

Blueprint Task Force Meeting #10

5.25.17

MEETING SUMMARY

On May 25, 2017, the tenth meeting of the Blueprint Denver Task Force was convened in the CAVEA space at the Metropolitan State University Student Success Building. The purpose of the tenth Task Force meeting was to engage Task Force members in an introduction and discussion around the emerging plan framework. Additionally, the project team conducted a small group exercise that provided Task Force members the opportunity to comment on the important elements that define and differentiate neighborhoods and places.

To begin the meeting, Jay Renkens, from MIG, presented a meeting overview and process update. He then presented some background on how Blueprint 2002 managed growth. Jay then introduced Sara White, from the City Planning Department, to provide specific examples of how the 2002 document fell short in providing complete direction for growth. Following Sara's presentation, Jay introduced the emerging plan framework and spoke about how it will provide a more holistic approach to Denver planning and address some of the short comings of the original Blueprint document. Namely, the emerging framework will help to achieve the vision of a more equitable, inclusive and affordable Denver. Following Jay's presentation, Task Force members broke out into small groups to discuss the emerging plan framework and the elements that define neighborhoods and places.

The full agenda for the meeting is included on page 11 of this summary and the meeting presentation is posted online at:

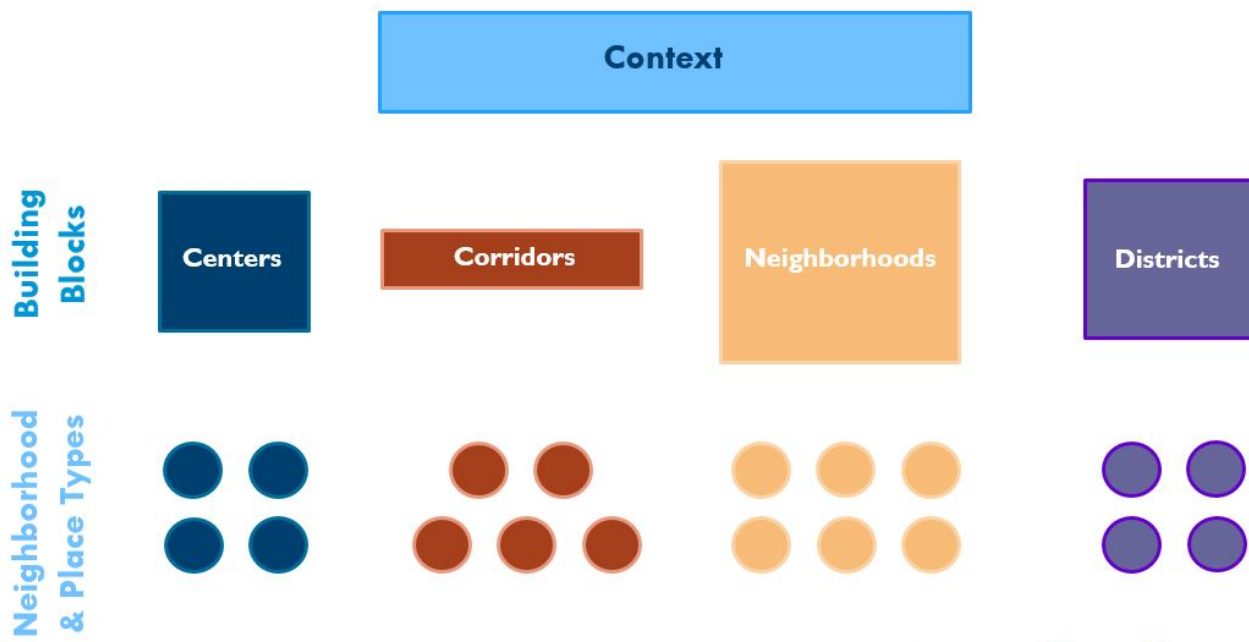
https://www.denvergov.org/content/dam/denvergov/Portals/Denverright/documents/Blueprint/Task_Force/Blueprint_Task_Force_Meeting10_Presentation.pdf



Jay Renkens presents background on Denver's growth strategy.

Jay Renkens provided the Task Force with a brief overview of the way Denver has managed growth since 2002. He then introduced Sara White, who provided two examples of locations in Denver where building blocks defined in the original Blueprint were inadequate in addressing the complexity of the area. Following Sara’s presentation, Jay outlined how the existing building block structure can be improved to add nuance and definition to the planning process. The emerging framework he presented consists of:

- **(Neighborhood) Context**- Address underlying DNA of an area (streets, block sizes and patterns, and utilities)
- **Building Blocks** - Describe different categories of development within neighborhood contexts. There are four categories of building blocks (Centers, Corridors, Neighborhoods, and Districts).
- **Neighborhood and Place Types** - Describe character and trade-offs of different types of neighborhoods and places (districts, centers and corridors)



(Neighborhood) Context

The Denver Zoning Code is a context-based approach that sets standards for development that are compatible with the existing development pattern and infrastructure. It consists of six main contexts (Downtown, Urban Center, Urban, General Urban, Urban Edge, and Suburban) and seven special contexts that help define an area.

Building Blocks

Building blocks are the centers, corridors, neighborhoods and institutional and employment districts that make up Denver.

Neighborhood and Place Types

Each Neighborhood and Place Type consists of the following elements that help define it:

- Land Uses
- Built Form
- Mobility
- Parks and Trails

Together these elements help to inform public and private realm enhancements, influence the urban design of a place, and incorporate key vision elements into Denver’s neighborhoods and places.

Over the summer, the project team will continue to advance the building blocks, neighborhood and place types, and emerging framework.



Task Force members report on the discussion topics covered in the small group break outs.

Small Groups Breakout: Neighborhoods and Places

Following the presentation, the Task Force was divided into four groups to discuss the elements and amenities they perceive as being critical components of neighborhoods and places. The Task Force members were asked to consider three questions:

1. What are the important elements of defining and differentiating neighborhoods and places?
2. What are examples of neighborhoods, centers, corridors and districts in Denver or other cities that should be explored or developed further? What elements make those places special?
3. What elements best support the vision themes and goals?

High-level summary points discussed include:

- Every group discussed the need for complete neighborhoods with access to transit, green space, and commercial and recreation amenities;
- The concept of ‘beauty’ was frequently discussed as an important element in the design of places and neighborhoods;
- Places need to be designed to be accessible to all levels of mobility (Walk and Roll); and
- Examples of cities that have created desirable places include Brooklyn, NY; Charleston, SC; Portland, OR; and most of Europe.

A wall graphic recording of the small group report outs can be found on page 10.

DETAILED COMMENTS:

- Defining Elements:
 - Less car-dependent/mobility
 - How do we make more neighborhoods complete?
 - More distributed infrastructure and commercial modes and community-serving amenities
 - Amenities along travel routes (i.e. to and from work)
- Define an identity for neighborhoods
- Challenges:
 - Integrating a neighborhood amenity in neighborhoods that are already out
 - Infill opportunities exist
- Density works differently in each neighborhood but can be accommodated and will sustain and support that neighborhood
- Diversify the methods to attain density
- Pair accessibility and affordability
 - Accessible can’t just include, for example, a bus that will get you there but should allow for spontaneity
- Places for events
 - Opportunities to develop a neighborhood ID and meet your neighbors
 - Means for information delivery and mobility opportunities to get to an event spontaneously
- Quality of the street is essential
 - Short blocks
 - Slow traffic (ex. Pearl District in Portland)
 - Slow traffic
 - Narrow traffic lanes
- Scale is important given context
- 2500 Block of Champa
 - Residential mix
 - Mixed-income housing opportunities
 - Commercial/business/retail
 - Narrowed traffic lanes
 - Quality sidewalks
- Congress Park S. of Colfax

- Mix of housing
- Multifamily may look different in different neighborhoods
- Every block has a four-way stop to make cars move slowly (CNN)
- “CEO Equality”
 - Amenities in all neighborhoods, not just wealthy neighborhoods
- Neighborhood nodes
 - 23rd and Dexter – Not large area
 - Build more nodes, not larger
- Rich Experiences – trees, materials, walkability
- Core Amenities (each neighborhood deserves a landmark)
- Rollability (walk & roll)
- Density/development patterns sensitive to context
 - Mix of housing types
 - Organizing features (parks)
- 3-D Cities
 - Vantage points, mountain views, city views, view corridors
 - Even in neighborhoods
 - Should be visible
- Centers
 - Need embedded retail (should have everything in neighborhood)
 - Street definition/enclosure (townhomes, eyes on street)
 - Think of 17th as promenade (better stores)
 - More carless streets
 - More diversity economically everywhere
 - Ex Cities – Charleston, Brooklyn (historic and walkable)
 - Marina in SF
 - Copenhagen (lower scale can be urban)
 - Portland (strong neighborhood nodes)
 - Walkable grocery stores
 - Can they retrofit?
 - All neighborhoods need access, maybe not same amenities
 - Edges of neighborhoods could have density to support amenities
 - Environmentally resilient
 - Trees in commercial areas (more healthy/humane)
 - Small parks (socially/physically healthy)
 - Healthy food access
 - Street Types (other uses than cars)
 - Density to promote environmental friendliness
 - Colorado Blvd. – Make Ped friendly/add tree median
 - Be flexible with changing technology
 - Complete streets!!! Need clear policy
- So many layers – complex. Need to think about how to roll out with the public.
- Q1 – What elements are most important to defining a place/neighborhood?

- The people who live there
- Culture: expressed through the people, commerce, Hubs where people gather and expressed through architecture
- Some elements everyone should have (every neighborhood)
 - Libraries, schools
 - Food, gardens, grocery stores
 - Opportunities for activity and recreation
- The 4 components that make up place/neighborhood
 - Types are missing culture, experience, the unique things that make a place what it is.
- Number of hours a day a place feels active
 - 18 hours/day is best for active areas
 - Keeps from being sterile (like Boulder)
 - Depends on good mix and balance of uses
- Better balance overall for city on jobs/housing
- As we think about more change in an area, do we want to change the culture there or protect existing culture?
- Equity: All communities should have some basic elements. This should be Blueprint's focus
 - Some things, mainly culture, we can't dictate in BP Denver. But we can determine basic components every neighborhood should have – including affordable housing
- 20 Min Neighborhood: Certain elements accessible within walk/bike distance of every neighborhood
- We need a baseline level of services for all neighborhoods including access to jobs and affordable housing
- Maybe the goal should be about access by resident/have, not neighborhood (difficulty of boundaries + equity within one neighborhood)
- Q2+3 – Types of development we want to see more? What's missing?
 - Artistic mixed-use Districts like Rino and Stapleton
 - Far N.E. Denver: Currently too much single use areas (all residential, all industrial)
 - More pedestrian only area like 16th Street Mall
 - Gathering spaces like plazas – like Stapleton (plazas in Spanish cities)
 - More condos/townhomes throughout Denver
 - Wash Park neighborhood – more parks and neighborhoods like this
 - Parks of this scale feel safer because more eyes on the park (you can see the edges)
- Defining Elements of Place
 - Character (architectural, ethnic, etc.)
 - Issue: What is the delta between existing character and vision/aspirational
 - We need balance? Cultural aspects of neighborhoods need to be acknowledged
 - Does not have gaps in amenities
 - School, libraries, trails, cultural centers are elements of place. Provide suite of “basics” and amenities to define place.

Denver needs more places like...

- Streetcar districts– enhance and grow off of existing historic neighborhood character.

- Issue: Our great neighborhoods don't want the "restrictions" of landmarking but want to keep character.
- In creating "vibrant neighborhoods" are we losing intrinsic character and our history? If members concerned with inherent character associated with use. Coffee shop chain vs. hardware store (locally owned)
- What creates the character of a commercial center/main street?
 - Is it the tenants/uses or the physical form and built environment?
 - Business reflect culture of the community in Westwood.
- Consistent building edge along streets create place and character defining feature.
- Private investment will help confirm to well defined and enforced character regardless.

What is Denver missing?

- Parks that are varied, well maintained urban neighborhood parks.
- Dog parks that are high quality, large, varied, and maintained.
- Make parks off leash in winter to encourage activity
- Make sure parks are accessible
- Denver is missing live music identity
- Vancouver's nice sidewalks!
- Clusters of employment districts

PROCESS UPDATE AND NEXT STEPS

The MIG Team is working with staff to continue development and refinement of place and neighborhood types, street types and modal priority, and continue development and evaluation of the alternative growth scenarios.

Task Force Meeting #11 is scheduled for June 22nd and will be the third in the series of Task Force discussions. The topic in June is Housing and Demographics and Urban Design.

At the twelfth Blueprint Denver Task Force Meeting on July 25th, the MIG Team will present a draft growth scenario and provide Task Force members with an opportunity to apply place types and neighborhood types across Denver. Outreach activities in the Summer will include Go To Them community engagement with BP take home board games, an online version of the BP Board Game, and additional community workshops in late Summer.

CITY AND COUNTY OF DENVER

Blueprint Denver Update

planning process



TASK FORCE MEETING #10 ATTENDEES:

Task Force: Joel Noble, Co-Chair, Andrew Abrams, Paul Aldretti, Andrew Sense, Caitlin Quander, Chris Crosby, Councilwoman Mary Beth Susman, Gabriel Guillaume, Jeff Walker, Jesse Adkins, John Desmond, John Hayden, Leo Carosella, Mizraim Cordero, Perry Burnap, Stewart Tucker Lundy, Tim Baldwin, Chris Hinds, Julie Underdahl, Annie Levinsky, Brianna Borin, Angelle Foucher

Other: Jill Locantore, Hilarie Portell, Rosemary Stoffel

Staff/Consultants: David Gaspers, Sarah Showalter, Brandon Shaver, Sara White, Mallory Bettag, Steven Chester, Courtney Livingston, Chris Beynon, Jay Renkens, Nicole Hofert, Caryn Champine, Brad Buchanan, Gretchen Armijo, Afor Chavez, Daniel Jennings

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 BLUEPRINT DENVER
 TASK FORCE MEETING #10
 5.25.2017

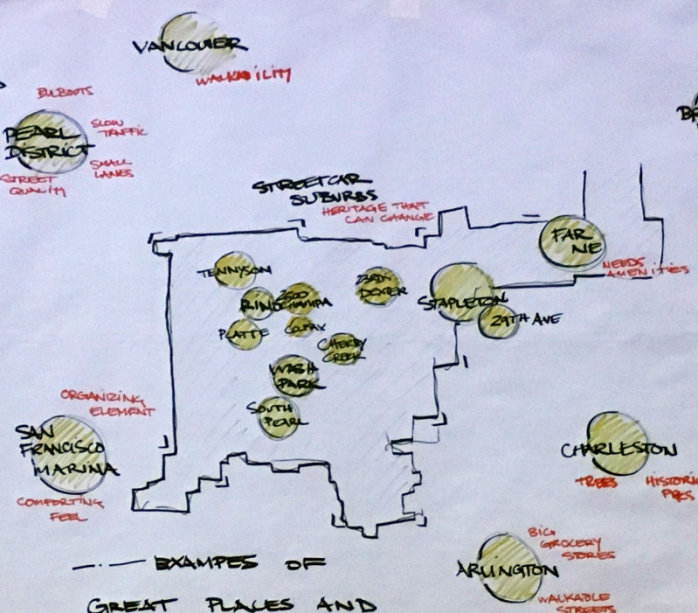
EQUITY
 BEAUTY... ACCESSIBLE
 UNIVERSAL ACCESSIBILITY
 SERVICES
 SPONTANEITY
 IDENTITY!!
 QUALITY OF STREET
 (SCALE OF STREETS)
 TREES
 SCHOOLS
 UNIQUE
 JOBS
 STREET TYPES

AMENITIES
 GATEWAYS
 WALKABLE, ROLLABLE
 (ROLLABLE SIDEWALK)
 CHARACTER
 COMPLETENESS
 PARKS
 CONNECTEDNESS
 SCALE
 FINE-GRAINED
 COMPLETE STREETS
 FOCAL POINT
 (DIFFERENTIATION)
 LIBRARIES/SCHOOLS
 MOBILITY BETWEEN COMMUNITIES
 SAFETY
 ACCESSIBILITY TO AMENITIES

BASELINE OF SERVICES
 CULTURE

HISTORIC FEATURES
 RETAIL & COMMERCIAL
 BUILDINGS ADD TO IDENTITY

PEOPLE-FOCUSED
 20-MINUTE NEIGHBORHOOD
 AFFORDABLE HOUSING
 (DEFINED BY WALKING/BIKING)
 (IN ALL NEIGHBORHOODS)
 (RELATIVE TO JOBS) • ADDRESS DISPLACEMENT
 • NEED MORE WALKABLE NEIGHBORHOODS



--- EXAMPLES OF GREAT PLACES AND NEIGHBORHOODS ---

- ▶ NEEDED TO BE STRATEGIC
- ▶ MORE NUANCED
- ▶ NEARBY CORRIDORS COULD ORGANIZE DENSITY
- ▶ PRESERVE EXISTING CHARACTER
- ▶ NEED MORE EMPLOYMENT CLUSTERS
- ▶ TYPES MIGHT BE TOO RIGID (TEMPORAL COMPONENT - TIME OF DAY OR WEEK)
- ▶ PARKING DOESN'T MAKE A PLACE GREAT
- ▶ NEIGHBORHOODS SHOULD ALL HAVE AFFORDABLE HOUSING

Date: 5/25/17	Time: 1:00 – 3:00 pm	Location: CAVEA at Metropolitan State University 890 Auraria Parkway, Student Success Building Room 420 - CAVEA
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Item	Topic	Time
1.	Welcome, Meeting Overview and Process Update <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Task Force #9 Update • Community Workshop and Ongoing Game Play 	1:00 – 1:10 pm
2.	Emerging Plan Framework <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Neighborhood Contexts • Building Blocks: Neighborhood and Place Types 	1:10 – 1:45 pm
3.	Small Group Discussions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Emerging Framework • Application to Existing and Future Denver • Building Blocks and Goals 	1:45 – 2:20 pm
4.	Small Group Report Out and Large Group Discussion	2:20 – 2:45 pm
5.	Questions and Comments	2:45 – 2:55 pm
6.	Next Steps <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Task Force Meeting #11 on June 22nd • Building Blocks: Neighborhood and Place Types • Application of Building Blocks to Preferred Scenario • Modal Prioritization and Street Typologies 	2:55 – 3:00 pm
7.	Meeting Close	3:00 pm

