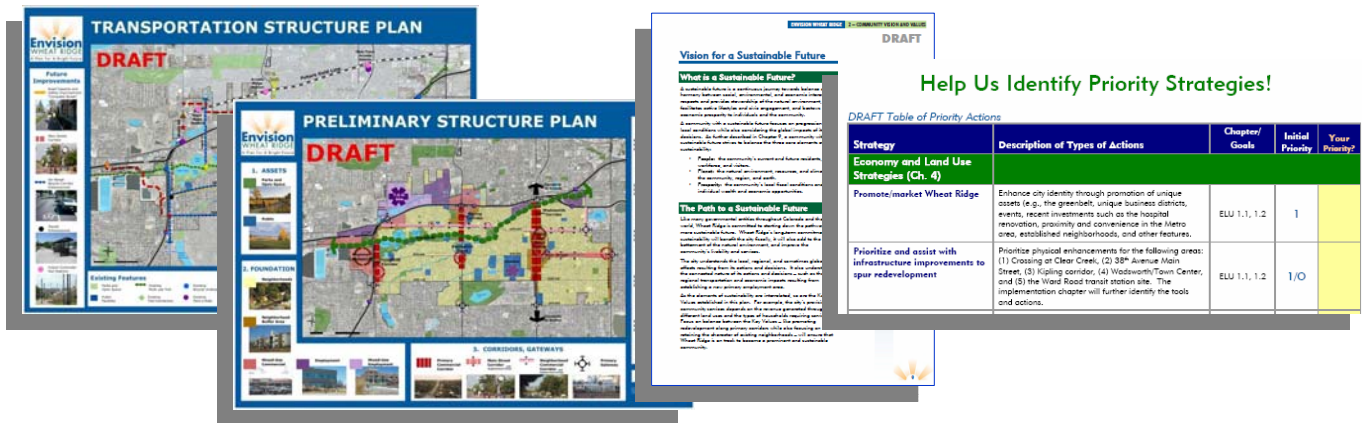


# Community Meeting #5 Summary

Wednesday, September 2, 2009- 6:30 p.m.

City Council Chambers

Topics: Priority Implementation Strategies and Draft Plan Preview



## Attendance

- ♦ **Public:** Approximately 30 community members attended the meeting
- ♦ **City Staff:** Sally Payne, Ken Johnstone, Adam Tietz
- ♦ **Consultants:** Clarion – Lesli Ellis, Shelby Sommer

## Presentation

### Process Update

The planning team presented an overview of the Plan’s background and process to date, as well as a brief preview of the draft Plan components (the PowerPoint slides are attached).

### Group Comments and Questions

Several community members asked questions and expressed concern to the larger group before the open house portion of the meeting. Group comments and questions included:

- ♦ Several people wanted clarification regarding the different types of neighborhood areas (established, revitalization, and buffer areas) shown on the Structure Plan. A summary of the different categories is provided below. Meeting participants were encouraged to review the draft plan and talk with a Planning Team member about individual concerns and questions.
  - **Established neighborhoods** (shown in yellow on the Structure Plan) are identified by criteria that include: generally consistent in character, mature landscaping, consistent maintenance, and high rates of ownership and investment. Future focus for these established neighborhoods is on

maintaining character, property ownership and maintenance, and neighborhood-level planning with the help of advocacy groups.

- **Neighborhood Revitalization Area** (also shown in yellow on the Structure Plan) are identified by criteria that include: increasing incompatibility of uses, infrastructure needs (e.g. utilities in disrepair), and less stability than established neighborhoods (e.g. increasing maintenance problems, higher crime rates, and lower rates of owner occupancy). Future focus for these areas is on increasing property maintenance and safety, home ownership, and investment and limited redevelopment.
- **Neighborhood Buffer Areas** (shown in orange on the Structure Plan) are located at the edges of neighborhoods adjacent to commercial corridors, typically contain vacant lands or uses that are transitioning from one activity to another, and generally align with Urban Renewal area boundaries. They feature a mix of residential (predominantly multi-family) and commercial uses. Future focus in these areas is to improve their appearance and function over time, with some areas becoming more mixed-use or commercial focused, increasing property maintenance, and investment and redevelopment.
- ♦ The proposed on-street bicycle corridor shown on the Transportation Structure Plan that crosses over the Tabor Street Bridge needs to be reevaluated, due to very narrow sidewalks and routine traffic congestion. The bridge is owned and maintained by CDOT.
- ♦ The I-70 Kipling interchange realignment should be shown on the Transportation Structure Plan if possible.
- ♦ The Transportation Plan should address bicycle lanes along 44<sup>th</sup> Avenue to connect to the City's parks.
- ♦ The majority of bicycle corridors will be on-street facilities with designated striping. An off-street bicycle and pedestrian route is proposed along Kipling.

## Implementation Priorities

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Meeting participants worked individually to review and provide comments about preliminary implementation strategies and priorities. Comments about priority levels are provided below. Meeting participants' rating of strategies according to the 0 to 5 year "priority levels" are provided in the table that follows.

- ♦ You have to improve infrastructure and feel that Wheat Ridge is a progressive and thriving city. You can't market and promote those things when everything in the city is not that way.
- ♦ Improving gateways is a waste of money.
- ♦ We have lots of time to coordinate transit improvements with redevelopment efforts.
- ♦ Added signage will help provide clear connections to the greenbelt.
- ♦ Focus on small businesses when attracting retail and revenue-generating activity.
- ♦ Focus on pedestrian-orientation in zoning and design standards.
- ♦ Natural resource/tree protection standards should promote the city's designation as a Tree City USA and protect mature trees in neighborhoods.
- ♦ Need an architectural preservation plan/policy for quality existing structures.
- ♦ Partner to revitalize housing (do not use eminent domain) in areas that are really in decline.
- ♦ Need to include all of the neighborhoods in the strategy to start subarea planning (not just established ones).
- ♦ Why promote new housing only? Encourage updating of existing homes (with Wheat Ridge 2020).
- ♦ Emphasize all income levels instead of only strong households.
- ♦ Include neighborhood groups as partners to help stimulate redevelopment in Neighborhood Buffer areas.

- ♦ Include benches in all public spaces to be developed in the future.
- ♦ Consider a city circulator van as a transportation option.
- ♦ A Sustainable Task Force/Action Plan could be used for all future planning efforts and actions.

*DRAFT - Priority Actions – Community Meeting Responses*

Strategy / Description	Initial Priority	Your Priority?
<b>Economy and Land Use Strategies (Ch. 4)</b>		
Promote/market Wheat Ridge	1	1 1 1/O 1/O 2 2 2 3
Prioritize and assist with infrastructure improvements to spur redevelopment	1-3	1/O 1/O 1 1 1 2 4
Retain and attract retail (revenue-generating activity)	1	1 1 1 1 1 1/O 3 3
Address zoning and design standards for targeted areas	1	1 1 1 1 1 1 1 3
Increase primary job opportunities	2	2 2 2 2 2 3
Guide Town Center development	2	1 2 2 2 2 3 3
<b>Neighborhoods and Housing Strategies (Ch. 5)</b>		
Support neighborhood and sub-area planning to address neighborhood needs	1	1 1 1 1 1/O 2 3 3
Continue partnerships for housing revitalization	2	1 2 2 2 2 2 3
Maintain and update subarea plans	2	1 2 2 2 2 2 3 3
Promote investment in declining residential areas	0	1 1 1/O 2 3 3 0 0
Stimulate revitalization in Neighborhood Buffer Areas	0	1/O 2 3 3 0 0
<b>Community Character &amp; Design Strategies (Ch. 6)</b>		
Improve gateways (image of Wheat Ridge)	2	1 1 2 2 2 3 3 3
Integrate arts and culture in developments (public and private)	2	1 1 2 2 2 2 2/O 3
Increase arts and cultural offerings	3	1 1 2 2 2/O 3 3 3
<b>Transportation Strategies (Ch. 7)</b>		
Identify pedestrian and bicycle improvements funding	2	0 1 1 1 1 1 1 2 2 3
Prioritize bicycle corridors (esp. north/south), and make improvements	2	1 1 1 1 1 1 1 2 3 3
Coordinate transit service improvements with new redevelopment sites	0/3	1 1 1 1 2 0/2 0/2 3
Target road improvements/"Complete Streets"	0/3+	1 1 1 1 0/2 2 2 3 0/3 0
Provide neighborhood-to-centers - bicycle/pedestrian connections	0/3+	1 1 1 1 1 0/2 3 0/3
Provide addition greenbelt connections shown on the Transportation Structure Plan	3	1 1 1 1 2 2 2 3 3
<b>Community Services Strategies (Ch. 8)</b>		
Provide many options for residents to actively engage in the civic process and local government	0	1 1 1 0/1 0/1 3 0
Coordinate with non-city service providers including utility, fire and school districts.	0	1 1 1 0/1 3 3 0 0
Continue and enhance programs for community safety and property maintenance.	0	1 2 2 3 0 0 0
<b>Sustainable Future Strategies (Ch. 9)</b>		
Improve standards for natural resource protection (Clear Creek, mature trees)	1	1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 2
Develop a Sustainability Task Force / Sustainability Action Plan	3	1 2 2 2 2 2 2/O 3
Coordinate actions for Healthy Community policies in the plan	3	1 1 2 2 2 3 3 3/O
Other?		

The Priority Levels, or time frames for implementing actions include:

- 1 – Immediate Priority – to be initiated with adoption of the Plan or soon thereafter;
- 2 – High Priority – to be initiated as soon as possible and completed within 1-2 years;
- 3 – Moderate Priority – generally to be completed within 3-5 years; and
- 0 – Ongoing – actions that occur continually.

## Feedback/Comments

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Meeting participants reviewed the draft Structure Plan and Transportation Structure Plan maps, and also had a opportunities to preview the draft Comprehensive Plan. Written comments are provided below.

### Draft Structure Plan Map and Categories

#### *Neighborhoods*

- ♦ Wadsworth corridor and adjacent Neighborhood Buffer Area is too wide and threatening to single-family established neighborhoods.
- ♦ Many of the Neighborhood Buffer Areas encroach onto existing, long-established single-family neighborhoods. This threatens property values and is bad for the areas (e.g. south side of W. 44<sup>th</sup>, Wadsworth between 38<sup>th</sup> and 44<sup>th</sup> near Upham, east of Wadsworth, and south of 38<sup>th</sup>).
- ♦ The Sheridan Neighborhood Buffer Area is impractical and should be deleted.
- ♦ Sheridan is too narrow to support a higher intensity use than what is presently there – leave it lower density for now.
- ♦ As a resident of the neighborhood at Vivien and 42<sup>nd</sup> Ave. I am interested in preserving the single-family homes along Vivien and along 42<sup>nd</sup> Ave. We lived here and wish to remain there indefinitely. Most of the other residents in this neighborhood felt the same way. A developer has recently been contacting homeowners in this area and we are concerned about future development plans.
- ♦ I would like better definition of Neighborhood Buffer in regards to the area of either side of Vivian Street at 44<sup>th</sup>. I would like to see this removed. My family has invested intensively in our home and do not want to relocate or see something build in this buffer zone that would detract from what we have.
- ♦ Good work. I like the categories. I'd be interested to see more on revitalization neighborhoods which could be targeted. The big yellow area makes it seem like it is all a similar stable category, although I understand it is broad.

#### *Corridors and Centers*

- ♦ The Ford dealership on 38<sup>th</sup> and Wadsworth is closing. The City should take this opportunity to create a vital commercial area.
- ♦ Main Street Corridor – consider 2-lane vs. current 4-lane width with medians, roundabouts, and angled parking in front of stores. Focus on pedestrians instead of autos in this area.
- ♦ Wadsworth should focus on parking structures not parking lots.
- ♦ I would take the Primary Commercial area from Kipling to 41<sup>st</sup> by the office building on the west side. I envision something like what Golden has between 41<sup>st</sup> and 44<sup>th</sup> on the west side of Kilning. Make whatever is envisioned in that area include the north side of the creek (just in this spot).
- ♦ At the 38<sup>th</sup> Avenue and Wadsworth car dealership develop something that will draw children and grandparents.
- ♦ Has anyone thought of on-street parking on 38<sup>th</sup> Ave. to encourage a more pedestrian-friendly environment?
- ♦ I like the idea of a Town Center – we need to ensure that it doesn't become another big box shopping center with a lot of empty housing (BelMar). It could incorporate some of the existing structures and facades.

## **Other Topics**

- ♦ 38<sup>th</sup> and Kipling park land is not displayed on the map.
- ♦ Utilize the Greenbelt and enhance awareness of its existence.
- ♦ Let's try to maintain at least some of the history and reason for the establishment of the city.
- ♦ I continue to be concerned about Urban Renewal and designating whole areas of blight – will this lead to more use of takings of land by eminent domain?
- ♦ I appreciate the user-friendliness of the Structure Plan.
- ♦ I totally agree with mixed-use facilities and would like to see that existing structures are used where possible. Would love to see a "preservation" effort in architecture where it makes sense.

## **Draft Transportation Structure Plan Map**

### **Road, Transit, and Parking Improvements**

- ♦ Include better parking options on 38<sup>th</sup> Avenue to get people to shop at the businesses more and generate City revenue.
- ♦ Why is there proposal for "capacity" improvement for W. 32<sup>nd</sup> Ave. between Wadsworth and Pierce? This street functions adequately for the traffic load it has and is predicted to have.
- ♦ Focus on parking structures or reducing parking needs.
- ♦ What are plans to increase traffic calming on 44<sup>th</sup> Ave. between Kipling and Ward?
- ♦ The new I-70 interchange and bicycle crossing over I-70 should be included on the map.
- ♦ Some of the past attention and TLC launched on 38<sup>th</sup> Ave. needs to be done on 44<sup>th</sup> west of Sheridan (west of Mountain View).
- ♦ Because frontage roads run for several miles north and south of I-70, and as infrastructure are not aesthetic, the City needs to give some attention to this step child of the road system.
- ♦ I take exception to the reclassification of W. 32<sup>nd</sup> Ave. as a minor arterial. It is in no way comparable in traffic volume to the other streets so classified: Youngfield, 44<sup>th</sup> Ave, 26<sup>th</sup> Ave. It has always been classified as a collector and should remain so. This is a residential street and not suitable for heavy traffic.

### **Trail, Pedestrian, and Bicycling Improvements**

- ♦ Add a bike/pedestrian route connection on Dudley (west side of hospital) between 38<sup>th</sup> Avenue and Crown Hill. The hospital is a potential partner for these improvements.
- ♦ Cyclists do not use the bike path along Crown Hill or the wide sidewalk west of Kipling along 32<sup>nd</sup> Ave. The City should provide signage along these paths instructing cyclists to use them and stay off the busy streets. You either need a dedicated bike lane in the street and narrower sidewalk or provide a wider sidewalk that cyclists are required to use.
- ♦ Great! Appreciate the addition of bike lanes throughout the city – make it a higher priority.
- ♦ Tabor is state-owned – the bridge is too narrow for foot traffic let alone for bikes. During morning and afternoon rush hours the road is overloaded.
- ♦ Where possible take advantage of gulches and community ditches to create off-street trails. With a long-term view this could soon or eventually become valuable assets like the Highline Canal. A great example is the existing path along the ditch from the hospital to Wadsworth.
- ♦ I ride Tabor Street frequently and think it is very safe and usable for cyclists.
- ♦ Bring the Arvada bike route down at the Carr underpass at I-70 to connect with Anderson Park in Wheat Ridge.

- ♦ LiveWell Wheat Ridge is able to assist with funding the bicycle/pedestrian Structure Plan components. Those funds will diminish. Also consider funding from CDOT grants for infrastructure changes around schools to encourage walking and biking.
- ♦ Make Wheat Ridge a more walkable community. More sidewalks need to be put on major streets and near the Senior Community Center. Better crosswalks need to be installed at busy intersections.
- ♦ We need bike lanes on 44<sup>th</sup> from Sheridan to Tabor and on 32<sup>nd</sup> Avenue from Sheridan past Youngfield into Golden.
- ♦ Signage should direct cyclists on Sheridan, Wadsworth, 38<sup>th</sup> Avenue and Pierce Street to the Clear Creek Trail.
- ♦ Add an east-west bike/pedestrian route along 44<sup>th</sup> to coordinate with the Neighborhood Commercial Corridor.
- ♦ Maintain some north-south crossing of I-70 in the vicinity of the future transit station (Ward/Tabor area).
- ♦ If the plan is to improve 51<sup>st</sup> Ave. from the Ward Road T.O.D. the plan should include an on-street bike lane so that the trail network connects to Kipling. I'd also like the City to partner with Arvada to build a trail that allows people to travel to Olde Town Arvada where the Park-n-Ride and future transit station will be.
- ♦ Great to see north-south bike connections and excited about the multi-modal vision and pedestrian safety enhancements for crossings.
- ♦ I would like to see more proposed future bike routes, possibly not only on major corridors, and also more sheltered bus stops.
- ♦ Please consider a north-south multi-use trail on Harlan under I-70 that would connect the southeast to Olde Town and the commercial center of Arvada.

## Draft Plan and General Comments

### Planning Process

- ♦ I do not think people who do not live in Wheat Ridge or own businesses in Wheat Ridge should be offering feedback and input on the Plan. The commercial aspects of the plan can be driven by business owners, but the residential components need to be decided by people who live in the community.
- ♦ Should the Charter limits regarding height and density be changed by the voters, there should be care taken to regulate building bulk of high rises, create open view corridors between tall buildings, and ensure adequate open space, landscaping and general public amenities. High-rise and higher density should not be enacted as an automatic right to developers. Wherever possible, high rise buildings should be restricted to low lying areas to prevent excessive view restriction. Also, prime view corridors should be established city wide (e.g. west of future park between 32<sup>nd</sup> and 38<sup>th</sup> on the east side of Kipling).
- ♦ In my opinion Comprehensive Plans are too general, giving the city government too much latitude to change them, which they do not hesitate to do.
- ♦ Any planning for specific changes that impact neighborhoods should include neighborhood meetings from the beginning of the process.
- ♦ The process has been well done and the community has had a chance to be heard. Implementation is the key and I hope the conversation will continue and not stop.
- ♦ It seems like a lot of issues discussed and written at the last meeting have been discounted or ignored.
- ♦ Time to start acting instead of doing more plans!

- ♦ Well done plan with good community involvement.
- ♦ The whole concept of spending millions of dollars to construct a community that has always been one of the prettiest and nicest to places to live is counter productive.
- ♦ Too bad the people who live here are not considered - they fought what was proposed for the Wadsworth Subarea but it passed anyway and ultimately make a part of the Comprehensive Plan.
- ♦ Some standards have become worthless – if someone says they’ll build something then anything goes and is justified with the NRS and Wheat Ridge 2020 recommendations.
- ♦ Has the Planning Team analyzed public responses to the existing subarea plans?
- ♦ Changes to zoning standards should be analyzed for long term effects.
- ♦ Is constant additional commercial and density to be pushed indefinitely or is there a limit beyond when quality of life drops drastically?
- ♦ The aim of the previous meetings was overpoweringly to justify Charter changes that will be on the ballot. That time might have been better spent.
- ♦ There are several topics that have not appeared in print or presentations including quality of life, compatibility, global warming, future population projections (how much is too much), future budget projections, how much revenue is generated from different types of development, and how much revenue is needed for a town this size.
- ♦ Great process with good public input. I enjoyed the mapping and dialogue.
- ♦ It sounds like there are previous concerns that haven’t been addressed. It would be helpful to have a communication process using the website or email to alert people to next phases, etc.

### ***Implementation Strategies and Priorities***

- ♦ The establishment of new policies for environmental conservation/natural resources management is vital and overdue. Last month we lost an acre of privately-held forest near 38<sup>th</sup> and Kipling. The owner scraped the lot after disputes with code enforcement officials. I don’t believe our codes had owner was expected to clean up the property to the standards for a residential yard, which was unreasonable. Now we’re left with a dusty wasteland. We need a new code category for wooded lots that encourages tree preservation.
- ♦ Change the healthy community policies to a higher priority because funding from LiveWell Colorado will decrease over the next 2 to 3 years. To take advantage of funds to the maximum level this should be considered in the 2 to 3 year time frame instead of 3 to 5 year timeline. Additionally, please consider adding Health Impact Assessment as an important voluntary process – it is a useful tool/process to assure that positive health outcomes are a result of development. LiveWell Wheat Ridge can help with that process.
- ♦ A healthy community needs to be a high priority.
- ♦ I think the Sustainability Task Force/Plan should be a high priority (1 or 2). This could strongly impact the planning process and should be initiated early in the implementation.
- ♦ I suggest that the strategies for creating a healthy community should be a top priority. LiveWell Wheat Ridge is a key partner and resource for additional information and capacity and may not have continued funding past 2010. Consequently, LiveWell WR should be capitalized now. Also, this strategy could include a health impact assessment that could inform future decisions, provide valuable health impact data to drive and form direction and help prioritize next steps.
- ♦ Many communities are stressing tree planting but there is no mention of it in Wheat Ridge.
- ♦ The City should do everything in its power to continue making progress in its urban Renewal Districts – progress has been slow thus far.
- ♦ The Sustainability Task Force should be established soon after the Comprehensive Plan is adopted.

- ♦ I understand that not all can be a top priority, but I would like to see more attention to sustainability matters, in part because neighboring communities, especially Golden and Lakewood, are moving ahead at an accelerating pace. It would be a shame if this were a low priority so that on this important direction Wheat Ridge stayed behind its neighbors.

## **Next Steps: Schedule and Next Meeting**

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- ♦ A joint City Council/Planning Commission meeting is scheduled for Monday, September 21 at 6:30 p.m. in the City Council Chambers (City Hall).
- ♦ The draft Comprehensive Plan will be posted on the [www.EnvisionWheatRidge.com](http://www.EnvisionWheatRidge.com) website on Friday, September 4, 2009. Paper copies of the plan are available by contacting Sally Payne, Senior Planner, at 303-235-2582. Detailed comments are welcome and appreciated!