



City and County of Denver

Parks and Recreation

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MEDIA RELEASE

**Mayors break ground on park improvements
Mayor Hickenlooper and Mayor Hagos celebrate City of Axum Park**

DENVER, CO – Monday, June 28, 2010— Denver Mayor John Hickenlooper and Mayor Ato Hagos Gebrewahid of Axum, Ethiopia, along with District 8 Councilwoman Carla Madison and Denver Parks and Recreation Manager Kevin Patterson, broke ground today on more than \$620,000 in improvements at City of Axum Park, funded through the Better Denver Bond Program, Denver Capital Improvement Funding and a Park Hill Thriving Communities Grant.

Scheduled to be completed in Fall 2010, the improvements include new picnic pavilions, new park furniture, games tables, a concrete promenade, new irrigation system, space for a community garden, a new playground and a resurfaced basketball court. Improvements already completed include a new, soft surface perimeter trail and new murals on the restroom facilities.

The City of Axum Park was named in honor of Denver's ninth Sister City, established in 1995. In honor of this relationship, the park will feature an Obelisk with many similarities to one in Axum and for which the City is famous.

After the ceremony, visitors were treated to traditional Ethiopian fare provided by the restaurant Axum Inc.

Design Elements and Partners

Obelisk

This feature has been sculpted by artist Ian Glas and Integrated Design Solutions. The famous City of Axum Obelisk is 78' tall and weighs 160 tons. Hand carved with stones by the Ethiopian people, the obelisk was built in approximately the 4th century A.D and used as an elite tomb. The obelisk was taken from Axum in 1937 by the occupying Italy to celebrate Mussolini's 15th year in power. After the city of Axum negotiated with Italy for a half-century for its return, the Obelisk was finally returned in 2005 and had to be brought back in pieces due to its weight and size. The obelisk designed by Glas will incorporate many of the elements of the Obelisk of Axum, such as decorations resembling [windows](#) on all sides and a semicircular top.

Your Name in Graffiti

Your Name in Graffiti (YNIG) provided the mural on the restroom building. Working with the Urban Arts Fund and the Denver Office of Cultural Affairs, YNIG works to prevent graffiti vandalism by creating positive, well-tended and active community gathering spaces and by engaging young people in diversionary art and leadership programs.

Lead by YNIG artists Wiser, Lemon and Kanz, the mural incorporates many elements of Ethiopia, including the obelisk and the coffee ceremony. The mural features coffee imagery and sport images that are important to the Ethiopian culture. Other elements include a Denver street sign and flags that tie the two cultures and cities together.

Park Hill Thriving Communities

For the past five years, Denver Environmental Health (DEH) has worked with Park Hill residents as part of its Park Hill Thriving Communities (PHTC) grant, which was awarded to DEH from LiveWell Colorado to help people in Park Hill eat better and move more.

Denver Sister Cities

Denver Sister Cities International is a vibrant and growing organization that believes in bringing together local citizens with grassroots efforts.

Better Denver Bond Program

The City & County of Denver's Better Denver Bond Program works to preserve, renovate and create amenities that touch citizen's lives – including roads, libraries, parks, recreation centers, child care sites, hospitals, city buildings and cultural facilities. Approved by voters in 2007 and led by Mayor John Hickenlooper and civic leaders throughout the City, the bond program pumps millions of dollars in the economy, helps to preserve and create jobs and is making Denver a more attractive place to live, work and invest in the future. For more information about the Better Denver Bond Program, visit www.denvergov.org/betterdenver.

City of Axum Park (upon completion of improvements):

- Located between Martin Luther King Blvd. and Bruce Randolph St., and between Birch St. and Cherry St.
- **1:** Equipped playgrounds
- **1:** Resurfaced Basketball court
- **5:** Baseball Fields
- **2:** Picnic Shelters with Grills
- **1:** Native Garden Bed
- **1:** Concrete Promenade
- **1:** Painted Restroom
- **1:** Water fountain
- **1:** Central Plaza
- **1:** Village Green Multi-Purpose Lawn

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