

NEIGHBORHOODS

WHAT IS URBAN RENEWAL?

By Martha Richmond
Contributing Writer

Over the past several years, many positive changes have taken place along the boulevard. Many of those changes are due to urban renewal and the tax increment financing that it makes available to the projects and programs that can truly make a difference.

What is Urban Renewal?

Urban Renewal is a program authorized by State of Oregon laws adopted in 1957 and 1961. Its purpose is to help communities improve and redevelop areas which are deteriorated, unsafe, have a lack of infrastructure such as streets, utilities and sidewalks, and have extensive vacant and under-utilized property. In addition to being unsightly and unsafe, these areas often impose a burden on city services and can be costly to city taxpayers.

More than 40 Oregon cities and counties currently have urban renewal programs in operation. The Portland Development Commission (PDC) is Portland's urban renewal agency. In the four decades since PDC was established, City Council has created 19 urban renewal areas in Portland starting with the South Auditorium Project near Civic Auditorium, where 110 acres of downtown property emerged as an attractive array of new offices, shops, housing and

public plazas. PDC currently administers eight plans. One of those plans, for the North Macadam area, was adopted just a few weeks ago.

How does Urban Renewal work?

The idea is this: Take an area that is deteriorating, one where property values and tax revenues are low. Draw a line around it. Plan streets, green spaces, utility lines, and other improvements that will attract significant new private investment, the creation of jobs and a full range of housing. Issue urban renewal bonds to pay for the planned improvements. Implement the plans and encourage investors to come in or expand in the area.

The result: The city as a whole gains new public assets and private investment. Because of the additional tax base created by the new private development in urban renewal areas, the city is able to finance other public benefits such as parks, enhanced greenways and opportunities to concentrate growth, such as office buildings and housing complexes outside of existing neighborhoods. The increase in tax revenue resulting from the new private investment (called "tax increment") is used to pay off the public urban renewal bonds that finance public improvements. When they are paid off, all the tax revenues go back

into the normal property tax collections.

Community Renewal Plans

The community must prepare a document called an Urban Renewal Plan for the area in which it wants to work. The plan details what the community intends to do in the area and how and when it intends to do it. Renewal Plans must be prepared with involvement by the general public. A renewal plan can only be adopted by Portland's City Council after it calls for and conducts a formal public hearing on the plan. After the Urban Renewal Plan is adopted, PDC is responsible for directing and making the major decisions needed to carry out the plan. PDC staff

administers Portland's urban renewal plans under the direction of the PDC Board.

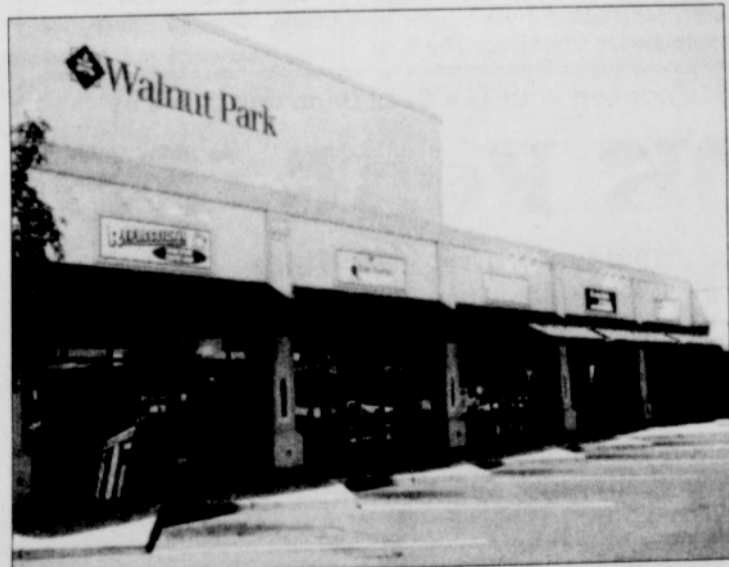
Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd.

Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd is part of the Oregon Convention Center Urban Renewal Area. This district was first designated in 1989 and included an area bounded by the Willamette on the west, 16th Avenue on the east, I-84 on the south and Russell Street on

the north. In 1993, as a result of the Albina Community Plan, the area was expanded to include the length of Martin Luther King Jr., Blvd. from Russell to Portland Boulevard and NE Alberta from MLK to NE 15th.

Future Plans

Recently, PDC began looking into the possibility of creating another new urban renewal area along Interstate Avenue that would run from the Rose Garden arena



Urban Renewal funds helped build Walnut Park Retail Center.

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SE 47th & STEELE. SUNDAY, AUGUST 22nd
(Rain location: Cleveland High School 3400 SE 26th. Same date & time.)
AFTERNOON EVENTS BEGIN AT 2:30 PM
OREGON SYMPHONY CONCERT AT 7:00 PM
Murry Sidlin, conductor; Janice Scroggins, pianist
The Oregon Symphony will perform a mixture of light classical and popular favorites.
Food and beverages available for purchase.

PENINSULA PARK
N ALBINA & PORTLAND BLVD. SUN., AUGUST 29nd
(Rain location: Jefferson High School 5210 N Kerby. Same date & time.)
AFTERNOON EVENTS BEGIN AT 2:30 PM
OREGON SYMPHONY CONCERT AT 7:00 PM
Murry Sidlin, conductor; Janice Scroggins, pianist
The Oregon Symphony will perform a mixture of light classical and popular favorites.
Food and beverages available for purchase.

TOM MCCALL WATERFRONT PARK
BOWL AREA SOUTH OF HAWTHORNE BRIDGE.
THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 2nd
(Rain date: Friday, September 3rd)
OREGON SYMPHONY CONCERT AT 7:00 PM
James DePreist, conductor
Bill Schonely conducts Stars & Stripes Forever
The Oregon Symphony performs classical and popular works including Tchaikovsky's 1812 Overture, complete with fireworks & cannons!
Food and beverages available for purchase.

The City of Portland and
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IN THE NEIGHBORHOODS

Education activities supported by the Patty Vomer Education Fund.

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