

**EVALUATION REPORT
THIRD ACTION YEAR**

**BOISE HUMBOLDT
BEAUTIFICATION PROJECT**

THE BOISE-HUMBOLDT BEAUTIFICATION PROJECT
(An Evaluation Report)

Model Cities Agency
Portland, Oregon
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I would also like to acknowledge the cooperation of the property owners of residential areas and renters of the commercial buildings whom I interviewed.

INTRODUCTION

The Boise-Humboldt Beautification Project [BHBP] was initially designed as a short-term project to generate greater citizen participation in the Pre-Neighborhood Development Program Planning Project and at the same time provide summer employment for Model Neighborhood youth. The project was to be completed in one and one-half months in order that a significant impact could be readily seen.

The operating agency [OA] selected to implement the project was the Portland Development Commission [PDC]. This report is based upon an eight - week evaluation of the BHBP, and includes among other things, an analysis of various facets of Planning, Administration, Operation and Coordination, and Impact upon the B-H Community.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Goals - Purposes - Beneficiaries

According to the Project Description, the BHBP was designed to create "an on-going visual and social impact in the community in a way that the Boise Humboldt residents would be stimulated to participate in the neighborhood planning process." The Project included beautification of commercial structures on Mississippi Avenue and Failing Street and residential homes at the intersection of Mason Street and Vancouver Avenue. In addition, canopies, tree planting, waste receptacles were to be used in various areas.

The beneficiaries of the Project were selected by the planners of the B-H neighborhood organizations and approved by the B-H Coordinating Committee and B-H residents. Although the direct beneficiaries were the owners of the properties, the incidental beneficiaries would be the residents of the

neighborhood who would be encouraged and stimulated by the concrete evidence of physical improvements being made in the B-H Area.

Both residential homes and commercial establishments were selected by the planners. One significant purpose was to "demonstrate design/planning innovations to residents in improving their community with the use of painted color and graphics [coordination of color] that could be applied to existing dwellings." The ultimate goal was to demonstrate how surface treatment and imaginative design control would turn what was a visually "blighted" area into a unified attractive area.

Another important purpose of the Project was to provide summer employment for twenty-five Model Neighborhood [MN] youth, preferably during the months of August and September. They would be given the experience and training in graphic design and execution, minor repairs, and painting. The contractor was to provide on-going instruction in:

1. Safety practices in construction.
2. Orientation in the use of construction hand tools in carpentry and painting.
3. Preparation of surfaces for painting.
4. Correction of structural defects.

PLANNING

The Demonstration Project was first conceived by the planning consultants for the B-H area during the early part of March of 1971. Neighborhoods were in the Pre-NDP planning process and this was just one of the many projects that the B-H residents had decided upon.

Commercial Beautification

The area selected was Mississippi Avenue between Failing and Shaver

Streets. Included in this area were fifteen [15] commercial structures: grocery stores, taverns, apartments, church, drugstore, auto shop, etc. Both sides of the street would be painted with graphics on their outside surfaces. The criteria by which the planners selected and approved the commercial establishments were:

1. Commercial area must have active trade and be a vital mode of activity in the neighborhood.
2. Area must be currently blighted in a visual sort of way e. g., boarded up store fronts.
3. Area must be capable of being visually improved with minimum effort and expenditures.
4. Owners of the commercial establishments must want the "surface beautification," and must agree to maintain the resulting graphics in good condition for at least three years.

Residential

Five homes were selected for painting. The criteria by which the planners selected the homes were:

1. Each property must be highly visible to Model Neighborhood residents, whether they are walking or driving.
2. Houses must be adjacent in order to be conspicuous.
3. Property owners must agree to have the work done on their houses and maintain the improvements for at least three years.

With the concept and a brief proposal package the planners presented the idea to the B-H residents in July of 1971. The Project was estimated to cost \$11,875.00. Citizens were very pleased and sold on the concept of the Project and wanted the Project to be implemented as soon as possible. However, at this time, B-H residents made certain stipulations:

1. Model Neighborhood youth, ages 14 to 21, from Boise-Humboldt would have top priority in employment.
2. The contractor selected be a Model Neighborhood black contractor, preferably from the B-H area.

The project was approved by the B-H residents early in August of 1971, and by the Citizens Planning Board on August 16, 1971.

The next step was to select an operating agency to implement the Project. Albina Contractors Association [ACA] was asked to be the O/A. However, in a letter sent to the Director of CDA, the Chairman of ACA declined the invitation of CDA for the following reasons: [a] limited budget [b] too many groups being included [c] project not very feasible.

After ACA declined as O/A, PDC was asked in turn to implement the project in September of 1971. Action of acceptance was deferred because necessary legal requirements had not been met. They were:

1. In order to spend Federal funds for improving commercial property, a public purpose would have to be shown stating and setting forth the objectives of the program and the standards for selecting the properties to be improved.
2. Consent of the property owners would have to be obtained in writing with some obligation by them to maintain the improvements in a proper manner.
3. Bidding requirements would have to be satisfied with regard to bonding, insurance, etc.
4. Timing would be dependent upon a single contractor for the work. To subcontract the work could result in delay and other complications.

After receiving this information from PDC, B-H planners began to get the total package together with layouts, specifications, and other pertinent information. Meetings were held with the Neighborhood Organization and property owners. In addition, a letter was sent from the B-H Coordinating Committee to PDC and other concerned parties setting forth the statement of intent for the program.

During this time period, it was requested of PDC by the B-H Coordinating Committee for funds to implement the project as a part of Pre-NDP. This request was denied because of a lack of sufficient funds. However, on October 22, 1971, a letter was sent to the Director of Model Cities from the B-H Neighborhood Organization concerning the possibility of funding the BHBP, as a separate project of the Model Cities Program. This proposal was reviewed by the City Demonstration Agency and the Citizens Planning Board and the budget was approved at \$11,875.00.

The Portland Development Commission accepted the offer to be the operating agency in November of 1971. The Project was then approved by City Council on January 6, 1972.

ADMINISTRATION

Operation and Coordination

PDC's staff, inspectors, and the consulting firm surveyed the project structure to determine the minimum work necessary in preparing these buildings for painting. It was found that many of the structures chosen to be decorated had extensive dry rot and general deterioration. In order to provide a suitable lasting surface for the intended painting and graphics, these defects would have to be corrected. These surface repairs were estimated at a cost of \$10,464.60.

The B-H planners were requested to update plans, specifications, and cost revisions. PDC's Executive Director, made an official request to CDA on behalf of the B-H residents, April 18, 1972, for additional funds. Ordinance No. 134467 was passed by City Council April 27, 1972, authorizing an amendment to Contract No. 13309 by and between the City of Portland and PDC, so as to revise the previously approved budget and project description and increase the cost by \$10,464.60 making the budget total \$22,339.00.

PDC's attorney and the City Attorney investigated the project and encountered various problems: [1] The utilization of youth for the project. A letter dated May 3, 1972, from John Kenward of PDC, was sent to the Area Director of HUD, requesting the ruling for use of youth in the project as it related to the Davis Bacon Act. The Davis Bacon Act stipulates certain procedures and guidelines as to the rate of wages for laborers employed by contractors. The act states that all individuals employed on a federal contract would have to receive minimum wages. The youth would have to be paid at the rate of no less than \$1.60/hour. A letter was received by John Kenward on May 11, 1972, from the Area Director of HUD, outlining acceptable procedures for the project, those being:

1. PDC enter into an agreement with a local contractor to supervise work practices for youth.
2. PDC establish a criteria that all employees are bona fide students and their intentions are to return to school in September.
3. PDC may establish an hourly wage rate in adherence to the Fair Labor Standards Act.
 - a. Minimum \$1.60/hour.
 - b. Statutory age requirement - 16 years minimum age.

The delay of execution of the BHP between August, 1971, and June, 1972, could be attributed to various phases of planning not fully researched and various legal aspects not fully looked into. However, with these problems cleared up, complete specifications were received and the Project was placed up for bid in June of 1972.

Bids were advertised for a period of twenty-one (21) days and an additional seven days were required to analyze and confirm the bids. Under federal guidelines PDC could not waive or limit bids specifically to black Model Neighborhood based contractors. Public bids advertised were received July 19, 1972. They were

<u>Company</u>	<u>Bid Amount</u>
A. L. E. Spitzer Company, Inc.	\$37,912.00
B. Washington Sign Company	\$15,600.00

The planning consultants had estimated the project at a cost of \$14,419.00. Spitzer's bid was disqualified due to the excessive amount and Washington Sign Company was determined to be the low bidder. However, since his packet did not contain a bid bond, he was also disqualified.

After being carefully reviewed by PDC's legal attorney, the bid was determined to be eligible and valid for negotiation if Mr. Washington was able to deliver a Performance Bond. This is a guarantee to the person or agency that is having the work done that the work will be done properly and in a definite time period with a guarantee on the performance or quality of the work.

Because of the increase in bid amounts, as compared to the architects estimate, it was impossible to do more than decorative treatment, especially since it was decided the twenty-five (25) youth were to be employed at a rate of \$2.00 per hour.

Washington Sign Company was offered a contract August 1, 1972 for review with the expectation of returning it signed to PDC with all the necessary bonds and insurance forms. From August 1 to August 28, various problems continued to cause a delay in the Project being carried out. The main problem during this period was the fact that it was very difficult for Mr. Washington to secure a performance bond because of his weak cash flow. PDC offered their assistance by contacting his insurance company, only to find that Washington's financial statement was inadequate to meet bonding requirements.

With a continued delay in the execution of the Project, PDC requested CDA to underwrite a bond or issue a letter of credit guaranteeing the work of Washington Sign Company. CDA guaranteed 100% of the contract amount for the Project in a letter dated August 30, 1972 to the Executive Director of PDC. In addition, a letter was sent to HUD's legal advisor concerning waiving this requirement. This requirement was waived also by HUD on August 30, 1972.

Operation of Project

On September 6, 1972, the contract was signed and by September 12, the Project was to be in full operation with forty-five calendar days for completion of the Project. The next step was to obtain building permits.

From September 13, 1972 to December 21, 1972, delays in the Project continued to exist. There was a delay in obtaining building permits because legal descriptions were not included with the application and had to be researched by the Bureau of Buildings. Mr. Washington began some of the work on the buildings and had subcontracted the work out to various professional contractors in the fields of masonry, carpentry, steam cleaning, and cement finishers. In addition, youth and contractors were employed

and working on and off during the months of October through December.

From January 3, 1973 to March 30, 1973, still other problems caused the Project to be delayed: (1) rainy weather conditions; (2) youth being in school; (3) Mr. Washington being on vacation and after returning, relocating his business; (4) unwillingness on the part of the subcontractors to stay on the job and supervise those youth desiring to continue to work.

PDC periodically (each week) kept in touch with Mr. Washington concerning the completion of the Project and at that time, a commitment was made that the Project would be completed by March 23. At that time, PDC informed him that an inspection and certification of completion would be made, signed off by the consultants, city inspectors, members of the B-H Coordinating Committee, and PDC. This was to be made March 26 or 27.

The work was not completed by this date, with the same excuses offered as before, weather conditions and workers not staying on the job. PDC then gave Mr. Washington an extension date of April 13 as the final deadline. PDC also agreed upon a walk-around inspection before this date, along with the City Building Inspectors to see what actually had been done and quality of work that had been completed.

Following the informal inspection of the work to be done, a letter was sent to Mr. Washington Dated April 17, 1973, from PDC informing him of the informal inspection that was made and the number of work items which were not completed and the fact that they were going to rescind his contract in ten days if the work was not completed. Evidently this did not motivate Mr. Washington. A letter dated May 6, 1972, from PDC to Mr. Washington stated that if certain corrections and work items that had been previously pointed out were not made by May 14, the contract would be terminated.

This was in accordance with the contract under item "Termination" specifying corrections of contract termination concerning general conditions for site preparations, termination due to delays, liquidated damages, and time for completion.

As of June 13, 1973, the Project has not yet been completed. Approximately thirty-five (35) per cent of the work has not been completed.

IMPACT

The last part of the report deals with impact with regards to how B-H residents feel about the Project up to this date and future recommendations that would prevent the occurrence of the type and number of problems that have and could exist with a Project of this type.

In trying to determine whether or not the BHBP had any type of significant impact upon the residents is very difficult. Number one, the Project is not yet completed. A project that was designed in March of 1971 to be completed in one and one-half months to (a) motivate citizen participation in the community and planning process (b) provide summer employment for Model Neighborhood youth and, (c) repair and paint a number of commercial structures and residential homes had not been completed after a total period of approximately twenty-one months.

Secondly, planning was not realistic in terms of considering or even consulting with other experts concerning the feasibility of the Project and other legalities and problems that should have been totally researched. The initial planning period, from the original concept, approval of the Project, resolution of legal problems, revised budgets and specifications, covered a period of four months.

The approval for utilization of youth, surveying work in determining the increase in budget, work authorization letters from property owners, problems with performance bonds, building permits, and problems with the contractor completing the job because of relocating his business, weather conditions, incompetence of some of the subcontractors delayed the Project for a number of months. Even after the contract had been signed on September 12, 1972, the contractor was given additional time on a number of occasions to complete the Project. The contractor was paid \$6,000.00 during the first half of the Project to cover the necessary expenses and labor costs. Yet with money still tied up in the Project, the contractor seemed no longer motivated to finish the Project.

The B-H residents and Coordinating Committee along with PDC, were not completely satisfied with the job in terms of the time element involved and the quality of the work. Residents were aware of the various problems that caused the delays in the Project.

However, the Project is viewed as not being a total loss. It was Boise Humboldt's first major project in which residents could be fully involved. In talking with the B-H planners, staff at the B-H Neighborhood Development Office and B-H Coordinating Committee, they are of the opinion that this project was the key to generating citizen participation.

This statement can be further reinforced by stating that because residents became interested in this Project and attended meetings more, they learned of various programs offered to Model Neighborhood residents such as: (a) Housing Repair Program; (b) 312 Loan and 115 Grant Program for home rehabilitation. This was verified by researching documents such as Neighborhood Organization meetings and files relative to grant-loan applications.

Attendance rosters indicated that attendance of residents at the Boise meetings averaged twenty-eight (28) persons per meeting at one meeting per month for Third-Action Year (June 72-73) as compared to average attendance of fourteen (14) persons per month for Second-Action Year. Attendance of residents at Humboldt meetings average thirty-one (31) persons per meeting for Third-Action Year as compared to an average of sixteen persons per meeting for Second-Action Year. In addition, it was found that residents are taking advantage of the various programs offered to them. During Third-Action Year, June 15, 1972 until June 15, 1973, when B-H residents were eligible for the grant-loan program, the following information was found: (a) a total of sixteen (16) loans were given to B-H residents at \$94,750.00; (b) a total of 111 grants given at \$386,657.00. Under the Housing Repair Program for First-and Second-Action Years, a total of ninety (90) jobs were completed for the B-H Area at \$89,460.00. However, during Third Action Year alone, sixty-four (64) jobs were completed at a cost of \$60,142.00.

Another positive aspect of the Project was the employment of twenty-five Model Neighborhood youth. The youth earned a total of \$2,468.00, being paid at \$2.00 per hour. The quality of work that the youth did was adequate in terms of the little supervision and training they received from the subcontractors. However, in talking with fifteen of the youth, they felt that they gained a great deal of training in learning responsibility, using their creativity and imagination, and learning how to do minor repair work and painting from Mr. Washington. The youth expressed that they were more motivated towards helping improve their community than personal monetary gain.

In surveying the residential homes and commercial businesses, I requested

the assistance of two professional contractors as to their opinion of the project at that point. The work on the homes, one of which was repossessed by FHA, was found to be of good quality performance. In addition to this, in talking with the four home owners, all were completely satisfied with the work that was done. The only complaint they expressed was the extensive delays in getting the painting completed.

The work done on the commercial establishments was of poor quality according to the two professional contractors. Of the fifteen businesses, ten had not been totally completed. Painting on a majority of the buildings was poor, a large majority (9) only having one coat of paint, seven structures having no surface repair work done. Eight of the occupants of the buildings were renters. In talking with them, six did not even know it was a beautification project, their general impression was that the work was being done by the owner and that it was just some paint being thrown on the buildings.

CONCLUSIONS

It can be stated that all individuals concerned benefited from the Project to some extent: (a) a black Model Neighborhood contractor received a \$15,600.00 contract; (b) twenty-five (25) Model Neighborhood youth benefited not only monetarily but were able to receive training and instruction in basic construction and painting; (c) at completion, a total of nineteen (19) establishments (4 homes, 15 businesses) will receive minor repair work and painting; (d) citizen participation in the B-H neighborhood has increased considerably.

This evaluation report was designed to give to the reader an idea of the numerous problems that could be encountered in planning, administration,

and operation of a project of this nature.

More importantly, the report was written in such a manner so that when projects of a similar nature are conceived, some aspects can be researched more thoroughly. Things such as the feasibility of the project, priorities, planning, legal aspects, costs, etc., can be more carefully analyzed before implementing projects of this nature.

The BHBP concept was good. A great deal has been learned by the planners, B-H residents, and even the staff of PDC. In view of the fact that the project has not yet been completed, the following recommendations are made in considering future projects of this nature.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. In project development, planning should be adequately researched in all areas and phases e.g., legal requirements and guidelines of HUD and other agencies; feasibility of the project; specification of direct beneficiaries.
2. A more flexible time period should have been planned, especially if youth are going to be employed on a part-time basis. In view of the fact that the project was a training program for youth, more time should have been allocated for supervision, training, etc.
3. The contractor should be required to have all the necessary performance bonds, resources, etc. to assure quality work. More importantly, there must be a moral commitment on the part of the contractor and his workers that a demonstration project is just as important as any other contract and that the highest quality of work will be performed.
4. Before proposing any project or proposal to residents, all details, legalities, specifications, budgets, layouts, consent of owners, should

be worked out.

5. When employing youth, the project should be widely advertised, so that youth who have had vocational training or interest in construction occupations such as masonry, carpentry, painting, etc., can get more experience and knowledge in these particular fields. This might very well influence them to go into a particular vocation as their future employment.