

STAFF REPORT
Lancaster Redevelopment Agency

RNB 1
2/24/09
MVB

Date: February 24, 2009

To: Chairman Parris and Agency Board Members

From: Elizabeth Brubaker, Housing and Neighborhood Revitalization Director

Subject: **Presentation of the Trend Tract Master Vision Plan**

Recommendation:

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

Background:

The Trend Tract (“Trend”) was developed between 1970 and 1972 for employees associated with the B-1 defense contract. Many of the homebuyers in Trend obtained FHA 235 loans, which was a HUD insured no-down-payment mortgage program. Among the many financial disasters that have befallen HUD over the years, the Section 235 program was one of the worst. Exceptionally high default rates, property abandonment, and costly foreclosures led to budget outlays well in excess of the amount of subsidies provided to buyers. The B-1 defense contract was cancelled, the homebuyers walked from their homes, and investors purchased the abandoned homes. The stigma of government subsidies and the large number of investment properties, created almost overnight, a negative image of Trend that developed into a self-fulfilling prophecy becoming much like the “projects” that HUD funded in the 1960’s.

The Agency in response to the implementation of the High Impact Program administered by the Los Angeles County Sheriff’s Department in the Trend Tract, immediately entered into a Professional Services Agreement with RBF Consulting to create a vision plan to enhance the livability of the Trend Tract. This project was undertaken within the context of the ideas and approach embodied through SafeScape: “Creating Safer, More Livable Communities through Planning and Design”. SafeScape is established on information and approaches based on crime prevention through environmental design, defensible space, eyes on the street, and other similar concepts and practices. SafeScape is intended to contribute to a safer public realm but does not guarantee the security of property or the prevention of crime. The purpose of the Trend Tract Master Vision Plan is to arrive at design recommendations for use by the City to address security concerns and objectives through sensitive, attractive, and visually unobtrusive design treatments.

The basis for this action was the concern with the overall lack of maintenance, structural deterioration of the housing stock, neighborhood isolation from the larger community, poor traffic circulation, limited neighborhood access, unintended planning policy consequences, an abundance of criminal activity, and the need to remove the blighting conditions and revitalize the area. The Trend Tract is generally bounded by 30th Street to 40th Street West and from Avenue L to Avenue K-10.

The primary objectives for the Trend Tract is to: enhance circulation, access, and traffic calming methods; redevelop housing; improve the stability of the neighborhood; provide planning design guidance; 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.

Discussion:

The preparation of the vision plan represents only a first step in the revitalization process. Additional actions will be necessary by the Council, Redevelopment Agency and Planning Commission, which will provide opportunities for public input. Future actions necessary to complete the effort include:

- Compliance with environmental review requirements.
- Adoption of any necessary regulatory plans by the Agency.
- Compliance with Uniform Relocation Assistance and Real Property Acquisition Policies Act of 1970, as amended and applicable administrative regulations.
- Acquisition of property, specific project and funding approvals by affected parties, the City and Lancaster Redevelopment Agency and other interested parties as necessary to implement the overall plan.

Implementation of the Trend Tract Master Vision Plan Project will require these and other related actions, as well as a commitment of resources by the City, the Agency and various interested parties. Therefore, it is important that the City Council and Agency Board concur with the planning effort to date and direct staff to continue with the actions necessary to finalize and implement the Trend Tract Master Vision Plan. This concurrence and direction will provide staff and the affected parties with a level of confidence necessary to continue revitalization efforts.

Attachment:

Trend Tract Master Vision Plan