Dec. 11, 2014 Listening Session Summary

Date: Thursday, Dec. 11 at Twenty-Ninth Street Community Room, 5 -7 p.m.
Attendance: 33

Meeting Objectives:

- For city staff to listen, answer questions, and provide information to community members about all aspects of the Envision East Arapahoe project.

Format/Agenda

1. Welcome, quick description of format (informal) – 5 minute overview
2. Staff introductions
3. Project purpose, origin, and basic facts
4. Full group Q&A
5. Breakout group conversations

Full Group Q&A

- Bike path connection shown on the connections plan – what is the status of these connections
- Project timeline
- Council meeting in Feb. – it's purpose
- Is the plan already set; has council already picked a preferred option?
- BRT and RTD's plans for regional transportation

Table Conversations

Table 1

- Flatiron Park employees would like more retail options and more transportation options along the corridor
- Zoning should attract small businesses/be more affordable than downtown.
- Need more robust public transportation to reduce the need to commute.
- Relaxation of zoning in Flatiron Park to allow mixed use for employees to walk to.
- There have been attempts to allow other uses and it was the economics that impacted success.
- There's a demand that's not allowed by zoning.

- Black Belly restaurant has been a success and the housing population is alread dense enough to support it.
- Last-mile connections would be good. B-cycle is great.
- Would like to see more housing in the area.
- More biking - needs to be safer and more accessible.
- Bike path on the golf course side.
- Better last-mile connection North-South from transit stops (i.e. Pearl East and Flatiron Park).
- Would like to see housing in the corridor and transportation options to support residents and employees.
- Similar to North Broadway - walkability and infill development.
- Housing north of Arapahoe is necessary but south of Arapahoe is already dense.
- 55th and Arapahoe (SE) needs redevelopment - there's potential there.
- Mixed use housing/town houses is a great idea.
- Restaurants/retail to walk to north of Arapahoe
    - Need pedestrian infrastructure.
    - Trouble crossing (to go North) at 55th and Arapahoe.
- Need a better pedestrian experience.
- Traffic at the hospital - need better traffic control there.
- Would like to see city createa a complete pedestrian experience - not just pieces.
- Industrial services (i.e. car service shop) is nice to have walking distance from home but wouldn't mind seeing auto dealerships leave.
- Signal priority for buses.
- Easier for people to commute to the corridor thorugh transit options.
- Flood concerns along Arapahoe.

Table 2

- A lot of traffic on Arapahoe
- Worst fear is a canyon of big buildings.
    - Blocks views of mountains.
    - Do not like buildings too close to the road.
    - Tree lined boulevard a plus.
- Sidewalks on Arapahoe are very bad - especially on the south - not continuous.
- Underground utilities desired - utility poles
- Sewers in the area need to be addressed.
- Do not take car lanes away for bikes.
- Boulder Chamber supports the idea of 15-20 minute neighborhoods.
- Traffic in Wendys/Ozo/Liquor Store parking lot is quite heavy - not easy to walk to, both crossing Arapahoe and walking in parking lot.
- MacArthur left turn onto Arapahoe is difficult and dangerous.

- Train whistles are very loud and disturbing with windows open at night.
- Independent living facility would be desirable in the area.
- Some people's physical abilities restrict them to cars only.
- Two lanes in and out of Boulder on Arapahoe creates a bottleneck for commuters leaving town.
- Concerned about BRT on Arapahoe
    - ROW may not be wide enough. Where will it go?
    - RTD's plan still seems very unclear.
    - Park-n-Ride near 75th desirable.
    - RTD should not create more bottlenecks - find a way to get commuters all the way in to town.
- New CDOT improvements east of 63rd did not make things better.
- Area is lacking restaurants.
    - disagreement, there are already restaurants.
- Partner with area landowners to improve landscape, look and feel.
- Current buildings house small businesses - what will happen to them?
    - Could totally change the feel of the area.
- Concern about large housing north of Arapahoe near railroad tracks.
- Golf course? Is housing planned here?
    - Set this aside entirely for parks and recreation.
- Do not like "affordable housing" that is not truly affordable
    - Upper middle/high end, not for families.
    - No net gain for the community.
- East Arapahoe has low crime - worried what could happen with a lot of new development
- New buildings unlikely to go between existing ones - likely to replace existing buildings.
- Naropa would like to plan for the future with minimal impact - would like students to be able to walk during the day.
- Crossing Arapahoe has become very difficult.
- The more people who ride bikes = the less who will drive cars.
- You cannot currently bike on Arapahoe - many gaps in the bike network.

Table 3

- 2 year project at Arapahoe and 63rd created a bottleneck.
- Plan to improve or alleviate the gridlock?
- Concerned about traffic because Arapahoe is still congested and will remain so even under the no change scenario.
- Transportation is an issue but you can’t build your way out of it
- NW Mobility study?
- CDOT study state route 7? What happens around 287?
- Process? Who makes the decision? Living document?

    - Response: Council decides but they take community feedback; more of a vision plan, more flexible because this is not within our control, land use changes will likely be more incremental may need to revisit plan if trends change.
- Concerned over conversation about widening of Arapahoe – would be against every city and county plan.
- Does the BRT have dedicated lanes?
- Hard to discuss because corridor is so different from Folsom to 75th.
- Concerned about connectivity for bikes along the whole corridor.
- Arapahoe is difficult for cyclists – high speed traffic.
- Xcel energy plant closing at some point?
- Can this be broken into bite size pieces? Transportation all together makes sense, but land use is unique to areas.
- Volume on Cherryvale is huge – make local traffic only? Would be more pedestrian bike friendly; like no streetlights/no sidewalks – gives the street a rural character.
- Cut off to through traffic?
- Flatirons Park – everyone arrives in AM, leaves at noon, comes back, leaves again at 5; more restaurants or transit within park would be good but zoning doesn't allow.
- B-cycles in Flatiron Park?
- Concerned about height of buildings
- Restaurants are good.
- Flatiron Park Deli is the one restaurant in the park.
- Closest grocery store? Safeway on Foothills, King Soopers at 30th
- Concerned about transportation demand and induced demand from new development; county and city should think about induced demand.
- Concerned about light pollution. 2018 – all light fixtures must be replaced by this time – includes car lots; development done right might improve quality of life in existing neighborhoods and for employment.
- CU East connection along 33rd very circuitous, not walkable. Should have more direct routes.
- Should have/enable development at urban/human scale.
- Need to find a way to make smaller parcels.
- If Boulder Junction parcels were smaller, taller, we'd have less of a fight.
- How much can we extract from developers?
- Smaller units. More affordable. No more impact fees.
- Will transit village be served by transit? RTD connection.
- Arapahoe and Foothills intersection. Any plans to change?
- This meeting is more productive.
- Council at meetings.
- Thinking in decades might seem big but that is the legacy we are building on. Plan for the long term. Eg. 2040 train. Open space. Not like Colorado Springs.
- Cohousing artists currently part of Louisville.