

**Clarksdale Quality of Life Commission**  
**Urban Renewal Plan**  
**City of Clarksdale, Mississippi**

Clarksdale Board of Mayor and Commissioners July 23, 2018  
*Approved* Clarksdale Quality of Life Commission July 17, 2018

# **Clarksdale Quality of Life Commission Urban Renewal Plan**

## *Table of Contents*

	<i>Page</i>
Section 1.0: Preface and Background	3
Section 2.0: Qualifying Conditions	7
Section 3.0: Relationship to Comprehensive Plan	8
Section 4.0: Land Use Plan and Plan Objectives	9
Section 5.0: Project Implementation	13
Section 6.0: Project Financing	16
Section 7.0: Changes & Minor Variations from Adopted Plan	17
Section 8.0: Agency Governance	18
Section 9.0: Plan Administration	18
Section 10.0: Severability	19

# **Clarksdale Quality of Life Commission Urban Renewal Plan**

Clarksdale, Mississippi

*Prepared for: Clarksdale Quality of Life Commission*

## **1.0 Preface and Background**

### **1.1 Preface**

This *Clarksdale Quality of Life Commission Urban Renewal Plan* (the “Plan” or the “Urban Renewal Plan”) has been prepared for the Clarksdale Quality of Life Commission of the City of Clarksdale, (the “Agency”) pursuant to the provisions of the Mississippi Urban Renewal Law, Title 43, Chapter 35, Article I, Mississippi Code of 1972, as amended (the “Act”). The administration of this Project (as hereinafter defined) and the enforcement of this Plan, including the preparation and execution of any documents implementing it, shall be performed by the Agency.

### **1.2 Description of Urban Renewal Area**

According to the Mississippi Urban Renewal Law, the jurisdictional boundaries of the urban renewal Agency shall be the same as the boundaries of the municipality.

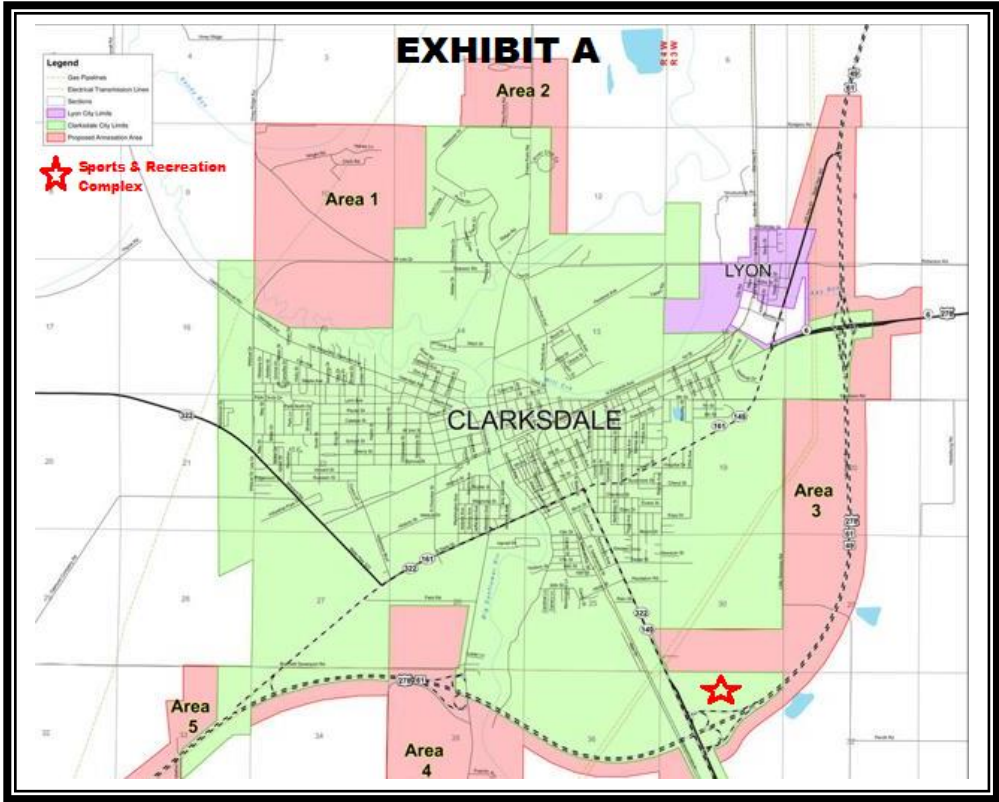
Additionally, within the municipal boundaries there may be one or more urban renewal areas.

Under this law, an Urban Renewal Agency is allowed to prepare plans for an urban renewal area provided it meets statutory requirements as a blighted area. These blighted areas may then be designated for an urban renewal project. In each urban renewal area, conditions of blight must be present at a level defined by the urban renewal law before the Agency can legally exercise its powers. Finally, in each urban renewal area, activities of an urban renewal project are implemented as a way to eliminate the conditions of blight.

The Clarksdale Quality of Life Commission Urban Renewal Area (referred to herein as “the Urban Renewal Area” or “the Area”) is located in the [13.2] square miles that

make up the incorporated area of the city of Clarksdale (the “City”). The Agency has selected the hereinafter-described urban renewal project (the “Project”) known as the Corey L. Moore Sports and Recreation Complex. The Project site is generally bounded on the north by the Sunbelt Industrial Park, on the South by the U.S. Highway 61 bypass, on the west by U.S. Highway 49, and on the east by U.S. Interstate I69. The boundaries of the Area are delineated on Figure No. 1. The figure controls the boundary description in case of any conflict with the legal description. The boundaries of the Urban Renewal Area are drawn narrowly to accomplish the planning and development objectives of the Urban Renewal Plan.

**Figure 1, Urban Renewal Planning Area Map** The boundaries for the Urban Renewal Area shall be the boundaries as set forth in the Urban Renewal Planning Area Map as identified in Exhibit A:



**1.3 Purpose of the Plan**

The purpose of the Plan is to reduce, eliminate and prevent the spread of blight within the Urban Renewal Area and to stimulate growth and reinvestment within the Urban

Renewal Area and surrounding neighborhoods. In particular, this Urban Renewal Plan is intended to encourage appropriate land uses, improve traffic mobility and provide other public improvements, however, such objectives shall not mean that any particular project will necessarily promote all such objectives. Specifically, the Plan promotes an environment which allows for the highest and best land use, including conference center hotel, waterpark, restaurant, and athletic fields. The Project which can respond to market conditions over time, further the goals and objectives of the General Plan (as hereinafter defined), and leverage the community's investment in public improvement projects in the Urban Renewal Plan.

While the principal goal of the Agency is to redevelop and rehabilitate the Urban Renewal Area by private enterprise, it is not intended to replace the efforts of the Clarksdale Chamber of Commerce, Clarksdale Industrial Foundation, Clarksdale Revitalization, Inc., or other business development or marketing organizations but rather collaborate with all of the above entities.

The rehabilitation and redevelopment of the Urban Renewal Area will be accomplished by improving existing structures, attracting new commercial and mixed-use development, and eliminating and preventing the deterioration of properties in the Urban Renewal Area. The effort will involve the Agency and the City and any other political subdivision of the State (including the County of Coahoma (the "County")) that chooses to participate, with the cooperation of the private sector.

As the Urban Renewal Law authorizes the Agency to undertake zoning and planning activities to regulate land uses, densities, and building requirements in the Urban Renewal Area, for purposes of implementing this Plan, the Agency shall govern the previously mentioned activities and utilize other applicable municipal standards and regulations. All development within the Urban Renewal Area will also need to comply with all applicable municipal requirements prior to receiving approval from the Agency.

#### **1.4 Public Participation**

The Plan has been made available to business and property owners located within the Urban Renewal Area, as well as Clarksdale residents at-large. Notification of the

public hearing was provided to property owners, tenants, and residents of record within the Urban Renewal Area as required by the Act. Input on the Plan's intent will be solicited from Urban Renewal Area residents, property, business owners, and tenants ("stakeholders") during a meeting to be held in July 2018. Another stakeholder town hall meeting was conducted on June 21, 2018 to discuss the impact of the Project on the community and answer community questions.

Presentations were made to the Planning and Zoning Commission and Board of Commissioners of the City (the "Board of Commissioners") in July of 2018, to receive comments and input on the Plan. The Planning and Zoning Commission formally reviewed the Plan at its July 2018, meeting. The plan is consistent with the General Plan.

## **1.5 Definitions**

In addition to terms previously defined in the text, the following terms are used in this Urban Renewal Plan:

**Cooperation Agreement** - means any agreement between or among the Agency, the City, the County and/or any other public body, as defined by the act, respecting action to be taken pursuant to any of the powers set forth in the Act or in any other provision of Mississippi law, for the purpose of facilitating public undertakings deemed necessary or appropriate by the Agency under this Urban Renewal Plan.

Any such cooperation agreement may include, without limitation, agreements regarding the planning or implementation of this Urban Renewal Plan and the Project, as well as programs, public works operations, or activities which the Agency, the City, the County or such other public body is otherwise empowered to undertake; including without limitation, agreements respecting the financing, installation, construction and reconstruction of public improvements, utility line relocation, storm water detention, environmental remediation, landscaping and/or other eligible improvements within the Urban Renewal Area.

**Redevelopment / Development Agreement** - means an agreement between the Agency and the owner or developer(s) regarding the redevelopment or redevelopment of property within the Urban Renewal Area.

## **2.0 Qualifying Conditions**

The City of *Clarksdale General Development Plan*, which was adopted by the governing body of the City on September 27, 2010 (the “General Plan”), was completed by Robert L. Barber and Associates. Page 48 of the Plan calls for locational opportunities to accommodate forecasted retail/commercial economic growth. The Plan contains the evidence of blight for the Urban Renewal Area. The complete Clarksdale General Plan is incorporated into this Urban Renewal Plan by reference as if fully set forth herein.

The legal term “blighted area” describes a wide array of urban problems, which range from physical deterioration of buildings and the environment, to health, social and economic problems in a particular area. Based on the survey completed in connection with the adoption and approval of the Urban Renewal Plan, at least four qualifying conditions of blight, as defined in the Act, are present within the proposed Urban Renewal Area. These conditions, which are summarized as follows, are evidence of a “blighted area” as defined in the Act.

- a) Slum, deteriorated, or deteriorating structures;
- b) Predominance of defective or inadequate street layout;
- c) Faulty lot layout in relation to size, adequacy, accessibility, or usefulness;
- d) Unsanitary or unsafe conditions;
- e) Deterioration of site or other improvements;
- f) Unusual topography or inadequate public improvements or utilities;
- g) Defective or unusual conditions of title rendering the title non-marketable;
- h) The existence of conditions that endanger life or property by fire or other causes;
- i) Buildings that are unsafe or unhealthy for persons to live or work in because of building code violations, dilapidation, deterioration, defective design, physical construction, or faulty or inadequate facilities;
- j) Environmental contamination of buildings or property;
- k) The existence of health, safety, or welfare factors requiring high levels of municipal services or substantial physical and underutilization or vacancy of sites, buildings, or other improvements.

If there is no objection of such property owner or owners and the tenant or tenants of such owner or owners, if any, to the inclusion of such property in an urban renewal area, "blighted area" also means an area that, in its present condition and use and, by reason of the presence of any one of the factors specified in paragraphs (a) to (k) of this subsection (2), substantially impairs or arrests the sound growth of the municipality, retards the provision of housing accommodations, or constitutes an economic or social liability, and is a menace to the public health, safety, morals or welfare. For purposes of this paragraph, the fact that an owner of an interest in such property does not object to the inclusion of such property in the urban renewal area does not mean that the owner has waived any rights of such owner in connection with laws governing eminent domain.

### **3.0 Relationship to General Plan and Strategic Community Plan**

The General Plan was adopted by the governing body of the City on September 27, 2010. The General Plan specifically seeks to "provide locational opportunities to accommodate forecasted retail/commercial economic growth," "provide for safe, sanitary development of affordable housing," and "stabilize deteriorating housing." This Urban Renewal Plan supports, implements, and is in conformance with the goals of the General Plan. Specific goals and policies of the General Plan that this Plan will further include the following:

*Goal B(2).* Support adequate economic development efforts which offer high school and college level employment opportunities.

*Goal C(2)* Support and encourage economic development activity related to tourism.

*Goal G(1)* Promote the development of visually pleasing commercial areas.

*Goal H:* Promote tourism and create gateway landmarks.

The County adopted a 2012-2022 Strategic Community Plan which was which was prepared by the Delta Bridge Project. The mission statement for this plan is to "promote, plan, and implement a comprehensive economic development strategy that attracts emerging, high-growth industries and supports the expansion and retention of existing businesses." This Urban Renewal Plan supports, implements, and is in conformance with the goals of County-wide 2012-2022 Strategic Community Plan.



Specific goals and policies of the 2012-2022 Strategic Community Plan this Plan will further include the following:

Goal 1 Create a strong economic environment that supports industry growth.

Goal 2 Upgrade the appearance of the community in order to enhance perceptions of local businesses and industries.

Goal 7 Construct a regional sportsplex to host sporting events in Coahoma County and actively market this complex for athletic tournaments and other large group events.

## **4.0 Land Use Plan and Plan Objectives**

### **4.1 General Description**

Properties located within the total proposed Urban Renewal Area comprise [13.8] square miles all of which is located within the city limits of Clarksdale, MS. City-owned land is included in this Plan to ensure proper land use planning practices are followed and to allow for the possible exchange or transfer of public land in order to implement the Plan.

The cornerstone of the stakeholders' vision for revitalization of the area is creation of high quality commercial and industrial business development, and medium-density infill residential developments. Existing inadequate infrastructure conditions present within the Area could be remedied by the proposed plan, but will need to first be identified as a priority public investment item by the stakeholders and community.

This plan can address the following land use designations:

***Business Industrial*** – employment uses, office, industrial and institutional, located independently or within a formalized business park setting, with supporting residential and commercial uses.

***Commercial*** – neighborhood- and community-serving commercial operations, freestanding and integrated into other non-residential commercial and employment centers.

***Area Parks*** – undevelopable open space, formal and informal, set aside for public recreation use.

## 4.2 Development Objectives

The development objectives for the Urban Renewal Area include establishment of a variety of land uses and densities that will allow projects to respond to changing market conditions. Proposed land uses within the Urban Renewal Area include employment, commercial, industrial, office, public, parking, and open space. Other objectives include:

- a) eliminate and prevent blight,
- b) increase property values,
- c) provide land uses supportive of and complementary to planned improvements,
- d) provide ease of vehicular and pedestrian circulation ,
- e) encourage continued presence of businesses consistent with the Plan vision,
- f) provide a financing mechanisms for private property re-investment and investment,
- g) encourage public-private partnerships to implement the Plan, and

### 4.2.1 Redevelopment Opportunities—Urban Renewal Plan/Catalyst Project

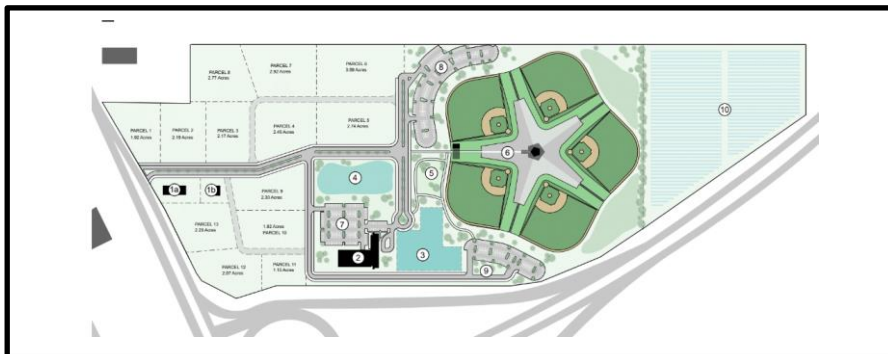
A key concept associated with implementation of the General Plan is targeted investment in strategic locations that will serve to catalyze redevelopment throughout the Area. With a proposed location in southeast Clarksdale, the Urban Renewal Plan and the Project will serve as the catalyst project for the General Plan.





The Project is a public-private partnership to develop vacant industrial land into a sprawling 72-acre sports, recreation, hospitality, and convention center complex. The Project is located approximately one hour south of Memphis, TN, in the rural Mississippi Delta Community of Clarksdale, Mississippi. Clarksdale, population of approximately 17,000, is a rural farming community in northwest Mississippi and is considered to be the birthplace of the Blues. The Project includes a 100 Room Franchised Hotel (Brand TBD); a 15,000sf convention center; 5 artificial turf athletic fields for youth baseball; a drive thru food franchise, a 2-acre outdoor waterpark and a 2MW solar farm located on the project site; and related public infrastructure and improvements.

**Figure 2. Proposed Site of Corey L. Moore Sports and Recreation Complex**



### **4.3 Design Objectives**

Design objectives for the Project also promote flexibility, adaptability to a mix of uses, and consistency with prevailing market conditions. Other objectives include:

- a) mix of land uses that promote vitality and livability
- b) variety of land use densities to address affordability
- c) higher design standards
- d) transportation improvements designed to enhance access into and out of the Area
- e) minimal pedestrian / vehicular conflict
- f) pedestrian-friendly landscaped streetscape which unifies uses and Plan components
- g) lighting and signage standards which are flexible

### **4.4 Building Standards**

All development shall conform to the local building codes, International Building Codes and any site-specific zoning for properties in the Urban Renewal Area unless a variance is granted by the City and/or County.

In conformance with the Act and Urban Renewal Plan, the Agency may adopt additional design standards and other requirements applicable to properties in the Urban Renewal Area.

### **4.5 Public Improvements and Facilities**

The Agency may undertake certain actions to make the Urban Renewal Area more attractive for private investment. The Agency may, or cause others to, install, construct, and reconstruct any public improvements in the Urban Renewal Area, including, without limitation, streets, sidewalks, underground utility and service facilities, streetscapes, pedestrian corridors, and parking facilities. The Agency may also, or cause others to, install, construct and reconstruct any other authorized improvements in the Urban Renewal Area, including, without limitation, other authorized undertakings or improvements for the purpose of promoting the objectives of this Urban Renewal Plan and the Act. Any and all of such improvements shall be considered to be a part of the Project.

Public projects are intended to stimulate (directly and indirectly) private sector investment in and around the Urban Renewal Area. The combination of public and

private investment will assist in the reinvestment and conversion of the Urban Renewal Area into a viable employment and commercial gateway area with supporting residential, institutional and public spaces contributing increased property and sales taxes to the City and the County.

#### **4.5.1 Infrastructure**

New infrastructure that is required will be relocated in public rights-of-way or dedicated easements. These systems will be added to the existing infrastructure to the extent possible.

The list below identifies some of the capital improvements currently contained in the City's Capital Improvement Program (CIP), both funded and unfunded, as well as other improvements that have been identified as part of this planning process. For the purposes of this Plan, any item currently contained within the City's CIP will not receive financing generated by this Plan for completion unless the Agency and the City cooperate through an interfund loan to accelerate a needed project and then the City would repay the Agency.

#### **4.6 Other Improvements and Facilities**

There could be other non-public improvements in the Urban Renewal Area required to accommodate development. The Agency may assist in the financing or construction of these improvements, any or all of which such improvements will be considered to be a part of the Project.

### **5.0 Project Implementation**

The Act allows for and recommends a wide range of activities be used in the implementation of an urban renewal area. It is the intent of the Agency to provide incentives to stimulate private investment in cooperation with property owners and other affected parties in order to accomplish the objectives of the plan. Public-private partnerships and joint venture development will be key to the Agency's strategy for preventing the spread of blight and eliminating the blighting conditions.

#### **5.1 Property Acquisition and Land Assemblage**

The Agency, through purchase or eminent domain in accordance with the Act and the Urban Renewal Plan, may acquire property. Any property acquired under the power of eminent domain must be approved by a majority vote of the Board of Commissioners.

The Agency may temporarily operate, manage and maintain property acquired in the Urban Renewal Area. Such property shall be under the management and control of the Agency and may be rented or leased pending its disposition for redevelopment.

## **5.2 Relocation Assistance**

It is not anticipated that acquisition of real property by the Agency will result in the relocation of any individuals, families, or business concerns. However, if such relocation becomes necessary, the Agency shall adopt a relocation plan consistent with specific objectives.

### **5.2.1 Mitigate Inconvenience and Expense**

Development of any relocation program for the Area will be designed to mitigate the inconvenience and expense of individuals, families and business concerns that may be displaced by acquisition of property by the Agency.

### **5.2.2 Information Program**

Any relocation program will be accompanied by an information program to keep all affected parties advised of relocation activities on a continuing basis and to encourage all such parties to keep the Agency informed of their needs and requirements.

## **5.3 Demolition, Clearance, and Site Preparation**

In carrying out this Urban Renewal Plan and the development of the Project, it is not anticipated that the Agency will be required to demolish and clear buildings, structures and other improvements from property in the Urban Renewal Area.

However, development activities consistent with this Plan may require such demolition and clearance to eliminate unhealthy, unsanitary, and unsafe conditions, eliminate obsolete and other uses detrimental to the public welfare, and otherwise remove and prevent the spread of blight. They may also be necessary to alleviate identified hazardous environmental conditions.

With respect to property acquired by the Agency, it may demolish and clear, or contract to demolish and clear, those buildings, structures and other improvements from property pursuant to this Urban Renewal Plan if, in the judgment of the Agency, such buildings, structures and other improvements cannot be rehabilitated in accordance with this Urban Renewal Plan. The Agency may also undertake such additional site preparation activities, as it deems necessary, to facilitate the disposition and redevelopment of such property. In all case, these practices will occur with the consent of the property owner and after just compensation, if applicable.

#### **5.4 Property Disposition**

The Agency may sell, lease, or otherwise transfer real property or any interest in real property subject to covenants, conditions and restrictions, including architectural and design controls, time restrictions on development, and building requirements, as it deems necessary to redevelop such property. All property and interest in real estate acquired by the Agency in the Urban Renewal Area that is not dedicated or transferred to public entities, shall be sold or otherwise disposed of for redevelopment in accordance with the provision of this Plan and the Act.

#### **5.5 Redevelopment and Rehabilitation Actions**

Redevelopment and rehabilitation actions within the Urban Renewal Area may include such undertakings and activities as are in accordance with this Urban Renewal Plan and the Act, including without limitation: demolition and removal of buildings and improvements as set forth herein; installation, construction and reconstruction of public improvements as set forth herein; elimination of unhealthy, unsanitary or unsafe conditions; elimination of obsolete or other uses detrimental to the public welfare; prevention of the spread of deterioration; and provision of land for needed public facilities.

#### **5.6 Development/Redevelopment Agreements**

The Agency is authorized to enter into Development/Redevelopment Agreements or other contracts with developer(s) or property owners or such other individuals or entities as are determined by the Agency to be necessary or desirable to carry out the purposes of this Urban Renewal Plan. Such Development/Redevelopment

Agreements, or other contracts, may contain such terms and provisions as shall be deemed necessary or appropriate by the Agency for the purpose of undertaking the activities contemplated by this Urban Renewal Plan and the Act, and may further provide for such undertakings by the Agency, including financial assistance, as may be necessary for the achievement of the objectives of this Urban Renewal Plan or as may otherwise be authorized by the Act.

## **6.0 Project Financing**

### **6.1 Public Investment Objective**

As reflected in the Plan, it is the intent of the Agency that the public sector continues to play a significant role in revitalization efforts as a strategic partner. Experience has proven that a critical component to the success of any revitalization strategy is participation by both the public and private sectors. Leveraging of resources will be key, as no one entity, either public or private, has sufficient resources alone to sustain a long-term improvement effort. Typical public infrastructure investments may include any or all of the following: unifying streetscape elements, access and circulation improvements, parking, utilities, and creation of special districts and any other projects or improvements allowed by the Act.

### **6.2 Authorization**

The Agency may finance this Urban Renewal Plan by any method authorized under the Act or any other applicable law, including without limitation, through the issuance by the City or the Agency of urban renewal bonds in an amount sufficient to finance all or part of this Plan.

### **6.3 Project Financing**

Upon approval of the Plan and acceptable assurances and guarantees from private developers, the City or the Agency may proceed with the sale and issuance of its urban renewal bonds to finance the Project, pursuant to Section 43-35-21 of the Act, and said urban renewal bonds shall further be payable from the income, proceeds, revenues and funds of the City and/or the County derived from or held in connection with the undertaking and carrying out of the Project, subject to the approval of the City and/or the County, and from such other collateral, if any, as may be specified and as allowed by the Act, subject to the approval of the City and/or the County. Additionally, the Agency may enter into an alliance with the City, the County or any



other political subdivision of the State as authorized under Regional Economic Development Act, Title 57, Chapter 64, Mississippi Code of 1972, as amended, and utilize any financing authorized thereunder.

#### **6.4 Financing Mechanisms / Structures**

The Agency recognizes that tax increment financing is only one tool which can be made available to facilitate investment and that others are needed. The Agency is committed to making a variety of strategies and mechanisms available which are financial, physical, market and organizational in nature. It is the intent of this Plan to use the tools either independently or in various combinations that are allowed by the Act.

#### **6.5 Agency Participating Interest in Private Development Projects**

The Agency may require a participating interest in private development projects in which it provides financial support. The philosophy behind this is that public support is frequently needed for projects of this nature, in order to fill a gap left by available traditional financing.

### **7.0 Changes and Minor Variations from Adopted Plan**

#### **7.1 Changes in the Approved Urban Renewal Plan and the Project**

This Urban Renewal Plan and the Project may be modified pursuant to the provisions of the Act governing such modification. To the extent that those modifications result from a property owner's requests to be included in a Area, the cost of such modifications shall be the responsibility of that owner if the owner's property was previously removed from the Area at the owner's request.

#### **7.2 Minor Variations**

In specific cases, where a literal enforcement of the provisions contained in the Urban Renewal Plan constitutes an unreasonable limitation beyond the intent and purpose of these provisions, the Agency may allow minor variances from these provisions.

### **7.3 Inter-Agency Cooperation**

For the purpose of this Plan, the Agency may enter into one or more Cooperation Agreements with the City, the County or other public bodies pursuant to the Act. The City and Agency recognize the need to cooperate in the implementation of this Urban Renewal Plan for, but not limited to, such items as project financing and administering the construction of public improvements. This paragraph shall not be construed to require any particular form of cooperation.

### **7.4 Urban Renewal Plan Review Process**

The review process for the Urban Renewal Plan is intended to provide a mechanism to allow those parties responsible for implementing the Plan to periodically evaluate its effectiveness and make adjustments to ensure efficiency in implementing the recommended urban renewal activities.

The following steps are intended to serve as a guide for Plan review:

- a) The Agency may propose modifications, and the Agency shall make such modifications as may be necessary provided they are consistent with the Act.
- b) Modifications may be developed from suggestions of the Agency, property, and business owners, and staff operating in support of the Agency.

### **8.0 Agency Governance**

In actions leading up to the creation of the Agency, the Board of Commissioners agreed to appoint a citizen commission.

### **9.0 Plan Administration**

The Agency may employ technical experts, agents, and employees, permanent and temporary, and it shall determine their qualifications, duties and compensation. Until such time that it is determined by the Agency that administration of the Plan requires the commitment of permanent employee(s), it is intended that the City staff will fill the role of Plan administrators, and shall not be compensated above their existing salary or hourly wages as provided by their primary employer, the City.

## **10.0 Severability**

If any portion of the Urban Renewal Plan is held to be invalid or unenforceable, such invalidity will not affect the remaining portions of this Urban Renewal Plan.