To:	Board of Directors	From:	Andrea Mackenzie
	Open Space Authority		General Manager

SUBJECT
Receive Update on Open Space Authority Web Design and Implementation

REVENUE/COST
Current project expenditures total $51,291.25 of $91,575 budgeted in Fiscal Year 2024/2025 (i.e. 44% remaining), though this agenda item is informational only, so there is no potential revenue impact under consideration.

BACKGROUND
The Santa Clara Valley Open Space Authority's (Authority's) website is the primary means of communication with new and existing audiences. To remain effective, it is crucial that the Authority's website continues to grow and evolve with the agency's new initiatives and consistently increasing needs for communication and education. It is also important that its website be updated to incorporate new learnings about user preferences and browsing habits, accessibility options, third-party tools and applications, etc.

The Open Space Authority's current website launched in May 2017 and was built on the In-Portal Content Management System (CMS) by the current web maintenance vendor, Intechnic Corporation. In recent years, Intechnic changed their business model from web design and maintenance to focus on user experience (UX) consulting. Their web maintenance contract with the Open Space Authority is set to expire at the end of 2024.

Because In-Portal CMS is a lesser-known system, there is a scarcity of vendors with the experience needed to maintain the current website and perform the improvements needed to match the Authority's increasing needs for communication and education. Additionally, the lack of resources available for staff to troubleshoot this lesser-known CMS has resulted in Authority staff being overly dependent on a single vendor for even minor web updates.

As such, Authority staff prepared a Request for Proposals (RFP) in early 2024 to hire a new web developer vendor and build a new website. In March 2024, the Authority Board of Directors approved the contract with rootid LLC, who provided the most complete and qualified response to the scope of service defined in the RFP.

DISCUSSION
The website developers at rootid were onboarded in March 2024, and over the course of six months, staff have worked with the vendor to move forward in building the new agency website, based on data

and audits of the Authority's current site, research into site architecture and user profiles, internal staff focus groups and workshops, and inclusive design practices guided by the Design Justice Network principles and the Liberatory Design process. The new website will be hosted on Drupal CMS, a mainstream platform that allows users to design, update and manage their sites with ease and flexibility. As a mainstream platform, Drupal also offers users many resources and technical support, which has been missing from the Authority's current website platform. The project is on track to launch in late Fall 2024. The process has involved several concrete phases to guide the design and development of a successful website – which staff will present as part of this agenda item – including:

Phase 1: Discovery (complete)

- Reviewed and compiled existing research materials, including the 2023 User Experience (UX) Audit conducted with Intechnic.
- Created a content inventory.
- Conducted a key page & navigation site audit.

Phase 2: Strategy (complete)

- Created the site map.
- Researched and designed key site user pathways.
- Led internal workshops to discover key page content recommendations.

Phase 3: Design (complete)

- Created wireframes/interface prototypes.
- Created visual interface design.
- Created mobile website designs.

Phase 4: Development (in progress)

- Drupal CMS configuration.
- Back-end & interface development.
- Quality assurance & testing.

New functionalities and updates include:

- A more intuitive site navigation to continue telling the Authority's story, enhance user experience, and ensure that important and timely information is easily accessible to the public.
- Updates for improved accessibility, including more accessible visuals (compliant fonts/colors) and continued use of our accessibility tool, Monsido.
- Translation/transcreation tools to make the site more accessible to non-English speakers in our jurisdiction.
- Unlike the current site that depends on third-party application ("app") integration for the Events and News sections, the new site will allow staff to manage these elements all in one place. This

will give staff more control over how, what and when information is displayed – and makes the site less vulnerable to app bugs and integration issues.

- More overall flexibility and ease for Authority staff to manage and update the website internally, with less reliance on contractors and vendors.

Staff plan to do a soft launch of the site in December 2024, with heavier promotion in January 2025, emphasizing the New Year theme to celebrate and promote the new website.

RECOMMENDATION
This is an informational item. There is no recommendation for action.

Prepared by:
Annamarie Pilon, Multimedia Communications Specialist