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April 23, 2012

Honorable Members of the City Council
Budget and Finance Committee
c/o Office of the City Clerk
Room 395, City Hall
Mail Stop 160

Attention: Erika Pulst, Legislative Assistant

DEPARTMENT OF CITY PLANNING 2012-13 PROPOSED BUDGET

The Mayor's Proposed Budget for Fiscal Year 2012-13 provides the Department of City Planning with the resources necessary to undertake a number of significant work projects in the upcoming year. First and foremost is the beginning of the five-year effort to completely overhaul the City's Zoning Code. At the conclusion of this project, the City will have a modern, technologically advanced Code which will serve to guide and encourage development in the City for decades to come. Second, the Proposed Budget provides positions and funding to establish ten Transit Oriented Districts (TODs) around the various new Metro stations coming into operation in the coming years. This effort is fully reimbursed by Metro, and will contribute both to the success of the new transit lines as well as the livability of the neighborhoods surrounding these stations. We would like to thank the Mayor for these resources, which show recognition of City Planning as one of the best ways to encourage economic recovery and development in the City.

As in any budget, there are some areas we would like to highlight where we believe additional resources are needed to provide the level of service the Mayor and Council expect. We respectfully submit the following items for consideration as the Budget and Finance Committee reviews and modifies the Proposed Budget:

- **Downtown Stadium and Events Center**

The Proposed Budget provides funding for overtime and contractual services for this multi-year major project. However, it does not continue the three positions that the Council authorized for this project earlier this year (CF 11-0023-S8). Without these three

positions (one City Planner, one City Planning Associate, and one Accountant II), the Department will be forced to absorb this work into its existing Major Projects staffing, which is already spread extremely thin. This will necessarily cause delays, either in this project or in other projects, all of which represent economic development and growth in the City.

- **Condition Compliance**

Currently, the City provides no proactive enforcement of zoning restrictions and usage conditions. The Department's budget submittal proposed to create a small group, fully funded by the Planning Case Processing Fund, aimed at proactively addressing these quality of life issues. This would address one of the most common concerns we hear during our meetings with Neighborhood Councils and other hearings. Having the resources to actively ensure compliance with all requirements will not only reduce the amount of blighted and nuisance properties in the City, but will foster confidence among the City's residents in the strength and meaningfulness of the conditions placed on businesses. The proposed pilot project group consists of one City Planning Associate, one Structural Engineering Associate, and one Senior Clerk Typist, and would generate enough revenue to fully pay for itself through Plan Approval and Conditional Use renewal filing fees.

- **Redevelopment Plan Administration**

With the dissolution of the Community Redevelopment Agency, there are a number of land use powers which are left unaccounted for. With the CRA gone, many of these powers revert to the City. However, there are no resources available for processing the necessary sign-offs and ministerial or administrative actions. Earlier this year, City Planning submitted a proposal for 11 new positions to allow the Department to take on the administration of the 31 redevelopment areas in the City (CF 11-0086-S4). Without some mechanism within the City to administer the requirements of the redevelopment plans, all projects in those areas will see unnecessary delays and issues.

- **Systems and Administrative Support**

While significant resources have been provided to Planning for new work programs, only the Zoning Code project was provided with systems support. In fact, the Proposed Budget cuts one regular position and does not continue four others. These positions allow the Department to provide the public with online information, facilitating review by both applicants and other concerned parties of plans, conditions, and decisions, all without requiring a trip to City Hall. While many of the Department's grants and special funding sources can pay for the systems support necessary to complete these work programs, funding without available position authority is not a viable plan. In order to support the Department's work program, we request restoration of all five of the eliminated positions: one GIS Specialist, two Systems Analysts, one Senior Systems Analyst I, and one GIS Supervisor I.

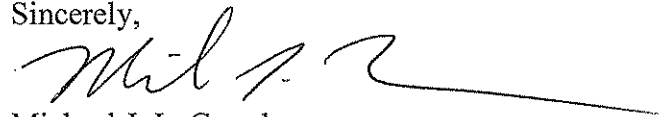
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In addition to the systems positions, two Management Analyst positions are proposed to be eliminated, representing half of the Department's four authorized MA's. These two positions provide valuable administrative support to the Department, and we request restoration these two positions as well.

The current fiscal climate demands that every department pushes itself to become more efficient in every way possible, and to prioritize among the various items competing for scarce resources, and City Planning is no exception. Over the past years the Department has reduced its net General Fund impact to less than half of what it was just four years ago. However, we feel very strongly that this Department, if given the resources, can serve as a driver of smart and strong economic development in the City.

We look forward to discussing these issues with the Committee. If you have any questions, please contact me at 978-1271 or Deputy Director of Planning Eva Yuan-McDaniel at 978-1273.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Michael J. LoGrande", followed by a long horizontal line extending to the right.

Michael J. LoGrande
Director of Planning

Cc: Miguel Santana, City Administrative Officer
Neil Guglielmo, Deputy Mayor for Budget and Fiscal Policy