

EUGENE CITY COUNCIL

AGENDA ITEM SUMMARY



Work Session: Downtown Improvements - Broadway Plaza

Meeting Date: February 22, 2016
Department: Planning & Development
www.eugene-or.gov

Agenda Item Number: B
Staff Contact: Nan Laurence
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ISSUE STATEMENT

The work session is to provide council an opportunity to review and discuss three expressions of interest for Broadway Plaza and for the council to provide initial feedback on pursuing any of them, or alternatively, pursuing improvements to the plaza as public open space or doing nothing at this time. The expressions of interest were received in response to a Request for Expressions of Interest issued by the City in December 2015.

BACKGROUND

Broadway Plaza, also known as Kesey Square, is a 4,400 square-foot parcel at the southeast corner of Willamette and Broadway. The plaza was created in 1971 as a part of the downtown mall. (Picture in Attachment A). In 1996, Willamette Street was reopened, the fountain was removed, and the plaza was imagined to continue as a gathering space for public events. Broadway Plaza is located in the heart of downtown, a critical site related to the activity, identity, and experience of downtown.

In December 2015, the council began a conversation about the design and use of the Park Blocks, and the need for a coherent, comprehensive look at all of the downtown public open spaces. In December, the Downtown Solutions Forum also provided public input on downtown open spaces, and reaffirmed the goal of fostering a vibrant downtown, that is inviting to all, inclusive, and economically healthy.

Broadway Plaza, similar to the other open spaces downtown, fills with activity during programmed events, but is largely vacant at other times. The City has worked to activate Broadway Plaza in part with focused attention on nearby redevelopment opportunities to bring people and jobs back to downtown, such as the Broadway Commerce Center, the Woolworth Building, and First on Broadway. Even as the downtown revitalization efforts have resulted in renewed confidence, investment, and activity in the last year, the food carts have not been as successful in that location. Challenges have included cart vandalism, destruction of the table and storage shed, conflicts with customers' ability to enjoy the space, and reports of assaults against food cart owners, and a resultant drop in customers.

While the site is not currently for sale, this past fall the City received an unsolicited offer from a group of downtown stakeholders to purchase the property at market value for a mixed use,

residential and retail development. The City Council and the Urban Renewal Agency Board have the ultimate authority over sale of the property. Because the City owns the parcel, the council must agree to sell it. However, because the Agency included a deed restriction when the Agency transferred the property to the City, the Agency Board must agree to remove that deed restriction prior to the property being sold for a private use. The redevelopment of the site is only one of three general options that the council could consider. The other two options are: (1) public investment to improve the use and appearance of the land; and (2) take no action.

In preparation for council consideration and discussion, the City Manager issued a Request for Expressions of Interest. The purpose was to determine if there were other qualified development teams or individuals with an interest in redeveloping the parcel and to learn more about their concepts for distinctive, creative and active uses for the property. Three responses were received: Otto P. Poticha (Attachment B), Ali Emami (Attachment C), and 2EB (Attachment D).

RELATED CITY POLICIES

City Council Goals

Safe Community - A community where all people are safe, valued and welcome.

- Greater sense of safety (especially downtown)

Sustainable Development - A community that meets its present environmental, economic and social needs without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.

- Increased downtown development

Effective, Accountable Municipal Government - A government that works openly, collaboratively, and fairly with the community to achieve measurable and positive outcomes and provide effective, efficient services.

- Public engagement that involves the community broadly

Envision Eugene Pillars

Pillar: Provide Ample Economic Opportunities for all Community Members

- Integrate new development and redevelopment in the downtown, on key transit corridors and in core commercial areas.

Pillar: Promote Compact Urban Development and Efficient Transportation Options

- Facilitate the transformation of downtown, key transit corridors and core commercial areas as mixed-use neighborhoods that foster active, walkable, community living by providing a mix of residential, commercial, retail, and public uses in proximity to one another.

Regional Prosperity Economic Development Plan

Strategy 5: Identify as a Place to Thrive, Priority Next Step - Urban Vitality

As we foster a creative economy, dynamic urban centers are an important asset. Eugene, Springfield and many of the smaller communities in the region, recognize the importance of supporting and enhancing vitality in their city centers. Building downtowns as places to live, work and play will support the retention and expansion of the existing business community and be a significant asset to attract new investment. The Cities of Eugene and Springfield will continue to enhance their efforts to promote downtown vitality through development and redevelopment.

COUNCIL OPTIONS

No options presented at this time, this work session is informational only.

CITY MANAGER'S RECOMMENDATION

No recommendation at this time.

SUGGESTED MOTION

No motion offered at this time.

ATTACHMENTS

- A. Picture of Plaza in 1970s
- B. Otto P. Poticha – Expression of Interest
- C. Ali Emami – Expression of Interest
- D. 2EB – Expression of Interest

FOR MORE INFORMATION

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