






## COMMISSION SUMMARY

**AGENDA CATEGORY:** Communications/Information Technology

**ITEM NUMBER:** 1

**DATE:** April 15, 2020

<b>SUBJECT</b>	WSSC Water Website Redesign
<b>SUMMARY</b>	Status Report on Website Redesign
<b>SPECIAL COMMENTS</b>	
<b>CONTRACT NO./ REFERENCE NO.</b>	
<b>COSTS</b>	
<b>AMENDMENT/ CHANGE ORDER NO. AMOUNT</b>	
<b>MBE PARTICIPATION</b>	
<b>PRIOR STAFF/ COMMITTEE REVIEW</b>	Carla A. Reid, General Manger /CEO <sup>DS</sup> 
<b>PRIOR STAFF/ COMMITTEE APPROVALS</b>	Monica J. Johnson, Deputy General Manager for Strategy & Partnerships  Charles V. Brown, Director, Communications & Community Relations 
<b>RECOMMENDATION TO COMMISSION</b>	N/A – Information Only
<b>COMMISSION ACTION</b>	



Interoffice Memorandum

TO: COMMISSIONERS

FROM: CARLA A. REID  
General Manager/CEO <sup>ds</sup> CR

MONICA J. JOHNSON  
Deputy General Manager, Strategy and Partnerships MJ

FROM: CHARLES V. BROWN CB  
Director, Communications and Community Relations

DATE: April 15, 2020

SUBJECT: WSSC Water Website Redesign

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**Background**

Based on best practices and feedback received from internal and external stakeholders, WSSC Water formed a website redesign committee with key participation from IT, Communications and Customer Service. After a competitive bid process, the website steering committee selected Taoti Creative as the vendor in December 2018. The contract was awarded on January 10, 2019.

Taoti Creative has strong knowledge of user experience, exceptional design skills and experience building dynamic websites for other water utilities. In fact, they have built websites for DC Water and Loudoun Water. They have been established for more than 20 years in the greater Washington, DC, area and bring an incredible track record to this project.

**Budget**

The cost for the redesign, including user testing and training, is \$358,830.

**Why Now?**

There are several reasons why now is the perfect time to redesign our website:

- The current website was launched January 19, 2015, and best practices dictate that websites should be updated every three to four years.
- Our website should reflect WSSC Water's new logo, colors and brand.
- Internal and external customers have told us our current website is not user friendly.
- A redesigned website will continue our ongoing efforts to improve customer service.
- The new site will enhance our ability to attract job seekers and improve overall user experience and engagement.

Commissioners  
Website Redesign  
April 15, 2020  
Page 2

### **Data-Driven Process**

Throughout this redesign process, Taoti Creative has helped us gather data to ensure we are reaching out to our users. From the start, Taoti gathered information from our internal and external stakeholders to uncover pain points with our existing site and develop requirements for the redesign. We worked with various groups within WSSC Water, under the guidance of Taoti, to organize the look/feel of the website. We then tested that structure and surveyed customers, both residential and business. While designing the homepage for the new website, we again reached out to customers, who gave positive feedback. All of this feedback will help ensure we are delivering a customer-focused website.

### **Next Steps**

- Taoti creative will begin working on the internal page designs, which are based on the approved homepage (*please see PowerPoint presentation*).
- Once the design is complete, Taoti will begin building the website.
- Content Writing: WSSC Water will work with internal subject matter experts and Taoti's copywriter to identify the most frequented pages and new pages that require writing/rewriting.
- Once content is approved, it will be migrated to the new site framework. The Quality Assurance team in IT will test functionality and ensure the site displays and works across all platforms (computers, phones, etc.) as intended.
- Taoti Creative will provide training to members of IT's Application technology teams and Communications' web content administrator.
- Prior to launch of the site, user testing will be performed with internal stakeholders to ensure accuracy, functionality and performance.
- Once completed and modifications are made, user testing will be performed with external stakeholders. We will ask participants to perform a series of tasks to see if the site functions as intended. They will all be assigned the same task and we will track their responses.
- Following final tweaks and adjustments, the new site will be launched in fall 2020.

Please let me know if you have any questions.

CC: Joseph Beach, Deputy General Manager, Administration  
Monica Johnson, Deputy General Manager, Strategy and Partnerships  
Chuck Brown, Communications and Community Relations Director  
Christopher Carter, Chief Information Officer

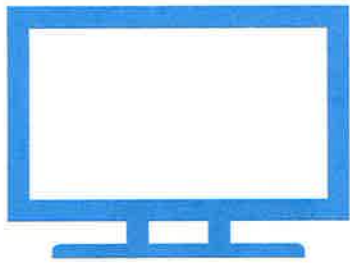


**Website Redesign – Homepage Design**

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April 15, 2020

# Why Change?



Current website  
launched in  
**January 2015**



Best practices dictate  
websites update every  
**3-4 years**



New logo  
New colors  
**New brand**



Customers and other  
audience **feedback**  
using our site



# Vendor Selection



## Key Stakeholders Committee

IT, Communications, and  
Customer Service



## Vendor selection

Established web design firm  
with user experience in the forefront  
Built DC Water and Loudoun Water.



# Customer Feedback Round I

*Top Five Audiences Surveyed:  
Customers, Vendors, Job Seekers, Elected Officials, Plumbers*

**10** 

Key Internal  
Stakeholders  
**interviewed**

**4** 

Customer Feedback  
Community  
**in-person interviews**

**111** 

Online  
Survey  
**responses**

# What We Heard



*"Making it easier to find information would increase customer confidence."*

**Optimize for search**



**Improve recruitment pipeline**

*"One of our biggest challenges is our aging workforce."*



**Update voice and tone**

*"I was trying to pay my bill and was redirected to another site... They're making it so much more difficult than it has to be."*

**Make site user-driven**

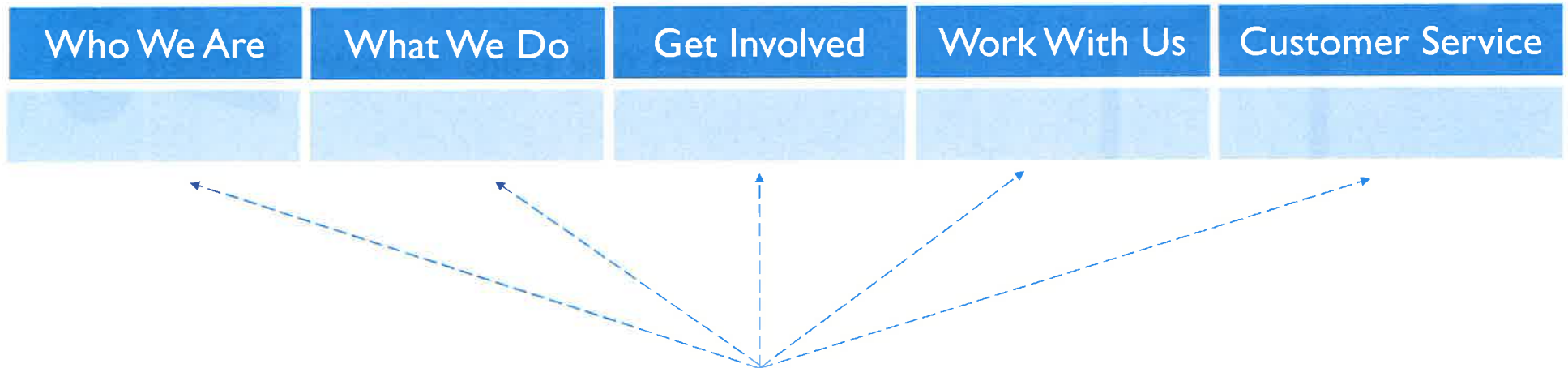


*"It's hard ...to find forms and easily pull information off of the website."*



# Telling Our Story

Information Architecture Development (Site Navigation)



Structuring content where it makes sense for **our customers**

# Customer Feedback Round 2

(Tree Testing) – July 2019

## Customer-focused Survey

Who We Are

What We Do

Get Involved

Customer Service

**72** participants

## Contractor/Business-focused Survey

Work With Us

**123** participants



**Information architecture works! 66-74% directness rate**

*What is directness? The ability to find the information immediately*



# Wireframes (Page Layouts)

Nov 14, 2019

Presented to SLT

Nov 25, 2019

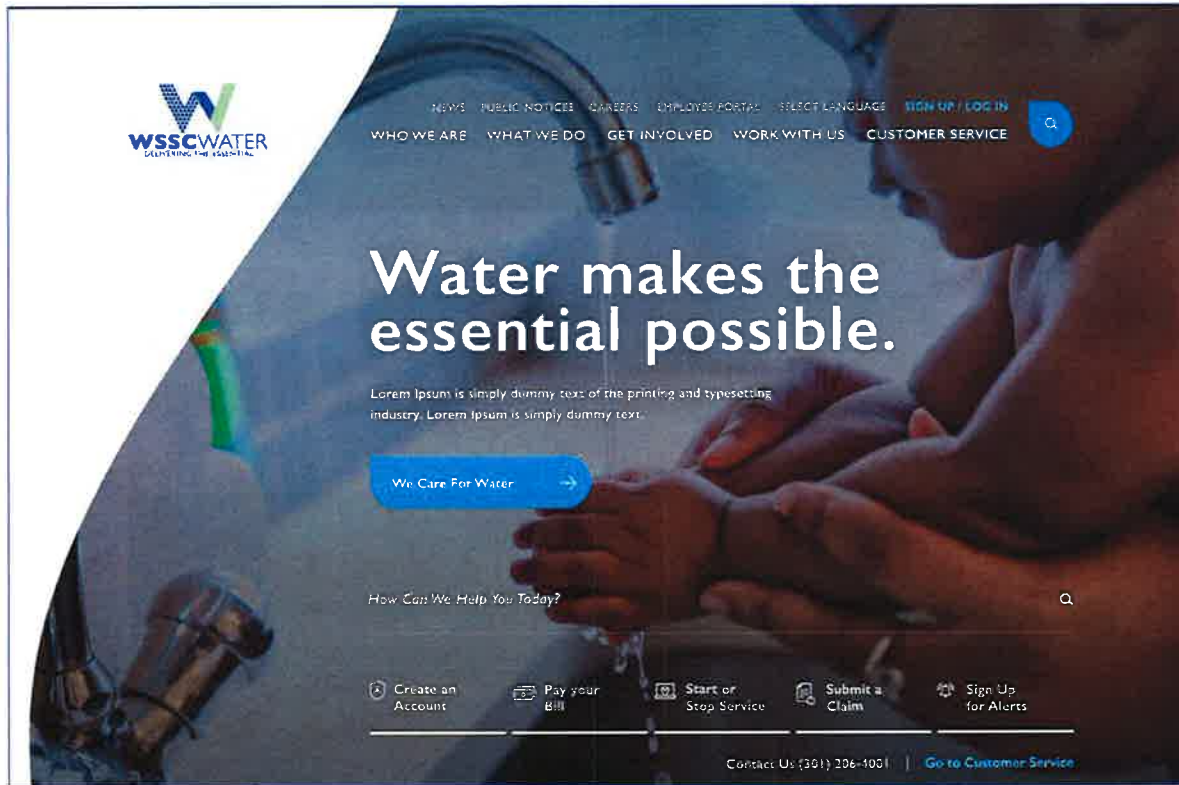
Official approval of wireframes granted



# Creative Kickoff and Homepage Design



# Homepage Design Concept



## Most frequently visited pages From Google Analytics tool

1. Home page
2. Pay my bill
3. Customer Service
4. Contact Us
5. Start/Stop Service
6. Locating and Operating Shutoff Valve
7. Bill Payment FAQs
8. Permit Services
9. Careers
10. Emergency Water/Sewer Problems

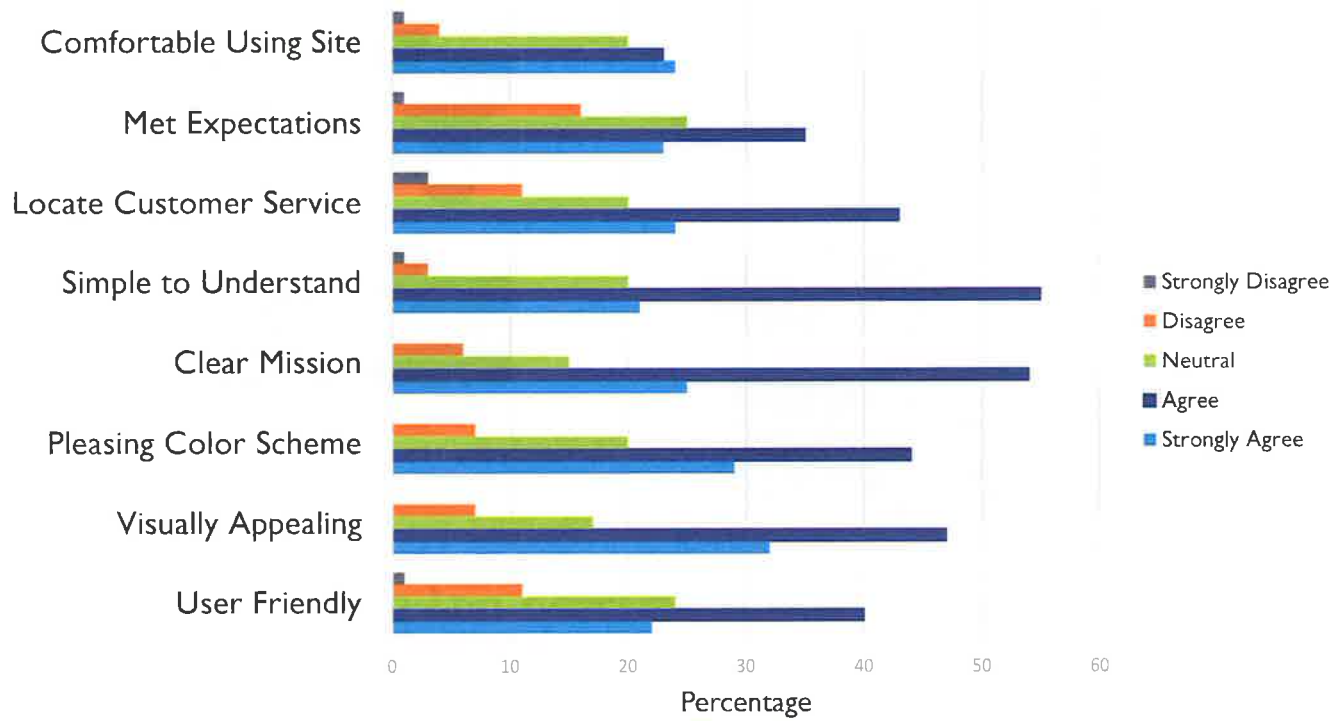
# Customer Feedback Round 3

*How would you describe the WSSC Water homepage?*

**72**  
Customer  
Responses



# Homepage Design Survey Results



# Next Steps





# QUESTIONS?

