



General Public Comment Received

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To: [LDT Oversight](#)
Subject: City of Santa Barbara Land Development Team Oversight Sub-committee
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Attachments: [REDACTED]

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EXTERNAL

Dear Committee, please see attached letter of comment for this Wednesday's July 29, 2022, meeting.

Fred Sweeney AIA



**Fred L. Sweeney AIA
10 East Quinto Street
Santa Barbara, California 93105**

June 27, 2022

City of Santa Barbara
Community Development Department
630 Garden Street
Santa Barbara, CA 93102

**Subject: Land Development Oversight Sub-Committee
Meeting of June 29, 2022**

Dear Chair and Committee Members,

Since I will be traveling all day of your meeting, I will not be able to attend in person. I have long been a “client” of the Land Development Team as an architect and homeowner, so I have some perspective that I hope you’ll find helpful. Specifically, I would like to share some comments on staff’s latest report on the committee’s progress.

1. In reviewing the Process Improvement Recommendations document, it shows that there are 62 specific items that are suggested to be addressed, *with almost half not having any progress at all*. My observation is as follows:
 - a. Of the 62 items that are identified, 15 have been accomplished which represents only 24% of the total items.
 - b. 34% of the items are either in process or about to be accomplished.
 - c. Almost half, 42%, are items that have not even been started.
2. There is no recommendation for a priority list of items to be addressed by the committee. I suggest that the following four items be considered as top priorities because they directly relate to the public that relies on the LTD process.
 - a. Establish clear customer service expectations across all work groups, and at all levels of the permit process.**
 - b. Communicate the LTD customer service expectations to the public.**
 - c. Provide comprehensive, baseline customer service training to all LTD staff.**
 - d. Provide customer service training to LTD-related advisory bodies (PC, ABR, HLC, SFDB)**
3. I believe that the ongoing frustration with the “process,” as outlined in the Novak Report and the recent Grand Jury report, is the perception by the public of a “broken system.” Addressing these items as a top priority and communicating that to the public should prove to be beneficial to the committee’s work.

4. Finally, my recent experience using the “one stop counter” on Garden Street brought home to me that there is still a lot of work to be done to improve the process to serve the public.

I was on SFBD for ten years, and I was always diligent about visiting each site before our meetings. I came to the counter to access street and planning files for six separate addresses that I remember SFDB had reviewed, some numerous times. I was told that only three had street files, one had a planning file and two others no files at all. Some of these projects had been reviewed as far back as 2016, yet the Staff Hearing Officer and SFDB minutes for these residential projects are back logged at the Planning Division, and thus not available to the public.

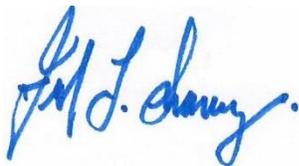
I was told by the planning counter, not the archive counter, that the only way to get information about these projects was to review all the SHO minutes myself, a time-consuming task but I did, in fact, find important information. I also drove by all these addresses the week before I went down to the Garden Street offices to ensure that all of these projects had been built.

It was also apparent that the counter planner was not aware that there is a two-week waiting period to be able to sit at the computer in the lobby to review drawings. I was able to use the computer to view site plans, only two of which were accessible.

My frustrating experience and others’ similar experiences I witnessed on the two sperate days I was in the lobby, the first (at least three people expressed within earshot of everyone in the lobby) epitomize the so called “broken system” that the committee is trying to fix. The second visit it was my turn to be frustrated when the log in appointment request would only allow me to request one of the six addresses, I was seeking just to look at the single site plan sheet . One might assume that a request for an hour would only be to look at one set of plans, but doesn’t accommodate someone, like myself who only needs about ten minutes to look at each property’s site plan. The committee’s lack of progress and lack of focus on what I consider top priorities to improve the One Stop counter need to change.

The goal is an admirable one, to help all Individuals, particularly owners of residential projects who may only visit the counter once, but it is not being met. In the interim, the city might consider some sort of ombudsman assistance at the counter to help the public understand how to navigate the process to have something constructed in this city.

Respectfully submitted,



Fred L. Sweeney AIA