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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **Vernon Reform Monitor John Van de Kamp concludes ‘significant reforms undertaken,’ ‘still unfinished business’ in release of January 2012 progress report**

**Vernon, CA** – City of Vernon Reform Monitor and former city Independent Ethics Advisor John Van de Kamp today issued his January 31, 2012 progress report on Vernon’s governance policies and practices.

In the second of two progress reports as Vernon’s Independent Ethics Advisor, Mr. Van de Kamp concluded “significant reforms have been undertaken by Vernon in the past year.” Mr. Van de Kamp added, “There is still unfinished business. The good news is that timetables have been set for completion of many of the remaining recommendations.”

Since mid-February 2011, Mr. Van de Kamp has examined and evaluated municipal policies relating to Vernon’s local government ethics, conflicts of interest, open government and transparency. His final 35-page report as Independent Ethics Advisor is a follow up assessment of Vernon’s progress toward good governance as outlined in his initial July 29, 2011 report.

Mr. Van de Kamp issued a series of recommendations in his July 2011 report that he indicated, if adopted by Vernon city leaders, would align Vernon from a governance standpoint to open government polices enacted by other model cities in Southern California.

Mr. Van de Kamp notes in his report that registered voters in Vernon – in two separate elections in November 2011 – overwhelmingly approved a series of 10 government reform city charter amendments placed on the city ballot by the five-member Vernon City Council in response to Mr. Van de Kamp’s July 2011 report recommendations.

Among the charter reforms adopted in November 2011 were city council member term limits, provisions for special elections to fill city council vacancies, maintaining the city’s Housing Commission and retaining an Independent Reform Monitor for four years.

Vernon City Administrator Mark Whitworth said, “We are pleased to have received Mr. Van de Kamp’s February report on our city’s progress on the road to good government reform. For the past 18-months, we have endeavored to turn the page on the city’s past, and with the help of Mr. Van de Kamp, and his team of Robert Stern, Cynthia Kurtz and Daniel Calendar, Vernon has made tremendous strides to be more open and transparent. Vernon today is a new city compared to the past. Today, we work closely with representatives from business, labor and the residential community in our daily effort to manage and maintain the best industrial city in California.”

To read John Van de Kamp’s full February 2012 progress report on Vernon governance, go to **[cityofvernon.org/good\\_governance\\_reforms/VDK\\_Follow-Up\\_Report\\_01-31-12.pdf](http://cityofvernon.org/good_governance_reforms/VDK_Follow-Up_Report_01-31-12.pdf)**.

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**Vernon was founded in 1905 to create jobs in California. Vernon’s 1,800 businesses create more than 105,000 jobs in the Los Angeles area – including 55,000 jobs within the city’s 5.2-mile boundary. The Los Angeles County Economic Development Corporation designated Vernon as California’s ‘Most Business Friendly City.’ Vernon generates more than \$330 million in state income and sales taxes, \$1.1 billion in taxable spending. Vernon’s businesses provide more than 4.4 billion in salaries and wages annually for workers in Los Angeles County. For more information, go to [www.cityofvernon.org](http://www.cityofvernon.org).**