

**OFFICE OF INDEPENDENT BUDGET ANALYST  
CITY OF SAN DIEGO  
M E M O R A N D U M**

No. 06-19

DATE: August 1, 2006

TO: Budget and Finance Committee Chair Atkins and Committee Members

FROM: Andrea Tevlin, Independent Budget Analyst

SUBJECT: City Council Visioning Process

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In the Independent Budget Analyst's April 28, 2006 Report on the "Mayor's Proposed Fiscal Year 2007 Budget," it was suggested that the City Council undergo a visioning process that would focus on the future direction of the City and provide guidance to the Mayor and the City organization in advance of the Fiscal Year 2008 budget development process. Ideally this process would not focus on specific budget items but rather would ask Councilmembers to weigh broad programmatic and service areas. The IBA suggested that this discussion occur early in the fall of Fiscal Year 2007 so that future budgets would reflect the Mayor's and City Council's common visions. Currently the IBA is researching two processes to facilitate the visioning process that would encompass the following subject areas with an emphasis on the General Fund:

- Public Safety
  - Police
  - Fire
  - Homeland Security
- Public Works
  - Capital Improvement projects
  - Refuse Collection
  - Streets
  - Facility Maintenance
  - Deferred Maintenance
- Neighborhood & Customer Services
  - Park & Recreation
  - Library
  - Customer Services
  - Community Services
  - Arts & Culture
- Land Use & Economic Development
  - Development Services
  - Planning & Redevelopment
  - Economic Development
  - Real Estate Assets
- Business & Support Services

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- Human Resources/Personnel
- Office of the CIO

The two processes that the IBA is currently researching to facilitate the visioning process are:

1. Written Rating Process facilitated by the Independent Budget Analyst
2. Multimedia Interactive Process facilitated by an outside consultant with Independent Budget Analyst input.

### **Written Rating Process**

If the Budget & Finance Committee elects to use a written rating process the IBA will develop materials focusing on the program areas outlined above. The IBA would distribute the survey at the September 14, 2006 Budget & Finance Committee and invite all City Councilmembers to participate. The IBA would compile the completed surveys and present the results to the Budget & Finance Committee in October. After discussion at the October Budget & Finance Committee meeting, the results would be forwarded to the Mayor for his consideration. Following is an example of the type of rating process that could be developed by the IBA.

EXAMPLE:

#### Funding for Planning Department's Operating Budget

The Planning Department coordinates and administers planning projects such as community plan updates, long range planning, supports historic resources, maintains a comprehensive Citywide General Plan, supports community planning groups and supports related boards and commissions.

Over the past several years the Planning Department's staffing levels have declined by 22%, but the community expectations have remained the same. In addition, 46 Community Plans are in need of being updated. The Planning Department's FY 2007 Budget is \$6.8 million.

\_\_\_ I would support increasing funding for this program area even if **taxes and/or fees would have to be raised** to do so.

\_\_\_ I would support increasing funding for this program area by making **reductions to other programs**.

\_\_\_ I would support increasing funding for this program area only if **existing resources become available**.

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\_\_\_ I feel that current funding for this program area **is adequate**.

\_\_\_ I would support **reducing this program** to provide funding for other priorities.

Funding for Community and Economic Development Activities

With an emphasis on the City's urban core neighborhoods and low and moderate income residents, the Community and Economic Development Department strives to improve the quality of life and ensure a healthy economy for all San Diegans through job development, business development, neighborhood revitalization, public improvements, redevelopment, social services, and revenue enhancement. The Community and Economic Development Department's FY 2007 Budget is \$10.9 million.

\_\_\_ I would support increasing funding for this program area even if **taxes and/or fees would have to be raised** to do so.

\_\_\_ I would support increasing funding for this program area by making **reductions to other programs**.

\_\_\_ I would support increasing funding for this program area only if **existing resources become available**.

\_\_\_ I feel that current funding for this program area **is adequate**.

\_\_\_ I would support **reducing this program** to provide funding for other priorities.

Multimedia Interactive Process

The other option that the IBA is exploring to facilitate a visioning process is a Multimedia Interactive Process. This process has been used by SANDAG on numerous occasions for visioning and planning purposes and they have had very positive results. The Multimedia Interactive Process utilizes group interaction technology to assist groups and individuals in the visioning process. All City Councilmembers would be invited to a Budget & Finance Committee Meeting to participate in the process. Each Councilmember would be given an individual remote input device that allows the member to simultaneously express their preference regarding the issues being discussed. Through the use of computer analysis, the results are immediately presented back to the group on a video screen for evaluation and discussion. A formal report with the final results will be developed and submitted to a future Budget & Finance Committee and then forwarded to the Mayor for his consideration in the Fiscal Year 2008 budget process as well as future budget years.

If selected, this process would require hiring of an outside consultant who would work with the IBA

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to develop the questions and criteria for the process. The estimated consultant cost for facilitating the process and presenting the final results is estimated to be \$2,500 - \$3,000 and could possibly come from the IBA's department budget. If approved, the IBA recommends having the Multimedia Interactive Process at the October Budget & Finance Committee to allow time for the IBA to select a consultant and work with them to develop the questions and criteria for the process. If selected, the IBA recommends that the majority of the time for the October Budget & Finance Committee meeting be allocated for this purpose.

The IBA recommends the selection of one of the processes discussed above to facilitate a visioning process for future budgets. The IBA recommends that a visioning process occur early in the fall of Fiscal Year 2007 so that future budgets, including Fiscal Year 2008, may be developed using the City Council's common visions as a foundation. The IBA is open to either one of these suggestions.