



CITY COUNCIL

**Darryl Moore**  
Councilmember District 2

CONSENT CALENDAR  
December 18, 2007

To: Honorable Mayor and  
Members of the City Council

From: Councilmember Darryl Moore  
Councilmember Linda Maio

Subject: Budget Referral: 3<sup>rd</sup> Annual Berkeley International Food Festival for 2008

RECOMMENDATION:

Refer a request for \$7,500 to be allocated for producing the 3<sup>rd</sup> Annual Berkeley International Food Festival for 2008.

BACKGROUND:

The second *Berkeley International Food Festival*, held June 2007, was very successful in terms of attendance; a snapshot estimate taken every 1-1/2 hours was around 3500 people, or, 12,000 attendees for the entire day total. Jim Masters, Director of Center for Community Futures, offered this number.

The event attendance doubled from the first year, when it was conceived as an economic development project for the City's International District, located around the intersection of University and San Pablo Avenues. The District is one of the densest areas of independently owned ethnic food markets in the region, restaurants serving a wide variety of specialty cuisines, and is home to the most globally diverse retail mix in Berkeley.

The goal is to build up West Berkeley from an economic development perspective by marketing the District as a destination venue. This successful food festival has brought about an increased awareness of this diverse food district and has helped to grow its popularity.

Nonetheless, the event is uniquely challenged in that is it not booth-driven, due both to the desire to feature local businesses, and its logistically challenging location, which prohibits the roping off of any major thoroughfares. With very little booth revenue and no entry fees possible, the Berkeley International Food Festival is still in its infancy and

is economically fragile. Strong financial support from the City is necessary for the first three to five years in order to sustain this event, which has done so much to bolster the economic vitality of this eclectic food district.

Still, the event has galvanized District merchants, who contributed greatly to the presentation of the Festival, decorating their businesses and offering cultural programming, and special sales and products. Festival staff provided businesses hands-on, individualized technical assistance and support, and sometimes gave financial assistance in the form of price reductions.

The geographic scope of the attendees extended from Novato, Concord, Foster City, with notable attendance from families from San Francisco. Festival-goers ran the gamut of local communities and demographics, with a strong presence from Bay Area suburbs and a large South Asian and Middle Eastern showing from the South Bay.

The psychographic profile was across the board—everyone came to eat. People wished to be exposed to a food culture, not a restaurant culture. The fact that the Festival was in Berkeley was also a big draw for many, renowned for its prominent food culture. Much of the event rested on residents exploring a neighborhood that was still slightly unfamiliar, and introducing the area to newcomers who were only familiar with 4th Street.

New in 2007, the West Berkeley Foundation was the philanthropic title sponsor of the festival, contributing to more than \$20,000 raised from various supporters (not including the City of Berkeley), many of them corporate food and beverage sponsorships. The event also earned about \$10,000 in booth fees.

A main feature of the event was a cooking stage hosted by a North Berkeley Celebrity Chef cooking with ingredients from West Berkeley markets, building on the theme of a City known the world over for its culinary sensibilities. The marriage of these two City Districts is exciting and promising.

Publicity received by the event was exceptional, and included major media sponsorships from *East Bay Express*, *India West*, KFRC and Comcast, providing several hundred thousands dollars worth of free advertising. The hosting Festival Celebrity Chef and the Festival Director appeared in television cooking segments, while district merchants and Festival staff were featured on talk radio.

One of the observable trends is the event is spreading west of university, northwest on San Pablo, and north up University. The event's economic topography actually ranges from Sacramento and University Avenues, west to the frontage and north to Hopkins and Sacramento.

It is recommended that the City appropriate \$7,500 to The West Berkeley Neighborhood Development Corporation (WBNDK) for production costs for the 2008 Berkeley International Food Festival in order to usher the event along during its financially delicate infancy period. This will help to ensure its long-term self-sufficiency by making the event recognizable and marketable to potential sponsors. If the event does not

receive financial support during this development stage, production quality will not be of the same caliber and the Festival will likely falter.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS:

\$7,500

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