

STATEMENT ON CONTRACT FOR LAND ACQUISITION AND RELOCATION COSTS IN BRUSH PARK

June 7, 2000

Today a majority of City Council voted to approve a \$4 million contract amendment to fund infrastructure, environmental engineering, land acquisition, and resident relocation, and legal services in the Brush Park area.

I voted against this contract amendment which is associated with ongoing economic development activities in Brush Park. While I support redeveloping this area, I remain troubled by the concerns of the residents about this process. Brush Park residents, including but not limited to members of the Brush Park Citizens District Council, have continued to raise issues with the Brush Park Modified Development Plan.

This plan is supposed to guide the ongoing redevelopment efforts in Brush Park. Nevertheless, many residents fear that its implementation may lead to the acquisition of their own homes if they do not rehabilitate them to meet the criteria called for in the plan. These residents have raised valid concerns about whether or not this would be a justifiable use of the city's eminent domain (condemnation) powers.

Within the past week alone an historic building in this area was demolished without proper notice to the city's Historic Designation Advisory Board or the Brush Park CDC.

The Planning and Development Department recently announced it plans to meet with the Brush Park CDC to discuss amendments to the plan that that group might like to see. While this is a step in the right direction, I do not believe Council should approve any funds or initiatives related to this plan until these issues have been settled in a mutually beneficial way for both the City and the residents.