

Information Item

Date: March 22, 2022

To: Mayor, Mayor Pro Tempore, and Members of the City Council

From: Ben Rowe, Assistant City Manager

Subject:

Information Regarding the Development of a Transformational Center in the Liberty Street Corridor (Northeast Ward)

Strategic Focus Area: Economic Vitality and Diversity

Strategic Objective: Enhance Skills of Workforce

Strategic Plan Action Item: No

Key Work Item: No



To enable economic mobility among the residents of East Winston, Council Member Burke has developed a vision to create a “Transformational Center” that would provide job training opportunities and other supportive services to residents in the community. Staff from the City Manager’s Office and Office of Business Inclusion and Advancement have assisted in initial planning to determine the feasibility of developing the center. Part of the initial planning has focused on identifying a viable location for the Transformational Center, and Council Member Burke and staff have identified nine parcels within the Liberty Street Corridor that could support the development of a 10,000 square foot facility between Sixteenth Street and Brannon Lane.

During a closed session in early October, the Mayor and City Council authorized staff to submit a bid to acquire the parcel at 1712 North Liberty Street as a first step in redevelopment along the Liberty Street Corridor and specifically the potential development of the Transformational Center. After several rounds of the upset bid process, the City was unable to acquire the parcel. The final bid exceeded the broker’s opinion of value provided to City staff. Exhibit A provides a map that highlights the parcels identified in the Liberty Street Corridor for the potential location of the Transformational Center. The parcel at 1712 North Liberty Street, which is no longer available, is shaded in red.

In addition to this preliminary work, City staff also engaged Stimmel Associates to develop a conceptual site plan for the Transformational Center. The cost of the work totaled \$7,500 and was paid for using a portion of the \$2.5 million in 2018 economic development bonds designated for Liberty Street redevelopment. Exhibit B presents the conceptual site plan, which overlays seven of the nine parcels identified by Council Member Burke and staff. Because the City was unable to acquire the parcel at 1712 North Liberty Street (shaded in red on the exhibit), the conceptual site plan will be modified to include the remaining two parcels west of the site (shaded in yellow on the exhibit).

The 10,000 square foot facility would include classroom, office, and multi-purpose space to provide for various types of job training, including training required to meet the City’s staffing needs in critical positions such as equipment operators and building trades. Other training could include job readiness training such as résumé writing and interview skills.

The following table identifies some of the City positions for which training could be provided through the center. The table also provides the hiring ranges for these positions.

Position	Hiring Range	Required Training
Equipment Operator/Medium	\$34,762.31 - \$43,452.89	Commercial Driver’s License
Equipment Operator/Heavy	\$37,195.67 - \$46,494.59	Commercial Driver’s License
Sanitation Equipment Operator	\$37,195.67 - \$46,494.59	Commercial Driver’s License
Sr. Sanitation Equipment Operator	\$39,799.37 - \$49,749.21	Commercial Driver’s License
Sr. Plumber	\$39,799.37 - \$49,749.21	Trades Skills
Building Maintenance Mechanic	\$34,762.31 - \$43,452.89	Building Technology (ex. HVAC)
Trades Helper	\$34,762.31 - \$43,452.89	Trades Skills
Welder	\$39,799.37 - \$49,749.21	Trades Skills
Master Fleet Technician	\$45,566.30 - \$56,957.87	Automotive Service Excellence (ASE) Training
Fleet Attendant	\$31,200.00 - \$39,000.00	Automotive Service Excellence (ASE) Training
Building Inspector	\$48,755.94 - \$60,944.92	N.C. Building Code Training/Certifications
Electrical Inspector	\$48,755.94 - \$60,944.92	N.C. Building Code Training/Certifications
Mechanical Inspector	\$48,755.94 - \$60,944.92	N.C. Building Code Training/Certifications
Plumbing Inspector	\$48,755.94 - \$60,944.92	N.C. Building Code Training/Certifications
Firefighter (No Degree)	\$39,469.50 - \$41,442.98	Fire Academy Course Work

To further develop the programming provided through the center, the City would seek partnerships with local workforce development providers such as Goodwill Industries, Forsyth Technical Community College, and the Piedmont Triad Regional Workforce Development Board. The Transformational Center also could provide resources to support entrepreneurship in the community through the Office of Business Inclusion and Advancement’s Small Business Assistance Program.

Stimmel Associates also developed preliminary cost estimates for constructing the Transformational Center. The conceptual site plan includes the building, parking, stormwater controls, and other site improvements such as outdoor seating. Based on these elements, Stimmel Associates staff estimate that the cost of demolition and construction could total \$2.8 million. This estimate does not include land acquisition, design, FFE (furniture, fixtures, and equipment), and project contingency. Using Stimmel’s estimate for construction and factoring in potential construction inflation based on current City projects, City staff estimate the total cost to develop the Transformational Center at approximately \$6 million. The following table provides preliminary estimates of the various cost elements.

Preliminary Cost Estimates

Cost Category	Estimate
Land Acquisition	\$ 328,000
Environmental Remediation	164,000
Relocation	108,000
Design	533,000
Construction	3,555,000
Furniture, Fixtures, & Equipment (FFE)	356,000
Miscellaneous	40,000
Stormwater Management	200,000
Project Contingency	587,000
Total Estimated Cost	\$5,871,000

Next Steps

Currently, City staff have not identified funding to develop the Transformational Center. The 2018 economic development bonds designated for redevelopment of Liberty Street could provide funding for acquisition of the remaining eight parcels, as well as design of the building and site.

If the Community Development/Housing/General Government Committee endorses the proposed location of the Transformational Center at the northwest corner of Liberty Street and Sixteenth Street, City staff will seek authorization to pursue acquisition of the remaining eight parcels at a subsequent meeting of the City Council.