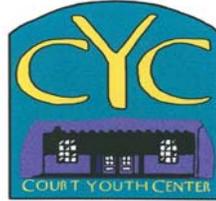


# **Proposed Court Youth Center Project**

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**402 West Court Avenue-Las Cruces, New Mexico-575.541.0145-575.527.5329 (fax)**

**Background for City Council Work Session—April 11, 2011  
Court Jr. High School Historic Property  
402 West Court Ave.**

**Summary**

The City of Las Cruces (City) and the Las Cruces Public Schools (LCPS) entered into a 25-year lease of the property known as Court Jr. High School in 1993 effective until 2018. In the lease the Mesilla Valley Youth Foundation (dba) Court Youth Center (CYC) was named as the sublessee.

LCPS is now interested in selling the property and has been in discussion with CYC to purchase the building. At the December 14, 2010 School Board meeting, the School Board requested the LCPS administration to start a dialogue with CYC to purchase the 402 Court Ave. property.

The property for sale includes the historic Court Jr. High School main building currently known as Court Youth Center; and three additional buildings that were part of the original property when the school district closed the property in 1982. These buildings include two buildings known as Crossroads on the west side and one building on the north side known as the Educational Services Building (ESC).

For two years the CYC Board of Directors and a community Ad-Hoc Building Committee have developed a large-scale arts complex strategic plan currently called the **402 Project** and includes two Phases:

--Phase I, purchase and renovation of the 4.5 Court Jr. High School Property (402 West Court Ave.) to house the CYC youth and community arts programs; Alma d'arte Charter High School (started by CYC in 2003); and the new J. P. Taylor Academy a K-8 Charter School to open in July 2011.

--Phase II, building of artist live/work spaces on two acres at 417 Court Ave. and a one-acre empty lot at Armijo and Hadley all owed by CYC. **This phase is not a topic of discussion at this point as the 3 acres are owned by CYC and are not a part of the original 1993 lease between the City and LCPS.**

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## **Request to City Council**

---City Council seek conscious to direct city administration to work in partnership with LCPS and CYC to terminate the existing 1993 lease.

--The City create a new lease with CYC for the continued use of the building as a community arts and educational complex with no financial cost to the city.

### **Background Information**

#### **Appraisal**

LCPS Appraisal, May 2010 by Hansen Real Estate Appraisals, Inc.      \$2,000,000

Assessed Value of the Property

Building	\$1,571,700
Land	182,000

#### **Property Data**

4.5454 acres or 198,000 sq. ft.

Court Youth Center	44,981 sq. ft.
Crossroads Buildings	7,571 sq. ft.
ESC Building	12,144 sq. ft.
Playing Field	133,304 sq. ft.

#### **Capital Outlay Appropriations since 1988 from City, State, Federal Sources**

City	\$ 300,000
State	2,030,000
Federal	<u>804,400</u>
TOTAL	\$3,134,400

#### **CYC and City of Las Cruces Infrastructure Investments/Operations**

This includes maintenance of the building—small repairs, gardening, utilities, etc.

City, 11 years of 35,000 from 1996 to 2007	\$ 385,000
CYC	<u>\$1,360,134</u>
Total	\$1,715,134

#### **Court Youth Center Plans for the Property**

The Court Youth Center is calling the acquisition of the property the **402 Project**, named for the address of the property.

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**The 402 Project** includes the expansion and repurposing of the historic property in the Alameda/Depot Historic Neighborhood. **The Project** is a continuation and expansion of the original arts-based philosophies and practices of the Court Youth Center when it opened in 1996.

The **Project** is a comprehensive creative economic complex for youth artists. It includes programs and spaces for arts training and workforce development; two state-authorized Charter Schools; galleries and performance spaces; film, broadcast media and digital arts studios; a certified culinary arts training program; retail space; vegetable and landscape gardens; and artist housing/living spaces. The **Project** is lead by the Mesilla Valley Youth Foundation (dba) Court Youth Center (CYC). All of the ideas are currently in place since the 1996 opening of the Court Youth Center except for the artist living/work space and the 2<sup>nd</sup> charter school.

The **Project** allows public, private, non-profit and community sectors the opportunity to solidify and expand existing partnerships with innovative opportunities in the creative economy. The **Project** develops youth entrepreneurs and youth/adult cultural industries and workers, establishes long-term economic development in arts production, arts businesses, arts in education facilities/programs/and training as well as creates festivals, events, performances, public art, and artist live/work spaces establishing an “artful environment” based in economic development through arts and youth culture in Southern New Mexico.

The **Project** has the capacity of being a one-of-a-kind complex and creative economic youth development program in New Mexico. This plan will include the development of artist/work spaces; youth artist businesses; coordination of state-wide/regional arts events; development of a state-of-the-art culinary arts training facility/program to focus on locally-grown major crops (chile/pecans/onions/native foods); developing arts businesses in Downtown for local and tourist use.

The **Project** is an example of what the National Endowment for the Arts is now calling “creative placemaking” in a study by Ann Markusen and Anne Gadwa. The research documents the economic development of programs/facilities throughout the country that brings together a number of public and private entities to strategically shape the physical and social character of a neighborhood, town, city, or region around arts and cultural activities. The authors believe, “Creative placemaking animates public and private spaces, rejuvenates structures and streetscapes, improves local business viability and public safety, and brings diverse people together to celebrate, inspire, and be inspired.”

### **Costs of the 402 Project**

#### **Phase I**

\$2,000,000 – LCPS Purchase Price (to be negotiated)  
\$ 960,098 – Renovation of ESC Building  
\$ 658,959 – Renovation of Culinary Wing and Media Arts Studio  
\$ 500,000 – Equipment (Estimate)  
\$ 500,000 – Working Capital (Estimate)

**\$4,619,057 – Total**

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### **History of the Property**

A short chronology of the Court Jr. High School property:

- 1880's, the site of the original Dona Ana County Court House
- 1936, the Court House was razed to build the only junior high in the city--Court Jr. High School, land owned by the Las Cruces Public Schools (LCPS)
- 1941, Court Jr. High opens with some 500 students
- 1982, Court Jr. High closes
- 1988, a "dream" is started to turn Court Jr. High School into a youth center for the arts
- 1996, Court Youth Center (CYC) opens in 11,000 sq. ft. of renovated space and quickly becomes a hub for youth activities in arts and physical activity. Since then CYC has been recognized nationally as a leader in innovative afterschool arts programs for children and youth.
- 2000 and 2002, CYC buys 3 acres to eventually become artist work/live spaces
- 2003, CYC submits an application to start the first charter high school in Las Cruces keeping the arts programs started by CYC, authorized by the Las Cruces Public Schools
- 2004, Alma a'arte Charter High School opens and in 2009 was reauthorized as the first state-chartered high school in the city.
- 2011, the **402 Project** starts.

CYC currently houses a 500-seat performance space, gallery spaces, dance and music studios, staging kitchen, demonstration kitchen, digital arts studio, visual arts studios, ceramics studio, administrative offices, and classrooms and multipurpose rooms. The building is important to the historic preservation of the City as many of the beautiful buildings of the late 1800's and 1900's were destroyed in the Urban Renewal process of Downtown Las Cruces.

### **About the CYC Program**

Since its inception in 1996, CYC has designed and completed arts projects and programs in the community with innovation, artistic excellence, and sustainability. The CYC vision of arts integration has created a more "artful" environment in the community, the schools, alternative spaces, and has had a major impact of training, encouraging and focusing on the excellence of youth workforce training as artists in the visual, performing, literary, and culinary arts. This is evidenced by the number of public art pieces created in the community, the afterschool programs, replication of the program by other youth programs in New Mexico and incubating an arts charter high school.

CYC offers a wide range of after school, weekends and summer programs in arts production, arts integration, arts as business, public art, arts in education, and arts work-force training. Youth, working with professional and emerging artists, arts educators and community members, increase their creative learning process, academic performance, problem solving, group interaction and life-long arts career development and training.

CYC is an outlet for creativity, growth and empowerment where youth participate in every aspect of the Center's activities, from administration to day-to-day operations. Some 49,000 children, youth, and adults participated in the programs in the 2009-2010 season.

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