



# Information Item

Date: October 6, 2015

To: Mayor and City Council  
From: Rick Cole, City Manager  
Subject: Continuing Efforts on Seven Strategic Initiatives

## Background

On August 23, 2015 the City Council convened a special Council meeting to establish three to five priority strategic goals that will make a difference in community safety, wellbeing, prosperity, quality of life, and sustainability. The Council unanimously chose the following three top strategic goals:

- Maintaining an inclusive and diverse community
- Establishing a new model for mobility
- Securing local control of the City land occupied by the Santa Monica Airport

The Councilmembers also added two additional congruent goals (for a total of five):

- Taking a leadership role in regional efforts to address homelessness
- Continuing the partnership supporting education and from cradle to career and beyond

Identifying these overriding strategic goals does not mean that staff will stop pursuing the many other policies and projects the City has identified, or the seven other strategic initiatives that were presented to the Council on August 23 for consideration. As requested by Council, updates on the seven strategic initiatives not prioritized at this time are below.

## Discussion

### Providing world-class customer service to the community

The organization is committed to providing responsive, consistent, and accurate services to those who live, work, and visit. A centralized web-based or mobile app customer relationship management system called Government Outreach (GO) is used to submit concerns, comments and service requests 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Users can select an issue, take a picture using a smartphone, and tap submit – using GPS technology, the app knows the exact location of the issue. The GO system routes the information to the appropriate department. The user receives a confirmation email and tracking number upon receipt of each request, which can be used to log onto the system at any time to track the case status. A response is guaranteed within ten days - though most requests are handled in less time. When a case is closed out, a survey is automatically e-mailed to the user so the responsiveness of staff and the quality of the resolution can be assessed.

In fiscal year 2014-15, over 10,000 GO items were created. Staff averaged 5.5 work days to close them. The most frequent service requests were in regards to graffiti, lost and found, public records requests, bus operator concerns, and use of leaf blowers.

On a quarterly basis, the City recognizes customer service excellence through the We Do the Right Thing Right and the 5R's of Teamwork Recognition Program. Members of the public and employees submit nominations for customer service excellence using hard copy or electronic nomination forms. The nominations are reviewed by a review committee. Winners are given the option of how they would like to be recognized.

Quarter 3 2014 (July/August/September)		Quarter 4 2014 (October/November/December)		Quarter 1 2015 (January/February/March)		Quarter 2 2015 (April/May/June)	
Nominations	Winners	Nominations	Winners	Nominations	Winners	Nominations	Winners
59	47	99	53	60	52	99	76
44	40	54	46	27	19	14	12

We Do the  
Right  
Thing  
Right  
5R's of  
Teamwork

The City has also created a training course on Customer Service. The first course was offered in March of 2014. It has been offered five times to date with 61 employees completing the four hour course. The interactive course helps employees use their existing knowledge base and provides new tools, definitions, and strategies to take customer service to the next level. During the class, staff develops their own code of conduct and understands how to integrate it into daily work.

## **Achieving water, energy and climate change sustainability goals**

### Water

Citywide water conservation efforts are generating positive results. The City is currently meeting its local and state required water conservation target of 20%. The cumulative water savings was 22.5% as of August 2015, due in part to:

- 34 new water-efficient landscapes were installed saving 562,883 gallons of water each year
- 796 water-saving rebates were issued saving 5,300,235 gallons of water per year
- 522 water- efficient toilets, showerheads and faucet aerators were installed saving 6,963,105 gallons per year.

However, sustained action is critical to meet the conservation target through December 2016. Continued drought response efforts include Water Use Allowances and implementation of penalties starting as early as December 2015 in addition to landscape and plumbing fixture rebates, water use consultations for homes and businesses, outreach, and marketing.

### Climate and Energy

The City is making consistent progress on its climate and energy goals. The 15x15 Climate Action Plan identified 15 measures to be implemented by the end of 2015 to reduce community greenhouse gas emissions by 15% below 1990 levels. When

adopted in 2013, it was projected that implementation of the measures would result in reduction of 28,812 metric tons of carbon emissions. Since then, the City has been able to calculate and verify approximately 40% of the necessary reductions. The calculation and verification process is underway for additional measures. It is likely that significantly more than 40% of the reductions have been achieved, due to:

- 13 Development Agreements totaling over 1 million sq ft of built space have been approved with requirements for LEED Certification, solar photovoltaic systems and EV charging infrastructure
- 8 residential projects have been completed using PACE financing
- 1,452 kW of solar have been installed on residential and commercial rooftops
- Peak period bicycling has increased by 79%
- Average vehicle ridership has been maintained at 1.7
- Use of imported water has decreased by 1.2 gallons per day
- Community energy use has declined by almost 2 million kWh since 2012
- 1,069,993 kWh of energy efficiency projects have been completed in City facilities
- Big Blue Bus converted to natural gas and then began sourcing its fuel from landfill-produced methane

The launch of the Breeze Bike Share system and the car share system pilot will round out the planned measures for the short-term 15X15 plan, which will sunset in December 2015. By mid-2016, staff will conduct a community wide emissions inventory and prepare a final report of the 15x15 Climate Action Plan.

Not included in the current plan, but closely monitored, will be the opening of the Expo Light Rail and the City's participation in a regional Community Choice Aggregation.

This fall, staff will launch the next phase of developing the Climate Action and Adaptation Plan for the years 2030 and 2050. This effort will integrate the City's existing plans, programs and projects to reduce emissions by 80% below 1990 levels by 2050.

In an effort to meet aggressive climate and energy goals, in August 2015 the City signed onto the Compact of Mayors. The Compact of Mayors is the world's largest

coalition of city leaders addressing climate change by pledging to reduce their greenhouse gas emissions, tracking their progress, and preparing for the impacts of climate change.

In addition to climate efforts, the City is actively addressing energy use in municipal buildings. Energy efficiency projects completed in municipal buildings within the last year have saved over 580,000 annual kilowatt-hours. Pending projects, which include retrofitting almost 1,500 streetlights and the Big Blue Bus maintenance facility with LED lighting, are anticipated to save almost 1.5 million kilowatt-hours. Completion of these projects is anticipated for early 2016.

### City Services Building

The new City Services Building is being designed to meet the most stringent sustainable building metric, the Living Building Challenge. Imperatives of the Living Building Challenge include net-zero water, net-zero energy, no cancer causing materials and the offset of embodied carbon in the project's cradle-to-cradle lifespan. Consolidating 250 employees that currently occupy outdated, inefficient buildings into a new Living Building Challenge structure that will be built to last over 150 years will result in significant energy, water, and carbon savings over the useful life of this building. Furthermore, the project has the potential to impact the future of construction in Santa Monica by modeling the opportunities that arise from building a cutting edge green building.

### **Building on Bergamot and Civic Auditorium assets as community and regional cultural hubs**

#### Bergamot Station Arts Center

In an effort to address Bergamot Station Arts Center's adjacency to an Expo light rail station, meet Big Blue Bus revenue expectations, create a safe harbor for community-based arts non-profits, and maintain the largest collection of art galleries in the western United States, the City is working with a Council-selected developer and an eleven-

member advisory committee comprised of Bergamot Station tenants, neighborhood association leaders, and representatives of the Arts Commission, Chamber of Commerce and Santa Monica Travel and Tourism. The committee has been asked by Council to assist staff and the selected developer, Worthe Real Estate Group, with refining the conceptual plan for the site, including recommendations on key amenities for the Expo Station and transit users, the inclusion of new space for a significant cultural organization such as the Santa Monica Museum of Art, retaining the galleries, and generating a minimum ground lease payment for BBB and other revenues to the City. Staff anticipates that the advisory committee and developer will complete their review and recommendations in early 2016 for Council consideration. If Council concurs with the recommendations and conceptual plan, the developer would then begin the entitlement process.

#### Santa Monica Civic Auditorium

In late 2013 Council appointed the nine-member Civic Work Group (CWG) and charged them with leading a community process with the goal of developing a vision for the Civic Auditorium (Civic) as a hub of a mixed use cultural district. Over the last 18 months, the CWG has held public monthly meetings, along with three well attended community workshops.

The CWG has completed a draft report which includes a series of 'Guiding Principles' for the future of the Civic and surrounding site, and is in the process of finalizing a number of 'Priorities for Council Consideration' as part of the same report. The draft report has been available on the project website since July for public review and feedback. Currently Council is scheduled to hear the Civic Working Group's findings and recommendations on November 10, 2015 and provide direction on next steps.

#### **Providing affordable community-wide gigabit speed fiber and wi-fi connectivity**

The City currently provides broadband services to the school district and college as well as businesses, including tech and entertainment companies, hospitals and clinics, and hotels through CityNet. A proof of concept is being developed for providing broadband

services to residential multi-dwelling unit buildings by the end of the 2015 calendar year. The pilot will inform staff if the City can build and maintain an affordable and sustainable residential broadband service. If feasible, expansion into residential services will start in Spring of 2016 and will be built incrementally over a number of years, based on available funding.

An extensive wi-fi system for free public internet at speeds of 8 Mbps in 34 hot zones and a majority of commercial and transit corridors throughout the City exists. Staff will continue to improve and expand the free wi-fi service it provides at public spaces, business districts, City and library facilities. The project will continue to extend the popular service known as "City Wi-Fi" at the South Beach, Ozone, Marine, Joslyn and Crescent Bay Parks. The City Wi-Fi is powered by 450 access points that also support transit priority, traffic signal synchronization and traffic and security camera systems.

### **Strengthening downtown as a community hometown with local-serving and cultural amenities**

The desire for an increase in cultural opportunities in downtown Santa Monica, and for more public art, came up consistently during the development of the Downtown Specific Plan. The draft plan includes a section on arts and culture and makes a number of recommendations ranging from the development of a new museum, to fostering more small music venues and walking tours, to locations for iconic works of public art.

The City continues to work closely with DTSM Inc. and the local business community to promote and celebrate downtown's local-serving businesses and cultural amenities to residents and downtown employees via the Buy Local Santa Monica campaign. Santa Monica Travel and Tourism is also building upon the "Go Where the Locals Go" marketing efforts of the Westside Cities Council of Governments.

In an effort to implement a complex public-private partnership to achieve a number of public objectives, staff is working with a Council-selected development team to transform a downtown, city-owned site between 4<sup>th</sup> to 5<sup>th</sup> streets south of Arizona Avenue into a mixed-use project with ground floor retail, affordable housing, office

space and a hotel that will also provide hometown amenities such as programmed, community open space that includes a seasonal ice rink. The project is also envisioned to include public parking, cultural space for a children's museum, a bike center, neighborhood serving retail and other services to serve residents, downtown employees and visitors alike. It is envisioned that the project will add synergy to the other public spaces in the downtown as well provide new activities and events not currently available. The Development Agreement float-up of the conceptual design will be heard by Council on October 20, 2015. The development team and staff will respond to Council's feedback and continue the entitlement process as required.

In addition, staff is working with a selected development team to redevelop Parking Structure #3 into a state of the art, multi-level cinema with ground-floor commercial space fronting Fourth Street. A contemporary cinema centrally located within the downtown will add to the diversity of uses downtown and provide the broader community with a greater breadth and depth of movie-going options. The Development Agreement float-up of the conceptual design will be heard by Council on November 10, 2015. The development team and staff will respond to Council's feedback and continue the entitlement process as required.

### **Expanding and improving the resilience of community infrastructure**

The City of Santa Monica's Capital Improvement Program (CIP) maintains and improves community infrastructure, as well as City facilities and a variety of community amenities. A year-end report detailing FY 2014-15 CIP progress will be released as an Information Item shortly, and a Work Plan report outlining planned work for the FY 2015-16 year will be issued by November 2015.

Some of the most significant current work on community infrastructure includes the reconstruction of the California Incline, the construction of the Colorado Esplanade, City oversight of Expo light rail construction, progress on elements of the Bicycle Master

Plan, ongoing street and alley resurfacing work and sidewalk repair, and water main and valve replacement work.

Construction on the California Incline began in the spring of 2015. The project is scheduled to reopen in 2016 with a stronger, wider bridge and improved access for pedestrians and bicyclists. Construction on the Colorado Esplanade, a multi-modal streetscape and circulation infrastructure project, commenced in early 2015. It is scheduled to be complete in 2016 to fully integrate the Expo Light Rail terminus station into Downtown by providing optimal access for pedestrians, bicycles, and vehicles in and around the station area. Construction on the Expo Light Rail neared completion in FY 2014-15 under City oversight, with train testing beginning in July 2015. Progress continues on elements of the Citywide Bicycle Master Plan, with traffic circles and related street and intersection improvements completed along Michigan Avenue as part of the MANGO project and construction of Safe Routes to School bicycle improvements near Santa Monica High School. The Michigan Avenue Traffic Circles Project consists of the installation of four traffic circles and related street and intersection improvements along Michigan Avenue. The traffic circles would be installed at the Michigan Avenue intersections at 9th Street, 10th Street, 12th Street, and Euclid Street.

During FY 2014-15, 8.5 miles of streets were repaved, 56,764 square feet of sidewalks were repaired, and work began on 11,500 linear feet of water main replacement that will be completed in the fall of 2015. In addition to improvements to critical infrastructure, work is underway on dozens of City facilities and community amenities. In FY 2014-15, energy savings measures were completed at the Ken Edwards Center, park restrooms at Hotchkiss and Marine Parks were remodeled, new beach volleyball courts were installed, and an accessible beach walkway at Ocean Park Boulevard was completed.

### **Taking community civic engagement to the next level**

Civic engagement is an important aspect of community that helps people feel not only a

sense of belonging, but also a sense of power, voice, and influence. Staff is working to provide a well-rounded set of events and civic engagement tools to ensure that the democratic process and civic life is accessible to a range of community members and that government represents the broad interests of the community.

According to the Wellbeing Index, Santa Monica has strengths and room to grow to continue creating a sense of community and connection through civic engagement. Despite high volunteerism rates (38%) that show residents take action to improve their community and high voter turnout (80%) that indicates a strong interest in civic issues, only 29% of residents feel they can influence city decisions. Thus, taking civic engagement to the next level is an organization-wide effort.

### Volunteerism

Thirty-eight percent of residents surveyed in the Wellbeing Survey indicated that they volunteer at least once/month which is higher than the US volunteer rate of 25%. The City, School District and local agencies provide a variety of volunteer opportunities for community members in an on-going capacity or for one-time events. In 2013 more than 25 City programs in 11 City departments benefited from over 660 adult volunteers on an ongoing basis. An example of a one-time annual event that could not happen without volunteers is the Annual Homeless Count. This annual event teams residents, businesses, non-profit organizations, faith-based groups and City staff to count the homeless population in Santa Monica on a single night in January. Over 250 volunteers cover every street, alley, and open space citywide. This effort provides a meaningful way for community members to “Be Part of the Solution” in addressing homelessness.

### Events

Community Events by their very nature promote civic engagement by drawing different members of the community to activities. Examples of existing events include:

- The annual Santa Monica Festival with its community booths, entertainment and

fitness activities;

- Kidical Mass, a targeted and fun bicycling event for families held in different neighborhoods in the community
- Dia De Los Muertos, highlighting the Mexican traditional cultural celebration honoring the dead
- Virginia Avenue Park Events.
  - The Park hosts a number of events, including Posada, Juneteenth, Arts & Literacy Festival, movie nights, and Dia de Los Ninos. These events draw over 1000 residents annually. In addition to coordinating some of these events, the Virginia Avenue Park parent leadership groups host informational meetings covering a range of topics including financial literacy and healthy living.

### People's Academy

The People's Academy launched in the spring of 2014. The Academy is a free seven week behind-the-scenes look at local government operations, partnerships, and innovation. It's an opportunity to learn about how local government works in Santa Monica.

Thus far three cohorts with a combined 60 Santa Monica residents have graduated from the Academy. Over the duration of the Academy people become more informed, inspired to get involved, and aware of themselves and their city. Six graduates now participate on a City board, commission, or community advisory board. With two academy sessions per year, the program will complement other efforts to improve civic engagement.

### Hack the Beach

The City of Santa Monica, the Chamber of Commerce, and members of the local tech community have developed a contest to allow anyone in the community to submit proposals for apps, ideas, processes, and/or technology to address community,

mobility, and civic engagement. The Hack the Beach contest will run from October 2015 to January 2016 as an ongoing series of micro festivals meant to bridge the gap between the City and the local tech community and obtain a tangible technology solution for some of Santa Monica's top issues.

### Policy and a Pint

A pilot event series is being developed to bring together community members in a casual setting over food and drink to discuss urban life in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Each event will present a different topic that intersects government, business, community, built environment, and personal responsibility. The goal is to encourage dialogue about current affairs so local civic participation becomes the norm, not the exception among young adults. The Wellbeing Index found only 21% of residents aged 25-34 put a lot of time and effort into being part of the Santa Monica community and they ranked lowest of all age groups in feeling a sense of influence over decisions affecting Santa Monica.

### E-chits

Emerging technology has the potential to make City Council meetings more accessible. The ability to electronically submit a request to speak on a specific Council agenda item will be available in 2015.

### Interactive Agenda

Staff is investigating ways for people to use technology to more easily track Council agenda items as well as provide Councilmembers feedback *before and during* Council meetings rather than after. An interactive Council agenda would make participation in the public decision-making process easier and would complement, not supplant, other non-technology based ways for community members to connect with staff and elected officials.

### Online Tools

This year, the Civic Working Group used an interactive electronic "trade-off" tool to enable participants (both in person and remotely) to evaluate three different scenarios

for the auditorium and site consider different cultural, recreational, and commercial land use preferences within available land area and an understanding of broad parking requirements. Participants considered construction and operating costs and selected from among alternative methods for financing those costs.

The Wellbeing Index's Community Survey was conducted almost entirely online, with over 2200 residents responding.. The survey was distributed to residents directly through email, and complemented by significant community outreach through the City's website, social media, local partners, public counters, and Seascope. Reaching residents directly and using an online survey format enabled a broad range of participation and engaged many who might not typically participate in survey efforts.

Initial input regarding the North Beach Playground was captured in an online survey tool, rather than the traditional public meeting kick-off. Social media and press coverage of the survey link yielded 52 responses, which exceed the typical turnout for past community meetings related to playground improvements.

#### Social Media and SMAAlerts

The City also has a robust social media presence that gives the public an opportunity to ask questions, request information, and learn about programs and events. A variety of digital tools are used to share information about government and community services including email newsletters, as well as news feeds such as SMAAlerts where people can register to receive information on what to do in an emergency, and other topics of their choice.

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