



## STAFF REPORT

**Meeting Date:** October 4, 2016  
**To:** Honorable Mayor & City Council  
**From:** Huma Ahmed, Community Outreach Manager  
**Subject:** Update on City-Hosted Hilton Initiative Public Forum  
**Attachments:** None

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### INTRODUCTION

This report provides the City Council with an update on the cancelled City-sponsored forum regarding the *Hilton Condominium Tower Initiative*. Staff also seeks Council direction on whether another type of educational forum should be organized.

Measure HH is a local city measure which has been placed on the November 8, 2016 ballot. The initiative seeks voter-approval for a private development project located within the City of Beverly Hills.

### DISCUSSION

Per City Council direction, a forum that was to be moderated by the Los Angeles League of Women Voters inviting both proponents and opponents of the measure was being planned for Thursday, September 29. However, due to non-participation from the proponent side, the event was cancelled.

Since then there have been requests for the City to review options on hosting a forum in which information regarding the measure could be shared with the community.

As the Council is aware, the City cannot expend public funds to support or oppose the ballot measure (Government Code Section 54954). But, the City can host an educational forum or a debate (with the two sides present). With that in mind, the following options are provided for consideration:

#### **1. City-Sponsored Educational Forum**

The City could sponsor an educational forum, hosted by an independent party or City staff (with assistance from the City Attorney's office) to provide information about the ballot measure.

Presenters would provide fact-based information from records filed with the City on the measure along with other relevant information. Audience questions should be responded to in a manner that would not advocate for either side. It is

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suggested that if City staff is conducting the forum, then an independent party should manage the Q/A segment of the forum.

The information provided should be accurate, fair, and be an impartial presentation of the relevant facts to aid the voters in reaching an informed judgment regarding the ballot measure (Government Code Section 54964(c)(2)).

## **2. City-Sponsored Forum with Opposing Views**

Similar to the format developed by the League of Women Voters, a forum would be conducted and managed by an independent party and/or group. The independent party would select representatives on both sides of the measure and moderate the forum.

The challenge in this case would be for the party and/or group to identify and select representatives willing to participate from both sides of the measure.

As a matter of seeking best practices on how other communities manage similar forums, both the League of California Cities and the Municipal Management Association of Southern California were contacted.

Municipalities such as the cities of Placentia and Costa Mesa have conducted ballot measure-related public forums and outreach. Both cities hired consultants to manage their public engagement process. However, additional details related to their events were not received in time for this report.

## **FISCAL IMPACT**

Currently fiscal impacts have not been assessed, but could include consultant, staff and promotional costs.

## **RECOMMENDATION**

Staff seeks City Council direction on this matter. Should the Council direction be for a City-sponsored public forum on this initiative, then it would be recommended that the event take place in mid-October 2016 after the conclusion of the High Holy Days.

Huma Ahmed  
Approved By

