

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

Town Hall Forums & Strategic Planning Meeting Schedule and Agenda

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

Town Hall Forums

The City of West St. Paul hosts annual Town Hall Forums (previously called Neighborhood Meetings) to inform the public about important projects and happenings in West St. Paul, and more importantly to learn from the public what the City is doing well and what needs more attention. In previous years these forums have been strategically held in-person in different wards around the City. Due to the large attendance these events usually bring and the prominence of the COVID-19 pandemic, we've had to adjust to planning for virtual Town Halls for 2021. After polling availability of elected officials, City & Townsquare TV staff and planning logistics, the following details are being proposed with input sought from Council.

- Town Hall Forums will take place in the WSP Council Chambers with elected officials and staff in-person and TownSquare TV broadcasting on cable and streaming the forums live to the public. No in-person public attendance.
- The agenda will consist of intro from elected officials, presentations from key staff members, Q&A from the public via phone and email, direction on how to complete the survey.
- Town Hall schedule is proposed as follows: **Thursday, February 11th: 1-3pm (afternoon session), Wednesday, February 24th: 6-8pm (evening session), Saturday, February 27th: 10am-Noon (weekend session)**
- Interaction between the public and chambers will work similar to citizen comments during Council Meetings with staff working the phone and the addition of emailed questions that staff can relay to those presenting.
- With the different technological abilities and access to smart phones/internet of the public, staff has decided the best way for the survey to be done is to refer viewers to take the survey online or via paper after the forums are complete. Direction will be given to viewers on how to complete this and data will be analyzed and compiled prior to the Strategic Planning Session. The virtual and paper surveys will be available in English and Spanish.
- An expanded survey is proposed. Staff is requesting council read the National Community Survey example attached and discuss West St. Paul expanding to a similar set of questions. With 2020 Town Hall data impacted severely by COVID, 2021 may be a good starting point to begin new questions.

Strategic Planning Meeting

Biennially, the City Council meets for a full day with staff to set out initiatives and priorities for the coming two years. After polling availability for those involved as well as reserving available space, staff

is proposing this meeting take place on **Saturday, March 6th from 9am-5pm**. Due to COVID-19, staff would like to hold this in-person in the Dakota Lodge at Thompson Park to be able to socially distance without having to limit the attendance of key staff members.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

Discuss and confirm schedule and agenda for 2020 Town Hall Forums and the City Council's Strategic Planning Meeting.