

Summary Minutes

Infill and Revitalization Steering Committee

City Hall- Pikes Peak Room (107 N. Nevada Ave., Colorado Springs)

Monday, May 4, 2015

1:30 p.m.

Members Attending: Donley, Beck, Gibson, Harris, Nelson, Bishop, Shonkwiler, Nicklasson, Day, Siebert

Members Absent: Craddock, Gaebler, Pico

Staff Present: Wysocki, Schueler, Nunez, Tefertiller, Geitner, Chris Lieber, Parks Dept.; Brian Vittuli, Mountain Metropolitan Transit

Guests: Rick Hoover, CONO; Marla Novak (HBA); John Wilson, Regional Business Alliance; Lauren Collier, Epic RE Group.

Call to Order/ Adjustments to Agenda

Mr. Donley called the meeting to order, and introductions were made. It was noted the Item 3.B would not be presented as Ms. Stone was unable to attend due to an unforeseen emergency. Mr. Schueler identified the materials available with the hard-copy agenda.

Initial Infill Workshop Follow-up

Mr. Schueler presented a single page of observations and themes that appeared to emerge, noting high attendance and interest (about 80 persons attending at one point or another), focus on importance for fiscal sustainability, interest in strategies associated with Downtown and redevelopment of retail corridors and importance of place making (in addition to Downtown) as well as integration of mixed uses within neighborhoods. Concerns with the use and current limitations of the *Community Viz* model were also noted.

Committee members generally concurred and added the following observations:

Eddie Bishop-

-Would have been nice to have bankers/financers there both for their input and to see the level of interest

-More Millennials active in infill would have been good

Tim Seibert (could only attend for a short time so deferred to others)

-Did comment that the group was not fully representative of the larger community

Robert Shonkwiler

- Surprised at level of interest in core areas.
- This is the body and heart of the City of Colorado Springs
- Encouraged by the turnout

Sarah Harris

- Echoed Planning observations
- Mapping too complex for this large a group. Options could have been better defined/limited for each table

Aubrey Day

- Process did allow a good start to capture comments

Darsey Nicklasson

- Excellent turnout, but self-selected
- Technology ineffective
- Could have been more focus on a proposed strategy

Rachel Beck

- Agreed with most prior comments
- Challenges with mapping, but the packet (workshop guide) was helpful

Chuck Donley

- Fewer controls would have been good for mapping
- More work needed with facilities
- May be option for further involving architects, planners and design professionals
- No one got to the final comparative chart

Sherrie Gibson

- Different learning styles, worked for some, not for others
- Is there a will to move forward based on this direction?

Elena Nunez

- Previous comments have captured her observations

Tim Seibert asked what the intent was for the next steps from the workshop, and what we expect to do with the information. Discussion followed. Carl Schueler suggested some of the mapping analysis and keypad results could be used in the report/Comprehensive Plan chapter, including a "hybrid strategy" created from the senses of the table discussions. This strategy could also be evaluated based on capacity.

Transportation Presentation

Kathleen Krager, City Traffic Engineer presented from a PowerPoint (available on Infill website). Her perspectives included increasing access in infill situations, and not worrying too much about congestion. She presented several examples of redevelopment projects in the Denver area which were allowed without any additional capacity added to the surrounding roadway system. These included the Eastbay near Swans Lake, the redevelopment of the old Elitch Gardens site and Belmar. Her global recommendations for infill projects were:

- 1) Waive the Traffic Impact Study (TIS)- in most cases
 - a. These mostly provide ammunition of arguments against the project and may not accurately reflect the true impacts based on more urban situations, differential trip generation based compared with greenfield scenarios, and the tendency for employees and residents to modify their behavior based on the transportation system available.
 - b. Ms. Krager later concurred that some transportation demand information (short of a TIS) can be valuable in the review of the project. Also, information on site-related improvements is needed.
- 2) Improve access
 - a. Infill sites may have been constrained in the first place by limited access
- 3) Allow for design variances
 - a. These should be understood to be necessary in many infill situations based on context and to make the plans work
 - b. However, these need to be supported and justified

Additionally, Ms. Krager commented that, particularly in infill situations, on-site parking calculations can be largely left up to the developer. They can determine what they think their parking needs will be and can market their project and uses accordingly. There was some follow-up discussion of off-site neighborhood parking impacts.

Mr. Shonkwiler suggested new projects need some kind of concentrated parking, on or off site. There was also some discussion of “hiding” parking inside, beside or behind buildings.

Ms. Nelson commented that today’s newly constructed multifamily housing is not the MF housing of yesterday. Due to the cost and amenities, it tends not to attract renters with the behaviors and other externalities people associated with this land use.

Ms. Nicklasson asked about the needs and safety of pedestrians particularly in light of the potential for numerous curb cuts for access. Ms. Krager responded that the answer needs to be contextual, and part of it lies with the option of providing alternate pedestrian circulation on lower capacity streets on internal to the project.

Mr. Seibert asked how the developer answers the question “why did you not do a TIS?” and how do we would define infill sites to determine who gets a waiver. Ms. Krager suggested good criteria would include whether the property was in the core area of the City and already surrounded by existing uses and transportation improvements. Moreover some, transportation-related information does need to be provided in some cases, in part to justify any requested waivers. TIS reports ordinarily cost several thousand dollars, and their value in terms of reliability maybe limited in core areas in any case.

There was also discussion by Ms. Nicklasson and others surrounding the efficacy of routinely waiving standards versus modifying the standards that might be routinely waived. Ms. Krager argued for maintaining the standards on the basis that some discretion is needed, and the projects do need to make their case. She noted that the waiver process can be simple and brief in many cases. There was Committee interest in revising the Code in at least some areas to maximize predictability (reduce entitlement risk). Mr. Donley commented that the Code should be adjusted to match expectations. Ms. Nicklasson then asked about Fire reviews. Ms. Krager noted they mostly require 20-foot clear lanes. Additionally, activities such as school drop offs can occur in these lanes.

Mr. Wysocki commented that he sees the issue as a matter of political will in some cases. Consideration should be allowed for some parking on public streets. Outside of Downtown, traffic (and parking) is often the primary reason for objections to infill projects.

Follow-up on Recommendations

There was Committee discussion on the recommendation for several topics:

Utilities

Laura Nelson and others commented that they would like to see a recommendation addressing reconnection charges, possibly to the extent of considering their elimination. Short of that, there was discussion of shifting the burden of the accumulating daily charges from the potential future property owner to the current owner, possibly in the form of an ongoing account charge. Ms. Nunez talked about possibilities including deferrals in certain situations.

It was suggested that several of the recommendations should be more direct (e.g. change word “consider” to something stronger).

There was more discussion of the role of UPAC versus and the Infill Steering Committee with the overall consensus being that it was UPACs role to get into more detail.

Code Enforcement

In response to a question on the organizational structure for Code Enforcement, Mr. Wysocki suggested the current structure (with this function about “6 deep” in the Police Department) was not the best. The function needs a champion and more direct reporting. Several Committee members suggest making strong and direct recommendation regarding this topic.

Public Property Maintenance

Mr. Seibert suggested the Park Lands Dedication Ordinance (PLDO) topic is big and goes beyond infill. Mr. Schueler was asked to contact Mr. Farkas for any recommendations.

General Discussion of Recommendations

The Committee talked about how better to proceed with recommendations. One idea was to assign responsibility for given topics to particular members. What was agreed to was the idea that the Committee should be more actively involved in providing comments to Mr. Schueler outside of the meetings and that members with a particular interest in a topic could concentrate on those.

Discuss Presenters and Approach to Next Topic- Transit

Mr. Donley made suggestions to Mr. Vittuli regarding the transit presentation for next meeting, noting the Ms. Krager’s presentation provided a good model. There should be some discussion of TOD.

Other Updates and Announcements

There were no additional updates and announcements, other than a note that Mr. Schueler will be presenting an update to the Utilities Policy Advisory Committee on May 6th.

Next Steps and Meetings

The next meeting will be Monday, May 19, 2015, 1:30 p.m., with a focus on Transit, and ongoing recommendations.