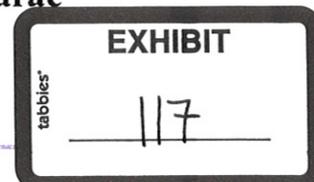


Target says it needs \$5 million from Denver or it will abandon Tamarac Square site

By Penny Parker The Denver Post The Denver Post

Posted:



Unless Target gets a \$5 million reimbursement from the city of Denver for public improvements on the empty Tamarac Square site, the discount retailer will walk away from the deal.

Tracy Huggins, head of the Denver Urban Renewal Authority, revealed the information at meeting Thursday about the project.

"If DURA doesn't do this, will Target develop on the site? No, they won't," Huggins said when recapping the meeting this week.

If the city doesn't authorize the \$5 million tax-increment financing — essentially a refund of sales tax to cover the developer's earlier costs — Tamarac owner Developers Diversified Realty in Ohio will be left with a muddy hole in the ground where Tamarac Square once sat. Neither Target Corp. nor DDR responded to requests for comment.

Under the reimbursement proposal, the TIF would not last longer than 10 years. "Target would pay up front and the TIF would reimburse them for the public improvement costs," Huggins said.

At issue is a laundry list of infrastructure improvements that are needed on the Hampden Avenue site including relocation of storm sewers, uneven topography and enhanced access off Hampden.

If approved, the \$5 million reimbursement for site improvements will not be passed down to shoppers at the proposed Target store, Huggins said.

"We look at private development where the city wants to focus growth," Huggins said about DURA's involvement. "These are site conditions that any developer coming in will have to address."

Peggy Lehmann, the Denver City Councilwoman whose district includes the Tamarac area, said she hasn't firmly decided on which side of Target's proposal she'll endorse because she wants to hear more input from constituents.

"I'm not afraid (the \$5 million) won't be paid back," Lehmann said. "I probably think it's a pretty good deal, but it's a public process and I just have to listen and hear with people say."

Lehmann said she's not aware whether the developer has a plan B if Target doesn't get TIF approval and opts out of the project.

"This is private property," she said. "The city has constraints on what it can do on that property. DDR has to take responsibility, and I'm sure having a big hole in the ground costs them lots of money."

If the city grants the TIF, the plan is for Target to spend \$20 million to develop the site for a 135,000-square-foot store.

The request from Target will go through an elaborate approval process, which includes a City Council

committee meeting March 6, a Denver Planning Board hearing with opportunity for public input on March 15, first reading of the proposal at City Council March 19 and a public hearing at City Council March 27.

