

15 June 2018

Board of Supervisors
City Hall, Room 244
1 Dr. Carlton B. Goodlett Place
San Francisco, CA 94102

RE: Mayor's Process Improvements Ordinance
Case #2018-004633PCA, Board File #180423

Dear Supervisors:

Thank you for the opportunity to weigh in on the Mayor's Process Improvements Ordinance, coming out of Mayor Lee's Executive Order 17-02 to speed up the approval and permitting of housing across San Francisco. SPUR strongly supports this strategic effort to streamline the approvals process by:

- Allowing broadly supported and desperately needed 100 percent affordable housing projects to be approved administratively. These projects face enough challenges and barriers without the city's entitlements and permitting process also getting in the way.
- Streamlining the approval of large downtown residential projects that currently have to undergo duplicative hearing processes.
- Allowing minor scopes of work to be approved administratively by staff .
- Standardizing neighborhood notification requirements, reducing from more than 30 different sets of requirements. We believe that Planning staff have carefully looked at how to standardize the notification requirements and process in a way that preserves the community's voice. It is astonishing that there are more than 30 sets of requirements for notification, and it is therefore not surprising that mistakes get made, further delaying the approval of projects large and small. Standardizing these requirements and eliminating neighborhood notice for rear yard pop-outs seems very reasonable. **We are happy to see that the Land Use and Transportation Committee is recommending the 20-day notification period as the standard.** We had serious concerns that using the Planning Commission's recommended 30-day notification period would serve to abnormally lengthen notification periods for simple, small projects which are currently 10 days and those that currently require 20 days. **We are also pleased that the Land Use and Transportation Committee is recommending inclusion of the popout portion of the ordinance since these additions are routinely approved. According to the department, two full-time staff could be deployed toward more important work at Planning if this one change is made.** If we are to weigh the relative importance of popouts versus a major housing project or a new area plan or anti-displacement efforts, we believe there are compelling reasons to approve this proposal.

We encourage the city to continue seeking opportunities to make the approvals process more efficient without giving up project quality. The Planning Department's December 2017 plan outlines more legislative ideas that we hope could also come forward soon. We urge the city to simplify and standardize environmental review analysis and historical preservation criteria to have a more efficient process and yield more consistent results. In SPUR's recent *San Francisco's Next Mayor: A Blueprint for Change*, we also recommend moving toward eliminating discretionary review and relying on the Board of Appeals process instead, and we suggest pushing forward more Class 32 exemptions.

Thank you for your consideration. Do not hesitate to reach out if you have any questions.

Best,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'KWang', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Kristy Wang
Community Planning Policy Director

cc: SPUR Board of Directors