David Pilpel

Scott Sanchez, Planner
City Planning Department
1650 Mission St Ste 400
San Francisco CA 94103

Re: Comments and Suggested Guidelines for City Planning Public Notice Streamlining Project

3 July 2009

Dear Scott,

As we discussed by telephone twice last week, attached are my comments and suggestions on your efforts to standardize and streamline public notices from your department in various areas. I look forward to further discussion on this topic and hope these comments and suggestions are helpful. As always, if you need to clarify or wish to discuss this matter further please call me at (415) 977-5578. Thanks again for your time and your work in this area.

Sincerely,

David Pilpel

attachment

City Planning Notices / Suggested Guidelines 090620

Issues
Audiences
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Audiences
Citywide organizations
Interested persons
Neighborhood organizations in or adjacent to the neighborhood of a proposed project
Owners of property adjoining a proposed project
Owners of property within a 150 foot radius of a proposed project
Owners of property within a 300 foot radius of a proposed project
Persons with a block book notation on a subject property
Residents / tenants of property adjoining a proposed project
Residents / tenants of property within a 150 foot radius of a proposed project
Residents / tenants of property within a 300 foot radius of a proposed project

Contents
1. Notices related to a document longer than 10 pages or including long or multiple attachments should include a cover letter, summary page, or transmittal memorandum summarizing the nature of the document or package and listing the contents where appropriate. Documents larger than 1 MB should generally not be emailed directly but should be posted on the Internet with the link sent by email.
2. Notices related to a specific proposed project (to be added, altered, built / constructed, and / or demolished) should include a clear description of the subject property and proposed project, including the street address, cross streets, existing and proposed use if applicable, block and lot number, height and bulk district, zoning, and neighborhood.
3. Notices related to an area plan, report, survey, or other document not related to a specific proposed project (to be added, altered, built / constructed, and / or demolished) should include a brief but clear summary of the document and its purpose.
4. Notices should include a brief section in Chinese and Spanish about how to get more information. An additional sentence should refer persons with other assistance needs to the appropriate City office or the City's 311 Customer Service Center.

Distribution Methods
Email attaching entire document
Email containing link to Internet posting
Internet posting
Posting at subject property
Posting on Department office clipboard
Posting on utility poles at and / or near a subject property
Published newspaper notice
U.S. Mail

Notice Types

Area Plans (Long Range Planning)
Business Process Change Proposals (Finance and Administration)
Code Enforcement Reports (Neighborhood Planning)
Comments and Responses on Draft Environmental Impact Reports (Environmental Review)
Draft Environmental Impact Reports (Environmental Review)
Environmental Exemption Determinations (Environmental Review)
Fee Adjustment Proposals (Finance and Administration)
General Plan Referrals (Long Range Planning)
Historic Preservation Commission Agendas (Planning Commission)
Historic Preservation Commission Draft Minutes (Planning Commission)
Historic Preservation Commission Final Minutes (Planning Commission)
Historic Preservation Surveys (Neighborhood Planning)
Negative Declarations (Environmental Review)
Planning Code Amendments (Long Range Planning)
Planning Code section 311 / 312 notices (Neighborhood Planning)
Planning Commission Agendas (Planning Commission)
Planning Commission Draft Minutes (Planning Commission)
Planning Commission Final Minutes (Planning Commission)
Reports (Long Range Planning)
Zoning Administrator Determination Letters (Director's Office)
Zoning Administrator Hearing Agendas (Director's Office)
Zoning Administrator Variance Requests (Director's Office)

Other Concerns

1. Certain circumstances may require special notice arrangements. For example, notices of environmental exemption determinations related to a particular activity but not connected to a specific address or property may warrant such special arrangements.
2. Persons and organizations interested in receiving notices should be directed to these guidelines to determine the categories and notices most appropriate to their interests.
3. Separate lists of interested persons should be created, maintained, and used for major projects.
4. These guidelines should be posted and reviewed periodically. All Department staff should be trained and understand the application of these guidelines.

Timing

1. Agendas, notices, and staff reports related to hearings and meetings should be posting and sent (by email and U.S. Mail) at least 72 hours before the starting time of the hearing or meeting, whichever is earlier.
2. Department office clipboards should be made more prominent and include an explanation of the types of notices posted there and who to contact for more information.
3. Mailed notices sent by U.S. Mail to organizations and persons interested in multiple or related projects may be batched, grouped, and / or held briefly to reduce the cost and number of separate mailings as long as notice timeframes are adhered to. For example, a single packet may be sent once a week containing all notices of variance hearings to a neighborhood organization.
4. Newspaper notices are normally published once a week on Friday in the City's designated Type 1 advertising publication. A copy of the weekly Friday newspaper advertisement should be posted on the Department's website by the close of business Thursday (the night before).