

The Definition of Success for San Diego Redevelopment Agency Projects

Economic and Community Development Department -- Mission Statement

"With an emphasis on urban core neighborhoods and low and moderate income residents, the Community and Economic Development Department improves the quality of life and ensures a healthy economy for all San Diegans through job development, business development, neighborhood revitalization, public improvements, redevelopment, social services, and revenue enhancement."

San Diego Redevelopment Agency -- Motto

"Revitalizing Neighborhoods and Improving Economic Conditions in San Diego."

A. Why Define "Success"?

Defining "success" in plain English is important because it provides a gauge for measuring Agency performance. Although broadly worded, the definitions of success presented here are precise enough to provide "big picture" benchmarks for evaluating the Agency's achievements in terms of project specific impacts and overall Agency effectiveness and efficiency. The definitions of success established in this task become the foundation of our project scorecards and ultimately our assessments of project performance in Task 2 (Case Studies) and Task 3 (Comparisons to Best Practices).

B. Basis of Definition

Success should be measured in relation to Agency goals, expectations of the public and other redevelopment participants, and requirements under California redevelopment law. Because the Agency does not have its own mission statement, "success" should be judged based in part on the extent to which the Agency helps achieve the mission of its parent department, the Economic and Community Development Department. "Success" for each of the two redevelopment projects (Las Americas and Metro Center) also should be evaluated based on the goals identified in the San Ysidro and City Heights Redevelopment Plans, respectively. Finally, "success" should include those objectives identified by the Agency for purposes of this study of Best Management Practices.

C. The Two Dimensions of Success

Success should be measured both in terms of (1) its impact on the *Quality of Life* for the people and businesses of San Diego, and (2) whether the *Agency Operations* are effective and efficient.

1. Quality of Life (Economic and Physical Impacts)

- a. **Removing Blight:** Projects should address both the physical and economic causes of blight, as defined in California statutes.

For Example: by reducing the number of dilapidated buildings; reducing the number of incompatible nearby uses that discourage investment in key parcels; consolidating small/irregular parcels into developable sites or providing parking needed to make a site economically viable; assembling land that is otherwise improperly utilized due to scattered ownership or tax delinquencies; increasing commercial occupancy rates; and reducing crime rates.

- b. **Improve Economic and Physical Conditions:** Projects should result in substantial economic development for the city and raise the quality of its physical environmental, as authorized by California law.

For Example: by creating jobs with “living” wages and good benefits, made available to residents of the community, at a reasonable cost per job created; increasing sales and property taxes in the project area; and spurring new private-sector development projects, investments, and renovations of existing properties surrounding the project.

- c. **Revitalize Neighborhoods:** Redevelopment agency activities should revitalize neighborhoods and provide an environment for the social, economic, and psychological growth of well-being of the city’s residents, as authorized by California redevelopment law.

For Example: by funding projects to increase the number and range of affordable housing; partnering with other housing providers including NGOs, local government agencies, and private developers to support their affordable housing programs; increasing the variety of commercial tenants to provide missing neighborhood services; expanding economic opportunities for the jobless and underemployed residents; providing public recreation or gathering places; and funding restoration and modernization of aging public capital facilities such as streets or water/sewer infrastructure.

2. Agency Operations (Effectiveness and Efficiency)

- a. **Project Rationale (Selection and Prioritization):** Projects should be selected and prioritized through a process that respects the wishes of the public while ensuring that redevelopment funds are used efficiently and maximize the likelihood of success in achieving Quality of Life goals.

For Example: by ensuring that projects meet all pertinent legal and local requirements; ensuring that the project clearly addresses identified Agency objectives and community goals, and reflects the desires of the affected

community; conducting a transparent review, prioritization, and selection process based on objective criteria; and selecting only those projects that actually need public assistance to achieve Quality of Life goals.

- b. Regulatory Compliance:** Projects and Agency actions must comply with all relevant redevelopment law and local regulatory requirements.

For Example: by preparing all appropriate reports justifying Agency actions such as for acquiring property; seeking required approvals from other City or other governmental agencies for environmental, safety, and code requirements; meeting the letter and the spirit of pertinent community participation requirements; and ensuring that projects receiving public funding are monitored for compliance with all financial covenants.

- c. Timing of Project Approval and Completion:** Projects should be reviewed, approved, and completed in the least possible time consistent with requirements of California law and an effective public involvement process.

For Example: by streamlining required procedures and beginning those processes as early as possible; maximizing the quality of public input meetings without adding unnecessary meetings; ensuring close coordination between all city and Agency staff required to implement approved projects; and establishing a robust project tracking system to gauge project status and progress.

- d. Sound Management Practices:** The Agency should leverage staff, financial, and technical resources efficiently and effectively from project design through implementation and monitoring.

For Example: by considering the costs of both direct investment and staff time when calculating project costs; conducting a thorough financial and market feasibility analysis for each project; performing a periodic, formal evaluation of each project against appropriate benchmarks; leveraging scarce agency resources through coordination with other economic development initiatives; by thoughtfully employing and managing consultant resources; and following "best practice" management techniques for vetting, implementing, and monitoring projects.

- e. Public Participation and Communication:** The Agency should ensure that its procedures and communications allow and encourage participation by all members of the public; that the Agency conveys clear, consistent, and accurate messages to the public throughout project selection, design, and implementation; and that the Agency's procedures allow meaningful incorporation of reasonable public desires into project design and prioritization.

For Example: by including a broad range of individuals and public perspectives; making an extra effort to find spokespersons for under-represented interests; refining its communications to focus on key messages of greatest interest to the

target audience; and ensuring that project goals and priorities are clear and consistent with community values.

- f. **Coordination with Other Agencies and Project Participants:** The Agency should ensure projects proceed expeditiously and efficiently by working effectively with all other relevant agencies and project participants.

For Example: by ensuring that internal communications and workflows between the Agency and other divisions of City government are clearly defined and efficient; delegating authority or responsibility for completing project tasks to the best positioned or most capable parties; and establishing effective project monitoring systems to ensure that critical tasks are not neglected.