



**PLANNING COMMISSION  
A G E N D A  
March 21, 2019**

**Notice is hereby given of a Public Meeting to be held before the City of Wheat Ridge Planning Commission on March 21, 2019 at 7:00 p.m., in the City Council Chambers of the Municipal Building, 7500 West 29th Avenue, Wheat Ridge, Colorado.**

*\*Agenda packets and minutes are available online at <http://www.ci.wheatridge.co.us/95/Planning-Commission>*

- 1. CALL THE MEETING TO ORDER**
- 2. ROLL CALL OF MEMBERS**
- 3. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**
- 4. APPROVE THE ORDER OF THE AGENDA (Items of new and old business may be recommended for placement on the agenda.)**
- 5. APPROVAL OF MINUTES – February 7, 2019**
- 6. CITIZEN COMMENT ON AGENDA ITEMS (Public comments may be limited to 3 minutes.)**
- 7. NEW BUSINESS**
  - A. NRS (Neighborhood Revitalization Strategy) Study Session
  - B. Election of Officers
- 8. OLD BUSINESS**
- 9. ADJOURNMENT**

*Individuals with disabilities are encouraged to participate in all public meetings sponsored by the City of Wheat Ridge. Call Sara Spaulding, Public Information Officer at 303-235-2877 at least one week in advance of a meeting if you are interested in participating and need inclusion assistance.*



**City of  
Wheat Ridge**  
**PLANNING COMMISSION**  
**Minutes of Meeting**  
**February 7, 2019**

**1. CALL THE MEETING TO ORDER**

The meeting was called to order by Chair BUCKNAM at 7:01 p.m. in the City Council Chambers of the Municipal Building, 7500 West 29<sup>th</sup> Avenue, Wheat Ridge, Colorado.

**2. ROLL CALL OF MEMBERS**

Commission Members Present: Alan Bucknam  
Emery Dorsey  
Daniel Larson  
Janet Leo  
Scott Ohm  
Richard Peterson  
Amanda Weaver  
Vivian Vos

Commission Members Absent: None

Staff Members Present: Lauren Mikulak, Planning Manager  
Jordan Jefferies, Civil Engineer II  
Tammy Odean, Recording Secretary

**3. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

**4. APPROVE ORDER OF THE AGENDA**

**It was moved by Commissioner DORSEY and seconded by Commissioner LEO to approve the order of the agenda. Motion carried 8-0.**

**5. APPROVAL OF MINUTES – January 17, 2019**

**It was moved by Commissioner DORSEY and seconded by Commissioner WEAVER to approve the minutes of January 17, 2019, as written. Motion carried 7-0-1 with Commissioner LARSON abstaining.**

**6. PUBLIC FORUM (This is the time for any person to speak on any subject not appearing on the agenda.)**

No one wished to speak at this time.

## 7. PUBLIC HEARING

- A. **Case No. WZ-18-17, WZ-18-18 and WS-18-02:** an application filed by Upham Partners, LLC for approval of a zone change from Residential-Three (R-3) to Planned Residential Development (PRD) with approval of an associated Outline Development Plan (ODP), Specific Development Plan (SDP), and subdivision plat for the construction of a 38-unit townhome project for the property located at 4000, 4042, 4062 and 4066 Upham Street.

Ms. Mikulak gave a brief presentation regarding the zone change, SDP, subdivision and the application. She entered into the record the contents of the case file, packet materials, the zoning ordinance, and the contents of the digital presentation. She stated the public notice and posting requirements have been met, therefore the Planning Commission has jurisdiction to hear this case.

Commissioner VOS asked if the utilities will be underground.

Ms. Mikulak explained that for all new subdivision all utilities are required to be underground.

Commissioner OHM inquired about the Jeffco Schools Letter of Intent with regard to the drainage and detention areas around Steven Elementary and if there can be a condition added to the motions to make sure the easements are in place.

Ms. Mikulak stated there are multiple ways to proceed, but the school is in agreement with the design and there can definitely be a condition in the motions regarding the easements being finalized.

Commissioner OHM asked why the heights are left blank on sheet one of the SDP.

Ms. Mikulak explained that was an oversight and per the ODP the maximum building height is 35 feet and the provided building height will be filled in and can be a condition of approval before going to City Council.

Commissioner PETERSON asked if the community park had been reduced in size due to parking.

Ms. Mikulak said that projects evolve and over time the visitor parking has increased which has shrunk the size of the park. She added the visitor parking is around the park.

Commissioner asked if all the buildings will be 35 feet in height.

Ms. Mikulak explained the roof lines vary and will range in height from 30 to 34 feet.

Commissioner LARSON wondered about having a Metropolitan District over an HOA.

Ms. Mikulak gave a brief explanation about the difference between Metro Districts and HOAs. Like an HOA, a Metropolitan District can be responsible for long term maintenance of shared facilities, including the park, drive aisles and detention. Unlike an HOA, Metro Districts are funded by a mill levy instead of fees. Metro Districts are a quasigovernmental entity and can issue bonds to pay for infrastructure costs associated with new development. The City is seeing more inquiries about Metro Districts because of the infrastructure costs often associated with infill development. She gave examples of existing Metro Districts in the City, explained the process by which they are created, and noted that the applicant is still evaluating the pros and cons of a Metro District versus and HOA.

Commissioner BUCKNAM asked if the community park will be open to the general public.

Ms. Mikulak said it is not intended for the neighborhood at large, but for the residents and their visitors.

**Tony Del Grippo, Upham Partners, LLC (Applicant)  
19209 W 53<sup>rd</sup> Loop, Golden**

Mr. Del Grippo explained that Upham Partners has the opportunity to do something unique with this property and are excited about the prospect. He gave a brief explanation about the surrounding area and other projects that are currently under construction and their hopes of keeping this project affordable and utilize the density without doing slot homes. Mr. Del Grippo mentioned the opportunity for the park and the infill situation. He also confirmed they are in final agreements for a temporary construction easement with the school district which will be replaced by a long term agreement for the detention area. He added this will be an amazing little village and their vision will have no 2 buildings looking the same.

Commissioner OHM asked about sheets 12 and 13 of the SDP with regards to ornamental trees the City's code states xeric water wise plant material should be used so he wondered why the Poplar tree was chosen.

**Julie Gunther (Project Landscape Architect)**

Ms. Gunther said the Poplar grows and fills in quickly, but a Columnar Oak could be a nice substitute.

Commissioner OHM asked why the trees were shown in the site triangle.

Ms. Gunter and Ms. Mikulak explained that the trees canopy will be higher than the clear zone area and tree trunks along with utility poles can be allowed by the City, because they are not completely obstructive.

Commissioner OHM also asked about artificial turf possible being used.

Ms. Mikulak stated artificial turf is typically not allowed and the ODP includes a note to allow it in these limited front yard areas.

Commissioner OHM also inquired about the one Blue Spruce which typically provides a lot of shade and can be a risk for residents to the north in the winter time.

Ms. Gunter said a deciduous tree could be substituted.

Commissioner OHM asked if an existing fence on the east side of the property will be removed. If a new one is installed, he asked if it would go around the catch basins.

Mr. Del Grippo confirmed there is a fence that will be removed and replaced by a wood fence and will be maintained by the Metro District; he added the fence will go on top of the catch basins and not impede flows.

Commissioner LARSON asked if there is an issue with the electric service easements for the subdivision plat.

**Jessie Donovan, Bright Letter Engineering (Project Engineer)  
3265 Gaylor Street, Denver**

Mr. Donovan explained there is a preliminary layout with Xcel, and they require building size information first for the load panels then they will know where to place the transformers. Xcel has a 6 week design process, but currently there are 2 transformers within the park area.

Commissioner LARSON asked where the easement will enter the property.

Mr. Donovan stated the utility easement will be along the southern end of the property.

Commissioner VOS asked if the developer has worked in the City of Wheat Ridge before and said she appreciated the 5-foot setback from the sidewalks. She also wondered how the Ridgetop Village name was chosen.

Mr. Del Grippo mentioned this is the first project in the Wheat Ridge area and they are excited about it. He added the team liked the happenings at the Ridge at 38 and wanted to incorporate Ridge with village since the feel of this project is a village.

Commissioner VOS asked the applicant to explain the architectural theme and asked what was intended by the modifications to the Architectural and Site Design Manual.

**Buddy Poppitt (Project Architect)**  
**7382 S Odessa Circle, Centennial**

Mr. Del Grippo and Mr. Poppitt explained the architecture is a mix of mid-century modern and traditional elements along with creating a vibrant village feel with variations of textures and colors so it does not feel like a cookie cutter architecture.

Ms. Mikulak explained the slight modifications refers to the fact that the project will comply with the ASDM, with the exception of slight modifications to the windows and siding ASDM standards which have been adapted to the proposed architectural themes.

**Rhonda Norman**  
**4110 Upham Street**

Ms. Norman mentioned she has concerns about the multifamily project and if the zoning will extend to other properties wanting to also do zone changes in the future. She also has concerns about the affordable housing and what it implies. Finally, she is curious about the timeline of construction and if it will overlap with the construction at 38<sup>th</sup> and Upham. Ms. Norman added she likes the architecture and the feel of the village atmosphere.

**Becky Zachmeier**  
**4200 Upham Street**

Ms. Zachmeier wondered what the notification process is for projects of this type. She also was curious about affordable housing in this project and how many of these townhomes will be rentals. She mentioned there are also concerns about truck traffic in the surrounding neighborhood and would like to see them go south instead of north on Upham.

**Rob McCleod**  
**3960 Upham Street**

Mr. McCleod said that he and his wife are very enthusiastic about Ridgetop Village coming to the neighborhood. He mentioned the house they live in south of the property was his wife's grandparents and she has fond memories about the vitality

of the Upham Street community and can't wait for new life coming back to the neighborhood.

Commissioner BUCKNAM had the public's questions answered:

- Zone changes in the neighborhood

Ms. Mikulak explained that each zone change stands alone and there is no plan to change all of Upham and the Comprehensive Plan wants there to be a good mix of housing types.

- Public notifications

Ms. Mikulak said the codified requirement is 600 feet for neighborhood meetings and 300 feet for public hearings, along with posting signs on the property.

- Haul routes

Ms. Mikulak said the Public Works Division will complete a condition analysis regarding the haul routes to determine the best route. She added Upham St is due for a mill and overlay which is scheduled in 2020 after the construction is complete. Ms. Mikulak also mention the West End 38 project should close to completion by the end of 2019, beginning of 2020.

- Time line for construction

Mr. Del Grippo said that vertical construction will hopefully start the 4<sup>th</sup> quarter of 2019 with approximately 2 ½ years of construction until completion.

- Intent of rentals

Mr. Del Grippo said the intent for these townhomes is owner occupied, but there might be some investors who purchase as well. The starting point for townhome price will be \$400,000 and they will all be market rate home.

Commissioner Larson asked if the City requires a soil sample of the property.

Ms. Mikulak said geotechnical reports are required as a part of the building permits for foundations. Also, a property owner might complete a phase 1 environmental study to see if there is any contaminant when they purchase the home.

Commissioners OHM, WEAVER and BUCKNAM mentioned that they really like this project including the direction the doors face the street, the drainage on the site, along with the pocket park. They think it is a creative infill use.

**It was moved by Commissioner OHM and seconded by Commissioner WEAVER to recommend APPROVAL of Case No. WZ-18-17, a request for approval of a zone change from Residential –Three to Planned Residential Development with an Outline Development Plan (ODP) for property located at 4000 to 4066 Upham Street, for the following reasons:**

- 1. The proposed zone change will promote the public health, safety, or welfare of the community and does not result in an adverse effect on the surrounding area.**
- 2. The proposed zone change is consistent with the goals and objectives of the City's Comprehensive Plan.**
- 3. The proposed zoning is consistent with the intent of a planned development, compatible with surrounding land uses, and will result in a high-quality development.**
- 4. The criteria used to evaluate a zone change support the request.**

**With the following conditions:**

- 1. All minor corrections occur prior to City Council public hearing.**
- 2. Prior to plat SDP and subdivision recordation the applicant enters into a formal agreement with any necessary easements with Jefferson County Public Schools as required by the City.**

**Motion carried 8-0.**

**It was moved by Commissioner OHM and seconded by Commissioner VOS to recommend APPROVAL of Case No. WZ-18-18, a request for approval of a Specific Development Plan on property located at 4000 to 4066 Upham Street, for the following reasons:**

- 1. The specific development plan is consistent with the purpose of a planned development, as stated in Section 26-301 of the Code of Laws.**
- 2. The specific development plan is consistent with the intent and purpose of the outline development plan.**
- 3. The proposed uses are consistent with those approved by the outline development plan.**
- 4. All responding agencies have indicated they can serve the property with improvements installed at the developers' expense.**
- 5. The specific development plan is in substantial compliance with the applicable standards set forth in the outline development plan and with the City's adopted design manuals.**

**With the following conditions:**

- 1. All minor corrections occur prior to City Council public hearing.**
- 2. Prior to plat SDP and subdivision recordation the applicant enters into a formal agreement with any necessary easements with Jefferson County Public Schools as required by the City.**

**Motion carried 8-0.**

Commissioner Peterson asked what staff looks at in condition 6 in the following motion.

Ms. Mikulak said common spaces are usually looked at because the City does not regulate the covenants.

**It was moved by Commissioner OHM and seconded by Commissioner WEAVER to recommend APPROVAL of Case No. WS-18-02, a request for approval of a 38-lot major subdivision plat for property located at 4000 to 4066 Upham Street, for the following reasons:**

- 1. All requirements of the subdivision regulations have been met.**
- 2. The plat is consistent with zoning on the property.**
- 3. Utility districts can serve the property with improvements installed at the developer's expense.**

**With the following conditions:**

- 1. Sheet 2 shall be updated prior to the City Council public hearing to remove the existing parcel line between 4062 and 4066 Upham Street.**
- 2. Note 4 shall be updated prior to recordation to indicate the current zoning as PRD.**
- 3. The applicant shall continue to coordinate utility service with the appropriate agencies and any updated information regarding dry utility easements shall be reflected on the plat at recordation.**
- 4. The developer shall enter into a subdivision improvement agreement prior to recordation of the subdivision plat.**
- 5. The developer shall pay parks fees at the time of plat recording in the amount of \$84,907.86.**
- 6. The Homeowners' Association covenants and/or metropolitan district service plan shall be reviewed by Staff prior to issuance of a building permit.**
- 7. All minor corrections occur prior to City Council public hearing.**

8. **Prior to plat SDP and subdivision recordation the applicant enters into a formal agreement with any necessary easements with Jefferson County Public Schools as required by the City.**

**Motion carried 8-0.**

8. **OLD BUSINESS**

9. **NEW BUSINESS**

- A. Resolution 01-2019

Commissioners VOS and LARSON asked about the purpose of this resolution.

**It was moved by Commissioner WEAVER and seconded by Commissioner LEO to approve Resolution 01-2019**

**Motion passed 8-0**

- B. Ms. Mikulak noted that the NRS study session is March 21 and the week of March 18 is NRS Blitz week which including a City Council study session and 4 public open houses ending with the PC study session. She mentioned more information can be found at [www.ci.wheatridge.co.us/nrs](http://www.ci.wheatridge.co.us/nrs)

Commissioner LARSON asked who will be in attendance at the PC study session.

Ms. Mikulak said the czb consultant, some of the steering committee members, staff and co-chairs. The meeting will be televised and is a public meeting.

Commissioner LARSON asked if the Commissioners will be asked to make recommendations.

Ms. Mikulak input from the Commissioners will be needed for draft recommendations for the final report especially if they include code amendments or programs and the committee would like the Commissioners reactions to the recommendations.

10. **ADJOURNMENT**

**It was moved by Commissioner DORSEY and seconded by Commissioner LEO to adjourn the meeting at 8:40 p.m.**

**Motion passed 8-0.**

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**Scott Ohm, Interim Chair**

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**Tammy Odean, Recording Secretary**

DRAFT



# Memorandum

**TO:** Planning Commission

**FROM:** Ken Johnstone, Community Development Director  
Lauren Mikulak, Planning Manager

**DATE:** March 12, 2019 (for March 21 study session)

**SUBJECT:** Neighborhood Revitalization Strategy (NRS) Update

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In 2018 the City began the process of updating the Neighborhood Revitalization Strategy (NRS). This document was originally adopted in 2005, and its findings and recommendations were adopted as guiding principles for revitalizing the City over that last 14 years. The City's goals in creating the original NRS were to become more competitive, more vibrant, and more fiscally stable by attracting and retaining strong households, increasing homeownership, growing existing businesses, adding new businesses, and attracting shoppers.

Enclosed is a memo from czb LLC, the consultant group leading the NRS update process. The memo summarizes the process and findings to date and previews some of the themes emerging from public input, steering committee work, and consultant observations. The purpose of the March 21 study session is to present this update to the Commission. The eventual NRS recommendations, expected in May 2019, are likely to address issues of policy and regulation that would fall under the purview of Planning Commission in the future. At this time, Planning Commissioners will be asked for their input and feedback on the issues as presented:

- Corridors and nodes,
- Neighborhood planning and engagement,
- Property conditions and code enforcement,
- Building Reinvestment,
- ADUs, and
- Short-term rentals.

The same findings are being shared at a study session with City Council on March 18 and at a series of public open houses on March 19 and 20.



# MEMO

To: Wheat Ridge City Council and Planning Commission  
Copy: Wheat Ridge City Staff  
From: Charles Buki, Thomas Eddington, and Eric Ameigh  
Date: March 13, 2019  
RE: Neighborhood Revitalization Strategy Project Update

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## Introduction and Background

The purpose of this memorandum is to provide a summary of the progress made to date on the update to the Neighborhood Revitalization Strategy (NRS). A suitable opening to set the stage comes from a February 2019 Neighborhood Gazette editorial by NRS steering committee member Guy Namiach, titled “Help Steer Wheat Ridge Into The Future”:

*“As we celebrate Wheat Ridge’s 50th birthday in 2019, there is no question for Wheat Ridge residents that our city is a special place with a high quality of life. Wheat Ridge has long been known for its small town feel, its agricultural heritage, and maybe the best location in the Denver metro area. We are conveniently tucked right along I-70 with only a few minutes drive into the big city for arts and culture or the mountains for outdoor play and recreation. What’s not to love?*

*What might be less well known around the Denver metro area are the more recent developments in Wheat Ridge that are making our community an even better place to live or open a business.*

*Our housing market, still offering relatively affordable housing options for renters or new buyers, has nonetheless been strengthening. During the last decade Wheat Ridge’s average single-family home price has increased by 60 percent, beating nearly all of our west metro suburban neighbors.*

*Wheat Ridge is experiencing an influx of new business and real estate development, providing a facelift to areas in need of investment as well as new shopping and dining options. The Corners development, anchored by Lucky’s market, is jump-starting our “new-look” Wadsworth corridor while additions like Colorado Plus, The Bardo Coffee House, and Right Coast Pizza on 38th Avenue offer a diverse set of complements to long-time community favorites like Clancy’s.*

*Despite the well-worn jokes about our “naturally occurring retirement community,” our median age has stopped growing. And, in fact, the number of college educated people aged 25-44 has increased faster in Wheat Ridge during this century than in nearby suburban communities. While our median household income still lags behind the competition, since 2000 Wheat Ridge has been adding households earning at least \$100,000 faster than Westminster, Golden, and Lakewood.*

*It was not always so. In 2005, the City of Wheat Ridge was missing out on the investment that is the lifeblood of any community and we were feeling the effects. We were at a crossroads. In a search for answers, the city commissioned a report called the Neighborhood Revitalization Strategy. The strategy described Wheat Ridge's history of failing to properly invest in itself. Maintenance of public infrastructure and public spaces had been too lackluster for too long. Homeowners and business owners had accepted a "good enough is good enough" attitude about the condition of their properties. As a result of this self-deprivation and proliferation of low standards, the outside world had received a message that Wheat Ridge was not a good investment. New potential homebuyers and business owners had heeded the warning and avoided our city.*

*The 2005 Neighborhood Revitalization Strategy was a wake up call, and we listened. By taking its recommendations to heart, by working hard, and by leveraging some good luck, our beloved city is on the rise. This is the new and improved context within which the City of Wheat Ridge is now updating the Revitalization Strategy."*

### NRS Update Process

City Council impaneled a 27-member steering committee in the summer of 2018 and charged them with guiding the NRS update. The committee kicked off its work with czb in July. The committee began by working to identify the most important issues to address in the NRS update, through both its own work as a committee, and also through public engagement activities in the fall of 2018.

czb examined and analyzed a variety of data sets to support and complement the steering committee's qualitative research with the community. Some of those findings were shared with City Council and Planning Commission on November 5, 2018.

All of the insights from the committee's own work, its engagement exercises, and czb's analysis of data and trends were blended together into an open house program for the evening of December 12, 2018 which was held at the Wheat Ridge Recreation Center. At the open house, the steering committee:

- Shared the results of their work defining key issues and sought public feedback.
- Previewed some potential policy and/or programmatic responses to key issues and sought feedback.
- Asked attendees to engage in a neighborhood mapping exercise to inform the way neighborhoods might be considered in the future.

Following the December open house, which officially marked the end of the project's first phase, czb and the committee worked together to synthesize a rich collection of comments, inputs, and other feedback from 108 attendees. The information gleaned from the public helped to confirm and validate much of what the committee had uncovered, and also provided some additional food for thought on how the committee and czb might rethink some things. The open house set up the next steps, which would come in the form of a February online survey and additional committee work on how the city could respond to the most pressing issues and opportunities.

The online survey was open from February 13, 2019 to March 1, 2019 and received just over 1,000 responses. Members of the committee met on Saturday, March 2 to debrief the survey results and share their own work on policy and programmatic responses to key issues.

The cumulative results of all of these steps, from summer of 2018 to March of 2019, begin to cement some important findings and shape an emerging NRS update.

#### Key Findings Informing the Emerging NRS Update

A handful of things have become clear to the committee and the consulting team during the course of the project that are important to note:

- Wheat Ridge is quite content with its quality of life and its overall position. Unlike the era that prompted the original NRS, the city does not perceive itself to be at an existential crossroads. Community sentiment about life in Wheat Ridge is positive.
- Positive community sentiment is backed up by survey results from both the 2018 Resident Survey completed by the National Research Center (NRC) and the 2019 NRS survey. It is further corroborated by independent analysis of data by the consulting team.
- In particular, Wheat Ridge values its small town character, its neighborly relationships, its parks and open space, its westward views, and its independent identity.
- It is unfair, and inaccurate, to characterize Wheat Ridge as being against change, but the community *does not fundamentally want big changes*. It is more or less happy with itself the way it is. In the collective mind of Wheat Ridge, whatever changes do occur should be incremental and well managed, and not rapidly or suddenly imposed from outside the community.
- In the category of “incremental and well managed,” there is a clear desire on the part of Wheat Ridge residents for more attractive commercial districts and for better shopping and dining options, particularly those that are not national or regional chains.
- Market analysis by czb and its partner MJB show that conditions do not yet support a significant increase in higher end non-chain retail and restaurants but positive market trends in Wheat Ridge could slowly change those circumstances over time.
- When it comes to Wheat Ridge neighborhoods, there is a meaningful portion of the city that is at least somewhat uncomfortable with changes that are perceived to be too drastic, out of character with existing conditions, or both. A desire for change to be “incremental and well managed” is stronger nearer to one’s home.

#### Preliminary Implications for the Updated NRS

The totality of the input—general community sentiment, recurring themes in the city around growth and governance, generally agreed upon areas for improvement, and some new opportunities—has led the committee and the consulting team to organize emerging strategy ideas. The balance of this memo presents the input received and possible next steps for the following three major issue categories:

- Corridors and nodes,
- Neighborhood planning and engagement, and
- Property conditions and code enforcement.

Several other issues have elicited a lesser response in the survey or were specifically requested to be included in this process; these are presented below, including building reinvestment, accessory dwelling units, and short-term rentals.

#### *Input Received – Corridors and Nodes*

At this time, corridors clearly identified for improvement include:

- 44<sup>th</sup> Avenue east of Wadsworth Boulevard
- 44<sup>th</sup> Avenue west of Wadsworth Boulevard (especially west of Kipling Street)
- Kipling Street north of 38<sup>th</sup> Avenue
- Youngfield Street, from 38<sup>th</sup> Avenue to 44<sup>th</sup> Avenue

Neighborhood retail nodes have garnered strong support. Where appropriate, Wheat Ridge residents want retail nodes (shopping, dining, “third places”) along main streets that are easily accessible, especially by bike or foot, to the surrounding residential neighborhoods. Some of these nodes will undoubtedly be in major corridors (Wadsworth, Kipling, 44th) but there are other streets that may offer more neighborhood scale opportunities.

#### *Input Received – Neighborhood Planning and Engagement*

The input to date has indicated a certain level of discomfort with neighborhood change that is perceptible to most everyone. At the same time, the input has also indicated a desire for positive neighborhood engagement and involvement.

Wheat Ridge residents enjoy life in their city partially because it is smaller than its neighbors; there are clear benefits to living in a smaller community, including increased opportunity for civic involvement. And yet, there is still a feeling in some quarters that local public decision making is done too far away, by “them” and not by “us.”

#### *Input Received – Property Conditions and Code Enforcement*

When asked in the NRS survey if property conditions have generally improved in Wheat Ridge over the past 5 years, 49% said yes and 28% said no.

As previously stated, Wheat Ridge wants its corridors to look better. Much of this work is likely related to infrastructure and streetscape, although the condition of buildings has been noted. Where Code Enforcement activities might have a role to play in corridor revitalization, the NRS will make comment to that effect.

Although the revitalization of residential areas was strongly supported in the 2018 NRC Resident Survey, the NRS process to date has not surfaced community complaints about property conditions in residential neighborhoods as a key issue. In fact, 79% of respondents to the NRS survey said their neighbors maintain their properties to an acceptable standard and respondents reported that commercial buildings were more of a problem than rental properties.

#### *Input Received – Other Issues*

Building Reinvestment System: Public interest in preservation and reuse of existing housing has been stronger than interest in building new housing. As a mature community, the current housing stock is also the future housing stock. Renovation and rehab is the future of the city’s housing market, and updating the structures can be difficult. The same is true of aging commercial structures.

Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs): There is nothing from the NRS process that has contradicted the 2018 Resident Survey findings, nor the staff public outreach effort and subsequent Council discussions from 2016. With 50% seemingly in favor of ADUs, 25% opposed, and the remainder on the fence, the answer is not yet clear.

Short-Term Rentals: Depending on the circumstances of any particular short-term rental, it may be a neighborhood issue or it may not. There is not clear consensus in the community as to whether they should be allowed or, if allowed, how they should be regulated or taxed. (It is also worth noting that the extent of short-term rentals in Wheat Ridge is not at the same scale as communities like Denver, Boulder or mountain resort towns. Based on available information, it appears there exist approximately 140 short-term rentals and staff has not experienced a history of code enforcement complaints associated with these units.)

#### *Preliminary Directions – Corridors and Nodes*

- The city has already allocated funds for a 44<sup>th</sup> Avenue corridor plan. The NRS will comment on which part of 44<sup>th</sup> Avenue should receive attention first, and what the major scope components ought to be for such a plan.
- Likewise, the NRS will comment on sequencing of future work for other corridors in question, and what the major scoping issues should be for those efforts.
- There are only a small number of existing or potential retail nodes that are not located on one of the city's main corridors (Wadsworth, Kipling, 44<sup>th</sup>). The NRS will identify these existing or potential locations and comment on a toolkit that could support their further development.

#### *Preliminary Directions – Neighborhood Planning and Engagement*

The City traditionally has not had a robust neighborhood planning or engagement function. This is not rare for a city the size of Wheat Ridge. But there are two particular reasons why Wheat Ridge should consider adding this capacity:

1. A strengthening real estate market is creating redevelopment pressure in some residential neighborhoods which can create anxiety for those residents. By working with affected neighborhoods on planning before changes happen, residents can have a better idea of what to expect over time, relationships can be built, communication feedback loops can be established, and the capacity to positively manage change, when it inevitably occurs, can be improved.
2. A number of policy issues facing the city may be better addressed at the neighborhood scale instead of citywide, and/or the engagement strategy to seek input may need to be executed at the neighborhood scale instead of citywide. The impacts of certain policy decisions are not abstract to many Wheat Ridge residents; they may be very real. Civically engaged residents of Wheat Ridge are not necessarily content to let the City Council and City staff figure out certain things, lest the result be negative for them, however they define it. The answers to some important Wheat Ridge policy questions today fall into the "it depends" category. Such situations require more conversation at a more intimate scale than Council chambers or the Rec Center ballroom can provide.

The NRS will comment in greater detail on the possibilities for a neighborhood planning and engagement function and its costs and benefits.

#### *Preliminary Directions – Property Conditions and Code Enforcement*

Wherever possible, czb advocates for rental inspection programs, as they can be an effective tool in managing the maintenance issues that can arise in absentee owned rental properties.

The city has explored this idea in the past and decided against it. The NRS process has not revealed a level of support that would suggest the city revisit the issue. The NRS is likely to suggest more surgical approaches representing incremental changes that would build on current Police Department capabilities and align with more specific neighborhood planning efforts.

#### *Preliminary Directions – Other Issues*

**Building Reinvestment System:** There are a number of barriers for homeowners and business owners taking on rehab projects in older buildings. Larger, more expensive projects are more likely to involve contractors who are sophisticated enough to navigate old buildings, new codes, and permitting and inspection processes. But for those owners who may be working on smaller projects or who do not hire a skilled contractor, there may be steps the City can take to improve the customer experience and therefore more proactively reward the investment that Wheat Ridge buildings need. The NRS will comment on this.

**Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs):** This is one of the aforementioned “it depends” issues, with very important nuances and different types of impacts on different properties. There are best practices for ADU regulations that address nearly all potential concerns, but a citywide policy response may not be the best way to test the suitability of ADUs in Wheat Ridge. The NRS will provide guidance on best practices for ADUs, a possible preferred citywide approach, and the pros and cons. It will also explore whether ADUs are a topic that may best be addressed on a neighborhood by neighborhood basis instead of citywide.

**Short-Term Rentals:** The NRS will provide guidance on best practices for short-term rentals and the pros and cons of different approaches.

#### Next Steps

NRS progress and emerging ideas will be presented to City Council and Planning Commission during the week of March 18. That same week, the steering committee will also hold four open houses to solicit feedback on these possible directions. Following the week of public events, czb will analyze all input and begin writing a draft strategy which will be available for review in early May.