

Elyria / Swansea / Globeville Neighborhoods – City of Denver & CDOT I-70 Community Meeting

Wednesday, November 9th, 2011
5:30 – 7:00 at Colorado Miners, 4809 Race Street

- I. Welcome & Thank You for Coming Steve Charbonneau
 - a. Back in September, we held a neighborhood meeting which was hosted by Mayor Hancock and included the Colorado Department of Transportation (CDOT). At that meeting the City of Denver provided history of the PACT meetings and explained that we were here to determine if there was consensus within the neighborhood for accepting and supporting the I-70 northern shift. The Mayor listened while neighbors expressed their issues and concerns. At the end of the two hour meeting the Mayor said, “Clearly there is not a consensus on going forward with the northern shift. We will hand the decision back to CDOT without consensus or recommendation.”
 - b. The Mayor went on to challenge the neighborhood, saying; “You’ve got a great turnout this evening. You’ve shown a lot of care and concern for your neighborhood. In the future, something will be done with I-70. You have a choice to make, will you be involved in the discussion and outcome, or will someone make that decision for you. I challenge you as a neighborhood to stay involved and work together to do what is best for the Elyria neighborhood.”
 - c. In the days and weeks which followed, the City of Denver (City) was approached by several individuals within the neighborhood asking that the City facilitate a neighborhood process which would allow the neighborhood to review, rethink and consider options for I-70.
 - d. CDOT has said they will give the neighborhood(s) until early March to see if they can reach a consensus and agreement on the issue of I-70. We are here to begin that process this evening. What we need to do will take work and participation from all of you.
 - e. This evening we want to review the concept as well as some of the issues and concerns you raised at our September meeting. We also want to identify five work groups who will spend time over the next three months studying and pursuing five different areas and reporting back to the large neighborhood group. The first of March, our goal is to bring a recommendation to CDOT and the City as to the alignment of I-70 and related issues.
 - f. At this point several neighbors raised issues of concern;
 - i. “No, it isn’t OK for you to propose plans which will disrupt my family and where we live.”
 - ii. “Who will be making these decisions?”
A: CDOT will be the final decision making authority as the PACT could not come to consensus.
 - iii. “Where is the line going to be drawn, what houses taken and which ones left?”
A: We only have preliminary information on what houses and businesses may be impacted. Part of the refinements that we are working on will provide more exact locations for the ramps and roadway as well as any additional enhancements identified by the community.
 - iv. “What is the timeframe we’re looking at?”
A: Timeframe of neighborhood outreach is through March, timeframe of I-70

work has yet to be determined.

- v. “You’re a facilitator, that’s great. We aren’t paid to be here, we are here for our livelihood. You are asking us to sit here while our lives are annihilated. I want to make sure that is on the record.”
- vi. “So who is providing the translation? I want the Spanish speakers to understand what is being talked about already because we are getting a conversation going already.”
A: A translator was present at the meeting & providing services to those in attendance needing translation.

- II. Overview and Purpose of Meeting Michael Sapp & Steve Charbonneau
 - a. There are a lot of concerns about what’s going to happen to your housing etc. We are here to listen to your concerns and recommendations. The Mayor was here the whole time last time but couldn’t be here tonight. We are here to listen as his representatives.

- III. Denver’s Preference for Northern Shift Lesley Thomas & John Lucero
 - a. We were a part of the PACT and that process has been concluded.
 - b. The final decision regarding what is done with I-70 is ultimately CDOT’s decision.
 - c. Denver’s position is that we’re here to focus on the northern shift of I-70, which impacts Elyria, Swansea and Globeville. We are not here to talk about southern shift.
 - d. The reason we supported the northern shift is because of the mitigations that can happen in these neighborhoods because of the northern shift. I-70 is old, replacement will happen. If we wait, either way the neighborhood will get some basic improvements such as noise walls, reduce environmental impact, etc. Those are things that happen with either alignment.
 - e. However, with the northern shift we’re in a position to bring more to the neighborhood; such as a school, grade separation for the tracks, improved connectivity, resolution of many Purina impact issues, loss of housing solutions, etc.
 - f. The City is committed to looking at all the different issues and concerns regarding the northern shift and finding ways to reduce the impact.

- IV. CDOT/NEPA’s Perspective Kirk Webb
 - a. When we couldn’t figure out which way to go on our own, we developed the PACT process so the impacted communities would be involved in the outcome. The PACT process is over. We came close to reaching consensus, but didn’t get all the way there. We are here to see if we can get community support and a clear consensus on the preferred shift.
 - b. As many people have already said, CDOT is committed to listening and trying to work the community on the outcome, to see if we can come to agreement. We are not required to do this, but have chosen to be involved from now until early March.
 - c. Ultimately CDOT and FHWA will make the decision regarding how to proceed with I-70.

- V. City and County of Denver & CDOT Kirk Webb & Karen Good
 - a. (Karen) The City is committed to the northern shift and we are here to discuss options and see if we can reach a point where the neighborhood(s) can reach consensus and be supportive of this northern shift.
 - b. We believe this process can benefit your families and your children. We can bring connectivity, walking, biking, and car connections, a grade separation at 47th or 48th. There are a lot of things that we haven’t thought about that you have so that’s why we are here.

- c. We have started a website that will document our meetings and our work group efforts. This will ensure the process is open and communicated. Our website is: www.denvergov.org/ccdl70
- d. Let me affirm that the City has it preferences, but CDOT has the final say, the decision.
- e. Some questions and comments:
 - i. Does Washington DC have a plan for us already?
A: No, the federal government will use the decision from the I-70 EIS.
 - ii. I'm going to be under the freeway I already know that. So I would just like to know a timeframe.
A: Timeframe is not clear as a decision on alignment is not made and funding has yet to be identified.
 - iii. CDOT and Denver should move their headquarters to the stock show and create jobs at this location.
 - iv. There isn't enough information for individuals and how they will be impacted.
 - v. The Wall Street Journal had an article on the health impacts incurred from living close to highways. People living by the highway and making it bigger is going to create a whole new generation with health problems which is why we suggested that we put it under ground. It sounds like you have made up your mind and we are sitting here waiting for self-annihilation. We have to look out for each other and we need to look at the 1,000 signatures to put it under ground.
A: As stated previously a decision has yet to be made regarding the alignment, though this process is focused on the northern shift. The underground has been off the table for some time, but maybe there are other innovative options that can be created or incorporated into the northern shift.
 - vi. What about Swansea elementary? What will happen to the school area, will it be turned into houses?
A: CDOT & the City would like to have the neighborhood representatives input on the future of the community and potential future enhancements.

- VI. Denver Public School & Denver Parks and Recreation Gordon Robertson & J.T. Allen
 - a. My job (JT Allen) is to do the planning for schools; where we need schools, when they should be built and how to move them forward to 21st century.
 - b. We have a number of projects where we're working with Denver Parks & Recreation (Parks) planning and design. Currently we're working on park space at Stapleton and two other school/rec centers. Green Valley Ranch is an example of what DPS and Parks can do together.
 - c. Currently, in Denver even in the old neighborhoods you will notice that schools and parks are working in proximity. As we develop new neighborhoods we are looking how to develop parks and schools in proximity. Some may be used for soccer, basketball, football or baseball. We are looking to see how we can align the parks and school so it has all the amenities. So much of the time that the elementary schools want to use the park or rec center it is when it's vacant and not being used. The peak use times are at different times. Rec centers are on the weekends and the schools during the week.
 - d. Some comments and questions:
 - i. I agree we need rec centers, but what about the 5 years to build that school during which time the kids that are shipped somewhere else?
A: A new school would be built before the old school would be impacted.
 - ii. Why was Swansea Park used when they could have used the vacated school property?
A: Neighborhood representatives expressed a desire to keep a new school within

easy walking distance of the existing school.

- iii. Why are they doing construction at Swansea Park? Why are they taking the lawn, doing cement when they are talking about using that area for the school or another rec center and will just tear it out?

A: The improvements to the park are needed to ensure the safety of current park users and were determined to provide benefits for the community regardless of any potential future changes to the site.

VII. Purina's Commitment Lewis Thomas & John Lucero

- a. John stated that the City & Purina have been talking about the issues and concerns. We're concerned about losing the jobs Purina provides for the city and the revenue we receive. We've also been discussing the neighborhood impacts, smell, noise, etc.

- b. Lewis then talked about how he's been at Purina and in Denver for fourteen years. It's not that we (Purina) doesn't want to solve the problem of smell, but we haven't been able to find a solution until now. We are now working with a company who can remove 90% of the odors we create. We have worked with them at our plant in Canada and the results have been positive. We anticipate getting the odor remediation process started within the next month or two.

- c. Comments and questions:

- i. Is Purina going to give the kids in the neighborhoods some amenities? Maybe support sports teams?

A: Purina could consider additional neighborhood outreach.

- ii. What about the sticky stuff that comes out of the mill and sticks to my car?

A: Please provide your contact information and we will go out to your house and to assess the material.

- iii. We have dusty stuff that lands on our car at 46th and Josephine.

A: See previous answer – home visit.

- iv. At 4691 Vine, the noise is crazy. We cannot open our windows. It sounds like a helicopter above me.

- v. Do you receive enterprise funding?

A: No

VIII. Responding to the Mayor's Challenge Steve Charbonneau

- a. I can take a few more comments right now before we move on

- i. Q: You are good about presenting program. My concern is that from the start of this meeting people from the City and people from CDOT have used some disturbing terms. Mitigating is after the fact. I urge everyone in this room to watch out for any mitigating process. It's after the crime. Has the decision been made and are you using this meeting to look good?

A: No decision has been made yet on the alignment. The purpose of this extended outreach is to work with the community to determine potential benefits and amenities associated with the northern alignment.

- ii. Q: Where will the money is going to come from?

A: Costs are from 800mil-1.7 billion, we need future funding sources or we will need to build it little pieces at a time. We are obviously short on funding.)

- iii. RTD Light rail stop is scheduled to be built at National Western Stock Show station) is set to begin construction in 2012 and open in 2016. The Stock Show is discussing their future, which has huge implications. There are 80 acres which are toxic and will need to be cleaned up. There are decisions already being made that will have impacts. My concern is that these decisions are being made in a

piece-meal manner, with no master plan. What can we do to ensure we're taking a coordinated and considered approach?

- iv. Questions regarding ASARCO came up, such as when they are going to move, when they will start mitigation of that area, etc.

A: Councilwomen Montero's aide, Stephanie Syner, said the 80 acres won't be able to be used for residential. They are going to seal the dirt and it is possible that commercial development may go on the site. Also, the pond will be drained.

- b. Regarding the work groups and plans for the next six weeks;
 - i. We plan on having another neighborhood meeting the week of December 12th. We don't have the exact date yet, but will let you know when we do.
 - ii. We will establish five working groups;
 - 1. The School/Rec Center group
 - 2. Housing group
 - 3. Future Enhancements group,
 - 4. Business group, and
 - 5. Neighborhood Communication group
 - iii. Please choose one group you're interested in and become a part of that work group.
 - iv. Each work group will meet once between now and the December neighborhood meeting. They will come prepared to report back to the larger group.
- c. Please remember the Mayor's challenge – "Something will happen when it comes to I-70 and the neighborhood, how will you choose to be involved?"