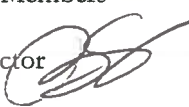




Neighborhood Housing and Community Development

Date: September 24, 2014

To: Mayor and Council Members

From: Betsy Spencer, Director 

Subject: Update on the Colony Park Sustainable Community Initiative (CPSCI) Master Plan and PUD

This memorandum serves to provide an update on the Colony Park Sustainable Community Initiative as it seeks approval of a Planned Unit Development (PUD) designation from City Council and adoption of the master plan as an amendment to the Imagine Austin comprehensive plan. The Austin City Council is set to hear an update on the Colony Park Sustainable Community Initiative at a briefing scheduled for the Austin City Council Agenda Sept. 25, 2014.

Funded by a \$3 million Community Challenge Grant from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development's (HUD) Office of Sustainable Housing and Communities, the Colony Park Sustainable Community Initiative has supported a 3-year community planning process that will culminate in an adopted master plan for 208-acres of Austin Housing Finance Corporation-owned land in Northeast Austin, north of Loyola Lane between Johnny Morris Road and Decker Lane. The project began in February, 2012, with work funded by the grant to be complete by the end of 2014.

The project supports the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development's six "livability principles:" provide more transportation choices; promote equitable, affordable housing; enhance economic competitiveness; support existing communities; coordinate policies and leverage investment; and value communities and neighborhoods.

The initiative has three primary stated outcomes:

1. Further land-use planning and development of 208 acres of publicly-owned land at Colony Park inspired by the HUD Livability Principles (listed above);
2. Foster cross-department/agency coordination and create successful models of comprehensive systems change to support sustainable and equitable development; and
3. Support capacity building and community transformation goals of Colony Park area residents and stakeholders.

To date, the CPSCI has achieved several milestones. These include: formation of a Technical Advisory Group (TAG) made up of representatives for agencies across the City; formation of a Community Advisory Committee made up of residents and stakeholders within the CPSCI; four community planning workshops attended by over 300 residents and stakeholders to determine the priorities, goals and design of the master plan; one open house and community resource fair attended by over 200 individuals to unveil the master plan and connect residents with city and community resources; and an extensive public engagement and capacity building effort that has provided activities and classes for residents during the summer months.

As part of the effort to implement the master plan upon its adoption by City Council, NHCD will collaborate with other departments including the Economic Development Department (EDD) to bring the plan to fruition. To that end, NHCD is exploring opportunities to fund a staff member responsible for furthering the implementation of the overall Plan. NHCD is working with EDD to physically locate this staff member within EDD in order to surround the staff member with similarly experienced staff. To help fund this endeavor, NHCD is exploring several possibilities.

These include a request for an extension of the HUD grant to enable a subject matter expert to begin some of these implementation activities. Another possibility is a pending application for a grant from the U.S. Department of Commerce, Economic Development Administration to fund a staff member. An item for Council approval to submit this grant proposal is scheduled for the Austin City Council Agenda October 2, 2014. The deadline for submission for this year's round of funding is October 17.

Through input received during the CPSCI planning process, the project's Design Team has drafted an Existing Conditions Report, Master Plan and Design Standards and an Implementation Plan. The anticipated schedule for adoption of the elements is as follows:

- Council briefing on the project on September 25
- Master Plan and Design Standards adoption as an amendment to the City's Imagine Austin comprehensive plan
 - Tentative Planning Commission review on October 14
 - Tentative Council adoption date of December 11
 - The Existing Conditions Report and Implementation Plan are currently under review and are also tentatively scheduled to be brought before Council on December 11
- Planned Unit Development (PUD) for the 208 acres of publicly-owned land
 - Environmental Board approved the PUD on September 3
 - Zoning and Platting Commission approved the PUD on September 16
 - Council public hearing and first reading September 25
 - Second and third readings will likely occur during council meetings in October
- Approval of the project's preliminary plan, final plat, and phase 1 construction documents will occur November through December, after PUD approval, in order to meet the grant deadline of December 31, 2014.

NHCD, in collaboration with other City Departments, is working to respond to Council Resolution No. 20140807-104 that directed the City Manager to include neighboring connectivity, public amenity maintenance and governance and financing options within and adjacent to the 208 acre Colony Park Sustainable Community Initiative project. A specific update related to the resolution will be forthcoming.

cc: Marc A. Ott, City Manager
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