



City of Arts & Innovation

Inclusiveness, Community Engagement & Governmental Affairs Committee

TO: INCLUSIVENESS, COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT & GOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS COMMITTEE **DATE: OCTOBER 6, 2021**

FROM: CITY MANAGER'S OFFICE **WARDS: ALL**

SUBJECT: LANGUAGE ACCESS AND TRANSLATION SERVICES UPDATE

ISSUE:

Provide an update on options for implementing subtitled Spanish translation of City Council and Committee meeting video feed and translation of meeting materials for future implementation to expand language access and translation services for Limited English Proficiency (LEP) persons.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

That the Inclusiveness, Community Engagement & Governmental Affairs Committee receive and file an update regarding options for the future implementation of translation of City Council and Committee meeting audio translation of video feed and translation of meeting agendas and materials.

BACKGROUND:

On May 5, 2021, the City Manager's Office presented a report to the Committee outlining the language preferences spoken in Riverside, current translation activities throughout the City and potential options to continue to expand language access for LEP persons. The Committee was then asked to provide input and collectively rank their top five choices presented for staff to research the feasibility, cost, benefits, and challenges that these solutions may present. Following the discussion, the Committee identified the following three options as priorities for future implementation:

1. Interpretation of Council and Committee Meeting Video Feed
2. Translation of Council and Committee Meeting Materials
3. Translation of Riverside Police Department Business Application Materials

On July 7th, 2021, the City Manager's Office returned to the committee and presented a report outlining estimated costs and considerations for implementing the three priorities identified by the Committee on May 5th. Although multiple options were explored, only the most viable options were presented.

1. **Interpretation of Council and Committee Meeting Video Feed**

Four Spanish translation of Council and Committee meeting video feed options were presented. Due to technical restraints with the current web service provider (Granicus) translated meetings would need to be shown via a separate simultaneous stream and would require the purchase of an additional Granicus encoder. All options are outlined in the tables below and include both one-time hardware costs (covered by Public, Education and Government Cable Fund (PEG)) as well as ongoing costs (General Fund costs).

Comparison of Options*	Year 1 Estimated Cost	Subsequent Years Estimated Cost
Option 1: Automated Spanish OPEN Captions with English audio	\$32,808	\$19,308
Option 2: Live Spanish audio WITHOUT Spanish captions	\$102,600	\$98,100
Option 3/4: Live Spanish Audio WITH Captions	\$129,408	\$115,908

*These are estimated costs and subject to formal bid.

2. Translation of Council and Committee Meeting Materials (City Clerk's Office)

Staff compared rates of several professional translation companies to estimate costs of translating City Council and Committee meeting materials (agenda's, minutes, etc.). Pricing was as follows.

Translation of Council Agenda's/Minutes	Meetings Per Year	Annual Cost
Council Agendas Only (agendas are regularly revised so this cost could be double)	48	\$7,160
Council Minutes Only	48	\$8,188
TOTAL ANNUAL COST		\$15,348

Translation of Committee Agenda's/Minutes	Meetings Per Year	Annual Cost
Committee Agenda's Only	84	\$3,469
Committee Minutes Only	84	\$1,764
TOTAL ANNUAL COST		\$5,233

Translation of ALL Meeting Materials	Average Meetings Per year	Average Annual Cost
Council - Average Agenda Packet in 2020 of 616 pages at 89,851 words would cost \$10,782 per packet	48	\$517,536
Committee - Average Agenda Packet of 20 pages at \$350	84	\$29,400
TOTAL ANNUAL COST (does not include printing costs for public inspection and permanent record)		\$546,936

*Estimated costs and subject to formal bid.

The City Clerk's Office recommended two options to implement translation of meeting materials.

Option 1: Add translated language to the face of all City Council and Standing Committee meeting agendas, offering translated materials upon request, with a 48-hour turnaround.

Option 2: On a trial basis, have only the agendas translated. This option will assist with determining the impact on staff, labor costs, and demand for this service. Factors to be considered with the second option would include publication due dates to meet deadlines for posting translated materials following the publication of the English version, including the posting of revised agendas, the fiscal impact, and additional staff time required for administrative functions.

3. Translation of RPD Business and Application Materials (Riverside Police Department)

Currently all business application materials are located online as PDF's that are only offered in English. The VICE Unit reviews these applications and calls upon internal bilingual staff to translate as needed. Although it would be possible to provide a second link to a translated version of the fillable form, the issue arises that all application responses submitted in other languages would then need to be translated back into English for review by RPD. The Vice Unit has no known documented complaints regarding the need for translation. Another factor to note is that the permit applications are only one step in part of a larger process of becoming a licensed business within the City. Applicants applying for the above listed permit applications within the City must also submit applications with the State and the Business Tax division. Currently the Business Tax division does not offer their applications in any languages other than English. RPD did not recommend moving forward with offering these permit applications in any language other than English, due to the factors discussed above and lack of data to support this request.

Outcome

Following the discussion, the Committee made the following recommendations:

1. City Council & Committee Meeting Video Feed: The Committee agreed that estimated annual costs for Live Spanish interpretation were too high but asked that further research be done to identify potentially less costly options for video feed with automated Spanish subtitles.
2. City Council & Committee Meeting Materials: The Committee asked that further research be done to investigate potentially less costly translation options for meeting materials.
3. Riverside Police Department Business Application Materials: The Committee agreed with the recommendation of RPD that translation for business applicants continue to be provided on an as-needed basis.

The Committee asked that staff return in 60-90 days with an updated report including potentially less costly options.

DISCUSSION:

Staff consulted with several vendors to research additional options for automated Spanish captions during live meetings.

Staff explored an option through the system currently used by the County of Riverside, Link Electronics. The system would function similar to the existing system used for English captions by listening to audio to create automated captions. The Link Electronics system goes a step further and uses Amazon web services/Google to translate the English captions into Spanish text. The base hardware required for the system costs approximately \$45,300 plus tax. Additionally, the web translation would include ongoing costs of \$2-3 per minute. The County estimates their costs

at roughly \$5,000 per year. Based on number of meetings and average duration our estimated ongoing costs would be estimated at \$26,000 per year. Considerations for using this system include the fact that the accuracy of the translation cannot be guaranteed since it uses the web and the fact that a separate stream with English audio and Spanish captions is still required. The advantage of this system is that it is the least costly option explored thus far. Link Electronics anticipates releasing a software update that will eliminate the need for Amazon/Google services. This will eliminate any on-going costs associated with live translated captions. This release is anticipated for October 2021.

The City Clerk's Office is still seeking guidance from the Committee on options for translation of meeting materials and is recommending one of the options previously presented. The most cost-effective option would be to add translated language to the face of all City Council and Standing Committee meeting agendas offering translated materials upon request, with a 48-hour turnaround. The other recommended option would be to implement translation of agenda's only on a trial basis to determine impact on staff, labor costs, and demand for this service.

STRATEGIC PLAN ALIGNMENT

Implementing Spanish translation meets Strategic Priority No. 8 – *High Performing Government* and Goal No. 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 for the Office of Communications to broadcast City Council and Committee video feeds with Spanish captions 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 translation of meetings and meeting materials ensures equity to the 13% of Riverside residents who only speak Spanish and would otherwise not be able to understand the discussions taking place during meetings.
3. **Fiscal Responsibility** – The Office of Communications practices fiscal responsibility by thoroughly exploring costs for all available options to provide Spanish translation and by exercising alternative project funding opportunities through the Public, Educational, and Governmental Access grant fund.
4. **Innovation** – The Office of Communications is committed to identifying creative solutions to make live broadcasting of meetings with Spanish captions throughout the City possible by exploring technology options.
5. **Sustainability & Resiliency** – By exploring all available options the Office of Communications hopes to gain direction from the Committee on which translation options will be the most sustainable in the long-term.

FISCAL IMPACT:

There is no fiscal impact related to this report.

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