



**Public Works Committee
Meeting Summary**

Tues. Sept. 16, 2008 1:30 p.m. Conference Room 391

Members Present: Johnson, Lehmann, López, Nevitt
Members Absent: None
Others Present: Garcia, Linkhart, Madison, Robb

1. Strategic Transportation Plan

Committee Action

The Committee approved adoption of the Strategic Transportation Plan.

Summary of Discussion

Bill Vidal, Manager, Public Works Department, presented a final overview of the Strategic Transportation Plan (STP). The document is in final editing and should be distributed by early October. Mr. Vidal requested that Council adopt the plan.

Mr. Vidal stressed that an underlying assumption of STP is that FasTracks will be completed to its originally planned extent by 2017. That system is necessary along with the other strategies and projects in the plan to maintain current levels of congestion through 2017. Even maintaining current levels would be a great accomplishment.

The Vision

Denver's vision, as stated in the Comprehensive Plan, is "A great city that is livable for all of its people now and in the future". STP creates a multi-modal transportation system to support a livable, connected, sustainable city:

- Multi-modal
 - Safe pedestrian connections
 - A comprehensive bicycle system
 - Dependable transit options
 - Efficient and well-maintained infrastructure
- Safe, efficient, reliable
 - Connected multi-modal system
 - Safe transportation network
 - Managed congestion
 - Accessible to all

- Connected
 - Link land use and transportation
 - Enhance connections between modes
 - Offer transportation choices
- Green and sustainable
 - Limit roadway footprint
 - Align with Greenprint Denver
 - Promote alternative public transit modes
 - Improve air and water quality
 - Provide alternatives to fossil fuel
- Healthy, livable community
 - Mixed-use streets support great neighborhoods
 - Provide transportation choices that improve community health and well-being
 - Promote pedestrian friendly mixed-use development
 - Integrate land use and transportation choices

The Innovation

STP offers a transformative approach to transportation:

- Travel sheds, not just high-volume corridors
 - Study areas defined by geographical boundaries that have characteristics and facilities servicing similar travel patterns.
- Moving people, not just vehicles
 - By analyzing travel sheds rather than measuring demand on high traffic corridors, STP recognizes the importance of moving people by any mode.
 - Focus on person trips rather than the traditional vehicle miles traveled.
- No growth in Denver's road footprint
 - Essentially working within the pavement already in place.
 - Turn lanes and other improvements will be added if warranted, but only after careful consideration of alternatives.

The Strategy

- Maintenance of existing infrastructure and maximizing efficiency and safety are fundamental to our current transportation system and will remain so.
- Need to add provisions for multi-modal improvements and planning for future transportation.
- Behavioral, physical and operational factors have to overlap to encourage people to use travel modes other than cars. STP includes a balance of recommendations in each of these three areas.
- Result is a comprehensive plan for each of 13 travel sheds, including a comprehensive list of planned and potential projects as well as strategies, including:
 - Basic maintenance of existing infrastructure
 - Completion of bike, pedestrian and street gaps
 - Transportation demand and traffic management
 - Transit support strategies

- Operational and safety strategies
- Transit and roadway improvements
- Major improvements and studies

Following the presentation, the Committee asked questions and made comments. During that discussion, Mr. Vidal and Council members made several comment, including:

- Transit-oriented development (TOD) station plans are a component of STP. Public Works and Community Planning & Development TOD planners work closely.
- We have to make it easier for mobility-impaired people to use the transit stations.
- Modeling indicates we can absorb growth without appreciatively increasing congestion through 2015. Beyond that, without additional investment, transportation issues will become dire. It is not too early to start planning.
- Bike and pedestrian improvements should have been included in the bond projects.
- Bike and pedestrian improvements are incorporated in the annual capital improvement plans.
- The policy makers have to make the decisions. One option is stop filling potholes and build out the bike plan. Achieving a balance by working on both is another option.
- STP includes an appendix showing cost associated with the recommendations.
- Traffic becomes an issue following land development. For example, the TREX project was 20 years too late.
- We can make physical changes and operational improvements, but we can't make people change their behavior and their transportation decisions.
- Mr. Vidal expressed concern that Council will be disappointed with the lists of projects contained in the STP. Most of the projects listed for the 13 travel sheds are already prioritized in the CIP. STP organizes them in relation to other strategies and projects.