

# **STUDY SESSION AGENDA**

## **CITY COUNCIL CITY OF WHEAT RIDGE, COLORADO**

7500 W. 29th Ave.  
Wheat Ridge CO

April 2, 2018

6:30 p.m.

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Individuals with disabilities are encouraged to participate in all public meetings sponsored by the City of Wheat Ridge. Call Sara Spaulding, Public Information Officer 303-235-2877 at least one week in advance of a meeting if you are interested in participating and need inclusion assistance.

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### Citizen Comment on Agenda Items

1. Neighborhood Revitalization Strategy (NRS) Update Scope of Services
2. Community Plaza on "The Green"
3. Staff Report(s)
4. Elected Officials' Report(s)

ADJOURNMENT

# Memorandum

**TO:** Mayor and City Council

**FROM:** Patrick Goff, City Manager  
Ken Johnstone, Community Development Director

**DATE:** March 26, 2018 (for April 2, 2018 Study Session)

**SUBJECT:** Neighborhood Revitalization Strategy Update and Discussion

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In August 2016, staff provided City Council an update on the Neighborhood Revitalization Strategy (NRS) focused on four areas:

1. Overview of the Neighborhood Revitalization Strategy
2. Summary of what has been achieved
3. Summary of 2014 demographic data update
4. What's left to be done

The August 15, 2016 memo is attached for reference. Direction from Council at that meeting was for Council to continue to discuss in a subsequent retreat and some of that occurred in spring 2017 as part of a two-day Council retreat. A comprehensive update to the NRS has been identified as a City Council priority.

To that end, Staff has been negotiating with the same firm that completed the original NRS, (czb, LLC). Attached is a draft scope of work, from czb, LLC. The proposed budget for the base scope of work, which would again include extensive public outreach, is \$183,310. The proposal also includes an optional task for a comprehensive assessment of the City's retail market to identify gaps and opportunities and make recommendations on incentives or other programs that could encourage and incent expansion of the City's retail markets. That optional task is proposed at \$30,000, for a total of \$213,310. A budget supplemental would be needed to enter into this contract with czb, LLC.

## **What's left to be done**

The following text has been copied from the 2016 memo to City Council. The text in *italics* provides a current update of what has occurred since 2016.

Leadership development. Continue to host biannual civic academy to support a pipeline of well-informed local leadership. Support Localworks efforts to promote community building through special events and leadership development. Support various efforts of business associations that facilitate leadership development. *The City's biannual civic academy has not been held the past several years due to a lack of citizens making application. LocalWorks continues to conduct their annual "Wheaties" program of citizen engagement.*

Zoning and Development Regulations. Continue to evaluate the land use and development regulatory environment and design standards to ensure we are achieving a high standard of design and an appropriate amount of public input in those processes. *The City Council adopted bulk/plane regulations in late 2016 in certain residential zone districts in the City, which seek to ensure an appropriate bulk and scale to residential infill development in those areas. City Council has also prioritized consideration of regulations pertaining to short term housing rentals and accessory dwelling units.*

Wadsworth Roadway Improvements. Finalize Wadsworth EA and secure all necessary funding sources to rebuild Wadsworth into an attractive multi-modal corridor. *The Wadsworth EA is scheduled to be completed in 2018, with ROW acquisition beginning in 2019 and construction set to begin in spring 2020. The voter's approval of a temporary sales tax increase provides \$7M toward the City's portion of the local match; however an approximate \$10M gap still needs to be closed.*

Wadsworth Redevelopment Opportunities. Through cooperative efforts with the development community, facilitate quality mixed-use development of key sites along the Wadsworth Corridor. *Wheat Ridge Corners, which includes a Lucky's Market, 40,000 SF of shops and 230 market rate apartments, is under construction at 38<sup>th</sup> and Wadsworth. Just off Wadsworth at 38<sup>th</sup> and Upham, a mixed-use building including market rate apartments and retail is under construction. Also just off Wadsworth at 43<sup>rd</sup> and Yukon a market rate, for sale townhome project is going through the entitlement approval process.*

Ward Road/Gold Line Station Area. Working cooperatively with property owners at key sites surrounding the station to redevelop the area into a quality mixed-use transit oriented development. Identify additional action items, including possibly investment in public infrastructure that would catalyze private sector investment. Work with Jefferson County EDC to identify primary employment opportunities in the station area. *A vision plan was adopted by City Council in the summer of 2016 and is being marketed to the development community. The City's Investing 4 The Future Consultant (AECOM) is developing concepts for the regional park and other infrastructure needs are being evaluated for the \$12M in funding for this area from the sales tax increase. Three separate market rate housing projects are at various phases in the land use entitlement process and may include public private partnerships.*

Implement 38<sup>th</sup> Avenue Roadway Improvement. Finalize a conceptual design for phase one 38<sup>th</sup> Avenue Roadway Improvements and develop ballot language for a November 2016 ballot question for funding. *While a streetscape design was developed through a public process in the first part of 2017, no funding source has yet been identified.*

Development of "The Green". Continue to work collaboratively with Jeffco Schools to finalize a new design of "The Green" that better facilitates community events for both the community and the school district. *Preliminary discussions have occurred with JeffCo School district staff and they are generally receptive. Next step options are being discussed with City Council at the April 2 study session.*

Finalize Public/Private Fruitdale School Redevelopment. Work with HEI development and their design and construction team to finalize construction documents and issue a building permit for the school redevelopment. Pursue additional grant opportunities to minimize amount of public funding participation in the redevelopment project. *The project is complete and nearing full occupancy. The City received its first loan repayment of \$1.5M earlier this year, with a ceremonial presentation to City Council on March 26, 2018.*

Consider Expanding Code Enforcement. Consider whether additional resources should be dedicated to the City's code enforcement program to ensure high standards of property maintenance on our commercial corridors and in our residential neighborhoods. Continue to utilize a "carrot and stick" approach by funding various grant and loan programs administered by Localworks and the Wheat Ridge Business District. *In 2017, staff initiated a commercial landscape maintenance pilot program. On March 26, 2018, City Council approved a \$20,000 budget supplemental to continue that pilot program in 2018.*

Rental Property Registration and Inspection Program. Consider whether a rental property registration/inspection program would be an appropriate tool to facilitate better property management and maintenance resulting in a higher quality rental housing stock, which encourages additional reinvestment and attracts strong and diverse new households to Wheat Ridge. *City Council has removed this item from the Strategic Plan as a priority strategic action.*

Gateway Signage and Identification. Continue to fund gateway identification landscaping and signage at key City gateways along Kipling, Wadsworth, 38<sup>th</sup> and 44<sup>th</sup> Avenues and other appropriate locations.

Development and Redevelopment of key properties. Continue to market prime development areas and work with the brokerage community, site selectors, property owners and developers creating viable opportunities for residential, commercial and industrial uses. *The Clear Creek Crossing project received its rezoning approval for a mixed-use development at the March 26 City Council meeting. New market rate housing is being developed throughout the City.*

Aging Infrastructure. Continue to identify aging infrastructure to assure development and redevelopment throughout the community. *With the exception of the four specific projects funded through the Investing 4 the Future (Ballot Measure 2E) projects, no dedicated funding source has been identified for other aging infrastructure needs.*

### **Conclusion/City Council Direction**

Staff requests direction whether to bring forward a budget supplemental and contract approval to engage czb LLC in a comprehensive public outreach process and update to the Neighborhood Revitalization Strategy.

### **Attachment:**

1. August 15, 2016 study session memo
2. czb NRS Update Proposal

# Memorandum

**TO:** Mayor and City Council

**FROM:** Patrick Goff, City Manager  
Ken Johnstone, Community Development Director

**DATE:** July 22, 2016 (for August 15, 2016 Study Session)

**SUBJECT:** Neighborhood Revitalization Strategy Update and Discussion

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This memo is organized into 4 sections:

1. Overview of the Neighborhood Revitalization Strategy
2. Summary of what has been achieved
3. Summary of 2014 demographic data update
4. What's left to be done

## **Overview of the Neighborhood Revitalization Strategy**

On July 25, 2005, the City Council adopted a resolution accepting the Neighborhood Revitalization Strategy (NRS) Report, *Repositioning Wheat Ridge*, and adopted its findings and recommendations as guiding principles for revitalizing the City. The strategies and recommendations contained in the NRS are focused on leveraging the City's strengths and addressing its challenges to assist in returning the City to a vibrant community with a healthy housing market and the thriving commercial centers needed to generate fiscal stability.

The report was prepared by a group of external consultants who conducted extensive community outreach as a critical component of preparing the assessment and strategy. The team held 29 public meetings ranging from meeting with residents in their homes to presenting before various boards, commissions and business groups. The summary of those meetings is contained in Appendix 2 of the Report. Within that appendix the comments are organized into "What's Working in Wheat Ridge" and "What's Not Working in Wheat Ridge." The comments reflect that the Report was by design intended to be a very honest and blunt assessment of the state of the community at the time.

Unpleasant as it was to confront, the Report reflects that in many ways Wheat Ridge stagnated for much of the period between 1980-2005. Other cities in Jefferson County were busy, rolling up their sleeves and actively competing for a share of strong households – and they succeeded. Years ago, Lakewood, Arvada, Westminster and Golden recognized the need to take outdated strip mall retail and make it more appealing for today's customers. They started building new, exciting housing projects demanded by Colorado's middle-class families. They increased investments in beautification, with special emphasis on landscaping. They invested in infrastructure. They began regulating multi-family development and they got into the business of vibrant place-making.

Wheat Ridge used to be a more balanced community. Residents across all family and income

spectrums were attracted to and remained in the community. However, since the 1980's, other communities have effectively out-competed Wheat Ridge in attracting families and higher income households, resulting in the “strong households” either leaving Wheat Ridge or simply not being attracted to Wheat Ridge in the first place. This has brought about an unbalanced community which has affected the image, condition, economic health and competitiveness of Wheat Ridge in the context of the greater Denver-Metro region.

The NRS report's primary conclusion was that for the City to regain its strength and reinvent itself as a thriving, economically-diverse community with broad commercial and residential opportunities, Wheat Ridge needed to overhaul how the City and residents manage change, and develop methods to regain the share of strong households that has been lost over the past 25 years. The NRS provided nine strategies to help accomplish these goals and recommended that the City create the non-profit organization, Wheat Ridge 2020 (now Localworks), to assist in its implementation.

The Report contained 3 central recommendations:

1. Wheat Ridge must overhaul how the city and residents manage change. A few of the highlights from this recommendation included the following:
  - a. Update the Comprehensive Plan
  - b. Update the zoning code to create a more flexible and streamlined zoning framework, which sends a message to the development community that Wheat Ridge is development friendly and open for business
  - c. Invest in leadership development
  - d. Create an ethos of high property maintenance standards that sends a message that it is safe to invest in Wheat Ridge
2. Wheat Ridge must create a public, nonprofit corporation capable of facilitating and encouraging appropriate development in Wheat Ridge. The exact form and format for this organization was not fully fleshed out in the NRS, but it identified five areas of focus:
  - a. Creating an image for Wheat Ridge and promoting the specific identities to selected market niches, both residential and commercial
  - b. Facilitating more competitive housing development through communications with builders, investors, home buyers, home owners, real estate agent/brokers and others
  - c. Encouraging higher levels of improvement and maintenance, in residential areas, commercial sites and public spaces
  - d. Promoting development of designated commercial sites and clusters
  - e. Encouraging effective resident, institutional, and business leadership on the board of the organization and in neighborhood and city-wide activities
3. All nine of the following strategies must be implemented:
  - a. Develop new market rate housing at key locations throughout the City
  - b. Acquire, upgrade, and sell out-of-date housing stocks throughout the City
  - c. Improve existing multi-family rental property throughout the City

- d. Redevelop the Wadsworth Corridor
- e. Develop West 44<sup>th</sup> into an Orchard District
- f. Accelerate and shape the development of 38<sup>th</sup> Avenue
- g. Develop a Town Center
- h. Continue the development of Wheat Ridge Open Space
- i. Develop signage and enhance gateways and general appearance (beautification)

### **Summary of what's been achieved**

Eleven years have come and gone since the NRS Report was adopted by City Council. A substantial amount of progress has been made in returning the City to a vibrant community. Much of the NRS Report is still relevant today and will continue to provide a roadmap for future leaders and policy makers. The purpose of this report is to revisit the NRS Report, evaluate where the City has had success and then to develop action items to continue developing a thriving community. The NRS report may be viewed in its entirety at [www.ci.wheatridge.co.us/276/Repositioning-Wheat-Ridge](http://www.ci.wheatridge.co.us/276/Repositioning-Wheat-Ridge).

1. Wheat Ridge must overhaul how the city and residents manage change. A few of the highlights from this recommendation included the following:
  - a. Comprehensive Plan – *Envision Wheat Ridge* was adopted by City Council in 2009
  - b. Numerous amendments to the zoning and development code have been achieved toward the goals of creating a more flexible and streamlined code, while still ensuring quality development
  - c. Architectural and Site Design Manual adopted in 2007
  - d. Planned Development regulations and subdivision regulations amended in 2011/12 to allow for clearer development processes and additional administrative and Planning Commission final approvals
  - e. Mixed use zoning regulations adopted in 2010, establishing clear design standards but allowing for additional administrative review and approval processes. Two major corridors (38<sup>th</sup> Avenue and Wadsworth) and numerous individual properties have been rezoned by City Council to Mixed Use zoning
  - f. Invest in leadership development. Six Civic Academies hosted by the City. Localworks (formerly WR2020) engages the community in leadership development and community building. Localworks has over 100 graduates of the Planning and Development Academy and has graduated one class of the Wheaties Academy with another class graduating in October 2016.
2. Create an ethos of high property maintenance standards that sends a message that it is safe to invest in Wheat Ridge. Code enforcement has been strengthened and in 2014/15 the TLC program was created to encourage additional residential and commercial property maintenance. The TLC Wheat Ridge program was an expansion of the East Wheat Ridge program partnership with Localworks started in 2009. Clean Up Days, where 30-yard

dumpsters have been placed for the use of residents have been hosted in each East Wheat Ridge and then TLC Wheat Ridge neighborhoods at least once a year since 2010.

3. Wheat Ridge must create a public, nonprofit corporation capable of facilitating and encouraging appropriate development in Wheat Ridge. The exact form and format for this organization was not fully fleshed out in the NRS, but it identified five areas of focus: Creation of Localworks (formerly WR2020)
  - a. Creating an image for Wheat Ridge and promoting the specific identities to selected market niches, both residential and commercial – Localworks assisted the City in its rebranding effort and the creation of a marketing logo. In collaboration with residents, there was an effort and results to position neighborhood names around parks for real estate marketing, such as Randall Park Neighborhood. The Ridge at 38 Leadership Committee was presented the Governor’s Award for Best Downtown Marketing and Branding for the brand Ridge at 38. West 29<sup>th</sup> Marketplace has been promoting its neighborhood shops and 44<sup>th</sup> Avenue businesses have organized under the banner Shop 44<sup>th</sup> Avenue. Throughout all these areas, events have been key in building awareness and recognition for Wheat Ridge’s commercial and residential areas.
  - b. Facilitating more competitive housing development through communications with builders, investors, home buyers, home owners, real estate agent/brokers and others - Localworks has partnered with the former Jefferson County Association of Realtors and now Denver Metro Association of Realtors to provide relevant information to their membership as well as tours of Wheat Ridge for Realtors. Similarly, there have been bus tours for new residents and potential residents of Wheat Ridge. The Mid Century and Modern Tour of Wheat Ridge entice mid-century and modern enthusiasts throughout the region to visit Wheat Ridge and explore our mid-century neighborhoods and housing stock.
  - c. In order to build on the pride of ownership, the City of Wheat Ridge launched a “Life is Sweet in Wheat Ridge” campaign with videos that could be shared showcasing newer and proud residents of Wheat Ridge. Localworks and the City of Wheat Ridge have actively sought the insights of many developers and investors, including on panels and focus groups to help us understand improving our approach and readiness in the marketplace.
  - d. Articles about the potential of Wheat Ridge and new developments and investments in Wheat Ridge have been published in the Colorado Real Estate Journal, Denver Business Journal and The Denver Post. The City of Wheat Ridge and Localworks have been active in organizations like Urban Land Institute, International Economic Development Council, Economic Development Council of Colorado, Housing Colorado, International Council of Shopping Centers and others to bring attention to Wheat Ridge and the City’s development potential.
  - e. Encouraging higher levels of improvement and maintenance, in residential areas, commercial sites and public spaces – Localworks provided grants for front yard



improvements showcasing xeric and native plant strategies for lower water consumption and improved aesthetics. This drew attention to the Landscape Design Manual featuring pre-made plans and lists of plants that do well in Wheat Ridge. Localworks also partnered with University of Colorado – Denver Architecture students to create a Ranch Design Manual featuring predominant layouts for ranch homes found in Wheat Ridge with suggested plans for modernization and expansion.

- f. The City of Wheat Ridge has provided maintenance contracts and staffing for the 38<sup>th</sup> Avenue Revitalization Project Area. The Ridge at 38 Leadership Committee has explored a Business Improvement District to plan for long-term investments and maintenance to the 38<sup>th</sup> Avenue corridor, but this has not yet been brought to a vote and implementation. Localworks has partnered with Ridge at 38 businesses and activated volunteers to do clean ups along the corridor.
- g. Promoting development of designated commercial sites and clusters – Localworks has provided a low-interest loan program to rehabilitate commercial properties. The loan program was originally targeted to the 38<sup>th</sup> Avenue corridor and has since been expanded to cover the whole city. The City of Wheat Ridge has helped capitalize the programmatic loan fund and Localworks has invested around \$400,000 in 8 commercial properties that have been rehabilitated and revitalized. Localworks has taken key corners such as 44<sup>th</sup> and Wadsworth and 38<sup>th</sup> and Wadsworth through planning exercises to develop site plans of what could be. The idea being to draw attention to the sites. Localworks and the city have discussed key sites throughout the city with developers and hosted property owner groups to mingle with potential investors. The City of Wheat Ridge has an electronic newsletter with a key audience of developers and investors to keep them aware of what is happening in Wheat Ridge.
- h. Encouraging effective resident, institutional, and business leadership on the board of the organization and in neighborhood and city-wide activities – Over 50 dedicated volunteers have served on the Wheat Ridge 2020 and Localworks Board of Directors. They have diverse backgrounds with most being residents, many business owners and some the top leadership in civic and regional institutions.
- i. Localworks has a membership of over 1,700 people. They are volunteer driven, staff supported and board directed. They believe in Wheat Ridge and attract others who share that belief. At any given time, they have over 200 actively engaged volunteers. Large events like the Ridge at 38 Criterium and Brewfest require over 130 volunteers to help pull off an excellent community building event. While there are many events in the world, the ones that Localworks leads connect neighbors with businesses to strengthen community bonds and build loyalty to the community. When people spend time and money in Wheat Ridge, this helps the businesses and the City as tax dollars to support City services.

Localworks now produces over 60 events each year meant to attract people to Wheat Ridge and encourage patronizing Wheat Ridge businesses.

Listed under each strategy are just a few of the City's accomplishments towards implementing these strategies over the last decade:

1. Develop new market rate housing at key locations throughout the City
  - a. Construction of more than 150 new single-family attached and detached homes ranging in price from \$300,000 to well over \$1 million located throughout the City
2. Acquire, upgrade, and sell out-of-date housing stocks throughout the City
  - a. WR2020 (now Localworks) and the Wheat Ridge Housing Authority purchased, upgraded and sold over 80 single-family homes and townhomes
3. Improve existing multi-family rental property throughout the City
  - a. Construction of 138 affordable, senior apartments at 44<sup>th</sup> and Vance Street
  - b. Proposal for up to 145 new, market-rate apartments on 38<sup>th</sup> Avenue and up to 231 additional market rate multi-family housing being proposed at 38<sup>th</sup> and Wadsworth – making for a more dynamic mixed use corridor
4. Redevelop Wadsworth Corridor
  - a. Wadsworth Corridor Subarea Plan was adopted in 2007. Corridor rezoning to mixed-use commercial in 2010
  - b. Transportation study completed to develop initial roadway design
  - c. \$25 million-grant received to reconstruct Wadsworth Boulevard from 35<sup>th</sup> Avenue to I-70. Consultant team are in the early phases of the federal environmental assessment (EA) process, which will culminate in a final design for the multi-modal roadway
5. Develop West 44<sup>th</sup> into an Orchard District
  - a. Fruitdale Subarea Plan adopted in 2007
  - b. City Council and the WRHA have executed a development agreement with HEI for the redevelopment of the Fruitdale School into a vibrant mixed income housing project
6. Accelerate and shape the development of 38<sup>th</sup> Avenue
  - a. 38<sup>th</sup> Avenue Corridor Plan adopted in 2011
  - b. Mixed Use zoning implemented on the Corridor in 2012
  - c. Initial design completed for the development of a main street
  - d. Conceptual design being developed for a phase-one roadway improvement project, with a potential ballot question in November 2016 to secure funding
  - e. Award winning branding and marketing – Ridge at 38
  - f. Significant increase in tax revenue generated from new business development
  - g. Conduct four major events annually on 38<sup>th</sup> Avenue (Wheat Ridge Criterium, Ridgefest, Trunk or Treat and Holiday Lighting Ceremony)

7. Develop a Town Center

- a. Incremental progress on building the foundation of a Town Center through zoning, improved bike and pedestrian connections, completion of street networks, revitalization of underutilized properties.

8. Continue the development of Wheat Ridge Open Space

- a. Construction of Discovery Park and Hopper Hollow Park
- b. Prospect Park redevelopment planned for 2016/2017
- c. Relocated segment of Clear Creek Trail for better access to open space
- d. Installed new directional signage to open space
- e. Completed Kipling Road trail project connecting Crown Hill Open Space, Discovery Park, and the Wheat Ridge Rec Center with the Clear Creek Trail

9. Develop signage and enhance gateways and general appearance (beautification)

- a. Constructed major entryway sign at I-70 and Kipling
- b. Installing minor entryway signage throughout the City
- c. Installed new park and open space signage throughout the City
- d. Expanded flower planting program throughout the City
- e. Focused efforts on neighborhood and commercial corridor cleanup

**Summary of 2014 Demographic Data Update**

As part of the 2005 NRS effort, a great amount of demographic data was collected that very much informed the recommendations in the report. After 10+ years, it seemed appropriate to update several of those demographic data point to see whether the demographic data trends have changed in the intervening years. In 2016 staff commissioned Development Research Partners (DRP) to update several of the demographic data points. The full report from DRP is attached and a brief summary follows:

- Population. The City's population continued to very slowly decline from 2004 to 2010; however, that trend reversed and began increasing from 2011 to 2014.
- Age. The City has historically had one of the oldest median ages in the Denver Metro region. In 2014, The median age was 42.5, well above the Metro Denver median of 36 and the Jefferson County median of 40.4. However, notably the median age has decreased in Wheat Ridge from 2009 to 2014 from 43.6, a full 1.1 years of decrease while the Jefferson County median age increased by 0.9 during that same period.
- Household Income. Median household income in Wheat Ridge (\$49,000) continues to be below area median income. This is about 70% of the countywide median income of \$69,700. That stated, Wheat Ridge household incomes have been increasing in recent years at a rate greater than Jefferson County as a whole. Since 2009, household incomes have been increasing by 1.6% annually versus 1.1% in the County.
- Poverty. Poverty rates in Wheat Ridge have increased somewhat in the past several years. Since 2009, the poverty rate in Wheat Ridge has increased from 10.8% to 14.2%, a 3.4% change. That is greater than the 0.8% increase in Metro Denver.

- Existing Home Prices. From 2007 to 2015, the sale prices of existing homes in Wheat Ridge has increased at an annualized rate of 4.3%, better than the Metro Denver average of 2.2%. Existing homes in Wheat Ridge are 89% of the countywide pricing, likely largely a result of the smaller average size.
- Apartments. Apartment vacancy rates are notably lower than the Jefferson County average (2.6% vs. 5.3%). Average rents in Wheat Ridge are \$910, compared to \$1,270 in the County and \$1,290 in Metro Denver.
- Retail. Wheat Ridge has a high density of retail commercial real estate, with 74.6 SF per capita; 60.1 SF and 53.2 SF are the respective averages for Jefferson County and Metro Denver. Perhaps not surprisingly, this results in sales of \$24,520 per capita, also well above the Jefferson County and Metro Denver averages of \$16,420 and \$17,640. Retail lease rates are increasing in Wheat Ridge recently, rising to nearly \$15/SF, higher than the County average and nearing the Metro Denver average of just over \$16/SF.
- Employment Base. Employment growth in Wheat Ridge has been competitive with the surrounding area. Workers in Wheat Ridge only earn about 83 percent of the average annual wage earned by employees in the Metro Denver region. This leads to a mix of industries and occupation in the City that are low tech and low paying. The healthcare industry in Wheat Ridge helps with this imbalance; but it should be noted that wage growth has been stagnant for the past five years. Wheat Ridge has witnessed a contraction of labor force since 2010.
- Commercial Real Estate. Cannabis grow operations and an improved economy triggered growth in the manufacturing sector. Vacancy rates are slightly greater than the County at 1.3%. The average per square foot lease rate is about \$8.38 above the County's rate of \$7.37.

### **What's left to be done**

Leadership development. Continue to host biannual civic academy to support a pipeline of well-informed local leadership. Support Localworks efforts to promote community building through special events and leadership development. Support various efforts of business associations that facilitate leadership development.

Zoning and Development Regulations. Continue to evaluate the land use and development regulatory environment and design standards to ensure we are achieving a high standard of design and an appropriate amount of public input in those processes.

Wadsworth Roadway Improvements. Finalize Wadsworth EA and secure all necessary funding sources to rebuild Wadsworth into an attractive multi-modal corridor.

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Ward Road/Gold Line Station Area. Working cooperatively with property owners at key sites

surrounding the station to redevelop the area into a quality mixed-use transit oriented development. Identify additional action items, including possibly investment in public infrastructure that would catalyze private sector investment. Work with Jefferson County EDC to identify primary employment opportunities in the station area.

Implement 38<sup>th</sup> Avenue Roadway Improvement. Finalize a conceptual design for phase one 38<sup>th</sup> Avenue Roadway Improvements and develop ballot language for a November 2016 ballot question for funding.

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Consider Expanding Code Enforcement. Consider whether additional resources should be dedicated to the City’s code enforcement program to ensure high standards of property maintenance on our commercial corridors and in our residential neighborhoods. Continue to utilize a “carrot and stick” approach by funding various grant and loan programs administered by Localworks and the Wheat Ridge Business District.

Rental Property Registration and Inspection Program. Consider whether a rental property registration/inspection program would be an appropriate tool to facilitate better property management and maintenance resulting in a higher quality rental housing stock which encourages additional reinvestment and attracts strong and diverse new households to Wheat Ridge.

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Development and Redevelopment of key properties. Continue to market prime development areas and work with the brokerage community, site selectors, property owners and developers creating viable opportunities for residential, commercial and industrial uses.

Aging Infrastructure. Continue to identify aging infrastructure to assure development and redevelopment throughout the community.

### **Conclusion/City Council Direction**

#### **Attachment:**

1. Draft Report – The State of Wheat Ridge, Profiles of the community, indicators and trends

Proposal to Wheat Ridge, Colorado

# Neighborhood Revitalization Strategy Update

Community Engagement for  
Neighborhood Vibrancy and  
Competitiveness



**Submitted by czb**  
APRIL 2018





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To the Wheat Ridge City Council and staff:

It was an honor and an incredible learning experience for czb, in partnership with Winston Associations, to co-create a Neighborhood Revitalization Strategy (NRS) with your community in 2005. In the time since the NRS was completed, much has changed. My friend Jeff Winston has retired and sold his firm. Our own firm has grown and evolved and we are a dozen years wiser for it. What has not changed is our longstanding commitment to solid analysis, meaningful public engagement, and sharp strategy that can be implemented by a city willing to work for the future it wants.

In 2005 Wheat Ridge was a 1970s era suburb that had fallen behind its competition in the work of retaining and attracting the region's strongest working, moderate and middle income households. Its future was not certain but it had the wherewithal to look for help and the tenacity and discipline to implement recommendations it was provided in the 2005 NRS. The NRS represented a community conversation, and consensus, about the city's competitiveness and what to do about it.

Between 2005 and 2018, a number of things transpired which now place Wheat Ridge in a very different position:

- The city took seriously the recommendation of the NRS and faithfully pursued its implementation.
- The metro area went through a historically exceptional period of demographic and economic growth, which had positive spillover effects in Wheat Ridge.
- The city experienced half a generation of demographic turnover, with some households leaving and new ones arriving.

Owing to Wheat Ridge's grit and a number of other factors, the question today is less "how do we compete?" than "how do we make the most of the assets we have resurrected, nurtured, invested in, grown, and must now optimize?" To answer that question, czb has been asked to update the 2005 NRS for a new time and what follows herein is our proposal to do so. If the City Council accepts our proposal, our team very much looks forward to working with you once again.

Sincerely,

Charles Buki  
President, czbLLC

# Firm Summary and General Qualifications

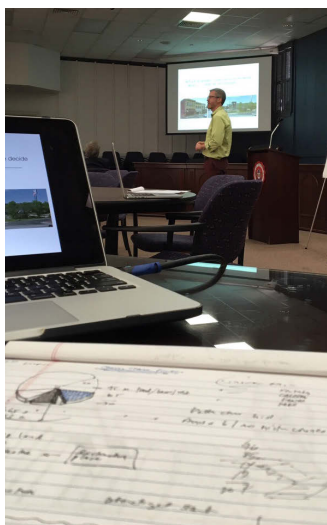


czb is a Virginia-based planning practice with experience in over 40 states since 2001. We specialize in market-based economic analysis, housing analysis, and strategy development for communities seeking to shape their futures and willing to put in the effort to obtain the outcomes they want.

The professionals who comprise czb are seasoned experts in their respective fields of urban planning and design, econometric analysis, historic preservation, real estate development and finance, affordable housing and community development, and demand-based strategy and policy development. Communities never succeed or fail solely because of a single factor like design or jobs or affordable housing and, in recognizing this, czb has built an interdisciplinary team of some of the finest community development minds in the United States.

In our experience, communities set the course for their future in direct proportion to the degree to which they stay ahead of trends and capably manage a range of influential forces – internal as well as external. These interconnected forces are economic, demographic, political, and social in nature. Furthermore, they are filtered through and strongly shaped by the core values of a community's residents and stakeholders. When events and influences are capably managed, the community's values play a large role in determining policy. But good policy relies on data as well.

To do this successfully – to manage change so that outcomes reflect local aspirations – requires incorporating community values into policy-making as well as continually collecting and analyzing the right data to guide the community (and its political leaders) in making what are often difficult choices. **What czb does better than any planning practice in the United States is help communities clarify what's at stake, get the information they need to make good decisions, and help them grow their capacity to manage and implement change.**



## Firm name and address:

czbLLC  
2001 Mount Vernon Avenue  
Alexandria, VA 22301

Year established: 2001

Business type: S corporation,  
Virginia

## Primary contact:

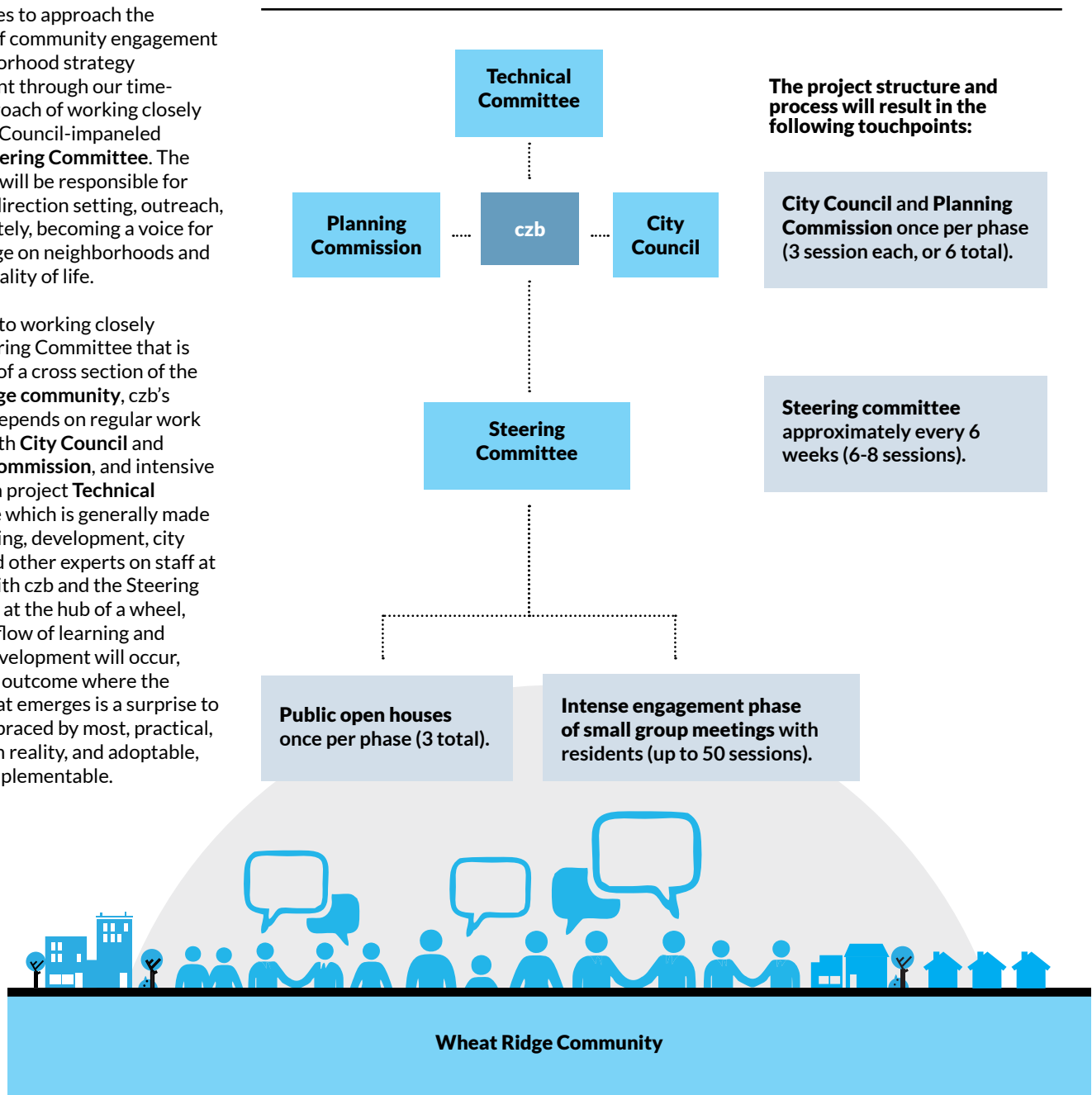
Charles Buki, *President*  
cbuki@czb.org  
703-548-3708



# Project Structure

czb proposes to approach the challenge of community engagement and neighborhood strategy development through our time-tested approach of working closely with a City Council-impaneled **Project Steering Committee**. The committee will be responsible for oversight, direction setting, outreach, and, ultimately, becoming a voice for Wheat Ridge on neighborhoods and resident quality of life.

In addition to working closely with a Steering Committee that is comprised of a cross section of the **Wheat Ridge community**, czb's approach depends on regular work sessions with **City Council** and **Planning Commission**, and intensive work with a project **Technical Committee** which is generally made up of planning, development, city finance, and other experts on staff at the city. With czb and the Steering Committee at the hub of a wheel, a constant flow of learning and strategy development will occur, creating an outcome where the strategy that emerges is a surprise to no one, embraced by most, practical, grounded in reality, and adoptable, and thus implementable.



# Team for Wheat Ridge NRS Update

czb



## Charles Buki

Charles Buki, czb founder and President, has more than 20 years of experience in the field of community development, with a particular expertise in helping communities identify their top priorities, understand complex trade-offs, and develop realistic action plans that are tied to durable planning principles. Over the past two years alone, he has led planning processes in Canton, OH, Erie, PA, Geneva, NY, and Ashland, WI, among others. In the past 18 months, he has also led neighborhood revitalization strategy work in Des Moines, Baltimore, Buffalo, and Rochester, NY.

*Role: Principal-in-Charge; lead on strategy development*



## Thomas Eddington, ASLA, AICP

Thomas Eddington, ASLA, AICP, will serve as the project manager on this project and has over 20 years of experience in all aspects of land use planning, community development, and public engagement. As the Planning Director for Park City, UT, between 2008 and 2015, Thomas led the development of a new master plan for the city in 2014, along with the development of groundbreaking housing strategies.

*Role: Project Lead; lead on land use planning, urban design, and public engagement*



## Karen Beck Pooley, Ph.D.

Karen Beck Pooley, Ph.D., brings to the czb team more than 15 years of experience in working on housing and community development issues. Karen handles all of czb's econometric analysis (including all GIS-based analysis) and has become one of the nation's leading experts in understanding how investments in housing and community development interact with neighborhood marketability.

*Role: Demographic and socioeconomic analysis, housing market analysis, and mapping*



## Eric Ameigh

Eric Ameigh has been a planner and local government professional for over 15 years. He has deep experience in housing and neighborhoods across a variety of market types, serving as the first ever Director of Neighborhood Initiatives in Geneva, NY, and later as a policy-focused project manager in Boulder, CO, working on a wide variety of issues, including affordable housing and redevelopment. In Geneva, Eric led Healthy Neighborhoods work to grow the capacity of residents to improve their blocks, and founded and facilitated the Problem Properties Task Force which coordinated the work of code enforcement, public works, police, and city legal staff to address chronic offenders.

*Role: Project management and public engagement*



## Peter Lombardi

Peter Lombardi is a planner and policy analyst who came to czb after previous assignments in policy research and nonprofit neighborhood revitalization. He served as founding chairman of the Chautauqua County Land Bank Corporation in western New York and worked as Deputy Director for the Jamestown Renaissance Corporation. At czb, he has led or supported planning and revitalization projects across the Great Lakes region, developing expertise related to inner ring suburbs in metro areas such as Erie, Buffalo, and Rochester.

*Role: Planning and policy development, public engagement support*

# Scope of Work

Wheat Ridge has acknowledged that the city has changed and continues to change, even if feelings about the nature of the city's development are not uniformly shared. Now is the time to determine what the city wants to be in 2040 and to leverage its newfound prosperity to meet the vision.

czb proposes to update the 2005 NRS for a new, more prosperous era in Wheat Ridge. We will do this by crafting and facilitating a process that will result in a neighborhood development vision that can be backed by the community. To do this, re-engaging the Wheat Ridge community in a deep and penetrating way is necessary.

Wheat Ridge will require a fresh evaluation of data and highly structured and well facilitated community conversations about what kind of a community it wants to be. These efforts will likely presage a future update to the city's 2009 comprehensive plan, which will soon be due for a refresh, or perhaps even an overhaul.

*czb proposes to deliver an engagement process and eventual written product via three sequential but overlapping phases:*

## Phase 1: Analysis



### PHASE 1: Analysis

#### PURPOSE

To generate a preliminary portrait of city finances, civic life, residential life, market strength, and existing policies and programs that can form the basis of determining whether the Wheat Ridge community likes everything just the way it is, and favors continuity and little change in direction, or whether some change is desired.

#### WORK

**Quantitative Analysis:** During this initial phase, czb will work with the City of Wheat Ridge and local market experts to build upon czb's existing knowledge of the Wheat Ridge market. This will be done through a rapid but comprehensive exploration of market conditions and trends using a variety of data sources, including the indicators report prepared by Development Research Partners in 2016.

**Qualitative Data:** Our quantitative work will be complemented by two key qualitative processes. The first is a series of interviews and conversations with local experts in the development and real estate community, local leaders facing politically challenging issues, and others who can inform a picture of the current state of Wheat Ridge. The second is a review and analysis of the data from the city's upcoming community survey that should provide a current picture of concerns and desires that exist amongst Wheat Ridge residents.

#### PROCESS

In the early part of the first phase, we will hold a kickoff with the steering committee to confirm project details and set expectations for the process. We will also share early insights and observations from our emerging analysis.

Subsequent steering committee meetings will focus on the implications of the analysis and training the group for the engagement activities ahead in Phase 2.

We will hold one working session each with Planning Commission and City Council.

There will be one large, open public meeting, likely in the form of an open house, to introduce the project to the general public and generate interest for participation in Phase 2.

#### DELIVERABLES:

- Preliminary analysis
- Final analysis
- Phase 2 engagement plan
- Interim report #1, including report card on 2005 NRS

## Phase 2: Values-Based Engagement



## PHASE 2: Values-Based Engagement

### PURPOSE

An intensive phase of engagement where residents put a stake in the ground and assert what kinds of neighborhoods and community life they want, and are willing to pay for.

### WORK

The core of the values-based engagement phase will be small group work with residents from all parts of Wheat Ridge so that new and long-time residents, renters and home owners, landlords and small business owners can articulate their expectations when it comes to housing and neighborhoods and quality of life. Through a series of carefully designed meetings, held over 4-5 months, around case studies involving market dynamics, planning and zoning, entitlements, economic development, and regional competition for strong households, Wheat Ridge residents will slowly shape the community's long term approach to neighborhood development. We estimate that this process, assuming steering committee commitment and sufficient public interest, can directly engage roughly 500 people, which is a far richer engagement experience than is possible using any other method.

### PROCESS

40-50 small group meetings facilitated by steering committee members and supported by czb, directly reaching as many as 500 people.

czb will continue to meet with the steering committee on a regular basis to both prepare for and process the results of the small group meetings.

We will hold one working session each with Planning Commission and City Council.

There will be one large, open public meeting, likely in the form of an open house, to share all analysis and public input gathered to date, and to preview preliminary strategy ideas that will be refined in Phase 3.

### DELIVERABLES:

- Completed engagement phase
- Interim report #2

## Phase 3: Strategy Development



## PHASE 3: Strategy Development

### PURPOSE

The Phase 1 analysis and the values-based engagement work from Phase 2 will be combined to develop the neighborhood strategy, inclusive of both action steps for the conditions that are foreseeable, and a decision making framework for those that are not. The strategy will have a "big picture" orientation, while also helping the city think through discrete neighborhood issues such as accessory dwelling units, short-term rentals, and others.

### WORK

czb will write the updated NRS and prepare and deliver public presentations of the draft strategy.

### PROCESS

czb will continue to meet with the steering committee on a regular schedule for the purpose of developing and refining the strategy.

We will hold one working session each with Planning Commission and City Council.

There will be one large, open public meeting, likely in the form of an open house, to present the draft strategy and to gather final public feedback before finalizing it.

### DELIVERABLES:

- Updated NRS

## OPTIONAL Phase 1 Task: Retail Analysis



### Optional Phase 1 Task: Retail Analysis

Our analysis will focus on housing market dynamics and residential development trends to understand what is happening and what is possible in Wheat Ridge neighborhoods. The city, however, may seek to understand its retail picture and the way its commercial corridors both relate to residential neighborhoods and how their future redevelopment might work in tandem with a neighborhood strategy. To that end, we have included an optional task for a retail analysis, to be completed by Michael Berne of MJB Consulting, that would help the city understand the competitive position of its retail market and its existing retail locations.

MJB Consulting (MJB) is an award-winning, New York City- and San Francisco Bay Area-based retail planning and real estate consultancy retained across the U.S., Canada and the U.K. to undertake market analyses, devise tenancing strategies and spearhead recruitment efforts.

Clients include municipal governments, quasi-public/non-profit development corporations, business improvement districts, and institutions as well as private developers, landlords and retailers. MJB has previously partnered with czb and is currently engaged in multiple projects in the Denver metro area making its potential addition to the project both valuable and seamless.

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Analysis for Wheat Ridge would include a forecast of potential uses, an analysis of retail development incentives, and strategies for new entertainment and specialty retail uses. More specifically, the scope of this analytic work will include the following:

- Focus groups with existing merchants.
- Interviews with commercial real estate brokers and self-leasing landlords who are actively leasing retail space in Wheat Ridge. These individuals should be able to provide critical information on the city as well as any competitors and, ideally, will have information about square footages, prevailing rents, parking ratios, and tenant interest.
- MJB Consulting has devised a research methodology called “total immersion.” From the moment they step foot in a study area, they “live like a local” (to the extent possible), walking the streets, refueling in the cafes, visiting the community’s “Third Place(s)”, chatting with residents, reading the local weeklies and blogs, eating at the restaurants, staying the weekend, sampling the nightlife, etc. because they feel that this is the only way to truly understand a place, its people and its potential.
- Review of City policies and initiatives with specific relevance to retail, including (but not limited to) the existing zoning and approvals process, redevelopment plans, and business assistance provision and resources.
- Survey and assessment of nearby competition. We will visit and assess other business districts and shopping centers in the vicinity that compete with Wheat Ridge for both customers and for tenants, including location, visibility/access, anchors, in-line occupancy/tenancy, core demographic/psycho-graphic, etc. We will strive to identify the niches that Wheat Ridge can serve in a regional marketplace that includes significant competition across the region.
- Creation of a trade area demographic/psychographic profile. Data will be retrieved from ESRI and our team will draw on MJB’s proprietary lifestyle segmentation scheme.
- Forecast the potential for future development of retail, office, and housing uses.

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Based on the review of the Wheat Ridge market, interviews with focus groups and stakeholders, and survey and assessment data, MJB Consulting will develop a business retention/attraction strategy based on providing a mix of business types, with a focus on strategy for new employment, entertainment, and specialty retail to complement, support, and enhance the residential neighborhood focus of the NRS.

# Project Timeline

	MAY	JUNE	JULY	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY
<b>Scoping</b>													
<b>Contract</b>													
<b>Kickoff</b>													
<b>Phase 1</b>													
<b>Phase 2</b>													
<b>Phase 3</b>													
<b>Steering Committee</b>													
<b>Small Group Discussions</b>													
<b>Large Community Meetings</b>													
<b>Planning Commission</b>													
<b>City Council</b>													
<b>Technical Advisory Committee</b>													
<b>Analysis Complete</b>													
<b>Values and Principles Complete</b>													
<b>Preliminary Strategy (DRAFT)</b>													
<b>Refined Strategy</b>													
<b>FINAL Strategy</b>													

# Project Budget

	czb Personnel					
	<b>Eric Ameigh</b>	<b>Thomas Eddington</b>	<b>Peter Lombardi</b>	<b>Charles Buki</b>	<b>Karen Pooley</b>	<b>Brenda Stynes</b>
<b>ROLE</b>	<i>Management and Engagement</i>	<i>Project Lead and Engagement</i>	<i>Planning</i>	<i>Strategy</i>	<i>Analysis</i>	<i>Communications</i>
<b>Analysis</b>	80	60	80	40	96	
<b>Engagement</b>	100	200	80	80		
<b>Strategy</b>	80	80	80	40		80
<b>Total Hours</b>	260	340	240	160	96	80
<b>Hourly Rate</b>	\$135	\$135	\$135	\$175	\$135	\$65
<b>Fees</b>	\$35,100	\$45,900	\$32,400	\$28,000	\$12,960	\$5,200
<b>Trips</b>	15	7	4	3	0	0
<b>Cost per Trip</b>	\$50	\$1,500	\$2,000	\$1,500	\$0	\$0
<b>Expenses</b>	\$750	\$10,500	\$8,000	\$4,500	\$0	\$0
<b>SUBTOTAL</b>	\$35,850	\$56,400	\$40,400	\$32,500	\$12,960	\$5,200
<b>Project Total</b>	\$183,310					
<b>Optional Retail Analysis</b>	\$30,000					
<b>Total with Retail Analysis</b>	\$213,310					





# Memorandum

**TO:** Mayor and City Council

**FROM:** Patrick Goff, City Manager  
Ken Johnstone, Community Development Director

**DATE:** March 26, 2018

**SUBJECT:** Development of “The Green” at Stevens Elementary School

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**ISSUE:**

Councilmembers Fitzgerald, Pond and Davis requested to include a discussion on a study session agenda concerning the redevelopment of “The Green” at Stevens Elementary into a community amenity such as a community plaza for a gathering place and community events.

**BACKGROUND:**

The 2005 Neighborhood Revitalization Strategy (NRS) focuses on the repositioning of Wheat Ridge as a vibrant community. In particular, the NRS urges the City to pursue policies that encourage redevelopment and to promote 38<sup>th</sup> Avenue as a destination Main Street and pedestrian-oriented place. Strategy 6 specifically calls to “accelerate and shape the development along 38<sup>th</sup> Avenue” because “Wheat Ridge is a community that lacks a defined center.” The NRS emphasizes the need to attract strong households, and ultimately the provision of an appealing, pedestrian-oriented destination such as 38<sup>th</sup> Avenue helps to create that household demand.

In 2009, this vision of a Main Street on 38<sup>th</sup> was reinforced in the City’s comprehensive plan, *Envision Wheat Ridge*. The plan specifically describes the future of the 38<sup>th</sup> Avenue corridor from Wadsworth to Pierce as “a transit and pedestrian friendly ‘main street’ that features an extension of streetscape and urban design improvements that have been completed between Sheridan Boulevard and Harlan Street.” Enhancing community character and design is one of six key values on which the comprehensive plan is based. This includes a call to enhance the image of the City’s commercial corridors and specifically “to coordinate, fund, develop, and maintain streetscape improvements.”

The 38<sup>th</sup> Avenue Corridor Plan, adopted October 2011, refines the Main Street vision and outlines specific action steps for revitalization. The plan addresses a wide range of recommendations related to branding, signage, housing, private development, public improvements, art, zoning, and community events all of which contribute to a feeling of place. Specifically, the plan recommended the following actions items pertaining to the Jefferson County School District property:

**Guiding Principle**

Vitality

**Action**

Work with Jefferson County School District to consider utilizing the large surface parking lot that abuts 38<sup>th</sup> Avenue for non-school events such as farmer’s markets, family or youth bike rodeos, overflow parking or civic functions.



**Guiding Principle**

Vitality

**Action**

Work with Jefferson County School District to consider long term re-investment of their underutilized land along 38<sup>th</sup> Avenue (vacant land fronting 38<sup>th</sup> and parking lot) for mixed use development and community functions such as community gardens and corridor parking

Appeal

Create public plazas or gathering places along the corridor at activity nodes for public gatherings

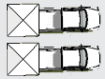
Subsequent to the adoption of the 38<sup>th</sup> Avenue Corridor Plan, the City hired a design firm to design conceptual streetscape improvements to 38<sup>th</sup> Avenue. As part of Phase II of that scope of work, Entelechy, the consultant urban designer, also designed conceptual designs for modifications to the schools vacant property along 38<sup>th</sup>, generally referred to as “The Green”. Already used for many City events, in partnership with the School District, the improvements would be intended to improve its functionality for special events.

**ATTACHMENTS:**

1. “The Green” conceptual design A
2. “The Green” conceptual design B

Total Booths (10x10): 94  
Major Beer Tent: 1  
Secured Entries: up to 4  
Vendor Entry: 1

Preferred layout of vendors with vehicles:



Vendors prefer to be able to back up trucks and have tent set up adjacent to it. If possible this arrangement would help with loading efficiencies.

Location of secured entries to venue.

Location of secured area fencing for major event.

For an event that doesn't need parking area fencing can be moved to edge of parking along walk

Location of secured entry for vendors

Food vendors focused on High Ct. for better drainage and clean-up

Fence location maintains two-way vehicular movement on High Ct.

High Ct.

38th Avenue

ATTACHMENT 1



