



## **MEMORANDUM**

**To:** The Honorable Members of the City Council  
c/o City Clerk

**From:** Eric Garcetti, Mayor *EG*

**Subject:** EXEMPTION OF (1) CHIEF ZONING ADMINISTRATOR FOR THE  
DEPARTMENT OF CITY PLANNING

**Date:** August 15, 2019

The Department of City Planning has requested the exemption of one (1) new position of Chief Zoning Administrator, Class Code 7999, in accordance with Charter Section 1001(b), from civil service as management, professional, scientific, or expert services exemptions. On July 11, 2019, the Mayor's Office asked the Personnel Department to review DCP's request.

Charter Section 1001(b) allows up to 150 persons to be exempt, of which 144 are approved. Approval of this request will increase the count. As of the date of this letter, this request will be in the 148th position of the 150 exemptions. There are an additional 50 exempt positions added by the City Council pursuant to Charter Section 1001(b)(4), of which 12 are filled.

The Chief Zoning Administrator will serve as a high level member of DCP's management team; as the only position of its kind in the City, will be responsible for all zoning-related matters including policy discussions, interpretation and technical guidance, issue and conflict resolution, and the advancement of DCP's goals for case processing efficiency and quality work products. The position will attend controversial appeal hearings before Area Planning Commissions and the City Council Planning and Land Use Management Committee; and supervise nine Associate Zoning Administrators engaged in regular coordination with other agencies, the Offices of the City Council and the City Attorney, the Department of Building and Safety (DBS), Petroleum Administrator, California Department of Alcoholic Beverage Control (ABC), and neighborhood groups, to resolve issues. Responsibilities and duties will include, but not limited to:

### **LEADERSHIP**

- Participate as a member of the DCP management team or Project Planning Bureau management team;
- Serve as technical resource to the DCP Executive Office on matters relating to the Zoning Code;
- Serve as the department's expert witness on matters related to the Zoning Code;
- Participate in the annual fiscal year budget process to identify where resources are needed and prepare necessary statistics, narratives, and justifications;
- Attend and participate in Area Planning Commission, PLUM, and Council hearings as needed; and
- Participate in the implementation of the DCP-DBS Partnership Plan as needed.

### **TECHNICAL DUTIES**

- Prepare Zoning Interpretations on behalf of the DCP/OZA;
- Serve active role in the development of the City's new zoning code (re:codeLA), offering technical guidance and direction;
- Direct the refinement of processes, procedures and templates related to OZA case processing and determination letters; and
- Re-evaluate the standard OZA conditions of approval.

### **TRAINING**

- Develop and implement ongoing training program on zoning case work (technical code sections, writing defensible findings, conducting a public hearing, site visit dos and don'ts, standard conditions of approval, etc.);
- Participate in the annual DCP New Hires Training Program; and
- Coordinate cross-department zoning code training with DBS personnel.

### **OFFICE MANAGEMENT AND SUPERVISION**

- Supervise, train, and evaluate Associate Zoning Administrators and Senior City Planner;
- Establish OZA office policies, goals, and performance evaluations;
- Prepare annual staff performance reviews and manage personnel issues as needed;
- Track and monitor quantity and quality of AZAs and Senior City Planner work;
- Actively monitor and inform PlanStat reporting for OZA work;
- Evaluate status of historic OZA records and files and develop a new electronic system for records management;
- Attend controversial appeal hearings before an Area Planning Commission or PLUM with the assigned AZA to provide support during the course of the meeting; and
- Conduct regular staff meetings of the OZA and attend other Project Planning Division staff meetings to provide information or clarification on zoning code interpretations.

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The Chief Zoning Administrator position requires three years of full-time paid experience with the City of Los Angeles in a class at the level of Senior City Planner in the development, revision, or administration of local zoning and land use control laws; or graduation from an accredited four-year college or university with a major in urban planning, urban studies, urban design, architecture, landscape architecture, geography, or a closely-related field and eight years of full-time paid professional experience in the development, revision, or administration of local zoning and land use control law, with three of the eight years supervising a professional zoning administration unit.

A master's degree in urban planning, urban studies, architecture, landscape architecture, geography or a closely-related field is preferred.

While the Chief Zoning Administrator is a civil service classification for which examinations have been given in the past, the exemption of this position will allow DCP the flexibility to recruit and select the best qualified candidate from a broader candidate pool who possesses the professional knowledge, skills, and abilities to manage the Office of Zoning Administration (OZA), which serves as a quasi-judicial agency within DCP; and the necessary experience and expertise to oversee the OZA staff engaged in a wide variety of complex work and responsibilities related to zoning and land use prescribed by ordinance. The duties and requirements as described are appropriate to the class of Chief Zoning Administrator.

Based on my review of the Department of City Planning's request, as well as the review of the Personnel Department, I hereby approve the request for the exemption of one Principal City Planner and transmit my action to the City Council, pursuant to City Charter Section 1001(b)(1). If the exempt position is not filled within six months, the Mayor's approval for the department to fill the position may expire.

EG:alg

cc: Vincent Bertoni, Director of Planning, Department of City Planning  
Ana Guerrero, Chief of Staff, Office of the Mayor  
Heleen Ramirez, Legislative Coordinator Office of the Mayor  
Wendy Macy, General Manager, Personnel Department