Item No. 10
Supplemental Material
For
City of Sacramento
Planning and Design Commission
Agenda Packet

For the Meeting of: April 23, 2020

☐ Additional Material
☐ Revised Material

Contact Information: Garrett Norman, Associate Planner, 916-808-7934
gnorman@cityofsacramento.org

Project Name: Ad Hoc Ordinance Streamlining the Planning Entitlement Process (M19-004)

Subject: Additional Community Comments

Attached includes all comments, including eComments, received from the community after publication of the staff report. Comments are as of 12:00pm on April 23, 2020.
Annette Emery at April 23, 2020 at 11:42am PDT
Planning by its very nature, takes time to complete. With this time of staying indoors, it is difficult to focus on planning going out in the wider neighborhood. I live in a neighborhood (River Gardens between Garden Highway and West El Camino) that has seen a flurry of new houses go up. I realize that housing is needed but none of the houses reflect the character of the neighborhood. Also, all are selling for more than $350,000 and many are inhabited by more than one family due to the cost. I would appreciate putting off changes to the Planning Entitlement Process until the neighbors have a chance to get together and look at the effect of the Planning Process on our and surrounding neighborhoods. Thank you.

Heather Fargo at April 23, 2020 at 8:50am PDT
I strongly urge the Planning and Design Commission to defer a decision on this item until a time when the public can participate actively in the meeting. This is a major change to how the citizens of Sacramento have helped to plan their city. This new process would be a big loss of input and influence by Sacramento residents and their elected city council members on development in their districts and city wide.
Streamlining of planning decisions should not be done by excluding public participation. thank you. Heather Fargo

Jackie Whitlam at April 22, 2020 at 4:43pm PDT
Jackie Whitlam
Location:
Submitted At: 8:44pm 04-07-20
I know this action is the culmination of a thorough process that has sought to ensure multiple public policy goals are met. With clear design guidelines in place, I am generally comfortable with the delegation of hearings to the staff and Director levels. However, I suggest that the skills we are all developing in participating in on-line meetings be used to make the Directors meetings more accessible to the public and; that an on-going process to monitor and report compliance with design guidelines be effected.

Deborah Condon at April 22, 2020 at 10:13am PDT
I support the streamlining. Sacramento needs to meet its State target for infill and housing construction. We are in both a climate and housing crisis. Streamlining is more necessary than ever as we as a City come out of the COVID19 pandemic and need to restart and build quickly to jump start the economy. The streamlining proposal provides public access through opened hearings. It includes enhanced notification and an appeal process. Many of the processes were proven to work in Portland. Lets go forward with an improved and expedient permitting process.

Anonymous Anon at April 21, 2020 at 11:32am PDT
Many of these comments of opposition are well intention-ed, but nevertheless misinformed. If you read through the staff report, this streamlining effort is removing burdensome red tape that is preventing many projects that are good for the city from getting built due to a few loud voices in the community. If you read the staff report, it clearly states that the affected planning project types will still be heard at a public hearing, though smaller, members of the public are still allowed to comment and influence the project. Projects can always be appealed to planning commission if necessary. Not only are we in a housing crisis, but we may be slipping into a period of economic recession as a result of this COVID crisis. so this streamlining effort is essential for Sacramento's resiliency and economic growth.
Earl Lagomarsino at April 20, 2020 at 9:07am PDT
Do not approve this anti-democratic ordinance, or you will be removed from office democratically!

L Pankey at April 20, 2020 at 8:16am PDT
It seems incredibly dangerous to remove or reduce the public oversight and input on Sacramento's development projects. The reduction of public participation, and the inequitable access of ability to respond when citizens have concerns for a project is not how you build a "world class city" it's the makings for building a "playground for the rich". We want our voices to easily be heard.

Gordon Lew at April 20, 2020 at 1:43am PDT
I am opposed to any streamlining of the planning process. Without proper transparency this would not be a democratic process. Many district 2 neighborhoods may not have internet access or know about e comments. I urge you to hold this item until more constituents can access and participate in this matter. I urge the alcohol portion should not be in the streamlining process it should stay with the planning commission.

Ski Taylor at April 19, 2020 at 10:59pm PDT
No streamlining the planning process! Let the voices be heard.

KC Schuft at April 19, 2020 at 10:39pm PDT
Absolutely oppose this!! This should not be on this agenda at this time. Our democratic process is still in place and deserves public scrutiny.

Kathy Blackburn at April 19, 2020 at 10:22am PDT
“Streamlining” must not mean removal from public scrutiny. This will remove public comment and disallow the democratic process by withholding information from the general public.

Jane Macaulay at April 17, 2020 at 1:59pm PDT
Please consider holding this item until more neighbors can participate in the discussion. Many district 2 and other area neighbors do not have sufficient internet access and may not even know about the e-comment ability. I would also request that the alcohol portion be removed from this streamlining process and that all approvals remain at the planning commission level. Thank you
April 23, 2020

City of Sacramento Planning & Design Commission
c/o Mr. Garrett Norman
300 Richards Boulevard, Third Floor
Sacramento, CA 95811

RE – April 23rd Public Hearing Item #10: Ad Hoc Ordinance Streamlining the Planning Entitlement Process (M19-004)

Dear Chair Ogilvie and Commissioners,

On behalf of the members of the California Apartment Association (CAA), I am writing to express our strong support for streamlining the City of Sacramento’s planning entitlement process.

CAA is the largest statewide rental housing trade association in the country, representing over 50,000 single family and multi-family apartment owners and property managers who are responsible for over 2 million affordable and market-rate rental units throughout California.

The current COVID-19 pandemic’s threat to public health has also threatened the City’s economic health. The recommended actions would expedite construction of critical facilities, housing, and economic recovery for the whole community. These proposed steps will go a long way to facilitate the construction of much-needed housing in Downtown Sacramento.

To address the City’s critical need for housing, policies that seek to streamline and expedite the entitlement process are crucial. By implementing fundamental changes to the entitlement process, the recommendations in the Ad Hoc Ordinance Streamlining the Planning Entitlement Process will result in more housing by reducing both time and application costs. The proposed amendments will reduce total entitlement processing time and application costs for projects that are compatibly zoned and meet all the City’s development standards and design guidelines.

The recommendations included in this ordinance are the result of many hours of outreach between the City, stakeholders and the public, and will result in new, smart and sustainable growth in our urban core.

Thank you for your time and consideration, we urge you to adopt the Ad Hoc Ordinance Streamlining the Planning Entitlement Process.

Sincerely,

Mallori Spilker
Vice President of Public Affairs
California Apartment Association
916.449.6456
Honorable Alix Ogilvie, Chair and Planning & Design Commissioners,

This email is sent to you in support of the Ad Hoc Ordinance Streamlining the Planning Entitlement Process scheduled for your Commission hearing on April 23, 2020. This ordinance will greatly streamline the planning entitlement process and allow for the production of more highly-needed housing in the City of Sacramento.

Accelerating the entitlement process and reducing unnecessary delays for projects is extremely important so that the supply of needed housing can be produced efficiently and quickly, which will also promote the City’s housing and environmental goals.

This ordinance is supported by numerous business, builder and housing-advocacy organizations.

We all appreciate the City’s leadership in encouraging this important measure to be considered and adopted. I strongly support this ordinance and recommends its approval.

Thank you.

Brian Holloway

*** Please note my new email address ***

brian@holloway.co

916-996-2019
FYI

Sent from my iPad

Begin forwarded message:

From: Karen Jacques <threegables1819@gmail.com>
Date: April 22, 2020 at 11:28:43 PM PDT
To: Stacia Cosgrove <SCosgrove@cityofsacramento.org>
Subject: Fwd: M19-004 Ad Hoc Ordinance Streamlining the Planning Entitlement Process

I tried to send the forwarded email to Garrett Norman, but apparently had the wrong address since it came back as undeliverable. Please share it with him. Thank-you for your assistance.

Begin forwarded message:

From: Karen Jacques <threegables1819@gmail.com>
Subject: M19-004 Ad Hoc Ordinance Streamlining the Planning Entitlement Process
Date: April 22, 2020 at 11:18:51 PM PDT
To: Garrett Norman <gnorman@cityofsacramento.org>
Cc: Cornelius Burke <cburke.realestate@gmail.com>, Douglas Covill <dcovill@cbnorcal.com>, William Farrell <wdfarrell@hotmail.com>, Nicolina Hernandez <pdc.nicolina@gmail.com>, Todd Kaufman <todd.s.kaufman@gmail.com>, Lynn Lenzi <lynnlenzi2@gmail.com>, Darryl Lucien <darryl.lucien@gmail.com>, Alix Ogilvie <aogilvie.sacpdc@gmail.com>, Phil Pluckebaum <phil.pluckebaum@gmail.com>, Kendra Reed <kreed.pdc@gmail.com>, Jia Wang-Connelly <wangconnellypdc@gmail.com>, Joe Yee <jyeepdc@gmail.com>

Garrett Norman, Associate Planner
Community Development Department
300 Richards Blvd.
Sacramento, CA 95811

Dear Mr. Norman,
I am writing to request that the Planning and Design Commission defer any decision on this item until the public has the opportunity to give testimony, either in person or virtually. The Ad Hoc Streamlining Ordinance represents a major change in the public’s ability to have input on proposed projects and completely eliminates Conditional Use Permits for a variety of businesses, including alcohol. It is a controversial ordinance that has been under consideration for a long time. Adopting it does not appear to be an urgent matter and no justification has been given for rushing it through in the middle of the coronavirus pandemic when the public does not have the opportunity to provide meaningful input.

The proposed ordinance will lead to major changes of the planning process that must be fully addressed before it is adopted.

__ It moves decisions regarding development projects of any size, including large projects with significant deviations from the General Plan and Zoning Code, from commission to director level. In so doing it greatly limits the public’s ability to participate because, unlike commission hearings that take place in the evening in council chambers at City Hall, director level hearings take place during the day at the Community Development Department in a hearing room that can only accommodate a small number of people. It also leaves the public with no way to appeal any project, no matter how large or how controversial, to the City Council.

__ It calls for a design committee that will meet informally behind closed doors and make decisions about project design. This leaves the public with absolutely no say about the design of projects that we will have to live with for years or decades. The design review process was already compromised when the City went from Design Commission, to a Design and Planning Commission where design often got short shrift. The proposed ordinance compromises the design process even further and appears to violate the Brown Act.

__ Years ago there was an early review process where project applicants met with the appropriate neighborhood association and/or neighbors who would be impacted by the project. Often these meetings took place before a project was formally submitted and often the staff member assigned to the project was also present. It was a constructive process that resulted in improved projects and gave people a real voice. That process was done away with several years ago and now an applicant just checks a box indicating whether he or she met with neighbors. The answer is almost always ’no’. The proposed ordinance could have given the public a real voice by reinstating the early review process, but a choice was made not to do that. The early review process deserves consideration.

__ It eliminates most Conditional Use Permits, including permits for alcohol uses that now require them. This is an area of concern for
many residents. The Central City where I live has a long history of alcohol related problems and other neighborhoods probably do as well. By getting rid of conditional use permits, the proposed ordinance gets rid of a mechanism the public had to compel problem alcohol businesses to be good neighbors.

In conclusion, the Ad Hoc Ordinance represents a major change to the planning process - a change that members of the public have serious concerns about. It should not be rushed through at a time of crisis. The Planning and Design Commission’s hearing must be scheduled to a time when the public can participate fully either in person or digitally.

Karen Jacques
City Resident
Alkali & Mansion Flats
Historic Neighborhood Association

The Board of Directors for the Alkali Mansion Flats Historic Neighborhood Association (AMFHNA) discussed the "Ad-Hoc Ordinance Streamlining the Planning Entitlement Process".

Although we see some benefits, we have the following concerns:

1. Commission hearings are typically held in designated public places, during evening hours, when people are more likely to attend. Director hearings are held in small meeting rooms, during the day, not easily accessible to the public. Transferring the decision making process from Commission to Director and Staff levels reduces important public input from people that might be impacted most by those decisions.

2. Commission decisions can be appealed to the City Council, whom constituents have access to, and Councilmembers have the authority to call controversial cases. Whereas Director decisions are appealable to the Commissions, but only for a short time after the decision has been made.

3. Staff decisions can be reconsidered to the Director level, but only if residents become aware of the decision and only for a short amount of time.

4. For development projects in Historic Districts like Alkali Flat and Mansion Flats, the proposed changes would allow review to be completed at Director and Staff level if the development standards and design guidelines are met. But determining if a project meets the design guidelines can be problematic or difficult since the Historic District Plan design guidelines are often not clear or easily understood. Thus, making genuine solicited public input even more critical to a transparent process.

5. AMFHNA has been impacted for decades by “corner grocery stores” that really act as liquor stores, with nonconforming uses that are “grandfathered in”. Any changes to their use, requiring a new conditional use permit (such as adding hard liquor sales), need to remain at the Commission level, with which those decisions are appealable to City Council.

1326 E Street - Sacramento, CA 95814
The AMFHNA Board strongly urge you not to change the current level of review of development projects; and not change the proposed specific land use decisions, particularly the ones involving off-site liquor sales.

Sincerely,

Sean Wright

AMFHNA Board President

cc: AMFHNA Board of Directors
April 22, 2020

To: Planning and Design Commission, City of Sacramento

From: “Friends of Woodlake”, a Neighborhood Group

Subject: Comments for City Planning and Design Commission Public Hearing on April 23, 2020, Re: “Ad Hoc Ordinance Streamlining the Planning Entitlement Process” (M19-004)

We, the undersigned “Friends of Woodlake”, DO NOT SUPPORT APPROVAL OF THE PROPOSED ORDINANCE referenced above; this “streamlining” quickens the planning entitlement process by lessening the time and opportunity for, what should be, all-important public outreach and input from the Citizens of Sacramento. Every proposed development has unique obstacles that need to be addressed on a project-by-project basis for the good of each community. This requires a higher level of review and more processing time than streamlining allows. Under the current (longer) process, the time and effort in public out-reach is already inadequate, minimizing the Public’s awareness, understanding, and involvement on a proposed project, and pretty much negating any opportunity for meaningful public input. If anything, the City should be devoting more time and effort to this process—and certainly not less!

The City’s proposed “streamlining” of its planning entitlement process appears to benefit developers at the expense of existing residents and neighborhoods. In the rush to provide affordable housing and to house the homeless, the City must not lose sight of the importance in: 1) maintaining the integrity of established neighborhoods and the quality of life of their residents; and 2) allowing existing residents adequate time and opportunity to minimize adverse impacts and positively affect the outcome of a proposed project on their neighborhood. More specifically, the City should not turn a blind eye on the potential for adverse impacts from a proposed high-density, high-rise, 100% low-income, infill apartment project which is in immediate proximity to an established, middle-income neighborhood of single family homes in a non-urban setting. Likely adverse impacts on the neighborhood would be from traffic, parking, noise, sewer/water/drainage, air quality, light, glare, reduced safety, reduced privacy, and a decline in property values—all worthy of the City’s time and attention in mitigating. Therefore, do not streamline the planning entitlement process: Do not reduce the processing time, or the level of review currently required. The City, the Developer, and the Public have only one chance to ‘get it right’ for the next 55 years.

• Do not reduce the processing time of private development applications;
• Do not reduce the level of review on these applications; and
• Do not allow for cost savings that benefit the developer at the expense of existing neighborhoods.

Please DO NOT APPROVE this proposed Ordinance to Streamline the Planning Entitlement Process.

Sincerely,

“Friends of Woodlake”:

Michele Rudek    Elaine Jackson    Jim Olson    Heidi Halderman
Brice Anderson   Jeff Brooke      Karen Olson  Tom Phayer
Sharon Leemans   Jane Macaulay    Haunani Henry Rick Guidara
Andrew Hughan    Brett Blackburn   Beverly Coleman

c: Garrett Norman, Associate Planner
Chair Alix Ogilvie  
300 Richards Blvd  
3rd Floor  
Sacramento, CA 95811

Re: Support for Ad Hoc Ordinance Streamlining the Planning Entitlement Process

Dear Chair Ogilvie and Commissioners:

I am writing to express my strong support of Ad Hoc Ordinance Streamlining the Planning Entitlement Process and to thank you for your leadership in creating processes that will ensure the continued development of our urban core, adding revenues and vibrancy.

I know from my work over the past three decades in real estate development, specifically in Sacramento's urban core, the power of strategic investment to revitalize neighborhoods and build communities. This ordinance streamlines both the application and approval process encouraging the development of more housing. Eliminating unreasonable delays in the development process is critical to providing and promoting the long-term sustainable growth of our communities.

With Ad Hoc Ordinance Streamlining the Planning Entitlement Process, California will take a strong step forward in tackling the challenges of the housing crisis and unlocking the incredible potential in the growth of Sacramento.

I look forward to serving as an active partner in support of Ad Hoc Ordinance Streamlining the Planning Entitlement Process.

Sincerely,

Sotiris K. Kolokotronis  
Founder & President  
SKK Developments
April 16, 2020

Planning & Design Commission
City of Sacramento
300 Richards Blvd., 3rd Floor
Sacramento, CA 95811

LETTER OF SUPPORT – Streamlining the Planning Entitlement Process

Dear Chair Ogilvie and Commissioners,

On behalf of the Mack Road Partnership, I am writing to express our support for streamlining the City of Sacramento’s planning entitlement process for compliant and compatibly zoned projects.

With an unprecedented housing shortage in Sacramento, it is imperative to build housing and adopt policies that will expedite the entitlement process and eliminate unreasonable delays for projects that are compatible zones and meet all development standard and design guidelines.

The Ad Hoc Ordinance Streamlining the Planning Entitlement Process addresses key obstacles by streamlining the process to reduce time and application costs, thereby encouraging the development of more housing. These policy changes encourage long-term smart, sustainable growth, and are widely supported by individuals and businesses in South Sacramento who want to see more infill development in throughout the City.

Approving these amendments will enhance the City’s ability to bring more housing to our urban core, amid skyrocketing demand and we urge you to recommend the adoption of this ordinance.

Sincerely,

Bill Knowlton, Executive Director
Mack Road Partnership
April 20th, 2020

Garrett Norman
300 Richards Blvd, 3rd Floor
Sacramento, Ca 95811

RE: Title 17 Amendments: Streamlining the Planning Process

Planning Commissioners,

The Midtown Association is writing today in support of the recommended amendments to Title 17 in the city code. We want to thank the Planning and Design Commission subcommittee that initiated this effort as they looked to streamline the development process.

Over the last three years, Sacramento has taken significant steps to make developing, particularly in the Central City, more consistent, fair, and prescribed. In 2018, the City completed a significant effort in adopting the Central City Specific Plan (CCSP). The CCSP resulted in significant changes to design guidelines in the Central City, a better understanding of existing and needed backbone infrastructure for future growth, and more consistent zoning and land-use. Just last year, the city took further steps to build upon the predictability of developing especially in our neighborhoods by adopting the Historic District Plan (HDP). The HDP added another layer of guidelines and requirements for projects within historic districts. By adopting these initiatives, the City has added substantial protections for existing neighborhoods and reduced the complexity of developing in the Central City.

The amendments proposed in the planning code update help align the hearing and review process with the extensive level of planning efforts put forth in the CCSP and HDP. Specifically, the Midtown Association appreciates the recommendations that eliminate the need for commission review if a project is compliant with design guidelines, reduce the threshold of deviation hearings to the director level, and allowing the Zoning Administrator to hear all tentative map applications at the director level.

The amendments to Title 17 allow city staff to handle more routine hearings, but will continue to allow for the production of quality infill development. At the same time, the amendments will allow the Planning and Design Commission to focus on policy level discussions to further streamline the development process to build a sustainable and equitable Sacramento. We ask that the commission again move this item to City Council for adoption.

Thank you,

Emily Baime Michaels, Executive Director
Midtown Association
Emily@exploremidtown.org

THE CENTER FOR CULTURE, CREATIVITY & VIBRANCY IN SACRAMENTO’S URBAN CORE.
April 16, 2020

Planning & Design Commission
City of Sacramento
300 Richards Blvd., 3rd Floor
Sacramento, CA 95811

LETTER OF SUPPORT – Streamlining the Planning Entitlement Process

Dear Chair Ogilvie and Commissioners,

On behalf of Downtown Sacramento Partnership, I am writing to convey our support for streamlining the City of Sacramento’s planning entitlement process for compliant and compatibly zoned projects. Approving these amendments will enhance the City’s ability to bring more housing to our urban core, amid skyrocketing demand.

We appreciate the Commission’s work to identify and implement ideas to improve our local structure and procedures to streamline quality development projects. To achieve this goal and facilitate more building, there must be a corresponding change to how the City approves entitlements. The Ad Hoc Ordinance Streamlining the Planning Entitlement Process addresses key obstacles by streamlining the process to reduce time and application costs, thereby encouraging the development of more housing.

It’s clear there is a housing shortage in Sacramento. We need to build housing and adopt policies that will expedite the entitlement process and eliminate unreasonable delays for projects that are compatible zones and meet all development standard and design guidelines.

The recommendations included in this ordinance follow extensive outreach, public meetings and discussions throughout the City. These policy changes encourage long-term smart, sustainable growth and are widely supported by individuals and businesses in downtown who want to see more infill development in our City.

We urge you to recommend the adoption of this ordinance the betterment of our downtown, local economy and city.

Sincerely,

Michael T. Ault
Executive Director
Downtown Sacramento Partnership

cc: Garrett Norman, City of Sacramento
    Stacia Cosgrove, City of Sacramento
    Howard Chan, City of Sacramento
    Councilmember Steve Hansen, City of Sacramento
    Downtown Sacramento Partnership Board of Directors
April 16, 2020

City of Sacramento Planning & Design Commission
c/o Mr. Garrett Norman
300 Richards Boulevard, Third Floor
Sacramento, CA 95811

SUPPORT – Ad Hoc Ordinance Streamlining the Planning Entitlement Process

Dear Chair Ogilvie and Commissioners,

The Sacramento Regional Builders Exchange (SRBX) wishes to express our support for streamlining the City of Sacramento’s planning entitlement process. It is our belief these steps will go a long way in facilitating the construction of more housing in Downtown Sacramento.

To address the City’s critical need for housing, policies that seek to streamline and expedite the entitlement process are crucial. By implementing fundamental changes to the entitlement process, the recommendations in the Ad Hoc Ordinance Streamlining the Planning Entitlement Process will result in more housing by reducing both time and application costs.

The recommendations in this ordinance are the result of many hours of outreach between the City, stakeholders and the public, and will result in new, smart and sustainable growth in our urban core. SRBX strongly supports the adoption of this ordinance.

Sincerely Yours,

Timothy A. Murphy
Chief Executive Officer

cc: Stacia Cosgrove, City of Sacramento
April 16, 2020

City of Sacramento Planning & Design Commission c/o Mr. Garrett Norman
300 Richards Boulevard, Third Floor
Sacramento, CA 95811

RE – Ad Hoc Ordinance Streamlining the Planning Entitlement Process (M19-004)

Dear Chair Ogilvie and Commissioners,

On Behalf of the North State Building Industry Association we are writing to express our support for streamlining the City of Sacramento’s planning entitlement process. The current COVID-19 pandemic’s threat to public health has also threatened the City’s economic health. The recommended actions would expedite construction of critical facilities, housing, and economic recovery for the whole community. It is our belief these proposed steps will go a long way to facilitate the construction of more housing in Downtown Sacramento.

To address the City’s critical need for housing, policies that seek to streamline and expedite the entitlement process are crucial. By implementing fundamental changes to the entitlement process, the recommendations in the Ad Hoc Ordinance Streamlining the Planning Entitlement Process will result in more housing by reducing both time and application costs. The proposed amendments will reduce total entitlement processing time and application costs for projects that are compatibly zoned and meet all the City’s development standards and design guidelines.

The recommendations included in this ordinance are the result of many hours of outreach between the City, stakeholders and the public, and will result in new, smart and sustainable growth in our urban core.

Thank you for your time and consideration, we urge you to adopt the Ad Hoc Ordinance Streamlining the Planning Entitlement Process.

Sincerely,

Crisand Giles
North State Building Industry Association
Director of Policy and Initiatives
916.677.7108
Speeding up the planning entitlement process to minimize unnecessary steps and procedures is a great idea, as long as this is accomplished without serious damage to our neighborhoods and to our citizens who have invested so much in the amazing Sacramento we see today.

Anyone exploring Sacramento’s central city today can see that the increase in the number of housing units is going along at a very rapid pace. Another round of major planning procedure changes seems unnecessary in this part of town at this time.

We have much to lose when we create a stampede of development without sufficient planning and design safeguards and without input from local and adjacent neighbors who are most affected.

Examples of today’s casualties from poor planning include the currently under construction N E corner of 19th & H where 2 overly large incompatible buildings are squeezed into both sides of an historic home side yard, and the N W corner of 18th and Capitol where another new large building is under construction, dominating and overwhelming one of the central city’s most charming historic areas.

Please slow things down enough so that these new projects are more carefully planned. Thank you for your consideration.

David Herbert
April 16, 2020

Garrett Norman
Sacramento Planning & Design Commission
Project # M19-004

Speeding up the planning entitlement process to minimize unnecessary steps and procedures is a great idea, as long as this is accomplished without serious damage to our neighborhoods and to our citizens who have invested so much in the amazing Sacramento we see today.

Anyone exploring Sacramento’s central city today can see that the increase in the number of housing units is going along at a very rapid pace. Another round of major planning procedure changes seems unnecessary in this part of town at this time.

We have much to lose when we create a stampede of development without sufficient planning and design safeguards and without input from local and adjacent neighbors who are most affected.

Examples of today’s casualties from poor planning include the currently under construction N E corner of 19th & H where 2 overly large incompatible buildings are squeezed into both sides of an historic home side yard, and the N W corner of 18th and Capitol where another new large building is under construction, dominating and overwhelming one of the central city’s most charming historic areas.

Please slow things down enough so that these new projects are more carefully planned. Thank you for your consideration.

David Herbert
April 17, 2020

Garrett Norman, Associate Planner
Community Development Department
300 Richards Blvd.
Sacramento, CA 95811

Re: M19-004, Ad Hoc Ordinance Streamlining the Planning Entitlement Process

The Board of Directors of Preservation Sacramento request that the Planning and Design Commission defer a decision on this item until a time when the public can participate actively in the meeting, either in person or virtually; the city’s eComment system is insufficient for this purpose. Streamlining of planning decisions should not be done by excluding public participation, and no justification has been provided regarding why this item is being rushed through during a crisis, when Sacramento’s City Manager has directed that all commission meetings shall be canceled through the end of May.

This proposal moves decisions regarding developments of any size, with no maximum, from commission level to director level. This creates a barrier to public access and public record. Instead of meetings held at City Hall, the recognized seat of city authority in a space with large capacity and open accessibility to the public, Director hearings are held in a meeting room behind locked doors at 300 Richards. These meetings are also held in the afternoon instead of evenings. This location is more convenient for staff, and familiar to applicants who submit plans, but creates an accessibility barrier for members of the public, due to issues of room capacity, daytime vs. evening hours, and simple perception of accessibility. Meetings held at 300 Richards are also not broadcast live, as meetings at City Hall are, meaning people cannot watch from home, either during the meetings or afterward. Director hearings are recorded on an audio device, but not posted online, and must be requested by the public. These audio recordings are not indexed by item or easily reviewable, as video records at City Hall are. Finally, staff reports are not posted on the City’s website for Director level hearings, meaning that the public cannot review those reports. All of these barriers make public attendance and participation more difficult and information harder to obtain. This does not serve the public’s interest.

The ordinance’s proposed creation of an informal design committee, whose meetings are not public, also decreases the public’s ability to comment on the project. Any such body should be Brown Act compliant and their meetings accessible to the public, including public comment.

Measures in the proposed changes intended to address the loss of opportunity for public participation are minimal, based on the assumption that project proponents will voluntarily do outreach, or that city staff will always move potentially controversial items to commission level review. Requests of city staff to require outreach at the October public meeting were rebuffed. But we have seen the repercussions of failure to perform outreach, in the form of the controversy regarding the demolition of the Tower Records and Books buildings on Broadway, where city staff gave demolition approval, but strongly
advised a developer to perform outreach before demolition. Because this outreach was not required, no outreach was performed, with a strong negative response from neighborhood groups and individuals. Nominal improvements to outreach, including slightly larger signage and notification to renters near a project, are appreciated, but do not make up for the lack of required early notification and placing the burden of notification on neighborhood groups, effectively limiting opportunities for public comment.

This item is not non-controversial. As noted in the city’s staff report, neighborhood associations and community members throughout the city have strong concerns about this item. Rendering a decision at a meeting with no opportunity for public comment can only be perceived as a way to avoid addressing these areas of controversy, regardless of the city’s intent. There is no need for urgency on this item, and there is no explanation why it is being advanced at this time. Outreach to other organizations and groups, incorporating their feedback to reflect community concerns, could resolve many of the outstanding issues with the proposed ordinance. This outreach can be done via electronic means prior to a decision at a future public meeting.

Finally, devolution of planning decisions in this manner means that the City Council is no longer the final arbiter of planning decisions in the city of Sacramento, because items appealed at the Director level would be reviewed by the associated commission, which could then not be appealed to City Council. Councilmembers thus lose the ability to call up items for Council decision. Your authority as members of the City Council is reduced by this decision.

On February 17, 2020, the Law & Legislation Subcommittee requested that this item be returned to Planning Commission for further discussion. However, the City Manager of the City of Sacramento has directed that all commission meetings be canceled through the end of May. By holding a hearing prior to that date, City staff has chosen an exception to the City Manager’s instructions, but no justification is provided; there is no explanation for urgency to move this measure forward during a public health crisis. The temporary weakening of Brown Act regulations, intended to allow government to function in extraordinary circumstances, should not be utilized as a means to avoid public process. We ask that the Planning and Design Commission defer a decision on this item until a meeting can be held where the public can testify before the PDC, either in person or virtually. The City of Sacramento must provide a suitable explanation for why they are holding the only city advisory board or commission hearing to be held during the ongoing health crisis, in order to make a decision unrelated to the crisis.

Sincerely,

William Burg, President, Preservation Sacramento Board of Directors
April 17, 2020

Members of the City of Sacramento Planning and Design Commission  
Stacia Cosgrove, Principal Planner  
Evan Compton, Zoning Administrator  
Garrett Norman, Associate Planner  
Community Development Department  
300 Richards Boulevard, 3rd Floor  
Sacramento, CA 95811

APRIL 23, 2020 PLANNING AND DESIGN COMMISSION MEETING: AD HOC ORDINANCE STREAMLINING THE PLANNING ENTITLEMENT PROCESS (M19-004)

The Board of Directors of the Boulevard Park Neighborhood Association has met and discussed these proposed ordinance changes. While we see significant benefit in changes that will result in (1) posting of signs on proposed development sites when an application is first received by the City and (2) mailing of public notices to residents in addition to property owners in advance of a public hearing, we also have substantial concerns.

For development projects within Historic Districts like Boulevard Park, the proposed changes would allow review of new construction to be completed at staff level if the project meets all the development standards and design guidelines. However, “meeting design guidelines” is subject to considerable discretionary decision making, as a majority of the Historic District Plan design guidelines are not written in a prescriptive manner and are, therefore, open to a variety of subjective interpretations. Some of these interpretations could adversely affect existing historic neighborhoods and individual residents, a situation exacerbated by reduced public input.

Over many years, the City of Sacramento’s planning entitlement process has been amended several times with the aim of streamlining decisions and moving more project reviews from the Commission level to Director and staff levels. In general, these changes have tended to reduce public and neighborhood involvement in the planning entitlement process, shortening or eliminating notice requirements and the potential for appeals. In return, City staff involved in the development of these ordinance changes have offered “early notification” to get neighbors and neighborhoods involved early in the process, even before a project has been fully designed, when changes would not necessarily result in substantial additional cost to project proponents.

At present, neighborhood associations are notified by email once a complete application has been filed with the City, and property owners within a restricted radius of the project site are sent a
notice by mail ten days in advance of a hearing. This system places the burden on neighborhood associations to inform potentially impacted neighbors, a task we often cannot accomplish because we lack a complete list of property owners and renters within our boundaries. This system also limits input from neighboring property owners to just before a hearing, by which time too much has been invested by project proponents and City staff to cause them to be receptive to significant changes.

Commission hearings are normally held in a large public auditorium during evening hours, when working people are more likely to be able to attend. Director hearings are normally held in small private conference rooms behind locked doors during the workday, limiting public input. Commission decisions are appealable to the City Council, a body composed of our publicly elected leaders to which residents have access. The Council can also call up controversial cases. Director decisions are appealable to the Commissions, but within a fairly tight time window. Staff decisions can be reconsidered at the Director level but only if citizens are made aware of what has been decided in time for them to request reconsideration.

Moving more decision-making to lower levels will significantly reduce public input in comparison with that of project proponents. Realize that the neighbors and neighborhoods must live with the result of these decisions long after developers have left the scene. The City’s promise of “early notification” and of early involvement in decision-making by neighbors and neighborhoods have failed to be realized or sustained. Proposed earlier site signage and more complete hearing noticing may help but are still insufficient to compensate for the general lessening of public involvement.

For these reasons, we urge you not to change the current level of review of development projects.

The Boulevard Park Neighborhood Association is also concerned with changes proposed for specific land use decisions, particularly the one involving off-site liquor sales. Given the unpleasant history of bad actors in residential zones R1, R2 and R3A, alcohol sales are a particularly sensitive issue for a number of residential communities. Currently there are several liquor stores in these residential zoned areas that are considered non-conforming uses. Under the current Planning and Development Code, any changes to these “deemed” (grandfathered) uses require a new Conditional Use Permit (CUP) at the Commission level of review with decisions appealable to the City Council. Some of those changes could involve adding hard liquor sales to businesses currently permitted to sell only beer and wine. We request that changes to alcohol sales at nonconforming sites in residential zones remain at the Commission level. The community needs the ability to appeal decisions to its elected representatives and to allow those representatives to call up controversial cases. We also rely upon the ability of our elected representatives to work with applicants and the community to resolve potentially contentious issues.

Sincerely,

Dr. Jon B. Marshack
Preservation Committee Chair
Boulevard Park Neighborhood Association

cc: Carson Anderson, Preservation Director, City of Sacramento
Board of Directors, Boulevard Park Neighborhood Association
22. Ad Hoc Ordinance Streamlining the Planning Entitlement Process (M19-004) [Noticed 03/27/2020; In lieu of Pass for Publication the Ordinance will be Published in its Entirety Upon Adoption] {Majority Vote Required}  File ID: 2020-00440

24. Ordinance Deleting Section 3.76.050 and Adding Chapter 12.14 to the City Code, Relating to Telecommunications Facilities [In Lieu of Pass for Publication the Ordinance will be Published in its Entirety]  File ID: 2020-00232


27. (City Council / Housing Authority) Emergency Bridge Housing Initiative  File ID: None

Sentiments for All Agenda Items
The following graphs display sentiments for comments that have location data. Only locations of users who have commented will be shown.

Overall Sentiment

Overall Sentiment

Agenda Item: eComments for 22. Ad Hoc Ordinance Streamlining the Planning Entitlement Process (M19-004) [Noticed 03/27/2020; In lieu of Pass for Publication the Ordinance will be Published in its Entirety Upon Adoption] {Majority Vote Required}  File ID: 2020-00440

Overall Sentiment

Barbara Schihi
Location:
My name is Barbara Schihl and I am a member of House Sacramento, a local YIMBY (Yes in My Backyard) organization that advocates for more homes, and a renter in midtown Sacramento. I support the City's proposal as it will actually allow for faster and smarter home growth in our region. Especially while in the midst of a serious pandemic, we cannot ignore the fact that so many are without adequate homes and we must acknowledge that roadblocks to production need to be addressed. This proposal makes it easier for the City to focus on smart planning and growth without delays due to a project approval process that so often delays the much needed housing construction in our region. Thank you.

Jackie Whitelam
Location:
Submitted At: 8:44pm 04-07-20

The stay-at-home restrictions which preclude public comments at the meeting is fueling a mis-perception that these restrictions are being used to rush the streamlining of the planning entitlement process through. Accordingly, I request action be deferred to the next Council meeting so that the Council can affirm they have heard and considered public comments on this item.

As a member of the Preservation Commission and the AIA Central Valley Chapter, I know this action is the culmination of a thorough process that has sought to ensure multiple public policy goals are met. With clear design guidelines in place, I am generally comfortable with the delegation of hearings to the staff and Director levels. However, I suggest that the skills we are all developing in participating in on-line meetings be used to make the Directors meetings more accessible to the public and; that an on-going process to monitor and report compliance with design guidelines be effected.

Mathew Malkin
Location:
Submitted At: 8:28pm 04-07-20

I am a homeowner in Sacramento and support this proposal. This will allow for the faster construction of more and better homes to address our housing shortage. We must always be planning for the future to keep Sacramento vibrant and successful and this will achieve that.

Also, reducing the public component now makes sense so that approvals can happen during this quarantine/work-from-home period and be ready to rejuvenate the economy once it is safe to do so.

In conclusion, I support both the proposal and for it to happen now.

Deborah Condon
Location:
Submitted At: 8:16pm 04-07-20

I support the ordinance as it will expedite climate readiness, resiliency and sustainable development in line with SB32’s 2030 climate goals by removing permitting barriers - cost, time and uncertainty. This expedites compact and walkable communities that conserve land resources, reduce vehicle trips, improve air quality, conserve energy and water, and diversify housing stock. Transparency and public participation are ensured through early site posting of public hearing notices and enhanced development tracking.

As the COVID19 protection set by the Governor and Mayor is lifted, we must quickly resume smart growth measures that enhance our communities and meet climate goals.

Ansel Lundberg
Location:
Submitted At: 8:07pm 04-07-20

Greetings, my name is Ansel Lundberg and I am a co-chair of House Sacramento, an organization that advocates for more homes for our growing region. On behalf of House Sacramento, I am proud to support the City's adoption of this proposal to improve the City's Planning & Design Committee so that it can focus on major policy concerns and not be bogged down by project approvals. Also, in the midst of the housing crisis our state and
region are facing, we need to make it easier to build homes. This ordinance will bring common sense reform to approval processes for new projects. We have been watching City staff's diligent efforts on this issue and are comfortable with the level of detail and consideration that has been given this. We urge the Council's approval of this item.

Karen Solberg
Location:
Submitted At: 7:44pm 04-07-20

This is clearly part of the agenda to destroy single-family housing with North Sac being the Petri dish for this assault. Why is such a radical proposition being considered now with the current crisis we are going through?

Susan Henas
Location:
Submitted At: 6:31pm 04-07-20

I have very strong concerns about the adoption of the proposed ordinance and the detrimental effects of moving development decisions from commission level to director level. But I am even more concerned that City Council has decided to hear this issue during the COVID-19 crisis when we are not allowed to attend the council meeting in person. To use the excuse that this ordinance must be passed immediately because it is a streamlining measure related to COVID-19 crisis is irresponsible and makes no sense to me.

I am asking that you reconsider the decision to vote this evening and delay the vote to allow for further discussion by the Planning Commission (as was requested by the Law & Legislation Subcommittee on February 17, 2020).

Susan Henas, resident of District 5

Bill Motmans
Location:
Submitted At: 5:49pm 04-07-20

While the Planning Dept. has done a better job of notifying neighborhoods of pending developments, there are still areas where the notice is lacking. Often times notifications are sent to neighborhood associations which are dormant or who have changed officers, and Neighborhood Services or Planning has been slow to realize notifications are being sent to the wrong address or officer. CUPs deserves more scrutiny, not less. Some council members might remember the effort to change the Special Planning District designation regarding the Stockton/Broadway corridor. Much of the historical and statistical background information was inextricably linked to the memory of the Zoning Administrator. Often times, information sought was unavailable or exceeded the ability of the ZA to provide data and context, which resulted in other staff being unable to give relevant opinions. This ordinance needs more scrutiny and input from the community.

Avital Barnea
Location:
Submitted At: 6:43am 04-07-20

Hello, I strongly encourage the City to delay the vote on Item 22 until a time that the public may attend the hearing. This item has a direct impact on the citizens who call Sacramento home and it would be irresponsible to conduct the vote in a closed meeting. While I understand the need to streamline some processes during the COVID-19 shelter in place, this should not be used as an excuse to evade public comment on items of importance to the citizenry.

Thank you,
Avital Barnea, Midtown resident and urban planner

Jane Macaulay
Location:
Submitted At: 11:40pm 04-06-20

I agree with the previous commenter that this issue should be re-visited when meetings are back to normal and people can show up in person if needed. I live in district 2 and many people do not have access to computers. The digital divide creates quite a problem for many of our residents. Housing, liquor Licenses and the streamlining of planning are important at this time to our district especially. Thank you
Jane Macaulay

KATHRYN TOBIAS
Location:
Submitted At: 11:39pm 04-06-20
Please do not approve such a far-reaching proposal when the public cannot participate in the normal fashion. There is no hurry on this and it's not like the stay-at-home restriction won't be lifted by summer. It makes it very suspect that you are moving ahead with cutting the public out of the process at a time when the public can't appear in front of you to testify. Please postpone. Kathryn J. Tobias, Esq.

Laura West
Location:
Submitted At: 9:18pm 04-06-20
Hello!
We request that the City Council defer a decision until it can be returned to the Planning & Design Commission, and subsequently presented at a City Council meeting where the public can participate actively in the meeting, either in person or virtually.
Thank you,
Laura Markle West

Agenda Item: eComments for Discussion Calendar

Overall Sentiment

Kayla Cannon
Location:
Submitted At: 12:56am 04-07-20
Please see attached letters of support regarding item 24 on behalf of:
Greater Sacramento Economic Council
Sacramento Republic FC
California Hispanic Chamber of Commerce
Bay Area Council
California Asian Chamber of Commerce
Samantha's Nail Tech Services
Billy's Wheel and Tire Shop
Sunshine Accounting & Tax Services
Harry's BBQ & Soul Food Kitchen
Ron's Hauling Services
Shaun's Childcare Services