Financing for a Downtown “White Elephant” City of Brush

CHALLENGE STATEMENT //

Two of the growing needs in Brush include housing and daycare needs with nearly 96% of all residential units within the city being occupied as well as a community survey indicating that the most important issue to residents within the next five years was Child Care and Early Learning Services at 82%. To address these future needs, how can a small community with strong partners turn this challenge to meet the needs for daycare and housing?

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY //

The City of Brush is interested specifically in the Central Platoon School Building (see below), a historic building designed by noted architect Frederick Mountjoy in 1929, in providing for the communities needs in regards to child care, early learning services, and housing. However, there are a number of hurdles to overcome including deterioration due to years of vacancy, rehabilitation costs, and the issue of ownership. On the other hand, there are a number of fantastic opportunities. Namely, the Central Platoon School is an architectural treasure not only for the City of Brush but for North East Colorado as a whole, its proximity to downtown Brush and I-76, it’s opportunity for mixed-use development, among many others. Ideas that came from our participants in this Challenge Studio ranged from new and creative uses for the space, to resources for funding such as historic preservation tax credits and grants, and ways to involve the local community.

TEAM MEMBERS //

Tyler Purvis, City of Brush / J.J. Folsom, DCI Board Representative, Progressive Urban Management Associates (PUMA) / Barbara Kloth, Ayres Associates / Cynthia Nieb, Director State Historic Fund, History Colorado / Mike Scholl, Loveland Economic Development / Cynthia Blake, Nederland Planning and Building Technician / Amanda Kennard, PUMA / Melody Christensen, Brush Area Chamber of Commerce / Jamie Shapiro, DCI

BACKGROUND INFORMATION //

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stakeholders + Partners:</th>
<th>Assets:</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Population: App. 5,408</td>
<td>Architectural Treasure</td>
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<tr>
<td>Private Owner of Building</td>
<td>Central to Town Center</td>
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<tr>
<td>Potential Funders</td>
<td>Mixed Use Opportunity</td>
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Obstacles:  
- Rehabilitation Cost  
- Significant deterioration of building  
- Acquisition of building
These resultant ideas about solutions for financing for a downtown “white elephant” in Brush came about through a round table discussion between community members, private, and public figures. This exercise was primarily to generate new ideas and sketch out the beginnings of innovative solutions and as such are on a conceptual level.

1. New Resources + Previously Undiscovered Assets
   - EPA Revolving Loan Fund
   - Affordable Housing Tax Credits
   - Oppsites
   - USDA Community Facilities Program
   - HUD Grants
   - Colorado Historical Foundation

2. Suggestions from Participants
   Other Uses of the Space:
   - Music venue
   - Incubator space for local businesses
   - Art space
   - Non-profit space
   - Hotel
   - Entertainment space
   - Ground level retail
   - Brewery

   Examples from other Communities:
   - Ivywild, Colorado Springs
   - Fruittdale School, Wheatridge
   - Old Albuquerque High School, Albuquerque, NM
   - Walsenburg Middle School, Walsenburg
   - Smiley Junior High School, Durango

Concrete Steps:
- Get the word out!
  - Ideally funding a private developer
  - People won’t help if they don’t know
  - See if local community has “angel investors”
  - Look to larger statewide or national audience for investment
- Move to purchase the property. Once the city has control of the site, it will be much easier to develop
- Talk to others who have been involved in similar situations
- Keep talking with History Colorado, and begin conversations with the USDA, EPA, and other potential grant funders.

Desired Outcomes:
- To provide for the needs of the community in regards to child care and housing
  - A final rehabilitated historically and architecturally significant building