



KAREN BASS  
MAYOR

**MEMORANDUM**

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

**From:** Karen Bass, Mayor *Karen Bass*

**Subject:** EXEMPTION REQUEST – LOS ANGELES DEPARTMENT OF CITY  
PLANNING, (1) DEPUTY DIRECTOR OF PLANNING

**Date:** September 3, 2025

The Los Angeles Department of City Planning (DCP) requested that the Mayor approve the exemption of one (1) position of Deputy Director of Planning, Class Code 9444, in accordance with Charter Section 1001(b), from civil service as management, professional, scientific, or expert services exemptions.

Charter Section 1001(b) allows up to 150 persons to be exempt, of which 121 are approved, and an additional 4 are pending approval. Approval of this request will increase the count. As of the date of this letter, this request will be in the 124<sup>th</sup> 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 20 are filled.

The Deputy Director of Planning will lead a new bureau consisting of 42 new staff transitioning from the Department of Building and Safety (LADBS) to the Zoning Review Program. In addition to managing the zoning review program transition from LADBS to DCP, this new Deputy Director will coordinate and manage other development services and zoning functions currently provided in the Department of City Planning, including the Development Services Centers, various work programs provided through the Specialized Services Division and the Office of Zoning Administration. This reorganization will consolidate all zoning, pre-application and development-related services under one Deputy Director. This position is responsible for organizing, directing, reviewing, coordinating, and ensuring that critical programs are successfully executed in a timely manner.

The Deputy Director of Planning position requires: 1) a bachelor's or master's degree from an accredited college or university in urban planning, urban design, environmental studies, geography, architecture, landscape architecture, public administration, engineering, or a closely related field; and 2) five years of professional managerial experience in the planning department of a federal, state, municipal government or an equivalent public sector administration; or 3) at least one year of full-time paid professional experience as an Assistant Deputy Superintendent of Building, Principal Architect, Principal City Planner, or Chief Zoning Administrator. Additionally, this position requires experience directing and managing through subordinate managers and supervisors; and a good knowledge of the provisions of the Los Angeles Municipal Code, State laws, and Rules of General Administrative policies. Board working knowledge of California planning principles and practices, including Building Codes and CEQA, is ideal.

The exemption of this position will allow the Los Angeles Department of City Planning the flexibility to recruit and select the best qualified candidate who possess the necessary specialized experience, talent, and expertise for the position. The duties and requirements as described are appropriate to the class of Deputy Director of Planning.

Based on my review of Planning's request, as well as the review of the Personnel Department, I hereby approve the request for the exemption of the Deputy Director of Planning 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, my approval for the department to fill the position may expire.

cc: Carolyn Webb de Macías, Chief of Staff, Office of the Mayor  
Zachia Nazarai, Office of the Mayor  
Thomas Arechiga, Office of the Mayor  
Vincent P. Bertoni, AICP, Director of Planning  
Shana M.M. Bonstin, Deputy Director of Planning  
Haydee Urita-Lopez, Deputy Director of Planning  
Arthi, L. Varma, AICP, Deputy Director of Planning  
Lisa M. Webber, AICP, Deputy Director of Planning  
Matt Szabo, City Administrative Officer, CAO  
Osama Younan, Superintendent of Building, Department of Building and Safety  
Malaika Billups, General Manager, Personnel Department