



Office of the City Manager

INFORMATION CALENDAR
July 28, 2020

To: Honorable Mayor and Members of the City Council

From: Dee Williams-Ridley, City Manager

Submitted by: Teresa Berkeley-Simmons, Budget Manager, City Manager's Office

Subject: Voluntary Time Off Program for FY 2021

INTRODUCTION

As a citywide cost-saving measure, the City Manager is designating 17 Voluntary Time Off (VTO) days in FY 2021 and authorizing certain City offices and non-essential services to temporarily close for those days.

CURRENT SITUATION AND ITS EFFECTS

The proposed 17 VTO dates will fall on a schedule similar to FY 2020, with City offices generally closing on every second Friday, with additional days the last week in December 2020 (December 24 - December 31). The following are the proposed VTO Days:

| Date (2020) | Day | Date (2021) | Day |
|--------------|-----------------------|---------------|----------------------|
| July 24 | Friday | January 8 | Friday |
| August 14 | Friday | February 11** | Thursday |
| September 11 | Friday | March 12 | Friday |
| October 9 | Friday | April 9 | Friday |
| November 3* | Tuesday | May 14 | Friday |
| December 11 | Friday | June 11 | Friday |
| December 24 | Thursday | | |
| December 28 | Monday | | |
| December 29 | Tuesday | | |
| December 30 | Wednesday | | |
| December 31 | Thursday | | |
| | 11 days (2020) | | 6 days (2021) |

*VTO switch in November due to the National Election Day (see [Council Item¹](#))

**Please note that Friday, February 12, 2021 is the observed Lincoln's Birthday

¹ https://www.cityofberkeley.info/Clerk/City_Council/2019/09_Sep/Documents/2019-09-10_Item_53_Voluntary_Time_Off_on_Statewide.aspx

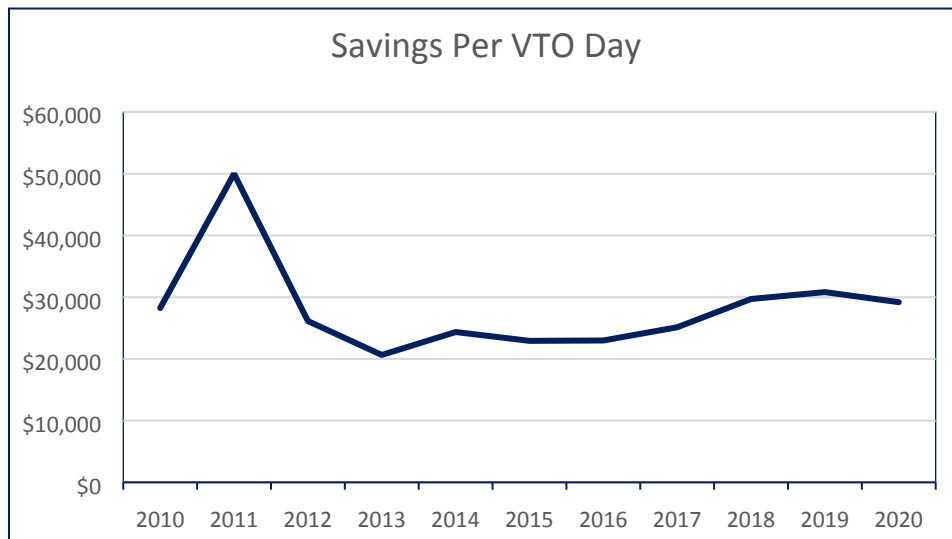
The purpose of VTO days is to generate savings to help balance the budget. The program has achieved a savings of \$467,108 on an all funds basis in FY 2020. The actual VTO savings was lower than previous fiscal year because of city building closure and staff working remotely due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Voluntary Time Off Salary Savings

| Fiscal Year | Number of VTO Days | Base Salary Savings | Savings Per VTO Day |
|-------------|--------------------|---------------------|---------------------|
| 2010 | 19 | \$536,660 | \$28,245 |
| 2011 | 29 | \$1,450,126 | \$50,004 |
| 2012 | 28 | \$731,723 | \$26,133 |
| 2013 | 28 | \$578,044 | \$20,644 |
| 2014 | 16 | \$389,706 | \$24,357 |
| 2015 | 16 | \$366,853 | \$22,928 |
| 2016 | 16 | \$367,821 | \$22,989 |
| 2017 | 16 | \$402,070 | \$25,129 |
| 2018 | 16 | \$475,400 | \$29,713 |
| 2019 | 17 | \$524,086 | \$30,829 |
| 2020 | 16 | \$467,108* | \$29,194 |

*Annualized savings

Although we plan to continue the VTO program in FY 2021, we will reevaluate the VTO program again for FY 2022. As shown in the chart below, the savings generated from the VTO program have significantly declined since FY 2011, however, savings per VTO day appear to have been gradually increasing since 2016. A slight decrease in FY 2020 was due to the COVID-19 pandemic as explained above.



In FY 2020, staff considered the impact that the VTO days had on City services. It was determined that the VTO days were, in general, not having a significant detrimental effect on the City's ability to provide quality services. Inconveniences to residents were mitigated in several ways, including keeping the 311 Customer Call Center open on VTO days, adjusting due dates for fines, and posting clear signs in advance of closure dates. In addition, many services remain open on VTO days including Police, Fire, Public Works Zero Waste, Senior Centers, Rent Board, Libraries, and the Animal Shelter.

BACKGROUND

The concept for a VTO program was proposed in 2004 by the labor unions representing non-sworn employees as an alternative to a mandatory closure of City offices ("furloughs") and staff layoffs. The VTO program designates certain days City offices are closed to the public while allowing staff to take paid or unpaid leave, or voluntarily report to work. The VTO closures have permitted staff to reduce their vacation leave balances, and eliminate the costly past practice of buying back vacation leave balances, which in turn has allowed the City to reduce its cost to pay out accrued vacation leave upon an employee's separation from employment. It has also been used by departments to help them reach their annual target savings.

Service Impacts: The VTO program has generated minimal complaints from the public regarding the office closures and reduced services because many key services remain open to the public, while other services can be provided on a callback basis.

During VTO days, customer service counters at the Finance Customer Service Center and Permit Service Center are closed. When Customer Service Center offices are closed and access to the drop box for Finance Customer Service payments is cut off, customers are redirected through signage to the Rent Board Office at 2125 Milvia Street. When the Permit Service Center is closed, building inspection services continue to be available to the public when City approvals are required for time-sensitive projects. The City will continue to notify the public of City VTO closure dates through public noticing, the press, voicemail messages, and signs.

The Voluntary Time Off Program for FY 2021 is a Strategic Plan Priority, advancing our goal to provide an efficient and financially-healthy City government.

ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY

VTO days may reduce vehicle miles traveled associated with City employees' work commute. Otherwise there are no identifiable environmental effects or opportunities associated with the subject of this report.

POSSIBLE FUTURE ACTION

We are continuing the VTO program in FY 2021. However, we will reassess the economic impact as well as the cost benefit to the public of continuing these temporary closures of City offices for FY 2022.

FISCAL IMPACTS OF POSSIBLE FUTURE ACTION

Cost savings are achieved on an annual basis from the VTO program. Since FY 2009, annual cost savings ranging from just over \$350,000 to just under \$1.5 million have been achieved from the VTO program.

CONTACT PERSON

LaTanya Bellow, Director of Human Resources, 981-6800
Teresa Berkeley-Simmons, Budget Manager, 981-7000