

**CITY OF BELMONT
CITY COUNCIL AND BELMONT FIRE
PROTECTION DISTRICT BOARD OF
DIRECTORS**



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CITY COUNCIL SPECIAL MEETING AGENDA

Tuesday, October 25, 2022

6:15 PM

City Council Chambers

City Hall, One Twin Pines Lane, Belmont, California

TELECONFERENCE PARTICIPANTS

Some Members may Participate Virtually

Being held under Gov. Code 54953(e)

The meeting will be broadcast live to Belmont residents on Comcast Cable Channel 27, streamed live via the City's website at www.Belmont.gov. The public may also attend the meeting in the City Council Chambers and address the council from the chambers. Social distancing must be practiced, and seating will be limited.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

To maximize time for live public comment, we encourage members of the public to provide comments by joining the City Council meeting via Zoom : For web, visit <https://belmont-gov.zoom.us/> select "Join" and enter Meeting ID: 95745673035. Use the Raise Hand feature to request to speak. You may rename your profile if you wish to remain anonymous.

For dial- in comments, call *67 1-(669) 900-6833 (your phone number will appear on the live broadcast if *67 is not dialed prior to the phone number), enter Meeting ID: 95745673035, and press *9 to request to speak. All public comments are subject to a 3-minute time limit unless otherwise determined by the Mayor.

If you wish to submit written public comment, you may send an email to cclerk@belmont.gov before the council considers the item. Please indicate the agenda item topic or agenda item number you wish to comment on in your email's subject line. Any public comment regarding agenda items that are received from the publication of the agenda through the meeting date will be made part of the meeting record, but will not be read during the Council meeting.

1. ITEMS OF BUSINESS

Persons wishing to orally address the Council on the items of business listed below will be given an opportunity to do so before or during the Councils consideration of the item.

2. STUDY SESSION

A. Review of Community Benefit Program Options

Recommendation: Receive staff presentation on community benefit program policy options and provide direction to staff for implementation.

Attachment(s):

[Community Benefits Study Session - Staff Report](#)

3. ADJOURNMENT

If you need assistance to participate in this meeting, please contact the City Clerk at (650) 595-7413.

Notification in advance of the meeting will enable the City to make reasonable arrangements to ensure accessibility to this meeting. Meeting information can also be accessed via the internet at: www.belmont.gov. All staff reports will be posted to the web in advance of the meeting, and any writings or documents provided to a majority of the City Council/District Board or Commission regarding any item on this agenda will be made available for public inspection in the City Clerk's Office, One Twin Pines Lane, during normal business hours and at the Council Chambers at City Hall, Second Floor, during the meeting.



STAFF REPORT

Meeting Date: October 25, 2022
Agency: City of Belmont
Staff Contact: Jennifer Rose, Housing and Economic Development Manager, jrose@belmont.gov
Agenda Title: Review of Community Benefit Program Options
Agenda Action: Discussion & Direction

Recommendation

Receive staff presentation on community benefit program policy options and provide direction to staff for implementation.

Strategic Focus Area

Economic Development and Housing

Background

The Belmont Economic Development Implementation Plan, adopted in 2019, includes recommended actions and strategies designed to help design and implement a local economic development program. One of the recommended actions is development of a community benefits policy that would leverage private development activity to support implementation of community identified priorities that enhance quality of life and encourage local economic development.

The Belmont Economic Development Task Force made a presentation to the Belmont City Council in January 2022 that included a recommendation to proceed with development of a City-wide community benefits program. The presentation also included Task Force feedback on an initial list of potential Belmont community benefits.

The City Council concurred with the Task Force recommendations and directed staff to proceed with developing a program. The Council also requested that staff solicit community stakeholder input when identifying priorities. Outreach activity has included the following:

- City staff conducted an internal stakeholder survey of City department leaders and other management staff to refine the list of potential benefits.
- In early October 2022, the City launched a public community benefits survey to solicit external stakeholder feedback on a list of potential community benefits.
- The survey will remain open through the end of October and can be found at:
<http://www.belmont.gov/departments/administrative-services/economic-development/community-benefit-priorities-survey-public>

The purpose of this study session is to provide a program update to City Council, and to receive feedback on key policy options.



Analysis

Community Benefits Program Overview

What is a community benefits program?

A community benefits program is a tool for cities to derive greater public benefit from new private developments than would be possible from conventional development review procedures. These programs allow jurisdictions to obtain amenities or public improvements that provide public purpose or advance community priorities in exchange for the City granting zoning incentives or concessions to developers. Some commonly utilized development incentives include increased density or floor area ratio.

How do Community Benefit Programs Work?

As new private development occurs, a community benefits program provides the framework for developers to voluntarily construct or contribute funding for community priority benefits (in excess of what would normally be required for the project), in exchange for enhanced zoning. The development project generates greater value from the enhanced zoning, and some of that increased value is returned to the City in the form of public improvements or amenities. City leadership and community stakeholders can identify needs or priorities that enhance quality of life or complement long term economic development goals.

What are examples of community benefits?

Some examples of community benefits are pedestrian and bicycle amenities, sustainability infrastructure such as public EV charging stations, parks and recreation facilities such as a new community center, or other community resources like affordable housing and childcare facilities. Some programs also allow developers to make financial contributions in-lieu of building public improvements.

Does Belmont currently offer any community benefit zoning?

The Belmont Village Specific Plan (BVSP) zoning regulations include a community benefits component that specifies the procedures and requirements for a development seeking additional density or intensity. The BVSP includes a list of possible community benefits including on-site affordable housing in excess of the minimum requirement, public right-of-way improvements, publicly accessible open space, day care facilities, and other community benefits as determined by the City Council. Belmont is now considering development of a City-wide community benefits program.

Community Benefit Policy Options

There are a variety of ways that cities can structure a community benefits program, and staff has identified three key policy options for Council consideration related to formation of a City-wide program.

Policy Option #1: Formulaic versus Negotiation-based Policy.

Formulaic programs utilize a formula or point system to calculate the exchange of development entitlements and community benefits. Benefits granted through a formulaic program are often approved by the Planning Commission when they review individual development projects. Formulaic programs provide very simple and clear expectations for both the City and developers, but can lock the City into certain benefits that do not fit the project or evolving priorities.



Negotiation-based programs do not have a set formula or point system defining a fixed relationship between entitlements and benefits. Each deal is negotiated on a case-by-case basis and usually results in a Development Agreement (DA) or Community Benefits Agreement (CBA) approved by City Council. Negotiations based programs allow maximum flexibility for the City but can set unclear expectations for both the City and developers.

- **Staff Recommendation:** Staff recommends that the City pursue creation of a negotiation-based policy based on identified community priorities that will offer the City flexibility to work directly with private developers to determine the most appropriate community benefits for each project. The City has a variety of pipeline projects (residential, commercial/office, R&D/life-sciences) that that may each be better suited to provide different types of amenities or benefits.

Policy Option #2: Implementation Mechanism

Implementation of a community benefits policy is typically achieved either through a zoning ordinance amendment (similar to the Belmont Village Specific Plan zoning) or through negotiation of a development agreement between the City and the project developer. A development agreement allows maximum flexibility for negotiation of deal terms that can be catered to each specific project, and would be considered by the City Council. A zoning ordinance-based community benefits program works better with a formulaic program and would require the Planning Commission to primarily consider the community benefits being offers.

- **Staff Recommendation:** Staff recommends that the City utilize negotiated development agreements to implement a community benefits policy which would allow community benefits to be derived from private development on a case by case basis, and would enable the City Council to ultimately approve a community benefits proposal. The process does require more staff time to support negotiations, but ultimately provides the City the most flexibility.

Policy Option #3: Community Benefits Fund

Many cities allow developers to make monetary contributions in-lieu of providing direct community benefits or projects. This enables developers to fund community benefits that are a priority to the City that the developer may not be able to provide on their own, such as affordable housing on a non-residential site or larger community projects such as recreation facilities and transportation infrastructure.

- **Staff Recommendation:** Staff recommends that the City establish a community benefit fund and allow developers to make in-lieu contributions. The community benefit fund could be used to finance capital projects consistent with the stakeholder identified priorities.

Next Steps

If the City Council supports proceeding with implementation of a community benefits program, staff will continue to work with its economic development consulting firm RSG, Inc., to develop a draft policy and implementation documents. The [public community benefits survey](#) will remain open through the end of October. The policy and draft documents would return to the City Council for consideration and adoption.



Alternatives

1. Discontinue Pursuit of a Community Benefits Policy
2. Provide Alternative Policy Recommendations

Fiscal Impact

☒ No Fiscal Impact

☐ Funding Source Confirmed:

Adoption of a community benefits policy does not require a specific financial commitment, but program implementation does require City staffing resources, technical consulting for fiscal analysis of community benefit proposals, and financial accounting for a new Community Benefits fund.

Source:

Staff

Purpose:

Council Vision/Priority

Public Outreach:

Posting of Agenda