

Agenda Report

TO: CITY COUNCIL

FROM: MAYOR HOLDEN

SUBJECT: STREAMLINING OF DEVELOPMENT PROCESSING
FOR MAJOR PROJECTS

RECOMMENDATION:

It is recommended that the City Council:

- 1) Approve the attached proposal to streamline development processing with the elimination of the provision for a "preliminary endorsement" by the Community Development Commission;
- 2) Direct the City Attorney to amend section 17.84.040 (Predevelopment Plan Review) of the Pasadena Municipal Code to reflect the new procedures; and,
- 3) Direct the City Manager to develop administrative guidelines for this new process as appropriate.

BACKGROUND:

On May 11, 1998 a proposal was presented to the Community Development Commission to streamline the development processing of major projects. Major projects were defined as any nonresidential project of 100,000 square feet or more which requires either city financial assistance or two or more discretionary actions. It was proposed that before beginning the standard review process, major projects would be brought to the Community Development Commission to determine routing through the appropriate advisory bodies and to impose review schedules. This step will focus and expedite advisory body reviews, eliminate overlap between these bodies and clarify roles and relationships of the advisory bodies to one another.

Since the May 11 presentation, the proposal has been reviewed by the city's advisory commissions and the City Attorney's Office. Comments from the advisory commissions are included in a separate agenda report to be presented this evening. Comments from the City Attorney's Office are attached and are discussed within this report.

As proposed, the Community Development Commission review would serve four purposes: 1) to review the project and provide some form of preliminary endorsement, 2) to identify areas of emphasis or issues which are of concern to the Commission, 3) to delegate these areas of emphasis or issues to specific advisory bodies, and 4) to specify a time frame by which each commission must complete their deliberations.

Although this initial review is not intended to provide any formal approval, the City Attorney's office has determined that, based on case law, the CDC may not evaluate the project merits at this time and may not make any form of "preliminary endorsement." As stated in the attached memo from the attorney's office, dated June 1, 1998, ". . . the final decision making body may only make a decision after the application has been fully processed. It may not be biased nor may it make a cognitive decision to pre-approve or deny an application."

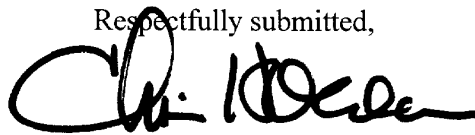
The Community Development Commission may direct the advisory body process through identification of broad issues, delegation to additional advisory bodies and establishment of deadlines. When identifying "areas of emphasis" for review by commissions, the CDC may identify broad issues of concern. For example, the Commission may refer a project to the Transportation Advisory Commission because of traffic issues in the neighborhood. In addition to the authority granted to commissions by the Municipal Code, the Commission may also assign additional authority if needed. The Commission may also determine time frames during which each advisory body must complete their deliberations, notwithstanding any superseding state law (such as CEQA). In the event that an advisory body does not meet the deadline, the Commission would have the option of extending the deadline or proceeding with the project without opinion from that advisory body.

The amendment of PMC Code section 17.84.040 (Predevelopment Plan Review) provides the administrative mechanism to present major projects to the Community Development Commission and to initiate this expedited process.

FISCAL IMPACT:

There may be a minimal fiscal impact due to a possible increase in staff time to coordinate and attend an additional project meeting. It is estimated that there will be no more than ten projects meeting the "major project" definition in the coming year.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Chris Holden". The signature is stylized and cursive.

Chris Holden
Mayor

Attachments:

1. Agenda Report to the Community Development Commission
2. Memorandum to the City Attorney's Office