



Building A Better Long Beach

December 15, 2008

REDEVELOPMENT AGENCY BOARD MEMBERS

City of Long Beach
California

RECOMMENDATION:

Amend language in the Redevelopment Agency's Commercial Screening Program for use in the Central, Downtown, North Long Beach and West Long Beach Industrial Redevelopment Project Areas. (Districts 1, 2, 3, 6, 7, 8, 9)

DISCUSSION

The Commercial Screening Program (CSP) (Exhibit A) was adopted on February 4, 2008 by the Redevelopment Agency (Agency) to reduce blight within the Central, Downtown, North Long Beach and West Long Beach Industrial Redevelopment Project Areas. The goal of the CSP is to improve the appearance of commercial and industrial properties by concealing equipment and service areas that are visible from the street. Since the program's adoption, Agency staff has completed several screening projects.

The impact of new screening on adjacent properties and along a commercial corridor is tremendous, and additional private investment has occurred when a screening project is implemented. However, because of the current downturn in the economy, participation in the CSP has tapered off significantly and several projects have been unable to proceed.

In an effort to assist property owners and business tenants affected by the significant downturn in the economy and continue to keep the CSP attractive to our business community, staff recommends that the CSP be modified as follows: increase the maximum Agency funding from \$15,000 to \$20,000 per project, and revise the language to ensure site access is granted to contractors. This will allow the Agency and participant a greater range of financial participation. All other aspects of the CSP will remain as currently structured.

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SUGGESTED ACTION:

Adopt recommendation.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'C. Beck', with a horizontal line extending to the right.

CRAIG BECK
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

CB:AJB:DAC:sb

Attachment: Exhibit A – Commercial Screening Program Summary

COMMERCIAL SCREENING PROGRAM

SUMMARY

CITY OF LONG BEACH
REDEVELOPMENT AGENCY



Building A Better Long Beach

333 West Ocean Boulevard, 3rd Floor
Long Beach, CA 90802
(562) 570-6615

Adopted February 4, 2008
Amended December 15, 2008

COMMERCIAL SCREENING PROGRAM SUMMARY

(February 4, 2008; Amended December 15, 2008)

PROGRAM OVERVIEW

The Redevelopment Agency of the City of Long Beach (Agency) has established the Commercial Screening Program (CSP) to assist in the addition or upgrade of screening of commercial and industrial properties within the Redevelopment Project Areas. This will be achieved through matching grants to property owners or tenants of approved sites, from a single building to commercial centers or industrial parks. Program participants may invest matching funds up to 25% of project costs.

City staff in the Development Services Department's Redevelopment Agency will administer the CSP. The City may provide design and construction services necessary for the installation of new architectural, landscape, and/or fence screening. Funding will be provided by the Redevelopment Agency and will be subject to annual funding availability within the respective Project Area. The Redevelopment Agency share of matching funds per application will be budgeted at \$20,000 or \$25 per linear foot of screening,

PROGRAM PURPOSE

The purpose of the CSP is to enhance the appearance of commercial and industrial building sites and to buffer or screen land uses and their service areas, equipment and appurtenances from public view through the installation of attractive architectural and other screening (i.e., landscaping or fencing). Screening means a structure erected or vegetation planted to protect, divide or conceal material and operations conducted behind it. This effort is designed to upgrade and strengthen commercial and industrial areas, to increase the likelihood of new business development within the immediate area and/or to provide a stimulus for shoppers to increase utilization of the area. Program funds may be used for exterior fencing, landscaping and other screening materials, as well as installation.

PROGRAM SCOPE

The CSP shall focus on screening materials that are or will be visible from the street. Treatments for open areas between buildings (e.g. vacant lots, alleys) could be included if they are necessary for the overall success of the project. The goal is to improve the overall appearance and safety of the property and area. The CSP is not intended to independently install major landscaping except as it pertains to screening areas visible from the street.

No residential properties shall be eligible for funding unless clearly located on a qualifying commercial site and clearly visible from a commercial street, or backing up to a major commercial corridor. Generally, projects will only be considered for funding one time per building site.

PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS

The CSP is available to targeted properties located within Redevelopment Project Areas. If requested by the program participant, City staff will work with program participants to select appropriate screening materials. In certain instances, the City may engage an architect to prepare architectural and landscaping plans. During the design phase of the CSP, building owners and/or tenants may be required to review and approve the selected materials and/or the designs. During the construction phase of the CSP, the building owners and/or tenants will be required to grant access to a contractor hired by the City to enter their premises to install the screening.

The property owner will also be required to record maintenance covenants against the property binding the owner and any future owners and tenants to maintain any improvements for a period of five years. The agreement will require that screening be maintained and landscaping watered on a regular basis. Owners and tenants of the building, selected block, or commercial center will be required to comply with all applicable federal, state and local governmental codes and regulations.

SELECTION PROCESS FOR TARGETED PROPERTIES

Selection criteria for target properties will be based on several factors including, but not limited to: properties must be within close proximity of other Agency activity or new private development; be located on major commercial and/or industrial corridors; and have inadequate screening of service areas, equipment and other appurtenances from the street. Sites to be targeted may be nominated by any City related staff, Board or Project Area committee. Upon identifying properties that warrant screening upgrade assistance; Agency staff will initiate contact with the property owner(s) to assess their interest in participating in the CSP.

The property owner or tenant may invest matching funds up to 25% of project costs. At the sole discretion of the City, the City may solicit bids, select a contractor to do the work, and manage the project on behalf of the owner/tenant. The funds allocated for the project will be determined based upon the bids received. Improvement funds will be released through an escrow account subject to Agency approval. Alternatively, Agency funding for this program may be provided as a rebate to the owner/tenant after work is completed to the satisfaction of the Agency.