



Building A Better Long Beach

February 4, 2008

REDEVELOPMENT AGENCY BOARD MEMBERS

City of Long Beach
California

RECOMMENDATION:

Approve and adopt the Commercial Screening Program for use in the West, Downtown, Central and North Redevelopment Project Areas. (All Project Areas – Citywide)

DISCUSSION

The purpose of the Commercial Screening Program (CSP) (Exhibit A – Commercial Screening Program Description) is to reduce blight within the City of Long Beach Redevelopment Project Areas by improving the appearance of commercial and industrial properties. This will be accomplished by concealing equipment and service areas that are visible from the street through the installation of attractive architectural screening, landscaping or fencing.

Target properties must be located on major commercial and/or industrial corridors, within close proximity of other Redevelopment Agency (Agency) activity or new private development, and have inadequate screening of service areas and equipment that are visible from the street. Sites to be targeted may be nominated by City Council offices, members of the Agency Board, a Redevelopment Project Area Committee or City staff.

Architectural screening will consist of fencing composed of concrete block, masonry, metal (tubular or wrought iron) or similar materials. Landscape screening includes the use of foliage and fabric fencing. Drought-tolerant vegetation and anti-graffiti materials will be used to the maximum extent possible. Rehabilitation of existing architectural or landscaped screening may be eligible for assistance.

Funding for CSP services will be provided by the Agency and the property owner or tenant. The Agency share of matching funds per individual application will be limited to \$15,000 or \$25 per linear foot of screening, depending on the type of screening installed. The property owner or tenant must be willing to provide at least 25% matching funds.

REDEVELOPMENT AGENCY BOARD MEMBERS

February 4, 2008

Page 2

Applications from multiple owners/tenants within a given block/area that desire to collectively improve their properties will be given a percentage increase of the maximum Agency grant amount (as provided in Exhibit A). In certain circumstances, the Executive Director can approve a project that exceeds the established limits.

The CSP will also require that a Maintenance Covenant be recorded against the title, binding the property owner and any future owners and tenants to maintain any improvements for a period of five (5) years. Such covenants will require that the screening be kept in good condition and the landscaping be watered and pruned on a regular basis.

Agency staff will administer the CSP subject to annual funding availability within the respective project area. Funds will be released through an escrow account subject to Agency staff 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.

SUGGESTED ACTION:

Adopt recommendation.

Respectfully submitted,



CRAIG BECK
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

CB:LAM:dac

Attachment: Exhibit A – Commercial Screening Program Description



Building A Better Long Beach

Commercial Screening Program

City of Long Beach
Redevelopment Agency

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

February 4, 2008

COMMERCIAL SCREENING PROGRAM

(February 4, 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 will be required to contribute at least 25% matching funds towards total project costs. City staff in the Community Development 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 limited to no more than \$15,000 or \$25 per linear foot of screening, depending on the type of screening installed. (See "General Provisions/Reimbursement Amounts" below.)

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 may be required to execute a Right of Entry form to allow 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 City staff, a Redevelopment Project Area Committee (PAC - a citizen advisory group), City Council offices or members of the Agency Board. 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 must be willing to provide at least 25% matching funds. 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.

MAINTENANCE REQUIREMENTS

All properties receiving financial assistance through the CSP will require property maintenance covenants to be recorded against title to the land and property. Such maintenance requirements will require that the screening be maintained and landscaping watered and maintained on a regular basis.

GENERAL PROVISIONS

A. Participant Eligibility Requirements

Eligibility for assistance under the CSP will be based upon the following eligibility requirements:

1. The participant must be the legal owner of eligible commercial/industrial property or a business tenant with a current Long Beach business license.
2. The leaseholder of the commercial/industrial property for which improvement assistance is requested must obtain written permission from the owner(s) of the structure prior to application for assistance under this program.
3. The participant (whether owner or leaseholder of the commercial property) must show adequate documentation to verify property ownership.
4. At least 25% matching funds provided by the property owner or tenant.

B. Property Eligibility Requirements

In order to be eligible for assistance under the CSP, properties must comply with the following property eligibility requirements:

1. The property for which assistance is requested must be zoned and used for commercial or industrial purposes.
2. The property for which assistance is requested must need exterior fencing and/or screening to conform to the property improvement standards for this program as outlined below.
3. The participant must permit property inspections by City of Long Beach staff to determine the scope of work and to approve work items.

C. Eligible Improvements

A grant provided under this program may be used to cover the costs to install or repair exterior screening:

1. New architectural screening, including fencing constructed of concrete block, masonry, metal fencing (tubular or wrought iron) or similar materials. Fences constructed of wood or chain link with visible razor/barbed wire are not eligible for funding. Small square vinyl coated chain link fencing or chain link covered with fabric is eligible.
2. New landscaped screening in conjunction with the installation of new fencing.
3. New landscaped screening to cover/compliment existing fencing, including chain link fencing, provided the existing fencing is in good repair.

4. Rehabilitation of existing architectural or landscaped screening may also be eligible, but such eligibility shall be at the Agency's sole discretion.
5. Installation of landscaped berms may be eligible, provided their primary purpose is that of an alternative screening devise.

D. Reimbursement Amounts

The Redevelopment Agency share of matching funds will be limited to certain maximums depending on the type of fencing and additional screening. Those maximums are as follows:

<u>Type of Improvement</u>	<u>Maximum per Linear Foot</u>	<u>Overall \$\$ Maximum</u>
Architectural Screening <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Masonry or concrete block• Iron (Wrought Iron or Tubular Steel)	\$25 per linear foot	\$15,000
Landscape Screening <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Landscaping• Vinyl coated small chain link with fabric covering	\$15 per linear foot	\$9,000

All cost budgets for projects considered by the Agency for assistance must include a 15% budget contingency in requests for Agency assistance. In no event shall consideration of the budget contingency increase the total amount of assistance provided above the limitation amounts shown above.

Participation in the program from multiple businesses within any given block/area is encouraged. In order to provide incentives, the Agency will increase its maximum grant amount by a percentage factor ("funding bonus"), which factor is dependent on the number of properties participating on a given block. The funding bonuses available to multiple participants include:

- 3 - 5 properties concurrently in same block - 5% funding bonus
- 6 - 8 properties concurrently in same block - 10 % funding bonus
- 9 or more properties concurrently in same block - 15 % funding bonus

E. Program Exclusions

A grant provided under this program may not be used to cover the cost of the following:

1. Landscaping other than vegetation installed for buffer or screening purposes
2. Façade improvements (see CFIP program for façade assistance)

3. Non-conforming uses
4. Uses inconsistent with any applicable strategic guides or design guidelines
5. Correction of City Codes or Regulations unrelated to screening

F. Property Improvement Standards

The property improvement standards for this program shall consist of:

1. The City of Long Beach Building Codes
2. The City of Long Beach Zoning Ordinance and any applicable Agency architectural design guidelines
3. The City of Long Beach Commercial and Industrial Design Standards (as applicable)
4. Drought-tolerant vegetation should be used to the maximum extent possible
5. Anti-graffiti materials must be used for exposed surfaces

G. Inspection Requirements

1. An initial inspection by City staff will be conducted for any property for which screening assistance is proposed under this program. The purpose of this property inspection is to ascertain the amount of improvement needed and/or to determine the eligibility of the improvements desired by the participant.
2. The improvement work assisted under this program will be inspected by the Long Beach Planning and Building Department, if such work requires a building permit. Improvements not requiring building permits will be inspected solely by program staff members. To accomplish this, program staff shall make:
 - Progress inspections necessary to ensure that the improvement work is being performed in accordance with the plans and specifications and construction contract; and
 - A final inspection to ensure improvements have been completed in accordance with the construction contract and City codes.

H. Terms and Conditions for Grants

The following terms and conditions apply to all improvement grants under this program:

1. Grants may only be used to pay for the costs of labor, materials and services necessary to carry out the improvement work for which the grant is approved; and,

2. All improvement work must be performed by a qualified, licensed contractor approved by the Agency.

I. Contracting for Improvement Work

1. Grants may only be used to pay for the cost of materials and services necessary to carry out the rehabilitation work for which the grant is approved.
2. Good faith efforts must be undertaken to solicit at least three bids for construction work. Estimates will be examined by City staff for completeness and cost reasonableness.
3. All work under this program shall be undertaken only after execution of a written agreement between the property owner and the Agency.
4. All of the terms, conditions and contracting requirements must be completed prior to the issuance of the grant. This includes the matching contribution and, if applicable, the contractor's federal or state reporting requirements.
5. Agency and City staff must approve architects and architectural plans prior to commencement of work.

J. Architectural Assistance

Architectural services may be provided to program participants for conceptual designs and construction drawings for screening materials. These services will be performed by a licensed architect retained by the City and will be available at no charge to participants.

K. Settlement of Disputes by Arbitration

Any disputes that arise between the participant and the Agency with respect to the construction of screening improvements shall be settled by arbitration. Any such arbitration shall be conducted by an arbitrator selected by mutual agreement of both the participant and the Agency and shall be consistent with the Commercial Arbitration Rules of the American Arbitration Association. The participant and the Agency shall use their best efforts to reach agreement on the matters in dispute prior to seeking resolution through arbitration.

L. Program Assistance

For more information or program assistance, please contact Don Caldwell, Development Project Manager, at (562) 570-6087.

Adopted _____