



National Western Center Citizens Advisory Committee

Thursday, April 30, 2015 – Meeting Summary

1. Welcome and Introductions

Maria introduced herself and welcomed those in attendance. Terrance was unable to attend as he was participating on a race relations panel tonight.

Maria reminded everyone that CRL is now taping all meetings. A link to the recordings will be posted on the new NWC-CAC website. The recordings are considered public information and anyone who wishes to access the recordings will be able to via the web.

2. NWC-CAC Member Updates and Announcements

Jocelyn Hittle announced that the legislature passed a bill to fund Colorado State University's facilities at the National Western Center. It was a collaborative effort with the city, NWSS and CRL to get the bill through the process. A copy was provided to the bill.

Maria noted CSU can't start spending money tomorrow – there are some contingencies – but this amounts to a \$250 million line of credit. Kelly Leid noted the work of Representatives Crisanta Duran and Jon Becker and Senators Jerry Sonnenberg and Pat Steadman – urban and rural, bipartisan support. HB1344 is just one piece of the financial equation needed to build the project. The measure will finance CSU facilities consistent with the NWC master plan, primarily on-site but also on the university's Fort Collins campus. The legislation requires Denver to secure additional revenue streams before the state resources provided in the bill can be tapped for CSU's facilities at the National Western Center. The funding mechanism is similar to funding that occurred at the Anschutz Medical Campus and how the state supported building the medical facilities.

The city will have to issue an annual report to the state and funding is contingent on Denver voters passing the lodger's tax extension. CSU will still need to present to the capitol development committee and complete against other higher education projects. Having the state as a partner in the NWC demonstrates the importance of the overall campus.

Questions and Comments:

- *How far will \$250 million go?* It is hard to say exactly since we haven't completed any design effort. The funds would go toward facilities primarily used by CSU and would be state owned buildings.

- *Is there anything we need to do to promote the RTA application?* There isn't any public presentation scheduled yet. We will be able to provide the NWCAC more advanced notice when it is scheduled.

3. Discuss NWC-CAC Mission and Purpose

Maria noted that this is a conversation that has been requested of the NWCAC for a few months now. She asked Kelly Leid to kick off the discussion.

Kelly presented information on the conversations he has had with various members of the community. There is no blueprint of what we are trying to accomplish in the NDCC. Six massive projects converging on one area is unprecedented. This is larger than the just the physical improvements. We also need to address a long history of promises not being delivered. We have to continue to build organizational systems to allow trust to happen through agreements.

The city is recommending that we set up implementation committees for the two neighborhood plans – Globeville Implementation Committee and Elyria-Swansea Implementation Committee – with residents and business owners from each neighborhood to have an active voice in implementing the plans. He suggested it will take the month of May to get the committee's organized. He has reached out to Councilwoman Montero for assistance in identifying potential members. The NDCC office would staff and support the committees. In addition to NDCC, Community Planning and Development, Public Works and Parks & Recreation will play an active role in working through issues of implementing the neighborhood plans. The goal is to align the implementation committees with the NDCC annual budget process so we can inform the work plans, budgets and implementation priorities.

The NWC-CAC will focus on the National Western Center. There is a tremendous amount of work to be done and the CAC will continue to be critical in helping advise the city on implementing the NWC plan which is the core mission of this group.

AE asked for more information on the Executive Oversight Committee. Kelly responded there is an interim structure the city is establishing to govern the NWC until final recommendations are made to the mayor later this summer on the formal governance structure that will maintain and operate the campus. The interim EOC will have representatives from the city, the NWSS, CSU, and a representative from the community. The role is to keep the project moving forward and make decisions that advance the various critical path items.

AE asked how the city is going to select the community representative? She suggested each MOU partner select a community representative. Kelly replied that isn't the structure planned, but would welcome the NWC-CAC's help in identifying a representative.

Kelly noted there were two EOC subcommittees planned:

1. Event/Programing Advisory Committee – Focusing on how to create a year-around, active place. The committee will include self-selected community members who are interested in focusing on this task.
2. Capital Funding Committee – Focusing on how to align all the funding streams. This will also include self-selected community members who are interested in funding/finance issues.

Kelly is working on taking the concepts presented by Vern and others last month and drafting a community benefits memorandum of understanding that lays out a framework in topical areas and sets out commitments to the community. The draft will be ready to discuss at the May meeting.

Maria noted an important future topic the CAC will need to address is the possible ballot measure, ballot title and language and timing to place on the ballot.

AE wants to be clear what the Committee's roles are as community representatives. Serving on the CAC is a huge privilege, opportunity and obligation. Members need to remain mindful of the larger community we representation and make sure we are informed representatives.

4. Heron Pond/Northside Park Discussion

Maria announced that Scott Gilmore was unable to attend but Gordon Robinson was present to update the Committee and answer questions.

Gordon begin by reviewing the history of the site. First, he reiterating the desire of Parks & Recreation to work collaboratively with the community going back nearly four years when the department sat down with the community to develop a shared vision for what Heron Pond could be. The city recognized the opportunity to take a small parcel and turn it into something much larger for the community. He announced the city has identified nearly \$2 million in state grants and city funding to go toward the project.

Gordon reviewed the history of how we arrived here today. Two years ago the department began the process of developing a master plan for the site which is a combination of several parcels. Subsequently Kelly Leid was brought onboard to lead the NWC and NDCC projects and Kelly asked Parks & Recreation to step back to allow the city to complete the NWC and neighborhood plans and then we could better see how Heron Pond could fit into those plans. The city is at a point where Parks & Recreation can reengage using the neighborhood plans to inform the park master planning process in a coordinated way with the community. This was a deliberate decision at the time. One benefit of the delay was it gave the department time to identify grants and other funding.

Finally, Scott noted Cincere Eades, who is also present, will be the project manager for the master planning process.

Questions and Comments:

- *When Scott was here he indicated the funding was available to start in January 2016. Are you saying the money is available now?* Grant funding will become available next year, but we are hoping to move some city funds around so we can begin as soon as possible with preliminary work prior to bringing the consultant on next year.
- *About a year ago we were told there would be environmental studies completed near 54th Avenue. Where does that stand?* The testing was put on hold until the city has the property under its jurisdiction. Denver Environmental Health is now working on a larger study area and are actively mobilizing on the project with the contractor. Completing the environmental work will be critical to begin able to begin the master planning in 2016.
- *Can we get a complete schedule from Environmental Health?* Yes, we will request the schedule.

- *AE hopes the NWC project can leverage funding for all parks and open spaces contained in the neighborhood plans.* Referenced in the most recent NDCC newsletter. We understand the desire to have a global discussion, but the city also wants to be thoughtful about what forum discussions occur.
- *John Zapien stated he wants to move forward with the issues on the NWC side of the river. He feels good about the city taking on the master planning and making sure the site is usable but is concerned about impacts on the neighborhood (e.g. if a bridge is built). The community has “equity” and an interest in the process, and wants to understand who is doing what.* The site is very complicated. Heron Pond is owned by the city and we need to figure out how best to deal with the contamination. Land use issues between Public Works and Parks & Recreation also need to be worked out.
- *Who is leading the master planning process?* Parks & Recreation and NDCC are jointly leading with the community: “a three legged stool.” The RFP will be drafted following a series of meetings to make sure we have a shared vision and goals.
- *The issues is important to the NWC because connectivity through the southern portion of the park makes it critical we understand the environmental condition of the land.*
- *Is it true you can only speak for Parks & Recreation? We are still missing Public Works and what their role and long-term intentions are. Will we be able to hear from Public Works?* Gordon clarified the ownership of various parcels.
- *Our expectation was that Public Works would be present – understand it is a neighborhood issue but has significant impact on the NWC.* Gordon asked what issue specifically -- he thought he was here to address issues within the NWC boundaries.

Steve Nalley introduced Sam Suter, Associate City Planner for Community Planning & Development and Sarah Anderson, Water Quality Project Manager for Public Works, who along with Cincere are the leads for the NWC and adjacent projects.

Sarah provided background on behalf of Public Works. Public Works does own 19.2 acres purchased 4-5 years ago prior to her being hired and the city taking an in-depth look at water quality needs throughout the city. She has focused on identifying the highest need areas, cleaning up the South Platte River and meeting the city’s permanent requirements. She has developed a score card of the basins that need the most attention; Heron Pond basin isn’t on the list so the city has determined it doesn’t need the full 19.2 acres to treat what is tributary to the area. There also aren’t funds as both CDOT and RTD have backed away from the project since the 19.2 acres aren’t required. Sarah pointed out what areas of the overall Pond might be needed for water quality purposes, but noted there hasn’t been any engineering completed.

Questions and Comments:

- *Can you clarify if there has been an environmental assessment of the property?* Yes, on the public Works site. EHS needs to respond if there are more questions. Info has been provided before but we will get it to you again.
- *Are you talking about a treatment facility or naturally?* Naturally. We are looking at a constructed wetlands facility to treat runoff. What is constructed by the city will look and feel like a nature area.
- *Any idea how much this will cost? The community is asking for a small amount (\$1 million) in comparison to what is being spent overall. It is time to spend money where it hasn’t historically been spent, e.g. Globeville.*

- *Wants to see the city work closely with CSU on a “living, learning, gardening” concept. The opportunity exists to partner on an “extension-education” mission of the university.*
- *We need more information on the difference and implications of a dedicated park vs. a non-dedicated park. What are the ramifications to the community as far as future uses?*
- *How far will this type of improvement go? The city has looked at its priority projects to identify places where the level of improvements planned here could be implemented, but there aren’t funds available.*
- *Will citizens be part of the plan or part of the process? Like any plan, we want the community at the table and we strive to reach consensus. Unless there is a stumbling block (i.e. cost prohibition) we are expecting to work collaboratively with you. We are interested in working with the community to determine what the best uses of the property are.*
- *Globeville stakeholders are very interested in getting the 4 acres developed for the benefit of the city. If it is necessary to “buy back” land – sell other assets around the city to invest here.*
- *We understand the need to use some of the land for water treatment, but the city should let the remaining land be used by the community as it sees fit. There will be strong opposition to any sale of land in Globeville from one city entity to another. We need to have a community conversation about land use. Waste Water has to be repaid – it’s a legal requirement – but that repayment could come in many different forms.*

5. NWC Updates

NWC Text and Map Amendment – Steve reported on the planning board meeting and public hearing on April 29. The planning board approved the NWC zoning text with the following condition: *that the City Council acknowledge and address the concerns expressed by the neighborhood stakeholders with regards to neighborhood involvement in governance and community equity.*

The next step will be to go to council’s Neighborhoods and Planning (NAP) Committee on May 18. The public hearing before city council will be on June 22 (note change from June 29). AE asked what happens at the NAP meeting? Steve will present a staff report to council and they have an opportunity to ask questions. It is not a public hearing, but it is televised. The committee does have to approve the item to move to the full council.

Brighton Boulevard NWC Segment – Steve revised a presentation on the preliminary design from 44th to Race. The goals are to advance the design from the 2013 Brighton Blvd effort; progress the implementation of the Elyria and Swansea Plan; progress the implementation of phase 1 of the National Western Center Master Plan; and develop anticipated budgets and schedules so the corridor is ready for final design and construction when funding becomes available.

The study also will provide guidance and input for surrounding projects including: I-70 East (CDOT), Brighton Blvd. 29th to 44th (CCD), National Western Center Development (CCD), and North Metro FasTracks (RTD).

Steve reviewed a number of cross-section drawings of various roadway designs including typical sections of interchange/gateway zones, event zones, campus gateways, and station zones. He also showed renderings of possible treatments for pedestrians, bicycles, vegetation and water quality needs.

Questions and Comments:

- *What is the existing width?* The area under I-70 is pretty wide because of all the interchanges and turn lanes. It tightens up north of 47th to about 60-70 ft.
- *Is the goal to make traffic flow consistent for the entire segment?* We want to react to traffic flows. Wider near I-70 where we have more traffic.
- *Why is there no cycle track under I-70?* We need input from the community of this. We have discussed phasing because it won't be safe to ride under I-70 during construction – and bicyclists may not want to ride under I-70 at all – but it might be necessary when the National Western is under construction. We need to create an “interim condition” that is good enough to use during construction but the ultimate configuration is to bring the track back up and avoid I-70 completely.
- *Is the funding for this part of phase one of NWC implementation?* Yes, but timing will be impacted by CDOT and RTD schedules for I-70 and RTD respectively. For planning purposes, the city is using schedules as we know them today.

The next steps for preliminary design work are:

- Reach out directly with property owners along Brighton Blvd. from 44th to Race – May-June
- NWC-CAC – May and June
- Public Meeting – June
- Complete Preliminary Design – End of summer

NDCC Work Plan and Schedule – Eric Shafran provided an update on activities underway and planned to begin in 2015/2016. Eric provided a handout (attached) outlining critical path and other activities. Eric will be at the May 28 meeting

Potential 2015 Lodger's Tax Extension Election – Maria updated the committee on the potential 2015 lodger's tax extension election in November. No city money can be spent on the campaign. A privately-funded survey has been completed David Hill with Hill Research. It took some time to get the poll in the field because TABOR requirements make drafting ballot language very complicated. The measure would extend a portion of the lodger's tax due to expire in 2023. Survey was in the field about three weeks and results and analysis will be completed soon. The NWC-CAC will be given an overview of the results in May. She would like to have Kelly and Richard Scharf from Visit Denver present because the ballot measure would fund over \$100 million for convention center improvements in addition to the NWC. Timing is challenging because the council must refer the measure to the ballot before we can kick-off a formal campaign. We want to have a larger discussion in May.

Questions and Comments:

- *Important to reach out to the millennials.*
- *Is there an opportunity to loop back and discuss the east side of the river? Can revenues from the tax be spent anywhere?* Need to have a discussion about projects that would be included in a companion ordinance that council would approve when it refers the measure to the ballot.
- *When does the final language need to be finalized?* The city attorney's office is working on language to make sure it meets all the legal requirements of TABOR.

6. Open Discussion

Nancy Jones commented that many community members were present at the planning board public hearing on the text and map amendment and their comments were critical to getting the items passed. The planning board had questions for MOU partners and they were not present. It was the community members who were present to respond and ensure the item passed.

7. Attendance

Maria Garcia Berry (Co-Facilitator)

Roger Sherman (CRL)

Ron Williams (NWSS)

Paul Andrews (NWSS)

Jocelyn Hittle (CSU)

Kelly Leid (NDCC)

Erika Martinez (NDCC)

Eric Shafran (NDCC)

Judy Montero (Denver City Council)

Susan Aldretti (Office of Debbie Ortega)

Gordon Robinson (Parks & Recreation)

Cincere Eades (Parks & Recreation)

David Oletski (Globeville)

AE (Globeville)

John Zapien (Globeville)

Armando Payan (Globeville)

Drew Dutcher (Elyria)

Bettie Cram (Elyria)

Juan Veloz (Elyria-Swansea)

Carrie Atiyeh (VISIT Denver)

Mickey Zeppelin (Taxi)

Anne Hayes (Westfield)

Larry Burgess (ESGBA)

Vernon Hill (JJJ Properties)

Nancy Grandy Jones (JJJ Properties)

Jeff Steinberg (City & County of Denver)

Steve Nalley (City & County of Denver)

Sam Sutter (City & County of Denver)

Sarah Anderson (City & County of Denver)

Michael Sapp (Mayor's office)

Nohra Medina (Spanish language interpreter)

National Western Center Citizen's Advisory Committee

April 30, 2015

2015 – 2016 NWC Work Plan

Critical Path Activities

The NWC-MOU partners will be undertaking the following activities over the next 18 months to lay the groundwork for a successful implementation of the Master Plan vision over the next decade.

Land Acquisition Without land, there is no program. To realize the vision outlined in the Master Plan, the City is currently analyzing, and will soon launch a land acquisition processes to assemble the ground necessary to accommodate the approximately 270 acre National Western Center program. The City will communicate closely with the neighborhood and the property owners as the plan unfolds.

Rail Consolidation There are currently three stretches of trackage that bisect the National Western Center campus and hamper circulation within the campus, include access to the South Platte through the site. The City has begun working with Denver Rock Island Railroad (DRIR) to discuss the consolidation of their two sections of trackage into a single right-of-way, to enable the contiguous development of the campus.

Environmental Investigation In order to properly program the land and develop project budgets for the various development zones of the campus, the project team must understand if any, or to what extent, contamination exists within the Master Plan Study Area. The City of Denver, through its Department of Environmental Health, has commissioned a "Phase I Light" investigation of the environmental history of the campus, and recently began sampling the potentially contaminated areas of the campus that are currently owned by either the City of Denver or the Western Stock Show Association.

Entitlements The current zoning of the properties on the campus is a combination of industrial, residential and mixed use designations. In order to facilitate and enable the development of overall campus vision, the City is writing a new zoning designation, within the Campus family, for the National Western Center. The new zoning designation will allow for the uses outlined in the Master Plan, and enable the sustainability, circulation and public amenity guidelines defined in the Master Plan.



Other Activities

Parking Management Study In order to test the ideas and assumptions discussed in the Master Plan about parking strategies and quantities, the City is commissioning a Parking Management Study, which will be launched in 2015. The plan will consider tools to provide both the ultimate number of spaces needed once the site has been fully redeveloped, as well as tools to manage inventory changes related to construction impact and the phasing plan of the campus development.

NWC Program Refinement While a preliminary framework program for the campus was developed through the master planning process, including critical facility adjacencies, further refinement of the program is necessary to inform the design process of the both the buildings and the infrastructure. The City will be working with Western Stock Show Association and Colorado State University to develop their respective program descriptions and assumptions.

Regeneration/Sustainability Appendix D of the Master Plan outlines a bold initiative to design a campus with the appropriate green infrastructure to achieve net-zero goals in energy, waste and water, upon full build-out of the campus. In order to realize that vision, the MOU partners have engaged ME Engineers to conduct a preliminary, high-level study of the potential for district level solutions for energy production, water management, and waste processing and disposal. Once the ME Engineers study is complete, a larger, more comprehensive study will be launched to deeply analyze the National Western Center's energy, waste and water demands, capacity generation, potential district solutions, and numerous other factors that will contribute to meeting the regeneration goals of the campus.

Public Realm Study With over 45 acres of public space on the campus, it is imperative that the project team develop a cohesive set of goals and standards for the numerous parks, plazas and open spaces. The City will commission a study to develop standards and guidelines for the spaces and plazas between the buildings, as well as the rights of way and pedestrian amenities. The study will include an exploration of alternate and complementary program elements that could enhance the patron experience and further the goals of the campus.

NWC Campus Design Standards and Guidelines Similar to the public realm study, the campus buildings should be designed to relate and complement each other, and engage the visitors and occupants in a manner that achieves the aesthetic and goals of the NWC Sustainability and Regeneration Framework. The City's Department of Community Planning and Development will lead the effort to define guidelines that will establish the architectural and urban design standards and review criteria for the buildings, including materials, windows, entrances and facades, and how the buildings will relate to the pedestrian realm.