

**Board Report**

File #: 2016-0903, **File Type:** Project**Agenda Number:** 14.

**PLANNING AND PROGRAMMING COMMITTEE
FEBRUARY 15, 2017****SUBJECT: CHAVEZ & FICKETT JOINT DEVELOPMENT GUIDELINES****ACTION: ADOPT DEVELOPMENT GUIDELINES FOR THE CHAVEZ & FICKETT JOINT DEVELOPMENT****RECOMMENDATION**

ADOPT the Development Guidelines for the joint development of 1.56 acres of Metro-owned property at Cesar E. Chavez Avenue and Fickett Street.

ISSUE

In November 2009, the Metro Gold Line Eastside Extension opened and began providing eastside residents light rail transit service including four stations in Boyle Heights. As part of the construction of the extension, numerous parcels were acquired by Metro to build the stations and for construction staging. The properties at Cesar E. Chavez and Fickett (Site - Attachment A) were originally acquired for construction of the Red Line extension through Boyle Heights. Subsequently, the properties were used for staging of the Gold Line Eastside Extension. These properties have potential for transit oriented development and create an opportunity for civic engagement and visioning. Over the course of the past year, the Joint Development staff undertook a robust community outreach and engagement process with the objective of preparing Development Guidelines (Guidelines - Attachment B) for the Site. The end result of this effort is a set of Guidelines which reflect the vision and desires of the Boyle Heights residents and stakeholders. If adopted by the Board, the Guidelines will be part of a Request for Proposals (RFP) for joint development of the Site to be released in March 2017.

DISCUSSION**Site Description**

The Site is along a historic commercial corridor dating back to the 1870s. Formerly known as Brooklyn Avenue, Cesar E. Chavez Avenue is a thriving, eclectic, major commercial corridor and serves as an important shopping area for the residents of Boyle Heights. Additionally, the City of Los Angeles has identified Cesar E. Chavez Avenue as part of its Great Streets initiative, promoting streets that are livable, accessible, and engaging for all people. The Site consists of two development parcels, Parcel A and Parcel B (see Attachment A), which collectively comprise a total of 68,000 square feet of developable space.

Community Outreach

Metro began the outreach process in February 2016 together with a consultant team made up of Gwynne Pugh Urban Studio (urban design), Perkins and Will (architecture), and DakeLuna (outreach). The community outreach process consisted of various community workshops. There were two 2-hour community workshops, one on Saturday, April 16, 2016, and one on Wednesday, May 4, 2016, along with a culminating community workshop on Saturday, August 6, 2016. The first workshop was aimed at identifying community desires - their wish list - as well as their concerns. Metro presented four topics for discussion to participants in the initial outreach meetings to encourage discussion about the Development potential of the Site:

- What are the goals of this community?
- What is working within the community?
- What is not working within the community?

There were approximately 40 participants at both community workshops, and nearly 60 participants in the culminating workshop. Comments were also taken online and accepted by the team via email and regular mail for those who were not able to make it to the meetings. Metro staff and the consultant team then presented the initial findings and guidelines to the Boyle Heights Design Review Advisory Committee (DRAC). The DRAC made some minor amendments and supported moving forward with the Guidelines and the RFP. The Boyle Heights Neighborhood Council (BHNC) will review the Guidelines in February 2017.

Vision for Development

Through the community engagement process, a number of recurring themes evolved which became the foundation for the vision and the Guidelines themselves. These themes included:

- Provide access to healthy grocery options at reasonable prices;
- Provide flexible spaces for art education and community partnerships;
- Strive to keep local businesses in Boyle Heights;
- Support the community's diversity and provide and enhance amenities for local residents and families;
- Promote equitable housing models suitable for this community;
- Balance density with well-designed open spaces that promote equal access for children and seniors alike;
- Preserve and celebrate the eclectic, artistic character of the neighborhood through the incorporation of public art, opportunities for performances, and a vibrant street life;
- Provide adequate parking for the development's demand;
- Embrace the rich history of street vendor culture;
- Promote access to healthy food at affordable prices;
- Create usable and welcoming public open space.

Through the community engagement process, the Boyle Heights community vocalized their vision for the Site: a mixed-use development with a focus on a community-serving grocery store, which can include affordable housing as well as public open space, some flexible space for education and community activities, and an enhanced landscape and hardscape strategy that seamlessly connects

the project to its neighborhood. Metro has assessed the viability and fit of each of these program elements and given consideration to the Site's zoning regulations, community fit and vision, and the financial feasibility of the program.

Development Guidelines

The Guidelines for the Site (Attachment B) include an outline of specific uses as well as examples of densities and organization of uses. Specifically, the Guidelines recommend the following:

- **Community-Serving Commercial Use**

The community has expressed a strong desire for a grocery store to serve the local community. In particular they expressed a desire for fresh produce, affordability and provision of items that meet the needs of the local community. Metro assessed the fit of a grocery store at two project sites currently open to development: Mariachi Plaza and Chavez-Fickett. Through a preliminary financial feasibility study, a review of the current zoning code and an assessment of site access opportunities, Metro has determined that a grocery store is an appropriate program use for Chavez-Fickett on Parcel A. Approximately 20-25,000 square feet would be desirable but needs to be sized to allow for the attendant uses such as parking, loading and trash collection.

- **Affordable Housing**

At this Site, the guidelines encourage a minimum of 40 and up to 60 units of housing, with as many as are financially feasible in the low and very low restricted affordable categories. The units should have a range of 30-50% area median income. Ideally, varying sized units should be provided from studio units to three-bedroom units. In addition, the development is encouraged to accommodate a multi-generational community, from children through seniors. The affordable housing component could be part of a development with community-serving commercial uses as outlined above on Parcel A. Alternatively, the housing component can be independent from a development on Parcel A and can be located on Parcel B.

- **Community Uses**

A community room or 'flex' space of about 2,000 square feet would be desirable to serve community needs as well as the affordable housing development. An option is to include this space as part of an affordable housing project or independently on either Parcel A or B and made available to the public.

- **Park Uses**

Park and recreation uses are important to the community. The community has expressed a desire for a children's playground and/or, green space with shade. On Parcel B, the guidelines provide for an option to use the Site exclusively for open space/park/community gardens. In consultation with the City of Los Angeles Department of Recreation and Parks, an option may be available to create a public/private park in partnership with the City. The developer can enter into a joint use MOU with the Department of Recreation and Parks for the purpose of a shared maintenance agreement for the park. (Developers/proposers should research this option further).

DETERMINATION OF SAFETY IMPACT

Approval of the Development Guidelines will have no direct impact on safety. The eventual implementation of a joint development at the Site will offer opportunities to improve safety for transit

riders and the community at large through better pedestrian and bicycle connections.

FINANCIAL IMPACT

Funding for joint development activities related to the Guidelines and any subsequent development activity, including the RFP process, is included in the FY17 budget in Cost Center 2210 (Joint Development) under Project 401037 (Chavez Fickett). Since development of the properties is a multi-year process, the project manager will be responsible for budgeting any costs associated with joint development activities that will occur in future years. Disposition of the Site may provide a source for on-going transportation-supporting revenues to Metro.

Impact to Budget

The source of funds for joint development activities is local right-of-way lease revenues, which are eligible for bus/rail operating and capital expenses. Adoption of the Guidelines will not impact ongoing FY17 budgeted bus and rail operating and capital costs, or the Proposition A and C and TDA administration budget.

ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED

The Board may choose not to adopt the Guidelines. This is not recommended because the Guidelines were developed with considerable stakeholder and community input and from the DRAC and BHNC. Pursuant to the Metro Joint Development Policy, approval of the Guidelines is necessary in order to move forward with the joint development process and the release of an RFP.

NEXT STEPS

If the Guidelines are approved by the Board, staff will issue an RFP for joint development of the Chavez Fickett Site. The RFP could be released in March 2017. If authorized to move forward, staff anticipates bringing recommendations for selection of a developer to the Board late summer 2017.

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment A - Site Map

Attachment B - Cesar E. Chavez and Fickett Avenue - Development Guidelines

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