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The design for the exhibit hall addition at the Pueblo Convention Center carries on the same general theme as the existing center with a few new touches, including steel roof supports and balcony railing in tribute to the city's steel industry.

# LOCAL Riverwalk designs unveiled

## Community input shapes large exhibit hall, outdoor plazas

BY DENNIS DARROW  
THE PUEBLO CHIEFTAIN

Kansas City architect David Greusel on Tuesday presented the preliminary design for the expanded Pueblo Convention Center, building on the center's existing look while adding new touches such as more steel accents in tribute to Pueblo's steel industry roots.

Meanwhile, landscape architect Bob Eck of Matrix Design presented the preliminary design for the other projects planned as part of the first phase of the Historic Arkansas Riverwalk of Pueblo expansion.

The other first-phase projects include the Heritage and Gateway outdoor plazas and event space, a grass area for concerts and a children's play area and parking.

Future phases of the Riverwalk expansion will include a channel extension, a parking garage and an aquatics center and water park. The state is funding the projects using a portion of state sales tax collections from the Pueblo area.

The first-phase design plans — unveiled at a luncheon meeting of the Urban Renewal Authority of Pueblo at the convention center — followed months of idea sharing between the design teams, local planners, civic groups and convention center staff.

Jim Munch, director of the Riverwalk and leader



A site map shows how the convention center's new exhibition hall would fit with the new Heritage and Gateway plazas and outdoor event space, a grass area for concerts and a children's play area. The exhibit hall will be built to allow for expansion across Mechanic Street as additional state funding becomes available in future years.

of the Urban Renewal's project team on the expansion, praised the architects for their work.

"I think what the plans exhibit is the design teams ... have listened to the community's input and have incorporated that input. I believe the plans reflect the vision of the community," Munch said after Tuesday's meeting.

The Urban Renewal Authority will continue to take public input with the goal of finalizing the plans in coming weeks.

Greusel, owner of Convergence Design of Kansas City, previously has designed convention centers in Provo, Utah; Dubuque, Iowa; Springfield, Mo.; Peoria, Ill.; Fort Myers, Fla.; and Enid, Okla.; along with multiuse arenas and sports parks.

### Exhibit hall

Tasked with developing a large, expandable exhibit hall along with additional meeting rooms, Greusel's proposal calls for a building

that will provide 22,500 square feet of rentable space.

It would be built onto the existing convention center and extend out over the center's existing parking lot toward the Riverwalk's water channel. It also would feature a balcony overlooking the Riverwalk, a long glass entryway along the Riverwalk and an upper-level suite of meeting rooms that would overlook the exhibit hall space.

The main exhibit hall

would extend about 40 feet from floor to ceiling — a "very tall space," Greusel said — and feature movable interior walls, bathrooms and a novel "daylight collector" lighting system that will flood the interior with natural light.

The wall on the east side of the addition would get a decorative interior and exterior finish but would be kept to a simple design given the city's plan to eventu-

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ally remove the wall to add more exhibit hall space as more state funding arrives in future years, he said.

The overall design allows for a large variety of uses in the exhibit hall, including a bull riding arena for the proposed Professional Bull Riders global training school, according to Urban Renewal planners. The service entry would be built wide enough to allow for a dump truck to deliver and remove dirt from the arena, they said.

The proposed "daylight collector" lighting system would make the site particularly attractive for large, regional sports camps and competitions such as volleyball tournaments by giving the athletes a chance to perform in natural lighting conditions rather than the dimly lit gyms, they said.

## **Heritage Plaza**

Beyond the new exhibit ball, the other part of the first phase improvements seeks to make use of the remaining open space in the area between where the new exhibit hall will go and the water's edge of the water channel.

The larger Heritage Plaza

outdoor patio will extend from the exhibit hall's entryway to the water channel.

Nearby, the designers would add The Great Lawn grass concert area, similar to the Riverwalk's temporary grass concert venue that sits on a future private development site. Both the outdoor patio and The Great Lawn can be used for concerts, Eck said.

A children's adventure play area also would be added, he said.

As for parking, a parking garage will be built as part of a future phase of the Riverwalk expansion but, until then, the city plans to demolish the old police department records building to free space for a temporary parking lot. It also plans to add parking spaces where possible in other areas near the convention center.

With the preliminary designs in hand, the Urban Renewal Authority next plans to do a final cost analysis of the construction costs. The agency has set a goal of starting construction on the project by late 2015 or early 2016.

*ddarrow@chieftain.com*