



**Public Works Committee
Meeting Summary**

June 3, 2008

1:30 p.m.

Room 391

Members Present: Johnson, Brown, Lehmann, Nevitt
Members Absent: López,
Others Present: Garcia

Agenda: Strategic Transportation Plan
Denver Water Update

1. The Strategic Transportation Plan

Committee Action

The Committee will have a more in-depth presentation after the official roll-out of the plan.

Summary of Discussion

Bill Vidal, Public Works Manager, and Dan Roberts, Deputy Manager of Operations, presented a preview of the Strategic Transportation Plan (STP), noting that the full plan would not be released until a public roll-out and communications plan have been coordinated with the Mayor's office, hopefully by mid-July.

The STP is the transportation component of Blueprint Denver, which is an integrated land use and transportation plan. The Areas of Change and Areas of Stability identified in Blueprint Denver were used as a guide to determine areas of future growth in trip generation. Community values reflected in Comprehensive Plan 2000, Blueprint Denver, Greenprint Denver and in STP public town meetings, focus groups, and the online questionnaire indicate that we as a community want to develop a transportation system beyond accommodating cars. We want an expanded array of modes of travel that work together seamlessly.

We need to plan for future population and job growth and economic development and make wise investments with available resources, which are static or diminishing. STP offers a map for doing that.

Two cutting edge concepts make their debut in the STP:

- "Person trips" replace "vehicle miles traveled" or VMT as the measure. This new concept encompasses trips made on transit, on foot and on bike as well as by vehicle.
- "Travel sheds" replace corridors as the basic components for analysis. This is the same concept as water sheds- we need to consider how the trips flow into the major corridors in order to fully understand the impacts of any proposed alterations.

Development of the plan involved an extensive amount of data analysis and modeling. Assumptions used in the model are:

- Existing bicycle, pedestrian, transit and vehicular systems (no major increase in lane miles).
- Blueprint Denver land use changes.
- DRCOG's 2030 regional forecast:
 - 30% increase in households
 - 37% increase in employment
 - 23% increase in population

The modeling indicates 5.4 million person trips per day by 2030, a 35% increase over 2007. Forty-one percent of those are internal, or trips with origin and destination within Denver. Fifty-nine percent of the 5.4 million trips each day will be generated outside of Denver.

What the model indicates through 2015, when FasTracks is built out:

- Person trips are increasing;
- Lane miles are not increasing;
- Peak period bus hours are increasing;
- Peak period rail hours increase, peaking in 2015 with implementation of FasTracks; and
- Vehicle delays increase slightly but we can stay fairly even until 2015.

This analysis indicates that the investments we have made to date allow us to absorb the growth without appreciatively increasing congestion through 2015. that without additional investment beyond 2015, congestion will get worse. Major projects can take 20 years or more, so it is not too early to start planning.

We can make physical changes and operational improvements, but we can't force people to make behavior changes and change their transportation decisions.

The plan document:

- explains the background;
- presents and explains the findings;
- presents the individual travel shed information, recommended actions and costs; and
- includes the appendixes containing the modeling data for each travel shed.

2. Denver Water update

Chips Barry, Manager, Denver Water Department, and Melissa Elliott, Conservation Manager, updated the Committee on various aspects of water supply and conservation. The major point was that the reservoirs are fairly full due to excellent snowpack over the winter, so this year there are no restrictions on water use, but there are rules. "Use only water you need" says it all. We must continue to be vigilant about conservation. We don't know what climate change means for precipitation. Our system needs to be more robust and flexible. We need to build or acquire new capacity as a hedge against long-term draught. The status of the Colorado Water Compact is another uncertainty. We will probably see rate increases. The goal is to keep them below 10%, but they won't be 3% either.

The Water Board is a great group of people, very forward thinking, and they are trying very hard to plan ahead to deal with unknowns.

We have a decent relationship with Denver Parks. We contributed \$300,000 to the sustainable parks effort, replacing bluegrass with low-water grass. We paid for development of sustainable parks plans.

Parks needs a permanent water conservation officer with authority. They have 50 varieties of irrigation systems of different ages. These need to be replaced, and Denver Water has offered to pay 10% of capital costs to replace the system, but Parks must be obligated to maintain it. It's in our interest to help Parks drive down its water use down; it is our biggest customer.

Several Denver parks are currently on non-potable water, and this year we added 6 or 7 at more at Stapleton and some at Lowry. Councilman Garcia asked if Denver paid a fee for this switch. Mr. Barry said he did think so but would check. Sloans Lake Park is irrigated from the lake fed by Rocky Mt. Ditch, and those rights are owned by City.

Denver Water is vigilant about security, but it is more difficult to attach a water supply than you might think. The department is taking steps to increase security, including working with the security folks on the Democratic National Convention. No meter reading will take place downtown during the convention. The manhole covers will be locked.

The forests are ravaged by pine beetles, and more susceptible to fire. The fires create more sediment in the reservoirs, which is a big problem. Denver Water worked with Chris Romer in the State Legislature to give water utilities the authority to adopt a watershed maintenance fee and issue bonds. Denver Water will take the lead in getting all the utilities to pool these funds, issue bonds, and do something about clearing the dead trees.

Denver Water has a target to reduce water use by 22% from the pre-draught 2001 base year by the end of 2016. For example, a single family home in 2001 that used 153 gallons per capita per should reduce its use to 119 gallons per capita per day. The department continues education and outreach, instituted tiered rates, and continues to enforce water waste rules about watering hours, faulty sprinkler heads, etc.

*Gretchen Williams
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06-07-08*