



## City Council Agenda Report

**Meeting Date:** May 27, 2025  
**Prepared By:** Saskia Lagergren  
**Approved By:** Gabriel Engeland

### **Subject: Adoption of Resolution— Agreement with Epic Recruiting**

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#### **COUNCIL PRIORITY AREA**

- ☒ Public Safety
- ☐ Business Communities
- ☐ Circulation Safety and Efficiency
- ☐ Environmental Sustainability
- ☐ Housing
- ☐ General Government

#### **RECOMMENDATION**

Adopt a resolution authorizing the City Manager to enter into an agreement with Epic Recruiting in an amount not to exceed \$300,000 for the development and implementation of recruitment marketing services, including video production, marketing materials, website development and targeted digital advertising to attract qualified candidates for Police Department vacancies.

#### **FISCAL IMPACT**

The total cost of the contract with Epic Recruiting will not exceed \$300,000. There is sufficient funding in the General Fund budget to cover this expenditure. Approving this item will not increase the current fiscal year budget.

#### **ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW**

Not Applicable.

#### **PREVIOUS COUNCIL CONSIDERATION**

Not Applicable.

#### **BACKGROUND**

The City of Los Altos continues to face significant challenges in attracting and retaining qualified candidates for key positions, particularly in public safety roles such as police officers and dispatchers. Despite offering competitive salaries and benefits, the City has struggled to fill vacancies due to a lack of visibility and effective marketing to potential applicants.

Epic Recruiting is a professional firm specializing in public sector recruitment marketing, with a proven track record of helping cities across the nation enhance their outreach and attract high-quality candidates through engaging digital content and modern recruiting strategies.

## **DISCUSSION/ANALYSIS**

Los Altos is a small, well-resourced community that provides a high quality of life and professional opportunities that are often overlooked by potential applicants unfamiliar with the area. Many qualified candidates do not apply simply because they are unaware of the City and the benefits of working here. This lack of visibility has contributed to ongoing staffing shortages and an overreliance on a limited pool of candidates.

Further compounding the issue is the City's current track record of police officer trainees being unsuccessful in either the Police Academy or the Field Training Program and dispatchers being unsuccessful in training. This has led to higher attrition rates and increased costs associated with recruitment, onboarding and training. These outcomes highlight the urgent need to not only attract more applicants, but also to attract better-qualified candidates who are more likely to succeed in their roles. Since 2022, the City has had between 2-5 police officer vacancies at all times and 1 dispatcher vacancy. Between 2022-2024, 20 applicants have been hired as police officers and 4 applicants have been hired as dispatchers. Only 7 police officers successfully passed training and are currently working for the Los Altos Police Department. Two dispatchers successfully passed training during this time frame. In 2025, we hired 6 police recruit/police officer candidates. Three are in Field Training and three are in the Academy.

We are authorized for 32 police officers and currently have 24 police officers working. We are operating at 75% capacity. Achieving full staffing for police officers and dispatchers is essential to maintaining the safety, effectiveness, and resilience of public safety operations in Los Altos. When our police department operates below optimal staffing levels, the impacts are felt across the organization and the community:

- **Public Safety and Response Times:**  
Understaffing directly affects our ability to provide timely and effective emergency response. Fewer available officers and dispatchers mean longer response times, reduced proactive patrols and limited capacity to investigate crimes thoroughly. This can diminish the community's sense of safety and erode public trust.
- **Officer and Dispatcher Wellness:**  
When positions remain unfilled, existing staff must take on additional shifts and responsibilities to fill the gap. This leads to fatigue, burnout and decreased morale—conditions that not only impact job performance but also increase the risk of errors, accidents and long-term attrition.
- **Community Engagement and Crime Prevention:**  
Fully staffed police and dispatch teams allow for a more proactive approach to public safety. Officers can spend more time engaging with the community, building relationships and focusing on crime prevention rather than operating in a constant reactive mode.
- **Operational Stability and Training Investment:**  
Every new officer or dispatcher who is hired and trained represents a significant

investment of time and resources. When staffing levels remain low, those investments are placed at greater risk, especially if new hires leave due to a lack of support, overwork or poor fit. Stable staffing levels help create a supportive environment where new personnel can succeed and thrive.

- **Maintaining Compliance and Reducing Liability:**

Adequate staffing ensures the department can comply with legal mandates, policies and best practices. This reduces liability exposure and ensures that both the community and department personnel are protected.

Epic Recruiting will provide services that include:

- Professionally produced recruitment videos showcasing the benefits of working in Los Altos
- Creation of visually compelling and informative marketing materials
- Development of a dedicated recruitment website tailored to highlight Police Department employment opportunities
- Targeted advertising campaigns through digital and social media platforms to reach the right audience

This investment will ensure Los Altos competes more effectively with surrounding agencies in a highly competitive hiring market. A well-executed recruitment campaign will ultimately lead to:

- A larger and more diverse applicant pool
- Better-informed candidates who are aligned with the City's culture and expectations
- Improved Academy and Field Training Program success rates
- Reduced long-term hiring and training costs

While \$300,000 is a significant upfront investment, the long-term benefits of a well-executed recruitment strategy far exceed the cost—both financially and operationally.

- **Reduced Turnover and Training Costs:**

The City currently spends tens of thousands of dollars per police trainee for background checks, academy tuition, salaries during training, uniforms and equipment. When trainees fail to complete the Academy or Field Training Program, those investments are lost. With the current salary and benefits, it costs the City approximately \$95,000 for a Police Officer Trainee to complete the Police Academy. This does not include the background check, academy tuition or uniforms and equipment, nor does it include any time in the Field Training Program, which would be approximately \$15,800 per month for salary and benefits. This makes a \$300,000 investment well worth it. Attracting better-qualified candidates through targeted marketing greatly improves the chances of long-term success, reducing costly attrition and the need to constantly restart the recruitment cycle.

- **Faster Time to Fill Vacancies:**

Vacancies in critical positions such as police officers and dispatchers force the City to rely on overtime or reassignments—none of which are cost-effective. A focused

recruitment campaign will build a stronger applicant pipeline, shortening the time needed to fill positions and reducing reliance on temporary stopgap measures.

- **Improved Public Safety Outcomes:**

Staffing shortages have a direct impact on public safety response times, crime deterrence and community engagement. Fully staffed departments are more effective, build greater public trust and can implement modern policing strategies. These outcomes result in long-term savings by preventing crime and reducing liability.

- **Better Visibility and Brand Awareness:**

Los Altos is not widely known, especially outside the immediate area. Professional video content, a dedicated recruitment website and ongoing digital marketing will raise the City's profile, helping it compete with larger agencies and continuously attract interest for future vacancies without starting from scratch each time.

- **Long-Term Workforce Stability:**

This investment will yield a more sustainable and stable workforce. Candidates who understand the values, expectations and culture of the City before applying are more likely to be committed, aligned and successful over time—resulting in higher retention and a more cohesive organization.

Authorizing a contract with Epic Recruiting represents a strategic investment in the City's future workforce. By enhancing our visibility and improving the quality of our applicant pool, the City will be better positioned to fill vacancies with qualified individuals who are likely to succeed and remain in their positions. By addressing the root causes of our recruitment challenges, we position Los Altos to hire better, spend smarter and build a stronger, more reliable workforce for years to come.

## **ATTACHMENTS**

1. Resolution