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CALIFORNIA



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March 22, 2022

REF: EXE-083-22

Honorable Members of the City Council  
City of Los Angeles  
Room 395, City Hall  
Los Angeles, CA 90012

Attn: Information Technology & General Services Committee

**SUBJECT: REPORT ON DIGITAL MODERNIZATION & IMPROVING THE CITY OF LOS ANGELES ONLINE PRESENCE (COUNCIL FILE 21-1255)**

Pursuant to City Council Motion (Raman / Buscaino - Koretz), Council File No. 21-1255, the Information Technology Agency (ITA) is submitting the following report regarding digital modernization and improving the City of Los Angeles online presence.

## **BACKGROUND**

Digitizing and improving the City of Los Angeles online presence and digital services is paramount to our world class city. With over 4 million residents and 500,000 businesses spread across 469 square miles, the City of Los Angeles has the enormous responsibility of ensuring the safety, sanitation, public services, utilities, transportation, and recreation of a large metropolis. To deliver on this responsibility, the City of Los Angeles leverages technology. While not a silver bullet, technology uniquely provides solutions unavailable to the generations before us. In fact, the power of these technology solutions was on display during the COVID-19 pandemic.

For example, in response to COVID-19, the Information Technology Agency (ITA) migrated 18,173 City staff to telework and developed brand new COVID response solutions to Angelenos. From building the region's first COVID testing app, to supporting the nation's largest vaccination site at Dodger Stadium, to a rent relief app that distributed \$350 Million to families in need, technology delivered lifesaving benefits at scale. Under Mayor Eric Garcetti's Executive Directive #29 for Contactless Government, the ITA facilitated a comprehensive exercise for all City of Los Angeles departments to review all department services that were paused by COVID-19, identified methods to modernize them, and digitized 74 different City services impacted by COVID. This was done using 13 key technologies that dramatically improve how residents and businesses digitally engage L.A. City government. Those 13 technologies were adopted by City departments and published in our City of L.A. Digital Strategy (<https://ita.lacity.org/news/ita-publishes-city-los-angeles-digital-strategy-covid-19-pandemic-beyond>). This is in addition to the City of Los Angeles seeking technology solutions to solve urban challenges, as seen in the City of Los Angeles SmartLA 2028 Smart City Strategy (<https://ita.lacity.org/news/ita-publishes-smartla-2028-smart-city-strategy>). All of these previous accomplishments were even recognized by Harvard University's "2020 Civic Innovation During the Pandemic" award.

And while the virus has had many terrible consequences for Angelenos, the pandemic has also been a catalyst for improving digital government services at the City of Los Angeles. This Council

Motion comes at a critical crossroads in the history of technology at the City of Los Angeles. Building on the progress made during the pandemic (e.g. migration to online services, City of LA Digital Strategy, Mayor's Executive Directive #29, etc), the City of Los Angeles has a unique opportunity to further digitally transform City department operations and establish a "new better", and not just a "new normal". Furthermore, the future promises even more evolving technology opportunities to engage, empower, and improve quality of life for Angelenos. From crypto to the metaverse to artificial intelligence, the ability of the City of Los Angeles to understand upcoming technologies and then implement them in a cost effective, secure, and ethical way, starts with modernizing our current digital presence so we can build future technologies on a good foundation. As L.A.'s residents, businesses, and visitors increasingly use technology to live, work, and play, improved digital services from the City of Los Angeles will improve resident engagement, government efficiency, economic opportunities, and customer satisfaction.

This report seeks to address each of the items requested from the ITA in the comprehensive Council File #21-1255 through the sections listed in Council Motion:

Section 1 - Improving LA City Websites and Online Presence

Section 2 - Securing a New Gov Web Address

Section 3 - Digitizing and Consolidating Access to Services with MyLA311

Section 4 - Recommendations to Ensure Internal Department Coordination

## **SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS**

The comprehensive nature of this Council Motion requires in-depth discussions in the following sections. For ease of understanding, the recommendations are summarized here:

1. The ITA to redesign LACity.org and re-launch under LACity.gov (pending federal agency domain name approval).
2. The ITA to review, consolidate, and update existing policies under a new City of Los Angeles Web Policy and Standards, with new sections to ensure all websites are under the LACity.gov domain, secure, mobile responsive, accessible, provide fillable online forms, support language translation, have online payment options, and have up-to-date content.
3. Instruct City of Los Angeles departments, elected offices, boards and commissions to:
  - a) Update their websites to adhere to the new City of Los Angeles Web Policy and Standards, maintain current and up-to-date information on websites, and notify the ITA Web Services Team ([ITA.WebServices@lacity.org](mailto:ITA.WebServices@lacity.org)) of new department and project websites to ensure Section 508 accessibility checks occur for timely resolution of any identified issues; and
  - b) Migrate their websites to a new LACity.gov subdomain, to be selected in accordance with the naming convention included in the new City of Los Angeles Web Policy and Standards; and
  - c) Update the Cyber Watch List maintained by the ITA Security Office ([ITA.Security@lacity.org](mailto:ITA.Security@lacity.org)) with their public facing apps, websites, and servers at least quarterly to allow cyber vulnerability scanning and adhere to the updated City of Los Angeles Information Security Policy, requiring all City Departments to implement cyber security controls and practices to protect from data breaches and cyber crimes; and
  - d) Report back with the resources needed, if any, to implement the above recommendations.

4. Instruct the City Administrative Officer (CAO) to identify funding sources, to be considered by the City Council as part of the FY 2022-23 budget development process, for the following additional resources to increase ITA's capacity and capabilities for scanning more websites to ensure City of Los Angeles websites are easy to read, resolve broken links quickly, and are ADA Section 508 accessibility compliant.
  - a) Two (2) new positions in the class of Systems Analyst, Direct Cost of \$148,330 annually, to assist City of Los Angeles departments in conducting quarterly City of Los Angeles website reviews and providing results and findings to department webmasters for timely resolution of any identified issues; and
  - b) Approve additional annual funding in ITA's base budget, in the amount of \$65,000, to upgrade existing accessibility scanning tools; and
  - c) Approve additional annual funding in ITA's base budget, in the amount of \$16,000, for the purchase and implementing a cloud-hosted City of Los Angeles Data Lake platform to facilitate secure data sharing, data analytics, and the responsible use of emerging technologies, such as artificial intelligence, process automation, and machine learning.
5. The ITA to continue working with the Office of the Controller and City Council to perform a Citywide 311 Customer Strategy assessment using Grant Thornton consulting firm (Council File #21-0278) and, upon completion of the project, report back to the Council with its findings and recommendations to improve the MyLA311 processes and systems.
6. ITA to update the existing City of Los Angeles Information Security Policy requiring all City Departments to implement the necessary cyber security controls and practices, such as identity management system, data sharing standards and prompt remediation of known cyber vulnerabilities

## DISCUSSION

### SECTION 1 - IMPROVING LA CITY WEBSITES & ONLINE PRESENCE

The following items were listed by City Council in the section of improving LA City websites and online presence:

1. *Ensuring Department Content is Easily Navigable from LACity.org*

The City of Los Angeles has over 120 official websites with tens of thousands of pages of content. The ability for L.A. residents and businesses to efficiently and easily access the information they desire (and the opportunity to show additional content that viewers may find useful) is the top priority for the Information Technology Agency Web Services Team. To accomplish this daunting task, the ITA subscribes to modern best practices for large website portals. Modern websites avoid including links to every service on their homepage, opting instead to curate their content and emphasize popular content, as well as, a search bar for hard to find content. This is exemplified through the nation's most popular websites (e.g. National Football League, Weather.com, U.S. Postal Service, ESPN, etc). Due to this Council Motion and recent ITA analysis of web traffic and focus group feedback, the ITA is planning to launch a modernized LACity.org website in Spring 2022 that will improve access to City department services using the following means:

- a. For Angelenos who like to navigate a website by topic, the ITA is grouping City services using web content curation. For example, the new LACity.org will help you find resident content and then popular resident services, such as trash collection, graffiti removal, access to elected offices, emergency preparedness, and police/fire non-emergency services. Businesses will have easier access to business tax information, contract opportunities, the L.A. business portal, etc.
- b. For Angelenos who like to search by keyword, the ITA is transforming our search engine access and optimization within LA City websites. The new LACity.org will make the search bar prominent on the front page and will soon search across LACity.org and other City websites. In other words, landing at LACity.org, you can easily search 'Parking Ticket', and be connected with the LA Department of Transportation Parking Ticket website.
- c. For Angelenos who like to navigate as a member of a demographic group (persona), the ITA is adding brand new LACity.org website options for youth, elderly, businesses, etc. In other words, for the first time, young Angelenos will visit LACity.org and find popular topics curated specifically for their age group. (find website information by over 55% of visits to LACity.org come through search engines (e.g. Google, Bing, etc).

Using modern web standards and usability practices, the City of Los Angeles is working to improve ease-of-use of our website regardless of how our residents like to surf the web.

## 2. *Eliminating all Independent City Department Domains*

The ITA supports a standardization of City department website addresses (URLs) to provide easy-to-find access for L.A.'s residents and establish authenticity for official LA City websites so the public does not fall prey to cyber criminals who mimic official government websites. The ITA will work with City departments to establish and implement a naming convention (e.g. LACitySAN.org would become Sanitation.LACity.gov or LAPDOnline.org would become Police.LACity.gov). Once consensus is reached in the naming conventions, departments must work to advertise the changes and update all of their marketing materials and documentation. Visitors who land on the current website address can simply be redirected to the official City of Los Angeles URL web address. Of course, this must be performed with caution as several large City of Los Angeles websites have millions of annual visitors (e.g. LAPD, Library, Building & Safety) and this effort must not disrupt department operations or accessibility for our residents.

An additional item that will be included is the use of special project websites by City of L.A. departments and elected officials. For example, SaveTheDropLA.com and DisobeyVapeFacts.com are special project websites initiated by departments and elected offices, which have no apparent connection to the City of Los Angeles domain name. To improve the reputation of a special project website as City of LA official for our public and to improve its web traffic, the ITA proposes that project websites be added to the official domain name for the elected office or department. Like department websites, unique URLs can still be used, but web traffic should be redirected to the official City of Los Angeles domain. For example, SaveTheDropLA.com would be redirected to SaveTheDrop.Mayor.LACity.gov so visitors understand it is an official City of Los Angeles website and subsequent administrations could inventory the websites maintained by that office. To assist with transitions between elected offices, the ITA will present to that new office the list of websites used by the previous administration within 60 days of a new elected official being sworn in.

The following is a potential timeline for adopting this specific request for department websites and department project websites from City Council:

*Potential Timetable for Consolidating City Websites Under LACity.gov Domain*

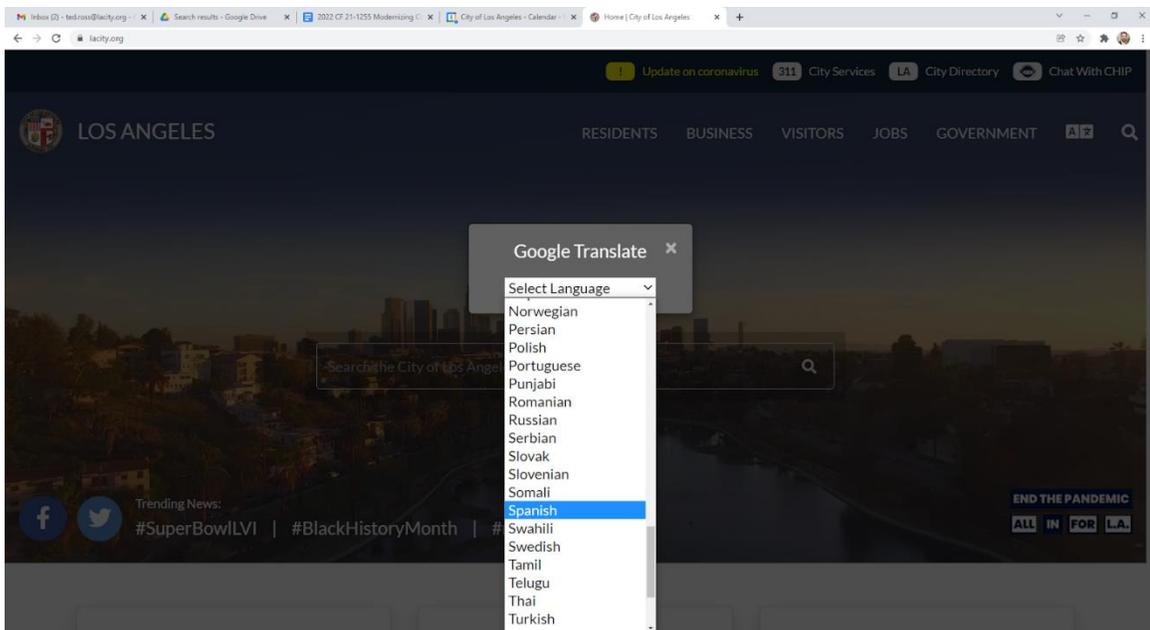
- a. If approved by the City Council, the ITA will give a presentation on this topic to the Citywide Information Technology Policy Committee (ITPC) within 90 days. The ITA will explain the rationale, discuss the proposed LACity.gov subdomains, the expectations required to implement this, and have an open discussion with department webmasters to best understand any obstacles or concerns.
  - b. Departments will be provided with their assigned LACity.gov subdomains based on the standard naming convention within 45 days after presenting to ITPC.
  - c. Departments will be expected to migrate their websites to their LACity.gov subdomain within 120 days of receiving their assigned subdomain. Departments will be allowed to maintain their old URL so long as they are re-directing web traffic to their assigned LACity.org subdomain. This will ensure web traffic is not impacted and allow temporary continued use of marketing materials, flyers, and other documents in the interim.
  - d. After one year, the ITA will assess the cost and benefit of eliminating old department URLs in favor of simply using the official, assigned LACity.gov subdomains.
3. *Ensuring that City Websites are Mobile-Responsive*  
As described in the Council Motion, mobile responsive websites dynamically respond to the device being used to view it. In other words, the website resizes itself whether you are using a traditional desktop computer, tablet, or smartphone. In an era when over 80% of American adults use a smartphone and residents will use a variety of devices to access LA City services, the ITA completely agrees with the importance of mobile responsive websites and has previously included it as a standard for City of Los Angeles websites. The ITA will incorporate this requirement into our upcoming City of Los Angeles Web Policy and Standards using the Citywide, multi-department Information Technology Policy Committee (ITPC).
4. *Ensuring all City Websites Comply with ADA Section 508*  
Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act (29 U.S.C. § 794d) requires government agencies' electronic and information technology be accessible to people with disabilities, including employees and members of the public. In other words, ADA Section 508 requires City websites to take proactive steps to ensure accessibility across our diverse communities. Towards this end, the ITA maintains an inventory of the 120+ departmental websites and uses an automated scanning tool each quarter to assess Section 508 compliance. The results of these accessibility checks are shared with City of Los Angeles webmasters each quarter and provide specific issues that need to be resolved for each website (e.g. incorrect document properties, failed bookmarks, failed alternate text, etc). This approach was implemented in the last few years and has worked well for these sites.

However, not all City of Los Angeles websites are being scanned and improved in this way. Specifically, hundreds of "project" websites are not included. These websites are not standard departmental websites, but are special purpose project websites launched for a specific initiative. For example, the City of Los Angeles Bureau of Engineering maintains

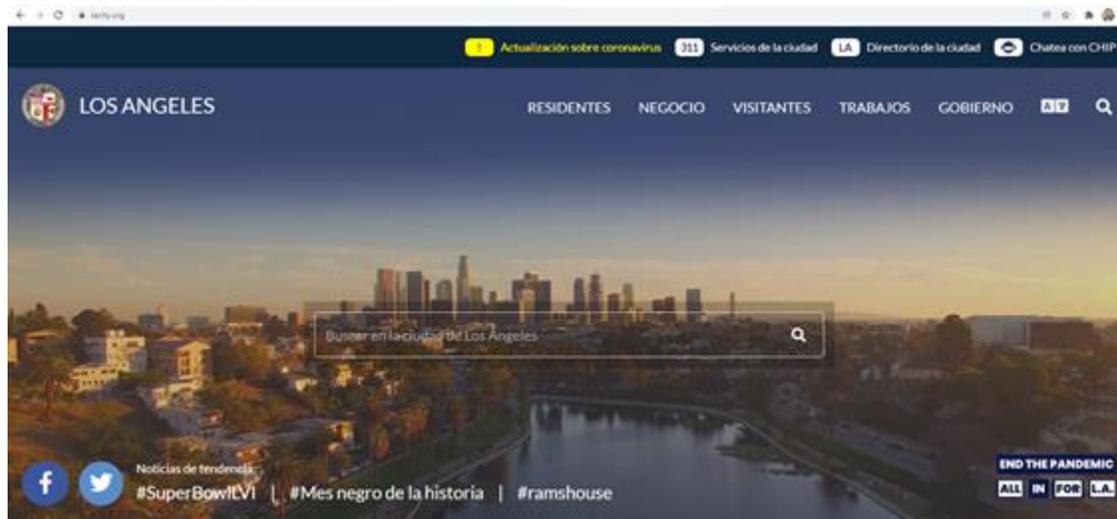
their departmental website at <https://eng.lacity.org/>, but also maintains project websites for significant engineering projects, such as the Sixth Street Viaduct (<https://www.sixthstreetviaduct.org/>). These websites are created ad hoc by departments, are often not known by the ITA when they are launched, and are large in number so scanning them would require additional budget for existing tools. To resolve this, the ITA will add a section to the upcoming City of Los Angeles Web Policy and Standards that requires departments to notify the ITA of new department and project websites to ensure Section 508 accessibility checks occur on a quarterly basis. As the size and the scope of auditing websites increases, so will the need for ITA tools to increase its capacity to scan more websites. In addition, as our website scans increase so will the demands on ITA staff who will need to field questions, suggest solutions, and schedule training for City webmasters to fix issues that the audits may reveal. Staff time will also be needed to ensure the auditing tools are configured to scan websites correctly and reports are delivered in a timely manner. To be able to address these needs the ITA will seek an additional \$65,000 of annual budget to upgrade existing accessibility scanning tools and an additional two Systems Analyst position authority at an annual cost of \$148,330 so they can accommodate the volume of hundreds of additional project websites.

5. *Resources Needed to Translate Website Content*

According to the U.S. Census, Los Angeles is a global city with over 175 spoken languages across its various communities. Government services must be accessible to Angelenos, so websites must provide an ability to translate from English into common written languages. To tackle this challenge, private sector companies heavily leverage tools like Google Translate, which auto translate web content in more than 108 languages. Using this method, a website visitor has the website automatically translated into their language of preference if their browser settings are set up that way. If not configured in the browser already, website visitors select the Google Translate widget at the top of the website and select their language of preference (see graphic below):



Website content is translated:



This feature has been provided without cost by Google to government agencies, such as the City of Los Angeles. Understandably, machine translation continues to improve, but is not perfect, especially with technical wording and content.

As an alternative, the City of Los Angeles could hire human translation services that manually translate website content from English to another language and then the City would need to host a separate version of the website in that language. While this approach could not cover all 108 languages found in Google Translate, it would provide high quality language translation for specific languages that were funded. This would involve an estimated one-time cost of \$48,125 per language and require the maintenance of a completely separate instance of the website. In addition, there would be annual ongoing costs for translation depending on the number of pages updated each year (likely \$10,000+ per year per language). Based on ITA's research, it is rare for municipal government websites to perform human translation and maintain separate websites based on language. Cities such as New York, Chicago, Houston, Philadelphia, Seattle, Phoenix, and San Diego have all opted instead for machine translation using Google Translate.

In addition, and most importantly, human translated websites are difficult and slow to update. Updating a single page of the 550 separate web pages in LACity.org, would require the updated content, waiting for multiple translations of the content, and the publishing of the content to each separate website. Website updates are typically time sensitive and would be problematic to wait days to make the update across various languages. At this time, the ITA does not recommend human translation services for LACity.org based on the aforementioned reasons. However, automated language translation with Google Translate should be a LA City standard and the ITA will include this as a section to the new City of Los Angeles Web Policy and Standards for City departments, requiring at least automated translation for all City of Los Angeles websites.

6. *Protocols for Resolving Broken Links on All City Websites*

Broken links can be a frustration for visitors of any website. With City of Los Angeles departments maintaining tens of thousands of pages of web content, it is possible for broken links to happen accidentally. As a result, the ITA scans 120+ City department websites for broken links as part of our quarterly audit. When broken links or apparent misspellings are found, the ITA sends the details to department webmasters for resolution.

While this has been very successful, hundreds of “project” type websites do not receive this service. As described in Section 1D above (ADA Section 508 compliance), the expanded accessibility checks for project websites would include details on broken links as part of the quarterly audit. This is at an estimated additional annual cost of \$65,000 that the ITA will request as part of the budget process.

7. *Ensuring City Department Content is Up-to-Date*

Websites and the MyLA311 City Services Directory are relied upon for accurate and timely information. Whether during normal day-to-day questions or during a natural disaster, Angelenos expect to rely on the information posted on official City of Los Angeles websites. As such, it is a critical responsibility for City of Los Angeles departments, including ITA, to maintain current and up-to-date information on websites. Towards this end, the ITA periodically emails City department webmasters and MyLA311 Liaisons to update online content, especially the MyLA311 City Services Directory articles used by 3-1-1 to assist the public. In addition, ITA staff and managers who identify out-of-date information take the responsibility of contacting the webmaster for the website. However, unless you are a subject matter expert in the specific website content, there is a difficulty in catching out of date information.

The ITA will add a section to the upcoming City of Los Angeles Web Policy and Standards that requires departments to perform a periodic review of their website content to ensure it is up to date. ITA also engages in Service Level Agreements with departments to maintain the MyLA311 City Services Directory in a timely manner.

8. *Ensuring City Department Content is Easy to Understand*

Government has a bad reputation for acronyms and technical jargon. However, the residents and businesses that we serve require easy to understand language and website content. In fact, complex and technical language is more than just frustrating, but can actually exclude entire communities from accessing City services. As a government that should be by the people and for the people, easy to understand websites are the top goal for the City of Los Angeles. However, a difficulty comes from the fact that websites necessarily are contributed to by thousands of different staff across 45 different City departments. These subject matter experts are responsible for adding and maintaining the content. These employees are not experts in copywriting or usability. In addition, these contributors have frequent turnover, so training them would be a constant exercise.

The ITA proposes an automated readability tool that could be purchased and utilized to scan City departments websites and provide a readability score (additional annual budget is required). Using the universally accepted Flesch-Kincaid method, websites could be scanned each quarter and score for their “reading ease” and “required grade level of education”. This Flesch-Kincaid approach has been successfully used by school districts across the country, the U.S. military for field manuals (ensuring readability by their diverse recruits), and the State of Florida for insurance contracts (to name just a few examples). The City of Los Angeles should set a goal for ensuring that every website could be understood by 8th/9th grade levels of education and use this proposed tool to measure against that goal every quarter. A contract for web content copywriting services could be established so City departments have an option to pay for assistance to meet these goals. The City of Los Angeles currently uses a tool for quarterly ADA Section 508 accessibility scans. For an additional cost of \$65,000 per year, additional features of this tool can be turned on and used to perform readability scanning with one simplified dashboard for department webmasters. The ITA would utilize this tool every quarter and provide the scores to City departments as part of the quarterly website audit.

9. *Ensuring City Department Websites Include Disclaimers & Privacy Policies*

All City of Los Angeles websites should include a link to the official City disclaimer and privacy policy (as reviewed by the City Attorney's Office) in the footer of their website. The link should simply take the visitor to [disclaimer.lacity.org](https://disclaimer.lacity.org) and <https://disclaimer.lacity.org/privacy.htm> respectively. This requirement will be codified as a section in the upcoming City of Los Angeles City of Los Angeles Web Policy and Standards that the ITA will draft and gain approval through the multi-department Information Technology Policy Committee (ITPC).

10. *Ensuring City Department Websites Are Securely Hosted (e.g. SSL)*

Secure Sockets Layer (aka SSL) is an encryption-based Internet security protocol to ensure privacy, authentication, and data integrity when visiting a website. SSL must be implemented through a digital SSL certificate for each website, allowing safe and secure browsing of that website. SSL became a standard in 2014 when Google and other search engines began favoring websites with SSL in their search results. Since that time, search engines have notified users when a website lacked an SSL certificate in the form of warnings and errors. Since 2016, ITA has installed updated versions of SSL on ITA-managed websites. While many other City of Los Angeles departments have followed, the ITA agrees that SSL is a requirement for modern websites and will include it as a section to the upcoming City of Los Angeles Web Policy and Standards.

## **SECTION 2 - SECURING A NEW .GOV WEB ADDRESS**

The following item was listed by City Council in the section of securing a new .gov website address for LACity.org:

Los Angeles was an early adopter of publishing a municipal website. At the time that LACity.org was acquired, it was common for municipal governments to use the .org domain. However, since that time, it has become the standard for municipalities to use the .gov domain. Until last year, the City of Los Angeles had few options for an easy-to-use .gov domain name. Based on the official naming convention, the City of Los Angeles would have been required to use the awkward "LosAngeles-CA.gov". However, with recent changes in .gov naming requirements last year, the City of Los Angeles now has the opportunity to pursue LACity.gov. The ITA is in the process of applying for this domain through the federal Cybersecurity & Infrastructure Security Agency (the governing board for .gov domain names). This process has required personal participation and authentication of the request through the Mayor's Office. We expect a response within the next couple of months. Once approved, the implementation will require some programming, testing, and advertising by ITA staff of the new website domain. For an interim period of time, both LACity.org and LACity.gov will get visitors to the proper LACity.gov webpage.

## **SECTION 3 - DIGITIZING/CONSOLIDATING ACCESS TO SERVICES ONLINE & 311**

The following items were listed by City Council in the section of digitizing and consolidating access to City services online and within the MyLA311 system:

1. *Ensuring City Department Services Are Accessible Thru MyLA311 or Other Site*

City of Los Angeles services need to be digital and easy to access. During the COVID-19 pandemic, City departments, working with the Information Technology Agency, had to rapidly pivot to providing contactless digital government services. In 2020, the Office of Mayor Eric Garcetti formalized this concept under Executive Directive #29 (Contactless & People Centered City Initiative), under which City of Los Angeles departments must "facilitate remote, digital interactions during and after the pandemic -- saving people time, money, and frustration, while improving public health, accessibility, and convenience." Taking on this challenge, the Information Technology Agency facilitated a comprehensive

exercise for all City of Los Angeles departments through the Citywide Information Technology Policy Committee (ITPC). The challenge was simple: review all department services that were paused or reduced by COVID-19 and identify methods to digitize and restore them. After two months of reviewing 97 different City of Los Angeles services impacted by COVID-19, the Citywide ITPC team identified 13 key technologies that, if implemented, would dramatically improve how residents and businesses digitally engage L.A. City government. Those 13 technologies were adopted as a digital playbook and incorporated into our L.A. digital strategy (<https://ita.lacity.org/news/ita-publishes-city-los-angeles-digital-strategy-covid-19-pandemic-beyond>). The ITA has established contract vehicles for these technologies and is now providing bi-monthly training sessions on these digital topics to ensure department services are online and accessible under this Mayor's Executive Directive to City departments.

In addition, the ITA is working with the Office of the Controller and City Council to perform a Citywide 311 Customer Strategy using Grant Thornton (as the hired consulting firm). Through Council File #21-0278, the consultant is working with the ITA, City departments, and elected officials to recommend improvements to the MyLA311 system and related customer service and fulfillment processes. They will help identify services that should be added to MyLA311 and handled by the 311 call center, as well as to identify those that are best handled by department subject matter experts. MyLA311 has become an essential one-stop resource for Angelenos to get City of Los Angeles information and request City services, such as bulky item pickup, pothole repair, graffiti removal, and cleaning up illegal dumping. In fact, over 2.1 million 311 requests were received in 2021 alone (a 39% increase from five years ago). The ability for commonly requested City services to be available to the public through this centralized resource is critical for the public's accessibility and ease of use. The ITA expects findings from this study in Summer of 2022.

2. *Digitizing All City Department Paper Forms*

Through the Mayor's Executive Directive #29 and the Citywide 311 Customer Strategy (CF 21-0278) mentioned in Section 3A above, the ITA will be working with City departments and elected offices to identify manual processes that need to convert into digital forms and be moved online or into the MyLA311 system.

3. *Replacing PDF Forms with Fillable Online Forms*

The Portable Document Format (.pdf) is a file format developed by Adobe in 1992 to allow the viewing of electronic documents independent of software or formatting. Digital tools have come a long way since that time. PDF documents can be cumbersome to complete, hard to read due to dense formatting, and difficult for search engines to optimize (reduces traffic to the website). Often, it is preferred to instead build the form securely into the website. City of Los Angeles websites are maintained by a variety of department webmasters. The enterprise website is maintained by the ITA (LACity.org) and departmental sites often have their own webmasters. Through the LA Digital Strategy (mentioned in Section 3A above), the ITA, working with City departments, has established standards for web forms and case management systems. While there may be some limited exceptions where a PDF form is preferable or a department lacks budget to make the transition to web forms immediately, the ITA will add a section requiring this to the upcoming City of Los Angeles Web Policy and Standards.

4. *Ensuring That e-Signature is Offered to the Public*

Electronic signatures (e-signature) are an electronic process that indicates acceptance of an agreement or record. E-Signatures allow departments to accept a digital, not handwritten, signature as a legally binding acceptance of an agreement and then store the signature in a database for recordkeeping. E-signatures codified in the Electronic Signatures in Global and National Commerce (ESIGN) Act and Uniform Electronic Transactions Act (UETA). E-signatures have the same legal status as handwritten signatures across the United States. E-signatures are already used across many business processes at the City of Los Angeles and are fundamental to digital and “contactless” government services. Without e-signature, a City of Los Angeles department is limited in the services they can provide to residents or businesses, as various use cases will require a formal signature process along certain checkpoints (e.g. sign-off on a permit). As part of the City of Los Angeles Digital Strategy and Mayor’s Executive Directive #29, the ITA established a Citywide contract for e-signature and has provided multiple trainings for City departments in the use of the tools. The ITA will add a section to the upcoming City of Los Angeles Web Policy and Standards requiring that e-signature be offered to the public by City departments.

5. *Ensuring That Department MyLA311 Services Are Categorized & User Friendly*

MyLA311 has become an essential one-stop resource for Angelenos to get City of Los Angeles information and request City services, with over 2.1 million 311 requests received in 2021 alone (a 39% increase from five years ago). Usability of the MyLA311 mobile app and website is fundamental to resident’s ability to request City services in an easy-to-use method. This requires that the hundreds of City of Los Angeles services be documented, streamlined, consolidated, categorized, and made user friendly. The ITA is working with the Office of the Controller and City Council to perform a Citywide 311 Customer Strategy using Grant Thornton as the consulting firm (Council File #21-0278). Part of this effort is a review of existing 311 services and recommendations for methods to streamline, categorize, and simplify MyLA311 service requests and knowledge base content. The ITA expects the findings in Summer of 2022.

6. *Ensuring That MyLA311 Services Have Service Expectations Communicated*

The ITA is working with the Office of the Controller and City Council to perform a Citywide 311 Customer Strategy using Grant Thornton as the consulting firm (Council File #21-0278). This effort will include proposals from the consultant on the best method to communicate service expectations at the time a service is submitted and a solicitation of feedback when the service is completed. The ITA expects the findings in Summer of 2022.

7. *Integrating Online Payment Abilities into MyLA311*

Online payments are a payment gateway to allow electronic payments through a website. Online payments can securely receive digital payments without having to store the sensitive payment details (e.g. credit cards) in the app. This is an important tool to ensure customers can simply pay a bill or service charge and to protect City departments from having to comply with complex federal Payment Card Interface (PCI) requirements.

ITA is currently working with the Office of Finance (OOF) to create the integration with their new electronic payment vendor to ensure that customer credit card payments are secured according to PCI requirements. ITA is also working with the Controller’s Office to provide departments who would like to offer electronic payment services, but do not have an invoicing mechanism to leverage the City’s Financial Management System (FMS) to create the required digital invoice to integrate with the ITA Enterprise e-Pay portal and the OOF credit card/check payment vendor. It is anticipated that this work will be completed

and available for departments to utilize shortly after OOF finalizes their contractual agreement with the credit card vendor. As the ITA, along with the Office of Finance and the Office of the Controller, is in the process of standardizing the City of Los Angeles online payment portal platform, the ITA will add this capability for departments as a section to the upcoming City of Los Angeles Web Policy and Standards.

8. *Ensuring All City Departments Utilize City's Unified Digital ID (Angeleno Account)*

Angeleno Account is a unified digital identity management (IDM) platform for the City of Los Angeles. Introduced by the Information Technology Agency, the Angeleno Account allows residents and businesses easy online access to all City of Los Angeles apps and websites through a single user ID and password (Angeleno Account). Prior to the Angeleno Account, LA City residents, businesses, and visitors were required to set up a new user account and password for each City app. This is frustrating for users, prone to security issues, expensive for City departments, and provides the City of Los Angeles with little customer information about its users and their needs. The Angeleno Account provides uniform access to City digital services, an easy-to-use login screens across all City of LA apps and websites, reduces user data entry, incorporates modern security features, provides easy discovery of other City services by residents, and less work and cost for City departments (ITA managed login screen). While the use of Angeleno Account is mandated through the Mayor's Office through Executive Directive #29, the ITA will also add a section requiring it in the upcoming City of Los Angeles Web Policy and Standards.

**SECTION 4 - RECOMMENDATIONS TO ENSURE INTERNAL COORDINATION**

The following items were listed by City Council in the section of recommendations to ensure internal coordination:

1. *Protocols to Ensure Departments Integrate Into City's Internal Identity System*

The City's internal identity management system provides secure authentication and access for employees to City of Los Angeles systems and data. Integrated with the City's payroll system, our internal identity management system ensures that the right employees have the right level of system and data access and limits risk associated with ransomware.

To ensure City of Los Angeles departments integrate with the City's internal identity system, the ITA recommends the following:

- a. Under the authority granted to ITA in Los Angeles Administrative Code Section 22.648, the ITA will update the existing City of Los Angeles Information Security Policy to require use of the internal identity system by all City departments and work with City departments to establish a reasonable compliance date. The City of Los Angeles Information Security Policy is an existing, comprehensive, internal policy used by City departments to ensure the necessary cyber security controls and requirements to best protect from data breaches and cyber crimes.
- b. The ITA will work with LA City departments on a reasonable deadline for all City departments to make the transition. After that date, City applications that use another identity management system may be disconnected from the City network until they comply.

2. *Protocols to Ensure Departments Allow Secure, Electronic Data Sharing*

The City of Los Angeles is a leading open data city, even winning the #1 Open Data City in the United States as measured by the Sunlight Foundation for several years. However,

equally important is the proper sharing of data between City of Los Angeles departments. Sharing the right data, at the right time, in a secure manner is fundamental to data-driven government and being a “smart city”.

To ensure City of Los Angeles departments allow secure, electronic data sharing with each other, the ITA recommends the following:

- a. Under the authority granted to ITA in Los Angeles Administrative Code Section 22.648, the ITA will update the City of Los Angeles Information Security Policy to establish data sharing standards and require cross-department access to datasets that may be valuable to other departments for their operations.
- b. If a department does not comply with item #1, then the General Manager of the Information Technology Agency will instruct the General Manager of the relevant department to comply.
- c. If a department continues to not comply after item #2, then the General Manager of the Information Technology Agency will notify the Office of the Mayor.
- d. Buying and implementing a cloud-hosted City of Los Angeles Data Lake platform to facilitate secure data sharing, data analytics, and the responsible use of emerging technologies, such as artificial intelligence, process automation, and machine learning. The ITA would actively seek out useful datasets and work with City departments to integrate them onto this platform. Datasets that can be shared with the public (based on the City of Los Angeles Open Data Policy) will be automatically published on the LA City open data portal (Data.LACity.org). The cost of this proposed City of Los Angeles Data Lake is estimated to be \$16,000 per year.

3. *Protocols to Ensure Departments Add Public Systems to Cyber Watch List*

The City of Los Angeles has made many advances in cybersecurity (employee training, email phishing tests, new security appliances, a Citywide Integrated Security Operations Center, etc.). In November 2019, the City of Los Angeles elevated its cybersecurity protections through unprecedented weekly vulnerability scans to identify cyber vulnerabilities before they are taken advantage of. Since that time, the average time for remediation of a critical or serious cyber vulnerability has dropped by over 30%. While the ITA can use some automated tools to ensure departments are putting their public facing apps, websites, and servers onto the Cyber Watch List for the weekly scans, ITA lacks the tools to identify all of these systems and relies on the compliance of City departments.

To ensure City of Los Angeles departments add their public facing apps, websites, and servers to the Cyber Watch List for weekly vulnerability scanning, the ITA recommends the following:

- a. Under the authority granted to ITA in Los Angeles Administrative Code Section 22.648, updating the City of Los Angeles Information Security Policy to require City departments to update the Cyber Watch List with their public facing apps, websites, and servers at least quarterly.
- b. If a department does not comply with item #1, then the General Manager of the Information Technology Agency will instruct the General Manager of the relevant department to comply immediately.

- c. If a department continues to not comply after item #2, then the General Manager of the Information Technology Agency will notify the Office of the Mayor.

4. *Protocols to Ensure City Departments Resolve Identified Cyber Vulnerabilities*

The average cost of a data breach is over \$4 million in the United States and an inestimable impact on residents who would be severely impacted if their sensitive data fell into the hands of cyber criminals due to a City of Los Angeles data breach. While the City of Los Angeles has made many advances in cybersecurity (employee training, email phishing tests, new security appliances, a Citywide Integrated Security Operations Center, etc.), a critical component of our cyber defenses is the weekly scanning and remediation of cyber vulnerabilities. The ITA agrees that prompt remediation of known cyber vulnerabilities is critical to avoiding a data breach.

To ensure City of Los Angeles departments resolve critical and high vulnerabilities within 15 days of notification, the ITA recommends the following:

- a. Under the authority granted to ITA in Los Angeles Administrative Code Section 22.648, updating the City of Los Angeles Information Security Policy to require City departments to resolve critical and high cyber vulnerabilities within 15 days of notification.
- b. If a department does not comply with item #1, then the General Manager of the Information Technology Agency will instruct the General Manager of the relevant department to comply.
- c. If a department continues to not comply after item #2, then the General Manager of the Information Technology Agency will notify the Office of the Mayor.

**FISCAL IMPACT:**

The ITA recommendations listed on this report will have a General Fund impact of \$229,330. This will include two position authorities, in the class of a Systems Analyst at a cost of \$148,330, \$65,000 for Accessibility Scanning tools and \$16,000 for the Data Lake Platform Hosting cost.

Respectfully Submitted,



Ted Ross  
General Manager

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