

KURA

KETCHUM URBAN RENEWAL AGENCY

KURA Visioning Session Summary

Thank you to all who joined us for the first of two KURA visioning sessions on December 5th. Another session will be scheduled in the coming weeks.

The goal of these sessions is for the KURA to get input from the public on its priorities and possible future projects. This feedback is primarily intended to help the KURA in its own planning and decision-making process, but could also help guide the activities of the KCDC and the City of Ketchum. Other factors may influence the KURA as well, including available resources, timing, cash flow, changes to URA laws, etc.

The December session allowed participants to prioritize five projects, from a list of about 50, that they felt were important for the KURA to pursue. Some project ideas had already been identified by the KURA, and others were presented by attendees at the session. The final tally of “votes” identified nine projects that participants lent the most support for; those projects are outlined below.

Two new ideas that were brought up at the session attracted a lot of interest, but state law prohibits the KURA from funding them:

- The first is financial support for the Wood River YMCA. URAs cannot provide general funding to operate a private organization, even if it is a non-profit that provides community services like the YMCA. The type of assistance that could possibly be provided would be funding public infrastructure (i.e. a new sewer line) that might benefit the organization.
- The second project that many were enthusiastic about was the proposed whitewater park near Hulen Meadows. Unfortunately, that project falls outside of Ketchum as well as the KURA’s identified Revenue Allocation Area, and therefore, by state law, cannot be funded.

Finally, a third idea that was proposed was for the KURA to use future income to retire all of its debt before funding any other projects:

The reality is that this is not permissible until October 2020, per the bondholder indenture. (Investors in this type of debt are typically seeking a long-term opportunity, and therefore require that the bonds cannot be redeemed for a certain period of time).

Additionally, a purpose behind a URA's existence is to invest in underdeveloped areas to help create a sustainable, growing economy. The expectation is that such investment will eventually lead to higher increment property tax revenue.. Many URAs, especially when they are relatively new, issue debt if they wish to pursue projects. It is somewhat akin to taking out a mortgage to purchase a home; most people would not wait until they could pay for a house outright before making a purchase. The KURA takes a similar approach. Its responsible issuance of debt led to the development of Town Square and the Fourth Street Heritage Corridor; the purchase of strategically located properties, including one for affordable housing; and the rehab of what is now the Visitor's Center.

It should be noted that the KURA takes its fiduciary responsibility very seriously, and ensuring that it can meet its financial obligations is its number one priority.

Listed below are the top nine projects identified at the December 5th session. Please see Priorities List Summary attachment for a detailed list of the ideas presented. We will update this list following the second session.

1. Relocate City Facilities
2. Affordable Housing at First Street and Washington Avenue
3. Alternative Energy Initiatives - Conservation, Solar & Geothermal Projects
4. Geothermal Outdoor Pool/Park
5. Four Phases of Downtown Sidewalks & Park Bench Donation Program
6. East Avenue Center Median Underground Parking Structure
7. Ketchum Transportation Hub
8. More Versatile Outdoor Festival/Events Space
9. Hostels