

Urban Renewal:

What's It All About?

(Earl Newkirk, executive director of the city redevelopment agency, discusses urban renewal in these columns on Sunday, Wednesday and Friday. Suggestions and comments may be offered in person, by mail or telephone. The redevelopment agency is in the city hall annex, 322 Church street, telephone GA 6-0460.

By Earl Newkirk

Many owners of commercial property within our San Lorenzo park project have asked about the possibility of their staying in the project area. The answer is most assuredly yes.

Yes, that is, to the extent that commercial re-uses are called for by the plan ultimately approved by the city council. As it now appears, there will be even greater commercial frontage in the project area on the west side of the river than now exists there. This would be accomplished by re-routing Front street as shown in the sketch which appeared in this publication some weeks ago.

There are many ways in which an owner of commercial property might stay. First of all, I want to point out that each owner will have priority to re-establish in the project area. There are many ways this could be done, and your agency will examine all possibilities before we are through.

For one example, an owner would simply stay put provided his structure meets existing codes and ordinances, conforms to the requirements of the redevelopment plan and does not stand in the way of new streets, flood

dikes, etc. In a case such as this, the agency need not even acquire his property.

Or, supposing only a small portion of his property is affected, the agency might acquire a piece of it on one side and sell him a matching strip along the opposite side. There are a million variations, as you can visualize.

But what of the fellow who has a substandard structure? He may sell to the agency or he may agree to bring that substandard structure up to standards set by the redevelopment plan, again assuming the building does not stand in the way of such improvements as new streets, etc.

Even if he chose to sell he would have a priority to purchase other land in the area to the extent that similar commercial property was to be made available under the terms of the redevelopment plan.

Then there may be instances where a standard structure that is otherwise OK stands squarely in the way of a new street or other development. In this event an owner would be required to sell—but again, he would have priority to re-purchase within the project area to the extent of availability of similar property as called for by the redevelopment plan.

Thus, you see there is an infinite variety of ways present owners of commercial land within the project area might exercise their priorities.

Apropos of this, I might point out that our attorney has informed us that capital gains resulting from sales to the redevelopment agency will not be subject to federal taxes if re-invested within one year.

All these procedural matters with regard to owners relocating within the project area is termed "ownership participation" under the provisions of the California community redevelopment law. All details relating to ownership participation will be a part of the redevelopment plan your agency adopts and presents to the city council.

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