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Downtown hotel plan to get first public look

Project includes conference center and parking structure

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A key piece of the city's revitalization plans for Old Town will get its first public review in just more than a week.

The city's Planning and Zoning Department will begin looking at plans for a 150-room downtown hotel and conference center on a city-owned parking lot on Remington Street between Oak and Olive streets at a neighborhood meeting Feb. 26.

The hotel, being developed by Corporex Colorado in partnership with the Downtown Development Authority, is a linchpin to revitalization plans in Old Town, bringing the area's largest block of hotel rooms, 40,000 square feet of convention space, a three-story parking garage and 70,000 square feet of Class A office space, said Chip Steiner, executive director of the DDA.

Currently, the Armstrong Hotel, 259 S. College Ave., and a few bed-and-breakfasts are the only lodging facilities in downtown.

The DDA and Corporex have been discussing plans for the hotel and conference center for almost a year.

City officials, including Steiner, City Manager Darin Atteberry and planner Joe Frank, traveled to Corporex's Kentucky headquarters last summer to tour the company's other hotels and start building relationships with corporate officers.

Company officials will be at the Feb. 26 hearing to discuss preliminary design sketches and answer questions about the layout and design.

In addition to preliminary reviews of the project, DDA and Corporex are working on the financing package to determine who pays for what, Steiner said.

"Obviously, we gotta do the financing sometime," Steiner said Friday. "Everyone avoids it because it's hard."

Until the financing is determined, Steiner is reluctant to call the hotel/conference center a done deal. "That's not to say I'm worried about it; it's just that step has to be completed on any project before it's a done deal."

How much the DDA is asked to kick in or can kick in has not been determined yet, Steiner said.

If things go according to plan, Corporex would own the hotel, the city or the DDA would own the conference center and both would share the parking structure.

Corporex has assembled a design team of OZ Architecture of Denver and Boulder, BHA Design, Northern Engineering and ELB Engineering LLC, all of Fort Collins.

The project will go to the Planning and Zoning Board twice, once in March for a modification to height standards in downtown and later in the spring or summer as the design is developed.

The hotel/conference center will also need City Council approval because the project will be built on city-owned

property.

Corporex, which built, bought and manages Embassy Suites at Denver International Airport and has an office in Denver, has been looking at roughly a 125-room hotel with 5,000 square feet of meeting space.

Parking likely will include a three-tiered parking structure with one level underground and fronted with retail shops.
