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CALIFORNIA



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April 21, 2021

REF: EXE-145-21

Budget and Finance Committee
c/o Richard Williams, Office of the City Clerk
Room 395 City Hall
Los Angeles, CA 90012

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY AGENCY - 2021-22 MAYOR'S PROPOSED BUDGET

As technology was critical in the City's response to the COVID-19 pandemic, technology has been increasingly important in Los Angeles' COVID recovery and rebuilding effort. Over the last year, the Information Technology Agency's (ITA) Connect2LACity telecommuting platform allowed 18,173 teleworking City employees to keep government services operating while preserving health and safety. Through our LACityView TV station, social media, and Zoom platforms, our Mayor and City Council led, engaged, and consoled Angelenos when they needed it most. Under the leadership of the Mayor's Office, ITA developed within 72 hours the City's first COVID-19 testing website and scheduling app that enabled over 60,000 COVID tests to L.A.'s essential workers, first responders, and residents within its first 4 weeks alone. Since that initial response, rental assistance, senior meals, disaster service worker assignments, logistics technologies at the Emergency Operations Center (EOC) and more were all quickly built and implemented by ITA to dramatically improve L.A. City's response to our residents and businesses during such a challenging time. As COVID-19 rates are decreasing and the region is pivoting quickly to safe reopening initiatives, technologies at the ITA will continue to play a key role in COVID-19 pandemic recovery. From public safety to small local businesses, new technology investments will continue to be the key for maximizing the health and prosperity of L.A.'s residents and businesses for years to come. Thankfully, the Mayor's proposed budget includes key technology investments critical both for the traditional technology responsibilities of the City of Los Angeles and the new ones related to COVID-19.

The Mayor's 2021-22 proposed budget for the Information Technology Agency of \$113.6M represents an increase of \$16.2M from FY 20-21 budget mainly attributed to funding for Infrastructure projects for our Microwave Radio Sites, Citywide Fiber Optic Network & Obsolete Network Replacement included in our budget and the Human Resource and Payroll Project (HRP).

ITA's budget includes funding to continue the essential new Human Resource and Payroll (HRP) System Project (\$14.2M), continues electrical, A/C, tower and mountaintop facility upgrades critical to the new LAFD radio system (\$4.2M), provides funding for the Citywide Fiber Optic Network End of Life Replacement (\$3.3M) which transports internet traffic for all public safety and City employees, Obsolete End of Life Network Equipment Replacement (\$2M), Mobile Worker Program and Phone Replacement of obsolete desk phones with mobile devices and VOIP where necessary (\$700K), funds the new Citywide Procurement System (aka Regional Procurement Portal - \$699K), Remote Work Package to allow continued teleworking capabilities for City employees (857K), Multilingual MyLA311 App implementation (\$95K), and includes the cost increases for our Google Workplace (email, calendar, Meet, etc) license renewal (\$408K).

Unfortunately, ITA's staffing has been reduced by 11% since last year. This is a total of 51 positions, from 450 employees in FY20-21 to 399 in FY21-22 (mainly due to Separation Incentive Program (SIP) retirements). This has been devastating. At a time when Angelenos and City employees depend on technology the most, and with a department already much smaller from the Great Recession (down from 814 staff in 2008 to 399 staff today), this presents substantial problems in the coming year, especially as the City of Los Angeles is re-opening and other departments are receiving funding for their various projects that will require resources from ITA to perform.

Requests:

The Mayor's proposed budget supports key technological investments and needs. However, there are three crucial requests that are included/not included in the proposed budget that must be noted to enable the department to continue providing existing services:

1. Restore Expense Account Reductions - \$1,568,199

ITA, as instructed during the budget process, submitted a 3% budget reduction proposal of \$2.6M realizing that these cuts will consequently impact services to any and all city departments and most consequently the public as a whole. In developing this bleak budget proposal, ITA reviewed our prior year expenditures, considered the 47 positions lost through SIP, and examined the many different services ITA provides to other City departments and the public. Although the proposed cut was reduced by \$1M, the remaining proposed reductions still pose a big impact in our major service areas. For example, the proposed \$611K reduction in our Contractual Services and Office and Admin Account would eliminate funding for the live alternative Disaster Recovery site for City's Payroll System, PaySr. This means that a natural disaster or failure in the City's payroll system will not have the ability to restore this critical system. Disaster Recovery is essential to our City operations. ITA plans to migrate this into the Cloud and to re-purpose this funding for our Cloud service subscriptions (so a failure in key City systems allows quick restoration in the Cloud). An ongoing cut for this funding will totally eliminate

Disaster Recovery for all our financial systems putting the City at risk when a natural or human-made disaster occurs (earthquake, fire, data center flooding from burst pipe, etc). The proposed cut includes a reduction of \$318,268 in contractual obligations used for our computer and conference room A/V support and Internet connections. During the COVID-19 pandemic, City of Los Angeles field offices and work locations increased their usage of video conferencing more than 40 times! The Internet bandwidth requirements have necessitated faster Internet services to field offices and work locations, critical for the current and ongoing telework of City employees. The proposed reduction of \$450K in our Contractual services account for our Financial Database Support, will impact any ongoing enhancements to the Financial Management System; various Subscription services, general supplies and Training will be eliminated if the proposed \$188,931 reduction is not restored which is counterproductive since the change in staff due to SIP and retirements does require a training investment in the newer workforce, which we will not be able to perform.

With fewer IT employees responding to increasing IT requests due to the pandemic, we need to provide staff the funding to purchase the parts they need when equipment breaks, procure support and tools, as needed, to complete service requests, and provide training to staff to achieve a more skilled and efficient workforce.

ITA is requesting restoration of this proposed Expense Account Reductions to continue preventing data breaches, network outages, Radio system outages, etc. Keeping up with these support will mitigate potential costly expenditures should any of these, security breaches or equipment failure, occur due to lack of maintenance.

2. Reinstate IT Staffing - \$2.4M

ITA acknowledges the mandate of deleting the SIP position authorities as part of this budget process to realize savings associated with these positions at the time when the fiscal condition of the City is so unknown. The ITA was disproportionately harmed by the SIP program. We are down from 814 positions in 2008 to 399 employees in this proposed budget with no service reductions. Technology demands have only increased during the COVID pandemic and staffing is needed to both support the new technologies implemented at the City and keep the existing technologies working. While the majority of the City worked from home, ITA staff continued to perform work on site and provided support in areas like Cyber Security, Network Support, Public Safety Radio and Microwave Support, LAPD and LAFD vehicle installations, Avionics, LACityview Channel 35, Emergency Operations Support, Desktop and HelpDesk, and many more. ITA staffed Council Meetings, setup Police Command Posts, and televised elected official press conferences. Now that the City is preparing to reopen, ITA will receive substantially more requests for ITA assistance. ITA needs additional staffing to facilitate reopening services for ITA and other City Departments.

ITA is requesting to reinstate 23 of the 47 positions deleted in this budget through SIP and requests funding for these positions of up to \$2.4M to ensure a safe and smooth

reopening for the City and to make sure ITA services continue as we move forward into our new “norm”. As City departments begin implementing their Reconstitution Plans, ITA has identified that key positions will be needed in Public Safety Support in Command Posts Support, LAPD and LAFD Radio Support, Voice and Data Engineering Operations, Enterprise and Data Network Operations, CRM and VMS Applications Support, Regional Procurement Project, FMS Enhancements Support, Elected Desktop Support, Citywide Helpdesk, and Web Services.

3. Public Information Director II and Digital Social Media Infrastructure - \$229,257

When the 2020 COVID-19 pandemic hit, social and digital outreach became an integral part of the City of Los Angeles’ mass communication efforts. From producing live streams for the Mayor’s daily live updates, to streaming press conferences shared on social channels in collaboration with LA county Health Department and various City Councilmembers, City Attorney as well as posting Emergency Management and Public Service content. The LA CityView Media Group has created and shared thousands of messages, videos and links to help spread up-to-date information during our COVID crisis with more than 6 million views since the beginning of the pandemic. This same medium will be essential as the City pivots to reconstituting and a safe reopening. However, ITA has never received funding for a social media position to help accomplish all of this citywide work.

ITA requests funding to engage a vendor to provide a Content Delivery Network (CDN) and for various software to manage social media engagement and content management and a position request for a Public Information Director to act as a Digital Media Director who would manage, lead and direct the City’s strategic and tactical actions on Digital and social Media platforms to improve citizen engagement and awareness. A Digital Media Director will ensure the continuation of the Mayor’s vision to deliver a cohesive official City presence on Social Media by consolidating all various platforms that are being used by City Departments.

Closing

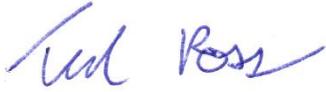
The COVID-19 recovery continues to be uncharted territory for the City of Los Angeles. While the economy resurges and health care professionals continue to fight the COVID-19 pandemic, ITA’s technology and digital tools will increasingly be used by City departments and elected officials to provide “contactless services” and to manage a large and complex city. The continued technology investments and IT capabilities are essential. We deeply appreciate the confidence that the Mayor’s budget demonstrates in ITA and our ability to deliver key digital services at this critical junction in Los Angeles history. We thank you for your close consideration of our requests.

Budget and Finance Committee

April 21, 2021

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Respectfully submitted,



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