

Date: September 20, 2023

To: Thomas B. Modica, City Manager 

From: Lea Eriksen, Director of Technology & Innovation 

For: Mayor and Members of City Council

Subject: **Civic User Testing to Improve Digital Services and Technology Products in the City of Long Beach**

Background

Following the COVID-19 Pandemic, the world experienced an unprecedented shift to operate digitally. City governments like Long Beach are now expected to offer user-friendly and accessible digital services, especially to communities that do not have access, resources, or experience in the digital space. Over 800 Long Beach community members reinforced this sentiment during the Technology and Innovation Department's (TID's) engagement as part of the City's Smart City Initiative. Community stakeholders told TID they would like their input integrated into the City's final digital products and services, such as the Go Long Beach app, utilities payment portal, and the online permit center.

Overview

To address this gap, TID is launching a Civic User Testing practice to identify Long Beach community participants to provide feedback on upcoming digital services and technology projects. By seeking the community's input on emerging technology projects, the City can ensure our services are accessible to all. Long Beach community stakeholders may [submit an interest form](#) to participate in civic user testing. Selected participants will receive a \$25 gift card for sharing their time and knowledge!

The Civic User Testing practice offers a promising opportunity for the City and community members to co-design digital solutions, to improve the quality of life for all. Interested community members can sign up to be in a pool of civic user testers who can be invited to test and provide feedback on digital tools, websites, technology plans, and civic products the City is developing and deploying for public use. Whether a website redesign or a new parking meter, Long Beach stakeholders are the ultimate end users of these technology products. By consulting with them during the design phase, the City can take an inclusive approach to creating easy-to-use digital services designed around the end user rather than a staff business process.

This program supports the Smart City Strategy to “develop channels for community codesign with residents, small businesses, and other stakeholder groups who stand to benefit the most

Civic User Testing to Improve Digital Services and Technology Products in the City of Long Beach

September 20, 2023

Page 2

from digital literacy gains” (Strategy 2.2). Additionally, the Civic User Testing program supports Goals 3.3, 3.4, and 12.1 in the 2030 Strategic Vision to be “digital by default” by centering the customer’s experience through adopting accessibility, inclusivity, and transparency to benefit all residents.

TID plans to conduct in-person and digital outreach to recruit civic user testers through the end of 2023. The first selected Civic User Testing Group will provide insights into their experience using a pilot version of a single sign-on portal. When fully implemented, the portal will be a community-friendly, web-based page for accessing resident-facing applications and allowing the Long Beach community to sign into multiple City applications by eliminating the need for separate login information for different City services. This service aligns with the City's equity goals through the adoption of proactive accessibility and inclusivity practices that ensure civic technology benefits to the Long Beach community, specifically those who face barriers accessing in-person City services. This project aims to simplify the community’s experience when engaging with the City's digital services.

The Civic User Testing Groups will compensate community participants for their feedback while introducing them to new skills and technologies. In alignment with the Long Beach Equity Toolkit, the Civic User Testing Groups will prioritize community members who are the end users of City services who may face challenges in accessing digital services. Those who identify as older adults, have a disability, speak a language other than English, and are of different races, ethnicities, and cultures will be prioritized. Interested Long Beach community members may [complete the interest form](#) (available in English, Spanish, Khmer, and Tagalog) to sign up as a civic user tester. TID will contact prospective participants for multiple opportunities to contribute over the next year, beginning with the single sign-on portal project.

More information about the Smart City Initiative, including guiding principles, pilot programs, and exciting new projects, is available on the Smart City Initiative [webpage](#).

If you have any questions, please contact Lea Eriksen, Director of the Technology and Innovation Department, at (562) 570-6234 or lea.eriksen@longbeach.gov.

CC: DAWN MCINTOSH, CITY ATTORNEY
DOUGLAS P. HAUBERT, CITY PROSECUTOR
LAURA L. DOUD, CITY AUDITOR
LINDA F. TATUM, ASSISTANT CITY MANAGER
TERESA CHANDLER, DEPUTY CITY MANAGER
MEREDITH REYNOLDS, DEPUTY CITY MANAGER
APRIL WALKER, ADMINISTRATIVE DEPUTY CITY MANAGER
TYLER CURLEY, ACTING DEPUTY CITY MANAGER
KEVIN LEE, CHIEF PUBLIC AFFAIRS OFFICER
MONIQUE DE LA GARZA, CITY CLERK
DEPARTMENT HEADS