

I-70 Shift – Business Workgroup

December 15th, 2011 meeting

Those present:

Armando Payan
Dorothy Martin
Gilbert Vasquez
Jeff Popiel

Jim Mercado
Karen Good
Kirk Webb
Larry Burgess

Louis Thomas
Marvin Witt
Scott Niblack
Tim Martinez

This was the first meeting of the business workgroup. Our goal was to discuss issues and concerns from a big-picture perspective. Below is a brief summary of the conversation.

- I. Attract new businesses into the area
 - a. How can we work with Office of Economic Development (OED) and Denver Urban Renewal Authority (DURA) to use this opportunity to leverage bringing additional businesses into this area?
 - i. Set up a time to meet with OED and DURA to discuss and identify possible opportunities.
 - ii. Is there an opportunity to move CDOT offices into the area?
 - iii. When is the appropriate time to involve the State Office of Economic Development?
 - b. What is available for area businesses in the way of workplace development? Facilitate a conversation with OED.
 - i. Small business loan fund?
 - c. We cannot attract the workers and therefore the businesses we need into the area unless we can improve the housing stock. Develop a plan to address housing stock.
 - i. DURA is awarding \$25K for residential owners to improve their house. This is a no interest loan and may have possibilities, but homeowners are hesitant to make commitments.
- II. Jobs
 - a. We discussed how many local residents were hired by companies in the area. We didn't have exact numbers, but my sense is there are not a high percentage of local residents working for local companies. There are a number of reasons; some being, condition of housing stock, need for skilled workers, etc.
 - b. The Stock Show hires temps and conducts numerous job fairs. How do we communicate this to the neighborhood?
 - i. Work with Focus Points?
 - ii. What else?
 - c. There are Hub Zone benefits to an employer who hires 35% of local residents, but this is almost an impossible percentage to achieve given the many hurdles.
 - d. We agree, there should be zero net job loss and business loss for the three neighborhoods because of any change to I-70. (While not directly within our purview, we also believe there should be zero net housing loss for the three neighborhoods because of any change to I-70.)

- III. Gateway
 - a. While we realize this is a discussion regarding the northern shift of I-70, we believe it is also an opportunity to meaningfully address issues around the Brighton Gateway to downtown.
 - i. Easy on/off of I-70 is critically important
 - ii. Make it look good, accessible, etc.
 - b. Infrastructure improvements along Brighton Boulevard into downtown.
 - c. Not just the Brighton exit
 - d. Needed improvements to Race Court
 - e. Market for our area
- IV. Local Service concerns
 - a. There is a need for a grocery store, market and other service oriented businesses within the three neighborhoods.
- V. Infrastructure concerns, specifically curbs, gutters, sidewalks, lighting throughout the neighborhoods
- VI. Connectivity
 - a. If 48th is built through, it will impact key operations (crane, railroad siding) at Eaton Metal and force them to leave the area. We need a different solution to the connectivity issue for 48th.
 - b. How can we utilize “under I-70” in a creative and meaningful way?
- VII. American Institute of Architects has volunteered to do an independent assessment of this specific section of I-70. Charbonneau agreed to talk with the key contact; however, CDOT and the City are not willing at this time to enter into an additional assessment by AIA.
- VIII. Construction schedule
 - a. We need a plan which will preserve the existing businesses during the confusion of construction. We don’t want their business to dry up and be gone because of the extensive construction.
- IX. Money
 - a. Look into establishing a “impact fund” which can be drawn upon if specific criteria are met. The concern is that we’re not able to identify all the impacts and needs which may become apparent as this process progresses.
- X. Neighborhood leadership
 - a. When Cross Community Coalition left it created a void of neighborhood leadership, neighborhood communication, and neighborhood connections, etc. This makes it difficult for a meaningful and cooperative relationship between the businesses and residents. This is something which will need to be improved.
- XI. Next time
 - a. Connectivity map
 - b. There was discussion regarding DPS’ bus lot. What is happening with this space? How can it be cleaned up? What are the requirements?

- c. Environmental assessment map to identify environmental concerns and issues of the area. .
- d. Who else needs to be here?
 - i. Owens-Corning?
 - ii. Paul Tamburello
 - iii. Who else?

XII. Next Meeting – January 3rd