



City Manager's Office
www.santa-ana.org/city-managers-office
Item # 23

City of Santa Ana
20 Civic Center Plaza, Santa Ana, CA 92701
Staff Report
March 21, 2023

TOPIC: Councilmember-Requested Item Policy

AGENDA TITLE

Councilmember-Requested Item Policy Informational Report

RECOMMENDED ACTION

Accept informational report and provide direction to staff.

DISCUSSION

Background

At the August 16, 2022 meeting, Councilmember Phan added the following councilmember requested item: *Discuss and Consider Directing Staff to Implement a Process that Will Allow the City Council to More Efficiently and Effectively Present Councilmember Requested Items on the Agenda*. There was consensus among the City Council to proceed with this item.

City Council Legislative Authority and City Council Meeting Agendas

As the legislative body of the City of Santa Ana, the City Council's role is to legislate—or to set policy. The City Council is empowered to enact local laws, approve programs, appropriate funds, establish local taxes, and approve other local government actions through its legislative authority. This function is primarily carried out through City Council action at regularly scheduled City Council meetings. City Council meetings are guided by an agenda, which consists of items relating to the City of Santa Ana local government. Matters of policy are ordinarily determined by a majority vote of the City Council on each agenda item. In some cases, a two-thirds vote of the City Council is required (e.g. for appropriation adjustments). Under the Council-Manager form of government, under the leadership of the City Council, the City Manager sets the agenda and the City Clerk prepares the agenda.

Councilmember-Requested Items

Section 411 of the Santa Ana City Charter states, in part, that “any member of the City Council may place items on the City Council agenda to be considered by the City Council”. Councilmember-requested items are discussion items only; the City Council

does not take any action. Councilmember-requested items may include any issue within the City Council's jurisdiction, such as requests for policy research, drafting resolutions and ordinances, and providing direction to City staff relating to the implementation and/or evaluation of a policy.

The City Council Handbook, which is prepared annually by the City Manager's Office and City Clerk's Office, provides administrative guidance on certain procedures relating to the City Council, including councilmember-requested items. Regarding councilmember-requested items, the current edition of the City Council Handbook states the following:

COUNCIL AGENDA ITEM

Any member of the City Council may place items on the agenda that are staff directives or policy changes. They are listed on the agenda pursuant to Charter § 411. Items may be added by emailing the Clerk of the Council and City Manager.

The "Council Agenda Item" provision of the City Council Handbook is the only written guidance that exists relating to councilmember-requested items.

At the August 16, 2022 meeting, members of the City Council discussed the creation of a policy to provide guidance to the City Council, with the goal of presenting councilmember-requested items to facilitate efficient and effective discussion among the members of the City Council. Specifically, the City Council discussed the creation of a policy that might include the following elements:

- Each councilmember-requested item is accompanied by a written report that outlines the following:
 - Topic: Use plain language to describe the topic of the report.
 - Title: Describe the action and subject of the report.
 - Recommendation: Identify the action that you would like the City Council to take.
 - Discussion: Provide a brief chronology of the item. Identify issues. If there is a provision of law, rule, policy, and/or previous City Council action related to this item, note it in this section. Provide a brief explanation of the item, focusing on data collection, analysis, and evaluation, which justifies your recommendation.
- Prior to the report being published as part of the City Council meeting agenda, the councilmember confers with the City Manager, City Clerk, and City Attorney to inform them of the councilmember-requested item.
- Once the report is written and after the councilmember has conferred with the City Manager, City Clerk, and City Attorney, the councilmember submits the report to the City Manager's Office and City Clerk's Office to be added to an upcoming City Council meeting agenda. The report must be submitted by 12 p.m. on the established due dates to ensure compliance with the City's Sunshine Ordinance (see Sec. 2-150 of the Santa Ana Municipal Code).

Currently, there is no policy approved by the City Council relating to placing councilmember-requested items on the agenda.

Proposed City Council Policy Regarding Councilmember-Requested Items

Based off of input provided by members of the City Council at their meeting on August 16, 2022, staff has prepared the attached draft City Council Policy Regarding Councilmember-Requested Items (Exhibit 1). The draft policy includes a Councilmember-Requested Item template to be used by the requesting councilmember to submit the councilmember-requested item.

Next Steps

The City Council has the following options to consider relating to this matter:

1. Accept informational report and direct staff to return with a resolution adopting the City Council Policy Regarding Councilmember-Requested Items.
2. Direct staff to return with additional information.
3. Take no action.

Staff recommends that the City Council accept the informational report and direct staff to return with a resolution adopting the City Council Policy Regarding Councilmember-Requested Items.

FISCAL IMPACT

There is no fiscal impact associated with this action.

EXHIBIT(S)

1. Draft City Council Policy Regarding Councilmember-Requested Items

Submitted By: Kristine Ridge, City Manager

Approved By: Kristine Ridge, City Manager