Land Hold - Arts & Entertainment Facility

City Council Meeting
March 24, 2026

Chris Corl, Director
Community & Regional Entertainment Facilities



Key Takeaways

- Staff has identified the City-owned “Parkside” property as a potential site for a mixed-use development anchored by an Arts & Entertainment facility.
- “Parkside” property has been targeted for mixed-use development dating to the 1980’s with the final assemblage of the land complete with the intent to assist with development of a performing arts center.
- A Communication and Engagement plan is being developed to ensure community concerns and aspirations are incorporated throughout the process.
- Early community input will help shape the right partnerships through a request for qualifications. These partnerships should ensure the project fits the site and respects nearby historic and cultural areas like The Block.
- Securing an additional partner will be critical to the project’s financial viability.

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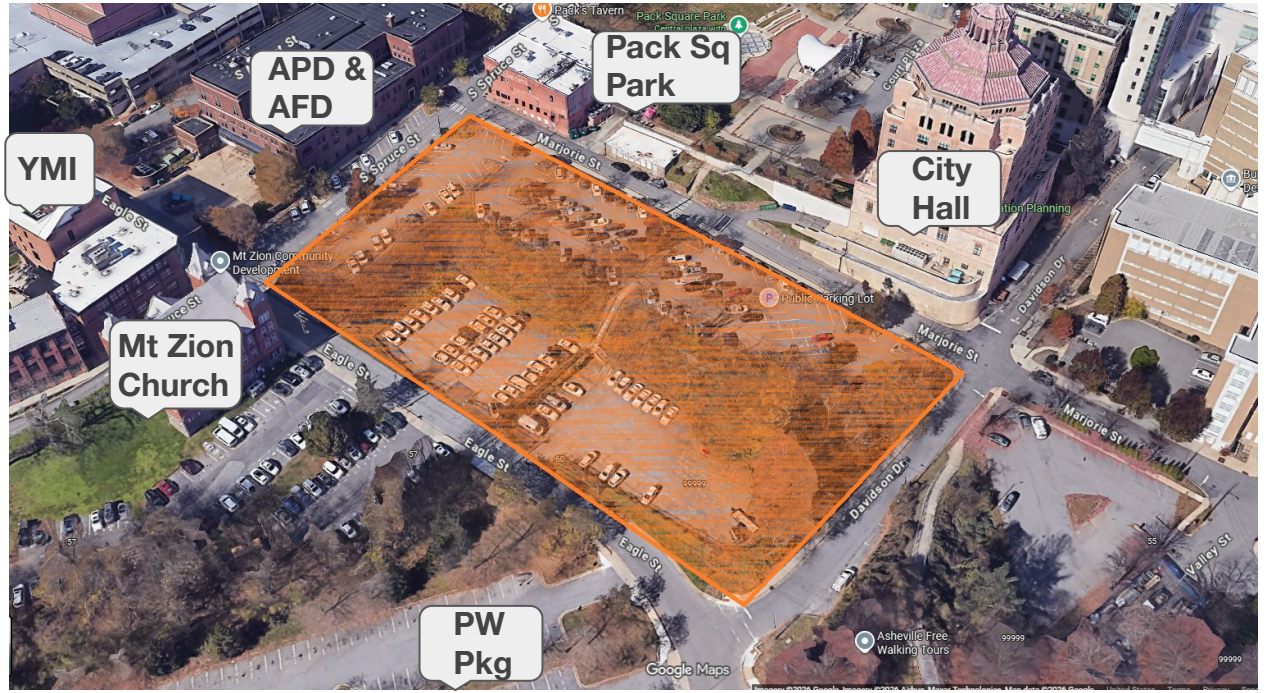
Brief History

- Community interest in replacing or modernizing the Thomas Wolfe Auditorium (TWA) dates back to the 1980s.
- Multiple efforts to renovate or replace TWA over the past 20+ years have been unsuccessful.
- Analysis indicates that the level of restoration required for TWA is less cost-effective long term than constructing a new facility.
- The City has signed a Memorandum of Understanding with ATG Entertainment with the intent ‘explore the feasibility of developing a new 2,500+/- seat arts and entertainment facility in downtown’
- ATG Entertainment an internationally known private operator of entertainment venues managing operations across 72 venues worldwide.
- Post-Helene Economic Development Administration (EDA) grant opportunities may create additional funding streams for this potential project.
- The City-owned “Parkside” site has been considered for mixed-use development multiple times since the 1980s.

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The Site

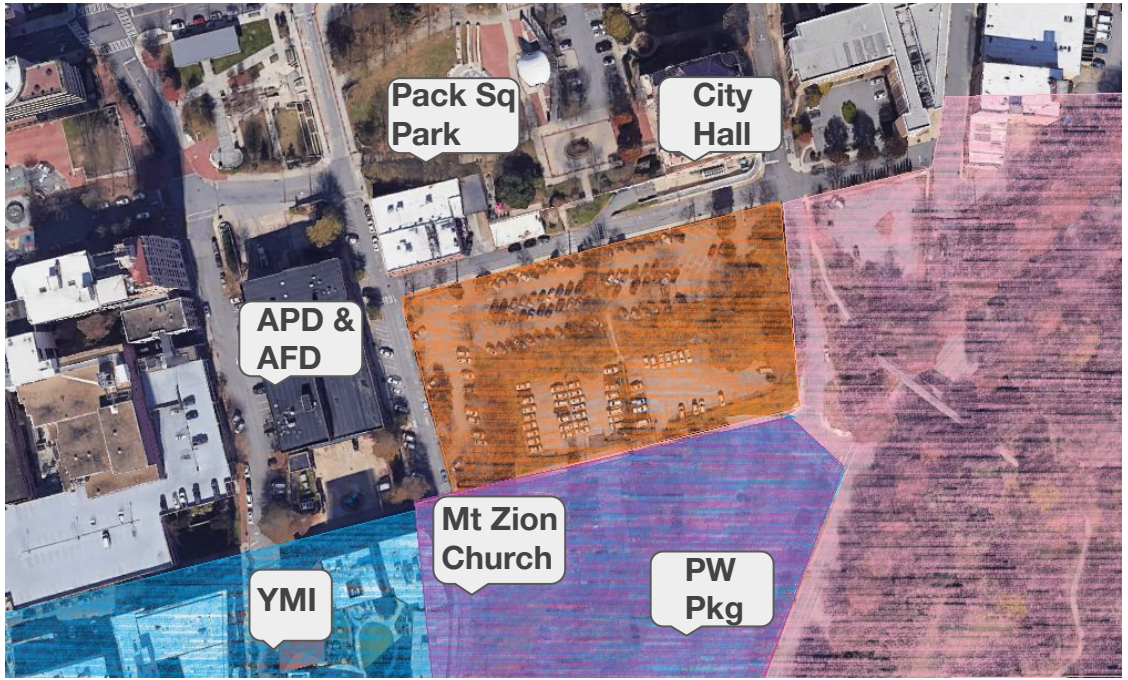
Seven total parcels, totalling ~2.43 acres



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The Site

Properties are not Urban Renewal parcels; however, they are directly adjacent to urban renewal property and located in an area impacted by urban renewal.



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Potential Space Use (site massing)

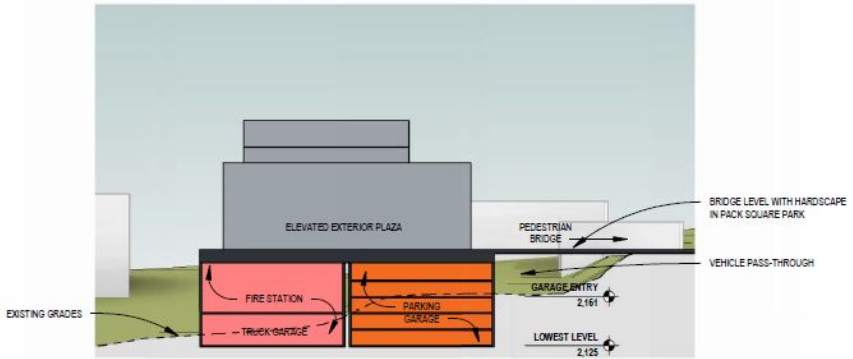
- 300+ space parking garage
- Space for a public safety station (Fire)
- ~2,500 seat main performance hall
- Rehearsal / education center spaces
- Workforce development workshop & footprint

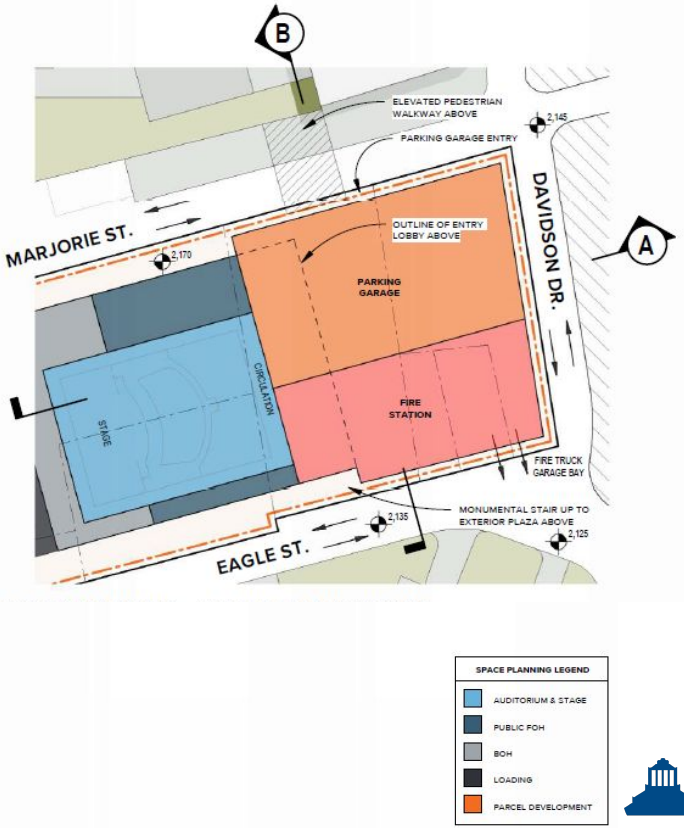
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DRAFT Site Massing *Drafted Spring 2024



Concept 1A





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Potential Space Use (site massing)

- Opportunity with additional developers
  - Retail
  - Gallery
  - Restaurant
  - Museum
  - Educational
  - Community
  - Other…….

Why Now

- Allows process with ATG to move expeditiously
- Will strengthen EDA grant application
- If Awarded funds will support pre-construction work:
  - Site survey & discovery
  - Geo-tech
  - Utility relocation
  - Initial conceptual design and construction documents

Next Steps



Continuing Engagement Next Steps

- Update information & FAQs posted to project page
  - Encourage those interested in this project to sign up for updates on the project page.
- Incorporate community feedback to inform a Request for Qualifications (RFQ) for additional development partner(s).
- Communication & Engagement Plan overview presented to Economy Recovery Board: Feedback received and will be integrated into plan

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Initial Identified Stakeholder Groups

- Arts AVL
- Asheville Downtown Association / ADID
- Asheville Independent Restaurants
- Asheville Symphony
- The Block Collaborative
- Chamber of Commerce / Economic Development Coalition
- Eagle Market Street Development Corp.
- East End / Valley Street neighborhood
- Explore Asheville
- LEAF
- Legacy Neighborhood Coalition
- Local Performing Arts orgs (Wortham, ACT, etc.)
- Mt Zion Church
- People's Place AVL
- YMI

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C&E Phase 1 Objectives (stakeholders)

- Project status update
  - Where we are and what we are requesting input on at this time
- Identify concerns and excitements
  - Top items these groups like/love about the site
  - Top priorities and concerns these groups have about the site
- Feedback will be utilized to create parameters
- Utilize identified feedback from stakeholders to inform content of RFQ to be issued to solicit additional development partner(s) in the project

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Discussion

Suggested Motion

Motion to adopt a resolution reserving City owned real property “Parkside” which is bounded by Marjorie Street to the north, Spruce Street to the west, Eagle street to the south and Davidson Drive to the east for up to two years for the purpose of exploring the development of an Arts & Entertainment facility within the reserved area to conduct, as part of this process, meaningful and robust public engagement with the surrounding communities, including but not limited to The Block and East End/Valley Street, and to reserve and final decisions on the use of this property until the City Council has received sufficient information and feedback.