

MOTION PLANNING & LAND USE MANAGEMENT

MAR 25 2009

When a proposed development project does not conform to existing zoning requirements, certain conditions may be imposed to ensure that it meets general compliance with the City's General Plan. Planning authorities issue land-use permits, or entitlements, to the applicant once conditions of approval have been met. The approval process for these types of discretionary development projects may contain several layers of decision making, which can include the Director of Planning, Zoning Administrator, Area Planning Commission, City Planning Commission, or the City Council.

An audit recently released by the City Controller, entitled "Performance Audit of the City of Los Angeles' Process for Planning Conditions for Development," found that the City does not have an adequate process for reviewing, approving, and overseeing development projects to ensure that the final project conforms with the intent of the decision maker. In the absence of a single point of management, development projects can materially change during project plan review, construction and completion. This can result in the final project being different from the project as it was approved by the decision maker.

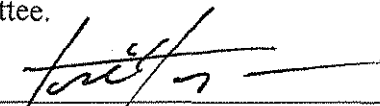
To make the approval process more efficient for developers, the City has centralized its permitting process through "One-Stop Centers" to expedite obtaining all necessary permits, which assists the needs of developers. This same rationale, of consolidating and standardizing processes between departments, should be applied to improve processes on behalf of decision makers. Oversight of a development project must ensure that a project, as it evolves through the various approval stages, meets the intent of each decision maker.

The Controller audit also recommends that the Mayor's "12 to 2 Committee," which is charged with improving interdepartmental processes for development approval and oversight, consider this issue. Additional consideration should be given to the City's "Development Reform Committee" report issued in 1995, which contained 83 recommendations to attract and retain businesses and developers. A review of this report is pending in Council's Jobs, Business Growth and Tax Reform Committee.

I THEREFORE MOVE that the Department of City Planning, with the assistance of the Department of Building and Safety and the Board of Public Works, be instructed to report on the following: (1) methods to ensure better coordination between departments during the entitlement process, and (2) how to establish clearer and more standardized conditions of approval to ensure that development projects remain consistent with the intent of each decision maker during the permitting process.

I FURTHER MOVE that this report be included in response to the City Controller's "Performance Audit of the City of Los Angeles' Process for Planning Conditions for Development," which will be considered by Council's Audits and Governmental Efficiency Committee, and Planning and Land Use Management Committee.

PRESENTED BY: _____


JOSE HUIZAR
Councilmember, 14th District

SECONDED BY: _____



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