

**STUDY SESSION NOTES
CITY OF WHEAT RIDGE, COLORADO**

December 17, 2012

Mayor DiTullio called the Study Session to order at 6:29 p.m. Council members present: Davis Reinhart, Bud Starker, Joyce Jay, Kristi Davis, Mike Stites, George Pond, Tracy Langworthy, and Joseph DeMott.

Also present: City Clerk, Janelle Shaver; Treasurer, Larry Schulz; City Attorney, Jerry Dahl; City Manager, Patrick Goff; Public Works Director, Tim Paranto; guests and an interested citizen

Public Comment: none

1. Kipling PEL Update – CDOT

Danny Herman, area planning director for the Colorado Department of Transportation (CDOT) was on hand to update Council on the status of the ongoing Planning Environmental Linkage (PEL) Study for improvements of the I-70/Kipling Street Interchange. He quickly went through a power point presentation on the reasons for the study, the timeline for the process, and diagrams of selected alternatives.

The main goals in the study are to reduce congestion, optimize operations, improve safety, and accommodate multi-modal transportation. Doing this study now will minimize duplication of work in later stages and be a collaborative effort to get stakeholders involved. There have been select stakeholder focus groups of multi-modal and resident/business owners; discussions with emergency service providers and other groups that have requested it, such as LiveWell Wheat Ridge; and with Wheat Ridge staff. Public outreach meetings have been well attended and doubled in size (to over 75) for the second one.

There were 16 alternatives considered; 11 were eliminated. The 5 options are::

- Do nothing (Required to be brought forward as an option)
- Single Point Urban Interchange (SPUI): Improves vehicular operations, has less community and right-of-way (ROW) impacts, is a familiar design. Downside: because the bridge has to be widened and more of I-70 needs to be rebuilt, it's harder to do in phases. Some little pieces can be done separately, but the main interchange has to be done in one shot.
- Partial Cloverleaf with Loops SW and NE Quadrants: Has the best vehicular operations; has a lot of free flow ramp crossings for pedestrians and bicycles; has a higher ROW impact; provides opportunities for construction in phases, but because of the significant purchase of private property would be more expensive. The free flow movement onto the loops might be difficult; Jefferson County's bike plan has bike lanes on Kipling in the long term plan so that's

included in this design. They are also looking at multi-modal paths on one or both sides. This presents challenges for bicycles and pedestrians and was not favored by the multi-modal focus groups because of all the free flow movements that would have to be navigated.

- Traditional Diamond Interchange: What we have now is a Tight Diamond Interchange. This design improves that by lengthening the ramps and putting the signals a little further apart. There would be some impact to area businesses due to the right-in/right-out design at frontage roads; as designed it would not accommodate full movements. This choice does allow for construction in phases and has a smaller footprint. The south frontage road would probably need to be relocated. The right-in/right-out movements there and at 49th would improve operations, but limit access.
- Button Hook Ramps: Improves vehicular operations, but difficult for driver expectancy. It was the least favorite choice at the public meeting because it looks confusing. It has a higher ROW impact due to space needs for the Button Hooks, but can be constructed in phases. The current design includes roundabouts west of the Kipling lights on the south frontage road and also on 49th Ave, but they are looking at T-intersections or other alternatives.

Preliminary recommendations will be in January; the full report and recommendations will be in March. We've had a very good collaborative approach. The technical team includes CDOT, RTD, DRCOG, Jefferson County, Wheat Ridge, and Arvada. ~ The next step will be 12-24 months to identify funding.

During discussion:

Mr. Herman indicated that the public response has been good and they've provided good feedback. Businesses are supportive of improving the interchange. Their main concern is access, but even the businesses that will lose ROW said to take their whole property if necessary -- just don't leave them with a business that has no access.

Mr. Paranto indicated that staff wants to protect the corridor for its financial importance to the City and stimulate redevelopment. For those reasons staff is leaning towards support of the SPUI or the Diamond.

Mr. Paranto explained that the span of I-70 over Kipling will need to be lengthened (to accommodate the widening of Kipling), and at the same time I-70 will be widened.

Mr. Paranto addressed the corner improvements the City has done. Staff knew those would all have to be removed eventually, so they were designed with that in mind. The new large sign was designed so it could be relocated and many of the trees will be able to be moved as well.

Mr. Herman explained that peak hour queues on westbound I-70 were not the only factor considered. Besides operational efficiency, other factors included access, safety, and multi-modal connections to allow bicycle/pedestrian use – especially with the RTD station coming in not too far away.

2. Staff Report(s) none

3. Design for entry of City Hall Plaza

Tim Paranto went through the design proposal for the City Hall entry plaza. Money has been budgeted for this project. He asked if Council likes this plan and wants staff to proceed and start spending money on design work. The design presented includes a complete demo of the existing plaza (indicated by the red line in the diagram), a canopy over the front entrance and the glass conference room, a canopy to collect melted snow, demolition of all concrete indicated and replacement with pavers or colored concrete, benches and table areas for visitors or employees, a trellis over the table area, and scattered pots for color and foliage.

Mr. Starker suggested looking at extending the canopy further out to provide architectural integrity and character as the entrance to our City Hall. Mr. Paranto said they could look at that to make a more inviting space and more of a buffer to the weather barrier doors.

There was also some discussion of the signage at the City Hall property, including the previous plan to have a sign on Wadsworth and replacing the sign on 29th to include the new logo. That will be discussed in March.

Mike Stites received a consensus to move forward with the entry design.

4. Televising City Council Study Sessions on Channel 8

The City's videography contractor will charge a discounted rate of \$350 per meeting. (The normal rate is \$425.) For 2 study sessions a month a supplementary budget appropriation of \$8,400 would be needed.

Kristi Davis opened the discussion. She thinks most of their honest discussion happens at study sessions. Issues that came up during discussion included:

- the difficulty replaying a council meeting video on a home computer,
- hearing just the audio recording gives a better sense of the discussion,
- the cost,
- more of the discussion and debate should happen on the dais,
- we getting mechanical at meetings because we've heard it all already and all the questions have been asked and answered
- we aren't hiding anything, but worries that study sessions will get longer if they have to have more lengthy discussions,
- some long term topics need to be aired publicly,
- some of the presentations are worthy of being televised to the public,
- some of the consensus reached at study sessions are like a first reading and should be debated on the dais at a regular meeting,

- does the average public really care, or do they just want us to make the decisions for them?,
- the kind of discussion we have at a study session will be different than the discussion we have on the dais
- staff will look into the buffering issue,
- PEG fees could be used to address the buffering issues,
- there needs to be some research into the technology necessary to create a good video, and make sure people can see the graphics on the screen
- a new camera system is a few months in the future; current equipment will not produce a very quality production.

For consensus to televise a couple of study sessions and look into the buffering problem there was a 4-4 tie. The mayor broke the tie in favor. ~ Mr. Pond suggested Council be diligent about what discussions happen at study sessions and what discussions happen at meetings.

5. Discussion of Renewal Wheat Ridge Appointments

The Mayor reported that he will be reappointing Walt Petit. The other appointment is for someone who doesn't want to be reappointed. Mrs. Langworthy said that Council has additional candidates to choose from [in these mayoral appointments] and she prefers that a resident be appointed over a business owner. The Mayor said he looks at the overall knowledge and experience of a candidate. Mr. Reinhart and Mr. DeMott received a consensus to move this discussion to the dais when the ratifications come forward.

6. Discussion of term limits for Board and Commissions

Following the discussion during agenda item 4, it was agreed to have this discussion at a regular council meeting. At that time the vote will determine if the City Attorney should proceed with writing legislation to accomplish it.

7. Elected Officials' Report(s)

Kristi Davis brought up the study session minutes. She thinks that the minutes should reflect the discussions. The last discussion notes didn't reflect that we'd talked about educating people better on TIF's and that a point had been made that this was the first time a TIF was ever done on a residential project. She thinks those are valid points and should be in the minutes. ~ Joyce Jay said that it didn't have to be in great detail, but that all the ideas and concepts of different people should be included. Bullet points would be enough. ~ Mr. Dahl spoke on the art of creating minutes. The challenge is to prepare less than a transcript and yet include all the main points and participants. The level of detail is a matter of individual style and policy from jurisdiction to jurisdiction. It is appropriate for you to share with the Clerk the level of detail you need. ~ Ms. Davis offered to provide addendums to the minutes. She prepares medical executive minutes so she knows there's a lot to take down, but she thinks it's good to summarize different viewpoints. ~ Mr. Dahl said councilmembers can inform the Clerk if they think something is missing in a draft. Meeting minutes

can be approved with changes. Study session notes are less formal, but the same relationship applies. He cautioned Council not to get too deep in the details that appear in the minutes and notes.

Bud Starker reflected on the minutes of the Dec. 3 study session at which he was not in attendance. His concern is the discussion and subsequent emails on the efficacy of City Council members applying for financial abatement on projects in the city. It sounded like it was a personal discussion and he took umbrage with that. We're all citizens and as Councilpersons and in our professional lives we work to advance the goals of the City. He hopes the project he's developing will be good for the City. He was awarded some grants and development assistance and he does not think it's a conflict of interest. He feels it is the wise stewardship the Council undertakes with regards to economic development that would direct them to look at the project, not the people or personalities involved, when making these decisions.

Joe DeMott initiated a discussion about what is needed to bring forward a rezoning under elected officials matters. Specifically, he knows of a high-end auto restoration business, operating in Arvada for 24 years, which wants to relocate to Wheat Ridge. The property the owner wants to buy has been in foreclosure for 17 months. The deal is time sensitive, but he was told by the City it would need to be rezoned and would take 5-6 months. Joe explained (and asked questions about) the rezoning options necessary to allow this type of use – at this location and elsewhere in our commercial corridors. ~ Mr. Dahl explained it would be a code change by ordinance that could be accomplished by sometime in February. ~ Patrick said this would be a major change in the zoning ordinance, and staff would like to discuss that with Council. It was suggested that this is an appropriate discussion for a study session. Mr. DeMott received consensus to put this on the Jan. 7 study session.

Mayor DiTullio addressed some earlier comments. He thinks all the projects that are coming forward in the City are good – whether public or private. All he is concerned about is proper disclosure on the dais so that the public knows. The disclosure process for elected officials is pretty detailed [in the Charter]. Unfortunately when you get elected you become a second class citizen in many ways. The Mayor referenced an email he sent to Council outlining the disclosure process and conflict of interest. Mr. Dahl will be addressing all that in his memo. Mr. Dahl also confirmed that you can't just say you're recusing yourself and walk off the dais. You have to explain why to the public and the Council.

Meeting adjourned at 8:28 PM.



Janelle Shaver, City Clerk