

December 18, 2015
via E-Mail

Senator Dan Johnson, Co-Chair
Representative Rick Youngblood, Co-Chair
Urban Renewal Interim Committee
P. O. Box 83720
Boise, Idaho 83720

Re: Urban Renewal Legislation

Dear Senator Johnson, Representative Youngblood, and Committee Members:

On behalf of the City of Sandpoint, we thank you for your work to review Idaho's urban renewal law. Urban renewal has been a difficult issue over the years, and we understand you are again considering significant legislative amendments.

Attached is City of Sandpoint Resolution No. 15-67, which was adopted at our City Council Meeting on December 16, 2015. Urban renewal is an issue of great importance to us, and we respectfully request that the Interim Committee fully support Idaho's urban renewal law. We also ask that you carefully consider ways to make this tool broader, easier to use, and more effective rather than more restrictive.

Sandpoint has seen the benefits of urban renewal first hand. Just some of the projects made possible by the Sandpoint Urban Renewal Agency are:

- Improvement of downtown public infrastructure (streets, sidewalk and storm water management);
- Partnering with Bonner County to improve public infrastructure at the airport, resulting in retention and expansion of aerospace businesses;
- Partnering with City of Sandpoint for public infrastructure (water, sewer, and streets) to enable construction and occupancy of affordable housing; and
- Partnership with the school district for infrastructure improvements to increase safety for students.

As a tool, urban renewal benefits both large and small communities as an affordable option to remove blight, to promote, provide, and receive public infrastructure, and to promote economic growth. This tool allows growth to pay for needed public infrastructure and other improvements through taxes collected over time, which benefits all citizens.

However, we need a more flexible and effective urban renewal tool. The entire state of Idaho has the ability and opportunity to become more competitive, increase its tax base, and be more successful. Our urban renewal law is a primary key to this success.

Sincerely,

Carrie Logan
Mayor

No: 15-67
Date: December 16, 2015

RESOLUTION
OF THE CITY COUNCIL
CITY OF SANDPOINT

TITLE: A RESOLUTION OF THE CITY OF SANDPOINT EXPRESSING THE CITY'S SUPPORT FOR URBAN RENEWAL AND REQUESTING THAT ACTION BE TAKEN BY THE IDAHO LEGISLATORS AND INTERIM COMMITTEE MEMBERS TO PROVIDE THEIR FULL SUPPORT BY CONSIDERING AND ADOPTING MORE FLEXIBLE AND EFFECTIVE TOOLS AND SOLUTIONS THAT ALLOW FOR SUCCESSFUL ADMINISTRATION AND EXECUTION OF URBAN RENEWAL IN IDAHO.

WHEREAS: Urban renewal is a topic discussed annually by the Idaho Legislature and is presently being considered for significant amendment; and

WHEREAS: The City of Sandpoint extends its gratitude for the service heretofore provided by the Idaho Legislators and Interim Committee Members in their support of urban renewal and economic development and respectfully requests continuing and additional support in this regard.

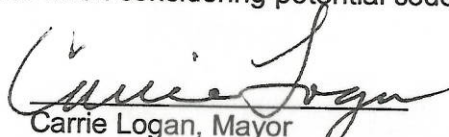
NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED THAT: The City of Sandpoint provides the following recommendations, which provide more flexibility and effectiveness to be considered in preparation of future legislative sessions and code adoption:

1. Urban renewal law should be more flexible with more options and more opportunity, not less.
2. Urban renewal law should be reformed in order to help Idaho be more competitive by expanding its purpose and ability as a fully functional and streamlined economic development tool.
3. Urban renewal law should allow greater local decision making and be more user-friendly, with less bureaucracy and fewer impediments.
4. For various and significant reasons, urban renewal boards should not be elected. Requiring the election of urban renewal board members could change an independent public body, corporate and politic, into a political subdivision of the State of Idaho, making it subject to Article VIII, Section 3, of the Idaho Constitution, which would require a 2/3 vote of the electors of the political subdivision to vote on any debt that exceeds the income and revenue of the agency for that year. Such a change may not be legal under the current laws of the State of Idaho. Therefore, urban renewal agencies should be appointed by the local legislative body.
5. Due to the public process currently required, urban renewal plans and agencies should be officially acknowledged by the Legislature as plans and bodies that do have representation and oversight by the locally elected officials.

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6. Finally, there should be a minimum number of years set by law restricting any considerations to make changes to the urban renewal laws at the legislative level. The annual visitation of the urban renewal laws hinders our ability to convince potential investors that Idaho is not a risk. Additionally, a bill should be written to specifically protect from legislative change existing urban renewal plans, TIF increment and debt payment assurance.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT: The City of Sandpoint hereby supports the Idaho Legislators and Interim Committee Members and encourages them to fully support urban renewal in Idaho and to carefully consider ways to make this tool broader, easier to use, and more effective during future legislative sessions and when considering potential code adoption.


Carrie Logan, Mayor

ATTEST:


Maree Peck, City Clerk

City Council Members:

			YES	NO	ABSTAIN	ABSENT
1.	Eddy	Second	X			
2.	Rognstad	Motion	X			
3.	Aitken		X			
4.	Williamson		X			
5.	Camp		X			
6.	Ruehle		X			