



Denver City Council

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Joint Meeting of Public Amenities and Public Works Committees  
Meeting Summary

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Date: June 6, 2006      Time: 11:00 a.m.      Location: Council Conference Room

**Public Amenities**

**Members Present:**      Lehmann, Johnson, Linkhart, Robb

**Public Works**

**Members Present:**      Johnson, Lehmann, Robb

**Other Council Present:**      MacKenzie

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**1. Theatres & Arenas – SMG contract with stagehands**

Committee Action

The Committee approved a contract with SMG to provide stagehand staffing and payroll services between 7-1-06 and 12-31-08 with possible extensions. Estimated labor expenses during the term of the contract are not more than \$4 million annually.

Summary of Discussion

Jack Finlaw, Director of Theatres & Arenas, introduced John Adams of SMG and manager of the Colorado Convention Center, and Jim Taylor, President of Local 7 of the International Alliance of Theatrical and Stage Employees. Under the terms of the contract, SMG will negotiate a labor contract with Local 7 and provide stagehands as needed to Theatres & Arena's clients for labor cost plus a 29.25% markup.

SMG was selected through a Request for Proposal for stagehand staffing and payroll services for the Denver Performing Arts Complex, Coliseum, and Red Rocks Amphitheatre. Although the national search generated many inquiries, only SMG submitted a proposal. SMG has a positive relationship with Local 7; the ability to provide pre-tax pension, medical and dental benefits; and an existing safety program to manage worker compensation costs. The 29.25% administrative markup compares very favorably to Theatres & Arenas' estimated 42% administrative cost.

SMG be responsible for payroll costs, insurance, and workers' compensation. The stagehands' status under Career Service Authority has never been clearly established. They are classified as on-call non-career-status CSA employees but are not considered CSA employees for purposes of CSA Rules. They do not receive any City benefits, such as pre-tax medical premium deductions. Under the proposed system, they will receive economic benefits. The union has been involved in the process and supports the SMG proposal.

Theatres & Arenas will realize cost savings and efficiencies with a simplified accounting and reimbursement system for the cost of labor for its clients. The contract with SMG will provide a more transparent payroll process. All parties will be able to understand labor charges, and Theatres & Arenas will be fully reimbursed.

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## 2. Greenprint Denver - Sustainable Development Initiative

Beth Conover, Director, and Andrew Wallach, Assistant to the Mayor, presented updated the Committee on the Initiative, starting with the new name. "Greenprint Denver" is patterned on "Blueprint Denver", the guiding document that promotes the basic value of "sustainability". The ideal is to incorporate consideration of "triple bottom line" in making decisions and policy. This means looking at 1) economic; 2) social; and 3) environmental impacts of decisions in terms of the long term costs and benefits. The Mayor wants to make Denver a leader in this area and has taken the following steps:

- Research of others' initiatives in 2004;
- Launched Sustainable Development Initiative in April 2005;
- Undertook Water Initiative, including model public gardens, and Internal Inventory of water quality programs in summer-fall 2005;
- Started strategic planning in Oct. 2005;
- Held Green Cities Form in Nov. 2005; brought together sustainability leaders from Chicago, Oakland, Portland, Salt Lake City, and Seattle; held public forum;
- Formed Greenprint Denver Council in May 2006 (members include Councilwoman Lehmann and Robb and seven department managers; full list attached); and
- Developed, with the Greenprint Council, an Action Agenda to be announced in State of the City Address July 12.

The goals of the program are:

- Introduce and integrate sustainability as a citywide operating principle;
- Make the business case that sustainability benefits public health, and economic opportunity as well as environmental quality;
- Develop coherence in goals, policies and priorities; and
- Leave a positive legacy.

Ms. Conover noted that sustainability has become an important issue in the private business sector and in the mainstream media, citing a recent feature article ("The Business of Green") in the *New York Times* and the cover of the May 2006 issue of *Vanity Fair*. As people become aware of the triple bottom line benefits and not just the environmental aspects, there is more acceptance of the ideas.

Denver, a charter member of Cities for Climate Protection, has been an unsung hero in this area with visionary leadership. Some of the successful quiet endeavors include:

- Regional air quality successes in the 1990's;
- one of the first the Green Fleet programs;
- the 25-year-old xeric landscape initiative;
- LEED building standards;
- LED traffic lights (\$800,000 savings/year); and
- Energy Demand Side Management program.

Mr. Wallach noted that Denver Water will be moving its 2050 conservation goals up to 2011, and some City legislation will be required to implement practices to help meet the goals.

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[WWW.SustainLane.com](http://WWW.SustainLane.com) undertakes an annual study to rank the 50 largest cities in the U.S. on essential quality-of-life and economic factors that affect sustainability. In 2004, Denver ranked 10<sup>th</sup>; it move to 9<sup>th</sup> in 2005 (Portland, OR was #1). The efforts of Greenprint will be measured by some of the same metrics as used in this survey, including policies in transportation, land use, solid waste, energy, water, and air quality.

City Council leadership will be needed to help facilitate neighborhood and business input and participation and in the budget process. Council will be asked to support capital investments that will yield significant operating savings by reducing fuel and energy costs.

The Action Agenda will be announced in July, but a preview indicates it contains measures in the following areas:

- Agency shortlists of opportunities for impact and cost savings (short term);
- 5-Year Plan:
  - Energy and emissions;
  - Community and economic development;
  - Waste and material reduction;
  - Land use and transportation; and
  - Natural resource stewardship.

Councilwoman Lehmann said that the marketing will be important to the success of the initiative, adding that education in the schools is effective. Greenprint needs to develop a road show. She added that incentives are as important as regulations.

Councilwoman MacKenzie said the City should require green building standards in its own projects.

Councilwoman Johnson said scrape-offs and redevelopment are changing our “areas of stability”, and new residential development is not particularly sustainable, with features like clearstory entries and less green space on the lots. She suggested looking tax incentives for smaller homes and luxury taxes on development that ignores sustainable principles.

Councilwoman Robb said our right-of-way standards need to include provision for street trees. Historic Denver has a small house education program that could be incorporated, and some neighborhoods host educational sessions on design, remodeling and construction. Zoning amendments known as Quick Wins II actually did reduce the allowable house and increased the open space from 50% of the lot to 62.5%.

Ms. Conover’s recommended reading: [The Weather Makers: The History & Future Impact of Climate Change](#) by Tim Flannery.

*Gretchen Williams*  
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