

City of Culver City, California
City Council Agenda Item Report

Meeting Date: 07/28/08		Item Number: <u>PH -1</u>	
AGENDA ITEM: CONTINUED PUBLIC HEARING: Adoption of a Resolution Establishing Community Benefits for the Washington/National District.			
Contact Person/Dept.: Sol Blumenfeld Elaine Gerety Warner		Phone Number: 310.253.5702 310.253.5777	
Fiscal Impact: Yes ☒ No ☐		General Fund: Yes ☐ No ☒	
Public Hearing: ☐		Action Item: ☒ Attachments: ☒	
Public Notification: Master Notification List on July 9, 2008; Residents, Property Owners and Business within 1,000 feet of proposed district boundary (approx, 2,000 notices), East Culver City Neighborhood Alliance Meetings on June 27 th and July 3 rd . Master E-Mail Notification List (07/24/08).			
Department Approval: Sol Blumenfeld		City Attorney Approval: Carol Schwab (by H. Baker) (07/09/08)	
Chief Financial Officer Approval: Jeff Muir (by N. Kimball)(07/09/08)		City Manager Approval: Jerry B. Fulwood (07/23/08)	
<u>RECOMMENDATION:</u> Staff recommends the City Council adopt a Resolution establishing community benefits related to the Washington National District. <u>PROCEDURE:</u> 1. Mayor calls on staff for a brief staff report. 2. Mayor seeks a motion to open the public hearing. 3. Receive comment from public. 4. Mayor seeks a motion to close the public hearing after all testimony has been presented. 5. Council discusses the matter and arrives at its decision. <u>BACKGROUND:</u> On March 10, 2008, the City Council approved a Resolution (Attachment 1) to establish a Community Benefit Incentive Program in connection with Section 17.400.065 of the Zoning Code – Mixed Use Development Standards. This Section of the Culver City Municipal Code (CCMC) allows mixed use development on certain commercially zoned property at a base residential density of 35 dwelling units per acre (du/a), but allows the density to increase to 50 du/a, and up to 65 du/a in a Transit Oriented Development Zone (TOD Zone), provided the project incorporates community benefits as established by the City Council.			

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A community benefit is defined as a project amenity that achieves a particular community goal. The list of community benefits outlined in the Ordinance includes, but is not limited to, the following:

- A. Streetscape Improvements
- B. Pocket Parks and Public Open Space (minimum 5,000 sq. ft.) in addition to park space otherwise required by the CCMC
- C. Metered Public Parking in Excess of CCMC requirements.
- D. Other Community Benefits as approved by City Council.

On May 12, 2008, the City Council established the boundaries for the Washington National Community Benefit District (District). This District encompasses the commercial areas extending from Robertson Boulevard/Higuera Street to the West, Venice Boulevard to the North, Helms Avenue to the East and Lindblade Street to the South and is coterminous with the TOD Zone in the Mixed Use Ordinance.

On May 21, 2008, a community meeting was held to discuss the Community Benefit Incentive Program and garner informal recommendations from residents, business and property owners as to what benefits may be beneficial to the area. The meeting notice was mailed to more than 2,000 individuals and a large ad was placed in the Culver City Observer per Council direction. The meeting, however, was not well attended.

On June 9, 2008, staff returned to the City Council for direction. At that time, a representative of the East Culver City Alliance and the Rancho Higuera Neighborhood offered their community meeting at the end of June as a forum to present the Community Benefit program and garner feedback. In addition, the representative requested that progress related to the Washington/National project also be presented. In response, the City Council directed staff to conduct the meeting with the neighborhood group rather than re-notice the 1,000 foot radius as specified in the Ordinance. It is important to note that this change is inconsistent with the specific requirements established in the resolution for community benefits which is intended to ensure that the area immediately abutting proposed mixed use projects is included in the decision making process. Henceforth, to ensure neutrality in this process, staff will follow the noticing requirement as specified. At that time, this public hearing was continued to this evening.

On June 27, staff presented the Community Benefit Incentive Program and Washington National Development Program to approximately 50 community members. There were a number of questions related to density, massing and existing development rehabilitation vs. new development parking requirements. Individuals expressed concern about circulation, bike paths and open space for children and animals as well as the perception that their neighborhood would be

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“changed” due to the project at Washington/National. Since a number of issues that were raised, staff offered to attend another meeting to answer additional questions. Staff further invited concerned individuals to call or e-mail their questions so they could be answered directly. In addition, a “Question” Sheet was put out in which individuals could write questions they would like addressed on July 3, 2008.

On July 3, 2008, staff adjusted the Community Benefit presentation for July 3, 2008 to include more clarification related to density, the mixed use ordinance and the community benefit options and did not present further information regarding the Washington/National development program. The July 3rd meeting was attended by more than 20 people. The group discussed the following items:

- Residential Permit Parking funded by the developer for the area (including parking permit fees and operational costs)
- Parking and traffic enforcement for the residential neighborhood.
- Streetscape Improvements with emphasis on promoting biking in and thru the area.
- Bike path improvements and bike storage.
- Transit passes to encourage Metro ridership at TOD projects.
- Open space and children’s open space.
- Parking that is convenient, low cost, easily found and designed so that it does not produce more through traffic in the neighborhood.

Staff attempted to get consensus on a benefit recommendation at these meetings but was unsuccessful. However, the group did request to see a summary of the items discussed (above) and offered to get back to staff with a recommendation. This list was made available on Tuesday, July 8th however, at the writing of this report, staff had not received a response.

In addition to the comments heard at the meeting, staff also received detailed and thoughtful comments from some of the attendees which are attached to the report (Exhibit B). They reported that they are generally very excited about the prospect of transportation serving the area but concerned about the scale of potential development around the transit station and the current level of traffic in the area. They also expressed concerns about the coordination with Metro construction and the community and the need for shuttle bus service. These written communications noted that streetscape improvements, added parking, commuter transit passes for EXPO, and park space may be more of a benefit to the tenants of the development than the community unless the development is “connected” to the surrounding neighborhood. So the actual design of the benefit was noted as an important issue. The written correspondence also included comments about multi-family development standards related to parking, open space and sustainability, potential parking in other areas of Washington/National and commercial development

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standards for TOD projects that staff will address in follow-up meetings with the neighborhood group.

The meetings did generate significant discussion about a general undersupply of parking throughout the East side and that residents were concerned about visitor parking on their neighborhood streets. To this end, parking opportunities that are open and accessible to the community and that discourage trips in the neighborhood through appropriate signing and location may be a suitable Community Benefit for the area.

DISCUSSION:

As noted in the Ordinance, the ultimate determination of the Community Benefit for the Washington/National District rests with the City Council. As indicated in the ordinance, the Council may establish more than one benefit in each district. Since the catalytic projects are relatively large, the Council may want to exercise the option to provide more than one benefit since no consensus was achieved through either the June 27th or July 3rd meetings. Further, the Council may want to consider adopting all three of the prescribed benefits listed in the Ordinance (Open Space, Streetscape and Parking) to allow greater flexibility to the catalytic projects already in process and to address the broadest number of community concerns. Following Council adoption of the Community Benefit resolution, each mixed use development project discretionary permit for the area will include the required Community Benefits. The draft resolution attached to the report lists the Community Benefits, because the City Attorney has recommended that it not contain blank space. Any changes to the resolution will be read into the record and reflected in the final resolution. It is important now to complete the Community Benefit process by completing the hearing and adopting the Community Benefit resolution for the Washington National area.

FISCAL ANALYSIS:

The selected community benefits will provide a much needed amenity at little or no capital cost to the City. If parking is selected, related parking enforcement costs may be offset by additional meter revenues. If open space or streetscape improvements are selected, the capital costs shall be absorbed by the related project. All of these benefits would be incorporated within development projects and all related maintenance would be paid for directly by the developer/development in perpetuity.

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Culver City is a built out City, which makes it very challenging and costly for the City to provide additional parking or open space using City funds. Additionally, the City does not have sufficient funding to build adequate parking or provide adequate open space in this area without taking advantage of programs such as a Community Benefit Incentive Program. This program will provide much needed parking or open space while shifting the cost of building and maintaining those community benefits to the developer.

To date staff has dedicated approximately 20 hours identifying a community benefit for the Washington/National area, which equates to approximately \$1,200 to \$1,500 in staff time (including salary and benefits). Additionally, Public notification for this project was provided in two steps involving two postcard mailings. The estimate direct cost for providing this notice is \$1,300.

ATTACHMENTS:

1. Resolution 2008-R015: Community Benefit Incentive Program
2. Washington National Community Benefit District Boundaries
3. Community Comments related to June 27, 2008 and July 3, 2008 community meetings
4. Correspondence on behalf of the Brentwood Fairfield Project
5. Proposed Resolution

MOTION:

That the City Council:

Adopt a Resolution establishing the benefit(s) for the Washington/National Community Benefit District.