



CENTRAL EASTSIDE INDUSTRIAL COUNCIL

P.O. Box 14251, Portland, OR 97293-0251

Ph: 503-768-4299 – Fax: 503-768-4294

Email: ceic@ceic.cc – Web: www.ceic.cc

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@Large Films

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December 9, 2014

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Re: Central Eastside Urban Renewal Area Amendments

The Board of Directors of the Central Eastside Industrial Council appreciates the opportunity to share our concerns about the expansion and extension of the Central Eastside Urban Renewal Area (URA). Peter Finley Fry represented the board on the advisory committee. We support the advisory committee recommendations on the expansion and extension of the URA with the understanding that the projects support the following priorities:

- Ensure efficient freight movement. Infrastructure improvements that enhance freight movement are a top priority, especially in the southern end of the district where higher density development is envisioned to occur. These improvements would also improve safety and access for all users of the transportation system and the district. Safer and easier access to Powell Boulevard and the Ross Island Bridge are a high priority and will facilitate more intensive business development around the light rail stations.
- We are concerned about comments in the memo to City Council, Recommendations of the Urban Renewal Area Amendments Advisory Committee dated November 21, 2014. The citation implies that the expansion is for the benefit of the "underdeveloped" area adjacent to the Clinton station. Urban renewal funds are intended to spark development of blighted areas where the cost for development exceeds the potential based on market demand. That is not the case here. Some of the area was purchased for staging the light rail line. The land is a prime location for development when the alignment is done, and will be developed without the need of urban renewal funds. CEIC favors allocation of funds to increase access to and through the area which may be impacted by more intensive development.
- The ODOT blocks on Water Avenue have been identified by CEIC for years as an important development opportunity to add to the City's tax base. It is a high priority for our board that development on the property contributes to both the employment base of the City as well as the tax base. This development should be prioritized for private sector employment expansion.
- More intensive development around the ODOT blocks or the light rail stations may lead to the need for structured parking in the future. We support evaluating the need and adding structured parking if it is deemed to unlock the development potential for those priority sites. This assessment should be coordinated with the CEIC's Transportation and Parking Advisory Committee.
- CEIC supports consideration of concerns raised by the Hosford-Abernathy Neighborhood Association regarding safety issues on SE 11th and 12th Avenues between Division and Hawthorne. We do not favor speed bumps as a method to slow traffic because they are not compatible with freight movement but we do favor other methods such as additional traffic lights or pedestrian crossing lights, as long as they are designed to maintain the width of the street.

The Central Eastside has and will continue to be a unique opportunity for Portland to grow its industrial and commercial job base. During the economic downturn and recovery, the Central Eastside outperformed most surrounding districts in job growth. We are an attractive location for startups and growing businesses and are home to a number of diverse industry clusters in manufacturing, distribution and creative industries. In particular, the areas surrounding the light rail stations in our district present an opportunity to capitalize on the potential for startups in the biotech and medical instruments industries based on close proximity to the Knight Cancer Center and affordable development opportunities compared to the South Waterfront area. Positive factors for our growth include the industrial sanctuary designation and zoning, stable conditions that promote long term investment, and close proximity to downtown and the Central City.

Thank you for the opportunity to work together on these issues.

Sincerely,

Debbie Kitchin
CEIC President