

MOBILITY FOCUS GROUP MEETING NOTES

JAN 15, 2019 | ART GYM DENVER

Consultant team attendees: Jason Longsdorf, Ian Chase, Greg Adelberg, Max Lubarsky, J.J. Folsom,
CCD staff attendees: Stephen Rijo, Ellen Forthofer, Curt Upton, Jane Boand, Ryan Billings, Scott Burton

Focus group and public attendees: Approximately 30 (Not including CCD and Consultant Staff)

1. Introductions/Icebreaker – Who you are and one word you would choose to describe mobility:

- Convenient
- Getting There*
- Mode Share
- Priorities
- Network
- Parking
- Mobility
- Fun
- Walking
- Access*
- Safe***
- Connectivity
- Transit*
- Easy*
- Crosswalks
- Freedom
- Multi(Modal)
- Equity
- Choices*
- Bicycles

* Mentioned more than once

2. Presentation:

JJ Folsom provided a background on the project, project team, and efforts to date.

Jason Longsdorf presented Mobility portion of presentation:

- Overview of City mobility goals (MAP, Vision Zero, Denver Moves, etc.)
- No change is not an option – 40% increase in Denver population by 2040
- High Injury Network (HIN) – a lot of opportunity to fix unsafe HIN streets in area.
- Frequent Transit Network (FTN) – Other transit corridors of opportunity
- Multi-modal infrastructure (sidewalks, bike lanes, etc.) as opportunity to move more people in constrained ROW

3. Discussion Question #1: What is done well in terms of multimodal transportation within East & East Central plan areas? (20 min)

- A lot of E/W parallel corridors and connectivity that allow the option to take different routes to places (walking, driving, biking etc.)
 - ◆ Frequent transit lines especially E/W
- 16th Ave. bike lane
- 7th Ave. and other parkways (17th Ave, 6th Ave.)
 - ◆ If they don't have sidewalks, opportunity for improvement to add sidewalks or formalize trails in median
- Shade canopy (mature trees)
- Alley loaded neighborhoods → help with lacking driveway conflicts
- Mixed use along the whole area keeps it walkable etc. – put the sidewalks somewhere needed
- 19th and 20th one-way to two-way conversions were great; how can we replicate elsewhere?
- Trend towards car-free households in East Central leads to heavy increase in bicycling (they are tied shifts)
 - ◆ Major benefits of these neighborhoods that they have many mobility options and choices to make car-free; so double down on bike/ped improvements

- People-centric development → ped and transit focused. Old neighborhoods built pre-parking minimums allowed for density
 - ◆ Variety – especially in Cap Hill (streets, housing, destinations, businesses; this variety helps add to the mobility environment and success of the neighborhoods)
 - ◆ Old trolley stops – great multimodal example of land use, good scale of development, and mobility options
- Prioritization of bike routes based on different levels of use (Similar to arterial, local, collector approach to roads)
- Walkability of areas and nice buffer from moving traffic to the sidewalk environment
- Car share is a great opportunity
- BRT opportunity to move more people and need to connect it with bike ped that people will be moving to and from
 - ◆ Center Running BRT will provide more visibility & safety to pedestrians in ROW

4. Discussion Question #2: What are the major challenges, barriers, & opportunities between today's trends and City goals? (30 min)

- 29th and Monaco bike lane example – good intention of bike lanes, lead to challenging auto environment
- We make it too easy to drive in Denver – need to step up and make those hard decisions to make driving a bit more difficult and then prioritize all other modes
 - ◆ Folks 2nd and 3rd that idea with support
- Midblock traffic lights are a recipe for non-compliance (and pointless...); locate at an intersection or folks don't get the purpose and choose to run them
 - ◆ 13th Ave example of signal timing and midblock platooning → driving is getting a bit harder and more folks are disobeying the platooning signals
- Lacking sidewalks and bus stop infrastructure → need to improve
 - ◆ 13th and Detroit ped crossing example as something to be improved
- Speeding a challenge (one ways implied)
- People avoid crossing busy roads
 - ◆ Life constrained between 13th and 8th because they are difficult to cross
- Need to widen some existing sidewalks
 - ◆ Example: 13th Ave around Pearl is "anti-love" → can't walk side by side, have to walk single file
- Reliability of public transit – actual or perceived
 - ◆ A-line concerns
 - ◆ Buses passing you as you wait at bus stop
 - Full buses and getting passed as another deterrent of transit
- Free street parking – can't see around it, visibility issues → could have a better use of that ROW → encourages car ownership
 - ◆ Difficult sight lines (13th and 14th example) where you can't see oncoming traffic until you nudge out → dangerous for all modes
 - ◆ Better sight triangles needed at intersections for safety of all users, especially bikes & peds
 - ◆ Some challenges between parking and the future goals of less driving
- Negative that many residential streets are oversized and lead to speeding etc. on those local neighborhoods streets
 - ◆ Opportunity to add treatments to mitigate this in light of future changes (e.g. 16th Ave from East High to Colorado as opportunity to mitigate cut through traffic)
- Lacking North south bike connectivity (especially east of downtown)
 - ◆ East west facilities are better, but north south are substantially lacking

- ◆ East-west can still be hard too.
- ◆ Better “long haul” bike lanes to get to and through the area
- Hard ends to bike lanes when approaching a major intersection – several folks chimed in on this
- Land use is a challenge
- School choice is an issue – going beyond your neighborhood
- Door zones and bike lanes
 - ◆ 11th Ave. example – slight debate about the existing danger here
- Have real change for speedways in neighborhood (haven’t changed it over past 40 years, so how do we get it to change for example...)
- Enforcement issue for folks driving, speeding, running stop signs etc. → only way you will see decrease
- Snow removal is tough from a walkability and bikeability perspective
- Cost of transit passes – most expensive in the country transit fare and need to change
- Should focus on emerging technology (AVs acting like rideshare, adding new SOV trips and congesting streets) vs. current-day parking constraints
- 8th Ave bike lane to help slow traffic and improve safety for everyone → 5mph slower can be much safer to avoid a number of accidents
 - ◆ Use mobility lanes to slow traffic
 - ◆ Reduce speed limits with street changes so they aren’t a speed trap but instead safer for drivers and bike/ped
- With Colfax getting road diet, what is role of leaving other streets passable for through traffic or not? → be thoughtful about keeping some road capacity for cars in key places and not cutting it everywhere
 - ◆ BRT traffic diversion is a key piece to keep an eye on in next phase of BRT design
 - ◆ Point well taken by all
- Aurora’s opting out of extending BRT; we shouldn’t have to accommodate that traffic on our local and neighborhood streets
- Need to close the natural pinch points and have more crossings for peds
 - ◆ So many crashes are midblock “jaywalking” being forced by lack of sufficient crossing
 - ◆ Major safety improvement with fix
- Auto-oriented crossing standards/policy (e.g. no ped crossing within 300ft of signalized intersection) → need a better option for moving people across the street to/from BRT
- BRT as a big experiment - need to study it before AND after
 - ◆ How can we be proactive and mitigate impacts in advance?
 - ◆ Should think about the post-implementation analysis to see how things really worked after we built them. Great idea to test it and put in \$\$\$ on the back end to show what we’ve learned and then we can do early implementation/mitigation to help deal with the negative externalities of new Colfax BRT
- Design City to encourage MAP goals; need to build it for achieving 50% SOV trips, 15% transit, 15% walking/biking and not say that we’re not ready yet
- Cost of sidewalks – huge barrier → need interim solution that makes streets with deficient sidewalks safe to walk in now
 - ◆ Lower speed or other traffic calming (circles) etc. to help improve level of shared spaces etc.
 - ◆ Allow for safer shared street where folks are walking in the road and likely will be until we’ve built them.
- 13th and 14th Ave will catch some diversion from Colfax BRT
 - ◆ Consider traffic calming & mitigation strategies – speed tables and or raised crosswalks may achieve same result

- City standards that need rethinking for mobility goals etc:
 - ◆ Fire department – policy for wide roads to allow vehicle access
 - ◆ Forestry and tree planting standards – enough for a tree to live
 - ◆ One ways
 - ◆ Right turns on red
 - ◆ Private development
- Separate modes by speed with protected bike and scooter lanes for example
 - ◆ Certain speed in street → person lane (currently bike lane) to carry heavy people traffic → sidewalk for ADA, walking, and origin/destination access
- Have more conversations about what to do with all the one-way couplets → is it two-way, is it a bus lane and PBL, are they all one-offs; something important to think about
 - ◆ 19th and Pearl/Penn area is so much better since 2 way conversion
 - ◆ Road diets of one-ways to add parking on both sides...slow speed and add more parking
- Sidewalk repair and costs to home owners - potentially not fair to expect owners to do it
 - ◆ Bring everything (all sidewalks) up to good standard then hand off maintenance to the City
 - City pays for it to come to “good standard” and then have a sidewalk fee
- Cost of parking and location of parking need to match.
 - ◆ Seattle example of making the market match what we want to see and having appropriately priced parking
- Amsterdam and bicycle culture → nothing special just the way they live
 - ◆ Thoughtful network with A+ infrastructure that you don’t need to think about
 - ◆ Great infrastructure takes care of and makes it intuitive for all, no education necessary
- Vulnerable user laws → Washington painted sidewalks and botanic gardens blinking signals for example
- Intuitive nature of transportation → make bike and transit infrastructure easy, safe, fun
- Places to put dock-less mobility – both storage and riding → how can we showcase the right way to store these things
 - ◆ Could be a great example we do right – not to park in sidewalks etc.
- Better bike facilities, especially at intersections (example of having to use 17th to cross at 16th...)
 - ◆ don’t want folks to have to pick the bike route, but feel safe on most streets and have good intersections, especially to cross major roads

5. Discussion Question #3: What is the methodology for prioritizing mobility projects? Spatial? Equity? Mode? (20 min)

- Pedestrian first – many said this (example of “Barnes’ Dance” downtown)
- Safety first
- Pick all the low-hanging fruit (see what we can change quickest or not...)
 - ◆ “reasonably implementable”
- Complete networks and connectivity → especially closing key gaps in the bike network for example
- Blueprint Denver inverse pyramid example of having the pedestrian at the top and trickle down to the SOV driver example → something to follow
- Ground floor access on new buildings need to think about bike/ped priority
- Reintroducing/encouraging pedestrians along Colfax will significantly help businesses, land uses, the quality of life and the environment of the corridor because that is what it was built for (wolf reintroduction analogy)

- Make the big changes first and focus on those transformative projects → do some big things to move the needle (devils advocate to only picking low-hanging) → implementable marquee project
 - ◆ BRT is one of those marquee projects
- People moving capacity (not just auto) → more people moved in smaller space for example

6. Anything we missed? Other thoughts?

- DRCOG and regional connectivity for bikes and other modes and coordination with adjacent municipalities (anecdote of linking to Adams county fairgrounds by bike)
- Make sure we link the feedback we're hearing from other focus groups to mobility
- How to make sure we actually change things and advance plan goals; not just make a plan that sits on the shelf
- Have steering committees to meet into future (hold folks & plan accountable)
- More temporary, demo, and pop-up type improvements
- Use focus group energy to advance positive thoughts etc.
- Make sure we have a more diverse group of folks than the regulars who show up → socioeconomic groups, racial background, age, ability/ADA or sighted for example and everyone else
 - ◆ Consultant team has budgeted resources to meet under-represented folks where they are to get their input etc.

7. FLIP CHART NOTES – THESE WERE NOTED ON FLIP CHART DURING DISCUSSION AND ARE GENERALLY CAPTURED IN THE MEETING MINUTES ABOVE:

Discussion Question #1: What are we doing well?

- High Frequency Transit (East-West in particular)
- 16th Bikeway
- Bicycle Routes (Expanding)
- Formal paths down middle of parkways
- Parkway with sidewalks (Safe, pedestrian friendly)
- Tree canopies
- Alley Loading (Parking)
- Capitol Hill Variety (Households, Streets, Modes, Choices)
- Setback Sidewalk (Safe Separation)
- Road Diets (Adding Bicycle Lanes)
- Development/Transit Connections (Mixed Use Nature)
- Conversion to 2-Way Streets
- Shift from Auto to Bicycle (Increase in No Car Households)

Discussion Question #2: What are challenges/opportunities?

- A+ bicycle infrastructure takes care of education need
- Need to prioritize pedestrian safety
- Safety – Slow down vehicles (for bicycles/pedestrians) e.g. 8th Ave – Add bicycle lane or reduce speed
- Land use has normalized long commute
- Design requirement for emergency vehicles
- BRT – Turn restrictions
 - a. Force vehicles onto local streets
- Aurora – No dedicated BRT lane
- Pedestrian/bicycle crashes – more safe crossings of arterials
- BRT – center turning – normalizes pedestrian crossings
- Unintended consequences
 - a. i.e. accommodate bicycles at vehicle expense
- Making it too easy for automobiles
 - a. (not pushing toward multi-modal)
- Sub-standard bus stops
- Speed reduction doing opposite
- Mid-block signals (frustrates drivers)
 - a. 6th 8th 13th 14th 17th
- “Speedways”
- Speedways as barriers
- Formal paths down middle of parkways
- 13th Ave for pedestrians “anti-love”
- Reliable transit
 - a. Everything to improve the feel
- Free street parking
 - a. Encourages car ownership
- Difficult finding spaces

- No vehicle ownership isn't possible for everyone
- Freedom of choice
- Enhance Car Share
- Oversized Residential Streets – High Speed (Colfax BRT!)
- Bicycle route connectivity
- Bicycle lanes ending at intersection
- "Door zones" – bicycle lanes by parking
- Making change actually happen
- Enforcement issues (vehicles)
- Snow removal for pedestrians
- Sight lines – pulling out into streets (i.e. 13th & 14th)
- Raising price of transit
- Uber/Lyft – single occupant
- Current pedestrian crossing standards are auto-centric
- BRT implementation – follow up on local street traffic impacts
 - a. Post-implementation
 - b. Capital on back end
- Don't set limits on multi-modal implementation
- Short term solutions for pedestrian safety now
- City standards for slowing vehicles
- City standards for landscaping (trees)
- Adding parking buffered bicycle lanes
- Property owners – sidewalk repairs and trees (transfer to city responsibility)

Discussion Question #3: How do we implement/prioritize?

- Pedestrians first – most vulnerable
- Safety for bicycle/pedestrians
- Downtown pedestrian priority is not true priority
- Connectivity – complete network/gaps
- Quick/easily implementable projects first
- Pedestrian orientation for new development
- Lost cost treatments for pedestrian safety
- Make big statement (Marquee) project
- People-moving capacity
- Data driven and measurable results

Other thoughts?

- Dockless mobility – where should they be?
- Connectivity beyond Denver (Regional)
- Need to coordinate with other focus groups
- Make plan implementable (not just a planning document)