



City Council Report

Date: October 15, 2018
To: Mayor & Council
Through: Christopher J. Brady, City Manager
From: William Jabjiniak, Economic Development Director 
David Packard, Management Assistant II
Subject: Adoption of the East Redevelopment Area Plan

Purpose and Recommendation

Some of Mesa's key transportation and employment corridors are Broadway Road, Main Street, and University Drive. These corridors lead into and out of the downtown area and play a vital role in creating a vibrant and active downtown. These areas have seen some public and private investment over the past several years, such as the upcoming light rail extension to Gilbert Road. To continue this momentum and encourage additional redevelopment projects in the areas east of downtown, City Council formally designated the East Redevelopment Area on August 21, 2017.

City Staff has been working with the project's consultant (Matrix Design Group) over the past year to craft the redevelopment plan for the East Redevelopment Area. The Office of Economic Development is recommending Mesa City Council adopt the East Redevelopment Area Plan as presented.

Background

A Redevelopment Area (RDA) is an area of the City designated by City Council to be in need of revitalization. The City of Mesa has four existing Redevelopment Areas - the Town Center RDA (1999), Southwest RDA (2016), East RDA (2017) and West RDA (2017).

Located adjacent to Downtown Mesa, the East RDA abuts the Town Center RDA and Central Business District (CBD) at Hobson and extends east to Gilbert Road, following three corridors along University Drive to the north, Main Street, and Broadway Road to the south (see attached 'East RDA Boundaries').

In general, a Redevelopment Area must exhibit a predominance of blighted conditions. The term "blight" is defined by nine factors as listed in ARS 36-1471. The formal process of designating an area a Redevelopment Area is called the "Finding of Necessity". The Finding of Necessity for the East RDA was on August 21, 2017. After this designation was made, City staff and the consultant (Matrix Design Group) began working on the Redevelopment Plan for the area. The Plan serves as the blueprint for economic development activities and aims to establish realistic

strategies for revitalization projects.

Discussion

Work on the East RDA Plan began in January 2018. The planning process began with a public workshop to gather feedback and ideas regarding the vision for redevelopment of the area. Drafting of the Plan by the consultant team continued through August 2018 with regular review and feedback from the City's Steering Committee. A draft of the East RDA Plan document was posted on the Economic Development webpage for public review in early September, and a public meeting was held to receive comments and final input. In addition to the public meetings that have been held to receive public comment, the website established for this process provided the opportunity for citizens to make comments and provide their input regarding the Area. Dozens of residents and business owners in the area have emailed or called City staff throughout the process to share their input.

Upon conclusion of the final public open house, City staff presented the East RDA Plan to the Planning and Zoning Board on September 19, 2018. The Planning and Zoning Board verified the Plan conforms to the City's General Plan and voted to recommend City Council approval. Additionally, per the state statute, the Plan must be presented to City Council within 30 days of being presented to the Planning and Zoning Board.

The East RDA Plan is divided into four sections: Introduction, Vision, Redevelopment Plan, Appendix.

The Introduction includes background on the Area and a history of development and the partial decline of the area. It also includes a review of the public outreach and citizen involvement efforts, as well as a review of the existing land uses within the RDA boundaries.

Citizen Feedback helped articulate the Vision for the area. The Vision Statement within the East RDA Plan states:

The East RDA is a high-quality, mixed use district, consisting of three distinct corridors that reflect the historic character of the adjacent neighborhoods. These corridors provide a wide range of local serving uses that form the foundation for revitalized, close-knit neighborhoods. Light rail provides connectivity to the region and a well-connected bicycle and pedestrian system which cultivates a safe, walkable, and active local environment.

Also included within the Vision section of the Plan, four redevelopment sites were identified as areas of significance and included conceptual redevelopment alternatives:

1. Main Street and Stapley Drive
2. University and Stapley Drive
3. University Drive and Gilbert Road
4. Main Street and Gilbert Road

The third section of the Plan is the heart of the document. It includes eight goal statements along with corresponding strategies to accomplish each of the identified goals. These goals and strategies were developed through the blight study, market analysis, stakeholder feedback, public input, and the steering committee's recommendations.

This section also classifies the strategies by project type (Capital Improvement, Program, Regulatory, Incentive, Marketing, or Assessment) and provides a cost estimate of the project, as well as a timeframe for implementation. Some discussion of possible funding sources to help with project execution is included as well.

Finally, the Appendix includes the supporting documents and background information that was used to study the area and draft the Plan. This section includes a summary of the blight study findings and a redevelopment market analysis.

Alternatives

An alternative would be to not adopt the East Redevelopment Area Plan; however, by not adopting the Plan, the potential benefits of the RDA designation would only be available to redevelopment projects within the existing Town Center and Southwest Redevelopment Areas and Central Business District.

Fiscal Impact

The adoption of the East Redevelopment Plan does not obligate the City to any additional expenditures. Should the City decide to implement any of the proposed projects within the Plan, those projects would be evaluated further and a potential funding source would be identified at that time.

Coordinated With

Economic Development has coordinated with the City Attorney's Office and the Planning and Zoning Department.

Mesa East RDA Study Area

