Staff Report
City of Manhattan Beach

TO: Honorable Mayor Tell and Members of the City Council

THROUGH: Geoff Dolan, City Manager

FROM: Bruce Moe, Finance Director
Leilani Flores Emnace, Information Systems Manager

DATE: July 17, 2007

SUBJECT: Presentation of City's New Website

RECOMMENDATION:
Staff recommends that the City Council receive and file this report.

FISCAL IMPLICATION:
There are no fiscal implications associated with the recommended action.

BACKGROUND:
In the FY 2005-2006 budget, City Council provided funding to renovate and update the City's website, and to enhance our on-line services. Through competitive processes, the City selected three key partners in which to develop our new site. Vision Internet was selected for the website development component of the project (the look and feel, as well as content management); Bureau Veritas was chosen for the Citizens' Request Management (CRM) piece; and Teleworks was picked to provide the Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) module, as well as the notification and distribution list services. In working with these three firms over the past months, staff has developed the final website product being presented this evening.

DISCUSSION:

Staff is pleased to present the City's new website to the City Council and community. This project, which has spanned many months, has resulted in a new, fresh look for the City's portal. Further, it allows us to monitor content more effectively (so that outdated pages are removed and pages are earmarked for review in a timely manner), and provide enhanced resident services.

Among the new features:

1. **Email Notification Capabilities:** This feature permits residents and other interested parties to subscribe to an email list on various topics. For example, we have email lists for road closures, elections information and recycling to name a few. Additionally, we have job listings notifications as well as bid solicitation lists. The subscription system is

automated, meaning the subscriber enters the information, making management of the lists fairly simple.

2. **Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ's)**: An extensive FAQ database matches commonly asked questions with answers in a multitude of service areas, and will be available by phone[1] or web. This will extend government operating hours and increase general information access 24/7.

3. **Citizen Request Management (CRM):** This provides citizens with automated requests and tracking, and ties into the database of FAQ's that will help address common requests. In the event the question cannot be answered by the FAQ database, the CRM application can then be utilized to assist the person. For example, if a user wants to report a code enforcement issue, she can complete the on-line form and the request will be automatically routed to the appropriate department for action. Requests are tracked by Management Services and the affected department to ensure timely responses.

4. **Podcasts of City Council and Planning Commission Meetings:** This new feature allows website guests to selectively download the audio, or both the audio and video, of archived Council and Planning Commission meetings. Any other content we choose to include on our site may also be added to the menu of podcast downloads (Mayor's state of the City for example).

The overall website design project not only includes these modules, but gives us a fresh look and feel, and is more intuitive for the visitor.

Tonight, staff will be presenting the new website and demonstrating some of the new features. While we will have delivered the new website, there is still more work to be done. Remaining tasks include development of the City's corresponding Intranet (which provides employees with useful information and access to internal documents) and the previously mentioned telephone portion of the FAQ data. Those tasks will be completed in the coming weeks.

As we deliver this new product, we would like to recognize each and every department for their extraordinary efforts in delivering the new website and its functionality. We are pleased with the end result, and look forward to continuing our efforts to communicate with, and serve our community through our web services.

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[1] The web based FAQ's are being rolled out now. The telephone based FAQ's, which involve taking written text and converting it to speech over the telephone, will be completed by September 2007.