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FROM: Michael P. Slevin III, P.E., Director, Environmental Services *GMS MPS*
COPY: Infrastructure, Planning, and Sustainability Committee;
 James Parvey, P.E., LEED AP, OEPS Division Manager
SUBJECT: Air Quality Monitoring Update
DATE: August 6, 2021

PRESENTATION TYPE:
Informational Memorandum

SUMMARY:

The purpose of this memorandum is to update the Infrastructure, Planning, and Sustainability (IPS) Committee on the status of the Air Quality Monitoring Pilot project. This project was originally brought forward as a Council Contingency Resolution in December of 2018. Since that time the project has experienced delays from a number of causes but the following progress has been made: Partnerships have been formed with the Tacoma School District and the Tacoma Pierce County Health Department, in addition to our existing partner University of Washington Tacoma (UWT). These partnerships will allow the Microsoft Air Sensors to be placed at school properties providing excellent distribution and access throughout the City. Microsoft has been unable to provide sensors due to prior commitments to the cities of Chicago and Miami. They have supplied these cities with the requested air sensors and have indicated that their next production run will be made available to Tacoma, though a delivery date has not been given.

BACKGROUND:

While the City is not directly responsible for regulating local air quality, there is a strong commitment to understanding and improving community health. Community interest in air quality has grown in recent years, with particular interest in the impacts of emissions from industrial activity on air quality in abutting neighborhoods. In response, the City Council passed Resolution No. 40201 directing staff to contract with Puget Sound Clean Air Agency (PSCAA) to develop a two-year pilot program to provide public education and to purchase, deploy, and monitor Purple Air sensors. Subsequently, PSCAA indicated that they were unable to provide these services. This required a new resolution (No. 40836) directing staff to negotiate a contract with UWT for the previously described services. In January of 2020 Microsoft offered to provide their prototype sensors for our use on this project, citing our projects strong orientation towards equity. Many elements of the work are currently in place, but we are awaiting air quality sensors from Microsoft.

Earlier this year Microsoft deployed all of their assembled sensors for their Chicago and Miami projects leaving none available for our project. Microsoft does not have a manufacturing partner for these sensors so they are assembled by hand by Microsoft staff. The original prototype runs of the sensors required a lot of field support, which was provided by the same team that did the assembly, precluding them from building additional sensors. The new batch of sensors are performing much better than expected in terms of longevity and reduced maintenance. They are spending less time on field support than they originally planned and therefore have capacity to begin building new sensors. Microsoft is aware that we would like sensors deployed prior to the school year and hopefully before any significant wildfire smoke episodes. They are trying to build at least a few sensors for us to deploy prior to the school year.



ISSUE:

The City is positioned for the deployment of the sensors in terms of locations and staffing when they become available. While we do not have a scheduled delivery date for the sensors we are working with Microsoft to acquire the sensors as soon as possible.

ALTERNATIVES:

This is for information only. There are no alternatives presented.

FISCAL IMPACT:

This is for information only. There is no fiscal impact.

RECOMMENDATION:

This is for information only. There is no recommendation