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NEWS RELEASE

Board of Supervisors

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Supervisors seek Promise Zone for San Bernardino

The Board of Supervisors today unanimously approved an agreement with several community partners to seek a federal Promise Zone designation for a large portion of the City of San Bernardino.

"Promise Zones focus on helping communities work together and partner with the federal government to meet their goals," said Board of Supervisors Chairman James Ramos. "A Promise Zone designation presents an invaluable and crucial opportunity to transform an area of extreme need in the City of San Bernardino into a healthy, sustainable, equitable and thriving place to work, live and play."

Promise Zones are partnerships between the federal government and local agencies across the country aimed at creating jobs, leveraging private investment, increasing economic activity, expanding educational opportunities, and reducing violent crime.

Specifically, Promise Zones will receive preferred access to certain competitive federal investments that further their strategic plans and assistance from dedicated federal staff to help implement goals and to recruit and manage volunteers to strengthen the capacity of Promise Zone partners.

"This is an amazing opportunity for our community," said Fifth District Supervisor Josie Gonzales. "The positive transformation of this community and its residents is dependent upon physical transformation of the area, linked to comprehensive and coordinated public-private Promise Zone strategies to access and create jobs, increase economic activity and security, improve educational opportunities, improve health and wellness, and reduce violent crime."

Under the agreement approved today by the Board of Supervisors, the County and the City of San Bernardino will serve as the lead agencies in seeking the Promise Zone designation. The County and city will work with San Bernardino City Unified School District, Loma Linda University, the Housing Authority of the County of San Bernardino, National Community Renaissance of California, and the Institute of Public Strategies to submit the required Promise Zone Urban Application and, if the area is designated as a Promise Zone, complete the work necessary to implement the Promise Zone Plan.

To strengthen the Promise Zone application, Neighbor Housing Services of the Inland Empire, Dignity Health, and St. Bernadine Medical Center have joined the Leadership Council. Neighbor Housing Services of the Inland Empire, Dignity Health, and St. Bernadine Medical Center have agreed to join the effort.

The federal Promise Zone initiative was created in 2013, and in December 2015 HUD and the U.S. Department of Agriculture announced the competition to designate the third and final round of the Promise Zones. Applications must be received by Feb. 23. The winners will be announced in spring 2016.

The proposed San Bernardino Promise Zone includes downtown San Bernardino and is bounded roughly by Highland and Tippecanoe avenues and Mill and H streets.

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