



# STAFF REPORT – CITY COUNCIL MEETING

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**TO:** Honorable Mayor and City Council Members

**FROM:** Tabatha Miller, Assistant City Manager/Finance Director

**PREPARER:** Tabatha Miller, Assistant City Manager/Finance Director

**DATE:** April 1, 2026

**TITLE:** **Authorize Staff to Investigate and Potentially Issue a Request for Proposal (RFP) for Redesign and Update of the Visit Arcata Website.**

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## **RECOMMENDATION:**

It is recommended that the Council Authorize staff to (1) investigate options for redesigning and updating the City-owned Visit Arcata website; and (2), if deemed appropriate, prepare and issue a Request for Proposals (RFP) to solicit qualified vendors to provide website redesign, development, and related services.

## **INTRODUCTION:**

The City owns and is currently responsible for maintaining the [visitarcata.com](http://visitarcata.com) website. There is no budget designated for this task and little support available in terms of staff time to maintain the website in the manner desired by the community, staff, Council Members, local businesses and the Arcata Chamber of Commerce.

## **BACKGROUND:**

The Visit Arcata website should serve as a primary digital resource for visitors, residents, and businesses seeking information about tourism, events, local attractions, and amenities within the City of Arcata. The site can play an important role in promoting economic development, supporting local businesses, and enhancing Arcata's public image.

Over time, the current website has become outdated in terms of design, functionality, accessibility, and user experience. Additionally, evolving expectations, integration with social media, and accessibility compliance standards (including ADA requirements) necessitate a comprehensive review and potential modernization of the platform.

## **DISCUSSION:**

Staff proposes conducting an initial assessment of the current Visit Arcata website to identify deficiencies, opportunities for improvement, and desired features for a modern tourism-focused website. This effort would include:

- Evaluating current website performance, usability, and content structure
- Identifying best practices in tourism and municipal website design

- Assessing integration needs (e.g., event calendars, booking tools, mapping features)
- Reviewing accessibility and compliance requirements

Based on this assessment, staff would determine whether to proceed with issuing an RFP. The RFP would seek qualified consultants or firms with expertise in website design, branding, content strategy, and digital marketing to:

- Redesign and modernize the Visit Arcata website
- Improve user experience and navigation
- Ensure ADA compliance going forward
- Enhance content management capabilities for staff and develop a longer-term plan for site maintenance and content updates

The Arcata Chamber of Commerce has offered to provide redesign and content development services, and this option will be included in staff's evaluation of opportunities to redesign the website. Any outsourcing of this work will be through contract or contract amendment for City Council approval.

#### **ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW (CEQA):**

This action is not a project under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15378, as it involves administrative and planning activities that will not result in a direct or indirect physical change in the environment.

#### **BUDGET/FISCAL IMPACT:**

This action authorizes staff to conduct research and potentially issue an RFP; no direct fiscal impact is associated with this authorization.

If an RFP or another opportunity to redesign the Visit Arcata website is identified, staff will report back to City Council and request funding from the City Council Community Projects Account (101-10-01-52104), which has a current budget of \$269,000. To date, \$12,500 has been spent on Friday Night Markets in partnership with Humboldt Made and the Arcata Chamber of Commerce (\$7,500) and to sponsor the Choose Humboldt Campaign over the holiday season (\$5,000). An additional \$100,000 from this account has been set aside to provide additional financial support for the Economic Strategic Plan. Staff is currently recommending a \$25,000 budget for this redesign and update to the Visit Arcata Website.

However, costs associated with website redesign and development will be refined and identified through this process and brought back to the City Council for consideration and approval.

#### **RECOMMENDED COUNCIL ACTION:**

Motion to authorize staff to (1) investigate options for redesigning and updating the City-owned Visit Arcata website; and (2), if deemed appropriate, prepare and issue a Request for Proposals (RFP) to solicit qualified firms to provide website redesign, development, and related services. Consent Calendar vote.

**ATTACHMENTS:** None