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November 10, 2022

Honorable Members of the
Los Angeles City Council
c/o Room 395, City Hall
200 North Spring Street
Los Angeles, CA 90012

**SUBJECT: EXPANSION OF LIVE SPANISH INTERPRETATION FOR CITY COUNCIL
COMMITTEE MEETINGS (C.F. 22-0436)**

Honorable Members:

SUMMARY

On May 31, 2022, the Los Angeles City Council (Council) adopted Motion (Raman - De León - Price) instructing the Office of the City Clerk (City Clerk), with the assistance of the Information Technology Agency (ITA), to report relative to expanding live interpreting services to all City Council Committee meetings, including: the required software, technology, and hardware; contracting options; and, funding and resources necessary for the expansion of interpreting services. This report includes information and costs regarding acquiring additional interpreters necessary to provide live interpretation services for Committee meetings and equipping the Committee meeting rooms on the tenth floor of City Hall and the Public Works Hearing room.

RECOMMENDATION

If Council wishes to move forward with expanding live Spanish interpretation services for the Committee meetings, Council should adopt the following recommendations:

1. APPROVE \$236,565 in funding to ITA's Communication Services Account 009350, for the hardware and software upgrades for the Council audio control room, Committee meeting rooms, Public Works Hearing room, and central room for interpreters.
2. APPROVE \$130,000 in funding to City Clerk for one-time cost to procure hardware to support live streaming of Committee meetings in Spanish with closed captions.
3. APPROVE \$30,000 in funding to City Clerk annually to provide automated computer closed captioning by vendor.
4. APPROVE \$30,000 in annual funding in ITA's Communication Services Account 009350, to provide maintenance for Council audio equipment and systems by vendors.
5. APPROVE \$74,850 in funding to the General Services Department, Construction Forces Division, to configure a central room to house interpreters and related equipment.

AN EQUAL EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY EMPLOYER

6. Authorize the General Manager, City Clerk, to enter into agreements with interpretation and translation service providers, selected through the Request for Qualifications (RFQ) process, for a term of five years, for amounts not to exceed \$200,000 per year, per agreement. This limit allows a contract ceiling for Neighborhood Councils and other City departments to piggy-back on the RFQ procurement process using their own source of funds.

BACKGROUND

For the past several years, all City Council meetings have been broadcast live on Channel 35 and on the internet in both English and Spanish. In addition, a Spanish language interpreter is available at every City Council meeting to assist members of the public with public comment, as needed. Interpretation services in other languages for Council meetings are provided by request only.

Currently, for Committee meetings, interpretation services in any language are provided upon request only. These services include interpretation for public comment speakers and interpretation of the entire meeting for those physically in the meeting room wearing the provided audio headset. The broadcast of the entire Committee meeting is audio-streamed on the internet and can be heard over Councilphone, in English only.

The City Clerk contracts with two vendors to provide interpretation services, with both contracts expiring on December 31, 2022. In prior years, the annual budget allocation for interpretation services within the City Clerk's budget was approximately \$20,000. In the 2022-23 Fiscal Year budget, City Council approved an additional \$60,000 for the expansion of live interpretation services for Committee meetings.

INTERPRETERS

The expansion of live Spanish interpretation services for all Committee meetings will require a greater number of interpreters. Council has 15 standing Committees and two Ad Hoc Committees. Based on the Committee meeting schedule, there are 242 regular Committee meetings per year. Due to the overlap in time of some Committee meetings, it is estimated that an additional three to four interpreters may be needed for Committee meetings each week, assuming the Committees continue to meet as scheduled. Committee meetings that exceed three hours may require an additional interpreter per industry standards.

The City Clerk released a new RFQ in September 2022 to establish a list of qualified, contracted interpretation and translation service providers. With the growing demand for interpretation services, a larger pool of certified interpreters who can readily and professionally meet the needs of the City Council and the City Clerk is necessary. Although the hope is to attract several service providers, there is no guarantee as to the number of companies that will respond and qualify for contracts.

The average cost of qualified interpreters is between \$80 - \$100 per hour. Based on these estimates, with an average of two hours per meeting and excluding Council Recess days, the cost to provide interpretation services for the 242 regular Committee meetings is between \$38,720 - \$48,400, and for the 115 regular Council meetings is approximately \$18,400 - \$23,000, totaling between \$57,120 - \$71,400 for the fiscal year. This amount does not include Ad Hoc Committee meetings or meetings that exceed two hours. The City Clerk anticipates that the \$80,000 approved in the FY 22-23 Budget will cover the increased costs. This amount may need to be adjusted the following fiscal year.

PLACEMENT OF INTERPRETERS

The interpreters will be placed in room 1035 on the 10th floor of City Hall, from which they would have the capability to interpret the meeting and provide interpretation services for public comment speakers. The room will require the installation of individual workstations enclosed to reduce noise interruptions, and the necessary audio hardware and equipment to facilitate the broadcasting of the interpretation of the meeting on Channel 35 and the internet.

SOFTWARE, TECHNOLOGY, AND HARDWARE

In order to expand interpretation services for Committee meetings, upgraded audio hardware and software will be needed for the ITA Council Audio office control room (room 163 in City Hall), in each of the Committee meeting rooms on the tenth floor of City Hall, and in the Public Works Hearing room. The upgrades will enable the interpretation of the meeting to be broadcasted through the audio feed and allow for the future expansion of additional languages.

The estimated cost of the upgrades to the Committee meeting rooms (350, 1010, 1020, 1050, 1060, 1070), Council Audio Control room 163, and the centralized location for interpreters (room 1035) is \$236,565 including network connectivity. An additional one-time cost of \$130,000 will be needed to procure additional hardware to support live-streaming of Committee meetings in Spanish with closed captions. An annual cost of \$30,000 annually will be required to provide automated computer closed captioning by vendors. An additional \$30,000 in annual contractual services funding will be required to provide maintenance for Council audio equipment and systems by vendors. The total cost for hardware and software upgrades is estimated to be \$426,565. The estimated timeline to complete the technical work is approximately 6-8 months, barring any supply chain delays.

CONSTRUCTION FOR CENTRAL ROOM 1035



Construction work is necessary to create a central room to house the interpreters. The General Services Department - Construction Forces Division will coordinate the installation of eight workstations, including two ADA-compliant workstations. The total estimated cost for the construction work is \$74,850. The estimated timeline to complete the construction work is approximately 8-10 weeks, barring any supply chain delays.

FISCAL IMPACT STATEMENT

Approval of the recommendations in this report will have a General Fund impact of \$501,415. There is a potential offset of up to \$70,000 to address eligible costs, utilizing Municipal Improvement Corporation of Los Angeles (MICLA) monies budgeted for the Citywide Space Optimization program.

Respectfully submitted,

Signed with ClerkSign



Nov 10, 2022 12:21PM

Holly L. Wolcott
City Clerk

HLW/PFS/PL:ih
EXE-081-22