



Citizen Advisory Committee - Meeting Summary

Thursday, January 22, 2009- 6:30 p.m.

City Hall

Topics: Introduction, Public Involvement, Issues

Welcome & Introductions

- ♦ **Committee:** 18 members present – Shannon Sturtevant, Sally Banghart, Amanda Rodriguez, Joyce Jay, Tom Abbott, Diana Lopez, Kelly Brooks, James Williams, Susie Seeds, Don Seyfer, Suzanne Teale, Ann Brinkman, Davis Reinhart, Thomas Meiers, Brad Cushard, Loretta Schwankl, John Marriott, Denise Stephens.
- ♦ **Staff:** City – Sally Payne, Ken Johnstone, Adam Tietz;
- ♦ **Consultants:** Clarion – Lesli Ellis, Shelby Sommer; ArLand – Arleen Taniwaki; Fehr and Peers – Jeremy Klop

Consultant Presentation

Consultant provided a presentation overview of project status and Community Profile. (See attached for PowerPoint slides.)

- ♦ **Public Outreach Report**
 - More than 50 participants at January community meeting,
 - More than 25 completed on-line surveys, and
 - 10 stakeholder interviews completed.
- ♦ **Preliminary Community Profile**
 - The draft profile includes snapshot summaries of the following topics: population households, housing, land use, community services and resources, transportation, and economics (including residential, office and industrial growth and demand).
 - The draft will be available on-line in February

Community Profile Discussion

Committee members discussed and asked for clarification on the following elements of the draft Community Profile:

- What is the current status of the Cabela's development?
 - ◊ The project has no specific timeline for completion; however, there has been significant investment in site improvements so the city is still optimistic that the project will happen. Cabela's is looking to work

with a master developer to develop the site so that they can focus on what they do best – retail sales.

- Is the city currently pursuing high-tech employers/businesses?
 - ◇ No, there is no policy in place to be doing this, and although the city has heard this interest, it is not a priority issue at this time. The plan may help address setting such policy.
- Is the current level of retail in balance or is restructuring needed?
 - ◇ The plan will examine this issue, although at first glance large-scale retail development encircles the city and money is leaving Wheat Ridge for these areas.
- The statistic that 37% of households consist of one resident is interesting. This is reflective of an older population, and many people are living in their parents' former homes.
- The planning team has heard that the eastern portion of the city is beginning to see more young families, although statistics do not reflect this trend yet. As the community changes there may be traffic implications, specifically because smaller households have less traffic and larger households generate more daily trips.
- Can more specific data about households be obtained? Information provided for political canvassing was extremely detailed and could be useful.
- How do retailers decide where to locate?
 - ◇ Most use complex demographic equations that take into consideration household size and/or population.
- Why are retailers not coming to Wheat Ridge? Is it red tape?
 - ◇ The main reason is likely due to lack of available land for significant development. We've also heard that the building/permitting process can be difficult, although others say it is in-line with neighboring communities. Also, many of the retailers want to be in the western portion of the market, near the mountain communities.
- Can the transportation profile also incorporate Colorado Department of Transportation (CDOT) plans for widening and improving arterials such as Wadsworth and Kipling? Yes.
- How does the age of commercial structures in Wheat Ridge compare to the surrounding communities?
 - ◇ The planning team will work to obtain this information.
- The profile should also contain information about the large lot sizes in eastern Wheat Ridge since that is a positive community trait.
- Many of the original 1969 blue-collar families that established roots in Wheat Ridge are still here. Wheat Ridge may be too young to see re-growth right now, although that time is nearing.
- What size of site and neighborhood density is required in order to attract retailers?
 - ◇ A large regional retail center (with large anchors 100,000 sq. ft. and larger) will require about 80 acres.
 - ◇ A smaller, town center retail area will require about 12 acres. The Tennyson site was mentioned as a possible town center area.

- The area at 32nd Avenue and Lowell has great character, but no big boxes. The higher incomes likely attract more independent stores, and the development also received major incentives from Denver.
- Can data be provided about the percentage of local retail versus destination retail? Yes.
- The plan needs to address the public perception of Wheat Ridge, in addition to long term vision.
- Is redevelopment of the existing shallow commercial lots realistic, or is assemblage of land necessary in order to see change?
 - ◇ The plan will explore this question and look at opportunities and constraints.
- The mixture of zoning along major corridors is unnecessary.
- It would be helpful if the profile/plan provides comparison information about other first-tier suburban communities.
- Which would have a more positive impact: residential or commercial development?
 - ◇ While retail follows rooftops, Wheat Ridge really needs to address both in order to have a successful future.

Public Participation

4 members of the public observed the meeting and did not wish to comment.

Group Photo Exercise

At the last CAC meeting committee members were instructed to take photos in Wheat Ridge and other communities about things that they like, and would like to see more of in the future, as well as things that they dislike or need improvements. Committee members worked in small groups to organize their photos into the two categories, and then presented the key themes of their photos. Overall themes of the presentations are listed below. The attached Photo Exercise Summary includes images and key themes.

Positive qualities that Wheat Ridge should promote or preserve:

- ◆ Attractive signage
- ◆ Attention to detail
- ◆ Inviting gateways
- ◆ Vibrant Main Street
- ◆ Attractive streetscapes
- ◆ Public art
- ◆ Architecture updates
- ◆ Appealing retail
- ◆ Recreation opportunities
- ◆ Inviting parks and open space

- ♦ Creek interaction
- ♦ Convenient public transportation
- ♦ Pedestrian/ bike friendly
- ♦ Multi-use development
- ♦ Growth and investment
- ♦ Pedestrian friendly spaces
- ♦ Property maintenance
- ♦ Neighborhood unity

Places and attributes that could be improved:

- ♦ Lack of prominent gateways/entrances
- ♦ Junky/dirty entrance to city
- ♦ Inconsistent architectural styles
- ♦ Unattractive signage/ run down areas
- ♦ Random signage
- ♦ Difficult and unsightly access to the greenbelt
- ♦ Unfriendly pedestrian spaces
- ♦ Poor access
- ♦ Lack of sidewalks along major streets
- ♦ Lack of property maintenance
- ♦ No landscaping along commercial frontages
- ♦ Empty storefronts
- ♦ Abandoned buildings

Next Steps: Schedule and Next Meeting

- ♦ Check the website www.EnvisionWheatRidge.com for latest work products, project news, and updates.
- ♦ The next Citizen Advisory Committee meeting is scheduled for **Wednesday, March 4, 2009** at 6:30 p.m. at the Recreation Center.
- ♦ The next Community Meeting is tentatively scheduled for Wednesday, March 25, 2009 at 6:30 p.m. at the Recreation Center.