Park Hill Golf Course
Steering Committee

Vision Summary 2021

October 2021

PREPARED FOR
Park Hill Golf Course Steering Committee

PREPARED BY
Dr. Ryan Ross, PhD
Purpose
The Park Hill Golf Course (PHGC) Steering Committee was created to serve as an advisory committee representing diverse community interests. The group meets regularly (monthly) to discuss and engage in a process to capture a potential vision for the future use of the Park Hill Golf Course land. The committee objectives are to work with a neutral third-party facilitator, strive for consensus around a vision, and deliver a summary to City of Denver leadership that will serve as one of several artifacts used to determine the future of the Park Hill Golf Course.

Background and Contextual History
According to the City and County of Denver, from the 1980s through 2019, the Park Hill Golf Course (PHGC) land was privately owned by the Clayton Foundation (which later became Clayton Early Learning). Arcis Golf operated the golf course. The golf course closed in 2018, and in 2019, Clayton Early Learning sold the land to Westside Investment Partners.
About Park Hill Golf Course

1899
In 1899, after his death, George W. Clayton left a will that established a Trust to manage the assets he owned at his death, including the land that would become the Park Hill Golf Course. From 1899 to 1982, the City served as the Trustee of the Trust. In that role, the City held "legal title" to all of the assets owned by the Trust.

1982
In 1982, the City was removed as Trustee, and an interim Trustee was appointed. In 1984, the Clayton Foundation was incorporated and appointed to serve as Trustee of the Trust. The Clayton Foundation later changed its name to Clayton Early Learning, which is the entity that continues to serve as the Trustee of the Trust today.

1982 - 1997
Between 1982 and 1997, the City had no direct ownership or other interest in the Park Hill Golf Course (denvergov.org).
Denver INC on PHGC

Denver Inter-Neighborhood Cooperation (INC) shares the following about the PHGC conservation easement from 1986 to 1997:

1986
The Clayton Foundation hires a real estate firm to market the Park Hill Golf Course property for sale. In November of 1986, Clayton agreed to sell the property to L.C. Fulenwider, Inc. for $10.6 million. Fulenwider’s purchase of the property is contingent upon the successful rezoning of the property for a mixed-use development that includes retail and light-industrial uses.

1988
As a result of the economic and real estate downturn in Denver during the late 1980s and resistance to the rezoning from surrounding neighborhood groups such as Greater Park Hill, North Park Hill, and City Park North, L.C. Fulenwider terminated the purchase and sale agreement in 1988.

1989
Denver City Councilperson Cathy Reynolds includes a line item in the City’s $300 million Bond referendum that earmarked "$2 million towards purchasing the Park Hill Golf Course." The $300 million Bond Referendum passes.

1994
The City of Denver approached Clayton about the $2 million earmarked for the course and proposed a perpetual Conservation Easement in exchange for the $2 million. To determine if the $2 million were sufficient compensation for the potential development rights it would be giving up, Clayton goes through an appraisal process that concluded the value of the potential development rights at that time was $2 million.

1997
Based upon the appraisal results, Clayton grants a perpetual Conservation Easement on the golf course property to the City and County of Denver in exchange for payment from the City of $2 million.
Perpetual Conservation Easement

Since 1997, a perpetual conservation easement has been in place on the land. Currently, there is disagreement on the interpretation of the Conservation Easement, which will ultimately need to be determined through a legal process. The Permitted Uses as outlined section (Section 4.) of the PHGC Conservation Easement is as follows:

4. Permitted Uses. Subject to the terms and conditions of this Easement.

(a) The Golf Course Land shall be occupied, used, operated, and maintained as a regulation-length 18-hole daily fee public golf course with such related uses and activities a., may be accessory or incidental to the operation of a golf course, including but not limited to a driving range, golf learning center clubhouse, restaurant and bar, and such unrelated recreational uses such as ball fields, tennis courts, etc.;

(b) No use of the Golf Course Land shall be permitted that would be a detriment to the existence and operation of the Golf Course, except for portions of the Golf Course Land that may be released from the Easement by reconfiguration in accordance with paragraph 7 of this Easement;

(c) The Golf Course shall be managed, operated, and maintained by Grantor or any agent, manager, or lessee of Grantor, consistent with such generally accepted standards as are applied by other regulation-length 18-hole daily fee public golf courses in the Denver metropolitan area;

(d) Buildings presently located on the Golf Course Land or which may be subsequently constructed upon the Golf Course Land at no expense to Grantee, may be used for purposes related to the operation of the Golf Course at the discretion of Grantor, so long as such uses are not in violation of current or legally amended zoning regulations relating to the Golf Course Land, and

(e) Grantor shall be solely responsible for costs and expenses of the operation, management, and maintenance of the Golf Course, and Grantee shall have no responsibility nor shall bear any cost or expense therefor.

A 2019 settlement agreement between the City and the new owner allows no less than three years for a public process to determine if the Community wants to continue limiting the future use of this property to a golf course. (City and County of Denver - Park Hill Golf Course Area Visioning Process - City and County of Denver (denvergov.org))

https://www.denvergov.org/Government/Agencies-Departments-Offices/Community-Planning-and-Development/Plans-in-Progress/Park-Hill-Golf-Course#section-2
Outcome

This document captures the broad independent views and feelings of the PHGC Steering Committee Members. Community, information, and discussion have shaped their views throughout this process.

There are some conflicting views and interpretations of the information and experiences provided to the committee members.

This summary report captures these views, reports that unanimous consensus was not reached, and captures the similarities and differences of visions for the future of the PHGC.

**The steering committee members represented two visions for the future of PHGC:**

1. The land is all open space, having no development not already approved in the current conservation easement.

2. The land moving forward is a mixed-use property with both open space and development.
Park Hill Golf Club
Steering Committee Participants

The Following Individuals are Members of the PHGC Steering Committee:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Muhammad Khan</th>
<th>Shonnell Norris</th>
<th>Imam Ali</th>
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<tr>
<td>Shanta Harrison</td>
<td>Melodie Polodori Harris</td>
<td>Jeff Martinez</td>
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<td>David Martin</td>
<td>Norma J. Paige</td>
<td>Sean Smith</td>
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<td>Rachel Coates</td>
<td>Sandrea Robnett</td>
<td>Nicholas Glenn</td>
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<td>LaMonte Noles</td>
<td>Andre McGregor</td>
<td>Sade' Cooper</td>
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<td>Drew Dutcher</td>
<td>Chandi Aldena</td>
<td>Noah Stout</td>
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<td>Evelyn Barnes</td>
<td>Rev Eugene Downing</td>
<td>Jermaine Blackmon</td>
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<td>Kenneth Ho</td>
<td>Pastor Del Phillips</td>
<td>Lisa Zoeller</td>
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<tr>
<td>Patty Sands</td>
<td>Gerie Grimes</td>
<td>Danette Hollowell</td>
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The PHGC steering committee met over several months beginning in February 2021. The meetings, due to COVID-19, were all virtual and held over zoom. After participating in sessions, listening to community forums, hearing presentations, and reviewing data, the committee members had the opportunity to meet in small groups to develop presentations that supported their vision for the golf course.

Primary Engagement & Education Experienced During Steering Committee Meetings
To create the small groups, the facilitator created a short survey that sorted the selection committee members into groups based on their responses to several general directions (brought up during meetings) for the future of the Park Hill Golf Course. The four options developed emerged from feedback and discussions from the Steering Committee meetings through July of 2021. 21 of the 28 Steering Committee members responded to the survey; the following graphic displays the results.

Based on the responses, two groups were formed:
- Open Space Only
- Open Space and Development

Each group created a 25-minute presentation which was delivered at the September 14th Steering Committee meeting. The presentations showed the areas of alignment and disagreement.
Similarities of Vision  
(Vision Alignment)

- Including open park space in the future of PHGC is important
- The Steering Committee members all want the best for the land and the surrounding community members
- Affordable housing is an essential need throughout Denver; however, the term "affordable housing" must be clearly defined
- The Community is experiencing a food crisis.
- Some would consider the area food insecure and others an actual desert from research presented to the steering committee suggesting over 70% of NE Park Hill residents do not live within a 10-minute walk of a full-service grocery store.
- The Community needs more intentional engagement in this process.
- Formal accountability measures need to be in place for any entity making a change to the PHGC land
- Recreational and sports use on the land

Differences in Vision

- The amount of Open Space needed to move forward
- The Source of food made available (ex. Grocery store vs. Community gardens, etc.)
- The necessity of brick-and-mortar development
- The need for retail space to bring Community
- Whether or not development would be responsive to the needs of Community
- Opportunity to bring economic and social equity to the Park Hill community through brick-and-mortar development of the PHGC
- Concern regarding the developer following through and keeping any commitments made
Open Space Presentation Group Members:
- Rachel Coates
- David Martin
- Drew Dutcher
- Shanta Harrison
- Sandy Robnett
- Chandi Aldena

Presentation Highlights:
- To best serve the health interests of Denver and its citizens, all 155 acres need to be preserved for Open Space.
- Per the understanding of this group, the developer has yet to commit to any continuous open park space.
- Only 8.5% of Denver’s land area is devoted to parks. This committee feels this number is low and below many major cities (Trust for Public Land data).
- Paved over green space in Denver has increased from 19% in 1974 to 48% in 2018.
- It is expected that 69% of the City will be paved over by 2040.
- Denver would need 3,000 acres of new park space to get to the national average of 13.1 acres of park per 1,000 residents.
- Open space and outdoor recreation is increasingly important to address the increased growth and population of Denver.
- Development of this space does not address adequately address food insecurity or affordable housing, nor have any commitments been made by Westside for an actual full service grocery store.
- Open space has economic, public health, and environmental health benefits.

Lack of Open Space Concerns
- Heat Island Effect
- Lose the ability to regulate temperature
- Lose the ability to mitigate Carbon and other pollutants
- Inverted L problem

Examples of Innovation:
To demonstrate the type of innovation and possible opportunities with open space, the group referenced open space examples from other cities. It is important to note that the examples that follow are simply examples of how open space can be leveraged and not specific ideas or wants for Denver but rather examples.
- Brown Mills Urban Food Forest (Atlanta) - 7-acre food forest
- Kathryn Johnson Memorial park (Atlanta) - a 3.4-acre park with significant stormwater detention purposes
- Rouge Park(Detroit) - 1,181 acre park

Opportunities to Build Upon:
There is an opportunity to build on and provide stability for the things in Denver that could include dedicated and permanent space for:
- The Mending Roots Forest
- Food Truck Hub
- Charity Run/Walks
- BlackArts Festival
- Jazz in the Park
- Local Artisan Fairs and Farmer’s Markets

Dedicated open space needs to be active open space that the Community can use and engage with, not simply consisting of things like water detention.
This group used the following references to create the presentation:

**The Nature Gap**
https://www.americanprogress.org/issues/green/reports/2020/07/21/487787/the-nature-gap

**How Cities Use Parks for Climate Change Management**

**As Development Eats Away at Denver's Green Space, the "City within a Park" is Becoming a Concrete Metropolis**
https://www.denverpost.com/2019/01/13/denver-green-space-urban-density

**The Trust for Public Land**
https://www.tpl.org

A full copy of this presentation can be found at:
Open Space
https://docs.google.com/presentation/d/1C7yn-RliqMy4hEKI69StGC28iKRVOZZAn4AnBNTXP_o/edit?usp=sharing
Mixed Use Presentation Group:

- Lisa Zoeller
- Muhammad Khan
- Evelyn Barnes
- Gerie Grimes
- Paty Sands
- Rev. Eugene Downing

- Imam Ali
- Jeff Martinez
- Pastor Del Phillips
- Shonnell Norris
- Jermaine Blackman
- LaMone Noles

Mixed Use Presentation Highlights:

- Geri Grimes provided a deep oral history of Park Hill and the lived experiences of its residents.
- Before the closure of Stapleton International Airport, NE Park Hill was the site of hundreds of good paying travel industry jobs supporting the airport, such as travel, hotel, car rental, skycaps, ticket agents, baggage handlers.
- Contracts with the City and airlines provided opportunities for small businesses to thrive.
- NE Park Hill was also home to airline reservation centers for United, Western, and Continental. The closure of Stapleton Airport in 1998 left a void in the Community’s economy.
- Demographics near PHGC are similar to Montbello and Northeast Parkhill, but the area is not currently attractive to potential grocery store chains because it isn’t sustainable in its current state.
- Both development and federal, state, and city incentives are necessary.

Development Needs

- Be inclusive
- Attract small businesses
- Rebuild trust
- Address the needs of the immediate and bordering communities, including Elyria Swansea and Clayton neighborhoods

In Response to Community Requests

Consider using the detention area to address:

- Local desires for athletic fields or other desired uses in addition to a 60 acre park.
- Even though the current detention area is comprised of a basin with natural grasses, this same level of stormwater detention can be provided on the property in the form of athletic fields or other uses as long as they do not include habitable structures.

Community Benefit Agreement (CBA)

- Understanding the importance of equity as outlined in the early stages of this process, this working group strongly encourages using a Community Benefit Agreement (CBA) should the PHGC land be developed.
- A CBA is a way for a community to be specific about the uses of the land should it be developed.
Mixed Use Potential Pitfalls to Avoid

While the Mixed-use working group generally supports community benefits agreements, they understand that they do not come without pitfalls.

Developer Accountability
Typically, Community Benefits Agreements rely on volunteer groups to hold the developer accountable to enforce long-term commencements and promises made to the Community. The community accountability approach is a tremendous strength; however, it can become a pitfall without a plan for sustainability.

Group Changes
Too often, community groups change or dissolve over time for a host of reasons (e.g., change in schedules, burnout, other extenuating circumstances, etc.).

Creative Legislative Solutions
To assist community members, we strongly encourage creative legislative solutions to ensure that community voices are not just heard but also acted upon.

Create Advisory Groups
City council members should consider creating an advisory/accountability group that would follow each phase of the future processes for this project.

Group Similar to PHGC
This group would be similar to the PHGC Steering Committee. It would function to ensure the developer (should the land be developed) adheres to the findings (e.g., surveys, market analyses, remarks from public comment, etc.) from the steering committee and provide equitable opportunities for community members to remain engaged.

Legislative Solutions
The council must implement a long-term legislative solution that will protect communities from future displacement. This needs to be intentional to address the historical distrust, dissatisfaction, and politicization of large-scale development and engagement processes.

A full copy of this presentation can be found at:
https://docs.google.com/presentation/d/1yUf0a4NRcwn2bpLd9aLST0QmlyYThOeOyPUAaZNIPVU/edit#slide=id.ge9d05ac7df_0_15
Important Considerations the Steering Committee wants to Convey to Decision Makers

Steering Committee Needs / Requests

- Environmental concerns caused by development.
- There is no clear definition of affordable housing.
- How will the Metro tax district impact affordability, especially for those who pay more than 30% of their gross towards housing and utilities?
- How is the current definition of affordable housing being considered?
- Should it be adjusted or changed to ensure everyone is included, especially folks who are not middle class or higher?
- What is allowable by the current Conservation Easement?
- Official guidance needs to be provided before any decisions are made.
- Development cannot be undone.
- Additional inclusive and comprehensive community engagement.
- The work of this steering committee needs to continue.
- Since “affordable housing" will no doubt be a small component of any overall development, how will the inclusion of market-rate residential impact gentrification? Historically speaking, it will happen.
- Clarification needs to be provided on the varied ways or not a detention area can be used.
- Understanding of the processes moving forward post November.
- An official judgment on the conservation easement because many aspects of the current conversation felt premature without knowing what is legally allowable.
- Access to any information previously collected or discussed regarding the PHGC.