

**Discussion Item #2 Community Meetings****BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE**

This is a report on the City's policies for developers to hold community meetings and consider options going forward for ways to make them more useful. The City often takes the lead in recommending community meetings to developers; namely because we believe it is useful for the developer and community members to hear from each other first, prior to public notification being issued. A robust community engagement process ideally should resolve concerns and build trust and a spirit of understanding, if not partnership, between project sponsors and the community.

The City of Oakland does not require community meetings for all projects. This is the case for several reasons. It was felt a community meeting could be too much for some smaller projects that are routine and unlikely to have impacts. If such a project proves controversial, a community meeting can always be called for after concerns are heard. Therefore, the City has not chosen to go through the process of changing the Planning Code to require community meetings for all Planning entitlements, preferring instead to strongly recommend community meetings for larger projects, controversial projects, and projects with the potential to cause substantial community impacts.

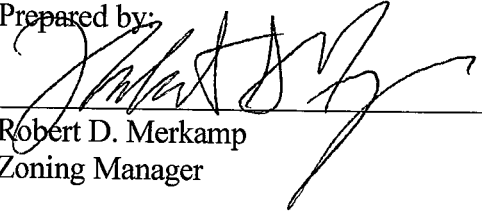
In January 2019, the City did take a step forward by adding a section to the Basic Application for Planning (see attachment A) that requires applicants to document their Community Engagement process for projects that involve any of the following: t

- New residential project with 100 or more dwelling units;
- New nonresidential project with 100,000 square feet or more of floor area;
- New Planned Unit Development (PUD);
- New subdivision of 25 or more lots;
- Proposed regulatory change (Development Agreement, Rezoning, and/or General Plan Amendment); or
- Any other new project requiring discretionary approval that the Planning Bureau has determined may potentially cause substantial community impacts.

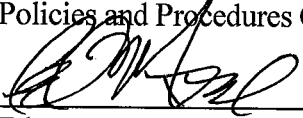
The City worked collaboratively with various groups to develop this amendment to the Basic Application for Planning to improve the visibility of Planning Projects, particularly those that truly are of the size to potentially have major impacts on the community in multiple ways and with the ability to bring real changes to neighborhoods. While it does not mandate community engagement projects, it puts the applicant applying for such projects on notice that the City deems them of value and requires the applicant to detail every and all attempts at community engagement the developer has had, including describing the input received about the project and how the project might've changed in reaction to that feedback. This is to encourage developers to make sure they're thinking proactively about engaging the community or, if they're not, help them realize that this is something they should be doing. This process is still very new and thus we're still analyzing the results of it at this time.

We'd like feedback from the Committee on this procedure as well as discuss possible ways forward to expanding the scope of these meetings.

Prepared by:

  
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Robert D. Merkamp  
Zoning Manager

Approved for forwarding to the  
Policies and Procedures Committee:

  
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Ed Manasse  
Interim Director  
Department of Planning and Building

Attachments:

- A) Planning Basic Application Page for Community Meetings