

Boardman urban renewal area

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that amount that property taxes can be increased unless we have a substantial improvement to our property or there is new construction," said Howard.

If that improvement does happen, the assessor is allowed to reassess the property and determine a new value.

When a URA is formed, the assessor calculates what is called the frozen base of assessed value, or the total assessed value of all the properties within the urban renewal area.

That doesn't mean the payment of property taxes within the urban renewal area is frozen, but that the distribution of those taxes is changed, Howard said. Property owners continue to pay taxes, and taxing districts receive them, but the portion that taxing districts receive remains frozen at that baseline for the length of the URA.

"Once an area is underway, any increase in that assessed value, either the three percent assessed value increase or new construction or substantial improvement, will go to the urban renewal agency during the timeframe of the urban renewal area," said Howard.

The change only applies to properties within the URA.

"Their property taxes do not change at all, the total amount that they pay," Howard reiterated. "The only thing that changes is to whom the assessor allocates that money."

The idea is that, as new contraction and improvement take place in the area, the assessed value will rise more than it would have without the urban renewal area. Once the term of the URA runs out—usually about 20 years—the special districts will go back to receiving their full share of those taxes.

"By the time your area is completed, all the taxing districts will end up getting more revenues than if there had never been an urban renewal area that helped to create that increase in those property taxes," said Howard.

The taxing districts affected by the North Boardman URA are Morrow County, Umatilla-Morrow Radio District, Morrow County Health District, Port of Morrow, City of Boardman, Boardman Fire Rescue District, Boardman Cemetery District, Boardman Park and Recreation, Morrow County Unified Recreation District, Vector Control and Oregon Trail Library District.

The URA will not directly affect education districts like Morrow County School District because those are funded at the state level.

The North Boardman URA

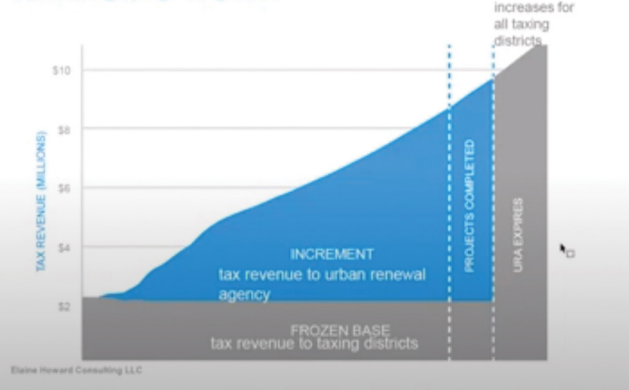
The city decided to put the plan out for review on June 11. After that, it went before the planning commission, which determined July 19 that the area conforms to the county's comprehensive plan.

The North Boardman URA will be in an area of Boardman north of I-84. Many of the properties in the area are currently undeveloped, though some will soon have new apartment buildings constructed on them.

That new construction will help fuel the tax increased to pay for improvements in the area, said Howard.

Most of the projects proposed within the North Boardman URA are trans-

HOW DOES URBAN RENEWAL FINANCING WORK?



To fund the URA, taxing district revenue will be frozen at a base rate for the length of the project, while any increases will go to fund planned area improvements. -Contributed



Proposed projects of the North Boardman URA. -Contributed



Elaine Howard

portation projects. For instance, the city plans to extend NE Boardman Ave. to Olson Rd., including pavement, curbs, gutters, sidewalks and lighting. The city also intends to improve NE Front St. and the intersection at North Main and Boardman Ave., among others. The estimated cost of the projects is nearly \$11 million.

Such infrastructure improvements are designed to encourage economic development within the area. The URA may also include specific economic development incentives.

The URA is projected to last 20 years, though Howard said she would not be surprised if it finished sooner than that based on the construction already happening.

The state sets limits on the acreage and assessed value of urban renewal districts within a city, but Howard said Boardman is well within those limits even with the existing URAs. The Central URA contains 168.6 acres and the Southwest URA 157.5 acres. The North Boardman URA will add 181.1 acres. All three areas make up 17.87 percent of Boardman's total acreage, well below the 25 percent allowed.

The assessed value is also within the limitations at just under \$17 million, or 2.37 percent.

Public Questions

The only public com-

ment during the hearing came in the form of a question from George Shimer of Boardman Park and Recreation District. He asked if the URA meant the park and rec district would lose \$490,000 in revenue over 20 years as indicated on one slide. Howard replied that the loss would not be to actual revenue the district is already receiving.

"What you won't get is from this area, the proposed urban renewal area, any taxes off the increased value of the area over the 20-year time frame," she said. "Given the projections of potential development within that area, that does equal, over that 20-year time period, about \$490,000."

"So that is not any revenue you're presently getting," she added. "It's foregoing that revenue in the future while this urban renewal area collects that to be able to do those transportation projects."

"But once the urban renewal is completed, whatever tax rate that is, you'll now gain that rate," added Boardman Police Chief Rick Stokoe, who was city manager pro tem during the initial stages of the URA's development. "That's going to be a good financial jump because of the valuation of the projects to be done."

Boardman City Councilor Karen Pettigrew added that the timing is good, because districts like park and recreation will soon see increased funding from other sources like enterprise zone developments, which will help offset what they forego from the URA.

"It helps that this is a more prosperous time," she said.

Boardman will present plans for the URA to the Morrow County Board of Commissioners Aug. 16. The second reading of the ordinance and a final adop-

Irrigon to receive \$1 Million for small business incubator

Oregon's U.S. Senators Jeff Merkley and Ron Wyden announced Tuesday that the City of Irrigon has been awarded \$1 million from the Small Business Administration (SBA) to build a business opportunity incubator for the community. Merkley and Wyden secured this community-initiated project's funding in the fiscal year 2023 omnibus appropriations package.

"Irrigon is very excited about this funding. This grant brings opportunities for sustainable growth in our community and our region. The incubator development project will help entrepreneurs to take that first big step toward launching their own business," said Irrigon City Manager Aaron Palmquist.

"The City of Irrigon is also grateful to U.S. SBA

and agency staff for getting this project award across the finish line," Palmquist added. "The project fits hand and glove with the current business developments happening in our community."

This funding will support the design, permitting, planning, and construction of a business opportunity incubator for the community.

"Small businesses are the backbone of economies across Oregon and are vital to the success of the communities they serve," said Merkley, who sits on the Senate Appropriations Committee that funds community-initiated projects like this. "This project will support small and medium sized businesses in Irrigon, providing space and support for companies to grow and thrive."

The incubator in Irrigon will provide a facility for small to medium sized businesses with a focus on enhancing opportunities for minority-owned businesses and women-owned enterprises and supporting low-income populations. This facility will be able to accommodate multiple use types, ranging from small office spaces to larger areas for manufacturing, to meet the needs of the region.

"Federal investment to help jump-start small and medium-size businesses that generate jobs in rural Oregon is crucial to our entire state's economy," Wyden said. "I'm gratified that Irrigon has earned this \$1 million that will make the town and Morrow County an even better place to live and work for generations to come."

Fair & rodeo parade Aug. 19



The Morrow County Fair and Rodeo Parade will wind its way through Heppner Saturday, Aug. 19, at 10 a.m. Residents and visitors are invited to line Main Street and enjoy the pageantry of one of Morrow County's most treasured traditions. For more information on entries, contact the Heppner Chamber of Commerce. -File Photos

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