



MAYOR & COUNCIL MEMORANDUM

January 21, 2015

Subject: Repurposing of Closed Tucson Unified School District (TUSD) School Sites (City Wide)

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Issue – Mayor Rothschild has requested this item to discuss possible incentives the City could offer for compatible redevelopment of closed TUSD school sites.

Recommendation – The City Manager requests that the Mayor and Council provide direction concerning this item.

Background - TUSD closed a total of 19 schools in 2010 and 2013, and has gained voter approval to sell or conduct long term leases on any or all of these sites. Given the prominence of these closed schools within the city's neighborhoods, their future use is of interest to the City.

City staff from Planning and Development Services and the Office of Integrated Planning previously met with planning staff from TUSD to discuss plans for closed school sites. Many schools have been leased to other organizations or used by TUSD for different purposes. One school (Wrightstown Elementary) is in the process of being sold for private housing development. TUSD currently has no plans for approximately five or six schools at this time.

Present Considerations – Planning and Development Services staff prepared the following list of incentives that the City could offer to developers of closed school sites where redevelopment is deemed beneficial to the City and compatible with surrounding neighborhoods. These incentives could include:

- Assignment of the Mayor-Manager Action Team
- Assignment of a dedicated Project/Portfolio Manager
- Expedited plan reviews (tentative plats, final plats, development packages—*3 day reviews*)
- Trade gray water requirements for active rainwater harvesting systems (on residential projects)
- Concurrent tentative plat, grading plan reviews
- Self-certification of building plans (on residential projects)
- Defer building permit and grading permit fees to Certificate of Occupancy (final inspection for residential projects)*
- Defer impact fees to Certificate of Occupancy (final inspection for residential projects)*

* Currently requires separate development agreement with the Mayor and Council

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Providing such incentives could increase the potential that these sites could be returned to productive use in the near term. Potential benefits for the City and the surrounding neighborhoods include reduced risk of blight, creation of new housing stock, retail and commercial development, and creation of community assets like open space as a part of private development.

Financial Considerations – None

Legal Considerations – Any financial incentives will have to undergo an analysis under the Gift Clause to the Arizona Constitution to ensure they are legally provided to a particular development.

Respectfully submitted,



Martha Durkin
City Manager

MD:NEG/JBM/mp
Office of Integrated Planning

Attachment: Status of Closed Schools in Tucson Unified School District