



Board Report

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**PLANNING AND PROGRAMMING COMMITTEE
JUNE 19, 2019**

SUBJECT: DIVISION 6 DEVELOPMENT GUIDELINES

ACTION: ADOPT DEVELOPMENT GUIDELINES

RECOMMENDATION

ADOPT Development Guidelines (Attachment A) for the joint development of 3.12 acres of Metro-owned property at the Division 6 site located in the Venice community.

ISSUE

In accordance with the Joint Development (JD) Policy, staff has conducted community outreach to solicit input for the creation of Development Guidelines (“Guidelines”) for the Division 6 property. The JD Policy requires Board approval of the Guidelines. If adopted by the Board, the Guidelines will be included in the Request for Interest and Qualifications (RFIQ) for the site.

BACKGROUND

On January 28, 2016, the Metro Board of Directors adopted a motion calling for a community-based process to determine a new use for Division 6 (“Site”) through Metro’s Joint Development (JD) Program. The site had been in operation as a transit facility for over 100 years before being decommissioned in 2016.

Site Description

Division 6 is located between Main Street and Pacific Avenue and between Sunset Avenue and Thornton Place, and is one of the most desirable development locations in Venice. The property is three blocks from Venice Beach and within a half-mile radius of Abbot Kinney Boulevard, Windward Circle, and the commercial corridors of Main Street and Venice Boulevard, which both continue north to Santa Monica.

DISCUSSION

Findings

The Site is not encumbered by federal requirements to dispose of the property and it has been determined that the Site will not be needed for existing or future transportation needs.

Considerations

The location provides a bathroom for Metro bus operators of the Local 33 bus which will be incorporated into the new development. The 733 Rapid and Santa Monica Big Blue Bus Route 1 also serve that area and are within a five-minute walk of the Site.

Community Outreach

In the fall of 2018, Metro's JD staff initiated an outreach effort to facilitate a community visioning process for the long-term reuse of the Site. The team used various methods to gather feedback and ideas about how the Site could be developed to have a broader positive community impact, increase mobility connections and improve quality of life.

The JD team hired an outside design/urban planning consultant to assist with outreach and creation of the Guidelines, and also worked closely with Community Relations and local elected offices (the Offices of Directors Bonin and Kuehl) to:

- Create a stakeholder outreach/email list;
- Hold focus groups and one-on-one meetings with key stakeholder representatives;
- Hold Workshop 1: "What is the Community's Vision?" on October 25, 2018;
- Hold Workshop 2: "Refining the Vision" on December 1, 2018;
- Hold two Open House events: "Preview of Development Guidelines" on February 20 and March 1, 2019;
- Offer "Virtual Workshop" and "Virtual Open House" with over 1,300 on-line participants;
- Staff a Division 6 informational booth at the Venice Farmers Market throughout the outreach process;
- Participate in various Venice community events; and
- Collect comments through Metro's website, comment cards, email, telephone and social media.

These meetings were publicized through the Division 6 email list, the distribution of 9,000 fliers within a 1/2-mile radius of the site, and through the elected officials' regular news updates, the Venice Neighborhood Council, the Chamber of Commerce, and Facebook.

Participation was strong throughout the outreach process. Between 40 and 50 community stakeholders participated in each of the workshops, and Metro received more than 1,300 responses to the on-line "virtual workshop". Over 90 participants attended the final open house including a pop-up open house held at the Venice Farmers Market. Comments were also taken online and accepted by the Metro team via email, social media, and regular mail for those who were not able to attend the meetings. A summary of the feedback received through the outreach process is included in Appendix A to the Guidelines.

Overview of the Guidelines

The Guidelines provide a set of development and planning principles that are applicable to the property and consistent with Metro's JD Policy and local land use regulations and reflect input received throughout the community visioning process. The Guidelines are not intended to provide

specific design- and construction-related criteria associated with a particular project. If approved, they will be attached to an RFIQ that staff will issue once the Guidelines are adopted by the Board.

The Guidelines are organized into five sections:

1. *Overview* - this section describes Metro's JD Process, the community outreach process to date, and a site description.
2. *Vision for Development* - this section describes the vision for the site and primary goals for reuse of the site.
3. *Regulatory and Policy Framework* - this section provides an overview of the key City of Los Angeles, Coastal Commission, and Metro regulatory documents. This section also outlines various policies to which developers must adhere.
4. *Program Guidelines* - this section establishes and memorializes the essential requirements for a successful partnership with Metro on the development of the site. Recommended uses include: mixed-income housing, community space, retail, public art, open space, walk streets and incorporation of transportation and mobility features.
5. *Development Guidelines* - drawing from the regulatory, policy and transit requirements as well as community feedback, this final section offers a series of guidelines to inform the urban design and environment of the development site, including both recommendations and requirements in the areas of community connectivity, open space, architecture and building design, sustainability and mobility and parking, etc.

The overarching goals that emerged from the visioning process and are captured in the Guidelines include:

- Recognizing that Venice is a coastal community and that development should be sensitive to the environmental complexities of a coastal location;
- Reflecting that Venice is a unique community that desires development that is supportive of existing residents and welcomes newcomers to the community;
- Leveraging culture in the development including community space and art that reflect the diversity and history of Venice; and
- Providing affordable housing and preserving Venice as a mixed-income neighborhood.

The Guidelines provide additional detailed requirements and recommendations for development of the Site. Selection of a future development partner through the RFIQ process will consider the extent to which the proposal responds to the goals and requirements articulated in the Guidelines.

EQUITY PLATFORM

Community outreach for the site has been robust, falling under the "Listen and Learn" pillar of the Equity Platform. Adopting the Guidelines and moving onto the developer solicitation phase will move toward implementation of the "Focus and Deliver" pillar.

DETERMINATION OF SAFETY IMPACT

The adoption of Guidelines will have no direct impact on safety. The eventual implementation of a JD project at the Division 6 site will offer opportunities to improve safety for transit riders through better pedestrian and bicycle facilities.

FINANCIAL IMPACT

Funding for joint development activities related to the Guidelines and any subsequent, related development activity, including the RFIQ process, is included in the FY 20 budget in Cost Center 2210 under Project 401048 (Division 6). Since development of the properties is a multi-year process, the project manager will be accountable for budgeting any costs associated with the joint development activities that will occur in future years. The source of funds is local General Fund - Other for joint development activities, which are eligible for bus/rail operating and capital expenses.

Impact to Budget

Approval of the Guidelines does not impact the budget.

IMPLEMENTATION OF STRATEGIC PLAN GOALS

The proposed Guidelines allow for a development that is in line with goal 3.2. (Catalyze Transit Oriented Communities) of the Strategic Plan. The Guidelines outline a development that would enhance the community and the lives of community members through mobility and access to opportunity. The Guidelines facilitate the development of additional market rate and affordable housing while preserving the character of Venice.

ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED

The Board could choose not to adopt the Guidelines. This is not recommended because a new development is desired by the community to replace the vacant site. Further, the Guidelines were developed with considerable stakeholder input and the Venice community is expecting movement on the joint development of the Division 6 site; adoption of the Guidelines is a precursor to moving forward with the JD process.

NEXT STEPS

After adoption of the Guidelines, Metro staff will issue an RFIQ for the development of the property. The RFIQ will include the adopted Guidelines. Staff anticipates bringing a recommendation for selection of a developer to the Board in early 2020.


ATTACHMENTS

Attachment A - Development Guidelines for Division 6 Joint Development

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