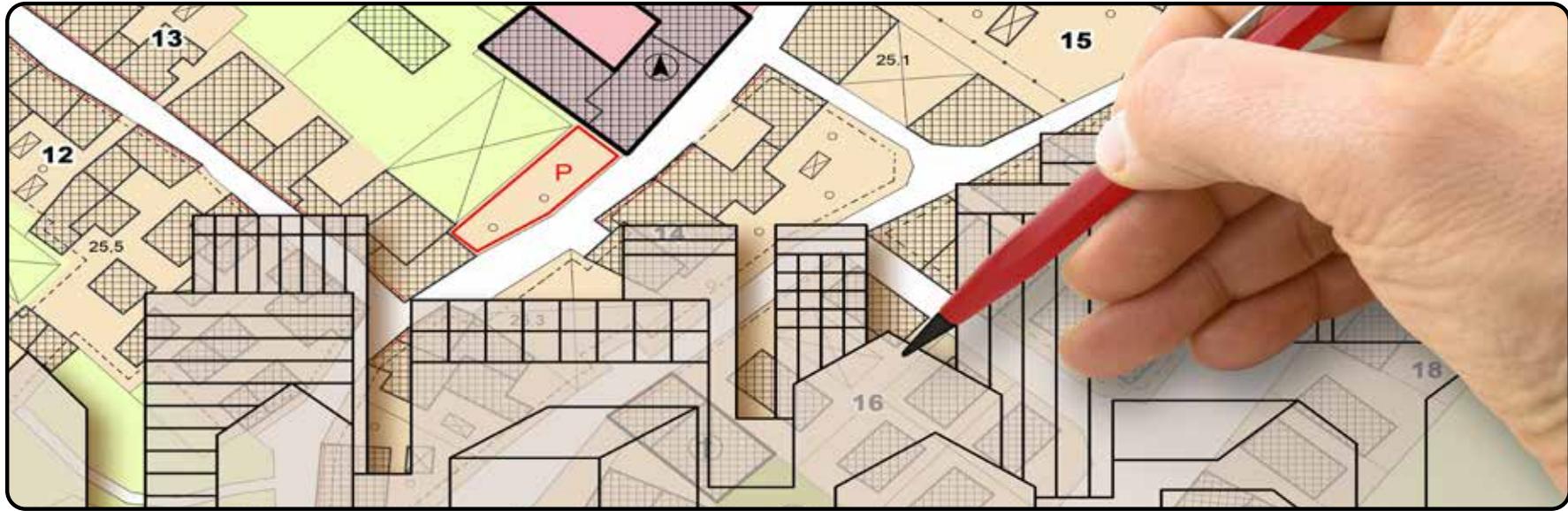


Connections

A publication from the City of Wheat Ridge Issue 87

Winter/Spring 2024



Wheat Ridge Launches City Plan

This spring, the City of Wheat Ridge is launching a community engagement process for the new City Plan. This plan, often called a comprehensive plan, aims to articulate the community's vision for the next 20 years, establish shared values, and identify priorities for the future. It will also provide direction on issues such as land use, transportation, housing, and economic growth. The City Plan will provide the framework for many decisions for years to come.

Broad community input is critical to ensure the City Plan reflects the Wheat Ridge community. Individuals will have several opportunities to share their thoughts throughout 2024 and into 2025. The first chance to engage is the City Plan Kickoff event on Tuesday, April 16 from 4:30 to 6:30 p.m. at the Wheat Ridge Recreation Center (4005 Kipling Street). At this event, participants can learn

more about the plan and share their initial thoughts on the city's future. The best way to learn about this event and other ways to get involved is to subscribe to project updates online at whatsupwheatridge.com/city-plan. Subscribers will get an email reminder about public events like the one this April and ways to share input online for those unable to attend in-person events. Community members who have subscribed for project updates but want to be even more involved are encouraged to become Neighborhood Champions. This is a group of people who live, work, or have a general interest in Wheat Ridge and who want to help promote City Plan participation. Neighborhood Champions may devote however much time they desire and have available. This could include simply placing a city-provided sign in their yard, or actively

CITY PLAN KICKOFF

TUES, APRIL 16
4:30-6:30 PM

RECREATION CENTER
(4005 KIPLING STREET)

JOIN US IN PERSON
OR PARTICIPATE
ONLINE



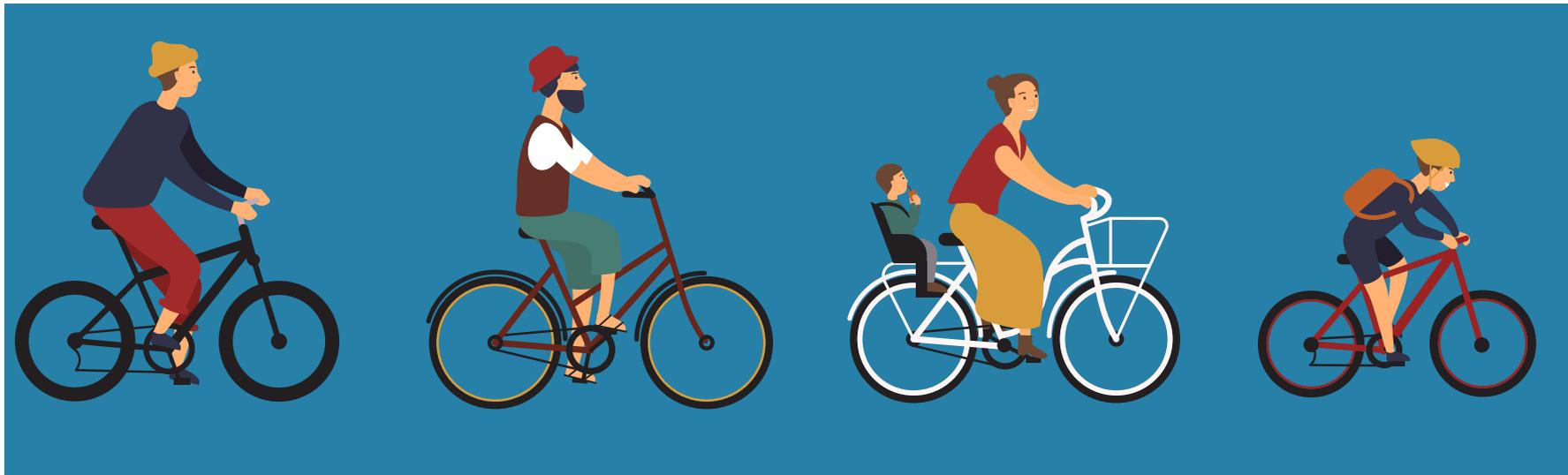
promoting the City Plan through their networks, participating in online engagement activities, and acting as the lead correspondent for their neighborhood. To become a Neighborhood Champion, visit the

project page at whatsupwheatridge.com/city-plan and click on the Neighborhood Champion Sign-up. To learn more about the City Plan and get involved, visit whatsupwheatridge.com/city-plan.

Inside this issue...

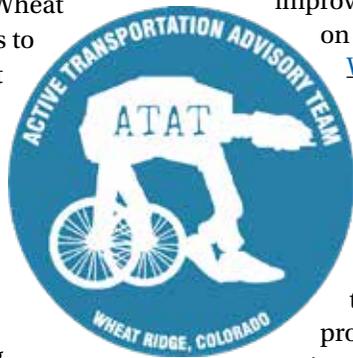
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MAYOR BUD STARKER



Bike Jeffco, Wheat Ridge ATATs, and City Collaborating on Safe Routes to Parks Activating Communities Program

In the wake of a 40-year high in pedestrian deaths across the country, local groups in Wheat Ridge are taking proactive measures to enhance pedestrian safety. A Wheat Ridge coalition, led by Bike Jeffco and including the Wheat Ridge Active Transportation Advisory Team and the City of Wheat Ridge, is one of four Colorado communities participating in the Safe Routes to Parks Colorado Activating Communities program in 2024, designed to improve safe and equitable local park access. There will be two opportunities coming up for public engagement: an Open House on Wednesday, March 13th at 6pm at the Recreation Center and a project site audit on Saturday, April 6th which will meet at the Recreation



Center at 10am before visiting potential improvement locations. More information on this program will be posted on WhatsupWheatRidge.com/srtp. During this nine-month initiative, Safe Routes Partnership will work with the coalition to provide technical assistance and analysis that will lead to recommendations and an "Action Plan" aimed to improve pedestrian travel to local parks and green spaces.

The Safe Routes Partnership awarded Bike Jeffco \$10,000 to implement an initial improvement in the plan. There is great support among residents for improvement in bicycle



and pedestrian access and safety, traffic and speeding, and public safety. This past November Wheat Ridge voters approved a ballot initiative with 70 percent in support of funding sidewalk connectivity and bike lanes. Participating in the Safe Routes to Parks program will help us engage with residents to identify and prioritize the biggest need areas for improving access to our great park and open space system.

I'd like to thank Bike Jeffco for applying for this program and giving us an opportunity to work collaboratively with community residents and the Wheat Ridge Active Transportation Advisory Team to develop an action plan that could be used to launch Wheat Ridge's investment into active transportation infrastructure.

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City of Wheat Ridge Hotel Ordinance, Affordable Housing Strategy and Action Plan Create Safe and Permanent Housing Solutions

Wheat Ridge’s Homeless Navigation Program, in collaboration with Family Tree and Foothills Regional Housing, have achieved significant milestones in addressing homelessness through city ordinances, action plans and partnerships.

Notably, the city’s hotel ordinance, passed in late 2021, proved crucial for individuals previously residing in motels, trapped in a cycle of exorbitant daily rents that hindered their ability to save or progress. To try and help those stuck in the cycle, the ordinance requires motels to implement basic security measures and upgrades to facilities that better cater to long-term guests.

The ordinance also limited the number of days someone could stay at a motel that was not licensed as an extended stay motel. To address the impact of this ordinance to our long-term motel residents, the city allocated \$500,000 in ARPA funds to partner with Family Tree to assist in the search for safe and stable housing options. This push has led to 31 households and 57 individuals being placed into permanent, stable housing through the great work of Family Tree.

As another example of partnership success, the Homeless Navigation Program recently worked with Foothills Regional Housing to help fund the purchase of the recently completed Vance Street Lofts near 38th and Wadsworth. By providing funds through the city’s new Wheat Ridge Housing Fund, the city was able to make direct referrals for open units in that building which resulted in 16 individuals gaining stable housing



Patrick Goff
City Manager

from the homeless navigation program.

This accomplishment coincides with the Homeless Navigation Program’s overall success in securing housing solutions for over 120 individuals since the program’s inception in late 2020. Clients helped by the program range greatly in age and experience, some grappling with chronic homelessness, and others for the first time. These housing solutions, like the Vance Street Lofts partnership, would not be made available if not for the Affordable Housing Strategy and Action Plan, which was adopted by city council in 2023. This strategy identifies policy and establishes a responsive set of actions for implementation over the next five years. One of those actions included developing a Wheat Ridge Housing Fund to fund affordable housing initiatives, like Vance Street Lofts. Lodging tax revenue from short-term rentals is one primary revenue source for the Housing Fund. Through this fund the city was able to grant Foothills Regional Housing the resources required to complete such a project.

‘By providing funds through the city’s new Wheat Ridge Housing Fund, the city was able to make direct referrals for open units in that building which resulted in 16 individuals gaining stable housing.’

In conclusion, the city’s motel ordinance and Affordable Housing Action Plan, guided by Wheat Ridge’s Homeless Navigation Program, and partnerships with Family Tree and Foothills Regional Housing have yielded remarkable outcomes, profoundly impacting the lives of every individual served. I would like to extend my gratitude to the dedicated efforts of our city council for this direction, our homeless and housing navigators, and our community partners for finding solutions to some of our greatest challenges.

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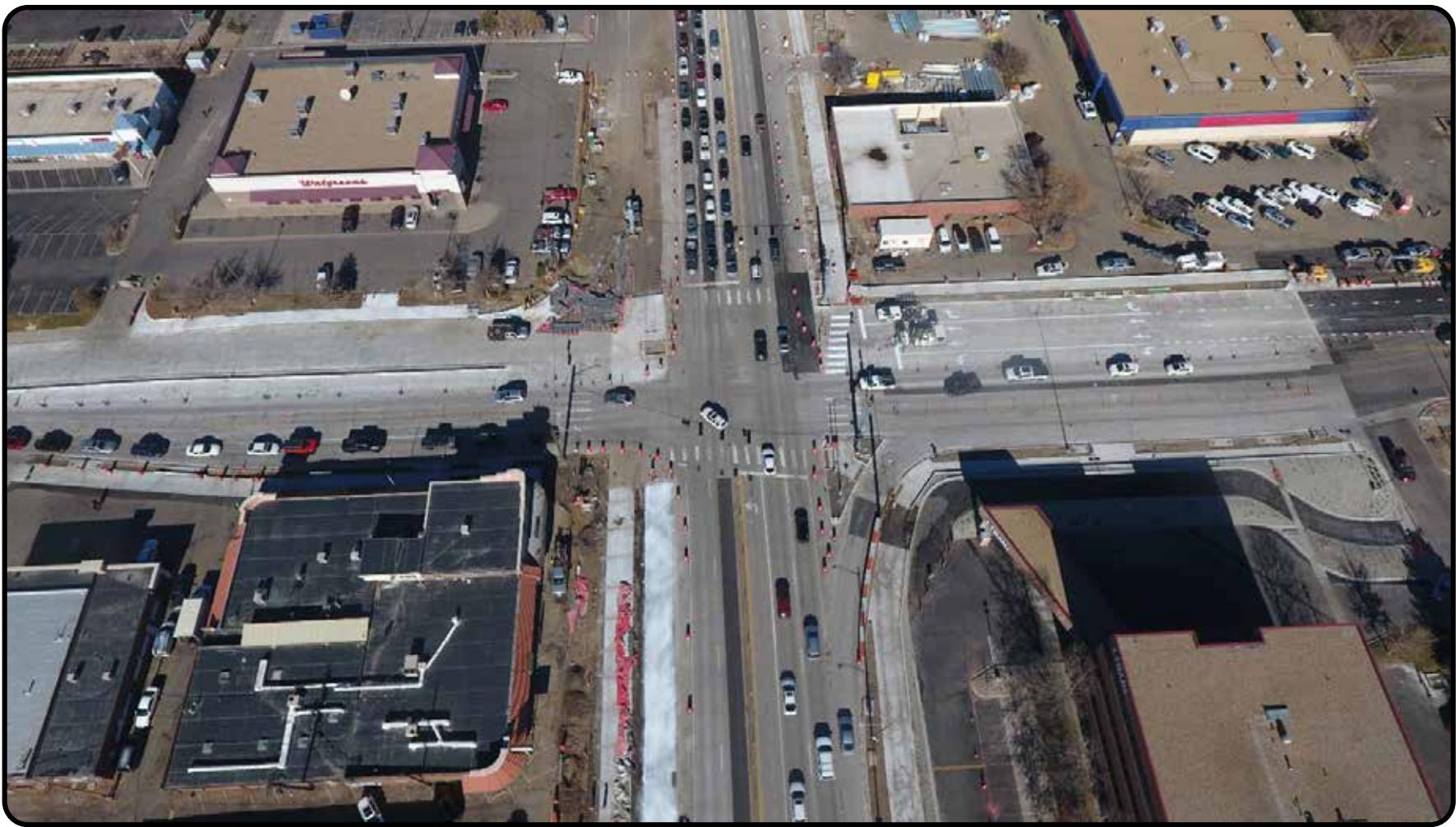
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Update from Wadsworth Improvement Project

It's a good time to revisit the safety and mobility benefits of the Wadsworth Improvement Project as construction continues for a third year along the heavily traveled state highway through Wheat Ridge. Safety is a concern along the Wadsworth corridor for all modes of travel—vehicular, pedestrian, bicycle, and transit. With an average daily vehicle traffic count of around 45,000 vehicles, the corridor experiences high levels of congestion during peak periods on weekdays which affects travel times, transit reliability, emergency vehicle response, and safety. Historical crash data from before construction began indicates that Wadsworth

experienced nearly three times the number of crashes expected for this type of road.

Major project features expected to improve safety and mobility include:

- Third lane in both directions on Wadsworth Boulevard
- Raised center median from 35th Avenue to I-70
- Reconfigured intersections to improve safety
- Continuous flow intersections (CFI) at 38th and 44th avenues
- Consolidated access points and driveways
- Continuous sidewalk on the west side of Wadsworth
- Multi-use trail on the east side of Wadsworth

- Landscape zones between travel lanes and sidewalks/paths

Several active construction zones are present along the 1.5-mile project area. Drivers should continue to expect daytime northbound lane closures and temporary traffic patterns as necessary.

Community members are encouraged to call the hotline 303-390-0878 or email wadsworthproject@ci.wheatridge.co.us to reach the project team with any questions. Visit whatsupwheatridge.com/improve-wadsworth for more information and to sign up for regular traffic alerts.



The City of Wheat Ridge received the National League of Cities (NLC) Milestone Award at the NLC City Summit Conference on November 18, 2023, in Atlanta, Georgia. This award honors those cities that have been continuous members of NLC for fifty years. Thank you to Councilmember Rachel Hultin for accepting the award on behalf of the city.



Speeding and City Streets

The city of Wheat Ridge's default speed limit is 25 mph for all local streets — primarily the roads with no stripes that go through residential areas and any street where speed limit signs are not posted. Signs stating this are posted at all major entry points to the city such as off highway ramps.



The biggest impact drivers can make on safety in the streets is driving at or below the speed limit. Public understanding of the function of stop signs is one of the most critical elements in reducing traffic crashes. Each year the city receives many requests to install stop signs in order to reduce speeding. Studies show that

Residential Waste Engagement Project

The Residential Waste Engagement Project launched in July 2023 and aims to better understand what residents think about the current open-market waste management system, and potential future changes to this system. The first round of public engagement took place in December and January and staff received 895 comments from the Wheat Ridge community; 51 residents attended the open house on December 13, and over the last two months 329 people took the online survey. The feedback received is currently being analyzed and will play an important role in shaping the second round of public engagement in late spring or early summer 2024. The sustainability team would like to thank everyone who provided feedback so far! In the meantime, residents can learn more about the project and subscribe to updates by visiting the project's page on What's Up Wheat Ridge at bit.ly/WRWasteProject.

Air Quality Monitors Installed in Wheat Ridge

Jefferson County Public Health received a grant to replicate Denver's Love My Air program, which installs air quality monitors in public locations including at the Wheat Ridge Recreation Center and Panorama Park, to measure pollution. This initiative is meant to provide residents with real-time data about air-quality on an easy-to-understand dashboard that will provide suggested actions based on current air quality. View the dashboard by visiting bit.ly/WRLoveMyAir, or downloading the Love My Air Network app.

SPEEDING continued from page 4

installing stop signs is not an effective method of reducing speeding violations. The purpose of stop signs is to assign the right-of-way at an intersection - not to slow drivers down.

The City of Wheat Ridge follows the national guidelines for installing traffic control devices such as stop signs, as outlined in the Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices. There are various requirements that must be met, such as minimum volumes and number of crashes, before a stop sign can be installed.

More information related to traffic safety can be found on the city's website or at www.codot.gov/safety.

COMMUNITY CALENDAR



HOLIDAYS AND CLOSURES

Easter – Sunday, March 31
Wheat Ridge Recreation Center closed

Cleaning & Maintenance Week – April 22-27
Active Adult Center closed

Anderson Pool Opens – May 25

Memorial Day – Monday, May 27
Wheat Ridge Recreation Center: 10 a.m. - 5 p.m.
Active Adult Center closed
City Hall closed

CITY COUNCIL

City Council Meetings

March 25 – 6:30 p.m.
April 8 and 22 – 6:30 p.m.
May 13 – 6:30 p.m.

Study Sessions

March 18 – 6:30 p.m.
April 1 and 15 – 6:30 p.m.
May 6 and 20 – 6:30 p.m.

COFFEE WITH THE MAYOR AT VINNOLA'S ITALIAN MARKET AND DELI

April 13 – 9 a.m.
May 11 – 9 a.m.

BOARDS, COMMISSIONS AND COMMITTEE MEETINGS

Board of Adjustment

March 28 – 7 p.m.
April 25 – 7 p.m.
May 23 – 7 p.m.

Cultural Commission

March 13 – 6 p.m.
April 10 – 6 p.m.
May 13 – 6 p.m.

Liquor Authority Board

March 14 and 28 – 9 a.m.
April 11 and 25 – 9 a.m.

Parks and Recreation Commission

March 20 – 6:30 p.m.
April 17 – 6:30 p.m.
May 15 – 6:30 p.m.

Planning Commission

March 21 – 6:30 p.m.
April 4 and 18 – 6:30 p.m.
May 2 and 16 – 6:30 p.m.

Sustainability Advisory Committee

March 21 – 6 p.m.
April 18 – 6 p.m.
May 16 – 6 p.m.

SPECIAL EVENTS

Parks and Recreation

March 14 – AAC's St. Patrick's Dinner, 5 – 6:30 p.m.
March 23 - Egg-stra Special Easter Egg Hunt, 10 a.m.
April 12 – AAC's Island Breeze Bash, 1 – 2:30 p.m.
April 20 – 21 – Tree Sale at Anderson Park, 8 a.m. – 3 p.m. & 8 a.m. – 12 p.m.

Wheat Ridge Historical Society

Second Saturday Socials – 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.
April 13 – Earth Day Event
May 11 – May Festival



LET'S TALK WHEAT RIDGE

The City of Wheat Ridge wants to hear from you! There are several upcoming opportunities for you to share input. If one or both of the following topics interest you, please participate!

CITY PLAN

Kickoff Event on Tuesday, April 16 from 4:30 to 6:30 p.m. at the Recreation Center (4005 Kipling Street) and **Online Engagement** opportunity available soon at WhatsUpWheatRidge.com/city-plan.

SAFE ROUTES TO PARKS

Open House on Wednesday, March 13 from 6 to 7 p.m. at the Recreation Center (4005 Kipling Street) and **Project Site Audit** (pre-registration required) on Saturday, April 6 from 10 a.m. to 12 p.m.
Learn more at WhatsUpWheatRidge.com/srtp.

ECONOMIC



DEVELOPMENT

Steve Art
303-235-2806
sart@ci.wheatridge.co.us

City Developing Economic Development Strategic Plan

The City of Wheat Ridge is undertaking an 8-month process to update its 2009 Economic Development Strategic Plan. Working with Progressive Urban Management Associates (PUMA) the strategic plan will evaluate and make recommendations on the internal and external elements of economic development.

Working with the city and the business community, PUMA will create a visionary strategic plan that will guide decision making and investment over the next 10 to 15 years, and will identify key actions that can be implemented in the more immediate future. The plan will build upon existing assets and recent growth that will chart a path toward a resilient and economically vibrant future.

Led by the PUMA team of Brad Segal and Andrea Buglione along with Arleen Taniwaki the Principal

of ArLand Land Use Economics, the process will focus on a deep dive into the past, current and future economic outlook for the city. "We're excited to work again with Wheat Ridge," says Segal the President of PUMA. "We've worked a few times in the community with our last work being done for Wheat Ridge 2020, which is now Localworks on a proposed Business Improvement District. The city has a great team and has done a fantastic job of attracting and maintaining its business base, our job will be to hone those successes and make recommendations moving forward."

For more information on the upcoming plan, or if you're a business looking to participate in elements of the plan, contact Steve Art, the City's Economic Development Manager at sart@ci.wheatridge.co.us. For information on PUMA, www.pumaworldhq.com.

City to Host 6th Annual Business Walk

The city's Economic Development Division will host its sixth business walk on June 20. The every-other-year walk is one program the city conducts to gather information from brick-and-mortar businesses in Wheat Ridge.

"Wheat Ridge is the only community in the state, that I'm aware of, that does a business walk," says Steve Art the city's economic development manager. "Most cities nationwide do a great job of attracting and welcoming business, but then never engage with them again. This is just one touchpoint we can use to continue to hear from our business community."

WALK continues on page 12

RIBBON

CUTTING

2023: City Busy Cutting Ribbons on New Business



2023 was a busy year for Wheat Ridge as it helped cut ribbons on just some of its new businesses.

If you're a new business or celebrating a historic event, contact Cheryl Brungardt at wr.ribbon.cutting@gmail.com. We ask for at least a 30-days notice.

BUSINESS continues on page 7



RIBBON

CUTTING

2023: City Busy Cutting Ribbons on New Business



2024 LARGE ITEM PICKUP PROGRAM

The City of Wheat Ridge is once again offering a free service to assist residents in getting rid of items that don't fit in typical garbage cans and/or can only be disposed of at an additional cost through an individual garbage service provider. Examples of these large items include mattresses/box springs, couches, and washers or dryers. A list of acceptable and unacceptable items can be found below.

This program improves aesthetics in neighborhoods by allowing property owners in getting rid of excess items on their property. Businesses and apartment complexes, who have other means of disposing of these items, are not included in the program.

The 2024 Large Item Pickup Program for residences located within the Wheat Ridge city limits is scheduled for:

**Saturday, May 18, 2024, and
Saturday, May 25, 2024**

SPECIFICS

- The FIRST 190 City of Wheat Ridge residences to register for the program will be eligible to have ONE large bulky household item picked up from the front of your property.

- Up to 120 residences will have a pickup scheduled on Saturday, May 18, 2024.

- Up to 70 residences will have a pickup scheduled on Saturday, May 25, 2024.

- This is a free service. No bill will be sent and no money will be collected from residents.

ONLINE & TELEPHONE REGISTRATION & PROGRAM INFORMATION

largeitemreg@ci.wheatridge.co.us
303-205-7611

- Online registration Begins: April 1, at 7 a.m.
- Telephone registration Begins: Monday, April 8, between 7 a.m. to 3 p.m. - Monday thru Friday only.
- Registration Ends: Friday, May 3, or when capacity has been reached, whichever comes first.
- Verification of Wheat Ridge residency and pre-approval of the type of item to be picked up will be required at the time of registration.

REMEMBER, ONLY THE FIRST 190 REGISTRANTS WILL BE ELIGIBLE FOR THE PROGRAM!

PROGRAM GUIDELINES

- Only ONE, pre-approved large item will be picked up per address, unless pre-arranged through Republic Services as described below.

- Pickup will not be approved for unit-type residences, such as apartments, townhomes, or condominiums. This service is also not eligible for businesses.

- Pickup hours are 7 a.m. to approximately 5 p.m. There is no schedule of when pickups will be made on any particular street; therefore, your large item must be at the curb by 7 a.m. on the pickup date you have registered for.

- Do not place your large pick-up item with refuse to be collected by your regular collection service.

- Pickups will be made from private streets only if they are wider than 20 feet and loop to a public street, connect to a public street at both ends, or end with a standard size cul-de-sac.

- Trash containers will not be emptied; trash bags and additional large items will not be picked up.

- A large item will not be picked up if two workers cannot safely lift it into the collection truck. A wood stove, for example, will not be picked up due to its weight.

- If weather conditions dictate, the pickup dates will be delayed by one week.

For a complete list of what items are accepted plus recycling information, visit www.ci.wheatridge.co.us.



Exceptional People Providing Exceptional Service!



Wheat Ridge Police Recognizes Exceptional Work at Annual Awards Ceremony

The Wheat Ridge Police Department held its annual Awards Ceremony to close out 2023. A committee within the department collects nominations and recognizes the good police work done over the past year, from saving

lives, DUI arrests, and going above and beyond what's required for the betterment of the Wheat Ridge community.

Employee of the Year was awarded to Cindy Case for her excellent work on the Evidence Team, maintaining cru-

cial evidence, at times single-handedly, for all criminal cases. Cindy helped guide the department through the cyberattack, which for a time required

AWARDS continues on page 12



WRPD Deploys New Tools, Technology to Improve Policing

The Wheat Ridge City Council has approved the police department's budget for 2024, which includes the foundation of the new WRPD Drone Program. The department will be deploying three drones to help in certain investigations, patrol, and active crime scenes. The department is currently

training four officers and detectives for the program to join the four who are already trained and hope to have drones up in the air soon.

The department has cleared all the necessary hurdles defined by the

TOOLS continues on page 12

Operation Blue Santa Success

Every December, the Wheat Ridge Police Department gets into the holiday spirit by giving back to the community. Operation Blue Santa was a huge success, thanks to a collaboration between the Wheat Ridge Police Department and the Optimist Club of Wheat Ridge.

After Thanksgiving, officers and detectives collected donations of toys at the Lakeside Walmart, while also collecting donations at the department. In mid-December, volunteers wrapped presents, which were then delivered by WRPD patrol and the new rookies.

"Seeing the smiles on the faces of these families is an important reminder of why we wear the badge: to serve and protect

SANTA continues on page 12

Wheat Ridge Police Welcomes Seven Talented New Recruits

Seven new recruits graduated from the joint academy this winter to join the Wheat Ridge Police family.

They are (top row left to right) Dalton Corbett, Andrew Cherry, Joshua Gonzalez (bottom row left to right) Oxli Monarrez-Adame, Mario Sandoval, Carlos Bowdre and Joshua Rettschlag. The seven are now out on the streets and undergoing the stages of field training with veteran officers, before working patrol on their own.

These rookies bring great service and first-responder experience to the Wheat Ridge Police Department family. Many include a background of military service, EMT training, and firefighting experience. Half of the class is fluent in Spanish, which will continue the department's efforts to provide excellent communication and connections to the people it serves.

The addition of seven rookies brings the department close to full staffing to kick of 2024, with five more promising candidates entering the academy this January.





GRAND OPENING

MARCH 30TH 11:00AM-2:00PM

CLEAR CREEK MAKERSPACE MEMBERSHIP NOW AVAILABLE

Excitement is brewing as Clear Creek Makerspace, situated at 9110 W 44th Ave, gears up to open its doors to the eagerly anticipating community. Before delving into the realm of state-of-the-art tools and equipment, prospective members are encouraged to acquaint themselves with the steps required to become active participants in this vibrant creative hub.

While open house events and guided tours will be available upon the grand opening slated for the end of March 2024, the true essence of Clear Creek Makerspace awaits active members. Accessing the myriad offerings of CCM necessitates enrollment in a membership plan tailored to individual preferences. Interested parties can peruse the range of membership options on the organization's official website at www.clearcreekmakerspace.com.

The membership process can be done from the comfort of one's home. After selecting and completing payment for the chosen plan, members will receive an email containing instructions for reviewing and signing the required safety waiver, followed by another email outlining the procedure for attending mandatory, in-person safety orientation sessions held weekly.

Once these steps are successfully completed a new member will receive an RFID key card by front desk personnel, granting round-the-clock access to the facility. With access secured, members can readily identify and enroll in classes pertaining to equipment they aspire to master, or alternatively, undergo tool proficiency tests for expedited access. Notably, certain workshops, such as the woodshop and metal shop, implement an after-hours buddy system to bolster safety protocols, underscoring

the organization's commitment to ensuring the well-being of its members.

While the grand opening is scheduled for the end of March 2024, securing membership by April 1, 2024, ensures non-commencement of charges until May 2024. Additionally, volunteers are invited to aid in equipment setup, granting them unrestricted access to Clear Creek Makerspace until April 1, 2024.

For inquiries pertaining to the opening or membership details, individuals are encouraged to reach out to Clear Creek Makerspace via phone at (720) 259-1030. The team eagerly anticipates the opportunity to emerge as the preferred destination for hands-on DIY endeavors and creative expression, inviting enthusiasts to embark on an exhilarating journey where innovation and education intersect.

RIDGEFEST 2024: CELEBRATING COMMUNITY ROOTS TOGETHER!

Excitement is brewing as Wheat Ridge prepares for Ridgefest 2024, a lively community gathering set to showcase the best of local talent and flavor. Following the success of last year's event, which drew over 1,500 residents from Wheat Ridge and nearby areas, anticipation is high for another day of festivities, camaraderie, and fun.

Organized by Localworks, a nonprofit dedicated to fostering community connections, Ridgefest has become a beloved tradition in the area. From its humble beginnings, the event has grown into a celebration that encapsulates the essence of Wheat Ridge—a place that many proudly call home.

Scheduled for June 29th at Anderson Park, Ridgefest promises a diverse lineup of activities to suit all ages and interests. From mouthwatering local cuisine and refreshing beverages to live music performances and family-friendly games, there's something for everyone to enjoy.

One highlight of Ridgefest is the annual button-making contest, which returns for its second year thanks to the sponsorship of Sweet Ridge Studios. Last year's contest, held in part-

nership with Clear Creek Makerspace, was a hit among attendees, and this year promises even more creative designs and community participation.

With the theme *Putting Down Roots*, organizers are encouraging participants to reflect on what makes Wheat Ridge unique and special. Whether it's the town's rich history, natural beauty, or strong sense of community, the theme invites artists of all ages and backgrounds to express their love for their hometown through art.

Submissions for the button contest open on March 1 and close on April 30, giving aspiring artists ample time to showcase their talents. The winning design will be featured on buttons distributed throughout the city during Ridgefest, serving as a memento of the event and a symbol of community pride.

Templates are available at a few Wheat Ridge businesses and online; however artists can create their own circle to design on as long as it is no larger than 11 inches in diameter. The winning design will be resized for a 2.25-inch button. There is no limit on the number of colors

an artist can use; however, for a clear image, please use a white background! All artwork must be original. Original computer-generated graphics are permitted, but clip art will not be accepted. Artists are welcome to provide a brief description of the design, although it's not necessary! The design itself is meant to capture the theme.

Artists design checklist:

- Theme: Putting Down Roots
- Words: Ridgefest
- Year: 2024
- Artists signature(s)

As the countdown to Ridgefest 2024 begins, Wheat Ridge residents are invited to join in the excitement and celebrate everything that makes their town a wonderful place to live. Whether it's participating in the button contest, enjoying the festivities, or simply soaking in the local atmosphere, Ridgefest promises a day of unforgettable memories and community spirit.

More information can be found at www.wearelocalworks.org or follow on socials @wearelocalworks.

TREE SALE

April 20th 8am - 3pm
April 21st 8am - 12pm

Anderson Park

We'll have 100 trees with 20 species available at wholesale prices! Trees are 1 inch caliper/diameter, in #7 pots

For more information, visit rootedinfun.com/forestry

Egg-stra Special EASTER EGG HUNT

March 23rd
10:00am

Anderson Park

With Staggered Start by Age Group



Enriching Lives Through the Trips Program

In Wheat Ridge, the Active Adult Center trips program is a hub for social and recreational opportunities for seniors. The program, offering 11-19 trips per month, includes visits to senior lunch sites, bingo games, exhibitions, events, iconic Colorado venues, and more. The program also offers RAMBLERS, a weekly, easy, one-hour walk at a location up to an hour drive away.

Amy Trujillo, a dedicated volunteer trip driver and leader, was recently awarded the Everyday Hero award from Denver7 and West Shore Homes! Since joining the team as a volunteer in August 2021, she has consistently provided enriching experiences, connecting

with seniors in ways that transcend the bounds of an ordinary volunteer. She not only drives and leads trips, but also instills a sense of joy, safety, and camaraderie among the seniors. Senior RAMBLERS who could barely walk one mile who now, thanks to Amy's consistent volunteerism and excellent driving/leading, are on the roster nearly every week and walking non-stop for the whole hour with energy to spare! These are the kinds of actions that have led to most of the 1-3 trips she drives/leads a month to sell out or have a waitlist.

The seniors benefiting from the Trips program, with an average age of 76, face unique challenges

such as living alone or being primary caregivers, limiting their ability to explore far or unfamiliar places. Amy's role becomes crucial in expanding their social world, providing a lifeline of connection, and promoting an active and engaged lifestyle.

As the Trips program continues to flourish, Amy remains a driving force, connecting seniors and fostering a sense of belonging, vitality, and purpose. These qualities have rightfully earned her the title of an Everyday Hero, and we extend our heartfelt congratulations to Amy for this well-deserved recognition.

Discover new experiences, connect with neighbors, and join in on the fun at the Wheat Ridge Active Adult Center!

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SANTA continued from page 8

those parents and children,” said Police Chief Chris Murtha.

This year, the department and the Optimist Club delivered presents to more than 100 families and more than 300 children who otherwise may not have toys under the tree, which was an increase from the year

before. The Wheat Ridge Police Department would like to thank the community for their generosity in donating gifts for families. This partnership exemplifies what relationship-based policing is all about.

TOOLS continued from page 8

Colorado legislature to reimplement facial recognition technology, after holding three public meetings on how the resource will be used. Facial recognition uses existing mugshots that the police department already has access to, but will optimize the department’s crime analyst’s time, instead of trying to match those mugshots with a potential suspect manually. The technology won’t be used without multiple employees verifying the identification manually, and the department is required to produce an accountability report regarding use. Wheat Ridge Police is the first law enforcement entity in the Denver metro area to reimplement this technology since the new state law took effect. The department hopes to begin using the technology again this spring.

The Wheat Ridge Police Department recently purchased two new e-bikes that will bolster its ability to patrol the greenbelt and other bikeable communities. WRPD plans on training several officers this spring and are excited for this new way to be more mobile in the community.

The department’s fleet is now equipped with ten new Automated External Defibrillators, or AEDs, to promote preparedness for medical episodes officers may encounter while on a call. These tools will allow the department to continue its mission to make our community a safer place.

WALK continued from page 6

The business walk is a two-hour event where groups of three and four volunteers are assigned a section of Wheat Ridge. Each group enters businesses in that area to speak to the owner or a person at the front desk, the volunteers ask a short series of questions about the business environment in the community and also query if the business has any specific concerns which can be followed up in a future call by the city’s Economic Development Division or appropriate city department.

“Those teams have gathered a lot of valuable information over the years,” says Art. The surveys show we have a business community that loves

doing business here in JeffCo, but it also shows we have some areas that need additional attention.”

Each business walk volunteers enter and survey nearly 175 brick-and-mortar business from retail to service to industrial.

“When we started this program, we had business tell us they’ve been in the community for 30-years and this is the first time anyone from the city had reached out to them,” said Art. “Nationwide, economic development professionals and elected officials need to read the pulse of their business communities. These are the businesses that keep America strong.”

For those interested in volunteering for the next business walk, contact Steve Art at sart@ci.wheatridge.co.us.

AWARDS continued from page 8

hours of manually entering evidence from handwritten sheets. Cindy is one of the kindest and most compassionate members of our Wheat Ridge Police Department family and her dedication, organization and attention to detail is unmatched.

Detective Kyle Boesel was awarded the Officer of the Year Award for his leadership and mentorship of fellow officers. Detective Boesel developed a strong firearms program and focuses on training the members of our team on a weekly basis. He recently developed a “Firearms Friday” lesson plan,

that uses timely real-life scenarios that law enforcement faces across the country to ensure our officers are educated and trained on the best practices and tactics for field operations and critical incidents. Detective Boesel is also a team leader on SWAT, and his leadership and training abilities shine through during the annual in-service training as he guides and mentors officers.

These are just a few examples of the exceptional work done by the exceptional people in our department. We would like to congratulate the recipients and look forward to another year of exceptional service that the citizens of Wheat Ridge deserve.