

Loretto Heights Area Plan Steering Committee Meeting # 1



Date and Time: Tuesday, October 30th, 2018
Location: Loretto Heights Library – 3001 S. Federal Blvd.

Attendees

STEERING COMMITTEE MEMBERS (AND ALTERNATES)

Adriana Pena, Tony Hernandez, Mark Witkiewicz, John Olson, Jim Gibson, Andrew Rogge, Clare Harris, Tara Durham, Kristina Evanoff, Kasandra Ornelas, Norma Brown, Bill Sirois, Sister Mary Nelle Gage, Dr. Hany Khattab, Councilman Kevin Flynn

OTHER ELECTED OFFICIALS

Councilwoman Deborah Ortega, Anita Banuelos (Councilman Clark aide), Polly Kyle (Councilwoman Kniech aide), (State Senator Irene Aguilar, Mayor Pro Tem of City of Sheridan Sally Daigle, and former State Representative Fran Coleman were also in attendance)

COMMUNITY PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT STAFF

Steve Nalley, Jason Morrison, Fran Peñafiel, Jenny Buddenborg, Brandon Shaver

Meeting Summary

1. WELCOME / INTRODUCTIONS

Steve Nalley kicked off the meeting with introductions of the City Staff and set the tone for what is to be a collaborative process. Steve also addressed the correspondence between CM Kevin Flynn and the Loretto Heights Community Initiative (LHCI), particularly those items that concerned CPD Staff and the planning process.

Jason Morrison introduced the evening agenda and will send agendas for future meetings in advance of each steering committee meeting.

Steering committee introductions were made around the table.

Jason provided list of needs identified by community so far and reiterated that the City is here to ensure this is an open, transparent process. Community feedback so far includes the following:

- Traffic
- Speed on Irving Street
- Keep the theatre
- Property value - go up
- Dartmouth Avenue connecting to Federal Boulevard
- Accessible, so site is not closed off
- Desire for a collaborative integrated process

- Desire for an open community process
- Theater cooperation with DCPA
- Maintain view of the admin building from Federal Boulevard
- Tree preservation and site beautification
- Access and maintenance of the cemetery
- Preserve the cemetery in perpetuity
- Poverty in College View neighborhood
- Need for affordable housing
- Community oriented place
- Desire for a “destination” and an “identity” for SW Denver

Tony Hernandez pointed out the letter shared with Councilman Kevin Flynn in advance of the steering committee meeting which included several requests. Mr. Hernandez has been a part of city processes that have not worked well in the past and feels that all concerns should be shared early in the process. Wants to make sure that voice of public is heard. The contents of the letter included:

- Makeup of steering committee: subject matter experts provide value; request that these experts serve as technical advisory committee to allow steering committee to be a community-driven steering committee.
- Jason Morrison’s past work with the Pachner Company.
- Believe process should be delayed. Stronger cultural assessment needs to be made of campus.

Other steering committee members and those from the public in attendance said that the group is not raising any issues that have not already been heard in several past meetings and would like the City to manage this area plan process and community/steering committee.

Steve Nalley shared that there is no conflict of interest, and subject matter experts are part of the committee to provide critical information to make informed decisions. Says this is a 100% community-based committee and the studies that were brought up in the letter will be part of the process. Steve noted that it is important that we do not put design in front of the planning and community driven process.

2. ROLE OF STEERING COMMITTEE

Jason provided background on purpose and role of steering committee, as well as ground rules for discussion. Committee members are advocates and owners of this plan.

Councilwoman Ortega shared that she has worked on many similar, large projects and it works well to have steering committee lead effort and to allow for broader community engagement. Public meetings and a variety of outreach will be part of this planning effort.

3. PROCESS / TIMELINE

Jason shared that the project team is doing due diligence existing conditions analysis to help shape/form the plan in the visualize stage that will take around three months to complete.

Then shift into strategize stage where ideas and recommendations start developing (roughly five months). Transition to realize phase where we start to draft a plan (approx. four months). Internal city review, steering committee review, and public review/comment are all part of the process.

Small area plan is intended to be a living, breathing document and informs decision-making process. Document that comes from plan will be the community's vision. This plan will update Blueprint Denver and must be consistent. Small area plan recommendations all go into updating Blueprint Denver. Small area plans are advisory and inform law/ordinance, but it is not law itself.

4. DENVERIGHT VISION ELEMENTS

Steering committee was encouraged to consider what Denveright elements mean to Loretto Heights area. Requested that steering committee become familiar with Blueprint Denver.

5. SWOT ANALYSIS & REPORT OUT

Jason introduced SWOT analysis process to group first to inform them of work involved. The activity will be moved to the November meeting and Jason will share directions for SWOT analysis in advance of next meeting.

6. STEERING COMMITTEE MEMBER GOALS FOR THE SMALL AREA PLAN

In place of the SWOT activity, the committee members shared their goals for small area plan:

- Justin: Interest is betterment of lives of residents. Recognizes the need more affordable housing.
- Kasandra: Sees this as a great opportunity for community. Keeping some of the things that are here, like the buildings, and addressing affordable housing. Healthy food access needs to be addressed; food is a huge need—perhaps a food bank. Advocate for bringing resources into community. Having a designated space for food provision.
- Father Joseph Dang: Would like to see the area represent and serve multiple cultures. It could be a great place to bring community together. The chapel could become a community chapel, multi-use. Could do multi-cultural events at the theater. Hoping for it to be a feature for SW Denver.
- John Olson: Wants it to be a wonderful place. Campus has 130 years of history with the Sisters and there is a great deal of opportunity. Would like to identify opportunities that don't forget the history but that move forward in future.
- Tim: Enjoys Loretto Heights Park and is excited to see fence removed to enjoy campus. Invested in making area better in every way, which includes this campus.

- Andrew: City of Sheridan excited in investment and how it can connect to their community. Sheridan has invested a lot in their city and is interested in greater recognition for area.
- Jim: Believes that the campus always felt a bit removed from community. Fell in love with campus when taught here.
- Bill: interested in how transit and mobility can play a role in shaping area.
- Norma: Interested in seeing beauty of area maintained. Admin Building and Chapel need to be preserved. Interested in keeping the theater and other cultural activities going. Would like to see education uses in Admin Building like educational opportunities. Would like to see local business that are of smaller scale that people can walk to.
- Sister Mary: Hopes legacy of Loretto Heights will pollinate what we come up with for future of campus. Maintain cemetery as place of reverence, serenity and prayer.
- Mark: Announced that Sister Mary Nell is celebrating her jubilee. Celebrating 50 years of commitment to her faith and he finds it an honor to work with her.
- Clare: Hopes people are aspiring to a process that goes well. Interested in multi-cultural aspects.
- Tara: Hope for a united vision. Wants this place to become a destination. Make it a community gathering place.
- Kristina: Committee can add details to mobility opportunities. Is here to provide transportation-oriented expertise and guidance.

7. CLOSING

Jason will provide agenda for next meeting and this meeting summary. Also noted that City is finalizing website where meeting information will be posted. Meeting summary from tonight and future meetings will be produced by City and uploaded to website. Public can track process via website. Members agreed that they are fine with sharing email addresses with other members.