



Legislation Text

File #: 18-1551, Version: 1

**AGENDA REPORT
REQUEST FOR CITY COUNCIL ACTION**

DATE: 3/7/2018

TO: Honorable Mayor and City Council Members

FROM: Administrative Services Department

SUBJECT:

City Council Consideration to Approve Revised City Administrative Policy No. 01200.001 (Travel and Other Expense Reimbursement Policy) to provide for Pre-Approval of Trips Involving Overnight Stays or Airfare and to Make Other Clarifying Changes.

RECOMMENDED ACTION:

That the City Council approve the attached revised Administrative Policy No. 01200.001 (Travel and Other Expense Reimbursement Policy) dated March 7, 2018.

ANALYSIS:

The City's Travel and Other Expense Reimbursement Policy (the "Policy") was established in compliance with AB 1234, to promote accountability and enhance transparency. The policy has been revised periodically to provide more precise directions on reimbursement of authorized expenses and improve the effectiveness of internal control related to travel and other City activities.

The Policy was last updated in December 2015. Please also note that all City administrative policies were assigned new numbers in January of 2017, as part of a comprehensive collection, organization and digitization project performed by the Legal & Risk Management Department. This Administrative Policy 01200.001 had been numbered 100.13.

Below are major areas amended in this revision:

- Overnight Travel and Travel via Airplane
Current Policy requires all out-of-state travel by employees to be pre-approved by the City Manager. This revision expands the pre-approval requirement to all trips involving overnight stays and travel by air. In addition, City Officials would now be required to obtain advance approval from the City Council for trips involving overnight stays and travel by air. However, because last minute travel may not allow for the time it takes to meet agenda deadlines for City Council meetings, staff has included a possible exception that would allow for the Mayor to approve trips meeting the following criteria: (1) the Mayor determines that the last minute travel is necessary

and appropriate and that the City Council agenda deadlines cannot be met prior to the trip or prior to the need to incur a non-refundable expense related to the trip; (2) the entire trip does not exceed \$1,000; and (3) the Mayor's approval of the trip is reported in writing to the City Council at the next available City Council meeting. New Advanced Travel Request forms have been prepared by the Administrative Services Department and the current versions are attached to this report for your reference. In addition, the Policy has been clarified to state that, in addition to expense reimbursements, all City Official expense payments involving trips or other events for which pre-approval is required shall be approved by the City Council. This means that, in addition to obtaining pre-approval, the payment and reimbursement amount for the entire trip or other event that requires pre-approval will be brought back to the City Council for approval. Once the trip has been pre-authorized, of course, any expenses which fall within the Policy will be subject to approval.

- Meal Reimbursement Per Diem Limitation

Approved meal expenses are reimbursable up to the GSA per diem rates (the Rates). While staff has interpreted and applied these Rates on a meal-by-meal basis, and not on an aggregated daily or trip amount, the Policy has been revised to state this expressly. In addition, the ability to obtain an exception for meal expenses above the Rates has been removed.

- Terminology for Reimbursements

For ease of reference, the term "reimbursement" has most often been used throughout the Policy, even though the Policy applies to expenditures either paid for by the City directly (e.g. via a credit card or other method) or ones paid for by a City Employee or City Official and reimbursed by the City. This has on occasion caused confusion, thus staff has included some recommended changes for clarification.

COMMITTEE ACTION:

Not applicable.

STRATEGIC PLAN:

This item supports the City's Strategic Plan Goal 6: Improve Communications with Our Community; Objective a: Commit to transparency in all City actions. The recommended action will help achieve these goals by providing precise guidance to City Officials and City Employees in regard to eligible and reimbursable travel, meeting, and other expenses.

FISCAL IMPACT:

There will be no fiscal impact for this policy update. Travel and related expenses are included in each department's annual operating budgets.

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 an action is exempt from CEQA if the activity is covered by the general rule 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 revision of the said Policy may have a significant effect on the environment, the action is not subject to CEQA.

PREPARED BY: Patricia Song, CPA, Finance Manager IV

REVIEWED BY: Dean Derleth, City Attorney and Legal and Risk Management Director

REVIEWED BY: KERRY D. EDEN, ASSISTANT CITY MANAGER/ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES DIRECTOR

SUBMITTED BY: DARRELL TALBERT, CITY MANAGER

Attachments:

- Administrative Policy 01200.001 - Travel and Other Expense Reimbursement Policy (03-07-18)
- Redline of Proposed Changes
- Current versions of Advance Travel Request forms