

**City of Austin
Website Redesign
In-Depth Interview Qualitative Research Study**

Conducted May 18th – May 20th 2010

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Executive Summary

Research Objective

The research objective was to find out from defined target user groups what they expect from, and what their needs are for, the City of Austin's website.

The main research objective was accomplished by:

- 1) Asking respondents about their expectations of the website and what information and services they currently use or would like to see on the City's website.
- 2) Exploring respondents' unmet needs on the current website.
- 3) Determining whether respondents' current behavior on the website is browse-based or search-based.
- 4) Reviewing key aspects of the existing website and discussing its strengths and weaknesses, as identified by respondents.
- 5) Reviewing the homepage design and features of three peer City websites to discuss the strengths and weaknesses, as identified by respondents.
- 6) Conducting a Card Sort exercise, which encouraged the respondents to consider the prioritization of potential website information or features based on these categories: Must Have, Nice to Have, Unnecessary, or Negative features – items that would have a negative impact on the perception of the website.

Methodology:

On May 18th, 19th and 20th, a total of 26 In-Depth Interviews were conducted with residents of the City of Austin to review their existing behaviors on and perceptions about the City of Austin's website. The interviews, which lasted one hour each, were conducted in a conference room at the Austin City Hall building.

Respondents were recruited based on their likeness to identifiable characteristics for one of the six user segments as defined by the research conducted and the target audience personas created in the Customer Profiling stage of this project:

Resident Segments:

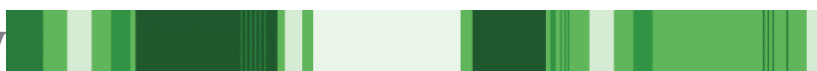
Urban Tech Savvy
Older Urban
Suburban Family
Hispanic (Bilingual) Families

Business Segments:

Small Business Owners
Construction/Real Estate/Development Professionals

Qualitative Caveat:

Qualitative research provides in-depth information about that consumer's feelings and behaviors, but it is not necessarily representative of the population as a whole. Findings from this research are intended to be used directionally.



Overview of Findings

One of the most significant findings coming out of these interviews was that respondent needs and interests were very similar and showed little difference, despite the residential or business segment that they represented. This finding is significant because it strongly indicates that the core needs for the website have universal support and interest, regardless of audience. Additional quantitative testing may indicate differences in specific content, feature needs, and prioritization by user segment. This research found that interest in specialized content and features is underscored by a strong overall preference for how that information is presented and displayed.

The strongest and most consistent feedback heard from respondents, regardless of segment, was a need for a website with well thought out, clear, and understandable organization, site architecture, consistent structure and navigation options. Respondents felt these aspects are lacking from the website today and, in their absence, think it is difficult to uncover the wealth of content and features available on the website. As a result, the new website needs to be approached with a focus on well constructed, consistent, and intuitive website architecture, well thought out and intuitive navigation options, and content that is well organized on the page for readability. Creating a website that is easy to use is paramount to having users return to it over time.

Another common sentiment heard from respondents throughout all segments was a strong desire to have a website that expressed the personality and character of Austin. Respondents felt the look and feel of the current website was stale or outdated. Specifically they felt the colors, design elements, and images used throughout the website did not portray the life and unique atmosphere felt throughout Austin. Respondents were passionate about the identity and originality of the city, indicating it as the primary reason they live here, and felt the website should represent that identity. The new website should represent Austin's identity, and as a result, the identity of the residents. If the new website does not look or feel authentically like Austin, residents will not develop a connection to it or become passionate about it. Establishing that connection is important to creating an environment for repeat visits to the website.

Quite a few of the respondents did not distinguish this website as being the resource for City Government versus a website like the Convention and Visitor's Bureau site that concentrates on promoting the city. Based on the answers and discussions during the interviews overall, a "City of Austin" website might address both. For that reason the new website should distinguish itself as City Government/Services focused in some way, but also link or provide reference to the sites that promote Austin to visitors.

When asked to describe their existing experiences with the website, most respondents recalled searching or clicking through a couple levels to locate information of interest. This would indicate that the current website is not structured in an intuitive way, or that information is buried too deep, and supports the need for a new website with well thought out organization and navigation options that allow the audience to get to most used information quickly.

The most commonly mentioned features expected of the city website, as it exists today, included:

- Civic related needs - connections to city council and updates to new regulations
- Access to information on utilities and city services
- Connection to information about Austin's Parks and Recreation
- A calendar highlighting current events

These comments represent the most basic level of information expected by residents, and therefore should be considered as key areas of focus and attention when structuring content for the new website.

When asked about unmet needs and wishes for features not available on the current website, respondents most commonly mentioned:

- Ability to complete activities online, such as paying taxes, locating birth certificates or registering to vote
- More information about city events and activities
- More statistics and information about the city

Consider the feasibility of offering these types of features on the new website and place them in an area that will be easily noticed and accessed by residents.

Respondents' assessment and feelings towards the current website were very similar across all segments.

When asked to describe the current website in a few words, respondents tended to repeat similar words and phrases (in rank order):

1. Informative
2. Easy-to-Use
3. Boring
4. Unorganized
5. Generic

While the website is recognized as containing a large amount of information, these phrases speak to a need to consider the organization, visual appeal, and available features for the new website so that it remains informative and easy-to-use but becomes more interesting, organized and unique.

As their perceptions of the current website were similar, so were their expectations for a future version of the website for the City of Austin. The most common words and phrases heard from respondents describing their hopes for a future website were (in rank order):

1. User-Friendly
2. Intuitive
3. Inviting
4. Authentic

Not surprisingly, the words used to describe expectations and hopes for a future version of the website call out the opportunities identified above from respondents' descriptions and assessments of the website as it exists today.

Response to visual examples of the current website varied depending on what page of the website was being viewed. Solid Waste Services stood out as the closest example (of the five section home page examples used in this exercise) of the direction in which respondents felt the website should go, while

Health and Human Services stood out as an example of the need to incorporate better organization, navigation, and visual design. Use the work that has been done on the Solid Waste Services page as a model for the direction of the new website in the areas of organization, navigation, features, and overall look and feel.

The home page of the website was perceived to be rich with information; however respondents felt that it did not communicate the life and vitality that is inherent across the city. The home page is the front door to the website and is the first, and often the only, opportunity to communicate the identity and focus for the rest of the website. The home page for the new website needs to authentically express the personality of the city, as well as offer content and features that match the needs and priorities for the city and its residents.

Respondents felt that a future version of the website could draw on some examples of features seen during a review of peer websites for Boston, Kansas City, and San Francisco. Organized and consistent navigation options, clean and colorful visuals of the city, access to 'Most Requested' activities and needs, and an easy way to review city highlights, features and events were all popular features recognized by respondents as ideas for a future version of the website.

The Card Sort exercise illustrated strong interest in several features deemed as "Must Have" or "Nice to Have" for a future version of the website:

- Online payment for utilities, tickets, court fees, library fines, etc.
- Ability to submit applications and forms online (such as permits)
- Interactive Events Calendar for all City events with ability to filter by date, topic, department etc.
- Mobile version of the website
- Social Media Integration – alerts and City news on platforms such as Twitter and Facebook

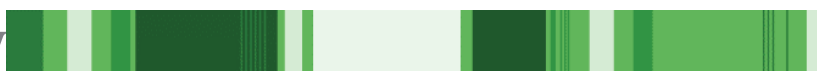
While the Card Sort identified popular ideas for inclusion in a future version of the website, it also identified features that respondents felt were "Unnecessary" or those that could have a negative impact on the image of the website:

- All City data feeds available for GIS data aggregation (this feature was not recognized or understood by any of the respondents in this study)
- Customizable City of Austin home page, iGoogle-type page
- My Favorites area – a place for users to save links to favorite pages
- Allowing citizens to submit events to a City calendar
- Allowing citizens to comment on council agenda items online

Conclusions

As work begins on the new website, there are several guiding principles that should be kept in mind and referred to during the planning and process of design and development:

- Plan for the website to offer consistent and obvious navigation options that allow users to navigate through the website using browse-based interaction or search-based interaction. A navigation menu that provides access to the core areas of focus for the website should remain present at the top of every



page so that users always have an easy way to locate and access information, no matter where they are on the website. As an important form of navigation the search field should be prominent. The top right hand corner of a webpage is an expected and standard location for search field placement.

- The site architecture and infrastructure should be carefully planned so that content is sorted, organized and categorized into obvious and logical sections. Information on the site should be organized based on a hierarchy of user needs. This can and should be addressed based on the larger user group identification roles: Residents, Business, Construction/Development, Tourists, and Government Employees as identified in the Customer Profiling stage of the project. Priorities by roles should be considered. A Product Gap research study is planned for this project and will identify the prioritization of key information and services. The most important and frequent needs and activities should be placed where users can locate them quickly and easily, least important needs and activities have more flexibility for secondary or tertiary placement.
- Because the website is so rich with information, it can be tempting to fill each page with as much information as possible. Instead of creating pages dense with content that require excessive scrolling and in-depth reading, simplify each page making it easily scan able and related content accessible through logical navigation paths such as hierarchical navigation links or drop down lists. Some suggestions include: allowing more “whitespace” on the page, breaking up the content into common topical areas or multiple pages with descriptive subheads, creating abstract or summary lists of content so that it is easily scanned.
- Consider the inclusion of visuals on the home page and throughout the website. Effective use of visuals on the home page will help establish the identity and branding, and bring authenticity to the website. Extending those visuals throughout the rest of the website will not only add to the overall personality and feel of the website, but will also create a more user-friendly environment (less copy dense environment); effectively making the pages easier to navigate, read, and comprehend.
- Utilize design elements and colors that speak to the character of Austin and region. The website should feel modern, lively, unique, original and eclectic; characteristics which are representative and indicative of the residents of Austin.
- While not mentioned specifically by respondents, we recommend that user feedback on the development and direction of the website should not end with these interviews. Continue to collect feedback from residents during the development of the website through iterative and ongoing user testing to determine if the direction of the website matches the needs and expectations of the users.

Detailed Observations

Residents

Overview

In each interview the respondents were asked about their experience with the existing City of Austin's website and expectations of what the website should offer. Of the users that had visited the website in the past, there were several commonalities among the responses from the four resident user groups.

Respondents who had visited the website were asked to recall their past experiences and describe whether their activities on the website were browse-based or search-based. When asked about their experiences with the website in the past, most respondents commented that locating information of interest usually required several clicks or a search. One respondent called out: "It's hard to find the information sometimes". Quite a few respondents stated that they began their interaction with the current website by entering search terms into a search engine, such as Google, and then being directed to specific information or pages on the City of Austin's website.

Overall, respondents felt that the existing website was full of information and content, but there was an impression across all segments that the information was not organized or accessible in an easy or obvious way.

Respondents were asked to describe the information and features they would expect to see available on the website. These expectations and needs for features and information on the current website were similar across all resident segments:

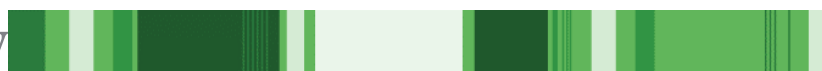
- Civic related needs: connections to City Council and updates to new regulations
- Access to information on utilities and City services
- Connection to information about Austin's Parks and Recreation
- A calendar highlighting current events

Respondents were also asked to detail areas that would not be appropriate or a good match for the website. Respondents called out a few specific examples:

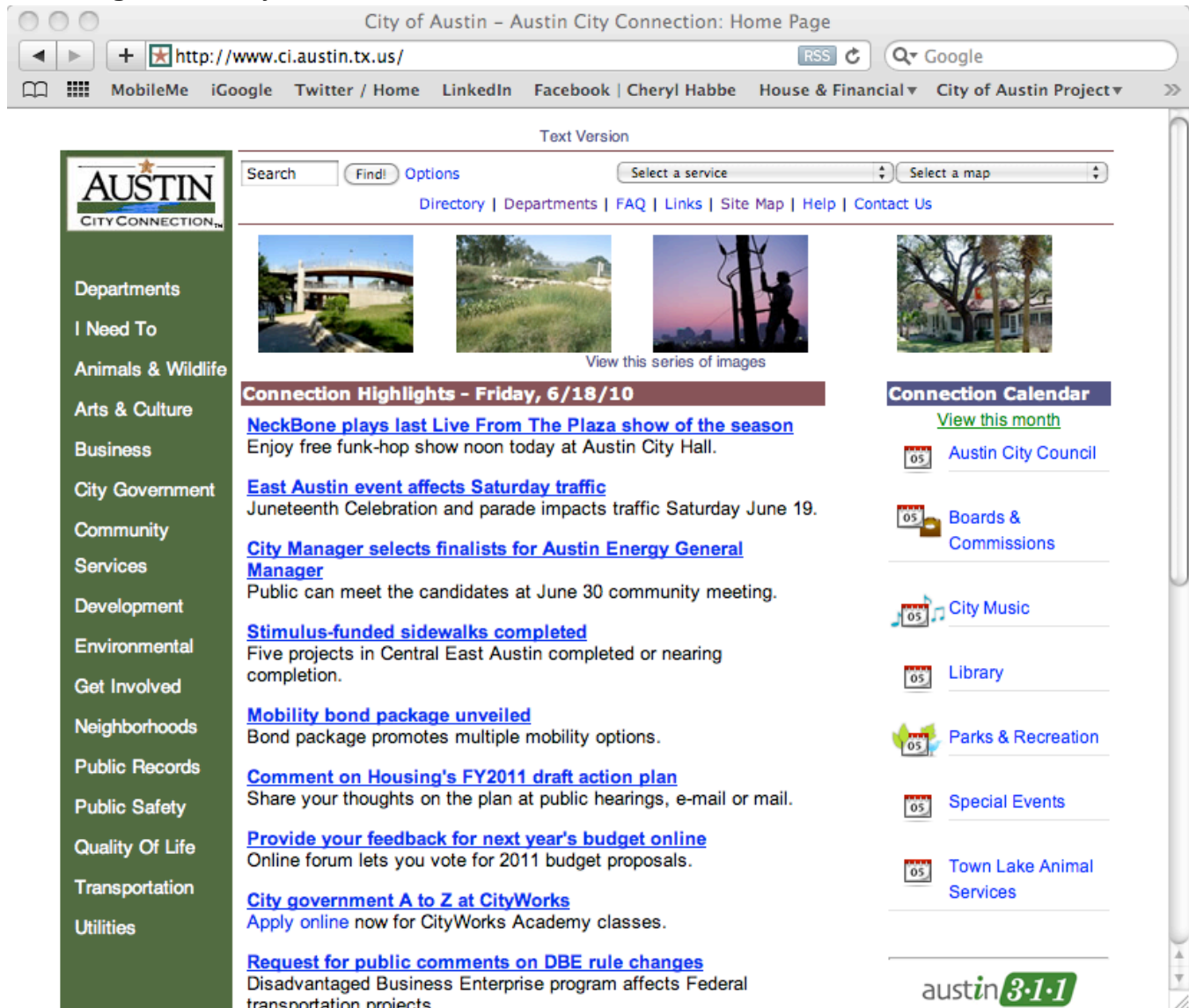
- Advertising
- Political promotion
- Information that is biased based on religion, gender, or race

Response and Perception to Examples on Existing Website:

Respondents were presented five key pages/sections on the website as it exists today; specific sections were chosen because they were identified as areas of interest for the residential users in previous research or high traffic areas of the website. Responses varied very little among the Residential user sub-segments.



Home Page for the City of Austin



- Across all segments, the most common feedback heard about the home page was that it looked informative and full of information. However, there was also a strong impression from that the page was cluttered and did not have a strong or identifiable area of focus.
- Respondents in each user segment described the website as boring, stale, generic, too utilitarian, bland.
- In all segments it was frequently mentioned the desire to see more attractive and dynamic imagery.
- For some respondents in the Urban Tech Savvy group the links to Events and Parks and Recreation were seen as positive aspects of the main page.

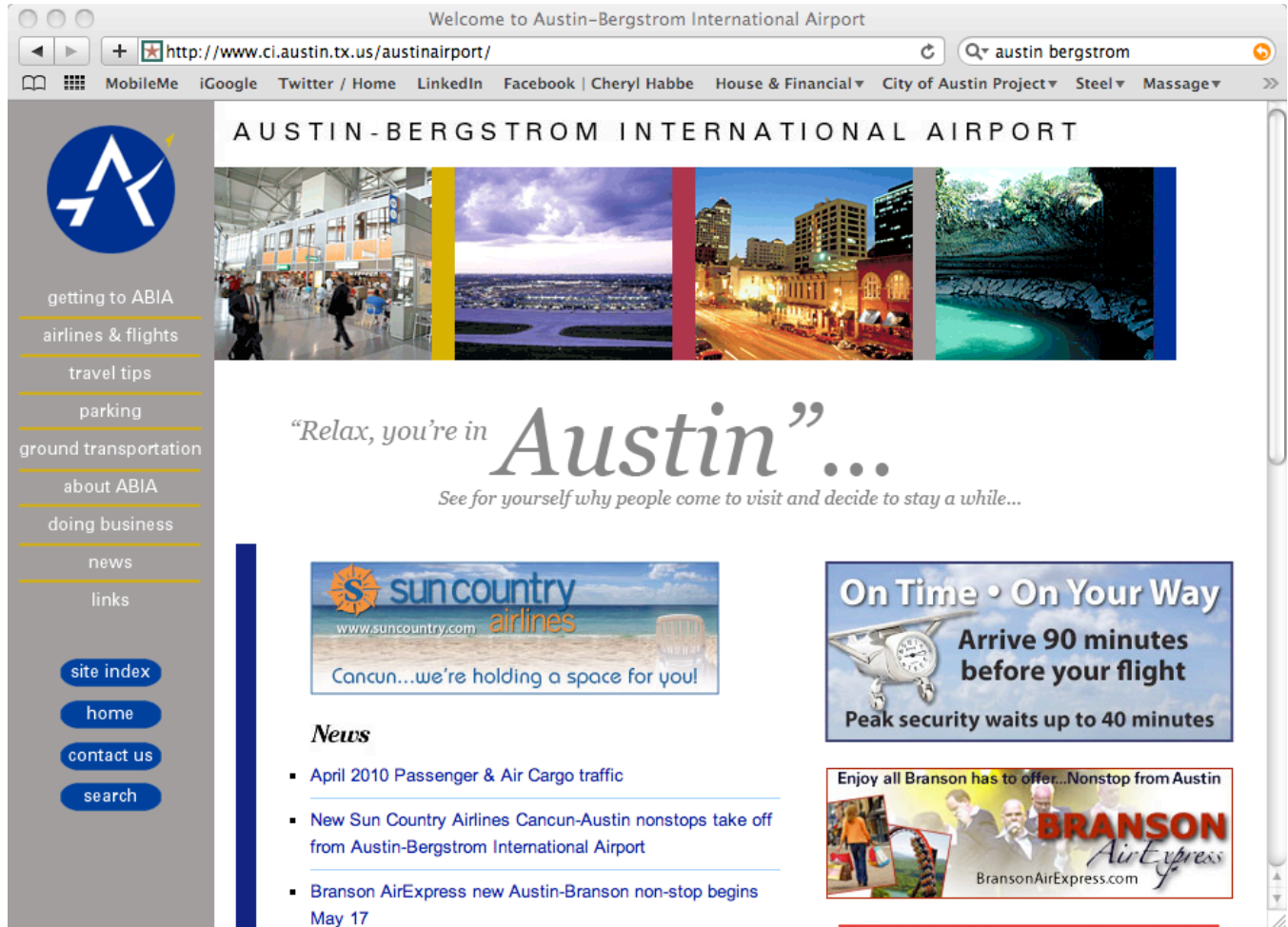
Library Page



- The Library page was received well overall and stood out as one of the strengths of the website for respondents in the Urban Tech Savvy, Suburban Family, and Hispanic (bilingual) Mothers segments. For respondents in the Older Urban segment this page was received better than the homepage, however was still seen as generic and stale.
- Respondents, in all segments, frequently pointed to the ability to search the Library catalog, which was perceived as a valuable feature that was clearly highlighted on the page.
- Many respondents were interested in the features listed in the “Highlights” section and assumed that it contained valuable information; however, respondents in all segments were not able to easily digest and comprehend what content was behind the promo buttons.
- In all segments respondents commented that the images used in the featured section were an improvement over the website’s home page, but were still categorized by some respondents in the Older Urban segment as outdated and stale.

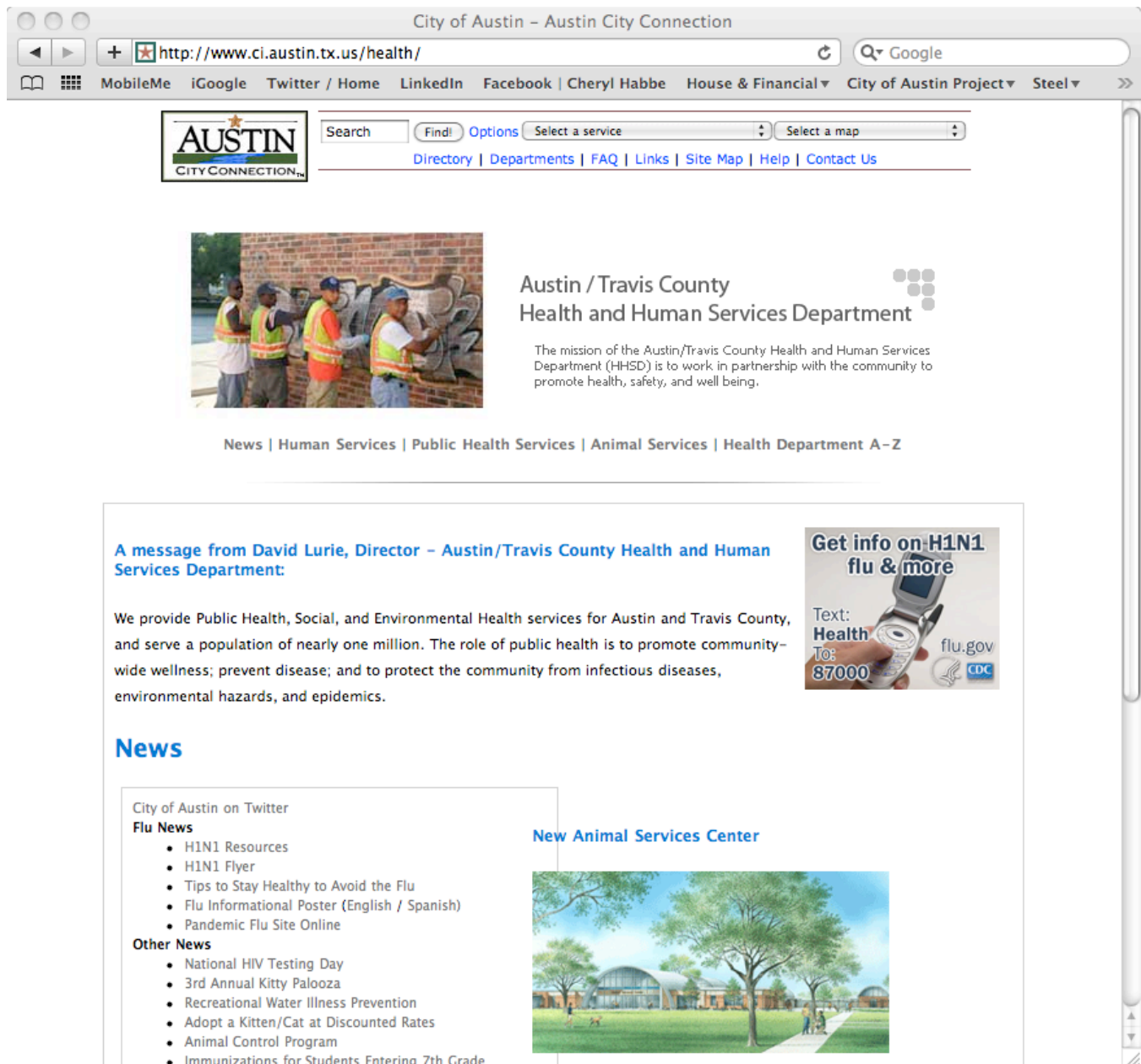
- The calendar was another area of interest to respondents in all segments, and was perceived as something that would offer valuable and useful information. However, some respondents commented that they wished it to be presented in a more dynamic and visually attractive way.

Austin-Bergstrom International Airport



- Respondents in all segments commented that the images used on the airport page expressed the type of life and vitality that they wanted to see carried throughout the website. Some respondents in the Hispanic (bilingual) Mothers segment commented that the colors were “boring”.
- In all segments, respondents felt that although the look and feel of the page was somewhat improved over other pages exposed during the website tour, the most valuable information was pushed to the bottom of the page, specifically the Travel Tips and Real Time Flight Status.
- Respondents, in all segments, were often confused to see advertisements on the page and some felt that they detracted from the purpose of the page.

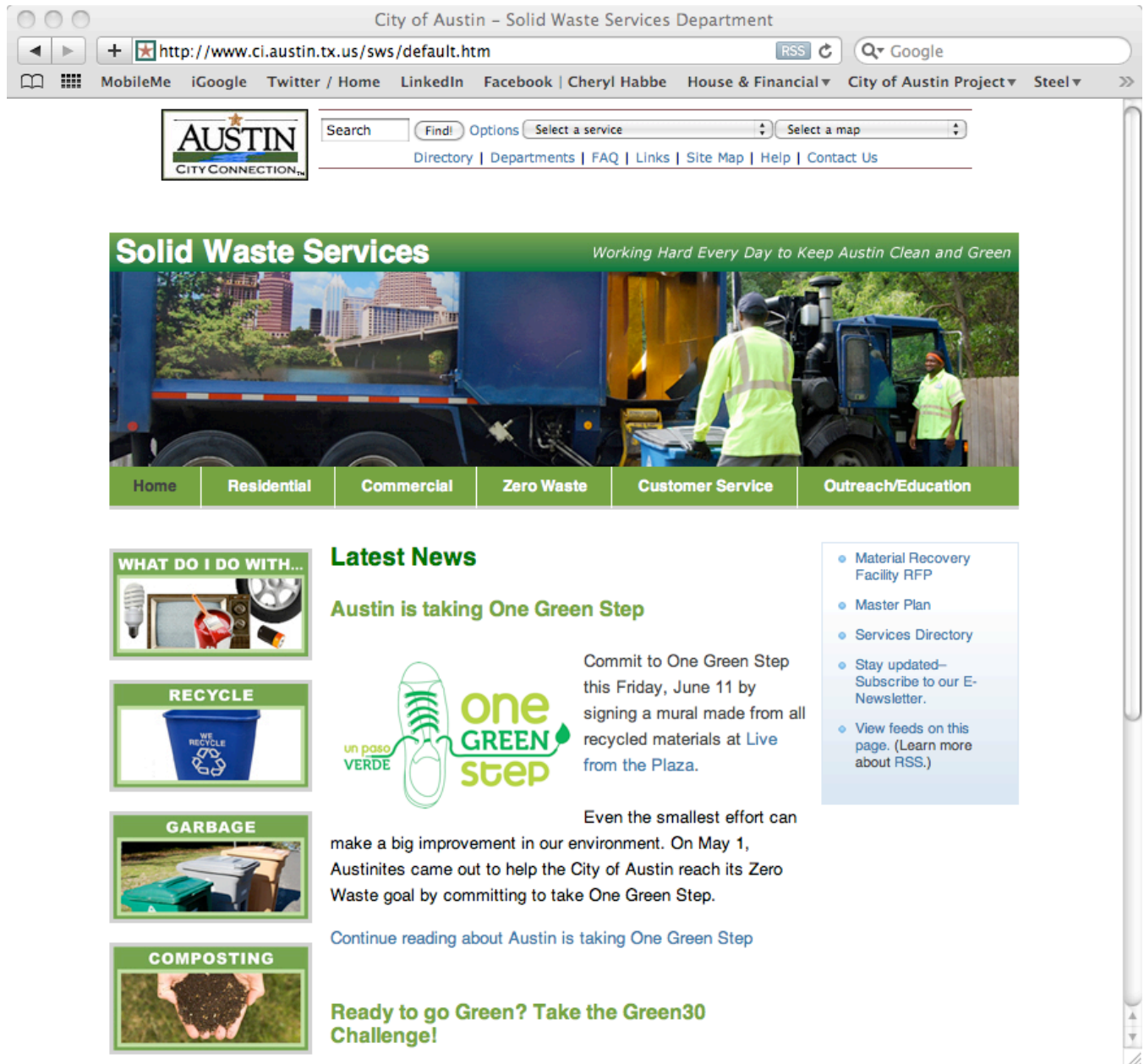
Health and Human Services



- Respondents in all segments felt that the Health and Human Services page was lacking in overall design and layout. The overwhelming perception was that the page was too plain, featured too many bullets and not enough description or meaningful content.
- Respondents from all segments were confused by the focus of the page. The mix of information on H1N1 and Animal Services left respondents unsure of the purpose and direction of the page.
- Many respondents, from all segments, felt that the navigation options (meaning the clickable bullet points in the body of the content) were detached from the top of the page (seen as a negative) and did not stand out.

- Respondents, from all segments, felt that Health and Human Services should speak more to health issues impacting the Austin area specifically, including allergies and regional/local public health issues.

Solid Waste Services



- The Solid Waste Services page received the most positive feedback from respondents, regardless of user segment.
- The rotating images used in the featured section at the top were a highlight for many. Respondents, in all segments, felt that the images expressed the identity of Austin and clearly communicated the purpose of the page.

- Communication of the direction and focus of department extended beyond the images and was felt throughout the rest of the page. All respondents liked the navigation bar running directly below the featured images and felt that it gave them a good grasp of what was available to them in this section.
- Many subjects, from all segments, commented on the “What Do I Do With” feature, which was clearly understood and very well received. One respondent commented that, “These things [referring to ‘What Do I Do With..’, ‘Recycle’, ‘Garbage’, and ‘Composting’] on the side are fantastic...”

Response and Perception of Peer Websites:

The presentation of the three peer websites, other City websites chosen by the web team as being aspirational to Austin, provided respondents with a number of features and ideas that were viewed as things that should be considered for a future version of a website for the City of Austin. Common areas on all three websites that were received positively by respondents included the consistent menu bar running along the top, a relevant and identifiable image representing the city, and easily accessible and obvious dropdown menus for navigation.

San Francisco

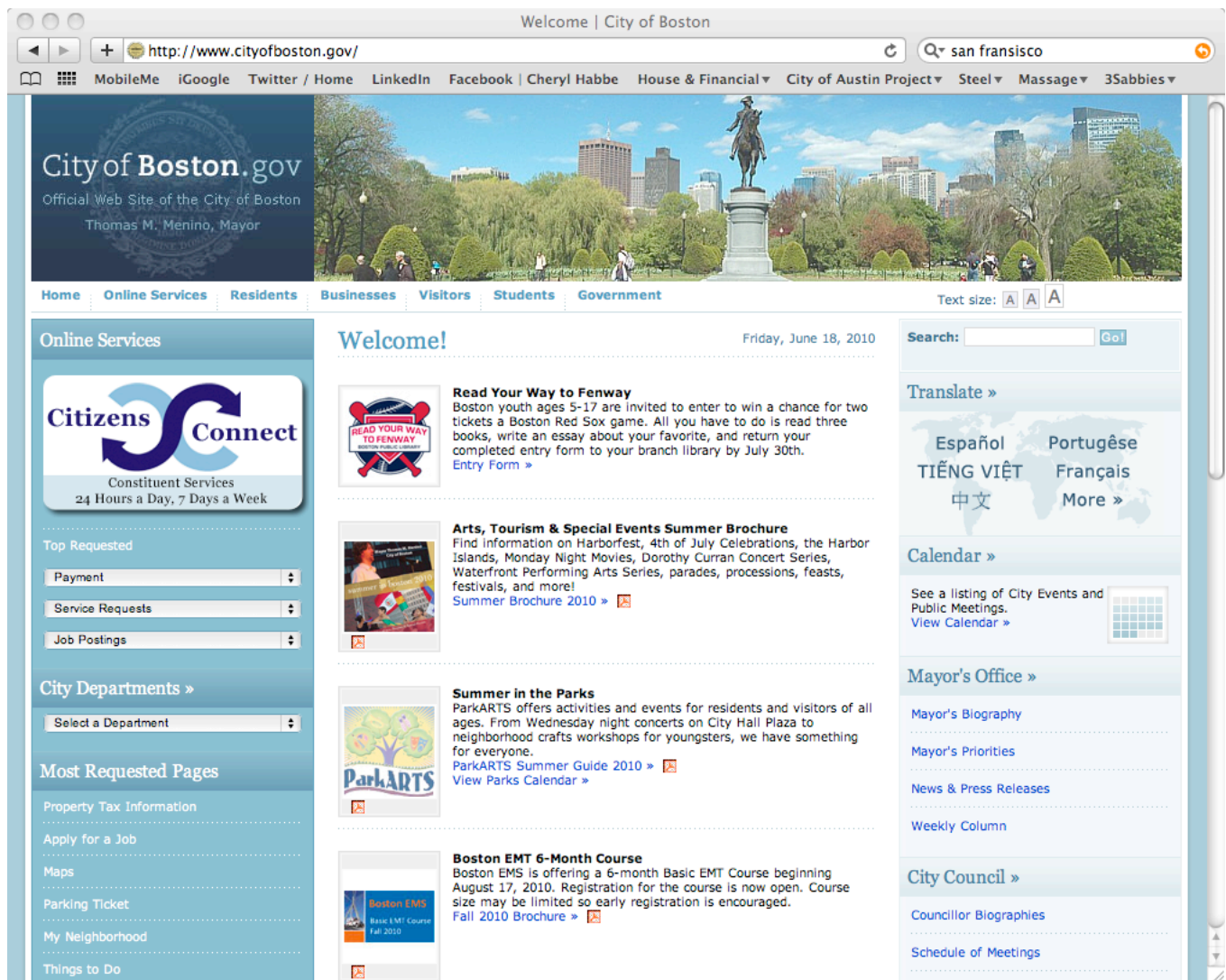


- The design used for the San Francisco website was very polarizing for respondents in all segments. About half of the respondents in each segment felt that the website presented a fresh, modern view and were attracted to the series of rotating images used as feature highlights in the middle of the page. The remaining respondents had a negative point of view: some Urban Tech Savvy and Suburban Family respondents felt that the images were distracting and distracted from the real value of the website, an Older Urban respondent felt that section focused too much on the Mayor, and some respondents in the

Hispanic (bilingual) Mothers segment felt the website was too plain and didn't provide enough information up front.

- The inclusion of a 'Most Requested' expandable dropdown was a standout to many, in all segments, respondents who appreciated the ability to locate frequently used areas of the website in one common menu or location.
- The rotating carousel at the bottom of the page was also somewhat polarizing with user segments. Although some respondents, in each segment, viewed it as "slick", "bold" and "clean" others felt that the functionality was not obvious and were not aware that it moved until they were shown the arrows to control the area.

Boston



- The website for Boston received praise from many of the respondents, across all user segments, for its organized and professional looking structure and appearance. Some Urban Tech Savvy respondents described it as "informal" and comparing its look to Facebook, which was considered positive. Some respondents from the Hispanic (bilingual) Mothers segment felt the color scheme was boring and plain.

- As was seen in the San Francisco website, a ‘Most Requested’ section stood out as an area of interest and value to respondents from all user segments.
- Respondents, from all segments, felt that the ‘Welcome’ section in the middle of the page struck a good balance between providing information, without becoming overwhelming.
- One of the standout areas of the Boston website was its concentration on Students. Respondents, from Urban Tech Savvy, Suburban Family & Hispanic (bilingual) Mothers, felt that was an important consideration for Austin because of its strong student base.
- Another popular feature was the obvious ability to translate into a number of different languages. Respondents, regardless of segment, appreciated this feature as respondents felt that the Austin area is a melting pot of people from different backgrounds and cultures.

Kansas City



- Respondents frequently commented on the color scheme used on the Kansas City website, with most describing it as “warm”, “colorful” and “appealing”.

- Although the 'Highlights' section in the middle of the page was similar to what was seen on the Boston website, many respondents, across all segments, felt that the section was too crowded and cluttered and as a result, gave a cluttered feeling to the website overall.
- The 'I Want To' section on the left hand side of the page was very polarizing. In each segment, some respondents felt that the concept was a good way of approaching tactical activities on the website, while others felt that the categories were too vague and confusing.

Existing Behavior and Expectations of the City's Website:

Respondents were asked whether they had visited the website in the past, and if so, what types of activities usually brought them to the website. Of the respondents from all segments of the Residents group that have used the site before, most of them reported visiting the website on a regular basis to look up information on City services (utilities, etc.), Parks and Recreation, and upcoming events. These areas were reported as the most visited within the Resident user segments. All respondents were asked to provide words that describe the current website and words to describe a future website. These responses uncovered a challenge to deliver the extensive amount of information expected of a City website, in an organized and user-friendly way. The opportunity uncovered from this exercise is that the current website is considered to be boring and stale, but largely in look and feel. The addition of design elements, such as color, photos; dynamic or multi-media elements would easily resolve the overall impression of the site.

In these activities, the respondents began to differ more among user segments. Below are the responses for these exercises broken out by segment:

Urban Tech Savvy

All of the Urban Tech Savvy respondents were existing users of the City's website on some level. Some respondents reported visiting the website on a regular basis to look up information on City services, parks and recreation, and upcoming events. Other respondents' activity with the website was focused on activities specific to the Library page or Airport page. In general, Urban Tech Savvy respondents felt that the current website was delivering most of those needs, although respondents called out that they wanted access to more detailed information for areas of interest in an easier and more obvious way.

When asked about desired activities or features that were not offered through the website as it exists today, respondents were able to point to several specific activities:

- Ability to complete activities online, such as changing name or registering to vote
- More information about city events and activities
- More statistics and information about the city

Descriptions of the website as it exists today and descriptions of expectations for a future version of the website:

Words Used to Describe the Current Website	Words Used to Describe a Future Website
Structured	Informative
Boring	Interesting
Lacking color	Sustainable
Clean	User Friendly
Generic	Colorful
Plain	Dynamic
Not Dynamic	More culture
Unorganized	Full of pictures
	Media
	Informational
	Reliable

Suburban Family

Most of the Suburban Family respondents were existing users of the current website on some level. Some respondents reported visiting the website on a regular basis to look up information on City services, parks and recreation, and upcoming events. One respondent’s activity was focused on activities specific to the Library page, but didn’t realize the Library page was part of the City’s website.

When asked about desired activities or features that were not currently offered on the website, respondents were able to point to some specific activities and wishes:

- More easily accessible information about city events and activities
- Better organized information

Descriptions of the website as it exists today and descriptions of expectations for a future version of the website:

Words Used to Describe the Current Website	Words Used to Describe a Future Website
Comprehensive	Intuitive
Unorganized	User-Friendly
Plain	Austin
Informational	Creative
Verbose	Current
Mediocre	High Tech
	Easy to Navigate
	Complete
	Clean
	Progressive
	Fun
	Authentic
	User-Friendly

Older Urban

Only three Older Urban respondents were interviewed and the majority of them had not been to the website prior to the interview. The respondent who had visited the website prior to the interview reported using the website to check road conditions, utilities and real estate information. The respondent who had visited the website in the past was asked to recall her past experiences with the website and describe whether their activities on the website were browse-based or search-based. The respondent reported primarily accessing information by browsing through features and content.

Because the majority of respondents in this segment had not visited the website in the past, they were asked to describe the type of information and content they would expect to see on the website. In general, respondents expected that the website would offer information on civic events, including connections to City Council, and access to information on utilities and City services.

When asked about desired activities or features that were not expected to be offered through the website as it exists today, respondents were able to point to some specific activities:

- More information about city events and activities
- More statistics and information about the city

Descriptions of the website as it exists today and descriptions of expectations for a future version of the website:

Words Used to Describe the Current Website	Words Used to Describe a Future Website
Information	Inviting
	Fun
	Atmosphere of Austin
	Beautiful
	Clean and Easy

HISPANIC Bilingual Mothers

All of the respondents representing the Hispanic Bilingual Mothers user segment were existing users of the website on some level. Respondents reported visiting the website on a regular basis to look up information on City services, parks and recreation, and upcoming events.

When asked about desired activities or features that were not currently offered on the website, respondents were able to point to some specific activities:

- Ability to complete activities online, such as paying taxes, locating birth certificates or registering to vote
- More information about city events and activities

Respondents were also asked to detail areas that would not be appropriate or a good match for the website. Only one respondent was able to come up with an example:

- Information not specific to Austin and it’s immediate surrounding area

Descriptions of the website as it exists today and descriptions of expectations for a future version of the website:

Words Used to Describe the Current Website	Words Used to Describe a Future Website
Easy-to-Use	User-Friendly
Informative	Simplified
Thorough	More tech savvy
Out of date	Fun
Friendly	Refreshing
	Attractive
	More options

Business

Overview

In each interview the respondents were asked about their experience with the existing website and expectations of what the City of Austin's website should offer. Of the users that had visited the website in the past, there were some commonalities among the responses from these two user groups but much less so than in the resident groups.

Respondents who had visited the website in the past were asked to recall their past experiences with the website and describe whether their activities on the website were browse-based or search-based. When asked about their experiences with the website in the past, most respondents commented that locating information of interest usually required several clicks or a search.

Overall, respondents felt that the existing website was full of information and content, but there was an impression across all segments that the information was not organized or accessible in an easy or obvious way.

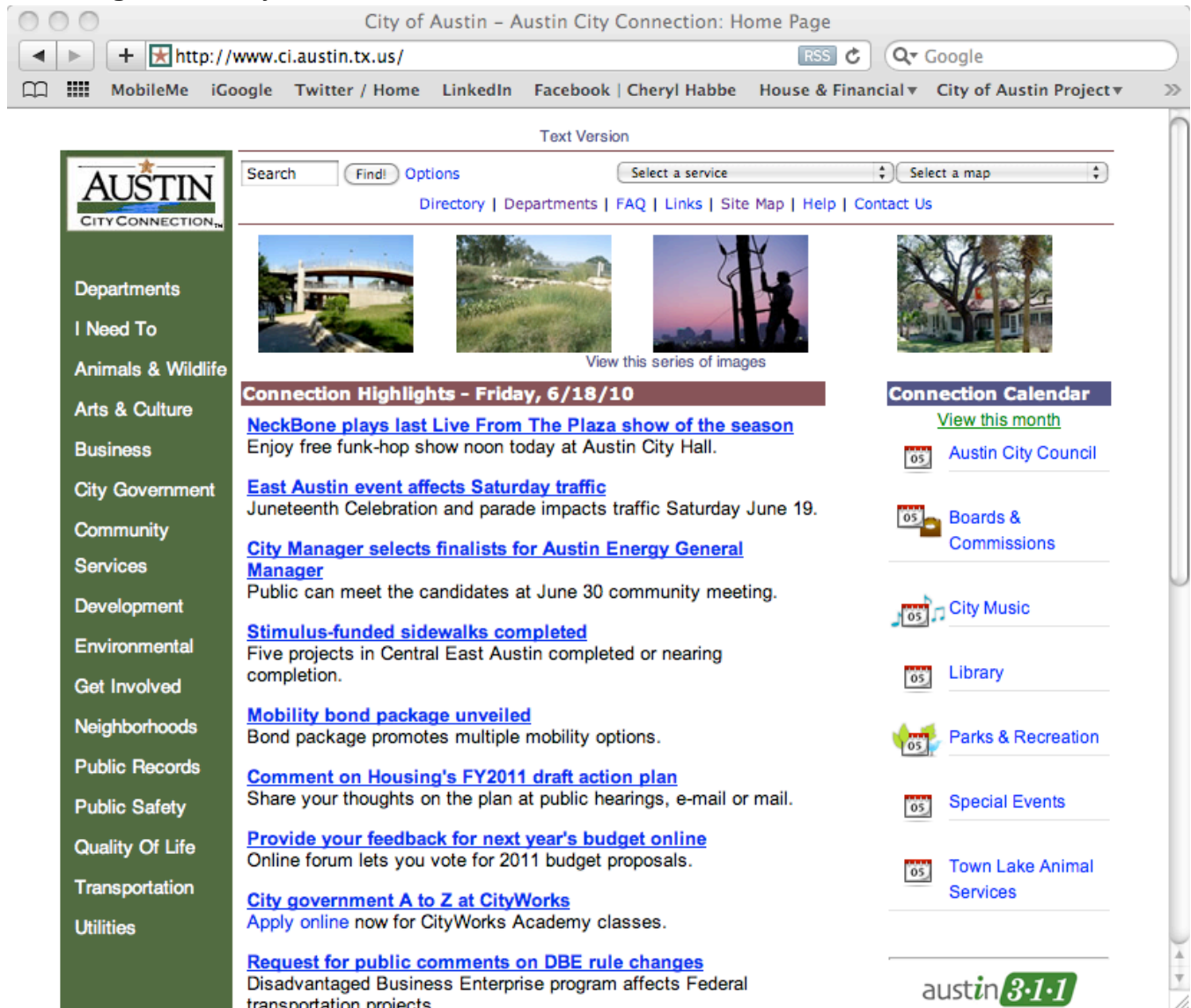
Respondents were asked to describe the information and features they would expect to see available on the website. Expectations and needs for features and information on the current website were similar across all respondents, regardless of user segment:

- Civic related needs: connections to City Council and updates to new regulations
- Access to information on utilities and City services
- A calendar highlighting current events

Response and Perception to Examples on the Existing Website:

Respondents were presented five key pages/sections on the website as it exists today' specific sections were chosen because they were identified as areas of interest for the business users in previous research or high traffic areas of the website.

Home Page for the City of Austin



When commenting on the homepage, Business users' responses echoes those heard by the respondents in the resident user groups:

- Across all segments, the most common feedback heard about the home page was that it looked informative and full of information. However, there was also a strong impression from respondents in all of the segments that the page was cluttered and did not have a strong or identifiable area of focus.
- Respondents sometimes described the website as stale, and commented that "this doesn't feel like Austin". Respondents frequently mentioned the desire to see more attractive and dynamic imagery.

Development Process and One Stop Shop

- The Development Process and One Stop Shop page was seen as simplistic and straightforward; although, subjects also felt that there was no way to understand the structure at a glance or quickly navigate through the page.
- Respondents, in both segments, felt that the page would be easier to use if there were navigational links that connect to content throughout the page (meaning the section needed navigation versus just links off of bullet points within the content of the page) as well as search options for content within the section.
- Respondents in both segments commented that they appreciated the historical images running along the right hand side of the page but felt that the space could be better used to evenly distribute and

organize the content that ran down the left hand side of the page. All commented that the page scrolled down much too long with important information getting lost as the bottom, in the absence of navigation.

Code Compliance



- Although respondents had a better perception of the page layout and organization for Code Compliance than with the other pages they viewed on the site, many respondents had a difficult time grasping the specific purpose and options available through this section; what was meaningful to them as users.
- One respondent, in the Construction/Developer segment called out an interest in having a directory or searchable database of codes, as well as the ability to learn about recent changes to codes.

Council Meeting Information Center

City of Austin, Office of the City Clerk – City Council Meeting Information Center

http://www.ci.austin.tx.us/cityclerk/edims/council_meeting_info_center.htm

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- (512) 974-2210
- [Send Email](#)

Next Scheduled Meeting

6/24/2010 - Regular Meeting of the Austin City Council [Draft Agenda*](#)

* Draft agendas are subject to change without notice.

[Index of Council Agendas](#) | [Video: City of Austin Channel 6](#)

Recent Meetings

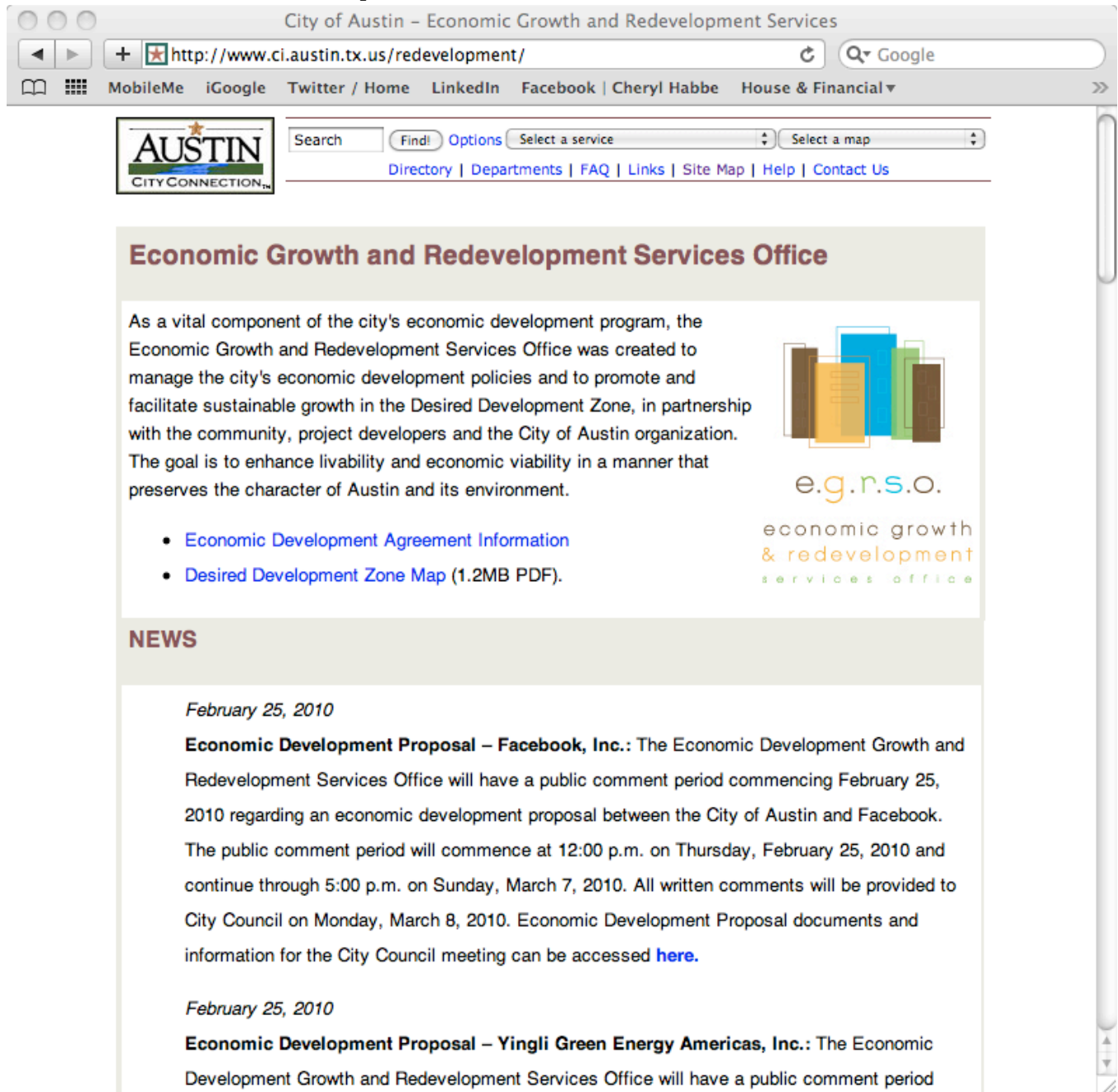
[Earlier Meetings...](#)

Agendas, approved meeting minutes, video, transcripts, ordinances and resolutions, work papers, drafts and other records by meeting date.

6/10/2010	Regular Meeting of the Austin City Council	Details
5/27/2010	Regular Meeting of the Austin City Council	Details
5/27/2010	Austin Housing Finance Corporation (AHFC) Board of Directors Meeting	Details
5/26/2010	Special Called Meeting of the Austin City Council <i>East 11th and 12th Street Town Hall Meeting</i>	Details
5/13/2010	Regular Meeting of the Austin City Council	Details

- Respondents, from both segments, clearly understood the focus and intent of the page and felt that the information available in this section was valuable.
- Although respondents received the content provided by this section positively, they felt that more specific information for each listed meeting would make it easier to use and view. Specifically, respondents wanted to see a brief description of agenda items for each meeting (past and future), without having to click on the Agenda or Details link.
- Respondents wanted a more obvious search to help locate specific topics of interest within this section.

Economic Growth and Redevelopment Services



- The most common feedback received by respondents about this page, in both groups, was the overwhelming length and need to scroll in order to locate information.
- Some felt that the contact information was a valuable part of the page and was buried at the bottom. Respondents wanted to see that section moved up to a more easily accessible section.
- A few respondents felt that the news section was too long and should feature shorter abstracts and links to stories, rather than paragraphs that increase the length of the page.

- The lack of color and sparse design scheme was viewed as plain, simple and clinical to some respondents.
- None of the Small Business respondents noticed the link to the Small Business Development Program.

Response and Perception of Peer Websites:

The presentation of the three peer websites, chosen by the City of Austin web team as being aspirational to Austin, provided respondents with a number of features and ideas that were viewed as things that should be considered for a future version of a website for the City of Austin. Common areas on all three websites that were received positively by respondents included the consistent menu bar running along the top, a relevant and identifiable image representing the city, and easily accessible and obvious dropdown menus for navigation.

San Francisco

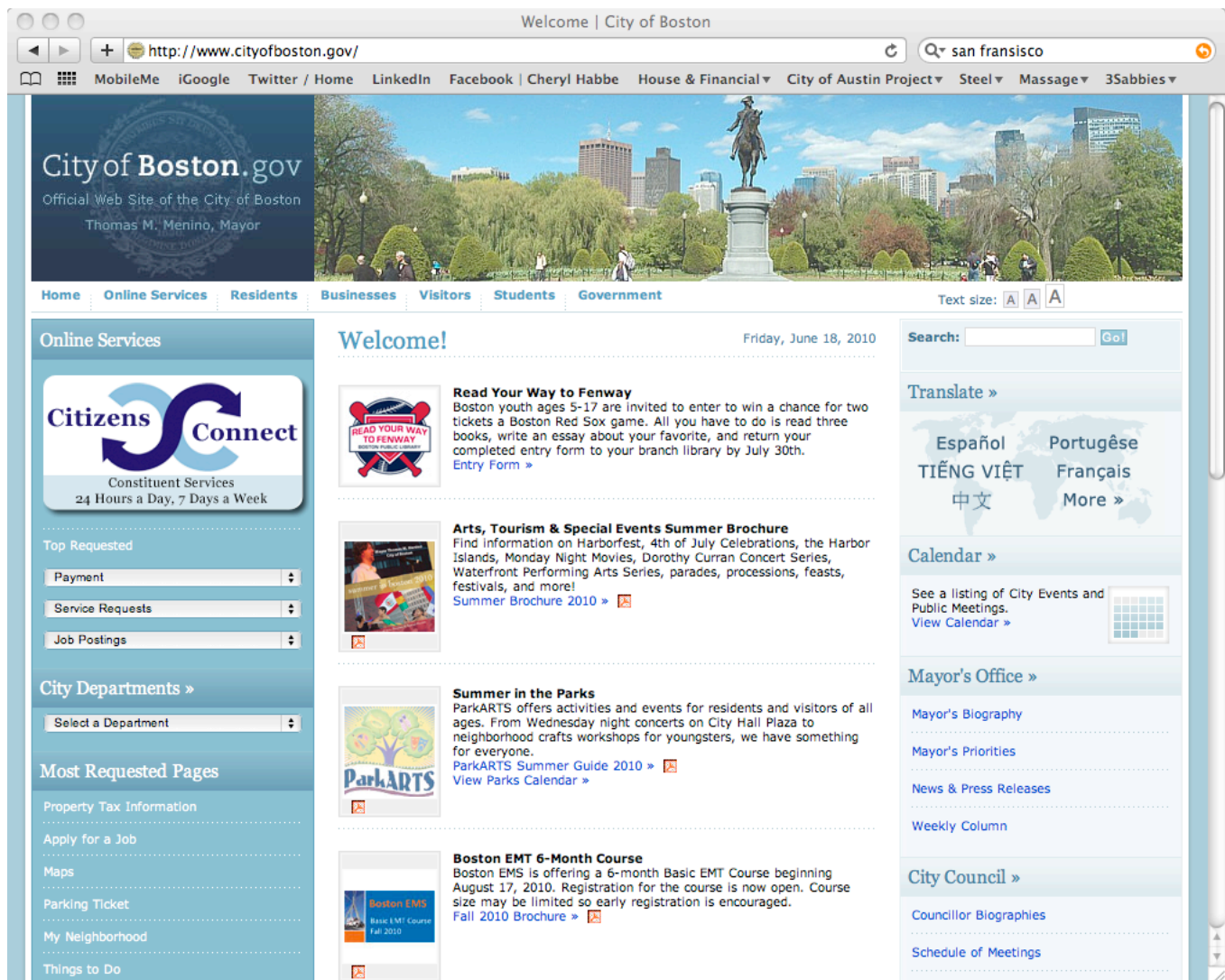


- The design used for the San Francisco website was very polarizing for respondents in the business group, as it was for the residents. About half of the respondents, in both groups, felt that the website presented a fresh, modern view and were attracted to the series of rotating images used as feature

highlights in the middle of the page. The remaining respondents felt that the images were distracting and distracted from the real value of the website.

- The inclusion of a 'Most Requested' expandable dropdown was a standout to many respondents, in both groups, who appreciated the ability to locate frequently used areas of the website in one common area.
- The rotating carousel at the bottom of the page was also somewhat polarizing across these business users groups. Although some respondents viewed it as "slick" and an effective way to control vertical scrolling down the page, others felt that the functionality was not obvious and were not aware that it moved until they were shown the arrows to control the area.

Boston



- The website for Boston received praise from many of the respondents, in both groups, for its organized structure and appearance; however, some respondents felt that the design and color scheme used on the website felt "cold" or "formal."

- As was seen in the San Francisco website, a ‘Most Requested’ section stood out, in both groups, as an area of interest and value to respondents.
- Respondents, in both groups, felt that the ‘Welcome’ section in the middle of the page struck a good balance between providing information, without becoming overwhelming.
- One of the standout areas of the Boston website, to Small Business Owners, was its concentration on Students, as they are a large population in Austin.
- Another popular feature seen on the Boston website was the obvious ability to translate the page into a number of different languages. Respondents, in both business groups like the residents group, appreciated this feature as respondents felt that the Austin area is a melting pot of people from different backgrounds and cultures.

Kansas City



- Respondents, in both groups, commented positively on the on the “warm” and “bright” color scheme.

- Although the ‘Highlights’ section in the middle of the page was similar to what was seen on the Boston website, respondents, in both groups, commented that the section was too crowded and cluttered.
- Like in the residents group, the ‘I Want To’ section on the left hand side of the page was very polarizing. Some respondents felt that the concept was a good way of approaching tactical activities on the website; while others felt that the categories were too vague.

Existing Behavior and Expectations of the City’s Website:

Respondents were asked whether they had visited the website in the past, and if so, what types of activities usually brought them to the website. Some respondents reported visiting the website on a regular basis to look up information on licenses and permits, City services, parks and recreation, and upcoming events. In general, respondents felt that the website was delivering most of those needs, although respondents called out that they wanted access to more specific detail in an easier and more obvious way.

SMALL BUSINESS Owners

The majority of Small Business respondents were existing users of the website on some level. Respondents reported visiting the website on a regular basis to look up information on licenses and permits, parks and recreation, and upcoming events.

When asked about desired activities or features that were not currently offered on the website, respondents were able to point to some specific activities:

- Ability to complete activities online, such as paying taxes or registering to vote
- More statistics and information about the city

Respondents were also asked to detail areas that would not be appropriate or a good match for the website. Across the segments, respondents called out a few specific examples:

- Advertising
- Political promotion
- Anything veering too much into the category of Social Networking

Descriptions of the website as it exists today and descriptions of expectations for a future version of the website:

Words Used to Describe the Current Website	Words Used to Describe a Future Website
Easy-to-use	Easy-to-use
Not busy	Informative
Arduous	Useful
Not user-friendly	Not busy
Clinical	Dynamic
	Intuitive
	Functional
	Event Oriented

Business Users in CONSTRUCTION/REAL ESTATE/DEVELOPMENT

The majority of Construction/Real Estate/Development respondents were existing users of the website on some level. Some respondents reported visiting the website on a regular basis to look up information on City services, parks and recreation, and upcoming events. Others visited for Information on City Council Meetings and City Council meeting minutes and Zoning Regulations. It is important to note here that while the previous research indicated that this user group contained “heavy users” of codes and regulations, the respondents who agreed to be interviewed as part of this study did not have the job responsibilities that required or included these activities. Specific needs, wants, and preferences for that section will need to be obtained by combining the information received from the first stage of research, and a Product Gap study that will follow as the third stage of research in this project.

Respondents were asked to describe the features they would expect to see available on the website. Expectations and needs for features and information on the current website were similar across all respondents, regardless of user segment:

- Civic related needs: connections to City Council and updates to new regulations
- Access to information on utilities and City services
- Connection to information about Austin’s Parks and Recreation
- A calendar highlighting current events

When asked about desired activities or features that were not currently offered on the website, respondents were able to point to some specific activities.

- More information about city events and activities
- More statistics and information about the city

Respondents were also asked to detail areas that would not be appropriate or a good match for the website. Across the segments, respondents called out a few specific examples:

- Political promotion
- Weather
- Social event information that isn’t broadly focused to all residents of the city

Descriptions of the website as it exists today and descriptions of expectations for a future version of the website:

Words Used to Describe the Current Website	Words Used to Describe a Future Website
Easy-to-use	Easy-to-use
Informative	Eye-catching
Data	Fully informative
	Positive
	Austin
	Success
	Future
	Relevant

Card Sort Exercise Findings

Top Features

Clear trends emerged from the Card Sort with interactive, functional tools and features becoming some of the most popular features identified by respondents in all user groups. Features depending on technology were also popular and interesting to respondents; however, most did not reach a large scale ‘Must Have’ response. Features that were deemed by many as unnecessary were often those that respondents felt could be accomplished without the help of the website or those that would be perceived as useful in isolated instances. The most common factor seen among features identified as potentially having a negative impact on the website was the potential ability for uncensored comments, feedback and discussion to get out of hand and devalue the quality of civic discourse.

Top Five Must Have Features

Feature Description	Must Have
Online payments for utilities, tickets, court fees, library fines, etc.	25
Submit applications and forms online (such as permits)	21
Interactive Events Calendar for all City events (can filtered based on users’ topic, preference and user can choose date range)	19
Interactive Maps - user enters an address and receives a map that displays City services, Utilities, Parks, Road Closures, etc. on a map	18
Permit Management - apply, pay, track progress of permits online	15

Top Five Nice to Have Features

Feature Description	Nice to Have
Mobile version of the website (readable on a smart phone)	19
Social Media - alerts and City news on platforms such as Twitter and Facebook	17
Interactive Maps with City development and redevelopment information (neighborhood plans, zoning, etc)	16
Be able to book resources at City Parks online (pavilions, courts, etc.)	15
Mobile applications for City Services (examples might be 311 information, look up crime statistics based on where you are or an address you type in, tour information about interesting sites around Austin, utilities usage information and payments)	15

Top Five Unnecessary Features

Feature Description	Unnecessary
All City data feeds available for GIS data aggregation (development data, floodplain data, etc.)	10
Customizable City of Austin Home page - like iGoogle	9
My favorites - a place for users to save links to favorite pages	8
Grant Management - apply, track progress of grants via online interface	6
Newsletters from the City (receive in email, by topic/department)	6

Top Five Features that Would Negatively Impact Impression of Website

Feature Description	Negative
Allow citizens to submit events for the calendar	5
Allow citizens the ability to comment on City Council Agenda items online	5
Community Platforms - way for citizens to provide feedback, ask questions, and communicate with each other in online groups set up by interest or neighborhood (similar to Facebook Groups)	3
All City data feeds available for GIS data aggregation (development data, floodplain data, etc.)	2
Two-way communication with City Government (allow comments on content or blog entries, as well as public forum for questions)	2

Respondent Submitted Feature Ideas

As part of the Card Sort exercise, respondents had the ability to submit their own ideas that they felt were not included in the predetermined list of features. Some features were identified based on examples seen during the Peer Website Review; while others were based on respondent needs and interests.

Verbatim feature ideas were captured as follows

Respondent Submitted Feature Ideas Based on Core Functionality, Website Navigation or Look and Feel
Most requested pages
More colorful pictures
Better colors conveying Austin's spirit
Better photography
More emphasis on a "keyword" search bar
A few buttons for key aspects of the website
Attractive icons that make your search fun and easy
Add a "most viewed" or "most requested" link
Easy to find search area
Text size options
Graphics not only make it user friendly, but more exciting to look at
Consistent navigation/presentation website wide.
Frequently requested actions/services dropdown menus on main page
More visually dynamic (photos and design)
Website available in other languages
Translate options
Website available in other languages
City-wide website account
Different Font
Search bar in top right of page
Respondent Submitted Feature Ideas Based on Activities and Events
Neighborhood based filter for service, news, events
City of San Francisco page is good example of visual/succinct info presented in single view; including highlight section for a "topic of month"
May want to include areas on the page for technology updates, fine art events, community events, philanthropic events
Austin Outdoors (everything related to outdoor activities)
Austin Original Shopping
Only in Austin Restaurants
Easily accessible calendar of upcoming events that actually stands out as one of the first things you see
Link to active resources/websites - road closures for upcoming races
Custom page has event, notification info

Respondent Submitted Feature Ideas Based on School, Students and Education
Student section
School info (public and university)
Link for students (similar to Boston)
Resources link (such as educational, schools, etc.)
Respondent Submitted Feature Ideas Based on Austin News and Civically Minded Activities
Have a mayor link on top of the page - some sort of direction on what the mayor is doing
More obvious section on agendas that require local voting
Filtered RSS Feeds. City news broken down into 5 or 6 categories allowing each to be subscribed to.
More topics on news, specifically emergency topics
Alerts - in case of emergencies
Sex offender locator
Respondent Submitted Feature Ideas Based on Health and Medical Interests
Search navigation to help people find their health needs
Austin's Health, such as topics related to current health issues, i.e. flu, diabetes, allergies, etc.
Healthcare info - from city services to specialty hospitals
Respondent Submitted Feature Ideas Based on Visitors and Tourism
More visitor friendly with events, landmarks, walking or other tours
Option for residents and visitors
Respondent Submitted Feature Ideas Based on Local Interests and Information
I would like to see a map of neighborhood parks with pictures - when wanting to take kids to something new, a pic would show me if it was age appropriate
Link to local coupon websites: Adelio, Groupon, Thrillist
Add a link to parking lots and zones as well as potential current residential parking permit required neighborhoods
Top companies/employers in area

Recommendations

The following are recommendations to consider when approaching the redesign of the City of Austin website:

- The structure of the site should allow for the different types of users, although the overriding segment is Residents, there are specific needs that business users in construction or development look for.
- Navigation should be consistent throughout the site and include top level navigation regardless of the department the user is in.
- Although the information about colleges and content most relevant to Tourists is not maintained by the City, it is expected that a website provided by the City of Austin would include these topics. It is not necessary to begin maintaining this content; from a user perspective, providing links that take the user to a resource that has the information they are looking for is the same as providing it.
- The website graphics should include photography of sites from around the city and a graphical look and feel that represents the residents of Austin. Respondents from all segments commented that the website should represent the uniqueness of Austin.
- Color was discussed across most user groups along with photography described above, as Austin is seen as a “colorful” city. In the review of peer sites the two sites that are “monochromatic” were seen to be clinical, cold or stale. The peer site, Kansas City, that used a wider color palette and utilized color for accents and content organization was better received.
- In all areas, the content on the website should focus on the “mission” of the department as it relates to the user/reader versus promoting the department and its staff as a primary goal. Although the respondents did not say this verbatim, it is an interpretation for the confusion on those pages on the current site that did not focus on what the information means to the user/reader.
- Interactive features and content is highly regarded by all user groups and should be considered for the website redesign. That is information that allows the user to “manage” information such as: pay, submit, filter, customize information to their area of focus, mobile applications, Social Media, etc..

Appendix

Screeners

City of Austin IDIs: Urban Tech Savvy, Suburban Families and Older Urban Screener

May 17 – May 19, 2010 Austin, TX

Daily Schedule: Recruit one respondent per session time

- 10:00-11:00: IDI #1
- 11:00-12:00: IDI #2
- 12:00-1:00: IDI #3
- 1:00-1:30: BREAK
- 1:30-2:30: IDI #4
- 2:30-3:30: IDI #5
- 3:30-4:30: IDI #6
- 4:30-5:30: IDI #7
- 5:30-6:00: BREAK
- 6:00-7:00: IDI #8
- 7:00-8:00: IDI #9
- 8:00-9:00: IDI #10

URBAN TECH SAVVY: Total of 6 subjects

- 3 females, 3 males
- No respondents with children
- Aged 24-34
- Self-identify as “Advanced” Internet User
- Live in an urban location

OLDER URBAN: Total of 4 subjects

- All females
- Aged 45 and older
- Identify as urban resident
- One with an impairment
- All with lower income range, under \$50K annually

SUBURBAN FAMILY: Total of 5 subjects

- 3 females, 2 males
- All respondents with children in the household
- Aged 24-54
- Self-identify as “Advanced Internet User”
- Live in a Suburban location
- 1 as Hispanic

****You can use past participants of focus groups, but not within the last 6 months****

1. Do you or anyone in your household work for any of the following: **(IF ANY CHECKED, TERMINATE)**

- Market Research Company ()
- Advertising or PR Agency ()
- Media Company ()
- Internet Company ()
- Federal, State or Local Government ()

2. Have you ever participated in a focus group?

- Yes () (CONTINUE)
- No..... () (SKIP TO Q4)

3. When did you last participate in a focus group? **(DO NOT READ)**

- Within the past 6 months..... () (TERMINATE)
- 6+ Months ago..... () (CONTINUE)

4. How old are you? **URBAN TECH SAVVY: 24 - 34, OLDER URBAN: 45 AND OLDER, SUBURBAN FAMILIES: 24-54**

- Under 18 years..... () (TERMINATE)
- 18 to 23 years..... () (TERMINATE)
- 24 - 34 years..... () (CONTINUE FOR URBAN TECH SAVVY AND SUBURBAN FAMILY)
- 35 - 44 years..... () (CONTINUE FOR SUBURBAN FAMILY)
- 45 - 55 years..... () (CONTINUE FOR SUBURBAN FAMILY AND OLDER URBAN)
- 56 to 60 years..... () (CONTINUE FOR OLDER URBAN)
- REFUSED () (TERMINATE)

5. Which of the following best describes your residential location **(READ)**

- Urban..... () (CONTINUE FOR 'OLDER URBAN' AND 'URBAN TECH SAVVY', IF RECRUITING FOR 'SUBURBAN FAMILY', TERMINATE)
- Suburban..... () (CONTINUE FOR 'SUBURBAN FAMILY', IF RECRUITING FOR 'OLDER URBAN' AND 'URBAN TECH SAVVY', TERMINATE)
- Rural..... () (TERMINATE)

6. What is your current marital status? **RECRUIT 3 SINGLE/2 MARRIED FOR 'OLDER URBAN', RECRUIT GOOD MIX FOR 'URBAN TECH SAVVY', RECRUIT ALL MARRIED/LIVING TOGETHER FOR 'SUBURBAN FAMILIES'**

- Single (unmarried, widowed, divorced/separated)..... () (IF RECRUITING FOR 'SUBURBAN FAMILY, TERMINATE. OTHERWISE CONTINUE.)
- Married/Living together..... () (CONTINUE TO Q7)

7. How many children are in the household, under the age of 18? **NO CHILDREN UNDER 18 FOR 'OLDER URBAN' OR 'URBAN TECH SAVVY', ALL 'SUBURBAN FAMILY' MUST HAVE ONE OR MORE CHILDREN UNDER 18.**

- One..... () (IF 'SUBURBAN FAMILY', CONTINUE. IF 'URBAN TECH SAVVY' OR 'OLDER URBAN', TERMINATE)
- Two..... () (IF 'SUBURBAN FAMILY', CONTINUE. IF 'URBAN TECH SAVVY' OR 'OLDER URBAN', TERMINATE)
- Three..... () (IF 'SUBURBAN FAMILY', CONTINUE. IF 'URBAN TECH SAVVY' OR 'OLDER URBAN', TERMINATE)
- Four or more..... () (IF 'SUBURBAN FAMILY', CONTINUE. IF 'URBAN TECH SAVVY' OR 'OLDER URBAN', TERMINATE)
- None..... () (IF 'URBAN TECH SAVVY OR 'OLDER URBAN', CONTINUE. IF 'SUBURBAN FAMILY', TERMINATE)

8. Please select the word that best describes your level of Internet expertise. **'URBAN TECH SAVVY' AND 'SUBURBAN FAMILY' MUST IDENTIFY AS 'ADVANCED'. READ AND RECORD FOR 'OLDER URBAN'**

- Advanced..... () (IF URBAN TECH SAVVY OR SUBURBAN FAMILY, CONTINUE TO Q9; IF OLDER URBAN, SKIP TO Q10)
- Intermediate..... () (TERMINATE FOR URBAN TECH SAVVY AND SUBURBAN FAMILY)
- Novice..... () (TERMINATE FOR URBAN TECH SAVVY AND SUBURBAN FAMILY)

9. **FOR URBAN TECH SAVVY AND SUBURBAN FAMILY:** Which of the following activities to do you participate in on a regular basis? By participate we mean read and/or write, download or share. **(READ AND RECORD - 'URBAN TECH SAVVY' MUST PARTICIPATE IN AT LEAST 4 TO CONTINUE TO Q11, 'SUBURBAN FAMILY' MUST PARTICIPATE IN SOCIAL NETWORKING IN ORDER TO CONTINUE TO Q11)**

- Blogs and/or micro-blogging (e.g. public blog, Twitter)..... ()
- Social networking – personal and/or professional (e.g. Facebook, LinkedIn)..... ()
- Watch/listen, post, share, or download videos or audio files (e.g. YouTube, iTunes)..... ()
- Post, share, or download photos and images (e.g. Flickr, Picasa)..... ()
- Texting or MMS..... ()
- Wiki (e.g. Wikipedia, PBworks)..... ()
- Social news (e.g. digg, reddit)..... ()
- Social bookmarking (e.g. delicious.us, stumble upon)..... ()
- Event communication (e.g. evite.com, meetup.com)..... ()
- Product or business reviews and opinions (e.g. yelp.com, epinion.com)..... ()
- Community message boards (e.g. Yahoo! Answers, Askville)..... ()
- Other (Specify)..... ()
- None of the above..... (TERMINATE)

10. **FOR OLDER URBAN:** Do you have any of the following physical disabilities or impairments? (READ AND CONTINUE TO Q11) **RECRUIT ONE RESPONDENT FOR 'OLDER URBAN' WITH AN IMPAIRMENT**

- No physical disability..... ()
- Vision disability..... ()
- Hearing disability..... ()
- Motor disability..... ()
- Cognitive disability..... (TERMINATE)
- Prefer not to answer..... (TERMINATE)

Now, just a few questions for classification purposes:

11. What is your current employment status? Are you...? **(FOLOW TERM. CRITERIA, OTHERWISE, RECRUIT A GOOD MIX)**

- Employed full time ()
- Employed part time ()
- Homemaker () (TERMINATE IF URBAN TECH SAVVY)
- Student ()
- Retired () (TERMINATE IF URBAN TECH SAVVY OR SUBURBAN FAMILY)
- Or unemployed () (TERMINATE IF SUBURBAN FAMILY)
- REFUSED () (TERMINATE)

12. Which **one** of the following categories best describes your educational status?

- Less than high school graduate () (TERMINATE IF URBAN TECH SAVVY OR SUBURBAN FAMILY)
- High school graduate ()
- Some college (includes two-year Associate degrees) ()
- Trade, technical or vocational school ()
- College graduate ()
- Post-graduate work or degree ()
- REFUSED () (TERMINATE)

13. Which of the following best describes your race or ethnic status? Is that... **(READ OUT AND RECORD BELOW.)**

- White/Caucasian ()
- Black/African American ()
- Latina/Hispanic ()
- Asian/Pacific Islander ()
- Other ()
- REFUSED () (TERMINATE)

14. And which of the following categories includes your **household's total annual income** last year?

- Less than \$20,000 () (TERMINATE IF URBAN TECH SAVVY OR SUBURBAN FAMILY, RECRUIT IF OLDER URBAN)
- \$20,000 to \$34,999 () (TERMINATE IF URBAN TECH SAVVY OR SUBURBAN FAMILY, RECRUIT IF OLDER URBAN))
- \$35,000 to \$49,999 () (TERMINATE IF SUBURBAN FAMILY, RECRUIT IF URBAN TECH SAVVY OR OLDER URBAN)
- \$50,000 to \$74,999 () (TERMINATE IF OLDER URBAN, RECRUIT IF URBAN TECH SAVVY OR SUBURBAN FAMILY)

\$75,000 to \$99,999 () (TERMINATE IF OLDER URBAN, RECRUIT IF URBAN TECH SAVVY OR SUBURBAN FAMILY)
 Over \$100,000 () (TERMINATE IF OLDER URBAN, RECRUIT IF URBAN TECH SAVVY OR SUBURBAN FAMILY)

IF RESPONDENT IS ARTICULATE AND HAS NO SPEECH OR LANGUAGE DIFFICULTIES – INVITE TO FOCUS GROUPS, OTHERWISE TERMINATE.

IF QUALIFIED, ASK: Would you be willing to participate in an informal one on one website evaluation? The evaluation would last approximately 1 hour, and you will be paid \$100 for your time and cooperation.

Is this something you are interested in doing?

IF YES, SET APPOINTMENT: DATE/TIME: _____ . Please arrive 5-10 minutes before your scheduled appointment time.

Austin City Hall
 301 W. Second St.
 Austin, TX 78701

Check in details: Once you go through security, please take a seat in the main lobby and Liz will be down to meet you.

REMIND ALL RESPONDENTS: If you require them, please bring your reading glasses. Thank you for your cooperation during this discussion, we look forward to seeing you on (insert date) at (insert time).

GENERAL INSTRUCTIONS

- A list of all respondents recruited for each group with all key breakdowns must be supplied for clients in the back room upon arrival to the facility.
- Use questions on the screener exactly as stated when making initial contact and when re-screening. Never abbreviate.
- Inform us of any changes which are made during screening.
- Review all screeners to make sure all qualifications have been met.
- No respondents are to know each other prior to the session.
- All respondents must be able to speak clear and intelligible English.
- No respondents are to be recruited through any organization.
- CONFIRM ALL APPOINTMENTS ONE DAY PRIOR TO SESSIONS.
- IF ANY QUESTIONS ARISE DURING RECRUITING, CALL ME IMMEDIATELY.

- I REQUIRE THAT ALL RESPONDENTS SIGN-OUT UPON RECEIPT OF INCENTIVE FEE PAYMENT. THESE SIGN-OUT SHEETS MUST BE FORWARDED TO MY OFFICE UPON COMPLETION OF SESSIONS. **THIS IS VERY IMPORTANT**

City of Austin IDIs: Hispanic Bilingual Mother Screener

May 17 – May 19, 2010 Austin, TX

Daily Schedule: Recruit one respondent per session time

- 10:00-11:00: IDI #1
- 11:00-12:00: IDI #2
- 12:00-1:00: IDI #3
- 1:00-1:30: BREAK
- 1:30-2:30: IDI #4
- 2:30-3:30: IDI #5
- 3:30-4:30: IDI #6
- 4:30-5:30: IDI #7
- 5:30-6:00: BREAK
- 6:00-7:00: IDI #8
- 7:00-8:00: IDI #9
- 8:00-9:00: IDI #10

HISPANIC Bilingual Mother SEGMENT: Total of 5 subjects

- 5 females
- 24-54 yrs old
- All with children in the house
- All who identify themselves as Hispanic
- All bilingual English/Spanish

****You can use past participants of focus groups, but not within the last 6 months****

1. Do you or anyone in your household work for any of the following: **(IF ANY CHECKED, TERMINATE)**

- Market Research Company ()
- Advertising or PR Agency ()
- Media Company ()
- Internet Company ()
- Federal, State or Local Government ()

2. Have you ever participated in a focus group?

- Yes () (CONTINUE)
- No..... () (SKIP TO Q4)

3. When did you last participate in a focus group?
(DO NOT READ)

- Within the past 6 months () (TERMINATE)
- 6+ Months ago () (CONTINUE)

4. Which of the following best describes your race or ethnic status? Is that... **(READ OUT AND RECORD BELOW.)**

- White/Caucasian () (TERMINATE)
- Black/African American () (TERMINATE)
- Latina/Hispanic ()
- Asian/Pacific Islander () (TERMINATE)
- Other () (TERMINATE)
- REFUSED () (TERMINATE)

5. Are languages other than English spoken in your family home?
 Yes CONTINUE TO Q6
 No () (TERMINATE)

6. Which language(s) do you speak at home, other than English? **RESPONDENT MUST ANSWER 'SPANISH', IF NOT, TERMINATE**

7. What is your current marital status?

- Single (unmarried, widowed, divorced/separated)..... () (CONTINUE TO Q8)
- Married/Living together..... () (CONTINUE TO Q8)

8. How many children are in the household, under the age of 18? **RECRUIT ALL WITH CHILDREN IN THE HOUSE**

- One..... ()
- Two..... ()
- Three..... ()
- Four or more..... ()
- None..... () TERMINATE

9. Which of the following best describes your residential location **RECRUIT GOOD MIX**

- Urban..... ()
- Suburban..... ()
- Rural..... ()

10. Please select the word that best describes your level of Internet expertise (READ AND RECORD)

- Advanced..... ()
- Intermediate..... ()
- Novice..... ()

Now, just a few questions for classification purposes:

11. How old are you?

- Under 18 years..... () (TERMINATE)
- 18 to 23 years..... () (TERMINATE)
- 24 - 34 years..... ()
- 35 - 44 years..... ()
- 45 - 55 years..... ()

56 to 60 years () (TERMINATE)
 REFUSED () (TERMINATE)

12. What is your current employment status? Are you...? (RECRUIT A GOOD MIX)

Employed full time ()
 Employed part time ()
 Homemaker ()
 Student ()
 Retired ()
 Or unemployed ()
 REFUSED () (TERMINATE)

13. Which **one** of the following categories best describes your educational status?

Less than high school graduate () (TERMINATE)
 High school graduate ()
 Some college (includes two-year Associate degrees) ()
 Trade, technical or vocational school ()
 College graduate ()
 Post-graduate work or degree ()
 REFUSED () (TERMINATE)

14. And which of the following categories includes your **household's total annual income** last year?

Less than \$20,000 () TERMINATE
 \$20,000 to \$34,999 ()
 \$35,000 to \$49,999 ()
 \$50,000 to \$74,999 ()
 \$75,000 to \$99,999 ()
 Over \$100,000 ()

IF RESPONDENT IS ARTICULATE AND HAS NO SPEECH OR LANGUAGE DIFFICULTIES – INVITE TO FOCUS GROUPS, OTHERWISE TERMINATE.

IF QUALIFIED, ASK: Would you be willing to participate in an informal one on one webwebsite evaluation? The evaluation would last approximately 1 hour, and you will be paid \$100 for your time and cooperation.

Is this something you are interested in doing?

IF YES, SET APPOINTMENT: DATE/TIME:_____. Please arrive 5-10 minutes before your scheduled appointment time.

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GENERAL INSTRUCTIONS

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City of Austin IDIs: Small Business Segment and Construction/Real Estate/Development Segment Screener

May 17 – May 19, 2010 Austin, TX

Daily Schedule: Recruit one respondent per session time

- 10:00-11:00: IDI #1
- 11:00-12:00: IDI #2
- 12:00-1:00: IDI #3
- 1:00-1:30: BREAK
- 1:30-2:30: IDI #4
- 2:30-3:30: IDI #5
- 3:30-4:30: IDI #6
- 4:30-5:30: IDI #7
- 5:30-6:00: BREAK
- 6:00-7:00: IDI #8
- 7:00-8:00: IDI #9
- 8:00-9:00: IDI #10

CONSTRUCTION/REAL ESTATE/DEVELOPMENT SEGMENT: Total of 5 Subjects

- 3 females/2 males
- All who work in job fields related to Construction/Real Estate/Development

SELF EMPLOYED/SMALL BUSINESS OWNER SCREENER: Total of 5 subjects

- 2 females/3 males
- All who are full-time, self-employed, or small business owners
- Any job field except those related to Construction/Real Estate/Development
- 3 identify themselves as “professional”

****You can use past participants of focus groups, but not within the last 6 months****

1. Do you or anyone in your household work for any of the following: **(IF ANY CHECKED, TERMINATE)**

- Market Research Company ()
- Advertising or PR Agency ()
- Media Company ()
- Internet Company ()
- Federal, State or Local Government ()

2. Have you ever participated in a focus group?

- Yes () (CONTINUE)
- No () (SKIP TO Q4)

3. When did you last participate in a focus group? **(DO NOT READ)**

- Within the past 6 months () (TERMINATE)
- 6+ Months ago () (CONTINUE)

4. Which of the following best describes your current employment status? **(FOLLOW TERM CRITERIA, OTHERWISE, RECRUIT GOOD MIX)**
- Full-time employee..... () TERMINATE IF S.E./SMALL BIZ
 - Full-time self employed..... ()
 - Part-time employee () TERMINATE IF S.E./SMALL BIZ
 - Part-time self employed..... ()
 - Homemaker..... TERMINATE
 - Unemployed TERMINATE
 - Student TERMINATE
 - Retired..... TERMINATE
5. Which of the following best describes the primary focus of your job field? **(SELF EMPLOYED/SMALL BIZ SHOULD NOT WORK IN THE FIELDS OF CONSTRUCTION, ARCHITECTURE, ENGINEERING, REAL ESTATE, UTILITIES OR DEVELOPMENT)**
- Advertising/PR/Marketing/Research..... () CONT. FOR S.E./SMALL BIZ
 - Agriculture..... () CONT. FOR S.E./SMALL BIZ
 - Arts & Entertainment..... () CONT. FOR S.E./SMALL BIZ
 - Banking, insurance, financial services..... () CONT. FOR S.E./SMALL BIZ
 - Business services () CONT. FOR S.E./SMALL BIZ
 - Computer retailer/reseller..... () CONT. FOR S.E./SMALL BIZ
 - Computer hardware/software manufacturing..... () CONT. FOR S.E./SMALL BIZ
 - Consulting () CONT. FOR S.E./SMALL BIZ
 - Construction, architecture, engineering..... () CONT. FOR
- CONST/RE/DEV
- Education () CONT. FOR S.E./SMALL BIZ
 - Government, military..... () CONT. FOR S.E./SMALL BIZ
 - Healthcare/medical..... () CONT. FOR S.E./SMALL BIZ
 - Insurance/legal..... () CONT. FOR S.E./SMALL BIZ
 - Media: TV, cable, radio, print..... () CONT. FOR S.E./SMALL BIZ
 - Non-computer manufacturing..... () CONT. FOR S.E./SMALL BIZ
 - Non-computer retailer..... () CONT. FOR S.E./SMALL BIZ
 - Telecommunications..... () CONT. FOR S.E./SMALL BIZ
 - Transportation..... () CONT. FOR S.E./SMALL BIZ
 - Travel and recreation..... () CONT. FOR S.E./SMALL BIZ
 - Real estate..... () CONT. FOR
- CONST/RE/DEV
- Utilities, energy..... () CONT. FOR
- CONST/RE/DEV
- Other..... () CONT. FOR S.E./SMALL BIZ
6. Which of the following best describes the kind of work you do? (READ AND RECORD) **RECRUIT 3 FOR SELF EMPLOYED/SMALL BUSINESS WHO IDENTIFY THEMSELVES AS "PROFESSIONAL"**
- Executive ()
 - Professional..... ()
 - Sales & Office Support..... ()
 - Service/Customer Service..... ()
 - Skilled Trade..... ()

Farming..... ()
 Other (Specify)..... ()

Now, just a few questions for classification purposes:

7. What is your current marital status? RECRUIT GOOD MIX

Single (unmarried, widowed, divorced/separated)..... ()
 Married/Living together..... ()

8. How many children are in the household, under the age of 18? RECRUIT GOOD MIX

One..... ()
 Two..... ()
 Three..... ()
 Four or more..... ()
 None..... ()

9. Which of the following best describes your residential location RECRUIT GOOD MIX

Urban..... ()
 Suburban..... ()
 Rural..... ()

10. Please select the word that best describes your level of Internet expertise (READ AND RECORD)

Advanced..... ()
 Intermediate..... ()
 Novice..... ()

11. How old are you?

Under 18 years..... () (TERMINATE)
 18 to 23 years..... () (TERMINATE)
 24 - 34 years..... ()
 35 - 44 years..... ()
 45 - 55 years..... ()
 56 to 60 years..... ()
 REFUSED () (TERMINATE)

12. Which **one** of the following categories best describes your educational status?

Less than high school graduate () (TERMINATE)
 High school graduate ()
 Some college (includes two-year Associate degrees) ()
 Trade, technical or vocational school ()
 College graduate ()
 Post-graduate work or degree ()
 REFUSED () (TERMINATE)

13. Which of the following best describes your race or ethnic status? Is that. . .**(READ OUT AND RECORD BELOW.)**

- White/Caucasian ()
- Black/African American ()
- Latina/Hispanic ()
- Asian/Pacific Islander ()
- Other ()
- REFUSED () (TERMINATE)

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Moderators Guide**CoA IDIs – Discussion Guide
May 18th - 20th 2010****I. Orientation (5 Minutes)**

- Background
- Ground Rules/Disclaimers

II. Existing Experience and Needs (10 Minutes)

- What types of activities are you using the city's website for today?
 - When you use the website in your own life, do you typically find yourself going directly to the area or features you need, or do you use a search tool to locate what you need?
- When you think about the activities you do in your own life, what is most important for you to see on the city's website?
 - Is that being accomplished by the city's website today? Discuss.
 - Are there activities that you wish you could do using the city's website that are not available today?
- Are there elements of the city's website that you feel are not important or not a good fit for the website?
 - If so, what are they and why?
- What words would you use to describe the city's website as it exists today?
 - If you had to use one or two words to describe what a future version of the city's website should be, would you use the same words you just mentioned, or should it be something different? If so, what?

III. City Website Review (10 Minutes)

- Let's take a walk through the website together. As we do, walk me through what you like and what you dislike about the website.

Residents

The home page: <http://www.ci.austin.tx.us/>

<http://www.ci.austin.tx.us/library/>

<http://www.ci.austin.tx.us/austinairport/>

<http://www.ci.austin.tx.us/health/>

<http://www.ci.austin.tx.us/sws/default.htm>

Business

The home page: <http://www.ci.austin.tx.us/>

<http://www.ci.austin.tx.us/development/>

<http://www.ci.austin.tx.us/code/compliance/>

http://www.ci.austin.tx.us/cityclerk/edims/council_meeting_info_center.htm

<http://www.ci.austin.tx.us/redevelopment/>

IV. Peer Website Review (10 Minutes)

- Let's take a walk through some other examples of city websites together. How do these compare to what you have seen on the City of Austin website?
 - Does anything stand out to you as something that you could see being incorporated into the city's website?

Kansas City kcmo.org

Boston Boston.gov

San Francisco sfgov.org

V. Card Sort Exercise (20 Minutes)

- In front of you are a pile of cards representing different pieces that could be part of a future design for the City of Austin website. If you had the opportunity to create the ideal website for your own interests and needs, what would it look like?
 - Take some time to look through the cards and sort them into groups based on:
 - Must have features
 - Nice to have features
 - Unnecessary features
 - Features that have a negative impact on your impression of the website
 - Is there anything else not represented on this list that you would want to see on the website? Take some time to write any ideas at the bottom and let me know which group your idea(s) belong in.

VI. Conclusions - (5 Minutes)

- Any ideas or advice for me to pass on to the City of Austin?

Card Sort List

* Must Have ✓ Nice to Have × Unnecessary - Negative

Two-way communication with 311 (online chat or submit questions)

Two-way communication with City Government (allow comments on content or blog entries, as well as public forum for questions)

Online payments for utilities, tickets, court fees, library fines, etc.

Submit applications and forms online (such as permits)

Interactive Events Calendar for all City events (can filtered based on users' topic, preference and user can choose date range)

Allow citizens to submit events for the calendar

Mobile version of the website (readable on a smart phone)

Mobile applications for City Services (examples might be 311 information, look up crime statistics based on where you are or an address you type in, tour information about interesting websites around Austin, utilities usage information and payments)

Social Media - alerts and City news on platforms such as Twitter and Facebook

Interactive Maps - user enters an address and receives a map that displays City services, Utilities, Parks, Road Closures, etc. on a map

Be able to book resources at City Parks online (pavilions, courts, etc.)

Newsletters from the City (receive in email, by topic/department)

Data about City Finances online for public view

Interactive Maps with City development and redevelopment information (neighborhood plans, zoning, etc)

Volunteer Center - see opportunities and online sign-up

View and update library account information online

City Code lookup (input section # or keyword to search the City Code)

All City data feeds available for GIS data aggregation (development data, floodplain data, etc.)

Online reservations for classes, events, and other activities online

Grant Management - apply, track progress of grants via online interface

Permit Management - apply, pay, track progress of permits online

Community Platforms - way for citizens to provide feedback, ask questions, and communicate with each other in online groups set up by interest or neighborhood (similar to Facebook Groups)

Allow citizens the ability to comment on City Council Agenda items online

My favorites - a place for users to save links to favorite pages

Customizable City of Austin Home page - like iGoogle