



Date: December 27, 2017
To: Patrick H. West, City Manager *KE*
From: Kelly Colopy, Director of Health and Human Services *kc*
For: Mayor and Members of the City Council

Subject: Development of a Veterans Affairs Commission Strategic Plan

On November 7, 2017, the City Council directed the City Manager to work with the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) and the Veterans Affairs Commission (Commission) to develop a Veterans Affairs Strategic Plan. The action specified that the Strategic Plan include programs and policies designed to assist Veterans in multiple capacities and build stronger connections between local Veterans and the community. This memorandum provides a brief report on the costs, staffing impacts, and timeline involved in implementing this recommendation.

Activities in its First Year

1. The Commission held its inaugural meeting in January 2017. Since that time, Commissioners have been trained in the rules of commissions, developed a governance structure, elected a chair, and became familiar with local Veteran serving organizations and activities.
2. On September 13, 2017, the Commission adopted a purpose, function and goals document utilizing a facilitated process led by Ginger Lee, Manager of the Collective Impact and Operations Bureau. This document will serve as a framework for developing the Veterans Affairs Strategic Plan. The adopted goals are as follows:

Goal 1: Economic Development - Increase Veteran employment by advising the City Council on ways to increase transitional employment opportunities, patronage of Veteran-owned businesses, and private business ownership for Veterans.

Goal 2: Awareness and Recognition - Increase awareness and recognition of all Long Beach Veterans, service members and their families by advising the City Council on ways to regularly celebrate and recognize our Veterans.

Goal 3: Information, Resources and Social Support - Serve as a clearinghouse for information pertaining to resources, services and social support available to Veterans in the Long Beach area, in collaboration with the City and by advising the City Council.

Goal 4: Underrepresented Groups - Identify and raise awareness of underrepresented Veteran populations by advising the City Council about groups that may not identify as Veterans and, therefore, may not seek assistance.

3. On October 11, 2017, the Commission moved to establish standing subcommittees for each Commission goal. The Committees are the Veterans Economic Development Committee; the Veterans Awareness and Recognition Committee; the Veterans Information, Resources and Social Support Committee; and, the Underrepresented Veterans Groups Committee.
4. On November 4, 2017, a social media presence went live. This includes:
 - A Facebook group page that serves as a clearinghouse for information pertaining to resources, services and social support available to Veterans in Long Beach (<https://www.facebook.com/groups/LBVeteransCommission/>); and,
 - A website page (linked to the City's website) containing basic information about the Commission and a Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) section that includes links to Veterans resources in the areas of education, employment, and others (<http://www.longbeach.gov/vetscommission>).

Developing a Strategic Plan

Developing a strategic plan typically involves several steps or phases of work, which will be adapted for developing the Veterans Affairs Strategic Plan (Plan), as necessary. These include:

- Assessing the current environment – How are Veterans currently served in our City and where are the gaps?
- Strategy formulation and development phase – What are the recommended steps and resources involved in addressing the identified gaps?
- Strategy execution phase – Translate the Plan into planning and action items, coordinate with the City Manager's Office and present the Plan to the City Council.

The Commission Coordinator will ask for DHHS staff support from experienced senior management and from other DHHS staff that serve or directly interface with Veterans, such as Homeless Services Division staff. The Coordinator will also ask the Commission to appoint a strategic planning *ad hoc* committee to assist with the development of the Plan. The strategic planning process will require significant partnering with local Veteran-serving organizations; bringing together a diverse cross-section of Veterans from different eras, ethnicities, genders, and socioeconomic backgrounds to provide their input; and, collaborating with Commissioners, DHHS staff, and the City Manager's Office.

The City Council action requested that the Plan include programs and policies designed to assist Veterans in multiple capacities and build stronger connections between local Veterans and the community. Given that the Commission's role is to advise the City Council on programming and policy development, the Plan will outline recommended policies and programs, but it is not the Commission's role to identify resources or undertake their implementation.

Resources needed for Developing a Strategic Plan

Current City funding supports a half-time Veterans Affairs Commission Coordinator who serves as the City's liaison to the nine-member Commission. Responsibilities include planning the monthly Commission meetings and creating agendas and minutes in Legistar, communication and outreach to local Veteran-serving institutions and organizations, oversight of the Commission's *ad-hoc* committees and standing Committees, as well as additional duties as identified by the Commission and aligned with its priorities. With the launch of the Commission's FAQ page and Facebook group page, the Coordinator added to her workload tasks related to researching, programming and managing the Facebook group page on an ongoing basis. These tasks involve collaboration with the DHHS social media manager and the Veterans Affairs Commission marketing and website subcommittee.

Developing the Plan will require additional investment from DHHS staff beyond the existing staff funded for the Commission. The Coordinator is at capacity with the current management of this active Commission. Support includes unfunded time from the DHHS and includes supervision by a Bureau Manager, facilitation support, administrative secretarial support, time of the DHHS Director as needed, printing, and office supplies.

The resources required to develop a strategic plan should not be underestimated. More specifically, with an 18- to 24-month timeframe for the plan, the following DHHS resources will need to be utilized:

- Veteran Affairs Commission coordinator utilizing 5-10 hours per week while also covering other responsibilities,
- DHHS staff time not covered by City funding and not aligned to other grant sources including:
 - Strategic Plan facilitation led by a Bureau Manager (80 hours)
 - Community meeting planning and facilitation (40-50 hours)
 - Social media outreach (30 hours)
 - Senior level oversight (20 hours)

In addition, the Veterans Affairs Strategic Plan will likely incur costs for coordinator staff time over and above the funded 20 hours per week. Commission programs have no funding for promotional materials associated with community outreach for focus groups and meetings, strategic plan report design or printing. Should the City Council decide to move forward with the development of a strategic plan, a funding source of approximately \$40,000 must first be identified. If the \$40,000 is not made available for a strategic plan, the City Council can rest assured that the great work of the Commission, as outlined in this memo, will continue.

For additional information, please contact Gina Overholt, Veterans Affairs Commission Coordinator, at (562) 570-4035.

cc: CHARLES PARKIN, CITY ATTORNEY
LAURA L. DOUD, CITY AUDITOR
TOM MODICA, ASSISTANT CITY MANAGER
KEVIN JACKSON, DEPUTY CITY MANAGER
REBECCA GARNER, ASSISTANT TO THE CITY MANAGER
DEPARTMENT HEADS
GINGER LEE, COLLECTIVE IMPACT AND OPERATIONS BUREAU MANAGER, DHHS
MONIQUE DE LA GARZA, CITY CLERK (REF FILE #17-1008)