

Garcetti urges easing development red tape; L.A. council president's plan to cut from 12 to 2 the number of agencies that review projects will be considered next summer, he says.

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ABSTRACT (ABSTRACT)

"We could never really pin [Eric Garcetti] down in the past," said Jim Clarke, government relations manager for the Apartment Assn. of Greater Los Angeles. "He would agree with us on a few things, but there was never any action. Now we're seeing some vision that maybe he finally gets it."

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FULL TEXT

Los Angeles City Council President Eric Garcetti said Thursday that he will push an initiative that would make it easier to build housing, offices and other real estate projects by **reducing from 12 to two** the number of government agencies that review any single development.

Speaking before the Central City Assn., a downtown-based business group, Garcetti said his so-called "12-2" plan will be taken up by the council next summer.

Garcetti said his plan would keep developers from having to appear before the Department of Transportation, the Bureau of Engineering, the Fire Department and several other agencies. Instead, they would work exclusively with two departments -- Planning, and Building and Safety.

"I'm going to fight the red tape with you," Garcetti told the audience of about 100 at the Omni Hotel.

Garcetti's proposal would expand on the "one-stop" permitting concept created a decade ago by then-Mayor Richard Riordan, who worked to concentrate all of the agencies that review development in a single office complex on Figueroa Street. Even with each agency represented in one building, smaller developers still have trouble navigating the permitting process, city planners say.

The Garcetti proposal is the latest pro-business initiative announced by the council president, who also has been working to reduce the number of forms required of small businesses by the city bureaucracy.

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In recent weeks, Garcetti also has been trying to strike a middle ground on a controversial plan for giving new incentives -- taller and denser buildings, primarily -- to developers who incorporate affordable housing into their projects.

Still, not every move from Garcetti has been greeted favorably by business leaders. The councilman, whose district stretches from Echo Park to Hollywood and Glassell Park, favored a plan last year to force hotels near Los Angeles International Airport to pay a "living wage" -- a measure that sparked a chamber backlash.

Garcetti also drew fire for backing plans that gave higher relocation fees to tenants who were forced out when an

apartment was converted to a condominium or a landlord moved into a unit.

Garcetti's two speeches have been greeted more warmly by the real estate industry.

"We could never really pin Eric down in the past," said Jim Clarke, government relations manager for the Apartment Assn. of Greater Los Angeles. "He would agree with us on a few things, but there was never any action. Now we're seeing some vision that maybe he finally gets it."

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