

DATE ISSUED: January 19, 2005

REPORT NO. 05-019

ATTENTION: Honorable Mayor and City Council
Docket of January 24, 2005

SUBJECT: Strong Mayor Form of Government Transition Workshop

SUMMARY

THIS IS AN INFORMATION ITEM ONLY. NO ACTION IS REQUIRED ON THE PART OF THE CITY COUNCIL.

BACKGROUND

On November 2, 2004, the City of San Diego voters approved Proposition F. The passage of this proposition will result in a significant change to the City's form of government. In accordance with the language of Proposition F, certain provisions of the City Charter will be suspended and new provisions enacted, all to create a Strong Mayor form of government for a trial period beginning January 1, 2006, and ending December 31, 2010.

The new form of government will be different from the present form of government in many substantive aspects. For example, the Mayor becomes the City's Chief Executive Officer and will assume the authority and responsibility currently held by the City Manager. The Mayor will no longer be a member of the City Council and will be in charge of running the day-to-day affairs of the City. The Mayor will be responsible for preparing the annual budget for the Council's consideration and adoption. Under the new system, the City Council will select a Presiding Officer of the Council and can choose new committees. The Council will also appoint an Independent Budget Analyst to review and provide budget information to the Council, independent from the Mayor. Attachment 1 contains a detailed summary of the Strong Mayor form of government and outlines the more substantive changes that will occur once the new system is in place.

DISCUSSION

In anticipation of the transition process, staff has started preliminary research of other cities that have transitioned to Strong Mayor (or similar) forms of government, including Oakland, Fresno, Seattle, Houston, Detroit and Cincinnati, as well as organizations such as the National Civic League and California League of Cities. While there are similarities among the government models, each had various and unique aspects that were included in their respective charter amendments. The City of Oakland has the most similarities and may be a helpful example for our transition. Oakland made the change recently, in 1998, on a six-year trial basis, which was subsequently made permanent in March 2004. Also, many of the legislative and administrative changes approved in Oakland are similar to the changes made with the passage of proposition F in San Diego. As we progress further into the specific issue areas, we may be able to draw upon the experiences from some of these cities.

In addition to the research of other cities, an informal group from the City Manager's, City Attorney's and City Clerk's staff have met to collectively brainstorm potential issues, tasks, questions and ideas for the implementation of the new form of government. Issues identified vary from the mundane daily operational tasks to the broader policy related issues. Examples range from who will be signing City Manager's reports and whether they will still be called City Manager's reports, to the broader issues of the annual budget process and the new Office of Independent Budget Analyst. Clearly, there are numerous tasks ahead of us this year.

Public Input

The first step in obtaining public input was the launching of a new web page on January 11, 2005, which was announced by the Mayor in his State of the City Address. The web page will provide valuable information including meeting notices, agendas, reports, and any other pertinent information during the transition process. A new electronic mail account has been set up to receive comments and suggestions from the public. Additionally, for members of the public without Internet access, meeting notices and information will be made available at the City's Community Service Centers and Libraries.

The purpose of this first City Council workshop is to hear from the public and to receive input regarding concerns, suggestions and ideas relating to the implementation of the new form of government, as well as to discuss the format for future meetings. As a framework to our discussions, a list of key issue areas to be addressed during the transition process is provided herein. As would be expected, there is overlap in many of the issue areas. For example, changes to the annual budget process will involve both the executive branch (Mayor and Manager) and the legislative branch (City Council). Alternatively, because the Mayor will no longer be part of the legislative branch, a number of the issues exclusive to the City Council, will not directly involve the Mayor. An example of this is the selection process for the new presiding officer of the City Council. It is foreseeable that among the most extensive tasks will be the review and revisions to the Municipal Code, City Charter and the preparation of resolutions and ordinances by the City Attorney's office necessary to

implement the new form of government. It is also important to point out that it is likely that distinct, but parallel work will occur in certain issue areas. For instance, the specific issues relating to new structural organization of Mayor/Manager's office will vary from the issues related to the new structural organization of the City Council. However, the two entities may want to provide comment and input on both. The following list is provided as a starting point for discussion.

Issues and Tasks

- Establish new annual budget process and anticipate budgetary needs associated with implementation of the transition;
- Establish new City Council agenda procedures;
- Revise City Council Permanent Rules including meeting procedures, tie-breaks, enactments over Mayoral vetos, etc.;
- Establish the new Office of Independent Budget Analyst and determine budgetary and staffing needs;
- Determine changes to City Council Committees;
- Select new Presiding Officer of the City Council;
- Review procedures regarding quasi-judicial decisions, i.e. land use projects and CEQA;
- Review and revise if necessary, City Clerk's legislative process, public noticing, etc.;
- Determine Mayor and City Manager's new duties and responsibilities;
- Review and revise as necessary Mayor/Manager organizational structure including staff assignments, reporting/supervisory roles, potential overlap of staff, etc.;
- Review and revise if necessary, procedures regarding the preparation of staff reports, drafting of ordinances and resolutions, briefings on City Council agenda items, etc.;
- Establish process for Mayoral vetos;
- Establish a plan for communication and interaction between Mayor, City Council, Manager and city departments;
- Review process for appointments to Boards and Commissions;
- Review structure of Data Processing Corporation and IT Board;
- Review process for long-term contracts, lease agreements and renewals, procurements, 1544 (Request for City Manager action) process, etc.;
- Review and revise Administrative Regulations to reflect process and procedural changes;
- Review Municipal Code and Council Policies to identify the inherent inconsistencies with the Strong Mayor Charter changes;
- Review Municipal Code and Council Policies to identify changes necessary for implementation of the Strong Mayor Charter changes;
- Draft all Ordinances and Resolutions to implement changes to Municipal Code, Council Policies and Permanent Rules.

Following the workshop, staff will compile all of the issues, suggestions and ideas discussed during the workshop and draft a comprehensive work plan. The work plan will include the necessary tasks to be completed during the transition process along with a detailed timeline in which to complete the tasks. The work plan and timeline will then be presented at the next scheduled meeting on the Strong Mayor transition process.

Respectfully submitted,

Bruce Herring
Deputy City Manager

Beth A. Murray
Assistant to the City Manager

Herring / BAM

Attachment: [City Attorney Summary](#)