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## OFFICE OF THE CITY CLERK

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# REPORT

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DATE: January 8, 1990

REPORT NO: CC-90-01

SUBJECT: Revised San Diego Municipal Code

### SUMMARY

At the City Council meeting of May 17, 1982, the City Clerk was directed to work with the City Attorney and San Diego Data Processing Corporation to undertake a joint effort to computerize the San Diego Municipal Code using the Legislative Information System (LEGIS).

### HISTORY

Originally, the City had contracted with Book Publishing Company to analyze the Code to determine its problems and decide what types of revisions needed to be performed. When this phase was completed, the City Attorney issued a report stating that, while the analysis was well worth the cost, it would not be cost-effective to revise the Code at that time. Instead, the City Clerk and City Attorney recommended, and the City Council approved, the reallocation of the monies budgeted for recodification for a new project. This special project was established to meet the following objectives:

- 1) Enter the existing Code into the computer system (LEGIS) so that information could be easily researched.
- 2) Improve the Code's readability by reformatting it with larger pages and clearer type.
- 3) Create a new, more accurate and useable index.

In August, 1982, the project began. Initially, the Code was to be read into the computer by an optical character reader (OCR). Because of the poor print quality of the Code, it could not be optically read and had to be entered manually by hired staff. During this process, more than 1,000 errors were discovered in the existing Code, many of which required the Attorney's approval to correct. While the project was slowed by the necessity of entering it manually, correcting the errors have significantly improved the end product.

The system work also required more time and effort than originally estimated. Special computer codes and typesetting conversion tables were developed to create the Municipal Code Database and make possible the electronic updating process. At this time, written procedures were also developed for updating and maintaining the Code and Index.

At the same time in the Attorney's and Clerk's offices, legal and administrative interns were hired to revise the Municipal Code Index. The current index, although revised by Book Publishing Company, was inadequate. One of the original objectives of the project had been to create a new, useable index. The creation of the Code Database and revision of the index were performed simultaneously.

It was decided to work with the City's Print Shop rather than send the Code to Los Angeles for typesetting. Producing the Code in-house with the City's typesetter gives us more control over the printing and supplemental processes.

Personnel changes also slowed the forward progress of this project. By March of 1987, the entire Code was typeset. However, by this time, numerous changes in legislation rendered the typeset Code and Index out of date.

The next two years were dedicated to verifying the integrity of the Code sections, updating, and maintaining the computer database. Large portions of the Municipal Code were compared to the original ordinances and corrections made in the database and the typeset originals.

The end result is an updating process that keeps the computer database up to date as well as allowing the changes to be sent electronically to the Print Shop's typesetting facilities. This saves the typesetting staff the burden of typing each change by hand as had been done up through 1988.

The Municipal Code has expanded from filling one volume, as expected in 1982, to over 2500 pages necessitating the purchase of matching volume II and volume III binders.

The first chapters entered the printing phase in February 1989. Due to the size of the task, it took over 11 months to complete production of the Code. During the production phase, legislation has introduced nearly 300 changes that have had to be incorporated into the printed Code and accounted for individually. This has proven to be a formidable challenge.

#### REVISED MUNICIPAL CODE

It is with great pleasure that I announce the publication of the new, three-volume version of the San Diego Municipal Code.

Creation of the new, improved Code represented a major technical undertaking requiring the cooperative efforts of my office, the City Attorney, San Diego Data Processing Corporation and the City's Print Shop.

Besides the incorporation of the new Code into an up-to-date "searchable" computer database, the most striking change in the printed version is the new two-column format using larger, more readable type.

Other features of the new Code include the following:


- \* Chapters separated by tabs
- \* Section references at the top of pages
- \* An updated Index
- \* History lines compiled in a separate and comprehensive History Table in Volume III
- \* Page numbers located on lower outside corner for easier replacement
- \* Addition of the San Diego City Charter
- \* An Errata Sheet to submit textual errors

The attractive blue and gold binders provide a professional look as well as durable protection for the Municipal Code. The binders feature split spines allowing the binder to be opened wide at any page for easy insertion of changes.

The sale of additional San Diego Municipal Codes will recover the cost of the materials used to produce them.

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I hope you will enjoy using your new Municipal Code. Your comments and questions are always welcome.



Charles G. Abdelnour  
San Diego City Clerk

CGA:MLV:wnc

**PRESS RELEASE**

**From the Office of The City Clerk  
February 1, 1990**

The San Diego Municipal Code has been republished in a larger, easier-to-read format, San Diego City Clerk Charles G. Abdelnour recently announced.

The Municipal Code was last published in 1952 in a single column, 10 point typestyle. The new version is 8 1/2" x 11", double column, and features a larger 12 point type size.

The republishing represents both a technological and coordination achievement. The Code is over 3000 pages and more than a thousand Code sections are revised every year.

City Clerk Abdelnour's Office created a text retrieval database in which the Municipal Code is stored and maintained. With this technological advance, the Code updates are available on-line to City employees two weeks before printed updates are distributed. Updates are now sent electronically to the City's Print Shop for quicker processing.

Municipal Code sets and supplemental update services are available to the public. Interested persons should contact the Office of the City Clerk, 2nd floor, City Administration Building, 202 "C" Street, or call 533-4000 during working hours.