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## Northwest **Power** and **Conservation** Council

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July 5, 2017

### **DECISION MEMORANDUM**

**TO:** Council members

**FROM:** Ben Kujala

**SUBJECT:** Authorization to enter into a contract for redesign of Council website

**PROPOSED ACTION:** Council staff seeks approval to enter into a contract with OMBU for the redesign of the Council's website.

**SIGNIFICANCE:** There is a need to update the Council's website to: (1) allow visitors to more easily navigate the site to locate specific information about the Council's activities and those of the Council's advisory committees; (2) enable a software platform capable of integrating more sophisticated content related to the Council's activities using different mediums; (3) enable a software platform that is more widely used (than Umbraco) by developers and consultants who can assist the Council in maintaining and, if necessary, expanding the website in future years; (4) better incorporate online tools such as GIS mapping; (5) better accommodate the posting and organization of recommendations and comments submitted during program and plan amendment processes; (6) enable the website to serve as a repository for the region for some technical studies and large data sets important to the Council's work such as price forecasts and modeling outputs; (7) enable public affairs staff to easily create website content and upload it to social media sites to keep the region informed of regional power and fish issues as well as ensure widespread public involvement in plans and programs.

## **BUDGETARY/ECONOMIC IMPACTS**

Not to exceed \$215,000. Payments to be spread out over fiscal year 2017 and fiscal year 2018 with payments tied to receipt of specific deliverables.

## **BACKGROUND AND ANALYSIS**

The redesign of the Council's website is a significant undertaking for the Council. The existing website was built and maintained by Council staff and has, over the years, been modified and expanded as needed to accommodate increasingly more information and data as well as audio and video files related to the work of the Council and its advisory committees. The Council now seeks to expand the capabilities and functionalities of its website as well as upgrade the user experience and the "look" of the website. In addition, the Council seeks a stable website platform that is able to integrate a variety of information sharing tools such as GIS mapping and social media tools that can facilitate the sharing of information about Council-related activities.

In 2016, the Council contracted with OMBU to redesign the Regional Technical Forum website. The resulting redesigned RTF website is a substantial upgrade in terms of usability, aesthetics and functionality. The RTF website redesign project came in on-time and within budget. Council staff who worked with OMBU on the RTF website redesign effort were impressed with OMBU's technical skills, consistent communication, and willingness to listen to and incorporate ideas of Council staff during the redesign effort.

Responding to a request from Council staff, OMBU prepared a preliminary scoping document for the redesign of the Council's website. OMBU met with Council staff from all divisions to better understand the responsibilities of the Council as an organization and the work of each of the divisions as it informs content on the Council's website. The document contains a detailed technical roadmap and estimated schedule and budget for the redesign effort.

A redesign of the Council's website is a larger undertaking than the redesign of the RTF website. However, the collaborative nature of OMBU's process to better understand the Council's website needs along with OMBU's accessibility during the RTF website redesign process and the ability to deliver a quality product that fulfilled the RTF's needs in a timely manner and within budget forms the basis for the staff recommendation to contract with OMBU for the redesign of the Council website.

## **ALTERNATIVES**

Two alternatives are to keep the existing website as is or make incremental changes to the website which may or may not involve utilizing an outside contractor. The primary concern with the latter, however, is that in making only incremental changes, the Council will lose the opportunity to do a more comprehensive redesign entailing fundamental changes to the website's platform in order to gain greater functionality and performance. Similarly, failing to update the website at all could result in diminished functionality and user experience, as time goes by and more content is sought to be presented on the Council's website. The Council could also choose to issue a Request for Proposals (RFP) for the website redesign project. Given the Council's previous

experience utilizing a RFP to scope the RTF website redesign, the challenges presented in coordinating the disparate website needs and expectations of the Council's divisions, and the expertise OMBU demonstrated in working with staff in developing and executing the redesign of the RTF's website, staff supports proceeding with OMBU as the one firm capable of providing the service of the type and quality required to see the redesign project through to conclusion at the budget level and on the schedule that fits the Council's needs.