Findings from DRCOG’s EPA-Funded Smart Growth & Aging Project: Removing Senior-Friendly Development Regulatory Barriers

Planning Commissioners Workshop 2007

March 10, 2007

Presenter: Joseph Hanke, AICP  jhanke@drcog.org

Senior Planner

Denver Regional Council of Governments (DRCOG)
Presentation Outline

- Regional Planning, DRCOG, the Area Agency on Aging, and the Metro Vision Plan
- EPA Grant: Senior-healthy Regulatory Guidelines
- Opportunities to Plan for the Aging
Regional Planning, DRCOG, the Area Agency on Aging, and the Metro Vision Plan
The Nine-County DRCOG Region
Rapidly Changing Demographics

- 4% growth per year
- After 2012, 75-79 increase at 5% per year

**Projected 60+ Population in Denver Region, 2004 - 2020**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Population</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2004</td>
<td>291,603</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008</td>
<td>346,553</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2012</td>
<td>411,591</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2020</td>
<td>575,175</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Regional Issues

- Increasing population
- Increasing senior population
- Land consumption
- Competition for tax base
DRCOG’s Role

- DRCOG is Area Agency on Aging for Metro Region
  - Four-Year Regional Plans for Aging Services
  - Periodic Strengths & Needs Assessments
  - Livable Communities Advisory Committee
Metro Vision 2030

- 2020 plan updated in 2004
- To be updated again in 2007
Key Elements of Metro Vision

- Growth and Development
  - Senior-friendly Development
- Transportation System
- Environmental Quality
- Implementation
  - Mile High Compact
Senior-friendly Development

- Promote development patterns and design features that meet the needs of seniors
- Encourage grid-based street systems
- Provide alternative transportation
- Accessible building and park design
- Larger signs, better lighting
Barrier-free community design

Transportation options

Housing options
Implementation Principles

- Voluntary
- Flexible
- Collaborative (External and Internal)
- Effective – not intended to “sit on shelf”
- Through local government actions
EPA Grant: Senior-healthy Regulatory Guidelines

Special Acknowledgement: National Research Center, Boulder, CO
Smart Growth Principles

- Range of Housing Choices
- Mixed Land Uses
- Compact Building Design (higher densities)
- Walkable Neighborhoods
- Distinctive Communities
- Alternate Transportation Choices
- In-fill development
- Preserve Open Space and Critical Environmental Areas
- Community and Stakeholder Collaboration
- Development Decisions
- Predictable, Fair and Cost Effective

Healthy living
- Access to:
  - Fresh fruits/vegetables
  - Health care services
  - Recreational centers

Active living
- Shorter blocks
- Grid based communities (cognitive ease)
- Wider, continuous, well-maintained sidewalks
- Safe street crossings
- Narrower streets

Parks
- Street furniture
- Hard surface pathways
- Easily identifiable signs and equipment
- Commodes

Housing options
- Accessible/adaptable detached homes
- Accessory dwelling units
- Congregate housing

Universal design
- No-step entry on accessible route
- First floor kitchen, bathroom and bedroom
- Reachable plugs and switches
- Accessible washrooms
- Maneuvering space

Reduce isolation
- Access to:
  - Social services
  - Commercial areas
  - Public facilities
  - Senior centers

Senior Housing Needs

- Parks
- Street furniture
- Hard surface pathways
- Easily identifiable signs and equipment
- Commodes

- Healthy living
- Access to:
  - Fresh fruits/vegetables
  - Health care services
  - Recreational centers

- Active living
- Shorter blocks
- Grid based communities (cognitive ease)
- Wider, continuous, well-maintained sidewalks
- Safe street crossings
- Narrower streets

- Parks
- Street furniture
- Hard surface pathways
- Easily identifiable signs and equipment
- Commodes

- Healthy living
- Access to:
  - Fresh fruits/vegetables
  - Health care services
  - Recreational centers

- Active living
- Shorter blocks
- Grid based communities (cognitive ease)
- Wider, continuous, well-maintained sidewalks
- Safe street crossings
- Narrower streets

- Parks
- Street furniture
- Hard surface pathways
- Easily identifiable signs and equipment
- Commodes

- Healthy living
- Access to:
  - Fresh fruits/vegetables
  - Health care services
  - Recreational centers

- Active living
- Shorter blocks
- Grid based communities (cognitive ease)
- Wider, continuous, well-maintained sidewalks
- Safe street crossings
- Narrower streets

- Parks
- Street furniture
- Hard surface pathways
- Easily identifiable signs and equipment
- Commodes

- Healthy living
- Access to:
  - Fresh fruits/vegetables
  - Health care services
  - Recreational centers

- Active living
- Shorter blocks
- Grid based communities (cognitive ease)
- Wider, continuous, well-maintained sidewalks
- Safe street crossings
- Narrower streets

- Parks
- Street furniture
- Hard surface pathways
- Easily identifiable signs and equipment
- Commodes

- Healthy living
- Access to:
  - Fresh fruits/vegetables
  - Health care services
  - Recreational centers

- Active living
- Shorter blocks
- Grid based communities (cognitive ease)
- Wider, continuous, well-maintained sidewalks
- Safe street crossings
- Narrower streets

- Parks
- Street furniture
- Hard surface pathways
- Easily identifiable signs and equipment
- Commodes

- Healthy living
- Access to:
  - Fresh fruits/vegetables
  - Health care services
  - Recreational centers

- Active living
- Shorter blocks
- Grid based communities (cognitive ease)
- Wider, continuous, well-maintained sidewalks
- Safe street crossings
- Narrower streets

- Parks
- Street furniture
- Hard surface pathways
- Easily identifiable signs and equipment
- Commodes

- Healthy living
- Access to:
  - Fresh fruits/vegetables
  - Health care services
  - Recreational centers

- Active living
- Shorter blocks
- Grid based communities (cognitive ease)
- Wider, continuous, well-maintained sidewalks
- Safe street crossings
- Narrower streets

- Parks
- Street furniture
- Hard surface pathways
- Easily identifiable signs and equipment
- Commodes

- Healthy living
- Access to:
  - Fresh fruits/vegetables
  - Health care services
  - Recreational centers

- Active living
- Shorter blocks
- Grid based communities (cognitive ease)
- Wider, continuous, well-maintained sidewalks
- Safe street crossings
- Narrower streets

- Parks
- Street furniture
- Hard surface pathways
- Easily identifiable signs and equipment
- Commodes

- Healthy living
- Access to:
  - Fresh fruits/vegetables
  - Health care services
  - Recreational centers

- Active living
- Shorter blocks
- Grid based communities (cognitive ease)
- Wider, continuous, well-maintained sidewalks
- Safe street crossings
- Narrower streets

- Parks
- Street furniture
- Hard surface pathways
- Easily identifiable signs and equipment
- Commodes

- Healthy living
- Access to:
  - Fresh fruits/vegetables
  - Health care services
  - Recreational centers

- Active living
- Shorter blocks
- Grid based communities (cognitive ease)
- Wider, continuous, well-maintained sidewalks
- Safe street crossings
- Narrower streets

- Parks
- Street furniture
- Hard surface pathways
- Easily identifiable signs and equipment
- Commodes

- Healthy living
- Access to:
  - Fresh fruits/vegetables
  - Health care services
  - Recreational centers

- Active living
- Shorter blocks
- Grid based communities (cognitive ease)
- Wider, continuous, well-maintained sidewalks
- Safe street crossings
- Narrower streets

- Parks
- Street furniture
- Hard surface pathways
- Easily identifiable signs and equipment
- Commodes

- Healthy living
- Access to:
  - Fresh fruits/vegetables
  - Health care services
  - Recreational centers

- Active living
- Shorter blocks
- Grid based communities (cognitive ease)
- Wider, continuous, well-maintained sidewalks
- Safe street crossings
- Narrower streets

- Parks
- Street furniture
- Hard surface pathways
- Easily identifiable signs and equipment
- Commodes

- Healthy living
- Access to:
  - Fresh fruits/vegetables
  - Health care services
  - Recreational centers

- Active living
- Shorter blocks
- Grid based communities (cognitive ease)
- Wider, continuous, well-maintained sidewalks
- Safe street crossings
- Narrower streets

- Parks
- Street furniture
- Hard surface pathways
- Easily identifiable signs and equipment
- Commodes

- Healthy living
- Access to:
  - Fresh fruits/vegetables
  - Health care services
  - Recreational centers

- Active living
- Shorter blocks
- Grid based communities (cognitive ease)
- Wider, continuous, well-maintained sidewalks
- Safe street crossings
- Narrower streets

- Parks
- Street furniture
- Hard surface pathways
- Easily identifiable signs and equipment
- Commodes

- Healthy living
- Access to:
  - Fresh fruits/vegetables
  - Health care services
  - Recreational centers

- Active living
- Shorter blocks
- Grid based communities (cognitive ease)
- Wider, continuous, well-maintained sidewalks
- Safe street crossings
- Narrower streets

- Parks
- Street furniture
- Hard surface pathways
- Easily identifiable signs and equipment
- Commodes

- Healthy living
- Access to:
  - Fresh fruits/vegetables
  - Health care services
  - Recreational centers

- Active living
- Shorter blocks
- Grid based communities (cognitive ease)
- Wider, continuous, well-maintained sidewalks
- Safe street crossings
- Narrower streets

- Parks
- Street furniture
- Hard surface pathways
- Easily identifiable signs and equipment
- Commodes

- Healthy living
- Access to:
  - Fresh fruits/vegetables
  - Health care services
  - Recreational centers

- Active living
- Shorter blocks
- Grid based communities (cognitive ease)
- Wider, continuous, well-maintained sidewalks
- Safe street crossings
- Narrower streets

- Parks
- Street furniture
- Hard surface pathways
- Easily identifiable signs and equipment
- Commodes

- Healthy living
- Access to:
  - Fresh fruits/vegetables
  - Health care services
  - Recreational centers

- Active living
- Shorter blocks
- Grid based communities (cognitive ease)
- Wider, continuous, well-maintained sidewalks
- Safe street crossings
- Narrower streets

- Parks
- Street furniture
- Hard surface pathways
- Easily identifiable signs and equipment
- Commodes

- Healthy living
- Access to:
  - Fresh fruits/vegetables
  - Health care services
  - Recreational centers

- Active living
- Shorter blocks
- Grid based communities (cognitive ease)
- Wider, continuous, well-maintained sidewalks
- Safe street crossings
- Narrower streets

- Parks
- Street furniture
- Hard surface pathways
- Easily identifiable signs and equipment
- Commodes

- Healthy living
- Access to:
  - Fresh fruits/vegetables
  - Health care services
  - Recreational centers

- Active living
- Shorter blocks
- Grid based communities (cognitive ease)
- Wider, continuous, well-maintained sidewalks
- Safe street crossings
- Narrower streets

- Parks
- Street furniture
- Hard surface pathways
- Easily identifiable signs and equipment
- Commodes

- Healthy living
- Access to:
  - Fresh fruits/vegetables
  - Health care services
  - Recreational centers

- Active living
- Shorter blocks
- Grid based communities (cognitive ease)
- Wider, continuous, well-maintained sidewalks
- Safe street crossings
- Narrower streets

- Parks
- Street furniture
- Hard surface pathways
- Easily identifiable signs and equipment
- Commodes
Study Purpose

To assist DRCOG with research, facilitation and setting progress measures for the creation of senior-friendly guidelines in the Denver region.
Study Components

- Case studies
  - Compile information from local communities in the U.S.

- Developer/builder group discussion
  - Get their input on regulatory impediments

- Public-sector group discussion
  - Get their input on developer’s comments
Case Studies

- Housing accessibility
  - Universal design
  - Visitability
- Home Sharing
- Elder Cohousing and Cooperative Housing
- Accessory Dwelling Units and Elder Cottage Housing Opportunity
- Active Adult Communities
- Continuing Care Retirement Communities
Developer Input: Key Findings

- Understand “active adult” vs. “traditional” communities
- Public works, water and fire departments provide biggest zoning and regulatory challenges
- Developers must educate municipalities on unique requirements of active adult communities
  - Increase jurisdiction’s awareness of older adult housing options
  - Increase flexibility of jurisdiction’s codes and ordinances
- Would like DRCOG to have a continued presence in this arena
Public Sector Input

- Understand the uniqueness of senior communities
- Public-sector departments must work together to overcome regulatory and process challenges
- The public-at-large must be educated on unique requirements of active adult communities
  - Increase public’s awareness of older adult housing options
  - Keep codes and ordinances up-to-date with changing demographics
- Would like DRCOG to have a continued presence in this arena
Making the Land Use, Transportation, and Public Health/Safety Connection
Connection Components

- The Three Senior-Friendly Environments
  - “Complete Community Design”

- The Physical Environment in Detail
  - Sub-environments
  - Issues/Activities
  - Potential Collaborators
Opportunities to Plan for the Aging
Future Activities by DRCOG

- Further explore the effectiveness of ordinances and zoning codes in the Denver Metro Area

- Initiate discussions among city planners and developers on how to include tenets in Comprehensive Plans

- Commence with crafting a standalone Senior-Friendly Development element of the Metro Vision Plan
Future Activities by DRCOG

- Hold discussions with some of the local communities highlighted in reports
- Develop a glossary of terms to provide a common language
- Collaboration between TOD and TDM programs at DRCOG
Many obstacles could be removed through educating the municipalities on:

- The current state of the active adult market
- The market segmentation that has begun to emerge within the industry
- The types of community characteristics and amenities that attract the active adult
Questions/Comments