

CITY OF COSTA MESA, CALIFORNIA

ATTACHMENT 3

COUNCIL POLICY

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PURPOSE

Costa Mesa Municipal Code Section 2-106 sets forth general provisions relating to communications between the City Council and City employees. The intent of this section of the code is to provide a framework for processing requests for information from the City Council through the City Manager. As the demand for information has increased and the manner in which information is communicated has changed with advanced technologies, the need has arisen to refine protocol under the Code. Section 2-106 provides that the City Council and City Manager may "...vary the provisions of this section by the establishment of contrary policies". The intent of this policy is to establish those "contrary policies" in terms of City Council, Commissions and Committees' relations with City employees.

POLICY

It is the purpose of this policy to:

1. Ensure clear guidelines for City Council, Commissions and Committees and City staff in terms of requesting and providing information, research, studies and similar staff responsibilities.
2. Designate appropriate levels of responsibility in responding to requests for information from the City Council, Commissions and Committees in a timely and accurate fashion.
3. Require that all reports, studies, memorandum and related staff work be provided concurrently to all members of the City Council.

PROCEDURE1. Routine Inquiries

These requests involve the basic "day-to-day" Council Member inquiries, which typically can be handled via the telephone or email. Such requests generally include matters such as meeting schedules, complaint status, reporting service requests, etc. These typically do not require a written report. Such requests may be directed to the City staff assigned responsibility for the program/service under inquiry by a Council Member.

2. Requests for Limited Studies

On occasion, Council Members, Commission and Committees will have an interest or need for City staff to research a given subject or issue. Such requests, for purposes of this policy, are those which are defined as taking four (4) hours or less of a City staff

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member's time to complete and result in a written report, memorandum, correspondence or similar document. For requests of this nature, the Council Member shall make the request through either the City Manager or the appropriate Department Director. Commissions and Committees may likewise request limited studies by majority vote from a noticed, regular meeting. It is the responsibility of the City Manager or appropriate Department Director, upon receipt of the request, to make a determination as to whether the request can be completed within the time frame above.

3. Requests for Substantial Research

New proposals, concepts and ideas brought forward to the full City Council for formal consideration, often require substantial research by City staff beforehand. For purposes of this policy, substantial research is defined as requiring more than four (4) hours of a City staff member's time to complete. Council Members making such requests shall direct same to the City Manager, except for requests for legal research, which shall be directed to the City Attorney. Commissions and Committees shall forward requests for substantial research to the City Council for authorization. The City Manager and the requesting Council Member shall meet to establish the scope of the research desired. If the research can be accommodated within existing staffing levels, and without impact on current assignments, budget or a commitment of City equipment or facilities, the City Manager will assign the research to the appropriate Department Director.

4. Provisions of Reports, Studies and Documents

All reports, studies, memorandums, correspondence and related documents prepared pursuant to the provisions of this policy must be provided concurrently to each member of the City Council with a copy to the City Manager. It is the responsibility of the City staff member preparing the preceding to ensure that the information provided is timely, accurate and complete. It is the responsibility of the Department Director to review all such staff work and to ensure it is distributed in accordance with the preceding directive.