

Redevelopment to aid schools

By Julie Snider
Times-Advocate Staff Writer

ESCONDIDO — If the city's proposed redevelopment agency generates as much money over the next 45 years as its proponents say it will, the Escondido Elementary School District could get eight elementary schools, two middle schools and unlimited new classrooms, all paid for with redevelopment money.

The Escondido High School District could get three new high schools, two new continuation high schools and more classrooms.

Those are some of the provisions contained in drafts of nine different agreements approved 4-0 Wednesday night by the City Council.

Councilman Jim Rady was absent. He is in Washington, D.C., on city business.

Approved with little comment, the agreements were negotiated with various agencies that would lose money to the redevelopment agency as it siphons tax revenues from them to pay for a civic and cultural center, downtown improvements and housing assistance for the poor.

The agreements must also be approved by the various agencies involved.

In order for the school districts

to be reimbursed by the state for the money lost to redevelopment, the agreements must be in place by Jan. 1, 1985.

Assistant City Manager Rod Wood said the agreements hammered out with the school districts, as well as those with the Palomar Community College District and the county Department of Education, would help meet nearly a half-century's worth of education needs.

State law allows cities, in order to stimulate economic development and finance public improvements, to collect a portion of the tax revenues going to agencies within a certain boundary.

The total redevelopment package, with financing, will cost about \$250 million. But the agency is predicted to generate more than \$800 million over its 45-year lifespan, and whatever it doesn't need must be returned in some way to the agencies it was taken from.

Wood said the agreements mean that within the first three to five years the agency is collecting money, it will have enough to pay for the proposed \$52 million civic center. (That figure contains the \$8 million the city already has set aside to build the new City Hall.)

Wood, who is acting as the city's redevelopment manager, has said

all along that negotiations with the various agencies have been friendly.

But they didn't start out that way. County supervisors a couple of months ago sent a letter to the city assailing the redevelopment plans as grandiose and an economic burden on the county.

Wood said the 'entitles' realization of the long-term benefits is what resulted in the agreements. "They're seeing the big picture," he said.

Although more than 20 agencies would lose money to the agency, only 10 of them would lose amounts significant enough to require some form of compensation, Wood said.

In addition to the new construction, the redevelopment agency, among other things, would pay to move schools. The elementary, high school and college districts would also get reduced rates for office space in the regional government building of the proposed civic center, and for the use of a conference room.

The college district would also get unspecified athletic and maintenance facilities, computer equipment and classroom space from the agency.

Although he hasn't seen the writ-

Please see **Schools**, page B2

• Schools

Continued from page B1

ten draft the council approved, high school district Superintendent Forest Fouts said this morning that board members have discussed the agreement and that he thinks they'll approve it.

Elementary school district Superintendent Don Hout said the board already granted preliminary approval to the agreement and perceives it as resulting in a "significant benefit" to the district.

The highlight of the agreement with the county is a promise that the city would build and deed to the county a 60,000-square-foot administrative building. If it isn't available by June 1990 and it isn't the county's fault, the agreement says, the redevelopment agency will give the county \$6 million so it can construct the building itself.



Times Advocate,
Sunday,
November 18, 1984,
Page B1

Public Records Request made to City of Escondido on 09/09/2008:

1. Records (Agreements, correspondence, etc.) about a **TAX SHARING AGREEMENT** between the Escondido Redevelopment Agency (aka Community Development Commission) and the Escondido Union High School District
 - including estimates of shared tax and school construction
2. Records (Agreements, correspondence, etc.) about a **TAX SHARING AGREEMENT** between the Escondido Redevelopment Agency (aka Community Development Commission) and the Escondido Union School District (elementary and middle)
 - including estimates of shared tax

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At what cost redevelopment?