

REDEVELOPMENT AGENCY BOARD MEMO

DATE: December 8, 2015 **ITEM #:** 10.B.
PREPARED BY: Amanda Holty
RE: Feedback from Developer Input Forum Event.

REQUESTED ACTION: No action requested. For information only.

POLICY ITEM: None.

BUDGET IMPACTS: None.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY: RDA staff is providing the Board with a summary of feedback gathered from its Developer Input Session on December 1, 2015. The event focused on exchange of information about the RDA's two new potential project areas and financial program modifications.

ANALYSIS & ISSUES: On December 1, 2015, the RDA and Salt Lake City Community and Economic Development Department (CED) hosted a forum to engage members of the City's development community in discussion surrounding two new potential redevelopment areas—9 Line and State Street—as well as modifications to the RDA Loan and Tax Increment Reimbursement Programs. More than 40 people attended the event, at which a small group format facilitated successful two-way discussions among RDA staff and members of the development community, including builders, financiers, architects, engineers, and various City stakeholders. Attendee input on opportunities and challenges of the potential new areas will be referenced during the creation of each area's strategic plan. Additionally, attendee insights on what changes to the Loan and Tax Increment Reimbursement Programs would best facilitate high quality developments in Salt Lake City will shape each program's new evaluation criteria. The highlights of the collective feedback for each of the four discussion topics are listed below:

9 Line Project Area:

- To improve east-west connection, the underpass on 900 South should be repaired.
- It would be smart to look for adjacent land uses, and also beautify along the railroad tracks.
- Since the proposed project area is so big, the strategic plan will need to provide focus and prioritize carefully to ensure impact.
- Since so much of the area is comprised of single family homes, it makes sense to look at medium-density projects such as town homes, cottages, and small apartment buildings; there is no market for the big stuff there anyway.

- Improve Jordan River recreation experience; it's a great amenity, but needs to be more attractive.
- Perceptions of west side—crime, dangerous, etc.—could create a challenge in attracting developers.
- It's important for the RDA to understand what the community really wants and not just facilitate large-scale impersonal developments; Need to make sure developments work with the fabric of the community.

State Street Project Area:

- There is significant opportunity within the State Street corridor to create a grand boulevard through traffic calming, multimodal improvements, and other streetscape amenities.
- Infrastructure improvements are essential to other redevelopment activities within the proposed project area. It is important to engage the Utah Department of Transportation (UDOT) early in the process.
- What is the financial ability to address the corridor in its entirety? It might be more effective to focus on infrastructure improvements at key nodes along the corridor.
- The proposed project area is quite large but provides an opportunity to comprehensively address the State Street corridor. Due to the large size of the area, redevelopment opportunities should be geographically focused to maximize impact.
- It would make sense to extend the boundaries west to 300 West and reduce the size of the project area by cutting off the south end.
- Rezoning and redevelopment activities should be compatible with the existing grain of the neighborhood. Historic and architecturally significant components of the existing built environment should be preserved. Redevelopment activities should maintain a pedestrian scale and not be monolithic.
- Existing businesses should be encouraged to remain in the neighborhood and not displaced, and provided opportunities for acquisition and rehabilitation. Focusing on existing businesses and bring new local businesses to the area will provide neighborhood stabilization.
- Redevelopment activities should not focus solely on corridors, but look at extended nodes and focus on connectivity within and between blocks. In addition, redevelopment activities should relate to and support transit.
- Opportunities exist to tailor redevelopment activities to key stakeholders in the area. For example, micro-units and innovative training programs could be co-located near Salt Lake Community College.
- Main Street, West Temple, and 1300 South provide tremendous opportunity to focus pedestrian-scale and transit-oriented development activities. Service and neighborhood-oriented businesses should be encouraged along these corridors.

Loan Program Changes:

- The proposed changes demonstrate an understanding of how financial markets work.
- It would be good to move away from political arena to a more solid financial basis for approval.
- Large vs. small developer can't use "lender of last resort" evenly; Some large developers are worried RDA is funding inexperienced developers and would prefer talking about "gap funder" instead.

- Look at track record of developers before approving loans; Structure a qualifications review as part loan approval.
- For small developers, the RDA is the only lender in some areas; RDA should keep in mind that though some developers may be small, they may still be experienced and capable as borrowers.
- Would be helpful to compare gap financing vs. demonstrated hardship.
- Don't save a building just because it's old—it might not be worth saving; Focus on the ones that contribute character to the neighborhood.
- LEED Certification is really limiting; Incentives should be available for other standards, such as affordable housing, and should be weighed according to priority or importance to the RDA.
- Like that the design review process would establish a set of clear standards for the programs.
- Expressed appreciation of the focus on achieving goals and that their projects tie into a bigger set of objectives that will collectively achieve something greater.
- Suggested that approval at the loan committee would be best because it would be based entirely on merits, and not involve political influences.

Tax Increment Reimbursement Program Changes:

- Should focus on how to make program available for smaller projects.
- The design guidelines need to be clearer, and need to be specific to each project area, as it's too hard to standardize city-wide.
- Need to keep politics out of the design review process.
- Would be beneficial to establish a design review committee group of experts to work with ahead of time.
- Should emphasize affordable housing in TI reimbursements.
- Need to provide development community with a better understanding/marketing of the program.
- Should communicate to GOED so they could promote and use the program.
- A specific RDA person needs to be point person for the program, as it's difficult to explain to average person.
- Should be able to combine TI reimbursements and loan programs.
- Perhaps use the TI reimbursement to accelerate the repayment of the loan.

PREVIOUS BOARD ACTION: None.

ATTACHMENTS: None.

