

CITY OF OAKLAND

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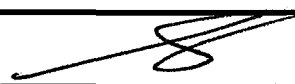
AGENDA REPORT

TO: Sabrina B. Landreth
City Administrator

FROM: Karen Boyd
Assistant to the City
Administrator

SUBJECT: OpenCities Website Content
Publishing Platform Software as a
Service Agreement

DATE: November 21, 2016

City Administrator Approval  Date: 12/1/16

RECOMMENDATION

Staff Recommends That The City Council Adopt A Resolution Authorizing the City Administrator To Enter into an Agreement with OpenCities, Inc. to Provide a Website Content Publishing Platform that Improves Customer Service; Enhances Public Access to the City's Digital Services on Mobile Devices; Improves the Searchability of Web Content; and Enables Staff to Publish Timely, Accurate, Easily Understood, and Multilingual Information to the City's Website, For An Amount Up To \$125,000 In The First Year And \$75,000 Annually For The Following Two Years, For A Total Amount Over The Three-Year Period Not To Exceed \$275,000; And Waiving the Competitive Request for Proposals/Qualifications (RFP/Q) Process

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

City Council approval of this resolution will authorize the City Administrator to enter into an agreement with OpenCities, Inc. to provide a website content publishing platform that will allow the City of Oakland to improve delivery of digital services on the City's new website (<https://beta.oaklandca.gov>), enhance the availability of services and information on mobile devices, ensure searchability and ADA accessibility of content, and support the ongoing development of a modern, user-centric website that can be easily updated with content in multiple languages. The agreement would be for an amount up to \$125,000 in the first year and \$75,000 annually for each of the following two years, for a total amount over a three-year period not to exceed \$275,000.

Research, user interviews and a review of website analytics have demonstrated that a good content publishing system is critical to delivering a website that is simple and easy for the public to use and efficient for City staff to keep updated. To identify the appropriate website development and content publishing solutions, City staff pursued a rigorous analysis of multiple analog and technology solutions, and combinations thereof, including a parallel analysis of the staff configurations, team size and costs required to implement and sustain the technology alternatives.

Item: _____
Finance and Management Committee
December 6, 2016

Staff also reviewed a suite of language translation and ADA accessibility tools to achieve more equitable access to online services and information.

Based on this exhaustive review of potential alternatives to build out and sustain the City's new website, City staff have concluded that Open Cities offers a unique website content publishing platform, crafted solely for municipal governments, making it the most cost-effective, subscription-based, technology solution to fully implement the City's goal of creating an ADA accessible, user-focused website to equitably deliver digital services to a diverse, multi-cultural, multi-lingual community. OpenCities provides a unique set of features, tools and configurations that meet the needs of the Oakland community with fixed and relatively low and predictable costs without the added and costly burden of providing ongoing maintenance and upgrades. OpenCities is a web-based, out-of-the box software application dedicated solely to municipal government website publishing. It requires minimal customization, which is often very costly, and includes the following services as part of the annual subscription price: customer support; routine maintenance; and data back-ups and recovery on the cloud-based, hosted service with a 99.9 percent uptime guarantee.

Since OpenCities is uniquely qualified in the marketplace to meet the City's equitable digital service delivery objectives, City staff believe it is in the City's best interest for the City Council to waive the RFP/RFQ process and authorize the City Administrator to enter into a three-year subscription agreement with OpenCities for a website content publishing platform.

BACKGROUND / LEGISLATIVE HISTORY

Digital Front Door Project

Recognizing that the City website has become the "digital front door" through which an increasing number of our constituents are accessing City services online, on May 20, 2014, City Council passed Resolution No. 84998 C.M.S. authorizing a professional services agreement with Code for America to develop a "digital front door." Staff worked with Code for America for about 15 months to produce a set of standards to modernize our online service delivery and communications.

Phase I

Phase I of the Digital Front Door project focused on research, creation of an analytics dashboard, and development of a prototype of the new website. The project started with users first. Over the course of three months, the team interviewed, gathered data, and analyzed feedback from City staff and community members. Research included in-depth interviews with groups of users and individuals, surveys received from 272 City staffers, and a survey of 1,000 Oaklanders conducted both on-line and on paper in English, Spanish, Chinese, and Vietnamese. The survey was advertised on social media (i.e., Facebook and Twitter) in multiple languages, through outreach to more than 30 community organizations, and by means of 7,000 flyers distributed throughout Oakland. In summary, the research revealed that:

- **We need to better understand the needs of our users.** City staff was not very knowledgeable about and did not have access to analytics on their web pages. As a result, staff loses valuable insights from users about what they need from the City.

- **Finding information was hard.** The current website was (and is) difficult to navigate and search for information.
- **Mobile friendly is essential.** The current website has limited usability on mobile devices. About 35 percent of the monthly web traffic is from mobile and tablet users that cannot adequately use the site.
- **We need modern web tools.** The current content management system is cumbersome and difficult to use. Antiquated tools lead to wasted time and discourage City staff from making even small updates to the site.
- **City staff is well trained and highly skilled.** Many staff who were interviewed demonstrated ample ability to navigate basic computer programs (i.e., word processing and spreadsheets) and use the internet. They often use creative technical solutions to circumvent difficult-to-use systems like the current content management system.

To understand how people were using the website and make online community members more visible to City staff, Code for America built a dashboard for the City to monitor use of the website and made it available both to City staff and to the public on a live screen in the lobby of City Hall. Anyone interested can see a live stream of search terms, top pages, and current traffic on the site.

Phase 2

Following this initial research and analysis phase, the project moved into a year-long Phase 2 focused on building a sustainable foundation and constructing a new beta website (<https://beta.oaklandca.gov>). The goal was to develop a more user-centered, data-driven, and iterative approach to digital service delivery and involve a cross-departmental team in the process. The City/Code for America team took inspiration from many places, drawing heavily from the work of GOV.UK and also cities like Philadelphia, San Diego, Long Beach, New York City, and Grand Rapids, and even the Federal government, all of which were similarly exploring new approaches to delivering digital services. The team learned from their experiences and shared our own.

A significant focus during Phase 2 was to build a solid foundation for the website, specifically good governance, standards, practices, and tools to ensure ongoing sustainability of the work. This included creation of the following guidance documents:

1. Design Standards

Currently, visitors to the existing www.oaklandnet.com site are met with confusing navigation systems, an array of visual “brands,” and inconsistent design. City departments look more disjointed than unified, eroding public confidence in City government.

To address this problem, the project team developed a set of Design Standards so the City’s official City website will have a clear and consistent identity and a simpler visual design; this will help unify the content and navigation and illustrate Oakland’s unique sense of place. The design standards include a color scheme, typographic system, pattern portfolio, and

visual design elements that can be used by City staff and outside graphic designers across a variety of print and digital communications channels to create visually consistent materials.

2. Style Guide

A Style Guide was developed to ensure that content on the City website is written in a way that is understandable by and accessible to all members of the Oakland community. These guidelines help ensure that content published on the website uses short sentences and simple words that can be translated into multiple languages; presents a friendly tone of voice that also conveys a sense of authority and respect so information is viewed as credible and trustworthy; and includes non-text alternatives to meet ADA accessibility requirements.

3. Content Strategy

The team developed a content strategy to provide content writers and designers with detailed guidance on how to plan, develop, and manage City website content. The Content Strategy identifies different types of content structures to help website users and website contributors understand the way information will be organized, reconfigured, and reused on the City website. Content types include department pages, transactional service pages, topic pages, calendar or event listings, and news and events pages.

4. Accessibility Plan

The Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 and as amended requires State and local governments to provide individuals with disabilities equal access to their programs, services, or activities (28 C.F.R. §35.149, 28 C.F.R. §35.150), and to communicate with individuals with disabilities in a manner that is equally effective as communication with others (28 C.F.R. § 35.160). This effective communication mandate extends to digital and web communications.

The City's efforts and commitment to conform to generally accepted accessibility standards and guidelines date back to the inception of the City's website, and are exemplified by the close relationship between the City and the Center for Accessible Technology. This partnership has most recently yielded an assessment of the City's beta web site using Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.0 AA success criteria, staff training, and technical assistance. With the selection of a new content publishing system, this continued partnership has been essential to the City's commitment to integrate accessibility into the design and user experience so that persons with disabilities who use assistive technologies such as screen readers, and persons who may experience other barriers to our services due to poorly designed digital content, are able to effectively engage with the City online.

5. Language Access Recommendations

The Digital Services Team is tackling technical and strategic improvements that will enhance the City's ability to better serve non-English speaking communities. There are several tactics staff are exploring to provide translated content, including free machine translation (i.e., Google Translate), prioritized page-by-page human translation services, and leveraging developing technologies to aid in the translation process.

The outcome of Phase 2 of the City's engagement with Code for America was the creation and launch of a new beta website (<https://beta.oaklandca.gov>) with a more government-appropriate,

user-friendly "dot gov" URL. The beta site includes 10 page templates and pathways to 25 City services which, together with the visual and design standards and guidance documents described above, provide a roadmap to build out and sustain a well-designed modern, service-focused, user-centric website.

ANALYSIS AND POLICY ALTERNATIVES

Oakland's current website--www.oaklandnet.com--receives about 1 million visitors per year who are looking to access City services or information online. For many of those visitors, the website is the first and perhaps only impression about the City of Oakland. If they are not successful in finding the service or information they need quickly, their frustration can lead them to believe that City government does not value or prioritize customer service, which can further erode public trust in government.

Evolution of Digital Service Delivery

Driven by rapidly changing technology, the public's expectations have grown exponentially in recent years. People now expect government to deliver online services 24 hours a day, seven days a week using mobile-friendly technology. According to the Pew Research Center, in 2015, 40 percent of mobile users used their phone to look up government services.

Delivering City services online in addition to traditional methods is also a question of equity. A 2015 Pew study on smartphone adoption found that another type of "digital divide" has emerged in the use of technology. "Although whites, blacks, and Hispanics have similar rates of smartphone ownership, minorities tend to rely more heavily on their phone for internet access. Some 13 percent of Hispanics and 12 percent of blacks are smartphone-dependent, meaning they don't have a broadband connection at home and have few options for going online other than their cellphone. In comparison, only 4 percent of white smartphone owners rely heavily on their cellphone for online access."

To provide equitable service, we need to reach our residents who:

- May not be able to take time off work to come to City Hall and stand in long lines,
- Don't have a computer at home and are accessing information on a mobile device, or at a location that may not have high-speed internet connections or the latest computers, or
- Don't have unlimited data plans or the latest iPhone.

Much of the content on our current site www.oaklandnet.com website is stale and hard for users to find for the following reasons:

- It is written in complex, bureaucratic language, which is difficult to understand as well as costly and time-consuming to translate into multiple languages;
- Web pages have links to thousands of PDFs, which are nearly impossible to read on small screens and mobile devices;
- PDFs are difficult for sight-impaired people who use assistive technology like screen readers;

- Requiring users to download PDFs uses up data plans, making it expensive for low-income residents;
- The existing content management system is complex, cumbersome and difficult for City staff to use.

About three years ago, the City Administration recognized that it was time for a new approach. City staff began to seek out innovations in civic technology and human-centered design that would create a more responsive and inclusive government. Research and interviews with website users—members of the public and City staff alike—demonstrated that we need simpler systems that serve more people faster and with less bureaucracy.

Guiding Principles that Shape Digital Service Delivery

Three key principles guide our work to improving the City's digital service delivery: equity, simplicity and trust, outlined as follows:

- 1. Equity:** By harnessing technology, we can create a better interface between residents and the government. Improving digital services will help bridge the digital divide by serving people where they are: on mobile devices using simpler, human-centered design. Government has a responsibility to serve the whole community, including those hardest to reach, which includes people who speak limited English and residents who have limited literacy or disabilities. Fair, inclusive, and equitable access to services must be factored into the design of digital services. We achieve this goal through ongoing user research and testing to be sure our efforts are achieving the desired results.
- 2. Simplicity:** Simple designs that are easy to use will make interactions between City staff and the public more friendly and engaging, and improve the quality of our relationship with the public. With more than 125 languages spoken in Oakland public schools, conveying information about City services, policies, and procedures must be straightforward and easy for the community to understand. Content should be written at the fifth to eighth-grade reading level instead of at the collegiate level as it is now. Content written in plain English will be faster and less expensive to translate into other languages. Simple interfaces convey that we respect people's time, which is key to building trust.
- 3. Trust:** The current oaklandnet.com website focuses more on top-down processes—which appear to the public to be more in service of the bureaucracy than in service to the community. Interfaces are cluttered, complex, and confusing, and information is organized from the perspective of the bureaucracy. The public's frustration with this approach leads to low public trust of government. Instead, our words and the organization of information should convey a sense of credibility as a trusted source of information for the Oakland community. Information should be simple to navigate, intuitive, in plain language (English or other languages), and centered on services. We achieve this by ensuring our information is accurate, consistent, and reliable.

Evaluation of Content Publishing Alternatives

Work on the Digital Front Door project and the development of the beta website revealed that a good content publishing system is critical to delivering a website that is simple and easy for the public to use and efficient for City staff to keep updated.

Given the numerous previously described challenges with managing content on the City's website, the fact that there were multiple potential solutions to those problems, and because the desired solution could not be clearly defined in advance, City staff did not pursue a traditional RFP/RFQ process. Instead, staff pursued a rigorous analysis of multiple analog and technology solutions, and combinations thereof, to identify the most cost-effective and sustainable website development and content publishing solution. This included a parallel analysis of the staff and workflow configurations, including team size and costs required to implement and sustain the technology alternatives.

In a partnership between City staff (Information Technology Department, ADA, Equal Access, and CAO Communications) and Code for America, the team evaluated a wide range of potential website development approaches, including the following:

- Develop an in-house web team with expertise in the full range of skills needed to design, develop, code, write, and test the website;
- Retain a traditional, large, customized enterprise system such as Adobe, Aquia (a Drupal implementation partner), or Oracle;
- Upgrade current content management system to include publishing;
- Hire a small to medium sized firm to create a custom-designed approach; or
- Pursue a hosted, out-of-the-box platform with less flexibility to customize the site.

Since the method of publishing web content and digitizing services varies widely, identifying the most cost-effective and sustainable approach for the City required an analysis of workflow and staffing structure in tandem with a review of existing technologies. Additionally, staff reviewed a suite of translation and ADA accessibility tools to achieve more equitable access to online services and information.

Our Digital Services Team focused on solving the following high-priority challenges:

- **Provide Multilingual Support:** The present website (www2.oaklandnet.com) offers lower quality translation through Google Translate. The Digital Services Team sought to offer higher quality translations. However, machine-translated text can sometimes inhibit content searchability and organization. Thus, a manual or technical process to resolve this challenge was needed to allow for streamlined translations and publication.
- **Ensure ADA Accessibility Support:** The City's selection of a new content publishing platform for its web communications must be informed by the system's ability to generate accessible content in conformance with the City's longstanding commitment to conform to the latest accessibility standards and guidelines. The team looked at a suite of different products to audit and possibly augment other web platforms that could guide City staff through the process of creating highly accessible information online.

- **Highlight the City's Digital Services:** The present website (www2.oaklandnet.com) is organized in a way that focuses on City departments, but often buries the most-searched City services like parking and applying for City jobs. Additionally, the existing site lacks a method of organizing this information across multiple pages or within a page. In order to resolve the challenges that site users face in finding services and information, staff: a) created a Content Strategy to structure information within and across pages, b) delineated work flow, and c) sought to find technologies that could support our strategy and process.
- **Offer Easy-to-use Technology:** Interviews with dozens of City staff revealed that the City's current content management system was a major impediment to staff routinely publishing accurate and up-to-date information and digitizing City services. As a result, the team tested several publishing tools with City staff to better understand the ease with which they could upload, update, and share a variety of information and integrate digital services online. Additionally, the City needs a publishing system that can manage and eliminate duplicative content site-wide.
- **Replace Obsolete Technology:** Research with City staff and the public demonstrated that users of online services often found it difficult to identify the legitimacy of the City's online presence or apply for City services online. More importantly, the existing content management system made it difficult to migrate information and services to newer, better technology, should the need arise. As a result, staff evaluated a series of content publishing systems for their ability to incorporate the City's new Design Standards, accommodate existing City technology, and allow staff to more easily upgrade or change systems over time.
- **Augment Existing Customer Support:** While ease-of-use is a chief concern, having access to a local team that is familiar with government technology requirements and services, as well as modern, user-centered web development approaches is important to the ongoing success of the new website. Often, vendors' customer support, maintenance, and development teams are managed by separate business units and organizations. Staff evaluated content publishing systems based on vendors' ability to provide streamlined, ongoing, and ideally, locally available customer support.
- **Ensure Ongoing Product Development:** An additional challenge of maintaining web content and digital services is ensuring that technical upgrades are continually implemented and maintained. In some cases, development is included as part of a subscription, also known as a Software as a Service or 'SaaS' agreement. In other cases, product development can happen within an organization by hiring additional staff to manage technical development. Another option would be to contract with a firm, in addition to procuring technology, to help maintain and develop a website. Staff reviewed content publishing and web development vendors based on their ability to continue to iterate upon and improve the technology that powered the website.

Many cities use free, "open-source" technologies that do not require a competitive process to procure. Cities such as Philadelphia and Boston use open-source technology platforms and then contract for services such as customer support and ongoing site development. While open-source platforms are free, they operate best with a large, in-house team that can maintain them.

Alternately, cities often purchase large, enterprise platforms such as Adobe to deliver digital services. While these platforms provide a comprehensive suite of services, the size and complexity, as well as customization, staffing, and maintenance requirements of these systems would be cost-prohibitive for the City of Oakland.

Recommended Solution: OpenCities Content Publishing Platform

Based on an exhaustive analysis of options and approaches, City staff believe that OpenCities' website content publishing platform would best meet the City's needs and stated goals. OpenCities was developed solely to publish content on municipal government websites, with user needs at the forefront of the product design and user interface. OpenCities offers a cost-effective technology solution to fully implement and sustain our content strategy, maintain accessibility standards, and meet our goal of providing equitable, multi-lingual digital service delivery at unparalleled value and efficiency. As an out-of-the-box, cloud-based subscription provider, OpenCities provides services and a platform at a fraction of the cost incurred by other similar cities that have developed similar user-centered websites, such as Boston, San Diego, and Philadelphia. OpenCities' website content publishing system is used to support more than 500 websites, portals, and intranets worldwide, including alpha sites in Grand Rapids, MI and Miami, FL.

Most importantly, OpenCities provides several key benefits that can help us cater to a diverse, multi-cultural, multi-lingual city like Oakland. The agreement with OpenCities would provide the following benefits:

- **Translation:** OpenCities uniquely offers the ability to publish content and services that have been professionally translated by humans in parallel to the English content, allowing for the same quality of search and architecture for non-English speaking visitors online.
- **Accessibility:** OpenCities explicitly recognizes accessibility as a central design consideration and includes unique features that prevent publication of content until any ADA issues are corrected. These accessibility checks not only help publish content, but passively train online service providers about accessibility.
- **Enhanced Search:** The OpenCities platform allows community members to search for content based on commonly used terms *and* frequently used City jargon. These commonly used terms can also be identified in multiple languages. Searchability and readability is a major indicator of success.
- **Relatable Content:** OpenCities allows for content to be created once and repurposed in multiple places on the site, optimizing the searchability of content.
- **Digitize City Services:** OpenCities has the capability to digitize forms that have traditionally only been offered on paper. This feature will significantly improve the City's efforts to digitize the full suite of City services, streamline and modernize our business processes, and help address the City Council's goal of a paper-free environment. It would also free up City staff to provide more dedicated "brick-and-mortar" services in person to those who require more personal service assistance.

- **Work with a local implementation team:** OpenCities' implementation team is based in San Francisco, which enhances their ability to conduct user testing, migrate content, and create digital services in close partnership with City staff.

Ultimately, OpenCities provides a unique set of features, tools and configurations that meet the needs of the Oakland community with fixed and relatively low and predictable costs. Choosing a web content publishing platform that specializes in government service delivery would enable City staff to focus on developing high-quality, clear, consistent, and accessible content; and designing effective digital services without the added and costly burden of providing ongoing maintenance and upgrades. Additionally, because the system is subscription based, the City has the flexibility of moving away from the system should technology evolve in the near future.

Other benefits of a web-based, out-of-the-box application hosted in the cloud like the OpenCities platform include the following: it requires minimal customization, which is often costly; costs are fixed and predictable; and the annual subscription cost includes regular and ongoing product updates, customer support, routine maintenance, and data back-ups and recovery on the cloud-based, hosted service, with a 99.9 percent uptime availability guarantee.

Waiver of RFP/Q Competitive Selection Process

Oakland Municipal Code (OMC) Section 2.04.042 requires competitive process advertising and solicitation for information technology products and services. OMC Section 2.04.042 also provides an exception to this requirement upon a recommendation of the City Administrator and finding and determination by the City Council that it is in the best interests of the City to do so.

City staff recommend that based on staff's rigorous and exhaustive analysis of various potential approaches, team configurations and costs to build out and sustain the City's new website, that the cost-effective, subscription-based solution offered by OpenCities is uniquely positioned to meet the City's goals of creating an accessible, multi-lingual, user-focused website to equitably deliver digital services to a diverse, multicultural community.

For this reason, and because OpenCities is uniquely qualified to meet the City's digital service delivery objectives, City staff believe it is in the best interest of the City for the City Council to waive the RFP/RFQ process and authorize the City Administrator to enter into an agreement with OpenCities for a website content publishing platform.

Finally, there is some urgency to expeditiously implementing the new website content publishing system. Parallel to the development of the beta website, the City's Chief Resilience Officer is working with the Housing & Community Development Department to develop a new informational website and online application to support the Rent Adjustment Program (RAP). This project is on an extremely fast delivery timetable, with project completion required by February 1, 2017, per City Council direction. It would be most cost-effective to build the new RAP informational web pages on the new OpenCities content publishing platform, rather than building on a separate platform that is not supported by the City, thereby necessitating additional staff time and expense to migrate the RAP site to OpenCities at a later date.

FISCAL IMPACT

From a financial standpoint, one of the key benefits of entering into an agreement with OpenCities is that the vendor will continually make improvements and product upgrades to the content publishing platform based on the results of ongoing research and feedback from cities around the world. As improvements are made to the product, all subscribers benefit without individual cities shouldering the financial cost of those improvements.

OpenCities' pricing is based on the population of the city. The first-year cost of up to \$125,000 includes the design and initial set-up of the site, training, ongoing support and maintenance, and access to an active users group and product feedback environment. The annual price for each of the next two years of the three-year agreement is \$75,000 per year; this price is fixed even if Oakland's population increases. The total amount of the three-year agreement is not to exceed \$275,000.

Funding to support the agreement for FY 2016-17 is available in the Telecommunications Fund (1770), City Administrator's Organization (02111), Web Design Project (A501210) totaling \$45,000; and the Development Services Fund (2415), City Administrator's Organization (02111), PERTS Tech Project (P249920) totaling \$80,000, for a total of \$125,000. Ongoing funding totaling \$75,000 will be identified during the FY2017-2019 budget development process to cover costs for FY 2017-18 and beyond.

PUBLIC OUTREACH / INTEREST

At this time, no outreach was deemed necessary for the proposed policy action beyond the standard City Council agenda noticing procedures.

COORDINATION

OpenCities' website content publishing platform is built exclusively for the work of local government and embeds best practices for digital interaction with the public developed from its work with a broad cross-section of local governments, discovering the commonalities many of them shared and continually implementing new and evolving solutions to digital service delivery.

As previously described, staff from departments across the City participated in a robust review of various web content publishing platforms. The feedback received from users led to the recommendation to select OpenCities as the best web content publishing platform to meet the City's needs and digital service delivery objectives.

This report has been developed in coordination between the City Administrator's Office, the Information Technology Department, and the ADA Programs Division of Oakland Public Works, and has been reviewed by the Office of the City Attorney and Controller's Bureau.

SUSTAINABLE OPPORTUNITIES

Economic: OpenCities is a cost-effective, web-based content publishing system that will greatly improve City staff's ease and ability to deliver efficient and effective digital services.

Environmental: As additional City processes are automated and digitized, fewer paper forms will be used, thereby reducing the consumption of paper and minimizing the use of electronic printers and ink. Also, the City's collective carbon footprint may be reduced as community members are able to access services through the City's website instead of City Hall.

Social Equity: The use of OpenCities to publish website content will improve public access to City programs and services, and will help bridge the digital divide to achieve a deeper and wider reach into the multi-lingual, multi-cultural, diverse community we serve.

ACTION REQUESTED OF THE CITY COUNCIL

Staff Recommends That The City Council Adopt A Resolution Authorizing the City Administrator To Enter into an Agreement with OpenCities, Inc. to Provide a Website Content Publishing Platform that Improves Customer Service; Enhances Public Access to the City's Digital Services on Mobile Devices; Improves the Searchability of Web Content; and Enables Staff to Publish Timely, Accurate, Easily Understood, and Multilingual Information to the City's Website, For An Amount Up To \$125,000 In The First Year And \$75,000 Annually For The Following Two Years, For A Total Amount Over The Three-Year Period Not To Exceed \$275,000; And Waiving the Competitive Request for Proposals/Qualifications (RFP/Q) Process.

For questions regarding this report, please contact Karen Boyd, Assistant to the City Administrator at (510) 238-6365 or KBoyd@oaklandnet.com.

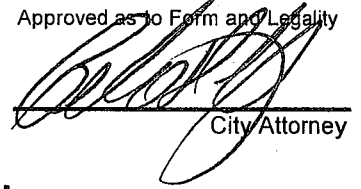
Respectfully submitted,

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City Attorney

2016 DEC -1 RESOLUTION No. _____ C.M.S.

Introduced by Councilmember _____

**RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE CITY ADMINISTRATOR TO
1) ENTER INTO AN AGREEMENT WITH OPENCITIES, INC. TO
PROVIDE A WEBSITE CONTENT PUBLISHING PLATFORM THAT
IMPROVES CUSTOMER SERVICE; ENHANCES PUBLIC ACCESS TO
THE CITY'S DIGITAL SERVICES ON MOBILE DEVICES; IMPROVES
THE SEARCHABILITY OF WEB CONTENT; AND ENABLES STAFF TO
PUBLISH TIMELY, ACCURATE, EASILY UNDERSTOOD AND
MULTILINGUAL INFORMATION TO THE CITY'S WEBSITE, FOR AN
AMOUNT UP TO \$125,000 IN THE FIRST YEAR AND \$75,000 ANNUALLY
FOR THE FOLLOWING TWO YEARS, FOR A TOTAL AMOUNT OVER
THE THREE-YEAR PERIOD NOT TO EXCEED \$275,000; AND WAIVING
THE COMPETITIVE REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS/QUALIFICATIONS
(RFP/Q) PROCESS**

WHEREAS, the City website has become the “digital front door” through which about one million visitors per year are looking to access City services or information online; and

WHEREAS, the City Council passed Resolution No. 84998 C.M.S. on May 20, 2014, authorizing a professional services agreement with Code for America to develop the “Digital Front Door Project” with the goal of producing a set of standards to modernize our online service delivery and recommendations; and

WHEREAS, the outcome of the City’s engagement with Code for America was the creation and launch of a new beta website (<https://beta.oaklandca.gov>) as a foundation for a more user-centered, data-driven and iterative approach to delivering digital services; and

WHEREAS, improving digital services will help bridge the digital divide by optimizing the website for use on mobile devices; using simpler, human-centered design; conducting ongoing user testing to ensure service delivery goals are met; and writing content in plain English so it is easier and faster for users to understand, and less expensive to translate into other languages; and

WHEREAS, information on the website should be simple to navigate, intuitively organized and focused on services so that the website functions as a credible and trusted source of information for the community; and

WHEREAS, work on the Digital Front Door Project and the development of the beta website revealed that a good content publishing system is critical to delivering a website that is simple and easy for the public to use and efficient for City staff to keep updated; and

WHEREAS, given the numerous current challenges managing content and information on the City’s website, and the fact that there are multiple potential solutions to those problems, City staff did not pursue a traditional RFP/Q process because the desired solution could not be clearly defined in advance; and

WHEREAS, City staff pursued a rigorous analysis of multiple analog and technology solutions, and combinations thereof, to identify the appropriate website development and content publishing solutions, including a parallel analysis of the staff configurations, team size, and costs required to implement and sustain the technology alternatives; and

WHEREAS, staff also reviewed a suite of language translation and ADA accessibility tools to achieve more equitable access to online services and information; and

WHEREAS, in conducting these analyses, City staff focused on solving the following high-priority challenges: 1) provide multi-lingual support; 2) ensure ADA accessibility support; 3) highlight the City's digital services to help users find the information and services they are looking for; 4) provide City staff with website content publishing tools that are easy to use with a minimal amount of technology training; 5) retain the ability to upgrade or replace obsolete technology systems; 6) seek vendors that are able to provide streamlined, ongoing and ideally locally available customer support; 7) ensure website content publishing technology is continually improved; and

WHEREAS, based on a rigorous and exhaustive analysis of potential approaches and team configurations to build out and sustain the City's new website, it is in the City's best interest to waive the RFP/FRQ process and to use OpenCities' website content publishing platform, crafted solely for municipal governments, as the most cost-effective, subscription-based, technology solution to fully implement the City's goal of creating an ADA accessible, user-focused website to equitably deliver digital services to a diverse, multi-cultural, multi-lingual community; and

WHEREAS, OpenCities uniquely offers the ability to publish content and services that have been professionally translated by humans (not just machine translators); includes unique features that prevent publication of content until ADA accessibility issues are corrected; provides for enhanced searchability of information; enhances the accuracy of information by allowing it to be created once on the site and repurposed elsewhere, thereby optimizing search results on widely used search engines; provides the capability to digitize forms traditionally only offered on paper, which will significantly improve the City's efforts to digitize the full suite of City services, streamline and modernize the City's business practices, and address the City Council's goal of a paper-free environment; and includes a local implementation team based in San Francisco; and

WHEREAS, OpenCities provides this unique set of features, tools and configurations that meet the City's needs with fixed and relatively low, predictable costs without the added and costly burden of providing ongoing maintenance and contractual administration, and with the flexibility of moving away from the system should technology evolve towards a better solution in the future; and

WHEREAS, OpenCities is a web-based, out-of-the-box Software as a Service (SaaS) application that was developed to meet the specific website publishing needs of municipal governments; it requires minimal customization, which is often costly, and includes the following services a part of the annual subscription price: regular and ongoing product development and updates; customer support; routine maintenance; and data back-ups and recovery on the cloud-based, hosted service with a 99.9 percent uptime guarantee; and

WHEREAS, Oakland Municipal Code (OMC) Section 2.04.042 requires advertising and requests for proposals/qualifications (RFP) to purchase information technology products and services, but authorizes the City Council to waive these requirements upon a determination that it is in the best interests of the City to do so; and

WHEREAS, the City Administrator recommends, for the reasons set forth above, that it is in the best interests of the City to waive the RFP/Q process for this purchase; and

WHEREAS, the City Administrator has determined that the services to be provided under the agreement are of a professional, scientific or technical and temporary nature, are in the public interest because of economy or better performance and shall not result in the loss of employment or salary by any person having permanent status in the competitive service; now, therefore be it

RESOLVED: That the City Administrator is hereby authorized to enter into a software license agreement with OpenCities, Inc. in an amount of up to \$125,000 in the first year and \$75,000 annually for the following two years, for a total amount over the three-year period not to exceed \$275,000; and be it

FURTHER RESOLVED: That based on the recommendation of the City Administrator set forth above and in the report accompanying this item, the Oakland City Council waives the competitive request for proposals/qualifications process for this purchase; and be it.

FURTHER RESOLVED: That the City Attorney will review the Agreement for form and legality and a copy of this resolution shall be filed with the City Clerk.

IN COUNCIL, OAKLAND, CALIFORNIA, _____

PASSED BY THE FOLLOWING VOTE:

AYES - BROOKS, CAMPBELL-WASHINGTON, GALLO, GUILLÉN, KALB, KAPLAN, REID and PRESIDENT GIBSON MCELHANEY

NOES -

ABSENT -

ABSTENTION -

ATTEST: _____

LaTonda Simmons
City Clerk and Clerk of the Council
of the City of Oakland, California