the tip of the iceberg:
EVERYTHING THAT HAPPENS BEFORE THE PUBLIC HEARING
Speakers:

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CITY ADVISORS
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WHY DO MEETINGS KEEP GETTING CANCELLED?

THE CITY MUST NOT BE VERY BUSY...
Streamlining

- Cuts out regulations
- Reduces Planning Commission review
- Fewer meetings
What keeps the Planning Division busy?

- Building permits: 25%
- Staff-level approvals: 20%
- Customer service: 30%
- Advanced Planning: 10%
- Planning Commission: 10%
WHY DON’T WE GET AN APPLICATION FROM .......?
Balancing Act

• Community Needs/Wants
• Market Conditions
• Land Economics
• Developer Influences
• Long-Term Viability
Applicant submits a project to the City.
WHY DOES THE CITY TAKE FOREVER TO REVIEW PROJECTS?
Review Timelines:

• Permit Streamlining Act- 30 day review
• It’s not just Planning....
  ○ City Departments: Public Works, Engineering, Building, Fire, Code Compliance, Police, etc.
  ○ Other agencies: Coastal Commission, Fire Authority, Health Department, etc.
  ○ Consultants: Landscape, Parking, Noise, Historic, etc.
Staff completes review within 30 days.
Then staff waits...
“Staff Is Holding Us Up!”

- Standard complaint
  - Is it True?
- 90%+ of the time untrue
- Client passing the blame
- Fact: Staff has 30 days to respond
- Fact: Applicant has no timeline to resubmit
  - 1 day, 6 months, or a year!
- Applicant complains it’s been a year, but staff has had it for 2 months!
Applicant revises plans and resubmits to the City.
PROJECTS ARE DESIGNED BASED ON IDEAL AESTHETIC CONSIDERATIONS.
Constraints

• Planning doesn’t happen in a vacuum.
• Site constraints like...
  ○ site size/shape, street access, easements, geologic/stability issues, etc.
• It’s not just zoning...
  ○ accessibility, engineering, trash pick-up, fire safety requirements, water quality requirements, political climate, etc.
  ○ city-wide priorities and state law
case study - project evolution

2.47 acre vacant lot
Zoned public/institutional, medium density residential, parks/open space
30 residential units, 0.92 acre park dedication

38 residential units, 0.36 acre recreation area

24 residential units, 1.0 acre park dedication
“Wash, rinse, and repeat”
but sometimes it also feels like this...
HEY... WHY DOES STAFF LOOK SO CHUMMY WITH THE APPLICANT?
Relationship Building

- Working closely with the applicant team
- Trust and cooperation
- Public Trust
Community Input

- Applicant-driven
- Long-range Plan
- Project Specific
- Public Hearing process
Project is deemed complete.
Time for a Hearing... Almost

- CEQA process
- Agendize for Planning Commission
- Public Hearing Notices
Planning Commission public hearing!
PLANNING COMMISSION DECISIONS ARE THE FINAL STOP.
After Project Approval

• Conditions of approval
  ○ Enables staff to continue working with the applicant on specific aspects of the project

• Appeal period

• Annual reviews
“Now we can build, right??”
And now the City waits...
BUT WE APPROVED IT YEARS AGO.... WHY HAVEN'T THEY STARTED CONSTRUCTION YET?
Causes for delay:

• Applicant selling the project
• Lack of funding
• Changing design professionals
  ◦ Often ends badly
• Original design team doesn’t have expertise to create construction documents
Construction drawings finally submitted!
“Now we can build, right??”
• Plan check: Building, Engineering, Planning, Utilities
• Comply w/ Conditions of Approval
• Permits issued
“Now we can build, right??”
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