

Date: August 9, 2021

To: Thomas B. Modica, City Manager



From: John Gross, Interim Director of Financial Management



For: Mayor and Members of the City Council

Subject: **Response to Questions from the City Council Budget Hearing on July 20, 2021**

During the Budget Hearing held on July 20, 2021, the City Council received and discussed an overview of the Proposed FY 22 Budget presented by the City Manager. This memorandum responds to questions raised by members of the City Council during that time that were not fully addressed on the floor or that need further clarification.

1. Is it feasible to provide in-house translation services where staff is trained to understand the technical language used in City Council meetings?

The Proposed FY 22 Language Access Program (LAP) budget is approximately \$3.2 million (see below table for detailed information). Of this amount, \$2.2 million is structural and includes funding for the following: a LAP coordinator to manage requests for interpretation/translation, conduct training, and evaluate LAP policy Citywide; contract services for document translation; interpretation at community and City Council meetings; community outreach stipends to fund multilingual education about LAP; bilingual skill pay for 591 FTEs across 19 City departments to compensate for certified oral and/or written bilingual capacity for positions that have frequent or significant interactions with the public. In addition, the budget includes \$950,000 in one-time Long Beach Recovery Act funding to support LAP coordination services, interpretation services at City meetings, translation of health material for COVID-19 response efforts, and business and outreach program materials to aid in economic recovery.

As of October 2020, all City Council meetings provide Spanish interpretation. A contracted vendor currently provides this service. Due to challenges with interpretation quality in the past, the vendor now typically assigns the same two interpreters for every City Council meeting so interpreters become familiar with the flow and jargon used in the meetings. The City Council has directed staff to explore bringing interpretation in-house to be provided by City staff. The Office of Equity is currently working with Human Resources to identify the classifications and funding needed to hire staff interpreters.

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Line Item	Structural/ One-Time	Funding Source	FY 2022
LAP Coordinator FTE	Structural	Equity Budget - FTE	123,939
Document Translation Vendor	Structural	CMEQUITY- \$200k	75,000
Meeting Interpretation Vendor	Structural	CMEQUITY- \$200k	75,000
LAP Community Outreach Stipends	Structural	CMEQUITY- \$200k	50,000
Subtotal FY 22 Budget in CM's Office			323,939
LAP Coordinator FTE	One-Time	(ARPA) \$500k	125,000
Interpreters for City Council Meetings (PT Staff)	One-Time	(ARPA) \$500k	100,000
Training & Materials	One-Time	(ARPA) \$500k	25,000
Subtotal Long Beach Recovery Act Budget			250,000
Health & Human Services Dept - COVID-19 Translation Staff	One-Time	Part of ARPA (Epidemiology and Laboratory Capacity (ELC) Funding - Managed by Health)	450,000
Economic Development LAP (Supplemental staff & vendor costs to translate business outreach/program materials)	One-Time	ARPA - Economic Development Funds	250,000
Total Budget (CM, HE, ED)			1,273,939
Bilingual Skills Pays Citywide*	Structural	Skill Pays budgeted Citywide for Bilingual Pays	1,892,321
GRAND TOTAL			3,166,260

*Skill Pays include pension and payroll taxes.

2. Is it feasible to provide panic buttons throughout our parks, especially those that suffer the most violent crimes and are most at-risk?

The cost of installing panic buttons is dependent upon infrastructure capabilities at parks and the desired services provided at each panic button location. Higher education campuses such as California State University, Long Beach typically have a Blue Light alert system that directly connects to a dispatcher for emergency assistance. However, it appears that in general this is an outdated and costly approach because most Blue Light alert systems were installed more than 40 years ago and have decreased in use with the rise of cell phones and safety applications. In fact, some campuses across the nation have opted to remove the Blue Light alert system due to lack of use, high maintenance cost, and rise of pranks and false alert calls. The Blue Light alert system can cost \$6,000 to \$13,000 per unit for the hardware alone and installation and shipping can cost an additional \$2,000 per unit. In total, a Blue Light alert system may cost over \$9,000 for each light box, not including operating and maintenance costs. Installing panic buttons in parks is likely to be cost-prohibitive due to high installation and maintenance costs. In addition, their effectiveness is highly questionable due to the availability of cell phones and other technological advances and the potential problems associated with false alarms.

3. What is the feasibility of building community centers in the neighborhoods hardest hit by violent crimes?

The addition of community centers would need to consider the capital cost, the operating cost, the cost of major maintenance, and the sources of funding for all three cost areas. The capital cost includes the cost of land, if it is not already owned by the City, the cost of construction and furniture, and other one-time costs. The cost of building community centers is dependent on the square footage and included amenities, especially for technology/audiovisual needs. For example, for a 10,000-square-foot building, this construction would require a 25,000–30,000-square-foot lot. Using the City's current metric of \$900 per square foot for the cost of construction, a 10,000-square-foot building would cost approximately \$9 million, which does not include technology/audiovisual costs. Additionally, the direct costs (i.e., design, entitlements, plan checks, permits, project management/construction management) run approximately 40 percent of the construction's costs – or \$3.6 million in the 10,000-square-foot building example. The land cost is difficult to project but could range from \$9 million to \$15 million for land to house a 10,000-square-foot building. In total, with land acquisition considered, a range of \$25-30 million per community center, assuming a 10,000-square-foot building, is the rough order of magnitude for planning purposes. Additionally, there would be an ongoing net operating cost and long-term significant maintenance costs, both which have not yet been estimated.

- 4. Since Governor Newsom recently passed a digital inclusion bill (SB 156) that provides funding for digital and broadband funding to disadvantaged and underserved communities, is there an opportunity to dramatically increase funding spent in digital inclusion from State funding?**

As an initial first step, the Technology and Innovation Department (TID) has engaged its fiber expansion consultant, The Broadband Group, to determine the funding category or categories for which the City's fiber expansion plan would potentially apply under SB 156. Additionally, TID has reached out to the Government Affairs Office to understand the parameters of SB 156 better. Current legislation dedicates \$6 billion of the State budget for broadband infrastructure funding. However, the legislation only identifies high-level funding categories that will be made available in the future. It will take some time for the State to develop the procedures for funding programs, which may be through direct allocations at the County/City level or grant opportunities. The legislation also calls for the creation of new governance structures and roles, which will most likely determine how projects and funding opportunities are distributed throughout the State.

Lastly, based on the wording of SB 156 and the ongoing development of State procedures for municipalities for access to the funding, TID does not anticipate funding from SB 156 will be dedicated for additional devices, hotspots, technical assistance, digital literacy, or outreach. However, these initiatives are planned to be funded with the Long Beach Recovery Act resources. TID will continue to work with Government Affairs Office to identify any funding opportunities for the City.

- 5. How much does the Police lease of the radio cost? How much is the total purchase cost? Provide more detail about the lease cost.**

On September 11, 2018, the City Council authorized the City Manager to execute a lease-purchase agreement with Motorola Solutions, Inc., of Los Angeles, CA (Motorola), for the financing of the radio communications equipment, in a total principal amount not to exceed \$17,500,000 and in an aggregate amount not to exceed \$23,300,000 including principal, interest and fees, payable over terms not to exceed 12 years if the lease-purchase is not paid off in FY 22 as planned. This lease-purchase provides for the replacement of radios no longer supported by the manufacturer for Police, Fire, Disaster Preparedness, and Public Works. This consists of 2,643 radios, of which 1,865 are portable (handheld), and 778 are mobile (in-vehicle). To secure the best available pricing, the City initiated and negotiated a volume pricing agreement with Motorola providing the City the same terms and conditions as afforded to the County of Los Angeles (L.A. County) in the Motorola/L.A. County master contract (L.A. County Master Agreement) along with the newly negotiated enhanced pricing options providing a better pricing structure than the L.A. County Master Agreement. The lease-purchase agreement was executed in September 2018, with interest beginning to accrue after October 15, 2018, and debt service payments due in October of each year. The City did not incur a debt service payment in October 2019 (FY 20) per the agreement. In FY 21, the City had a debt service payment of \$1,221,804. As planned, the lease-purchase agreement will be paid off in FY 22 in the amount of \$15,029,920, for a total lease-purchase cost of \$16,251,724.

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If you have any questions, please contact Budget Manager Grace H. Yoon at (562) 570-6408.

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