



*City of Arts & Innovation*

# City Council Memorandum

**TO: HONORABLE MAYOR AND CITY COUNCIL** **DATE: JUNE 21, 2022**

**FROM: COMMUNITY & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT** **WARDS: ALL**  
**DEPARTMENT**  
**CITY MANAGER'S OFFICE / OFFICE OF**  
**SUSTAINABILITY**

**SUBJECT: RIVERSIDE UNIVERSITY HEALTH SYSTEM PROPOSAL TO CONDUCT AN**  
**ASSESSMENT TO DETERMINE THE CITY OF RIVERSIDE'S ELIGIBILITY TO**  
**PARTICIPATE IN A BLUE ZONE PROGRAM**

## **ISSUE:**

Approve a proposal by the Riverside University Health System to conduct an assessment to determine the City of Riverside's eligibility to participate in a Blue Zone Program.

## **RECOMMENDATION:**

That the City Council approve a proposal by the Riverside University Health System to conduct an assessment to determine the City of Riverside's eligibility to participate in a Blue Zone program.

## **BACKGROUND:**

Blue zones were founded by adventurer and author Dan Buettner, an explorer who once circled the globe on his bicycle to earn three Guinness Book of World Records. The concept of blue zones grew out of the demographic work conducted by Gianni Pes and Michel Poulain, who identified regions of the world with the highest concentration of centenarians. Additional research on blue zone communities led to the establishment of the Blue Zone Project® (Project), a research-based systematic approach to improving community well-being via the environment, policy drivers, urban and building design, and social networks. The Project provides a model for communities to apply tenants of community well-being to transform health at the population level by focusing on "life radius," or the areas close to home where people spend 90 percent of their lives. The Project optimizes:

- The built environment: Improving roads and transportation options, parks, and public spaces
- Municipal policies and ordinances: Promoting activity and discouraging junk food marketing and smoking

- Restaurants, schools, grocery stores, faith-based organizations, and workplaces: Building healthier options into the places people spend most of their time
- Social networks: Forming and nurturing social groups that support healthy habits
- Habitat: Helping people design homes that nudge them into eating less and moving more
- Inner selves: Encouraging people to reduce stress, find their purpose, and give back to the community

## **DISCUSSION:**

The Riverside University Health System (RUHS) identified the City of Riverside as a potential Blue Zone candidate City. As a result, the City Manager's Office was contacted by RUHS to conduct a feasibility assessment to determine if the City of Riverside is a viable candidate for becoming a Blue Zone Project® city. Completion of an assessment does not commit the City of Riverside to apply for and/or become a Blue Zone Project city. Should the assessment determine the City of Riverside as a viable candidate, the City Council would be presented with the option to proceed with the application process and the related time, resources, and/or other commitments associated with Blue Zone Project designation.

The Riverside University Health System will provide a presentation on the steps in such an endeavor.

The Office of Sustainability concurs with this report.

## **STRATEGIC PLAN ALIGNMENT:**

The goals of the Blue Zone Project® align with **Strategic Priority 2 – Community Well-Being** and **Goal 2.2:** Strengthening neighborhood identities and improving community health and the physical environment through amenities and programs that foster an increased sense of community and enhanced feelings of pride and belonging citywide.

This item aligns with each of the Cross-Cutting Threads as follows:

1. **Community Trust** – Activities and actions of possible Blue Zone Project® benefit the City's diverse populations and result in greater public good.
2. **Equity** – Blue Zone Project® tenants are applicable and support the City's racial, ethnic, religious, sexual orientation, identity, geographic, and other attributes of diversity and are committed to advancing the fairness of treatment, recognition of rights, and equitable distribution of services to ensure every member of the community has equal access to share the benefits of community progress.
3. **Fiscal Responsibility** – The City of Riverside's collaboration with the Riverside University Health System provides a prudent steward of public funds and ensures responsible management of the City's financial resources while providing quality public services to all.
4. **Innovation** – Evaluation to determine the adaptation of the Blue Zone Program® is

inventive and timely in meeting the community's changing needs and preparing for the future through collaborative partnerships and adaptive processes.

5. **Sustainability & Resiliency** – Considerations of programs that build community well-being contributes to Riverside's commitment to meet the needs of the present without compromising the needs of the future and ensure the City's capacity to persevere, adapt and grow during good and difficult times alike.

**FISCAL IMPACT:**

There is no fiscal impact related to this action. The feasibility assessment will be paid for by the Riverside University Health System.

Prepared by: Chris Christopoulos, Interim Community & Economic Development Director

Certified as to availability of funds: Edward Enriquez, Interim Assistant City Managers / Chief Financial Officer / Treasurer

Approved by: Rafael Guzman, Assistant City Manager

Approved as to form: Phaedra A. Norton, City Attorney

Attachment: Presentation