

# Agenda Report

**TO:** COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT  
COMMISSION

**DATE:** MAY 11, 1998

**FROM:** CHAIR HOLDEN

**SUBJECT:** DISCUSSION OF CITY COUNCIL AS COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT  
COMMISSION AND ITS ROLE IN STREAMLINING DEVELOPMENT  
PROCESSING OF MAJOR PROJECTS

## RECOMMENDATION OF CHAIR HOLDEN:

Direct the Chief Executive Officer to work with the General Counsel to develop revisions to the appropriate city ordinances to establish a new procedure for the review of major development projects, as outlined in this report.

## BACKGROUND

In an effort to expedite the process for dealing with major projects in the City, the Cityscape Master Committee (made up of the Mayor, Vice Mayor, City Manager and the Chairs of Planning, Design, Cultural Heritage and Transportation Advisory commissions and the Community Development Committee) was reconstituted last year. However, in light of the issues which grew out of the South Lake project, it would seem clear that there is a need for additional change to the current process; a change which would be more inclusive of community input while providing the developer a level of comfort as to the process and a defined timeline.

It would appear that we need to make a change now, with the advent of the redevelopment of the Plaza Pasadena, the development recommendations from the City Center Task Force, and other developments coming into the City. The City needs an effective process that takes a reasonable period of time.

The proposal outlined below involves the City Council acting in its capacity as the Community Development Commission. As you know, the Community Development Commission was established by the City Council in 1981 as a successor to the Pasadena Redevelopment Agency. Although its focus is on redevelopment and housing authority matters, Section 2.10.080 (A) also specifies:

"....the purpose of the commission is to exercise any other powers regarding community development which the board of directors may desire to delegate to the commission subject to such conditions as may be imposed by the board of directors."

This language seems to provide a basis for the Community Development Commission to take a more active role in the processing of major development projects in the city.

### PROPOSAL

It would be my recommendation that all major development projects should first be channeled through the Community Development Commission (the "Commission"), and that the Commission would then set the process and time frame for the project to be heard by the appropriate commissions. The key components of this process are: 1) definition of "major project;" and, 2) initial consideration by City Council, acting in its capacity as the Community Development Commission. The Commission will determine the scope of the issues, "areas of emphasis," and policy parameters which will shape commission review and will delegate specific advisory responsibilities to appropriate commissions with a concomitant time frame for them to complete their reviews in order to permit City Council action in a timely manner.

**Definition of Major Project:** There are obviously many different ways to define a major project: square footage, height or other size-related threshold; complexity of the project as characterized by the presence of multiple uses; whether an EIR is required; whether multiple discretionary reviews are needed; or whether city assistance is required, for example. Given the nature of the reviews for Hastings Village (300,000 square feet) and South Lake (150,000 square feet), I would suggest defining "major development projects" as: any nonresidential project of 100,000 square feet or more which requires *either* city financial assistance *or* two or more discretionary actions. Both Hastings Village and South Lake were characterized by both two or more discretionary reviews AND city financial assistance by way of sales tax sharing agreements. The 100,000 square foot threshold would seem to encompass significant projects while recognizing possible impacts on nearby residential areas.

**Initial Consideration by the Commission:** When a project meets the threshold identified above, the proposal would be brought to the Commission for initial review. The purpose of this step is fourfold: First, to review the project and provide some form of preliminary conceptual endorsement for the project to move forward. Second, to identify "areas of emphasis" or issues which which the Commission will seek the advice of designated advisory bodies. Third, to delegate these specific "areas of emphasis" and issues to specific advisory bodies in order to clarify which bodies are to provide advice on particular issues. And, finally, to specify a time frame by which each commission must complete their deliberations to enable final action by the City Council.

This "initial consideration" is not intended to provide any kind of formal, legal approval, only to provide preliminary review of the project and to identify the specific issues to addressed prior to final City Council action. However, it is intended to focus and expedite advisory body reviews on specific issues, eliminate any overlap between these bodies and to clarify the roles and reporting relationships of the advisory bodies to one another. Just as important, it is also intended to hold each advisory body accountable for the time frame established by the Commission; if an advisory body does not act within this schedule, they will have waived their ability to advise the City Council on that project. It should also be kept in mind that the time frame established

by the Commission can never be less than what is required to provide the appropriate environmental clearance for the project (i.e., the time frame will be dependent on whether an EIR is required).

**Cityscape Master Committee:** Under this proposal, the Cityscape Master Committee would continue to serve as a forum for the chairs of the Planning, Design, Cultural Heritage and Transportation Advisory commissions, and the Community Development Committee.

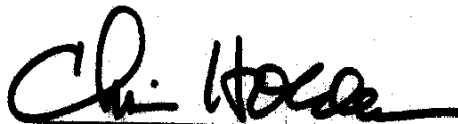
The original Master Committee met monthly from 1981 to 1994 to promote communication between city advisory bodies on land use and development issues. Essentially informal in nature, it provided a useful source of coordination and troubleshooting regarding development projects and planning efforts involving review by more than one advisory body.

It was reactivated in 1997 as a result of the City Council's decision on Major Projects, and met three times last fall to discuss the South Lake project. The Cityscape Master Committee meets on an "as-needed" basis when to discuss coordinated processing of major projects.

Under this proposal, major projects, as defined, could be scheduled for informal discussion by the Master Committee after Predevelopment Plan Review, with a recommendation being provided to the Commission as part of the initial consideration step.

**Revisions to City Ordinances:** The legal ramifications of a review process outlined in this report would need to be researched and, if implemented, could require several changes to city ordinances as well as coordination with state law requirements. In general, the Administrative Provisions in Title 17 (Zoning Code) may need revisions, as well as Title 2 (Organization and Administration, which deals with purposes of advisory bodies). Related state law provisions may include Planning and Zoning Laws (including the Permit Streamlining Act) and the California Environmental Quality Act. I would recommend that the Commission direct the Chief Executive Officer and General Counsel to work together to provide a legal review and produce the requisite code amendments to incorporate the proposal outlined in this report.

Respectfully submitted,



Chris Holden  
Chair, Community Development Commission