

May 16, 2010

Joleen Jensen-Classen
Public Participation Manager
Portland Development Commission
222 NW Fifth Ave.
Portland, OR 97209

RE: NNE CAC Meeting May 19, 2010

Dear Joleen;

Thanks for agreeing to pass on my comments to the NNC CAC regarding potential expansion of the ICURA boundaries to encompass former OCC properties. My comments for consideration by the CAC follow.

As the first, and longest serving Chair of both the OCC and MLK Advisory Committees I was a forceful proponent of PDC's efforts in the OCC area north of Broadway, especially along MLK. The expansion of the OCC into the area north of Broadway was done specifically to direct resources to an area that has long been blighted. It also honored commitments made by a succession of Mayor's to address urban renewal "mistakes" that affected this area of the Eliot neighborhood. The expiration of the OCC would abandon these commitments since this area remains blighted and continues to face development and business development challenges that are unique in NNE Portland. Challenges associated with the presence of a 4-lane arterial street, large plots of vacant land, underutilized buildings, limited parking, and immature business leadership that PDC is specifically chartered to address and has tools specific for that process.

The potential expansion of the ICURA boundaries to include the areas designated within the Eliot neighborhood and along MLK provides the best opportunity to continue to honor the City's commitments to this community and the adjacent neighborhoods. Although I recognize there are concerns within ICURA regarding the proposed expansion, there can be little doubt that this area continues to be blighted. Concerns about diversion of resources from other projects in ICURA should be minimum inasmuch as most of this area is not new, but already within the OCC area along with proposed funding for continuation of programs in the area. Since that funding rests on the potential TIF associated with this same area, I presume it would also transfer to ICURA essentially paying for itself.

In summary, I strongly encourage the committee to include the areas proposed in the Eliot neighborhood along and along MLK in the new ICURA area.

Sincerely,

Mike Warwick
535 NE Thompson
Portland, Oregon 97212