

Game Plan Task Force Meeting #2

10.27.2016

Meeting Summary

Game Plan Update

Denver's parks and recreation has changed over the past 13 years and policy needs to be updated to reflect today's social and environmental realities. The Game Plan is part of Denverright, a community-driven planning process that will reflect our community's values and desires by holistically planning for the next 20 years of important land use, multi-modal mobility, and parks and recreation strategies. Denverright encompasses four new plans that will help establish a long-term vision for the City as well as identify near-term actions to help implement that vision: Blueprint Denver, Denver Game Plan, and Denver Moves: Peds/Trails, and Denver Moves: Transit.

The primary goal of the Game Plan is to prepare for the next 20 years to define new parks and recreation centers, relevant programs, and how existing assets are maintained and enhanced in the face of financial constraints, climate change, shifting demographics and increased visitor usage. The plan will focus on a great parks system that is the result of intentional planning, engaged community members, and public investments that inspire creativity, social gatherings, and the enjoyment of the environment.

Game Plan Task Force

On October 27, 2016, the second meeting of the Game Plan Task force convened in Grant Family Education Center in the Four Mile Historic Park. The charge of the Task Force is to guide the advancement of the update to the Game Plan and the overall process.

The purpose of the second meeting of the Game Plan Task Force was to discuss consultant progress so far in Phase 1 (existing conditions report). Task Force comments are summarized in the notes below. The full agenda for the meeting is included at the end of this summary and the meeting presentation is also posted online.

Executive DPR Director Happy Haynes provided a brief overview introduction and her impressions regarding the Denverright Visioning meeting held in early October.

Learning Conversations about Game Plan

Between the first Task Force meeting held in July and the second meeting, the Task Force was asked to talk to 10 individuals about the Game Plan update and get their thoughts on the challenges Denver Parks and Recreation faces. The summary of responses shared during the group exercise is below:

Equitable, Affordable and Inclusive

- People appreciative of parks available, but still want more (esp. underserved areas)
- Equity in parks
- Hard to find information on how to sign up for park programs, not always conducive to working families
- Aging population needing connection to community (used to be more senior centers in Denver)
- More parks in developing (densely populated) areas
- Extend hours for more recreation centers, decrease costs.
- Using parks as gathering space for communities (without burden of permits, etc)

Innovative, Strong and Dynamic Public Spaces and Programming

- Winter activation in parks
- Surprise over number of parks esp. mountain parks
- Want to focus on downtown parks, want recreation in downtown parks
- People impressed with all that is happening in parks
- More variety in activity of rec centers – for small kids, swimming, etc.
- What will be done in parks to address population growth
- Want to see more benches in parks
- Need for more basic amenities – water fountains, bathrooms

Well Connected and Accessible

- Better and safer connections to parks, safety in parks
- Aging population needing transportation to parks
- More connection to mountain parks
- More connections between schools (elementary, middle, and high) to local recreation centers
- Need for biker amenities in parks (increase in bike use in the city)

Environmentally and Economically Resilient

- Increased tree canopy on north side of Sloans Lake, around the city tree canopy should be a priority
- Concerns over EAB and losing trees in parks
- Concern that less water means less shade
- Can we designate rivers (not water, space underneath) as parks?
- Remove bamboo from Harvey Park lake, blocking view and not native
- How are we protecting trees in midst of climate change?

- How are we protecting trees in midst of climate change?
- We need a dedicated source to parks, in addition to what we have now. We need to be investing money in parks

Healthy, Safe and Active

- Traffic concerns for bikers and pedestrians
- Concern over homeless in parks, safety – homeless encroaching on park goes

Denverright and Draft Blueprint Denver Vision Elements Framework

David Gaspers, CPD Principle Planner and Project Manager for Blueprint Denver provided an overview of the draft vision elements emerging from Blueprint. These vision elements will provide a high-level framework for the future Game Plan Guiding Principles and help the Denverright plans align and relate to each other. The presentation can be found online.

Game Plan Existing Conditions Update

The Game Plan consultant team, Sasaki and associates, next provided an overview presentation of the DPR existing conditions as well as a summary of the Game Plan Visioning Workshop held in conjunction with Denverright. The full report is anticipated for release in early 2017. Sasaki's presentation can be found online.

Key Points from the Facilitated Small Group Discussion

After the existing conditions presentation by Sasaki, Task Force members were divided into three groups of around 10 participants each. They participated in a facilitated exercise whereby the brainstormed, shared and discussed major themes around parks and recreation relating to the Game Plan. Part 1 asked "What are the key issues that you see facing the park and recreation system today". The Task Force small groups then brainstormed first on post it notes, then discussed. Part 2 asked "What are the key goals you would like Denver Parks and Recreation to achieve in the next 15 -20 years. Below is a summary of the key higher level discussion points that were shared during the facilitated small group activities.

Part 1 Summary (Issues)

Ecology and Environment

- Climate Change
- Managing stormwater and flooding with increasingly intense storms
- Drought + water use. We need to figure out how to use less water in our parkscapes
- Perception issue with low water landscapes – we need to educate people on what healthy native landscapes look like and why this is important – City of Lakewood is a good example

- Recycled water quality
- Dog parks – dust clouds, smells – more vegetation needed

Equity and Access

- Population growth, densification in the urban core, increasing demand on our parks and recreation centers
- The current rec center model (28, very dispersed) is not sustainable
- Overuse of our parks and recreation spaces
- Homeless people camping in our parks
- Cost of land to acquire new park space in densifying areas is prohibitive
- Better use of our existing open spaces
- Safer crossings and trails/sidewalks to get to parks and recreation centers
- Equity in parks maintenance – parks in some neighborhoods are maintained to a higher standard than other neighborhoods
- Pokemon Go – where is digital gaming going, and how will parks be impacted?
- Safety is critical, getting to and spending time in parks
- Access to mountain parks for people without cars...how do we get people to this amazing resource?
- Cost of programs and classes feels too high for some

Stewardship and Organizational Health

- Pressures on funding – too much competition with other city needs
- Recreation center facility upkeep is challenging, especially with so many, so dispersed
- Park maintenance and patrol budgets are too small for the burden
- Resources – human/staffing, \$\$\$ and tools/hardware for maintenance are our biggest issues

Part 2 Summary (Goals)

VISION = “Parks define our city – how can we maintain and develop a world class system?” “DPR keeps us Denver – our parks are critical to our city’s identity”

Ecology and Environment

- Research different native plants and trees that can adapt to our changing environment
- Work to increase our tree canopy
- Aggressively treat for Emerald Ash Borer, and plant new (native) trees

- Incorporate natural,/native/low-water landscapes in non-traditional areas, like boulevards and downtown...educate people

Equity and Access

- Create safe access to every park
- Create a liaison between DPR and DPS to facilitate connections between youth and parks/playgrounds/recreation centers
- Expand park access in dense downtown areas – consider innovative methods like renting space or reclaiming rights of way. Consider parks + streets to be all part of the public realm.
- Think beyond boundaries – relationship to the region and what is accessible beyond Denver
- Need to reach out more on social media – create awareness about what kinds of activities, facilities and programming are out there for people
- We should consider putting transit near parks
- Change use patterns and facilities to adapt to new needs and trends
- Better maps of the system, maps of individual resources, so people know how to find a playground if they're looking for one
- More outdoor education programming
- Rec center programming – more input from public on what programs should be where and how often
- Program the parks more, and think about spreading events to parks that need more attention, get people to places they wouldn't normally go

Stewardship and Organizational Health

- Create data-driven approaches
- Create a dedicated parks fund – consider tax on development or pulling more from the top of Red Rocks (and other parks venues) ticket sales
- Leverage partners for programming and funding (i.e. libraries, non-profits, schools...)
- We need to reach out to the public, tell an honest story about funding needs and gaps
- Cultivate friends and neighbors groups that can help take care of park spaces
- Unite with other city resources – we should be sharing with public works, libraries, schools and having them help us too

Attendees

Task Force: Sharon Alton, Mark Bailey, Erin Brown, Councilman Jolon Clark, Fran Coleman, Noel Copland, Tracy Davis, Catherine Dockery, Anthony Graves, Jennifer Hale, Mike Hughes, Cindy Johnstone, Jeremy Matsen, Jennifer Moreland, Florence Navarro, Erik Ortiz, Jason Robinson, Kendra Sandoval, Ken Schroepple, Rachel Steel, Regan Suhay, Myles Tangalin, Jamie Torres, Darrell B. Watson,

Staff: Happy Haynes, Gordon Robertson, David Gaspers, John Martinez, Yolanda Quesada, Laura Morales, Mark Tabor, Dody Erickson, Courtney Levingston, Nina Pisano

Visitors: Jill Locantore, Walk Denver, Liz Adams, CRL Associates

Consultants: Brie Hensold/Kate Tooke (Sasaki), Barbara Heller (Heller and Heller)

AGENDA

Date: 10/27/2016 **Time:** 7:30 am – 9:30 am **Location:** Four Mile Hi

Item	Topic	Presenter/Facilitator	Duration
1.	<p>Welcome, Task Force Introductions + Report Out Remember your homework? We asked you to tell at least 10 people about the Game Plan. Please be ready to share 1-2 sentences with the group about who you talked to and what the major impressions were.</p>	<p>Happy Haynes, DPR Executive Director Florence Navarro, Co-Chair Darrell B. Watson, Co-Chair Everyone gets 45 seconds!</p>	10
2.	<p>Denverright and Draft Blueprint Denver Vision Framework Introduction to draft emerging vision elements from Blueprint and their connection to Game Plan as a framework</p>	David Gaspers, Community Planning and Development	5
3.	<p>Presentation The consultant team will provide an update on the work thus far – including preliminary analysis, feedback from the public and emerging themes.</p>	<p>Brie Hensold, Kate Tooke, Sasaki Associates + Barbara Heller</p>	45
4.	<p>Questions and Answers</p>	<p>Brie Hensold, Kate Tooke, Barbara Heller + Task Force</p>	5
5.	<p>Brainstorm Activity We'll split into three facilitated groups to brainstorm and discuss major issues facing Denver Parks and Recreation as well as key priorities for the system moving forward.</p>	<p>Florence Navarro, Co-Chair Darrell B. Watson, Co-Chair Gordon Robertson, DPR Planning Director</p>	30
6.	<p>Report Out and Wrap Up Representatives from the small groups will report back to the larger Task Force on themes that emerged in their group discussion. Discussion around next steps.</p>	<p>Florence Navarro, Co-Chair Darrell B. Watson, Co-Chair Gordon Robertson, DPR Planning Director</p>	15
7.	<p>Opportunity for Questions and Comments from attending public</p>	<p>Florence Navarro, Co-Chair Darrell B. Watson, Co-Chair</p>	Up to 5 minutes