



City Planning & Development Department

Development Management Division

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STAFF REPORT July 7, 2015 (19)

RE: **Case No. 721-S**

APPLICANT: Robert D. Long
Land Clearance for Redevelopment Authority
1100 Walnut Street, Suite 1700
Kansas City, MO 64106

OWNER: Various

LOCATION: Generally located on 92 acres bound by I-670/I-70 on the north, Bruce R Watkins Drive on the east, the KCT Railroad on the south and Oak Street on the west.

REQUESTS: Declaring an area generally bounded by I-670/I-70 on the north, Bruce R Watkins Drive on the east, the KCT Railroad on the south and Oak Street on the west to be a blighted and insanitary area in need of redevelopment and rehabilitation pursuant to the Land Clearance for Redevelopment Authority law and approving the Urban Renewal Plan for the same, said plan to be known as the East Crossroads Urban Renewal Plan. (721-S)

AREA: About 92 acres.

ZONING: Various

SURROUNDING LAND USE:

- North:** I 35/I 70, Downtown Loop, zoned B 4-5.
- South:** KCT RR, Truman Medical Center, zoned UR
- West:** Crossroads, Kansas City Star, zoned UR & B 4-5.
- East:** Bruce R Watkins Drive, light industrial uses, zoned M 1-5.

LAND USE PLAN: The Greater Downtown Area Plan is the plan of record (adopted March 11, 2010 by Resolution Number 100049). This plan “*Downtown Mixed Use*” land use at this location, which is defined as:

The DMX district is primarily intended to accommodate office, commercial, custom manufacturing, some light industrial, public, institutional and residential development, generally at lower intensities than in the DC district. The DMX district promotes a mix of land uses both horizontally (i.e. adjacent to one another) and vertically (i.e. within the same building). This land use classification corresponds with the DX and DR zoning districts within the new zoning ordinance.

MAJOR STREET PLAN: Oak Street, Holmes and Charlotte are listed as Established Arterials. Truman Road and E 18th Streets are listed as Thoroughfares.

**ARTERIAL STREET
IMPACT FEE:**

(Informational only): The subject property is exempt from Arterial Street Impact Fees.

PREVIOUS CASES: Not Applicable

EXISTING CONDITIONS:

The site is about 92 acres bound by I-670/I-70 on the north, Bruce R Watkins Drive on the east, the KCT Railroad on the south and Oak Street on the west. According to the submitted plan, the area has good access to the adjacent interstate system, began general development in late 19th Century and early 20th Century and is made up of a diversity of industrial and commercial businesses. These businesses range in size from modest and basic one-story operations, substantial two-and-three-story multi-tenant buildings to large operations in multi-story buildings. The report also states that the area began to experience a slow decline once the suburban growth accelerated.

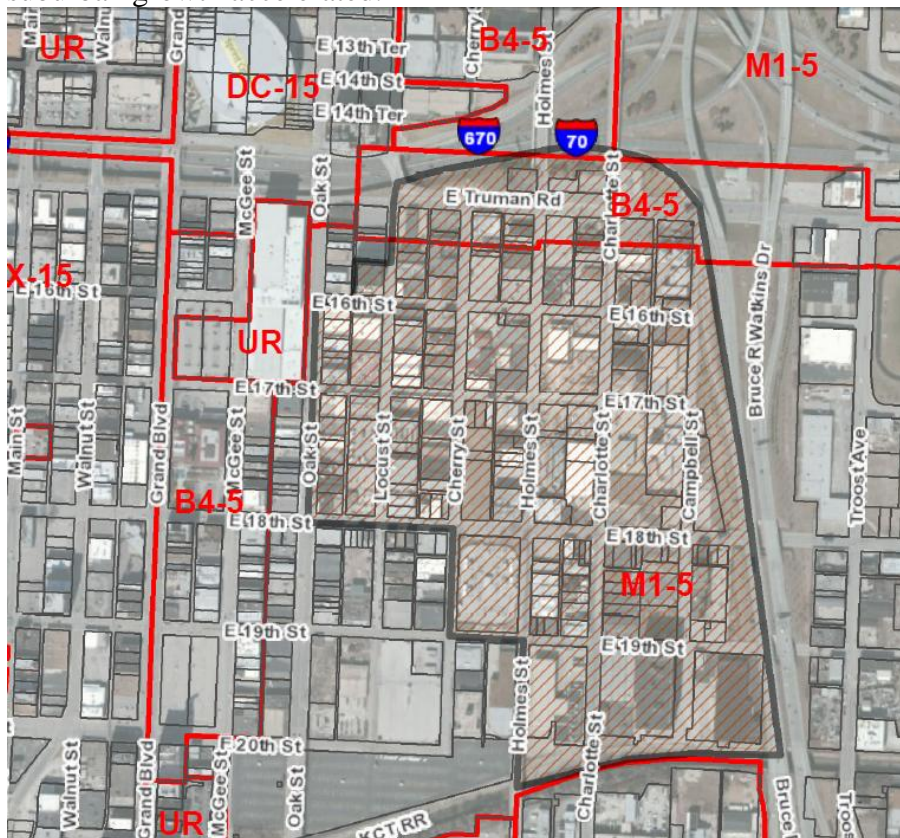


Figure 1 Subject Property

URBAN RENEWAL PLAN:

Case No. 721-S is a request to find the area to be a blighted area and approval of the East Crossroads Urban Renewal Plan (URP). According to the plan, the purpose of the urban renewal area is to eliminate blight, enhance the tax base with development of the area, provide a development in conformance with the city's area plan, promote health, strengthen the fabric of the East Crossroads area. LCRA benefits include the use of eminent domain (with future council approval) and the ability to freeze property taxes for a period of up to 10 years.

Blight: The approval of an Urban Renewal Plan must include the finding of blight. The URP states there are many blighting and insanitary conditions present in the area.

The dominant conditions are:

- Outdated building finishes and improvements.
- Unmaintained exterior building components.
- Deteriorating and unsafe sidewalks.
- Degrading and deteriorating masonry.
- The existence of unsanitary or unsafe conditions within the area, including trash, debris and excessive graffiti.
- Lack of good lighting in certain areas.

The plan states that the area should be found to be a blighted in accordance with Section 99.320(3) R.S.Mo of Missouri's Land Clearance for Redevelopment Statute.

PLAN REVIEW:

The plan proposes the renovation of the 94 acre east Crossroads area previously defined. The plan states the following objectives:

Reaffirm and Revitalize the Urban Core

- The Urban Renewal Area is located within the East Central Core Urbanized Zone Development Priority Zone identified in FOCUS.
- Implement Urban Design Guidelines.
- Target investment and incentives on the Great Streets.
- Provide high quality housing for residents of all income ranges.
- Reinforce and encourage mixed-use neighborhoods.

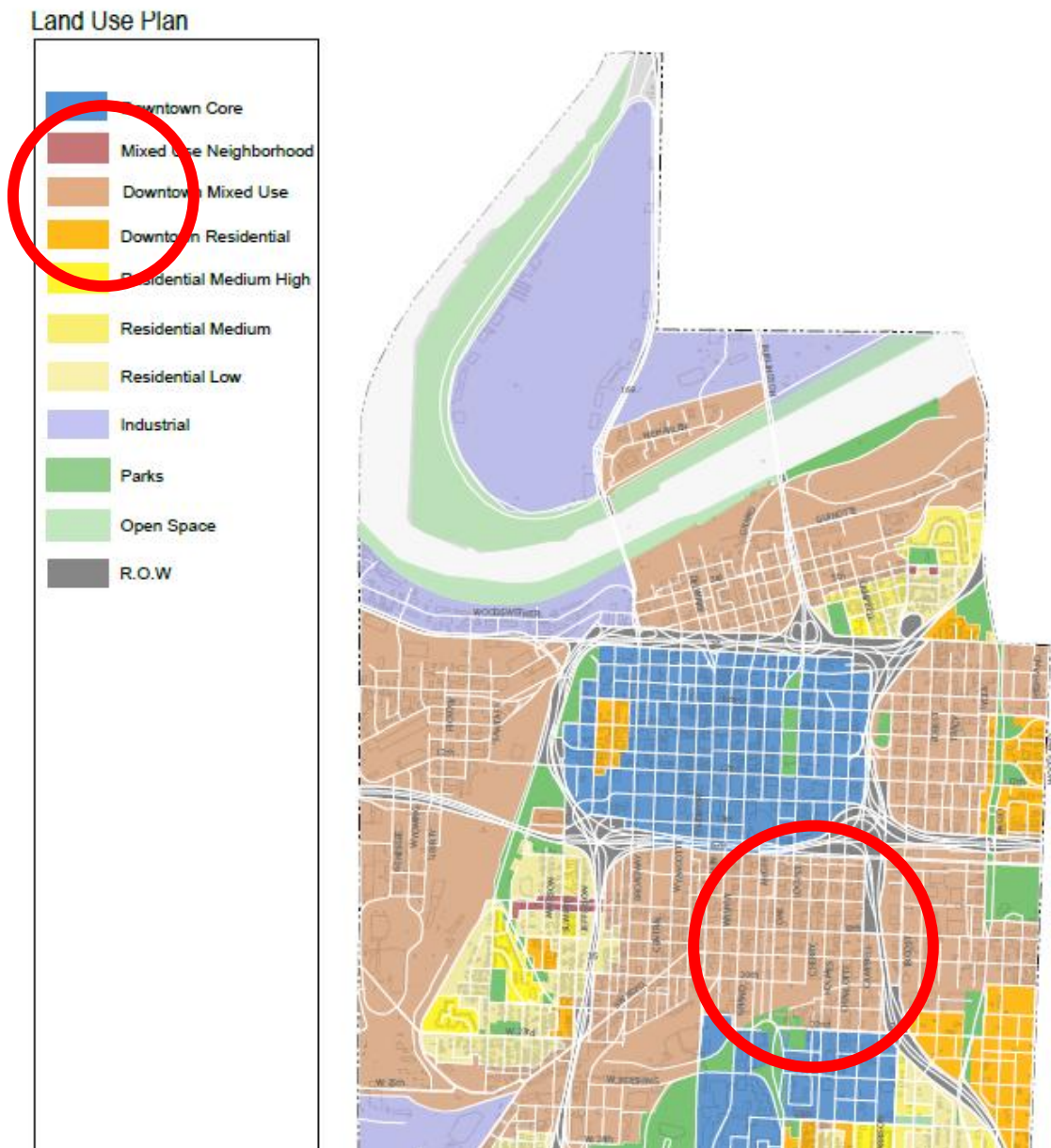
Area Plan

The Greater Downtown Area Plan is the plan of record (adopted March 11, 2010 by Resolution Number 100049). The area plan recommends "*Downtown Mixed Use*" land use at this location, which is defined as:

DOWNTOWNMIXED-USE (DMX)

The DMX district is primarily intended to accommodate office, commercial, custom manufacturing, some light industrial, public, institutional and residential development, generally at lower intensities than in the DC district. The DMX district promotes a mix of land uses both horizontally (i.e. adjacent to one another) and vertically (i.e. within the same building). This land use classification corresponds with the DX and DR zoning districts within the new zoning ordinance.

The plan states that the proposed urban renewal plan will be in conformance with the Greater Downtown Area Plan regarding future land uses.



Zoning:

The plan area has three zones, M 1-5 (Manufacturing 1), B 4-5 (Heavy Business/Commercial) and DX-15 (Downtown Mixed-Use).

The plan states that a future project area must rezone to District UR (Urban redevelopment district). The Economic Development Corporation and the City have agreed that new tax incented projects be rezoned to District UR to allow the City Plan Commission and the City Council the ability to review the project and comment on the design and layout of the site. In addition however, the city has also agreed that historic sites not be required to be rezoned because the plan would first be reviewed against the guidelines by the Secretary of Interior Standards. City staff has agreed in the past that if a higher governmental review of the plan is required, it would not impose further site plan review through the City Plan Commission and City Council. The applicant has chosen not to file a rezoning plan. The applicant should be aware however that all Chapter 88 standards such as landscaping, buffering, street trees, sidewalks, etc., will be required during the site plan review process.

ANALYSIS:

The request includes the approval of an urban renewal plan which allows for property tax abatement in exchange for removing blight.

This project is in compliance with the City's Greater Downtown Area Plan. The plan contains the recommended wording for the future zoning requirement to District UR. The plan contains the recommended language regarding the removal of billboards in exchange for tax abatement.

RECOMMENDATION:

City staff does not make a formal recommendation on the finding of blight related to tax incentive plans, however a motion is offered for City Plan Commission consideration in the conditions of approval for Case No 721-S. Staff does recommend approval of the urban renewal plan document as submitted.

Respectfully submitted,



John Eckardt
Planner