



NEWS RELEASE

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City of Wheat Ridge Adopts Mixed Use Zoning along Wadsworth Boulevard

WHEAT RIDGE – On July 11 the Wheat Ridge City Council unanimously adopted a new Mixed Use-Commercial (MU-C) zoning designation for numerous properties along the Wadsworth Boulevard corridor totaling 90 acres. The new zoning is designed specifically to implement the long range mixed use development vision for this important gateway corridor in Wheat Ridge as outlined in the comprehensive plan.

Mayor Jerry DiTullio noted, "I am proud of the broad outreach to the public and the affected property owners that preceded the official City Council hearings. Beginning in early 2010 with the Mayor's Wadsworth Summit we worked to bring all interested parties to the table and create a plan that would work to promote the interests of the community as a whole."

Public outreach regarding the Wadsworth rezoning began when the City drafted new mixed use zoning in 2010. As part of this process, the City utilized a variety of tools to gather input on the content of the new code, including meetings with property owners in geographic areas targeted for the new zoning. At these meetings, staff distributed surveys that asked property owners if they would be interested in City-initiated rezoning's once the new code was in place. After the mixed use zoning was adopted by City Council in September of 2010, the City continued outreach along the Wadsworth corridor to proceed with a rezoning to mixed use-commercial. This included another property-owner meeting, a larger neighborhood meeting, and five mailings to property owners throughout the rezoning process.

The adopted ordinances creates a new mixed use zone that will encourage a broad range of uses while not requiring applicants to complete the lengthy planned unit development application process. This ordinance will support economic development by streamlining the application and review process within the mixed use-commercial zone district. Council member Davis Reinhart supported this idea, "In addition to the zoning allowing for a very broad range of different land uses, it also has the advantage of permitting future development proposals to be reviewed and approved administratively. In the development business, time and predictability are highly valuable and the mixed use-commercial zoning designation respects that value."

"In adopting the new zoning for Wadsworth Boulevard, City Council wanted to be respectful of the rights of property owners on the corridor. To achieve that, the ordinance will not go into effect until August 13, 2011. Until then, property owners may request in writing to be removed from the area to be rezoned," said Joe DeMott, City Council member, District IV.

Mayor DiTullio agreed, "While Council did pass an amendment which allows property owners to "opt-out" within 30 days of the rezone passage, I would encourage all property owners to pro-actively consider the economic benefits of the rezoning. The "opt-out" amendment was a smart amendment supporting due process for all property owners."

With the application of the mixed use-commercial designation to the Wadsworth Corridor the City has taken a major step in the development process. "The City has reached an important milestone in moving forward the redevelopment vision for Wadsworth Boulevard with this action," said Ken Johnstone, Community Development Director. "The mixed use zoning, which strikes a balance between the free market and the community's long-term goals, is intended to encourage quality redevelopment on the corridor over time."

Council member Mike Stites agreed, "The new mixed use commercial zoning for Wadsworth does not prohibit more auto-oriented businesses, though in some cases it may limit their number or affect how they are designed. In that sense I see this zone change as a "win-win" for the property owners and the City."

Ultimately the new zoning designation will promote the long range vision of Wheat Ridge. Karen Berry, Council member added, "The community's vision, as established in several previously adopted planning documents, is to transition the Wadsworth Corridor into a high quality, walkable environment with community gathering places and compact, efficient land uses that offer a mix of storefronts and restaurants with offices and residences. The approval of the Wadsworth corridor rezoning gets us one step closer to that vision."

Joyce Jay, City Council member concurred, "We firmly believe that this zoning change opens the Wadsworth Corridor for the variety of business and residential opportunities that our City needs to accomplish what has been termed smart growth. This zoning enables mixed use and improved density with the correct blend of amenities that add value and "place" for a smaller city like Wheat Ridge."

For more information on the new mixed use zoning designation for Wadsworth, contact Sarah Showalter, Planner II at 303-235-2849 or via email at sshowalter@ci.wheatridge.co.us.

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