

# Memorandum



DATE August 30, 2013

TO The Honorable Mayor and Members of the City Council

SUBJECT **Lessons Learned From Virtual Town Hall Meetings**

On Wednesday, September 4, 2013, the City Council will be briefed on Lessons Learned From Virtual Town Hall Meetings. The briefing materials are attached for your review.

Please let me know if you have questions or need additional information.



Jill A. Jordan, P.E.  
Assistant City Manager

c: A.C. Gonzalez, Interim City Manager  
Thomas P. Perkins, City Attorney  
Rosa A. Rios, City Secretary  
Judge Daniel F. Solis, Administrative Judge  
Craig D. Kinton, City Auditor  
Ryan S. Evans, Interim First Assistant City Manager  
Forest E. Turner, Assistant City Manager  
Joey Zapata, Assistant City Manager  
Charles M. Cato, Interim Assistant City Manager  
Theresa O'Donnell, Interim Assistant City Manager  
Jeanne Chipperfield, Chief Financial Officer  
Frank Libro, Public Information Office  
Elsa Cantu, Assistant to the City Manager – Mayor and Council

# LESSONS LEARNED FROM VIRTUAL TOWN HALL MEETINGS

Presented to the Dallas City Council  
Wednesday, September 4, 2013



# Goals

- Increase citizen engagement
- Attract a broader more diverse audience
- Provide a more convenient way to participate
- Strengthen relationships between government and constituents
- Increase knowledge of constituents on the topic of budget

# Services Provided



- Automated outbound calls
- Use of toll-free inbound numbers
- Data for each district
- Spanish translation
- Web simulcast inbound Spanish line online
- Professional moderator



# How The Meetings Worked

- Broadcast from 6ES
- 1 Hour in length
- 5 Minutes to call out to approximately 18,000 – 20,000 registered voters
- Moderator greeted
- Recorded budget message from City Manager
- Council Member comments
- Opened floor for questions
- Questions pre-screened for relevance
- City staff available to answer just like a regular meeting
- Citizens could leave voice mail questions/comments after the meeting
- Polling questions posed to audience
- Citizens could leave email addresses
- Report next day from firm

# Results

- 6 Districts participated in 5 meetings
- 100,158 citizens were called
- 1,872 citizens participated via phone
- 322 citizens participated via the web

# Telephone/Webcast Town Hall

Council Member	Language	# Dialed	Max # of Participants in Conference	Web Participants	Email Addresses Left	Voice Mail Messages Left
Caraway	Spanish	34	11	0	0	0
Caraway	English	17,460	351	36	18	16
Atkins	Spanish	71	15	0	0	1
Atkins	English	15,575	430	53	39	29
Kadane/Allen	Spanish	79	18	0	0	0
Kadane	English	18,380	207	0	20	9
Allen	English	16,938	228	86	21	12
Kingston	Spanish	36	9	2	0	0
Kingston	English	20,877	265	62	19	8
Callahan	Spanish	195	53	0	2	0
Callahan	English	10,513	285	83	38	22
Total:		100,158	1,872	322	157	97

# Comparison of Electronic vs Regular Town Hall Meetings

- Average electronic attendance per district meeting = 365
- Average face-to-face attendance per district meeting in sample set = 34

District	Meeting Dates	# Attended
5	08/08/13	71
1/2/14 Joint Meeting	08/20/13	59
8	08/15/13	29
	08/20/13	25
	08/22/13	33
	08/26/13	42
	08/27/13	10
14	8/13/13	17
	8/27/13	15
5/7 Joint Meeting	08/15/13	37
<b>Total:</b>		<b>338</b>
<b>Average:</b>		<b>34</b>



# SAMPLE POLLING QUESTIONS FROM TOWN HALL MEETINGS

## **DISTRICT 5**

Did you find this Telephone Town Hall Meeting useful and informative?

ANSWER	RESPONDED	% of TOTAL
YES	100	98
NO	2	2

## **DISTRICT 9**

Which of the following issues are of greatest concern to you?

ANSWER	RESPONDED	% of TOTAL
Crime	32	50
Traffic and street conditions	21	33
High weeds and conditions of properties	3	5
Inadequate recreational, arts and library facilities and programming	8	13

## DISTRICT 4

How do you normally get information on city matters?

ANSWER	RESPONDED	% of TOTAL
Local TV News	72	74
Local Newspaper	10	10
Social Networks	6	6
Friends and Family	5	5
Somewhere Else	4	4

## DISTRICT 8

What are the most important issues you see facing your neighborhood right now?

ANSWER	RESPONDED	% of TOTAL
Manage urban character: Control growth/protect environment/Water	6	7
Recreation/Leisure	6	7
Building/Code Enforcement/Streets	34	38
Business Retention/Development/Economic Indicators/Insufficient	19	21
Public safety	25	28

# Lessons Learned

- First night poor audio quality. Corrections made
- Webcast was spotty. Experience heavily dependent on citizens' home internet service provider & computer
  - ❖ Google Chrome seemed best
- Phone call right before meeting very successful
  - ❖ But dialing took too long for more than 20,000 calls
- Citizens liked participating in the comfort of their own homes
- Citizens seemed more comfortable asking questions
- Demand for Spanish in all the districts
- Might want to add additional databases of phone numbers to call

# Planning Ahead for Next Year

Does the council want to do virtual meetings again?

- How many districts
- Single or joint meetings
- What's the technology?
  - ❖ Phone only
  - ❖ Web only
  - ❖ Both
  - ❖ Real-time vs. on-demand