

**Citizens' Capital Improvement Plan Committee (CCIPC)**  
**October 30, 2014**  
**FINAL MEETING SUMMARY**

**Attendance**

Melissa Beck	Lindsay Gomez	Leanna Principe
Larry Coates	Harriet Hall	Ron Slinger
Michelle DeLaria	Cindi Kreutzer	Janet Steinkamp
Nancy Ford	John Malito	Don Wood
Ascenzo Di Giacomo	Kelly Mueldener	
Michelle Glasmann	T.O. Owens	

Presenters and Observers: Bryan Archer, Mike Elms, Lori, Gillis, Tom Miller, and Bill Ray

Facilitation Team: Heather Bergman (Peak Facilitation) and Niki Koszalka

One member of the public also attended.

**Welcome**

The facilitator welcomed the Committee and proceeded with introductions.

**City of Arvada: Resident Survey 2013 (Tom Miller, National Research Center)**

The resident survey serves as guidance for policy decisions and shows how sustained capital improvement over time improves the quality of life of citizens.

- General information about citizen surveying through the National Research Center (NRC):
  - A citizen survey is a broad survey of quality of life, public trust, community engagement, quality of service, demographics, policy questions, etc.
  - The information gained can be used to help to make budget, infrastructure plan, strategic plan, policy, and program decisions as well as for an evaluation of services. This can be very instructive for staff, Council, and committees.
  - It is a sample of a group; it is not a census.
  - The NRC has surveyed Arvada for more than 20 years and collected earlier Arvada surveys performed by other firms and added those to the NRC database. .
  - In 1991, NRC collected surveys from all over the country and put together a set of benchmarks called “norms” to determine what citizens usually think about their services. These norms provide an average across the country and add a dimension to a survey that would not be available without the benchmarks.
  - NRC has surveyed over 600 jurisdictions with a population over 5,000 all over the country. This provides the ability to compare Arvada to other areas in the country and provides robust resources to understand how Arvada compares.
  - Survey results during the recession showed NRC some interesting information.
    - NRC decided to attempt to determine how influenced the citizen base is by adverse economic conditions and found unsurprisingly that there was concern about job growth being too slow.
    - The survey also indicated citizen perceptions about the overall quality of life in these jurisdictions remained the same. The residents did not feel their

quality of life or of services was changing for the worse, and in many cases seemed to sustain and even improve during the recession.

- The surveys also showed that lack of trust in government is often more on the state and federal level and not directed toward local governments.
- Information specific to the Arvada surveys:
  - It is a statistically valid survey, mailed out to 2400 households.
  - Arvada had a 34% response rate. For comparison, the average response rate for phone surveys that are often used on news reports is 9%.
  - When the data from the survey is compiled, NRC looks at the aggregate demographics of respondents. Often the respondents include older residents and citizens less likely to be of color, more likely to be property owners, and more likely to have a higher income.
  - The proper technique is to weight the data by looking at census data to determine the right demographic profile. This allows for the volume of missing categories to match other demographics.
- Seven key learnings from the Arvada survey:
  - Key Learning #1: Arvada residents experience a high quality of life.
    - From 2009-2013, the percentage was 93-95%, which puts Arvada above the national benchmarks.
    - Arvada also has a higher-than-average percentage of people who think quality of life will continue to get better.
  - Key Learning #2: Residents consider access to parks, recreation and Arvada's attractiveness/cleanliness it's top three characteristics. (Arvada is above average compared to other surveys in the USA.)
  - Key Learning #3: Residents continue to feel safe in their neighborhoods.
    - Across the country, an indication for a high quality of life is most influenced by safety and the economy.
    - The ratings from citizens regarding feeling safe from violent crime are better in Arvada than other survey jurisdictions.
    - The victimization rate (reported being a victim of violent crime) is 11%.
    - Arvada citizens feel more safe from violent and property crimes in their own neighborhoods than outside of their neighborhoods.
  - Key Learning #4: Evaluation of City services and non-City services mostly were stable over time, with several improvements and no declines.
    - From 1981 to 2013, there has been a 20% increase in satisfaction with City services.
    - In 2013, 58% of residents felt "very satisfied or satisfied" with the services provided by the City.
  - Key Learning #5: City of Arvada government performance and City employees are rated highly.
    - The survey indicated the citizens feel positive and believe government performance and City employees will only get better over time.
    - Arvada is above national benchmarks for value of services for taxes paid and the overall direction being taken by the City.
  - Key Learning #6: Residents support growth in the local economy.
    - The survey indicates 73% of respondents "strongly" or "somewhat" support more retail development.

- The survey information indicates, historically, Arvada has shown support for retail development.
- Key Learning #7: Concerns with traffic were similar to concerns in 2011 but have steadily declined since 1997.
  - Since 1997, there have been huge improvements.
  - Even attractive communities such as Arvada do not usually indicate traffic issues getting better. Each iteration of the survey showed traffic getting better and better.
- Other improvements from 1997 include air quality, parks, recreation, mass transit planning, opportunities for eating out, and bike-ability.
- Note: City staff City will post the final survey results online.

### **Questions/Answers**

- *How is the decision reached to determine who will be surveyed?* US Census data is utilized in constructing a sample group that is representative of the community. Then, a probability sample method is used and participants are selected using a list of all addresses in Arvada, obtained from the US Postal Service.
- *Does the survey go to the same people every year or do the participants change?* The participants change for each survey. The sample is of 2,400 households. The likelihood one certain person will get chosen is very small.
- *For apartment addresses, does the survey sample the tenants or the property owners?* The survey is designed to sample the residents of units regardless of whether they are owner or renter. This gives a broader perspective.
- *When a certain demographic is under-represented in survey results, how is the volume increased?* If the underrepresented demographic is at half in the sample, it gets doubled; if it is at a third, a little more than a half is added. The idea is to balance the characteristics that will make the demographic of the sample be the same as the demographic of the larger community. The broader idea is not to just have 700 people's opinions. To understand what the community thinks, those 700 people must represent, within in a margin of error, the whole.
- *If a category in the survey does not have enough representation, is it the practice of NRC to go out with the intent to improve numbers in that area?* Only in some very rare instances. NRC does not want surveys to be weighted by too many multipliers. It is often a challenge to get participation from Spanish speakers and African Americans.
- *How is increased survey participation encouraged?* NRC has a packet of ideas/recommendations that are provided to clients in regard to participation. It is up to the client to utilize the information. In Arvada, once the sample addresses have been selected, the City sends a series of postcards (informing the resident of their selection, following up on receipt, and following up on completion). Part of the methodology for participation is to have multiple contacts with the participant often through reminders.
- *Relating to NRC's findings about quality of life, in Colorado are there areas that surveys indicate do not have a good quality of life?* No, not in Colorado. It is rare to find any jurisdictions whose majority of citizens do not give a rating or good or above to quality of life. This is why benchmarks are so important--they give a better understanding and comparison.
- *In terms of the overall survey, do the respondents have the information they need to answer questions?* It is most likely they do not. They may not be making informed decisions, but the survey still provides important information to the government. The utility of the survey is to have a representative sample of the thinking of citizens.

- *The percentage of residents supporting additional retail development decreased in 2013. Could the issue with Walmart have impacted the results?* The surveys do not indicate the reason, but it is possible that had an impact. As the percentages increase or decrease, it is important for leaders to look at why the change happened and what can be learned.
- *Related to support for retail development, the percentage has been decreasing. Is this considered a trend?* Not necessarily. The percentage decrease is worthwhile for the City to look and consider why it is a trend and if it will bounce back. Not every change in percentage is something that is reflective of what is happening in the community as a whole because of the margin of error.
- *On the survey, are “somewhat support” and “somewhat oppose” basically neutral?* These are viewed as somewhat more decided than neutral, but they are clumped with “support” and “oppose” in our summaries. It is important to consider the way the summary metrics are presented; it is important that the summary is not the only thing considered by the City. The report has full appendices so people can explore the data on their own. The full final citizen survey will be made available by the City on the CCIPIC website.
- *Could the traffic percentages be skewed because lots of people come out of state and are comparing Arvada traffic to Los Angeles or other major areas?* Probably not. The demographics show 50% of Arvada residence to have lived here for more than 15-20 years.
- *Considering the traffic improvements percentages increase, could the attention given to roads/traffic in the last CIP (2007) be the reason for the increase?* The surveys do not indicate the why; however, this group should consider this and realize the importance of the CCIPC.
- *How is the air quality compared to other survey jurisdictions?* Across the country, there is a trend that air quality is looking better to respondents. People in America are experiencing better air.
- *Are incentives ever used to increase survey response rates?* It has been considered, but incentives tend not to be used in a general citizen survey. This would mean giving away tax money, which is legally challenging.
- *In general, what demographic is underrepresented in Arvada’s survey compared to overall the City demographics?* Often lower income, minorities, and renters are underrepresented.
- *Is there a qualitative relationship to the outlook of people and the trend of the answers?* This motivated NRC to look at changes in attitudes during the recession. The thought was answers would be polluted across the board, and but NRC did not find this to be true.
- *Is NRC changing the approach to the survey to meet the trends of younger respondents?* This is currently a challenge for all in the research survey field. There is an option to complete the survey online rather than the respondent returning the survey through the mail. Even with this option, it is still hard to get youth (18+ years old) to participate.

#### **Arvada Comprehensive Plan – Mike Elms, Community Development Director**

- For the history of Arvada comprehensive plans (8 plans since 1964), please see handout online.
- On October 6, 2014, the City adopted and Council ratified the comprehensive plans and it is broken out into sections with maps and appendices separately.
- The plan articulates community shared values and vision for the future by providing 20-year outlooks.
- It is used by the City and others to direct capital investment, policies, and programs, and is tied to Council’s strategic plan.
- The comprehensive plan took into consideration and included the following:
  - Increased number of citizens(30,000 additional by 2035);
  - Near build-out of vacant land by 2035;

- Redevelopment becoming an increasingly important issue;
- Continued demand on public infrastructure;
- Indicated by the 2010 census, high concentration of seniors with persons of 65+ years old in 25% of houses;
- Increased diversity with minority populations growing more than in the previous 10 years;
- Tripled number of 70+ year olds; and
- Continued growth.
  - Arvada is lower in percentage of growth than most other neighboring towns.
  - The 4.2% growth rate is not large when compared to the neighboring towns.
- The Community Vision came out of multiple stakeholder meetings and included work from 200 high school students.
- Land Use Plan:
  - A map identified where development could occur, different densities, and proposed land uses;
  - Council made a few changes (at 72nd and Indiana, Council changed the development proposal to be five units/acre instead of the 12 units/acre proposed by staff); and
  - At Ralston Road Council felt the plan needed to be completed first, and then they should do additional work with the community, and finally present the designations.
- Roadway needs (Indiana Street, 64<sup>th</sup> Ave, 72<sup>nd</sup> Ave, 80<sup>th</sup> Ave; Ward/Alkire)
- Transit needs:
  - The community is excited about stations but residents also have other transit needs. Wadsworth is an area of need for rapid transit or dedicated bus lanes.
  - Olde Town Arvada needs a circulator.
  - The area from Candelas to Ward Road Station has identified needs.
  - RTD Stations will open and will put in circulators that may cut out other lines; the community may have identified needs for transit access if this occurs.
  - Bicycle connections are needed, including additional on-street bike lanes and completion of connections.
  - Pedestrian connections are needed including completing missing sidewalks and improvement near Gold Line stations.
- Public safety needs:
  - A new justice center
  - Additional community stations in Candelas area
- The Parks Department is updating their master plan and when it is completed, it will become part of the Comprehensive Plan.
- Vibrant neighborhoods:
  - The City has instituted code enforcement retraining with hopes to work on neighborhood engagement and the division is now named “Neighborhood Services.”
  - The City implemented the “Party Van,” which has all the supplies needed to set up a block party.
  - The City is working with the food bank.
  - The City is planning for a tool bank/library starting next year.

### **Questions and Answers**

- *What are the criteria used or who decided the roadway needs?* The staff and community decided roadway needs.

- *What does “roadway improvement” mean?* Usually it refers to widening roads and completion/input of sidewalks. It may also include bike lanes or creating better road connections.
- *Can this committee receive information on crime rates in Arvada?* Yes. Part of the story on crime statistics is the philosophy of the Police Chief, which is a focus on service delivery and connecting/understanding the public safety needs of the community. (NOTE: This has been posted on the Committee website.)
- *How does changing public perspective impact the Comprehensive Plan? Do you see mostly consistent public support for the Comp Plan?* It is the City’s finding that people do not get involved until things impact them directly. Most have no idea what comprehensive plans are or what they say.
- *Is Arvada planning to join Lakewood’s attempts to change the Colorado construction defect laws? Does high-density housing in the Comp Plan differentiate between apartments, condos, or townhomes?* The government cannot dictate if a development is owner- or renter-occupied or require developers to build only for sale. Yes, Arvada is highly concerned about the impacts of the construction defect law. This is resulting in a lot of class action law suits in multifamily developments. This has caused insurance companies to raise rates so high that it is almost impossible to build for-sale multifamily units. Arvada is taking the approach to watch and see what happens in Lakewood and let them take the lead. It may spur the Legislature to change condominium laws.
- *Is the recent apartment boom changing the execution of the Comprehensive Plan?* No. The City and Council still see a need for a diversity of housing.
- *Does the economic market undermine the ability to execute the Plan?* For land use purposes, the quick answer is no.
- *Can the City create incentives for buildings to be owner-occupied instead of rental?* That is a policy-level decision, but is not currently being discussed by the Council. *Would it be accurate to say that according to the Comprehensive Plan, density is in the southeast and east of the City and development is less dense in the west?* Yes.
- *Is most of the commercial and property tax generation is in the southeast and south. too?* Yes, the major retail corridor is Wadsworth.
- *Does the Comprehensive Plan have emphasis or goals for corridor densification to even out the tax generation?* The City would like to see more tax generation on Indiana and 64<sup>th</sup> and in some other areas as well, but retail consultants say some areas are not good corridors. The City wants to maintain job opportunities in industrial areas. Retail needs density. There are not enough roofs out west for retail.
- *Does Arvada have a growth ordinance?* There was a growth ordinance, but it was allowed to lapse 3 years ago as the City was not coming close to the 1.6% growth maximum specified in the ordinance.
- *What are the tax generation impacts from industrial, retail, and property? Are the statistics available to the Committee?* The City will provide specific data on cost-benefit factors for industrial and other kinds of land.
- *Regarding neighborhood dissension in the area of the intersection at 72<sup>nd</sup>, was this due to the existing poor intersection and traffic or specific concerns about new development?* The cause of the concerns was not specifically identified. There were some people who complained about traffic but more of the concern articulated at meetings was about the quality of life.

### **Additional Questions/Answers**

- *What is the Walmart sales tax projection?* The Walmart contract is based on an agreement with the Arvada Urban Renewal Authority from 2003. The land is locked up, and the City cannot touch it until 2023.
- *How much is Arvada giving back to Walmart developers?* The short answer is the city is not giving any money directly to the developers. If there is time and interest, the City is happy to share this information.
- *What is the process for the Committee down the road?* The facilitator will work with the Committee on the process; the path is for the Committee to choose. Peak Facilitation will give the group a rough outline of the steps that lie ahead and a common order in which groups take those steps. The Committee can then decide how to proceed.
- *Is there a standard write-up format for all the projects on the list from last week?* Yes, though some more so than others. There is less detail on the unfunded projects than on the funded list. The City can make that available.
- *In light of the 10-year plan with \$500 million in unfunded projects, is there a structural problem in the City's budgeting, revenue, and spending approach?* The \$500 million is a wish list. It is important for that to be emphasized when discussing financial viability. This group is to decide what should remain on the wish list and what the City needs to pay attention to first. The City knows about the transportation challenges and is unsure how to fix them.
- *Were the City criteria posted for interested Committee members to use for the upcoming presentations?* The City did post the staff criteria used in evaluating capital projects. Committee members should use it if it is helpful but should not feel obligated to use the criteria. Eventually, this group will come up with its own criteria.