

REDEVELOPMENT AGENCY
OFFICE OF THE CITY CLERK
OAKLAND

2009 FEB 26 PM 6:17 *AGENDA REPORT*

TO: Office of the Agency Administrator
ATTN: Dan Lindheim
FROM: Community and Economic Development Agency / Redevelopment Division
DATE: March 10, 2009

RE: A Report and Recommendation on the Implementation of the Oakland Ambassador Program

SUMMARY

The Redevelopment Agency board appropriated \$890,000 (\$445,000/year) in the Oakland Redevelopment Agency FY 2007/09 adopted budget for an Ambassador Program. The Ambassador Program was envisioned as a public safety program focused on crime prevention and hospitality. As proposed in the May 22, 2007, City Council report, Redevelopment Agency funds would be used to provide matching grants to organizations to hire young adults to serve as Ambassadors. Ambassadors would serve as guides, provide information and escort services to individuals on the street in redevelopment project areas in the vicinity of BART stations and in neighborhoods adjacent to commercial districts. This report provides an update of efforts to establish an Ambassador Program. Specifically it summarizes information collected from Ambassador Programs across the country, includes an update on the provision of ambassador services in the Downtown and Lake Merritt/ Uptown Community Benefit Districts and contains brief descriptions of public safety programs proposed in West and East Oakland that include ambassador type services. Implementation options, including challenges, are also included.

FISCAL IMPACT

The direction of the City Council as it pertains to the implementation of the Oakland Ambassador Program may result in future fiscal impacts.

BACKGROUND

On May 22, 2007, the City Council sitting as the Redevelopment Agency board endorsed in principle the establishment of an Ambassador Program as a means to increase public safety in certain commercial districts within redevelopment project areas and to give employment opportunities to at risk Oakland youth. Staff was asked to work with Councilmember Brunner's office to develop a detailed cost analysis and to refer consideration of funding for the program from Redevelopment funds to the FY 2007/09 budget process. The Oakland Redevelopment Agency FY 2007/09 Adopted Budget included an appropriation of \$445,000 in FY 2007/08 and \$445,000 in FY 2008/09 for an Ambassador Program for a total of \$890,000. A breakdown of the \$890,000 is as follows:

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- \$127,142 from Broadway/MacArthur/San Pablo in Council District 1,
- \$127,144 from Central City East (CCE) in Council District 2,
- \$127,142 from West Oakland in Council District 3,
- \$127,144 from CCE in Council District 4,
- \$127,142 from Coliseum in Council District 5,
- \$127,144 from CCE in Council District 6 and
- \$127,142 from the Coliseum Redevelopment Area in Council District 7.

The Ambassador Program was envisioned as a public-private partnership, with half of the cost funded by the Oakland Redevelopment Agency and the other half from private funding. The May 22, 2007, Council report recommended that the program be piloted in the downtown and in redevelopment project areas around Oakland neighborhood BART stations. Although there was not funding allocated from the Central District Redevelopment Area.

Redevelopment staff was charged with developing the Ambassador Program. From October 2007 to April 2008, staff researched Ambassador Programs around the country to understand basic characteristics and general program costs. Information on commercial district safety/security programs was collected from the following cities:

- Portland, Oregon- Portland Business Alliance's Sidewalk Ambassador Program
- Austin, Texas- Downtown Public Improvement District's Downtown Austin Rangers
- Atlanta, Georgia- Central Atlanta Progress, Atlanta Downtown Improvement District's Ambassador Force Program
- Philadelphia, Pennsylvania- Central Philadelphia Development Corporation's Community Service Representatives (Ambassador Program)
- Dallas, Texas- The Downtown Improvement District's Downtown Safety Patrol
- Seattle, Washington- Downtown Seattle Association, Metropolitan Improvement District's Safety Program
- Columbia South Carolina- City Center Partnership Inc.' Hospitality Team- Clean Team and Safety Guide Services
- San Francisco, California- Union Square Business Improvement District's Community Safety Ambassadors
- Phoenix, Arizona- The Downtown Phoenix Partnership's Copper Square Ambassador Program

The following is a list of characteristics found in Ambassador Programs listed above.

1. Ambassador Programs are typically in downtown areas and are funded by Business Improvement Districts (BID). Budgets for Ambassador Programs range from \$300,000 to \$3 million a year. Ambassadors cover areas ranging from 50 blocks to 200+ blocks. In most cities Ambassadors are employees of the BID or the BID contracts with a private security company to provide Ambassador-type services. Salaries range from \$8.50 to

\$17.50/hour. In Austin Texas, Ambassadors are civilian employees of the Austin Police Department (APD). The City of Austin contributes \$40,000 - \$50,000/yr to the Ranger Program, to provide Ambassador Services, which costs approximately \$420,000/yr. An APD Lieutenant supervises the Rangers and APD handles recruitment. The City covers liability.

2. Ambassador Programs typically have a safety and hospitality focus and many function as part of a comprehensive crime prevention strategy.
3. Ambassadors work closely with local police departments and are generally linked to the police department via radio contact when they are on patrol. BIDs typically equip Ambassadors with radios. In most cities, Ambassadors have regular meetings with local police to exchange information and review crime data. Some BIDs pay for police services to ensure close oversight and coordination between Ambassadors and local law enforcement. Examples include Union Square in San Francisco and Nashville, Tennessee.
4. Training requirements for Ambassadors varies but in the majority of cities some training is provided. Ambassadors are required to take a combination of classroom and field training and they generally work with an experienced Ambassador before they are able to patrol alone. Training includes pepper spray, bicycle safety, CPR, de-escalation techniques, crime prevention, etc. Additional training may also include customer service, history of the area, businesses in the area, points of interest and special events. Union Square, San Francisco's Community Service Ambassadors (CSA) have extensive training in understanding the laws governing quality of life offenses and public nuisances, as well as procedural guidelines essential to their relationship with the SFPD.
5. Ambassadors generally wear uniforms and they patrol their area on foot or bicycle. All equipment is provided by the BID. In a few cases BIDs provide vehicles.
6. The majority of Ambassadors are armed with pepper spray and only a few carry firearms. However, Ambassadors typically serve as "eyes and ears" for the police and they rely on voluntary compliance rather than enforcement because they generally have no legal authority.
7. BIDs that contract with private companies to provide security services tend to place a greater emphasis on ambassador type services than just security. Phoenix initially contracted with a security firm to provide ambassador services in their downtown. As the BID gained experience with the contracted services they brought their Ambassador Program in-house. Phoenix cited concerns with not having any control over the type of people contractors employed, how they were trained, and an overall lack of employee "buy-in" to the mission and work of the BID as reasons for shifting to BID staffing.

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In addition to conducting research on existing Ambassador Programs, staff met with a number of individuals to collect information and discuss issues pertinent to developing and implementing an Ambassador Program. On October 30, 2007 and December 18, 2007 staff met with the Directors of Youth Employment Partnership (YEP) and Youth UpRising, respectively, to determine their level of interest in participating in training youth and young adults to be Ambassadors, to get a sense of the estimated costs for providing training and to obtain feedback in terms of issues and concerns related to implementing the Program.

YEP indicated that their organization is most suited to recruit Ambassadors and provide workforce development skills rather than conducting training specific to the duties of an Ambassador. While YEP did not evince an interest in establishing and conducting a training program for Ambassadors, they recommended that such training include customer service, safety procedures and conflict resolution. YEP suggested that the Ambassador Program be part of a public safety strategy, developed with input from the community, to address the needs of the commercial district or BART neighborhood. YEP estimated that the basic cost for a team consisting of five Ambassadors and one supervisor would be \$150,000 a year. If Workers Compensation and Liability Insurance are to be provided for the Ambassador Program there may be additional costs.

Youth UpRising indicated that the success of an Ambassador Program will greatly depend on the individuals hired as Team Leaders to supervise the Ambassadors. Youth UpRising suggested that individuals over 24 years of age would be most suited for the positions of Team Leads. Conflict mediation was recommended as mandatory training for Team Leaders. The recommended salaries for both Team Leaders and Ambassadors were \$40,000 and \$25,000 annually respectively. Youth UpRising suggested that a typical team consist of four Ambassadors working in pairs with one Team Lead. Additionally, they recommended that OPD data determine the areas for deployment. The estimated cost for a team, including overhead, benefits, insurance, equipment and uniform allowances, is approximately \$250,000 a year. Youth UpRising suggested that Ambassador training include a briefing as to why the City is investing in the program; the importance of sales taxes to the City; an overview of the assigned commercial district (including meeting merchants; reviewing crime data and demographics of the surrounding neighborhood) and intensive role playing of various scenarios to determine how Ambassadors respond to situations they may encounter on the streets.

On March 12, 2008, staff met with representatives of the steering committee working to establish special assessment districts, called a Community Benefit District (CBD), in the Lake Merritt/Uptown and Downtown areas to determine their interest in partnering with the City to pilot the Ambassador Program in the downtown, as per the May 22, 2007, City Council report. The feedback received was generally positive, however the groups elected to postpone further discussion of the matter until the assessment district establishment process was completed. In an April 2008 meeting the CBD proponents raised concerns regarding the amount of matching funds available and one of the goals of the program, which was to hire at risk youth. On July 15, 2008, City Council approved the establishment of the Lake Merritt/Uptown and Downtown CBDs.

The Lake Merritt/Uptown and Downtown Oakland CBDs contracted with a private firm, Block By Block, to provide security to the Districts. On February 1, 2009, twelve Safety Ambassadors and two supervisors, hired by Block By Block began walking and bike patrols in the 19 block CBD area. The annual budget for the Lake Merritt/Uptown and Downtown Oakland CBD Safety Ambassador Program is just over \$659,000. This represents more than 60% of the total annual assessment projected to be generated by the two CBDs. The bill rate for the Safety Ambassadors is \$22.48 which includes \$14.00 hourly rate, benefits and other overhead costs. The bill rate for the Team Leader is \$24.23 which includes a \$15.50 hourly rate, benefits and other overhead costs. The Safety Ambassadors are supervised by an Operations Manager. The Operations Manager bill rate is \$40.31 which includes a \$29.33 hourly rate, benefits and other overhead costs. The average age of the Safety Ambassadors is estimated to be between 20 - 35 years old and the Operations Manager is an older, experienced security/police trained individual with management experience. The Lake Merritt/Uptown and Downtown Oakland CBDs provide uniforms, Police Edition Bicycles, two-way radios, two-way radio repeater, desktop computers, cell phones, digital cameras, field interview cards, office supplies and licensing fees for business and officers. Block By Block provided training to the Safety Ambassadors. Training consisted of 24 hours of security services training, 3 hours of orientation in the districts, first-aid certification, CPR certification and bicycle safety certification. The Operations Manager participated in a 1-week site field training at the Long Beach Block By Block Safety Program. Initial feedback on the Safety Ambassadors has been positive.

Staff met with the Mayor's Public Safety Director in April 2008, to explore coordinating the implementation of the proposed Ambassador Program and the Central City East and Coliseum Commercial District Security Programs. The Central City East and Coliseum Commercial Security Program propose to use redevelopment funds to pay for unarmed security to patrol targeted areas along major commercial corridors in the two redevelopment areas. Staff discussed using a Request for Qualifications/Proposals (RFQ/P) process to identify firms to provide security services under the pilot programs, including Ambassador Services. A potential benefit to this approach is the City/Agency would develop a list of pre-selected and qualified firms from which BIDs and CBDs can interview and select. A concern was expressed regarding linking the commercial security program and the Ambassador Program in a RFP/Q because there are still issues to be resolved pertaining to the Ambassador Program in terms of overall mission and responsibility, organizational affiliation and required training.

As mentioned earlier in this report, the Ambassador Program was envisioned as a public-private partnership (matching funds). There was an underlying presumption that there were groups in the areas targeted for the Program with capacity to provide matching funds. Staff reviewed the list of areas designated for the Program, based on the appropriation of redevelopment funds, and identified organizations that can potentially meet the requirements. The following table reflects staff's findings:

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Redevelopment Project Area	Commercial District	Redevelopment Project Area	BID or CBD
Broadway/MacArthur/San Pablo (Council District 1)	Telegraph/Temescal	Yes, 40 th - 42 nd Sts. on Telegraph Avenue	Yes
	MacArthur BART	Yes	No
	San Pablo/Golden Gate	Yes	No
West Oakland (Council District 3)	7 th Street	Yes	No
	West Oakland BART	Yes	No
	San Pablo Avenue	Yes	No
	Telegraph/ Koreatown	Yes, 27 th - 35 th Sts. on Telegraph Avenue	Yes
Central City East (CCE) (Council District 2)	E. 18 th /Park Blvd.	Yes	No
	Eastlake	Yes	No
CCE (Council District 4)	Melrose (47 th – Cole on Foothill)	Yes	No
CCE (Council District 6)	Foothill/Seminary	Yes	No
	Foothill/Eastmont	Yes	No
	MacArthur Blvd. (73 rd – 82 nd Ave.)	Yes	No
Coliseum (Council District 5)	Fruitvale/International Blvd.	Yes	Yes
	Fruitvale BART Station	Yes	Yes
Coliseum (Council District 7)	International Blvd. (82 nd – 106 Ave.)	Yes	No
	Coliseum BART Station	Yes	No
	Hegenberger Road	Yes	No

Of the redevelopment target areas listed above four districts have community organizations with potential financial capacity to provide matching funds for an Ambassador Program. This include the Fruitvale BART Station and Fruitvale/International Blvd. districts, which are located in the Fruitvale Business Improvement District (BID); Telegraph/Temescal, of which two blocks are within the boundaries of the Telegraph/Temescal BID and Telegraph/Koreatown, which is a part of the Telegraph/Koreatown Community Benefit District. There is no funding for the Ambassador Program in the Downtown/Central District Redevelopment Area since there was no appropriation for it in the FY 2007/09 budget.

On March 18, 2008, staff met with Oakland Police Department (OPD) to explore their potential involvement in developing and implementing the Ambassador Program. Representatives of the Neighborhood Services Division were in attendance at the meeting. Citing OPD Departmental General Order B-15 Police Cadet Program, dated February 1, 2000, staff inquired about using OPD Cadets for BART escort services and “City Ambassador” walking details. OPD Departmental General Order B-15 sets forth policies and procedures regarding eligibility criteria, duty assignments and the administration of the Departmental Cadet Program. The policies for the Cadet Program closely aligned with the objectives outlined in the May 22, 2007, City Council report. OPD did not support the use of Police Cadets for the Ambassador Program. They cited the relative youth of the Cadets and concern for their safety, as well as their ability to handle the diverse situations which may arise.

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Staff presented the following options to OPD and Neighborhood Services, including perceived pros and cons, for implementing an Ambassador Program. They also discussed possible protocol for coordinating with commercial districts that utilize Ambassadors.

OPTION #1

Ambassadors would be employees of the City and the Ambassador Program would be assigned to the Neighborhood Services Division which is accountable to OPD and the City Administrator. Direct oversight and supervision of the Ambassadors would be provided by Neighborhood Services, specifically the staff responsible for the Merchant Alert Program. OPD would provide training for the Ambassadors and assist with developing standard operating procedures for the Program. Ambassador services would be provided on a first come, first serve basis to merchant and property owner groups in the targeted redevelopment areas, including Business Improvement and Community Benefit Districts (BID/CBD). The participating organization would enter into a contract with the Agency and pay matching funds for Ambassadors. With City Council approval, portions of the FY 2007/08 funds would be used to establish the Ambassador Program. Examples of start up expenses may include purchasing insurance, recruiting, training and providing equipment (e.g., uniforms, mobile telephones, radios, bikes, etc.). The remainder of the funds allocated to the Program in the FY 2007/08 budget, after paying for start-up and possibly some on-going operating costs (e.g., supervision), will be used for matching grants to merchant, property owner, BID/CBD groups for Ambassador Teams. Applications for Ambassador Teams will be reviewed by a panel including OPD and Neighborhood Services staff. The evaluation process would include an assessment of the commercial district to determine if Ambassadors are a suitable public safety strategy for the requesting district. In addition, a determination will be made of the organization's capacity to coordinate ambassador services. Staff's recommendations would be forwarded to the City Council/ORA for approval. Groups awarded grants would enter into an agreement with the Agency, which outlines the terms and conditions of the grant.

Pros:

- City/Agency has direct control of Ambassadors including hiring, training and supervising.
- The Ambassador Program, like the OPD Cadet Program, has the potential to become a feeder program into the law enforcement and security professions due to the caliber of training and the level of oversight/management provided.
- The Ambassador Program is a great example of a "public/private partnership" designed to address public safety problems in Oakland's commercial districts.

Cons:

- The cost for an Ambassador Program has not been established. Based on the number of merchant groups with the potential to provide matching funds for Ambassadors, it is uncertain that the cost of the Ambassador Program can be assumed by these groups.
- On-going funding for the Ambassador Program has to be included in future budgets.
- Current funding for the Ambassador Program is ORA. ORA funds can only be used in the redevelopment area that generated the funds. The Ambassador Program would be

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eligible for ORA funds assuming the program serves a redevelopment area and the nexus can be made between improved public safety and the promotion of business activity and investment in the project area.

OPTION #2

OPD would assist with developing operating standards (training requirements, duties, communication protocol, etc.) for the Ambassador Program. Neighborhood Services staff responsible for the Merchant Alert Program would assist with monitoring the Ambassadors to ensure compliance with the established Program standards. ORA would offer matching grants to eligible organizations to provide Ambassador Services in targeted commercial districts. ORA would enter into agreements with selected organizations. OPD (possibly Problem Solving Officers) would meet with the Ambassadors on a regular basis to review crime data, share information and discuss issues and concerns affecting the overall safety of the commercial district. OPD might provide some training to the Ambassadors in this option.

Pros

- Implementing the Ambassador Program would not result in an increase in City staff.
- The City/Agency has some control over how the Ambassador Program is operated. The City/Agency's requirements for the Ambassadors would be spelled out in the agreement with the sponsoring organization, a.k.a. grantee. Failure to comply with the terms of the agreement could result in the Agency suspending the contract.

Cons

- The City/Agency does not have control over selection, supervision or termination of the individuals serving as Ambassadors.
- While Ambassadors may not be City/Agency employees there may still be some City/Agency liability for their training and actions.

OPTION # 3

Funding for the Ambassador Program would be used to hire a contractor capable of employing and training at-risk youth and young adults to serve in the capacity of Ambassadors. A Request for Qualification (RFQ) process would be used to select the contractor. OPD and Neighborhood Services would be involved in the selection process. OPD would provide ongoing training to the Ambassadors and conduct regular informational meetings. Neighborhood Services staff would oversee contractor performance in terms of overall objectives and goals.

Pros:

- The RFQ will enable a wide range of prospective businesses and organizations to submit proposals that meet the goals and objectives required.

Cons:

- Initial feedback from merchant and business groups has not been positive to the hiring of at-risk individuals in the capacity of Ambassadors. Given the range of estimated costs for operating the Ambassador Program (\$150,000 to \$250,000 a year), there is

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considerable doubt that local merchant and business organizations would be willing to participate in such a program if one of the primary goals is to hire at-risk youth.

- There is a lack of organizations in the redevelopment areas targeted for Ambassador Program funding with the capacity to provide matching funds.

The participants in the March 18, 2007, meeting with OPD did not select a preferred option among those listed above. OPD was clear that they could not manage the Ambassador Program; however they identified training that they could provide to the Ambassadors. Suggested training included: Community Relations/Cultural Diversity/Policing in the Community (aspects that would apply to an Ambassador Program such as garnering trust with the community, not actual policing), Tactical Communication, Working with Persons with Disabilities, bicycle safety and Oleoresin Capsicum (pepper spray) training. OPD indicated that the City Attorney's Office would need to determine the liability involved in the City providing training to Ambassadors or assuming other work related to the Ambassadors Program. Neighborhood Services indicated they could provide some training to the Ambassadors if they received funding to do so. There was overall acknowledgement that communication and coordination between the Ambassadors and OPD is important. OPD suggested that contact with the Ambassadors would occur at the Area Commander's level.

The potential legal issues generally identified by the City Attorney's Office early in April, 2008 involved the 1) contracting with BID/CBDs for matching funds or provision of Ambassador Services by the City; 2) City/Agency liability for the acts of the Ambassadors; 3) labor / employment issues in creating new city employee positions for the Ambassadors; and 4) scope of permitted use of ORA funding. The City Attorney's Office has not been specifically asked to research the liability issues that may be involved with various aspects of the Ambassadors Program. Moreover, specific elements of the Ambassadors Programs have not been determined in order for the City to assess the legal risks and liabilities involved. The City Attorney's Office will be contacted once the various options for the Ambassadors Program are considered and defined.

Other Proposed Public Safety Programs in West and East Oakland

The West Oakland Project Area Committee is currently reviewing a proposal requesting approximately \$844,000 from West Oakland redevelopment funds for a community escort service and anti-crime patrol at the West Oakland BART Station and surrounding neighborhoods, called the West Oakland Community Options Patrol (WOCOP). WOCOP is a collaboration of The African American Cal Works Coalition Options Program (Options), Tomorrow's Answers (a youth development program), House of Change (a transitional housing and business enterprise to assist homeless women) and private security companies. The amount requested represents approximately 53% for the estimated two year program cost of \$1.59 million. WOCOP proposes to hire and train youth and young adults from the West Oakland community to escort BART riders to and from their cars, walk nearby streets, maintain a watchful eye on local businesses and report criminal activity and suspicious persons to OPD.

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In September 2008, the Redevelopment Division released a RFP soliciting proposals from qualified firms to implement a pilot commercial security program in the Central City East and Coliseum redevelopment areas for a cost not to exceed \$180,000. The goal of the pilot program is to reduce crime. It will focus on crime prevention and enforcement in targeted areas along major commercial corridors in the two East Oakland redevelopment project areas. Redevelopment funds will pay for four security officers to patrol the target areas on foot or by bicycle. The security service will coordinate with and supplement OPD efforts. A report requesting authorization to negotiate and enter into a contract with a security firm to implement the pilot program will be presented to the Community and Economic Development Committee on March 10, 2009. ,

KEY ISSUES AND IMPACTS

Challenges to developing and implementing the Ambassador Program include:

- Determining the most appropriate role for the City/Agency in an Ambassador Program, e.g. funder or employer.
- Assigning management/oversight of Ambassador Program to the most appropriate City Agency.
- Developing a public safety strategy for each of the target districts that will direct the geographic deployment of Ambassador Personnel.
- Mitigating potential legal issues including City/Agency liability and redevelopment funding eligibility.
- Ongoing funding for the Ambassador Program.

While OPD does not support using Police Cadets for the Ambassador Program, OPD Departmental General Order B-15 (General Order B-15) includes BART escort services and "City Ambassador" walking details among the duties to be performed by Police Cadets. The objectives and eligibility requirements included in General Order B-15 including age limit, student status, academic requirements, assignments and training closely align with the Ambassador Program objectives outlined in the May 22, 2007 City Council report. This includes hiring and training youth and young adults to be Ambassadors and working with merchants to ensure public safety in the vicinity of Oakland BART Stations and in neighborhoods adjacent to commercial districts. Furthermore, since the Police Cadet Program was established in 1986, more than one third of the approximately 240 cadets have transitioned to police officers. The Police Cadet Program serves as a feeder for the law enforcement and security professions.

The need for a public safety strategy to provide an overall framework for the Ambassadors was cited more than once during the process of collecting information for development of an Ambassador Program. A data driven approach for deploying Ambassadors and oversight of the Ambassadors by experienced public safety professionals was also recommended. Assigning the Ambassador Program to the Neighborhood Services Division is one of the implementation options included in this report. If this option is implemented additional budget resources may be required.

Enforcing security in a redevelopment project area to promote business activity and investment is considered a valid use of redevelopment funds. Oakland redevelopment area blight studies typically document the relationship between crime and blight conditions, which serves as a basis for defending the use of redevelopment funds for public safety initiatives.

Funding from the Downtown/Central District Redevelopment Area was not appropriated to the Ambassador Program in the FY 2007/09 budget and it is not anticipated that funding will be appropriated to the Program in the proposed Oakland Redevelopment Agency budget for FY 2009/11 due to unavailability of funding. Once implemented, ongoing funding for the Ambassador Program will need to be appropriated in future budgets. In addition, funding the Ambassador Program with redevelopment funds limits its geographic application.

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

The Redevelopment Agency will offer matching grants to eligible organizations to hire Ambassadors to provide escort, directions, information and serve as the eyes and ears for law enforcement officials in targeted commercial districts and BART Station areas in redevelopment project areas. The general objectives of the Ambassador Program are:

- To create a visible presence of security within the boundaries of the target district.
- To achieve a measurable decrease in all crimes committed in the area. Specifically, deter loitering, solicitation, panhandling and other anti-social behavior. Provide resource information to homeless persons and other transients regarding programs and services. Participate in community meetings to promote communication and collaboration on issues of mutual concern to businesses and residents in the district.
- To provide assistance and information to businesses and employees in the district.

The Ambassador Program will be a part of an overall public safety strategy for the targeted district, developed in conjunction with the sponsoring community organization, Neighborhood Services and OPD.

Eligibility requirements for the community organization requesting matching funds for Ambassadors include:

- A Business Improvement or Community Benefit District with a budget and experience managing and coordinating the provision of services to the target commercial district; and
- Administrative capacity including fiscal ability to budget, monitor expenditures and evaluate performance; and
- Can demonstrate three years capacity to provide matching funds from private funding source.

SUSTAINABLE OPPORTUNITIES

Economic:

Businesses and commercial properties located in redevelopment areas are negatively impacted by crime. Overall revenues and sales tax generation have declined due in part to increased crime hindering the City's business attraction and retention efforts. The proposed Ambassador Program is a public safety program focused on crime prevention and hospitality services in commercial districts. Enhanced public safety will encourage business retention and attraction, financial investment and developer interest in redevelopment project areas.

Environmental:

The relationship between crime and blight in Oakland Redevelopment Areas has been documented in Redevelopment Area Plans, specifically in blight studies. Crimes such as graffiti and vandalism contribute to physical blight. A goal of the proposed Ambassador Program is to provide additional eyes and ears on the streets to report undesirable activity creating a safer environment for businesses and residents.

Social Equity:

The proposed Ambassador Program has the potential to become a feeder program for individuals interested in pursuing careers in the law enforcement and security professions. The potential is increased if the Ambassador Program is affiliated with the Oakland Police Department's Police Cadet Program. Recruiting Oakland residents to positions in OPD is a goal of the Department's Hire Oakland First Policy.

DISABILITY AND SENIOR CITIZEN ACCESS

The proposed Ambassador Program is a crime prevention program with an emphasis on hospitality. A reduction in crime in redevelopment areas will be beneficial to the overall safety of senior citizens who reside in Oakland redevelopment areas.

RECOMMENDATION(S) AND RATIONALE

Ambassador Programs have taken a wide range of shapes and forms in the different cities researched by staff. They have had a positive effect when they function as part of a coordinated public safety strategy. Initial feedback on the Ambassadors currently working in Lake Merritt/Uptown and Oakland Downtown Community Benefit Districts has been positive. It is in the City's interest to expand the Program where possible.

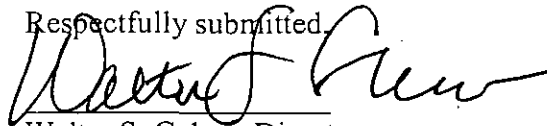
Offering matching grants to eligible organizations to provide Ambassador Services in targeted redevelopment project areas, provided that the use of Ambassadors is a part of an overall public safety strategy, is highly recommended. Staff recommends a phased implementation of the Ambassador Program. Phase one is working in targeted redevelopment areas that have organizations with both capacity and interest in including Ambassadors Services in the services already provided to district to provide matching grants. Phase two involves exploring the

potential to integrate Ambassador Services in the commercial security program in the Central City East and Coliseum Redevelopment Areas as part of the overall public safety strategy. Also included in this phase is identifying opportunities to use Ambassador Program funds to support commercial security efforts in targeted redevelopment areas and examining the Central District Redevelopment Area budget to determine if funds exist to support the Lake Merritt/Uptown and Downtown Community Benefit Districts' Safety Ambassador Program.

ACTION REQUESTED OF THE CITY COUNCIL

Staff requests that the Redevelopment Agency board accept the recommendations to implement the Ambassador Program using the phased approach described in the recommendations section of this report. If approved staff will come back to the Redevelopment Agency Board with detailed program description, budget and an implementation plan.

Respectfully submitted,



Walter S. Cohen, Director
Community and Economic Development Agency

Reviewed By: Gregory Hunter, Deputy Director
Economic Development and Redevelopment

Prepared By: Stephanie Floyd-Johnson
Redevelopment Program Manager

APPROVED AND FORWARDED TO THE
COMMUNITY AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE:



Office of the Agency Administrator