

The Hidden Tax

is \$36.97. Compare that to what this property owner pays to the Educational Service District (E.S.D.) or Portland Community College. How does county-wide public education compare to urban renewal districts in the city of Portland?

There are no right or wrong answers to the question. For some the distribution may look just right, for others, not enough. It boils down to values. But it REALLY underscores the importance of taxpayers knowing and having a say about the spending of those dollars.

Today, many citizens seem dissatisfied. They ask, "Why am I paying more taxes to government today and receiving fewer services?" A partial answer may be, "Because of tax increment financing."

Whatever a person's feelings about the merit of tax increment financing, wouldn't it be good to know what the real costs are? Shouldn't urban renewal projects be recorded on the tax statement just like the other costs?

Why isn't it? Because efforts to get such disclosure have been blocked in the legislature.

Has Urban Renewal Brought Tax Relief?

Below are a list of projects in Portland's urban renewal districts that have begun since Oregon permitted tax increment financing. The first started in 1965 and the list is growing. One can see from the data that the excess value of these properties represents millions and millions of dollars lost to the tax rolls, for purposes of financing our cities, schools, etc. The taxes paid on the new growth in the urban renewal areas, (the "excess" values), go straight to the Portland Development Commission.

The data also shows that little has been returned to the rolls during the last 20 years, although the projects have mushroomed. What's to prevent this growth? As long as the development stays within a designated urban renewal area, then the City of Portland, together with the Portland Development Commission, which runs the programs, are free to invent an endless list of needs. While urban renewal has returned over five million

Dollars Lost From Tax Rolls

South Auditorium Urban Renewal	
TOTAL:	\$5,000,000.00
Downtown Waterfront Urban Renewal	
Year	Amount
1974-75	\$213,820.93
1975-76	\$853,833.20
1976-77	\$1,352,546.80
1977-78	\$2,255,662.10
1978-79	\$3,135,329.41
1979-80	\$3,611,648.96
1980-81	\$3,650,583.11
1981-82	\$4,825,766.18
1982-83	\$6,212,390.97
1983-84	\$6,833,346.73
1984-85	\$8,037,686.43
1985-86	\$9,889,434.25
1986-87	\$12,475,373.15
1987-88	\$9,402,716.30
TOTAL:	\$72,750,138.52
N.W. Front Avenue Urban Renewal	
1978-79	\$165,474.50
1979-80	\$140,723.37
1980-81	\$156,260.68
1981-82	\$1,576,291.32
1982-83	\$1,798,058.39
1983-84	\$1,726,733.02
1984-85	\$1,788,377.36
1985-86	\$2,055,273.78
1986-87	\$1,677,030.81
1987-88	\$1,724,677.39
TOTAL:	\$12,798,900.62
St. John's Urban Renewal	
1981-82	\$11,221.26
1982-83	\$19,401.14
1983-84	\$20,037.71
1984-85	\$30,191.65
1985-86	\$30,358.69
1986-87	\$10,794.75
1987-88	-0-
TOTAL:	\$122,005.20
South Park Blocks Urban Renewal	
1986-87	\$1,587,216.00
1987-88	\$2,629,650.82
TOTAL:	\$4,216,866.82
Central East Side Urban Renewal	
1987-88	\$226,244.10
TOTAL:	\$226,244.10
Columbia South Shore Urban Renewal	
1987-88	\$107,873.24
TOTAL:	\$107,873.24
GRAND TOTAL LOST FROM TAX ROLLS:	\$95,222,028.50