



**Land Use, Transportation & Infrastructure Committee
Summary Minutes**

Tuesday, February 22, 2011 10:30 AM City & County Building, Room 391

Members Present: Johnson, Madison, Montero, Robb, Sandoval

Members Absent: Hancock

**Other
Council
Present:**

Committee Staff: Gretchen Williams

Bill Requests

BR11-0145 Designates a portion of the Curtis Park Neighborhood as Curtis Park Historic District 'H'.

Savannah Jameson, Landmark Preservation Commission

The Landmark Preservation Commission (LPC) on February 15 recommended approval of this application to designate the final portion of the Curtis Park Neighborhood. The LPC found that this area meets criteria under Architecture in that the neighborhood contains many examples of Queen Anne and Italianate architecture designed by several of Denver's renowned architects of the time. The area also meets criteria under Geography. The neighborhood is an easily identifiable and distinct area with the unique history of being Denver's first streetcar suburb.

Joel Noble, one of the applicants, discussed how this application fills in the part of the Curtis Park Neighborhood which has not been designated. Several applications for various sections of the neighborhood have been submitted over several years. Reasons for this approach included the large size of the neighborhood; the need to move quickly to preserve the structures in the more residential areas; the need to work closely with the property owners unfamiliar with historic districts; and the desire not to lose the whole neighborhood while working with more reluctant property owners.

Councilwoman Johnson asked if there are guidelines for new infill construction in an historic district. The design guidelines do allow for contemporary design, as long as it complements the older architecture. Guidelines specifically discourage faux Italianate or Queen Anne, for example.

Councilwoman Robb asked if structures can be built out to the full extent allowed by the zoning. They may, if those additions complement and are subordinate to the main building, Ms. Jameson replied. Mr. Noble added that in some areas, the new zoning code is more restrictive than the buildings on the ground. In the new zoning code, Community Planning & Development fashioned an administrative variance for instances where the strict compliance with zoning would prohibit compatibility with surrounding structures. Excess height or bulk plane penetration can be administratively approved if needed to be more appropriate with the surrounding structures.

A motion offered by Councilmember Madison, duly seconded by Councilmember Johnson, to HOLD the bill described above until March 15 carried by the following vote:

AYES: Johnson, Madison, Montero, Robb, Sandoval(5)

NAYS: (None)

ABSENT: Hancock(1)

ABSTAIN: (None)

The four following requests related to River North Greenway Master Plan implementation were voted on en bloc:

BR11-0112 Approves a Grant Agreement with Great Outdoors Colorado (GOCO) for up to \$1 million for land acquisition in the River North area for a park, implementing part of the River North Greenway Master Plan. (GC00035).

Gordon Robertson, Parks & Recreation; Tim Wohlgenant and Wade Sheldon, Trust for Public Lands

BR11-0113 Rescinds \$420,000 from the Cranmer Park Sundial Plaza Restoration project in Council District 5 and re-appropriates that amount to River North Greenway Land Acquisition in Council District 9, to be restored to Cranmer Park when additional fundraising is completed.

Gordon Robertson, Parks & Recreation; Tim Wohlgenant and Wade Sheldon, Trust for Public Lands

BR11-0114 Approves a Disposition Agreement with the Trust for Public Land (TPL) for the transfer of property from TPL to Denver for the River North Park Acquisition.

Gordon Robertson, Parks & Recreation; Tim Wohlgenant and Wade Sheldon, Trust for Public Lands

BR11-0115 Approves a lease agreement between the City and Interstate Shippers Service to lease the building back to ISS, the current occupant, for up to one year to allow for relocation of the business after the City acquires the property as part of Denver's River North park land acquisition.

Gordon Robertson, Parks & Recreation; Tim Wohlgenant and Wade Sheldon, Trust for Public Lands

The Committee considered the following four ordinances as a package as they all relate to land acquisition for implementation of the River North Greenway Plan. The River North Implementation Plan, created by Parks & Recreation (P&R) and the Greenway Foundation, calls for a neighborhood park somewhere in the general area of 31st to 35th streets.

Mr. Robertson said the Trust for Public Land (TPL) helped P&R identify property owners willing to sell land. TPL began working with the owner of the parcel at 3400 Arkins Court in 2009 and spent the past year negotiating the price. TPL also helped the City secure the Great Outdoors Colorado (GOCO) grant for acquisition, which helped leverage City funds.

The four proposed ordinances are necessary to:

- acquire the 2.1-acre parcel for \$2.4 million, the closing for which is scheduled for March 31, hence the urgency;
- approve a disposition agreement whereby the City will lease the property back to Interstate Shippers Trucking Company for up to 12 months while it relocates the business;
- accept the \$1 million GOCO grant; and
- transfer \$420,000 of P&R CIP funds from the Cranmer Park Sundial restoration project to River North land acquisition.

Mr. Robertson noted that the lease-back period works well for the City because we are not ready to develop the park. Public Works is in the process of designing a plan to swing Arkins Court to the east around this parcel, providing the park direct river access as well as seven additional acres. Site stabilization funds will be identified in the 2012 P&R CIP budget.

Councilwoman Johnson explained that the Cranmer Park Sundial was a memorial dedication to the City, but the sandstone platform is sitting on rumble and is cracking. Restoration is calculated to be a \$1.3 million project. P&R has made a commitment to the project with the caveat that the community raises \$900,000 in matching funds. The neighborhood, the Grayland school, P&R's fund-raiser and others are involved, but the formal fund raising is incomplete. Hopefully, the funds will be raised within this year. She agreed to move the funds to the River North project, and she is expecting a robust letter from P&R making a firm commitment to put the funds for the Sundial into the 2012 budget.

Councilwoman Robb, referring to the site map, asked if the open space donation adjoining this parcel to the south is a certainty. Mr. Robertson said P&R has a non-binding donation agreement with that owner, and we think it will happen, but nothing is certain.

Councilwoman Montero asked if the donated piece is critical to the build-out of River North Greenway Park. Mr. Robertson replied that it is not critical, but it would be a key to providing the planned larger park. P&R will move forward on the park without the donation for the time being.

A motion offered by Councilmember Sandoval, duly seconded by Councilmember Robb, to file the four bills described above carried by the following vote:

AYES: Johnson, Madison, Montero, Robb, Sandoval(5)

NAYS: (None)

ABSENT: Hancock(1)

ABSTAIN (None)

Presentations

McNichols Building presentation

Michael Sheehan, Public Works; Jan Brennan, DOCA; Kent Rice, Theatres & Arenas; Adam Ambro, Humphries Poli Architects

Mr. Sheehan said interest in this building has grown since the Biennial of the Americas last summer. The City issued a Request for Proposals for further restoration design of the building on Sept. 10, 2010, and awarded the job to Humphries Poli in November. The architects' existing on-call contract for McNichols Phase I Redevelopment is being used because this contract allows work to be started more quickly, and this work will be well under the \$500,000 threshold for Council approval anyway.

Mr. Ambore said it is appropriate to be talking about this building's future 101 years and a week after its dedication. This phase will design work required to obtain a permanent Certificate of Occupancy (CO), allowing the space to be occupied. Plans call for continuing to celebrate the building's legacy, elevating the vision for Civic Center, and establishing the framework and inspiration for a model of sustainability.

Target date for completion of the designs is May 2012. Public Works will be back before Council with a contract for construction this spring or early summer.

Ms. Brennan said this building will again be the main presentation space for the 2nd Biennial of the Americas in July 2012, after which it will begin its new life for an array of activities. This project builds on the Civic Center Plan. From 2007 to 2009, there were three major initiatives that involved this building:

- The City's Creative Spaces Initiative;

- A review of similar buildings nationally and internationally along with a large public discussion to gather ideas for uses; and
- A feasibility study of the McNichols Building by the Western Arts federation.

The plan is to finish the interior to a usable but versatile condition without making any changes that would preclude any of the planned future features. A summary by building level is below.

Level 1 - Add a catering area with loading area for the building and the park. Add restrooms, some accessible from the park without access to the building; others could be open to the park during large events. Public event space will be included, and Denver Office of Cultural events and exhibits could be held there. The director of the Newman Center served as a 3rd party to help assess how the space needs to function.

Level 2 – Main event space. Add support space for catering, utilizing the former library support space.

Level 3 - Event space and exhibit space, while maintaining opportunities to finish as future income-generating leased space. Communications infrastructure will be extended here as well as throughout the building.

Kent Rice said Theatres & Arenas will operate the building as an event and program venue through its normal rental process, as it does the Ellie Caulkins Opera House, the Buell Theatre, the Coliseum, and Red Rocks.

The Civic Center Park Master Plan is the guide for the restoration programming. It is important that the building's relationship to the Great Lawn of Civic Center Park is fully utilized.

The building should be four-sided, which means elimination of the parking lot. However, the current parking area will remain the primary vehicle access to support activities in the building and the park while reconnecting the building to the park. This work will not inhibit any elements of the larger plans. A future phase will restore the grand stairs on Colfax.

A large part of the \$2 million Phase I budget is for windows. The building originally had 13.5 foot windows. In 1957, the window openings were reduced and the windows were replaced. Plans are to recreate the look and feel in the building of those original windows.

The scope of work includes upgrade of the mechanical systems, including completion of the fire sprinkler system. In order to obtain a temporary CO for the 1st Biennial, only the basement had to have sprinklers.

The City is pursuing a State grant with a 50% match for the windows now that we have a budget from the window designer. The Greenprint Office is working on a grant application related to energy efficiency. Funds left from the Democratic National Convention and the Biennial are being utilized, and Theatres & Arenas is contributing \$750,000.