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## Land Use, Transportation & Infrastructure Committee Summary Minutes

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**Tuesday, February 07, 2012    10:30 AM    City & County Building, Room 391**

**Members Present:** Lehmann, Lopez, Montero, Robb, Shepherd, Susman

**Members Absent:** None

**Other Council  
Present:**

**Committee Staff:** Gretchen Williams

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### Bill Request

**BR12-0081 Approves the rezoning of 100 Detroit Street from PUD #607 to PUD-G to allow for additional residential uses along 2nd Avenue in Council District 10.**

*Chris Gleissner, Community Planning & Development*

This 2.26 site in Cherry Creek North is bounded by Detroit and Fillmore streets and 1st and 2nd avenues. The proposed amendment is necessary to allow a fourth story (total height of 55 feet) for the residential units along 2nd Ave. with retail and office space along 1st Ave. in 8 stories, as per the recommendations of the Cherry Creek North Design Guidelines and Cherry Creek North Plan. The recommendations are for higher intensity structures along 1st Ave. with buildings stepping down towards 2nd Ave. Recent redevelopment in the area has also conformed to the plan. Blueprint Denver identifies this as a Regional Center/Pedestrian Shopping Corridor within an Area of Change.

Several neighborhood organizations were notified of the application. Community Planning & Development (CPD) received no comments from any of them.

CPD recommends approval due to the consistency with adopted plans and design guidelines and changing conditions in the area. On Jan. 18, the Planning Board unanimously recommended approval.

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

AYES: Lehmann, Lopez, Montero, Robb, Shepherd, Susman(6)  
NAYS: (None)  
ABSENT: (None)  
ABSTAIN: (None)

**Presentations**

**1 Rocky Mountain Arsenal Settlement Funding Process Update (Northeast Parkway)**  
*Gordon Robertson, Parks & Recreation*

As part of the settlement with Shell Oil and the US Army regarding environmental contamination at the Rocky Mountain Arsenal, a \$24.7 million fund was established. The Natural Resource Damages fund, or NRD, is administered by the State of Colorado, and the intent is to restore, replace or acquire the equivalent of the injured national resources. Funds will be available over the next six years. The Northeast Greenway Advisory Committee was created to plan projects and apply for this funding. The entities in the Committee are Adams County, Aurora, Brighton, Commerce City, Denver, Thornton and the Sand Creek Parkway Regional Partnership. Ten million dollars are available to this Advisory Committee alone. Later on, an additional \$17.4 million will be available to nonprofits and governments statewide based on a competitive application process.

The Committee developed the Northeast Greenway Corridor Restoration Plan "Draft" Vision. The vision is for Colorado to create and preserve first class habitat to complement the outstanding natural resources at the Rocky Mountain Arsenal Natural Wildlife Refuge. This will be a new system of stream and river corridors, riparian ecosystems, wildlife migration routes and recreational trails to provide an integrated greenway and open space network across jurisdictional boundaries.

Denver has submitted applications for three projects:

1. First Creek Habitat Restoration and Ecological Buffer

The City has a 10-year old commitment to working in cooperation with Urban Drainage & Flood Control District and RTD to widen the First Creek flood plain corridor, which requires additional land acquisition and construction of trails. Total project cost is \$8M, of which \$6M is already in place from Urban Drainage and RTD. The final \$2M is being requested from NRD.

## 2. Grant Frontier Park Aquatic and Terrestrial Habitat Restoration

This project is to improve current acreage without any new acquisition. Urban Drainage is working to improve flood control in the area, and the overall project has a substantial water quality element. It will enhance the wildlife habitat. The City is partnering with Urban Drainage, Greenway Foundation, GOCO and the State, which has committed \$1.7M from the Shattuck settlement. Total project cost is \$7M. The application for NRD funds is for \$2.75M.

## 3. Heron Pond Water Quality and Habitat Improvements

Denver Public Works is working to extend Heron Pond and increase habitat area. This project will enhance that habitat area even more. The Stormwater Enterprise Fund is purchasing land from the City in an area that has historically been junk yards and other industrial uses. This project will expand and deepen the pond. Total cost is \$4.6M. The NRD funding request is for \$1.3M.

Councilmember Lehmann noted that the Westerly Creek trails ends short of the Sand Creek trail, and these need to be connected. Mr. Robertson said Parks is working with DIA to construct that connection.

Councilmember Susman asked if all of these projects compete against each other for funding. Mr. Robertson replied they do, but he is confident of funding for all.

Councilmember Robb expressed concern about increasing maintenance responsibilities for all these new areas when the urban parks need so much. She suggested that Council could adopt a proclamation in support of the applications.

## **2 East Colfax Updates: Transit Alternatives Analysis, RTD Transit Priority Project, and Concept Plan.**

*Terry Ruiter and Karen Good, Public Works; Jeff Becker, RTD; Tim Baldwin, Steer Davies Gleave*

The Committee heard from Public Works about some of the planning and projects in various parts of the East Colfax corridor. Two are studies just getting underway, one of which requires Council action (see next action item). Another has been completed and the product is available to help guide design of Colfax redevelopments.

Terry Ruiter of Public Works described the Colfax Alternatives Analysis, Environmental Assessment and Model Assessment involves the 10-mile corridor (12<sup>th</sup> to 19<sup>th</sup>/20<sup>th</sup> ave.) between the Auraria campus and Fitzsimons, funded by a Federal Transit Administration grant. Findings of two

previous assessments led to the FTA grant:

- The Citywide Strategic Transportation plan, completed in 2008, identified 20-30% increase in person-trips in the corridor by 2025.
- Colfax Streetcar Feasibility Study, completed in 2010, concluded:
  - There are currently 30,000 transit riders per day on four routes in the study area.
  - All four routes are at capacity during peak travel times,
  - Routes 15 and 15L are at capacity throughout the day, with 22,000 riders daily.

The FTA analysis will help identify an appropriate investment strategy for the corridor. Reasonable alternatives will be analyzed to determine costs, environmental impacts, trade-offs, risks, and if the benefits are worth the investment. For reasonable alternatives, alignments and vehicle technologies will be evaluated, and the end result will be a recommendation.

Councilman Lopez noted that the study area should be extended west to Lakewood.

Jeff Becker, RTD, described the 9-month Colfax RTD Route 15/15L Transit Priority Study on E. Colfax between Broadway and Yosemite. The outcome is to identify and implement innovative technologies and other capital improvements to enhance ridership and performance on the route. The City and RTD received a Senate Bill 1 capital grant from the State. This is a pilot project for other corridors, and it fits in with the Alternatives Analysis described above. The two will be coordinated and findings on each will benefit both. A consultant will be hired through a Request for Proposals (RFP) process to help identify specific actions to make transit on Colfax more attractive, faster, and more convenient. Possible approaches include traffic signal prioritization for transit vehicles; vehicles with multiple boarding doors; and off-board fare payment systems.

Karen Good, Public Works, talked about the Colfax Ave. Concept Plan (formerly Colfax Ave. Design Guidelines) document. The project looked at a 14-mile corridor between 12th and 19th/20th avenues with a broad brush for all modes of travel- bikers, walkers, transit users, etc. It identified the over-arching issues for the entire length, noting that the limited right-of-way is a primary constraint. Several opportunities were identified, such as to preserve historic business signage, provide street trees, and improve access to transit. The final product, an 11-pag document is available on DenverGov.org under Development Services.

Councilmember Robb said that the Mayor's economic development plan calls out St. Anthony's redevelopment site but there are more opportunities along the

corridor.

## **Bill Request**

**BR12-0102 Approves an InterGovernmental Agreement with RTD to act as a conduit for payment to the City of a Federal Transit Administration Alternatives Analysis Grant for the East Colfax Corridor.**

*Terry Ruiter, Public Works; Tim Baldwin, Steer Davies Gleave*

Terry Ruiter, Project Manager for the Colfax Alternatives Analysis, presented information on the study during the discussion above. The Council is being asked to approve an Intergovernmental Agreement allowing the City to receive reimbursement from RTD from the \$2M Federal Transit Administration (FTA) grant. The grant funds are going to RTD because it already has a funding relationship with FTA. The City is matching the grant with \$1M. Request for approval of two consultant contracts will be submitted soon. One is with Steer Davies Gleave (\$2,027,590); the second is with AECOM (\$700,000).

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

AYES: Lehmann, Lopez, Montero, Robb, Shepherd, Susman(6)  
NAYS: (None)  
ABSENT: (None)  
ABSTAIN: (None)