

Dear TRRG Members,

City Manager Michael Ortega will be naming a permanent Planning and Development Services Department (PDSD) Director later this year. I believe this selection is of exceptional importance to TRRG. Had there not been long-term frustration with PSDS, I do not think TRRG would have ever become an organization.

The TRRG Board has approved a communique to Michael which expresses our position about the selection of the new PSDS director. I have included it below and here. Please take a few minutes to read it; then share it with others in the community who care about this issue who have not yet become TRRG members. TRRG needs to have a strong voice to ensure that PSDS lives up to its name. The Office of Integrated Planning (OIP) is now the P in PSDS; the old PSDS is the DS. The new director must see both functions as interacting and of equal importance.

Thanks for your support,

Ruth Beeker, Chair

To: City Manager Michael Ortega
From: Tucson Residents for Responsive Government (TRRG) Board of Directors
Re: Selection of the New PSDS Director
Date: July 8, 2016

Members of TRRG recognize the significant impact that a director has on a department. The changes in PSDS since you merged it with Office of Integrated Planning (OIP) have been notable. When a permanent PSDS director is chosen, we would like that individual to build on these positive changes.

The new PSDS director certainly will continue to have the traditional responsibilities as stated in the 2014 job description: Directs plans, organizes and coordinates all programs, functions and activities of the Planning and Development Services Department to fulfill zoning, rezoning, and sign code administration, plan reviews and field inspection service requirements of the City. However, we look forward to the new director bringing a fresh perspective to this work, including:

- A view of UDC as a document which gives both guidelines for development and protections to adjacent property owners and neighborhoods

- An awareness of current building trends so there is code in place as it is needed, not written after problems arise

- An expectation that new code amendments will originate from an inclusive public process, be well researched, reflect best practices elsewhere, and be written in clear, concise language

- The willingness to engage other departments when addressing development project problems identified by residents of the area

- A belief that all stakeholders in the City should have equal opportunity to participate in City land use decision-making which affect them

Given the merger, we believe the new PSDS director must embrace the original OIP Mission: ensuring accountability toward Mayor and Council and community problems; furthering innovation, efficiency, and effectiveness; and improving public trust through greater transparency and public participation. When OIP was formed, TRRG members felt that there was finally a branch of City government which was accessible. We do not want to lose that essential benefit when the interim director most familiar with the original goals leaves.

In addition, many TRRG members attended numerous meetings to shape the content of PlanTucson. It was OIP who was given the responsibility to ensure that this general plan would be unlike any other—it would be followed. We assume that task also has now become PSDS's.

The consolidation of PSDS and OIP has created a unique challenge, and opportunity, for a new director. PSDS is no longer what it was. TRRG requests that various interests in the community beyond those typically seen as PSDS clientele participate in the selection of the new PSDS Director. TRRG would appreciate having a seat at that table.

Also: Code Enforcement Updates have been posted.