ROSEVILLE
REQUEST FOR COUNCIL ACTION

Date: March 2, 2015
Item No.: 14.a

Department Approval	City Manager Approval
	(signature)

Item Description: Continued Discussion of Civic Engagement Module and Request for
Motion to Contract for Module Development and Website Integration

1 **BACKGROUND**

2 On February 9, Communications Manager Garry Bowman and Community Engagement
3 Commission Vice-Chair Scot Becker brought to the City Council a discussion regarding the
4 unanimous recommendation by the Community Engagement Commission to consider the
5 integration of a civic engagement module into the City's website. Mr. Bowman and Mr. Becker's
6 presentation during the discussion included introductory information about the module, the 2-
7 way communication benefits of such a module, and the evaluation process for selecting a
8 recommended module vendor.

9 Following the presentation and discussion, City Council members asked Mr. Bowman and Mr.
10 Becker to research additional questions and return for further discussion at a future meeting.

11 **QUESTIONS FROM CITY COUNCILMEMBERS**

12 Responses to questions from City Council Members are included in Attachment A.

13 **BUDGET IMPLICATIONS**

14 The expected three-year cost for integrating the Granicus civic engagement module is
15 approximately $14,400, or $4,800 per year. Granicus does offer shorter-term agreement options
16 of one or two years.

17 It is recommended that funds for the civic engagement module come wholly from the
18 Communications Fund. The Communications Fund is an enterprise fund, for which the primary
19 source of funding is cable television franchise fees.

20 **COMMISSION RECOMMENDATIONS**

21 After receiving the website subcommittee civic engagement module report, the Community
22 Engagement Commission approved a motion recommending that Granicus be selected to
23 integrate with the City of Roseville's website in order to help facilitate community engagement.
24 The motion passed the Commission by a unanimous 7-0 margin.

25 **STAFF RECOMMENDATIONS**

26 Staff agrees with the Commission's recommendation to contract with Granicus to develop a civic
27 engagement module for integration with the City of Roseville website. Staff recommends that it
28 be approved to contract with Granicus to develop a civic engagement module for integration with
29 the City of Roseville website at a cost not to exceed $14,400. Information about the selection

process used by the Community Engagement Commission subcommittee as well as the proposal made by Granicus was included as part of the February 9 RCA. Staff has not included the previous attachments in order to save paper. However, if City Council Members would like to receive them again, please let staff know and they will be sent electronically.

REQUESTED COUNCIL ACTION

A motion to authorize staff to negotiate a contract with Granicus to develop a civic engagement module for integration with the City of Roseville website at a cost not to exceed $14,400. Staff will bring forward the final contract to the City Council for approval at an upcoming meeting.

Prepared by: Garry Bowman, Communications Manager (651) 792-2707
Attachments: A: Responses to City Councilmember questions regarding Civic Engagement Module

Responses to Questions from City Council Regarding Civic Engagement Module

1. **What will the impact on staff time be following the incorporation of a civic engagement module into the City of Roseville website?**

   According to Granicus and other communities, the impact on staff time is moderate at best and heavily dependent on the amount of community interest in a discussion topic. The City of Edina likened it to the time they spend on social media (facebook and twitter), which for the City of Roseville accounts for a small portion of each day. Other Cities reported similar low-to-moderate impacts on staff time. Most find that checking the module once a day to be sufficient to stay on top of the comments. Can be used to contact city staff in place of email.

2. **Will resident's comments be moderated and if so how will this be accomplished?**

   The Granicus module operates in real time for both discussion topics generated by the city and in the ideation feature, which provides residents with the opportunity to share their own ideas. Resident's feedback is not moderated before being posted. The module incorporates a profanity filter that keeps improper language off the site. To combat other inappropriate uses of the module, staff and account members can both flag comments as inappropriate and remove them from the site for additional review.

   City staff discussed the issue with other cities who said that they incorporate the same rules used on social media sites, that non-compliance was very rare, and that with very few exceptions discourse was serious, professional and respectful.

   One city did provide an example of a resident who made up 20 accounts and commented under a variety of names. However, it was just one person and they were quickly found out and banned from the site.

   Another community reported that the only personal conflict they saw arose between residents. It was quickly diffused. They have not experienced personal attacks toward City Council or staff.

   In addition to the profanity filter, Granicus requires individuals to create an account with a valid email address, provides for questionable content to be flagged by multiple sources, provides the ability to ban habitual offenders, and pick and choose which "SpeakUp" tools are activated.

3. **Does the module have the ability to ensure that surveys allow only one vote per resident?**

   Voting is conducted by account. Once an account has voted in a survey voting is closed for that account. Residents do have the ability to manufacture additional accounts with different email

addresses, but Granicus has found that this is so cumbersome that they have not seen this as a notable strategy used to influence debate.

4. **Please gather and provide feedback from other communities currently using the module.**

Cities are pleased with the module, but are quick to point out that it does require effort on the part of staff. It is not an if-you-build-it-they-will-come proposition. Cities must engage with relevant discussion topics, respond within reasonable time frames, and show that residents' opinions are being heard and that actual 2-way communications are taking place. It is important to have a plan and that structure is provided in order for residents to engage. The real value was seen in the feedback received from discussions or surveys begun by the city.