



City of San Antonio

Agenda Memorandum

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Agenda Item Number: 2.

Agenda Date: 12/5/2018

In Control: Governance Committee

DEPARTMENT: Development Services

DEPARTMENT HEAD: Michael Shannon, PE, CBO

COUNCIL DISTRICTS IMPACTED: Citywide

SUBJECT:

Briefing and discussion of a City Council Consideration Request (CCR) to review City of San Antonio development regulations and their impact on economic development.

SUMMARY:

A CCR was sponsored by Councilman Manny Pelaez on November 14, 2018, which asks staff to conduct a comprehensive review of the Unified Development Code (UDC) update process to determine the feasibility of requiring an economic impact analysis for each UDC amendment.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

The UDC establishes regulations and procedures for development in the City of San Antonio. Regulations related to several city departments are found in the UDC including Development Services, Planning, Transportation and Capital Improvements, Office of Historic Preservation, and Solid Waste. It is designed to provide clear rules about what is expected of applicants in order to gain approval to develop land while also streamlining the approval process and removing unnecessary delay and confusing or vague standards from the process.

The UDC is specifically intended to be updated over time in order to modify procedures and standards for workability and administrative efficiency, eliminate unnecessary development costs, and to update the procedures and standards to reflect changes in the law or the state of the art in land use planning and urban design. Section 35-111 of the UDC established the 5-year update process where proposals for updates are solicited from city staff, advocacy groups, and ordinary citizens. These amendment proposals are vetted by city staff, stakeholders, citizen and neighborhood leaders, the Planning Commission Technical Advisory Committee (PCTAC), various city boards and commissions, and ultimately the City Council. The last 5-year update cycle occurred in 2015 when over 260 amendments covering 670 pages of the UDC were updated.

Since 2015, eleven out-of-cycle amendments have occurred. Out-of-cycle amendments can occur at any time and are usually initiated at the request of the City Council. In some cases, out-of-cycle amendments may be necessary due to changes in state law. Recent examples of out-of-cycle amendments include courtesy notices for certain development applications, updating of regulations pertaining to demolition of historic structures,

revisions to the Military Lighting Overlay District, and the Short Term Rental ordinance. Out-of-cycle amendments are vetted through a diverse stakeholder group, the PCTAC, various city boards and commissions, and ultimately the City Council.

ISSUE:

In a recent report, the Mayor's Housing Policy Taskforce identified the extent to which development regulations have the effect of increasing costs for construction. The CCR from Councilman Pelaez states that additional costs and pressures on current process from external groups directly impact the cost and affordability of new construction. As a result, DSD staff plans to convene a diverse stakeholder group which includes city staff from various city departments, the development community, citizens and neighborhood leaders, the military and school district representatives to review the UDC amendment process - both the five year process and the out-of-cycle process - and to determine the feasibility and process of including economic impact analyses for proposed UDC amendments.

ALTERNATIVES:

City Council could choose to not take any action on the CCR which would leave the existing UDC amendment process unchanged.

FISCAL IMPACT:

The convening of the stakeholder group would not have a fiscal impact. At this time, it is unknown whether or not the recommendations resulting from the stakeholder taskforce's work would result in a fiscal impact.

RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends beginning a stakeholder taskforce process as described, and report the findings to the Comprehensive Plan Committee.