



MEMORANDUM

To: Mayor and City Council

From: Alexis Moore, Associate Planner, Comprehensive Planning and Research

Thru: Rebecca P. Clark, Director, Community Planning and Development *RPC*
Roger Wadnal, Manager, Comprehensive Planning and Research *RW*
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Date: April 23, 2009
City Council Study Session Date: May 18, 2009

Subject: North Wadsworth Boulevard Corridor Plan
PL-08-007

RECOMMENDATION

Direct staff to move the North Wadsworth Boulevard Corridor Plan forward to Planning Commission and City Council Public Hearings.

BACKGROUND

The North Wadsworth Boulevard Corridor Plan is an update of the Wadsworth Boulevard Strategic Plan, which was adopted as an amendment to the Lakewood Comprehensive Plan in 1997. Neighborhood, corridor, and special area plans are adopted as amendments to the Comprehensive Plan to address specific geographic areas of the City in greater detail.

Lakewood's Comprehensive Plan recognizes that transportation helps shape a community and that the way a community provides for the safe and efficient movement of people and goods affects the community character and its citizens' quality of life. The North Wadsworth Boulevard Corridor Plan establishes a vision, goals, action steps, and implementation strategies to help achieve safe, efficient transportation patterns as well as positive community character and enhanced quality of life along Wadsworth Boulevard.

The study area for the North Wadsworth Boulevard Corridor Plan includes primarily the properties bordering Wadsworth Boulevard from 26th Avenue to Yale Avenue. The

section of Wadsworth Boulevard from Mississippi Avenue to Yale Avenue was not included in the Wadsworth Boulevard Strategic Plan or in any other previous planning study.

More than 100 people were invited to participate on the North Wadsworth Boulevard Corridor Plan Advisory Committee. The Committee started meeting in January of 2008 and has since held 12 meetings to develop the vision, goals, and action steps to guide future development and redevelopment along Wadsworth Boulevard.

The Advisory Committee consisted of representation from City Council, Planning Commission, Board of Adjustments, the West Colfax Community Association (WCCA), the Alameda Gateway Community Association (AGCA), the Jewell/Wadsworth Area Business Association (JWABA), business owners, residents from neighborhoods adjacent to Wadsworth Boulevard, the Colorado Department of Transportation (CDOT), the Regional Transportation District (RTD), the Denver Regional Council of Governments (DRCOG), and City of Lakewood staff. A list of the Advisory Committee members is attached.

PUBLIC OUTREACH

Public input has been an important part of the planning process. In March of 2008, a survey was mailed to all property owners and tenants within the study area boundaries and a link to the survey was also available on the City of Lakewood website for interested stakeholders to complete online. Approximately 350 people completed the survey, which included both multiple choice and open ended questions. The main concerns expressed about Wadsworth Boulevard included:

- Congestion, increased traffic, road conditions
- Aesthetics of the Corridor
- Conditions for pedestrians, bicyclists, and transit users along the Corridor
- Concerns about impacts of road widening, light rail, and other projects on businesses and neighborhoods along the Corridor

Staff also held one-on-one interviews with interested stakeholders along the Corridor.

Over the past 15 months, the Advisory Committee hosted three public open houses to present and discuss the draft vision, goals, action steps, and the final draft plan. The first open house was held in July 2008 and was attended by approximately 60 people. A second open house was held in November 2008 and was attended by approximately 45 people. The third open house was held in January 2009 and was attended by approximately 80 people. Additionally, a property owner and tenant meeting was held for individuals within the proposed commercial/multi-family/mixed-use node areas in December 2008.

Staff also made presentations to the Jewell/Wadsworth Business Association monthly meeting in May 2008 and at their open house in September 2008.

The City of Lakewood Community Planning and Development website includes a page dedicated to the North Wadsworth Boulevard Corridor Planning process. Project updates were also included in Looking at Lakewood and the monthly Community Planning and Development Download newsletter.

NORTH WADSWORTH BOULEVARD CORRIDOR PLAN

The Advisory Committee, with substantial input from the public, developed the North Wadsworth Boulevard Corridor Plan over the past 15 months. The following are key aspects of the proposed Plan:

- The Plan addresses the major land use and transportation changes that have occurred and are in the process of occurring along the Corridor since the Wadsworth Boulevard Strategic Plan was adopted in 1997, including:
 - Lakewood City Commons
 - Belmar
 - Creekside (the intersection of Colfax Avenue and Wadsworth Boulevard)
 - The West Corridor light rail line and the TMU zone surrounding the future station at 13th Avenue and Wadsworth Boulevard.
- The Plan establishes goals, action steps, and implementation strategies that are organized into the following categories: Transportation, Land Use, Urban Design and Streetscape, and Economic Development. Key recommendations under each category include:

Transportation

- Make Wadsworth Boulevard a complete street by creating safe and convenient access for all transportation users.
- Reduce congestion and pollution along Wadsworth by supporting transit and transit oriented development.
- Improve mobility along Wadsworth Boulevard.
- Work closely with the Colorado Department of Transportation on any changes to Wadsworth Boulevard.

Land Use

- Cluster commercial uses at major intersections.
- Direct mixed-use development to designated areas.
- Create land use and transportation connections between the light rail station area and Lakewood Center (which is defined as the four quadrants of the Alameda/Wadsworth intersection).
- Protect single-family residential neighborhoods adjacent to Wadsworth Boulevard.
- Protect and enhance the park and open space facilities along the Corridor.
- Where appropriate, support private property owners in the assemblage of smaller parcels on Wadsworth for redevelopment.

- Make Lakewood Center more visible as “Downtown Lakewood”.

Urban Design and Streetscape

- Promote urban design that supports pedestrian, bicycle, and transit choices.
- Create a clear visual identity for the Wadsworth Corridor.
- Improve the visual character of existing and new buildings and properties along the Corridor.
- Within the designated node areas (described below), use urban design to help define the street and node areas.
- Enhance the aesthetics of the Corridor through the use of climate-sensitive landscaping.

Economic Development

- Encourage the success of businesses along the Corridor and enhance the economic vitality of the Corridor.
 - Support locally owned and small businesses.
 - Help property owners and tenants improve commercial areas along the Corridor that have experienced economic decline.
- The Plan identifies four node areas, which are areas along the Wadsworth Corridor where concentrated commercial, mixed-use, and/or multi-family residential development is envisioned. The node areas are located at major intersections and include some properties that are not located directly adjacent to Wadsworth Boulevard. Overall, the existing zoning within the node areas supports commercial and higher density residential uses. The four node areas are:
 - 20th Avenue and Wadsworth Boulevard
 - The east side of Wadsworth Boulevard between US 6 and Alameda Avenue
 - Mississippi Avenue and Wadsworth Boulevard
 - Jewell Avenue and Wadsworth Boulevard

SUMMARY

At the April 22, 2009 Planning Commission Study Session, Planning Commission directed staff to forward a resolution to adopt the North Wadsworth Boulevard Corridor Plan as an amendment to the Comprehensive Plan at an upcoming Planning Commission Public Hearing.

Attachment A – Advisory Committee Member List

Attachment B – North Wadsworth Boulevard Corridor Plan