



City of Long Beach
Working Together to Serve

Office of Robert Garcia
Council Member, First District
Memorandum

Date: November 3, 2009

To: Honorable Mayor and Members of the City Council

From: Councilmember Robert Garcia, First District *RG*
Councilmember Gary DeLong, Third District *GD*
Councilmember Gerrie Schipske, Fifth District *GS*

Subject: Councilmember Public Calendars

Background:

Transparent government is an important value in a democratic society. The ability to know and understand what elected officials do and with whom they meet during their hours of official public service gives the public greater confidence in government, and allows the public to more knowledgeably and effectively participate in the democratic process.

The City of San Jose provides a model of open, transparent government in making the calendars of all elected officials visible online for the public. Scheduled or official meetings related to official business are required to be posted for public view, giving constituents a better understanding of how and for what purpose their elected representatives are conducting themselves and spending their time on the public payroll.

Some Councilmembers have made an effort to make their calendars available to the public, but it has been a difficult process without the use of appropriate technology. Additionally, the benefits to the public would be much greater if all elected officials participated, and used a uniform format.

The City of Long Beach and its residents would benefit from more transparency in government, and one means of achieving this is to require the calendars of all Councilmembers be public and viewable online, and allowing all other elected officials to participate in this system if they so choose.

Recommendation:

Request the City Manager study and report back to Council within 60 days on the possible technological approaches and cost of making Councilmembers' calendars public and available online, and to include other elected officials who wish to participate in this process.