

WORK SESSION AGENDA ITEM SUMMARY

City Council



STAFF

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SUBJECT FOR DISCUSSION

Hughes Site Plan and Engagement and Timeline.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The purpose of this item is to discuss and confirm an engagement plan for the creation of a use plan for the Hughes property. Staff is seeking feedback on guiding principles to set expectations throughout the process and on the feasibility of utilizing a “Civic Assembly” process.

GENERAL DIRECTION SOUGHT AND SPECIFIC QUESTIONS TO BE ANSWERED

1. What feedback do Councilmembers have regarding the proposed guiding principles?
2. What feedback do Councilmembers have on utilizing a Civic Assembly vs. an in-house engagement process?

BACKGROUND / DISCUSSION

The original Hughes Stadium was built in the early 1960’s. To build the stadium, the entire site was re-graded to create large parking lots that accommodated thousands of visitors during football games and other events. The site remained open to pedestrians and a disc golf course was later built in the southeast corner of the site where a large, regional stormwater detention pond is located.

The stadium operated until 2016. After efforts to consider housing on the property, residents initiated a ballot measure to maintain the property as Public Open Lands.

In 2021, the ballot initiative passed, requiring the City to purchase the former Hughes Stadium property, rezone the 164.56-acre parcel to Public Open Lands District (POL) and use the site for “parks, recreation, and open lands, natural areas, and wildlife rescue and restoration.”

The City rezoned the property POL in May 2021 and started the work to acquire the property. Acquisition was finalized in June 2023 for \$12.5 million with \$2M each from General Fund and Natural Areas and the difference coming from bonding. Final costs will be allocated proportionally and retroactively to corresponding funds once land uses are determined.

In late 2022, in anticipation of acquisition, City staff began an outreach process to engage community members in envisioning potential future activities on the site. City staff engaged Kearns & West, a third-party consulting firm specializing in public engagement efforts.

Throughout the process was clear that this site is a highly valued, cherished piece of property, and it is a relatively large parcel of land with countless opportunities.

Interests ranged from making the entire property a Natural Area to interest in a bike park. In between these stated desires were numerous possibilities including restoring native grassland habitat, creating an accessible and balanced space, the addition of a few amenities such as a basic restroom, signage, and more parking, and a need for more shade and seating areas. This outreach process became a mechanism for residents to mobilize their interests.

See attached engagement report for full details.

Current State

Since 2019, and to date, the Hughes site has seen little to no improvements or management. The disc golf course sees continued use and the sledding hill is utilized when conditions allow. There is also a cell tower and above ground distribution lines located on the property.

For additional context, staff has provided visuals in the power point comparing the size of numerous community parks to the 164-acre Hughes property. Spring Canyon is the largest park at 123 acres.

Developing a Use Plan

Staff is prepared to create and implement an engagement plan resulting in options for Council consideration by Q2 2025. Prior to initiating work, there is value in determining Guiding Principles for the process. Staff is proposing the following Guiding Principles:

- Develop a plan that meets the ballot language, is contextually appropriate for site location, and can be implemented over time.
- Create integrated, multi-use spaces that can serve the community year-round.

These principles help to guide the process and set expectations.

Staff is also seeking feedback on the outreach mechanism. There has been some interest in pursuing a Citizen's Assembly which can be more inclusive and more empowering to residents. A Citizen Assembly utilizes a random drawing of self-selected residents who are ensured to be representative of the community demographics. Participants are compensated for their time and will be tasked to make a recommendation to Council. In order to be consistent with inclusive language that the City adheres to, rather than call it a "Citizen Assembly," our proposed name will be the "Civic Assembly."

The Council Futures Committee had a presentation and discussion on Citizen Assemblies at their April 8, 2024 meeting. A recording can be found at: <https://www.fcgov.com/council/futures>

NEXT STEPS

Based on Council conversation and direction, staff will create an outreach plan and begin implementation.

ATTACHMENTS

1. Kearns and West Engagement Report
2. Presentation