

Downtown Fresno PBID PROPOSED APPROACH (DRAFT 9-17-08)

Project Objectives

Progressive Urban Management Associates proposes to assist the Downtown Association of Fresno (DAF) and the downtown business community evaluate the feasibility for creating a property-based business improvement district (PBID), and, if found both necessary and feasible, proceed through the legal steps to form it. Specific project objectives include:

- Build upon the work and recommendations of the June 2008 IDA Advisory Panel.
- Assess the dynamics of downtown Fresno's economic, political and planning environment. Identify significant market changes that have occurred over the past five years and anticipate those that can be reasonably expected through the next five to ten years.
- Determine how DAF and a new PBID should best be positioned and organized to respond to current challenges and opportunities.
- Determine program priorities for downtown (i.e. enhanced security, maintenance, marketing, economic development, parking management, etc.) and develop a blueprint to ensure that new initiatives strengthen and unify overall downtown development, marketing and management efforts.
- Engage DAF's board of directors and other downtown stakeholders in a participatory process to evaluate and potentially form the PBID.

Proposed Approach

Three steps are anticipated to determine the feasibility and optimal plan for the PBID and then, if found necessary and feasible, create it. The consulting approach builds support for the PBID through a series of participatory processes that educate and engage direct stakeholders.

To provide input, direction and an overall "sense of reality", a ***PBID Steering Committee*** composed of business, property and civic representatives is recommended to work with the consultant team through the duration of the project. A 12 to 18 member Steering Committee is recommended, including representatives from the DAF board, key downtown businesses, influential property owners and City representatives. Three steps during a nine month process are anticipated, resulting in a Downtown Fresno PBID Management Plan and the completion of a petition drive, City Council hearings and mail ballot process to form the PBID.

We also anticipate that the DAF will designate a ***project manager*** to work with the consultant team. Tasks for the project manager include updating and maintaining a comprehensive property database, arranging logistics for consultant meetings and site visits and, if needed, managing the campaign to form the PBID, including petition assignments, community relations and project timetable.

Step 1: Preparation

- 1.1 **Downtown Market Reconnaissance:** The consultant team will undertake an initial project orientation site visit to become acquainted with Downtown Fresno and its various sub-districts, assess changes over the past five years and understand opportunities for the next ten. Prior to the site visit we will review plans and market studies that have been completed over the past five years. We will review findings from the IDA Advisory Panel and interview panel participants. During the market reconnaissance phase we will meet with influential property and business owners, civic leaders and city officials. Local database capabilities will be evaluated, a study area defined and an initial meeting with the PBID Steering Committee and/or the DAF board of directors will be convened.
- 1.2 **Database Development:** The consultant team will assist the DAF to update and refine a comprehensive property database from available information at the City, County and other existing sources. The database will be designed for a variety of uses, including periodic mailings to property owners, source data for assessment scenarios and tracking for the PBID petition and 218 ballot campaigns. *DAF staff will be expected to update and maintain the database – the consultant team can assist in the updating process and provide technical assistance as needed.*
- 1.3 **Base Level of Services:** A quantified definition of the City's existing base level of services and a commitment to maintain existing services can be developed early in the PBID formation process. The consultant team will work closely with the City and the DAF to provide model base level of services agreements from other cities, assist in negotiations and participate in the process as requested.

Step 2: Plan Development, Review & Refinement

- 2.1 **Downtown Stakeholder Outreach:** To educate a broad array of downtown property owners, businesses and civic leaders (i.e. "stakeholders") on the PBID concept, and to determine priorities for supportable PBID services, the consultant team will conduct a series of up to six (6) roundtable discussion groups and up to 15 one-on-one meetings. Each discussion group will contain from 8 to 12 participants representing a particular stakeholder segment (i.e. retail, services, theater and the arts, property owners, etc) within Downtown. Discussion groups should also be determined by geographic sub-districts. The discussion groups will aim to identify strengths and weaknesses within the Downtown and the willingness of stakeholders to support creation of the district. Recommendations for moving forward will be submitted to the PBID Steering Committee and/or the DAF board of directors. The consultant team will also meet individually with key stakeholders, including city officials, to obtain input into the design of the PBID.
- 2.2 **Direct Mail/email Survey:** To broaden the outreach effort and obtain input on PBID priorities, a direct mail survey will be distributed to affected property and business owners via direct mail and/or electronically. Similar to the roundtable discussion groups, the survey will aim to assess priority needs and the appetite for supporting creation of the district. (The consultant will design, tabulate and

interpret the survey, DAF will be expected to copy and distribute it.)

- 2.3 **Draft PBID Draft Management Plan:** Under the direction of the DAF board of directors and/or the PBID Steering Committee, a PBID Draft Management Plan will be compiled. The PBID Draft Management Plan will respond to downtown's recent market changes and anticipate future opportunities. The Management Plan will also incorporate the recommendations from the IDA Advisory Panel, stakeholder outreach and surveys. It will include the following components:

- Plan summary;
- District rationale and objectives;
- Recommended district boundaries;
- Service plan options with first year budget and ten year projection;
- Recommended assessment methodology;
- Governance and service delivery structure;
- Relationship to DAF, existing BIA and other organizations;
- City participation issues;
- District rules and regulations;

The preliminary *Draft Management Plan* will be reviewed by the PBID Steering Committee and/or the DAF board of directors with the consultant.

- 2.4 **Plan Review Workshops:** The consultant team will present the options and recommendations from the preliminary *Draft Management Plan* to Downtown Fresno stakeholders through a series of up to three workshops. Participants from roundtable discussion groups, direct mail surveys and other outreach will be encouraged to attend the workshops. The intent of the workshops is to obtain stakeholder input prior to completion of the final *PBID Management Plan*.
- 2.5 **Stakeholder Consensus:** Following the plan review workshops, a consensus Management Plan will be developed with input from the PBID Steering Committee and the DAF board of directors. ***At this step, the feasibility for proceeding with creation of the district and the property owner petition drive is determined.***

Step 3: PBID Creation -- Petition & Ballot Campaigns

- 3.1 **Legal Review, Engineer's Report & Final Plan:** Legal counsel will undertake a final review of the plan and initiate preparations for the property owner petition drive, including review of the draft petition and petition collection procedure. The Management Plan and assessment methodology will be evaluated by a certified engineer (Kristin Lowell Inc.) to verify utility in spreading benefits and providing overall fairness. The Engineer's Report is a requirement of California's Proposition 218. Based upon the stakeholder and legal review of the preliminary *Management Plan*, the consultant team will incorporate revisions and prepare a final *Downtown Fresno PBID Management Plan*. The plan format, pioneered in California by the consultant team, is designed to comply with AB3754 and Proposition 218, plus be utilized as a user-friendly educational tool for property and business owners.

- 3.2 **Database Verification/Refinement for Campaign:** To prepare for the property owner petition drive, the database will be refined to prepare property data sheets profiling each property owner. The data sheet must then be mailed to each property owner along with the PBID petition allowing for protests on the validity of the data. An arrangement with the City is recommended to facilitate site inspections for property owners that choose to appeal. Database parameters will also be expanded to include percentage of influence on petition drive, support inclination and other information useful for the petition drive.
- 3.3 **Campaign Training/Classify Support Inclinations:** The consultant team will provide coaching and training to the Steering Committee, which will now evolve into a Property Owner “sales team”, charged with obtaining signatures. Sector captains will be appointed to oversee campaign activities within specific areas. The Committee will help the consultant team and staff to classify inclinations of support or opposition from all property owners. Property owner classifications will be added to the database.
- 3.4 **PBID Newsletter:** The consultant team will prepare a summary newsletter that communicates the parameters and benefits of the PBID. The newsletter will summarize the management plan and will be distributed with petitions.
- 3.5 **Draft Petition/City Review:** A draft petition for the PBID will require City review. The consultant team will work with staff behind-the-scenes to keep the process on track. The actual petition package for property owners will consist of several items, including a summary of the PBID Management Plan, petition, newsletter and property owner data sheet with estimated assessments. The consultant team will work with the DAF to ensure that these materials are assembled and prepared properly.
- 3.6 **Campaign Assistance:** The consultant team will monitor and provide assistance to the Property Owner’s Committee during the petition drive and City Council approval process. These meetings will include tracking support, making “sales” assignments for property owners, and developing strategies for approval of the PBID.
- 3.7 **218 Ballots:** Following the submission of petitions to the City Council, the consultant team will assist the DAF and the City of Fresno complete the required 218 ballot process.
- 3.8 **City Council Approval:** Upon the completion of a successful petition drive, the consultant team will be available to participate in public hearings establishing the PBID.