



Date: December 6, 2017

To: Patrick H. West, City Manager *T.H.W.*

From: Bryan M. Sastokas, Director, Technology and Innovation Department *BMS*

For: Mayor and Members of the City Council

Subject: **Language Access Phone Trees**

At the November 14, 2017 City Council meeting, the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) provided an update on the implementation progress of the Language Access Policy. Concerns about the City phone trees were raised during the discussion, specifically that certain phone lines will disconnect if a language is not selected, and that a language selection may be requested several times during a single phone call. This memorandum provides the findings of staff's research in response to these concerns.

Background

The Language Access Policy (LAP) was adopted in August 2013 and defined standards and procedures for accessing City services, programs, and resources with four languages (English, Spanish, Khmer and Tagalog). Working with the LAP lead (now under DHHS) and City Departments, the Technology and Innovation Department (TI) implemented 73 multi-language, phone tree solutions to support the LAP. There are three basic phone tree architectures:

Unified Contact Center (UCCX) (29 LAP enabled phone numbers): Departments using this system include Animal Control, City Clerk, Development Services, Financial Management, Gas and Oil, DHHS, Parks, Recreation and Marine, Police, and Special Events. Callers into this system are prompted for their language, defaulting to English if no selection is made. Callers are routed to the best available agent, who can conference in an interpreter if required.

Unity Auto Attendants (30 LAP enabled phone numbers): Departments using this system include Airport, City Attorney, City Prosecutor, City Treasurer, Civil Service, Development Services, Financial Management, Fire, Human Resources, Library, Pacific Gateway, and Public Works. Callers into this system are prompted for their language, defaulting to English if no selection is made. If English or Spanish are selected, the call is routed to a staff member in those departments. If Khmer or Tagalog are selected, the call is routed to voicemail. Staff will return calls with an interpreter.

Direct Numbers (14 LAP enabled numbers): Departments using direct numbers include City Auditor, City Manager Office, Council Districts and Mayors Office, and Parks, Recreation and Marine (Alamitos Bay and Downtown Marinas). If the phone is unanswered, it is then sent into a Unity Auto Attendant process. Callers into this system are prompted for their language, defaulting to English if no selection is made. A language specific

voicemail prompt will be played and the voicemail is saved and cc'd to the department's email with subject indicating the language of the message. Staff will review the message with an interpreter and respond accordingly.

Findings

With regards to the report that City Council, Water and Gas phone lines disconnect if a language is not selected, staff corrected this problem in April 2017. All phone trees (including City Council, Water Billing, and Gas) were upgraded to default to English, if a language is not selected. It is important to note that the Water Department's main phone line is not part of the TI managed phone system. During business hours, the Water Department's main phone number is answered by a staff member. After hours, the main phone number offers English and Spanish recordings, and connects to the Water Emergency line at the end of the recording.

With regards to City Council's report that residents calling Water may have to press "2 for Spanish" four times to reach a person, TI staff found that there are two separate Water Department lines with different behaviors. The Department's main phone line is not part of the TI managed phone system, and does not implement LAP. The Department's billing phone line does implement LAP, and TI has not been able to reproduce any scenario where "2 for Spanish" has to be pressed four times. TI staff did identify a scenario in an after-hour UCCX script that could prompt for language twice, and is coordinating with the LAP lead to resolve.

Next Steps

TI will continue the FY 18 voice system modernization project, which will: (1) bring the City's phone, voicemail and contact center to the manufacturer's supported levels; (2) consolidate the Unity Auto Attendant architecture into UCCX; and, (3) establish the foundation platform for the planned "one number" system implementation targeted for completion in Fall 2018.

TI will also assist the Water Department in migrating their Nortel based phone system to the City's UCCX system. To do this, Water Department technology staff is upgrading the local data network (in-building fiber and copper, network switches, and Voice over IP Quality of Services). When the network upgrade is completed, TI will assist the Water Department with procuring new handsets and migrating to the Cisco platform. This project is needed to expand LAP into the Department, and to integrate it into the "one number" solution.

If you have any questions regarding this matter, please call Cason Lee, Infrastructure Services Bureau Manager, at (562) 570-5553.

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