

CITY OF LOS ANGELES

CALIFORNIA

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Date: July 19, 2023

REF: EXE-264-23

To: Municipal Facilities Committee

From: Ted Ross, General Manager
Information Technology AgencySubject: **REVISED - INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY AGENCY – A PATH FORWARD FOR CHANNEL 35 OPERATIONS**

The Information Technology Agency (ITA) is submitting a request for your consideration to instruct the Department, with the assistance of the General Services Department (GSD) and Public Works, Bureau of Engineering (BOE), to identify and secure either a City owned property or a private property for the relocation of Channel 35.

BACKGROUND

The LACityView Channel 35 move to El Pueblo has been delayed since 2017 when the bids from Pre-Qualified Contractors came in between \$11.8 million and \$17.8 million substantially over the estimated \$21.1 million budgeted for the project. In a January 2020 Municipal Facilities Committee (MFC) report, \$30 million was the estimated overage (likely higher now due to increased construction costs resulting from recent labor shortages and supply chain issues). No City entity to this date has committed to the additional funding required for a retrofit and build out of El Pueblo. Alternative locations would be significantly less expensive and likely better for Channel 35 operations and our government access mission.

The relocation of Channel 35 has been in planning and needed for well over 15 years, and there is still no established completion date. During this time, Channel 35 staff and its operations have been spread out over five temporary locations - Little Tokyo Studios, City Hall East 10th Floor, and City Hall Rooms 342, 1000, and 1001.

Challenges

The separation of operations and staff began with the termination of the Union Bank lease in 2017. The lease termination led to the relocation of Master Control and the administrative staff to City Hall. This was viewed as a temporary move since the post construction of El Pueblo was scheduled for completion by June 2024 as per the January 2020 MFC Report. Going on six years, this diaspora has resulted in many operational and managerial challenges while Channel 35 is required to provide increasing

TV production and social media services to the City. In addition to typical Council Meeting and Committee coverage, Channel 35 is required to televise remote events for 18 different elected officials, weekly broadcast shows (e.g. LA This Week), and citywide events (e.g. State of the City, Mayor's Inauguration, etc). The current situation is dire and untenable, and there is an immediate need to identify and secure a permanent home for Channel 35. Current challenges include:

- Consistent water leaks in City Hall Rooms 1000 and 1001 have damaged equipment and forced four staff to relocate to City Hall East. GSD has been unable to resolve.
- Inadequate space for personnel in Master Control (City Hall Room 261) - During live broadcasts, there are between two to eight required staff in Master Control. Room 261 is 625 square feet. With the equipment configuration, there are approximately 2 feet of separation per person. In May 2021, a Council Crew member tested positive for COVID-19. The exposure resulted in the quarantine of the entire Council Crew staff, which rippled operations for the two weeks.
- The Server Room in City Hall Room 342 - the heart of Master Control - is without backup power, which could hinder broadcasts during emergencies.
- Increased connectivity and equipment costs between facilities.
- Added operational time and costs to staff and facilities because of the different locations.
- Lack of in-person time and team building among staff leading to low morale.
- Management issues of staff and contractors from afar.
- Lack of secure storage space at the Little Tokyo Studios has resulted in stolen gear.
- The Little Tokyo Studio lease is a financial burden to the City.

Studio Space Requirements

Ideally, the permanent home of Channel 35 would be a City owned facility within two miles of City Hall for convenient Electeds and City Officials access, or near the Emergency Management Department where proximity would provide efficient emergency communications at Channel 35.

- 24,000 square feet
 - Two Studios (3,000 sq ft and 1,500 sq ft) with uninterrupted open space (no columns)
 - 15'-20' ceiling height
- Offices and work space for 15 FTEs and approximately 15 contractors per day.
- Parking for 30-50 cars. Guests average 1-25 on a production day.

FISCAL IMPACT

Approximately \$18.7 million remains available via Council Motions in the Telecommunications Development Account Fund 342 for the improvement and/or purchase of a building for Channel 35.

RECOMMENDATION

That the Municipal Facilities Committee approve and instruct the Information Technology Agency, with the assistance of the General Services Department, Real Estate Division and the Public Works, Bureau of Engineering, to identify and secure either a City owned property or a private property, prioritizing properties to be purchased versus leased space, that has space for local programming around the Civic Center similar to what was designed to be included in the Merced Theater for the relocation of Channel 35 and to build out the property within the next three to five years.

If you have any questions, please contact Maryam Abbassi (maryam.abbassi@lacity.org) at (213) 978-3346 or Ted Lin (ted.lin@lacity.org) at (213) 473-9767.

Respectfully submitted,



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