



- Board of Directors  
*Communications and Legislation Committee*

4/9/2019 Board Meeting

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**7-2**

## **Subject**

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Authorize a professional services agreement with Sensis, Inc. not to exceed \$1,500,000 to design, develop and deploy the new mwdh2o.com website; the General Manager has determined that the proposed actions are exempt or otherwise not subject to CEQA

## **Executive Summary**

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This action authorizes a contract for professional services to design, develop and deploy the new mwdh2o.com website. The current website is four years old and requires a modernized replacement to enhance the mobile experience, integrate with social media, optimize search results, improve navigation and technology and accomplish key strategic goals. Additionally, a Content Management System (CMS) is needed to increase efficiency in website management.

## **Timing and Urgency**

The interface with mobile devices has changed the direction of communicating with the public. In order to proficiently communicate through Metropolitan's website, the ability to more effectively interface via mobile devices is essential to inform and engage the public. The current website is not mobile responsive and needs to be replaced to enhance the public's mobile experience. Redesigning mwdh2o.com will bring enhancements such as optimized search results, Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) considerations and an enriched user interface.

This project has been reviewed with Metropolitan's Capital Investment Plan (CIP) prioritization criteria and is included in the Cost Efficiency and Productivity Program. Funds for this action are available within Metropolitan's capital expenditure plan for fiscal years 2018/19 and 2019/20.

## **Details**

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### **Background**

One of Metropolitan's most effective ways to communicate with the public and provide access to information is through the internet, via Metropolitan's enterprise website, mwdh2o.com. The website allows - Metropolitan to strategically communicate water issues in its service area with member agencies, local officials, media, educators and the general public on a broad number of topics, including water policy and operational issues, Board meetings, events, programs, and projects. As the public face of the organization and with an ever-growing number of users, the site must evolve to more effectively deliver information on a wide range of staff and Board activities, projects, programs and initiatives that support Metropolitan's mission statement "to provide its service area with adequate and reliable supplies of high-quality water to meet present and future needs in an environmentally and economically way."

Since the current website was deployed four years ago, technology has evolved rapidly, offering better development tools; enhanced web design techniques, including incorporating updated methods with respect to ADA considerations; and capacity for improved support for multiple languages. The current site was designed primarily for text and images, whereas communication with our target audiences will increasingly include more interactivity and multimedia both directly and through our social media platforms. A growing number of users now access the site on their mobile devices, requiring Metropolitan to more effectively incorporate mobile design to accommodate those users. These and other changes have made the current website less effective in interacting

with the public. Metropolitan's website needs to tell the District's story with a unified, interactive, consistent, visually appealing and intuitive design that provides a stronger user-centered experience.

Additionally, maintenance of the current website is cumbersome. Often, content (images, text, etc.) requires updating that involves many steps to complete. By using a more advanced CMS, most content updates can be automated, eliminating dependency on manual efforts. A CMS enables the development of workflows to update content and offers other tools to maintain information while providing maximum efficiency for website maintenance. Metropolitan will have expanded options to migrate/redesign additional websites, including bewaterwise.com, into the CMS.

A Request for Proposals (RFP), RFP-PL-1186 for Metropolitan Website Redesign, was issued on August 3, 2018. There were 20 respondents in the competitive procurement process. The small and/or disabled veteran business enterprise goal designated for this solicitation was 25 percent. Proposals were reviewed and short-listed. The short-listed firms were evaluated based on the following criteria: firm qualifications and past performance; key personnel and staff qualifications; proposed solution and web Content Management System solution; project management, implementation plan, and project schedule; environmental sensitivity; business outreach program and cost. Sensis, Inc., a 100 percent small business enterprise organization, is recommended to be awarded a contract in the total amount not to exceed \$1,500,000.

Sensis, Inc. has 20 years of experience in delivering these services. This vendor has worked with other public agencies, utilities, and organizations including San Diego Gas and Electric and Sempra Energy. Based upon their proposal, references, and experience, the RFP review team selected this vendor to be awarded the work.

### **Replacement of mwdh2o.com**

The planned work includes: (1) search engine optimization; (2) integration with social media; (3) mobile compatibility; (4) ADA considerations; (5) improved navigation; (6) improved user experience; and (7) general improvements to the website, overall. Additionally, a CMS will be implemented to maintain the new website.

A total of \$2.040 million has been budgeted for this work. In addition to the amount of the agreement, other allocated funds include the following: \$290,000 for Metropolitan labor to participate in the design, development and deployment of the website; \$55,000 for project management; \$10,000 for incidental expenses; and \$185,000 for remaining budget.

### **Summary**

This action authorizes an agreement with Sensis, Inc. in the amount of \$1,500,000 for services to complete the redesign of mwdh2o.com website.

This project has been evaluated and recommended by Metropolitan's CIP Team, and funds are available within the fiscal year 2018/2019 capital expenditure plan.

This work is included in Appropriation 15484, Business Operations Improvement Program initiated in 2013. With the present actions, the total funding for Appropriation 15484 will increase from \$6.5 million to \$8.540 million. See **Attachment 1** for Allocation of Budgeted Funds.

### ***Project Milestones***

August 2019 – Finalize design for the new website

December 2019 – Complete content layout for the new website

### **Policy**

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Metropolitan Water District Administrative Code Section 8121: General Authority of the General Manager to Enter Contracts

Metropolitan Water District Administrative Code Section 8140: Competitive Procurement

Metropolitan Water District Administrative Code Section 11104: Delegation of Responsibilities

By Minute Item 51353, dated October 9, 2018, the Board appropriated a total of \$290 million for projects identified in the Capital Investment Plan for Fiscal Years 2018/19 and 2019/20.

**California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA)**

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**CEQA determination for Option #1:**

The proposed action is not defined as a project under CEQA because it involves continuing administrative activities that will not result in direct or indirect physical changes to the environment (Section 15378(b)(2) and Section 15378(b)(5) of the State CEQA Guidelines).

The CEQA determination is: Determine that the proposed action is not defined as a project under CEQA pursuant to Sections 15378(b)(2) and 15378(b)(5) of the State CEQA Guidelines.

**Option #2**

None required.

**Board Options**

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**Option #1**

Authorize a \$1,500,000 agreement with Sensis, Inc. to redesign mwdh2o.com website and implement a Content Management System.

**Fiscal Impact:** \$2.040 million in capital funds.

**Business Analysis:** This option will optimize Metropolitan’s primary vehicle to communicate with the public, www.mwdh2o.com.

**Option #2**

Do not proceed with the project at this time.

**Fiscal Impact:** None.

**Business Analysis:** This option would forgo an opportunity to increase communication effectiveness and efficiency on water-related topics with the residents of Southern California.

**Staff Recommendation**

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Option #1

  
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Sue Sims  
Manager, External Affairs

3/25/2019  
Date

  
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Jeffrey Kightlinger  
General Manager

3/28/2019  
Date

**Attachment 1 – Allocation of Budgeted Funds**

Ref# ea12661561

**Allocation of Budgeted Funds for mwdh2o.com Replacement**

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	<b>Current Board Action (Apr. 2019)</b>
Labor	\$ 345,000
Owner Costs	-
Construction Inspection & Support	-
Installation, configuration & integration	-
Materials & Supplies	-
Incidental Expenses	10,000
Professional/Technical Services	1,500,000
Equipment Use	-
Contracts	-
Remaining Budget	185,000
<b>Total</b>	<b><u>\$ 2,040,000</u></b>

The total estimated costs to complete this project is \$2,040,000. No future funding requests are currently anticipated for this project.