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**SUBMITTAL TO THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS
COUNTY OF RIVERSIDE, STATE OF CALIFORNIA**



FROM: Transportation and Land Management Agency (TLMA)
Administrative Services

SUBMITTAL DATE:
June 22, 2008

SUBJECT: Board Workshop: BIA/Riverside County Streamlining Strike Force Report

RECOMMENDED MOTION: That the Board of Supervisors:

1. Receive and File the attached report entitled, "BIA/Riverside County Streamlining Strike Force Report".
2. Direct the TLMA Agency Director, working in cooperation with the BIA/Riverside County Strike Force members, to report back to the Board in six months on the effectiveness of implementing the actions listed in this report and any further recommendations for streamlining case processing.

BACKGROUND: On November 19, 2007 (M.O. 3.0), the Board of Supervisors held a workshop to discuss ways the land development process could be improved, including streamlining systems, making decision-making more transparent and predictable, and reducing costs without sacrificing public services. An ad hoc committee was formed, called the BIA/Riverside County Strike Force, composed of Building Industry Association (BIA) members and affected County departments, including: the Executive Office, Transportation, Planning, Building and Safety, Code Enforcement, Environmental Programs, TLMA Administrative Services, Flood Control and Conservation District, Regional Parks and Open Space District, Economic Development Agency, Fire, Environmental Health, and County Counsel.

Katherine Gifford
Katherine Gifford, Director
TLMA Administrative Services

FINANCIAL DATA	Current F.Y. Total Cost:	\$0	In Current Year Budget:	N/A
	Current F.Y. Net County Cost:	\$0	Budget Adjustment:	N/A
	Annual Net County Cost:	\$0	For Fiscal Year:	N/A

SOURCE OF FUNDS:	Positions To Be Deleted Per A-30	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Requires 4/5 Vote	

C.E.O. RECOMMENDATION: Approve APPROVE

County Executive Office Signature BY: *Tina Grande*
Tina Grande

Consent
 Policy
 Per Exec. Ofc.:
 Policy

Prev. Agn. Ref.: 11/19/07, 3.0 District: All Agenda Number:

ATTACHMENTS FILED WITH THE CLERK OF THE BOARD

15.3

Board Workshop: BIA/Riverside County Streamlining Strike Force Report
July 1, 2008

The Strike Force first met on January 16, 2008 and decided to focus its efforts on the entitlement process, plan check and plan review, project case management and enhanced communication between departments and the private sector. The Strike Force discussed its efforts at a Planning Commission workshop on April 2, 2008.

The attached report includes a list of the participants in the Strike Force effort, minutes from the meetings, a copy of the Planning Commission Workshop Powerpoint presentation, and letters from departments involved in the land development process. The department letters (Attachment 3 of the report) outline the actions County departments are taking in light of the Strike Force discussions to streamline case processing, increase transparency, and reduce costs, where possible. These actions are summarized in the Case Processing Action Plan (Attachment 4), which lists challenges that were identified in the current land development system and the actions, lead department and implementation schedule that will address these challenges. Overarching concerns focused on the need for additional staff training, improved cross-departmental project management, and future evaluation of the effectiveness of the proposed actions.

The BIA/Riverside County Strike Force was found to be an effective forum in meeting the objective of improving communication between County departments and the development industry. To evaluate the success of the work that has been initiated and refine these actions as necessary, it is recommended that the BIA/Riverside County Strike Force continue to meet over the next six months. It is further recommended that the TLMA Agency Director, working in cooperation with the BIA/Riverside County Strike Force members, report back to the Board on the effectiveness of implementing the actions listed in the attached report and any further recommendations for streamlining case processing.

BIA/RIVERSIDE COUNTY STREAMLINING STRIKE FORCE

REPORT TO THE RIVERSIDE COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

July 1, 2008 Workshop

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2. **April 2, 2008 Planning Commission Workshop Powerpoint Presentation**
3. **Correspondence from County Departments on Case Processing Improvements**
 - A. **TLMA Planning Department**
 - B. **TLMA Building and Safety Department**
 - C. **TLMA Transportation Department**
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 - E. **TLMA Environmental Programs Department**
 - F. **Environmental Health Department**
 - G. **Riverside County Flood Control and Conservation District**
 - H. **Economic Development Agency**
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4. **The Case Processing Action Plan**
5. **July 1 Workshop PowerPoint Presentation**

**BIA/RIVERSIDE COUNTY
STREAMLINING STRIKE FORCE REPORT**

July 1, 2008

BACKGROUND AND GOAL OF THE STRIKE FORCE:

On November 19, 2007 (M.O. 3.0), the Riverside County Board of Supervisors held a workshop to discuss the unprecedented downturn in development activity and the need to streamline case processing of land development projects in Riverside County. The workshop was an outgrowth of several meetings Supervisors Tavaglione and Ashley held with building industry representatives, County Planning Commissioners Petty and Snell, the Transportation and Land Management Agency (TLMA) and other County departments involved in the land development process.

The direction of the Board was to establish an ad hoc committee, composed of Building Industry Association (BIA) members and affected County departments, to streamline the development review process and reduce or defer costs wherever possible, without undermining public service and infrastructure. The overall goal of these improvements was to provide processing transparency and predictability, to reduce processing time, and increase cost-efficiency. It is an opportune time, given the downturn in case activity to revisit case processing systems so that the County is better prepared to address a future growth cycle.

THE STRIKE FORCE EFFORT:

The Streamlining Strike Force (Strike Force) had its kick-off meeting on January 16, 2008. Barry Burnell, Principal with T&B Planning, was retained by the BIA and TLMA to serve as a facilitator for the Strike Force meetings. The Strike Force identified the following specific objectives:

- Streamline the entitlement process.
- Streamline the plan check and plan review process.
- Provide efficient project case management.
- Enhance communication between and among County departments and builders/developers.

Eleven Strike Force meetings were held with the active involvement of BIA and County representatives. Perhaps the greatest benefit that resulted from the Strike Force was the open communication that allowed both private and public parties to speak frankly about the land development system from beginning to end and discuss those parts that could be improved and make a real difference in meeting Strike Force goals. The dialog was two-way: for example, while acknowledging areas for improvement, County departments also spoke of the need for quality applications that reduced processing times for County staff.

Attachment 1 includes a list of attendees and meeting minutes. Particular thanks are owed to industry representatives from Brehm Communities, KB Homes, K. Hovnanian Homes, Laing-Sequoia Partners, Van Daele Development and Shea Homes for their commitment to this process.

The meetings were also attended by Planning Commissioner Snell, Board legislative assistants, Executive Office staff and senior departmental management—including the TLMA Agency Director, department heads from Planning, Building and Safety, Transportation, Code Enforcement, Environmental Programs, TLMA Administrative Services, and the Flood Control and Conservation District. Additional participants included representatives from County Counsel, the Regional Parks and Open Space District, Economic Development Agency, Environmental Health, and Fire. At each meeting, departmental representatives presented flow charts and draft materials for discussion. Of particular note are the revised timelines prepared by the Planning and Building and Safety Departments, which are included in Attachments 3.A and 3.B respectively.

In addition to the Strike Force meetings, a Planning Commission Workshop was held on April 2, 2008 to discuss the actions being proposed to improve the entitlement process. (See Attachment 2 for a copy of the Planning Commission Workshop Powerpoint presentation.) Planning Commissioners emphasized the importance of developers providing complete plans so that the Commission can review projects in a timely manner. Several Commissioners also spoke of the importance of training and retaining Planning staff to ensure quality project review. Reflecting some of the comments from the Strike Force meetings, it was emphasized that property owners as well as their representatives should be notified of concerns as early as possible, so that property owners are made aware of the project's progress.

PROPOSED ACTIONS:

The overriding purpose of the Strike Force was to achieve improved case management to reduce case processing time, provide greater clarity and predictability during the development process, and improve interdepartmental coordination and cooperation, resulting in improved customer service. In preparation for this Board workshop and to summarize its involvement in the Strike Force effort, each County department was asked to identify what actions it had taken or proposed to take to improve case processing. Department responses are included in Attachment 3 of this report. Based on this input, a Case Processing Action Plan ("Action Plan") was developed (Attachment 4) that highlights how the Strike Force goals of transparency, predictability, as well as time and cost savings have been or are proposed to be improved.

Most improvements to the development review system have multiple benefits and require the participation and contribution of other departments. A lead

department was identified in the Action Plan to ensure that actions do not fall between departments, but are fully realized and implemented. Many of the listed actions were discussed at the Strike Force meetings, but County departments have also taken advantage of this system review to make improvements that will directly benefit the individual homeowner, along with commercial and industrial developers.

While the Strike Force covered a wide range of topics, streamlining the entitlement and plan check processes were central topics. The Action Plan and department letters describe these improvements in detail. A few system changes can be highlighted to reflect the improved transparency, predictability, reduced timeline, reduced costs and improved customer service. For example, the Planning Department instituted a triage of cases within three days of their receipt to identify major issues. Within five days, the project will be assigned to a project manager who will notify the applicant and owner of any major issues as well as the date of the Land Division Committee (LDC) meeting, where all land review departments will be required to have written comments on the project. LDC will occur within four to six weeks of the filing of complete applications.

The changes to the LDC process should reduce staff time in processing cases, and improve communication to the property owner and applicant regarding issues affecting the case. The new LDC program will improve predictability and transparency, and facilitate interdepartmental coordination during project review. The end result will be a better project and associated conditions of approval that will assist in later phases of project implementation. The reduced time frame and LDC process will reduce project costs and improve customer service.

Similarly, the Building and Safety Department has instituted a "same day" process for subdivision plan check. Building and Safety is committed to a two-plan plan check rule when cases have less than ten corrections. Further, Building and Safety will complete its final review within 10 to 15 days of receipt of the case and assign one plan checker who is cross-trained to perform structural and plan review. Assisting in this streamlining effort, the BIA has agreed to submit complete plans, thereby reducing processing delays. These commitments on both the public and private side will reduce processing costs, increase transparency and predictability, resulting in improved customer service.

FINDINGS:

Looking beyond individual department actions, several broad challenges affect the overall land development process:

Staff Training: During the boom period of land development, many of the County's experienced staff members in Planning and other departments were hired by private industry. This left some departments with a relatively inexperienced staff who were required to manage significant projects. Further,

the consequence of "green" staff's review had a ripple effect: that is, cases were delayed in the process, or, if approved, needed "hand-holding" for unclear conditions of approval, corrections, etc.

The recent layoff of Building and Safety staff has also forced some realignment of job duties in the inspection and counter staff area. New requirements, linked to landscaping, or implementation of the Coachella Valley Multiple Species Habitat Conservation Plan, are the norm in the land development field. Departments are working to improve their individual training programs to respond to changing public and private requirements.

There are broader considerations. As individual departments improve their training programs, there is also a need to ensure cross-training between departments. It is, therefore, recommended that in the next phase of the streamlining effort, the TLMA Agency Director convene a subcommittee of all land development departments to discuss cross-departmental coordination of training and case processing. A possible spin-off of this effort could be an annual public workshop that assists the private sector in their understanding of the County's processes and proposed system improvements.

Project Management, Interdepartmental Coordination and Public Hearings: The Strike Force has discussed the need for improved project management. To address part of this issue, the Planning Department now notifies the applicant of the project planner who will be responsible for case processing. Counter Services has re-emphasized, with other TLMA departments, the central role the Regional Officer Manager provides at Permit Assistance Centers in ensuring cross-departmental management of projects to ensure consistency, transparency and predictability.

More work is needed. At all stages of the process, from case intake to clearance of conditions of approval, it is critical that departments work in an integrated manner to assist the customer. The land development departments, under the leadership of the Executive Office and TLMA Agency Director, shall meet to discuss what actions can be taken from the "ground up", to reorganize systems between departments to create greater internal efficiency and problem solving. One recommendation may be to broaden the role of the TLMA Ombudsman to cross Agency and departmental/district lines to identify system problems and resolve individual case problems.

Recent data indicates that approximately 50% of cases heard by the Planning Commission are continued. At the Planning Commission workshop, the Commissioners emphasized the need for complete development applications. The Planning Director will spearhead further discussions with the Planning Commission to identify the reasons for continuances and ways to improve predictability and timeliness. Also, the Planning Director will reevaluate the

viability of a Hearing Officer or Zoning Administrator (as previously discussed in the proposed Ordinance 850) to improve customer service.

Determining Effectiveness: The effectiveness of implementing the actions identified in the Action Plan and the resultant improvements to customer service will be assessed by evaluating reductions in timelines, increased predictability and transparency, and realized savings for the public and private sectors. The Action Plan identifies additional actions that need to be developed, such as coordinating with non-County agencies on the issues of conserving mitigation areas in flood control channels and reviewing Deposit Based Fees to determine if some minor permits should be handled as flat fee cases.

To evaluate progress in implementing the Action Plan, it is recommended that land development departments, coordinated through the efforts of the TLMA Agency Director, report to the Board of Supervisors in six months on progress in the following performance areas:

- How have the Actions identified in this report reduced timelines for project review?
- What indices is the department using to evaluate the success of its Actions?
- How have these Actions increased predictability and transparency in the process, both for the department and across departments?
- What cost savings to the department or development industry has occurred?
- How has customer service been improved and what further actions are needed?

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS:

The opportunity to collaboratively review the land use permit system with experienced private and public sector participants has been invaluable. The mutual insights gained from the meetings held to date represent "common ground" for County government and private industry as they continue to work towards the shared objectives of quality development and efficient service delivery. Continued cultivation of ideas, perspectives and an open forum for problem resolution provides a strong opportunity for the Board to reinforce its commitment to a participatory "business model" for responsible development.

The Strike Force was an effective forum in meeting the objective of improved communication between County departments and the development industry. Despite its many successes, further action is needed. Departments must fully implement and measure the effectiveness of the actions outlined in the Action Plan. Continued communication is needed to ensure that these actions are resulting in improved customer service, that interdepartmental coordination is implemented, and the County is responsive to the rapid changes that are

occurring in the development community. The Action Plan identifies new efforts, such as web improvements, DBF assessment, and the Fuel Modification and Trails manuals to mention a few, that will need to be developed in the coming months. It is therefore recommended that the BIA/County Streamlining Strike Force continue to meet.

To augment this effort, the Executive Office recently retained the services of Larry Seigel, with LMS Consulting, to further refine or support the Strike Force recommendations and findings. Mr. Seigel, working with the County Executive Office, is reviewing interdepartmental relationships to develop streamlining recommendations. We look forward to the added direction that will result from Mr. Seigel's analysis. Working with the Executive Office, the TLMA Agency Director can help lead this effort on behalf of the departments and districts that are involved in the land development process.

It is therefore recommended that the Board of Supervisors approve the recommended motions for receiving and filing this report and direct the TLMA Agency Director, in cooperation with the BIA/Riverside County Strike Force, whose membership includes the Executive Office and other County departments and districts involved in the land development process, to report back to the Board in six months on the progress made in this streamlining effort.