

**CITY OF EL PASO, TEXAS
AGENDA ITEM DEPARTMENT HEAD'S SUMMARY FORM**

DEPARTMENT: Planning and Economic Development
AGENDA DATE: February 15, 2011 Regular Agenda
CONTACT PERSON/PHONE: Kathryn Dodson, PhD, Director 541-4670
DISTRICT(S) AFFECTED: ALL

SUBJECT:

Discussion and action that the City Council approve amendments to the City of El Paso Incentives Policy for Blighted Properties, as recommended by the Director of the Planning and Economic Development Department.

BACKGROUND/DISCUSSION:

City council has previously approved policies on Blighted property. The policy is being amended to include a provision that all projects 5 acres or more in size must be zoned for SmartCode development in order to qualify for incentives.

PRIOR COUNCIL ACTION:

Yes. City Council adopted the Blighted Policy January, 6 2009 and approved renewing the policy on February 9, 2010.

AMOUNT AND SOURCE OF FUNDING:

N/A

BOARD/COMMISSION ACTION:

N/A

*****REQUIRED AUTHORIZATION*****

DEPARTMENT HEAD:

Prox. E. for Kathy Dodson, Director

RESOLUTION

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF EL PASO:

That the City Council approve amendments to the "City of El Paso Incentives Policy for Blighted Properties," as recommended by the Director of the Planning and Economic Development Department, with the amended policy being attached hereto as Exhibit "A".

APPROVED this the _____ day of _____, 2011.

THE CITY OF EL PASO

John F. Cook
Mayor

ATTEST:

Richarda Duffy Momsen
City Clerk

APPROVED AS TO FORM:



Marie A. Taylor
Assistant City Attorney

APPROVED AS TO CONTENT:



Kathryn B. Dodson, Ph.D., Director
Planning and Economic Development

EXHIBIT A

City of El Paso Incentives Policy for Blighted Properties February 2011

SECTION I. PURPOSE

It is the policy of the City of El Paso to provide incentives to remove blighted conditions for properties. The City of El Paso believes that eradication of blight serves an important public function because:

- Blighted and deteriorated properties create potential nuisances and can become a convenient haven for criminal activities.
- The presence of blighted and neglected properties impairs or arrests growth and development of neighborhoods and often lead to an exodus of current businesses and residents, threatening the spread of blight to other properties and neighborhoods.
- Vandalism of a single property or structure can have a significant negative economic and environmental impact on entire neighborhoods.

The purpose of this policy is to define the financial incentives available to remove blight and to establish standards by which they will be implemented. New and existing businesses can be considered for financial incentives within the parameters of this policy. In order to be eligible for incentives, businesses or individuals must be current on all city taxes or any other obligation to the City.

Incentives cannot be transferred as a result of a change in the majority ownership of the business without the expressed written consent of the City of El Paso. Any new owner shall file a new application for an economic development incentive. It shall be the responsibility of the business to notify the City of any such substantive change.

The City of El Paso is under no obligation to approve any requested incentive and the right to these incentives is neither intended nor implied.

SECTION II. STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

The City of El Paso, through the implementation of this and other policies, shall endeavor to abolish blight and provide incentives for the redevelopment of blighted properties.

SECTION III. GENERAL CRITERIA

The City of El Paso may provide incentives for any business or commercial development project if that project, in the opinion of the City Council of the City of El Paso:

1. Will substantially enhance the economic health of the City of El Paso;
2. Will result in a net increase or retention of jobs in the City, will add to the tax base, and will otherwise improve or enhance the economic welfare of the residents or businesses of the City; or
3. Demonstrates the potential to generate revenues to the City which outweigh costs associated with incentives.
4. The property is formally declared blighted (in accordance with the attached "Methodology for Determining Slums and Blight" approved by the City of El Paso on 17 October, 1989) prior to entering into the incentives contract.

In addition, the following criteria must be satisfied.

The project must:

1. Show a clear demonstration of public purpose and economic benefit through advancement of the City's economic goals which include expanding the tax base, creating quality jobs, increasing private capital investment in the community, spurring development in targeted City locations; or encouraging development of targeted businesses or clusters desirable to enhance the City's economy;
2. Include solid evidence provided by the business that demonstrates the business's financial stability and capacity to complete the project;
3. Be in compliance with all local, state and federal laws.

The business, in order to receive any such incentives from the City of El Paso will make available credible information, including but not limited to capital investment and employment projections, to enable the City to prepare a fiscal impact analysis. The recipient will update this information annually during the term of any incentives contract. The decision to provide any economic development incentives will be considered on a project-by-project basis, in accordance with the criteria set forth in this policy, and at the discretion of the City Council of the City of El Paso.

SECTION IV. QUALIFICATION CRITERIA

In order to be eligible for incentives under this policy, the general criteria must be met and a minimum capital investment of \$30,000,000 (Thirty Million Dollars), not including the costs of purchasing the property, will be required. In addition, in order to be eligible for incentives under this policy, the blighted property MUST be redeveloped as a mixed use, lifestyle or transit oriented development, or other use as recommended by City Council. Projects 5 acres or more in size must be zoned for SmartCode development.

SECTION V. ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT INCENTIVE

Companies satisfying the general criteria and meeting the qualification standards above who wish to pursue incentives will need to pay a \$750 non refundable application fee in order to formally request incentives.

An economic impact analysis will be conducted by the Planning and Economic Development Department on every project considered for incentives. The delivery mechanism of choice for incentives will be the Chapter 380 agreement. As a matter of general policy, Chapter 380 agreements entered into as a result of this policy will not be used simultaneously with other incentive programs unless the revenue stream from which the Chapter 380 agreement is paid is derived from sources other than property tax.

Agreements may be conditioned on the completion of specific improvements to real property and/or job numbers and salaries levels being met. The Agreements shall contain recapture clauses in the event that such conditions are not met.

The Planning and Economic Development Department is charged with recommending to the Legislative Review Committee for Economic Development, Planning and Tourism the level of incentives based on the economic impact analysis and other factors. For the projects qualifying under this policy with total investments of \$30 to \$59M, the incentives will be granted for 5 (five) years. For projects qualifying under this policy with total investments of over \$60M, the incentives will be granted for 10 (ten) years.

For Projects qualifying under this policy, the incentives available will be as follows:

- 100% ad valorem real property tax rebated (on increment)
- 100% sales tax rebate for tenants new to El Paso County (payable to the Developer)
For Tenants NOT new to El Paso County
 - 50% of sales tax will be used to fund a Sales Tax TIF for public improvements in the area adjacent to the development; the other 50% will be deposited to the general fund.

- 100% Sales & Use Tax rebate on construction materials and labor used in the development.
- Shared parking requirements if the development is mixed used residential or transit oriented development
- Up to \$200,000 available in separate grant for LEED certified projects.
- Reimbursement of development fees
- If the project investment is \$60 million or more, the City will support State Enterprise Zone designation for the project, enabling the developer to access State incentives.