

City of Los Angeles

California



ANTONIO R. VILLARAIGOSA
MAYOR

Thera G. Bradshaw
General Manager

Ken Simmons
Executive Officer

Assistant General Managers

Clifford K. Eng
Kamton M. Joe
Mark P. Wolf

Information Technology Agency

Room 1400, City Hall East
200 North Main Street
Los Angeles, CA 90012
(213) 485-2892
FAX (213) 847-3512

www.lacity.org/ita

February 23, 2006

REF: OPA-069-06

Honorable Members of the City Council
City of Los Angeles
Room 395, City Hall
Los Angeles, CA 90012

Attention: Education and Neighborhoods Committee

Subject: **NEIGHBORHOOD COUNCIL MEETING WEBCAST
COUNCIL FILE NO. 05-1922**

The Information Technology Agency (ITA) with assistance of the Office of the Chief Legislative Analyst (CLA), the Office of City Attorney, and the Department of Neighborhood Empowerment (DONE) hereby presents the following report to the Education and Neighborhoods Committee with recommendations for implementing a pilot program for webcasting Neighborhood Council meetings, including details and estimated costs.

Background

Council File #05-1922 (Hahn/Garcetti), instructed ITA, with the assistance of DONE, to report to the City Council specific recommendations for enabling Internet-based access to Neighborhood Council meetings, in an effort supporting e-democracy and the City's goal of involving the greatest number of residents in the development of City policies and budgetary priorities. ITA submitted a report on November 9, 2005 with a summary of the necessary equipment and support services to implement an archived video-on-demand system, allowing Neighborhood Councils to record meetings, and for the public to view them via the Internet.

Subsequently, at the November 9, 2005 meeting of the Education and Neighborhoods Committee, the Committee requested information describing how a pilot webcasting program could be established for Neighborhood Councils, including information and costs related to live streaming video via the Internet.

Webcasting Neighborhood Council Meetings

Various options for implementation of a pilot program for webcasting Neighborhood Council meetings are available. In general, a recorded meeting can be (1) achieved on the web to be watched at a later time at the viewer's leisure (video-on-demand), and/or (2) it can be viewed as a live streaming webcast as the meeting takes place, and also archived for later viewing. In both options, resources for electronic storage of recorded

meetings and bandwidth for rapid and reliable content distribution via the Internet are required for either live or archived video webcasting.

Due to storage and bandwidth needs, ITA recommends a service contract be established for outsourcing the conversion of Neighborhood Council video tapes or audio tapes to a digital format as well as hosting them for access via the Internet to support the pilot project. This approach provides Neighborhood Councils with a cost effective video-on-demand and web-based archiving solution, as well as sufficient bandwidth for content distribution via the Internet. Moreover, this solution reduces the City's need to invest in additional Internet bandwidth and servers necessary to support streaming video.

A summary of the details and cost estimates for two webcasting options are as follows:

Option 1: Video (or Audio Only) Archive

This option allows a Neighborhood Council to record their own meetings, using either a video camera or audio tape recorder, and forward the recording to a vendor for conversion and publishing via the Internet.

- Recordings of each meeting would be sent by Neighborhood Councils, via United States Postal Service or other predetermined method to the contractor for conversion and web hosting.
- The service provider would convert the tape media to a digital format and then publish it for access on a Neighborhood Council or City web page.
- A web-based directory would allow anyone to access meetings via the Internet for up to one (1) year.

Estimated Cost For Option 1 For Each Neighborhood Council

One-Time Fixed Cost:

Equipment to record meeting ¹	\$3,000
Web Content Management/ Hosting Set-up	\$3,600

Recurring Cost:

Video Encoding (\$250/ meeting X 12 meetings/ year)	\$3,000/year
Bandwidth Support/Storage/Internet Access	\$2,800/year

Total one-year cost per Neighborhood Council: \$12,400*

¹ Equipment only (camera, microphone, tripod, case, misc. adaptors). Assumes single camera configuration that is operated by a Neighborhood Council representative. Cost estimate does not include a multi-year service agreement for audio/video equipment.

Option 2: Live Video Streaming and Video (or Audio Only) Archive

This option includes the 24/7 on-demand archiving of meetings described in option 1. It also allows Neighborhood Councils to webcast their meetings live over the Internet. It should be noted that certain conditions must be met before option 2 can be successfully implemented. In addition to the equipment and support described for option 1 above, the requirements for live streaming include:

- A meeting room location with an accessible broadband Internet connection (minimum 300 Kbps upstream).
- A digital encoder device must be installed at the meeting location. The encoder must be connected to the fast Internet link and configured to stream video/audio of the meeting.
- Encoder installation and configuration will need to be completed prior to each meeting.
- Technical support staff will be required on site for each meeting to provide Local Area Network (LAN) access and to establish an Internet connection to the webstreaming server in a secure manner.
- An “Administrator” with Internet access and a user ID/password must log in and set-up the meeting.

A video camera will be used to record the meeting as described above, however, encoding and transferring of data over the network to a broadcast server is done in real time by Neighborhood Council staff as well as ITA and DONE staff.

Estimated Cost for Option 2 For Each Neighborhood Council

One-Time Fixed Cost:

Equipment to record meeting ²	\$3,000
Encoder Equipment	\$5,000
Web Content Management/ Hosting Set-up	\$5,000
Installation of Secure Broadband Connection ³	\$2,000

Recurring Cost:

ISP Broadband Connection Service	\$3,000/year
Hosted Bandwidth Support & Data Storage, Internet Access	\$5,000/year
Technical Support Staff at Each Facility (ITA) (Systems Programmer I salary is up to \$90,000/year)	\$TBD
User Administration and Support (DONE) (Management Analyst II salary is up to \$72,000/year)	\$TBD

Total one-year cost per Neighborhood Council \$23,000*

² Equipment only (camera, microphone, tripod, case, misc. adaptors). Assumes single camera configuration that is operated by a Neighborhood Council representative. Cost estimate does not include a multi-year service agreement for audio/video equipment.

³ Installation cost may vary depending on provider and location.

Fiscal Impact Statement

The cost estimates provided herein for the Neighborhood Council webcasting solution proposed are contingent on the execution of appropriate service agreements. It is currently estimated that an agreement will be established by June 2006. Other factors that may affect the cost to implement a pilot program include:

1. Cost estimates could increase significantly for the live broadcasting option depending on the meeting location and cost to develop the telecommunications infrastructure necessary to webcast meetings live over the Internet at each location.
2. ITA and DONE plan to use existing staff to support the pilot unless the scope of the pilot project exceeds the departments' ability to support it with current resources, i.e. live streaming video or a larger number of Neighborhood Councils participating in a pilot project.

Recommendations

Upon discussion of the multiple webcasting options, the Information Technology Agency, the Office of the Chief Legislative Analyst, the City Attorney's Office and the Department of Neighborhood Empowerment recommend option 1, as described above, to establish a pilot webcasting program for Neighborhood Councils. Live streaming video would be difficult and costly to implement due to the variable locations of Neighborhood Council meetings as well as the necessary infrastructure and technical support required to enable live transmission of video content.

To implement option 1, it is recommended that:

1. Department of Neighborhood Empowerment, in consultation with the Mayor and Council, select up to three (3) Neighborhood Councils to participate in a one-year pilot project to webcast Neighborhood Council meetings;
2. Department of Neighborhood Empowerment to identify a Project Manager assigned to coordinate all activities related to the pilot project including any training necessary for Neighborhood Councils to effectively webcast their meetings; and
3. Instruct ITA and DONE to move forward with option 1 as described herein, to implement a one-year pilot project to support archived webcasting for up to three (3) Neighborhood Councils.

We trust the information provided herein addresses the Committee's direction. Please contact me at (213) 485-2892 or Mark Wolf at (213) 485-5100, if you have any questions or require additional information.

Respectfully submitted,



Thera G. Bradshaw
General Manager

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cc: Karen Sisson, Deputy Mayor
Marcus Allen, Deputy Chief of Staff
Gerry F. Miller, Chief Legislative Analyst
Rockard J. Delgadillo, City Attorney
Greg Nelson, DONE
Frank T. Martinez, City Clerk
ITA Executive Team