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February 22, 2010

Mayor Antonio R. Villaraigosa
Los Angeles City Hall
200 N. Spring Street, Room 350
Los Angeles, Ca 90012

Dear Mayor Antonio R. Villaraigosa:

This letter is thank you for the opportunity to serve as your General Manager for Neighborhood Empowerment. I support the consolidation of our department with the Community Development Department (CDD) understanding that the General Manager for the CDD will become the General Manager for the new department that includes Neighborhood Empowerment. I will no longer be serving in this position effective upon this appointment or June 30, 2010, whichever comes first.

I would like to reflect upon my last three years of work for you and our 90 Neighborhood Councils. My tenure in government has been filled with many inspiring moments and several unanticipated challenges. As you may recall, you appointed me in March 2007 to serve as Assistant General Manager under Carol Baker Tharp, and then as Interim General Manager after her tragic and unexpected passing. I was permanently appointed in May 2008. I will forever be grateful for my chance to serve with Carol Baker Tharp, a brilliant and compassionate leader. Her death was a loss to us all.

With her, and then as General Manager, we were able to launch several new initiatives which helped to advance our department's mission. We started the first series of Regional Neighborhood Congress events beginning with the first ever South Los Angeles Regional Congress which helped to organize NC leaders around issues of local concern. With private foundation funds, we launched a marketing campaign and will soon be unveiling a new and dynamic website. We provided educational workshops, advice, and assistance to thousands of NC board members and stakeholders. Despite the many challenges with the NC funding program, we were successful in placing all purchases on-line for full transparency. A process which I believe will protect our efforts into the future.

During my tenure, I have seen the continued evolution of the Neighborhood Council (NC) system. Of the 90 certified NCs, many are doing quite well and have given voice to their community. There are also NCs who continue to be challenged to fulfill their potential. Each NC has their own trajectory. But I am confident that with continued and focused support, the NC system will continue to fulfill their City Charter mandated purpose.

In anticipation of drastic cutbacks in government services due to the fiscal crisis, DONE initiated a strategic planning process to determine the best allocation of limited city resources while continuing to advance DONE's mission and purpose. Those functions include: education and training; outreach and broadening participation; and facilitating partnerships between government and NCs. These core functions can be supported largely by NC volunteers with city staff serving as volunteer coordinators in service delivery by identifying and matching the resources with targeted NC support needs throughout the city. I believe it is appropriate to also seek non-profit support for the continued development of the NC system.

Being able to serve as DONE's General Manager was truly an inspiring moment in my lifelong career in community service. The thousands of volunteers that I have met truly believe in the promise of neighborhood democracy. They have a passionate commitment to their communities and working with city government. The vision set forth in the City Charter is being realized throughout diverse neighborhoods in this great city.

During my remaining time with the department, I will be working closely with you and your staff, the City Council, and NC leaders to assure that the key functions essential to the continued development of the Neighborhood Councils are enhanced through the consolidation process.

Respectfully,



BongHwan (BH) Kim,
General Manager