



Focus Groups – Phase 1 Summary of Input (through 5/3 meetings)

05/18/10

Overview

A series of Focus Groups were held in late March through early May to generate ongoing awareness and excitement about Plan Fort Collins among a broad variety of Fort Collins stakeholders. The Focus Groups collected targeted/focused input from more than 200 participants on a range of identified theme-based integrated topics. Topics included:

- Infrastructure Funding
- Health & Wellness
- Arts, Creativity & Economics
- Transportation Connections with all Modes (2 opportunities to participate)
- Sustainability Scorecard
- Energy
- Infill & Redevelopment
- Multi-Functioning Streets
- Youth in the Community
- New Housing Options
- Poudre River
- Resilient Economy

A general summary of “big themes” and overarching ideas by Focus Group session is provided below. Detailed comments from each Focus Group begin on page 4. Feedback received from these Focus Groups will be used during Phase 2 of the planning process to help refine the vision and determine the key policy choices facing the community in the future.

Summary of “Big Themes”

The following “big themes” represent the recurring ideas and key topics that were discussed at each of the Focus Group meetings. These “big themes” are for summary purposes only, and the detailed notes beginning on page 4 represent the range of feedback and ideas discussed during the Focus Groups.

Infrastructure Funding - March 29, 2010

- Need to revisit Impact Fees
- Transportation Utility Fees
- Regional Approach to financing
- Willing to revisit service standards to address cost

Health and Wellness - March 29, 2010

- Non-chemical gardening and food production and year-round farmer's market
- City relationship to non-profits/human service boards
- Growing senior population and their need
- Transportation needs of youth and seniors
- Funding – doing more with limited resources and being creative

Arts, Creativity, and Economics - March 29, 2010

- Integration of ethnic and international cultural groups
- Scientific and Cultural Facilities District (SCFD)
- Enhancing existing festivals, programs in parks and street fairs
- Citywide focus, including south end of town
- Challenge of coordinating multiple organizations and sustainable funding.

Transportation: Modes and Connections - March 29, 2010

- Address the process of prioritizing
- Provide connections for the “last mile” from transit to destination
- Address speed management, especially for bicycle and pedestrian safety
- Bikes, Bikes, Bikes
- More choices

Sustainability Scorecard – March 31, 2010

- Need to refocus on the definition of Sustainability for Fort Collins
- Showing some examples of a scorecard would help the discussion process
- Consider whether to use the term “scorecard” or a different term that doesn't carry connotations of a grading process
- Need to keep it simple and understandable

Multi-Functioning Streets – March 31, 2010

- Addressing future needs and vehicle changes
- Are we doing too much paving? How much should be porous versus asphalt?
- Bikes are important for their continued role in the transportation system
- Streetscape (trees, shrubs) and urban design is important
- A lot of transportation cross-topics
- Regional connections important

Energy - April 5, 2010

- Extension/expansion of incentives to promote energy investments by small businesses
- Transportation is a big cross-over topic for energy - how changes in transportation will impact energy use and vice-versa
- Second big cross-over topic is economic development - what we need to do to attract jobs as a result of our low energy costs and high reliability; also what new investments we need to make to attract businesses that are looking for new technologies and not necessarily just being cost-driven
- Major changes occurring worldwide with how we get, produce, and distribute energy; need to decide how far we want to go as a community towards the leading edge without hitting the “bleeding” edge

Infill/Redevelopment - April 5, 2010

- Need to look at infill/redevelopment and how it affects areas outside of the downtown - many areas of the community are ripe for redevelopment

- Address different standards for different areas – don't use one size fits all
- CSU area has huge potential, and can leverage multiple needs (student housing, retail to serve students, CSU employees, and general community)
- Don't be afraid of density in the right location
- Development projects may need to be a finer grain – smaller buildings, small parcels of land, to be more appropriately scaled to this market
- Need to look at transitions/neighborhood compatibility; determine where change is ok and where it isn't
- More predictability for neighborhoods, more definition of “compatibility”

Youth - April 8, 2010

- Providing safe, reliable, and simple transportation for youth of all ages to key destinations (e.g. schools, Boys and Girls Club, movie theaters, etc.)
- Changing youth attitudes/perceptions of transit and bikes/walking as transportation
- Need for more youth-oriented gathering places and events (need to collaborate with organizations to provide facilities and/or programming to address youth interests)
- Vision and leadership by the City to coordinate non-profit, profit, and other groups and organizations in the community to focus on youth issues
- Need to “speak the language” with youth and conduct outreach that reflects latest technology and learning styles (

Housing – April 8, 2010

- Providing future affordable housing integrated in with other market-rate units at higher densities along Mason (and other future) corridors
- Difficulties in developing compatible new housing within existing neighborhoods
- Increasing the efficiency and decreasing the maintenance of affordable housing so residents have lower utility bills and maintenance costs
- Availability of and access to housing for marginalized groups (e.g. mobile home residents, criminal backgrounds, credit/financial issues, etc.)
- Challenging credit market (especially new FHA loan condo requirements)

Transportation: Modes and Connections – April 9, 2010

- Efficiency of transit system
- Pedestrian spaces and links
- Density and funding to support transit
- Regional coordination and planning
- Incorporating new technologies and vehicle types

Poudre River – May 3, 2010

- Develop defined policy for access and development (not one-size-fits-all, address by districts, and customize according to objectives, including floodplain protection, absolute approach may not work). Put in unified document.
- Development on one side of the river might balance habitat, access, and aesthetics and avoid urbanization of the river.
- Overcome river as barrier or boundary.
- Integrate Old Town, but address what this looks like with regards to flows.
- Address the College/river wildlife habitat barrier.
- Improve instream flows, purchase water for release, address water quality.
- Trail system is great, but amenities are lacking.
- Recognize/carry forward the 1997 City Plan “highest rated image/desired community character” of Poudre River.

Resilient Economy – May 3, 2010

- Coordinate with other organizations on workforce training, maybe a better role for others.
- Businesses: Address entitlement process, possible special process for desired businesses? Targeted industry focus. Plan for vacant big box areas and mall.
- Incentives: City has limited ability to use; if used should be for certain businesses or geographic areas of the community. Be careful of reducing development standard that impact quality of life.
- Retailers: Recognized as revenue driver, at least for now, and probably not changing soon. Focus on mall and buy local to counter regional trends.
- Jobs/housing balance important.
- Jobs are important, especially targeted industries. Be thoughtful about companies.
- Resourcing Our Future: Important to consider options for revenue.
- Other: Need other “unique” districts in Fort Collins, not just Downtown.
- Measure “healthy economy” with indicators. Don’t lose momentum or vision of economic development issue in past five years.

Infrastructure Funding - March 29, 2010

Participants: 11

Big themes of this focus group:

- Impact Fees
- Transportation Utility Fees
- Regional Approach
- Willing to revisit service standards to address cost

General discussion:

The group discussed the following ideas:

- Some sorts of infrastructure are better funded than others because they are in enterprise funds – can raise or lower rates; others, you really can't without going to a vote of the people.
- We don't have a lot of influence over funding through Plan Fort Collins because it is more focused on the general fund.
- Is there a definitive line where projects like utilities have a revenue generating potential? vs. projects like maintenance of roads?
- Are utility costs in the context of a roadway project picked up by the utility? Or is it a general fund contribution [Bracke answered – mostly from .25 cent funding, not necessarily general fund]
- Proponent of impact fees to pay for infrastructure needed to accommodate new growth – would like to take these as far as we can – already charging sewer, electrical etc., even road impact fee, but could be expanded to capture widening existing intersections throughout town – would like to revisit this – would like to also fund new schools this way, rather than bond issues, have the county do the same thing for jails, regional roads, RTA concept is good, need to work with the surrounding entities, prioritize remaining funds for fixing deficiencies.
- Problem with impact fees is competition with surrounding towns – until you get regionalized fees that are in line with each other, you will have developers finding the path of least resistance – need Loveland, Windsor, others in the conversation.
- Not of the mind that we require new people to pay 100 percent of they way – shouldn't be a monetary barrier to entering the community, easy answer, but not the most prudent way to talk about, we should go to the people and ask them to pay for it, taxation questions should be clear and open.
- With better coordination between various departments, we wouldn't need so much money to achieve the plan. It is my perception that utilities and road maintenance are not well coordinated.
- The difference between the “buckets” for new construction and maintenance is pretty important. New construction is fine to push onto developers, the maintenance and upgrade piece is the key – analogy should be the enterprise funds. Entities deal with vast physical improvements – miles of transmission, plants, etc. need to look out 40 years, depreciate, etc.; because they work that way and stand alone, they are much more transparent and understandable to residents, easy to compare to other cities, etc. This is desirable and it wasn't always that way. Used to be housed in PW departments. FC took that strategy with stormwater about 20 years ago. It has made a huge difference – used to be some huge flooding issues. Funding for both construction and maintenance. Street maintenance should follow this model as well. Transportation maintenance fee or transportation utility fee is needed. We don't have enough tools

available. Would like to see the data around what that would look like on a residential utility bill – case 1 residential only (collector and arterial covered by existing sources like oversizing and gas tax); old equation is not working. Better to charge by VMT as the pump at state and federal level. Also a possibility within the utility umbrella to have them back off a little and pull back a dollar each – make room to add 3-4 dollars a month for street maintenance – assuming it could be covered by something in the 5-7 dollar range. There is a certain amount of government momentum – once you reach a B B+ level, we may be just fine – never heard of anyone getting sick from FC water, but every year the fed is raising the standard – city should be able to opt out.

- Utility charge – some portion is overhead cost, not related to use; as property owners, there is a frontage component, the tough issue is to capture wear and tear some way better than the gas tax. Beyond VMT, you could tax parts, etc.
- How to figure out the VMT? – could pay at the pump; sensitive b/c of big government, but could be fully automated.
- 6 million gap in maintenance, the important thing is to get another tool on the table, not close the gap. Even if you can collect a nominal amount in the first years – you can have a community dialogue about the level of maintenance – cracks, potholes, etc.
- Only the residents pay in that model, sales or gas tax gets more cost recovery from the people who benefit.
- Locally we don't have the purview to change the gas tax, TMF would go just to local streets; Loveland – they can tell any resident when their street is coming for maintenance; we have an existing tax to cover the main roads [Bracke - will sunset in 2015].
- Could we get better utilization though higher densities? If we could get more throughput, it is an efficiency gain.
- What projections are the City using to look into the future? Based on 5 years ago or six months ago? [Birks – looking at a long term history through business cycles to get at a historic average growth rate – may still be different – some new normal with less peaks.]
- Are the projections available for review? [Birks – The Snapshot has summary, more will come.]
- Are we looking at ways to reduce the cost – can we live with less? Reduce or drop down the priority list – are we cutting out things like a smart meter to fix the pothole in front of my house?
- Timberline example – shows the lack of planning – the 2-lane bridge is 10 years old – why didn't that happen? [Bracke - only built half – could be added – strategic cost decision at the time]
- Issue of capital vs. maintenance – also relevant in parks – we have a wonderful open space program, but we may have overbought without ability to maintain – we should look at redirecting to parks and medians – politically sensitive issue, but I voted for those and I think its time to revisit that – redistribute to fund maintenance, parks, flowerbeds, etc.
- The .25 cent is intended to cover - the concern is the balance of funding.
- Open space costs less to maintain because it doesn't generate the same need for city services.
- Open space and urban parks should be funded differently – qualitatively very different. Should combine both County and City open space fund and look at the long term horizon – learn from other open space programs (e.g. JeffCo open space fund – urban parks got built without a fund for maintenance; need to redefine what maintenance could occur with those – some limit is needed, but at least give council the option to move money between open space and parks budgets).

- Not going away from rubber tire transit anytime soon, so roadway improvements also help transit, development patterns and changes in density will support this best in the near term
- Is there a way to turn transit into an enterprise [Brake – costs are too great, traditionally very heavily subsidized.]
- We've made a value decision here and are going to have to support it somehow – just like the Mason Corridor – it is going to have an impact, hope it takes VMT off, need to leave in some flexibility, don't box us in with the plan.
- Neither transit or SOV are paying their full cost – looking forward, there are structural things in the economy – we aren't going to be so rich, Peak oil is coming, aging populations won't be driving – I would lean towards minimizing the amount of new roads we are putting in, rather invest in more frequent routes where people live. Widening roads and intersections take a huge amount of roads, intersections.
- Also need to think about getting to work – buses may not work for inter city travel
- Really do need to think regionally about all of our infrastructure systems – we always thought the federal government would handle the connections. Disaster will follow. Need to take advantage – water storage, transportation; City Plan has to consider that.
- If we have transit or rail from here to Loveland, it could take pressure off our roads, but it could also affect our tax base – also have to think about others drawing from us.
- Where in this conversation do we talk about the workforce needed to maintain the systems – we are about to lose a lot of that workforce (both to aging and lack of educational focus) – we need to think about how we address this in one of those cross cutting areas.
- At some point for the economic stability and sustainability, it gets harder and harder when folks do the right thing, to still see the costs go up – would like to see that mitigated.
- Plan should remain as a vision document, not a matrix document, don't think we want to start judging where we will be – really concerned about making it a performance based document – the complexity of the funding conversation – concern is revisioning in 5 years if detailed performance matrix are not met.
- Different approaches for transportation infrastructure vs. utility funding (utility = fees vs. transportation = tax/vote.)
- Road projects include costs for utilities (usually paid out of project). But utilities can't pay for road improvement.
- Impact fees-do as much as we can. Idea for impact fees on new development to pay for new growth and pay for new needs/services:
 - Schools
 - Jails
 - Regional roads
- Concern that neighboring cities not changing impact fees – Receive some type of regional impact fees.
- Concern about impact of these impact fees on homeowners. Prefer look at public's willingness to pay impact type of taxes, be overt and upfront about how to cover the impact costs.
- Get more tools on tool box.
- Better inter-department coordination for city departments=lower wasted dollars, so don't tear up a new road.
- Different buckets of money for capitol vs. O&M. Concerned with maintenance/enterprise fund model is good for long-term; transparent money strategy for major facilities and investment.
- City should use some model for street maintenance. Ex: TMF or transportation utility fee.

- Data needed=what would that look like on a residential utility bill? #1, 2, or 3 month just for local streets. Continue to use gas tax and sos/1/4 cent for arterials and ?. Or VMT tax.
- What are some measures to track? Feet?
- VMT-pay for miles driven at gas pump? Need to be at state/federal level.
- What if utilities backed off their fee for \$1-2/months; then add \$5-7/month for transportation.
- How to get not just residents to pay too-like visitors? Do at state/federal. Residents only pay for local streets. Residents only use existing infrastructure/street system=like density and utilization.
- Workforce required to support infrastructure?
- Projections available via Snapshot. When more/new information is available, will put on the website.
- Look for ways to reduce cost, ex: Timberline improvements.
- Also need to include parks and open space. We could afford to buy, but how to include maintain and overtime. Is there ability to re-distribute \$/resources and distribution of \$ overtime?
- Need to address urban parks=City fun, so could funds be directed to open space to maintain urban parks? Community's value for transit?
- Not box ourselves in for transit and roads.
- Plan needs for flexibility/less new construction. Focus on maintenance and transit to solve. Not rely on feds.
- Need to think regionally for all infrastructure system for collaboration. (roads; water; wastewater; funds)
- Economic stability concerns-how to mitigate that people pay more for making the right choices.
- Plan focus has to say at vision for long-term. Not just a purpose for a performance measurement matrix document. (Don't lose visioning purpose.)
- Shrinking revenues vs. cost (repair/maintenance and capital expansion)
- Changing revenue sources require new taxes to replace diminishing and disappearing historical sources. Sales taxes need to be replaced or potentially increased and new tools such as impact fees and user fees need to be implemented. The balance of the use of these tools needs to be watched carefully to prevent or minimize negative impacts such as deterring growth due to higher impact fees.
 - Revenue sources used to fund projects need to be identifiable.
 - More comprehensive impact fees.
 - User fees-VMT
- I like the fixed and variable concept of street maintenance. We all have some need for our roads so a fixed fee makes sense, but we do not all drive or drive in town so we need a variable component.
- I was surprised that there was not as much interest in utilities, which is a major infrastructure, compared to streets. Although, I realize the difference in funding sources. (GF vs. enterprise)
- Mass transit in Colorado will always be a financial dog due to low density of population.
- Mass transit systems need to be recognized as window dressing for the community and region and using general funds to expand and improve the system may not be in the city's best interest unless it can be shown that the benefit to the city from improved window dressing (more workers, property owners, shoppers, etc.) outweigh the cost.
- Less federal funding.
- Transportation fee for residential roads is an interesting idea.

Health and Wellness - March 29, 2010

Participants: 13, including bicycle advocates, food growers, downtown business owners, non-profit organizations, nurse and health care.

Big themes of this focus group:

- Non-chemical gardening and food production and year-round farmer's market.
- City relationship to non-profits/human service boards.
- Growing senior population and their needs.
- Transportation needs of youth and seniors. Connections/getting around (bikes, pedestrians)
- Funding – doing more with limited resources and being creative (e.g., programs where seniors and youth mutually benefit).

The focus group worked in smaller groups and discussed the following ideas:

Group 1

New or Interesting Ideas Related to this Topic?

- Mechanism regarding human services – Could the City have annual meetings with segments of the human services of our region for input and connectivity?
- City should promote its members to be on non-profit Board of Directors

Short-term Challenges or Opportunities

- Providing transportation options, especially for needy “hubs” - for example group homes, Safehouse, hospitals, court, and social services.
- Looking towards adding a goal to “safety” - being safe at home, not only on the streets.
- The term “domestic violence” is conspicuously absent from the Snapshot, as if domestic violence doesn't exist here. Crossroads Safehouse should be in lists on pages 35 and 41 (of the Snapshot Report).

Group 2

New or Interesting Ideas Related to this Topic?

- Food, permaculture, people share, equal portions holistic production thinking - whole systems thinking.
- Farming - Lee Martinez park - contractual agreement with the City to farm the land? Provide plot to do children's area? In city parks, minimize lawn space and put into food production? Allow sales at farm. Revisit to see how the garden is developing.
- Non-profit, organic, community garden on public land?
- How to live here with our water, food, and resources.
- City compost site with free mulch. Look at waste streams and reuse.
- Grow more fruit trees in public areas.
- Make natural areas as areas people can engage with more.
- Licensed purchase of pesticides.
- Education for gardening
- Create “hubs” and services within half a mile.

Short-term Challenges or Opportunities

- Stopping use of pesticides and herbicides

- Change in City operations and maintenance. How can the City assist education and awareness, operation and maintenance, regulation,
- What mechanisms for reducing exposure to chemicals?
- Taxing - Greater tax on items that harm environment.
- City promote human services groups to meet with officials.
- Statewide Safe House

Long-term Challenges or Opportunities

- Connectivity
- Government involvement with non-profits - partnership
- Social services
- Genetically Modified Organisms (GMO)
- look at problems as avoidance
- Write codes to keep something from happening – e.g., GMO

Group 3

New or Interesting Ideas Related to this Topic?

- Senior center - generating money to build the facility for booming senior population.
- Community garden expansion.
- Adult activity center.
- Childcare – especially for single parents should be more available, especially for low-income.
- Need alternatives for child care – Use seniors to help?
- How can land used for parks and open space be used for community gardens, especially in north Fort Collins? It is already being watered.
- No fluoride in City water.
- Green buildings, healthy buildings.
- \$4 million for Senior Center is a priority - provide preventative care/activities.
- Could look at partnering seniors and youth to teach gardening and provide fresh produce to low-income families.
- Increased marketing to non-seniors.
- Improve accessibility to childcare for single parents, especially for those seeking education - look at Boulder County program that allows more reasonable sliding scale fee and tiered fee structure. Need to decrease waitlist.
- Establishing zoning policies for community gardens in City parks, open spaces, Home Owners Associations
- Zoning policy limiting fast food restaurants and liquor stores near schools.
- Policy guidance to establish healthy food standards at City/public vending machines and other city venues

Short-term Challenges or Opportunities

- Challenges:
- Fluoride issues with water
- Green/healthy buildings.
- Budget cuts impacting poor
- Substance abuse and detox facility - currently have to go to Greeley – no follow-up.
- Mason Street corridor is need to go further north to service low income
- City events/ programs cost money (i.e., community gardens)
- Utilize seniors to help with a lot of things - wisdom

- Gas prices going up - provide alternative transportation
- More bus routes and times, including evening routes.

Opportunities:

- Tap into booming senior population who have wisdom and time.
- By national standards, City does well addressing some of these issues - can move proactively as well as reactively.

Long- term Challenges or Opportunities

- Educate children about nature and open space
- Reduce childhood obesity
- Increase natives to go to college - increase graduation rates

Related Topics

- Substance abuse and detox
- Childcare issues are cost prohibitive
- Transportation

Involve Others

- Latino community - meeting at vida sano
- Field experts
- Low income
- Mental health
- Medical - underinsured
- CSU students
- Seniors
- Faith community

Group 4

New or Interesting Ideas Related to this Topic?

- On the right path. Continue.
- Dollars are the big challenge -- and how to pay for what we want. The retail tax base is a limiting factor (over-reliant on sales tax).
- How can we do more with less - reprioritizing / innovative interim solutions.
- Recreation programs need to focus on bike-related programs (e.g., bike safety).
- Provide a local market that is covered, year-round, and full-time to bring people downtown. It can include farmers and artists. Tap Into the local grower business. (Olympia, WA example)
- Make seniors feel safe walking downtown.
- Make North College a walkable environment and Midtown area.
- Address requirements for redevelopment areas like Midtown so that parking lots get revamped to be walkable.
- Make the pedestrian experience pleasant, comfortable, and safe.
- The car dealerships in Midtown likely won't stay there forever, so have a plan for transitioning uses in Midtown so that those areas become more appealing for pedestrians.
- The downtown business Bureau holds meeting on the economics of the area that's ongoing and helpful. Some other issues include street maintenance and whether or not Transfort fills out the grid.

- This group supports a 1% tax increase to the general fund to support quality-of-life measures.
- Private public ventures are a good way to accomplish ideas such as bicycling program the Frisbee golf program was something that was done through public-private ventures – could apply to bicycle safety education plan.
- B.O.B. funds are being used for a connection to Whole Foods. Would like to see them being used for more projects with citywide initiative. Big picture - need to support facilities that local groups are passionate about tied in with the transportation system - building on what's been done.
- This group had some discussion about connections to Legacy Park but also acknowledged that it is far out of town and not very well connected to the transportation grid.
- City Plan as it has unfolded has been a great asset to downtown.
- The community garden is a great asset - it provides food to the Food Bank and also programs for youth at risk - would like to see more emphasis on CSAs. Provide incentives for CSAs so that young farmers can be farming on empty fields in the City. That could be a public-private partnership and then provide food for low income, restaurants, and so forth.
- Transportation needs to focus on services for seniors and disabled and also youth have transportation barriers for participation. Dial a ride, while it might be a little bit of a tired subject, is still important.
- The Transfort Strategic Plan - at full buildout is fantastic. Some of the challenges have to do with funding and getting from where we are today to fulfill needs.
- We should be applying for federal funds as much as possible to promote alternative transportation modes
- Poverty is increasing in the community. We don't know what the full percentage of people living below the poverty line is. Before the economic downturn, it was 13%
- Health and wellness often assumes people have money to spend. Don't make that assumption. We need to make sure we focus on programs for low income for children in poverty etc. Are there things we can do, such as retrofitting abandoned bicycles, so that people can get around. The bike program has been retrofitting bicycles for Putnam Elementary and could easily retrofit 500 bikes a year.
- Focus on health initiatives for low income. Dental is a huge gap in the community.

Short-term challenges

- Revenue sources including a 1% quality-of-life ballot measure on the November ballot.
- Our aging population
- Our increasing low income population
- Transportation obstacles for disabled, seniors, and youth.
- Health care affordability
- Preventative care
- innovative interim solutions

Other people to include:

- Latino or Hispanic community

General notes:

- Check the statement on Snapshot page 37 about health and human services funding - wasn't that program eliminated?

Arts, Creativity, and Economics - March 29, 2010

Participants: 21, including downtown business owners, non-profit organizations, artists, Beet Street, CSU faculty.

Big themes of this focus group:

- Integration of ethnic and International cultural groups.
- Scientific and Cultural Facilities District (SCFD).
- Enhancing existing festivals, programs in parks and street fairs.
- Citywide focus, including south end of town.
- Challenge of coordinating multiple organizations and sustainable funding.

The large group worked in smaller groups and discussed the following ideas:

Group 1 (with Jill S.)

New or Interesting Ideas Related to this Topic?

- Asian Cultural Group
- History of Asians in this area regarding the railroads.
- “Asian Town” cultural central city. Develop an area with the theme that complements Old Town but that operates like the cultural environment of its own Chinatown. Accessible international markets.
- Mexican cultural aspects.
- Major events at Lincoln Center of Chinese artists.
- Have a festival to honor our sister city in China.
- Encourage Asian, Hispanic peoples and artists on board and commissions - specifically recruit these folks.

Short-term Challenges or Opportunities

- Develop Asian business centralization and awareness.
- Encourage eastern alternative medicine and language classes (that already exist that could be concentrated).
- Attract Asian/overseas students to study at CSU. Develop programs that are welcoming to students, professors, families from all backgrounds.

Long-term Challenges or Opportunities

- Place for International artists.
- More cooperation between the city and CSU arts and cultural departments - music, art and language.
- More “Town-Gown” cooperation.
- Using music to heal the elderly.
- Take culture out into the streets
- Mid Eastern festival, Asian festival, etc.

Related topics

- Health and wellness
- Transportation
- Education about a better environment
- Could Asia Town be developed as the walking environment to the breweries?
- Could the Creative Garden at New West Fest have a cultural theme? (e.g., Asian one day, Hispanic the next...) ?

- Integrate with school district with overall planning – direct links between music and brain development (especially math and arts relationship to healing, learning).

Involve Others

- Owner of East-West (Oshima),
- CSU Dean of Arts and Sciences (Gill),
- CSU Asian department.

Group 2 (with Lesli E.)

New or Interesting Ideas Related to this Topic?

- Scientific and Cultural Facilities District (SCFD) - institute a tax to support the district like in Denver - 1/10 of 1% tax.
- Beet Street doesn't provide funding; they provide professional development assistance. They are a DBA initiative.
- Physical representations of our history, for instance statues of pioneers like in Seattle that you can have entry way monuments for example in N. College Ave. Our Fort Collins history is amazing.
- Support street performers. For example, the Arts Alive chalk program.
- Beet Street is doing a "streetmisphere" program this year, and is paying artists a nominal amount to perform. Currently holding auditions.
- In Paris there's a huge event music day where everyone is allowed to provide impromptu performances on the street.
- Partner with arts organizations that provide cultural events at CSU.
- New fund for new ideas
- Faculty members at CSU in the language arts – are doing Spanish painting classes for disadvantage children. Get young people involved early on in arts and culture. Focus on collaboration city funding for a program such as Beet Street, which is seen as a collaborator.
- Enhance programs that are already going on, for instance the Art Walk. The spread out nature of arts and culture is a challenge.
- Don't forget the therapeutic aspect of arts and culture, for instance performing arts and youth at risk activities. This is related to health and wellness. They need transportation to get there.
- Old Town - Taste of Fort Collins - Give a "Taste of..." the arts/theater.
- Chattanooga, Tennessee is a great example of best practices and a robust arts community
- "Articulate City" provides passport discounts for a younger generation.
- Don't forget the demographic of family with children 30 to 45 years old – this is an important demographic involving family.
- Don't assume that the only audience is downtown where in fact people from all parts of Fort Collins, including the south end of town participate in arts and culture.
- If we spread our culture to the south end of town does it divide the energy? The library model of districts with some facilities on the south end of town might work, but need funding for south town. For example the Carousel Theatre needs a source of funding, But Beet Street is only downtown.
- Mason Corridor will provide connectivity that will also provide art along the way – with memorable stops with musical moments and visually interesting places (like Portland), so all the energy does not have to go into downtown.

- One of the things that Beet Street is working on is the unified website with a calendar of citywide arts and cultural events the city partnering with that along with CSU.

Short-term Challenges or Opportunities

- Developing ethnic groups and their strengths (e.g., sister city in China and Muslim world).
- Encourage alternative medicine for senior citizens
- Welcoming the students from all backgrounds, especially Middle Easterners
- Long-term challenges at home for international arts and artists - more cooperation among CSU, Front Range, and the community
- Beet Street should be better integrated.

Involve Others

- Betty Aragon, Northside
- The Middle Eastern community and the strong international connection
- Send or sponsorship of lawyer or other interested qualified party to democracy school.

Group 3 (with Josh B.)

New or Interesting Ideas Related to this Topic?

- Murals in public places – bus depot, etc., and coordinated with theatres, etc.
- A separate art block for New West Fest.
- A few smaller theaters.
- An outdoor theater.
- Mt. Vernon, IA – chalk the walk (in conjunction with New West Fest – upgrade art into the event. Small business sponsors an artist. (20,000 people attend)
- Coordination amongst arts and culture.
- Evaluate the economic benefit of events.
- Torpedo Factory (Alexandria, VA) – a compound of producing artists.
- Citywide mural program.
- Graffiti wall – “free” walls at skate parks to use as a teaching tool.

Short-term Challenges or Opportunities

- Funding
- Coordination
- Sponsorship

Group 4 (with Joe F.)

New or Interesting Ideas Related to this Topic?

- PSD get students involved.
- “Tram buses” (e.g., Key West) to visit cultural/historical locations (cheap, convenient)
- Publishing resource book on arts and culture for visitors
- Art sale tent – annual show (juried, once a year, local NoCo, regional artists show their work. (example in Waco)
- Art sales in City parks.
- Publish monthly arts booklet – resource book.
- Combine more music and arts.
- Large venue for multiple-arts, music, dance.
- Make it a repeat event (children activities)

- Around themes? Photo – pottery, sculpture, weeklong festival, combine arts and performing arts – close a street.
- Folk art festival – Santa Fe.
- Pedicabs – San Diego.

Short-term Challenges or Opportunities

- Financial – slow now to turn around, but tap into growing economy.
- Logistics to get anything going – volunteers – no infrastructure.
- Use parks as venues for arts festival – won't impact roads.
- Need to get in the “schedule” for shows in region... not to conflict but also to partner (e.g., New Belgium).
- While there are a number of art organizations – but no one who could take on an ongoing festival.
- There are a lot of artists, but they aren't the organizing types (“herding cats”).
- Discovery center momentum.
- CSU and City – coordination lacking – UCA – University Center of Arts.
- Build on Friday art walk - First Friday walk great to promote
- Sustainable funding – art/culture tax district.

Long-term Challenges or Opportunities

- Sustaining interest - funding (and competing with sports)
- Integrating/coordinating with CSU-University Center Arts.
- Sustainable funding for culture and arts (use existing budget – certain percentage; explore new tax).
- Regular rating in top polls surveys and continued growth.

Related topics

- Transportation – visitors tram.
- Parks – use for festivals.
- UniverCity Connections ... connections to community, schools.
- Infill/redevelopment – reuse of buildings for arts, etc. (ex Mountain Ave Armory was used for a dance. Downtown meat packing districts reused old buildings, Poudre Feed building, artist/live work opportunities).
- Transit – coordinate with festivals, make it easy to get around.

Involve Others

- UniverCity Connections.
- PSD
- “South” Fort Collins
- Hispanic
- CSU
- Chamber
- DDA
- DBA
- PRI

Transportation- Modes and Connections, March 29, 2010

Participants: 8 signed in

Big themes of this focus group:

- Process
- Last Mile
- Speed management
- Bikes, Bikes, Bikes
- More choices

The group discussed the following ideas:

General

- AASHTO recommends that bicycle facilities including the share the roads on all streets if 35mph or less; College is a perfect place to ride a bicycle today, we just need to make it happen and make them more comfortable; people can be taught how to ride safely in traffic; of all the streets in this community, College in Old Town is a perfect candidate.
- How are we going to make cyclists feel comfortable?
- Speeds on arterials are a big barrier to crossing.
- Scouts example – civic lesson – voted to lower the speed limits!
- All the speed limits used to be 35mph.
- Value for health to keep lower speed limits, encourage people to use alternative transportation.
- Its really important that win/wins are created, not selling people on something they will have to give up – better to give them options that are better or just as could; safety argument is one where we just tell them this is what we are going to do – just like school zone issue; a lot of people won't be able to get out of a car – all need to be available.
- If we make better places where a car is not needed, people will figure out how to get rid of the need for the car; how can we help CSU remember that their long range plan calls for a car-free campus.
- Significant amount of data available to find out where CSU parking permit holders are coming from; same with RamRide program – missing at the right hours.
- Surprised about parking prevalence north of campus.
- More time to get there question; on average its taking more time to get there; example of retail location showing willingness to drive; multimodal idea of two lanes of cars and one flex lane doesn't have to be citywide at first – not necessarily the Harmony corridor – maybe they don't need that multimodal thing; would help with short trips.
- Land use – not a case of reducing capacity, but rather building such that it can change over time, giving people another option that actually works; carsharing will reduce VMT – making trips more efficient; neighborhood center vs. regional center example violating city plan – concern with sacrificing plan values in land use decisions that make short term economic values.
- Land use and location of employment – good to allow taller buildings in downtown setting – and especially around nodes of employment and density.
- Focusing on infill and density – we are ahead of most communities and we need to continue on that path.
- As we look at TOD, we need to look at integrating low income housing being integrated, need to have service workers living there and also making sure that disabled access is at the front of the discussion.

- Need the last mile from Mason Street to include more bikes – Foxtrot needs more bike capacity.
- Discussions centered around biker needs with little on other alternative transportation means. Outreach to other citizens needed!!

What are new ideas, challenges or opportunities? (next 5 years)

- Have to integrate CIP lists/costs into key choices and alternatives. (Try vehicle/bike share at Mason Corridor.)
- Funding Challenges
- Changing for transportation and change the paradigm for funds.
- Transportation vehicle “vending “ approach.
- Bike share Mason and transit stops.
- Maintain existing pavement assists; make projects shovel ready for new Federal funds.
- Think Regionally-transit/multimodal commuters and regional bicycle trails
- New transportation funding paradigm.
- Full spectrum vehicle share: capitalization low (leased, automatic), right-sized, choice-driven; begins at nodes and grows out; user-fee supported.
- Maintain existing assets; implement innovative solutions; build capitol improvements lists.
- Bike sharing program-take to transportation-oriented program (D-cycle)
- Regional multi-modal
- Improve bike trails
- Road districts-reduce to 3 lanes (Mulberry/Shields)
- Grow VanGo program
- Mason Corridor-good test ground for vehicle share.
- 4-day work week/impacts on transportation
- Living streets-retrofit and lanes to other uses.
- Think towards a Mason-like “Enhanced Transportation Corridor” from the University Avenue stop west-serving the CSU Plaza, Moby, campus West and out to the Foothills Campus and/or Hughes Stadium. (Right now car is basically the only safe way to reach the Foothills Campus or Hughes Stadium during CSU games.)
- Think about contacting ASCSU for data regarding where students are traveling to/from late on weekend evenings and design transit services to meet those needs. Make ASCSU an actual partner in responding to student/Transfort needs, instead of just a funding source.
- Also, look at CSU Parking Permit holders to see where they are coming from-plan transit accordingly.
- Consider allocating transportation funding in proportion to passenger miles traveled. (I'd think this would yield significantly more for bike and ped travel.)

What are new ideas, challenges or opportunities? (next 5 years)

- What has changed? More people commuting to Denver.
- Change's to on the job locations/various connections to Denver.
- Bus service to Denver.
- More VanGo service to Denver (available now)
- More VanGo service along US287.
- Need to address crossing of US287 with connections.
- Address failures or lessons learned with 34 Express and Colorado Springs to Denver.
- “lost mile” connections from transit (local and regional)
- BTC on Harmony needs to come right behind Max

- Employers going to 4 day work weeks and shorter trips and energy used.
- More integration with transit and maintenance of roads
- Modeling options with MSP with lane widening/"Living Streets"
- Retrofit 4 lanes to 2 lanes with more/wider bike lanes with costs and neighborhood impact.
- Safety/perceptions of safety with multimodal to co-exist to develop new standard.
- Lower city-wide speed limits to 35 MPH for safety for co-exist goal.
- Funding vs. needs
- Priorities vs. council priorities
- Developing realistic CIP list.
- Regional connections-more people commuting to Denver. Losing employment base-new employment opportunities elsewhere
- Current and regional top priorities
- Improved way finding
- Pedestrian and bike connections across College Ave. (Troutman, Swallow)
- Harmony corridor-similar to Mason Corridor
- Maintain roads-challenge. Build and maintain 4 lanes. Trigger; impact on neighborhoods; modeling in reverse-instead of plugging in date, tell whatever want. 4 land-\$617 per linear foot. \$3.2M per lane mile. 2 land \$510 per lineal foot-\$2.7M per lane mile.
- Living streets-safety issues; segment analysis.
- Safety and perception of safety
- Street design changes-ex. Reduce speed limits to 35 MPH in city. Bike facilities on 35 MPH streets. Make more people feel comfortable on College Avenue.
- How to make cyclists comfortable from Mason Trail to Foothills.
- Complete the bike path connections to Loveland and to Greeley.
- Biking does not feel safe for many Fort Collins residents. Some don't bike because they don't want to be associated with bicycle scoff-laws. We need more BIKE ENFORCEMENT!!!!
- We also need more streets with separated bike lanes, but they also need to be properly maintained and cleaned/cleared when needed.
- This needs to be the default for road planning.
- Better bike signage and instruction at roundabouts! (Taft/Vine especially)

What topics new ideas challenges or opportunities? (beyond 5 years)

- Convert College Avenue to livable street downtown
- Suggest bike lanes along streets with 35 MPH speed limit
- TOD issues with bike crossings of US287 and Harmony north and south.
- Crossing concerns at arterial streets for bikes and pedestrians.
- Need to find "win-win" to give people options, spectrum of choices.
- Create great places
- CSU master plan coordinate with City plans
- Coordinate with UniverCity Connections.
- Ram Ride connections on west Elizabeth to Foothills and Mason Corridor.
- Start with incremental improvements – not whole city at once.
- Funding
- Rail connection to Denver
- Give people options and let them decide. Needs to be a spectrum of choices.
- Multi-modal more attractive with lower speeds.
- People are more than willing to drive.
- Changes do not need to be city-wide to start.
- Funding

- Rail connection to Denver
- Give people options and let them decide. Needs to be a spectrum of choices.
- Multi-modal more attractive with lower speeds.
- People are more than willing to drive.
- Changes do not need to be city-wide to start.

What topics are related or should be better integrated with this one?

- Land use to support transportation choices and alternate capacity
- Copy businesses and practices need to be sustainable.
- Location of employment density.
- Get comfortable with taller buildings
- Focus on mixed use and density (continue)
- Disabled access
- “Last mile”
- Land use and transportation (TOD)-integrate low income housing.
- Land values
- Land use: functional problem with land use. Codes need to be written to support
- Land use-location of employment; zoning for ?; attraction/nodes for employment. Focus on infill, mixed use; high density.
- Disabled access and low income/affordable housing provisions.
- Key=the last mile-more bike access/provisions.

Missing Organizations

- Low income
- Seniors
- Youth
- Disabled
- PVH
- Natural Resources
- Chamber of Commerce and other organizations
- CSU staff – students
- HP and other large businesses
- Mfg. industries

Sustainability Scorecard - March 31, 2010

Participants: 11

Big themes of this focus group:

- Need to refocus on the definition of Sustainability for Fort Collins - to consider long-term resource needs. Consider clarifying the use of the word "balance" in the definition - for some, the word between the three categories (human, environmental, and economic) should be "AND" to reflect that they are all equally important and not mutually exclusive; for others, the word in between should be "OR" to reflect that at times, the relative emphasis may shift to reflect differing balance between the three.
- Showing some examples of a scorecard would help the discussion process.
- Consider whether to use the term "scorecard" or a different term that doesn't carry connotations of a grading process - it is too broad of a concept and might tend towards lowest common denominator. Possible options include a tiered approach (perhaps broken down by topic area) or perhaps a sustainability evaluation rather than scorecard.
- In any event, keep it simple and understandable!

Group notes:

- Definitions of sustainability evolving- based on science.
- Comment: City missing opportunities with other events, reaching out to the community
- BH: Ensure that Plan Fort Collins (PFC) is coordinating with events going on.
- Sustainability definition the City has is squishy (Natural Step 4 system conditions are much less so).
- Issue of representation: so many players not here, business, chamber, etc. Better way of getting all of these people together?
 - Engage Chamber to help organize focus groups?
 - Focus groups are supposed to be 8-10 people. Could have a focus group w/Chamber on sustainability.
 - BH: this is not be all end all for participation
- Is Clarion meeting separately with Chamber?
 - City met w/Chamber at breakfast meeting
 - Chamber has been made aware of all events
- Buildings as representing embodied energy- way ahead of the energy game if the building lasts for decades
 - Retrofit rather than tear down buildings to save energy
 - Not just natural resources but built environment too
- Climate Action Plan: energy utilization, 2/3rds of energy consumed goes into buildings. Big opportunity to substantially improve existing building stock, not just new buildings.
 - Incent, motivate, and finance upgrade of our building stock.
 - Metric: BTUs/SF a good metric for residential and commercial energy use
 - Embodied energy: more difficult question
 - Look at economic return of re-utilization
- City has moved forward to do good job of its own efforts to measure sustainability. Half time person to promote, fleet buses, etc. Getting good handle on metrics for internal sustainability.
 - NRAB: this is why we are promoting community scorecard
 - Could use some examples of what a sustainability scorecard might look like. Underlying definition of sustainability is important to driving what the scorecard looks like.
- Definition comments: relate the metrics to the need (Physical: air, water, food, shelter, medicine: quality of life)

- Scorecard: human, social, economic side
 - Environmental: wedges going out from there: air, water, etc.
 - Strong visual image of wedges to show how we're doing
- Balance in City's definition: shows lowest common denominator, can be better
 - Instead of "OR" balance between the three, look at the "AND"
 - Sustainability: lower transaction cost and paying the cost yourself so that the next person doesn't have it.
- Personal accountability: community has a great desire for open space, play area
 - City needs to think outside the box more:
 - Impact fees: when home changes hand, no fees for new buyer, all on the shoulders of new construction
 - Creating a more welcoming environment for businesses who want to re-locate here. City does not make process easy and is not welcoming. Need jobs to support local businesses and economy.
- What is City measuring now:
 - JS: City has 10 internal sustainability objectives
 - City has done a community-wide scorecard, second one coming out now
 - How do we measure: looking at things, indicators you can use on a day to day, project by project basis, not just whole community?
 - Is it a goal to achieve in everything we do or just a generic definition?
- Think about what employers look like in 10 years? Get away from thinking about today. City vision about future employment and future employers (key choices? Big idea?). How would we recruit people?
 - Recruit capacities, not just invest
 - Other metrics: quality, number of jobs, replenish jobs every year
- Harmony Corridor Plan in past:
 - Retail on North Harmony: changed use to retail center
 - What other land do we have to offer to others who want to come here
 - Infill redevelopment will be a critical piece of sustainability: we are landlocked
 - Can't do on a retail model- in the tank nationally
 - Make arts and culture an economic engine, make accessible to people
 - Sales tax is an unreliable method of sustainable revenue: need other ways for all of us to chip in a little
- Need to link data to action plan
- Like idea that specific neighborhoods will have different needs- different ways to read information. Scroll throughout city and see where neighborhoods are feeling more financially, environmentally secure.
- Like idea of keeping circle going in sustainability graphic: pluses and minuses for financial, environmental, etc.
- One reason for scorecards: community participation. Interactive web sites, etc. What do we do well, where are the problems? But somebody has to look at, analyze, turn into action plan?
- Sustainable: is quality of life we have now going to remain the same? Or are there going to be tradeoffs?
- Retain level of asset over life cycle of investment
 - The action upon which value resources is homeostasis that preserves life.
 - Methods: when you produce goods and services: process of producing them from cradle to cradle does not degrade the homeostasis
 - Barring that: what is best available way to lower impacts, or mitigate impact to lowest level of impact
 - Ultimately lowest cost means we won't become extinct

- Look at short term gain vs. long term loss
- Review ordinances Citywide to see if they are consistent with protecting physical environment
- Examine and articulate principles behind sustainability
- Food security is important
- Lower the speed limits in the entire City and you will increase safety of cyclists and pedestrians
- Model of zero impact mixed use development on Harmony and Shields(?)
- Actual neighborhood center and don't zone it out of existence
- Insulation to vagaries of economic swing
- Will we have many scorecards that fit into one?
- What is system we want to have in place in 10 years? What are steps to get to that system?
- We're looking at economic, natural, multiple systems. We are accustomed to working in our separate silos, our perspective shape our silos. Scorecard can put bigger picture in front of us. Scorecard to draw the picture of the vision.
- Requires common agreement of different perspectives. Need leadership that can continue to keep dialogue open. Agree to use data for best possible use.

Multi-Functioning Streets - March 31, 2010

Participants: 15

Big themes of this focus group:

- Addressing future needs and vehicle changes.
- Paving for streets – are we doing too much? To achieve green streets, how much should be porous versus asphalt?
- Bikes and their continued role in transportation system.
- Streetscape (trees, shrubs) and urban design is important.
- A lot of cross-topics.

What are some new or interesting ideas related to this topic?

- Address bike, pedestrian, and auto safety. Number of bicycles per household is a significant number now and in the future. We should share this data on the web site. We would like to see “Bicycle Miles Traveled”.
- Listen to people who live here vs. Larimer County/outside the city.
- Ideas for “Green Streets” – ex: porous pavers, defining function of street. Are we putting down more asphalt than we really need; landscape treatments, low impact sidewalks, no curbs; “rethinking purpose of streets” and use by all modes; new balance among modes; more public space, ex: gardens and parkways; aquifers and the relationships with the use of pavers; connectivity to more routes for bikes/pedestrians; less for autos due to the cost of maintaining roads.
- Changes are occurring with types of vehicles (Thomas Frye). We need connectivity for new and safe routes for all/new modes. Multifunction has to include safety connections.
- Bikes are part of Fort Collins’ history and maybe more visible now.
- How to pay for streets/ Core needs vs. wants; priorities need to keep commerce in mind.
- Turnberry extensions vs. not connected is still an issue. It took away from us (Mountain Vista area residents) and connectivity for all modes.
- Need to fill in the roadway system gaps like Redwood and Turnberry.
- Incentivize local business to use alternate modes and provide metrics to evaluate changes/reward use.
- Driving cars is heavily subsidized. There is gross underfunding for maintenance.
- The city cannot afford continuing to fund Transit. Transit plans should be long term and short term. And, it should be productivity based vs. coverage basis to meet citizen needs. The goal should be to get TransFort self-sustaining.
- Concerning current street standards, we need more flexibility for innovation.
- Fiber internet connections may not be needed due to increased use of wireless technology but should be considered.
- Street look/visual function and creating special places is important.

Urban Design:

- Green spaces and trees on streets. We need to consider different types of planting, French drains and deeper roots. Create public spaces such as using parkways for gardens and periscope with less irrigation. This encourages people to walk and interact with neighbors.
- Bushes block the view of smaller cars and bikes.
- Street crossings for pedestrians – there is not enough time for seniors. They need more time to cross.
- Mailboxes on the sunny side of the street so they don’t get surrounded by ice.

Short and Long-Term Opportunities and Challenges

Short Term:

- Street standards need to be less rigidly enforced to encourage Green Streets.
- Need incentives for innovations
- Challenge is infill and rider fees collected need to cover impacts of development, incorporating costs.
- Porous pavers could cost less for stormwater operating costs.
- Better wayfinding signage and maps, and consistent street naming criteria.
- Wire streets for transportation needs as we re-think and digitalize.
- Solar power ideas for powering transit shelters or other ideas. Integrate solar into new projects to fit in now or later communication.

Long Term:

- People need to consider changing ways to travel for long term shift.
- People love to be downtown, but they won't say they like to drive there. There are good places to be that are not good places to drive.
- There are physical limitations to widening streets.
- How to increase street capacity for all modes without street widening. Make it a "win-win-win" for all modes which leads to better utilization of space.
- Technology for wireless will be more prevalent than fiber optics.

What topics are related or should be better integrated with this one?

- New urbanism/TOD/walkable communities and built environment
- Broad definition of streets.
- Integrating arts and culture and key destinations and visitors creating self-guided tours and scenic routes.
- Address regional connections/draws/destinations
- Address new vehicle types and where do they travel and park. Blend with bike lanes. Does that work? We need new designs for bike lanes
- Integrate urban design with safe route to school program.
- Re-evaluate areas along the river – focus on Downtown River District.

Energy - April 5, 2010

Participants: 14

Big themes of this focus group:

- Need to consider how to extend/expand incentives to promote energy investments by small businesses.
- Transportation is a big cross-over topic for energy - how changes in transportation will impact energy use and vice-versa.
- Second big cross-over topic is economic development - what we need to do to attract jobs as a result of our low energy costs and high reliability; also what new investments we need to make to attract businesses that are looking for new technologies and not necessarily just being cost-driven.
- Major changes occurring worldwide with how we get, produce, and distribute energy; need to decide how far we want to go as a community towards the leading edge without hitting the “bleeding” edge.

Background

Steve C. provided an overview of some of the things planned by utilities currently and over the next 5 years:

- SmartGrid meter installation
- Controllers for AC, hot water
- Remote control switches – changing system to remote control
- Renewable energy portfolio (at 6%)
- Incentive programs to buy down solar panel costs, net metering,
- Green building codes
- FortZed
- ClimateWise

Group Comments

New or Interesting Ideas (Question #1)

- Small business incentives to install technologies
- One stop shop to help small businesses
- Look at models in Copenhagen and Israel studied models to reduce energy consumption for transportation
- Planning for electrical loads related to car charging loads – may have impacts on local transformer loads? How are other countries addressing this issue that could be transferable to the USA? Can address through AMI
- Smart grid will allow us to charge variable rates if people want to demand power during peak periods, i.e., charge vehicles during peak periods vs. later, but this approach will penalize those least able to afford it. Would rather see us focus our efforts on a viable transit system that will give people real choices. Must look at the affordability issue (overall) or it will begin to impact on community.
- Tie our energy investment policies to align with our economic viability goals.
- Public/private initiative that right-sizes each trip, also using vehicle-sharing program at transit nodes to give access to cars for non-owners.
- Need to address density that would need to be in place to support transit. Also have to address public subsidy needed to support transit system.
- In order to have to have a sustainable economy (create jobs); need to have a more distributed energy-based approach. Do we have the right relationships with PRPA to

truly go to a distributed energy? Need to look at capital business model that businesses will need to be viable.

- Perhaps change the paradigm from supplying kwh to one where the city provides a service (keep lights on, supply energy, etc.) irrespective of how much you use. Excel is attracting business because they are ahead of the curve in terms of innovation, etc – price of energy is not the only thing.
- Any options for utilities to front-end costs for providing energy generation (such as solar) to reduce the front-end costs to property owners?
- Make the investments needed now to attract desired economic development activity related to energy innovation (even if energy rates go up – we are now in the bottom 5% nationally for electricity rates).
- Develop accounting systems that changes the paradigm of how we measure actual costs, including lifecycle costs and environmental and community costs, and determine who pays.
- Population forecasts are a problem (overall growth in northern Colorado) – need to determine how to work with other communities; maybe a workshop with other communities to determine what the rest of them are doing and how they dovetail together.
- Examine the city’s policy on rebates for appliances; are they actually more energy-efficient, and what is the trade-off cost between new appliances and devices that are being landfilled?
- Fort Collins is a 40% owner of PRPA; do the other 3 owners have the same goals and values as the city? Should we move towards a different model, i.e. different supply of power, buyout partners, etc? Recognizing that the city would be responsible for debt load in case of a change of contract. Alternative view – demonstrates leadership and proves that it can be done, and then they will follow (particularly if the city can prove that it will work).
- Other model – based on “community gardening” approach where you foster groups of individuals or businesses that want to group together to find small-scale solutions.
- Major change going on about how we get, produce, and distribute energy; world is moving towards a new energy paradigm. How far do we want to go towards the leading edge, without getting too close to the bleeding edge? Innovation will drive the technology and lead us towards the vision as approaches become feasible.
- Alternative energy – good ideas, but need to think about the demands they place on our system, such as Prius batteries – where are they going to go? What demands are we placing on our environment to build cutting-edge systems? Need to look at what we can do to store energy so that it is more accessible (example – make ice at night, use for cooling).
- Need to continue to have discussion about the population growth model we have – if 5 million more people come to Colorado, can’t do so based on the same resource consumption basis. Must reduce consumption if we are to maintain our standard of living.
- This may also relate to the sustainability task force – consider adding a 1-3% carbon tax to natural gas bills. This provides funding for items such as green buildings, which should save electricity and natural gas, but currently programs put most of the burden on electric customers (Boulder has a similar program).

Short-term Opportunities and Challenges

- Preparing for CO2 legislation that may impact PRPA = they have a fairly “clean” coal plant but it is still coal. I am pro-coal, but many people are not.
- Need to balance renewable energy, distributed energy and a reliable grid system.

- Continue with smart grid (AMI), without feedback electric customers can not modify behavior.

Long-term Opportunities and Challenges

- Continue to track technology, energy needs and energy use while balancing energy costs. Also ensure rate models accommodate these changes and not hinder. Overall population growth in the region. There must be opportunities to partner, and in particular, planning for this growth. Our silo approach when we were all small communities, needs to be reviewed as we grow and bump into each other. Compete for business, and energy (and water) needs.

Related topics

- Reliable infrastructure with sustainable funding models.
- Transportation energy use and potentially increased use of hybrid vehicles.

Infill/Redevelopment - April 5, 2010

Participants: 29 signed in

“Big Ideas”

- Need to look at infill/redevelopment and how it affects areas outside of the downtown - many areas of the community are ripe for redevelopment
- Address different standards for different areas – don’t use one size fits all.
- CSU area has huge potential, and can leverage multiple needs (student housing, retail to serve students, CSU employees, and general community)
- Don’t be afraid of density in the right location.
- Development projects may need to be a finer grain – smaller buildings, small parcels of land, to be more appropriately scaled to this market.
- Need to look at transitions/neighborhood compatibility; determine where change is ok and where it isn’t. More predictability for neighborhoods, more definition of “compatibility”.

Group 1:

New or interesting ideas

- South College – Highway and Mason Corridor Access – Redevelop = achieve vision. Look at mixed-use and residential.
- Density – near parks (Vancouver) – mixed-use Senior housing – market rate housing. Fossil Creek Park – Activates space
- Diversity/population and employment opportunities.
- Incentives – rezoning – TIFS, permitting, bonding.
- Give advantage to smaller, independent business owners (permitting, assistance).
- Good – city/cares enough about input/thoughtfulness.
- Keep people feeling “lucky” to live in FC.

Short-term opportunities and challenges

- Join shopping districts – use trolley to move people around
- Financing options
- Partnerships
- Zoning – allow fee re-use /encourage
- Attract new business for infill – gain an attractive business climate (infill, empty lots, fill empty buildings)
- Get away from boxes and make visually interesting to serve as catalyst (mid-town, backstop is Mason).
- Mason – huge opportunity including land values and leverages.
- Population growth – moratorium of uses. Not limit growth but where growth occurs.
- Repaving Old Town (poor street surface).
- Area between prospect and college – opportunities for housing.
- DDA funding stream – TIF – River District. OK – When DDA. Funding expires.
- City – business-friendly. Encourage change and perception/image.
- Annexing – fee properties together (contiguous running properties). – S. College good.

Long-term opportunities and challenges

- Pavement management very expensive. If can’t keep it up – downward path.

- Economic diversity: 1. Moving out of trailer parks – chose – where do they go? Responsibility of City for relocation. How to keep them here? 2. Incorporate low income housing. Develop north around Willow. Issue pending.
- Area around CSU – older residential areas (student housing), not maintained as other residential areas. Rental properties not maintained as owner-occupied. Need not being met by on-campus housing and opportunities exist to develop/improve rental homes. Rental homes – city should have standards for maintenance. Simplify zoning. Smaller homes are redevelopment opportunity for 1st time home owners.

Better integrated topics

- Housing – ensuring more diversity housing – protect.
- Transportation/connectivity.
- Low income housing.
- Built environment – land use planning (buffer zones)

Who else?

- Senior Groups
- (advertise – channel 14)
- County – GMAs
- Promote through Chamber and NFCBA.

Group 2

New or interesting ideas

- Infill development between river and Old Town (eyesore, dangerous at night). incorporate Old Town into River (e.g., Oscar Blues)
- River Walk (i.e., San Antonio, Estes Park) – Drive tourist business.
- Steer Old Town and business in one direction.
- Mixed use – social, retail – accommodate continuation of non-profit and business use. Daycare facilities. – Pieces of a mixed-use form at (River District Area).
- Accommodate employment and housing into downtown. Higher density allows for high density and mixed use.
- Direction Fort Collins has gone with downtown planning is good.
- Mid-town area. Incorporate high density and mixed-use with transit.
- TOD promotes walking, biking, health benefits. Have options where people have a choice.
- North College marketplace – movie theater, library much potential for gateway.

Short-term opportunities and challenges

- Mason Corridor – only serves limited public.
- Need to infill area between city limits and downtown.
- Truck traffic through middle. Will city redirect?
- South areas – empty buildings – look at re-occupying.
- Market – zone to re-use empty buildings.
- Change perception of city being unfriendly to business.
- Maintain city buffer zones.
- Comprehensive zoning map and boundaries.
- Regulations for river development.
- Use of private-public right away to address beautifying journey and the destination.
- Use creative stormwater (i.e., Odell's)

Long-term opportunities and challenges

- Plan for historic preservation
- Identify structures and any other locations that we desire to preserve – be proactive, don't wait until a property is up for sale (i.e., Rule property) and pay market value for a property if it is important for historic preservation.

Better integrated topics

- Colorado State University enrollment goals / plans – need for student housing.
- Affordable housing available throughout the city and not just in one area to avoid blight.
- Senior living in Downtown – able to walk to grocery, library, theater, medical services, and pharmacies can locate here too.

Mixed-use 4 level redevelopment of foothills mall.

Who else?

- CSU, PVHS, UniverCity

Group 3

New or interesting ideas

- Year-round farmer's market (indoor/outdoor) near mass transit.
- Downtown-to-downtown commuter rail (not I-25)
- Yampa River – Steamboat.
- Arkansas River – Pueblo

Short-term opportunities and challenges

- Larimer County Urban Area Street Standards Was not written with infill and redevelopment in mind (if it was, it does a poor job at accommodating it).
- The mission of the engineering/development review department appears to be to present problems/roadblocks and find every way possible why a project can't be done. Conversely, other departments are very much solution-oriented, proactive, collaborative, etc. Its not the people (engineering staff is great!), but rather their tools provided, job description, missing, lack of front-line decision-making ability, etc. Make infill/redevelopment a priority for that department. Remove their LCUASS handcuffs, and great things will happen.
- Keep the DDA in place – perhaps expand.
- Expand the flexibility of public right of way, and the ability to do new/different things within ROW, alternative widths, sections, etc.
- Ensure historic preservation is done correctly (i.e., not taken too far).

Long-term opportunities and challenges

- River district, river district, river district!
- New era of student housing
- Mason corridor...
- Increase marketing/tourism of “craft beer city”.

Better integrated topics

- “Cap and trade” for stormwater detention and water quality
- Economic vitality! Include as part of city staff's mission.

Group 4

New or interesting ideas

- North College mall is empty – redevelopment is identified as negative. Can we be proactive?
- Old Town in hands – new historic homes – 50's – 60s – ranches to accommodate changing demographics versus building new. Keep integrity of Old Town neighborhoods.
- Expanded community – benefits are not as widely dispersed. Not meeting need of community. Disperse public facilities throughout community.
- Redevelop does not equal demolition. Re-use, remodeling program to make it attractive.
- Labor market – look at what it does for employment. Keep this in mind when redevelopment occurs. Needs to support redevelopment.

Short-term opportunities and challenges

- Tipping point – slide downhill to challenge to renew. Get to issue before slide happens. Center of town. Keep students in town, get them involved. Bring things to market. CSU is most important focus of community. Foster throughout community. New shopping occurring on south and how to gauge impact. Housing and employment is going to have to be flexible and nimble – incremental steps – attractive to new entry. Make us competitive – can't compete with other communities.
- Density of housing may not be there for awhile. Mason not going to drive significant density. Seen as a suburban community. Need to deal with this issue.
- The funding for the DDA will be cut back dramatically in 2011. It is extremely important that the DDA be able to combine the exceptional job it is doing.
- The River District, oxbow property and the Link-N-greens property are the heart of new funding opportunities for the DDA.
- The City and DDA should be activity explaining the best way for the 3 properties to be planned and developed. They are wonderful infill properties that can provide a logical expansion of downtown, increase the tax base and house new employment centers.

Long-term opportunities and challenges

- Sales tax – taxing structure needs to be visited. City's role in economic development. In a FC way – what it means. How it works. Employment –type – promoting CSU, PVH, living wages. Financial assistance to help graduates. Payback roots in community. User friendly to students. Attract creative minds.
- Patterns of areas – sustainability – infill and redevelopment needs to be hand-in-hand. Reuse.
- Infrastructure planning, improvement districts to offset costs of infrastructure.

Better integrated topics

- Historic preservation – 50s- 70s reoccupy.
- Sustainability – embodied energy
- Affordable housing
- Transportation – Why not funded through districts like utilities? Transportation benefits entire district. Is not working. Economics doesn't work – value would have to decrease so far.
- The Link-n-Greens site is very unique. A significant portion of the site is in the floodway, thus no building can be constructed. However, it is the only stretch of the river in the urban center of the city that could house a community gathering place. How

should that be designed to balance the need to be respectful of the wildlife corridor and allow meaningful human access to the river?

Who else?

- CSU
- PVH
- Students
- PSD – not connected as well as they could be.
- Arts community should be plugged in.

Group 5

New or interesting ideas

- Year-round farmer's market (opera galleria) expanded.
- Downtown to downtown route of light rail / density around inner city, move away from Interstate,
- use innovative infrastructure treatment, subsurface,
- add incentives to infill (cash incentives, make things viable),
- how to deal with trash, jeep grab dumpsters, Pacific Northwest,
- 300 foot corridor around the Poudre is an obstacle, interface where city has interaction - use river, no political will to develop around river corridor, city should embrace the river, invite development without impacting,
- In-stream flow in river (pumping water back),
- fix the aesthetics around the river, use the downtown area (e.g., Steamboat – the Yampa River, floating experience),
- Art in the Park, modify regulations to allow downtown development near the river (e.g., Pueblo, Missoula), promote the river,
- allow development along Link-n-greens by pushing regulations,
- how to accommodate additional student housing, off campus housing, dense urban housing for students single family style housing,
- more height, use parking structures.
- Incentivize not having cars, better transit system,
- Affordable housing close to town, onsite storage of stormwater,
- Open opportunities for use of right of way.
- Use multi-functioning streets, do things out of the box,
- Use innovative stormwater techniques to reduce detention areas,
- DDA needs to be renewed, become stronger – increase its limits,
- Mall needs to be closer to College with better visibility, why not have a department store downtown?
- Multi-story malls (do we have density for that?) open air stores, add primary employment downtown.
- Use mall as a multi-use facility – there is still a need for indoor mall, make some of the big box as a beer garden, use flexibility,
- Add economic viability as one of the standards.
- Add economic vitality as one of the focus groups.
- Mason Street Corridor is a challenge and an opportunity.
- How to get from here to there.
- Capitalize on micro brewery environment. Museum of micro brewing, places to stay close to breweries, Beet Street should get involved in Breweries.

General Group Comments

- Need to look at infill/redevelopment and how it affects areas outside of the downtown
- Address different standards for different areas – don't use one size fits all.
- Area around CSU campus – significant needs around that area: 25,000 students, 6,000 employees, significant people (up to 40,000 people). Focus on student housing; efforts to date have been a failure. Need a certain type/capacity of housing and employees, etc. Look at the Flats on the Oval (50 du/ac).
- Look at how to leverage Mason Corridor as a catalyst. DDA has extended boundary for a bigger suite of tools to the area.
- Focus on Campus West – ripe for redevelopment.
- City be proactive on where density could occur – use incentives, ways to encourage development. Use West Side neighborhood plan as model.
- During first City Plan, people had an impression of FC being different from Boulder.
- Boulder downtown is a very restrictive environment; density, affordable housing, buildout, etc. FC by comparison allows much taller development potential. Two cities are switching roles??
- Don't be afraid of density in the right location.
- Development projects may need to be a finer grain – smaller buildings, small parcels of land, to be more appropriately scaled to this market.
- Outside question – what does “small-town feel” mean in the context of FC?
- Need to think about the relationship between where higher-density development occurs and access/mobility – should not place it where it cannot be served. Also integration of affordable housing. Need to look at the tradeoff between high densities in a few locations vs. looking at alignment with systems.
- How to address market mismatch – may need to look at situations where ground level space is used for parking, etc until such time as the demand increases when it can be converted.
- Need to look at transitions/neighborhood compatibility; determine where change is ok and where it isn't. More predictability for neighborhoods, more definition of “compatibility”.
- Look at Denver nodes that still exist (such as along 17th Avenue); they are there because they were originally transit stops.
- Give the city credit for focusing on pockets that need help (such as Midtown, College/Prospect) – another area that needs attention and focus. DDA revenue stream expires in 2012. Revenue stream will get reduced. Focus on three pieces of ground: River District, Oxbow property and other Bohemian properties, and Lincoln Greens golf course property. Look at area cohesively for collective thought. Fort Collins rail yard area. Look at employment, housing, and retail/entertainment/local market, other uses.
- How about the 58 acres at Harmony and Shields – what should happen there? Look at areas outside of Old Town. How should some of these places develop in the 21st century vs. what was being constructed in the 20th century.
- How to address mobile home parks – Wood Street, North College, etc – how do we address this issue? Include this topic in the plan.
- Look at how much capacity there is in the land we have – how do we maximize the development potential of what we have?
- Use infill and redevelopment to make neighborhoods more economically and socially more viable. How to promote more homeownership for first-time buyers, to stabilize and create a better environment for redevelopment?
- Exempt urban cores from stormwater requirements (Denver and Boulder have done so)
- How to address the asset of the viewshed to the Front Range Mountains?

- Use of irrigation waterways and trail opportunities – can we do more with them? Identify them now and flag them on the Structure Plan.....
- What happens if some of the projects out by the Interstate (River Walk project, etc) come to fruition – what will their impact be on Downtown?

Related Topics:

- Lincoln Greens is only stretch of river that could be public gathering spot – “save the best for everyone”.
- Need to identify interface between river and development – be proactive.
- Stormwater – open space, trails, flood management. Also need to look at urban area (moderate risk). Finished floor elevation requirement to be above the urban floodplain – pushes finished floor level way above the street level. Need more compatibility between storm water requirements and floodplain requirements.

Who else at the table?

- South College (annexation)
- North College
- Financial community (bankers, etc)

Youth - April 8, 2010

Participants: 17 including students, non-profit organizations, early childhood providers

Big themes of this focus group:

- Providing safe, reliable, and simple transportation for youth of all ages to key destinations (e.g. schools, Boys and Girls Club, movie theaters, etc.)
- Changing youth attitudes/perceptions of transit and bikes/walking as transportation
- Need for more youth-oriented gathering places and events (need to collaborate with organizations to provide facilities and/or programming to address youth interests)
- Vision and leadership (through this Plan) by the City to coordinate non-profit, profit, and other groups and organizations in the community to focus on youth issues
- Need to “speak the language” with youth and conduct outreach that reflects latest technology and learning styles (Youth Board as Plan ambassadors)

What are some new or interesting ideas related to this topic?

- Transportation linked with access to early child care & programs.
- Bus transportation for kids under driving age but still independently travel.
- Routes don't go to where kids visit (Boulder's HOP works well.)
- 25% of the community relies on public transportation. (result of survey indicates parents don't need help with transportation.)
- Public transportation needed between Boys and Girls Club and schools.
- Need a more central Boys and Girls Club location.
- Mid-town and south town access to early childhood services is needed.
- Use old Wal-Mart building for Boys and Girls Club, quality child care or other youth and child services needs.
- We need new grid routes. Routes need to be near schools, movies, Boys and Girls Club, and destinations for mid youth.
- We need more safe bicycling and walking throughout town.
- Fort Collins should have lower speed limits. (Every 10 mph lower reduces severity and accidents by 50%.)
- Change in culture with kids driving vs. busing. (Stops need to be closer to schools, need bike education at school, and there needs to be a sustainability connection.)
- Increase options for transportation for kids. (More flexible options than just bus.)
- Market destinations linked to bus routes for kids. (i.e.: LaCross example.)
- There is a lack of economical activities for kids.
- Community Center includes coffee shop and place to do music (Wal-Mart center) as a destination for youth.
- Friday night play movies kids vote for.
- Estes Park and Loveland are also working on this.
- Use Senior Center model for youth and provide outlets beyond athletics.
- Boys and Girls Club has a good model in other cities. Open later and on weekends.
- It would be best to fund this youth center with partnerships.
- Do we have the will as a community to fund everything we want with the Plan Fort Collins efforts?
- Communities that have partnerships are more likely to receive funding and grants.
- Vision and Leadership by the city could coordinate non-profit, profit, and other groups and organizations in the community. (i.e.: Northern Hotel)
- There could be a rotating basis facilities for youth center or youth activities.
- Popularity for youth centers decline. Youth like events i.e. New West Fest no longer youth focused.
- Create concerts and skate competitions.

- Beat Street could connect with kids and include youth events.
- Increase marketing to youth for events. (i.e. local music fest this weekend.)
- Coloradoan is not read much by youth.
- Venues other than bars –inclusive venues (however, don't need to exclude alcohol with food).
- Dollars spent on youth saves community resources, has positive return beyond money spent constructively.
- Place/venue needs to be safe from tobacco smoke, non-violent, and safe.
- Safety may have different definitions.
- 16-25 year olds alcohol and driving is the most dangerous and #1 problem.
- Youth feels police are out to get them. The reactions should be, "Oh, good" vs. "oh, no" when youth see police. Improve the relationship between police and youth.
- Suicide attempts are increasing. We need resources outside of school for kids. 'Cutting' is increasing. Counseling sessions open during certain times. "Connections" is a service available. "Sexting" is on the rise. And eating disorders are increasing.

Outreach

- Full spectrum ages for discussions.
- Elementary age needs to be represented.
- Create diversity, specifically in the Hispanic community, but not limited to that group. Do a focus group in Spanish.
- 211-arm of United Way staff members belong to Spanish-speaking network.
- Have us go to schools or classrooms.
- Youth Advisory Committee dedicated to reaching out to youth. They are open to being ambassadors for projects.
- Open invitation to Youth Advisory Board focus group at YAB.
- Potentially more stress at home. Give more confidence early for kids to cope and become well balanced.
- Teen choices conversation at the high school needs to happen earlier.
- We criminalize kids' behavior that used to be considered normal such as: sexual behavior in adolescent, drug use in adolescence. We need to get away from criminalizing mistakes. Computers can track and keep this information with youth through the next years. Records stay with youth for young mistakes because of technology. This effects youth their whole lives.
- Educate kids younger on choices they make.
- The DARE program fizzled out. Jr. High is the target age for programs to prevent poor choices.
- There needs to be opportunities for kids to be kids.
- There is a generation gap with technologies. We can't do things the old way.
- The negative impacts of multi-tasking leaves youth anxious and depressed during down time.

Housing - April 8, 2010

Participants: 14

Big themes of this focus group:

- Providing future affordable housing integrated in with other market-rate units at higher densities along the Mason Corridor
- Difficulties in developing compatible new housing within existing neighborhoods
- Increasing the efficiency and decreasing the maintenance of affordable housing so residents have lower utility bills and maintenance costs
- Availability of and access to housing for marginalized groups (e.g. mobile home residents, criminal backgrounds, credit/financial issues, etc.)
- Challenging credit market (especially new FHA loan condo requirements)

Short-Term Challenges and Opportunities

- City as a provider of “social services to “fill the gap”
 - City allocates \$555+K to social service agencies with some connection to housing provisions
- Housing Authority separate governmental entity
 - City Council appoints the HA Board of Commissioners
- Opportunities within the Mason Corridor for multi-story, mixed-use, various housing types => height issues
- Density must increase to support the corridor and transit
 - Not a wholly supported idea – key for infill work
- Development sites in the floodplain raises compatibility issues
- Upgrading existing/older homes (LEAP Program)
 - Low income – upgrades to increase efficiency
- Green Building Code – within reason, otherwise it will drive up costs
- Public affordable housing should be low maintenance and high quality/durable
 - Needs balance
- Purchasing co-ops for materials (e.g., insulation) to keep costs down
- Credit markets are currently challenging
- Look at regional lot availability, not just Fort Collins
 - Inventory in the region drives prices down
- Trend is for smaller, more efficient homes
- Nuclear family trend is changing –different types of housing are needed (aging population)
- “Granny Flats” – history =- but potential to address affordable housing and changing demographics
- Compatibility issues and transition challenges (e.g., mixed-use next to single-family)
 - Steeles Market example
- Fort Collins is spread out
- Support transition projects (e.g., 4 stories)
 - Challenge with making it work financially
- Tie education piece to the plan (broader picture, understand trade-offs)
- Incorporating decision-makers
- Inventory of properties/areas with potential for development
- Density at point of origin and destination to support transit system
- Life cycle costs should be considered (building performance, etc.)
 - Quality of materials should be a factor (health, maintenance)
 - Fox Meadows Apartments as a good example

- Opportunity to tie in with reducing carbon emissions
- Obesity prevention/trails
- Live close to transit/close-in
- Policies such as 3-unrelated ordinance may limit possibilities for making housing affordable
 - Unrelated a key to the ordinance => cars, parking issues
 - In the future, transit corridors and other options may shift thinking about 3-unrelated
- Affordable housing definition is based on HUD definition, 80% of AMI paying less than 30% of income for housing
 - City is short 6,000+ units for families under 50% of AMI
- Integrate affordable housing throughout the community (helps developers off-set costs)
- 30% of income for housing
 - Margin of income for emergencies is very low for lower income residents
 - Makes affordable housing more important
 - Emphasizes need for quality materials, low maintenance
- Mobile home park displacement (opportunities along Mason Corridor)
- Isolation of existing low income neighborhoods is challenging – opportunities to surround neighborhoods with higher quality options
 - N. College example

Long-term Opportunities and Challenges

- City funding currently required 20 years of affordability, should be increased to 30 years or more
- Some projects nearing the end of 20 year period
 - Potential loss of units
 - For sale (challenging with restrictions)
 - Rental funding
- FHA standards for financing => condo issues (50% must be owner-occupied)
 - Other financiers will likely follow
- Selling units and finding buyers who can get financing
- Rental problems
 - Credit checks
 - Background checks
 - People have nowhere else to turn become homeless => many other issues (housing is a key factor)
- Community concerns about who in moving in (background checks)
 - Criminalization/background checks of youth causes problems down the road for lifestyle options
- Providing avenues for rehabilitation
 - Financial literacy/Pathways Past Poverty
- Credit checks and new users entering the housing market face hurdles
- Schools will be required to teach basic personal finance
- Areas that are NOT appropriate for redevelopment (where/when?)
- Historic preservation (50 years timeframe)
 - Should everything be preserved
- Gentrification – keeping people in their homes
 - Market forces at work (mobile home parks) redevelopment pressure
 - People living “below the radar” don’t have other options – diversity of incomes
- Mobile home financing challenges
- Can’t move mobile homes – how to keep people here?
- Economic development – housing to meet needs of all worker types

- Higher paying jobs create lower paying jobs – need for affordable housing
- Think “outside the box”
 - Mobile homes may be a choice, but not always the answer
- Quality appearance and design a community issue – must be balanced with sense of community
- Appearance also can lead to redevelopment
- Mobile homes will be part of the community – can the plan explore other options?
- Mill levy for permanent affordable housing revenue source
- Focus on mobile home maintenance, upkeep
- Tax credit, land donation for close-in affordable housing (like conservation easements)
- Rights of first refusal for the City to purchase property/projects
- Facilitation having people living in mobile home parks purchase their own parks
- Look at other economic incentives – based on affordable housing programs/developer’s challenge to suggest incentives that would work
- Re-examine incentive packages to build affordable housing
- Chronic homelessness is very expensive for the community – reallocate resource to housing

Transportation- Modes and Connections, April 9, 2010

Participants: 19

Big themes of this focus group:

- Efficiency of transit system
- Pedestrian spaces and links
- Density and funding to support transit
- Regional coordination and planning
- Incorporating new technologies and vehicle types

What are some new or interesting ideas related to this topic?

- Anticipate significantly more toward electric vehicles
- Transportation Planning work with Utilities for charging infrastructure
- Private market
- Equal rights access – install changing stations – how to transcend to public sector (libraries, etc.)
- Pedestrian districts – Mason Corridor link to other districts – safe, well-lit (ped zones), connect people from transit, facilities separated from street. Ex: Mason/Horsetooth/Midtown theater
- Use one mode and no barriers – safe, accessible, friendly.
- Work with private sector
- Walkability midtown concern – parking lot vs. walkability
- Pedestrian overpasses
- Technology to allow extra time to cross roadways when needed.
- Public/private shuttles and shuttles stops/intersect with major on/off ramps.

What are short-term challenges or opportunities? (next 5 years)

- CDOT – Regional rail – expedite regional rail transit (closer than 75 years)
- Bus service – longer hours and routes
- Fully fund Transfort strategic plan
- Mason Corridor – analyze/anticipate success/failure of duplication of existing routes.
- TMP needs sustainable and affordable, grow it wisely as we have investments
- Connect centers of commerce
- Now – too low density to support TMP now
- Can have better plan/new vision with higher density
- Look at all costs of each system
- Threshold for people to make (changes?) is 13 units per acre
- Origins and destinations are key to illicit trips
- Connectivity of transit systems can mitigate density issues
- Need to create connectivity for 2nd to 3rd stops – no options (“the last mile” and multiple stops)
- Vehicle sharing program (FC Bikes, vehicle sharing)

What are long-term challenges or opportunities? (beyond 5 years)

- Interface with CSU and long term planning – sharing community
- Regional communication/coordination for transit use with surrounding communities.
- Current TMP (?) model shift. What type of capital is needed to accommodate more lanes?
- Transit funding vs. capital expansion
- What is cost of maintenance of streets and how much subsidized (gas taxes, etc.). Look at subsidies of all uses.

- Consulting with other cities with similar issues
- Transit system – utilize input to design system. People that use buses help to design routes.
- Point to point bus use – Ex: PVH center and Harmony center – shuttle between points (examine movement between two points)
- Emphasize road maintenance vs. new road construction

What topics are related or should be better integrated with this one?

- Update to pedestrian plan – connections over ditches. If pick key locations
- TOD overlay district as part – pedestrian specifications include (S/W widths, etc. vs. vehicles).
- Design concept change – take 4 lane costs into 2 lane costs and transit.
- Design – determine s/w arterials. Ex: Harmony – hard to service
- Attached where concrete meets pavement. Determine s/w on lower scale facilities.
- Develop stations – require development of street front. RE: Large setbacks.
- Pedestrian Plan – develop strategy – use existing resources or identify new to connection /accessibility to bus stops.
- Bus – more focused advertising, more appealing to public. Promote affordability, friendly, convenient. Ensure not false advertising. Adequate stops. Frequent, connections.
- Make buses a choice, not a necessity)

Other Comments

- Access to stop was with good but not for pedestrians movements (winter), for chairs as well.
- Not go beyond standard 5' distance?, meandering
- Include frequency and bus service
- Triage
- Hourly routes no benefit, look at the big picture. Eliminate and put resources into other routes with more frequency.
- Accessibility and benefits
- Reallocation. Value of transit – transportation option throughout the city
- System that is efficient – shuttles, use shapes, create more flexibility and hours of access.
- Build capacity for people to use.
- Stops with same (?).
- Mid-town not well articulated pedestrian plan which minimized use of attached s/w. Not meandering.
- Where would point to point make a difference vs. fixed route service.
- Snow removal in ROW – better code enforcement
- TMP – 3 big events
- Include funds
- Climate change
- Aging population
- Will change structure of how we think about transportation
- Transport expand scope and vision beyond buses – other sized vehicles they compliment existing system. A fully integrated “multi-modal” service itself.
- Consideration for voice – ability to ‘hear’ vehicles coming. Passenger safety enhancement act.
- The better the multi-modal system, the better it will be to drive.
- Continued efforts with better traffic flow with consideration of modes
- Accommodate all vehicle types (2, 3, 4 wheeled)

- Impact fees need to cover I/S improvements due to increased capacity.
- Use better models of traffic flow – non-infrastructure type solutions. (ITS)
- Tax drivers/congestion tax.
- Consider roundabouts (less costs, increased movement, increased safety), better separation of modes.
- L.A. – pay into technology fees in lieu of building extra lanes, capital improvements. AT&T
- As new technologies are introduced for modes of transportation, for example electric cars and mopeds, we need to consider multi-modal usage of travel ways.
- Our current roads and the space dedicated to this can be redesigned. Safety is an important consideration.
- Maybe a lane dedicated to mopeds and scooters can be developed.
- We need to think how these different vehicles will safely travel roadways together. For example, delivery trucks and mopeds and bicycles.
- One dedicated lanes are currently used for car pool lanes.
- Look at solutions that are already being used and replicate them for target populations. For example, Care-A-Van/Saint utilizes a solid scheduling system and volunteers to service seniors needing transportation. Consider replicating this for others who need transportation – getting to work or school. We have a generous community that is willing to volunteer. We can utilize systems in place already for connecting volunteers with those who need rides.
- Build a round-about at Overland and Drake!
- Increase fines for bicyclists who do not follow the rules of the road.

Poudre River, May 3, 2010, 5:30 - 7:00 p.m.

Participants: 20

NOTE: This focus group touched on some of the policy questions being addressed in Phase 2. Recorder did his best to record each topic, but it is possible a few points are missing due to multiple conversations.

Big themes of this focus group:

- Develop defined policy for access and development (not one-size-fits-all, address by districts, and customize according to objectives, including floodplain protection, absolute approach may not work). Put in unified document.
- Development on one side of the river might balance habitat, access, and aesthetics and avoid urbanization of the river.
- Overcome river as barrier or boundary.
- Integrate Old Town, but address what this looks like with regards to flows.
- Address the College/river wildlife habitat barrier.
- Improve instream flows, purchase water for release, address water quality.
- Trail system is great, but amenities are lacking.
- Recognize/carry forward the 1997 City Plan “highest rated image/desired community character” of Poudre River.

Topics Addressed:

Stream Flow

- Why? What do we mean by “benefits we want to receive”?
 - Integration of people for both the people and the habitat.
- Mechanics?
 - If Glade is built water is not release back into the river? The water is not piped down.
 - Horsetooth would no longer be going down the river thru Carter Lake.
 - Advance support of in stream flows for kayaking.
 - Angling – this is a unique amenity.
 - Seasonal Trout fisheries

Interpretation of the River

- Do not paint the river with one brush.
- Development may have an interest in specific areas, such as Shields to Mulberry (University).
- River is a barrier/boundary in Downtown and needs to be integrated. Need better access North Shields.
- Existing infrastructure plans such as Ranch Way feeds.
- DDA plans for Jefferson Street, changing the original commercial district.

Historical Elements

- Data to be built
- Areas arising out of the floodplains
- Zoning districts allowing development closer to the river.
 - College to Lincoln
 - Areas of development go to 300' within the river.

Cities Investment

- College to Lincoln
 - Parts of the city are in the county; example trailers.
- With the 100' buffer, what type of problems is involved?
 - Bottleneck under College. City owned property in the Swanson area.
- Would buffer reductions help?

Wildlife Corridor Triggers

- Urban Situation
 - Bird habitat constraints. Wherever the river narrows, we see fewer birds. Many birds will not nest where the river narrows.
 - College is tough for a wildlife corridor
 - Responsibility for mountain lions?
- What would College design solution look like?
- What is the goal for habitat?
- Observe motion sensors?

City Plan

- Photograph determined what the people wanted, in handout format.

What is the accuracy of Loomis study?

Urban Form/Nature

- Design was not a place to have fun or recreate
- Steamboat and Durango – river runs parallel vs Fort Collins diagonal
- Bike trails were installed.
- Public benches do not have backs; they should face the river.
- Careful planning working with the river.
- Bicycle trails – bench – we mapped where the benches were placed – many were not installed to look at the river
- Habitat protection
- Not good for passive recreation.
- Closeness makes the river passive.
- Fabric of the community.

Suggest a bigger issue

- 1) Why would we have 10 cfs year around?
- 2) Why did the River dry up before? For people? Then the mechanics are important.
- 3) Trail – should go to the river to experience the river and move away the bike path

Our trails

- Have many people - 0.5 Million people per year use the corridor.
- Our plan did not integrate people with the river so we end up with situations we do not want.

Pine Ridge Example

- If managed it different what criteria would you include?

City Rented Water

- 1) Be local, buy local, security
- 2) On the other hand it is talking about taking water away from our agriculture.
- 3) Nearly all of the producers count on owned and rental water
- 4) Implications go beyond food production
- 5) Wildlife habitat associated with tail water, ditches, and reservoirs.
- 6) Water sharing between agriculture and municipal uses. It is more possible to share water by arrangements. We have just begun to explore the option of working together. Projects like Glade may not have to be built.
- 7) Dangers in trading rental water. Exchanges may be better.
- 8) Farms going out of production.
- 9) Goals and consequences. Are there more senior water rights? Thornton?
- 10) NCWCD it is possible to change the delivery of established diversions.
- 11) How much water does it take to kayak park? ¼ mile of features? Can it be created with narrower areas?
 - o An outside firm engineer the park at one of the locations, with areas of hundreds cfs.
 - o Operation is not year around.
 - o Kayak plan is still pending. Located upstream of College. Lake Canal diversion area. The location had to be up stream of the brown field. We do not know who owns the bottom of the river at that location.

Miscellaneous

- The Oxbow Park study is now pending and is still a city work session.
- Park theme option: One city has a bicycle veldrome and music venue at the same park.
- Heritage Corridor could be revived.
- Plans are subjective. In 1995, Susan Kirkpatrick declared 'the year of the river.' For example – set back, floodplain, fringe. They are still looking at the set backs.

Themes

- 1) How do we develop an interface with the river with the people that is pleasant, respects the natural quality and photo image
- 2) Interpretation
- 3) In stream flows; what is the flow
- 4) Absolute approach is not effective; we need compromise.
- 5) A lot of planning has gone into the river corridor, including a fabulous trail system.

Park Service Funding

- The city is working with other cities.
- A bit of money for interpretation

Four areas to know the ground rules and get precise are;

- Recreation, habitat, history, development areas.

Downtown Development

- College – Mulberry; if a proposal came in on the Link N Greens development, there may not be enough on the wildlife corridor. There is a policy for dedicated public access.
- There is not enough definition on designing the characteristics of the transition of wildlife and development.
- Knowledge and understanding needs to be translated to a plan.

100 years planning

- Where do we want to be? We want this to be a permanently-reserved corridor.
- We need to help address the boundaries. If some person that has to deal with property could be an issue.

Sites

- Link N Greens
 - Elevate?
 - You could go back 300' (buffer) and still have a set back.
 - The city has developed a plan for infill development – seems like a great opportunity.
 - Excluding the floodplain could be an issue making the buffer of 1000'.
 - The floodplains can be built in.
- A part of our community (Mulberry Wastewater Plant) -- Site with kiosks (like DWRF) does. The new facility may not have a bad odor.
- Keefer concrete facility would be a good spot for a restaurants or other. What would be the pros and cons of that property?
 - Southside of Ranch Way.
 - Policy? 1833 hours Could we adopt a policy??
 - Density of SW – batch plant?
 - Density or height?
 - Ranch Way feeds – 7 stories, power plant – do you allow 3 or 4 stories?
 - Is a parking structure allowed?
 - Step up may be feasible
 - DC limits the heights for monuments. Like the idea of the bulk of buildings down
 - No visual access to the river. Given it should be appreciated you should be able to see it.
 - Mishawaka is the only place to eat on the river.
 - Properties development/ private sector
 - Power plant location – there are some places but some areas have too much overgrowth.
- Does the city have any plans that ID the different interfaces along the river (e.g. Longmont – river restoration – defined different reaches)? Such as the suburban and urban reach.
 - Many areas along the river that are city, county, downtown and/or river improvement plan are not on one unified document.
 - Recommendations are to have one unified document.

Mission Statement

- Need a broader encompassing statement?

In the BFO offer, it has been requested to have a river master.

- He or she would work to have a systematic approach – more integrated idea!
- George Varra understands the life of the river.

Stream flow success

- City policy - see a goal or a numerical value.
- The shut down of Young's Gulch?
- Hydrographs through the winter. Down, run off, and etc.
- A community should appreciate the natural flows in the river.
- Should be grounded in the history.

- Reference the a few years that the river was high.

City Utilities

- Are there others that should be brought in?
 - George Varra
 - Dennis Bode
 - Susan S
 - Property Owners along the river
 - Parks service
 - Trout Unlimited

Evaluations / Overall topics covered this evening

- Boundaries
- Access / development / more defined policy
- Integrating old town / what that looks like / flows etc
- Habitat for wildlife corridors – how to deal with College
- Development on one side of river
- Water Quality
- Look at examples of other cities
- What is Greeley doing on the river?

Pubic Service

- Natural areas program is updating the plan for the river.
- How do we manage the plans of the river?

Last – what will we do with the information?

- Comments will be posted on www.fcgov.com/planfortcollins
- Council will also get a copy.
- Will be posted on the web within the next 10 days.
- Boards and commissions distributed. The draft will be posted on the web site.

Other

- Discussion of policy document -- more specifics will come out of this work.
- Emphasis on the Poudre Fort Collins to Windsor bike trail
- Snapshot report on water conservation raises some concerns on how the document reported issues like conservation. Questions on the report for NISP
- The impacts of NISP on the river; ideas were expressed in our comments on the DEIS.
- Junk yard concerns/on county property. A developer is interested in purchasing the property.

Resilient Economy, May 3, 2010, 7:30 - 9:00 p.m.

Participants: 10

Big themes of this focus group:

- Coordinate with other organizations on workforce training, maybe a better role for others.
- Businesses: Address entitlement process, possible special process for desired businesses? Targeted industry focus. Plan for vacant big box areas and mall.
- Incentives: City has limited ability to use; if used should be for certain businesses or geographic areas of the community. Be careful of reducing development standard that impact quality of life.
- Retailers: Recognized as revenue driver, at least for now, and probably not changing soon. Focus on mall and buy local to counter regional trends.
- Jobs/housing balance important.
- Jobs are important, especially targeted industries. Be thoughtful about companies.
- Resourcing Our Future: Important to consider options for revenue.
- Other: Need other “unique” districts in Fort Collins, not just Downtown.
- Measure “healthy economy” with indicators. Don’t lose momentum or vision of economic development issue in past five years.

Other Topics Addressed:

1. *Work Force Training*

- There were questions of the most effective role of the City in work force training; it’s a better role for community colleges, Poudre School District and business. An example is the 21st Century effort that is underway.
- A possible City role is to highlight work force training activities of others in the City’s marketing materials as the City talks to new businesses (website, etc.) Another role might be to coordinate with others.

2. *Land Ready for Business*

- An important factor for many businesses is the time that it takes to get through the entitlement process. Some cities have special development review procedures for certain desired businesses or areas of their community.
- The City should consider pre-entitlement options, such as creating lots; reducing development fees, etc.
- Target these new options at targeted industries or other uses/areas of the community which are high priority, for instance, the mall, N. College area, and Mid-College area. Need clear strategies for landing the big users.
- The City’s development review center has been working well to reduce time; there still appears to be some delays due to disagreement between departments on certain issues.
- Vacant big boxes should be considered a “land ready” development option. City should do some planning for these areas.
- Create an “ombudsman” in the City that could aid special projects through the development process; have decision-making authority to resolve disputes. Loveland and Lakewood have similar positions.
- Investigate having a guaranteed timeline for how long a project is in the development process e.g. 65 days or less.

- - Incentives have unintended consequences. For example, the use of TIF for the King Soopers grocery store on N. College may put the existing Albertson store out of business.
- Incentives are best used for existing businesses and small businesses.
- Question use of incentives for retail; others believed that retail is so important to the revenues of the City that incentives for some retail is fine ex. redevelopment of the mall.

3. Incentives

- Some questioned spending tax dollars on infrastructure.
- Reality is that the City does not have the \$ for incentives to compete with many other communities.
- Incentives sends a welcoming message to businesses.
- City incentives are not just limited to \$; they also include marketing efforts, special development review procedures, problem solving assistance, etc.
- Target incentives at certain businesses or areas of the community.
- Don't reduce our development standards that impact quality of life. We don't lose any businesses because of our standards.

4. Retailers

- Retail is the revenue driver for the City until a new revenue method is found, which is probably not going to happen in the short term.
- Paradigm shift in retail sales; inflow is slowing over time as adjacent communities get their own stores. City needs to have a strategy to counter this trend...mall?
- Buying local should be encouraged. Need to encourage/support local food producer e.g. preservation of agricultural lands and building a community market, which will attract customers from the region.

5. Jobs/Housing Balance

- - Its important for many reasons to maintain a healthy balance of jobs and housing.

6. Primary Employment

- Primary jobs are critical to the economy.
- The term primary jobs is outdated; needs a new definition.
- Targeted industries are important to pursue.
- Need to align the City's activities with CSU ex. Super clusters. City might need to be more aggressive in its "attraction" activities.
- Need to be thoughtful about attracting businesses that just end of leaving after a short time.
- Primary jobs has a downstream impact on retention, expansion, incubation and attraction.

7. Resourcing our future

- City needs to consider a transportation utility fee to pay for local roads; focus sales tax on arterials/collectors that will then be partially paid for by visitors.
- Investigate reallocation of natural areas \$ for maintenance, although the available funds may be limited by existing financial commitments and ballot language What is long term plan for maintenance of natural areas?
- Sales tax proposal has merit.

Other

- Need to learn from our experiences in economic development (both successes and failures).
- The City has shown great leadership in downtown, Mason Corridor, North College, Harmony Road, and more recently Mid-College. The demise of the DDA over time is a threat to the health of downtown; special attention should be given to the area between College and Mulberry along the river (river district, Link n Greens, etc.) in terms of development and redevelopment opportunities. Need to have other “unique” districts in the community that can contribute to the economy.
- Care needs to be taken on how we measure a health economy. Recognize our assets/strengths (ex. Forbes magazine) and deficiencies/weaknesses (ex. the City does not have a lot of \$ to spend).
- Important to have a set of economic indicators. They should not just measure “growth”, as there are other unintended consequences e.g. job loss and growth, unemployment, per capita income, income distribution, etc. People will move here regardless of economic development activities. Leverage the Community Scorecard to tell our story. Use Triple Bottom Line. Build a model
- Support for retention and expansion of jobs.
- Take a look at Boulder. They appear successful at attracting desirable jobs.
- Need to benchmark the City’s efforts and successes against other similar communities.
- Need to understand economic benefits of work at home e.g. “companies of 1” and retirees.
- Economic development is a new issue for City...past five years. Don’t lose the momentum or the vision.