

## Report to Council

**Report Title:** Govstack Website Update

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

**Department:** Clerk's

**Date:** November 12, 2024

**Report Number:** CLK2024-24

**File Number:** C11CL

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**Attachments:**

**Recommendation:**

That the Council of the Municipality of Brockton hereby receives Report Number CLK2024-24 - Govstack Website Update, prepared by Sarah Johnson, Deputy Clerk for information purposes.

**Report:**

**Background:**

In November 2023, Council approved Brockton moving to a new website platform as the previous platform, iCreate, was going to expire and because the website had not been refreshed since 2018.

Staff across multiple departments have been working for many months to review the Sitemap, content of all the pages, layout and clarity of the website. The website refresh has involved updating our layout to a more modern appearance, evaluating content to ensure it effectively conveyed current and accurate information, improving user navigation and searches (through a new search provider), and maintaining popular tools such as the News Subscription module, and Calendar (now called Events) module. Staff were also able to migrate over our existing News Categories and Subscribers, existing Calendar events, and our existing online Forms through FormBuilder to the Govstack CMS.

The Govstack CMS allows more flexibility in the design of webpages, improves the accessibility of our site, and incorporates new tools with a more engaging appearance, that all align with our goals for website improvements noted under the Strategic Action Plan action #72.

Staff worked with GHD to compare our top webpages and top searches into an updated Sitemap (Menus and Subpages underneath those Menus).

**Analysis:**

The Govstack CMS is customizable, allowing staff to design webpages from scratch and adjust how the content appears on a webpage, compared to our previous iCreate CMS which was limited to function like a Word

document with a few options to add drop-down menus (known as Accordions) and embed photos or video on a page.

Since the website continues to be identified as a top source of information, staff prioritized maintaining a site that is user-friendly, accessible, visually appealing as our website is also regularly accessed through mobile devices. We also have been working with Apptic Studios, the Municipal App developer, to ensure that our existing Municipal App will be updated to display the new webpages through the Govstack CMS.

We moved to a new Search provider, Google, which will hopefully improve our search results allowing users to access the content they're looking for rather than outdated News Items or webpages, which had been a concern since we updated the News Manager module in 2021.

Our Menus were also simplified down to four categories:

1. Living Here
2. Parks, Recreation and Culture
3. Business and Development
4. Municipal Government

This search and navigation change should improve the efficiency for users to locate content in an easier manner.

#### **Website Launch Date:**

The new website is set to launch on Wednesday, November 27, 2024 at 9:00 a.m. The website will be down for an estimated period of 30 minutes, after which the new Brockton.ca site will be live with the Govstack CMS. The current plan is to provide an earlier "soft launch" of the website to Council prior to this new official launch.

We expect that the transition will go smoothly, and adjustments may be required following the launch to ensure that content is appearing properly. As usual, staff will continue to monitor the website and provide updates throughout the year to ensure the content is accurate.

#### **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 | N/A |
| • 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

In November 2023, Council granted pre-budget approval for the proposal to implement the Govstack CMS in the amount of \$28,409.60 to be funded from the website reserve fund with ongoing annual costs of \$6,429.60/year to be included in the 2024 Municipal Budget. The annual cost of for the website will be included in the 2025 budget.

**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