

STUDY SESSION AGENDA

CITY COUNCIL CITY OF WHEAT RIDGE, COLORADO

7500 W. 29th Ave.
Wheat Ridge CO

November 5, 2018

6:30 p.m.

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.

Citizen Comment on Agenda Items

1. Neighborhood Revitalization Strategy Joint Meeting with Planning Commission
2. Moratorium on Single Family Building Permits Associated with Subdivision Approval
3. I-70 Kipling Corridor Strategy
4. Staff Report(s)
5. Elected Officials' Report(s)

ADJOURNMENT

Memorandum

TO: Mayor, City Council, and Planning Commission

THROUGH: Patrick Goff, City Manager

FROM: Ken Johnstone, Community Development Director
Lauren Mikulak, Planning Manager

DATE: October 24, 2018 (for November 5 Joint Study Session)

SUBJECT: Update of the Neighborhood Revitalization Strategy (NRS)

In 2005, City Council adopted the Neighborhood Revitalization Strategy (NRS) Report, (titled *Repositioning Wheat Ridge*), and its findings and recommendations have served as a guiding document for revitalizing the City and updating City policies and codes. The strategies and recommendations contained in the NRS were focused on leveraging the City's strengths and addressing its challenges. The goal was 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 NRS represented a community conversation, and consensus, about the City's competitiveness in the early 2000s and what to do about it. The original NRS documents are available on the City's website at <http://www.ci.wheatridge.co.us/NRS>.

In the course of the last 13 years, the City and metro area have changed significantly, so in early 2018 Council gave direction to update the NRS document. Much of the work is being driven by a City Council appointed citizen Steering Committee with guidance from the original consultant group, czb. The Steering Committee is comprised of over 20 members including residents, business owners, and other stakeholders who represent a broad cross-section of the community. The Committee has met four times with czb and staff since July. They have self-organized into six teams and have convened dozens of small group "kitchen table" meetings to engage the public in peer-to-peer community conversations.

The Steering Committee will be hosting additional small group meetings throughout November and a public open house is scheduled for the evening of **December 12 (Note: date corrected from December 10 in original packet) (corrected on November 9, 2018)**. Committee and community meetings will continue in early 2019, and this update process will culminate in a final report in mid-2019.

Input from Planning Commission and City Council is important to the process, and the purpose of the November 5 study session will be to provide an update on the process, to present on the Wheat Ridge housing and retail markets, and to seek your input as community representatives.

Attached for your review is an interim report from the consultant team sharing their preliminary observations. Based on your review of this report, discussion at the study session will be focused on these questions:

1. Do you have any questions about the preliminary analysis?
2. Do you agree that the NRS process thus far has identified the right issues?
3. Are there any other issues that you think the NRS process should address?
4. Do you have any questions about the engagement process?

ATTACHMENT(S):

1. Wheat Ridge Neighborhood Revitalization Strategy Update – Interim Report:
Preliminary Market Observations

Wheat Ridge Neighborhood Revitalization Strategy Update



OCTOBER 2018

Interim Report -
Preliminary Market
Observations



czb with MJB Consulting

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Purpose of Interim Report

The purpose of this report within the Neighborhood Revitalization Strategy (NRS) update process is to share preliminary market observations and to test the most important questions and themes that have emerged to date. Key stakeholders in the process, including but not limited to the City Council, Planning Commission, and Steering Committee, should read what follows and determine whether the issues raised are the correct ones as the city seeks to update the NRS.

This interim report marks the end of the project's first, exploratory phase. Discussions prompted by this early work will assist staff, the consulting team, and the Steering Committee in confirming a direction for the next phase, which is focused on documenting community values, setting priorities for neighborhood change, and weighing tradeoffs that may result from public actions.

This is only an interim report, and the observations here are subject to change over the course of the project based on additional data and analysis as well as stakeholder and public input and feedback. The content should be considered a solid first draft, not a final report. As such, the consulting team reserves the right to update or adjust analysis and observations found here before finalizing a report to the city in the spring.

Introduction and Background

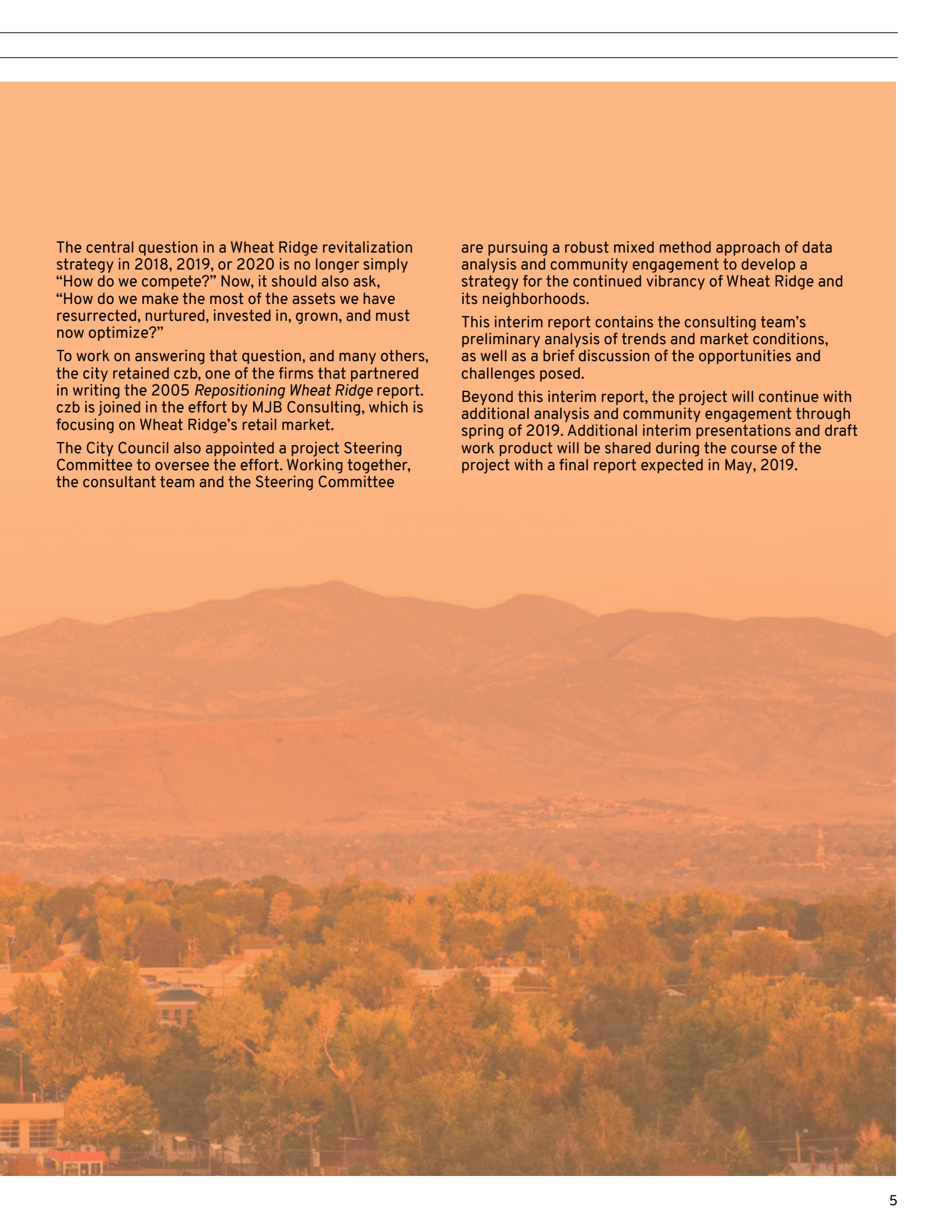
In 2005, City Council adopted the Neighborhood Revitalization Strategy (NRS) Report, *Repositioning Wheat Ridge*, and adopted its findings and recommendations as guiding principles for revitalizing the city.

The strategies and recommendations contained in the NRS were 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 NRS represented a community conversation, and consensus, about the city's competitiveness in the early 2000s and what to do about it. Most would acknowledge that Wheat Ridge changed in the ensuing 13 years and continues to do so, even if feelings about the nature of the city's development are not uniformly shared. In early 2018, City Council agreed that it was time to update the NRS to determine what the city wants to be today and into the future.

Between 2005 and 2018, a number of changes 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 spillover effects in Wheat Ridge.
- The city experienced half a generation of demographic turnover, with some households leaving and new ones arriving.





The central question in a Wheat Ridge revitalization strategy in 2018, 2019, or 2020 is no longer simply “How do we compete?” Now, it should also ask, “How do we make the most of the assets we have resurrected, nurtured, invested in, grown, and must now optimize?”

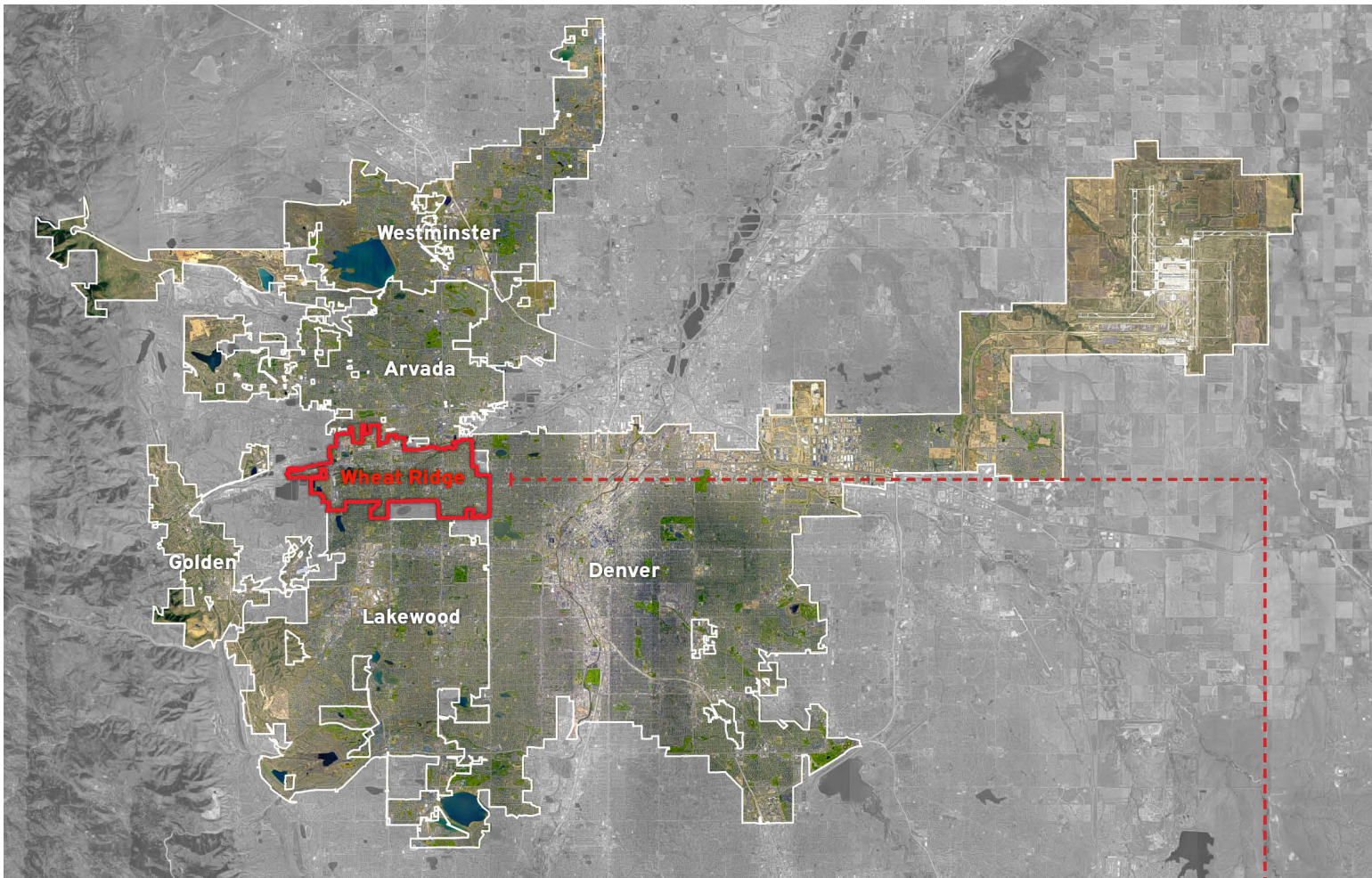
To work on answering that question, and many others, the city retained czb, one of the firms that partnered in writing the 2005 *Repositioning Wheat Ridge* report. czb is joined in the effort by MJB Consulting, which is focusing on Wheat Ridge’s retail market.

The City Council also appointed a project Steering Committee to oversee the effort. Working together, the consultant team and the Steering Committee

are pursuing a robust mixed method approach of data analysis and community engagement to develop a strategy for the continued vibrancy of Wheat Ridge and its neighborhoods.

This interim report contains the consulting team’s preliminary analysis of trends and market conditions, as well as a brief discussion of the opportunities and challenges posed.

Beyond this interim report, the project will continue with additional analysis and community engagement through spring of 2019. Additional interim presentations and draft work product will be shared during the course of the project with a final report expected in May, 2019.



The Wheat Ridge Market and the Competitive Landscape

The Denver region has unquestionably become more economically vibrant in the past decade.

The region performs well on economic and demographic measures and has gained a national reputation for its high quality of life. Denver's success has created positive spillover effects for Wheat Ridge. But, with a few exceptions, neighboring and other nearby communities have also been improving, in some cases faster than Wheat Ridge itself. **While Wheat Ridge has gotten stronger in an absolute sense, its position relative to other suburban areas has not improved much.**

INCOME AND EARNINGS

Although Wheat Ridge has seen income growth in line with that of its neighbors – greater growth in fact than some of its neighbors – the city’s lower starting position means it still has not caught up. Wheat Ridge was at or near the bottom of the pack in household and family incomes in 1999 and that has not changed according to the most recent available data.

Fig. 1
Change in Median Household Income, Selected Communities (1999-2016)

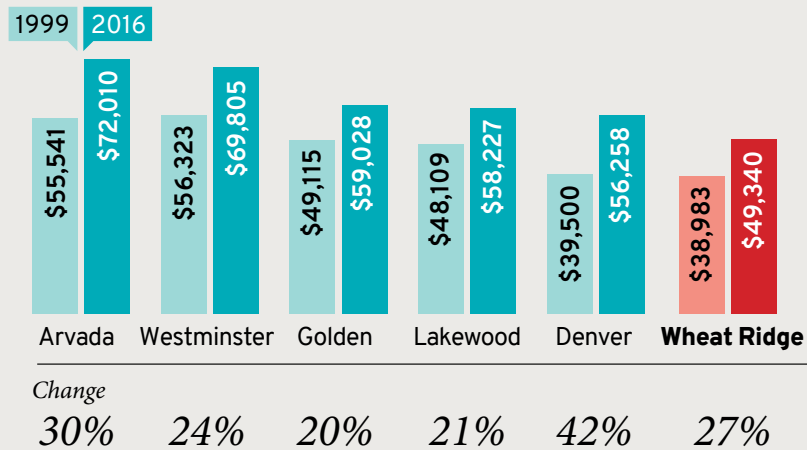
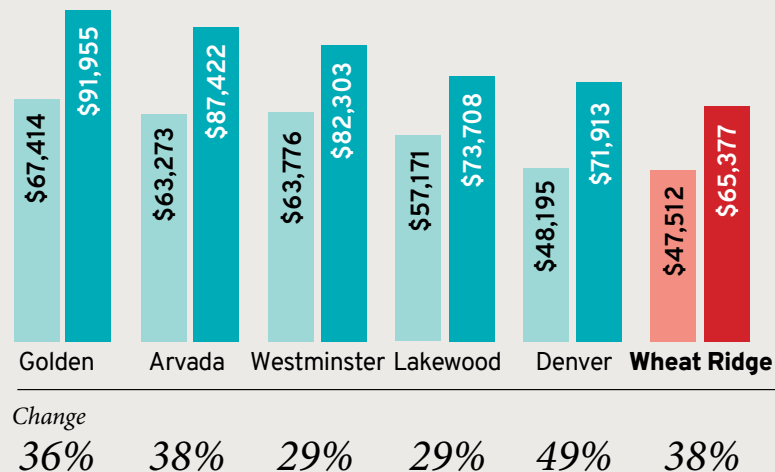


Fig. 2
Change in Median Family Income, Selected Communities (1999-2016)



Compared to other nearby jurisdictions, Wheat Ridge also has fewer households earning at least \$50,000 per year. On a relative basis, Wheat Ridge has fewer of the households that are able to afford the rising rents and home prices in the Denver area. Wheat Ridge households are also less likely to have disposable income for discretionary purchases.

Fig. 3
Percent of Households Earning at Least \$50,000, Selected Communities (2016 dollars)

	1999	2016
Arvada	73%	67%
Westminster	76%	66%
Lakewood	67%	57%
Golden	64%	57%
Denver	56%	55%
Wheat Ridge	56%	49%

Source: czb Analysis of U.S. Census and 2012-2016 ACS 5 Year Estimates

EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT

The median earnings for a high school graduate in Jefferson County is \$35,000. For someone in Jefferson County with a four year college degree, the median is approximately \$55,000 while an advanced degree fetches a median earnings of \$68,000. Wheat Ridge trails its neighbors in the percentage of college graduates living in the city, which means lower wages for workers who live there. This is especially true in some key age groups, including most importantly the peak earning years of 45-64.

AGING POPULATION

Wheat Ridge has long been known as a community older than others in the region. Although its median age is now actually falling and the median age in other communities is rising, Wheat Ridge is still substantially older than its neighbors. It may be some time before the gap closes, and in the meantime the city faces the realities of a relatively large elderly population.

With a population that is older than its neighbors and with a relatively large proportion of people in their retirement years, it comes as no surprise that Wheat Ridge leads in the percentage of married couple households that have no workers living in them.

Fig. 4
Population at Least 25 Years Old with Four Year Degree, Selected Communities (2016)

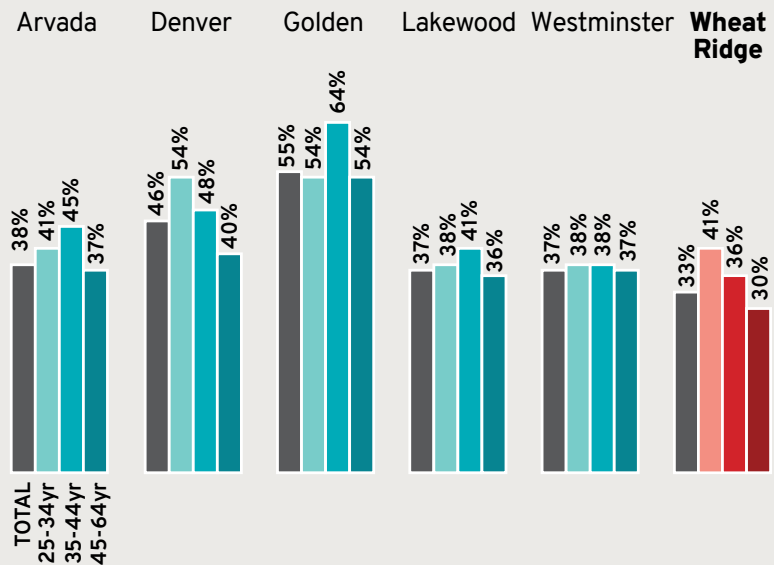


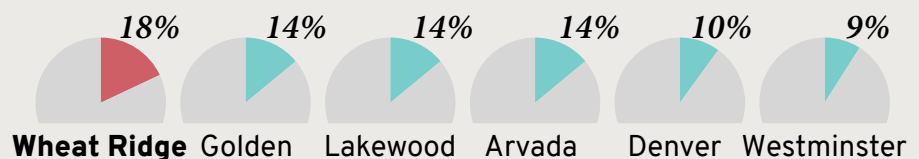
Fig. 5

Median Age and Population Aged 65+, Selected Communities (2016)

	Median Age	% Population 65+
Arvada	41	15%
Westminster	34	10%
Lakewood	34	11%
Golden	38	16%
Denver	36	11%
Wheat Ridge	42	19%

Fig. 6

Percentage of Married Couple Families with No Workers, Selected Communities (2016)



Source: 2012-2016 ACS 5 Year Estimates

THE BOTTOM LINE

Educational attainment and age combine to paint a clear but nuanced picture of Wheat Ridge within the regional marketplace.

Denver and Golden are outliers in this group, having done well in retaining and attracting people of all ages with college degrees for a variety of reasons. They are **reaping the rewards of an educated population** in a 21st century economy.

Wheat Ridge is holding its own against Lakewood, Arvada, and Westminster with young people in their late 20s and early 30s, including those with college degrees. This is a positive sign for the future of Wheat Ridge's market strength.

Wheat Ridge has 35-44 year old residents in similar proportions to its neighbors, but that **age group is not as well educated** as it is in Lakewood, Westminster, and, especially, Arvada. Arvada in particular has been successful in attracting college graduates in this age group.

The same thing is true of residents aged 45-64 in Wheat Ridge. **College degree attainment rates** for this group in Lakewood, Westminster, and Arvada are 36-37% but **only 30% in Wheat Ridge.**

Wheat Ridge has a **substantially higher percentage of senior citizens** than does the immediate surrounding area. This prevalence of retirement age people may also explain why the city has a higher percentage of married couple families where no one works.

Higher proportions of elderly retirees and peak-career workers without college degrees explain why incomes and earning power are lower in Wheat Ridge than in other nearby communities. Younger, well-educated people are choosing Wheat Ridge, but not in great enough numbers to rebalance the scale. This of course has implications for the city's housing and retail markets.

The Housing Market

Wheat Ridge has a housing mix not dissimilar from its neighbors, although its housing is markedly older, as the city largely missed out on new housing construction after 1980.

Many of its owners are elderly, and there is evidence to suggest that at least some older homes are converting to rental use as the buyer market finds them out of date. Despite all this, price appreciation over the past decade has been strong in Wheat Ridge, reflecting the market's desire to be in the city. Price appreciation has been led by areas east of Wadsworth Boulevard, suggesting that proximity to Denver is a key driver of Wheat Ridge housing values.



HOUSING STOCK

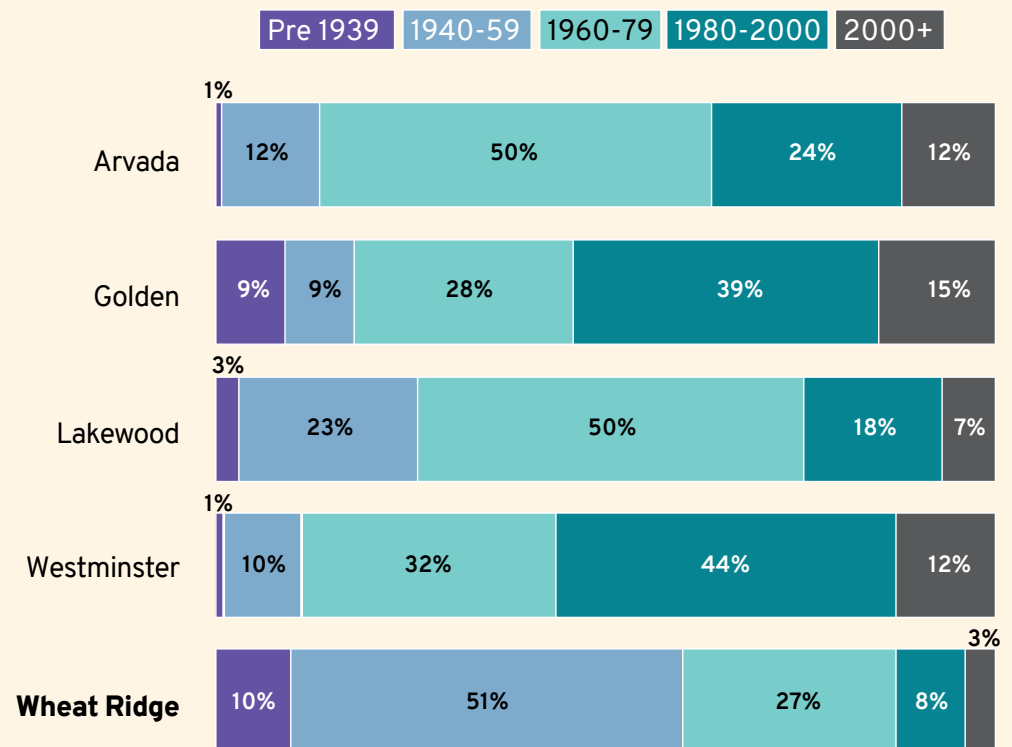
Wheat Ridge's housing stock is mostly similar in nature to those of the comparison communities. Arvada stands out for being more heavily tilted toward single-family detached units and away from large multifamily structures.

What stands out about Wheat Ridge's housing stock is its age. Nearly 80% of Wheat Ridge's single-family units were built between 1940 and 1979. This is the most among west metro peer communities. Only 12% of Wheat Ridge's single-family units were built 1980 or later and this is by far the least among the peer communities.

Fig. 7
Housing Stock Characteristics (2016)

	Single-family Detached	Single-family Attached	# OF UNITS		
			2-4	5-19	20+
Arvada	70%	8%	4%	10%	7%
Golden	48%	8%	7%	14%	14%
Lakewood	49%	10%	6%	20%	13%
Westminster	59%	9%	4%	16%	11%
Wheat Ridge	53%	13%	7%	15%	11%

Fig. 8
Single-Family Housing Units, by Era Built (2016)



Source: 2012-2016 ACS 5 Year Estimates

CHANGES IN TENURE OF AGING HOUSING

Mid-century housing stock, unless of rare high quality or in rare desirable locations, is today near the end of its useful life and has long outlived the homebuyer preferences that it was built to meet. As a result, the buyer market is increasingly avoiding these aging units and they are in many cases converting to rental properties. This is true in suburban communities across the country and Wheat Ridge is no exception. Between 2000 and 2016, just over 500 single-family units converted from ownership to rental, and over 80% of those were built between 1940 and 1979.

AGING HOMEOWNERS

One in three Wheat Ridge owner households is headed by a senior citizen, just as it was in 2000. West metro peer communities are catching up as their populations age, but Wheat Ridge still has the greatest percentage of elderly owners. Roughly 1,300 Wheat Ridge owners are 75 or older, with approximately 400 of those 85 or older. In addition, nearly 2,000 Wheat Ridge owner units built between 1940 and 1979 are currently occupied by a senior citizen head of household. The city ought to be anticipating the likelihood that some significant number of those 2,000 houses will convert to rental properties as their current occupants transition out.

Fig. 9
Change in Percentage of Single-Family Units that are Rentals, by Era Built (2000-2016)

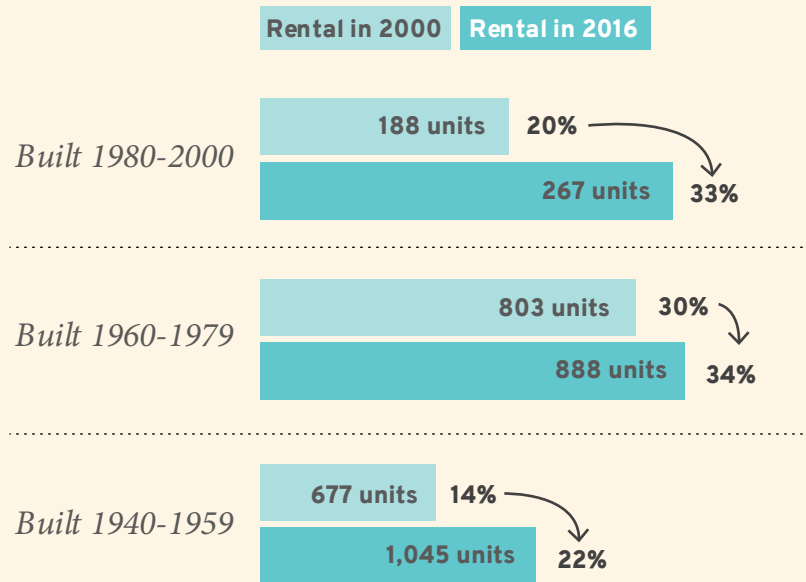


Fig. 10
Percentage of Owner Units Headed by Someone Aged 65+ (2016)

	2000	2016
Arvada	19%	28%
Golden	21%	24%
Lakewood	23%	30%
Westminster	12%	21%
Wheat Ridge	33%	33%

Fig. 11
Percentage of Owner Units Built 1940-79 and Headed by Someone Aged 65+ (2016)

Arvada	19%
Golden	11%
Lakewood	22%
Westminster	9%
Wheat Ridge	25%

Source: czb Analysis of Data from U.S. Census and 2012-2016 ACS 5 Year Estimates

SALES AND PRICES

In the last decade, Wheat Ridge has enjoyed strong real estate appreciation, especially compared to other nearby communities. As reflected in average sales, Wheat Ridge is still a bit more of a bargain than Arvada and Lakewood, but more expensive than Westminster. Price appreciation in Wheat Ridge proves that even with older housing stock and relatively lower incomes of existing residents, the market still values Wheat Ridge as a place to invest its housing dollars.

Appreciation across Wheat Ridge and neighboring communities is not uniform, however, as some neighborhoods have grown in value faster than others. The fastest appreciating parts of Wheat Ridge have been those east of Wadsworth, along 38th Avenue and especially close to the Denver line. Central Wheat Ridge and the Applewood area have also performed well, demonstrably better, in fact, than most areas of Arvada and Lakewood.

Fig. 12

Change in Average Sales Prices by Census Tracts, Selected Jefferson County Cities (2006/08 - 2016/18)

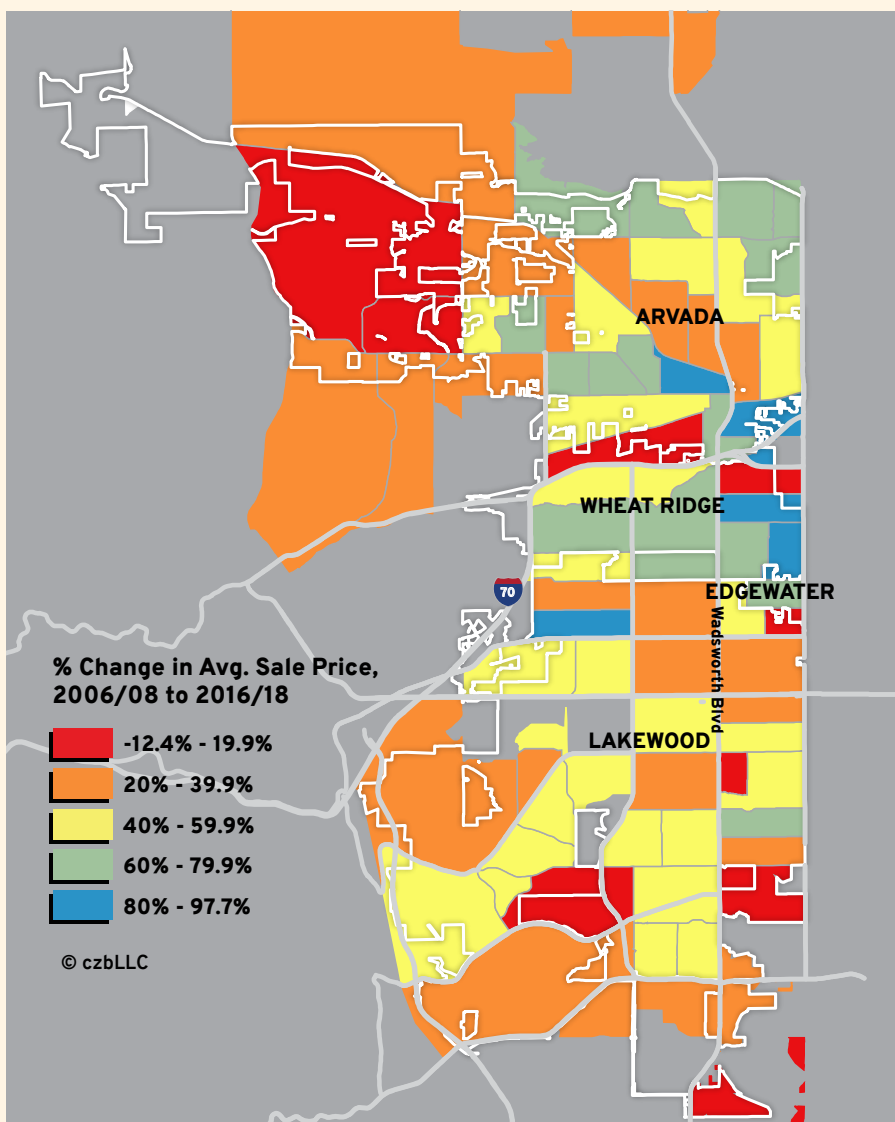


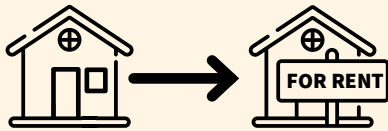
Fig. 13

	Average Sale Price		% Change
	2006/08	2016/18	
Arvada	\$308,808	\$447,038	45%
Golden	\$447,564	\$541,682	21%
Lakewood	\$297,776	\$432,155	45%
Westminster	\$251,264	\$370,917	48%
Wheat Ridge	\$259,691	\$416,065	60%

Source: czb Analysis of Data from Jefferson County Assessor

MARKET TRENDS TO WATCH

There are a few trends the city should watch that will bear on its long-term future, both in terms of neighborhood stability and its economic and fiscal strength.



Owner Units Turning to Rentals

Wheat Ridge has long valued home ownership as a sign of the city's stability, its residential quality of life, and its suitability as a place to raise a family. While Wheat Ridge on the whole continues to be a desirable place to buy a home, data suggest that aging, obsolete houses are converting to rental use. This is not necessarily a bad thing, as every community needs rental housing. But the conversion of single-family units to rentals can often mark the beginning of a process of disinvestment.



Lack of New Housing Product

Houses that sell in Wheat Ridge are fetching good prices, indicating that the market is working to the city's benefit and that new owners have good incomes and are willing to invest in the city. That being said, however, it cannot be ignored that Wheat Ridge struggles to serve a market that is looking for a more modern housing product. Continuing to build Wheat Ridge's market strength—and its resulting quality of life and fiscal capacity—will require helping the market to update the existing housing offerings.

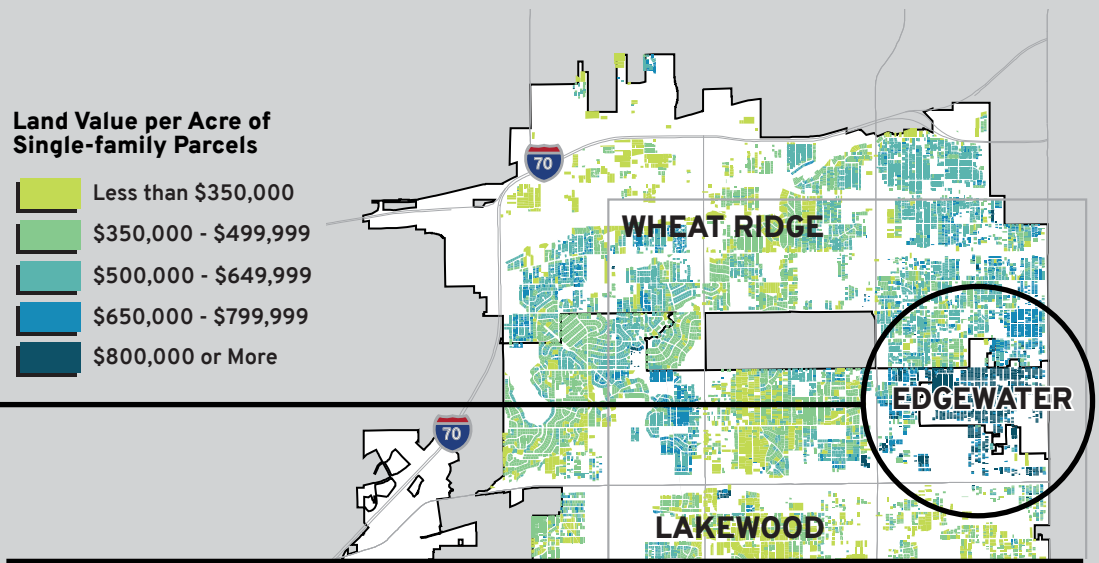
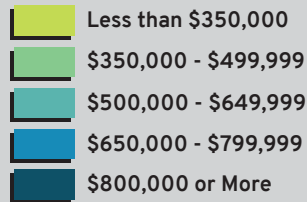


Desirable Locations Prone to Redevelopment

Why are some older houses left behind by the buyer market, while others sell for high prices? As any realtor will tell us, it's "Location, location, location!" Land values reflect location desirability and those values with a few exceptions, are highest in the eastern and southeastern parts of Wheat Ridge. On properties where the land is valuable and the structure itself is valuable, the market will preserve and reinvest in the existing building. On properties where the land is valuable and the structure itself is not, there will be market pressure to upgrade the structure, often via demolition and rebuilding. Redevelopment of existing single-family properties in the eastern sections of Wheat Ridge may be an important part of the new housing mix, even as it may also prompt concerns from neighbors about changing physical character.

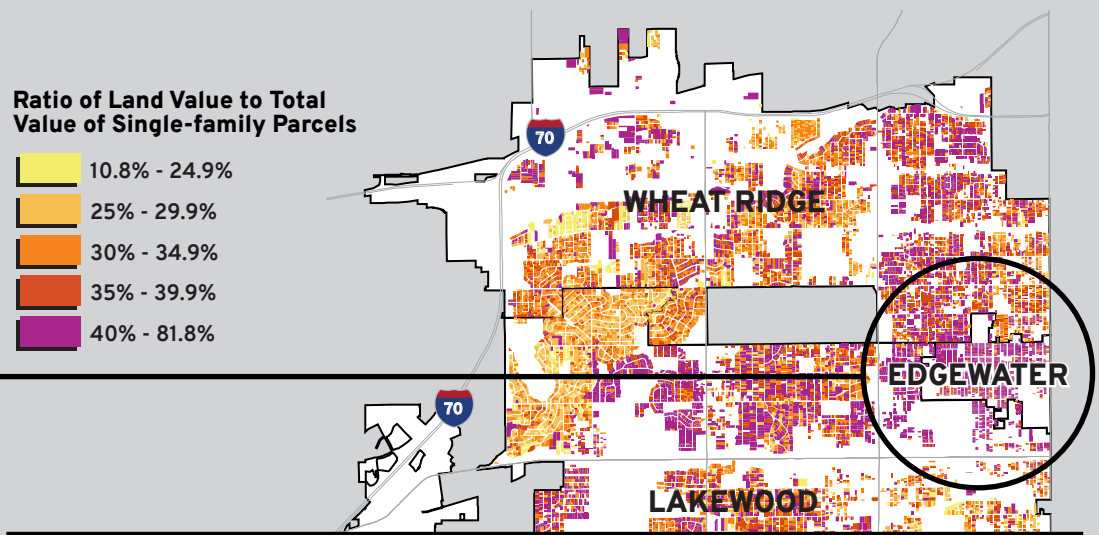
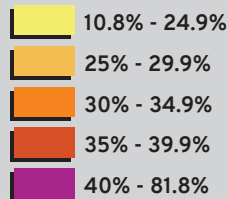
Where residential land is valuable...

Land Value per Acre of Single-family Parcels



...and most of the value is in the land, not the building...

Ratio of Land Value to Total Value of Single-family Parcels



...the market will redevelop.



New infill on small lots, Edgewater

Wheat Ridge's east side is not as uniformly ready for residential redevelopment as Edgewater, but parcels east of Wadsworth will be in play for demolition and new construction on a piecemeal basis. This is not a trend that will stop on its own, nor is it likely to be stopped legislatively, though it can be influenced via the city's bulk plane regulations.

The Retail Market

Wheat Ridge, for the purposes of retail development, has a trade area of roughly 40,000 people, inclusive of the city itself and some peripheral areas outside its boundaries.

This market is modestly-sized and its appeal to tenants, compared to other markets across metro Denver, is challenged by lower levels of household income and educational attainment. This has important consequences for Wheat Ridge's ability to sustain existing and new retail establishments that can generate large amounts of sales-tax revenue.



The Wheat Ridge market can generally be characterized by two dominant “psychographics” or consumer profiles:

“Making Do”

These young singles, mostly white and Hispanic, are starting careers and/or raising young families. They tend to be renters, earning between \$30,000 and \$40,000, with limited discretionary income. They are primarily concerned with price, gravitating to businesses like Big Lots, Dollar Tree, EZ Pawn, Boost Mobile, thrift stores and fast-food restaurants.



“Sunrise Sunset-ting”

These older white couples tend to be long-time residents, usually homeowners, with middle incomes and traditional sensibilities. Most likely to be found at one of Wheat Ridge’s many family restaurants, dive bars or bowling alleys, their traditional sensibilities seem more in tune with rural and small-town Americana. This is the psychographic with which Wheat Ridge remains most closely associated today.



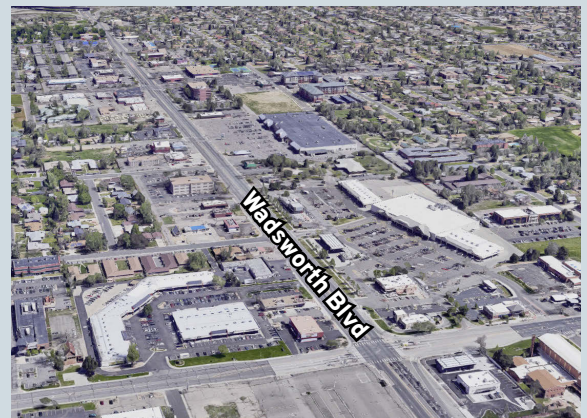


SALES TAX GENERATORS

Sales tax generators are usually targeted to the mass market and oriented towards automobiles. In general, Wheat Ridge struggles to attract and/or retain such tenants due to its modestly-sized trade area as well as its proximity to other, more attractive locations with better access to larger and stronger markets in the region. Furthermore, many kinds of large retailers have slowed or halted expansion in response to the rise of e-commerce as well as the ongoing contraction of the middle class.

It is also important to note that the types of retailers which generate large amounts of sales-tax revenue tend not to be brave leaders, willing to blaze a trail into an emerging market. Rather, they seek “safety-in-numbers” and prefer to co-locate with each other— a phenomenon known in the industry as “co-tenancy”. Most potential locations in Wheat Ridge are unable to provide, the same level of co-tenancy as competing ones in adjacent communities.

The most important retail locations in Wheat Ridge— Applewood Village/Clear Creek Crossing, Kipling and I-70, and Wadsworth Blvd—all face significant challenges related to trade area and co-tenancy limitations. As the city considers sales-tax generation and redevelopment, these market and real-estate realities will need to be kept in mind.





PLACEMAKING ON WEST 38th AVENUE (EAST OF WADSWORTH)

Many suburbanites are seeking urbanity closer to home and Wheat Ridge is no exception. The success of suburban walkable districts (Arvada, Louisville, etc.) reflect the reality that many suburban residents demand and will patronize such areas. In fact, at this point, some form of walkable area is almost “table stakes” for suburban communities hoping to remain vital in the 21st century.

Wheat Ridge has made great strides on this front along W. 38th Avenue with public improvements as well as private investments by businesses like Colorado Plus, Right Coast Pizza, and The Bardo Coffee House. One challenge that exists, however, is the scattering of new business and projects along the street. To maximize the potential of a walkable suburban, or “surban,” district in Wheat Ridge, the city should be giving serious thought to how it can concentrate the activity in a smaller area so as to achieve a critical mass. Notwithstanding the real obstacles to doing so, including the school district’s ownership of underutilized property on the north side of the street, the city should be focusing its redevelopment and repositioning efforts in the near term on the relatively compact stretch roughly between Upham Street and Reed Street.



Issues and Opportunities Now Facing Wheat Ridge

Early indications suggest that Wheat Ridge residents are generally satisfied with the quality of residential life, including the quality of parks and open space, housing affordability, and the emerging character of W. 38th Avenue.

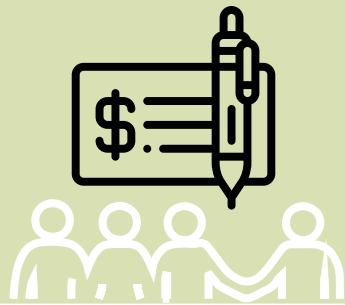
There are also some areas where improvement is being sought. At this early stage, there seems to be agreement that highly visible commercial areas—Kipling and I-70, Wadsworth Boulevard, W 44th Avenue—are lacking in aesthetic appeal and the city overall does not offer many of the retail amenities that residents want. Less emphasized, though still important, is that the community does not have established nor well-followed norms about property maintenance.

This qualitative data tracks with the results of the 2018 community survey in which Wheat Ridge residents reported overall satisfaction with life in the city, but expressed relative dissatisfaction with shopping options, the appearance of the community (including business areas and corridors), and the land use, planning, zoning, and building inspection functions of city government.



Wheat Ridge is well positioned to become a more desirable, more valuable suburban community with greater fiscal capacity, more attractive commercial corridors, and better retail offerings for its residents. Wheat Ridge is holding its own on the west side of the metro area, as evidenced by growing home values and new ventures like Lucky's. The market wants to reward Wheat Ridge, largely because it occupies one of the best locations between Denver and the mountains in the western suburbs. But the market has hedged its bets and will continue to be on the sidelines or invest disproportionately in other locations until Wheat Ridge proves that more change is forthcoming.





Today, the market views Wheat Ridge as an older, aged community, with comparatively low incomes, and a built environment that is nearing obsolescence, if not already past its use-by date. This poses some choices for the community to consider within the NRS update and in future policy making.

There is clear consensus that Wheat Ridge residents want their commercial areas to be redeveloped for aesthetic reasons and to create newer and better retail and dining opportunities. But retailers and developers have concluded that the Wheat Ridge market has real limitations. Bridging that gap at a meaningful scale—as opposed to one or two projects every few years—will require public spending for public infrastructure and private sector incentives.

Will the community support the level of spending that might be required to address the challenge or will it stick to its historical anti-tax attitude? If Wheat Ridge's history is any guide, the answer is no, but changing community expectations may suggest otherwise.

Much of Wheat Ridge's housing stock is at the end of its useful life, and out of step with current homebuyer preferences. Future community vitality is tied to the redevelopment of existing residential properties, including single-family properties not at the edges of established neighborhoods but directly in the middle of them. It will also require new multifamily housing of heights and densities that Wheat Ridge has not historically experienced.

Will the city support this redevelopment trend through policy or respond to neighbors and advocates who resist the changes to existing neighborhood and community character?



Wheat Ridge values what has been called its “quirkiness,” understood to mean that it is a bit offbeat, less fussy, and more comfortable than other places. Part and parcel of this quirkiness is that at times Wheat Ridge may also look messier, less polished, or generally rougher around the edges than those other places. Quirkiness can be a valuable attribute in the right amounts and should be maintained in some proportion in Wheat Ridge in the future. But given the widespread presence of fairly routine disorder throughout Wheat Ridge, and the low standards often communicated to the wider market, these characteristics are interpreted not as quaint and quirky but, rather, as signs of disorder, unpredictability, and risk to be avoided. For Wheat Ridge to become the strong market it has the potential to be and the market it must be to support continued economic development, good public services, and a high quality of life, it will need to clean up its act and appeal to an investor class seeking a more polished presentation.

Will the community accept a higher level of regulation and spending in order to upgrade standards across Wheat Ridge to appeal to this different market or will it hew closer to its longstanding small government orientation?

In short, if Wheat Ridge wants to redevelop itself as an attractive and fiscally sustainable 21st century suburb, it must become a stronger market, better able to keep and attract higher earning households, especially those with college degrees. For the foreseeable future, this will mean facilitating housing investments for this market, financially assisting in retail and commercial development along visible corridors, and investing money and political capital in planning, zoning, and code enforcement work.

This package, in its totality, comes with significant financial and political costs. Is Wheat Ridge willing to pay those costs?

These are issues and questions that will be explored during the process of updating the NRS, and which the Steering Committee, the public, and decision making bodies will need to ultimately address. There are no free lunches; for every “get” that Wheat Ridge seeks, there will need to be a corresponding “give.” Strategy is about making choices, and the remainder of the NRS update will be an opportunity to seek perspectives as broadly as possible about what matters most when it comes to hard choices in Wheat Ridge.

Wheat Ridge Neighborhood Revitalization Strategy Update

OCTOBER 2018

Interim Report - Preliminary Market Observations



czb with MJB Consulting

Memorandum

TO: Mayor and City Council

FROM: Kenneth Johnstone, Director of Community Development

THROUGH: Patrick Goff, City Manager

DATE: October 30, 2018 (for November 5 City Council study session)

SUBJECT: Residential-One (R-1) building permit moratorium

ISSUE:

At the October 22, 2018 City Council meeting, Council adopted a temporary moratorium on the “acceptance, processing and approval of building permits for the construction of single family residences in the R-1 zone district within subdivisions approved administratively.” The ordinance was adopted as an emergency, going into effect immediately and expiring on January 20, 2019, unless further extended by additional City Council action through approval of a non-emergency ordinance.

The ordinance was adopted, in part, in response to concerns about a 2-lot subdivision that was recently approved administratively in the Bel Aire subdivision, at 4055 Everett Street. As drafted, the effect of the ordinance is such that it impacts two subdivisions, the one previously noted and a second subdivision, known as the Gladys Subdivision, located at 2876-2880 Newland Street, where one of the two lots remains vacant.

While Council did not provide specific direction on what substantive changes to the zoning code might be pursued, if any, during the moratorium, staff has taken the liberty of proposing a few options for consideration, given the short duration of the moratorium and the need to also hold a Planning Commission hearing on any potential changes to Chapter 26 of the Code. If Code changes are desired, City Council could potentially hold a first reading on an ordinance on November 26, a Planning Commission hearing on December 6 and a City Council public hearing on January 14, 2019, prior to the moratorium’s expiration on January 20, 2019.

BACKGROUND:

Article IV of Chapter 26 (Subdivisions) was most recently amended in 2014 with an ordinance that repealed and reenacted the entire Article. During that process, the code was changed to allow subdivision of up to 3 lots to be approved administratively. Four and five lot subdivisions are reviewed by the Planning Commission at a public hearing and subdivisions of more than 5 lots, or those dedicating new public streets require hearings before both Planning Commission and City Council. Prior to 2014, administrative subdivision approval could be granted only for consolidation of two (2) lots and for lot line adjustments.

Based in part on some of the public testimony at the October 22 meeting, staff has drafted 5 possible code amendments that might be responsive to some of the concerns that were expressed. Options 1 and 2 are procedural options that would change the subdivision review process/public notification requirements. These options would not be retroactive, so would not apply to the two affected subdivisions that have received their required administrative approvals. Options 3, 4 and 5 are possible substantive changes to Chapter 26 that could apply to the lots currently subject to the moratorium, as well as potentially many other residentially zoned lots, depending on what scope of applicability Council would choose to include in such an ordinance.

Option 1: As noted previously, administrative subdivision approval can currently be granted for subdivision of up to 3 lots. No public hearings are required and no public notice is provided. It is certainly an option to require a Planning Commission hearing and commensurate public notice for all subdivisions, or hearings before both the Planning Commission and City Council for all subdivisions. The rationale behind not having hearings for smaller subdivisions is that subdivision approvals are considered ministerial actions by the City – if they meet minimum lot size/width, have street frontage/access and access to adequate utilities, the City has limited discretion to deny the applications.

Option 2: When subdivisions meet the size thresholds to require public hearings, as summarized previously, they trigger standard public notice requirements for land use applications (publication in paper, physical posting of the property and mailed notice to property owners within 300 feet of the subdivision). Unlike some other City land use applications, such as private property initiated rezonings and special use permits, both of which modify the types of permitted uses on a property, subdivisions are not required to have a neighborhood meeting as a precursor to making application. Similar to the discussion in Option 1, the rationale behind that is generally that having a neighborhood input meeting for a ministerial type of application may send somewhat of a mixed message as to what level of substantive impact the neighborhood will actually have on the application under review.

Option 3: The City's subdivision regulations discourage, but do not prohibit "flag lots." Flag lots must meet the following criteria:

1. The minimum width at the pole portion abutting a public street is twenty-five feet.
2. The use of a flag lot is necessary for the effective development of the land.
3. The proposed design does not negatively affect public safety and includes clearly defined access for private use and for emergency service.

The subdivision at 4055 Everett created a flag lot for the existing home at the rear of the property and created a new lot in front of the existing structure, adjacent to the street. The City could amend the code to prohibit "flag lots" citywide, or in certain parts of the City (by geographic area or by zoning district). Several years ago, at the recommendation of the Planning Commission, City Council discussed further restricting flag lots, but did not choose to take any action at that time. As an alternative to outright prohibition of flag lots, City Council could consider a code amendment that would trigger an automatic public hearing for any subdivision containing a flag lot, regardless of the number of lots. Such a process could include just a Planning Commission (PC) hearing, or both PC and City Council.

Option 4: The City has the ability to create overlay zone districts for certain geographic parts of the City. In so doing, the zoning “rules” can be fine-tuned to address specific issues or concerns related to said geographic area. The overlay zone “rules” would typically be in addition to the development standards contained in the underlying zoning district. To use the example of 4055 Everett, the property is zoned R-1 and the subdivision is the Bel Aire subdivision. It would be possible to define the Bel Aire subdivision as a distinct overlay zone and develop specific development regulations that apply to that subdivision, beyond the underlying R-1 zoning development standards. The range of what those additional “rules” might be is very broad: more stringent or different building height restrictions, architectural design standards, material standards, different setback standards, etc. If this option were to be pursued, staff would suggest that additional time would be needed, beyond the schedule outlined previously in this memo and as such, it would be necessary to extend the moratorium.

In terms of the procedures under which such an overlay zone would be adopted, staff would suggest two options: 1) processed as a City Council initiated legislative rezoning, which, at a minimum, requires a neighborhood meeting; or 2) processed similar to a planned development outline development plan amendment, which requires written approval of a at least 25% of the owners within the specified geographic area.

Option 5: There has been much discussion about residential bulk plane regulations in the City over the past several years, including adoption of an ordinance in 2016 that applied a bulk plane regulation in the R-1C zone district and for single-family homes in the R-3 zone district. There has been some discussion of applying the bulk plane regulations more broadly in additional residential zone districts, or additional geographic areas of the City. Though Council has not yet had consensus to move forward on such an approach, this also would be an option available, whether to apply the bulk plane regulations in all R-1 zone districts, or in a geographic area, such as the Bel Aire subdivision.

RECOMMENDATION:

Staff requests direction on whether to proceed with any of the above options, other options City Council may have, or take no further action.

Memorandum

TO: Mayor and City Council

FROM: Kenneth Johnstone, Director of Community Development

THROUGH: Patrick Goff, City Manager

DATE: October 26, 2018 (for November 5 City Council study session)

SUBJECT: I-70/Kipling Corridor Strategy

In 2017, City Council identified the top 5 priorities in the strategic plan, and two priorities relate to the I-70/Kipling Corridor: development of a corridor plan/vision and reconstruction of the interchange.

At the November 5, 2018 City Council study session, staff will provide a brief update on activities occurring in regard to these two strategic plan priorities.

I-70/Kipling Interchange Environmental Assessment (EA):

The Colorado Department of Transportation (CDOT) plans to reconstruct the I-70/Kipling Street interchange and make related improvements to the interchange area. A Diverging Diamond interchange configuration is the Preferred Alternative. An Environmental Assessment (EA) is being conducted to evaluate the benefits and impacts of these improvements and document any necessary impact mitigation. The EA is being reviewed by CDOT, and will be available for a 30-day public review later this year with a public meeting currently scheduled for December 11, 2018. Comments received will be considered by CDOT and the Federal Highway Administration prior to issuing their final decision to confirm if improvements can move forward.

Project implementation: Construction is not yet fully funded, but completing the EA study and preliminary (30%) design will allow the project to quickly move forward when funding is obtained.

Two initiatives on the 2018 ballot (Propositions 109 and 110) would impact transportation funding in Colorado. To learn more about what the different initiatives mean for this project, visit www.codot.gov/programs/colorado-transportation-matters/together-we-go. For details of the I-70/Kipling interchange improvements: www.codot.gov/projects/i-70-kipling-interchange

I-70/Kipling Corridor Visioning:

The City of Wheat Ridge has engaged David Evans and Associates (DEA) to assist the City in creating a vision for Wheat Ridge's I-70 & Kipling Interchange. The north-south scope of the visioning effort extends from Clear Creek on the south to 51st Avenue on the north. This scope of work includes:

- Identifying potential aesthetic betterments to be included as part of CDOT's reconstruction of the interchange. The intent of this design effort would be to create a unified urban design aesthetic that transitions from the new interchange and into the City of Wheat Ridge, creating and highlighting the interchange and the corridor as a key City gateway.
- Creating a vision plan that will communicate to multiple audiences the City of Wheat Ridge's desired urban design expectations as redevelopment occurs.
- Identifying desired future land uses along the corridor and at the interchange that improve community safety and positively contribute to adjacent neighborhoods.
- Developing a strategy to engage with CDOT, landowners, residents, and partner jurisdictions in order to realize the City's desired aesthetic betterments at the interchange.

A vital component of this project is coordinating with CDOT to ensure that City perspectives and aesthetic betterments are included as part of the interchange reconstruction. As of today, the project is included as part of CDOT's Proposition 110 Tier 2 projects. If the proposition passes, the project will begin construction in year two or three of CDOT's program. As noted above, the draft Environmental Assessment (EA) is currently being reviewed by CDOT's Environmental Programs Branch. Once complete the draft EA will then be sent to FHWA for an additional four weeks of review. Following FHWA's review, a public comment period, including a public meeting on December 11, 2018, will begin. During this period, CDOT's consultant team will be preparing a Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) document, with a decision document expected sometime in February. The formalization of the decision document signifies the end of the environmental process and positions the project for final design and construction.

The DEA led visioning project is scheduled for completion in January of 2019. The completed project and its associated deliverables will serve as vehicles for engaging CDOT related to City of Wheat Ridge funded aesthetic betterments strategies for the project. These "over and above" aesthetic betterments are the responsibility of the City and its partners and will augment the "minimum" aesthetics elements that CDOT will include. Staff will return to Council with proposed betterments and order of magnitude costs prior to requesting that CDOT incorporate them into the design.

Extended Stay Lodging Ordinance:

One possible regulatory change that would affect this area would be a zoning code amendment defining extended stay lodging facilities. Such an ordinance could define minimum physical and operational characteristics of an extended stay lodging facility vs. a standard hotel/motel. In so doing, it would be possible to disallow operation of a standard hotel/motel property, in an extended stay manner, if it does not meet those physical and operational requirements. This could be an effective enforcement tool that might improve the quality of the existing hotels/motels in the area.

Staff had a kick off meeting on that topic on October 29, 2018.

Private Development Activity:

On the east side of Kipling, the vacant parcel at roughly 46th is being reviewed administratively as a concept plan under the City's Mixed Use-Commercial zoning designation. The concept plan will establish building orientation, mix of land uses, access points and internal roadways and/or private streets/drive aisles. Conceptually, the applicant proposes highway oriented commercial uses and restaurants, possibly an additional hotel and multi-family housing toward the south end of this vacant parcel, closer to 44th. If and when a concept plan is approved, individual phases can be submitted for site plan review to ensure compliance with said concept plan and with the design standards and guidelines contained in the City's mixed use zone district regulations.

Just off the Kipling Corridor to the east at 44th and Jellison, Swiss Flower and Gift Cottage has just opened a new store and has plans to develop multi-tenant "maker spaces" to the rear of the new building.

The Kipling Village apartment development on the west side of Kipling also recently upgraded their streetscape, including signage and landscaping upgrades.

Conclusion:

The purpose of this agenda item is principally to provide City Council with an update on activities related to this strategic plan priority. If Council has questions or comments, those are of course welcome as well.

November 2, 2018

VIA E-MAIL

Honorable Bud Starker and Members of the City Council
City of Wheat Ridge
7500 W. 29th Ave.
1st Floor
Wheat Ridge, Colorado 80033

Re: Wheat Ridge City Council Study Session, Agenda Item 2, Moratorium on Single Family Building Permits Associated With Subdivision Approval (Nov. 5, 2018); Request for Reconsideration of Emergency Moratorium, Ordinance No. 1656

Dear Mayor Starker and Members of the City Council:

I am the owner of 4055 Field Drive in Wheat Ridge, Colorado. On October 1, 2018, the City of Wheat Ridge Community Development Department approved an administrative subdivision of the property pursuant to Section 26-406.B of the Wheat Ridge zoning code. At its last regular meeting, on October 22, 2018—and without notice to me—the City Council then enacted an emergency moratorium on building permits for single-family residences within administratively approved subdivisions in the R-1 Zone district.

It has come to my attention that the City Council will consider this moratorium as Agenda Item 2 at its upcoming study session on November 5, 2018. I am writing to provide you with more accurate information about my plans for the property than was previously presented to City Council by some members of the community at the October 22 meeting. My full written testimony is **Attachment 1** to this letter. I request that you include this letter and its attachments in the record of proceedings on the moratorium. I also wish to request that you place reconsideration of the moratorium on your agenda for City Council's next regular meeting, presently scheduled for November 26, 2018.

I purchased the original lot so that my 82-year-old mother can live close to my brother and his family, who are 19-year residents of the neighborhood. The original lot contained one small house believed to be the original orchard farmer's house. Most purchasers would tear that house down and build a large multistory home in its place. My goal in subdividing the property was to preserve and improve the original house for my mother to live in and develop a new home on the new front lot for my brother and his family.

At the October 22 City Council meeting, some members of the community made highly inaccurate assertions regarding my plans for the new home. The most important of these are as follows:

1. It is not true that I hid my plans from the neighbors. To the contrary, when I first learned there was concern about my building plans in late September, I wrote a letter to the neighborhood offering to share my design for the new home and consider any architectural comments the community might offer. *See Attachment 2*. I received no response. The next thing I heard, City Council had enacted the moratorium on October 22.
2. I am not planning to build a tall, skinny, multistory house; a trailer home; or a slot home. My design is for a raised-ranch home no more than 1.75 stories tall with a tuck-under garage. I took as my inspiration the existing raised-ranch homes with tuck-under garages that already exist on 41st Avenue between Dudley and Dover, as well as on the 4200 block of Dudley.
3. I am not planning to tear out all the existing trees. In fact, the footprint of the new home attempts to work around two of three trees on the property. Even after building the new home, I will be providing more green space than is required by the code due to my low lot coverage.

I remain willing, and would again like to offer, to share my design plans with the community and consider their concerns, in an appropriate forum. Please understand, however, that I already have completed the subdivision process and have invested substantial financial resources into my project. I have made significant improvements to the existing home. I worked cooperatively with the City through the subdivision process, which went through several iterations before receiving final approval. I bear the additional expense to demolish the existing garage and pay the required subdivision fees, and I already have signed contracts for many other aspects of the work necessary for the new house.

I believe the hastily crafted moratorium was based on misinformation and unfairly targets my property. By preventing me from moving forward with my plans, the moratorium is causing me and my family additional uncertainty and increasing my expenses. If, as stated in the moratorium, the City Council wishes to study the administrative-subdivision process—which in my case already is complete—it can do so without needlessly delaying my project. I therefore respectfully request that the City Council add reconsideration of the emergency moratorium to its agenda for the next regular session, so that the moratorium may be lifted as soon as possible.

Letter to Mayor Starker and Wheat Ridge City Council
Request for Reconsideration of Emergency Moratorium
November 2, 2018
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Sincerely,



Stephanie Garcia
(303) 619-2546
garciamoyaproperties@gmail.com

cc:

Monica Duran, Janeece Hope, Kristi Davis, Zachary Urban, Tim Fitzgerald, George Pond,
Larry Matthews, and Leah Dozeman, City Councilmembers
Janelle Shaver, City Clerk
Gerald Dahl, City Attorney
Ken Johnstone, Community Development Director
Lauren Mikulak, Planning Manager
Scott Cutler, Planner II

Enclosures

Letter to Mayor Starker and Wheat Ridge City Council
Request for Reconsideration of Emergency Moratorium
November 2, 2018

For consideration at Wheat Ridge City Council Study Session, Agenda Item 2:
Moratorium on Single Family Building Permits Associated with Subdivision Approval
November 5, 2018

Attachment 1

Written Testimony of Stephanie Garcia

**Wheat Ridge City Council Study Session
November 5, 2018**

**Written Testimony of Stephanie Garcia
RE: Emergency Moratorium on Building Permits for Single-Family Residences Within
Administratively Approved Subdivisions Within the R-1 Zone District**

I am writing to introduce myself and to share accurate information about my project/plans for 4055 Field Drive, the property subject to the City of Wheat Ridge's recently enacted emergency moratorium on building permits for single-family residences in administratively approved subdivisions.

In brief, I am hoping to move my mother to the existing small home on the property, which I am currently renovating. I also hope to build a new home (a raised ranch with a tuck-under garage) for my brother and his family, who currently live down the street and are looking to downsize. My mother is 82 years old, and my brother and his wife kindly agreed to let me pass the caretaking reins to them, given that their daughters are now adults, and I have had primary caretaking responsibility for my mom for over 2 decades.

As background, when my brother moved to his Field Drive home nearly 20 years ago, I was enchanted by the neighborhood. After researching many years ago, I came to know the charming and highly desirable area was known as Bel-Aire. I learned it was platted and dedicated in 1946, and I've since met a lovely descendant of the original developer who still lives in the neighborhood. I later heard that parts of this subdivision were known as "Doctor's Row" and "Pill Hill," owing to the numerous doctors one time in residence along the winding streets of Field and Everett; I was smitten.

In addition to the charming history, we all agree that the neighborhood's unique appeal is owing to the gently elevated sites and curving streets, which create atypically shaped lots. Because my brother has lived in the neighborhood, for nearly 20 years, I have seen the ups and downs of the neighborhood but especially the "dandy lion" field of 4055 Everett Street. When it came on the market, I acquired it—warts and all. It had structural, electrical, and plumbing issues. It was the proximity to my brother, the transformation opportunity of the home, and the atypically shaped lot which captured me. After acquiring the home and researching detached garages and accessory dwelling units, I realized that the topography would permit me to both keep the original home and construct a new home in harmony with the scale and character of neighborhood.

The raised ranch homes on 41st Avenue between Dudley and Dover, as well as on the 4200 block of Dudley, served as my inspiration for the design/use of lot (tuck under garage) and some of the more modest homes along Field Drive helped inform my footprint (smallish homes on some of the smallest lots in Bel-Aire). These existing, original homes were used as the fundamental basis to design my new home. I followed all stated rules, regulations, and processes to do such a thing, and after several iterations, my subdivision was approved at the end of September.

A few days before final approval of the subdivision, I learned there was some community opposition when a neighbor who lives across from my brother introduced himself to me and asked a few questions about my plans. I shared my plans with him and suggested he share my info with others who had concerns. Some neighbors expressed their distaste for developers who are not residents. I also heard that some resident architects believed that it would be difficult to keep the look, feel, and character of the neighborhood if a new home were added to the lot.

I attempted to promptly address their stated concerns with an e-mail and graphic of the front house elevation, which was sent to them by my brother's neighbor on October 1, and I invited them to contact me with questions. I never received one responsive communication from them, despite providing my e-mail address and phone number. I am not sure if they chose to ignore or simply misunderstood my plans, but it simply is not the case that I intend to build a trailer, multistory, or slot home, or to tear out all the trees, as some community members incorrectly stated at the City Council meeting on October 22, 2018.

I am not now, nor have I ever been a return-on-investment driven investor or developer. I am not a preservationist per se, but contrary to neighbor assertions, I strongly believe in protecting neighborhood character. So much so, I served on Mayor Hickenlooper's zoning code task force for 4+ years. Our charge was to rewrite the entire zoning code with primary emphasis on preserving and enhancing neighborhood character and livability. In addition, my personal efforts have several times been awarded with the Denver "Mayor's Design Award" for my thoughtful preservation, creation, or expansion of existing, derelict in-fill commercial or single-family properties in the City of Denver.

My passion is adaptive re-use—not development. I am not a spec builder, as some community members seem to think. Further fueling my passion is my belief that the most "green" thing one can do is to creatively use what is usable. Consequently, keeping the existing home in tact, even without its historical importance, was very important to me. Any profit-motivated developer would never consider such a thing.

What I shared with the neighbors was consistent with my application to the City of Wheat Ridge Planning Department long before I knew of any neighborhood concerns. I continue to abide by it. My desire in pursuing the conforming lot split is to:

1. Preserve what is widely believed to be the one of the original orchard farmer's house; and
2. Develop a home on the new front lot that does not diminish the presence of the original home and honors the current neighborhood character.

Specifically,

- The current home is quite small by today's standards, especially given the size of the lot and the surrounding homes. It has a footprint of a little over 1,000s.f. and is not suitable for today's modern family needs. It is only a 1 bedroom/1 bath with an unfinished basement.

- Given the existing home's characteristics, it was likely a target for tear-down to be replaced by a much larger, multistory home. Such a home would be permitted and in scale with the lot, but would not necessarily match the scale of all but a few other homes in the neighborhood.
- I can preserve and enhance what I, and many others, consider a historically significant home, while at the same time creating a new home at an appropriate scale, suitable for today's living.
- A new home with an appropriate scale and character can be achieved owing to the topography of the new lot. Specifically, I can achieve a smaller footprint home by creating a tuck-under garage (common in Bel-Aire) and front walk-out basement.
- The footprint of the new home would be smaller than the footprint of most on Field Drive or Everett Street.
- The new home will have more visible green space/less lot coverage and will not overshadow any home near it.
- The new home's closest neighbor to the west would be fully 35 feet away, which is much greater than almost any other side distances in Bel-Aire.

Contrary to the testimony of some community members on October 22:

- The new home would not be 2.5 to 3 stories tall; it would be 1.75 stories max.
- The new home would not be a tall, skinny house; it would be a ranch style, longer than it is tall.
- The new home would not be a slot home; the lot does not require such a compromise.
- The new home would not be like a trailer home; that would be impractical and inappropriate.
- There will not be water and sewer lines going under the house.
- I do not plan to tear down all the trees; the footprint attempts to work around 2 of 3 existing trees.
- I am not burdening the water district; my penetrable area is already significantly less due to enhancements to the original home exterior. Further reductions will occur owing to the new home's footprint, yet I still offered to use treated water if it was too complicated or burdensome for the district to add my new lot.

Profit also is not my central motivation. If it were, I would not have made half of the improvements to the original home. Those were investments to make the home safe and welcoming for my 82-year-old mother, so that she can be near my brother and his wife.

Moreover, if I were truly pursuing this as a financially driven project, I simply would have torn down the original home and built one (or more) 35-foot-tall homes on the lot. I have never even considered that course.

Much of the information provided to the City Council on October 22 was false and misleading. I nevertheless remain open to sharing, in an appropriate forum, my design plans with the community and considering any architectural critiques or concerns that they may share. I have renderings of the proposed new home that support my descriptions above and that will provide more green space than is required by code, even after I have granted nearly 1,000s.f. to the City for right-of-way. I remain committed to not detracting from what makes Bel-Aire so special, and I am willing to keep an open mind at this late date.

In summary, I respectfully ask that you reconsider and lift the moratorium at your next regular Council meeting. I followed the established process and complied with all requests made by the Planning and Public Works Department. I have already spent significant resources on this pursuit, the moratorium is increasing my expenses, and there is no justifiable reason to prohibit me from proceeding. If a change to the administrative-subdivision process is desired, it should not be pursued at the sole expense of a property owner who has attempted to cooperate and has followed every rule at every turn.

In the meantime, I would welcome the opportunity to meet with you in person in advance of the November 5 study session or thereafter. Please do not hesitate to reach out should you have any additional questions that I have not addressed here or in my 3 minutes of time to speak at the study session. I will endeavor to make myself available to suit your calendar and availability. Thank you for taking the time to read and digest this information and its implications.

Kind Regards,



Stephanie L. Garcia
(303) 619-2546
garciamoyaproperties@gmail.com

Letter to Mayor Starker and Wheat Ridge City Council
Request for Reconsideration of Emergency Moratorium
November 2, 2018

For consideration at Wheat Ridge City Council Study Session, Agenda Item 2:
Moratorium on Single Family Building Permits Associated with Subdivision Approval
November 5, 2018

Attachment 2

E-mail to Community re: 4055 Everett

[REDACTED]

From: Steph Garcia <[REDACTED]>
Sent: Friday, November 2, 2018 11:10 AM
To: [REDACTED]
Subject: Fwd: 4055 Everett
Attachments: everettresponse.pdf; 4055 Everett10012018.pdf

Steph

Begin forwarded message:

From: "William L. Rickman" <[REDACTED]>
Date: October 1, 2018 at 11:40:29 AM MDT
To: 'Walter LaMendola' <[REDACTED]>, 'Chris Chidley' <[REDACTED]>, "'KACZMAREK, JAMES'" <[REDACTED]>, "'Paul & Kate Welschinger(Brannan)'" <[REDACTED]>, 'Bill Whitfield' <[REDACTED]>, "debjohnson" <[REDACTED]>, 'Paul Hovland' <[REDACTED]>, 'Marge Marcy' <[REDACTED]>, 'Mike Cunningham' <[REDACTED]>, 'Courtney Pullen' <[REDACTED]>, 'Mimi Pullen' <[REDACTED]>
Cc: "[REDACTED]" <[REDACTED]>
Subject: FW: 4055 Everett

Hi everyone, As a direct neighbor of Mark & Valerie Garcia and my familiarity with the redevelopment work Stephanie Garcia has done in Denver, I reached out to her for information about her project at 4055 Everett St. Below and attached is her thoughtful and direct response with information about the project. Hope this is helpful. She is a member of the Bel-Aire Improvement Association, but in case you don't have her contact info, please see below. thanks BR>

This email has been scanned for spam and viruses. Click [here](#) to report this email as spam.

Bill Rickman, [REDACTED]

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I'm not sure to whom this will be sent because I am not privvy to the recipient list of the letter dated 9/27. I write this in lieu of having addressed you in person, though I welcome that opportunity as well and can be reached through [REDACTED]@gmail.com

I understand there is some displeasure about my pursuit of a code-compliant, use-by-right project on 4055 Field Drive. Please know that prior to Thursday no one has ever expressed displeasure about my efforts-to-date on the site. Quite the contrary, as I have been complemented on the care of the lawn, the colors of the home, and the attention to the weed strangled, wood strewn back yard. I have more than once been told that it was nice to finally see the home cared for.

When my brother moved to his Field Drive home 18 years ago, I was enchanted by the neighborhood. After researching many years ago (during a failed attempt at another purchase for my mom), I came to know the charming and highly desirable area was known as Bel-Aire. I know it was platted and dedicated in 1946 (and descendants of the original developer still live in the neighborhood). I learned that parts of this subdivision were known as "Doctor's Row" and "Pill Hill" owing to the numerous doctors in residence along the winding streets of Field and Everett.

In addition to the charming history, we all agree, that the unique appeal is owing to it's gently elevated sites and curving streets which create atypically shaped lots. Because my brother has lived in the neighborhood, for nearly 20 years, I have seen the ups and downs of the neighborhood but especially the "dandy lion" field of 4055 Everett Street. When it came on the market I acquired it - warts and all (structural, electrical AND plumbing issues). It was the transformation opportunity of the home and the atypically shaped lot which intrigued me. After acquiring the home I realized that the topography would permit me to keep the original home AND construct a new one in scale with all the surrounding homes and not detract from the character of neighborhood.

It seems that part of the concern is that I am "not a resident" of the neighborhood, the implication being that I may not care or be thoughtful in my pursuit - that I am selfishly exploiting the lot and therefore, the neighborhood. Please know that most of the improvements to the original home are not ROI (return on investment driven). They are investments in making it safe and welcoming home for my 82yr old mother to be near my brother and his wife. Moreover, if I were pursuing this as a financially driven (typical) developer, I would not have commuted across town during rush hour to manually turn on irrigation, I would not have re-wired the fire-hazard home, nor cleared the additional fire hazard of stumps from the back corner. I simply would have torn down the original, dangerous home, completely obliterated the lot of all growth and history and then built TWO large scale homes on the blank canvass of a lot. I could do that but it was never, ever a consideration!

You see, I am not a preservationist, per se, but contrary to neighbor assertions, I strongly believe in protecting neighborhood character, so much so that my efforts have several times been awarded with Denver "Mayor's Design Award" for my thoughtful preservation, creation,

and expansion of existing, derelict in-fill commercial and single family properties. My passion is “adaptive re-use” and adding fuel to my passion is that I believe the most “green” thing one can do is to creatively use what is usable. Consequently, keeping the existing home in tact, even without it’s historical importance, was very important to me.

I shared the following with the City of Wheatridge and continue to abide by it:

My desire in pursuing the conforming lot split is:

- 1- Preserve what is widely believed to be the one of the original orchard farmer’s house
- 2- Develop a home on the new front lot that does not diminish the presence of the original home and honors the current neighborhood character

Specifically,

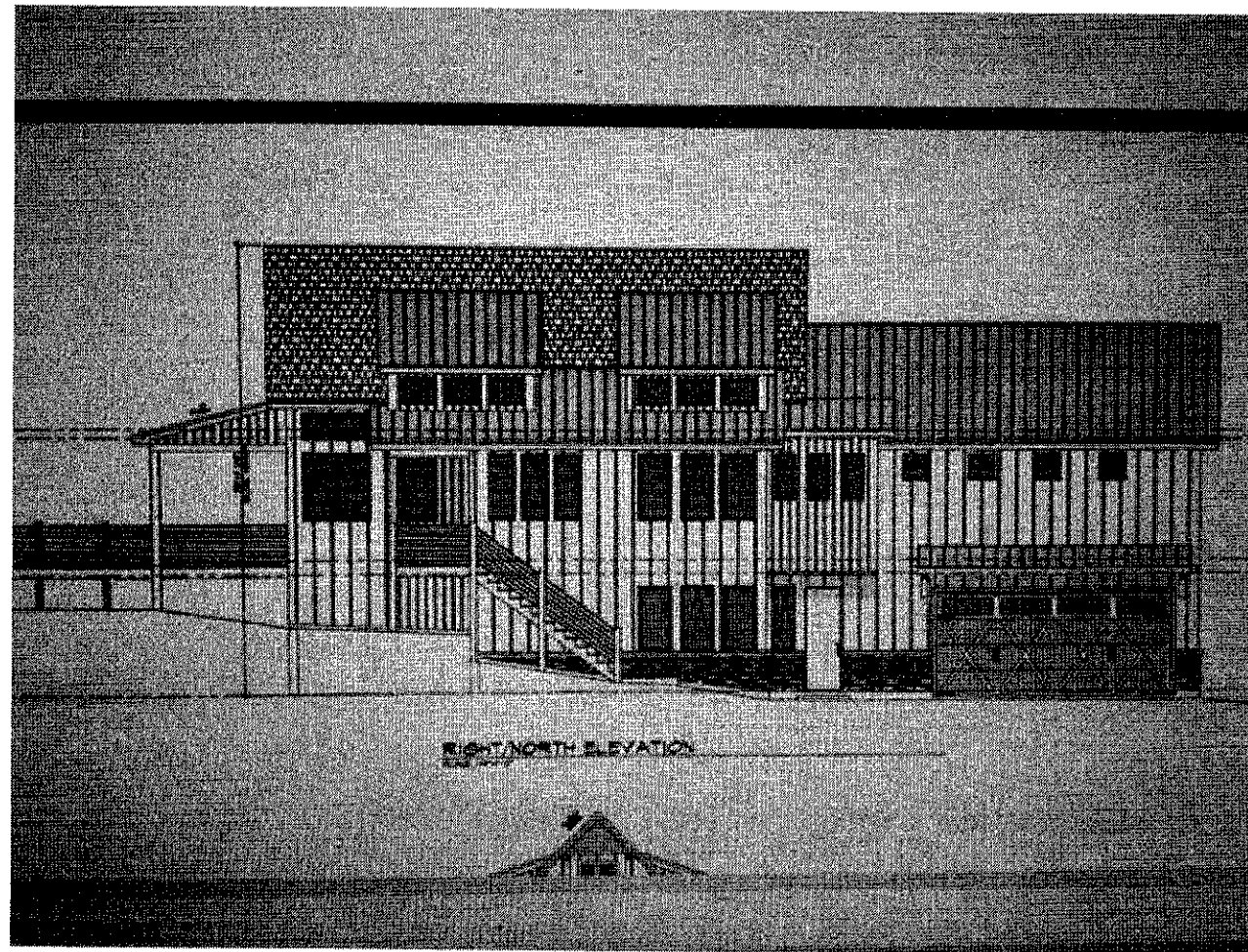
- The current home is quite small by today’s standards and most especially given the size of the lot and the surrounding homes. It is little over 1000sf footprint and not suitable for today’s modern family needs (it’s only a 1bedroom/1bath with a low-ceiling, unfinished basement).
- Given the home’s characteristics, it was likely a target for tear-down with the expected McMansion (or two) to replace it. Such a home would be in scale with the lot but NOT in keeping with the scale of the rest of the neighborhood.
- I can preserve & enhance what I and many consider a “historically significant” home AND create a new home in appropriate scale, suitable for today’s living.
- A appropriate scale and character home can be achieved because of the topography of the lot (the new lot). Specifically, I can achieve a smaller footprint home by creating a “tuck under” garage (common in Bel-Aire) and front walk-out basement which will permit more green space and not overshadow the original home or any home near it. In all likelihood the footprint of the new home would be smaller than the average footprint on Field Drive or Everett Street.

Neighbors, I trust you will consider the above and come to your own conclusion. I have renderings of a proposed new home which fits nicely on the lot and provides plenty of green space (even after granting nearly 1000sf to the City for right-of-way). However, I would welcome any architectural critique or donation of design services if the raised ranch “modern farm house” is perceived as not in keeping with the neighborhood.

I have tolerated admitted repeated trespass by a neighbor, the cursing out of my workers by the same neighbor who also found it acceptable to come on to my job site and give orders to my worker without my knowledge (despite my being obviously on-site). It seems this neighbor

is unhappy and attempting to solicit support with incomplete information and unfounded assertions and allegations. Despite not physically living at the home, I have attempted to be a good neighbor: I have adjusted sprinkler heads to water my neighbors side yard when their irrigation wasn't working, I have taken in trash cans, I have retrieved newspapers during travel, I installed security lights within 18hrs of being notified my back yard was too dark and coyotes were potentially gathering there (which the disgruntled neighbor then complained about). From all but one neighbor, I have been rewarded with kindness and appreciation: I trust this one unhappy neighbor won't further poison the positive environment I'd hoped to deliver to whomever should live in the home.

Regards,
Stephanie L. Garcia



Steph

Steph

Bill Rickman

From: Steph Garcia <[REDACTED]>
Sent: Friday, September 28, 2018 4:24 PM
To: William L. Rickman
Subject: Footprint and front elevation

This is not the exact split but it does show how the house and yard address the site and neighbors

