

A banner for the Denver Region Sustainable Communities Initiative. It features a background image of a modern multi-story apartment building and a paved walkway with people. The text 'Denver Region Sustainable Communities Initiative' is written in a white, cursive font over a dark blue background.

Denver Region Sustainable Communities Initiative



SCI Spring Symposium -- May 29, 2014 Housing and Transit: Moving Toward Opportunity Interactive Discussion Feedback

Question 1: What does success look like?

Transit- Oriented Development (TOD)

- High density around TOD
- Co-locating services with housing, including transit
- Walkable, bikeable, and complete communities with amenities
- More affordable senior and family housing near TOD
- People live where they work and play
- Locate transit lines and stops close to residential hubs

Funding and Other Non-Monetary Resources

- Priority funding for brownfields
- Non- monetary resources (e.g.: Zoning, density, TIF)
- Getting the region to fund TOD developments
- Alternative funding mechanisms beyond tax credits

Mixed-Income/Use

- Two and three- bedroom mixed-income communities
- More mixed-uses to eliminate barriers/ Euclidian zoning that segregate uses
- Mixed and diverse populations/communities
- Mixed-income communities with a mix of housing stock

Affordable Housing is a Regional Responsibility

- All communities in the region need to embrace affordable housing
- Get buy-in from the community
- Collaboration and partnerships between local government and organizations
- Existing neighborhoods embrace new affordable housing development
- Change the culture of NIMBY-ism by educating communities and elected officials

Affordability

- Frequent and affordable transit
- Households pay less than 40% of their income on housing and transportation
- Measurable strategies and goals for the region



Question 2: What do we need to get there? – Priorities

Funding

- Finding new funding to support the demand for Low Income Housing Tax Credits
- Bonded income stream for affordable housing
- Resources for rehab and maintenance of the existing housing stock
- Funds to support and retain existing businesses and small businesses
- Regional funding and financing for affordable housing
- Regional TOD Fund that acquires and preserves existing housing and/or land banks for future affordable housing and/or community serving assets
- Utilizing existing entities' funding resources (housing authorities, developers, city/town/county, foundations)
- First- in infrastructure funding source (gap funding)
- A permanent and competitive source for progressive TOD projects
- Resources for infrastructure costs (sidewalks, lighting, etc.) that enhance transit
- Create incentives and financial mechanisms to support goals (e.g. Pilot TIF)
- Revisiting allocation of funds to align with goals

The Development Process

- Collaboration with surrounding areas and service providers
- Waive development fees for affordable housing/ Elimination of fees that drive up costs
- Capped building fee waivers
- Adopt a mixed-use zoning policy to encourage density around bus and rail transit
- Flexibility with development standards for affordable housing projects
- Proven models where government can support mixed income development with a variety of monetary and non-monetary resources (e.g. Soft money, zoning tools, expedited approvals, vocal champions, and fee waivers)
- Mandatory on-site inclusionary zoning at 10 units)
- Public private partnerships

Stakeholder Engagement and Education

- Making sure we have support of stakeholders (e.g. City/Town/County, RTD, etc.)
- Include stakeholders of all socio-economic backgrounds in conversations
- Political will, public awareness, and buy-in
 - Training and education on affordable housing for elected officials (e.g. Case making and case studies)
- Increased dialogue with all key stakeholders (agencies, communities, business leaders, and residents from all spectrums)
- Increased voice of impacted residents about community development/mobilize residents whose perspective isn't normally heard
- Have the conversation/Community engagement

Supportive Services

- 40-80% AMI affordable housing vouchers
- Forbearance programs and policies that help people and prevent them from falling into hardship
- More supportive services that include education, employment, housing, and transportation
- Incentive programs for displaced families to seek affordable housing near transit lines

Local, Regional, and DRCOG

- Bold regional vision for affordable housing and fair housing by DRCOG
- Better relationships between communities in the region



Question 3: What are the next steps and pressing needs?

Transit Needs and Next Steps

- Discounts for Car2Go, B-Cycle, etc.
- Circulators
- Access and frequency
- Pilot routes running long enough to gauge success
- More public-private partnerships to build-out and complete FasTracks
- The next phase of FasTracks/Planning for it today
- EcoPasses for people living in affordable housing units
- Affordable transit
- Statewide connections through CDOT transit planning
- More funding is needed for infrastructure
- Funding is needed for transit agencies to maintain existing stations

Overall Strategies at the Local and Regional Level

- Focus on the complete community not just job center access
- Public (regional) campaign to rebrand affordable housing
 - Painting the beautiful and beneficial picture for affordable housing projects
 - Putting a face to what it means to be at 40-60% AMI
- DRCOG needs to adopt housing as a policy issue
- Education of elected officials and the community
 - What the numbers mean (leverage) and image of affordable housing
- Develop improved strategies to communicate with the public about affordable housing
- Regional funding and financing for affordable housing and infrastructure
- Address the Colorado Construction Defects Legislation without stripping consumer protections
- Incorporate affordable housing into new developments
- DRCOG should elevate projects that incorporate affordable housing to the top of the TIP list
- Comp plans need to have explicit reference to affordable housing
- Education on what density means
- Making the case for green development
 - Savings related to energy use and the long term return over the short term gain
- Cross conversation among interests and industries
- Funding and collaboration beyond SCI
- Continued knowledge and information sharing on lessons learned and best practices

Housing Needs and Next Steps

- LEED for neighborhood development principles (for durable sustainable communities)
- Land banking either through non-profits, municipal acquisitions or changes in politics that prohibit
- Incentivize affordable housing near transit
- Creative funding/revenue sources (like revenue from marijuana) targeted towards housing, public services, etc.
- Connect affordable housing to job centers
- Retain residents in redevelopment projects
- Elevate the aging in place component for affordable housing and transportation



Question 4: What are the current relevant efforts and activities?

Local Government Efforts

- Local coordinating councils
- Inclusionary housing and dedicated funding for housing in Denver
- Inclusionary Housing Ordinance
- Regional housing dialogue as a result of the September 2013 floods
- Countywide Ecopass
- Boulder comp housing strategy: analyzing housing choice and affordability
- Transportation master plan/Housing comp plans
- Area wide planning efforts (West Colfax- Platte River and Westerly Creek in Aurora)
- Corridor planning
- Complete streets/complete communities
- Comprehensive rezoning efforts (Aurora, Lakewood, Denver, etc.)
- Lakewood
 - Adopted new zoning code with mixed uses and increased station density
 - Creation of a sustainable neighborhoods programs to improve outreach to neighborhoods
 - Creation of an arts district to promote affordable housing
- Thornton
 - Maintaining and funding existing housing stock, both rentals and owner occupied
 - Outreach and education on affordable housing
 - New comprehensive plan fostering affordable housing
- Multi-jurisdictional planning efforts (e.g. FHEA, housing plan, etc.)
- FasTracks
- 10th/Osage DHA project
- Rethink/revisiting planning and zoning regulations to promote inclusionary development
- Density bonuses and TDR's
- Continue efforts to address condo defects legislation

DRCOG Efforts

- DRCOG sponsored/coordinated planning and peer-to-peer exchanges
 - CWG sharing of "Catalytic TOD" lessons learned and best practices
- SCI/Metro Vision 2040
- DRCOG leadership recognizing affordable and fair housing
- DRCOG housing needs assessment (become a regular event)
- Regional Equity Atlas

Organizations and Partnerships

- Partnerships like Mile High Connect/Affordable fare efforts through Mile High Connects
- eGo car share and other transportation options like Ecopass
- Voluntary agreements with for-profit development
- Regional TOD fund/TOD Fund and the expansion of it
- Community benefit agreements
- 95 LIHTC's
- Enterprise Green Communities
- Innovative housing authorities and other developers
- Neighborhood development collaborative
- Creative solutions with our partners (RTD) in areas not served/underserved by transit

