



WESTMINSTER

Staff Report

TO: The Mayor and Members of the City Council
DATE: September 9, 2015
SUBJECT: Briefing and Post-City Council Briefing Agenda for September 14, 2015
PREPARED BY: Don Tripp, City Manager

Please Note: Study Sessions and Post City Council briefings are open to the public, and individuals are welcome to attend and observe. However, these briefings are not intended to be interactive with the audience, as this time is set aside for City Council to receive information, make inquiries, and provide Staff with policy direction.

Looking ahead to Monday night's Briefing and Post-City Council meeting briefing, the following schedule has been prepared:

Dinner	6:00 P.M.
Council Briefing (<i>The public is welcome to attend.</i>)	6:30 P.M.

CITY MANAGER'S REPORT

POST BRIEFING (*The public is welcome to attend.*)

PRESENTATIONS

None at this time.

CITY COUNCIL REPORTS

None at this time.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

1. Discuss strategy and progress on negotiations related to economic development matters for Downtown Westminster, disclosure of which would seriously jeopardize the City's ability to secure the development; discuss strategy and progress on the possible sale, acquisition, trade or exchange of property rights, including future leases; and provide instruction to the City's negotiators on the same as authorized by Sections 1-11-3(C)(2), (4), and (7), W.M.C., and Sections 24-6-402 (4)(a) and 24-6-402(4)(e), C.R.S.-
Verbal

INFORMATION ONLY

1. Revisions to City Standards for Sanitary Sewer Design and Construction
2. Affordable/Workforce Housing Interview Summary

Items may come up between now and Monday night. City Council will be apprised of any changes to the post-briefing schedule.

Respectfully submitted,

Donald M. Tripp
City Manager

NOTE: Persons needing an accommodation must notify the City Manager's Office no later than noon the Thursday prior to the scheduled Study Session to allow adequate time to make arrangements. You can call 303-658-2161 /TTY 711 or State Relay) or write to mbarajas@cityofwestminster.us to make a reasonable accommodation request.



Staff Report

Information Only Staff Report
September 14, 2015



SUBJECT: Revisions to City Standards for Sanitary Sewer Design and Construction

PREPARED BY: Andy Walsh, Senior Engineer
Dave Loseman, Assistant City Engineer
Stephen Grooters, Senior Projects Engineer

Summary Statement

City Staff is in the process of revising City standards for sanitary sewer design and construction. These revisions are performed periodically and are necessary to address improvements for safety, constructability, changes in materials, and standards of practice. Staff wishes to update City Council on the nature and extent of the changes and will then solicit and incorporate stakeholder input from various outside agencies prior to the anticipated publication on January 1, 2016. This report is for City Council information only and requires no action by City Council.

Background Information

The City maintains published Standards and Specifications for Public Improvements, which outline requirements for development and construction of City assets, infrastructure, and utilities. Chapter Four of these standards is devoted to sanitary sewer design and construction and was last updated with significant revisions in 1999. Revisions to this chapter are now necessary to address newer standards for safety, constructability, materials of construction, and standards of practice within the industry. Revisions are also necessary to clarify the standards as they pertain to trends in redevelopment, densification, and new development types. Overall, City standards are amended and/or edited routinely with periodic larger-scale revisions, as discussed herein, issued at times determined appropriate by the City Engineer.

The nature and extent of current revisions to the Chapter Four standards are based on common issues encountered through development review, day-to-day utility operations, construction inspections, and repair and replacement projects. These revisions were developed based on input from outside agencies that regularly work with the City and from input from the City Departments that coordinate utility issues (Public Works and Utilities and Community Development). Over the past few years, issues have been addressed via ongoing coordination through the development review process, and having updated and published sanitary sewer design and construction standards will streamline efforts.

Staff developed a list of roughly 50 priority issues to update within the standards. Revisions were developed for each issue based on: 1) industry standards, 2) practices common to the Front Range and neighboring utilities, 3) City experiences during and following construction, 4) the experience of City Staff who operate and maintain the City's utility system, and 5) input from several external stakeholders including HDR Engineering Inc., Martin/Martin, Jansen/Strawn, City of Arvada, and City of Boulder. These external stakeholders were chosen based on their similar city size and location within the Front Range and/or the frequency of their business with City development and construction projects. The four examples listed below are typical of the types of revisions incorporated into the updates.

1. A common problem with the long term maintenance of the sewer system has been poor access to manholes and buried sewer pipe. The previous standard required clarification on the types of

structures or landscape plantings that are allowed within utility easements associated with the sewer facilities. Clarifying these structures and plantings provides fewer questions/comments during design review and prevents long-term issues with these conflicts.

2. The previous standard allowed for the use of concrete pipe. This type of pipe degrades over time from exposure with sewer gas. The new standard requires the use of PVC pipe and the use of interior manhole corrosion linings on larger sewers. PVC pipe and manhole linings provides longer service life of the sewer system.
3. The previous standard used a relatively high sewer flow projection for residential development. This overestimates projected design flows for many newer types of development and can result in incorrect sizing of sewers. The new standard sets design flows based on historic sewer use within the City and takes into account water conserving fixtures.
4. The previous standard required 24-inch diameter manhole lids on all sewer main sizes. Maintenance staff has difficulty obtaining safe access through these small lids in cases where large equipment is required for inspection/cleaning (for example, large-sized sewers of +21-inch diameter require larger equipment). Manholes are confined space, and the tight space available for maintenance equipment and emergency rescue equipment is a safety hazard. The new standard is for 30-inch diameter manhole lids for large-sized sewers.

Staff is sensitive to and have anticipated potential concerns of the contracting and development community (for example, cost and construction implications). Where revisions to the standards could impact material costs, alternate products and distribution sources were specified to help maintain a competitive marketplace and greater availability of parts. Staff will also distribute a draft of revisions to the contracting community (Colorado Contractor's Association and Denver Home Builders Association) for their comment and review over a one-month review period. Their input will be combined with the input from all stakeholders and incorporated prior to publishing updates.

The City Engineer has the authority to amend the sanitary sewer standards as necessary. The target publication date for the updated standards is January 1, 2016, and will require that all new developments adhere to the new standards with provisions for projects already partially through the process. In the following cases, new standards will not apply:

- Projects currently under construction as of January 1, 2016.
- Projects approved prior to January 1, 2016 (these projects may be subject to re-review if they have not been constructed by July 1, 2016).

As is always the case, City Staff will work with developers and make them aware of the proposed revisions to the standards prior to their publication so that they can plan accordingly.

Revision to the City's sanitary sewer design and construction standards helps achieve the City Council's Strategic Plan Goal of "Financially Sustainable Government Providing Excellence in City Services" and "Beautiful, Desirable, Safe and Environmentally Responsible City" by properly designing and constructing utility infrastructure for the overall health and safety of our citizens and maintenance staff.

Respectfully submitted,

Donald M. Tripp
City Manager



WESTMINSTER

Staff Report

Information Only Staff Report
September 14, 2015



SUBJECT: Affordable/Workforce Housing Interview Summary

PREPARED BY: Mac Cummins, AICP, Planning Manager
John Hall, Economic Development Director

Summary Statement

This report is for City Council information only and requires no action by City Council.

One of Council's 2015 Strategic Plan objectives is to advance strategies to provide affordable/workforce housing. Specifically, the relevant goal, objective and action are stated as follows:

GOAL: Vibrant, Inclusive and Engaged Community - Westminster provides options for an inclusive, demographically diverse citizenry in unique settings with community identity, ownership and sense of place, with easy access to amenities, shopping, employment and diverse integrated housing options. Members of the community are empowered to address community needs and important community issues through active involvement with city cultural, business and nonprofit groups.

OBJECTIVE: Advance strategies that demonstrate Westminster is a regional leader in providing affordable/workforce housing.

- **ACTION:** Pursue workforce housing

To address this goal staff is engaged in a work effort that will result in development of a recommended affordable/workforce housing policy and strategy that when implemented will result in the development of affordable/workforce housing units. The general steps included in this work effort include:

1. One-on-one interviews with each Council member to better understand specific concerns and objectives around this issue.
2. Preparation of this summary memo for review and use by Council. Staff's intent following this memo is to have a more detailed Study Session discussion with Council on September 28, 2015; where a more robust discussion of the work program for this item can be conducted. Due to constraints with the Council Calendar in September, this discussion will likely occur as a Post Item after the regular meeting that evening. Staff anticipates having a consultant in attendance for this discussion.
3. Subsequent to a Council Study Session discussion, development of baseline data and drafting of a final work scope that will guide policy development, analysis, and recommendations necessary to implement a City affordable/workforce housing strategy during the balance of 2015 and into 2016.

4. Pursuing current affordable/workforce housing opportunities in the short-run through our partnerships with both the Jefferson and Adams County Housing Authorities, as a part of City development and planning efforts in both the Downtown and the South Westminster TOD area, and in other areas of the City.

Background Information

Staff appreciates Council members taking the time to meet individually over the course of the past few weeks, for sharing your perspective about housing policy, workforce housing, and the issues you seek to have addressed related to this Strategic Plan objective. The intent of the interviews was for Staff to gain a better perspective on what the City Council would like Staff to pursue in order to fully execute the work plan associated with this objective. The purpose of this memo is to provide a summary of Council comments, and identify where it appears there is consensus on key topics that will serve as a starting point for consideration of a work program to be conducted during the balance of 2015 and into 2016.

The memo is formatted to describe where there appears to be full consensus on topics, and those areas where multiple Councilors were suggesting the same (or substantially similar) ideas. The memo has two components, one in which ideas or comments were made by 6 or more Councilors, and one in which ideas or comments were made by 2-5 Councilors on the same topic or idea.

Consensus Comments (6 or more Councilors made this comment):

1. The City is facing an affordable/workforce housing problem. Council members felt strongly that this was a problem that needed to be addressed based on the significant rise in housing costs the past few years, coupled with the low vacancy rates in the rental housing stock in the City. This was important to note, because the Council felt that there was a “problem,” even if there was not agreement about how to define the problem, or what the possible solutions may be.
2. Growth Management should proceed without any changes in 2015. Council expressed that the competition should not be held up while the City undertakes this strategic program to evaluate affordable/workforce housing. In the interim, the Council conveyed that this year’s competition could move forward using the existing rules and procedures.
3. Timing – The consensus among Councilors was that the “appropriate” amount of time should be spent researching, evaluating, and working with a consultant to consider possible solutions to the problem of affordable/workforce housing; all Councilors said that they wanted to take the appropriate amount of time to have the “right” approach. There were some differences in how long the term “appropriate” should mean (Ranging from weeks to months); but there was consensus that the City should not “rush” this process.
4. Community development standards are important to maintain and Councilors commented that the City should be careful not to create a “slum” or “project” in developing affordable/workforce housing units. There is consensus among Council members that affordable/workforce housing should reflect community standards consistent with other types of housing in the City. Councilors conveyed that this was a difficult task, acknowledging that the extra cost of producing the types of housing that makes Westminster known for quality will increase the end user’s cost of consuming that housing. However, the Council uniformly felt that “projects” were not the solution, but some mix of market rate and workforce housing within a housing development was preferable to a project comprised of solely of affordable units.

5. Geographic dispersion of the units was critical; and not having all the units in one area of the City was very important to the Council. Though many Councillors acknowledged that they did not have a good sense of the exact housing costs in various parts of the City, Council members felt strongly that they did not want one portion of the City to be the repository of lower income residential units.
6. A consultant should be brought in to help Council and Staff identify specific aspects of the problem and potential possible solutions. This consultant should be an expert in this field, and have worked with jurisdictions similar to ours, in the past.
7. Council members felt that workforce housing should include evaluation of, and assure ability to have, both rental and ownership product. There was no consensus about how much of either type, nor by product type (i.e. townhomes vs. single family residences vs. condo, etc.). The Council felt strongly; however, that to be a complete community, residents should be able to afford to live in both ownership and rental housing accommodations throughout the community.
8. Council members are not interested, at this time, in having the Westminster Housing Authority build affordable workforce housing.

Comments made by Multiple Councillors (2-5 Councillors made these comments)

1. Construction defects appear to be a significant factor in the ability to produce ownership housing. Councillors pointed to the fact that these units are generally smaller and can become more affordable than a traditional single family house. Addressing this issue will hopefully help with the production of another product type (condos) that the market is currently missing.
2. Several of the Councillors wanted to see examples of workforce housing that has been done well. A few of the Councillors cited the “Mueller” project in Austin, Texas as an example and asked Staff to contact the Austin Economic Development Director for further information.
3. The majority of the Council (though not 6) believed that demand pulling prices upward was as much of a factor, if not more, than the production cost of the house itself. The Councillors who commented on this generally believed that we are a community of high standards and that this desirability leads to an increased value in the marketplace. None were sure exactly how to handle this “premium” in terms of attacking the workforce housing problem facing our community, but there was an acknowledgement that this “demand pull” phenomenon was occurring in housing prices within Westminster.
4. There was not complete agreement about what the “metrics” should look like relative to defining “affordable/workforce housing.” Many of the Councillors felt that this should be a range of Area Median Income (AMI); and possibly a percentage of units built in a particular subdivision or project. The consensus ranged from 60% - 80% AMI, with varying ideas of percentages of units in those categories being either required or incented to be produced. Nearly all the Councillors asked for more information to make a more informed decision about what the metrics should be.
5. When prompted, many of the Councillors felt that they would prefer a “carrot” approach to the “stick” approach in terms of either incenting or attempting to regulate the production of affordable/workforce housing units. Though not opposed to regulating (ie inclusionary zoning principles), most of Council felt that some type of incentive program would be a good first step. Most who contributed to this discussion topic asked Staff to have the consultant evaluate these options for further consideration.

6. Several Councillors mentioned that their idea of who they would like to evaluate for affordability included City employees, such as firemen (both single and married), teachers, and single parent households.
7. Some of the Councillors mentioned that they were concerned about the aging housing stock, and how affordability is considered when looking at those units. They were concerned about the maintenance costs of these kinds of units when compared against the affordability metrics.
8. Several Councillors felt that a good barometer for expenditure on housing cost should be somewhere between 30-35% of a person's income.
9. Some of the Councillors comments on the need for public outreach and to set up focus groups to further study the issue. This included suggestions of the "market," the "developers" and the "community."
10. Some of the Councillors commented that strategy in this area of affordable/workforce housing is tied to economic growth and the City should focus on this area so that our economic policy can be achieved as well, both in the short term, and the long term.
11. Several of the Councillors asked what types of regulatory barriers could be removed or reduced (aka parking requirements) to help with the production of workforce housing.

This encapsulates the majority of the main topic points that came up in the interviews. There were several comments made by individuals that were not repeated by others in the interviews. This does not decrease the value of any of those comments or ideas. The intent of this memo is to help facilitate the Council discussing these issues and help focus the discussion on September 28 to help give direction to staff about how the Council would like to proceed.

Respectfully submitted,

Donald M. Tripp
City Manager

cc: Jody Andrews, Deputy City Manager
Steve Smithers, Deputy City Manager