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The state audit of the City of Ithaca's finances found a lack of complete and timely monthly and annual financial reports dating back to 2020. PROVIDED BY ITHACA POLICE DEPARTMENT

Ithaca's new website aims to improve access to city resources

Beth McDermott
Ithaca Journal | USA TODAY NETWORK

The City of Ithaca has launched a redesigned website and a new email newsletter platform aimed at making it easier for residents, businesses and community partners to access information and stay informed.

The website was redesigned based on feedback from the public and city staff. Residents had reported difficulties finding information, navigating pages and accessing services. In response, the city reorganized the site to align with how people search for information, according to a community announcement. The new site features clearer organization, improved navigation and enhanced accessibility.

"City government touches people's lives in many ways. Enhancing our communications efforts helps to build trust and increase access to our services while keeping people informed on important news that impacts us all," Acting Ithaca City Manager Dominick Recceio said in the announcement. "This new website and email newsletter platform reflect our commitment to transparency, accessibility, and responsive local government."

Improved accessibility is a central feature of the redesign. The site meets modern ADA standards, offering better contrast, clearer structure, improved keyboard navigation and stronger compatibility with screen readers and assistive technologies. These improvements aim to ensure more residents can use city services independently and confidently.

Sign up for updates

In addition to the website, the city has introduced CivicSend. This digital communication platform allows users to sign up for updates tailored to their interests. CivicSend will be used to share city news, project and service updates. Topic areas include city manager updates, actions of Common Council, employment, parks and recreation, planning and development, public safety, roads, sidewalks and infrastructure, sustainability, and youth programming.

"CivicSend allows people to choose how they receive information from the City, instead of having to search for it," said Alan Karasin, director of the Department of Information and Community Engagement. "Together with the new website, it creates a clearer and more direct connection between the City and the community we serve."

Community partners and local businesses will benefit from improved access to online applications, contact information and program updates. This is expected to reduce confusion and save time.

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Comptroller: City failed to file financial reports

Mayor outlines corrective plan after scathing state audit

Jillian McCarthy
Ithaca Journal | USA TODAY NETWORK

City of Ithaca officials say operational deficiencies and delays led to the financial issues outlined in the New York State Comptroller's Office's newly released audit report.

In a 22-page report released March 27, the state audit found a lack of complete and timely monthly and annual financial reports dating back to 2020.

While city officials were able to maintain "generally accurate" transaction details, the audit found that more than 4,000 of the city's transactions totaling about \$10 million were recorded late, some by up to 282 days. Over \$1 million in council-approved budget adjustments were not recorded at all, according to the report.

The city controller's office did not create or provide Ithaca's Common Council with monthly reports such as budget-to-actual comparisons, cash balances or fund balance estimates, and the city manager did not provide year-end financial reports to the Council, according to the audit. These issues impaired the Council and officials' ability to make informed financial

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Ithaca Mayor Robert G. Cantelmo in front of Ithaca City Hall. PROVIDED BY JACOB MACK

2 dead after blaze breaks out in Groton mobile home park

Jeff Murray
Ithaca Journal | USA TODAY NETWORK

For the second time in April, a residential fire has claimed multiple lives in Tompkins County.

The latest fatal blaze broke out around 12:30 a.m. Friday at the Valley View Mobile Home Park in the Village of Groton, according to the Tompkins County Sheriff's Office.

Units from the Groton Fire Department were already on the scene and the residence was fully en-

gulfed in flames when deputies arrived, the sheriff's office said. Arriving deputies were advised two people were still inside the structure, and they assisted in the extrication of one occupant through a window.

Both occupants of the mobile home ultimately died after the fire, including the individual who had been extricated, the sheriff's office said.

The incident remains under investigation, and no cause has been announced. The names of the victims are not being released at this time.

Agencies that assisted at the scene included Dryden Fire and Ambulance, Bangs Ambulance, McLean Fire, Ithaca Airport Crash Fire Rescue, and the New York State Office of Fire Prevention and Control.

On April 1, three people, including a small child, were killed in a single-family house fire at 321 Cortland Road in Freeville in the town of Dryden, according to the Tompkins County Sheriff's Office.

The victims were identified as Christy M. Oralls, 30, Paisley M. Wood, 3, and Katherine F. Gray, 31.

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