

# City document dumps 500 pages of regulation changes

Small Gov

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In the waning days of Ashley Swearengin's administration, the City of Fresno is embarking on arguably one of the biggest changes to Fresno's development policy ever.

A year after the victory on the 2035 General Plan, the City is finalizing an incredibly detailed update to the development code.

It seems, however, that City Hall decided to speed up the timetable on approving the changes from a gingerly pace to no-huddle offense.

Last Thursday, a select group of local business owners – many of whom had been invited to pitch in ideas on the development code – were sent a 500-page breakdown of the changes that would be headed to the Fresno Planning Commission.

Sources provided CVOobserver with a breakdown of the development code changes.

Seizing the moment, the city's development director, Jennifer Clark, and economic development czar (and former City Councilman) Larry Westerlund also pushed for the business owners to meet on Tuesday to discuss the document, a mere five days after dumping the PDF on them.

And the kicker: regardless of the outcome of the Tuesday working group meeting, the City would move forward with presenting the changes to the Planning Commission next week.

The ultimate goal, it seems, is to get the City Council to see and (hopefully) vote on a development code update before campaigning for 2016 commences and lame duck status sets in on Swearengin.

Some business owners in the working group expressed significant ire over the perceived breakneck pace at which the City was progressing with these changes, noting that having merely five days (over the course of a weekend) to review the documents was not nearly sufficient for a dense 500-page document, sources told CVOobserver.

Other sentiment centered on the fact that failure to fully vet the development code changes would have major implications for businesses that have done business in the city for multiple decades, especially those who are not prepared for a hastily-implemented overhaul of regulation.

The City, it seems, still plans to go full-speed ahead and present the changes to the Planning Commission next week with it on track to hit the City Council by October.

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