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June 11, 2014

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

Honorable Members:

**BUDGET REPORT BACK ON THE DEPARTMENT OF CITY PLANNING EXPEDITED  
PROCESSING SECTION METRICS – COUNCIL FILE 14-0600-S144**

In its discussion of the Department of City Planning's 2014-15 budget, the Budget and Finance Committee on May 1, 2014, requested a report back on the metric used to measure the case processing timeline for cases submitted to the Department of City Planning's Expedited Processing Section and to provide a comparison with other non-expedited cases.

**Background**

Cases processed through the Expedited Processing Section (EPS) continue to meet the processing time of 90 days from the time a case is deemed complete to when the public hearing is held – at a 95% success rate. This provides predictability in the entitlement review process that is highly valued by developers and applicants. The pre-determined timeline is in sync with business practices and how projects are funded. Developers are willing to pay additional fees to expedite cases for a targeted hearing date. This is indicated by the sustained high demand for expedited services.

The expedited program also streamlines the review process and provides a culture of customer service by designating a project planner that manages a project throughout the process by consolidating the initial review; preparing the hearing notice, environmental document and staff report; presenting at the public hearing; and preparing the letter of determination. The project planner also provides a single point of contact for the applicant – a business-friendly concept of "one project, one planner". A

pre-acceptance, one-on-one meeting is also provided for all cases that are expedited to serve as a pre-screening of projects to identify issues early in the process.

For the City, the Expedited Processing Section generates revenue of \$2 million annually by the fees that are charged for the services. All EPS staff positions are fully recovered with no impact to the General Fund.

The EPS was established in 2004 through the adoption of an ordinance by the City Council in order to improve and streamline the arduous City entitlement approval process. The intent was to create a target date for development projects and provide better customer service. It is important to note that this timeframe did not incorporate the total processing time from when the case was filed at the public counter to when a decision letter was issued, which generally added another month at each end of the 90 days – totaling an approximate processing time of five months. At the time, cases that were expedited benefited from approximately 30%-50% time savings, depending on the type of entitlements. Regular processing time took anywhere from 8 to 12 months, and sometimes longer.

More recently, the EPS has become a model for the rest of the City Planning Department. As part of the Blueprint 2010-2011 reorganization of the City Planning Department, the expedite model of streamlining the entitlement process and providing better customer service was embraced by other sections responsible for case processing including Metro Neighborhood Projects, Valley Neighborhood Projects, the Office of Zoning Administration and Division of Land (Subdivisions). For this reason, the Department as a whole is functioning at a much higher production and efficiency level based on measures initiated by the Expedited Processing Section.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Michael J. LoGrande", written in a cursive style.

MICHAEL J. LoGRANDE  
Director of Planning

Cc: Sharon Tso, CLA  
Jason Killeen, CAO