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February 21, 2017

Los Angeles City Council  
c/o Office of the City Clerk  
City Hall, Room 395  
Los Angeles, California 90012

Attention: PLUM Committee

Dear Honorable Members:

**SIX-YEAR COMMUNITY PLAN CYCLE, APPROACH AND FUNDING; CF 16-0422**

On January 31, 2016, City Council's Planning Land Use Management Committee (PLUM) Committee heard an update on the status of Community Plans currently underway, and on the progress made in implementing the ten-year Community Plan cycle currently envisioned and funded as part of the Department of City Planning's (Department) Fiscal Year 2016-2017 (FY 16/17) budget. At that meeting, the PLUM Committee directed the Department to report back, with the CAO, on the necessary budget resources, funding needs, and staffing analysis that would be needed to accelerate the envisioned ten-year cycle to a six-year cycle. PLUM's instructions were incorporated into a motion approved by City Council on February 8, 2017.

**Background**

The status of the Department's Community Plan program has been a subject of particular interest to the City Council, Office of the Mayor, and to the Department, having discussed options to more systematically and frequently update the City's 35 Community Plans over the course of a series of meetings in 2016 and 2017. Community Plans provide guidance and clarity to stakeholders about the future of their neighborhoods, and they set the stage for future community development and investment. For this reason it is essential that Community Plans be updated regularly to best reflect community aspirations and relevant trends.

*Plans Currently Under Development*

There has been positive momentum within the Community Plan program, as the Department ushers the seven Community Plans currently underway through the City's adoption process in 2017 and 2018. Below is a summary of recent Community Plan activity:

- In 2015 the City adopted two new Community Plans for Sylmar and Granada Hills;
- In 2016 the City adopted a new Community Plan for West Adams;
- In 2017 it is anticipated that the City will have opportunity to adopt Community Plans for San Pedro, South Los Angeles, Southeast Los Angeles, and Hollywood;
- In 2018 it is anticipated that the City will have opportunity to adopt Community Plans for Boyle Heights, Central City, and Central City North; and

- In 2017 the Department will launch an update process for an additional group of three or four Community Plans, per the FY 16/17 budget.

#### *Future Community Plans*

While momentum within the Community Plan program appears promising, and is addressing Community Planning in critical parts of the City, the City Council increased funding for the program at the onset of FY 16/17 to ensure that all Community Plans in the City could be updated with greater speed. As part of the FY 16/17 budget, in support of a vision to update all 35 Community Plans within ten years, the City Council expanded the Department's Community Planning budget program by approximately \$5 million, initially contributing six-month funding (\$2.72 million) in FY 16/17, through the City's General Fund.

For its part, the Department of City Planning created a ten-year strategic plan to update all 35 Community Plans within the City, envisioning three regional teams that would concurrently update groupings of three to four Community Plans at a time, before moving on to the next grouping of the Community Plans within the region. This ten-year strategic plan is discussed in detail within the Department's May, 2016 report to the City Council's PLUM Committee (CF-16-0422). The program makes use of existing staff resources currently involved in completing Community Plan work described above in the Central/East and South/West/Harbor regions of the City; launches a new Community Planning team in the San Fernando Valley; and then launches newly expanded teams within the aforementioned Central/East and South/West/Harbor regions of the City in subsequent years.

The proposed ten-year plan would provide economies of scale with respect to the preparation of draft Community Plans and their associated environmental studies within contiguous geographies. The program also builds complete teams of City staff across multiple City Departments that engage in the preparation and review of Community Plans, ensuring that the overall timeline to create and adopt new Community Plans keeps pace with the needs of the City.

#### **Accelerating to a Six-Year Plan Update Cycle**

On the January 31, 2017 meeting, the PLUM Committee requested guidance from the Department as to the resources that are needed to compress the currently funded ten-year Community Plan strategy so that all Community Plans in the City would be brought up to date in six years. This would require the formation of two additional Community Plan teams, in addition to the three that are currently funded, as shown below:

*Additional Community Planning Team Staff Resources*

Position	Quantity	Cost Per Position	Total Cost*
Principal City Planner	1	\$158,250	\$150,338
Deputy City Attorney	2	\$129,957	\$300,627
Senior City Planner	2	\$132,382	\$251,526
City Planner	6	\$112,267	\$639,922
Graphics Supervisor	1	\$100,447	\$95,425
Associate City Planner	12	\$90,156	\$1,027,778
Transport. Plan. Assoc.	2	\$89,346	\$169,757
Transport. Eng. Asc. III	1	\$87,717	\$83,331
Paralegal	1	\$85,378	\$81,109
OSRA	1	\$82,205	\$78,095
Office Engineering Tech	1	\$79,030	\$75,079
		<i>Sub Total</i>	\$2,899,877
		Benefits Overhead	\$1,237,645
		Contractual Services	\$1,000,000
		<i>Total</i>	\$5,190,676

*\*Total Cost shown at 5% Salary Savings Rate per CAO*

Through the use of five Community Planning teams, the Department has envisioned the launch of three new Community Plan teams in 2017, with two subsequent teams launching after current Community Plans underway are adopted near the end of 2018, as shown below:

	Launch	Round One	Round Two
Team One	2017	2017-2020	2020-2023
Team Two	2017	2017-2020	2020-2023
Team Three	2017	2017-2020	2020-2023
Team Four	2018	2018-2021	2021-2024
Team Five	2018	2018-2021	2021-2024

*Phasing is approximate, shown for discussion purposes.*

### **Accelerated Program Funding**

To support the ten-year Community Plan cycle with three staff teams, the City Council budgeted a \$5 million incremental increase to the program budget, providing six-month funding, \$2.72 million, in FY 16/17. In order to support a six-year Community Plan cycle, with two additional staff teams, an additional increment of \$5.19 million is needed.

As part of its report on the FY 16/17 budget, the CAO recommended the completion of a fee study to support the expanded use of the General Plan Maintenance Surcharge (GPMS), a surcharge imposed upon most planning and building entitlements and permits to support the Community Plan program. Raising the GPMS from its current rate of 5% to 7% will support the Community Plan program. The current GPMS of 5% is comprised of a 3% base and a 2% fee that supports the City's work to rewrite its zoning code. The 2% zoning code assessment will expire in December 2017, and the creation of a flat, permanent, 7% fee will provide a sustained funding level of approximately \$5 million per year for this program at maturity.

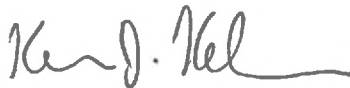
In support of a faster five-team strategy, it is recommended that the incremental increase of approximately \$5.19 million be funded through an increase of the GPMS to 7%. The existing three-teams would continue to be funded with the approximately \$5 million General Fund contribution. In lieu of any General Fund contribution, an 11% GPMS would provide roughly \$10 million, supporting both the FY 16/17 incremental increase of \$5 million, and the envisioned \$5.19 incremental increase.

### **Codifying the Community Plan Program**

At its January 31, 2017 meeting, the PLUM Committee requested that the Department initiate amendments to the Municipal Code that would embed regular review of the City's 35 Community Plans consistent with the strategy discussed in this report. The Department intends to release, for public review, a draft ordinance that would codify review of the City's Community Plans, and that would codify the batching of General Plan Amendment requests by private applicants, as discussed in the Department's January, 2017 report to PLUM Committee. Following a 60-day public review period, the ordinance will be considered by the City Planning Commission, and brought before the PLUM Committee. The Department intends that the ordinance would be available for PLUM Committee by June 2017.

Sincerely,

VINCENT P. BERTONI, AICP  
Director of Planning

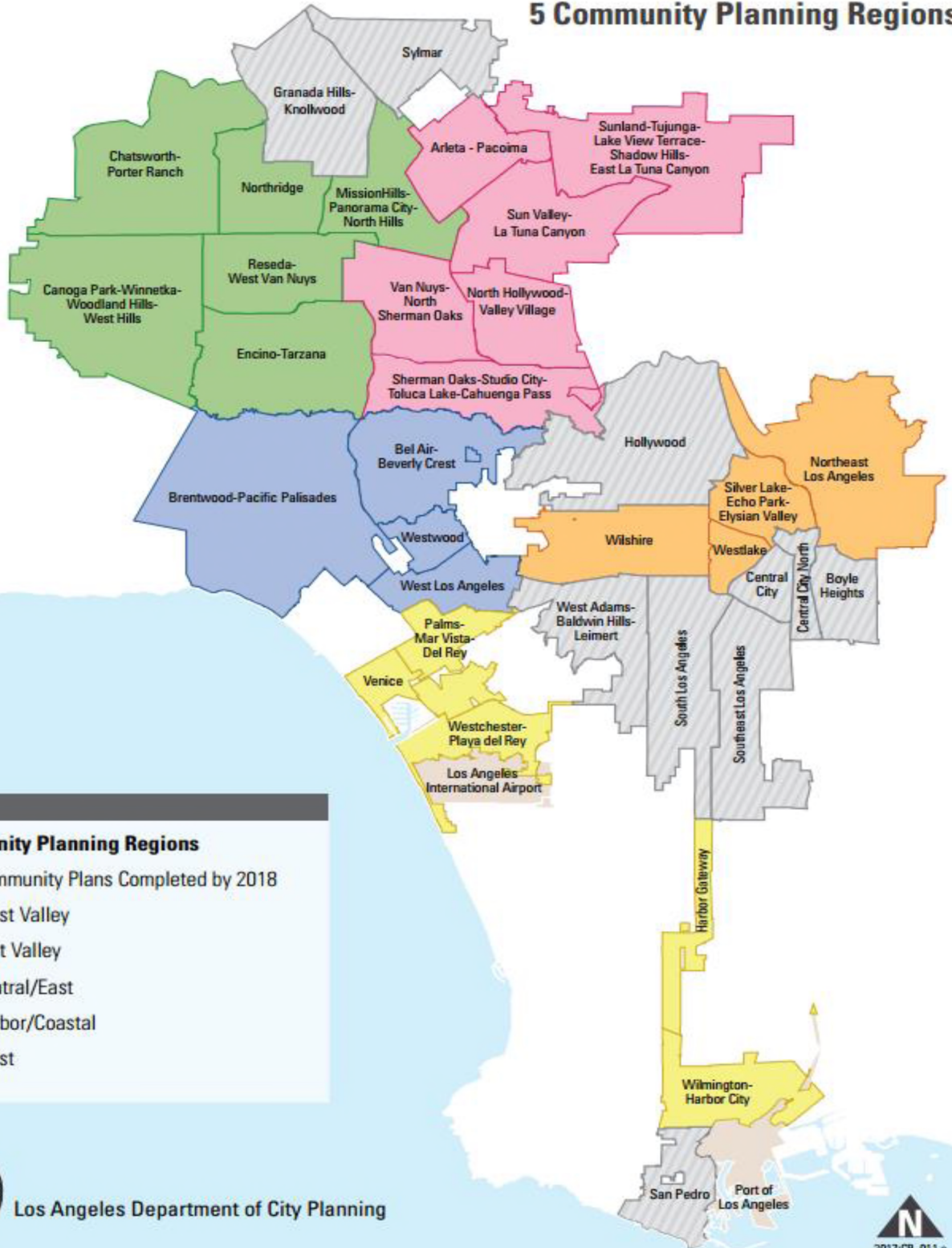


Kevin J. Keller, AICP  
Deputy Director

VPB:KJK:CRW:mn

Enclosures  
Community Plan Map

# 5 Community Planning Regions



**Key**

**5 Community Planning Regions**

- Community Plans Completed by 2018
- West Valley
- East Valley
- Central/East
- Harbor/Coastal
- West



Los Angeles Department of City Planning