



Agenda Report

24-772

Agenda Date: 12/2/2024

REPORT TO GOVERNANCE AND ETHICS COMMITTEE

SUBJECT

Discussion and Direction on District Communication Options

BACKGROUND

City Hall News started in 2019 as a monthly digital publication featuring City news, initiatives, events, and a message from the City Manager. In 2021, City Councilmembers expressed an interest in sending regular communications to their District constituents. To that end, the publication was rebranded to include a message from the Mayor instead of the City Manager, and Councilmembers were given the option of including a message with the same City Hall News monthly content. On any given month, if the Councilmember submitted a City Hall News message, the digital publication was made available to the public during that month.

City Hall News is distributed via the GovDelivery platform to approximately 50,000 eNews subscribers each month and is archived on the City website where it is viewable in both Flipbook and PDF formats. Currently, each version of City Hall News with councilmember messages are also promoted on the City's social media channels.

DISCUSSION

As background, the Governance and Ethics Committee included the topic of District Communication options as part of their 2024 work plan. Through the review of our current communication options, staff proposes decoupling City Hall News from Mayor and District Councilmember messages to the community, and provide each District Councilmember the ability to send newsletters to subscribers in their districts. The Mayor, as the ceremonial head of the City, would continue to utilize the citywide distribution list to send her/his message to the community.

Mayor and Council Distribution Lists

The City uses GovDelivery as its email distribution platform. Staff is proposing to develop distribution lists for each council district on the City's eNews platform. Since the Mayor is not assigned a district and is considered the ceremonial head of the City, she/he would be able to send her message citywide which is already the current practice Councilmembers will be able to communicate directly with their District news subscribers. This will allow councilmembers to provide specific information about their district that is relevant to those who live in that district.

Newsletter Guidelines

To manage workload due to citywide communication efforts, city staff proposes the following for Mayor and Council:

- Submit a message up to 500-700 words
- Submit up to three to five images
- Message sent to eNews subscribers on a monthly basis
- Content submissions due the second the week of each month

Content and images should be sent via email to the Communications Team. After staff review, the messages will be formatted in Gov Delivery and sent out to the distribution lists.

The City Communications team will promote the eNews subscription lists via social media and other City publications. Prior to implementation, City Communications will promote to the public that they can subscribe to the District distribution lists via social media and City publications.

By decoupling City Hall News from Council District newsletters, City Halls News would stand on its own as the official source of monthly news for the City. Communications staff would launch a campaign to rebrand City Hall News to generate more subscribers and unveil a new look.

ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW

The action being considered does not constitute a “project” within the meaning of the California Environmental Quality Act (“CEQA”) pursuant to CEQA Guidelines section 15378(a) as it has no potential for resulting in either a direct physical change in the environment, or a reasonably foreseeable indirect physical change in the environment.

FISCAL IMPACT

There is no fiscal impact associated with the approval of the recommendation other than staff time.

COORDINATION

This report was coordinated by the City Manager’s Office

PUBLIC CONTACT

Public contact was made by posting the Committee agenda on the City’s official-notice bulletin board outside City Hall Council Chambers. A complete agenda packet is available on the City’s website and in the City Clerk’s Office at least 72 hours prior to a Regular Meeting and 24 hours prior to a Special Meeting. A hard copy of any agenda report may be requested by contacting the City Clerk’s Office at (408) 615-2220, email clerk@santaclaraca.gov or at the public information desk at any City of Santa Clara public library.

RECOMMENDATION

Provide Direction on District Communication Options Recommendations by the Governance and Ethics Committee and Forward for Consideration and Approval by the City Council.

Reviewed by: Janine De la Vega, Director of Communications/PIO, City Manager’s Office

Approved by: Jovan Grogan, City Manager