



CITY OF COSTA MESA

Agenda Report

77 Fair Drive
Costa Mesa, CA 92626

File #: 25-371

Meeting Date: 7/8/2025

TITLE:

DISCUSS A CODE OF ETHICS AND CONDUCT

DEPARTMENT: CITY MANAGER'S OFFICE/CITY CLERK DIVISION, CITY ATTORNEY

PRESENTED BY: BRENDA GREEN, CITY CLERK

CONTACT INFORMATION: BRENDA GREEN, CITY CLERK (714) 754-5221

RECOMMENDATION:

Discussion of a Code of Ethics and Conduct and provide feedback and direction for development of a policy.

BACKGROUND:

The goal of the Code of Ethics and Conduct is to ensure public confidence in the integrity of local government elected and appointed officials. The priority is to establish an ethics code to promote an honest, effective, and accountable city government, encourage high standards of behavior by public officials, and assist with decision-making. The code's framework is designed to guide public officials in their daily duties to help ensure that they exercise their public responsibilities without conflicts or improprieties, whether actual or perceived.

A draft Code of Ethics and Conduct for City Council consideration is provided as Attachment 1. Also, attached are the City of Irvine (Attachments 2 and 3) and City of Gardena (Attachment 4) Code of Ethics and Conduct policies for reference. As part of the implementation, all elected and appointed officials must certify that they have received a copy of the Code of Ethics and Conduct, understand its provisions, and pledge to conduct their duties in accordance with the code. The code will also be incorporated into the Commissions and Committees Handbook, orientation programs, and other training efforts to further clarify its provisions and application.

ANALYSIS:

The intent of the Code of Ethics and Conduct is to achieve fair, ethical, and accountable local government for the City of Costa Mesa. The people of Costa Mesa expect public officials, both elected and appointed, to comply with both the letter and the spirit of the law.

The following are the issue areas addressed and components of a Code of Ethics and Conduct:

- Act in the Public Interest
- Comply with the Law
- Conduct of Members
- Respect for Process
- Conduct of Public Meetings
- Decisions Based on Merit
- Communication
- Conflict of Interest
- Gifts and Favors
- Confidential Information
- Use of Public Resources
- Representation of Private Interests
- Advocacy
- Policy role of Members
- Independence of Boards, Commissions, and Committees
- Positive Workplace Environment
- Implementation
- Compliance and Enforcement
- Statement of Commitment

ALTERNATIVES:

The City Council may provide alternative direction to staff on the Code of Ethics and Conduct.

FISCAL REVIEW:

This item has no fiscal impact.

LEGAL REVIEW:

The City Attorney's Office has reviewed this report and approves it as to form.

CITY COUNCIL GOALS AND PRIORITIES:

This item is administrative.

CONCLUSION:

The purpose of this item is to discuss a Code of Ethics and Conduct to provide feedback and direction for development of a policy.