



Policy Role in Land Use Planning

Eric Nelson
Planning Commissioner
City of Dana Point

Mark Teague, AICP
Managing Principal
PlaceWorks

New Mayors & Council Members Academy

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IMAGINE...AT YOUR FIRST MEETING





A BRIEF INTRODUCTION TO PLANNING

Seeing the future is hard
The public believes the future is now
All planning is local





TOOLS OF THE TRADE

**GENERAL PLAN
SPECIFIC PLANS**

ZONING

OTHER REGULATIONS & TOOLS

CEQA

GENERAL PLAN

- Vision for the City
- Mostly very long term
- Becoming Less General
- Keep it Current





REQUIRED GENERAL PLAN ELEMENTS

1.Land Use

2.Circulation

3.Open Space

4.Conservation

5.Housing

6.Noise

7.Safety

Depending on Circumstances

1.Environmental Justice

2.Air Quality



EXAMPLES OF “OPTIONAL” ELEMENTS

- Parks and Recreation
- Sustainability
- Public Health
- Economic Development
- Public Facilities and Services
- Implementation



SPECIFIC PLANS

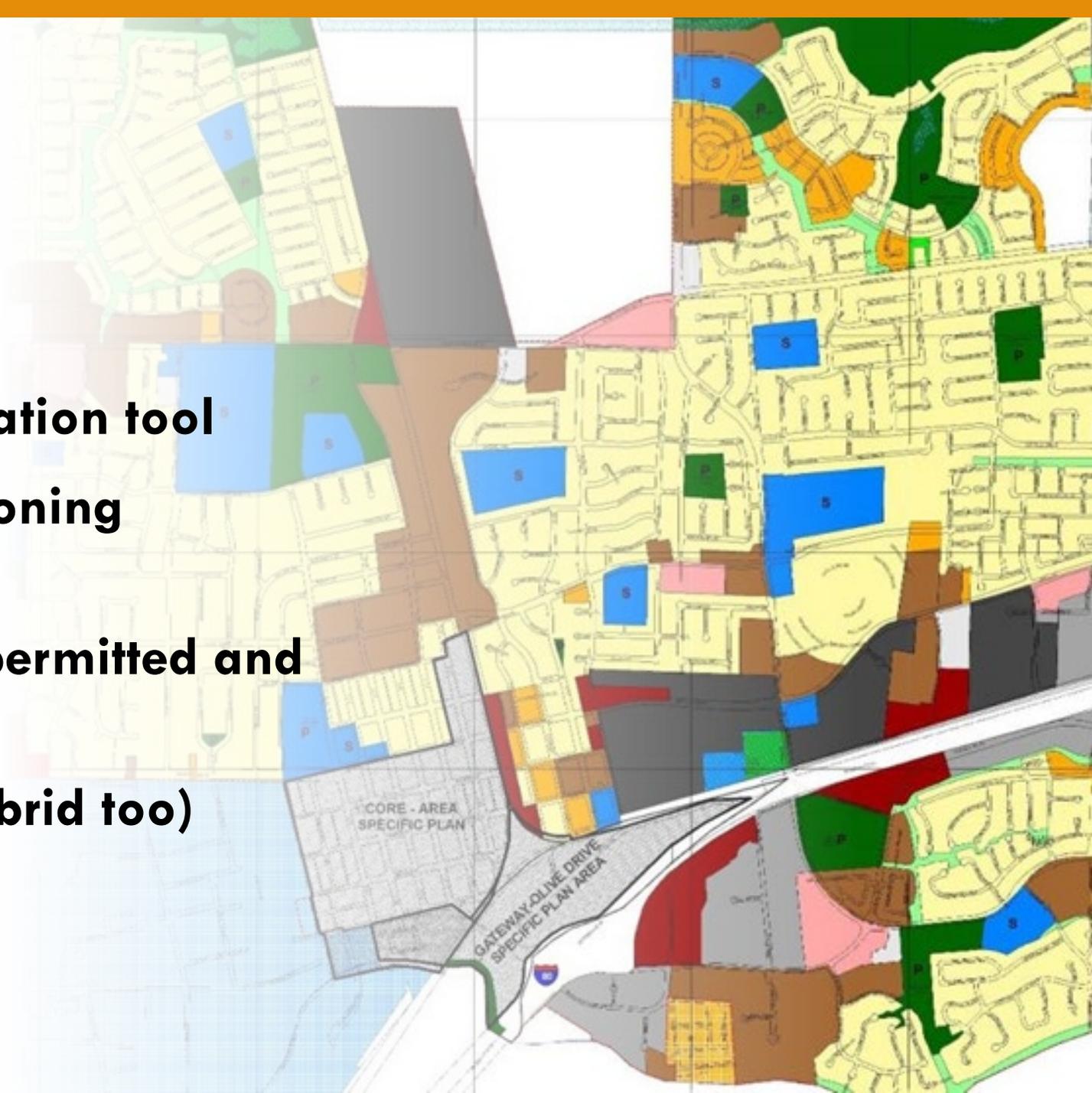
Implements the goals and policies of the General Plan for a specific area

Contains standards for land use densities, streets, and other public facilities in greater detail than the general plan map and text

ZONING

The pointy end of the stick.

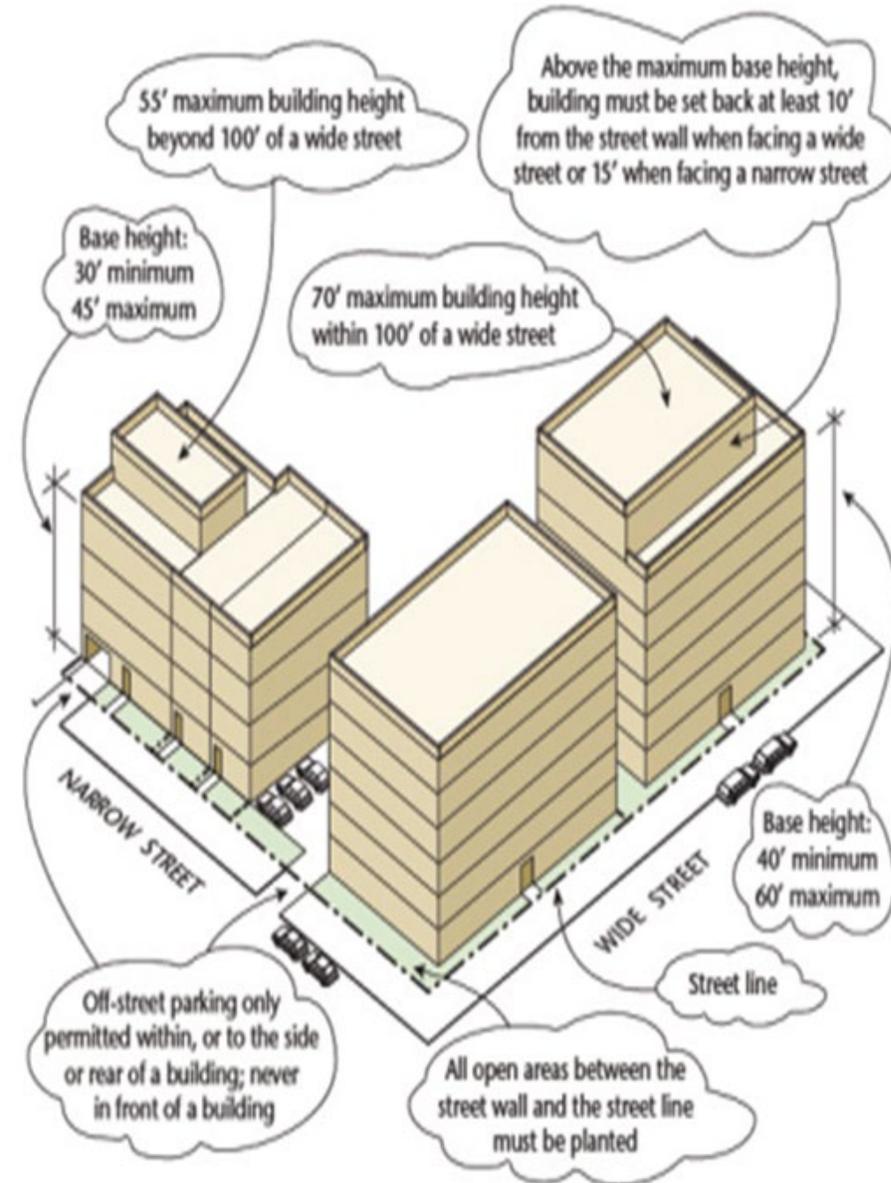
- **The General Plan's implementation tool**
- **Divides the city into various zoning districts**
- **Identifies different land uses permitted and allowed in each district**
- **Euclidian and Form-Based (hybrid too)**



EUCLIDIAN ZONING

Establishes Detailed Standards

- Building uses
- Building size (height, lot coverage and setbacks)
- Landscaping
- Signs and billboards
- Parking requirements
- Other performance standards



FORM-BASED ZONING

Establishes Detailed Standards

- Building uses
- Building size (height, lot coverage and setbacks)
- Landscaping
- Signs and billboards
- Parking requirements
- Other performance standards

Main Street-Medium (MS-M)

40.13.120 Main Street-Medium



A. Intent

A walkable, vibrant district of medium footprint, moderate-intensity mixed-use buildings and housing choices from Main Street Buildings to Courtyard Buildings and Townhouses, supporting and within short walking distance of neighborhood-serving ground floor retail, food and services, including indoor and outdoor artisanal industrial businesses.

The following are generally appropriate form elements in this zone:

Medium Building Size

Primarily Attached Buildings
Medium Building Site Width
Medium Building Footprint
Small-to-None Front Setbacks
Small-to-None Side Setbacks
Up to 4 Stories; Up to 5 stories, see Figure 40.13.070.A (Zoning Map).
Min. 14' Ground Floor Ceiling Height
Forecourts, Shopfronts, Terraces, Galleries, Arcades

B. Sub-Zone(s)

None

General note: The image above is intended to provide a brief overview of this form-based zone and is illustrative.

OTHER TOOLS

- OBJECTIVE DESIGN STANDARDS
- SUBDIVISION REGULATIONS
- CONDITIONAL USE PERMITS
- DEVELOPMENT PERMITS
- SPECIAL OVERLAYS
- VARIANCES



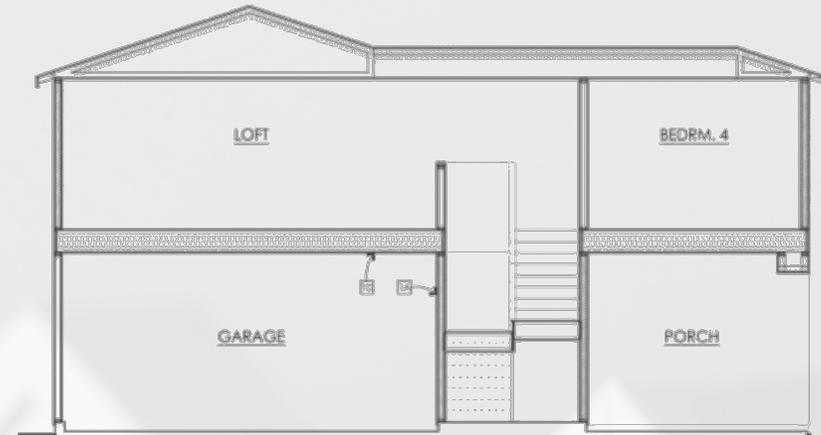
Single Family Home

1- 10 DU/AC

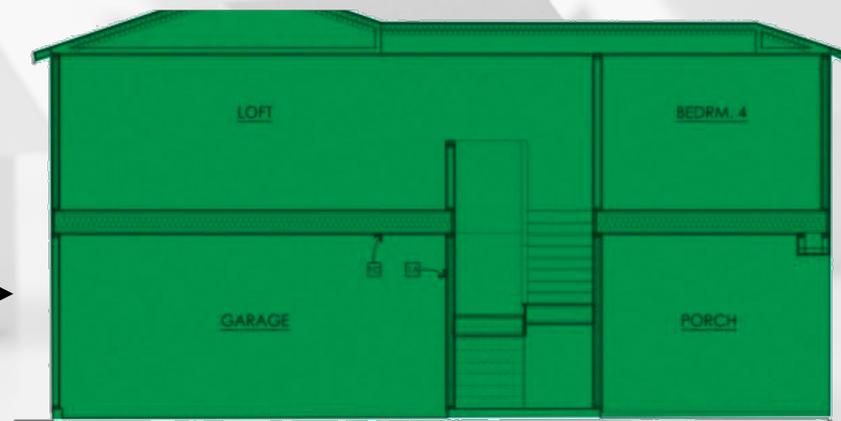


- Lowest Cost PSF to Build
- Highest Sales Price
- Limited Complexity
- Rapid Construction
- Quicker Sales Cycle
- Lower Carry Costs
- Less Capital / Carry Costs
- **Least Attainable**
- **Requires More Land**
- Least Community Opposition*

Less Complex Building Envelope



Simple Structure



* Yimby movement has increased opposition to SFR for higher-density housing.

Townhomes (Row Towns)

12-20 DU/AC 2 & 3
Story

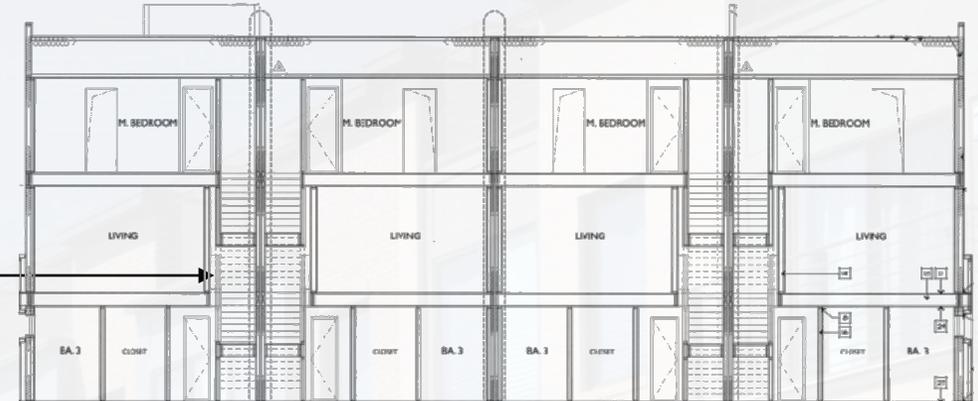
- Moderate Cost PSF to Build
- Lower Sales Price
- More Complex Construction
- Slower Construction Time
- Longer Sales Cycle (more units in same structure)
- Higher Carry Costs (requires more \$\$ and longer cycle time)
- Increased Costs for HOA & Amenities
- Requires Less Land Per Unit
- Increased Community Opposition

Complex Roof Impacts
Solar →



More Complex
Building Envelope →

Increased Structure Cost
(Fire, Sound, Structural) →



Increased Exterior
Maintenance Cost (HOA) →



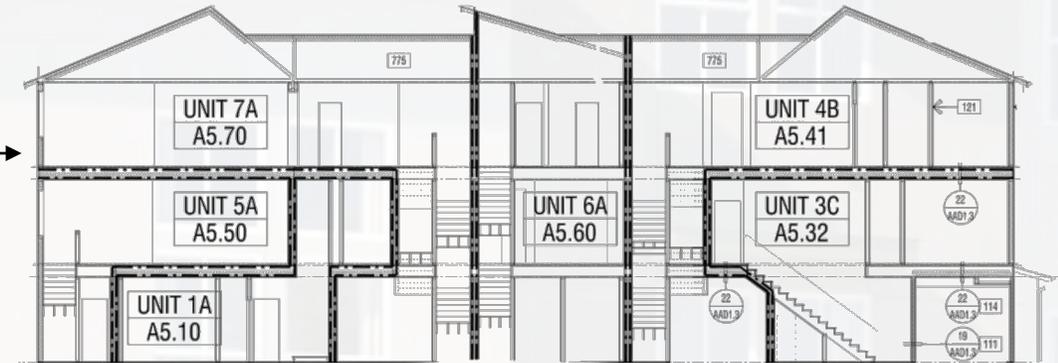
Townhomes (Flats)

- Highest Cost PSF to Build
- Lowest Sales Price
- Most Complex Construction
- Slowest Construction Time
- Longest Sales Cycle (more units in same structure)
- Highest Carry Costs (requires more \$\$ and longer cycle time)
- Decreased Costs for HOA & Amenities (more units share exterior)
- Requires Least Land Per Unit (+8 DU/AC vs Row Towns)
- Highest Rates of Community Opposition

Most Complex Roof Impacts Solar →



Very Complex Building Envelope →



Increased Structure Cost (Fire, Sound, Structural) →

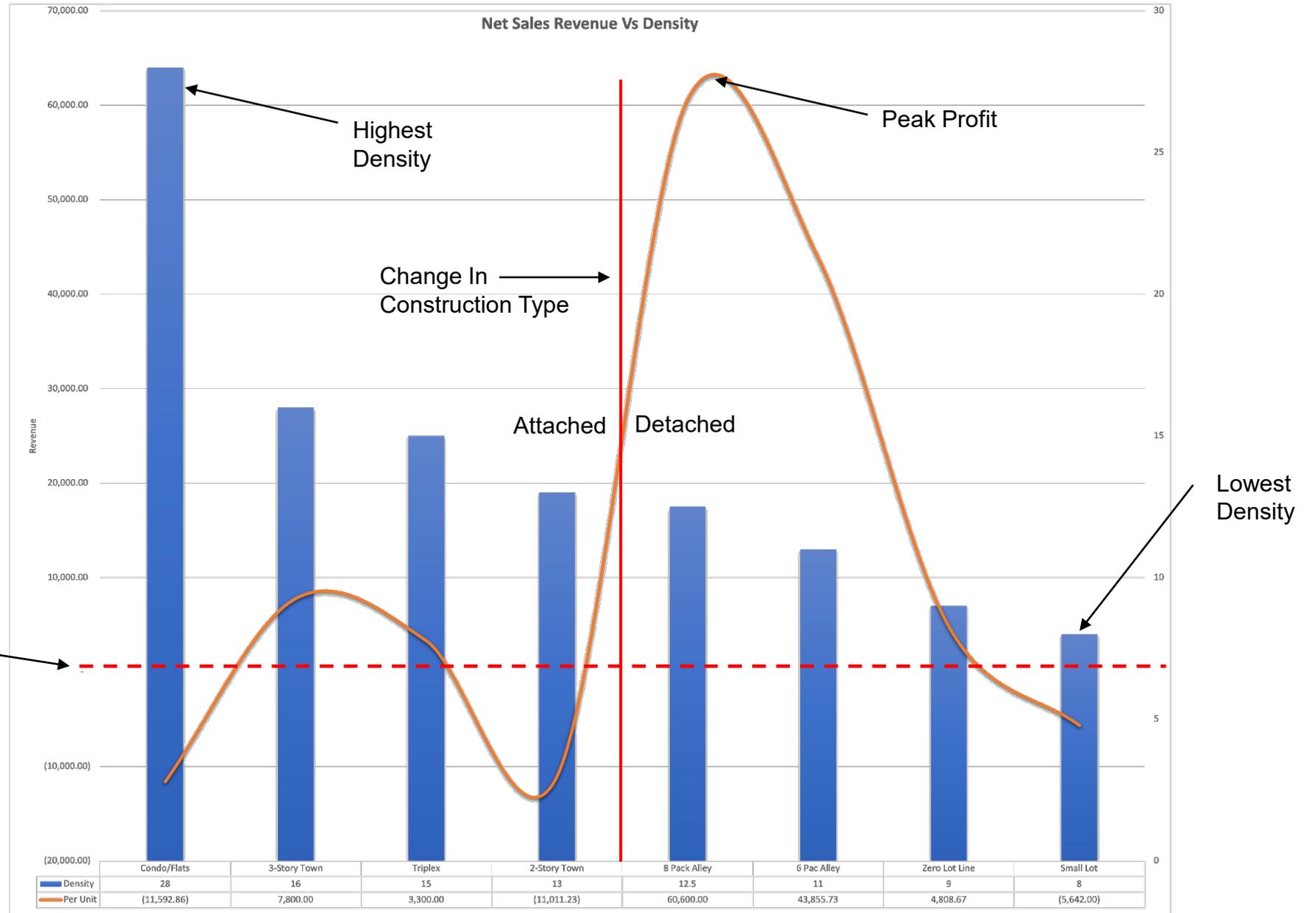


DENSITY – PER UNIT NET REVENUE (PROFIT)

MARKET REALITY

- Housing is Hyper Local
- Highest Density = Loss
- Lowest Density = Loss

Negative Profit





Plan 2

Plan 1

Plan 2

Plan 1

Plan 2

Plan 1

Plan 2

Front



FLATS & TOWNS AT COVINA BOWL
 COVINA, CA
 Covina | Flats & Townhomes
From \$450,400



Up to 1,827 Sq. Ft. | 1 to 3 Beds
 1.5 to 3.5 Baths | 1 to 2 Car Garage



Plan 7

Plan 3

Plan 9

Plan 8

Plan 6

Plan 5



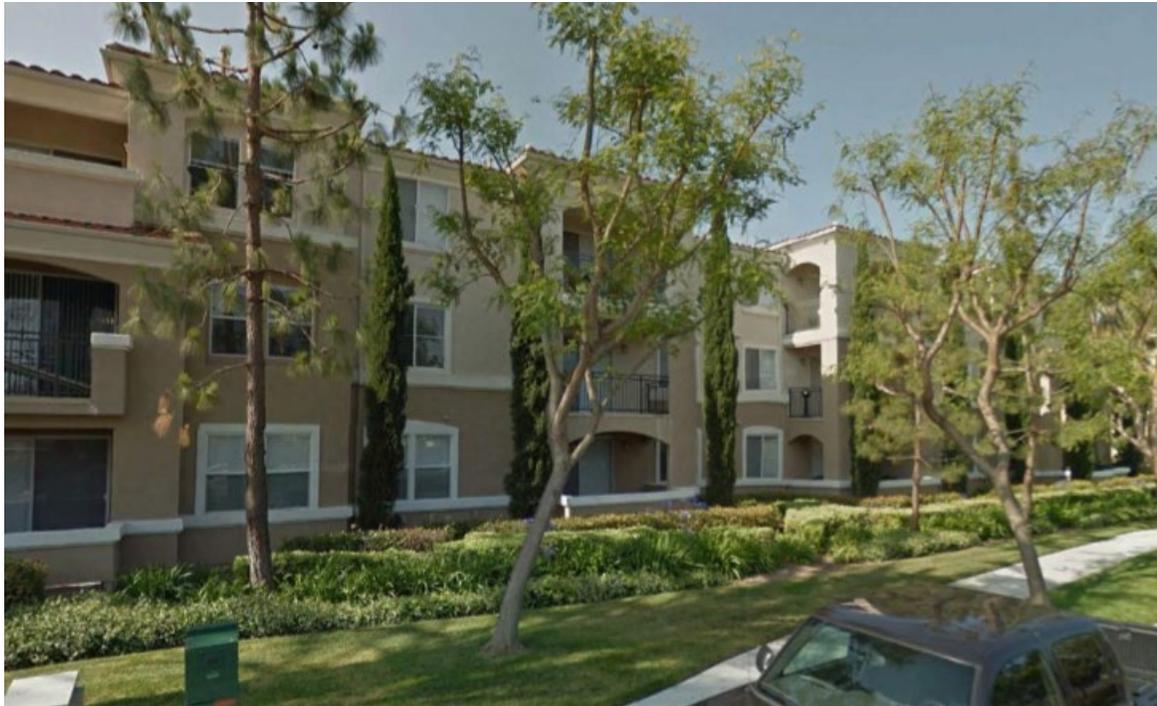
ROWS AT COVINA BOWL
 COVINA, CA
 Covina | 3-Story Townhomes
From \$702,829



Up to 1,705 Sq. Ft. | 1 to 5 Beds
 2.5 to 4 Baths | 1 to 2 Car Garage

Multiple Housing Types & Market Entry Price

WHAT DO THESE TWO HAVE IN COMMON?



THEY BOTH HAVE A DENSITY OF 30 DUA (DWELLING UNITS PER ACRE)

175 x 165 building

3 stories

60 units

X 3 blds

180 units total

30 units/ acre



50 x 65 building

2 stories

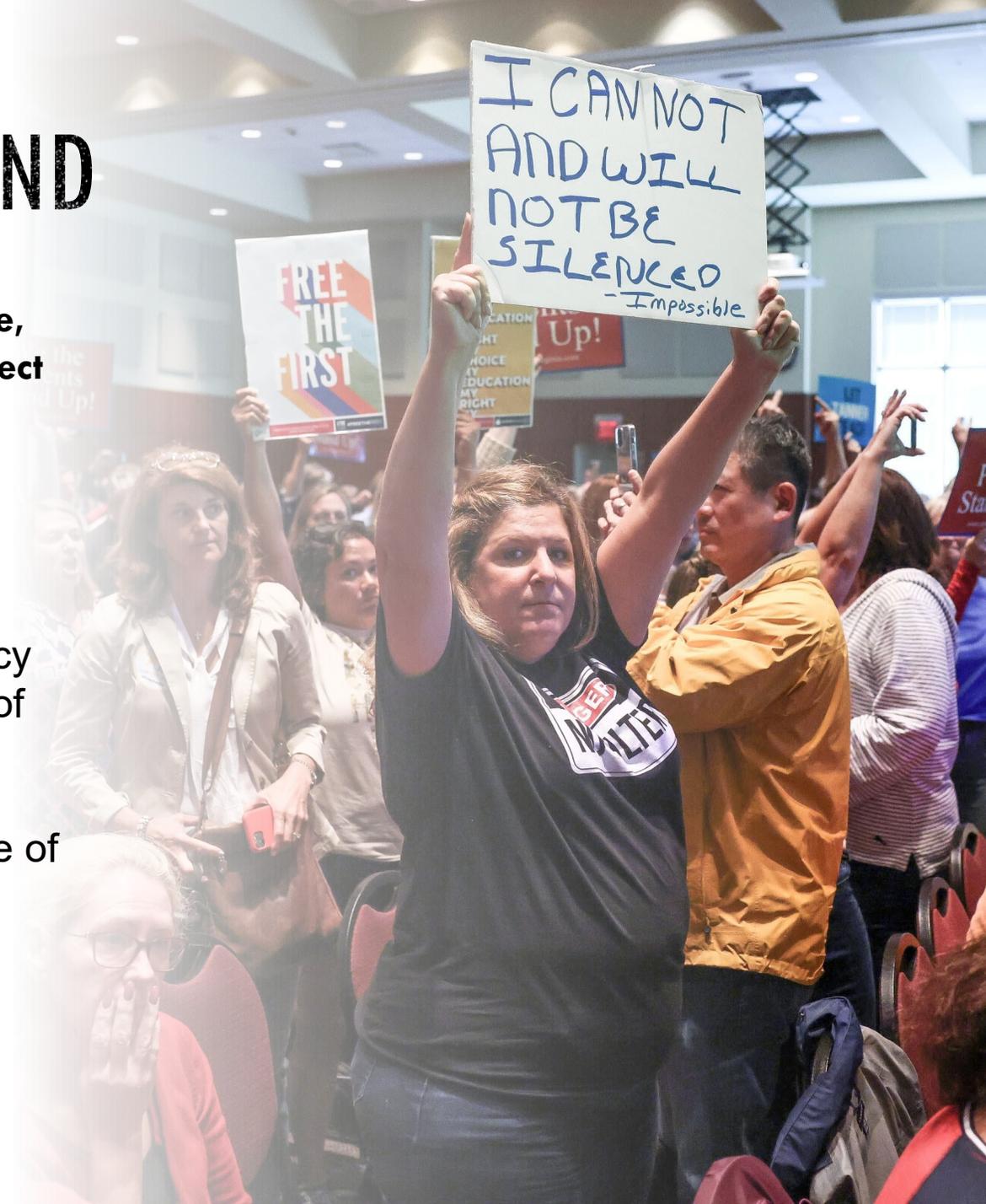
5 units

29 units/ acre

A FEW THINGS TO KEEP IN MIND

PLANS ARE POLICIES and policies, in a democracy at any rate, equals politics. The question is not whether planning will reflect politics but whose politics will it reflect?

- Opposition to a new policy renders it bad; A new policy with no opposition is good, right? Wrong.
- Knowledge and information will make you a better policy maker. The League of California Cities has a plethora of information related to the topics discussed today.
- Change is hard because people overestimate the value of what they have—and underestimate the value of what they may gain by giving that up.



CALIFORNIA ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY ACT



Intent of CEQA

**Why does it take so long
and cost so much?**

Mitigation Measures

How to read an EIR

Showing your work

**Tips to a speedy CEQA
process...Really!**

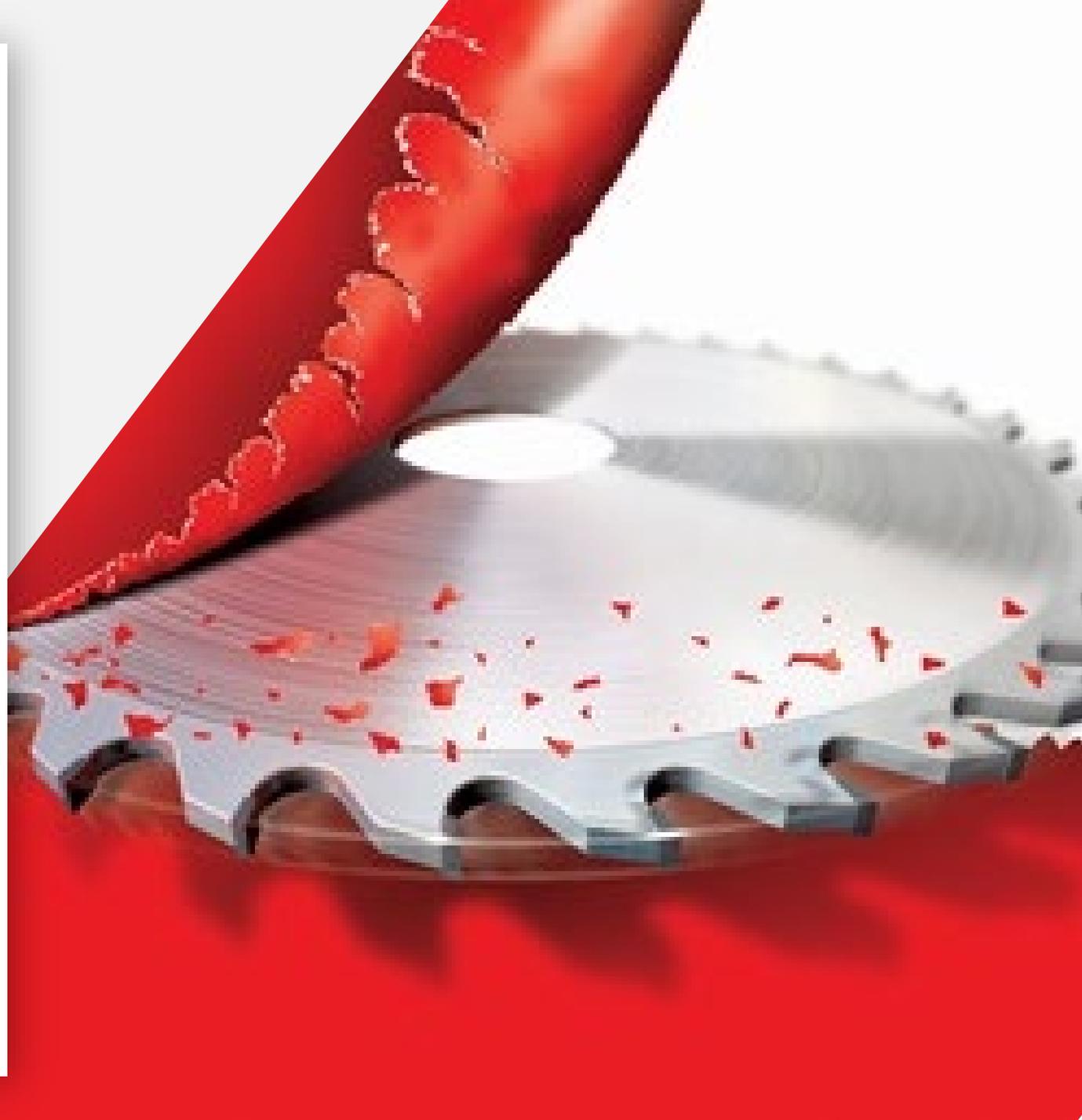


INTENT OF THE CALIFORNIA ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY ACT (CEQA)

- ❖ To provide objective information regarding the environmental consequences of a proposed project to the decision makers who will be reviewing and considering the project.
- ❖ To provide the public and applicable regulatory agencies the ability to participate in the public decision-making process and comment on the environmental effects of a proposed project (based on established thresholds).

CEQA STREAMLINING

Declaring of Certain Projects Ministerial
Exemptions and Addendums
Tiering from existing EIR
Supplemental EIR



PAPERWORK IS NOT THE PURPOSE

Digital Docs are Still Too Long!

- Reports on solutions to environmental impacts of the project
- Provides environmental alternatives
- No requirement to speculate (on some things)
- Not an advocacy document
- Not an exhaustive study
- Not Perfect
- Not a 'worst-case' analysis



WHY DOES CEQA TAKE SO LONG?

- Incomplete project information
- Changing project information
- Statutory review periods
 - 30 – days IS/MND
 - 85 – days EIR
- Timing of Technical Studies
- Having to solve the problem



LATE HITS

- A “late hit” = lengthy comment arriving just before a decision on a project.
 - Intentional delays to review comments
 - Delays decision by requesting additional studies after the CEQA document has been completed
- They happen but don’t let them derail the process.
 - Give your staff time to review
 - Don’t be afraid to postpone a decision
 - Don’t be afraid to make a decision

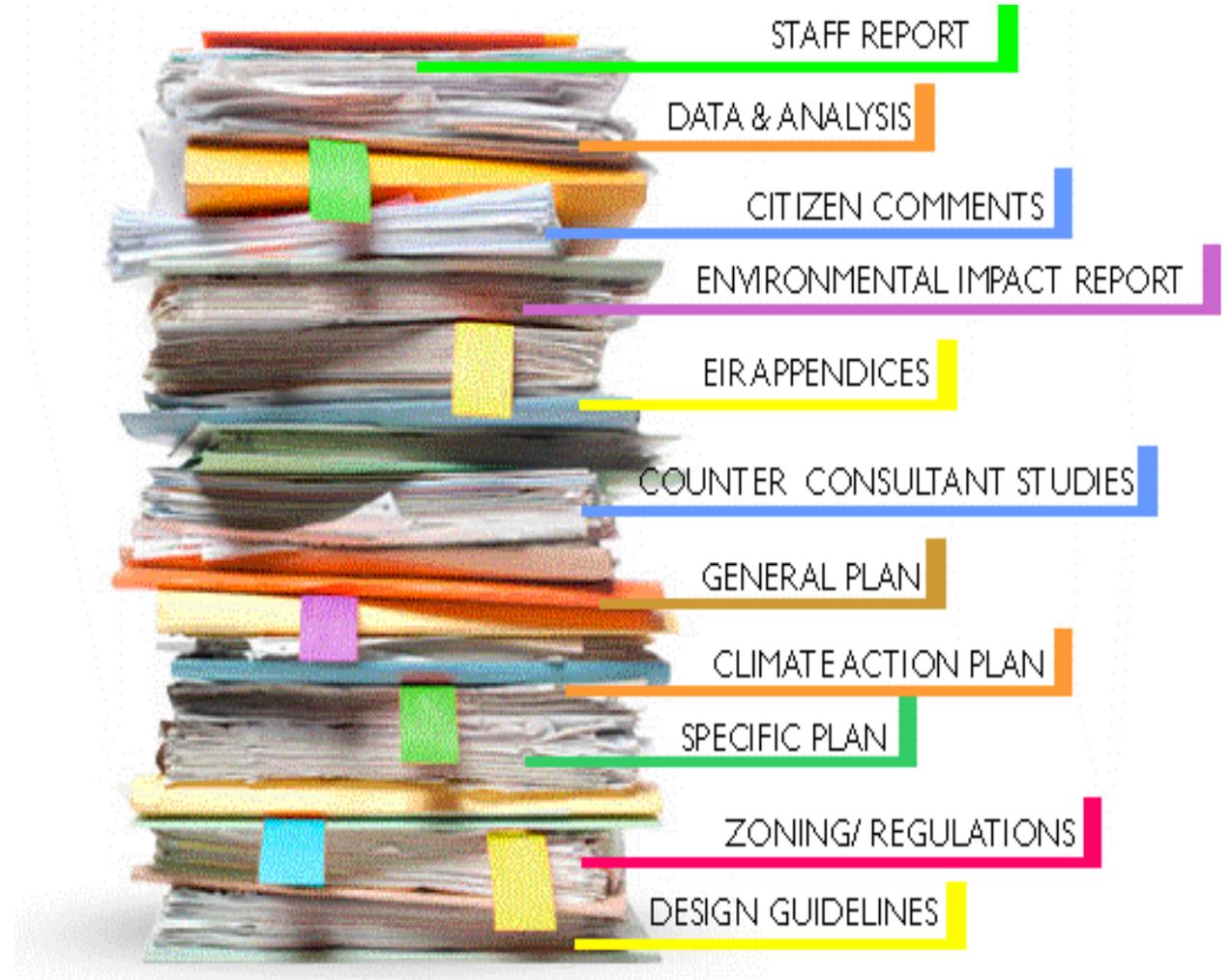


WHAT TO READ FIRST...

- Final EIR & Errata
- Project Description
- Comment Letters & Responses
- **Findings**
- Staff Report

What to Skim

- Introduction & Setting
- Methodology & Thresholds



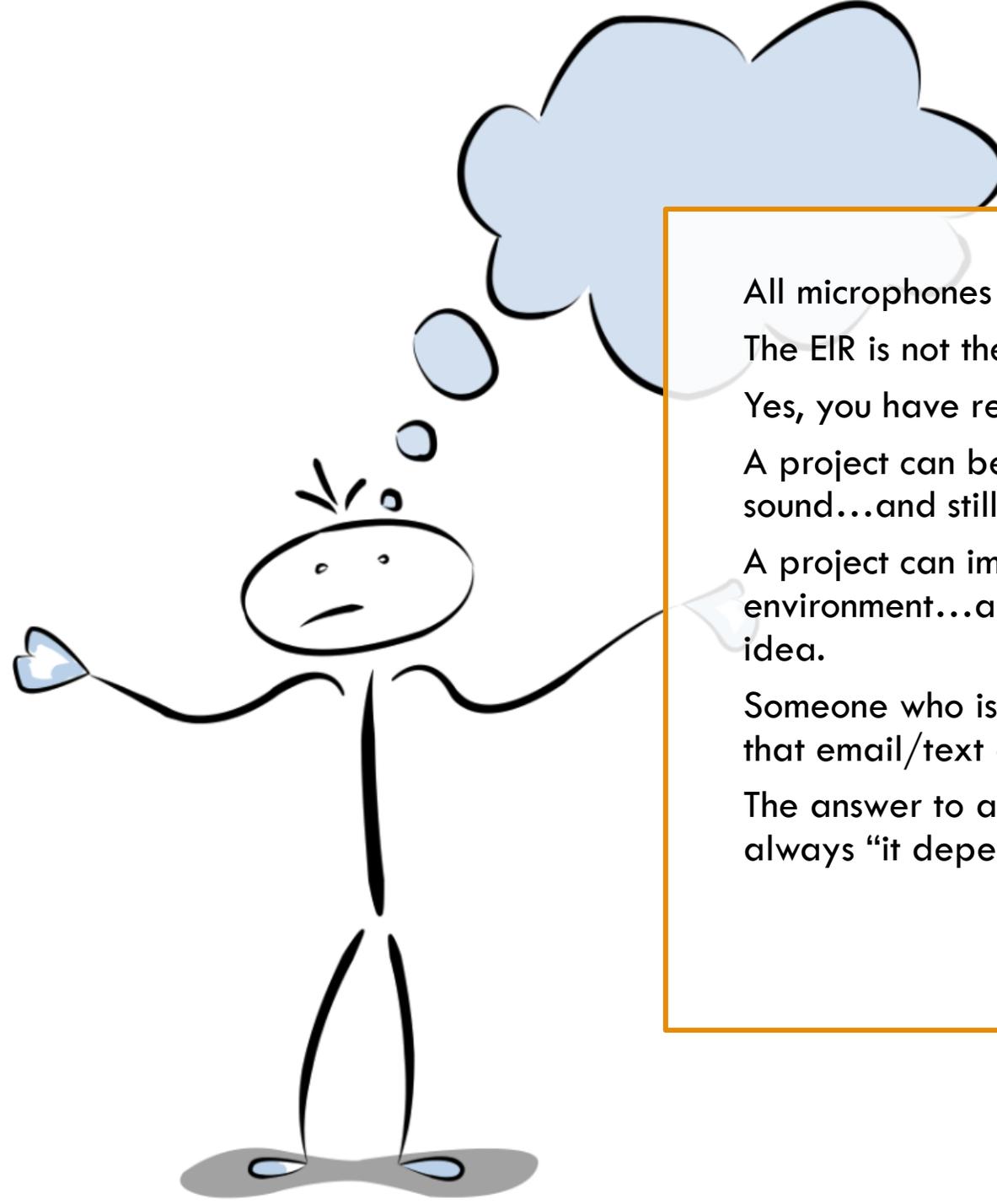


EIR MYTHS

- The EIR will stop the project.
- The EIR will tell me how to vote.
- The EIR will be more expensive than a mitigated negative declaration.
- The EIR will take longer and than a mitigated negative declaration.
- The EIR will be more thorough than a ND/MND.
- The EIR will be challenge-proof.



FINAL THOUGHTS



All microphones and cameras are on.

The EIR is not the project.

Yes, you have read the EIR.

A project can be environmentally sound...and still a bad idea.

A project can impact the environment...and still be a good idea.

Someone who isn't your friend will see that email/text about the project.

The answer to any planning question is always "it depends".