

STAFF REPORT

Lancaster Redevelopment Agency

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MVB

Date: January 13, 2009

To: Chairman Parris and Agency Board Members

From: Elizabeth Brubaker, Housing and Neighborhood Revitalization Director

Subject: **Presentation of the Revised Northeast Gateway Corridors Project - The Piute Neighborhood Master Vision Plan**

Recommendation:

Concur with the vision and the Piute Neighborhood Vision Master Plan and direct staff to commence with the planning, environmental, and redevelopment processes necessary to implement and complete the Piute Neighborhood Master Plan.

Background:

On August 26, 2003, the Agency Board authorized the award of a Professional Services Agreement with RBF Consulting for a Work Program that included a vision plan, tools to implement the plan, infrastructure/technical studies and the required environmental documentation and clearances for the Northeast Gateway Corridors Project (NGCP). The NGCP is generally bounded by 10th Street West, West Avenue H-8, Challenger Way and Avenue I. The basis for this action was their concern with the overall lack of maintenance, deterioration of neighborhoods and increase of criminal activity (drugs, prostitution, and gangs), in the area, and the need to remove the blighting conditions and revitalize the area.

The primary objectives of the Northeast Gateway Corridors Vision Plan were to: facilitate the transition and redevelopment of the existing Antelope Valley Fairgrounds site; enhance the aesthetics of Avenue I, Sierra Highway, Division Street, and other major streets; redevelop specific housing areas; improve the stability of existing neighborhoods; provide subdivision and site planning design guidance for infill development; contribute to the open space and parks goals of the community; ensure adequate infrastructure; and create the implementation tools and environmental clearance needed to realize the resultant vision plan.

On February 24, 2004, based upon the Work Program created by RBF Consulting the Agency Board authorized Agency staff to commence with the planning, environmental, and redevelopment processes necessary to implement the Northeast Gateway Corridors Project Vision Plan. The Work Program included compliance with environmental review requirements, an approved Environmental Impact Report, adoption of necessary regulatory plans and compliance with Uniform Relocation Assistance and Real Property Acquisition Policies Act of 1970, a relocation plan and a replacement plan, the ability to obtain funding approvals to acquire property for future projects.

Discussion:

As staff implemented the Work Program, staff realized that the NGCP covered approximately four miles, which is a large area for the purposes of redevelopment and neighborhood revitalization. In addition, there were many diverse components within the NGCP and for redevelopment and neighborhood revitalization to be effective the area needed to be broken down into smaller sections. Furthermore, upon completion of the Housing Needs Assessment for the redevelopment project areas, a neighborhood within the NCGP area was identified as a Primary Focus Neighborhood. A Primary Focus Neighborhood is one that exhibits all of the key indicators of a distressed neighborhood in need of revitalization. The Housing Needs Assessment provided a snapshot of issues and activities that would require more in depth study and analysis to address issues, opportunities and constraints for potential revitalization activities.

The Piute neighborhood was identified as a Primary Focus Neighborhood within the Northeast Gateway Corridors Project area. The "Piute Neighborhood Master Plan" was created after doing an in depth study and analysis of opportunities and constraints for potential revitalization activities. The Piute Neighborhood developed its name after Piute Elementary School located at West Avenue H-11. What came to be known as the Piute neighborhood is bounded by Division Street to the west, West Avenue H-8 to the north, 7th Street East to the east and East Avenue I to the south.

RBF Consulting met with pertinent staff members from various departments and agencies to receive input and discuss what physical changes could be done to revitalize the Piute neighborhood. In addition, RBF collected statistical data, conducted physical assessments and merged this information with staff's input to renew the Piute neighborhood. RBF Consulting did an outstanding job of capturing all of the parties' desires, wants and needs for the subject master plan. RBF Consulting and staff achieved the goal of creating the Piute Master Vision Plan (the "Plan"), which provides direction for staff and the residents of Lancaster to make change happen in the subject neighborhood. The Plan also is to provide the necessary tools to compete for additional funding, to leverage funds more effectively and to remove blight, preserve work force housing and to make Lancaster the place where people want to live, work and play in the Piute Neighborhood.

Therefore, it is important that the Agency Board give their concurrence with the planning effort to date and direct staff to continue with the actions necessary to finalize and implement the Piute Neighborhood Master Plan within the Northeast Gateway Corridors Vision Plan.

Attachment:

1. Northeast Gateway Corridors Vision Plan
2. Piute Neighborhood Master Vision Plan