

EXHIBIT M

**Statement of Corporation Counsel Stephen R. Patton
In Support of the Department of Law's
Proposed 2016 Budget**

October 9, 2015

Thank you for the opportunity to testify before you today in support of the Department of Law's ("DOL's") proposed 2016 budget.

My testimony is organized into six parts: Part I provides a brief overview of DOL's organization and the work it performs. Part II highlights some of DOL's work during the past year in building a better future for the City. Part III discusses DOL's recent successes in improving the quality of life of Chicago residents. Part IV provides recent examples of DOL actions to protect and recover taxpayer dollars. Part V describes some of the DOL initiatives to reduce the City's legal costs. Finally, Part VI provides highlights of the work of each of DOL's various divisions during the past year.

Like my previous statements, this statement is not limited to Law's proposed budget; it also provides an update on our successes during the past year, and our progress in achieving the goals and objectives detailed in my prior statements.

I. OVERVIEW OF DOL

DOL attorneys meet the City's legal needs in a wide array of areas. This includes police, tort, and employment litigation; municipal finance; affordable housing; aviation; civil rights; environmental law; and collective bargaining. The Department is fortunate to employ some of the City's most prolific and talented trial attorneys, as well as high-caliber transactional attorneys who finalize large, complex financial transactions for the City. All of this work is done for a fraction of what outside law firms would charge and by individuals whose institutional knowledge and experience results in high-quality work product and informed, solid advice.

The Department works closely with the Mayor's Office, City Departments, Boards and Commissioners, and the City Council: to protect public safety and maximize the quality of life of the City's citizens; to minimize the City's exposure to financial liability for claims and lawsuits; and to seek revenue and savings for the benefit of its taxpayers. In short, we seek to provide the City and its various departments, officials, and employees with the very best legal representation available, as efficiently and cost-effectively as possible.

II. BUILDING A BETTER FUTURE FOR CHICAGO

Below are the highlights of some of DOL's initiatives during the past year to build a better future for Chicago.

A. Helping to Secure the Barack Obama Presidential Center for Chicago

In December 2014, the Barack Obama Foundation announced that the University of Chicago's bid to host the Obama Presidential Center was in jeopardy because the University -- one of four finalists in the Foundation's competition to host the library -- did not own or control either of the sites it proposed in Washington and Jackson Parks. The Foundation subsequently made clear that in order for the University's bid to remain competitive, the City would need to develop a plan whereby it would acquire the sites in question and lease them to the Foundation. DOL attorneys worked over the Christmas and New Year holidays to research state law governing the use of park land and develop a plan and draft ordinances and an intergovernmental agreement whereby, if the University's bid were selected, the Chicago Park District would exercise its authority to transfer park land to the City, and the City in turn would exercise its authority to lease the land to the Foundation.

In January 2015, an ordinance was introduced authorizing the inter-governmental land transfer with the Chicago Park District, and that transfer was subsequently approved by the Chicago Plan Commission and the City Council after public hearings. Thereafter, DOL began negotiating the terms of a proposed ground lease and related transaction documents with the Obama Foundation to demonstrate the City's commitment to the project. Finally, last spring, to resolve any questions about the legality of using park land for the presidential center, DOL drafted legislation amending the State's Museum and Aquarium Act to expressly allow the long-term lease of park land for the center, which was subsequently signed into law in May.

B. Enhancing Neighborhoods by Reactivating Vacant Lots

DOL played a key role in facilitating a program to reactivate and improve hundreds of vacant lots the City has inherited from delinquent property owners over the years. Through its Large Lot Program, the City is transferring ownership of City-owned lots in economically challenged communities to nearby homeowners and not-for-profit organizations for \$1 per lot. DOL both drafted the ordinances to make this initiative possible and managed the legal closings of each property transfer.

Pursuant to this program parcels are conveyed to individuals or entities that already own property on the same block as the City parcel. Lot recipients are required to maintain them, and, for those lots that are not a side yard, to fence them in. By conveying the parcels, the City gives local residents greater control over land in their neighborhoods and further incentivizes residents to help revitalize their communities. At the same time, the program is reducing the City's costs for property maintenance and clean-up.

In December 2014, the City conveyed approximately 275 vacant parcels in the Englewood, West Englewood, Woodlawn, and Washington Park communities, as well as sections of the Greater Grand Crossing, New City, and Fuller Park areas. In April 2015, the City conveyed approximately 150 vacant parcels in the East Garfield Park and Greater Englewood community areas. Closings on an additional 90 lots in the Austin community are expected before