



MEMORANDUM

TO: City Council

FROM: Whitney McDonald, City Manager
Jessica Matson, Legislative & Information Services Director/City Clerk

SUBJECT: Consideration to Authorize a Request for Proposals (RFP) to Conduct a Voter Opinion Survey and Public Education Services for a Potential Future Ballot Measure

DATE: June 13, 2023

SUMMARY OF ACTION:

Consider publishing a Request for Proposals (RFP) for voter opinion survey (“polling”) services as well as public education services for a potential future ballot measure.

IMPACT ON FINANCIAL AND PERSONNEL RESOURCES:

\$115,000 for voter opinion survey and public education services has been identified in the preliminary Fiscal Year 2023-25 Biennial Budget. Significant staff resources will be utilized to coordinate the efforts.

RECOMMENDATION:

Authorize the City Manager to publish a Request for Proposals (RFP) for Voter Opinion Survey and Public Education services for an amount not to exceed \$115,000.

BACKGROUND:

In August 2019, Council authorized the City Manager to enter into a Consultant Services Agreement with True North for voter opinion survey services for a potential Transaction & Use Tax (Sales Tax) measure on the November 2020 ballot. Polling was conducted in the Fall of 2019 and results were presented to Council in January 2020. In June 2020 Council discussed bringing forward a 1% Sales Tax measure on the November 2020 ballot and ultimately chose not to pursue the ballot initiative due the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic. Approximately two years later, having continued to identify significant funding needs, particularly for the City’s infrastructure, pavement maintenance, stormwater systems, and sidewalks, the City Council again discussed the potential for seeking additional Sales Tax revenue through a new ballot measure. On [May 24, 2022](#), Council approved placing a 1% local Sales Tax measure, Measure D-22, on the November 8, 2022 ballot.

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On November 8, 2022, a General Municipal Election was held in the City which included Measure D-22, asking voters if the City shall be authorized to increase the Sales Tax by 1% to fund maintenance and repair of streets, sidewalks, stormwater and drainage facilities, and for other City programs and facilities. Measure D-22 did not pass, with 45.64% of the votes in favor of the measure.

On [March 2, 2023](#), Council participated in a goal-setting study session and identified seven priorities:

1. Funding: New Revenue Sources, Economic Development;
2. Five Cities Fire Authority;
3. Address Current Infrastructure Needs;
4. General Plan;
5. Water Resilience;
6. Homeless/Housing; and
7. Staff Resources/Employee Attraction and Retention

The top four priorities were identified as the City's focus for the upcoming two-year budget process.

ANALYSIS OF ISSUES:

When considering whether to place a ballot measure before the voters, cities generally undertake the following process:

1. Identify needed services and funding to provide those services;
2. Survey a statistically valid sample of residents to objectively evaluate voter preferences about a local ballot measure;
3. The City Council considers providing direction to City staff on whether to move forward with a ballot measure;
4. If moving forward with a ballot measure, the City provides public education that effectively communicates about the measure, including how measure funds could be used and how accountability will be provided;
5. Place a measure on the ballot and await election results.

As discussed during several City Council meetings over the past three years, the City is facing significant financial constraints due to its current revenue sources not keeping pace with increasing costs of services, supplies, and capital projects. For example, the City's pavement engineering expert has advised that the City requires \$6.25 million in investments every year in order to maintain the current pavement condition index, which is already bordering on "poor." Historically, the City has been able to invest an average of approximately \$1.25 million each year. Other significant funding challenges include the City's fire and emergency services provided by the Five Cities Fire Authority. The City's required contribution to the FCFA is increasing by approximately \$1.2 million in Fiscal

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Year 2023-24, and it is anticipated that costs will continue to increase each year. During the City Council goal-setting study session held on March 2, 2023, the City Council identified funding, including a potential revenue measure, as a top priority for the City's upcoming budget cycle. To help support this goal, staff recommends issuing an RFP for consultant services to complete a voter opinion survey regarding a potential revenue measure and to provide public education services surrounding a potential measure, if one is pursued.

An RFP has been prepared for the combination of Voter Opinion Survey services and Public Education services for an amount not to exceed \$115,000 (Attachment 1). Staff anticipates presenting to Council a proposed agreement for the identified services in August.

ALTERNATIVES:

The following alternatives are provided for the Council's consideration:

1. Authorize the City Manager to publish an RFP for Voter Opinion Survey and Public Education services for an amount not to exceed \$115,000;
2. Modify the RFP and authorize the City Manager to publish the RFP;
3. Do not authorize the RFP; or
4. Provide other direction to staff.

ADVANTAGES:

Moving forward with a Voter Opinion Survey will assist the Council in identifying community perspectives on services and potential support of a future ballot measure. By including public education services in the same RFP, and potential contract for services, will allow for an efficient and coordinated approach to both the survey and outreach services should Council direct that a ballot measure be pursued.

DISADVANTAGES:

Contracting with professional research and public education teams is expected to cost \$90,000 to \$115,000.

ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW:

No environmental review is required for this item.

PUBLIC NOTIFICATION AND COMMENTS:

The Agenda was posted at City Hall and on the City's website in accordance with Government Code Section 54954.2.

Attachments:

1. Proposed RFP for Voter Opinion Survey and Public Education services

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