

## **Blast Park:**

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Overview: Blast Park Project- To research the underlying items as to why the project originally stopped; identify the city's ability to restart project discussions, and eventual fulfillment of park creation in Olde Town.

The removal of blight through the creation of an open park space, which will serve as a gateway to Olde Town historic district and a tribute to Colorado history. An information/education center at the Livery stable is proposed to be housed adjacent to the epicenter of the great train blast of 1888. This project originated in 2007, which is being re-assessed in 2015. The land asset belongs to the BNSF railroad and a small part of the land is leased by a commercial enterprise. There are personal properties that back up to the land; who inadvertently use the land as access to the back portion of their properties. Overall the project is viable and a positive for the city.

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### Benefits and Concerns of the proposed site:

#### **Benefits**

Beautification and added asset of this particular blighted area.

A unique open space park for city and state residents to enjoy long term.

This is the entrance to the historic Olde Town area and as such could be a gateway and attraction for downtown.

This area could be a historic tourism magnet for the city, as it is part of Colorado's history.

This park creates a "center of place" for city residents, lending itself to community cohesiveness.

Complete linear park with the RR crossing closure at Illinois Avenue and relocation to Indiana Avenue.

#### **Concerns**

This area is used by some local residents' properties for access and parking. In addition, a commercial use lease exists on a portion of the proposed park site.

Parks department requires minimal maintenance with this park addition.

Timing of Railroad (RR) donation period will dictate the development of the project.

External funding needs to be identified to adequately renew the site with long-term maintenance by volunteers identified.

Pedestrian safety issues will need to be addressed for the rail line and personal properties that flank the site.

Timing of RR closure (2016) and overall parking and accessibility.

#### **Cost Points:**

Land- TBD- Cost of acquisition (donation) and land appraisal approximately \$1900.00 (prior value); historic designation

Site Architectural design- TBD

Stable Purchase-TBD: This process would require an inquiry discussion with the current owner of the property.

Stable Renovation- TBD- Based on construction cost of renovation and RFP issuance.

CIP- Fence/sidewalks- TBD

RR Site Amenities – Alamosa has RR yards with items that could be cost-effective to purchase for placement in the park as a tribute to the RR industry, the State and blast site history.

## **Education and Visitor's Center:**

There is currently, just to the north of the park land, an old Livery stable that is from the time period that was used to house the horses of the travelers that stayed at the local hotel at the turn of the last century. This stable is currently on the National register of Historic places and we could gain support from the Olde Town Committee, FURA, and the City Council to have both the Stable and the land listed on the State's registry of historic sites.

- The plan would be for the Livery stable to become the visitor/information center for the city as well as an educational facility specific for the park. The Education facility would be used to help educate students and community members about Fountain, Colorado history, the science behind the explosion, and the impact of the railroads in shaping this area as well as the nation at the turn of the last century.

## **Partners in the Project:**

Any project of this magnitude needs local sponsorship to assist, not just in the creation of the park but in the ongoing maintenance of the park as well.

- BNSF Railroad as the donor of land asset to establish the park.
- City of Fountain would lend asset resources toward the project as project manager and assist with CIP and pedestrian safety improvement requirements.
- Scott's Miracle Grow, a local business which already has a program in place to create community gardens, has had initial talks with Fountain and expressed interest in growing a partnership with Fountain with its community garden concept.
- The Olde Town Committee and the Fountain Urban Renewal Authority (FURA) as possible supporters of the project as well as contributing volunteer and/or funding sources towards the project.
- The Fountain Historic and Preservation Society are already on board and would be another valuable resource of replicating historical knowledge and staffing.
- The educational component of the project could be parlayed with Fountain School Board, Boy Scouts/Girl Scouts and auxiliary student groups to support the project through park maintenance, site tours, and other special event activities.
- Grants: There are a few different funding sources for this project. The History Colorado Center has both a competitive grant, to help with infrastructure, and a non-competitive grant to help with costs associated with the appraisal and architectural design. Also we have been in discussion with the Gates Family Foundation, and there is a possibility of a grant from them as well centered around the education in the Livery Stable.
- The team foresees more will be identified as the project gains steam and viability.