

STUDY SESSION NOTES
CITY OF WHEAT RIDGE, COLORADO
City Council Chambers 7500 W. 29th Avenue
June 3, 2019

Mayor Bud Starker called the Study Session to order at 6:30 p.m.

Council members present: Amanda Weaver, George Pond, Janeece Hoppe, David Kueter, Zachary Urban, Larry Mathews, and Leah Dozeman

Absent: Kristi Davis (excused)

Also present: City Clerk, Janelle Shaver; City Manager, Patrick Goff; Community Development Director, Ken Johnstone; guests and interested citizens.

Citizen Comment on Agenda Items

Ashley Holland (WR), a representative of Localworks, thanked the NRS steering committee and consultants for their work. Localworks is excited to partner with the City and she looks forward to getting involved to help make Wheat Ridge a vibrant city

Jesse Hill (WR) appreciates the work of the NRS, but unfortunately it punts the ADU issue back to the Council. There are 100's of them in the city. Time goes on and things change. He spoke in support of ADU's. People want to know if they will be allowed to keep/build them. He thinks Council only needs to modify the Code to remove the prohibition. He urged Council to make a decision now.

Celeste Tanner (WR) appreciates the robust analysis of the NRS. She would like more focus on ADU's, and she think we should focus on the 38th and 44th Ave corridors.

Christine Disney (WR) was on the steering committee and attended all the events. In gathering data they were careful to talk to as many people as possible to get a good sense of what people want. She feels the report accurately reflects community opinion. Her only disappointment is the two year listening tour. She doesn't think we should put off decisions for two years; we will miss opportunities. She advocated for putting multi-family housing on the corridors, and letting neighborhoods be a little more involved.

Kathleen Martel (WR) was a co-chair of NRS committee. It was enlightening and educational - a lot of fun and a lot of work. She wants Council to know they reached out in a variety of ways to different groups. She hopes there is distinction between corridors and neighborhoods, and that we use the opportunities that are there. She thanked everyone involved.

Karin Jenny (WR) has concerns about zoning. She hopes the NRS study will provide good guidance. It is aimed at progress and change. Her concern is not to wait and defer making decisions.

Rachel Hultin (WR) was a co-chair of NRS committee. She is excited about the process that took place. Things thought to be a big problem turned out to be not so big. The process included gathering data and having conversations. She thinks it is a good representation of what people want and it identifies strengths and vision. We also don't want to lose our quirkiness.

1. Neighborhood Revitalization Strategy (NRS) Update ~ Ken Johnstone

Mr. Goff opened the Update by reminding Council this document was originally adopted in 2005, and its findings and recommendations were adopted as guiding principles for revitalizing the City over the last 14 years. This report is different.

Eric Ameigh and Thomas Eddington of czb presented a detailed report on the NRS.

Mr. Ameigh began with introductory remarks, acknowledgements and thanks to the committee and others who participated. A power point presentation followed.

Important framing considerations for the NRS report included

1. This is a strategy that finite resources can be used to achieve.
2. It is not a comprehensive solution to every problem.
3. The NRS is biased toward implementation of what is realistic and what is achievable in 10 years.
4. NRS was highly responsive to community sentiment; it is less about big vision and more about incremental improvement.
5. It is not a pure consultant product; it reflects the restrained and practical mood of the community.

How this report should be used:

- It is a kit of useful parts that focuses on getting some things done.
 - It is organized in five parts
 - 1) Background and Process
 - 2) Wheat Ridge Numbers
 - 3) Neighborhoods,
 - 4) Priorities for Improvement,
 - 5) Summary of Recommendations
- 1) Background and process tells what the committee did (e.g. community meetings, open houses, online survey).
 - 2) Wheat Ridge by the Numbers

Key findings: Residents are largely satisfied, market has been strengthening, and resulting real estate investment has implications.

Implications: 1) Change brings opportunity and discomfort, 2) Buildings need reinvestment (people are upgrading their properties.)
 - 3) Wheat Ridge Neighborhoods

- Eight neighborhoods were outlined: East WR, Leppla Manor/Hopper Hollow, Bel Aire, Anderson Park, Lutheran/Crown Hill, Rolling Hills/Paramount Park, Applewood, and Fruitdale
- Data is critical for understanding neighborhood change. Neighborhood profiles include turnover rate, land value vs improved value, code violations, major permits, permit values

4) Priorities for Neighborhood Improvement

- The main strategic challenge is converting a set of identified issues into a workable implementation plan.
- Summary of priorities
 - Neighborhood engagement as change management
 - Investing in selected primary corridors
 - De-prioritize and table accessory dwelling units
 - City service enhancements to facilitate investment
- Building resident capacity to manage neighborhood change
 - Change = both opportunity and discomfort
 - Building capacity to manage change is imperative
 - *Manage change, don't be managed by change*
 - Neighborhood planning is a change management tool'
 - Plan *with* neighborhoods.
- Listening is the first step in planning for Wheat Ridge neighborhoods
 - Suggest a Citywide neighborhood listening tour'
 - Get a better understand what matters to neighborhood residents
 - Allow neighbors to "define the problem"
 - Engage at the neighborhood level
 - Neighborhood planning later if appropriate
 - Hire two professionals to implement engagement and follow-on activities
- There is strong support for
 - Small town life,
 - Neighborhood initiatives uniquely tailored to individual neighborhoods,
 - A need to engage neighborhoods on planning and development issues that directly affect them
 - Willingness to participate in a new neighborhood organization if they don't already have one.
- Engagement requires knowledge of the process
 - There should be educational opportunities for residents,
 - Planning/development has different steps with different levels of specificity
 - Each part of the process requires input in different ways
- Investing in primary corridors is a city-wide issue. The capacity of a 10 year horizon dictates not all will be addressed. Secondary corridors matter, but have smaller scope. Should be handled by neighborhood planning efforts.

Discussion occurred on the things presented so far.

- When we engage with neighborhoods we do have to listen to them.
- Shouldn't councilmembers be the listeners? Mr. Ameigh recommends both the engagement of councilmembers and professional staff.
- Thought the NRS study was the listening tour. We need to address some things *now*.
- We should be able to listen and move forward at the same time.
- Neighborhood engagement lacks tangible results. It presumes every citizen is paying attention.
- Any guidelines where this has worked or priorities for boundaries? It is not a science. Cautions against having too many neighborhoods to manage.

Accessory Dwelling Units

40% support it, 49% say it depends (80% support occupancy by a family member; only 10% support it as a rental unit), and 11% say no.

- Not a hot topic for most people
- A niche housing product at best
- Source of opposition is potential non-family rental income
- No practical regulatory or enforcement mechanisms
- Suggest to maintain status quo; table discussion for at least two years
- Monitor developments on other cities.

There was discussion about how to proceed regarding ADU's.

Mr. Ameigh addressed whether the most important issues have been addressed or if there are still issues to tackle.

Mr. Ameigh addressed the status of primary corridors and commercial nodes

- 38th Ave has positive trend but unfinished streetscape; continue to monitor; do a bonding issue 7-8 years from now
- Wadsworth is in final planning stages
- 44th Ave issues are behind the curb; focus on Wads to Youngf first; corridor plan is budgeted; should supersede the Fruitdale Plan; 44th east of Wads in the future
- Kipling has high interest, but depends on CDOT timing
- Youngfield has less interest; Clear Creek Crossing may change things
- Secondary corridors matter, but are more residential; focus should be on commercial corridors

Neighborhood scale retail opportunities

- Neighborhood gathering places
- Provides a chance to walk or bike instead of drive'
- Opportunity for small and local instead of chain
- Challenges include market, location, access, density
- Tools are mostly in place

- Stay patient, opportunistic and “open for business”
- Explore tweaks to zoning if necessary
- Support additional residential development and density where it makes sense
- Use neighborhood engagement and planning to determine neighborhood desires and support zoning and incentive efforts

Facilitating Investment through Customer Service

- 90% of residential and commercial structures built before 1980; updates needed
- Double down on getting customer feedback in a structured way
- Explore different approaches (e.g. case management or rehab specialist/liaison)
- Consider existing conditions when updating codes (flexibility while remaining safe)

Discussion followed.

There was consensus to accept the report and use the information to guide further discussion and decision making. Formal adoption of the report will follow.

Mayor Starker declared a break at 8:57. The meeting resumed at 9:05

2. Ridgetop Village Metropolitan District Service Plan ~ Patrick Goff

Russell Dykstra from Spencer Fane LLC, the legal representative of Upham Partners, gave a short power point presentation on the formation of the metro district.

The public improvements will include

- Sanitation and Storm Drainage
- Water
- Streets
- Traffic Control and Transportation
- Television Relay and Translation
- Mosquito Control
- Covenant Enforcement
- Security Services
- Legal Powers

Probable Costs

Onsite improvements are estimated to be \$1,580,400.

Offsite improvements are estimated to be \$1,730,400.

Maximum mill levies

53.736 mills for debt service, plus

10.000 mills for operation and maintenance

Maximum Debt Issuance: \$2,000,000

Impact on \$500,000 Home: \$3,087/year total or \$257/month

Questions and discussion followed.

There was consensus to move this forward to the hearing date set for June 24.

3. Staff Reports There were none.

4. Elected Official Reports

David Kueter reminded everyone of the Criterion and Brewfest on Sunday.

Leah Dozeman learned tonight that wildlife rehabilitation centers are not allowed in Wheat Ridge. She would like those organizations to be able to come and provide services after hours.


Zach Urban In the shadow of the recent shooting in Virginia Beach, he thanked all the City employees for their dedicated service and wants them to know they are appreciated. Mayor Starker noted that security enhancements are in progress.

Mayor Starker invited the public to join him for coffee and cookies and some good conversation at Vinnola's this Saturday at 9:00am.


ADJOURNMENT

The Study Session adjourned at 9:23pm.

APPROVED BY CITY COUNCIL ON JULY 22, 2019



Janelle Shaver, City Clerk



Janece Hoppe, Mayor Pro Tem