

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

May 16, 2022

Mayor Bud Starker called the Study Session to order at 6:32 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. A quorum of members (eight) of Council were present in Council Chambers for this session.

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

Mayor Starker 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, Korey Stites, Valerie Nosler Beck, Janeece Hoppe, Leah Dozeman, and Rachel Hultin.

Also present: City Manager Patrick Goff; Chief of Police, Chris Murtha; Assistant to the City Manager, Marianne Schilling; Director of Parks and Recreation, Karen O'Donnell; Director of Community Development, Ken Johnstone; Planning Manager, Lauren Mikulak; Deputy City Clerk, Robin Eaton, interested citizens and guests.

Public's Right to Speak

Ihor Figlus came forward stating he was glad that city council was finally getting around reviewing the bulk plane. He wanted to add to the review that the bulk plane not only looks at the sides of the building but also the back. He also asked that the plane measured from the original grade of the property and to add proper wording in the order.

Note about Wheat Ridge Speaks:

Members of the public 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 the public 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.

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

1. Preferred Concept Designs for the "Green" on 38th Avenue

Discussion of this item began at approximately 6:37 pm.

Issue

The 38th Avenue Streetscape project has been a priority for City Council for over a decade. While the redevelopment of the Green does not directly implement that priority, it is a logical first step in extending streetscape improvements from the West 38 mixed-use project and creating a public gathering space on the City's main street and in the heart of downtown. A consensus was reached by City Council in 2018 to engage a designer to develop conceptual designs for the Green. Architerra Group was hired by the City in August 2018. A comprehensive community engagement process (see Attachments 1-3) was completed since that time to obtain feedback from key stakeholders and the public. Based on that feedback, Architerra Group has created two preferred design options which they will present to City Council at the April 18, 2022, study session for further discussion and direction.

Staff Reports

City Manager Patrick Goff briefly reviewed the history of design and use planning for the various concepts for developing the Green, with Mark Taylor from the Architerra Group, who spoke on a myriad of topics relevant to this item. Those guiding principles included:

- Vitality
- Appeal

Where Architerra developed multiple options and those were presented to focus groups of interested stakeholders, including various school district representatives, Stevens Elementary parents, LocalWorks and 38th Avenue businesses. Some of the designs maintained the current footprint of the Green, while others altered that orientation such that it would occupy the entire frontage along 38th Avenue and relocate the school's parking and student drop-off area to be a buffer between 38th Avenue, the Green, and the school.

Councilmembers had questions and comments:

Councilmembers had many comments and asked detailed questions about several topics, engaging in discussion among themselves and with staff, who answered their questions in detail:

- Thanked the staff and the consultants for their report and more so for their hard work.
- CM asked numerous, detailed questions of the Architerra Group representative, who responded in kind to their designs, summaries, and public outreach.
- Loves the water feature but thinks the playground is better for year-round use
- Likes option A in round two but wants to save the existing trees.
- Wants landscape materials to use more drought friendly landscaping.

- WR needs a community gathering space.
- Likes the water feature, even though it a drought concern and is not a responsible usage.
- Would hate to lose the firepit where there are those people without kids who would like to use it.
- Likes the stage that faces 38h Ave.
- Questioning the chairs if they would be permanent or movable as well as the backless wall seats and graveled areas.
- What is Jeffco adding to the design build and is anyone applying for grants?
- Likes the classic promenade and wants a safely done fire pit along with a really well shaded game area.
- Proposing a 50-year lease to the city to manage and maintain the park.
- Emphasized the importance of a communication strategy to inform our residents about what we are, and are not, trying to achieve

CM Hultin asked for consensus to move forward to 90 percent plan for the Green and using the feedback that been provided tonight.

Consensus attained.

2. Residential Bulk Plane

Discussion of this item began at approximately 7:48 pm

Issue

In 2016, the City Council adopted Ordinance 1613, which included new zoning regulations in Chapter 26 of the code pertaining to bulk plane. Currently, bulk plane applies only to detached single-unit dwelling in the R-1C and R-3 zone districts. During the 2021 City Council strategic planning session, the potential to adopt such regulations in all residential zoning districts was identified as a priority. The topic was discussed by Council in May 2021, but there was a lack of consensus on how to proceed. The purpose of the May 16, 2022, study session is to discuss bulk plane again and seek direction on a potential ordinance. This memo contains background information as well as new content related to zoning analysis and public input.

Staff Reports

Director of Community Development, Ken Johnstone and Lauren Mikulak, Planning Manager, spoke on the issue including prior action of the 2016 when city council adopted the current bulk plane ordinance and its study sessions prior to that. These included

public hearings, public feedback, study sessions, along with other proposed regulations, definitions, current zone districts and code sections.

Noted also that the current bulk plane regulation does apply to all sides of the property, including the rear setbacks, where some heights force the use of peak roofs instead of flat roofing techniques.

Councilmembers had questions and comments:

Councilmembers asked detailed questions about several topics, engaging in discussion among themselves and with staff, who answered their questions in detail:

- All members thanked staff for their presentation, their excellent preparation and well-conceived groundwork.
- Does the bulk plane apply to all residential districts such as mixed-use neighborhoods that include townhomes?
- With grading issues how is it measured and how do different grade points work with the bulk plane.
- Supportive of the issue to take it to all residential areas as it gives people more faith in the process
- Maintaining unique neighborhood characteristics and that it covers all residential districts which was agreed upon by all councilmembers.
- There are many people, including those who live in west Wheat Ridge, that want to see this be approved as well.
- Questions were asked on how extensive the issue was and to find out how many concerns there have been with bulk plane outside of the areas that are currently covered by it.

CM Hultin proposed a consensus to direct staff to move forward with the recommendation to apply bulk plane city-wide in all 8 R-series zone districts.

Consensus attained.

A break was called at 8:11

3. 44th Ave. Subarea Plan Update

Discussion of this item began at approximately 8:20 pm

Issue

The purpose of this study session is to provide City Council with an update on the W. 44th Avenue subarea planning process, public engagement and preliminary findings from the existing conditions scan completed thus far.

Staff Reports

Stephanie Stevens, Senior Planner, spoke briefly on the issue including prior action from 2019 where City Council awarded a contract to MIG, Inc., a professional planning firm, to lead the community through the subarea planning process. This effort was put on hold due to the pandemic and need to prioritize the Lutheran Master Plan.

Where now the City of Wheat Ridge and consultant team, MIG Inc. with Mark De la Torre and Jay Rankins (on Zoom), described how they restarted the W. 44th Avenue Subarea Plan in early 2022, and how it will proceed throughout the year. The plan with outreach strategies, will focus on W. 44th Avenue between Youngfield Street and Clear Creek (near Field Street) and will more broadly include the portion of the City between Clear Creek and I-70. The plan will combine public input with technical analysis to establish a long-range vision and guiding principles for the W. 44th Avenue planning area which will guide public and private investments in the future.

Some trends are emerging around the following ideas:

- Improving intersections and addressing multimodal transportation connections which has been at the forefront of the conversation.
- Creating a balanced development strategy that honors diverging viewpoints around change (feedback shows 50/50 split for desiring big change vs. no change); and
- Promoting increased investment in a variety of forms, including beautification along the street and on private properties, investment in commercial properties and nodes, and establishment of complementary land uses not currently present on the corridor.

(Timestamp 8:40)

Councilmembers had questions and comments:

Staff, the members from MIG Inc. and CM engaged in a detailed discussion of the presentation.

CM raised questions about what other methods of engagement the City might use, including mobility connections, especially with the school zones in the area.

CM Hultin thanked staff for their presentation, their excellent preparation and groundwork. Nothing in the presentation was a surprise, with everyone wanting safe corridors for traffic and pedestrians. There are lots of opportunities for re-investments and creative opportunities.

CM Dozeman looks forward to what comes out of the process, especially for diverse usages of the corridor.

CM Nosler Beck also discussed people missing the rec center engagement from the eastern part of WR accessing Anderson park. The bridge is getting fixed and encouraged them to participate in the project.

Talking points from members included:

- Bike lanes
- Safe crossings
- Controlling traffic
- The bridge on 44th to Anderson park

Staff Report(s)

Nothing Tonight

4. Elected Officials' Report(s)

CM Nosler Beck wanted to give a shout out to volunteer coaches throughout the Parks and Recreation teams. There are lots of parents and grandparents investing their time and commitment to help teach kids in all types of sports.

CM Hultin spoke on the eclipse last night where many folks gathered with her in the church parking lot. Her heart was made happy by seeing city staff putting in flowers along 38th avenue and cleaning up the gutters. It looked really great to see that kind of pride going into our community.

CM Stites and CM Nosler Beck met with community members recently, who are putting together a group to help local school budgeting and marketing programs. The new group is called Wheat Ridge Community and Family Coalition. They hope to get more volunteers to help strengthen the group by getting the names of the schools out there and asked for volunteers.

CM Dozeman stated that the Carnation Festival is now accepting nominations for royalty where three members of the community who have made an impact can be recognized during the Festival, starting on August 13. The annual plate design contest is opening up soon, to be reviewed by the cultural commission and they are looking for artwork to be submitted.

CM Hutchinson remarked how the Wendy's on Wadsworth is now boarded up. It's a surprise to everyone as there were no notices given.

CM Ohm was biking on the clear creek trail and noticed there were a lot of kids at Prospect park. It has partially re-opened with limited access and hopes that all can get out and enjoy the parks.

The Mayor thanked everyone for a productive meeting, he thanked everyone for joining and encouraged us to drive safely.

ADJOURNMENT

The Study Session adjourned at 8:57 p.m.

APPROVED BY CITY COUNCIL ON June 13, 2022.



Robin Eaton, Deputy City Clerk



Rachel Hultin, Mayor Pro Tem