



Land Use, Transportation & Infrastructure Committee Summary Minutes

Tuesday, June 25, 2013

10:30 AM City & County Building, Room 391

Committee Members: Robb, Chair; Montero, Vice-Chair; Brown; Lehmann; López; Shepherd

Committee Staff: Gretchen Williams

Council Members Present: Brown, Lehmann, Lopez, Montero, Robb, Shepherd, Susman

Members Absent: None

Bill Requests

BR13-0358 Approves 9th & Colorado Urban Redevelopment Plan and creation of an Urban Redevelopment Area with tax increment financing in Council Districts 5 and 10.

Tracy Huggins, Denver Urban Renewal Authority

This 41-acre site, generally bounded by Colorado on the west; 8th Ave. on the south; 11th Ave. on the north; and Clermont/Bellaire on the east, was the University of Colorado Health Science Center for 85 years. It has been completely vacant since the end of 2009, and the University has been trying to sell the property. Maintenance of the property is costing about \$700,000 a year. Community Planning & Development approved a General Development Plan (GDP) for the site in 2009 and a major amendment in 2012. A few potential sales and proposed plans have not come to fruition.

The Denver Urban Renewal Authority (DURA) is proposing an Urban Redevelopment Plan for the area, including an Urban Redevelopment Area, and authorizing use of Tax Increment Financing (BR13-0358). A companion ordinance (BR13-0359) adopts a Cooperation Agreement between the City and DURA

establishing, among other matters, the parameters for tax increment financing with incremental property taxes.

DURA has conducted a formal Conditions Study to determine if the site meets enough of the criteria for the site to be considered "blighted" under the definition of State statutes and therefore appropriate for the proposed action.

The legislative findings Council must make include that the site is blighted as defined in the law. The Condition Study calls out the conditions that make the site difficult to redevelop:

- Deteriorated or deteriorate structures;
- Defective or inadequate street layout;
- Deterioration of site or other improvements;
- Unusual topography or inadequate public improvement or utilities;
- Environmental contamination of buildings or property;
- Existence of health, safety or welfare factors requiring high levels of municipal services or substantial physical under utilization or vacancy of sites, buildings or other improvements.

The proposed Urban Redevelopment Plan must conform to adopted City plans, and the Planning Board voted unanimously on June 19 that the redevelopment plan is in conformance with Denver Comprehensive Plan 2000; Blueprint Denver; Colorado Boulevard Healthcare District Plan; the 9th & Colorado General Development Plan (GDP) and Urban Design Standards and Guidelines.

Phase I Project:

Lionstone Development has purchased a 6.74-acre portion of the site bounded by 8th Ave; 9th Ave; Clermont and a reconstructed Bellaire St. for 325 market-rate apartment units. This will be a property tax increment financing (TIF) area under the plan. There may be additional TIF areas later, each requiring an amendment to the Urban Redevelopment Plan by Council.

The initial TIF request is for \$2.4 million for reimbursement to the University for infrastructure, demolition and abatement costs.

Councilman Brown said that once we start with TIF, it is easier to add more. Ms. Huggins replied that there are several steps involved in creating any TIF area, including City Council approval. DURA has been in conversations with the City and the University all along but there was no development to discuss to get to this point. Now that a developer has purchased a portion of the site and has

development plans, it is wise to establish the URP prior to the City's property reassessment so that the incremental tax is at the maximum.

There will be a public hearing on the Urban Redevelopment Plan on July 22.

A motion offered by Councilmember Susman, duly seconded by Councilmember Lehmann, to file the bill carried by the following vote:

- AYES: Susman, Brown, Lehmann, Lopez, Montero, Robb, Shepherd(7)
- NAYS: (None)
- ABSENT: (None)
- ABSTAIN: (None)

BR13-0359 Approves a Cooperation Agreement between the City and the Denver Urban Renewal Authority for the 9th & Colorado Urban Redevelopment Area.

Tracy Huggins, Denver Urban Renewal Authority

See discussion above.

A motion offered by Councilmember Lopez, duly seconded by Councilmember Susman, to file the bill carried by the following vote:

- AYES: Susman, Brown, Lehmann, Lopez, Montero, Robb, Shepherd(7)
- NAYS: (None)
- ABSENT: (None)
- ABSTAIN: (None)

BR13-0406 Changes the zoning classification from PUD #511 (Planned Unit Development) to E-MX-3 (Urban Edge context, Mixed Use, max. 3 stories) of property at 1300 S. Sheridan in Council District 3.

Sarah Showalter, Community Planning & Development

This site is in the Mar Lee Neighborhood on the east side of Sheridan. It is just over one-half acre, and the existing structure is about 1,400 square feet. The PUD allows for drive-in eating use only, and the owner, SRI Real Estate Properties, wants to add drive-through service.

Community Planning & Development determined that rezoning one of the new zoning classifications would be the best way to accommodate this request. The classification identified for this site is E-MX-3.

The Planning Board on June 5 voted unanimously to recommend approval of the rezoning. No comments have been received from the Greater Mar Lee Neighborhood Association or any other organization or individual.

Councilman Lopez said this proposed map amendment is ready to move to City Council.

A motion offered by Councilmember Lopez, duly seconded by Councilmember Susman, to file the bill carried by the following vote:

AYES: Susman, Brown, Lehmann, Lopez, Montero, Robb, Shepherd(7)
NAYS: (None)
ABSENT: (None)
ABSTAIN: (None)

Presentations

- 1 Urban Land Institute recommendations for Westwood Neighborhood**
Rachel Cleaves, Livewell Westwood; Khanh Nguyen, Colorado Health Foundation

Healthy Places is a five-year initiative of the Colorado Health Foundation to promote better health through the built environment. The goal is to make it easier for people to engage in physical activity as part of their daily activities. Westwood was selected as one of three communities. The other two are Lamar and the southeastern portion of Arvada.

The PowerPoint presentation is attached.

Big ideas:

- Create a unique identity – Latino Cultural District
- Create a Main Street – Transform Morrison Road
- Create a plaza at the heart of the neighborhood
- Create neighborhood connections using open space and greenways.

A primary focus is on Morrison Road through the center of the community, about a 2 mile length. This street has no stop signs or lights to help with pedestrian crossings, and there are three schools in the area. A traffic light has been

approved at Perry for years but has not been installed.

Parks and recreational facilities need to be increased, and the neighborhood needs more safe places to play and for art and neighborhood connections. One idea is to close an alley or two to provide this desired space.

One pilot project has been alley improvements and converting from dumpsters to barrel pickup.

City departments are collaborating with the neighborhood residents and this planning effort. Community Planning & Development will focus on a Westwood neighborhood planning project in 2014. Public Works is designing a Bike Boulevard on Knox Court. The Office of Economic Development is directing the Morrison Road Neighborhood Marketplace Initiative, working with owners of vacant buildings that are blighted and unsafe. Several of these need to be removed as soon as possible.

Councilwoman Shepherd asked how the neighborhood is engaged?

Councilman Lopez said Westwood has a good community network in place. The neighbors will form a steering committee to establish priorities and look for leveraging opportunities.

He said ULI did a great job of listening to the community and picking up on the big ideas we have had for a long time. The plaza idea is huge, and it is important to work with the property owners. We have identified willing sellers and just need to put together a public/private partnerships to fund it. A grant application is being compiled. Matching requirement for the grant is not official but the goal is 25% to show City support.

Councilwoman Lehmann suggested Council adopt a proclamation to include in the grant application.

Councilman Lopez introduced four women who have been instrumental in this effort. They each made a few remarks about the importance of this project to the neighborhood. They need the support of everyone. The neighborhood has some ugly places. They thanked Councilman Lopez for his help and support, and said that they do want a plaza where the whole community can gather and a recreation center with classes for the children and adults. The signs in the community show negative to other people, one of them said, and she asked that Council please take them into consideration a little more. They appreciate the support on this project and asked for more support for the actual work and improvements that will help unite the community.

Councilman Lopez thanked the residents, saying he is proud of them. He also thanked the City department of Public Works and Planning for stepping up. Now we just need to fund it. He asked for everyone's help in representing this

neighborhood.