



4305 Santa Fe Avenue, Vernon, California 90058  
Telephone (323) 583-8811

## NEWS RELEASE

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### **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

Contact: Fred MacFarlane – (213) 369-8425

### **City of Vernon engages former California Attorney General John Van de Kamp to serve as Independent Ethics Advisor for comprehensive review of city's governance practices**

### **Vernon City Administrator Mark Whitworth says yearlong independent ethics review shows 'Vernon Means Business'.**

**Vernon, CA** – Vernon City Administrator Mark Whitworth today announced the City of Vernon has engaged noted attorney John Van de Kamp to serve as an Independent Ethics Advisor to the City of Vernon for the next year. Mr. Van de Kamp is a former California Attorney General, L.A. County District Attorney and California State Bar president. He is a highly respected authority on public policy and public affairs legal matters.

In his role as Independent Ethics Advisor, Mr. Van de Kamp will provide advice on a broad array of issues. He will independently review and assess Vernon's governance policies and practices as they relate to local government ethics, conflicts of interest, open government and transparency.

Mr. Van de Kamp will prepare a comprehensive initial report, as well as a final report, all with the goal of making recommendations on improving existing policies and procedures and further enhancing Vernon's municipal administration. Mr. Van de Kamp's engagement is subject to final approval by a vote of the Vernon City Council on February 15.

In order to perform his review, Mr. Van de Kamp will also be enlisting other prominent experts in the field of municipal governance and transparency in government, including Mr. Robert M. Stern, co-founder and president of Los Angeles-based Center for

*Exclusively Industrial*

Governmental Studies and former General Counsel of the California Fair Political Practices Commission (FPPC).

City Administrator Mark Whitworth said, “John Van de Kamp is a man of impeccable integrity and credentials, and unmatched experience. We value the opportunity to have someone of his caliber and qualifications advise us as we continue to look for ways to improve and enhance municipal governance in the City.”

“Vernon has not been standing still on municipal government reforms. In the past year, Vernon has taken a variety of actions, including limiting pay of city employees, creating an official city Internet website, posting salaries of all Vernon city officials on the city’s website, posting all City Council agendas on the city’s website, and undertaking a process to develop a comprehensive sustainability program,” Mr. Whitworth said.

“While Mr. Van de Kamp will focus on ethics, conflict of interest and open government issues, he will also examine how Vernon, retains consultants, and how the City authorizes payment or reimbursement of expenses, including payments or reimbursements to employees, consultants and affiliated parties,” Mr. Whitworth said.

“We believe that, with the changes and reforms enacted to date, Vernon already manages its affairs properly. But we are always looking for ways to improve. Consequently, we welcome whatever recommendations Mr. Van de Kamp may provide once he has had an adequate opportunity to conduct his review,” Mr. Whitworth said.

Mr. Whitworth said Vernon’s importance to the business community and workers throughout Los Angeles County and the Southern California region couldn’t be understated.

“Vernon was specially created in 1905 to create jobs in California. In 2011, Vernon’s 1,800 businesses generate 105,000 jobs in the Los Angeles region – including more than 50,000 jobs within our city’s boundaries. 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 and \$1.1 billion in taxable spending. ‘Vernon Means Business’,” Mr. Whitworth said.

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