Quality of Life Infrastructure
Policy Recommendations

West Area Plan Steering Committee Meeting
Thursday, April 15, 2021
Agenda

• Introduction (Eugene)

• Draft Quality of Life Policies (Valerie Herrera)
  • Community Resiliency
  • Parks, Trails, Waterways, Urban Forest and Open Space
  • Complete Food Environment
  • Safety and Security
  • Animal Protection
Historical Background – Understanding how we got here

**EQUITY VERSUS EQUALITY**

Equality means treating every person the same. Equity means giving everyone access to opportunities for what they need. Equity acknowledges that treating each person or place exactly the same may not result in fair opportunities to succeed. The diagram below illustrates this concept. With equality, everyone receives the same bicycle. The result is that many people do not have what they need to succeed. An equitable approach recognizes the unique needs of different people and gives each person an option to reach their full potential.

**EQUALITY**

![Bicycles](image1)

**EQUITY**

![Bicycles](image2)

Source: Robert Wood Johnson Foundation
Historical Background – Topography and Natural Environment

• Topography changes throughout the West Area Plan, high and low points.

“Denver has been favored by nature with one of the best natural drainage systems that we have observed in the larger American cities. It lies high and dry on both banks of the River Platte, ascending gradually to an elevation about 300 feet above the river in a distance of about six miles to the eastward, and rising about 400 feet in a distance of two to three miles to the westward”

Charles Burdick: Hydraulic and Sanitary Engineer of Chicago (Denver Municipal Facts 1924)
Topography changes throughout the West Area Plan, high and low points.

Eastern side includes river bed

Unique area in the city with two gulches running through.

*Denver has been favored by nature with one of the best natural drainage systems that we have observed in the larger American cities. It lies high and dry on both banks of the River Platte, ascending gradually to an elevation about 300 feet above the river in a distance of about six miles to the eastward, and rising about 400 feet in a distance of two to three miles to the westward*

Charles Burdick: Hydraulic and Sanitary Engineer of Chicago (Denver Municipal Facts 1924)
Historical Background – Indigenous Peoples and Early Denver

Utes, Cheyenne, and Arapahoe Tribes

[1858] Denver / Auraria / Highland Founded

“When the permanent settlers first reached the mouth of Cherry Creek, friendly Indians warned them against camping in the bottoms on account of great floods which had come down the creek in times past.”

*(Douglas County Research Center)*
Historical Background – Railroads and Industry

**[1870]** First Railroad Completed

**[1874]** Burnham Yards to Support Railroads

1907 Illustration of South Broadway Industrial Area

1908 Illustration of Denver Showing Burham Yards and empty fields in what today is the West Area Plan

**1870** First Railroad Completed

**1874** Burnham Yards to Support Railroads

1907 Illustration of South Broadway Industrial Area

1908 Illustration of Denver Showing Burham Yards and empty fields in what today is the West Area Plan

**TOPOGRAPHY 1888 Denver Map**

Elevation:
- 5196 ft
- 5396 ft
- 5496 ft
- 5597 ft
- 5700 ft

- 5096 ft
- 5298 ft
Historical Background – Viaducts and Street Cars and Auraria

[1881-1908] Construction of Viaducts

[1900] Street Cars Consolidated into Denver Tramway Company

1926 – St Cajetan Church in Auraria (Denver Public Library)
By the early 1920s, Auraria became a distinctly Hispanic neighborhood, St. Cajetan’s Catholic Church (built in 1926), became the spiritual and cultural heart of Auraria’s Hispanic community.
Historical Background – Early Framework & Redlining
Historical Background – Early Framework & Redlining
Historical Background – Highways, Urban Renewal, 1965 floods

- [1958] Valley Highway (I-25)
- [1958] 6th Ave connects to I-25
- [1964] I-70 Completed
- [1965] Denver Floods
- [1970s] Auraria Urban Renewal Project

1964 – I-70 early days (Denver Public Library)

1965 Floods Valverde Neighborhood (Denver Public Library)

1973 St Cajetan Church (Denver Public Library)
Historical Background – Today
Community and Environmental Resiliency

Q01: Put health equity in action by identifying opportunities for communities to thrive and live their healthiest lives with inclusion being a part of every conversation.

• Further the development of Complete Communities and Access to Opportunities as outlined in Blueprint Denver.
Q02: Increase systems, policies, and practices that sustain racial and social equity in support of citywide efforts throughout all Denver neighborhoods.

- Access to Healthcare
- Housing and Transportation
- Positive Health Outcomes
- Access to Food and Nutrition
- Green Infrastructure
- Culture and History
Q03: Improve and increase accessibility to existing community parks, open spaces and recreation facilities for all users, ages and abilities.

- Promote safe system access with increased infrastructure, signage and wayfinding.
Q04: Enhance existing facilities and programming at community parks, open spaces, and recreation facilities. Increase accessibility and incorporate universal design principles, including community-desired, culturally relevant design elements.

- Promote and expand parks, open spaces, recreational facilities and amenities.
- Update existing playground areas and park facilities for all ages and abilities.
Parks, Trails, Waterways, Urban Forest, and Open Space

Q05: Create new or expand existing community parks, open spaces, and recreation facilities to ensure all West Denver residents are within a 10-minute walk of an amenity.

- Promote recommendations in the “Game Plan for a Healthy City.”
- Build accessible infrastructure that promotes health, wellness and healthy lifestyle choices.
- Develop programs and activities that appeal to all ages, abilities and income levels.
- Implement park master plans that provide enhanced or new parks and open spaces within a 10-minute walk of all West Denver residents.

Enhance and protect the South Platte River with an acknowledgement of 1st Nation and Indigenous peoples.
Q06: Enhance and improve access to existing regional trails, waterways, and the South Platte River.

- Recognize First Nations and Indigenous peoples in any South Platte enhancements, improvements and projects.
- Fill gaps in gulch and trail networks for continuous, uninterrupted connectivity.
- Enhance trail signage and wayfinding with an emphasis on at-grade street crossings, intersections, and high traffic corridors.
Q07: As proposed in the One Water Plan, implement a cohesive approach to development and infrastructure improvements that prioritizes the protection and enhancement of the South Platte River’s environmental, ecological, and recreational needs.

- Elevate the importance of the river to surrounding communities, First Nation and Indigenous West Denver residents.
- Support the river’s ability to provide natural benefits for water quality and ecosystem health.
- Develop multidisciplinary approaches to guide the future of the river including environmental, stormwater, water quality, recreation, mobility and urban design.
Q08: Utilize the policies and recommendations in the Denver Climate Action and similar plans to improve environmental performance and climate resilience within West Denver neighborhoods.

- Require energy efficiency and green building practices.
- Promote the use of renewable energy technologies.
- Invest in low-and-no emitting mobility options.
- Improve waste management practices.
Q09: Create a system of green streets and connected alleys that unite open spaces, reduce pollution, improve stormwater management and beautify neighborhoods, and reduce urban heat island effects.
Q10: Protect, preserve, and expand the urban forest tree canopy in all redevelopment efforts, and increase tree canopy coverage within public rights-of-way.

- Require climate appropriate tree species and plantings in all new developments.
- Promote tree planting programs on private property and in new redevelopment projects.
- Increase tree canopy coverage in public rights-of-way with an emphasis on industrial areas.

Urban tree canopy cover is important to the quality of life experienced by residents in neighborhoods for various reasons. Trees provide shade which helps keep urban environments cool, mitigating the added heat caused by many paved surfaces. Trees reduce air and water pollution by capturing and holding carbon dioxide in the air and stabilizing soils to better manage stormwater runoff.

American Forests estimates that Denver’s urban tree canopy saves residents $6.7 million in cooling costs annually and removes 290 pounds of air pollution every year. In addition, Denver’s urban forest is an important part of the city’s cultural and aesthetic identity.

Tree canopy coverage in the West neighborhoods is 9%, compared with 19% citywide. The existing tree canopy is fairly evenly dispersed in the study area within the residential neighborhoods. There is a notable loss of any tree canopy east of Federal Blvd within the stadium area, industrial area and along the South Platte River.
Complete Food System

**Q11:** Build a more inclusive, healthy, resilient and vibrant, complete food environment.

- Community Centers, Hubs and Education
- Local Entrepreneurships
- Local Sources
- Healthy Food Retail
- Food and Nutrition Education
- Expand Healthy Options and Choice
Complete Food System Policies

**Q12:** Increase fresh food access, availability, and affordability throughout the West Denver communities.
Q13: Support initiatives that address food insecurity, maintenance, and improvements to existing local businesses.
Complete Food System Policies

Q14: Use creative regulatory tools and solutions to streamline processes and close food access gaps.

• Fast-Track Permitting
• Fee Waivers
• Incentivize Retail and Service Expansions
• Mobile Markets
Complete Food System Policies

**Q15:** Expand local food production, urban farming, food processing and manufacturing to serve the needs of West Denver residents.
Q16: Improve access to fresh and healthy food and nutrition through improved physical connections and multimodal networks. Prioritize access to nutritious food, goods and services.

- Ensure safe and compliant multimodal infrastructure exists or is prioritized around food distribution locations (i.e., grocery retailers, urban farms, community gardens, community service providers)

Engage and support communities in building vibrant, beautiful, and complete neighborhood food environments.
Community Safety and Security Policies

Q17: Maintain energy efficient streetlighting for increased safety and comfort. Prioritize gathering spaces, parks, trails, transit facilities, commercial corridors and centers.

- Lighting should be pedestrian-scale.
- Increase lighting along key corridors with an emphasis on Vision Zero High Injury Networks and Intersections.
- Support energy-efficient lighting solutions on public and private property in alignment with Denver’s Climate Action Policies and Goals.
Community Safety and Security Policies

Q18: Encourage public agencies, and private agencies, and urban design and development partners to incorporate design principles that promote safety within the built environment with heightened attention for cultural biases, call for equity, diversity, community need and universal inclusion and design.
Community Safety and Security Policies

**Q19:** Encourage and incentivize the inclusion of public art and culturally significant design elements in development projects, urban designs and landscapes that celebrate West Denver history, culture, instills a sense of community pride, and ownership.
Q20: Support ongoing funding for Denver Animal Protection (DAP) “Pets for Life” and similar programs that provide access to information, education and veterinary healthcare services for pet owners at low to no cost.

• Provide pet education to West Area families and youth.

• Develop pet owner referral, engagement and outreach programs to expand access and awareness of DAP programs and services.
Next Steps & Thank You for Attending!

• Continuing the development of the policies survey.
  • This is the last set of major policies in order to complete the survey
  • Proposed to be released end of May

• Thursday, May 20, 2021
  • Review preliminary survey results

• Any guidance or advice regarding outreach and engagement opportunities is encouraged
  • Please utilize the chat! 😊