

City of Culver City, California
City Council Agenda Item Report

Meeting Date: 12/03/07		Item Number: <u>A-7</u>	
AGENDA ITEM: Discussion and Adoption of a Resolution Establishing a City Council Policy on Public Notification.			
Contact Person/Dept.: Martin R. Cole, Phone Number: (310) 253-6000 Assistant City Manager			
Fiscal Impact: Yes ☒ No ☐		General Fund: Yes ☒ No ☐	
Public Hearing: ☐		Action Item: ☒ Attachments: ☒	
Public Notification: Master Notification List (11/28/2007).			
Department Approval: Martin R. Cole (11/26/2007)		City Attorney Approval: Carol Schwab (by H. Iker) (11/28/07)	
Fiscal Impact Review: Marlee Chang (11/28/07)		City Manager Approval: Jerry B. Fulwood (11/28/07)	
<u>RECOMMENDATION:</u> Staff recommends the City Council discuss a proposed City Council Policy on public notification and adopt a resolution establishing the proposed Policy. <u>BACKGROUND:</u> The City Council discussed this topic on July 10, 2006. At that time and after very brief discussion, the City Council directed staff to return at a later date with a proposed updated policy related to Public Notification. Therefore, this item is presented to the City Council this evening for consideration. <u>DISCUSSION:</u> Culver City has had a tradition of encouraging public participation in the governmental process. As part of that tradition, the City has provided public notification in excess of the levels required by law. In the following sections, the various levels of public notification will be discussed. <i>Legally Required Notice</i> Under applicable federal and state law and as provided for in the City Charter and Culver City Municipal Code, the City provides notification to a subset of the Culver City community of certain actions being considered by the City Council, the City's Commissions (especially the Planning Commission), and certain administrative actions taken by City Staff.			

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Section 610 of the City Charter states the following:

The City Council shall comply with the applicable provisions of State law regarding the giving of notice for regular and special meetings. The City Council shall consider whether it should establish additional procedures to provide efficient, timely and cost-effective notice in a manner consistent with currently available technology.

Consideration of this item and the associated Policy meets the requirements of this Section of the Charter.

Notification Process under Current Practice

In addition to legally required notice, current City practice provides for an “enhanced” public notification process. This involves the preparation and mailing of post cards, publishing of courtesy notices in the local newspapers, and researching past minutes to find persons and organizations interested in various topics. Also, in instances where the minimum legal requirement is to provide notice to property owners, the City also provides notice to residents as well.

The current process can be staff time intensive (because of the need for manual research). Further, while staff strives to include every interested person in a notification effort, a manual system may result in some interested persons being inadvertently missed.

Points for Consideration

In distributing items for public notification purposes, the City should attempt to balance the cost of notification with the efficacy of the notification effort. Additionally, the City should also consider the subjects of resource conservation and sustainability.

In an attempt to reach the broadest number of persons, the City currently sends postcards to property owners as well as residents. The Information Technology Department has attempted to electronically “sift” the lists so that if the property owner is the resident, then only one notification postcard is generated. However, sometimes the information utilized for this process may be several months old and duplication may occur. From time to time, the City Council has heard from residents who receive multiple notifications for the same item.

Even with this process, a Citywide mailing costs approximately \$0.50 per post card. With approximately 22,000 postal addresses in the City, a City-wide mailing costs a

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minimum of \$11,000. With respect to newspaper notification, a quarter-page legal advertisement costs approximately \$150 per insertion.

As directed by the City Council, staff has prepared the attached draft policy for the City Council's consideration. In drafting the proposed policy, staff is recommending the following:

- Continued compliance with the minimum notification requirements established in applicable law;
- Continued use of the "extended radius to end of block" methodology currently in use;
- Reduction of the use of postcard notifications in favor of E-mail notification.
- Utilize the GIS System as the basis of creating the address lists for mail notifications with radii being extended to the end of blocks.
- Increased use of E-Mail notifications
- Increased use of a revised Speaker's Card to allow persons to sign-up for the City's e-mail notification list
- Routine placement of public notices on the City's Website
- Provide for the establishment of a mail notification list and allow persons to self-select areas of interest
- Department Heads may provide for extended notification based upon specific circumstances

Generally, the City is continually moving toward more efficient processes. For example, the City Council has approved online application and payment for recreation class registrations and certain permits. And, on November 14, 2007, the City Council authorized the purchase of software to allow Business License Certificates to be renewed online. Staff recommends the City Council adopt a Public Notification Policy that also takes advantage of the efficiencies of electronic processing. This process has significant benefits by decreasing use of resources and reducing the number of missed notification requests.

Publicizing the New Notification Process

To help the Community become more aware of the public notification processes available, staff will advertise the availability of the e-mail and postal notification lists on various existing City "publications" including on the City's website, city documents, with internal flyers and through other similar methods.

PROCESSES USED BY WESTSIDE COG CITIES

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In preparing this report, staff contacted the cities of Beverly Hills, Santa Monica, and West Hollywood. The following table includes the results of this brief survey:

City	Process Used
Beverly Hills	In addition to legal minimums, the City posts its notices on their website. Items of a non-routine nature may be noticed through announcement at a City Council meeting.
Santa Monica	Provides the legally required notice.
West Hollywood	In addition to legal minimums, the City posts notices on City bulletin boards at City Hall and all City Parks. Notices are also posted at the Sheriff's Station and on their Cable TV Channel.

FISCAL ANALYSIS:

It is anticipated that the new policy will result in the reduction in the use of mail and the increase in the use of E-Mail. In addition to the cost reductions for supplies and mailing, the staff time currently utilized in the preparation and mailing of post cards would be available for other City's priorities. The exact of potential cost reduction is difficult to project at this time; however, it is estimated to be in the tens of thousands of dollars annually. Overall, it will have a positive fiscal impact to the City's and it will also fulfill the commitment to the City's Sustainable Community Plan.

ATTACHMENTS:

1. Proposed Resolution (including Council Policy)
2. Proposed Revised Speaker's Card.

MOTION:

That the City Council:

1. Discuss the topic of Public Notification; and
2. Adopt the resolution establishing the Public Notification Policy.