

The EDRP

The Economic Development Reform Panel has the mission of recommending by August 1, the best ways to improve the City's economic development process to insulate it from political influence and cronyism.

The enabling ordinance instructs that the Panel's work should include at least 9 activities. For discussion purposes, these activities might be grouped under the following tasks.

1. Collect information from reliable sources for all tasks. Propose a Code of Conduct.

- a. Consult municipal finance, development, and campaign contribution experts;
- d. Review best practices in other cities across the country;
- g. Propose a Code of Conduct for the City's elected officials and developers, which Code should require developers to report inappropriate requests from the City's elected officials;

2. Propose ways to ensure the separation of development incentives from campaign contributions.

- f. Propose ways in which the City could track connections between campaign contributions and the award of public incentives to developments;
- h. Recommend whether contract awards should be prohibited to developers who made campaign contributions to council candidates within the prior twenty-four months;
- i. Recommend whether the City should establish a hotline by which any citizen, including developers, can report in confidence any inappropriate request or demand from any public servant, elected or otherwise.

3. Advise on the effectiveness of providing public incentives for development.

- b. Review and evaluate the City's use of public incentives for development, including direct awards, loans, and tax abatements;
- c. Determine how well and with what clarity the City establishes and then achieves its goals in providing public incentives to development projects without allowing developers to benefit at a higher level than justified by the public benefit to the City;

4. Conduct a forensic audit. (This will likely be done separately from our work.)

- e. Study possible links between campaign contributions and the award of development contracts and/or significant changes in the final form of a development contract;

