

Mads Odom

From: Colin Fiske [REDACTED]
Sent: Monday, October 09, 2023 3:54 PM
To: Scott Davies; Peter Lehman; Judith Mayer; Dan Tangney; Matthew Simmons; Joel Yodowitz; Abigail Strickland
Cc: David Loya
Subject: Community Benefits Program & General Plan Comments

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Planning Commissioners,

Please accept the following comments regarding the Community Benefits Program:

1. A new development in Arizona called [Culdesac Tempe](#) prohibits residents from parking a car within 1/4 mile of the project site. This effectively prohibits car ownership/use, which has many benefits for both residents themselves and for the surrounding community. We encourage you to consider incentivizing such a contractual provision in future Arcata developments by including it in the Community Benefits Program.
2. Our understanding is that parcel frontage improvement for pedestrians is essentially required by the Gateway zoning code's setback and streetscape requirements. This would make it unnecessary to incentivize parcel frontage dedication as a community benefit. If this is not the intended purpose of the setback requirements, then those setbacks should be revisited.
3. New building codes increasingly require EV charging infrastructure. Incentivizing more than is required may be unnecessary, and could lead to more off-street parking than desirable in a walkable neighborhood. If the Commission would like to incentivize EV-supportive infrastructure, we would encourage you to consider specifically incentivizing public on-street charging infrastructure.
4. Many kinds of special needs housing will not be provided by the market alone, but would provide a major benefit to the community. We encourage you to consider retaining a community benefit related to special needs housing..
5. In general, the reasons for the proposed removals of some items and retention of others is not clear. For example, some benefits which involve exceeding regulatory requirements (e.g., stormwater, EV charging) are proposed for removal, while other similar benefits (e.g., energy efficiency, bus stop improvements) are retained. Additional explanation of the logic behind proposed changes would be helpful.

Also, regarding the proposed changes to General Plan commercial land use designations:

- The staff report proposes moving car-oriented uses, including gas stations, from the eliminated C-G category into C-M. We encourage you to instead take this opportunity to prohibit new gas stations entirely, as [several other California cities have already done](#). Gas-powered vehicles are on the way out, and there is certainly no need for more gas stations than the city already has.

Thanks for your consideration.

Colin

--
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Mads Odom

From: Fred [REDACTED]
Sent: Wednesday, October 11, 2023 10:13 AM
To: Scott Davies; Dan Tangney; Judith Mayer; Matthew Simmons; Peter Lehman; Joel Yodowitz; Abigail Strickland; David Loya
Subject: Community Benefits -- process, organization

CAUTION: This email originated from outside of the organization. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

To: Planning Commissioners, Community Development Director David Loya
From: Fred Weis
With highlights so you can skim.

Last night's discussion on how to structure the Community Benefits Program provided much food for thought. I regard a good Community Benefits Program as a **crucial element to the success** of the Gateway Plan. Director Loya brought up some new ways of looking at the benefits, and each of you contributed worthwhile comments.

I have ideas for a single input form (a spreadsheet) on which you can individually provide your input on what is important and your views on how to make this work. Your input could then be more easily compiled. I can supply this in the next five days or so.

David, please send to me the "Gradient 1 to 3" spreadsheet that came out of last night's meeting. Thank you.

David, also this question: If a developer chooses to go with the path of the State Density Bonus law, does that project then follow the regulations of the Gateway Area Plan **OR** of City-wide policies? [With adjustments for concessions at 1 for 10% low-income, 2 for 17%, 3 for 24%, and so forth.]

As I see it, there are multiple factors at play, and you are trying to assemble all the factors into one grading system -- when, in my view, **each factor has to be evaluated separately... and then combined** into a simplified grading system.

Among the factors involved:

- What is of high value to the community?
- Which benefits are of value to the planning and overall development of the Gateway area?
An example might be: Mixed unit sizes within a project, so a developer is encouraged to not build a project with 150 studio units.
- Which benefits are likely or unlikely for the developer to choose, based on cost?
While we do not know the actual costs involved, we can have an approximate or relative idea.
For example, providing a 50-square-foot community garden or free tenant-use WiFi are very low cost -- and you removed them last night. Making a certain percentage of units be ADA-accessible has some cost (special showers, wider doorways, design of kitchen, etc.) but it is not a large cost relative to, say,

providing 10,000 sq.ft. of public open space or adding 10% to inclusionary housing. (That is: Adding the 10% figure -- if it is 9%, it becomes 19%.) Those are acknowledged as large costs. As Commissioner Yodowitz remarked, it would be good to get this info from a developer, and perhaps we will one day. But we have some idea of relative costs.

- Benefits that are permanent, and those that take place over a period of time and might have to be monitored -- and might include **penalties for non-compliance**.
- What can the City offer to the developers as a "carrot" -- to make it attractive to the developer to select a particular benefit?
- Which benefits may be good now, but may be acceptable or State-law-required in the future? Equally, which benefits might be of **increasing value** in the future?
An example might be EV charging stations (bike or car). As you may be aware, I am a fan of large, useable rooftop garden space. See articles on Rooftop Gardens [here](#) and [here](#) -- with actual costs for a project in Berkeley. In 10 or 20 years, this could be seen as a visionary inclusion in the Gateway area.
- What is going to encourage development in the Gateway area?
Put another way, what can be done to not discourage development?
- On an overall basis, how do we want the Gateway Plan to turn out?

Please send me your thoughts on what you see as factors. There are other factors and considerations -- I will appreciate your input. Thank you. Evaluating the many factors may be difficult, but it is not impossible to figure out what really might make this work.

As David pointed out, there are some benefits that "ought to be in a category of their own." And, as he said, it could be that a developer is required to include one for each tier (building height). These should be promoted -- independently of their point value. I have some ideas on how to go about doing this.

You are aware that I've spent considerable time thinking about how this system can be improved. The previous system could easily be "**gamed**" by the developer, **with a negative result to the community**. Part of your goal is to make a system that gets what you want (community benefits) while still being attractive to the developer -- and not cumbersome.

In my view, just making the previous system simpler will not in itself produce the results you want.

I will remind the Commission (especially the newer members): The list of benefits was created by the Planning Commission, over a period of four sessions, starting over a year ago. **The point assignments were not made by the Planning Commission.** How the items were worded and the points awarded came from the Community Development Director -- not from the Planning Commission. Last night, there were further new benefits added to the list and other ones changed, at the suggestion of the Director. His input is appreciated, and so is yours. We have new Commissioners, and the benefit of a further year of experience on this -- and knowledge of how the State Density Bonus law can work. **You may wish to add to and revise the benefits that are listed.**

Last night I spoke to the idea of expanding the range of points offered, using a 1 to 100 scale. This is presented in the article [State Density Bonus Housing Law — How it affects us here in](#)

[Arcata](#) -- estimated reading time for you is about 8 minutes. You can skim and read the parts that are of interest or value to you. Included is **the Myers-Nave report** "Guide to the California Density Bonus Law," 10 pages of text, and a bullet-point synopsis of that report.

If you are curious how the 54 or so participants at the September 25 Open House "voted" on the Community Benefits, the easiest way to view their votes is in the article on [Arcata1.com: The September 25, 2023, Gateway Open House meeting – Synopsis and photos](#). Estimated reading time is ~10 minutes for the article. There's a table of contents at the start, so you can skip directly to the votes.

The direct URL address is: arcata1.com/gateway-open-house-meeting-sept-25-2023

People are reading about the Community Benefits Program and are interested. There have been over 220 views on Open House article, over 165 views on the transcriptions of the handwritten comments, and over 160 views of the Commissioners' and Councilmembers' [pre-meeting policy ideas](#). The article [The Gateway Community Benefits program — Details of the "points" proposal](#) has over **350 views** and [State Density Bonus Housing Law — How it affects us here in Arcata](#) has over 190 views.

David Loya made the State Density Bonus Laws / Inclusionary Zoning / Community Benefits video, 15-1/2 minutes, which you have seen. If you want to read the text (you can watch at the same time, or not), this video and a complete transcription (with no commentary) can be reviewed [here](#).

My intention is that my views on the Community Benefit Program are of value to you in your work.

Thank you.

-- Fred Weis

Direct URL addresses:

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arcata1.com/gateway-apartments-had-rooftop-gardens/
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arcata1.com/density-bonus-incl-zoning-comm-benefits-loya-presentation/