



City of Long Beach

**R-6**

Office of Vice Mayor Robert Garcia

**Date:** October 9, 2012

**To:** Honorable Mayor and Members of the City Council

**From:** Vice Mayor Robert Garcia, First District  
Councilmember Gary DeLong, Third District GD  
Councilmember Patrick O'Donnell, Fourth District  
Councilmember James Johnson, Seventh District J.J.

**Subject: Business and Economic Development Officer**

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**Background:**

The City of Long Beach adopted an Economic Development Implementation Plan in 2007. It contains goals and strategies for economic development in our city. Its three key initiatives are:

- To make Long Beach the most business-friendly city in California
- To create additional jobs for Long Beach residents
- To support and strengthen neighborhoods

The Economic Development Bureau was primarily responsible for implementing the plan. However, in 2010, Long Beach eliminated the Economic Development Bureau and moved many of the bureau's functions to other departments and staff. Given the current economic climate, recruiting new businesses to Long Beach, and retaining existing businesses, has never been more urgent.

The City Manager's office has done its best to maintain some economic development programs, including Industrial Development Bonds, hiring vouchers, sales tax sharing agreements, investment in infrastructure, technical assistance to small businesses, enhanced code enforcement, youth workforce assistance, and retail recruitment.

In addition, the Mayor's office has also focused on business recruitment, small business preferences for city contracts, and trying to make government more efficient for both small and large businesses.

While the city has successfully assisted thousands of business owners, there is still an opportunity to do more. Long Beach should always be recruiting new companies and ensuring that those business owners who choose to open in Long Beach are being advocated for and supported every step of the way.

A strong economic development program overseen by an experienced officer or ombudsman can be of tremendous help to a local economy. An economic development manager can serve

as both a liaison to existing businesses, assisting them in maintaining and expanding their business' growth, and provide outreach and recruitment to regional, national and international employers, offering incentives and assistance to businesses relocating to our city.

On occasion, business owners run into challenges while opening in Long Beach. A Business and Economic Development Officer would serve as the business owners advocate throughout the planning and licensing process.

A Business and Economic Development Officer could also work to advise the Council on policies to best enhance local economic growth, and manage the City's public relations with the business community locally, regionally and beyond.

A fulltime Business and Economic Development Officer would enhance the quality of life in our city by supporting an expanded business sector, and would also potentially increase revenue by driving up economic activity and the taxes and fees that result.

The position would be housed in the City Manager's office and accountable to the City Manager.

**Recommendation:** Direct the City Manager to explore the creation of a Business and Economic Development Officer position and report back to Council within 90 days the feasibility and costs of the new position. In addition, it would be the preference of the Council, to use existing general fund dollars to create the position.

**Fiscal Impact:** There is no fiscal impact to this item. If the position is created, the City Manager will report back to Council the economic impact.