



STAFF REPORT

Status of the Web Site Update

Honorable Mayor and Council Members

Summary

The City recently contracted with e21 Corporation to update the official Belmont website. The goal is to enhance the navigation as well as the look and feel of the site. The purpose of this report is to provide the City Council with an update on the project and solicit input on the design, which will be presented at the meeting.

Background and Discussion

The City's website was first created in 1995 by staff and local volunteers. It has evolved over the years and currently has over 8,000 pages of information. However, it has never had a comprehensive review or professional update. Staff felt it was time for such an update and upgrade.

In the fall of 2003 staff solicited proposals from three firms to redesign the website. The goal was to update the look and feel of the site, as well as to reorganize how information was presented. After reviewing proposals, the firm of e21 was selected and a contract signed in February of this year.

e21, based in Fremont, is a full-service marketing firm focusing on e-business solutions. They have numerous public and private sector clients, such as Hewlett-Packard, Epson, IBM and Intel. They have done web design work for a number of cities, including Oakley, Morgan Hill and Hollister.

e21 did a comprehensive analysis and review of the current website (which was shared with the City Council several months ago). The contract with e21 calls for them to develop a new

navigational system for the website, create a new design for the homepage and a template for departmental pages, install a customer contact management system, create a new calendar system, provide a template for online surveys, and provide new software for content management. The new website will be flexible and adaptable, so other components such as document management and e-commerce can be implemented in the future. e21 is also taking a limited number of photos that can be used on the website or for other City purposes.

Work is well underway and the project is expected to be completed in June. The draft navigational structure can be found in Attachment A. Departments have provided input on the structure of their homepages as well as the main homepage design.

After reviewing many other sites, staff provided input on a number of iterations of the homepage. At the Council meeting, staff will present the current draft of the homepage and explain its main components. It will not be a fully developed website, only a few pages to give you a sense of the look and feel of the site. While the ideal look of a website is very subjective, and a design can't be finalized by a group, staff welcomes input from the Council on this very visible component of the City's public information efforts.

Fiscal Impact

Funds for this project (\$20,000) are authorized in the FY 04 budget (account 620-1401-8351).

Recommendation

Staff recommends Council review the draft website design and provide input on it.

Attachments

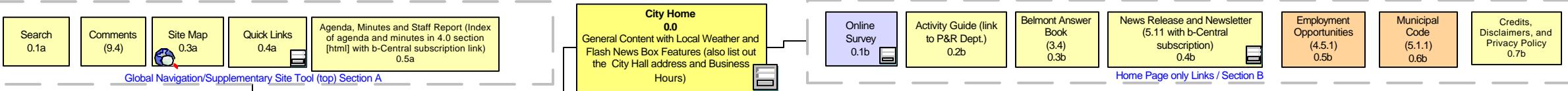
A. Navigational Structure

Respectfully submitted,

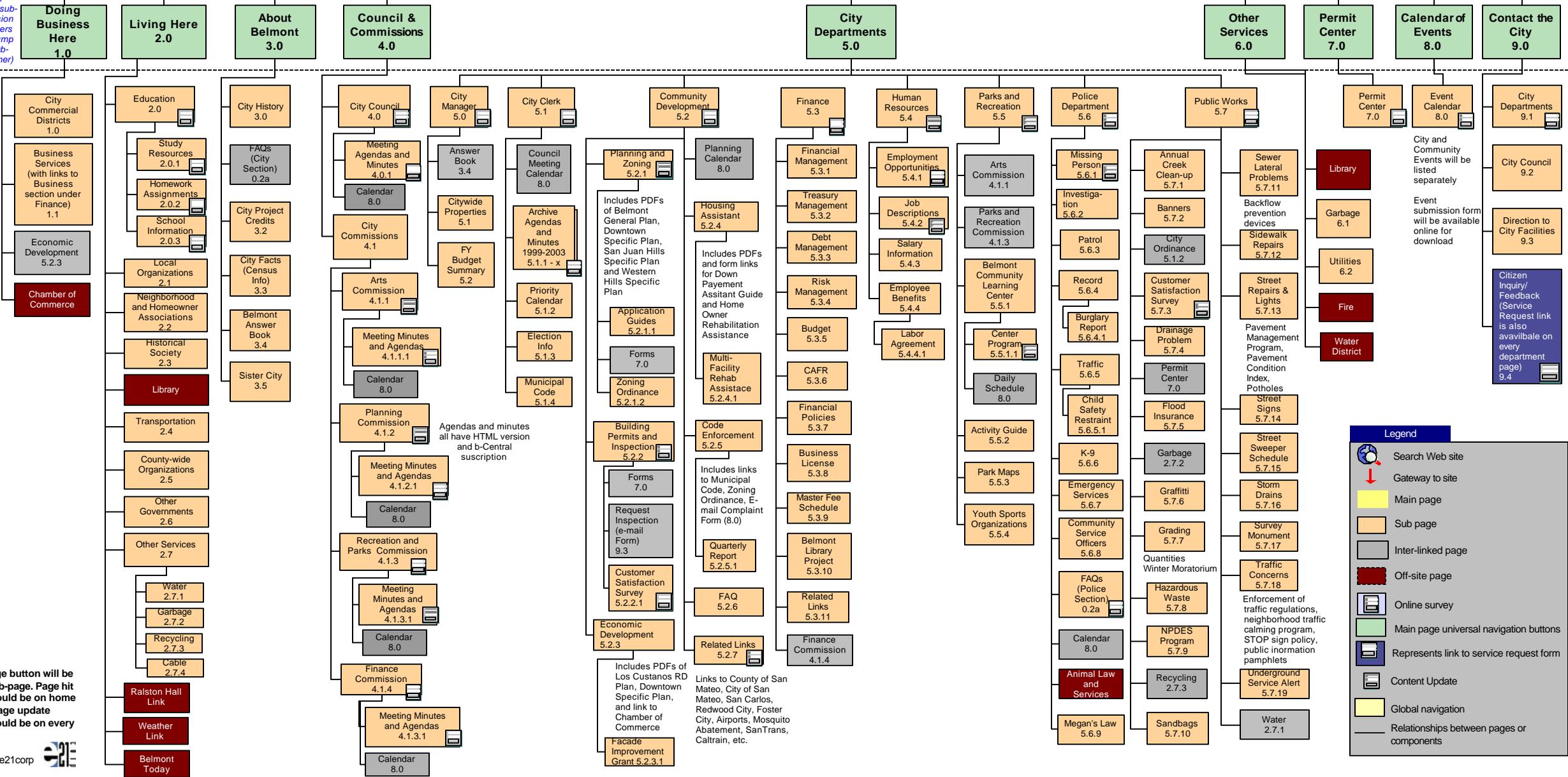
Valerie Harnish
Information Services Manager

Daniel Rich
Assistant City Manager

Jere A. Kersnar
City Manager



Universal navigation buttons (with sub-page expansion to enable users to laterally jump from one sub-page to another)



Note:
A home page button will be on every sub-page. Page hit counter should be on home page and page update counter should be on every page

