

HANFORD REDEVELOPMENT AGENCY

SYNOPSIS

Redevelopment is a financial tool to assist local agencies in improving blighted areas. California Redevelopment is contained in the Health and Safety Code from Section 33020 to Section 33039. It is in the Health and Safety Code because blight can cause unsafe and unhealthful living conditions.

WHY THE GRAND JURY INVESTIGATED

Public interest

AUTHORITY

California Penal Code Section 933.1. The Grand Jury may at any time examine the books and records of any redevelopment agency.

METHOD OF INVESTIGATION

The Grand Jury invited the Hanford City Manager to discuss and explain the Hanford Redevelopment Agency. Subsequent to a general description review, the Grand Jury heard a detailed presentation by the Hanford Economic Development Manager directly involved with the redevelopment work in the city.

BACKGROUND AND FACTS

The Health and Safety Code, cited above, contain all the details of operation of a Redevelopment Agency. Typically, and in this instance, the Redevelopment Agency Governing Board consists of the same persons as the City Council. Blight is the key word of redevelopment. The definition of a blighted area is rather complex, but in general consists of an area that is a serious physical and economic burden on the city. According to California Code Section 33031, conditions that cause blight are:

1. Buildings that are unsafe or unhealthy
2. Conditions that prevent or substantially hinder the viable use or capacity of buildings
3. Adjacent or nearby incompatible land uses
4. Depreciated or stagnant land values
5. Abnormally high business vacancies

Hanford's first redevelopment area was in the Industrial Park. It was adopted in 1975. It first consisted of 182 acres, but has been expanded to 1100 acres.

In 2004 the Downtown Enhancement Project Area was adopted. It included 333 acres generally located between 11th Avenue on the west to 9 ¼ Avenue on the east, and from 10th Street to Highway 198. Originally the area proposed extended to Ivy Street on the north, but was scaled back after citizen protests at a public hearing that single family housing areas should not be included.

The Redevelopment Agency has the power of eminent domain, but the city has opted to not use it for housing areas.

The Downtown Enhancement Project Area #1 is currently being studied.

Redevelopment is funded by tax increments in the redevelopment area. State law requires that 20% of the tax increment must be used to increase and preserve affordable housing in the city. The city uses this 20% to assist first time home buyers with down payments, and to assist with home repairs.

FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The City of Hanford appears to be using the Redevelopment Program properly. There are no recommendations.

RESPONSE REQUIREMENT

None