City of
SACRAMENTO

Web Governance

Scope: CITYWIDE

Policy Contact
Natasha Greer, Website Administrator, Office of the City Manager
(916) 808-7920
ngreer@cityofsacramento.org

Table of Contents

Regulatory References
Rehabilitation Act of 1973 as amended, and the United States Access Board's Standards for Electronic and Information Technology, Subpart B, section§1194.22 (a)-(p) Section 508

WEB GOVERNANCE

I. GENERAL

The City's Web Governance policy ensures a professional City of Sacramento web presence that meets current conventions in government website management. The City's website is for official use only. This policy applies to all City employees, vendors and contractors who create or maintain web pages for the City.

1.1. Responsibility

The City's Executive Management provides oversight for the City's Web Governance structure. The City's Information Technology "IT" Steering Committee, consists of the IT Department Director, Communications & Media Manager, four department directors and a charter officer. The IT Steering Committee provides oversight for the Web Governance process and Web Core Team, acting as the Web Governance "Board of Directors." The Web Core Team's responsibilities include three support functions, based on priorities established by the IT Steering Committee: governance, marketing communications, and technical support. The Web Core Team consists of the following personnel:

- Website Administrator
- IT Manager
- Web Support Team
- Web Developers
- Marketing Communications Professionals
- Graphic Designer
- City ADA Coordinator

1.2 Enforcement

The Web Core Team, department directors and public information officers are responsible for ensuring compliance with the City's web governance policies and procedures. The City's Web Core Team will provide assistance and advice when needed to ensure the policies and procedures are clear.

2. FUNCTIONALITY

To ensure a professional City of Sacramento web presence that meets current conventions in government website management, the following functional standards are established.

2.1 Domain Name

The City's domain name for public City of Sacramento's Web content is www.cityofsacramento.org. The domain name will be promoted in all public City promotional material (such as brochures, news releases, e-mail signatures, advertisements, signs, etc.) Unique "vanity domains" are only allowed after approval from the Website Administrator or Communications and Media Manager.

2.2   External Domains & Microsites
Any domain that does not reside on the City web servers is considered an external domain. External domains are not permitted unless authorized by the Website Administrator, and are only permitted under the following circumstances:
- The proposed website cannot be easily achieved by the current Content Management System and other tools
- A 3rd party vendor requires the content to reside on their domain (or web server)

2.3   Compliance with Regulations and Guidelines
The City's website will endeavor to comply with commonly recognized and accepted regulations and guidelines including:
- Digital rights, copyright, trademark, and patent laws; and
- Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended, (29 U.S.C. 794d), designed to make online information and services fully available to citizens with disabilities.

The City's website will include a Privacy Policy to inform visitors of the City's legal authority for collecting personal data and how the data will be used.

2.4   Navigation
The City website will include a consistent navigation scheme throughout all website pages. To the extent practicable, consistent "Navigation Labels" will be used, such that common items existing on different website pages appear in the same location on each page, and have the same appearance and wording. If a particular set of web pages requires specialized or local navigation, that navigation shall be applied to the largest possible logical grouping (such as a topic, an audience, or a complete organizational unit).

2.5   Browser Standards
To the extent practicable, the City's website will accommodate visitors with low connection speeds, minimize page download times and keep HTML pages under 50KB.
- Web pages shall be written using HTML 4.01 transitional. Style sheets must comply with CSS 2.1 but must also work effectively across all popular browsers, taking into consideration the various "quirks" and partial implementations.
- Web pages shall be designed and implemented so that they require no assumptions about any of the following features of the device they are displayed on:
  - Hardware
  - Operating System
  - Browser
  - Display size/resolution
- Web pages shall render closely across the latest versions of the following browser code streams:
  - Internet Explorer
  - Mozilla
  - Firefox

> ➢ Google Chrome
> ➢ Apple Safari
> ➢ Opera
> ➢ Netscape 4.x

- Content providers may provide client-side scripting only if the following conditions are met:
  > ➢ The script conforms to the client-side scripting standard; and
  > ➢ The page is still useable if the user either chooses not to run the script or the user's browser does not support the script.

2.6   External Links

The City's website may include links to the following types of organizations, as appropriate:

- Related governmental units and educational institutions;
- Local, state and federal agencies that provide additional services and information that any user of the City's site may find of interest or use;
- Educational institutions including K-12 school districts, community colleges, and universities;
- Partner organizations, businesses, or non-profit organizations that offer services complementing the information or services offered by the City.

2.7   Web Evaluation and Improvement

The City is committed to ensuring the City's website utilizes a contemporary web design and functionality to ensure customer satisfaction. The City will periodically monitor and measure the customer satisfaction level of the City website through on-line surveys.

2.8   Accessibility

The City will endeavor to comply with accessibility guidelines identified within Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 as amended, and the United States Access Board's Standards for Electronic and Information Technology, Subpart B, section 1194.22 (a)-(p).

2.9   Training

Web developers and Content Editors shall undergo training on the City web design and development standards, and web governance policies and procedures.

3.   CONTENT

The City website content will be kept current to the fullest extent possible and will regularly delete or archive content that is obsolete and not required by law or regulation. A citizen-driven perspective shall guide the City's web content, navigation, and website design. City departments will use the SiteCore Web Content Management application upon its development, and use it to post content. The following City standards should be met:

3.1   Use of Language

The City's website should be grammatically correct, well written and concise. In addition, the following apply to content on the City's website:

- **Plain Language**. Home pages, all major entry points, and navigational elements should be written in plain language (plain language is language the website's typical visitor can understand in one reading; it is writing designated for the reader).
- **Common Terminology**. Common expressions and generally used terminology. Acronyms or technical terms should be avoided unless a definition is provided.
- **Avoid Duplication**. Content that already exists on another public agency's website should not be included. Instead, a link to the agency should be provided.

3.2   Common Terminology

The City's website will use common terminology to the fullest extent possible, including:

- **Contact Us**. A "Contact Us" page with a link to the page displayed prominently from the homepage and every major entry point. The "contact us" page should include the following information:
  - ➤ The City's mailing address
  - ➤ City telephone numbers and TTY numbers
  - ➤ Means to communicate by e-mail (email address or web-based form)
  - ➤ Policy and procedure for responding to email inquiries, including whether the City will answer inquiries and the expected response time.
    Contact information for reporting both technical and content problems with the Website, including accessibility problems.
- **About Us**. An "About Us" or similar page describing basic information about the City, including a description of the City, the City's budget, and information about City structure, and the names of City departments and key staff, as appropriate.
- **Online Services, Forms, and Publications**. Easily accessible printable City forms and publications and, to the extent practicable, the ability to complete and submit forms online.
- **Job Opportunities**. Information about working at the City, including information about City jobs and careers.
- **Business Opportunities**. Information about conducting business with and in the City of Sacramento. Business opportunities including Requests for Information (RFIs), Requests for Proposal (RFPs), Requests for Qualifications (RFQs), etc. shall be advertised on the City's website. Information regarding City contractual requirements, including insurance requirements, shall also be displayed on the City's website.
- **Required and Important Links**.
  - ➤ A link to the City's privacy policy shall be provided on every page.
  - ➤ A link to general information about the City's security protocols to protect information.
  - ➤ Home Page: A text link back to the home page
  - ➤ "Website Policies and Important Links": A page entitled "Website Policies and Important Links" that includes links to all the required information and important policies.

3.3 Sensitive Information

The website should only include public information. Private, personal, personnel, sensitive, restricted, privileged, confidential, or classified information, or information that contains personally identifiable information should not be included in any web-based file.

3.4 Advertising

Paid advertising is prohibited on the City website. Departments should not enter into contracts which involve and/or negotiate for paid advertising on the City's website.

3.5 Website Initiatives

City web initiatives shall be processed through the City's web governance framework and IT Steering Committee, prior to execution. Initiatives that present an enterprise benefit or leveragability across one or more business units, shall receive a higher priority for enterprise funding.

3.6 Language Tools

The City's website will use language tools, including language software, to evaluate the readability of the website's content.

3.7 Editorial Review

The Web Core Team will regularly review the homepage, major entry points, and navigational elements to ensure they continue to be written in plain language, considering the City's website's intended visitors.

3.8 Browser-Based Service Delivery

- All web-based applications developed for a department that reside on a City server shall be reviewed first by the Website Administrator and then the Web Core Team.
- Department-created or vendor/volunteer-developed web-based applications will be supported by the originating department with the assistance of the Web Core Team. Departments must have a plan for the ongoing support and maintenance of the application, either through the use of internal employees or a vendor under contract.
- Web-based service delivery applications may be published (i.e., moved to production) only after official approval by CIO, the IT Steering Committee, and Web Core Team. The IT Steering Committee may approve, conditionally approve, or deny the request.

3.9 Website Evaluation and Improvement

- **Usability Testing**. The City will endeavor to periodically test its website, either through informal testing or more formal one-on-one, in a lab-based environment, for usability testing.
- **Customer Satisfaction**. The City will endeavor to periodically monitor and measure the customer satisfaction level of the City website through on-line surveys.

- **Site Changes Notification**. The City will endeavor to inform website visitors about changes to the City's website, both before and after changes have been made.
- **URL Changes** (including domain name changes)
  - ➢ The City will notify visitors when changes are made to the primary Web address;
  - ➢ When URLs are revised (such as those that occur when a page is removed, renamed, or placed in a different location within the Website), the City will notify interested parties, especially for URLs of frequently visited pages;
  - ➢ For domain name changes, or individual page URL changes, a "redirect" notice that will automatically take visitors to the new URL will be inserted.
- **Navigation Changes**. To the extent practicable, interested parties will be notified when a change is made to the navigational or organizational structure of the Website.
- **Redesigns**. For site redesigns, a notice will be included on the homepage informing visitors about the new design and how it will impact their ability to find information.
- **Assistance-Locating New Information**. When a significant number of page URLs change at one time (for example, as part of a redesign or conversion to an automated content management system), the City will provide a method for visitors to locate the new page locations.
- **Page Download Times**. To the extent practicable, the City website will accommodate visitors with low connection speeds and keep the HTML pages under 50KB.

3.10 Developing New "Portal" Sites
Before developing new portals, the City will:
- Ensure the site meets a defined business need;
- Include all appropriate organizations;
- Have sufficient resources for the site to be sustainable; and
- Follow the Web Governance Framework to get assistance in coordinating with other City Departments/agencies, to avoid duplication.

3.11 Developing Portal Pages (for Divisions)
Before divisions can create portal pages, three of the following criteria must be met:
- Must be marketable to the public
- Must interact directly with the public
- Must have staff to update the page regularly
- Must contain 7 or more pages
- Must be unique enough so that the content cannot be contained in a 2-column layout
- Must have enough traffic to the pages

3.12 File Formats
The City will adhere to the following file format standards:

- **Industry Standard Formats**. Provide access to documents using open, industry standard web formats (currently, HTML, XHTML, or XML) or alternative formats (such as Portable Document Format) that do not impose an unnecessary burden on the intended audience.
- **Appropriate Format**. Consider the following when selecting formats:
  - Intended use of the material by the target audience;
  - Frequency of use by the target audience;
  - Accessibility of the format to the target audience; and
  - Level of effort and time required by the City to convert the material to the format.
- **Preferred Format**. Use native web formats (HTML, XHTML, or XML) providing greatest flexibility for visitors, especially those pages most frequently accessed by the public.

- **PDF and Other Alternate Formats**
  - Use Portable Document Formats (PDF), such as Adobe Acrobat, only as an alternate format to native Web formats when a clear business need exists;
  - Provide a link to the downloadable free viewer when using PDF files;
  - Provide an HTML version of the document whenever feasible when using PDF or other non-standard file formats;
  - Include a text description of the file, including the name, file type, file size, and effective date, when linking to a non-HTML document;
  - Avoid providing documents that are only available in proprietary formats requiring purchase or licensing of commercial software.

- **Large Complex Documents**
  - Organize large or complex documents (generally, more than 10 - 15 pages), whether in HTML or other format(s), into sections or chapters and link them together;
  - Provide a link to download larger documents since some readers may prefer to print the entire document for later reading.
- **Data Files**
  - Allow visitors to efficiently download available data in a format that allows them to effectively aggregate and disaggregate the data;
  - Open files (raw data) to provide the greatest flexibility for visitors over proprietary formats that require specific commercial software;
  - Only use proprietary formats (for example, SAS, SPSS, SQL, MS Excel etc.) when that format provides functionality not otherwise available.

3.13 Metadata
- The following minimum metadata will be included on the homepage and all second-level pages of the City's website:
  - Title (this is different from the HTML title tag);
  - Description;
  - Creator (the content owner; this should be the name of the organization);
  - Creation Date (original creation date);
  - Last Reviewed Date; and
  - Language.

- **Subject and Keyword**. The subject and keyword metadata will be included if it is helpful in improving search relevancy and content classification.
- **Location of Metadata**. In addition to the home page and second-level pages, metadata will be included on as many pages as is feasible, within resource constraints.

3.14 File Organization

The Web Core Team will work cooperatively with departments to create top-level folders for departments/divisions/subject entities that are concise and intuitively named.

- **URL's**. Designers/developers will not change URL's without first consulting the Web Core Team and should consider offering a redirect page for URL's that have changed.
- **File and folder naming**. Designers/developers will use intuitive file and folder names that are representative of the content within them. They must consist only of the lowercase letters a-z and the numbers 0-9 in any combination. Special care must be taken to avoid any characters such as spaces, underscores, and special characters such as ampersand ('&').
- **Media Assets**. Designers/developers will upload media assets into the web content management system and organize by department folders using the aforementioned naming convention. The following folder structure will be used:
  - ➤ Department Name (main folder)
  - ➤ Images (sub-folder)
  - ➤ Documents (sub-folder)
  - ➤ Videos (sub-folder)
- **Extensions**. Designers/developers will use extensions to indicate the type of content. The following table contains approved extensions for popular file types:

Extension	Description
.jpg	Images in JPEG format
.png	Images in PNG format
.wmv	Movies in WMV format
.avi	Movies in AVI format
.mov	Movies in MOV format
.pdf	Files in Portable Document Format

3.15 Image Use

Developers and Content Editors will adhere to the following standards for images:

- Save images in .jpeg or .png formats.
- Generally images in landscape mode (horizontal), should be no larger than 800 pixels in width and in portrait mode (vertical), should be no larger than 400 pixels high. No graphic image may be wider than 800 pixels.
- Images should have no borders.
- All images should have alternative text, per Level 1 Accessibility Policy.
- Animated gifs and clip art are not acceptable.

3.16 Portable Document Format

- The Adobe Portable Document Format (pdf) is appropriate when a document is to be printed by the user.

- Acceptable scenarios include:
  - A form that is to be completed by the user and mailed back to the City;
  - Documents requiring digital signatures;
  - Documents already available in print whose intended usage is offline reading by users.
- Unacceptable scenarios include:
  - Replacement of content that could otherwise be rendered as HTML;
  - Replacement of content to ensure document layout.
- To reduce file size, PDFs must be compressed as much as possible, without losing quality.
- If the file exceeds the City's maximum page size of 5MB, the file size should be noted.
- Display PDFs in the following format: Hyperlink to PDF (file size if over 100KB) City's PDF image, e.g., Neighborhood News April 2013 (311KB).
- Before posting a PDF that exceeds 5MB, alternative ways of rendering the document should be considered before putting it on the web. Strategies for dealing with large documents include:
  - Breaking the document into smaller PDFs. This might be on a per chapter basis, or per subject as understood by the user. If a document is split into smaller sections, then the full document must also be available to download at one time.
  - Minimizing the amount of binary content. Wherever possible, text should be embedded as text and not as binary content such as images. In other words, it is generally inappropriate to scan in a document containing large amounts of text as an image and then convert it directly to a PDF.
- Assumptions should not be made concerning the availability of resources such as fonts on a client device. Extra resources must be embedded within the PDF.

3.17 Search Engine Effectiveness
- Standard metadata shall be used to enhance search engine effectiveness.
- Unique title and description meta tags should be used on all pages; keywords are highly encouraged.
- A search engine should be included on every page.

3.18 Search Box
Designers/developers will adhere to the following search standards:
- Search Box
  - Include either a "Search box" or a link to a "Search" page on every page.
  - Place the search link/box in the same position on all pages.
- Where practicable, create a search index to allow visitors to search all files on the website that are intended for public use.
  - Index the content of the website(s) at least once a month;
  - See that content added/updated frequently, such as press releases, is indexed more frequently.
- Search Results and Response Times
  - Search engine results should process in less than three seconds
  - Monitor and log search response times and ensure that adequate hardware and software capacity is available to achieve the response time standard

> ➢ Display search results in an easy-to-read format that, at a minimum, shows visitors the term(s) they searched for and highlights the term(s) in each search result.
- Relevancy
  - ➢ Routinely identify the common search terms used on website;
  - ➢ Evaluate the relevancy of the search results for those terms;
  - ➢ Configure search services to provide the best ranking possible;
  - ➢ Conduct a review on a quarterly basis.
- Advanced and Broader Searches
  - ➢ Allow visitors to conduct more refined, focused searches to achieve more relevant results;
  - ➢ Accommodate wild card searches;
  - ➢ Provide options for broadening searches beyond the individual website.
- Provide search help, hints, and tips, including examples.
- Service Level Standards: Set minimum service level standards for search capabilities, and monitor how well those standards are met.

3.19 Sensitive Information

Designers/developers will adhere to the following standards for handling sensitive information:
- Take all reasonable measures to ensure sensitive, personal, personnel, restricted, classified information, or any other information that contains personally identifiable information (such as social security numbers), is not included in any web-based file that could be retrieved using a government-owned or commercial search engine.
- Comply with privacy requirements.
- Post the City website's privacy policy on each page.
- Conduct periodic privacy impact assessments on the City's website.
- Translate privacy policies into a standardized machine-readable format.

3.20 Emergency Operations

To facilitate operations during emergencies, the City will:
- Develop a plan identifying what will be done to the website during disasters or emergencies.
- Include the City website information in, and consistent with, the overall agency planning: document, e.g., the City's Continuity of Operations (COP) plan.
- Ensure the City IT Department takes measures to provide continuity of service during emergencies.
- Develop a plan for taking the City website off-line, including when and how the website may require maintenance.
- Develop system availability, including procedures for bringing the City website back on-line and ensuring system availability. Alert the public via social media in these rare circumstances. Promote other web pages where information can be obtained if the City website is down.
- Prepare procedures for updating, approving, and maintaining information content during emergencies.
- Identify critical information that the public will need most during an emergency.

- Provide emergency contact information for web staff to facilitate coordination of services during emergencies.

DEFINITIONS

Continuity of Operations Plan (COP)
A COP is a planning effort to assure the capability exists to continue essential agency functions across a wide range of potential emergencies.

CSS (Cascading Style Sheets)
CCS is a style sheet language used for describing the look and formatting of a document written in a markup language.

Domain
Domain refers to an identification string or name that defines a realm of administrative autonomy, authority or control on the internet.

HTML (HyperText Markup Language)
HTML is the main language for creating web pages and other information that can be displayed in a web browser.

Metadata
Data providing information about one or more aspects of the data; often referenced as "data about data".

PDF (Portable Document Format)
PDF is a file format used to represent documents in a manner independent of application software, hardware and operating systems.

URL (Uniform Resource Locator)
URL is a web address.

XHTML (Extensible HyperText Markup Language
XHTML is a family of XML markup languages that mirror or extend versions of the widely used HTML.

XML (Extensible Markup Language)
XML is a markup language for encoding documents in a format that is readable by both humans and machines.