

**Ward 5 Economic Development Summit
February 23, 2008**

Workshop: Negotiating Community Benefits

Overview of Community Benefits

“Community Benefits” are new investments (money, programs, amenities, facilities, etc.) paid out of economic development profits, that are for the good of the neighborhoods and residents where development is taking place

The “community benefits movement” started in California and has come to the District of Columbia. It is a strategy for community activists and residents to deal with economic development based on these points:

- Development often has potential negative impacts (displacement, density, etc) but it also has significant potential positives (new jobs/careers, better housing, more amenities, etc)
- Cities offer various kinds of incentives to attract developers and businesses to come to urban locations rather than the suburbs. The community benefits movement asserts that these incentives create a legitimate public interest in what development brings to the communities where they locate.

The ***community benefits solution*** is this:

- Communities organize, forming coalitions, partnerships and alliances, and mobilize residents to determine their needs and priorities.
- Community players understand their power to create delays, higher costs and political opposition but they use this power to give developers a path to gaining community support if they provide something real and meaningful to the community.
- In a community benefits agreement, all sides get something: * the community residents get benefits that are lasting and transformational; * the developers get their projects moving and complete them without costly delays; * the government gets revitalization and increased tax revenue from new economic activity, growth in population, etc. *and* private dollars going towards addressing important community needs.

With community benefits, development becomes an opportunity for improving life for residents, not just a business opportunity.

Workshop Outline: Communities Meeting the Challenge

- Setting a big goal – what’s the vision for the this neighborhood’s future?
- Seeing where new investment can help – what community benefits serve our vision?
- Recognizing the necessity of collaboration – who needs to be working together?

Presenters:

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