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**Minutes
City of Fort Collins
Futures Committee Meeting
Regular Meeting
300 LaPorte Ave
City Hall
August 12, 2013
4:00–6:00p.m.**

Committee Members Present:

Wade Troxell, Chair
Gerry Horak
Bruce Hendee
Darin Atteberry
Gino Campana

Committee Members Absent:

City Staff:

John Stokes, Natural Resources Director
Karen Cumbo, Director of Planning, Development and Transportation
Laurie Kadrich, Community Development and Neighborhood Services Director
Dianne Tjalkens, minutes
Kelly DiMartino

Community Members:

Caroline Bradford
Miles Crane
Dale Adamy
Kevin Jones

Wade called meeting to order: 4:02pm

Approval of July Minutes:

Gerry moved to approve. Wade seconded. Approved 5-0-0.

Chairman Comments:

We are fine-tuning the agenda format. The purpose of the committee is to address opportunities for Fort Collins' future 30-50 years out.

Think Tank Item 6: East Mulberry Visioning, *Karen Cumbo and Laurie Kadrich*

Presentation Summary:

Bruce commented on the potential of this project, creating another unique gateway to our community.

Laurie showed a map to give a bigger picture, and overview of the area for the discussion. She discussed how the area is not in the City, but in the county. She listed challenges to existing development including poor appearance. She showed photos of the area. The county would like to collect new data for the corridor and look at making improvements. There will be a study group looking at this area.

Comments/Q & A:

- There is concern that the County is making this area a priority.
- Laurie was asked to point to anything that has happened as a result of the plan. She said the basic challenges of developing have prevented much change.
- The County maybe looking at getting into economic development and sees this as an opportunity.
- The URA discussion plays a role in this as well. Are we scared because of pushing costs without looking at benefit?
- We are not informed with data. If the County is taking on economic development, they may take on improvements that don't look at the long term picture. The first meeting about kicking off the model and potential revenue sharing was today. We would rather look at taking it over, making a plan, and owning it. It would be better to see the County incorporate land use and zoning regulations of the City, with code enforcement for what will ultimately be a City area. They have talked about using the URA tool in this area.
- It will be a long time before the City can affect changes in this corridor. What the County will do will benefit all.
- The City wants to partner with the County. Three years is the shortest time before this area is annexed into the City.
- The biggest land use of the area was agricultural, but that may have changed since the study to more commercial.
- This corridor is a direct connection to downtown, which has its own mixture of uses. There is a shortage of developable industrial and employment land that is affordable. The value of land in this corridor could support that. We need to think about transit and infrastructure.
- The breweries are going down Lincoln. Industrial process and these types of companies exist in this space already. We need to think about how they will be accommodated.
- With as much as we are spending in Old Town, we should focus on the Mulberry Corridor. Old Town is having more employment, it can stretch down Mulberry.
- We can expand tourism down this corridor (breweries, entry to Poudre canyon, etc.).
- Lincoln used to be the entry way into Fort Collins. The Lincoln corridor could become the entrance into town.
- When you look at plans over the whole reach, there are lots of opportunities in large parcels, like the old air park. It was once the entry way, but has fallen into decay. With careful thought and planning we can achieve a lot visually and in terms of employment

- Property owners in that area are investing their own money into studies to see what the area could look like. We can pick up ideas from that. The market may do this without the City. Controlling earlier rather than later is better.
- The City has been actively working to create the enclave. The City cannot forcibly annex for three years, without property owners being on board. This gives us three years to look at cost/benefit. If we can get an enclave to the Council, we can do three years of capital and operational forecasting and come to Council with good information.
- One constraint is that this is a state highway. The City will still have to plan with CDOT because it is likely to stay a state highway.
- This can be negotiated.
- Laurie showed a map of the existing City limits and the “East Mulberry Corridor Future Enclave Area.” The key area properties include some on the east side of I25. The white boxes on the map show properties that they have talked with owners. The slide shows the ownership of the properties. We are just a few properties away from closing the enclave. Once the County properties are surrounded with City properties then we can annex.
- Linda Hoffman knows clearly that we are planning on creating an enclave.
- Laurie showed another map of the early design work of the I-25 interchange. The County is making some shifts to the frontage roads that are impacting various properties. The concerns on the west side are actual traffic engineering: they are not bike or pedestrian friendly. They have also looked at a diverging diamond. How the design ends up has a big impact on the properties to the east. Some properties are affected by the Timnath agreement. The enclave can be closed by a strip annexation.
- Where is the Growth Management Area?
- They are working on the boundaries.
- The City is working with the County and Timnath on these properties. Timnath wants to keep properties along I25, but the City wants to close the enclave.
- Closing this enclave affects planning over the next few years, but this has the potential to transform and change the City over the next 50 years. Citizens think we are in control of this area, and we are not.
- The industrial base expansion opportunity, how the corridor intersects with the Poudre river, and scenic byway are intriguing ideas. An element relates to what is happening in the brewery triangle, Lincoln, etc. The enclave is critical to moving forward.
- Is it good or bad to have a brewery trail?
- We are sensitized to a brewery district because there are homes in that area. They are sensitive to being branded as a brewery district. How do you brand without disenfranchising the neighborhoods there?
- It is happening whether we brand it that way or not. Should we be planning for it or do it after the fact? The neighborhoods are changing regardless.
- Neighborhoods don’t want to be branded as a brewery district. There are concerns about transitions to an active playful environment and impact on homeowners. As gentrification occurs there are people who can no longer afford to live there. We haven’t spent time or resources on that area.
- The market will dictate what will happen. Should we put a long term master plan in place for that area?

- There are two schools of thought. Some don't like the pressure. Some like the opportunity.
- Many of the houses in that area are being updated. These are people who are moving in and like the brewery district.
- Can we protect the neighborhoods and still allow the craft brewing to develop? How can you take an idea around the outside of the neighborhood?
- The pressure is in Buckingham. The changes are going on there.
- What is CDOT's plan is for the next 40-50 years? Karen said they don't have any long term plans for highway 14. They are working on interchanges.
- We have cut off the Lincoln corridor. How do we reconnect it? How can people get on and off of 14 without too many lights?
- We can encourage them to expand, build a bridge, etc. We need to think about what we want for the infrastructure. The light at Mulberry and Timberline doesn't work for those trying to turn onto 14 from Timberline.
- If CDOT has a magic wand, where would they put the highway? Karen discussed some possible alternate routes.
- When we go through due diligence, we want to think about what we want the Mulberry and Lincoln areas to look like. CDOT could be open to an exchange if it made sense for them.
- It doesn't work for trucks to go through our city.
- What is the future of Lincoln if you expand to all the way to Timberline? If we get Lincoln expanded with a median, we may bring in a whole different type of traffic.
- Where are the welders in this? Waste management? How can this be a great gateway, but still allow commerce? Some are there because they cannot fit in Fort Collins.
- The airport is a prime redevelopment opportunity.
- If it remains a truck route, how can we enhance it to accommodate that?
- The Poudre plays a big role in this. There are opportunities on the south side of Mulberry that could be utilized. The south side of Mulberry might have a different intentional use than the north side.

DO 4: Next Steps

- How do we work with Highway 14 and Lincoln to have a relationship there?
- What does it mean to have industrial and employment there?
- How does the tourism corridor relate?
- How do we deal with trucks?
- How do we develop that so that it is an attractive gateway into Fort Collins?
- Near term is working with the County on the enclave to realize City benefit.

Think Tank Item 7: Long-Term Vision of the Poudre River, *John Stokes*

Presentation Summary:

John and Caroline presented on the long-term vision of the Poudre River. The group gathered around a large map of the river that showed the many projects that are proposed and underway.

The discussed how the plans that are driving work are not one overarching plan, but a number of them, and they are trying to integrate the plans. They are currently using plans to drive work, planning, and doing projects. They have 2 dozen projects in the areas of function of the river, flood protection, and park and recreation development. The geographic scope is Overland Trail to I-25 and land right around the river. The Natural Areas department owns about 70% of the floodplain. One constraint is flow. Between the mouth of canyon and town, there are about a dozen diversions. The big Thompson adds water but it gets diverted. Another thing to contend with is being hemmed in. The river doesn't move around a lot. The things they are doing about this include taking down banks and letting the river reconnect with the floodplain near the Shields Street Bridge. They are putting in a BFO offer for this project, plus raising funds. To be successful they will have to develop partnerships on a local, regional, state, and federal level. They are also reestablishing habitat and have an in-stream flow project. They are looking at dry-up points in the river. They want to keep the water moving and oxygenated. This is a highly engineered river system; all the water belongs to someone. They are also working on an interruptible water supply agreement, but were not able to finish the project due to the drought, so they are trying to find other easier mechanisms and develop strategies to deliver water through town. They are focusing on the area around the College Bridge. They are having an open house September 5 at Lincoln Center and going to Council October 8.

Caroline has worked with the Eagle River Watershed District. She has been working on restoring rivers around the west. How can we connect people with a healthy river? In Eagle County the community did an inventory and assessment that helped prioritize work to be done on the Eagle River. The inventory was done by CSU. Eagle County is smaller than Fort Collins, but their growth has been similar to Fort Collins. The Watershed Council was created in 2000. The land trust passed an open space tax to fund open space protection (mill levy). The Colorado River through Eagle County is an economic driver due to rafting. The commercial traffic is in the upper third of the river. They are opening more boat ramps down the river for fishing, rafting, etc. to relieve some of the traffic upstream. Both rivers are highly managed. They hold a 40 person conference call each week to decide how much water will be released and what the flow will be for the week. The collaborative management gets them a lot further. The complex set of agreements actually allows to them to keep more water in the river. John said they are doing a lot of access based improvements, especially by acquiring land. An advantage here is that we own a lot of land, but we are constrained by parking.

Comments/Q & A:

- Regarding the storage reservoirs, we don't have control over them because of endangered species. Can we build partnerships with irrigation companies? John said Thornton, and Larimer & Weld don't have much control. When they are delivering it dramatically affects the river. Some irrigation companies we have relationship with, and there may be opportunities for stream flow.
- A lot of the water in these ditch companies is very hard to deliver.
- What about city of Greeley? Their takeout is near us. Is there any opportunity there for delivery?
- No because their treatment plant is upstream. Everyone wants to move the water up to the mouth of the canyon because of water quality.

- Has that changed with the issues of organics and quality of water coming out of canyon? We are unsure how that will affect people.
- How can we mitigate the water quality issues through town? How can we take that concern off the table? John said the river bottom is coated with mud right now. He worked on north fork when it got filled with dirt. They got CSU to help and had a good water year the next year, so they were able to flush the sediments out. The fire area is going to take time to work itself out. It says something about peak flows and their importance to move things out of the river. He gave the example of the South Platte deconstruction project.
- Collaboration will get more than any one of a few can achieve. We have Halligan Reservoir and EIS. Is there anything we should be thinking about to help change the dynamic?
- Some voted for the project because of the collaboration that was happening with the City.
- We want to serve as the connective tissue between water entities. Utilities work with us because there is a person in this position, they have someone to call to talk to, plus CSU has a study group. They are trying to put together water deliveries. Relationship building is crucial.
- Are water entities invited to their open house? John answered yes. Many have attended.
- Caroline said collaboration isn't just with water providers, but also with community, university, business community, brewery community, etc. They have been inviting them into focus groups and facilitated discussion groups. All the departments see that collaborating when grant opportunity comes is beneficial. There is much greater confidence that can support federal funding to our project. The investment of time in just going to meetings is beneficial in the end.
- Doing projects is a differentiator.
- What about sedimentation of the Poudre? John said this is a common technical platform. One thing that has been lacking is a model for sediment transport. They hired a consultant to analyze sediment transport.
- Are we having anyone look at the companies? Larimer & Weld is one of the key ones. BVA is an engineering firm working with us on that now.
- What is the take away in the 20-50 year vantage point? Also, could you tell us the '13/14 BFO projects that are in the queue?
- Projects that were funded by BFO include Josh Ames and Sterling Natural Area, where they are reconnecting the river to the floodplain. Downstream they are doing a similar project that will begin this fall. They had to do a hydraulic analysis because of messing with river banks to determine how it would affect flood conditions and scour.
- Has anyone inventoried the studies that have been done over the last 25 years? Anderson engineering has done a modeling for them. They have partnered with the County because the County is building the new bridge at Shields.
- Open Water Foundation's purpose is to have a legacy for water models that can be sustained. John said Steve is working on that.
- They also have downtown project and in-stream flow project, funded by BFO.
- We see structured water holding from gravel mining on the map. John said they identified those as an asset because we can modify the ponds for habitat, if they can change the banks to be less steep as was done at the McMurray ponds. Most are destined to be

managed by others, while some ponds are owned by the City. They are not being used to manage water supply, and we can have an influence on them. In the long term, for ponds we don't own, it would be nice to have collaborative management of the properties.

- A river is water, rocks and mud. The point is there are fundamental elements to the river that are hardwired in us. When we go to a nice river, we appreciate that: the water, environment, vegetation. My vision of the river for the next 50 years is that people have access and have that feeling of seeing a nice river.
- This is in the context of where the river is located. John and Caroline said that it is an urban river and that drive thoughts for the long term vision. One opportunity and challenge is access. Over ½ million people are going down the river every year. How do we preserve and conserve? We have to provide infrastructure for that to happen. We have had an ad hoc approach, with degradation in resources as a result.
- In regard to the debate of restoring the river to natural, do people intervene? Caroline answered that they are calling it a healthy “working river,” and recognizing its depletions, and asking a lot of it, keeping it healthy is a delicate balancing act.
- The river gets worked very hard. There is a lot of strain. It can be worked to death.
- Can we restore it and keep it healthy and working?
- Public access is a big issue to consider. College Bridge Coy Ditch ownership is 50/50. We can modify or remove that structure. It reconnects habitat and could provide a fun drop for boating, as well as control flooding. They acquired the remaining 40% this spring and are talking to ELCO about their ability to modify the structure.
- Could there be public access? John said not right now, but they are exploring opportunities if we can acquire a few key properties. When asked about the flume, John said we own it and just bought land on Mulberry. We could create parking, and then have access to the flume and trail. They have a plan for restoration that includes using it as a pedestrian bridge.
- Part of the long term vision is inviting people to river, but we want them to have a natural river to access. There are a lot of cities that put concrete around the river, with concrete steps. It's a different approach to access, but in Fort Collins we have a natural approach. That sets us apart.
- For the downtown core project near Lee Martinez they are looking at more natural improvements. Lee Martinez is a good model for access, including the parking areas.
- What about Lake Canal? John answered that he has met with their board to modify or move the structure. The drop could be utilized for boating.
- When tubing on the river, you get the feeling you are in a completely different place, outside of the city.
- The City is facing a lot of issues involving water rights right now.

DO 2: Next Steps

- Keep working toward the objective of a healthy working river, with details brought out in the discussion.
- Members would like to see the map include the objectives. He would also like to see inspirational slides for the future visioning and signs along the river for tubers who are new and don't know where to exit.
- How do we create habitat that is flourishing and keep the river working?

Additional Discussion: None

Meeting adjourned 6:14 pm.