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GRAYCE LIU
GENERAL MANAGER

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April 21, 2015

Honorable Members of the
Budget and Finance Committee
c/o Erika Pulst, City Clerk
Room 395, City Hall
Los Angeles, CA 90012

Dear Honorable Members:

The Department of Neighborhood Empowerment (Department) wishes to first thank Mayor Garcetti and his budget team and City Administrative Officer Miguel Santana and his budget team for working with the Department to provide funding and resource options to maintain the majority of the services to the Neighborhood Councils for FY 2015-2016.

The Department respectfully requests the Budget and Finance Committee to consider the following changes to the Department's proposed budget:

A. Neighborhood Council Administrative Services Staffing New Service Request BM4704

Request: \$550,000 to support the Department's build out for the 2016 Neighborhood Council elections online voting platform, training, equipment and translation. In the alternative, \$250,000 can be funded this year, and the remaining \$250,000 can be funded next fiscal year.

Impact:

The Department has successfully increased Neighborhood Council election turnout over the past two election cycles, most recently by 43% between the 2012 and 2014 elections. In anticipation of increased participation in the Neighborhood Council elections, the Department began building the foundation for online and telephone voting by releasing a Request for Proposals for an online vendor in 2014. The vendor, Everyone Counts, was selected in 2015 to conduct an online and telephone voting pilot for 50 Neighborhood Councils and to be building the custom back end of an online voting system that will be used by the Department and the Office of the City Clerk to accept submissions and qualify both candidates and voters.

Because of the complexity of Neighborhood Council elections with every Council having different board seats and voting requirements, an online voting platform is the only sustainable option for the City to continue successfully conducting Neighborhood Council elections. Once this platform is built out, the Department anticipates a significant decrease in the cost of online and telephone voting system for subsequent election years.

Potential Funding Sources: Unspent Neighborhood Council funds from FY 2014-2015 (approximately \$550,000)

B. Neighborhood Council Funding and Department Fiscal Operations New Service Request BM4702

Request: \$80,040 for two resolution authority Project Assistants to support the Department's funding program

Impact:

With the conversion to checking accounts this fiscal year, the Department has determined that more staffing is required for the successful administration of the Neighborhood Council Funding Program. At the request of the Office of the City Attorney, the Department has had to implement new reviews on Neighborhood Council events and community improvement projects. In order to accomplish this, the Department has had to bring on 3-4 as needed staffing that work nearly full time. Even this is not enough to keep up with the various funding requests and reviews of the Neighborhood Councils' use of public funds, leaving Neighborhood Council leaders frustrated with staff, and staff exhausted by the amount of work.

For the first time, the Department required Neighborhood Councils to pay for funding services, such as extra training and audit preparations, in order to have enough staffing to support the needed work. With recent City Council suggestions of additional funding, funding rollover from fiscal year to fiscal year and acceptance of donations, the Department will need even more funding staffing to execute these programs.

Without this additional staffing, the Department will not have the ability to continue the funding program and requests another City department assume the function as a possible solution.

Potential Funding Sources: Due to Department vacancies this fiscal year, there may be enough salary savings that can be used to support this request.

C. Neighborhood Council Administrative System Development New Service Request BM4701

Request: \$25,800 for increased costs of new Neighborhood Council board member materials after the 2016 elections and increased transportation costs associated with more field work support

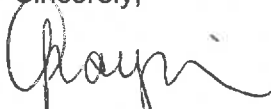
Impact: During the election years, the Field staff is required to conduct additional board trainings citywide for newly elected board members. In Fiscal Year 2013-2014, the Department conducted 89 board orientation trainings after the elections. This significantly increases the Department costs for training materials and transportation, i.e. mileage payouts.

Without these trainings, Neighborhood Councils would not have access to the knowledge necessary to be effective in their work, which would increase the learning curve time for them to assist their communities. Such education is essential, and the Department has determined the best way to provide it is to go to the Neighborhood Council at their first meeting and teach the entire board at the same time.

Potential Funding Sources: Due to Department vacancies this fiscal year, there may be enough salary savings that can be used to support this request.

Thank you for your consideration. If you have any further questions, please do not hesitate to contact me at (213) 978-1551.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Grayce", with a stylized flourish at the end.

GRAYCE LIU
General Manager

