



March 20, 2014

Fellow West Valley City Councilmembers and interested members of the public,

After years of visioning meetings and planning exercises West Valley City in 2007 decided to proceed with plans to bring an international marketplace near the Utah Cultural Celebration Center and The Jordan River. Several terms were used to describe this project including "extra-extraordinary", 'mini-EPCOT Center', and 'Gardner Village, but themed multi-cultural'. We as a City were determined to make this a special destination spot and protect this gateway corner of our city from becoming an anywhere USA strip mall. The WVC City Council deployed all the redevelopment tools at our disposal to incentivize and kick start this Jordan River Marketplace. For the past six years we toiled and consulted with the development community through a Great Recession and several iterations of this project in countless strategy meetings. With deadlines rapidly approaching and no noticeable construction progress on the site, the West Valley City Council and Redevelopment Agency must consider whether to continue down this same path or to use this opportunity to take a fresh look at the area and reconsider what is truly best for the long-term growth and sustainability of the area, and for West Valley City. Despite being a strong believer in this Marketplace, notable drastic increases in education, partnerships, and momentum surrounding the Jordan River has made it clear to me the steps that we should be taking in regards to this property:

1. Decline any extension to the current development proposal and explore avenues to unwind and debrief within the boundaries set forth by any contractual and inter-local agreements that may be in place.
2. Bring together all stakeholders to assess the reality of long-term funding and acquisition of open space along the Jordan River Corridor. Support for preservation and protection of the river corridor has been strongly expressed at federal, state, and local levels of government from inclusion in the White House "Great Outdoor Initiative" down to voters' approval of the recent Salt Lake County open space bond initiative. The time is right assess the strength of this momentum and how we can utilize the know-how of Utah Open Lands and the solidarity of the Jordan River Commission to make preservation and acquisition a regional priority.
3. Set high standards and lead by example. It is time for WVC to draft and adopt a riparian corridor ordinance that sets forth clear standards for how we will maintain, protect, and enhance our section of the Jordan River. Also we need to collaborate with the members of the Jordan River Commission and tap into its expertise. Our ultimate goal should be to better define what a "River Center" actually is, and to demonstrate how to employ best practices to have the focus of any future development be sighted towards the River itself and not just the manufacture of a development.

These steps will help ensure that this special corner of our city will be most optimally utilized for future use and fulfillment of the goals we all share. Thank you for your continued foresight and leadership in West Valley City.

Best,

  
Corey Rushton  
Councilmember At-Large