




**COUNCILMEMBER CHRIS CATE  
CITY OF SAN DIEGO  
SIXTH DISTRICT**

**M E M O R A N D U M**

**DATE:** January 13, 2017

**TO:** Councilmember Scott Sherman, Chair, Committee on Smart Growth and Land Use

**FROM:** Councilmember Chris Cate 

**SUBJECT:** 2017 Committee on Smart Growth and Land Use Committee Priorities

Since assuming office in December 2014, my office has continuously engaged with the residents and business owners of District 6 to better understand their neighborhood concerns and priorities. San Diegans are vocally worried about the increasing barriers to homeownership, rising rents, and a loss of housing affordability. I believe the City can and should do more to address these issues.

In 2017, I believe the Committee should bring forward proposals to eliminate unnecessary municipal regulations that impact housing affordability, complete Community Plan Updates, and provide homeowners with the opportunity to supplement their income by maximizing their private property. I appreciate the opportunity to share my priorities to accomplish these objectives and provide a better quality of life for all San Diegans.

**Ensure Commencement and Completion of Community Plan Updates**

As the City of San Diego begins several significant Community Plan Updates, the process should be open, transparent, and streamlined to best gather input from local residents and neighborhood business owners. In the Sixth District, three community plan updates are commencing, some of which have not been updated in 20 years. The Committee should ensure that each Community Plan Update is a public process, soliciting as much feedback as possible through workshops and local planning groups. In addition, the Committee should continue to work with City staff to ensure the effective and expeditious completion of each Community Plan Update.

**Finalize Short-Term Vacation Rental Ordinance**

Over the last two years, the topic of Short-Term Vacation Rentals and Home Sharing has received over 25 hours of public comment and input from the community. After one City Council hearing, two Smart Growth and Land Use Committee meetings, Community Planners Committee, Technical Advisory Committee, Code Monitoring Team, and Planning Commission, City staff and the City Council should have sufficient input to propose and adopt a comprehensive Short Term Rental ordinance in 2017. Due to the desire of the City Council to have an item be heard at the SG&LU Committee, I request that the ordinance I proposed in my September 2016 memo be docketed for consideration in the first quarter of 2017. My ordinance is a balanced proposal that will create a pathway for strong enforcement, certainty for the sharing economy, and safeguards for resident to protect their quality of life.

**Revise City Employee Transportation Alternatives Program**

The City's Climate Action Plan seeks to increase the number of mass transit commuters in Transit Priorities Areas by 8 percent to achieve its 2020 goal. To help move the needle, the Committee should consider amending the

City's current public transportation incentives offered to City employees through the Transportation Alternatives Program. The current program offers incentives only to employees who do not purchase a monthly parking pass from the City Parkade and does not offer mileage reimbursement for work travel taken with public transportation. The Committee should consider amendments to this program that will extend incentives to Parkade pass-holders and employees who utilize public transit for work travel.

#### **Amend Local California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Appeal Processes**

The California Environmental Quality Act has been utilized to ensure the protection of San Diego's precious waterways, air quality, and environmental assets for the enjoyment of future generations. Unfortunately, frivolous opponents to both private and public projects have utilized this legislation as a mechanism to stall housing development and infrastructure improvements. In an effort to ensure faster project delivery, saving taxpayer dollars and lowering housing costs, the Committee should consider a proposal to streamline the appeals process for environmental determinations, amend the fee structure to file appeals, and expedite the timing for appeals to be heard at the City Council. The Committee should work with Planning Department staff to bring forward an item for discussion in the first quarter of 2017.

#### **Streamline Process to Develop New Off-Leash Dog Parks in the City**

Maintaining and maximizing neighborhood parks is a top priority for residents, especially as more and more San Diego families desire convenient and safe park space to enjoy with their dogs. Following a 1999 change to the San Diego Municipal Code governing park use to include policies governing off-leash dog parks, the then-Land Use and Housing Committee has studied several reports published by City staff on the issue spanning from 2000 to 2004. Since the suggested changes were adopted and implemented, the City has not designated and opened a single new off-leash dog park. The Development Services and Planning Departments should work cooperatively with community members to revise SDMC §63.0102(b)(2)(C) to allow for a feasible path for identifying, developing, and opening new off-leash dog parks within existing City parks.

#### **Ease Restrictions for Accessory Dwelling Units**

As the City of San Diego continues to face the challenge of a lacking local housing supply, the Committee should consider measures to ease restrictions with regard to Accessory Dwelling Units. Accessory Dwelling Units, commonly known as granny flats, have served an important role in San Diego by providing homeowners with an opportunity for supplemental income and additional affordable in-fill housing for residents. The Committee should consider amending the Municipal Code to reflect recent changes set forth by the State of California via Senate Bill 1069. This bill relieves parking, setback, and height requirements for Accessory Dwelling Units. The Committee should work with Planning Department staff to bring forward an item for discussion in the first quarter of 2017.

#### **Consider Revising City Parking Requirements**

The City's Climate Action Plan outlines the need to incentivize in-fill and multifamily development near multi-modal communities to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and provide new housing supplies. Locating housing within transit areas helps eliminate the need for parking requirements, which can substantially increase the cost of development. The Committee should consider a proposal to waive parking requirements within transit areas for the following types of development: small lots, affordable units, senior housing, and projects that require tandem parking only.

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