

TO: Urbana Park District Board of Commissioners

FR: Timothy A. Bartlett, Superintendent of Planning and Operations

CC: Vicki Mayes, Executive Director of Parks and Recreation

DT: March 10, 2009

RE: Updates on Planning – “Planning and Operations Facility”

HISTORICAL CONTEXT

The current Planning and Operations Facility located at 901 N. Broadway Avenue was constructed circa 1952. The facility was constructed at time in UPD history that provided operational and maintenance support primarily to Crystal Lake Park and Crystal Lake Park Pool and approximately 5 other UPD parks—approximately 150 acres of park space and few fulltime staff. In 1986 a modest expansion effort provided additional office space in the front of the building (east side) and limited maintenance space. In 1994, 2 back offices were eliminated and combined with a portion of the staff break room space to provide a new space configuration for tool storage and limited shop space. No new net maintenance space resulted.

BACKGROUND

In 1992 the UPD committed to adding a professional planning and development staff position to assist the District with future park, natural area and recreation facility planning needs. At that time the District anticipated new growth and a new demand for park and recreation services. One of the early reports prepared included the “1992 Facility Space Needs” report. The report provided an inventory and update on all the existing UPD building facilities that included:

- ❑ General Office/901 N. Broadway Maintenance Facility
- ❑ Thornburn Recreation Center
- ❑ Anita Purves Nature Center
- ❑ Crystal Lake Park Pool
- ❑ Lake House
- ❑ Northgate Plaza
- ❑ Additional Facilities – Leased Space: Urbana High School, Leal Elementary School, Yankee Ridge Elementary School, Washington Elementary School, Prairie Elementary School, King Elementary School, Urbana Middle School (gymnasium space)

In 1992 the UPD identified at least three District priorities. District staff was investigating the options of: expanding the Anita Purves Nature Center, developing Meadowbrook Park and expanding/replacing the General Office/Maintenance Facility.

In March 1992 the Thornburn Recreation Center was closed to the public due to the facility’s failing structural integrity. The District did not anticipate the facility to fail. In fact, the District had recently completed at least 2 phases of interior remodeling to the Thornburn Recreation Center by 1991. In an effort to retain as many recreation programs and staff as possible, two

storefronts at the Northgate Plaza were leased for recreation programming and staff office use to replace the closed Thornburn Center space.

UPD Board of Commissioners and administrative staff then updated priorities based on: replacing the lost space at the Thornburn facility, expanding the growing need for programming space at the Anita Purves Nature Center, expanding/replacing the General Offices/Maintenance Facility at 901 N. Broadway Avenue and developing Meadowbrook Park as a public park/natural area.

District administrative staff recommended that the Board of Commissioners would need to seek additional funding to plan, design, develop and operate the above high priorities. The 1993 UPD referendum was successful and allowed the District to achieve most of the high priority needs at that time.

However, the UPD was unable to replace/relocate the General Office/Maintenance Facility at that time due to many competing needs for parks and facilities and the limited amount of the new tax support. However, staff continued to work toward planning efforts to look at expansion opportunities at the 901 N. Broadway Avenue location in Crystal Lake Park. In October 1992 staff received approximately three proposals for professional services to assist with planning for the General Office/Maintenance Facility. Isaksen Glerum and Associates (IGA) were selected to provide 4 phases of architectural planning service for expansion of the General Offices/Maintenance Facility to include:

- ❑ Program Analysis
- ❑ Existing Building/Site Evaluation
- ❑ Conceptual Design
- ❑ Project Cost Opinions/Project Schedule

The final 1993 report from IGA indicated that the General Office/Maintenance Facility could be expanded at the current 901 N. Broadway Avenue location however; the site had many limitations including:

- ❑ Negative impact on Crystal Lake Park – loss of open space
- ❑ Negative impact on North Broadway Avenue and Franklin Street neighborhoods – increased traffic, noise, environmental impact
- ❑ Limited ingress/egress access for vehicles, staff, vendors, public/visitors
- ❑ Need to acquire additional residences on Franklin Street
- ❑ Possible need to create “satellite” maintenance facilities elsewhere in the District
- ❑ Limited/no expansion possibilities for future growth

Both UPD Board and staff determined that the potential for expansion at the 901 N. Broadway Avenue was extremely limited based on the preliminary planning documents. Further, staff recommended that the “General Office” space be located at a new site as a way to reduce the need for a “large footprint” within Crystal Lake Park. Subsequently, in 1995 the General Offices (administrative staff) were moved to Leal Park – Greek Revival Cottage after the International Society of Arboriculture relocated to a Champaign site. In 1999 the “Cottage” was renamed the

Darius Phebus Administrative Building and would continue to house the administrative office functions for the District. Future opportunities could offer the District the option of combining administrative and planning/operations at a new site.

Today, the 6,800/sq.ft. Planning and Operations Facility located at 901 N. Broadway Avenue supports all of the District's operation and maintenance needs for seven (7) District facilities located on approximately 600 acres of open space. The facility currently houses approximately 22 full time and 15 part time/seasonal staff/interns.

UPD LONG RANGE PLANNING

The UPD has a long history of promoting the need for long range planning for park and recreation services for all Urbana residents. The following UPD long range planning documents indicate a high priority for replacing/relocating the current Planning and Operations Facility:

- ❑ Urbana Park District – 1994 Interim Plan
- ❑ Urbana Park District – Parks and Recreation for the Year 2000
- ❑ Urbana Park District – 2007 Strategic Plan

All of these comprehensive plans indicate a high priority for replacing/relocating the current Planning and Operations Facility. Most recently the 2007 UPD Strategic Plan indicates in Chapter 6, Section 4.3 the following:

Level of Service (LOS) #3 – “Develop and implement a relocation plan for the current maintenance facility (located at 901 N. Broadway Avenue) to a new location to accommodate improved maintenance operations and support implementation of the Crystal Lake Park Master Plan”

PROPOSED “STIMULUS PACKAGE”

In 2009, UPD staff provided project information to the Champaign County Regional Planning Commission as part of our coordinated efforts to obtain the proposed “Stimulus Package” funding for a future facility. In that report, the UPD cited the following needs/reasons for relocating the current facility for the following reasons:

- ❑ Planning and Operations Facility is unsafe, environmentally incompliant and highly inefficient
- ❑ Planning and Operations Facility is outdated and dangerously located electrical and other operational systems pose a threat to worker safety
- ❑ No on-site detention or treatment of stormwater
- ❑ Limited parking for vendors, staff and visitors
- ❑ Lack of access for delivery of equipment, tools, facility supplies and other needs
- ❑ Limited capacity for recapturing waste products from fleet maintenance, pesticide storage operations, and other various light industrial operations
- ❑ Lack of daily storage and access of regular use equipment is inefficient and results in loss of staff time and poor equipment upkeep
- ❑ Lack of office space and work space for current staff/work groups
- ❑ Negative impact to a traditional neighborhood/quiet residential area and is accessed by historic brick road

- Other local code and functional issues

Currently, the proposed UPD Planning and Operations Facility is included in the approximately 30 other high priority projects identified by Champaign County Regional Planning Commission. No information is available regarding who/which entity will decide what projects will be selected for funding, when this might occur, nor the time schedule for any announcements. Staff remains hopeful that the UPD project will be supported.

EXISTING SITE EVALUATIONS AND CURRENT NEEDS

District staff has attempted to plan for relocation/replacement of the facility for many years. The current facility does not meet the UPD's need for appropriate planning, operations or maintenance services. In addition, the facility lacks enough storage space to accommodate all of the District's storage needs. By 2008, the UPD utilized, leased, and managed approximately 23 other "temporary spaces" and/or sites for cold storage purposes to augment the need for storage.

During the 2007 summer season P&O supervisory staff conducted a site survey and site visits to all existing buildings and tracts of land located at least 3 acres near the center of Urbana for sale or lease. The intent was to identify any/all opportunities that the District could consider for purchase/lease to be used as a UPD storage facility and/or new operations facility.

In order to determine the best overall location for the immediate cold storage facility and the near term Planning and Operations building, staff conducted an analysis of what was available on existing district lands as well as properties and land available for both acquisition and lease. Staff worked with Mr. Gary Stebbins, Weiner and Associates, and other realtors to identify potential/available properties. Staff visited many of these facilities and locations, and while some had elements that would work either for storage or operational use, none met all of the District's needs and it became increasingly clear that the District would be best served to build to specific requirements. In evaluating these properties, staff developed the following criteria for evaluation:

Criteria

- 1) *Cold Storage:*
 - a) Min. of 6,840 sq ft (to replace existing facility)
 - b) Interior accessibility with maintenance vehicles
 - c) Minimal utility requirements
 - d) Minimal conflicting adjacent land uses
 - e) Separate storage areas for various departmental needs
 - f) Easy ingress and egress – adjacent to appropriate collector streets
 - g) Located within 1-mile of District core activities
- 2) *Planning and Operations:*
 - a) Min. of 19,790 sq ft total building space situated on a minimum of 2.18 acres
 - (1) Min. of 5,010 sq ft frequent access cold storage
 - (2) Min. of 10,280 sq ft climate controlled space
 - (3) Min. of 4,500 sq ft office space
 - b) Climate Controlled and Cold Storage accessibility with maintenance vehicles
 - c) Expanded electrical capabilities, similar water, similar HVAC to current 901 facility

- d) Minimal conflicting adjacent land uses
- e) Work and storage spaces sectioned to accommodate current working groups
- f) Easy ingress and egress
- g) Conveniently located to major streets for efficient access to park sites
- h) Located within 1-mile of District core activities to maximize staff time and fleet fuel efficiencies.

In 2002 the UPD entered into an intergovernmental agreement with the Urbana-Champaign Sanitary District to lease 14 acres at the “Hickory Street Site” for use as an outdoor bulk storage facility. In 2007 UPD staff negotiated the agreement to allow the construction of an indoor cold storage facility of approximately 10,000 square feet to provide indoor/outdoor storage for all of the District’s storage needs. The facility is nearly complete and will allow the District to move and consolidate all of the various storage sites within the District. The Hickory Street Storage Facility will meet current and future cold storage needs for the District for many years. It should be noted however, that the Hickory Street Storage Facility does not provide indoor heated storage space for vehicles, equipment and/or other specific storage needs.

INTERGOVERNMENTAL COOPERATION

Since 1992 previous attempts and discussions have been on-going by UPD staff regarding shared operations facilities. To date, UPD staff has evaluated potential cooperative efforts with the following units of local government:

- ❑ Urbana-Champaign Sanitary District
- ❑ City of Urbana
- ❑ Champaign Park District
- ❑ Champaign County
- ❑ Urbana School District #116
- ❑ MTD

The possibility of collaborating with other units of government was also evaluated for the purpose of meeting both our cold storage and expanded operational needs. Shared storage space in particular seemed of particular merit given the primary resource to be fairly allocated is that of space. In previous conversations with the Sanitary District, such a possibility was explored, but the UCSD felt they had all their needs covered at the time and future expansion of their main complex is expected to meet any of their future storage needs. Furthermore, given the immediate needs of the UPD, any delay to locate a suitable and willing partner will result in expanded storage conflicts within our own District.

The possibility of collaborating with other units of government in the development of an expanded Planning and Operations facility is felt to have even less merit than the possibility of shared storage. Where other units of government oversee departments such as police and fire that are charged to directly ensure public safety, park district fleet and operations are likely to occupy a second tier of priority in the allocation of shared resources.

All discussions have determined that separate facilities are needed by all respective entities. It is recommended that the UPD maintain an independent Planning and Operations facility to continue to provide high quality park and recreation services to the community of Urbana.

Most recently, UPD staff discussed the possibility of joint use/access to the City of Urbana's newly acquired "Tri-Star" building—a property located near Philo Road and Washington Street in Urbana. City staff indicated the older facility will be remodeled to accommodate city staff offices for their various departments and that the site is not suitable for UPD operational needs. However, city staff indicated that some additional leased office space may be suitable for use by UPD administrative staff. This option may have some benefits however, would not provide an opportunity to consolidate UPD staff and/or reduce the number of UPD facilities.

COMMERCIAL REAL ESTATE

In addition, UPD staff evaluated the potential to acquire existing commercial space that could be redeveloped into the proposed Planning and Operations Facility. UPD staff coordinated search and evaluation efforts with City of Urbana – Planning Department and Community Development staff to avoid sites that the city staff is working to improve/redevelop for commercial uses to help support Urbana business growth. UPD staff visited approximately seven existing buildings and several properties for consideration. The process resulted in determining that none of the existing buildings/lots for sale were appropriate for use as the new site for the UPD Planning and Operations facility.

UPD staff prepared a short list of criteria for evaluating each existing building and/or lots for sale. Staff determined that none of the potential sites were suitable for redevelopment due to the high cost of sale and/or the poor condition of the existing buildings. Some of the potential land tracts were better suited for residential or commercial land uses. Inserting a Planning and Operations facility on any of the lots for sale would prove to be incompatible land uses and/or provide a negative impact on adjacent land uses. Most of the potential sites were valued at several million dollars and the buildings needed extensive rehabilitation for future use. Staff recommended that relocation of the proposed facility be considered and existing park sites should be considered.

Commercial real estate reflects that no commercial buildings were available for purchase or lease that met UPD criteria/facility needs. Land identified for potential acquisition within the prescribed 1-mile distance of core District activities is cost prohibitive and/or in areas with conflicting adjacent land uses. (See attached listing of properties)

CURRENT PLANNING ACTIVITIES – CHIEF SHEMAUGER PARK

The Urbana Park District's 2007 Strategic Plan recommends that the current Planning and Operations Facility, located at 901 N. Broadway Avenue be replaced/relocated to provide the type of facility the UPD can depend on to serve and support all of the parks, natural areas and facilities within the District for the future. The 2007 Crystal Lake Park Master Plan further recommends that the current P&O facility be relocated away from Crystal Lake Park as way to provide more park/open space needs in the neighborhood.

After further evaluation and consideration, UPD staff identified the potential for redevelopment of existing UPD properties to support the Planning and Operations Facility needs. Thorough analysis highlighted the potential for Chief Shemauger Park to be considered for redevelopment due to:

- ❑ Site availability/owned by UPD
- ❑ No additional acquisition costs
- ❑ Site proximity to major UPD facilities,
- ❑ Park size – 13.5 acres located adjacent to the Saline Branch
- ❑ Adjacent land uses – mostly rural/unincorporated land uses
- ❑ Existing Kerr Avenue road width/street access – provides adequate access needs by all
- ❑ Infrastructure and utility access
- ❑ Positive drainage and space for required stormwater retention
- ❑ Existing condition and land cover – suitable for Planning and Operations Facility and possible park use/recreational use
- ❑ Immediate adjacency to the new Hickory Street Storage Facility; The Planning and Operations Facility can be connected via a bridge over the Saline Branch to the Hickory Street Storage Facility site to allow full use of both properties

PLANNING PROCESS-PLANNING AND OPERATIONS FACILITY

In May 2008 the Board of Commissioners authorized UPD staff to obtain more information on the proposed relocation of the Planning and Operations facility from the current Crystal Lake Park location to Chief Shemauger Park. Staff recommended that BLDD Architects, located in Champaign, IL be retained to provide a site assessment/analysis of Chief Shemauger Park.

BLDD recently provided planning, design and construction services to City of Danville – Public Works renovated facility and Champaign County – Roads and Fleet Maintenance Facility to construct a new headquarters for the county’s engineering and fleet services located at the county’s East Campus near the Brookens Administration Center. Other A/E firms were considered however, BLDD’s recent experience in both Urbana and Danville indicated recent and successful experience in working with local units of government to provide planning services.

Currently, the UPD staff is coordinating the following phases of facility planning with BLDD Architects:

- ❑ Phase I – Site Analysis for New Operations Facility
 - completed 2008
 - \$4,900 Not-to-Exceed Fee
 - Site Analysis
 - Site Suitability
 - Infrastructure – water, gas, sanitary, road, electrical, drainage
 - 3 “concepts” – determine site suitability
- ❑ Phase II – Feasibility Study for New Planning and Operations Facility –
 - in progress 2009
 - \$29,000 Not-to-Exceed Fee

- Operational Requirements
- Space Needs Program
- Alternative Conceptual Plans
- Draft Design Guideline Document
- Conceptual Cost Estimate
- Final Design Guideline Document

Additional phases will be identified and may include Design Development, Bidding/Construction Documents, Construction Management and/or other necessary services to be determined.

SITE VISITS/ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

UPD administrative and Planning and Operations staff have conducted site visits/obtained additional information from several newly constructed/renovated “operations” facilities including:

- Wheaton Park District
- Warrenville Park District
- Bolingbrook Park District
- Springfield Park District
- Champaign County – Fleet Maintenance Facility
- Champaign County Forrest Preserve District
- City of Danville – Public Works Department
- Collinsville Park District
- Peoria Park District
- City of Bloomington, IL – Parks Department
- City of Valparaiso, IN – Parks Department

UPD Planning and Operations staff will continue to work on the completion of Phase II contract work with BLDD, Berns Clancy and Associates and Maintenance Facility Consultants. Staff anticipates Phase II completion by June 2009 and recommends continuing with additional necessary phases to complete the planning process.