

Blueprint Task Force Meeting #3

09.22.16

MEETING SUMMARY



On September 22, 2016 the third meeting of the Blueprint Denver Task Force was convened in the CAVEA space at the Metropolitan State University Student Success Building. The purpose of the third Task Force meeting was to engage Task Force members in an open dialogue on Blueprint 2002's Areas of Stability and Areas of Change and to elicit feedback to help better define and utilize these constructs in the Blueprint Denver update. To begin the meeting, the Task Force was presented with an overview and history of Areas of Stability and Areas of Change. A small group discussion followed where Task Force members critiqued the effectiveness of Areas of Stability and Areas of Change and provided feedback on 'what went well' and 'what didn't go well' with their implementation since 2002. Finally, MIG Team members, Economic & Planning Systems (EPS), presented preliminary results of its diagnostic analysis of how well the concepts achieved their stated goals from a land use perspective.

The full agenda for the meeting is included on page 8 of this summary and the meeting presentation is posted online at:

https://www.denvergov.org/content/dam/denvergov/Portals/Denverright/documents/Blueprint/Task_Force/BP_TF_Meeting_3_Final_092216.pdf

Background on Areas of Stability and Areas of Change

David Gaspers gave a presentation reviewing background information on Areas of Stability and Areas of Change in 2002 Blueprint in order to provide a common understanding ahead of the small group breakout discussions and the diagnostic analysis. Definitions of the concepts were presented along with key features and characteristics as envisioned in the 2002 document. A variety of regulatory, public infrastructure, and partnership tools were also reviewed to help provide context for the intended application of the Areas of Stability and Areas of Change over the past 14 years.

Key Points from the Facilitated Small Group Discussions

After the background presentation, Task Force members were divided into four groups of six to seven participants each. They participated in a facilitated exercise whereby they discussed and shared their views on the successful and less successful aspects of Blueprint 2002's Areas of Stability and Areas of Change. Each group was asked to discuss: "What worked well" and "What did not work well," as well as identify potential issues that may arise during the update process. A complete, detailed list of comments is available at the end of this document. Below is a summary of the most common higher-level discussion points that emerged during the facilitated small group activities.

What worked well

- Overall, the Areas of Change and Areas of Stability construct has been relatively successful in driving growth and change into targeted areas;
- It helped the targeted areas of change develop with a greater mix of uses; and
- While some noted the simplicity of the concepts as an asset, others suggested that increased refinement and sophistication are needed if these are to be effective tools for Denver over the next 10 to 15 years.

What didn't work well

- The designation is used as justification to oppose projects;
- The construct never fully integrated transportation;
- There was confusion over what the designations meant – Areas of Stability does not mean that no change should occur;
- The nuance and refinement built into the 2002 concepts (e.g. Committed Areas and Reinvestment Areas, and the idea of areas of the city being located along a continuum from change to stability) were largely lost in actual implementation;
- The actual Areas of Stability and Areas of Change that were mapped don't reflect intended and necessary nuance and failed to address transition areas and changes in designations; and

- The concept of Areas of Change and Areas of Stability had the unintended consequence of creating and maintaining income inequality throughout the city.

What problems are arising or may begin to?

- An obvious problem moving forward is that we no longer have distinct areas to direct new development like Stapleton, Lowry, and Gateway/Green Valley Ranch;
- How do Small Area Plans fit into Blueprint moving forward?
- The Blueprint update needs to more carefully refine these concepts, identify what we are trying to achieve, and define how we can objectively measure success;
- Areas of Stability is used as a shield and a sword and may be misused to avoid providing a variety and number of housing types in some areas and neighborhoods; and
- Supporting Areas of Stability and Areas of Change should include increasing community amenities, access and services.

Diagnostic Analysis: Areas of Stability and Areas of Change

After the small group discussions and report-outs, EPS presented its evaluation on the effectiveness of Areas of Stability and Areas of Change since 2002. Specifically, the analysis addresses how well the implementation of Areas of Change and Areas of Stability achieved its four main goals (note: the analysis related to Goal 3: “Improve the function and use of streets to move people in more ways” will be covered during Task Force Meeting #4 on October 27th).

The diagnostic analysis compared 2002 projections to actual growth in Areas of Stability and Areas of Change for housing units and jobs. This comparative data was used to evaluate how successful 2002 Blueprint was in relation to its three land use-oriented goals:

- Goal 1: Direct growth to Areas of Change
- Goal 2: Maintain character of Areas of Stability while allowing some development/redevelopment
- Goal 4: Support transit and growth through mixed-use development



Detailed information and statistics from the diagnostic analysis can be found in the presentation posted on the Denverright Blueprint website. A more detailed analysis of Areas of Change and Areas of Stability will be detailed in the final Blueprint Diagnostic document to be completed later this year. A summary of the initial findings is below:

Housing

- Housing growth outpaced projections;
- Areas of Change were unable to capture 85% of new growth (55 to 65% actual) and Areas of Stability captured more than the anticipated 15% (37% actual); and
- Downtown captured less than anticipated, but the core neighborhoods on the edge of downtown captured more.

Employment

- Employment growth has been slower than projected growth but is rapidly catching up with the projection;
- Areas of Change were unable to capture 85% of new growth (50 to 65% actual) and Areas of Stability captured more than the anticipated 15% (42% actual);
- Employment growth was greatly impacted by Great Recession;
- City of Denver has been capturing less of the Denver-Metro growth; and
- Employment targets were achieved in Areas of Change (Downtown, Big 3) that had a plan for employment growth coupled with an active entity focusing on requirement and marketing of these areas (Examples: DDP; Forest City; Lowry Development Authority).

Lessons Learned and Staff Comments

To conclude the presentation, City staff shared with the Task Force a summary of their comments about Areas of Stability and Areas of Change and “lessons learned” from implementing the concepts over recent years. For the most part, these comments reflect the key points raised by Task Force members during the small group break outs:

- Over simplified terms;
- Too black and white;
- Difficult to address transition areas;
- Implementation is critical; and
- Measure what you care about.

Large Group Discussion

The MIG team led the full Task Force in a concluding discussion to review overall thoughts and impressions about Areas of Stability and Areas of Change and to explore goals for refining the concepts during the Blueprint update. Comments from that discussion were recorded on the wall graphic shown on page 5 of this document.

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AREAS OF STABILITY + AREAS OF CHANGE

- ▶ MEASURE TYPES OF JOBS IN AOC?
- ▶ ADD EQUITY ASPECT →
- ▶ WAYS TO GAUGE CHARACTER/MIX IN AOC?
- ▶ 2002 PLAN WAS REALLY AGGRESSIVE (80% Δ → 20% AREA)
- ▶ GET AWAY FROM BINARY BLK/WHI APPROACH
- ▶ RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN HOUSING + JOBS? DO THE OLD FORMULAS STILL APPLY?
- ▶ AOS = PROMOTE STABILITY BY ALLOWING PPL TO STAY IN THEIR COMMUNITY THROUGH ALL STAGES OF LIFE - WHAT IS MISSING IN YOUR NEIGHBORHOOD THAT WOULD GET YOU TO STAY?
- ▶ LIVABILITY (S) AESTHETICS
- ▶ NEED TO ANTICIPATE DEMOGRAPHIC DES + HOW THAT WILL AFFECT COMMUNITY DESIRES (esp. outside the core)
- ▶ IS CHANGE ADDING?:
 - ▶ BUILDINGS
 - ▶ HOUSING UNITS
 - ▶ JOBS
- ▶ QUALITY OF "CHANGE" INSTEAD OF CHANGE FOR CHANGES SAKE
- ▶ FOCUS ON NEEDED CHANGES IN INFRASTRUCTURE (CITY'S ROLE/INFLUENCE)
- ▶ EDUCATION COMPONENT IMPORTANT TO ILLUSTRATE OPTIONS + TRADE-OFFS (ESP. IN NEIGHBORHOODS + AOC'S)
- ▶ IMPACT OF RENTAL VS. OWNERSHIP / TRANSIENT NEIGHBORHOODS
- ▶ ADUs INTERESTING, BUT DO NOT SEEM LIKE "CHANGE"
- ▶ UNANTICIPATED CONSEQUENCES?
 - ▶ COMPETING GOALS (EQUITY vs. OPPORTUNITY?)
- ▶ WHERE IS OUR ECONOMY GOING - HOW DO WE NEED TO PREPARE?
- ▶ PROJECTION-BASED APPROACH (DROG)
 - VS. ESTABLISH GOALS?
 - VS. RANGES/OPTIONS FOR RESILIENCY

exp: How value as part of wealth creation

Blueprint Task Force Meeting #3 Wall Graphic Recording

PROCESS UPDATE AND NEXT STEPS

Over the next four weeks, the MIG Team will work with staff to refine the Blueprint Diagnostic analysis, conduct an industrial lands assessment (what exists today and what is needed for industrial employment land in the future), and develop draft values, vision, and guiding principles for the Blueprint update. At the forth Blueprint Denver Task Force Meeting on October 27th, the MIG Team will present diagnostic data related to the transportation aspects of Blueprint 2002, and participants will review preliminary vision, values and guiding principles. The Blueprint Community Profile will be finalized over the next few weeks based on comments from City staff and Task Force members and will serve as a valuable resource throughout our process.

CITY AND COUNTY OF DENVER

Blueprint Denver Update

project schedule



The MIG Team reviewed ongoing and upcoming community outreach events including a variety of pop-up/intercept events at locations around the city; stakeholder interviews and focus groups that have thus far gained input from over 65 people across 25 targeted focus areas; the “Plan Van”; Denverright Survey #2 available online; and the first Denverright Think Tank meeting which took place on September 20th on the University of Denver campus.

Meanwhile, the entire Denverright Team will be participating in Community Visioning Workshops on October 4th and 5th at five locations around the city. The workshops will provide an overview of the Denverright planning process, and participants will have the opportunity to visit one to four breakout sessions to give input on the visioning for each of the individual planning efforts.

Complete details about the Community Workshops can be found in English and Spanish on the Denverright website:

https://www.denvergov.org/content/dam/denvergov/Portals/Denverright/documents/Oct_Visioning_flyer_final_1.pdf

https://www.denvergov.org/content/dam/denvergov/Portals/Denverright/documents/Oct_Visioning_flyer_final_1_sp.pdf



TASK FORCE MEETING #3 ATTENDEES:

Task Force: Joel Noble, Co-Chair, Kimball Crangle, Co-chair, Angelle Fother, Andrew Sense, Andrew Abrams, Annie Levinsky, Brent Bowman, Caitlin Quander, Chris Crosby, Dace West, Geneva Hooten, Jeff Walker, Jerry Tinianow, John Hayden, Julie Underdahl, Margie Valdez, Parry Barnap, Roger Armstrong, Stewart Tucker Lundy, Tim Baldwin, Joe Vostrejs, Trini Rodriguez, Jesse Adkins

Other: Robert Schmid, Melissa Horn, Melissa Sotelo, Valerie Kerns, Gosia Kung, Peter Wall, Amanda Schoultz

Staff/Consultants: David Gaspers, Jay Renkens, Chris Ryerson, Andrew Knudtsen, Matthew Prosser, Sarah Showalter, Caryn Champine, Mallory Bettag, Andrea Burns, Brandon Shaver, Sara White, Andrew Rutz, Curt Upton

Date: 09/22/2016	Time: 1:00 – 3:00 pm	Location: CAVEA at Metropolitan State University 890 Auraria Parkway, Student Success Building Room 420 - CAVEA
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Item	Topic
1.	Welcome and Meeting Overview
2.	Process Update <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stakeholder Interviews and Focus Groups • Intercept Events, Flyers and Surveys • Community Think Tank • Community Profile
3.	Background: Areas of Stability and Areas of Change
4.	Small Group Discussions: Areas of Stability and Areas of Change <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What do you think has/is working well? • What do you think has not worked well? • What problems do you think are arising or may begin to? • Small Group Reporting
5.	Analysis: Areas of Stability and Areas of Change <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Highlights of Diagnostic • Lessons Learned from Staff
6.	Large Group Discussion: Problem Definition <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Overall Thoughts/Impressions • Goals for Updating Approach to Areas of Stability and Areas of Change
7.	Questions and Comments
8.	Next Steps <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Diagnostic • Community Visioning Workshops (October 4 & 5)
9.	Meeting Close

DETAILED COMMENTS

Below are the comments recorded during the discussion with by Task Force Members during the facilitated small group discussions.

Small Group Break Out Notes- Table 1

What's working?

- Overall, the Areas of Change and Areas of Stability construct has been relatively successful in driving growth and change into targeted areas
- It helped the targeted areas of change develop with a greater mix of uses

What's not working?

- It was too binary and was used too rigidly
 - Area of Stability does NOT mean no change
 - In some Areas of Change (particularly older streetcar neighborhoods and commercial nodes), the degree to which change was allowed wasn't always appropriate and went too far
 - It needs to be utilized much more as a continuum (as originally conceived). Maybe a change to the nomenclature will help with this?
- Although it has been relatively successful, the effort is one-dimensional – just about development
- It is missing multiple layers, including an equity aspect
 - Many Areas of Change neighborhoods were lower income and higher proportions of minorities
 - We need to add a layer that emphasizes mixed-income and racially diverse neighborhoods
 - We need a clearer framework and better definitions of terminology like “beneficial” and “adverse.” We need to be clear what we mean by those terms and *for whom?*
 - These terms could be measured by numerous indicators – we need to focus on more objective ones
 - We need to figure out how to layer in multiple criteria for Areas of Change and Areas of Stability (affordability, diversity, etc.)
- It did not unlock the potential of FasTracks and TOD opportunities in Denver [although it was acknowledged that Blueprint (2002) predated the vote to approve FasTracks (2004)]
- Similarly, the Blueprint update has to reconcile and adapt to new initiatives like Main Street Zoning and Form Based Code

Small Group Break Out Notes- Table 2

What's working?

- As far as they could go at the same time
- Intent was very good

- Worked best on major Fastracks alignments
- Helped Areas of Change become more mixed in uses
- Worked well for Areas of Change

What's not working?

- Too black and white; not enough nuance
- Terminology
- Not an actual continuum
- Doesn't address social equity; built in income bids; segregation
- False dichotomy
- Doesn't fully integrate transportation
- Doesn't address other major bus corridors
- Doesn't respond to newer desire for mixed use nodes (retrofit older/existing neighborhoods with amenities)
- Doesn't integrate parking and mobility sufficiently
- Stability designation is used as weapon against multi-family housing, affordable housing (anti-growth mechanism)

Small Group Break Out Notes- Table 3

What's working?

- The current system of AOC/AOS helps drive investment. Generally, it protects areas of stability.
- In a complex world of land use regulation, it relies on simple language that people understand.
- The simplicity is an asset.
- Main street neighborhoods have done well under this rubric over the past ten years. Vibrant neighborhood commercial areas have emerged.

What's not working?

- There is a lack of understanding in terms of 'committed' vs. 'reinvestment'
- This in part is due to the fact that people look at the maps, but do not read the text
- This difference needs to be elevated, with an emphasis placed on 'reinvestment'
- Perhaps the solution is a new category.
- Or another solution worth considering is subcategories within AOS/AOC

Small Group Break Out Notes- Table 4

What's working?

- The Areas of Change directed the market for areas of redevelopment and infill
- The designation of AOC was seen as a "Yellow Light" for developers to consider asking for changes in zoning/entitlements. Areas of Stability are red light
- Successful in directing growth

- The process seems to be working in terms providing direction to decision makers (ie planning board, council)

What's not working?

- The designation is used as justification to oppose projects. For both AOC and AOS. For AOS its used to say no to any development. For AOC its used to allow development that isn't sensitive to existing context (example: protecting historic buildings)
- It's too black and white
- The corridors create conflicts. The corridors are often too narrow to allow for larger projects and may require acquiring sites in both AOC and AOS to make the project work. Makes for a stark contrast between what gets built on the corridor and the adjacent area
- The process seems to create projects that have winners and losers. For some developers, this leads to them avoiding the projects
- The language/vernacular leads to issues. Everyone picks up on the titles AOC or AOS but not that text that describes them
- Some neighbors are afraid of the designation of AOC because it means major change but some of these areas need change
- Edge areas lead to conflicts

Other Comments and Concerns

- Scrapes and PopTops
 - Some are good. Some are very bad. Some are detrimental.
 - Those without street activation are a problem.
 - The urban space -- the space between -- can suffer. We must protect and enhance it.
 - This needs further attention and more detail.
 - Blueprint 2002 fell short in this area. Additional detail in the comp plan and zoning code is needed.
- Small Area Plans
 - Intended to continually refine them, as they change.
 - This has not happened.
 - The plans need to be more responsive.
 - If they fulfill their goals, the plans need to reflect that.
- Need better definition of development potential
- Need to be more granular
- Needs subparts, with additional categories.
- How might "place types" come into play?
- The additional categories should address equity
- AOS should not be communicated as an absolute.
- The question is one more like, "How can we accommodate change and maintain character?"

- The group expressed unanimous support for communicating the need for change within AOS.
- "Change is a part of life. We are in all of this together. Residents in AOS cannot delusionally believe they are exempt from change."
- Accessory Dwelling Units could solve many problems, including equity and affordability issues.
- Transportation should be incorporated into the AOC/AOS discussion.
- An obvious problem moving forward is that we no longer have obvious areas to push new development like Stapleton, Lowry, and Gateway/Green Valley Ranch
- Density and change are inevitable. What are the trade-offs required for absorbing the next round of growth? To answer this, we need to define a more specific vision of success.
- Areas of Change seem to be more focused on what a neighborhood looks like and its physical appearance/components, rather than thinking about stability from the perspective of affordability – this drastically alters how you evaluate level of success and if stability or change are good vs. bad.
- We need to use this construct to create potential and opportunity in all areas of the city
- We need to re-think the "toolbox" aspect and make sure our options are updated to reflect current and future challenges and opportunities
 - We also need to evaluate how the "toolbox" from the original Blueprint was used and which aspects were successful or not
- Does change need to be more broadly described
- Add more granularity
- Do a better job of illustrating/describing what change and stability looks like