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OFFICE OF THE CITY COUNCIL
COUNCIL CONSIDERATION REQUEST

TO: Mayor and City Council
FROM: Councilman Manny Pelaez, District 8
COPIES TO: Erik Walsh, City Manager; Tina Flores, City Clerk; Andy Segovia, City Attorney; John Peterek, Assistant to the City Manager; Emily McGinn, Assistant to City Council
SUBJECT: Synchronize Council Offices with Emergency Activity Plans and Protocols for Emergency Preparedness
DATE: March 4, 2021

Issue Proposed for Consideration

I request your support for the inclusion of the following item on the agenda of the earliest available meeting of the Governance Committee and subsequent approval by the full City Council:

Increase training for City Council officeholders and staff on local emergency plans and protocols; functionally incorporate them in emergency preparedness communications plans; and better equip them to support and inform their constituents during emergencies.

Brief Background

City Council offices are often the first step for many neighbors as they seek assistance with neighborhood issues and city services. When they aren't the first step, they tend to be the next one when additional help is needed after initial calls to 311 and city staff. Each district has a prolific staff dedicated to knowing their neck of the woods, coordinating with constituents, neighborhood leaders, and the business, faith and nonprofit communities, and serving as an interface for city services. Neighbors and organizations in district rely on them for emergency matters as much as they do routine neighborhood issues.

The recent weather and utilities outage crisis, which was felt all across San Antonio and the State of Texas, made evident several gaps in communication and preparedness. Despite these challenges, city councilmembers and their offices worked tirelessly to gather information from city staff and utilities providers, identify the needs in their respective districts, and call critical audibles on initiatives to bridge neighbors with food, water, warming centers, and emergency services.

In many instances, Council Offices were in the dark on emergency communications and not adequately prepared to support emergency response plans at a time when neighbors may have needed them most. As neighbors experienced dropped calls and prolonged wait times from CPS



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Energy, SAWS, and 311 due to a spike in activity, City Council teams were triaging the in-flow of follow-up calls. Communication gaps between City Council Offices, Metro Health, and our public safety departments underscore a need for new initiatives to enable emergency preparedness with the role of Council Offices and staff in mind.

We must take every step necessary to prepare our local government and community to effectively respond to emergency scenarios. For these reasons, I request your support.

Submitted for Council consideration by:

Councilman Manny Pelaez, District 8

Supporting Councilmembers' Signatures (4 only)

District

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