



City Council Staff Report

Subject: Lower Park Avenue City Owned Property Next Steps
Author: Jonathan Weidenhamer, Economic Development Manager
Department: Economic Development
Date: January 28, 2016
Type of Item: Work Session

Summary Recommendation:

City Council should review the outlined goals and scope and direct staff to proceed with a Request for Proposals to begin implementing housing and a community center in the Lower Park Avenue Redevelopment Area. Staff seeks specific discussion on the RFP outline including goals, tasks, and timeline. Council should also carefully consider the Alternatives Section at the end of the report.

The City Manager and Economic Development Manager recommend the City Council consider prioritizing vertical development of housing at the Fire Station site as their highest priority in this process.

Executive Summary:

On November 19, 2015 the City Council reviewed the findings from the interviews and outreach, workshops and design studio conducted over the past nine months for the city-owned properties in the Lower Park. Council directed staff to proceed with a Request for Proposals to move the process from Community Engagement and Schematic Design and into issuing an RFP for refinement of the community center and housing programming and ultimately construction.

At this time, the City council should review the outlined scope of an RFP based on the relevant background and specific discussion on November 19, 2015. Council should provide staff with any changes to the scope or timeline and direct staff to pursue an RFP to begin implementation.

Background:

The July 16, 2015 work session was a presentation by the Design Studio team of its concepts created July 13-16. City Council began discussion all the public input received during its work session on August 20th. Council continued that discussion to its September 3 work session. At that meeting Council directed staff as follows:

- Remove the Library field from consideration as a site for housing, senior center or other community center-type development.
- Conduct follow-up outreach on community center needs and identify the pros and cons of each of the following locations: (Miners Hospital, fire station parcel, Mawhinney/Skate Park Lot, and Library parking pad) as sites for meeting those needs. This was

requested because of Council desire to site community buildings prior to authorizing staff to move forward with housing plans for any of the properties. This assessment also considered if needs were being fulfilled, or could be fulfilled at the Library.

- Return to City Council in November with this information, along with a complete package of outreach materials and input received.

The City Council November 19, 2015 presentation was the culmination of nine months of community engagement. The report & meeting minutes, including a summary of the process and the July 16, 2015 work session where the findings of the Design Studio were presented can be found here: ([Packet](#))([minutes](#))([Audio](#) @2:37).

On November 19, 2015 City Council reviewed the opportunities and challenges of four specific Options:

OPTION 1

- Community Flex Space / Senior Space located at Library Parking Lot
- Mixed Use Space at Fire Station Site and Mawhinney Lot
- Expanded Recreation Center

OPTION 2

- Community / Senior Space located at Fire Station Lot
- Mixed Use Space at Mawhinney Lot
- Entrepreneur Center located at Miners Hospital (Possible Addition)

OPTION 3

- Community / Senior Space located at Mawhinney Lot
- Entrepreneur Center located at Miners Hospital (Possible Addition)
- Mixed-use space located at Fire Station Site
- Daycare located at Library Parking Lot

OPTION 4

- Community / Senior Space located as addition to Miners Hospital
- Mixed Use Space at Fire Station Site and Mawhinney Lot

Council did not choose one specific option, but rather choices from each. Specifically the entire Council asked staff to:

- Not pursue additional development adjacent to the library;
- Pursue the east-west pedestrian connection from City Park to Park City Resort;
- Consider additional pedestrian and neighborhood improvements to the 1300 block of Woodside;
- Construct housing that is compatible and reflects the traditional neighborhood scale along Park Avenue at the site of the former fire station;
- Construct housing on Woodside, west to the resort that reflects the transitional nature of the neighborhood (mixed in type and scale);
- Maintain the historic / iconic nature of Miner's Hospital;

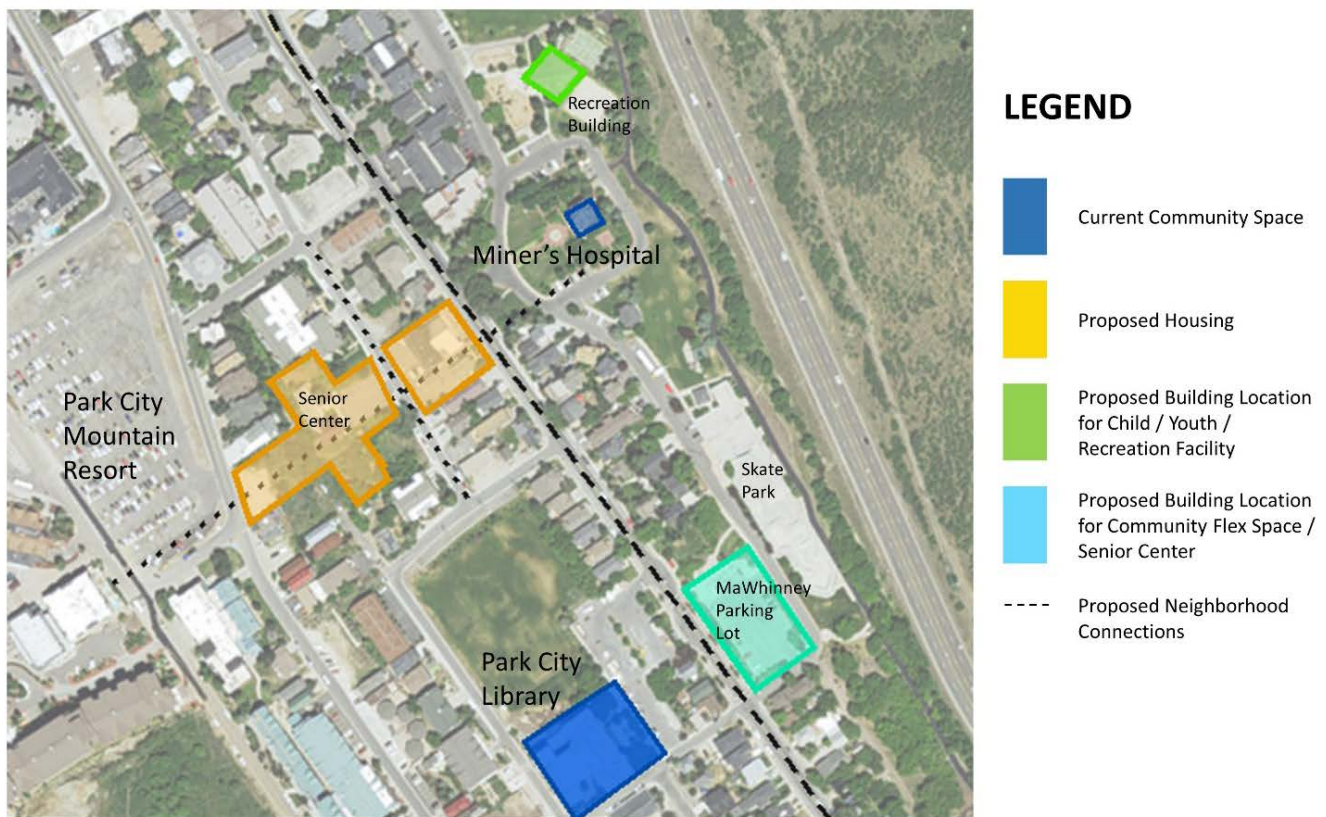
- Do not pursue an expansion for a community center;
- Consider an interior renovation and needed support (ie kitchen); or
- Tap into existing groups in the community who would rent “as is”;
- Demolish or renovate and expand the recreation building to meet our needs;
- Further develop the senior needs/program.

Furthermore, other comments heard from one or two Council members, that we intend to include in the RFP are:

- Analyze use of the library’s public rooms (in the context of finalizing program for a community center);
- Consider including green space immediately north of Mawhinney for community center footprint or parking;
- Rather than build a new community center, consider keeping senior program at current (renovated) location and consider expansion of recreation building to accommodate other needs. *(staff seeks additional discussion on additional alternatives should the pre-development phase identify fatal flaws.)*

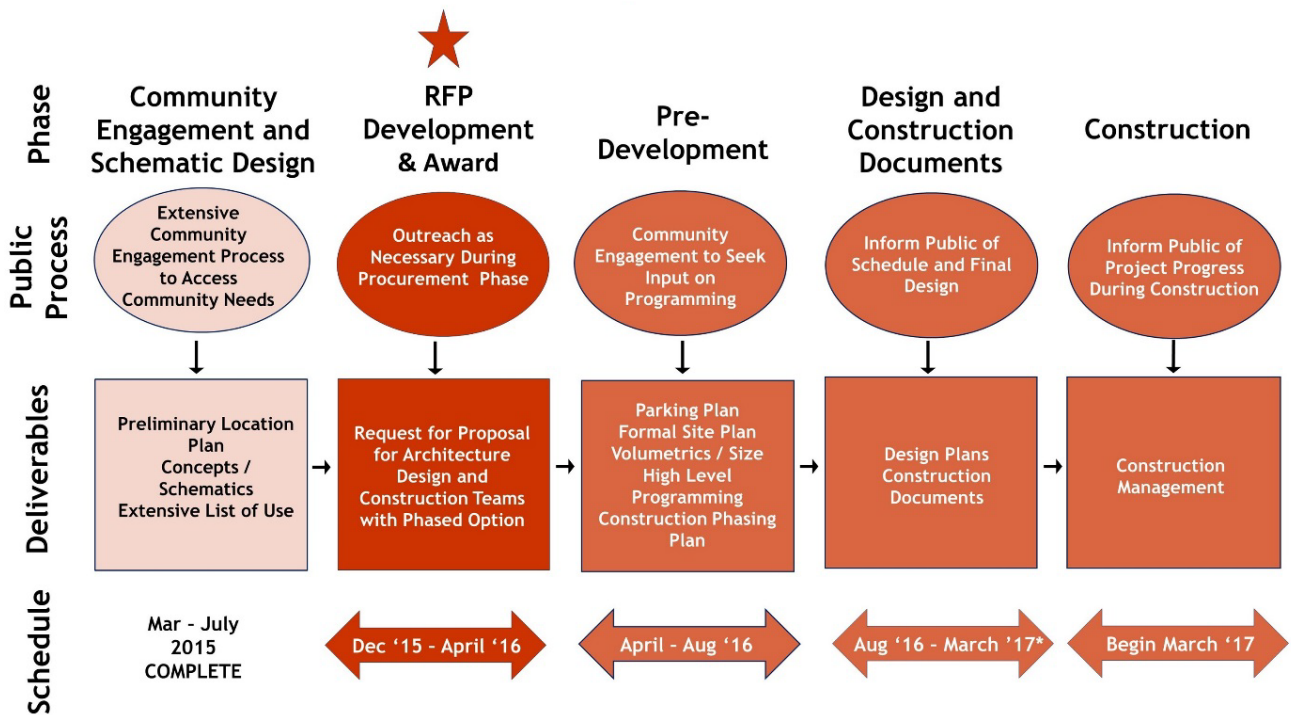
The following map shows the proposed areas of development along with the current community elements that will be taken into consideration.

LOWER PARK AVENUE REDEVELOPMENT AREA



At the November 19, 2015 meeting staff identified the mechanism and timing by which we will proceed through development process as a phased process as shown in the following graphic:

Lower Park Avenue Pre-development and Design Process



As shown the first step will be the creation, issuance and award of contract for professional services. This work is proposed to begin in December 2015 with an anticipated award of contract for professional services in April 2016. The additional steps outlined include:

Pre-Development:

The Pre-Development process moves the work from the existing schematic design to testing and refining concepts for the site layout, volumetrics for accommodating programming, parking plan for the project overall, costing and phasing plan. Also included in this process would be a recommendation on how to structure project implementation via city construction, public-private partnerships, or other mechanisms. Based upon a satisfactory completion of this work, the the team would proceed to Design and Construction Documents. Alternately, Council could decide to defer or conclude the process at the conclusion of the Pre-Development stage.

Design and Construction Documents:

The Design and Construction Documents stage develops the design for the buildings and architecture and engineering for the sites. Upon acceptance by City Council as property owner, the project would then move onto the entitlement process and ultimately the construction documents and bidding process.

Construction:

The final phase of this process would be commencement of construction in accordance with the approved phasing plan.

Analysis

The past community engagement and education has gathered input on the community needs in the area without any evaluation of specific options. In this next stage, more detailed concepts will be developed for the community center / flex space and housing so the interrelationships are understood and vetted with the community before proceeding with a particular development. Staff recommends procurement of one diverse development team through a Request for Proposals for all phases of the contract with an opportunity to stop after each phase or split the project into separate components.

The outline for the RFP has been developed taking into account the the input received during the Lower Park Avenue engagement phase, including the prioritization workshops, the Design Studio ideas, and City Council direction. Based on this information the overarching goals of the RFP are listed below:

Overarching Goals

- Engage a highly skilled and diverse team;
- Develop concepts for all sites in tandem to create a holistic solution that utilizes the current uses and enhances the community environment;
- Develop affordable housing options on the east side of Park Avenue that is compatible in scale with the surrounding neighborhood;
- Evaluate all potential outcomes on multiple levels – financial, social, equity, and critical priorities (housing, energy, and transportation);
- Maintain an east / west connection through the housing area to allow for neighborhood connections;
- Identify creative opportunities for parking that takes into account the multiple uses in the Lower Park Avenue Area and incorporates the transportation / parking vision and concepts that are currently under study;
- Consider potential uses for Miners Hospital when developing the Community / Senior Center options that compliment the area.

The approach described below is based on previous Council direction, specifically related to timing of building housing. Council has prioritized a more holistic approach (parking and land uses) rather than compartmentalizing individual parcels or projects. An exception to that was 1450/60 Park Avenue, where Council felt due to lack of contiguity that we could approach that site individually. Staff has framed discussion in the alternatives section of this report about the goal and timing of implementing housing balanced with the above goals.

The following outlines the broad activities and specific elements for consideration for the housing component and the community / flex space.

Broad Activities

Pre-Development

- Affirm the CC goals
- Determine process by which to build the housing projects (do it ourselves, create a joint venture, or dispose of with conditions)
- Determine housing units that best meet the need
- Refine community center needs & program – volumetrics
- Conduct site feasibility analysis & preliminary cost estimates
- Generate Conceptual Designs / Renderings
- Create a Development and Phasing Strategy for all projects
 - Ensure the senior center stays in place until they are able to move to a new space
 - Identify various options for each building piece (housing, community/flex centers, and recreation building)
 - Identify pros and cons of building together versus separately
- Develop Costing Analysis;
- Develop a parking approach;
- Elicit Policy Direction.

Design Phase

- Produce Design Development & Construction Development Drawings;
- Bidding Assistance.

Construction Phase

- Construction Management Assistance.

Considerations

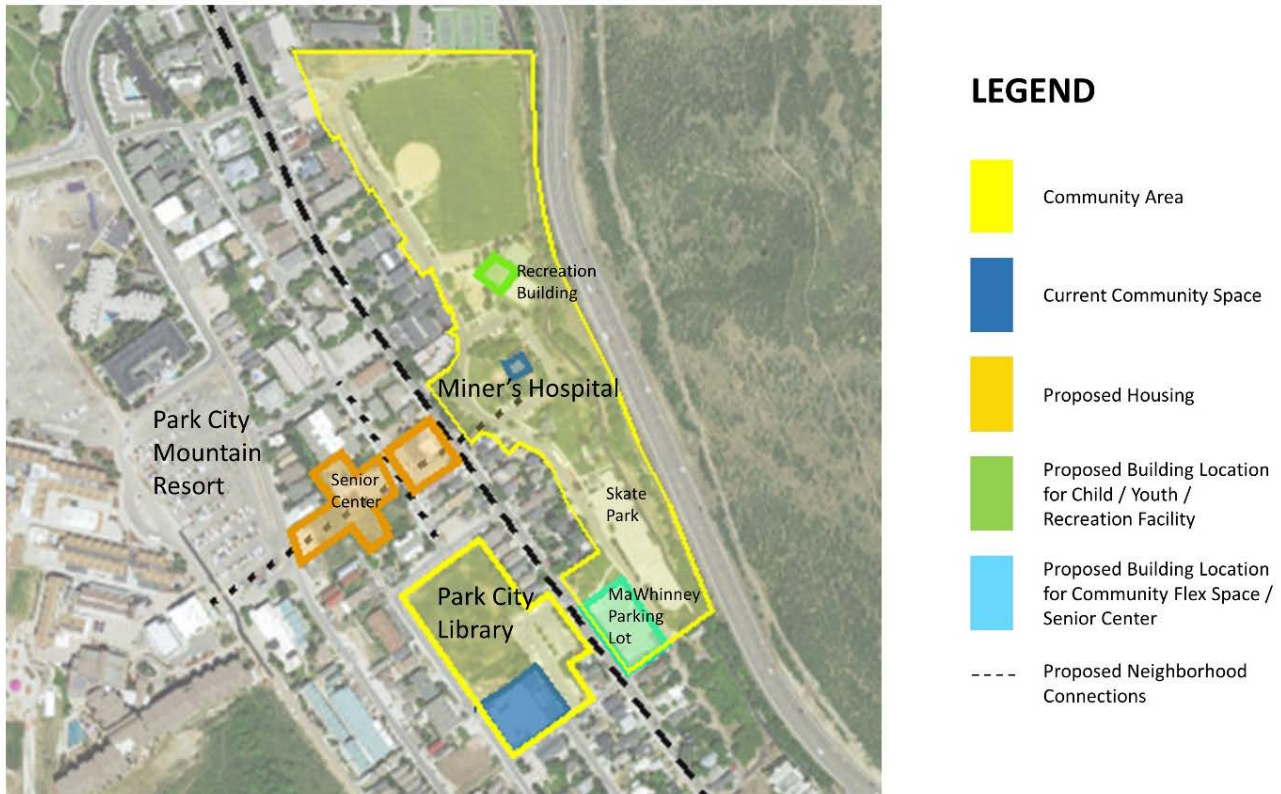
Specifics to consider for the housing piece includes:

- Housing Analysis – Determine alternatives for housing options (townhomes, micro homes, single family homes, mix) and the benefit of each;
- Recommended city role;
- Recommended timing and phasing for housing;
- Consider parking options for Community area;
- Consider parking options for housing area.

Specifics to consider for the community / flex space includes:

- Evaluate potential uses for consideration in the community space including the library and Miner’s Hospital as well as the new recreation and community spaces, and housing. See graphic below for the community space areas. A long list of potential uses has been created already, but there has been no determination of use mix at this

LOWER PARK AVENUE REDEVELOPMENT AREA



time. It is not anticipated that all these uses can or should be accommodated and other locations such as Miners or the Recreation Building expansion can also be considered:

- Seniors
 - Meeting space to serve lunch 2X a week
 - Full Kitchen
 - Space for activities - movies, billiards, bridge, etc.
 - ADA Accessible
 - Transit access
 - Secure storage space
- Childcare Facility
- Community Event / Meeting Space (80-150 occupants)
- Smaller Flex Space (for events / active classes)
- Collaborative Workspace
- Community Kitchen
- Center for Nonprofits / Non Profit Space
- Collaborative Work Space
- Entrepreneur center
- Storage Space

- Outdoor Event Space
- Rooftop Gardens;
- Recommend size for community flex space;
- Recommend location for community space;
- Consider parking options for all community uses;
- Ensure the senior are housed in their current location until another location is identified.

Specifics to consider for Miner's Hospital

- Continue as is – Sundance uses September to March for their back of house ticketing support. The Egyptian rents the building for large portions of the summer for their youth theatre program (which may at some point relocate to Main Street); and the Recreation Department uses in the summer to expand the Adventure Summer Camp user numbers. Changing gears would require us to find and pay for the Sundance use to have a new home. It is possible we could rent the two existing offices out concurrently with each of the leases above;
- Create a part time or year round Entrepreneur/Education center. We've had specific inquiries from the Park City (Angels) Project to have an office presence at this location. Additionally we've discussed intermittently locating an education presence back into the RDA such as the PC Caps program. Again depending on their needs, we could rent the offices out without affecting existing tenants;
- Lease the facility to a different tenant, likely a non for profit. For example, we've had discussion about providing child care from this facility. If Council is considering alternative 2 or 3, they may consider soliciting formal, public proposals.

Specifics to consider for Timing

- Building Housing is a priority. Creation of a phasing plan that realizes housing as soon as possible is a critical goal, balanced with Council's willingness to relocate the senior program either prior to or not until we have a new facility for the program to be relocated to.

The mechanism by which staff will proceed through development process is a phased process. A high level summary of each phase is described below. We anticipate award of contract for professional services in April 2016.

The City Council at their 11/19 work session explored each of these alternatives informally:

Option 1:

- Use expanded area north of Mawhinney;
- Footprint roughly doubles to a total of 1 acre;
- HRM Zoning allows subterranean use of setback areas for parking;
- Could easily do a combo of only 1 underground level and combo of surface and/or replace green scape.

Option 2:

- Expand the site feasibility considerations to include the Miner’s Hospital. Where Council left it in November was they would put Miner’s back on the table if Mawhinney didn’t pan out;
- We will still face significant cost to park the community center at this location; however, we wouldn’t have to build the additional 48 Santy stalls (savings of \$2.4M).

Option 3:

- Consider a program that downsizes and renovates the senior use in place; and
- Expands the recreation building to meet the remaining needs.

Staff recommends reconsidering including all three options in the RFP for the consulting team to conduct feasibility analysis on. Doing so will allow for gathering additional information on the sites, including soils and ground water conditions

A fourth alternative Council could consider:

Option 4:

- Delay the community center in the short term and focus on the housing;
- Conduct specific research on the use of the library rooms;
- Identify niches not being filled;
- A risk of doing so would be the footprint of the existing senior center would limit the amount of housing that could be built at that site.

- Timing – Staff seeks discussion on the importance and timing of implementing affordable housing versus their desire to plan and phase (and park) the district holistically.

Throughout the recent process we’ve stressed the desire to put together a broad approach to balancing goals and parking the project. If Council desires to begin housing immediately, staff recommends considering the fire station site as an isolated project, and keeping the Woodside housing, senior and community center program planned holistically.

If Council does desire to do so, staff will most likely pursue one of the following two options:

- 1) Continue with the above forementioned approach, but modify the goal and process to realize housing a the top priority. Compared to the next option we believe this will still allow holistic planning but may slow implementation down; or

- 2) Procure separately a team to design and develop housing on the fire station site independent of the broader process. This will likely be quicker than option one, but staff still believes Spring of 2017 to start will be an aggressive timeframe.

Summary of Issues for Discussion

- Staff seeks specific discussion if Council would like to revisit site feasibility analysis for the community center at alternative sites?

- Timing – Staff seeks discussion on the importance and timing of implementing affordable housing versus their desire to plan and phase (and park) the district holistically.

Significant Impacts:

The FY16 RDA budget includes funding for the RFP process. The five-year CIP includes funds for the anticipated projects. The Pre-Development phase of the RFP will provide costing estimates for Council consideration. Staff is prepared to begin the RFP process. Completion of the process outlined above will result in commencement of construction for housing and community center/flex space to meet identified needs in the community.

Summary Recommendation:

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