

STUDY SESSION NOTES

CITY OF WHEAT RIDGE, COLORADO

City Council Chambers 7500 W. 29th Avenue

March 6, 2017

Mayor Joyce Jay called the Study Session to order at 6:29 p.m.

Council members present: Monica Duran, Janece Hoppe, Kristi Davis, Zachary Urban, George Pond, Tim Fitzgerald, Larry Mathews, Genevieve Wooden

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

CITIZEN COMMENT ON AGENDA ITEMS none

3. I-70/Kipling Environmental Assessment Update ~ Scott Brink

Mr. Brink introduced Kevin Brown from CDOT, and Leah Langerman and Stacy Tschuor from David Evans & Associates.

Following a few opening remarks from Mr. Brown, Ms. Tschuor briefed Council on the status of the EA with a power point presentation.

The goal of reconstruction of the interchange is to reduce congestion, optimize operations, improve safety and accommodate multi modal connections.

She went over the PEL (Planning and Environmental Linkage study) begun in 2013.

- Identified as issues were
 - 1) capacity and operations related to close signal operation, weave movements between the ramps, traffic that includes tourists and the need for business access;
 - 2) a safety assessment including analysis of all types of accidents, and
 - 3) a need for better bicycle access.
- Technical team meetings included staff from all local agencies, plus CDOT, DRCOG, RTD and FHWA.
- They met with federal elected officials and had small group meetings with several stakeholders.
- Two public open houses and six community focus groups were held.
- From 33 designs two preferred design alternatives were chosen to move forward: a Single Point Urban Interchange (SPUI) and a Traditional Diamond (Diamond).

Following the PEL process a third alternative, Diverging Diamond Interchange (DDI), was added as an option due to new conditions and information. The DDI had not been

considered as an option in the original PEL study due to driver unfamiliarity and bicycle safety concerns.

Features of the three design options include:

SPUI The Single Point Urban Interchange has the smallest footprint (least impact to private property), but does not provide acceptable traffic operations (westbound off-ramp does not improve). The frontage road intersections remain as they are today.

Diamond – The Traditional Diamond moves the frontage roads to improve traffic operations. It provides:

- Acceptable peak hour operations
- Opportunity to phase in separate projects, which could mean smaller funding sources
- 49th intersection is right-in/right-out
- 50th Ave intersection is used to access the northern quadrant
- South frontage road is relocated to the south
- Allowance for separate reconstruction of the north and south ramps before the bridge is reconstructed.

DDI – The Diverging Diamond is similar to the Traditional Diamond. It moves the frontage roads in similar fashion and has similar traffic operations, but is deemed safer because it has fewer conflict points for turning cars and bicycle operations in the middle of the diverging diamonds.

They are now recommending the DDI configuration. While it improves vehicular operations just as the Traditional Diamond does, the DDI is safer and improves bicycle connections.

Schedule: The first public informational meeting will be held Thursday, March 23 to let the public know the design we are moving forward with. Documentation to be in the spring and summer, preliminary design work in spring to fall, with a decision document scheduled for January 2018.

Discussion and questions followed.

- The DDI interchange is not like the one at I-25 & University. That is a SPUI. This DDI is similar to the one at US Hy 36 and McCaslin Boulevard.
- Will this project really ever be done? Funding is not available at this time, but more could be coming. Having the design ready will help when the time comes.
- They will be at 30% design by fall.
- The public meeting on March 23 is at the Rec Center from 5:00-7:00, with a presentation at 6:00pm.
- Residents in the area are concerned that CDOT currently does not take care of its property along I-70. Ms. Tschuor will pass that on to the correct people.
- For future projects, residents will be extremely concerned about maintenance. Mr. Brown reported there has been some discussion about having an IGA with the City for extra maintenance. They will consider this in the future.
- How were the six focus groups put together and who was involved? Ms. Tschuor described three: The multi-modal group had participation from groups like Bike Jeffco,

Bicycle Colorado, and others who signed up at the open house; the business group was made up of businesses surrounding the interchange that they reached out to, and others; another group was area homeowners they reached out to (HOA's, neighborhood associations, etc.).

- The DDI provides no access from southbound Kipling into Natural Grocers; access would be via 50th Ave. Ms. Tschuor noted the possibility of a left turn pocket in the median there as design work proceeds. That is the kind of thing they will address with each property during the design phase. ~ Mr. Goff noted that Natural Grocers is aware of this and the City has promised to work with them.
- The DDI requires a little bit more property acquisition—mostly for the crossover intersections.
- Is there a way to know if the City's streetscape requirements unnecessarily increase the cost of the project? They shouldn't unless there are special or unusual requests.
- Projected cost of \$50-65M is based on CDOT's means and methods.
- Mr. Goff inquired about the impact to development plans for the corridor if funding doesn't come our way. Mr. Brown said there will be give and take as time goes on. They will deal with access requests by working with current conditions with an eye toward the future plan.
- I-70 will be 3 lanes eastbound and 4 lanes westbound at the ramp.
- Will I-70 rush hour congestion be relieved? I-70 bridges will be replaced, but not widened, in the fiscally constrained plan.
- I-70 bridge structure rating not available, but it's not on a "bad" list. It's ugly, but stout.
- Timeline for phasing when the money becomes available? Possibly 1½ - 2 years.

2. Localworks Update ~ Britta Fisher, Executive Director of Localworks

Provided in the packet for Council's information:

- An independent auditor's report for 2015 and 2016
- The IRS Form 990 tax-exempt return for the 2015 fiscal year
- The City's Localworks budget from 2013 to 2017

Ms. Fisher spoke about the following elements of Localworks:

- Mission -- Connecting neighbors and businesses and helping build a more vibrant and engaged community.
- 2016 highlights:
 - Change of tradename from WR2020 to Localworks; launched new website
 - Live Local Dines -- 2nd Thursdays, 9 restaurants, 200+ attended (The NRS noted WR is leaking \$10M annually from people dining outside the city)
 - Localworks Active -- (21 events: winter fitness challenge, cruiser rides every Thurs in summer, yoga in the park, 260+ attended those events and social gatherings)
 - Localworks Harvest -- potlucks and several classes, 220+ attended
- Pillars -- They are volunteer powered, staff supported and board directed. Their third pillar is "creating". They rely on volunteers, businesses, and home owners. Their major project is Ridge at 38.

- Major events -- Attracts thousands of people from across the region. Expanded to seven major events in 2016: Criterium and Brewfest, Friday Night Live series (monthly), Ridgefest, Trunk or Treat, Holiday Celebration. 19,000+ attended. Awarded state championship for Criterium.
- Partnerships -- Partnered with WRPD on the TLC clean up days. Wheaties Academy. Loan programs -- Provide low interest home and business loans. Grant from Kaiser will fund new project called Activate 38; goal is to draw attention to walking, biking, and wheelchair rolling needs on 38th Ave (Kipling to Youngfield)
- Recognition -- Recognized by Westchamber as 2016 Non-profit of the Year.
- Promotion -- She distributed to Council their postcard of events for Jan to April, and hard copies of Enews, their twice-monthly email newsletter.
- Administration -- They have added three new staff members and now have the equivalent of 5 FTE.

After 11 years their core principal is still the same. They're proud of the low 1.7% vacancy rate on 38th Ave in 2016. Increased sales tax on the 38th corridor and the strengthening of other parts of the City provides chance to repeat things that worked well.

Discussion followed. Questions and comments from Council included:

- Was original mission housing related? Yes, and the mission is still the same -- to advance WR as a vibrant and sustainable community. The real estate market has changed since they began. Right now Wheat Ridge is a hot real estate market, so they serve better as a lender for home improvements.
- What percentage of budget is "lending"? \$50K is for infusion. Some things could be retooled and they are open to working with the City.
- Rental income? Localworks still owns three units in the Summerset Townhomes. The real estate committee is evaluating when is the right time to sell.
- 50% for fixed overhead seems high. Ms. Fisher agreed overhead and staffing is 45% - 47% of their budget, but it includes program delivery.
- How does City staff play into the volunteer power? When City staff members volunteer, Localworks counts that as volunteer hours. Mr. Goff added that City staff volunteer of their own choosing; they receive no comp time from the City for volunteering. Sometimes Parks or PD employees are paid for event work, but those are budgeted contributions.
- Any conflicts with the rental properties? Tenants are employees of several small businesses. Any City employees? One. The same rental process was used for all the tenants. Given the heavy reliance on City funds, having a City staff member rent from Localworks should be disclosed. Ms. Fisher acknowledged the concern, but is confident in the properness of this arrangement.
- With revenue coming in, will you become self-funded? Ms. Fisher noted 60% of their budget comes from City. The auditors say it is standard that they provide services that are usually provided by government. They have diversified and are now program directed. There have been changes over time and other changes may come in the future.
- How was Localworks started? Ms. Fisher recommended the video on their website about the history of Localworks. She related how it started as an organization to do what government or neighborhoods couldn't do and be a liaison between businesses, community and government. Localworks is hybrid organization in that they do both community and economic development.

- What specific metrics can be used to track performance/outcomes of these services/programs and events related to economics? They would need money to do an economic impact study. They have done their best with the resources they have. Ms. Fisher pointed out:
 - Vacancy rate in the 38th Ave corridor is down.
 - Between 2011 and 2015 citywide sales tax revenue went up 19%. Sales tax revenue in the 38th Ave corridor (Sheridan –Wads) went up 70%.
 - With the restriping, the marketing campaign, revitalization loans/grants and events Localworks brings consumers to the area and is part of the equation.
- Discussion about causation for the increase in revenue. (e.g. Clancy's moving in)
- Concern about a charity that runs 50% overhead and taxpayer money being transferred to a place where there is no control over it; making sure taxpayers get good bang for their buck. Ms. Fisher noted they follow best practices for non-profits; salaries are necessary for program delivery; the audit separates program delivery from administration.
- Evaluation and metrics are important; it's appropriate for Council to use that to see that the money is prudently and effectively spent.
 - Marketing, brand formation, and brand strategy for our City is being done by Localworks and is largely staffed by community volunteers.
 - Community development and economic development are important and needed.
 - As we prioritize the Neighborhood Revitalization Strategy and evaluate its continued relevance, we can look at validation for these programs, and adjust if necessary.
 - Think the branding and engagement is fantastic.
- Many businesses have said publicly they chose to move to 38th Ave because of the revitalization; Localworks' events and programs are a part of that.
 - Don't want to live in a city that doesn't care about community and have festivals. All cities have festivals and that costs money. Localworks brings people together.
 - WR created Localworks to create community and do economic development; there is a need for the things they provide. Their books are open to the public.
 - When have we ever seen this kind of detailed auditing on the Carnation Festival? If we demand this of Localworks we should demand it from other organization we give money to.
- Measuring effectiveness is good, but what Localworks does is hard to measure. Localworks is valuable and our city would be barren without it.
- This is about social capital. Building and measuring social capital is hard.
 - Localworks builds social capital with events and programs that create relationships; the loans also support home ownership.
 - If we don't have a great community people won't want to live here.
 - Thornton paid four party planners, whereas Localworks has a strong volunteer base that lives here. Support all the things Localworks does.
- Has heard positive remarks at work about the events and the postcard.
- The organization Ms. Fisher referenced is the Colorado Non-profit Association.
- It is important to increase marketing during hard times; just want to make sure there are no overlapping efforts.
- Realize Localworks does a lot for the community, but there is the public perception that there is not enough transparency. We do give Localworks a large amount of money. Public information will help.134

4. Update on the expiration of the moratorium of freestanding emergency rooms

Ken Johnstone made the staff presentation.

The City's one-year moratorium on freestanding emergency rooms expires April 27, 2017. Absent any regulatory legislation coming from the state, it is appropriate for Council to consider if any local regulations should be enacted.

Freestanding emergency rooms are not defined in our zoning codes. Hospitals are only allowed in the Planned Hospital Zone and MU-C zones.

Option 1: Allow the temporary moratorium to expire and do nothing. Existing regulations would allow freestanding emergency rooms in areas zoned PHD (Planned Hospital District) and MU-C (Mixed Use Commercial).

Option 2: Extend the moratorium for six months to allow time for additional regulations to be drafted. The Planning Commission would be engaged in the drafting and review processes. If Council chooses this path, direction on potential modifications is requested.

Per the Council packet potential modifications to the zoning and licensing codes include:

- Limiting how many zone district could have them
- Requiring a Special Use Permit or Conditional Use Permit
- Limiting the total number allowed in the city
- Establishing some spacing requirements
- Establishing operational requirements such as hours of operation
- Creating unique licensing and permitting requirements
- Requiring a demonstration of "need" for such licenses

Discussion followed. All councilmembers expressed a desire to have more discussion before making a decision. Comments included:

- Possibly put them in the category of urgent care center, but don't favor having them in a commercial area.
- Mr. Johnstone explained that uses in a PHD are limited to medical uses, and the uses would likely be applicant driven.
- Any hospital district would go through Planning Commission and public hearings.
- Has anyone asked about this? Not since the initial request at 38th & Wadsworth, but that was withdrawn.
- Like limiting the number in the city and limiting the districts where they are allowed.
- Would like to have freestanding emergency room defined so that the public understand what services they will get or not get.
- Traffic from fire and police is concerning from a land use prospective.
- Not interested in restricting trade, but when it comes to public health we should exercise care.

There was unanimous consent to proceed with Option 2.

1. Staff Report(s) -- Patrick Goff

- The tour of the Fruitdale project on Thursday has been changed to 5pm.
- He reported the City is still working on a long-term solution to ensure that detox services remain available in this area. [*Arapahoe House discontinued their detox services.*] The City is working with Jefferson Center for Mental Health; they are very interested in working on that. Lutheran and St. Anthony's have committed to \$15K each for short term funding through June. This lowers our commitment, which is currently \$12,800. The City could use contingency funds to help fund short term, but long term they will work with other partners. Discussion followed.

5. Elected Officials' Report(s)

Mayor Jay expressed her concern that no condominiums are being built in the metro area and that 68% of the housing is over \$400K. ~ She asked Councilmembers to limit their questions during discussion so everyone has an opportunity to participate.

George Pond noted that the Activate 38 meeting is not on the City's website. Mr. Goff said staff would get it on there.

Monica Duran asked if the information from the retreat would be on the website. Mr. Goff said it would. ~ She also announced that the WR Coop will be having a grand opening on Saturday, March 11. It is located at 7250 W. 38th Ave. It is an office sharing space, complete with conference room. All are welcome to come and check it out.


Kristi Davis reported an Urban Renewal meeting at 6:00 tomorrow. They will be talking about giving the 2E dollars back. ~ Mr. Goff added that a big document will be coming to Council on March 13 that contains tax sharing agreements to ensure compliance with the terms of 2E. He explained that while the WR Cyclery TIF is all paid, the increment generated from WR Cyclery (sales and property tax) continues to flow to Urban Renewal. This cooperation agreement between Urban Renewal and the City will do two things: 1) Stop all sales tax sharing from WR Cyclery to Urban Renewal as of Dec.31,2016 and put it in the City's General Fund, and 2) maintain the flow of WR Cyclery's incremental property tax to Urban Renewal for the life of the TIF. This agreement will prevent revenue from 2E from being spent for anything else.

Tim Fitzgerald reported that he and George Pond would be having a District III meeting on March 18 at 9:30am at the Rec Center. There will be coffee and donuts.


Zachary Urban shared that he would not be here on March 13 as he, along with Mr. Pond and Ms. Wooden, will be attending the National League of Cities. ~ He thanked citizens Tim Rogers, Vivian Vos and Kelly Brooks who attended parts of the retreat. He thought the retreat was productive and extended gratitude from the people under the bridge on Wadsworth who received left over food from the dinner Friday night.

ADJOURNMENT

The Study Session adjourned at 8:39 pm.


Janelle Shaver, City Clerk

APPROVED BY CITY COUNCIL March 20, 2017


George Pond, Mayor Pro Tem