

*City of Arts & Innovation*

# City Council Memorandum

**TO: HONORABLE MAYOR AND CITY COUNCIL**      **DATE: FEBRUARY 1, 2022**  
**FROM: COMMUNITY & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT**      **WARDS: 1, 2**  
**DEPARTMENT**

**SUBJECT: REVIEW AND APPROVAL OF THE MASTER PLAN FOR A PORTION OF THE INNOVATION DISTRICT – TRIANGLE DISTRICT BOUNDED BY STATE ROUTE 91, INTERSTATE 215/STATE ROUTE 60, AND THIRD STREET**

## **ISSUE:**

Review and approve the proposed Master Plan for a portion of the Innovation District – Triangle District bounded by State Route (SR) 91, Interstate (I) 215/SR-60, and Third Street.

## **RECOMMENDATION:**

That the City Council review and approve the proposed Master Plan for a portion of the Innovation District – Triangle District bounded by SR- 91, I-215/SR-60, and Third Street (Attachment 1).

## **COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION:**

On September 23, 2021, the Economic Development, Placemaking and Branding/Marketing Committee reviewed and recommended that the City Council approve the proposed Master Plan for a portion of the Innovation District – Triangle District bounded by SR-91, I-215/SR-60 and Third Street.

## **BACKGROUND:**

On December 19, 2017, the City Council unanimously approved the concept of creating innovation districts across the City as a way to attract new investment, retain local talent, and create jobs. The City's first Innovation District encompasses Downtown and the geographic area between Downtown and the University of California Riverside (UCR), including portions of the Eastside and University Avenue neighborhoods.

To facilitate the implementation of the first Innovation District, a visioning charrette was held between August – October 2019. Attendees included the Mayor and City Councilmembers from Wards 1 & 2; representatives from UCR, Riverside Community College District, the Greater Riverside Chambers of Commerce; and City staff from the Community & Economic Development Department, Mayor's Office, and the City Manager's Office. The outcome of the charrette is summarized in Attachment 2.

On February 25, 2020, the City Council received and filed an update on the Innovation District Visioning Charrette, which included, among other things, the creation of a "freestyle" zone for the

area generally bounded by the 91 Freeway, 60 Freeway/215 Freeway, and Third Street (Triangle District).

On June 17, 2021, the Economic Development, Placemaking and Branding/Marketing Committee received and filed an update from staff on the proposed Master Plan for the Innovation District and directed staff to return to the Committee with a final master plan document for further review and potential recommendation to City Council.

On September 23, 2021, the Economic Development, Placemaking and Branding/Marketing Committee reviewed and recommended that the City Council approve the proposed Master Plan for the Innovation District – Triangle District.

On October 5, 2021, as part of the Phase 1 General Plan Update, City Council approved text and map amendments to Title 19 (Zoning) of the Riverside Municipal Code to facilitate implementation of the Innovation District – Triangle District vision.

On December 14, 2021, at the request of Councilmember Edwards, this topic was pulled from the City Council agenda to be continued to a future date.

## **DISCUSSION:**

The City is committed to providing the development community with a predictable and streamlined permitting process that allows for creativity in design and flexibility in land uses. To translate the Visioning Charette document into implementation regulations for the Innovation District – Triangle District, the City contracted with AVR Studio of San Diego led by Howard Blackson (AVR) to develop a Land Use Regulation Framework.

The overall concept for the Innovation District – Triangle District is to transform this area of the City. The Concept promotes a walkable, mixed-use area where people can live and work. By creating north-south connections and ensuring a network of open spaces, different land uses can be accommodated to redevelop the area.

Different emphasis areas have been identified in the Innovation District – Triangle District and include: East Side Transition, Residential Emphasis, Employment Emphasis, Industrial Emphasis, and Civic Spaces. The East Side Transition Area is intended to protect the East Side Neighborhood by creating opportunities for mid to low-rise buildings that include residential, and office uses. The Residential Emphasis Area allows for higher-density residential and mixed-use buildings that could include commercial and/or light industrial uses. Warehouse and distribution centers are not envisioned in this area. The Employment Emphasis Area promotes office, light industrial and employment centers within the Triangle to create a place where people can live and work; warehouse and distribution centers are not envisioned in this area. The Industrial Emphasis Area promotes a variety of more intensive industrial, office and commercial uses; this area would accommodate warehouse and distribution centers. The Civic Space areas provide locations for public squares, plazas, and parks.

The Innovation District – Triangle District was recognized as a location that could help the City meet its 6<sup>th</sup> Cycle Regional Housing Needs Assessment (RHNA) obligations. Working with the Planning Division, AVR prepared both a Master Plan and the associated Title 19 changes as part of the Phase 1 General Plan Update. The Title 19 changes adopted as part of the Housing Element Rezoning Program created an overlay zone for the Innovation District – Triangle District. While the Title 19 changes have been adopted by the City Council, and the draft Master Plan included as an attachment to those changes, the Master Plan approval by City Council is required.

There are several parallel economic initiatives in the City of Riverside that will help to promote the Innovation District – Triangle District transformation. First, the Green Team is a collaborative effort (County, City, UCR and Chamber) that is working to develop marketing and an attraction plan based on the recently opened California Air Resources Board facility. Second, the Opportunities to Advance Sustainability, Innovation, and Social Inclusion, or OASIS, is a proposed initiative that will leverage UCR’s expertise in greenhouse gas emissions, air quality, clean energy, intelligent transportation, agriculture, natural resources management, community health and health disparity, and many other areas of scholarly work. OASIS will also house shared facilities that convene research talents and incubator space for technology transfer and startup activities. Lastly, the City’s upcoming Economic Opportunities & Prosperity Plan will, amongst other things, identify actions to attract more clean and green technology businesses to the Innovation District.

Implementation of the Innovation District requires several actions, including the creation of an Advisory Board to establish a Governance Structure. This Board should include neighborhood groups, businesses, property owners, and other stakeholders. The Advisory Board should also develop a workplan that includes ways to govern the Innovation District, determine how best to manage the Innovation District, consider public-private partnerships for implementation, and prepare recommendations on what the overall Governance Structure would include. In addition, the Advisory Board should develop a work plan that could include studying the potential for a tax-increment financing mechanism and the structure for regulating the Innovation District.

### **STRATEGIC PLAN ALIGNMENT:**

This item contributes to **Strategic Priority 3 – Economic Opportunity** and **Goal 3.3 – Cultivate** a business climate that welcomes innovation, entrepreneurship, and investment.

This item aligns with each of the five Cross-Cutting Threads as follows:

1. **Community Trust** – The proposed Innovation District – Triangle District Master Plan serves the public interest, benefits the City’s diverse populations, and promotes clean businesses in the City, illustrating that the City is committed to the future health of residents and a diverse economy.
2. **Equity** – The proposed Innovation District – Triangle District Master Plan provides equitable opportunities within the District and surrounding areas to share the benefits of future economic growth. Input from residents and businesses at several public workshops and hearings provided opportunities to shape the strategy for clean businesses.
3. **Fiscal Responsibility** – There is no fiscal impact associated with approving the proposed Innovation District – Triangle District Master Plan, which sets out the vision that will benefit all residents in the City.
4. **Innovation** – The proposed Innovation District – Triangle District Master Plan demonstrates that Riverside is providing opportunities for creative design and uses to meet the City’s changing needs while fostering collaborative partnerships and adaptive processes.
5. **Sustainability & Resiliency** – The proposed Innovation District – Triangle District Master Plan demonstrates that Riverside is committed to meeting the needs of the present without compromising the needs of the future by promoting clean industries.

### **FISCAL IMPACT:**

There is no fiscal impact associated with the recommendations included in this report.

Prepared by: David Welch, Community & Economic Development Director  
Certified as to

availability of funds: Edward Enriquez, Chief Financial Officer/Treasurer

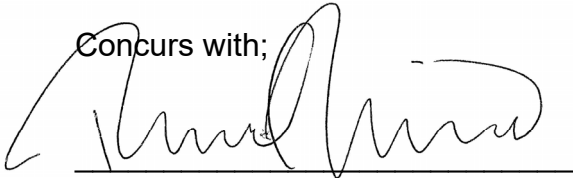
Approved by: Rafael Guzman, Assistant City Manager

Approved as to form: Phaedra A. Norton, City Attorney

Attachments:

1. Innovation District – Triangle District Master Plan
2. Innovation District Vision
3. Presentation

Concurs with;

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Ronaldo Fierro', written over a horizontal line.

Ronaldo Fierro, Chair

Economic Development, Placemaking, and Branding/Marketing Committee