

South Side retailing, with school, roads, gets OK

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Funding for a new school, wider roads and job training was among the things promised to the City Council Tuesday night when it approved an agreement with the developers behind a large, mixed-use project on Tucson's South Side.

The council voted 5-1 to accept a development agreement with residential builder KB Home and commercial developer

Eastbourne Investments during its regular meeting. Councilman Jose Barra was sick and not at Tuesday's meeting. Councilwoman Karin Ulchik voted against it.

There was no mention in the agreement of a waiver of the

city's big-box ordinance, which bars retail outlets that are 100,000 square feet or larger with more than 10 percent of the space dedicated to grocery sales.

The agreement outlines how the two developers will pay for the effect their project, The Bridges of Tucson, will have on the surrounding neighborhoods.

The Bridges will be near Kino Parkway and Interstate 19, to the south of the University of Arizona's proposed Arizona Bioscience Research Park.

The council will vote next month on the zoning of the 56-acre project, including the research park.

It will also decide if Eastbourne can build a big-box store at the location, which the developer believes is needed as



Source: KB Home, Tucson Citizen

an anchor to the regional shopping center.

Ulchik said she voted against the agreement because she has not had a chance to review the plans for the area and doesn't know how the neighboring communities will be affected.

"It's very difficult to know what those impacts are," she said. "I don't feel comfortable taking it on a nod and a huff-shake here."

Those plans are in the hands of Zoning Examiner Peter Gavin, who is expected to make a ruling next week before forwarding them to the council to approve the zoning.

Under the agreement already approved by the council, Eastbourne and KB Home will pay the city \$6 million in impact fees.

The two builders have also agreed to widen Park Avenue from 38th Street to I-19 and make improvements to the intersection at Kino and 38th.

The cost of those road improvements could earn the builders credit toward the

impact fee assessment, but details on that part of the agreement are still being worked out, city officials said.

Eastbourne and KB Home will also put up \$2 million for job training, business assistance, a community arts center and sidewalks and trails in the area.

In exchange, the city will contribute \$4.7 million of construction sales taxes generated by the property to help pay for those programs.

Councilman Steve Leal said the job training will not guarantee jobs for those living in the surrounding low-income area, but it will give them the skills they need to compete for the estimated 900 permanent jobs the project will generate.

KB Home also will pay an estimated \$2,000 per home, which is

called a rooftop fee, that will help raise \$3 million for a new Tucson Unified School District school to be built on a 10-acre parcel within the development, Leal said.

Eastbourne's partner, Eric Davis of Retail West Properties, said the concessions it made in the development agreement are unlike any they've made elsewhere in the country.

"This one marks a first for me and I think it's unique in a lot of my peers," Davis said. "It's the first one that addresses the other side of the community. Job training is probably the best example of that."

Councilwoman Nina Trassoff voted for the agreement but said she still had concerns about the possibility of encroaching the project from the big-box ban.