

Fairfield budgets funds for economic development

With the recent passage of the City's 2007-2009 budget and financial plan (based on a fiscal year July 1 – June 30), the next two years will see quite a lot of economic development related activity and some major capital projects. Here are some of the activities to watch for:

City staff has launched an effort to revitalize the entire Texas Street [Interstate] 80-to-80 Corridor. Lively mixes of commercial and residential uses are envisioned for the future of West Texas, Texas, and North Texas.

The City budget includes \$9 million in funding to assist with the transformation by assembling parcels for future mixed use and housing development along and adjacent to Corridor as opportunities arise in key locations. Downtown property acquisition will focus on 701 Texas Street, the former County Hall of Records building requiring environmental remediation.

The next Community Meeting to discuss the Texas Street corridor is scheduled for Thursday July 19, 2007. Call 707 428-7461 for information on how your vision for transforming Texas Street can help make a difference.

A second major focus is the PACE Area (Pennsylvania, Alaska, Cunningham, Eton Streets). Over the past few years, the City acquired and demolished several older four-plexes in the area near Air Base Parkway. This has created a five-acre development site for new, higher quality housing.

The City also acquired a former gas station at the southeast corner of Pennsylvania and Tabor Ave and opened a Temporary Operating Center for the Police Department and local neighborhood-serving social services. The City is now planning to completely redevelop both of these properties, while continuing its programs to rehabilitate other residential and commercial properties and related infrastructure improvements throughout the City's redevelopment project areas.

Although the slower pace of home-building will reduce development-related fees and taxes that pay for capital projects, major capital improvements allocated within the budget will certainly assist in boosting economic development. For example, the City has nearly completed the design for a \$3.4 million planned street reconstruction, widening and utility

undergrounding project for Auto Mall Parkway (at the I-80/ West Texas exit). The project should be bid in the fall with construction by mid-2008. The City's former fire station at Auto Mall and Serrano Drive has been sold to an auto dealer and the existing building should be demolished in the coming months.

The City's budget also contains \$24.1 million for the I-80/North Texas/Manuel Campos Parkway Interchange project. This long-planned project will improve access to Interstate 80 for residents of northeastern Fairfield as well as easing congestion at the interchange.

In Cordelia, the North Connector project, which will provide an alternative route between Cordelia and central Fairfield, will be partly funded by the Garaventa development, using \$21 million during 2007-2009 to help construct the planned extension of Business Center Drive. This project will pave the way for new retail, office and housing development.

The budget also includes over \$2.1 million for new and modified traffic signals. Watch for a new signal to be installed near Armijo High School at Texas and Washington Streets. This project was partly funded by a State grant which will also include lighting improvements on side streets downtown as well as improved crosswalks.

The City's economic development marketing program (Fairfield4Business.com), which started last year, is in full swing and funding remains in the budget for it to continue. The program employs a public relations firm to assist in business recruitment / marketing efforts and has achieved success gaining media attention on a national and regional basis.

Overall, the 2007-2009 budget provides the financial resources for the City to pursue economic development (and other) goals over the next two years. Your Economic Notes reporters will be active providing you updates on various projects during that time.

***Economic Notes** is an update from Fairfield City Hall written by Brian Miller and Karl Dumas of the Fairfield Community Development Department. They can be contacted at 428-7461 or e-mail at kdu-mas@ci.fairfield.ca.us or bkmiller@ci.fairfield.ca.us.*