



500 West Big Beaver
Troy, MI 48084
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CITY COUNCIL AGENDA ITEM

Date: July 8, 2020

To: Mark F. Miller, City Manager

From: Robert J. Bruner, Assistant City Manager
Cathleen A. Russ, Library Director

Subject: Library Millage Community Engagement Plan

History

- Voters approved a five-year, 0.7 mills dedicated library millage on August 2, 2011 and again on November 3, 2015.
- The current library millage will fund the Troy Public Library through the fiscal year that ends on June 30, 2021.
- Voters must renew or replace the library millage in order for the City to continue operating and maintaining the Library beyond June 30, 2021.
- City Council must determine the library millage rate and duration to be presented at the November general election by August 11, 2020, the deadline to approve ballot wording for November 2020.
- City Council held a special meeting to discuss library funding on June 8, 2020.
- On June 22, 2020, City Council approved an agreement with Cobalt Community Research (Cobalt) for library survey research. City Council also discussed library funding and City staff outlined a preliminary public engagement plan including the survey, virtual focus group(s), and virtual town hall meeting(s).

The purpose of this memo is to provide a detailed community engagement plan for the Library millage. The community engagement plan is divided into two phases. The first phase is intended to collect public input to help the City Council determine the most appropriate library millage rate and duration for the November ballot proposal. The second phase is intended to provide the public with information regarding the ballot proposal consistent with the Michigan Campaign Finance Act.

Phase 1

The preliminary public engagement plan discussed on June 22 included survey research, virtual focus group(s), and virtual town hall meeting(s). As we considered the most effective strategies to collect public input in the limited time available, we quickly realized we should concentrate our efforts on the survey research and focus groups in Phase 1 and host town hall meetings in Phase 2. A focus group is a small group of people whose reactions are studied in a guided discussion to determine the reactions that can be expected from a larger population. The facilitator asks the questions and the participants provide answers. In contrast, town hall meetings usually include a presentation followed by questions from the audience. As such, town hall meetings are better suited for Phase 2. Below is a brief outline of Phase 1. Please note it includes a new special City Council meeting on July 20.



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- Week of June 22: This week was primarily devoted to the kick-off meeting with Cobalt and developing the survey questions to be published online and mailed to 3,000 recent voters.
- Week of June 29: This holiday-shortened 4-day workweek was primarily devoted to finalizing the survey questionnaire and focus group preparation.
- Week of July 6: The survey was distributed on Monday, July 6. City staff is preparing to host focus groups the following week.
- Week of July 13: Surveys are due this week. Focus groups will be held on Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday, July 14, 15 and 16.
- Week of July 20: Raw data summary of survey results presented to City Council at a special meeting.
- Week of July 27: Report summarizing survey results and all feedback from focus groups presented to City Council, along with recommended ballot language.
- Week of August 3: Final preparations for the August 10 City Council meeting.
- Week of August 10: City Council approves millage rate and duration incorporated into ballot language at City Council meeting of Monday, August 10. Approved ballot language is submitted to Oakland County Clerk's Office by the 4 pm deadline on Tuesday, August 11.

The survey research being conducted by Cobalt will include both a random sample of 3,000 recent Troy voters who receive the survey via USPS (sample respondents) and anyone else who completes the survey online (non-sample respondents). Sample respondents may complete the survey online using the unique ID on each cover letter. For the sample, we chose residents who voted in the 2018 Michigan general election held on Tuesday, November 6, 2018. The 2018 general election was chosen to balance recency and turnout. In other words, it was more recent than the 2016 US presidential election and had greater turnout than the 2019 Michigan general election. The 2018 Michigan general election included several important statewide offices (US Senate, Governor and Lieutenant Governor, Secretary of State, and Attorney General). Raw survey data will be compiled for the July 20 special City Council meeting and a more detailed report will be presented at the July 27 regular City Council meeting.

Three focus groups are scheduled during the week of July 13. Members of the City's Financial Ideas Team (FIT team), Global Troy Advisory Committee, Troy Women's Association, and Boys & Girls Club of Troy Board of Directors have been invited to participate. The focus groups will be conducted remotely using Zoom and will accommodate about 12 people each. The results will be presented at the July 27 regular City Council meeting.



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In addition, the July 13 City Council meeting agenda includes a report with the results of three recent studies that have taken place within the last 18 months (see “Library Community Engagement Supplemental Information”). Specifically, the Library conducted a feasibility study considering renovations for the Youth Services area, which occupies the original 1971 library building. Throughout the course of this study, the Library’s consultant, Integrated Design Solutions of Troy, conducted focus groups of parents, caregivers and children, to ascertain what these library users need and want in this space. The report provides three design options to address their needs and wants. The information is still fairly current so we believe it is relevant input regarding what the community wants from its Library.

In summary, we believe the survey research, focus groups, and additional recent studies will provide a robust variety of public input City Council can use to inform its decision regarding the Library’s millage rate and duration.