



DATE: November 22, 2022

TO: Mayor and Members of the City Council

FROM: Councilmember Laura Lothian

SUBJECT: CONSIDERATION OF DIRECTING STAFF TO DRAFT POLICIES
REQUIRING PUBLIC NOTIFICATION OF ALL SIGNIFICANT OR
IMPACTIVE DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS UNDER CONSIDERATION

Background

As City Council members are aware, the recent discussion of the five-story apartment project in the Village on the site of the old Randall Lamb building resulted in several residents expressing concerns they had not been informed of the development proposal.

Given the nature of the development, the City was not obligated to publish any related information regarding the proposal nor inform businesses and residences within a certain distance of the site.

As a result, the project proposal may have gone largely undetected by many who might otherwise have had an interest and concerns.

Discussion and Consideration

In many instances, the City has an obligation to inform nearby property owners, businesses and/or residents of upcoming public hearings on development projects. In other instances, this is not the case.

The legal differences between what constitutes a requirement for notification and what doesn't is very likely confusing to the public, as well as the City Council, Planning Commission, and others.

From a transparency, due diligence, good governance, and trust in government standpoint, I believe it incumbent on the City to utilize reasonable, good faith efforts to inform the public of projects that may be significant or impactful on surrounding areas.

It is within the city's purview to inform the public of such proposals using means over and above what is minimally required.

Means of communicating such information could include the City's website's homepage, social media, the placement of signage on the property, and written notices sent to businesses and residences within a certain distance of the proposed project site (such as 300 feet). My City Council colleagues may have other ideas in this regard.

The other question is how will the determination be made as to what constitutes a significant or impactful project, and thus requiring notifications to the public? Would this be based on square footage, number of residential units, location, projects requiring waivers or variances, and/or projects not in compliance with Specific Plans or the General Plan?

I believe a constructive discussion by the City Council will provide enough input to staff so they may draft a policy proposal for consideration.

I request my colleagues join me in providing appropriate direction to staff to draft the needed policy changes in this regard. I look forward to the discussion.