



From 5,000 Pages to 600

*A Smarter Website,
Built From Scratch*

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Fort Collins

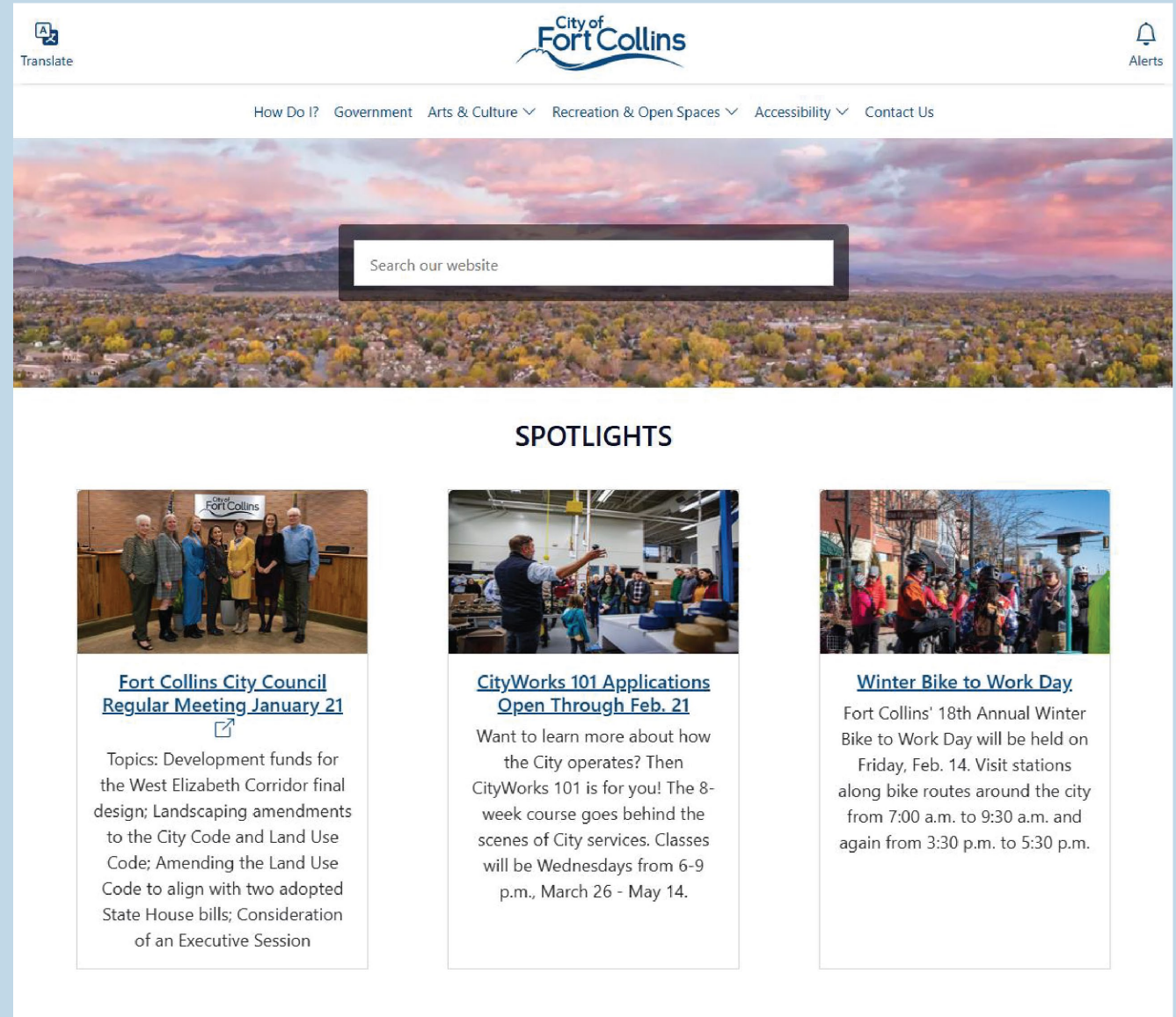
- Northern Colorado regional hub
- 60 miles north
- 170,000 residents
- Colorado State University
- Engaged community
- Wide range of programs and services
Utilities, broadband, parks & recreation, transit, arts & culture, and more

The City website is consistently rated a top source of information by community members.



FCGov.com (our old website)

- Custom-built
- 160,000+ unique visitors (2024)
- 315,000+ total views (2024)
- 5,000+ pages & 6,000+ PDFs
- 300 content editors
- Department-based structure
- Risky!
- Council priority to update



Who's responsible for your website?

- Our website isn't owned solely by IT.
- It isn't owned by departments.
- It isn't owned solely by Communications.

Enterprise asset governed centrally and supported through partnerships.

Okay, but who owns it?

- We do.





Project Vision & Goals:

Simple, accessible and intuitive platform where site visitors can easily find information and do business with the City.

- Third-party, cloud-based solution
- Accessibility, ease-of-access, language access requirements
- Complexity to simplicity
- Customer-centered content organization
- Current information only
- Scratch build – not simply content migration
- *Fcgov.com* to **FortCollins.gov** (domain change)





Would you rather....

- Remodel the house
- Or re-build from the ground up?



Content Audit

What we looked at:

- Page views
- Document downloads
- Internal search terms
- User journeys
- Content age
- Redundant and duplicate content
- Regulatory and operational requirements

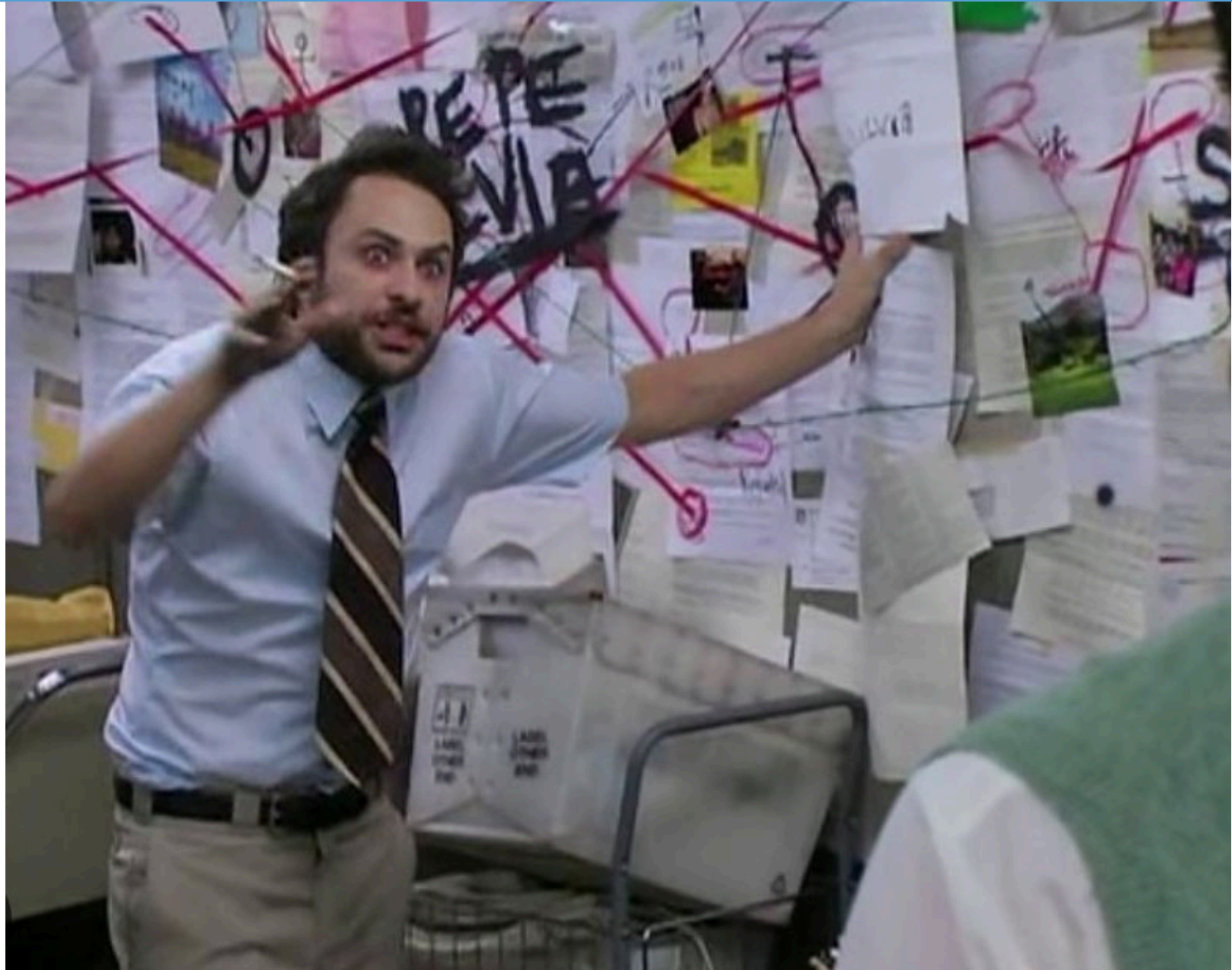
Questions we asked:

- Is it legally required?
- Is it relevant to public safety?
- Will changing it cause public concern?
- Is it necessary to participate in one of our programs?
- Does it already exist somewhere else?
- Could it be combined with other content?

Analytics informed our decisions — but didn't make them. We combined data, organizational needs and customer experience to determine what deserved a place on the new website.

Consolidating Content

- More than 5,000 webpages to ~600
- Re-wrote and re-organized **high-traffic** webpages
- Folded **medium-traffic** webpages into others
- Archived **low-traffic** webpages



MIGRATE



- ✓ High page views
- ✓ Useful and relevant
- ✓ Task-driven
- ✓ Required (legal)

ARCHIVE



- ✓ Low page views
- ✓ Outdated
- ✓ Unnecessary
- ✓ Redundant or duplicate
(one source of truth)

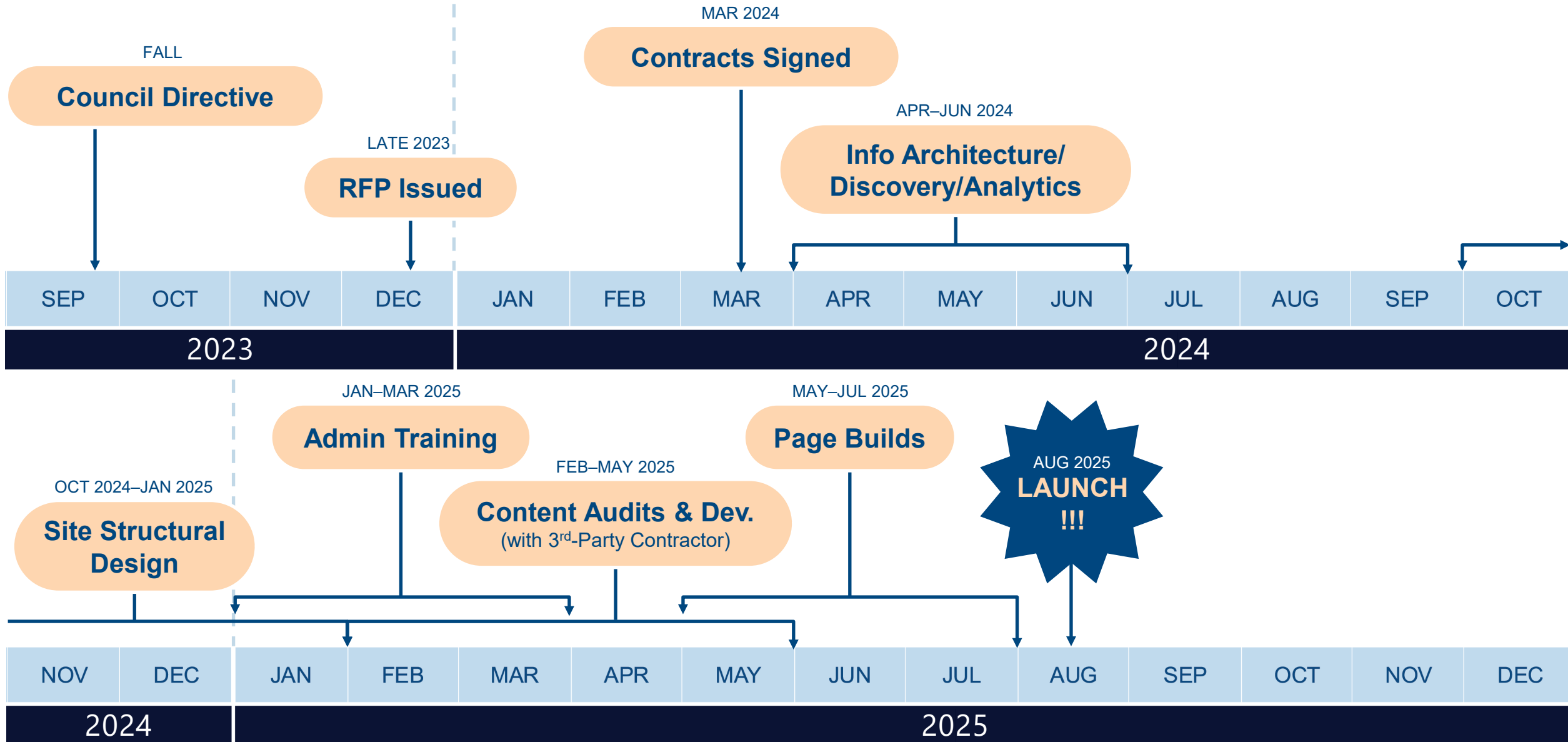
What we **thought** it would take:

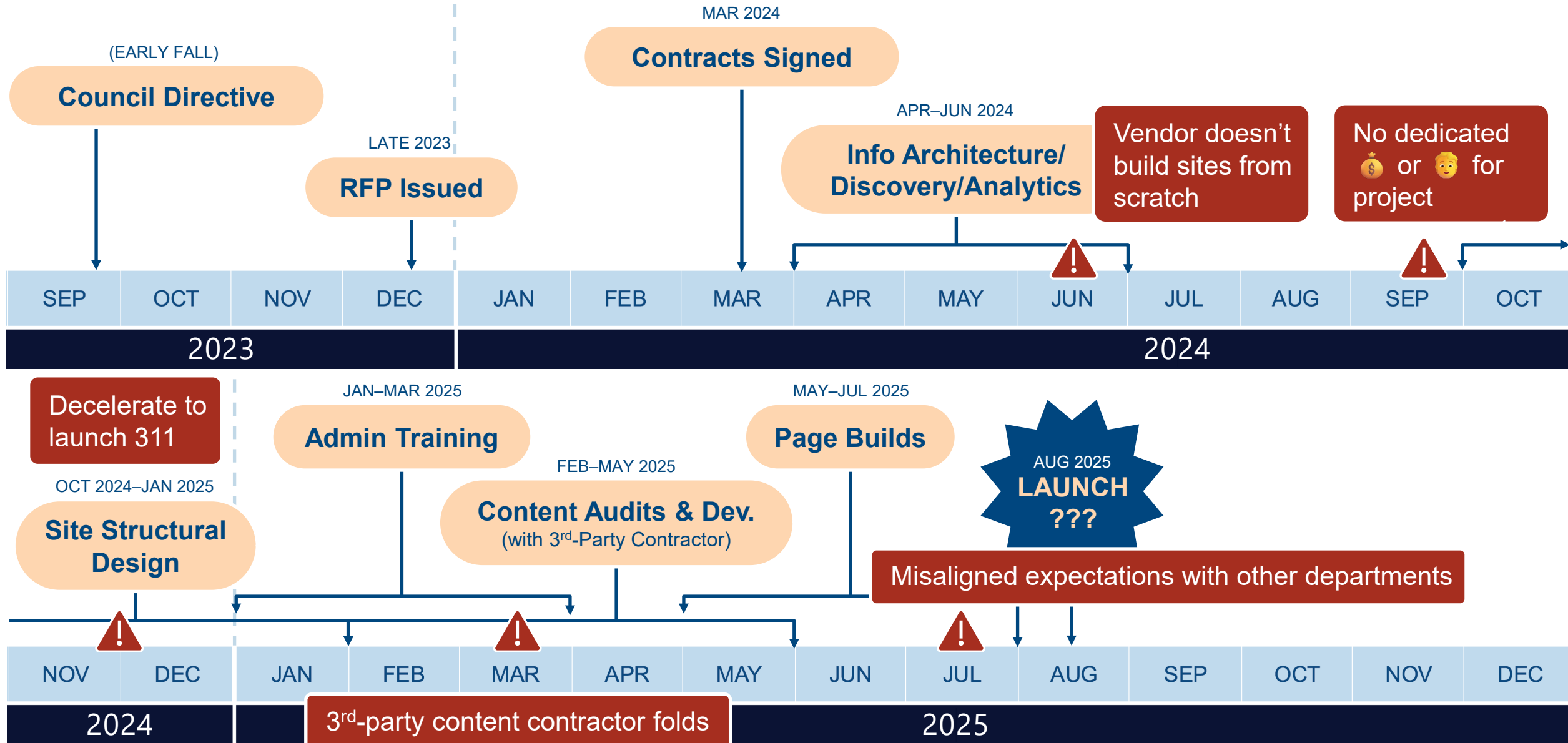
- ☐ Auditing old content
- ☐ Writing new content
- ☐ Creating standard page templates for branding consistency
- ☐ Restructuring site navigation
- ☐ Building out new pages
- ☐ Training site admins and page editors
- ☐ Launch the site!

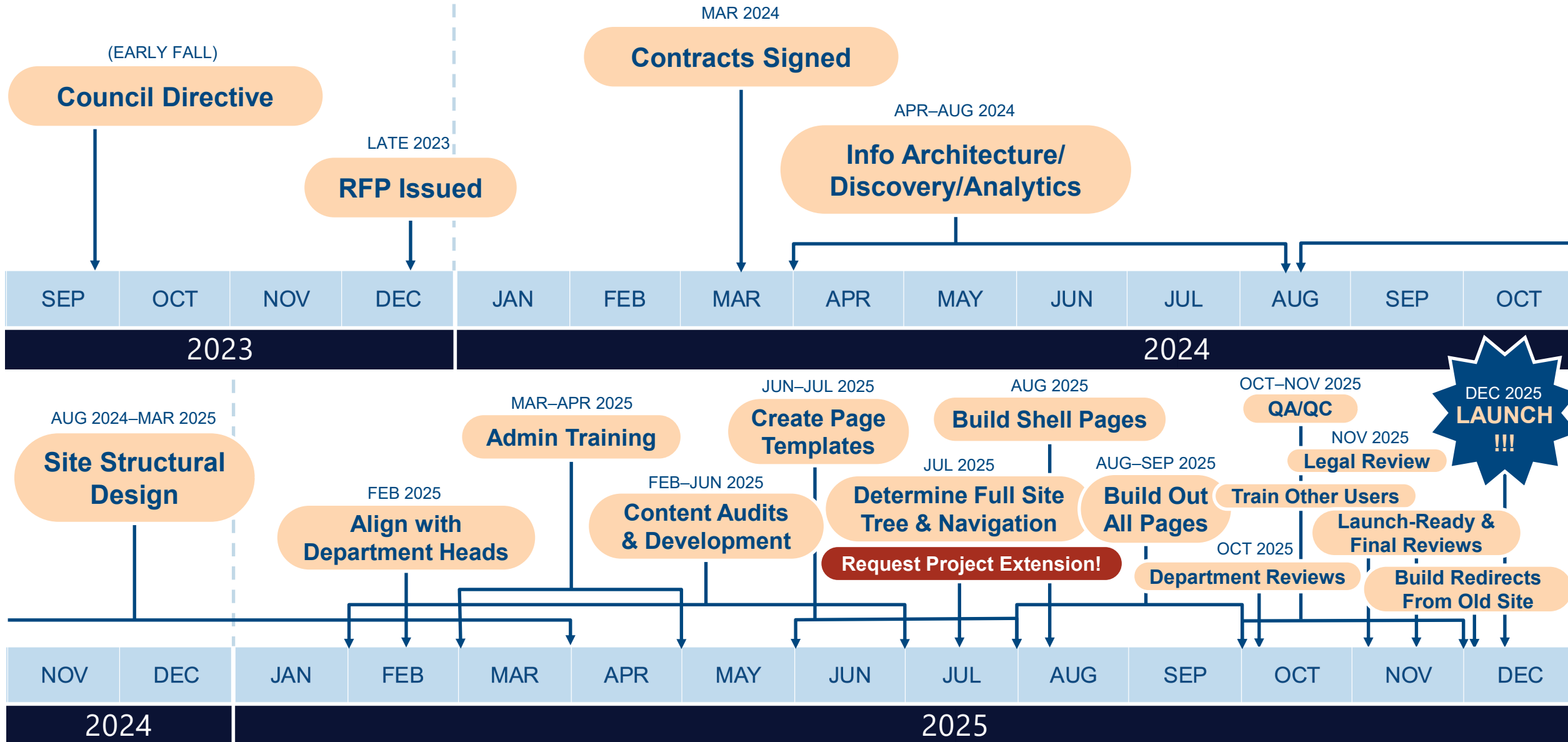


What it **really** took:

- ✓ Adjust scope and expectations
- ✓ Identify core project team (that's us!) – roles & responsibilities, training, etc.
- ✓ Triage & eventually stop nearly all other comms work
- ✓ Review site analytics & verify content buckets with departments
- ✓ Write new content & review agency rewrites
- ✓ Create multiple page templates & document standards in thorough user guide
- ✓ Design new site structure & navigation
- ✓ **Retire old custom apps & identify/build alternatives**
- ✓ Establish new governance model
- ✓ Build out pages
- ✓ **Scour HTML to find hidden accessibility & other issues**
- ✓ Identify & train other site admins/page editors
- ✓ **QA/QC & troubleshooting**
- ✓ **Legal review**
- ✓ **Create redirects for every fcgov.com page and file**
- ✓ **Organizational change management**
- ✓ Marketing and promotion – internally and externally
- ✓ Launch site!!!
- ✓ Sleep for days 😞





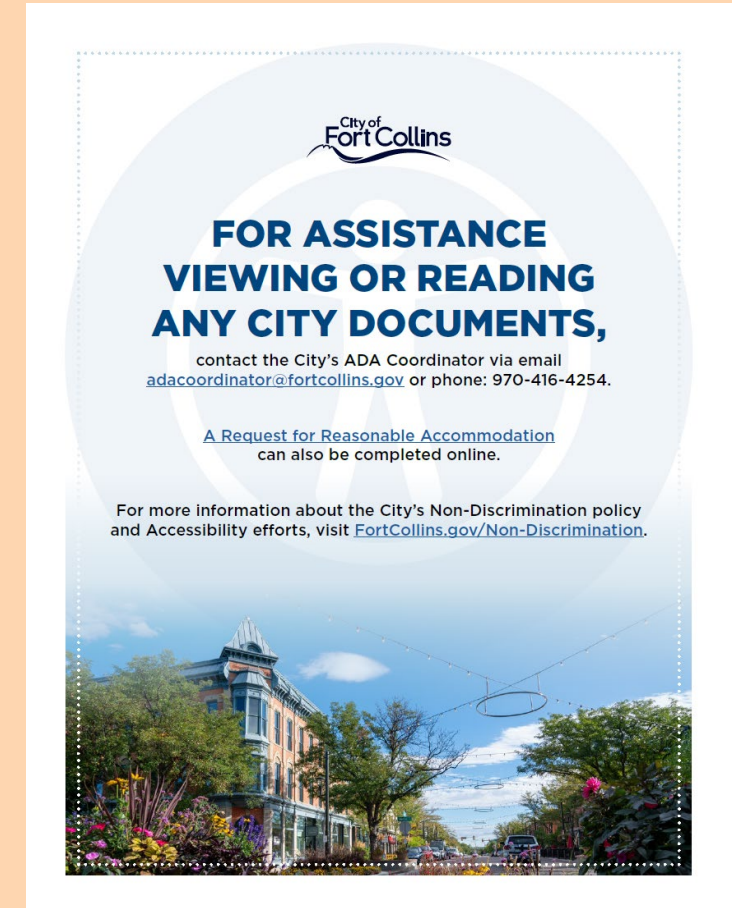




- HTML is always our first choice for sharing content.
- Avoid duplicating content in PDFs.
- PDFs must meet Accessibility (or exception) requirements
- We only use PDFs when there's a clear need or benefit to the customer.



- PDFs were not *automatically* migrated to the new website
- Exception process created
- Existing/old PDFs not remediated



PDF cover sheets added to all non-compliant documents

City of Fort Collins			
	Activities	Services	Government Business
Utilities Pay My Bill Customer Support Start or Stop Service Outages Programs and Rebates Commercial Utilities	Transportation and Roads Transfort Construction and Traffic Impacts Street Maintenance Getting Around Town Transportation Programs Transportation Planning	Parking Pay Your Parking Ticket Where to Park Parking Permits Parking Rules Residential Parking Permit Program (RP3) Downtown Parking Management Updates	Historic Preservation Code Compliance Forestry Cemeteries Permits and Licensing Assistance Programs and Grants Residential Assistance Programs Business/Nonprofit Assistance Programs
Connexion (Broadband) Trash and Recycling Recycling A to Z List Timberline Recycling Center Curbside Trash and Recycling	Police and Public Safety Contact Police Online Crime Reporting Police Services Police Recruiting Emergency Preparedness Poudre Fire Authority Drones as a City Resource (DCR) Mosquito Spraying	Home Improvements Development Review Housing Rental Housing In Your Neighborhood Mobile Homes Affordable Housing Short-Term Rentals Homelessness Historic Preservation	Other Services

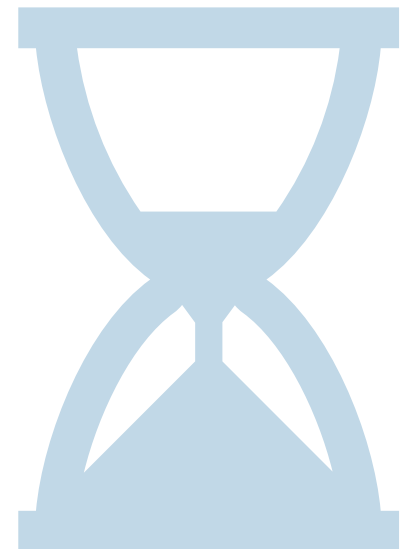
electric services.

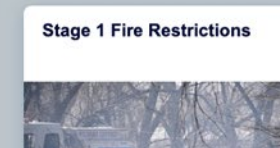
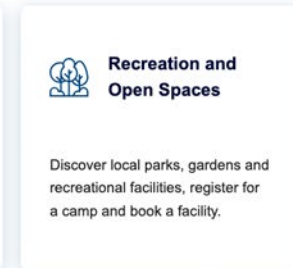
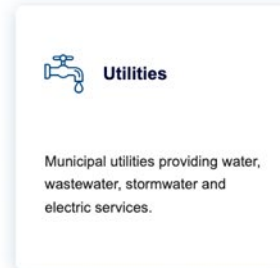
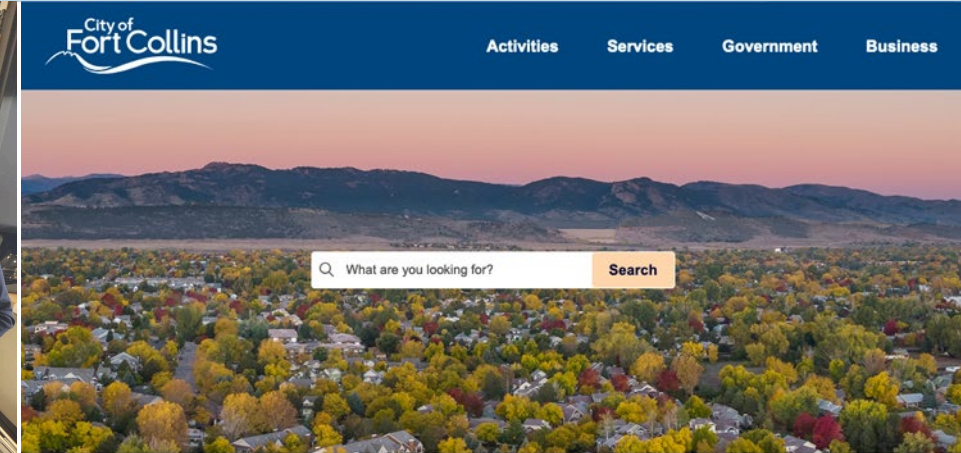
a camp and book a facility.

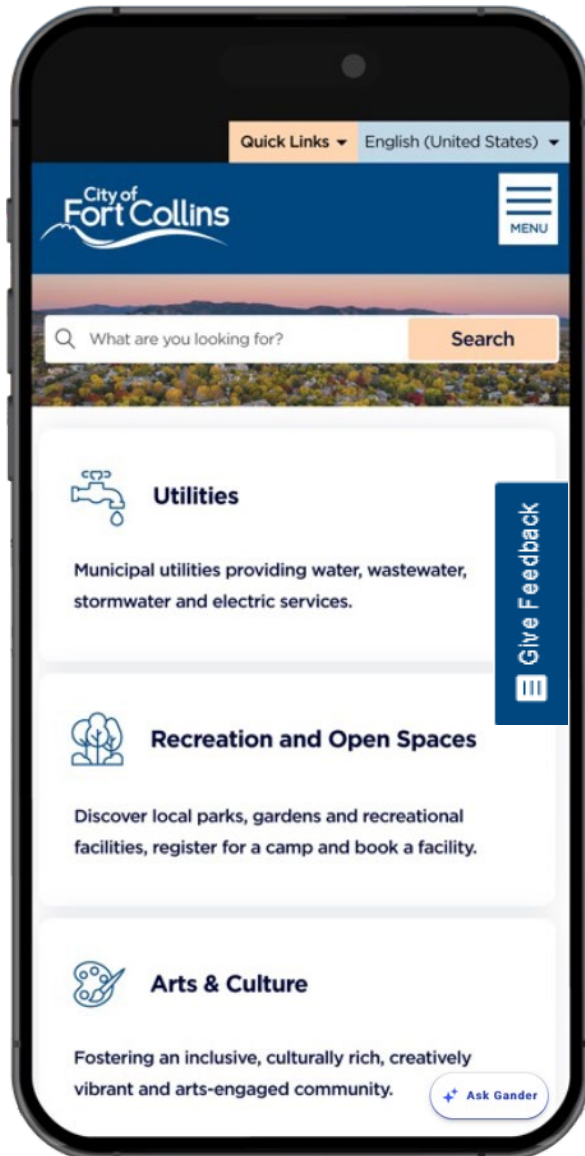
engaged community.

Launching a new site so fast had these trade-offs:

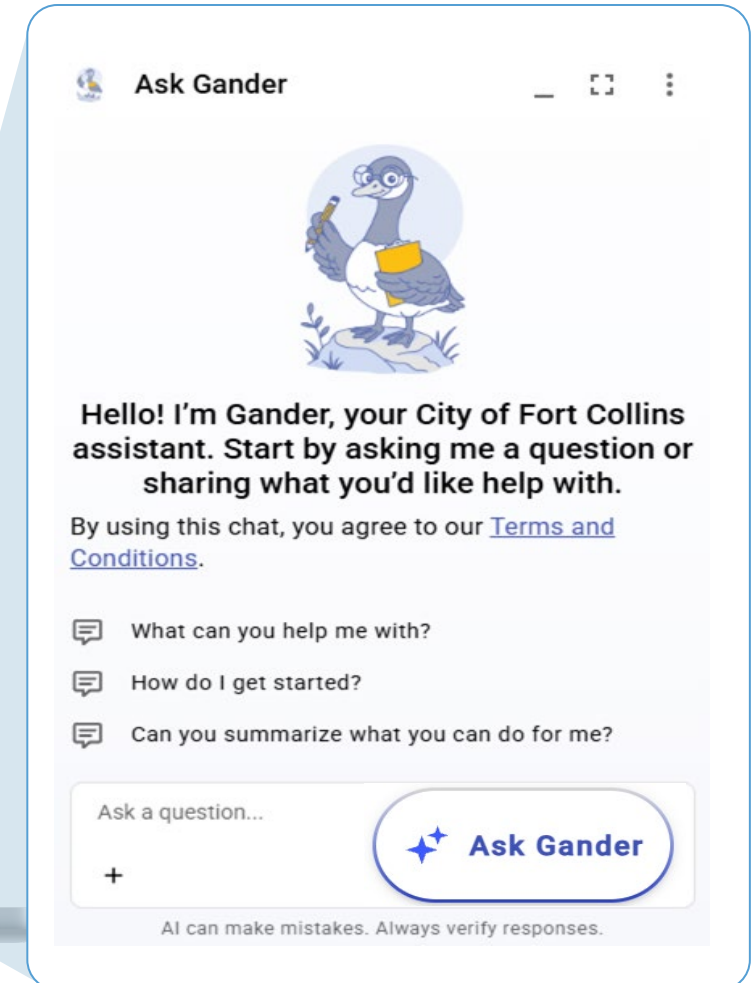
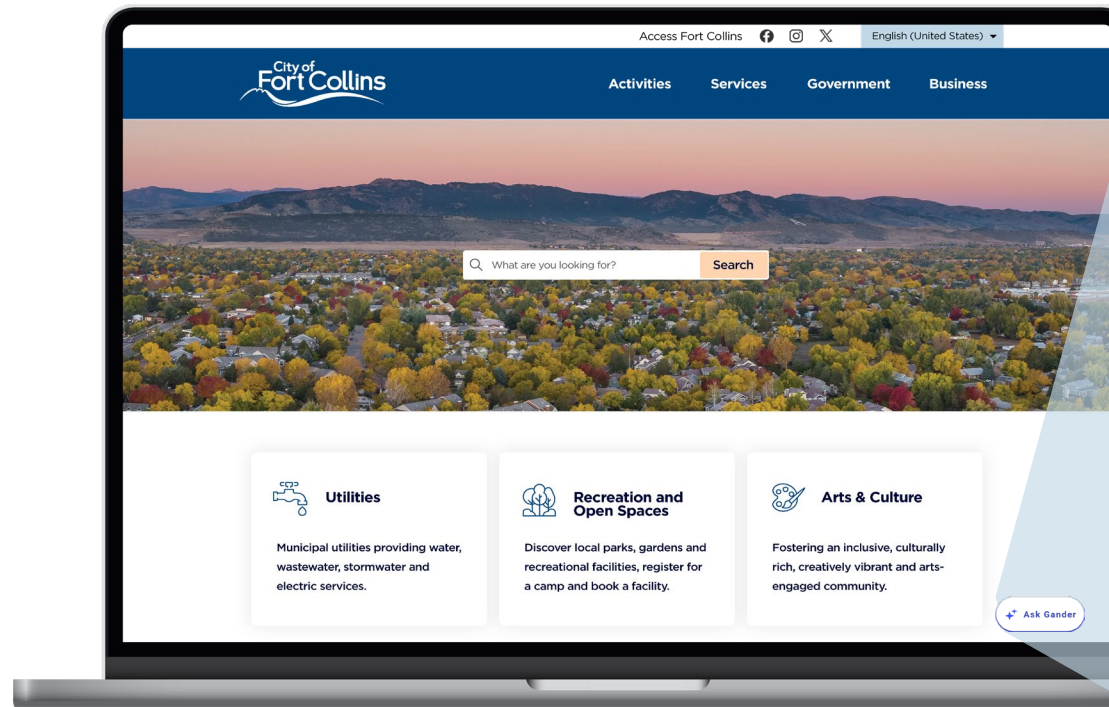
1. **Not enough time** for user testing (analyzing user journeys through high-traffic/sensitive areas of the site like Building Permits and Development Review).
2. **Not enough time** for internal training for customer-facing teams.
3. **Not enough time** for proper collaboration and reviews with stakeholders/internal partners.
4. **Not enough time** to effectively solve for accessibility compliance requirements.







- Continued improvements
- Forms, Newsletters
- Refine Search
- Ask Gander



What we wish we'd known:

1. It's ***always*** going to take longer than you think.
 - Ask for the extension as soon as you know you need it ... and don't waste the ask.
2. Expect to have many crucial & candid conversations.
 - Get comfortable saying the hard, true thing.
3. Plan for limited training & be self-sufficient.
 - Your vendor knows their product, but they don't know your city.



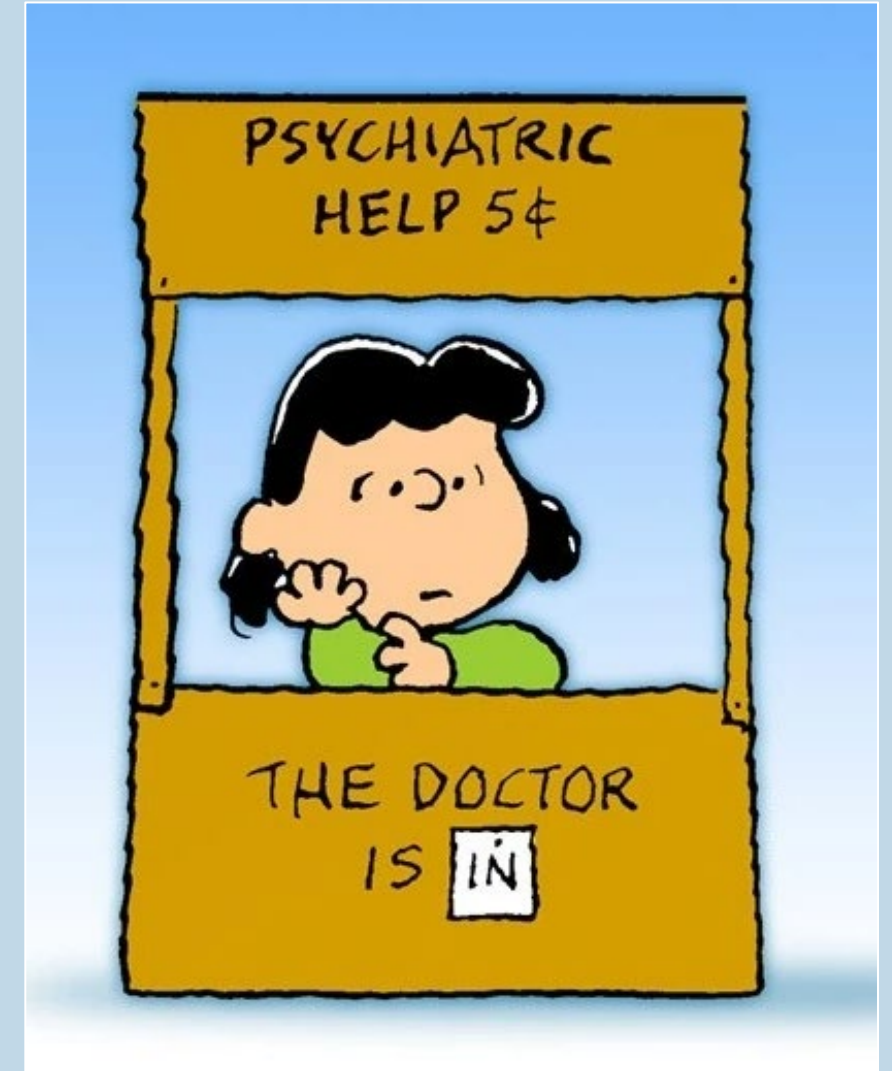
What would we do differently & what can you do now?

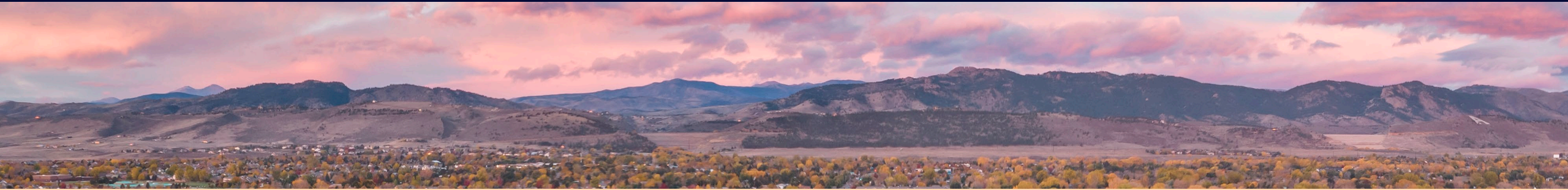
- ✓ Insist on a dedicated project manager and funding
- ✓ Stop the sprawl ASAP
 - What could we have done sooner?
- ✓ Build a realistic timeline
- ✓ **Don't underestimate staff impacts**



Staff will have **reasonable** concerns and **BIG** feelings.

- Staff take great pride in their work – “erasing” it feels personal.
- *On board* is different on paper than on the screen.
- Website $\neq$ work files or official record.
- Hold the line with empathy and kindness.
- Shift philosophies around transparency and customer service.



A wide-angle landscape photograph showing a valley with autumn-colored trees in the foreground, a small town in the middle ground, and a range of mountains under a dramatic, cloudy sky at sunset or sunrise.

Building a new website is an organizational *transformation* — not just a tech platform or communications strategy — requiring intensive planning for the product, process and people.

