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Subject: Downtown Ambassador Program Proposal from Block by Block

Executive Committee:

Got this proposal from Block by Block yesterday. If you'd like a hard copy, we are happy to provide at the office.

Here's the bottom line. It's an \$800K proposal, with an initial startup capital cost of \$65K. That is for 10 full time employees – 7 entry-level folks, one homeless outreach case worker, and two supervisors. The supervisor positions are not office positions – they are also out in the field. This would give us a schedule that has an average of 7 people on the streets every day – a low of 4 on Sundays, with up to 9 people on weekends. That's about double the size of the force that I had put down on the back of a napkin. The 10-person team is about what they see in other communities and downtowns our size, looking for the services we are looking for. That's the suggested size – so let's not get sticker-shock just yet; let's see if we can find some money.

I had a great meeting with Councilman Boudreaux Monday. He was very supportive of the plan, loved the use of the EDD funds – he gets that downtown retailers would love to see tangible evidence of that penny being put to good use everyday. I pitched that the EDD cover half of the cost and LCG cover the other. That is a steep ask, but I think it's reasonable. Even if we are only able to secure partial match from LCG, we could build a great program. I have also had a good conversation with Councilman Hooks. I will continue to shop the idea to the rest of the council and get their buy in as we go. My pitch is that we "reprogram" the funds that LCG already spends downtown – we just put it into one bucket.

I have also had a good conversation with LCVC. Ben Berthelot said that his board is starting to talk about getting active in homelessness issues where it makes sense for them – this could be the way they plug into that issue. They are also very interested in the marketing/hospitality opportunities this new service provides --- you've got teams in uniforms, with big push carts, all with advertising inserts and other opportunities on social media. I'm not sure how much would be reasonable, but we will have that conversation.

Finally, I have reached out to ARCH to see if they could help us find \$100K to fund the homeless outreach case worker portion of this proposal. Stay tuned.

- EDD - \$350K a year, plus \$70K to fund initial capital (ATV, equipment, etc.)
- LCG - \$350K a year, plus perhaps donation of storage space, old pickup, etc.
- ARCH federal funding sources (this might have to be a year 2 ambassador thing, depending on timing) - \$100K a year.
- LCVC - ?\$10K? – will see how extensive this participation could be.
- ULL – they'd at least like to see about having their students be considered for employment
- LPTFA – could piggyback on this base contract for their campus

One last thing about WHERE we would host this stuff – we need some office space for the manager team, lockers, etc. We COULD squeeze them into the basement at our current building, if LCG agreed. But we also need to find a storage solution. We are currently putting out feelers for downtown property that's well off Jefferson. Could be an opportunity to get a cut-rate rent at a storefront off Jefferson that people have had a hard time filling. We could do a short lease – just putting this program in an area should help – so I am specifically looking for “problem” properties – we can kill two birds with one stone. Give it some thought. Not above dropping a metal building on an empty lot.

Good stuff. Stay safe during the storm.

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