

A banner for the Denver Region Sustainable Communities Initiative. It features a background image of a modern residential building and a park area with a paved path and trees. The text 'Denver Region Sustainable Communities Initiative' is written in a white, cursive font across a blue horizontal band.

Denver Region Sustainable Communities Initiative



SCI East Corridor Working Group – Meeting #2 *Stapleton Foundation, 7350 E. 29th Ave., Suite #300* *1:00 pm – 3:30 pm, May 2, 2013*

Meeting Summary (As of 6/13/13 - Approved)

Attendees

CWG Members

- City and County of Denver – Community Planning and Development: Steve Gordon and David Gaspers
- City and County of Denver – Public Works: Jenn Hillhouse
- City of Aurora – Comprehensive Planning: John Fernandez
- City of Aurora – Public Works: Duane Launder
- Denver Housing Authority: Ismael Guerrero
- Denver International Airport (DIA): Tom Reed
- Regional Transportation District (RTD): Mike Turner
- Metro Denver EDC/Denver Metro Chamber: Holli Riebel
- Stapleton Foundation: Angie Rivera-Malpiede

Others

- CDR Associates (Facilitator): Laura Sneeringer
- Reconnecting America: Catherine Cox Blair, Mike Madrid
- Denver Regional Council of Governments (DRCOG): Paul Aldretti, Ashley Kaade
- Place Matters: Jocelyn Hittle

Absent CWG Member Organizations

- Aurora Housing Authority
- Denver Urban Renewal Authority
- Northeast Denver Housing Center



Agenda

- Welcome, Introductions and Agenda Overview
- Review CWGs Purpose and Expected Work Plan
- Discuss Benefits and Considerations for Corridor Planning
- Review and Discuss East Corridor Baseline Data and Mapping

Meeting Materials (available on the Website or FTP site)

- Agenda (Website)
- Work plan and process timeline (FTP site)
- Reconnecting America's draft East Corridor reconnaissance and baseline data and mapping (FTP site)
- Presentations describing lessons learned from other corridor planning efforts (Website)

Action Items

- All CWG members will send any questions and feedback on the corridor reconnaissance and baseline mapping, focusing specifically on the following questions:
 - Did we miss any relevant planning efforts or other activities in the corridor reconnaissance?
 - Does any of the information require further clarification?
 - Is there any additional baseline data and mapping that would be helpful to include?
 - Was any of the 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?
- All CWG members will provide contact information for large property owners and developers, to be invited to a forum
- Denver, Aurora and DIA (Tom Reed) will provide information on large property owners' vision and ideas
- Mike Turner will provide input on how the 72nd and Himalaya site should be characterized
- Tom Reed will send information on the Airport Station to be included in the corridor reconnaissance
- Denver, Aurora and DIA (Tom Reed) will provide information on large property owners' vision and ideas
- Reconnecting America will work with Denver and Aurora to incorporate their feedback into the corridor reconnaissance and baseline mapping, including considering development potential

Recap and Updates

Approval of Meeting 1 Summary

The group provided minor updates to the Meeting #1 Summary, which will be updated on the Website.

Operating Protocol

The operating protocol was approved. The only addition since the discussion at the last meeting was that Reconnecting America was added to provide technical support.



FTP Site Discussion:

Items that are ready to be shared with the public will be posted to the Website. Working materials will be added to the FTP site. In terms of printing materials, ECWG collectively agreed to receive materials electronically and print them themselves. Files will be sent a week in advance to allow members to prepare. DRCOG can print out materials for any member if needed; members should contact Paul Aldretti.

Review of CWGs Purpose and Expected Work Plan

The work plan and process timeline outline expectations for the next 15 months. Three underlined items on the work plan are the primary deliverables:

- Corridor Vision and Goals
- Corridor-wide Recommendations for Implementation
- Catalytic Site Plan

The Corridor reconnaissance and baseline mapping is meant to set a context to help the group develop the vision and goals. Additional conversation on opportunities and barriers will support the group in developing corridor recommendations.

The parallel Stakeholder Committee, comprised of community leaders, residents, and businesses will discuss vision and goals before the ECWG discusses so the ECWG can incorporate their input at the onset. They will also provide feedback on draft vision and goals and draft corridor implementation strategies. There will be a public meeting in order to obtain input on the vision and goals and implementation strategies. The group also discussed the need for a forum with developers and property owners to describe opportunities and barriers and their vision for the corridor. This is initially suggested between meetings 3 and 4.

The Committee discussed the following:

Will the ECWG Plan overlap with any other plans happening along the corridor? Denver and Aurora's existing station area plans will not be changed as a result of the ECWG's efforts. Instead, they will be incorporated into the ECWG efforts. The purpose of the ECWG is to promote the corridor, building off the individual station area.

How was the Stakeholder Committee selected?

Selection was based on geographic distribution, referrals, interest area, and networks when choosing from neighborhood leaders, employers, and land owners.

Why is the ECWG developing visions and goals before discussing barriers and opportunities?

It may be challenging to develop a vision and goals before fully understanding barriers and opportunities. The project team will reconsider the ordering of topics. Also, the vision and goals can be modified as necessary throughout the process.

Will there be a need for more than one public meeting?

The ECWG is actively seeking input from the public, necessitating the need for a public meeting. While one public meeting is likely appropriate, it may be helpful to present ECWG activities at other groups' planned events. This was the approach the West Corridor Working Group used.



Discussion on Benefits and Considerations for Corridor Planning

Catherine Cox Blair, Reconnecting America, presented an overview of their experience supporting corridor planning efforts across the county. Corridor planning helps set places in a regional context, and helps to prioritize limited resources to fund certain projects for the corridor as a whole. This presentation is available on the Website.

Ismael Guerrero, Denver Housing Authority, presented information about the West CWG's efforts, including development of a corridor profile, corridor goals, lessons learned, and key recommendations. He also described development of the West Line Corridor Collaborative, a 501(c)3 organization that will continue coordination efforts among the key parties of the original WCWG. Its purpose is to promote and advocate for TOD along the corridor. The 501(c)3 status enables it to apply for federal grants and technical assistance. Further information is available at <http://www.westlinecorridor.org>.

The Committee discussed the following:

What were additional lessons learned along the West Line?

Early public investment was pursued to spur development along the corridor. This approach attracted private investment and encouraged discussion regarding the corridor among private developers.

Did any of the station area plans change because of the corridor plan?

No. Station area plans laid out land uses for development and the WCWG was not revising them. The WCWG identified strategies to promote TOD development within these plans.

Does Reconnecting America have any experiences working on corridors with similar characteristics to the East Line? Miami is similar, but it is not as far along. Reconnecting America will consider other comparative efforts and case studies, in order to share lessons learned and other comparative information for context and foresight.

Review and Discuss East Corridor Baseline Data and Mapping

Catherine Cox Blair, Reconnecting America, presented the East Corridor baseline data and mapping. The group was also given this information a week in advance and asked for feedback and comments on Reconnecting America's findings. They were asked to provide feedback on the following questions:

- Did we miss any relevant planning efforts or other activities in the corridor reconnaissance?
- Does any of the information require further clarification?
- Is there any additional baseline data and mapping that would be helpful to include?
- Was any of the 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?

Reconnecting America's Findings of the Data and Notable Information:

- There are high transit usage rates in low income areas
- Jobs are low density and industrial
- There is a lack of parks and green space around station areas
- There is a deficiency in grocery stores around station areas
- First and last mile connections provide challenges



- Workers at Anschutz/ Fitzsimons and DIA currently live along the corridor
- Owner occupied outnumbered rental occupied two to one

Additional Information Requested:

- DIA information needs to be incorporated.
 - Significant ridership will be used for employment at DIA. There are approximately 33,000 employees currently at DIA, and over 55,000 employees at full buildout.
 - There were 30 million total passengers that arrive to or depart from DIA in 2012.
- The distinction between Airport City and Aerotropolis needs to be clarified.
- Need to determine how to incorporate development potential. A vacant land survey along the East Corridor would be helpful.
- It would be helpful to highlight the regional trail network, including a map for the trails near or along the East Corridor.
- It would be helpful to describe stations by type – destination, transfer and end of the line, as described in the Denver presentation from Meeting #1.
 - All RTD rail lines currently go either to downtown’s Central Business District or to Union Station, except for the future I-225 line. This makes the Peoria/Smith station a major transfer hub, since it connects to the I-225 line.
 - DIA should be characterized as a unique destination, connecting other FasTracks corridors to the Airport, with Union Station as a major transfer point from other lines to the East Line.
 - 61st Ave. Station may serve as “alternative” end-line station, along with 40th and Airport, for people taking the rail line east, but not going to the Airport.
- The location of affordable housing property needs to be updated. ULC has obtained two sites along the line at 38th and Blake and 40th and Colorado.
- Need to determine how to characterize the 72nd and Himalaya site. It is a potential station that will not be in existence on opening day. Mike Turner will provide feedback, based on RTD’s discussions.

Initial Themes from the Data Review:

- Connectivity issues are a challenge. Many stations do not connect well to the surrounding area in terms of access by walking, biking, or driving. The rail line was designed for cargo and never needed easy access for people before.
 - 38th and Blake does not have a fully developed street grid in place.
 - The downtown Denver angled grid does not connect well to bordering street grids to the south and east, making automobile connectivity and navigation difficult.
 - The ½ mile designation may not be the right level to consider. Denver has incorporated walks shed into its plans.
- Connections to the Rocky Mountain Arsenal should be included. Connections could be made from 61st and Pena via a bike path and from Stapleton via shuttle. Stapleton has completed a shuttle feasibility study.
- Education will likely be needed to overcome the idea that the East Line is only a destination line from downtown the airport. There are other destinations along the corridor.



What is the difference for commuter rail as opposed to light rail?

Commuter rail carries the highest ridership potential with longer trains, more seating, and passenger capacity, and also travels faster than light rail.

Is there going to be something that drives high density at the station? If not, will there be more park-and-rides to encourage ridership?

Density along the West was completed by negotiating high density developments with the neighborhoods, and agreeing that density is going to be kept near and around the station, not all over the neighborhood or too close to their homes. Denver is taking a strategic approach to get developers on board with high density around station areas, including the 61st & Pena station. People who are interested in a downtown culture will have the choice to live somewhere connected to downtown along the rail lines rather than in downtown.

