

**STUDY SESSION NOTES**  
**CITY OF WHEAT RIDGE, COLORADO**  
**City Council Chambers 7500 W. 29<sup>th</sup> Avenue**  
**June 4, 2018**

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

Councilmembers present: Monica Duran, Janeece Hoppe, Kristi Davis, Tim Fitzgerald, Zachary Urban, Larry Mathews, Leah Dozeman, George Pond

Also present: City Clerk, Janelle Shaver; City Manager, Patrick Goff; Public Works Director, Scott Brink; Community Development Director, Ken Johnstone; other staff and interested citizens.

**CITIZEN COMMENT ON AGENDA ITEMS**

**Dorothy Archer** Regarding the citizen survey, she is concerned that of the 4,500 surveys sent out only about 1,150 (26%) were returned and 43% of the respondents were renters. She pointed to question 24 that was about the 35ft height limit. If 43% of the people who wanted 35ft are renters, what does that say to the homeowners? It is possible the renters think you are addressing 35ft apartment houses. ~ She suggested Council review the Planning Commission minutes of September 15 which reported details of five different City studies on height limits. She submitted that lowering heights would eliminate unnecessary density and not impact our goal of preservation of neighborhoods. ~ She requested a 25ft maximum height with a 15ft bulk plane – with allowances for lot size. ~ She reminded Council of the November online survey that indicated only 42% favored three story houses and 64% of respondents wanted the bulk plane regulations.

**Jake Burkhardt** (WR) has been in WR since 1955. He asked Council why they want the 35ft height allowance. He opposes increased density and doesn't understand the reason for it. He's not opposed to change, but the changes should be for the good.

**Michael Epton** (WR) lives on Chase. He believes the survey results show a desire for extending the bulk plane regulations to Districts 1 and 2, and perhaps the whole city. He and his neighbors would also like to see a 27ft height limits similar to their neighbors in the Highlands and Edgewater. They believe the bulk plane and the height limit are essential to preserving the quality of life in the neighborhoods. Failure to do so will protect developers – not the citizens who live here. He urged consideration of both.

**Katherine Vermilyea** (WR) told Council she opposes more density or growth. It's not worth it.

**Susie Griffin** (WR) didn't get a survey, but her biggest complaint is that only 4,500 surveys were sent out; there are 31,000 people in the city. That only surveys a small percentage of the citizenry and 43% of them were renters. ~ She and her husband are

looking at converting one of their garages into a room. They wonder why it is taking so long to get an answer on it. ~ She agrees the five foot easement is not enough.

**Dan LeBaron** (WR) happened to read about the survey in the WR Connection. Since ADUs are not allowed, he assumes that the many houses in his neighborhood that have extra units in the back are illegal. The survey had some good ideas about that subject. He approves of ADUs, but shared that if they are ever allowed -- parking is a big issue and density is a concern for many.

**Rita Weller** (WR) has been in the WR area all her life. She is against the 35ft height and the flat roofs. She doesn't think renters should have a say. As a landlord with several units, she knows renters don't stay -- they go elsewhere, so they should not have a say.

**Tom Slattery** (WR) prefers a 25ft limit on residential dwellings. If you feel you must have 35ft in R-1 and R-2 zones, please limit it to 2½ stories; that way the roofs will have to be sloped -- which will reduce the impact to the neighborhood. He added that when a house is pushed to the max with the bulk plane, the areas that are not pushed to the max that are within the 5ft setback should be offset. There are many things that can be done to reduce the impact and he thinks they should be done in all residential districts.

**Roger Loecher** (WR) referenced a recent discussion with property owners about the Wadsworth expansion. The developer of the greenhouse property said they have to put in a street and was told he could extend 42<sup>nd</sup> to Wadsworth or go to Yarrow. Mr. Loecher said this adds lanes that no one is talking about. He believes if the City is telling developers they have to (or can) do things that should be put on the blueprints for everyone to see. He also suggested that things are being put on Wadsworth that will extend into the neighborhoods, and believes the City is not going far enough to show what is really going to happen.

**Mary Apel** (WR) has lived here her whole life. She didn't get a survey and she hasn't talked to many people who did get a survey. She is definitely opposed to the 35ft flat roofs. She is happy to see improvements to the area and more young people walking the streets, but we can't give up the character of our neighborhood.

**Barbette Halliday** (WR) doesn't understand why the survey can't be sent to every household. Postcards were sent, then the survey. Going forward, she believes a survey of this magnitude should go to every household. She didn't get a survey, but she opposes any 35ft flat roof homes. She thinks we need to look out for people who need housing. Developers turning places into duplexes that are monstrosities that block the neighbor's sunlight and charge \$3,000 a month rent doesn't help anyone. Council should pay attention to what's happening in Denver, and listen to the citizens of WR.

**Rachel Hultin** (WR) thinks ADUs are a great opportunity to help people stay in their homes longer. ~ ATAT was excited to have a dedicated 2-way cycle track on

Wadsworth, but since it will likely not make it through the value engineering they are happy to see that cyclists are being accommodated with wider sidewalks. They would like the City to look at other accommodations that are parallel and close to Wadsworth. When she drives down Wadsworth 2-3 times a week, she sees at least 6-7 cyclists. She suggested Upham and/or Teller Street. She praised the City for being continuing to be bike/ped friendly and appreciates there will be a continuous ADA corridor all the way to Clear Creek.

**Bob Till** (WR) has lived here 40 years. He opposes the 35ft height for houses. He thinks what Council did to 38<sup>th</sup> Ave is really messed up. The people who authorized that don't live in that area, and that's wrong. He's watched friends lose property to road widening, and then you mess it up making it two lanes instead of four. He is completely against the 35ft houses and wanted his opinion heard.

**Robert Grissom** (WR) related his deep roots in Wheat Ridge. He didn't get a survey, but wants Council to know he is not in favor of 35ft flat-roofed houses.

**Deborah Gonzales Grissom** (WR) is opposed to the 35ft, three-story, flat roofed houses. There are two duplexes on their street. One duplex she knows of has 4 young women who live there with their grandmother. Every night there are 8-10 cars (boyfriends, etc.) along their street that stay until late into the night. It has reduced parking considerably on that end of the block. She thinks about the density in Denver, the flat roofed buildings, the impact to those neighbors. She's seen how nice homes are being knocked out in Denver and replaced by monstrosities that have multiple tenants. If density is a concern, that is not the way to go.

**Stefano Truschke** (WR) moved here about a year ago from the Highlands. As a cycling commuter, he thinks Council should consider all options when deciding how they want to respond to the 35ft height allowance. He knows some of our neighbors are considering lower height limits. In the Highlands he saw some flat roofed houses that were tasteful, and others that were terrible. He's not sure the City should dictate architectural preferences, but he does encourage adoption of the bulk plane restrictions.

Councilmember Mathews asked again about getting all these related documents in one place on the website – including the survey. Mr. Goff said the survey should be on the home page. The survey is also available at City Hall, and they will make it available at the Library.

#### 1. Citizen Survey Report – Laurie Urban

Ms. Urban noted having done the City's surveys since 2008. The last survey was done in 2015. She thanked Carly Lorentz and Heather Geyer for their help preparing the questions and gave a presentation summarizing the report.

Surveys are done to monitor trends, measure government performances, inform citizens about budget, land use and strategic planning decision, and to benchmark service ratings.

- "Best Practices" in survey taking were used to increase response rate.
- Of the 4,500 households contacted, 1,136 responded. This is a response rate of 26%, which is down from the last survey. The margin of error is 3% +/-.
- Online response was an option this time. 181 did that.
- Responses were compared by demographics.

#### Key findings

- Most folks are happy living here, feel they have an excellent/good quality of life, and plan on staying. They would recommend it. This is similar to past surveys and the regional and national benchmarks.
- 22 community characteristics were assessed in the survey. Nine areas received ratings similar to 2015. One had lower ratings (availability of affordable quality housing). 12 characteristics increased from 2012 (including recreational opportunities, sense of community, opportunities to participate in social events and activities, and opportunities to attend cultural activities
- 7 in 10 feel neighborhood safety has improved, but safety on the road is worse.
- There were improvements in the areas of street cleaning, public information, street repair, and crime prevention.
- There was a decrease in satisfaction with animal control, programs for seniors, and police emergency response.
- The ranking of services as to importance was also measured. This is something Council may want to look at.
- Overall the performance of City staff was up. Interaction with City employees shows an increase in courtesy, people feeling valued and overall impression.

#### New areas of survey

- *Police priorities:* Over half felt it was a high priority to have added training for cops to deal with mental health issues and to increase surveillance cameras in high crime areas. Solving violent crimes is a priority.
- *Homelessness:* 2 in 10 think homelessness is a major problem; 4 in 10 consider it a moderate problem. 8 in 10 thought mental health and substance abuse programs were the most important to address this.
- *Short term rentals:* There is great variety in how people feel about them and how they should be regulated. Requiring a license and collecting lodger's tax was supported.
- *Bulk Plane regulations:* 61% support bulk plane regulations. 53% favor expanding it to other zones.
- *Building heights:* 54% favor maintaining the current residential building height of 35 feet for infill development. That said, more information/education is necessary

because a large number of respondents said they were unsure. She suggested another survey on this.

- *ADUs (accessory dwelling units)*: A little over half support allowing ADU's. There was strong support to make sure they were architecturally compatible and that there should be limits on the number of people allowed to live in the ADU. Also supported were limiting the size and requiring additional parking.
- *Economic development*: Most think the City should promote revitalization of businesses and certain housing areas.
- *Environmental sustainability*: Twelve areas were surveyed. The highest support was for clean water. There was less support for promoting biking and walking over automobile use and starting a composting program.

Council questions and comments followed.

Councilmember Mathews felt it was a good survey, but doesn't drill down enough on what the answers mean. (Ex: What does it mean "the city is going in the right direction", or "how many tax dollars are you willing to pay for this or that service"?)

Councilmember Duran's biggest concern is the height restrictions and she suggested a more comprehensive survey on the matter. She asked for consensus to continue the conversation about height limits. Councilmember Davis thought it already is a continuing discussion. Councilmember Pond, Hoppe and Fitzgerald wouldn't support this consensus; they think it should be done in the context of the NRS.

Councilmember Hoppe thanked Ms. Urban. There is a lot of information that is helpful.

Councilmember Pond believes it's important to do the surveys scientifically. He doesn't want to think of renters as less important. He addressed the cost of the survey.

Ms. Urban explained how/why mail surveys are more reliable. She explained some of the ways a small sampling can be carefully selected and managed to ensure a balanced sampling that results in a survey that represents the community.

- Addresses are selected randomly.
- Young people typically don't respond to surveys; more did the online response.
- Renters are over-sampled because they tend not to respond.
- Answers are weighted by demographics.
- Homeowners, women and older adults over-respond so they are under-sampled.

She explained for Councilmember Mathews that there are many variables and how over- and under-sampling helps the survey be more representative of the community.

Councilmember Urban asked about areas where we didn't do as well (e.g. questions about court). Ms. Urban said it's likely a high percentage said they don't know. The survey gives a broad view; it would be hard to dig deeper in this length of survey. The goal is to find points that may need work. This kind of survey answers what, not why. Councilmember Urban suggested Council move forward on areas where they agree.



Councilmember Fitzgerald observed there has been improvement in almost every area we have control over. Some things, like air quality and affordable housing, we have no control over. Overall the improvements seem good to him.

Councilmember Dozeman is concerned that renters are not considered as valuable, given that about half our residents are renters. She thinks the survey provides a good starting point for solutions.

Council Mathews had a question about Table 51. Ms. Urban explained those were the "other reasons" that resident wrote in.

## 2. Wadsworth Value Engineering Report – Mark Westberg

Council was last updated on the Wadsworth Widening project at the Study Session on April 16, 2018. As discussed during the funding update portion of the presentation, a Value Engineering workshop was conducted during the first week of May 2018.

The VE team consisted of 2 AECOM staff (consultant for the City on 2E projects – including a facilitator that came from Canada), 1 HDR staff (another of our consultants), 1 city staff, 3 CDOT staff. It was a 3-day, intense brain dump on the project to get a fresh set of eyes on it. Staff and CDOT met afterwards to refine the recommendations.

Mr. Westberg went through the suggestions.

VE-1 Two-way Cycle Track: 35th to 44<sup>th</sup> (east side). Replace 10' cycle track and 8' sidewalk with a 12' shared use path (similar to Kipling) and decrease tree lawn from 10' to 9'. Parallel bike routes already exist. Would allow to keep existing screen walls and landscaping in front of Safeway center. Saves 7 feet of demolition, materials, etc.

### VE-4 & 5 Reduce Widths

Previous: 9.5' tree lawns on both sides and 6' minimum center median

Proposed: Reduce to 8' side tree lawns and 4' minimum center median

### VE-12 & 18 47<sup>th</sup>/48<sup>th</sup> (Several options here)

Replace frontage road with separate accesses.

Make 48<sup>th</sup> a cul de sac (or not) or make it right in only, or make it right in/right out only.

Make 47<sup>th</sup> (west side) right in/right out, with a left in at 47<sup>th</sup> and 48<sup>th</sup>.

He explained why 47<sup>th</sup> will not ever have enough traffic to warrant a signal light.

### VE-13, 14, & 17 North Walls

The wall on the east side is shorter and would be less expensive to replace.

Proposal: Keep the west side wall; replace the east side wall; elevate the sidewalks on both sides to run on top of the walls; add switchbacks at the north ends to return to grade. A narrower center median would be included (VE-4 & 5).

#### VE-15 Reduce Sidewalk Width From 47<sup>th</sup> northward

Reduce sidewalks from 10' to 8' with only a 2' amenity zone north of the walls.

#### Anticipated savings

- Removing the 2 way cycle track will save \$1M+
- Reducing the median and amenity zone widths will save \$2+M.
- Amending the 47<sup>th</sup>/48<sup>th</sup> Accesses saves about \$1M.
- Changing the plan for the north retaining walls will save \$½ to ¾ M.
- Reducing sidewalk width saves \$50K+.
- VE-9 & 19 Eliminate ABC & Split Drainage saves \$200K

Total identified savings = \$5,000,000+ anticipated

#### Schedule

Public Outreach is planned this month with the property and business owners. Mr. Westberg went through the remainder of the schedule for design, planning, and ROW acquisition. Construction would start in mid-2020 and take two years.

Discussion and questions focused on the various issues and options.

Councilmember Mathews had some technical questions about the north retaining walls.

Councilmember Urban asked if U-turns would be allowed at 48<sup>th</sup>, noting that so many cars that turn left onto 48<sup>th</sup> just turn around and heads back to Arvada. Yes, with 3 lanes – U-turns would be allowed. Councilmember Urban suggested it would be helpful to offset the entrance onto 48<sup>th</sup> from the entrance to the building. They exchanged ideas about possibilities for 48<sup>th</sup>.

Councilmember Duran asked if the fire department had been consulted concerning 48<sup>th</sup> Avenue. Mr. Westberg said that will follow.

Councilmember Fitzgerald had concerns about use of the building's parking lot at 48<sup>th</sup>. He also asked if narrowing the medians would still allow space for trees. Yes, there will be trees.

Councilmember Pond had some remarks about the pain, yet necessity, of the VE process. He asked for consensus to support all the recommendations. Councilmember Urban asked that more feedback be gotten from property owners on 48<sup>th</sup> Avenue. Councilmember Pond agreed with that. There was unanimous consent.

### 3. Update on Wheat Ridge Ward Station – Ken Johnstone

Patrick Goff noted the presentation would cover 1) Development interests on three parcels, 2) Some updates on the regional park, and 3) A marketing video the City had

produced. He reported that multiple trains are now running on the G Line for the final testing. There still is no timeframe, but it could be August.

Mr. Johnstone highlighted a long list of things that have already been done, including a subarea plan, proposed future land uses, DRCOG grant, traffic/road design study, urban renewal in place, 2 properties rezoned to TOD, creation of a Metropolitan District, an IGA with RTD, and an Urban Land Institute (ULI) TAP (technical advisory panel) in 2015.

In 2016 a more specific WSP Vision Plan was created to use for marketing. It identified the potential for a regional park, encouraged the potential for co-working space to tap into the outdoor rec industry, and identified the pedestrian bridge and the concept of a linear park. This was presented at the ULI TOD Marketplace in 2016. Also in 2016 the voters passed 2E which will provide \$12M in sales tax for the project.

#### Cost Ranges for City Projects

- Local streets – up to \$8,000,000
- Pedestrian bridge over railroad tracks – \$1,500,000 to \$4,000,000
- Linear Park – up to \$5,000,000
- Regional Park – up to \$5,000,000
- Ward Road (state highway) minimal improvements – up to \$2,000,000 11

Mr. Johnstone elaborated further on “Turning \$12M (the allotted 2E funds) into \$50M” through TIF’s, state and federal grants and parkland fees in lieu. 12

The City had discussions with, and signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with, Arvada and Jefferson County agreeing to coordinate and cooperate in design and funding of road improvements in the area (particularly 52<sup>nd</sup> Ave). An IGA with a more specific outline of cost-sharing arrangements among the parties will follow, and regional cost sharing for a traffic study and regional park concepts have been discussed. 13

Mr. Johnstone presented conceptual designs for the pedestrian bridge, the linear park, and the regional park. 14 – 16

#### Development Updates

The Hance Ranch Townhomes (63 units on the south side of 52nd Ave between Tabor Street and Taft Court) was approved by Council, is close to final administrative approval, and should break ground in the next few months. It is anticipated that a small amount of 2E funds will be used on this project to offset some unanticipated stormwater costs associated with some off-site stormwater that impacts the property.

The TRAX residential development proposes 207 highly amenitized, higher-density, market-rate apartments in a 4-story building with structured parking. This project will be on Ward Road directly northeast of the station platform and directly south of the Hance Ranch Townhomes. Due partially to the cost of the structured parking and local street



improvements, a 2E investment in this project and an Urban Renewal tax increment financing (TIF) is anticipated. Construction is to begin late 2018 or early 2019.

The Jolly Rancher property at Ward & Ridge is under contract to be purchased and developed by Toll Brothers, a national homebuilder. Staff anticipates an application for a mix of approximately 200 townhomes and live-work townhomes and approximately 6,000 sq. ft. of commercial building space to be submitted soon. The subdivision plat for that will require Council approval.

Connectivity, on-street parking and being bike friendly have been emphasized.

He went through a number of the next steps that need to happen (e.g. regional traffic study, design/construction for 52<sup>nd</sup> Ave and Ridge Road, regional park planning coordinated with property owners, TIF for the TRAX development, Ridge Road access permit, possible Ward Road improvements, and approval of concept/site plan for the Jolly Rancher property.

Mr. Johnstone played the promotional video.

Council questions followed.

Councilmember Mathews asked if the park areas would be natural or manicured? The east pond would be more developed - the west pond more natural.

Councilmember Urban inquired about water rights. The ponds are spring fed. The City has been told the water quality is very good. One pond is used for scuba training.

Mr. Goff noted the marketing video is being used to reach out to the industry.

#### 4. Staff Report(s)

Mr. Goff noted that Council had been sent copies of the application for the NRS advisory committee. The deadline for application is June 15.

#### 5. Elected Officials' Report(s)

**Leah Dozeman** noted the 49<sup>th</sup> Annual Carnation festival is only 2 months away. The Committee is soliciting artists for a plate design. They are also seeking nominations for this year's royalty. This year's theme is Deep Roots.

**Mayor Starker** reminded folks of the Criterium Brewfest this weekend. He also thanked Lutheran Hospital for hosting the Leaves of Hope Run.

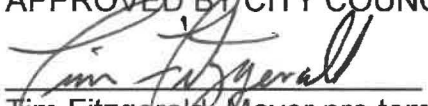
**Clerk Shaver** told voters to watch for their primary election ballots that will be coming in the mail very soon. She alerted registered Independents that they will be receiving both a Democrat ballot and a Republican ballot in one envelope. They must choose only one ballot to fill out and mail in. If they return both ballots – neither ballot will be counted.

**ADJOURNMENT:** The Study Session adjourned at 9:08 p.m.

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Janelle Shaver, City Clerk

APPROVED BY CITY COUNCIL ON June 25, 2018



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Tim Fitzgerald, Mayor pro tem