

## **PROJECT STATEMENT**

### **Property Information:**

#### **Penrose Library**

Parcel Address: 20 N CASCADE AVE

Parcel Number: 6418213002, 6418213007, 6418213008, 6418213013

Zoning: FBZ-CEN

Acreage: 2.93

Legal Description: LOTS 9 TO 13 INC, LOT 14 EX PART TO ST BLK A ADD 5 COLO SPGS

### **Project seeks relief from the following review criteria of the Form Based Code (FBC):**

#### *2.4.1 Common Lawn*

*A landscaped frontage wherein the façade is set back from the property line (but minimum and maximum setbacks are met). The front yard remains unfenced and is visually continuous with adjacent yards supporting a common landscape.*

### **Current Conditions driving the request:**

Over the past few years, the staff and management of Penrose Library have been struggling with a growing amount of garbage, human excrement, puddles of urine, and discarded drug paraphernalia being scattered at the entrances to the library, and the plaza facing Cascade Ave., and throughout library grounds. Additionally, there has been an increase in fires built on grounds and adjacent to library buildings. Along with many other safety incidents, security staff have had to deal with trespassing, vandalism, theft, fighting, break ins, criminal activity on the property, assault with weapons, drug use, drug sale, deaths of homeless individuals inside and on library property, overdoses and people sleeping overnight on library grounds.

Every morning, staff have had to deal with the aftermath of homeless camping overnight in the plaza, drug use, health hazards and property damage. The library has many programs to provide support to people with need and is not unempathetic to their situation. However, the conditions have led to other patrons avoiding the use of the library due to the unsafe and unsanitary conditions that they perceive to exist at the library. Additionally, this has led to an increase of community mistrust of not only the downtown library but the safety of the downtown corridor.

### **Measures that the Library District has taken:**

The library has already hired additional Security Officers and expanded the arrival and departure times of these officers at the Penrose campus. Our facilities team checks the campus and adjacent city sidewalk and gutters each morning to clean up human feces, garbage and drug paraphernalia before opening. PPLD provides exterior garbage cans on our property adjacent to city right of ways that we empty as full to encourage proper disposal of refuse. Security has installed additional cameras around all of the exterior of

the downtown campus with improved resolution and notification features. The library continues to work closely with CSPD to implement any recommendations they have and encourage response for identified issues.

### **Proposed Modifications:**

In order to create a safe, comfortable and attractive approach to the building entrance, the library would like to:

1. Provide 7 ft tall fencing around the entire property perimeter along Pikes Peak Avenue, Kiowa Avenue and Cascade Avenue per the attached exhibit, with fencing that matches existing fencing that encloses the garden between the Carnegie Building and the Old Knights of Columbus building.

- a. Fencing along Pike Peak Ave. would consist of gates at the existing monumental entrances to the lower parking lot, and short sections of fences and gates on either side of the monument/entrance structure. Gates will be open during business hours.
- b. Fencing along the common property line, at the western boundary, with Pikes Peak Community College.
- c. Fencing along W. Kiowa St.
- d. Fencing off the Parking lot with a short section of fence above existing walls to a total height of 7 feet. The entrance to the parking lot will be gated off from afterhours access. Gates will be open during business hours.



*Existing fencing at Penrose Library*

2. In addition to the above, the library would also like to fence off the plaza area. The purpose of the fencing is to prevent unlawful overnight camping on the property and help the staff maintain a clean environment and approach to the library. We have made a deliberate attempt to avoid fencing off large portions of the street frontage in keeping with the intent of the FBC. However, the plaza is the primary area of concern as it is where we have the largest concentration of loitering and overnight camping.

## Justification:

### The following are abstracts from the FBC

*‘...these strategies and goals strive to further the revitalization currently underway by bringing residents into the downtown, encouraging mixed-use development and maximizing streetscape vibrancy to transform the area into the pedestrian-friendly heart of the region.’*

*‘They are intended to create safe, attractive street life and pedestrian comfort. By regulating appropriate building design and public amenities such as awnings, sidewalk cafes and landscaping the implementation of the FBC results in a comfortable, natural integration of uses.’*

In summary, the intent of the FBC is to create safe, attractive street-life and pedestrian comfort. While the code does not allow fencing in the common lawn, if the area is to remain unfenced, it creates conditions contradictory to the intent of the FBC.

By providing appropriately designed attractive fencing, we are creating a safe and comfortable environment for Library patrons as well as all pedestrians that use the sidewalk along the library frontage. The fencing will be attractive and at the same time provide the security and comfort that is currently lacking in the area. The fencing along Cascade Ave. is minimized to place the maximum building façade outside of the fencing, enclosing only the plaza area with a short section of fencing.



*Existing fencing at Penrose Library Along W. Kiowa St*