

Technical Assistance Panel APPLICATION FORM

Please provide the following information and submit to ULI Kansas City.

Applicant Organization City of Westwood, Kansas
Contact Person Fred Sherman Job Title: City Clerk
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1. Statement of the problem/issue

Dennis Park, located at the southwest corner of 50th Street and Rainbow, is a one acre in size public park owned by the City of Westwood that was initially developed in the mid 1970's. The park is not compliant with the American's with Disabilities Act (ADA) requirements, and there are several deferred maintenance issues that need to be addressed.

The City of Westwood entered into a contract with Indigo Design in March of 2013 for consulting services to develop alternative design improvement concepts for the city's park space. Two different concept designs for an updated park plan and preliminary probable cost estimates were delivered. The concept designs developed in 2013 showed a possible expansion of certain park elements onto the adjacent Westwood Christian Church property to the south, addressed at 5050 Rainbow Blvd. At the time these concept plans were developed, the City of Westwood did not own the adjacent property to the south.

The City of Westwood purchased the Westwood Christian Church property and building in April of 2014. The almost 2-acre in size former church property has an 8,217 sq. ft. building with an almost 3,000 sq. ft. unfinished basement that was partially built in 1951 and partially in 1962. A full appraisal as well as a Phase 1 Environmental Study was conducted on the 5050 Rainbow property prior to its purchase.

The 5050 Rainbow Blvd property and the Dennis Park property sit adjacent to Westwood View Elementary School. The enrollment area of this two-section Shawnee Mission School District elementary school serves five different cities: Westwood, Mission Woods, Westwood Hills, and parts of the cities of Fairway and Mission Hills. This elementary school has been recommended to be closed at times in the past, as there is sufficient capacity in other near-by district elementary schools to accommodate the school's current enrollment. The current superintendent of the Shawnee Mission School District has publicly stated that there are no plans to close Westwood View Elementary school. In fact, improvements to the entry for security, and kitchen and cafeteria updates are slated to be completed to the Westwood View Elementary building in the summer of 2015, pending approval of the district's current bond issue.

It is the city's long term goal to increase school enrollment at Westwood View Elementary to help ensure that this elementary school remains a key and viable aspect of the surrounding area. Having an elementary school and establishing a relationship with the SMSD that sets the example for the truest form of sustainable education in a community-based, walkable urban setting. Westwood's acquisition of the Westwood Christian Church property plays a vital role in park planning and economic development. Westwood does not yet have a vision for the 5050 Rainbow property but will be working on one henceforth. Westwood looks to bolster the community's commitment to keep Westwood View vibrant and open for generations.

A revised and expanded scope of services has been established with Indigo Design to finalize a Park Master planning process now that the City of Westwood purchased the 5050 Rainbow property and former church building. This next phase of the Park Master plan study has been initiated, but is still in the early stages of completion. The expanded scope of work includes:

- Meet with City staff and others to review new information and recent discussions regarding possible uses for the south parcel and former church building.
- Meet with potential south parcel “developers” to discover use parameters and needs which may affect park development options and opportunities. Anticipate 3-4 meetings.
- Develop park master plan site concept for each “valid” south parcel development scheme. Anticipate 3-4 site concepts.
- Meet to review the site concepts and determine positive and negative impacts on park/city uses and interests.
- Meet with the south parcel “developers” to review site concepts and assure compatibility with desired use(s).
- Meet with City staff, City Council, and/or Planning Commission and others to discuss options and determine a preferred direction for park development.
- Develop Final Master Plan Concept and Opinion of Costs.
- Meet with City to review final concepts and costs.
- Revise, as needed, and provide final digital and hard copy products to City. Products to include PDF versions of all documents, plus quality printed and mounted display board(s).

Since the city of Westwood purchased the 5050 Rainbow property, a number of ideas and concepts for utilization of both the 5050 Rainbow property and the existing church building have been conveyed to city staff and city leadership. This includes:

- Converting the building into the use of a commercial child-care center for up to 100 children;
- Use of the building as a community center for a performing arts location;
- Leasing parking spaces to the University of Kansas Hospital Authority;
- Partnering with Johnson County Parks for various use;
- Dividing the property to expand the Dennis Park uses, then selling the former church building for commercial uses or redevelopment;
- Demolishing the building and constructing a new City Hall or other civic uses, like a Jo Co Library or new Fire Station;
- Demolishing the building and redeveloping the land area for active open space uses, like soccer fields;

Nearby to the northeast, catty-corner to the Westwood View Elementary School site sits two Entercom Broadcasting Corp. transmission towers and their former 15,000+ sq. ft. broadcast center building on about 8.5 acres of land that is bounded by 50th Street, Belinder Ave, and Booth Street. The facility is currently mostly vacant except for the broadcasts of two AM radio stations frequencies from the site – KMBZ at 980 kHz and KUDL at 1660 Khz. It has been recently announced that Entercom is working on relocating the broadcasting of these two AM frequencies to another location so the two broadcast towers can be eventually removed with the potential redevelopment of the property. A developer has publicly announced that he has a contract for purchase on the 8 acre Entercom property, and desires to submit a proposal for a senior living facility in the near future. The broadcast towers and office building on the Entercom property are a legal non-conforming use, as the underlying zoning of the property is for R-1, single-family development and uses.

Over the years some area residents have suggested that the City explore at least the following uses and consider proactive city roles in the redevelopment of the Entercom property for:

- Single family housing as is currently zoned.
- Examine the feasibility of slightly denser coverage with amenities that may be more attractive to millennials (smaller yards, access to service, walkable and green).
- Convert the current building into a civic use.
- Develop single family housing at least along Booth and 50th Street.
- Create a “town square” park as a community centerpiece.
- Sell and redevelop the current City Hall property at 47th & Rainbow Blvd to higher-value mixed use consistent with other developments underway.
- Create a regional urban park in collaboration with JOCO Parks and Recreation Department.
- Enhance the current office space for commercial use and create new park space on the property.

Given the anticipated price of purchase, demolition, and redevelopment of the 8-acre Entercom property, the financial reality of being able to successfully redevelop the Entercom property into a number of the above land uses is unknown.

2. Sponsor information Please describe:

- (1) **The type of and major business activity of the sponsoring organization:** The City of Westwood is a municipal local government. The City of Westwood, Kansas was incorporated June 7, 1949 and is governed by a Mayor and five Council members. www.westwoodks.org
- (2) **What role the sponsor plays in the particular issue(s) suggested for the Panel:** The City of Westwood owns the Dennis Park property and the 5050 Rainbow Blvd property, and is seeking solutions for redevelopment of the park, as well as helping foster the sustainable education in a community-based, walkable urban setting by partnering with the school district to keep Westwood View Elementary school viable in the future.
- (3) **Include a brief history of important projects/activities that recently have taken place or are planned or under consideration:** As noted above – a consultant specializing in the design of parks has been engaged to help develop an updated Master Plan for the Dennis park property.

3. Questions to be addressed by the Panel:

Planning/Design - Considering its proximity to the elementary school and the city's long term goal to increase school enrollment, what is the best and most innovative redevelopment options for 5050 Rainbow & the Park property?

Market Issues - What is the estimated fair market value (residential and commercial) for development of the two properties along Rainbow Blvd?

What is the estimated market potential for redeveloping the 8-acre Entercom property into the different suggested land uses?

Feasibility - Cost to rehabilitate the 5050 Rainbow building or tear it down. Cost to update and expand the park including removal and/or rehabilitation of the 5050 building.

4. Sponsor responsibilities – planning and logistics

Key Individuals:

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