TED M. ROSS
GENERAL MANAGER
CHIEF INFORMATION OFFICER

JOYCE J. EDSON
EXECUTIVE OFFICER

ANTHONY MOORE
ASSISTANT GENERAL MANAGER

MARYAM ABBASSI
ASSISTANT GENERAL MANAGER

BHAVIN PATEL
ACTING ASSISTANT GENERAL MANAGER

CITY OF LOS ANGELES
CALIFORNIA

ERIC GARCETTI
MAYOR

February 19, 2021

REF: EXE-016-21

Honorable Members of the City Council
City of Los Angeles
Room 395, City Hall
Los Angeles, CA 90012

Attn: Information Technology & General Services Committee

SUBJECT: **COUNCIL FILE NO. 11-1013-S11 - REPORT ON THE FEASIBILITY OF ADDING MULTIPLE LANGUAGES TO THE MYLA311 MOBILE PHONE APPLICATION AND THE "GET CONNECTED LOS ANGELES" WEBSITE**

Pursuant to City Council Motion (Price/Martinez), Council File No. 11-1013-S11, the Information Technology Agency (ITA) is submitting the following report regarding adding multilingual capabilities for the MyLA 311 mobile application and the "Get Connected Los Angeles" website. On 1/27/2021 a motion was submitted by ITGS to report on the feasibility of adding multiple languages for the MyLA 311 mobile application and the "Get Connected Los Angeles" website.

Item A - Adding Multilingual Options to the MyLA311 Mobile App

Background
The MyLA311 service request system was launched in November of 2015 as a centralized system to allow residents to report City service requests, track the status of their requests, and search a knowledge-base. The 3-1-1 call center, which handles 60% of all requests, has access to a language translation service that covers 150 languages via phone conferencing. The MyLA3111 website at https://myla311.lacity.org/ provides translation options for multiple languages through the "Google Translate" services launched in 2016.

MyLA 311 mobile apps available on iOS/iPhone and Android devices are currently offered in English only. On January 6, 2020, pursuant Council Motion (Martinez/Wesson - CF No. 11-1013-S7), ITA submitted a Council report regarding the feasibility and cost of adding the following languages to the mobile app: Spanish, Chinese, Tagalog, and Korean.

Key Metrics for the MyLA311 mobile application
- 7% of 311 service requests are submitted in a language other than English via call center and website
- Over 2.1 million service requests were created in 2018 and 2.5 million in 2019.
- An average of 199,000 requests are created monthly.
- Approximately 40% of all service requests are self-service requests via web and mobile
- An average of 5,830 new installations of the mobile app each month
- The mobile app is installed on over 250,000 devices

AN EQUAL EMPLOYMENT AFFIRMATIVE ACTION EMPLOYER

Options for Adding Multiple Languages to the MyLA311 Mobile App
For the City of Los Angeles to add additional language options to the MyLA311 Mobile Phone Application, some key changes must be implemented. The first change is to modify the Android and iOS application code to support multiple language packs. Second, for each new language added, a translation service must convert key English phrases and words to the desired language. There is an additional cost to engage translation services for each new language.

Costs
- Mobile App Development costs
  - o Adding the first non-English language: $65,680
  - o Adding subsequent non-English languages: $5,000
  - o Total cost to add Spanish, Chinese, Tagalog, and Korean
    - $65,680 + $5,000 + $5,000 + $5,000
    - Total: $71,680
- Language Translation costs
  - o Translation is charged per the number of words to be translated. For example, the cost per word is $0.25 for Spanish translation. The estimated cost for Spanish is approximately $5,000.
  - o Translation costs for Spanish, Chinese, Tagalog, and Korean: $20,000
- Ongoing changes to the MyLA311 app require the additional translation service costs. We estimate these to be $1,000 per year per language.

- **Overall cost:**
  - o **One-time (Development + Translation): $91,680**
  - o **Annual (Ongoing): $4,000/year (for 4 languages)**

The above cost estimate provides for multilingual capabilities built within the mobile application. However, the cost estimates do not include the application translating text that is input by the user in non-English languages. All drop-down and selection fields will automatically translate. However, the general description text fields will still assume that the user will enter English so that City staff can respond accordingly. Additionally, the cost estimates do not include Arabic languages. A separate estimate would be required for adding these.

It is important to note that future modifications and enhancements to the mobile application may have an increased cost due to the requirement to support the non-English languages.

Item B - Adding Multilingual Options to "Get Connected Los Angeles" Website

Background
The "Get Connected Los Angeles" website, at GetConnectedLosAngeles.lacity.org, was launched on March 3, 2020 to provide the public with information regarding free or low-cost internet services, computer devices, and computer training in order to help bridge the digital divide in Los Angeles. After receiving feedback from constituents and staff, the website was relaunched in October, 2020 with a brand new interface meant to increase usability and user-friendliness. At the time of launch, the website was offered in English only based on the cost and lack of translation tools on the initial website platform. To help immediately improve the situation, the Information Technology Agency already translated the Get Connected Los Angeles website into a Spanish version (https://getconnectedlosangeles.lacity.org/spanish).

On January 27, 2021 Council Motion (Price/Martinez), Council File No. 11-1013-S11, was introduced instructing the Information Technology Agency to report on the feasibility of adding support for multiple languages for the MyLA311mobile app and the "Get Connected Los Angeles" website.

Key Metrics for the "Get Connected Los Angeles" website
- Since October 2020, the site has received over 5,000 unique visits
- Over 200 websites have referred traffic to the website, including media outlets like the LA Times and Univision as well as educational institutions from elementary schools to local universities like UCLA and CSUDH.

Options for Adding Multiple Languages to the "Get Connected Los Angeles" website
Adding options for multiple language translations on the website can be implemented through the use of the "Google Translate" service, a web-based translation service provided by Google that instantly translates web pages between English and 109 other languages. Although popular across the web, as of January 2019 Google has stopped providing its free translation services to new websites except to government and non-profit institutions. Therefore, as of now, this service will still be available and free to use for the City of Los Angeles.

Google's translation services are provided through computer-based machine translations whereby the content of a web page is fed into Google's algorithms which in turn provides an approximation of that same content to the user in the other requested language. Due to the lack of human translators in this process, the resulting translated web pages are not always 100% grammatically correct, however they are fairly accurate.

ITA staff would need approximately 2 to 4 weeks to implement Google Translate and re-platform the website if necessary.

Recommendations
ITA recommends providing multilingual translation options for the Get Connected Los Angeles website through implementing the "Google Translate" service.

Fiscal Impact Statement
If Council opts to add Spanish, Chinese, Tagalog, and Korean capabilities to the MyLA311 mobile app, ITA will require an additional appropriation of $91,680 (one-time) for development and translation, plus $4,000 annually for ongoing maintenance. This work may be eligible for the Special Funds that support the 311 Call Center, subject to funding availability.

Respectfully submitted,

Ted Ross
Chief Information Officer, General Manager

ec: Honorable Mayor Eric Garcetti
       Honorable Councilmember & Chair, Nithya Raman
       Honorable Councilmember & Vice Chair, Bob Blumenfield
       Honorable Councilmember Curren D. Price
       Maria Ramos, City Administrative Officer
       Melissa Velasco, City Administrative Officer
       Matias Farfan, Office of the Chief Legislative Analyst
       Josh Drake, Office of the Chief Legislative Analyst
       Ed Magos, ITA
       Jayson Joseph, ITA
       Donna Arrechea, ITA
       ITA Executive Team