



"A City That Works"

## City Council Meeting

## AGENDA ITEM NO. J. 2.

**DATE:** 06/16/2020

**TO:** Honorable Mayor and City Council Members

**SUBJECT:** Presentation of Community Priorities Survey and Support for Municipal Services (Management Services/Finance Director Garcia)

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### **MOTION(S):**

If the City Council determines that staff's recommendation is appropriate, the following motion is provided:

I move to receive the presentation on the results of a Community Survey conducted by TBWB Strategies and True North Research.

### **RECOMMENDATION:**

Staff recommends that the City Council receive a presentation on the results of the Community Survey conducted by TBWB Strategies and True North Research.

### **DISCUSSION:**

For the past twelve fiscal years, the City Council has adopted balanced General Fund budgets, wherein recurring expenditures do not exceed recurring revenue. However, this balance has come at the expense of certain capital and resource needs that remain unfunded and continue to increase in amount each fiscal year. Adding to this constraint, the revenue impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic and its effects on the City's General Fund budget will impact revenues negatively for the remainder of fiscal year 2019-20 and for the upcoming FY 2020-21 budget. It has meant significant reductions in staffing levels, including the layoff of 21 full time positions, and the use of an estimated \$8.6 million from reserves.

Beginning in late fall of 2019, staff, including the Police Chief, Fire Chief, and Interim City Manager, held public meetings and visited local civic groups to talk about local funding needs and the overall budget constraints faced by the City. A total of 27 meetings were held with public groups like the Redlands Area Interfaith Council, the Redlands Tea Party Patriots, City Boards, Committees and Commissions as well as the Redlands Service Club Council, among many others.

During this time, two community mailers were sent out to residents to ask for individual feedback on services and priorities within the community, providing residents with ways to get in touch with staff regarding their concerns. As well, the City's website has been updated frequently with video messages, frequently asked questions, a facts sheet regarding the current state of public safety capital needs, as well as an open-ended public survey about city services.

Most of these early conversations focused on the state of the City's budget vis-à-vis the long term demands of infrastructure and public safety funding. Before the mid-March COVID-19 stay-at-home orders were put in place, staff received feedback from the public that reinforced the list of funding priorities for the community. In the wake of the economic impact caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, the focus on maintaining public safety and other priority services will mark a shift from the public conversations regarding expansion and enhancement of those priorities to a maintenance of effort discussion.

As a culmination of these outreach efforts, a voter opinion survey was conducted in March of this year, by True North Research, with a goal of demonstrating the feasibility of a potential sales tax measure for the City. The proposed measure would require that all monies collected from the tax be controlled locally and be spent on City of Redlands services and projects. The survey had several research objectives:

- To gauge current levels of satisfaction with City services;
- To assess potential voter interest in ensuring local funding for infrastructure and protection of essential City services like public safety; and
- To inform a priority ranking of projects and programs to potentially be funded with the proceeds

The results of this survey show there is currently strong support in favor of a sales tax measure among likely November 2020 voters in the City. Support was shown to be broad and wide-ranging among different groups within the City. These results, along with continued efforts on the part of staff and City Council to communicate information on funding needs and the public's priorities, should contribute to the overall feasibility of a successful ballot measure in November 2020.

## **ALTERNATIVES:**

Not applicable.

## **STRATEGIC PLAN:**

The survey itself supports the following:

Objective A-1:

Enhance fiscal and operational practices to support fiscal stability, transparency and data-driven decisions

- A-1.5 Work Collaboratively with Departments to Propose new revenue generation concepts for City Council consideration and approval

Objective A-3:

Implement Financial Planning Tools

- A-3.2 Support each Department in the creation of a Capital Improvements Program to include Capital Outlay & Funding Strategies
- A-3.3 Develop Long Term Financial Planning Procedure (to include 5-, 10- & 20-Year Scenarios)

**SUBMITTED BY:**

Danielle Garcia, Management Services/Finance Director

**RECOMMENDED BY:**

Charles M. Duggan Jr., City Manager

**REVIEWED BY:**

Daniel J. McHugh, City Attorney

Janice McConnell, Assistant City Manager

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**Fiscal Impact**

**Discussion:**

There is no fiscal impact associated with the receipt of this presentation.

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