

**STUDY SESSION NOTES**  
**CITY OF WHEAT RIDGE, COLORADO**  
**Virtual Meeting**  
**December 7, 2020**

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

This meeting was conducted as a VIRTUAL MEETING.

No members of the Council or City staff were physically present at the Municipal building for this meeting; the public did not attend in person.

Mayor Starker welcomed the Council, other elected officials, staff and interested citizens.

The Mayor also explained the virtual meeting format, how citizens will have the opportunity to be heard, and the procedures and policies to be followed.

Council members present: Amanda Weaver, Judy Hutchinson, Zach Urban, Rachel Hultin, Korey Stites, Janeece Hoppe, Leah Dozeman, Valerie Nosler Beck.

Also present: City Attorney Jerry Dahl; City Clerk, Steve Kirkpatrick; City Manager Patrick Goff; Community Development Director, Ken Johnstone; Director of Public Works, Greg Knudson; Mark Westburg, Senior Planner; Sara Spaulding, PIO; Assistant to the City Manager, Marianne Schilling; Russ Higgins, Construction Manager, Associate Professor in the School of Education at Metropolitan State University of Denver, Dr. Rosemarie Allen; Kevin Kullman, Kate Binning and Stephen McQuilkin, from AECOM, and other guests and interested citizens.

Citizen Comment on Agenda Items –

No one came forward to comment.

**Note about Wheat Ridge Speaks:**

Citizens may visit the Wheat Ridge Speaks website and enter written comments of up to 1,000 words on any Council agenda item. *The deadline for citizens to submit comments is 12:00 Noon Mountain Time on the day of a Council session* so that Council members, other elected officials and City Staff have time to review the comments before the meeting on Monday evening.

The City Clerk's Office transcribes those Wheat Ridge Speaks comments into these minutes, placing each comment along with the record for that agenda item, including items that include a public hearing (verbatim, if the comments do not contain lascivious language or unlawful hate speech).

No comments appeared in Wheat Ridge Speaks for this Council session.

## **1. City Council Equity and Implicit Bias Training**

Discussion began at 6:01 pm, approximately 0:06 minutes into the recording of the session.

### **Issue**

During the September 21 study session, City Council provided consensus to move forward with the following action items that were brought to Council in June 2020 by Wheat Ridge for Equity:

1. Frequent and ongoing equity and bias training for city staff and elected officials in order to understand and recognize patterns of thinking that perpetuate discrimination and mitigate personal biases.
2. Creation of an Equity Task Force by the City Council to include people marginalized by oppression, such as people who are Black, Indigenous, and People of Color, LGBTQ, immigrants, differently abled, people of non-Christian faiths, young people, and elders in our community. Membership of this Task Force must represent diverse and multiple perspectives so as not to deny or minimize our neighbors' lived experiences.
3. The Equity Task Force will carry out a thorough review of City policies, services, and ordinances, as well as inequities in community systems and departments and report recommendations, including ways in which success will be measured toward becoming a more inclusive and responsive community.

### **Staff reports**

Mr. Goff introduced Ms. Schilling who spoke on this item, and introduced Dr. Rosemarie Allen, currently an Associate Professor in the School of Education at Metropolitan State University of Denver, who facilitated the training.

Key topics of the training included implicit biases, microaggressions and systemic racism.

### **Councilmembers had questions and comments:**

Councilmembers and the Mayor thanked Dr. Allen for her presentation and her ongoing work.

(Dr. Allen's presentation is available to the public in the recording of this Council session.)

## **2. Wadsworth construction management**

Discussion began at 8:15 pm, approximately 1:45 hours into the recording of the session.

## **Issue**

Staff provided City Council with an update on the Improve Wadsworth Project on September 21, 2020 including final estimated projects costs, construction phasing and status of right-of-way acquisitions. On October 12, 2020, City Council approved resolutions authorizing the use of eminent domain to acquire necessary rights-of-way and approving an amendment to the contract with the Colorado Department of Transportation (CDOT) to administer the federal funding for the Project. Councilmembers Urban and Hoppe requested that staff provide an update at a future study session on CDOT's role in construction management.

## **Staff reports**

Public Works Director Greg Knudson gave some brief background on Wadsworth Boulevard, State Highway 121, which links the City of Wheat Ridge to the neighboring cities of Arvada and Lakewood. The Denver Regional Council of Governments (DRCOG) designates Wadsworth a major regional arterial and a future enhanced transit corridor.

The City, in cooperation with CDOT, has explored the future of the Wadsworth corridor in numerous plans, including the Wadsworth Corridor Subarea Plan (2007), Envision Wheat Ridge Comprehensive Plan (2009), the Wadsworth Planning and Environmental Linkages (PEL) Study (2015) and the Wadsworth Boulevard Widening Project Environmental Assessment (2019).

Although Wadsworth is designated a state highway and maintained by CDOT, this project is considered a local agency sponsored project which has been and will continue to be managed by the City and its consultant partners.

Additional construction management and project oversight will be in partnership with AECOM, the current construction management company for the City's 2E projects. AECOM is the world's premier infrastructure firm, delivering professional services throughout the lifecycle of projects with a diverse group of professional planners, designers, engineers, consultants and construction managers.

Mr. Stephen McQuilken and Mr. Kevin Kullman presented AECOM's construction management qualifications along with the anticipated scope of work for the Improve Wadsworth Project.

## **Councilmembers had questions and comments:**

Council asked detailed questions about coordination with utilities on the project.

Staff and guests gave answers to the Council's questions.

The Mayor and Council also asked about the scheduling and keeping things on track with DRCOG.

**3. Staff Report(s)**

Discussion began at 9:02 pm, approximately 2:32 hours into the session.

Nothing new from staff this evening.

**4. Elected Officials' Report(s)**

Councilmember Hultin thanked staff for their quick turn around on the third phase of the Business Revitalization Program.

Councilmember Hutchinson remembered that today Pearl Harbor Day.

Councilmember Weaver thanked District II for their hospitality with her goats and explained that the herd is in safekeeping.

Councilmember Urban updated Council on the applications for the Business Stabilization Program.

City Treasurer Miller discussed the sales tax deferral program ongoing for Wheat Ridge businesses.

Mayor Starker thanked staff for their preparation and participation. Saturday, December 13 at 9 AM is the next Coffee with the Mayor. He also thanked Dr. Allen.

The Mayor reminded all to wear a mask, watch social distancing and wash our hands.

**ADJOURNMENT**

The Study Session adjourned at 9:06 pm.

APPROVED BY CITY COUNCIL ON December 14, 2020.

  
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Steve Kirkpatrick, City Clerk

  
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Janeece Hoppe, Mayor Pro Tem