OPEN FOR BUSINESS WORKING GROUP

RECOMMENDED STRATEGIES

Alameda County Planning Commission

December 5th, 2016

WORKING GROUP MEMBERS

- Staff Facilitators
  - Economic & Civic Development Department
    - Eileen Dalton & Susan McCue

- Supervisor Nate Miley's Office: Matt Turner
- Supervisor Wilma Chan's Office: Steven Jones
- Boards & Commissions:
  - West BZA – Dawn Clark-Montenegro
  - Castro Valley MAC – Marc Crawford
- Non-Profit Agencies:
  - Eden Area Chamber of Commerce – Bill Mulgrew
  - San Lorenzo Village Homes Assoc. – Susan Kleebauer

- Developer/Commercial Brokers/Contractors
  - Sherwood & Co. - Cliff Sherwood;
  - Eden Realty - Tom Silva;
  - Bohannon Dev. Co.- Scott Bohannon
  - MTZ Commercial Real Estate - Mike Tanzillo
  - BA Morrison - Brian Morrison
- Local Sanitary Districts:
  - Castro Valley Sanitary District – Roland Williams, Jr.
  - Oro Loma Sanitary District – Jason Warner
- Alameda County Departments
  - Planning Department – Albert Lopez
  - Environmental Health – Ron Torres & Cynthia Bartus
  - Fire Department – Bonnie Terra
  - Public Works – Art Carrera (Roads) & Allen Lang (Bldg.)

PURPOSE OF WORKING GROUP

The Open for Business Working Group met between July 14 and October 6, 2015 to recommend strategies to make unincorporated Alameda County more business-friendly and remove barriers to economic growth.

RECOMMENDED STRATEGIES - NEXT STEPS

- Present *Recommended Strategies* to various community and planning bodies, including West Board of Zoning Adjustments, Planning Commission, etc.

- Present *Recommended Strategies* to the Board of Supervisors in Spring of 2017.

- Full implementation to follow.

Open for Business Working Group
Recommended Strategies

	Issue/Challenge	Recommendation	Next Steps - Implementation	Responsible Dept./Agency	Notes
1	Need overall improvements to customer services:			Planning, Building, Env. Health, Fire, PW/Eng., ECD, CV San, Oro Loma, EBMUD, PG&E and ECD	
	Make it easier to understand process(es) for opening or expanding a business or commercial space	✓ Develop a process map – for specific businesses, restaurants, etc.	Develop a draft review	ECD	On-line & Handouts
		✓ Pre-application meeting with all relevant depts.	Develop concept with Depts. and launch	ECD & Development Review Team	
		✓ Set up ombudsman function	Development	ECD	
		✓ Develop fast-track permit tied to incentives (e.g. restaurants)	ECD will work with Depts. to develop concept	ECD, Planning, Env. Health, Building & Fire	Evaluate Staff/budget impact
	Website upgrades – add zoning info, process maps and links to GIS layers	Use website to clarify process, provide useful data/info and standardized answers	Add new info or clarify existing info and link to GIS layers	Planning, Building, Env. Health, Fire, PW/Eng., ECD, ITD	
	Need consistent info at Permit Center and counters	Give clear, consistent info so applicants know what to expect and understand the process	Staff will work on better coordination and cross-training between depts.	Planning, Building, Env. Health, Fire, PW/Eng. and ECD	
	Need one departmental point of contact throughout the process *(one per Dept.)*	Set up a "technical" single point of contact Assign Planner earlier in the process Survey customers on regular basis Evaluate need for more staffing	Depts. name technical single point of contact for applicants Staff evaluate and recommend	Planning, Building, Env. Health, Fire, PW/Eng. Planning, Fire, Building, etc.	Provide list of agencies

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2	Need to show economic impact/benefit for dev. projects. Include impact/benefit discussion in all staff reports (revenue, jobs)	Refer dev. projects to ECD for evaluation	ECD develops template and evaluates impacts on project-by-project basis	Relevant depts. refer projects to ECD for commentary	
3	Site Dev. Review process takes too long – can take up to 6 to 9 mos.	Look at streamlining options/ approaches	Staff review/evaluation & recommendation	Planning Dept. in conjunction w/ relevant Co. depts.	
4	Can we expedite process and/or offer incentives to "preferred" businesses? Staff to develop criteria	Look at criteria for "preferred" and examples of effective programs & initiatives (e.g., other cities)	ECD evaluates & makes a recommendation	ECD takes lead and confers with all permitting depts. & agencies	$$$ incentives require budget
5	PG&E and EBMUD service connections take too long and delay businesses/development projects	PG&E and EBMUD need to expedite services related to development	Let PG&E and EBMUD know @ issue and ask for resolution	ECD to notify PG&E and EBMUD @ Issue & track resolution (e.g., PG&E's 1-step approval process)	Solution not under County jurisdiction
6	Business Licenses are issued without Planning sign-off on zoning or referral to Env. Health	Add Planning & Env. Health approval/referral box to Business License application	Work with Business License staff to add box	Business License Dept. with assistance from Planning, Env. Health & ECD	May need software upgrade
7	CV San's sewer hook-up fees are too expensive, making it hard to attract restaurants, etc. (CV San charges by no. of fixtures resulting in expensive fees . Oro Loma uses sq. footage as basis – resulting in lower fees).	Ask CV San to review fee structure so that fees are less cumbersome for new & expanding businesses	Request CV San to look at modifying fee structure	CV Sanitary District staff & Board	Solution not under County jurisdiction – under control of CV San Board

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8	Zoning ordinances are outdated: Example - food trucks & liquor licenses for restaurants	Review and update relevant zoning ordinances – look at neighboring cities for examples	Staff review, evaluation & recommendation	Planning Dept., Sheriff's Office, Env. Health, ECD	Ordinance changes - MAC, BZA, PC, BOS
9	Complaint-driven code enforcement not meeting needs & shabby appearance of area is dampening new investment & development	Evaluate alternative or additional approaches to current enforcement - such as mobile devices & apps	Look at proactive approaches	Planning/Code Enforcement	Look at tech. solutions
	CV San and Oro Loma regulate street trash	Review franchise agreements – 2019 for CV San/ 2022 for Oro Loma	Ask CV San and Oro Loma to recommend solutions	ECD	Franchise Agreements
	Review County's approach to code enforcement of signs – create list of signs not allowed (wavy guys, sandwich boards in street medians, for example)	Review current approach	Clarify w/ Working Group	Planning/Code Enforcement	Prioritize by local comm-unity desires
	Clothing donation boxes create blight and should not be allowed – CUP process for donation boxes	Co. Counsel is reviewing current ordinance – to change or update	Track ordinance change	Planning/Code Enforcement, Public Works (?)	CUP process for donation
10	Streamline the ACUP process – under current process It can be cheaper to pay fines than apply for permit	Look at streamlining options (e.g., 60 days or less) & review Review what qualifies for ACUP	Staff review/evaluation & recommendation	Planning Dept. in conjunction w/ relevant Co. depts.	

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11	Requiring Site Dev. Review for signs – several views (1)requirement is onerous (2)requirement prevents poor signage	Look at options for streamlining signs while maintaining quality of signs	Planning develops a sign program with criteria that allows staff to sign off. Policy question – should signs continue going to MAC for review?	Planning	
12	Innovation and technology to improve/streamline process	Look at using automation and systems to improve process	Staff evaluation/ recommendation	Interdepartmental Committee (best practices)	Budgetary impact