

**COLORADO SPRINGS URBAN RENEWAL AUTHORITY  
WORK SESSION MEETING NOTES  
May 7, 2015**

**I. OVERVIEW**

**A. Mission Statement:**

Key words, as expressed by Board members, from the current mission statement were highlighted:

*The mission of the Colorado Springs Urban Renewal Authority is to **encourage\*** **private investment** and reinvestment which **restores targeted areas** with strong community benefits while **strengthening the tax base** of the whole city.*

*Through partnerships and collaboration, we **advance** sound urban planning and design, fiscal prudence and cultural sensitivity.*

*Our objective is to **facilitate** development of balanced, sustainable environments where people live, work, and come together as a community.*

\*The word “encourage” isn’t a strong enough word: consider changing to “catalyst”.

**The Board will schedule a future work session to review and revise the Mission Statement, Goals and Objectives at a future Board meeting (refer to Parking Lot section V)**

**B. Board’s Role:**

1. Urban Renewal Authority Board training is available from Downtown Colorado, Inc. on August 6; to be held in downtown Denver. **Jim Rees will follow up with the registration information**
2. Relations to other public bodies:
  - a) City Council is the ultimate authority for urban renewal plan approval; Board makes recommendations to City Council for Council approval, similar to City Planning Commission.
  - b) City Planning Commission reviews any proposed urban renewal plan for compliance with City Comprehensive Plan.
  - c) County Commissioners review any recommended plan impact report. This provides the County with a 30 day period to identify fiscal impacts to the county budget.
  - d) Board’s role is to also implement any plan that is approved by Council.
3. Recent legislation approved by state legislators (HB 15-1348) but still needs signature by Governor:

- a) The CSURA Board will grow to 13 members by adding at least 1 County representative, 1 School District representative and 1 Special District representative.
    - 1) There are several school districts and several special districts; it is not clear how these will be selected.
    - 2) Special districts are defined by the State and formed by Council; they collect property tax from mill levies. Examples of special districts:
      - Metro districts
      - Business Improvement Districts
      - Public Improvement Districts
      - Fire Districts
  - b) Each URA is different and tax increment allocations could be different.
4. History of URA's
- a) Started in the 1970's using federal money.
  - b) Denver Urban Renewal Authority (DURA)
    - 1) Denver has done so well because started off by buying and selling land within proposed URA's;
    - 2) Denver relies on neighborhood plans, which City Planning Dept. have written over the years and provide requirements for reviewing neighborhoods;
    - 3) DURA has achieved good coordination between different City departments and is very strong, politically,
    - 4) Use HUD money (CDBG) for refurbishing homes.
  - c) Now there is no federal money allocated by the City for use in urban renewal areas to help implement the plans but this is allowable under CDBG regulations.
  - d) Colorado Springs has relied on private developers to approach URA, has never owned land, and has not gotten into refurbishing homes.
  - e) The state statute allows for the use of eminent domain by URA's but politically CSURA plans have deferred the approval of the use of eminent to Council only. Can only use eminent domain for private land to cure blighted conditions not economic development.
5. Which are the most effective existing URA's and why:
- a) University Village
    - 1) Strong influence of project on the community including UCCS.
    - 2) Quality feeling of project and how community feels about it.
    - 3) It has influenced every aspect of the surrounding community (job creation, blight removal, taxes, infrastructure)
    - 4) More than just a retail site (UCCS Expansion was a key goal)
    - 5) Size of project is worthwhile.
  - b) Gold Hill Mesa

- 1) Site would still be sitting there unimproved without the URA financial assistance
  - c) Ivywild
    - 1) Catalyst for the community
    - 2) Could have used more public improvements. This may still occur with city and URA TIF contributions once the loan has been repaid.
  - d) Lowell
    - 1) Although not a current URA, it has been a successful conversion of an old rundown neighborhood and an abandoned school building.
    - 2) It is an isolated site and hasn't impacted the adjacent area as well as it could have.
    - 3) If S. Nevada is redeveloped, it should be extended up to railroad tracks to tie the two projects together; then, Lowell might be more influential.
  - e) Southeast portion of City (South Academy Blvd.)
    - 1) Needs to have something happen in this part of the City; shouldn't be ignored.
    - 2) 90% of poverty of the City is in this area.
6. Board collaboration with other public and private entities (this is just a list that could be reviewed in more detail and even prioritized if more collaboration and/or communication needs to occur):
- a) City Council
  - b) City Planning Commission
  - c) City Planning Department
  - d) Mayor and Staff
  - e) County Commissioners
  - f) Downtown Partnership
  - g) Business Alliance
  - h) Downtown Development Authority
  - i) Springs Forward
  - j) Housing and Building Association
  - k) UCCS
  - l) Other State URA's
  - m) URA Areas
  - n) City Housing Initiative (Department)
  - o) Colorado Springs Housing Authority
  - p) Broader community
  - q) Private Developers
  - r) Neighborhoods

## **II. CSURA CRITERIA TO SUPPORT THE MISSION**

- A. Prevent and eliminate slum and blight as per State Statute
  - 1. Reviewed the 11 conditions of blight as per State Statute.

2. State statute only requires one condition for an area to be considered blighted if there is consensus from the owners; 4 are required to utilize eminent domain.
3. Should CSURA just meet the minimum or go beyond? CSURA has always found at least 4 conditions present in all the current URA plans. There is no set policy, however.
4. Don't limit the available tools to address blight.

**B. Comply with City Comprehensive Plan**

1. Infill and Redevelopment chapter of Comp. Plan being worked on now.
  - a) Could be the basis for more Neighborhood Plans since Colorado Springs has very few existing neighborhood plans now and the ones they do have are very old (mainly done in the 1990's)
  - b) URA could be a partner with City Planning Department for implementation of neighborhood plans.
  - c) The City Infill Committee looking at code enforcement issues to help address blight; maybe could work more with URA on this.
2. Current Comp. Plan lacks vision and direction for financing; needs more strategic planning for redevelopment options.
3. There is a need for more Neighborhood Plans which requires money and neither the City Planning Dept. nor URA have the money; need to work with groups who have money or look for other avenues to obtain planning money. It may be possible through the City budget process.

**C. Role of CSURA is to Encourage & promote development & redevelopment not otherwise financially feasible for developer through the use of gap financing.**

1. State statute establishes the requirements for establishing the base and starting the clock; these requirements aren't static and can be adjusted.
2. Development and redevelopment improvements that benefit the public. Buildings have not been included in Colorado Springs but Denver has done buildings.
3. Usually public improvements (infrastructure) needs are so high that these improvements take all the available tax increments.
4. There may be some hesitancy on the part of the public to put money toward private improvements but this is often needed in order for a project to become financially viable.
5. There is a ceiling with sales tax but there can be different layers of taxing.
6. URA should explore other funding options such as CDBG and special districts.

**III. CSURA HIGHEST PRIORITY AREAS**

**A. Southwest Downtown has to be one of the high priority URA's because of City for Champions projects**

1. Norwood hired SOM (Skidmore Owings Merrill Architects) to do land planning around event center and museum.
2. City paying for parking structure concepts

3. Vermijo Bridge from parking structure to America the Beautiful Park: hasn't been decided how to fund the bridge or the parking.
  4. Seems like the Museum and event center still being planned behind closed doors to some people.
  5. Museum has raised its' money but need more money for parking and bridge.
  6. Event center is currently looking at being an Olympic sports facility
    - a. Need 200 events scheduled for facility to work
    - b. Waiting until June to take consultant process selection forward
    - c. Need to identify a funding source in addition to state TIF
  7. Two roles for URA as part of City for Champions
    - a. \$27 million from State will flow through URA for the Event Center
    - b. TIF typical role for infrastructure
      - 1) State will pay for a portion
      - 2) URA TIF will be needed for majority of the infrastructure upgrades
      - 3) TIF clock needs to be restarted for the Southwest Downtown area.
  8. SW Downtown URA needs to be expanded.
  9. State reporting requirements have a checklist that has to be filled out on a quarterly basis.
  10. URA would like to be part of the discussions about the different design options but feel they have to wait on the SOM plan for the two projects downtown.
    - a. Agreements have to be set up between the various entities first for all four projects: City, Museum, Event center, UCCS and AFA.
- B. S. Nevada has to be one of the high priority URA's
1. Bob Cope has organized the S. Nevada Ave. Corridor Task Force with a few of the developers in the area and the City department representatives (mainly City Planning Dept.). Task Force putting together ideas regarding streetscape along S. Nevada and what to do about the creek and flood plain issues.
  2. Jim Rees passed out map that was presented to the committee by the development groups with proposed URA area and first priority development area highlighted as well as flood plain issues. Concerns and issues:
    - a. Why isn't URA area defined as going all the way to at least I-25 or further to the railroad tracks, at least as a planning area. This ties back to the issue raised about Lowell URA area being isolated, even though it no longer is an active URA.
    - b. Should the S. Nevada area be done in phases?
    - c. If there are separate developers, how should TIF be designated?
    - d. Why is the area shown on the map, which is considered first priority by the developers, mainly concentrated along Cheyenne road and S. Washington? Why isn't phase one along S. Nevada, which needs the most attention? The intent is to include the entire area in the plan but the development interests do not control all of the property in the area.
    - e. Need money for master plan for this area. What are different sources of money?

- 1) City Planning Dept. doesn't currently have money. How do we lobby for more money in the budget? Could URA put together formal request to help obtain the funding?
- 2) Could URA ask for general fund money? Probably too complicated
- 3) What does Planning need to do a planning in this area? Peter Wysocki is to look at potential costs and get back to URA.
- f. Both master plan and developer driven process need to move forward together.
- g. This area has high impact on Broadmoor Hotel and is a gateway to downtown from the south.
- h. Should URA focus more on proposed residential in this area? Or get Housing Authority and/or CDBG involved?
- i. Could it be one URA or several?
- j. Consider what happened with Lowell in terms of starting in just one area and expanding the URA.

C. S. Academy is the third high priority for URA involvement.

1. Might be some areas that could use TIF
2. The Citadel Mall is key project that could impact this area. Bob Cope is talking with current owner trying to determine what their philosophy is. Still in discussions.
  - a. Can URA participate and/or provide any support? If so, what type of support is needed?
3. Maybe focus on low-hanging fruit along the rest of S. Academy
4. Lakewood URA did a good job with converting their existing mall at Alameda & Wadsworth to Belmar Development.
5. Need affordable housing in this area. Maybe CSURA needs to find a new vehicle to get into affordable housing.

**V. SUMMARY/PARKING LOT ISSUES**

A.	This work session was valuable. Maybe consider meeting more often or as an extension of the regular monthly meeting.	Short-Term
	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Pueblo meets twice a month: once as a formal meeting and once as a work session.</li> <li>2. CSURA could add an agenda item for open discussion as part of regular meetings.</li> </ol>	
B.	Talk to DURA about other priorities that have dealt with: HUD/housing issues? Also consider Aurora and Pueblo	Long-Term
C.	Consider reworking existing mission statement	Long-Term
D.	City needs to review structure for different City departments and consolidate and define as necessary	
	1. City should use URA as a tool for revitalization	
	2. Talk with new mayor about this issue	Merv. will

		start process
	3. URA and City Council need to have a joint discussion session.	Peter Wysocki will talk with new mayor
F.	How can City generate more money for everything within the City?	
	1. Process of developing Neighborhood Plans needs to be reinstated. Funding options need to be identified	Short Term
	2. Explore all funding options available to URA	Short Term
H.	CSURA Objectives needs to be discussed in more detail	
I.	Schedule a meeting with S. Nevada Corridor Task Force	Short-Term
J.	S. Academy URA participation brainstorming session	
K.	Olympic Museum separate meeting	Short-Term
M	CSURA getting into housing issues/tied in with DURA discussion	Long-Term

**Attendees:**

**CSURA BOARD:**

Wynne Palermo, Chair  
Tiffany Colvert  
Nolan Schriener  
Merv Bennett  
Peter Scoville  
Robert Shonkwiler  
Jim Raughton  
Zachary McComsey  
Valerie Hunter

**CSURA STAFF:**

Jim Rees, Executive Director  
David Neville Legal Counsel  
Dean Beukema, Administrative Assistant

**NON-BOARD MEMBERS:**

Bob Cope, City Economic Vitality  
Peter Wysocki, City Planning Director  
Carrie Bartow and Thuy Dam, Clifton Larsen Allen  
Liz Rockwell, Facilitator and Meeting Notes