

**COUNTY OF SACRAMENTO
CALIFORNIA**

For the Agenda of:
June 9, 2009

To: Board of Supervisors

From: Department of Neighborhood Services

Subject: Report Back - Budget Workshop Of May 15, 2009

Supervisory
District: All

Contact: Leslie Burgett, Administrative Services Officer II, 916-874-5611

BACKGROUND

On May 15, 2009, the Board of Supervisors was presented with the Budget Workshop for the Department of Neighborhood Services (DNS). During the workshop the Board directed DNS to report back on several topics/scenarios of interest.

DISCUSSION

1. Reducing the number of CPC meetings rather than suspending operations.

The CEO has recommended funding for the CPCs in the amount of \$680,580 for Fiscal Year 2009-10.

If the Board doesn't approved this recommendation, in this current environment, given the limited number of current applications, it is possible to establish a bi-monthly or perhaps even quarterly meeting schedule for CPC's.

A CPC meeting operates at a cost of \$14,179:

- Commission member stipends at \$70 each or \$490/meeting;
- Clerk of the Board indirect costs (printing, mailing, etc.) \$744 per meeting;
- Contractual (set up/audio, etc.) and supply costs of approximately \$418/meeting;
- Staff time for five departments including:
 - DNS Service Area Manager at \$729/meeting,
 - Planning at \$2,488/meeting,
 - DERA at \$1,691/meeting,
 - Clerk of the Board at \$2,411/meeting,
 - Attorney at \$5,208/meeting.

Notes

- CPC costs can fluctuate based on applications submitted. The above costs are net for applicant fees for Planning, Clerk of the Board, and DERA.

- With the inception of the CPC's, the review and approval of applications was shifted from Subdivision Review Committee (SRC), Planning Commission (PC) and Zoning Administrator (ZA) to the four (4) CPC's. The shift required "higher" staff review and preparation time per application. A return to the SRC, PC and ZA review would lower staff review and preparation time but not eliminate it. Therefore, the total elimination of the estimated \$14,179 cost per meeting would not be realized. See the attachment provided for a line by line comparison. However, substantial reductions would be realized since certain staff such as County Counsel would not be present at SRC or ZA hearings and DERA staff does not attend ZA hearings.

Impacts if reductions are made

- In the event of a CPC continuance, applicants would need to wait until the next regularly scheduled meeting. This would be contrary to the streamlined application review process, since a reduced meeting schedule could delay processing time.
- As an alternative: Staff could modify the ordinances to allow for applicants to proceed to the PC for all/any CPC continuances. Applicants wishing to avoid delays due to a continuance could be allowed to proceed to the PC which meets twice monthly.

2. Would increased application processing time be contrary to goals of streamlining?

Yes, by definition increased application processing time is contrary to the streamlining process. That said, there are processes that could be put into place to minimize these delays, but for most cases, fewer meetings will mean delays in getting to a hearing body which translates into longer processing time.

3. Would savings from suspending the CPC's be negated by increased PC workload?

The shift in caseload from CPC's to the PC would not negate savings since the PC process currently exists. However as the number of applications increase the possibility that a backlog of cases would develop and necessitate lengthier and/or additional PC meetings that may begin to erode potential savings. But it is important to note that some projects previously heard by the CPC's would not be heard by the PC. Parcel maps would be heard and decided by the SRC and minor use permits and variances would be heard before the ZA. Therefore, if the CPC's are suspended the number of projects that may shift to the PC are likely to be less than all the cases heard by the CPC's.

4. What is the "trigger" to reinstate the CPC's?

The threshold for reinstating the CPC's could be an established numerical increase in applications. At the height of the CPC process, the four CPC's were reviewing approximately 200 cases per year. The applications were somewhat evenly distributed except for a smaller number of applications in the Rio Linda/Elverta area. Each CPC reviewed 4 to 6 cases per meeting during higher development activity periods. The Carmichael/Old Foothill Farms CPC experienced a brief few months where additional meetings were scheduled due to high caseloads.

An overall threshold for reinstating all four CPC's or individual CPC thresholds could be established for re-initiation.

5. Line-by-line cost comparison between the CPC's and the PC.

See attached line by line comparison worksheet.

6. Suspending the CPC's in areas which have a Community Service Center.

Given the current DNS organizational structure, there are three Service Areas (South, North and East), two Service Centers (North and East) and four CPC's (Rio Linda/Elverta, Arden Arcade, Carmichael/Old Foothill Farms, and Fair Oaks). The South Service Area is not served by a Service Center nor any CPC's. The North Service Center serves the Arden Arcade, Rio Linda and Elverta area and the East Service Center serves the Fair Oaks and Carmichael/Old Foothill Farms area. Technically, there are no CPC's not served by a Service Center. However in the previous DNS structure, Arden Arcade and Carmichael/Old Foothill Farms were served by a fourth Service Area Manager without a Service Center.

Collectively, the Arden Arcade and the Carmichael/Old Foothill Farms areas previously carried the heaviest caseloads. Maintaining these two CPC's would place the least burden on the PC. Conversely, elimination of these two CPC's would place the heaviest burden on the PC. However from a community perspective, treating any of the currently operating CPC's in a different manner runs the risk of creating further distrust and alienation from residents who continue to feel disenfranchised. It would seem more appropriate to place all CPC's on hiatus or retain them all in some modified form or meeting schedule.

7. The possibility of including some of the members of the CPC's on the PC.

The PC and CPC's are established by ordinance. At the Board's direction, the ordinances could be amended to establish more members and/or new membership requirements for the PC. Inclusion of additional members from the CPC's on the PC may enhance community input. Cost savings could be realized if membership in the PC is increased and the CPC's are placed on hiatus. Again, it is important to note that many applications would not be heard by the PC and handled internally by the SRC or ZA. Community input on these cases would be eliminated altogether.

8. The possibility of retaining the CPC's and the third Service Area Manager.

Pending Board approval:

- The CEO is recommending funding the CPCs as mentioned above.
- Sacramento Housing and Redevelopment Agency is prepared to augment Community Development Block Grant funds to the Code Enforcement Division, this will free up sufficient General Fund resources to retain the third Service Area Manager. Other program funding shortfalls have not been mitigated.

9. Creating a third Service Center using vacant space in a County owned or leased facility.

The development of a third Service Center will require significant additional funding. The South Service Area/Team (without a Service Center) previously operated on half to three quarters of the current funding of the other established Service Center. Although lease space is available at relatively low cost, one time start up costs as well as on-going maintenance and utility costs significantly increase overall costs for a Service Center. Interdepartmental staffing of a third Center could also be problematic given the current reductions in staff countywide.

Respectfully submitted,

VICTOR MORRISON-VEGA, Director
Department of Neighborhood Services

By: _____
PAUL HAHN, Administrator
Municipal Services Agency

Attachments:

Attachment 1 Line by line comparison of the CPC and PC Worksheet

Attachment 2 CPC and PC Process Flowcharts