

Moving the Pieces of the Puzzle

You know those puzzles where you push one piece out of the way in order to place another?

It all started out by pushing the old block-sized City Hall out of the way to make way for the new. Putting a new four story, 30,000 sq. ft. City Hall on the SW corner quarter of that old block left behind three quarters of a blank block to fill. The plan was to reserve the NW quarter behind the proposed new City Hall for a future Phase II, 60,000 sq. ft. City Office building so that the City would eventually occupy the whole western half of the block, leaving the eastern half open for another use. So what might one do with that other open half a block of land downtown?

Enter the Switch. The County could have the eastern half of the old City Hall block for their new County Courthouse. In trade, the City would receive the lost North Park Block and the half block of land along 7th Ave. buried for the past 50 years under the "Butterfly" Parking lot. That in turn would make possible a restored N. Park Block and expanded site for the Saturday and Farmers Markets, including the possibility of an indoor market building. So what was not to like?

From the County point of view, it made much better sense to build the new County Courthouse on the western side of the now open block so it could better continue to connect to its Public Services Building. But that would move the proposed new City Hall building further down 8th Ave. to the corner of 8th and High. The Phase II City Office Building meant to consolidate city services would then end up behind it on the corner of 7th and High St. - no ones first choice location for downtown central city services.

And how far out was the County Courthouse project – 5 years? And what were the realistic prospects that the City would ever build its Phase II office building behind the new City Hall anyway? The cost of the 30,000 sq. ft. Phase I building has already climbed from \$15 million to a controversial \$25 million. A Phase II 60,000 sq. ft. office building could be expected to cost at least twice that much or more by the time it got built.

Enter a different switch?

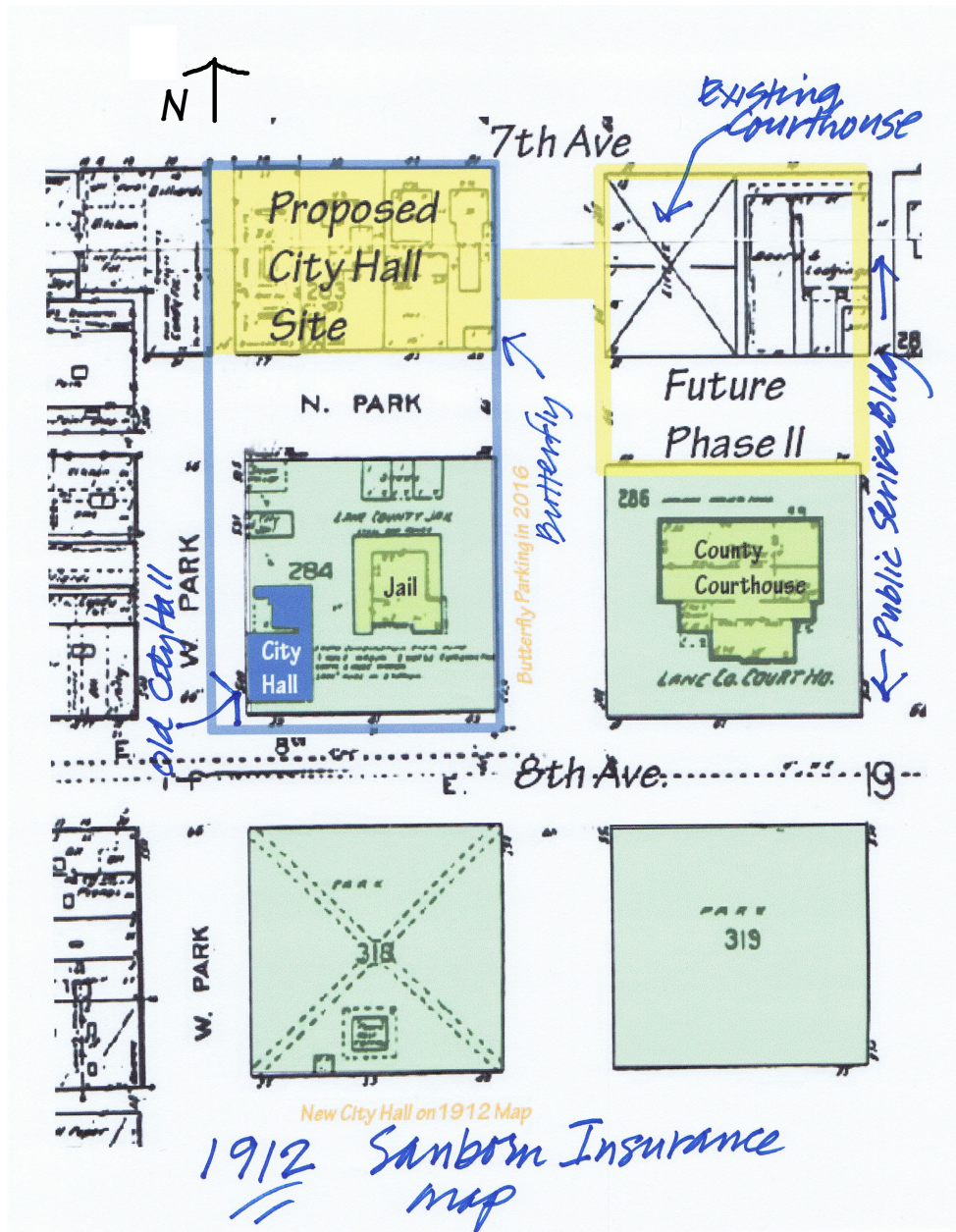
New planning has shown that a new consolidated County Courthouse will need to be 250,000 sq. ft. and that a best configuration and fit would require the entire vacated City Hall block. But where then would the new City Hall building go? Building the large new County Courthouse on the Butterfly site would be a possibility, but that would foreclose forever any N. Park Block or Market aspirations. And it would leave the new City Hall building sitting lonely on its 8th Ave corner wistfully awaiting a Phase II and some other compatible use that might never come.

The answer to the puzzle:

The County gets the whole block of the old City Hall site. The City moves its 4 story, 30,000 sq. ft. City Hall to the one-half block site at north end of the Butterfly Parking Lot along 7th Ave. And after 100 years away, the City Hall returns to its Park Block home.

The old 100,000 sq. ft. (four floors of 25,000 sq. ft.) County Courthouse is in time remodeled (and its steel frame upgraded to present day seismic requirements) for one-quarter of the cost of a new Phase II City office building. And if desired, the two city buildings could be connected by a skyway over Oak St.

The North Park Block is restored and becomes the home of a long awaited improved



market environment. For the next several years, the County plants solar collecting trees and parks on its warehoused block, and with the best of good fortune has a brand new building in place when the world comes to visit in 2021.

Because it no longer needs to be courthouse secure, the whole Oak St. side of the Public Services Building is opened up to the Park Blocks, igniting the process of turning the Park Blocks' buildings' backsides into front sides all around.

The new City Hall now sits poised above its restored Park Block and Market civic center.

And we all lived happily ever after.