

Standard Operating Procedures for Effective Communications Between the County and the City on Specific Matters

1. A contact person, or more than one contact person, should serve as the project owner for that locality and be responsible for ensuring communications are replied to in a timely manner, needed information is collected, and the locality's staff involvement is coordinated (rather than having multiple departments independently engaged).
2. Communications between the localities should request a reasonable reply date so that the time for a reply is not open-ended and timely follow-up can be expected.
3. Periodic meetings should be held so that issues can be discussed face-to-face. The periodic meetings should include persons designated by each locality to take notes. The notes should reflect each locality's understanding of any conclusions reached on the matters discussed at the meeting, and thereafter be shared with all attendees to review, correct, and identify the need for follow-up.
4. For those matters where any decision must be made jointly by the Board of Supervisors and the City Council, the Chair/Mayor of each governing body should be copied on communications between the locality's staffs. Only those communications pertaining to discussions that are above the technical level, and are approaching the policy level, should be copied to the Chair/Mayor of each body. This procedure will not apply to communications between the offices of the City Attorney and the County Attorney without the prior consent of the other locality's governing body. The Chair/Mayor will share information regarding the communications with all of the members of their respective governing bodies.
5. For those matters where any decision must be made by the Board of Supervisors, the City Council, or both, discussions on specific matters should be initiated only with staff having technical expertise on the subject matter so that they can identify key issues and outline the parameters and limitations related to the matter being discussed.
6. Any matters resolved, promised, or preliminarily agreed to in communications between the County Executive and the City Manager should be provided in writing to the respective Chair/Mayor of their governing bodies and the contact persons/project owners if the matter is of a type for which contact persons/project owners have been designated. The Chair/Mayor will share information regarding the communications with all of the members of their respective governing bodies.

Note that some of these procedures include creating documents that may be subject to mandatory disclosure under the Freedom of Information Act.