

# Civic Use Pad Update

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June 16, 2016

## **Civic Use Pad Update**

Discussions are ongoing regarding the potential for a mixed-use building on the pad adjacent to the St. Julien Hotel, which could include a “civic use” space on the first floor, along with hotel uses above. The multi-use space on the first floor (approximately 14,700 square feet with 3,200 square feet of mezzanine/storage) is envisioned as a flexible space to be available at a discounted rate to community and nonprofit groups for civic and cultural functions. The civic use space is proposed to be built and managed by the St. Julien pursuant to a development and management agreement to be approved by City Council. St. Julien estimates the current cost of building out the civic use space on the first floor at approximately \$6 million (\$300-400/sf).

## **Background**

An urban renewal plan (URP) adopted in 1988 for the Ninth and Canyon site in downtown Boulder called for hotel and convention facilities, including retail, restaurants, entertainment, transportation facilities and underground parking. In 1995, City Council modified the plan to include design guidelines for the site, as well as requiring that a minimum of 20 percent of the gross floor area be committed to civic uses. The urban renewal plan envisioned a development to be built on property owned by the downtown parking district, Central Area General Improvement District (CAGID), at Ninth Street and Walnut and property owned by St. Julien Partners located to the south of the CAGID property. The two properties were combined pursuant to a Condominium Association.

Through implementation of the urban renewal plan and consistent with the plan’s original purposes, the community has received the following benefits:

- Development of a quality hotel in downtown Boulder (opened February 2005) meeting the urban renewal plan design guidelines including:
  - Retail activity at the street level
  - 50,000 square feet of south facing urban open space and landscaping
  - Attractive western gateway to downtown
  - Pedestrian access corridor through the site – the 10<sup>th</sup> Street alley – connecting the civic area and downtown
  - Provision of activities and amenities for public enjoyment
  - Floodplain improvements
- Construction of a below-grade off-street parking structure (opened 2004) that (1) replaced a CAGID surface parking lot, (2) provided parking for the hotel uses and (3) provided additional parking for the anticipate additional development/redevelopment that the hotel project was expected to generate along the corridor
- Provision for civic use and construction of foundation for future development of civic use.
- The hotel and parking structure development has, in fact, served as a catalyst for redevelopment on and activation of Walnut, as intended by the URP.

## **2015 Civic Use Pad Proposal**

Following an exhaustive 15-year process of exploring civic use options for the pad, it was determined that the civic use component as envisioned in the urban renewal plan is not commercially and/or financially feasible as defined in 1995. The most recent civic use pad task force of citizens and city representatives concluded that a collaborative partnership between the city and the St. Julien represented the most viable path to achieving the requirement for civic use set forth in the urban renewal plan and recommended modification of the concept to allow for civic uses in conjunction with commercial uses. The concept for a collaborative partnership is a mixed-use facility on the civic use pad to be built and owned by St. Julien and to include 18,000 square feet (inclusive of 3,300 square feet of mezzanine storage and vertical circulation as well as restrooms, corridors, warming kitchen, etc.) providing 8,000 square feet of multi-use space for civic use on the first floor (secondarily shared with the hotel) with hotel uses on upper floors. The multi-use space on the first floor is envisioned as a flexible space to be available at a discounted rate to community and nonprofit groups for civic and cultural functions. The civic use space is proposed to be built and managed by the St. Julien pursuant to a development and management agreement to be approved by City Council. St. Julien estimates the current cost of building out and equipping (furniture, fixtures and equipment; warming kitchen; etc.) the civic use space on the first floor at approximately \$6 million (\$300-400/square foot).

### **Letter of Intent**

In March 2015 City Council approved the key provisions of a letter of intent (LOI) outlining the key issues, process and responsibilities for moving forward. The LOI between the city, CAGID and St. Julien Partners dated July 30, 2015 provides:

- The project concept includes creation of the first floor event space, possibly a rooftop deck, and three floors of an ancillary and compatible use connected at each level to the existing hotel.
  - Provision of the outdoor rooftop deck must be determined to be feasible given architectural constraints and commercial functionality.
- The St. Julien intends to design, construct, maintain, own and operate the building, including the civic use component. Any cost contribution/civic use subsidy by the City and/or CAGID is yet to be identified.
- CAGID, the city and St. Julien will enter into a management agreement that will set forth the standards for use and criteria for management of the civic use space.
- It is anticipated that assistance and/or coordination by CAGID and/or the City will be an integral part of the project.
- An assortment of decisions, reviews and approvals are necessary for any of the terms of the LOI to be completed.

### **Threshold Design Issues**

Following Council approval of the LOI, city staff and consultants worked with the St. Julien on some threshold design issues, most notably the potential rooftop patio. A better understanding of the building's design was necessary in order for the St. Julien to project likely construction costs with greater accuracy. Analysis showed that the rooftop patio, as imagined through the Civic Use Task Force process, would not be feasible with the proposed four-floor building program envisioned in the LOI because of the city charter height limit of 55 feet. Most infrastructure or appurtenances necessary to make the rooftop usable for events, such as elevators, storage areas, canopies, shelters, walls or railings, would push the building over the height limit. Staff and consultants entertained a variety of possible ideas to overcome the height challenge related to a potential rooftop patio. None were seen as viable options, either for financial or technical reasons.

### Civic Use Pad Height Illustrations

4240 Architecture, the firm that provided the original conceptual design for the civic pad in 2013, has provided revised illustrations which measure height per the city's code. They show that elevators and other infrastructure necessary to support access and events, as previously considered, will exceed the height limit. Both figures below show the height limit in red.

Figure 1 – Aerial View of Civic Pad Looking Northeast

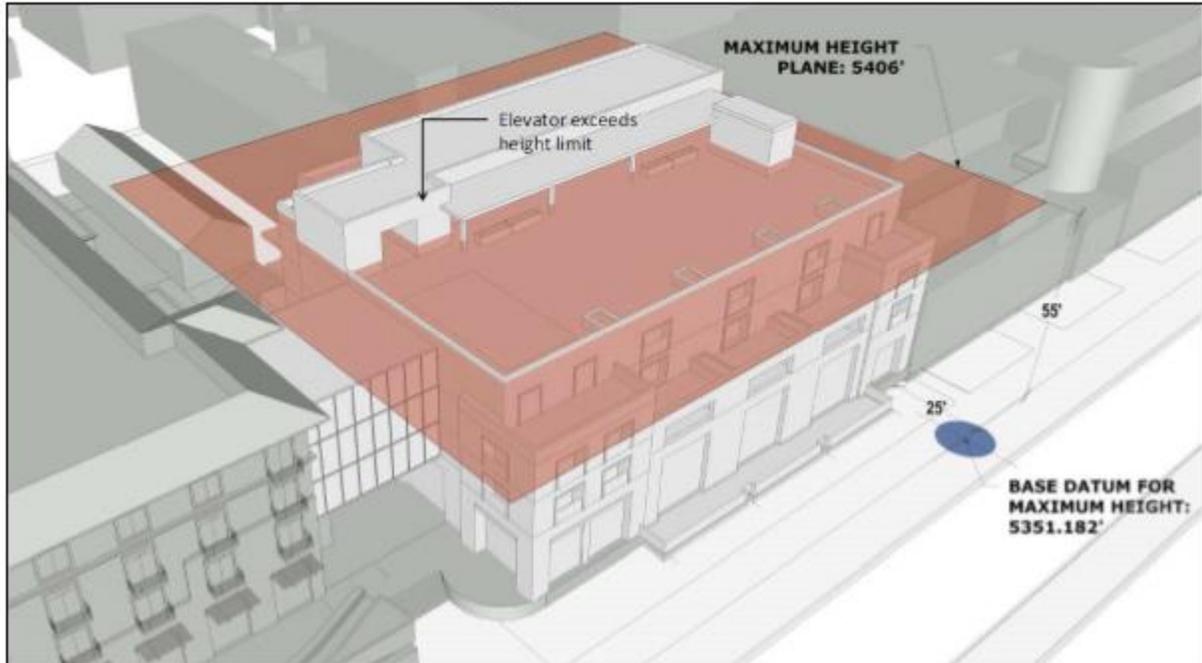


Figure 2 – Diagrammatic Building Section

