

West Area Plan
West Plan Small Working Group
Meeting# #3



Date and Time: June 22, 2022 at 4 pm
Location: Microsoft Teams

Attendees

WORKING GROUP MEMBERS (PRESENT)

Chala Mohr
Kathy Sandoval
Elizabeth Walsh
Heidi Newheart

Jeanne Granville
Jonathan Pira
Evon Lopez

ELECTED OFFICIALS/COUNCIL DISTRICT AIDES

Katie Heideman, Council Aide, District 3

COMMUNITY PLANNING PROJECT TEAM

Courtland Hyser
Valerie Herrera
Chelsea Bennou

Meeting Summary

Main Takeaways:

Overall:

- Have a separate session to discuss land use, building heights, and opportunity maps
- Have a separate session to dig into mobility more
- When we talk about neighborhood level maps next week, request for CPD to share how we are adjusting the formatting of the plan recommendations by number so it's more readable for the public
- Build out narratives for the equity analysis maps and others
- Develop additional text that explicitly connects the recommendations to what the existing conditions maps show
- Connect with partner departments to ensure our plan and maps are up to date as things have evolved over the past 2 years
- Reduce the amount of planner jargon in the plan and build out a glossary of terms
 - Specific questions about job diversity – what does innovation mean, vs manufacturing vs retail?

Equity Analysis Maps

- Add in narratives for the equity analysis maps and potentially others
- Check with GIS and pull or potentially create additional equity analysis maps that show more detail
- Show West in context with the rest of the city

Tree Canopy Map

- Overlay our water basins and flood zone maps with tree canopy and heat island
- Develop recommendations that help developers prioritize the area's environment/ecology before buildings
- Mitigation is needed for the impact of highways, impervious surfaces and reflects what we see in the urban heat island and tree canopy. Connect with CDOT, Denver Park & Rec and Capital Improvement Projects to discuss mitigation efforts and recommendations.
- Include more recommendations to mitigate pollution in Valverde

Park Access Map

- Specific recommendations related to park access include
 - Extend lakewood gulch park to Sheridan
 - Weir gulch should be extended north
 - Connect Barnum parks north and south
 - Recommend a park all along the river, especially in SV
 - Park in the clover
- Check in with DPR about the pool that was planned 30 years ago but never built in Valverde

- Review all maps and remove Frankie Park, and then in the Valverde neighborhood section provide more context and speak to the unnamed park
- Consider creating a map that combines park access, environmental quality recommendations, and the food maps, mobility, and water/flood zones
- If we recommend a park somewhere, we should also recommend residential, retail, transportation to provide access to that park
- Green zone/park recommendations should be integrated into our neighborhood maps too, and park maps should show other green amenities to communicate the system
- Include a map that shows planned/future investments across various categories

Mobility Maps

- Mobility should include bolder recommended actions to decenter the automobile and plan for future types of mobility across West
- Under transit frequency and ridership – RTD has confirmed that 16L(?) has been permanently closed so we need to pull that from the map
- Modal opportunities and green amenity maps don't always correspond to each other (Jonathan emailing details)
- Map the parkways (discuss with DPR)
- Clarify what is meant by development incentive priority areas for New Public Space for Federal, Alameda and Colfax areas.
- Clarify the community process in the text when it says that certain things were identified as community priorities
- Add 14th as a priority area, and recommendation for a protected bike lanes
- Include existing crossings on Colfax viaduct
- Overlap the maps showing crashes/injuries and the parks/trails/open space to show how crash spots might be mitigated with more parks trails, and open space

AGENDA

1. Existing Conditions Maps
 - a. What is missing?
2. Recommendations Maps
 - a. What is missing?
 - b. What are the conflicts and contradictions?
 - c. How to integrate?
3. Neighborhood Maps

NOTES

1. EXISTING CONDITIONS MAPS

What is missing from the existing conditions maps?

BP DENVER EQUITY MAPS

Jonathan:

Is the data supporting this available at different years, or more granularly?

Courtland:

These maps are taken directly from Blueprint Denver

That is presented Citywide in BP, this is a zoom in for the West area, but this makes use of those maps.

I think on the CPD website you can get an appendix of the methodology, what it is, how it was analyzed

Kathy:

Expressed some difficulty in interpreting these equity maps

Courtland:

Explained this is an aggregate to give everyone the big picture

We can probably provide access and links to additional materials to explain

Kathy:

Yeah, this doesn't really present the story

We need more of a narrative with these maps, and maybe additional maps to pair with these, such as owner/renter composite map, zoning map, etc.

The maps as they stand now are inconclusive in what they are saying

Elizabeth:

The most difficult to interpret is the access to opportunity

Why is the neighborhood equity index not included?

How do we tell the story about how equity and opportunity are totally different?

For example, Sun Valley, mostly renters, and people have some measure of protection from displacement because some properties are DHA owned

Heidi:

I find these equity maps confusing bc I am not sure what they are saying and how vulnerability to displacement, or like, referring to recommendation L3 (max bldg. heights and density), how it relates

How are these maps talking to each other, what are they really saying, and do the recommendations get to it?

Kathy:

Even your explanation is more or less just saying that this is a blueprint Denver map

For example, why are we not explicitly writing an interpretation about the area's lack of opportunity, and then tying it into recommendations?

Courtland:

All of these maps were done on the city wide scale,
Maybe it would be helpful to have a small inset where you could see the citywide scale so that you can see it in context, because there is not any of the darkest purple on this access to opportunity map

Jeanne:

These are all confusing
In Sun Valley, we haven't wanted to change any of the maps from what is – all of these maps show what have been, with nothing about what development is happening now
If Sun Valley is light lavender, why is it a NEST neighborhood? It seems very incongruent with what we know is true of SV

Kathy:

Staff, what colors do you see?
Are we at 1 and 2, 2 and 3?
Even basic stuff, understanding what colors relate to . . . what is your interpretation of these colors?

Courtland:

Yeah, that is where it would be helpful to have the city wide map

Evon:

When I look at this access to opportunity, it brings up a lot of memories about how we were the hardest hit by covid bc of the caustic pollution, being boxed in by highways, etc.
Looking at almost every map, we see there is no equity
So when you build these maps that will last 20 years or so, how are you going to build in something that will mitigate this pollution?

Kathy:

Yes, that's what I want to see in this plan
What is being done to remedy the story that we see in these neighborhoods?
WHY is there low homeownership, low income, high displacement, low opportunity?
You need to tell the story

Elizabeth:

I appreciate Courtland naming that if we saw the larger city, it would put some things in perspective
However, there is a level of mishmash on this map – it obfuscates what is actually going on bc all of these variables are thrown on top each other in a way that does not tell a clear story
On p. 17, the equity index, it already has 7 variables, that should at least be on its own, if not unpacked a bit so we can see where the most children are, etc.
Percent of pregnancies with children at healthy weight, etc.

Having an access to opportunity map with everything might be helpful at the end, but the access by walkshed and access to quality transit is probably some of what is making SV look good in access to opportunity, but it is obscuring the story, so we need to pull it apart

And what is the story with the dark purple strip in Villa Park?

I got very frustrated when I looked at these and moved on, like Jeanne

As a general rule, can we have some maps that show an outcome, and then break out some contributing factors – like with health, to be able to present the maps together, like healthy weight, avg life expectancy, poverty line, high school graduates – these are all kind of health outcomes, and then we can be able to tease out and show a map of access to fresh food and social determinants of health

Maybe we can collage on one side of the page the factors influencing the outcomes, and then the aggregate maps so you can see how the patterns are the same or different, that would be helpful in allowing the maps to tell a story and build our ecological literacy

Kathy:

Leading with Neighborhood Equity Index makes more sense to me verse access to opportunity on how the plan improves on these conditions.

Courtland:

We need to follow up with our GIS analyst to see what is possible in terms of providing the greater level of detail

Jonathan:

For Tree Canopy and Urban Heat Index maps, I have no commentary. They represent existing conditions, not our recommendations, and are purely data-oriented, rather than subjective

Kathy:

With each of these maps, you are trying to tell a story with wach of these maps, but there are lots of components left out,

Like housing ownership

Zoning

Job diversity – what does innovation mean, vs manufacturing vs retail? – there is no definition

Val:

Yes, clearly this plan ahs too much jargon, we need to pull apart some definitions and terms

Elizabeth:

Generally speaking, when there's an indexed map, it would be wonderful to pair that map with a collage of the individual themes that are combined next to it.

I imagine that if an index was created, the GIS team has original baseline data too.

Housing diversity, unpacked, would be great, too.

Evon:

When we talk about a hazardous neighborhood, it sends a stake through my heart

We are still talking about how hazardous this neighborhood is, we have got to stop this! I am 61 years old and its still hazardous, all this redlining, what they did to us, they destroyed this neighborhood

This is so not fair, it is madness, I want people to have what we have, I am asking you all to please really look at this stuff

Kathy:

Add zoning map to reflect how it impact vulnerability to displacement, in addition to understanding job diversity as it relates to innovation, manufacturing, & retail.

TREE CANOPY

Kathy:

Part of the story needs to reflect that there is a lack of tree canopy, there is a prevalence of industrial, and how can that be changed?

What more improvements can be made to make it a greener space? This might lead us to create more open spaces along the gulches

Heidi:

These two maps, the tree canopy and heat island maps are so telling and speak to what Evon is saying

The areas that are red with heat island are the areas we lack tree canopy, it would be interesting to overlay our water basins and flood zones

These areas are being ignored

The opportunity areas maps are recommending that the most development happen in the heat island, and this is the biggest discrepancy to me

Blueprint Denver keeps saying we should build our way out of it, and there is no plan to tell a developer that if you are building in an area with lack of tree canopy, heat islands, manufacturing, etc. – there is no requirement to address any of this

We keep thinking developers are going to solve these problems, and this is the biggest inconsistency in the plan

Jeanne:

can you erase all of those trees in the middle along the river in sun valley because with the DHA demolition, there is no trees

Elizabeth:

To what Heidi is saying, the "Access to Opportunity" map is strongly shaped by growth assumptions of the "Future Places" map, 1/3 of the map's sense of access to opportunity is weighted towards whether its closer to a local center, local corridor, community, corridor and regional center under Future Places

Kathy:

We need to look at tree canopy compared eo the environmental quality/climate resilience maps and our roads

Maybe parks and rec needs to be part of this, getting us more trees

I don't think everything will be solved by a developer
How do the CDOT roads tie into this? The volume of traffic is higher on 6th ave than 1-25 – is that an opportunity to increase tree canopy there as well?
Need to loop back w/ our partners in CDR specifically forestry

Mitigation is needed for the impact of highways, impervious surfaces and reflects what we see in the urban heat island and tree canopy. Mitigation needs to go beyond development to CDOT, Denver Park & Rec and Capital Improvement Projects.

Heidi:

The reason the open space is so wide in some parts is bc it was designed first
So in our plan, can we design for the green space and make space for the water, and then layer our mobility – and THAT informs our development, not the other way around
Our stadium development plan does not do this – our water isn't informing the development – the development gets put in, a blue line drawn through, and we think we have done it
We absolutely cant continue in this way

Elizabeth:

One of the amazing things about getting to see maps at the same scale of different themes next to each other is that we get to start to see relationships among them and patterns. The indexing ends up flattening it, reducing our capacity to see relationships among many factors; reducing our literacy of interrelated patterns in the living systems we're part of. When we can see the individual maps and intuitively make comparisons, THEN, the index map can help us think through the combinations in a different way, but it's problematic/unhelpful standing on its own.

Evon:

We are the least canopied with trees and the most hot zone

Elizabeth:

We need to make sure the recommendations we have tie to multiple existing conditions elements and affecting multiple layers in an integrated way

Kathy:

CDOT needs to come to the table with their state funding so they can help lessen the impact of their projects
If a project is impacting multiple neighborhoods and helping multiple issues, then it should rise in priority

Evon:

30 years ago there was money earmarked for a park in Valverde
But then we learned they used money for irrigation
Why didn't we get a swimming pool?
We need to check in with DPR

PARK ACCESS

Kathy:

You are showing some extensions of the gulches that are not showing up In the park access map, so that there is an extension of open space

We have always wanted to see lakewood gulch park to Sheridan

Weir gulch should be extended north

In the park access map this needs to be highlighted

There are natural connections that could be expanded with park access,

Barnum parks north and south – why cant they be connected more?

Elizabeth:

Also, Frankie Park is "not a thing" but shows up all over these maps.

Heidi:

I would love to see these two maps (park access and environmental quality recommendations) and the food maps layered with the mobility maps

I would like to see a lot of these maps being laid over, with the water too

With the equity maps, if they were fleshed out more, this would be a great way to start talking about systems, and then would help us start to talk about implementaiton

Val:

I suggest re: Frankie Park is that we review all maps and remove Frankie Park, and then in the Valverde neighborhood section we can provide more context and speak to the unnamed park

Elizabeth:

That sounds great

There are two pocket parks that are unnamed and both, in the 1991 plan, both were supposed to be given names

Val:

I will loop back with DPR on the unnamed parks

Evon:

We are actually trying give a name this park (Frankie), as it was promised to be name 32 years ago, another broken promise. 🙄➡️

Evon is scheduled to speak on this on 7/13

Kathy:

Missing gaps in the park access on not including the gulch as detention priority areas and connecting green spaces with expansion.

MOBILITY

Kathy:

If we can put pedestrian challenges/lighting together with the injury network maybe we can see whats going on better

Jonathan:

I see what the existing conditions are today, and I would like to see where else in the plan we specify what we would like to change for the future

Under transit frequency and ridership – RTD has confirmed that 16L has been permanently closed so we need to pull that from the map

Elizabeth:

I do not want to get lost in the weeds, but there has been a tension throughout the planning process about how much that is dictated in BP Denver are what we have to be stuck with It is an interesting thing to have these in existing conditions, bc they are city wide plans for what should happen

For our conversation about recommendations, we need to understand how we want to advance our recommendations vs what BP Denver is recommending

Kathy:

Missing gaps in the park access on not including the gulch as detention priority areas and connecting green spaces with expansion.

Would like to see a 6th ave bridge park at Barnum Park North (ball park fields and Barnum Park to the south of 6th ave), enhancement rendering under recommendations

Jeanne:

I would be happy to go in the weeds on more of this, but maybe later

I would like to table some of the and use and density discussion and continue on the environmental discussion

But one thing I want to point out is, what does it mean to be a regional center?

I don't think people that are reading this – its not easily found

Val:

One thing we talked about is having a supplemental glossary or begin to incorporate terms and definitions more clearly in sidebars or wherever they show up

Kathy:

We can look at blueprint Denver and height recommendations in its own separate meeting

This will be more impactful in terms of rezonings

We can get in the weeds next time

I would like to go back to mobility right now

Heidi:

I would also like to get into the weeds with this too, so maybe that can be it's own meeting.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Kathy:

I would see the opportunity area map as part of the built environment discussion we are trying to table

Jonathan:

Looking at parks, trail, and open space, we have a large green circle in the central part of the western Barnum neighborhood – other maps say that this same area will not have any local centers, local corridor access, changes in density of receive any growth, and these things are congruent with one another

Not to say we shouldn't put a park here, but if we are putting a park here, we should then also improve access to living, shopping, dining by the park

Its not so much an edit to this map, but we should put some mobility recommendations, there should be more residential density, a local corridor to shop, in contrast to BPDenver, so we need to put these recommendations into other maps

Jeanne:

In looking at SV

I am wondering why there is no riverfront park put as a priority area?

There should be a lengthwise oval all along the river there

DPR says they committed funds to it

Elizabeth

Great point, Jonathan, about integrating parks investment with housing, transportation, etc.

Especially because we're trying to use River Sisters and the Turquoise Necklace as a guiding light

Also is the "new park" bubble in Valverde by Ullibarri Park? It would benefit from investment, but may not need to be a new park?

Jonathan:

I had the same question in my notes. We have recommendations and plans to return the river to a place of recreation, restoration, and nature access, but none of the Recommendations map includes mention of riverside park and access changes. So basically +1 to Jeanne's question.

Val:

Its great to have these discussions bc we have been working on this for 2 years, so some of this is now outdated and we need to loop back with our partners and review this plan with this lens

Heidi:

I am guessing these areas in the green circles are there bc these are the areas that match the gaps where you don't have access to parks

Also the clover is a really important transit center

Maybe we need to think about areas that have not been developed bc of water quality and basins, the areas that don't have green should have some green development but not just as part of our parks plan, but our neighborhood plan

Why don't we have a park as part of the clover, and all along the river?

Jeanne:

Please add a Priority Area for park along the river in Sun Valley in addition to the descriptive Sun Valley Riverfront Park box that i in the Sun Valley recommendations

Elizabeth:

Why is there a blob so close to an active park in Valverde?

If there is a map that shows future investments,

The park access map on the left, you can get a sense that there is almost a network, but it has lots of breaks in it – if we are really able to use the riverfront park and show the turquoise necklace concept and connect the riverfront parks throughout the neighborhood and show how it fits into a system of parks and bikeways, that would be helpful

Green streets are part of the network too, but you don't get a sense from this map how it all fits into a park system

Heidi:

Wasn't parks and rec having discussions about green ways combined with mobility, like along 14th...

Recommended layering more of these maps

Jonathan:

There is some disagreement between maps

10th ave is identified as a green amenity street, but then on mobility opportunities there is no indicator at all

Same thing is happening with 14th and 17th – on one map it is a green amenity or water quality street, and then in bike modal priority there is no bike priority icon in mobility map or a green tree indicator

Modal opportunities and green amenity maps don't always correspond to each other (he is emailing his notes on these things so we are clear)

Kathy:

Discussion about confusion on what the parks, trails, and open space map is saying

If you look at Alameda, you have a median with landscaping, also somewhat the case on Federal Blvd, and that is a designated parkway, so how can that be pulled out even further?

Heidi:

and does it mean ground floor/street level activation, which is a big problem along Colfax as development is not required to activate the street for community, so we are encouraging a dead zone along this vital business strip

Val:

I think this would be worth looping back with DOTI bc I think there has been some discussion about designating Alameda as a parkway, but would need to happen is that the city would need to takeover that CDOT highway and that has not happened

Kathy:

But that has not happened with Federal Blvd either, and it is a designated parkway

Val:

Who should we talk to?

Courtland:

DPR for the parkway component

But, what's mapped here is not intended to be getting at parkway – that is a different concept from what that map is intending to recommend, but we need to dig into that bc there would be different recommendations around this development incentive idea, but we need to look more closely at this

Kathy:

Yes, I want to see the parkways mapped and included in this plan

Unclear of what is meant by development incentive priority areas for New Public Space for Federal, Alameda and Colfax areas.

Heidi:

There is a lot of language in the mobility section talking about bold changes, and what it feels like is that these recommendations are based on what DOTI has already talked about what can be and is already being done

This already feels dated, and if it's going to transcend into the next decade or two . . . especially multimodal transportation like scooters and hoverboards, we don't mention any of this

It's hard to even read these maps bc it feels like, this is what we talked about so this is what we will do

It doesn't feel bold enough for the future

Jonathan:

Barnum West and Villa Park each have only one E-W bikeway, and hardly any pedestrian priority

If we are looking at being transformative with mobility, VP and BW are being left out

Looking at the plan for bike networks as a whole, there are almost NO protected bike lanes in west area as a whole

Huge sections show only automotive priority

Not seeing a lot of action in these maps that show bold transformation

Kathy:

Also wondering why 8th ave from Knox Ct to Federal Blvd can be recommended for a parkway. West Denver in general has been neglected for these designations when we compare it to the rest of the city.

Elizabeth:

what are these "input corridors"?

Jonathan:

Re: input corridors @Elizabeth I was wondering the same thing - if you look in the main plan, on page 111, it is explained

Elizabeth:

Thanks Jonathan - confused though 111 in the print copy s "high comfort bikeways"

Jonathan:

Oh weird that's not what it is for me. It's in the Mobility section, Recommendation segment M6

Elizabeth:

thanks - that's 119 for me; and the naming convention could be clarified to make it more obvious that M6 and that map tie together.

Jonathan:

Agreed - I was reading the next recommendation before realizing that's what the map was referring to

Eizabeth:

Gotcha - and M6 is confusing about where the "community input" is coming from... Denver Moves? This planningprocess? both?

Elizabeth:

Explained this is confusing, and also there is text talking about how the community designated these as priorities, but **unclear what process was undertaken to identify these priorities**, and it also sounds like the plan is asking for further feedback, so it is very confusing

Heidi:

And I would just add 14th as a priority area, and recommendation for a protected bike lanes, this street just seems to be ignored and not aggressive enough given it's import as an E/W corridor....

Also, I love Jonathan's point around the mobility maps not addressing how SOV traffic/dedicated space will be affected around mobility.

Also missing existing crossings on Colfax viaduct

Jonathan:

Do we want to talk more about recommendations on mobility now, or can we have a separate section on mobility?

Val:

Yes, there will be a separate discussion about mobility

Courtland:

If we need to dive into the written recommendations, will that be aseperate section?

But since we are talking about the maps, bring up thoughts now

Maps and recommendations work together, bc maps are supposed to be showing where the recs apply

Kathy:

We did not really look at the crash and HIN maps

But there are some parallels with parks and open space

So we need to overlap those two maps together to show how crash spots might be mitigated with more parks trails, and open space

Evon:

Can you please direct me to the area that speaks to the corner of Lipan off Alameda, nest to the S Platte River? I did walk this area recently and it seems like it has been neglected and abandoned area. Not walkable, as there is a small sideway, that is not complete.

Can you email me about where it is in the plan?

Elizabeth:

When we get to the neighborhood map stuff can you also present how you are reorganizing the recommendations so we can get the general and specific recommendations to talk to each other better

So that it doesn't get lost: When we talk about neighborhood level maps, can CPD also talk to us a about how you're adjusting the formatting of the plan recommendations by number so it's more readable for the public?

Heidi:

Great meeting, I am so glad we are having these conversations around system by identifying patterns and being able to get a handle on how patterns can inform recommendations!