



Legislation Text

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Depot Park Update and Development Action Plan (B)

This item involves the Depot Park Update and Development Action Plan.

On March 17, 2008, Community Redevelopment Agency (CRA) staff presented its project update and development action plan for Depot Park to the CRA board. The presentation covered the project vision, coordination structure, anticipated project timeline spanning the present to late 2011, funding availability, and funding gaps. The CRA approved several recommendations for referral to the City Commission in order to clarify and assign project management responsibilities, expedite the project schedule and fill funding gaps.

Since the CRA meeting date, staff has continued to expedite progress on the schedule. On April 1, a remediation coordination meeting was held with Florida Department of Environmental Protection (FDEP) officials. This meeting clarified cleanup objectives related to coal tar, petroleum, and other contaminants and secured FDEP assistance with addressing arsenic and solvents detected on portions of the site. The Rinker building is expected to be demolished by the end of April. A pre-bid meeting for relocating the Depot Building was held on April 11th. Bid submittals were due April 23rd. Public Works made progress on completing the reconstruction documents for Depot Avenue with CRA staff requesting brick paving, roadway lighting and electrical conduit. The landscape architecture firm Carol Johnson and Associates attended the Cade Museum charrette, conducted a site visit, and began drafting park design standards for completion by mid-July. The Phase 1a landscaping plans for the west pond are undergoing revisions and bidding of this work is expected by early May.

Over the last seven months, CRA staff has been instrumental with aiding the museum leadership become familiar with the Depot Park project and obtain various design documents, and also with coordinating with GRU and Public Works to ensure compatibility between their respective undertakings and the proposed museum site. CRA staff is also providing project timelines and other strategic assistance to ensure that the museum planning process is synchronized with activities tied to the redevelopment of the Depot Park area. The CRA, with its capacities in project coordination, engineering, planning, and finance, anticipates assisting the museum project through completion.

The Cade Museum Leadership Group, assisted by CRA staff, conducted a design charrette from March 25th through 27th at the Florida Community Design Center. The Cade design team consists of Gould Evans Architects and exhibit designers Amaze. The design team has identified a concept described as the "3 I's" - Inspiration, Invention, and Innovation - as guiding principles for the museum. The concept arises from the processes whereby creativity leads to the development and dissemination of new technology. The charrette helped translate the concept into ideas for a physical space that showcases the exhibits and park. Gould Evans and Amaze created four distinct expressions of buildings that will later be refined into concepts. There was agreement that the museum and park should unify their design and that an overall brand for the museum and park be developed. Further conceptual refinement is underway and the Cade Museum Leadership Group anticipates returning to Gainesville soon with additional design materials. The CRA staff has invited representatives of the Cade Museum Leadership Group to present information concerning the project during the City Commission meeting.

Project Objectives: May through July (Dates provided by respective department)

- Final Phase 1 remediation construction plans approved (GRU) 5/2/08
- Submittal of Phase 2 remediation construction plans and approval (GRU) 6/15/08
- Begin temporary move of Depot Building (GRU) 7/1/08
- Complete park design and technical standards (CRA) 7/15/08
- Complete design and bid documents for Depot Avenue (Public Works) 5/15/08
- Begin installation of Phase 1a landscaping and irrigation installation (CRA) 7/1/08
- Begin 100% Depot Building rehabilitation plans (CRA) 7/1/08

Partial funding for construction of Depot Park improvements (\$2.58 million) is available in the following City accounts: 335-850-

C350 (2005 CIRB funds) amount \$980,480, 115-800-X201 (HUD EDI grant) amount \$119,514, 103-850-C350 (UDAG funds) amount \$470,253 with additional funds of \$809,879 due by 2013, and 115-790-X150 (Recreational Trail Program grant) amount \$200,000. Partial funding for the Depot Building rehabilitation is available in account 328-790-M500 (FDOT TEA 21 funds) amount \$627,679 and an additional \$850,000 from an anticipated bond issue in 2010. Beginning in fiscal year 2009 (October 1, 2008), DRAB will be requested to budget \$500,000 for park improvements. Funding for stormwater improvements is available from the State Revolving Fund construction loan and government grants. Partial funding for the reconstruction of Depot Avenue from Main Street to SE 7th Street is available from Federal Highway Administration and LAP funds. The funding needs are as follows: \$4 million to complete park construction, \$500,000 for restoring the depot building, \$1,000,000 to fully fund construction of Depot Avenue. The total capital need is \$5.5 million.

The CRA to the City Commission: 1) Designate the CRA as the lead agency for the construction of the park and recreation elements on the site and for the depot building rehabilitation and authorize the CRA to assume leadership of the Depot Park Team, to be comprised of CRA, GRU, Public Works and Parks, Recreation and Cultural Affairs staff; 2) Approve "City's Best Interest" as an option for procuring remediation services and authorize staff to modify the project documents accordingly; 3) Address the approximately \$4 million capital funding gap for park and recreation improvements; 4) Establish late-2009 as the target completion date for remediation and start date for constructing the remaining park and recreation improvements; 5) Direct the City Manager to fund landscape improvements from Stormwater Management Utility funds in and around the stormwater ponds instead of using park development funds; 6) Direct the City Manager to secure adequate funding to start the Phase 2 reconstruction of Depot Avenue between South Main Street and SE 2nd Street by late-2009 and to determine funding needs to address arsenic remediation on the park site; 7) Address the approximately \$500,000 funding gap for restoring the Depot Building and authorize staff to pursue beginning the rehabilitation while the building is in storage in 2008; and 8) Accelerate funding of park projects by making funds equal to the remaining UDAG grant proceeds (total of \$809,879) available in fiscal year 2009 instead of 2013.