Administrative Report

To: **MAYOR AND CITY COUNCIL**

From: MIKE COOK, IT DIRECTOR
          ELEANOR MANZANO, CITY CLERK

TITLE
DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE ACTION REGARDING THE CITY'S EFFORTS TO DIGITIZE AND IMPROVE OPERATIONAL PRACTICES RELATED TO CITY RECORDS

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY
In April 2026, the City Council adopted a Strategic Plan that includes the goal to, "Improve Customer Service by Expanding the City's Use of Digital Tools and Online Services." As part of that goal, Council approved an Objective to "Work with Departments to identify the records and processes that can be digitized in order to improve operations and meet retention and disposition requirements. Develop a plan to digitize City records, make them more accessible to the public, and provide a progress report to the City Council."

The Citywide Records Digitization Project (Project) is the direct response to that direction. The effort focuses on expanding secure public access to official records through online tools, reducing reliance on paper-based processes, modernizing internal workflows through electronic forms and automation, and strengthening the City's overall records retention and disposition practices. Over the past year, staff have completed foundational system upgrades, coordinated extensively with Departments, destroyed a significant volume of out-dated records in accordance with approved record retention schedules, and initiated scanning and electronic storage of retained records for multiple Departments.

The City is now well-positioned to expand this work in subsequent years, subject to future funding, with the goal of improving customer service, increasing transparency, reducing long-term storage costs, and preserving the City's historic and official records in a secure and accessible electronic format.

BACKGROUND
The City maintains millions of physical documents stored in basements, vaults, offices, and off-site facilities. Historically, many of these records were managed through paper-based processes or shared network drives, limiting accessibility, increasing risk, and constraining the City's ability to respond efficiently to public records requests and internal operational needs. As a result of these manual practices, many Departments were accumulating records far beyond their disposition schedules.

The City has been a Laserfiche Document Management customer since 1998 and maintains millions of records in core repositories for the City Clerk's Office and the Police Department. As part of this initiative, staff conducted a formal evaluation of the City's document management strategy and confirmed that Laserfiche remains a best-of-breed enterprise content management system. Based on that analysis, staff determined that the most effective and fiscally responsible record keeping approach is to expand the existing Laserfiche environment to encompass Departments that have not historically used the platform, rather than introducing a new system.

The Citywide Records Digitization Project is guided by four primary objectives:

1. To create an easy-to-use online public portal for public access to official City records.
2. To implement electronic workflows for internal business processes using eForms and automation.
3. To establish a secure electronic repository for the long-term preservation of official City records.
4. To strengthen records retention practices by proactively managing outdated, duplicate, or unnecessary records and automate record disposition.

Project Status
Significant foundational work has been completed, including rebuilding the Laserfiche environment, establishing a dedicated test and training environment, implementing trusted backup and preservation controls, and conducting Department-by-Department discovery meetings. This work positions the City to responsibly scale digitization and workflow modernization efforts across the organization.

Staff have held extensive meetings with Departments Citywide to inventory records, review and update retention requirements, and identify opportunities for workflow modernization. To support this effort, the City Clerk's Office has allocated additional part-time staff to assist Departments, and the Information Technology (IT) Department filled a full-time Analyst vacancy with a candidate who has extensive experience in document management, records digitization, and electronic forms development. The City's Laserfiche environment has been upgraded and is fully prepared to accept scanned and born-digital records, with both production and test environments in place.

In the last six months, 987 boxes of records have been destroyed following the appropriate disposition schedules, including records from Police, Finance, Engineering, and Public Works Departments. This proactive disposition effort reduces storage costs, mitigates risk, and ensures that only records with ongoing business or legal value are digitized.

Staff have evaluated multiple scanning approaches, ranging from fully in-house scanning, to hybrid models combining scanning with AI-assisted tools and human quality control, to fully outsourced full-service scanning. While a recommendation has yet to be finalized, staff is strongly considering a hybrid approach to leverage AI technology to classify and extract metadata from scanned documents which would provide considerable cost and time savings to the City.

Current and Planned Digitization Efforts

*   In Progress

- o Building Department Permits - approximately 80 boxes currently being scanned
  - o Building Department Permits - V: drive import and review (Over 17,000 folders)
- Next in Queue (Scanning Pilot)
  - o Building Department - Additional building permits from 1950's
  - o Fire Department - approximately 235 boxes, 36,000 plans, and 500 microfiche sheets
- Phase 1 Departments (To Begin FY 2026) - Approx. 2.7 Million Documents
  - o Waterfront and Economic Development - 29 boxes
  - o Planning - approximately 110 boxes and 11,000 plans
  - o Transit - 45 boxes
  - o Human Resources - approximately 320 boxes
- Phase 2
  - o Housing - approximately 325 boxes.
  - o Public Works - approximately 150 boxes and 20,000 plans
    - CIP Documentation
    - Engineering Plans
    - Engineering Permits
  - o Community Services, Recreation
  - o City Attorney
  - o City Manager's Office
- To be Assessed
  - o City Hall Basement Vault
    - Additional Planning, Building and CIP Documents
  - o Finance
  - o Planning and Engineering Electronic File Servers

Electronic Forms and Workflow

Electronic forms are nearing deployment, with Finance workflows for payroll, accounting, and withholdings close to going live. Human Resources workflows are in development and are expected to leverage DocuSign, which is integrated directly with Laserfiche. Many public-facing processes are also being transitioned into existing digital platforms such as iWorq, Access Redondo, and the City website (www.redondo.org), reducing paper intake at the source.

Timeline

The Citywide effort is structured as a multi-year program with overlapping phases:

Foundation (Complete):

Rebuilt Laserfiche environment, created testing and training environments, implemented trusted backup controls, and conducted department discovery meetings.

AI Proof of Value (Q1 2026):

Evaluation of AI-assisted classification, retention identification, and metadata extraction, with approximately $75,000 in work funded by AWS.

Forms and Licensing (Q1 2026):

Deployment of approximately 20 eForms, DocuSign integration, licensing finalization, and repository expansion.

Citywide Scanning Preparation (Q1-Q2 2026):
Vendor selection, retention review, and security decisions for off-site scanning.

Large-Scale Scanning and Import (2026-2027):
Scanning and classification for Housing, HR, Planning, Fire, Public Works, and additional departments. Online availability of public records, where applicable, will align with completion of department-centric scanning projects. Small to Medium sized data sets to be scanned by part-time and temporary staff in the City Clerk's Office, with larger data sets to be outsourced to professional scanning firms.

Department Workflow Rollout (2026-2027):
Deployment of Department-specific workflows and migration of records from shared drives.

Completion (Late 2027):
Final Project closeout and confirmation that official records are retained within Laserfiche.

At this time, staff requests the City Council receive and file the update (progress report) regarding the Project and provide direction on future efforts required to enhance the security, utility, and availability of the City's records.

COORDINATION
This Project has been coordinated by the IT Department and City Clerk's Office with all Departments. Future procurements will be brought to City Council for approval as necessary to support project goals and timeline.

FISCAL IMPACT
The City Clerk's Office has allocated $150,000 in the Adopted FY 2025-26 Budget to the Project and has been leveraging salary savings due to an existing vacant Assistant City Clerk position to fund additional scanning. The IT Department will cover costs associated with planned DocuSign licensing, additional Laserfiche licensing, and system integrations. An additional $100,000 is currently available in the IT Fund and is earmarked for the Fire Department Pilot, and Phase 1 of Departmental scanning.

Scanning services represent the largest cost component of the Project. Due to the scale of records involved, particularly large-format plan sets that must be scanned individually and Departments with large volumes of paper documents, such as the Housing Division of the Community Services Department, this work cannot be fully absorbed by existing staff resources and budgets. Additional funding will be required in future fiscal years, likely over the next two to three budget cycles, to continue large-scale scanning efforts. These future funding requests will be brought to Council as part of the normal budget process and will be informed by completed pilots, refined cost estimates, and demonstrated operational benefits.

APPROVED BY:
Mike Witzansky, City Manager