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## SLC set to move on Broadway theater, housing makeovers

Projects » The Redevelopment Agency could sign contracts with developers today.

By Derek P. Jensen  
The Salt Lake Tribune

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Updated: 10/12/2009 08:23:06 PM MDT

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Salt Lake City is poised to pick teams to develop a Broadway-style theater on Main Street and overhaul low-income housing tenements on State Street.

City officials also are pondering a lease agreement for the unoccupied Rio Grande Hotel, a longtime low-income housing haven at 428 W. 300 South.

The Redevelopment Agency, which owns each of the housing properties, may sign contracts with the developers today.

The Broadway playhouse group includes internationally renowned Moshe Safdie and Associates. Safdie designed downtown's award-winning Main Library.

Funding for Mayor Ralph Becker's proposed \$80 million, 2,500-seat theater has yet to be secured.

The LaPorte Group, the design team for the State Street properties between 235 South and 257 South, would look at tax credits and grants to erect low-income studios, specialty shops, cafes and a restored Rex Theater.

RDA staffers recommend Garfield Traub Swisher Development and Hamilton Partners for the Broadway-class theater project between 100 South and 200 South and Main and Regent streets. The property is owned by development arms of the LDS Church.

The team, responsible for the Durham (N.C.) Performing Arts Center and selected over Hines Interests, would be given a six-month window to complete the purchase and present a plan. If formally approved, the group would use Okland Construction as the contractor and Salt Lake City's VCBO Architecture, in partnership with Safdie, for the design.

After six initial sites for the theater were considered, capital leaders chose the former Newspaper Agency Corp. building as the "ideal location."

For its part, LaPorte proposes to demolish the properties at 235 South and 241 South and replace them with a new, seven-story building. It would feature commercial on the first two floors, an atrium connecting to the rear alleys, and restoration of the historic Cramer House to the east, possibly into a restaurant. Besides two levels of underground parking, the plan calls for 36 units above a series of shops that "would target higher-income residents of the downtown area."

Just to the south, the tenements would be restored, complete with 78 low-income studios and a refurbished Rex Theater. LaPorte, which did a similar renovation with the Stratford Apartments in 2007, has contacted the Children's Theatre and Salt Lake Film Center about leasing the Rex. Both buildings would be seismically ungraded and meet "green" building standards.

[djensen@sltrib.com](mailto:djensen@sltrib.com)

What's next

Salt Lake City's Redevelopment Agency Board, which doubles as the City Council, will consider these projects today at City Hall, 451 S. State. The meeting begins at 3 p.m.

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