

PDC

PORTLAND DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION

DATE: July 9, 2008
TO: Board of Commissioners
FROM: Bruce A. Warner, Executive Director
SUBJECT: Report Number 08- 95
Creation of a River District Urban Renewal Area Advisory Committee

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

BOARD ACTION REQUESTED

Adopt Resolution No. 6615

ACTION SUMMARY

This action will create the River District Urban Renewal Advisory Committee (URAC) in accordance with the PDC Urban Renewal Advisory Committee Policy.

The Urban Renewal Advisory Committee Policy requires that the board take specific action to create an urban renewal advisory committee.

This action will establish the River District URAC and the positions on the committee. In subsequent actions, the Board will be asked to appoint members to those positions, and a Chairperson of the URAC.

PUBLIC BENEFIT

A URAC is one of a variety of tools the Board and staff will use to obtain public input and feedback when making plans and decisions related to implementation of an urban renewal plan ("Plan"). Over the life of a Plan, the URAC plays an important role for the PDC Board by virtue of the following:

- Its diverse composition of representative stakeholders.
- Its ongoing familiarity with the overall short and long-term goals and objectives of a Plan and related city plans and policies.
- Its members sharing information with and receiving feedback from wider networks of project stakeholders.

Meaningful public participation helps promote democracy and civic engagement, builds public trust in government and enhances the Commission's credibility within the community.

Effective public participation can improve the quality and effectiveness of Board plans and decisions.

This action will support the following PDC goals:

- Develop healthy neighborhoods
- Provide access to quality housing
- Help businesses to create and sustain quality jobs
- Support a vibrant Central City (urban core)
- Contribute to a strong regional economy

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION AND FEEDBACK

PDC staff has consulted with stakeholders from the River District, Downtown Waterfront and South Park Blocks Urban Renewal areas regarding the formation of the URAC. Staff also consulted with representatives from the Pearl District and Old Town/Chinatown Neighborhood Associations and numerous community partners. They are in agreement about the need for the formation of a URAC for the River District URA.

COMPLIANCE WITH ADOPTED PLANS AND POLICIES

Formation of a URAC is not required by law. However, Oregon law, ORA 475.085, states that “an urban renewal agency shall provide for public involvement in all stages of the development of an urban renewal plan”.

The Portland Development commission’s (PDC) Public Participation Policy, adopted in June 2005 (Resolution 6266), states that “public participation is required and will be an integral component of project schedules, budgets, and board decision-making processes for developing and implementing urban renewal area plans and implementing urban renewal projects.”

A URAC is a “standing committee” as provided for in Article IV, Section 1 of the Bylaws of the Commission, and as such is a “public body” subject to Oregon Public Records/Public Meetings Law (ORS 192). This also means members of a URAC are “public officials” subject to Oregon Standards and Practices related to ethics and conflict of interest.

In addition, the creation of the River District Urban Renewal Advisory Committee will further the implementation of PDC’s strategic plan, Goal II which states that PDC will “Position communication-listening as well as informing-at the center of every initiative we undertake.”

FINANCIAL IMPACT

There is no significant financial impact associated with formally establishing an urban renewal advisory committee for the River District Urban Renewal Area.

RISK ASSESSMENT

There are no significant legal, financial or operational risks resulting from this action.

WORK LOAD IMPACT

While management of a URAC requires considerable time and effort, Public Participation staff has developed orientation and communication processes that will help manage the work load of adding a seventh URAC.

ALTERNATIVE ACTIONS

If the Board were to decide not to form a URAC at this time, public participation efforts would continue with diverse stakeholders and organizations.

CONCURRENCE

PDC public participation staff worked cooperatively with development staff to develop the structure, function and membership of the proposed URAC.

BACKGROUND

On September 14, 2005, the Board adopted Resolution 6293 which established a formal policy regarding the composition and operations of Urban Renewal Advisory Committees (URACs). This policy was adopted in response to the Board's desire to ensure consistency in the procedures for creating and operating URACs and to emphasize the agency's commitment to public participation and involvement.

On June 14, 2006 the Board took the following actions to establish new URACs and transition existing URACs into compliance with the new policy. The River District Urban Renewal Area (RD) was one of five urban renewal areas that did not create a URAC. The River District Team and River District stakeholders recommended that if the boundaries of the River District URA area expanded to encompass areas from Downtown Waterfront and South Park Blocks URAs, a URAC should be formed at that time to ensure that Portland Development Commission (PDC) priorities reflect community involvement. The review of the central city urban renewal areas (Downtown Waterfront, South Park Blocks and River District URAs) has been complete and recommendations for change have been adopted.

Public participation staff, in consultation with development staff and numerous stakeholders, has developed a plan to create a URAC that encompasses the new boundaries of the River District Urban Renewal Area.

The membership of the URAC membership, based on the URAC Policy and discussion with stakeholders, is as follows:

- I. Organization Members
 - A. Neighborhood Association Members
 - Two Pearl District Neighborhood Assoc. representatives
 - Two Old Town/Chinatown Neighborhood Assoc. representatives
 - B. Business Association Members
 - Portland Business Alliance
 - Pearl District Business Assoc.

- Old Town/Chinatown Business Assoc.
 - C. Community Partners
 - Old Town/Chinatown Visions Committee representative
 - Representative from the Chinese Community of Old Town/Chinatown
 - Affordable Housing representative
 - Minority Business representative
 - Educational organization representative
 - Families with Children representative
 - Union representative
 - Property developer representative
 - D. Taxing Jurisdiction Partners
 - Multnomah County
 - Portland Public Schools
 - E. Alternate Members (for the above listed members)
- III. Ex-Officio Members
- A. Bureau of Planning
 - B. Portland Department of Transportation
 - C. Portland Parks Bureau

The initial membership of the River District URAC will be 17 members. The Pearl District Neighborhood Association and the River District Neighborhood Association will have two members each based on their official recognition by the City of Portland as organizations formed for the purpose of considering and acting on issues affecting the livability and quality of their respective neighborhoods.

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