
Hood River Urban Renewal Agency

211 Second St.
Hood River, OR 97031
(541) 386-1488
www.cityofhoodriver.com

December 9, 2019

AGENDA

5:30 p.m.

URA Members: Kate McBride, Chair
Hoby Streich
Jessica Metta

David Meriwether
Megan Saunders
Erick Haynie

Mark Zanmiller
Tim Counihan

All public meeting locations are accessible. Please let the City Recorder know if you will need any special accommodations to attend any meeting. Call (541) 387-5212 for more information. Oregon Relay Service 1-800-735-2900

I CALL TO ORDER

II AGENDA ADDITIONS OR CORRECTIONS

III EXECUTIVE SESSION

Oregon Revised Statute 192.660 1 (e) To conduct deliberations with persons designated by the governing body to negotiate real property transactions.

IV APPROVAL OF MINUTES

August 12, 2019 and September 18, 2019

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V BUSINESS FROM THE AUDIENCE

VI URBAN RENEWAL ADMINISTRATOR

1. Urban Renewal Administrator Update

VII ITEMS FROM AGENCY MEMBERS

VIII ADJOURN

Urban Renewal Agency
Regular Meeting
August 12, 2019

Present: Chair Kate McBride, Vice Chair David Meriwether, Paul Blackburn, Hoby Streich, Mark Zanmiller, Tim Counihan, Jessica Metta, Erick Haynie

Staff: Urban Renewal Administrator Rachel Fuller, Finance Director/ACM Will Norris, City Attorney Dan Kearns, Planning Director Dustin Nilsen, Public Works Director Mark Lago, City Engineer Stoner Bell, City Recorder Jennifer Gray, Police Chief Neal Holste

Absent: Megan Saunders

I CALL TO ORDER – McBride opened the meeting at 6:00 p.m.

II AGENDA ADDITIONS – None

III APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Motion: To approve the meeting minutes of June 10, 2019 and June 24, 2019 as written.

First: Metta

Second: Streich

Discussion: None

Vote: Motion passed unanimously

IV BUSINESS FROM THE AUDIENCE – None

V URBAN RENEWAL ADMINISTRATOR

1. Heights Design - Scheduling Scoring Criteria Meeting

The Heights Urban Renewal District was established in 2011 through Ordinance 1999 with an authorized maximum indebtedness of \$8,495,000. After several years of building financial capacity the Heights Urban Renewal District is now poised to begin making significant investments.

The Urban Renewal Agency held a series of well attended community meetings were held in late 2017 to prioritize the projects identified in the original 2011 Hood River Heights Urban Renewal Plan. Dovetailing on the Agency hosted events were community driven events, including a “Walkshop” facilitated by Blue Zones, LLC and streetscape demonstration projects as part of an Open Streets event. These community events generated important public input, including new ideas not originally included in the Heights Urban Renewal Plan. The most ambitious of which is modifying traffic flows on State Highway 281.

In May of 2019, the Urban Renewal Agency executed a contract with an Urban Design & Engineering team lead by Greenworks LLC to organize all the public input received to-date and create a cohesive urban design and implementation plan for the Heights District. Major project milestones include a district traffic study, organization of redevelopment concepts, and the refinement and selection of a preferred redevelopment concept. The project deliverable is an implementation sequencing plan with 30% design drawings sufficient to begin bidding construction projects. There are multiple planned community meetings as well as Urban Renewal Agency Board and Advisory Committee involvement throughout the process.

The next step in the project is an Urban Renewal Agency special meeting to establish overarching policy direction and goals for the project. This policy direction will be translated into scoring criteria that will be used throughout the rest of the project to guide and evaluate various district design alternatives.

The special meeting will be facilitated by Greenworks staff supported with subconsultants from Angelo Planning Group. Meeting activities include both open-ended visioning questions as well as discreet ranking and voting exercises.

Norris stated they would be setting the trajectory for the rest of the project, before any alternatives or any discreet policy decisions are in front of the Agency Board. They will talk about what the values are for the District and what is the vision for the District. The project is going to ultimately going to end with Agency Board adopting the plan, but they want to start the process with the Agency Board as well.

The Agency Board agreed to hold the joint meeting on September 18 at 6:00p.m.

VI ITEMS FROM AGENCY MEMBERS – None

VII ADJOURN –6:12 p.m. by unanimous consent.

Kate McBride, Chair

Jennifer Gray, City Recorder

Approved by the Agency on _____

**Hood River Urban Renewal Agency Board & Advisory Committee
Special Meeting – Heights Urban Design & Engineering Scoring Criteria
September 18, 2019 6:00p.m.**

Present: Chair Kate McBride, Vice Chair David Meriwether, Mark Zanmiller, Megan Saunders, Tim Counihan, Jessica Metta, Erick Haynie

Present: Chair Jack Trumbull, Vice Chair Pat McAllister, Abby Capovilla, Jody Behr, Tina Lassen, Amanda Goeke, Joshua Chandler

Staff: Urban Renewal Administrator Rachel Fuller, Finance Director/ACM Will Norris

Absent: Hoby Streich

I CALL TO ORDER – McBride opened the meeting at 6:02p.m.

II AGENDA ADDITIONS OR CORRECTIONS

III MEETING OVERVIEW & INTRODUCTIONS

Norris stated he wants to start the meeting with an overview, so everyone has consistent information on where they are, how they got to where they are today regarding this project. There is a lot going on, and it's good to do reminders. Norris did an overview regarding Urban Renewal in general, Urban Renewal in Hood River, the Agency, how it works and how Urban Renewal got to the Heights Urban Engineer project.

The Heights Urban Renewal District was formed in 2011, via Ordinance 1999 with an authorized borrowing limit of \$8,495,000. These funds are authorized for projects supporting the goals of Economy, District Identity, Recreation, Traffic & Transportation, Public Utilities. Housing was added as a goal in 2016. After several years of amassing tax revenues, the district is now ready to make substantial investments.

In anticipation available funding, several well attended community meetings were held in late 2017 to prioritize the projects identified in the original Hood River Heights Urban Renewal Plan. Dovetailing on the Agency hosted events were grassroots community events, including a "Walkshop" facilitated by Blue Zones, LLC and streetscape demonstration projects as part of an Open Streets event.

Last Spring, the Urban Renewal Agency initiated a competitive solicitation process to hire an urban design and engineering firm to organize all the community input to-date and produce a unified design and implementation plan. A multi-disciplinary team led by Greenworks was awarded the contract. Their proposal includes a traffic analysis, development of several design alternatives, multiple community workshops, and production of 30% engineered drawing of the final preferred design alternative.

IV PUBLIC COMMENT

Peter Cornelison, Hood River, OR – The ground swell for alternative and innovative projects in the Heights is at odds within the confines of the current Urban Renewal Plan Goals for the Heights.

These new concepts are outside the scope of projects currently authorized in the 2011 plan. The Urban Renewal Agency needs to take on the idea of street improvement/changes like we've all been discussing for the last couple of years and not limit the possibilities for new thinking. Once we have a vetted design from Greenworks, it can be formally adopted as an amendment to the Heights Urban Renewal Plan. In this way, Urban Renewal can be a possible source of funding for some of the demonstration projects.

As we come up to Climate Strike Week, I want to recommend a Washington Post article from September 1, 2019 called: Could bicycles help save the planet and improve our cities? It tells the story of the early days before cars when bikes seen as excellent transportation but were gradually supplanted by cars. Some cities in Europe have turned this type of thinking around and people now favor bikes over cars. As we know, bikes are great for the planet, our health and our cities. Speeding around on two-wheels can also provide a profound sense of joy and social connection.

Heather Staten, Director of Thrive Hood River – The URA is about to begin making some big decisions on how to spend a significant amount of public money. URA will want the money to be well spent and want to do as much good as possible. The decisions will affect the amount of money that is available. If they land on a good urban design, the design can attract other sources of money to get even more done. There will be interested private developers investing in building parts of the project. The property values will also increase more quickly, providing a larger tax increment sooner. ODOT might contribute some of the transportation projects that are in their right-of-way. Thrive encourages the URA to prioritize projects that improve walkability, bike ability, transit access and place making. Walkability is a good goal in itself, but the reason you should make it a priority in the Urban Renewal spending is economic. Improvements in walk scores have shown to increase commercial property values and lease rates. It also significantly improves retail revenue per square foot. Combine that with improved bike ability and transit, the numbers are impressive. In this area where most can buy online, having a charming neighborhood district that is walkable is another reason to go shopping there. Walkability and bike ability help decrease household transportation costs and is good for people who rely on those modes of transit. Thrive hopes the URA considers big moves like returning 12th and 13th Street into two-way streets and roundabouts at Belmont and May. Greenworks can analyze the benefits and drawbacks to those changes. She wanted to point to the State Street Urban Renewal project as a cautionary tale. It includes many of the projects listed in the Heights Plan. There are now benches that no one sits on and planters with dead plants. They didn't get a focus on placemaking for a more walkable or bikeable street. There are no street trees and no green infrastructure. Urban Renewal investments did not make it a more comfortable place to walk or shop. If they measure the economic impact of Urban Renewal investments, they would be minimal. She does not believe property values have increased on State Street; higher than other areas that increased in the City that didn't get the Urban Renewal investment. The Waterfront District has had a great impact in terms of economic impact; look for that same return in the Heights District. That means walkability.

Dani Correa, business owner and resident of the Heights – her business was established in Hood River's downtown business district in 2005. In the summer of 2013, she relocated her business to the Heights because she didn't want to be reliant on tourism. Her customers needed easier access and parking for their vehicles. Her customers travel from all of the Hood River valley and the Mid-Columbia Gorge region. The Heights was the perfect fit because that is where her customers were already conducting business. As a business owner in the Urban Renewal corridor she would like to take the opportunity to briefly restate the priorities that fellow business owners and clients have most often shared with her in the last six years. 1. Undergrounding utilities to mitigate loss of commerce from power outages and update utility infrastructure. 2. Design the streetscape in

continuity with downtown. Update sidewalks, curbs, add acorn top light posts and street trees. Use curb extensions to make crosswalks safer, reduced the speed to 20 mph and add lights to key intersections to alert drivers to pedestrians. 3. Retain the authenticity and affordability of the Heights, by achieving equitable development and investment that benefits existing businesses and residents.

Megan Ramey, resident of the Heights – she stated her daughter turns 10 years old tomorrow. She has been attending community meetings to testify since she was 2 months old. She has attended these meetings asking for better biking and walking, so her daughter is safe while she is walking or biking by herself or with others. She is here representing moms of this City who want to see safe passage for their children. She stated the time is now to act boldly so our children can inherit a more livable community. She has been appointed as ODOT Region 1 Active Transportation Representative for the four counties; Hood River, Clackamas, Washington and Multnomah. She is not sure how that is going to interface with URA and URAC, but she will be working as hard as she can for walking, biking and active transportation. This project is two blocks away from my home, she will be here watching. She is very excited about the scoring criteria.

Tamara Shannon, Hood River OR – Indian Creek is used by a lot of people. She asked regarding the scoring criteria workshop, please do not preclude any possibilities of widening or reconstructing that portion of 12th Street between the Armory and the Shell station to create a safe bike path and an underpass. This type of work may or may not be in the budget, but please do not preclude the option to be included in some future project when funding is available. In other words, do not do a quick fix, do it right the first time. These two things would be well used and valued by the community and its visitors.

V GREENWORKS LED WORKSHOP

Greenworks facilitated a special workshop for the Urban Renewal Agency Board with participation from the Advisory Committee to establish initial direction of the Heights Urban Design & Engineering project. Direction and input from the Agency will be translated into design options that will go through several public workshops and be refined into a single preferred design for the Heights District.

The project is beginning with the Urban Renewal Agency Board because it is ultimately the Board that will adopt a final preferred design. The Advisory Committee will have the most “hands on” role through the bulk of the Heights Urban Design & Engineering project. This joint meeting is intended to coordinate and set a unified direction between the Board and Committee. The results of the scoring criteria meeting will be summarized by Greenworks and returned to the Urban Renewal Agency for review and confirmation before being finalized.

Urban Renewal Agency Board, Urban Renewal Advisory Committee and members of the audience participated in the exercise to collect data input. It was noted, they are not going to end up with a full set of scoring criteria to evaluate today. This is to get a sense of the room and priorities. Jason King, Greenworks thanked everyone for participating. He stated this is not the final chance to see all the results. King and his team will take all the data and turn it into a report that is interpreted in some way. It will be sent to the Urban Renewal Agency Board for review and an opportunity to provide comment. He stated they will see a similar exercise at the next public workshop; open a similar idea to a large group. The results are going to inform a lot of those decisions. It is not necessarily going to give a clear answer but the idea of when they make decisions, they can go back to the scoring to show why they selected certain items.

There will be multiple times through the process, when the group can say they disagree with decisions and want to go a different direction.

Behr stated she was under the impression that just the Urban Renewal Board and Urban Renewal Advisory Committee would be participating in tonight's exercise. Because some community members participated and influenced the results, she suggested that it would be important to discern the data. Andrew Parish, Angelo Planning confirmed that will be part of what his team will do. The input from committees and community members can be separated. Parish stated having the community participate in a similar exercise, is in the plan.

King stated at the next public meeting, they will introduce the traffic information, the scoring activity and some of the work that has been done. They will not necessarily be at the concept phase; input needs to be gathered first. The goal is to share the information with you before that meeting.

Norris stated he will present the aggregated report from this evening, at the next Agency meeting to confirm the results reflect their input.

Zanmiller stated he would like to see a plan they will work on for 20 years, well beyond the initial \$8 million dollars. It's the grants they are collecting for a decade after they have used to make a significant dent. He asked that the group not scale the vision to what is in the bank today. Phasing it so they will not spend \$12 million dollars tomorrow, if they only have \$8 million. He hopes they can have a vision they can stick to for 25 years.

McBride stated they need to think about all the different aspects, as they go through this process.

Fuller stated ultimately that prioritization is what they rely on the elected officials for. She doesn't mean to put all the pressure on the elected officials, but that is the case. They need to weigh all the various plans, with what they ultimately think is most important. That is the role of the governing body. For staff, the role is to make sure they are consistent with other plans within regulations they must live in, so the Board can make informed decisions.

Behr stated something that is happening in transportation design across the County but has not been addressed is flexibility within in street scape. There are a lot of places that have parking lanes that are sometimes used for traffic lanes. She believes that should be included in the value system. There needs to be flexibility built into the plan; changes will be happening in the coming years.

VII ADJOURN – 7:30 p.m. by unanimous consent.

Kate McBride, Chair

Jennifer Gray, City Recorder

Approved by the Agency on _____