

# Website Redesign Checklist

A checklist to set your website redesign project up for success





## Introduction

Redesigning a local government website is exciting. But without a clear plan, internal alignment can break down, important functionality can be overlooked, and project creep can set in.

Content, design, analytics, governance, and timeline planning are all core components of a successful website redesign. Each plays a role in how effectively the website serves residents and supports internal operations. This checklist helps local governments evaluate these areas holistically before procurement begins.

### Use it to:

- Assess how well the current site supports resident and organizational needs
- Identify gaps in functionality, accessibility, and content quality
- Clarify priorities and define the scope of improvements
- Determine where time, staffing, or external partners may be needed



## Content Review

A content audit helps determine what should be retained, revised, consolidated, or removed, so the new site reflects current priorities and delivers accurate, high-quality information to residents. Defining this early helps set a clear direction for the redesign and keeps content aligned from day one.



### Audit Site Content For:

#### Stale content

Identify pages, documents, or announcements that are outdated or no longer relevant.

#### Inaccessible content

Review webpages, PDFs, forms, and media to determine whether they [meet accessibility standards](#) and are usable by all residents.

#### Answer engine optimization (AEO)

Evaluate whether the content clearly answers common resident questions in an answer-first, plain language format that can help improve visibility in AI-driven search experiences.

#### Search engine optimization (SEO)

Ensure pages follow SEO best practices to support visibility in traditional search engines.

#### Readability

Confirm content uses plain language, clear structure, and formatting that supports comprehension across literacy levels, languages, and assistive technology needs.



## Design Updates

Design decisions shape how easily residents can navigate services and how efficiently staff can manage the site after launch. Custom elements, complex layouts, and advanced functionality require thoughtful planning to ensure the site remains sustainable and adaptable over time.

### Gather Examples of Design Elements That Might Need a Refresh:

- Graphic buttons
- Resident action center
- Global navigation
- News carousels
- Calendars
- Social media embeds
- Update photography (often one of the easiest ways to modernize website design)
- Mobile-first design elements



## Website Performance

### Data Review

Data helps determine what to improve, what to consolidate, and what to remove during a website redesign. Reviewing performance data reveals how residents actually use the site and highlights where navigation, search functionality, page hierarchy, or mobile and desktop design may need to be restructured.

### Collect Performance Data For:

#### High-traffic pages

Prioritize these for content refresh, design improvements, and optimization.

#### Low- or no-traffic pages

Flag pages and documents with little or no engagement for archiving, consolidation, or removal.

#### Navigation pathways

Review how residents move through the site to determine whether global navigation reflects actual browsing behavior.

#### Search queries

Analyze common internal search terms to identify content gaps or opportunities for clearer labeling.

#### Device usage trends

Confirm the percentage of mobile vs. desktop users to inform layout, navigation, and design priorities.



## Editor Structure and Ownership Review

A website redesign does not end at launch. Before building the new site, local governments should evaluate who is responsible for content updates, how permissions are managed, and how editorial workflows function. Clarifying ownership helps ensure the redesigned site launches with defined responsibilities and expectations.

### Audit Your Editorial Structure:

- Review rights and permissions in the content management system (CMS)

- Determine whether editing is centralized or decentralized

- Identify how many content creators are needed to support the redesigned site

- Define appropriate access levels for each role

- Determine whether refresher training is required before launch



## In-House vs. External Partnerships

Internal staff may not have the bandwidth or the expertise to do some or all of the website redesign. In that case, vendors may be the answer. External partners can strengthen planning, improve compliance, and help ensure the redesign reflects current best practices.

### Consider Whether You Need:

- A professional photographer or videographer for original visual assets

#### A consultant to:

- Review site architecture

- Evaluate compliance and resident usability

- Incorporate current best practices in the website's footprint

- Identify engagement opportunities

# Project Timeline

Most website redesigns take between 16 and 28 weeks from kickoff to launch.

## The exact timeline will depend on:

- The defined project scope
- The selected enhancements
- Stakeholder availability for meetings and approvals
- How quickly assigned action items are completed

A project timeline goes beyond meeting deadlines. A structured timeline with defined milestones, task deadlines, and approval checkpoints is essential because it helps provide transparency throughout the redesign process. That visibility supports better internal planning, reduces avoidable delays, and helps keep teams aligned.

Below is a breakdown of [how CivicPlus® structures website redesign projects](#). Use it to inform your own timeline. It illustrates how work is sequenced and can help local government teams anticipate key milestones, decision points, and resource commitments.

Phase	Duration	Deliverables
<b>Phase 1: Initiate</b>	2-4 weeks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Project kickoff meeting</li> <li>• Planning and scheduling</li> <li>• Timeline confirmation</li> </ul>
<b>Phase 2: Analyze</b>	4-6 weeks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Audit and clean up webpage content</li> <li>• Review and update site architecture</li> <li>• Select design and layout</li> <li>• Leverage consulting where needed</li> </ul>
<b>Phase 3: Design and configure</b>	6-10 weeks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Design concept development</li> <li>• Design concept review and approval</li> <li>• Finalize design</li> </ul>
<b>Phase 4: Optimize</b>	2-4 weeks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Site development and quality checks</li> <li>• Website finalization</li> </ul>
<b>Phase 5: Launch</b>	2-4 weeks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Website launch</li> </ul>

# Strengthen Your Digital Front Door

The decisions outlined in this checklist can help determine whether your investment in a website redesign results in a modern, maintainable digital front door or a site that requires ongoing workarounds, reactive fixes, and [negatively impacts resident trust](#).

## That's where CivicPlus can help.

[CivicPlus Municipal Websites](#) are built specifically for local governments that need more than a visual refresh. With secure hosting, accessibility support, scalable functionality, and resident engagement tools in one platform, the solution is designed to support both today's demands and tomorrow's growth.

Take a self-guided tour to explore how CivicPlus Municipal Websites can support your budget, your long-term digital strategy, and your website redesign.

[See It in Action](#)





## REAL RESULTS

# Fort Wayne's Website Redesign

The City of Fort Wayne, Indiana, hadn't redesigned its website since 2014, and residents struggled to find basic information, staff used Google to locate internal pages, and the site lacked accessibility and mobile responsiveness.

After partnering with [CivicPlus Municipal Websites](#), Fort Wayne launched a modern site that saw resident engagement surge, internal workflows improved, and accessibility validation came directly from the disability community.



## Learn How They Did it

[Read More](#)

