






Date: October 19, 2004

To: Honorable Mayor and City Councilmembers

From: 2nd District Councilmember Dan Baker 
5th District Councilmember Jackie Kell 
7th District Councilmember Tonia Reyes Uranga 

Subject: **Discuss the Role of the City Council in the Redevelopment Process**

Background

On August 25, 2004, City Manager Jerry Miller distributed a memo entitled "The Role of the Council in the Redevelopment Process." The memo raised serious issues, which deserve to be considered by the Council.

After carefully reviewing the information contained in these reports, we agree that there is a compelling rationale to consider changing the way redevelopment decisions are made in Long Beach.

Long Beach is one of only three cities in California that has delegated all of its Redevelopment Agency powers to a separate, appointed Agency Board. In all of the other 385 cities in California with active Redevelopment Agencies, the City Council – a city's elected representatives – serves as the Agency Board and makes the decisions regarding redevelopment in the cities they represent.

City Council oversight of redevelopment is the norm, which is true in the ten largest cities in California. The City Council is the Agency Board in four of the largest cities (San Jose, Fresno, Oakland and Santa Ana). The City Council sets policy with input from appointed boards with advisory powers in three others (San Diego, Sacramento and Anaheim). In the vast majority of cases, city councils make the key policy decisions regarding redevelopment activities in California. In fact, in Los Angeles, the largest Redevelopment Agency in California and one of the three cities that has an independent Agency Board, the City Council is considering changes to give the council a greater role in redevelopment decisions.

As elected representatives, Councilmembers must answer directly to the residents of the areas affected by redevelopment projects and can be held accountable by residents for their policy decisions. Appointed Boards are removed from direct accountability from area residents. Members of the public have been calling for increased accountability for the Redevelopment Agency and replacing the appointed Agency Board with elected officials would accomplish this goal.

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In addition, there likely would be greater cooperation, clarity in the development process, and alignment of policy goals by having a single entity – the City Council – setting policy in redevelopment project areas and the city as a whole.

Redevelopment projects have changed the face of Long Beach and have made a real impact on the quality of life in our city. Redevelopment will play an increasingly important role in Long Beach's future and this is why we believe the Council should consider assuming greater responsibility for these decisions.

We look forward to working with the members of the Project Area Committees and other interested citizens to ensure that redevelopment decisions serve the best interest of the communities affected by them and all of Long Beach.

We encourage our colleagues to consider taking the next step in this process, as outlined in the August 25, 2004 memo "The Role of City Council in the Redevelopment Process," which is to schedule a hearing to consider an ordinance declaring the City Council the Redevelopment Agency Board for Long Beach.