

Supplemental Material

For

City of Sacramento

City Council
Financing Authority
Housing Authority
Redevelopment Agency

Agenda Packet

Submitted: 8/11/09

For the Meeting of: August 11, 2009

- Additional Material
 Revised Material

Title: Alley Activation Update (M09-026)

Attached is a correspondence from ECOS.

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Please include this supplemental material in your agenda packet. This material will also be published to the City's Internet. For additional information, contact the City Clerk Department at Historic City Hall, 915 I Street, First Floor, Sacramento, CA 95814-2604, (916) 808-7200.



ECOS
ENVIRONMENTAL
• COUNCIL •
OF SACRAMENTO

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August 11, 2009

Mayor Kevin Johnson and Councilmembers
City of Sacramento
915 I Street, 5th Floor
Sacramento, CA 95814

Re: Alley Activation Update (M09-026)
ECOS Analysis of Environmental Returns on Investment and Support for Approval of
Staff Study of Alley Activation Pilot Projects

Dear Mayor Johnson and Sacramento City Councilmembers,

ECOS wishes to reiterate its strong support for the ongoing “Alley Activation” process that has been occurring these last months. ECOS has twice previously submitted comments to the City expressing our support for this process. We are now submitting the comments below in connection with the Alley Activation Update item (M09-026) scheduled for the August 11, 2009 City Council agenda.

ECOS has participated in the Alley Activation dialogue since its inception. As these discussions have progressed, it has become clear that Alley Activation is one of the best opportunities presently before the City for facilitating efficient revenue-generating infill development while simultaneously tackling greenhouse gas emissions; reducing air and water pollution; encouraging more walking, biking and use of transit; improving the safety of the central city; and enhancing equity. Alley Activation presents such valuable opportunities because it builds on the city’s existing infrastructure and community assets and is thus an extremely efficient method for addressing multiple community planning, environmental, social, and economic issues.

ECOS wishes to undertake an analysis of Alley Activation that will quantify the environmental returns on investment associated with the various efforts currently under consideration. Across a broad range of critically important criteria, Alley Activation offers the City of Sacramento remarkable opportunities to make significant progress addressing climate change, air quality, water quality and supply, transportation mode share, public safety, equity, and the completeness of our central city. Similar analyses could be conducted with regard to the economic and governmental returns. ECOS will attempt to provide a comprehensive analysis of environmental returns associated with alley activation investments.

Alley Activation has evolved to encompass three main approaches: “pedestrian-first” alleys with enhanced paving/landscaping, mixed use alleys, and residential alleys. These three approaches offer flexible and location-appropriate methods for better utilization of the central city’s existing infrastructure with substantial positive returns to city government and city residents. ECOS is eager to analyze just how substantial these returns may be. However, without additional staff

time spent studying these approaches and the three pilot project proposals currently under consideration, any quantitative analysis of possible returns will necessarily involve an undesirable amount of guesswork.

A proper quantitative analysis of alley activation environmental returns on investment will greatly benefit from staff studying the pilot project proposals currently before the council and from the pilot projects being implemented. ECOS therefore urges the Council to direct staff to study alley activation and the pilot project proposals and ultimately to support implementation. Doing so will provide needed insights into the actual costs associated with the various possible investments and thus make it possible to much more accurately analyze the projected returns from these investments.

What is an Environmental Return on Investment?

An environmental return on investment (ROI) is a measure used to evaluate the environmental benefits of a particular investment or set of investments as compared with other possible investments. In order to calculate ROI, one subtracts the costs of an investment from the benefits and then divides this sum by the cost. More simply put, one divides the return by the cost of the investment and the ROI is then presented as a percentage or ratio. If Investment Option A does not present positive returns or if there are other investments (say Investment Option B) that present higher ROIs, then Option A should not be pursued.

ECOS suggests to the City that all of its planning efforts would benefit greatly from a comprehensive set of ROI analyses being conducted on all current planning investment opportunities — new growth areas, large-scale infill, small-scale infill, transportation, energy, solid waste, water, wastewater, etc. Based on our initial consideration, it appears that Alley Activation may offer one of and possibly the highest ROI of any planning-related investment options currently before the City. This is because it appears that for a relatively small amount of money, on the order of thousands of dollars, a range of significant benefits potentially valued at many millions of dollars could accrue. Conducting a thorough environmental return on investment analysis for Alley Activation will take some time — and again, it is not currently possible to fully quantify the returns because Alley Activation is not a project and the City has not yet provided the guidance that will make it possible to establish all of the elements required to calculate potential returns. This is why it is so critical for the City Council to direct staff to continue engaging in this process and to further study the activation of the pilot alley projects.

Alley Activation Environmental Returns – Returns, Sub-goals, Strategies, Means

Below are the major environmental returns potentially achievable with investments focused on activating Sacramento's alleys to become "pedestrian-first" alleys, mixed-use alleys, and residential alleys. As this initial analysis is not quantitative, the returns are not presented with any specific references to the three different approaches to alley activation. Rather, the returns below are organized by type of return, sub-goals, strategies for achieving the sub-goals, and then means for implementing these strategies. There is some overlap and redundancy as certain strategies and means have potential application for multiple returns and sub-goals.

The sections below are presented in the following manner:

I. RETURN on Investment 1 (Goal 1)

A. SUB-GOAL 1

1. STRATEGY 1

a. MEAN 1

Alley Activation Environmental Returns on Investment

I. Reduce/Slow Climate Change

A. Greenhouse Gas (GHG) Reductions

1. VMT Reductions

a. Traffic Demand Management

b. Parking Efficiency Enhancements

c. Increased Parity in Mode Share / Increased Walking, Biking, Transit

d. Garbage Collection / Waste Management Efficiency Enhancements

e. Increased Urban Core Densities → Greenfield Development Reductions

2. Energy Demand Reductions

a. Stormwater Pumping Reductions

b. Per Capita Energy Consumption Reductions

3. Energy Efficiency Enhancements

a. Infill Built to Higher Standard

II. Improve Air Quality

A. Air Quality Attainment / Criteria Pollutant Reductions

1. VMT Reductions

see above

2. Energy Demand Reductions

see above

3. Energy Efficiency Enhancements

see above

III. Increase Parity in Transportation Mode Share

A. Walking, Biking, Transit Usage Increases

1. Non-Vehicular Accessibility to Goods, Services, Destinations Enhanced

a. Population of Central City Increases

b. Job, Shopping, Destination Opportunities in Central City Increases

2. Access to Transit Enhanced

a. Population Living in Proximity to Transit Increased

3. Access for Persons with Disabilities Enhanced

a. Population of Persons with Disabilities in Central City Increased

IV. Enhance Equity

A. Mobility and Access to Essential Services and Goods for All Residents Increased

1. Mode Share Parity Enhanced

a. Walking, Biking, Transit, Wheelchair, Scooter Usage Increases

V. Improve Water Quality

- A. Urban Runoff Reductions
 - 1. Water Percolation / Groundwater Recharge Increased
 - a. Permeable/Porous Pavement Installation

VI. Protect/Preserve Water Supply/Reliability

- A. Water Usage Efficiency Improvements
 - 1. Per Capita Water Demand Reductions
 - a. Density increases / Yard Size Reductions

VII. Enhance Public Safety

- A. DUI Reductions
 - 1. Nighttime Driving To/From Bars/Restaurants Reductions
 - a. Mode Share Shift
- B. Vehicular Impacts on Pedestrians/Bicyclists/Others Reductions
 - 2. Slower Speeds
 - a. Non-Vehicular Street Activity Levels Increased
- C. Street Crime Reductions
 - 3. "Eyes on the Street" Increased
 - a. Alley Residents, Businesses, Users Increased

VIII. Enhance Completeness of Community / Sense of Place

- A. Investments in Central City Increased
 - 1. High Quality Infill Increased
 - a. Alley Activating Development Increased
 - 2. Restore/Rehab Dilapidated Structures
 - a. Alley Activating Development Increased
 - 3. Lighting, Signage Improvements
 - a. Public, Private Financing
 - b. City Naming of Alleys

The above skeleton is the initial draft structure that ECOS has blocked out to frame our analysis of the environmental returns on investment associated with Alley Activation. ECOS welcomes comments and input on this structure and our overall analysis. We look forward to continuing to work with the City and all Alley Activation stakeholders on this exciting and incredibly promising effort. Thank you for your attention.

Sincerely,



Graham Brownstein
Executive Director, ECOS

cc: Ray Kerridge, Bill Crouch, Stacia Cosgrove, Bill Thomas, and David Kwong