

Urban Renewal: What's It All About?

By Earl Newkirk

Boy, did Newkirk foul up again! At least, if sample reaction to Wednesday's column on possible means of financing the San Lorenzo park project is any indication.

Let me try to set straight any misconceptions I may have conveyed.

1. Federal funds for carrying out the project will be available if the city council approves the redevelopment agency's plan next fall. Your redevelopment agency would not recommend a redevelopment plan that would not be acceptable to the federal government.

2. We really have hopes this project will "break even" financially. On the basis of present proposals, it surely has a possibility of doing so, especially if we can:

(a) Find a developer to build a convention center and perhaps another to build apartment houses.

(b) Create new commercial frontage along the proposed re-routing of Front street on west side of the river.

(c) Leave as many standard commercial structures on the west side as possible.

(d) Get owners of substandard commercial structures to agree to rehabilitate them or tear them down. This would leave much less land for us to acquire.

(e) Get the proposed downtown park on the east side free as a part of the flood control rights-of-way to be acquired with state funds (this was another reason—plus added flood protection—in suggesting the east bank

levee be pulled from the river's edge).

3. If there is any loss money will be available from any one or a combination of all the financing methods I cited in Wednesday's column. It is not so much a question of where we'd get the money to finance a loss but which way, or combination of ways, we'd recommend. All of them have advantages and disadvantages. It will be a question of deciding which to use—and all I cited are available.

4. The city council will be the one to say "go ahead and carry out the redevelopment plan." By the time your redevelopment agency formally holds public hearings, adopts a plan, presents it to the council for public hearings and adoption, the redevelopment plan will be in such shape that the only thing that could prevent it from going through would be the council's vote to turn it down—not lack of financing means.

5. The figures I used to show how the deal works if there happens to be a loss were absolutely imaginary. I used them only as an example to show how the federal government would contribute, etc.

Hope the above clears up any "fog" Wednesday's column may have spread. If not, will you please give me a chance to explain—either in person, over the phone or here in these columns?

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Mrs. Donald C. Gaubitz, daughter of...

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