

**STUDY SESSION NOTES  
CITY OF WHEAT RIDGE, COLORADO  
Hybrid - Virtual Meeting**

**December 6, 2021**

Mayor Bud Starker called the Study Session to order at 6:31 p.m.

This meeting was conducted both as a virtual meeting and hybrid, where some members of the Council or City staff were physically present at the Municipal building, and some members of the public attended in person as well. All eight members of Council were present in Council Chambers for this session.

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

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

Council members present Scott Ohm, Amanda Weaver, Judy Hutchinson, Janeece Hoppe, Corey Stites, Valerie Nosler Beck, Leah Dozeman, and Rachel Hultin.

Also, present: City Manager, Patrick Goff; City Clerk, Steve Kirkpatrick; City Attorney, Gerald Dahl; Director of Community Development, Ken Johnstone; Engineering Manager, Steve Nguyen; interested citizens and guests.

**Citizen's Right to Speak**

Guy Nahmiach, 3650 Ward Road. Came to comment on the many, many years as a resident in W 38<sup>th</sup> area. Politicians have talked endlessly but done nothing. It is long past time for sidewalks to improve pedestrian and cyclist's safety, and to address the many drainage issues along this corridor. Please, take action, as you have on several other controversial issues.

**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.

**The following residents' comments appeared in WR Speaks for this Study Session.**

My wife and I are new residents of west Wheat Ridge (35th and Simms) but old residents of east Wheat Ridge. The rural feel on the west side is precious and road

improvement efforts should be geared towards preserving the laid back and semi-quiet look and feel of the Applewood neighborhood. I'm witnessing occasional grumblings from neighbors about lost views that I don't want to ever see boil over. At the moment the intensity of the grumbling is low compared to what I've seen over the years on the East side but do be aware that change causes anxiety. That said, my dog suggests that improvements should be made to make 38th more walk-able which generally means sidewalks, bike paths, shoulders, etc. From where we live, we cross 38th to reach a neighborhood that leads to a greenbelt and we do a bit of hopping from dirt to sidewalk to get there. Plus, the dog feels a little "boxed in" from a walk-ability standpoint as she can't safely make her way to the east towards Parfet or even the northeast towards some interconnecting roads around Pierson Court. It makes her howl! Sidewalks would fix this. I've also noticed an obscene number of people pushing baby carriages through the neighborhood, kids on bicycles, joggers, and other active users that would benefit from improved access and walk-ability. Item #1 further mentions poor storm drainage which, assuming it ever rains again in Colorado, should be a priority. The bottom line is do what you must. Knowing there is significant development occurring on 38th and Youngfield, I am concerned that too many improvements to 38th would encourage traffic to and from the new Lutheran campus and associated shopping. This has the potential to significantly change the complexion of the neighborhoods in the form of more lanes, more traffic, and most concerning higher speeds - resembling the 38th of East Wheat Ridge and Denver. That kind of sucks but I guess if you have to you have to, right? If you can prioritize traffic calming that would be great so that crossing the street does not become a game of Frogger. It is one thing to triple volume and quite another to triple volume and speed. Finally, please make sure your traffic study explicitly considers all the new, planned, and preplanned people/traffic from upcoming developments on Youngfield, Kipling, and the old Lutheran campus. I would hate to do a study that we rapidly outgrow because we forgot about traffic from the new hospital and all those apartments. I've seen too many government projects that botch this, but never from Wheat Ridge because Patrick and staff are great at their jobs.

December 2, 2021, 3:29 PM

**Joseph Giordano**

I appreciate the past efforts of the City to address concerns on the segment of 38th Ave west of Kipling. Since 2008 and even 2017, there have been many changes in Wheat Ridge including the development of Clear Creek Crossing and more young families resettling in the area. I anticipate this corridor will only become more popular as an east west route through the city to CCC. I look forward to the day when there are continuous, safe sidewalks and protected bike lanes.

December 2, 2021, 10:38 AM

**Heather Lowers**

I live in between 32nd and 38th, and since we moved in here 8 years ago, sidewalks along 38th have been a priority for our family! Our kids walk to and from school and that often involves walking, riding bikes or skateboarding along 38th Ave. I also have a child in a wheelchair, and if you have tried to take a stroll down to Sprouts or Starbucks with a kid in a wheelchair (or stroller, for that matter, or even with a toddler walking beside), I invite you to try it. It is simply not safe, and also very rocky and muddy. My kids are now older, and we have taught them how to travel 38th safely, but I see people with strollers or wheelchairs or small children all the time on 38th, walking to or from school. I am a big supporter of safe travel outside of cars, because it gives kids the independence they want and need and a safe route to Discovery Park, and also saves my heart from freaking out at some of the close calls I have personally seen. Please prioritize these sidewalks (and drainage) - I beg you. Humbly, Jenny Fischer

December 2, 2021, 10:24 AM

### **Jenny Fischer**

#### **1. 38<sup>th</sup> Avenue West Street Improvements (Kipling Street to Youngfield Street)**

Discussion of this item began at approximately 6:33 pm

#### **Issue**

Re-examine and Advance Sidewalks on 38<sup>th</sup> Avenue” was identified as one of City Council’s priorities in the 2021-2022 Strategic Plan. Staff has broken this topic into two geographic areas: 1) 38<sup>th</sup> Avenue West (Kipling Street to Youngfield Street); and 2) 38<sup>th</sup> Avenue East, generally from Wadsworth Boulevard to Harlan Street, or smaller priority segments

#### **Staff Reports**

Engineering Manager, Steve Nguyen and Project Supervisor, Mark Westberg presented on the item where the purpose of this study session is to provide City Council with an update on a potential design process for 38<sup>th</sup> Avenue West. 38<sup>th</sup> Avenue East is on the future City Council agenda for a study session next year.

They spoke on existing conditions, past planning/design efforts, and a summary of a possible improvement project to construct a continuous complete street with a focus on bicycle and pedestrian (bike/ped) improvements.

Councilmembers had questions and comments:

- It makes sense on several levels to divide this project into two projects, from Kipling to Youngfield to the west and Wadsworth to Sheridan in the east.
- Walking or riding on a cycle or scooter is very dangerous along W. 38<sup>th</sup> Ave from Kipling to Youngfield. There are no sidewalks anywhere along that corridor.

- Heavy rain or snowmelt creates a number of flooding situations, especially where the open ditch flows through a pipe underneath a driveway. Those culverts are constantly clogged, which causes overflow and sends the residents to the ditch to unclog the flow.
- CM Stites recalled that as a child he had trouble safely riding or walking along 38<sup>th</sup> Avenue and the same problem persists today.
- None of the residents along 38<sup>th</sup> Ave. have lodged a single objection or complaint about moving forward with sidewalks, drainage and bike paths.
- Would there be funding available from The American Rescue Plan? Mr. Goff responded that we do not know just yet.
- Can Mile High Flood District help with this project? Mr. Johnstone answered yes.
- CM Hultin reported on her extensive experience researching and studying this corridor. She believes that this is the time to improve this corridor. Whatever we do has to address drainage and especially pedestrian and cyclist safety. Currently some families do not allow their children to go to the park because it is too dangerous to cross 38<sup>th</sup> Ave. This is also a huge issue for the disabled who must travel along this corridor. There is no other east-west access through this neighborhood, other than 38<sup>th</sup> Ave. Any transportation study must accommodate the needs of those who need sidewalks in order to move along the corridor.
- Several Councilmembers expressed support for planning an extensive project along 38<sup>th</sup> Avenue.
- Without asking for a design tonight, give us some ideas about how this project might get designed to accommodate vehicles, pedestrians, children, cyclists, sidewalks and drainage including putting utilities underground.
- How many traffic lanes will the new design include? 38<sup>th</sup> Ave is 3 lanes to the east of this corridor.
- How much additional right of way would the project require the city to acquire?
- Mr. Johnstone commented that all of these issues will have to be resolved during planning. Mr. Nguyen opined that the current 60 feet of right of way will be adequate except for a few specific locations.
- CM Hultin recalled the four priorities that came from the study of the corridor and what residents need. She also recommended that staff review that report and the data that supported it because it was thorough, voluminous and informative.
- Would funding this project require a supplemental budget appropriation? Mr. Goff commented that it would, and that funds currently appear to be available given our reserves. It would also require the issuance of more bonds, which would have to go to the voters for approval.

CM Hoppe proposed a consensus to direct staff to bring to Council a plan to pursue a design process and start the design consulting RFP process.

**Consensuses attained.**

## **2. Staff Report(s)**

Discussion began at 7:11 pm,

Mr. Goff reported that at the next Council meeting we will present a progress report on the funding of Clear Creek Crossing.

## **3. Elected Officials' Report(s)**

CM Hultin announced that Grammy's Goodies recently received further accolades and she is proud of the success of this District II business.

CM Dozeman thanked WR Parks and Rec and Local Works for presenting the tree lighting ceremony last week. In the future let's have more for kids at this event. Please patronize our local market at 38<sup>th</sup> and during the Holiday shopping season.

CM Hutchinson thanked the WR PD for their recent toy drive. She also commented that the three issues people are most concerned about include crime and response time to calls for service. Mr. Goff replied about recent situations and going forward generally.

She also asked about what is being done to better manage traffic in our neighborhoods. She is in favor of reducing the speed limit from 25 mph to 20 mph. This will not solve the problem, but it will help, and we need to do *something*.

CM Hultin commented that Denver will soon reduce the speed limit in residential areas from 25 to 20 mph. She asked staff the consequences of that action in WR, and Mr. Nguyen gave his opinion. CM Hultin and CM Hutchinson requested that a discussion about reducing speed limits in residential areas from 25 to 20 mph be added to a future study session agenda.

Mr. Goff commented that there are many and varied traffic problems across the City and we need to address them all. He also reported that he has asked the WR PD to enforce speed laws in residential neighborhoods more frequently and visibly.

CM Weaver thanked staff and Council for the work on the W. 38<sup>th</sup> Ave. corridor.

Mayor Starker thanked those who attended the tree lighting and those who worked so hard on the event. The next Coffee with the Mayor is this Saturday, December 11.

## **ADJOURNMENT**

The Study Session adjourned at 7:27 PM.

APPROVED BY CITY COUNCIL ON May 23, 2022.

  
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Steve Kirkpatrick, City Clerk

*Rachel Hultin*

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Rachel Hultin, Mayor Pro Tem