

Stakeholder Committee Meeting #3

West Central Area Plan

September 10, 2014 – 5:30-7:30 p.m.

Present

Sue Ballou
Rick Callan
Susan Dominica
Colin Gerety
Carrie Ann Gillis
Per Hogestad
Ann Hunt
Greg McMaster
Tara Opsal
Andy Smith
Logan Sutherland
Lloyd Walker
Nicholas Yearout

Absent

Lars Eriksen
Becky Fedak
Kelly Ohlson
Jeannie Ortega
Jean Robbins
Steve Schroyer

Staff & Consultants

Ted Shepard, Chief Planner
Amy Lewin, Transportation Planner
Rebecca Everette, Associate Planner
Craig Russell (*Russell + Mills Studios*)
Paul Mills (*Russell + Mills Studios*)

Notes

1. Welcome/Introductions
2. Project Updates
 - a. Process and schedule update
 - b. Recent and upcoming outreach
 - c. Final Vision Statements
3. *Discussion*: Draft Introductory Text (prepared by Lloyd Walker for the Stakeholder Committee to review)
 - a. Discussion about the purpose of the text and how it should be incorporated into the plan.
 - b. Clarification by Lloyd Walker that this is an updated version of the introduction from the previous plan, and the vision statements reflect his own understanding of the vision for the area.
 - c. Decision by the committee to review the text individually and send any comments to staff. Staff will then incorporate the text into the draft plan as appropriate.
4. *Keypad Polling*: What topics would the group like to focus on tonight?
 - a. Group could select from 1) Land Use & Neighborhood Character, 2) Transportation & Mobility, 3) Open Space Networks, and 4) Prospect Corridor
 - b. Land Use & Neighborhood Character was the top choice overall, and was discussed first

- c. Following the discussion of Land Use & Neighborhood Character, the committee broke into small groups to focus on the other topics
5. *Large Group Discussion: Land Use & Neighborhood Character*
 - a. Areas of Stability, Enhancement, and Development Map
 - i. Should the Sheely neighborhood be classified as “Neighborhood Enhancements” rather than an “Area of Stability?” There is development pressure within and surrounding the neighborhood, which causes tension. The Sheely Historic District is stable, but remodels and additions might be appropriate in the rest of the neighborhood.
 - ii. Is this map descriptive or prescriptive? We want to show what we would like in these areas, not just what we expect to see.
 - iii. Just because there are rentals in a neighborhood doesn’t mean the character isn’t good.
 - iv. High intensity/density development and small-scale single family homes can co-exist in close proximity. There are examples in other cities with historic neighborhoods adjacent to new development.
 - v. Even taller than 5 stories might be appropriate in some areas.
 - vi. Add Safeway at Taft Hill/Drake to map.
 - vii. Spring Creek Medical Park may be outdated.
 - b. Affordable Housing
 - i. Concern about affordability in the West Central area. Investors out-compete families looking for more affordable housing (e.g., starter homes or homes for families).
 - ii. Staff commented that the City is currently working on a Housing Affordability Policy Study, and will send follow up information on that effort.
 - iii. Should be recommending affordable housing in the Areas of Development on the map
 - c. Neighborhood Character
 - i. There are a lot of locational advantages to the West Central area. A lot of people live here for the location.
 - ii. Consider a tax-credit, deed restrictions, or other incentives and requirements for owner-occupied homes in areas currently dominated by rental houses (e.g., Avery Park).
 - iii. Enforcement of ordinances helps keep neighborhoods desirable and affordable. This requires active involvement and cooperation from neighbors.
 - iv. Some portion of neighborhoods needs to be stable/owner-occupied. Is there a standard percentage for what is considered stable?
 - v. Don’t want to get rid of the students; that’s part of the diversity, part of what we like about the neighborhood.
 - d. Student Housing
 - i. West Elizabeth corridor and the HMN zone are good for new student housing.

- ii. New student housing developments – consider an incentive for developers to include an affordable component for students with lower incomes. This might help attract students away from rental houses in the neighborhoods.
 - iii. It would be nice for CSU to build more housing for their students.
 - iv. MAX and transit are changing where it's convenient for students to live.
 - v. If CSU continues to grow, it will be distributed throughout the city, not that many more students could be fit into this area.
- e. HMN zone
- i. It's about choices. The HMN zone is a good place for high-density student housing, but it also has historic properties.
 - ii. Good, high-quality design is key in the HMN zone.
 - iii. Consider greater design standards for particular areas (e.g., HMN) or uses (e.g., multi-family housing).
- f. Growth and Density
- i. Fort Collins is a landlocked community that will only continue to grow. We've gone way beyond being just a college town.
 - ii. More density means more intense use in this area, which will stress services, infrastructure, parks, etc. Need to figure out how to address that.
 - iii. Density feels dense when it is underserved.
 - iv. Encourage and facilitate good non-residential uses, bike and pedestrian connections, and open space to serve the neighborhoods.
- g. Open Space
- i. When new development comes in, how are they going to provide open space outside the dwellings?
6. *Small Group Discussions:*
- a. Land Use & Neighborhood Character (continued discussion)
- i. Don't lose focus on redevelopment opportunities on West Elizabeth.
 - ii. Land Use #5 "Well-integrated campus community" should be supplemented with a reference to such attributes as safety and well-being, or somehow promoting a "good neighbor policy."
 - iii. Support for the Police Sub-District.
 - iv. Recommend the formation and active use of a Neighborhood Design Review Advisory Committee to advise on design issues but would not function like an H.O.A. This was recommended in the 1999 Plan but never implemented. Such committee could work in conjunction with the Landmark Preservation Commission or the Planning and Zoning Board and would not apply to single family detached homes.
 - v. Recommend the new development be guided by established design that reflects the vernacular of the neighborhoods. Design styles should be identified and encouraged such as mid-century modern, craftsman, prairie, but not the international style.

- vi. The mass of large buildings must be mitigated and not over-power the neighborhoods.
 - vii. Compatibility should be emphasized when evaluating new development.
 - viii. The 20-acre Blue Ocean property should be allowed to focus on compatibility, sensitive design, forms that are the appropriate scale, avoiding huge blocks of apartments, and that there should be flexibility to allow the developer to accomplish these objectives.
- b. Transportation & Mobility
- i. Need better updates for changes in Transfort routes for students.
 - ii. Need to prune trees on the sidewalk on City Park Ave.
 - iii. Don't focus on just bikes, pedestrians are important too.
 - iv. Crossing Shields needs improvement – look at an underpass.
 - v. Safety and maintenance concerns for underpasses and overpasses, especially in the winter.
 - vi. There are accidents all the time at Drake and Raintree, add to the map to consider improvements.
 - vii. Prospect and Shields intersection – it is difficult for bikes to safely turn northbound from Prospect, as they have to cross multiple lanes to get into the turn lane.
 - viii. Shields and Elizabeth intersection – bicyclists don't always look back for cars, and cars aren't always paying attention; need more awareness where the bike lane meets the turn lane.
 - ix. Support for newly installed buffered bike lanes on Shields, Stuart, etc.
 - x. A crossing from Hill Pond to the Spring Creek Medical Park would improve safety.
 - xi. Support for the green bike lanes and bike box. Bike boxes at Prospect & Shields and Prospect & Center were suggested. Concern that the paint gets slippery in wet/snowy conditions.
 - xii. Support for the corner and mid-block bulb-outs to increase the visibility of pedestrians and encourage drivers to slow down. Support for the use of reflectors in conjunction with these.
- c. Open Space Networks
- i. No discussion occurred on this topic.
- d. Prospect Corridor
- i. Overall support for concepts shown in Alternative B above other alternatives.
 - ii. Support for on-street bike lanes as shown in Alternative B for efficiency and ease of movement for bicyclists. This is especially important from Whitcomb to Shields due to excessive access points and concern for bike/vehicle conflicts.
 - iii. Medians are a positive addition in all alternatives, particularly Alternative B. Include medians throughout corridor wherever possible.
 - iv. Support for pedestrian/bike crossing between Whitcomb and Shields. Need to integrate with a pedestrian refuge if possible.

- v. Need to improve Mason Trail crossing and overall configuration for wayfinding, ease of movement and safety.
- vi. Street trees are desirable to create a corridor with consistent character.
- vii. Support for including bicycle facilities as depicted in Alternative B and C.
- viii. Ensure corridor designs are acting as a catalyst for new development.
- ix. Support for Lake Street Alternative B and/or C. The two-way bike lane on the north side of the street is positive because it has fewer access points and easier access to the CSU campus than the south side.