

SUBJECT: **COMMUNITY OUTREACH FOR PROJECTS REQUESTING
DEVELOPMENT AGREEMENTS**

INITIATED BY: **COUNCILMEMBER LAUREN MEISTER**

PREPARED BY: **COMMUNITY SERVICES DEPARTMENT**
(Yvonne Quarker, Community Services Director)
(Andi Lovano, Community & Legislative Affairs Division, Manager)

STATEMENT ON THE SUBJECT:

The City Council will consider directing staff to enhance the community outreach requirements for new projects seeking development agreements to include additional noticing and a community meeting.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- 1) Direct staff to draft a Zone Text Amendment to:
 - a. Require new projects seeking development agreements to require noticing within a 1,000-foot radius, rather than the standard 500-foot radius currently required.
 - b. Require a neighborhood meeting with residents within a 1,000-foot radius of any project seeking a development agreement, including stand-alone billboards, before any City meetings are held.
- 2) Direct staff to consider new ways to inform the community about upcoming Design Review Subcommittee meetings.

BACKGROUND/ANALYSIS:

Expanded Noticing Radius for Development Agreements

A development agreement is a contract between a developer and a local agency that outlines the rules of development for a particular project in very specific terms. The purpose of a development agreement is to establish a negotiated agreement between the

developer and the city that outlines the applicable standards for the specific project, and typically provides an alternative timeline for project entitlements which can include allowing additional time for construction and/or specific project phasing. For the term of the agreement, the City and the Developer are bound to the benefits and obligations of the agreement. The development agreement provides a framework for the approval of entitlements for the developer and often additional conditions, obligations, or public benefits for the city that are provided by the developer. Development agreement applications are adopted by ordinance and require consideration by the Planning Commission and City Council.

Projects that request development agreements must specify the permitted uses of the property, the density or intensity of use, and the maximum height and size of proposed buildings. They may have greater public impacts because of the size and scale or uses proposed. Applications for new billboards are also required to enter into development agreements with the City as part of the Sunset Boulevard Off-Site Signage Policy. In all of these cases, it is important for the community to be aware of what is being proposed and have a chance to provide comments and input.

The Zoning Code (Section 19.74.020) currently requires a notice to be sent to residents within a certain radius of a project prior to a land use permit, entitlement, or other matter requiring a public hearing. In the case of projects requesting a development agreement, a public hearing is required before the Planning Commission, and, upon receipt of the Planning Commission's recommendation, a public hearing is held before the City Council. The notice of the public hearings is required to be mailed or delivered at least 10 days before the hearing to residents within a 500-foot radius of a project, "or, at the discretion of the Community Development Director, where project impacts may affect a larger area than is typical, within a radius of 750 feet or 1,000 feet of the exterior boundaries of the parcel involved in the application". This item directs staff to draft a Zone Text Amendment to require any projects requesting a development agreement to trigger the expanded 1,000-foot radius for public notices.

Neighborhood Meetings

The Zoning Code outlines requirements for applicants to hold neighborhood meetings.

For most new projects the applicant “shall conduct a meeting with property owners and tenants located within a 500-foot radius of the subject site to present the project and discuss identified concerns prior to action by the review authority.” (Section 19.48.040)

This item directs staff to amend the Zoning Code to increase the noticing radius to 1,000 feet for neighborhood meetings for projects seeking development agreements. This would make the radius for neighborhood meetings consistent with the proposed radius for the public hearings at Planning Commission and City Council.

Currently, there is no neighborhood meeting requirement for new or upgraded stand-alone billboards that are not connected to a larger project. This raises concerns for residents as they are not provided an opportunity to discuss identified concerns with the applicant prior to the project moving through the City’s review process. As part of the proposed Zone Text Amendment, the City should require a neighborhood meeting for all projects seeking development agreements. This would include stand-alone billboards that are not part of a larger development project.

Design Review Subcommittee

The Design Review Subcommittee of the Planning Commission is a working study session of three members of the Planning Commission. This is an advisory subcommittee that delivers opinions and gives advice to the applicant. The Subcommittee does not vote, nor does it take any other legal action. Projects are approved, denied, or approved with additional conditions only at meetings of the Planning Commission itself. At the Design Review Subcommittee discussion of these projects is focused only on the design of the project. The Subcommittee is often able to get into more detailed discussions regarding the project’s design than at Planning Commission hearings. The meetings are open to the public and members of the public are able to provide public comment.

Because there is no public hearing or decision made at Design Review Subcommittee meetings, they are not required to be noticed the way that public hearings are noticed. All City meetings are posted on the City’s website calendar (www.weho.org/calendar). There is an opt-in subscription list for weekly calendar e-notifications, which is posted at www.weho.org/email, by selecting “City Calendar”. Community members who are interested in receiving reminders about upcoming City meetings, including the Design

Review Subcommittee, are encouraged to opt-in to weekly email notifications.

This item gives direction to staff to continuously consider new ways to inform the community about upcoming Design Review Subcommittee meetings. This may include looking at other tactics and encouraging developers to establish their own regular update listservs. The intent is for community members to become more familiar with the design review process for all development projects, including those requesting development agreements.

STAFF ANALYSIS:

If this item is approved, it would have a moderate impact on the Community Development Department's work plans. Currently, the Zoning Ordinance does not specify a 1,000-foot notification radius for any type of project or planning process. A new notification protocol that differs from that provided for other types of projects will add further complexity to the City's planning processes and procedures. The additional requirements for a neighborhood meeting and advance noticing may add to the approval timeline for these types of projects.

CONFORMANCE WITH VISION 2020 AND THE GOALS OF THE WEST HOLLYWOOD

GENERAL PLAN:

This item is consistent with the Primary Strategic Goal(s) (PSG) and/or Ongoing Strategic Program(s) (OSP) of:

- PSG-1: Maintain the City's Unique Urban Balance with Emphasis on Residential Neighborhood Livability.

In addition, this item is compliant with the following goal(s) of the West Hollywood General Plan:

- G-1: Ensure that the community is active and engaged in the decision-making process.
- G-2: Maintain transparency and integrity in West Hollywood's decision-making process.

EVALUATION PROCESSES:

N/A

ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY AND HEALTH:

N/A

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT:

The intent of these recommendations is to increase community engagement and ensure the community is aware of the decision-making process.

OFFICE OF PRIMARY RESPONSIBILITY:

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT / CURRENT & HISTORIC
PRESERVATION PLANNING DIVISION

CITY COUNCIL INITIATIVE CATEGORY:

PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT

FISCAL IMPACT:

None.

ATTACHMENT:

None.