

## **DRAFT: Communication Protocols Between Council Offices & the Administration**

The Administration is committed to productive and professional communications between the City staff and the valued members of our legislative branch, the Oakland City Council. Over the past year, interactions have improved and working relationships between departments and Council offices have strengthened policy development and enhanced services and communication to Oaklanders.

As we continue to face tremendous challenges, we must further this great work to ensure we remain focused on the collective goal of providing the best solutions and services to Oakland residents.

Recently, Councilmembers requested clarity and consistency on how to receive information or make requests to city staff. In order to support and enhance collaboration between our sections in keeping with standing policy and communications standards, we provide this written communication protocol so that everyone has the same information and understanding of the process.

It is important that exchanges between us are guided by key principles. This Administration is committed to abiding by important principles, which must be exemplified in all aspects of our leadership roles. Those principles include: Transparency, Collaboration, Respect, Dignity, Equity, and Commitment.

Our communications are further guided by Charter Section 218 “Non-Interference in Administrative Affairs” and Administrative Instruction (AI) 597. The framework of Charter Section 218 and AI 597 is designed to make clear that the collaborations between our offices are exercised in accordance with our defined roles. Both are attached for your reference.

The language of Charter Section 218 and AI 597 provide the limits of specific approaches; therefore, we would like to be clearer on how your requests are able to be supported.

Council requests to Departments should be made to the department director with the lead City Administrator copied. Current department assignments for the City Administrator’s Office are:

- Ed Reiskin, City Administrator: Human Resources, Finance, Fire, Police, Race & Equity, Violence Prevention, Workplace & Employment Standards
- LaTonda Simmons, Assistant City Administrator: Homelessness, Housing & Community Development, Human Services, Information Technology, Library, Parks Recreation & Youth Development
- Betsy Lake, Assistant City Administrator: Animal Services, Economic & Workforce Development, Oak311 Call Center, Planning & Building, Public Works, Transportation, Howard Terminal, Oakland Army Base
- Richard Luna, Deputy City Administrator: City Clerk, Employment Investigations & Civil Rights Compliance, Agenda Management

## **DRAFT: Communication Protocols Between Council Offices & the Administration**

### **Methods of Communications**

1. Communications related to service requests from constituents should first be routed to our citywide intake systems, such as [Oak311](#), [Accela](#), [NextRequest](#), [among others](#).
2. Emergencies/Urgencies (phone call or text to Director, follow up with email with CC: CAO)
3. Requests within the District, action needed (email to Director with CC: CAO)
4. Information request, no actions required (email to Director with CC: Lead City Administrator) *If district offices have inquiries from the public seeking the status of matters, we request that district offices obtain or enter Service Request numbers, and include those in any requests for status from staff.* Responses to requests that are general and/or broad in nature and that may be of interest/relevance to others may be disseminated to all Councilmembers.

We also recommend Councilmembers and Department/Agency Directors establish check-ins on a bi-monthly or quarterly basis to discuss district office priorities. For department check-in meetings, please provide written agendas with related service numbers from Oak311 or other service system, when possible, details from other status matters, and Council priority items to departments in advance of the scheduled meeting.

Our ultimate goal is to be responsive to your requests and maintain communication protocols in accordance with established procedures that will ensure:

1. Timely responses to urgent needs
2. Clarity on the specifics of the requested information (timing, needs, outcomes, fiscal, operational, and labor impacts, equity implications, feasibility, contracting requirements, etc.)
3. Alignment of all interested parties on the path forward.

As your committed professional team, we understand and value the roles of our elected representatives and the pressing issues within the districts. We fully understand your advocacy for services, interest to resolve resident issues, and desire to provide creative solutions to complex problems; and we stand with you.

We seek the maintenance of this synergy and are open to new suggestions and strategies for council offices and our staff to further strengthen communications and collaboration to support the residents we serve. We look forward to hearing your thoughts and ongoing partnership.