COUNCIL POLICY FORM

SUBJECT: Staff Support for Councilmembers; Staff-Council Communications

POLICY PURPOSE:

It is the purpose of this policy to establish guidelines and standards regarding staff support for Councilmembers as well as staff-Council communications. This policy is supplementary to and in no way is intended to conflict with the *City Charter*. For further information on the relationship between staff and Council, see the *Code of Conduct for Elected Officials*.

POLICY STATEMENT:

I. Staff Assistance. It is recognized by the Council that work on the Council cannot be fully conducted at Council meetings. It is also recognized that the *City Charter* places the responsibility on the City Manager to conduct the day-to-day affairs of the City consistent with established Council policy and does not permit Councilmembers to direct the activities of City staff. The following policy regarding staff assistance is established to comply with the *City Charter* and meet the staffing needs of Councilmembers:

A. Intergovernmental Assignments. Reasonable staff assistance shall be provided to Councilmembers serving on intergovernmental bodies when the Council has approved the appointments of a member to that body, or in the case when the Council is not the approving body, if the Council has consented to that member sitting on that body. For purposes of this policy, intergovernmental bodies are broadly defined to include committees of intergovernmental agencies or organizations. Use of staff shall be consistent with the following guidelines:

1. Assignments will be made by the City Manager.

2. If the intergovernmental body has its own professional staff, such staff should be utilized to the greatest practical extent, rather than City staff.

3. Assigned City staff shall not attend the intergovernmental meeting unless the Councilmember requests such attendance from the City Manager, and the Manager approves.

4. The primary responsibility of assigned staff is to review issues before the intergovernmental body as they may affect the City and advise and, assist the Councilmember in presenting issues before the full Council.

5. Councilmembers shall not direct staff to conduct major research. Major research shall occur only upon the direction of the City Council or City Manager.

B. Speech and Correspondence Preparation. Councilmembers are entitled to staff assistance for speech and correspondence preparation. Such assistance shall be requested of the City Manager for purposes of assigning appropriate staff assistance. An outline of issues to be covered as well as available supporting material is to be provided by the requesting Councilmember.

II. Staff-Council Communications

A. General. Council communications with City staff should be limited to normal City business hours unless the circumstances warrant otherwise. Responses to Council questions posed outside of normal business hours should be expected no earlier than the next business day.

B. Councilmember Requests for Information and Inquiries. Councilmembers have the right to make routine requests for readily available information of City staff. Councilmembers also have the right to make an inquiry of the City Manager regarding City operations of any City department. Routine questions of City staff for easily retrievable information (other than those relating to designated staff support for IGR committee assignments and/or secretarial support from the Council Executive Assistant) should be directed only to the City Manager, City Attorney, Assistant City Manager, Deputy City Manager, or Department Heads. The City Manager and the Council should be copied on all Councilmember requests for information and inquiries, except requests made to the City Attorney.

Any request or inquiry that requires staff to compile information that is not readily available must be directed only to the City Manager, or to the City Attorney, as appropriate. Any request for a meeting with staff must be directed to the City Manager or City Attorney as appropriate. When in doubt about the appropriateness of a communication with staff, Councilmembers should ask the City Manager for direction.

C. Community Member Complaints. Councilmembers should route all community member complaints dealing with the administrative affairs of the City to the City Manager for appropriate information and follow-up. The City Manager will

prepare a written response to the community member for the Mayor's signature on behalf of the Council. If the issue is not resolved to the satisfaction of the community member, the Mayor or the Councilmember should follow-up with the City Manager to address the issue.

D. Responses to Councilmember Requests for Information, Inquiries, and Community Member Complaints.
Information supplied to a Councilmember in response to a request, inquiry, or community member complaint will be made available to all members of the Council and to the City Manager. Responses will be made within a reasonable amount of time depending on the nature of the issue, the difficulty in compiling the requested information, and other circumstances which may affect the timeliness of a response. Inquiries concerning any City incident or operation will not be answered until it is safe and practical to do so, and at such time as it will not jeopardize staff response to the incident or operation.

III. Implementation. The City Manager shall monitor those provisions of this policy within the City Manager's Charter responsibilities. Disagreement in interpretation shall be resolved by the City Council. The City Manager shall institute administrative policy to implement this policy. At the time a new Councilmember is seated, the Mayor and City Manager should review this policy with him/her.

Annually, the City Manager shall review the resource requirements necessary to support the level of service specified in this policy, and recommend as a part of the proposed budget necessary changes of budget resources.

Approved by City Council: May 4, 2004
Report to Council No.: 04-153

City Clerk Certification Susan A. Ramos