

DATE: February 10, 2015

ITEM: 7.C.

RE: RECOMMENDATION ON OPEN SPACE PORTION OF THE HUB DISTRICT DEVELOPMENT IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY

PROJECT AREA: Depot District

PREPARED BY: Edward Butterfield

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY: In November 2014, the RDA staff provided options for consideration to expand open space in the Hub District on the north and south blocks as part of the Development Implementation Strategy. Staff is returning with a final open space recommendation for the Board to consider.

The staff recommendation is to expand the plaza to the north of the Serta Mattress building and create a new open space adjacent to the southern edge of the Beehive Brick building. Also, the north/south aligned streets that bisect 300 South would be designed to allow for temporary closure for events and other activities. There are a range of options that will be studied for activating these spaces, including a potential community garden.

Additional details on the open space options are included in the Analysis and Issues sections with plan renderings attached to the memo. A representative from Design Workshop, the RDA design consultant, will be presenting with staff at the Board meeting and available to answer specific design questions.

RECOMMENDATION: The final open space recommendation for the Hub District Implementation Plan includes:

1. South Block – Extend the plaza north of the Serta Mattress Building to 300 South to encompass the current sidewalk area on the west side of the north-south midblock street. Second, extend the plaza treatment north of Serta east across the midblock street to create an environment geared toward pedestrians, but crossable by vehicles, rather than a standard pedestrian crossing of a street designed for vehicles.
2. North Block - Create a new open space adjacent to the Beehive Brick Building that could be accessed by residents and commercial tenants of the building. In addition, a section of the north-south midblock street could be closed to vehicular traffic, periodically, allowing increased space for pedestrian/bicycle travel and an area for outdoor seating and dining. The creation of these new open space areas would have the

benefit of more winter sun exposure than might be experienced on the south block plaza spaces.

ANALYSIS AND ISSUES: The proposed changes to the open space portion of the Development Implementation Strategy improve or maintain many of the aspects of the original plan. An outline of these improvements from the original plan is highlighted below.

Comparable Size - The proposed changes maintain the original size of the planned open space in the first Implementation Strategy. The original plan called for a large plaza on the south block consisting of approximately 14,900 sq. ft. The new plan will have approximately 14,100 sq. ft. of open space, with additional space available when the street is closed for events.

Flexibility of Space - The new proposal creates an additional 12,200 sq. ft. of open space on the north block and an additional 2,640 sq. ft. of open space on the south block when vehicular activity is restricted during small to medium sized events. This improves the programmatic opportunities for the open space but doesn't create out sized spaces that may seem vacant when no activities are occurring.

Improved Accessibility - The new plan provides open space opportunities on both the north and south blocks. Distributing the open space across the area provides nearby access to more residents, visitors, and workers.

Sun Exposure - The creation of these new open space areas would have the benefit of more winter sun exposure. The new proposal creates a large open space on the north block that faces south and could be utilized during the cool season months. The previous Implementation Strategy only had one large plaza that would have had limited sun exposure because of its position on the north side of buildings.

Traffic Calming - The new proposal provides expanded traffic calming features that will result in slower speeds and an improved pedestrian environment. Also, the current plan envisions a curb-less street where pedestrians can cross with ease.

ATTACHMENTS:

A. Open Space Diagrams