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## **Economy & Efficiency Commission Presentation**

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*Editorial Note: Although every effort has been made to insure the accuracy of the material in this presentation, the scope of the material covered and the discussions undertaken lends itself to the possibility of minor transcription misinterpretations.*

**PRESENTATIONS BY  
Mr. Richard Bruckner  
Director, Regional Planning Museum  
Los Angeles County**

**September 2, 2010**

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### **Overview of LA County Regional Planning Department**

Chairman Barcelona greeted Richard Bruckner, Director of Regional Planning and welcomed him while turning it over for Mr. Bruckner to speak to the Economy and Efficiency Commission.

### **Regional Planning Fee Adjustment**

Mr. Bruckner stated that the Board of Supervisors approved a revision to the existing fees and the implementation of new fees charged by the Department of Regional Planning became effective July 1, 2010. He stated that the revision to the existing fees and implementation of new fees are warranted and appropriate based on comprehensive review and cost analyses of fees charged for similar services provided by comparable public agencies.

Mr. Bruckner stated that the recommended actions support the County's Strategic Plan Goal of Operational Effectiveness by increasing revenues to support timely delivery of customer oriented and efficient public services. He stated that the proposed recommendations will also support Community and municipal services to the County's diverse unincorporated communities. Mr. Bruckner stated that the approval of the recommended actions will allow his Department to continue providing services in a timely and efficient manner.

### **Future Plans for the Department**

Mr. Bruckner stated that the Department of Regional Planning (DRP) is working on updating the Countywide General plan. He stated that the plan has not been updated since 1980 and is long overdue for an update. Mr. Bruckner stated that the General Plan is the growth and development in the unincorporated areas of Los Angeles County. He stated that California law requires each city and county to adopt a General Plan "for the physical development of the county or city, and any land outside its boundaries which bears relation to its planning." He also stated that the General Plan was designed to guide the long-term physical development and conservation of the County's land and environment through a framework of goals, policies,

and implementation programs which has not been easy. Mr. Bruckner stated that the General Plan also provides a foundation for more detailed plans and implementation programs to be conducted, such as area or community plans, zoning ordinances, and specific plans.

Mr. Bruckner stated that in terms of individual projects there are a lot of projects that he is excited about that are on the table now. He stated that Disney is building new studios and other production facilities on property it owns in the Santa Clarita Valley, north of Los Angeles County. He stated that the property is called the Golden Oak Ranch, an 890 acre site that was leased by Disney in the late 1950's and then bought in the beginning of 1959. He also stated that the Mouse House used the land as the outdoor filming location for motion pictures ranging from "Old Yeller" and "The Parent Trap" to "Pirates of the Caribbean" installments. Mr. Bruckner stated that the company has now filed paper work with Los Angeles County to build on 56 acres of the property adjacent to the 14 freeway. He stated that this project will bring a lot of new job opportunities to that area.

## **Questions**

Commissioner Cox asked what involvement Mr. Bruckner has with the plans for the high speed rail. Mr. Bruckner replied that his Department is looking at this from a more defensive perspective. He stated that when thinking about the high speed train, you need a dedicated order that you can't cross. Mr. Bruckner replied his Department's concerns are how they get in and out of the Union Stations being that it is a fairly congested area. He replied that his Department is looking at large stretches of this plan being underground. He also replied that he thinks it's a great idea but not sure if it is practical.

Commissioner Reznik stated that being a Commissioner with the Economy & Efficiency Commission she would like to be kept informed on the streamlining of the land use and title process that Regional Planning is going through. She stated that she is also interested in if his Department will be able to reduce the 100 different processes to a significantly lesser amount. She also asked what role, if any, that Regional Planning has, in the mall area that is being developed outside Superior Court. Mr. Bruckner replied that his Department is not involved at all. He replied that the project is with the Department of Public works.

Commissioner Kalm asked if Mr. Bruckner's Department is trying to create a friendlier electronic user interface which is easily accessible by applicants as well as anyone else on the County side. Secondly, Commissioner Kalm asked if there are any efforts in trying to pen down best practices. Mr. Bruckner replied that those are perfect questions. Mr. Bruckner replied his Department is definitely looking at best practices and there is a lot to learn from other communities and counties. Mr. Bruckner stated that he has experience with two other jurisdictions and there is a lot to learn from those other jurisdictions. He also stated that in terms of automation this County is back in the 1940's in terms of land use. He stated that part of the effort his Department is going through will hopefully put the right system in place so that when it's automated, his Department will be automating something that makes sense. Mr. Bruckner stated the other thing he would really like to get done is to establish a one-stop with his counterpart Director, Gail Faber of Public Works. He stated that an applicant right now has to go to three jurisdictions to get a permit: Fire, Public Works, and Regional Planning. Commissioner Kalm asked if Mr. Bruckner is going to try and integrate County Health as well. Mr. Bruckner replied that the Health portion plays a much smaller part but that his Department would like to connect them as well. He stated that the main focus is getting Regional Planning, Public Works and Fire first, and that Health can easily be brought in as well.

Commissioner Fuhrman stated that the work Mr. Bruckner has detailed so far sounds like traditional business process reengineering but it also relates to strategic planning. Commissioner Fuhrman asked Mr. Bruckner if he can tell us how his Department is integrating the two or what he is doing in the strategic planning area. Mr. Bruckner replied that internally, his Department is getting ready to launch a reorganization that will support things they have heard from the public. He stated one of the things that his Department has heard from the public is that when they call one of the planners, and the planners don't have all the knowledge on the issue and has to search around for it. He stated that his Department has in the past, separated the Environmental Review Unit from the Project Processing Unit. Mr. Bruckner stated that he is also working on redoing the org charts and one of the changes would be to internally realign the two units

back together.

Commissioner Barcelona asked Mr. Bruckner what he has discovered to be the biggest issue in terms of the opposite in smart growth. Mr. Bruckner replied that in many of the undeveloped areas, his Department is going to recommend reducing densities dramatically and then increasing densities in some of the more urbanized areas. He stated that the reduction in densities will be a complex topic that he doesn't believe his Department could continue to do business as usual from a water, energy, or transportation perspective.

Chairman Barcelona expressed his appreciation to Mr. Bruckner and invited him to come back to speak to the EEC in the near future and the Commissioners applauded.

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Kenneth Hahn Hall of Administration, Room 163, 500 West Temple St.,  
Los Angeles, CA 90012  
Phone (213) 974-1491 FAX (213) 620-1437 [EMail eecomm@co.la.ca.us](mailto:eecomm@co.la.ca.us)  
WEB [eec.co.la.ca.us](http://eec.co.la.ca.us)