

## **Step Springs Non-Use Variance Project Statement**

- 1) *The application complies with any standards for the use in Part 7.3.3 (Use Specific Standards):*

We have been informed by Katie Carleo and Ann Odom of the Land Use Review Division that the application for the use complies with the standards in Part 7.3.3 (Use Specific Standards)

- 2) *The property has extraordinary or exceptional physical conditions that do not exist in nearby properties in the same zone district:*

For the past (4) years, Step has been asked by government officials (namely John Suthers and City Council Members), community leaders (namely Jim Johnson, Steve Schuck, Larry Yonkers, and Bill Cadman), homeless and addiction service providers (namely the Springs Rescue Mission and Homeward Pikes Peak), and private foundations (namely the El Pomar Foundation, the Anschutz Foundation, and the Daniels Fund) to bring the Step model to Colorado Springs to assist in providing services to those in need suffering from addiction and homelessness.

After extensive discussions with these individuals and entities, Step began a building search in April of 2023. Given the nature of the Step model and the individuals being served, there are very specific criteria for the building search.

- **Location:** The building must be within walking distance of major public transportation trunklines, near to - or accessible easily by public transportation the following: full time employment opportunities, 12-Step Addiction Recovery Meetings, grocery stores, department stores (Walmart, Target, etc.), drug stores (Walgreens, CVS, etc.), and government services (Department of Transportation, Social Security Office, Court, Probation/Parole, etc.) and medical care facilities (hospitals, urgent care clinics, etc.).
- **Size:** The building needs to be a minimum of 12,000 square feet and no larger than 18,000 square feet to serve upwards of 50 men with the program described in the application 'Project Description'.
- **Cost:** To be financially prudent and to receive the buy in and financial support of foundations and private donors, our budget for the building and its renovation needs to remain under \$6 million.
- **Layout and Condition:** The building's layout and condition need to be such that it would lend itself to a reasonable renovation cost and timeline, and which the wellbeing of the residents would not in any way be in question from health and safety perspectives.
- **Security:** The building needs to have the ability to be secured from the surrounding confines to allow a safe, sober environment for the residents, free from the risk of drug dealers, gang members, etc. similar to the Springs Rescue Mission property layout.

Step Springs has been working with former City Council Member Tim Leigh as its real estate representative to identify potential properties for sale within the cost parameters listed above, scout locations meeting the criteria listed above, and research those properties abilities to meet the other criteria listed above. To date, this is the first property that Step has identified that meets all the criteria. Over the course of almost a year, Step has been unable to locate another property that is suitable for our services to the community. While it may be that other nearby properties within the same zone district might be suitable, none are currently available for sale. It is the hope that the City will grant this variance so that Step will not require a continuing property search that could push this project off for another year or more.

- 3) *That the extraordinary or exceptional physical condition of the property will not allow a reasonable use of the property in its current zone in the absence of relief:*

Step cannot say the property would not allow for a reasonable use in its current zone by another owner in the absence of relief. What it can say is that there is an indicated need for the services of Step in the community, and that there are few buildings that meet the criteria to provide these vital services. Again, it is the hope of Step that this variance might be granted to do such.

- 4) *That the granting of the Non-Use Variance will not have an adverse impact upon surrounding properties:*

Step has functioned in Denver for almost (41) years and has, to date, never had a complaint from, nor affected in any negative manner, any of the surrounding businesses. The property in Denver is actually much closer to the other businesses in the vicinity as it is located on a street where the majority of the business buildings are attached in 'row' fashion. Step often gets feedback from the surrounding businesses that they are pleased that it operates in proximity to them as they know that the building and grounds will be clean, quiet, and safe given the nature of the Step program. It also is such that men in the Step program seek employment in the surrounding businesses and have a vested interest in ensuring that in no way will the Step building, its program, or its residents in any way negatively affect the adjacent properties, owners, and their businesses. So, it is the belief of Step that not only will it not negatively affect the surrounding businesses, experience has shown that it has had a positive effect on those businesses in one way or another.