



**SPECIAL
JOINT WORK SESSION AGENDA
COLUMBIA GATEWAY URBAN RENEWAL AGENCY
AND
URBAN RENEWAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE**

**Tuesday, January 28, 2014
MINUTES**

CALL TO ORDER

The work session was called to order by Chair Lawrence at 5:38 PM.

ROLL CALL

URAC members present: Chris Zukin, Gary Grossman, Jennifer Botts, Robin Miles, Steve Kramer, and City Council representative Linda Miller

Members absent: Greg Weast

Urban Renewal Agency members present: Steve Lawrence, Dan Spatz, Tim McGlothlin

Members absent: Bill Dick, Carolyn Wood

Staff present: City Manager Nolan Young, City Attorney Gene Parker, Public Works Director Dave Anderson, Administrative Fellow Jon Chavers, Administrative Secretary Carole Trautman

Others present: Economic Development Specialist Dan Durow

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Lawrence led the group in the Pledge of Allegiance.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

It was moved by Spatz and seconded by McGlothlin to approve the agenda as submitted. The motion carried unanimously; Dick, Wood and Weast absent.

WORK SESSION – Prioritization of Urban Renewal Agency Projects

Lawrence stated that the purpose of the meeting was to conduct a work session only; no decisions would be made at this session. Suggestions and comments from this session would be submitted to Administrative Fellow Chavers who would, in turn, submit a report to the Urban Renewal Advisory Committee (URAC) for consideration. The URAC would make a recommendation to the Urban Renewal Agency (URA) for consideration.

Chavers presented an overview of his report entitled, “Project Prioritization Recommendation.”

Chavers reviewed the list of urban renewal projects (p.g. 4), URA plan goals, and how the projects met the URA goals. Chavers pointed out that the urban renewal goals were listed either alphabetically or numerically; there was no other significance in the list order.

Chavers concluded his summary by emphasizing that the recommended course of action was to place higher priority on projects that met the goal of a growing labor market and creating jobs such as: 1) the Civic Auditorium restoration, 2) the Downtown Parking Structure construction, and 3) the development of the Granada Block Hotel.

Chavers reported that one goal not specifically outlined in the Urban Renewal Plan was the increase of property value of parcels within the Urban Renewal District. He said the goal was implied, but not directly addressed within the plan. Chavers recommended giving extra consideration to the streetscape projects and a proposed expansion of the façade restoration program. Currently, only non-profit organizations were eligible for URA grants, and "for-profit" organizations were eligible for URA interest buy-down URA loans. Young emphasized that the intent of the work session was to obtain feedback from the work session on urban renewal priorities to bring back to both the URAC for recommendation to the Agency, and the Agency's consideration of the URAC recommendations. A second agenda item for the February 18 URAC meeting would be a recommendation for an amendment to the Property Owner Rehabilitation Program and any recommendation needed for amendments to the URA plan itself.

Botts asked if staff could provide conceptual designs of the existing urban renewal projects. Young indicated staff would have conceptual designs for some of the urban renewal projects, but not all.

Chavers highlighted the supplemental information memorandum dated January 27, 2014 (copy attached). It was the general consensus of the URAC members to take into consideration the property value issue in Chavers' document for the February 18 meeting. Botts asked for suggested stipulations for the "for-profits" grants. Lawrence asked that the information also include how the property value issue would factor in as criteria.

Zukin asked if the Property Owner Rehabilitation Program could be listed in goal numbers 1 and 2. After further discussion, it was the general consensus of the committee that the Property Owner Rehabilitation Program should be considered by the URAC as meeting goals #1, 2, 7 and 8.

Lawrence pointed out that four streetscapes were discussed in the report, and each streetscape had its own identity. He asked if there was a reason to prioritize them and what specifically were their identities. Young stated that the City was working on a market analysis for downtown that would provide information as to what the identity of the streets would be. He said there were common elements that were created for all the streets such as street lights, types of trees, the type of crosswalks, etc., that provided a common denominator to the streets. Otherwise, the streets had their own identities. The current streetscape prioritization is: 1st Street, 3rd Street and 4th Street. Young said it would be good for the URAC to consider if streetscape prioritization was heading in the right direction. It was the general consensus of the committee to incorporate the 3rd Place Streetscape project into the streetscape prioritization.

The committee discussed the Mill Creek Greenway urban renewal project. Durow gave a summary of how it became an urban renewal project. He reported that it was part of the original UR plan in 1990. The project is located within the URA Zone and runs from 2nd Street to the Senior Center. During that time, there were old apartment units that made the area undesirable. The thought was that it would be good to connect a fair amount of the City from the Senior Center on a trail where pedestrians would not be required to cross a street to get to the Riverfront Trail. Another reason for the project was that the area could be an oasis in the summertime, so it was more for appearance and functionality than for

economics, Durow reported. Lawrence said he noticed the project did not appear in any of the Agency goals. Durow pointed out that not a lot of UR money would be spent on the project, because the property was gifted and possibly a match grant could be obtained to clean up the trail work. McGlothlin stated that the area had been identified as a bike summit, and as far as economic development was concerned, it could bring bikers to the area. Young suggested considering Mill Creek Greenway as applicable to urban renewal goal #4 because it bi-sected and linked to the West Gateway/Thompson Park area. Lawrence said he would like to see some information on where the Mill Creek Greenway project fell within the grand scheme of the urban renewal prioritization list, considering the City had a need to get the downtown district healthy again. Young said it typically listed towards the bottom of the urban renewal priorities. It was discussed that urban renewal funds and priorities often shift because the City's urban renewal program is "opportunity driven."

Botts asked if the West Gateway project could be moved up the priority list in light of the passage of the pool bond. She felt it would be more efficient and cost effective to coordinate the projects rather than work on and complete the pool project then, at a later time, "dig things up" for the West Gateway project. The pool project is scheduled for a Memorial Day 2015 opening, and West Gateway is scheduled for fiscal year 2023 and several years following. Young asked Durow to provide the West Gateway conceptual design to Parks and Recreation District to coordinate efforts and to ensure the Agency's project did not cause any conflicts with the Parks District's efforts. Durow said the West Gateway conceptual design was done in conjunction with a grander development of Thompson Park, and it would be worth reviewing. He gave a summary of the Gateway design which included a roundabout at Cherry Heights and West Second Street. Botts said the pool design would not interfere with Cherry Heights or West Second. Public Works Director Anderson said there was a high priority for traffic signalization at that intersection.

Lawrence stated he would like to see an RV park development in the area behind the pool. Botts said out of the 12 acres behind the pool, only 6 acres were usable. McGlothlin said he would also like to see an RV park behind the pool. Botts advised that for an RV park to be developed, the Park's rules and regulations would need to be amended.

Questions were asked regarding how the delay of the Granada Block project, the subsequent delay of the downtown parking structure, and the potential property purchase of Sunshine Mill in 2015 would affect the prioritization of the urban renewal projects. To best answer those questions, Young suggested preparing a chart that included: 1) a list of urban renewal projects; 2) their related dollar amounts; 3) a chronological list of fiscal years; 4) current concepts of how each project would fall under the UR budget fiscal years; and 5) a list of funds that would be available to the Agency. Staff would also assess and prepare what information was available regarding projections on urban renewal property value increases and their impact on Agency funding, Young said.

Upon request, Young gave a brief summary of how the Washington Street Tunnel project was brought about. Lawrence noted the urban renewal plan still listed a tunnel project that would go under the highway. Young said, around 2008, a task force was formed to consider reconnecting the downtown area to the river. That task force decided to separate out the tunnel project from the Washington Street Undercrossing project under the railroad. Both would be listed on the forthcoming urban renewal chart for the Advisory Committee's consideration, Young advised.

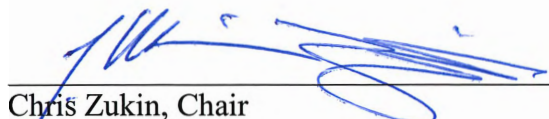
Lawrence commented that the Main Street Business Group developed a four-point plan in 2012 as follows: 1) Build inventory downtown; 2) Identify future development projects; 3) Building a business

cluster strategy; and 4) Recruitment and retention. Lawrence emphasized that these strategies walk hand in hand with urban renewal. He said the Main Street program did not focus on deficiencies, it focused on the assets.

ADJOURNMENT

Lawrence adjourned the meeting at 7:04 PM.

Respectfully submitted by Administrative Secretary Carole Trautman



Chris Zukin, Chair
Urban Renewal Advisory Committee



IMPROVING OUR COMMUNITY

COLUMBIA GATEWAY URBAN RENEWAL AGENCY

CITY OF THE DALLES

To: Urban Renewal Agency Board, Urban Renewal Advisory Committee

From: Jon Chavers, Administrative Fellow

Thru: Nolan Young, City Manager

Date: January 27, 2014

RE: Additional Information for Consideration of Urban Renewal Project Prioritization

Background: After completing a draft review and re-prioritization of the current and upcoming urban renewal projects and a review of the URA Plan goals, we identified important information we thought should be considered.

1. The current URA Plan does not address the goal of increasing property value within the urban renewal district.

In its Best Practices Guidebook, the Association of Oregon Redevelopment Agencies (AORA) states “*The reason for pursuing urban renewal is to increase the value of properties in the URA*” (Best Practices for Urban Renewal Agencies in Oregon, AORA. Page 16). My familiarity with this document comes from my work in drafting the most recent version under the direction of the AORA President.

Any activity that the URA undertakes should fulfil this goal first, regardless of other goals directly spelled out in the URA Plan.

2. Along with upcoming streetscape improvement projects, expansion of the existing façade restoration program will best fulfil this goal.

Low-interest loans are currently offered by the urban renewal agency for the purpose of façade rehabilitation to for-profit businesses in the downtown area. These loans are underutilized by these businesses. Matching grants, which may be more attractive to for-profit businesses, are also currently available for façade restoration, but to “public, non-profit, and civic organizations only” according to the Urban Renewal Plan. Changing the language of the urban renewal plan to make matching grants available to for-profit businesses in the downtown area will incentivize rehabilitation of downtown commercial properties.

Alternatives:

- 1. Proceed with project prioritization without consideration of goal to increase property values.**
- 2. Request a new report with “increasing the value of properties within the URA” as a stated goal.**
- 3. Amend the current URA Plan to list “increase the value of properties within the URA” as a stated goal.**
- 4. Expand the current façade restoration program to include for-profit businesses within the URA.**
- 5. Keep the existing façade restoration program as found in the current version of the URA Plan.**