

**DOWNTOWN REVIEW BOARD AGENDA
OCTOBER 2, 2019**

STAFF: RYAN TEFERTILLER

FILE NOS:
CPC CU 19-00102 – QUASI-JUDICIAL
CPC V 19-00103 - LEGISLATIVE

PROJECT: DOWNTOWN STADIUM
OWNER: CITYGATE STADIUM LLC
DEVELOPER: SWITCHBACKS FC HOLDINGS
CONSULTANT: NES, INC.



PROJECT SUMMARY:

1. Project Description: This proposal is to develop a roughly 8,000 seat athletic stadium and supporting project elements on the roughly 4.9 acre vacant, FBZ-CEN (Form-Based Zone – Central Sector) zoned site located on the block bound by W. Cimarron St., Sahwatch St., W. Moreno Ave., and S. Sierra Madre St. **(FIGURE 1)**
2. Applicant's Project Statement: **(FIGURE 2)**
3. Planning & Community Development Team's Recommendation: **Approval of the application with technical modifications**

BACKGROUND:

1. Site Address: 520 Sahwatch St.
2. Existing Zoning/Land Use: FBZ-CEN (Form-Based Zone – Central Sector) / The site is vacant
3. Surrounding Zoning/Land Use:
 - North: FBZ-CEN / commercial and light industrial uses
 - South: FBZ-T1 / commercial, office, residential, and light industrial uses
 - East: FBZ-CEN / commercial, office, and light industrial uses
 - West: FBZ-CEN / light industrial uses
4. PlanCOS Vision: Downtown Activity Center
5. Annexation: Town of Colorado Springs, 1872
6. Master Plan/Designated Master Plan Land Use: Experience Downtown Master Plan (2016) / Activity Center Mixed Use
7. Subdivision: Addition No. 1, Colorado Springs (1873); an application to establish one lot via the Downtown Stadium Filing No. 1 is in process with administrative review.
8. Zoning Enforcement Action: None
9. Physical Characteristics: The site is vacant and slopes slightly downward from northeast to southwest.

STAKEHOLDER PROCESS AND INVOLVEMENT:

The stakeholder involvement for this project was significant. In addition to the developers' noteworthy efforts to engage surrounding property owners, businesses, and residents, the City participated with and led multiple public meetings. On July 16th and 17th of 2019 the project proponents held meetings with businesses, restaurants, and retailers in the area (the 16th) as well as the general community (the 17th) to formally present the proposed project. A thorough discussion of the physical and operational components of the project took place at both meetings. While some attendees expressed some concern about parking and traffic management, the overall response from the community was largely positive.

At the time of application submittal, the City mailed notification postcards to roughly 123 owners of property that falls within 1,000 feet of the subject property. Those postcards included information about the proposed project including details of the three specific applications. The notices also announced a City-led public meeting which was held on August 21, 2019. Roughly 75 people attended this meeting. While some questions were still raised about parking and traffic, the feedback from attendees was very positive. Staff received written input from three individuals during the internal review stage of this project **(FIGURE 3)** and one additional communication from the Downtown Partnership prior to the DRB hearing. The site will be posted and new postcards mailed prior to the Downtown Review Board's public hearing.

The application was reviewed by all standard City agencies including, Public Works, Traffic Engineering, Colorado Springs Utilities, Water Resource Engineering, the Parking Enterprise, the Urban Renewal Authority, and others. All reviews support the project; any remaining technical concerns are included as Technical Modifications at the end of this report.

ANALYSIS OF REVIEW CRITERIA AND MAJOR ISSUES

1. Background

The subject property is found on the southwestern edge of Downtown immediately south of the Cimarron and I-25 gateway area. The property, and much of the surrounding area was largely developed as with industrial uses due to proximity to the City's primary north/south rail line as well as good access to I-25 and US-24. For many years, the site was utilized as a foundry and similar industrial uses associated with the Metso Minerals Company (**FIGURE 4**). The site was cleared for redevelopment in 2006 and has remained vacant since. In 2007 the site was designated as part of the CityGate urban renewal area. In 2009, the site was rezoned from M-1 (Light Industrial) to be within the southern portion of the Form-Based Zone's Central Sector which covers the bulk of the City's downtown core area.

In 2013 the City of Colorado Springs initiated the City for Champions effort to utilize over \$120 million awarded by the Colorado Economic Development Commission through the Regional Tourist Act. These funds help support four major projects intended to bring increased tourist revenue to the area. After initial struggles to define and progress the sports and event center project, a concept began to take shape in 2018 to bifurcate the project into two separate but related venues: 1) Robson Arena – the indoor component of the project would be located on the south edge of the Colorado College campus and would serve as the new home arena for the College hockey team; and 2) the Downtown Stadium project located on the subject property at Cimarron and Sahwatch would serve as the new home for the Colorado Springs Switchbacks Football Club.

After extensive coordination with the City of Colorado Springs, Switchbacks FC Holdings, together with their primary project partner Weidner Apartment Homes, has developed details plans for the proposed stadium. The project will bring much needed investment and density to a portion of downtown that has struggled to see progress over the last decade, despite significant reinvestment in other parts of downtown. The proposed stadium, together with significant reinvestment a few blocks north around the United States Olympic and Paralympic Museum and Hall of Fame (USOPM&HF) will finally bring forward long-held plans for the southwestern portion of Downtown Colorado Springs.

2. Form-Based Conditional Use Development Plan

The Downtown Colorado Springs Form-Based Code (FBC) was adopted by City Council in 2009 after extensive planning, professional consultation, and stakeholder involvement. The Code de-emphasizes regulations of uses, while placing a higher emphasis on the built environment, specifically how buildings contribute to a walkable, pedestrian friendly urban core. The code supports a high-density, mixed use area where residents, employees, and visitors can park their vehicles on-street or in off-street parking lots and structures, and comfortably navigate on foot to multiple destinations. The Form-Based Code established quantifiable standards for redevelopment to minimize risk and increase predictability. Projects that meet all basic standards can be reviewed and approved quickly by administrative action; projects that need relief from any standard must be reviewed and approved at a public hearing with the Downtown Review Board (DRB).

While the Code encourages a wide range of urban uses in close proximity to each other, often times vertically integrated on one property, there are uses that require special consideration through the Conditional Use process. The most common Conditional Uses that have required DRB consideration over the last decade are new bar uses and new human service uses. These uses are common and expected in an urban core, but have the potential to affect surrounding properties and as such special consideration and analysis is justified.

The FBC also requires a Conditional Use permit for “any convention center, arena, or sports stadium, whether indoor or outdoor.” The Code indicates that such a review may be necessary due to “the fact that the proposed structure does not adhere to one of the Code’s approved building types.” While the Code acknowledges that a stadium doesn’t fit cleanly into one of the approved seven building types, the applicant has utilized the “civic” building type for the proposed stadium as it fits better than any of the other options and provides some guidance on issues such as building envelopes and glazing that would otherwise be unknown.

a. Stadium Details.

The plan for the proposed stadium was initially submitted in early August of 2019. The initial review letter was issued on August 28, 2019 and described a wide range of issues that needed to be improved or clarified prior to the public hearing and formal approval process. A revised plan (**FIGURE 1**) and updated traffic/parking study was submitted on September 11, 2019. This resubmittal addressed the vast majority of items from the August review letter.

The plan illustrates the creation of an 8,157 seat outdoor soccer stadium covering the vast majority of the 4.9 acre site. The facility is also designed to include: a 4,360 square foot hospitality space with an attached “skyclub” space seating roughly 240 guests; a roughly 4,000 square foot restaurant space at street level on the Cimarron and Sierra Madre corner; and roughly 2,650 square feet of sports medicine clinic space.

The proposed stadium will have seating on all four sides of the artificial turf soccer field. The field itself is someone sunken below much of the adjacent right-of-way, becoming largely level with the adjacent public space only at the Sierra Madre and Moreno corner, the lowest portion of the site. The field is roughly eight feet below the adjacent roadway on the highest portion of the site at Cimarron and Sahwatch. The stadium is wrapped by an internal concourse that is typically five to ten feet higher than the adjacent public sidewalk. The concourse is separated from the public sidewalk by structures on the east and west sides of the site, with the primary structural components being a three story building along the entire west side of the stadium.

The stadium will appear its largest for those traveling along Sierra Madre as well as travelers heading east and west along Cimarron. Those exiting I-25 at Cimarron and heading into Downtown Colorado Springs will crest the rise over the railroad tracks and immediately see the one story restaurant space (with roof deck above) on the corner of Cimarron and Sierra Madre. As the building extends southward along Sierra Madre it increases in scale and height topping out at roughly 50 feet high along the central portion of the Sierra Madre side of the site. The northern edge of the site will appear relatively open with a six to eight foot tall split face retaining wall separating the public sidewalk from the stadium’s internal concourse. Seating and the field drop below the concourse southward. Both the north and south edges of the stadium will include

canopies providing shade for fans and netting extending roughly 40 feet high to prevent off-target soccer balls from exiting the facility. The northeastern corner of the site has been designed with an eye-catching artistic entry feature conceptually shown with a large (roughly 25 foot diameter) orb and two even larger ring elements extending nearly 40 feet into the air and as much as 75 feet horizontally. While this feature could evolve during the final design stage, it is sure to present an exciting and eye-catching entry into the project.

The plan illustrates that the southern edge of the site will be developed as a pedestrian plaza that will one day provide a high quality space between the stadium and the planned apartments just south of the site. While the details of the roughly 40 foot wide plaza are to be determined and constructed with the adjacent residential project, the plaza is a key element for the long-term success of the stadium project.

Beyond the design and development of the stadium itself, the proposed plan illustrates significant public improvements along the west, north and east sides of the project. While the site is largely devoid of any curb, gutter, sidewalk, landscaping, seating, and lighting today, the proposed plan will bring the adjacent roadways up to the urban standards described in the Form-Based Code. The plan illustrates new curb and gutter with pockets of parallel parking on the Sierra Madre and Sahwatch sides of the site. Wide sidewalks typically between eight and ten feet wide are planned to provide adequate pedestrian comfort both during events and daily use. Street trees with tree grates, raised planters, bike racks, benches, trash cans, lighting and specialty paving are all included in the detailed streetscape sheets within the plan.

To help accommodate large volumes of pedestrians during events, many of the pedestrian ramps and cross walks are illustrated with extra width. The plans also illustrate the installation of a traffic signal at the corner of Cimarron and Sahwatch to better manage vehicular and pedestrian safety at the entrance to the stadium. Special care was taken to design the fan entrance at this corner to allow for adequate queuing between the roadway and the ticket taking and security areas. That said, the traffic and parking study associated with the project does suggest that Switchbacks staff may be needed to ensure pedestrian safety and wayfinding during events.

b. Form-Based Code Physical Standards

The Form-Based Code includes a number standards that guide new development to ensure that the goals of the Experience Downtown Master Plan are met and that a high density, pedestrian friendly urban core is established. The primary organizing concept of the FBC is that all new buildings fall into one of seven established “building types.” All other physical standards are related to the defined building type to create appropriate densities, setbacks, heights, and uses within each building. While the code acknowledges that stadiums and arenas don’t fall cleanly into specific building types, the proposed plan utilizes the “civic building” type to guide implementation of the required physical standards.

Projects that don’t meet all the required physical standards may still be approved by the Downtown Review Board through the warrant process. A warrant is the term used in the FBD for relief. There are five specific criteria in the FBC that are utilized for evaluating and granting a warrant (further discussion below). Warrants are also noted on development plans to document which standards are not fully met and to what extent relief is granted.

The first standard for consideration is building envelopes. The FBC does not include minimum setbacks which are used in many of the City's other zone districts. Instead, maximum setbacks are utilized to require buildings to be located close to the right-of-way and public sidewalk thereby creating a higher density pedestrian environment. The proposed stadium is designed to have a zero foot setback for the majority of all three building frontages. One of the only areas where the building isn't located at the front property line is along the northern portion of Sierra Madre where restaurant café seating is proposed.

Building height is regulated by the Form-Based Code by providing maximum and minimum building heights in most Sectors. The Central Sector, in which this project is located, has no upper limit on building height, but does establish a two story minimum building height. This is a somewhat difficult standard to apply to this project in that a significant portion (the western side) of the stadium is designed with a three story building mass, while other sides have either minimal structural components (i.e. concourse and bleachers only) or only one story structures for concessions and restrooms. One could argue that the code doesn't indicate that all portions of any proposed project must fall within the minimum height standard, and therefore the proposed project is in compliance with this standard. However, in order to err on the side of caution, a note is included on sheet 1 of the plan indicating that because portions of the stadium are less than two stories in height, a warrant is necessary.

The next standard for consideration is building frontage which provides requirements on how proposed buildings address the public realm. This standard is closely related to building envelopes as some frontage types are by definition immediately adjacent to the sidewalk while others may be completely or partially setback from the public realm. The frontage standards also drive glazing – how much of the front façade has windows compared to blank walls. The intent of these standards are to create buildings that are interesting to pedestrians as they walk through the area. The frontage type used for the stadium is the “shopfront” type which typically requires 60% of the street level façade to be glazed. Although the west facing side of the stadium is well glazed, the other edges of the proposed stadium are not due in part to larger areas of retaining walls and bleachers along the site perimeter. To mitigate this issue and provide pedestrian interest the project includes landscaping, higher quality building materials, signage, banners, art, and other elements that may be interesting to pedestrians.

The FBC also includes block standards that requires that blocks retain the historic 400 foot by 400 foot platting configuration and that mid-block alleys or pedestrian paths be included. While the alley that historically bisected this block was vacated decades ago, the project does proposed the vacation of Moreno between Sierra Madre and Sahwatch as well as the vacation of a part of Sahwatch street between Cimarron and Moreno (see additional discussion this portion of the project below). While these vacations may seem counter to the intent of the FBC's block standards, the utilization of the vacated Moreno right-of-way as a pedestrian plaza may actually bring the project closer to the intent of the code than exists today. The intent of the block standards is to create a predictable, convenient and safe pattern for travel downtown. The project's proposed pedestrian improvements, hugely better than the conditions that exist in the area today, will certainly help improve the safety and convenience of users in the area.

The last set of development standards within the FBC relate to the developer's obligations to improve the public spaces adjacent to the project. This includes standards for sidewalk and amenity zone width, amenity zone elements (e.g. trees, benches, bike racks, trash receptacles, lighting, etc.), paving and surface materials, and others. While the proposed project includes many of these items and is a huge improvement over the existing conditions (i.e. no curb/gutter, sidewalk, landscaping, etc.), the plan does fall slightly short regarding the number of trees and light poles relative to the FBC standard. The proposed design is largely justified by some relatively unique issues particular to the stadium itself. Specifically, the need for ride share pick-up and drop-off areas and space where food trucks could operate. These are reasonable issues and the project does include an adequate number of street trees, lights, and other urban amenities expected on an urban stadium project.

3. Parking and Traffic

The project applications include a parking and traffic evaluation produced by local firm Felsburg, Holt & Ullevig (**FIGURE 5**). The study goes into great detail to estimate the likely traffic increases, parking demand, and parking supply issues for the proposed project at maximum capacity. The study finds that just under 2,400 vehicles will be traveling to the facility specifically for a sold-out Switchbacks game. The study also documents that this parking demand can be met within a 10-minute "walkshed" using a combination of on-street parking, off-street parking lots, and public parking structures which are found at the outer edges of the walkshed. The study acknowledges that parking restrictions such as time-limited meters a couple blocks to the east and future parking restrictions that may be implemented in the Mill Street neighborhood to the south could effect on-street parking supply for games and other larger events. The study also indicates that specific plans and strategies would be needed to accommodate the "large events" that occur up to four times a year and could include as many as 15,000 attendees by using a portion of the playing field for seating or assembly space.

While City Staff fully supports the FHU study, there has been some concern expressed via emails (**FIGURE 3**) as well as at the multiple public meetings held for the project, that parking was already a concern in the area and that the large capacity crowds at the stadium would present challenges for stadium users, as well as other customers, employees, and residents in the area. While it is true that recent redevelopment efforts in the South Tejon corridor have increase parking demand south of Cimarron, Staff's opinion is that some level of parking shortage can actually be beneficial to the vibrancy and activity levels in any particular area. In fact, the Form-Based Code actually prohibits the creation of new stand-alone surface parking lots as they don't help achieve the higher goals of creating activity or establishing a pedestrian friendly urban core. Parking lots, especially under-utilized parking lots, should be limited where possible and incorporated into new projects which meet the physical standards within the FBC. Additionally, the dispersed nature of the parking that will be utilized for the project will help lessen the before- and after-game traffic impacts by dispersing the vehicle destinations and flattening the peak volumes while people walk a few blocks to their vehicles.

While Staff finds that the parking study is adequate and that the existing supply of parking in the area can adequately meet the demands of the stadium within a reasonable walking distance, City and private stakeholders in the area are exploring options for increasing parking supply. Discussion and analysis is underway for public/private partnerships to add one or more public parking structures that would serve the United States Olympic and Paralympic Museum and Hall of Fame as well as the new Downtown Stadium project.

Obviously, any new public parking resources in the southwest part of downtown will not only benefit existing projects but will serve as a catalyst for further investment and redevelopment in the area.

4. Conditional Use Criteria

The FBC uses the same three criteria to evaluate a conditional use as are used City-wide.

As a conditional use, the Downtown Review Board must find that the project substantially complies with the following conditional use criteria:

- A. Surrounding Neighborhood: That the value and qualities of the neighborhood surrounding the conditional use are not substantially injured.
- B. Intent Of Zoning Code: That the conditional use is consistent with the intent and purpose of this Zoning Code to promote public health, safety and general welfare.
- C. Comprehensive Plan: That the conditional use is consistent with the Comprehensive Plan of the City.

Staff has made considerable effort to evaluate these criteria given the size and significance of the proposed project. The site is located in an area that was historically occupied by industrial uses but which has been vacant for nearly 15 years. This despite the creation of an urban renewal district in 2007 as well as significant planning and investment in the SW portion of downtown. While the project will bring significant change to the area and will create short periods of significant parking demand and traffic increase, the project will also make huge improvements to a key gateway into Downtown.

One could argue that the project may impact the existing “qualities” of some of the industrial areas to west, southwest and east of the site, but Staff believes that the project will also have a significantly positive impact on the value of surrounding properties. Significant investment in the surrounding area is already occurring with Weidner Apartment Homes stating publicly their desire to build as many as 1,000 apartment units in the immediate area. While the stadium may catalyze the evolution of the surrounding area, those changes are largely expected to be positive and well aligned with the goals of the Experience Downtown Master Plan and the existing urban renewal plans in the area.

Staff also finds that the project is highly consistent with the intent and purpose of the City-wide zoning code as well as the Form-Based Code. The existing vacant site does not contribute to the public health, safety or general welfare of the community, whereas the proposed stadium will create jobs, increase activity, and lead to future investment in an otherwise largely neglected area. While many stadiums create the problem of minimal activity when events are not underway, the proposed venue includes a restaurant that will operate during standard business hours, as well as a sports medicine clinic – both of which will have regular employees, customers, and clients on the site.

The project is also highly consistent with the newly adopted PlanCOS, out City’s Comprehensive Plan. See below for additional discussion of this issue.

5. Right-of-Way Vacations

The proposed stadium requires the vacation of two different sections of public right-of-way in order to move forward. The vacation plat submitted as part of the project (**FIGURE 6**) illustrates the full vacation of W. Moreno Ave. between S. Sierra Madre St. and Sahwatch St. This is necessary to not only allow the necessary north/south dimension of the field and stadium, but also to allow for the future creation of a pedestrian plaza that will improve the area between the stadium and the planned apartments to the south. This 400 foot long stretch of W. Moreno has actually been the subject of two prior ROW vacations. Ordinance No. 4684 vacated the northern 15 feet of W. Moreno Ave. and was approved by City Council in April of 1973. Ordinance No. 74-162 vacated an additional 28 feet of the same section of W. Moreno ROW; this ordinance was approved by City Council in December of 1974. Both ordinances reserved public utility and drainage easements. Should City Council approve the proposed ROW vacation, Staff is recommending that public utility and drainage easements be retained in order to protect and service the infrastructure in the area.

The second portion of the proposed vacation application is to vacate the western 30 feet of the Sahwatch St. right-of-way between W. Cimarron St. and W. Moreno Ave. Again, this application was submitted to allow adequate space for the proposed field, seating, concourse, and associated project improvements. Should City Council approve the partial vacation of Sahwatch, the remaining ROW would total 70 feet wide, which is adequate for the proposed three lane roadway cross section (one northbound lane, one southbound lane, and one center turn lane), as well as on-street parking, and comfortable sidewalk and amenity zone improvements. The proposed vacation will retain enough right-of-way for public transportation, parking, utility and drainage needs, while also allow for adequate stadium and pedestrian way design. The applicant has discussed temporary closure of Sahwatch between Cimarron and Moreno during games to create additional festival space; this aspect of the project would be reviewed via the City's Special Event Permit process.

A right-of-way vacation must be found to meet the review criteria in City Code Section 7.7.402.C., specifically that:

1. The right of way is no longer needed for public transportation purposes;
2. The vacation will not adversely impact use of the right of way for public utility and/or drainage purposes;
3. The vacation will not adversely impact the uniform width of the remaining portions of the public right of way along the block frontage for which vacation is sought;
4. Access to lots or properties surrounding the public right of way will not be adversely affected; and
5. The vacation is consistent with the purpose of this Subdivision Code.

Planning Staff has carefully considered the required criteria and has consulted with other review agencies to ensure that the proposed areas for vacation are not necessary for access, drainage, or utility purposes. And while the proposed vacation ordinance will initially retain public utility and drainage easements over the vacated area, once all the necessary infrastructure is removed, those easements can also be administratively vacated through the City's Real Estate Services Division. Staff finds that all five criteria are met and recommends that the proposed vacation be approved.

6. Conformance with the City Comprehensive Plan

PlanCOS was adopted in January of 2019 and establishes the Vision, framework, goals, policies and strategies for the City of Colorado Springs. The subject property and the majority of downtown falls within the Downtown Activity Center and neighborhood. Downtown is also designated as one of six city-wide “typologies.” The specific goal of the downtown typology is “to continue to grow and adapt Downtown Colorado Springs as the singular economic and cultural heart of the city and region, consistent with the Experience Downtown Colorado Springs Plan.” The proposed stadium clearly furthers that goal by creating a unique entertainment venue that will serve as a regional attraction. The primary tenant of the new facility, Switchbacks FC, will be moving from the eastern edge of the City to Downtown strengthening the City’s core as the economic and cultural heart of the region. Furthermore, the proposed project is intended to be a catalyst to significant residential and mixed use investment in the area, which further achieves the goals described within the Downtown typology.

Other specific strategies within the Unique Places chapter of PlanCOS that are closely aligned with the proposed stadium include:

Strategy UP-1.A-5: Design urban activity centers to encourage walkability.

Strategy UP-1.B-1: Support and promote a system of gateways and signature streets extending beyond Downtown to create unique, desirable, and identifiable entries to the overall city and the distinct places within it.

Strategy UP-1.C-1: Locate and design public spaces and civic facilities at key locations throughout the city that set an example for quality design and integrate with surrounding private development.

Strategy UP-2.A-1: Encourage the development or redevelopment of vacant properties in the core area of the city by using a combination of incentives, rezoning, and creative design solutions.

Strategy UP-3.A-1: Place a high priority on implementation of the City’s adopted Experience Downtown Master Plan, including upgrades to festival streets, multimodal transportation facilities, Southwest Downtown improvements, Downtown park enhancements, and alley and street activation projects.

Within the Plan’s Thriving Economy Chapter, the proposed project falls clearly into Typology 3 – the Experience Economy. These are tourism, entertainment and cultural attractions that appeal to a wide range of residents and visitors. The experience economy is critical to maintaining high quality of life, a factor that is important for attracting and retaining skilled talent and the businesses that rely on these workers. This project is well aligned with a number of goals, policies and strategies within the Thriving Economy Chapter including:

Goal TE-1: Build on our quality of place and existing competitive advantages.

Strategy TE-1.A-4: Prioritize Downtown redevelopment to establish it as the region’s employment center, hub of commerce, governing, innovation, tourism, entertainment, art and culture.

Policy TE-1.B: Build on our emerging sports, recreation, and outdoors economy. This includes the Olympic Training Center, Olympic Museum, sports and recreation organizations and other related businesses and industries.

Strategy TE-1.B-3: Pursue opportunities for building additional sports venues throughout the city, including in or near Downtown.

Strategy TE-2.C-1: Prioritize redevelopment and activation in Downtown and other urban activity centers in order to establish or enhance economic development.

While the Unique Places and Thriving Economy chapters of PlanCOS have the most goals, policies, and strategies that align with the proposed project, the following are number of other plan elements from other chapters that also support the applications:

Strategy SC-1.F-1: Consistent with City-adopted plans, repurpose identified wide rights-of-way of Urban Core Streets (Typology 1) to provide and enhance non-motorized travel in the Downtown area.

Strategy RC-3.B-1: Continue to work with property owners and civic organizations to implement the Experience Downtown Master Plan to market arts and festivals and incorporate creative placemaking into new developments and redevelopments.

Strategy RC-3.B-2: Encourage the establishment of more and improved arts, education, and cultural opportunities in and near Downtown.

Strategy RC-3.E-3: Designate festival streets within the Unique Places typologies around the city that can be temporarily closed or otherwise repurposed for special events. (Also see Policy UP-1.B in Chapter 3: Unique Places)

Staff finds that the proposed project is highly consistent with PlanCOS and creates direct and specific progress toward a number of specific goals spanning a wide range of key issues.

7. Conformance with the Area's Master Plan:

This project falls within the 2016 Experience Downtown Master Plan. The Plan includes eight primary goals, each with numerous "action steps" to bring success to Downtown Colorado Springs. A few of the goals and action steps that the project aligns with include:

Goal 1 – Economic and Cultural Heart of the Region

Support the growth and viability of one-of-a-kind retail, restaurant and service businesses, with keen attention to first-to-market brands and offerings.

Goal 2 – Diverse and Inclusive Place to Live, Integrated with Adjacent Neighborhoods

Support and incentivize construction of at least 1,000 new residential units by 2020, and 2,000 total by 2025. *Staff comment – while the proposed project itself does not include any new residential units, there is an expectation that a primary project partner, Weidner Apartment Homes, will be developing as many as 1,000 apartment units in close proximity to the site.*

Goal 3 – Celebrating and Connecting with Outdoor Recreation and Exceptional Natural Setting

Create and implement a brand campaign positioning Downtown as a vibrant urban area integrated with world class outdoor experiences.

Goal 4 – A Place for Healthy and Active Lifestyles

Signal and invite an active lifestyle through amenities, events, and offerings.

Goal 7 – Offering an Unforgettable Visitor Experience

Support and complete construction of the U.S. Olympic Museum, to include the pedestrian bridge from America the Beautiful Park and enhanced streetscape treatments that position the area as a public space for celebrations, festivals and year-round activities.

Complete feasibility study for a sports event center and determine next steps accordingly.

The Plan specifically discusses this site within Chapter 1 of Volume 2 as a “catalytic development site.” While the plan didn’t call out the site as the future home of an athletic stadium, it does recognize the site as critical to the success of the area due to its proximity to the Cimarron Street gateway, proximity to America the Beautiful Park, and as one of the largest single development sites in the core. The Plan states that all catalytic development sites represent significant transformative opportunities and the potential to increase synergy between gateway and mobility improvements.

The Plan also labels the area along the north edge of the project site as one of the most critical gateways into Downtown. Immediately east of the newly improved I-25 and Cimarron interchange, this area is critical in creating a positive first impression to visitors and residents alike. The Plan supports efforts to “enhance placemaking, ensure multi-modal access, showcase community arts and culture, and foster private realm development and improvements.”

The proposed stadium is consistent with a wide range of issues within the Experience Downtown Master Plan. This despite the fact that the stadium project had no defined location and seemed unlikely to move forward during the period of time that the Master Plan was being drafted and approved. The approval and construction of the proposed stadium will bring the City closer to achieving the vision and many of the goals of the plan.

8. Technical Modifications Required for the Plan.

The conditional use development plan for the downtown stadium project was initially submitted in early August, 2019 and then a revised and updated plan was submitted in early September (FIGURE 1). While the resubmittal was a significant improvement over the initial submittal, so items must still be resolved before the plan is officially approved.

The proposed recommendations at the conclusion of this report include a number of technical modifications to both the conditional use development plan as well as the vacation plat. While the number of items may exceed many projects that are heard by the DRB and City Council, most items are more a matter of clarity as opposed to substantive design-related or compatibility issues. Staff is confident that the applicant and designer can continue working with Planning Staff, as well as Staff of a few other key agencies, to resolve

the remaining technical items while honoring the overall intent and design of the plan as it sits today.

Staff finds that the project substantially complies with the required standards and criteria for both the conditional use development plan as well as the right-of-way vacation if all the Technical Modifications listed below are fully implemented.

STAFF RECOMMENDATIONS:

CPC CU 19-00102– DOWNTOWN STADIUM

Recommend that City Council **Approve** the Conditional Use Development Plan based on the findings that the Conditional Use criteria found in Section 7.5.704 of the City Code will be met once the following technical modifications are addressed:

Technical modifications to the Conditional Use plan:

1. Finalize approval of the project's drainage report
2. Confirm street addresses for the building and add them to the plan.
3. Document the percent glazing for the west building elevation.
4. Add the proposed legal description to sheet 1 of the plan.
5. Clarify proposed streetscape details including curb type, phasing, pedestrian ramp locations, and what elements are by the developer versus by others.
6. Modify the plan to illustrate an adequate and comfortable pedestrian way along the Sierra Madre side of the site.
7. Clarify presence of existing easements confirming where easement vacations are underway.
8. Update the landscape sheet to document the location and detail of structural soil to ensure tree health.
9. Revise the plan to ensure that all public space improvements are fully ADA compliant.

CPC V 19-00103– RIGHT OF WAY VACATION

Recommend that City Council **Approve** the Right-of-Way vacation based on the findings that the vacation criteria found in Section 7.7.402.C. of the City Code will be met once the following technical modifications are addressed:

Technical modifications to the Conditional Use plan:

1. Document that the easements retained as part of the Sahwatch vacation are adequate for the existing public stormwater infrastructure in the area.