

November 2009

**PRELIMINARY PLAN
FOR THE PROPOSED
CALIMESA
REDEVELOPMENT
PROJECT AREA No. 2**

**CALIMESA REDEVELOPMENT AGENCY
PLANNING COMMISSION OF THE CITY OF CALIMESA**



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Prepared for the

PROPOSED
CALIMESA REDEVELOPMENT
PROJECT AREA NO. 2

Prepared by:

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In Cooperation with the:

PLANNING COMMISSION OF THE CITY OF CALIMESA

and the:

CALIMESA REDEVELOPMENT AGENCY

NOVEMBER 2009



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1.0 INTRODUCTION

The Calimesa Redevelopment Agency (the “Agency”) has initiated preparation of a proposed redevelopment plan (the “Plan”) to establish a redevelopment project, entitled the Calimesa Redevelopment Project Area No. 2 (the “Project” or “Project Area,” depending on context), within the City of Calimesa (the “City”). The Agency desires to adopt the Plan for the purposes of improving existing deleterious physical and economic conditions in certain parts of the City not currently within a redevelopment project area.

Pursuant to Section 33322 of the California Community Redevelopment Law (CCRL; Health and Safety Code, Section 33000, *et seq.*), the City Council of the City (the “City Council”), by its Resolution No. 2009-36, adopted on September 21, 2009,¹ directed the Planning Commission of the City (the “Planning Commission”) to select preliminary Project Area boundaries and formulate a Preliminary Plan for the redevelopment of the Project Area, and addressed other related redevelopment plan adoption actions. Pursuant to CCRL Sections 33323 and 33325, the Planning Commission will forward the Preliminary Plan to the Agency for its review and subsequent action and cooperate with the Agency, as appropriate and necessary, in the selection of Project Area boundaries and preparation of the Preliminary Plan.

The Preliminary Plan is the initial framework document which will serve as the basis for each subsequent aspect of the Plan adoption. More detailed studies will be initiated which will identify specific problems and deficiencies, and target programs, projects and implementation actions necessary to effectuate the achievement of redevelopment activities that will be made possible by approval and adoption of the Plan. Adoption of the Plan for the Project will permit the Agency to fund improvements benefitting both private and public interests. As a part of the redevelopment plan adoption process, the Agency will prepare analyses intended to further support the need for redevelopment benefits, including: the provision for affordable housing opportunities within the Project Area and the larger community, economic development assistance, community facilities and infrastructure improvements.

1.1 DESCRIPTION OF THE BOUNDARIES OF THE PROJECT AREA

The Planning Commission’s recommended Project Area boundaries are shown on the map included as Appendix “A” of this Preliminary Plan (a legal description of the Project Area will be completed upon Agency acceptance of the Planning Commission’s selected Project Area boundaries). The Project Area, as proposed, consists of approximately _____ acres which are generally located in two noncontiguous sub-areas within the Survey Area, and which are not currently in a redevelopment project area within the City.

Boundary recommendations presented herein have been based upon: i) discussions with Agency staff and legal counsel; ii) a parcel-specific field reconnaissance of the Survey Area (the field reconnaissance focused on identifying the kinds and degree of blight in the Survey Area); and iii) a review of aerial images. As Agency staff and advisors work to complete the redevelopment plan adoption process, it may be necessary to make minor modification(s) to the Project Area boundaries based upon

¹ Adoption of City Council Resolution No. 2009-36 also designated a new redevelopment survey area (the “Survey Area”). By law, parcels proposed for inclusion within a redevelopment project area must first have been included within a redevelopment survey area. All parcels proposed for inclusion within the Project Area have been included within the Survey Area boundary.

new information and analyses, including evaluation of Project Area and larger area economic conditions, surface and sub-grade infrastructure, code enforcement and building violations, public safety services, and other relevant information available in public records. Except for minor boundaries adjustments, any substantive modification to the Project Area's boundaries shall be brought back to the Planning Commission for its review and approval prior to approval of Plan adoption by the Agency and subsequent consideration for adoption by the City Council.

1.2 PROJECT DESCRIPTION AND BASIS FOR REDEVELOPMENT

The severe economic recession that began almost two years ago has resulted in a sharp decline in demand for newly constructed housing units in the City and an increase in land developer bankruptcies. Preliminary review of several new housing tracts which comprise much of the Project Area suggests these aforementioned adverse economic conditions have created and will continue to create serious negative physical and economic impacts on the City and the community at large.

Several neighborhood tracts and supporting infrastructure begun, but only partially completed, create an abandoned character not only to each area, but to the surrounding community as well. Some homes in these defaulted housing tracts, abandoned by real estate developers, are only partially-constructed with no substantial evidence of preservation of construction already completed (e.g., in most cases only chain-link fences have been installed to lessen potential for vandalism). These partially-built homes in the Project Area and the semi-completion of the neighborhoods pose serious health and safety hazards to the community by attracting vandals, vagrants and arsonists, as well as becoming potential breeding grounds for vectors, such as mosquitoes, fleas, rats and other vermin. Such partially constructed homes sprinkled through newly developed areas can result in an increase in demand for public safety services, and reduce, in the longer-term, potential for development/redevelopment of adjacent and near-by parcels due to the negative impacts of external obsolescence.

Adding to this grim economic scenario is the City's unemployment rate, currently 15.9%, which is much higher than the State's approximate average 12.1% unemployment rate.² City officials are concerned that increased interrupted and abandoned neighborhood construction caused by numerous developer bankruptcies and other economic problems will leave the City with insufficient property tax revenue to cover the costs associated with providing additional necessary public services within these and other areas of the City. City officials have reason to believe that these existing and future structural deficits, therefore, constitute a serious physical and economic burden on the community which cannot reasonably be expected to be reversed or alleviated by private enterprise or governmental action, or both, without redevelopment.

The Project Area will be further evaluated by Agency and City staff, UFI, and Alfred Gobar Associates economists to determine the degree of both physical and economic blighting conditions, including the presence of inadequate public improvements, and other factors relevant to substantiate the inclusion of these areas within the Project Area, such as relocation and development of affordable housing consistent with CCRL requirements.

² Employment Development Department Labor Market Information Division for the State of California, <http://www.labormarketinfo.edd.ca.gov> "Monthly Labor force for Cities and Census Designated Places for August 2009-Preliminary Data Not Seasonally Adjusted," 18 September 2009.

2.0 GENERAL STATEMENTS

2.1 PROPOSED LAND USES

As a basis for the redevelopment of the Project Area, it is proposed that development and redevelopment be in conformance with the adopted General Plan and Zoning Ordinance of the City,³ as it presently exists and as it may be amended from time to time (the General Plan and the Zoning Code Ordinance are collectively referred to hereafter as the “General Plan”), and all other applicable State, regional and local building codes, standards and guidelines as they presently exist and as they may be amended from time to time.

All development, redevelopment and related construction activities undertaken within the Project Area will be subject to applicable federal, State, regional, and local building codes, standards and guidelines. In addition, the Plan’s proposed implementation projects will be subject to all applicable planning, environmental review and other procedural requirements currently in effect as such activities are proposed, planned and implemented.

2.2 PROPOSED LAYOUT OF PRINCIPAL STREETS

As a basis for the redevelopment of the Project Area, it is proposed that, in general, the layout of newly constructed, improved or vacated principal streets will be as shown in the General Plan Circulation Element, as it presently exists and as amended from time to time, and as permitted by future actions of legally authorized public entities such as Caltrans. In accordance with General Plan policies, existing streets within and/or directly adjacent to the Project Area may be closed, widened or otherwise modified, and additional streets may be created as necessary for proper pedestrian and/or vehicular circulation, consistent with the General Plan.

2.3 PROPOSED POPULATION DENSITIES

Within the confines of the General Plan Land Use designations, there will be a permitted range of development within the Project Area; population densities therein must be in conformance with the General Plan, as it presently exists, and as it may be amended from time to time.

2.4 PROPOSED BUILDING INTENSITIES

As a basis for the redevelopment of the Project Area, it is proposed that, in general, the building intensity be controlled by limits, as promulgated by the General Plan, with respect to: i) percentage of ground area covered by buildings (lot coverage); ii) building setbacks, parking, landscaping and open space requirements; iii) location of the buildable areas on building sites; and iv) building heights. Land coverage and locations of buildable areas should be appropriately limited so that provisions for open space, landscaping, parking and a high level of livability are adequate and sustainable.

³ The General Plan was last updated in 1994. The City is currently engaged in the initial stages of preparing a comprehensive update; however, it is anticipated that consideration of Project adoption will occur prior to update completion.

The limits on building intensity shall be established in accordance with the restrictions defined in the General Plan as it presently exists, and as it may be amended from time to time.

2.5 PROPOSED BUILDING STANDARDS

It is proposed that, in general, building standards in the Project Area conform to the building requirements of all applicable federal and State statutes, standards and codes, and all applicable City codes and ordinances.

3.0 ATTAINMENT OF THE PURPOSES OF THE LAW

It is anticipated that, over the long-term, approval and adoption of the Plan and redevelopment of the Project Area will provide substantial benefits to both public and private interests. In addition to the benefits to be afforded Project Area property owners, residents and businesses, it can also be expected that implementation of redevelopment projects and programs within the Project Area will ultimately also benefit property owners, residents and businesses in the City overall.

Adoption of the Project Area will bring direct benefits to the Project Area due to the funding that will be available to the Agency for use within or for the benefit of the Project Area. Achievement of other Plan objectives will also help the Agency to more fully attain the purposes of the law and to help ameliorate conditions of physical and economic blight in the Project Area. Redevelopment of the Project Area would be attained through, but not necessarily limited to, the following:

1. Stimulating construction activity and increasing employment opportunities including reuse of lands;
2. Assisting in the development, construction, and occupancy of affordable housing in the community;
3. Community education and consensus building activities with regard to the need for, and long-term use of redevelopment as a financial, planning, and project implementation tool to be effectively used;
4. As necessary and appropriate, comprehensive planning, redesign, replanning, development, reconstruction or rehabilitation of parts of the Project Area, which would help to facilitate a higher and better utilization of underutilized parcels, thereby contributing to the public health, safety and welfare, and higher productivity of available land resources;
5. Stimulation of new construction and reconstruction activities and increasing employment opportunities within commercial segments of the Project Area, specifically, and the community, generally;
6. Participating in the financing, realignment, reconstruction and/or construction of curbs, gutters, sidewalks, streets, drainage and other necessary public facilities, and the under-grounding of overhead utilities in those parts of the Project Area where this would be feasible;
7. When and if appropriate, facilitating the redevelopment of existing land uses principally through the aggregation or subdivision and disposition of designated parcels into more viable and productive land bays consistent with General Plan land uses, development densities and intensities;
8. As necessary and appropriate, assisting in the redevelopment of residential, and commercial areas by helping to finance redevelopment activities, which activities have not and probably will not occur without Agency assistance. Redevelopment

and development activities may include, but not necessarily be limited to, construction of infrastructure, land write-downs, acquisition and subsequent disposition of parcels, planning, permit process expediting, and low interest rate loans;

9. As necessary and appropriate, developing and implementing projects and programs designed to assist the upgrading and/or growth of new or existing commercial uses within and adjacent to the Project Area consistent with General Plan land use designations;
10. Helping to lessen or eliminate existing deleterious physical and economic conditions that contribute to the deterioration of the quality of life of residents living in the Project Area, and that hinder the productivity of commercial business interests located within and adjacent to the Project Area, principally through the construction and/or reconstruction of public facilities, utilities and infrastructure, including, as necessary and appropriate, noise attenuation walls, vehicle and pedestrian oriented street and roadway improvements, increased landscaping in public rights-of-way, parks and recreation facilities, and public safety facilities; and
11. Helping to improve affected residential neighborhoods by supporting and promoting housing projects and programs designed to provide better, and a greater number of housing opportunities for community residents in accordance with CCRL requirements and community housing objectives, principally through the provision of low cost loans and grants, and, when appropriate and feasible, the assembly, clearance and disposition of suitable parcels, and construction and/or reconstruction of housing units on certain parcels which activities will serve to help provide better quality and safer living environments for affected homeowners and tenants.

3.1 CONFORMANCE TO THE GENERAL PLAN OF THE CITY

All development activities implemented within the Project Area must be consistent with the goals and objectives of the General Plan as it presently exists, and as it may be amended from time to time. CCRL Section 33346 provides that the Planning Commission shall prepare a report showing that the Plan conforms to the City's General Plan (the "Conformity Report"). Preparation of the Conformity Report will give the Planning Commission the opportunity to evaluate the Plan as proposed.

While the Agency has not yet formulated its projects and programs list for the Project Area, it is expected that the Plan will help the Agency to: i) implement the goals and objectives of the General Plan and facilitate creation of a more cohesive and better functioning community overall, ii) improve existing community services and facilities as necessary, iii) effect additional positive impacts, discussed earlier in this Preliminary Plan, within the Project Area, including the lessening of physical and economic blight, and iv) increase the number of affordable housing opportunities available to eligible residents; among other things.

3.2 GENERAL IMPACT OF THE PLAN UPON THE RESIDENTS AND THE SURROUNDING NEIGHBORHOODS

The potential for negative impacts upon residents of the Project Area and surrounding neighborhoods caused by adoption and subsequent implementation of the Plan can be expected to be minimal. For instance, during the term of the Plan, short-term construction-related impacts may affect residents using the circulation system adjacent to the Project Area due to roadway and other public works improvements occurring in roadway rights-of-way. On the other hand, it is reasonable to expect that, over the long-term, impacts upon residents living within the Project Area and the surrounding neighborhoods will be largely positive. For example, long-term Agency redevelopment activities can be expected to help: i) fund improvements to public facilities and services; ii) expand economic development activities; iii) assist with infrastructure improvements, and iv) increase the number and quality of affordable housing opportunities available to eligible members of the community and reduce the number of foreclosed properties and abandoned construction sites, among other benefits to the Project Area, and the community overall.

As a part of the redevelopment plan adoption process, the Agency is required to comply with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) to evaluate environmental impacts of the Plan implementation in the Project Area. The Planning Commission will be given the opportunity to review the CEQA documents prior to issuing its Conformity Report and recommendations on the Plan.



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4.0 CONCLUSION

This Preliminary Plan, as the initial document produced in the redevelopment plan adoption process, conforms to the requirements of the CCRL. This Preliminary Plan is consistent with requirements codified in CCRL Section 33324, which provides that a preliminary plan need not be detailed and is sufficient if it:

- (a) Describes the boundaries of the project area.
- (b) Contains a general statement of the land uses, layout of principal streets, population densities and building intensities, and standards proposed as the basis for the redevelopment of the project area.
- (c) Shows how the purposes of the CCRL would be attained by redevelopment.
- (d) Shows that the proposed redevelopment is consistent with the community's general plan.
- (e) Describes, generally, the impact of the project upon the area's residents and upon the surrounding neighborhood.

Preparation and consideration of the Preliminary Plan provides the Agency the opportunity to work with the Planning Commission to determine the boundaries of the Project Area and to coordinate other aspects of the Plan adoption process. At a later date, the Planning Commission will be asked to review the draft Plan and draft Program Environmental Impact Report prepared for redevelopment plan adoption prior to the transmittal of those documents to the Agency and City Council for their subsequent action.



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APPENDIX A –
PROPOSED PROJECT AREA MAP



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