

Stakeholder Working Group (SWG) Meeting #2 Summary

Date: Thursday, September 22, 2016

Time: 5:30-7:30 PM

Location: Four Mile Historic Park

Overview

The *Go Speer Leetsdale Mobility Study* is exploring potential improvement options for multimodal travel along the Speer Leetsdale Corridor, running approximately from Broadway and Speer southeast to Mississippi Avenue and Leetsdale (also SH 83).

The second of three SWG meetings was held at Four Mile Historic Park to provide a study update and gather feedback on potential improvement options for the corridor. A small group break-out session was conducted to discuss each travel mode followed by a large group discussion on key takeaways.

Study Update

Following the first SWG and public meeting, the study team has been working to develop potential improvement options and screen those options for both feasibility and their potential impact on travel throughout the corridor. Some options passed the initial screening while others were flagged as not viable. The project team also shared the finalized Purpose & Need and Vision Statement for the corridor, noting how input from the Technical Working Group, the SWG and the broader community is reflected in the documents.

Vision: Speer Leetsdale Corridor is a place where:

- Transportation systems and facilities contribute to “complete communities”.
- There is a viable choice to leave automobiles at home.
- Technology advances out of the lab and onto the street.
- Regional and local agencies, businesses and stakeholders partner to implement the vision.

Purpose:

- Accommodate the corridor’s current and growing person-trip demand.
- Enhance existing transportation options.
- Provide additional mobility and access options.
- Improve quality of life.
- Enhance economic development opportunities.

Bicycle Mobility Needs:

- Need: Address inadequate and disconnected bicycle facilities.
- Need: Improve ease of use for bicycle facilities.
- Need: Address locations with demonstrated bicycle safety concerns.

Pedestrian Mobility Needs:

- Need: Address inadequate and disconnected pedestrian facilities.
- Need: Improve ease of use for pedestrian facilities.

- Need: Address locations with demonstrated pedestrian safety concerns.

Transit Mobility Needs:

- Need: Accommodate increasing person-trip demand resulting from population and employment growth in the corridor.
- Need: Address unreliable transit travel times and delay that result from vehicular congestion.
- Need: Accommodate increasing trips within the corridor while still providing improved corridor-long commutes.
- Need: Address inadequate accessibility and rider comfort at transit stops and stations.

Vehicular Mobility Needs:

- Need: Reduce congestion resulting from increasing person-trip demand related to population and employment growth in the corridor.
- Need: Improve operations at intersections and corridor locations with higher than expected crash frequency and severity.

Livability Needs:

- Need: Provide transportation solutions that support livability concepts for everyday life through a range of transportation modes.

Transportation Access and Equity Needs:

- Need: Identify convenient and cost-effective mobility options for all users of the corridor.

Evaluation Process

The study team provided an update on the evaluation process of potential improvements and the progress that has been made since the last SWG meeting. Options were developed by mode (e.g., transit, vehicular, bike and pedestrian) and assessed for their feasibility and potential impact (positive and negative) on travel throughout the corridor. During this initial screening, infeasible options were identified and removed from consideration while potentially viable options were advanced for further analysis by mode as “primary” and “complementary” solutions.

Small Group Breakouts

SWG members counted off into small breakout groups to rotate among three stations representing the four travel modes examined in the study: transit, bike/pedestrian and vehicular. Project team members were located at each station to talk through boards outlining the potential improvement options. Key feedback themes from working group members at each station are outlined below:

Transit Station

- Bottleneck traffic takes place throughout the corridor and needs to be mitigated.
- Workgroup members noted that the process to-date has considered technical feasibility, not the cost for specific improvements, which may influence improvement preferences.

- Interest in high capacity/enhanced transit with specific suggestions for a street car, bus rapid transit or shuttle options.
- For high capacity transit to be successful, it must feel safe, comfortable and clean.
- While Workgroup members determined that dedicated transit (exclusive) lanes have potential, there was concern related to increased traffic congestion and the ability for safety to be upheld.
- Mobility hubs are considered key to connecting transit and bike/pedestrian accesses.
- The complexity of the corridor creates the need for specific solutions at traffic hotspots, such as 1st and University Blvd.
- Consider how paid parking at Cherry Creek Shopping Center will impact travel patterns.

Bike/Pedestrian Station

- Strong support for improved bike/ped facilities to address safety/comfort concerns along East 1st Avenue in front of the Denver Country Club with interest in reevaluating the alternative to widen the Trail on 1st Avenue between University and Downing.
- Strong support for improved bicycle connectivity, safety, and comfort along Leetsdale, while requesting clarification for how a two-way protected bike lane would impact vehicular traffic.
- Other specific areas for improved bike/ped facilities emphasized by discussion groups include:
 - Separated bicycle and pedestrian corridors for travel along the Cherry Creek Trail between Broadway and Downing Street.
 - Alternatively, widening the Cherry Creek Trail west of Downing Street to add capacity.
 - Along 1st Avenue and Steele Street between University Avenue and Bayaud Street.
- Cherry Creek North and the mall were noted as barriers to bike and pedestrian connectivity. There is a need for enhanced connections through the Cherry Creek Shopping Center area (private property).
- Consider improved wayfinding, distance, and destination-based signs to identify nearest exits along the Trail (e.g. 2 miles to next exit).
- Multiple small groups asked for a sidewalk inventory to be completed. There was interest in adding a new alternative to the screening process to complete the sidewalk network along Speer Boulevard, particularly on the north side of eastbound Speer Boulevard in the western portion of the corridor.

Vehicular Station

- Desire for lower and consistent speed limits throughout the corridor and other traffic calming strategies.

- Consider likely future trends, such as the expansion of car sharing, Uber/Lyft ride sharing, and self-driving vehicles, in the sustainability of improvements.
- Highlight the impact of human behavior, such as mobile phone usage/distracted driving, in accidents and congestion.
- Small groups identified areas and intersections to especially target for improvements:
 - Alameda and 1st Ave.
 - Leetsdale and Cherry
 - Leetsdale and Dahlia
 - Leetsdale and Monaco
 - Ellsworth and Steele (concerns of impacts related to the roll-out of paid parking at the Cherry Creek Shopping Center)
- Signal optimization was confirmed as an element that will be integrated into the improvement options.

Full Group Discussion

The breakout groups reconvened for a full group discussion on key takeaways. There was general consensus that the options proposed for elimination should remain off the table while options recommended for advancement should be further evaluated. Overarching themes emerging from the SWG discussion included:

- Overall, the study should emphasize increased consistency for all travel modes throughout the corridor (i.e. roadway/lane/sidewalk character and widths, speed limits, operations, pedestrian environment, bus stops)
- Ensure that bike and pedestrian travel are being considered as separate, but interconnected, travel modes.
- Consider whether vehicular focus is a need in the study, particularly in the terminology surrounding “needs” (i.e., integration of multimodal travel and future travel trends into a corridor designed for vehicles).
- Potential corridor improvements should be considered in conjunction with other citywide plans currently underway.

What's Next

The next *Go Speer Leetsdale* SWG meeting will be held in early 2017 to review and gather feedback on packages of multimodal solutions and to discuss the processes for implementation and funding.

Attendees

Project Team

- Rachel Ackermann (FHU)
- Tim Baldwin (RMW Planning)
- Jane Boand (CCD)
- Holly Buck (FHU)
- Scott Burton (CCD)
- Rachele DiFebbo (GBSM)
- Miles Graham (GBSM)
- Geneva Hooten (Toole Design Group)
- Jessica Myklebust (FHU)

Stakeholder Working Group

- Hussen Abdulahi (African Community Center)
- Scott Broch (Glendale City Council)
- Christine Des Enfants (Cherry Creek Chamber)
- Loralyn Fabian (Transportation Solutions)
- Douglas Hsiad (Country Club Historic Neighborhood)
- Laura Hiniker (Four Mile Historic Park)
- Ellen Ittelson (Cherry Creek Area Business Alliance)
- Ted Kennedy (Cherry Creek Steering Committee)
- Sam Lauer (BikeDenver)
- Anne Lindsey (Golden Triangle Neighborhood Association)
- Matt Russell (South Hilltop Neighborhood Association)
- Susan Sweeney (Cranmer—Hilltop Civic Association)
- Susan Smernoff (Cherry Creek East Association)
- Robert Vogel (Cherry Creek North Neighborhood Association)
- WalkDenver (Jill Locantore)

Media

- David Sachs (Streetsblog Denver)