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Economy & Efficiency Commission Presentation

Editorial Note: Although every effort has been made to insure the accuracy of the material in this presentation, the scope of the material covered and the discussions undertaken lends itself to the possibility of minor transcription misinterpretations.

**PRESENTATIONS BY
Mr. Jon Sanabria
Acting Director, Department of Regional Planning
Los Angeles County**

October 1, 2009

OVERVIEW OF THE DEPARTMENT OF REGIONAL PLANNING

Chairman Barcelona greeted Jon Sanabria, Acting Director, Regional Planning, and welcomed him while turning it over for Mr. Sanabria to speak to the Economy and Efficiency Commission.

Department Background

Mr. Sanabria stated that his department performs all land use planning functions for the County's unincorporated areas, including long range planning, land development review and approval, and zoning enforcement.

Mr. Sanabria stated that Regional Planning started in Los Angeles County in 1922 with the establishment of the Regional Planning Commission (RPC), a body that still exists and is responsible for advising the Board of Supervisors on all planning matters. He stated that it is the oldest planning body in the United States. The roots of the Department of Regional Planning (DRP) lay in providing staff advice and assistance to the Regional Planning Commission. He also stated it became an independent Department in 1974 and continues to support the Commission and Board of Supervisors.

Mr. Sanabria stated that the RPC formulates policies and conducts regular public hearings weekly. He stated that tentative subdivision tracts, zoning changes, variances and permits, Countywide and Community plan polices are presented to and acted upon by the Commission. Department of Regional Planning designs long range plans and prepares ordinances for approval by the RPC. He also stated that the Department prepares and develops amendments to the County of Los Angeles General Plan, a two-part document that covers: (1) countywide chapter on elements such as land use, circulation, conservation and open space, housing, safety, and noise, and (2) community specific plans for unincorporated areas.

Mr. Sanabria stated that DRP also provides hearing officers to review cases of limited complexity, allowing the Regional Planning Commission to devote more of its time to the consideration of more far-reaching policy issues. He stated that the hearing officers are appointed by the Director of Planning from experienced

staff members, and are subject to approval by the Board of Supervisors. He stated that the hearing officers hold regular hearings on discretionary, non-legislative development cases. In addition to these functions, DRP handles inspection, and code enforcement.

Mr. Sanabria stated that DRP is responsible for both providing immediate responses to enforcement and permitting requests, and considering long-range development issues. Therefore, DRP must consider a broad range of constituents, from individual homeowners, to large land owners, to community groups, and to future generations of Los Angeles County residents. DRP outreach efforts to all affected groups have been a hallmark of its operations since its establishment.

GIS Web Mapping Applications

Mr. Franchino stated that in recognizing the growing value of geographic aerial imagery and the prohibitive cost, the Chief Information Office, Department of Regional Planning and County Counsel formulated a program to acquire a set of imagery for a group of organizations willing to share the cost of acquisition. He stated that the Los Angeles Region-Imagery Acquisition Consortium (LAR-IRC) Program was established to acquire high resolution imagery (4' color orthogonal, 4' color infrared, 6' color oblique), and highly detailed digital terrain datasets. He stated that the LAR-IAC represents a model in regional cooperation that improves the quality, access, and cost effectiveness of high resolution aerial imagery acquisition. Mr. Franchino stated that knowledge transfer is increased through consortium program meetings, user groups, and various workshops that have been established in conjunction with this project. He stated that the imagery acquired enables all participating jurisdictions the ability to leverage this key geographic information asset to support numerous decision support business applications, thus enabling more effective and efficient delivery of services.

Mr. Franchino stated that GIS-NET was developed to provide the public with geographic information regarding land use planning and zoning for the unincorporated areas of Los Angeles County. He stated that it was developed by the Los Angeles County Department of Regional Planning (DRP) in coordination with the County Chief Information Office (CIO).

Mr. Franchino stated that the GIS-NET public version is user-friendly and provides the basic layers of zoning and land use policy. He stated that it also includes many other GIS layers for displaying and querying. He also stated that the number of calls and visits to the Department of Regional Planning Headquarters related to zoning and land use policy inquiries has reduced as a result of the use of this application.

Mr. Franchino stated that the SUB-NET is a user-friendly application and provides access to the numerous scanned tract and parcel maps. He stated that it also provides information for projects that are pending, approved or recorded. This Application is primarily used by a section within the Department involved in land division process.

Mr. Franchino also stated that Z-NET is the most complex application to be used by power users in the Department. He stated that fundamentally, zoning and its related information is the foundation of the Regional Planning Department's mission.

Department Accomplishments

Mr. Sanabria stated that his Department has responded to more than 63,500 telephone calls and counseled more than 32,900 customers at the headquarters and nine field offices. He stated that his Department has completed the review of 29 Screen check EIRs, reviewed 478 environmental documents for non-County projects such as the NFL Stadium Project, Walnut Creek Energy Park Project, and Edison Tehachapi Project to ensure the unincorporated County interests are protected. He also stated that his Department has approved 157 final map waivers, completed over 200 internal GIS work request, continued support of the GIS Liaison Program, and prepared more than 110 case hearing and ordinance maps.

Questions

Commissioner Padilla asked if Mr. Sanabria could comment on the regional housing need assessments and how it applies to the County. Mr. Sanabria replied that the organization in charge of coordinating the needs for each one of the communities and determining how housing will be allocated and produced by each community is Southern California Association Government (SCAG). SCAG is charged by the State to prepare an assessment or a number. He stated that sometimes the number is based on existing housing needs for a particular community. SCAG reviews the assessment and states that they have to meet a certain overall number and then it becomes a haggling between numbers. Commissioner Padilla asked what is the overall number determined by. Mr. Sanabria stated that the overall number is determined by population growth.

Commissioner Sax asked Mr. Sanabria his Department's relationship with the MTA. Mr. Sanabria stated that his Department works closely with the MTA but he stated that the MTA is a separate agency.

Commissioner Reznik asked if Mr. Sanabria's Department's Mission is to become a coordinating body for all these agencies. Mr. Sanabria replied that it is not his Department's mission to become one body for the different agencies because they all have different missions.

Commissioner Reznik asked if Mr. Sanabria had to declare his number one challenge in becoming the best Regional Planning Department what would it be. Mr. Sanabria replied that his number one obstacle is for his Department is to balance all the needs of the community.

Chairman Barcelona expressed his appreciation to Mr. Sanabria and Mr. Franchino for coming to speak to the EEC and the Commissioners applauded.

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