



SCI Northwest Corridor Working Group – Meeting #2

Louisville Public Library, Library Meeting Room

9:00 am – 11:00 am, November 6, 2013

Meeting Summary

Attendees

- Audrey DeBarros, 36 Commuting Solutions
- Karen Schneiders, CDOT Region 4
- Dave Shinneman, City & County of Broomfield
- Debra Baskett, City & County of Broomfield
- Lesli Ellis, City of Boulder
- Gavin McMillan, City of Louisville
- Grant Penland, City of Westminster
- Aric Otzelberger, City of Westminster
- Genevieve Hutchison, RTD FasTracks
- Geneva Faulkner, RTD FasTracks
- Judi Patrick, Community Resources & Housing Development Corporation
- Chris Auxier, Adams County Housing Authority
- Chris Hagelin, City of Boulder
- Jeanne Shreve, Adams County

Project Team

- Paul Aldretti, Denver Regional Council of Governments
- Ashley Kaade, Denver Regional Council of Governments
- Andrea Meneghel, CDR Associates
- Catherine Cox Blair, Reconnecting America

Agenda

- Welcome, Introductions, Agenda Overview and Updates
- Discuss Benefits and Considerations for Corridor Planning
- Review and Discuss NW Baseline Data and Mapping
- Review and Discuss Existing Station Area Plans and Corridor-Wide Planning
- Review Action Items and Next Steps



Meeting Materials

- Meeting Agenda
- Draft Northwest Corridor Opportunities and Challenges Brief
- Draft Northwest Corridor Reconnaissance Summary

Action Items

Action item responses should be sent to Andrea Meneghel (ameneghel@mediate.org; 303.442.7367 ext. 221). Technical data responses and questions should also be sent to Reconnecting America (ccooblair@reconnectingamerica.org; bsadler@reconnectingamerica.org; (303) 861-1420).

- Ashley Kaade will provide the working group with a list of stakeholder committee participants (akaade@drcog.org; 303-480-6781).
- CWG members will review and provide comments on the following by Thursday Nov. 21:
 - Draft Northwest Corridor Opportunities and Challenges Brief
 - Draft Northwest Corridor Reconnaissance Summary
- Reconnecting America will revise the documents above and provide prior to the next meeting. They will also take feedback provided on goals and develop a list of draft goals for the committee to react to. A draft goals matrix will be distributed to the CWG.
- An inquiry was made about how the NW corridor's age range compares regionally. Reconnecting America will provide that information.

Updates

- Ashley Kaade, DRCOG, explained the role of the Corridor Stakeholder Committee, communicated who was on the CSC and will distribute a list of members to the CWG. She will provide periodic updates to the CWG about the CSC meetings.
- The committee approved the NW CWG Operating Protocols, Work Plan and October 2, 2013 CWG Meeting Summary.
- Reconnecting America has worked with City of Boulder to incorporate Boulder Junction information into the background documents.
- The CWG requested there be a main point of contact that distributes materials and information. Andrea Meneghel, CDR Associates, will be that point of contact. He will send out committee correspondence including meeting materials, items for review and updates.
 - Andrea will indicate in the agenda or email that accompanies the agenda which items should be printed and brought to meetings.
 - It was understood that there will be times when Reconnecting America will need to be in direct contact with the CWG members for gathering information.
- The following SCI events are scheduled. Please contact Paul Aldretti, DRCOG, for additional information (paldretti@drcog.org; 303-480-6752).
 - The Northwest Corridor Stakeholder Committee will meet Tuesday Nov. 12 and Dec. 3.



Benefits and Considerations for Corridor Planning

Catherine Cox Blair, Reconnecting America, provided an overview planning for implementation at a corridor-scale. The presentation is available on the Website at:

<http://www.drcog.org/index.cfm?page=NorthwestCorridor>

Reconnecting America is a national nonprofit with local Denver region staff that works with communities around the intersection of community development and transit. They provide technical research, education and capacity-building to HUD grantees. Reconnecting America's scope of work includes:

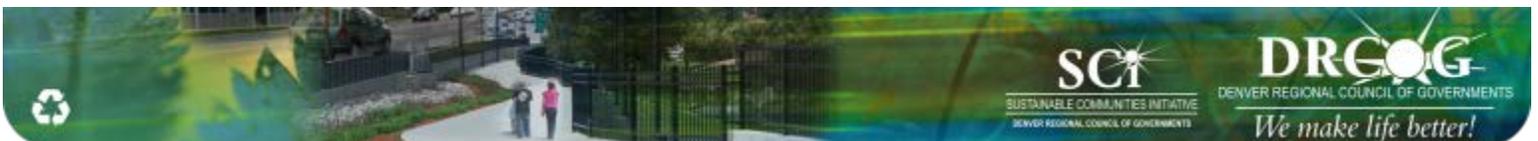
- Developing an existing conditions analysis
 - Corridor reconnaissance
 - Baseline data and mapping
- Developing a Corridor Profile
 - Issues and barriers
 - Recommendations for next steps and implementation
- Supporting the Corridor Working Group

There are different categories of corridors - destination connector, commuter and district circulator. While the Northwest Corridor has a significant volume of commuters, it would be considered a destination connector. There are also different scales of transit-oriented development (TOD), station areas play different roles and the corridor is made up of a set of connected nodes and centers.

Corridor planning is helpful to identify roles of station areas, integrate land use and transportation planning and identify how local planning fits into regional transit system. Corridor planning also offers an economy of scale for both planning and implementation by identifying shared challenges and opportunities, the range of needs and priority locations strategic resource allocation as well as prioritizing limited resources.

Example of West Corridor Activity: Catherine explained that the West Corridor Collaborative (WCC) has worked together much like the coalition in the US 36 corridor, with a focus on community development and land use. The WCC compiled plans for each station area and analyzed the corridor-wide effects if they were to all be implemented; the group concluded they should be more thoughtful about market realities and have stronger partnership on implementation activities. The WCC looked at the balance of residential and transportation costs, vehicle miles travelled (vmt), amenities, public infrastructure needs and assessed vacant land, identifying both public- and private-sector deficiencies including drainage and bicycle-pedestrian infrastructure. The WCC categorized three station area types- transitional, intensification and neighborhood infill and corresponding implementation strategies. The group has evolved and set up a 501c3 and is now working on branding plan and coordinated funding strategies.

West Corridor Collaborative and Catalytic Project: The WCC work took place prior to the Sustainable Communities Initiative (SCI) with funding from the housing authorities and City and County of Denver, though they did receive SCI funding for their catalytic project, the Sheridan Station. The Sheridan Station is



on the border of Denver and Lakewood and has a large transit-dependent population; catalytic site work includes a 20-Minute Neighborhood Study and redevelopment of the Jody Apartment site. The City of Lakewood has been hosting community meetings for the 20-minute study, including a recent large workshop where they had a large aerial map available for participants to identify bicycle and sidewalk connection deficiencies.

Review and Northwest Corridor Baseline Data and Mapping

Catherine Cox Blair summarized the information that was collected by Reconnecting America about the Northwest Corridor area planning efforts in addition to economic, demographic and housing characteristics. Highlights of the baseline report include a large percentage of the population is under 40 years of age, educational attainment and household income is high compared to other corridors though combined housing and transportation costs are also high, there are a significant amount of renters, most residents commute by car. Employment was also broken down by stations area and sector with a prominence in research and knowledge-based, retail, food, healthcare and science and technology jobs. Data was gathered for ½ mile radius around station areas.

The CWG was asked the following questions:

- Does the report portray an appropriate awareness of the corridor’s current planning efforts
- Is any of the baseline information surprising?
- What key themes stand out from the information presented?

Comments and Discussion

- The committee discussed the potential impacts of construction legislation which increased liability for condos and may have stymied the market resulting in a stronger market for apartments.
- Median income seems high for the lower Westminster area.
- How does the rental rate compare across the region as it seems disproportionately high?
 - The ½ mile radius around station areas includes a good amount of multifamily units which may be different than the full corridor or transit shed
 - These areas have a large stock of older housing and the group should consider how to stabilize or transition those units
 - Arista and CU Boulder may also account for a higher rental population
- Reports indicate a trend of young and older adults choosing to rent and it is important to recognize that where you live is transitional with age and ability. The corridor rental market supports a diverse population which is a positive thing.
- Urban Land Conservancy (ULC) reports indicate millennials are choosing to rent and their desire for choices often indicate a preference for access to urban places and services. The committee remarked that millennials may also be more likely to use transit and/or car-share services.
- The City of Boulder has been requiring new multifamily developments to unbundle parking, which has resulted in making units more affordable and encourages transit use. Researching which projects



offer unbundled parking would require a project by project approach and may be a good option to explore with implementation recommendations. There is an educational component associated with unbundled parking, both with developers and potential renters.

- An inquiry was made about how the NW corridor's age range compares regionally. Reconnecting America will provide that information.

Review and Discussion of Existing Station Area Plans and Corridor-Wide Planning

Reconnecting America presented the information that was compiled based on interviews, station area plans, demographic data and information from municipalities and agencies. Common challenges include barriers to access and connectivity the suburban nature of the corridor and aging housing stock. Opportunities include a long history of collaboration and political support for transportation.

Committee members discussed the opportunities, challenges and current activity in their jurisdictions and individual station areas. The CWG was asked what their impression was of the following:

- Where are the key opportunities?
- What are the most significant challenges?

Comments and Discussion

General Comments and/or Considerations

- Because of the high existing transit use and movement of commuters in both directions throughout the corridor, the concept of corridor-wide Eco Pass is of high interest throughout the corridor.
- It is important to advance TDM strategies outlined in the 36 Commuting Solutions First and Final Mile Study.
- A viable concept that could be examined to be furthered throughout the corridor is what the City of Boulder is doing with the Boulder Junction area. It has implemented a tax district around Boulder Junction with property taxes directed at managing parking and supporting TDM opportunities. Eco-passes for residents and employees, subsidized bike- and car-share services are part of the benefits.
- Parking management strategies can be developed that can have a positive impact on transit ridership. The City of Boulder has developed a parking management strategy focused on the philosophy of concept of shared, unbundled, managed and paid parking.
- Allocation of retail (competition for sales tax) and affordable housing along the corridor can be identified. The question was raised about how much retail the corridor can support?
- With so many jurisdictions it is important to consider the corridor-wide benefits when choosing a catalytic site.
- Considerations should be given to making connections with the goal of encouraging employment.

Multi-modal Connectivity: The question was raised about how to plan a corridor that has two major transit services such as the Northwest Rail and US 36 BRT services. It was noted that stations on those two lines might be some distance apart from each other in certain areas and connectivity between them should



be supported. It was mentioned that between both BRT and rail service, this corridor will have more transit overall than many other corridors in the region.

Land value: It can be extremely expensive to both acquire and develop/redevelop especially for public-sector for parks and open space and affordable housing uses.

Branding Opportunities: There are opportunities to come together as a corridor to develop consistent branding throughout.

- US 36 BRT and local bus service (Flatiron Flyer) will have its own brand which doesn't include the word "Northwest". Can this provide a consistent identity throughout the corridor?
- Broomfield has been having discussions that focus on a concept of describing the corridor as the "creative corridor".
- The question was asked about the balance of identifying a unique identity for each BRT station while trying to develop consistency amongst the stations.

Northwest Rail/Westminster Station

- Need to consider the transit-dependent population and how to get them connected to the BRT system as this will be the end of line rail station for the foreseeable future.
- The committee discussed the need for interface and connectivity between the rail and BRT lines.
 - This is both an opportunity with the potential to link the two modes and increase mobility and a challenge in how to make that happen
 - It is important to consider those travelling from downtown Denver to the northwest region and how to allow them to take advantage of the enhanced transit system with bi-directional flow.
 - There is no current shuttle planned between the modes; there is opportunity for Westminster to "buy into" additional service. That conversation may be better suited to be had with RTD as it evaluates its yearly service plans.
 - It is important to consider how the South Westminster Station and NW Rail relate to the other corridors in the FasTracks system and how to optimize the benefits of the proximity to the Gold Line stations within one mile to the south. Adams County refers to this area as the "Triangle of Opportunity".

Westminster Station

This area is one of most challenging parts of the city with older industrial land uses but is also ripe for transformative TOD and opportunities for reinvestment, including a 135 acre mixed-use redevelopment site. The city has made considerable investment in the area to storm water and park facilities, RTD betterments, removing railroad tracks out of the floodway, upgrading sewer infrastructure, providing subsidies and down payment assistance for single-family homes, a grocery store and a 4-level parking structure which will maximize land available on the north side and pave the way for development. There are additional opportunities to identify affordable housing and improved access for transit-dependent populations. The area is fairly walkable with an elementary school and senior center. Challenges include aging homes, a need for an identity and master-development which is expensive.



The Adams County Housing Authority made an effort to acquire a property in 2008. Single-family homes are aged and in poor condition, so there is affordable housing but not quality affordable housing. From a redevelopment standpoint there is a need for lower rent and a transformational push. ACHA is currently trying tax credits, but progress has been slow.

Westminster Center

The city owns 97% of a 105 acre redevelopment site; planning and development is currently on a block-by-block basis. There is an interest in residential and office components with a build-out of 2500-3500 residential units and 1-1.5M square feet of office. With the planned rail station the challenge is how to connect riders to existing Park-n-Ride and service with grade separated crossings and major roadways.

US 36 and Church Ranch

This area is mostly built-out, but there are some opportunities. The Promenade development is exploring mixed-use.

Broomfield

The Arista development is a well-performing anchor with entertainment and a maturing community with dense multifamily housing and businesses, though there is a need for additional dining. There could be additional opportunities to improve parking and bus service in coordination with large events at the 1st Bank Center. On the other side of the highway there is redevelopment opportunity; currently there is a storage yard located on a very expensive property. Harvest Station is currently being built; it is a higher density development with 300 units and new bike and pedestrian connections are being made to emphasize the concept of place-making. Other opportunities include redeveloping some of the older developments, agricultural land and making good use of open space.

Flatiron/96th

With higher density development beginning ten years ago, this area is a “sleeping giant”. Challenges include underutilized parking and underpass access; and from a place-making perspective the lack of visibility from the highway and need for more uses. On the other side of highway there are exciting opportunities in the retail district where box stores are located with a new developer coming in and potential partnership. The transit station and bike path are in close proximity and there is good connectivity within the development. The greatest unknown in this station area is the future of the Conoco Philips site, which is currently being brokered. There is opportunity to plan for the future knowing that guaranteed BRT will be in place.

McCaslin/Louisville

Transportation infrastructure is an important feature of this station area. The future diverging diamond intersection will be a significant improvement along with bike trails and connections to open space. Construction of a future bike path underpass will provide access from the McCaslin area to open space and El Dorado Springs without crossing a road; branding opportunities related to this gateway to the foothills



are being explored. Challenges include connectivity, incompatible land use, final mile barriers and some resistance to new residential developments. An area planning process will begin in Spring 2014.

Superior Town Center

The Town Center Plan provides options for mixed-use development. Discussions about this development have been focused on density, parking and open space.

Table Mesa

The largest challenge in this station area is the existing housing stock and suburban land use patterns. There are opportunities to provide connectivity with the new overpass.

Boulder Junction

Boulder Junction is being planned to provide more than 2,000 residential units including multifamily and single-family townhomes as well as a hotel; Class A office space is in high demand. Boulder Junction's special taxing district brings a sustainable funding source and focus on transportation demand management (TDM). Boulder has taken lessons learned and applied them in this station area, along with trying cutting edge ideas with parking management, including unbundled parking and imposing a maximum of one parking space per unit. There has been investment in the depot village and a need to coordinate and provide real BRT service to the site and since this is an end destination there are opportunities for last mile connections.

Preliminary Corridor Goals

The Northwest Corridor will be one of the most developed and provide the ultimate transportation network in the Denver area with BRT, bicycle and pedestrian connections in addition to quick roadway access. Communities are proud of getting people from point A to point B quickly, efficiently and with choices.

The corridor is under a major transformation and communities are taking another look at development around BRT station so there is a need for the BRT system to be built right and reach its potential with infrastructure linked to surrounding land uses to maximize investment.

The committee discussed initial corridor-wide goals and identified the following as some of the key goals to further focus on developing:

- Develop a corridor-wide Master Eco Pass model.
- Identify branding opportunities and look at what can be done throughout the corridor to give it a consistent identity.
- Identify parking solutions to balance the corridor demand.
- Addressing the unique demographic needs of the area while considering how these demographics could change in the future. Considerations should focus on the following topics housing, transit use, jobs, types of employment and age related needs.



- Define how the rail and BRT will function together and how the two modes can influence or be linked to land use decisions. Think about the compatibility of both systems for the near term as well as the long term.
- Capitalize on the opportunities to travel through the corridor by multiple modes as there are diverse mobility patterns between Denver and Boulder as well as between corridor communities.
- Create a corridor-wide identity or characterize each station.

Review Action Items and Next Steps

Subsequent meetings will focus on developing a vision and goals and beginning discussions on catalytic and technical assistance funding. For immediate actions see Action Items on page 2.

