

STUDY SESSION NOTES
CITY OF WHEAT RIDGE, COLORADO
Hybrid - Virtual Meeting
May 1, 2023

Mayor 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, guests and interested citizens.

The Mayor 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, Judy Hutchinson, Leah Dozeman, Valerie Nosler Beck, and Rachel Hultin (who joined virtually).

Councilmembers Hoppe, Stites, and Weaver excused themselves.

Also present: City Clerk, Steve Kirkpatrick, City Manager Patrick Goff; Director of Community Development, Lauran Mikulak; Civil Engineer, Jordan Jefferies, PE; West Metro Fire Chief, Don Lombardi; Will Wagenlander with RVi consultants and Jeff Snelling with David Evans & Associates, also consultants; other staff and one interested resident.

Public's Right to Speak

None tonight.

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. Update from West Metro Fire District

Issue

West Metro Fire Rescue is a full service, all hazard and rescue agency, headquartered in Lakewood, Colorado. West Metro covers more than 108 square miles in two Colorado counties and serves nearly 300,000 residents with crews at 17 fire stations staffed 24/7. West Metro responds to an emergency every 12 minutes, averaging more than 41,000 calls annually.

Staff Reports

Chief Lombardi provided an update on West Metro Fire, one of just 301 accredited fire and emergency services agencies in the world. West Metro is also ISO Class 1 certified – one of just 114 agencies to achieve both accreditation and the top ISO rating. The rating is a gauge of a fire agency's ability to serve its residents and business owners and is awarded based on a number of key factors including staffing, apparatus, training, 911 communications and water supply.

For business or homeowners in West Metro's district, the Class 1 rating results in millions of dollars in savings on property insurance. In April of 2016, Wheat Ridge Fire merged with West Metro Fire Rescue.

Chief Lombardi spoke on the feasibility study where it concluded that the merger would result in cost savings for taxpayers and more robust service for the cities of Wheat Ridge and Edgewater. Voters officially approved the merger in October 2016. West Metro generally serves Wheat Ridge south of Clear Creek.

Other items spoken about included:

- Peer Communities and National Standards
- Recommendations
- Next Steps

Councilmembers had questions and comments:

- Several CM thanked Chief Lombardi for his time and the update.

CM asked detailed questions about City policy options and how our policies impact our interactions with West Metro Fire.

Another CM question concerned the danger from high winds and wildfires, and measures West Metro Fire takes to mitigate that risk.

Can one of West Metro's fire fighters afford to buy a home in Wheat Ridge? Chief Lombardi gave a detailed answer, including the provisions in a recently negotiated labor contract with West Metro Firefighters and EMT.

2. Youngfield Street Beautification Update

Issue

Renewal Wheat Ridge, the City's urban renewal authority, issued bonds in the amount of \$37.5 million, in September 2021, for public improvement projects throughout the I-70/Kipling Corridors Urban Renewal Plan area. Five million dollars from these bond funds have been allocated for beautification of the Youngfield Corridor. Improvements to the Youngfield Corridor is a priority project for those residents who participated in the Let's Talk Applewood Neighborhood program

On August 22, 2022, City Council awarded a contract to David Evans & Associates, Inc. ("DEA"), a professional design firm, to refine the conceptual design and to provide

preliminary design, final design, and permitting for the Youngfield Beautification project and the associated 32nd Ave Bike Lanes project.

Staff Reports

Civil Engineer, Jordan Jefferies provided City Council with an update on the Youngfield Beautification project and gave CM the opportunity to provide feedback on the thematic concepts that will inform the preliminary design.

The Youngfield Beautification project is focused on improving the aesthetics of the Youngfield corridor from 30th Avenue to 40th Avenue, particularly in the area between Youngfield and I-70. DEA¹ had previously developed a design concept booklet for the City as a part of a separate project in 2021.

Topics addressed in the update included:

- Project Scope
- Project Status & Public Engagement
- Next Steps

Mr. Jeffries explained that while this session is largely focused on updating the status of the Youngfield Beautification project, the 32nd Bike Lanes project is another nearby project under development with DEA¹ as the design consultant. DEA's scope on the 32nd Avenue project is to develop final design plans to add much-needed bike lanes under I-70 to provide a safer experience for bicyclists along the very popular 32nd Ave bike route. Bike lanes that currently terminate just west of Xenon Street, will be extended west under I-70 to Zinnia St/Clear Creek Drive.

Councilmembers asked detailed questions about several topics, engaging in discussion among themselves and with staff including:

- Several CM expressed their support for the staff recommendations.
- How will the construction impact traffic on Youngfield St.? Staff gave a detailed reply.
- If there were funding for multimodal and sidewalks along Youngfield, would that be along the east side of Youngfield. Again, staff provided details.
- Mr. Goff reported on a funding application for more improvements is in the queue awaiting approval.
- Will CDOT cooperate with our efforts to complete the Plains to Mountains bicycle route? Mr. Jefferies reported about why and how we will work closely with CDOT directly and in conjunction with DEA¹.
- Will the plans include lighting under overpasses, signals for pedestrians and cyclists, and other safety protections? Staff gave a detailed answer.

¹ DEA refers to David Evans and Associates, not the Federal agency with the same acronym.

- Staff is recommending that ongoing maintenance of these improvements should be contracted with a local firm because the City does not have the resources to do it.

Consensus attained.

3. Staff Report(s)

Mr. Goff announced that the City received a Starburst Award for wise use of funding.

The City received a Program Excellence Award for our hotel licensing program from the Colorado City and County Managers Association.

Elected Officials' Report(s)

CM Nosler Beck again reminded us of the upcoming Willmore Davis alumni event.

CM Hutchinson announced a rummage sale this Saturday at the Active Adult Center.

CM Ohm recognized the parents and other volunteers who worked many hours to create decorations, set-up the space and in doing so created a safe and attractive environment for the Wheat Ridge High School After Prom Party on Saturday, April 29th. He particularly emphasized the creativity and artistic flair they demonstrated in making scores of paper flower decorations, many of them as large and 18" to 30" across.

CM Hultin reported that Local Work has launched an app that will allow you to learn more about the City and its history. If you visit the site and download the app you will receive a coupon good for purchases from a local business. Please, use it!

CM Dozeman reported that Local Works has a great local calendar of events. This Wednesday, May 3 we will have a Farmers Market from 5 to 7 pm in the 5000 block of W. 29th. Ave.

Mayor Starker reported on a great groundbreaking for the project at 44th and Wadsworth.

Mayor Pro-Tem Stites will sit in for the Mayor at Coffee with the Mayor on May 13th. (Coffee with the Mayor is scheduled monthly on the second Saturday.)

ADJOURNMENT

The Study Session adjourned at 7:49 pm.

APPROVED BY CITY COUNCIL ON May 8, 2023.



Steve Kirkpatrick, City Clerk



Corey Stites, Mayor Pro-Tem