

Blueprint Task Force Meeting #7

2.23.17

MEETING SUMMARY

On February 23rd, the seventh meeting of the Blueprint Denver Task Force was convened in the Independence Pass Conference Room at the Denver Regional Council of Governments (DRCOG) office building. The purpose of the seventh Task Force meeting was to begin the first Task Force Discussion Series and engage the Task Force in a meaningful dialogue about equity. Additionally, the meeting was meant to provide an initial discussion regarding how equity may be addressed in the Blueprint planning process.

To begin the meeting, Kimball Crangle presented what equity means for Denver. She acknowledged the complexity of equity as a topic area and indicated that this meeting is not meant to capture all aspects of equity, but rather to begin the conversation early on in the planning process so that the Task Force may approach Blueprint with an equity lens. Following this brief introduction to equity, Kimball outlined the meeting agenda and introduced each guest speaker to present followed by a discussion session for each presentation. The first presentation was by Laura Brudzynski, who provided information about what the city is doing to better understand how to increase economic investment and revitalize neighborhoods while reducing involuntary displacement. The second guest speaker was Chris Armijo, who presented information regarding how to address health equity throughout the planning process. The third and final guest speaker was Jonathan Cappelli, who presented policy approaches, methods, and case studies to promote equitable revitalization. The meeting concluded with a discussion facilitated by Kimball Crangle on how the information provided by these area experts could be used to ensure equity is addressed as a part of this policy document.

The full agenda for the meeting, list of resources, and poster notes are included on pages 9, 11, and 12 of this summary and the meeting presentations are posted online at:

<http://www.denvergov.org/content/denvergov/en/denverright/land-use-transportation.html>

Speaker #1:

Laura Brudzynski works for the Office of Economic Development at the City & County of Denver focusing on affordable housing preservation throughout the City. Laura presented to the Task Force a broad summary of gentrification in Denver and addressed some of the findings from the City's Gentrification Study

(<https://www.denvergov.org/content/dam/denvergov/Portals/690/Reports%20and%20Studies/GENT%20STUDY%20051816.pdf>) which was finalized in May of 2016. Before addressing gentrification, she emphasized the importance of framing what we call "gentrification" and how it is best defined. Public and private investment into areas is important for revitalizing neighborhoods across the city, but it is having an increasingly negative impact on housing costs and contributing to a demographic change, making

involuntary displacement a serious problem for low and moderate-income residents. Laura posed the ‘big’ question as it pertains to neighborhood revitalization and displacement: How do we revitalize underserved neighborhoods by bringing needed amenities and increase economic development while simultaneously reducing displacement in our city?

Laura identified a map used within the Gentrification Study to show areas vulnerable to gentrification, utilizing inputs including income of residents, percentage of renter-to-home ownership households, and education. It was noted that the data used for this study was from 2013, and there is updated data that may be used to better reflect existing conditions. However, findings through studies such as this Gentrification Study tend to lag behind existing conditions due to availability of data, and some of what is seen on the ground does not mirror the data due to this delayed census data.

Major findings of the study included:

1. There is no single solution or silver bullet in addressing gentrification.
2. Affordable housing investment is key in reducing displacement.
3. There is a need to connect public investments with access to economic opportunity.

This presentation was followed by a discussion session among the Task Force:

- How do we provide resources to communities without displacing folks, knowing we need to add density to the city?
 - In partnership with RTD – the City works to combine a mix of incomes within a single project (24th and Welton for-sale condos, for example). Allowing for density, but ensuring density includes a component of affordability is important. Encourage development that brings amenities and services but includes a variety of affordability. In Globeville and Elyria/Swansea neighborhoods where we see this happening very quickly, encourage needed amenities (grocery stores, childcare, etc.). Think about how we can directly invest in the neighborhoods. At 38th & Blake, for example, the city is exploring increased density with an affordability requirement through a height incentive. Provide additional density if the project provides affordability or community-serving amenity.
- There is concern about a concentration of poverty in already low-income neighborhoods. Where can we put affordable housing in areas that have higher amenities? How do we balance investment into these neighborhoods to ensure affordability but not focus affordability in certain areas?
 - The map is only one side of the coin. One question is to look at how to invest affordability in areas with larger amounts of amenities. High access neighborhoods versus neighborhoods vulnerable to gentrification. Affordability around existing transit – what about areas with no real access to transit? What can the city do to increase amenities in these areas? What are we doing to bring in grocery stores so we aren’t reactive, but rather spurring an area’s development?

- Is there any consideration about the role displacement has that is voluntary displacement? Has that been quantified?
 - It is hard to know how many people are being displaced voluntarily versus involuntarily. Involuntary displacement is generally about renters. We asked those working in the neighborhood if they have heard stories about people having to leave who actually owned houses due to things like property housing taxes, but we haven't heard a lot. So really, it's the renters who take the brunt of that. Some information from DPS show how many kids have left in a given year, saying that they couldn't afford to stay in their neighborhood.

Speaker #2:

Chris Armijo works in the public health realm and serves as Chair to the Health Equity Commission at the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment. Chris focused his presentation on the meaning of health equity and how to consider health equity in the planning process. Chris described the tendency for planning processes to fall under what is known as "Targeted Universalism". This concept includes initiatives or big ideas that set audacious/ambitious goals to increase the social factors and conditions for a community. The fault of Targeted Universalism, Chris explains, is these initiatives, policies, or big ideas do not take into account "situatedness", or rather, context, situations, or histories of individuals. There needs to be targeted solutions for these contexts. When you have these big ideas without targeted solutions, greater inequities result.

Chris provided data about health and how health may be guided by our environment (built and natural). Twenty (20) percent of what makes us healthy is our environment. Policy in the planning process may contribute to health by addressing social determinants of health in living conditions, such as the physical environment, economic and work environment, social environment, and even the service environment.

Moving forward in the Blueprint planning process, health inequities may be addressed through a variety of approaches, including engagement with community leaders at every stage of the planning process; documentation of existing conditions, including health conditions; strong partnerships between public health and planning; measuring health impacts and outcomes or implemented policy; and setting policy that reflect the needs of low-income communities.

This presentation was followed by a discussion session among the Task Force:

- Throughout the Blueprint Denver planning process, the process should be done *with* people, not *at* people.
- Consider the safety aspect of where you live and how that impacts your health.
 - If you feel unsafe in your neighborhood, you are less likely to utilize amenities within your neighborhood, such as parks.
 - Real versus perceived safety are important considerations. Focus on people and increase social cohesion in neighborhoods.
 - Is there a link between opportunities and increased health outcomes?

- Income, education, etc. have a strong affect in increasing health outcomes.

Speaker #3:

Jonathan Cappelli is the Director of the Neighborhood Development Collaborative (NDC) in Globeville and Elyria/Swansea (GES) Neighborhoods. Jonathan presented case studies in which investment into neighborhoods have caused or may cause unintended consequences leading to inequitable revitalization.

Jonathan describes that, unfortunately, certain development standards that increase aesthetics may have a side effect of pricing out certain projects that may be community-serving. For example, the Arapahoe Square development standards make it difficult for affordable housing projects given its point-tower podium design standards. Other issues that may increase cost and thus make it more difficult to providing community-benefiting development include design review committee architecture standards that increase the use of brick and decrease the use of stucco, metal, and/or compressed wood; and street-level activation requirements that may increase cost.

Community preservation is key in order to revitalize equitably. Renters are often the first to be involuntarily displaced due to thins like short-term leases. Increased property taxes and barriers to tax abatement programs can force homeowners to sell. This involuntary displacement has significant effect on communities. For example, common reasons for absence of elementary school children include economic or housing stress in family and health issues. This leads to low graduation rates in high school and the perpetuation of low graduation rates within communities.

Potential solutions for community preservation include:

- Community organizing
- Housing counseling
- Emergency housing cost funds
- Resident sale match-making
- Direct subsidy to land-owners
- Landlord rehabilitation in return for affordability covenants
- Acquisition of rental properties
- Community land trust
- Develop subsidized affordable housing options

Conclusions:

1. Equitable Guidelines: Ensure that new development guidelines don't exclude community-benefiting development and end up concentrating poverty in low-land value, low-design-standards communities alone

2. Equitable Outcomes: ensure that the development encouraged by the market and public projects/incentives benefit individuals of any income—especially current residents. Do this by creating resources for housing preservation and jobs for residents in the new economy that the investments foster.
3. 3. Geographic focus – Everywhere: GES is a fast-paced example of how new development can erode community fabric in just a few years. But the same thing is happening across the city at faster and slower rates in different neighborhoods. Work to ensure that Blueprint shapes development with equitable outcomes everywhere. Revitalization is important, but we should work to foster inclusive development in neighborhoods that are already “good” as well.

This presentation was followed by a discussion session among the Task Force:

- Is there a short term way to use city of Denver funds to bridge a gap for short leases, for instance to buy us time to provide new services and provide density to meet the needs and reduce displacement? How do we address these through policy in Blueprint Denver?
- A potential solution would be to implement a linear strategy rather than a point strategy. TOD tends to be a point strategy. It may be better to bid up all property along a length or corridor of Transit-Oriented Development.
 - However, constraints in physical development may dictate investment at the station for greater efficiency.
 - Enlarging the area around transit modes can be considered convenient to the transit station itself – increasing the area to allow for greater density.
 - Connect rail network with high-quality multi-modal infrastructure system. This leads to convenient access to a larger area around transit station and increase catchment area of a high-density area around transit nodes. Mile High Connects has great resources in relation to this concept.
- How do we contemplate equity when we think about infrastructure improvements? There are people enduring disruption to achieve these changes that they will never benefit from. It will serve those that are attracted to those changes, resulting in displacement.
 - Potential responses include education and outreach to allow people to understand their options. When homes are dilapidated, identify people who don't want to leave and identify the reasons they don't want to leave, then target subsidy and resources around those. Understand rehabilitation issues of residency with renters. This is a state issue with renter notification laws. Something that you can get ahead of if you make deals with existing landlords to reduce these issues, provide subsidy, and increase resources for renters.
 - Create housing and jobs for existing residents during revitalization efforts.
 - Public investment and improvements can serve existing residents and attract new residents.
- Create more ownership opportunities.
 - Construction defects laws are a problem and reform is needed.

Facilitated Discussion

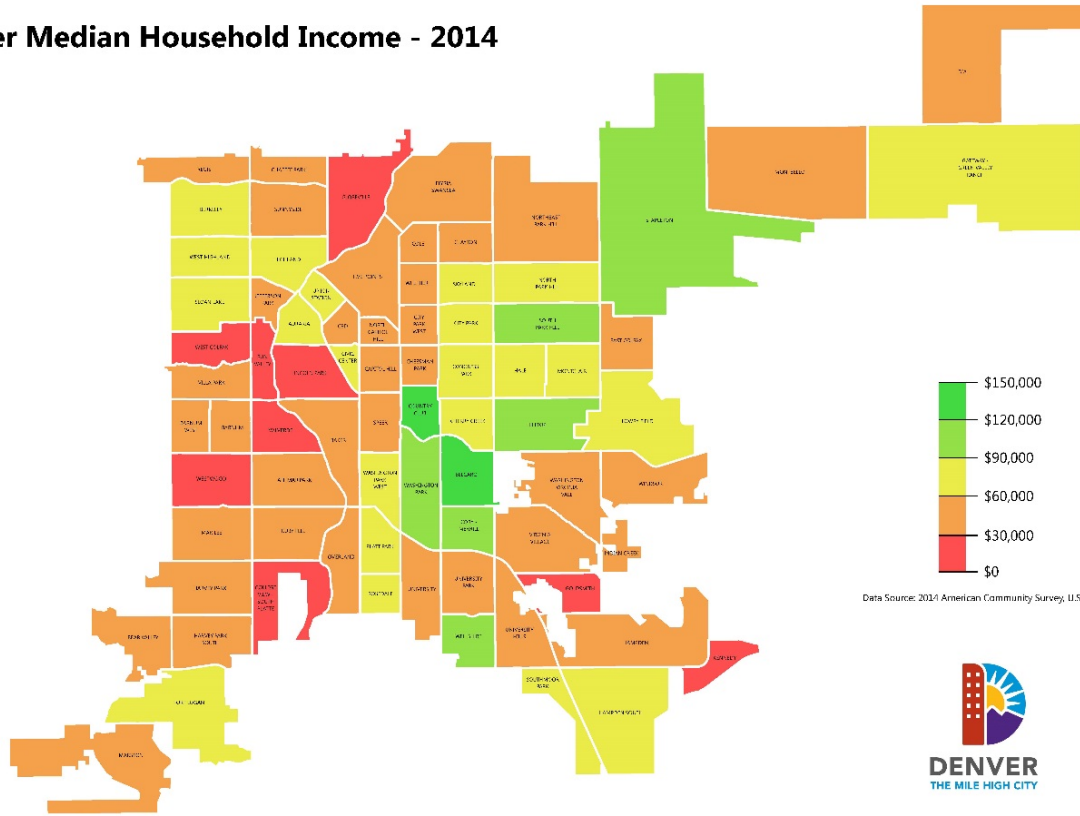
- We have to think about capital investments and think about who they are intended to benefit within the overall context of the city as a whole.
- We need to focus on the people we are trying to impact. What is that benefit? Policy might not be one bucket of infrastructure, but a talk about equitable tradeoffs across communities.
- Sometimes improving infrastructure (most of the time) accelerates displacement. So you need to work with people to maintain affordable housing. Nothing that we do happens in a vacuum and we need to understand this at the beginning.
- Critical to this is really thinking about areas of stability and areas of change.
 - It's easy to say, every neighborhood should be denser because then we will be more equitable. But then we need to think more about how this may increase displacement. What are we trying to stabilize in areas and what are we trying to change? What are the longer-term impact that might seem like a really good thing today? Policy can be affective in talking about and adding a layer to the conversation about what the impact that some of these decisions might have.
 - It's about redefining what areas of stability mean. An area is stable if it can support people living there through the changing stages of their life. If it cannot support people because they can't afford it, then the community is not stable. Neighborhoods with no affordable housing are suddenly no longer stable neighborhoods.
- Change the paradigm and say that one of our goals should be that no neighborhood should have a poverty rate greater than 20%. If lower than 20%, it can function, but once it grows greater than 20% you start to see community functions break down. Crime goes up, education goes down, etc. That opens up communities to the possibility of displacement and gentrification.
- We should start thinking about health in the idea of not putting people in places that are really unhealthy for them. Air quality, for example can negatively impact communities. I want to make sure we aren't just squeezing people in because they fit in a certain area, but not if that is unsafe or unhealthy for those community members.
- We are at a crossroads and really need to determine what kind of city we want to be. Do we want to be a place that is open to all types of socioeconomics? If we don't get that right, it will be a place where only rich people can live and it will be too late. Instead of stability and change, we think about what areas need barriers removed for accessibility and areas that need added infrastructure and amenities to be appealing to different types of people. Everything is a place that needs a touch, but some places need something removed while others need something added.
- Issue of people being forced to move: What if Blueprint had a box at the beginning that said, "it is the policy of CCD that no one should ever have to move if they don't want to" and everything else is organized around that. Think about that – that is what we are hearing. We also don't want to concentrate poverty. There is only two ways to do that: Bring rich people while low-income people stay, or move low-income people into other neighborhoods, probably in the form of subsidy. You shouldn't have to move if you don't want to, but we will help you move if you would like to. If we are

not comfortable with putting this “box” on the plan, then we are stepping into a different territory with different implications.

- Let’s make the change: Areas of Evolution and Areas of Continued Success. Something along those lines to help us have a healthy conversation if we make that decision sooner rather than later.
- Reduce poverty in neighborhoods: focus on raising incomes for those already there. It’s important to focus on this issue. Whenever there is public investment helping foster development or catalyze development, there is a goal of increasing income of those in the neighborhood. Increase jobs and ensure sustainable longer-term jobs.
- What about increasing bike and pedestrian sidewalk routes along a linear area, like we spoke about before?
- Consider the costs and investment benefits by population and by geography.
- Ensure equitable investments across the city.
- Consider the impacts of zoning on land values.
- Raise income, education, and access.

The maps below were displayed at the seventh Task Force meeting to provide broad context to median household income by neighborhood and a Neighborhood Health Index with four contributing factors that influence the health index rating by neighborhood.

Denver Median Household Income - 2014



Legend:
 \$150,000
 \$120,000
 \$90,000
 \$60,000
 \$30,000
 \$0

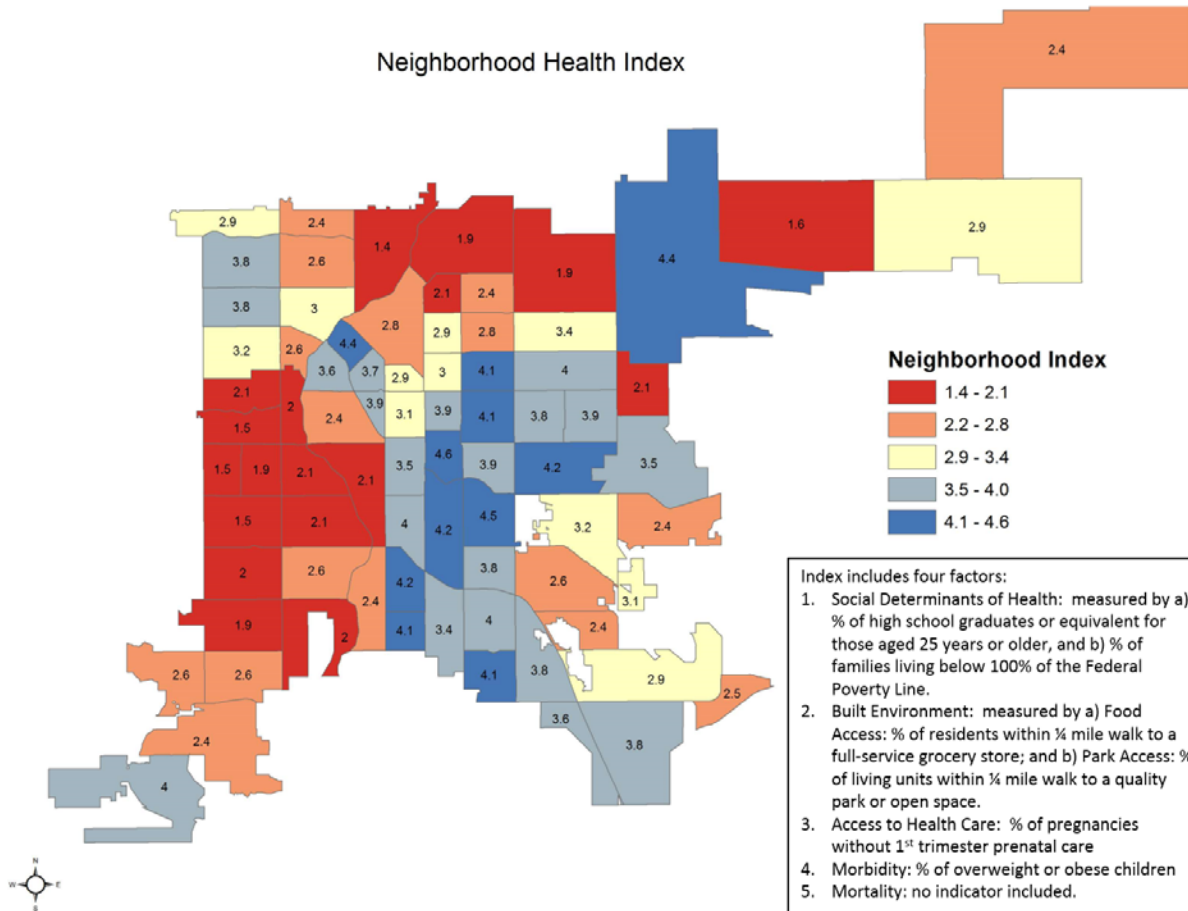
Data Source: 2014 American Community Survey, U.S. Census.



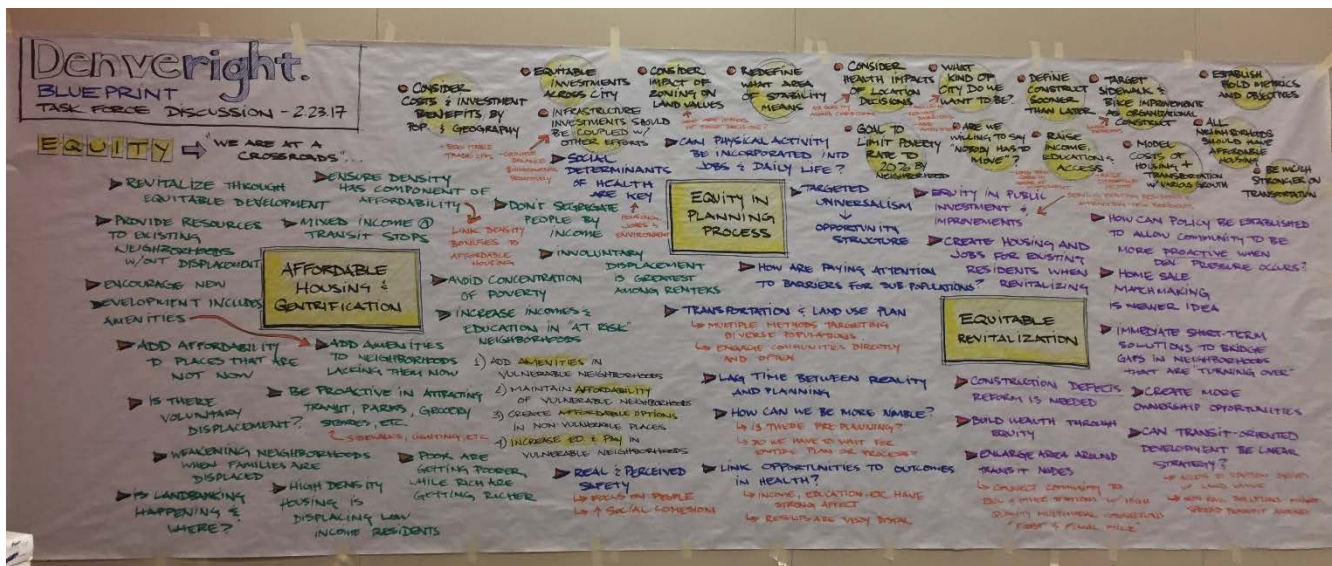
Information provided by Denver Office of Planning and Development. The City and County of Denver shall have no responsibility for any data being a derivative of any information. The information is provided as a public service and is not intended to be used for any other purpose.

Denver Median Household Income, 2014

Neighborhood Health Index



Neighborhood Equity Index, 2016



PROCESS UPDATE AND NEXT STEPS

At the next Blueprint Denver Task Force Meeting on March 23rd, the MIG Team will present alternative growth scenarios and evaluations, facilitate a large group activity about the scenarios and communication with the broader community, and provide an introduction to place types and street typologies. Outreach activities continue to include outreach targeted to groups under-represented during the first round of public engagement. The team is also in the process of finalizing the format for the April Community workshop, which is scheduled for April 25th.

CITY AND COUNTY OF DENVER

Blueprint Denver Update
planning process



TASK FORCE MEETING #7 ATTENDEES:

Task Force: Joel Noble, Co-Chair, Kimball Crangle, Co-Chair, Andrew Sense, Caitlin Quander, Annie Levinsky, Councilwoman Mary Beth Susman, Gabriel Guillaume, Geneva Hooten, Jeff Walker, Jerry Tinianow, John Hayden, Tim Baldwin, Andrew Abrams, Brianna Borin, Trini Rodriguez, Jesse Adkins, Norma Brambila, Perry Burnap, Mizraim Cordero

Other: Paul Aldretti, Chris Hinds, Chris Armijo, Laura Brudzynski, Jonathan Cappelli, Ledy Garcia-Eckstein

Staff/Consultants: David Gaspers, Sarah Showalter, Brandon Shaver, Sara White, Mallory Bettag, Jay Renkens, Gretchen Armijo

Date: 02/23/2017	Time: 2:00pm – 4:00pm	Location: 1290 Broadway – DRCOG Independence Pass Conference Room
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Item	Topic	Presenter	Duration
1.	Welcome & Review Agenda <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Purpose of Focused Topic Meeting: Equity 	Kimball Crangle	5 min 2:00pm – 2:05pm
2.	Guest Speaker <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Affordable Housing & Gentrification <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Laura Brudzynski, City & County of Denver, Office of Economic Development 	Laura Brudzynski	10 min 2:05pm-2:15pm
3.	Discussion		20 min 2:15pm - 2:35pm
6.	Guest Speaker <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Equity in the Planning Process <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Chris Armijo, Commissioner, CO Office of Health Equity 	Chris Armijo	15 min 2:35pm-2:50pm
7.	Discussion		15 min 2:50pm-3:05pm
	Guest Speaker <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Equitable Revitalization Opportunities <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Jonathan Cappelli, Cappelli Consulting, LLC 	Jonathan Cappelli	10 min 3:05pm-3:15pm
	Discussion		20 min 3:15pm-3:35pm
	Facilitated Discussion: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>How do we use this information about equity to influence Blueprint Denver?</i> 	Kimball Crangle	20 min 3:35pm-3:55pm
7.	Public Comment		5 min 3:55pm-4:00pm

Date: 02/23/2017	Time: 2:00pm – 4:00pm	Location: 1290 Broadway – DRCOG Independence Pass Conference Room
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Task Force Member Homework

In preparation for the upcoming Blueprint Task Force meeting addressing the topic of *Equity*, please read the following resources. These resources were provided by area experts and are meant to supplement the information that will be presented and discussed at our upcoming meeting.

- Gentrification Study: Mitigating Involuntary Displacement (May 2016):
<https://www.denvergov.org/content/dam/denvergov/Portals/690/Reports%20and%20Studies/GENT%20STUDY%20052316.pdf>
- Regional Planning for Health Equity, Policy Link (2015):
http://www.policylink.org/sites/default/files/Regional-Planning-for-Health-Equity_FINAL.pdf
- Equity and Urban Planning – Weave equity into process and content, Interaction Institute for Social Change (November 2015):
<http://interactioninstitute.org/equity-and-urban-planning-weave-equity-into-process-and-content/>
- Urban planning without social equity is like playing chess without the queen, San Diego UrbDeZine (December 2015):
<http://sandiego.urbdezine.com/2015/12/12/urban-planning-social-equity-chess-queen/>
- Plan4Health, An American Planning Association Project:
<http://plan4health.us/>

