

# STAFF REPORT

## Lancaster Redevelopment Agency

RNB 1
3/24/09
MVB

Date: March 24, 2009

To: Chairman Parris and Agency Board Directors

From: Elizabeth Brubaker, Housing and Neighborhood Revitalization Director

Subject: **Presentation of the Desert View Master Vision Plan**

---

### **Recommendation:**

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

### **Background:**

The residents of Lancaster know the neighborhood, located between 10th and 15th Streets West and Avenues I and H, as Desert View named after the elementary school built in the late 1950's. At that time, commercial buildings were constructed on Avenue I between 10<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> Streets West and were the first type of development to occur in the Desert View Neighborhood. During the late 1950's, single-family subdivisions were built filling in the area north of the commercial development up to Avenue H.

Over time, the commercial development began to deteriorate and the residential development followed. In the mid 1990's, the City completed a street improvement project on Avenue I between 10<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> Streets West, which spurred the businesses to improve the appearance of their buildings; however, the residential did not improve and continued to become more blighted with increased criminal activity and code enforcement violations. As homeowners moved up to newer homes and neighborhoods, investors acquired the properties in the subject area creating an imbalance of homeownership and rental properties thereby contributing to the escalation of blighting conditions in the Desert View Neighborhood.

The Desert View area was the first neighborhood chosen by the High Impact Program. The Agency, in response to the implementation of the High Impact Program administered by the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department in the Desert View Neighborhood area, immediately entered into a Professional Services Agreement with RBF Consulting to create a vision plan to enhance the livability of the Desert View Neighborhood area.

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, code enforcement violations and the need to remove the blighting conditions and revitalize the area.

The primary objectives for the Desert View Neighborhood are to: enhance circulation and access; 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 Desert View 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 Desert View Neighborhood 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:**

Desert View Neighborhood Master Vision Plan