



Land Use, Transportation & Infrastructure Committee Summary Minutes

Tuesday, November 16, 2010 11:00 AM City & County Building, Room 391

Members Present: Madison, Montero, Sandoval

Members Absent: Hancock, Johnson, Robb

Other Council Present: Nevitt

Committee Staff: Gretchen Williams

Bill Requests

BR10-1040 Approves the Community Coordinating Metropolitan District No. 1 service plan, and approves filing a resolution setting a public hearing on formation of the proposed districts encompassing Eddie Maestas Park and other triangles along Broadway in Council Districts 8 and 9.

Andrew Johnston, Department of Finance

Andrew Johnston, Dept. of Finance and District Advisory Committee; Scot Robson, Parks & Recreation; Amy Harmon, Urban Market Partners and Ballpark Neighborhood Association Board; Mary Ann McGeady, Attorney representing Urban Market Partners, presented the proposed metro district.

The proposal is a new approach to maintenance for Eddie Maestas Park, Box Car Park, and three other triangle parks along Broadway. Parks & Recreation, Public Works nor the neighborhood association can solve the issues alone, but in cooperation, it should be manageable.

Amy Harmon said she has owned property in the area for 10 years, is actively engaged in the neighborhood association, and is the applicant for the metro

district. The triangle properties are a top priority for the neighborhood.

The proposal is for a different type of metro district than Council usually sees. The physical component is one small piece of land, but the service area includes land in and around all five triangle parks.

Ms. McGeady said the district model comes from the need for trust, accountability and funding. By law, a special district must have a great deal of transparency, more than a neighborhood group. Additionally, there are funding opportunities available to this type of government entity, although in this particular case, the district will not have authority to incur debt or assess taxes. A seven-member board makes the decisions, and the members are property owners and other stakeholders. These include representatives of Denver Health & Human Services, Public Works, Parks & Recreation and Denver Rescue Mission.

The proposed metro district is not intended to be the sole solution. Community Planning & Development is working on the North East Neighborhood Plan, and an Arapahoe Square urban renewal plan is being prepared, which will make urban renewal funds available. Funding for district initiatives will include donations and various grants.

Mr. Robson said there is a parallel effort moving ahead within Parks & Recreation. A stewardship agreement is being developed with the Denver Rescue Mission regarding Eddie Maestas Park. Other entities, including Downtown Denver Partnership and the Denver Police, are involved. The metro district will be the funding arm to make the plans that come out of the stewardship agreement feasible.

Diane Barrett, Mayor's Office, said the Mayor's Development Council has approved of the proposed district, and Denver Urban Renewal Authority supports it.

Once the proposal is processed through City Council, including a public hearing in December, District Court will approve a required election on the district formation for Feb. 2011.

A motion offered by Nevitt, duly seconded by Madison, to approve filing a bill regarding the Community Coordinating Metropolitan District No. 1 service plan, and a resolution setting a public hearing on formation of the proposed district encompassing Eddie Maestas Park and other triangle parks along Broadway in Council Districts 8 and 9 carried by the following vote:

AYES: Nevitt, Madison, Montero, Sandoval(4)

NAYS: (None)

ABSENT: Hancock, Johnson, Robb(3)

ABSTAIN: (None)

BR10-1009 Approves Zoning Map Application #2010I-00003, changing the zoning at 210 St. Paul from PUD to PUD in Council District 10.

Chris Gleissner, Community Planning & Development

PUD #269 was been built-out as retail and office several years ago. The owner now wants to add residential units and additional square footage. The existing building will remain and be enlarged. The site is in Cherry Creek North, an Area of Change designated as pedestrian shopping corridor. Cherry Creek North was not rezoned in the recent Citywide rezoning because an update of the neighborhood plan is underway. At this time, a new PUD is the most appropriate vehicle to accomplish the plans.

The Cherry Creek North Neighborhood organization submitted a letter of non-opposition, which is its normal response.

Community Planning & Development found that the application is consistent with existing plans, including Comprehensive Plan 2000, Blueprint Denver and the direction of the update of the Cherry Creek Neighborhood Plan. On Nov. 3, the Planning Board voted to recommend approval on a 9-0 vote.

A motion offered by Councilmember Sandoval, duly seconded by Councilmember Madison, to file a bill approving Zoning Map Application #2010I-00003, changing the zoning at 210 St. Paul from PUD #269 to PUD in Council District 10 be adopted carried by the following vote:

AYES: Nevitt, Madison, Montero, Sandoval(4)
NAYS: (None)
ABSENT: Hancock, Johnson, Robb(3)
ABSTAIN: (None)

PR10-1004 Approves filing a proclamation in support of the River Vision Implementation Plan developed by the Department of Parks & Recreation.

Gordon Robertson, Parks & Recreation; Jeff Shoemaker, Greenway Foundation

Kevin Patterson, Manager of Parks & Recreation, referred back to the proposed Community Coordinating Metro District discussion to add that it is part of an attempt to address problems the City has with the "silo" effect. The various departments are trying hard to look at issues more holistically and creatively. The metro district will be a model that can be used for other urban parks.

Mr. Patterson said the River Vision Implementation Plan is a wonderful effort, and he thanked Jeff Shoemaker and the Greenway Foundation for all of its work. He said that people are beginning to look to the rivers in their communities as

opportunities. US Interior Secretary Salazar was in town recently and acknowledged the efforts Denver is making along the Platte River. Our rivers tie us to our history, and we need to make opportunities to reclaim the rivers and provide housing and open space along them.

Gordon Robertson and Jeff Shoemaker started the presentation by saying that in 2007 and 2008, Parks & Recreation brought the River North and River South plans to the Public Amenities Committee. The River Vision Implementation Plan is the product of an intense effort over the last three years to combine the two plans for the Platte and recommend implementation methods. It is a bold, visionary plan representing a collaborative effort among many partners. One of the first real accomplishments is the successful application leading to a Brownfields grant.

The Steering Committee includes representatives of 45 partners who have jointly invested \$100 million in the planning process. The Greenway Foundation is proud of its partnership with the City over the last 36 years, and that partnership is stronger today than ever. Mr. Shoemaker credits City department managers with making things happen. Everyone has realized that in the case of the river, "green equals green", meaning green space translates into value.

Mr. Shoemaker said that in hard times, we should plan for the good times so we have plans to implement when funding becomes available again. There are many local, regional, state, federal as well as private opportunities for funding. It is estimated that between 50,000 and 70,000 people in the next 25 years will be living within 1/4 mile of the South Platte in Denver.

The main emphasis of the implementation plan was to identify the short-term projects that can be realized over the next five years. These include projects that will improve existing and provide new recreational opportunities, improve water quality, and involve land acquisition, roadway relocations, and bridge construction. The complete list of short-term projects is attached to this meeting summary on the website. A summary by section of the river is below:

1. Overland Regional Park (south of Dartmouth to Overland Golf Course) - a number of projects, mostly to make it easier to get down to and into the river, with a total investment of \$15,476,378.
2. Central Greenway Corridor (beginning at Vanderbilt Park, taking in Johnson Habitat and on to Alameda) - a number of projects designed to create a kids' campground in an urban forest and an improved sports field with a total investment of \$20,827,394.
3. Southern Urban Greenway Corridor (Sun Valley area) - revitalization of the neighborhood and a new park and improvements at Weir Gulch, including a pedestrian bridge, with a total investment of \$17,454,174.
4. Central Platte Valley Event District (Confluence Park) - reconfigure and improve the ramps down to Shoemaker Plaza at the river with a total investment of

\$4,300,573.

5. Northern Urban Greenway Corridor (River North Park, 31st to 38th avenues) - widen the corridor for bikes and parkland, an iconic bridge, and river access with a total investment of \$14,657,687.

The plan also identifies a series of mid-term (6-15 years) and long-term (16+ years) projects but with less specificity.

Councilwoman Montero noted that not many cities have the opportunities offered to Denver by the S. Platte River. She uses the bike paths as much as she can to get places she needs to go. The Sun Valley neighborhood portion is very important to the people who live there.

Mr. Patterson said the opportunities of the river infrastructure should be equally available for everyone, connecting both the highest and lowest value-per-square-foot properties. This speaks to Denver's values.

Councilman Nevitt said the first two sets of projects are in Council District 7, and it is wonderful to see this as an actual implementation plan. He noted that the "green equals green" maxim is very important to remember. This isn't just a soothing urban amenity. This plan is a big-time economic development plan.

Councilwoman Montero said the proposed Council proclamation will be read at Council on Nov. 29. It is a statement of City Council's support of the plan, and will help leverage funding. Mr. Shoemaker said the proclamation will make it clear that the City stands behind the projects and will be of great value when he is seeking funding.

A motion offered by Councilmember Sandoval, duly seconded by Councilmember Nevitt, to approve filing a proclamation in support of the River Vision Implementation Plan developed by the Department of Parks & Recreation, the Greenway Foundation and other stakeholders be adopted carried by the following vote:

AYES: Nevitt, Madison, Montero, Sandoval(4)
NAYS: (None)
ABSENT: Hancock, Johnson, Robb(3)
ABSTAIN: (None)

Presentations

- 1 Better Denver Bond Program 3rd Quarter Report**
Don Hunt, Manager, Better Denver Bond Program

Don Hunt said the \$550 million Better Denver Bond Program is finishing its third year in a very strong position. The managers have been able to accelerate projects in order to condense the 5-year program into four years, per the Mayor's direction.

On June 30, 2010, 148 projects had been completed. Coming off of a wave of activity during the third quarter, 174 projects have now been completed (60% of all active projects). Five big projects are still underway:

1. Central Park Blvd./I-70 interchange is well underway, a huge project that will take several years to complete.
2. The new police crime lab construction contract has been sent to Council for approval; construction should start shortly after the January 1.
3. The Eastside Human Services facility on Steele Street is now under construction.
4. The new municipal animal shelter is under construction, to be completed in the near future.
5. The Stapleton branch library land acquisition is starting through the Council process.

By the end of next year, we will have completed the vast majority of projects. Four projects have been moved out to 2012 for various reasons. These are:

1. The Lowry fire station, for which the land donation is just being completed.
2. The 38th Ave. underpass project will complete the first phase, the pedestrian bridge, in 2011.
3. The West Denver library project is underway with the contract between the City and the Urban Conservancy for the one-acre site southwest of Colfax and Federal executed, and construction will start by the end of 2011 with completion in 2012.
4. The Denver Museum of Nature & Science Education Center, a substantial project with public and private funding, is moving toward completion of the shell and core in 2012.

The Mayor's commitment to acceleration, and the project managers' ability to keep projects moving, has been very valuable in terms of construction employment in the city.

During 2011, we will move into the Legacy and Transition planning phase as we hand over the project management programs and systems to Public Works. These systems have changed the culture of project management in Denver. The project managers must present a monthly progress report now, and that changes the

dynamic and adds transparency.

Councilwoman Montero asked how many jobs were created by the bond projects. Mr. Hunt replied approximately 1,000 construction jobs per year have been directly created by the program. That does not include the multiplier effect of those construction workers spending their wages locally.

Councilwoman Montero asked about the market for construction materials. Mr. Hunt replied that most of the bids have been significantly under budget. We may save as much as \$20 million in authorized but unissued bonds. The timing has been terrific; it could not have been better. Another benefit is all of the additions and enhancements that were incorporated into the projects because the bids came in under budget.

Councilwoman Sandoval noted that the success of the program underscores the importance of investing in infrastructure.

Lotte Dula, Bond Program Financial Manager, said the program has spent \$189 million, and \$37.2 million is pre-encumbered for approved contracts, mostly for the crime lab. With the interest earned, the total program budget is now \$554 million.

We expect to spend \$124 million by end of 2010, bringing the total for all three years to \$229 million.

In October, the last bond issue of approximately \$45 million was sold. That leaves \$77 million: \$57 million for Boettcher and the \$20 million savings Mr. Hunt described.