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Organization, Inc.

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December 31, 2005

Municipality of Anchorage, Planning Department  
P.O. Box 196650  
Anchorage, Alaska 99519-6650

ATTN: Tom Nelson  
RE: Hillside District Plan

Hi Tom:

I was pleased to see the Assembly provided the additional funding for the Hillside District Plan that you've indicated would be necessary to hire a staff person, a lead consultant and begin the process. My understanding is that Planning has received \$ 400,000 which includes \$100,000 in the 2005 budget and \$300,000 for 2006. This is more than half of the \$710,000 you've estimated will be needed from "Tax Supported" funding for the project. Good News.

As you know, HALO and the eight community councils within in the HDP plan boundaries (Abbott Loop, Basher, Bear Valley, Glen Alps, Hillside East, Huffman O'Malley, Mid-Hillside and Rabbit Creek) formed a working group almost two years to concern ourselves with the development of the Hillside District Plan. We've been very active and supportive of this plan but concerned that the process may become driven by department heads that have agencies to support rather than by the values of the people in the affected area.

For example at a recent meeting you indicated that you believed that the question of placing Commercial Centers on the Hillside was still unresolved. I'm sure you heard the groan from the people in the room. More importantly during the process of writing the 2020 Plan there was an attempt to designate a very few neighborhood commercial centers on the Hillside. The public outcry was overwhelming and the designations were removed. This question has been resolved for those that live in the affected area.

Another example is the HDP boundaries. You've attended at least two meetings this past year where the message was clear that the western border line generally follow the current HWWMP boundary and yet the Planning Scope Summary that your office developed seems to dismiss this community value and instead continues to insist that the west boundary be the New Seward Highway. That boundary would skew community surveys because the polling would include the already fully developed high density neighborhoods that have little relevance to the Rural Residential characteristics that the 2020 Plan contemplated in the "Hillside District"

Also troubling is that a "Citizen Advisory Committee" is lower on the proposed "Organizational Chart" than the Municipal Department Heads. I would expect the Policy Committee would be made up primarily of the Citizen Group and possibly include the Department Heads rather than being exclusively department heads excluding the people most affected by the plan.

Board Officers: President: Chris Hamre, Vice-Presidents: Judy Moerteln, Secretary: Dianne Holmes,  
Treasurer: David Cottrell  
Board Members: Mark Moore, Bill Lamoreaux/Beth Terry, Jim Barnett, Katie Nolan, Rodney Powell, Dan Stone, Gerry Guay,  
Jeff Lentfer, Annie Mabry, Ryan Stencil

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This plan will determine a great deal of the future of our neighborhoods and we would expect that we would be integrally involved in the key decision making processes. As you are aware, we have suggested that we assume the funding and undertake the process of hiring the "Lead Consultant ourselves and coordinate the study as community driven process. I still believe this would result in the "Best Value" to the city including lower costs, equal quality and a process that will gain more public confidence.

You've talked about encumbering the 2005 money by hiring a project manager by year end who will be tasked to begin the plan. Was this accomplished and was there any community involvement contemplated in this step? The next step would be to hire the lead consultant. How will the "Request for Proposal" to hire the "Lead Consultant" be developed and what steps can be taken to involve the community this process.

As you know our group has been quite vocal about the community's need to be involved in the design of the process, the development of the plan and the selection of staff and consultants that will conduct the process. Can you tell us:

1. What is your timeline for bringing on line the Staff Project Manager?
2. How can the community be involved in this process?
3. How can the community be involved in the RFP process?
4. Will you allow the Citizens Committee to fulfill the role of the Policy Committee?

We are hopeful that the process will finally get underway but equally important is that it be conducted in a manner that will maximize community engagement and will involve the community in policy development.

Sincerely:



Chris Hamre  
President

Cc: Mayor Mark Begich  
Mary Jane Michael  
Assemblywoman Janice Shamberg  
Assemblyman Chris Birch  
Eight Council Representatives

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