Agenda Report

TO: CITY COUNCIL **DATE:** AUGUST 17, 1998

FROM: PLANNING COMMISSION
DESIGN COMMISSION
CULTURAL HERITAGE COMMISSION
TRANSPORTATION ADVISORY COMMISSION

SUBJECT: STREAMLINING DEVELOPMENT PROCESSING OF MAJOR PROJECTS – RECOMMENDATIONS AND COMMENTS FROM PLANNING COMMISSION, DESIGN COMMISSION, CULTURAL HERITAGE COMMISSION, TRANSPORTATION ADVISORY COMMISSION AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

RECOMMENDATION: The recommendations from the Planning Commission, Design Commission, Cultural Heritage Commission, Transportation Advisory Commission and the Community Development Committee are presented below.

BACKGROUND: On May 11, 1998, the Mayor introduced a proposal to streamline the processing of major development projects. The proposal generally included a threshold for defining major projects; an initial review by the City Council, acting in its role as the Community Development Commission, to identify issues, delegate the review of these issues to designated commissions, and establishing a review schedule. The Council referred this proposal to the five affected commissions (Planning; Design; Cultural Heritage; Transportation Advisory and the Community Development Committee), and requested comments and recommendations in approximately 60 days.

Planning Commission:

On June 24, 1998, the commissions staffed by the Planning & Permitting Department (Planning, Design and Cultural Heritage) held a joint meeting to discuss the Mayor's proposal. Each of these commissions developed their comments at subsequent individual meetings.

On August 12, 1998, the Planning Commission approved a letter to the City Council outlining their response to the Mayor's proposal (Attachment 1). This response reiterates the Planning Commission's original comments on the "major projects" issue, dated May 15, 1997 (included in Attachment 1). The Planning Commission does not believe that the limits being proposed and suggested in the proposal would improve the process for the City of Pasadena. The Planning Commission concurs with the City Council's goal of improving processing of major projects, but believes the completion of the specific plans; design guidelines and the zoning code revision are the key components to improving the review of development projects. In addition, the Planning Commission offered to host a joint meeting with the Council to continue and expand on this discussion.

Cultural Heritage Commission:

On July 6, 1998 the Cultural Heritage Commission adopted the following recommendation:

a) Endorsed the proposal to hold a workshop between the City Council and the Cultural Heritage Commission, Design Commission, and Planning Commission to discuss reviews of major projects; and
b) Authorized one member (Robert Winter) to draft a letter on this subject, to circulate it among commission members, and to forward it to the City Council (Attachment 2).

Design Commission:

On July 13, 1998 the Design Commission approved the following recommendation:

a) Endorsed recommendations from the Planning Commission, specifically the proposal to hold workshop between the City Council and the commissions; and
b) Agreed to send a letter to the City Council (Attachment 3).

Transportation Advisory Commission:

At their June 12th regular meeting, TAC's comments centered on their desire to become involved at the beginning of development projects, rather than after the whole project has been designed and gone through other Commissions. Their action from that meeting is as follows:

TAC recommends that all projects submit a transportation/traffic impact analysis with initial project scope. This analysis should include any mitigation solutions. The traffic/transportation impact analysis should be forwarded to the Director of PW&T for decision as to whether the mitigation solutions are appropriate and if project should be determined "major". If "major" then the project should go to the TAC for review and public hearing, PRIOR TO SUBMISSION OF PROJECT TO OTHER COMMISSIONS, CITY COUNCIL ETC. This will enable identification of traffic and transportation issues and proposed resolution, which have been the major sticking point on recent development projects, up front. Once traffic and transportation issues are resolved then other Commissions can better review and consider with full and clear understanding of mitigation measures to be employed.

Although TAC left the decision as to the definition of Major Project to the discretion of the City Council, City Attorney and Planning Department, TAC stated that traffic and transportation impacts should be considered in the definition as even a "minor" project could result in significant traffic/transportation impact on a surrounding area.

Community Development Committee

The Community Development Committee is scheduled to consider the issue of streamlining major projects processing at their meeting of August 13, 1998. Its action will be transmitted to the City Council in a separate memo.

Respectfully submitted,

Fred G. Zepeda, Chair
Planning Commission

Bill Fay, Chair
Design Commission

Dale Trader, Chair
Cultural Heritage Commission

David Worrell, Chair
Transportation Advisory Commission