

MOTION

Land Use Reform – Increasing Transparency

On August 24, 2016 the Director of Planning initiated a Processes and Procedures Ordinance that would amend the Los Angeles Municipal Code to systematically reorganize the administrative provisions of the Zoning Code (CF: 12-0460-S4). The purpose of this ordinance is for the public to have a user-friendly and consistent set of administrative provisions that clearly outline the processes and procedures for project review.

The type of actions outlined in the Processes and Procedures Ordinance such as General Plan and Zoning Code amendments allow for changes to established zoning. From November 2016 to February 2020, these types of actions have gone to the City Planning Commission 135 times.

In many cases these entitlements are warranted due to the city's outdated zoning code, which makes many projects, particularly housing, infeasible. There are also situations where projects, such as industrial facilities, are proposed which can have an adverse affect on nearby residents. In these situations the land use process allows Council Offices to advocate on behalf of their constituents to reduce impacts.

However, the sheer volume of entitlements can also erode public trust. Without clear established criteria, the public is left wondering how certain projects were allowed to be built in their communities. For this reason, it is necessary to provide additional criteria in the Processes and Procedures Ordinance on when legislative actions and other entitlements can occur. This will give more discretion to the Planning Department to make sure these actions align with broader city goals and the public interest. This will also provide more transparency to the public when a project can diverge from existing zoning.

As a result of the outdated code and administrative processes, Council Offices have to play a more active role in some projects. This type of involvement results in communications between a Council Office and development team. In order to bring more transparency to the interactions between Council Offices and developers, the City should establish protocols for these meetings.

I THEREFORE MOVE that the City Planning Department, in coordination with the Chief Legislative Analyst, update the Processes and Procedures Ordinance with additional criteria on when entitlements such as legislative actions and Conditional Use Permits will be granted and should restrict actions from moving forward unless it can be established that they are in the public interest or otherwise adhere to established policies of the city.

I FURTHER MOVE that the City Planning Department, in coordination with the Chief Legislative Analyst, establish new protocols around communication between developers

AUG 19 2020



and council offices that takes place outside official meetings or hearings, these protocols should ensure that discussions between developers and council offices take place transparently and with appropriate disclosures.

PRESENTED BY: 
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