



2024 Budget Request

Request: Website Rebuild

Department: Corporate Services

Request ID: COR2024BUDGET-C-02

Financial Ask: \$35,000

Funding Source: Capital – Admin Computers

This document and its attachments are public and available in an accessible format upon request.

Background and Strategic Priority

The Township of Georgian Bluffs website, available at www.georgianbluffs.ca, is an integral part of our community's digital presence, as well as the Township's primary source of information on our services. The last full website update took place in 2017, with some of the current content predating that update.

The website plays a pivotal role in the services we provide to our community. It garners over 150,000 pageviews from more than 50,000 unique visitors per year, making it the number one customer service tool accessed by our residents, visitors, and stakeholders. The website is a conduit for information on all the services our community has available to them, as well as keeping the community informed about events and Township news, Council activities, and provides access to online services and resources.

As the site is now over 5 years old, the technology supporting the back end has become dated and functionality has declined. As websites age, they also get bloated with discarded pages and old files that impact site performance and search functionality. Design trends have also changed, and the need for a responsive design that works on different screen sizes has increased.

This project supports the following Strategic Priority:



- 1.1 Improve communications to foster public engagement and participation.
 - (c) Continued enhancement of social media presence, website, and general communications.

Analysis

The Township's current website provider, GHD (formerly eSolutions), is offering a limited-time incentive to migrate to their new website platform called GovStack. This newly designed platform caters specifically to government organizations, with improved functionality and accessibility features over the current content management system. It will retain all of the current features of our site that work well, such as online payment forms, email subscriptions, news feed, and calendars, with the addition of an updated look and feel, improved design flexibility for content and landing pages, and additional accessibility features for improved alt-text and responsive design for different device sizes.

Industry best practices recommend updating websites every 3-5 years. This not only keeps the site looking fresh and modern, but allows the site to integrate updated technology, clear out outdated information and old files that slow the site down and inhibit search functionality, and ensure we are keeping up with industry compliance like AODA standards.

In conjunction with the transition to the GovStack platform, we will undertake a comprehensive review and revision of all website content, update the site architecture, and eliminate any outdated content. This strategic endeavor will guarantee a more user-friendly experience, improving access to crucial information for our residents.

While we recognize that not all residents are regular website users or have consistent access to high-speed internet, demands continue to increase for access to digital services and information. Keeping the website up to date is essential in order to bridge the digital divide and ensure that our community remains inclusive and well-informed, addressing the diverse needs and expectations of all residents.

Financial Impact

The anticipated financial impact of this project is \$35,000, which includes installation and configuration of the GovStack site with our selected theme and branding including forms, calendars, and news feed, as well as updated staff training and a scan for AODA compliance.

If this project was delayed to a future year or if staff were to issue an RFP, the anticipated cost to upgrade and redesign the site would increase to \$50,000-\$60,000. Undertaking this project in 2024 is not only cost-effective, but ensures we are providing our community with an up-to-date and accessible online platform.



Report Approval Details

Document Title:	2024 Budget Request Website Rebuild.docx
Attachments:	
Final Approval Date:	Nov 14, 2023

This report and all of its attachments were approved and signed as outlined below:

Niall Loble, Director of Community Services

Samantha Buchanan, Treasurer