RISE Together Denver

Community Engagement on Economic Recovery

Budget and Policy Committee | June 24, 2021
Agenda

• Process and Goals
• Turnout and demographics
• Community Feedback
• Business Feedback
• Infrastructure Feedback
• Next Steps
1. Building on Prior Outreach

- **Community**: 13 neighborhood conversations on community supports
- **Business**: A year of collaboration with 100+ businesses and nonprofits through the Mayor’s Economic Relief & Recovery Council
- **Infrastructure**: 5,000 public comments on capital projects to inform the Six-Year Capital Improvement Plan

2. Narrowing Key Topic Areas

Denver Human Services, Denver Economic Development & Opportunity, and Capital Planning & Real Estate used prior community outreach results to identify key topic areas and draft survey questions.

3. Finalizing Surveys and Methods

Collaboration with the Office of Equity and Social Innovation and the People Lab at UC Berkeley to revise survey questions, survey design, and outreach strategies and finalize content and approach.
Input online and over-the-phone

- **Website** with surveying, educational materials, and townhall live-streaming

- Four **telephone townhalls** with 30k dial-outs and text messages per call to 20 zip codes in historically marginalized neighborhoods. Townhalls simulcast in English, Spanish, Vietnamese, and Amharic

- Presentation during the **Mayor's Cabinet in the Community** in Council District 3

- Presentation to the **Mayor's Economic Relief and Recovery Council**

- Presentation at a citywide **employee townhall**
Inclusive Outreach Tactics

- 25k translated **mailers** to vulnerable neighborhoods, fully translated in English and Spanish with instruction in Vietnamese and Amharic

- A **pop-up event** and **flyers** at Denver Public Libraries in vulnerable neighborhoods

- **E-blasts** and newsletters through city agencies, City Council offices, etc.

- **Paid social media campaign**, geo-focused on vulnerable neighborhoods.
6,200 participants online and over the phone

9,800 surveys and comments submitted

2,300 unique survey respondents

160 callers on Spanish, Vietnamese, or Amharic lines

65 townhall caller comments heard live
Participation by zip code

Neighborhood areas with the highest percentages of participation:

- Barnum, Mar Lee, Harvey Park (607 participants)
- South Park Hill, East Colfax, Hale, Hilltop (526 participants)
- North Park Hill, Northeast Park Hill (517 participants)
DEMOGRAPHIC QUESTION

What is your relationship to Denver?

- I live here: 34%
- I work here: 19%
- I live and work here: 32%
- None of these, I'm just interested in what's going on in Denver: 1%
- I visit Denver: 14%
DEMOGRAPHIC QUESTION

Which best describes you?

- White or Caucasian: 57%
- Latinx: 23%
- Black or African American: 10%
- Asian of Pacific Islander: 4%
- Multiracial: 4%
- A race not listed here: 2%
DEMOGRAPHIC QUESTION

How worried are you that you will be able to afford next month's expenses?

- Very worried: 7%
- Somewhat worried: 24%
- Neutral: 6%
- Not worried at all: 63%
How old are you?

- 17 or younger: 1%
- 18-28: 5%
- 29-49: 42%
- 50-70: 35%
- 71 or older: 17%
When it comes to community support, what matters most to you?

- Housing and support for people experiencing homelessness: 40%
- Mental Health: 17%
- Transportation: 12%
- Education: 8%
- Food access: 7%
- Childcare: 7%
- Health care: 4%
- Digital access: 3%
- Direct cash assistance: 3%
Which housing solutions would be the most helpful to you and your family?

- Increased affordable housing: 47%
- A wider variety of housing options in the neighborhood to reduce overcrowding and displacement: 29%
- Mortgage assistance: 11%
- On-going rental assistance: 7%
- Eviction prevention: 6%
Which solutions would be the most helpful to you and your family to access nutritious food?

- More farmer’s markets or community gardens within a 10 minute walk from my house: 59%
- More places that accept Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), also known as food stamps or Women Infant Children (WIC): 18%
- More food sources that meet my special dietary or cultural needs and preferences: 12%
- More food delivery programs: 11%
## Which childcare solutions would be the most helpful to you and your family?

1. Affordable childcare (52%)
2. High-quality and licensed (26%)

## Which solutions would be the most helpful to access mental health services?

1. Affordable services (61%)
2. Diverse providers aligning with cultural/religious beliefs (16%)

## Which solutions would be the most helpful to access general health care?

1. Low-cost, no insurance, or affordable services (72%)
2. Services available with my schedule (10%)

## Which solutions would be the most helpful to access transportation?

1. Transit close to home or work (28%)
2. Frequent routes (22%)
2. Affordable transportation (22%)

## Which solutions would be the most helpful to access internet?

1. Free or reduced broadband and affordable internet devices (47%)
2. More available/reliable internet at home or work (37%)
Predominate comment themes: mental health, transportation, and technology
I live in Villa Park neighborhood and work in Barnum neighborhood, both considered food deserts. There are only convenience stores and small mom & pop stores with limited space & inventory in both neighborhoods. A car is needed to access large grocery stores.

Mortgage assistance covers it mostly. Would love to see specific programs for first-time homebuyers who are working full-time but have had financial difficulties or are considered low income. I would LOVE to buy in Denver (vs. Aurora, Littleton, etc)

Mental health services available in my community and covered by my insurance–Kaiser only offers mental health coverage for practitioners located in the suburbs, which makes it very challenging to access without reliable transportation.
I was commenting on mental health and for me, I have not only experienced it myself, but I have lost my eldest child to suicide just within the last four months. And it was due to mental health...I think we have to get back down to basics and realize that [mental health] has to be the number one thing.

- Patricia

The housing market is going crazy out here in Montbello. Well, I'd like to see more situations where we can afford housing.

- Rupert from Montbello

I have a three-year-old kid and we don't qualify for food stamps and I just want to see if there's a way we can, maybe, get a little help.

- Stephen from Lincoln Park
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
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<tr>
<td>Jobseeker/workforce</td>
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<td>Local business support</td>
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<td>Community/neighborhoods</td>
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<td>Public infrastructure invest</td>
<td>19%</td>
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<td>Government regulations</td>
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**BIZNESS**

Townhall and online question

When it comes to business support, what matters most to you?
If you're seeking employment, what are some of the barriers preventing you from returning to work? 

- No opportunities in my field: 25%
- Low pay: 18%
- No child/elder care: 17%
- No transportation: 12%
- Lack technology: 11%
- Volatile industry/looking outside my field: 10%
- Unsure about public health environment: 7%
If you are a business owner, capacity, what barriers are you most concerned about?

- Cost of rent/lease/mortgage: 32%
- Need more employees: 20%
- Employee and customer health: 19%
- Household demands, like a lack of child or elder care for my household: 11%
- Lack of customer demand: 9%
- Security concerns at my current location: 5%
- Lack of guidance on public health precautions: 4%
- Lack of personal protective equipment (PPE): 0%
When it comes to workforce development and jobseeker supports, what do you think the city should prioritize?

1. Training for new skills or career paths (61%)
2. Expand employment opportunities on city projects (21%)

What do you think the city should prioritize to help Denver businesses recover from the pandemic?

1. Expand grant-based funding for small businesses (35%)
2. Neighborhood improvements to encourage shopping locally (24%)

How should the city prioritize community needs to create an economy that works for everyone?

1. More support to pay for housing needs (32%)
2. More businesses that people can walk to (21%)

What do you think the city should prioritize to make it easier to do business with the City and County of Denver?

1. Make licensing and permitting processes easier (42%)
2. Hire staff to help communities navigate city processes (32%)

Additional online survey questions
Predominant comment themes: job training, worker pay/wages, and small business supports
Increasing accessibility to secondary and trade education for BIPOC communities by reducing costs.

Launch a program to bring back apprenticeships and on-the-job training programs in place of traditional college education. Promote & incentivize the trades, labor unions, and create a path of opportunity.

Create grant writing programs that provide HIGHLY SKILLED grant writers to small businesses. We don’t have the bandwidth to spend hours applying for grants. The process to sign up for grants takes weeks.

Create opportunities for small, minority and women-owned businesses to lead City contracts.
I think that jobs are the most important right now...In food and beverage and the hospitality industry, I think we need to use these windfall funds to shore up wages and benefits in those industries and get people back to work.

- Barry, Central Denver

I own a business...Small businesses are kind of the backbone of the economy...They just help so much in terms of generating jobs and just good for the local economy because a lot of the money you know is spent locally. I just think that any help for small businesses, you know just goes a long way, especially locally in the Community.

- Carlos, Jefferson Park

[Foster] connections with local community colleges in the area, so that people who are currently unemployed could [get] a degree or certificate...and gain the skills that they need...to go get a job in the workforce.

- Kelly, Downtown
When it comes to infrastructure, what matters most to you?

- Building safe and accessible streets, sidewalks, bike lanes and transportation systems: 32%
- Improving community and cultural buildings like libraries, museums, arenas, fire stations, etc.: 25%
- Improving spaces to serve people experiencing homelessness and promote public health: 21%
- Addressing climate change and supporting the environment: 13%
- Expanding and enhancing the parks and recreation system: 9%
Infrastructure can have a variety of economic benefits. What should the city prioritize?

- Offer the most jobs, including apprenticeships and job-training opportunities: 46%
- Offer the most opportunities for small, minority, and women-owned businesses: 26%
- Improve access to technology like computers and internet: 17%
- Support Denver’s tourism and hospitality industries: 11%
Infrastructure can mean new projects or fixing something that already exists. What should the city prioritize?

- Fix something that's outdated: 48%
- Improve something that already exists: 42%
- Build something new: 10%
Infrastructure can serve a specific area, the city, or the Denver metro region. What should the city prioritize?

- Projects for neighborhood improvements like a local playground, sidewalk, or recreation center: 53%
- Projects for regional improvements like public transportation systems, venues, or museums: 47%
Predominant comment themes: transportation, environmental sustainability, and community buildings
Prioritize projects in equity neighborhoods and jobs with long-term sustainability.

Infrastructure that supports local businesses, like sidewalk improvements, protected bike lanes, and traffic calming. A good pedestrian environment is good for businesses.

From an ecological standpoint, buildings should be reused/renovated WHENEVER possible, instead of knocked down and rebuilt. Scraping a building is an enormous source of landfill waste and producing new building materials is very carbon intensive.

Places, spaces, and plazas that bring people together. Research has shown that by bringing people together in safe and welcoming public spaces increases upward mobility and access to opportunity.

Prioritize projects in equity neighborhoods and jobs with long-term sustainability.

Infrastructure Comments: Online

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Nutritious food, transportation, childcare, affordable housing, we indeed support that, but we know that the human spirit needs more. The fine art and music [elevates] our souls...I advocate for the May Bonfils Stanton theater in SouthWest Denver.

- Sister Mary, Harvey Park

There's not a library in Globeville. The closest one to get to us in the Swansea neighborhood. It's totally not possible to walk or ride a bike there...it just isn't accessible. I would love to have a neighbor library... It's an important resource for books but also access to technology and Community space. - Katie, Globeville

Infrastructure for mass transportation buses and trains, making sure that you can get in and out of the city a little bit easier without using single use cars. - Jacey
Residents submitted 247 forum posts relating to community, business, and infrastructure.
Residents could start dialogues by responding to comments or liking posts with thumb-up signs.
Next Steps: Reporting out to the public

Rise Together Survey Summary

90% of respondents supported improving or fixing existing infrastructure over new builds

Respondents prioritized projects that produce jobs and provide opportunities for minority & woman-owned businesses

Top Priority:
- Projects that fix something that's outdated
- Projects that improve something that already exists
- Projects that build something new

Top Priority:
- Projects that offer the most jobs, including apprenticeships & job-training opportunities
- Projects that offer the most opportunities for small, minority, and women-owned businesses
- Other projects
Questions?