

BEFORE THE METRO COUNCIL

FOR THE PURPOSE OF ADOPTING THE) RESOLUTION NO. 14-4508
DISTRICT REVITALIZATION WORK PLAN TO)
SPUR INVESTMENT IN DOWNTOWNS AND) Introduced by Chief Operating Officer Martha
MAIN STREET DISTRICTS) Bennett in concurrence with Council
) President Tom Hughes

WHEREAS, Metro’s Planning and Development Department facilitates implementation of the region’s 2040 Growth concept in order to ensure sustainable growth and development in the region; and

WHEREAS, in 2010 the Metro Council, with the advice and support of the Metro Policy Advisory Committee (MPAC), established six desired outcomes for policies and strategies that affect future growth and development in the region; and

WHEREAS, the six outcomes reflect the region’s desire to develop vibrant, prosperous, and sustainable communities with reliable transportation choices that minimize carbon emissions and to distribute the benefits and burdens of development equitably in the region; and

WHEREAS, the Regional Framework Plan sets forth the Metro Council’s policy to facilitate infill and redevelopment, particularly within Centers, Corridors, Station communities, Main Streets and Employment Areas, to use land and urban services efficiently, to support public transit, to promote successful, walkable communities and to create equitable and vibrant communities; and

WHEREAS, the Regional Framework Plan sets forth the Metro Council’s policy to promote the distinctiveness of the region’s cities and promote excellence in community design; and

WHEREAS, Title 6 of the Regional Framework Plan calls for actions and investments to enhance the role of Centers, Corridors, Main Streets and Station Communities as the principal centers of urban life in the region; and

WHEREAS, Metro’s Development Center works to facilitate investment and development in local downtowns and along main streets in order to create the vibrant communities envisioned in the region’s 2040 Growth Concept and described as part of the six desired outcomes; and

WHEREAS, the Development Center has successfully implemented a pilot program to test the viability and efficacy of incentive-based community development programs to spur revitalization of downtowns and main streets; now therefore

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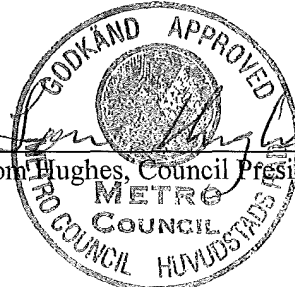
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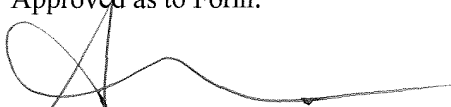
BE IT RESOLVED that the Metro Council adopts the District Revitalization Program Work Plan, attached as Exhibit A.

ADOPTED by the Metro Council this 20th day of March 2014.


Tom Hughes, Council President



Approved as to Form:


Alison R. Kean, Metro Attorney

DISTRICT REVITALIZATION PROGRAM WORK PLAN

- 1. INTRODUCTION..... 1
- 2. PROGRAM OVERVIEW..... 2
 - 2.1 MISSION.....
 - 2.2 OBJECTIVES.....
 - 2.3 CORE PROGRAM ELEMENTS.....
 - 2.4 PROGRAM INVESTMENT STRATEGY.....
 - 2.5 DESIGNATION OF ELIGIBLE INVESTMENT LOCATIONS.....
- 3. STOREFRONT IMPROVEMENT GRANTS..... 5
 - 3.1 STOREFRONT IMPROVEMENT PROJECT TYPES.....
 - 3.2 STOREFRONT IMPROVEMENT ELIGIBILITY AND MATCHING REQUIREMENTS.....
 - 3.3 STOREFRONT IMPROVEMENT INVESTMENT CRITERIA.....
- 4. DISTRICT TRANSFORMATION GRANTS..... 6
 - 4.1 DISTRICT TRANSFORMATION PROJECT TYPES.....
 - 4.2 DISTRICT TRANSFORMATION PROJECT ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS.....
 - 4.3 DISTRICT TRANSFORMATION PROJECT INVESTMENT CRITERIA.....
- 5. FINANCIAL RESOURCES..... 8
- 6. GOVERNANCE..... 9
 - 6.1 METRO COUNCIL.....
 - 6.2 CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER.....
 - 6.3 DISTRICT REVITALIZATION STEERING COMMITTEE.....
 - 6.4 METRO STAFF.....
 - 6.5 PROGRAM PARTNERSHIPS.....
 - 6.6 WORK PLAN AMENDMENTS.....

1. INTRODUCTION

Metro’s District Revitalization program is an essential tool for implementing the region’s 2040 Growth Concept, which calls for significant commercial activity, redevelopment and investment to be focused in existing downtowns and main street districts. The purpose of the District Revitalization program is to enhance the vitality and prosperity of downtowns and main streets, and position them to attract new investment and future development. Continued work to enhance these areas will boost economic activity, create new jobs, and attract new businesses and clientele. As these districts mature into successful commercial centers, their strong economic performance will continue to stimulate a virtuous cycle of improvement.

While today inner neighborhoods close to downtown Portland are experiencing a resurgence, many historic downtowns and main street districts throughout the region continue to struggle. Local small businesses are challenged to compete with shopping centers, big-box retail and e-commerce. Property owners are challenged to find tenants for empty storefronts, and market rental rates frequently are insufficient to support needed building maintenance or renovations. For owners of vacant or underperforming property in these districts, new infill construction is not economically feasible until and unless the district achieves a greater level of economic activity and prosperity.

Many local cities have programs to help support their downtowns, but local resources are not always sufficient to catalyze revitalization. Metro’s leadership and investment is essential to help communities achieve the benefits envisioned in the 2040 Growth Concept and leverage prior public investments and existing infrastructure. These public-private partnerships can improve vitality of downtowns and main street districts, bolster prosperity, create new opportunities for local businesses, and set the stage for future private investment that helps local communities and businesses reach their full potential.

The purpose of this work plan is to set forth the policy, governance and operating framework for the District Revitalization program, as approved by the Metro Council.

2. PROGRAM OVERVIEW

2.1 MISSION

The core mission of the District Revitalization program is to **stimulate private investment in established commercial districts by directly engaging small businesses and property owners and jointly investing in transformational physical improvements.** Metro’s investments are strategically focused to create the vibrant communities and efficient land use envisioned in the Region’s 2040 Growth Concept. The core program activity is to provide grants, technical assistance and financial resources to stimulate the needed physical and economic revitalization of these districts.

2.2 OBJECTIVES

- A. **Built Environment:** Cause the development of highly-visible improvements to downtowns and main streets through quality design and renovation of storefronts, helping to create vibrant places.
- B. **Economic Prosperity:** Build profitability and success of local downtown and main street businesses through strategic reinvestment. Attract new entrepreneurs and destination businesses that improve the mix of services and amenities in districts throughout the region, grow the customer base for all district businesses, and increase equitable economic prosperity. Cultivate sound property management and investment strategies by private property owners that can help build district value and economic resilience over time.
- C. **Leadership:** Advance implementation of the region's 2040 Growth Concept. Demonstrate best practices for urban revitalization and design for retail districts. Leverage local resources, political focus, and public investments to strengthen existing commercial districts, create jobs, and improve tax bases.
- D. **Equity:** Promote equitable access and participation in revitalization and redevelopment activities. Ensure that new investment and development in districts benefits a diverse spectrum of local business owners, property owners, and residents across the region.

2.3 CORE PROGRAM ELEMENTS

The following sections provide further detail regarding the core program activities, eligibility requirements, and project selection criteria. Additional program elements consistent with the program mission and objectives may be added when and if increased funding is available and an expansion of program offerings is appropriate. The core program elements offered through this program are:

- Storefront Improvement Grants
- District Transformation Grants
- Financial Resources

2.4 PROGRAM INVESTMENT STRATEGY

The District Revitalization program works to promote revitalized downtowns and main streets region-wide. However, variations in commercial business activity, real estate market strength, urban form, and community context require different strategies and approaches for different areas. With limited resources available, it is crucial to target grants and technical assistance to those locations where there is a high likelihood that Metro's investment will have measurable impact, leverage private sector participation and stimulate further

reinvestment. Suitable locations for District Revitalization Program grants are areas that show strong underlying potential in terms of market and urban form, but have not yet experienced a significant “first wave” of revitalization activity. Metro will seek to target investments in districts that have the following characteristics or conditions:

- Business and property owners are ready to invest
- Multiple parties are prepared to invest simultaneously to maximize the collective impact of individual improvements
- A high density of existing retail businesses, services, and amenities
- A high number of older buildings (built prior to 1950) in need of renovation
- Urban street grid with two-way traffic, on street parking and narrow road widths (one travel lane each direction, or two very narrow lanes each direction)
- Continuous sidewalks and walkable access to adjacent neighborhoods
- High lot coverage with a majority of buildings fronting on the sidewalk
- Potential to bring increased services and amenities to underserved communities and neighborhoods

These criteria shall be considered in determining which areas are appropriate for Metro’s grant program investments. Not all of these criteria will apply to every eligible area, and the relative importance of these criteria may vary depending on unique local circumstances and conditions.

2.5 DESIGNATION OF ELIGIBLE INVESTMENT LOCATIONS

Because of the fluid nature of urban revitalization, the program utilizes an evolving approach to identify specific locations within the region that are appropriate for investment and should therefore be eligible to receive grant funding. Eligibility will be based both on local need and readiness of commercial districts. Districts showing high readiness will be eligible for both the program’s Storefront Improvement Grants and the District Transformation Grants. Other districts may only be eligible for the District Transformation Grants until such time as a greater degree of readiness is achieved.

Metro staff reviews market conditions and conducts field assessments to evaluate evolving local development characteristics every three years, or more frequently if conditions warrant. During this review, program staff identifies areas in need of revitalization that have the underlying characteristics necessary for program tools to be successful. However, areas where revitalization is clearly under way will not be eligible, as market forces have already triggered a virtuous cycle of reinvestment.

Staff proposes eligible area boundaries for each of the grant programs to the program Steering Committee, and the Steering Committee makes eligibility recommendations to the Metro COO based on based on the program mission and objectives. The Metro Council may review eligibility designations via the Seven-day Notice process set forth under Section 6 below.

3. STOREFRONT IMPROVEMENT GRANTS

3.1 STOREFRONT IMPROVEMENT PROJECT TYPES

Grants to private property and business owners for capital improvements to buildings shall constitute the initial primary emphasis of the program and may include:

- A. Grants to property and/or business owners to facilitate reinvestment and physical improvements to building facades, lighting and signage to demonstrate best practices in place making, architectural design, and construction techniques.
- B. Technical assistance to property owners to assist them in making strategic building investments and tenancing choices that build district value over time.
- C. Grants to property and/or business owners to facilitate reinvestment and physical improvements to core interior systems, structure, and permanent finishes. In order to be eligible to spend grant funds or grant matching on interior improvements, a building exterior must also be upgraded in accordance with best practices.

3.2 STOREFRONT IMPROVEMENT ELIGIBILITY AND MATCHING REQUIREMENTS

Storefront Improvement Project grants must meet program requirements set forth below to be eligible for funding consideration.

- A. Grants must serve Metro-area residents. Projects must occur on property within the metropolitan-area urban growth boundary or Metro's jurisdictional boundary.
- B. The applicant shall be a property owner, or business owner with site control or written or contractual authority to implement improvements.
- C. Grants may be awarded to projects on publicly-owned property only if the public organization is not receiving grant funding.
- D. All storefront grants will require a minimum match of one dollar of outside funding for every dollar awarded by Metro. While other public sources may be leveraged to match Metro's funding, private property owners or business owners must contribute at least 25% of total project funding.

3.3 STOREFRONT IMPROVEMENT INVESTMENT CRITERIA

Projects will be evaluated to determine the extent to which they support the Downtown and District Revitalization Program objectives. These criteria shall be considered by staff and the program Steering Committee in determining whether and what level of project funding to recommend for approval, and what conditions to apply. Not all of these criteria will apply to every investment opportunity. The relative importance of these criteria varies depending on the characteristics of the project and the area in which it is located.

- A. Contributes to critical mass of revitalization within the district due to proximity to significant node of activity, major district destinations, key historic buildings, and renovated and well-maintained properties.
- B. Potential to significantly enhance district appearance, ambience, and character
- C. Provides a significant destination or venue that will be an attractor for the district
- D. Potential to enhance an important gateway to the district
- E. Improves availability or viability of ground floor retail services and amenities (urban living infrastructure)
- F. Improves or facilitates placemaking, revitalization and local identity
- G. Attracts investment, create jobs and strengthen local tax bases
- H. Enhances opportunity or provides community benefit to disadvantaged individuals or populations
- I. Removes or addresses a significant existing blight within the district
- J. Potential to significantly restore historic structures
- K. Leverages contributions from other public and non-profit entities

4. DISTRICT TRANSFORMATION GRANTS

4.1 DISTRICT TRANSFORMATION PROJECT TYPES

To encourage and support district placemaking and revitalization initiatives, a portion of program funds are invested annually into innovative efforts around the region. A wide range of project types are considered for funding. Potential qualifying revitalization activities include, but are not limited to those outlined below. The program intent is to encourage creativity and support innovative projects responsive to local needs and conditions.

- A. Placemaking improvements or interim uses on key vacant or blighted sites
- B. Targeted recruitment and incentive programs to attract successful destination business to target districts
- C. “Pop-up Store” program and/or product promotional events to fill vacant storefronts and help incubate new business ventures
- D. Development feasibility studies for new ventures that could bring significant retail activity and jobs to target districts
- E. Development feasibility studies for renovations that facilitate use of existing vacant upper-stories of buildings for residential or commercial purposes
- F. Training for local businesses in financial management, merchandizing, window or sidewalk display improvements to enhance the retail ambience of the district and increase sales
- G. Innovative public relations campaigns, district promotions or community events to attract customers and bring increased activity to the district
- H. Outreach, training or awards programs to highlight best practices for revitalization and educate and inspire key stakeholders

4.2 DISTRICT TRANSFORMATION PROJECT ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

District Transformation Project grants must meet program requirements set forth below to be eligible for funding consideration.

- A. Grants must serve Metro-area residents.
- B. The applicant may be a property owner, local business owner, community group, district association, local city, or other entity.
- C. The applicant must have site control or written or contractual authority to implement project if permanent or interim property improvements are proposed.

4.3 DISTRICT TRANSFORMATION PROJECT INVESTMENT CRITERIA

Projects are evaluated to determine the extent to which they support the District Revitalization Program objectives. Recommendations regarding project grants and investments are made by the District Revitalization Steering Committee (see section 6.3) according to the following evaluation criteria. These criteria are considered by staff and the

program Steering Committee in determining whether and what level of project funding to recommend for approval, and what conditions to apply. Not all of these criteria apply to every investment opportunity. The relative importance of these criteria varies depending on the characteristics of the project and the area in which it is located.

- A. Potential to significantly enhance district appearance, ambience, and character
- B. Improves availability of ground floor retail services and amenities (urban living infrastructure)
- C. Provides important outreach or training opportunity to key district stakeholders that contributes to revitalization
- D. Provides an innovative event, activity, or destination that is an attractor for the district
- E. Improves or facilitates placemaking, revitalization and local identity
- F. Attracts investment, create jobs and strengthens local tax bases
- G. Enhances opportunity or provides community benefit to disadvantaged individuals or populations
- H. Removes or addresses a significant existing blight or challenge within the district
- I. Potential to restore historic structures or urban form
- J. Leverages contributions from other entities

5. FINANCIAL RESOURCES

As the program is dependent on joint investments with the private sector, a key component to achieving Metro's mission and objectives is to assist small businesses and property owners with access to necessary capital. Therefore, the program will seek to procure, establish and maintain an agreement with a qualified Community Development Financial Institution (CDFI) that would provide some or all the following financial tools and services:

- A. Establish and administer a capital loan fund or otherwise facilitate private investments through improved access to capital
- B. Provide review of grant applicants to determine their financial capacity and fitness to be a recipient of Metro grant funds
- C. Serve as fiscal agent for program grants and handle release of funds to grantees as requested by Metro's program manager, in accordance with contracts between Metro and its private-sector partners
- D. Provide or facilitate training or mentoring in relevant aspects of financial management for small businesses

6. GOVERNANCE

6.1 METRO COUNCIL

The Metro Council is responsible for establishing the program with objectives and criteria that meet Council goals, overseeing implementation of the program, funding program activities, and providing policy direction for the District Revitalization Program by:

- A. adoption and approval of District Revitalization Program Work Plan to set forth the policy, governance, and operating framework for the program
- B. adoption of the operating budget, as part of the Metro budgeting process
- C. assignment of a Metro Councilor to serve as a voting member of the District Revitalization Steering Committee and directly participate in project funding decisions
- D. review of District Revitalization Seven-day Notices issued by the Metro Chief Operating Officer to inform the Metro Council of eligible area designations, project funding decisions, major strategic partnerships, and District Revitalization Work Plan changes. The Council shall have seven (7) business days from issuance to request that the COO schedule a Councilor briefing, a Council work session, and/or to bring the matter forward for formal Council action. Decisions become final after seven (7) business days if no Councilor(s) requests it be presented to the full Metro Council for work session review or formal action. The Metro Council may allow the to decision stand, send the decision back for reconsideration, or take formal action to deny or approve the decision.

6.2 CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER

The Metro Chief Operating Officer is authorized by the Metro Council to implement this District Revitalization Program Work Plan and conduct all activities set forth herein, including program administration and financial oversight of the Downtown and District Revitalization program by:

- A. designating areas of the region that will be eligible to apply for program grants and approving project funding decisions and strategic partnerships
- B. issuance of District Revitalization Seven-day Notices to inform the Metro Council of eligible area designations, project funding decisions, strategic partnerships, and District Revitalization Program Work Plan changes
- C. appointment of District Revitalization Steering Committee members and chair
- D. other activities consistent with the role and responsibilities of the COO position.

6.3 DISTRICT REVITALIZATION STEERING COMMITTEE

A. Steering Committee Composition

The District Revitalization Steering Committee shall be composed of no fewer than five and no more than seven members, all appointed by the Chief Operating Officer. The Chief Operating Officer shall designate one (1) member of the Committee to serve as Chair. Except for Committee members whose positions are not term-limited, as indicated below, Committee members may each be reappointed for up to two (2) additional terms as provided in Metro Code Section 2.19.020. Committee member (re)appointments shall be for staggered 3 year terms. Committee chair (re)appointments shall be for 1 year terms. The Committee shall be comprised as follows:

- one Metro Councilor, as designated by the Metro Council President
- four to six additional members to collectively provide a balanced range of expertise in the following related areas:
 - Community development
 - Urban revitalization
 - Architecture
 - Urban design
 - Retail strategy
 - Economic development
 - Small business development
 - Finance
 - Real estate development
 - Commercial property management
 - Commercial leasing

B. Steering Committee Role

The District Revitalization Steering Committee provides expert guidance, review and recommendations regarding District Revitalization Program investment activities by:

- A. Providing advice to staff regarding urban revitalization, redevelopment, urban design, and best practices for commercial districts.
- B. Reviewing staff field work and analyses and recommending to the Metro COO those areas that should be designated eligible to apply for District Revitalization program grants.

- C. Making recommendations to Metro COO regarding the award of Storefront Improvement Grants and District Transformation Grants.
- D. Recommending strategic partnerships with local jurisdictions, non-profit corporations, or other entities to further the goals of the District Revitalization Program work plan.

6.4 METRO PROGRAM STAFF

Metro staff administers the District Revitalization Program under the direction of the Metro COO and departmental management. Staff coordinates program outreach and day to day management consistent with established program mission and objectives outlined above.

- A. Program staff will report annually to the Metro Council regarding program progress, grants, partnerships, and outcomes achieved.
- B. Following 3 years of program activity, staff will conduct a strategic review that evaluates the impact and distribution of program grants and activities to date, and proposes modifications of program policy or strategy as needed. The strategic review and a plan to guide future program activity will be presented to the Metro Council for consideration and for approval of any proposed program modifications.

6.5 INTER-AGENCY COLLABORATION

The Metro District Revitalization Program seeks opportunities to collaborate with other organizations and public agencies and leverage resources to stimulate private investment in revitalization. Metro may enter into contracts or inter-agency agreements.

6.6 WORK PLAN AMENDMENTS

The District Revitalization Program Work Plan is updated, as needed, to ensure the program continues to meet the policy, governance, mission, and operating framework for the program. The Chief Operating Officer issues a Seven-day Notice to provide written notification to the Metro Council of proposed amendments to the District Revitalization Program Work Plan, in accordance with section 3.2.G. The Councilors have seven (7) business days from issuance to request that the COO schedule a Councilor briefing, a Council work session, and/or bring the matter forward for formal Council action. The amendment becomes final after seven (7) business days if no Councilor(s) request it be presented to the full Metro Council for work session review or formal action.

STAFF REPORT

IN CONSIDERATION OF RESOLUTION NO. 14-4508, FOR THE PURPOSE OF ADOPTING THE DISTRICT REVITALIZATION PROGRAM WORK PLAN TO SPUR INVESTMENT IN DOWNTOWNS AND MAIN STREET DISTRICTS

Date: February 24, 2014

Prepared by: Lisa Miles, ext. 1877

BACKGROUND

The District Revitalization program is part of the Development Center's work to promote on-the-ground implementation of the 2040 Growth Concept. This program was discussed in a Council work session on February 18, 2014.

Since 2011, the Development Center has implemented a range of workshops, grants and activities as part of the program's pilot phase. This work has been funded through existing general fund resources presently allocated to the Development Center for centers and corridors. Investing with local small businesses and property owners throughout the region is consistent with Metro's commitment to equity and long-term economic development. Stimulating private sector investment and implementing visible physical improvements is essential to help local communities revitalize their downtowns and main street areas and help build the vibrant, walkable neighborhoods and centers envisioned in the 2040 Growth Concept.

Based on stakeholder feedback from community partners and lessons learned from pilot phase grants and activities, staff believes that an incentive-based community development approach is an essential tool to help implement the 2040 Growth Concept and should therefore become an ongoing core program of the Development Center. Staff has developed a work plan to describe the strategic focus of ongoing District Revitalization program activities, and to set forth the proposed governance structure for administration of the program and approval of program grants.

As part of the proposed District Revitalization Program, matching grants will be competitively awarded to qualifying private property owners and businesses that are willing to invest in their storefronts and demonstrate best practices for commercial district revitalization and redevelopment. Grant funds will also be competitively awarded to support innovative revitalization initiatives in local communities. In addition, the District Revitalization Program endeavors to partner with a local Community Development Financial Institution (CDFI) to assist in the administration of program grants, improve access to capital, and advise small entrepreneurs regarding their credit options and business management practices. An important element of the program's mission is to enable a wide range of property and business owners from diverse backgrounds to have the opportunity to invest and participate in the revitalization of the region's downtowns and main streets.

The proposed grant approvals structure is modeled after Metro's Transit Oriented Development Program and Nature in Neighborhoods grant programs. A program steering committee comprised of one Metro Councilor and 4-6 members with expertise in urban revitalization, small business development, retail, commercial real estate, architecture, urban design and other related fields will review grant applications and make recommendations regarding project investments to the Chief Operating Officer. The Chief Operating Officer will issue Seven-day Notices to the Council to inform the Council of project funding

decisions and the Council will have seven business days to request a Councilor briefing, a Council Work Session and/or bring the matter forward for review and formal action by the full Metro Council.

In response to feedback obtained from the Council in the February 18th work session, staff has revised sections 2.4 and 2.5 of the work plan to clarify criteria for selecting target investment areas and to provide opportunity for the Metro Council to review the designation of areas eligible to apply for program grants. Staff will conduct analyses regarding the local conditions and readiness of downtowns and Main Street districts throughout the region, and will present the analyses to the Steering Committee. The Steering Committee will make recommendations regarding eligible areas to the Chief Operating Officer. The Chief Operating Officer will issue Seven-day Notices to the Council to inform the Council of eligible area designations and the Council will have seven business days to request a Councilor briefing, a Work Session, and/or bring the matter forward for review and formal action by the full Metro Council.

The Council provided additional feedback to staff during the work session regarding the need for effective and inspirational communications materials to support this program and share results, and the need for a more engaging program name. Development Center staff and Communications staff will be working in the coming months to identify a suitable name, develop an outreach strategy and create program materials prior to the program's formal launch anticipated in late spring. Section 6.4 of the Work Plan has been amended to stipulate that staff will report annually to the Metro Council regarding program progress. Section 6.4 has also been amended to call for a strategic review of the program following 3 years of program activity to evaluate results and refine program policies and strategies as needed.

ANALYSIS/INFORMATION

1. **Known Opposition** There is no known opposition to the proposed program.
2. **Legal Antecedents** MC 2.04.053 (a) (12) and (b) sets forth special procurement procedures for "contracts in the nature of grants." The District Revitalization Work Plan sets forth the Metro Council approved process for identifying locations in the region eligible to receive grants as well as the competitive evaluation criteria for determining grant awards.
3. **Anticipated Effects** Metro Council adoption of the District Revitalization Work Plan establishes the policy, governance and operating framework for the proposed grant program.
4. **Budget Impacts** Zero impact. The Districts Revitalization Program will be supported with current levels of funding and staff allocated to the Development Center.

RECOMMENDED ACTION

It is recommended that the Metro Council approve the District Revitalization Program Work Plan as presented in Exhibit A of the Resolution.