



Legislation Text

File #: 16-502, **Version:** 1

A resolution authorizing City Staff to execute an amended and modified deed of conservation easement for the Santa Fe Depot building removing approximately 1.5 acres of parking lot, drive aisle, and landscape area from the easement.

Presenter:

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

Summary:

In late-2014 the O'Neil Group Company, LLC (OGC) purchased the Santa Fe Depot and the surrounding buildings with the goal to create "The Catalyst Campus, a collaborative ecosystem where industry, education, and the entrepreneurial spirit come together to create community, technological advancement and a highly-skilled workforce." The primary building on the campus is the Santa Fe Depot which was completed in 1917 and served as the rail depot for the Atchison, Topeka, and Santa Fe Railroad from 1917 to 1971 and is listed on the National Register of Historic Places. In 1981 the City Council approved a resolution establishing a historic preservation conservation easement on the property to protect the historic integrity of this unique asset. In 2015 the City of Colorado Springs worked with OGC to obtain a \$150,000 grant from the State Historic Fund (SHF) to improve and maintain the building. During discussions regarding the building's necessary maintenance, the State's requirements for preservation easements when allocating funding from the SHF, and future plans for expansion on the campus, it became obvious that the time was right to update the 35 year old easement.

The specific element of the easement that is proposed to be modified is the legal description which establishes the boundaries of the preservation area. The existing easement's legal description matches the parcel configuration that existed at the time the easement was recorded and extends over 300 feet south of the building. The result is that approximately 22,000 square feet of parking lot is encumbered by the easement and could impact future plans for expansion on the campus.

Previous Council Action:

On December 22, 1981, the City Council adopted Resolution 374-81 authorizing the execution of a conservation easement preserving the Santa Fe Depot building and adjoining site improvements.

Council heard the presentation for this item during work sessions on September 12 and 26.

Background:

City Council Resolution No. 374-81 (Figure 1) authorized City officials to execute a conservation easement (Figure 2) to preserve the historic and architectural resource of the Santa Fe Depot. The existing easement encumbers approximately 2.3 acres of the roughly 8 acre campus. The property

owner desires to modify the legal description of the existing easement to limit the easement to the footprint of the historic building thereby removing a roughly 1.5 acres of parking lot, drive aisle, and landscape area from the easement. This change gives the property owner more long term flexibility for the development of the campus while continuing to preserve and protect the historic and architectural integrity of the depot building.

A wide range of City Staff have worked together to evaluate this request. City representatives involved in this effort include: Planning and Community Development; Parks, Recreation and Cultural Services; the City Attorney's Office; Finance; Real Estate Services; and Economic Vitality. After considerable review City Staff has concluded that the proposed change to the easement should be supported and that the amended and modified deed of conservation easement (Figure 3) should be adopted and recorded against the property.

The proposed change to the easement, and the efforts to develop a successful Catalyst Campus project, are well aligned with the City's Strategic Plan which aims to promote job creation. Specific objectives applicable to this project include the desire to support the community's economic development goals through partnering with existing and future businesses and economic development partners to identify and remove barriers to business growth and development, and to partner closely with organizations that are driving catalytic projects downtown.

Financial Implications:

N/A

Board/Commission Recommendation:

At their regular meeting on August 1, 2016, the Historic Preservation Board voted 3 to 2 to support the proposed change and to forward the request to City Council.

Stakeholder Process:

N/A

Alternatives:

1. Adopt a resolution authorizing City Staff to execute the proposed easement modification;
2. Modify the proposed easement document;
3. Deny the proposed resolution leaving the existing easement in place;
4. Refer the matter back to Staff for further consideration

Proposed Motion:

Adopt a resolution authorizing City Staff to execute an amended and modified deed of conservation easement for the Santa Fe Depot building removing approximately 1.5 acres of parking lot, drive aisle, and landscape area from the easement.

N/A