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January 26, 2017

Honorable Members of the City Council
City Hall, Room 395
200 N Spring Street
Los Angeles, CA 90012

**RE: CF-16-0422 – COMMUNITY PLANS, GENERAL PLAN AMENDMENT BATCHING,
EIR CONSULTANTS**

The following report is provided as a follow-up to the Department's initial May 2016 report, and subsequent August 2016 report on the topics of Community Plans, batching of General Plan Amendments (GPA), and Environmental Impact Reports (EIR) for private development applications. Specifically, this report addresses the following:

1. Provides a status of Community Plan updates currently underway, with an overview of the current ten-year Citywide community plan update cycle, plus a discussion of an accelerated six-year Citywide community plan update cycle;
2. Provides a more refined process for batching General Plan Amendment applications; and
3. Provides recommendations for the implementation of EIR Option 2 pertaining to the use of EIR consultants.

Community Plans

Seven of the 35 Community Plans are currently undergoing an update process within the City. The Community Plan program as it exists today covers roughly 60 square miles of the City, anticipates growth of just under 200,000 people, and nearly 100,000 housing units, and touches neighborhoods surrounding nearly 40 fixed rail transit stations.

West Adams-Baldwin Hills - Leimert

The "West Adams" Community Plan was adopted by the City Council in July of 2016. The Community Plan's various zone changes, amendments to the Crenshaw Corridor Specific Plan,

and adoption of the Community Plan Implementation Overlay (CPIO) are pending final adoption following completion of the City Attorney's transmittal of the final ordinances.

San Pedro

Adoption anticipated first half of 2017

The San Pedro Community Plan was recommended for approval by the City Planning Commission in December of 2016. A finalization of the Community Plan's Final Environmental Impact Report (EIR) is currently underway. Once the Final EIR is completed, adoption of the Community Plan, and its corresponding zone changes and Community Plan Implementation Overlay (CPIO), among other changes, will be transmitted for Council consideration in Winter, 2017.

South Los Angeles and Southeast Los Angeles

Adoption anticipated second half of 2017

The Draft EIR for both Community Plans was circulated for public review in November 2016, and will be available for public comment into February, 2017. A series of public hearings was held in early December, 2016 and was attended by roughly 500 people, and staff are currently compiling stakeholder comments in anticipation of providing a report to the City Planning Commission in Spring, 2017.

Hollywood

Adoption anticipated second half of 2017

Compilation of a Draft EIR is currently underway. Following the EIR's release, the Department will hold public hearings and prepare a Final Impact Report in anticipation of bringing the Community Plan before the City Planning Commission and City Council in Fall, 2017.

Boyle Heights

Compilation of a Draft EIR is currently underway, anticipated for circulation in Fall, 2017. Following the EIR's release, the Department will hold public hearings and prepare a Final Impact Report in anticipation of bringing the Community Plan before the City Council in 2018.

Central City and Central City North

Compilation of a draft Community Plan, and comprehensive re-zoning program is currently underway following a successful downtown outreach effort. It is anticipated that following the completion of a draft Community Plan an EIR will be released for public review in 2018.

Community Plan Ten-Year Cycle

Having received six-month funding for the initial roll-out of the expanded Community Plan program envisioned within the FY16/17 Community Plan Program Budget, the Department has begun staffing various positions related to the launch of a group of geographically contiguous Community Plans within the City, consistent with the strategy discussed in the Department's May 2016 report. This program will update all 35 community plans within a ten-year timeframe, with three geographic teams working across the City's geographic areas. The development and adoption cycle for each set of individual plans is anticipated to take 36 months.

Options for an Accelerated Community Plan Six-Year Cycle

Members of the City Council have expressed an interest in accelerating the Community Plan program so that all 35 Community Plans would be updated within a six-year timeframe. To accomplish this, the Department has recommended that the three-team scenario envisioned in its May 2016 report be expanded to five teams, and is developing a detailed work program and funding proposal.

- The currently proposed, and initially funded, three-team approach allows for one team to launch a new group of Community Plans in 2017, while existing staff wrap up current Community Plans during 2017 and 2018, at which point subsequent groups would be launched.
- The five-team approach would allow for two teams to launch in 2017, and a third in 2018, while existing staff wrap up current Community Plans during 2017 and 2018, at which point two subsequent groups would be launched.

The Department is working with the CAO in preparing recommendations for funding the accelerated five-team approach, and authorizing the necessary staff positions and consultant resources. A more detailed report with recommendations is anticipated for February 2017.

Batching of General Plan Amendments

The City Council has expressed an interest in batching private-party applications for General Plan Amendments (GPAs) so that they may be considered more comprehensively. With consideration to the various complexities involved with timing and review of such applications, the Department has recommended, and is prepared to begin instituting, a procedure whereby GPA applications are batched by geography at the time of application filing. A hypothetical arrangement of such a batching process is shown below:

Geography (Area Planning Commission area)	Window 1	Window 2
Harbor & South	January	July
West	February	August
Central	March	September
East	April	October
South Valley	May	November
North Valley	June	December

The Department presented preliminary administrative procedures in its August 2016 report (attached) that can be instituted to begin batching GPA applications. Certain types of GPAs would be excluded from these limitations, including public improvement projects, hospitals, museums, roadway projects, 100% affordable housing projects, and homeless service facilities.

Preparation of Environmental Impact Reports

In its May, 2016 report to PLUM, the Department prepared a range of four options to address the manner in which consultant-prepared environmental studies are used in the preparation of City EIRs for private development applications. Four options were presented to PLUM, and are summarized below:

- Option 1: Applicant's consultant prepares materials that are then reviewed by City staff and signed off by City staff. Option 1 represents the City's current process.
- Option 2: Applicant selects and hires from a City list of CEQA consultants that are pre-qualified by the City. The City retains the right to remove consultants from the pre-qualified list for not meeting criteria or performance.
- Option 3: City selects the CEQA consultant for the applicant from a list of consultants that are pre-qualified by the City, and the applicant pays the consultant.
- Option 4: City hires the CEQA consultant directly and bills the applicant. The City includes a 15 percent administrative surcharge to cover management expenses.

In its August, 2016 report to PLUM, the Department presented revised administrative procedures related to the implementation of Option 2. The Department is prepared to begin implementing Option 2 following the completion of a Request For Qualifications (RFQ) process intended to ensure that an adequate array of environmental consultants are available on the Department's on-call list. An RFQ process is slated to commence during Spring 2017.

DEPARTMENT RECOMMENDATION

Community Plan Acceleration

If a six-year plan update timeframe is desired, direct the Department to identify necessary resources and funding options and report back with an implementation plan.

General Plan Batching

To implement the batching procedure, the Director of Planning has the authority to issue a memorandum outlining the required procedures and timeframes. On a parallel track, the Council may also seek to initiate an amendment to the zoning code to codify the program. Such an amendment would be developed by the Department for consideration by the City Planning Commission, City Council, and Mayor.

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Preparation of Environmental Impact Reports

To implement the EIR procedures, the Director of Planning has the authority to issue a memorandum outlining the required procedures and begin the RFQ process for the selection of qualified consultants.

Sincerely,

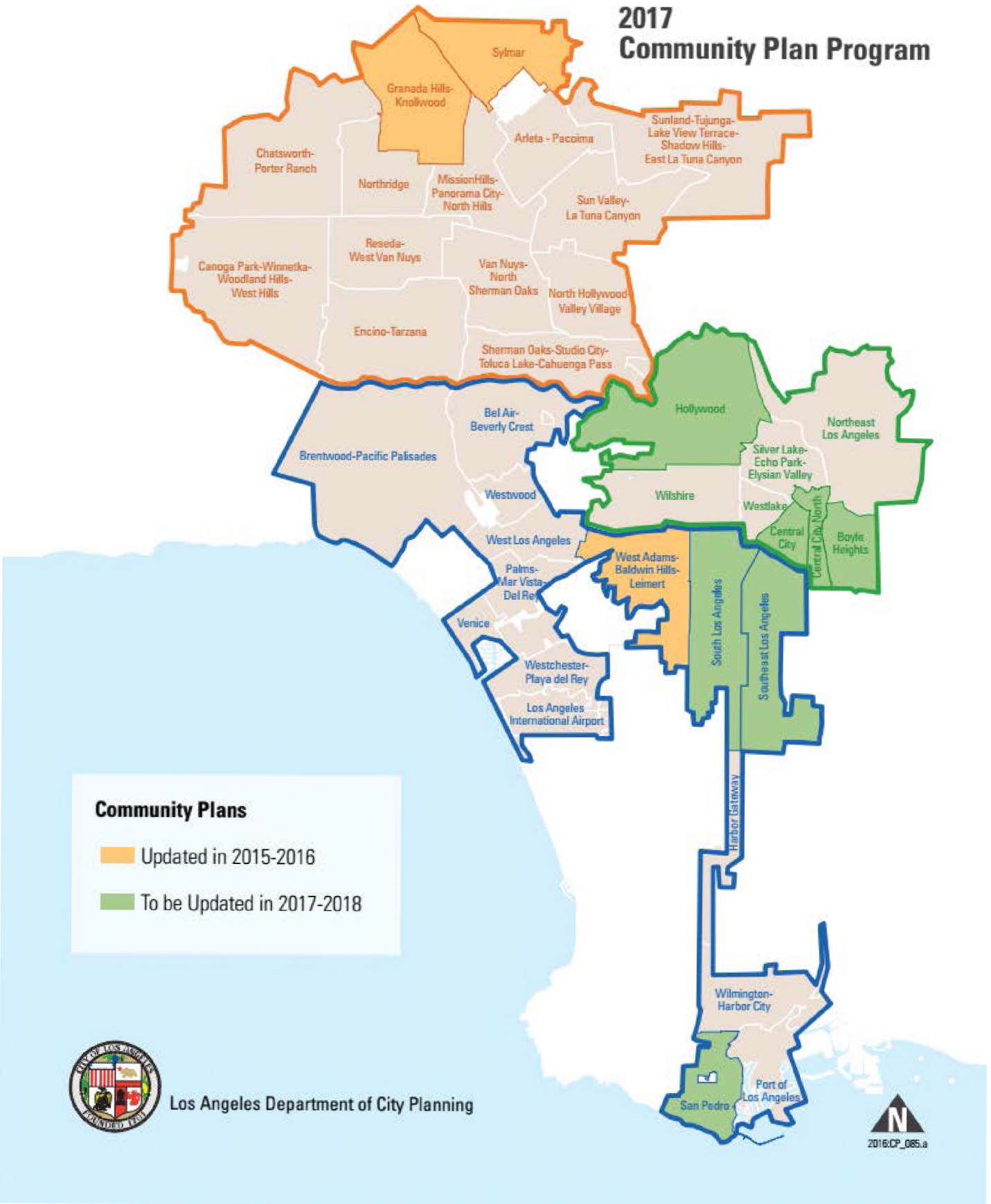
A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "K. J. Keller", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

KEVIN J. KELLER, AICP
Deputy Director of Planning

Attachments

KJK:CW:mn

2017
Community Plan Program



ATTACHMENT 2
DRAFT MEMO – INCLUDED FOR REFERENCE ONLY

DRAFT EIR CONSULTANTS DRAFT MEMO “OPTION 2”

This advisory is for projects that have received a consultation with Department of City Planning staff where it was determined that an Environmental Impact Report (EIR) is required. Such evaluation is mandated by the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) when the project involves a discretionary action and when there is a potentially significant environmental impact the proposed project may cause. The purpose of the environmental review is to:

- Inform the decision-makers and the public of the potential environmental effects of the proposed and activities.
- Identify the ways that significant environmental impacts can be avoided or significantly reduced.
- Prevent environmental degradation resulting from land developments by requiring changes in projects through the use of alternatives and/or mitigation measures.
- Disclose to the public the reasons why the City approved the project in the manner chosen if significant environmental effects remain.

The goal of these procedures is to assure the quality and objectivity of the EIR being produced.

A master list of qualified environmental consultants will be maintained by Department of City Planning and is available at the Development Services Center Counters at Figueroa Plaza and Van Nuys, the Major Projects Section in Room 750 of City Hall, and on the Department’s website at <http://planning.lacity.org> by clicking on the Environmental Review tab. Companies on the list have been evaluated by the Department as meeting core competencies in the environmental field, having knowledge and staff expertise of legal requirements for CEQA documents and technical competency for evaluating environmental impacts.

The proponent/applicant for the proposed project must enter into a contract with one of the consultants on the master list to prepare the EIR and notify the Department of City Planning, in writing, of the selection. The proponent/applicant is responsible for paying the consultant for their services. The environmental consultant prepares the EIR for the City under the direction of the Department of City Planning. The environmental consultant will be responsible for all document reproduction, filing and mailing expenses and the generation of the 500 foot owners and occupants mailing list and map.

The environmental consultant will be responsible for the following documents and tasks:

Initial Study, Notice of Preparation (NOP) and Scoping Meeting

The consultant will prepare the Initial Study (IS) evaluating what topics are required to be analyzed in the Draft EIR. Upon review and approval of the IS by the Department, the consultant will prepare the NOP and after Department of City Planning review and approval will release the NOP to interested parties and owners and occupants within 500 feet of the project site. Copies of the IS and NOP are sent to Agencies by direct mail and through the State Clearinghouse. The NOP must also be filed with the Los Angeles County Clerk. The release of the NOP starts the 30-day comment period. If a scoping meeting is held, the consultant will be responsible for attendance, including

ATTACHMENT 2

DRAFT MEMO – INCLUDED FOR REFERENCE ONLY

the attendance of any subcontractors, and will be required to secure a meeting facility that complies with City requirements and provide all necessary equipment (display boards, sign-in sheets, comment forms, directional signage, etc.) for use during the meeting. All costs associated with the scoping meeting are at the expense of the proponent/applicant. This is a City sponsored meeting and Department of City Planning staff will be in attendance to facilitate the meeting and direct the consultant staff.

Draft EIR (DEIR)

The consultant will evaluate all comments received during the NOP comment period and discuss with Department of City Planning staff the final scope and content of the EIR. Upon agreement from the Department, the consultant conducts and/or coordinates investigations and studies and prepares the necessary analysis according to established methods, models and protocols approved by the Department of City Planning. The overall organization of the DEIR shall be prepared in accordance with the CEQA Guidelines and follow the format specified by the Department.

Department staff will review administrative drafts of the DEIR prepared by the consultant and provide comments and edits. After the Department of City Planning approves the release of the DEIR, the consultant is directed to produce the 500 foot owners and occupants mailing list and may reproduce copies of the DEIR for distribution. The Department of City Planning will publish the Notice of Availability (NOA) in the Los Angeles Times. Publication costs will be billed to the proponent/applicant.

The consultant will mail copies of the NOA to the Owners and Occupants, Agencies and Interested Parties Lists approved by the Department of City Planning. Copies of the DEIR and a Notice of Completion will be provided to the State Clearinghouse for distribution to State agencies, the Libraries and the Administrative file. The release of the NOA and filing with the Los Angeles County Clerk starts the 45 day comment period.

Final EIR (FEIR)

The consultant will evaluate all DEIR comments and prepare responses to the comments received in a format approved by the Department of City Planning. The consultant will notify Department staff of any comments that raise issues that the analysis in the DEIR requires re-evaluation prior to starting any new analyses. Should recirculation of the DEIR be required, the consultant will follow the steps for the development and release of the Recirculated DEIR noted above under "Draft EIR (DEIR)". The Department of City Planning will review administrative drafts of the FEIR prepared by the consultant and provide comments and edits. After release of the FEIR is approved, the consultant is directed to produce the 500 foot owners and occupants mailing list and may reproduce copies of the FEIR for distribution. The consultant will mail copies of the Notice of Completion (NOC) of a Final EDR to the Owners and Occupants, Agencies and Interested Parties Lists. Copies of the NOC and FEIR will be provided to all persons or entities that submitted a comment, the State Clearinghouse for distribution to State agencies, the Libraries and the Administrative file.

Questions regarding this process may be directed to Major Projects staff at (213) 978-1332.