



DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT SERVICES

Grants Management Division

m e m o r a n d u m

TO: Bruce K. Walden, Chief Administrative Office

FROM: Elizabeth H. Tyler, AICP, City Planner/Director

DATE: October 10, 2002

SUBJECT: King Park Neighborhood Center

Description

Urbana School District 116 is evaluating options whereby their current plans to expand classroom facilities at King Elementary School could create opportunities to provide a neighborhood center for the use of nearby residents. For example, development of a neighborhood center could occur in conjunction with remodeling of the existing gymnasium as a multi-purpose facility that could be available for use by the neighborhood.

This memo provides City Council with background information on the King Park Neighborhood Center initiative and recent alternatives discussed by the School District at a special meeting held on October 5, 2002. This memo also includes a number of options and policy recommendations for how the City might proceed with respect to this initiative.

Issues

The issue is to determine the opportunities and feasibility of providing a neighborhood center for the residents of the King Park neighborhood.

The idea of a neighborhood center has been discussed for many years. Staff has files on this project dating back to 1981, when the North Urbana Concerned Citizens Development Corporation applied for CDBG funding. For several years, CDBG funds were allocated for neighborhood center planning. This \$100,000 in CDBG funds was re-allocated in the FY 2001-2002 Annual Action Plan (AAP), since the scope and timeline for completing the project were not clearly defined and little progress had been made towards the utilization of the funds.

Issues to be considered in evaluating the potential for Neighborhood Center development include the following:

- Purpose and mission of the Neighborhood Center
- Funding sources for construction and operations
- Identifying potential uses of the Neighborhood Center
- Identifying operational responsibilities for the Center
- Development site acquisition

- Coordination with King School uses and facilities
- Coordination with King Park uses and facilities

Background

City staff has been involved as a resource for consideration of a neighborhood center for nearly 20 years. Until recently, \$100,000 of CDBG funds have been available for development of such a center. The level of community interest in this initiative has varied over this time. Most recently, staff has been meeting regularly with the Urbana King Adopt-A-Park Committee. This neighborhood organization has been working to realize improvements at King Park and develop a neighborhood center. The group meets at 6:00 PM on the first Tuesday of each month at Morningstar Freewill Baptist Church.

This Committee and City staff conducted a survey during Jetti Rhodes Day to help determine the potential activities and services that could be provided at the proposed community center. A copy of the survey and summary of results are attached. The Committee is also initiating fundraising activities to support the improvements to King Park and the construction of a neighborhood center.

The Urbana School District 116 Board of Education met on October 5, 2002 to discuss the Martin Luther King Elementary School Expansion. Community Development Services Department staff Libby Tyler and Bob Grewe attended the meeting. Bob Leach and Loretha Harmon also attended the meeting to represent neighborhood interests (see attached agenda and meeting materials).

The Board began the meeting by briefly providing background on the expansion project. The District has received an Illinois First Grant in the amount \$500,000 to provide four new classrooms at King Elementary School. The proposed project must be completed and all funding spent by June 30, 2004.

The Urbana School District is currently completing several major capital improvement projects and has several unmet life safety and other capital needs. In addition, due to revenue shortfalls and other factors, the School District is facing a budget deficit. From a budget standpoint, this is not a good time for the School District to undertake additional construction projects, beyond the classroom project.

The architect's estimate is that the total project costs for the four classrooms is \$680,000. The District is using \$700,000 as the budget estimate. The Board reviewed a staff briefing on the District's construction financing arrangements and discussed potential options for finding the additional \$200,000 necessary to leverage the \$500,000 grant. The Operation and Maintenance and Education accounts were identified as possible sources. The School District has also applied for a federal construction grant of \$900,000 that could be used for additional improvements to King School. However, it is not known yet whether this grant will be received.

The following information was distributed to the Board at the meeting and is attached:

- Meeting Agenda
- Agenda for reviewing King School Long-Range Facility Plan
- School Building Improvements Since 1995 Decennial Survey Including Boiler Replacements
- District 116 Life Safety Amendments Summary
- Spreadsheet of recent improvements to District school facilities
- Spreadsheet of District 116 Facilities Needs 2002
- Site Plan prepared by ISAKEN GLERUM PC ARCHITECTS
- Preliminary construction cost estimates prepared by ISAKEN GLERUM PC ARCHITECTS

With this background, the Board discussed various project alternatives for King School improvements. Some of these alternatives would provide for a neighborhood center, in the form of a multi-purpose room and attached kitchen (remodeled from the existing gymnasium). The rationale for including a multi-purpose room/neighborhood center component is to take advantage of economies of scale as part of the same construction project, to allow for the efficiencies and benefits of shared school and neighborhood use, and to reach out to additional development partners that might include the City, the Park District, and neighborhood groups. In addition, under these options a new fuller size gymnasium would be constructed which would be beneficial to the school athletic program and provide for more complete assembly space. The existing, small gymnasium would lend itself to conversion as a neighborhood center since it is an appropriate size and has a kitchen attached. This neighborhood center could also be used by the school. These alternatives are summarized as follows:

OPTION 1: FOUR (4) NEW CLASSROOMS

Construction	\$541,875
Fixtures, furniture and equipment (FFE)	\$25,000
Network	\$5,000
Engineering (10%)	\$54,200
Contingency (10%)	\$54,200
TOTAL	\$680,275 (\$700,000 estimate)

*Project funded solely by School District (\$500,000 grant + \$200,000 from District)

*No provision for a neighborhood center.

OPTION 2: NEW GYMNASIUM

Construction	\$708,750
Fixtures, furniture and equipment (FFE)	\$15,000
Asbestos removal	\$50,000
Network	\$0
Remove boiler and playground	\$30,000
Engineering (10%)	\$80,400
Contingency (10%)	\$80,400
TOTAL	\$964,550

*Project funding shared from other sources

*Under this option, the old gym is converted into a Neighborhood Center.

OPTION 3: FOUR (4) CLASSROOMS AND NEW GYMNASIUM

Construction	\$1,150,000
Fixtures, furniture and equipment (FFE)	\$40,000
Asbestos removal	\$50,000
Network	\$5,000
Remove boiler and playground	\$30,000
Engineering (10%)	\$127,500
Contingency (10%)	\$127,500
TOTAL	\$1,530,000

*Project funding is shared (\$700,000 from District + \$830,000 from other sources)

*Under this option, the old gym is converted into a Neighborhood Center.

OPTION 4: FOUR (4) CLASSROOMS AND NEW GYMNASIUM SEPARATELY

Four classroom	\$680,275
New Gymnasium	\$964,550
TOTAL	\$1,644,825

*Project funding is shared (\$700,000 from District + \$944,825 from other sources)

*Under this option, the old gym is converted into a Neighborhood Center.

OPTION 5: FOUR (4) CLASSROOMS AND MULTIPURPOSE ROOM

Four Classrooms	\$680,000
Multi-Purpose Room (*4,800 sq. ft)	\$820,000
TOTAL	\$1,500,000

*Project funding is shared (\$700,000 from District + \$800,000 from other sources)

*This option was dismissed since the school needs a new gym and the multi-purpose room does not meet the long-term goals of the District.

OPTION 6: "STAND-ALONE" NEIGHBORHOOD CENTER

Neighborhood Center	No engineer estimates available.
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*To provide the type of facility discussed by the neighborhood committee, project costs would well exceed \$1,000,000 (potentially \$5,000,000, but again, no cost estimates have been made). Costs must include property acquisition, site development, full construction costs, and additional operational considerations.

Considering the options outlined above, the School Board obtained consensus on the following:

1. To proceed with the project to construct four new classrooms, which includes finding an additional \$200,000 within School District funds.
2. For budgetary reasons, the School Board cannot proceed with the gymnasium options at this time, unless a \$900,000 federal grant is obtained.
3. The School Board would welcome development partners for the gymnasium/neighborhood center option and can offer the following support activities for the neighborhood center:
 - Daytime staffing
 - Utilities
 - Maintenance
 - Insurance (as part of school operations)
 - Basic infrastructure of the building
 - Cost efficiencies of a combined construction project

This would leave a relatively narrow operational gap in the form of operations during non-school hours.

It was further noted at the meeting that a stand alone center would be less desirable from the School Board perspective because it would not include direct benefits to school children in the form of improved gymnasium and assembly space and would require much higher construction costs. If the center was located off-site, the School District may not be able to use it due to transportation and liability concerns.

In summary, the District noted that in order to meet the June 30, 2004 project completion deadline, they must decide on the scope of the project by January 2003. The District discussed the idea of convening a separate meeting of interested parties to discuss the school expansion and neighborhood center projects. The key participants were identified as the neighborhood groups, School District, Park District, City of Urbana and specified youth services providers.

Options

A variety of project options have been outlined above.

Fiscal Impacts

City involvement with the provision of a Neighborhood Center would have significant fiscal impacts. Clearly the costs associated with these projects are considerable. The City is facing declining revenue sources and a likely reduction in funds for the next budget year. With the undertaking of the Library Expansion project, there are no construction funds available for a project of this magnitude. In addition, the City must consider the efficient use of the Civic Center and the operational demands posed by this existing facility.

Nonetheless, as noted above, there are considerable economies that could be realized in the pursuit of this project in conjunction with other school improvements. The City could potentially fund a portion of the gymnasium/neighborhood center project through future proceeds from TIF 3 and

potentially from CDBG funds. This project is consistent with the TIF 3/King Park Neighborhood Plan and would be a realization of a several year effort to develop a neighborhood center in the area.

However, even with the use of TIF and CDBG funds, the City would not be able to fund the complete gymnasium/neighborhood center project and would not be able to provide operational support. An agreement for fee based use and operational participation by the Park District (as in the Brookens Gym) or another qualified entity would likely be sufficient to allow neighborhood use and access during evenings and weekends. Additional potential grant funds could also help to close the construction-funding gap.

Recommendations

Staff recommends that the City seriously consider participation in the gymnasium/neighborhood center project in conjunction with the School District's classroom project (Option 3, above). If this option is not pursued, staff recommends that the City consider no longer actively participating in planning for a stand-alone neighborhood center, since this approach would be much more costly, less efficient of resources, and less beneficial to school children in the area. As noted above, participation in planning for a neighborhood center has been absorbing staff resources for many years without measurable progress. Of course, choosing not to participate in Option 3 at this time would not preclude future participation in the gym project should the school district finances improve in the future or a grant be obtained.

Memorandum Prepared By:

Bob Grewe, AICP
Grants Management Division Manager

Attachments:

A copy of the King Park Community Center Survey and Summary Results
School District meeting information:

- Agenda for the meeting
- Agenda for reviewing King School Long-Range Facility Plan
- School Building Improvements Since 1995 Decennial Survey Including Boiler Replacements
- District 116 Life Safety Amendments Summary
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King Park Community Center Interest Survey

The Urbana King Adopt-A-Park Committee has been working to promote the idea of a community center in the King Park Neighborhood. In order to plan for such a facility, we need to better understand the needs and desires of the people who live in the neighborhood.

**Please take a few minutes to complete this survey.
Your response is CONFIDENTIAL.
Thank you!**

Age: circle one (optional)
 Under 18 18-25 26-35 36-45 46-55 56-65 65+

Gender: Female Male

Do you have children living at home? Yes No How many? _____ (optional)

How long have you/your family lived in Urbana? _____ Years

Do you feel there is a need for Community Center in the King Park Neighborhood? (Circle a number below.)
 Not very important 1 2 3 4 5 Very Important

How often do you or your family use existing community services and recreation programs?
 Daily Weekly Monthly A Few Times Never

Would you participate more if programs were offered at a local community center?
 Yes No Maybe

Would you be willing to volunteer your time at a Community Center located in the King Park neighborhood? Yes No

Would you consider paying a fee for certain programs provided by a Community Center?
 Yes No Maybe

Please rate the highest level of interest you or other household members would have in each of the following activities or services a Community Center COULD provide.

* Community Services

Computer/Technology Center
 Not very important 1 2 3 4 5 Very Important

Social Service Programs
 Not very important 1 2 3 4 5 Very Important

Temporary Shelter & Food Programs
 Not very important 1 2 3 4 5 Very Important

Community Organization Office/Meeting Space
 Not very important 1 2 3 4 5 Very Important

Other: _____
 Not very important 1 2 3 4 5 Very Important

* Youth Activities

After-School Activities
 Not very important 1 2 3 4 5 Very Important

Homework Help
 Not very important 1 2 3 4 5 Very Important

Teen Activities
 Not very important 1 2 3 4 5 Very Important

Indoor or Outdoor Play Facilities
 Not very important 1 2 3 4 5 Very Important

Theatre/Drama/Music Activities
 Not very important 1 2 3 4 5 Very Important

Other _____
 Not very important 1 2 3 4 5 Very Important

* Adult Activities

Adult Development Courses
 Not very important 1 2 3 4 5 Very Important

G.E.D. Study & Testing Center

Not very important	1	2	3	4	5	Very Important
Job Placement Help						
Not very important	1	2	3	4	5	Very Important
Senior Citizen Activities						
Not very important	1	2	3	4	5	Very Important
Parenting Roundtable						
Not very important	1	2	3	4	5	Very Important
Other: _____						
Not very important	1	2	3	4	5	Very Important

*** Leisure Activities/Services**

Room Rentals						
Not very important	1	2	3	4	5	Very Important
Performing Arts Facilities						
Not very important	1	2	3	4	5	Very Important
Movie Nights						
Not very important	1	2	3	4	5	Very Important
Holiday Events						
Not very important	1	2	3	4	5	Very Important
Social Recreation Classes (arts & crafts, leisure discussion groups)						
Not very important	1	2	3	4	5	Very Important

*** Sport Activities/Services**

Gym/Sport Facilities						
Not very important	1	2	3	4	5	Very Important
Exercise & Aerobics Classes						
Not very important	1	2	3	4	5	Very Important
Other: _____						
Not very important	1	2	3	4	5	Very Important

*** Facility Design Considerations**

Picnic/Reception Amenities						
Not very important	1	2	3	4	5	Very Important
Accessibility for Disabled Persons						
Not very important	1	2	3	4	5	Very Important
Kitchen Facilities						
Not very important	1	2	3	4	5	Very Important
Meeting Facilities						
Not very important	1	2	3	4	5	Very Important
Other: _____						
Not very important	1	2	3	4	5	Very Important

Please rank the top five services or activities that you would like a community center to provide:
You can write in your responses below or circle your top five from the list above and note priority (1-5) next to the activity or service.

1. _____ (Highest priority service/activity)
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

PLEASE PLACE YOUR SURVEY IN THE DROP BOX.

THANK YOU.

KING PARK COMMUNITY CENTER INTEREST SURVEY

39 Surveys were returned from a cross section of the community:

Age: Under 18 = 3, 26-35 = 3, 36-45 = 6, 46-55 = 7,
 56-65 = 9, 65 and Over = 6, Unknown, = 5

Gender: Male = 15 Female = 22 Unknown = 2

Is there a need?	4.7
Parents	4.9

Community Services = 4.6

Computer/Technology Center	4.8
Social Services Programs	4.6
Temporary Shelter Programs	4.6
Community Organization Office/Meeting Space	4.4

Youth Activities = 4.76

After School	4.8
Homework Help	4.8
Teen Activities	4.8
Indoor or Out Door Play Facilities	4.7
Theatre/Drama/Music Activities	4.7

Adult Activities = 4.8

Adult Development Courses	4.7
GED Study & Testing Center	4.9
Job Placement Help	4.9
Senior Citizen Activities	4.7
Parenting Roundtable	4.8

Leisure Activities = 4.6

Room rentals	4.4
Performing Arts Facilities	4.8
Movie Nights	4.5
Holiday Events	4.8
Social Recreation Classes	4.8

Sports Activities = 4.7

Gym/Sports Facilities	4.7
Exercise & Aerobics Classes	4.7

Facility Design Considerations = 4.8

Picnic/Reception Amenities	4.6
Accessibility for Disabled Persons	4.9
Kitchen Facilities	4.8
Meeting Facilities	4.8

43 % of respondents said they would be prepared to volunteer.
 46% of respondents said they would consider paying a fee for certain programs,
 and a further 41% answered maybe.

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m e m o r a n d u m

TO: Bruce K. Walden, Chief Administrative Office
FROM: Elizabeth H. Tyler, AICP, City Planner/Director
DATE: October 9, 2002
SUBJECT: **King Park Neighborhood Center Memo ATTACHMENTS**

The School District Board Meeting materials referenced in the memo are not available in electronic form.

Please contact Bob Grewe for copies.

Bob Grewe, AICP
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