Los Angeles County
Department of Regional Planning

Planning for the Challenges Ahead

May 14, 2008

Bruce W. McClendon FAICP
Director of Planning

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

Dear Supervisors:

PRIORITY NEEDS FOR FISCAL YEAR 2008-09

The Department of Regional Planning is submitting its priority needs and funding requirements for fiscal year 2008-09. These priority needs will, if funded, enable the department to provide improved levels of service for the Board of Supervisors, Regional Planning Commission, unincorporated communities, landowners, and the general public. The programs will affect every supervisorial district and effectuate strategic plan strategies and objectives of the County through service and workforce excellence, and organizational effectiveness.

Our first priority is **Funding for Consultant Services ($1,100,000)**. Based on actual revenue received during fiscal year 2007-08, anticipated case load reduction and a $403,000 reduction requested by the Chief Executive Office, consultant services were reduced for fiscal year 2008-09. The Department would like to restore a portion of this funding for the following more urgent consultant services:

- General Plan EIR ($200,000) – To provide additional funding for completion of the environmental analysis of the proposed General Plan.
- Town & Country ($300,000) – an effort to update the Environmental Impact Report for the County's Antelope Valley Area Plan.
- Wildfire Hazard ($50,000) – Creation of a supplemental regulatory overlay district to implement development standards for improving safety in Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zones.
- Marina del Rey LCP Periodic Review ($200,000) – consultant will conduct community outreach, gather data, and propose alternatives for future development of Marina del Rey.
- Santa Monica Mountains LCP ($75,000) – consultant will provide an analysis of native vegetation and the status of Sensitive Environmental Resource Areas.
- Airport Land Use – Whiteman Airport ($125,000) – consultant will provide policies and criteria to achieve land use compatibility for future land use development within a defined airport influence area and a summary of the airport master plan or diagram of the airport layout plan.

- Certificates of Compliance Title Research ($150,000) – consultant will provide title research for Certificates of Compliance.

Our next priority for next year is **Additional Office Space ($659,000 -- $259,000 one-time cost).** From fiscal year 2007-08 to the fiscal year 2008-09 proposed budget, the Department received a net of 24 new budgeted positions. There is currently no additional space for storage of documents nor have we been able to obtain sufficient space either in satellite field offices or internally in order to adequately accommodate these additional positions. Funding wil allow the Department to properly house all budgeted positions and leave adequate room for future file expansion.

Our next priority need is the **Updated Environmental Process and Procedure System ($200,000).** This effort will provide funding to update the Environmental Processing Manual for all environmental assessments and revise the County Environmental Document Reporting Procedures and Guidelines to be consistent with current Department procedures. A consultant will be hired to complete the EIR and Initial Study Preparation Manual, formulate and implement a Mitigation Monitoring Program to reengineer and streamline the Department's current ad hoc process, and computerize the Initial Study Information Database.

Our next priority, **North County Community Outreach ($236,000),** will enhance the Department's ability to provide service excellence to the residents of the North County. The staff will act as liaisons for the Department by servicing as the primary contact point for constituents, other agencies and organizations. Their responsibilities include attending Town Council meetings and other events in the foothill communities, the Santa Clarita Valley, and the Antelope Valley, disseminating information about Department activities, monitoring the local press, maintaining mailing lists and distributing an electronic newsletter. They will also manage the outreach component of all Community Standards District and Community and Area Plan Projects in the North County Planning Section in order to facilitate greater stakeholder participation and the creation of a knowledge base of community concerns and issues. Furthermore, they will be able to assist in providing field office services and processing ministerial permits as needed.

Our final priority need is **Mitigation Monitoring and Condition Checks ($259,000)**. This program will provide for project mitigation monitoring including landfill and solid waste facility condition compliance and data management of approved permits. Funding will also be used for staff to perform condition checks to insure compliance with permit conditions. The additional positions will decrease the overall case processing time and generate a business friendly atmosphere in accordance with the County's goals of service excellence and organizational effectiveness.

It is our strong belief that, along with the already approved proposed budget these additional projects will assist in our stated planning missions to protect and enhance our communities overall quality of life by planning for smart growth that promotes sustainable development, conserves energy, preserves the environment, minimizes global warming, and encourages economic development that links housing and employment and reduces traffic congestion.

These programs will improve customer service, streamline development permit processes, and enhance decision making throughout the County. We strongly recommend your consideration and funding of the priority needs listed herein for next year.

Sincerely,

DEPARTMENT OF REGIONAL PLANNING

Bruce W. McClendon, FAICP
Director of Planning

BWM:TNE:KC:kc

c: Hamai, BOS
Fujioka, CEO

bc: Sheehan
Parker
Englund
Villegas
Bohlke
Saltsman
Moore
Novak
McClendon
Sanabria
Elias
Chin
Hammond
Guzman