

DENVER MOVES: TRANSIT TASK FORCE MEETING #4 - SUMMARY

February 2, 2017

ATTENDEES

Task Force Members

Kathleen Osher (Co-Chair), Ellen Winkler (Co-Chair), Councilman Kevin Flynn, Commissioner Diane Young, Commissioner Jessica Skibo, Paul Aldretti, Stuart Anderson, Tangier Barnes Wright, Jordan Block, Laura Brudzynski, Frank Buczkowski, Tiffany Eck, Ellen Ittelson, Aylene McCallum, Angie Malpiede, Kirk Miller, Chris Nevitt, Joel Noble, Bill Sirois, Barbara Weiske

Guests

David Sachs, Jill Locantore, Gosia Kung

City Staff and Consultants

City of Denver: Kristina Evanoff, Ryan Billings, David Gaspers
Consultant Team: Tom Brennan, Nelson\Nygaard; Jennifer Wieland, Nelson\Nygaard; Oren Eshel, Nelson\Nygaard; Cady Dawson, FHU; Emma Belmont, FHU, Lisa Zoeller, Zoeller Consulting

WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

Kristina Evanoff, *Denver Moves: Transit* Project Manager, welcomed the Task Force members and announced two new members: Frank Buczkowski will represent SW Denver Neighborhood Area and Diane Young is the new representative for the Commission on Aging. Kristina also thanked the group for committing the extra 30 minutes added to the meeting time, and then checked with members to make sure they are receiving emails and were able to download the State of the System (SOTS) report. Kathleen Osher, *Denver Moves: Transit* Task Force co-chair, asked members to introduce themselves and then reviewed the agenda for the meeting.

PROJECT UPDATES

- Task Force members were able to download a draft of the State of the System Report prior to the meeting; the final version of the report will be posted to the project website later in February. This report summarizes existing conditions and findings from the first six months of the project.
- The project team has developed draft project goals and objectives based on input to date and will ask the Task Force to review them as part of this meeting.
- The team has also been coordinating with the *Blueprint Denver* Project team; there is a natural “push and pull” between the projects because land use is a significant factor for both projects. Typologies and corridors will be identified by the late summer/early fall in support of the recommended *Blueprint Denver* land use and transportation scenario.

SMALL GROUP ACTIVITY: STATE OF THE SYSTEM SPEED SHARE

- Task Force members broke into small groups of three to four people to discuss what each learned from the SOTS report. Each group then shared highlights of their conversation with the full Task Force:
 - The demographics of the report were interesting and raised the question of what demographic measurements will indicate a successful transit plan. Which demographic group is the primary group we are looking to impact in order to consider the transit plan a success?
 - It was illuminating to see how expensive public transit is in Denver compared to other cities.
 - The ridership data seems to indicate that some populations are not being served, which raises questions about how land use and the location of transit service impacts ridership.
 - It was a surprise to see that the 20-25 year old demographic is not riding transit at levels that would be expected. In a developed economy, we really need to shift our focus. The charge should not be about making it so that low-income folks can drive a car; rather, we need to create an environment where wealthier people take transit even if they can afford to drive.
 - Denver's transit system seems to be antiquated. System planning is reactive to demand rather than proactive in driving demand.
 - The concentration of riders who reside in Denver compared to those who live outside of Denver is notable, yet the system we are building seems geared towards getting people "out." The transit plan is a way for Denver to consider filling that gap rather than repeat the city's errors of highway construction in the 1950s. It will be good to have the plan focus on our in-city connections instead of the regional connections, including thinking about whether those connections are best made by bus or rail.
- Task Force members also had questions about collaboration between *Blueprint Denver* and *Denver Moves: Transit*. It was noted that working with the *Blueprint* team will help address the issue of being proactive. Both *Blueprint* and *Denver Moves: Transit* are at similar points in their processes, and both plans have developed draft goals. Moving forward, it is important to bear in mind that both the transit plan and *Denver Moves: Pedestrians and Trails* are geared more toward implementation than *Blueprint* and *Game Plan*, which are more policy-driven plans.
- Jennifer Wieland, Nelson\Nygaard Deputy Project Manager, challenged the Task Force members to consider how they can share the SOTS information with their communities. Jennifer and Kristina suggested that Task Force members use newsletters, community meetings, and social media as possible avenues. Task Force members identified aspects of the report that may resonate well with the community and make sharing the findings easier:
 - **Frequency:** The frequency maps are a good tool for sharing with groups.
 - **Connections and quality of access:** It will be helpful when sharing the information to provide a bit more context for what it means to make connections between corridors. For example, the connection between Federal and Broadway is

really a 45-minute walk because of a lack of sidewalk continuity; this is especially important for people in wheelchairs.

- **Travel time:** The visual of how long it takes to travel via transit vs. driving was good; it would be great to have even more information on what is working right now and what is not.

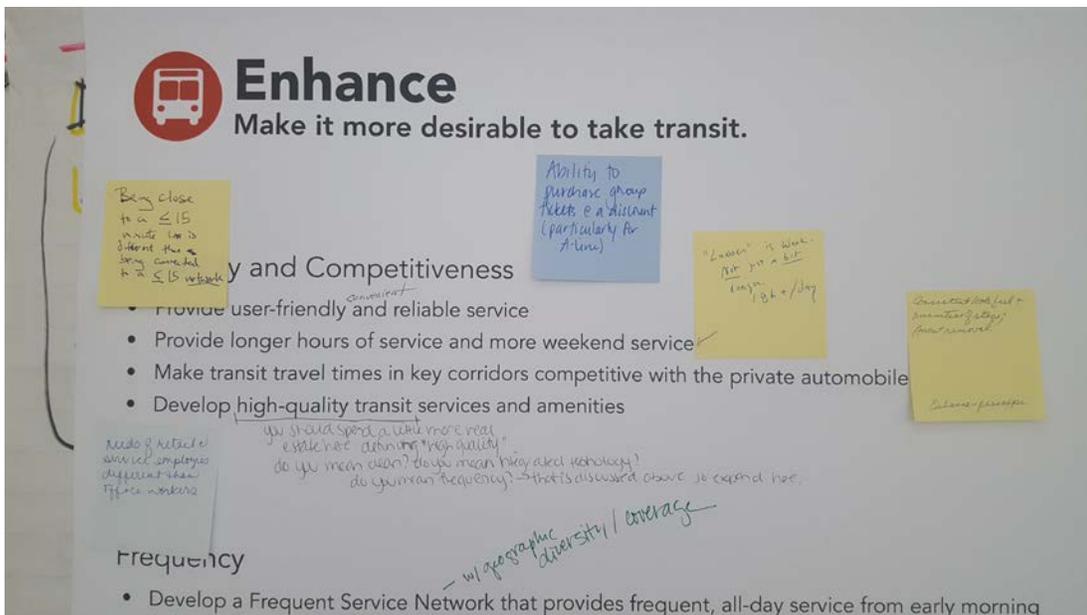
REVIEW OF DRAFT GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

- Jennifer reviewed the Task Force's work from the December meeting and explained that the draft goals and objectives are the project team's attempt to distill that information and all the public feedback received through the first six months of *Denver Moves: Transit* into a set of clear statements about what the plan will strive to accomplish.
- Tom Brennan, Nelson\Nygaard Project Manager, explained that the goals and objectives will be used in many ways throughout the planning process: to inform the evaluation framework, to set priorities, and to direct investments. Tom introduced five draft goals for *Denver Moves: Transit*:
 - **Enhance:** Make it more desirable to take transit
 - **Simplify:** Make transit easier to use
 - **Connect:** Connect people and places to transit
 - **Thrive:** Improve community health and access to opportunity
 - **Sustain:** Support a transit system in Denver that will be successful over the long term
- To further frame the Task Force's review of these draft goals, Tom shared a short "inspirational" video (<https://player.vimeo.com/video/196010541>) that highlighted results of Seattle's transit system investments over the past several years. In 2012, Seattle undertook a planning process much like Denver's and has moved ahead quickly to implement that plan. Seattle voters have passed several ballot measures to support local and regional transit, and the investments and improvements have resulted in a tremendous increase in transit services and ridership.



SMALL GROUP ACTIVITY: REVIEW OF DRAFT GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

The draft goal statements and supporting objectives were posted on the wall. Task Force members walked around the room and placed sticky notes with comments on the goals. The members then broke into small groups and discussed each goal, focusing on three questions: 1) Do the five draft goals match the input you've shared and heard to date? 2) Do the objectives for each goal adequately define what the goal represents? and 3) Is anything missing that should be added? The following table summarizes discussions within each small group as well as the report-outs to the full Task Force.



Summary of Small Group Discussions of Goals and Objectives

Goal	Overall Group Report Out	Group #1	Group #2	Group #3	Group #4
Enhance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> For all people, all types of trips, all hours of day Frequency Make it “appealing” rather than “desirable,” which better implies that transit works for all Enhance function with rapid and reliable service within walking distance for all; mode share should be the headline goal Make transit the first choice 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reliability and competitiveness <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bullets 2 and 3 are most important Frequency is a priority <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Important to define and ensure <i>access</i> to major corridors (coordinate with CDOT) Dedicated lanes <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Help attract people to transit Tradeoffs in terms of right-of-way between vehicles, bicycles, and transit, and allocation of service resources 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Service reacting to changing needs of an 18-hour or 24-hour city Typical commuter demographic rider is well served, but not non-typical rider (e.g., service sector worker accessing service after 7 pm) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Change word from desirable to appealing or convenient (who must use vs. who has a choice) Enhance is umbrella term, which means that goals overlap (e.g., Enhance vs. Simplify) Issue of making transit first choice <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Make it “sexy” Convenience is key “Carrot and stick” approach “Take your parking” vs. better faster transit (e.g., giving bus priority) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Leaves out rapid, reliable, within walkable distance everywhere in city, and geographic equity “All day” service emphasis must be at least 18 hours True frequent network has short wait/transfer (<5 minutes) Integrate indicators; how does this inform decisions How to make bus like rail Quality of bus stops Mode share should be headline goal for transit plan
Simplify	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Wayfinding and visual cues are critical Use new yet proven technologies Legibility, information, and education are all needed 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Legibility of fares (round trip ticket, purchase in advance, day pass, group fares, fare technology, partnership opportunities) Emphasis on marketing and education related to improving rider information (education on how to use system, promotional passes) and desired outcomes <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Numeric goal, get x% of population to try transit Wayfinding New technologies: mobile devices attract millennials 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Enhance legibility of system Marketing of services 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Technology: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> “Proven” preferred over “new” Give examples Needs to be equitable Integrated technology card works for bus, rail, bikeshare “New <i>innovative</i> technologies” 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fares with pay by phone option Frequent network must be branded Street grid might not accommodate frequent network Add in “convenience”

Goal	Overall Group Report Out	Group #1	Group #2	Group #3	Group #4
Connect	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Icons for this need to include arrows that go both ways not only one direction All modes and inter-related 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Difficult connections are not an easy sell for visitors (e.g., Tech Center hotels, convention center on weekends) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Connect people to choices Integration of all transit modes and other active modes Right mode for right need 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> "Better connections between neighborhoods" isn't very meaningful
Thrive	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Equity, frequency, and multimodal access Responsive system Public health leads to funding opportunities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identified "responsiveness to needs" as a priority 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Access to opportunity Economic development is called out in Connect, but could be called out in Thrive Youth engagement 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Denver's definition of affordable: housing + transportation + health 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Land use investments with transportation—add density (and use) to be better served by transit
Sustain	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ability to deliver Partnerships with large employers and marketing are important Sustainable funding is important overall Innovation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Funding <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sustainable funding source Private sector participation Creative partnerships: build in costs (e.g., leases, hotels, conventions, pass programs) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Significant funding required Focus on need/opportunity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Expand definition of partnership "Environment and health" needs to be the phrase Reprioritize existing transportation spending and use existing resources 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> RTD service standards: How do we pay for under-utilized service? How does city "contribute" Funding: How do we identify important service based on ridership?

OUTREACH AND ENGAGEMENT: PHASE TWO ACTIVITIES

Jennifer quickly introduced the engagement activities planned for the next phase of *Denver Moves: Transit*.

“Storefront” or Bus Stop Workshops

“Storefront” or Bus Stop Workshops will allow the project team to engage with the community more informally at key neighborhood destinations. These events will be held in each of the seven geographic focus areas identified in the SOTS report. This will provide opportunities for more detailed feedback about specific locations and ensure that the team receives input from all parts of the city.

The project team will be asking Task Force members to help identify locations and opportunities to set up these workshops. The number of workshops in each focus area is still being determined, but there will be at least one workshop in each focus area. Kristina encouraged Task Force members to attend the workshops in their communities. Task Force members shared the following comments and questions:

- The project team might consider coupling these activities with a transit ride with residents to more fully understand the issues and challenges in that particular community.
- A suggestion was made to set up a table at the Colorado Station with hot chocolate or some other kind of enticement to get people to stop by and give their input.
- Ensure that outreach to the aging community is included as part of these efforts.

Other Outreach Efforts

- **Youth Stakeholder Group:** Kristina reported on the work underway to establish the project’s Youth Stakeholder Group, which will be a subset of the Mayor’s Youth Advisory Commission. The group’s first official meeting is planned for February 24, and eight youth will participate. The Youth Stakeholder Group will work with the project team for the duration of the plan to provide more in-depth feedback and connections to other youth.
- **Outreach in Spanish:** *Denverright* is coordinating additional outreach in Spanish-speaking and hard-to-reach communities.
- **Build Your Own Transit System Tool:** In mid-March, an online tool called the “Build Your Own Transit System” survey will launch. This will be supported with a paper survey to provide access for those without the internet.

NEXT STEPS

- Kristina asked the Task Force to share the SOTS report and other project information with their communities. The SOTS will be released in the coming weeks.
- Task Force Meeting #5 will be Thursday, April 6, from 1:00-3:30 p.m. at Visit Denver.

COMMENTS/QUESTIONS FROM THE TASK FORCE/AUDIENCE

David Sachs from Denver Streetsblog asked if there is anything that is not going well regarding transit in Seattle. Tom provided one example, explaining that Seattle still struggles with “pinch points” in some areas. This is a problem because buses occasionally get stuck in long queues of traffic as a result of a traffic collision or another event in the system. Generally, the transportation system is overloaded, which can present challenges for transit.