



Information Item

Date: February 10, 2011

To: Mayor and City Council
From: Elaine Polachek, Assistant City Manager
Subject: Update on Planning Efforts for the 2011 LA Marathon

Introduction

This report provides information on the planning efforts undertaken in preparation for the 2011 LA Marathon which will be held on Sunday, March 20, 2011.

Background

Last March, the LA Marathon established a new race route in celebration of its 25th anniversary. The “Stadium to the Sea” route took runners from a starting line at Dodger Stadium, through the cities of Los Angeles, Beverly Hills, West Hollywood, entering Santa Monica at 26th Street and San Vicente and concluding at the finish line at Ocean Avenue and Santa Monica Boulevard. Over 23,500 runners participated in the race with thousands of spectators lining the new course that boasted a landmark at every mile.

Following the race, runners were united with family and friends at a post-race festival in the 1550 Beach Parking Lot. Participants and spectators were very enthusiastic and the race itself was positive and inspirational.

Preparation for the marathon required a large inter-departmental team to plan for the safety of runners and spectators, parking, traffic, and transit management, clean up during and after the event, and outreach to the community. Every City department had a role to play to ensure the success of the event. Additionally, staff partnered with neighborhood associations, Chamber of Commerce, Convention and Visitors Bureau, Bayside District Corporation, and Pier Restoration Corporation to provide information to

the residential and business communities. While the 2010 LA Marathon was an unqualified success in terms of the race experience and the City's preparation, there were a number of important lessons learned that have lead to changes in preparation for the 2011 race.

Discussion

Finish Line

The finish line location at Santa Monica Boulevard created significant safety and congestion concerns for Police and Fire personnel last year. For the first time in the race's history, spectators were allowed to gather at the finish line to view runners as they finished the race. At the peak finishing time, hundreds of runners mingled with spectators creating gridlock on Ocean Avenue from Santa Monica Boulevard well beyond the Pier entrance. This congestion complicated efforts to manage pedestrian and vehicle traffic on Main Street and on Ocean Avenue south of the Pier.

In response to these issues, City and marathon staff agreed to relocate the finish line to Ocean Avenue at California Avenue. Pedestrians will be prohibited from accessing the race course from just north of California Avenue south to Arizona Avenue. A media bridge will be erected to further reduce congestion and VIP's will be limited and assigned to a specific tent. Bike racks and six foot fencing with windscreen will be installed along both sides of Ocean to keep pedestrians off of the course consistent with most professional marathons. Runners will have a much longer "walking chute" to receive water, snacks, Mylar blankets, and their medals. Mobile emergency medical services, provided by Santa Monica-UCLA Medical Center, will be located at Ocean and Wilshire Boulevard and at the Senior Center in Palisades Park.

Family Reunion/Festival

Last year, the post-race festival was located in the 1550 Beach Parking Lot. This site was selected as it provided the necessary open space to accommodate runners reuniting with family and friends, sponsor booths, entertainment stage, and an area for

runners to claim their pre-race clothing. One of the challenges with the 1550 lot was that runners had to make their way to the lot via the Pier bridge. The vast number of runners who made their way down the narrow and steep Pier bridge, navigating the stairs from the Pier to the beach lot, and then having to walk back uphill after completing the marathon created significant physical difficulties for many runners. It also created severe congestion at the intersection of Colorado Avenue and Ocean that extended into other parts of the downtown. Keeping the family reunification area on a level path will make it easier for runners to walk from the finish line to the area.

To respond to these concerns, the 2011 post-race festival will be located in the Civic Center Lot North (former RAND site). After crossing the finish line at California, runners will continue walking down Ocean Avenue and cross into the festival area just south of Colorado Avenue. This site is self-contained, is a direct, downhill walk for runners and spectators, and frees up the 1550 lot for much needed Pier and beach parking.

Traffic Management

Like last year, Transportation Engineering staff from the Planning and Community Development Department has developed a comprehensive transportation management plan for the LA Marathon addressing traffic control, shuttles, bicycles, transit, and pedestrian circulation. This year, based on lessons learned from the 2010 race, the following changes will be implemented:

- Staff is planning for a longer duration of heavy traffic congestion in and around Downtown, from approximately 11:00 AM to 3:00 PM the day of the race.
- Staff is working with SMPD and LAPD to ensure a faster street re-opening.
- Guidance signs for vehicles and pedestrians will be mounted on existing sign posts for increased visibility. The signs will clearly direct pedestrians and vehicles to the post-race pick-up area, parking structures, and freeways.
- Improved coordination with LA Marathon staff will ensure that appropriate Caltrans permits are obtained for placement of changeable message signs on I-10, PCH, and Lincoln Blvd.

- The post-race runner pick-up area will be located on Ocean Avenue between Moomat Ahiko and Pico Boulevard and will provide a greater area to serve more vehicles, and better distribute traffic.
- Street closures have been designed to completely separate areas of high pedestrian activity from vehicles. Information on all closures will be posted on the City's web site.
- Big Blue Bus will operate a free shuttle between detoured bus routes at 11th Street to 6th Street, allowing for increased access to the race via bus.

Parking

Parking Operations for the 2011 Los Angeles Marathon will be much the same as in 2010. Consistent with Resolution 10517 (CCS), parking facilities in the core of the event area will be \$20 per entry with prices decreasing to \$5 per entry at the Library and the farthest north and south beach parking lots. Free parking in the South Beach lots for the Main Street Farmers' Market will not be permitted. This year, event parking rates will be in effect until 6:00 p.m., due to the continued presence of significant traffic in the downtown. Parking staff will work with Transportation Management staff and Police personnel to direct vehicles to available parking areas to ensure that parking structures in the downtown are better utilized than last year. Once again, pre-sale parking for runners is being sold in the South Beach and Civic Center lots to better utilize traditionally underutilized parking locations. However, with the reopening of Santa Monica Place, no downtown structures will be pre-sold for runners. All downtown structures will have a hard closure between midnight and 6:00 a.m. Sunday to ensure they are available to spectators and other downtown visitors.

Public Safety

Police and Fire operations during the 2010 LA Marathon were focused on ensuring the safety of runners and spectators while maintaining coverage throughout the remainder of the city. Several changes in coverage will be in place for the 2011 race:

- Additional cameras will be added at 26th Street and San Vicente Boulevard and at Ocean Avenue and San Vicente. These additional cameras will facilitate critical decision-making during the race.

- Less total security personnel will be assigned but more personnel will be assigned on bicycles to allow for faster response in the downtown.
- Santa Monica-UCLA Medical Center will replace California Hospitals as the medical services provider on the race course in Santa Monica and at the finish line.

Communications and Community Outreach

Building on last year's experience and feedback, the City and LA Marathon staff have expanded coordinated outreach for both residents and businesses. Outreach to residents, the Neighborhood Council, and neighborhood groups is underway and is being well received. A collaboration between WILMONT and NOMA was added this year as a way to engage local residents and businesses of those neighborhoods that are most impacted by the race course. LA Marathon is providing a \$1,500 grant to sponsor an entertainment area allowing neighbors to come together to connect in a block party atmosphere. Special outreach is being undertaken so that parking alternatives are offered to buildings on Ocean Avenue that experience restricted access during the race.

Work with business partners - Chamber of Commerce, Bayside District Corporation, Convention and Visitor's Bureau, Pier Restoration Corporation, and Santa Monica Place – began earlier this year to improve business involvement in events leading up to the Marathon and on race day. Discussions have included ways to adapt business offerings for the day as well as methods to expand local business promotion to provide full marketing exposure for the range of products and services that make up the unique Santa Monica business mix. LA Marathon will include promotions and specials in their advertisements and alerts to runners. A unique Santa Monica smart phone application is being launched and the marketing muscle of the CVB, Bayside, and Chamber is being engaged to broadly promote Santa Monica. March 19, 2011 is being planned as a focused "Buy Local" day to celebrate the Marathon and all that Santa Monica has to offer as the finish line for the race. Work is also being done to coordinate a Santa

Monica presence to promote City services such as Big Blue Bus schedules and local businesses at the two-day pre-race LA Marathon Expo at Dodger Stadium.

An early partnership with LA Marathon and regional public relations efforts will allow staff to build on the success of last year as well as strengthen coordinated marketing and communication. In addition to a pre-race media campaign, special emphasis will be placed on creation of joint marketing materials; utilizing web, CityTV, radio resources; linking of all communication resources; coordination of Twitter, and text messaging feeds to provide day of instant updates to followers throughout the event.

Summary

Staff is confident that the adjustments being implemented as a result of the 2010 LA Marathon, the extensive community outreach, and early planning efforts will result in a successful event for runners, spectators, residents, and businesses.

Prepared By: Elaine Polachek, Assistant City Manager