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STAFF REPORT

REDEVELOPMENT DISTRICT AREA PLAN UPDATE

To: Honorable Mayor and City Council

Through: Rodolpho Lopez, Director, Development Services

From: Derek Scheerer, Planner II, Development Services

Date: November 7, 2023

RE: Redevelopment District Area Plan Update

PUBLIC HEARING: REDEVELOPMENT DISTRICT AREA PLAN UPDATE: *As part of the requirements of Arizona State Statutes for Redevelopment District Area Plans, the City Council will host a public hearing to review, and possibly approve, the proposed Redevelopment District Area Plan Update, and to promote citizen participation. Action on the Redevelopment District Area Plan Update must occur at the statute required City Council public hearing.* **DISCUSSION AND ACTION.**

PROJECT INFORMATION:

What is a Redevelopment District Area Plan?

A Redevelopment District Area Plan (RDA) is an economic development strategy that has been successfully used to improve living and economic conditions within a designated Redevelopment District. A Redevelopment District is an area that has been deemed distressed and in need of revitalization. The establishment of a Redevelopment District is the responsibility of the Mayor and City Council. State statutes provide an outline of material that must be included in the Plan. Redevelopment District(s) and Redevelopment District Area Plan(s) are required for municipalities to be able to qualify for and receive Community Development Block Grant funding.

The Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Program supports community development activities to build stronger and more resilient communities. Activities may address needs such as infrastructure, economic development projects, public facilities installation, housing rehabilitation, public services, etc. Each funded activity meets one of three named national objectives of the CDBG Program. These three objectives are identified as: benefiting low- and moderate-income persons; preventing or eliminating slums or blight; and meeting urgent needs. To qualify under the national objectives, the designation of a redevelopment area and approval of a redevelopment area plan is required for activity eligibility. Additionally, the redevelopment area and approval of a redevelopment area plan must be redetermined every 10 years for continued qualification.

When a Redevelopment District has been designated, a Redevelopment District Area Plan is drafted and adopted by resolution. This Plan then allows the City greater flexibility in encouraging certain grant funded opportunities to be applied within the area to spur a variety of beneficial improvements. Similar to a General Plan or a Specific Plan, an RDA is a guiding policy document that lays out broad goals and objectives for the area to be revitalized. An RDA is not a “quick fix” policy document, but a tool used to encourage and aid public and private development within the designated area.

Establishment of the Redevelopment District and Redevelopment District Area Plan

On September 2, 2008, a legislative finding and declaration of necessity was declared by the City Council and the original redevelopment district boundary was created. Subsequent to the original boundary adoption, city staff developed and presented the original Redevelopment District Area Plan (aka Heritage District Area Plan) to the City Council on June 16, 2009, where, under Resolution 09-24, the City Council adopted the City of Maricopa Redevelopment District Area Plan.

As the city continued to develop, the original RDA boundaries were amended by the City Council on August 18, 2020, under Resolution 20-33, to the boundaries that exist today. As a part of this boundary reduction, and in conformity with the applicable statutes, city staff has prepared this update of the RDA.

This update was developed by city staff through the fall of 2022 and into the summer of 2023. City staff researched and identified the current conditions of the area, assessed the progress made since adoption of the original RDA, and established updated goals objectives for the Plan. The final draft version of the RDA Update is now being presented to the City Council for review and approval. In the drafting of the RDA Update, the public, which included citizens and stakeholders residing or locating within and around the redevelopment district, were engaged through a series of Planning and Zoning Commission and neighborhood meetings. Details of these meetings are further discussed in the Citizen Participation and Public Comment sections of this report. Citizen and stakeholder engagement, as required by statute, served to inform and educate the public on what the RDA Update is, what the redevelopment district is, and how both affect properties and development within the redevelopment district. The public engagement also served to garner further input and help refine of the goals and objectives of the RDA Update.

State Statute Requirements

Included in the Plan, as well as in the adopting Resolution is language, as required per State Statute, in the creation of a Redevelopment District. Statutorily required statements can be found on pages 49 – 51 of the Plan.

Planning and Zoning Commission

Per Arizona Revised Statute 36-1479, Subsection D, prior to approval of a redevelopment plan the Planning and Zoning Commission shall review and submit written comment as to the Redevelopment Area Plan's conformance with the City's General Plan. Written comments and recommendations, if any, must be submitted to the city's governing body within thirty days after receipt of the plan for review. Upon receipt of the comments and recommendations, if any, Planning Staff will forward the Plan to the City Council who may then proceed with a public hearing for adoption of the Plan. As of the writing of this report, Planning Staff has not received any written comment or recommendations from the Planning and Zoning Commission.

City Council

Per Arizona Revised Statute 36-1479, Subsections E, F, and G, the local governing body (City Council) shall hold a public hearing on any redevelopment plan or substantial modification to a plan (Plan Update) being considered for approval. Approval of a redevelopment plan requires a two-thirds vote of the local governing body. Subsequent to the public hearing, the local governing body may approve a redevelopment plan if it finds that the plan is feasible and in conformity with the general plan for the development of the municipality (City of Maricopa) as a whole.

Next Steps following Adoption.

Included in the RDA are a number of recommendations for Plan implementation priorities. These priorities are listed to provide general guidance for public and private entities in accomplishing goals and objectives of the Plan.

CITIZEN PARTICIPATION:

This plan's formation, vision, and methods for reaching the vision, have been guided by the community. Direct mailings have been sent to affected property owners, and neighborhood and homeowner associations. Other interested parties within and in proximity to the redevelopment area received notification of the public meetings through sign postings, newspaper legal advertisements, and have been given the opportunity to discuss the planning process at their convenience with Planning Staff or at the published public meetings and hearing.

During the plan update process, several presentations were made at public meetings within the city at the Planning and Zoning Commission meeting, the Neighborhood Meeting, and the City Council. Throughout the plan update process, Planning Staff engaged the public by phone, electronic communications, in-person meetings at City Hall, and in-person meetings within the various redevelopment district neighborhoods. Mailed notifications for the meetings were bilingual (English and Spanish) and translators were present at each meeting.

- September 6, 2023 - Notification letters sent
- September 7, 2023 - Redevelopment District notification signs posted
- September 25, 2023 - Planning and Zoning Commission Meeting
- October 9, 2023 - Neighborhood Meeting
- October 16, 2023 - Public Hearing notification letters sent
- October 21, 2023 - Newspaper legal notice published
- October 28, 2023 - 2nd Newspaper legal notice published
- November 7, 2023 - City Council Public Hearing

PUBLIC COMMENT:

As of the writing of this report, staff has not received any written public comment on the Draft Redevelopment Area (Heritage District) Plan Update.

On September 25, 2023, the Planning and Zoning Commission introduced the RDA Update to the public for review and comment. At the meeting, attended by approximately twenty to thirty (20-30) individuals, Planning Staff presented a slideshow presentation highlighting the RDA area, the purpose for the RDA Update, and the goals and objectives of the RDA Update. Planning staff fielded a series of questions and engaged in discussions with meeting attendees. Public concerns concentrated around common misconceptions that the Plan would rezone properties in the Redevelopment (Heritage) District, facilitate "takings" of property by the city, or foster gentrification within the area. Planning staff assured the attendees that the Plan was not a document that facilitated or endorsed any of these concerns but was a required instrument for applying for federal Community Development Block Grant funds to be applied towards and utilized in a variety of infrastructure, economic development, and housing stabilization improvement projects within the District.

On October 9, 2023, Planning Staff hosted a Neighborhood Meeting in the City Council Chambers (original host venue, Maricopa Library and Cultural Center, was closed for staff training). Approximately forty to fifty (40-50) individuals attended the meeting. Planning staff presented a detailed slideshow presentation highlighting the RDA area, the purpose of the RDA Update, the goals

and objectives of the RDA Update, and demonstrations of where/how previous Community Development Block Grant funds have been applied within the Redevelopment (Heritage) District. During the presentation Planning Staff fielded a series of questions and engaged in discussions with meeting attendees. After the presentation, Development Services Staff and meeting attendees broke out into small groups to facilitate individualized question and answer discussion sessions as well as present more detailed information about the Plan Update and history of the RDA.

During the Neighborhood Meeting, attendees voiced their concerns about the overall evolution of the area and their position in the community. Questions and discussions ranged from past and current infrastructure (roadway, sidewalk, streetlight) improvement projects, various commercial and residential developments in the area, financial costs of these and other proposed infrastructure projects in the area, as well as other burdens felt placed on individual property owners. Attendees voiced a general sense of “being left behind” by development in other areas of the City. Other areas of concern expressed by attendees regarded the lack of infrastructure (streetlights, public parks in the RDA area, the potential costs of sewer infrastructure improvements and “forced” connections), illegal truck traffic through residential neighborhoods, and the need for various traffic control measures around the area. Through these questions and discussions, Development Services staff reassured attendees that many of their expressed concerns were contained within the RDA Update, and that approval of the Plan would be a tool to help the City offset the financial costs associated with addressing them. Development Services staff noted to the attendees that the concerns could not be surmounted overnight, but would be addressed strategically, and incrementally.

CONCLUSION:

City Staff recommends **approval** of the **Redevelopment Area Plan Update**, subject to the conditions of approval stated in this staff report, and/or as amended by the City Council.

ATTACHMENTS:

- Exhibit A – Redevelopment District (Heritage District) Area Plan Update
- Exhibit B – Appendix A: General Plan Conformity
- Exhibit C – Appendix B: General Plan Map Conformity
- Exhibit D – Appendix C: Parks, Trails, & Open Space Master Plan Conformity
- Exhibit E – Appendix D: Presentation to the Planning and Zoning Commission
- Exhibit F – Appendix E: Community Participation
- Exhibit G – Appendix F: Heritage District Area Assessment

– End of staff report –