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Title: RESOLUTION - Approving a Construction Impact Assistance Program for Fulton Mall Businesses and Property Owners

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REPORT TO THE CITY COUNCIL

March 3, 2016

FROM: JENNIFER K. CLARK, ACIP, Director
Development and Resource Management Department

SUBJECT

RESOLUTION - Approving a Construction Impact Assistance Program for Fulton Mall Businesses and Property Owners

RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that the City Council adopt a resolution approving a Construction Impact Assistance Program for the Fulton Mall Businesses and Property owners located within the boundaries of the Fulton Mall Reconstruction Project.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

At this time, the City of Fresno seeks to implement a Construction Impact Assistance Program (Program) as a form of relief assistance for the businesses and property owners located along the Fulton Mall within the boundary of Merced Mall, Mariposa Mall, Kern Mall, Federal Alley, Congo/Homerun Alley, and Inyo Street (as illustrated in Exhibit A). The Program consists of the following:

- Eligible businesses will receive at no cost, parking validation coupons for their customers. The “validation coupons” provide customers up to 2 hours of free parking at designated Parking Garages 4, 7, 8, and 9 (excluding events).
- Waiver of Business Tax.
- Certain Planning fees will be waived or reduced as shown on Exhibit B of the resolution.
- The Program is effective the day construction commences for a term of 14 months.

BACKGROUND

On December 3, 2015, the City Council awarded a construction contract to American Paving Company of Fresno, California for the Fulton Mall Reconstruction Project. During that meeting, City Council members urged the Administration to consider developing a program that would provide relief assistance to those businesses that would be impacted by the construction. It was advised that the Program should also include a form of relocation assistance to those businesses that may want to move to another part of the City of Fresno. The administration is working closely with Councilmember Esmeralda Soria to develop this segment of the Program.

The City and the Downtown Fresno Partnership held several meetings with the business and property owners, and researched the best practices for dealing with construction in “Main Street” environments. The Program as described above was created as a result of those meetings. The business and property owners located within the boundary as shown in Exhibit A of the resolution are eligible for the Program, if they have paid all assessments due to the Downtown Fresno Property and Business Improvement District, and (for properties with basements that encroach into the City right-of-way) have signed a Covenant & Permit Agreement.

There are an estimated 110 business entities operating within the boundaries shown on the map in Exhibit A. During 2015, the City of Fresno’s business tax records indicate an estimated \$52,580 of business tax was paid by those businesses. Planning records indicate that one permit was submitted totaling \$6500. Parking records indicate that for the first two months of 2016, there were 5,500 coupons used for a value of approximately \$20,000. Projecting the benefits over 14 months would result in an approximate value of less than \$200,000 for the City of Fresno. While the Program will have a de minimis fiscal impact upon the City’s general fund, there is a significantly greater value for those business that have invested their money, and devoted their time and passion into their establishments.

During construction, the Downtown Fresno Partnership will utilize social media to promote the businesses, provide monthly tours to showcase vacant storefronts, and develop a variety of marketing promotions. The City will assist with providing public service announcements. Additionally, American Paving Company (Contractor) is required to provide public access to all the businesses thus enabling them to stay open during construction. Biweekly meetings will be held with the business and property owners to inform them of the construction timeline, phasing, and to address any issues that may occur. In addition, City staff will be at the construction site on a regular basis working closely with the Contractor to address any issues that the businesses and or property owners may have.

ENVIRONMENTAL FINDINGS

By the definition provide in the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Guideline Section 15378, this item does not qualify as a “project” and is therefore exempt from the CEQA requirements.

LOCAL PREFERENCE

Local preference was not considered because this item does not include a bid or awarded of a construction or service contract.

FISCAL IMPACT

The Program will have a negligible fiscal impact upon the City’s general fund. However, the City may benefit in terms of future property and sales tax revenues.

Attachment:
Resolution