

AGENDA ITEM SUMMARY

Urban Renewal Authority



STAFF

Josh Birks, Acting URA Executive Director
Andy Smith, Redevelopment Manager
Chris Sheafor, Program Coordinator

SUBJECT

Concept Plan and Funding Discussion for a Temporary Outdoor Event Venue at 1636 North College.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The purpose of this item is to consider the concept plan to construct a temporary event and community gathering space on Authority-owned property at 1636 North College Avenue and receive guidance regarding alternative concept plans. Construction cost estimates for the initial concept came in considerably higher than originally anticipated, and Authority staff have asked the design team to prepare an alternative “value engineered” design to lower the cost of the project.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommend using the “Value Engineered Design” alternative proposed by design consultant RVi Planning + Landscape Architecture. Using elements from either or both designs is also a possibility.

BACKGROUND / DISCUSSION

Background

The large-scale redevelopment of the 1636 property, acquired in July 2025, is not likely to begin for two to three years. In the intervening time, Authority staff recommends activating the space with “tactical urbanism” elements to provide a benefit to the neighborhood and illustrate how reuse of this space can be an asset to the community. Potential uses include food trucks, farmers markets, cultural festivals, concerts, and an unprogrammed gathering space.

Discussion

The Authority engaged RVi Planning + Landscape Architecture to design a space that is inviting, useful for many activities, and largely reusable in future development projects. Approximately two-thirds of either design alternative could potentially be reused in other parts of the 1636 development when it occurs in the future.

The initial design came with a higher price tag than originally anticipated, so RVi was asked for possible alternatives. They provided an alternative that reduced the size of the footprint to an area roughly the size of the Oak Street Plaza. They also substituted resilient tiles for artificial turf and reduced some of the landscaping features. While the size has decreased, some larger scale uses like farmers markets can still occur outside the barricaded area and spill into the ample parking space unused by this design.

The budget contemplated here is for construction that will define the space and make it usable for most of the anticipated activities. Future work on the site will mostly consist of artwork like murals and painting of the concrete barriers. That work will be coordinated with local entities like La Familia, Art in Public Places, and CSU to encourage a feeling of local ownership at the site. Budgets for those types of activities will be forthcoming as the various groups are engaged and design processes approved.

Rather than making the decision at the staff level, we are asking if the Board sees advantages to retaining the initially proposed size and materials to get the project underway as originally conceived or proceed with the less expensive option.

BOARD / COMMISSION / COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION

None.

AUTHORITY FINANCIAL IMPACTS

The original design has a cost estimate of **\$252,443**. By scaling back the size by approximately one third along with substituting resilient tiles for the proposed artificial turf, the cost goes down to **\$153,312**. The attached spreadsheet summarizes the difference between the alternatives.

The URA could also look for donations or sponsorships for the construction to further reduce the budgeted cost of the project. Staff recommend that if done, we approach that process carefully so as not to dilute the feeling of neighborhood ownership of the property or have unnecessary oversight from an outside entity.

PUBLIC OUTREACH

There have been informal discussions with various community organizations.

ATTACHMENTS

1. 1636 Event Space Budget Comparison
2. North College Event Venue Concepts
3. Presentation