Office of Finance

Annual Plan 2018

City of Los Angeles

los angeles office of finance

All Roads Lead to Finance ///

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FROM THE DIRECTOR



On behalf of the City of Los Angeles and members of Team Finance, I am pleased to present the 2018 Annual Plan (Plan) for the Office of Finance (Finance). The Plan is an opportunity for Finance to share our vision for the future and lay out a set of initiatives that will impact every aspect of how Finance serves the people and businesses of Los Angeles. The success of this Plan will be determined by our ability to achieve the Plan's four goals:

- Create a positive and cohesive organizational culture;
- Deliver responsive and informative customer service;
- Ensure secure, resilient, and user-friendly technology systems; and,
- Establish citywide best practices for payment and receivables.

These four goals will enable Finance to modernize our systems and services, collect revenue and manage finances more efficiently, provide support to businesses and taxpayers more effectively, and create an environment of financial health and excellence for the City of Los Angeles.

At the heart of the Plan is Finance's four Core Values that drive the actions of Team Finance: (1) Service with Integrity, (2) Service with Excellence, (3) Service by Leadership, and (4) Service through Innovation. In these Core Values, developed by the entire Finance management team, we see the foundation of an Office that goes above and beyond for the people and businesses of Los Angeles. The Core Values urge Finance staff to work collaboratively and think creatively to address challenges and seize opportunities for bringing the Plan's initiatives into reality.

As excited as we are about this Plan, Team Finance has been active throughout 2017 with new initiatives that lay the groundwork for Finance's continued transformation. We launched an online chat service to expand our customers' options for getting in touch with us. And we encourage all entrepreneurs and business owners to visit our LA Business Portal at <u>business.lacity.org</u>, for a roadmap on how to start a business as well as educational content and a resource library to help grow an existing business. Finance's online services have enabled 78 percent of business tax renewals to be conducted online, saving time and money for businesses and Finance.

Team Finance is proud of what has resulted from these efforts. This year, our revenue operations brought in more than \$3 billion to support essential City services, while our Treasury team achieved one of the highest returns on City investments among cities and counties in the State of California, ensuring that the City maintains a sound financial environment and promotes growth.

As we move forward with fulfilling the goals set forth in this Plan, Team Finance is rolling out an Action Plan to ensure the Plan's strategies and objectives produce real, impactful results. Each goal is supported by an Action Planning Team to manage the initiatives, and a Goal Tracker with Key Performance Indicators, timelines, and points of ownership which will enable the teams to measure progress and ensure the Plan remains on track.

I want to acknowledge the efforts of Team Finance for their assistance in developing this Plan. This Plan was the result of nearly a year's worth of discussion and debate about the future of Finance and the ways in which we can better serve the people and businesses of Los Angeles. The result is a set of goals, objectives, and strategies that will continue to deliver meaningful and impactful change for this City. Team Finance looks forward to seeing this City, its businesses, and its people thrive!

Sincerely,

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Claire Bartels Director, Los Angeles Office of Finance

Millions of Reasons to Strive for Financial Management and Customer Service Excellence.

The City of Los Angeles is vast.

It sprawls across roughly 470 square miles with 80+ neighborhoods connected by roughly 6,500 miles of streets.

More importantly, it is home to nearly 4 million Angelenos, over 500,000 businesses, and countless stakeholders with big dreams, goals, and aspirations.

We at the Office of Finance carry an important responsibility to ensure these entrepreneurs, visionaries, and leaders have the necessary services and city infrastructure to thrive.

As LA's primary revenue collector, the Office of Finance engaged in an in-depth process throughout 2017 to develop an Annual Plan that guides the **pursuit of excellence in financial management for the City, its residents, and its businesses.**

Guiding the pursuit of excellence in financial management for the City, its residents and its businesses.

WHO WE ARE

The Office of Finance comprises twelve divisions, each with important responsibilities that support the overall success of the Office in effectively working with City Departments and serving the citizens of Los Angeles.

Collectively, we are Team Finance.

Executive Accounting Billing & Collections Business Tax Liaison Unit Citywide Revenue Management Customer Support Investment Performance Management & Administration Personnel Systems Tax & Permit Treasury

WHAT WE DO



ACCOUNTING // Accounts for \$3 billion in annual receipts and daily reconciliation of investment transactions

BILLING & COLLECTIONS // Processes tax renewals and manages citywide delinquent collections

BUSINESS TAX LIAISON UNIT // Enhances the customer experience through service level innovations in design, communication, and product development

CITYWIDE REVENUE MANAGEMENT // Leads policy and process for citywide accounts receivable management

CUSTOMER SUPPORT // Engages in over 300,000 annual customer contacts via phone, email, chat, and in-person

INVESTMENT // Actively manages the City's \$10 billion investment portfolio producing over \$100 million in returns

PERFORMANCE MGMT & ADMINISTRATION // Provides departmental administration, performance, and oversight

PERSONNEL // Conducts hiring and employee engagement

SYSTEMS // Oversees all Finance systems including LATAX, which manages more than 600,000 tax and permit accounts

TAX & PERMIT // Enforces City tax requirements through discovery efforts and audit

TREASURY // Provides City banking services and cash management conducting electronic transactions totaling over \$40 billion

FINANCE FUNDS THE CITY

Finance is the Treasurer-Tax Collector of the City

On an annual basis, **Finance is responsible for the collection of over \$3 billion in revenue** from various sources including taxes, licenses, fees, and permits which pay for numerous essential municipal and public safety services to the City's residents and businesses.

Finance is the custodian of all money deposited in the City Treasury and all securities bought by the City. This includes actively managing the City's \$10 billion General and Special Pool investment portfolio, and processing of over \$40 billion through treasury services. Ensuring the financial health of the city we love.

> los angeles office of finance

Funding the municipal services that the City's residents and businesses need.

Finance Matters to the City



In City revenue collected annually by Finance, supporting:



CREATING THE PLAN

The Plan establishes the strategic focus that will drive the Los Angeles Office of Finance to provide revenue and treasury management services for the City of Los Angeles.

Throughout 2016-2017, over 170 Finance employees, from leadership to staff, participated in the creation of the Plan and helped identify the mission, vision, and values of the Office.



The Office of Finance engaged in an in-depth process throughout 2016-2017 to develop a Strategic Plan that guides the pursuit of **excellence in financial management for the City and all of its customers**.

CURRENT STATE ASSESSMENT

Team Finance leadership and management identifies Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats (SWOT)

170 Team Finance staff respond to an electronic survey on communication, management, technology, and culture

STRATEGIC DIRECTION

Team Finance establishes Mission, Vision, and Values for the Office of Finance

Team Finance identifies Goals, Objectives, and Strategies to guide Finance's future actions

FUTURE STATE IMPLEMENTATION

Team Finance defines action items to deliver the objectives and achieve the goals set forth by the strategy

Team Finance defines responsibilities, timelines, and key performance indicators

Real **People** Real **Processes** Real **Results**



SEPTEMBER 2016 Strategic Planning Kick-Off

OCTOBER 2016 Management Interviews and SWOT

DECEMBER 2016 Finance All Staff Meeting

JANUARY 2017 Staff Engagement Survey & Core Values Planning



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FEBRUARY 2017 Establish Mission, Vision, & Values

APRIL 2017 Core Values Feedback Solicitation

MAY 2017 Strategy and Implementation Planning

JUNE 2017 All Staff Meeting - Shared Mission/Vision



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JULY 2017 - FORWARD Development of Action Planning Goal Trackers

AUGUST 2017

Established Quarterly Newsletter and Held Team Building Events

NOVEMBER 2017 - DECEMBER 2017 Development of Annual Plan

DECEMBER 2017 All Staff Meeting and Employee Core Value Awards Presentation

MISSION

The Office of Finance ensures a healthy fiscal environment for the City of Los Angeles through the professional administration of tax revenue and treasury services

VISION

To serve as a national leader in municipal tax and treasury services and as a citywide model in professional excellence and financial management

CORE VALUES

The Values outlined below represent those that have significant importance to the Office of Finance, govern the actions of all Team Finance members, and establish a standard of excellence for the Office. Each Value is illustrated with and supported by its listed action statements for the Office to uphold.

service with INTEGRITY	service with EXCELLENCE	service by LEADERSHIP	service through INNOVATION
Uphold our fiduciary responsibility in an ethical and honorable manner.	Provide superior customer service to all customers across the City.	Develop a cohesive team that works together to serve and succeed.	Implement out-of-the-box solutions to transform and improve our work.
Treat all customers equally and in a professional and responsive manner.	Invest in our employees through training, resources, and professional development.	Empower our employees to grow and succeed.	Develop new processes and procedures to stay up-to-date and effective in a changing world.
Maintain transparency in policies and operations.	Respect and embrace the diverse nature of our employees, customers, and communities.	Work with customers in a collaborative manner to continually improve services.	Leverage new technologies to solve the unique problems of our customers.
Maintain technology systems that protect customer confidentiality and ensure continuity of service.	Deliver best practices through measured accomplishments and continual improvement.	Share knowledge and best practices to advance the financial management industry.	Re-evaluate the ways in which we do business to best enrich our employees and serve our customers.

STRATEGIC GOALS

This strategic plan contains four goals, driven by our mission of ensuring a healthy fiscal environment for the City of Los Angeles and our vision to be a national leader in municipal tax and treasury services and a citywide model in professional excellence and financial management.

Each goal contains objectives and strategies to illustrate exactly how the Office of Finance will advance towards these goals, as well as actions to establish specific tasks and activities that the Office is or will undertake.

Goal ONE Team

Finance

Instill a positive and cohesive organizational culture that supports and empowers all employees.

Goal TWO Customer Service

Deliver responsive and informative customer service to all internal and external customers in a professional manner.

Ensure secure, resilient, and user-friendly technology systems while cost-effectively modernizing technology infrastructure.

Goal THREE

Modernization

Systems

Goal FOUR Accounts Optimization



Establish citywide processes and technical guidance, serving as strategic partner to other City departments in payment and receivables best practices.

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To ensure the success of this Strategic Plan, it is vital that the Office of Finance think and operate as a team – TEAM FINANCE.

The Office of Finance will focus on building and cultivating a culture around the values of this Strategic Plan. This culture will establish a common understanding of the Office's role within the City of Los Angeles and a shared commitment to excellence in service. The Office will work across all functions to ensure that team members have industry-leading skills and abilities while working in a safe and supportive work environment.

Goal **ONE**

Instill a positive and cohesive organizational culture that supports and empowers all employees

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OBJECTIVES

Ensure employees are supported, encouraged, and prepared to be high-functioning members of the Office of Finance

Establish open and ongoing communication channels

Team Finance



It is vital that the Office of Finance think and operate as a team.

HIGHLIGHTS

Held the first ever **Continuing Education Training program**

Launched Team Finance Newsletter

Awarded **25 Core Value Awards of Excellence** to deserving staff members

Hosted two **all-staff meetings** that brought together all the divisions for mutual learning and departmental alignment

where our values meet our goals

In 2016 and 2017

We launched ::

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LEADERSHIP

- + Grow With: A Business Forum for Women Brought over 300 women business owners to City Hall to connect and learn how to grow with the City
- + The Business Tax Liaison Unit Helping customers navigate difficult issues
- + The Business Experience Unit Innovating operations, communications, and customer experience
- + An Executive Fuse Fellow Exploring specialized programs and initiatives

SPOTLIGHT

Monika McKnight, EdD Business Tax Liaison

Creating a Culture of Learning

Monika McKnight, an 11 year veteran of Finance leads the Continuing Education Series, a monthly training that teaches the processes and procedures of other units within the Tax and Permit division. These monthly sessions allow for professional development of staff and the growth of institutional knowledge among participants.

where our values meet our goals

In 2018

We are launching ::

- + Build With: A Construction Matchmaking Event A construction focused conference co-led by Finance and other City partners
- + A Revamped Employee Training Program Improving our ability to serve customers
- + An Employee Mentorship Program Creating pathways to leadership

Improving organizational culture and employee morale goes beyond engagement, it requires encouraging professional growth and providing opportunities to pursue advanced learning.

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SPOTLIGHT

Candice Arnold & Shahid Chaudhry Special Events Committee Team Leads

Putting the "Team" in Team Finance

Candice Arnold and Shahid Chaudhry co-manage a team of 14 volunteers that comprise the Special Events Committee and are responsible for curating opportunities for Team Finance members to build camaraderie amongst each other.

The Special Events Committee puts together team building events and helps instill departmental pride amongst employees.



CUSTOMER SERVICE

Customer service is at the core of the Office of Finance's transformation. Customer service is not limited to answering questions from taxpayers when they are filing their taxes.

Customer service is a critical component of all areas of Team Finance, as every staff member in the Office provides services that reach Angelenos, businesses, and other City departments. Therefore every staff member has a customer at the end of their business practices who relies on Team Finance for open communication and clear information.

CUSTOMER SERVICE

Goal **TWO**

Improve accessibility and deliver responsive and informative customer service to all internal and external customers in a professional manner

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OBJECTIVES

Goal TWO

Service

Customer

Ensure an open, responsive, and relevant communication process for all customers

Maintain accountability and transparency through performance measurements and standards

Ensure all staff are supported and equipped to provide excellent customer service

HIGHLIGHTS

Launched a new modern website to provide an **improved customer experience**.

Launched the City's **first online live chat experience** delivering a new channel of communication.

Developed a **cannabis business processing methodology** allowing business to continue operations while **driving revenue for the City**.

Customer service is at the heart of everything we do.

CUSTOMER SERVICE

where our values meet our goals

In 2016 and 2017

We launched ::

- + Online Chat Allowing online bill-pay users live support during business hours
- + A Cannabis Business Processing Methodology Allowing for businesses to continue activities quickly and hassle-free
- + A Form Redesign Initiative Using behavioral science principles to refine business forms
- + The LA Business Portal Adopted the LA Business Portal to enhance its offerings

SPOTLIGHT



Carolyn Mix-Lee Customer Service Specialist (Retired January 2018)

Bringing a Personal Touch to the Counter

Carolyn Mix-Lee had 33 years of service with the City of Los Angeles. During her tenure, she provided assistance to thousands of customers with the utmost care, patience, and humor.

CUSTOMER SERVICE where our values meet our goals

In 2018

We are launching ::

- + A New and Improved Website Providing self-service and education options for customers
- + An expanded online live chat feature and virtual assistant Expanding live and automated touchpoints for customers
- + A redesign of business forms and notices Utilizing behavioral science to better inform customers

Customer service is more than just answering phone calls and processing requests. It's about the smile you leave on faces, the tools you provide for self-service, and the ability to meet people where they are.

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SPOTLIGHT

TEAM FINANCE

Billing and Renewal, Customer Service, Tax and Permit & Audit

Managing Yearly Renewal Season

Every year, Team Finance engages with over 500,000 businesses during the renewal season, securing billions of dollars in tax revenue for the City. This team effort allows the City to thrive and affords residents the municipal services they depend on.



SYSTEMS MODERNIZATION Goal THREE

The Office of Finance's Information Technology (IT) systems represent a critical component not only for the Office, but for the City as a whole. Disruptions in the Office's IT systems can impact the City's ability to collect revenues, issue permits, and make daily payments on its outstanding bonds. It is critical to the financial health of the City that the Office make the necessary investments to bring the Office's systems up to date with operations and responsibilities.

With these investments, the Office will pursue business improvements to use this modernized technology more effectively, from integrating data analytics into current business practices to conducting website performance management to modernizing business continuity and redundancy plans. Under this Strategic Plan, systems modernization will drive operational innovation throughout the Office.

SYSTEMS MODERNIZATION

Goal **THREE**

Ensure secure, resilient, and user-friendly technology systems while cost-effectively modernizing operations

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OBJECTIVES

Maintain accountability and transparency through performance measurements and standards

Ensure user-friendly business practices in customer technology interfaces

Manage and mitigate risk in IT systems and planning

Ensure IT systems are up-to-date and fully functional

Goal THREE

Systems Upgrades

Systems is the cornerstone of our ability to deliver excellent customer service.

HIGHLIGHTS

Began replacement of four different systems to **improve service levels** and **efficiency**

Currently Implementing a new **audit case management system**

Currently Implementing an **improved data analytics approach** to discovery, collections and audit selection

SYSTEMS MODERNIZATION

where our values meet our goals

In 2016 and 2017

We launched ::

- + Phase 1 of LATAX Modernization Plan Scoping and designing a more robust tax and permit processing system to ensure a stable operating environment for years into the future
- + A New Lifeline Processing System for Seniors and Disabled Improving our ability to service senior and disabled citizens' tax exemption requests
- + Enhanced Online Services Continuing to expand online solutions and increasing utilization by our customers



Deborah Bates-Johnson & Craig Sykes Systems Specialists

Keeping the Lights On

Deborah and Craig of Systems help keep the lights on, not just for Finance, but also for our customers. They help manage LATAX and all of the reporting programs essential to Finance operations and to meeting the information systems needs of Team Finance.



SYSTEMS MODERNIZATION

where our values meet our goals

In 2018

We are launching ::

- + Phase 2 of LATAX Modernization Completing development of upgraded LATAX system
- + An Investment Earnings Allocation System Replacement Upgrading an out-of-date system for dispersing over \$100 million in investment earnings
- + A Collections Management System Replacement

Enhancing ability for customers to manage debt owed to the City

As technology advances, so do customer and user expectations of service. We upgrade systems, not only to improve the customer experience, but also to ensure we are doing everything we can to drive revenue for the City.

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SPOTLIGHT

Phillip Nunley, Henry Chan & Jeffrey Yeung Audit Case Management Team

Enhancing Audit with Case Management

Phillip, Henry & Jeffrey led the charge on implementing and training staff on the use of the new case management system which will allow the Audit Division to improve their efficiency and maximize their efforts in uncovering potential business tax revenue for the City.



ACCOUNTS OPTIMIZATION Goal FOUR

As the City's Treasury, the Office of Finance is the City leader in financial services. This subject matter expertise presents the Office with a unique opportunity to lead payment and receivables practices throughout City departments.

As part of the Strategic Plan, the Office will leverage its involvement in City financial processes to identify and share best practices across City departments. The Office will monitor procedures and pursue opportunities to centralize, standardize, and modernize payment and revenue procedures. With leadership in this area, the Office can position the City to become a leader in payment and receivables practices.

ACCOUNTS OPTIMIZATION

Goal FOUR

Establish citywide processes and technical guidance, serving as strategic partner to other City departments in payment and receivables best practices

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OBJECTIVES

Optimize City department payment systems and processes

Optimize City department revenue systems and processes

Establish banking procedures for Accounts Payable and Accounts Receivable systems

Institutionalize Finance's subject matter expertise and sharing of best practices across the City

Establish partnerships with tax preparers for simplified business tax filing

Goal FOUR

Accounts Optimization

Creating a best in class accounts payable and receivables operation to ensure the financial health of the City.

HIGHLIGHTS

Received the Investment Policy Certificate of Excellence Award by the the Association of Public Treasurers of the United States & Canada

Received the **2017 Digital Summit Award** by govtech.com for creating an innovative electronic payment solution

ACCOUNTS OPTIMIZATION

where our values meet our goals



In 2016 and 2017

We launched:

- + An Enhanced Electronic Payment Solution Automated the City's wire transfer process reducing risk and increasing efficiency
- + A New Approach to Neighborhood Council Banking Utilizing credit cards for improved transparency and controls

SPOTLIGHT

Adrine Temuryan, Michael Poon, Ben Ortiz, Davey Baquiran, & Shadonna Williams The Cannabis Team

Laying the Foundation

Since October 2016, the MMD Unit, comprised of 5 veteran tax compliance officers, has planned and managed the review of close to 1,000 accounts with the Medical Marijuana business tax classification. This unit engaged in the planning and support functions that impacted the development of department policy while closely working with the City Attorney and other Finance divisions.

ACCOUNTS OPTIMIZATION

where our values meet our goals

In 2018

We are launching

- + A Citywide Payment Card Industry (PCI) Compliance Training Module Safeguarding citywide PCI compliance and credit card acceptance
- + New Citywide Banking Services Ensuring that the financial operations of the City are current with best practices

Our ability to successfully receive and process payments is an essential element of creating a fluid ecosystem of service. Ensuring we abide by industry best practices ensures the financial health of the City.

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SPOTLIGHT

Russel Fujii Cash Management Supervisor

Optimizing Banking Services

Russel's work as a Cash Management Supervisor is critical to safeguarding the City's money.

With over 13 years with the Office of Finance, Russel has worked to optimize banking service usage while reducing charges to the City.



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Building and Being Team Finance

With the release of this Annual Plan, the Office of Finance is announcing its vision for the future of financial management in the City of Los Angeles and laying out its path to achieve this future. However, just as Team Finance did not wait until the Annual Plan was finalized to pursue new initiatives, so too will Team Finance's work continue after the Annual Plan is released. To deliver on the goals of this Annual Plan and create lasting, meaningful change for the businesses and people of Los Angeles, the staff of the Office of Finance is committed to the culture of Team Finance –for today, and for the future.

The work of building and being Team Finance is best described by this quote from industrialist Andrew Carnegie: "Teamwork is the ability to work together towards a common vision, the ability to direct individual accomplishments towards organizational objectives. It is the fuel that allows common people to attain uncommon results." Mr. Carnegie was absolutely correct when he described teamwork as fuel. Fuel not only moves a vehicle forward; it is critical for the vehicle to keep moving.

The success of the Annual Plan will be determined by each member of Team Finance taking pride in Finance's work and realizing each team member's effort in the accomplishments that Finance achieves.

Building and being Team Finance means looking across Divisions to find ways to support every part of Finance operations; recognizing that every team member has a customer who looks to that team member for assistance and clarity; looking for opportunities to make today's work more efficient than yesterday's; and, sharing our expertise and understanding with others to create a better environment for financial management.

Team Finance is -and will- continue to be involved with issues that will change the future of the entire City, from the modernization of the City's payment system to emerging sectors of the City's economy including short-term rentals and cannabis. And while Finance tackles these issues, our staff still manages the day-to-day business of tax renewals and enforcement, revenue collections, treasury services, investment management, and customer service requests that keep the City's finances stable and secure.

Team Finance's daily efforts directly contribute to the ongoing vitality of the City of Los Angeles, its people, and its businesses. It is critical that Team Finance continues to do all that it can to enable the City of Los Angeles to thrive and grow.

City Leadership

Mayor Eric Garcetti City of Los Angeles

Council President Herb Wesson District 10

President Pro Tempore Mitchell Englander District 12

Asst. Pres. Pro Tempore Nury Martinez District 6

Councilmember Gil Cedillo District 1

Councilmember Paul Krekorian District 2

Councilmember Bob Blumenfield District 3

Councilmember David Ryu District 4 Councilmember Paul Koretz District 5

Councilmember Monica Rodriguez District 7

Councilmember Marqueece Harris-Dawson District 8

Councilmember Curren Price District 9

Councilmember Mike Bonin District 11

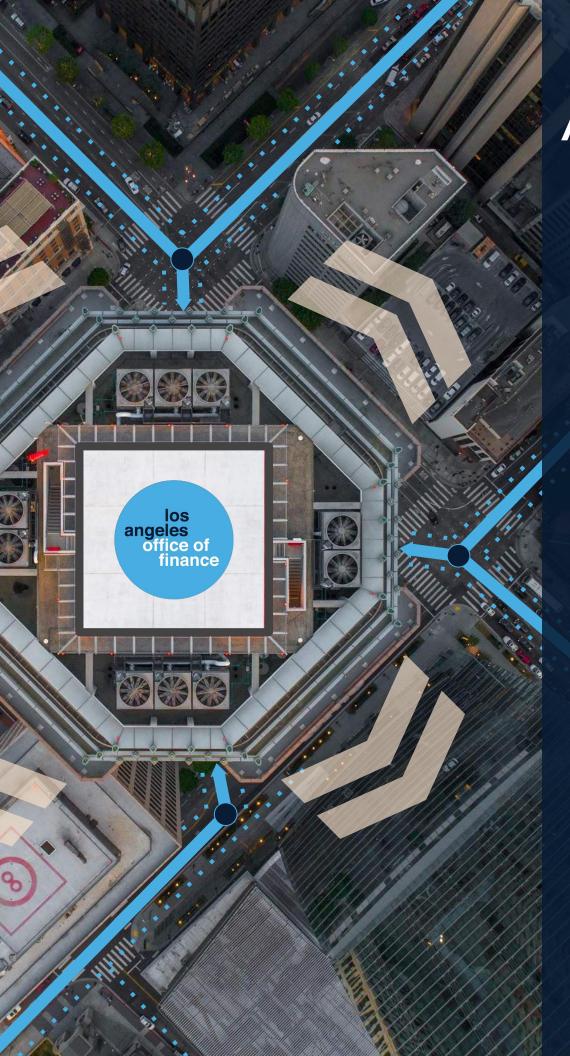
Councilmember Mitch O'Farrell District 13

Councilmember Jose Huizar District 14

Councilmember Joe Buscaino District 15



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All Roads Lead to Finance /// Finance Grows LA

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