

SANTA BARBARA COUNTY BOARD AGENDA LETTER



Clerk of the Board of Supervisors
105 E. Anapamu Street, Suite 407
Santa Barbara, CA 93101
(805) 568-2240

Agenda Number:
Prepared on: 5/2/06
Department Name: Planning and Development
Department No.: 053
Agenda Date: 5/16/06
Placement: Departmental
Estimate Time: 15 minutes
Continued Item: YES
If Yes, date from: 5/2/06

TO: Board of Supervisors

FROM: Ron Cortez, Deputy County Executive

STAFF CONTACT: Steve Mason, Deputy Director, x2070

SUBJECT: Planning Commission Compensation

Recommendation(s):

That the Board of Supervisors receive a report on Planning Commission Compensation.

Alignment with Board Strategic Plan:

The recommendation(s) are primarily aligned with Goal No. 3. A Strong, Professionally Managed County Organization.

Executive Summary and Discussion:

On March 21, 2006, your Board received a report to consider changes to Planning Commission compensation. At that hearing your Board directed staff to conduct further analysis regarding Planning Commission workload. This report provides data on the time commitment of Planning Commissioners. In their meeting on May 3, 2006 the Planning Commission discussed the proposed changes to Commission compensation. The Planning Commission directed Planning and Development to have Commission compensation considered by your Board during budget hearings scheduled in June.

P&D will prepare a budget expansion request for your Board's consideration during budget hearings. This budget expansion will allow for compensation of Commissioner mileage for all Commission related work, increase Commissioner compensation by \$50 per meeting, and provide \$100 for Planning Commission sub-committee meetings attended. Reimbursement for mileage will be effective July 1, 2006, and the other increases will be effective January 1, 2007.

To provide the best workload information for this report, staff surveyed the Santa Barbara County Planning Commissioners, reviewed data from the past 15 months of County Planning Commission hearings, and

surveyed 6 six other jurisdictions. Attachment A shows the workload from the last 6 months for the City of Santa Barbara, and the counties of San Luis Obispo, Ventura, Kern, Marin, and Sonoma. These jurisdictions were also those used for the compensation comparison presented in the March 21, 2006 report to your Board.

Planning Commissioners have three regularly scheduled hearings per month, plus special hearings as necessary. Commissioners are compensated at the rate of \$250 to attend hearings and \$50 to review staff reports and other hearing materials. The standard mileage rate is paid for travel to and from hearings and for site visits. The Planning Commission has recommended an increase in the compensation for material review by \$50, and to provide \$100 for each meeting outside of hearings. Compensation for outside meetings would apply to sub-committees of the Planning Commission, but not general meetings related to planning and development issues in the county. The Planning Commission has also recommended payment of mileage for travel directly related to Planning Commission business.

Our research shows that the Santa Barbara County Planning Commission conducts 3.2 hearings per month, nearly double the rate of the average jurisdiction in our survey. The average length of Planning Commission hearings is 5.5 hours, or 125% of the average hearing length. In preparation for hearings Commissioners review staff reports, make site visits and speak with applicants and concerned citizens. These activities increase a Commissioner's familiarity with projects, providing a foundation for decision-making. Commissioners also attend a variety of meetings outside of the regular hearing schedule. These meetings are in support of planning and development activities within the county. In response to our survey, Commissioners report spending between 60 to 130 hours each month outside of hearings, with the average of approximately 65 hours per month.

Should the Board elect to increase compensation at the level recommended by the Planning Commission, costs are estimated to be \$9,600 for material review and \$12,000 for outside meeting attendance and mileage. The total of \$21,600 can be funded in several ways. The Board may increase fees to offset the cost, or provide General Funds to offset increased costs. Planning Commission fees are currently \$225 for a consent item and \$1,000 for a hearing item. These fees would need to rise to \$312 for a consent item and to \$1,324 for a hearing item, an increase of 38% and 32%.

Before any changes in compensation or fees can be effective, staff must return to your Board with Amendments to the County Code and a revised fee resolution for Planning and Development.

Mandates and Service Levels:

None

Fiscal and Facilities Impacts:

Increasing compensation will increase costs by approximately \$21,600. These costs can be offset through an increase of Planning Commission hearing fees or through additional General Funds. Permitting revenues are budgeted in the Development Review and Administration cost centers on pages D-294, D-296 and D-290 of the adopted 2005-06 Fiscal Year budget.

Special Instructions: None

Concurrence: None

Planning Commission Workload Comparison

	Hearing Items			Hours Per Hearing	Hearings Per Month	Hours Per Month
	Consent	Regular	Briefing/ Discussion			
Santa Barbara County ¹	0.5	2.8	0.3	5.5	3.2	17.6
Ventura County ²	0	1.7	0	3.4	0.9	3.1
SLO County ²	2.9	5.9	0	8.2	1.6	13.1
Kern County ²	2.5	2.3	0.2	2.4	1.5	3.6
Marin County ²	0	2.1	0	4.8	1.3	6.2
Sonoma County ²	0.6	1.4	0	2.2	1.3	2.9
City of Santa Barbara ²	1.1	1.6	0.6	4	2.6	10.4
Average	1.1	2.5	0.2	4.4	1.8	7.7

1. Fifteen Months of Data

2. Six Months of Data

Planning Commission Compensation Survey, 10/2005

Jurisdiction	Stipend	Any reimbursements?	Mileage to/from meetings	Site Visit
Santa Barbara County	\$300/mtg	lunch on meeting days	yes	mileage
Santa Barbara County (Montecito Area PC)	\$0/mtg	no	no	no
City of Santa Barbara	\$50/mtg	no	no	city van
Ventura County	\$50/mtg	no	yes	mileage
Kern County	\$65	yes	yes	yes
SLO County	\$150/mtg	yes for conferences, meals	yes	mileage and travel
Marin County	\$100/mtg	lunch or dinner	No	No
Sonoma County	\$75/mtg	yes for conferences, no meals	yes	mileage and travel