

The website also saw varied participation through the other tools launched on the site including: Stories/Photo submissions, Q&A, Polls, Ideas, and Places (map).

The top projects involved topics of value to residents. Brockton saw the most engagement on the Budget, and ERBP Road Naming. In previous years, we have seen the most engagement on survey related topics where residents can share their opinion on matters they are interested in.

## **New Homepage Design**

In an attempt to update the website, and comply with updates to the system, staff created a new appearance for Build Your Brockton homepage. The design aided in better explaining the goal of the website, highlighting featured and current projects, and showing a review of all projects launched, as well as information about how to sign up/create an account. The new homepage was launched in May 2022.



## Considerations

Staff had hoped to launch the Recreation Master Plan on Build Your Brockton in early 2022 as it was best suited for this website; however, this project was delayed and was just launched on the website on December 7, 2022. The project will be completed by the end of January 2023. Further to this we are proposing a Master Water/Wastewater Master Plan in 2023 and starting an Official Plan Update feedback and engagement regarding these fundamental future planning documents will be essential.

Staff also plan to gather feedback on the 2023 Budget prior to the 2023 Budget Meetings in January and February, and will review our 2023 capital projects to determine which could be featured on Build Your Brockton.

Bang the Table continues to be used locally by Bruce County Municipalities, including Huron-Kinloss, Kincardine, Northern Bruce Peninsula, South Bruce, and South Bruce Peninsula. The County of Bruce also used the website software during their Official Plan Review – Plan the Bruce.

## Continued Growth of an Existing Software

Staff and the public are familiar with this engagement website. It has also been included as a feature on Municipal website homepage, referenced in Brockton Buzz Newsletters, and individual projects have been advertised through News Items and social media posts over the past three (3) years to continue to grow the site's awareness and encourage participation. If the site was renewed for another year, the Municipality could

conduct feedback on the Recreation Master Plan on the site, and review 2023 capital projects to determine which projects could be launched on Build Your Brockton and continue to promote its benefits over the next year. There is not another platform that can essentially fill this gap should the contract end that allows the two-way engagement in a monitored and controlled format.

Bang the Table have also offered to provide refresher training for staff on the website and compare our 2023 capital projects and provide feedback and advice for how the website can be better promoted over the next year. This will be a priority as we have new staff that need to review all the capabilities for full utilization of this platform and we strive in different ways to engage residents.

Staff understand the tools available in the site, and can continue to engage with Bang the Table and Departments at the beginning of the year to suggest which projects could be launched on the site to provide information, updates, and opportunities for soliciting feedback. By analyzing our goals prior to launching specific projects, staff can better understand the objectives required, and expectations for public feedback. We can also continue to track the engagement and adjust as required, including additional promotions. By continuing Build Your Brockton's momentum, we can create engaging content and understand our community's interests as we plan for the future.

It should be noted that while Brockton has many critical infrastructure projects that are not always conducive to resident feedback (such as bridges), our neighbouring Bruce County municipalities have launched construction projects or informational projects on their Bang the Table websites, so staff intent to expand our communications to ensure additional information is provided to promote our good news work and ensure we are communicating more on these important projects with the public as per the Strategic Action Plan. Staff did launch a few informational projects on the website in 2022, including the Greenock Bridge and Riversdale Bridge.

### Site Moderation

While social media is a widely-accessed tool, and continued to be used in Municipal communications, social media can often result in the spread of misinformation, and argumentation. One of the benefits of this website is the 24/7 moderation by Bang the Table. Within 2 hours of a comment or question being posted to our site, Bang the Table staff will review it to ensure it is not inappropriate or offensive. Any comment that is deemed offensive or inappropriate will be removed from the site and the respondent will receive an email from Bang the Table outlining why their action was removed.

Staff recommend renewing the Bang the Table/Build Your Brockton website for another one-year period in order to continue to offer this availability for residents and business owners to share their perspectives on issues they feel are important in a safe environment.

### Analytics

The website provides staff a detailed report of analytics from each project, including user engagement, access to tools, and separate reports on survey analytics. This service is beneficial for both staff to publish, update, and track the status of projects and/or surveys with the added bonus of providing reporting tools.

## Registrations

If users wish to participate in a project that does not allow for anonymous participation, they must create an account/login for the website in order to post their submission. Some tools allow for anonymous participation – such as surveys, which allow users to participate without making a login/account.

In 2022, 28 new registrations were completed, the majority of which were created in order to participate in the ERBP Road Naming Project which was not an anonymous forum. This showed that if residents care about the project, they are willing to create an account in order to participate.

## Contract

Brockton's contract with Bang the Table expires December 31, 2022. Our licence includes:

- Unlimited engagement projects
- Unlimited access to [all eight Feedback Tools](#)
- Participant Relationship Management
- Analytics and Reporting;
- 2 site administrators
- Access to online webinars and articles
- 24/5 help desk support and online chat
- 24/7 moderation by Bang the Table in French and English
- Ongoing account management, strategy reviews and online training refreshers
- SSL certificate

## **Contract Renewal**

### Option 1:

A 12-month renewal would cost \$7,650 plus any applicable taxes.

Staff did inquire if the website could be renewed for a 6 month period instead, but Bang the Table advised their minimum contracts are for 12 months.

Bang the Table have offered additional training for staff, and suggestions of how to improve our engagement on the site. Staff have also reviewed our lists of projects and communicated how the site could be more widely used; however, with limitations in timing, and other projects occurring in 2022, the website was not used to its full potential; therefore, staff propose making some adjustments in 2023 to better promote the website.

### Option 2:

Not renew the contract with Bang the Table and seek other alternative methods for community engagement.

If the website were not renewed, staff would need to further consult and determine a plan for future community engagement methods such as advertising, review of our proposed Social Media Policy in order to monitor comments and private messages, consultation with the website provider and IT regarding security

and available space if residents were directed to the Municipal website or required to email their submissions/feedback, and investigate appropriate software for survey creation and distribution.

At this time, we are proposing a 12-month renewal to finish the Recreation Master Plan, Master Water/Waste water Plan, and Official Plan consultations as well as other 2023 capital projects, while taking advantage of our momentum with the website, and suggestions from Bang the Table to better utilize the website.

### **Strategic Action Plan Checklist:**

What aspect of the Brockton Strategic Action Plan does the content/recommendations in this report help advance?

- |   |     |
|---|-----|
| • Recommendations help move the Municipality closer to its Vision                       | Yes |
| • Recommendations contribute to achieving Heritage, Culture, and Community              | Yes |
| • Recommendations contribute to achieving Quality of Life                               | Yes |
| • Recommendations contribute to achieving Land Use Planning and the Natural Environment | No  |
| • Recommendations contribute to achieving Economic Development                          | Yes |
| • Recommendations contribute to achieving Municipal Governance                          | Yes |

### **Financial Impacts/Source of Funding:**

- Do the recommendations represent a sound financial investment from a sustainability perspective? Yes

A 12-month renewal would cost \$7,650 plus any applicable taxes.

#### **Reviewed By:**



Trish Serratore, Chief Financial Officer

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#### **Respectfully Submitted by:**



Sarah Johnson, Deputy Clerk

#### **Reviewed By:**



Sonya Watson, Chief Administrative Officer