

Background: City Property at West 73rd Avenue and Lowell Blvd.

The Project: Residents of the Harris Park neighborhood asked the City to reprogram a city-owned property on the southwest corner of West 73rd Ave and Lowell Blvd for community use as an event park. City leadership directed staff to work with area residents to evaluate the proposed use while gathering added community input about community needs that might also be addressed with this resource.

The Site: The property is made up of six parcels that were acquired by the City in the 2000's and assembled as a community and economic development project between 2012 and 2014 using U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development funding. Staff at the time envisioned a mixed-use development that served both emerging small business and provided affordable housing. Staff hoped to apply the HUD funds to incentivize development that would activate the corridor and revitalize a section of an historic block with failing properties.

Since that time, three housing projects have been unsuccessful at the site and area residents have asked the City to consider a use that could provide year-round benefits and bring the community together. Current "blue sky" proposals include an out-door market, a neighborhood event center, a food/grocery truck and farmers market venue and a use that highlights community and student arts. Work group participants have shared stories that key off the historic Harris Park businesses that once served this corridor, current food and grocery needs experienced in the area and the desire to design a space that elevates neighborhood pride. Some work group participants have asked to keep housing as a potential use; perhaps as live-work housing for local artists.

The Process: Staff proposed a workgroup and community meeting process involving Historic Westminster and Harris Park residents to gather additional information and explore potential uses based on identified community needs and interest. Staff anticipates that the process will require approximately four community work group meetings through September to review assembled information and recommend concepts for the City to consider. Staff anticipates additional research and planning in October and will invite the work group and residents to assess evolving proposals and plans.

For more information or to provide input to the process, email: CDBG@cityofwestminster.us