

## **Hiawatha Gardens: Answers to Your Questions**

*(Last updated Sep. 27, 2021)*

### ***What will it cost to renovate the building, install HVAC, and stabilize the area closest to the creek? Is it going to be open-ended cost?***

The Hiawatha Gardens Task Force has taken a step-by-step, deliberate approach to developing a recommendation to the Manitou Springs City Council about the future of the historic dancehall portion of the Hiawatha Gardens building. The first—and very significant step—was to determine the structural integrity of the dancehall. Now that the non-historic and unsound portions of the building have been demolished, experts have been able to conduct a close inspection of the dancehall structure and have determined it to be sound, the Task Force can proceed to the next step.

At this point, the cost of historic renovation of the building and needed site work is not yet known. The Task Force is in the process of retaining the services of an architectural/engineering firm to work with the Task Force, and ultimately the community, to develop a proposed design or designs for the building, along with cost estimates. Once the preferred design is determined, final costs will be defined. A set cost will be established and a budget developed; costs will not be open-ended.

It's important to note that the Task Force has kept City Council informed as each step is planned and accomplished, and will continue to do so throughout the process. The ultimate decision about the future of the building will be made by City Council.

### ***Will the City of Manitou Springs have to fund any of the costs, and if so, how much?***

The City of Manitou Springs owns the Hiawatha Gardens property, including the building. Since purchasing the property in 2016, the City has invested \$393,847 in City dollars and Pikes Peak Rural Transportation Authority (PPRTA) funds for building analysis, hazardous material abatement, partial demolition, building and property improvements, and costs for the mobility study and parking analysis performed in 2019.

A local resident recently initiated the prescribed and lengthy process for considering whether the Hiawatha Gardens building should be included in Manitou Springs' Historic District. If it is indeed included, the Task Force will actively pursue grant funds through the State Historic Preservation Office as well as other available historic preservation entities. The Task Force applied and was approved to receive \$41,278 in Manitou Arts, Culture, and Heritage (MACH) funding for 2021. The Task Force will continue to apply for MACH funding in the future. A capital campaign to solicit private and nonprofit donations is also planned. It's unknown at this time what role, if any, the City will play in future funding.

### ***Will the renovated building be "open air" as the original dancehall pavilion was?***

While the building design is not yet completely determined, it's anticipated that the building will be restored to its appearance in its "period of historic significance"—the 1920s to 1950s. During that time, the dancehall had half-walls with openings from the top of the half-walls to the roof line. It will be restored in a manner that accommodates year-round community use, likely with large windows, rather than be an "open air" structure, which would limit use to only portions of the year.

***What uses will the building have in the future? Will it be open to the public?***

The building will be designed for community use. The focus will be on meeting Manitou Springs' residents' needs, although specific community uses have not yet been identified. The Task Force will engage community residents in discussions about both building design and use.

***Are there other buildings planned for the site?***

A small structure or structures will likely be constructed adjacent to the dancehall building to house public restrooms as well as a mobility hub. The mobility hub will serve pedestrians, bicyclists, hikers, motorists, and transit riders and is expected to include shelter from the elements, lockers, a bicycle repair station, water refilling station, as well as other components. The Task Force is actively collaborating with the Transportation and Mobility Board to help determine mobility hub requirements. Design options and specific uses for the mobility hub are still to be determined and will be fleshed out as part of the site plan that will be drafted by the architect and reviewed by the community. The Task Force anticipates no other buildings on the site.

***The City purchased the building solely for parking; how will parking that is occupied by the building be replaced?***

Actually, when the City of Manitou Springs purchased the Hiawatha Gardens property in 2016, City Council identified parking as one, but not the only, use of the property. The City established the first Hiawatha Gardens Task Force made up of community volunteers, City staff, and two City Council members in 2017 to assess potential uses of the property. Two subsequent task forces have continued to explore possibilities for Hiawatha Gardens.

It is worth noting that the partial demolition, along with some additional site work, will potentially create approximately 35 new parking spaces.

***What is the economic benefit of restoration vs. lost parking revenue over 5, 10, 15+ years?***

The community has been pretty clear in its assessment that the disposition of the Hiawatha Gardens building should be whatever provides the greatest value to the community, not necessarily the greatest revenue to the City coffers. While it is important to provide appropriate parking for tourists and residents, increased levels of parking do not necessarily increase the well-being of the community. In numerous public engagement sessions on Hiawatha Gardens, the community has strongly suggested that restoring the historic Hiawatha Gardens building into an accessible and functional community center is of greater value to the community than the addition of a few dozen more parking spaces.

Reliable parking lot revenue is not yet available since the number of parking spaces varied throughout this summer at Hiawatha Gardens. However, parking spaces do have a certain value and once that data is available and reliable, it will be shared with the community.

***How often has the building flooded?***

Based on physical evidence in the remaining historic structure, the building appears to have never flooded. The hardwood floor is in good condition and has no signs of water damage and the buckling that would occur with flooding. There are no water lines on the existing drywall or vertical support

beams nor is there evidence of shifting or settling that might be expected after a flood. A few years ago, our community experienced a hail storm that blocked inlets and caused mud and debris from Washington Avenue to flow into the building. City staff quickly dealt with it and there were no permanent repercussions.

According to the most recent floodplain mapping, the floor of the building is one foot above the 100-year floodplain. The crawlspace has a positive slope toward the creek, so any water that has made it to the building has been carried away under the building. The stone columns under the building are not only supporting the weight of the building, but act as stilts in keeping the building off the ground and above floodwaters.

### ***What is the complete history of the building and its uses?***

On this web page, you will find a Power Point presentation prepared by local historian Deborah Harrison entitled "Hiawatha Gardens Soul of Manitou Music" (the document is titled 'history of Hiawatha Gardens') that provides a rich history of the Hiawatha Gardens property through its colorful, 100-plus-year existence. You can find this presentation at the bottom of the main webpage.

### ***Was there a cork floor in the dance hall?***

There is no evidence that there is or ever was a cork floor under the existing hardwood dancehall floor.

### ***What is the architectural significance of the trusses?***

A queen post truss has two principal rafters and two vertical [queen posts](#). The queen post truss extends the span, and combined with spliced joints in the longer members, extends the useful span for trusses of these types. As with a king post, the queen posts may be replaced with iron rods and thus called a queen rod truss.

The queen rod trusses that were utilized at Hiawatha Gardens allowed for a sizable span that enabled Hiawatha to have a large and open floor plan. Additionally, although the benefit isn't obvious at Hiawatha, queen rod trusses create larger openings in the trusses compared to king rod trusses. This enables better HVAC system access and possible usage of the top of the roof pitch, above the trusses, for additional amenities.

The trusses sit on 10-inch wooden columns that are supported by grouted stone foundations. Although these vertical beams were covered up for many years, once exposed, they were it was determined to be in great shape. The wooden columns do not show any signs of bending or warping. They are painted, which further proves that at one point in its history, the wooden columns were open and not covered up by walls.

Because of the stability of the stone columns, paired with the sturdy wooden supports, the queen rod trusses all appear to be relatively plumb and in pretty good shape, considering their age.

Regarding the grouted stone foundation columns, it is not yet known what they sit on, whether it's all bearing load or if they sit on bedrock. We do know from field observations, that there do not seem to be any signs of settlement or other foundation-related failures. Whatever the deep foundation design is, it appears that it has done its job.

### ***What happens next?***

As the Task Force continues planning, design and community engagement activities, the building must be secured from the elements, critters, and any unwanted human visitors. Some of the items that still need to be completed are:

- Ensuring the roof is water-tight;
- Making sure the walls are secured with wood sheathing and then wrapped in Tyvek;
- Verifying that the immediate areas around the building maintain positive drainage to the creek;
- Providing grading and proper drainage to the whole lot to make sure that any water that runs onto the site from rainwater is directed to the creek and not under the building;
- Providing a security camera system inside the building to detect any unwanted activity;
- Harvesting additional greenstone from the building's north side as soon as a replacement foundation system can be installed; and
- Backfilling the areas immediately adjacent to the building to reduce the trip/fall hazard that currently exists.

### ***Why should Manitou's residents put money toward a project that is intended to draw summer tourists and not serve them?***

Retention of the historic dancehall portion of the building would provide a use for the site that is primarily targeted to the Manitou Springs community. If instead, the dancehall were scraped off and replaced by more parking, that use would mostly benefit tourism and ultimately bring more vehicles to the community. Over the years, local citizens have consistently expressed a desire for fewer cars and a smaller carbon footprint. Retention of the historic dancehall would be one step toward that goal.

### ***When will Manitou make its residents' needs the priority above the unending demands of businesses hoping to attract more and more tourist dollars?***

City Council passed a resolution in 2020 calling for the transformation of the historic Hiawatha Gardens building into a site for community use and for a mobility hub. The ultimate goal for Hiawatha Gardens is to make it a place that all community residents will be able to use and enjoy.

### ***Why do you think it (the Hiawatha Gardens building) is worth saving?***

At least three professional historic preservation experts have concluded that the historic dancehall is well preserved and worthy of rehabilitation. A successful restoration of it would provide needed community meeting space and may support other city needs as well. In addition, the community engagement process that was facilitated in late 2018/early 2019 revealed that the people who participated in the process consistently preferred options that focused on retaining the Hiawatha Gardens building for some type of community use. This process was open to everyone in the community and was conducted through multiple channels, including a community open house, workshop and an online survey accessible to all.

### ***If it is such an historic building, why wasn't it included in the large historic district to begin with?***

Hiawatha Gardens was in the Historic District when the District was first drawn up. However, there was an effort to reduce the District's footprint and as a result, a sizeable portion of the properties to the east of downtown, including Hiawatha Gardens, was removed. It was not until the City purchased the property in 2015 that the first Hiawatha Gardens Task Force did research on the building and discovered that it had an extremely rich and unique history.

***Does Manitou need such a facility (Mobility Hub)? How would it benefit pedestrians? Cyclists? Autos?***

Currently, the Hiawatha Gardens site serves multiple community mobility needs as a transit hub, parking site and bicyclist center. The City's 2019 Transportation and Mobility Master Plan recommendations include establishing Hiawatha Gardens as one of three community mobility hubs to serve all modes of transportation. In addition, the adjacent and popular Creekwalk Trail used by pedestrians and cyclists is currently being improved which will help bring multi-modes of transportation to intersect at Hiawatha Gardens.

***How many parking spaces would be lost by keeping the building and at what cost?***

Approximately 20 additional parking spaces at Hiawatha Gardens will be gained through the selective demolition that will remove the exterior, non-historic building additions and possibly leave the original historic dancehall structure for community use. If the original historic dancehall structure were also demolished, it is estimated that an additional 25 parking spaces would be made available.

***Why not put the costs to restore on the ballot for a vote?***

The resolution passed by the majority of the Manitou Springs City Council in October 2020 directs that "The historically significant sections of the Hiawatha Gardens building be retained for future use as transportation center and community hub." It also directs the Hiawatha Gardens Task Force, made up of seven local residents, two City Council members, and City administrative staff, to "Investigate and implement the restoration of historic aspects of HG with the goal to establish it for community use including but not limited to a multi-modal transportation hub." The Task Force has been following City Council's direction by first gathering data regarding the feasibility of retaining the historically significant sections of the building. If the determination is made that saving the historic sections is a responsible decision, the Task Force will continue to fulfill its charge from City Council by considering and narrowing options for building use, gathering estimated costs and identifying potential funding sources. Once that is accomplished, all interested community residents will be encouraged to review and provide their ideas about a Draft Recommendation. Needed adjustments will be made before a Final Recommendation is presented to City Council. City Council members will ultimately make the decision about how to proceed.

***What ever happened to our elected representatives' charge of taking care of the city's needs before stuffing the barrel of pork projects?***

Through its October 20, 2020 resolution, City Council recognized that our community needs include a building which can serve our local residents, both for community-focused uses and for mobility purposes.

***How is the building restoration going to be paid for?***

Once partial demolition of the building is complete and a professional assessment of the dancehall's historical integrity and potential financial implications is conducted, a decision will be made about whether to retain the building. If the building is to be retained, the Task Force will research restoration costs, explore funding sources and propose a strategy. We expect grants to be made available for the historic portion of Hiawatha Gardens as a designated historic structure. Other transportation and City funds would be explored for other improvements at the site such as restrooms.

***What exactly will this 7,400 square foot building with 8-foot eaves be used for?***

If the decision is made to retain the building, the Task Force will first review the suggestions for use of the building which were recommended by local residents in 2018/2019. Options for use as well as cost data and additional information will be included in a Draft Recommendation that will be reviewed through a community engagement process. Based on the community's response to the Draft Recommendation, the Task Force will make adjustments and present a Final Recommendation to City Council, as called for in City Council's 2020 resolution.

***How is the building going to support itself?***

Once final building use(s) are determined (see above response), the Task Force will investigate and recommend to City Council avenues to make Hiawatha Gardens as self-sustaining as possible.

***If the Mobility Hub bathrooms need to be separate from Building 1, what exactly is left over for Building 1 as a Mobility Hub?***

If the decision is made to retain the building, the Task Force will consider options for use of the building. Additionally, in conjunction with the City's Transportation and Parking Board, the Task Force will determine how it can best serve the needs of a mobility hub at the Hiawatha Gardens site. These options will be reviewed by the community and then with City Council before any final decisions are made about the use of the building.

***Are we being forthright with the PPRTA?***

The City has been transparent with the Pikes Peak Rural Transportation Authority which has provided funds for transportation-related improvements to the site. The Hiawatha Gardens site is and will continue to be used for transportation. Additional other community uses may also be planned for the site.

***What are the requirements for the Police Station and City Hall expansions? Can the unknown requirements be reasonably satisfied by reconfiguring Main Hall?***

Determination of such requirements are not within the purview of the Hiawatha Gardens Task Force.