



March 19, 2019

Mr. Joel Noble, Chair
Denver Planning Board
c/o Community Planning and Development
201 W. Broadway, 2nd Floor
Denver, Colorado 80202

Dear Mr. Noble and Planning Board Members,

This letter is submitted on behalf of the Downtown Denver Partnership (the “Partnership”). On March 5, 2019, the Partnership’s Management Group discussed Blueprint Denver Draft #2, and voted unanimously to approve the comments listed below. Members of the Management Group, Partnership staff, and other Partnership members have participated directly in the process through our representation on the Task Force, City of Denver staff briefings to Partnership boards, and participation of our members in various public meetings.

We want to commend the Task Force, City of Denver staff and the consultant team for the incredible amount of thought and work they have put in to the planning process. The process has been highlighted by a bold vision, a thoughtful approach, and a very thorough outreach effort to an enormous array of stakeholders and stakeholder groups – all of which has been embodied in this very ambitious and detailed document that has built on the legacy and foundation of the 2002 Blueprint Denver Land Use and Transportation Plan.

We also want to commend staff and consultants for addressing the numerous comments we shared in the Downtown Denver Partnership letter of November 30, 2018 regarding the August 6, 2018 draft. We expressed a number of significant concerns in that letter regarding hierarchy and priorities, the growth strategy, mapping, the equitable planning section and the Downtown neighborhood context, and staff and consultants did an excellent job of reviewing those concerns and modifying the structure and text to address many of them.

Overall, we strongly support Blueprint Denver Draft #2 and encourage its adoption by Planning Board and City Council as soon as possible, so that its many implementation strategies may commence.

We want to specifically highlight several sections and items in the plan that merit further commendation or clarification. These are as follows:

An Equitable City, pp. 30-45, and Measuring Equity, pp. 53-54 – this is a very important section of the plan and much thought has been given to this. Our primary concern here is how the individual objectives are quantified and what weight they will be given as compared to other goals and objectives. Clarity is essential to avoid this section being misinterpreted in the future.

Growth Strategy – pp. 50-51 – We strongly support this strategy, which rightly focuses growth on regional centers such as Downtown much more limited growth in other areas of the city. It strikes a good balance between fostering smart growth and stability across Denver.



Measuring Our Success – pp. 52-53 – we commend the Plan for setting clear 2040 goals in how we measure our success. What is missing is the rationale for how these targets were established. We believe an explanation would help future Plan readers better understand why these goals are important.

Recommendations- pp. 78-125 - Overall, this section is strong, with many well-thought out recommendations. We want to call out just a few of these that we believe to be particularly notable and important priorities which are relevant to Downtown:

Page 85 – Item 06 - Increase the development of affordable housing and mixed-income housing, particularly in areas near transit, services and amenities; and Item 07, Expand family-friendly housing throughout the city.

Page 86 – Item 08 – Capture 80 percent of new housing growth in regional centers, community centers and corridors, high-intensity residential areas, greenfield residential areas and certain districts (including capturing “25 percent of the housing growth within the downtown neighborhood context”)

Page 90 – Item 01 – Capture 90% of job growth in regional center, ...in downtown and urban center contexts. Of the 90 percent job growth, focus 30% downtown.

Page 92 – Item 04 – Promote creative industries and maker spaces as vital components of Denver’s innovation economy; and Item 05 – Support organizations and districts within the city’s centers and corridors to aid in attraction and retention of employment and commerce.

Page 93 – Item 06 – Ensure Denver and its neighborhoods have a vibrant retail and hospitality marketplace meeting the full range of experiences and good ademanded by residents and visitors.

Page 102- Item 03 – Create exceptional design outcomes in key centers and corridors.

Page 104 – Item 04 – Ensure an active and pedestrian-friendly environment that provides true mixed-use character in centers and corridors.

Page 108 – Item 01 – Encourage mode shift....through efficient land use and infrastructure improvements.

Page 109 – Item 03 – On all streets, priority people walking and rolling over other modes of transportation; and Item 04 – Implement the vision for street types and the layered multimodal network to create complete streets.

Page 110 – Item 05 – Embrace emerging technologies for mobility and transportation safety; and Item 06 – Reduce impacts from development to pedestrian and bicycle mobility during construction.



Page 112 – The reference to Vision Zero is particularly important and is strongly correlated to - Item 09 - Improve safety on Denver’s streets and collaborate with city departments when developing neighborhood plans.

Page 113 - Item 11 – Maximize the use of curb space – often used for on-street park, loading and drop-offs – according to land use context.

Page 114 – Item 12 – Implement transit priority corridors as a strategy to support growth.

Page 118 – Item 01 – Expand tools and regulations to ensure high-quality parks and outdoor public spaces keep pace with Denver’s growth; and Item 02 – Protect and expand Denver’s tree canopy on both public and private property.

Page 121 – Item 05 – Ensure attractive streets and outdoor spaces in all centers and corridors, giving priority to pedestrian spaces and amenities.

Street Types/Complete Network sections, pp. 153-183 – the Downtown context is very fine-grained and often changes from block to block. Therefore, we think it makes sense on many of these maps to provide a separate or inset map for the Downtown area, similar in concept to the Downtown Places map on page 269.

Street Types map – pp. 156-157. We have concerns about how many Downtown streets are classified as “arterials”. We would encourage that more Downtown streets be listed as collectors and the “arterial designation be focused on the “Grand Boulevards” as described in the 2007 Downtown Area Plan.

Downtown context - pp. 264-277 – we are supportive of most of the language in this section. We would like to see a much greater emphasis on provided a high-quality, well-landscaped public realm, with a focus on a robust and consistent urban tree canopy throughout the context. In addition, we would like to see more thought put into the “Street Types” section (pp. 276-77)- The text as currently written implies that all streets have similar characteristics and needs. As mentioned above, there is a clear hierarchy between Grand Boulevards and other streets, at a minimum, and there are also special streets such as 16th Street, California and Wynkoop with a variety of unique characteristics. At the very least, the Plan should reference Denver Moves: Downtown as a follow-up study that can provide much more definition about different Downtown street types.

Implementation Matrix – (Appendix) – this is an excellent way to hold the City accountable for implementation of the Plan. We believe it is important that we be listed as a partner for a number of Implementation policies/strategies, including Land Use and Built Form – General strategies 2B and 2D, Land Use and Built Form – Economic Recommendations strategy 1A, Land Use and Built Form Design Quality and Preservation strategies 3A and 4C, Mobility strategies 1B and 2C, and Quality of Life Infrastructure strategy 2E.



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Lastly, there is no current reference to this in the Plan, but we strongly encourage adding language that emphasizes the importance of taking into account the unique ways that different people experience the fabric of our city, with particular acknowledgment that there may be noticeable variations in how different genders respond to and feel or do not feel included or safe in our public spaces. This is an imperative for building a more inclusive and welcoming Denver.

Thank you for providing us the many opportunities to be engaged and share feedback about this process to collaborate on Denver's long-term vision. We look forward to staying involved as the Draft is finalized.

Please do not hesitate to contact us if you have any questions about our comments.

Sincerely,

Rob Cohen

Chair, Downtown Denver Partnership Management Group