

Date: July 2, 2020

To: Mayor and Members of the City Council

From: Thomas B. Modica, City Manager 

Subject: **Ballot Measure to Fund Equity and Reconciliation Proposals**

The City of Long Beach (City), along with other jurisdictions across the country and around the world, has been grappling with the killing of George Floyd by police in Minneapolis, and the calls for action to address police violence and systematic racism. This historic pattern of injustice has resulted in historic disparities in health, services, and overall well-being in the City's communities with large numbers of Black and low-income residents.

In response to these community actions, on June 23, 2020, the City Council unanimously adopted a [Resolution](#) acknowledging Racism as a Public Health Crisis and establishing a Framework for Reconciliation. This framework includes: (1) acknowledging the existence and long-standing impacts of systemic racism in Long Beach and the country; (2) listening to accounts and experiences of racial injustice, inequity, or harm to community members, while concurrently compiling local and external data on racial disparities in the community; (3) convening stakeholders to analyze feedback from the listening sessions and racial disparity data to recommend initiatives that shape policy, budgetary, charter, and programmatic reform; and, (4) catalyzing action that includes immediate, short-term, medium-term, and long-term recommendations for the City Council's consideration in a Reconciliation Report.

Since June 22, 2020, two town hall meetings and nine of sixteen (16) scheduled listening sessions have been completed. The themes and topics raised by participants have been varied, but center around the nexus between racism and community health, housing and homelessness, and policing and public safety, as well as economic inclusion and budget reforms as summarized below:

- **Reimagining public safety.** Decreasing investment in traditional models of law enforcement and policing; creation of different oversight structures; and, creating alternatives to police being utilized for activities that might be better suited for a community health worker or mental health professional.
- **Budget reform.** Creating a more equitable and inclusive budget with increased investments in violence prevention, well-being, and safety (as defined by the community).
- **Health Equity.** Advancing health equity and well-being in communities with concentrations of Black residents through enhanced services in areas such as youth programs, supporting community-based organizations that serve the Black community, mental health services, housing, education, and other opportunities.
- **Economic Inclusion.** Advancing economic inclusion by increasing access to good paying jobs, developing policies to increase procurement relationships between small

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businesses and local government agencies, equity in new sectors, such as cannabis, increasing access to capital, and other efforts to increase wealth in the Black community.

- **Racial Equity.** Institutionalizing racial equity into City policies, practices, programs, and services to dismantle current racial inequities.

At its June 23, 2020 meeting, the City Council directed staff to consider all possible funding mechanisms, including a ballot measure, to implement the Reconciliation Framework and the initiatives that result from this process. Given the time constraints for qualifying a ballot measure for the November election, this memorandum provides background information on the initiative process, including election costs and the timeline to qualify a City Council initiative for the November 3, 2020 election. Even though the development of the Framework is still underway, it is important to provide this information to the City Council now as there are upcoming deadlines the City Council needs to be aware of, if a ballot measure is to be considered.

Should the City Council direct the City Manager to place a measure on the November 3, 2020 ballot, over the next two weeks, staff would need to conduct to determine an appropriate level of tax increase and work with the City Attorney to create ballot language. This analysis would be brought back to the City Council for consideration and further direction. According to the City Clerk, the cost estimate for a one issue ballot measure is \$1.1 million, with each additional ballot measure costing approximately \$300,000. Eligible measures on the November ballot could include tax measures or changes to voter-approved ordinances. Changes to the City Charter cannot legally be added to the ballot at this time as the State-required deadlines for considering a Charter change required a first hearing by May 19, 2020. The timeline for qualifying a City Council ballot initiative is summarized below.

2020	Ballot Activity
July 7	City Council directs City Manager to place a measure on the ballot
Mid-July	City Manager and City Attorney present detailed analysis for proposed measure(s) and potential ballot language
August 4	Last day for City Council to adopt a resolution calling the election
August 11	City Council approves Mayor's list of argument writers
August 11 – September 3	Ballot argument and rebuttal preparation
September 24	Sample ballots mailed

If you have any questions, please contact me at (562) 570-5091.

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