Staff Notes on Strategic Plan Proposals:

Board, we have three proposals in front of us today to assist the URA with creating a new strategic plan. All the consultants have been spoken to about the data that came out of our last retreat (which I have copied underneath my notes for reference). Here are the major bullet points:

1. What types of projects do we want to promote?
2. What areas of the city do we want to entice new projects?
3. What should we change of keep the same with our existing finance structure to grow the organization?
4. What will the taxing entities support for a more streamlined approval process?
5. What involvement can the URA have in areas that fall out of our URA boundaries that still serve our mission/vision?

**COLORADO SPRINGS URBAN RENEWAL AUTHORITY**

**Board Retreat Summary &**

**2022-2023 Strategic Plan Outline DRAFT**

**BOARD RETREAT SUMMARY**

On June 3, 2022, the URA Board met to discuss what the URA currently is and what it wants to be. From that discussion, some consensus emerged as well as questions for further exploration.

**CONSENSUS:**

* Current Developer-Led Model is Successful, but Needs to Move in the Direction of a Hybrid Model (Developer-Led + URA-Led Projects).

*NOTE: While “URA-Led Projects” need to be defined, there is consensus that it doesn’t mean purchasing parcels of land. That requires a different mindset than the one the COSURA currently operates under.*

* Written Strategic Plan/Direction Needed.

**REMAINING QUESTION:** How robust does the strategic planning process need to be to effectively address:

* What “URA-led projects” mean
* Definition of blight
* How to educate leaders, stakeholders, and community members about what the URA is
* What URA wants to see from developers to avoid areas becoming blighted again (and to what extent it needs to include stakeholder and community input)
* How to spend existing funds
* How to obtain additional funds

To assist the Board in answering the remaining question, a draft outline of a strategic plan is included below. It’s based on a summary of key themes from the June 3 Board Retreat as well as Executive Director Jariah Walker’s recommendations. It is intended to serve as a springboard for further discussion and refinement.

**DRAFT 2022-2023 STRATEGIC PLAN OUTLINE**

**WHAT THE URA IS CURRENTLY**

* An economic tool deployed by developers. The most productive URA in the state. The current Develop-Led Model has been highly successful.

*But consider: We’ve been successful because we’re focused on full blight.*

* Viewed by the City as a City “department” and tool of the City. Not entirely autonomous. The City Administration is very involved with URA and it has benefited from that. Having the ED located inside the City Administrative provides access and opportunities to be proactive.

*But consider: There are disadvantages as well – not being taken seriously, not being included in conversations where URA should be present and/or leading. Developers also go around URA to City Administration when they don’t like URA position.*

**WHAT THE URA WANTS TO BE**

* A URA that engages in both Developer-Led and URA-Led Projects that won’t be blighted again in 25 years. Remain responsive to developers, but also put out messaging about what the URA wants to see from them.
* A trusted community leader regarding urban renewal, economic development, and blight-resistant design.

**ACTION ITEM: DEFINE BLIGHT**

**ACTION ITEM: DECIDE WHAT TO DO WITH EXISTING URA FUNDS**

**ACTION ITEM: IDENTIFY WAYS TO INCREASE URA FUNDS**

**HOW WE PLAN TO GET THERE**

A URA that engages in both Developer-Led and URA-Led Projects that won’t be blighted again in 25 years.

* Stay the course regarding Developer-Led Projects, but add use restrictions and blight-resistant design guidelines to every project.

**ACTION ITEM: DEVELOP BLIGHT-RESISTENT DESIGN GUIDELINES**

* Determine what “URA-Led Projects” mean.

**ACTION ITEM: DEFINE WHAT “URA-LED” PROJECTS MEAN.**

A trusted community leader regarding urban renewal, economic development, and blight-resistant design.

* Establish a more authoritative role with incoming City leadings (April 2023).

*The political landscape is going to change all the time. If the URA stands firm with everyone, it can change the expectations about “the way things are done.”*

* Educate the public about what URA is, why it matters, and what it wants to see from developers.

**ACTION ITEM: DECIDE ON EDUCATION / PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT TACTICS**

* Engage stakeholders and broader community regarding what they want to see from developers, in order to develop design guidelines.
* Emphasize the importance of the URA to land use and planning decision-makers.

*The Board has a significant role to play here.*

* Be more involved with City planning department. Integrate with PlanCOS.
* Be more intentional and deliberate about identifying opportunities. Be visionary about areas that need help.
  + Convene community/leadership conversations about urban renewal, bringing together people to identify spaces for urban renewal and to envision creative, community-centric uses for those spaces
  + Open the eyes of developers to potential areas and projects
  + Invite and include designers

**ACTION ITEM: Identify, develop, and promote use restrictions and blight-resistant design guidelines**

* Leverage land use code to lead the way.

**ACTION ITEM: IDENTIFY ADDITIONAL RESOURCES/STAFF/FUNDING NEEDED TO ACCOMPLISH THIS THOUGHT-LEADERSHIP ROLE**