July – August 2024 Summary of Comments

Draft Amended Plan of Development

Introduction

The draft Amended Plan of Development (Amended Plan) for the Downtown Denver Development Authority (DDDA) provides a legal framework and high-level overview of projects and improvements that can be funded by the DDDA.

The draft Amended Plan **does not** identify specific projects or investments, **nor** is it intended to provide comprehensive policies and procedures related to the DDA governance structure or implementation process. Policies and procedures for both the DDA governance structure and the implementation process will be established in future planning documents.

The draft Amended Plan was available for public review from July 16-31. The city received 22 written comments from Denver residents, property owners, neighborhood organizations, agencies and businesses. Respondents provided a variety of insights and suggestions to further bolster the Amended Plan. Previous engagement included over 1,700 responses to a public survey, which helped inform the broad categories of investment detailed in the draft Amended Plan.

Comments can generally be grouped into the following 6 categories:

1. Project Ideas
2. Values
3. Map/DDA Boundaries
4. Governance Structure & Board of Advisors
5. Implementation
6. Miscellaneous Areas of Opportunity
7. Additional Resources/Planning Documents

1. Project Ideas

Project ideas ranged from activations like DIY spray paint areas to new developments like grocery stores and conversions of office space to support mixed-income housing options, animal shelters and day care centers, as well as proposed locations for new parks and open spaces. Transportation projects to connect neighborhoods and improve walkability, workforce development projects and projects to support tenants and master leasing strategies were also of interest. The city received recommendations that in addition to individual development projects, the DDA invest in infrastructure and site preparation projects to remediate conditions that would otherwise be prohibitive to development.

Response: *While the Amended Plan does not identify specific projects, these ideas have been received and recorded and can be further evaluated during the application process. The Amended Plan does contain "Categories of Investment" which are (1. New development and adaptive reuse 2. Livability, economic opportunity and jobs 3. Parks and public space 4. Arts, culture and activation and 5. Connectivity and mobility), and which would allow the city to consider investment toward the creative and innovative ideas suggested by the public. Additionally, site preparation projects to encourage development will be eligible.*

2. Values (equity, affordability, accessibility, and transparency)
Respondents asked that we further elaborate on values guiding the plan and how those values might align with project selection and implementation.

Response: *The city will be revising the draft Amended Plan to include language that attests that all projects will be subject to the city's existing codes, requirements and performance standards, including those for equity, affordability, and accessibility. The city will also be developing specific project selection criteria during future implementation processes that will incorporate these values as part of the scoring matrix.*

3. Map/DDA Boundaries
In regard to the map/DDA boundaries, the city received several comments expressing interest in further extending the right-of-way boundaries into other areas of downtown.

Response: *Per state statute, a Downtown Development Authority (DDA) must operate within the central business district (CBD), defined as "the area in a municipality which is and traditionally has been the location of the principal business, commercial, financial, service, and governmental center, zoned and used accordingly", which in Denver's case has historically been defined as the area from Lower Downtown (LoDo) to portions of Uptown. The city's proposed expansion of the DDDA area extends throughout this full area.*

If and when the proposed expansion is approved by city council, properties within the new boundaries will be eligible to be included into the DDA, provided the following conditions are met: 1) the property must be adjacent to the current DDA boundary, and 2) property owners must submit a 'petition for inclusion' that includes evidence of full fee ownership. Full fee ownership means the full bundle of property rights free of any obstructions or encumbrances such as liens, easements, or deed restrictions.

4. Governance Structure & Board of Advisors
Respondents also expressed a desire for more clarity and structure concerning the composition, roles and responsibilities of the DDA board. Several groups expressed interest in formal representation on the board.

Ensuring a DDA governance structure that is transparent, technically capable, and has the capacity to deliver projects expeditiously and effectively was also a top priority.

Response: *The draft Amended Plan is not intended to provide comprehensive policies and procedures related to the DDA governance structure and/or job responsibilities of the Board. This will be established in a Cooperation Agreement between the city and the board.*

However, the city has revised the Amended Plan to include statutory language that further clarifies the composition and purpose of the board, which can now be found in the "Introduction" section of the Amended Plan.

5. Implementation
Respondents provided a number of comments and suggestions related to implementation, including consideration of programmatic goals and performance metrics, project selection criteria and

applications, and employment of DDA staff and labor unions/workforces for development of projects. In regard to project selection criteria, respondents urged the city to consider speed of delivery (within 1-5 years), longevity of impact, geographical impact (the extent to which a project would impact surrounding areas of downtown), and how projects are considered in relation to other plans and programmed projects (such as the Downtown Area Plan).

Response: *The city has updated the draft Amended Plan to include a statement establishing its commitment to developing reporting and analytics, including, but not limited to, ongoing project and application data, financial data, and performance metrics/economic impact data. This data may be reflected in such documents as annual reports, a website with dashboard information, and other material. This can be found in the "Inclusion and Project Selection" section of the Amended Plan.*

6. Miscellaneous Areas of Opportunity

The city received positive feedback on the ongoing public engagement process and respondents asked that the city continue public outreach efforts, particularly through the Downtown Area Plan process.

Response: *The city fully intends to continue public engagement for both the DDA and the Downtown Area Plan. The Downtown Area Plan process is expected to kickoff in September 2024. More information will be provided in the coming weeks. Visit denvergov.org/DDA to sign up for the newsletter and stay up to date on the latest opportunities.*

7. Additional Resources & Planning Documents

Respondents shared several resources and planning documents to help guide the Amended Plan and the implementation process, including the 2007 Downtown Area Plan Mid-Point Reflection and Priorities Document (2017), Skyline Park concept plan (2021), Civic Center Transit District Plan (2015), and novel Walkable City: How Downtown Can Save America, One Step at a Time.

Response: *The city acknowledges receipt of these additional resources and planning documents. These will be considered for purposes of both the DDA and the Downtown Area Plan process.*