

Project: Advancing Equity in Rezoning
Subject: Task Force Meeting #6
Meeting Date: Wednesday, July 27, 2022
Meeting Time: 3:00pm - 5:00pm
Meeting Location: Virtual Zoom Meeting

Meeting Notes

Meeting Objectives:

- Continue discussion about public input in the rezoning process

Welcome, Introductions and Agenda Review

- Staff and Consultant Team introduced themselves
- Task Force members introduced themselves with something fun they've done this summer

CPD Updates

- Liz Weigle updated the Task Force on timeline adjustments
- To accommodate a revised timeline, CPD staff proposed additional Task Force meeting times/dates

Meeting Goal and Objectives

- Rox White reviewed next steps on feedback from previous Task Force meeting – evaluating alternatives for public awareness, identifying case studies for future meetings, reviewing best practices
- Rox White reviewed the goals and objectives for the meeting, including review of today's Denver's current methods of public input (when/how it is submitted and how it is considered) and a discussion of potential solutions to address the identified issues.

Public Input and Scenario Review

- Review of public input opportunities in Denver's current rezoning process
- Reviewed previous public and Task Force Input
- Presented rezoning scenarios for use in discussion of potential solutions
- Scenario 1 Discussion
 - Consider written literacy level especially if English is only language input it taken
 - Planning versus zoning - When a neighborhood has a recent plan, there is a lot less treating public hearings as a forum for opinions. Conversely, when there is no neighborhood plan, the rezoning is treated more as a planning exercise.
 - Concern that some plans may not have an equitable engagement process. Others felt plans have had equity at the forefront of engagement.
 - Criteria should be stressed in explaining to the community how public input is considered
 - Consider issues and impacts on adjacent communities
 - Review Criteria really needs to be revisited for equity and for explanation and understanding
 - Criteria seem very open to interpretation
 - Community voices could be weighted based on impact and/or weighted based on adjacency

- Inequity in RNOs; more RNO support for their role and membership. Need support for equitable participation.
- Scenario 2 Discussion
 - Notification to all tenants not just property owners, includes renters and businesses
 - RNO's are not always a reflection of the neighborhood and seemingly have more control over outcomes
 - Consider partnering with organizations to increase participation. Office of Children's Affairs has a database of non-profit organizations across the city and could help get information to various, schools, libraries etc.
 - Consider reevaluating criteria instead of weighted voting
 - Weighted voting could lead to increased legal challenges
 - How/can we leverage technology/text notifications? Mailed postcards may not be reaching everyone they are intended to
 - Consider improving PocketGov with more functions. Modernize platform for noticing.
 - In addition to noticing RNOs, outreach and engagement with community members and tenants should be required
 - Consider ways to include students and youth in the conversation. Noticing or participation in existing school meetings/events could increase engagement.
 - Consider who (city/applicant) who is responsible for the outreach and engagement and how it is verified.
 - Rezoning application could shift from asking if there has been engagement to requiring it
- Additional Discussion
 - Scaling could be appropriate based on size, neighborhood and potential impact
 - Careful that we are not making rezonings difficult for members of NEST communities. Consider unintended consequences for certain types of applicants (nonprofits, affordable housing developers, homeowners)
 - It's important to have the same process for all rezonings. It just needs to be better for all.
 - Legislative rezonings following the adoption of a plan is a good tool
 - Consider requiring additional outreach for high impact areas, while having fewer requirements for areas that have little impact
 - Rezonings should have more tools for outreach; build on the tools we use in neighborhood plans for rezoning
 - Consider local libraries and city owned facilities as places for people to get information on rezonings
 - Signage occurs prior to the public hearing but outreach needs to occur much earlier, consider signage be posted earlier when application is complete
 - Different outreach and noticing may be appropriate based on the applicant and their resources
 - City Plans although adopted, may not have included the collective voice of the area. Others felt that neighborhood plans have put equity at the forefront of engagement.
 - City could be the applicant for rezonings that are clearly consistent with plans or solve a hardship and waive fees
 - Allow applicants to speak/present during public hearings
 - Outreach and engagement - leverage Mile High United Way and other large community organizations
 - Like the use of scenarios. Continue to test recommendations against the scenarios presented throughout the project.
 - Look forward to a discussion of the five review criteria at a future meeting, since they used to evaluate public comments.
 - Public input should not be restricted to public hearings. Provide remote options for comments.
 - Unclear how city staff responds to RNO comments/concerns if not clearly tied to rezoning
 - Provide additional opportunities for feedback online and other non-written opportunities (consider challenges in reading/writing proficiency for some community members)
 - Difficult to get people involved. Consider using technology like YouTube channels and social media to reach community beyond RNOs.
 - In addition to various methods of written and quantifiable input, consider potential weighting of voices in the immediate area and disadvantaged communities.

Additional Meetings Confirmed

- September 14, 2022 3-5pm
- December 14, 2022 3-5pm

Public Comment

- No public comment

Closing Statements

- Next Task Force Meeting is Wednesday, August 24th from 3:00-5:00pm

Attendees:

Task Force Members:

Flor Alvidrez, Geraldine Castillo, Anna DeWitt, Gene Fashaw, Stacie Gilmore, Steve Harley, Kate Hilberg, Lindsay Miller, Joel Noble, Bruce O'Donnell, Caitlin Quander, Lou Raders, Robin Wood-Mason, Councilwoman Amanda Sandoval, District 1, Councilwoman Stacy Gilmore, District 11

Project Team:

Liz Weigle, Andrew Webb, Rob Haigh, Brandon Shaver

Also in attendance and participated in discussion:

Naomi Grunditz, Aide to Councilwoman Sandoval, Councilwoman CdeBaca, District 9