

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

April 4, 2022

Mayor Bud Starker called the Study Session to order at 6:30 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 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, Korey Stites, Valerie Nosler Beck, Janeece Hoppe, Leah Dozeman, and Rachel Hultin.

Also present: City Clerk, Steve Kirkpatrick; City Treasurer, Chris Miller; City Attorney, Gerald Dahl; City Manager Patrick Goff; Director of Administration, Allison Scheck; Chief of Police, Chris Murtha; WR Police Department; Assistant to the City Manager, Marianne Schilling; Director of Parks and Recreation, Karen O'Donnell; Director of Community Development, Ken Johnstone; Sustainability Coordinator, Kayla Betzold, interested citizens and guests.

Public's Right to Speak

Montana Stephenson, 3655 Urban St., came to discuss the second agenda item, municipal refuse removal. She has been frustrated with the numbers of trash trucks she sees on our streets, creating traffic problems and air pollution. She is also concerned about cyclist and pedestrian safety as the trucks from several companies pass through her neighborhood regularly. She asserted that for more money (\$28/mo.) she gets less service than people in Arvada who pay less (\$20).

Rob Robinson, 4 Hillside Drive, a long-term resident and member of the WR Sustainability Committee. He came to support the municipal trash removal plans in tonight's item 2. Among the many reasons he supports it are the greenhouse gasses emitted by trash trucks and the lack of accessibility to recycling. Other cities have begun providing city-wide trash removal with good results.

Guy Nahmiach, 3650 Ward Rd., came to opine on the impact of delivery trucks, school busses and other vehicles. He opposes the movement to begin using a single hauler for trash and recycling because he believes that action will result in poor service, constant complaints to staff at City Hall and dissatisfied residents who will not get better service, but worse.

Noah Nowak (no address given) came to report on all the preparation and research done by Sustainability Committee and asked Council to carefully read the letter to Council in tonight's packet. She enumerated the many positive impacts of a single waste hauler, ranging from lower cost, more recycling, to less traffic and reduction of greenhouse gas emission. She supports a city-wide trash hauler program for all the benefits the City and its residents would enjoy.

Jenny Snell, 7020 W. 35th Avenue, represents the WR Active Advisory Team, which advises on issues related to cycling and cyclist safety. She called to say that a top priority for the Federal funds available should be to extend and complete bicycle pathways, specifically the Walker Pond area. Not filling in this gap, and connecting more neighborhoods, would be a tragic missing of an opportunity to improve safety, accessibility and inclusiveness.

Mark Westberg, 3320 Yukon Court, lives in a subdivision with a single trash hauler. Previously, he in another neighborhood, where the residents had multiple haulers. He strongly supports a single garbage hauler effort as much more convenient and pleasant than multiple haulers. (Mr. Westberg spoke tonight as a resident, not a city staffer.)

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.

Dear City Council members, please see attached for a letter on this topic from the Wheat Ridge Active Transportation Advisory Team. Thank you for considering!

April 4, 2022, 9:08 AM

[Attachments](#) [See Attachment #1 below]

Kelly Blynn
4175 Brentwood St

Hello Wheat Ridge City Council- Thank you so much for taking the time to consider alternative approaches to how waste is managed in Wheat Ridge. We have loved living in Wheat Ridge since 2017 and feel that the city does a great job managing utilities, parks, etc. Our only real concern has been in the realm of waste management for several reasons: 1) For trash, recycling and compost collection services (from two different haulers), we pay over \$60/month; that is many times more than what we paid previously for the same level of service in a neighboring municipality. 2) The lack of a coordinated waste strategy means that there are multiple haulers on our street every week. We and many of our neighbors have small children and feel that this poses safety concerns as well as unnecessary

pollution, noise and wear and tear on the streets. 3) Some haulers do not provide their own receptacles with lids allowing trash to escape and blow around the neighborhood on windy days. My 5-year-old found trash including cigarettes in our yard after a recent wind event.

4)

From an environmental perspective, we feel that it is important to expect that all haulers operating in Wheat Ridge at least offer trash, recycling and ideally composting options for residents. Thanks again for your time and attention to this issue!

April 4, 2022, 10:00 AM

Susan Renaud
4065 Lamar Street
Wheat Ridge, 80033

TO: Wheat Ridge City Council Members I am happy to see that you are committed to looking into residential waste strategies for Wheat Ridge! This has been a concern for my family and I since we moved here in 2013. Having lived in Denver previously we were surprised when we moved to Wheat Ridge and found that residential trash services were more expensive and that there were trash trucks on our quiet residential street nearly every day of the week. My primary concerns are around: safety and noise; cost; and environmental impact. Safety and Noise: -We have a lot of small children and dogs on our street and surrounding streets. The trash trucks are loud and often drive too fast for the area. Cost: - We're paying two different waste service providers so that we can get trash, recycling, and compost. This is a lot more expensive than if there was one service that did it all. Also because we compost and recycle so much, we would really benefit from a pay as you throw model. Environmental Impact: -Having some many waste service companies means more trucks on our roads than is necessary which increases air pollution -We have an opportunity and responsibility to divert solid waste from landfills as much as possible. Without easy, organized recycling and composting, this is difficult for residents to do on their own. I'd really like to see Wheat Ridge address the following: -We need to better regulate the waste service providers in Wheat Ridge to make sure that they are: transparent about their rates, provide all services needed/wanted (including composting), and that they are collecting and sharing data regarding their ability and track record for diverting waste from landfills. -We need to look at our city as a whole and ensure that the waste service options are supporting our overall quality of life including safety and a clean environment, and that we (residents) are not bearing the brunt financially for a disorganized approach to waste management. Thank you for the time and consideration!

April 4, 2022, 8:24 AM

Laura McGarry
4050 Jay St.
Wheat Ridge , 80033

I'm writing to express my concern with the way waste is currently managed in Wheat Ridge.

I would like the City to consider doing something different. I have concerns regarding 1) the impact on my family and community's quality of life, 2) the costs and overall quality of services, and 3) overall environmental stewardship. Personally, I've found that current waste management practices have resulted in higher trash truck traffic volumes, which in turn, has led to numerous hindrances in the public right of way impacting safe pedestrian connections throughout the City. Additionally, it is my understanding that our neighboring communities who've made the effort to address this issue have benefited from both reduced costs and expanded services. Thank you for taking the time to consider this matter.

April 4, 2022, 6:40 AM

Mark De La Torre
4345 Brentwood St.

1. Appropriation of One Time Revenues – American Rescue Plan and Clear Creek Crossing Reimbursement

Discussion of this item began at approximately 6:46 pm.

Issue

The City is receiving historic and transformative funding from the federal government to respond to the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic. The City received \$2.5 million in 2020, through Jefferson County, from the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act (CARES) and will receive \$7.9 million in Coronavirus State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds from the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) in 2021 and 2022. CARES funding was designed to help respond to the immediate financial impacts of the pandemic while APRA was approved to address the more strategic and long-term needs of communities.

The City is also experiencing an unprecedented level of residential and commercial development during this pandemic which is expected to continue for several years. Revenue associated with this development, such as building use tax and building permit fees, has increased substantially since 2019. The SCL Lutheran Hospital project alone is estimated to generate approximately \$8 million in building use tax in 2021 and 2022.

Finally, the City received \$9.8 million from the Longs Peak Metropolitan District (LPMD) in December 2021 as a reimbursement for the funding the City contributed to the Clear Creek Crossing hook ramp project above and beyond the \$10 million allocated from the 2E Bond.

All these revenues are considered non-recurring as they are one-time revenues or gains that have arisen from infrequent events that are not expected to continue in the future. It is prudent for the City to take a strategic approach in allocating these funds to ensure they are leveraged appropriately. The following proposal will allow the City to shift formally from response to recovery and keep forward momentum for ensuring our entire community can be stronger in the long term from the negative effects of the pandemic.

Staff Reports

Patrick Goff led the discussion of the Cares Act, and American Rescue Plan act including topics on:

- COVID Mitigation and Prevention
- Food Insecurity and Assistance to Low-Income Populations
- Behavioral Healthcare
- Preventing and Responding to Violence
- Lost Revenue
- Water Infrastructure

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:

- Detailed questions about which pot of money we can use for what purposes, and when, how long we can wait to spend the various funds vs. spending them as soon as feasible.
- Is there an opportunity to ask whether specific trails near ponds and lakes can be planned and built to foster birdwatching by protecting avian habitat?
- Can some of this money support water control, curbs, and sidewalks along W. 38th Ave when that project is designed, planned and funded?
- We are very excited to have this opportunity to use these dollars for our residents' benefit.
- Can these funds be applied to resurfacing the Rec Center parking lot? (Funding for that project is already in this year's budget.)
- Are surrounding communities making similar efforts with regard to homelessness, mental health, and similar badly needed social services?
- Can we take the \$1.5 million from the Wadsworth Phase 2 and use it to provide curbs, sidewalks, and other badly needed improvements? We do need to extend the sidewalk along Wadsworth from 35th Ave to 38th Ave.
- In general, people like loop trails. Perhaps we need to create a complete loop trail, that includes consideration of our residents' desires and needs, around Taylor Lake. Will the City also look at drainage along with water quality in these habitats?
- CM thanked the staff and our partners for their thorough and thoughtful proposed allocation of these funds.
- Mental health is so important that it should be a line item in our budget.
- When we reach a consensus, we need to ensure that sidewalks are included along Wadsworth from 38th to 45th.
- The Family Liaisons, the Chamber and several other community groups met on March 15 to discuss elementary school Kindness Closets where families in need can get food, clothing, shoes and other necessities. Hopefully support for this project can get included in the budget.
- Where are we with sharps containers in our parks?
- We need to spend the budgeted money for the Wadsworth Project Phase 1 to make sure it gets completed expeditiously.
- Can we build pickle ball courts at Anderson Park?

CM Hoppe proposed a consensus to bring forward an action to Council to move forward with this proposed spending plan for the \$7.9 million in ARPA funding and the \$9.8

million Clear Creek Crossing reimbursement, to commit 8.8 million to Wadsworth and \$1 million for sidewalks and curbs along Wadsworth between 35th and 38th Avenues.

Consensus attained.

2. Residential Organized Waste Strategies

Discussion of this item began at approximately 8:20 pm

Issue

To improve the Wheat Ridge Police Department's response to emergent calls for service, the organization assigns sworn police officers to a newly formed Telephone Reporting Unit (TRU). The practice of using officers in this capacity has improved the department's ability to respond to reports of criminal activity in the City of Wheat Ridge.

Staff Reports

Sustainability Coordinator Kayla Betzold spoke on the issue including prior action including a ballot measure on the topic that was defeated in 2010, along with other items to include:

- **Organized Waste Systems**
- **City of Wheat Ridge Existing System**
- **City of Wheat Ridge Waste Diversion Efforts**
- **Resident Feedback**
- **Alignment with Current City Planning Documents**
- **Potential Organized Waste Strategies**
- **Peer Agency Overview**

Councilmembers had questions and comments:

CM thanked staff for their presentation and their excellent research and groundwork.

Councilmembers asked detailed questions about several topics, including:

- CM commented that it would cost about \$100,000 to hire consultants, do the research, collect and summarize resident's opinions before we get to a ballot issue.
- We need to allow for residents' options for haulers, not only because that is what our residents will want but also because state law mandates that we have a choice.
- The key issue for CM Hultin is the greenhouse gasses emitted by our current refuse haulers.
- We must begin with a good, robust community engagement process to know what our residents' will support and buy-into.

- One concern is that we do not want Sustainable Wheat Ridge to become the trash hauler group. We need to move forward with an opt-in process for our residents. We need to guard against the Sustainability Coordinator's position being solely devoted to trash.
- In Applewood and Paramount Heights, neighborhood sustainability groups have provided a single hauler program that residents can opt-in and it's working.
- If we get to a ballot issue, we must be clear what the ballot issue states so that people know exactly on what they are asked to vote.
- We need to have either several options for our residents to choose, or, if we go with a single-hauler plan, then we need to put that before the voters, not Council.
- We need to know what our residents want and will support before we take any action.
- In Arvada when the residents must pay an opt-out fee, where does that money go? We need to be very clear with our residents what we are asking them to approve and where all the money will go. What restrictions will residents face with trash that does not fit into a can or bag? What about large items, like old appliances?
- We need to hesitate to describe what we are planning to offer, so that we do not get ahead of the questions our residents will want answered.
- How much staff time would be involved in first, collecting the necessary resident input, and then designing a program based on those needs and desires? We need to make this consultant-based in order to allow the sustainability coordinator to continue to pursue other programs.
- How often do trash haul contracts get renewed? (Staff answered usually once every 5 years is the common practice among Colorado municipalities.)
- We should offer this service to multi-family residential locations because they do not currently get recycling services and the dumpsters inevitably attract vermin.
- What will this program do for businesses and facilities like the hospital?

CM Hultin proposed a consensus to bring forward an action to Council to move forward with a strategy to begin this process.

Consensus attained.

3. Staff Report(s)

Discussion began at 9:15 pm,

Mr. Goff commented on the work that began on the 32nd avenue bridge tonight.

4. Elected Officials' Report(s)

CM Hultin and Ohm will host a district meeting at Randall Park on April 15th. More details will appear on the City website soon. She proposed that during April, the month of Earth Day, no Councilmember should bring disposable plastic water bottles to meetings.

CM Ohm thanked the members of the committees who gave reports tonight. Their presentations reflect hard work and critical thinking.

CM Hutchinson was contacted regarding the traffic situation, and she gave a link to the City's update on the Wadsworth Project and that link is broken.

She saw two residents today who were having trouble navigating along 38th Ave in their electric carts. The construction at that location has gone on for two years and it's just too dangerous for people to ride scooters in traffic!


CM Nosler Beck reported on the March 15 meeting she mentioned earlier and wondered if we can support the effort financially.

The Mayor thanked everyone for a productive meeting, and encouraged us to drive, cycle and walk carefully to protect one another.

ADJOURNMENT

The Study Session adjourned at 9:22 PM.

APPROVED BY CITY COUNCIL ON April 25, 2022.



Steve Kirkpatrick, City Clerk



Rachel Hultin, Mayor Pro Tem

Attachment 1 submitted in WR Speaks for this session:

Re: Leveraging additional general fund dollars for priority bicycle and pedestrian safety projects

March, 23rd, 2022

To: Wheat Ridge Mayor, City Council, and City Manager,

We are writing on behalf of the Wheat Ridge Active Transportation Advisory Team (ATAT), an Outside Agency supported by volunteers that has advised the city on improving active transportation options since 2013. The ATAT envisions a physically and economically vibrant community where people of all ages and abilities can maintain safe, healthy and connected lives through easy and equitable access to active transportation options. The ATAT focuses on outreach and education, advocacy, and connecting community members through walking and biking, and since its founding has provided community input on City projects affecting bicycle/pedestrian safety such as the Pierce Street bike lanes.

We would like to offer our comments on the \$10 million in unbudgeted general funds we understand are available to the city. We believe the top priority for these funds ought to be completing a safe biking and walking connection along the Wadsworth corridor by extending a side path at least to 32nd and Wadsworth. We regularly see pedestrians struggling to navigate the stretch between 35th and 32nd along the side of the road, and the worn trails or footprints in the snow are evidence of the need for this connection. Given the magnitude of the existing Wadsworth project, and the potential impact it will have for improving safe active transportation in the corridor, not filling in this gap would be a major missed opportunity to connect more neighborhoods to this central corridor of the city. This connection is included in the Bicycle & Pedestrian Master Plan Update as a side path and would help provide connections from neighborhoods north of 35th and Wadsworth to City Hall, Crown Hill Park, the Lutheran Campus and other important destinations, and for neighborhoods south of 32nd to connect with businesses along Wadsworth, 38th, and more.

We also hope the city will fully explore the various options for leveraging this funding as match for regional and state funding opportunities to help our city dollars go further. In doing so, we would recommend working to address other top priority bicycle and/or pedestrian uncompleted projects in the Bicycle & Pedestrian Master Plan Update.

Thank you for your consideration, and for your work to improve the safety and access for people walking and biking in this city.

Sincerely,

Wheat Ridge Active Transportation Advisory Team

WHEAT RIDGE ACTIVE TRANSPORTATION ADVISORY TEAM |
<https://www.wratat.org/>