

City of Culver City, California
City Council Agenda Item Report

Meeting Date: 01/26/09		Item Number: A-1	
AGENDA ITEM: Discussion Regarding Enhanced Programming on the City's Government Access Channel (CCTV 35) and Direction to Staff.			
Contact Person/Dept.: Martin Cole Elaine Gerety Warner		Phone Number: 310.253.6107 310.253.5777	
Fiscal Impact: Yes ☒ No ☐		General Fund: Yes ☐ No ☒	
Public Hearing: ☐		Action Item: ☒ Attachments: ☒	
Public Notification: Master E-Mail Notification List (01/21/09); Advertisement in Culver City Observer (01/21/09).			
Department Approval: Martin R. Cole ()		City Attorney Approval: Carol Schwab (by R. Miranda) (01/21/09)	
Chief Financial Officer Approval: Jeff Muir (by M. Noller) (01/21/09)		City Manager Approval: Jerry B. Fulwood (01/21/09)	

RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends the City Council discuss enhanced programming on the City's Government Access Channel (CCTV 35) and direct staff as deemed appropriate.

BACKGROUND:

On December 22, 2008 the City Council discussed a proposed policy which would allow the City to more fully utilize its Government Access Channel (GAC). Currently, GAC broadcasts live meetings of the City Council, the Redevelopment Agency, and the Commissions Under the proposed policy, the use of the GAC would be expanded to include an electronic bulletin board as well as original programming developed for the City. The GAC would be used to replay the live meetings already broadcast and, ultimately, provide for an expanded playlist of programming in Tier II and Tier III.

The City Council adopted the proposed policy and staff is working to implement Tier I of the new policy which provides (as excerpted from the December 22, 2008 staff report:

Tier I (1 - 12 months)

Staff proposes to begin expanded use of the GAC with the periodic rebroadcast of City Council, Agency, and Commission meetings. Additionally, once the rebroadcast schedule is stable, programming developed by Culver City (Art of Speaker's Series, Council/Agency meeting playbacks etc.) would be included in the broadcast rotation. Electronic bulletin board notices will be developed utilizing existing PowerPoint tools and could be implemented with current staffing resources. Additionally, the first tier

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would focus on streamlining technical execution, developing title listing with Time Warner and managing the current playback system. This tier may also allow for some limited airing of programs developed by other municipalities as approved by the City Manager. Given that the channel would not be airing a full flight of programs, it is recommended that programming be available during select hours such as from 10:00 AM to 10 PM. It is proposed that this tier would be in effect for approximately twelve months.

During discussion of the policy, the City Council also expressed a desire for additional information on Tier II and Tier III programming and fiscal impacts proposed in the policy. This information is provided this evening for the City Council's discussion.

DISCUSSION:

As discussed on December 22, 2008 the GAC is not a public forum but rather another medium used by the City for official City communications. Therefore, enhanced programming needs to meet certain requirements to maintain the GAC nature of CCTV 35.

Further expansion of the programming on the GAC may involve the need for additional staff or financial resources. In the following paragraphs, staff has attempted to estimate those additional costs for the Council's consideration.

The following descriptions of Tier II and Tier III are excerpted from the staff report from December 22, 2008:

Tier II (12-24 months)

Once the initial stabilization period has been achieved, and financial resources being available, a more aggressive programming selection could be made available through other municipalities and government organizations. While there would be some fees associated with purchasing these programs, several programs from other municipalities via our membership in SCAN NATOA (SCAN NATOA is the California/Nevada Chapter of NATOA, a nationwide professional organization comprised of municipalities and cable television operators), have already been made available for airing distribution at no cost. In addition, our participation in SCAN NATOA will also allow the City/Agency to share their original programming with other communities and expand the outreach of programming. During this tier, staff may request additional budget resources to inform the community of new programming as well as to create pilot programs of major City events such as the Culver City Music Festival, ArtWalk, and feature other department programs and messages

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such as Fire Safety, Sustainability and Redevelopment activities. It is proposed that this tier would be in effect for approximately 6-10 months.

Tier III (24 - 36 months)

As CCTV 35 becomes more established and resources are available and allocated, staff will bring forward refined programming recommendations to the City Council for consideration that may include covering major events taking place throughout the City such as Little League Championships, events/programs from the Visual and Performing Arts Academy, and general news programming.

Additional Fiscal Information Related to Tier II and Tier III

As noted, certain programs are available through SCAN NATOA at no cost. A listing of programs which may be considered for broadcast is included in Attachment 1. Once the operation of the equipment for replays is confirmed to be reliable and stable, the integration of programs from SCAN NATOA which meet the requirements of the Policy can be integrated at little cost. Should the City Council determine it wishes staff to proceed more quickly with implementation of this type of programming, it may be necessary to obtain the services of a consultant to assist staff with operating the equipment. Applying the current hourly rate of our existing video consultant as a guide (\$40/hour) and estimating 40 hours of time, the resulting cost is \$1,600. The cost of programming would range from \$0 to \$2,000, dependent upon the source of programming.

Tier III would involve a level of programming which has the potential of significant costs. If the City Council desired the video and audio capture and re-broadcast of events such as Little League Championships, Visual and Performing Arts Academy performances, and similar programs, the City would need to hire a filming crew consisting of between two and five persons. Using the City's current video consultant would cost \$120/hour. Also, the City would either need to purchase video equipment (estimated at between \$5,000 and \$10,000) or hire a filming crew that provides its own equipment. In that case, it is estimated the above hourly rate would increase to \$200-300/hour. For a three hour performance, the direct costs would be between \$600 and \$750, plus any necessary post production work to prepare the "raw footage" for broadcast. At this time, the Agency has a contract with a production company to edit and post produce the Art of Speaker's series. The cost for this production, to include a separate interview segment, B-roll, music and opening closing credits is approximately \$2,200.

Tier III also provides an opportunity for the City to provide its own general news programming. Currently, the City does not have its own production facilities. Nor is there sufficiently qualified staff to manage all the elements of producing, hosting,

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filming and editing such programming. The City Council could determine to provide for in-house production facilities to include dedicated space and associated audio/visual equipment. The cost, depending on the level of effort, could be in the tens of thousands of dollars. Alternatively, if the City Council determined it wished to pursue this level of programming, it may wish to direct staff to prepare and issue a Request for Proposals to companies with both facilities and personnel to provide the necessary services. Costs for such an agreement are difficult to estimate at this time but are estimated to be in the tens of thousands of dollars dependent upon the type and frequency of programming desired.

Should the City Council wish to pursue these enhanced programming options, staff would recommend the preparation and release of a Request for Proposals for filming crew and/or production facilities.

FISCAL ANALYSIS:

As with the initial proposal, it is staff's recommendation to take a conservative approach in the enhancement of the GAC. Costs for implementation of the Tier I phase can be accommodated within the existing work plan and budget and would not require additional resources.

Progression to Tier II and Tier III may cost significantly more money depending on the approach and strategy. Tier II costs would be primarily related to securing additional programming created for municipalities and compliant with the Policy. Initially, costs for Tier II could be up to \$2,000. Tier III costs would encompass filming and production expenses to feature original and Culver City created programming. The costs for Tier III would also depend on the resources available at implementation, the desire to develop in-house facility operation or hire external consultants and contractors. A ballpark estimate, for the development of 10 new shows per year could range between \$25,000 and \$35,000. Staff does not recommend exploring Tier III until the economic climate is more conducive to such an endeavor.

ATTACHMENTS:

- 1) SCANNATOIA Programming from other municipalities

MOTION:

That the City Council:

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- 1) Receive and file this report; and,
- 2) Direct staff as deemed appropriate.