

HOUSING, NEIGHBORHOOD SERVICES & REDEVELOPMENT POLICY COMMITTEE  
December 8, 2020

Members Present:        *Council Member, Chair Crystal Murillo*  
                                 *Council Member, Vice-Chair Francoise Bergan*  
                                 *Council Member, Alison Coombs*

Others Present:         George Adams, Andrea Amonick, Lana Dalton, Liz Fuselier, Lindsay Hammond, Karen Hancock, Chance Horiuchi, Tim Joyce, Daniel Krzyzanowski, Signy Mikita, Mindy Parnes, Jessica Prosser, Melissa Rogers, Melinda Townsend, Roberto Venegas, Sandra Youngman, Cecilia Zapata

### WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

Council Member Murillo welcomed everyone to the meeting.

### MINUTES

The Committee unanimously approved the November 12, 2020 meeting minutes.

### ANNOUNCEMENTS

Jessica Prosser, director of Housing and Community Services announced and introduced Lana Dalton, the City's new Homeless Program-Manager.

### NEW ITEMS

#### **RESOLUTION TO TEMPORARILY SUSPEND ENFORCEMENT OF CITY CODE SECTION 46-4.6.3.B.4 AT 3293 OAKLAND STREET**

##### Summary of Issue and Discussion

As COVID-19 has continued to impact Aurora, assistance and protective measures for those most vulnerable in our community have continued. As we move into colder months, our population of people experiencing homelessness with a need for shelter will increase, thus increasing public health concerns. Aurora is also seeing an increase in encampments and people living in their cars. This is a public health issue and the City is working with partners to identify additional sheltering space to accommodate the need. Additional shelter space would be funded with County CARES funds through the end of the year and then HUD Emergency Solutions Grant (ESG-CV) funds starting in January. Eligible activities for ESG-CV include: Emergency shelter, housing stability, homelessness prevention, rapid re-housing, whole family health and wellness and support for Homeless Management Information Systems (HMIS).

Jessica Prosser presented the resolution to allow "Safe Parking" (sleeping in vehicles) exclusively at the 3293 Oakland Street shelter.

Questions/Comments – CM Bergan and CM Murillo asked for clarification about the end date of the resolution. Jessica responded that it coincides with either the end date of the Disaster Declaration and/or the end of the lease and operations at 3293 Oakland St., April 30, 2021. However, after the meeting, Assistant City Attorney Tim Joyce clarified by email, "the duration of the regulation proposed can only be as long as there is a disaster declaration by the City. A disaster declaration allows the City Manager to promulgate regulation necessary to protect life and property and preserve critical resources. Once the disaster declaration is terminated all the promulgated regulations will terminate."

Outcome – The Committee unanimously agreed to move the Resolution to study session consent.

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## **HOUSING, NEIGHBORHOOD SERVICES AND REDEVELOPMENT POLICY COMMITTEE REVIEW OF SCOPE AND NAME**

### Summary of Issue and Discussion

The Neighborhood Services department finalized a reorganization and department name change on June 1, 2020. The department is now named Housing and Community Services.

On August 5, 2020, the Housing, Neighborhood Services and Redevelopment Policy Committee members reviewed the current Council Rules which define the Housing, Neighborhood Services and Redevelopment Committee as follows:

### **Housing, Neighborhood Services and Redevelopment Committee**

The Housing, Neighborhood Services and Redevelopment Committee shall recommend objectives and Initiatives in the following areas:

1. Neighborhood stability and code enforcement
  - a. City housing and animal codes
  - b. Policies and procedures of code enforcement
2. Incentives for redevelopment
3. Urban Renewal projects
  - a. Redevelopment policies
  - b. Economic development and business/Chamber groups (urban renewal)
4. Community housing needs
  - a. Community development programs (including housing counseling and homelessness prevention programs)
  - b. Programs to address the foreclosure issue (including vacant property registration and the Neighborhood Stabilization Program)
5. Programs to strengthen and enhance neighborhood organizations and address neighborhood and business community issues including:
  - a. Neighborhood liaison programs, including the Neighborhood Fence Replacement Program
  - b. Graffiti
  - c. Citizens' Code Enforcement Academy
  - d. Learn about Aurora, Neighbor to Neighbor roundtables, and the Neighborhood Referral Program
6. Annual reports from the following boards and commissions:
  - a. Aurora Housing Authority
  - b. Building Code, Contractors Appeals & Standards Board

After discussion, the Committee agreed to defer to the Rules Committee for review of the Housing, Neighborhood Services and Redevelopment Policy Committee scope and possible name change. The Housing, Neighborhood Services and Redevelopment Policy Committee members deferred to the Rules Committee to review the committee's scope to assure it falls in line with the direction of the Committee. The Rules Committee was not able to accommodate the request in a timely manner, and therefore it was agreed to return the agenda item to the Housing, Neighborhood Services and Redevelopment Policy Committee for review. After review of the item on October 7, 2020, the Committee requested staff's support in identifying what the Committee is about, how they operate, and what the goals should be. Staff was to communicate via email with the Committee during the next month, and before the next committee meeting, especially when talking about specific text for the goals. A short presentation was to be given by staff at the next committee meeting

At the November 12, 2020 Housing, Neighborhood Services and Redevelopment Policy Committee meeting, CM Murillo reminded staff of the pending item and requested to have the item placed on the December meeting agenda.

In early December, Jessica convened staff from several departments to discuss the history, different objectives and initiatives associated with the policy committee. Staff discussed the best use of committee resources in light of the

fact many areas of overlap with other departments, committees, and boards. The conversation with staff focused on long-range redevelopment planning with an emphasis on community engagement. Staff also discussed quality-of-life areas such as waste hauling, animal services, etc. The group affirmed a focus on housing and the implementation of a housing strategy. These foci will need to be captured by any council sub-committee.

Questions/Comments – Andrea Amonick discussed the process for consideration of some overlapping matters (e.g. urban renewal projects) which bypass policy committees and are discussed by the AURA (the Aurora Urban Renewal Authority) Board. CM Coombs asked whether these discussions could be more focused within the committee, which is familiar with the topics and may be able to look more closely at topics pertaining to redevelopment than the Board in general. Andrea responded that the Board awaits two new members but is well-equipped to discuss redevelopment matters despite its large scope. Andrea detailed selections from the Board’s thirteen goals which are aligned with those of the Policy Committee and are generally considered by Council without intermediary consideration by sub-committees. CM Bergan indicated the over-arching goals of the Board and the Policy Committee have a lot of overlap. CM Coombs clarified her question as to whether AURA issues can be considered within the Policy committee for coordinating with policy objectives, she requested a review in light of the housing survey results. CM Murillo enumerated the factors that will likely need to resolve before moving forward in combining, restructuring, or otherwise finalizing changes to the name and scope of the Committee. CM Murillo further described hesitation with combining based on key distinctions between development of land and development of communities. CM Coombs circled back to the reason for the discussion of committee name arising from the change of name (from “Neighborhood Services”). Mindy added that department aims to do a lot of sub-area planning that requires community engagement. CM Bergan mentioned overlap of economic impact with housing discussions. She requested a presentation of plans to include economic impact (e.g. what urban development will mean for area jobs). Andrea responded process for urban renewal planning includes community engagement and communicating community interests to council and the board. The draft is reviewed by planning commission before going to study session as a whole. CM Murillo reiterated the distinctions between the logistical and social development of an undeveloped area and restoring existing neighborhoods. CM Coombs, *et al.* discussed opportunities for collaboration between the committees given shared interests and goals. CM Bergan requested a presentation on economic impact of City Center development. Andrea described community engagement efforts to include diverse voices in the plan and said they would be able to further present on their findings pursuant to CM Bergan’s request.

Outcome – The conversation provided the components of the Committee’s direction, but definitive next steps can neither be determined nor taken without the resolution of other matters.

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## **CITY CENTER VISION PROJECT UPDATE**

### **Summary of Issue and Discussion**

The City Center area has long been a priority area for development and planning efforts for Aurora. Throughout the 1980s, 1990s, and into the 2000s, the city conducted a number of studies and reports for the purpose of encouraging quality development in the city center area - those areas east of I-225 to the north and south of Alameda Parkway.

In February 2017, RTD opened the Aurora Line (R line) light rail service through Aurora. The city center location represents the third of the three major transit-oriented development (TOD) hubs along the Aurora Line (R Line) – the first two being Colfax Station and Nine Mile Station. This trio of locations also represents the three mixed-use, high density Urban District place types identified and prioritized in the Aurora Places Comprehensive Plan. A new development proposal for the Metro Center property is under review, while the Aurora Town Center has redevelopment plans for a portion of the site, the first of what is likely to be a long-term effort to further develop and enhance the mall site. While the city has identified the area as a critical location and a portion of the study area has an urban renewal plan (2009) in place, there is not a documented vision and master development framework for the full study area against which to evaluate development proposals, incentives requests, and infrastructure investments. The attached map identifies these key property holdings.

To help shape and support this development interest, the city has initiated a planning process to develop a vision and development framework for the area. This process was anticipated to kick off in March/April and take 6 months to complete, however Covid-19 delayed the initiation of the steering committee and public input process. The public process kicked off this Summer and the first two rounds of public engagement have been completed. The Housing, Neighborhood Services and Redevelopment Policy Committee was provided a preview of the project and process at the March 11, 2020, meeting.

Despite a delayed start due to Covid-19, the project was initiated earlier in 2020. The project team has facilitated the steering committee and community engagement process, as well as started development of guiding principles and articulation of the community's vision for future development in the area. Key elements of the process include:

#### *Steering Committee*

The project is supported by a steering committee whose role is to provide oversight on process and input on key issues. The steering committee is comprised of City Council representatives, Planning and Zoning Commission representatives, major property owners (including Metro Center and Town Center at Aurora), nearby residents, RTD and Arapahoe County, and city staff. The steering committee has met periodically throughout the project and has been briefed on all aspects of the planning process.

#### *Community Engagement*

The city hosted virtual public meetings on August 6 and October 21. At these online events, participants learned about opportunities for growth and development in the City Center area, as well as similar urban development in other area cities. Speakers included Visit Aurora, AEDC, representatives from Parkside at City Center, and city staff. Participants also were invited to provide input into their desired development character and activities for the area.

Additionally, the city asked for community input through an online survey that was open to the entire Aurora community and available in English and Spanish. Over 860 responses were received and provided the project team with a wealth of information on key topics that are important to the community. There was a lot of support for an active "downtown" district at City Center that included a wide variety of uses and activities. Unique or locally-owned businesses were especially desirable as were high-quality public parks and plazas. Respondents supported the idea of a "park once and walk" type of district that was safe, convenient, and comfortable to move throughout the district. More detail on the public input will be provided as part of staff's presentation.

#### *Plan Development*

Staff has started to draft key elements and content of the vision and plan document. This content will reflect the community input received to date, staff recommendations, and any direction provided by City Council. A draft plan document will be presented to the public at a third and final stage of public engagement for review and further feedback. (No date has been set at this time.) Staff's Policy Committee presentation will review the project's goals as well as address the public input received and planning completed to date.

Staff presented a PowerPoint that detailed:

1. Project Overview
2. Understanding City Center
3. Public Input Summary
4. Draft Guiding Principles
5. Next Steps

Questions/Comments – CM Coombs said she was interested in hearing more about initiative from a standpoint of equity and inclusivity (of businesses and residents) standpoint. Staff responded that it was a recurring theme in the

customer feedback and could be provided. Another major theme in the feedback was an emphasis on unique, locally- and minority-owned businesses in the city center. This is already a strength within Aurora on Havana and Colfax.

CM Murillo expressed appreciation for the geographical visuals and reiterated her focus on equity, ensuring that development concentrates on accessible price points. Staff responded that this was a recurring and leading theme and is a priority focus.

Outcome – This item was informational only.

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### **MISCELLANEOUS MATTERS FOR CONSIDERATION**

There were no miscellaneous matters for consideration.

Next meeting: Wednesday, January 6, 2021 at 3:00 p.m. (Tentative)

Meeting adjourned at 4:24 p.m.

APPROVED:

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Committee Chair, Crystal Murillo