

THE SPECTRUM

A GANNETT COMPANY

TUESDAY | 1.20.15

SOUTHERN UTAH'S INFORMATION SOURCE

THESPECTRUM.COM



LIFE

Eating certain foods help to burn body fat



SPORTS

Dixie State beats Cal Baptist to end home stand

Dr. Eric Maxwell,
Au.D., FAAA
HearingAidDoctor.com

City's plan would save Sun Bowl

Council to take first steps in tentative plan

By David DeMille
ddemille@thespectrum.com

ST. GEORGE — The construction of a new downtown elementary school could allow for continued growth at Dixie State University and the preservation of St. George's historic Dixie

Sun Bowl, according to a tentative agreement between officials with the three entities.

The St. George City Council is scheduled to take comments during its meeting Thursday on the proposed sale of six acres adjacent to the Sun Bowl to make room for the school, which

would be built where the Elks Baseball field sits on the 300 East block of 100 South.

The six-acre location is smaller than the sites typically used for new schools, but district officials have discussed saving space by building a multi-story building. That would allow for

DSU to move forward with a purchase of the nearby East Elementary School — the state has already authorized \$1.5 million for the purpose — and carve out more room to facilitate its anticipated enrollment growth.

St. George would gain the economic impact of a new school more centrally located in the downtown area, while not impacting the Sun Bowl, Mayor

Jon Pike said.

Pike said he and others have been working closely with multiple stakeholders who have an interest in the area, including groups that currently use the baseball field and nearby horse-shoe facilities. Ultimately, those facilities could be replaced elsewhere in the city.

See BOWL, Page A3

Purchase

Continued from A1

for East Elementary if the district sells the school's seven acres on 700 East to Dixie State, which is located on a landlocked 100 acres.

Multiple options have been discussed for moving the Sun Bowl, which includes the Lions' annual Dixie Roundup Rodeo, he said.

Among the potential options: Leaving the Sun Bowl where it is and making the new East Elementary a three-story building that would have a smaller footprint; moving the Sun Bowl east of the Dixie Center, which would expose it to potential seasonal flooding; hosting the rodeo at the Washington County Regional Park's fair grounds, which the Lions generally oppose; and hosting the rodeo at Dixie State's Hansen Stadium, which would require shutting down the school's football for a few weeks to truck dirt into the makeshift "arena."

Bergeson said he also likes discussion of a potential second DSU stadium east of Hansen Stadium, which could provide a venue for high school tournaments.

"Any and all of these things have been discussed," he said. "Something needs to happen, and it will. We just don't know what it will look like yet."

Change on the horizon

The district would like to sell East Elementary, Bergeson said, because the building is aging, and district officials don't want to put money into revitalizing it.

DSU Executive Director of Campus Services Sherry Reusch, the chairwoman of the campus master plan, said the university would use the East Elementary building as it is without trying to tear it down any-



Dixie State University President Stephen Nadauld, left, discusses plans for campus development Friday. KEVIN JENKINS / THE SPECTRUM & DAILY NEWS

time soon, however.

"It still has some useful life. The school district took good care of it," she said. "I imagine we'll use it as classrooms and offices."

Nadauld said the university and school district haven't signed a contract for the East Elementary site yet, and negotiations are still in the very early stages, but an appraisal of the site was done a couple of years ago, which established the value at \$1.5 million.

Dixie State received the first \$500,000 toward the purchase during last year's legislative session. The money will remain in escrow until the university is ready to use it.

Coping with growth

University officials hope the acquisition would help it meet the demands of a growing institution and expectations for an increase in student population.

Although the school recorded a 5.5 percent decline in student head count this year, Nadauld called attention to increasing recruitment in

other countries and a doubling in the number of student applications, with more than 1,100 from California alone, where the costs of living and education are higher.

"They won't all come, obviously. We'll have a lower yield," Nadauld said. "(But) that just boggles my mind to think of where we are compared with just a couple of years ago."

"They're going to need a place to go," St. George Mayor Jon Pike said. "We're trying to look at the combined Sun Bowl site, with the ball field, the horse shoe pits and Vernon Worthen Park and the road (200 South) between them ... (to see) how things could fit and be rearranged."

Pike said the city already had been contemplating some type of new arrangement for the Vernon Worthen playground, which is at the edge of park property adjacent to the heavily traveled 400 East.

Although the city has not yet reached the point of contracting with a design company, it has been contemplating a new master plan for the site.

"We don't want to totally change Vernon Worthen Park. But if there's a school on that parcel, where do you want the driveway? Where do you want the kids? First South is only going to get busier," he said.

Bergeson said nothing has been finalized yet.

"But we're all very interested in something happening," Bergeson said.

"Now that the state has funded (the East Elementary acquisition), ... we're all going to be motivated to figure this thing out," Pike said. "But there's really not a hurry to make these changes. For the next few years, the fireworks stay where they are (at the Sun Bowl), and the rodeo stays where it is. We want to be very thoughtful about this."

Follow Kevin Jenkins on Twitter, @SpectrumJenkins.