

STAFF REPORT
Lancaster Redevelopment Agency

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05/12/09
MVB

Date: May 12, 2009

To: Chairman Parris and Agency Board Members

From: Elizabeth Brubaker, Director of Housing & Neighborhood Revitalization

Subject: **Authorize a Professional Services Agreement with RBF Consulting to develop the Columbia Neighborhood Specific Area Vision Plan**

Recommendation:

Authorize a Professional Services Agreement with RBF Consulting to develop the Columbia Neighborhood Specific Area Vision Plan in an amount not to exceed \$66,946 for Phase I. The Columbia Neighborhood boundaries are 20th Street East to 30th Street East, and from Avenue J to Avenue K.

Financial Impact:

The amount of \$66,946.00 will come from the Lancaster Redevelopment Agency's Low- and Moderate-Income Housing Budget Fund Account No. 920-3402-801. The account has a balance of \$75,000.00, which is sufficient to cover this agreement.

Background:

The Agency Board authorized the award of Professional Services Agreements to RBF Consulting to prepare and develop a Housing Needs Assessment for the seven-redevelopment project areas as well as outside the project areas on April 26, 2005 and January 23, 2007 respectively. Its purpose was to identify priority areas of need; and then, strategically direct available financial resources to revitalize established housing areas, address issues of blight, and optimize inclusionary housing opportunities throughout the City. The data collected and analyzed from the initial assessment was instrumental in identifying and prioritizing neighborhoods in need of revitalization efforts. The second phase of the Housing Needs Assessment entails the application of this data to identify detailed implementation strategies and plans for each revitalization project area; as well as to preserve and maintain affordable, decent, and safe and sanitary housing in the City of Lancaster.

Conduct an analysis of the Columbia Neighborhood to determine the conditions and needs in order to create a detailed strategy and implementation plan to guide the area's future. The purpose of creating a specific strategy and implementation plan is: to improve the aesthetics of the area; redevelop challenged housing; improve the stability of existing neighborhoods; provide

subdivision and site planning design guidance; contribute to the open space of the community through park planning and design; ensure adequate infrastructure; and, create the implementation tools needed to realize the vision plan.

The analysis and development of a specific vision plan and strategy is similar to that of a general plan, which allows the Agency to follow the five-year implementation plan and develop ideas and guidelines for the betterment of the respective neighborhood in a defined redevelopment project area. As the analysis takes place and the plan develops, short-term and long-term strategies and goals represent ideal improvements; however, the elements of the plan are only guidelines to meet the revitalization needs of the neighborhood and community as a whole. The specific Vision Plan also assists with developing public-private partnerships, which are vital in ensuring a successful revitalization project. Moreover, the plan must also address Housing and Community Development requirements, such as maintaining a percentage of affordable housing units.

In order to complete the analysis and develop the specific strategy and implementation plan, staff has determined that the most effective and efficient method is to work in conjunction with RBF Consulting. RBF is familiar with the Columbia Neighborhood and the City of Lancaster and is prepared to work with staff to conduct and deliver a timely analysis.

Staff recommends entering into a Professional Services Agreement with RBF Consulting to create a specific Vision Plan and strategy for the Columbia Neighborhood.

Attachment: None