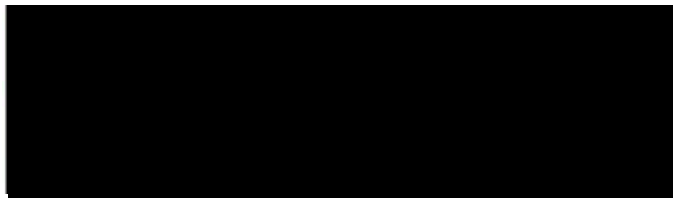


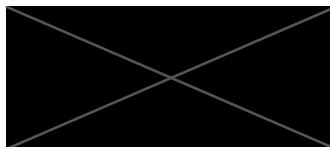
PROJECT BRIEF

Site Assessment and Redesign Planning Project



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Prepared by



Purpose

The purpose of this Project Brief is to summarize [REDACTED] process, observations, conclusions, and recommendations for the planning of a re-implementation of a public-facing website for [REDACTED]. It particularly compiles the findings of tasks undertaken as part of the **site assessment** portion of this project, which has been aimed at:

- Using data to better understand audiences and opportunities
- Assessing the current site content to identify areas for simplification and reduction
- Focusing on high-priority content and functions that should be improved and made more visible
- Decreasing the level of 'buried' and excessively deep content to reduce user clicks and the burden of browsing involved in the site experience
- Developing a prospective plan for an online application management system
- Explore potential solutions to better document management

Project and Organizational Background

[REDACTED] contracted [REDACTED] to work on planning for a new implementation of a public-facing website that would be informed by user data, usability best practices, functional enhancements, updates to content management processes, and modern technology.

There are four main 'Centers' comprising [REDACTED], and website content has departmental / center-based ownership, with little overlap, which project stakeholders observe creates inconsistencies in how content is presented to end users. Project leaders wish to achieve a unified and cohesive design and site implementation, while still allowing for the flexibility of the individual centers' varying content.

[REDACTED] has a broad set of audiences, including those who are fluent in the domain and the industry jargon, known as the Health Care Community audiences. There are also aspects of the [REDACTED] purpose aimed at a general public / citizen audience, and these individuals are less likely to understand and use domain-specific language - the Health Care Consumer audience.

Project leaders note site information that does not feel well-organized, and it is growing steadily without sufficient strategy into where new content fits, in part due to the decentralized ownership and decision-making occurring in the site maintenance. It is also observed that the search function does not work well currently, and these issues combined result in major pain points around the findability of information, including some information only being reached via a large number of clicks.

██████ representatives note the technology behind the site is aging and there are some concerns about document security, as well as general usability, governance, and accessibility.

In 2020, ██████ embarked on a research effort to analyze their web data, focusing on understanding who visits and when, what they're looking for, how much time it takes, bounce rates, and so on. A powerpoint slide deck compiling the results of that analysis was shared with ██████ and access to ██████ Google Analytics was granted to ██████ as well. Additionally ██████ previously conducted a survey with staff to gain insight to their perspectives around needs and opportunities for the site, which was also shared with ██████ team members.

It is important to know that health planning, which is a function of the ██████, is a quasi-legal process involving case law access which are the anchors of decision-making. It involves 1000s of pages of documents, but the site needs to be more than a 'holding area' for documents. Some sections of the site are extremely text-heavy, so constructing a plan for future content that helps ensure the usability and user-friendliness of such content is crucial.

Audiences and User Data Collection / Analysis

██████ serves all ██████. It is important that the site be broadly usable and accessible by users of all types, including users of different abilities, ages, technical savvy, and familiarity with the domain, as well as mobile-friendly. However the majority of content, and the core work conducted by ██████, serves members of the health care community in a professional capacity. This community is made up primarily of health care professionals, providers, legislators, insurance agencies, lobbyists, and health care purchasers.

██████'s process included an end user survey that produced ~35 responses to questions that were aimed at understanding the demographics and backgrounds of users, their current knowledge of the ██████, their assessment of the quality of the website in various areas, the type of content they seek, and the themes around areas that should be targeted for improvement. Lastly, ██████ existing Google Analytics data was explored by ██████, resulting in the several observations, including:

- The site has a very high rate of new visitors.
- The site has a very low rate of mobile utilization.
- Multiple CON-related pages are among the most popular in the site.
- Site traffic is extremely consistent throughout the year, and primarily distributed during traditional office hours between 8am and 6pm.
- There is a significant portion of very short user sessions under 10 seconds each.

These observations prompted ██████ to propose the following success metrics for a new site implementation.

- Increase the rate of repeat / returning visitors, which would illustrate prior success and value to the user driving them to return.

- Increase the portion of mobile usage, by implementing a more mobile-friendly and responsive site.
- Reduce the bounce rate and the portion of user sessions under 10 seconds each.

■■■■'s user research report was delivered in a meeting to ■■■■ project stakeholders and is attached. A future post-implementation user survey conducted a few months into the life of the new site would also provide helpful data, especially with respect to users' assessment of site clarity and ease of use compared to the prior site.

Content Assessment and Opportunities for Improvement

CON

Certificate of Need (CON) is a process involving an application for approval of major facility-related and other projects undertaken by health providers that impact the delivery of health services within ■■■■. State regulations require ■■■■ to assess proposed projects to ensure they are executed with appropriate planning and efficiency, that they positively impact care delivery, expand services, or serve a segment of the population currently in need. Projects that are submitted for consideration are typically either approved or denied through a process that involves public review, a staff recommendation, and final decision by the body of Commissioners.

CON drives a large amount of traffic to the website currently - representing 7 out of 10 of the most popular pages in the site at times - and the organization does not adequately surface CON in the user interface (UI) or navigation scheme. CON materials are somewhat disorganized despite ■■■■ efforts to manage this content in the realm of the current site technology and structure, making it hard for a user to find all current applications, application materials/forms, past applications, and procedures / requirements associated with the application process.

■■■■ proposed an overhaul to the entirety of the CON section of the website, starting with its representation on the homepage, in the main menu, and the structure and consolidation of content in this section of the site. The proposed changes focus on creating a clearer narrative explaining the role of CON in ■■■■, and clarifying user access to details and supporting materials about CON (partly through the use of an interior menu which could also be leveraged elsewhere in the site).

Additionally, the proposed implementation of CON involves greater structure to the application entities themselves, supporting easier, queryable user access to current and past applications, which would better meet a user need involving applicants preparing application materials or LOIs who are conducting research into past CON applications that are similar or would otherwise impact their application.

Further 'automation' of the CON business workflow was also explored in several meetings with [REDACTED]. [REDACTED] discussed with [REDACTED] the potential of a full online application management system that could go so far as to fully digitize the application process using an entirely online set of forms and a guided / wizard-like process of completing the application. However we also discussed that much of the organizational and user benefits could be achieved through improved structure of application entities even if the application itself remains largely PDF-based, with no automation of the application submission or post-submission workflow. There is a departmental decision to be made, by [REDACTED], as to the extent of the sophistication of the online application management system that should be targeted for the implementation. There were concerns raised about fully digitizing this, including that application materials are very voluminous, involve multiple attachments, sometimes are delivered on a USB/thumb drive, and require multiple sessions over several days or even weeks for an applicant to complete all requirements. There is also concern around the challenge of successfully implementing the logic involved in the various permutations of CON applications (which vary according to facility / project type).

Implementing an application management system that offers a submission process for an applicant would most likely involve account creation and authentication for applicant users, which would be new functionality to [REDACTED] site. [REDACTED] designed (in low-fidelity wireframes) the basic interactions involved in that functionality (log in, account creation, and authenticated applicant user landing page).

[REDACTED]'s Recommendation Regarding CON

A full-scale end-to-end implementation automating the applicant, reviewer, and publication experience may be prohibitively costly to [REDACTED]. There are 'off the shelf' products, such as Clio which is under review by [REDACTED] now, that may fulfill much of what [REDACTED] wants to achieve with respect to the application review workflow and matter management needs. [REDACTED]'s technical recommendation document assumes a product like Clio is adopted by [REDACTED], and explores the potential of integrating with Clio in support of key functions such as publication to the website when a matter / record in Clio has been changed. Additionally, the initial website functionality targeted for the first release may not include any particular automation aimed at the CON applicant experience.

However, [REDACTED] anticipates that the CMS implementation for [REDACTED] website should include some structured templates or content types that capture basic details around individual CON applications, populated through either a Clio integration or by [REDACTED] contributors responsible for maintaining this content. These would help ensure the consistency of information shared with the public about CON applications that are under review or have passed, and would support the intended user experience associated with finding information about CON applications.

Generally, application workflows raised by [REDACTED] including those associated with the trauma fund and determination letters generated for CON exception scenarios, both of which are less complex than the CON process, could be scoped to be built into the CMS / website over subsequent phases, but would not necessarily be recommended for the initial launch of the site.

[REDACTED] Portal

There is currently an authenticated section of the [REDACTED] website dedicated to [REDACTED]. The intent of this section is to allow the organization to feed timely information to [REDACTED] and help them prepare for upcoming meetings, and for [REDACTED] to have access to protected materials. Project stakeholders observe the [REDACTED] space is underutilized, and [REDACTED] commonly rely on physical mailings of meeting materials. This is seen as something that could be improved through updated website functionality and experience, enabling [REDACTED] to discontinue mailings.

[REDACTED] designed two options for the [REDACTED] landing page (for the authenticated [REDACTED] user) from which [REDACTED] chose their preferred approach that is aimed at creating a basic 'dashboard' experience with quick access to upcoming and recent meetings and other key materials. Further, we discussed targeting functionality that would trigger email notifications to the ~15 [REDACTED] when there are updates to their site materials. This would be a proactive method of notifying [REDACTED] of new materials available and would drive them to log in to review updates, including agendas published for meetings, eliminating the need for [REDACTED] administrators to also send physical mailings.

Page Consolidation and Overall Reduction

This project involved consideration of various ideas to manage growing site content and consolidate or reduce. There are opportunities to better organize and in some cases combine existing pages into fewer overall pages, which would generally reduce the number of clicks involved to reach the content, reduce the opportunities for users to get lost, and help [REDACTED] manage the constant growth observed in the site. This should be done carefully, however, to ensure pages don't become excessively cluttered or hard to read - which was something mentioned in responses to [REDACTED]'s user survey.

Another contributing factor to organic growth of website content has to do with the distribution of content management responsibilities within an agency, as the lack of a centralized owner can result in disparate decisions about what should go into the site, where new content fits into the site structure, and how long or detailed page content should be. [REDACTED] proposed removing content authoring by the division representatives (primarily being executive assistants - EAs), however [REDACTED] advised that governance and editorial workflows built into the new website could ensure IT maintains ultimate authority over content changes and additions while still leveraging the subject matter expertise maintained within the Centers.

An editorial review schedule that queues up content pages and documents for review by content managers and internal SMEs, to ensure pages are reviewed, updated, and possibly archived as they age, would be a valuable measure to protect against haphazard, organic expansion of the site over time.

Specifically, user roles and permissions could be established to enable content creation and editing - but not publication - by EAs and other distributed team members. If desired, control or access to edit can also be maintained on a section-by-section basis to ensure limited access to content editing across divisions. Information Technology (IT) in this model would retain sole responsibility for actually publishing content (effectively, an approval requirement). A CMS like Drupal could easily be configured to set up this type of workflow, including the ability for all editorial users to preview and prepare content that is not yet live and accessible by the public. A queue of content updates would be accessible to site publishers, helping them manage the flow of proposed content changes. This would help ensure that decisions to add content are validated appropriately by site authorities, as well as for IT to verify the placement of any new content that is generated, and would help ensure consistency in tone of voice and level of detail from section to section. It would also keep most of the responsibility for composing new pages in the hands of the distributed content owners.

██████ noted that this creates the potential of a 'bottleneck' with IT or whomever is authorized to publish content, and could create undesirable delays between when a page edit is identified and when it takes effect. Over time, ██████ could opt to discontinue this workflow or enable more users to directly publish, if desired. Additionally, there should be an internal process adjustment and information shared amongst all within ██████ responsible for site content to develop standards for web content and the publication workflow. Health Information Technology in particular was cited as having an excessive amount of content.

Additionally, an editorial review schedule that queues up content pages and documents for review by content managers and internal SMEs, to ensure pages are reviewed, updated, and possibly archived as they age, would be a valuable measure to protect against haphazard, organic expansion of the site over time.

Based on site traffic and analytics, there are pages in the site getting little to no page visits, and these would be candidates to consider for elimination when ██████ new site implementation is in place and content migration commences. Out of 651 pages detected by Google Analytics, approximately 160 pages in the current site, which is 25% of the site's pages, have each had **one visitor or fewer over the last 12-month period**, as observed in January, 2023. Approximately 460 pages (70%) in ██████ current site reflect page views over a 12-month period individually constituting <0.05% of page visits; these pages have each had 50 or fewer page views during this 12-month period. A content prioritization and migration plan should involve a review of ██████ Google Analytics page views, sorted by number of views on an ascending basis (smallest to largest), as it is likely that some or all of these pages, and more, could be cut from the site or possibly consolidated into fewer. Doing so would mean ██████

stands to reduce its page count significantly, by as much as 70%, bringing the page count down to around 200 pages.

However, there may be reasons - such as low findability of content - driving a low level of traffic to a given page. For a site like [REDACTED] that has a known issue with findability, clarity of content organization, and effective site search, greater consideration should go into what constitutes the best content to cull, including assessment by subject matter experts and original content authors, and possible business rules relating to the age and relevance of content. Certainly any content that is obsolete - either no longer relevant to how [REDACTED] operates or outdated (especially if inaccurate) - should be left out of a future site migration. A review schedule built into a new CMS implementation would help keep content on a continuous life cycle to be reviewed for consideration of any changes or retirement needed.

[REDACTED] recommends that as part of the scope of a future implementation, content *strategy* that further defines how text and narratives in the site will be transformed, and that guides content migration and future content creation, be included. This would be aimed at establishing 'guardrails' for what does and does not belong in the site and the level of depth and detail that should be included in the [REDACTED] web content.

Administrator views that enable content managers / owners to view lists of pages and documents within a particular category, section of the IA, or other taxonomy could be helpful, to increase empowerment of content owners and visibility of exactly what content exists in the site. Drupal, as an example, can also be configured to detect duplicate content within the site if multiple pages share similar language, content, or titles.

One opportunity for consolidation and reduced duplication is in the management of contacts within the site - ie individual points of contact or office contact information that should be shared on various webpages with the site visitor. An implementation that involves a central listing of those contacts or locations, which the webpage can refer to and share (like a feed), would be valuable. This would eliminate the need to identify every instance where a particular contact appears in the site in the event that the contact information needs to change; an edit to the central contact record would apply that change wherever the contact is referenced in the site.

Updated Information Architecture

Findability was cited as a key pain point in user research conducted both by [REDACTED] and [REDACTED]. Naturally, site organization and information architecture play a big role in the user success of finding content. [REDACTED] prepared two potential IAs for [REDACTED] consideration, based on research into similar agencies in other states, and then conducted an IA workshop in which the joint team led by [REDACTED] generated a new working model of an IA that was observed to improve upon the current, and it was later revised slightly with further changes by [REDACTED].

Generally 'center-based' content organization was not incorporated into this new IA. There is an element of audience-based content organization, with top-level items referring to 'For Providers'

and 'Consumer Resources', however the IA that [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] jointly built is mostly **topic-oriented**. There is 'find information by center' mentioned in the second level navigation, per an update specified by [REDACTED] following the workshop.

In the user survey, there was an observation about respondents not clearly understanding what [REDACTED] does, its scope or purpose. A few particular experience and design recommendations by [REDACTED] are intended to improve on that:

- Explicit statement about [REDACTED] core mission incorporated into the homepage banner
- More prominent 'About' information offered on the homepage and in the information architecture
- Brief descriptions built into the menu to help users know what the scope of a given section is and what information can be found within it

Consumer versus Community Content

It is a challenge to equally represent the different audiences within [REDACTED] website when the majority of content is aimed at and utilized by a particular set of users - health care community members. Though [REDACTED] does serve the general public, and [REDACTED]'s user survey showed a high number of participants that did not identify as one of the community/provider audiences, the primary materials available to general public users are separate sites maintained by [REDACTED] that are not part of this site: the [REDACTED] and the Quality Reporting site. In order to create balance in the website and help direct general public users to these two key resources, the homepage designs provided by [REDACTED] provide a section close to the hero banner providing a layout dedicated to evenly weighted calls to action for the health care community and health care consumer resources. This helps ensure that general public visitors to the site can quickly find the resources most suited to their needs.

Webforms

Though [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] discussed the potential of bringing forms that are currently maintained in PDF (typically static but occasional fillable PDF), printed, and submitted via email or physical mailing, into more integrated web-based forms that would support digital submission, near the end of the project it came to light that there has been a separate initiative in recent months to migrate many of these forms to JotForm, a third party tool that [REDACTED] has successfully leveraged to enable online completion and submission. Therefore it was decided that [REDACTED] would put no further effort into exploring or designing webforms in the context of a new website implementation.

Site Search

[REDACTED] put concerted effort into exploring site search experiences that would improve the usability of this key feature of the site, in light of a recurring pattern of user feedback relating to this being a major area of need. Establishing a functional and effective site search is largely a

technical challenge, requiring the appropriate technology to be put to work and configured to return relevant results. However there are significant aspects of efficacy and user-friendliness of a search function achieved through the design of the search experience.

XXXX's exploration into the proposed site search experience strove to do the following:

- Make individual results easy to read and differentiate from one another
- When available, present short teaser or descriptive text to help communicate the content at a particular link
- Surface key details about each result, including the result type (such as webpage or file), the date last updated, the section of the site where it belongs (according to the site map), and, for files, the file format and size, and whether or not it has been archived
- Offer end users filtering capabilities to further refine result sets, by date updated, result type, or site section (topic)

Document Management Capabilities

XXXX conveyed a current business challenge associated with how documents are managed within the site. At a high level, there are business rules driving documents to be 'archived', meaning they are removed from the main site and stored in a separate environment, when they are two years old. This presents a few challenges, including that some documents are still important and popular despite being older than two years, requiring them to be restored by request. Additionally, users who have bookmarked the URL for a document would reach a dead end, and those outside the XXXX are unlikely to have the method to request it to be restored. Archived documents are not searchable or queryable at all, so users generally would not know they exist. There is not currently a need to maintain multiple *versions* of documents.

XXXX proposes maintaining archived documents within the site in order to support the user ability to find them without requiring hands-on support by XXXX administrators, such as through an advanced search or additional filter on the main site search. Low-fidelity site search designs provided by XXXX reflect a recommended end user experience that involves accessing archived content through the main site search, with the use of filters to target archived results and labels to clarify archived versus non-archived search results.

There could potentially be a schedule that causes documents or site contents to be automatically archived based on age, or could instead be added to a queue for content manager review in consideration of archiving. Another option, if XXXX prefers to restrict end user access to archived files, would be to keep them in the site in an unpublished state where they can easily be restored as needed and accessed by internal parties with appropriate permissions.

Admin views that help site administrators manage documents and see which are visible, archived, or unpublished would be valuable, with admin overrides to quickly change the status or publication state. It would be important for administrators to be able to identify instances where a page refers to a document or file that has been archived, to ensure a replacement is entered or the content is updated to no longer refer to this archived file.

█████ anticipates a key technology that would be involved in achieving this would be SOLR, which integrates with content management systems such as Drupal. See also █████'s technical recommendations document.

Visibility and Promotion of Key Content

There are many factors that contribute to visibility and access to high-priority content. █████ made several recommendations that would improve upon user access to high-priority content as well as enable █████ content administrators to curate pages in order to promote high priority content:

- The main menu has been designed to reflect three levels of depth from the homepage, helping to expose a large amount of content available within the site, as well as descriptions built into the menu to help users understand what can be found in each section.
- The IA developed in conjunction with █████ prioritizes the use of plain language and high priority content and topics. With clarity of language cited as an area for improvement in █████'s user survey, this is important to incorporate.
- The homepage design includes a section of 'popular links', which would actually be defined by █████ administrators, incorporated into the main hero banner for high visibility. These could be reviewed and updated by █████ on a regular basis, such as monthly or quarterly, according to site traffic analytics and popular searches in the site.
- The homepage design creates ways to feature other popular content as well, including timely meetings / events schedules and recordings, news, consumer links, and content according to facility type.
- The interior page layouts and general page construction approach recommended include components such as call-to-action blocks intended to make navigation and key actions on a page clear and prominent.
- Some sections of the site will benefit, as shown in █████'s designs for CON, from interior navigation (shown as a left sidebar menu on desktop designs). This will help communicate what pages are available in a particular section, and enable navigation within a section without having to go back and forth from a landing page.
- Content and document management functionality discussed include an editorial review schedule by which content owners / SMEs could review site content and consider its age and relevancy for archiving, which will help manage the volume of current content and offer an opportunity to consider promoting or cross-linking content in the site.

Division Pages

As mentioned above, the information architecture developed in a workshop between █████ and █████ project stakeholders is not specifically division or center-oriented, though it has been updated to offer navigation within About to 'Information by Center' to help communicate to the

end user how [REDACTED] is organized internally and how its services are delivered, or provide information to those who are curious about the segments of the Commission.

[REDACTED] feels this approach is appropriate because it's commonly not transparent or predictable by external site visitors how [REDACTED] is organized or its services facilitated, so a largely need, topic, or audience-based navigation is more friendly. The interior page sample designs that [REDACTED] has provided assume topic-related landing pages and related content accessible via links within pages and interior (sidebar) menus. However for those familiar with the Centers, offering a categorization within About would support their browsing.

Minimizing Clicks in the Navigation and UI

The following recommendations made by [REDACTED] are intended to minimize the number of clicks involved in reaching content within [REDACTED] site. These are closely related to the methods recommended to improve visibility and access to high priority content noted above.

- The main menu has been designed to reflect three levels of depth from the homepage, which exposes a large amount of content, and features descriptions built into the menu to help users understand what can be found in each section. This is intended to reduce the amount of hunting, or incorrect selections, a user may make during their browsing experience.
- Site search has been designed to be greatly improved, including providing multiple details to users about each search result that is returned and enabling filtering by the user to support their ability to quickly identify the targeted resource.
- Functional breadcrumbs would prevent excessive backtracking or the need to return to the homepage if a user has reached a page that isn't what they need.
- Interior navigation on more complex sections of the site (especially in instances like CON where there are multiple closely related pages) means a user does not have to go back and forth between a parent page and its child pages to browse an entire section; all related pages are accessible via the interior menu **from one another**.
- The information architecture has been updated to reflect [REDACTED] and [REDACTED]'s understanding of high priority content and logical organization as well as user-friendly, less jargon-y language.
- Page consolidation, focusing on combining pages that are light on content into fewer overall pages, generally will require fewer clicks by end users to reach content.

Online Application Management (focusing on CON)

See "Content Assessment and Opportunities for Improvement - CON".

Note over time, most likely over multiple release schedules additional applications could be built into the online application management tool set to achieve the same general process, administrative, applicant, and end user benefits. While CON is the largest and most complex application-related need that [REDACTED] faces, there are simpler application processes such as

associated with the trauma fund and determination letters for CON exceptions that could potentially be built into the website in subsequent releases.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

UX and Visual Design Recommendations

[REDACTED] existing site design presents various opportunities for improvement in the usability as well as general modernization. [REDACTED]'s design exploration at both low and high fidelities prioritizes high-quality graphics, a consistent visual language, and high-contrast elements to ensure readability and attention to actions and interactive elements.

[REDACTED] current site does not specifically tie visually to the [REDACTED] state-level brand guidance, nor is there an evident relationship between the [REDACTED] agencies, outside of some shared iconography in the [REDACTED] logo and the presence of the Maryland governor feature near the footer. [REDACTED] provided [REDACTED] 'templates' that could be followed or used for inspiration when exploring new graphic design directions, but was not sure whether or how closely they should be followed.

Accessibility and Usability

All concepts address usability and accessibility in the following ways:

- Large and otherwise high-contrast text with consideration of font selection and spacing that ensures readability.
- Distinct link and interactive text styles to aid user recognition of text that provides navigation, compared to non-linking text.
- Minimized and targeted use of all-caps text, which can be hard to read and can convey an urgent or angry tone that may not be intended.
- Icons incorporated to support user identification of interactive elements, such as arrows incorporated into button styles.

- Large clickable regions established for interactive elements to minimize the level of motor control / precision required of the user.
- Minimal use of animation such as auto-play videos or rotational elements, which can be challenging for users to control and can present problems to motion-sensitive site visitors.
- 'Selected' or 'active' states on things like interior navigation to help orient a user to their current location.
- They assume and provide the basis for tab ordering and the implementation of aria landmarks that are required to enable keyboard-based navigation, and consumption of site content via assistive technologies.

Visual Direction

██████ presented three distinct directions represented by homepages for ██████ consideration (in addition to multiple low-fidelity homepages to establish layouts and priority content for the homepage). These designs provided a spectrum of adherence to the ██████ templates that had been shared with ██████ during this process, from a high to a moderate level, and lastly to a direction that would be more distinct for ██████ and largely disconnected from the ██████ templates. They explored the use of the red, black, and yellow tones in ██████ state branding and iconography, as well as softer tones of the dark blue and lighter red reflected in ██████ logo, and visual elements of the current site design as well.

Though there is limited opportunity to incorporate images into the site, images do play an important role in creating warmth and recognizability, so the designs explore the use of both landmark/landscape and human subjects in photographs. Patterns from the ██████ flag were incorporated, and there are both serif and sans serif fonts used in the various designs.

Particular attention was paid to color contrast in the development of these designs, to ensure any text or interactive element would meet web accessibility standards for contrast, which included modifying the tone of the pink in ██████ logo for it to be suitable as a text or background color.

The general goals of the visual designs created for ██████ were to make the site **approachable**, **easy to understand / navigate**, **informative**, and **friendly**. Further, all concepts translate seamlessly to smaller screens including mobile devices.

Best Practices for Creating and Maintaining Content

Proposed Governance and User Roles

As described above, editorial workflows and user permissions that enable content creation and editing by distributed subject matter experts, while preserving publication capabilities for a smaller set of users with enhanced authority and responsibility for site content, has been

recommended as an alternative to [REDACTED] idea to remove editing capabilities from decentralized SMEs and their representatives entirely.

Based on our understanding of the site's functions, the following user roles would be needed:

1. System administrator
2. Publisher
3. Content editor
4. [REDACTED]
5. CON reviewer
 - a. There may be additional granularity to the roles involved in the CON workflow.
6. Applicant (CON)

Flexible CMS with Page Building Capabilities and Dedicated Templates or Content Types

[REDACTED] work on site evaluation and exploration into new ways to contain and present [REDACTED] website data resulted in several low-fidelity samples of interior pages, which reflect page organization recommendations as well as the beginning of outcomes that should be sought in a CMS implementation with respect to page building.

[REDACTED] anticipates that [REDACTED] would have a mix of page templates (content types) and highly flexible 'page building' capabilities enabling the creation of an infinite number of new pages as needed over time.

Component-based Implementation

CMS implementations are commonly 'component-based', involving the definition of individual page components that are developed and configured to provide certain functionality, responsive display, and behaviors for end users. These are then reused in various places throughout the site to ensure a consistent and predictable site experience, and avoid re-developing page elements from page to page.

[REDACTED]'s CMS implementations typically account for *some* of these components to be part of the ad hoc page building capabilities. This would allow [REDACTED] content managers to create new pages as needed over the life of the site, by 'mixing and matching' components that display on the page according to what that page's content demands. The particular components recommended based on [REDACTED]'s work during this phase, and as shown in the low-fi designs provided, are:

1. Text block, built to use a rich text or wysiwyg (what you see is what you get) editor, enabling basic formatting of text on the page including selection of different header styles, bulleted and numbered lists, and text emphasis such as italics, as well as imagery and tables.

2. Sidebar navigation, for use in sections that are particularly voluminous (such as containing 5 or more pages on a given topic).
3. Accordions, which support lengthy (rich) text content to be contained in a collapsed UI element for space preservation, and that expands upon user interaction.
4. Cards / tiles, supporting a variety of display sizes including full-width horizontal cards and those with portrait aspect ratios, with an option to include thumbnail imagery, which enable a user to navigate from page to page.
5. Link and file groups, which display groupings of links, files, or a mix of both, to the end user for navigation / selection.
6. Call to action (CTA), presented similarly to a card, but with the benefit of a prominently styled button, to drive user attention to key actions on a page.
7. Featured video component, which may support 1 or multiple videos, hosted on / linked from [REDACTED] YouTube account, to be played in-place within the webpage.
8. Side-tabbed element, offering similar benefits to an accordion grouping, in which different topics can be grouped together in a singular area of the page and accessed by selecting the tabs in the element to view contents of each.

It is likely that a complete design phase would identify a few more components that should be included in an implementation.

Structured Pages and Templates

Beyond the need for 'ad hoc' page creation described above, [REDACTED] anticipates [REDACTED] website will have a series of pages that share a common format / set of fields, as well as truly unique, singularly structured pages.

Structured pages that were identified include:

- Site search results
- Events listing
- CON application listing
- [REDACTED] portal landing

Note these are generally expected to occur just once in the site (ie, there should just be one page that provides site search results).

Pages that would benefit from the development of structured templates or content types, so that multiple pages can share the same general structure, include:

- Events
- CON detail pages
- Division landing pages
- Alerts / notifications

Analytics Tracking

A best practice to consider adopting, which [REDACTED] is already utilizing alongside their current website, is Google Analytics or other similar platforms, integrated to enable [REDACTED] to monitor site utilization and performance. Tools like this can identify latency issues, 404s / broken links, as well as accessibility issues throughout the site. Further, they provide insights as to changing user behaviors, page popularity, click paths, referral channels, and technologies in use as visitors browse the site. Analytics should be established

Attachments and Related Materials

1. Low-fidelity page designs
2. High-fidelity homepage designs
 - a. Option 1
 - b. Option 2
 - c. Option 3
3. User research summary
4. CON workflow diagram drafted
5. Working model for updated IA
6. Low-fidelity main menu design exploration
7. Technical recommendations