



# **National Western Center Citizens Advisory Committee**

**Thursday, August 27, 2015 – Meeting Summary**

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## **1. Welcome and Introductions**

Maria Garcia Berry and Terrance Carroll called attention to the meeting and welcomed all attendees before promptly beginning the meeting.

## **2. Committee Community Representative Reports**

Drew Dutcher gave the CAC members a brief update on the most recent Executive Oversight Committee (EOC). Dutcher explained the EOC had not met since the last NWCAC meeting but added the members of the EOC were presented with a study by CSU which pertained to the NWC. According to the ninety page study report, written by three CSU professors, the site of the new NWC campus has the potential to become a hub for agriculture and technology and the growing relationship between those two sectors. The study explored the potential for the NWC ranging in scope from local to international impact it will have. For those interested, the link to the study is on the NDCC website. Dutcher explained the next meeting would be held on Monday, August 31<sup>st</sup> and he will be able to update members at the following NWCAC meeting.

John Zapien updated those in attendance on the progress made by the Campaign Executive Committee (CEC). He stated he was not yet aware of any major opposition to the NWC and the committee is working to spread awareness and promote the ballot issue. Zapien added he would continue to reach out to CAC members for support and feedback and any suggestions they might have. Maria stated that the NWC is one of five issues going to the ballot. She gave a brief explanation of each issue and added that the NWC will be 2C on the ballot behind College Affordability (2A) and Marijuana Tax Retention (2B).

AE, on behalf of the campaign, explained to the CAC members that efforts were underway to gain endorsements and prepare those who have endorsed the NWC effort to articulate their support and benefits the NWC will have on the city of Denver and state of Colorado. She explained that she had engaged in conversation with business leaders and neighborhood voters as well as nonprofit organizations in order to cast as broad a net as possible and is grateful to be a part of the outreach effort. She also added that as a large voting contingent, the Globeville, Elyria-Swansea neighborhoods have a responsibility to leverage their voice to advocate on behalf of the community. Before his update on the campaign status, Jake Martin thanked those who were able to attend the campaign kickoff, which was a major success. He informed members that the Denver city council had been given a tour of the NWC center and explained that the campaign had garnered over 200 endorsements which are listed on the Smart Deal for Denver website. He added that the campaign had created a video and advert for the NWC which is being circulated on platforms like Facebook. Martin explained that the campaign team would be at Riot Fest to reach the event goers and added that CSU had recently passed a formal resolution

in support of the campaign. Before closing up his presentation, he noted that as November nears, the campaign team would continue to aggressively promote the NWC ballot item. AE expressed support for the Smart Deal for Denver website and urged any CAC members who hadn't seen it, to check it out. Garcia Berry stated that the fundraising efforts are well underway and that she is on her way to reaching a goal of \$2 million by the end of September. It was noted that all members interested in devoting time to the campaign should contact Jake martin or AE after the meeting.

The Event Programming Advisory Subcommittee (EPAS) and the Capital Funding Alignment Subcommittee (CFAS) have yet to meet but updates will be presented at the following CAC meeting.

#### Questions and Comments

- Armando Payan expressed concern for the other issues going to the ballot and for how the NWC is being presented to voters. Maria Garcia Berry noted that because issues on the ballot are so "tax related" the biggest hurdle facing the campaign right now is explaining to voters that NWC does not further burden citizens with new taxes.
- Maria Garcia Berry explained that the campaign is exploring the legality behind the kind of support they can leverage from CSU which is already limited due to the state funding received by the university. Additionally, the campaign is working on creating a group of 4-6 CSU alums that are able to express support for the campaign and appeal to the broader voter base.
- John Zapien added the role the Catholic Church can play in garnering support from Denver voters, especially in proximity to the National Western Center. Efforts are underway to bring in the Bishop.

### **3. NDCC Updates**

Kelly Leid led the discussion on NDCC efforts. The most critical issues for the NDCC, at present, are land acquisition and rail consolidation, followed by site remediation and demolition. He explained that the NWC is several years away from the actual construction of the proposed campus. Leid is working with Ed Nichols of History Colorado to begin meetings for the EPAS and to gain partners for the NWC who would like to establish a relationship for the use and operations of the campus. Leid added that the CFAS date has yet to be determined. It was noted that CH2M Hill is in the process of doing the design work for Brighton Blvd which will be completed November. Leid explained that a competitive RFP has been issued for several of the projects occurring in RiNo to which nine of the top Denver construction firms in Denver expressed interest and ultimately one will be chosen to complete the work. Additionally, the Army Corps is progressing on their South Platte study and will eventually make recommendations on the possible relocation of the Delgany interceptor.

Erica Martinez gave brief update on the NDCC town hall meeting at Growhaus. She noted that the town hall meetings are an opportunity to provide information to residents and community members. The roundtable discussion for the next meeting will be on the topic of accessing food systems and the issue of food deserts for communities in GES. She encouraged those in the CAC to attend the next NDCC town hall meeting and handed out the flier for the event.

#### Questions and Comments

- Drew Dutcher stated concern for the sort of participation History Colorado is able to engage in. There was an impression that some of the money used for NWC could have been used to bail out History Colorado but Maria Garcia Berry noted that the financial issues faced by History Colorado are unrelated and that HC has every intention to see through the success of the NWC.
- Heather lafferty stated her concern for an election failure and asked whether there is a backup plan should the issue not pass. Leid replied that if the ballot issue does not pass, the city has enough money in reserve to continue all efforts currently underway (land acquisition) but that there is not enough reserve funding to make further progress on efforts that have not yet begun.

- Dave Oletski asked after land acquisition has been completed, who will own the land to which Leid answered that the land will need to be owned by a government entity if purchased with government funds.
- One issue that was discussed was whether RTD would be expanding north with due to current funding setbacks. Kelly Leid assured members that RTD will be expanding north and Maria added that RTD has already set \$3 million into escrow for the land they will be acquiring from the NWC under eminent domain.

#### 4. NWC Updates

Barbara Frommell gave a brief presentation on the historic preservation efforts underway. She presented the CAC members with a work plan document used to show which projects are underway and under whom each of the projects are being contracted with. Frommell then highlighted her team's work on a document on the comprehensive history of the NWC site and its cultural and agricultural significance. The document will be used for the process of registering certain structures on the NWC site for historical designation. She noted each project listed on her work plan is categorized by the sort of expertise and contractors that will need to be hired to complete each task.

Kelly Leid briefly updated CAC members on the status of the RTA. He explained that the RTA application had been submitted to the state and in the third party review process, it was determined that the requested \$117 million would be cut in half. Leid added that his team is working with the state and in doing so, has found several errors in the math conducted by the third party review team and is in the process of cooperating with the state prior to the October RTA presentation in order to receive as much of the requested amount as possible. Erica Martinez stated that several interested individuals have come forward to advocate on behalf of the NWC RTA and who would like to speak at the October presentation. Martinez added that presenters are only granted a limited amount of time to speak and in order to make sure no points are repeated anyone who would like to speak at the presentation should coordinate with her to ensure there is no repetition.

After discussing the RTA, Leid explained that his team issued a competitive RFP for a next generation economic study and which three firms ultimately expressed an interest in. Leid added that the study will include three main topics: economic and market opportunity analysis, center operations and partnerships, and public-private partnership formation. The contractor is set to work from September through February of next year, and will issue interim reports throughout the process. The study will range in scope from the local level to the international level. As a part of the economic study, an agribusiness forum will be held to incorporate the voice of local and state businesses into the conversation. The focal point of the study will be how to maintain and attract agribusiness to Colorado and make it the "silicon valley" of agriculture. Leid added that the study will also aim to bring light to the fact that agriculture is the largest employer in the state and will continue to be an economic driver into the future.

Eric Shafran led the discussion on the topic of rail consolidation. He explained that the NDCC initially had trouble finding a consultant for the project because most prospective companies wanted to design the rail. Nonetheless, the NDCC is on the verge of hiring a qualified consultant and has already agreed to work with a negotiator and a D.C. based firm who will conduct the valuation process of Denver Rock Island's assets. The consultant, who will begin work within the next few weeks, will set the strategy of how to approach Rock Island and the strategy for the design process. Leid and Shafran explained that bringing Denver Rock Island to the table and engaging them in the effort has the potential to be a long and arduous process. The goal of the consolidation process is to prevent any loss of economic activity for DRI.

For the parking study update, Shafran explained that a consultant called Apex is currently writing a scope of work and is on track to finish soon. In addition to actual parking, the study will include aspects such as

intermodal access to the NWC campus and how campus goers will be able to move across campus in an efficient way. When the scope is completed Shafran will present it to the CAC for suggestions prior to submitting the RFP.

Additionally, Shafran gave a brief update on the NWC public realm study. The NDCC has gone through the first round of work on the study but there is still much to do before it is completed. The study will examine the open spaces on the campus and potential uses for those spaces so that they are utilized best. Shafran then discussed efforts to work with CDOT on plans for I-70 so that its design is executed with the NWC in mind. He finished his presentation with a brief highlight of the efforts geared at sustainability. The NDCC is beginning a process with the National Resource Defense Council to begin an analysis of the possible solutions for energy production, waste management and water recycling.

### Questions and Comments

- Paul Andrews stated that in addition to some of the structures on the NWC site, he would like to see a historical designation of some of the buildings off site that have played a role in Denver's history. Frommell responded that her work would also include significant structures in the neighborhood but that many will be covered in a process with Historic Denver that is complementary to the work her team is doing.
- Anne Hayes suggested the task labeled "creative media" on Frommell's list should be contracted with Habey Productions, a local film making company who made the film for Union Station. She stated they would be a great way to begin promoting the project.
- AE requested the historical preservation team include Riverside Cemetery in the historical designation process.
- Maria Garcia Berry suggested the preservation team explore the possibility of making NWC a historic district. It was stated that the possibility of creating a historic district was explored by the team, but that there would be many complications due to the location of several structures.
- For the next gen economic study, AE expressed her hope that the study put a spotlight the local businesses that have played a historic role in the area.

## **5. Open Discussion, Announcements and Public Comments**

Maria stated that in the coming months the CAC meetings will coincide with the holidays. It was determined that instead of the last Thursday of the month, the final two meetings of the year will be held on November 19<sup>th</sup> and December 17<sup>th</sup>. It was noted that the December meeting cannot be held at the NWC and AE suggested the Denver History Museum as a potential alternative.

## 2. Attendance

Maria Garcia Berry (Co-facilitator)

Terrance Carroll (Co-facilitator)

Kelly Leid (NDCC)

Eric Shafran (NDCC)

Erica Martinez (NDCC)

Chy Montoya (Office of Albus Brooks)

Nola Miguel (LiveWell)

AE (Globeville)

John Zapien (Globeville)

Armando Payan (Globeville)

Drew Dutcher (Elyria – Swansea)

Bette Cram (Elyria – Swansea)

Juan Veloz (Elyria – Swansea)

Liliana Flores Amaro (Elyria – Swansea)

Mickey Zeppelin (TAXI)

David Oletski (GCA)

Flossie O’Leary (Clinica Tepeyac)

Tracy Weil (RiNo Art District)

Anne Hayes (Westfield)

John Olson (Historic Denver)

Heather Lafferty (Habitat for Humanity)

Patricia Carmody (Riverside Cemetery)

Vernon Hill (JJJ Properties)

Jake Martin

Monica Rivera (Spanish Lang. Interpreter)