

Urban Renewal Authority Meeting

August 7, 2025

Members' Present: Katy Ames (President), Rob Graham (Vice President), Ken Dugas, Ryan Whitehead, Chet Halverson

Members' Absent: None

City Staff Present: Charles Bloom, Sam Gudmestad

Others' Present: None

1. CALL TO ORDER

Called to order by President Ames at 10:12 a.m.

2. ROLL CALL

Completed by staff member Charles Bloom, there was a quorum

3. DISCLOSURES

No disclosures

4. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Motion to approve by Dugas to approve all three sets of minutes (December 5, 2024, April 3, 2025, and May 1, 2025), seconded by Whitehead. Motion passed unanimously.

5. Update on Other URA Plans (Douglas and Laramie):

Bloom noted that he would be providing an overview of Wyoming Urban Renewal Authorities. He mentioned that the Rock Springs Urban Renewal Authority (URA) operates more like a Downtown Development Authority (DDA) and has recently explored utilizing other URA powers, such as tax increment financing (TIF).

Bloom explained that Laramie adopted its first plan and project, North 4th Street, which freezes taxes to aid in the residential redevelopment of City-owned properties adjacent to La Bonte Park in north Laramie. He shared the plan and project on the display monitors, noting it was completed by AVI and followed a similar format to others they had reviewed. He also noted that Laramie initially declared its entire incorporated city in their blight study but did not account for how to address annexations. However, he pointed out that annexations are infrequent.

Bloom also described a conversation with representatives from Douglas, Wyoming. They are in the early stages of forming their urban renewal agency and intend to designate their entire community as blight. In the event of annexation, they plan to amend any approved blight study to expand the area of operation to include annexed land. He further noted that

blight findings in and around the city affect the entire community. A primary reason for this approach is to treat all properties equally and avoid labeling different properties throughout the city differently.

6. EXPANDED BLIGHT DESIGNATIONS

Bloom introduced an exercise regarding expansion of the community blight designation. Maps and markers were used, along with overhead visuals, to help board members identify different areas of town. He also debuted a new Urban Renewal Agency map recently posted on the URA website. This map shows existing blight designations, adopted plans and projects, and active TIF projects.

During the discussion, Bloom noted areas of the community where there has been interest in utilizing urban renewal powers authorized under state statutes. Specific areas mentioned included Whitney Ranch, Cowboy Dodge, Southwest Drive, Section 20 (the Enhanced Use Lease area, or EUL), Nob Hill subdivision, and the area around Element Church.

The Board began working on identifying potential blight areas, starting with the northern section of town. Initially, the Board took a broad-brush approach, highlighting large areas and not limiting the review to City boundaries in case they wished to expand their area of operation, which would require County Commissioner approval. During the discussion, Bloom provided additional information on past attempts to designate the mall and downtown as independent blight areas, efforts that had faced resistance from the mall owner and the DDA. Since then, however, the DDA has changed its position and now supports the designation.

Board members made several suggestions. Whitehead proposed the Frontier Mall area, noting that it has undergone significant change. Halverson suggested that more of Dell Range between College and Powderhouse could benefit from the tool. Some members questioned whether residential areas should be included, and Bloom clarified that the designation itself does not directly impact residents. Any potential impacts would come later, depending on changes to the property tax structure. As the discussion progressed, the western boundary shifted further west, toward Yellowstone Road and Interstate 25.

Ames noted that an even broader western boundary might be more appropriate and stated that this discussion was leading her to support a community-wide approach. Whitehead and Halverson echoed support for that approach. The Board agreed unanimously that a community-wide blight designation was best. It was emphasized that a city-wide designation simply provides access to additional tools and does not create any tax implications. It was also noted that future annexations could be accompanied by concurrent blight study updates.

Moton by Whitehead to have a recommendation for a community-wide blight area, which would include all the corridors that were put in front of us as far as the north area, central area, south, and southwest area of Cheyenne, the boundaries of Cheyenne, Wyoming, which would include the county pockets within that designation. As far as recommendation

in the second part, as far as due diligence of annexation of the area of those county pockets to become a blight-designated area after the annexation; seconded by Halverson. **Motion carried unanimously.** (48:40)

Staff Note: The intent of the motion was to designate all areas within the City limits as blighted and expand the blight designation with future annexations on the City perimeter and interior (County pockets).

Item 6: ADJOURN

Meeting adjourned at 11:04 a.m.

Minutes recorded by Charles Bloom, AICP, Planning and Development Director

Approved September 4, 2025