

Neon Line District Community Meeting: Pre-submitted Questions and Answers

Name	Topic	Question	Response
Donna Keats	Abandonments	Please provide details about pending street abandonment proposals, including a map of the street locations and surrounding areas, rationale and need for abandonment, future plans for abandoned streets, and public benefit from changing streets from public to private control.	Two requested abandonments are scheduled to be heard at the January 12th City Council Hearing. Staff reports for each case (ABN21-00005 and ABN22-00003) are available on the City website and contain maps, supportive information and an analysis of the requests by City staff. The streets and alleys proposed to be abandoned were dedicated to the City by a private property owner, when the western portion of Downtown Reno was subdivided. This area was originally developed as single family lots with alleys bisecting the blocks to provide rear access to the homes. With time, the Downtown has expanded and the development pattern has changed. These alleys and underutilized roadways often are no longer necessary and can hinder larger scale development anticipated in the downtown. Abandonments grant this property back to adjacent property owners and property tax is again applied. Abandonments and the assemblage of smaller parcels under common ownership provide opportunity for new development and revitalization of the Reno's downtown. New development supports and provides housing options, tourism, entertainment and recreational opportunities, employment, improved quality of life for residences, adds to the tax base, stimulates economic growth and provides stability to our City as a whole.

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Art Rangel AICP	Glow Plaza	<p>A Conditional Use Permit (CUP) application was recently filed for a 3,500 attendee open air amphitheater on 4th street. The application reads as follows: . The Applicant anticipates that programming at the Glow Plaza will include a summer concert series beginning on approximately July 1st and running through September 3rd, to be held every Friday and Saturday from 5:00 pm-11 :00 pm. Programming will also include future hosting of the Street Vibrations event and the Taco Fest event. Private security will be provided on site. No enclosed structure or building is proposed with this application.</p> <p>In response to CUP finding # 5. The characteristics of the use as proposed and as may be conditioned are reasonably compatible with the types of use permitted in the surrounding area; and</p> <p>The Applicants Response: The proposed Glow Plaza is designed to be consistent with the greater Neon Line Development plan therefore will be complimentary to the area. The venue design is modeled to reflect a revitalized continuity throughout Downtown Reno, and will provide an elegant and stylish appearance consistent with the surroundings.</p> <p>My Question is: How can this finding be made when the applicant has not submitted any details explaining what the Neon Line Development Plan is?</p>	<p>The response referenced to CUP #5 was written by Jacobs Entertainment. It is not a city staff analysis. The application is currently under review by planning city staff in accordance with the Reno Land Development Code. A finding has not yet occurred. The development code requires a CUP for outdoor entertainment in the Entertainment District zoning. A variety of uses are permitted in the downtown mixed use zoning districts. Staff will analyze the proposed project for compatibility and it would be anticipated that the permit would be conditioned to mitigate for noise, light glare and hours of operation and provide for reasonable compatibility. Reno Land Development Code (Title 18) also provides standards and requirements intended to reduce possible impacts. Additional information, comments and concerns related to the case can be submitted on the City of Reno website or directed to the Planner of the Day by email, phone or in person at City Hall. Additional opportunity to provide comments will be available at the Planning Commission hearing. The Planning Commission hearing has not been scheduled yet.</p>
Sally Sapunor	Noise Abatement	<p>Where is the affordable housing for Reno residents and will there be noise abatement requirements for special events since the "neon line" district is close to residential neighborhoods?</p>	<p>The Entertainment and North West Quadrant zoning districts allow and support a variety of uses. More intense uses that are anticipated to have impacts on surrounding properties require additional discretionary review. Noise, odors, glare and other impacts are analyzed through this review process and mitigation measures can be conditioned to reduce impacts and provide reasonable compatibility.</p>
P McAdoo	Property Rights	<p>Why did the city sanction the unconscionable decision to allow the tear-down by Jacobs Entertainment of the motel for low-income residents during the current housing crisis?</p>	<p>By law, private property comes with a bundle of rights. The applicant was within these rights to apply for a demolition permit, for the City to issue the permits, and the private property owner to remove the buildings.</p>

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Montage	Traffic	Significant street closures along the 4th. Street corridor are included in the executed development agreement. Have comprehensive traffic studies been completed that evaluate the impacts of such closures on public safety and convenience of access for downtown residents and businesses?	The Development Agreement references potential street closures for special events. When Jacobs Entertainment wants to close a street, Jacobs Entertainment must file a permit application with the City of Reno. At that time, all proposed street closures will be reviewed by staff and governing agencies to ensure the closures will not impact public safety. Traffic times and convenience of travel may be impacted during events. Depending on what is proposed, traffic letters, traffic plans for events and other mitigation may be required to ensure safety, emergency access and proper traffic patterns are maintained. Currently, there is no pending permit application for street closures. Further, the Development Agreement does not require the City of Reno to approve the permit application for street closures.
Donna Keats	Zoning	Please explain how development standards for entertainment and mixed use districts apply to proposed development - especially how Title 18 requirements will apply to the gaming overlay that was dragged onto a mixed use district for the purpose of building an archway sign. Will the gaming overlay persist as a designated zoning district overlay if the arch isn't built, or will the City be left with non-conforming zoning?	The arch sign is not enabled by a gaming overlay zone. The Development Agreement allows Jacobs Entertainment to construct the arch sign using the Entertainment District zoning sign standards. The Entertainment zoning district is located two blocks east of the proposed arch sign location. The arch sign must be substantially conforming to the exhibit proposed in the development agreement and will be reviewed and permitted by the City before construction.
Montage	Zoning	Is it true, technically speaking, that future Jacobs' projects (and those for builders to whom Jacobs sells) could be reviewed by the City and approved with no public input? (No Conditional Use Permit nor Planned Unit Development nor Special Use Permit; just a building permit).	Yes, if the future proposed projects meet the standards and requirements outlined in the development code. This code outlines setbacks, street image, landscape standards, architectural treatments, signs, other design elements and allowed uses. The development code was recently updated with extensive public outreach, stakeholder engagement and several public workshops and hearings for approval.
Montage	Event Permits	Downtown residents frequently see 3 or 4 police squad cars dispatched to a problem at a bar or nightclub. Some of these cars likely are diverted from areas outside of downtown. Considering this, what impact will Jacobs Entertainment's plans for an "event" every other weekend (30 per year) and bringing 100,000 people to 4th. Street have on currently limited City resources like police, fire, and street maintenance, and how will any increased needs be funded?	Generally, the costs for expanded services associated with special events are borne by the promoter. The City anticipates these events will self fund just as many of other larger events in the downtown already do.

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Montage	Event Permits	Will Jacobs Entertainment need a Conditional Use Permit or a Minor Conditional Use Permit for their planned 30 events per year? Also, at what stage(s) of the permitting process will the public be able to make comments, and/or appeal a permit decision?	Depending on where the event occurs (private property or public property), a special activity or special event permit would be required. The Development Agreement does not provide a blanket right to these events nor is the City obligated to provide such permits. The applicant will need to follow the appropriate procedures in place at the time of application. The City has a sign up page on its special events webpage for the public to receive notifications and updates to events and street closures.
Montage	City Commitments	The City's recently published marketing video is clearly aimed at attracting outside development money. Are there any solid promises you can put on record to reassure the public that, in future, their input will be taken and considered before a development agreement is finalized?	As with any Development Agreement, the property owners within 750 feet of the project are notified of an upcoming public hearing on the agreement. Additionally, the public hearing is noticed in the newspaper and the project area is posted with signs. Before the City Council approves a Development Agreement, there must be a public hearing. In this instance, the public hearing occurred October 13, 2021. Pursuant to Nevada law, there will be a public hearing before a Development Agreement is approved.
Montage	City Commitments	What are your specific plans for the historic Nystrom House and when will they be initiated? Are you willing to re-list the house on the City of Reno's historic register to protect its historical integrity?	The City encourages that most large initiatives be brought forward for discussion at NABs. While we cannot require a developer to present at NABs, most understand the importance of doing so. It is not uncommon for council to delay decisions until an item is heard by a NAB. Should Council desire to formalize this process, they must direct staff to make the necessary changes to our development code.
Montage	Precedent	In several public statements, Jacobs Entertainment's legal representative has asserted that his client should get the same incentives the City previously gave to other developers (for example, for the RED on Plumb Lane and S. Virginia St.). Does the City Attorney agree that the City created a precedent when it gave incentives for earlier development projects and that Jacobs Entertainment has a right to the same incentives?	No developer is entitled to any benefit outside of what is required by our state and local laws. The purpose of a development agreement is to allow a city council step outside of their own requirements to provide flexibility, relief, or incentives to entice development. Each agreement is unique in the benefits that it may provide and does not create a precedent.
Alicia Barber	Acquisition	Do you plan to purchase any more parcels and if so, where, and for what?	Question directed to Jacob's Entertainment
Alicia Barber	Amphitheater	Will the Glow Plaz be the area only outdoor concert and festival space? Is this replacing the "amphitheater" idea, or is that separate?	Question directed to Jacob's Entertainment

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Montage	Coordination	Like the Midtown and Riverwalk Districts, will Jacobs Entertainment agree to share coordination of the Neon Line District with other business and residential owners?	Question directed to Jacob's Entertainment
Montage	Events	Besides Street Vibrations, please give other examples of events Jacobs Entertainment plans to hold.	Question directed to Jacob's Entertainment
Montage	Externalities	What considerations are being given by Jacobs Entertainment to the possible downside impacts of their plans on the quality-of-life for their resident neighbors in downtown Reno? For example: traffic congestion, pedestrian safety, excessive noise, crime, cleanliness.	Question directed to Jacob's Entertainment
Donna Keats	Glow Plaza	Please explain the relationship between the "Glow Plaza" (Ward 1 NAB agenda for January 11th) and the Sands Connect entertainment plaza that was previously presented. Are the boundaries for these entertainment spaces the same? If so, what is the purpose for changing the name? If not, why does Jacob's need two large spaces of this type?	Question directed to Jacob's Entertainment
Nathan Digangi	Housing Type	What kind of mixed-income housing models are being explored for the district?	Question directed to Jacob's Entertainment
Alicia Barber	Neon Signs	What happened to the neon and other signage from the motels you demolished?	Question directed to Jacob's Entertainment
Alicia Barber	Nystrom house	What are your specific plans for the historic Nystrom House and when will they be initiated? Are you willing to re-list the house on the City of Reno's historic register to protect its historical integrity?	Question directed to Jacob's Entertainment

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Alex Woodard	Project Specifics	<p>Hello, as a lifelong resident of northern Nevada I've seen the fall of downtown Reno. As such I have a multitude of questions and appreciate being able to give you guys some advanced notice on these questions.</p> <p>How do you plan to avoid the exact same issues that plagued the last owners? How do you plan to incorporate Reno's vision for a more public first and family friendly downtown, beyond the lights along The pedestrian walkways and a sculpture garden? What will draw people that are locals on your new properties? What will draw a variety of tourists, not just resort vacationers and skiers?</p> <p>Do you have any plans for renewable energy sources? With a vast amount of unused roof space on buildings and parking lots, that would be free real estate for such projects.</p>	Question directed to Jacob's Entertainment
Alicia Barber	Project Specifics	<p>How exactly do you intend to develop the land that you plan to retain, and when? Do you plan to construct any outward-facing restaurants, or other commercial amenities at street level on any of it, and if so, where?</p>	Question directed to Jacob's Entertainment
Donna Keats	Project Specifics	<p>Lastly, but more importantly, WHERE IS THE ADDITIONAL MARKET RATE/AFFORDABLE HOUSING ELEMENT IN ALL OF THIS?? And I don't mean the eventual build-out of 63 condos that has been the "additional housing" flag-waving in public relations talk.</p>	Question directed to Jacob's Entertainment
Gerald Franzen	Project Specifics	<p>What are the future plans for 255 Bell St.</p>	Question directed to Jacob's Entertainment
James Alderin	Project Specifics	<p>Why has Jacob's Entertainment done virtually nothing with the Neon-Line the past two years, aside from tearing down temporary housing structures? Where did all of that capital investment go? Doesn't really seem like a billion dollar district at all? (Adding art installations along 4th street is absolutely a good thing, but not when the district isn't efficiently and/or effectively being built around it)</p>	Question directed to Jacob's Entertainment
Montage	Project Specifics	<p>When can the public see a detailed list of Jacobs Entertainment-planned actions/projects, by quarter, out at least a year or two?</p>	Question directed to Jacob's Entertainment

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Sherida Rapp	Project Specifics	<p>I am very concerned that there is going to be another huge lot set aside for " entertainment, festivals and other activities". We are not in Southern California - we do have winter. There are already two large outdoor areas for concerts and festivals at the Nugget in Sparks and at the Grand Sierra Resort in Reno. I don't think we need any more as these two venues are only used during the 5 or so months during good weather. We also regularly close both downtown Reno and Sparks for food festivals and things like Hot August Nights and Street Vibrations. We also have very large regional parks for festivals like the Balloon Races and we also have a livestock events center for the annual Reno Rodeo. I feel that this lot should be developed for the people that live in Reno, not tourists. I believe that there should be a large apartment complex (at least 1000 apartments) for LOW INCOME residents of Reno. You took away around 600 rooms that were home to people, and never replace them with anything although you said that you would. We also need to have small businesses, with restaurants, bars and grocery stores for residents to enjoy, especially since you tore down so many businesses that were in this area.</p>	Question directed to Jacob's Entertainment
Sherida Rapp	Project Specifics	<p>We don't need another casino! We need housing, and support for small businesses in Reno. I also disapprove of the arch that you have proposed over 4th street. I am supporting Scenic America in fighting this proposal. It would destroy the view of the Sierra as well as adding no useful purpose other than bragging about yourself and being big enough to do it. Also why are the neon replica signs on this lot so high? Is it only for the people driving by on I 80? It is not for people walking on the street. Hopefully you will submit plans regarding your "Neon Line District" very soon so that the people of Reno can decide to support it or to object to it. So far there have been only promises and talk with not one plan submitted. Finally, I object to the way the Reno city council has handled this entire project by keeping it under wraps, not making Jacobs Entertainment submit concrete plans, only promises, and giving Jacobs Entertainment reduction in fees for sewer, taxes and other necessary items to develop this area. We need to know what is planned and when will it happen.</p>	Question directed to Jacob's Entertainment

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Donna Keats	Signs	Please discuss details of the proposed arch. There was a tremendous amount of negative public comment about this item. Is Jacobs willing to consider any of those comments, or consider changing the design or visual impact of the sign in response to public comments?	Question directed to Jacob's Entertainment
Montage	BID	Will the City (through the Downtown Reno Partnership) be considering levying higher property taxes for all properties in the Neon Line District, since Jacobs Entertainment has publicly stated its goal to move the "heart" of downtown from Virginia Street to 4th. Street?	The Downtown Reno Partnership (DRP) is governed by a Board of Directors, not the City of Reno. The DRP does not control property taxes. The DRP controls assessments. There are no plans to increase assessment rates.
Alicia Barber	District Name	If this entire district isn't owned or master-planned by Jacob's Entertainment, then why should this one company be allowed to unilaterally decide what it's named, what its boundaries are, how it's marketed, and what its streetscape elements (like streetlights) look like? Shouldn't a district have members who get to participate in all of those decisions, like the Riverwalk and Midtown?	The City does not have the authority to prevent private property owners from naming a project what it would like.
Donna Keats	District Name	Please explain how the creation of this unofficial marketing district benefits the city - particularly owners of property that Jacobs does not control and users of Keystone and the 4th street corridor.	We cannot say that its branding necessarily benefits the City directly, but we also cannot say that it hurts the City either. If this helps them successfully build out their project, then the City directly benefits in that we see increased housing and reduced blight. Significant investment and development in this space is a benefit to all property owners and the City as a whole.
Donna Keats	Timing of Agreement	Is the January 10, 2022 a pro-forma meeting held solely to conform to Council's request? Is the purpose solely to "inform", or is there an intention to consider & incorporate public comments into the final design and development in the "district"?	This meeting is to provide the public an additional opportunity to ask questions related to the development so that they may have a better understanding of what could get built out and the process in which that would happen. Whether the developer desires to incorporate any suggestions from this meeting is at the developer's discretion.
Garth Hoyman	Timing of Agreement	Why is this meeting AFTER the agreement was already signed?	During the Council meetings in October, there was a desire by the public and various councilmembers that before any actual development projects or actions be approved that the developer and City hold a community meeting, in addition to the public meeting held on October 13, 2021.

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Montage	Timing of Agreement	After a large number of public requests, it's a positive step that this community meeting is being held. However, to dispel some remaining confusion, please explain why a public meeting was not held prior to the development agreement being finalized.	Pursuant to municipal code, a public meeting was held prior to the approval of the development agreement. That meeting was held on October 13, 2021. It was noticed through the newspaper, by mail to property owners within 750 feet, and was posted throughout the development area. Over 1,000 individuals received written notification of the public hearing.
Montage	Pedestrian	Why should the City count towards the pedestrian amenity credit the full \$4.66m Jacobs Entertainment has already spent for the 4th Street wall, lighting, landscaping, lighting and sculptures when the City neither asked for these, nor had any input into them, and neither did the public?	Pedestrian amenities are defined as walkways, plazas, artwork, fountains, seating, landscaping, and recreational facilities in any combination. All developers have broad latitude in determining whether they would like to add street furniture, artwork, expanded sidewalks, additional landscaping or any other item that meets the definition.
Art Rangel AICP	Project Specifics	A typical development agreement includes considerably more detail relative to what the proposed development will be. This agreement reads more like a city disposition agreement with the master developer asking for discounts for city owned property and other concessions from the city. Why was this agreement lacking so many details and benchmarks?	This project is proceeding under existing zoning designations. Therefore, the detail in more traditional development agreements is not necessary. There are minimal regulatory concessions and financial incentives being provided. The belief is these minor concessions are balanced against the potential that the development will bring to Reno. Ultimately, if no development occurs, the City is not harmed financially nor has it incurred some type of opportunity cost by providing these incentives. Any future development must require additional review depending on the applicable scenario. The zoning code governs the review and approval process.
Frankie Sue Del Papa	Project Specifics	I am concerned about the lack of specificity concerning plans including sparse performance standards in the Jacobs Development Agreement. I am concerned about traffic circulation in the area and North/South access. I am hopeful the Council will look at the area very carefully going forward and not do abandonments piecemeal but decide in advance what is in the public interest overall, particularly regarding public safety and traffic flow. At some point a review of how "notice" is given and to whom needs to be enhanced.	All development must meet the standards and requirements outlined in the development code. This code ensures that development standards are met including: architectural, allowed uses, signage, landscape, setbacks etc. Specific uses may require additional discretionary review. All abandonments are reviewed by City staff and appropriate governing agencies to ensure that the public will not be materially harmed by the abandonment. North/South roadway connectivity is limited and it is not anticipated that an abandonment of a connecting roadway would be recommended by staff. All abandonments require a public process and hearing.

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Marilyn Naylor	Public Involvement	It is not appropriate to give a developer broad discretion based solely on a "concept" that would be revealed over a 20-year time span without providing information to and seeking approval from the public. Why are key decisions of "concept" being made without citizen involvement ?	Pursuant to municipal code, a public meeting was held prior to the approval of the development agreement. That meeting was held on October 13, 2021. It was noticed through the newspaper, by mail to property owners within 750 feet, and was posted throughout the development area. Over 1,000 individuals received written notification of the public hearing. All development must meet the standards and requirements outlined in the development code. This code ensures that development standards are met including: architectural, allowed uses, signage, landscape, setbacks etc.
Montage	Project Specifics	Why did the development agreement not include new and additional provisions the City wanted Jacobs to achieve (including time frames)? For example: the City's preference for specific types of development or creating safe, walkable neighborhoods.	The City feels that the incentives provided are balanced against the potential the development has for increasing housing, creating a vibrant neighborhood, and removing blight.
Garth Hoyman	Project Value	Why are we subsidizing a company to be no more than a real estate broker in the development process? What actual value is Jacobs adding?	The City has not provided any City funds to the proposed development. Most of the items that have a financial value (i.e. sewer credits) to them will still be collected or incurred, just deferred or extended. The value they provide exists in the potential for redevelopment. Eventually, the money will be collected. The additional value Jacobs Entertainment is adding includes removing impediments, such as the abandonment of alleyways to create contiguous blocks of land, environmental issues, and title defects.
Alicia Barber	Public Art	Is the City defining the privately-selected sculptures and signage installed by Jacobs Entertainment, which went through no public process, as public art?	The City's responsibility is to ensure that these items are being completed in accordance with our zoning and building requirements.
Alicia Barber	Public Benefit	What exactly does the City consider to be the public benefit of this Development Agreement, how was that decided, and by whom?	There are several items that could be seen as public benefit. Among these include the return of productive property to our tax rolls, the activation of blighted/vacant land to create a lively downtown neighborhood, and providing much needed housing.
Donna Keats	Public Opinion	Please discuss the role of public opinion in proposed development of this district.	Public opinion is important to how development occurs but it must be balanced against the rights of a property owner. A public hearing was required and occurred on October 13, 2021.

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Donna Keats	Signs	Please clarify whether or not footings of the archway sign will be placed on public right-of-way. If so, please explain how Jacobs is entitled to build on public right-of-way in the face of so much negative input on the design and location. If this is a done deal, please explain what will happen if the city needs to use the right-of-way for another purpose, such as street widening, sidewalk improvement, or traffic control. Will the city have to pay to relocate it, or pay to remove it if the district concept fails to develop in the manner that has been marketed? Please discuss bonding requirements or other protections for the city that will be built into the permit for the archway sign, so that the city will be released from financial burdens should things not go as Jacobs planned. Please discuss any conditions that staff is considering adding to the permit application before it goes to public hearing.	One can probably assume that footings would be required for the archway sign and they would be in City right-of-way. Should the developer proceed with this sign, it would be required to enter into an agreement with the City to occupy that property. As part of this process, it must also submit for a sign permit and that process would ensure that it addresses all the concerns staff, and RTC, may have with its location. Without an actual sign permit, it is difficult to discuss the specifics as it has not undergone a full review by our building and public works departments. The development agreement places the financial burdens onto the developer to maintain and operate the sign. The City would require an additional agreement for this and would seek to place these provisions into the agreement.
Joyce Thompson	Signs	How do you justify a sign visible from the highway when the voters have said they don't want anymore billboards?	It was determined those were not billboards, but rather Area Identification Signs to which different rules apply.
donna keats	Street Closures	Please provide details about proposed street closures and City requirements for temporary or permanent closures.	The developer proposes up to 30-days of events along West 4th Street. As with all of our special events, the promoter will be required to ensure that road disruptions are minimized and that pedestrians are protected. There are no permanent closures of any streets associated with this development agreement. In order for Jacobs Entertainment to close a street, it must submit all relevant permits which must be reviewed.
Alicia Barber	TIF	Is Tax Increment Financing still being considered for this area, and if so, when will that be proposed, and how will the City ensure widespread public participation in discussions about it?	Tax Increment Financing (TIF) is not part of this agreement.

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Montage	TIF	Does Jacobs Entertainment intend to ask for Tax Increment Financing (TIF)? For the public's information, please explain what TIF is, what benefits it brings to the City, and what risks the City assumes.	Tax Increment Financing (TIF) is not part of this agreement. Tax Increment Financing (TIF) is a value recapture strategy that diverts future property tax revenues from a defined area toward an economic development project or public improvement project. The belief is that the new tax revenue generated by the development should be used to help pay for that development given the development is what gave rise to the additional funding. TIF provides subsidies to close the gap on projects that otherwise could not be built due to insufficient capital. Many of the facade improvement projects along the Riverwalk and Virginia Street in the past and the Parking Gallery itself were constructed using these funds as part of the overall funding. One potential drawback back to TIF is that it diverts funding away from other public uses, such as schools, police, and fire. However, without development, these funds may not have existed anyway. Additional risk can be borne from the sale of bonds which are repaid from the anticipated revenue stream. This can be minimized by taking a "pay as you go" model, spending TIF only as increment is received. If Jacobs Entertainment requests TIF in the future, it would be reviewed in accordance with all applicable laws.
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