

# Arvada Urban Renewal Authority (AURA) Board Meeting, March 03, 2016

Notes taken by Nancy Young

## HEADLINES

- Arvada Square redevelopment: 307 rental apartments, additional retail, not enough parking
- AURA “butts heads” with Planning Commission & City Staff over a right turn lane
- AURA hires consultant to improve “image” with a new marketing program

5:30 pm Commissioners present: Fred Jacobsen, Tony Cline, Alan Parker, Michelle Delaria, and Moni Piz-Wilson. Commissioners Marc Williams and Page Bolin were expected to arrive late (and did so). AURA Staff: Maureen Phair - Executive Director, Clark Walker - Redevelopment Manager, Mike Polk - AURA Attorney (Deputy Arvada City Attorney), Carrie Briscoe - AURA Coordinator, and Peggy Salazar - Administrative Specialist. Presenters: Jim Loftus and Tim VanMeter. Citizens present - 5.

A motion to postpone agenda item “10-year forecast” was approved.

**Arvada Triangle/Square - Phase I and Phase II Presentation:** Phase I to the Planning Commission March 8 (see below)

Jim Loftus, the developer for both Phases, addressed changes to the plans for the Arvada Triangle (Phase I) and the Arvada Square (Phase II). He was assisted by Tim VanMeter (architect, also designed Park Place Olde Town, aka PPOT)

The Triangle (Phase I) is now planned for 30,000 sq. ft. and will include 4 buildings with retail/commercial businesses like Qdoba.

- The original plan called for 38,000 sq. ft., including 24-Hour Fitness at the former Safeway. 24-Hour is no longer interested.
- The existing Triangle buildings and the former Safeway are to be demolished soon to enhance marketing to potential new tenants.
- A new broker has been hired, who reportedly supports a mix of local, regional, and national business concerns occupying the buildings. Plans are to break ground on the Triangle in June.

The Arvada Square (Phase II) “vision” has also changed substantially since 24-Hour Fitness will not occupy the former Safeway building. The purpose of this presentation was to receive feedback from the AURA Board on a preliminary design for this development with the former Safeway site being residential.

The proposed new “vision” for the Arvada Square has 3 buildings (#7 & #8 being the Arvada Square and #9 being the former Safeway), all on the north side of the Square, on Ralston Creek.

NOTE: Presentation slides were not available to the public at this meeting (as they are for Council meetings), so a picture is not available.

- the existing “driveway” in front of the Arvada Square businesses will be developed as a “road” from Garrison to the traffic light at Independence/Ralston Road.
- the existing parking lot for the Arvada Square will remain essentially unchanged in area, with added landscaping.
- The businesses from Garrison to about Chuck ‘E Cheese would become Bldg. 7. This building will have ground level parking with apartments on top. It is envisioned that there will be walk-up apartments on the ground floor to mask the parking. Commissioners asked if there would be restaurants/coffee shops facing the new park on Garrison. Loftus stated that “since there isn’t a breakfast place there anymore”, it could be considered.

NOTE: The Ralston Road Café property was sold to AURA in December 2015. Ms. Phair stated that this business could continue at its current location as long as the owners so desire. The drawings presented showed the site of the Ralston Road Café as a detention pond for Bldg. 9.

- the remainder of Arvada Square will be Bldg. 8 in the proposal. The ground floor will be a glass front about 20 feet high to provide visibility across the parking lot from Ralston Road. This retail space will have one large retailer (about 30,000 sq. ft) and one smaller retailer (about 6,000 sq. ft.). Potential large retailers mentioned were Whole Foods and Sprouts. There will be two levels of residential on top of these retail units.
- the former Safeway will have parking on the first floor with two stories of residential above (Bldg. 9 in the proposal). It is envisioned that there will be walk-up apartments on the ground floor to mask the parking.
- the drawing showed a small building on Ralston Road next to the emergency care building. There was little discussion about this building and whether Loftus should keep it in his plans.

### **Commissioner Comments**

- Disappointed that the buildings are not right on Ralston Road. Mr. Loftus noted that the entire project has several issues, in addition to parking, that resulted in the decision to keep the parking lot:
- Bldg. 7 is short 30 required spaces, based on 1.5 spaces per residential unit. The parking lot north of the gas station helps meet the requirement.
- Phase I retailers want 10 spaces per 1,000 sq. ft. of retail, but this development will have substantially less parking. Mr. Loftus implied that the combination of residential and retail resulted in the lower parking ratio.
- The gas station, whose future is uncertain (mentioned by Mr. Loftus and others), does not encourage residential right next door. The parking lot buffers the residential/retail from the gas station.

- The parking lot provides a vista for apartment residents, especially those on the upper floors. It also allows the large retail of Bldg. 8 to be visible from Ralston Road.
- Is owner-occupied housing an option? Mr. Loftus will not build owner-occupied housing, although he is willing to help find a builder willing to do so.

Messrs. Loftus and VanMeter will now reconsider the vision presented and make adjustments. A neighborhood meeting is planned for late March 2016. They hope to submit a Preliminary Development Plan for the Arvada Square (Phase II) to city staff in April.

**Arvada Triangle - Phase I:** AURA/Loftus and city staff at odds over new right-turn lane requirement

- Ms. Phair presented a draft letter from the AURA Board to the Planning Commission requesting that the right-turn lane recently required by city staff be removed from approval of the Phase I Preliminary Development Plan for the Arvada Triangle.
- Just three weeks ago, city staff inserted a requirement for a shared bike/right-turn lane on Independence-Ralston Road from W. 58th north to the traffic light. In the past year of conversations, the right-turn lane was not mentioned. Loftus' traffic studies showed that there is no need for this right-turn lane.
- The development plans will need to be substantially altered: particularly by narrowing sidewalks, reducing landscaping, and minimizing dining patios for Phase I retail tenants, thus making the development less attractive.
- Commissioners noted that a shared bike/right-turn lane presented a danger to both.
- Commissioner Williams noted that he discussed this issue with City Manager Mark Deven.
- Attorney Polk noted that such a letter, wherein one city Board asks deference from another city Board, is unprecedented - it has never happened before in his tenure.

It was informally agreed (no formal motion and vote) to proceed with the letter. Any suggested changes by Commissioners need to be received promptly since the Planning Commission will address the Loftus Phase I Plan next Tuesday.

**Ms. Phair's Development update**

- Walmart has issued a formal bid request for a general contractor and anticipates that the site will be mobilized by April with an expected 12 months to complete construction. Also, the two corner locations not owned by Walmart (United Bank and KFC/Taco Bell) have agreed to maintain the standardized urban renewal streetscape, while AURA will pay for the construction.
- Solana expects completion of the public park, clubhouse and private swimming pool by October, with the first units coming on line in February 2017.

- Trammell Crow has changed architects to Eisen Group (based in Washington DC). This project will be south of Grandview to the current RTD parking lot, between Vance and Wadsworth ByPass. He is targeting the fall of 2016 for Planning Commission rezoning and preliminary development plan approval.
- Park Place Olde Town (PPOT) is about 50% leased.
- Hilton Hotel estimates opening in early 2017.
- The former McDonalds site on Ralston Road (now a vacant lot next to Monterrey House) has been sold to Edgemark, who plans to develop a self-storage facility that looks like offices. They held a neighborhood meeting last week. It appears that the site will need to be rezoned.

### **Commissioner Comments:**

Commissioner Jacobsen noted that AURA plans to post meeting dates, including neighborhood meetings related to AURA projects, on their website sometime in the future. He noted that the City of Arvada has no site for posting such information.

### **Ms. Phair's Staff Report**

- AURA has selected a marketing consultant, Rassman Design, to develop new "branding and message".
- The AURA office will be redesigned/redecorated soon.

### **Attorney Polk comments**

A bill now in the State legislature (to refine the urban renewal amendment passed in 2015) is at an impasse. It appears that counties and other authorities receiving property taxes want the 2015 amendment (aka HB 1348) to apply retroactively to all outstanding urban renewal plans. Urban renewal authorities and their supporters oppose such action. According to Mr. Polk, the bill will probably be reported out of committee without the retroactive provision. He noted that the current bill contains provisions mostly favorable to urban renewal authorities.

A motion to enter executive session regarding a personnel matter and the sale of property passed unanimously.

7:10 pm Public session of the Board meeting ended.