



Business

Portland's Interstate Urban Renewal District in the planning stages

By LEE PERLEMAN
FOR THE PORTLAND OBSERVER

Coming your way soon is the Interstate Urban Renewal District, with more territory but one less feature than any other such program in Portland - to the consternation of some.

The district was originally proposed by Mayor Vera Katz to generate \$30 million to the funding package for the North Light Rail project, which would run along North Interstate Avenue from the Rose Quarter to the Expo Center. Once proposed as a corridor four blocks wide, the district as now planned would be the largest such program in Portland, covering 3700 acres and expected to generate more than \$150 million in tax increment funds, according to the Portland Development Commission's John Southgate, the largest such districts now in existence are Columbia South Shore, at 2700 acres, and Lents at 2400 acres.

The Interstate Urban Renewal District Advisory Committee is expected to approve the proposed district, and its proposed objectives, by the end of May. Hearings are scheduled before the Portland Development Commission at 6 p.m. June 21 at Kaiser Town Hall, 3704 N. Interstate Ave. before the Portland Planning Commission at 12:30 p.m. July 11 at 1900 S.W. Fourth Ave. and before City Council at 6 p.m. August 16 at Kaiser Town Hall.

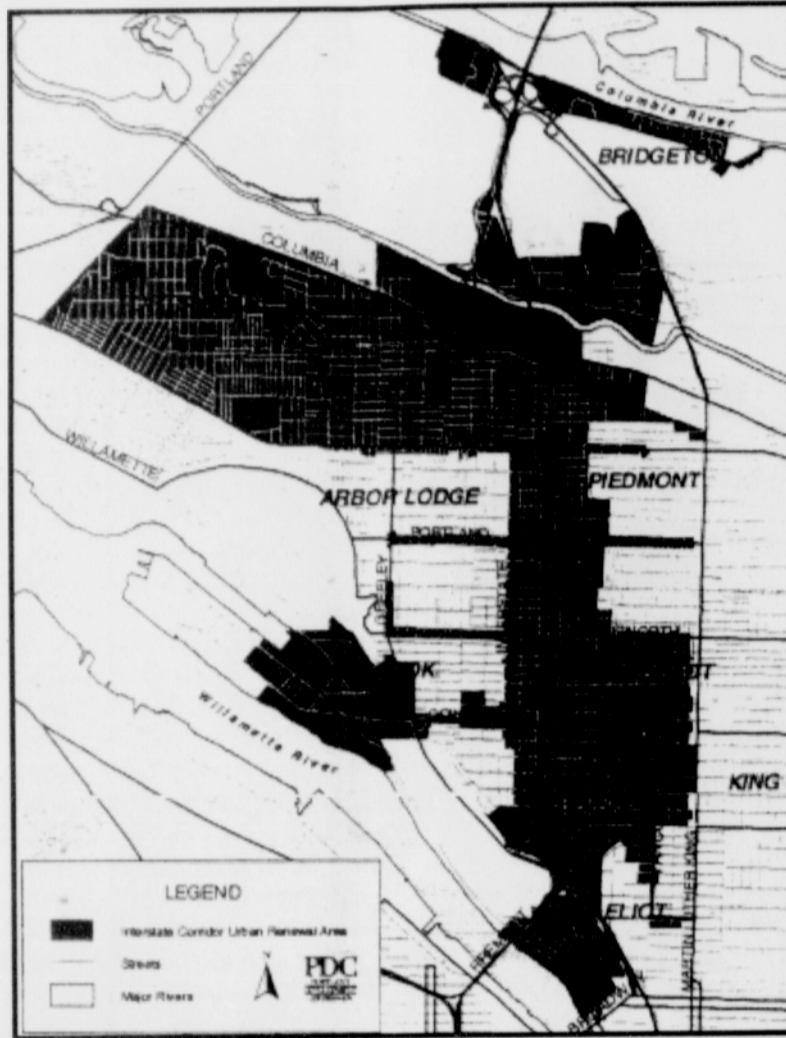
The district will be the only one of its kind in which PDC will not have the power to condemn property, compelling its sale to the city against

the wishes of its owner. In an April 25 letter to Harold Williams of the Coalition of Black Men, Mayor Katz wrote, "Knowing the depth of feelings about condemnation, specifically within the African-American community, I support the recommendation of the Portland Development Commission. PDC recommends that there not be a condemnation provision as part of the Interstate URA. If in the future the community initiates a proposal for condemnation that is acceptable to the broader community (this would obviously entail a broad-based community outreach effort), then we would be willing to work on this, but again, WE (the city and PDC) are not going to initiate it."

The debate over boundaries came to a head over the request by the Portsmouth neighborhood to be included. Extending from North Chataqua Boulevard to the Burlington Northern railroad tracks, Portsmouth contains nearly 700 acres and is 1.5 miles from the Interstate route at its nearest point. It also contains Columbia Villa, the state's largest low-income housing project, which some community groups fear could swallow up much of the tax increment funds.

Advisory Committee members such as Larry Mills of the Kenton Neighborhood Association and Lenny Anderson of Swan Island argued that the district was intended primarily to rejuvenate the immediate area around Interstate, and to mitigate the effect of the new light rail on traffic.

In response, Portsmouth



Neighborhood Association president Elizabeth Humphrey countered, "Poverty doesn't run just north and south, it runs east and west too." She later told The Portland Observer that inclusion in the district could help the Housing Authority of Portland secure a \$35 million grant to renovate Columbia Villa. Condemnation was an equally large issue for the fledgling

district. In the past this process has been used by PDC to remove vast tracts of homes to make way for the I-5 Freeway, Memorial Coliseum and the expansion of Emanuel Hospital. PDC insists it no longer operates in this way, and uses condemnation only to acquire select properties. Nonetheless, the Arbor Lodge, Boise, Eliot and Humboldt

neighborhood associations, NAACP and Coalition of Black Men, among others, were strongly against its inclusion in the new district. Others favored it. Kenton representatives, in particular, have said they would like to see acquisition and conversion of the Dancin' Bare, a bar with nude entertainment in the heart of the neighborhood business district. Mills said condemnation could prove indispensable to assembling large tracts of land to accommodate facilities desired by the community. Anderson said condemnation could be used to preserve low-income housing. As part of the draft General Principles governing activities within the district the Advisory Committee adopted a statement saying, "There shall be no condemnation as part of the URA

until and if the Interstate Corridor URA Advisory Committee decides that it wants to amend the urban renewal plan to include condemnation." PDC attorney Karen Lewis said that to introduce condemnation into the district would require mailed notification to every property owner in the district. Nonetheless, the qualifying language in the general principles prompted an angry speech to the committee by Williams, in which he accused the committee of failing to respond to "the African-American agenda" and called the qualifying language "an insult." He later told the Portland Observer, "Vera Katz and (PDC's) Baruti Arthuree told them to take condemnation out, but they tried to put it back in there. No is no."

Women advancing in technical careers

By JANA NOVAK
FOR THE PORTLAND OBSERVER

Throw out the pocket protectors and throw in a bra: stereotype of technology savvy people must now be updated to include women. Not only are women overtaking male Internet consumers, but according to the Internet research firm VentureOne, they are also making themselves comfortable in the executive ranks of the 'dot-com world.' In fact, women have doubled their presence in top-tier management positions just since 1998, holding an impressive 45% of those jobs at Internet firms receiving venture capital funding last year - compared to only 4% at traditional Fortune 500 companies. Even Time magazine included five women in its "Digital 50". Obviously, the proliferation of technology has had widespread benefits for women.

But the benefits are not only in terms of their success within its executive

ranks, but also in terms of the freedom and flexibility it offers to find creative solutions to juggling a professional life and a personal life.

My friend Virginia, a married mother of one and the top communications officer at a Washington, D.C.-based public relations firm, understands this pressure. Fortunately, an understanding employer and technological advances have allowed her to have the best of both worlds. By telecommuting from home two days a week, she's been able to continue putting her years of experience and PR savvy to use for clients while also spending quality time with her new toddler.

In other words the flexibility and freedom provided by technology offers perhaps the first step toward answering the age-old dilemma for women: to stay at home or not to stay at home. Whether a woman decides to work with her employer to create the flexibility she desires or to be her own boss through a home-based



business, technology is the key factor. In fact, while home-based businesses for women have been around for centuries, technology has

taken it to a new level. Today, these businesses are no longer a way to simply supplement income; they are income.

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