

**DOWNTOWN REVIEW BOARD AGENDA
NOVEMBER 1, 2022**

STAFF: RYAN TEFERTILLER

**FILE NO:
DEPN-22-0055 (AKA CPC DP 22-00105) – QUASI-JUDICIAL**

PROJECT: COS CITY AUDITORIUM

OWNER: CITY OF COLORADO SPRINGS

DEVELOPER: COLORADO SPRINGS COMMUNITY CULTURAL COLLECTIVE

CONSULTANT: KIMLEY-HORN & ASSOCIATES



PROJECT SUMMARY:

1. **Project Description:** The subject application was submitted to allow construction of a roughly 7,000 square-foot addition to an existing civic building. The existing facility, together with the new addition, will serve as an education, performance, and cultural hub in Downtown Colorado Springs. Significant internal improvements to the historic building (built in 1923) are proposed. The 1-acre site is located on the southwest corner of N. Weber St. and E. Kiowa St., is zoned FBZ-CEN (Form-

Based Zone – Central Sector), and is currently developed with a multi-story, roughly 30,000 square-foot civic building. The proposed project requires Warrants from the Form-Based Code's Frontage Standards. **(FIGURE 1)**

2. Applicant's Project Statement: **(FIGURE 2)**
3. Planning and Development Team's Recommendation: **Approval of the application with one condition of approval and multiple technical modifications.**

BACKGROUND:

1. Site Address: 221 E. Kiowa St.
2. Existing Zoning/Land Use: FBZ-CEN (Form-Based Zone – Central Sector) **(FIGURE 3)**
3. Surrounding Zoning/Land Use:
 - North: FBZ-CEN, FBZ-T1, and FBZ-T2A / Civic Use (Municipal Court)
 - South: FBZ-CEN / Surface Parking (planned mixed-use and transit facility)
 - East: FBZ- CEN and FBZ-T2A / Office and Civic uses
 - West: FBZ- CEN / Commercial and Lodging uses
4. PlanCOS Vision: Downtown Activity Center
5. Annexation: Town of Colorado Springs (1872)
6. Master Plan/Designated Master Plan Land Use: Experience Downtown Master Plan (2016) / General Mixed-Use
7. Subdivision: Pikes Peak Plan subdivision (2009)
8. Zoning Enforcement Action: None
9. Physical Characteristics: The site is developed with an existing multi-story, roughly 30,000 square-foot historic civic building. The site is flat and drive aisles / loading zones exist around the building's perimeter.

STAKEHOLDER PROCESS AND INVOLVEMENT: The public notice for this application included the display of posters on the site and the mailing of roughly 250 postcards to surrounding property owners when the application was first submitted to the City. These notices included information on how to review the plans and provide comments. Staff received limited input from stakeholders regarding the project; two letters of support were received and are included as **FIGURE 4**. The site will be posted, and postcards mailed prior to the DRB hearing. Any formal communications received by Staff just prior to the hearing will be made available at the hearing.

The application was reviewed by all standard City agencies including, Public Works, Traffic Engineering, Colorado Springs Utilities, Water Resource Engineering, Parks and Recreation, and others. All reviewers support the project; any remaining technical concerns are included as Technical Modifications at the end of this report.

ANALYSIS OF REVIEW CRITERIA/MAJOR ISSUES/COMPREHENSIVE PLAN & MASTER PLAN CONFORMANCE:

1. Background

The subject property is located on the southwest corner of N. Weber St. and E. Kiowa St., totals 1.0 acre in size, and is zoned FBZ-CEN (Form-Based Zone – Central Sector). The site is City-owned and includes the Historic City Auditorium building, constructed in 1923. The building has served as an event center for concerts, performances, celebrations, and a wide range of similar community and cultural events throughout its lifespan. However, the building needs significant reinvestment and improvement to resolve a wide range of issues not uncommon to buildings of similar age and use. After exploring a number of proposals for the improvement and management of the facility, the City has agreed to work with the Colorado Springs Community Cultural Collective to lead the efforts to improve and operate the facility; details on ownership versus long-term lease from the City are still on-going.

The subject property is located just east of Downtown's central core in the Weber/Wahstach corridor, which continues to see significant redevelopment, especially for new high-density residential apartment projects. The site falls within the City Auditorium Block Urban Renewal Area, adjacent to the newly completed Hyatt Place Hotel. The southern half of the block is currently utilized for a

commercial surface parking lot but is planned for redevelopment within the near future for a new mixed-use project which will include the City's new Downtown Transit Center.

2. Review Criteria / Design & Development Issues:

a. Project Details

The proposed project includes the construction of a new four-story addition with a roughly 7,000 square-foot footprint to the existing civic building. The addition will supplement significant internal remodeling efforts to modernize and improve the existing facility. The addition extends the building approximately 50 feet southward toward the adjacent public alley. The design and materials of the addition have been selected to complement the existing historic building which was placed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1995. Due to both the planned internal layout and uses, as well as to the need to continue the existing historic design, the addition includes minimal glazing on the Weber-facing building façade.

b. Historic Preservation

The City Auditorium Building was constructed in 1923 and has served as a civic building providing a place for concerts, events, competitions, and other public assembly uses for nearly 100 years. The building was placed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1995. While the City of Colorado Springs has a Historic Preservation Overlay Zone which includes additional standards and procedures prior to modifying historic buildings, this property is not encumbered by the Historic Preservation Overlay Zone. While Staff's review and analysis for the proposed addition and building modifications is primarily based on the Standards and Guidelines within the Form-Based Code (see Section c. below), there has been considerable discussion and analysis of this proposal related to honoring the building's historic design and architecture.

The initial submittal (**FIGURE 1**) included notable modifications to the front (north) façade of the existing building. Specifically, the plan showed the addition of 19 new windows on the second and third floors of the front façade designed to allow increased light penetration and improved functionality of the northern portion of the building's interior. Planning Staff provided input on the proposed façade changes questioning the need for the new windows and asking for analysis on how the work affected the building's historic designation. In recent weeks Staff has had additional dialog with the applicant regarding this issue. During those meetings, a revised design was offered (**FIGURE 5**) which eliminated most of the new windows. The updated north façade exhibit included as **FIGURE 5** of the packet shows that the central portion of the north façade will remain as is with no changes while only four new windows are proposed on the eastern and western portions of the façade to light two internal stair assemblies. These alternations to the plan were made to address local input as well as to better satisfy State and Federal input which could lead to funding opportunities for the proposed work. Inclusion of **FIGURE 5** into the final version of the development is included as a Condition of Approval at the conclusion of this report.

c. Form-Based Code

The Downtown Colorado Springs Form-Based Code implements physical standards that result in the development of a pedestrian-friendly, high-density, mixed-use area. New buildings are required to be constructed in close proximity to the sidewalk and building facades must include high levels of glazing to maximize pedestrian interest. Parking requirements are reduced (or eliminated) compared to other zone districts but surface lots are required to be located at the rear of the site largely screened from the public realm. While most projects within the Form-Based Zone can be reviewed and approved administratively, any project that needs relief from a required Standard, must have a public hearing in front of the Downtown Review Board for the review of a Warrant. Warrants can be granted for relief from any Standard, but each request must be evaluated by the Board using the five required Warrant criteria (see analysis below).

d. Analysis

The subject application was submitted to allow a roughly 7,000 square-foot addition to be constructed on the south side of the existing City Auditorium Building. The proposed addition will add a range of uses to the facility and will increase the functionality and flexibility of the building.

The addition has been designed to be compatible with the existing historic structure in both architecture and materials. The continuation of the existing building design and the internal space allocation of the addition has led to the need for a Frontage Warrant as neither the existing building nor the proposed addition meet minimum glazing standards.

The Form-Based Code requires that the public facing building façade include significant glazing (i.e. windows) so that passing pedestrians have a varied and interesting perspective. Minimum requirements for frontage design are described within Section 2.4.7. of the Form-Based Code. The existing building as well as the proposed addition utilize the Shopfront frontage type which is typical for buildings that extend up to the front property line and have a finished floor height equal to the adjacent sidewalk. Shopfront frontages are required by Code to have 60% glazing. While some changes are proposed for the front (north-facing) façade of the building, no changes affect the existing glazing percentage within the regulated area (18" above grade to 10' above grade). However, the addition on the southern edge of the building does expand the regulated area on the Weber side (east-facing) of the building. Sheet 12 of the plan (**FIGURE 1**) illustrates that the existing building has glazing on 23% of the regulated area. The proposed addition extends the Weber façade roughly 50' further south and adds just over 200 square feet of glazing. While the addition has just over 50% glazing, it does not meet the 60% minimum standard for the Shopfront frontage and therefore demands a Frontage Warrant. When the proposed addition is included in a comprehensive calculation for the Weber façade the percent glazing increases from 23% to 30%.

Any project that requires relief from a Form-Based standard must gain approval of the Warrant by the Downtown Review Board. Warrants are reviewed using the five criteria found in Section 5.4 of the Form-Based Code. The criteria are:

1. Is the requested Warrant consistent with the intent of the Form-Based Code?
2. Is the requested Warrant, as well as the project as a whole, consistent with Section 4 – Design Guidelines of the form-based code?
3. Is the requested Warrant reasonable due to the proposed project's exceptional civic or environmental design?
4. Is the requested Warrant consistent with the Downtown Master Plan?
5. Is the requested Warrant consistent with the City's Comprehensive Plan?

As discussed above, the subject property is unique in its history, its architecture, and its use. The Form-Based Code is largely written to be applicable to new construction where architecture and design can (and should) be focused on creating an interesting and diverse environment for the pedestrian. Conversely, the proposed project must recognize and honor the architecture and design of the existing building as well as the relatively unique civic use. Staff finds that the applicant and their design team have done a good job balancing the site's history and the proposed mix of uses with the intent and standards of the Form-Based Code.

The project is also largely compliant with the Code's Design Standards. The building includes appropriate architectural detail, screens necessary service features, and provides adequate public space improvements along affected areas.

The project also represents exceptional civic design by honoring the history of the building and utilizing compatible design. Additionally, the use itself could be considered consistent with the third Warrant criteria in that the developer looks to establish a regional hub for the arts, cultural events, and education that would be considered as a unique and valuable addition to Downtown.

The project is also highly consistent with the Experience Downtown Master Plan by closely aligning with multiple plan goals. The project addresses Goal 1 – to make Downtown Colorado Springs the economic and cultural heart of the Region; Goal 7 – to create an unforgettable visitor experience; most notably Goal 8 to create a place for inspiration honoring history and facing the future.

Lastly, the project is consistent with the City's Comprehensive Plan, PlanCOS. The Plan emphasizes the value of civic facilities as key elements of unique, vibrant and walkable places that help establish a positive community identity. It also supports adaptive reuse and infill to make Downtown Colorado Springs the City's premier urban activity center.

Staff finds that the proposed project, as well as the specific Warrant request, are substantially consistent with the required warrant criteria as well all other Form-Based Code standards and guidelines. While some technical issues remain to be resolved, Staff fully supports the application and recommends that the Downtown Review Board approve the plan.

e. Technical Issues

The development plan for this project has gone through three rounds of City review (initial submittal and two resubmittals). While some technical issues remain, the majority of initial comments have been fully resolved. City Staff is confident that all these issues can be resolved without any major changes to the plan presented to the Downtown Review Board. All required technical modifications that must be addressed prior to final approval are listed below.

3. Conformance with the City Comprehensive Plan:

The proposed project is consistent with a number of provisions within the City's Comprehensive Plan. The expansion and repurposing of the existing civic building is well aligned with the following Goals, Policies and Strategies:

- Goal UP-1: Enrich the texture and livability of the city as a tapestry of unique, vibrant, and walkable places.
- Strategy UP-1.A-2: Evaluate new and redeveloping land use related to enhancement and support of existing, transitioning, and new activity centers.
- Policy UP-1.C: Locate and design new and repurposed civic facilities to make them highly visible focal points that express quality design, permanence, importance, and community identity.
- Policy UP-3.A: Proactively participate and invest in the development of Downtown as the city's premier urban activity center.
- Goal RC-1: Preserve the best of our history.
- Goal RC-2: Add to, enhance, and promote Colorado Springs' institutions, attractions, and community assets integral to our local culture and civic pride.
- Strategy RC-2.A-1: Allow for the addition of complimentary uses, services, and infrastructure to support existing Defining Institutions and tourism destinations.
- Goal RC-3: Ensure the accessibility and diversity of arts and culture opportunities throughout the city.
- Policy RC-3.B: Reinforce Downtown as an historic, cultural, and entertainment center of the community and the region.

4. Conformance with the Area's Master Plan:

The subject property falls within the 2016 Experience Downtown Master Plan. The proposed use, building and density are all well aligned with the Plan. The project adheres to many of the 8 primary plan goals, including: Goal 1 – to make Downtown Colorado Springs the economic and cultural heart of the Region; Goal 7 – to create an unforgettable visitor experience; most notably Goal 8 to create a place for inspiration honoring history and facing the future.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

Item No: DEPN-22-0055 – COS CITY AUDITORIUM

Approve the COS City Auditorium Form-Based Zone development plan with a Warrant for frontage design, based upon the findings that the application complies with the criteria for granting Warrants, subject to compliance with the following condition of approval and technical plan modifications:

Condition of Approval:

1. Update the development plan's elevation sheets to utilize the revised north building façade included as **FIGURE 5** of this staff report.

Technical and Informational Modifications to the Form-Based Zone Development Plan:

1. Update the plan to add a trash enclosure for the proposed dumpster on the west side of the building.
2. Update the landscape and irrigation details and notes to ensure that all new street trees meet City standards for irrigation and maintenance.
3. Modify the plan details for the outdoor seating area's railing to comply with CSU standards given the proximity of the underground vault to the north.