



File #: 14-0387, Version: 1

REPORT TO COUNCIL

SUBJECT

Add Determination of Study Session Locations to Mayoral Responsibilities

BACKGROUND

On February 7, 2014, City Council endorsed a Budget Issue Paper (Attachment 1) designed to identify the costs of broadcasting future Council study sessions on the City's public television channel (Channel 15), similar to the manner in which general business meetings of the City Council and Planning Commission are televised. Given the relatively minor expense involved, staff recommended that the service simply be adopted if staff could find a way to absorb the expense or otherwise cover it within the proposed budget. Several study sessions have since been conducted in the Council Chambers and televised to the community.

The Budget Issue Paper also indicated that the City's technological capabilities limited this type of broadcast to meetings conducted in the Council Chambers, and that therefore the Council would occasionally need to weigh the importance of televising a particular study session against the importance of conducting that study session at a specific alternative venue (e.g., a dog park study session at Las Palmas Park or a library expansion study at the library). Council indicated its preference to "podcast" (i.e., make an audio recording available online) any Council study session conducted outside the Council Chambers, and to post online any related presentation materials when feasible.

No protocol was discussed or determined with regard to who would decide where a particular study session would be conducted, and given the potential for varied perspectives on this issue, staff is seeking Council direction.

EXISTING POLICY

From the City's General Plan:

Goal A: Achieve a community in which all community members are well informed about local issues, City programs and services.

Policy A.1: Assure that all community members have reasonable access to City information, services and programs within budgeted resources.

Policy A.3: Ensure an integrated approach to informing community members about local issues, City programs and services that reaches segments of a diverse community.

Goal B: Achieve a community in which all community members can be actively involved in shaping the quality of life and participate in local community and government activities.

Policy B.2: simplify processes and procedures to make it easy and convenient for community members to participate in City activities and programs.

Council Policy 7.3.4: Roles and Responsibilities of Mayor, Vice Mayor and Councilmembers

ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW

N/A

DISCUSSION

Options relative to the location for specific study sessions will likely generate occasional differences in perspective, with members of Council applying different weights to different criterion. For example, one Councilmember might feel strongly that the best location for a study session on expanding the library would be at the library itself, where participants could gain first-hand experience regarding the need for the expansion; another Councilmember might feel that the benefits of such experience were outweighed by the benefits of having the study session in Council Chambers, where the session itself could be televised live for those unable to attend in person, and captured on video for those who wanted to view the session later (holding the session at the library would necessitate audio “podcasting”, available only to listeners at a later time, as opposed to televising the session live). Still another Councilmember might feel that the library, despite its limitations regarding televised broadcasting, was the superior site due to its ability to hold a larger crowd than the Council Chambers.

To avoid the necessity of polling Councilmembers each time a study session is proposed, staff believes a single authority should be authorized to make related decisions. Options include the Mayor, the City Manager, and/or the proposer of each study session.

FISCAL IMPACT

There is no fiscal impact associated with determining who makes decisions regarding the venues for Council Study Sessions.

PUBLIC CONTACT

Public contact was made by posting the Council agenda on the City's official-notice bulletin board outside City Hall, at the Sunnyvale Senior Center, Community Center and Department of Public Safety; and by making the agenda and report available at the Sunnyvale Public Library, the Office of the City Clerk and on the City's website.

ALTERNATIVES

1. Authorize the Mayor to determine the venue for future study sessions as depicted by the revision of Council Policy 7.3.4 in Attachment 2.
2. Authorize the City Manager to determine the venue for future study sessions.
3. Authorize the proposer of each future study session to determine the venue.
4. Other action as directed by Council

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Alternative 1: Authorize the Mayor to determine the venue for future study sessions as depicted by the revision of Council Policy 7.3.4 in Attachment 2.

The most suitable location for any particular study session will depend on a variety of factors, including the purpose of the study, the number of anticipated participants, the amount and type of interaction desired between participants, the physical/technological capabilities required by presenters, and room availability. Staff believes that choosing the location to conduct specific study sessions is a logical addition to the Mayor's responsibilities, which already include adding items to the Council agenda without Council vote and revising dates and/or times a specific agenda item appears on the Council's calendar. Staff also recommends that prior to making final determinations, the Mayor consult with the City Manager to confirm such things as room capacity, availability, and/or access to technology.

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Reviewed and Approved by: Robert A. Walker, Interim City Manager

ATTACHMENTS

1. Budget Issue Paper
2. Recommended Revision to Council Policy 7.3.4