



City of Colorado Springs

City Hall
107 N. Nevada Avenue
Colorado Springs, CO
80903

Meeting Minutes - Draft Downtown Review Board

Wednesday, October 2, 2019

8:30 AM

City Council Chambers

6.A. [CPC CU
19-00102](#)

A Form-Based Zone Conditional Use Development Plan for the Downtown Stadium project on 4.9 acres of FBZ-CEN (Form-Based Zone - Central Sector) zoned land located at 520 Sahwatch Street.

(QUASI-JUDICIAL)

Related File: CPC V 19-00103

Presenter:

Peter Wysocki, Director, Planning and Community Development
Department
Ryan Tefertiller, Manager, Urban Planning Division

Staff presentation:

Ryan Tefertiller, Urban Planning Manager, presented a PowerPoint with the scope and intent of this project.

Bob Cope, Economic Development Officer for the City of Colorado Springs, thanked the board for the role they have played in the revitalization of downtown and the downtown Renaissance we are in the midst of. Mr. Cope encouraged the board to support the project explaining we have reached a milestone in implementing a sports venue as part of a formula that breeds excitement and economic vitality into downtown.

Applicant Presentation:

Chris Lieber, N.E.S, presented a PowerPoint with the scope and intent of this project.

Laura Neumann, Strategic Project Lead for Weidner Apartment Homes, shared information with the Board about the project.

Nick Ragain, President of the Switchbacks Holdings Partnership, presented to the Board.

Questions:

Board Member Briggs said he was concerned about setting a precedence of having one story in the Form-Based sector when two stories are required.

Board Member Briggs wanted to know if there would be any clarification going forward in the Form-Based code scrub to address this so that there would not be sites popping up with using the justification that it applies because it was needed for part of their site.

Mr. Tefertiller explained it was a subjective issue and one of the primary hopes of the Form-Based Code is to be as objective as possible. However, Mr. Tefertiller said he believed there was a reason to support this if a new building within the central sector is being built under the two-story minimum building height if the front of the building is two stories even if the back part is only one story, as long as from the street it appears as if it is two-story. Mr. Tefertiller said we could try to articulate that in the Form-Based code scrubs, but it is reasonable to say the entirety of a new project does not necessarily need to meet that minimum building height threshold. Mr. Tefertiller also explained that the size and scope of this project and the amount of the publicly visible portion of this project that is less than two stories justifies relief from that standard for this project.

Board Member Raughton commented on Cimarron Street being the gateway to the downtown and the design neglected the importance of this gateway. Board Member Raughton would like staff to work with the applicant on this. Mr. Tefertiller said he would defer to the applicant but said the stadium has evolved significantly from the early conversations with city staff and key stakeholders.

Board Member Coppedge asked the applicant to address how elements of the Downtown Partnerships gateway project were integrated with this project since Cimarron is obviously a gateway. Board Member Coppedge also asked that the parking and pedestrian access across Cimarron be clearly addressed in the presentation.

Mr. Tefertiller said planning staff has been involved with the Downtown Partnership and believed most of the work was just west of this site and on the bridge itself, but deferred to Susan Edmondson or Len Kendall with the Downtown Partnership to address that.

Mr. Tefertiller went on to explain there would be improvements with widened pedestrian ramps to make sure the volume of spectators going north and south across Cimarron can be handled, as well as adding a traffic signal at Cimarron and Sahwatch, which will be the primary pedestrian entry into the stadium and will have extra wide pedestrian facilities. Traffic Engineering will also account for a signal time change during games that will provide a comfortable and adequate queuing and time for pedestrians to get north and south across the road, as well as the possibility of having uniformed traffic control at some of the signals during peak times.

Board Member Raughton asked about the parking district and if there were plans to create new parking garages. Mr. Tefertiller explained there the City's parking enterprise does not have a physical geographic boundary and there was not a parking district. He further explained the enterprise can build parking structures where there is demand.

Board Member Nicklasson asked if the El Paso County parking garage was included in the study. Mr. Lieber said it was part of the calculation. Board Member Nicklasson noted that the county garage on Costilla is only available during weekdays and not available on weekends to the public nor in the evenings to the public, so it is not just an automatic 700 parking spaces available.

Board Member Nicklasson asked Mr. Lieber to address how the lighting will be going up in the neighborhood. Mr. Lieber said the lighting system will be LED lights and the lights will be directed into the field and into the stadium.

Board Member Nicklasson pointed out that the overall design for the pedestrian entrance is beautiful; however, the entrance coming across from the west as you're coming into downtown is a little lacking. Mr. Lieber explained the project team is working with and accepting proposals and that part of the theming with this part has not been determined. Mr. Lieber also said based on the FBZ zone it was important to pull the building all the way up to the property boundary.

Board Member Briggs asked for more clarification on the pedestrian plaza on the vacation area of Moreno since it was mentioned that it was carefully designed and thought out, but there was no material that showed any of that.

Mr. Lieber said they were not bringing forward a concept plan for that but wanted to emphasize the elevation of the field which is largely set by the elevation of the plaza space, so that the pedestrian access and flow from the plaza in and out of the stadium works well.

Board Member Briggs explained not having that information is concerning because the project is being considered now. Board Member Briggs asked what if the apartment complex fails and the only things left is dirt. Board Member Briggs also asked if there was any way to liven up the wall with murals or public art to address the gateway feel.

Mr. Lee Sterrett with Perkins & Will said the south stands were minimal on purpose to encourage the activity that will be happening at the plaza level. Mr. Sterrett went on to give a detailed description of what the south side and the north side would look like and how the transition area would work.

Board Member Briggs said he believed there would be more pedestrian traffic along Moreno than on Cimarron and that they would be trying to find parking from the southeast. Board Member Briggs wanted to know if there was an entry point on that corner of Moreno and Sahwatch. Mr. Lieber said that was a secondary entry and its use would depend on the nature of the event and the primary entry and focus will be on the northeast corner.

Board Member Nicklasson asked about the service entrances and wanted to know if the design would ensure traffic would not be blocked. Mr. Lieber explained how the service entry components worked and that the surface doors, recycling bins and dumpsters would be screened.

Board Member Case asked if the housing on the south side of the stadium is owned by the same partnerships for the stadium. Ms. Laura Neumann answered that it will be owned by Weidner Apartment homes, which is half of Switchbacks Holdings LLC. Ms. Neumann said they anticipate the public plaza along Moreno would be finished within a year of the opening of the stadium and then the apartment complex within two years of the opening of the stadium.

Board Member Case said he understood it would be nice having housing next door to the stadium if you are a fan, but it might be a concern with that kind of use right next door when residents are trying to go to bed. Ms. Neumann said Weidner has over 35 years of experience in apartment dwelling and have studied urban living and there is a type of individual, not just millennials, that want to live in a walkable community that has a lot of energy.

Board Member Case asked Ms. Neumann if she was representing the ownership of the apartments in saying it was okay that there is no access plan to that property except from the alley or the side streets with respect to the plaza and the vacation of the road. Ms. Neumann said that was correct. Ms. Neumann also said the residential units will have their own parking built within the facility, as well as Weidner providing additional parking for the stadium.

Board Member Case asked if there was any contemplation of expandability for seating. Mr. Lee Sterrett explained the potential for expansion has to be built in from a structural standpoint and to bring anything beyond those existing boundaries of what is in the plans now would mean going vertical. Board Member Case asked if at the 8001 point, does the stadium need to move. Mr. Sterrett said that would not be the case from an architectural standpoint.

Board Member Case asked if there was access from Sierra Madre for people who parked to the north and walk down Sierra Madre. Mr. Lieber said that entrance would be the Sky Club entrance on the mid-block, but there is not a

main ticket component entry on that corner.

Board Member Case asked if there would be signage that would show the directions for people to go. Mr. Sterrett said they were in the early process of developing the signage that would be implemented around the perimeter both inside and around the building.

Board Member Coppedge said one of the things that has not been addressed is the Mill Street Neighborhood and how off street parking will be managed. Board Member Coppedge also said that where the pedestrian access shifts to the north side of Cimarron that goes along the creek and below the interchange is not functioning well currently and people are still walking down the south side of Cimarron, which is a mess. Adding this number of people to this area will increase that.

Mr. Lieber said they want to provide parking that is easily and readily accessible, but to minimize some of the parking issues in the Mill Street area is why the entrances would be located on the north side of the stadium. Mr. Lieber mentioned there have been conversations with the City encouraging studies for further efforts with the parking.

Mr. Lieber also spoke about the pedestrian traffic and trail access on the north side of the Cimarron bridge going eastbound and that there are bike lanes on Sierra Madre that will extend north towards the museum which will be a good connection. Also certain events should have uniformed traffic control, not so much for vehicles, but for the pedestrian crossing.

Supporters:

Doug Price, President/CEO of Visit Colorado Springs

- Supportive of this project
- Visit Colorado Springs poised to work with other community partners to bring more events to this end of town
- Believe NCAA Division II men and women's soccer championships that will be played here will be the first of many we can attract
- Many new hotels being built in downtown Colorado Springs and events like this will fill them
- Provide jobs for people who need them
- Pikes Peak Community College is going to be starting the first hospitality tourism program curriculum and a project like this will allow students gain experience

Susan Edmondson, Downtown Partnership

- Applauded the applicants for the incredible attention to their resubmittal

and significant changes that made improvements to this project

- Pleased to see the northwest corner changes with the restaurant with 365 days of use
- Currently no one is on this portion of Cimarron and that will change
- Believes this project has addressed both perspectives of game days and non-game days

Opponents:

None

Questions of Staff:

Board Member Coppedge asked what would happen to that portion of the Moreno Vacation if the apartments were not built. He questioned if there was a way to have assurances that the area of Moreno will be dealt with in the near term versus left for the long term.

Board Member Nicklasson asked for clarification on if the public plaza is attached to the stadium project or if it was attached to the apartment project, as well as how far into the Moreno vacation the stadium project goes. Board Member Nicklasson also wanted to know if the plaza was not attached to being built with the stadium and then the apartment project is not built, what could we do to make assurances the pedestrian way is actually completed.

Mr. Tefertiller answered that he believed just the northern most 15 feet will be incorporated into the proposed subdivision plat for the proposed stadium. The other 45 feet would be left to be developed and incorporated in a future submission for the apartments to the south. It would not make sense to put in physical improvements now knowing they would probably be damaged or destroyed when the adjacent apartments are built. Currently, Moreno is a roadway today and will not be dirt or gravel. Mr. Tefertiller said the hope is to see those apartments come through around the same time the stadium is being completed.

Board Member Nicklasson asked if there would be a sidewalk there as well, and Mr. Tefertiller explained that there is no sidewalk there today, so no, there would not be a formal pedestrian sidewalk separate from the roadway.

Board Member Case wanted to point out that the City's Parking Enterprise and the City Council needs to find locations for parking for these kinds of venues if we are going to have a parking exempt zone. Board Member Case also said that we used to have a downtown shuttle that was discontinued due to financial problems, but that it might be time for that to come back.

Board Member Case pointed out the rings on the diagram and encouraged the

applicants to consider a smaller set of rings near the bistro so it has that identity coming in not only from the east but from the west. Board Member Case also recommended that if the project was going to be expanding in the future, that needs to be addressed now by council on how to approach this being a larger facility, as there will be some neighbors of the project that will not be happy.

Board Member Briggs pointed out the following to be considered by the City and City Council:

- Dispersed parking is great, but puts an extra onus on the city to figure out how to reduce friction going from parking to the site
- A sense that the public is feeling that we are always behind the ball and letting parking figure itself out
- We should not play catch up when dealing with the parking situation and not wait for things to sort themselves out
- City should commit to some of these issues now and get ahead
 - Transit
 - Pedestrian improvements in the surrounding blocks
 - Parking restrictions

Board Member Briggs asked about the sidewalk width surrounding the stadium. Mr. Tefertiller said this issue was discussed in detail as part of the initial review to provide dimensions and clarity on how wide the sidewalks would be to ensure adequate width. Mr. Tefertiller explained the Form-Based code has a six-foot minimum sidewalk where eight feet is preferred. Most of the sidewalks around the perimeter of the site are ten-feet but the Sierra Madre side is somewhat more narrow. Mr. Tefertiller assured that through the review adequate sidewalks was a critical review element.

Board Member Briggs said he didn't think the 11 feet lane width along Sahwatch was needed for a street with that slow of traffic and a couple of feet could be gained for the sidewalk. More people would be walking down Moreno and then entering the site. Board Member Briggs wondered if eight-feet would be side enough. For Cimarron Street, you could easily get two more feet of it without hurting traffic which would add to the project.

Mr. Tefertiller said as far as process is concerned, it is typical and expected that there might be some last evolution in design and details that get cleared up or modified between the public hearing and the Downtown Review Board or even City Council and final approval. Mr. Tefertiller explained it was staff's obligation to make sure any of the changes are aligned with the discussion of the Downtown Review Board and at City Council, and to make sure nothing is added that is outside the comfort or support of those entities. Mr. Tefertiller said he believed there was an opportunity for public works, traffic engineering and the applicant to look at the lane widths and see if there is any ability to pick

up additional width.

Board Member Briggs said he agreed with the concern about the Moreno Vacation are and said it was worth putting in the motion to require some kind of interim or transitional use when the stadium is done that will not be some sort of a dirt pit until the apartments are complete.

Board Member Case asked about the glazing on the north side wall, which is quite long and wanted to know how it was being addressed for any kind of street glazing or making that a pedestrian friendly location. Mr. Tefertiller explained with this particular building and use, adding glazing to the north side is unrealistic. At best it would be faux windows that are reflective or tinted to such that they really would not add anything to the project. The applicant has some pockets of shrubs and landscaping and other things to provide a little bit of rhythm and pattern and they continue to work with staff to try to do as much as possible, but it is unlikely to reach the 25% glazing.

Board Member Case suggested an art implementation and was curious if a soccer pleyer mural could be put on there or something fun. Possibly use the Art on the Streets program to put a private sculpture or encourage council to consider this is how they might bring that into the public art realm. Board Member Case said he was just thinking of ways to provide the relief that glazing is supposed to do.

Mr. Lieber gave an explanation of how the glazing was planned out and how layering was a consideration, but that adding glazing along that particular stretch just wasn't practical. Board Member Case asked if there were going to be building uses inside that wall that is any kind of offices or other uses. Mr. Lieber said there were no uses inside that space.

Rebuttal:

Mr. Tefertiller said the city has put a lot of time and effort into looking at parking opportunities in this quadrant of downtown.

Peter Wysocki, Director of Planning and Community Development, commented that the City recognizes that it needs to be a partner with the private sector to do its part in either studying, building, maintaining and operating some parking facilities throughout the downtown area. Mr. Wysocki assured that all city departments that have a stake in the redevelopment of downtown were diligently working on coming up with solutions, and that expands into alternative modes of transportation. Mr. Wysocki said in the future, we could invite parking enterprise staff to present to the board the bigger picture that transcends beyond the scope of this project.

Board Member Hahn suggested there could be more street level activity around the perimeter of the facility. More daily activities on the rest of the perimeter would be more desirable. Mr. Lieber said that outside of the restaurant space was deliberately left for outdoor café type space. The curb heights and the design along Sahwatch was intentional so that the space could become a festival space related to different events. Mr. Lieber said they were mindful of that area for food trucks and adding that vibrancy for some of those parking pockets along that corridor.

Board Member Coppedge asked if the tracks were still buried on Moreno and if so that might be a design opportunity. Board Member Coppedge said there are several areas of opportunity to make the gateway work along with pedestrian improvements, many of which have been done by the parking enterprise along with this project itself and setting the stage for other development. Board Member Coppedge said this is our opportunity to do something really, really big and we should not be timid about it. Board Member Coppedge said it is critical that we provide an example of how a project like this can work adjacent to a relatively modest residential neighborhood and not throw those people under the proverbial bus. With that, Board Member Coppedge said he strongly in support of this project with the technical recommendations that have been made and the other comments made regarding pedestrian access, the vacation on Moreno, and Mill Street.

DISCUSSION AND DECISION OF Downtown Review Board:

Board Member Raughton said he was concerned about the Mill Street Neighborhood and in keeping the integrity of the neighborhood as a future part of the housing stock for the city, but said he would be supportive of this project and commended the staff, the involvement of the community and the work that has occurred with the downtown.

Board Member Colvert commended the applicant for really listening to the public's feedback and making adjustments to the plan that is before us today. Board Member Colvert said the plan meets two of the three criteria the board is required to look at being the intent of the zoning code and conforms with the comprehensive plan, as well as a number of other plans in place. The project does impact the surrounding neighborhood and the city needs to be more proactive with the parking, but this is a parking exempt zone. Board Member Colvert brought up that it was interesting the parking study did not include some of the private parking garages that offer public parking such as Plaza of the Rockies. Also on South Tejon, a new Marriott Hotel is being built which will have an additional 200 parking spaces. Board Member Colvert said this is a catalytic project and strongly believes that the positives will outweigh the negatives and for that reason will be in support of the project.

Board Member Hahn wanted to emphasize what Board Member Case said about anticipating and planning for the success on this project and making this location work for the long term.

Board Member Briggs said he was thrilled this project was happening. Board Member Briggs made the motion to approve the Conditional Use Development plan with the inclusion of an added technical modification to clarify the pedestrian plaza track will be developed to an interim usable state including pavement and access pending future developments at the plaza.

Motion by Briggs, seconded by Raughton, to recommend approval to City Council the Conditional Use Development Plan based on the findings that the Conditional Use criteria found in Section 7.5.704 of the City Code will be met once the following technical modifications are addressed:

Technical modifications to the Conditional Use plan

- 1. Finalize approval of the project's drainage report**
- 2. Confirm street addresses for the building and add them to the plan.**
- 3. Document the percent glazing for the west building elevation.**
- 4. Add the proposed legal description to sheet 1 of the plan.**
- 5. Clarify proposed streetscape details including curb type, phasing, pedestrian ramp locations, and what elements are by the developer versus by others.**
- 6. Modify the plan to illustrate an adequate and comfortable pedestrian way along the Sierra Madre side of the site.**
- 7. Clarify presence of existing easements confirming where easement vacations are underway.**
- 8. Update the landscape sheet to document the location and detail of structural soil to ensure tree health.**
- 9. Revise the plan to ensure that all public space improvements are fully ADA compliant**
- 10. Clarify that the pedestrian plaza tract will be developed to an interim usable state including pavement and access pending further future developments of the plaza.**

The motion passed by a vote of 7:0:2:0

Aye: 7 - Hahn, Colvert, Case, Briggs, Coppedge, Raughton and Nicklasson

Absent: 2 - Heggem and Gullixson

6.B. [CPC V
19-00103](#)

An ordinance vacating public right-of-way described as W. Moreno Ave. between S. Sierra Madre St. and Sahwatch St. and a 30 foot wide portion of Sahwatch St. between W. Cimarron St. and W. Moreno Ave. within Addition #1 to the Town of Colorado Springs consisting of 0.87 acres.

(LEGISLATIVE)

CPC CU 19-00102

Presenter:

Peter Wysocki, Director, Planning and Community Development
Department
Ryan Tefertiller, Manager, Urban Planning Division

See Item 6.A. (CPC CU 19-00102)

Motion by Briggs, seconded by Case, to recommend approval to City Council the Right-of-Way vacation based on the findings that the vacation criteria found in Section 7.7.402.C. of the City Code will be met once the following technical modifications are addressed:

Technical modifications to the Conditional Use plan

1. Document that the easements retained as part of the Sahwatch vacation are adequate for the existing public stormwater infrastructure in the area.

The motion passed by a vote of 7:0:2:0

Aye: 7 - Hahn, Colvert, Case, Briggs, Coppedge, Raughton and Nicklasson

Absent: 2 - Heggem and Gullixson