

AGENDA
City of Brookings
Urban Renewal Agency Advisory Committee
City Hall Council Chamber
Thursday, August 9, 2007 3:00 PM

- I. Call to Order**
- II. Roll Call**
- III. Approval of July 12th minutes**
- IV. Public Comments**
- V. Regular Agenda**
 - A. Consideration of Façade Improvement Program applications.**
 - B. Review and prioritization of authorized projects.**
 - C. Preliminary estimate of funds available from debt issuance.**
 - D. Information: Sample vacant lot improvement program.**
- VI. Committee Members Comments**

MINUTES
URBAN RENEWAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE
Council Chambers, 898 Elk Drive
Thursday, July 12, 2007

Call to Order

Chair Pete Chasar called the meeting to order at 3:00 pm.

Attendance

Present were Chair Peter Chasar, Committee Members Donna Cramer, Tony Parrish, Joyce Tromblee, Dan Nachel and Werner Buehler and Ted Fitzgerald. City staff in attendance were City Manager Gary Milliman, Building Official LauraLee Grey and Public Works Inspector Richard Christensen. Public present were Noah Bruce, Rick Bishop and Mark Gleason.

Minutes

June 14th, 2007 minutes were approved as presented.

Public Comment

Rick Bishop brought up the lack of downtown lighting. Chair Chasar reported that we have a commitment for completion of the streetlight project by August of this year.

Regular Agenda

Tree Update

Richard Christensen reported that all but one tree are improving and composting is complete. Five new trashcans were delivered and three were damaged. The supplier will provide paint for repairs.

Facade Improvement Applications

Concerns were voiced about asking for and distributing social security numbers to all committee members.

Facade Improvement Program applications were reviewed and unanimously approved for projects at the following locations for the following amounts:

620 Hemlock Street	\$17,910.50
604 Railroad Street	\$17,500.00
549 Chetco Avenue	\$19,100.00

Review of Project Prioritization

With \$224,000 remaining in the Urban Renewal Fund, decisions need to be made as to what other projects are to be pursued besides Facade Improvement.

Tony Parrish suggested that one project might be the removal of potentially hazardous parking spaces along Chetco Avenue; a majority of committee members agreed. Pete Chasar shared details from an article regarding the use of "bike sharing" by other cities for downtown transportation. Parrish also suggested the possibility of using traffic cameras to increase safety at key intersections. After some discussion, this suggestion was considered too costly.

BROOKINGS RENEWAL PLAN	
Table 2	
Estimated Cost of Project Activities	
	Estimated cost
Public Parks & Open Spaces	\$1,582,500
Create a Central Plaza	
Walkways and Plazas	
Local Nature Interpretive Areas	
Looped walkway from downtown to public parks	
Wetlands Park at Old Mill Pond	
Enhance Chetco Park and other parks in project area	
Streets and Public Utilities	\$3,165,000
Improve Railroad St, Chetco Av, Fern, Willow, Spruce, Hemlock, Alder & Wharf Sts	
Assist Street improvements in CIP	
Assist Water, Sewer, Storm improvements in CIP	
Streetscape	\$791,250
Accent Paving	
Decorative lighting	
Street trees , planters, landscaping	
Benches, trash receptacles, bike racks	
Street & Directional signs	
Public art	
Gateway monuments and landscape features	
Under grounding of overhead utilities	
Pedestrian, Bike, & Transit Improvements	\$791,250
New bike paths in renewal area	
Pedestrian connections to waterfront	
Other Public Facilities	\$2,373,750
Public Restrooms	
Enhancement of public museum	
Relocate City Hall	
Performing Arts Center	
Community Center	
Public Parking Facilities	\$791,250
New lot at Fern & Spruce	
New lots at pockets along Railroad St.	
New RV parking lot	
Development and Redevelopment	\$3,165,000
Assist development of new medical facility	
Assist development of higher education facilities	
Assist in construction or expansion of job creating facilities	
Provide Low Interest Rate Loans & Incentives	\$791,250
Preservation & Rehabilitation	\$791,250
Program Administration	\$1,582,500
TOTALS	\$15,825,000



MEMORANDUM

Office of the City Manager

GARY MILLIMAN

City Manager

July 26, 2007

TO: URBAN RENEWAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE

SUBJECT: August 9 Agenda Items

The following Agenda items are scheduled for discussion/action at the meeting of August 9, 2007.

FUNDING AVAILABILITY

The Urban Renewal Plan adopted by the City in 2002 contemplated that the Agency would issue debt to finance urban renewal projects beginning in 2009. The Plan projected that tax increment revenues would reach \$290,700 annually by 2007 and \$460,104 by 2009 and \$460,104 by 2009. The adopted 2007-08 budget projects that tax increment revenues for the current year will be \$356,600.

The City's Plan anticipates that there will be four long-term bond issues during the life of the Plan, and states that "Bonds will be issued as revenues, projects requirements, and overall bond market conditions dictate" which indicates some flexibility in the bond sale schedule.

An underwriter with whom I have worked for the past 25 years reviewed the City's budget and Urban Renewal Plan and estimates that, if an Urban Renewal Tax Allocation Bond were issued today, the Agency could realize about \$2,853,400 in net spendable proceeds. It would take 3-4 months to get the bonds sold.

According to the *"Administrative Guidelines and Procedures Manual for Urban Renewal Agencies in Oregon"* published by the Association of Oregon Redevelopment Agencies in February, 2001, "Tax increment revenues are to be used solely for the payment of principal and interest on indebtedness issued or incurred to carry out the urban renewal plan." The City's Urban Renewal Plan states that "Revenues are obtained from anticipated urban renewal bond proceeds and the proceeds of short term urban renewal notes."

The maximum indebtedness authorized under the Plan is \$15,825,000.

This office is currently undertaking research on the availability of grant funding from a variety of sources that may be leveraged by bond funds.

PROJECT LIST

Attached is a list of projects that are included in the Urban Renewal Plan. The Plan provides that "The sequencing and prioritization of individual project activities will be done by the Urban Renewal Agency, **and any citizen advisory bodies that the Agency calls upon to assist in this process. The priority of projects and annual funding will be as established in the annual budget process.**

This item has been placed on the agenda to facilitate the development of a priority list of projects that can be forwarded to the Agency Board for approval, and may form the basis for the Agency's first debt issuance.

While most of the list is project-specific, there are also categories such as "Preservation and Rehabilitation." It is under this heading, for example, that the façade improvement program is conducted. In a debt financing, the Agency could include, for example, \$500,000 for façade improvements. This would establish a façade improvement fund which could then be drawn upon as needed.

Please review the project list, come to the meeting with your thoughts and recommendations, and be prepared to actively participate in this important discussion. A project that is not included on the list, or can not be rationalized into a category of projects on the list, would need to be amended into the Plan...which may be a complex procedure.

VACANT LOT IMPROVEMENT PROJECTS

At the last URAC meeting, there was a brief discussion concerning unsightly vacant lots within the project area, and what the Agency could do to improve the appearance and possible public use of these properties.

The City of Paramount has employed a program of improving vacant parcels or partial parcels as "pocket parks" since 1996. It has been a very successful program. A description of the program (please overlook the "dense, urban city verbiage") is attached. I will also have some visual examples at the meeting.

Another program that is somewhat similar is a program employed in my former City of Fort Bragg to deal with vacant storefronts. Vacant storefronts give the impression of a failing commercial district. We made arrangements with the owners of vacant storefronts to utilize their display windows for the display of merchandise from other downtown businesses, or as "walk-by" art galleries. This gave the appearance of a vibrant commercial district...and it also often helped the property owners find new tenants for their buildings.

We have not developed any budget or plan for either of these projects, and are simply seeking discussion with the Committee members at this time.

FAÇADE IMPROVEMENT APPLICATIONS

As of this writing, we have received one façade improvement application for the property at 509 Chetco Avenue. They are seeking \$3,750.

UPDATES

The three façade improvement applications recommended by the Committee at their last meeting were approved by the Agency Board (City Council) on July 23 with no changes. Approval letters and contracts were issued to the grant recipients on July 26.

We are advised that **most of** the remaining parts for the Chetco light standards have "been shipped" and that installation is now planned to begin August 17.

Cc: City Council

Paul Hughes

Pocket Parks Program City of Paramount, California

1) Describe the program. What is the innovation?

Imagine a typical vacant lot in a dense, urban city - surrounded by a sagging chainlink fence, full of weeds and junk, a magnet for illicit activities from dumping to crime. Now imagine the same lot - as a park - and you've got Paramount's Pocket Parks Program. The Pocket Parks Program was created to address the problem that blighted vacant lots presented to neighborhoods in Paramount. The lots invited crime and were continual maintenance problems, creating a nuisance for the surrounding area. Traditional code enforcement efforts were inadequate. The owners of the lots would respond to citations and clean the lots on occasion, but because the lots were vacant and unattended, the problems would inevitably recur.

The Pocket Parks Program addressed the problem in an innovative, constructive way. Instead of taking a watch dog role and relying on absentee landowners to be good citizens, the City took an active caretaker role, took control of the lots and turned them into public parks. The owners can continue to market the lots while the City assumes their liability and maintenance. The program is also innovative because it is able to remove blight, curtail crime, and add park space—all at a minimal cost. Through the program the City has increased the amount of park space available to residents for a fraction of its true cost. It would have cost over \$1 million for the City to purchase the eight properties that have been landscaped and improved. Yet, Paramount has spent only \$77,600 for these parks.

The program radically alters the relationship between the City and the owners of the lots. Once characterized by antagonism, the relationship becomes one of partnership and cooperation. The program also looks at vacant lots not as a problem, but as an opportunity. The lots become an existing, underutilized

resource that is tapped to increase a rare and valuable urban commodity – open space.

The uniqueness of this program has been recognized by the media. In an August 29th, 2000 editorial, the Long Beach Press Telegram touted the program as, "the most creative, least expensive, plan ever proposed for expanding municipal park space." The program also won the prestigious U.S. National Conference of Mayors Livability Award.

2) What problems does the innovative program address?

The program directly addresses blight, crime, and lack of open space in dense, urban communities. The City has added eight new neighborhood parks at a fraction of what it would have cost to acquire land for open space, and eliminated both blight and public safety problems. The City enters into no-cost leases with the owners of vacant lots, attractively landscapes the lots, and turns them into neighborhood parks with amenities such as trees, winding walkways, picnic tables and decorative benches.

The program began in 1996. A large, vacant lot in a troubled neighborhood had been the site of numerous code enforcement and public safety problems. Through the program, the City took control of the lot and turned it into a park. Afterwards, code enforcement and crime problems disappeared. Police services were freed up for other important efforts. Since then, seven other vacant lots have been transformed into neighborhood parks.

In a highly cost effective manner, the program removes unsightly conditions that foster economic decline and crime, and utilizes existing resources to increase a valuable urban commodity.

3) Cite the best verifiable evidence of the most significant achievements of the program.

Prior to the institution of the program, the Code Enforcement Unit of the City of Paramount responded to 25 requests for service at these eight vacant lots over an 18 month period. Complaints included overgrown weeds, accumulation of trash and debris, and illegal dumping. Since the improvements, the Code Enforcement Unit has not received a single call for service at these properties. The City has been able to redirect the services of its three Code Enforcement employees to other tasks and programs, saving about 200 personnel hours.

The problems occurring at the vacant lots were not limited to Code Enforcement. The Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department also had to respond to more serious incidents at these locations. Over a one year period, the Sheriff's Department responded to 19 arrestable offenses at these lots, including burglaries, assaults with deadly weapons, and grand theft. Since the inception of the program, law enforcement personnel have not been needed at any of these sites.

The program has also increased park space for Paramount residents. In built-out cities like Paramount, open space for recreational use is never easy to find, and any available land is prohibitively expensive. With the Pocket Parks Program, Paramount has increased park space by 4.5%, about two acres, at a fraction of its true cost, paying about 7.7% of the market price for these properties.

4) Who are the beneficiaries of the program? What are the direct and indirect benefits?

The Pocket Parks Program is a true "win-win-win" situation for the owner of the vacant lot, the City, and the community. By leasing their lots to the City, property owners eliminate their interim maintenance costs and liability

headaches. By acquiring the land at no cost and improving the lots, the City takes care of a nuisance problem, and, with minimal investment, provides the community with attractive new park area to enjoy. The Pocket Parks Program effectively eliminates conditions which contribute to crime and code enforcement problems. What were once problem spots in neighborhoods are now a community asset.

The pocket parks also provide additional open space for children to play and families to gather. Although the City has ten larger parks, the pocket parks are of a neighborhood character, and residents of the immediate area can easily walk to them. They are outfitted with turf and trees and other amenities such as meandering walkways, flowers and shrubs, and decorative picnic tables or benches. Since many of the parks are located on corners or adjacent to busy streets or boulevards, they also provide some visual relief from the "concrete jungle" look of the dense, urban city.

5) How replicable is the program? What obstacles might others encounter?

The program is easily replicated and two metropolitan cities in the area, Long Beach and Los Angeles, have adopted similar programs after visiting Paramount. The biggest potential obstacle concerns tort liability. Since the lots become public spaces, owners are not willing to take on any liability for their use. Given the benefit of extra park space at an extremely low cost, City officials were willing to take on the liability. Most cities in the Los Angeles area are insured through a Joint Powers Authority and insurance coverage is likely to attach to the lots at no additional cost. To date, no claims against the City have been filed for the use of the pocket parks.

Another obstacle is that the program requires the cooperation of private property owners. Convincing the owners of the lots to participate in the program is made easier, however, by the fact that they may continue to market the lot and, in the meantime, are relieved of responsibility for the property, both with regard to liability and maintenance, resulting in a financial benefit to them.

Another consideration with the program is the fact that the lots can be sold and developed at any time. Since most vacant lots that have been sitting for many years are being land banked by the owners, this concern has not turned out to be very significant. The low cost of creating the green spaces means that even a relatively short period of use is beneficial. To date, only one parcel out of eight has been sold and developed.

6) Funding Sources

The program has been financed from two different funds. For the first two years, the improvements were paid for with redevelopment funds. In 1999, the funding source was switched to the City's General Fund. To date, redevelopment funds have paid for 64%, and the General Fund 36%. This ratio will continue to change, however, as more parks are completed with General Fund dollars. Depending on the sizes of the parcels, the cost to create the parks ranges from about \$5,000 to \$12,000. The largest cost is irrigation, which is installed in all of the pocket parks to ensure they remain well maintained. Total expenditures so far for the creation of eight pocket parks are about \$78,000.

LEASE AGREEMENT

This Agreement entered into this _____ day of _____ 2006 by and between the City of Paramount, hereinafter referred to as the "City," and Howard Hall, hereinafter referred to as the "Owner."

Whereas, the Owner owns property generally located at 15525, 15537 and 15541 Paramount Boulevard in the City of Paramount; and

Whereas, said property is presently vacant and not being utilized; and

Whereas, City in order to promote and preserve the public health, welfare and safety of the residents of the City, desires to provide areas of visual aesthetic relief and passive recreation; and

Whereas, Owner hereto joins in this endeavor to make improvements on the property.

NOW, THEREFORE, City and Owner, for and in consideration of the mutual promises and covenants herein contained, agree as follows:

A. Description. The subject property is legally described in Exhibit "A," attached hereto and made a part hereof.

B. Ownership. Owner represents and warrants that Owner is vested with full authority to enter into this Agreement.

C. Improvements. City at its own expense and responsibility will landscape the property and provide irrigation in the manner and amount City so determines. City, at its own expense, shall maintain the landscaping and said improvements.

Ownership of improvements installed on the property shall remain with the City. Upon termination of this Agreement, City shall have the right to immediately remove all such improvements without further notice to Owner.

D. Use of Property. For so long as the improvements remain on the property, the property will be considered in the public domain, and shall be open to use by the public in the same manner as any other public park or open space within the City.

E. Sale of Property. Both parties acknowledge and agree that the subject property may be put up for sale in the future. This Agreement shall in no manner limit or restrict Owner's right or ability to market subject property for sale or lease.

Owner shall have the right to place "For Sale/Lease" signs on the property in the manner provided by law.

F. Term. This Agreement shall be for an indefinite term and either party may terminate this Agreement at any time upon giving forty-five (45) day written notice to the other party at the last known mailing address of such party.

G. Hold Harmless. City shall hold Owner harmless from any claims, costs, or suits for bodily injury, personal injury or property damage arising from or as a result of use or activities on subject property during the term of this Agreement, except those which arise out of the sole negligence of the Owner.

Owner shall defend, indemnify and hold City, its officers, and employees harmless from all claims, costs, or suits arising from hazardous materials or necessary remediation that may exist on the site whether such materials are over, in or under the ground.

H. Amendments. This Agreement sets forth the entire agreement between the parties with respect to the property herein. Any modifications must be in the form of a written amendment agreed to and signed by both parties.

Witness our signatures to this Agreement this day and year first written above.

CITY OF PARAMOUNT

By: _____
Linda Benedetti-Leal
City Manager

OWNER

Howard Hall

Agreement; Hall
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Exhibit A

Lots 16, 17 and 19 in Block 30 of the Town of Clearwater, in the City of Paramount, in the County of Los Angeles, State of California, as per map recorded in Book 19, Pages 51 to 54 inclusive of miscellaneous records, in the Office of the County Recorder of said county.

Project Criteria

- Increases tax base
- Increases employment opportunities
- Degree to which it would foster redevelopment (critical link or upgrade)
- Timeliness (lost opportunity/need to happen before other plans on the shelf)
- Partners available
- On-going maintenance costs
- Leveraging of private investment
- Visibility/immediate impact/aesthetically enhancing
- Supported by public
- Cost (possible cost/benefit ratio) (Develop Preliminary estimate)
- Ratio of public benefit to private
- Availability of property (willing seller)
- Extent of blight eliminated
- Long-term impact and value

Downtown Themes -'02 Master Plan

Tell the Brookings Story

- Chetco Indians
- Maybeck
- Home of Winter Flowers

Natural Environment

- Trees, flowers, lush landscaping
- Outdoor recreation
- Connections » ocean, river, parks

Example: signed walking tour

Arts

- Public/ “community as canvas?”

Community Socialization

- Park/plazas
- Bicycle amenities

Urban Renewal Plan '02 - Objectives

- A. Promote private development/redevelopment to create jobs and tax revenues
- B. Rehabilitate existing buildings
- C. Improvements to streets, streetscapes and open spaces
- D. Utility improvements
- E. Parking development
- F. Remodel and construct parks and public open spaces
- G. Provide a wide range of housing
- H. Assist in funding art in public spaces
- I. Unity and improve signage
- J. Increase employment and economic vitality