



From the Executive Director

GROWING THE PIE FOR EVERYONE



The use of urban renewal and tax increment financing (TIF) is an excellent means of focusing tax revenue on areas that are blighted and in need of redevelopment. But redevelopment is not an activity that we do simply because it “feels good” (although it does!), redevelopment is an essential activity for any community seeking to maintain a healthy economic base.

Communities need to carry out redevelopment because eroding urban core areas prevent positive real estate growth and development, and thereby erode the tax base of the city, school district, library district, and all other taxing entities present in the blighted area. Such was the case with our Phase I Downtown project area, created in 1986. At that time, the three block area that comprised the Phase I Downtown project area held an estimated assessed value of less than \$40,000. Today, as a result of the activities of the urban renewal authority, the assessed valuation has risen to over \$2.3 million.

This increased value has translated to increased property tax revenue for all our community partners, including School District 60 who has seen annual revenues from the area steadily increase from a few hundred dollars to over \$15,000 per year during the project area’s lifetime. Moreover, District 60 will receive an additional bump in revenue of \$85,000 in tax revenue every year from the Downtown Phase I Project Area beginning in 2014.

In 2018 when the St. Charles Urban Renewal Area sunsets, School District 60 will receive an additional \$930,000 in tax revenue every year as a result of the site and infrastructure improvements financed by the urban renewal authority.

There is an unfortunate perception by some in our community that urban renewal “takes revenue away from schools and libraries.” This is a fallacy. As the numbers above demonstrate, urban renewal adds revenue to our community by stabilizing and increasing the taxable property base in blighted areas.

PURA recognizes that we are part of a larger Pueblo community, and our organization does not create project areas for the purpose of creating TIF revenue. We create project areas to eliminate blight, return land to productive use, and grow the tax base for all our community partners who depend upon stable property tax revenue. Without the actions of the urban renewal authority, there would be a smaller slice of pie for everyone!

Yours, **John R. Batey, AICP-PURA Executive Director**



From the Chairman

Pueblo City Council voted to allow PURA establish the Lake Minnequa project in 2008. The goal of the PURA board of commissioners was to begin the steps to redevelop this once thriving area. One main catalyst for this decision was the city purchasing Lake Minnequa from Evraz Group, the producer of steel which owned the lake.

Lofty plans called for the redevelopment of recreational activities around Lake Minnequa. A popular recreational destination since the turn of the century had since become neglected in the last two decades. Purchasing of the lake and the surrounding land afforded the city the opportunity to redevelop this city treasure. Cleanup and drainage improvements were first. Then a park, basketball courts and walking paths were developed in phase one. Phase two saw the installation of recreational fields for football and soccer.

This activity opened up the door for PURA to entice private redevelopment of the business areas around the lake. Water is a natural attraction to people and this further enhances the possibilities. Public meetings were held with business owners, residents and the general public to obtain preferences and ideas of what the redevelopment would look like.

The process developed into three major concerns: traffic, drainage and image. Lake Avenue was once the major thoroughfare through the city before the interstate so the street was wide and unencumbered. This led to high speeds through the area. Drainage was an issue because stormwater could not adequately drain west into the lake because of inadequate storm drains. Lastly the image had been tarnished because of inferior lighting, sidewalks and public amenities.

PURA had listened and a master plan was developed to address these issues. A four phase project was envisioned for the Lake Avenue streetscape which dealt with traffic, drainage and image. Two phases of the project have been completed. The avenue was narrowed to facilitate larger pedestrian walkways and parking. Drought tolerant landscaping and street lighting was installed. Images can be slow to change but these improvements have got people looking at the area again.

The vision for redevelopment could not be complete without attracting private investment. Although it is hard for everyone to visualize the possibilities, some forward thinking businessmen have started to reinvest into the area again. Once again restaurants, night clubs and retail are opening up in the Lake Minnequa project. Businesses which stayed and have weathered the changes are also reinvesting into their buildings. As they say “Rome was not built in a day”, so true it is also for Lake Minnequa.

New Development on Lake Ave.



Ted Trani recently relocated his dance hall to an old Lake Avenue nightclub he purchased and refurbished. The 88-year-old said his patrons — mostly senior citizens — love the club’s new location. ‘People around here have been wonderful,’ Trani says.

Vincent Henriquez thinks time will fully heal the damaged reputation of Lake Avenue’s night life. Time and Ted Trani. Henriquez manages one of the few aged Lake Avenue nightclubs still in business, Paisano’s, now embarking on a plan to shed its own rough image from past years.

As for Trani, the 88-year-old dance hall patriarch surprised many by recently purchasing and refurbishing another old nightclub on Lake Avenue, directly across the street from Paisano’s. The site is the home of Trani’s new ballroom-style dance club.

The nonalcoholic hall caters to older adults who enjoy traditional dancing, the same as Trani’s

former Supper Club near Downtown, bought by the state to make room for Interstate 25 improvements. “Very low key,” Trani said of the new club, now open only one night a week — on Tuesdays — to accommodate the current schedule of the club’s longtime band, Jorica. Nights filled with violence, excessive drinking and prostitution are gone from Lake Avenue, aided by an ongoing streetscape and business redevelopment project launched by the city of Pueblo, Trani said. His patrons — most of whom are in their 70s — are thrilled with the new club and the neighborhood, he says. “I tell you the people around here have been wonderful,” Trani said. Trani’s arrival also caught the attention of Henriquez, among a fresh crop of merchants looking to capitalize on the revitalization of Lake Avenue.

Henriquez recently agreed to manage Paisano’s after convincing the owner to take steps necessary to make the club more mainstream. Witnessing Trani in action left him more enthusiastic than ever. “There is no going back. Look at the changes that are happening. Across the street, you’ll see 60 to 70

senior citizens. That's not going to go back," Henriquez said.

Henriquez plans theme nights such as Salsa on Thursdays, country music on Fridays and Tejano music on Saturdays in a bid to draw tourists and a wider mix of local patrons. He also plans to keep a lid on excessive drunkenness by monitoring patrons, encouraging rides home and, eventually, offering a late-night food buffet. "Everybody's afraid to come to this part of town. I tried to think, 'How do we overcome this problem?' " said Henriquez, who previously managed brandname hotels in Pueblo and Canon City.

The turnaround will not happen overnight. Puebloans' memories are long, Henriquez said. "All the bad clubs that used to be trouble around here are closed, but everybody I talk to is still like, 'Lake Avenue? Oh, my god,' " he said. Still, he's optimistic. "I think it has a good chance. You have a congregation of so many new businesses here. But it has to be run right and you have to be patient," he said.

~ Article, courtesy of the Pueblo Chieftain.



Paisano's new manager, Vincent Henriquez

BID Outreach Meeting

**CITY CENTER
BUSINESS IMPROVEMENT DISTRICT**
Where small business, is big business

YOU'RE INVITED!

Pueblo City Center Partnership
invites you to the
BID Open House

WHAT?

The City Center BID will provide services to enhance the neighborhood, support business, and encourage residential living in downtown Pueblo.

WHY?

A Business Improvement District can do several things to help your business & property:

- Streetscape Maintenance
- Public Safety
- Marketing
- Economic Development

WHEN? WHERE?

Olde Town Carriage House
102 S Victoria Ave
Pueblo Riverwalk
May 9, 2013
5:30 PM

Join us for Hors d'oeuvres and a cash bar!

RSVP

RSVP Kristi Alfonso by **May 7, 2013**
at
KAlfonso@pueblourbanrenewal.org
or 719-583-8169

Lake Ave. Block Party



After nearly two years of construction, PURA would like to celebrate the streetscape improvements on Lake Ave. with a community block party. Enjoy free food and entertainment! Please plan to join us on Saturday, May 11, at 11:30 - 1:30. The party will be held under a tent located on the corner of Nevada and Lake Ave. To RSVP or for more information, contact PURA at 719-542-2577.

East Side Update

PURA and the East Side Task Force are continuing to work on obtaining blighted residential properties, commercial redevelopment along East 4th Street between Erie Avenue and Hudson Avenue, working in partnership with the City on the Fountain Creek Watershed Trails and Recreation Project, and the upcoming planning and engineering project for an East 4th Street Streetscape aimed at improving pedestrian activity and safety.

PURA has partnered with the Healy Center at CSU-Pueblo to develop a research and implementation project to spur economic development and commercial redevelopment along East 4th Street. Presently, several commercial structures are vacant, many of which have been foreclosed. The

principle goal of the partnership is to determine what types of commercial services would best thrive within the neighborhood and ways in which to entice individuals to the area.

The City has qualified two Skateboard Park design and engineering firms to be selected to work as sub-consultants to the overall consultant for the Fountain Creek Watershed Trails and Recreation Project. The City will publish a Request for Proposal for the Project's lead consultant in March. Once the primary consultant and sub-consultant have been identified, work will commence on the \$2.5 million dollar recreation project that will directly link El Centro Quinto Del Sol to Fountain Creek and provide a unique and challenging "Wheel Park" within the City of Pueblo.

The City will begin discussions with property owners along East 4th Street this summer to identify safety issues and preferred streetscape amenities along the commercial corridor. The City will most likely partner with the Police Department once again to address concerns and ensure that Crime Prevention through Environmental Design principles are adhered to within the overall streetscape design.

The East Side Task Force meets the third Friday of every month. In April, the Task Force as well as multiple volunteers, participated in a walking and mini-clean up tour of the East 4th Street Commercial Corridor.

Governors Art Award Presented

Gov. Hickenlooper announced that Pueblo has been selected as one of only two recipients for the 2013 Governor's Arts Award. Pueblo received the award, with the other recipient, Aspen, at the Second Annual Creative Industries Summit on April 12, 2013, in the Pueblo Creative Corridor.

Per the Colorado Creative Industries, a division of the Office of Economic Development and International Trade, which annually convenes a panel to review these selections, “The annual Governor’s Arts Award recognizes a Colorado town or city for their collective efforts to enhance their community and their economy through strategic use of the arts. Pueblo City Council President, Steve Nawrocki, was presented with the award, which is an original three-dimensional works by artist Michael Clapper of Denver (seen below). The artwork will be displayed at the Pueblo Convention Center. The review panel commended Pueblo for leveraging the arts to revitalize their community. “



PURA and PPAG presented the award to Pueblo’s City Council, on April 22. You can also view the Creative Corridor Community video at www.pueblourbanrenewal.org