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SUGGESTIONS RE CIVIC CENTER FOR SPORTS AND CONVENTIONS AND A SITE FOR THE PILE.

So far, Commissioner Boody has proposed the east side water front area between the Broadway and Steel bridges as a civic center for sports, conventions, and other forms of public assembly. Apparently Mr. Boody's plan does not include a solution for the Pacific International Livestock Exposition. The suggestions below simply consolidate some of our thinking on the subject of a proposal which would offer a solution for both the sports center and PILE.

1. PILE: If one of the prime considerations guiding proposals having to do with the PILE is the amount of land necessary to accommodate all of the activities of the Exposition itself and other semi-public doings from time to time during the year the University Homes tract might possibly offer an acceptable solution. Perhaps the University Homes site is not quite as accessible as would be the Vanport location from the standpoint of existing traffic arteries serving the north end of Portland, but certainly it is not what you would call inaccessible at the present time, and in the future it possibly will be equally as accessible as the Vanport site for the reason that it appears likely that the projected alignment of the new freeway approach to the second Columbia River bridge will be approximately midway between Interstate Avenue and Chautauqua Boulevard. If this freeway were to follow the Peninsular Avenue alignment, as suggested by the City Planning Commission, and if interchanges were planned for either Lombard or Columbia Boulevard, or both, the University Homes site would be generally as accessible as any location could be, considering the amount of land required.

If developments in the near future were to give any indication that the University Homes tract might possibly be considered, along with other locations, for the PILE, the question might come up as to whether the City of Portland and the School District would be interested in acquiring that portion of the tract which

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presently is being set aside for parks, schools, etc., inasmuch as such plans are based on residential use of the University Homes area. If the City and the School District were to continue their interest in this portion of the University Homes tract, even though the balance of the land might be disposed of to the PILE, we would still have approximately 90 acres available for the latter. If additional land were necessary or if the PILE wanted to round-out the site, the privately owned land adjoining University Homes north of Trenton might be considered for acquisition. Assuming that the PILE were to acquire the privately owned portion adjoining University Homes and that the City and School District were to retain the portions presently set aside there would be 100 acres or more available for acquisition and development by the PILE.

In the matter of the cost of land to the PILE, Laidlaw tells me that the appraisal for the land at University Homes amounts to \$3600. per acre. If this appraisal were to be adopted for purposes of sale to the PILE I suppose the question would be one as to whether the site is worth \$360,000. for the kind of use to which it would be put by the PILE. I wouldn't know the answer to this question, except that it occurs to me that the expenses in connection with both acquisition and preconstruction preparation of the Vanport site would involve not an inconsiderable amount of money. Outside of some grading and possibly the extension of spur trackage, the University Homes site would not entail any large expenditure for site development before construction. Furthermore, of course, it would have all of the city utilities and there would be no access roads to construct. It could be possible, therefore, that the University Homes tract would prove to be a less expensive investment if costs were compared on the basis of the respective land areas being ready for actual building.

Probably the major item to be considered in connection with the University

Homes site for the PILE would be that of the zoning. According to my interpretation of the new zoning ordinance it would require a change from the present residential classification to C2, General Commercial. Considering the characteristics of the properties surrounding the University Homes tract it might prove to be that little opposition would develop in the matter of a zone change. Certainly the largest single property owner adjoining the site is the Housing Authority and the only question with the Authority would be the influence of the PILE on its own investment in Columbia Villa. If the area to the south and east could be screened effectively it would stand to reason that the opposition to a zone change might be minimized. Furthermore, to the east of University Homes property values would be influenced a great deal more by the freeway which will be located not more than six or seven blocks from the east boundary of the University Homes site. (See map)

2. Civic Sports and Convention Center: If we were called upon to make any statements or remarks with reference to the proposed development offered by Mr. Boody we should observe extreme caution by making the reservation that at this stage very little can be said on the part of the Housing Authority with respect to the use of redevelopment as a means of accomplishing acquisition of an area for the intended purpose of a civic center. While it is true that we have made some studies of eligibility of the area, such studies in the first place are not conclusive, and, in the second place, whatever studies are made should not be made solely by the Housing Authority. As a matter of fact, it probably would be better to have the studies initiated by the City through the Building Department. There are two things about the eligibility of the area that occur to me as being very important. The first one has to do with eligibility from the standpoint of determination of blight and the second has to do with eligibility from the standpoint of intended re-use. It might be highly dangerous to make too liberal a statement

with reference to either one of these factors.

On eligibility, from the standpoint of substandardness, for example, it would depend almost entirely upon the size of the area selected for the civic center for the reason that the district between the Steel and Broadway Bridges is very spotty. Although it would appear, at a quick glance, that the area is decidedly blighted there are, nevertheless, quite a number of properties which are well kept and fully improved, particularly so in the case of a number of rather large apartment houses constituting a concentration of population. If redevelopment in the area were to be linked with a public program to be carried out by the City it might be possible to solve whatever problems might arise as a result of ineligibility of a part of the area for federal assistance under Title I. For example, there might be two or three or several blocks which, if included in a redevelopment project, might affect its eligibility but which might be included as a part of the City's project in such a way that the City, not the Housing Authority, would acquire the properties.

So far as eligibility from the standpoint of re-use is concerned, we ought to check with Horan before we make too definite or positive a statement. I don't know whether DSCUR would accept a project for federal assistance if the predominant re-use were for a public purpose. The Agency might say that the City should use its own powers of eminent domain and tax assessment. On the other hand, and for fear that we (Housing Authority) might get a discouraging response from DSCUR in reply to a simple question, it might be better to allow a head of steam to develop locally in support of a proposed project so that the policy question would be raised by the City or a local group (e.g., a Citizen's Committee or the Chamber of Commerce) rather than by the Authority. If DSCUR gave us a tentative negative answer to begin with it might be more difficult to reverse things through

a pressure group later. Maybe it would be better, therefore, to let the steam build up and leave any questions to be directed to DSCUR by a sponsoring organization or the City Council itself.

The principal thing to be kept in mind, if Mr. Boody's plan were to be given any further airing, is that first of all there must be a general scheme or plan tentatively adopted by the City and interested civic groups which would set up such simple specifications as the size of area to be reckoned with so that the public and semi-public agencies concerned would know what their respective responsibilities would be in acquisition and development. With respect to the size of the area contemplated for a civic sports center I believe that it would be possible to lay out a redevelopment area large enough to include all of the proposed activities, the only limiting factor being that which has to do with how much the people of Portland think they can afford to pay. There might be some exceptions to this basic proposition but the only way to make a determination of this, or any other problem, would be to initiate studies. Obviously, these studies should be carried on as a joint venture between the Housing Authority, the City, and groups or organizations interested in participating in both the promotion of the project and the end uses to which the land is to be put.

Apart from the determination of eligibility of a project in this area, probably the single problem of greatest proportion and significance would be that having to do with relocation of families to be displaced. The predominance of minority groups (mostly colored) in that area very likely will raise the controversial subject of public housing. (The Urban League would certainly raise the issue.) From all outward observances there must be a strong cohesion amongst the families and members of each of the minority groups. This is evidenced by the presence in the area of Negro and Buddhist Churches, colored night clubs, the Keystone Hotel and

other gathering places. The area presently is definitely a colored section and there appear to be very few vacancies in the apartments and other rental units. Considering that the same is probably true in the Williams Avenue area north of Broadway the question would be: where are the colored and other minority families now living in the area going to find replacement housing? The ideal solution, of course, would be to link with the civic center project a public low-rent housing development in the Williams Avenue area. There are portions of the Williams Avenue area which very probably could be made out into a Title I project. A Title I project, however, for public housing in the Williams Avenue area would probably be unthinkable for the reason that it would, no doubt, require a local bond issue. Title I, of course, could be the means of writing-down the cost of land to be used for public housing, but with the prospect of a bond issue it would probably be better to think only in terms of a housing project financed under the PHA program and without the use of Title I assistance, i.e., if there is any point at all in thinking about public housing in the first place. Without public housing to solve the relocation problem in the civic center area we must face-up to the reality of the situation because it will be a problem that absolutely must be solved. It may be true that there are vacancies generally throughout the City in the older neighborhoods which might satisfy in whole, or in part, the relocation needs of families in the civic center area, but the opposition to the migration of minority families into areas now almost exclusively white is going to raise some nasty problems. Thus, if further attention is given Mr. Boody's plan we either must have some kind of solution to offer or we must be careful to avoid meeting the problem head-on until there is a definite movement of sufficient size and weight behind Mr. Boody's plan to overcome the kind of opposition or controversy that might be expected in connection with the relocation problem.