



Memorandum

To: GURA Board of Commissioners
From: Mark Heller, Executive Director
Date: January 5, 2012
RE: Meeting Memo for January 9, 2012 meeting

This memo will provide background information on selected items to be discussed at the upcoming GURA meeting.

V.4.a. Discussion/action re Gateway Village Conditions Survey

Anne Ricker will present a conditions survey on a proposed hotel site at the intersection of I-70 and US-40. This survey was commissioned by the Planning Department upon the suggestion by the project's owners who are seeking financing. After considering the presentation, the GURA Board could recommend to City Council that it adopt the conditions survey and direct GURA to draft an urban renewal plan for the area that could catalyze the development plan, which has already been approved.

V.4.b. Discussion/action re retreat dates and topics

This agenda item will allow the Board to discuss the timing, approach, and topics for a GURA Board retreat, currently scheduled for January 23. Prior suggestions for retreat topics include:

- Implementation of City Council Resolution 2161 including
 - Revenue-sharing with the City from new urban renewal projects
 - Implementation and outreach strategies for a DDA and new urban renewal projects
 - Working relationship with Jefferson County
- Grants policies including business signage, energy efficiency and general improvement grants
- Support of for-profit vs. non-profit businesses generally
- Miners Alley support specifically
- Revised mission statement
- Parking enforcement
- Recap of urban renewal financing
- Legislative update and advocacy approach
- Miners and Prospectors Alley improvements
- Strategy for Colorado Business Bank redevelopment reserve (the \$325,000 balance from that loan)

V.4.c. Central and South Neighborhood Plans

The draft Central Neighborhood Plan was considered by the Planning Commission on January 4, 2012. Between 10-20 citizens spoke strongly against including the provisions mentioning that urban renewal should be explored to achieve the goals of the neighborhood plan. Prior community meetings with residents and business owners going back several years showed much support for the application of urban renewal. However, there was not a specific urban renewal outreach component to the creation of this draft plan. Although City Council recently endorsed the concept of potential new urban renewal projects that would be constrained by the new Comprehensive Plan, Golden Vision 2030, and the relevant neighborhood plan, the recommendation to use urban renewal to catalyze the priorities in the draft Central Neighborhood Plan were deleted from Planning Commission's recommendation to City Council, which will consider the matter on January 26.

The draft South Neighborhood Plan is also under review. Like the Central Neighborhood Plan, it contains a recommendation that urban renewal should be used to achieve the goals of the plan. Even more than in the Central Neighborhood, Council has endorsed the concept of a variety of urban renewal projects in the South Neighborhood. To date, there has been no concerted effort directed by GURA or the City to educate the neighborhood about how urban renewal could be carefully directed to catalyze neighborhood priorities rather than control them.

This agenda item will allow the Board to discuss its options regarding these two neighborhood plans.

V.4.d. South side of 13th Street Sidewalk Extension

When Gateway Station was designed, the possibility to extend the sidewalk into the on-street parking was pre-approved. The incoming tenants of Indulge are doing just that and work is underway. Jim Garrick, the owner of the building opposite to Gateway Station would be interested in a similar kind of expansion, but does not have funds to cover the \$35-40,000 expense. GURA has considered at least partially funding such work in the past and approved the idea in concept for 2012 although did not allocate funds specifically. Staff recommends observing the construction currently underway to completion so that GURA has the best possible information upon which to base its support.

V.4.e. Bear Creek Land LLC Exclusive Dealings Agreement

On or about January 9, 2012, GURA agreement to exclusively deal with Bear Creek Land LLC regarding Lot 2 and Lot 4 will expire. GURA's obligations to maintain confidentiality regarding information shared thus will continue until July 12, 2014. As of this writing of this memo, GURA has no proposal from Bear Creek Land LLC under consideration.

VI.1. Sales Tax Authorization

If a new administrative assistant is hired in time, this item will allow the Board to authorize that person to gain access to sales tax information.

VI.2. Holiday Lights

Downtown merchants have requested that the downtown street tree holiday lights be left up through March. Under this proposal, the lights along the creek, north of 10th Street, on the new bridge and arch, and on the Chamber lot would be removed at the end of January as always, but the lights on downtown street trees would remain through March. In most prior years, this request has been larger: to leave the lights up year-round everywhere. However, the city forester has regularly advised against this for reasons of tree health and GURA has resisted because of the inevitable diminution of the unique holiday event. This new request would add two months to the display, which might seem like a small increase but is actually twice as long as usual, which will result in a doubling of the wear and tear on the inventory. The phased removal of lights will cost GURA an additional 15% for labor past the third week of February plus the added wear and tear of leaving the lights up twice as long as usual. The city forester has approved such an extension, but will require the lights to be removed before spring budding, whenever that appears to be happening. This agenda item will allow for discussion and direction on this matter.

VIII. Staff Report

Garage Lighting Retrofit:

The contract has been forwarded to the various parties and is awaiting approval.

Update on East Downtown Plan

A scoping meeting with GURA and City staff was held on December 15. GURA staff is drafting a policy document combining the various current planning and policy documents relating to downtown.

Update on Wichmann

GURA staff is researching potential municipal ordinances to address situations such as the Wichmann property, where the condition of the building is deteriorated beyond mere nuisance. An owner of the property has been located. The Fire Department is attempting to enforce and correct certain violations of the fire code that contain daily fines of \$100.

Administrative Assistant Posting

An offer to hire was made and accepted on December 27, but recanted a few days later. Another round of interviews is scheduled for January 6.

January 11, 2012 DID on Loan

I will be presenting a session sponsored by Downtown Colorado Inc on how GURA re-financed in 2005 using only projected property tax increment revenue.

Legislative Update

There are firm reports of two potential bills coming up. One would require increased accountability and financial reporting on par with what is required of other local governments. Provided that is all that the bill contains, staff would recommend strongly supporting this change. This is something that GURA has always done

anyway. Another bill might ban or constrain the State “backfill” for school districts. Backfilling is the process whereby the state covers the gap for school districts created when new urban renewal projects impact school districts. Such a bill appears to be designed specifically to pit school districts against urban renewal and staff recommends strong opposition.

Annual Report

Our annual report is still in conceptual stages, which might turn out to be advantageous if GURA decides to adopt a more directed communications strategy for the neighborhood plans, DDA, and new urban renewal projects. In other words, we might choose to use this vehicle and its budget line item to discuss the year ahead rather than the year past.

American Mountaineering Center Vacancy

Outward Bound will be vacating its 16,000 sqft space in the American Mountaineering Center and staff is assisting in the search for replacement(s).

Chamber Luncheon

GURA will purchase a table to this event and we have invited some new business owners to share it. We have invited the owners of Art on the Brix, Indulge, and Thai Gold – all of whom are beneficiaries of GURA support.

California Tax Increment Financing

Alarming news from California, especially since what starts there usually heads east. Once and current Governor Jerry Brown’s plan to consolidate and take over all 400 local government tax increment agencies in the state was approved by the California Supreme Court last week. Under this plan, the state would gain all tax increment revenue (about \$5 Billion) so that it could use any excess to help close its \$26 Billion deficit. Governor Brown is a strong supporter of urban renewal and recognizes this is a bad idea for the long-term health of the state, but feels this step is necessary to address the budget crisis.