
CHUN Recommendation: Governors Park Design Review & Beautification

1 message

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To: "Hinds, Chris - CC Member District 10 Denver City Council" <chris.hinds@denvergov.org>, "Gilmore, Scott M. - DPR Dpty Mgr Parks And Recreation" <Scott.Gilmore@denvergov.org>, "Haynes, Allegra R. - DPR Mgr Dept Parks And Recreation" <happy.haynes@denvergov.org>, "Hillhouse, Jennifer L. - DOTI City Planning Director" <Jennifer.Hillhouse@denvergov.org>, "Aldrete, Laura - Manager Community Planning and Development" <laura.aldrete@denvergov.org>

Cc: "Hancock, Michael B. - MO Mayor" <michael.hancock@denvergov.org>, "Dreyer, Evan F. - MO Deputy Chief of Staff" <Evan.Dreyer@denvergov.org>, "Kniech, Robin L. - CC Member At Large Denver City Council" <Robin.kniech@denvergov.org>, "Ortega, Deborah L. - CC Member At Large Denver City Council" <Deborah.ortega@denvergov.org>, Travis Leiker <travis.leiker@chundenver.org>



MEMO

TO: Hon. Chris Hinds, Denver City Council - District 10; Denver Community Planning and Development; Denver Department of Transportation and Infrastructure; and Denver Department of Parks and Recreation

FROM: Travis Leiker, President and Executive Director - Capitol Hill United Neighborhoods, Inc.

CC: Hon. Mayor Michael B. Hancock, City and County of Denver; Hon. Robin Kneich, Denver City Council - At-Large; Hon. Deborah Ortega, Denver City Council - At-Large

Fellow Denverites,

On behalf of Capitol Hill United Neighborhoods, I want to thank you for your leadership and perseverance during these extraordinary times. You are addressing some of the most vexing issues of the day, and we appreciate all that you do to move the City forward.

There are a number of developments proposed within the neighborhood blocks surrounding Governors Park. Some initiatives are drawing the ire of residents (e.g. demolition of Racines Restaurant, neighborhood entrenchment on the KMGH building's future, etc.). Other concepts are sparking innovation (e.g. ways to beautify Governors Park) that should be taken under advisement.

With demolition permits filed at 701 and 711 Grant Street, the demolition of Racines for market rate apartments, another market rate community slated for 8th and Sherman, and an additional 3-5 slated projects in the area, CHUN has received a number of inquiries and complaints.

When one has the opportunity to weigh this feedback, as we have judiciously done, you can see a number of ways to

move forward.

RECOMMENDATION: To adequately consider these options, we suggest establishing a design review and standards committee in order to guide next steps and help serve as a strategic thought partner in this part of Denver.

Consider the following opportunities:

- **Parks and Open Spaces:** Improved amenities, cleanliness, and beautification of Governors Park including more trees, playground equipment, receptacles, etc. Further, let's think about ways to activate the park more as a neighborhood destination.
- **A 20-min Neighborhood:** The operators of businesses located at 7th and Logan, have suggested enhanced lighting along 7th Avenue to boost walkability and create a neighborhood-friendly, gentle commercial hub with a unique, distinctive feel.
- **A thoughtful mix of old and new structures:** We applaud Councilwoman Sandoval's efforts to preserve unique commercial storefronts, while boosting access to housing. Consider preserving the façades of 711 and 701 Grant Street, with housing immediately behind or connected to these distinctive commercial spaces.
- **Keeping local businesses operational:** With the displacement of the restaurants and small businesses along 7th Ave. between Broadway and Pearl, we worry about local employment opportunities and Denver's small business community. We should think about ways to keep small businesses thriving, while creating space for new development opportunities.
- **Affordable housing is essential:** Most of the proposed housing units are expected to be market rate; we can do better and should explore ways to concretely deliver affordable housing in this neighborhood. Continued displacement of residents reduces the diversity, equity, and inclusivity we strive to achieve in greater Capitol Hill.
- **Addressing climate change through smart design:** Sufficient setbacks and added green spaces will be essential to the future of this neighborhood. We know vacant lots and dilapidated buildings aren't aesthetically pleasing. We can get this right and help Denver lead on sustainability practices and climate. Furthermore, we can work with developers, the business community, and the nonprofit sector to encourage green building standards (e.g. EV charging stations, bike/ped friendly amenities, etc.) and energy efficiency.

Existing neighborhood plans and zoning are in place. However, CHUN believes that a collaborative assembly of nonprofit, business, and community leaders can support the evolution of this neighborhood (and the city too) through solutions and diplomacy. There is a great deal of room for creative ideation, and such a framework could be essential going forward.

We look forward to exploring this concept further and laying the foundational work to put such a proposal, or something similar, into action.

For Denver,
Travis

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Preserving the past, improving the present, and planning for the future of Denver's greater Capitol Hill community.