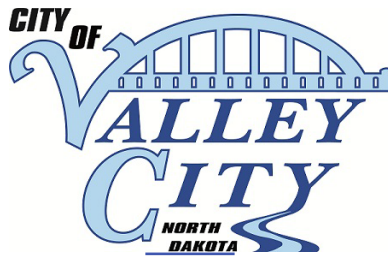


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March 6, 2023

Testimony in Support of SB 2391 by Gwen Crawford City Administrator for Valley City, ND

Chair Headland and members of the House Finance and Taxation Committee:

I'm providing testimony as not only the City Administrator of Valley City with a population of just over 6500, but also as the past Auditor and Economic Development Director of Lisbon ND who's population is just under 2200. Programs like the Renaissance Zone have been imperative for the success of these sizes of communities.

Allowance of a property/parcel to be eligible for benefits again after thirty years have lapsed from the date of completion of the project would be instrumental in continuing to improve growth and resilience in these communities. Most of the approved projects in the Renaissance Zones for Valley City and Lisbon were local community members who financed the revitalizations themselves. One thing that has been noticed is with the cost to renovate the buildings have become so high that their plan for a multiuse building had to stop at the main level. With this addition to the Renaissance Zone after 30 years they would have the opportunity to take advantage of this benefit to finish other levels no to mention the need for improvement that is usually there after 30 years of use.

Adding an option to increase the benefit term from 5 years to up to 8 years for commercial rehabilitation projects that are at or above 75% of the current true and full value of the property would not only encourage larger projects but further help multiuse projects pencil out especially with the rise in costs. We have businesses that renovated their building and were able to complete everything on their main floor but were not able to make it work to do something with their 2nd floor. With this addition to the Renaissance Zone it will be more of a possibility.

As more blighted areas are identified and houses are bought out for flood protection in our area, the allowance of a second island would be beneficial to spread the opportunity further into the community.

As with most Economic Development endeavors they take time. Most projects take several years from the inception to completion. Knowing this, you could imagine in a 5 year time period there are very little changes in regards to renewals. Increasing the term for a renewal from 5 years to 10 years will not only help with unnecessary busy work but would also cut costs in regards to the time staff has to put in.

Currently we do not and have not used the RFO program, so we have no issues with sunseting this program.

Thank you for your time and consideration of these amendments to this program.

I strongly encourage and ask for the committee's support for SB 2391.

Thank you.