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News

LB Redevelopment Agency Staff Mulling Possible Incentives To CityPlace Owner To Facilitate *Fresh & Easy* Entry Into Downtown



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(Sept. 1, 2009) -- **LBReport.com** has learned that LB Redevelopment Agency staff is considering providing financial incentives to the owner of downtown CityPlace to facilitate locating a *Fresh & Easy* at that downtown LB site.

LB RDA Assistant Executive Director Amy Bodek told **LBReport.com** that RDA staff is in the early stages of considering possible incentives for the CityPlace property owner for improvements to the property to accommodate the new store location.

Ms. Bodek stressed that RDA isn't discussing direct incentives to *Fresh & Easy* but rather to the property owner (CityPlace). She said no decisions have been made on specific types of incentives that RDA might offer, but in general they might take the form of a loan, a grant, or the RDA doing some type of public improvements.

"The proposal isn't that far along," Ms. Bodek said. "RDA staff is considering incentives to the property owner and if we get to the point where it's a good deal, we will make a recommendation to the RDA governing Board." A majority of the RDA would have to approve the arrangement in a publicly voted action.

Ms. Bodek noted *Fresh & Easy's* financial arrangements [presumably some type of lease] are with CityPlace, not with the city or RDA...and the city/RDA have no financial interests with *Fresh and Easy*.

However CityPlace is within the downtown Redevelopment Project Area...and *Fresh and Easy* would provide a very strong benefit for downtown residents, Ms. Bodek noted.

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She added that RDA does have the ability to use its resources to promote economic development (bringing jobs and an improved tax base) in addition to traditional "blight fighting" actions.

Lakewood has two Fresh and Easy locations -- one at Paramount and Del Amo Blvds. and another at Woodruff Ave. and South St. City of Lakewood spokesman Don Waldie says neither Lakewood City Hall nor its Redevelopment Agency provided incentives for those locations.

LB has two Fresh and Easy locations, one on Spring St. east of Palo Verde Ave. and another opening in September at 7th St/Nebraska Ave.; LB city officials say no financial incentives were involved in those locations.

Fresh and Easy's website says its markets offer [website text] "fresh and wholesome food choices" and "everyday staples: plus its own line of "fresh prepared meals and organic items [to] make quick eating easy and affordable").

City Place Shopping Center offers multiple businesses, retailers, restaurants and services between 3rd and 6th Sts. from LB Blvd. to Pine Ave.

LBReport.com is to our knowledge the first to follow-up and report on this aspect of the story potentially involving public resources. On July 15, **LBReport.com** first reported that RDA staff acknowledged it might offer incentives to facilitate an agreement to locate the Fresh & Easy market at City Place. News of the talks was first reported a day earlier by Karen Robes Meeks on *Press-Telegram.com*.

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