



Frequently Asked Questions About Redevelopment Areas

Q. What is redevelopment?

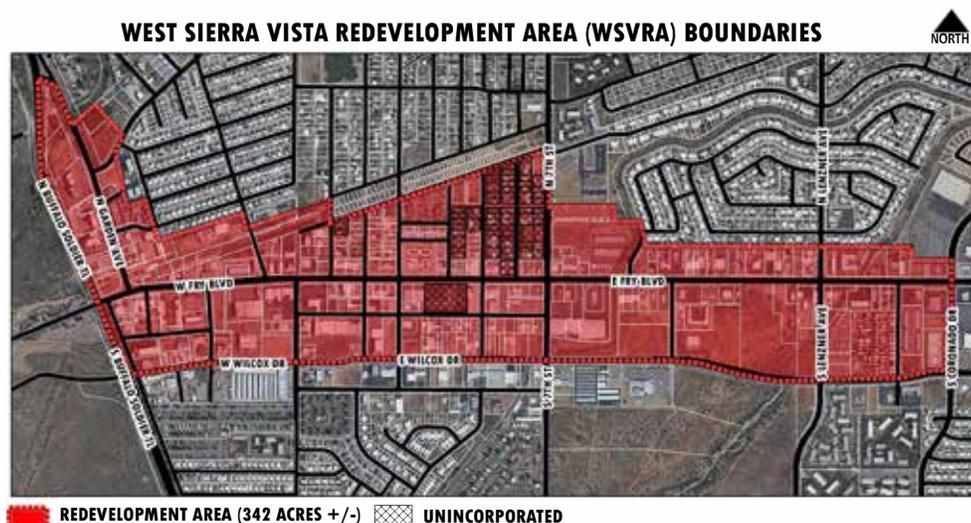
A. Community redevelopment is an economic development strategy that many local governments are successfully using to improve living and economic conditions within a designated area. Redevelopment is a process for achieving desired development, reconstruction, and rehabilitation of a neighborhood or business district. In Arizona, the statutory authority for planning and carrying out a community redevelopment program is found under Arizona Revised Statutes 36-1471 et. seq.

Q. What criteria are evaluated in determining whether an area qualifies for redevelopment?

A. In order to qualify for redevelopment, it must first be deemed a “blighted area”. Arizona State law defines a “blighted area” as a geographic area where a predominance of the properties experiences any of the following:

- Dominance of defective or inadequate street layout
- Faulty lot layout in relation to size, adequacy, accessibility, or usefulness
- Unsanitary or unsafe conditions
- Deterioration of site or other improvements
- Diversity of ownership (by block)
- Tax or special assessment delinquency
- Defective or unusual conditions of title
- Improper or obsolete subdivision platting
- Existence of conditions that endanger life or property by fire and other causes

A redevelopment area will have some, but not usually all of the aspects listed above. A combination of them can be described by State law as “blight” and can qualify an area for redevelopment.



Q. What are the boundaries of the proposed redevelopment area?

A. The proposed redevelopment area boundaries were delineated to focus on the City's business district, west of Coronado Drive.

Q. Why is the City considering a designated redevelopment area?

A. Over the years, there has been increasing community discussion and concern about the commercial vacancy rate and how the viability and attractiveness of the west side of Sierra Vista can be improved. With the FY 16/17 budget, the City Council set aside \$50,000 toward the establishment of an economic assistance fund to incentivize improvement—and ultimately the occupation—of commercial buildings. The redevelopment statutes being considered will allow the City to provide direct matching grant assistance to private property owners for beneficial improvements. Additionally, the redevelopment area designation will allow the City to consider redirecting a portion of its annual allotment of Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funds toward making public improvements in the district.

Q. If I own property in a redevelopment area, will people think I live or work in a slum?

A. **NO!** Redevelopment areas are not “bad” areas; they are areas where a concentration of public investment can correct problems. If you own or rent property in a redevelopment area, it does not mean that your home or business is blighted or that you live or work in a slum. It means that you live or work in an area that needs public investment for things like better streets, sidewalks, street lighting, curbs and gutters, fire hydrants, and storm drainage, or that the area could benefit from building repairs and beautification. *And it means that there is a commitment from the City to improve the area.*

Q. If I own a property in the redevelopment area, will it be labeled as blight?

A. **NO!** The use of the word “blight” is part of the criteria outlined under state law to establish a redevelopment area. However, the City will not record any individual property's participation in the area and the overall designation does not result in any record attached to particular properties. In addition, if the redevelopment area is established, the City will not use the word “blight” when referring to this area or associated properties in the future. Instead the focus will be on redevelopment, revitalization, and reinvestment in a key business corridor.

Q. What does it mean to be in a redevelopment area?

A. If you rent or own property in a redevelopment area, you have an opportunity to improve the economic health and well being of the district. A redevelopment program is a partnership between residents, business and property owners, and the City.

Q. How will this affect property values?

A. Historically, redevelopment areas have resulted in increased property values over time. As properties are improved, it often inspires others to invest in the area as well. In other communities where such a designation has been made, it has not caused a decline in property values, even in the short term. Some examples of redevelopment in Arizona include Flagstaff, Maricopa, Chandler, Mesa, and Tempe, among others. City staff is reaching out to these communities to gather more detailed information about their experiences and will provide updated information as it is available.

Q. Will \$50,000 really make a difference?

A. In our experience, small start ups in the West End often go into business on a shoestring budget and struggle with the cost of improvements necessary for them to open. By virtue of their age, many buildings in the proposed redevelopment area predate current life-safety and accessibility codes and require upgrades when there is a change in use. A matching grant that can defray the cost of new signage, a fire sprinkler system, grease trap, or bathroom improvements can make a difference on whether a vacant building is reused or passed over.

Q. How long will the designation remain in place?

A. By law, the designation of a redevelopment area is required to be redetermined every 10 years for continued qualification.

Q. What is a redevelopment plan?

A. A redevelopment plan describes how the redevelopment will occur and shows what the area will look like in the future. State law requires that the City designate a redevelopment area prior to a redevelopment plan being prepared.

Q. Do citizens have a voice in the redevelopment?

A. **YES!** The ideas, support, and ongoing involvement of residents, business owners, and property owners is crucial to a successful redevelopment program. Without citizen input, any redevelopment plan will falter. The City has been contemplating revitalization of the West End for nearly 50 years. There have been several plans and studies completed that advocate for public investment toward community redevelopment. In 1998, the Downtown Neighborhood Commission (forerunner to the West End Commission) adopted a strategic planning goal seeking to implement a “Storefront Improvement Program,” which is the basis of the proposed “West Sierra Vista Partnership Program”. If the City elects to proceed with the establishment of a redevelopment area, staff will continue to build on the prior work that’s been already been performed with active participation by the public in the planning process.

Q. Why is redevelopment important?

A. Redevelopment is one of the most effective ways to breathe new life into areas that are challenged by a variety of social, physical, environmental, and economic conditions. These conditions act as a barrier to new investments and result in a lower standard of living for residents. Redevelopment is a process that has the authority, scope, and financial means to provide the necessary stimulus to reverse or stem deteriorating trends and improve the image of a neighborhood or business district.

Redevelopment involves:

- Comprehensive planning
- Citizen participation
- Public and private partnerships
- Improved infrastructure
- Improved buildings

Residents and business owners may benefit from redevelopment in the following ways:

- New construction and remodeling
- Elimination of poor health and safety conditions
- Improved streets, drainage and other infrastructure
- Increased property values
- Attractive landscaping and public features
- Improved fire protection
- Commitment of public resources
- A sense of pride and accomplishment

Q. I own home or business in a redevelopment area, will I be forced to leave the area to make way for redevelopment?

A. **NO!** Proposition 207 (Private Property Rights Protection Act) approved by referendum in 2006 prevents government from exercising eminent domain on behalf of a private party taken for economic development purposes. The City has never initiated eminent domain proceedings in its entire history and doesn’t intend to take such action in the future in connection with the redevelopment area designation.

Q. How long does redevelopment take?

A. Redevelopment does not happen overnight. It takes hard work and careful planning. People are often anxious to see the signs of new construction, but it is essential to make the right choices so that the objectives of the plan can be achieved.

Q. I live outside of the proposed redevelopment area, why should I care about redevelopment?

A. As a redevelopment area is improved and the causes of blight are eliminated, the entire community will benefit through the creation of new or renovated homes and businesses, attractive public areas, and the renewal of civic pride. Even if you don't live in, or avoid, the redevelopment area, it doesn't mean you are insulated from the effects of problems in the community. These problems do affect you and cannot be ignored because:

- **Deterioration results in an economic drain on the community.**
As businesses move out of the district, jobs that would be available for people in the community are lost. People have to travel farther to shop. Dollars that flowed into the neighborhood from nearby businesses are lost. At the same time, the area begins to need more public services than the tax revenue produced in the area can fund. In other words, the area becomes a financial drain on the rest of the community.
- **There are no natural barriers.**
Deterioration, if not stopped, tends to expand and affect surrounding areas. On the other hand, area improvements often have a dramatic positive effect. New homes, businesses, and attractive spaces provide an incentive for others to improve their property and to take renewed pride in their neighborhood.
- **Conditions of deterioration will likely proliferate.**
Once blight begins, many people in the community tend to ignore or avoid the area. The property owners are afraid to invest more money in improvements unless they are assured the entire area will be improved. Banks may refuse to lend money. There is no market for new homes or businesses. This combination of negative trends is very powerful. *Foresight and courage are needed to meet the challenge of reversing downward economic, social, and physical trends.*

Summary

A well planned and adequately funded strategy is required to stop deterioration in its tracks and begin the process of economic, social, and physical revitalization.

Many major revitalization projects fail for a number of reasons. While good intentions and considerable efforts are made, the complexity of the task, the large amount of money needed, and the difficulty in coordinating diverse interests sometimes stymies public and private efforts at revitalization.

Multiplicity of ownership, inadequate public facilities, financial limitations, and widespread environmental decay place the possibility of revitalization beyond the reach of private builders and developers.

Community redevelopment is accomplished by forming a partnership of public and private interests. Public funds are used to provide the conditions that are necessary to facilitate private investment in the area.

Still have questions?

The City of Sierra Vista will host an informational meeting about the redevelopment area proposal on Wednesday, March 8, at 11:30 a.m. in Kino Hall, located at 800 Taylor Drive. Citizens will be able to ask questions and offer comments during the meeting. To learn more, contact Community Development Director Matt McLachlan at (520) 417-4413 or Matt.McLachlan@SierraVistaAZ.gov.

