

Riverfront District Meeting

Meeting Notes – Wednesday 10/31/18

Mayor Debbie Brinkman welcomed everyone and introductions were made. The purpose of the meeting was to highlight the significance of the corridor and work in partnership with stakeholders to assess needs and desires for the area and begin the process of proactive visioning and planning, and to share information regarding Santa Fe Drive, CDOT and the PEL.

We have a “blank slate” for dreaming about what could be. This is a very desirable area and we need to face the opportunities and challenges and move to thoughtful planning and design

Significant elements that impact the area are:

1. The Platte River
2. CDOT
3. Light and heavy rail
4. Santa Fe (expressway)
80,000+ cars per day
5. Properties have sold
6. Property owners and business needs must be considered
7. Impacts to the river and trails must be considered
Each year 750,000 bikers and pedestrians use the Mary Carter Greenway Trail

Mayor Brinkman covered the focus and accomplishments of South Platte Working Group. Through an open space tax share back of approximately \$1 million per year and various grant opportunities, the South Platte Working Group (SPWG) has secured more than \$60 million since 2006 to conserve and enhance property along the South Platte River corridor in Arapahoe County. This is an effective partnership including Littleton, Englewood, Sheridan, Colorado Division of Wildlife, Colorado Water Conservation Board, Urban Drainage and Flood Control District, US Army Corps of Engineers and Arapahoe County.

Keith Reester, Director of Public Works, City of Littleton covered some major traffic issues along the corridor and summarized CDOT’s Planning and Environmental Linkage (PEL). There is no current plan to expand Santa Fe (this would be a CDOT decision).

1. Santa Fe is actually an expressway built to handle 20k cars per day but is traveled by 80k plus cars per day.
2. Funding for improvements comes from the state and federal governments but the city must plan to provide a 50% match. Some 80 communities associated with DRCOG can submit plans.
3. We must provide a master plan for the corridor or CDOT will make improvements that may not consider the property and business owner needs. For instance, CDOT may recommend a continuous median down the length of Santa Fe, eliminating access points necessary for businesses.
- 4.
5. The Citywide Transportation Master Plan will allow Littleton to target the Santa Fe corridor.
6. Modeling opportunities will “protect the envelope”.
7. First level of the PEL will be design and environmental assessment followed by construction (est. cost \$50-\$60M)

Paul Bryant, Principal with Bryant Flink Architecture & Design summarized the value of master planning.

1. The upcoming Comprehensive Planning process will include data collected through outreach done during the Visioning process.
2. When there’s no cohesive thought process for land use, development occurs in “islands”.

3. Creating a cohort including the stakeholders in the Riverfront District will lead to a thoughtful united vision, fostering an economic engine that can be used for the PEL.

Chris Shears “The River Guy” with Shears Adkins Rockmore Architects covered some of the metro area projects from the past and some currently being worked on by his firm (e.g. Sun Valley, Elitch’s redevelopment and redevelopment of the property adjacent to Bronco Stadium.) Land use needs to be thoughtful

1. Entitlement process needs to be as smooth as possible
2. Community needs to be considered and effectively engaged with careful explanation of intentions
3. The exciting river adjacent projects in the metro area will lead to interest moving south to Littleton

Bruce Stahlman, Planning Commission, City of Littleton echoed Chris by underscoring the need to be careful how we describe our processes and who will be involved. Bruce explained we have a council and board and commission members poised to move toward thoughtful future development.

Mayor Brinkman covered the basic elements of the draft for “Envision 2040”

1. Anchored
2. Authentic
3. Connected
4. Active
5. Engaged

Joe Busto with Colorado Water Conservation spoke about the importance of water use and conservation in land use planning.

1. Following the flood, the river was straightened and aligned and annual inspections were initiated
2. Changes require the approval of the Army Corps of Engineers.
3. Littleton has a great opportunity to incorporate the Platte River into land and business development.

Mark Relph, City Manager indicated the need to act. We must engage in thoughtful planning and create a vision incorporated in the PEL citing the example of the San Antonio Brewery Riverwalk area. Mark also spoke about attractive median alternatives to the Jersey barriers.

Mayor Brinkman (Closing Remarks)

The mayor wants to keep the momentum high. We need to remain connected and committed to the process. Some ideas included forming and Steering Committee with stakeholders and holding a charrette to develop a vision and ideas for future development. She asked for a show of hands to stay on course. All in attendance indicated their interest.