

Washington Street Study – CWG #2

Community Working Group Meeting Notes

March 13, 2017

5:30-7 p.m., Project Angel Heart

Community Working Group Members

| Name | Affiliation | In Attendance |
|-------------------|-----------------------------|---------------|
| Kristin Cardenas | Garden Place Elementary PTO | X |
| Fred Schultz | ASARCO/Trammell Crow | |
| Dennis Maddox | DenCol | X |
| Elizabeth Bugay | Project Angel Heart | X |
| AE | Globeville K.A.R.E.S | X |
| Vernon Hill | Globeville Civic Partners | X |
| Marina Chotzinoff | Where Wood Meets Steel | X |
| Jill Locantore | Walk Denver | X |
| John Zapien | Community representative | X |
| Dave Oletski | Community representative | X |
| Maria Campos | Community representative | X |
| Cliff Lind | GES Business Association | X |
| Kaitlyn Randol | Superior Farms | X |
| Tracy Weil | RiNo | |
| Carina Gaz | Bike Denver | |
| Mickey Zeppelin | Zeppelin Development | X |

Study & Design Team Members

| Name | Representing | In Attendance |
|----------------------|---------------------------|---------------|
| Elise Brenninkmeyer | Matrix Design Group | X |
| Matt Buster | Matrix Design Group | X |
| Karen Good | City and County of Denver | X |
| Andrew Irvine | RNL Design | X |
| Heather Noyes | Studio CPG | X |
| Chris Pacheco | City and County of Denver | |
| Chris Proud | City and County of Denver | |
| Jason Rutt | Matrix Design Group | X |
| Andrea Santoro | Matrix Design Group | |
| Michael Sapp | City and County of Denver | X |
| Rosa Snyder | Zoeller Consulting | X |
| Christopher Valencia | Matrix Design Group | |
| Beth Vogelsang | OV Consulting | X |
| Lisa Zoeller | Zoeller Consulting | X |

Guests: Ray Ruppert

Nancy Gradys-Jones



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Introduction:

Andrew Irvine ran the meeting and began by asking each member to introduce themselves and then reviewed the agenda for the evening. ***Note, the presentation for this meeting will be posted online at www.denvergov.org/washingtonstreetstudy.*

Andrew reviewed some key activities from CWG #1 and discussed the process, outreach and schedule for the project as well as reviewed what CWG members shared at the first meeting regarding their hopes, fears and must haves related to the corridor study. Andrew then oriented the group to the purpose of this second CWG meeting, which would focus on existing conditions and some visioning for the future.

Existing Conditions:

Beth Vogelsang presented the existing conditions of Washington Street and the surrounding area. This included information about:

- External and internal physical barriers in the area such as highways, the South Platte River and railroads
- Vehicular connections and the lack of north-south connections other than Washington Street
- Lack of east-west connections
- Transit use, which is somewhat low in the area and raises the issue of whether a lack of sidewalks and other transit infrastructure plays a role in the low usage levels
- Bicycle and pedestrian routes and the lack of connections to the neighborhood as well as the challenging existing conditions that pedestrians currently face along the corridor

Existing Plans:

Andrew reviewed the goals, vision and priorities outlined in the Globeville Neighborhood Plan. He also reviewed the potential design elements that are part of a complete street and reviewed items that more or less flexible based on existing conditions on the street. He showed images of best practices related to creating a positive pedestrian environment as well as images related to bicycle facilities and water quality. Interspersed throughout the presentation by Beth and Andrew, the following comments and questions were raised:

John Z: Do not limit our vision for this corridor by assuming that we have pre-determined space limits.

Dave O: Raised the issue of whether the City was willing to spend the money to do what needed to be done; as an example, he asked whether the City is willing to pay for a bridge at 44th to create safer and better connectivity in the area. He stated that National Western needs to spend some of their money to “do something now.”

John Z: Stated that at times, he loses confidence with the City. He asked for us to provide the community with solid statistics related to things such as the number of vehicles per day, the type of vehicles traveling Washington and to also have solid, technical information about the flooding issues on Washington Street. He wants facts, figures and a commitment from the mayor’s office in order to have confidence in the City, so “let’s do this right!” We need to accommodate truck traffic, but have a balance for what works for the community as well. He does not want “another Kalamath.”

Vern H: If I-25 bogs down you can instantly see the resulting increase in traffic on Washington Street.



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Mickey Z added that the “roads are a silo.”

Public Meeting #1 and General Comments:

Andrew reviewed the timing and format for the first public meeting. The meeting will be Tuesday April 25 from 5:30-7 p.m. at Garden Place Elementary School in the cafeteria (*NOTE: April 25 was a tentative date and has been changed to Wednesday May 3, same location and time*). A presentation will begin at 5:45 followed by Q&A, and an open house format from about 6:15 -7 p.m. Andrew then went around the room to ask each CWG member to share their thoughts on the public meeting format and/or the existing conditions information.

Cliff L: Commented on the fact that right now Washington seems to be a street that is primarily a way for people that do not live in the neighborhood to get from one place to another. He challenged us to think about how to make this a main street and not to assume that we have to go “wider and faster,” but could also go “slower and friendlier” and to consider what local people need, not people “driving through.” The complete street concept is good; it will be interesting to see the prioritization process with this limited space. If the street is widened he hopes it will be done in the interest of the neighborhood experience rather than the interest of travel lanes.

Cliff also mentioned that Ground Work Denver did a “key connections” study and went door-to-door to ask people what they want. They did not want bikes pushed “to the river” they want bikes to be able to connect them within the community.

Cliff ended by saying that stormwater and flooding is an important issue to address.

Elizabeth B: stated that she does not live in the neighborhood but as an employee in the neighborhood she sees the concerns for safety. She knows that Project Angel Heart employees and volunteers have wanted to start running and walking clubs but it’s very hard due to lack of sidewalks, lighting, and it doesn’t feel safe along the South Platte River. She has a concern regarding safety along the trail, related to interactions with a number of people that hang out along the river. She also agreed that flooding is a problem.

AE: Asked that at the public meeting we have a large map that shows an overview of the entire GES community. She referenced slide #6 in the presentation and asked for statistics and other data to help everyone figure out the wayfinding issue more easily. She feels that Broadway was missing from the conversation regarding the existing network. She has heard Washington called a “gateway” but wants to think of Globeville as a neighborhood/community where people can park to eat and then go downtown from Globeville. She raised the issue of “turnouts” on Washington Street and said that there are concerns in the community that too much density with tall buildings along the road will create a feeling of being “trapped.” The current open sky feeling of the street is valued.

Jill L: Her primary concern is traffic safety, safe crossings, traffic speed in pursuit of the Vision Zero goal to eliminate fatal crashes. She mentioned that fast vehicular speeds are daunting to cyclists and pedestrians.



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Kaitlyn R: Believes the diversity of businesses needs to be highlighted and visually apparent when the community looks at maps of the area. Superior Farms wants to stay in Globeville.

Dave O: Believes this is the “ideal time to design the truck route.” He also asked “who gets to vote?” because on past plans he has felt that City employees have been allowed to weigh in during public input processes and so the results do not always reflect what the community wants. He does not want neighbor voices overpowered by those of people who do not work or live in the community.

John Z: Is optimistic that we can do both—be a main street and move truck traffic. He stated that the street used to have a movie theater, courthouse and other features of a true main street. We have to be able to move traffic but we can still have a Main Street feel. The City was the reason that Globeville was neglected many years ago, now we have to decide whether we can widen the street and where that is appropriate and to consider alternate routes. Neighborhoods need business and so it’s a balance. Development can be gradual and should not be uncontrolled and flooding must be addressed. The public has to leave this process with confidence and feeling positive that things will happen on Washington Street and that it will be to the neighborhood’s benefit.

Kristin C: Agrees that we need to use a broader map so that people can envision how everything fits together. She wants a focus to be on how we accommodate business while maintain safe routes for the community.

Mickey Z: Wants the City to commit to making Globeville a better, revitalized place that serves the neighborhood and the people. He suggested adding the parks and light rail stops into the map to help us all better see how we can move in this community. He wants Globeville to go from “Brown” to “Green” and that we can do that with the amenities that we have in terms of parks and the river.

Vern H: Discussed that we need to see Washington as having the same kind of ebb and flow throughout the day that was understood when the City studied Brighton Blvd. Washington should be evaluated in the same way. For example, trucks are a factor early in the morning factor and wind down later in the afternoon. Vern sees Washington as a “tree trunk” with connection to various parts of the neighborhood. We need to increase the connectivity and he believes “if you build it, they will come.” He wants to maintain the character of Globeville but add sidewalks and lighting and other necessary infrastructure to attract restaurants, banks, pharmacies, etc.

Maria C: Pointed out that we should not forget that families live on the west side of Washington. We have some timing issues with intersection lights that make it dangerous for pedestrians to cross at 47th and 45th. Because there are only 2 exits/entrances to the Neighborhood (Washington and Lincoln) traffic will inevitably increase. Drivers do not respect pedestrians. Many kids in the summer are crossing the street by the 7-11 store and it is unsafe. Globeville tries to have walking clubs and it can be a real challenge to find safe places to walk and on the trails along the river there is a challenge with lighting and with bikes. Overall it is important that the kids are able to walk and bike safely—protecting the pedestrians and kids is the most important issue.

Jason R & Karen G: To address Maria’s concerns—the 45th Street pedestrian crossing signal was assessed on March 12th and they did find that it needed to be adjusted and that was done immediately. The other



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signal, 47th, was evaluated last year for a left turn signal and did not meet the criteria for a change but the City is doing further study to assess the issue and possible solutions.

Dennis: Has been with DenCol for 30 years and the changes he has seen in the area are enormous. Truck traffic is not going to stop, but safety is an issue to address. Employees take the bus, and it needs to be safe. He feels we all need to know the relationship between what we are doing and the National Western Center plans. He believes NWC or someone at the City “has a plan but they aren’t showing it yet.” He would prefer that we all see plans now to react to rather than to move forward without knowing what the City prefers and wants.

Mickey Z: The NWC Placemaking project is asking for a resident to be a representative for the community but Mickey feels that this person should be a professional urban planner who advocates on behalf of the community. He suggested Andrew Irvine from the project team would be a good representative.

Marina C: As a business owner she cares about how the study impacts business but also cares about how it impacts kids. And how kids as well as adults are able to get from one place to another. She wants the study to look beyond Washington and look at how it fits and connects into other areas. She is also concerned about the flooding problems.

Andrew then asked if the non-CWG attendees had comments.

Ray Ruppert: The growing marijuana businesses in the area are a problem. He also feels that 51st and Washington is being considered the main intersection along Washington due to the NWC bridge being placed nearby but he thinks this would be better if the bridge is located at 48th to leverage existing links to Federal Blvd and improve overall connectivity. He also thinks that we need a stop light at every intersection but they would need to be correctly timed.

Nancy Gradys-Jones: Encouraged the City to let people know where the money is coming from so that it doesn’t feel like “just another process.” She said a timeline for funding and implementation is important. Brighton was part of the NDCC project list.

John Z : The study team needs to understand that the project is also an exercise in social engineering as much as infrastructure engineering.

Mickey Z: Washington Street should be included in the bond issue.

Vern H: Said that the Heron Pond meeting included an online survey as well as paper surveys at the meeting. He felt that people took the time to really answer them thoughtfully and he would encourage us to do the same thing at our public meeting on April 25. ***

***Note the public meeting originally considered for April 25 has been moved to May 3.

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