Durango is changing, and the City is working to help ensure that as we grow, we retain the things that make Durango a quality place to live, work and play. To help facilitate redevelopment, the City has launched our Character District planning effort. As we look to encourage implementation of this vision, we’ll be opening up a new toolbox to help us achieve the goals of building a stronger tomorrow. This Citizen’s Guide will provide you with a snapshot into how one of these tools, an urban renewal authority, could be used in Durango.

**About Urban Renewal Authorities (URA’s):**

Additionally, the sources below will give you more detail on the functions and roles of an Urban Renewal Authority in Colorado, we will link you to other local URA websites and reports.


**On the Durango URA Plan and Status:**
Please visit: [WEBSITE](#)

**On Durango Character Districts:**
Please visit: [https://districts.durangogov.org/](https://districts.durangogov.org/)

**To Contact Staff or Get Involved:**
Colleen O’Brien, Business Development and Redevelopment Coordinator
970-375-4855
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1235 Camino Del Rio
What is Urban Renewal and How is it different than other options?
Urban Renewal is a set of tools that are used to encourage and incentivize redevelopment. The chart to the right shows the key differences between Urban Renewal and other redevelopment-focused organizational structures. Urban Renewal can fill a gap in the resources available to aid in stimulating redevelopment efforts in Durango.

Durango looked at three organizational approaches to redevelopment. A Business Improvement District (BID), a Downtown Development Authority (DDA), and an Urban Renewal Authority.

Durango has a BID that focuses on improvements in Downtown and surrounding areas through events, beautification and more. An Urban Renewal Authority differs as it serves the City as a whole and provides the community a different package of tools.

Durango Urban Renewal Authority

What is Urban Renewal all about?
Urban Renewal Authorities offer a very different approach for encouraging redevelopment. Their goal is to work in partnership with community organizations to identify areas in need of assistance. URA’s can use a wide variety of tools to encourage redevelopment through incentives and partnerships. Many communities that have an URA work closely with a Main Street or Business District to create positive changes.

What is Tax Increment Financing (TIF)?
One unique and useful tool available to URA’s is called Tax Increment Financing. This mechanism uses the growth in property and/or sales tax in a renewal area and re-invests it into that neighborhood so that overall growth in the tax base can occur while improving the overall condition of the area. Tax Increment Funds are the difference between the tax collected in the baseline year and the tax collected after reinvestment projects. These funds are then used to create more opportunities for redevelopment incentives and partnerships.

Why are incentives needed?
Pioneers in redevelopment are taking a financial risk that in the long term, their investment will pay off. Without assistance from an organization like a URA, certain projects aren’t likely to happen. This is what’s called the “but for” principle in redevelopment. We ask the question, “is this project feasible without assistance?” If the conclusion is “no,” we consider that the project would not be feasible, but for the assistance provided by the URA. The reality is that without assisting certain key projects, they may not occur, leaving the neighborhood to continue to decline in activity, and tax base.

Where can urban renewal be used?
Although an URA is set up for the entire municipality, URA’s can only provide incentives and partnership within designated areas that establish an Urban Renewal Plan. Durango is considering use of a URA in areas that need a little boost to help encourage reinvestment. A Conditions Assessment will occur as one of our first steps. Colorado Revised Statutes describe that four of the following conditions need to be present in order to establish an urban renewal project:

- Deteriorating structures;
- Inadequate street layout;
- Faulty lot layout;
- Unsanitary or unsafe conditions;
- Deterioration of site or other improvements;
- Unusual topography;
- Title issues;
- Fire hazards or other life-safety concerns;
- Buildings with code violations or dilapidation;
- Environmental contamination;
- Inadequate public improvements or utilities;

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