



## Agenda Report

September 28, 2015

**TO:** Honorable Mayor and City Council

**THROUGH:** Economic Development and Technology Committee  
(September 10, 2015)

**FROM:** Planning & Community Development Department

**SUBJECT: HOUSING ELEMENT IMPLEMENTATION PROCESS**

### **RECOMMENDATION:**

It is recommended that the City Council approve the proposed Housing Element Implementation Process. The recommended implementation process includes the following:

1. Planning Commission as the oversight body for the implementation of the Housing Element;
2. Housing and Career Services Department to host biannual community workshops specifically on housing related issues;
3. Planning Commission to hold biannual commission meetings focusing on the Housing Element and other housing related issues;
4. Planning & Community Development Department to prepare a report to the Economic Development and Technology Committee (Ed Tech Committee) following each biannual Planning Commission meeting. In addition, the report sent to the Ed Tech Committee after the second biannual Planning Commission meeting will include a discussion on the effectiveness of the implementation process.

### **ED TECH COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION:**

On July 9, 2015, staff presented to the Ed Tech Committee an information item regarding the proposed Housing Element Implementation Process that was recommended by the Planning Commission. Members of public were invited to attend the meeting, and two public comments were received in support of creating a new housing commission. After careful consideration and discussion, the Committee concurred with the proposed Housing Element Implementation Process. However, as this was an informational presentation, no action of the Committee was taken.

On September 10, 2015, staff returned to the Ed Tech Committee for a formal action regarding this matter. While some members of the Committee expressed their support for a housing commission, the Ed Tech Committee ultimately approved the recommended implementation process unanimously, with an added request that there be an assessment on the effectiveness of the approved implementation process after one year.

**PLANNING COMMISSION RECOMMENDATION:**

On May 27, 2015 the Planning Commission voted (6-1 vote) to recommend that the City Council adopt an implementation process for the Housing Element that includes the following three components:

1. Planning Commission as the oversight body for the implementation of the Housing Element;
2. Housing and Career Services Department to host biannual community workshops specifically on housing related issues; and
3. Planning Commission to hold biannual commission meetings focusing on the Housing Element and other housing related issues.

In response to several comments received, the Planning Commission requested that the Housing Element annual report include additional information than what is required by the state. The Commission also requested that the agenda for biannual Planning Commission meetings be exclusive to affordable housing issues and that the schedule for these meetings (both Planning Commission and the community workshop) be established and presented to the City Council. Lastly, the Commission requested that staff be kept up to date with the state legislation related to housing.

The recommended implementation process would result in quarterly public meetings focusing on housing related issues, providing updates on the Housing Element and a forum to discuss community concerns.

**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:**

As part of 2014-2021 Housing Element adoption process, considerable discussion occurred regarding its implementation, with particular emphasis on which body would be charged with its oversight. In February 2014, the Planning & Community Development Department presented various alternatives for an oversight body for the implementation of the Housing Element to the City Council. The City Council forwarded the Housing Element implementation plan to the Ed Tech Committee for review and directed staff to return to Council with a formal recommendation. Based on Planning Commission's recommendation in May 2015 and the Ed Tech Committee's review in July 2015, it is recommended that the Planning Commission be designated as the oversight body for the Housing Element implementation, supplemented by biannual community workshops held by the Housing and Career Services Department, biannual Planning Commission meetings dedicated to housing issues, and a Planning & Community Development report to Ed Tech Committee following each biannual Planning Commission meeting.

## **BACKGROUND:**

On February 3, 2014 the City Council reviewed the Housing Element programs, along with an Implementation Plan that included the framework to establish the implementation process as well as a range of alternatives for an oversight body, which included: 1) New Housing Commission; 2) New Council Committee; 3) Existing Council Committee – Ed Tech Committee; 4) Planning Commission; 5) New Planning Commission Subcommittee; 6) New Committee of Planning Commissioners and Community Members; and 7) New Advisory Committee of approximately 20 persons. The City Council adopted the Housing Element and referred the Implementation Plan to the Ed Tech Committee for review and recommendation prior to final City Council action.

On April 16, 2014 the Ed Tech Committee reviewed the range of alternatives for an oversight body and the steps in developing a proposed implementation process, received public comments and provided direction to staff regarding the process for returning to the City Council with a formal recommendation on the Housing Element Implementation Process. In addition, the Committee noted that matters of jurisdiction, composition, and cost should be considered when determining the type of body that should monitor the implementation of the Housing Element.

Following the Ed Tech Committee meeting, a community workshop was held on July 14, 2014 to present the alternatives and to receive community comments. The community discussion focused on various issues and concerns related to the seven alternatives, along with other issues involved with affordable housing. The community workshop brought out a variety of comments on which body would be the most appropriate to oversee the Housing Element. The community generally supported the idea of establishing an oversight body whose focus would be the implementation of the Housing Element and housing issues in general. The community expressed a need to increase accountability for the implementation of the Goals of the Housing Element and to address affordable housing issues through regularly scheduled public meetings, where open discussion and education about housing and other related issues could occur.

## **ANALYSIS:**

### ***Oversight Body***

Pursuant to Pasadena Municipal Code Title 2, the purpose of the Planning Commission is to advise City Council on the preparation and review of the General Plan, as well as the adoption or implementation of programs under the plan. The Housing Element is a required element of the City's General Plan, as mandated by the State, and the Planning Commission has authority to monitor and review progress of implementation programs and objectives associated with all elements of the General Plan. The Planning Commission was actively involved in the adoption process of 2014-2021 Housing Element and played an essential role in its adoption. The Planning Commission functions as the oversight body for other elements of the City's General Plan (i.e. Land Use Element, and Open Space and Conservation Element), and the

Planning Commission should similarly oversee implementation of the Housing Element. It is also a common practice for cities that do not have an established housing commission to utilize the planning commission as a monitoring body for a housing element.

In addition, the Planning Commission is required to hold a minimum of one meeting per month that is open to public and subject to Ralph M. Brown Act. The Commission meetings are required to be publicly noticed and regularly scheduled meetings. Therefore, the Planning Commission meetings are an appropriate venue to gather community input and monitor the implementation of the Housing Element.

Six other alternatives for the oversight body, as previously mentioned under the Background Section, were also considered. Even though a new Housing Commission (Alternative 1) would allow a dedicated public platform to solicit community input on housing issues, it may be duplicative with Planning Commission's role of overseeing the General Plan implementation. The City's Housing and Career Services Department is also tasked exclusively with addressing housing issues in the City and reporting to the City Council through the City Manager. While the exact role of Housing Commissions varies from city to city, such a Commission would typically have jurisdiction well above and beyond providing oversight for the Housing Implementation Process. A new Housing Commission (depending on its purview) could also add additional layers of review and processing time for housing projects beyond the City's existing development review process. Finally, the process and time involved in establishing and seating a new City commission, along with identifying funding and staff resources to support an additional commission may be a difficult task for the City to undertake due to limited resources and the already ambitious work plan of applicable departments.

Alternatives 2, 3, 5, and 6 propose designating a Council committee, subcommittee or a subcommittee of the Planning Commission as an oversight body. Because a committee or a subcommittee is comprised of a limited number of members of the larger pertinent body, their discussions may not represent the opinion of the larger body. Additionally, already established subcommittees of City Council, such as Ed Tech Committee, already have regular and full agendas and expanding the scope of their purview may not allow them to allocate appropriate time and consideration of important housing issues. In addition, there were concerns about Alternatives 5 and 6 since a committee or a subcommittee of a commission may have irregular schedules, which could hinder public participation. Such concern was also raised in regards to Alternative 7, which proposed to create an advisory committee of 20 community members. Also, even though an advisory committee comprised of community members would garner broad input from the community and advise staff on variety of housing issues, it would not have an authority to implement the Housing Element or make official recommendations to City Council.

For these reasons, it was determined that the Planning Commission would be the most appropriate oversight body for the specific task of monitoring the implementation of the Housing Element, which is an element of the City's General Plan.

As the oversight body, the Planning Commission would receive the Annual Progress Report for the Housing Element by the end of March each year to review and monitor progress of implementation programs of the Housing Element (Attachment A). The Planning Commission will make recommendations to the City Council regarding additions, deletions or amendments to the implementation programs if deemed necessary. Furthermore, the Planning Commission will receive summaries of the biannual community workshops from the Housing and Career Services Department, and make recommendations to the City Council based on the community input if necessary.

### ***Regular Housing Meetings***

During the Community Workshop in July 2014 and the Planning Commission meeting in May 2015, a range of other issues related to affordable housing were discussed, which demonstrated that there is community interest in establishing a public venue to discuss housing related issues supplemental to the Housing Element.

Therefore, a minimum of two community workshops a year hosted by the Housing and Career Services Department to convene advocates, stakeholders, and members of the public to discuss various housing issues, including affordable housing issues are proposed. These workshops would be widely advertised to garner community participation.

In addition, biannual meetings of the Planning Commission related to an update and discussion of the implementation of the Housing Element are proposed as part of the implementation process. These meetings may be supplemented with commission meetings related to Zoning Code Amendments needed to implement the Housing Element, including topics such as second units, inclusionary housing, etc.

To facilitate communication between the community and the City, a summary of the community workshops would be reported to the Planning Commission, which may include recommendations and action items if appropriate. This process would allow the Planning Commission to be updated with the feedback from the community on various housing issues and priorities. Also, a report will be provided to the Ed Tech Committee following each biannual Planning Commission meeting to provide an update.

### ***Schedule of Biannual Meetings***

As requested by the Planning Commission, the proposed schedules for the biannual meetings are as follows:

- Planning Commission meetings: April and October of each year. The tentative dates for next two meetings are October 28, 2015 and April 13, 2016. Also, there may be additional meetings scheduled if deemed necessary.
- Community workshops: These meeting will occur prior to the Planning Commission meetings. The tentative dates for the next two meetings are October 21, 2015 and March 23, 2016.

### **Comments**

- **Planning Commission Meeting:** There were a number of public comments received during the May 27, 2015 Planning Commission meeting. A total of 12 speakers spoke in favor of creating a new Housing Commission that is dedicated to addressing implementation of the Housing Element and other housing related issues including affordable housing issues. A number of members from the audience also echoed support for a new housing commission. The Planning Commission concurred that housing is an important issue to the City that must be thoughtfully addressed; however, the Planning Commission was concerned about the existing number of City commissions and advisory bodies, the implications of creating a new commission (e.g. time and cost), the effectiveness of a new commission, and issues involved with separating land use and housing issues.
- **Ed Tech Committee Meetings:** At the July 9, 2015 meeting, two public speakers spoke in favor of creating a housing commission, and emphasized the importance of addressing housing related issues including affordable housing issues. At the September 10, 2015 meeting, three public speakers spoke in favor of creating a housing commission, and two public speakers spoke in favor of designating the Planning Commission as the oversight body. While some members of the Ed Tech Committee expressed their support for a Housing Commission, the challenges associated with creating a new commission were recognized. Ultimately, the Ed Tech Committee concurred that proposed process should provide sufficient opportunity for the public and the City to discuss the Housing Element and other housing issues. Additionally, in an effort to address housing issues more effectively, the Ed Tech Committee requested that a report be provided to the Ed Tech Committee following each biannual Planning Commission meeting to provide update and that there be an assessment on the effectiveness of the approved implementation process after one year.

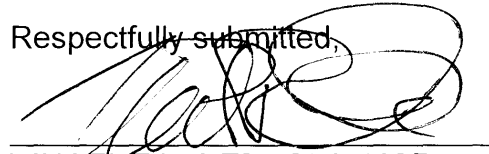
### **ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS:**

In accordance with Section 15061 (b)(3) of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Guidelines, projects that have the potential for causing a significant effect on the environment are subject to CEQA. Establishing an implementation process for the Housing Element will not have a significant effect on the environment because the action will not result in or lead to a physical change in Pasadena. Therefore, no additional environmental review is needed at this time.

**FISCAL IMPACT:**

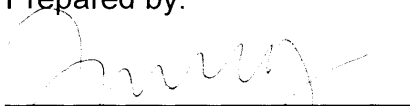
There is no fiscal impact as a result of this action. The costs associated with this work item are included as part of the Planning & Community Development Department's operating budget.

Respectfully submitted,



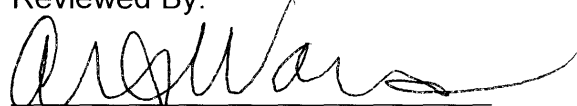
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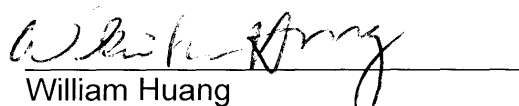
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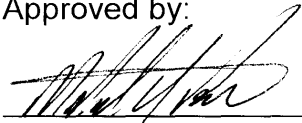
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Attachment (1):

Attachment A - Housing Element Implementation Programs