

CITY OF LOS ANGELES
INTER-DEPARTMENTAL CORRESPONDENCE

Date: April 16, 2015

To: Honorable City Council
c/o City Clerk, Room 395, City Hall
Attention: Honorable Mike Bonin, Chair, Transportation Committee

From: Seleta J. Reynolds,  General Manager
Department of Transportation

Subject: **EXPEDITED SERVICE FOR TRAFFIC CONTROL PLAN REVIEWS AND TECHNICAL STUDIES**

SUMMARY

The Los Angeles Department of Transportation (LADOT) requests authority to accept labor cost reimbursements to expedite traffic control plan reviews and technical studies, and to establish a trust fund for managing such reimbursements.

RECOMMENDATION

- 1) REQUEST the City Attorney to prepare and present an ordinance establishing a new Expedited Plan Trust Fund for the Department of Transportation to accept funds for the purposes of conducting technical studies and reviewing traffic control plans and traffic studies on an accelerated basis; and
- 2) Upon establishment of a new Expedited Plan Trust, AUTHORIZE the Department of Transportation to establish separate accounts within the Expedited Plan Trust Fund for individual utility companies and developers for expedited plan reviews for ongoing complex projects, and accept up to \$500,000 from utility companies and developers, deposit the funds into the new Expedited Plan Trust Fund, and appropriate therefrom to Fund 100/94, Salaries Overtime Account No. 001090 and Salaries General Account No. 001010 for the actual costs expended on the requested services; and
- 3) AUTHORIZE the Department of Transportation, subject to the approval of the City Attorney as to form, to enter into Memorandum of Agreements with each appropriate utility company and developer that is requesting expedited plan review; and
- 4) AUTHORIZE the Controller to make any technical corrections or clarifications to the above instructions in order to effectuate the above recommendations.

DISCUSSION

In the City of Los Angeles, private and public entities that perform construction and maintenance work affecting surface streets in the public right-of-way are legally required to have traffic control plans reviewed by LADOT. Additionally, technical studies are often necessary to assess the potential traffic impacts from transportation and development projects.

LADOT operates six (6) district field offices that are responsible for providing the public with engineering assistance on a broad range of transportation-related issues. From January 2014 through March 2015, district staff processed 19,071 service requests. A total of 6,222 requests were for plan reviews and technical studies, which represented 33% of all processed service requests. The average processing time for plan reviews and studies was 39 days.

Typically, plan reviews and technical studies are completed in the order in which they are received. Several factors impact processing times, including the project scope and location, complexity of analyses, plan revisions, client resubmissions, staff workload, etc. Recently, LADOT was granted limited authority to accept payments from a private utility company in order to reimburse staff overtime costs to expedite plan reviews (CF 14-1431-S1, CF 14-1431). The number of plan reviews improved significantly for that company, exceeding more than 60 plan reviews per week. The Department no longer has authority to accept payments for the expedited service because the maximum reimbursement amount was reached. However, multiple firms have continually expressed interest in reimbursing staff overtime costs for expedited services. The benefits are improved processing times for those receiving expedited services in order to facilitate the timely completion of projects, and lowering the quantity of pending requests to be processed during regular business hours and thereby reducing overall service delays.

LADOT requests the adoption of a City ordinance to establish a Department of Transportation Expedited Trust Fund to formalize an expedited review service and to accept monetary deposits for reimbursing the labor costs to perform such services. A draft copy of the proposed ordinance is attached.

FISCAL IMPACT

The Trust Fund will allow for the acceptance of advance deposits to reimburse labor costs and ensure that adequate funding is available to cover related payroll expenses.

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Attachment