



Office of the City Manager

44

September 11, 2007

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COUNCIL MEETING OF:

SEP 11 2007

OFFICE OF THE CITY CLERK
CITY OF BERKELEY

To: Honorable Mayor and
Members of the City Council
From: *PK* Phil Kamlarz, City Manager
Subject: West Berkeley Community Benefit District

In recent months the West Berkeley Business Alliance (WBBA), an association of West Berkeley property owners and businesses, has been engaged in an effort to organize a Community Benefits District (CBD) in Southwest Berkeley. The WBBA became motivated to organize a CBD to address various quality of life issues affecting the west side of the City including improved security, graffiti abatement, better employee transportation and access to transit, and the need for improved homeless outreach services.

A CBD is essentially a form of property-based Business Improvement District (PBID), as currently exist in the North Shattuck and Telegraph Avenue commercial districts. CBDs, widely implemented recently in Oakland and San Francisco, serve as a vehicle for PBIDs to explicitly include smaller residential properties as assesses in mixed-use commercial districts. WBBA leaders thought that the CBD concept, more than a traditional PBID, might lend itself better to the mixed-use nature of West Berkeley by including residential as well as commercial properties as both assesses (albeit at a lower rate for residential) and as participants in the district management entity.

The PBID Ordinance revision that was originally placed on the Council Agenda for tonight was designed to explicitly enable the City Council to establish CBDs in Berkeley (CBDs are not currently recognized) and tweak various elements of PBID law to create greater efficiencies in district set-up and administration. In the wake of concerns expressed by some neighbors about the costs to residents, staff decided to remove this item from the Agenda. Staff determined that it was premature to advise Council to adopt a CBD update to the City's PBID law at present. This decision was discussed with the leadership from the WBBA and they agree with this assessment. They realize that everyone would benefit if they reevaluate their approach to the CBD and do more substantive public outreach to the community and potential assesses.

A community meeting has been scheduled by Councilmember Darryl Moore in conjunction with the Berkeley Office of Economic Development and will be held on September 27th at 7:00 p.m. at the Frances Albrier Center. In the wake of this meeting and likely meetings/deliberations by the CBD

West Berkeley Community Benefit District

September 11, 2007

Page 2 of 2

Steering Committee of the WBBA, a decision will be made on how to proceed. It is likely that the WBBA will propose a revised CBD concept or traditional PBID concept sometime in the future once broader outreach to the community has occurred and greater agreement has been generated about the direction.

cc: Pamyla Means, City Clerk
Ann-Marie Hogan, City Auditor
Michael Caplan, Office of Economic Development