# New Center Council overhauls park into performance venue

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New Center Council is well underway with a project that includes improving the pocket park at Second and West Grand Boulevard, as well as acquiring and upgrading the neighboring building and parking lot at 2660 W. Grand Blvd.

New Center Park is being outfitted as a performance venue with a stage, conservatory building for concessions, lighting, landscaping and wrought iron fencing. The Boulevard West Building is being improved with a new facade and signage as well as interior renovations; existing tenants will remain and the Council's operations will relocate into the building in 2010.

This project has been in the works for about five years, estimates New Center Council president Michael Solaka. The organization's goal, he says, is to "create some cultural events, some special events -- and to generate some revenue." He envisions regular concerts and movie screenings that will enhance New Center's livability.

Phase One is being funded by United Way Nonprofit Facilities Center, The Kresge Foundation, Detroit LISC and the State of Michigan's Cool Cities program. The project architect is Steven C. Flum Inc.

Phase two of improvements to New Center Park will include a roof over the stage, and sound, lighting and projection equipment. New Center Council is finalizing details of this phase and will begin raising funds shortly.

Source: Michael Solaka, NCC
Writer: Kelli B. Kavanaugh

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