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OAKLAND

# AGENDA REPORT

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TO: DEANNA J. SANTANA  
CITY ADMINISTRATOR

FROM: ANDREA R. GOULDINE  
DHRM DIRECTOR

SUBJECT: Informational Report Regarding the  
City of Oakland Classification Plan

DATE: May 14, 2012

City Administrator  
Approval

Date

5/30/12

COUNCIL DISTRICT: City-Wide

## RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends acceptance of this informational report regarding the City of Oakland Classification Plan.

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

### Background

- The Civil Service Rules (Personnel Manual, Rule 3 – Classification of Positions) establish that the city shall have a classification plan.
- The need for a report on the City's classification plan arose from Councilmembers' questions when the Department of Human Resources Management (DHRM) submitted requests to schedule Salary Ordinance amendments (Rules & Legislation Committee 12/1/11).
- The City's classification plan has not been systematically reviewed and updated since 1992 when it was reviewed related to salary equity issues only.
- As specific needs arise, new classifications are added, but not considered within the broader context of the City's overall classification plan.
- The City's classification plan includes a total of 826 classifications with 747 active and 79 inactive classifications.

### Organizational Needs

- The stakeholders and needs for the City's classification plan include:
  - Civil Service Board – Charter Section 901: mandated to be “responsible for the general supervision of the personnel system,” including the establishment and maintenance of the classification plan;
  - Council – Charter Section 600: provides for “authorized duties, powers and functions...[to] provide the most efficient and economical service possible;”
  - City Administrator – Charter Section 600: “All departments or other administrative agencies...shall be administered by the City Administrator;”

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- o Departments (including the Port) -- need definitions of responsibilities for work product and management roles;
- o Labor – needs transparent information related to working conditions; and
- o Employees – need definitions of job requirements and growth potential.
- Systems of categorizing and organizing the City's classifications have not been maintained: numbering systems and naming conventions are no longer organized in a way that makes the system useful, transparent, or routinely functional.
- Issues with the classification system leave the City vulnerable related to:
  - o Lack of definition as to whether certain classes at the City and Port are “shared” – issues related to seniority and bumping.
  - o Outdated classifications specifications may raise issues related to employee performance and accountability.

Solutions	Timelines
1. Create design to restructure the City's classification plan <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Create skeletal design and arrange classes within that design;</li><li>• Create or revise naming conventions;</li><li>• Determine appropriate numbering system; and</li><li>• Partner with DIT &amp; Payroll to coordinate related changes in Oracle.</li></ul>	Late Fall 2012
2. Eliminate Unnecessary Classifications <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Identify titles that are clearly obsolete and should be eliminated; and</li><li>• Coordinate with departments to identify other titles for elimination.</li></ul>	Winter 2012/2013
3. Implement Exemption Process for Civil Service Exempt Titles <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Establish exemption criteria; and</li><li>• Create appropriate classification specifications (29).</li></ul>	September 2012 to December 2012
4. Revise 146 Class Specifications & Create 101 New Class Specifications <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Options: engage interns, or engage City department staff – DHRM researching, additional staffing would allow for shorter timeline; and</li><li>• Systematically assign to existing staff – requires much longer timeline.</li></ul>	Depends on approach
5. Bring Port Classifications into the City's Classification Plan <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Analysis of Port classifications against City classifications; and</li><li>• Recommend assistance by external consultant.</li></ul>	TBD
6. Transition to Generalist Staffing Pattern in DHRM <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Complete key milestones and create new class plan; and</li><li>• Train and provide for staff development.</li></ul>	TBD

## BACKGROUND/LEGISLATIVE HISTORY

The classification plan is established by the Civil Service Board (Personnel Manual, Rule 3 – Classification of Positions) and is a system of organization for the jobs and assignments within the City government, which are called “classifications.” According to Civil Service Rule 3.02, “Each class specification describes the main characteristics and qualification requirements of positions in the class and gives examples of specific duties which employees holding such positions may properly be required to perform. Class specifications provide a basis for determining the relationship among classes, including the series to which a classification belongs, where applicable.”

In the 1980s and 1990s the City undertook a systematic reorganization and revision to the City's classifications and their associated pay grades in a project known as the Multi-Purpose Job Analysis (MPJA). At that time a consulting firm was engaged and four staff members in Human Resources were dedicated to the process. The work done on the MPJA project was largely focused on issues related to pay inequities and took more than 10 years to complete.

Classifications were analyzed for their similarities in terms of the type of work performed for the purpose of restructuring pay grades to ensure equal pay for equal work. The result was a classification/compensation plan that became the basis for the City's current Salary Ordinance report structure. Because of the compensation focus, concerns about whether or not a classification specification was authorized and/or exempted by the Civil Service Board were not emphasized in this study.

## ANALYSIS

### State of the City's Classification Plan

The City's classification plan includes a total of 826 classifications with 747 active and 79 inactive classifications. Active classifications are those that are currently published and available in the Salary Ordinance. Inactive classifications are not currently available for use, although they have not been abolished and could be administratively reactivated if the need arose. Also in the Salary Ordinance are separate listings for permanent part time, or temporary part time designations where they exist in a given classification. Council has expressed concern in the past that there are too many classifications in the City's system.

The Civil Service Rules state, “Each class specification describes the main characteristics and qualification requirements of positions in the class and gives examples of specific duties which employees holding such positions may properly be required to perform.” These requirements limit somewhat the City's ability to utilize broad, general classifications and instead suggest that specialized positions are more likely to be defined as separate classifications. In other cities where there are fewer classifications, their Civil Service Rules do not require the same level of specificity in the definition of the classification; instead, specialized requirements are stated in the job announcement. In contemplating any change to the structure of the City's classification

plan, every aspect of the employees' relationship to the classification have to be considered, i.e. opportunities for hiring, transfer, promotion, seniority, layoffs, and reinstatement rights.

To determine whether the number of classifications in use in the City is excessive, staff looked at the classification plans of other cities. The sampling below is limited due to difficulty in getting responses or obtaining detailed information from human resources contacts in other cities. While the sample set is limited, it does provide some context for comparisons.

A simple comparison of the ratio of the number of employees to the number of classifications helps to indicate that Oakland is not very different than several other cities. In Oakland the ratio of four employees to one classification compares favorably to the ratio in Long Beach, which is often cited as the California city most comparable to Oakland.

The following is a sample of other California cities and their classifications:

City	No. of Classes	# Employees (approx.)	Ratio of Employees to Classes	# Depts.	Classification Analysts	Additional Services (not in Oakland depts.)
Oakland	826	3,500	4:1	13	3	
• Port	356	474	<2:1	9 (Divisions)	2 generalists	
Berkeley	399	1,300	3:1	12	2	Includes Public Health dept.
Concord	166	370	2:1	9	1	
Long Beach	1362	6,000	4:1	21	9 generalists	Includes Port, Airport, Gas & Oil, Water depts.
Richmond	463	900	2:1	13	3 generalists	Includes Port
San Jose	513	5,400	11:1	22	6 generalists	Includes Airport

The creation of or changes to classification specifications is a mandatory subject of bargaining. So for example, when there have been changes in technology requiring new skill sets or the scope of a job has changed, the classification specification has to be revised, the representative union notified and given the opportunity to meet and confer regarding the changes, and the revised classification is then presented to the Civil Service Board for approval before a revised job announcement can be posted. However, it is possible to reduce the number of classifications. The most obvious solution is by eliminating those that are clearly no longer necessary and/or not being used. Another possibility for reducing the number of classifications is to closely review single-incumbent classifications for potential consolidation, where practical.

The City's classification plan has not been systematically updated in more than 20 years. Changes to the classification plan have occurred as departmental needs have evolved. New classifications have been added and some have been eliminated, but those changes have taken place on a case-by-case/as-needed basis and have not been considered within the broader context of the overall classification plan. The result has been that a coherent structure has not been maintained.

The relationships between classifications have become increasingly unclear and muddled. In a well-defined classification plan, job families are organized by work type and classifications within families are arranged in a way that makes career ladders (upward mobility) and lattices (lateral mobility) evident. Additionally, systems of categorizing and organizing the City's classifications have not been maintained and numbering systems and naming conventions are no longer organized in a way that makes the system useful, transparent, or routinely functional.

### Issues Requiring Remedy

Classification Plan Design: Within the classification plan, jobs are supposed to be arranged into job families where a series of classifications involving work of the same nature but requiring different levels of skill and responsibility are grouped together. The current job families in the City's classification plan include (numbers in parenthesis are the counts of classifications in the job family):

AF = Accounting/Financial (34)	MA = Management / Administrative (37)
AL = Admin Law/Legal (4)	PP = Public Program (49)
AP = Analysis / Professional (176)	PS = Public Safety (80)
EM = Executive Management (127)	SC = Supervisory / Coordinator (109)
EO = Elected Official (2)	SS = Support Services (64)
ET = Engineer / Technical (33)	TC = Technical / Crafts (22)
IS = Investigator / Inspector Series (14)	TR= Trades / Maintenance (75)

The job family designations in the City's classification plan are not organized in the traditional sense of the term – some families are groups of assignment level (manager or supervisor) as opposed to work type (fiscal or legal). And then, even within the established job families, classifications have been modified and added individually without consideration of the impact to other classifications in the job family, or changes have not been made following changes in organizational structure or other legislation (for instance, the City Auditor and City Attorney are still designated as Executive Management, even though the Charter was amended in 1996 and 1998 respectively, making them elected offices).

Classification Specifications ("class specs") provide the job descriptions for each title in the City's classification plan. Of the 747 currently active classifications, only 471 have specifications that have been approved by the Civil Service Board. There are draft specifications for another 146, but 62 Civil Service classifications and 68 exempt classifications have no description on file at all. Particularly for the Civil Service classifications, it is imperative that the key tasks as well as the knowledge, skills and abilities required to perform the job are clearly defined. Otherwise, the City risks incurring complaints arising from the misassignment of work or claims of working out of class.

Systems of categorizing and organizing the City's classifications have not been maintained and numbering systems and naming conventions are no longer functionally organized. The

classification plan has to be analyzed as a whole and reorganized using standardized conventions, otherwise, key issues like the City/Port common classifications and career ladders and lattices will remain obscured.

Civil Service Exempt Designation: The City Charter, under Title IX Personnel Administration, section 902, lays out the conditions under which positions may be exempt from Civil Service. Certain offices are specifically exempted (elected officials, City Administrator, etc.), but section 902(f) provides that other positions may be exempted if recommended by City Council and approved by the Civil Service Board. There are several classifications in the City that have been historically treated as exempt – that is, incumbents have been appointed without competing and released without cause – but there is no record that the classifications were formally exempted from the provisions of Civil Service. At the time of this writing, there are 78 incumbents (in 13 departments, 34 titles) who were appointed as exempt to classifications for which staff could not locate records of formal exemptions.

City/Port Common Classifications: Per the Oakland City Charter and the Civil Service Rules, the Port is a department of the City, but for decades the Port has been allowed to function largely as independent from the City in its personnel practices. Port classifications have not been routinely reviewed, approved, and adopted by the Civil Service Board and are not included as part of the City's classification plan. There are approximately 356 classifications that the Port uses; it is not clear how many of those overlap with City classifications.

Based on an agreement with the City's and the Port's unions, the Civil Service Rules were amended in May 2011 and included the addition of Appendix B (attached) that lists 12 classifications that have been deemed as common between the City and the Port. However, at the request of the Civil Service Board, the City and the Port were asked to review and analyze classifications in both systems to determine which additional classifications should be recommended to the Board to be treated as common. Initial efforts were made and staff met to begin the analysis, but those discussions were stalled due to layoff activities and other pressing demands for City and Port staff. Advancing those discussions will also require meeting and conferring with the City's and the Port's unions before additional classifications may be designated as common or shared with the Port. In a recent decision on appeal, the court held that a classification a laid off Port employee had held at the Port was comparable to a classification at the City, and he therefore had the right to be placed in a vacancy or to bump a less senior employee at the City. This decision will likely have the effect of broadening the definition of City/Port common classifications, which in turn will affect promotion, transfer, and reinstatement rights for City and Port employees.

Insufficient Current Classification Staff: To bring the City's classification plan up to date from its current state, the existing structure has to be analyzed and recommendations developed to reorganize the structure. Classifications have to be deleted, revised, or added – including the revision of 146 draft class specs and the development 130 new class spec documents to ensure

that every existing classification has a job description (276 specs total). The process of revising the City's classification plan is complex and requires the engagement of the many stakeholders including the Civil Service Board, the City Council, City Administration, department management, labor unions, and employees. Most large cities would engage professional consultants to perform the work at this level of magnitude.

The classification plan has not been successfully maintained largely because there has been insufficient staff dedicated to the effort. In the face of competing priorities, classification work is often pushed to the back burner, as it has been true in the City's Department of Human Resources Management (DHRM). Since the early '90s when the MPJA study was done, in times when the City had the resources to be adding and filling positions, the focus of DHRM was to run recruitments and fill positions. Classification work was aimed at supporting emerging department needs through revising classification specifications ("class specs" or job descriptions) or creating new classifications and processing amendments to the Salary Ordinance (Ordinance No. 12187 C.M.S.). During lean times involving budget cuts, classification specialists are assigned to processing layoffs. More recently, since July 2008, DHRM has lost 50% of its staffing and the City has revised its budget and laid off employees nearly continuously. The three remaining analysts with expertise in classification work have been assigned to processing all of the activities associated with layoffs, to the detriment of the classification plan and day-to-day classification work.

Day-to-Day Classification maintenance work includes:

- Working with departments to keep existing classifications current with trends in the workplace (adding computer proficiency, for instance).
- Performing desk audits when employees or departments request an analysis of an employee's work assignments against the employee's classification.
- Analyzing of requests for temporary assignments such as Temporary Contract Service Employees or Exempt Limited Duration Employees in the context of the City's classification system.
- Evaluating department requests for Acting/Out of Class assignments and pay.
- Consulting with departments, Employee Relations, and the unions on classification-related issues.

The basic task of maintaining existing job classification descriptions requires the following steps:

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Task	Duration	Notes
Collaboration with departments	One to four weeks	Drafts sent back and forth in development
Create finalized draft	One week	Submitted by analyst, reviewed by supervisor and manager
Meet and consult (or confer) with representative union	Three weeks	Allow for sufficient notice and scheduling
Bring proposed new or revised classification to the Civil Service Board for review and approval	One to three weeks	Depending on timing with CSB schedule
Prepare Salary Ordinance amendment documents (for new or retitled classifications)	Concurrent with CSB preparation	
Present Salary Ordinance amendments to Council for review and approval	Three to five weeks	Depending on timing with Committee and Council schedule. Requires two readings.
Update Oracle	One week	Following Council approval
<b>Total</b>	<b>9-15 weeks</b>	

The City is in the midst of reorganizing several departments. Classification work is at the heart of these efforts because assignments will be distributed differently, reporting structures will change, and the relationships of work groups will be redefined. The reorganization will require the retirement of unnecessary (and unused) classifications, revisions to existing classifications, and creation of new classifications. At the same time, classification analysts will have to continue to support department needs and be mindful of maintaining the classification plan as it exists.

If the midcycle budget requires additional layoffs, reorganizations, or other detailed personnel transactions, the classification team will again be pulled to perform that work. All of these demands make it difficult to attend to the task of creating and maintaining a classification system.

**Next Steps**

Restructure the City's Classification Plan: As the other classification activities are undertaken, staff will be working with an eye toward revising the entire classification plan. The restructuring will require creating a skeletal plan design and then systematically taking the City's classifications and arranging them within the new design. Included in this process will be the creation or revision of naming conventions and the creation of a new numbering system. Since the city's classification plan is captured as part of the Human Resources Information System (HRIS) module in Oracle, DHRM will be working closely with Payroll and the Department of Information Technology to integrate changes to the classification system with the upgrade of Oracle citywide. Staff will provide a follow up report on the restructuring of the classification plan before the end of 2012.



Eliminate Unnecessary Classifications: Classification analysts are working now to identify classifications to recommend for elimination. Some obvious choices to be removed will be the classifications associated with Museum and Jail operations and duplicative titles. For others, DHRM will be sending out a memo to City departments to request the elimination of unused classifications from our plan. If departments wish to retain currently unused classifications, they will be asked to justify any class retention. DHRM will review department requests and make recommendations to the City Administrator by the end of the calendar year.

Revise One Hundred Forty-Six (146) Class Specifications: Staff has been tasked with developing a strategy to address this issue to anticipate what would be required if the work is to remain in house rather than being performed by an external consultant. It will require close consultation with our departmental contacts to seek their time and collaboration, as success will not be achieved without it. In addition, we will need outside assistance. To that end, DHRM is exploring the possibility of engaging college interns. If this proves to be a fruitful venture, DHRM's work could possibly be conclude by winter 2013. However, delays could occur due to protracted union discussions, Civil Service Board appeals, or delayed Council decisions. If three (3) analysts are expected to do this work in addition to ongoing assignments, the timeline would have to be expanded for a duration that cannot be quantified at this point. It would require a more in depth analysis of the outstanding classification specifications, the amount of available, sustained support from departments, and sustained commitment from leadership.

Creation of One Hundred and Thirty (130) New Class Specifications: The same response as above is applicable. The exception is that the initial timeline may extend to 2014, since the process would begin from scratch. This process requires the incumbent and/or department must complete "Position Description Questionnaires," which become the basic tool for all future decisions. Depending upon the nature of the position, salary, class specification, and/or benefit comparison surveys may need to be conducted with other jurisdictions. Obtaining responses from these surveys can take a considerable amount of time.

Implement Exemption Process for Exempt Titles: There are several classifications in the City that have been historically treated as exempt – that is, incumbents have been appointed without competing and released without cause – but there is no record that the classifications were formally exempted from the provisions of Civil Service. For titles that have been treated as exempt, twenty-nine (29) division manager titles were recommended by Council to be exempted but have not been brought to the Civil Service Board for approval of their exemption. An additional five titles for classifications that have been treated as exempt and have incumbents will have to be brought forward to the City Council for a recommendation to be exempted from Civil Service before being presented to the Civil Service Board.

Bring Port Classifications into the City's Classification Plan: There will be some classifications for which the City, Port and Civil Service Board agree are unique to Port operations and may be

simply added to the classification plan. Staff can begin the work of identifying those classifications immediately. A full analysis of the Port's remaining classifications will have to be undertaken and those Port classifications folded into the City's classification plan. To do this work effectively, appropriate resources should be dedicated and be external to the City and Port organizations to obtain the most comprehensive and objective evaluation of the classifications and their relationship to the City's plan. Staff therefore recommends that this task be performed by an external classification consultant on a timeline to be determined at a later date.

Transition to a "Generalist" Staffing Pattern: The Recruitment & Classification division of DHRM is divided into three units (Recruitment, Classification, Support/Certification) and the staff are assigned within those distinct areas. Recruitment analysts do not perform the day-to-day classification maintenance work and classification analysts do not conduct recruitments. The trend in the industry is for all HR analysts to be generalists in human resources and responsible for aspects of all related functions. The City has kept a specialist model in an attempt to separately focus on repairing the classification system and to improve recruitment processes.

There are so few staff assigned and the magnitude of the problem is so great, the three analysts in the Classification Unit have struggled to keep up with the demands. Departure of any of these employees from classification work potentially exposes the City to a long term risk of being unable to maintain the classification plan, even after it may be restored to health. The leadership challenge will be to manage all of the moving parts previously described, while simultaneously broadening the capability of analysts to be competent in all phases of classification, recruitment, and examination/selection functions. The capacity of analysts to multi-task these functions to desired deliverable targets requires considerable analysis, planning, discussion, training, and coaching. It is absolutely not possible without a stable classification plan in place. This generalist approach is a "best practice" within the human resources discipline. Therefore, a timeline to determine the feasibility of this approach should be determined at a later date.

For questions regarding this report, please contact Kip Walsh, Recruitment & Classification Manager, at (510) 238-7334.

Respectfully submitted,



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Director, Dept. of Human Resources Management

Prepared by:  
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Attachment: *Civil Service Rules Appendix B – Common Classes*

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## APPENDIX B – COMMON CLASSES

Classifications in the classified service with positions at the City and the Port with the same class titles and class codes that were changed or modified after 1978, not following the prescribed prevailing Civil Service Rules at the time of the changes or modifications, shall be submitted to the Civil Service Board as soon after collective bargaining 2011 concludes, but no later than 90 days after collective bargaining is concluded. [Amended June 9, 2011]

As of the date of this addendum, the following classifications have been deemed as common classifications until the Port and City comply with the procedures ascribed above.

(list of the deemed classifications as listed below)

<u>PORT</u>	<u>CITY</u>
1. Account Clerk	Account Clerk II
2. Senior Account Clerk	Account Clerk III
3. Office Specialist I	Office Assistant II
4. Office Specialist II	Administrative Assistant I
5. Administrative Specialist	Administrative Assistant II
6. Carpenter	Carpenter
7. Gardener I	Gardener I
8. Gardener II	Gardener II
9. Gardener III	Gardener Crew Leader
10. Painter	Painter
11. Plumber	Plumber
12. Semiskilled Laborer	Public Works Maintenance Worker
13. Port Electrician*	Electrician*
14. Custodian	Custodian**

The Port and the City have agreed that the following two classifications are Port-specific due to the following reasons and therefore they are exempt from the above common classifications:

\*The Port Electrician – due to the “high voltage” experience required by the Port.

\*\*Custodian – due to FAA security requirements. Port custodians must be able to pass a Criminal History Records Check (CHRC), a ten-year background check, and be fingerprinted for FBI clearance in order to work in the Security Identification Display Area (SIDA) at the Oakland International Airport. Additionally, the Port and City have agreed that due to recruitment requirements, both the City and the Port agreed to conduct separate examinations to accommodate internal candidates (Port relief/990 custodians and City part-time custodians).