

BRIEFING OVERVIEW: 1240 W. Bayaud Avenue – Youth Empowerment Center



Council Action Summary

The City & County of Denver, on behalf of Denver Economic Development & Opportunity (DEDO), proposes to purchase the property from Denver Police Activities League, Inc., a Colorado Non-profit corporation in the amount of \$3,000,000. The intent of this purchase is to secure space for youth-focused activities aligned with the City's youth violence prevention goals.

Youth Violence Prevention Connection

Denver, like many cities, has experienced an increase in gun violence involving youth in recent years. As highlighted in September 2019 report issued by Denver Public Health, the short- and long-term impact of gun violence on youth, families and communities is significant, but preventable.

In December 2019, Mayor Michael B. Hancock convened the first meeting of the Youth Violence Prevention Action Table (YVPAT) and tasked the group with developing a comprehensive youth violence prevention plan. The YVPAT is made up of approximately 120 members from city, state and federal agencies, the judiciary, Denver Health, Denver Public Schools and community partners. Councilman Paul Kashmann is the City Council representative and sits on the Action Table's Executive Committee. The YVPAT adopted a public health framework to address youth violence and with support from national partners Cities United and Bloomberg Associates, implemented a

series of action steps to inform short- and long-term strategies including;

- *Partnered with CU Denver to conduct Youth Violence Needs Assessment which included a review of successful YVP strategies from across the country.*
- *Mapped out existing YVP data sources, programs and investments in youth by city agencies.*
- *Formed Youth Violence Prevention Council made up of young people from across the city who have a wide range of lived experiences including exposure to violence, homelessness, and involvement in the juvenile justice system.*
- *Completed surveys and interviews with community-based organizations focused on youth violence prevention.*
- *Explored the impact of additional on-going public health crises (COVID-19, systemic racism) on youth violence.*



A need that was repeated by youth and CBO's alike, was for a building or center, based in the community, that would offer a variety of supports to youth and families. Both groups envisioned a center that connects young people and their families to a network of services ranging from educational and vocational support, entrepreneurial training, recreation activities, behavioral and mental health support as examples. A few CBO's noted that while they can run programming, they lack a suitable space to do so. COVID-19 has only

exacerbated this problem leaving some CBO's unable to continue offering programming. Through our partners at Cities United, the YVPAT connected with individuals who were involved in the development of the Change Center in Knoxville, Tennessee which has been a successful example of a city supported, community led youth center model.

The acquisition of the PALS property also provides an opportunity for the City to support strategies recommended by the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) for reducing youth violence in one space including:

- *Connecting youth to caring adults*
- *Creating protective community environments*
- *Intervening to lessen harms and prevent future risk.*



Potential Building Usage

The acquisition of 1240 W. Bayaud Avenue will provide a unique opportunity to co-locate city and community resources, including staff, to offer a full spectrum of support services to youth and families. While the center will have a primary focus on youth-specific services, where possible, strategies that support a 2Gen approach will be incorporated. Possible programming options include but are not limited to:

- *Workforce and entrepreneurial training programs*
- *Recreational programs in partnership with DPR*
- *Family and Parent Skill Building Programs such as Parent Connect and Strengthening Families Program 10-14*
- *Workspace for CBO's to connect with youth and run programming.*

Site Benefits

The roughly 9,600-square-foot building is located on the southwest corner of Bayaud Avenue and S. Platte River Dr, just northwest of Alameda and I-25. The building is less than one mile from Alameda Light Rail Stations and within three blocks of RTD bus routes 3 and 4. The proximity to transit helps to mitigate some of the potential transportation barriers for youth.



Funding Specifics

The \$3 million acquisition is secured through CDBG Funding. In addition to the acquisition cost, **HUD will cover the first year of operating expenses to maintain and operate the facility, a minimum of \$50,000.**

After this first year, operation expenses will be outlined in the RFP for the future service provider.

RFP Process

Through a competitive RFP process, the City will select a service provider(s) to manage this property. The RFP will outline space needs and any associated renovations to accommodate those needs.

The contract for the service provider is anticipated to come through City Council for approval in 2021

Eligible Funds for Future Renovations

After a service provider is selected and an assessment determines needed renovations, DEDO will coordinate with HUB to identify eligible funds to cover the costs of such renovations with an estimated start date in mid-to-late 2021.