

ATTACHMENT A

MEETING SUMMARY Metro Vision Planning Advisory Committee (MVPAC) Wednesday, April 16, 2014

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Christopher Auxier	Adams County Housing Authority
Erin Fosdick	City of Longmont
Steve Glueck (Chair)	City of Golden
Steve Gordon	City and County of Denver
Steve Hebert	City of Lone Tree
Leanne Jeffers	Regional Institute for Health & Envrnmtl. Leadership
Steve Klausung	Denver South Economic Dev. Partnership
Glenda Lainis	City of Thornton
Kyle Legleiter	The Colorado Health Foundation
Anne Miller	CO Dept. of Local Affairs
Ann Norton	Ann Norton Law Offices
Katherine (Kati) Rider	Douglas County
Will Toor	Southwest Energy Efficiency Project
Cate Townsley	CO Dept. of Public Health and Environment
Glen Van Nimwegen	City of Littleton
Robert Watkins	City of Aurora
Brad Weinig	Enterprise Community Partners

DRCOG staff: Brad Calvert, Nicole Klepadlo, Teri Whitmore, Michele Anderson, Anna Garcia, Doug Rex, Ashley Kaade, Gabby Voeller, Casey Collins

Public: Ted Heyd, Bicycle Colorado; Susan Wood, RTD

Call to Order

Chair Steve Glueck called the meeting to order at 9:05 a.m.

Public Comment

No public comment was heard.

Summary of March 19, 2014 Meeting

The summary was accepted with the following clarifications.

- On page 4 – In MVPAC Comments (Edge Development) Second bullet, second sentence. Change sentence to “*There are industries that may be drawn to these areas—e.g., energy (solar, wind, oil and gas).*”
- On page 6 – In MVPAC Comments (Regional Housing Strategy Study). Fourth bullet. Change to “*Current construction defects legislation should be noted – it is perceived by some as a primary barrier to building attached housing.*”

INFORMATIONAL ITEMS

Metro Vision 2040 – Regional Economic Strategy Update

Brad Calvert presented an update on the Regional Economic Strategy (RES). This report seeks to identify roles, responsibilities, policies, and actions that DRCOG can adopt to promote economic sustainability in the Denver region. Consultants developing the report, Economic & Planning Systems (EPS), conducted 12 interviews with over 40 participants (municipal economic developers, county-wide organizations, multi-county regional organizations, and state-level economic developers).

Key highlights of the RES interviews:

Regional assets

- Well-educated and trained workforce (although R&D and technology transfer not of the same scale as Stanford-Silicon Valley / MIT-Cambridge-Boston)
- DIA – particularly direct international flights (and other airports)
- Mid-continent location
- Transit investment and planning
- Housing and lifestyle diversity
- Highway network

Regional weaknesses or threats

- Broadband access and the digital divide
- Not educating everyone equally well
- Business personal property tax
- TABOR and Gallagher Amendment
- High housing cost for size of metro area
- Lack of strong financial or tax incentives compared to competing states
- Not attracting Fortune 500, but strong hub for Western and West-Central US
- Cost of electric power for large power users
- Growth in rural communities (jobs and housing)
- Oil and gas regulations
- I-70 congestion

Quality of life

- Regional trails, parks, open space
- Favorable weather (generally)
- Proximity to mountain recreation
- Key factors in attracting 25-34 year old talent workers
 - Knowledge of latest arts/practices/skills
 - Ability to sustain industry as older workers retire (concern for some)
 - Peak household formation years means high spending patterns (housing, consumer goods, entertainment, etc.)

Transit and FasTracks

- Fare rates and zone structure is higher than competitive cities – issue for service/middle skill employees
- EcoPass: great amenity in CBD, but less attractive in areas with lower transit shares
 - CBD (40% transit capture) vs. suburban office parks (<10%)
 - At the expense of equally important road infrastructure?
 - DRCOG promoting residential vs. commercial at station areas

Housing

- Middle to upper skill and wage jobs have pretty good choices
- Lower incomes: affordability and stability a threat to economic opportunity
 - Lack of entry level rental housing in peripheral suburban and exurban locations
 - Difficulty attracting and retaining entry level employees
 - Construction defects – impact on urban-style housing that's seen as key asset

The RES will also create benchmark indicators that can be used to track how the region compares to competitor regions. Six regions were identified as competitor regions based on an analysis of Metro Denver Economic Development Corporation records.

Cities identified for benchmarking are:

- Phoenix, AZ
- Dallas, TX
- Salt Lake City, UT
- Austin, TX
- Atlanta, GA
- Portland, OR

Brad discussed the following proposed benchmarking indicators and asked for committee feedback.

Employment and Business assets

- Proportion of jobs in low, mid, and upper level wages
- Percent of population with HS, Bachelor's Degree and advanced degrees
- Percent of population with reported access to download speeds greater than 25 or 50 Mbps
- Number of internet service providers

Population and Quality of Life assets

- Population by age cohort and growth rate by cohort
- Median household income and income distributions
- Median single-family home price and housing affordability index
- Cost of Living Index (Census)
- Multifamily housing units delivered as a percent of total housing units
- Vacancy rate own-vs.-rent
- Air quality - # of days exceeding healthy levels

Transportation and Transit access

- Congestion index (Travel Time Index)
- Mode of transportation: SOV, HOV, transit, bicycle, pedestrian
- Average commute times and distribution of worker commutes by time of day (peak spreads)

MVPAC member comments (Regional Economic Strategies):

- Small business representatives should be included interviews – the Small Business Development Center was recommended.
- Supporting entrepreneurship is critical for a variety of reasons – including larger businesses that can “harvest” employees and ideas
- Is there specific direction from the Board regarding the economic strategy? Traditional economic development activities may be outside the role DRCOG is best suited to play.
- Benchmarks and indicators should reflect the nuance of data and DRCOG should consider how data are reported.
- There should be broader groups and fewer indicators. Economic development comes down to “are the workers there and can you retain them”.
- Some committee members indicated that these data are already collected and there may be some duplication of efforts.
- Focus on where DRCOG has influence - i.e., air quality, mobility, and mix of housing and jobs.
- Many businesses focus on the cost of doing business, including utilities. They are also interested in the access their employees have to higher and continuing education.
- Benchmarking should reflect the role of DIA – the region’s single biggest economic driver.
- Travel time index is not a good measure for congestion – when possible it’s best to think of housing and transportation affordability together.
- Important to grow existing jobs, not just new jobs.
- A healthy workforce is also important – are they able consistently make it to work because they are healthy, etc.
- Another role is to look at distribution of resources geographically across the region – level of success
- It may not be appropriate for the plan to include a separate section, but rather link other policy items to their importance in creating an economically vital region.

A follow-up conference call to discuss more details of indicators will be scheduled by DRCOG staff with the following volunteers, Steve Glueck, Steve Klausung, Steve Herbert, Robert Watkins, Kati Rider, and Christopher Auxier.

Key findings of the Regional Economic Strategy Report will be brought to the DRCOG Board (June 11). A final report is expected by the end of July, 2014.

Metro Vision 2040 – Parks and Open Space

Brad Calvert presented the initial findings on potential modifications to the existing Parks and Open Space element identified by consultants Logan Simpson Design. Brad noted over 300 comments were received during public engagement.

MVPAC member comments (Parks and Open Space)

- The powerpoint and summary were requested to share with appropriate staff.
- Discussing parks and open space separately may be needed, but there are also reasons to keep them together in the plan.
- Make sense to look at separately, like population based goals.
- Are we adding open space to the edge of UGB to make it better?
- Should the plan detail conservation of open space on edges – creating buffers.
- Urban areas may have different needs (parks) than areas of the region that are looking to protect large areas of open space.
- Open space is very important to Free Standing Communities.
- Access to parks should note who has access – e.g. do areas with concentration of affordable housing have good access?
- The plan should include both access (parks) and land area (open space) measures.
- There needs to be an emphasis on urban centers and what functions as useful space
 - What is important to build our environment?
 - How do people's needs get met by amenities?
 - Emphasis and public space, plazas, etc.
- Access to trails and how that impacts access to parks should be considered
- What do we know about hazard areas (e.g. fire and flood) – this should be incorporated in discussions about protected areas.

Metro Vision 2040 – Urban Centers Analysis

Nicole Klepadlo presented on key urban centers and corridor themes emerging from surveys and interviews conducted by consultants Logan Simpson Design with local government staff and stakeholders.

The following urban centers were interviewed:

- Downtown Golden
- RidgeGate West (Lone Tree)
- Westminster Activity Center
- Superior City Center
- Thornton City Center
- Twin Peaks Activity Center (Longmont)
- Downtown Louisville
- Cherry Creek Center (Denver)
- East Colfax Center (Denver)
- Lakewood Center

What We Heard – Urban Centers

- Weathered the recession well compared to other areas within communities
- Common goal towards working to enhance multimodal mobility with proposed bike facilities, better transit and exploring/implementing shuttles from urban center to rail stations
- No formal monitoring in place, no metrics in place to track performance
 - Consideration of lease rates, building permits, land value, sales tax etc.
- Strong desire for more affordable housing units including senior housing
- Difficulties in leasing mixed-use space and an oversupply of retail space
- Policies and programs within the selected urban centers include:
 - Streetscape improvements enhancing the pedestrian experience
 - Design guidelines
 - Parking management
 - Business improvement districts
 - Updated zoning policies
 - Small area plans

Nicole noted key themes emerging from the interviews on the following corridors:

- Wadsworth (Arvada, Wheat Ridge)
- Speer/Leetsdale (Denver)
- South Broadway (Denver, Englewood)
- Federal Blvd (Denver, Adams County)
- 72nd Avenue (Commerce City)

What We Heard – Corridors

- Corridors complement, rather than compete with, urban centers through linking them to each other and transit stations
 - Lack of funding/resources
- Not a shared vision for any of the corridors
 - Competing needs (auto, pedestrian, commercial)
- Overall challenges facing corridors include:
 - Constrained right-of-ways
 - Weak identities
 - Small parcels and multiple owners
 - Competing priorities of other city projects
- Primary role is to provide local and regional connectivity
- Successful policies and programs that have been effective include:
 - Innovative form-based code
 - TOD zoned districts
 - Neighborhood plans/station area plans
 - Concentration on nodes within each corridor
 - Living and complete streets policies

Urban Centers Quantitative Analysis

- % of trips that are urban center to urban center
- % of trips that stay within an urban center
- Average VMT for households in an urban center
- Average VMT for employees in the urban center
- SOV% for urban center employees (commute trip)
- SOV% for urban center residents (commute trip)

Urban Centers Quantitative Initial Analysis

- Two Urban Centers types emerged:
 1. Centers friendly for **residents**
 - Include large concentration of destinations and jobs for people that live here
 2. Centers friendly to **jobs**
 - Include high concentration of job options, sometimes transit to get there, and retail accommodations before, during, after work.
- Urban centers with high numbers of walking, biking and transit trips shared similar characteristics including:
 - Population density
 - Job density
 - Trips that stay within the urban center or go to other urban centers
- Walking trips are high in places with high population density
- High numbers of transit trips are correlated with low VMT/SOV rates for employees
 - These areas present alternative options to driving to employment in these urban centers

MVPAC member comments (Urban Centers)

- Does DRCOG require monitoring metrics –there should be monitoring done – we should require governments to supply their metrics. Others spoke in opposition to this if it leads to “de-designation” of centers. Brad Calvert explained that DRCOG is committed to periodic regional measurement and that DRCOG-funded urban centers studies will include metric and monitoring efforts.
- Urban renewal is a critical tool.
- How well we are doing in achieving 50/75 goals? Brad said between 2005 and 2010 urban centers captured 21% of housing growth and 55% of employment growth (2005-2013).

Next Steps

Urban Centers and Corridors

- Survey analysis to be completed and final results presented in May
- Quantitative analysis to be correlated with survey data and interview themes
- MVPAC preview – May 2014
- MVPAC policy conversation – June 2014

Rural Town Centers

- Interviews to be completed
- MVPAC preview – May 2014

Metro Vision 2040 – Regional Housing Strategy Update

The presentation was tabled until May 2014. The DRCOG Board of Directors will receive a briefing in May 2014 – final report to be completed in June.

ADMINISTRATIVE ITEMS

Cate Townley, Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment, was introduced as a new member replacing Susan Motika.

Member Leanne Jeffers of Regional Institute for Health and Environmental Leadership distributed a flyer on the Institute's *Leadership for Healthy Community Design* program.

The meeting was adjourned at 11:04 a.m. The next meeting is scheduled for May 21, 2014 at 9:00 a.m.