INC Transportation Committee Meeting Notes - November 13, 2014
by Geneva Hooten

The INC Transportation Committee met on November 13, 2014 from 6 p.m. to 8 p.m. in the top-floor "party room" at 1201 Williams Street. Many thanks to Michael Henry for the use of this wonderful space!

Holistic Long-range Regional Planning - Metro Vision 2040 Update -- Brad Calvert, DRCOG Metro Vision Manager

Long-term regional planning is the foundation for Denver’s continued success in becoming a world-class city. To guide the region for the next 25 years, the Denver Regional Council of Governments (DRCOG) has focused on the Metro Vision 2040 planning process to reveal common goals for housing, economic development, urban and rural centers, corridors, community health and wellness, and redevelopment within the nine-county region. The 2040 Regional Transportation Plan will also include a fiscally-constrained plan with a concrete impact on regional investments, including the funding for and prioritization of transportation projects.

Brad Calvert, DRCOG Metro Vision Manager, presented the context for long-term regional growth -- the need for urban center development to create communities that can weather recessions, allow people to age in place, and meet Metro Vision goals. These elements inform DRCOG’s project prioritization. For example, population and employment growth in urban centers will greatly influence the region’s ability to meet its goals for Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT) and mode share. Every modeling scenario without significant housing and employment growth in urban centers and/or transit areas saw an increase in per capita VMT compared to the base scenario.

Throughout the visioning process, Brad consistently heard that urban centers need better transportation infrastructure for bikes and pedestrians, especially to access transit or transverse major arterials. In order for DRCOG to direct the funds they control into the most impactful projects, they’ve changed project scoring as to grant more points to projects within a quarter mile of an urban center (or rural town center) and to projects served by transit or using mixed-use zoning, parking management, and affordable housing. Through this scoring process, Metro Vision 2040 has a profound impact on regional mobility and development.
For more details from the presentation, please see Brad Calvert's slide deck used at our meeting. For more information about Metro Vision, including progress on Metro Vision 2040 which is nearing completion, see the DRCOG Metro Vision web site.

New Interregional Express Transit Service in Colorado -- Amy Ford, Director of Communications and Mike Timlin, Bus Operations Manager - Colorado Department of Transportation (CDOT)

Following in the steps of other successful State Departments of Transportation like Oregon and Washington, CDOT will launch their new Interregional Express transit service in early 2015 to connect the communities along the I-25 Front Range and I-70 Mountain Corridors. The mission of the intercity service is to connect Colorado’s population and employment centers, interconnect with the state’s various transit providers, and provide an alternative to traveling by car.

Mike Timlin, CDOT’s new Bus Operations Manager, formerly with Greyhound, presented the upcoming service (just-branded “Bustang,” a playful allusion to Colorado’s western spirit), which will expand intercity transit options while fulfilling a demand for reliable transit along the highest-traveled corridors in the state.

All buses will depart from Denver Union Station, thereby providing a direct link to regional mobility options (light rail, regional bus service, commuter rail, Amtrak, bike share, and more). The three initial Bustang lines will extend as far as Glenwood Springs, Fort Collins, and Colorado Springs:

- **Orange Route** (Denver to Colorado Springs) will make seven roundtrips per weekday and is anticipated to have the highest ridership.
- **Green Route** (Denver to Fort Collins) will have six roundtrips per weekday using existing and planned managed lanes along I-25.
- **Blue Route** (Glenwood Springs to Denver) will depart Glenwood Springs at 7:30 am, then make one return trip from Denver at 6:00 pm.

The buses are equipped with real-time tracking capabilities, free wifi, bike racks, and under-bus storage for luggage. When the service launches, riders will be able to purchase tickets online, via smart phone, or at various ticketing outlets.
See Mike Timlin's full presentation slide deck for more details. Far more technical detail is available on CDOT's web site. Bustang will launch in spring 2015, and a rider-oriented Bustang website is being developed to accompany the service rollout.

Improving Walkability in Denver - Update and Looking Towards 2015 -- Jill Locantore, Policy and Program Director, WalkDenver

2014 has been a great year for WalkDenver! With the launch of the WALKscope tool, a successful request made of the Mayor and City Council to establish a Pedestrian Advisory Committee (MPAC) and a "Denver Moves Pedestrians" implementation plan, and the new “Great Paths” project for Jefferson Park, this organization has made its mark on the Denver transportation scene.

Jill Locantore with WalkDenver provided an update about their current policy goals that are focused on establishing the Denver Moves Pedestrians Plan and MPAC. Jill highlighted what the Denver Moves Pedestrians Plan aims to address, including:

- Implementation, priorities, funding, and maintenance.
- Measuring performance through goals, walkability indicators, and data collection/evaluation.
- Safe, healthy, comfortable, and attractive pedestrian experience through connectivity, accessibility, and priority pedestrian zones
- Fostering a culture of walking through tactical urbanism, play streets, and education campaigns.

In conjunction with the development of a pedestrian plan, WalkDenver is closely involved with the City in crafting a diverse MPAC committee. Members are to represent many different demographic and geographic groups as to provide the best oversight and input into the pedestrian planning process. (See below for how to apply for an appointment to the MPAC!)

Finally, Jill highlighted the fast-paced Great Paths project in Jefferson Park which has just begun and includes a neighborhood mapping exercise, field trips, and new wayfinding signage. The Great Paths project serves as a reminder that improving public spaces is possible on short timelines and small budgets.

Jill's full presentation deck has more details. Visit WalkDenver at www.walkdenver.org, and use their WALKScope tool to document the pedestrian environment in your neighborhood!
Applications Open for Mayor’s Pedestrian Advisory Committee

The new Pedestrian Advisory Committee is seeking members! The Mayor’s Pedestrian Advisory Committee (MPAC) advises the Mayor on all matters regarding the pedestrian experience as it relates to transportation and recreation. Following are the critical issues the committee will be advising and helping to inform the Mayor over the next two years:

- Review of the existing 2004 Pedestrian Master Plan
- Denver Moves Pedestrian Plan
- Prioritization of identified pedestrian projects
- Development of street guidelines

The Pedestrian Advisory Committee is specifically looking for individuals with the following backgrounds and experience:

- Geographic Representation – a citizen from each Council District
- Older Adult Representation
- Disabled Representation
- Youth Representation – Grade 9 thru 12
- Transit Organization
- Business Community
- Healthy Lifestyle – Wellness & Prevention
- Pedestrian Interest Group(s)
- Parents/Teachers Association
- Higher Education Institution

Length of term: Two year terms which may be renewed up to a maximum of three times pending reappointment by the Mayor.

Meetings and time commitment: Expect four to five hours per month.

- MPAC meets monthly for approximately 90 minutes
- MPAC sub-committees meet approximately 10 times per year for approximately 90 minutes
- MPAC members may be asked to attend other community meetings, site visits and related meetings

How to apply: Interested applicants should complete the Boards and Commissions application (or call 720 865-9090 to get a copy of the application form) and return to Anthony Aragon, Director of Denver Boards and Commissions by close of business, Friday, Dec. 19th.
Visit RTD's new Commuter Rail Vehicles, December 3rd-6th

The first rail cars that will be part of RTD's electric commuter rail lines in 2016 arrived in Denver on Thursday, November 20 after a 3-week long journey from the assembly plant in Philadelphia.

The cars are assembled in Philadelphia and shipped four at a time by freight railroad. The new train cars will operate on RTD’s four commuter rail lines: East Rail Line to Denver International Airport, Gold Line to Arvada/Wheat Ridge and Northwest Rail to Westminster, all opening in 2016, and the North Metro Rail Line to Thornton, opening in 2018.

You're invited to tour the new train cars and learn about RTD's newest type of transit during an open house at Union Station in downtown Denver.

- **Wednesday, Dec. 3 through Saturday, Dec. 6**
- **11 a.m. to 7 p.m. each day**
- **Union Station commuter rail platform directly behind the historic building**

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**Upcoming Meeting Schedule**
The INC Transportation Committee's upcoming meetings for 2015 will all be at 1201 Williams St., 19th Floor:

- Thu. Jan. 8th 2015, 6-8 p.m.
- Thu. Mar. 12th 2015, 6-8 p.m.
- Thu. May 14th 2015, 6-8 p.m.
- Thu. Jul. 9th 2015, 6-8 p.m.
- Thu. Sep. 10th 2015, 6-8 p.m.
- Thu. Nov. 12th 2015, 6-8 p.m.