



IMPROVING OUR COMMUNITY

COLUMBIA GATEWAY URBAN RENEWAL AGENCY

CITY OF THE DALLES

To: Urban Renewal Agency Board, Urban Renewal Advisory Committee

From: Jon Chavers, Administrative Fellow

Thru: Nolan Young, City Manager

Date: January 27, 2014

RE: Additional Information for Consideration of Urban Renewal Project Prioritization

Background: After completing a draft review and re-prioritization of the current and upcoming urban renewal projects and a review of the URA Plan goals, we identified important information we thought should be considered.

1. The current URA Plan does not address the goal of increasing property value within the urban renewal district.

In its Best Practices Guidebook, the Association of Oregon Redevelopment Agencies (AORA) states “*The reason for pursuing urban renewal is to increase the value of properties in the URA*” (Best Practices for Urban Renewal Agencies in Oregon, AORA. Page 16). My familiarity with this document comes from my work in drafting the most recent version under the direction of the AORA President.

Any activity that the URA undertakes should fulfil this goal first, regardless of other goals directly spelled out in the URA Plan.

2. Along with upcoming streetscape improvement projects, expansion of the existing façade restoration program will best fulfil this goal.

Low-interest loans are currently offered by the urban renewal agency for the purpose of façade rehabilitation to for-profit businesses in the downtown area. These loans are underutilized by these businesses. Matching grants, which may be more attractive to for-profit businesses, are also currently available for façade restoration, but to “public, non-profit, and civic organizations only” according to the Urban Renewal Plan. Changing the language of the urban renewal plan to make matching grants available to for-profit businesses in the downtown area will incentivize rehabilitation of downtown commercial properties.

Alternatives:

- 1. Proceed with project prioritization without consideration of goal to increase property values.**
- 2. Request a new report with “increasing the value of properties within the URA” as a stated goal.**
- 3. Amend the current URA Plan to list “increase the value of properties within the URA” as a stated goal.**
- 4. Expand the current façade restoration program to include for-profit businesses within the URA.**
- 5. Keep the existing façade restoration program as found in the current version of the URA Plan.**