

City of Piedmont COUNCIL AGENDA REPORT

DATE: March 3, 2025

TO: Mayor and Council

FROM: Rosanna Bayon Moore, City Administrator

SUBJECT: Introduction of NextRequest, the City of Piedmont's Online Public Records Request Portal

BACKGROUND

The City of Piedmont has managed public records requests the same way for decades — with multiple manual steps (e.g., spreadsheet tracking, email communication, manual redactions) and a great degree of institutional knowledge. Overall, the City consistently meets its legal obligations, albeit in a manner that is not characterized as highly modern or efficient. However, the transparency landscape around requests has changed dramatically in recent years. Given this new landscape, the City Clerk's office sought to find a solution to improve how the public can easily and efficiently initiate a request for public records, obtain access to the records and also view records of interest to other members to the public.

After assessing several available options, staff selected NextRequest as its dedicated solution across all City of Piedmont departments for managing public records requests.

DISCUSSION

The City Clerk's Office is pleased to announce that NextRequest is now live and active on the City's website at www.piedmont.ca.gov. Implementation of NextRequest meets the following key criteria of Public Records Request management:

- Compliance: NextRequest creates a more centralized and process-driven approach, which is vital, reducing risks such as:
 - The release of sensitive information that should have been redacted, such as personally identifiable data or Social Security Numbers
 - Human error due to increased volume and complexity
 - Missed due dates, costly fines and damage to the City's reputation
 - Potential legal challenges
- Transparency: Investments in transparency are essential and improves public trust in local government. NextRequest enhances transparency by:
 - Publication of others' requests to keep the public informed about topics of interest and how the City responded
 - Automation of status updates for inquiring parties
 - Opportunities for the City's proactive publication of records of public interest

- Efficiencies and Workflows: NextRequest improves efficiencies in the following ways:
 - Eliminates the decentralized and duplicative use of multiple systems (e.g., spreadsheets, email threads, redaction software)
 - Improves cross departmental coordination by centralizing intake, communication, and response portal
 - Reduces staff time involved with receiving and addressing public records requests
 - Provides redaction tools allowing for timely and consistent responses.

By: Anna M. Brown, City Clerk