

Project: Advancing Equity in Rezoning
Subject: Task Force Meeting #4 notes
Meeting Date: Wednesday, April 27th, 2022
Meeting Time: 3:00pm - 5:00pm
Meeting Location: Virtual Zoom Meeting

Meeting Notes

Meeting Objectives:

- Review a summary of feedback received so far
- Learn about Peer Cities and alternative ways for generating public awareness of rezonings
- Discuss and provide feedback on potential recommendations or solutions for public awareness of Denver's rezonings

Welcome, Introductions and Agenda Review

- Staff and Consultant Team introductions
- Task Force members introduced themselves

Summary of Previous Engagement Feedback

- Strategy with Rox presented a summary of feedback from the Focus Groups
- Task Force members reported out on the first Community Meeting
 - There was good attendance at the meeting
 - A lot things said are similar to what has been discussed at the Task Force meetings
 - A bit of a concern of some comments made that may not represent the majority of opinions
 - Thought staff did a good job of briefly educating the attendees and then moving directly into discussion of issues, opportunities, goals, and objectives. Thought the use of the menti-meter survey tool was helpful and engaging

Topic Discussion: *Public Awareness*

- Rob Haigh presented a summary of Denver and how other cities approach public awareness of rezonings (see presentation for information)
- Discussion:
 - Suggestion of studying Seattle and what their rezoning process is
 - The notice upon receiving a complete application is relatively recent, which gives the maximum amount of time for people to reach out. Postcards were added to this notification step as well.
 - Recommendation to notify at the preapplication phase because the more heads up a community has for an attempt for a rezoning the better.
 - Suggestion for a criterion that notifies City Council at the pre-application phase. Currently there is no criteria that makes an applicant reach out to their Councilperson, it is just advised they reach out. Once an application is submitted, then they can no longer work with the applicant, because it's quasi-judicial.
 - Around 75% of the initial pre-application discussions do not go forward to become actual applications. Often, it's people just asking what's possible so need to consider why to notice at the preapplication stage.

- New ADU specific rezoning applications addressed notification to Council and could be easy to replicate for other applications.
- Public notice at time of pre-application could deter applicants from exploring different options and conversations with the City because it would lock them in before they are ready. Public comment confirmed this was a good process to be preserved. Option to have notification to the City Council person at the pre-application phase. Rezoning applications now include requirements for the applicant to detail outreach to the neighborhood and if they met with a Councilperson and when.
- Good applicants take advantage of the pre-application and the meeting with city staff to learn how best to engage with the community and get feedback from the city that can lead to good outcomes for the city, community, and applicant. Additionally, doing extra work at this phase can strain city resources even further. Once there is an application, then there isn't much engagement to do further.
- There is a finite amount of energy that should be considered for this moment in the process. If over 50% of pre-applications are exploratory, focusing our time on that phase may not have the impact we want to achieve. Think about intended or unintended consequences since a lot of time could be spend on rezonings that may never happen.
- There shouldn't be noticing at the pre-application phase because many are exploratory, they aren't an actual application yet, and some may not even have the correct information.
- Consider how to create opportunities for relationship building between community members and applicants.
- When diving into how applications move forward with opposition, it would be important to also evaluate what the nature of the opposition was to get that nuance.
- RNOs don't always reach out to their community. They seem to be very selective as to who they let in on the information.
- Consider how to facilitate a productive rezoning process where everyone feels positive about the outcome.
- There may not be enough time to do the outreach, or applicants aren't taking enough time to do it.
- Need to consider households with renter vs. owner occupied and how notification is done.
- Look at the idea of having a practice of legislatively rezoning every time there is a neighborhood plan. This would utilize the recent community feedback and new plan to then rezone an area.
- Not all rezonings are bad, and they can be viewed as adding the supply of housing that's needed. If a rezoning is advancing city plans and city objectives, that's something that should be happening.
- Rezonings do need to meet plans to move forward. Some applicants have the resources to do the process, and others don't. It would help applicants if the city can do the application for them or be more proactive about rezonings rather than rely on individual applications coming in.
- Raised the issue of differentiating the size of rezoning to allow smaller projects that are in line with approved plans. For equity purposes, maybe can consider allowing a faster process for smaller in-line projects with less costs. Or allow the City to waive some of the more costly and time-consuming processes for smaller projects to facilitate equity.
- Should think about differentiating the process to incorporate better equity.
- Example, a property was rezoned for Colorado public radio because they needed to have an antenna to broadcast radio. The system needs to be responsive to the needs of those that want to invest in the community and not be so complicated for minor changes.
- Can evaluate if there is a larger amount of density added into a neighborhood vs. very small rezonings/gentle density. Maybe the smaller ones can be fast-tracked through the process.
- Consider expanding notification radius to 1000 ft and to all occupants.
- The city has a lot of data that's not shared with the general population. How language is handled, and things like that are part of the question. Need to know more about the application and access to information. All the data about every rezoning should be available right now with a tool to search for them.

- With the NPI process continuing, we can honor people’s time by moving forward with rezonings and reducing applicant-driven rezonings later. This is the intention of the city generally. City council has done some rezonings, but the city could be more proactive about key rezonings or ones coming from recent plans. The city will investigate more opportunities to do that.
- In blueprint Denver, there are equity maps that talk about needs and displacement. It calls for the city to link large-scale rezonings with anti-displacement tools as well. Doesn’t make sense if it’s property by property. We should bring in tools to have those bigger discussions. It’s not about participating in rezonings, it’s about the impact and potential change in the area.
- Questions and Answers:
 - Question: who gets notified with the mailed notices? Property owners or tenants?
 - Answer: Owners of real property get mailed notices.
 - Question: Who is getting the notices and what is the evaluation or reasoning of how?
 - Answer: Emailed notification is sent to all RNO’s within 200 feet of the subject property being rezoned as well as the District Council Member and At-Large Council Members. These email notifications are sent when there is a complete rezoning application submitted, prior to the Planning Board public hearing, and prior to the City Council public hearing. Mailed postcard notifications are sent to owners of real property within 200 feet of the subject property being rezoned when a complete rezoning application is submitted and prior to the Planning Board public hearing.
 - Question: In addition to being made aware and having an opportunity to provide feedback, do any of the peer cities have language justice commitments?
 - Answer: Other cities have very limited requirements in terms of language access.
 - Question: Why would there be an exclusion of an entity? What is the history of noticing and why?
 - Answer: There is no intentional exclusion of an entity.
 - Question: What percentage of the rezoning requests get approved?
 - About 25% of rezoning preapplications turn into a rezoning.
 - Question: Are rezonings able to move forward without community involvement?
 - Answer: Technically yes. It’s highly advised that an applicant reach out to the community though.

Public Comment

- Opportunity for other meeting attendees to comment or ask questions
 - No public comment

Closing

- Opportunity for Task Force members to say what they liked or wish for the next meeting
 - Task Force is interested in meeting in person.
 - Would like more ways to interact with jamboard comments.
 - Post or send out more of the raw material after the meetings.
 - Send information prior to the meeting.
 - Consider less presentations and more time to workshop on issues that are coming up, but also balance that with necessary information to educate the Task Force.
 - Preference to not have a lot of homework outside of meetings.

Task Force Members

See the membership list on the [project webpage](#) for more details.

In Attendance	Task Force Member
No	Alfonso Espino
Yes	Amanda P. Sandoval
Yes	Anna DeWitt
Yes	Brendan Greene
Yes	Brittany Katalenas
Yes	Bruce O'Donnel
Yes	Caitlin Quander
Yes	Claudia Folska
No	Elaine Minjy Limmer
No	Erin Clark
No	Flor Alvidrez
Yes	Gene Fashaw
Yes	Geraldine Castillo
Yes	Joel Noble
Yes	Kate Hilberg
Yes	Lindsay Miller
Yes	Londell Jackson
Yes	Lou Raders
No	Maggie Lea
Yes	Mayra Gonzales
Yes	Monica Martinez
Yes	Robin Wood-Mason
No	Shara Smith
Yes	Stacie Gilmore
Yes	Steve Harley

City Staff

In Attendance	City Staff
Yes	Sarah Cawrse – Project Manager, Senior City Planner
Yes	Liz Weigle – Planning Supervisor
Yes	Andrew Webb – Principal City Planner
Yes	Rob Haigh – Associate City Planner
No	Mike Ramsey – Community Engagement Specialist
No	Genna Morton – Marketing & Communications Specialist

Consultant Team – Strategy with Rox

In Attendance	Consultant Staff
Yes	Rox White
Yes	Yvonne Miranda
Yes	Sabrina White

Observers

Ben Wells, Brea Zeise, Chiquita Sanders