

To: **Mayor and City Council**
Through: **Ryan Schroeder, City Manager**
From: **Dan Nowicki, Marketing and Communications Manager**
Date: **January 25, 2021**

Translation Services Discussion

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

West St. Paul is a City with a close-knit community and strong diversity. The US Census estimates that in 2019 about 22% of West St. Paul residents would consider themselves “Hispanic or Latino”. We’ll have a more accurate understanding of these demographics when the 2020 Census results are released. Of course, much of West St. Paul’s Hispanic population speaks and/or understands English, however there is a portion that use Spanish as their primary or only language.

Progress has been made in recent years to translate some documents to Spanish and offer expanded in-person and over the phone translation services. However, this progress has revolved around mostly day-to-day staff operations and community events. It has been requested that staff research the cost of translating certain official documents to get the conversation started on how to progress further in the translations offered to the public while keeping in mind that the cost of accurate translation services can add up quickly. While it might make sense to the council to translate some meeting minutes, the cost of translating agenda packets would easily reach into six figures annually and may not give our community the best return on investment. Below are estimated costs to translate some key documents into Spanish.

City Council Documents

Average 2020 City Council Agenda: ~\$40 (~\$920 /yr)

Average 2020 City Council Agenda Packet: ~\$2,260 (~\$52,000 /yr)

Average 2020 City Council Agenda Minutes: ~\$100 (~\$2,300 /yr)

Other Key Documents

Annual Report: ~\$520

Budget Book: ~\$420

CIP/CEP: ~\$340

Please keep in mind these estimates are for raw translation services ONLY and this list is a small example of what the City creates. If it is the Council’s wish for translated documents to look similar to the English versions, current staff could likely integrate some smaller documents into their workload, however significant sized or quantity of documents would need to be outsourced. Translation costs could be up to double the above estimates for well-designed documents.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

Discuss scope of translation services and direct staff on how to move forward.