



# City of Colorado Springs

Regional Development  
Center (Hearing Room)  
2880 International Circle

## Meeting Minutes - Final Downtown Review Board

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Tuesday, November 4, 2025

9:00 AM

2880 International Circle, 2nd Floor, Hearing Room

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### 1. Call to Order and Roll Call

**Present:** 8 - Board Member Kuosman, Board Member Coats, Board Member Hensler, Board Member Lord, Board Member Friesema, Board Member Mikulas, Board Member Sokol and Board Member Luciano

**Absent:** 1 - Board Member Nolette

### 2. Changes to Agenda/Postponements

### 3. Communications

#### **Ryan Tefertiller - Urban Planning Manager**

Ryan Tefertiller, Urban Planning Manager, introduced Charlie Rose as the new Planning Technician.

Mr. Tefertiller said the board recently heard a presentation on the Elevate Downtown Plan, which aims to update the existing Downtown Experience Plan. He said this presentation was shared with City Council during their October 27 Work Session and generated productive dialogue. He said a video of the session is available online for those interested in hearing Councilmembers' feedback.

Mr. Tefertiller said the December DRB meeting may be canceled, as there are currently no action items requiring their attention. If so, meetings would resume in January.

### 4. Approval of the Minutes

**4.A.** [DRB 2303](#) Minutes for the October 7, 2025, Downtown Review Board Meeting.

Presenter:

David Lord, Downtown Review Board Chair

**Attachments:** [DRB Minutes 10.7.25 Draft](#)

**Motion by Board Member Hensler, seconded by Board Member Luciano, that this Minutes be accepted Motion to approve the October 7, 2025, Downtown Review Board Meeting.**

**The motion passed by a vote of 5-0-3-1.**

**Aye:** 5 - Board Member Coats, Board Member Hensler, Board Member Lord, Board Member Sokol and Board Member Luciano

**Absent:** 1 - Board Member Nolette

**Abstain:** 3 - Board Member Kuosman, Board Member Friesema and Board Member Mikulas

**5. Consent Calendar**

**6. Items Called Off Consent Calendar**

**7. Unfinished Business**

**8. New Business**

**Palmer High School**

- 8.A. [ZONE-25-0026](#) Ordinance No. 26-07 to amend the zoning map of the City of Colorado Springs pertaining to 8.27 acres located within the two blocks bound by N. Nevada Ave, E. St. Vrain St., N. Weber St., and E. Platte Ave. from R-1 6/R-5/OR (Single-Family - Medium, Multi-family High, and Office Residential) to FBZ-T2A (Form-Based Zone - Transition Sector 2A). (Quasi-Judicial) (2nd Reading and Public Hearing)

Related Files: ZONE-25-0026, SUBD-25-0076, LUPL-25-0012

Located in Council District 3

Presenter:

Ryan Tefertiller, Planning Manager, City Planning Department  
Kevin Walker, Planning Director, City Planning Department

**Attachments:** [Zone Ord\\_ZONE\\_25-0026](#)  
[Palmer HS CPC Staff Report 121025](#)  
[Attachment 1 - Palmer HS Project Statement](#)  
[Attachment 2 - Palmer HS Zone Change Legal Description](#)  
[Attachment 3 - Palmer HS Zone Change Exhibit](#)  
[Attachment 4a - Boulder ROW Vacation Legal](#)  
[Attachment 4b - Boulder ROW Vacation Plat](#)  
[Attachment 5 - Palmer HS Land Use Plan](#)  
[Attachment 6 - Zoning Map](#)  
[Attachment 7 - Consolidated Stakeholder Input Palmer HS project 022526](#)  
[Attachment 8 - Palmer HS Stakeholder Responses](#)  
[Attachment 9 - Palmer HS Steering Committee](#)  
[Attachment 10 - Palmer HS April 2025 Traffic Study](#)  
[Attachment 11 – Palmer HS Traffic Study Update](#)  
[7.5.704 ZONING MAP AMENDMENT \(REZONING\)](#)  
[DRB\\_Minutes\\_11.4.25 Draft](#)  
[CPC Minutes Excerpt - Palmer High School - 12.10.2025](#)  
[Palmer HS Staff Presentation City Council 031026](#)  
[Applicant Presentation - Palmer High School Transformation](#)

Board member Luciano recused herself as she represents an adjacent property as a commercial broker.

Board member Lord excused himself as he will not be able to stay through all the meeting.

Ryan Tefertiller, Urban Planning Manager, presented the Zone Map Amendment (rezone) and the establishment of the District 11 Palmer High School Land Use Plan for proposed civic uses, consisting of 8.27 acres for the two blocks bound by N. Nevada Ave, East St. Vrain Street, N.

Weber St., and E. Platte Avenue from Single-Family - Medium, Multi-family High, and Office

Residential to Form-Based Zone - Transition Sector 2A, and the public right-of-way vacation known as East Boulder Street consisting of approximately 0.92 acres located between N. Nevada Avenue and N Weber Street. This is the first formal request since 2009 to rezone a property into the Form-Based Zone from a non-Form-Based Zone, this will be also presented to Planning Commission, and the final approval will require City Council action. The project site includes two city blocks on the northeast corner of downtown Colorado Springs, bounded by Nevada, Platt, Weber, and Saint Vrain. The 8-acre site currently includes three zoning districts: R-1-6 and R-5, both residential, and a small portion zoned Office Residential. Mr. Tefertiller said there is a fourth

application regarding this site going through administrative review, it is a Development Plan that will likely include multiple warrants, and it will come back to the Board for review. He said the applicants are requesting the vacation of Boulder Street to create a consolidated campus, which would allow future structural and the creation of a new outdoor athletic facility.

Mr. Tefertiller said the “developer” is School District 11, a public school district that, in the state of Colorado, can request a building permit either directly from the State or through Pikes Peak Regional Building. However, they do not have the ability to vacate public right-of-way without local approval. Agency Review was done and most of the comments were addressed, leaving a few technical items outstanding. Standard notice was sent, as well as public engagement notifications, and public open houses have been held with various stakeholders. A traffic study was completed in September 2025, during the closure of Boulder Street for construction purposes.

Mr. Tefertiller said there are proposed conditions of approval tied to input from Public Works and Traffic Engineering. These conditions emphasize the need for ongoing cooperation between the School District and the City regarding future traffic impacts along the Platte corridor. Additionally, if the school district ever decides to vacate the campus, the city would seek to reclaim the right-of-way currently proposed for vacation, these conditions could be established through an intergovernmental agreement (IGA) between the City and District 11. The site complies with PlanCOS, and meets the review criteria for the applications, with some technical modifications and conditions of approval.

### **Board members’ Questions**

Board member Sokol asked at what point in the development would meet the requirements of permanent D11 activities. Mr. Tefertiller said access could potentially be provided during Phase 1A of the project; however, there may still be internal discussion and uncertainty about the public’s ability to use that alignment. He said once Phase 1B or Phase 2 is underway, the condition regarding access would likely become clearer.

Acting Chair Mikulas asked clarification on what School District 11 activities entitled. Mr. Tefertiller said it is still being discussed between the City and the School District.

### **Applicant’s Presentation**

Chris Lieber, NES, said this is a unique application for the potential expansion of the Form-Based Zone and a major investment for Downtown and the

surrounding neighborhoods, but mostly for the youth and the future. He introduced his team and said they have had more than 40,000 touchpoints for stakeholder involvement, including electronic and regular newsletters, 24 focus groups, six public meetings and more. He said all these have helped shape the alternatives and design for the project.

Jessica Wise, Executive Director of Engagement for the Colorado Springs School District 11, said she appreciates the opportunity to present to the Board such a unique and significant project that the District is approaching with serious responsibility and commitment. She said she will speak about the how and the why they got to this point. She said Palmer High School is of historical significance, established in 1871 as part of General Palmer's original plan for Colorado Springs, that envisioned the city as a permanent home, not a transient stop, with education as a foundational element. She said the current building, constructed in 1939, represents a legacy of modernization that seems to occur every 50 to 70 years. Ms. Wise said Palmer High School's legacy is the flagship school of Colorado Springs, noting that in 1939, the community recognized the need for a new facility to better serve students at the city's core. She said architectural preferences varied, but the decision then, as now, was driven by the evolving needs of students.

Ms. Wise said the district has reached a pivotal moment, with \$100 million in COPs, District 11 is funding this reinvestment independently, without asking taxpayers for additional support. Ms. Wise said this bold move stems from a leadership shift under Superintendent Michael Gaul, who identified a troubling trend: the district was losing students to suburban schools and neglecting its downtown foundation. She said revitalizing District 11 requires a transformative investment in its heart, Palmer High School, and while the district continues to support schools on its borders, such as Doherty and Coronado, the downtown core is where its identity and future lie. She said this project is essential not only for education but for the vitality of the city itself, a place where people can learn, live, thrive and work. Ms. Wise said the process began not with design, but with listening, engaging students, staff, community members, and a passionate alumni network to understand what was truly needed.

Ms. Wise said in terms of student Well-Being there is a lack of athletic facilities and climate control at Palmer, the only high school in District 11 without a full-size track and field, and that the building's lack of air conditioning makes the upper floors nearly unusable during warmer months. She said these conditions hinder both physical activity and academic focus, underscoring the need for a healthier, more supportive environment. Ms. Wise said preserving Palmer's history and tradition is also a priority, highlighting the architectural and cultural significance of the school's Romanesque building. She said the vision of the school is a visible, integrated part of downtown life, rather than a structure that

has faded into the background.

Ms. Wise said they defined six key priorities for the campus. The first one is a commitment to Academic Excellence through the International Baccalaureate (IB) philosophy, which is a student-centered framework that fosters interdisciplinary learning and globally engaged citizenship. She said that Palmer High School's current infrastructure is windowless and has below-grade classrooms, limiting the ability to fully implement this approach. Ms. Wise said a learning environment should include flexible, collaborative spaces where students and teachers can engage dynamically, both inside and outside the classroom.

Ms. Wise said Community Engagement is another major focus, where Palmer could be a downtown hub for intergenerational and community-based learning. She said there are potential opportunities for partnerships with local businesses and organizations, allowing students to extend their learning into the city and inviting community members into the school to participate in educational experiences. She said Arts and Cultural enrichment is also important, and Palmer's downtown location offers unique opportunities to integrate cultural experiences into the curriculum, supporting a well-rounded education and leveraging the school's proximity to local institutions and events.

She said their sixth priority is a Healthy and High-Performance Building, not just a retrofit, but a transformative space that supports modern teaching and learning. Ms. Wise said they have a strong desire to reestablish Palmer as a vibrant, accessible, and inspiring place for students, educators, and the broader community. She said educational spaces, particularly in a downtown setting, should be active and outward facing, not retreating from their surroundings, like Acacia Park with potential for community interaction. Ms. Wise shared a quote from the Roman poet Ovid, who wrote that while animals look down, humans were given faces to look up at the sky, and she appreciated its symbolism because District 11 is choosing to look upward and forward.

Brian Calhoun, RTA Architects, said they were retained, along with Perkins-Eastman, to work on the Master Plan. He said the architectural vision behind the transformation of Palmer High School began with the community to re-energize the campus. He said as the design team studied the site, it became immediately apparent that the campus was fragmented, spread across multiple parcels and city blocks. He said this poses daily challenges for students, as over 1,100 students move between buildings and across busy downtown intersections, creating safety, security, and logistical concerns. He said these issues are more evident during emergency situations, such as lockdowns, when students are scattered across multiple locations and unable to move freely.

Mr. Calhoun said in response, the team developed a consolidated campus solution, presented in a master plan approved by the District 11 Board of Education. He said a key element of the plan is the preservation of the historic 1939 building at the corner of Platte and North Nevada, which is of cultural significance, especially the iconic “front 9” area known to all students and alumni, the design retains the building’s exterior while transforming the interior. Mr. Calhoun said the renovation introduces much-needed public and common spaces, which the school currently lacks, creating a new heart for the campus. He said the plan includes a new academic building on the east side of the campus along Weber Street, that will address the spatial and functional needs of the school and supports a more unified and secure student experience while honoring Palmer’s legacy. Mr. Calhoun said Phase 1A centers on a new three-story academic building designed to support modern, flexible learning, providing breakout areas, small and large group spaces, and environments suited for project-based learning and presentations.

Mr. Calhoun said students must travel two blocks to access gym and athletic facilities at the existing complex, that is why the new plan proposes consolidating athletic functions on campus, including a practice football field and a track, amenities Palmer currently lacks. Mr. Calhoun said Phase 1B includes the potential addition of a fourth floor to the academic building and the construction of the full-size practice field and all-weather track. He said the only feasible location for these athletic facilities is over the closed section of Boulder Street. He said the plan also considers the homes along the north side of the campus, indicating a thoughtful approach to integrating the new design into the existing neighborhood.

Mr. Calhoun said the proposed location for the track overlaps with four existing homes along the north side of the site. He said a 20-foot fire access path requested during the planning process would shift the track even further north, increasing the overlap with those properties. He said the master plan is not intended to expand the school’s capacity. He said with enrollment declining citywide, the new design is scaled to accommodate the current student population of approximately 1,100, down from a peak of over 2,000 a decade ago, by creating a right-sized, relevant, and future-ready campus.

Mr. Calhoun said throughout the planning process, the team explored multiple design concepts and gathered extensive community feedback, one included creating an inward-facing courtyard to serve as the heart of the school. He said another concept included vacating Boulder Street to unify the campus and expand outdoor learning and recreation space. He said a third option was bridging over Boulder. Mr. Calhoun said the final plan includes vacating Boulder Street to accommodate the field and track, as it was the feedback they received

from the community. He said this as a transformative solution that aims to create a collegiate atmosphere, with outdoor spaces and views of Pikes Peak integrated into the layout.

Mr. Lieber presented the Palmer High School redevelopment project that involves multiple applications, including a land use plan amendment, rezoning, right-of-way vacation, and future development plan and replatting of the property. He said the goal is to create a consolidated, connected campus that supports both academic and extracurricular functions while enhancing pedestrian safety and urban integration. He said the district's vision aligns with city planning documents such as PlanCOS and the Experience Downtown Master Plan, which emphasize education, arts, culture, and pedestrian connectivity. Mr. Lieber said the project is designed to strengthen the relationship between the school and the downtown area, with a focus on creating a vibrant, walkable environment.

Mr. Lieber said Phase 1A focuses on the southern block of the Palmer High School campus, with the construction of a new academic wing and a full renovation of the historic 1939 building. He said it also introduces streetscape improvements and the installation of geothermal wells beneath a future multi-use field on the north side of Boulder Street, and the vacation of Boulder Street, which will allow for a cantilevered section of the new building and help unify the campus. Mr. Lieber said Phase 1B adds a track and field facility on the northern portion of the site, replacing the existing tennis courts along Weber Street, and includes temporary parking solutions around the school to support the new layout. He said they will be providing 484 parking spaces. Mr. Lieber said Phase 2 focuses on expanding the school's athletic and wellness facilities with the construction of a main gymnasium that will house a swimming pool, fitness rooms, locker rooms, and other related amenities. Mr. Lieber said each phase will include detailed planning and community engagement to ensure the campus evolves in a way that supports both student needs and neighborhood character.

Mr. Lieber said with the rezoning they are trying to integrate Palmer High School into urban fabric, but the school's current zoning (R1-6) is outdated and results in nonconforming conditions. He said the proposed rezoning to Form-Based Zone Transition 2 (FBZ-T2) better supports the school's urban context, allowing for zero-lot-line setbacks, active streetscapes, and flexible design standards. He said they do meet the review criteria for this application.

Mr. Lieber said regarding the Saint Vrain homes, the district acquired all four properties for campus expansion. He said an architectural assessment found that none of the homes qualified for historic registry. He said the district explored relocation partnerships but found no feasible options. Mr. Lieber said

future development would include thoughtful design and community engagement to create a new, appropriate edge along Saint Vrain Avenue.

Mr. Lieber said vacating right-of-way usually occurs around parks, health care and education. He said the district plans to convert Boulder Street into a secure pedestrian plaza with emergency and utility access preserved through easements. He said Palmer High School is smaller compared to other schools in the area. He said they are proposing gates for pedestrian access through vacated Boulder Street. He said the new academic building will cantilever over part of the right-of-way, making the vacation essential for construction. Mr. Lieber said the closure would improve pedestrian safety and unify the campus, estimating nearly 3.8 million pedestrian trips through the corridor over the next decade.

Mr. Lieber said traffic studies and real-time counts showed that the closure would have minimal impact on vehicle circulation, with most traffic naturally redistributing across the city's grid. He said emergency response times would increase by only about 20 seconds, and alternative detour routes via Wasatch and Pikes Peak Avenue are viable. Mr. Lieber said crash data from 2019 to 2024 showed 284 incidents near the school, with 14 involving pedestrians, further supporting the need for improved pedestrian infrastructure.

Mr. Lieber said a follow-up traffic count conducted in August showed that actual traffic impacts from the proposed Boulder Street closure were lower than projected. He said traffic is being redistributed rather than concentrated, with some shifting to Saint Vrain and most moving to Platte or other nearby corridors. He said unsignalized intersections present turning challenges, but most traffic is using signalized routes; however, adjustments to signal timing based on time of day were recommended.

Mr. Lieber said the district is also committed to restoring the historic median at Nevada and Boulder, with approval from the Parks and Recreation Advisory Board; and making additional curb and gutter improvements. He said their proposal brings a numerous community benefit, with the pros outweighing the cons. Mr. Lieber said although construction is likely a decade away for Platte Avenue improvements, the city requested a condition of approval allowing the right-of-way to be reclaimed if no longer needed by the district, and the district agreed.

### **Public Comments**

Judy Owsley, President of the Palmer Alumni Association, said the design team's year-long, inclusive engagement process has been very thorough, involving alumni, students, staff, neighbors, and community members through

surveys, meetings, focus groups, and open houses. She said as a steering committee member, she visited similar historic high schools in Washington, D.C. and was impressed by their transformations. Ms. Owsley said preserving Palmer's 150-year historic character while modernizing the campus is very important. She said a key benefit of the project is improved student safety and the addition of a full-size track and field for the first time in the school. She said she believes the consolidated campus will foster school spirit and community energy, while also enhancing downtown Colorado Springs.

Krista Burke, Principal of Palmer High School, said she is now in her third year at Palmer and student safety, and educational quality are her top priorities. She said there are approximately 1,200 students that face daily challenges crossing busy streets like Wasatch and Boulder to attend PE and health classes. She said some of the benefits of the new academic building design include above-ground learning spaces and improved air quality control.

Austin Wilson-Bradley, Director of Economic Development, Downtown Partnership of Colorado Springs, said he supports the project on behalf of the Downtown Development Authority and the Partnership. He said a recent economic study highlighted the need to better educate and train local talent for the 21st-century workforce, noting that Palmer is downtown's only high school and plays a critical role in that effort. Mr. Wilson-Bradley said the project represents a once-in-a-generation opportunity to invest in downtown education and aligns with the goals of the Downtown Master Plan and Experience Downtown Plan. He said he also supports the vacation of Boulder Street because it enhances campus security and student safety.

Cheryl Brown, President of the Historic Uptown Neighborhood Association, speaking for the residents to the north and east, said they have concerns about vacating East Boulder Street, because it is a vital, signalized east-west connector to downtown and I-25. She said diverting traffic to less safe, unsignalized routes like Platte Avenue would increase danger, especially given existing issues with speeding and obstructed visibility on nearby streets. Ms. Brown said the three historic homes in the National Register should be preserved instead of demolished, as they are essential to the neighborhood's character. She said parking loss is another major concern, as most residents rely on street parking, and removing it would create safety risks, particularly for students walking longer distances. She said the proposed rezoning to FBZ is not necessary as the area is predominantly residential and should remain so.

Daniel Way, Middle Shooks Run resident for eight years, said Palmer High School has a nice open, campus-like design, contrasting it with the enclosed nature of modern schools. He said the school's integration with public streets fosters trust, safety, and a sense of community connectedness. He said it is

important to maintain the city's 400-foot block standard, which supports walkability and pedestrian experience. He said Colorado College and the CityWalk apartments are examples on how development can succeed without disrupting public access or neighborhood character. Mr. Way said he is concerned that the proposed superblock design and Boulder Street vacation would compromise Palmer's unique identity, reduce pedestrian connectivity, and send a misleading message about neighborhood safety. He said Boulder Street is his preferred connector into downtown because of the signalized crossing.

Amy Hill, Middle Shooks Run resident, said she supports public education and the Palmer campus remodel but prefers the design with a pedestrian bridge that maintains both pedestrian and vehicle access on Boulder Street. She said, as a downtown resident and commuter, she is concerned about traffic safety and congestion, as there have been frequent near-misses as pedestrian and driver. She said she wonders about the reliability of claims that vacating Boulder would have minimal impact, especially given its recent consideration as a key corridor in city planning. Ms. Hill said breaking the downtown block structure would be a short-sighted move for long-term urban planning. She said a suggestion would be relocating the statue at Nevada to improve traffic flow and advocated for scrambled pedestrian crossings around the campus to enhance safety without sacrificing connectivity.

Mr. Tefertiller said he received additional comments by email, and he will distribute hard copies to the Board. Young Shin, City Attorney's Office, said reading the emails received from residents is not a common practice, that is why they are provided to the Board in advance, and the opportunity of participating either in person or online to comment is available.

### **Applicant's Rebuttal**

Mr. Lieber said District 11 is committed to doing the project right, and while the district could legally continue operating under R1 zoning as a state institution, it chose to pursue rezoning to better align with the site's design needs. He said remaining in R1 would require numerous variances, particularly for setbacks, which the FBZ zoning would accommodate more appropriately while still respecting neighborhood character. Mr. Lieber said the district is committed to maintaining Palmer as an open campus, especially during lunch, to preserve its connection to downtown and the vibrancy students bring; however, there is also the need to balance openness with student safety, especially during lockdowns. Mr. Lieber said the idea of turning Boulder Street into a one-way thoroughfare would prioritize vehicle flow over pedestrian safety and contradict the city's vision for a walkable downtown. He said pedestrian access should take precedence and that the district is open to working with the city on traffic solutions during future improvements to Platte Avenue.

**Board members' Questions**

Board member Hensler asked if funding was available for all three phases. Ms. Wise said the \$100 million from the COP fully funds Phase 1 of the Palmer High School project, which includes construction of a new academic wing and renovation of the historic portion of the school. She said this phase also features a new community entrance and convocation space at the Nevada corner. She said funding mechanisms are time-limited, requiring all funds to be used within three years, which is why construction is already underway. Ms. Wise said the district expects to secure funding for the track and field portion of Phase 1B; however, Phase 2, focused on building the athletic facility, remains unfunded. She said the district's goal is to pursue a bond to complete the project, though any decision on that would rest with the newly seated Board of Education.

Board member Hensler asked if they were not to get approval for the vacation of Boulder Street, the project would stop at Phase 1A; and why is this application just coming forward if construction is already underway. Mr. Calhoun said Phases 1A and 1B are related to the vacation of Boulder Street. He said if the vacation is not approved, the district would need to revise the master plan. He said Phase 1A could still proceed, but part of the building slightly overlaps Boulder Street, which would require adjustments. Mr. Calhoun said without the street vacation, constructing a track and field on campus would no longer be feasible, which was a key challenge the plan aimed to solve. He said the district waited to present the plan until it had addressed multiple rounds of city review to ensure alignment with all criteria. He said as a school district they can obtain building permits, and due to time-limited funding, the district had to begin construction without delay.

Board member Friesema asked how they obtained the permit for the overhanging. Mr. Calhoun said they do not have that permit yet, only demolition and foundation permits. Mr. Tefertiller said it may seem unusual, but it is not uncommon for demolition or site preparation work to begin before public hearings or entitlement approvals. He said demolition and foundation permits for the Palmer project were issued prior to the right-of-way vacation, but because the project is for a public school, those permits were not reviewed by the city's Planning Department, but by a limited group within Pikes Peak Regional Building Department, acting on behalf of the state. Mr. Tefertiller said the vertical construction permit, once submitted, will also bypass city zoning review, though it is expected to align with the submitted development plan, which will still be reviewed by the city and the Downtown Review Board. He said the street vacation and zoning change are strictly local matters. He said public school districts do not have the authority to use public rights-of-way without city approval, and only City Council can authorize a street vacation. Mr. Tefertiller

said although the district has requested a specific zoning designation, state law allows public schools to operate in any zone, meaning that while local zoning codes may list schools as permitted, conditional, or prohibited uses, public school districts are not strictly bound by those classifications when providing educational services.

Board member Hensler asked if they have considered relocating the houses, and if there is a possibility of having the field near Nevada instead. Mr. Calhoun said the approved master plan includes redevelopment of the Herbs Field site for athletic use, such as softball, baseball, tennis, and other outdoor facilities, but not for a football field or track. He said the site is intended solely to support educational and athletic programs at Palmer High School, with no plans for unrelated development. Mr. Calhoun said the district has actively sought partners or nonprofits interested in relocating the historic homes, but no group has come forward yet.

Acting Chair Mikulas said the Palmer High School project is a complex one, and, as a lifelong resident, he recognizes the project's significance and its potential to contribute to thriving downtown. Acting Chair Mikulas encouraged the board to focus their questions and decisions on how the proposal aligns with current planning frameworks and how best to support it within that context.

Acting Chair Mikulas asked for more details about the proposed programming on Herb Fields and how it is related to students' safety. Mr. Calhoun said the proposed programming for Herbs Field includes limited changing facilities, which would primarily support after-school athletics, with minimal daytime use for physical education, such as occasional tennis units. He said most of the daily student activity currently occurring at the Herbs complex would shift to the new consolidated upper campus under the master plan and would significantly reduce student movement to and from Herbs Field during the school day. Mr. Calhoun said large athletic events would continue to be held at Garry Berry Stadium, while Herbs Field would serve smaller, routine practices. He said parking at the site would remain limited, intended only for coaches, drop-off, and minimal circulation, with no plans to accommodate large event parking.

Acting Chair Mikulas asked if they could provide data on how the scenario would change around the safety concern for students crossing during peak hours. Mr. Calhoun said after-school use of the Herbs Field complex would remain consistent with current patterns and student athletes would continue to use the facility. He said after-school activities involve far fewer students than daytime school operations. Mr. Calhoun said a larger site would allow for full athletic consolidation, but the current plan maximizes available space by relocating the highest-use elements to the main campus. He said the team did explore placing the field along Weber Street within the consolidated campus but determined it

was not feasible due to space constraints.

Board member Friesema asked if there would be any type of separation given that the field would be very close to the sidewalk. Mr. Calhoun said the track would be positioned close to the sidewalk, separated by an ornamental fence and a narrow strip of landscaping. He said minimal stadium seating would be incorporated into the future athletic building, intended to accommodate small gatherings rather than large events.

Board member Friesema asked if the area with gates for pedestrian access would be a public space. Mr. Calhoun said they have plans for the east side of the new academic building, where a setback fence would create a public outdoor plaza along Boulder Street. He said this space is intended to be open and accessible to the public, allowing for gatherings and community use. Ms. Wise said, as Director of Engagement for the district, she manages crisis communications and said there were two incidents last year involving individuals with AK-47s arrested near the school, so it is the district's responsibility to prioritize student safety in today's public education environment. Ms. Wise said the district values the surrounding neighborhood and supports community access; however, safety must come first. She said gates may need to be locked at certain times, but the district is committed to exploring ways to balance safety with openness. She said the district is willing to consider models where public access to school athletic facilities is allowed in urban settings.

Board member Sokol asked if the houses plan to be demolished for the first phase as the land use plan shows those sites as open space. Mr. Calhoun said in the master plan that is part of Phase 1B. Mr. Lieber said the district is not in the business of managing housing and that current leases will end by year's end. He said the district's preference is to partner with an organization willing to relocate the homes. Mr. Lieber said the timing of demolition or relocation would depend on whether a partner emerges and what timeline they would need. He said the district is open to accommodating that process if possible; however, if no partner is found, the buildings will ultimately need to be removed to proceed with the project.

Board member Sokol said looking at the land use plan, it seems that there is room for at least two homes to stay until the beginning of the final phase. Board member Sokol said given the housing crisis, it is unfortunate that they lose four multifamily houses. Mr. Lieber said their preference would be to find a partner to use those houses in proximity.

Board member Hensler asked if those houses were listed in the National Register. Mr. Lieber said they are part of the Historic District but are not listed in the Register.

Board member Sokol asked what the implications are for other intersections and crosswalks if they vacate Boulder Street. Todd Frisbie, City Traffic Engineer, said traffic studies showed a dispersion of traffic patterns rather than significant congestion, and that signalized intersections at Saint Vrain and Weber, as well as Boulder and Nevada, would remain available even if the vacation proceeds. He said additional safety improvements, such as pulling back parking near intersections and adding bump-outs, could enhance pedestrian visibility and reduce risk. He said pedestrians will be using signalized crossings and pointed out that existing medians allow for safer, two-stage crossings.

Board member Sokol asked if those improvements would be absorbed by the developer. Mr. Frisbie said it has not been discussed yet and those are not specific requirements that the City has established. Board member Sokol said Boulder is the main connector for the neighborhood to Tejon so, if the vacation is happening, he would like to see pedestrian improvement and connectivity.

Acting Chair Mikulas said he would also want to see pedestrian improvements if the vacation moves forward. Mr. Tefertiller said those details are usually part of the development plan review that would come back before the Board early 2026.

Board member Hensler asked what City Engineering's position on vacating streets close to schools and hospitals. Mr. Frisbie said Public Works evaluated the Boulder Street vacation request based on five key considerations outlined in the staff report. He said the debate around street vacations is subjective and context-dependent, but City's Traffic Engineering team focused on the core question: whether the public right-of-way is still needed. Mr. Frisbie said while the city has approved other street vacations in different contexts, each case is unique. He said in this instance, staff provided their interpretation of the criteria for vacating Boulder Street and offered guidance for decision-makers to weigh in accordingly.

Acting Chair Mikulas asked if the athletic field is only able to fit if they vacate Boulder Street, and if that is the only reason they are doing it. Ms. Wise said that is not the only reason, but student safety and campus connectedness. She said by consolidating most student activity onto the main campus, the district aims to reduce daytime movement across city blocks and better monitor student safety. She said there was one incident where a police arrest occurred in the middle of students walking to class, underscoring the difficulty of managing safety across dispersed locations. Ms. Wise said Palmer's new building will support 1,500 students, up from the current enrollment of just under 1,200, but below the original 2,000-student capacity. She said families and students have expressed a desire for modern athletic facilities, which are standard at other

high schools. Mr. Lieber said that the original planning process included multiple design alternatives, some of which did not feature a track and field; however, the idea of a new gym and a reconfigured campus layout on the north side was present. He said what emerged clearly from community feedback at that stage was strong support for a more connected campus with independent of athletic facilities. He said the primary motivation for the proposed Boulder Street vacation was student safety and campus cohesion, and then the track and field component was introduced to maximize the use of the unified space.

Board member Coats asked what the negative aspects of rezoning to FBZ could be. Mr. Tefertiller said the Form-Based Zone (FBZ) is designed to allow flexibility in land use within urban environments. He said traditional residential zones are required to have setbacks from the street, the FBZ encourages buildings to be placed close to sidewalks to promote a vibrant, pedestrian-friendly atmosphere. He said this zoning supports urban density and mixed-use development. Mr. Tefertiller said regardless of whether the site remains zoned FBZ or reverts to residential zoning (such as R1-6 or R5), the school district is likely to proceed with a similar buildout due to its authority under state law, which exempts it from strict compliance with local zoning standards like setbacks and height limits. He said the FBZ would allow a wide range of future uses if the site were ever repurposed; however, given the \$100 million investment in Phase 1A alone, he believes it is highly unlikely the property will be used for anything other than a school for many decades.

Board member Friesema asked if the district could make various changes without coming before the Board. Mr. Tefertiller said under state law, public school districts are required to submit development plans to the local municipality for review, and they could also require a public hearing before the Downtown Review Board; however, they are not obligated to obtain final local entitlements. He said they may proceed with development regardless of zoning compliance. He said local governments do retain the right to request a hearing before the school board, which ultimately has the final authority over what is constructed on public school property.

Board member Sokol asked if the recommendations they would add would be a requirement they have to meet. Mr. Tefertiller said the City retains full local control over public rights-of-way; they have significant leverage to influence the outcome of the project through conditions or modifications. He said if the vacation is not approved, the school district would be expected to return with a revised land use plan that reflects development without the vacated street. Mr. Tefertiller said there might be disagreements between the city and the school district over conditions, particularly if the district does not accept modifications required by the Downtown Review Board, Planning Commission, or City Council; however, the district has so far demonstrated a cooperative approach,

showing a willingness to align with local zoning and work closely with city staff and technical experts to meet applicable standards. Mr. Shin said City Council has the authority to place conditions upon the vacation of right-of-way, but they should be related to the vacation itself. He said City Council could agree or not to accept any recommendation placed by this Board.

Acting Chair Mikulas said he wondered if vacating Boulder Street is needed, when some other things could be accomplished without doing so.

Board member Hensler said she likes the idea of connectivity; however, wonders if the field needed to be there as most of the activities happen after school hours.

Board member Sokol said, according to the applicants, about 3 million students would be crossing within the next decade, showing most pedestrians would be students themselves. Board member Sokol said he worries about public connectivity from east to west for the public, making it challenging balance with safety. Ms. Wise said the Palmer project is about creating a functional urban campus, not just vacating a street. She said the district could bypass local processes, but it has chosen to collaborate with the city and community to ensure the campus fits the neighborhood. She said she understands the complexity of balancing safety with access and expressed a strong commitment to working through those challenges. Ms. Wise said the district is flexible and willing to adapt. She said the district remains open to studying community access needs and adjusting plans accordingly.

Board member Sokol asked if they knew how many people were living in those apartments. Ms. Wise said she does not have an exact number but two are lived in, while the other two are businesses, the Nevada property, which is not in the historic district, has the most tenants.

Board member Sokol asked if they have considered maintaining residential use on those properties. Ms. Wise said they had talked to the tenants, and they have not expressed any concerns about ending their leases.

Board member Coats asked if the district considered having that area more open to the public, probably outside school hours. Ms. Wise said they studied a school in Washington where the track and field area is managed through a shared-use agreement between the school and the city's Parks and Recreation Department, which has shown itself to be a successful and beneficial model to the community. She said that District 11 is open to similar shared-use arrangements and already has systems in place for public rentals of school facilities; however, more community input is needed to determine interest and shape how such access could work locally. Mr. Tefertiller said this is something

that could be discussed later but if this were to happen, conditions would need to be established during City Council final's approval. Mr. Shin said if the vacation of Boulder is approved, that would become the district's property, and it would be up to them what they decide to do with that space.

Board member Hensler said, depending on construction phasing, public access through the area may be limited or entirely restricted due to it becoming an active construction site. Board member Hensler said it would be a trade-off between losing vehicular access and making significant improvements in student safety. Board member Hensler said, as a downtown driver, she noted that avoiding student-heavy areas could make adjacent routes more efficient. Board member Hensler said reducing student exposure to traffic is important given the number of national incidents and the unpredictability of student behavior.

Board member Friesema said large, complex projects are becoming more common and should be expected in the future. Board member Friesema strongly supports downtown development and believes this project is a prime opportunity to merge public and private goals. Board member Friesema said for downtown to thrive as a walkable, vibrant neighborhood, future planning must prioritize maximizing public land use rather than diminishing it.

Acting Chair Mikulas asked what resources and site studies have guided them to decide that the vacation is the best idea, besides safety. Ms. Burke said they are trying to foster globally minded students and ensure safety. She said they value students engaging with the downtown community and building relationships with local businesses. She said many work-based learning opportunities are located nearby, which supports educational goals. She said distractions during school hours caused by public interactions can become a concern. Ms. Burke said there was a past incident during summer construction when a breach in the fence led to an unauthorized individual occupying her office, underscoring the need for secure boundaries even during off-hours. Mr. Lieber said placemaking is very important, and maintaining a full street grid through campus areas can undermine a cohesive campus identity. He said high pedestrian volumes near schools like Palmer and Colorado College already cause traffic delays, even with crosswalk infrastructure. Ms. Wise said 50% of Palmer's student population qualifies for free and reduced lunch, therefore they rely heavily on walking and public transit.

Board member Hensler said she said Boulder Street segment between Weber and Nevada is primarily campus space and she sees potential for future connectivity and student-centered development and believes the change could enhance the campus environment.

Board member Friesema asked if the Board could just vote on the zone change as a final decision, given that the Board does not have authority over the other two applications. Mr. Tefertiller said the property is not currently form-based zoned and the code anticipates that adjacent property owners may seek rezoning into the district. He said in such cases, the Downtown Review Board (DRB) is required to make a recommendation. He said, although the DRB lacks direct authority over the land, it must still provide a recommendation on all three applications and final decisions will proceed through the Planning Commission and City Council.

Acting Chair Mikulas asked if they could recommend approval for two of the applications and place recommendations for the third one. Mr. Tefertiller said they can certainly do that; however, he would suggest adding a technical modification with the recommendation of approval if that is the case.

Board member Friesema asked what the difference would be between the vacation and revocable permits. Mr. Tefertiller said right-of-way vacation transfers public land to private ownership, while revocable permits allow temporary private use of public but are limited and must be renewed annually. He said given the scale of proposed improvements on Boulder Street, relying on revocable permits would be atypical and less ideal. Mr. Shin said vacation of a right-of-way is not revocable at all, while revocable permits can be rescinded under specific circumstances.

Mr. Tefertiller said there are three conditions proposed with the approval of the right-of-way vacation, one of them being an agreement that would allow public use of the Boulder right-of-way is unused.

Board member Sokol said he likes the vision of the campus, but he would like to recommend two conditions if the project is approved: first, the applicant implements substantial pedestrian safety improvements; second, that residential land use be retained in Phase 1A to preserve affordable housing, particularly the Victorian units.

Acting Chair Mikulas asked if they could put conditions of approval to the development plan. Mr. Tefertiller said they can, as it is a more detailed application regarding the improvements. Mr. Lieber said the development plan already includes pedestrian safety improvements, such as upgraded ramps and bump-outs at key intersections like Platte and Nevada. He said they have also planned the removal of the southbound left-turn lane on Nevada at Boulder, which will allow for sidewalk expansion and a new pedestrian ramp. Mr. Lieber said they could potentially install bump-outs at the ends of Boulder Street to reduce pedestrian crossing distances.

Acting Chair Mikulas said it would be up to the owner to decide what to do regarding the houses. Board member Sokol said it would be a shame to see those houses go when they could still have some benefits for affordable housing. Board member Hensler said she considers it is not within the Board's purview to dictate what should be done in private property.

**Motion by Board Member Mikulas, seconded by Board Member Kuosman, to recommend approval to City Council the Zoning Map Amendment of 8.27 acres for the two blocks bound by N. Nevada Ave, E. St. Vrain St., N. Weber St., and E. Platte Ave. from R-1 6/R-5/OR (Single-Family - Medium, Multi-family High, and Office Residential) to FBZ-T2A (Form-Based Zone - Transition Sector 2A) based on the findings that the change of zone criteria in Section 7.5.704.D. of City Code are met once the following technical modifications are implemented:**

**Technical Modifications to the Zone Change Application:**

**1. Revise the page numbering of the zone change legal description to read "Page 1 of 2."**

**The motion passed by a vote of 6-0-1-2.**

**Aye:** 6 - Board Member Kuosman, Board Member Coats, Board Member Hensler, Board Member Friesema, Board Member Mikulas and Board Member Sokol

**Absent:** 2 - Board Member Nolette and Board Member Lord

**Recused:** 1 - Board Member Luciano

- 8.B.** [LUPL-25-001](#)  
[2](#) Establishment of the District 11 Palmer High School Land Use Plan for proposed civic uses consisting of approximately 8.27 acres located on the two blocks bound by N. Nevada Ave., E. St. Vrain St., N. Weber St., and E. Platte Ave. (Quasi-Judicial)

This application is in association with the School District 11 Palmer High School zone change and right-of-way vacation, which had their first reading setting a hearing date on February 24, 2026.

Related Files: ZONE-25-0026, SUBD-25-0076, LUPL-25-0012

Located in Council District 3

Presenter:

Ryan Tefertiller, Planning Manager, City Planning Department  
Kevin Walker, Planning Director, City Planning Department

**Attachments:** [7.5.514 LAND USE PLAN](#)

**Motion by Board Member Kuosman, seconded by Board Member Hensler, to recommend approval to City Council the Palmer High School Land Use Plan consisting of 8.27 acres for the two blocks bound by N. Nevada Ave, E. St. Vrain St., N. Weber St., and E. Platte Ave. based on the findings that the land use plan criteria in Section 7.5.514.C.3. of City Code are met once the following technical modifications are implemented:**

**Technical Modifications to the Land Use Plan Application:**

- 1. Revise the Land Use Plan to illustrate student drop off areas and accessible parking zones along N. Weber St. consistent with Traffic Engineering guidance.**
- 2. Call out curb ramps along N. Nevada Ave. to serve bus drop off areas.**

**The motion passed by a vote of 5-1-1-2.**

**Aye:** 5 - Board Member Kuosman, Board Member Coats, Board Member Hensler, Board Member Mikulas and Board Member Sokol

**No:** 1 - Board Member Friesema

**Absent:** 2 - Board Member Nolette and Board Member Lord

**Recused:** 1 - Board Member Luciano

- 8.C.** [SUBD-25-0076](#) Ordinance No.26-06 vacating the public right-of-way known as East Boulder Street consisting of approximately 0.92 acres located between N. Nevada Ave. and N. Weber St. (Legislative) (2nd Reading and Public Hearing)

Related Files: ZONE-25-0026, SUBD-25-0076, LUPL-25-0012

Located in Council District 3

Presenter:

Ryan Tefertiller, Planning Manager, City Planning Department  
Kevin Walker, Planning Director, City Planning Department

**Attachments:** [ORD\\_VacationROW\\_East Boulder Street](#)

[7.5.522 VACATION PLAT](#)

[Exhibit A - Boulder ROW Vacation Legal](#)

[Exhibit B - Boulder ROW Vacation Plat](#)

**Motion by Board Member Kuosman, seconded by Board Member Hensler, to recommend approval to City Council the vacation of public right-of-way known as East Boulder Street consisting of approximately 0.92 acres located between N. Nevada Ave. and N. Weber St. based on the findings that the vacation criteria in Section**

7.5.522.C.5.b. of City Code are met provided the following Conditions of Approval are applied and the noted technical modifications are implemented:

**Conditions of Approval:**

- 1. An agreement between the City of Colorado Springs and School District 11 shall be entered into that requires School District 11 to allow public egress over the property if the space is unused for construction or permanent School District 11 activities.
- 2. Request that D11 collaborate with the City to provide public egress during construction of the PPRTA-fund Platte Avenue Improvements (Wahsatch to Circle) project.
- 3. An agreement between the City of Colorado Springs and School District 11 shall be entered into that requires School District 11 to return ownership to the City of Colorado Springs, should the district choose to dispose of the property.

**Technical Modifications to the Vacation Application:**

- 1. Revise the vacation plat to correctly and clearly identify the basis of bearing and associated monuments to match the written legal description.
- 2. Add notes and labels to the vacation plat to clarify that public utility easements are being retained through the vacation. Portions of the retained easements may be eligible for vacation at a later date.
- 3. Remove the notary block for the surveyors statement as it is not needed for the vacation plat.
- 4. Revise "Colorado Springs Utilities Chief Executive Officer" to "Utilities Executive Director" on the vacation plat.
- 5. Revise Note 8 on the vacation plat to meet Colorado Springs Utilities' standards for reserved easement language.
- 6. Revise notes on the vacation plat that refer to dedicating new easements via the plat.

**The motion passed by a vote of 4-2-1-2.**

**Aye:** 4 - Board Member Kuosman, Board Member Coats, Board Member Hensler and Board Member Sokol

**No:** 2 - Board Member Friesema and Board Member Mikulas

**Absent:** 2 - Board Member Nolette and Board Member Lord

**Recused:** 1 - Board Member Luciano

**9. Presentations**

**10. Adjourn**