

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

October 6, 2014

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

Council members present: Jerry DiTullio, Bud Starker, Kristi Davis, Zachary Urban, Tracy Langworthy, Tim Fitzgerald, George Pond, and Genevieve Wooden

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

PUBLIC COMMENT ON AGENDA ITEMS none

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

1. Present Alternatives for Wadsworth PEL (Planning and Environmental Linkage Study) ~ Mark Westberg and Steve Nguyen (Public Works)

Jason Longsdorf (consultant from Parsons Brinkerhoff) went through the presentation that will be given to the public this Wednesday evening at an Open House. He noted the original study limits were 35th to 48th Ave. In consultation with the Federal Highway Administration and the Dept. of Transportation it became clear those boundaries need to move a little south and north. Exact extensions have yet to be determined, but it may likely be 34th on the south and into the I-70 ramps on the north.

Existing Conditions report is complete.

Environmental Issues

- Historic properties: Want to minimize impact
- Wetlands & floodplains: No impacts anticipated
- Two Parks (Town Center Park and Johnson Park): require additional environmental steps to avoid impacts to those

Purpose & Needs assessment is based on talks with the CDOT and the FHA and input from the public meeting in April. The purpose of the project is:
"To transform Wadsworth Blvd from 35th to 48th Avenue into a multimodal facility that enhances regional mobility, provides local accessibility, and supports the vision of a livable, walkable, mixed use corridor."

The study addresses the following needs for Wadsworth:

- Lack of capacity
- Lack of access management (There are currently too many places to get on/off Wadsworth at the various businesses. That needs to be cut back.)
- Lack of multi-modal access (Needs bike lanes)

- Safety concerns
- Inconsistency between roadway functions for the State (a 26-mile long state highway with major connections to other highways in the system) and for Wheat Ridge (with mixed use zoning and redevelopment efforts as a city street with the multi-use efforts that have been made); need to blend the two.
- Vision (has been shared with some of the property owners)
 - Urban design and landscape architecture; more landscaping
 - Create a space that feels more like a district (e.g. Cherry Creek North, 29th St. in Boulder, LoDo); make people feel like they're in Wheat Ridge
 - Gateways, lighting, streetscapes, public art

The process went from 54 options to 10 to 3. He went through the 10 options and the 3 that were finally chosen for presentation.

The 10 alternatives with varying street widths and edge enhancements included:

No action alternative (1) – the current road width and lanes; 100 feet of ROW; 86 feet curb to curb (38th to 44th)

Transportation system management alternatives (2) – live within the current footprint; minor changes could include additional landscaping, retune the signals, build medians in places where turn lanes aren't needed, no impact to additional property

Full Build with access control (6) 150 foot cross section; based on the 2007 plan; adds more lanes;

Full Build w/ Frontage Road (1) – 200 feet of ROW; a frontage road on each side

The 3 final proposed alternatives are:

Minimal Build w/ edge enhancements: adds an additional southbound lane; 5 foot sidewalks and 10 foot tree lawns on the edges; 22 foot center median(tree lawn); 100 foot ROW; improvements on the east side already built (McDonalds, 1stBank); 10-25 foot of expansion on the west side

Full Build (2) has a 28 foot raised median down the center w/ trees, to provide access control; six 10 or 11 foot lanes for traffic (three each way); 10 foot tree lawns on each side; an 11 foot 2-way cycling track on the east side (to connect 35th Ave to the Clear Creek Trail); a 10 foot sidewalk on each side

Full Build with Frontage Road has the 28 foot, raised center median, then six 11' lanes for traffic (three each way), then a two lane frontage road (1 lane park, 1 lane drive) on each side, followed by a 5' one-way bike lane on each side and 10 foot sidewalk on each side; may provide some spaces for sidewalk cafes. (May only need four through-lanes, but the modeling isn't complete; 85% of the traffic on Wads is through-traffic, 15% is local.)

One of these 3 alternatives may not be the final choice. They will likely repackage the best pieces of these, along with comments from the public, the Council and adjacent property owners.

Issues To Be Decided: sales tax assessment, safety improvement, how much private property will need to be acquired, estimated travel speed, number of crashes, signal progression, and life cycle costs.

One or two final choices would go through an environmental evaluation. There will be one more City Council briefing before a final public meeting around Feb 4. A final document would come out in spring of 2015.

TIP funding from DRCOG has been applied for.

Council questions followed. Mr. Westberg contributed in this discussion.

- Councilmember Starker asked about plans for the east /west streets and pedestrian bridges. ~ Mr. Westberg said:
 - The intersections at 38th and 44th would have pedestrian refuge islands on all four corners. All signals will be upgraded.
 - Pedestrian bridges typically aren't used much.
 - There's an additional signal at 34th or 35th Ave.
 - Move the signal at Three Acre Lane to 41st Ave.
 - Add another signal at 39th (Safeway entrance)
 - Potentially a pedestrian signal at 43rd Ave.
- Councilmember Wooden asked about historic properties. They include Holy Cross Lutheran Church and Wardle Feed.

Treasurer Schulz inquired about considerations for enhanced mass transit or rail.

Mr. Westberg said RTD's long range plan identifies Wadsworth as an enhanced high speed transit route. Could be bus or rail. The reason for the 28 foot median in these plans is so it can be converted to rail lines in 20, 30 or 40 years. Mr. Longsdorf spoke about the reconfiguration for bus stops.

Council questions continued.

- Councilmember Langworthy asked if the proposed widths align with Lakewood and Arvada. ~ Mr. Westberg said the plan fits with what comes from I-70. Traffic counts between 38th and 32 are lower and may not need so many lanes. The last remaining piece to design would be 26th to 35th.
- Councilmember Davis asked about a timeline. ~ The DRCOG TIP funding cycle is every 4 years. This application was submitted in September even though all the environmental work isn't finished. The estimated cost for the whole project is expected to be \$31 million, with the City share being \$6 million. If we are awarded the grant and can come up with the money, construction would start in 2019. ~ Staff also submitted individually for each of the four major intersections – 38th, 41st, 44th and 48th. It depends on how DRCOG scores things. ~ It's unlikely CDOT will do any repairs on what's there now. They say everything behind the curb is ours.
- Councilmember DiTullio asked why the frontage road option is still on the list. There was a huge fight over it in 2007 because it takes so much private property, and the previous Council accepted a 150 foot plan. ~ Mr. Westberg explained

that it meets the criteria, but isn't optimistic it will survive the next level of screening.

Treasurer Schulz commented on the advantage of the frontage roads – allowing through traffic to get through (not be held up by shoppers), and the advantage for businesses by providing a way for their shoppers to get to them. He would hate to see a scheme that would allow the through traffic unimpeded movement and there would be a trade-off to some advantage for the commercial district.

Council questions continued.

Councilmember Fitzgerald asked for confirmation that the 150 foot option doesn't take any buildings. ~ Mr. Westberg doesn't think it actually takes any buildings, but a couple of places will lose their entire front parking lot so changes may occur.

Councilmember Urban noted that Level C riders will not be encouraged to use this type of dedicated path; it seems like a lot of bike path that not all levels can use. ~ Mr. Westberg said the bike lanes are separated from auto traffic and pedestrian walks and will accommodate A and B level riders. He said Level C riders and families can use the 10 foot sidewalk.

Councilmember Urban asked how the cycle path would connect to Arvada and Lakewood – if they have existing bike trails on Wadsworth to connect to. ~ Mr. Westberg said the south end of the bike path would end at 35th – which in Denver is a major bike route. We have plans to connect to that. On the north end the bike path will connect to Clear Creek Trail and the sidewalks that go under I-70.

Councilmember Fitzgerald asked about the retaining wall on the west side of Wadsworth (north end). ~ The walls on both sides will be moved out.

Councilmember Urban asked if there would be access to the neighborhood at 48th. ~ Mr. Westberg said there are several options for the side streets on the north – possibly a signal at 46th, maybe at 47th, possibly closing 48th and making it a cul-de-sac. Meetings with folks will continue as the process moves forward.

The public meeting is this Wednesday, October 8, 5:30 – 7:30pm at City Hall. Open house format. Presentations at 6:00 and 7:00. People can leave written comments.

Everything from tonight and for the Wednesday night meeting is available on the City website. There is a quick link to the Wadsworth PEL. Folks can look at all the diagrams and send in their comments. The comments will go to City staff and Parsons Brinkerhoff.

2. Staff Report(s)

Mr. Goff asked Council if they wanted to cancel the meetings for Nov 24 and Dec 22 as they are close to holidays. Discussion. Consensus to cancel both meetings if the things scheduled for Nov 24 can be rescheduled.

3. Elected Officials' Report(s)

Tim Fitzgerald reported from the WR Business District. They are giving 3-4 grants a month. Last month they gave sign grants to Christiano's Gelato (matching grant) and WR United Methodist Church (maximum sign grant). ~ The former Taste of Home Cooking/Wine Not is soon to be Iron Rail Tavern and that owner received three matching grants - for signage, exterior paint and landscaping. ~ In the previous month they gave a sign grant to the Independence Shopping Center because a pending building in the old Furr's Cafeteria is going to block their sign. A grant was also given to the Mon Petite Center for sign work. ~ The Business District has \$81,000 in the bank.

Bud Starker said the CML Policy Committee will meet again on Oct 17. Items for consideration for legislation are

- RR hazmat training for communities that have railroad crossings
- Repeal on the ban that municipal governments are over broadband services (potential for municipalities to provide this service)
- Revision to quality of service requirements for fire protection districts
- Allowing local governments to license the manufacture of spirituous liquors (would add local control)

Kristi Davis reported from Urban Renewal.

- The Kipling Ridge groundbreaking is this Friday.
- The Authority has decided to have signs that publicize their projects so citizens will know. The Kipling Ridge site received \$2.4 M from TIF and \$1M from City economic incentive.
- 38th & Yukon: Site remediation continues. Asbestos removal is complete. Demo of the building should happen next week.
- Town Center: They have the final contracts on the last two parcels. Lot 1 will be fifty (50) age-restricted apartments. Lot 2 is yet to be determined.
- Perrins Row: Moving forward; almost all units are sold (9 of 26 are left). \$467,000 in TIF money is going to that development.
- WR Cyclery: Their TIF is paid off 4 years early due to good sales.

Jerry DiTullio commented on the Perrins Row townhomes that the City gave development incentives to. Council was told originally they would be sold for \$250-275K. They are now selling for \$310-320K. The developers are getting more than what they bargained for. He asked if they will still get all the money from the City. Mr. Goff said they would because that's what the contract stipulates. ~ Genevieve Wooden asked what the 4th pad will be at Kipling Ridge. Ms. Davis said they don't know.

Genevieve Wooden reported the education committee had their summit. 15 of 17 schools attended; 40-50 people were there; guides to the schools that serve WR are still available. Now they're working on an accountability committee, getting all the PTA's together to talk about best practices, and having West Metro Drug Task Force do education.

Zach Urban noted the Metro Mayors Caucus is planning to track homeless individuals to see what services they are receiving and wondered if we are participating? Mayor

Jay said she'll get back to Council on that. ~ He wondered if we are willing to do what Lakewood is doing about construction defects (allowing for remedies before litigation). Mr. Goff said they've talked to Lakewood and will monitor how this works for them.

Tim Fitzgerald remarked that Jefferson County only has 34 permanent homeless beds.

Bud Starker reported that Jeffco Public Health is putting together a grant application to the CO Dept of Public Health for \$5.8 M to provide healthy living to lower income individuals to provide healthier food, education and resources, and creating more walkable communities and more exercise in our lives. It's a 3-year program.

Jerry DiTullio asked about the status of Applewood Golf Course. Mr. Goff said Coors is interested in selling and a few developers are looking at it. The City has had some discussions over the last several years, but there's nothing to report.

Genevieve Wooden asked for an update on the Kipling Trail Project. Mr. Goff reported there are still 3-4 properties from which the City needs to acquire ROW. Xcel has their lines underground; Comcast and Century Link don't. Undergrounding those lines from 35th to 32nd will happen when construction starts after the first of the year.

Bud Starker reported his neighborhood had a very successful block party. 40 people came. He was encouraged to see so many young families with children.

Kristi Davis asked if the ballot questions could be on the City website. Clerk Shaver explained that the Clerk's pages on the website are not up to date due to staffing turnover and the lack of someone in her office who is trained and allowed to edit the website. The new Deputy Clerk started today; her training will be next week. ~ Kristi Davis asked if that could happen sooner. Mr. Goff will try to get that on the website tomorrow.

ADJOURNMENT

The Study Session adjourned at 8:46 p.m.



Janelle Shaver, City Clerk