

REPORT TO CITY COUNCIL

DATE: MARCH 11, 2020

TO: HONORABLE MAYOR AND MEMBERS OF THE CITY COUNCIL

FROM: GREG RAMIREZ, CITY MANAGER

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SUBJECT: REQUEST TO MIGRATE CITY'S UNIFORM RESOURCE LOCATOR (URL) FOR ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATION

As part of the City's continued efforts to improve communication with the community, as well as make information simple to find and accessible, the Communications Subcommittee is recommending changing the City's Uniform Resource Locator (URL) from ci.agoura-hills.ca.us to agourahillscity.org.

A URL is an identifying source for the City's online presence and includes the City's domain name or the web address an individual would type in to find City information (website, email, etc.). Staff went through an extensive process with the Communications Subcommittee in reviewing the available URL/domain names and how it relates to what an individual from the public could easily remember and would logically utilize to find the City's website and online information. The subcommittee and staff also explored other government agencies and their URL's to understand their effectiveness.

Should the City Council agree to the proposed change, there are several things that would need to occur to complete the transition to the updated URL. Although there are several actions that will need to be taken by City staff to complete the transition to the new URL, such as new email addresses instituted, letterhead and business cards, internal paper forms, migration of existing website, and other Information Technology (IT) tasks, it is something that staff feels can be handled through the existing approved budget as a normal business operation. IT staff has confirmed the ability to forward emails from the old addresses, as well as transferring website visitors from the existing site to the updated site, thus limiting the need to immediately order all new forms, letterhead etc. The only hard costs associated would be related to any paid advertising that the City does to promote the change, which could be absorbed by the existing advertising budget. Staff does feel that there are multiple opportunities available that have no costs to notify the public of the change, such as on an employee's signature line in their emails or on the other City marketing materials for events and programs. The soft costs involved would include time by City staff from all departments, use of existing IT consultants, and Granicus staff who manage the City's website.

Staff has also completed a review of the web operational related impacts of changing the City's URL and has spoken with some other municipal agencies to get insight on how they kept their new website ranked high by search engines such as Google and insured that their website visitors were able to get to the new site without receiving error messages, also known as 404 error pages and will incorporate those best practices received. The existing City website will be kept in place for a short period of time following the transition to make sure that the public has had an opportunity to be made aware of the new URL. The timing of all of this transition is expected to take approximately 45-60 days.

The proposed change provides an improvement to the City's web presence, as well as provides an opportunity to enhance the public's ease of access to local information. Although there are steps that will need to be taken to accomplish this goal, they come at a small cost that will not impact other City services or operations.

RECOMMENDATION

The Communications Subcommittee recommends the City Council approve the migration from the City's existing URL to agourahillscity.org.