Los Angeles County
Department of Regional Planning

Planning for the Challenges Ahead

James E. Hartl, AICP
Director of Planning

May 14, 2003

The Honorable Board of Supervisors
County of Los Angeles
383 Kenneth Hahn Hall of Administration
500 West Temple Street
Los Angeles, CA 90012

Dear Supervisors:

PRIORITY NEEDS FOR FY 2003-04:
DEPARTMENT OF REGIONAL PLANNING

The Department of Regional Planning is submitting its priority needs and funding requirements for fiscal year 2003-04. These priority needs will, if funded, enable the department to implement a portion of the recommendations from our Management Audit, as well as provide the needed levels of service for the Board of Supervisors, Regional Planning Commission, unincorporated communities, landowners, and the general public. The primary areas of priority needs are shown in the attachment. The programs will affect every supervisorial district and effectuate the strategic goals and objectives of the county through service excellence, and organizational effectiveness.

Our #1 priority for next year is **New Permit Tracking System (eDAPTS) Implementation ($258,000).** The **eDAPTS** (using KIVA software) provides web-based access to parcel-level electronic case filing, tracking and processing and fulfills many goals of the County and DRP Strategic plans. This collaborative effort among Public Works, Assessor, Fire, Health, and Regional Planning, will replace the legacy and CTRK permit and case tracking systems with a single, multi-departmental system. Additional funding is requested to finance DRP technical staff commitments to manage and implement this project; whereas the CIO's Information Technology Fund will help finance the business process review and software costs.

The second priority need, **Restoration of Public Counter Field Offices Counseling ($449,000),** seeks to provide a renewed service level to both the downtown office, the Land Development Coordinating Center (LDCC), as well as the nine district offices that we share with Public Works. Funding will save travel time for constituents and provide more local planning advisory services for all county residents. Staffing at the Public Counter (LDCC), will be extended to a full day and field offices will be staffed full days. Much of the discontent with the waiting time at our downtown public information counter will be greatly reduced with the full day operations made possible with this funding. Service for the 30,000 yearly telephone calls, 300 One-Stop counseling

sessions, and 675 client appointments will also benefit from this greatly needed additional funding. The development community and our small "mom and pop" businesses support this program priority.

An effort that will minimize case processing delays due to mandated conformance to the Board of Supervisors directives including responding to constituents' letters brings us to our next priority need, **Environmental Review/Guidelines ($522,000)**. The addition of funding requested is needed for scoping meetings as required pursuant to CEQA Section 1508 and expediting EIR review processes for major and complex development proposals.

To facilitate business retention efforts in the unincorporated County area, implementing the strategic goals of service excellence and organizational effectiveness, we request funding for our fourth priority need: **Zoning Code Streamlining and Updating ($342,000).** Changes and modifications to the ordinance over the last 40 years have made it very difficult to interpret and more complex to read for the public and other jurisdictions. The addition of funding requested is needed for consultant services and staff costs to design and make recommendations for the design and methodology to automate, update, and streamline the zoning ordinance. This represents a long overdue, important, vital program for the County.

Our fifth priority need is, **Community Plan Update: Rowland Heights/Commercial Amendments; Agua Dulce; Quartz Hill; Littlerock; East LA ($300,000).** Additional funding is needed to finance planning and technical staff to initiate the preparation of local zoning standards (Community Standards District Ordinances) for the above mentioned communities. The funds will also be used to finance the coordination and participation in planning outreach activities for communities including East LA, Lennox, and Rowland Heights

Our sixth priority need is, **Zoning consistency to General Plan ($250,000).** The requested funding will finance planning and technical staff to initiate zoning consistency planning activities for communities such as: Altadena, South Whittier, and East LA. Funding this effort will positively result in Community Plans being consistent to the General Plan.

We are requesting additional assistance in **Certificate of Compliance (COC) processing and investigation ($253,000).** The cost will help finance the utilization of contract title examiners hired by Regional Planning through our sole source contract with Paragon Partners, Ltd. Due to a shortage of staff in the section, these consultant services are highly needed to provide title expertise support and complete legal, mandatory corrective actions such as: Notices of Intent to Record Violations, hearings to resolve issues, filing of Notices of Violation on properties illegally subdivided, and the pursuit of legal action resulting from these corrections. These funds will greatly help us avoid negatively impacting numerous clients, landowners, builders, contractors, and the real estate industry by ensuring a prompt and thorough review of the cases. Failure to fund this critical need will cause an increase in overtime usage, extend time to process and resolve

cases, and increase the risk of employee fraud due to lack of separation of duties. In the past 2 years, we have made significant progress in our investigation and resolution of the 1700 properties affected. The C of C investigation and disposition is expected to be completed by June 2005. The independent section to process Certificates of Compliance and Lot Line Adjustments will be on-going.

Our last priority need, **Strategic Workforce Planning and Database Administration ($464,000),** is requested to fund necessary staff to secure, protect, and administer to the complex geographic information and local area network databases. These very large and valuable digital formats require on-going and very technical expertise. The proposed staffing will reduce network downtime and potential security breaches for valuable county data, and effectively respond to fiscal and management audits. Additional staffing will be used to implement the recently developed Strategic Plan in performance measurement, employee development, succession planning, and emergency preparedness. Funding will greatly enhance organizational effectiveness and fiscal responsibility through cost avoidance.

It is our strong belief that thoughtful and planned program expenditures as outlined herein and reiterated in portions of the County and department strategic plans, and most recently, in the management audit concluded by the Auditor-Controller will be increasingly vital in the new millennium. These programs, utilizing information technology and geographic databases already initiated in a series of Board approved projects, will improve customer service, streamline development permit processes, and enhance decision making throughout the County. Considering the positive contributions that these funding requests will make to the strategic initiatives of the county and the total effectiveness of the county, we strongly recommend your consideration and funding of the priority needs listed for next year.

Sincerely,

DEPARTMENT OF REGIONAL PLANNING

James E. Hartl, AICP
Director of Planning

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Attachment

c: Chief Administrative Office
Executive Office

DEPARTMENT OF REGIONAL PLANNING
FISCAL YEAR 2003-2004 PRIORITY NEEDS

Program	*Gross Appropriation*	*Revenue/IFT*	*Net County Cost*	*Budgeted Positions*
1. New Permit Tracking System (eDAPTS) Implementation	**$258,000**		**$258,000**	**3.0**

The eDAPTS project is a collaborative effort between the Department of Public Works, Assessor, Fire Department, Health Services and Regional Planning to replace legacy permit and case tracking systems with a single, multi-departmental system. The eDAPTS software, also known as KIVA, will provide web-based access to parcel-level electronic case filing, tracking and processing and will fulfill many goals of the County and DRP strategic plans. The project will impact all divisional programs within DRP. The business process review and software costs for this project are to be funded by the CIO's Information Technology Fund; however, DRP staff commitments to manage and implement this project are currently unfunded.

2. Restoration of Field Offices And Public Counter Hours Business Retention	**$449,000**	**$**	**$449,000**	**6.0**

Impacts the Land Use Regulation Program and reflects funding to expand DRP's program of zoning counseling and planning advisory services to the public in field offices, such as Arcadia, Antelope Valley, Florence/Firestone, Santa Clarita, Calabasas, South Whittier, and East Los Angeles where demand surpasses current staffing resources. This funding will also increase service hours at DRP's downtown public information counter by extending hours to include mornings as recommended in the management audit. Funding this effort will positively impact the department's ability to provide convenient, timely, accurate and courteous service **(service excellence)**, and to promote continuous quality improvement **(organizational effectiveness).** This is a continuous, on-going program which is strongly supported by our clients and Public Works.

3. Environmental Review/ Guidelines	**$522,000**	**$**	**$522,000**	**3.0**

Impacts the Current Planning Program and reflects funding for scoping meetings as required pursuant to CEQA Section 1508. This effort will minimize case processing delays due to mandated conformance to Board of Supervisors directives including responding to constituents' letters. This funding will expedite EIR review processes for major and complex development proposals. There have been considerable changes in State law and in environmental analysis methodology since 1987. Without updating, the County will be out of compliance with State guidelines and applicants may submit documents not in compliance which will increase processing time and development costs.

4. Zoning Code Streamlining And Updating	**$342,000**	**$**	**$342,000**	**2.0**

Impacts the Land Use Regulation and Current Planning Programs and reflects the utilization of consultant services and two staff to define and make recommendations for the design and methodology to automate, update, and streamline the zoning ordinance. This effort will modernize provisions of the Ordinance to make it less complex to read and interpret, thereby reducing the County's future liability due to misinterpretation, as well as assisting economic revitalization efforts in the County. Failure to fund this need will hinder DRP from

Program	*Gross Appropriation*	*Revenue/IFT*	*Net County Cost*	*Budgeted Positions*

complying with two Board motions directing all affected departments to identify and utilize streamlining mechanisms to assist in the development of affordable housing and to stimulate the economy by easing the path to development. Funding this need will allow DRP to meet the Countywide Strategic Plan Strategies of designing structures and systems for seamless service **(service excellence),** and providing convenient, efficient, and effective service **(organizational effectiveness).** This represents funding for the first year of an estimated three-year project.

5. Community Plan Update: Rowland Heights; Agua Dulce; Quartz Hill; Littlerock CSD; East LA	**$300,000**	**$**	**$300,000**	**3.0**

Impacts the Advance Planning Program and reflects the addition of funding for planning staff and technical services to initiate the preparation of local zoning standards (Community Standards District Ordinances) for communities such as: Rowland Heights; Agua Dulce; Quartz Hill; Littlerock; and East LA. Also reflects the addition of funding to coordinate and participate in planning outreach activities for communities including: East Los Angeles, Lennox, and Rowland Heights

6. Zoning Consistency to General Plan	**$250,000**	**$**	**$250,000**	**2.0**

Impacts the Advance Planning Program and reflects the addition of funding for planning staff and technical services to initiate zoning consistency planning activities for communities, including: Altadena, South Whittier and East Los Angeles. Failure to fund this effort will result in non-compliance with State law which requires zoning ordinances to be consistent with the General Plan.

7. Certificates of Compliance	**$253,000**	**$**	**$253,000**	**3.0**

Impacts the Current Planning Program and portions of the Land Use Regulation Program. The cost reflects utilization of contract title examiners to complete the current Certificate of Compliance (C of C) investigation, and creates additional staffing to accommodate the workload (currently experiencing a six-month backlog) for new, incoming C of C's and Lot Line Adjustments, and to conduct hearings on disputed land divisions. Failure to fund this critical need will cause increased overtime usage and extend time to process cases. It will also leave the department ill-equipped and under-staffed to complete corrective actions, and unable to prepare for hearings, civil lawsuits, and criminal court trials. These legal, mandatory corrective actions include Notices of Intent to Record Violations, hearings to resolve issues, filing of Notices of Violation on properties illegally subdivided, and the pursuit of legal action resulting from these corrections. The C of C investigation and disposition of its 1700 cases will be completed by June 2005. The independent section to process Certificates of Compliance and Lot Line Adjustments will be on-going.

DEPARTMENT OF REGIONAL PLANNING
FISCAL YEAR 2003-2004 PRIORITY NEEDS

Program	*Gross Appropriation*	*Revenue/IFT*	*Net County Cost*	*Budgeted Positions*
8. Strategic Workforce Planning And Data Base Administration	**$464,000**	**$**	**$464,000**	**5.0**

This critical need impacts the Information Systems, Administration, and Support programs, and reflects funding for five staff to provide increasingly complex database and LAN administration, and to provide necessary assistance in the areas of Strategic Plan and management audit implementation and monitoring, emergency preparation planning, employee development programs related to strategic workforce (i.e., succession) planning, compilation of performance measurement statistics, and contract administration. Funding of this vital program will greatly enhance departmental efforts to improve employee preparedness and safety, to improve our network recovery time and secure our database **(organizational effectiveness),** to effectively respond to fiscal and management audits **(fiscal responsibility),** and to implement our own Strategic Plan **(service excellence).** Strategic Plan implementation is estimated to be a five-year project. All others are on-going.

TOTAL	**$2,838,000**	**$**	**$2,838,000**	**27.0**