

Factors Influencing the Functionality of Constituencies Development Catalyst Fund Committee in Tanzania: A Case of Makambako Constituency

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Abstract: This study explores the factors influencing the functionality of the CDCF Committee. Utilizing a qualitative research approach with a case study design, data were collected through semi-structured interviews and a documentary review involving 31 key respondents, including CDCF Committee members, Head of Department, and councilors. Thematic analysis was used to analyze data supported by NVIVO software.

Findings reveal that while the CDCF Committee's composition is perceived as inclusive, it suffers from biases and political interests that skew decision-making processes. Respondents noted that political influence and favoritism often undermine equitable fund distribution. Budgetary constraints were cited as a significant challenge, limiting the scope and impact of funded projects. Additionally, a lack of comprehensive understanding of CDCF guidelines among CDCF members and failure on adhering to committee meetings schedule hampers effective utilization of the funds.

This study underscores the necessity for restructuring the CDCF Committee's composition to mitigate biases, improving financial resources to better meet development needs, and enhancing training on CDCF guidelines to optimize committee performance. These insights aim to inform better management practices and policy adjustments to enhance the effectiveness of CDCF committees.

Keywords: CDCF, CDCF Committees, Factors Influencing Performance.

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I. INTRODUCTION

Constituency Development Funds (CDFs) have been widely adopted globally as mechanisms to finance local development initiatives, channeling government funds directly to constituencies for projects such as education, infrastructure, and essential community facilities (Commonwealth Parliamentary Association, 2016, Daudi, 2022). CDFs have been implemented in different forms under various names for example, the Priority Development Assistance Fund (PDAF) in the Philippines, the Member of Parliament Local Area Development Scheme (MPLADS) in India, the Constituency Development Catalyst Fund (CDCF) in Tanzania (Tshangana, 2010). Despite differences in structure, size, and scope across countries, CDFs share a common objective: empowering parliamentarians to

influence service delivery and local development by funding projects tailored to their communities' needs (REPOA, 2014). By doing so, CDFs aim to bridge the gap between national governments and local populations, fostering a more participatory form of governance.

The Constituency Development Fund Committees (CDCFs) play a pivotal role in the management of CDFs. These committees, composed of elected representatives, civil society members, and government officials, are tasked with identifying and prioritizing development projects within constituencies and managing the allocation of CDF resources (Chesang, 2016). The committee differs in composition and roles as stipulated in their rules and regulations. The CDCF model has been widely adopted in sub-Saharan African countries, where local-level decision-making is essential for

ensuring that funds address the specific needs of communities. For example, Uganda introduced CDFs in 2003, and Kenya followed in 2005, with Tanzania adopting its version, the CDCF, in 2009 (Tsubura, 2013). While the mechanisms and objectives are similar across these countries, the implementation and governance of CDCFs are shaped by each country's social-political context. In Tanzania, for instance, the CDCF aims to promote local economic development, enhance access to basic social services, and foster community engagement (The Constituencies Development Catalyst Fund Act, 2009).

The CDCF in Tanzania was established through the Development Catalyst Fund Act of 2009, which provides a framework for the allocation and management of funds across constituencies. The CDCF Committee, established under section 10 of the Act, is responsible for overseeing fund management, ensuring transparency, and promoting equitable development across regions. However, concerns have been raised about the potential for CDFs to undermine the separation of powers between the legislative and executive branches of government. Critics argue that allowing parliamentarians to have direct control over fund allocation blurs the lines between their roles as policymakers and those of the executive responsible for service delivery (Zyl, 2010). This overlap raises governance challenges, particularly in terms of maintaining accountability, transparency, and fairness in resource distribution.

Despite the significant role CDCF committees play in local development, there is limited empirical research on the functionality of these committees. Most studies have focused on evaluating the legality, politics, and performance of CDFs rather than the operations of the committees themselves (Daudi, 2019, Nguyaine, 2019, Tsubura, 2013, Mgani et al., 2020). Scholars have examined how CDFs can serve as tools for political patronage, where funds are sometimes used to garner political support rather than addressing community needs. This study seeks to fill this gap by identifying the factors influencing the functionality of CDCF committees in Tanzania. By understanding the operational challenges and dynamics within these committees, the study aims to provide insights that can improve the effectiveness of CDCFs in achieving their intended development goals.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

A. Constituency Development Catalyst Fund

These are funding arrangements that channel money from the central government directly to electoral constituencies for local infrastructure projects (Chesang, 2016).

B. Community Participation

Involving community members in decision-making processes and project implementation to ensure projects align with local needs and preferences (Mwansasu, & Ng'wanakilala, 2015). Community participation is a dynamic process that involves the active involvement of individuals, community organizations, and stakeholders in decision-making, planning, implementation, and evaluation of

initiatives aimed at improving the well-being of a community (Sixsmith et al., 2023). Community participation is essential for the success of any project aimed at community development. It plays a crucial role in the Constituency Development Fund (CDF) and needs to be strengthened at every stage, from project identification and initiation to design, implementation, and control. Community development directly affects residents' quality of life and other aspects of community welfare. It involves empowering the community by initiating and enhancing projects in education (schools), health (hospitals), safe water, electricity, and roads (Nguyaine, 2019).

C. Constituencies Development Catalyst Fund (CDCF) Committee

The Constituencies Development Catalyst Fund (CDCF) Committee refers to a local governing body established within Tanzanian constituencies. This committee plays a pivotal role in overseeing the allocation, management, and utilization of the Constituencies Development Catalyst Fund. The committee comprises members chosen to represent diverse community interests and is responsible for decision-making related to local development projects and initiatives (Shaidi, 2016). According to section 10 (1) of the CDCF Act, 2009 CDCF Committee, each constituency will have a Constituency Development Catalyst Committee, led by the elected Members of Parliament and comprising up to seven members. These members include the elected Member of Parliament as Chairman, the District Planning Officer as Secretary, two local councilors (one of whom must be a woman), two Ward Executive Officers in Mainland Tanzania or one Sheha in Tanzania Zanzibar, and one person nominated from among active local NGOs if any are present. (The Constituency Development Catalyst Fund Act, 2009)

D. Functionality of CDCF Committee

In the context of the Constituencies Development Catalyst Fund Committee refers to the effectiveness and operational capabilities of the committee in fulfilling its designated responsibilities. This includes planning, resource allocation, and project initiation and implementation to achieve sustainable development goals within the constituency (Mwansasu, & Ng'wanakilala, 2015). The main role of a committee is to enhance the effective functioning of an organization. Typically, a committee focuses on sharing information and supporting leadership in the decision-making process by supplying essential data (Mgani et al., 2020).

According to CDCF Act, 2009, the committee is responsible for identifying and prioritizing development projects within the constituency. This involves engaging with community members to understand their needs and ensuring that the selected projects align with their needs. Article 12(1) of the CDCF Act, 2009, emphasizes that projects funded by the CDCF should be initiated by community members. Once projects are identified, the committee reviews and approves them. Another function includes preparing detailed project proposals and budgets to ensure that the projects are feasible and financially sound. Section 11 (1) of the CDCF Act, 2009, outlines the committee's role in reviewing and approving project proposals and budgets. Also, the committee oversees

the allocation and disbursement of funds for approved projects. It ensures that funds are used efficiently and transparently and that all financial transactions are properly documented. This includes keeping accurate records, submitting regular reports to relevant authorities, and ensuring that all activities comply with legal and regulatory requirements (The Constituency Development Catalyst Fund Act, 2009).

E. Empirical Review

Wambui, (2016) conducted a study on the influence of Project Management Committee (PMC) members' competence on the performance of Constituency Development Funded (CDF) projects in Kiharu Constituency, Murang'a County, Kenya. The research identified critical gaps in PMC members' qualifications, including a lack of academic credentials, inadequate technology usage, insufficient financial management skills, and limited community participation. Wambui's findings suggest a need for capacity building among PMC members to enhance project performance. Drawing parallels with this study, a similar investigation is underway in Makambako Constituency, Tanzania, aimed at understanding the functionality of the Constituency Development Catalyst Fund (CDCF) Committees. By comparing the two contexts, this study seeks to address potential challenges and propose solutions for more effective CDCF operations.

Mgani et al., (2020) focused on the implementation of the CDCF Act in Vwawa Constituency, Tanzania, examining areas like project initiation, procurement, and administration. Their findings highlighted the discrepancy between the legal framework and the actual project selection process, where community-proposed projects were often overlooked by the CDC committee, despite the Act's provisions. While CDC committee members had a good understanding of the fund, the general population lacked awareness. The study highlights the need for stronger community involvement in decision-making. This observation is crucial to the ongoing research in Makambako Constituency, which aims to explore the effectiveness of CDCF operations by identifying gaps in project selection and community participation, contributing to the enhancement of CDC committee roles.

Masue, (2010) examined the effectiveness of primary school committees in Tanzania, revealing educational inadequacies among committee members and communication challenges with local communities. These findings highlight the importance of educational qualifications, financial constraints, and gender representation in committee performance. The study's themes resonate with the ongoing research on CDCF Committees in Makambako, where similar challenges of capacity building, community involvement, and resource management are prevalent. Masue's research emphasizes the need for proper training and capacity development to improve committee effectiveness, which is mirrored in the CDCF context, where such enhancements could lead to better project outcomes.

Kirema & Ngacha, (2023) studied the role of Project Management Committees (PMCs) in the performance of borehole projects funded by County governments in Kenya, revealing that constitutional policies, training, transparency, and stakeholder involvement were crucial to project success. Their findings align with the challenges faced by CDCF committees in Tanzania, where issues such as inadequate training and transparency also hinder performance. By focusing on borehole projects, this study highlights the significance of specialized training and clear structural frameworks, which is similarly necessary for the broader scope of CDCF operations in Makambako Constituency. Both studies advocate for stronger accountability and enhanced community participation to ensure successful project implementation.

Kiprono et al (2015) the study analyzed the capacity of School Management Committees (SMCs) in handling Free Primary Education (FPE) funds in Kenya, finding that inadequate accounting skills, insufficient training, and gender disparities hindered the effective use of these funds. The research underscores the need for capacity building and training in governance and financial management. These challenges are also reflected in the CDCF committee structures in Tanzania, where governance and fund management are critical issues. The parallels between SMCs and CDCF committees emphasize the importance of addressing educational and financial resource challenges to improve public fund management and promote local development.

The study by Ketan, (2007) and Muyaloka & Kachamba, (2024) shed light on systemic weaknesses in CDF operations, including political interference, poor contractor performance, and logistical challenges. Ketan's research, particularly, emphasizes the discretionary power of MPs over CDF funds, often leading to corruption and mismanagement. Similarly, in Zambia and Tanzania, CDCF committees face governance issues like inadequate training, lack of transparency, and logistical inefficiencies, which affect project outcomes. Both studies underline the need for improved governance, capacity building, and oversight mechanisms to mitigate these challenges and enhance the functionality of CDCFC initiatives for community-driven development.

III. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study employed a qualitative research approach to explore the factors influencing the functionality of Constituencies Development Catalyst Fund Committees (CDCFCs) in the Makambako Constituency, using a case study design for in-depth analysis. Data were collected through semi-structured interviews with 31 key informants, including CDCF committee members, councilors and head of department, and supplemented by documentary review. Purposive sampling ensured diverse perspectives were included. Thematic analysis was applied to identify patterns and insights into the committee's operations, with Nvivo software facilitating the process.

IV. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The study involved participants with diverse characteristics. To ensure the credibility of the findings, the researcher collected demographic information from participants covering gender, age, level of education,

occupation, and role within the committee. This comprehensive demographic profiling was essential to ensure the validity and reliability of the data. Participants actively and willingly engaged in the study, providing robust and meaningful responses.

Table 1 Participant Demographic Characteristics

CDCF Committee Members						Non-CDCF Members			
		Councilors	Ward Executive Officer	Head of Department	Committee Clerk	Councilors	Head of Department	Ward Executive Officer	Total
Total number		2	2	1	1	8	10	7	31
Age	≤ 45		2		1			6	
	≥ 46	2		1		8		1	
Gender	Female	1	1			2	5	3	
	Male	1	1	1	1	6	5	4	
Education Level	Standard Seven	2				6		1	
	Form Four					2			
	Form Six								
	Certificate								
	Diploma		2					2	
	University Degree			1	1		10	4	
TOTAL									31

➤ Factors Influencing the Functionality of the CDCD Committee

The functionality of the CDCF Committee is influenced by several critical factors, including committee composition, political bias and favoritism, budget limitations, knowledge gap in CDCF guidelines and committee meetings. A well-structured and diverse committee is essential for balanced decision-making, but current biases and political interests often compromise its effectiveness. Additionally, limited funding restricts project scope and impact, while inadequate knowledge of CDCF guidelines among members and the community hampers operational efficiency. Addressing these issues through reforms, improved transparency, and better resource management is crucial for enhancing the committee's effectiveness in achieving developmental objectives

➤ Committee Composition

Committee composition refers to the makeup of the CDCF Committee, including its diversity, expertise, representation, and roles, which significantly impact decision-making and inclusivity. While a few respondents, both members and non-members of the committee, viewed the composition positively, saying *"the composition of the CDCF committee is well because every group has been touched"* (P16 Councilor non-CDCFC member). Most respondents highlighted concerns about political bias and favoritism in project deliberation. They recommended restructuring the committee so that it can work in proper way, the respondents had this to say, *"this exercise would be done by the executive director and his team i.e., the Council Management Team (CMT); there would be no bias from committee members"* (P13 WEO CDCF Committee member). Others suggested the Member of Parliament should serve only in an advisory role rather than chair the committee, adding, *"If it were possible, the chairman of the fund committee should not be a member of parliament"* (P26 Head

of Department non-member of CDCF Committee). Additionally, some proposed that project funds be distributed through the Local Development Capital Grant (LDCDG) system to ensure more equitable and transparent disbursement of resources (P23 Councilor non-member of CDCF Committee).

A study by REPOA, (2018) aligns with this, revealing that politicization of such committees can skew project prioritization towards political loyalty rather than community benefit. Suggestions for restructuring, such as removing the MP as chair, are seen as potential solutions to enhance fairness and accountability. The same was stipulated by Daudi, (2019) on the (Jussell, 2019) Efficacy of Constituency Development Catalyst Fund where the existence of MP as a chairman on CDCFC hinders decision making, and there is a need for restructuring of the composition to avoid influence in decision making process within the committee.

➤ Political Biases and Favoritism in CDCF Management

Respondents highlighted significant concerns regarding political bias and favoritism in the management of CDCF projects. Most felt that Members of Parliament (MPs) were using the fund for political gain, the respondents had this to say, *"MPs always think that the money is theirs, it just goes to the wrong pocket... they come to the meetings having already planned the use of the money"* (P14 Councilor former CDCF Committee member). This bias was also evident among Ward Councilors, who are members of the committee, pushed for projects benefiting their own wards. Other respondents added, *"The funds should stay with the executive director because the committee members... favor their wards"* (P7 WEO non-committee member). Additionally, the presence of a multiparty system fueled favoritism, as the majority party often prioritized its interests. *"Once the MP has his priorities, and then no one else can change them,"* remarked another respondent, pointing to neglected areas

associated with political opponents (P8 Councilor Non-Member of CDCF Committee).

The influence of political bias on the CDCF Committee is consistent with studies by (Murniati et al., 2021) and (Tsubura, 2013), which show that such funds are often used as political investments, leading to clientelism and undermining equitable development. The findings highlight the need for a transparent and objective project selection process to mitigate these biases and ensure fair distribution of resources. The influence of political dynamics in the CDCF committee's operations is a recurring theme in both the study by Mgani et al., (2020) and the provided findings. MPs are often accused of using CDCF funds to fulfill political promises and gain support, leading to biased and inequitable distribution of resources. This politicization undermines the CDCF's objective of addressing genuine development needs and can result in the diversion of funds to politically motivated projects rather than those that benefit the community as a whole. The study by Jussell (2019) highlights how political representatives in patronage democracies often distribute resources based on political incentives, leading to favoritism and unequal resource allocation. This insight is relevant to this study, where project selection is influenced by the discretion of the committee chairman, typically a Member of Parliament. As a result, political considerations may lead to inconsistent project prioritization, reflecting clientelism. The influence of political actors in CDCF decision-making echoes Jussell's findings, underscoring the difficulties of maintaining transparent and accountable governance in patronage-driven environments.

➤ *Limited Budget*

Respondents frequently cited the limited budget as a major challenge for the CDCF Committee, hindering both the initiation and completion of projects. The respondents had this to say, *"The CDCF helps us a lot even though the amount of money is not enough"* (P16 Councilor Non-CDCF Member). They emphasized that the current funding levels are insufficient to meet the developmental needs of their constituencies, resulting in delays in ongoing projects and preventing the launch of new ones. A suggestion was made to focus the available funds on fewer projects for better impact. The respondents had to say *"This fund will work better if it manages a few important projects first... then follow other projects and are completed with quality"* (P27 Head of Department Non-CDCF Committee Member).

The findings from Makambako, which highlight the impact of limited budgets on project implementation, suggest that strategic resource management is crucial. The study underscores the importance of prioritizing projects based on community needs and available resources to maximize the benefits of CDFs. The recommendation to focus on fewer, well-resourced projects for greater impact in Makambako aligns with the need for more effective and targeted use of CDF allocations. The REPOA, (2014) findings have also identified insufficient funding as a major challenge for the CDCF committees performance. Limited financial resources restrict the committee's ability to complete ongoing projects and initiate new ones. Furthermore the study by Deveaux et

al., (2022) suggests that budget constraints often lead to incomplete projects, as the available funds are not enough to cover all the development needs within a constituency. This issue is echoed in the provided findings, where respondents highlight the need for better fund management and prioritization to maximize the impact of the limited resources. The study by Kimata (2021) aligns with the findings of this study as it indicate that the level of funding, frequency of funding, allocation of funds, and adequacy of funding greatly affected the implementation of projects in a decentralized system of constituency developed fund projects in Kinangop Constituency, Kenya. Some of the financial challenges included incomplete and delayed projects, the project manager's inability to track expenses, inadequate planning of the project budget (involving the aggregation of individual activity costs or work packages to establish a baseline budget), and insufficient funds to complete the project on time. For local governments and private entities to effectively perform their independent roles, they need adequate revenue—either generated locally or transferred from the federal government—and the authority to make spending decisions.

➤ *Limited Knowledge of CDCF Guidelines*

Most respondents highlighted a lack of sufficient knowledge regarding the CDCF guidelines, limiting their understanding of the committee's functions beyond approving or rejecting project proposals. Many were unaware of the broader roles outlined in the guidelines, with some mistakenly viewing the fund as being controlled by the Member of Parliament. The respondents had this to say, *"We councilors do not have enough knowledge about the law of the fund"* (P17 Councilor, non-CDCF Committee member). Another added, *"There was no education about the CDCF, its use, and how it should be planned... some people believe it's MP Fund"* (P14 Councilor, former CDCF Committee member). This lack of awareness contributes to confusion and mismanagement of the fund.

Knowledge gaps among Constituency Development Catalyst Fund committee members and the public regarding the CDCF guideline in Makambako reflect broader issues of capacity and awareness, which are essential for the effective implementation of CDCF. Members have demonstrated lack of awareness on the CDCF guidelines which may impair its implementation. It was expected that member of the committees would be more conversant on the operational guideline of the fund which would have helped them to strictly implement it. Murniati et al., (2021) argue for the need to build local capacity and enhance understanding of CDCF mechanisms to ensure their proper use. The study by Muyaloka & Kachamba (2024) identified the issue of committee members failure to execute there functions due to lack of knowledge on guidelines concerning CDCF. The findings identified that that CDCFC and WDCs they have limited knowledge on project implementation and overall CDF, lacks incentives and recognition and limited participation and involvement in different issue like monitoring and evaluation of project. The study states that "100% of the committee members reported not receiving any Project Management or CDF training," highlighting a

significant gap in the skill set necessary for effective project management. The study added, “The absence of Project Management and CDF awareness as the study indicated among CDCFC and Ward Development Committee members may lead to challenges in effectively managing CDF projects, including issues related to budgeting, scheduling, resource allocation, and risk management”. Without proper training in project management principles and practices, committee members may struggle to ensure the efficient and timely completion of projects, potentially resulting in delays, cost overruns, and suboptimal project outcomes. This was also revealed to Makambako constituency where the committee members have general information on CDCF which challenge them during decision making.

➤ Committee Meetings

Committee meetings refer to regular gatherings of committee members to discuss, review, and make decisions about various aspects of their responsibilities. These meetings are essential for ensuring transparency, oversight, and responsibility within an organization or project. The respondents were asked if the committee is conducting

meetings as per guidelines. The respondents revealed that, there are few meetings conducted as per guidelines, where there were supposed to meet at least once in every quarter of the year. The respondents has this to say.

"This committee only meets once a year because the money from the CDCF is only received once a year."

The respondents added that the committee meets once after receiving the fund, and that meeting depends on the timetable of the chairman, who is the Member of Parliament. The respondents had to say.

"Meetings are often delayed and usually wait for the schedule of the chairman, who is the Honorable Member of Parliament and is very busy." P10 Committee Clerk

Through documentary review, the same issues were revealed as the respondents highlighted. The document for minutes from the Town Director for consecutive five financial years the committee conducted on meeting every year and the last quarter of the financial year.

Table 2 Shows the Schedule for CDCF Meetings from 2019/2020 up to the Year 2023/2024

FINANCIAL YEAR	AMOUNT RECEIVED	MONTH FUND RECEIVED	DATE OF CDCF COMMITTEE MEETING	NUMBER OF MONTH DELAYED DECISION
2019/2020	32,389,000	10 December 2019	22 May 2020	07
2020/2021	32,388,000	03 December 2020	26 February 2021	03
2021/2022	32,388,000	25 December 2021	9 May 2022	06
2022/2023	55,754,500	01 December 2022	18 March 2023	04
2023/2024	55,754,000	31 October 2023	28 May 2024	07

Source; from the field

Findings from this study indicated that the committees are not holding its meeting as per guidelines and schedule. CDCDF works through meetings which is uses to make deliberation of different issues and create a conducive environment for the effective functionality of the particular organization. According to Regulation 17 (1) of the Constituencies Development Catalyst Fund Regulations, 2010: The Committee shall hold an ordinary meeting for the transaction of its business at least once every three months at such place, on such date, and at such time as may be decided by the Chairperson. A respondent explained that the committee only meets once after receiving the CDCF funds. These meetings are often delayed due to the busy schedule of the Member of Parliament (MP) who chairs the committee. This lack of adherence to meeting schedules leads to delays in project implementation and potentially hinders the committee's ability to follow established CDCF rules and guidelines. Therefore, failure to comply with this regulation results in delays in project implementation and raises issues of transparency and accountability. The same issue was linked to the study by REPOA, (2014) shows that most of the MPs do not reside in their constituencies and spend much of their time attending to parliamentary, ministerial, or other political duties elsewhere. Consequently, some of these MPs delegate their CDCF responsibilities to council planning officers, others to their assistants, or to one of the councilors on the meetings, which hinders decisions on the committee. Also the study by Daudi, (2019) which also found that,

having Members of Parliament (MPs) chair CDC committees creates a bottleneck. MPs are primarily responsible for debates and legislation in parliament, limiting their time available for constituency work. This dual role as committee chair strains their time management, leading to frequent absences from CDC meetings and project oversight. Study by by Muyaloka & Kachamba, (2024) on “Assessing Factors Influencing the Failure of Constituency Development Fund (CDF) Projects in Education and Health Sectors in Zambia” revealed the same. The absence of monitoring mechanism to the CDCFC to some extent contributes to failure of the committee to comply with the government Act. Similarly, in Zambia, the lack of regular monitoring, the failure of members to appear at meetings, and reporting on CDF projects is a significant challenge. Limited administrative support and resources hinder the ability of CDCF and WDCs to effectively oversee project implementation and ensure accountability.

V. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

The functionality of the Constituency Development Catalyst Fund Committee (CDCF) in Makambako Constituency is impaired by political biases, limited budget, inadequate knowledge of guidelines, and irregular meetings. Political favoritism, especially from Members of Parliament, distorts project selection, while insufficient funds hinder the scope and completion of projects. Additionally, knowledge

gaps and irregular meetings contribute to delays and inefficiencies. To address these issues, it is recommended to restructure the committee by limiting the MP's role to an advisory capacity and promoting more diverse representation. Enhancing transparency, focusing on fewer high-impact projects, and providing regular training on CDCF guidelines are crucial for better governance. The committee must also adhere to quarterly meetings and establish a robust monitoring and evaluation framework to ensure timely decision-making and accountability. These reforms will enhance the committee's ability to prioritize community needs and achieve more equitable development outcomes.

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