



the**PLACE**

## The Launchpad

Applicant's Response to Appeal  
Against Administrative Approval  
of Development Plan (DEPN-23-  
0001)



shopworks architecture



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Landscape  
Architecture  
Urban Design

NES



Thank You Colorado  
Springs Planning  
Department and Planning  
Commission

We have been asked to respond to this appeal, and we prepared it with the goal of providing insight, knowledge, and understanding to provide a bridge to bring people together and sufficiently clarify the topics brought up in this appeal.

We  
would  
like to  
Introduce

*Andrea Barlow, AICP, Principal,  
NES*

*Shawna Kemppainen, CEO, The  
PLACE*

*Wayne Bland, Chair, Housing  
Stability Committee, The PLACE*

*Lisa Sorensen, Development  
Director, Cohen-Esrey*

# Who Are the Applicants?

Cohen-Esrey is a national affordable housing development company. We are a mission-based developer and truly believe that affordable housing is the cornerstone to Empowering People to Thrive. Cohen-Esrey owns and manages over 8,000 units nationwide and is based in KC. We currently have properties under construction in MN, WI, TX & CO. Panorama Heights is under construction in Southeast Colorado Springs which is 133 units of affordable housing and is the first affordable housing community to utilize TIF in Colorado Springs.



the**PLACE**

The PLACE ignites the potential in youth to exit homelessness and lead self-determined, fulfilled lives. Established in 2000, it provides a full spectrum of programs for youth ages 15 to 24 including street outreach and daytime drop-in center, state-licensed youth shelter, diverse housing models and wrap around services such as education, employment, life skills development and healthcare.

- Since inception, The PLACE helped an estimated 2,525 young people to permanently get off the streets and build a stable future.
- In 2022, 156 youth permanently exited homelessness via The PLACE programs.
- Annually, 85% or more of youth in housing maintain a stable home and improve their health, employment and financial stability.

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# Project Intent

**Housing** is a basic human need, and it plays a critical role in shaping the quality of life for individuals, families, and communities. [Wikipedia](#)



## Permanent Housing & Services

Permanent Supportive Housing is not a Homeless Shelter. The residents have a lease and pay rent. They have jobs. It is a stepping-stone to a more stable and successful future.

It has been proven with data from The PLACE, Corporation for Supportive Housing, & HUD that, when services are provided along WITH housing, the long-term **independent** housing is 85% **successful** AND in addition, it saves money to taxpayers, and reduces costs on social infrastructure (hospitals, Emergency Rooms, Police, Jails, Shelters, etc.) by up to 4 times.

# Project Intent

## The Launchpad

- An apartment community that provides affordable housing to youth who have not had the opportunities that many of us have.
- 50 Units Permanent Supportive Housing **servicing at risk & homeless youth ages 18-24.**
- Community room, offices for The PLACE and Cohen-Esrey Communities, 24-hour front desk security.
- Cohen-Esrey will be the property managers, with a 40-year land use restriction to assure long-term affordability.
- The PLACE will operate the programs and services.

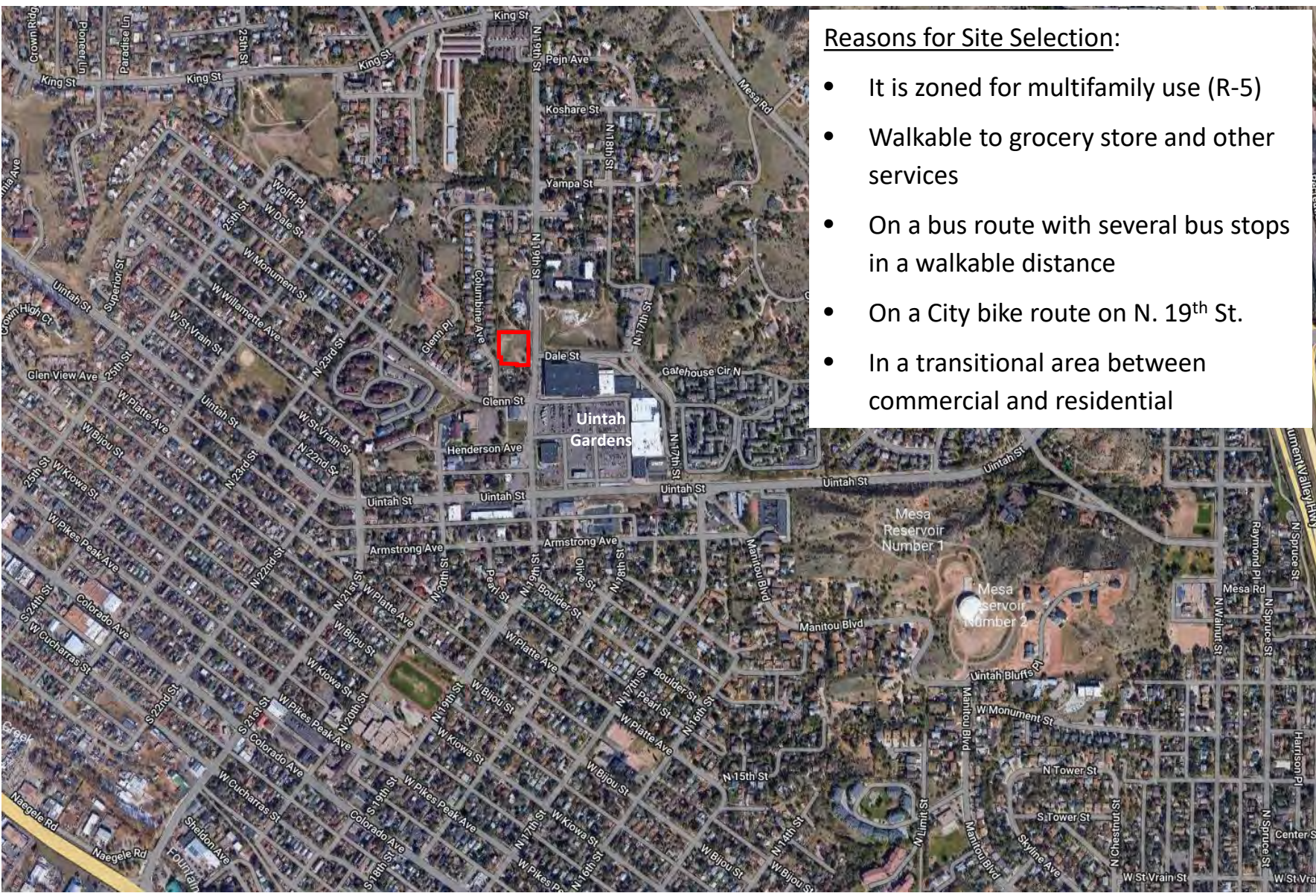


**THE PROJECT MEETS ALL CITY ZONING AND DEVELOPMENT STANDARDS**

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# Site Location



## Reasons for Site Selection:

- It is zoned for multifamily use (R-5)
- Walkable to grocery store and other services
- On a bus route with several bus stops in a walkable distance
- On a City bike route on N. 19<sup>th</sup> St.
- In a transitional area between commercial and residential

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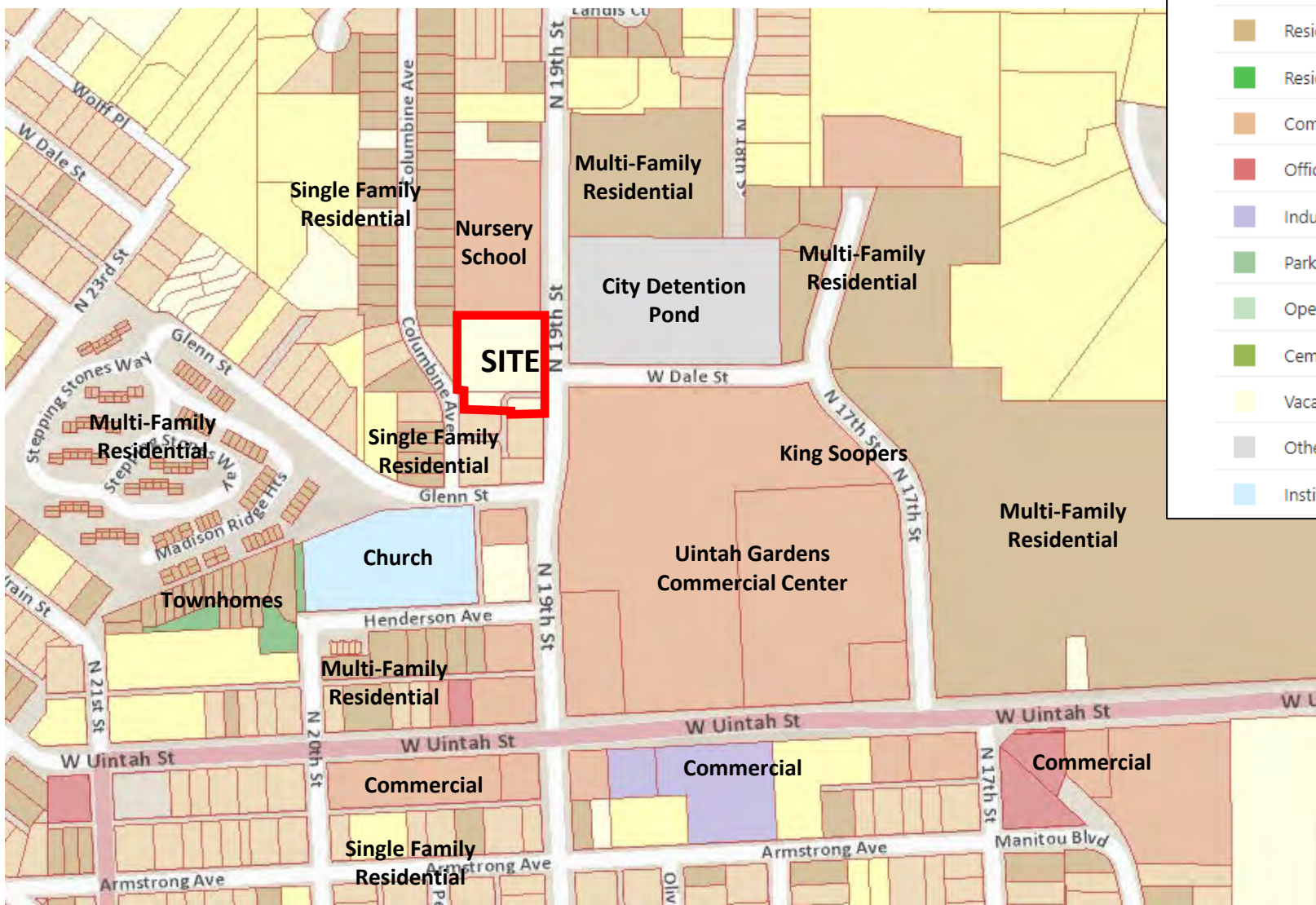
# Property Information

- 1.37-acre property
- Site comprises:
  - 810 N 19<sup>th</sup> Street
  - 809 Columbine Avenue (2 parcels)
  - Vacated portion of alley (Ordinance 23-22)
- New address will be 864 N 19<sup>th</sup> Street





# Surrounding Land Use



Current Land Use

- Residential (low density)
- Residential (med density)
- Residential (hi density)
- Residential (common area)
- Commercial
- Office
- Industrial
- Parks
- Open Space; Trails
- Cemetery, Golf Course
- Vacant
- Other
- Institution

# Zoning



# Zoning



- Property was zoned R-5 in 1973 (Pre-dates the adoption of The Westside Plan in 1980)
- The provisions of the R-5 standards in the old Zoning Code apply as the application was submitted in on January 3, 20203, prior to the adoption and implementation of the UDC
- Relevant standards:
  - Maximum Height: 45 Feet
  - Minimum Lot Size: 4-story building 800 sq.ft. (equates to a density of 58 du/ac)
  - Maximum Lot Coverage: 40%

# Project Description

- The building has been located within the required R-5 Zone setbacks:
  - Front (N. 19<sup>th</sup> St.): 20'-0"
  - Rear (West): 25'-0"
  - Side (North/South): 5'-0"
- Building located clearly outside the hill's topography to mitigate the impact on the slope.
- Building buffered from N 19<sup>th</sup> St by greenery, accessible ramps, and the main entry stair that leads to the overhead canopy welcoming you into the building.
- The southern facing entry is flanked by a large "porch-like" walk that allows accessible access to the parking for everyone.



**THE PROJECT MEETS ALL CITY ZONING AND DEVELOPMENT STANDARDS**

# Project Description

- 4-story elevator building
- Under the 45' maximum height, which is calculated off an average of 4 main building corners at grade.



SOUTH ELEVATION



EAST ELEVATION



NORTH ELEVATION



WEST ELEVATION

# Project Description

- There will be 47 x 1-bed units, and 3 x 2-bed units, for a density of 36 du/ac.
- Residential units occupy a portion of the ground floor, and all of levels 2 through 4.
- The building features a level 1 amenity lobby area with meeting rooms, staff/offices, laundry spa, mailboxes, kitchenette, lounge areas, etc.
- The Launchpad Apartments can be only accessed by authorized users via key card at the single south facing door.
- The courtyard to the west is only accessed from within the building by residence and staff, and features a shade structure, seating areas, extensive plantings, lawn area, perimeter meditation walk, etc.



**THE PROJECT MEETS ALL CITY ZONING AND DEVELOPMENT STANDARDS**

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# Response to Appeal

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# Grounds of Appeal

- Consistency with The Westside Plan with regard to proposed density and building height.
- Consistent PlanCOS with regard to relevance of neighborhood-specific master plans and the site's location within an "Established, Historic Neighborhood".
- The approved density and building heights are exceptions that are against the language and intent on the Zoning Code.
- The building will dwarf the bordering properties and will be the tallest building in OCC.
- Grading and slope removal would destabilize slope on west side.
- Unreasonable to approve this "controversial" application administratively with little public comment or input and without a public process.
- Putting a publicly subsidized facility for homeless adults next to a nursery school is unreasonable.
- No tacit benefits of proposed housing and no benefit to the community where it is being proposed.
- Detriments of the project are obvious: Increased traffic, increased drug use and dealing, increased homeless population congregating around the property, unsavory characters interfacing with a young student population, etc.



# Consistency with the Westside Plan



Generalized Land Use Map designates project site as Medium Density Residential, where it recommends:

- Density of 5-16 units per acre
- Height limitation of 35 feet
- Detached, semi-detached, attached and multi-family structures
- Site plan review of buffering, landscaping, traffic circulation, and building orientation

# Consistency with the Westside Master Plan

- The Westside Master Plan provides “recommendations and strategies designed to meet the community objectives.” (Page 1)
- “Land use recommendations promote the concept of flexibility in the land use classifications in order to compliment the unique circumstances of inner-city development.” (Page 2)
- Residential Land Use Recommendations :
  - On almost all vacant land designated for future residential land use, the pursuit of compatible higher density development rather than the historical single-family development found on the Westside. (Page 15)
- North Bluff Subarea Recommendations (Page 23):
  - The primary recommendation for change in land use concerns existing vacant land. Except for parks and open space, the recommendation is to ensure higher density residential development. The areas selected for higher density development do not negatively affect existing uses and, if well planned, contribute to the future of the area.

# Consistency with PlanCOS: Relevant Plans

## Relevant Plans and their relationship To PlanCOS

While Plan**COS** provides overarching guidance, numerous City plans provide additional detail required for effective application and implementation of this Vibrant Neighborhoods Chapter. Of particular importance will be publicly and privately initiated neighborhood-specific master plans. **Used in conjunction with the overall themes and ideas in Plan**COS**, these plans should be relied on to allow for and articulate land use and other area-specific recommendations for the neighborhoods they address.** As existing plans are updated and new plans created, these plans should support the themes of Plan**COS**.

Where a discrepancy exists between small area plans and the City's Comprehensive Plan, the more specific plan should generally take precedence **particularly if these plans are up-to-date and are reflective of the key elements of this theme.** New and updated Neighborhood Plans should follow the guidelines and vision of Plan**COS** and include its common desired elements. Links to relevant plans are found below.

# Applicability of the Westside Master Plan

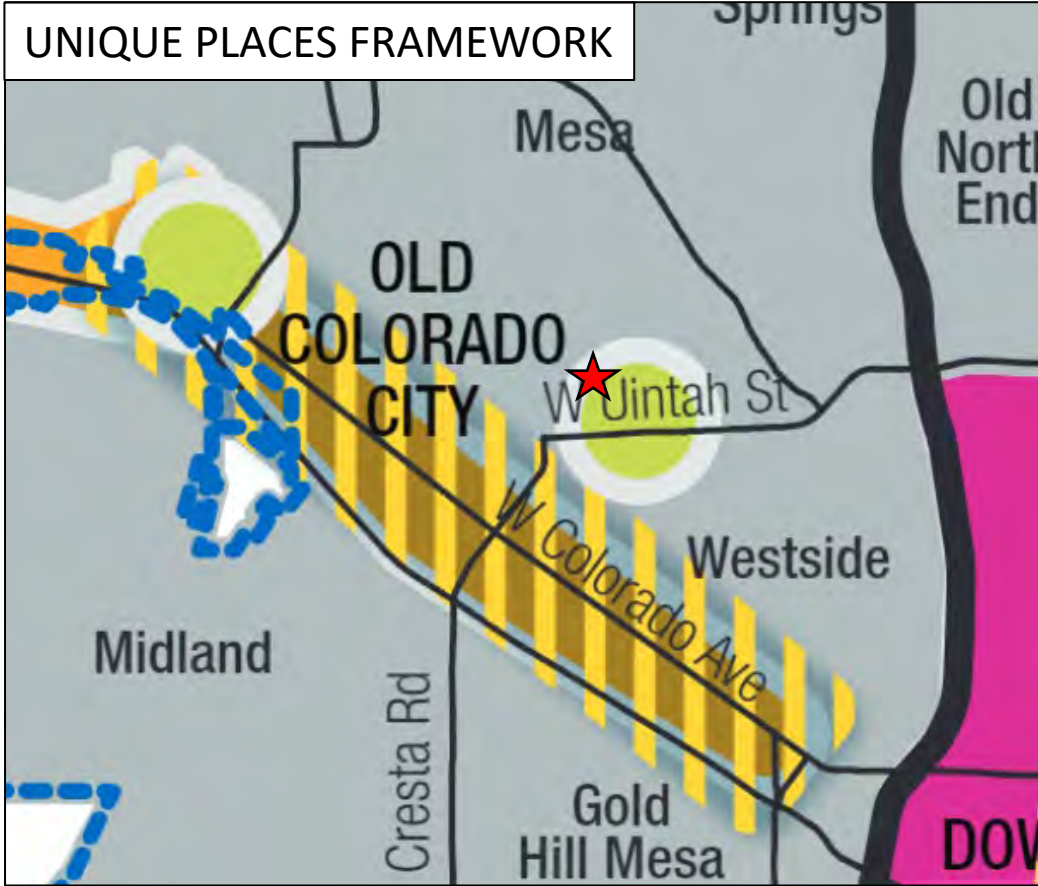
- The Westside Master Plan is listed as a “relevant plan” for the purposes of PlanCOS Chapter 2 Vibrant Neighborhoods.
- However, it is only relevant in so far as it is “up-to-date” and “reflective of the key elements of this theme”.
- The Westside Master Plan was approved in 1980, 43 years ago.
- The needs of the City and the Westside Community have changed significantly in the last 43 years:
  - There is now an attainable housing crisis in the City that did not exist 43 years ago.
  - There is now a significant homeless population in the City, increasingly in youths and young adults, that did not exist 43 years ago.
  - This property was vacant when the Westside Plan was adopted and is still vacant 43 years later and is described as an eyesore.
  - With the adoption of PlanCOS (2019) there is an increased emphasis on infill development and higher density residential development.

# Applicability of the Westside Master Plan

- The Westside Master Plan does not reflect all the themes of the Vibrant Neighborhoods Chapter of PlanCOS, to include:
  - **Strategy VN-1.A-1:** Prioritize development of Neighborhood Plans, particularly in mature areas of the city. **Update outdated plans.**
  - **Strategy VN-2.A-1:** In partnership with other organizations and agencies, continue to develop and support existing, expanded and new initiatives to address homelessness to include provision of additional shelter beds, **permanent supportive housing**, and programs to be coupled with increased enforcement applicable laws including camping bans.
  - **Strategy VN-2.A-3:** Support land use decisions and projects that provide a variety of housing types and sizes, serving a range of demographic sectors, and meeting the needs of residents and families **through various life stages and income levels.**
  - **Strategy VN-2.A-4:** Allow for zoning residential bonuses that result in the provision of additional attainable housing, such as **increased heights or densities.**
  - **Strategy VN-2.A-5:** Amend the City's zoning code to allow attainable housing in multi-family and commercial zoning districts in order to **maximize the availability and distribution of this housing option in the city.**

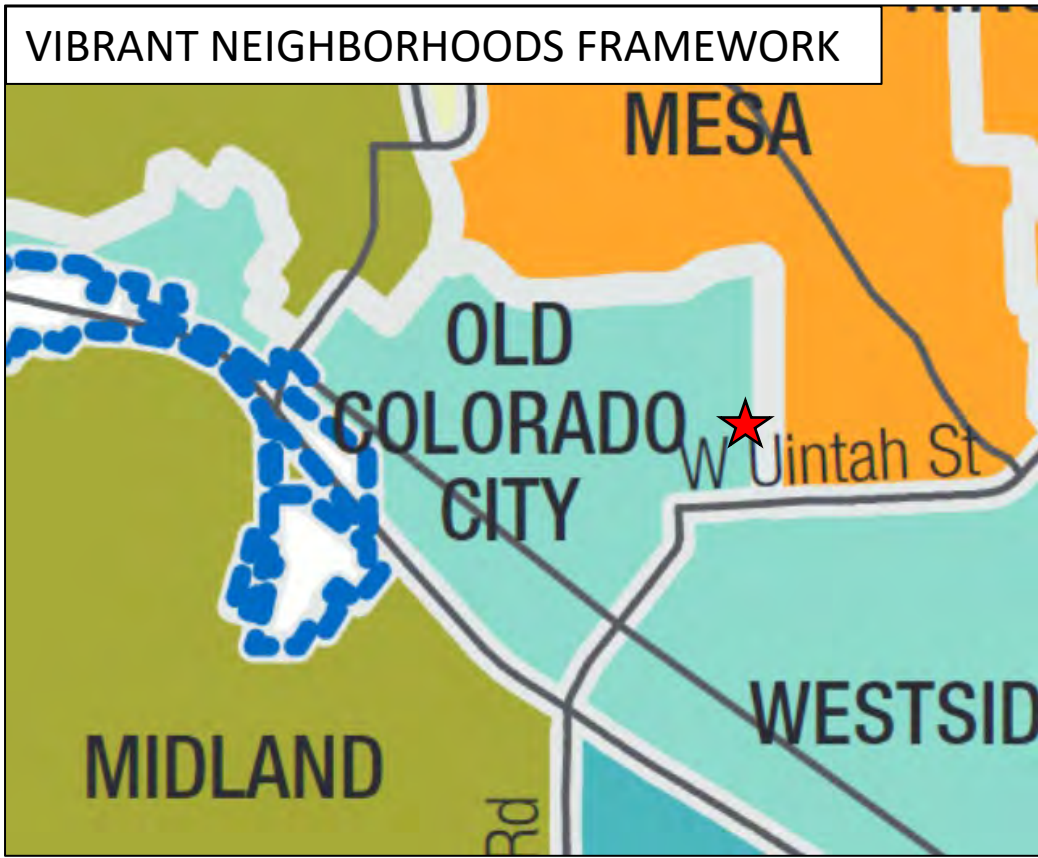
# Consistency with PlanCOS: Community Activity Center

- Project site is on the edge of the Uintah Gardens “Community Activity Center” typology on the Unique Places Framework.
- Community Center Recommendations include: “Diversify housing types and densities adjacent to commercial areas.”
- **Strategy UP-2.A-4:** Actively support ongoing and potential infill projects, employ problem-solving approaches and continue to implement process improvements in support of infill and redevelopment.
- **Strategy UP-4.C-1:** Support additional mixing and integration of land uses as zoning use-by-right or administrative approval.



# Consistency with PlanCOS – Historic Neighborhoods

- Project site is on the eastern periphery of the Old Colorado City “Established Historic Neighborhood” typology on the Vibrant Neighborhoods Framework.
- “...these typologies should be consulted and applied with the understanding that they are examples and therefore need to be considered in context to the surrounding land uses, land use transitions, and overall character.”
- “Most Established Neighborhoods within the city should expect some degree of infill and redevelopment.”
- “Historic Neighborhoods have an especially high value for preserving the legacy of existing design and architecture, although they may have to experience some amount of change especially in areas of transition with less historic uses.”



# Consistency with PlanCOS – Historic Neighborhoods

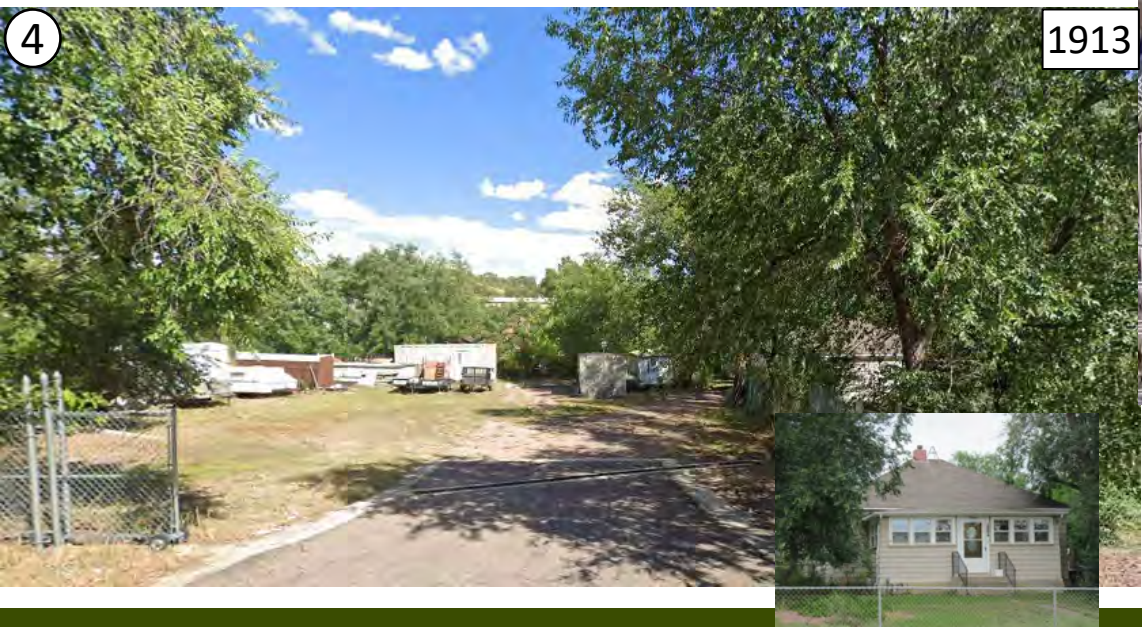


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# Consistency with PlanCOS – Historic Neighborhoods



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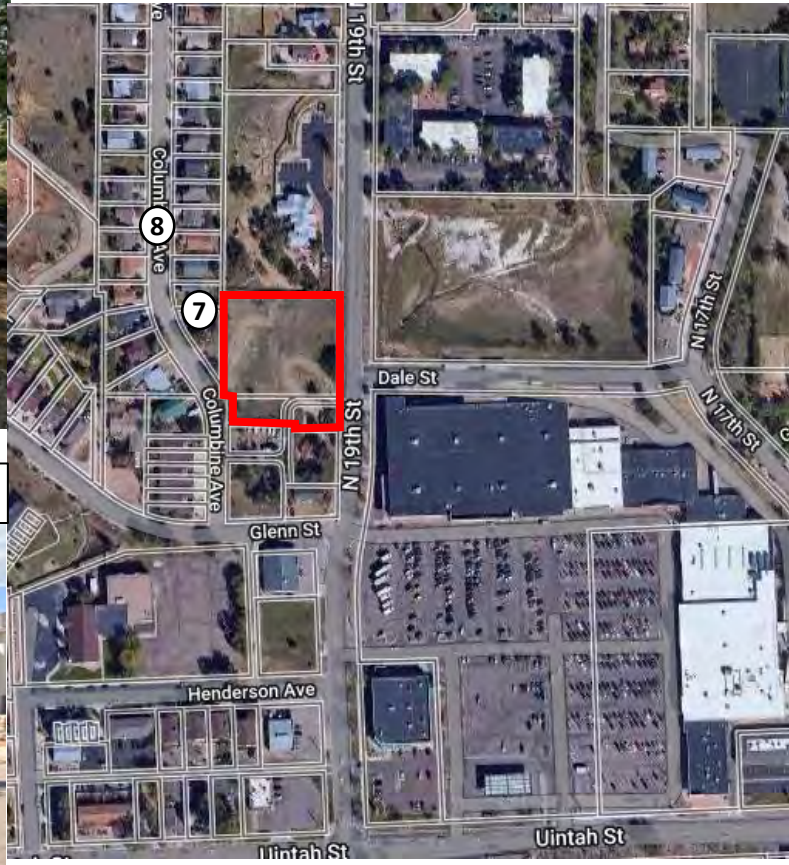
# Consistency with PlanCOS – Historic Neighborhoods



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# Consistency with PlanCOS – Historic Neighborhoods



Land Planning  
Landscape  
Architecture  
Urban Design



# Consistency with PlanCOS – Historic Neighborhoods



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# Consistency with PlanCOS – Historic Neighborhoods



# Compatibility – Building Density



# Compatibility – Building Density



- The building occupies only 15% of site area.
- The building footprint is only 8,950 sq.ft.
- The total building square footage is only 35,100 sq.ft. over 4-stories.
- Compare to approx. 78,000 sq.ft. commercial building opposite.

# Compatibility - Building Height

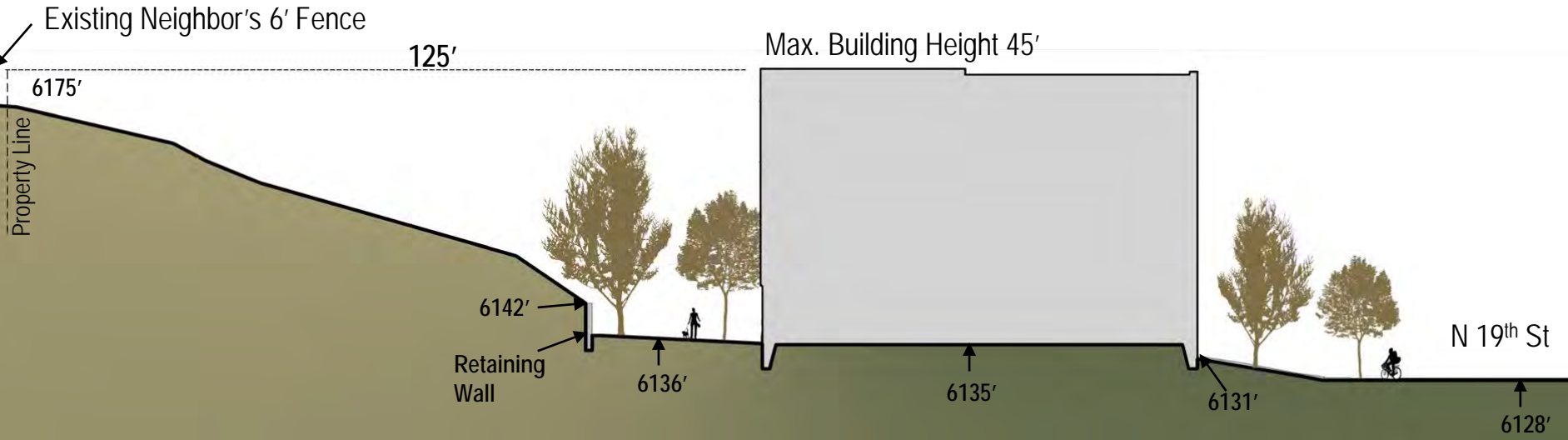
- The R-5 Zone allows a maximum height of 45 feet.
- The proposed building is a 4-story flat roof structure that is 45 feet and meets the standards of the R-5 zone.
- There are several buildings in the surrounding area that are 3-story with pitched roofs in the range of 40 feet high. This building is only 5 feet higher.
- The site is on the eastern perimeter of OCC and the surroundings include a variety of uses that do not have historic character





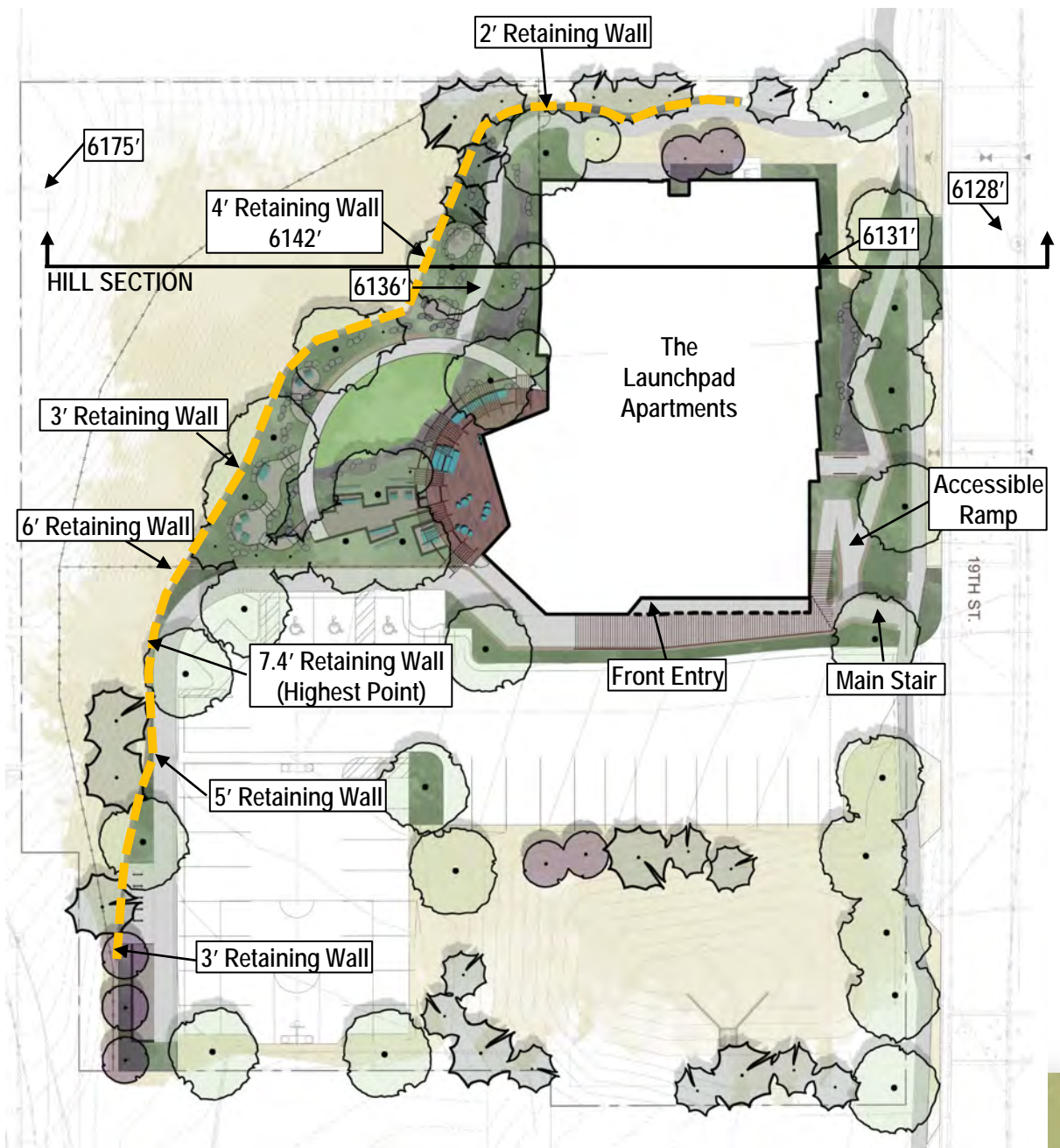
# Compatibility – Building Height

- There are only 2 neighbors to the west who abut the property.
- The proposed building is approximately 40 feet lower than the adjacent properties.
- The top of roof will be level with the top of nearest neighbor's fence.
- The building will be located 125' away from the fence.



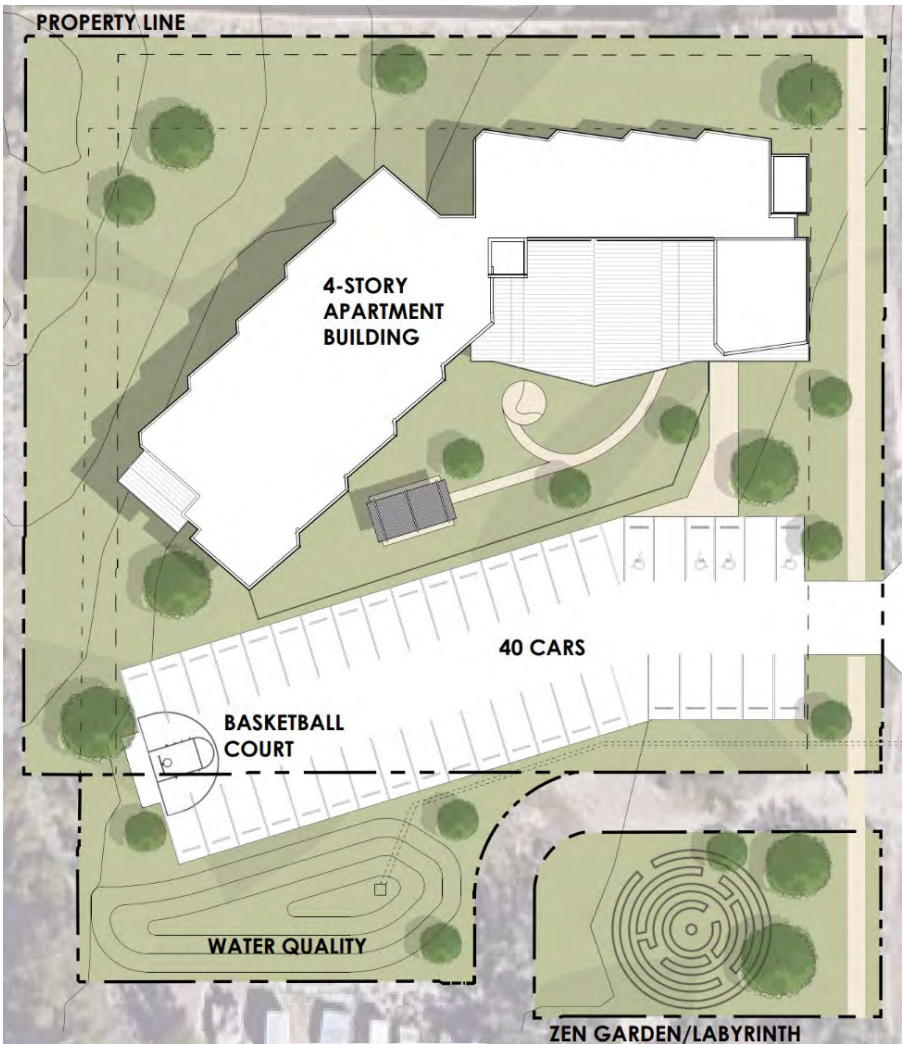
# Geologic Risks

- CTL Thompson's Geohazard Report did not identify any geological hazards that preclude site development for its intended use.
- Conditions that pose constraints to development include a potentially unstable slope to the west side of the site and the occurrence of expansive soils.
- As recommended, these have been mitigated with engineering design and construction methods commonly employed in this area.
- The Applicant revised the original plans to address Geohazard Report recommendations prior to submitting to the City.
- The current location of the building and proposed retaining wall provides adequate stability for the slope.



# Geologic Risks

Initial Site Plan included in submittal to CHFA



Revised Plan as submitted to the City, which addresses recommendations of Geohazard Report



# Adequacy of Public Input/Process

- To characterize this project as “controversial” is intentionally misleading by the Appellant.
- To suggest that this project has been approved with little public comment or input is inaccurate.
- The Applicant went above and beyond to meet with and educate neighbors & the community.
- We personally reached out to both Scott Hiller (at 2/28/23 City Council Candidate Debate) and Tom Strand (via email invitation to attend 2/21/23 neighborhood meeting) to give them an opportunity to learn more about this project, as well as understand exactly what this apartment community means to ending homelessness. These offers were not taken up.



# Adequacy of Public Input/Process

Since June 30<sup>th</sup> of 2022, our team has connected with 209 individual neighbors and businesses in the area, including:

- 8/4/22 Board meeting of the Organization of Westside Neighbors, who are supportive.
- 7/25/22 to 8/22/22 – Visits to 23 area businesses near 19<sup>th</sup> and Uintah streets.
- 9/26/22 – 45 people at an info and discussion session hosted by the Ruth Washburn Cooperative Nursery School. The meeting was requested by a neighbor, who we coordinated with to make it work on their schedule.
- 10/22/22 – 24 homeowners on Columbine Street: 9 spoke with us in person, and flyers with our contact information were left at 15 homes.
- 2/27/23 – 16 community members (not part of design/development team) attended the City-sponsored meeting.



# What Neighbors Say About The Launchpad



“Ruth Washburn Cooperative Nursery School ... has been at our current location on 19<sup>th</sup> street for over 50 years. ... One challenge we struggle with is having an open field to our south. It has been the site of illegal camping and fires... We have had our building shot at from that field and it has never felt like part of our community. We were so excited that the lot had been purchased by The PLACE to be used for housing and services for our unhoused young people. We are excited to form partnerships with this incoming community, offer ... opportunities to residents. We will continue to work with the tiny folks in our community while The PLACE works to support those who need a little boost towards independence. It truly does take a village, and we are thrilled to be part of that village.”

*Jen Filonowich, Executive Director*

*Ruth Washburn Cooperative Nursery School*

# What Neighbors Say About The Launchpad

- During our conversations, initially we heard comments such as,

**“Our home value is going to go down!”**  
**“What about increased homelessness?”**  
**“Why our neighborhood?”**  
**“What about drugs?”**

- After our conversations concluded, sometimes after an hour or so of chatting, the comments we heard were:

**“I had no idea about how this worked, this is a great service”**  
**“Can I volunteer?!?”**  
**“Good Luck with your project!”**  
**“You have my support!”**

- *Shawna Kemppainen, The PLACE*
- *Wayne Bland, The PLACE*
- *Lisa Sorensen, Cohen-Esrey*

**Overall, we received extremely positive feedback about The Launchpad. Of the 15 comment letters submitted to the City, 12 were from separate households or organizations, of which 8 were in support and 4 were opposed.**

# Benefits to Youth & Community

- The Launchpad matches affordable housing with support services for youth today, which prevents them from becoming chronically homeless adults tomorrow.
- 85% of youth in The PLACE housing remain safe and stably housed.
- 75% of youth in The PLACE programs engage in employment services, return to school or engage in other healthy community building.
- 156 youth Permanently exited homelessness last year.





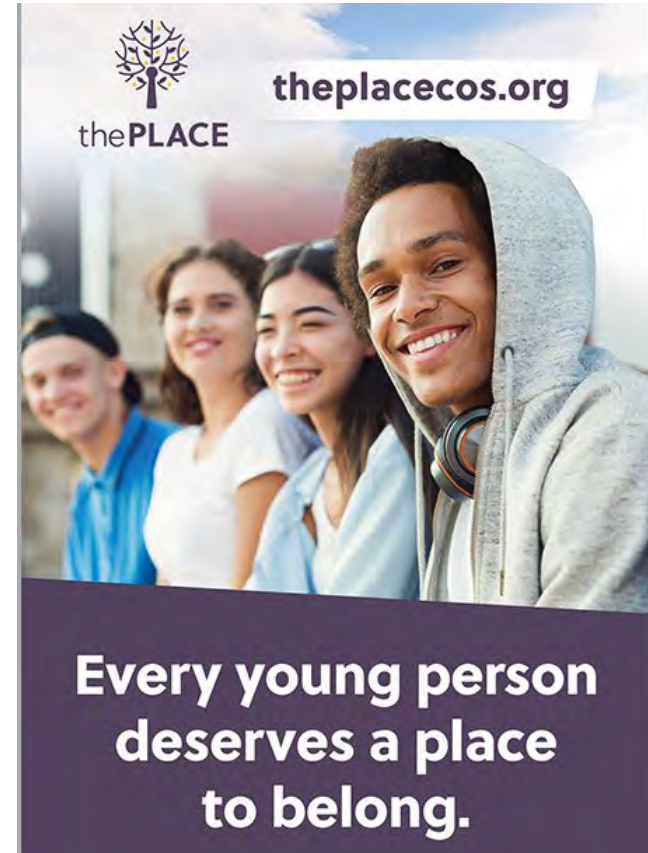
# Benefits to Youth & Community

- The Launchpad will remain an affordable housing community for 40 years per investment agreements with the State of CO.
- First 15 years of operation = 200 young lives changed.
- One adult living in chronic homelessness costs local taxpayers \$37,000 a year in emergency services (911 calls, emergency rooms, hospital visits) (Source: *Pikes Peak Continuum of Care analysis of emergency service interactions in CO Springs*).

- ✓ The Launchpad in YR 1 empowers 50 young people to safely get off the street and not become a chronically homelessness adult. That's a taxpayer savings of ...

**\$1,850,000**

- ✓ Approximately 200 young people will safely exit homelessness in the next 15 years through the trauma-informed space and housing first approach.



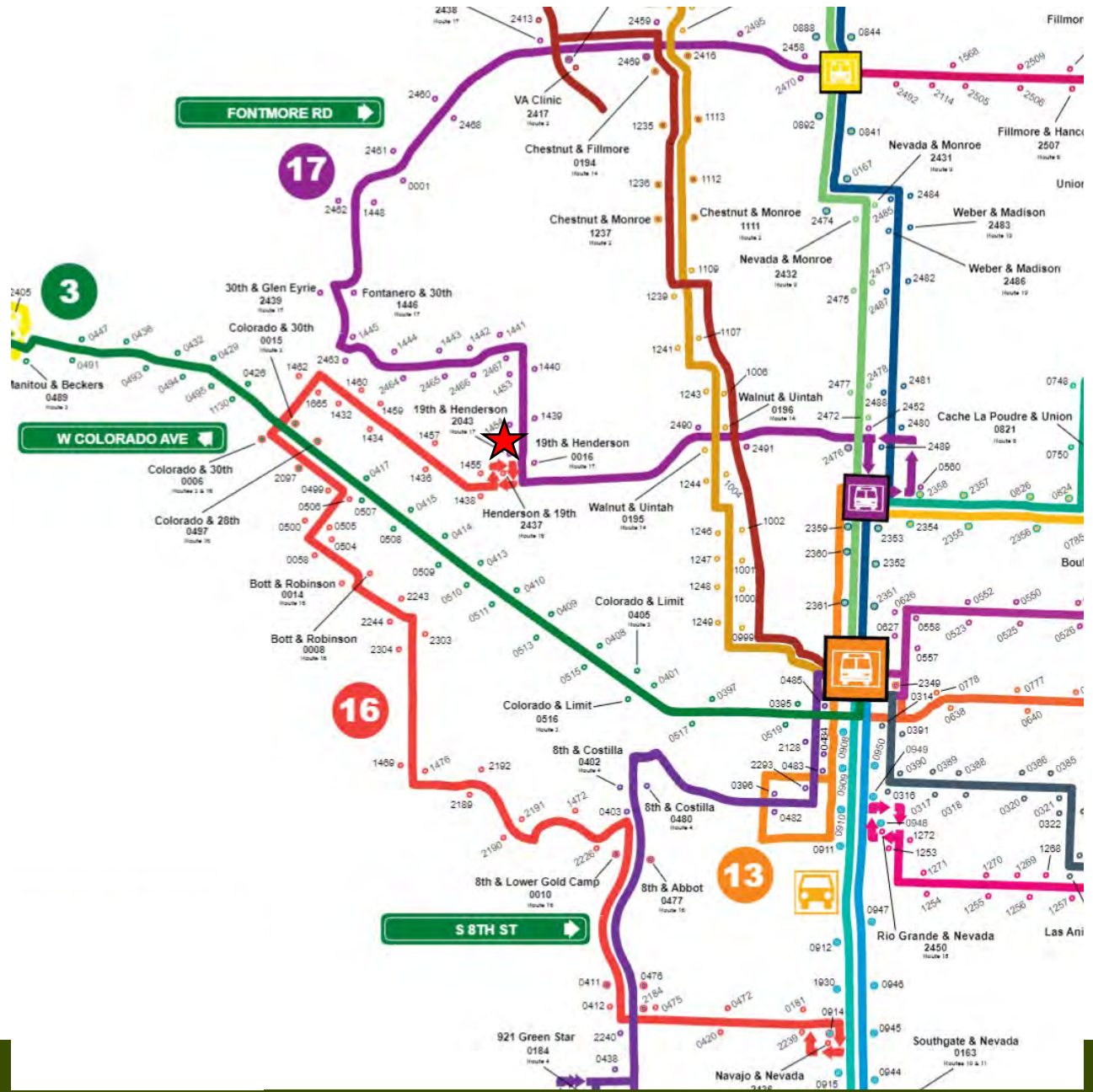
# Other Tangible Benefits

- New development on land that has been vacant for over 40 years and that has frequently become unsightly and degraded. Some neighbors commented that the property has been an eyesore for years.
- Over \$20 million investment in this neighborhood and community by the State of Colorado.
- There will be local economic benefit through connecting the youth at The Launchpad with employment opportunities at local businesses to learn customer service and specific job skills, while creating income for The Launchpad tenants .
- The Applicant has met with several local businesses who are actively seeking reliable employees and have expressed support for the project and recognize the benefits of such a collaboration (e.g. King Soopers, Ace Hardware, ARC thrift shop, Petco, Subway).
- The site is ideally suited for permanent supportive housing as it is conveniently located adjacent to a commercial center with a grocery store, a pharmacy and other facilities, which provides easy access to jobs and necessary services.
- The Launchpad residents will have easy access to several nearby bus stops that provide service to the rest of the City via Bus Routes 16 and 17, with the stop at nearby 19<sup>th</sup> and Henderson being the hub for the two routes.
- The site is also on a City bike route on N. 19<sup>th</sup> Street.

# Access to Services and Transit



# Public Transport Access



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# City Bike Route

**Colorado Springs Bike Map**

**Bike Facilities**

- Green Line = Bike Route
- Teal Line = Bike Lane
- Olive Line = Shoulder
- Forest Green Line = Bike Boulevard
- Orange Line = Shared Lane Marking
- Blue Line = Climbing Lane

**Brown Line = Urban Trails**

**Brown Dotted Line = Park Trails**

**Red Line = Cone Zones**

- Active Cone Zone

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# Perceived Detriments of The Launchpad

## Appeal Comment:

- *Increased drug use and dealing*
- *Increased homeless population congregating around the property*
- *Unsavory characters interfacing with a young student population*

## Here are the FACTS:

- Cost Studies in 6 states prove that supportive housing **directly decreases** the need for shelters, hospitals, emergency rooms, jails & prisons by up to 4 times, according to the Coalition for Supportive Housing.
- Cohen-Esrey Communities manages over 10,000 nationwide and we **do not allow loitering** at any of our properties.
- As part of the Development Plan review, the project plans were reviewed by Colorado Springs Police Department.
- 24-hour security person on-site.
- Bosch BIS (Building Integration System) site security cameras.

# Perceived Detriments of The Launchpad

## Appeal Comment:

- *Increased Traffic*

## Here are the FACTS:

- A Traffic Impact Study (TIS) was prepared by Fox Tuttle Transportation Group, LLC even though the City did not require a one.
- Trip generation was assumed to be low as residents are not likely to own a vehicle and specialized services will be provided to support the youth becoming self-sufficient.
- The TIS concluded:
  - *“The Project was estimated to generate 42 daily trips with 9 trips in the AM peak hour and 5 trips in PM peak hour.”*
  - *“The existing Roadway network has ample capacity to accommodate the Launchpad trips.”*

### 8.0 Conclusions

The Launchpad Project proposes to develop the vacant site on the west side of 19<sup>th</sup> Street across from Dale Street. The site plan proposes to have one (1) full-movement, side-street stop-controlled access on 19<sup>th</sup> Street which will align with Dale Street, becoming the west leg of the intersection. The Project was estimated to generate 42 daily trips with 9 trips in the AM peak hour and 5 trips in the PM peak hour.

The existing roadway network has ample capacity to accommodate the Launchpad trips. The only recommended mitigation measure is to lengthen the northbound left-turn lane storage from 40 feet to 45 feet at the intersection of 19<sup>th</sup> Street and King Street. This is triggered by the 95<sup>th</sup> percentile queues in the long-term background condition and is not project related. The access into Launchpad is recommended to include one inbound and one outbound lane and does not require auxiliary lanes.

# Youth Testimony

You've heard from us, but let's hear from Daymond.

Daymond is an example of a young person who may reside at The Launchpad.

<https://theplacecos.org/daymond/>



# Questions?

