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News from District 5

FEBRUARY 2010

Dear District 5 Neighbor,

After a nearly 7 hour public hearing, my colleagues and I on City Council voted 12-1 in favor of rezoning 57 acres of landfill on East Alameda Avenue, known as Lowry Vista.

I ultimately voted to support the zoning change because the 100-acre Westerly Creek dam wetlands are currently unavailable to most of the public. The Lowry Vista development will not encroach on the wetlands, but will actually make them more accessible.



Today, those who know how to find the path to the top of the dam, and who are physically able to climb, are the only ones who can see the

beauty of the wetlands and its wildlife inhabitants - and that, only from a distance. Lowry Vista will provide a 13 acre buffer of open space between the development and the wetlands, which will allow pedestrians to walk right up to the edge of the wetlands.

At the public hearing, we heard expert testimony from an independent ecologist who said that the wildlife would not be harmed by the development. This is an area equivalent in size to the Bluff Lake Nature Preserve. To emphasize the importance of the resource, Bluff Lake has a staff of four to protect and promote the natural area. One day, the Westerly Creek dam wetlands will be an accessible preserve of similar scope - a wild refuge in our urban landscape.

In the last couple of weeks, I had received emails, phone calls and letters from a number of District 5 residents who are opposed to the Lowry Vista redevelopment. It was never easy to tell if the comments

were from fully informed individuals (clearly some were) or from people responding to erroneous information. But it was obvious that many responses were inspired by incorrect statements - for example, the **Lowry Vista development absolutely will NOT pave over the wetlands!**

If you would like to watch a replay of the January 25, 2010 Council meeting where we voted on this rezoning, please visit www.denvergov.org/denver8tv. I also have an article on YourHub.com regarding Lowry Vista, traffic mitigation and why I supported the rezoning.

Please take a look inside, at page 2 of this issue, for more information on the Colorado Department of Public Health & Environment's requirements for any development that might occur on the landfill, and for some background on the Westerly Creek Dam and wetlands.

~ Marcía

Lowry Vista - Next Steps with CDPHE

Now that the Lowry Vista has gotten the go ahead from the City on its development plans, IRG will need to submit their plans and obtain approval from the Colorado Department of Public Health & Environment (CDPHE) as well as the Air Force, to actually develop the project. CDPHE's primary concern is ensuring that the selected plan and design will be protective of human health and the environment.

In general, the factors that will be considered include:

- Determining that the plan is technically feasible
- Appropriate financial assurances (insurance) are provided
- An adequate "Materials Management Plan" is in place to address contingencies with discovered or disturbed materials.
- Public and stakeholder involvement
- Officially adopt changes in the State's Environmental Covenant for the landfill site
- An agreement from the Air Force for these changes (since they are ultimately liable for the property)

Getting to Know... The Westerly Creek Dam & Wetlands

In 1991, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers completed construction of the Westerly Creek Dam as part of a regional flood control system. The 9,100-foot long dam was created from 3 million cubic yards of compacted dirt, and can hold 4,000 acre-feet of water. For comparison, 1 acre-foot is equal to the amount of water a four-person household would use in one year!

Before the dam was built, the wetlands did not exist. The wetlands were developed after the dam was built, in an area excavated for dirt used in the embankment. Wetlands play an important role in controlling flood waters. Wetlands are natural sponges that store water and then slowly release it, so that flood waters are more likely to soak into the ground than continue downstream.

The wetlands along Westerly Creek provide valuable functions such as wildlife habitat, bank stabilization, and floodwater storage. They also provide food, nesting and resting sites, and protective cover for a variety of animals, including red-tailed hawks, owls, deer, foxes, raccoons, and skunks.

Typically, people are not allowed to access a dam for recreational uses. However, the Lowry Redevelopment Authority and Denver Parks & Recreation asked the Urban Drainage & Flood Control District (responsible for the maintenance of the dam) to allow paths to be built on top of the dam, so that the public could use the path for walking, running and enjoying the views, and the District agreed to do so.

While the top of the Westerly Creek Dam is used recreationally, the grass on the sides of the dam provide important erosion control. If the vegetation is disturbed, or foot-paths are worn, rain will eventually create channels that weaken the earthen sides of the dam. Unfortunately, many people and their pets venture off the ramps and gravel path on top of the dam, damaging the natural vegetation and the dam structure.

It is difficult to quantify the effects that the Lowry Vista development might have on the Westerly Creek Dam and its wetlands. At the public hearing for the rezoning of the landfill site, we heard from an ecologist



Please stick to paths and obey posted signage when you use the Westerly Creek Dam!

who stated that, based on review of the buffer area portion of the preliminary site plans, she did not generally believe the wildlife who use and live in the Westerly Creek wetlands would be significantly affected by the development of the Lowry Vista property. Although, more detailed review of the final development plans would need to be conducted to better understand the effects on the wildlife.

Lowry Vista will also be required to provide onsite water quality ponds to clean any flows that could be transported into the wetlands.

City Will Begin Measuring for MMD Distance Requirements

The Denver Department of Excise & Licenses began accepting applications for the newly created Medical Marijuana Dispensary license on Monday, February 8th.

All dispensaries currently in operation must apply for a MMD license prior to March 1st. **Medical Marijuana Dispensaries that applied for their original sales tax license af-**

ter December 15, 2010, and do not meet the 1,000-foot distance requirements recently set by City Council will not be eligible for the new MMD license. Excise & License will measure the distance between MMDs and schools once license applications have been submitted.

Full details of the new licensing process, including the medical mari-

juana dispensary application, are available at www.denvergov.org/Excise_and_Licenses. The Council ordinance adopting regulations governing dispensaries is also available on the Excise and Licenses website.

Excise and Licenses is open from 7:30 a.m. to 4 p.m., Monday - Friday and is located at 201 West Colfax, Suite 206.

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4th Version of Draft Zoning Code Available

The 4th draft of the New Denver Zoning Code and map is now available for viewing at www.newcodedenver.org.

Residents have attended listening sessions and office hours, e-mailed, called and met with Planning staff, and this draft reflects substantial input from the Denver community since last fall.

Updates and improvements incorporated in Draft # 4 include:

- Clearer and more flexible approach to nonconforming uses and structures
- New alternatives that provide more flexibility in meeting build-to and ground story activation requirements
- Clearer standards for large-scale and convenience retail development
- Reinstatement and improvement of the residential bulk plane (which was removed in Draft # 3), resulting in support of solar objectives and the ability to shape buildings that fit

their contexts.

- Reformatting of the use tables in each context to provide more information and make it easier and faster to find.

Planning staff will hold office hours on Tuesday, February 9th from 3 to 5 p.m. and Thursday, February 11th from 11 a.m. to 2 pm. Both sessions will be held in the Webb building, 201 W. Colfax, in the 4th floor conference room. If you plan to attend the office hours, please register [here](#) so that adequate staff is present.

On Wednesday, February 17th, the Denver Planning Board will hold a formal public hearing on the fourth and final draft of the new zoning code. **The hearing will begin at 3 p.m. in the 4th floor conference room of the Webb building, 201 W. Colfax.**

For more information on the next steps in the new code adoption schedule, please visit the [New Code webpage](#).

East Side Mobility Plan

The 2nd [East Side Mobility Plan](#) public meeting will take place on Wednesday, February 24, 2010.

***East Side Mobility Plan
Public Meeting
Wednesday, February
24th
5:30 - 7:30 p.m.
Denver School of the
Arts***

I hope you will come and learn about the East Side Mobility Plan and help identify solutions to mobility issues in the East Side Travel Shed (I-70 to Leetsdale Drive between Monaco Parkway and Yosemite Street). The public workshop will include briefings by the project team and interactive displays that will help you identify potential solutions - ranging from upgrading sidewalks to improving roadways and transit - to mobility issues throughout the area.

Please visit www.denvergov.org/eastside for more information.

Old House Workshops at the Molkery - February 20th

Denver's Old House Society, a non-profit dedicated to educating owners of old (50+ years) houses and helping them protect their neighborhoods, will host "Saturday Morning Workshops" on February 20th at the Molkery, 6820 E. 12th St.

Three 45-minute workshops will be offered. Registration begins at 8:30 a.m. and the first workshop is at 9:00 a.m. The cost is \$10 per per-

son. You can register on-line at www.DenversOldHouseSociety.org.

The workshops will cover masonry, windows and appropriate exterior colors for architectural styles of old houses. The sequence of workshops and the presenters are posted on the Society's web site.

"Saturday Morning Workshops" are designed to give home owners suc-

cinct, but vital information, specifically crafted for old houses. The event also allows home owners to talk with other old-house lovers and exchange information about caring for their homes. The Denver Old House Society Advocacy Committee will be available to answer questions about Denver's new proposed zoning code and other issues that affect neighborhoods.

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Denver's Road Home 5th Annual PJ Party

Denver's Road Home is a call to end homelessness as we know it in Denver, within ten years.

On January 28th, hundreds of pajama-clad partygoers attended the 5th Annual PJ Party, to benefit Denver's Road Home. Every year, this Denver's Road Home event is a favorite of mine. This year, my husband and I were invited to ride the Zamboni during the Avalanche game in support of the PJ Party.

More than \$860,000 was raised throughout the week leading up to the PJ Party - that's a new record! Proceeds benefit the homeless in our community and reminds all of us that not everyone has a place to put



on their pjs and go to bed at night.

The monies raised at this event help to support the critical safety net of homeless services in Denver, like emergency shelters, substance abuse counseling and transitional housing - to name a few.

"Meet Your Match" at the Denver Municipal Animal Shelter this Valentine's Day!

Save a life, give the gift of love, and adopt! From noon to 4 p.m. on Sunday, February 14th, the Denver Municipal Animal Shelter will open for adoptions only, and offer reduced adoption fees (\$85 for dogs, \$50 for cats, and \$10 for small animals). Volunteers will be on hand playing match-maker between potential adopters and their future pets. To learn more, visit www.denvergov.org/animalcare. The Denver Municipal Animal Shelter is located at 678 S. Jason Street.

SAVE the DATE!

**Westerly Creek Greenway
Master Plan
Public Meeting #2**

**Tuesday, March 23, 2010
6:30 - 8:00 p.m.
Westerly Creek School
8800 E. 28th Avenue**

Congrats to Neighborhood Award Winners!

Congratulations to **Betty Aguilar** and **John Russell** from East Montclair, **Ray Allen** from the Bellevue-Hale, and **Andrew Brock** from George Washington.

These District 5 residents were awarded the 2009 Neighborhood Stars Award from Inter-

Neighborhood Cooperation (INC), for making a difference in their neighborhood and improve the quality of life in our city.

INC represents ALL Denver neighborhoods, working together to make Denver a better place to live.

Manager of Safety Newsletter Now Available Online



under Mayor Hick-enlooper’s administration, is the civilian authority over the Denver Police, Fire, and Sheriff Departments.

The Manager of Safety, Al LaCabe, Jr.

Manager LaCabe’s Newsletter is now available online, at www.denvergov.org/safety.

The Manager of Safety is responsible for the following:

- Public Safety Budget
- Denver Police, Fire & Sheriff
- Cadet Program

- Safety Recruitment
- Discipline and Promotions
- Communications Center (911)
- Safe City Office
- Community Corrections
- EEO and Records Management
- Crime Prevention & Control

Parks & Rec Offers Coyote Hazing Training

- Learn about urban coyotes, why they are here, how behavior is changing, and what we can do.
- Discover what hazing is and how we can reshape coyote behavior to avoid contact with people.

- Understand how to keep your pets safe and deter coyotes from entering your yard.
- Contact [Ashley DeLaup](#), (303) 455-0785 for more information.

WHEN

- February 9th - 10 to 11:30 a.m.
- February 11th - 10 to 11:30 a.m.
- February 18th - 10 to 11:30 a.m.
- February 25th - 10 to 11:30 a.m.
- March 3rd - 10 to 11:30 a.m.
- March 11th - 10 to 11:30 a.m.
- March 18th - 10 to 11:30 a.m.
- March 25th - 10 to 11:30 a.m.
- April 1st - 10 to 11:30 a.m.

WHERE

- City Park - Parking lot south of Ferril Lake, by Pavilion
- Eastmoor Park - Parking lot South of E. Princeton Avenue
- Bible Park - North parking lot at Yale & Quebec
- Cook Park Rec Center - 7100 Cherry Creek Drive South
- Washington Park Rec Center - 701 S. Franklin Street
- Westerly Creek Park - Picnic area on MLK Blvd & Beeler Ave
- Bear Creek Park - Parking lot on S. Raleigh under I-285
- Southmoor Park - Playground east of S. Poplar Street
- Eisenhower Rec Center - 4300 E. Dartmouth Avenue

GREEN Tip -

Donate your unwanted phone books to The Gabriel Foundation

In many cases, unwanted phone books end up in the recycling bin, or worse, the trash.

But check out this neat idea - you can pass them on to parrots and other birds at The Gabriel Foundation, a nonprofit parrot welfare organization licensed by the state of Colorado. The books are put in the cages for the birds to shred.



You can drop off the books at 1025 Acoma Street. The overflow will be sent to the foundation’s compound in Elizabeth. For more information, contact [The Gabriel Foundation](#), (303) 695-5900.

Upcoming SCFD Free Days

Denver Zoo

Tuesday, February 16th

Denver Museum of Nature & Science

Sunday, February 21st

Monday, March 1st

Sunday, April 18th

Denver Art Museum

Saturday, March 6th

Saturday, April 3rd

Denver Center for the Performing

Arts - Program operates as a ticket drawing. [Apply for free tickets.](#)

Denver Botanic Gardens

Friday, March 5th

Friday, April 2nd

@ Chatfield location only

Monday, February 15th

Thursday, April 22nd

@ 1005 York Street location only



Citizens of the
Scientific & Cultural
Facilities District

Making It Possible.

Visit www.scfd.org for more
information about upcoming
FREE DAYS.

Denver Trivia Question for February

Courtesy of Rich Delanoy

At the Denver Museum of Nature and Science, a diorama artist painted 8 tiny objects in various backgrounds as his personal signature. What are these 8 little objects?

- A) Unicorns
- B) Trolls
- C) Smiley Faces
- D) Gnomes

Answers to the monthly Denver trivia question can be found on [my webpage](#).

Can't get enough City
news? You don't need to
wait for my newsletter...
You can stay up-to-date by
visiting my website:

[www.denvergov.org/
councildistrict5](http://www.denvergov.org/councildistrict5)

Please encourage your
friends and neighbors to
sign up!

Stay Connected...

The City & County of Denver provides streaming video of Denver 8 TV programming. You can view [LIVE](#) as it is scheduled, or you can watch a variety of videos on demand, including archived coverage of City Council meetings and City-produced local shows. For direct access, [visit](#) www.denvergov.org/Denver8online anytime!

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