

WORK SESSION OF THE GREENBELT CITY COUNCIL was held on Monday, September 15, 2025, to discuss the Greenbelt Armory Site – Concept Presentation.

Mayor Jordan started the meeting at 7:30 p.m. On site Council Chambers via Zoom.

PRESENT WERE: Councilmembers Amy E. Knesel, Danielle P. McKinney, Jenni A. Pompei, Silke I. Pope, Rodney M. Roberts, Kristen L.K. Weaver, and Mayor Emmett V. Jordan.

STAFF PRESENT WERE: Josué Salmerón, City Manager; Timothy George, Assistant City Manager; John Mason, Economic Development Manager; and Bonita Anderson, City Clerk.

OTHERS PRESENT WERE: Taylora Imes-Thomas, AMAR Group; Dave Waples, Bob Rand, and Bill Orleans; and members of the online community.

Greenbelt Armory Renovation Concepts

The council held a work session to discuss plans for the Greenbelt Armory, a historic facility recently acquired by the city. Janelle Anderson of the AMAR Group presented three conceptual designs developed after public engagement sessions, including a charrette attended by approximately 100–120 residents.

Councilmember Roberts expressed concern about the small number of participants, while other members emphasized that concepts reflected broad community input and would be included in an upcoming survey for additional feedback. Council agreed to review the designs and provide comments to determine next steps.

Armory Development Schemes Review

Council reviewed three design schemes:

- Scheme 1: New 20,000+ sq. ft. EMS facility, garage for storage, and a food/beverage amenity.
- Scheme 2: Mixed-use community with 31 residential units, commercial spaces, and an amphitheater.
- Scheme 3: Municipal building with incubator space, live-work units, and a repurposed garage.

All schemes featured bike/pedestrian connections and 145–150 parking spaces.

Armory Demolition and Development Scenarios

The AMAR Group presented cost estimates:

- Scheme 1: \$12.8M base cost (\$20.3M with markup), most affordable.
- Scheme 2: Highest cost, but maximized revitalization.
- Scheme 3: Moderate cost with municipal and live-work focus.

Preservation of the existing armory was determined not feasible due to water damage, structural cracks, mold, failing electrical systems, and ADA compliance issues. Renovation costs were estimated at \$13–18M. All options included hazardous material remediation (asbestos).

Development Project Environmental Considerations

Council emphasized minimizing tree removal and preserving forested areas. Members raised questions about hall space in the firehouse; adjustments will be considered. Councilmember Knesel asked about proximity to GHI (approx. 0.5 mile). Scheme 1 was identified as the least environmentally impactful due to its compact footprint.

Armory Redevelopment Concept Designs

Council discussed incorporating taxable commercial properties, a municipal building, and outdoor amenities such as an amphitheater and trails. Phased development was considered, beginning with outdoor elements. Potential reuse of limestone panels from the existing armory was suggested. Council also discussed geothermal heating/cooling, though costs were not included in estimates.

Armory Proposed Development Plans

The proposed development plans could include up to 31 residential units across three floors, with potential for affordable, senior, or disability-focused housing. Concerns included connectivity across Greenbelt and impacts on a nearby 55+ community, prompting discussion of transportation and accessibility needs.

Site Development Concepts

Council reviewed three concepts: fire station with coffee shop, residential mixed-use, and municipal commercial. They discussed funding through DHCD and county partnerships. To expedite feedback, Council agreed to include QR codes in the resident survey linking directly to the concepts.

Municipal Site Development Concepts

Architect Dave Whaples advocated for a new 4–6 story structure as a “front door” to the city. Councilmember Knesel noted development may be a decade away, but economic benefits were emphasized by Mr. Mason, who urged inclusion of commercial, community, and residential components to attract businesses and reduce tax burden.

Development Project Phasing and Funding

Council discussed phased implementation and potential grants for demolition and environmental remediation. The session closed with appreciation for AMAR Group’s work, noting the end of their contract.

Informational Items

Updates were provided on ongoing infrastructure projects: road resurfacing, bike rack installations, extended outdoor pool season, and reopening of the indoor pool by September 29th.

The work session ended at 9:12 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Bonita Anderson
City Clerk