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LAND SWAP WITH DEVELOPER

# Denver takes ownership of Park Hill Golf Course

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BUSINESSDEN

Denver finally owns the former Park Hill Golf Course.

The city closed on its purchase of the 155-acre property along Colorado Boulevard on Oct. 2, eight and a half months after Mayor Mike Johnston announced that the city would do a land swap with Westside Investment Partners, the course's now-former owner.

Under the deal, Denver agreed to give Westside 145 undeveloped acres south of Denver International Airport in exchange for the Park Hill property. Both properties were appraised at $12.76 million, according to the city. Denver plans to turn the property, which hasn't been used for golf since 2018 and which has been fenced off since 2023, into a park.

Westside, led by Andy Klein, bought the property for $24 million in 2019 and had hoped to develop a portion of the land and build a park on the remainder of it.

Note

In the late 1990s, however, Denver had paid a previous owner of the property $2 million to put a conservation easement on it, which required that the property remain a golf course.

Westside's efforts to have the easement lifted ultimately were stymied by Denver voters at the ballot box.

City officials previously said they hoped to lease the land from Westside before the purchase, so residents could gain access to the property this summer. But no deal was reached, and the land remained fenced off.

Laura Swartz, a spokeswoman for the city's finance department, which handles real estate deals, said in an email last week that "there was no lease as we focused our efforts on the land exchange," but she didn't give a reason for that.

Denver Parks and Recreation didn't respond to a request for comment Tuesday asking when, in light of the deal closing, the property would be accessible to the public.

Lisa Lumley, the city's director of real estate, previously said the easement would automatically go away upon Denver buying the property because the city owns the easement.

The to-be-named park will be the city's fourth-largest, behind City Park, Sloan's Lake Park and Wash Park. Design firm Sasaki has been tapped to lead a community engagement process to inform on the development of the park. A bond package going before city voters in November would earmark $70 million for park build-out.