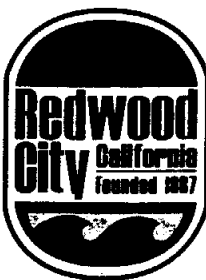


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City Manager



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Date: October 10, 2003  
To: Members, City Council  
From: Malcolm Smith, Public Communications Manager  
David Chulick, Information Technology Services Manager  
Re: Overview of Redesigned City Website

At your October 13<sup>th</sup> meeting, under "Special Orders of the Day," we will present to you a brief overview of the City's redesigned website. The new website will have gone "live" as of Sunday, October 12<sup>th</sup>.

Although the current website offers a great depth of information, it does not meet our high standards of being easy to navigate, "user-friendly," and visually appealing. In short, the website needed an overhaul that would promote a consistent image, reflect the City's core purpose and values, and offer the community a more effective means of obtaining information and becoming engaged with the City. Our original website was created nearly five years ago and was overdue for a significant re-building.

A committee was convened in June of 2002 consisting of representatives from each of the eleven City departments, coordinated by the public communications manager, the information technology manager, and the webmaster, and given the charge of revising the website. To help guide our efforts, this committee first developed a mission statement for the City's website:

- To engage all audiences in the greater Redwood City community with content-rich, innovative, easily-navigated, aesthetically pleasing pages;
- To provide e-government services, serve as a community focal point and electronic town center, and embody the City's values and image.

Bi-weekly meetings were held throughout the process, various staff sub-committees worked on specific elements of the re-design, and a graphic design consultant was hired to fully realize the committee's vision for the website. As a focus group, a sampling of PACT participants reviewed and suggested changes to the proposed re-design. The graphical concept was brought to the department heads for review and comment, and staff members at all levels were involved in revising, creating, and re-creating the specific content for their departments.

Today, the website is streamlined with a reduced, more manageable number of links on the front page, offering four sets of alternating photos on the front page to keep it fresh to the repeat visitor, and graphically evoking the concept of "the community of Redwood City." The front page now includes an "I Want To" menu, offering quick links to the most-requested pages or functions, as well as a "Hot Topics" menu for immediate access to the top issues of the day. Thanks to the website committee's dedication and great effort, we are proud to unveil the new Redwood City website.

It should be noted that while the website is 'live,' not all of its pages are in the new format. There are literally thousands of files on our website; most departmental pages are nearly completed in the new format, but a few of the larger departments are taking more time to convert their pages, simply due to the number of files with which they're dealing. The result is that as someone visits the page and accesses files they will in some cases see pages that are in the old format.

One of the features of a highly used website is its dynamic nature and its constant state of being upgraded and improved, so you'll continue to see our website evolve and change to meet the ongoing needs of our community.