

Blueprint Task Force Meeting #2

07.28.16

MEETING SUMMARY



On July 28, 2016 the second 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 second Task Force meeting was to engage Task Force Members in an open dialogue on higher level themes that emerged during the first meeting as part of the discussion about the City's assets, opportunities, and challenges. During the second meeting, the Task Force was asked to assist in the further development of vision elements and objectives to inform the first phase of the Blueprint Denver Update focusing on vision, values and guiding principles. Based on the conversation at the first Task Force meeting and input received from the first online survey for Denverright, the consultant team worked with staff to establish a preliminary organizational framework of six emerging themes for discussion and commentary. These included:

1. Healthy and Equitable Neighborhoods;
2. Well Designed Places that Strengthen our Community;
3. Connected Places;
4. Business and Economic Diversity, Growth and Access;
5. Stewardship of Natural Resources; and
6. Accessible and Affordable Housing.

Each emerging theme was introduced by the project team with a list of initial indicators and a sampling of supporting data and mapping. The initial indicators were selected based upon

several factors, including: contribution to telling Denver's story; availability of the data currently and in the future; and potential for inclusion in dashboard indicators and implementation evaluation later in the Blueprint Denver process.

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

https://www.denvergov.org/content/dam/denvergov/Portals/Denverright/documents/Blueprint/Task_Force/BP_TF_Meeting%202_072816_Web.pdf



Homework from Meeting 1

At the end of the first meeting, Task Force Members were tasked with two homework assignments. First, they were asked to read the 2002 Blueprint Denver Plan Guide. During the second meeting a series of questions related to the plan was posed to the Task Force Members in the form of 'Blueprint Jeopardy' to test their knowledge of the original plan. Prizes were handed out to those who demonstrated their mastery of Blueprint facts.

For their second assignment, each Task Force Member was asked to speak to 10 people and investigate what they value most about Denver today and what they need Denver to be in the future. The summary of responses shared during small group exercises is below:

- Most of the people Task Force Members interviewed had never heard of the original Blueprint plan and were not aware that the City was in the process of updating it. Nor were they aware of the city's approach to collaborative planning.
- Many of the respondents expressed interest in getting involved in the process once they learned about it.
- The biggest fears expressed were:
 - Effect of uncontrolled and rapid population growth
 - Decrease in general feeling of safety, especially in areas with high homeless populations and perceived drug areas

- Affordability (of housing and general livability)
- Traffic congestion and maneuverability around the city
- Access to jobs
- The things that people were most excited about:
 - Denver's great parks and open spaces and proximity to the Rocky Mountains
 - Neighborhood diversity
 - A-Line connecting to the Denver airport
 - New bike lanes being installed throughout city and also the large number of bike paths/trails in parks
- The things that people would like to see pursued/improved:
 - Greater public space activation
 - Increased quality of design and new Citywide Design Guidelines that protect and enhance new and existing developments
 - Increased walkability at arterials
 - More affordable housing (rental and ownership) options

Task Force Questions and Comments Session

After the presentation of emerging themes and initial indicators, Task Force members and audience members were given a chance to pose questions and comments to the consultant and city staffs. The following is a summary of the points raised and discussed:

- Provide an analysis of land devoted to the automobile, and capture data on non-work trips
 - In LA, 2/3rds of land is devoted to the automobile. What is it in Denver and how does that compare to other cities?
- Why is vehicle congestion still considered as a metric?
 - While congestion overtime has increased, congestion per commuter has flat lined since 2005. This coincides with an increase in the percent of single occupancy vehicle (SOV) trips to work - from 68% in 2000 to 70% in 2014. Measures of congestion are still valuable metrics in a car dependent society.
- Provide benchmarks and case studies; perhaps each theme area should include (1) a benchmark city, (2) an inspirational city, and (3) benchmarking against ourselves (i.e. historical Denver data)
 - Cities to consider comparing to include: Austin, TX; Portland, OR; Seattle, WA; and Nashville, TN.
- Infuse terminology related to accessibility (versus just walkability)
 - Need to consider how persons with wheelchairs, strollers, walkers, use space
- What are the indicators for "well-designed" places?
 - This is one of the challenges we will face moving forward. Is there a way to measure the 'character' of places?
- Should we include DIA in our data/metrics? DIA makes up a large portion of the overall land area of Denver and impacts metrics. What is the methodology for when to include/when not to?

- o The city has devoted a substantial amount of time and financial resources on the development of DIA and should be included in analysis when appropriate. Additionally, City Council has an interest in inclusion and analysis of DIA as a part of Blueprint as there is currently no plan in place for the airport and information learned can be used to inform future plans (DIA has an on-going plan effort and Blueprint Denver team will coordinate).



Key Points from the Facilitated Small Group Discussions

After the questions and comments section of the presentation, Task Force members were divided into four groups of six to seven participants each. They participated in a facilitated exercise whereby they brainstormed, shared and discussed potential vision elements and/or goals associated with each of the emerging themes. Below is a summary of the key higher level discussion points that were shared during the facilitated small group activities. A detailed list of comments is available at the end of this document.

Healthy and Equitable Neighborhoods

Key points that emerged from this theme include:

- Maintain and improve accessibility of residents to critical services such as quality education, healthy food options, transportation and jobs, medical services, shared community spaces, and green spaces;

- Improve safety of residents and commit to reduction of pedestrian and bicyclist accidents through the Vision Zero Initiative;
- Foster “whole” neighborhoods and communities with equitable distribution of services including basic amenities as well as access to education, healthcare, healthy food, jobs, transportation, housing, and parks and recreation spaces; and
- Support and enhance neighborhood character and diversity.

Well Designed Places that Strengthen our Community

Key points that emerged from this theme include:

- Create appropriately-scaled, context-sensitive design standards that prioritize the pedestrian and bicyclist over the automobile, as well as support the development of alleys and streets with setbacks that allow porches and other pedestrian-friendly zones;
- Create new and enhance existing gathering spaces “between” and “in” communities that act as “centers of gravity”;
- Prioritize the development of new sidewalks and the continued maintenance of existing sidewalks that link to multimodal transit options and are ADA compliant;
- Enhance and maintain landscaping and the built environment to create more interesting and pedestrian friendly streets;
- Encourage a good mix of residential, retail and commercial spaces, while exploring new models of vertical mixed-use development; and
- Prioritize and encourage Neighborhood plans.

Connected Places

Key points that emerged from this theme include:

- Explore a no-fee affordability model for transit service for all Denver residents and visitors;
- Increase and improve multimodal connections and options linking Denver’s core to neighborhoods;
- Make better use of wide corridor rights-of-way to include a full range of modes
- Enhance transit connections to and between suburbs, business/employment clusters, neighboring communities and counties, and the mountains;
- Create “mobility hubs” that serve as more than just connections and transfer points;
- Prioritize the last ½ mile of journeys; and
- Make transit accessible for all residents, by both increasing options for residents and by decreasing barriers that prevent all users from utilizing transit services (i.e., ADA accessibility, elevators, lifts, etc.); explore innovative transit such as pop-up buses and transit stops that respond to on-demand needs

Business and Economic Diversity, Growth and Access

Key points that emerged from this theme include:

- Create more shared work/collaborative spaces and centers (e.g., The Commons) to help foster dialogue and mentoring opportunities;
- Partner with educational institutions to make learning and job training programs available to all residents;
- Provide free city-wide wifi;
- Develop and implement strategies to streamline regulations, support small business development, and encourage entrepreneurship; and

Redefine and leverage Private Public Partnerships (PPPs) to help achieve business growth and diversity goals.

Stewardship of Natural Resources

Key points that emerged from this theme include:

- Strengthen energy efficiency requirements for all users and developments and make renewable energy integration mandatory in all new construction and retrofit projects;
- Create policies that support and encourage investment in renewable energy sources (such as solar);
- Protect mountain views from visual encroachment by new developments;
- Expand composting program to a city wide venture and provide incentives for commercial and residential stakeholders to participate in reduced waste and composting initiatives;
- Continue to protect and enhance Denver's natural features, including waterways;
- Ensure strong water conservation and create sustainable stormwater management infrastructure;
- Support and enhance wildlife habitat within the city; and
- Support and maintain existing parks and open spaces, and ensure they are not neglected as new population and development pressures occur.

Accessible and Affordable Housing

Key points that emerged from this theme include:

- Incrementally increase density throughout the city, leveraging larger single family lots especially in areas that are already built out and don't need additional new infrastructure (i.e., Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs));
- Support the development of affordable housing in all parts of the city and ensure varied types of housing (including single family, multi-family, families with kids/no kids, individuals, and more) are developed;
- Create and support pathways to community land ownership;
- Support micro inventive schemes such as tiny homes and ADUs; and

- Work to fix state construction defects law to allow for needed condo and townhome options.

Attendees:

Task Force: Joel Noble, Co-Chair, Angelle Fother, Andrew Sense, Annie Levinsky, Brent Bowman, Caitlin Quander, Councilwoman Mary Beth Susman, Dace West, Gabriel Guillaume, Geneva Hooten, Heather Noyes, Jeff Walker, Jerry Tinianow, John Desmond, John Hayden, Margie Valdez, Stewart Tucker Lundy, Tim Baldwin, Joe Vostrejs, Andrew Abrams, Brianna Borin, Trini Rodriguez, Jesse Adkins

Other: Robert Schaid, Jill Locantore, Melissa Horn, Sean Maley, Council Member Rafael Espinoza

Staff/Consultants: David Gaspers, Chris Beynon, Jay Renkens, Chris Ryerson, Nicole Hofert, Ryan Billings, Steven Chester, Andrew Knudtsen, Matthew Prosser, Sarah Showalter, Brandon Shaver, Sara White, Andrew Rutz, Gordon Robertson, Mark Tabor

DETAILED COMMENTS

Below are the comments recorded by Task Force Members on sticky notes during the facilitated small group discussions. As well as notes from comment cards left after the meeting.

Healthy and Equitable Neighborhoods

- Land use, development mobility model
- Connection of river corridors to neighborhoods
- Finer grain of development areas
- Diversity of people, choices of retail, recreation, mobility and housing choices with safety and quality infrastructure
- Culturally welcoming
- Needed services and amenities and infrastructure for residents in all neighborhoods
- Jobs and access for persons with disabilities
- Food Access
- Mixed Income diversity
- Balance respect for longtime residents while accommodating need for increased density
- Equal access to basic amenities
- Safety/safe streets
- Living near where you work
- Access to community buildings/ shared spaces
- Access to quality education in the neighborhood
- Access to medical care
- Utilizing neighborhood associations
- Vision Zero
- Embrace character of each neighborhood
- Quality infrastructure/services
- Mixed incomes
- Focus/center on park/rivers
- Accessibility of shared services / sharing economy
- Comfortable walking at night
- Kids can be outside
- Accessibility and choice
- Uniqueness/needs of neighborhood
- Placemaking elements in neighborhoods
- Mixed-use; vibrant character
- Equal access to basic amenities – daily needs
- Traffic reduction – low emissions and traffic deaths

- Quality (architecture, ethnic diversity, parks)
- Creative parks – Parklets

Well Designed Places that Strengthen our Community

- Appropriate Scale (of building, street, etc)
- Design for more than cars
- Green spaces
- Sidewalks (continued maintenance, snow removal, etc)
- Decreased car reliance
- Slower moving streets (speed limits by design or regulation)
- Central gathering places that are welcoming and provide a diversity of year-round activities and invitations and are authentic and reflective of the neighborhood and are spatially defined (ie building walls)
- Landscaping, modifying microclimates
- What to do with the car?
- Spaces created by the built environment
- Design narrower streets – for people not cars
- Smooth transitions with older neighborhoods
- 5' sidewalks with 5' amenity zone or tree line
- Front porches and alleys
- Require bike facilities in all new development
- Adaptive Reuse
- Central gathering places
 - “the places in between”
 - “centers of gravity”
- Authenticity
- Less car-dedicated space; less car-related or specific design
- Landscaping used to modify comfort
- Alleys enhance place (or they can)
- Smooth transition/gateways between neighborhoods
- Narrower streets/sidewalks
- Good design can shape behavior
- Recreational access – Parks, trails, etc.
- Design review?
- Density – where to send/target?
- Quality – adaptive reuse, contextual front setbacks
- Mobility
- Parks as anchors – seasonal, appropriate lighting
- Urban, inviting streetscapes (detached sidewalks)
- Mixed use – not parking podiums – is it successful citywide?
- Amenity zones on right of way

- Where's the office space?

Connected Places

- Transit plus ... for all neighborhoods
- Affordability of mobility service
- Inner and inter neighborhood connectivity
- Charging stations for persons with wheelchairs
- More elevators for accessibility at bridges, transit
- Development oriented transit
- Hybrid oriented development
- Shift priority from cars to other modes of transit
- Get anywhere safely without a car
- Have choices that encourage healthy and positive social behavior
- Mixed use
- Mixed Vacancy
- Bike Paths
- Smaller neighborhood 'developments' or town centers
- Nodes
- Make public transit free
- Include connections to areas outside Denver; particularly in border neighborhoods
- Focus on last ½ mile
- Streetcar
- Mobility Hubs
- Support of car share programs outside of core / equally throughout city
- Better designation of neighborhood lines
- Guidelines and locations for innovative pedestrian zones
- Moving people
 - Physically
 - Socioeconomically
- Connect outwardly as well as within boundaries
- Encourage bike use with infrastructure – Bike garage/storage
- Foster public/private transit partnerships
- Transit on Demand – RTD can't do it alone
- Streetcar alignments
- Efficient use of right of way
- Effective review of projects

Business and Economic Diversity, Growth and Access

- Allowing the lines between live and work to blur a little
- More shared work/collaborative spaces and centers (eg The Commons) to help foster dialogue and mentoring opportunities
- Educational system accessibility evenly distributed
- Places for small businesses, entrepreneurs and non-profits

- Support for locally owned, culturally appropriate businesses
- Design to attract middle-skilled jobs
- More good paying jobs
- Jobs for people with disabilities
- Invest in education
- Keep business invest in central city rather than moving to suburbs
- Strategies to attract smart ambitious talent
- Anchor institutions
- Priority for businesses that bolster self-sufficiency or expertise (nationally)
- Decreases airfare (make it easier for people to and from)
- Free wifi citywide
- City supported job boards
- H.S. attainment
- Spaces to foster collaboration
- Support small businesses/entrepreneurs
- Career development for young people
- Co-ops; entrepreneurialism; training/skill development
- Shared workspaces and access to tools/technology
- Redefine public-private partnerships
- Broaden role of business/solidify partnerships
- Mountain dynamic, fun, attractive, lifestyle balance
- Encourage new business development to infill CBD
- Increase number of interspersed, diverse job centers
- Promote high-speed connectivity
- Innovation – high tech
- Integrate existing educational infrastructure
- Housing costs that allow risk-taking/investment
- Higher education – stronger relationships

Stewardship of Natural Resources

- Green infrastructure (district energy solutions, etc.)
- Parks and green spaces
- Energy efficiency standards
- Decrease car culture
- Protect views
- Air quality
- Pocket parks
- Small scale interventions
- Sustainability as an expressed physical aspect of Denver
- Decrease reliance on coal and non-renewable resources
- Bus ride to mountains
- Partnerships with ag learning institutions
- Make composting citywide

- Use subsidies and tax breaks to encourage alternate fuel sources (solar)
- Mandatory renewable energy at all new development
- Subsidies to retrofit existing buildings for renewable energy
- Allowance for wildlife in city (bears, coyote)
- Enhancing and using a drainageway
- % of Permeable surface
- Commit to sustainability
- Water re-use
- Restoration rather than stewardship
- Dedicated parks and rec funding source
- Improve air quality
- More discerning land use adjacent to transit
- Solar
- Respect ecology
- Address water rights issues
- Food security

Accessible and Affordable Housing

- Mixed income neighborhoods
- Incrementally increase density throughout the city, especially in areas that are already built out and don't need additional new infrastructure (i.e., Accessory dwelling units)
- Tie density to affordability
- Support community land ownership
- Use of city land for affordable housing
- Variety of unit sizes (family, etc.)
- Affordable housing all across the city (Affirmatively Furthering Fair Housing)
- Engage all scales
- Allow development without off street parking
- Work to fix the state construction defect law
- Increase mill levy
- More progressive inclusionary housing ordinances
- Tiny house developments
- More townhomes and condos
- Smaller-scale affordable development (in addition to larger-scale)
- ADUs
- Larger range of unit types (studios-family)
- Building in higher cost areas
- Diverse housing choice/balance – condos
- Commitment to affordable housing
- Renter's rights and policy change
- Study form of housing; not just financing
- More economical ways to build
- Alternative housing types

- Tiny houses/mobile houses
- CO Housing
- Flexible units
- Fix construction defects
- Protect 80% AMI residents
- Owning vs. renting – sharing economy

NEXT STEPS

Over the next six weeks, the MIG Team will work with staff to develop the Community Profile with a collection information, trends, comparisons and maps to establish a strong baseline for community dialogue around the vision, values and guiding principles for the Blueprint Denver Update. Meanwhile, the entire Denverright Team will be conducting a series of community intercept events throughout the community to raise awareness about the concurrent planning efforts, the second community survey and the early October community visioning workshops. At the third Blueprint Denver Task Force Meeting on September 22, participants will review preliminary findings from the Areas of Change/Areas of Stability analysis and assist in defining the problems with the existing construct and/or its application.

Date: 07/28/2016	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
1.	Welcome and Meeting Overview (1:00 – 1:05)
2.	2002 Blueprint Jeopardy (1:05 – 1:15) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How well do you know the Original Blueprint?
3.	Review of Task Force Meeting #1 (1:15 – 1:20)
4.	Community Profile Presentation (1:20 – 1:50, ~5 minutes per theme, 3 key data points) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Theme #1: Healthy and Equitable Neighborhoods • Theme #2: Well-Designed Places that Strengthen our Community • Theme #3: Connected Places • Theme #4: Business and Economic Diversity, Growth and Access • Theme #5: Stewardship of Natural Resources • Theme #6: Accessible and Affordable Housing
5.	Task Force Questions and Comments (1:50 – 2:00)
6.	Small Group Discussions (2:00 – 2:45) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introductions and Key Takeaways from Homework Assignment (2:00 – 2:05) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The most common and the most interesting things you heard? • Vision and Goals for Key Themes (2:05 – 2:40) • Report Back to Full Group (2:40 – 2:45)
7.	Questions and Comments (2:45 – 2:55)
8.	Next Steps (2:55 – 3:00) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Think Tank • Other Outreach Events and Survey #2 • Community Visioning Workshop
9.	Meeting Close (3:00)