

May 13, 2008

**VIA EMAIL TO Mark Bollinger@dpsk12.org
AND BY U.S. MAIL**

Mark W. Bollinger
Associate Executive Director of Facilities
Denver Public Schools
2800 West 7th Avenue
Denver, CO 80204

RE: Gove Middle School

Dear Mark:

I am writing this letter as President of, and on behalf of, the Board of Directors of the Bellevue-Hale Neighborhood Association ("BHNA") with respect to the Gove Middle School property. Our understanding is that the Gove property will be included in an assessment/evaluation to be performed by the Urban Land Institute ("ULI") for Denver Public Schools ("DPS"). BHNA wants to participate in ULI's evaluation process and formally requests that you facilitate our participation. Because we are advised that the ULI study will be done on an expedited basis, we would like to take this opportunity to provide our preliminary comments, concerns, and thoughts with respect to the sale and ultimate redevelopment of the Gove property. Based on previous discussions, it is our understanding that you will pass this letter on to the ULI team, along with other pertinent background information, in advance of their on-site visitation.

The former Gove Middle School is located on an approximately seven (7) acre parcel of land bounded by 14th Avenue on the north, 13th Avenue on the south, Colorado Boulevard on the west, and Ash Street on the east. This in-fill site is the gateway to Denver's historic Bellevue-Hale neighborhood, a predominantly single-family residential neighborhood in east Denver's District No. 10. In addition, the property is in close proximity to the redevelopment of the University of Colorado Hospital in-fill site which is currently underway at 9th Avenue and Colorado Boulevard. Gove Middle School served the community for decades prior to its closure by DPS. For years it was also home to the Gove Community School which offered a multitude of classes, educational and training opportunities, and fitness and swimming programs to young and old alike. The Community School served and was supported by residents of Bellevue-Hale and surrounding Denver neighborhoods.

Recognizing that one of DPS's motives is to maximize its profit on the sale of the Gove property, it is and remains our expectation that DPS and ULI will still take into account the potential impact of the sale and redevelopment of this strategically located in-fill site on the Bellevue-Hale and surrounding neighborhoods particularly given Denver's long-term land use plan as reflected in Blueprint Denver and DPS's stated intention to be a good neighbor. Blueprint Denver recognizes that the City's goals are to

create a "vibrant, community-oriented city," to preserve strong neighborhoods, to eliminate the negative impacts that can result from unregulated growth, and to discourage incompatible development. With that in mind, we would urge DPS and ULI to specifically commit that the ultimate use, disposition, and redevelopment of the Gove property will become an asset to and be supportive of the Bellevue-Hale neighborhood.

In Blueprint Denver, the Bellevue-Hale neighborhood is classified as an area of stability. A stated goal for areas of stability is that the character of the areas be maintained, preserved, and, in some cases, revitalized to prevent stagnation. Blueprint Denver recognizes that large developments may be harmful to achieving the vision of quiet neighborhoods, vibrant corridors, and active districts and that, therefore, it is often desirable to reduce development capacity to achieve Denver's long range vision.

DPS's impending disposition of the Gove property presents a unique opportunity for DPS, ULI, the City, Denver Parks and Recreation, BHNA, and the surrounding neighborhoods to work together to direct and manage the future use of this uniquely situated in-fill property and the location, type, intensity, and design of future development and improvements proposed for the site.

Currently the eastern-most one-third of the Gove property (being one-half block on the west side of Ash Street) is zoned R-1 (single-family residential). The balance of the property is zoned R-3 (multi-family residential) which has no height limitations or other building restrictions (other than use). Such a lack of restrictions is recognized in Blueprint Denver as being a hindrance to the City's ability to effectively and successfully implement its stated vision.

Based on the foregoing, we expect that ULI and DPS will take into account and consider the following options and possibilities:

- Sale of the site to the City to house the "Central Denver Community Center," keeping in mind that in 2007 voters approved the City's issuance of bonds to finance the acquisition of a site for, and the design of, a community center to be located in Denver's District No. 10. At this time, the community consensus is that Gove is the preferred location for the proposed community center. In addition, the site is located almost exactly in the middle of the focus area under review by the architectural and consulting firm hired by Denver Parks and Recreation to consider and evaluate potential sites for the community center.
- Sale of the site to National Jewish Hospital for joint use and development by the hospital and the City for hospital expansion purposes, a wellness center, the community center, and other public and private purposes. If the site is sold to National Jewish we would like its ultimate redevelopment to be subject to conditions and restrictions substantially similar to those listed below.
- If the site is sold to a third-party commercial developer, placing conditions and restrictions on the sale and ultimate redevelopment of the site in order to preserve the character of the Bellevue-Hale neighborhood and to fulfill the Blueprint Denver vision by creating compatibility between the existing historic homes and the proposed redevelopment of the Gove site. In this regard, the following list highlights some of the areas where efforts must be directed to foster continuity between the existing and proposed uses and improvements and thus enhance the community of the Bellevue-Hale neighborhood.

Site:

- ▶ Setbacks – Allow for generous setbacks to promote a neighborhood atmosphere on all three residential sides of the site, recognizing that the easternmost portion of the property is and should remain R-1. As for the portion of the property along Colorado Boulevard, allow a large enough setback for pedestrians to walk comfortably along Colorado Boulevard.
- ▶ Floor Area Ratio (FAR) – Reduce FAR ratio to maintain the character of the existing residential neighborhood.
- ▶ Green Space/Buffers – Incorporate green space and other buffers into the design for the benefit of surrounding neighbors and employees of the proposed building and to assure appropriate transitions between different land uses.
- ▶ Preservation of Viewshed – Preserve the mountain viewshed of the residential properties on the east side of Ash Street (directly across from the eastern border of the site in question).
- ▶ Multi-Modal Streets – Encourage alternative forms of transportation by providing generous sidewalks and tree-lawns (planted buffer between street and sidewalk) for pedestrians and bikers.
- ▶ Parking – Restrict the size of on-grade parking lots (ideally parking would be in an under-grade structure).
- ▶ Access – Consider the impact of traffic patterns and increased traffic volume particularly on the residential side streets such as Ash and Albion. Access to and from the Gove property must take into account and respect the integrity of the neighborhood. Ingress to the site should be off of 14th Avenue and egress should be onto 13th Avenue.
- ▶ Security – Take into account the character, interests, and concerns of the neighborhood.

Proposed Building:

- ▶ Height Limits – On the sides of the property closest to residences, match the average existing height of residences.
- ▶ Roof-top Use and Development – Prohibit or appropriately limit antennas, towers, communications equipment, landmark features, steeples, and the like.
- ▶ Materials – Carefully choose building materials to complement existing structures and to minimize any reflection and glare.

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- ▶ Lighting – Minimize exterior lumens to match surrounding residential lighting and to reduce night light pollution.
- ▶ "Back of Building/Mechanical" – Orientation of new structures should take into account the residences and residential uses bordering the property. Mechanical systems should not face the residential areas to avoid unsightliness and noise generated by such systems.

Sustainable Building:

- ▶ Upon altering the Gove site for a new use, the parties involved have an opportunity to make this project a model of sustainable building. BHNA has taken many steps to educate and encourage "green" living amongst its residents and we expect this trend to continue with respect to the Gove property.

As we look to the future, BHNA believes that a building and site that carefully consider the surrounding neighborhood culturally, aesthetically, and environmentally and take into account the vision of Blueprint Denver would be welcome on the Gove property. BHNA's goal is to work cooperatively and effectively with the purchaser of the Gove Site and, if applicable, a quality developer who will respect the neighborhood and take into account and address with BHNA and other concerned parties the matters raised in this letter.

Very truly yours,

BELLEVUE-HALE NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION

By: _____
Ray Allen, President

WJH:nls

cc: Councilwoman Jeanne Robb (via email to Jeanne.robb@ci.denver.co.us)
BHNA Board of Directors
Wendy J. Harring
Mark Musselman