LAKEWOOD PLANNING COMMISSION
PUBLIC MEETING
MINUTES
October 16, 2019

COMMISSIONERS PRESENT:
Dale Miller, Chair
Alex Bartlett
Johann Cohn
Alan Heald
Henry Hollender
Glenda Sinks

STAFF PRESENT:
Roger Wadnal, Manager, Comprehensive Research and Development
Paul Rice, Manager, Planning-Development Assistance
Holly Boehm, Principal Planner, Comprehensive Research and Development
Christy Horber, Planner, Comprehensive Research and Development
John Padon, Transportation Engineering Manager
Laura Pemberton, Secretary to the Planning Commission

Following are the minutes of the October 16, 2019 Lakewood Planning Commission Public Meeting. A permanent set of these minutes is retained in the office of the City Clerk.

Minutes are not a verbatim transcription, but rather an attempt by the Secretary to capture the intent of the speakers.

ITEM 1: CALL TO ORDER

ITEM 2: ROLL CALL

The roll having been called, a quorum was declared and the following business was conducted:

ITEM 3: PL-19-001, UNION NEIGHBORHOOD VISION PLAN

COMMISSIONER SINKS asked planning staff to specify how the Union Neighborhood Vision Plan will serve as a foundation for the future overlay district. She then asked if Planning Area 1 will primarily be office and restaurant uses in the future.

ROGER WADNAL answered yes because Planning Area 1 was identified as a gateway for the Union Corridor during the planning process.
COMMISSIONER SINKS asked if the 59 acres at the Federal Center is the only location available for development.

HOLLY BOEHM answered that the recommendations for Planning Area 1 and Planning Area 2 are to allow residential use in some capacity. The mixed-use employment areas will have restrictions on the amount of residential permitted. Planning Area 3 is recommended to no longer permit residential. The recommendation for Planning Area 3 is to no longer permit residential, but to provide commercial uses for the neighborhood.

COMMISSIONER SINKS asked if there are currently any residential plans submitted for Planning Area 1.

HOLLY BOEHM answered no.

COMMISSIONER SINKS asked if there are currently any residential plans submitted for Planning Area 2.

HOLLY BOEHM answered that there is a development project which is noted on the map on page 22 of the Union Neighborhood Vision Plan. This residential project is currently under review.

COMMISSIONER SINKS asked for the address of this project.

PAUL RICE answered that he believes it is located on Bayaud. This project is located on the City's website under formal case listings. He said that planning staff can provide the details to her later.

GLENDA SINKS asked what the zone district is for the Bayaud property.

HOLLY BOEHM answered M-E-U, which is mixed-use employment.

COMMISSIONER SINKS asked for clarification on M-E-U on page 24 of the Union Neighborhood Vision Plan. She asked if limiting residential space in any development to 50% of the total building gross floor area includes vertical mixed-use.

HOLLY BOEHM answered that is correct. The ME district was changed by City Council during the Development Dialogue process because Council wanted to ensure that new development in the ME district was not all residential.

COMMISSIONER SINKS commented on the shared use path recommendation on page 19. She stated she would like the City to separate bicyclists from pedestrians. She suggested drawing a line or finding a way to denote separation of bicyclists from pedestrians for the 10 ft wide shared use path. She also stated that as new roads come in, it is important to separate pedestrians from bicyclists.
COMMISSIONER SINKS asked if apartments on Van Gordon and Bayaud are considered adjacent to Union and therefore require vertical mixed-use.

HOLLY BOEHM answered no. The intent is to require vertical mixed-use for new developments or redevelopments directly adjacent to Union. Vertical mixed-use would not be required in other areas.

COMMISSIONER SINKS asked if there is anything in the Union Neighborhood Vision Plan that planning staff believes is missing and if planning staff believes the plan is a strong foundation for the overlay district.

HOLLY BOEHM answered yes to the second part of the question because it provides staff with guidance for the overlay to examine potential changes in land uses and dimensional standards.

ROGER WADNAL answered yes it provides a good foundation and is based upon the previous public meetings with community members. The overlay would provide an opportunity for an even closer look and potential adjustments.

COMMISSIONER HEALD asked if the anticipated growth projected in the previous Federal Center plans has taken place and if there is additional growth that could occur in this area.

ROGER WADNAL answered much of the growth incorporated the St. Anthony Hospital and associated developments. The projected growth from the plans has not occurred, including the 59 acres, which the Federal Center anticipated by the time.

COMMISSIONER HEALD asked if there is a projection for the potential number of residents who would come to the Union Neighborhood with the requested zoning.

HOLLY BOEHM answered that planning staff does not have that projection, but projections were made in the transportation study.

COMMISSIONER HEALD asked about funding for transportation in the Union corridor area and more specifically how funding for the transportation projects identified in the Union Neighborhood Framework Map will be prioritized.

ROGER WADNAL answered that the transportation study identifies projects. The vision plan identifies land use and design.

COMMISSIONER HEALD asked how funding will be acquired to support transportation projects in this plan.

HOLLY BOEHM answered when new developments come into the City, the developers are required to make improvements such as new sidewalks, new roads, or dedicate easements for future road connectivity. Many capital improvements come in with new development. Other improvements are funded with the CIPP.
COMMISSIONER HEALD asked how capital improvement projects in the plan will be prioritized compared to other CIPP projects.

JOHN PADON answered that it is hard to prioritize funding for transportation projects because there are restrictions on various funds. There is a long list for transportation projects based on City Council requests, citizen requests, and needed maintenance. There is input from multiple City departments related to multiple funding sources to determine projects. There is not one defined way to determine projects and future funding.

COMMISSIONER HEALD asked how the design review commission will be selected.

HOLLY BOEHM answered City Council will appoint a design review commission based on the criteria outlined in the ordinance.

COMMISSIONER HEALD asked if there will be a public hearing for the overlay district.

HOLLY BOEHM answered yes.

COMMISSIONER COHN asked staff to define vertical mixed-use.

HOLLY BOEHM answered that vertical mixed use is a building that has different uses on several levels of floors going up vertically. For example, the first floor may be a commercial use and then the floors above may be residential or office.

COMMISSIONER COHN asked to update Map 7 on page 22 to Planning Area 2.

HOLLY BOEHM answered that planning staff will update the map.

COMMISSIONER COHN asked if residential uses are prohibited in Planning Area 2.

HOLLY BOEHM answered that the recommendation is to only prohibit residential in Planning Area 3.

COMMISSIONER COHN asked if current structures that have the proposed prohibited uses, such as automobile shops and gas stations, will be phased out.

HOLLY BOEHM answered they would become a legal non-confirming use. These properties would be considered a legal use and allowed to continue until their use expires. There is a possible option in the overlay to address this in more specificity.

COMMISSIONER COHN commented that he does not want Union Boulevard to become a canyon and commented that he would like to see additional protections for building setbacks in this neighborhood.
HOLLY BOEHM answered that recommendation C3 on page 31 was added after the last Planning Commission hearing. The recommendation is to review and revise the current setbacks on Union. Specific dimensional changes will be addressed in the overlay.

COMMISSIONER COHN commented that the RTD ridership rate information provided by staff shows that there has been a decline in RTD ridership from the previous transportation study.

COMMISSIONER BARTLETT asked if it would be more appropriate to use the term adjoining instead of adjacent on page 20 of the plan.

HOLLY BOEHM answered that adjacent is generally the term used for planning purposes.

COMMISSIONER BARTLETT asked why staff did not recommend residential use in Planning Area 3 and stated that he has reservations about prohibiting residential use in Planning Area 3.

HOLLY BOEHM answered that this recommendation was in response to concerns stated by the community at the public meetings. Residents wanted less density and more commercial uses in this area. The surveys showed that the community was 100% in favor of prohibiting residential uses in Planning Area 3.

ROGER WADNAL stated that Planning Area 3 has been identified as a local center serving the neighborhoods in that area and supporting small businesses.

COMMISSIONER SINKS commented that smart growth is important. She stated that the Federal Center is a good opportunity for development in Lakewood, and it is important that the city control the development, unlike what happened at Jewell and Wadsworth, which is unincorporated Jefferson County.

COMMISSIONER COHN asked if it is practical to have both a pedestrian and vehicular road in the area directly west of the light rail station. This area is noted on page 37 of the plan.

JOHN PADON answered some items in a plan are not easily built and will take time. With the current development it is not practical, but the connection and connectivity could be very beneficial in the long term.

COMMISSIONER COHN asked if the Cedar Drive connection through Routt Street is private land.

JOHN PADON said the portion across from the medical offices was dedicated as a public easement and that connection is within reach.

COMMISSIONER MILLER asked what the conversation was at the community meetings surrounding pedestrian and bicycle paths. He asked if planning staff discussed segregated paths for pedestrians and bicyclists and e-bikes.
HOLLY BOEHM answered this plan specifically looks at land use and design. Bicycle and pedestrian connectivity is discussed more in previous transportation connectivity plans. Mobility and accessibility was addressed in this plan because it was a concern discussed at the community meetings. This plan acknowledges the previous work and recommendations for connectivity improvements.

COMMISSIONER MILLER asked what recommendations from the transportation study will be followed.

HOLLY BOEHM answered the connectivity map on page 37 addresses some of these concerns. The connectivity map is a combination of the Union Corridor Urban Design Plan of 2011 and the recent transportation study.

COMMISSIONER MILLER asked how long Union Boulevard is from 6th Avenue to Alameda. He stated that he is concerned that mobility needs to be address more in the Union neighborhood.

JOHN PADON answered it is one mile.

COMMISSIONER MILLER asked if the attendees of the public meetings asked about mobility.

HOLLY BOEHM answered concerns were stated about automobile traffic. Also, some members of the public stated they wanted to see more pedestrian and bicycle friendly conditions.

COMMISSIONER MILLLER asked if there were bicycle counts in the transportation study.

JOHN PADON answered that they did not do a bicycle count. The transportation study noted 91 pedestrian trips during the P.M. peak and no bicycle counts. He believes that bicyclists do not feel comfortable in this area because the facilities go from 4 ft. to 8 ft. and there are many pedestrians.

COMMISSIONER MILLER asked if 91 pedestrians in a day during the peak P.M. hours is high.

JOHN PADON answered yes.

COMMISSIONER SINKS asked to clarify the P.M. time period.

JOHN PADON answered the P.M. period is from four to six.

COMMISSIONER SINKS asked if pedestrian activity would be higher during the day.

JOHN PADON answered that they look at this time frame due to the peak time for conflicts between pedestrians and automobiles.

COMMISSIONER COHN asked if there are current plans for dedicated bicycle trails.
JOHN PADON answered that they have not been looking at off street bike lanes. Typically, they look at streets with lower speed and volume for on street bike lanes. In an urban area like Union there is limited land and it is important to find the right balance with the multiples uses and limited space.

Public Comment OPENED at 8:07 p.m.

MIKE MULLER stated that he would like to see if there are blighted areas in the project area. He stated he would like to see the height limits on the proposal. He stated he wanted to know where the Union corridor is in terms of priorities and projects in Lakewood.

DIANE DUFFY stated her neighborhood adjoins the Union neighborhood corridor. She stated she is glad staff are doing these plans but would like more outreach to the community and for the meetings to be more public.

Public Comment CLOSED at 8:10 p.m.

COMMISSIONER MILLER asked if there is a map showing blighted properties.

ROGER WADNAL answered that determination of blighted areas is still being discussed by City Council.

COMMISSIONER MILLER asked if planning staff can clarify height limitation stated in the plan.

HOLLY BOEHM answered the plan recommends the current permitted maximum height of buildings should be looked at and addressed in the overlay.

COMMISSIONER MILLER asked about staff priorities for plans in Lakewood.

HOLLY BOEHM answered that planning staff was directed by City Council to do this plan. City staff tries to be as equitable as possible for projects throughout the City.

ROGER WADNAL answered City Council sets priorities and staff was directed by City Council to look at this area as part of the Development Dialogue process. The purpose of this study was to look at land use and design related to zoning in the Union corridor. The Mobility issues were added based on public comments at the meetings.

JOHN PADON answered that City projects are infrastructure focused. The CIPP is restricted with how and where funds can be used. City Council and public input is a consideration. Projects are determined based on maintenance, needed improvements, and staff assessments. Grant money is also a consideration. The final decision is reflected in the City Council's adopted budget.

COMMISSIONER MILLER asked for planning staff to clarify outreach.
HOLLY BOEHM answered outreach is discussed on pages 10 and 11 of the Union Neighborhood Vision Plan. The map on page 11 indicates the total outreach area. Notifications were sent to community organization contacts and community members were notified through Nextdoor posts and emails directing them to the Lakewood Together site. Staff also attended Union Corridor Professionals meetings. The Union Corridor Professionals group posted about the meetings in their e-newsletter.

COMMISSIONER MILLER stated he would entertain a MOTION.

COMMISSIONER HEALD made a MOTION to adopt the Union Neighborhood Vision Plan as an Implementation Plan Based upon the testimony and evidence presented during the public hearing this evening and move that the Planning Commission adopt the findings of fact in the resolution for Case Number PL-19-001 to adopt the Union Neighborhood Plan as an implementation plan, and to recommend to the City Council approval of the plan.

SECONDED by COMMISSIONER SINKS.

COMMISSIONER BARTLETT commented that he believes this is the right step forward. He believes this is a step in the right direction for smart growth along the Union corridor.

COMMISSIONER COHN stated he is uneasy about the low attendance at public meetings. He wishes that community members would understand each other better. He stated that he appreciates the work that has gone into this plan and is leaning to support it.

COMMISSIONER HOLLENDER stated that he will not be supporting the adoption of the plan. He stated he is concerned about the recommendations for residential properties in this plan. He believes that there should be more affordable housing in this area and housing should be accommodated in this area. He believes that more people should have been involved in the public process due to the plan’s regional impacts.

COMMISSIONER HEALD stated he is concerned about the potential density that will be added in this area. Density is not necessarily alleviated by light rail or public transportation. Greater density in this area will increase traffic and congestion. He believes this plan should consider the potential for growth in the Rooney Valley area. Development in Rooney Valley will impact what should be developed in the Union corridor. He stated that he will not support adoption of the plan. He believes staff needs to develop a more detailed plan that prioritizes infrastructure and transportation projects.

COMMISSIONER COHN stated he is weighing his initial support of the plan following Commissioner Heald and Commissioner Hollender’s comments.

COMMISSIONER BARTLETT stated he is torn because he believes this a step in the right direction but is concerned that the process was rushed, and it is important to consider the long-term impacts. He is currently leading towards voting no.
COMMISSIONER SINKS stated that she supports adoption knowing it is a foundation document, and the implementation details will be discussed during the overlay process and at future public meetings.

COMMISSIONER MILLER stated he believes the process was too fast and that there was not a previous Planning Commission study session. He believes the vision plan needs to go one step beyond automobiles and create a bicycle and pedestrian friendly community. He believes the vision plan would have included this if there was more time. He stated that if it is not approved by the commission it would because they need more time for consideration and input.

VOTE TAKEN –

Two Ayes – Commissioners MILLER, SINKS

Four Nays – Commissioners HEALD, HOLLENDER, BARTLETT, COHN

MOTION FAILED

COMMISSIONER MILLER stated he would like more time to review this plan and would liked to have had a Planning Commission study session.

COMMISSIONER HOLLENDER requested that the Planning Commission be more involved going forward.

COMMISSIONER BARTLETT commented that he does not want to see this plan die but would like more time to review the plan.

COMMISSIONER MILLER stated he believes the consensus is that Planning Commission would like planning staff to continue working on the Union Neighborhood Vision Plan. He asked for the Planning Commission to give the planning department specific things to address.

COMMISSIONER HEALD stated he would like to see more numerical modeling based on what could be built for residential in this area. Staff can examine under the current zoning what the maximum residential can be and then include a range of possible scenarios.

COMMISSIONER HOLLENDER suggested to add a Planning Commission study session on the Union Neighborhood Vision Plan.

COMMISSIONER BARTLETT asked for a joint study session with City Council.

COMMISSIONER HOLLENDER stated there will be a transition period after the new City Council is elected and perhaps this is an opportunity for a Planning Commission study session.
COMMISSIONER BARTLETT asked if this plan can be presented at a public meeting.

ROGER WADNAL answered that staff can propose a study session to further review the plan.

COMMISSIONER COHN stated that he believes building heights and blighted areas should be discussed more.

COMMISSIONER MILLER stated that he would like staff to continue working on this plan and to have a Planning Commission study session.

COMMISSIONER HEALD stated items to further study include potential for regional impacts, impacts from Rooney Valley, and light rail use.

PAUL RICE answered that this document does not have all components included in a neighborhood plan because it is supposed to focus at land use and zoning issues as directed by City Council from the Development Dialogue process. This plan would provide the framework for the newly proposed Design Review Commission.

ROGER WADNAL stated that he would suggest a study session with the Planning Commission. He then stated that in the absence of this plan moving forward there is current zoning in place in this area that allows for development.

COMMISSIONER SINKS asked if a new plan would address more than land use.

ROGER WADNAL answered the direction given for this plan was to address land use and design.

HOLLY BOEHM answered generally when a neighborhood plan is developed it is in a residential neighborhood. This area is unique because it is a corridor with commercial, residential, and a light rail station. She stated that neighborhood plans take about two years to develop and those plans are very comprehensive. This plan provides guidance to take the next step to develop the overlay.

COMMISSIONER BARTLETT asked if it is possible to have more public comment.

HOLLY BOEHM answered the plan was made available online for public review and comment.

COMMISSIONER HOLLENDER asked when will information regarding the light rail usage by businesses be available.

ROGER WADNAL answered the Transportation Management Associate (TMA) Executive Director is currently collecting this information and is available to attend a future Planning Commission study session.

COMMISSIONER COHN asked about occupancy data and parking information from Beacon and other multi-family units.
PAUL RICE answered that staff can get that information if the management company grants access to their facility.

ROGER WADNAL stated modeling for future development as requested by Commissioner Heald would take time and resources. An economic consultant was brought in for the Rooney Valley study. He stated he is reluctant to guarantee this request by the next meeting due to the comprehensive information and time required for accurate data.

COMMISSIONER HEALD stated if staff cannot get hard numbers then staff can look at capacity and usage in other areas to make their best assumption. He stated that DRCOG and the Denver Office of Demographics may have information.

COMMISSIONER HOLLENDER asked if previous modeling was done for the Transportation Study.

JOHN PADON answered that comprehensive modeling was done for the transportation study which was accepted one year ago. He stated it does not make sense to redo a transportation study for the vision plan.

COMMISSIONER HEALD asked if the parks building and the Point Fitness Center redevelopment was modeled in the transportation study.

JOHN PADON answered yes, the transportation study examined existing zoning, open areas of opportunities, and potential areas for development.

The Planning Commission and planning staff will determine the Study Session date and time.

**ITEM 4: General Business**

ROGER WADNAL announced that Principal Planner Holly Boehm is retiring on October 31, and her position will not be filled. Associate Planner Morgan Gardner resigned, and her position will be filled.

PAUL RICE announced that Associate Planner Greg Colucci resigned last July, and his position will not be filled at this time. Business Specialist Diana Brown-Evens recently resigned, and the department will fill this position. Senior Sustainability Planner Lynn Coppedge has resigned, and her position will be filled.

**ADJOURNMENT**

Meeting adjourned at 9:26 PM.

[Signature]

Laura Pemberton, Secretary
to the Planning Commission

Date Approved