



# RIVERSIDE PUBLIC UTILITIES

## Board Memorandum

**BOARD OF PUBLIC UTILITIES**

**DATE:** OCTOBER 2, 2015

**ITEM NO:** 9

File ID – 15-3130 – D

**SUBJECT:** UPDATE ON THE LONG RANGE PLANNING EFFORTS FOR THE NORTHSIDE NEIGHBORHOOD INCLUDING RIVERSIDE PUBLIC UTILITIES REAL PROPERTY ASSETS

**ISSUE:**

The issues for Board of Public Utilities consideration are to: 1) receive an update on the public outreach effort to be conducted by the City staff to help develop the scope of work for the Northside Neighborhood, which includes Riverside Public Utilities real property; and 2) discuss a coordinated inter-jurisdictional effort to develop a specific plan for the Pellissier Ranch property.

**RECOMMENDATIONS:**

That the Board of Public Utilities:

1. Receive this update and provide comment and direction on City staff led public outreach strategies for obtaining broad community input on parameters for developing the scope of a specific plan for the Northside Neighborhood; and
2. Consider and provide input on a coordinated effort to develop an inter-jurisdictional specific plan for the Pellissier Ranch property within the City of Colton.

**BACKGROUND:**

In December 2013 the Community and Economic Development Department initiated a nationwide search for a consultant team that would prepare a citywide Smart Code Specific Plan and a related Program Environmental Impact Report (PEIR), and concurrently create a Northside Neighborhood Vision Plan. The consultant was also to provide master planning services for the 124-Acre former Riverside Golf Club and the 55-Acre Ab Brown Sports Complex – both properties lie within the Northside Neighborhood.

Due to community concerns, it was decided to focus on developing a Northside Neighborhood vision and specific plan before undertaking a citywide effort. City staff subsequently proposed an independent effort to establish a distinctly separate “Northside Neighborhood Pledge” and requested that the Board of Public Utilities (Board) on September 19, 2014, authorize partial funding for the effort and initiate a contract with a consultant team. The Board continued the neighborhood visioning effort until after the Board considered and adopted a real property management policy. Subsequent to the adoption of the real property management policy, City staff received direction to reconsider the project scope and seek further guidance from the City Council.

On April 28, 2015, city staff provided the City Council a summary of the City-owned properties within the Northside Neighborhood, including the former Riverside Golf Course and Ab Brown Sports Complex. In the report (Attachment 1), staff outlined the ownership and transfer history, legal obligations of the City of Riverside, Riverside Public Utilities and the Successor Agency, existing uses and active recreation leases, as well as adopted zoning requirements and General Plan 2025 policies related to the Northside

Neighborhood. During deliberations, the City Council directed staff to pursue a specific plan for the Northside Neighborhood, including a preliminary effort to engage the public prior to the release of a Request for Qualifications (RFQ) or Request for Proposals (RFP) from qualified consultants.

Consistent with the City Council's direction, City staff is initiating the public engagement process by meeting with established organizations, such as the Northside Improvement Association, the Springbrook Heritage Alliance and the Spanish Town Heritage Foundation, in addition to business organizations and other stakeholders. The intent of these meetings is to identify the community driven issues that need to be incorporated into a specific plan RFQ/RFP. Community and stakeholder support throughout the development of a specific plan will be of utmost importance.

The Northside Neighborhood Specific Plan will be based on a combination of community visioning exercises, an evaluation of site-specific strengths and weaknesses and limited technical analyses. The intended outcome is a regulatory document that encourages the economic development of vacant and underutilized properties in a manner that reflects a community-based vision. This document will also be instrumental in guiding any future use or sale of City of Riverside owned properties within the Specific Plan area, including properties deemed surplus by Riverside Public Utilities (RPU) or the City of Riverside.

Pursuant to state law, RPU has a legal obligation as a public utility to ensure ratepayer investments, including those of real property, are preserved. For properties that RPU and the Board determine to be excess, this obligation includes ensuring that the potential or future sale value is based on the highest and best use of the property.

A specific plan for the Northside Neighborhood will establish a clear community vision and land use policy for the entire neighborhood. The development of a specific plan will provide certainties about the future development of the neighborhood for the community, developers and small business operators. Establishing clear land use policies and development standards for the City-owned properties will also determine a "highest and best use" for the properties and, in turn, solidify property value.

Likewise, establishing a clear vision and land use policy for other RPU-owned property outside the City of Riverside will provide clear direction on the highest and best use, and preserves ratepayer investments. Therefore, staff is recommending a coordinated effort with the City of Colton to develop an inter-jurisdictional specific plan program for the Pellissier Ranch Property; Pellissier Ranch is a 227-acre vacant property owned by RPU that is located just north of the City's limits in the City of Colton. Although the property is outside the City of Riverside's jurisdiction, the City has a vested interest in the future use of the property and the potential impacts that use could have on properties within the Northside Neighborhood.

The release of an RFQ/RFP seeking a qualified consultant for the specific planning effort will occur before the end of 2015. Although an accurate budget cannot be determined prior to receiving consultant submittal, it is anticipated that a comprehensive development of the specific plans and accompanying environmental and technical documents will cost approximately \$1 to \$2 million, depending on the area covered and complexity of issues. The source of funds for the specific plan is currently unknown, but will be evaluated after the RFQ/RFP is prepared and consultant proposals are received.

The development of a specific plan for the Northside Neighborhood is anticipated to occur over an 18-month period, with project commencement in early 2016. The Planning Division of the Community and Economic Development Department will administer the contract with the selected consultant through the completion of the project, in close coordination with RPU and other Stakeholders. As a major property owner within the proposed Northside Specific Plan boundaries, RPU and the Board are encouraged to appoint representatives to remain engaged in the specific plan process, and actively participate in the pending community meetings.

**FISCAL IMPACT:**

There is no fiscal impact as a result of this report and the preparation of the RFQ/RFP. The fiscal impact of a future contract will be determined through a RFQ/RFP process, and the funding sources will be identified in advance of the release of the requests.

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Attachments: City Council Report – April 28, 2015