

# MEMORANDUM

Louisville Jefferson County  
Metro Government

**TO: METRO COUNCIL MEMBERS**

**FROM: COUNCILMAN STEVE MAGRE**

**DATE: 13 JULY 2015**

**RE: CITY HALL ENTRANCE**

As I understand it, the resolution that has been drafted by Dan Johnson concerning the issue of bringing back a security guard at the Congress Alley employees' only entrance will be heard sometime in July via the committee process. My point of view about this matter expands beyond the issue of staffing at the entrance. As one who came onto the council in 2015 as last one in; and as the one that will be leaving the council in 2015 as first one out; I concluded early that my best ability to serve effectively would be to take on "big picture" items only. I also realized that I am uniquely positioned. I can take issues on without regard to my needing to concern myself with actions that tie me to having a long tenure. It is from this base that I raise now another issue that I believe commands Metro Council attention. Right now (today) there is a lack of a warm, "sure glad you have come to City Hall" welcoming to all of our constituents and out of town visitors who choose to enter at street level with the purpose of coming to City Hall.

The relatively recent history that has allowed constituents to enter City Hall's first floor by climbing the 19 steps off 6<sup>th</sup> Street dates back to the 1990s. It was tied to a revamp construction project to create a grand welcoming to City Hall's historic and rightful Main Entrance. That re-opening was led by then Alderman Tom Owen. For the many of us who can move about easily, and are quite familiar with City Hall; this equated to a literal step up and into City Hall. But the reality of the many people who, for many reasons, can not traverse those steps meant that an option for ground floor entrance had to be assured. In the Board of Aldermen days that main street level entrance was off Congress Alley. The Jefferson Street entrance used now was also a "main general entrance". Both were staffed for security back then. Generally speaking, persons entering off Jefferson Street had interest in going to the offices that are located in the annexed area to City Hall, especially to the Finance Department. Those interested in Board of Aldermen business generally chose to enter off Congress Alley. They made this choice for good reason which will become clearer as I lay out my reasoning.

The choosing of Jefferson Street as the only main street level entrance to City Hall was not a good decision. The signage-markings inviting entrance along

Jefferson Street are non-serving, and more or less, non-existent. In short, a person trying to find the entrance will find it hard to find. Once making the entrance a person will have quite a trip to make it to City Hall offices. If a person is in a wheelchair it will turn into a long ride. This constituent will have to steer their wheelchair from the Jefferson Street entrance all the way to the Employee Entrance door that is off Congress Alley. Once to this door the person will have to turn their chair 180 degrees around a curve and then head south through a ramp system. At the end of this ramp the person will, at long last, come into the ground floor area of City Hall. He or she will find the elevators are to the right and vending machines to the front. What a welcoming! Suffice to say, this person has just entered into the most unattractive vestibule area in all of local government, and I do mean all! The flooring appears to be asbestos glued, very ugly worn and by today's standards, totally outdated. There are no welcoming signs near, or in front of the elevators, unless a series of vending machines are meant to serve this purpose. There really is need for new flooring put in at this ground floor entrance in front of the elevators. If that work was to be done then why not repaint the walls in this area to brighten up the welcoming? And why not have new large directional signage placed to allow constituents entering City Hall at this location to be able to determine their options so they know what button to push once in the elevator. Why not make persons as comfortable and as welcomed as those who traverse those 6<sup>th</sup> street steps?

Hard to believe but the non-welcoming attitude that prevails on the ground floor actually gets worse in the most real way possible. I sight the horrific conditions of the restrooms, or at least the Men's restroom. The needed change out of the flooring in the Men's Restroom area is the least of problems there. There is always in this room an "off limits" area marked with yellow caution tape, as if a crime had just taken place. Given the sickening odor (apparently rats do die) I would guess a crime happening in the room is possible. In a more serious vein, it is embarrassing that we would allow our constituents to enter such a facility particularly upon their entering City Hall. By the way, I am not willing to ask for help from any woman to check out the women's restroom on this floor. This would NOT be a gentlemanly thing to do. This men's restroom should either be modernized or closed.

To make clear, my main suggestion is for Metro Council to support changing the current Congress Alley "Employee Only Entrance" so it will once again be the main ground floor- street level entrance. The advantages are manifold. That person in a wheelchair would simply come through the Congress Alley entrance and go immediately to the ramp system that lands the individual to the ground floor vestibule area by the elevators. I will reiterate the advantages- There would be no 180 degree turn of the wheelchair required, and no rolling or motoring of the wheel chair indoors for a distance of ½ a city block. The next advantage, I share is not subtle either. Right now convincing people to enter to City Hall off Jefferson Street is a bit perplexing, and that is my being kind. This entrance door is at an inlet area along Jefferson Street. A quick walk will let you know that

many entrance doors on Jefferson Street, between 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> Streets, are right off the main sidewalk and have no concern over the hidden entrance problem an inlet causes. I also note that it is an entrance door that by its very location is misleading. It forces the person to enter at the very back/west side of City Hall. Any person not familiar with downtown when entering here really does not sense they are coming into City Hall or have easy access to enter into City Hall. Of course the fact is the person does not have easy access. Changing the main entrance to Congress Alley has many advantages, including easier access. The outdoor white brick wall next to the entrance offers ample space for clear and large welcoming signage. Such welcoming certainly does not exist today! In addition Congress Alley extends across 6<sup>th</sup> Street going east. Constituents walking this alley have easy access the main entrance of the downtown Clerk's Office on the north side and to the Mayor's office on the south side. It appears our forefathers/mothers named Congress Alley appropriately way back when. Assuring constituents the easiest and most clearly marked street level entrance to City Hall deserves to be a top priority we make sure happens. If this were to become a top common sense priority, then a full pledged entrance at Congress Alley is certainly the best option.





LOUISVILLE METRO HALL  
527  
WEST JEFFERSON STREET

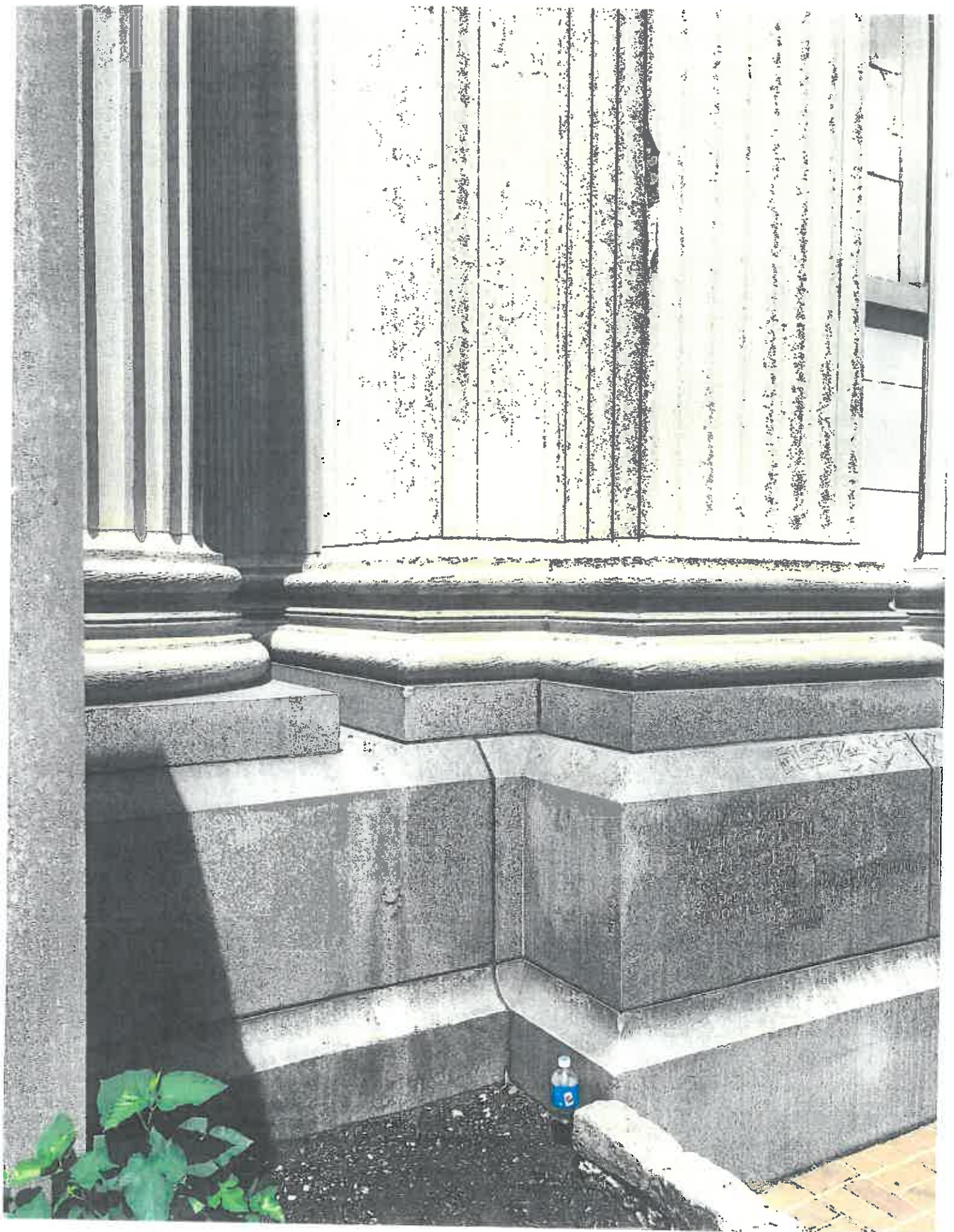
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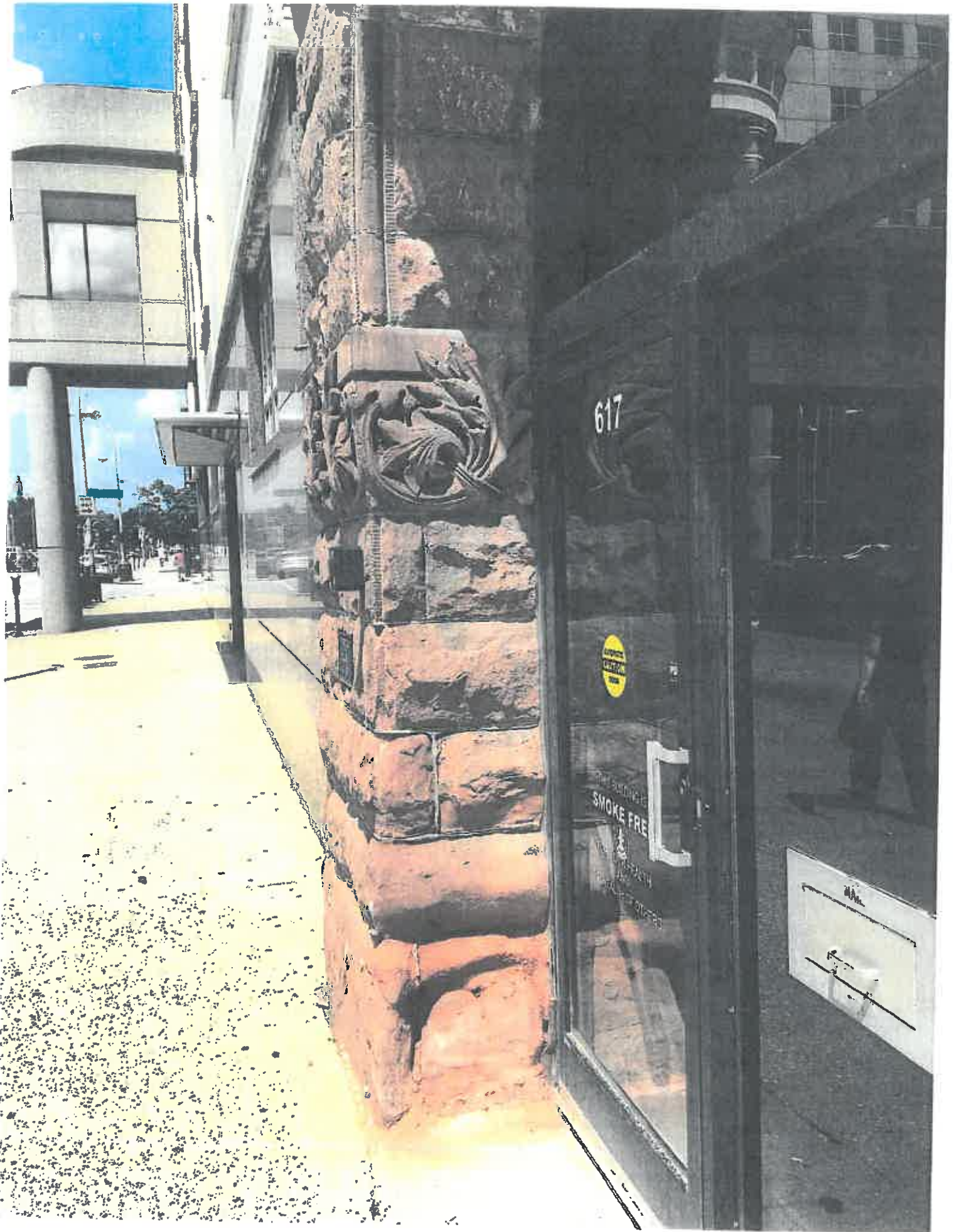
THIS BUILDING IS  
SMOKE FREE  
FOR YOUR HEALTH  
AND  
THE HEALTH OF  
THE COMMUNITY

  
**NO SMOKING**  
Smoking of tobacco products  
is prohibited within 50 feet  
of all entrances to  
Metro Government office  
buildings or workplaces.  


OFFICE OF  
PERFORMANCE  
IMPROVEMENT

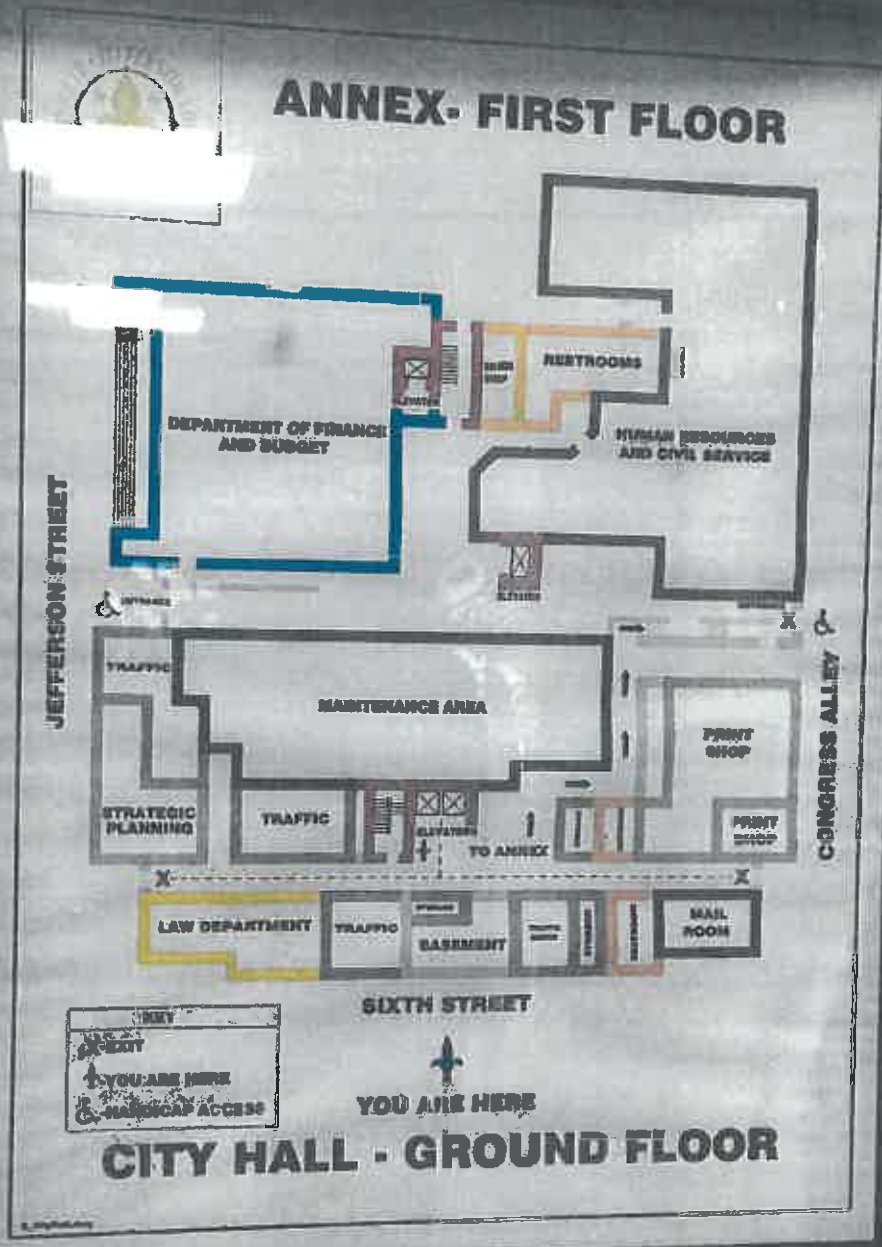








# ANNEX - FIRST FLOOR



**KEY**

- DEPT
- YOU ARE HERE
- HANDICAP ACCESS

**YOU ARE HERE**

# CITY HALL - GROUND FLOOR