



# WESTMINSTER

## Staff Report

TO: The Mayor and Members of the City Council  
DATE: November 29, 2006  
SUBJECT: Study Session Agenda for December 4, 2006  
PREPARED BY: J. Brent McFall, City Manager

*Please Note: Study Sessions and Post City Council meetings are open to the public, and individuals are welcome to attend and observe. However, these meetings are not intended to be interactive with the audience, as this time is set aside for City Council to receive information, make inquiries, and provide Staff with policy direction.*

Looking ahead to next Monday night's Study Session, the following schedule has been prepared:

*A light dinner will be served in the Council Family Room* 6:00 P.M.

### CITY COUNCIL REPORTS

1. Report from Mayor (5 minutes)
2. Reports from City Councillors (10 minutes)

### PRESENTATIONS

1. Proposed Improvements for Westminster Grange Hall, Rodeo Market and Adjacent Park
2. Municipal Service Center Renovation
3. Sign Code Amendments for signage in City Rights-of-Way

6:30 P.M.

### EXECUTIVE SESSION

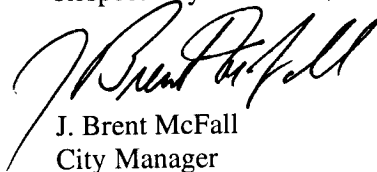
None at this time.

### INFORMATION ONLY ITEMS – Does not require action by City Council

1. Center for Digital Government Award/Reception


Additional items may come up between now and Monday night. City Council will be apprised of any changes to the Study Session meeting schedule.

Respectfully submitted,



J. Brent McFall  
City Manager

C I T Y C O U N C I L F A X R E S P O N S E

TO: Mayor and City Councillors  
FROM: J. Brent McFall, City Manager   
DATE: November 29, 2006  
SUBJECT: Study Session Items for December 4, 2006

There are no items for consent at this time.



WESTMINSTER

## Staff Report

City Council Study Session Meeting  
December 4, 2006



**SUBJECT:** Proposed Improvements for Westminster Grange Hall, Rodeo Market and Adjacent Park

**PREPARED BY:** Vicky Bunsen, Community Development Programs Coordinator

### Recommended City Council Action

Review staff report and provide feedback on proposed plans.

### Summary Statement

Staff has been working during 2006 to develop more detailed improvement plans for the Westminster Grange Hall, Rodeo Market and adjacent vacant property. This report outlines the progress that has been made and further steps planned for 2007. Staff will provide a visual presentation at the December 4, 2006, study session, which will include drawings of a proposed floor plan and exterior elevations for the Grange Hall and Rodeo Market buildings.

This project is still at the conceptual stage with many details to be worked out. The City has not budgeted funds for this project, therefore, significant additional financial analysis and resource development needs to be completed before this project can move forward.

**Expenditure Required:** \$2.5 – 3.0 Million, with operating costs to be determined

**Source of Funds:** Grant funds and volunteer labor, as available

## **Policy Issue**

Does City Council support the direction that is being taken with regard to future improvements and programming at the Westminster Grange Hall and Rodeo Market community arts complex?

## **Alternative**

Provide other direction for staff if the proposed plans and programming are not what City Council desires.

## **Background Information**

The City and the Westminster Housing Authority have invested in acquisition of and improvements to several adjacent properties on West 73<sup>rd</sup> Avenue, the historic center of commerce in Westminster, with the vision that the Grange and Rodeo properties could eventually be used for community cultural purposes. During the past two years, property has been acquired, property boundaries were adjusted, zoning was corrected, the Grange exterior was restored, the Rodeo Market received a historic structure assessment, and three structures on or adjacent to these properties were designated local historic landmarks. The properties proposed to be included in development of the cultural facility include:

1. Westminster Grange Hall, 3935 West 73<sup>rd</sup> Avenue. The Grange has been a community gathering place since 1912 and continues to be owned and operated by the non-profit Westminster Grange Association. In 2003, the City Council designated the Grange as the City's first local historic landmark and used Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) and State Historical Fund grants to complete a \$145,000 exterior restoration of the building, including roof, windows, siding, front door and foundation stabilization. The building has also been assessed for interior restoration, with work expected to be completed when the Grange-Rodeo cultural facility gets underway.
2. Rodeo Market, 3915 West 73<sup>rd</sup> Avenue. The Rodeo Market is a 3,400 square foot barrel vault concrete block office building that was the City's first larger format grocery "supermarket" in the 1950s and 1960s. It was acquired by the Westminster Housing Authority in 2004 and has been leased for offices while plans are completed for the project that would combine it with the Grange Hall. City Council recently designated the Rodeo as a local historic landmark. A structure assessment has been completed, which was funded by the State Historical Fund. Further grant funding is being sought for a façade restoration.
3. Vacant property behind the Grange and Rodeo and northwest of Orchard Court and West 73<sup>rd</sup> Avenue. This property was acquired in two transactions. The landlocked parcel north of the Grange and Rodeo (and south of the Westminster Presbyterian Church parking lot) was acquired as part of the Rodeo Market acquisition. The property at the corner of Orchard Court and 73<sup>rd</sup> Avenue was acquired with the historic two-story bungalow at 7319 Orchard Court. This house was subdivided from the larger vacant parcel, designated a local historic landmark, and sold to private owners who are artists and purchased it based on their interest in joining a neighborhood that could emerge as an arts district. These vacant parcels were rezoned to residential zoning, allowing for a potential public park to be developed.

### **Plans for Community Arts Facility**

In order to move the proposed project along, three activities have been undertaken in 2006: (1) architectural drawings of a proposed reuse plan for the Grange and Rodeo, (2) conceptual planning for the adjacent park area, and (3) study of similar types of arts facilities around Colorado and the United States to identify programs and characteristics of programs that seemed most suitable to the facility and neighborhood.

1. Architectural Drawings of Grange-Rodeo Improvements. The idea of joining the Grange and Rodeo together as a single complex was inspired by a similar project. The Centennial Hall project in Steamboat Springs involved rehabilitation of two adjacent historic buildings and adding new construction that joined the buildings together in the rear, thereby preserving the historic view of the two buildings from the street, but making them modern and functional for 21<sup>st</sup> century uses. These buildings are now used for Steamboat Springs City Council meetings and other public functions. Because this project was similar to what could be done with the Grange and Rodeo, Staff contracted with the same architectural firm, Andrews & Anderson Architects, to prepare conceptual plans for the project.

The architectural work was driven by Staff's research into programming, which is described in more detail below. Based on the architects' prior experience and drawing on staff's research, a floor plan was developed that includes the following (see Attachment 1):

#### Grange

- The goal for future use at the Grange would be consistent with its historic use. It would continue to be used for public assembly, including meetings, events and performances. This would include cultural activities such as music, theatre, dance, film and literary pursuits as well as neighborhood meetings and private parties or receptions.
- The kitchen, restrooms and coat area at the Grange would be relocated to a new addition on the north end of the Grange and Rodeo.
- This would allow the historic front door of the Grange to become functional and allow restoration of the front foyer area of the Grange.
- The interior of the Grange would be restored to the original wood beadboard, floor and light fixtures. Building systems such as electrical, HVAC and plumbing would need to be upgraded.
- The stage area would be rebuilt with a garden-level room excavated below the stage. A "back of stage" area could be added to accommodate rehearsal and work space, storage and dressing rooms. Also, a lift could be installed to allow persons with limited mobility to access the stage.
- While the historic front door would become functional, the complex would be configured so that the main entrances would be between the two buildings, allowing a ramp to be installed on the east side of the Grange allowing for safe, convenient wheelchair access into the Grange Hall.

#### Rodeo

- The Rodeo is proposed to be a small arts facility, emphasizing visual arts, but possibly also accommodating music classes or other types of cultural activities.
- The proposed floor plan includes a small art gallery, a café, five small artist studios, and a larger community art studio.
- Proposed programming of this space will be described more fully below, but it is possible that a non-profit organization could be identified or created to operate the facility, emphasizing arts education or artist business incubator programming, with the intent of optimizing public access to the space with programming evolving as needed.

Staff Report – Proposed Improvements for Westminster Grange Hall, Rodeo Market and Adjacent Park

December 4, 2006

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- Staff is currently working toward a restoration of the 73<sup>rd</sup> Avenue façade of the Rodeo. The rear of the building would have a new elevation based on new construction (see Attachment 2). The sides of the building would be modified, subject to the oversight of the Historic Landmark Board. One proposal is to have the artist studios open to the east, allowing light and air into the studios, providing artists access to the park outside, and allowing the art studios to merge into a plaza on the east side of the building. This area would possibly be furnished by local artists with interesting functional structures for sitting and shade. The café could also open onto this proposed plaza.

New Addition

- The improvements to both buildings contemplate new construction at the north end of both buildings.
- The new construction would be architecturally sympathetic to both buildings, which is an interesting architectural problem since the buildings are quite dissimilar.
- The addition would accommodate main entrances facing both south, to the traditional street frontage of the two buildings, and to the north, toward the park and proposed parking opportunity at the Westminster Presbyterian Church. The configuration would create a courtyard between the two existing buildings on the south side of the addition.
- The addition would accommodate the back of stage area for the Grange, the large community art studio at the Rodeo and also a catering kitchen and restrooms to support the entire complex, as well as a mechanical room and office to serve the project.

Phasing and Financing of Improvements. The architectural services were commissioned in 2006 in order to get a more reliable cost estimate for the proposed complex. The current cost estimate for the project is \$2.5-3.0 Million. This cost does not address a number of related projects such as park construction, the proposed “alley” and handicapped parking to the west, and costs of operation, programming, and maintenance. Much remains to be discussed and planned. However, the drawings and cost estimate help to inform the path to a successful facility.

Arts facilities are often grown from small seeds and evolve over time. This allows the facility to grow as community support and funding grows and the evolution of the facility responds to community needs over time. Gradual progress is a lower-risk, more sustainable way to approach the Grange-Rodeo project. In 2007, there are several tasks that can be worked on to make progress toward the full-fledged goals, including:

- Working with the Grange Association to increase use of the Grange Hall, especially for cultural activities.
- If space becomes available, begin some visual arts activities, possibly an after-school youth arts program.
- Initial work on adjacent park improvements using existing City resources and community volunteers in order to allow the park area to begin being used by the neighborhood.

Incremental progress has been a hallmark of this project since its early inception in 2002-03. Continuing this progress in small steps will show commitment and provide an opportunity to gain community and volunteer support. It is also believed that this progress and commitment will lay the groundwork for securing additional sources of funding such as through private foundations and the Scientific and Cultural Facilities District (SCFD).

2. Conceptual Park Plans. Several ideas are proposed to be incorporated into the adjacent small park, including:

- Allowing the park to be used in concert with the arts facility. For example, a wedding could be held in the park, with a reception catered from the arts facility, or art classes that use both the indoor and outdoor spaces.
- Pedestrian and possibly vehicular connections that strongly connect Bradburn and the Westminster Presbyterian Church to the arts facility and 73<sup>rd</sup> Avenue.
- Use of the existing irrigation ditch system not only as a water feature, but to irrigate the park and allow distribution of irrigation water to other users.
- The heritage of the neighborhood will be commemorated through appropriate materials, structures and interpretive signs that recognize the roots of Harris Park, including the farming, the railroad, and those who built the town of Westminster.
- Providing one or more “Christmas” trees so that one can be adopted by the neighborhood in the future when the old spruce tree on the south side of 73<sup>rd</sup> Avenue expires.

Because funding for expensive park improvements is not likely to be available for at least several years, staff proposes to begin minimal improvements that would allow better public access and use in the near term. Old fences and abandoned structures are being removed, and in 2007 volunteer projects can be organized to build some improvements and to plant trees. The goal is to show progress, get the community involved in creating and supporting the park space, and to encourage use and care of the space by the neighborhood.

3. Study of Arts Facilities Around Colorado and the United States. In order to learn how best to manage the proposed cultural center, staff has been investigating many facilities and programs. Some defining characteristics of the Grange-Rodeo project are:

- It is very small physically. Care must be taken not to try to be all things to all people, but to find uses appropriate to the space, configuration and location.
- The project should be diverse and flexible, in order to provide use and access by as much of the community as possible. Arts instruction and arts business incubator concepts seem to serve this goal best, by allowing for constant turn-over of users as students and artists come and go over time.
- Because it is located on a local street in a residential area, and because the facilities are small, programming should not attempt to make 73<sup>rd</sup> Avenue a regional destination. The traffic and parking would be inappropriate for the neighborhood. The programming needs to be scaled for and responsive to the needs of the local area.

Research into these types of facilities and projects indicates that they are more often operated by non-profit entities devoted to the arts rather than by a municipality. Occasionally, a building may be physically owned by a city, but operated by a non-profit organization. Artist studio space is managed in a variety of ways. Financially, public cultural facilities are not often supported solely by fees collected by users, but always rely on additional forms of support, including grants from state and local organizations and private foundations and a variety of other fundraising tools.

Two local examples seem to stand out as models for the programming at the Grange-Rodeo project for two reasons: (1) they are a comparable size, and (2) they provide maximum public access to the

facilities. These two examples are illustrative only, and should not be interpreted as THE model for a Grange/Rodeo project. They will be described in detail below.

Downtown Aurora Visual Arts (DAVA). DAVA was started 12 years ago by an individual artist who decided to offer after-school arts instruction to teens. Today, the non-profit organization has five employees and operates a gallery, classes, and a large drop-in art studio out of old storefront space at 1405 Florence, south of Colfax Avenue. DAVA's programs include:

- Free drop-in studio that is visited by 5 to 50 students a day, Monday through Friday, 2:15 to 4:30pm. It is a space about half the size of the Rodeo Market and is furnished with concrete floor, sinks, wire shelves for supplies and works in progress and bulletin boards featuring notices of classes, events and students' art work. No registration is required.
- A class described as "job training" for 11 to 14 year olds. This is not job training to learn to be an artist, but simply trains students in the expectations of the work world. The free class requires a commitment to show up, on time, two days a week. Students learn to plan a project, do it well and complete it. The projects are works of public art that are scattered through the Colfax and Florence neighborhood including murals, mosaics, sculptures and street furniture. Students receive periodic reviews, similar to a job, and are paid a small stipend for the time they spend. If they turn 15 years old and have a good record in the job training program, they may be invited to become teachers' aides in other DAVA programs.
- A digital graphics computer lab limited to 10 students at a time. Students completed a recent project, working with a professional artist and using photography, graphics, self-authored text and audio, where the students expressed themselves concerning events or issues of great personal concern to themselves. The results were impressive.
- The gallery features works of one to three professional artists who are teaching classes during a particular period, along with the work of the students in their classes. The shows have opening and closing receptions for the public and parents to attend. A recent show featured the theme, "The Power of Word," and included calligraphy, bookmaking, and illustrated printmaking.
- A parent-tot art class is offered in the mornings
- A portable art studio is offered. For a varying fee, DAVA will take classes to a location, including all equipment and supplies. These are offered to schools, churches, employee work groups, festivals etc.

DAVA is funded by the City of Aurora (using CDBG money), the Adams County Cultural Commission (allocating SCFD funds), and private grantors such as the Denver Foundation, Gay & Lesbian Fund, Wells Fargo, U.S. Bank and others.

DAVA is one possible model for South Westminster that offers valuable outreach to low-income students, involving them in creative, expressive activity and community service. It brings professional artists into the program and into contact with the students, their parents and other members of the public who attend the DAVA classes and receptions. It provides arts education, contributes to the professional lives of artists, and involves both artists and students in community service.

Business of Art Center (BAC). The BAC in Manitou Springs has similar facilities to the Grange and Rodeo, although in a larger space. They have a large barrel vault building that is used for galleries, gift shop, and a number of large artist studios. There is a second historic two-story stone building. It is used as a performance venue on the ground level and offices on the second floor, including BAC offices and a business center for non-profit organizations that need office support such as shared



computer and office equipment and meeting space. The BAC operates with two full-time and three part-time employees. The artist studios are operated as a business incubator, allowing artists to move in at a very low rental rate and the rent is raised annually so that they must eventually move out into the market. Each studio is equipped to serve several artists in a certain art medium, for example, pottery or printmaking. The BAC interviews artists to determine if they are a good fit with the existing group, whether they are at a point in their career to benefit from a business incubator opportunity and whether they are prepared to be involved in community service, such as public art projects or public events. The BAC has some revenue from studio, office space and performance venue rentals and from gallery sales, but relies in large part on foundation and corporate philanthropy to make ends meet. It has been in business for about 25 years and was the catalyst for a great deal of arts retail activity that now populates Manitou Avenue.

The BAC model helped to inform the proposed physical modifications to the Grange and Rodeo buildings. The arts business incubator function would support emerging artists, would allow a variety of artists to come and go from the project, would provide variety from the gallery art and activities of the resident artists at any given time. The large community studio in the Rodeo Market was planned with two types of uses in mind. The first might be the after-school drop-in type of program, but it would also allow artists in the community to use the space for their own instruction and projects. Artists have indicated a desire for studio space where they can learn new types of art and have also asked for space where they can work on an occasional larger project that they cannot accommodate in their home work space.

### **Financing Strategies**

Two major categories of expense must be addressed: the costs of the new construction and remodeling the Grange and Rodeo and costs of ongoing operation and maintenance.

**New Construction and Remodeling.** The construction of the addition on the Grange and Rodeo will require \$2.5 to \$3 million. It is likely that the funds will need to be assembled from a variety of sources. Possible sources of funding include:

- Financing the project. The real estate has significant value that could serve as collateral for borrowing, but a revenue stream for debt repayment would need to be identified. While the contemplated programming could generate some revenue, it is likely to be only partly sufficient to cover debt service.
- Use of a portion of future CDBG allocations. Federal Community Development Block Grants (CDBG) are a possibility but the allocations are decreasing every year, so this source might make a small or declining contribution to the project. In addition, the City has other needs that CDBG funds are being used to address.
- Tax increment. If significant new development occurs in the neighborhood before the Grange-Rodeo addition is built, tax increment may be available to service a portion of the debt.
- State Historical Fund grants may be available for costs of interior restoration of the Grange and façade restoration of the Rodeo.
- Philanthropy and private foundations may be a source of construction funds. However, it is unlikely that such sources would offer funding unless an active valuable program is already in place. If such programming in the Grange, Rodeo and adjacent neighborhood gets underway and a business plan is developed for the community arts facility, this may be sufficient to gain the support of foundations and individual philanthropists.

Construction of adjacent park improvements may be done in incremental steps, making it more likely that progress can be accomplished on a cash basis over several years, using city funds, CDBG, and volunteer labor and contributions.

**Operations and Maintenance.** Rather than operating this facility with City staff, it is recommended that it be operated by an arts-based non-profit organization similar to other models such as DAVA and the BAC described above. While cities occasionally staff an arts complex with city staff, this usually requires significant municipal subsidies. Other examples involved a city assisting with acquisition of a physical facility (e.g. DAVA in Aurora, Dairy Arts Center in Boulder, Torpedo Factory in Alexandria VA) and turning it over to the non-profit for operations. The city may retain a role such as maintaining the exterior of buildings or maintaining a reserve for major system replacements (e.g. roof, HVAC).

There are a few examples of metro-area non-profits who are operating at several sites, such as The Other Side Arts (TOSA), but non-profits for arts facilities are usually based on one location. Therefore, staff will be investigating the local interest among artists and others who might be interested in an organization to manage arts programs in the 73<sup>rd</sup> Avenue area, with the goal of ultimately operating the Grange-Rodeo complex. The goal would be to start programs on a small scale, keeping costs and revenues in balance, seeking grants and foundation support, and gradually building a self-sustaining organization.

#### **Ultimate Goal**

The goal is to work toward an intensely active small complex with artistic diversity and evolving programs that will maximize public access and involvement. The City's role should be limited to providing minimal services, perhaps maintenance and repair of the building exteriors and systems. Non-profit and volunteer capacity will need to be encouraged over the next few years to conduct the operations and programs.

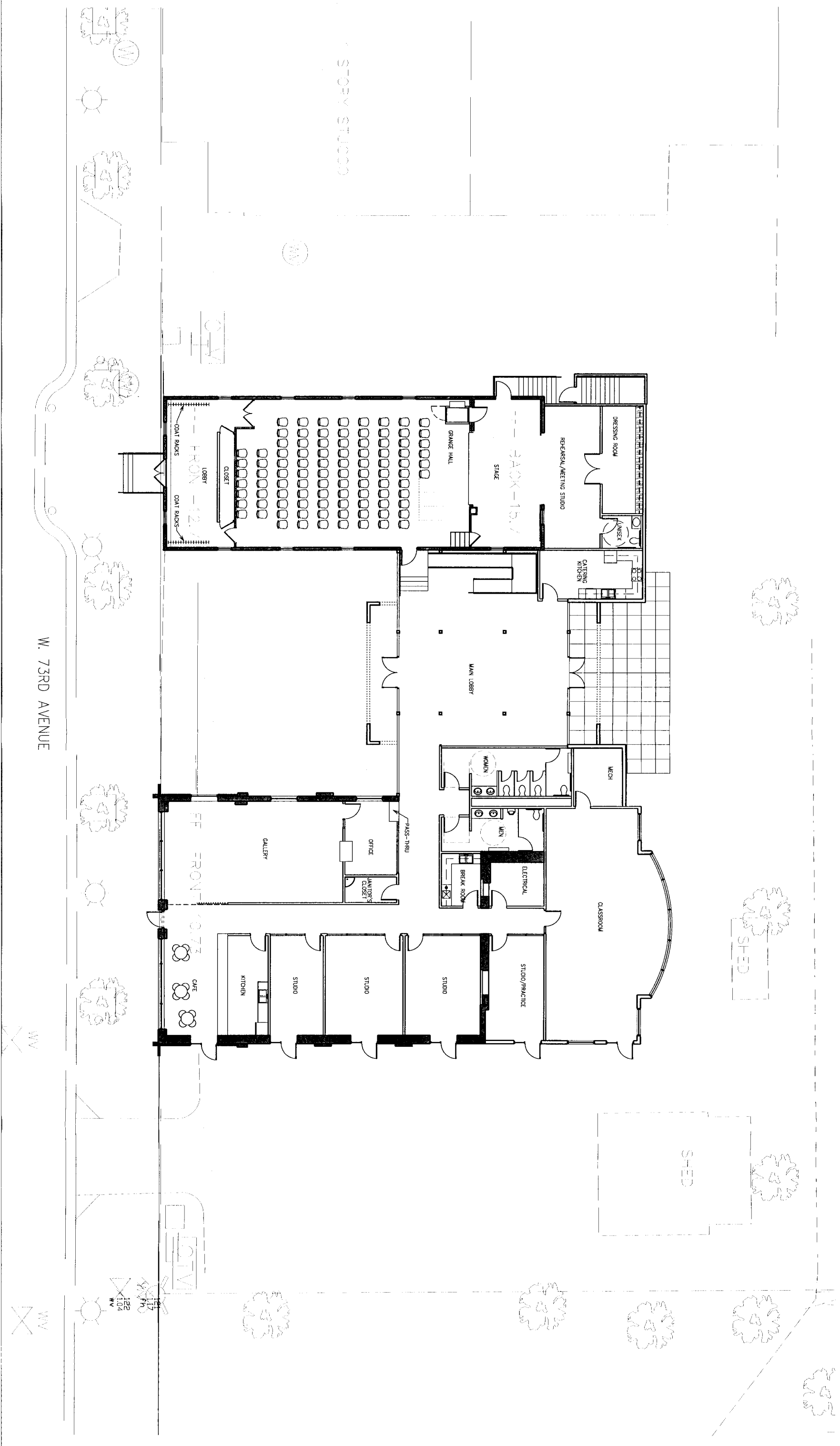
Much work is yet to be done to find a financially feasible solution that works for this project.

Respectfully submitted,

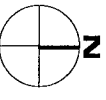


J. Brent McFall  
City Manager

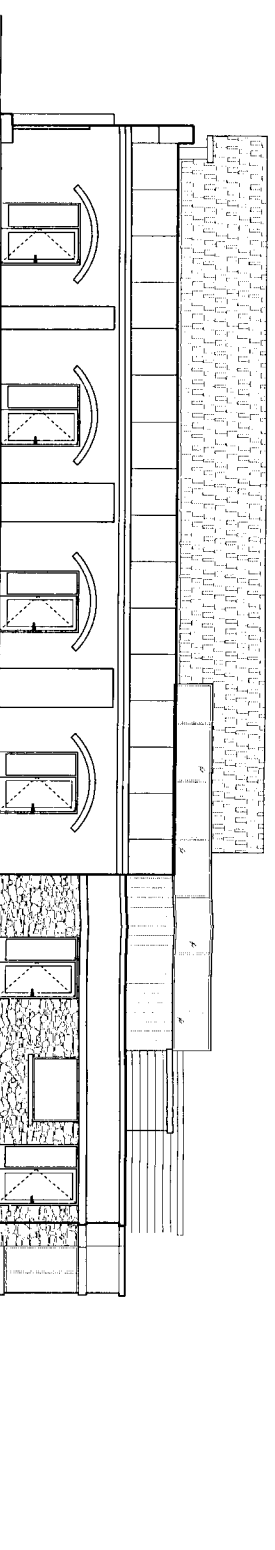
Attachments: Attachment 1 – Westminster Grange and Rodeo Market – Main Floor Plan  
Attachment 2 – Westminster Grange and Rodeo Market – Scheme B (Elevations)



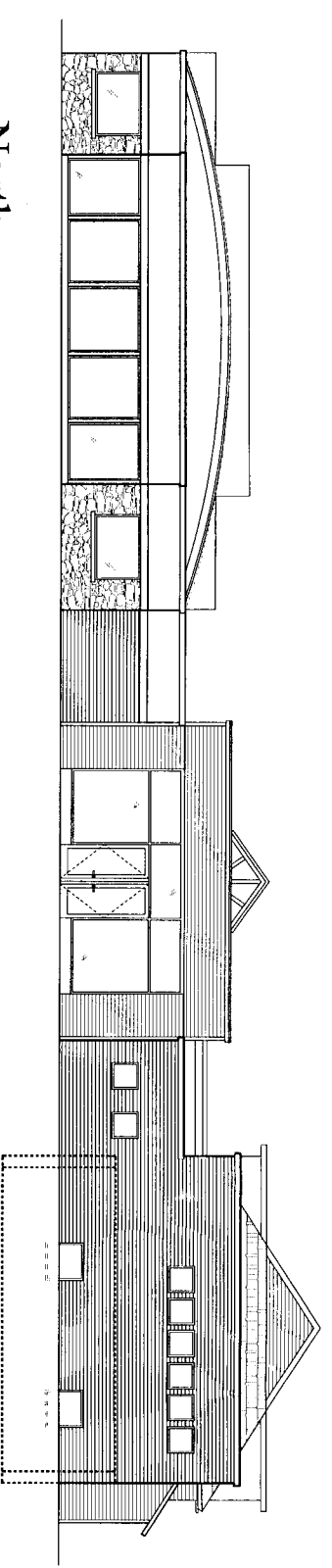
# Westminster Grange and Rodeo Market - Main Floor Plan



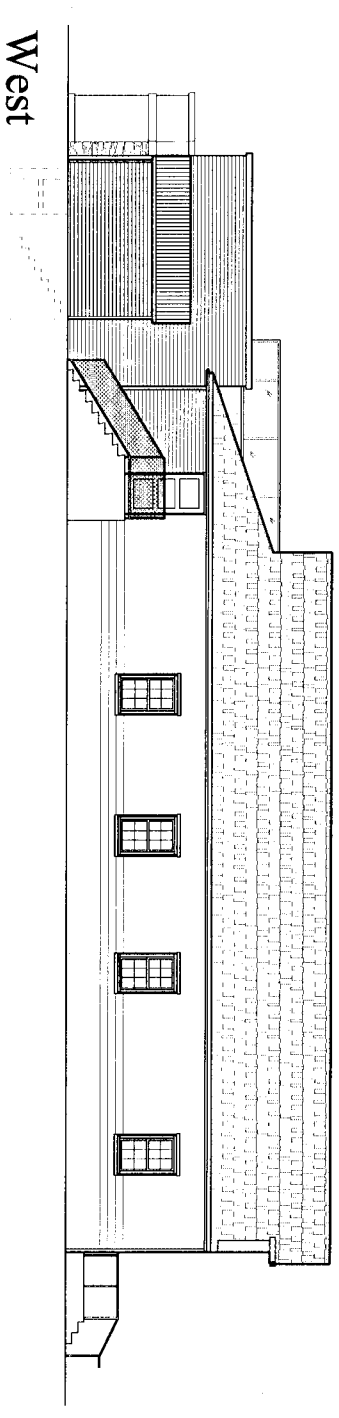
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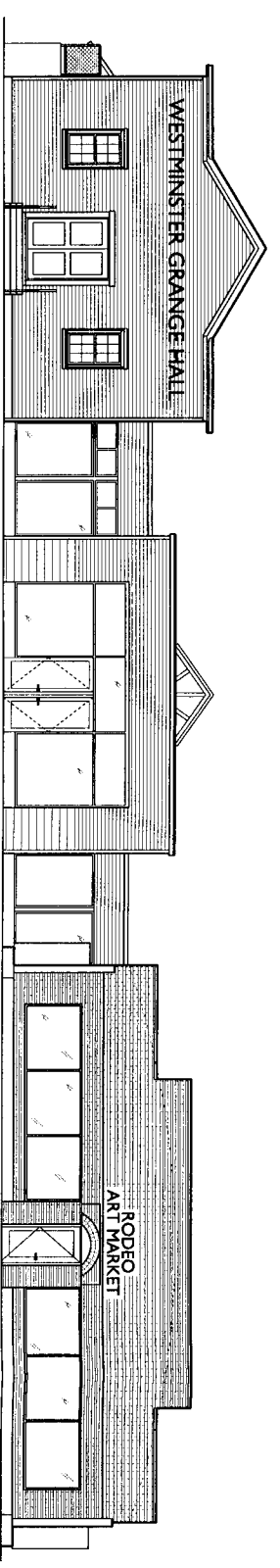
East



North

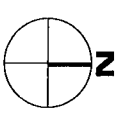
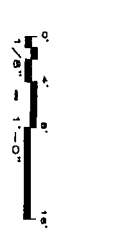


West



South

# Westminster Grange and Rodeo Market - Scheme B





# WESTMINSTER

## Staff Report

City Council Study Session Meeting  
December 4, 2006



**SUBJECT:** Update on the Municipal Service Center Renovation Project

**PREPARED BY:** Mike Wong, P.E., Senior Engineer  
Abel Moreno, Capital Projects & Budget Manager  
Jim Arndt, P.E., Director of Public Works & Utilities

### Recommended City Council Action:

Review the Staff Report and listen to Staff presentation on the status of the Municipal Service Center renovation. Direct Staff to proceed with the project including bringing forward additional project funding request in 2007.

### Summary Statement

- On January 6, 2006, the City entered into a contract agreement with Fisher Associates for the study, design, and construction-phase architectural services on the Municipal Service Center Facility Renovation project.
- The original scope of work included:
  - Remodeling the Operations Building to provide a safe working environment for approximately 80 staff from the Department of Public Works & Utilities, storage space for project record drawings, maintenance equipment, and indoor parking for vehicles and tandem trucks.
  - Remodeling the Administration Building to provide adequate space for training/conferencing and kitchen facility.
  - Recommending changes to the existing Heated Storage Buildings No. 2 and 3 for equipment and maintenance supplies.
- The original MSC Facility Renovation project schedule called for completion of the design in May and start of construction in summer of 2006, approximately at the time the Parks Division Staff moved out of the Operations Building to their new Parks Maintenance Facility at City Park.
- On July 10, 2006, City Council authorized an amendment to Fisher Associates contract to modify the scope of work to include a master plan of the entire MSC site due to aesthetic and aging facilities issues, as well as incorporate housing of the Building Operations and Maintenance Division, and additional facilities for the Fleet Maintenance Division.
- Staff will be present at the December 4, 2006 City Council Study Session to present Fisher Associates site master plan, facilities conceptual renovation plan, and conceptual construction costs.

**Expenditure Required:** \$11,200,000

**Source of Funds:** Utility Fund – MSC Renovation Project  
Utility Fund Capital Project Reserve

### **Policy Issue**

Should City Council support the MSC master plan and facilities renovation recommendation as presented by Staff?

### **Alternatives**

One option is for the City to scale back the scope of work on the proposed MSC site renovation project to the adopted project budget. This option is not recommended because several components of the project are interrelated, making it difficult to complete one part of the renovation without doing another, i.e. renovating the operations building but not constructing the heated storage facility.

A second option is to complete minimal improvements to the site to enhance working conditions and employee safety in the Operations and Administration buildings. This option is not desirable due to not adequately addressing the City's long term problem of an aging site and facilities. Significant improvements will need to be made at the site over the years including mechanical system replacement, stormwater quality detention and replacement of aging facilities components, all of which are included in the recommended plan.

### **Background Information**

The Municipal Service Center (MSC) was originally built in 1984. Since that time, the City has experienced significant growth in population. Over the years, the demand for municipal services and equipment, personnel and supplies have added significant demands on the MSC site. Three divisions work out of this seven-acre site including, Utilities Operations, Street Operations, and Fleet Maintenance. In addition to storage of large snow plows, maintenance vehicles, and utilities materials, the MSC site also houses the City's primary fueling station, vehicle repair center, and office space for approximately 100 staff from all three divisions.

As Fisher Associates and Staff from the Utilities Operations and Street Operations Divisions worked on space planning for personnel and equipment needs, the Fleet Maintenance and Building Operations and Maintenance (BO&M) Divisions were encouraged to participate in planning efforts to ensure all issues at the MSC site were addressed prior to initiating and finalizing the Operations and Administration Buildings design.

The Fleet Maintenance Division identified a need for an extra welding bay for vehicle repairs and modification to the existing large truck wash station. Currently, the Fleet Maintenance Division is using two bays built for equipment repair as a weld shop. Also, the small vehicle wash bay that is currently located in the east end of the Fleet Maintenance Building is being proposed to be relocated to the east bay of Heated Storage Building #3. This move will allow a drive thru vehicle wash bay for large equipment, removing the current drive in and back out approach that is used today. By extending the existing Fleet Maintenance building to accommodate a weld shop and relocating the small vehicle wash, the bays can be freed up and returned to their originally intended use.

The Building Operations and Maintenance Division is responsible for maintaining all buildings owned and operated by the City. Currently, maintenance supplies for the Division are stored in various locations throughout the City resulting in an inefficient use of storage space and BO&M staff time in retrieving supplies. This move will allow BO&M to be in a centralized location for its personnel and maintenance supplies.

Other issues related to the MSC site were identified during the planning efforts. Traffic circulation within the MSC has been an on-going concern and there have been a few near-miss accidents at this site over the years. Other concerns were the issues of the covered material storage bins, material

storage yard, storm drainage, and the possibility of adjacent commuter rail in the not too distant future, and site aesthetics. Staff determined that a master plan study of the entire site was essential to ensure the MSC was designed and constructed to meet the City's long range objectives for the future. As a result, Staff directed Fisher Associates to provide a revised scope of work and cost proposal to include a master plan effort of the MSC site.

Improvements that were deemed essential and discussed during the planning efforts included:

- Centralizing Public Works & Utilities staff in one facility to improve Department efficiency.
- Renovating the current Operations Building to be an office campus to provide an adequate and safe working environment for staff.
- Renovating the current Administration Building to be an annex building for staff whose work is related to maintenance management, GIS, and public works project files and record drawings.
- Locating all diesel operated vehicles and equipment in heated storage.
- Building a separate heated storage building on the MSC site to accommodate seventeen tandem trucks equipped with snow plows and spreader boxes.
- Removing all vehicles and equipment from the Operations Building to accommodate the BO&M Division's relocation to the MSC as the centralized location for its personnel and maintenance supplies.
- Improving traffic circulation at the MSC site to enhance employee safety.
- Increasing security at the site during normal business hours and directing the flow of vendor deliveries to designated locations.
- Adding a vehicle wash bay to the far eastern end of Heated Storage Building #3, freeing up the large truck/equipment wash bay for its original intended use.
- Expanding the west end of the Fleet Maintenance Building to add a new welding shop that could also be used by BO&M Division.
- Improving the drainage control at the MSC site as a result of new discharge standards and the renovation project. Attention will be given to innovative landscaping design to minimize storm runoff and maximize water quality benefits.

Upon review of several Fisher Associates' alternative concepts, Staff selected a master plan and a facility renovation concept that will serve the City's long term goals. The preliminary drawings are attached with this Staff Report for your information.

### Project Costs

Fisher Associates performed a cost estimate for the entire proposed MSC Renovation project. The estimated conceptual construction cost, including office furnishings, architectural/engineering fees, material testing, and a 20 percent contingency is estimated to be \$11.2 million. The following is the conceptual cost breakdown:

Site Work	\$2,016,000
Building Renovation/Construction	5,875,000
Drainage Control	650,000
Material Testing	35,000
Office Furnishing	200,000
Architectural/Engineering Design Fees	<u>720,000</u>
	9,496,000
Contingency	1,708,000
Total	\$11,204,000

### **Funding Strategy**

City Council previously appropriated \$1,214,000 for the renovation of the MSC. City Council also appropriated \$3.75 million for the 2007 budget year to complete the MSC renovation project as originally scoped, bringing the total project budget to approximately \$4,964,000. However, as a result of the site master plan and conceptual facilities design addressing current and future needs, the estimated conceptual construction budget as defined above is over \$11.2 million.

Staff is recommending that the additional funding come from the Utility Fund Capital Project Reserve account to fund the difference for the overall master plan construction as recommended by Fisher Associates. The amount of Utility Fund Capital Project Reserve is \$29,465,609. If City Council supports Staff's recommendation to fund the project difference from the Utility Fund Capital Project Reserve, the \$6,239,493 will reduce the reserve to \$23,226,116.

Staff will be present at the December 4, 2006 City Council Study Session to present this information and answer any questions City Council may have.

Respectfully submitted,



J. Brent McFall  
City Manager

Attachment



# Municipal Service Center

CURRENT

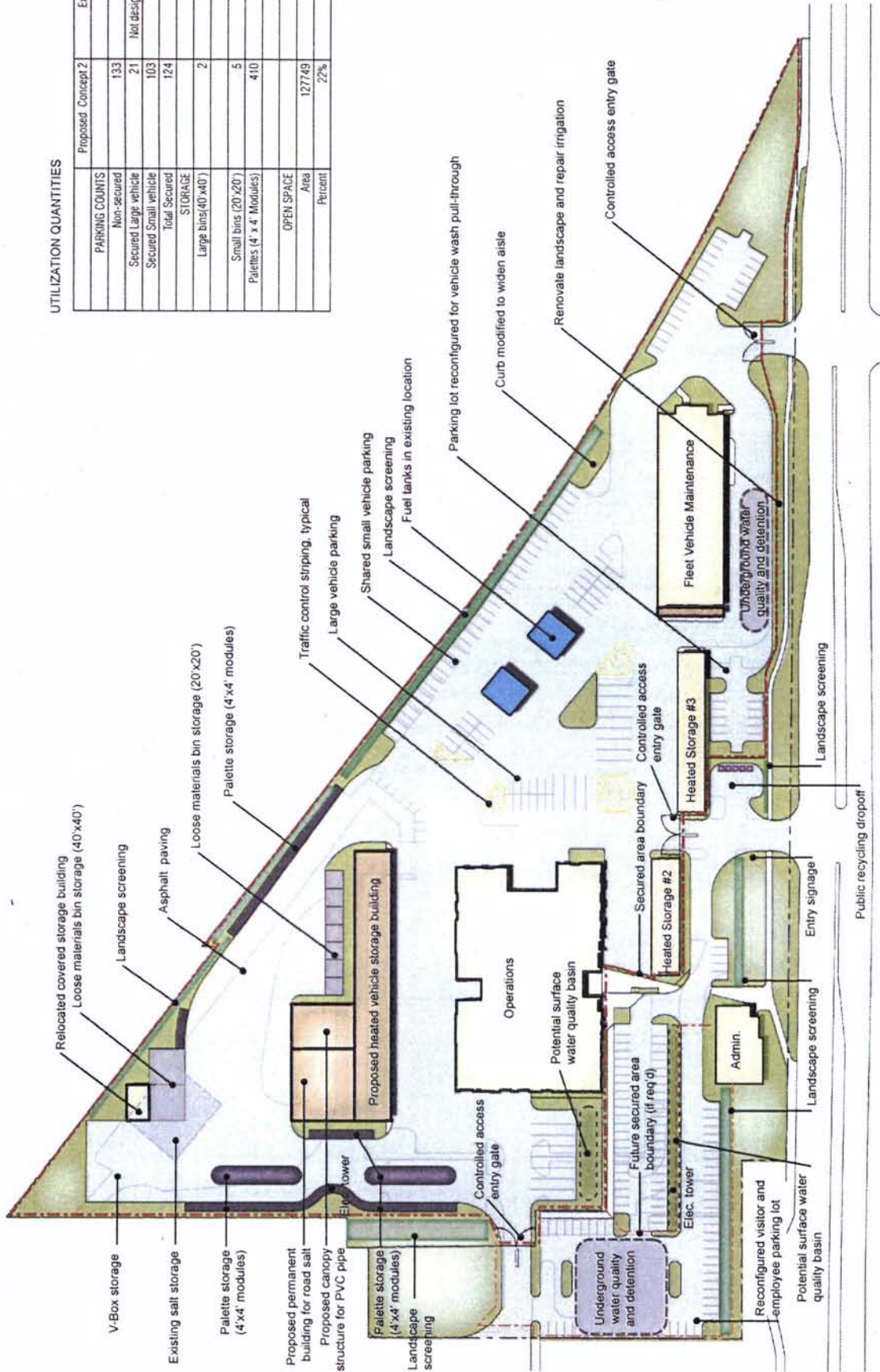




PROPOSED

UTILIZATION QUANTITIES

	Proposed Concept 2	Existing	
PARKING COUNTS	Non-secured	133	160
	Secured Large vehicle	21	Not designated
	Secured Small vehicle	103	150
	Total Secured	124	150
	STORAGE		
Large bins (40'x40')	2	2	
Small bins (20'x20')	5	5	
Pallettes (4' x 4' Modules)	410	390	
OPEN SPACE	Area	12749	
	Percent	22%	





WESTMINSTER

2006-

## Staff Report

City Council Study Session Meeting  
December 4, 2006



**SUBJECT:** Proposed Modifications to the Sign Code

**PREPARED BY:** Steve Smithers, Assistant City Manager  
Marty McCullough, City Attorney

### Recommended City Council Action:

Direct Staff to bring back for official City Council action at the next City Council meeting the sign code amendments proposed in this Staff Report.

### Summary Statement

- The City's current sign code currently permits election and political signs to be posted for a limited amount of time (45 days) prior to an election. The City Code places restrictions on the size and location of the signs.
- Staff conducted a review of the current code and identified legal and practical issues created by signs posted in the public right of way and on public property.
- After significant analysis and discussion, Staff is recommending that the sign code be modified to no longer allow any signs in the public right of way or on public property.
- The three key reasons for Staff's recommendation are: 1) Establish a more legally consistent and defensible ordinance; 2) Prevent the damage that is being done by the signs to City irrigation systems and City landscaping; and, 3) Eliminate the visual clutter that is created by the signs and the costs to the City of cleaning up these signs.
- The City of Westminster is one of only three jurisdictions that Staff is aware of in the Denver Metropolitan area that allow the posting of political signs in the public right of way.
- The City Attorney's Office has drafted amendments to the City's sign ordinance, which are attached for City Council's review. There are significant legal issues to be considered in regard to sign regulation, and these are addressed in a separate legal confidential memorandum, which is attached for City Council's review.

**Expenditure Required:** \$0  
**Source of Funds:** N/A

### **Policy Issue**

Should the City modify the sign code regulations to no longer allow signs to be posted in the public right of way and on public property?

### **Alternatives**

1. Council could direct Staff to leave the current code provisions in place allowing for the continued placement of signs in the right of way and on public property. Staff does not recommend this alternative. Under recent Supreme Court decisions, Cities must take an all or none approach to regulating signs on street rights-of-way and other public property. The current provisions allowing only political signs, and setting durational limitations on their display, could not be preserved without allowing all types of free speech signs in the right of way without any durational limitations. In addition, the current signage practice is causing damage to landscaping and irrigation systems, presents a significant maintenance problem for both the City and HOA's with right of way maintenance obligations, and Staff continues to hear complaints from the public about the unsightly nature of the signage.
2. Council could direct Staff to take a less impactful approach such as eliminating signage from medians but allowing signage in other areas. While this approach would help eliminate some of the issues the City has with damage to irrigation and landscaping, this would not address some of the legal concerns and it would not completely address the issue of visual clutter. Staff does not recommend this alternative.

### **Background Information**

The issue of sign regulation in the public right of way and on public property has been an ongoing issue in the City. The City's sign regulations were amended several years ago to add additional requirements on the timing, location and size of political and election sign posting. At the time these amendments were adopted it was recognized that the regulations were in a gray area of the law, and that additional modifications might be warranted.

Recent input received from homeowners associations dealing with political signs, as well as input from citizens, City Council and Staff created the motivation to take another look at the sign code. Staff has analyzed this issue from a number of different perspectives and has concluded that a significant change is warranted.

Staff contacted several surrounding jurisdictions to determine what their signage regulations are for political and election signs. The results of this survey are attached and reflect that only Westminster and Aurora allow signs in the right of way.

Staff evaluated the current costs to the City of allowing signage in the public right of way and on public property. Below are the description and breakdown of the costs to the Code Enforcement Division and Parks Division of repairing damage and responding to citizen complaints and removing signs.

#### Code Enforcement:

610 Hours have been spent in the first 10 months of 2006 on enforcing the City's sign code regulations applicable to political signs. The average is approximately 2 hours per complaint called in. This accounts for the time taken to retrieve the complaint from the voice mail, write it up and assign to the Code Enforcement Officer (CEO). The CEO's time involves driving out to the complaint site, call the owner of the sign to have them pick it up, and then a reinspection to verify the sign has been removed. Sometimes the

complaint requires a second call back to the sign owner and another trip out to reinspect. If not removed the CEO will remove and dispose of the sign. There have been 163 sign complaints to date in 2006 x 2 hrs manpower each = 326 hours. In addition, CEOs will go out on Saturdays and remove illegal signs without a complaint. To date 284 hours has been devoted to removing signs. The total estimated cost for this sign removal work for 10 months is estimated at \$15,120.

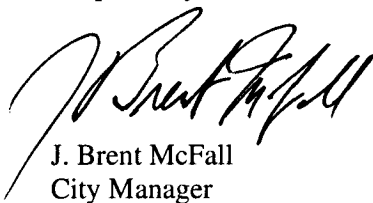
Park Services:

The Park Services Division is responsible for the operation and maintenance of City landscaped medians and most streetscape rights-of-way not being maintained by HOA's or business centers. Of concern for the past several years is the amount of damage to irrigation systems that occurs within these landscaped areas caused by the installation of temporary signs by private parties. The drip irrigation that provides water to the landscape lies just below the mulch bed (either stone or bark) and are easily pulled apart by foot traffic or permanently damaged by the insertion of wooden stakes or the wire frames currently so popular with political signage. Because the damage occurs below the surface it is often difficult to see that some of the plant material is not receiving water until the plant begins to show stress by dropping its leaves or succumbing to insect damage. In a typical year approximately \$2,000 in plant loss occurs within the medians caused by malfunctioning drip irrigation systems. City Staff and the contractors hired to maintain some of these properties also spend approximately 100 to 200 man hours performing repair work on the median and right of way streetscapes at a valued cost of \$5,000.

The proposed ordinance is attached for City Council's review. The changes to the ordinance remove election and political signs as a permitted temporary sign in public rights-of-way and other public property such as our parks and open spaces. In addition, new definitions have been added reflecting the elimination of election and political signs as a separate category of signs from the ordinance.

Staff will be present at Monday Night's Study Session to respond to City Council questions and receive direction on this matter.

Respectfully submitted,



J. Brent McFall  
City Manager

Attachments

## Metro Area Election Signage Requirements

Municipality	Election Sign Requirement	Are Signs Allowed in ROW
Arvada	No restrictions on height size or number	Not Allowed
Aurora	6 sq. ft. maximum area; 4 ft. max height; no limitation on number	Allowed unless; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) In the center median of public street</li> <li>b) On developed city parks</li> <li>c) On developed city property other than city parks including but not limited to city hall</li> <li>d) On a traffic control or in such a manner that causes an obstruction or hazard to pedestrians or motorists</li> </ul>
Boulder	12 sq. ft. maximum area; 7 ft. maximum height	Not Allowed
Broomfield	16 sq. ft. maximum area; 7 ft. maximum height in residential; 32 sq. ft. maximum area; 7 ft. maximum height in business district	Not Allowed
Northglenn	No Restrictions	Not Allowed
Thornton	12 sq. ft. maximum area; 6 ft. maximum height; no limitation in number	Not Allowed
Westminster	(Class 9 election signs) 50 sq. ft. maximum area in zones T1, C1, C2, M1, O1 and similar PUD's. 6 sq. ft. in all other zones in residential PUD's.	Allowed unless; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i) they block or otherwise interfere with traffic visibility</li> <li>ii) they are not located within 50 ft. of an intersection</li> <li>iii) they do not exceed 3 sq. ft. in area</li> </ul> No single candidate or issue sign may be located within 50 ft. of any other sign for the same candidate or issue



# WESTMINSTER

## Staff Report

Information Only City Council Staff Report  
December 4, 2006



SUBJECT: Center for Digital Government Award/Reception  
PREPARED BY: David Puntteney, Information Technology Director

### Summary Statement:

The Center for Digital Government, a national research and advisory institute on information technology policies and best practices in state and local government, conducts an annual comprehensive nationwide Digital Cities Survey to examine how city governments are utilizing information technology to operate efficiently while delivering quality service to their citizens. Participation in the program has increased each year and competition is growing. Cities are categorized and ranked by population.

The Center for Digital Government evaluated Westminster and other participating cities in the areas of Information Technology strategic planning, hardware and software technologies, city services offered through web sites, technology use in public safety, geographic information system capabilities, voice and data networks and more.

Staff is very pleased to report that the City of Westminster has been selected as one of the top ten Digital Cities in the nation in the population category of 75,000 – 125,000. This is the fifth year that Westminster has achieved a top ten rating and has moved from 6th place in 2005 to a 5th place rank for 2006. Westminster is one of only five cities nationwide, and the only Colorado city to maintain a top ten rating for the last five years in the 75,000 to 125,000 population category. Winners will be posted on the Center for Digital Government's website ([www.centerdigitalgov.com](http://www.centerdigitalgov.com)) in December.

The Center for Digital Government will be hosting an award reception for winners during the NLC Convention in Reno, Nevada on December 7<sup>th</sup>, 2006. All Westminster City Council and staff attending the NLC Conference have been registered for the reception. The details for the reception are as follows:

When: Thursday, December 7, 2006, 5:00 pm - 7:00 pm  
Where: Circus Circus Hotel & Casino-Reno- Casino Ballroom  
500 North Sierra Street

Respectfully submitted,

J. Brent McFall  
City Manager