

## Park Hill Golf Course Area Visioning Process

March 25<sup>th</sup> Public Open House – Follow up

Replay available from [www.denvergov.org/parkhillgolfcourse](http://www.denvergov.org/parkhillgolfcourse)

### Questions and Answers

Many questions were asked and answered live during the public open house held Thursday, March 25, 2021 on Zoom. Unfortunately, there was not enough time to answer every question during the meeting. These are listed and answered below.

- 1. I really loved learning about the larger neighborhood in which the Golf Course sits, and I think this is so important to thinking about what comes next and how to build up this community's amenities. I am wondering, in terms of planning, is the development of the golf course going to be considered in relation to the wider neighborhood and potential development areas across Northeast Park Hill? Will it include dealing with major problems like the issue of accidents at 40th and Colorado which are clearly dangerous for pedestrian crossing? I was somewhat surprised to see in the survey questions about daycare, playground, retail, and rec center when we already have those nearby. Would adding more those just decrease use at the ones already there? Could we invest in those amenities at the existing commercial spaces in NE Park Hill and increase the amount of open space in the park?*

Yes – While the current visioning process is focused on the future of the golf course land specifically, it is important to consider this land in relation to what surrounds it. The survey questions were created in part to better understand how nearby residents view the resources already in these neighborhoods today as well as what people may want more or less of in the future. As this process continues, planning efforts paired with community input will look into where and how much certain amenities make sense, as well as mobility and safety issues such as pedestrian crossings. Likewise, ensuring these neighborhoods are able to enjoy quality open space, both at this site and others, is a priority.

- 2. With the lack of amenities as presented by the city for NE Park Hill; if we can't use this land where will we as community members of this community get the land or space to provide these amenities to our community?*

Other locations in Northeast Park Hill and adjacent neighborhoods that currently have zoning or plan support for commercial, retail, mixed-use, or residential development would be the most likely candidates. For commercial and retail needs, these might include Holly Square, along Colorado Blvd., and near the 40<sup>th</sup> and Colorado rail station areas.

- 3. Can someone address metro tax district and how this would potentially impact any residents including affordable housing. If one purchased an affordable home in this area or rented that would be reflected in the mortgage and/or the rent. How exactly would this be equitable?*

There is no metro district in place today on the golf course. At this stage, the use of a taxing district to pay for infrastructure has not been considered. If a community vision supports the idea of adding new uses in this area, we will continue working with residents to establish the planning and zoning regulations necessary to implement that vision. This work could include a discussion of available financing tools as well as the equity considerations.

- 4. Is the availability of affordable golf going to be factored into the decision making? This and City Park Golf Course are affordable recreational resources for everyone in the larger Denver community, not just the local neighborhood. For the last 13 years I've lived here, Park Hill Golf Course has been an incredible asset that provides access to people of all socioeconomic backgrounds and races to a sport that is otherwise cost-prohibitive.*

The Park Hill Golf Course was a privately-owned course that closed in 2018. The City and County of Denver offers affordable golf opportunities at eight public facilities, which include one 27-hole regulation golf course, four 18-hole regulation golf courses, one 18-hole executive mountain golf course, two 9-hole par three golf courses, and five driving ranges. During this visioning process, the city is asking residents what types of recreation activities, park or open space features, including golf, would be desirable at this location in the future.

- 5. How does the Park Hill cost burden compare to the rest of Denver?*

Northeast Park Hill census tracts are slightly below the city average in terms of cost burden. Census tracts in North and South Park Hill are above the city average.

- 6. Thanks so much for this. I asked this when I signed up, but in light of the killings in Boulder this week, I will ask again. On the Colorado Coalition Against Gun Violence Zoom Meeting we were informed by one of the national organizations that they had been contacted about planting trees on the Park Hill easement next to the golf course in April in honor of victims of gun violence. That's cool, but with so many local GVP activists living in Park Hill, why were they not contacted, i.e. Colorado Ceasefire and Mom's Demand Action, Denver Chapter? It would go a long way to involve locals on any events at Park Hill Golf Course to build trust in this process.*

This project is run by Holleran Group to honor youth who have lost their lives to gun violence by planting trees in a living memorial. The city has not had any involvement in it. Holleran is working with several community groups, but if you have questions or would like to get involved, please visit their webpage: [www.mendingrootsforest.com](http://www.mendingrootsforest.com).

- 7. When will individuals and groups that disagree with the City's legal interpretation of the conservation easement have the opportunity to present their interpretation to the Steering Committee?*

City staff will work with the Community Steering Committee facilitator to determine if the committee would like to add this to their agenda.

- 8. Please explain how the City intends to prove to a judge that—based on changes on or surrounding the Park Hill Golf Course land since the new easement was granted on July 11, 2019—it has become “impossible” to fulfill the “conservation purposes” of the Park Hill Golf Course conservation easement? Related, please explain what facts would support a judicial determination of that.*

The City Attorney's Office can't provide commentary about future legal strategies. However, extensive information surrounding the golf course use restriction from the conservation easement, originally obtained by the city in 1997, can be found here: <https://denvergov.org/files/assets/public/city-attorneys-office/documents/phgc/qa-golf-course-use>.

9. *When will experts outside of the City's consultant team have the opportunity to make a presentation regarding the health and environmental benefits of maintaining the open space of the Park Hill Golf Course land?*

Community health is an important aspect for complete neighborhoods in Denver – so much so that it is one of the vision elements in the city's Comprehensive Plan 2040. We continue to partner with the Denver Department of Public Health and Environment (DDPHE) to monitor community health data and use this data to inform decision making. DDPHE's new Community Health Assessment dashboard provides the most recent public health data similar to what would be found in a Health Impact Assessment. The Community Health Assessment dashboard can be found at:

<https://dashboards.mysidewalk.com/denver-health-assessment/introduction>. City staff will also work with the Community Steering Committee facilitator to see if the committee would like to add guest speakers to their agenda.

10. *When will Mayor Hancock, Laura Aldrete, Happy Haynes, David Gaspers, Courtney Levingston, and Nita Mosby Tyler provide full substantive responses to the three letters from Save Open Space Denver to Mayor Hancock, Laura Aldrete, Happy Haynes, David Gaspers, Courtney Levingston, and Dwinita Mosby Tyler dated February 5, 2021, March 3, 2021, and March 23, 2021?*

The city responded to letters from Save Open Space on January 31, 2020, February 24, 2020, and March 3, 2021. Additionally, Save Open Space has several members on the Community Steering Committee for this project who have an opportunity to ask questions and share input monthly. The city's current efforts are focused on ensuring as many people in the neighborhoods around the golf course as possible also have the opportunity to ask their questions and participate, and we will continue to respond to all letters and questions as we can.

11. *When will CPD post on its website and share with the Steering Committee the three letters from Save Open Space Denver to Mayor Hancock, Laura Aldrete, Happy Haynes, David Gaspers, Courtney Levingston, and Nita Mosby-Tyler dated February 5, 2021, March 3, 2021, and March 23, 2021?*

Public comments/letters that are submitted during the visioning process will be published on the website along with the survey results, community navigator report, and technical studies.

12. *The Future of PHGC Community Survey asks respondents if they are concerned about the availability and cost of housing. The Survey should also inquire if respondents are concerned about the availability and quality and size of parkland and recreational areas in their neighborhood. Shouldn't the survey include this question as well?*

The survey included several questions focused on parks and recreation priorities and desires. The questions were crafted by a market research firm, RRC Associates, that has decades of professional expertise creating survey questions. The aim was to include a range of questions that allowed people to share their thoughts on parks, open space, recreation, housing, fresh food, transportation, and more.

13. *How can CPD defend its survey as being substantively valid when Question No. 3 that introduces the survey questions only gives the following two choices: (a) "keep the Park Hill Golf Course as 100% golf course" or (b) "use the site to provide a variety of open space, recreation and/or other community-serving areas"? This is substantively invalid because it should have provided the option of keeping the Park Hill Golf Course land as open space and recreational land.*

The survey questions were created to be as unbiased and as accessible as possible. Multiple questions asked about priorities around golf courses, parks, open space, and recreation activities in a number of different ways, including a question that specifically asked individuals to note if they desired 100% open space or a portion for open space and a portion for recreation, etc. Because there are many forms of recreation, which could include a golf course but could also include other items like fields, courts, a pool, or more, the questions allowed people to provide detail on what they would like to see when they say “recreation.”

*14. The developer spent over \$24 M on the property. They obviously have a plan. Has that been shared with the community?*

The property owner has not submitted development plans to the city. The focus now is on understanding what the community’s vision is for the property and creating the planning and zoning regulations to enforce that vision. Any future development plans will have to meet those regulations.

*15. The survey the city sent out makes no mention of the conservation easement prohibiting development. If you don’t provide complete information, how can the respondents be expected to provide meaningful feedback?*

The questions asked on the survey are not just about keeping or removing the conservation easement. There are a number of outcomes that might not require removing the conservation easement, but simply amending it to remove the golf course use restriction. The survey was intended to speak to the community in ways people could relate to and understand, even if they had no prior knowledge or understanding of conservation easements.

*16. Can you talk us through the request for proposal (RFP) or selection process for Denver Metro Community Impact (DMCI) winning the paid community navigator contract? Were there other organizations considered? How many etc. What set them apart to be awarded the contract? These questions didn’t really get answered. Maybe city reps can chime in?*

The city issued an RFP to three local firms with experience using a community navigator model of community engagement at this scale. The city only received one response to that RFP. City staff evaluated the response from Denver Metro Community Impact and found it to be responsive due to DMCI’s knowledge of the community navigator model and experience convening community conversations in Park Hill.

*17. If the conservation easement is in place during this 3-year period, and if it mandates it can only be used for a golf course, does that impede the wonderful memorial tree planting project that is planned for the land?*

No. Trees are customary and compatible with a golf course use.

*18. Is there still a possibility that the lifting of the conservation easement may end up on a city ballot and if so how would this impact development plans?*

It is a possibility but to date has not occurred.

*19. How much is this visioning process costing the taxpayers and why is it being undertaken before the scope of the conservation easement is determined (i.e., whether development is even legal, as determined by a court, rather than Westside or the city attorney)?*

The city has three contracts in connection with this process for \$270,616 of city funding. This funds the third-party facilitation services, the community navigators program, and technical studies. The conservation easement in place for the Park Hill Golf Course is a unique and unusual situation in Denver. For example, it does not function to preserve the land for natural habitat protection, which would be a typical use of a conservation easement, but rather it preserves the land for use as a fee-based golf course. As such, the city believes there is a clear legal path under state law that would allow for modifications to be made to the conservation easement, such as lifting the golf course use restriction, if there is community and City Council support for doing so. More information is available at [www.denvergov.org/parkhillgolfcourse](http://www.denvergov.org/parkhillgolfcourse).