

# Renewal Asked On River Street At Boise Parley

By MINDY CAMERON  
Statesman Staff Writer

A strong pitch for an urban renewal-type project to upgrade the River Street area was made Thursday by Boise Model Cities Director Ray Long.

A meeting at the Model Cities headquarters brought together elected city leaders and department heads, urban renewal and housing agency directors, residents of River Street and West Coast representatives of the Department of Housing and Urban Development.

The gathering was an attempt to find a solution to the land use controversy which has simmered over the River Street area for more than two years.

The residents banded together this summer to form a tenants' union and last week confronted the City Council with a request for action in solving housing needs on River Street.

Discussion centered on the possibility of making the several block area a Neighborhood Development Project (NDP). Pat LaCrosse, from the Seattle urban renewal office of HUD, explained the NDP approach as "forward looking, progressive and flexible."

He said the NDP is funded on a year-to-year basis and is geared for making a significant impact on a specific area in one year. The Boise Redevelopment Agency would administer a local program.

Long said he was a "strong advocate" of the NDP. A land use plan for the River Street area already has been accomplished through Model Cities and could serve as the first step toward implementing the NDP, he said.

A report to the City Council on the land use is expected in about 30 days, he said.

houses in the River Street area, Long replied: "It is ridiculous that the city would invest \$50 million in the central business area to attract people and then allow commercial expansion adjacent to the core."

He said such practices are the pattern of urban decay in large cities across the country. "The best and highest use theory is not necessarily the best way for this country to go," Long declared, blaming it for many of the modern urban problems. "It is forcing people out of the city," he said.

The only alternative to an NDP mentioned at Thursday's meeting was a concentrated housing code enforcement. City Housing Division Chief Marion Hoyt said "River Street is too far gone for the code program." Through code enforcement houses are torn down but "someone else has to come along to rebuild," he said.

Gary Hughes, urban renewal director for Boise, who also would be charged with directing the NDP if the council decided on that move, said the first step would be a finding by the mayor and council as to the deterioration of the area and the need for its renewal.

After such a finding the redevelopment agency would be brought into the picture along with other local agencies which would assist in the planning activity.

HUD officials indicated that the application-to-activity timetable of an NDP would be relatively short if funds are available.

At the meeting's close no direction had been set. River Street residents were told to keep in touch with city hall as to pending action. Meanwhile, the issue hinges on the land use plan expected in a month from Model Cities.