



DATE: January 19, 2021

TO: Mayor and Members of the City Council

VIA: Peter Pirnejad, City Manager

FROM: Dante Hall, Assistant City Manager/Acting Parks & Recreation/Public Works Director
Paul Nagengast, Project Advisor, Regional Government Services

SUBJECT: LEVEE IMPROVEMENTS PROJECT (CIP 301-657) ROBUST PROACTIVE COMMUNICATION PLAN

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that the City Council by Minute Order, receive and accept the report and provide input regarding a robust proactive communication plan to be implemented in support of the Levee Improvements Project (Project).

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

It is necessary for Foster City to supplement the current public outreach plan for the Project by providing a more robust, proactive communication plan to readily anticipate community questions and concerns through communications that are consistent, meaningful and easy-to-understand.

Effective communication and informed community members are key to success in any City project. By improving communication processes, toolsets and tactics, Foster City can communicate early and often to build trust, dialogue, engagement, understanding, and relationships within the community

Tripepi Smith has provided a Proactive Communication Plan with stated goals to include metrics to measure success of the communication strategies implemented. These metrics can be provided to the City Council during the Project construction duration when assessing effectiveness of the Communications Plan.

BACKGROUND

Staff has worked together with the City's Construction Management team of Tanner Pacific, Inc., (TPI) and Data Instincts (DI) to provide outreach and notifications since the commencement of construction in October 2020. As portions of the trail began to close community members shared questions and concerns regarding the project. In particular, members of the community sought additional explanation of the project timeline and exactly how construction activities may impact access to sections of the trail.

Prior to the December 17, 2020 City Council meeting, there was misinformation amongst the community regarding the nature of the trail closure and the duration of the closure. A petition had circulated concerning staff and City Council stating the entire trail length was to be closed for thirty-six (36) months, even though the contractors schedule indicated a nineteen (19) month period of time for the entire length of trail closure. Subsequently, at the meeting, City Council requested staff to develop a robust communications plan to minimize the potential for misinformation in the community and to be able to provide clear messaging about the project.

Staff engaged the services of Tripepi Smith to work with the project team to facilitate a robust Project Proactive Communication Plan. The Plan details new additional communication strategies and tactics that will supplement ongoing communication efforts, such as City-issued press releases and mandatory noticing, signage, etc. The current construction management team of TPI and DI would still be engaged in their ongoing public outreach efforts and coordination with City staff.

ANALYSIS

Tripepi Smith provided five (5) goals for the Proactive Communication Plan:

1. Define Communities of Interest
2. Identify Strategies
 - a. Increased Stakeholder Engagement
 - b. Social Media Monitoring and Support
 - c. Strategic Messaging
 - d. Internet Strategy & Website
 - e. Increased Content Creation
 - f. Public Engagement Planning and Facilitation
3. Introduce Initial Key Messages

4. Establish Tactics/Timelines
5. Outline How to Measure Success

Tripepi Smith goals included a set of metrics to assess the effectiveness of the plan and inform future communication decisions. Tripepi Smith would measure their success by keeping track of:

- Reach and Penetration (quantitative)
- Level of Community Engagement (quantitative and qualitative)
- Media Tracking (quantitative)

The ability to measure success provides opportunities for staff to report back to City Council the effectiveness of the communication plan in regular intervals.

Tripepi Smith Proactive Communication Plan would provide the additional supplemental support with the City's current outreach efforts. In addition, the plan has timelines and measurements to determine desired outcomes by improving public access to timely, accurate, consistent, and easy to digest information; provide multiple easy, meaningful and successful ways to engage with the City and other project stakeholders; ensure accurate and timely information is widely disseminated and absorbed by interested parties to ensure the community is operating with the same facts when discussing or evaluating the Project; and promotes transparency regarding the Project, including the phased trail closure timeline and any variable that may impact the timeline over the course of construction.

FISCAL IMPACT

The initial outlay for the services is time and materials not to exceed \$49,000 dollars. Adequate funding is available in the budget for the Levee Improvements Project (CIP 301-657) for the Proactive Communication Plan.

Attachment:

- Attachment 1 - Foster City Levee Improvements Project Proactive Communication Plan – January 2021 Tripepi Smith