



Staff Report

File #: 24-0134

REQUEST FOR CITY COUNCIL ACTION

DATE: 02/21/2024

TO: Honorable Mayor and City Council Members

FROM: City Manager's Office

SUBJECT:
COMMUNITY CONVERSATIONS EVENTS

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

This report provides an update on Community Conversations Events and asks the City Council to provide direction on future events.

RECOMMENDED ACTION:

That the City Council provide direction to staff on the future of hosting Community Conversations events.

BACKGROUND & HISTORY:

According to the City's Strategic Plan, Objective 5.2.4, the City should "pursue opportunities to highlight the contributions of Latinx, Asian, Indigenous, and Black residents to Corona's history, culture, and current community." In response to this, the City created "Community Conversations" events, which consist of cultural entertainment, a panel discussion, and a social reception. To this date, successful events have been held to highlight Black History Month, Hispanic Heritage Month, and Asian American Pacific Islander Month. After piloting these events for the past two years, staff have determined that they have the capacity to do two of these events well each year.

Due to the success of previous Community Conversations events, other groups have inquired about or are interested in having a Community Conversations event to recognize their group. Some of the groups include but are not limited to Native American/Indigenous groups, Veterans, LGBTQ+, Interfaith, and Refugees. Due to interest from other groups, staff is seeking direction on the future of Community Conversations events.

ANALYSIS:

Five options are proposed for the future of Community Conversations events:

Option A: Host four Community Conversations events annually (four set events)

Option B: Host two Community Conversations events annually (two set events)

Option C: Host two Community Conversations events annually (two rotating events)

Option D: Try something different (host an annual outdoor “Community Cultural Celebration Event”)

Option E: Hold Community Conversations events on an as needed basis

Option A consists of hosting four Community Conversations events annually for the four groups identified in the Strategic Plan. For instance, an event for Black History Month would be held in February, an Asian American Pacific Islander (AAPI) Heritage Month event would be held in May, a Hispanic Heritage Month event would be held between September and October, and a Native American Heritage Month event would be held in November.

Option B consists of hosting two Community Conversations events annually and rotating through the four groups identified in the Strategic Plan. For instance, in 2024, Community Conversations events could be held for Black History Month and Hispanic Heritage Month. Then in 2025, Community Conversations events could be hosted for AAPI Heritage Month and Native American Heritage Month.

Option C consists of hosting two Community Conversations events annually and rotating through different community groups. This option will not be limited to the four community groups outlined in the Strategic Plan. However, the City Council would need to provide guidance on which groups to highlight each year.

Option D consists of trying something different and replacing the Community Conversations events with an annual “Community Cultural Celebration Event,” which would have food, dancing, performances, music and conversations with various cultural groups throughout the day, all in a single event.

Option E consists of hosting Community Conversations events on an as-needed basis to respond to national, state, or local events, creating the need to engage in dialogue about current events.

Below is a list of advantages and disadvantages of each option:

	Advantages	Disadvantages
Option A	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Focuses on highlighting the largest groups in Corona• Consistent with the City’s Strategic PlanEnsures an event each year for each major group	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• No events for smaller groups• Exceeds current staff capacity• Community may lose interest if these are held too often• Time, effort and funding could be put into other community priorities or projects

Option B	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Focuses on highlighting the largest groups in Corona • Consistent with the City’s Strategic Plan • More sustainable, long term 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A wider range of groups will not have conversations over time • Time, effort, and funding put into planning these events could be put into other community priorities or projects
Option C	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provides the opportunity to recognize a broader set of groups • Helps keep conversations and topics fresh • More sustainable, long term 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • May be challenging to determine which groups to hold events • Hosting an event for smaller groups may not draw as many individuals • Question of which group gets recognition when
Option D	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Helps the community celebrate its diversity and promote unity • Each group receives recognition • Showcases local minority owned businesses to broader audience • Single event will draw a more participants 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • May not be conducive to deep discussions • No group will have their own event
Option E	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proven and responsive format for emerging current events • Flexibility to address unforeseen issues • Allows resources to be dedicated to other priorities • Prevents events from becoming stagnant 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Frequency of conversations may decline over time

Staff is recommending that the City continue the current practice of issuing recognitions and proclamations as requested. This will allow the City and the City Council to allow community members to come before the Council, share a little about themselves or their organization, and be formally recognized. Additionally, staff is recommending Option D, which is trying something different than the City’s Community Conversations events and hosting an annual Outdoor “Community Cultural Celebration Event.” This could become a signature annual community event in Corona, which could eventually be hosted at the new City Park. Instead of recognizing a few groups each a year, this event could recognize various community groups and cultures and bring the entire Corona community together in one event. This event could have food, dancing, performances, and music from various cultural groups.

This event could replace the existing Community Conversations events and be a more inclusive and effective solution to engaging with the community. If the City Council desires to continue the individual Community Conversations events in addition to the proposed new Community Cultural Celebration Event, the Council could choose one option between Option B, Option C, or Option E. However, if this option is chosen, additional staff time, funding, and resources will need to be considered in future budgets requests.

FINANCIAL IMPACT:

The financial impact for a single Community Conversations event is typically \$5,000 per event, not including staff hours. Depending on how many of these events are hosted annually and when the events are hosted will influence the financial impact for each fiscal year. Staff estimates that the implementation of a "Community Cultural Celebration Event" may cost approximately \$15,000 - \$35,000, depending on the size and scale of the event. Based on the City Council's direction, funding for the events will be included in the annual budget process.

ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS:

This action is exempt pursuant to Section 15061(b)(3) of the Guidelines for the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), which states that a project is exempt from CEQA if the activity is covered by the commonsense exemption that CEQA applies only to projects that have the potential for causing a significant effect on the environment. Where it can be seen with certainty that there is no possibility that the activity in question may have a significant effect on the environment, the activity is not subject to CEQA. This action seeks direction from Council regarding the future of Community Conversations events, and there is no possibility that obtaining direction will have a significant effect on the environment.

PREPARED BY: ANDREW KIM, CITY MANAGEMENT FELLOW

REVIEWED BY: JUSTIN TUCKER, ASSISTANT CITY MANAGER

Attachments:

1. Presentation