



# City Council Report

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

## Purpose and Recommendation

West Mesa features great transportation corridors and innovative employers. These corridors and employers 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 light rail extension through West Mesa. To continue this momentum and encourage additional redevelopment projects in the areas west of downtown, City Council formally designated the West 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 West Redevelopment Area. The Office of Economic Development is recommending Mesa City Council adopt the West 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 West RDA abuts to the western edge of Mesa's existing Town Center RDA and Central Business District (CBD), and extends westward to the Tempe Canal, comprising 1,496 acres. The area generally includes properties along the north side of W. Main Street and the area between W. Main Street and W. Broadway Road, as well as offshoots north along N. Alma School Road and N. Extension Road, up to and crossing University Drive. There is another large portion extending south between S. Dobson Road and S. Sycamore connecting to the Southwest RDA's northern border (see attached 'West 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 West RDA was on August 21, 2017.

Necessity". The Finding of Necessity for the West 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 West 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 West 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 West 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 West 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 West RDA Plan states:

*The West RDA is a unique and iconic destination attracting residents and visitors because of its safe, live-work-play environment. The area features distinguished educational and job training institutions that support a growing employment base with innovative, high-wage industries which are accessible from across the region through three major freeway corridors and the light rail system. New, high-quality development, adaptive reuse, and the emerging Asian business core have revitalized the area into an active and vibrant community.*

Also included within the Vision section of the Plan, five redevelopment sites were

identified as areas of significance and included conceptual redevelopment alternatives:

1. Main Street Corridor
2. Asian Multicultural District and Core
3. University Drive and Alma School Road
4. Broadway Road and Extension Road
5. South End

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 West 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 West RDA Study Area

