

Loretto Heights Area Plan Steering Committee Meeting # 5



Date and Time: Tuesday, February 26th, 2019 from 6:00-8:00pm
Location: Loretto Heights Library – 3001 S. Federal Blvd.

Attendees

STEERING COMMITTEE MEMBERS (AND ALTERNATES)

In attendance: Shannon Stage (John Olson), Jim Gibson, Adriana Pena, Zachary Wallace (Public Works), Kasandra Ornelas, Norma Brown, Mark Witkiewicz, Sister Mary Nelle Gage, Tara Durham, Councilman Kevin Flynn, Tony Hernandez, Melissa Thate (Office of Economic Development), Andrew Rogge, Clare Harris, Jennifer Siegel (Office of Economic Development)

COMMUNITY PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT STAFF

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

Meeting Summary

1. WELCOME

Jason began the meeting by welcoming the steering committee members as well as those members of the public that were in attendance. He invited the public to fill out comment cards if they had any questions or comments during the meeting or if they had any general questions and comments about the area plan process.

Clare Harris thanked those members of the steering committee who could attend the tour of the Fruitdale Lofts (in Wheat Ridge) and Pancratia Hall. She commended the work that was done at Fruitdale Lofts and is excited to see the same techniques applied to Pancratia Hall in the future. She thanked Mark Witkiewicz for his time and thanked Jim Hartman (Hartman/Ely Investments) for all the information he has provided. About 5-6 members of the steering committee were able to attend one or both tours.

Sister Mary Nelle Gage shared a letter from a Loretto Heights Alum recalling her experience as a student in the 1960s.

Jason introduced two members of the City of Denver who were in the room. These individuals are replacing two former subject matter experts and will provide knowledge and expertise throughout the process. Zachary Wallace works for Public Works and Jennifer Siegel will serve as alternate to Melissa Thate with the Office of Economic Development. She is replacing Haley Jordahl.

2. ONLINE SURVEY RESULTS

A brief overview of online survey results was presented. Overall, the number of people who completed the survey was average and to be expected for the size of this area plan. Jason

thanked the steering committee for their help in promoting the survey and getting a strong number of participants but noted that the lack of diversity of individuals who took the survey was still disappointing. The steering committee is encouraged to think about ways to improve this representation prior to the creation of additional online surveys in the future.

Sister Mary Nelle Gage asked if anyone out of state took the survey. The City will follow up with this information.

Jim Gibson asked if the income levels of the survey respondents mirrored the incomes of those that live in the study area. Jason and Councilman Kevin Flynn believed that the income level represented by those that took the survey did not accurately mirror that of individuals who live in the study area. The City will follow up with more information.

Generally speaking, the steering committee believed that the results from the survey questions were what they expected to see. Many members were surprised to see a strong desire from the community to have a “commercial center” on the campus. Jason informed that steering committee that all the comments have been put into “buckets” in order to group the comments by theme/topic. “Commerical center” is not a defined term but was the term used as a “catch all” to organize all the comments specific to commercial/retail activity on the site, as well as where people generally thought this activity should occur.

Councilman Flynn and other steering committee members would like to see the full spreadsheet of all comments to better understand the results. The City will follow up with this information.

3. FEEDBACK FROM PUBLIC MEETING

Jason presented the feedback that was received from the public meeting held on January 15th. A lot of wonderful feedback was received and each comment has been documented. Jason reminded the steering committee that all public meeting material is located on the project website (including every comment) and the information presented during this meeting is only a concise snapshot of what was heard.

When Jason presented the *Precedent Images/Top Amenities* station boards, he asked the steering committee about their thoughts on the top three amenities. Councilman Flynn noted that he was not surprised to see that many in the community have a strong desire for a community gathering space. He noted that is a need for all of southwest Denver.

Jason presented updates that were included in the revised vision statements and demonstrated how the comments from the steering committee and the community helped to influence the changes. He then asked the steering committee if they had any questions or comments about any of the vision statements. Mark Witkiewicz wanted to have a discussion around the word “preservation” in the *Strong and Authentic Neighborhoods* vision statement. He noted that this might not be the most appropriate word. Shannon Stage (alternate for John Olson – historic Denver) added that the term “preservation” can include “adaptive reuse” and allow for some

change. Mark would like to see more added in the statement to add clarity. A suggestion was to add the word “character” after the word “preserve” to better describe what the statement is anticipating. The steering committee agreed that this warranted taking another look at this vision statement.

Jim Gibson wanted more clarity behind the word “retention” in the *Economically Diverse and Vibrant* vision statement. Clare Harris added that sometimes, neighborhoods may not want some of the current business to stay if they have negative impacts on the community. The greater steering committee agreed that the statement should include new business that come into the area but also call for support for the community serving business that exist today.

Tony Hernandez encouraged the use of regular terms throughout the vision statements. For instance, “equitable allocation of resources” in the *Healthy and Active* vision statement could be replaced with another adjective to better understand what kind of resources are being mentioned. A suggestion of “community assets” was mentioned to allow for better understanding and interpretation by the public.

4. LAND USE MAPS

Jason presented the land use maps from the future place type mapping exercise which was held during the January steering committee meeting. City Staff wants to make sure that that all the feedback heard is correct.

The steering committee agreed that the land use maps appropriately reflected their ideas from the January meeting. The steering committee is encouraged to think about the areas where not as much guidance was provided to the City. The upcoming topic meetings – mobility, open space and historic preservations – should help to influence the vision and guidance for these areas.

Some steering committee members would like to revisit the land use activity to help fill in some of these areas where there were differences among the groups. Similarly, Councilman Flynn would like to have a transition discussion about the area north of the center and south of the Bentwood/Sharon Park/South Mar Lee neighborhoods.

5. EQUITY DISCUSSION

Jason and Brandon introduced the equity topic for discussion. To date, staff has received many comments concerning equity, affordable housing and preserving the existing community and character.

Brandon provided background information from Blueprint Denver on how equity is defined at the city-wide scale and how that can be applied to the Loretto Heights Area Plan. His presentation included a brief examination on the indicators that affect low/high equity scores and how the Loretto Heights community compared to other areas in the city.

Irene Aguilar, director of Denver’s Neighborhood equity and Stabilization Team (NEST), led the larger equity discussion for the remainder of the meeting. Prior to the discussion, the city prepared questions for the steering committee to consider:

- What is your definition of equity?
- What are some risk factors for displacement?
- What are some investments you’ve seen in other neighborhoods that you would like to see here?
- What are some ideas you have to be sure that people who live here can stay here?
- What does it mean to have equitable businesses, streets and parks?

The steering committee noted that equity is about fairness, equal opportunity and access for all. Equality is where everyone is treated the same whereas equity is where everyone gets what they need based on their own situation and set of circumstances.

The steering committee noted that some of the risk factors for displacement included: housing taxes, lower incomes, expensive homes, misconceptions of those that live in affordable housing units, influx of newer homes, increase in property value, inability to preserve existing traditions and customs, pressure from new residents, low wages, discrimination, lack of housing options, no variety of housing type, lack of education, and income inequality.

The steering committee also noted that some investments they’ve seen in other neighborhoods that they would like to see here included: recreation centers, more mobility options (such as bike lanes, reliable transit, bus stops, protected bike lanes, sidewalks, wider sidewalks, better roads, safer intersections for pedestrians), open space connections, grocery stores, community center(s), cultural amenities, educational opportunities (ESL, GED and healthy living classes) diversity of housing options (including the “missing middle – housing containing anywhere between 2-19 units), mixed use and mixed income housing, both rental and ownership opportunities.

6. CLOSING

Jason presented the remaining schedule for the upcoming steering committee meetings as well as some of the upcoming community meetings. The steering committee is encouraged to help get the word out about the upcoming all-Spanish Community Meeting and was given a homework assignment to leave their meeting flyer with another individual, community bulletin board or place of business.

Councilman Flynn noted that the location of the Keen Independent Research Community Meeting was the Loretto Heights Library and not Machebeuf Hall as stated in the presentation. This change will be reflected in the presentation posted to the project website.

Jason encouraged the steering committee to exercise patience as the City posts meeting material after each steering committee meeting.

Jason mentioned that he would re-send the draft two redlines of the Inventory of Historic Resources and Survey Report via email. An incomplete draft was distributed late last week and a portion of the report was unintentionally cut off. The final report will be sent to the City on March 1st and will then be distributed to the steering committee. Jim Gibson asked if there would be an opportunity to look at the report again prior to the 1st. There will not be an opportunity to look at the report prior to its finalization on March 1st.

METTING SUMMARY PREPARED BY COMMUNITY PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT –
FEBRUARY 28TH, 2019