

# Frequently Asked Questions

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## What Is Redevelopment?

Redevelopment is a process authorized under California law that enables local government entities such as El Cajon to revitalize deteriorated and blighted areas within their community. Redevelopment Agencies develop a plan and provide the initial funding to launch revitalization of identified areas. This revitalization is intended to eliminate blight, to provide affordable housing, and to help spur economic development of the community.

## What Has El Cajon's Redevelopment Agency Accomplished?

El Cajon's Redevelopment Agency was created in 1971 and has been amended several times since then. Some of the Agency's accomplishments include the construction of the East County Performing Arts Center, the Downtown Library, assistance to numerous businesses, loan assistance to over 250 first-time homeowners, funding for housing rehabilitation, and construction assistance for several hundred units of housing for seniors and other low and moderate income households. The City's [Summary of Accomplishments](#) and [Five Year Implementation Plan](#) provide additional information on the accomplishments of El Cajon's Redevelopment Agency.

## How Does The El Cajon Redevelopment Agency Accomplish This?

Funding for these efforts is generated from property taxes. It is important to know that redevelopment agencies do not levy taxes, nor do they have the ability to raise taxes. They simply receive a portion of the new property tax revenues within the Redevelopment Project Area that are generated because of new investment. This new property tax is called the [tax increment](#), and it is simply the difference between the property taxes after the new investment and what the property taxes were before the investment. This not only benefits the Redevelopment Agency, but often benefits schools, counties, water districts, and other agencies within the boundaries of the redevelopment agency.

## Why Is An Amendment To El Cajon's Redevelopment Plan Being Considered?

State laws require that certain elements of Redevelopment Plans be periodically updated or extended in order to remain effective. El Cajon's ability to acquire property through eminent domain expired in April of 2011 and the time limit to begin new projects within the Central Business District will expire in December of 2012. Despite the uncertainty created by the State's consideration of legislation that could eliminate Redevelopment Agencies, the El Cajon Redevelopment Agency believes that Redevelopment is likely to continue and it is important to begin consideration of amendments to El Cajon's Plan to address these deadlines.

## What Amendments Are Under Consideration?

### **Extending the Agency's Eminent Domain Authority by 12 Years**

The first amendment under consideration would extend the Agency's ability to acquire property through eminent domain. State law no longer allows Redevelopment Agencies to acquire owner-occupied single family homes, and this power is not under consideration. Rather, an extension of the Agency's power to acquire properties that are needed for Redevelopment purposes through the use of eminent domain. El Cajon has used this power on only a very limited basis and only after negotiations have reached an impasse. Whether a property is acquired through eminent domain or traditional negotiation, the Agency must pay fair market value for property and pays for relocation expenses as applicable. There are tax advantages for property owners who sell their property through eminent domain or threat of eminent domain. As such, it is not uncommon for property owners to request that the property be acquired under threat of eminent domain because of these tax advantages.

### **Extending the Plan Effectiveness for the Central Business District by 10 Years**

In order for El Cajon's Redevelopment Agency to begin new projects and continue to collect the tax increment for those projects within the Central Business District, its Redevelopment Plan must be current and effective. By extending the effective date of this portion of the Redevelopment Plan the Agency can continue to collect property taxes, issue bonds, construct projects and undertake the other activities to further improvement of this area.

### **Consideration of Additional Areas for Inclusion within the Redevelopment Project Area**

The current [Redevelopment Project Area](#) includes over 1,547 acres, generally within the northern and central areas of the City of El Cajon. This area includes a mix of residential, commercial, industrial, and institutional property as well as street rights-of-way.

A number of [additional areas](#) are being evaluated for inclusion in the Redevelopment Project Area. Inclusion within the Project Area would allow these properties to receive Redevelopment funding for economic development, removal of blight, construction of affordable housing, construction of needed infrastructure, or other eligible purposes. These areas are being considered because they may make the redevelopment boundaries coincide with the Downtown Specific Plan boundaries, because they appear to be similar to areas within the current Plan Area and could be natural extensions, or because property owners have requested consideration.

Through the years, the State has raised the threshold regarding areas that may be included within a Redevelopment Project Area. These thresholds now include measures of blight, land use patterns, economic viability, infrastructure deficiencies, and others. A major focus of the Plan Amendment Project is to conduct the necessary studies and meetings to address these issues.

## What is the Process to Amend El Cajon's Redevelopment Plan?

Amending an agency's Redevelopment Plan requires a number of physical and environmental studies as well as public meetings and hearings. These studies and meetings typically require twelve to eighteen months to complete. The City of El Cajon believes that public participation is an extremely important part of such an effort and has scheduled several workshops at the very beginning of this project to explain the project and to gather public input at the earliest possible time.

[Click here for a schedule of Meetings](#)

While people are welcome to attend any or all of these workshops, the workshops are targeted toward specific groups to provide better focus and to distribute attendance.

[Click here for more detailed information on the anticipated steps and time schedule.](#)

## Where Can I Get Further Information or Provide Comments?

Further information about redevelopment including financing and Agency Accomplishments is available at the City's website at [www.cityofelcajon.us/dept/redev/](http://www.cityofelcajon.us/dept/redev/). The website of the California Redevelopment Association at [www.calredevelop.org](http://www.calredevelop.org) also provides additional information on redevelopment throughout the State of California.

The El Cajon Redevelopment Agency welcomes your comments throughout the Plan Amendment process. Comments or questions may be sent to Jim O'Grady, the Agency's Project Manager at [jogrady@cityofelcajon.us](mailto:jogrady@cityofelcajon.us) or (619) 441-1710. In addition you are encouraged to attend the workshops and comment cards will be provided at those meetings.

Responses to key questions raised at the workshops or subsequently will be posted on the [Project Updates](#) section of these web pages.

[Current Redevelopment Plan Area Boundaries](#)

[Additional Areas Being Considered](#)

[Project Milestones and Schedule](#)

## Where Can I Find Project Updates?

As the project proceeds, additional information will be developed and posted on the [Redevelopment Plan Amendment Page](#). Look in this section for information on project updates.

In addition, we expect to receive questions during the workshops and from the community throughout the project. All questions will be answered, and those questions (and answers) that might be of interest to the general public will be posted in this section. If questions from the community are posted, no information regarding the community member asking the question will be posted.

## **Who Do I Contact If I have a Question?**

Community Participation is vital to this project. We welcome your comments and questions. We encourage you to attend the workshops, and thoroughly explore the information in this website, especially the “Frequently Asked Questions” and the “Additional Redevelopment Resources” sections. In addition you may contact the City’s Project Manager for the Plan Amendment Project, Jim O’Grady, at [jogrady@cityofelcajon.us](mailto:jogrady@cityofelcajon.us) or (619) 441-1640. We also encourage your suggestions regarding information that would be helpful to post on these web pages.