

# West Area Plan West Plan Small Working Group Meeting #6



Date and Time: July 13, 2022 at 4 pm  
Location: Zoom

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## Attendees

### WORKING GROUP MEMBERS (PRESENT)

Chala Mohr  
Kathy Sandoval  
Jonathan Pira  
Sean Brady  
Elizabeth Walsh  
Evon Lopez  
Jeanne Granville

### ELECTED OFFICIALS/COUNCIL DISTRICT AIDES

Katie Heideman, Council Aide, District 3

### COMMUNITY PLANNING PROJECT TEAM

Valerie Herrera  
Courtland Hyser  
Chelsea Bennouna  
Eugene Howard

## Meeting Summary

### **Main Takeaways:**

- Include snapshots of the Environmental Justice map Kathy shared along with additional important existing condition data, and include text about how our mobility and economic systems contribute to these environmental pollutants
- Look at what LA is doing with green zones in industrial areas and consider for potential case study
- Consider recommending performance zoning and including specific metrics we would associate with it – consider tracking particulate matter
- Develop key QoL metrics to track
- Remove the name "Frankie Park" which is in VV
- Clarify the job density map, including whether it shows census tracts or blocks, and what exactly it is showing
- Include data about how many of the jobs are held by West Area residents
- Connect with Shannon from CASR to help update climate action related information in plan
- Calculate and use area's median rents and income based on a smaller area for West instead of for Denver as a whole
- Create incentives for developers to take over affordable housing contracts that are at risk of expiring (like HUD properties) to help continue to provide the 30-50% AMI
- Can we have a recommendation that says discouragement of conservation overlays or design requirements that conflict with universal design requirements
- Recommend policies that allow lower income residents to own homes even if they can't own the land (CLTs?)
- Recommend we put a condition on demolition or allow people to build to a higher density if you meet certain climate adaptation and affordability standards
- Include something in the housing section that recommends policies for transitions – opportunities to find people to maintain existing housing, or put stricter conditions on redevelopment, or allowing first right of refusal for current tenants to buy before a house was sold

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### **AGENDA**

- **Environmental Justice discussion led by Kathy**
- **Housing and Economy discussion led by Val**

## NOTES

### Kathy:

- Shares a mapping tool that shows diesel particulate matter and other pollutants from EPA “EJ Screen”

### Elizabeth:

- Snapshots of this would be so helpful to include in the Quality-of-Life section, with discussion of how our mobility systems and our economic systems contribute to those levels of cumulative exposure.
- This tool launched recently, though I haven't had an opportunity to play with it yet, <https://cdphe.colorado.gov/enviroscreen>

### Kathy:

- Shows that Sunnyside and Valverde are some of the hardest hit
- There is demographic information tool
- Perhaps this plan could help move us forward with recommendations that tie to the environmental Justice information
- We need to look closely at how EJ issues are impacting our neighborhood, what that means, and what we can do about it
- I've added a link to the EPA EJ Screen mapping site. <https://ejscreen.epa.gov/mapper/>

### Val:

- Thinking about how we already look at social determinants through Blueprint, and other things like access to healthcare, child obesity rate, etc.
- We already have some of this included in the introduction and neighborhood sections
- Perhaps we can identify with this group what other indicators you would like to add in and then we can figure out how to integrate

### Elizabeth:

- There are a lot of snapshots in here that would be helpful to name
- Maybe the introduction or QoL section could be a place to have an expanded look at existing conditions
- Wherever we are unpacking the equity and vitality challenges
- Seeing the maps and unpacking the story behind these maps and the past infrastructure, mobility, and land use choices the city has made is important
- We need to tell the story of WHY is it like this
- Let's foreground this in the introduction

### Sean Brady:

Can be tricky to unpack the “why” of unemployment, etc.

### Kathy:

- There is a methodology of how you get to the root cause of these issues

- You have to ask the question multiple times to figure it out
- And then we have to ask how to repair this
- Can we look outside the box and to places like LA and what they are doing with green zones in industrial areas?
- If not now, then when?
- This document could start to make this reparative story

**Elizabeth:**

And also, the heavy diesel trucks that are part of the industrial zone - there are diesel semis going through Valverde all the time. Running over pets, and threatening pedestrians.

**Courtland:**

- This is definitely possible, and we have data on how this affects people and health
- I think it is more about identifying what of all of this data is the most connected bc no one is able to process the whole thing so we need to identify what pieces of data are most relevant
- Generally, we try not to bog down a plan with too much existing conditions data, it shouldn't be something where people are having a difficult time finding the vision, that's why we have a separate existing conditions report
- But I understand the need to make these connections

**Elizabeth:**

- The idea is, if we do go with performance zoning,
- Then what are the metrics
- Maybe there are some that give us a better sense of how different things are interacting
- Cumulative exposures are a main concern, and Sunnyside and Valverde have those major semis moving through the neighborhood
- Agreed you don't want to overwhelm people with data, but maybe there are some things we want to track and monitor and hold development accountable to equity and vitality goals
- I don't know what those are, but I think particulate matter might be key since it comes to particulate matter
- The maps are so helpful to see the patterns, and the SDIs are in the report, but being able to see how that particular metric shows out on a scale is important

**Val:**

For everyone, SDI is Social Determinant Indicator

**Kathy:**

- I agree we have some existing conditions, but I am hoping that the cumulative effect and how that really needs to be driven within the QoL section to really make that argument of what we need
- I am really anticipating that we can do this and see evidence of how this shift is happening

**Elizabeth:**

- How can we have EcDev that contributes to the wellbeing of the neighborhood
- Not only with jobs, but with jobs that are health give not extraction and exploitation
- I know there are some indicators that do help you get a bigger sense of these system effects and how things are interacting that are useful to track
- Can we have some additional key QoL metrics we are tracking?
- Life expectancy is great to track but it might not tell you what's going on and how to intervene on it, so what feedback do we want to build into accountability to make good responses and strategies for how we adjust things?

**Elizabeth:**

- thank you so much, Kathy, for sharing.
- CPD team, neighbors, I am curious how we collectively plan to incorporate this resource into performance tracking and accountability, beyond just existing conditions.

**ECONOMY AND HOUSING SESSION**

**Elizabeth:**

- Renee is interested in reconvening
- WDRC is planning to present some important data on schools and displacement and the relationship
- Asks if someone from CPD can join and we can link up with this effort

**Eugene:**

- Confirms we have been coordinating and following this conversation with WDRC

**Elizabeth:**

- Thanks, Eugene, for working so closely with WDRC from the get-go. Your presentations at WDRC have been very helpful, too. So grateful for all the coordination you have been doing for years.

**Jonathan:**

- Feels that we thoroughly worked through the map packet
- Let's jump into the bullet points

**Kathy:**

- Wants to see how these bullet points relate to the maps

**ECONOMY**

**Elizabeth:**

I have had a hard time understanding the maps that relate to jobs, suggests we revisit

**Eugene:**

- In most cases, we mapped where zoning allows for certain commercial retail uses
- The map related to where zoning allows for those types of activities to occur, and it's based off of existing conditions
- Job diversity is based on pure job numbers, and it uses census data, so it's a reflection of the predominate job type
- Eugene explains this map shows where there are opportunities to increase job diversity

**Elizabeth:**

- Can we represent this data with a dot-density map? It would be more clear

**Kathy:**

- I am also wondering with this map if there is a way to identify who has these jobs? Are these people who live in the neighborhoods of West?
- Maybe we can create green jobs for locals and green zones in the industrial areas

**Val:**

- @chelsea can you please note that we need to remove the name "Frankie Park" which is in VV. That is the unnamed park going to PRAB this evening. Hopefully we can add the newly adopted name in before adoption.

**Elizabeth:**

- And three cheers for what Kathy's naming about sharing data, if we can find it, to show how many people get to work near their home.

**Courtland:**

- We know there is an appetite for more detail and understanding of why it is the way it is
- But these are from Blueprint, so we should think of it more of a big picture
- If we want to see the big picture, we can dig deeper, but we are kind of stuck with this map because it's the way blueprint crunched the numbers, this is how the info has been done city wide, so provide a consistent basis from one plan to the next we should use it
- But we can provide more detail to make it more clear

**Elizabeth:**

- If it is possible to clarify with the legend, like if it is census blocks, that would be helpful
- If we can complement this with more information, that would be super helpful

**HOUSING****Kathy:**

- It is important to see how the missing middle connects to the zoning that is here already
- We had a massive rezoning to allow for ADUs, so again that's an anti-displacement strategy

- When we have this opportunity to keep existing zoning but use ADUs, that is an important component
- When I look at the striped areas, eventually you need to provide a path for how you get there and have to do it with the zoning code, or rezone, which would encourage displacement

**Jeanne:**

- i really apologize for being late. couldn't be helped. Would I be able to get a copy of the slide deck, so I send my comments...? I've lost track of what are focus is this week

**Elizabeth:**

- Great to have you, Jeanne! We're focused on housing and economy today.
- And we spent some time in the beginning talking about some great mapping tools Kathy shared about particulate matter exposure and other factors tracked by the EPA

**Elizabeth:**

- I also think that the missing middle, if we have an increase in density, we also want to have an increase in diversity, that will also include diversity of ownership opportunities
- Can we have a map that shows diversity of housing ownership
- There is awesome language in the plan already, but would like to see it in a map, the diversity of housing types that allow for that
- Let's look at where ADUs are and where they are allowed
- How can housing diversity meet the needs of different demographics, and different incomes?

**Evon:**

- Has a meeting coming up with Shannon in CASR, she is bringing green jobs
- Some of the questions under economy can possibly be answered by some solutions from CASR  
I love what Kathy said about how we know whether people working in the industrial area are also living in West,
- Maybe with Shannon's data we can track this

**Val:**

Let's try to connect with Shannon from CASR

**Evon:**

Can invite us to the meeting with her

**Jeanne:**

Is there a place where I can go that describes all of those planning terms used in the Opportunity and Future Places maps? I can't really comment on anything until I know what these terms mean

**Val:**

Hi Jeanne - here is the link to Blueprint Denver. Let me send you the pages that you can find all the breakdowns of terminology used. [https://www.denvergov.org/files/assets/public/community-planning-and-development/documents/planning-general/blueprint-denver/blueprint\\_denver.pdf](https://www.denvergov.org/files/assets/public/community-planning-and-development/documents/planning-general/blueprint-denver/blueprint_denver.pdf)

71.

**Kathy:**

I noticed the comment about a huge need for rentals at 30-50% AMI  
How can you create rental housing at this range?

**Courtland:**

- The market won't provide this on its own, so usually it would be Denver's HOST dept partnering and competing for tax credits, assembling a deal with an affordable housing developer
- Some of this has happened recently in Globeville

**Jonathan:**

- Local depts like HOST has been clear that under 60% AMI is rarely something that market forces will provide, so those are developed with partnerships and tax credits
- What's exciting about inclusionary zoning is that it can decrease the amount of money city's having to spend on 60%+ AMI, and cities can focus on subsidizing for 30-50% AMI
- Zocalo goes out of their way to provide for 50% AMI
- On the AMI topic, I am not well informed about what's available in the region, but if its possible with current data, it would be cool to see an encouragement for projects in our area to not use Denver AMI, but to use rather small area AMI
- Denver's AMI is too high for West
- We need to see area's median rents and income calculated on a smaller area for West

**Jeanne:**

- We have a new private development going into Sun Valley and they are looking to charge pretty much the same as downtown rates... slightly less

**Chala:**

- Are there sites in our neighborhood that might be with HUD but about to expire?
- If that's the case, maybe we can stop them from going to a traditional market rate sale and create incentives for developers to take over the contract to help continue to provide the 30-50% AMI

**Jonathan:**

- We encourage in some parts of the pan, the creation of conservation overlays, but what we have been seeing is that conservation overlays expressly require housing forms that are not good for aging in place or disabilities



- Can we have a recommendation that says discouragement of conservation overlays or design requirements that conflict with universal design requirements
- On this topic of acquiring/preserving naturally affordable housing and homes that are losing their deed restriction, I thought it might be of interest to this group to know that Gary Community Ventures is putting forward a ballot initiative that will massively increase state-level funding for financing the construction of affordable housing and preserving housing that already exists - and better yet it is revenue neutral. Something to look out for (and maybe support) later this year! <https://leg.colorado.gov/content/dedicated-state-income-tax-revenue-affordable-housing-programs>

**Elizabeth:**

- THANK YOU JONATHAN
- What Jonathan was just naming is part of what it would be great to include when we talk about housing diversity that we need. And yes, universal design is good for everyone.
- And New Urbanist ideas about porches and elevated landings are cute, but you can get eyes on the street that includes everyone.

**Kathy:**

How can we keep capacity for a range of incomes within a neighborhood while having more ownership opportunities, maybe people can't own the land, but they own the building?

**Elizabeth:**

- We have a strong desire for anti-displacement
- We have a strong desire for environmental justice
- Is there anything that on climate justice and gentrification goals, any policy out there that places a condition on giving a demolition permit on having a plan for housing that meets a particular standard beyond just building within the general zoning?
- I doubt that is possible, but we have been talking a lot about the problem of scraping properties, replacing them with more expensive housing, and the energy output that requires
- Maybe we can put a condition on demolition or allow people to build to a higher density if you meet certain climate adaptation and affordability standards?

**Val:**

- I think what you're speaking to is more on the development services side of things
- I know the green building ordinance and the multi-unit multifamily ordinance that went into place
- We may need to follow up on this because there is a lot to unpack

**Courtland:**

- I don't think what Elizabeth is describing exists
- Is it possible?
- I am not sure . . . I think it is

- There are programs in place for trying to preserve affordable housing that currently exists – to get people to opt in to making certain house income restricted for a few years . . . that starts to get there

**Elizabeth:**

It would be interesting to have something in the housing section that recommends policies for transitions – opportunities to find people to maintain existing housing, or put stricter conditions on redevelopment, or allowing first right of refusal for current tenants to buy before a house was sold

**Jonathan:**

Blueprint does have recommendation to encourage conditions or requirements to preserve, reuse, or recycle materials during demolition, but I don't think any have been affected yet

**Chala:**

- Maybe motels could be a source of identifying units that could be turned into affordable studio units
- Maybe owners that are already wanting to sell, can we put suggestions for policies to have it be acquired for affordable housing instead of demoed

**Elizabeth:**

- Part of my reflection is dealing with sale of my own house.
- I had assumed that speculative developers would buy it, scrape it.
- We were able to privately find a local family who were at risk of being priced out

**Jonathan:**

- the above funding, along with funding provided by the state legislature last year, is partly intended to help close gaps between residents' purchasing power (or municipal purchasing power) and a market rate sale on older units.
- so optimistic about that