

## Memo

To: City Council  
From: Susan Albright, President  
Rick Lipof, Vice President  
Re: Requests to city staff for work  
Date: Jan 31,2022

At our Chairs' meeting we discussed a problem that has occurred when a Councilor or multiple Councilors ask staff to perform work without knowing the work-load of that staff member and the potential prioritization of such a request by the Department head. This puts the staffer in the awkward position, not wanting to say no while not understanding how to prioritize this work.

As an example, Doug Greenfield (GIS), was the latest recipient of four requests from Councilors. We checked with the IT Commissioner who confirmed that he absolutely wants to know what requests are being made by Councilors simply to assure that prioritizations and expectations for staff work are appropriate.

I sent an email to all last week asking that if you make a request to a city staffer for work you must copy the head of the department and the president of the City Council in the email. The President can make sure that the appropriate Chair and any other involved departments knows what is being requested, The Department Head can manage an appropriate schedule for the work. If this work request duplicates other requests either by a department or other Councilors, this will be learned from this practice. I am confirming that staff and department heads need us to follow this practice.

To be perfectly clear, a request to staff that asks something like "what did you mean by ...." Or "can you explain something for me" or any request that simply asks for help in understanding something, does NOT fall into this practice. This practice will apply when you are asking the staff to create a document or perform some kind of work that takes longer than one conversation.

If anyone has questions about this practice we can discuss them at the next Chairs' meeting. If anyone has an outstanding request to staff please let the appropriate department head and the president know what has been requested. Thank you for your help keeping the work life of our city staff manageable.