



Southeastern
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Memorandum

Date Issued: June 9, 2010 Item No. 6a – Report No. 10-006

Meeting of: June 14, 2010

To: Chair and Members of the SEDC Project & Development Committee

From: Chris Jones, Interim Project Manager

Subject: *Approval of a Short Term Lease to allow a community garden on Agency owned property located at 4261-4271 Market Street (APN's 547-102-02; 547-102-03; 547-102-04; 547-102-38).*

SUMMARY

Staff Recommendation – That the SEDC Project & Development Committee recommend to the SEDC Board a Short Term Lease for a community garden on Agency owned property located at 4261-4271 Market Street in the Mount Hope Redevelopment Project Area. The term of the lease will be for 3 years with mutual renewal options of (1) one year at a time thereafter.

Fiscal Impact – Fifty Thousand Dollars previously budgeted in FY10 for a community garden in Mount Hope Project Area.

BACKGROUND

On July 23, 2008, the SEDC Board of Directors approved the staff recommendation for the temporary installation of a water conservation garden on Agency owned property located at 4260-4274 Market Street in the Mount Hope Project Area. The project was eliminated due to budget cuts as a result to the ERAF Take.

SEDC has recently been presented with an opportunity to partner with Project New Village and proceed with a community garden. SEDC recognizes community gardens to be a valuable public resource fostering environmental awareness and positive social interaction while educating the community. Community gardens provide community members access to fresh, nutritious produce and a low-intensity physical activity. Community gardens help bring neighborhoods and communities together as a team and can help foster skills needed in the workplace, as well as be a building block for neighborhood growth. The properties we have identified for this use are future potential redevelopment sites. On a longer term, SEDC will seek agreements with development partners to redevelop this segment of Market Street.

In the interim, the property will remain vacant and underutilized, awaiting the commercial lending and real estate investment market to return and the economy to recover.

SEDC staff and Project New Village, in conjunction with District 4 staff, explored alternative sites in the Mount Hope project area and found this site to be the only feasible option for implementation of a garden in this fiscal year, per Agency Board direction in their adoption of the FY 10 budget. Several private property owners were approached but declined to participate in the garden partnership. The Mount Hope cemetery and park lands were denied by the City for this purpose due to restrictive covenants.

DISCUSSION

A short term lease on the SEDC Redevelopment Agency property will allow Project New Village to get a garden growing as a demonstration and they have committed to work over the lease period to identify a more permanent property for their garden. We strongly favor using property that is not in productive use as garden space, given certain terms and conditions be included in the lease. We believe it is a very beneficial interim use for underutilized public land that would otherwise be an eyesore for the neighborhoods surrounding the property. When a property sits fenced and vacant, it provides no public benefit and it diminished the value of properties surrounding it.

The Agency property under consideration for the community garden is located at 4261-4271 Market Street, in the Mount Hope Project Area. SEDC proposes a partnership with Project New Village and local landscape vendors to initiate a garden. The lease terms will be drafted utilizing many of the terms and conditions that were included in the Community Garden Policy recently adopted by the City of Chula Vista, attached.

CONCLUSION

If approved, this community garden will promote positive environmental awareness while allowing the community to combine efforts and create the model for more community gardens within the Southeastern area.



Submitted by:
Chris Jones
Interim Project Manager



Approved By:
Brian L. Trotier
Acting President/CEO

- Attachments:
- A. City of Chula Vista Community Garden Policy
 - B. Staff Report to the SEDC Board of Directors Dated July 23, 20008
 - C. Conceptual garden designs