



City Council Memorandum

City of Arts & Innovation

TO: HONORABLE MAYOR AND CITY COUNCIL DATE: NOVEMBER 5, 2024
FROM: MARKETING AND COMMUNICATIONS WARDS: ALL
**SUBJECT: LANGUAGE ACCESS AND TRANSLATION SERVICES – SPANISH
TRANSLATION AND INTERPRETATION OF CITY COUNCIL AND CITY
COUNCIL STANDING COMMITTEE MEETING BROADCASTS AND AGENDAS**

ISSUE:

Update on the language access for Limited English Proficiency persons through Spanish interpretation and translation of City Council and City Council Standing Committee meetings broadcasts and agendas. Spanish translation will continue for City Council meeting agendas.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

That the City Council:

1. Consider discontinuing in-person Spanish interpretation services for City Council and City Council Standing Committee meetings unless a 72-hour notice for Spanish translation is received;
2. Consider discontinuing Spanish translation of City Council Standing Committees agenda unless a 72-hour notice of Spanish translated agenda is received; and
3. Direct staff to bring an update back to the Committee in six months.

COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION:

On October 2, 2024, the Governmental Processes Committee (GPC) recommended that the City Council consider discontinuing in-person Spanish interpretation services for City Council and Committee meetings unless a request for such services is received at least 72 hours in advance. Furthermore, it was advised to discontinue the Spanish translation of Committee agendas unless a request for a translated agenda is submitted within the same 72-hour timeframe. Spanish translation will continue for City Council meeting agendas. Staff were also directed to provide an update on this matter to the Committee in six (6) months.

BACKGROUND:

On May 5, 2021, the Inclusiveness, Community Engagement, and Governmental Processes Committee (ICGC) received a report outlining the language preferences spoken in Riverside,

current translation activities throughout the City, and potential options to continue expansion of language access for Limited English Proficiency (LEP) persons. Following discussion, staff were requested to research costs and implications for translating the audio of Council and Committee meetings, agendas, materials, and Riverside Police Department business and application materials.

On July 7, 2021, ICGC received an update on the translation options previously identified, including estimated costs. Following the discussion, the Committee requested staff reassess alternative less expensive meeting audio translation services for video feed and report back to the Committee for further discussion and look at other translation options, as needed, eliminating the need for Riverside Police Department business and application materials.

On October 6, 2021, ICGC received and filed an update regarding options for the implementation of audio translation of video feed and translation of meeting agendas and materials at City Council and Committee meetings. Following discussion, the Committee requested staff complete a financial analysis by test piloting agenda translation services and requested a presentation on the application process.

On September 7, 2022, ICGC received and filed an update regarding options for implementation of automated Spanish captioning of City Council and Committee meeting broadcasts, Spanish translation of agendas, and in-person interpreting options. Following discussion, it was moved by Chair Cervantes and Vice Chair Perry to move forward with translation of all City Council and Committee Agendas; move forward with implementation of automated Spanish captions; and direct staff to refer any language access, interpretation, and translation service recommendations selected to the full City Council for discussion.

On December 13, 2022, the City Council received an update on options as recommended by the ICGC for the expansion of language access for limited English proficiency persons through Spanish translation of agendas, in-person interpretation, and automated Spanish captioned broadcasts for City Council and Committee meetings. Based on the options explored and the feedback previously given by the Committee, staff recommended a combination of translated Spanish agendas, automated Spanish captioning, and in-person interpretation of meetings to adequately provide Spanish language access to City Council and Committee meetings. Providing both live interpretation and Spanish captions would meet the needs of both in-person and remote meeting attendees. Staff outlined two potential options for future implementation. Following the discussion, it was moved by the Council to approve the option as outlined in the staff report to expand language access through automated Spanish captions of City Council and Committee meetings, and in-person interpreter services for all City Council and Committee meetings. Automated Spanish captions would be available for online viewers. Automated translation of Agendas would be available using an accessible agenda link on the Legistar meeting calendar. All one-time fees for implementation could be covered by PEG funds, while any ongoing costs would not.

On April 19, 2023, the City Manager's Office, in conjunction with the Purchasing Division, issued Request for Proposals (RFP) No. 2270 on the City's Electronic Bidding System, PlanetBids Vendor Portal, seeking experienced and qualified individuals or businesses to provide accurate, real time, live, and in-person interpretation services primarily for the Spanish language at the City Council and Committee meetings throughout the year.

On May 23, 2023, the RFP closed with a total of eight (8) proposals received and three (3) proposers listed as non-bidders. Purchasing did a preliminary review of the proposals for responsiveness and determined six (6) of the proposals received were qualified and two (2) were

deemed unresponsive due to missing or incorrect information. After a review of the respondents' qualifications, staffing coverage, experience, professional references, and cost evaluation, Focus Language International Inc., of Victorville, California was selected by the proposal review team to be the most responsive and qualified business to perform the scope of work described in the RFP.

On June 27, 2023, the Finance Department conducted a public hearing on the proposed amendment of the Fiscal Year 2023/24 budget within the previously adopted Fiscal Year 2022-2024 Biennial Budget. The hearing also included a recommendation to add \$175,000 for contracted Spanish interpretation services to the amended General Fund budget and authorize related adjustments to the cost allocation plan.

On November 14, 2023, City Council unanimously approved a Professional Consultant Services Agreement with Focus Language International Inc. of Victorville, California, for interpreter services. The interpreter services provide live, in-person Spanish interpretation at City Council meetings, Committee meetings, and on an on-call, as needed basis throughout the year. The agreement lasts until June 30, 2024, with the option to extend for two (2) additional two-year terms, not exceeding five (5) years in total, for up to \$175,000 annually. Pricing is to remain firm for the initial contract term. Should the option to renew for additional years be exercised, City and Company may negotiate any and all price modifications.

On August 7, 2024, the Governmental Processes Committee (GPC) recommended discontinuing Spanish interpretation services for all Committee meetings and proposed discussing the cost breakdown for Spanish translation services for City Council and Committee meeting agendas. During the meeting, it was decided to continue providing Spanish translation and interpretation for City Council meetings and agendas. The item was requested to go back to GPC to provide further direction on Spanish interpretation and translation for City Council and Committee meetings and agendas.

DISCUSSION:

On May 7, 2024, during the City Council meeting, Councilmember Falcone requested to reexamine the Spanish translation and interpreting services that are being provided for all City Council and Committee meetings, to include the costs and data specific to viewership for these services.

As approved by City Council on November 14, 2023, Focus Language International Inc. of Victorville, California, provides real-time, live, and in-person interpretation services primarily for the Spanish language at all City Council and Committee meetings, and for on-call as needed meetings. The hourly rate for in-person interpretation services is \$92.00 per hour, per person, with a two-hour minimum for each interpreter. To ensure accessibility for Spanish-speaking participants, a minimum of two interpreters are provided, offering Spanish interpretation through the following channels:

- **Live Video Broadcast:** Spanish interpretation is available through voice-over and video captions during live broadcasts. These interpreted videos are uploaded to Legistar following the adjournment of meetings.
- **Headsets:** In-person meeting attendees can access real-time Spanish interpretation through the use of headsets.

- **Public Comment:** For public comments made in Spanish, English interpretation is provided to the City Council, Council Committee, public, and City staff, whether the comments are made over the phone or in-person.

The translation of City Council and Committee agendas are coordinated by the City Clerk’s Office with a third-party Spanish translation vendor and posted in Legistar upon receipt of translated material.

From launch on January 17, 2024, through July 23, 2024, data from Granicus indicates that Spanish interpreted meetings have received 404 live meeting video views. The total costs for City Council and Committee live, in-person interpretation services, and meeting agenda translation services from January 17, 2024, through June 30, 2024, are as follows:

| INTERPRETATION SERVICES | AGENDA TRANSLATION SERVICES | TOTAL COSTS | TOTAL COUNCIL & COMMITTEE MEETINGS |
|--------------------------------|------------------------------------|--------------------|---|
| \$22,977.00 | \$7,397.98 | \$30,374.98 | 37 |

| Meeting | Total Number of Views | Total Number of Spanish Views |
|--|------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| City Council | 1045 | 247 |
| Economic Development Committee | 75 | 12 |
| Finance Committee | 82 | 16 |
| Governmental Processes Committee | 90 | 17 |
| Housing & Homelessness Committee | 229 | 56 |
| Land Use Committee | 77 | 1 |
| Mayor’s Nominating and Screening Committee | 26 | 3 |
| Mobility & Infrastructure Committee | 90 | 34 |
| Safety, Wellness & Youth Committee | 96 | 18 |
| Total | 1,810 | 404 |

As requested at the Governmental Processes Committee on August 7, 2024, below is the breakdown of translation costs incurred for City Council and Committee meetings from January 1, 2024, through July 30, 2024.

| City Council Agenda Translation Services | Council Committee Agenda Translation Services | Total Costs |
|---|--|--------------------|
| \$6,851.16 | \$1,132.59 | \$7,983.75 |

The Professional Consultant Services Agreement with Focus Language International, Inc. was executed on December 13, 2023, with an annual budget of \$175,000 for FY 2023-2024. Services began in January 2024. The First Amendment to the agreement was executed on May 17, 2024, extending the contract for an additional two (2) years, with a total sum not to exceed \$350,000 for FY 2024-2026. This budget is designated for interpretation services for City Council meetings, Committee meetings, and on an on-call, as-needed basis throughout the year.

For FY 2024-2025, estimated costs are based on prior actuals and the average number of meetings. Spanish interpretation services for City Council are estimated at \$60,000 annually, based on three (3) meetings per month at \$1,650 each, with an average duration of three (3)

hours. Committee meetings are estimated at \$35,000 annually, based on eight (8) meetings per month at \$368 each, with an average duration of two (2) hours. The total anticipated cost, considering prior actuals and the average number of meetings, is \$95,000. Costs may vary depending on the length and potential cancellation of meetings.

STRATEGIC PLAN ALIGNMENT:

Implementing Spanish translation contributes to **Strategic Priority 5 – High Performing Government** and **Goal 5.2** - Utilize technology, data, and process improvement strategies to increase efficiencies, guide decision making, and ensure services are accessible and distributed equitably throughout all geographic areas of the city.

1. **Community Trust** – The ability to provide interpretation of City Council and Committee in Spanish allows the City to be transparent by giving the large Spanish speaking community in Riverside the opportunity to view and participate in public meetings.
2. **Equity** – Providing Spanish interpretation of City Council and Committee meetings ensures equity to the Riverside residents who only speak Spanish and would otherwise not be able to participate in the discussions taking place during meetings.
3. **Fiscal Responsibility** – Competitive procurement was used to secure the lowest cost for interpretation services.
4. **Innovation** – Exploration of technology options to ensure live broadcasting of meetings with Spanish interpretation throughout the City demonstrates innovative approaches to communicating with a wider audience.
5. **Sustainability & Resiliency** – Reaching Spanish speaking audiences through in-person translation services will help to better serve, engage, and prepare the community to be more resilient and sustainable.

FISCAL IMPACT:

If the City Council votes to discontinue the Spanish translation services unless a 72-hour notice is received, a partial savings on the current cost of translation services could be realized, depending on customer demand.

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| Prepared by: | Kaitlin Reiersen, Director of Marketing and Communications |
| Certified as to availability of funds: | Kristie Thomas, Finance Director/Assistant Chief Financial Officer |
| Approved by: | Mike Futrell, City Manager |
| Approved as to form: | Phaedra A. Norton, City Attorney |

Concurs with:



PHILIP FALCONE, Chair
Governmental Processes Committee

Attachments:
1. Presentation