Thank you so much for being here today! My name is Sarah Cawrse and I work for the Community Planning and Development department in the City and County of Denver. We are all here for the first task force meeting to kick off the Advancing Equity in Rezoning Project!
So, what will we cover today? There will be three main components of the meeting:

1. We will start with an introduction to the project and then an ice breaker for us all to get to know each other.
2. We will discuss the project framework, so everyone is aware of what the project is all about and the schedule for it.
3. Then we will have a breakout session and large group discussion.
• Why are we, the city, doing this project to update the rezoning process?
• First, we recognize that the city is evolving.
• Development and change has been happening.
• And we have heard from community members like yourself that some improvements can be made, especially to the rezoning process.
Second, citywide goals need to be implemented. In 2019 we adopted new citywide plans that set the vision, priorities, and goals for Denver. These plans also provide guidance for land use and future development. As we consider how the city is evolving, we look to our plans to see what projects should be prioritized to achieve our citywide goals, especially the goal of creating a city that is equitable, affordable, and inclusive.
• Third, the rezoning process is outdated.
• The citywide plans I just mentioned identified this project as a priority, because the rezoning process is outdated.
• There are more rezonings getting denied because of conflicts of outdated review criteria;
• More applicants having a difficult time navigating the process;
• And more people are showing up, wanting to be a part of the process, but are not feeling heard.
• Lastly, we need you to contribute to this project, to provide your expertise, experience, and perspective.
• We are tasking you with the responsibility to work with us to help answer the question of: How should the rezoning process change?
• Before we move on, I’d like to recognize the members of city council and planning board who are participating on this task force
  • We have Amanda Sandoval, who is the councilwoman for District 1, northwest Denver
  • We have Stacie Gilmore, who is the councilwoman for District 11 and is the City Council President.
  • We have Erin Clark, who is a planning board member.
  • And we have Joel Noble, who is a planning board member and the current chair.
• Next, I’d like the project team to introduce themselves. I’ll hand it off to Kyle!
• Hope you all enjoyed the ice breaker!
• Let’s dive a bit deeper into what this project is about
• So there are two plans I want to discuss.
• The first plan is the Comprehensive Plan, which is a 20-year vision for Denver.
• It has six vision elements, and the first vision element is the goal for Denver to be equitable, affordable and inclusive.
• The second plan is Blueprint Denver, which guides future land use and transportation.
• This plan also identifies specific goals related to equity and improvements that can be made to the city’s rezoning process to make it more transparent, equitable, and accessible.
• This project, as well as all city projects, look to these citywide plans and aim to achieve their goals.
The maps you see here measure what areas of the city might be vulnerable to displacement, what areas don’t have good housing diversity, what areas lack jobs diversity, and what areas have less access to opportunity.

Right now, there are various citywide projects that contribute to achieving the city’s equity goals and strive to decrease vulnerability to displacement, and increase housing diversity, jobs diversity, and access to opportunity.

For example, the expanding housing affordability project is helping the city become more affordable and improve housing diversity.

So where does our project fit in?
• Well, the advancing equity in rezoning project is just one piece contributing to the larger picture and one project progressing the city’s goals
Let’s talk about our work to better understand what our Community Planning and Development department does.

Our work can be broken down into two types.

First is the planning work. Our department works with the community to create different types of plans.

These are citywide, neighborhood, and small area plans.

These are all policy documents that set the vision and framework under which future decisions are made. For example, they may identify development intensity or the desire for more parks and open space.
The second type of work is our regulatory work.

This includes creating new or updated rules and regulations that inform land use or development.

For example, how tall buildings can be and what uses can occur within that building.

One of our biggest tools informing development is zoning, which provides a more prescriptive and quantitative approach to the city’s built environment.
• Where does our project fit in?
• Our project is a regulatory project intended to help implement goals already identified in our plans.
• The outcome will be a text amendment to the Denver Zoning code.
We understand the importance of community engagement, and have identified five main goals for engagement and outreach:

1. Educate you and the broader community on the reason for the project, importance of participation and engagement, the process for decision making, and the potential impacts of project outcomes.
2. Engage a broad cross-section of community members.
3. Engage historically marginalized, underrepresented, and hard-to-reach communities and empower them to have a meaningful role.
4. Build trust between all participants by creating a space to listen and address questions and concerns.
5. This will be especially important for us working together.

- Inform the community by distributing accurate, objective, and timely information that’s accessible and understandable
- Foster an understanding of land use regulations and the rezoning process
- Solicit input and feedback to ensure key issues, interests, and needs are integrated into the process and project outcomes
- Build awareness of how feedback is used to inform outcomes
Now, we will go over some of the types of outreach that we will be doing.

This is not an all-inclusive list, but includes some of the major components of the outreach planned for the project.

For general communications, we will use our project webpage, newsletters, and social media to spread information about the project, updates, and announcements for events/meetings.

In terms of the task force, we are planning to meet monthly.

Because of the impact this project will have on city council’s work and planning board’s work, we will be doing frequent briefings and info items.

For broader outreach, we plan to do several community meetings and have other touch points such as surveys.

Lastly, for focused outreach we will convene focus groups and have office hours.

Those were the main components planned for outreach.

Now, let’s talk about the schedule.
• This project will be about a year-long project
• And will involve several phases, starting with the....
• You will be involved in monthly task force meetings that will occur throughout the first six phases of the project
• You will help us by providing feedback and reviewing best practices, identifying key issues, and refining alternatives and recommendations.
• We plan to have three community meetings, one in the spring, summer, and fall
• As I mentioned, there will be other opportunities for community engagement throughout the duration of the project
To understand the rezoning process, we must understand the role of zoning. One thing that we will iterate is that this project is about the rezoning process. However, to understand the rezoning process, we must understand the role of zoning and the difference between the two.
• Zoning controls what you can or cannot do with your property, or zone lot.
• It controls how tall buildings can be
• Their general location, and other things such as parking
• It controls transparency or windows, entrances and other design standards
• And it also controls uses within the building or on the site.
• Right now, the majority of development and changes you see, occur under the existing entitlement or zone district.
For example, if someone owns a property with a three-story building on it but it’s zoned to allow eight stories......
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• Then they can go ahead and build an eight story building....
• So that means 10% of development occurs after a rezoning.
• Meaning a property owner or developer pursues a rezoning so that something different can be allowed and developed on the property.
• Even though a smaller portion of development occurs after a rezoning, starting with updating the rezoning process is important because it involves a public process and requires a vote from city council.
A rezoning is the process of changing the zone district of a property.

- So if that was zoning, then this is rezoning
- A rezoning is the process of changing the zone district of a property
This property could rezone from what’s allowed here...

- For example this property that’s zoned to allow a two-story residential duplex could rezone to....
• Allow a three-story building with retail on the first floor and office on the upper floors
• Again, a rezoning is to change the zone district of a property to allow something different
• There is a process for that and requirements, which is what this project will focus on
When I think of what the rezoning process is, I think of it in three phases, which I’ll describe to you.

The first is the pre-application phase.

This phase includes what happens before an actual rezoning application is submitted.

So, if you wanted to rezone your property, you would submit a pre-application, have a meeting with city planners, and you would be encouraged to do public outreach.
• The second phase includes everything that happens once a rezoning application is submitted.
• So, if you were rezoning your property, you would submit an application, then city staff would review your application, provide comments, and take note of public comments received.
- The final phase is everything that occurs during the adoption process
- A city planner will write a staff report summarizing findings of how the rezoning request meets or does not meet the five review criteria, and they typically make a recommendation
- Your application would then move through planning board and city council public hearings.
- Once at the city council public hearing, that’s when city council will vote whether to approve or deny your rezoning request.
So that was more about rezoning, now let’s talk about some initial goals for this project.

Throughout this process, we will dive into the details, identify key issues, and further develop project goals.

But at this point, we can say this project will focus on three main things and they are:
THIS PROJECT WILL NOT:

• Rezone any property
• Change the rules of individual zone districts
• Stop development
• Change the role of City Council as the voting body on rezonings

Now that we are aware of what the project will do, I want to call out some things the project will not do:

• We are not going to rezone anyone’s property
• Unfortunately, this project won’t change the rules of zone districts
• It won’t stop development. And keep in mind that most development happens by-right anyways.
• And this project won’t change the role of city council as the voting body on rezonings
• That’s what the project won’t do....
• This project will focus on equity
• When we think about what equity means for this project, it could mean a lot of things!
• Equity may mean creating a more transparent and understandable process.
• Like do we have understandable requirements for a rezoning application?
• Or do we need to better communicate what the rezoning process entails and how people can voice their opinion on a rezoning?
• Equity may mean incorporating meaningful notification and awareness of rezonings
• Do we need to change who gets notified of rezonings and how?
• Equity could mean providing different opportunities for engagement
• For example, do there need to be other ways community members can engage in the rezoning process?
• Equity could mean calibrating the rezoning fees
• For example, should we have different fees depending on who applies for a rezoning?
• Those were just some examples of what equity in rezoning could mean
• During this meeting, we would love to hear from you about your experiences
• And now I’ll hand it off to Rox to discuss more about your role of being on the task force
**NEXT STEPS:**

- January 26th, 3:00-5:00pm – Optional Task Force Orientation
  - An in-depth educational session about zoning and the rezoning process
- February 23rd, 3:00-5:00pm – Task Force Meeting #2
- Focus Groups coming soon

Please visit the project webpage for updates and other opportunities for engagement:
www.denvergov.org/equityinrezoning

- Next Steps