

District 5 Community Cabinet Meeting
Hosted by Amanda Sawyer, City Councilwoman for District 5
Tuesday, August 6, 2024, Noon-1:10pm
Virtual Meeting via Zoom

MEETING MINUTES

ATTENDEES

CW Amanda Sawyer (Council District 5), Owen Brigner (District 5), Matt Walter (District 5), Nick Williams (Denver DOTI), Alaina McWhorter (Denver DOTI), Sterling Simms (MO), Officer Mike Borquez (DPD2), Officer Matt Grimsley (DPD3), Andrew Latson (Montclair Rec Center), JD Chism (Denver Fire), Chy Montoya (Denver Fire), Alice Sanburg (CCHN), Ira Frosch (Candlewyck Condos), Libby Smith (Park Forest), Steve Silver (CCEA), Norman Chandler (South Hilltop), Jeff Aldrich (WDCA), Mickey Greenberg (WDCA), Mary Carr (LCMA), Katherine Head (LUN), Meredith Levy (DPRAB), Cari O'Shea (HCAI), Judy Baxter (HMCA), Kelsey Gano (MNI), Lisa Voss (CCNNA)

*Others may have joined during the meeting

WELCOME & INTRODUCTIONS

CW Sawyer welcomed everyone, led introductions, and then introduced guest speaker: Nick Williams, Department of Transportation and Infrastructure (DOTI).

GUEST SPEAKER: Denver Department of Transportation & Infrastructure
Nick Williams (Presentation Attached)

Contact information: Nicholas.Williams@denvergov.org

- Denver Initiated Ordinance 307: Denver Deserves Sidewalks
 - Citizen-Initiated Ordinance 307 amended Chapter 49 of D.R.M.C by shifting responsibility for sidewalk construction, reconstruction, and repair from adjacent property owner to the city, funded by a frontage-length-based fee.
 - Approved in November 2022.
 - Requires city maintenance (and resident fees) in perpetuity.
 - Fees are based on length of right of way, for example people on corner lots could pay twice what their neighbors do.
 - Greatly accelerates network buildout to a steady state.
 - Ordinance requires creation of an enterprise program fund.
- What does the ordinance include, or not?
 - Includes:
 - Construction of current sidewalk gaps
 - Reconstruction of deficient sidewalks to current standards.
 - For example, “Hollywood” sidewalks, the thin strips along a road, is deficient.

- Repair of damaged sidewalk.
 - Does not include:
 - Reconstruction of curb ramps to meet DOJ requirement.
 - Pedestrian crossings at intersections.
 - Trails, shared spaces, and other non-traditional ROW uses.
 - Other pedestrian safety measures, wayfinding, etc.
 - Snow/Debris Removal
- Anticipated Challenges
 - Right-of-way: ensuring adequate space to build sidewalks
 - Physical impediments: trees/vegetation, utilities, private/public infrastructure
 - Subsidiary impacts: curb lines, drainage, signals, bridges
 - Financial viability: rate modeling, billing, accounting, audits
 - Resourcing: adequate concrete and contractor supply
- Sec. 49-146. Sidewalk Master Plan requirements:
 - Current inventory of sidewalks (and sidewalk gaps)
 - Strategy for bringing sidewalk network to standard (and ongoing maintenance)
 - Investment and construction plan (including flagstone)
 - Updated every 5 years (or sooner)
 - Annual report
- Sec. 49-147. Sidewalk construction, reconstruction and repair service charge
 - “Sidewalk Service Charge” for every lot/parcel in the city*
 - Pays for sidewalk construction, reconstruction and repair of current and future sidewalks.
 - Paid in advance, twice annually based on property frontage length, multiplied by street type.
 - Corner lots charged for both frontages.
- Sec. 49-152. Fiscal matters and Sidewalks Fund
 - Fees must be used for implementation of program, and can’t be transferred to other city accounts/programs.
 - Fees cannot be used for landscaping*, street furniture, roads, curb and gutter*, or snow removal.
 - Fees can be used to bond against.
 - Fees must be reflected in city’s annual budget.
- Recommendation Development
 - Community-led, collaborative, and data-driven process in consultation with other Denver depts (CAO, DOF, DPR)
 - 26-member (two council members) Citizen Stakeholder Committee met bi-weekly for ten months
 - Considerations:
 - Limit unusually high fees on residential properties (e.g., corner lots) but retain relationship between characteristics of the property and the fee (e.g. larger lots have more square feet of sidewalk, higher density development is more efficient and requires fewer square feet of sidewalk per household)

- Implement a meaningful and accessible low-income rebate
 - Easy to understand and consistent billing experience for residents
 - Ensure compliance with enterprise fund and Colorado's TABOR rules
- Right of Way Acquisition Costs
 - Many complexities in implementing the program
 - Buildings, trees, lights built right up to the right of way
 - Bridges are a pinch point and require multiple considerations
 - Not all of them are built to current standards
 - Is it better to wait until the whole bridge needs replaced?
- Next Steps
 - Pursuing an amendment through City Council to delay the program start until January 2025
 - If there is a broken sidewalk, please put it in to 311, which will put it in the prioritization process.
 - Include as much info as possible to help with the prioritizing what gets fixed first.
 - If its dangerous, wildly uneven, or exposed rebar, fixes can be made in the interim.

Q&A

- Norman Chandler asked if DOTI considered charging homeowners once up front for the cost of the improvement rather than a perpetual fee.
 - Nick: Yes, this is a perpetual fee which can go up and down based on future costs, but we assume that sidewalks have a 50 year life span, which means after the initial implementation costs could come down in the future.
 - CW Sawyer: Due to state law, these fees can only be collected for their intended purpose.
- Judy Baxter asked what the standard residential sidewalk width is.
 - Nick: It depends, but the most common is 5ft tree lawn and 5 ft sidewalk.
- Judy Baxter asked if there will be additional homeowner responsibilities down the line once the fees are enacted.
 - Nick: Development is the main vehicle the city address sidewalk gaps, but this will be utilized more with major developments. The trigger for a residential property would be different.
- Mary Carr asked when DOTI anticipates repairs to resume.
 - Nick: Some have already begun using the funding which already existed for the worst cases. Once funding begins in 2025, the bulk will begin in spring 2025.
- Kathy Head noted that the connectivity of sidewalks is important.
 - Nick: TABOR requires the connection from fee to service and what residents are paying for is the service of connectivity.
- Mickey asked how replacing Hollywood sidewalks are prioritized compared to other projects.
 - Nick: We don't know at this point, but the preexisting Denver Moves sidewalks plan can show how we prioritize sidewalks before this ordinance. We also consider if its connecting to a school, or if there is room for expansion of those

Hollywood sidewalks or will acquisition be needed. There will be a public input process.

- CW Sawyer: Sidewalk on 6th and Monaco was installed to help students getting to George Washington, but there was homeowner who had done a lot of landscaping so they built the sidewalk to dip around trees.
- Mickey asked if the land claimed by the city during acquisition lowers people's home assessment rate.
 - Nick: I am not an assessor so I encourage you to ask someone better.
- Mary asked how this ordinance affects the liability of sidewalk related injuries for homeowners.
 - Nick: This shifts some liability to the city but the standard must be really high to sue the city, the conditions really bad. But you should report broken sidewalks, dangerous issues as soon as you see it, which shifts some responsibility from you to the city.

PARTNER UPDATES

Denver Parks and Recreation, Meredith Levy, meredithprab@gmail.com

- **Crestmoor Playground and Walks:** Design with the community has finished up (two surveys, pop up, and two public meetings). You can see the latest presentation from May 30 with the design on the project page:
 - <https://denvergov.org/Government/Agencies-Departments-Offices/Agencies-Departments-Offices-Directory/Parks-Recreation/Planning-Community-Engagement/Park-Facility-Projects/Crestmoor-Park> Construction scheduled to start in spring 2025
- **Lindsley Park Picnic Area:** Construction hasn't started just yet but we have been in communication with the BHNA on specifics
 - <https://denvergov.org/files/assets/public/v/1/parks-and-recreation/documents/planning/lindsley-park-picnic-improvements.pdf>
- **Lowry Pickleball Courts:** In process of awarding a design contract now, but we will have more details soon – design and construction of brand new courts.
- **High Line Canal Improvements (Parker to Havana):** We plan to schedule public outreach this fall, which would include a meeting with the Windsor Gardens community specifically. The plan is to upgrade the stretch of existing asphalt trail to the DPR contemporary concrete and crusher fine trail standard
- **Montclair Park Playground:** Project will kick off this fall with outreach, so will reach back out when we have more details and a survey to share
- **Basketball Court Bundle (Ben Bezoff Park and Denison Park):** A number of basketball courts in the city are getting upgrades – project is in design right now. For the two in D5, they will be simple/essential repairs, so will alert of construction timeline, anticipated to commence in Q1, 2025.
- **Karmiel/Takayama Park Landscape Conversion:** This is in early stages, and we will reach out when we have more info. This will be a 9.5-acre landscape transformation- a full irrigation system replacement, priority irrigation zones for existing and new trees, approximately 9.5-acre turf conversion to native prairie, addition of focused pollinator

habitat, and formal garden bed improvements. We will be educating the community on the benefits of this conversion.

- **Citywide Projects can be reviewed here:**
 - <https://www.denvergov.org/Government/Agencies-Departments-Offices/Agencies-Departments-Offices-Directory/Parks-Recreation/Planning-Community-Engagement/Park-Facility-Projects> AND I encourage you to sign up for the DPR newsletter
- **Next Parks and Recreation Advisory Board Meeting is August 14- you can join or give public comment**
 - <https://denvergov.org/Government/Agencies-Departments-Offices/Agencies-Departments-Offices-Directory/Parks-Recreation/Planning-Community-Engagement/Parks-Recreation-Advisory-Board-PRAB>

Q&A

- Kathy asked where the pickleball courts are going in Lowry.
 - A: CW Sawyer shared that they are in design phase right now so 1.5 to 2 years until they are finished but will eventually be by the hockey rink.

Montclair Recreation Center, Andrew Latson, Andrew.Latson@denvergov.org

- Night Moves, DPR youth violence prevention program every other Friday 6-8pm
- Movie in the Park at Crestmoor Park, Thursday August 8th 6:45-9pm
- Shifting into fall activities and working on a back-to-school fall festival event

Denver Department of Transportation and Infrastructure, Joe Levi, jlevi@ozarch.com

- The Citizens' Advisory Committee has been applauding the work by the Mayor & DOTI to reduce traffic fatalities and is pushing for as much street calming as we can afford.
- We are also concerned about the traffic build up on 13th, 14th, & 17th with the closing of lanes on Colfax due to the BRT.

Denver Water, Ashley Denault, Ashley.Denault@denvergov.org

- Lead Reduction Program work will be starting in the Montclair neighborhood likely later this month.
- Work in the Hale neighborhood (phase 2) is likely to start late October.
- The East Colfax Avenue Pipe Replacement project is on-track. Crews are currently working from Bellaire Street to Cherry Street. Folks can always sign up for updates through [Nextdoor](#), or they can email me or WaterUDoing@denverwater.org with questions.
- Summer watering rules continue to be in effect, even with this hot, dry weather.
 - Only water between 6 p.m. and 10 a.m.
 - Water two days a week, only adding a third when needed (watering more than three days a week is not allowed).

- Do not water your sidewalk!
- Repair leaking sprinkler systems within 10 days.
- Do not irrigate when it is raining or during high winds.
- And, if you need help remembering, check out the Splashstreet Boys' video, [I Water That Way](#).

DPD District 2&3: Officer Matt Grimsley, matthew.grimsley@denvergov.org (720) 913-1218
or Officer Mike Borquez, michael.borquez@denvergov.org (720) 913-1183

- DPD2 had their National Night Out was on August 1st at City Park from 5:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m.
- DPD2 will not have their cabinet meeting this month due to National Night Out
- DPD3 had their National Night Out on August 1st at Cook Park Recreation Center from 6:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m.
- DPD3 will not have their cabinet meeting this month due to National Night Out.

Denver Fire Department, Captain JD Chism, John.Chism@denvergov.org

- Very busy with a community events, just finished a free summer camp with over 300 kids in attendance,
- Pancake breakfast, almost a 1000 at station 39, launch for Denver Days
- Also gave away backpacks to kids in need
- Hundreds of scouts from Denver metro coming to learn what it's like to be a firefighter
- August 6th was National Night Out, where trucks were spread out in a bunch of parks and other community events!
- Make sure people are staying hydrated and out of the heat
- DFD has been busy with the active wildfires along the Front Range. DFD sent 5 engines every day for 5 days to Deer Creek, and a rig up north and command unit. This is the most DFD has ever assisted in putting out a wildfire.

Q&A

- CW Sawyer asked what DFD was doing to support the wildfire efforts.
 - A: JD shared that over 35 Denver firefighters were spread across the state in wildland firefighting efforts.
- Judy asked how busy DFD was this past 4th of July.
 - A: JD shared that between 8pm and midnight they ran 90 calls when a normal day is 200 calls total. CW Sawyer reminded the group that fireworks are illegal in Denver.

CW SAWYER UPDATES

- Gas Stations
 - Looking at where and how we permit gas stations to provide favorable development outcomes which prioritize housing or better quality-of-life

developments in Denver and to prevent the proliferation of gas stations. Learn more at: [Bit.ly/GasStationProposal](https://bit.ly/GasStationProposal)

- Vacancy Blight
 - Working to strengthen enforcement of neglected and derelict properties in Denver to enhance the health, safety, and welfare of Denverites. The final proposal will include a fine to property owners each time first responders are called to their properties. Learn more by watching the July 22nd Budget and Policy Committee here: https://denver.granicus.com/player/clip/16231?view_id=180&redirect=true
- Fall Community Clean Up Day on October 6th!
 - District 5 will be combining parks clean-up day and bus stop clean-up day to form the District 5 Community Clean-up Day!
 - Join us on Sunday, October 6th at 8:30 A.M. at the Montclair Rec Center to grab supplies, coffee or juice, breakfast, and meet Councilwoman Sawyer!
 - Register at: <https://bit.ly/FallCommunityCleanup2024>
- Affordable Denver Community Conversation with Mayor Mike Johnston
 - Mayor Mike Johnston will be hosting a community conversation with Councilwoman Sawyer on **September 3rd at 5:30 P.M. at Bromwell Elementary School** (2500 E. 4TH Ave, Denver, CO 80206)
 - RSVP at: <https://tinyurl.com/affordabledenver>

The next Community Cabinet meeting will be on Tuesday, October 1, 2024, from noon – 1:00 p.m.

Adjourned at 1:10 p.m.