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## DOWNTOWN STADIUM – CONDITIONAL USE FBZ DEVELOPMENT PLAN

### PROJECT JUSTIFICATION JULY 2019

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#### REQUEST

Switchback FC Holdings requests approval of the following applications:

1. Conditional Use FBZ Development Plan Approval
2. Non-Use Variance/Warrants
3. Final Plat
4. Public R.O.W Vacation Plat

#### LOCATION

The property is located between Sierra Madre and Sahwatch Street south of Cimarron just east of the Cimarron and I-25 interchange. The site is located within Downtown Colorado Springs, within the Central Sector of the Form Based Zone.



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## PROJECT DESCRIPTION

As part of the City for Champions (C4C) Initiative, two downtown multi-purpose sports venues (together named the Colorado Springs Sports and Events Center) are being planned and designed to host professional, Olympic and amateur sporting events as well as entertainment and cultural events. The two venues together, representing one component of the C4C initiative, are in close proximity to the U.S. Olympic Museum. The Downtown Stadium is the outdoor venue (new permanent home of the Colorado Springs Switchbacks Football Club), and Robson Arena at Colorado College (home of CC Tiger hockey) is the indoor venue. Both will include technological features coveted by competitive athletes, further solidifying the city's vision for Olympic City USA and providing unique venues to host the growing momentum of a strong and vibrant tourism industry. The Downtown Stadium will be a mixed-use development featuring a rectangular field of play.

The other C4C venues include the U.S. Olympic Museum, a new U.S. Air Force Academy Gateway Visitors Center and the William J. Hybl Sports Medicine and Performance Center on the campus of the University of Colorado, Colorado Springs.

**Project Partners:** The Colorado Springs Switchbacks Football Club (FC) and Weidner Apartment Homes have partnered on the Downtown Stadium project. The stadium will be constructed together with a mixed-use residential and commercial development. After a competitive bid process, the Stadium Partnership selected the team of GE Johnson Construction and Perkins & Will Architects to lead the design/build of the stadium.

**Location:** Located at the CityGate property, the Downtown Stadium site is bordered by Cimarron Street to the north, Moreno Avenue to the south, Sierra Madre Street to the west and Sahwatch Street to the east. The strategic downtown location allows for high visibility, access to amenities, and special experiences for participants and spectators. Much of the land is currently vacant and open for development following environmental work related to its long-term use as a steel and iron foundry since the beginning of 1900 until it closed in the early 2000's. It is also in close proximity to several other sports-related facilities, specifically the new U.S. Olympic Museum, America the Beautiful Park, the administration building for several National Governing Bodies (NGBs), and the headquarters building for the U.S. Olympic Committee.

**Capacity:** The stadium is anticipated to have 8,157 seats, expandable to 15,000 for concerts and other special events. The primary tenant for the facility is the Switchbacks FC. The United Soccer League (USL), of which the Switchbacks FC is a member, has stated that by 2020 all of its teams need to be playing in or developing facilities that seat 8,000 - 10,000 spectators in order to create a strong franchise. Colorado Springs is among the smaller markets in the Championship League. Olympic related events, tournaments, and camps will create a synergy between the U.S. Olympic Museum, outdoor stadium, indoor arena, and the U.S. Olympic Training Center that will set Colorado Springs apart nationally as a destination for amateur sporting events.

### Stadium Description:

- The stadium is composed of three distinct elements: an 85,000 square foot playing field / event surface, a 3-story, multi-function West Building Complex, and an elevated concourse surrounding the playing field
- It will include: a 240-seat, multi-use meeting/banquet room, an approximate 4,000 square foot restaurant concept, sports performance and training facilities, and looks to be an anchor for future development opportunities
- Total interior square footage: approximately 145,500
- Synthetic turf field with cork and coconut hair as infill for water savings and to reduce surface temperature
- Project site footprint: approximately 4.46 acres
- West building: Approximately 48' tall
- North seating bowl wall and northeast building: ranges from 4' to 16' above Cimarron Street. A canopy structure may range from 12' - 20' above the seating bowl wall

- East seating bowl wall: 4' above Sahwatch Street. East buildings are approximately 14' above the seating bowl wall
- South concourse is flush with the Plaza that naturally slopes from Sahwatch to Sierra Madre streets

*Field Level Building:* The heart of the development resides in the first level building situated along Sierra Madre Street. This program area includes commissary, storage, loading, Field Club, home team complex, visitor locker rooms, administrative offices, and tenant orthopedic/fitness and restaurant space.

*Concourse Level:* The main public level encompasses a fully elevated concourse between 4 and 16 feet above and surrounding the field and seating sections. Each side of the concourse has a different elevation offering a diverse experience while circulating the stadium. Program areas on the concourse include restrooms, concessions, team store, seating sections, and amenity decks. The south concourse is on grade with a 57-foot-wide pedestrian plaza that lies between the south side of the stadium and the north face of the new Weidner apartment building. The plaza will create an active environment around the stadium and can be used for pre- and post-game events.

*Sky Club Level:* The Sky Club (the tallest structure along Sierra Madre Street) features a higher-level experience on game days and multiple accommodations of rentable spaces on non-game days. The Sky Club program includes flexible hospitality / banquet space with a capacity for 240 people, prep kitchen, storage, and restrooms. Glazing on the east, west, and north sides of the stadium offer views to the field, Downtown Colorado Springs, and the Colorado Rocky Mountains.

**Food and Beverage venues in the stadium:**

- Restaurant - prime location with an option for a rooftop bar
- Sky Club - stadium event day catering and catering for reserved special events
- Field Club - stadium event day catering and daily team food service opportunity
- Concessions - stadium event day service at four main concourse locations plus cart service opportunities
- Other Game Day Food Service – Suite/Cabana Catering, other Club Catering, in-seat service

**Technology (Sound / Lighting / AV / Data):** The outdoor stadium will have Best-In-Class lighting and data accessibility, high definition digital video production, live world-wide streaming and distribution capabilities, next generation real-time training and match full-field video data tagging capabilities. This level of technology is typically found only in new facilities and is deemed critical to maximize fan experience. It is also critical because coaches and trainers highly desire real-time training and full-field video capture with data tagging capabilities. Simultaneous to C4C, the City of Colorado Springs is pursuing a *Smart City* strategy under contract with Panasonic. The technology also includes:

- Distributed sound system, not a single point source system, allowing for more efficient volume control
- Positioning of speakers downward and toward the center of the field
- LED sports lighting for reduced light pollution and reduced kw consumption
- Colored RGB LED up-lights in key locations are anticipated to provide a visually pleasing evening experience

**Stadium Access, Traffic and Parking:** The main entrance for the stadium is at Cimarron and Sahwatch streets. Two secondary entrances are at the Moreno Avenue plaza. VIP entrances are along Sierra Madre Street. The New South End of downtown Colorado Springs has been growing and transforming into a more vibrant area attracting more businesses and visitors. This vibrancy has driven the need to understand near and long-term strategies for parking and traffic in and around the area. The Stadium Partnership is collaborating with the Downtown Partnership, City of Colorado Springs, and numerous other public and private organizations in a third-party study to understand the needs of the broader downtown area as well as the stadium impact on parking and traffic. The consulting firm of Felsburg Holt & Ullevig (FHU) has been contracted to conduct the study.

**Events:** The Switchbacks FC has approximately 22 home matches per season held over approximately eight months, or an average of 2.5 matches per month in season. Approximately 80 days are reserved for other sporting events including NGB events and others targeted to attract out-of-state visitors. The stadium anticipates hosting other types of events in the remaining days, especially those that will draw new visitors to the region (per Regional Tourism Act goals). The stadium will have the potential for hosting concerts as well as different field configurations for smaller outdoor sports including volleyball, basketball, hockey, etc.

### **PROJECT JUSTIFICATION**

An outdoor stadium in southwest downtown Colorado Springs has been envisioned for many years. This application and proposal will diversify and strengthen the goals of the downtown area while also providing a catalyst for economic growth that can leverage effective development in the downtown area and the larger Pikes Peak Region. This proposed downtown stadium project embodies the advancement of several community planning efforts including the following:

- Plan COS
- Experience Downtown Master Plan
- Mill Street Neighborhood Master Plan
- Urban Land Institute Report on Downtown Colorado Springs
- CityGate Urban Renewal Plan
- City for Champions Initiative

The stadium proposal meets key goals and expectations outlined within these planning documents.

- The stadium provides a unique venue for community events gatherings, bringing added vibrancy to downtown.
- The stadium provides a venue for a wide variety of events and attracts new visitors to our community and the state of Colorado
- The stadium provides a new gateway into our downtown from I-25 and Cimarron.
- The stadium will serve as catalyst for future private and public investment in downtown Colorado Springs, leading the way for future private development and public infrastructure improvements.
- The stadium provides pedestrian and streetscape improvements, further advancing downtown Colorado Springs as a vibrant, pedestrian friendly destination.

The application for the Conditional Use FBZ Development Plan addresses a use that is not directly addressed in the current Form-Based code constituting the requirement for a Conditional Use application. The current site is located in the southern most portion of the Central Sector which makes up the majority of the Downtown Form-Based Zone District and is seen as the “Urban Core”. The Central Sector is seen as “being the heart of downtown” and is intended to offer diverse mix of uses that strengthens and encourage density to establish a strong pedestrian experience. This Sector does not mandate minimum parking requirements and specifically notes this area as parking exempt.

The Conditional Use FBZ Development Plan application is accompanied by Final Plat application and Vacation of Right of Way request. The vacation of a portion of right of way on Sahwatch, between Cimarron and Moreno is requested to accommodate the required footprint of the playing field and associated stadium infrastructure. The vacation of right of way on Moreno, between Sahwatch and Sierra Madre is requested to accommodate the footprint of the stadium and to support a future urban plaza between the stadium and future proposed multi-family development to the south.

### **Conformance with Conditional Use Criteria (Code Section 7.5.704)**

- A. Surrounding Neighborhood: That the value and qualities of the neighborhood surrounding the Conditional Use are not substantially injured.**

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- a. The stadium project does not substantially injure the surrounding neighborhood, but rather greatly enhances the character and vitality of the neighborhood. The surrounding area and many of the land uses immediately adjacent to the stadium site are in currently in a transition as reinvestment in private and public infrastructure occurs. The stadium is intended to serve as a catalyst for redevelopment and overall enhance of real estate values within the southeast area of downtown.
  - b. The Mill Street Neighborhood Master Plan and the Experience Downtown Master Plan identify strategies for maintaining and enhancing quality of life for Mill Street residents, downtown businesses and downtown residents. The proposed stadium is consistent with the Mill Street Plan and the Experience Downtown Master Plan and will serve as a catalyst for future public and private investment in the area. The frontages and public realm adjacent to the stadium project will be greatly enhanced with sidewalk, streetscape, lighting, landscape, and ADA improvements.
  - c. While parking on public streets is considered a shared public infrastructure resource, concerns related to stadium parking in the Mill Street neighborhood on public streets can best be managed through the future establishment of neighborhood parking program by the City. Concerns related to stadium parking on public streets in front of businesses within the Central Sector of the FBZ can best be managed by the City using available tools such as parking meter management, expansion of multi-modal transportation opportunities, implantation of a downtown shuttle, and future public/private investment in public parking infrastructure.
- B. The intent of Zoning Code: That the Conditional Use is consistent with the intent and purpose of this Zoning Code to promote public health, safety and general welfare.**
- a. The proposed use is expressly permitted as a conditional use within the FBZ district. The proposed stadium is consistent with the requirements of the zone, enhances the public health, safety and general welfare of the property and surrounding area. Furthermore, the project is intended to be a catalyst for advancing future public and private investments which promote quality of life in the southeast area of downtown.
- C. Comprehensive Plan: That the Conditional Use is consistent with the Comprehensive Plan of the City.**
- a. The proposed stadium is consistent with advancing numerous Plan COS goals including:
    - Contributing to Vibrant Neighborhoods, Typology 2: Changing Neighborhoods**  
Changing Neighborhoods primarily include existing neighborhoods that have the potential or need for City attention, reinvestment, and land use change. Areas of change within these neighborhoods may be focused at the edges (e.g. because of a redeveloping arterial corridor or special area) or be more evenly distributed throughout. Planning emphasis should be placed on implementing strategies necessary to support, incentivize, or adapt to change resulting from market forces, redevelopment, or disinvestment. These neighborhoods will expect to see more infill and redevelopment than other areas of the city. Downtown, and specifically Southwest Downtown, is a subcategory of this typology. Redevelopment here could be transformative due to the potential for extremely high densities. *The proposed stadium is located in heart of the changing Southwest Downtown area and is strategically positioned to be a catalyst for future reinvestment and landuse change.*
    - Unique Spaces, Typology 6: Downtown**  
The goal of this place typology is to continue to grow and adapt Downtown Colorado Springs as the singular economic and cultural heart of the city and region, consistent with the Experience
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Downtown Colorado Springs Plan. *The proposed stadium will be a signature contributor and place-maker for Downtown Colorado Springs.*

**Thriving Economy, Typology 3: The Experience Economy**

The goal of this typology is to support a variety of high quality existing and new attractions and related amenities for residents and visitors, appealing to a diverse mix of interests and incomes. *The proposed stadium will provide a venue for a wide variety of new and existing events, attracting local residents and new visitors from across the state of Colorado and beyond.*

**Compliance with FBZ Standards:**

**2.3 Building Type:** Stadium permitted as Conditional Use

A stadium is permitted within the Central Sector of the Form Based Zone as a conditional use.

**2.5 Uses:** Stadium, Conditional Use

A stadium is permitted within the FBZ as a conditional use.

**2.6 Parking:**

The stadium is proposed within the Parking Exempt Area of the Central Sector of FBZ. The proposal, although not required to have provisions per code, has provided a Parking and Traffic Evaluation Study. Parking demands vary greatly between daily use (approximately 85 parking spaces needed) to sold out soccer games (approximately 2,400 parking spaces needed). The project team has identified available parking capacity within walking distance of the stadium to accommodate a sold-out event of up to 8,157 attendees.

**Warrants Requested:**

**2.3.3 Building Envelopes**

REQUIRED: Building types with 0' front setbacks but inadequate public roadside width should be setback from property line far enough to provide adequate public roadside width

PROPOSED: Moreno setback (south) = 15' allowance to south Moreno avenue to be vacated  
Sahwatch setback (east) = 30' allowance to the east (28' used) Sahwatch street to be partially vacated

**2.3.4 Building Height**

REQUIRED: civic building unlimited maximum 2 story minimum

PROPOSED: Cimarron = 1 story  
Sahwatch = 1 story  
Sierra Madre = 3 stories  
Moreno = 1 story

**2.4.4 Shopfronts**

REQUIRED: It has substantial window glazing on the sidewalk level and awning that should be at least 6' in depth but does not encroach in the street

PROPOSED: The Sierra Madre (west) façade has substantial storefront glazing on all 3 levels and a 6' canopy extended over the main public entrances

#### 2.4.7 Glazing and Fenestration

REQUIRED: Shopfront required 60% glazing

PROPOSED: The first level of Sierra Madre (west) façade with direct alignment of the property line (primary pedestrian interface area) has a 48:52 ratio (48%) glazing to opaque structure. This ratio has been vetted the maximum percent feasible to support the hierarchy goals for this façade and use. The full Sierra Madre façade has significant articulation, texture and glazing

#### 2.7 Block Standards

REQUIRED: Blocks shall feature a mid-block alley or pedestrian passage that is at least 20' in width.

PROPOSED: No mid-block alley or pedestrian passage will be provided. A 57' pedestrian plaza will be maintained in the vacated Moreno R.O.W.

#### 2.8.4 Amenity Zone (Sahwatch Street)

REQUIRED: Trees at 25-40'; lights at 50'-75'; materials

PROPOSED: Allow for varied tree and light spacing and materials within the Sahwatch amenity zone for provisions of dedicated parking, ride share and game day food truck spaces.

#### **Community Outreach:**

In addition to the years of broad-based community master planning that has led to this stadium proposal, a robust community outreach effort has been conducted specifically for the Conditional Use FBZ Development Plan application. Community engagement efforts began with a door-to-door outreach effort to over 300 nearby businesses and residents. The project team has provided presentations and sought input from numerous stakeholder groups including downtown businesses, Downtown Partnership, Mill Street Neighborhood, and adjacent businesses. A community meeting, attended by approximately 85 community members, was held on July 17, 2019. Additionally, the project team has maintained a project website for posting presentations, answers to frequently asked questions, and videos from the July 17<sup>th</sup> community meeting have been posted for public review.