



## **SCI East Corridor Working Group – Meeting #3**

*Stapleton Foundation, 7350 E. 29<sup>th</sup> Ave., Suite 300*

*2:30 pm – 5:00 pm, June 12, 2013*

### ***Meeting Summary (As of 7/3/13)***

#### **Attendees**

##### *CWG Members*

- Adams County – Deputy County Administrator Unit: Jeanne Shreve
- City and County of Denver – Community Planning and Development: Steve Gordon and David Gaspers
- City of Aurora – Comprehensive Planning: John Fernandez
- City of Aurora – Public Works: Duane Launder
- Aurora Housing Authority: Craig Maraschky
- Denver Housing Authority: Ismael Guerrero
- Denver International Airport (DIA): Tom Reed
- Denver Urban Renewal Authority: Tracy Huggins
- Regional Transportation District (RTD): Mike Turner
- Stapleton Foundation: Angie Rivera-Malpiede

##### *Others*

- City and County of Denver - North Denver Cornerstone Collaborative (NDCC): Kelly Leid
- CDR Associates (Facilitator): Laura Sneeringer
- Reconnecting America: Catherine Cox Blair, Bill Sadler, Mike Madrid
- Denver Regional Council of Governments (DRCOG): Paul Aldretti, Ashley Kaade
- Place Matters: Jocelyn Hittle

##### *Absent CWG Member Organizations*

- City and County of Denver – Public Works
- Metro Denver EDC/Denver Metro Chamber
- Northeast Denver Housing Center



## Agenda

- Welcome, Introductions and Agenda Overview
- Overview of the North Denver Cornerstone Collaborative (NDCC)
- Review and Discuss East Corridor Baseline Data and Mapping
- Discuss Corridor Vision and Goals

## Meeting Materials (available on the Website at

<http://www.drcog.org/index.cfm?page=EastCorridorWorkingGroup> or on the FTP site)

- Agenda (Website)
- Reconnecting America's draft East Corridor Reconnaissance and Baseline Data and Mapping (FTP site)
- West Corridor example Vision and Goals (Website)
- Input from the East Stakeholder Committee on the Vision and Goals (Website)
- North Denver Cornerstone Collaborative Presentation (Website)

## Action Items

- All CWG members will send final questions and feedback on the Corridor Reconnaissance and Baseline Mapping to Reconnecting America (ccoxblair@reconnectingamerica.org; bsadler@reconnectingamerica.org; mmadrid@reconnectingamerica.org; (303) 861-1420)
- CDR Associates and Reconnecting America will develop draft Vision and Goals, based on feedback shared at the meeting.
- All CWG members will review draft Vision and Goal statements and prepare input for the next meeting.
- Paul Aldretti, DRCOG, will acquire information about how Corridor Working Group efforts will fit into the regional planning (e.g., the 2040 Transportation Plan) and report back at the July 10th meeting.
- North Denver Cornerstone Collaborative staff will create a calendar of all of the different planning meetings and events in the area, including relevant East and Gold Corridor Working group activities. This will be completed when new staff are oriented.

## Meeting Minutes Approval

The following items from the May 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2013 meeting summary were discussed:

- The wording for the Aurora Housing Authority/Urban Land Conservancy was incorrect and should be amended.
- The 72<sup>nd</sup> and Himalaya station should be characterized as an Optional Future Station.

The Working Group approved the previous meeting's minutes upon these changes being made.

## North Denver Cornerstone Collaborative

Kelly Leid, City and County of Denver, provided an overview of the North Denver Cornerstone Collaborative (NDCC), which is a part of a larger comprehensive envisioning effort to ensure integrated planning and deliberate connections among six converging projects. The East Line is considered by Mayor Michael Hancock as the "Corridor of Opportunity". Kelly's presentation is available on the Website.



The NDCC represents an opportunity to coordinate existing project planning efforts across multiple entities and to facilitate public/private partnerships. The six projects it covers are:

- I-70 Reconstruction
- National Western Stock Show and Coliseum
- Brighton Blvd. Redevelopment
- River North Reclamation
- RTD Station Development
- Globeville & Elyria-Swansea Neighborhood Plans

The high priority issues and needs for neighborhoods within the project area include:

- Improving access to services and reed retail
- Improving public safety
- Environmental concerns
- Enhancing connectivity
- Proximity to heavy industrial uses
- Empowering the neighborhood

Current activities that the NDCC is working on include:

- National Western Stock Show Strategic Business Plan
- CDOT – Announced preferred alternative and supplemental EIS process going forward
- RTD – East and Gold Lines, I-225 Line
- Globeville Elyria-Swansea Neighborhood Planning (Denver Community Planning & Development)
- Globeville Elyria-Swansea Asset Mapping (Councilwoman Montero)
- Launched NDCC Strategic Alignment Steering Team (NDCC)
- Feasibility Study is underway (Visit Denver, A/V, and NWSS)
- Launch Mayor’s NDCC Project’s Office

Next steps for the NDCC include:

- Organize and launch the NDCC Project Office
- Kickoff NDCC Project Integration/Alignment Sessions
- Establish preliminary communication/outreach efforts
  - Issue monthly NDCC Project Updates Report (6/2013)
  - NDCC Website

*The group discussed the following questions:*

### **How is NDCC engaging the residents in the community?**

The NDCC is leveraging ongoing outreach that is being conducted by the City and County of Denver and RTD. It does not want to cause confusion for community members, due to several initiatives occurring at the same time. NDCC does plan on filling in any gaps that aren’t currently being addressed. For example, it did host an open house regarding the River North neighborhood. Monthly public agency meetings are being held.



### **What is the update on the Stock Show planning?**

A 20-month feasibility study of the area is being conducted by the NDCC and will inform the decisions made about the Coliseum and the Stock Show. The tentative schedule is as follows:

- Master planning will take place from 2013-2014
- Facility planning will take place in 2015
- Improvements will likely begin in 2016, though funding still needs to be determined

### **Have you reached out to Aurora?**

So far, listening tours have been conducted in Denver. However, reaching out to Adams County, Aurora and other municipalities will be necessary to carry out the plans.

### **How does the NDCC fit within other East Line planning efforts?**

Station area plans will not be replaced, but instead brought together and synthesized to help bring the existing plans to implementation. When station area plans were developed, input from the stakeholders in each station area were taken into consideration. Both Steve Gordon from the City and County of Denver and Mike Turner from RTD are involved with both the NDCC and East Corridor Working Group so they will keep both groups comprised of the others' activities. Also, in the future, NDCC will create and maintain a calendar of all of the different planning meetings and events in the area, including relevant East and Gold Corridor Working group activities.

### **Is there a vision for this area?**

The vision starts with the Mayor's five vision points for the area, which includes: children, jobs, public safety and safety net, efficiencies and customer service (i.e., smart government) and sustainability. The work involved needs to connect to these five vision points.

### **Discussion of the East Corridor Reconnaissance and Baseline Data and Mapping**

The group discussed the findings of the Draft Corridor Reconnaissance and Baseline Data prepared by Reconnecting America. The group was asked to consider the following questions:

- Do you have any questions on the baseline information? Does any information require clarification?
- Was any of baseline information surprising to you? If so, why?
- What do you see as key themes from this information?
- After considering this information, what makes the East Corridor unique? Where are specific opportunities? What are specific challenges to address?

*The group made the following comments on the information provided:*

- Characterizing the corridor will be difficult because the Denver Union Station neighborhood represents half of the population, and is starkly different than the other neighborhoods.
- It would be helpful to provide a qualitative summary to explain some of the data. For example, why are there more young people living near the Peoria station.
- The Central Park data is inconsistent and misleading in terms of median household income being the highest in the corridor, but also having the highest housing and transportation costs.
- It would be helpful to have a better understanding of the amount of vacant land near the stations.
- For planning purposes it may be useful to perform a "rating" of the stations by topic areas such as housing and employment opportunities, development potential and retail. This would help to compare different stations and determine the best opportunities to meet diverse goals throughout the corridor.



- There were questions on the source data. Reconnecting America described that the data comes from the National TOD Database, which includes a half-mile around each transit station. It is based on Census data and employment data.

*The group shared the following themes and perspectives:*

#### *Opportunities*

- Connections to large employment centers
- Connection to recreational areas (e.g., Rocky Mountain Arsenal)
- Development underway to build from

#### *Challenges*

- Very different communities with different needs
- Connections at stations – they are not all easily accessible by walking, riding a bike or driving a car
- Community infrastructure needs, such as healthy food and retail

#### *Current and Future Development*

- Unlike the West Line, the East Line has some major developments in place or underway, such as DIA, Anschutz/Fitzsimons (which is nearby via a transfer to the I-225 Line) and Stapleton. The East CWG should identify the major development areas to continue the build-out of each station. The vision should be about stringing together each destination to along the East Line.
- It is important to consider that land owners may want to make a quick profit instead of considering the Corridor and Vision, and may rush to build something the area does not need.

#### *Diverse Populations*

- The diversity between the neighborhoods along the East Line will be a challenge as they have very different visions and needs. Some stations have affluent populations, while others are vulnerable populations with old, established neighborhoods that face significant challenges. For example, 40<sup>th</sup> and Colorado has a large food desert. Also, a question was asked about whether environmental justice implications from Title VI for the Elyria-Swansea neighborhood should be considered.
- One need all areas share is connection to employment.
- Outreach will be challenging because there are various languages, working hours, and family structures along the corridor. Also, some areas (e.g., Elyria, Globeville and Swansea) are a focus of numerous initiatives.

#### *Connection to the Stations*

- 40<sup>th</sup> and Colorado has constraints in terms of accessibility.
- Walkability maps can help illustrate and better understand the accessibility to stations.

#### *Differences of Commuter Rail*

- This is commuter rail, not light rail. The line is longer and the stations are further apart. The alignment is not directly through neighborhoods, which will make it more difficult to develop connections to the station and to the services communities need. Stations may not be located in a natural retail location.



## *Regional Planning*

- A question was raised about how the Corridor Working Group activities relate to the region as a whole, specifically how policies that direct development along the corridor affect the regional scale and how information between regional, corridor, and station scales will be shared. DRCOG noted that it is currently working on making information sharing between the scales of development easier and more accessible. More information about how CWG efforts fit into regional planning will be provided at the next meeting.

### **Review of the West Corridor Vision and Goals and East Stakeholder Committee Input**

Visions are how the corridor is envisioned in the long-term future (e.g., 10-15 years) and are meant to be aspirational. Goals are priority efforts for the next three to five years to begin to make the vision a reality. Catherine Cox Blair, Reconnecting America, and Ismael Guerrero, Denver Housing Authority, provided an overview of the West Corridor Working Group's vision and goals. Ashley Kaade, DRCOG, provided an overview of the Stakeholder Committee's input regarding the East Corridor Vision and Goals. This information is provided on the Website.

*The group discussed the following questions:*

#### **On the West Corridor, how did you think through attracting private development to an area where development already existed?**

The public investment needed to come first in order to attract private development to the area. Private developers are finding existing infrastructure more attractive, such as connections to the rail, sidewalks, and access from the rail to their developments.

#### **Did gentrification come up in the Stakeholder Committee conversation?**

Yes, it has come up in the meetings. New development is needed, but the existing stakeholders do not want to be forced out as a result.

### **Discussion on Corridor Vision and Goals**

The group was asked to identify key components of a vision statement based on input from the Stakeholder Committee and their insights. Their feedback included the following. CDR Associates and Reconnecting America will use this information to develop a draft Vision and Goals for review at the next meeting.

- Placemaking with high density development, destinations that impact more than the immediate surroundings of stations, community centers, etc.
- Multi-modal connectivity -- Last mile infrastructure to connect people to the station by walking, biking and driving
- Job creation and retention
- Economic development
  - Consider intersection of other travel modes (e.g., how the volume of traffic on I-70 impacts retail destinations)
  - Consider proximity to key services that draw a range of people (e.g., hospitals)
  - May include commercial/light industrial, which is an important component of overall economic development
- Diverse housing opportunities
  - A need is rental housing near the airport

- Services available to communities – healthy food, basic services
- Respect history/culture of neighborhoods
- Need to highlight that the station serves downtown and the airport
- Potential goal – balance of development with displacement
- May need to include a statement about the differences of commuter rail somehow

