



City and County of Denver
Parks and Recreation

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

New Denver Park Acquisition Finalized

DENVER, CO — October 16, 2009 —The Denver Parks and Recreation Department (DPR), working in partnership with the Trust for Public Land (TPL), has succeeded in purchasing a derelict city block in the heart of the Westwood neighborhood that will be converted into a public park – the only public park in a mile radius. The closing will take place today at 1:30 p.m. at the Heritage Title Company in Denver.

Covering a full city block (1.2 acres), the property is completely abandoned, having most recently housed a trailer park, a bar and an auto body shop. TPL negotiated the purchase and put the property under contract earlier this year, securing bridge funding to underwrite the purchase until DPR was able to fully fund the project through federal and state grants.

“Westwood is one of the department's highest priorities for the addition of park land and we are grateful that we were able to work proactively with the west Denver community to locate and secure an entire block of property for our newest park,” says Kevin Patterson, Manager of DPR. “This property will go from community eyesore to a wonderful neighborhood asset where families and kids can enjoy a park experience close to home.”

“One of the exciting things about this project is that it will do more than just provide local residents with a park. New park projects can help stabilize property values in areas that have been hit hard by the real estate market downturn and can often help spur economic growth,” says Wade Shelton, TPL Project Manager.

DPR contacted TPL in early 2009 about this opportunity, and TPL began working immediately to secure the purchase of the property. Other buyers had worked to purchase the property in the past but had been able to reach an agreement with the sellers, Wiggons Farm, Inc. Over a period of months, TPL succeeded in negotiating an agreement that made financial sense to both the sellers and to DPR.

“There is much to celebrate in our purchase and transformation of this blighted piece of land into a beautiful park space for our neighborhoods, families and children to enjoy,” said Councilman Paul Lopez, in whose district the property lies.

“Our partners at the Department of Parks and Recreation and the Trust for Public Land are to be commended for their commitment to finding resources to beautify this small but incredibly important space for the families of the Westwood neighborhood.”

The land will be remediated immediately and DPR will then work with the community to decide how the park should be developed. These public meetings will be planned for sometime in 2010.

This purchase marks the first success in an ongoing partnership between DPR and TPL to identify and complete park projects throughout the City.

“Since new parks have rarely been added to the system, Denver’s ratio of parks to population has slipped year after year. Now we find that Denver’s park system is well below average when compared to other similarly sized cities. This purchase will take a step towards remedying that situation,” says Tim Wohlgenant, TPL’s Colorado State Director.

*The **Trust for Public Land** (TPL) is a national nonprofit land conservation organization that conserves land for people to enjoy as parks, gardens, and natural areas, ensuring livable communities for generations to come.*

***Denver Parks + Recreation** (DPR) facilities are unrivaled in the Rocky Mountain West. The DPR system spans over a 138-year history from the first park created in 1868 to nearly 15,000 acres of urban parks and mountain parkland today. It embraces nearly 3,000 acres of “traditional” parks and parkways, 2,500 urban natural acres and close to 8,000 acres of urban forest within the city alone*

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