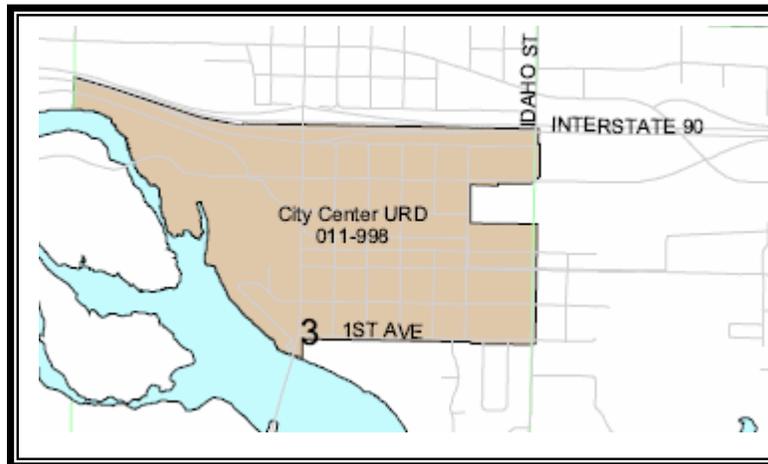


# Post Falls Urban Renewal Agency

## CITY CENTER

### District Review Committee Report



#### **Date**

June 2008

#### *Committee Members:*

Bobbi Rollins, Chair

Larry Carstensen

Peter Smith

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

	<u>Page</u>
A. District Review Committee Goals .....	1
B. District Review Methodology .....	1
C. District Summary .....	1
D. Purpose & Goals of District .....	2
E. Proposed Redevelopment Actions.....	2
F. Completed Improvements .....	3
G. Job Creation .....	4
H. Financial .....	4
I. Findings .....	4
J. Proposed Action Items .....	4

City Center  
**District Review Committee Report**  
**June 2008**

**A. District Review Committee Goals**

1. Update the Post Falls Urban Renewal Agency Commissioners on the status of the city center;
2. Summarize insights gained with the district review process; and
3. Establish a benchmark for progress and future reviews of the District.

**B. District Review Methodology**

This review was completed through an evaluation of the District Plan, a history of activities completed to date, and research assistance by Luke Malek, PFURA Executive Director.

**C. District Summary**

Year of Creation	Size (acres)	2004 Base Assessed Value (Pre-Urban Renewal/TIF)	Increment Value (Assessed value generated through urban renewal)	Projected Termination Date
1994	330	\$16,759,277	\$26,104,653	2018

The City Center Urban Renewal District was created in 1994 as the "4<sup>th</sup> Street Urban Renewal District." An area beyond 4<sup>th</sup> Avenue was added with a plan amendment in 2001. A third amendment was completed in 2004 to expand the boundaries, amend goals and objectives and rename the District as the "City Center Urban Renewal District." This district is the area of the city that has been the most negatively affected by the construction of I-90 in 1977 and has experienced the greatest decline of commerce.

The District was formed by City Resolution and Ordinance under the basis of deterioration. The listed areas include:

- Weed-covered vacant lots
- Dilapidated buildings
- Inadequate streets consisting of graveled or partially paved surfaces without curb, gutter or adequate sidewalks

- Residential units pose fire hazard due to disrepair
- Vacant and odd platted single ownership lots
- Tax liability for city (requires more in services than provided for in taxes)
- Existing conditions cannot create a viable business climate or attractive residential lots
- Lack of job growth

**D. Purpose & Goals of District**

The purpose and goals of this District as outlined in the Plan, are to pursue opportunities for improvements that will promote mixed use diversity, thereby achieving rejuvenation and stimulation of a depressed area. Specifically:

- As the city of Post Falls has no area that could unanimously be identified as “City Center” or “downtown”, this district and the improvements will provide the stimulation needed to attract business, provide new life and rejuvenate a depressed area, which in turn will benefit the City and its residents and help establish an identifiable area as the City Center.
- Locating City Hall and other government services within the City Center area will help to provide a stable job base in the City Center area
- Encourage and pursue new business. Small retail shops, such as bicycle stores and other specialty item stores would be envisioned locating initially in City Center, with larger retail or commercial businesses locating in City Center at future times.
- Support and preserve “green” space within the City Center area. Green spaces would be envisioned as encouraging pedestrian traffic corridors.
- Encourage and assist in the development of mixed land uses within the City Center including commercial, green space, recreational and residential. Provide the necessary infrastructure support for the attraction of new business.
- Enhance and improve transportation routes for the benefit of area business, tourist and residents
- Improve public infrastructure and public facilities for the benefit of the area residents, businesses and surroundings
- Assist in the creation of a “City Center” for the City and its residents, with standards in place for uniform development.

**E. Proposed Redevelopment Actions:**

*Distinct Identity & Historical/Cultural Reconnection*

- New street signage
- Streetscape improvements including street trees, lighting, sidewalks and street furniture
- Entryway monuments and public art
- New museum
- Cultural Center
- Visitor Center
- Historic walking tour including interpretive centers/kiosks along centennial trail and throughout the City Center

*Natural Character, Resources and Pedestrian Connection Projects*

- Trails to connect the City Center as well as Q'emiln Park to the Avista Properties
- Trails / pedestrian access from the City Center to Q'emlin Park
- Trails / sidewalks connecting public spaces

*Create an Attraction Project*

- Public restrooms
- Public square (markets, events, gatherings)

*New Development Projects*

- Land acquisition
- Building renovations
- Façade improvements

*Infrastructure Projects*

- Intersection improvements / interchange improvements
- Public parking lots
- Centralized multi-nodal transit hub
- Water and sewer upgrades and improvements
- Improvements to the existing Centennial Trail
- Street, sidewalk, streetscape

*Other*

- Street Vacations for the purpose to attract business and create pedestrian circulation:
  - ~ Frederick Street, between 3<sup>rd</sup> Ave & Centennial Trail
  - ~ Frederick Street between North Railroad Ave & 4<sup>th</sup> Ave (both sides)
  - ~ William Street between 3<sup>rd</sup> Ave & Centennial Trail
  - ~ William Street between North Railroad Ave & 5<sup>th</sup> Ave (both sides)
  - ~ Post Street between 3<sup>rd</sup> Ave & Centennial Trail
  - ~ Post Street between North Railroad Ave & 5<sup>th</sup> Ave (both sides)

**F. Completed Improvements**

1. 4<sup>th</sup> street demonstration (see 4<sup>th</sup> street summary) note: to be provided soon.

2. New signs with fountains installed at the Spokane Street I-90 on and off ramps

**G. Job Creation**

To date there has been no additional jobs created because of any improvements made to this District

**H. Financial**

1. Projected values under this plan were projected to be between \$16,000,000 and \$25,000,000 through the life of the district. Actual values spent or dedicated to be spent in the City Center District are \$840,204.13.
2. From inception of the plan, the total received for tax increments at the end of FY 2008 are predicted to be just over \$1,383,712.00.<sup>1</sup>

**I. Findings**

1. There is little that can be done without the help of the city. Political will to put an end to subpar structures, such as pole barns, enforce code and tighten parameters for infractions, and provide protections for viable investors through measures such as enacting a smart code are paramount. Without this resolve, the viability of the district is diminished entirely, and the value of urban renewal is thrown into question.
2. Sidewalks are few and far between. As a commercial/residential district, there needs to be good multimodal means of transportation throughout the district.
3. There are three beautiful parks within or contiguous to this district: the Falls Park, Warren Playfield bounded by Idaho Street, 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> Streets, and across the Spokane Street bridge, Q'emiln Park. Pedestrian, bicycle and other multimodal pathways should be consistent throughout the district.

**J. Proposed Action Items**

As defined by 20005 City Center comprehensive plan notes:

Action	Description
1	Improve 4 <sup>th</sup> Avenue streetscape FINISHED June 2008
2	Create Infill and shared parking
4	Improve underground and stormwater utilities
5	Acquire underused property for parking and greenspace

<sup>1</sup> Estimated based on best available information from 2004-2008. Actual values for overall tax revenue may be slightly more.

6	Create overlay districts to encourage development – Incentive & Regulatory actions
7	Upgrade Spokane Street streetscape
8	Support split diamond interchange
9	Create unique signage & character
10	Implement commercial development demonstration project
11	Upgrade Centennial Trail parking facilities
12	Rename Spokane Street and 4 <sup>th</sup> Avenue
13	Create joint visitors center/historic museum
14	Install Falls & Dam view lighting accent
15	Upgrade Henry St. and Lincoln St. streetscapes
16	Upgrade 3 <sup>rd</sup> Ave. streetscape
17	Improve Centennial Trail crossing
18	Upgrade Mullan Ave / Spokane St. streetscape
20	Upgrade 1 <sup>st</sup> Ave streetscape
21	Improve 3 <sup>rd</sup> Ave crossing
23	Implement residential development demonstration project

**As defined by Post Falls Urban Renewal District Review Committee:**

The City center Urban Renewal district is far behind anticipated development. We recommend that the Urban Renewal Commission and the Mayor and City Council have a workshop as soon as possible to discuss the City's willingness to address the major issues of this District, which include code enforcement, demonstration development and restrictive zoning, and that the City take aggressive action to put such laws and initiatives into place. Without these tools, an inviting City Center District will not develop. *Timing is crucial:* The City's chance to improve the quality of life in our community is drawing to a close. The Post Falls Landing is not the development force that it had been anticipated it would be, and other alternatives for driving community friendly growth must be sought. But the City cannot wait. If we do not take action on the Spokane Street corridor, the access to the Spokane River, and other critical areas within this district, other restrictive and less community oriented enterprises may do so. A lack of action now will likely prevent the City of Post Falls from ever having a community oriented downtown area.

In 2004, the City and The Urban Renewal Agency combined resources to bring the community together in creating a vision for the City Center. As a result of a sizeable investment in capital and time, a sound plan and vision were created. The Post Falls Urban Renewal Agency stands behind that investment made by the community, and behind the Vision for what our City Center could be: **The City Center is the city's heritage center, the focus of Post Falls identity, and is distinctive in character, look and feel. The district celebrates and reconnects with Post Fall's heritage**

**as a historic mill and railroad town. The City Center fully capitalizes on wonderful natural resources in close proximity to downtown, including the Spokane River, Post Falls, and Q'emlin Park. A network of safe, pleasant pedestrian connections are in place, linking key landmarks and attractions, and these connections are clearly marked and understood. Civic, cultural and business attractions draw both I-90 travelers and Post Falls residents into the area. A safe livable core is in place, especially in the Southern part of the district. The residential core provides basic support for a mix of retail shops, small offices and services nearby, that are also available to regional patrons as well. Because of the falls, natural character and parks, the Post Falls city center is a great place to live, work, recreate, do business and visit.**