

Lisa,

I heartedly applaud the Planning Department's current efforts at DR reform. Your goals as stated in your reports are right on target and the process refinements being suggested are well considered. I would like to stress that the following points should be maintained or included, regardless of what else is compromised:

1. Establish specific criteria for a DR – re what is deemed "exceptional or extraordinary circumstances" so that DR requesters and project sponsors know what DR requests will immediately be thrown out as not meeting DR criteria vs. what is in a legitimate gray zone (meets code but "possibly" not design guidelines).
2. The Department declines DR requests not meeting the criteria. It goes no further than an internal Planning Dept (RDC) decision that the DR criteria are not met.
3. Legitimate DRs get passed along to EITHER the Hearing Officer OR the Commission... but not to one with a potential appeal to the other. If it a project involving "policy" matters, it should go to the Commission. If it does not involve "policy" issues, it goes to the hearing officer, and from there to the Appeals Board if appealed. The RDC decides which is which.

I think this would be a tremendous improvement and would reduce costs, improve predictability, increase consistency, and reduce bad behaviors all around.

Thanks so much.

David Ehrlich

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