

Council signs off on tax incentives for land near Yard

Columbus officials hope to benefit from development now under way in Grandview

By GARTH BISHOP

Columbus City Council has given the go-ahead for the formation of a tax increment financing district near Grandview Yard.

Council approved an ordinance creating the district at its Oct. 4 meeting.

City officials in July announced its intention to form a TIF district for some 300 acres in and around the portion of Grandview Yard that falls within Columbus limits.

A TIF district generates money through the increases in property values that are created by new construction. After a base property value for the district is established, taxes on any increases in the property's value go toward the TIF.

For example, if a property is assessed at \$10 million when the TIF begins, when the property's value increases to \$12 million, the property taxes on the extra \$2 million go to the TIF. Those taxes typically are diverted away from agencies relying on property taxes—such as schools, the Columbus Metropolitan Library, the Columbus Zoo and others—and used to pay for public infrastructure improvements to benefit the TIF area.

Revenue from the new TIF will be used for public infrastructure improvements in Columbus near Grandview Yard, including the widening of Third Avenue from Edgehill Road to Olentangy River Road.

Residential properties will not be included in the TIF, and the area's biggest collector of property taxes will not be affected.

"As is usually the case, this is a non-Columbus City School District revenue TIF," said Councilman Andrew Ginther.

Grandview Yard is expected to house about 90 acres of office, retail and residential uses when all is said and done. The first phase of the project, including an Urban Active fitness center and a Hyatt Place hotel, opened last month.

Nationwide Realty Investors owns the property in Columbus and Grandview Heights that will become Grandview Yard. As part of the agreement in which Columbus promised to form a TIF, Nationwide agreed to transfer 1,400 positions from Dublin to downtown Columbus by the end of 2011. ■