



# ***National Western Center Citizens Advisory Committee***

**Thursday, November 17, 2016 – Meeting Summary**

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## **1. Welcome and Introductions**

Liz Adams called the meeting to order and promptly began the discussion.

## **2. NWC Equity Partner Updates**

### **CSU**

Jocelyn Hittle reported on the retreat that CSU hosted for EOC members a week prior. The retreat was geared at developing future programming for the NWC. They explored how to frame the big-picture programmatic ideas with the core objective of telling a story that resonates with site goers. Hittle explained that seven key topics were kept in mind including education, entertainment and sports. She was particularly inspired by the discussion around global impact of the NWC. The opportunity the new campus provides in solving some of the issues faced on an international scale is really an exciting prospect.

Drew Dutcher summarized some of the main discussion points from the retreat. He was excited about the potential role the NWC will fill in the community and greater Colorado and cited Greenpoint, Brooklyn as one such example of an older, established area being transformed into a vital center of culture and commerce. The topic of place making was a major focal point and the NWC has a responsibility to be a unique and desirable place that draws people in. In the case of food, the goal is to tell a story about food systems and how it gets to the plate. Dutcher also informed the CAC that CSU President Tony Frank spoke during the retreat and covered a broad range of topics including climate change, sustainability, environmental stewardship and the education/preparedness of our youth to tackle those challenges. He suggested the NWC may provide a great opportunity to create agricultural-based magnet schools in the surrounding neighborhoods that attract positive growth and add to the sense of place at the NWC and surrounding area. Dutcher pointed out in addition to science and the environment, the push for sustainability covers topics such as culture and art and maintaining a sense of community.

### **WSSA/National Western Stock Show Association**

Ron Rohr invited CAC members to the NWSS Fall Feast on November 19<sup>th</sup>. He also reminded everyone the NWSS is in full gear preparing for the upcoming Stock Show. The prequalified hires will begin working prior to Christmas with the rest of the hired staff beginning in 2017. All individuals interested in working the Stock Show can inquire at the NWSS employment office open from 9-3 every day.

## **Denver Museum of Nature and Science**

Nancy Walsh encouraged CAC members to visit the Extreme Mammals Exhibit being held until January 8, 2017. She reiterated that all school and organized youth groups have free admission and asked that if anyone has questions about DMNS youth visits to contact her.

### Questions and Comments

- Heather Lafferty informed the CAC that the United Nations just passed a new Urban Agenda which setting new global standards around urban development. One of the key conversations was around the rural-urban relationship and transition as most of the world's population moves into an urban setting.
- Hittle also added that as the world becomes ever more characterized by the trend of urbanization, there is a loss of understanding for rural life and knowledge of where food comes from. She emphasized the important role the NWC will serve to bridge that gap.
- AE informed the CAC that the conversation at the sustainability advisory committee's last meeting around farming was very informative. She asserted the importance of maintaining a focus on efficiency and integration of new technology to bolster agriculture and agriculture-based education.

### **3. Special Presentation – Update on Grocery Store/Food Availability in GES**

Denver Manager of Food System Development, Blake Angelo came to discuss resident concerns around the loss of a 7-Eleven for the Washington St redevelopment. He explained that his position with the city is relatively new with less than 30 food systems development managers across major cities in the US. His role was created when Denver realized the need to address growing concerns around food and access to markets and grocery stores. Angelo has been tasked with improving access to food beyond just basic corner stores so that communities have access to a variety of healthy food. He reminded the CAC in Denver alone one out of every two adults are obese or overweight. Much of that growing issue is exacerbated by a basic lack of access to reasonably priced, nutritional sources of food and could be solved in part by eliminating food deserts, which tend to exist in geographical low income areas. The city has drafted a strategic initiative called the Denver Food Plan to address food systems issues which will be made public this coming winter. Community input was considered when the plan was being written, with outreach meetings in each of Denver's eleven council districts. The Food Systems team, which operates under the Office of Economic Development also established communication with several local nonprofits focused on the same issues in order to explore collaboration opportunities. Recently they also applied for and received the Local Food Local Places Award through the federal government. The LFLP is geared at advancing healthy food goals through continued support of existing food businesses in the community and recruiting/attracting full service grocery stores while preventing negative effects of food business relocation (i.e. 7-Eleven). In order to combat the issue, the Food Systems Team is also implemented the GES Healthy Food Challenge which is a financial commitment of \$1.5 million to support healthy food in the neighborhood, derived from both a loan and a grant.

Collaboration with local food-based organizations and nonprofits has been a major focus. Recently Growhaus was awarded a grant that allowed them to provide door-to-door food based informational guidance in the GES neighborhoods. Additionally the OED was able to assist Focus Points and the Comal Kitchen Incubator at TAXI in efforts to support existing food businesses and provide healthy food access. OED is seeking outside partners for an initiative to rebrand corner stores that provide healthy options so they are not recognized as establishments where only chips and cigarettes can be purchased but as places where individuals can buy healthy alternatives as well.

Before closing his presentation, Angelo invited CAC members to contact him with any suggestions or ideas about how to further address the issue and implement solutions. He explained that his team is continually refining its approach to engaging in the community and seeking funding through various grants and loans and outside input is always welcome.

## Questions and Comments

- John Zapien suggested Blake Angelo return to an upcoming CAC meeting when members can engage in a lengthier conversation about food systems within GES. He also emphasized the importance of creating an environment that provides healthy foods but doesn't push out local establishments with cultural ties to the community.
- Mickey Zeppelin suggested that Angelo's team contact Natural Grocers who will be putting in a nearby location to implement a community outreach process where the chain can get an idea of the sort of foods the community needs.

## **4. NWC Project Updates**

Kelly Leid informed the CAC that Denver is one of six cities that has been awarded a US Department of Energy partnership grant around new Better Buildings Zero Energy Districts Accelerator to develop more sustainable communities. He credited the NWC's growing relationship with the National Renewable Energy Lab in Golden and his trip with Barbara Frommell to Washington D.C. last February to talk with US Department of Agriculture, as two of the main reasons Denver was awarded the grant. He was excited to announce that in addition to being only one of six cities to receive the grant Denver was the only city to receive a grant allocation for two separate districts.

On November 10<sup>th</sup>, the Next Generation Agribusiness Economic Development Study was released. CAC members were given a concise, one-page summary denoting some of the key findings in the study. Leid explained that efforts to undertake the study began in the fall of 2014 and were spearheaded by CSU. The study provides a comprehensive background on the various sectors that fall under the agribusiness umbrella from farming to machinery to technology and software. It also provides context for Colorado within the competitive business environment on an international scale. The study includes a focus on job growth and workforce development not just at the NWC, but across the state. The Next Gen Ag Study is the first in a series of studies by the State with the ultimate goal of honing in on 5 or six industries Colorado can focus on in order to bolster its competitive agricultural standing internationally. Growing the private sector around the NWC campus and creating job growth in an around Denver and particularly the GES neighborhoods is one topic the study examines however subsequent studies will continue to explore those initiatives further.

Denver Rock Island Railroad negotiations have come to a standstill. The NWC and city of Denver have been clear with DRI from the beginning that they would like to improve the system of rail around the campus because of the important complementary role rail plays to the NWC. To date, the NWC has been unable to engage DRI in a meaningful way. The rail DRI has laid on NWC property is in clear violation of the agreement between the NWSS and DRI and directly impacts the ability to host the Stock Show. A series of legal letters has been exchanged between the two parties however no progress has been made to solve the issue. Leid informed CAC members the City may need to acquire one last property on the site currently occupied by McDonald Farms due to the ongoing dispute with DRI. He urged CAC members to write a letter to Tom Mars, owner of DRI, to express the community's interest in the NWC as well as the economic and cultural benefits of having events like the Stock Show. It is possible that the NWC and DRI can both exist and continue operations for years to come if the two entities are able to come to an agreement about diverting the rail around NWC property.

The office of the National Western Center is in the process building out its team and has several procurements in the pipeline. In the coming year NWCO will have a team of employees engaging in recording, campus place making, and project management. Leid expects the planning process in 2017 will be extensive in order to ensure the NWC schedule remains on track.

## Questions & Comments

- The CAC will draft a letter urging Denver Rock Island to engage in negotiations with the NWC so that the project can continue and both parties can avoid a lengthy and expensive litigation process.

## **5. Community Representative Reports**

### **Executive Oversight Committee**

There was nothing new to report. The Next EOC meeting will be held on December 15<sup>th</sup>.

### **Capital and Operating Funding Alignment Subcommittee**

There was nothing new to report. The next CoFAS meeting will be held on a date to be determined in 2017.

### **Event Planning Advisory Subcommittee**

AE explained the EPAS is still being postponed. She reminded members the NWSS worked with the EPA to determine building availabilities. In the coming year the NWC will have some venues that can be activated through various programming and events.

## **6. NDCC Updates**

Lindsay Sousa from AECOM gave an update on the Elyria Swansea at York East/West Connectivity Study. She explained that they began the study last December to examine mobility around 47<sup>th</sup> and York and the issue of trains blocking the intersection, creating congestion. The study sought to improve safety, connectivity and mobility. The approach to outreach and community engagement was to start small with groups at the nearby elementary school and other local businesses and organizations. During the spring and summer, several different pedestrian crossing improvements were explored in a thorough process. Ultimately the study recommended the insertion of a ramp on 47<sup>th</sup> street. The project will move into preliminary design in 2017 and following that process the final design will be approved. Funding is not yet in place but the city is pursuing several different funding streams. Lindsay Sousa invited all CAC members to attend NDCC meetings in regard to the connectivity study and the ramp designs. The feasibility portion of the study will be complete in December.

Anna Jones presented the CAC with a summary on NDCC activities. She informed the CAC that the NDCC is commissioning a video for the ramp to bolster additional funding efforts. Jones also reminded members the NDCC was not awarded an FRA grant however they did apply for a TAP grant through CDOT which was approved. The bridge will cost approximately \$10M so the process of gathering funds will require a lot of additional work.

## Questions and Comments

- Patricia Carmody asked whether the preliminary design shown at the CAC meeting has been implemented elsewhere. Lindsay Sousa explained it has been used in Kansas and a few other states. Carmody worried the design of the ramp may encourage people to try and run across the tracks to beat an oncoming train rather than climb the ramp to cross the road.
- AE felt the NDCC has the potential to make the ramp an artistic installment in the community.
- John Zapien was pleased with the design of the ramp. He emphasized that the ramp will need safety measures in place to prevent skateboarding or other undesirable activities around the ramp.

## **7. Community Announcements and Public Comments**

### **Report Out from Denver Bond Subcommittee**

Mickey Zeppelin emphasized how important it will be to get involved in the Denver Bond process to advocate on behalf of the GES neighborhoods. He lamented the lack of funding that went to the GES community after the last Denver bond schedule. Zeppelin then discussed some of the key developments community members felt the area needed. One of the primary community resources people felt the neighborhood was missing and could greatly benefit from is a Recreation Center. John Zapien added that a multi-use facility would greatly benefit the community and bring a greater focus to recreation and wellness for people of all ages. He encouraged the community to ask for upwards of \$50M and although they probably won't get it, it is important to ask and make some noise from GES. Much of the discussion was also around advocating connectivity improvements along Washington Street. Additionally, the Elyria-Swansea neighborhood park is in serious need of improvements and funding allocated towards that particular project. Zeppelin encouraged all members to attend Denver Bond Subcommittee meetings so their voice is heard.

There will be no December meeting but Maria Garcia Berry would like to have a social event – more details to come. The next CAC meeting will take place in January 2017.

## **8. Attendance**

Liz Adams (Facilitator)

AE (Globeville)

Liliana Flores Amaro (Swansea)

Patricia Carmody (Colorado Watershed)

Drew Dutcher (Elyria-Swansea)

Anne Hayes (Westfield)

Vernon Hill (JJJ Properties)

Heather Lafferty (Habitat)

Kelly Leid (NDCC)

Nola Miguel (Focus Points)

Nancy Walsh (DMNS)

Tracy Weil (RiNo Arts)

John Zapien (Globeville)

Mickey Zeppelin (TAXI)