

Office of the City Manager


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COUNCIL MEETING OF:

MAY 11 2019

OFFICE OF THE CITY CLERK  
CITY OF BERKELEY

May 11, 2019

To: Honorable Mayor and Members of the City Council

From:  Dee Williams-Ridley, City Manager

Subject: Council-Staff Communications

Since some of you are new to Council, I want to help you navigate the City so that we all abide by the law as we collaborate to successfully serve the City.

Berkeley's Charter outlines a framework for our work together and our separate roles. Our City's governance relies on the cooperative efforts of elected officials, who set policy and priorities, and City staff, who analyze problems, make recommendations, and implement Council policies. In our respective legislative and administrative roles, certain guidelines help strengthen the relationship between policy makers, their aides, and City staff.

These communication guidelines are meant to foster effective communication between the City Council and staff. As we embark on a busy 2019, the following general guidelines will assist both Council and staff to provide excellent service to the Berkeley community.

#### General Council-Staff Communication Guidelines

**1) Channel communications through the appropriate City staff.**

As City Manager, I am the liaison between the Council and City staff, as outlined in Administrative Regulation (A.R.) 1.4. However, I believe that it is important for Council to have a relationship with department directors and key managers in the City. As such, I have established the practice of making specific senior managers and department directors available to Council and their council aides. I will continue that practice. Requests to senior staff should relate to routine City operations. Please direct requests for services or information that are outside of the course of regular business to me so I can work with the Departments to properly prioritize the work.

Following is a list of senior staff who are available to respond to Council requests.

Name	Title
Farimah Brown	City Attorney
Mark Numainville	City Clerk
Dee Williams-Ridley	City Manager
Paul Buddenhagen	Deputy City Manager
David White	Deputy City Manager
Teresa Berkeley-Simmons	Budget Manager
Jordan Klein	Economic Development Manager
Kristen Lee (Erin Steffen returns in June)	Acting Assistant to the City Manager
Matthai Chakko	Assistant to the City Manager
Tasha Tervalon	Assistant to the City Manager
Henry Oyekanmi	Finance Director
Dave Brannigan	Fire Chief
Kelly Wallace	Interim Health, Housing & Community Services Director
LaTanya Bellow	Human Resources Director
Savita Chaudhary	Information Technology Director
Scott Ferris	Parks, Recreation & Waterfront Director
Timothy Burroughs	Planning & Development Director
Alex Roshal	Chief Building Official, Planning & Development
Andrew Greenwood	Chief of Police
Phil Harrington	Public Works Director
Farid Javandel	Transportation Manager / Public Works

When a Councilmember makes an information request to one of the above managers, the practice is for them to inform the City Manager and the Deputy City Managers, so that we are aware of Council's requests and needs.

- 2) **Use 311 to address citizen concerns and complaints as often as possible.**  
The City's 311 Service Center is an important frontline service that demonstrates our organizational culture of providing quality customer service to the community. 311 answers questions about services like Zero Waste and graffiti removal, as well as provides assistance with business license and residential parking applications. 311 staff also help people report problems, such as issues with

streets, sidewalks, broken parking meters or illegal dumping. They can also process payments, such as for parking citations, the marina berthing fees or fire inspection fees. Call 311 on a landline or mobile device inside City limits. When outside, dial 510-981-2489 or visit them online at [www.cityofberkeley.info/311](http://www.cityofberkeley.info/311). All Councilmembers and their council aides are encouraged to contact 311 to help solve a citizen's problem. While some items should be directed to the City Manager and senior managers, routine concerns/questions about City services (as noted above) may be addressed faster through the established 311 process than through direct communication to management staff. When a Councilmember submits an item to 311, there will be follow-through with the Councilmember as to the outcome of the problem or concern

The 311 Service Center can be reached by dialing 3-1-1 on a landline or mobile device when within city limits. When outside City limits, dial 510-981-2489. Emails can be sent to [customerservice@cityofberkeley.info](mailto:customerservice@cityofberkeley.info) or visit them online at [www.cityofberkeley.info/311](http://www.cityofberkeley.info/311).

**3) All Councilmembers should have the same information with which to make decisions.**

When one Councilmember has an information request, Councilmembers should expect that it will be shared with others.

**4) Respect the will of the “full” City Council.**

City staff will make every effort to respond in a timely and professional manner to all requests for information or assistance made by individual Councilmembers. However, if a request reaches a certain degree in either terms of workload or policy, it may be more appropriate to make the assignment through the direction of the full City Council, as a referral to the City Manager. If this should occur, I will inform the requesting Councilmember that the workload to fulfill the request necessitates that it be approved by the full City Council and prioritized through the annual Re-Weighted Range Voting (RRV) process.

**5) Depend upon the staff to make independent and objective recommendations.**

Staff is expected to provide its best professional recommendations on issues, providing information about alternatives to staff recommendations as appropriate, as well as pros and cons for recommendations and alternatives. Sometimes staff may make recommendations that we know will be unpopular with the public and Councilmembers. Staff respects the role of Council as policy makers for the City and understands that Council must consider a variety of opinions and community values in their decision-making in addition to staff recommendations.

**6) The City Manager and staff support adopted Council policy.**

Regardless of whether it was staff's preferred recommendation or not, staff will strongly support the adopted Council policy and direction.

**7) Refrain from publicly criticizing an individual employee.**

All critical comments about staff performance should only be made to the City Manager through private correspondence or conversation.

**8) Seeking political support from staff is not appropriate.**

The City is a non-partisan local government. Neither the City Manager nor any other person in the employ of the City shall take part in securing or contributing any money toward the nomination or election of any candidate for a municipal office. In addition, some professionals (e.g., City Manager, Deputy City Manager, and the City Attorney) have professional codes of ethics, which preclude politically partisan activities or activities that give the appearance of political partisanship.

Attachment:

1. Administrative Regulation 1.4: Contact with City Councilmembers and their Staff

cc: Department Directors  
Assistants to the City Manager  
Alex Roshal, Chief Building Official, Planning & Development  
Farid Javandel, Transportation Manager, Public Works

# CITY OF BERKELEY ADMINISTRATIVE REGULATIONS

<b>A.R. NUMBER:</b>	<b>1.4</b>
<b>ORIGINAL DATE:</b>	<b>7/1/94</b>
<b>POSTING DATE:</b>	<b>5/12/10</b>
<b>PAGE</b>	<b>1 OF 2 PAGES</b>

## **SUBJECT: Contact with City Councilmembers and Their Staff**

### **PURPOSE**

To coordinate relations between the administrative and legislative branches for the benefit of both the citizens and the government.

### **POLICY**

The City Manager is responsible for the administration of the government, and for maintaining an effective relationship with the Council. In order to carry out these responsibilities effectively, certain procedures should be followed with requests from Council and from individual Councilmembers.

### **PROCEDURE**

#### Requests for Routine Information

Department Directors and senior staff in the City Managers office are responsible for seeing that the required information is available to Councilmembers requesting routine information.

Examples of routine information requests might include such information as:

- The cost for renting a swim center;
- The cost for filing an appeal with the Board of Adjustments; and
- The procedure for getting a permit for street closure.

#### Requests for Information on Agenda and/or Agenda Items

If the information needed deals with previous actions taken by the City Council and requires either the record of action or previous Council reports, the question should be referred to the Office of the City Clerk.

If the information needed deals with previous actions, but requires additional information such as an update or information that did not appear in the earlier Council report, the question should be referred to the City Manager.

Requests for Technical Assistance or Reports

Department Directors and senior staff in the City Manager's Office should not accept any request for a major work product, which comes from an individual Councilmember rather than the City Council itself. Any specific request, which will require research or special staff assignment, must have been submitted in writing and handled through the City Manager. These requirements are designed to protect the existing work program of the department, and to ensure that Council approval is obtained when redirecting City staff effort.

City employees cannot accept work assignments from individual Councilmembers. Department Directors and Assistant City Managers do not have the authority to give assignments based on such requests, nor to perform the assignment themselves, and the Councilmember should be referred to the City Manager.

Citizen Complaints Referred by Councilmembers

Councilmembers should put such complaints in writing and direct them to the City Manager.

<p><b>RESPONSIBLE DEPARTMENT:</b> City Manager's Office</p> <p><b>TO BE REVISED:</b> Every 2 years</p>	<p>Approved by:</p> <p>_____ Department Director</p> <p><i>Phil Kinley</i> _____ City Manager</p>
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