

TO: Andrew P. Powers, City Manager
FROM: Jeanette D. Green, Human Resources Director
DATE: May 20, 2025
SUBJECT: **Assembly Bill 2561 Vacant Positions Status**

RECOMMENDATION:

1. Receive report.
2. Find that this action is not a project as defined by the California Environmental Quality Act.

LEVINE ACT ITEM: No

FINANCIAL IMPACT:

No Additional Funding Requested. Minimal staff time and costs to prepare the report are included in the Adopted FY 2024-25 General Fund Budget.

BACKGROUND:

On September 22, 2024, Governor Newsom signed into law Assembly Bill 2561 (AB 2561), codified in Section 3502.3 to the Government Code, requiring public agencies to report on “the status of vacancies and recruitment and retention efforts.” The intent of the bill was to ensure that public agency operations are appropriately staffed and that high vacancy rates do not undermine public employee labor relations.

Specifically, AB 2561 requires public agencies to present the status of vacancies and recruitment and retention efforts at a public hearing at least once per fiscal year. If the City is adopting a budget in the fiscal year, the presentation must take place prior to the adoption of the final budget. The agencies must identify any necessary changes to policies, procedures, and recruitment activities that may lead to obstacles in the hiring process.

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AB 2561 entitles any recognized employee organizations to present at the hearing. Further, if the number of job vacancies within a single bargaining unit meets or exceeds 20 percent of the total number of authorized full-time positions, the bill requires public agencies, upon request of the recognized employee organization, to include specified information during the public hearing as outlined in the bill.

DISCUSSION/ANALYSIS:

The City has 397 approved Full-time Equivalent (FTE) positions in its FY 2024-25 Adopted Budget. As of April 23, 2025, the City has 28 vacant positions, equating to a vacancy rate of 7.053 percent. The City has three recognized employee organizations: Thousand Oaks City Employee Associations (TOCEA), Thousand Oaks Management Associations (TOMA), and Senior Management Association (SMA). As outlined in Table 1 below, the job vacancies within each bargaining unit are well below 20 percent. As such, the special reporting requirements outlined in AB 2561 are not triggered.

Table 1. City Vacancy Rate by Bargaining Unit

Bargaining Unit	Number of FTE	Number of Vacancies	% Vacant
TOCEA	221	12	5.43%
TOMA	93	9	9.68%
SMA	72	6	8.33%

The City's recruitment efforts for vacant positions include advertising vacant positions on the City's public-facing website, on external and professional association job boards, and through CalOpps, an applicant tracking system that was developed by and for public sector agencies for advertising jobs. The City's Human Resources Department (HR) also utilizes social media, primarily the professional networking website LinkedIn, to spotlight and promote various job vacancies to potential candidates. The City actively promotes itself as an employer on numerous online platforms, including promotional videos posted on its website and on YouTube. Additionally, the City ensures that interested candidates can easily access information about the benefits of being a City employee through the City's Careers page on its public facing website. There, candidates can find information about the City's salary schedules and benefits. Finally, HR routinely participates in regional job fairs to promote the City's jobs and educate the public about the City as an employer.

The City has a robust retention program, the foundation of which is the City's compensation philosophy that targets total compensation at the top of the market for comparable public sector employers within the region. The City maintains a comprehensive and competitive benefits package that offers a full range of employee and retiree benefits. The City Manager's Office sponsors an Employee Recognition Committee that facilitates a number of events each fiscal year to engage with employees and encourage connection within the organization. Understanding that opportunities for professional development are key to employee retention, the City offers internal training opportunities both in person and through the City's online learning platform, iEvolve. Moreover, the City supports employees in participating in external learning opportunities such as webinars and conferences. The City's retention efforts have resulted in the City maintaining a relatively low turnover rate for City positions, currently at 8.03 percent for this fiscal year and an average turnover rate of 8.85 percent over the last five years.

Based on staff's review and analysis, staff has not identified any necessary changes to policies, procedures, or recruitment activities that may lead to obstacles in the hiring process.

COUNCIL GOAL COMPLIANCE:

Meets the following City Council goal:

B. Provide municipal government leadership which is open and responsive to residents, and is characterized by ethical behavior, stability, promoting public trust, transparency, confidence in the future, and cooperative interaction among civic leaders, residents, business representatives, and staff, while recognizing and respecting legitimate differences of opinion on critical issues facing the City.

C. Operate City government in a fiscally and managerially responsible and prudent manner to ensure that the City of Thousand Oaks remains one of California's most desirable places to live, work, visit, recreate, and raise a family.

K. Prepare for transition of City workforce by ensuring that sufficient succession planning takes place to develop an employment base which is reflective of the community's demographics.