

CITY OF LOS ANGELES
INTER-DEPARTMENTAL CORRESPONDENCE

Date: November 7, 2018

To: The Mayor
The Council

From: Richard H. Llewellyn, Jr., City Administrative Officer



Subject: **INNOVATION FUND RECOMMENDATION – ZENCITY PILOT**

RECOMMENDATIONS

That the Council, subject to the approval of the Mayor:

1. Establish and appropriate a new appropriation account entitled Office of the Mayor – ZenCity Pilot in the amount of \$78,000 within the Innovation Fund No. 105/10 from the available cash balance of the Innovation Fund.
1. Transfer \$78,000 from the Innovation Fund 105/10, Account to be Established, Office of the Mayor – ZenCity Pilot to Fund 100/46 as follows:

2.

<u>Fund/Dept.</u>	<u>Account No.</u>	<u>Account Name</u>	<u>Amount</u>
100/46	003040	Contractual Services	\$ 78,000

3. Instruct the Mayor's Office to:
 - a. Separately track all encumbrances and expenditures of Innovation Fund monies so that unspent funds can be returned to the Innovation Fund at the end of the fiscal year;
 - b. Report to the Innovation and Performance Commission with an accounting of the funds, the lessons learned, and any obstacles faced; and,
 - c. Report to the Innovation and Performance Commission if, after the receipt of funds, the scope of the funded item differs from the scope approved for funding by the Mayor and the City Council.
4. Authorize the City Administrative Officer to make technical corrections as necessary to those transactions included in this report to implement Mayor and Council intentions.

SUMMARY

The City Administrative Officer herewith transmits the recommendation of the Innovation and Performance Commission (IPC) to approve funding in the amount of \$78,000 from the Innovation Fund (IF) for the Office of the Mayor's Innovation Delivery Team (i-team). Please note, as with all IPC recommendations, this report presents the idea as submitted by the Department and approved by the IPC along with the necessary recommendations to implement the idea as presented. If the scope of the Innovation Fund item changes after the Department receives funding, the Department must return to the IPC to present the revised scope to the Commission to determine whether alternative recommendations are required.

The i-team proposes to capture and understand the sentiments, behavior, major concerns, satisfactions, and opinions of the City's constituents using a social listening tool, ZenCity. Social listening is defined as the process of tracking conversations around specific topics, keywords, phrases, brands or industries, and leveraging insights to discover opportunities or create content for those audiences. The i-team states that City legislators and departments only hear from the very vocal minority of their constituents who attend Council meetings and organize demonstrations, rather than hearing the voices of the passive majority who voice their sentiments online. Through the implementation of the ZenCity pilot, the i-team believes that the City will be able to cast a wider net in quantifying constituents' sentiments and opinions on City solutions, be proactive about addressing concerns before they become issues, supplement existing information technology and data tools such as 311, and tailor City services and programs by demographic groups, neighborhoods, and Council districts. The i-team and ZenCity would be collaborative partners in identifying the best ways for the analytics tool to support civic engagement, research, and policy initiatives. The pilot would be in English and Spanish, making Los Angeles the first city to implement Spanish social media analytics.

The i-team provided proposed use cases for how the ZenCity pilot could be utilized. They are as follows:

- *Understanding Public Discourse related to the Homelessness Initiative*
Problem/Opportunity: The City's new housing initiative, A Bridge Home, increases shelter services in the City and has already ignited heated political debates in City Hall and town halls.
Proposed Deliverable: A partnership with ZenCity will help the Mayor's Office gain deeper insights from social media and 311 and inform local conversations within Council districts to critically address residents' concerns and lift up less vocal voices that may not be physically present for town hall meetings. Accessing these insights will also help proactive management of the sites once selected and in construction. If there are any issues at the site, the i-team would be able to receive real-time alerts and quickly address local concerns before they become entrenched in public discourse.
- *Informing Participation in the Census*
Problem/Opportunity: Los Angeles County is an extremely difficult area to count for the Census. Every ten years the Census Bureau is responsible for the task of counting every person living in the United States. This count determines

allocations of funding that have long-term impacts. LA County receives \$7 billion in federal and State funding that supports important programs such as transportation, job training, child welfare, Section 8 housing, Medicaid, and older adult assistance. Low Census counts can result in jurisdictions losing representation in Congress, as the State did in 2010 when California was 13,000 individuals short of gaining a seat. With the recent concern over a citizenship question on the 2020 Census, Angelenos may be more wary of completing the survey.

Proposed Deliverable: Partner with ZenCity to engage Spanish speakers in conversations about the Census and leverage insights from social listening to improve outreach strategies to ensure a more accurate count in 2020. Work with ZenCity to incorporate online forums on Univision and La Opinion among other key Spanish-speaking news outlets.

- *Planning Our City's Future*

Problem/Opportunity: The Department of City Planning (DCP) is currently updating the City's General Plan which is anticipated to be presented in 2020 and that could change the long-range strategy of Los Angeles. The DCP has been holding listening sessions to understand the needs of residents from different communities. Public hearings are important, but not all residents can be available for these hearings, and social media could provide additional perspectives that can be incorporated into the General Plan.

Proposed Deliverable: With ZenCity, DCP could review various social media feeds and discover how constituents feel that the City could be improved. ZenCity has the capability to break down different tweets, posts, and other media by geographic location. Using this breakdown, City staff could build a dashboard for DCP to focus on what communities need so their concerns might be better incorporated into the General Plan.

- *Proactively Identify Rent Stabilization Ordinance (RSO) and Building Violations*

Problem/Opportunity: City departments that investigate resident complaints often learn of issues when brought to their attention by residents or through routine inspections. However, many individuals do air complaints on social media, especially civic-oriented sites such as Nextdoor. While some talk over social media may not be substantive, other comments may present opportunities to better understand concerns regarding housing, eviction, and illegal dumping complaints.

Proposed Deliverable: Partner with the Housing and Community Investment Department (HCID), Information Technology Agency (ITA), and Department of Building and Safety (DBS) to work with ZenCity to mine sites like Nextdoor, Instagram, and Twitter for complaint-related data (e.g. housing, eviction, construction, and illegal dumping). Work with departments to determine hot-spots for proactive enforcement and guided inspections, open and investigate complaints/requests, anticipate constituent needs, and plan for future departmental operations using constituent input obtained by the i-team.

- Connecting Angelenos to Work: Understanding the Gig Economy**
Problem/Opportunity: Through the proliferation of instant shared-service applications such as Lyft, TaskRabbit, and UpWork, a record number of individuals have entered the contractor workforce. As a result, there is a great deal to learn about the benefits, drawbacks, and net impact on residents, such as how the City can assist these residents and support their needs, and how the City help those in need of immediate income or temporary employment obtain shared-service work.
Proposed Deliverable: As part of its new “Future of Work” priority area, the Mayor’s Innovation Team will work with ZenCity to analyze social media feeds to isolate content associated with those who work in the shared-service economy. The i-team will use the resulting analysis to research this constituency in an effort to better identify opportunities for this growing population.

The i-team states that the English version of the pilot will be available to launch immediately, and that the Spanish language version will take six months to develop. The timeline for the pilot is as follows:

	Month								
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Dashboard Launch									
Launch English Dashboard with New and Existing Data Sources									
User Training for Departments									
Spanish Dashboard									
Develop and Test Spanish Dashboard									
Launch Dashboard with Both Languages									
Train Additional City Users									
Use Cases (Projects)									
Review and Understand Insights									
Plan and Implement Initiative									
Track Metrics									

The i-team indicates that an individual user will see aggregated data based on collected posts and tweets; however, individual user data is not identifiable, stored, or collected. In addition, unless people are public figures, any mentions that take place in the tweet/post are redacted by the system. The i-team emphasizes that it is focused on aggregation and resulting insights, and not on specific posts. For City-collected information, ZenCity will integrate with the City’s systems via API and will not collect any personally-identifiable information. The i-team has stated that ZenCity goes to great lengths to protect resident information, as detailed here in

some of the FAQ responses. No personal data is collected and the i-team has stated that if the license with ZenCity is not renewed, ZenCity will purge any data they have collected.

The Commission recommends funding of \$78,000 to cover the costs associated with this pilot. The i-team proposes to contract services with ZenCity on a sole-source basis. The funds will pay for the following:

- ZenCity English Insights Dashboard (includes unlimited City users, reports, 24/7 customer service) - \$5,000 a month for 12 months \$60,000

 - ZenCity Spanish Insights Dashboard (includes testing and launch) - \$18,000
\$3,000 a month for six months
- Total \$78,000**

To support the program after its pilot period, the i-team anticipates that departments that are interested in the tool pay a portion of the license renewal fees. If this plan is not feasible or enough departments do not opt in, the i-team will not renew ZenCity's license.

FISCAL IMPACT STATEMENT

Approval of these recommendations will allocate \$78,000 of the remaining \$1,595,434 Innovation Fund 2018-19 available balance. The \$78,000 will be transferred to the Mayor's Office to begin implementation of the pilot project that has been approved by the Innovation and Performance Commission. In some cases, departments will incur ongoing costs.