



CITY OF SANTA BARBARA

COUNCIL AGENDA REPORT

AGENDA DATE: July 18, 2007

TO: Mayor and Councilmembers
Planning Commission, Historic Landmarks Commission and
Architectural Board of Review

FROM: Planning Division, Community Development Department

SUBJECT: Community Design/Compatibility of New Development Issues; Size,
Bulk, Scale And Height

RECOMMENDATION: That Council:

- A. Hear a brief staff presentation on Community Design/Compatibility of New Development Issues: Size, Bulk, Scale and Height;
- B. Conduct a workshop with members of Council, Planning Commission, Historic Landmarks Commission, and Architectural Board of Review; and
- C. Provide general direction for Staff to return to Council regarding near-term and future actions associated with Plan Santa Barbara.

DISCUSSION:

On May 8, 2007, at the request of Councilmembers Barnwell and Horton, the City Council heard public testimony and discussed the possibility of new regulations and limits on building heights. A full range of comments were offered by members of the public and Council. Overall the Council expressed that there may be a need to strengthen the process to deal with current development, and yet there is also a need to trust and use the comprehensive long range planning process of Plan SB to address the complex and inter-related issues of building heights, housing, open space, and transportation, to note the main "hot" topics. The meeting concluded with Council directing staff to schedule a joint worksession with the Planning Commission, Historic Landmarks Commission (HLC) and Architectural Board of Review (ABR) to discuss existing regulations and whether any new tools are needed in the interim.

The purpose of today's worksession is to:

- Review existing policies, guidelines and findings for approval of large projects, including mixed-use and new condominium development;

REVIEWED BY: _____ Finance _____ Attorney

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- Discuss and evaluate whether additional standards and/or findings of approval should be required; and
- Discuss questions / issues to be considered in *Plan SB* Round 2 workshops.

Staff will present a brief overview of the policy development history and context that resulted in our current set of regulations. This will include emerging policy conflicts and challenges to be addressed in the *Plan SB* process.

In preparation for the worksession, Staff requests that the Council and Board members review a number of documents that outline the City's policy history, identify key development issues, provide guidance for the design review process and set standards and findings for discretionary actions, and outline critical considerations for long term planning. A web page has been set up for this meeting and includes links to the following documents:

- Urban Design Guidelines and Appendix (particularly Introduction and Chapter 1);
- Housing Element History Chapter;
- General Plan Update, Policy History (August 2005) - PowerPoint;
- Planning Commission Views Discussion (January 2006) - Staff Report and Slide Show;
- El Pueblo Viejo Guidelines - DRAFT update material/excerpt - of work in progress; and
- Conditions, Trends and Issues (Sept. 2005) Executive Summary.

The website can be found at:

http://www.santabarbaraca.gov/Resident/Major_Planning_Efforts/Special_Joint_Meeting_of_City_Council/

The first two chapters of the City's Urban Design Guidelines and Conditions, Trends and Issues Report Executive Summary are also attached to this report (Attachments 1 and 2).

The format of the worksession has been set to allow the maximum opportunity for discussion among the Council, Commissioners and Boardmembers.

1. Brief staff PowerPoint presentation – a condensed version of information available on website noted above.
2. Small group discussions (2 Council, 2 ABR, 2 HLC, 2 PC in each group), with staff recording main points and public observing.
3. Reports from small groups made to all.
4. Public comment.
5. Wrap-up and indication for staff to return to Council for formal direction.

Possible outcomes for the worksession include:

- Immediate value for all groups to have a greater and common understanding of existing policies and standards for review of large projects in El Pueblo Viejo (EPV) and throughout the City.

- Confirmation that the existing rules, guidelines and findings for approval give sufficient direction to approve, revise or deny projects under the current policy framework.
- Interest for near-term actions such as establishing additional findings especially related to the review of projects for consistency with the Urban Design Guidelines; and/or policy direction on unit size with use of variable density.
- Ideas and possible questions to help shape the community dialogue on policy options and trade-off in the Round 2 of Plan SB.

Following the worksession, staff will return to a regularly scheduled Council meeting to receive formal direction.

- ATTACHMENTS:**
1. City's Urban Design Guidelines (Introduction, Compatibility of New Development with Existing Environment and Human Scale Character Chapters)
 2. Conditions, Trends and Issues Report -- Executive Summary
 3. Current Review Process – Findings For Approval

PREPARED BY: Bettie Weiss, City Planner

SUBMITTED BY: Paul Casey, Community Development Director

APPROVED BY: City Administrator's Office