



Agenda Item D.2
DISCUSSION/ACTION ITEM
Meeting Date: November 17, 2020

TO: Mayor and Councilmembers

FROM: Kristy Schmidt, Assistant City Manager
Kelly Hoover, Community Relations Manager

SUBJECT: Community State of the City

RECOMMENDATION:

Provide staff with feedback and direction on the City's next Community State of the City event.

BACKGROUND:

Since April of 2017, the Goleta City Council has hosted an annual Community State of the City event, which is a free, public event held in the Goleta Valley Community Center auditorium, and features presentations by the Mayor and City Manager, videos and a question and answer (Q&A) segment. Upon arriving, attendees write their questions on an index card and provide it to designated staff. During the Q&A segment the Mayor, City Manager and the Department Directors assemble on the auditorium stage and a moderator screens the questions and asks the Mayor or staff the questions that pertain to them. Afterward, the Mayor, City Councilmembers and staff are available to the audience for one-on-one questions and conversations.

Live Spanish translation is provided for all segments of the program. Light refreshments are served, and tables staffed by City personnel which feature information about various City projects and programs are staged throughout the auditorium.

The Community State of the City event is advertised using city-wide mailers and through other City outreach platforms, such as the City's website and social media. A video of the event is recorded, and later broadcast on Goleta TV Channel 19. It is also posted on the City website for on-demand viewing. The cost for putting on the event is approximately \$5,000.

This event has been well attended each year, and participants have expressed their appreciation for the Q&A segment and the approachable, open-house format of the event. The last Community State of the City event hosted by the City took place on April 4, 2019. Due to the unprecedented challenges caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, the City was forced to cancel the Community State of the City event scheduled for the spring of 2020.

Recently, Mayor Perotte requested that staff bring a discussion item to the Council regarding the next Community State of the City event in order for the Council to provide direction to staff on the timing and content of the event in light of the many challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic. Councilmember Kyriaco supported this request.

DISCUSSION:

The public health risks associated with the COVID-19 pandemic have resulted in the declaration of federal, state, county and local states of emergency, and ensuing state and county health orders that have prohibited gatherings and events since late March of 2020. Local agencies, including the City of Goleta, have rapidly transitioned to online, “virtual” meeting formats in order to ensure continuity of government and a platform for public engagement in the public decision-making process. These virtual tools have now become the standard for a myriad of event formats and continue to be a safe way to share information and to connect with others. Staff understands the importance of communicating with the public during this challenging time and believes that the Community State of the City can be presented successfully in a virtual format. However, staff seeks the Council’s input and direction on the content and timing of such an event, given the fact that budgets and staff resources are stretched. Below are several options for the Council’s consideration.

Live GoToWebinar Community State of the City Format

One option would be to use the same webinar format that is used for City Council meetings, which would provide a way for the community to see the event live and for the public to have their questions answered and interact with Council and staff. Slide presentations and/or videos could be included to add to the content of the program. The event would be advertised on City outreach platforms and broadcast live on Channel 19 and the City website. It would be recorded and subsequently released on all City outreach platforms.

A Live GoToWebinar Virtual State of the City scenario is expected to take several weeks of staff time to advertise/promote the event and write/create presentations from the Mayor, City Manager and other designated staff. If a Q&A segment is desired by the Council, staff recommends that questions are sought in advance from the public, and asked by a moderator, similar to the format used in past Community State of the City events.

The event would also require Spanish interpretation at the event and coordination with IT and contracted production services to broadcast the event. The cost to the City would be approximately \$1,000 for advertising and production costs which would come out of the current year’s Community Relations budget. Spanish simultaneous interpretation services would cost an additional \$500, for a total of \$1,500.

Taped Community State of the City Production

Alternatively, the City could choose to do a taped production. The Mayor, City Manager and designated staff would be taped giving their presentations at a scenic Goleta location to be determined and those presentations would be edited into a show that would be released to the public on all City outreach platforms. Slides and other graphics could be added to the presentations if desired. The event would be advertised several weeks in

advance and the public would have opportunity to submit questions which would be answered by staff and included in the taped production.

The taped State of the City production would be more of a produced show format and would require several weeks of staff time to create the presentations, edit the show, and advertise the event. The production costs, which include Spanish translation, are expected to be approximately \$3,000 and would be taken out of the Community Relations budget.

In order to effectively execute either option for a Community State of the City, staff will need to identify and reserve an available date for Council and staff that does not conflict with any Council meetings or other community events. Staff will also need several weeks to prepare presentations and advertise the event.

If the Council decides to do a January Community State of the City (either live or pre-recorded), it will also need to consider the staff time and cost to participate in the State of the City series event planned by the South Coast Chamber of Commerce for Goleta in May of 2021. Typically, the time to prepare for a comprehensive State of the City presentation is a minimum of six weeks. This would result in 12 weeks of staff time devoted to the State of the City for the two events in a single fiscal year. With a more streamlined format, staff time for each event might be able to be reduced somewhat but would still be significant.

Community Message Alternative

A third alternative would be to produce a shortened holiday-themed community message of 10-15 minutes, similar to some of the other messaging that has gone out throughout this year, and then do a more detailed Community State of the City event in concert with the Chamber's event in May 2021. This option could include holiday messages and expressions of gratitude from the Council, messaging from the Mayor about some of the City's activities, and summary information from the City Manager about the City's financial position, but without the presentation of the type of detailed data and information involved in a typical Community State of the City presentation.

This cost could likely be absorbed in the Community Relations budget for the current year. Further, staff feel that it would be possible to put this message out in December due to the shortened format.

The City Council is asked to consider the options identified above, or other ideas they may have for the Community State of the City event, and to provide direction to staff on how and when to proceed.

FISCAL IMPACTS:

As noted above, if Council wishes to proceed with a Community State of the City, the Live GoToWebinar Virtual State of the City scenario would cost approximately \$1,500 for advertising, production and interpretation. The taped State of the City production would cost approximately \$3,000 dollars for production and translation.

One Community State of the City was planned for Fiscal Year 2020/21 and funds were

budgeted for it in the current year. If needed, any additional costs under the options presented above could be absorbed through budget savings in other areas of the City Manager's Office budget.


ALTERNATIVES:

Staff has identified three potential options for alternative approaches to the Community State of the City event, however Council may direct another approach or forego the event until COVID-19 restrictions are lifted and large indoor gatherings are again permitted.

Reviewed By:

Legal Review By:

Approved By:



Kristine Schmidt
Assistant City Manager



Michael Jenkins
City Attorney



Michelle Greene
City Manager