

# HEBER PUBLIC UTILITY DISTRICT

## REPORT TO BOARD OF DIRECTORS

**MEETING DATE:** November 19, 2015

**FROM:** Laura Fischer, General Manager

**SUBJECT:** Authorize submittal of projects to the Imperial County Community Benefit Program for Funding.

**ISSUE:** Shall the Board authorize submittal of projects to the Imperial County Community Benefit Program for funding?

**GENERAL MANAGER'S RECOMMENDATION:**

Authorize submittal of one or two projects to the Imperial County Community Benefit Program for funding.

**FISCAL IMPACT:**

None:

**BACKGROUND:**

On October 16, 2015, I received an announcement that the County of Imperial was holding Public Workshops to discuss the Community Benefit Program and to inform the public and community service groups on the status of the program and what solar projects have been developed. The workshop in Heber was held on October 21, 2015.

The Community Benefit Committee was established by the Imperial County Board of Supervisors to develop recommendations to the Board regarding the use of funds currently being generated under the Community Benefit element of the Public Benefit Program for Solar Projects in Imperial County. This Program was developed to address community concerns resulting from solar energy development in Imperial County.

To address these concerns, the County of Imperial help public workshops to gather comments and suggestions on programs and/or projects that would provide for a concerted and coordinated effort to maximize the benefits of the solar projects to the County and its residents. Such benefits include, but are not limited to, infrastructure improvement, job creation, economic development and enhancement to the quality of life in neighboring communities.

**DISCUSSION:**

I sent out an e-mail to HPUD Board Members notifying them of the meeting and asking if they could attend. At the suggestion of Board Member Sandoval, I prepared a letter requesting that the Community Benefit Funds be used in the HPUD Service Area to support and improve the quality of life for Heber residents. A copy of the letter is attached to this document.

We were notified that we must submit shovel ready project to the committee for review. Here is a list of the projects that have been discussed, the estimated cost, and the shovel ready status of each project.

REQUEST TO COUNTY OF IMPERIAL FOR COMMUNITY BENEFIT FUNDS						
PROJECT LIST						
	PROJECT TITLE	LOCATION	DESCRIPTION	ESTIMATED COTS	CURRENT FUNDING	PROJECT STATUS
1	Soccer Field Lights at Tito Park	Tito Park	Construct 12 new lights poles to provide soccer field lights	\$ 270,000	None	We received a quote from Musco Lighting in 2013.
2	Basketball Courts	Tito Huerta Park	Refurbish existing cement and construct a full size high school basketball court.	\$ 76,170	None	Project was submitted to bid in March 2015. The lowest bid received was from
3	Park at Correll Basin	Correll Basin	Construct a park with recreation facilities in the Correll Retention Basin	None	80,000 (same funds as listed in the Correll Basin Improvement Project)	This project is not designed. HPUD has submitted a request to the County of Imperial to reduce the size of the retention basin. HPUD Engineer has determined that the basin is adequately sized for the required 100 year storm. Staff will submit this new information to the County with an additional request.
4	Field Lights and Security Lights	Jiggs Johnson Park	Install field lights and area lighting in Jiggs Johnson Park	\$ 150,000	None	We have a design and engineering documents to construct the lighting, but no cost estimate.
5	Restrooms at Jiggs Johnson Park	Jiggs Johnson Park	Construct restrooms at the park	\$ 100,000	None	We have a design and engineering documents to construct the restrpp, but no cost estimate.
6	Restrooms at Estancia Park	Estancia Park	Construct restrooms at the park	\$ 100,000	None	We don't have design or engineering plans for this project. It would need to be designed before a good cost estimate can be determined.
7	Area Security Lights at Estancia Park	Estancia Park	Install field lights and area lighting in Estancia Park	None	None	We have not designed or engineered this project so we have no current cost estimates.
8	Improvements to Correll Basin	Correll Basin	Reconstruct the basin to make it functional	\$ 220,000	80,000	Project was bid in April 2015. Lowest bid received was \$171,771. With additional project costs total (deisgn and engineering prepaid by HPUD) total cost is estimbated at \$220,000.
9	Construct New Park and Open Space In HPUD Area	HPUD Vacant Land on corner of Correll/Rockwood	Construct a park with recreation facilities in the current vacant land owned by HPUD	None	None	This project was submitted to a grant agency, but was not approved. The conceptual design would need to be reconsidered prior to reuesting funds.

**RECOMMENDATION:**

Approve a prioritized list of projects to submit to the Community Benefit Program Committee. Direct staff to prepare a report as to the benefits to the community, cost estimates, shovel readiness, and a justification as to why these projects meet the criteria of the program.

**ALTERNATIVES:**

- 1) Do not authorize projects to be submitted to the County Community Benefit Program Committee.
- 2) Provide alternate direction to staff.

Respectfully Submitted,

Laura Fischer, General Manager

Attachment: Letter from HPUD to County Community Benefit Program  
Flyer from County re: Public Workshops for Community Benefit Program



## Heber Public Utility District

1078 Dogwood Rd. Suite, 103 · P.O. Box H  
Heber, CA 92249  
TEL. (760) 482-2440 · FAX (760) 353-9951  
[www.heber.ca.gov](http://www.heber.ca.gov)

October 20, 2015

Board of Supervisors  
c/o Blanca Acosta,  
IC Clerk of the Board  
940 Main Street  
El Centro, CA 92243

**RE: Community Benefit Program**

Dear Board of Supervisors:

It was recently brought to the attention of the Heber Public Utility District (HPUD) that the County of Imperial Community Benefit Program may have funding available to enhance the quality of life in neighborhood communities like Heber.

The Heber Public Utility District would like the County of Imperial to consider the benefit of improving parks and open space in the Community of Heber. Community parks and open space improve our physical and psychological health, strengthen our communities, and make our cities and neighborhoods more attractive places to live and work.

Strong evidence shows that when people have access to parks, they exercise more. Regular physical activity has been shown to increase health and reduce the risk of a wide range of diseases, including heart disease, hypertension, colon cancer, and diabetes. Physical activity also relieves symptoms of depression and anxiety, improves mood, and enhances psychological well-being.

Beyond the benefits of exercise, a growing body of research shows that contact with the natural world improves physical and psychological health. Despite the importance of exercise, only 25 percent of American adults engage in the recommended levels of physical activity, and 29 percent engage in no leisure-time physical activity. The sedentary lifestyle and unhealthy diet of Americans have produced an epidemic of obesity. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has called for the creation of more parks and playgrounds to help fight this epidemic.

Numerous studies have shown that parks and open space increase the value of neighboring residential property. Growing evidence points to a similar benefit on commercial property value. The availability of park and recreation facilities is an important quality-of-life factor for corporations choosing where to locate facilities and for well-educated individuals choosing a place to live.

Green space in urban areas provides substantial environmental benefits. Trees reduce air pollution and water pollution, they help keep communities cooler, and they are a more effective and less

expensive way to manage stormwater runoff than building systems of concrete sewers and drainage ditches.

Community parks also produce important social and community development benefits. They make neighborhoods more livable; they offer recreational opportunities for at-risk youth, low-income children, and low-income families; and they provide places in low-income neighborhoods where people can feel a sense of community.

Access to public parks and recreational facilities has been strongly linked to reductions in crime and in particular to reduced juvenile delinquency.

In light of these benefits, the Heber Public Utility District recommends the following project to be included in the Community Benefit Program. We encourage the County Board of Supervisors to join our effort to bring more parks, open spaces, and greenways into the neighborhoods of Heber where everyone can benefit from them.

The Heber Public Utility District has put together a list of projects that will bring more parks, open space and greenways to our community. The proposed projects are listed below:

### **Suggestion 1) Increase Park and Open Space Area in Heber.**

The Heber Public Utility District has four (4) parks and recreational facilities and is responsible for maintaining parks and retention basins within the service area. The District and the Imperial County use a service ratio of five (5) acres of parkland per 1,000 persons. Currently, the District has 21.53 acres of parkland and a population of 6,000, which equates to a *deficiency of 8.47 acres of parks.*

**Request:** Construct new park and open space in Heber to meet the County's service ratio. Parks should have athletic fields, lights, restrooms, and play equipment to ensure maximum use and health benefit.

***Correll Basin:*** The Heber Public Utility District requests a park be built in the Correll Stormwater Basin. The HPUD has a conceptual plan that includes construction of a 60' X 180' park area where the neighborhood residents and public will have access to a walking path around the basin and a park area with a recreation area. Some suggestions for the recreation area include a splash pad and/or play equipment for youth.

***HPUD Property:*** The HPUD owns 19 acres that could be used to construct a park and open space area. We have submitted this project to a grant funding agency, but we were unsuccessful in securing construction funds. We are very interested in increasing the park acreage in the Heber community and would very much like to work with the County to secure construction funds.

### **Suggestion 2) Improve Existing Parks to Promote Health and Safety of Community:**

The Heber Public Utility District owns and operates four parks in the community and each park has some service deficiency. The HPUD continues to make improvements to the parks and open

spaces, but the revenues we receive are limited to our share of property taxes and revenue from CFD after bond payments. These limited revenues are the only sources available and we must fund the park operations and maintenance, as well as any capital equipment purchases and construction projects from these funds.

Estancia Park is a 7.02-acre park that serves two functions, as a park and retention basin. The revenue to operate and maintain the park is generated from a Community Facilities District which is managed by the County of Imperial. The park contains a shaded tot lot, basketball court and benches.

**Request:** Install security area lighting in Estancia Park to promote healthy use of the parks and to increase security and safety of the community. Install restroom facilities so that the community youth leagues can benefit from the use of the parks.

Jiggs Johnson Park is a 3.72 acre park that has a shaded tot lot and barbecue grills. The revenue to operate and maintain this park is generated from a Heber Meadows Community Facilities District which is managed by the HPUD. The annual revenue available to maintain the park, after payment of Heber Meadows CFD Bond, is \$11,000 per year. The cost of operate and maintain the park is much more than the revenue provided by the CFD, thus there are no extra funds available for the needed improvements.

**Request:** Install security area lighting in Jiggs Johnson Park which will promote healthy use of the parks and to increase security and safety of the community. Install restroom facilities so that the community youth leagues can benefit from the use of the parks.

Children's Park is a .41 acre park that was built in 1981 and has not had significant upgrades. The play equipment is outdated and does not meet current tot lot safety standards. The revenue for operations and maintenance of Children's park comes from the HPUD's share of property taxes. The park is in great need of new play equipment to ensure the safety of our children.

**Request:** Install new play equipment and benches in Children's park so that the children in Heber and the surrounding neighborhoods can benefit from healthy activities.

Tito Huerta Park is the largest of the parks in Heber at 10.38 acres. Tito Huerta park has many of the community facilities that are in great demand, such as a lighted little league field, snack bar and restroom. The Park does not have field lights for the soccer fields and does not have a playground for young children. The revenue for the operations and maintenance of this park is generated from the HPUD limited share of property taxes.

**Request:** Install field lights for the soccer fields and a playground. There is a very high demand for the use of the soccer fields and baseball field at Tito Huerta Park as this is the only park with area lights and restrooms. Youth soccer leagues are only able to play at this park during daylight hours and during

the fall soccer season this is limited as it gets dark early. Additionally, there is no playground equipment at this park and that limits the use by children.

The Heber Public Utility District appreciates the opportunity to express our concerns with the park acreage deficiency in the Heber community, and to express our great desire for the County of Imperial to use any funds available in the Community Benefit Program to improve the quality of life in the Community of Heber.

We welcome a discussion regarding the needs of the community and will make staff available to provide conceptual plans, specifications, bids and other documents supporting the request address above. Should you have any questions or wish to contact the HPUD, please contact Ms. Laura Fischer, General Manager, at 760-482-2440.

Sincerely,

Heber Public Utility District  
Board of Directors

Cc: Ralph Cordova, County CEO  
HPUD Board of Directors  
Laura Fischer, General Manager HPUD

**Edward “Jiggs” Johnson Park** – The 3.72-acre park is one of the newest parks within the District. Although the park has not been fully completed, it includes a shaded tot lot as well as visitor amenities including barbecue grills.

**Heber Children Park** – The 0.41-acre park is one of the District’s most mature parks located within close proximity to the center of the Townsite. Existing amenities at the park include a tot lot, mature trees, and benches.

**Margarito “Tito” Huerta Jr. Park** – The 10.38-acre park is the largest park in the District and the only park that includes a

If you have any questions regarding this communication, please don’t hesitate to contact me at (760) 482-2440 or at [lfischer@heber.ca.gov](mailto:lfischer@heber.ca.gov).

Sincerely,

Laura Fischer,  
District Manager

cc: HPUD Board of Directors  
Ralph Cordova, Executive Officer  
Steve Walker, Legal Counsel  
James G. “Jack” Holt, PE, District Engineer  
Justina G. Arce, Planning Consultant



# IMPERIAL COUNTY COMMUNITY BENEFIT PROGRAM PUBLIC WORKSHOPS October 21 & 22 and November 2, 5, & 9, 2015

## Wednesday, October 21, 2015

Calexico - Woman's Improvement Club  
320 Heber Ave, Calexico, CA 92231  
3:30pm - 5:00pm

Heber Community Center  
1132 Heber Ave., Heber, CA 92249  
6:00pm - 7:30pm

## Thursday, October 22, 2015

Imperial Valley Economic Development Corporation  
1405 N Imperial Ave # 1, El Centro, CA 92243  
3:30pm - 5:00pm

County Fire Department - Seeley Station  
1828 Park Street, Seeley, CA 92273  
6:00pm - 7:30pm

## Monday, November 2, 2015

Westmorland City Hall - Council Chambers  
355 S Center St., Westmorland, CA 92281  
4:00pm - 5:30pm

Salton Community Services District  
1209 Van Buren Avenue, Suite 1, Salton City, Ca. 92275  
6:00pm - 7:30pm

## Thursday, November 05, 2015

Holtville American Legion Hall  
225 W. Sixth Street, Holtville, CA 92250  
3:30pm - 5:00pm

Niland Chamber Community Center  
8031 Highway 111, Niland, CA 92257  
6:00pm - 7:30pm

## Monday, November 9, 2015

Brawley One Stop Conference Room  
860 Main St., Brawley, CA 92227  
3:30pm - 5:00pm

Calipatria Well-Being Center  
101 N. Lake St., Calipatria, CA 92233  
6:00pm - 7:30pm



The purpose of the public workshops regarding the Community Benefit Program is to inform the public and community service groups on the status of the program and what has been developed so far, and to receive comments and suggestions.

The Community Benefit Committee was established by the Imperial County Board of Supervisors to develop recommendations to the Board regarding the use of funds currently being generated under the Community Benefit element of the Public Benefit Program for Solar Projects in Imperial County. This Program was developed to address community concerns resulting from solar energy development in Imperial County.

To address these concerns, the County of Imperial seeks comments and suggestions on programs and/or projects that would provide for a concerted and coordinated effort to maximize the benefits of the solar projects to the County and its residents. Such benefits include, but are not limited to, infrastructure improvement, job creation, economic development and enhancement to the quality of life in neighboring communities.

The Committee encourages you to attend one or more of the workshops listed above. The Committee recommendations, based on the public input during these workshops, will go to the Board of Supervisors for approval in the near future.

You may also provide your comments and suggestions after the workshops to any Committee Member, as listed:

Ralph Cordova • Yolanda Cordero • Franklin Bailey • Gustavo Galindo  
Patrick Harris • Dilda McFadden • Esperanza Colio-Warren

Contact information for Community Benefit Advisory Committee:

940 W. Main Street, Suite 208, El Centro, CA 92243 • E-mail: [rosalopez@co.imperial.ca.us](mailto:rosalopez@co.imperial.ca.us) • Phone (442) 265-1001