

INC Transportation Platform

Inter-Neighborhood Cooperation (INC), a volunteer network of approximately 100 Denver registered neighborhood organizations (RNOs), was organized in 1975 to ensure that: (a) residents of Denver be fully informed of proposals, policies and actions of the city government that affect the quality of life in all neighborhoods, and (b) all city departments and agencies solicit and consider opinions and ideas from citizens and neighborhood organizations.

INC and public agencies must work together to ensure that the residents of Denver individually and through their RNOs and other similar groups have the opportunity to engage in meaningful participation with access, standing, and influence in decision-making by the City and other public agencies in matters related to transportation.

The quality of decision-making is improved when residential neighbors have early and meaningful involvement. The purpose of this INC Transportation Platform is to provide a proactive position and collaborative framework in which residents of Denver and public agency officials can discuss policy pertaining to transportation – decisions that deeply affect the future and the quality of life in Denver. Accordingly, to ensure that residents and neighborhood organizations are included as stakeholders in public policy and decision-making processes, INC proposes the following principles and subsequent positions be adopted by the City and County of Denver (the City), the Colorado Department of Transportation (CDOT), the Denver Regional Council of Governments (DRCOG), and the Regional Transportation District (RTD).

Principles

The following principles are intended to serve as the foundation for this platform:

1. The City and other transportation agencies should support transportation improvements that support place-making and livability for its residents.
2. Neighborhoods and citizens should have meaningful engagement in transportation planning and evaluation of tradeoffs that are inherent in implementation.
3. As the city and metropolitan area population grows, our transportation systems need to keep pace and adapt to changing needs. We must ensure sufficient ability to move people of all income levels, ages and abilities by a variety of quality transportation modes in safe, efficient, and reliable ways.
4. Denver's transportation network should continuously evolve to move people safely and efficiently by various modes.
5. Management of our transportation network should be well-grounded in a broad and continuously-updated foundation of data, and that data should be available to everyone for understanding, setting and reviewing mode-share, safety, and other key goals.
6. This is a time of rapid change worldwide in transportation options and technology. Denver should be fully engaged in using the best ideas and smart management techniques emerging in other cities in order to address Denver's specific challenges and goals. The City and other transportation agencies should work with and empower neighborhoods on "demonstrations," "prototypes" and "pilot projects" of new ideas as low-cost, rapid approaches to explore feasibility of new designs and services. The approaches can provide the means to actively and meaningfully engage with the community, often with community leading with its ideas and insights into what the issues and solutions may be.

1. Communications / Transparency

- 1.1. There is a need for improved communications and collaboration between neighborhoods and all transportation agencies and departments (Denver Public Works, Denver Community Planning and Development, Denver Police Department, RTD, CDOT, DRCOG, and others). Communications with the general public on transportation issues is not yet as integral or institutionalized in Denver as communications and notifications on land use topics with Community Planning and Development, and CPD's communications should be used as a model by transportation agencies and departments.
- 1.2. The public needs a clear and effective process for communicating transportation concerns to Denver Public Works, and tracking prioritization, disposition, and progress of both near-term and long-term requests/concerns. This is beyond the scope and ability of 3-1-1.
- 1.3. There should be a source for the collection and notification to neighborhoods and interested parties about street work, event road closures, and other street network disruptions, using a standard, reliable process.
- 1.4. Denver should address the growing fragmentation of transportation-related input being handled through a variety of committees and advisory groups. Few citizens can follow the recommendations and resulting work plans from so many groups. We support the need for each of these targeted groups, but Denver is missing an "umbrella" coordinated point for bike, pedestrian, transit, traffic, and land-use initiated proposals for the transportation network. The INC Transportation Committee would like to assist with this.
- 1.5. When existing processes and projects create traffic studies, neighborhoods should be able to review them with the appropriate city departments and understand their implications. Additionally, Denver should research ways to expand the scope of "traffic studies" to include a more complete view of capacity and delay for all modes, so that decisions regarding changes can take into account all users. For larger projects, the network impacts over larger areas should be considered, which the neighborhoods can help identify.
- 1.6. Denver and other transportation agencies should adopt comprehensive data-driven approaches to manage and improve all travel modes, considering capacity, delay, collisions, injuries, fatalities, and infrastructure quality. This data should be open and available to the public to enable exploration and insights as part of a continuing dialogue on managing the public right-of-way.
- 1.7. Increase information access by neighborhoods to Public Works' and CDOT's annual work program in Denver - street repaving, curb ramp installations, alley paving, storm sewers, etc.

2. Planning and Funding

- 2.1. We request increased transparency and input on Denver transportation project selection and funding. What projects are being prioritized for Denver discretionary funding, Denver Capital Improvement Plan (CIP), DRCOG Transportation Improvement Program (TIP), Federal grants, bond initiatives and other funding sources? How are the city's priorities matched with funds availability? The INC Transportation Committee can assist with this communication.

- 2.2. CDOT, DRCOG and RTD should increase meaningful involvement of Denver citizens in planning, as regular and ongoing practice. CDOT must plan the in-town streets it owns as multimodal urban corridors consistent with their context, not simply as motor vehicle highways.
- 2.3. Denver has a significant backlog of improvements needed in neighborhoods throughout the city, and far too little annual discretionary funding to address these issues. While the limited funding available is allocated strategically where it will have the best effect, Denver should also research options to increase annual discretionary funds for transportation.
- 2.4. Complete street maintenance and implementation of bicycle/pedestrian improvements must be funded sufficiently out of regular general funds, not with occasional but uncertain bond votes.
- 2.5. In any proposed city bond issue elections, citizens and RNO representatives must be meaningfully involved in the early planning discussions.
- 2.6. We strongly urge that the planned update to Blueprint Denver in 2015 and 2016 go further than the original 2002 plan in linking transportation capacity with land use recommendations, placing a priority on increasing the total ability to move people on corridors and in areas where the community-driven plans call for more development.
- 2.7. Ensure that neighborhoods are actively involved in the development and adoption of a more comprehensive “complete streets” policy and design guidelines.
- 2.8. Street and alley paving, street and alley lighting, road maintenance and other fundamental infrastructure and maintenance investments for all modes seem disproportionately neglected in less-affluent parts of the city. This must be addressed to improve equity for all residents.
- 2.9. Implement multimodal transportation recommendations of adopted neighborhood or “small area” plans, as they reflect significant, prioritized input from neighborhoods.
- 2.10. Increase collaboration between city departments and agencies so that planning can more effectively lead to implementation, reducing lengthy and redundant studies that so often seem to be the result of multiple-agency involvement.
- 2.11. Bridges across highways, creeks and rivers in Denver are natural funnel points where people using all forms of transportation must cross. As such, bridges and tunnels in Denver need to have high standards for multimodal access. It’s not acceptable to build or rebuild a bridge only for cars. People on bicycles and people walking must be able to safely and conveniently cross all bridges.
- 2.12. The development review process should include mechanisms that ensure that when properties are developed, the bicycle and pedestrian facilities are brought up to the new standards and not left up to the whim of the developer. Loopholes pertaining to whether or not the project “increases density” should be closed.
- 2.13. Transportation Management Associations (TMAs) should hold area meetings with residents and neighborhood organizations to find identify solutions to important transportation needs. TMAs that partner with neighborhoods should be supported as valuable community advocates in making a difference on transportation topics, including Transportation Demand Management programs which can help identify and implement strategies to reduce traffic congestion. Denver should require TMAs work with the city and RNOs in setting aspirational goals with quantifiable results and in sharing best practices.
- 2.14. Any repaving or restriping should include a study on the feasibility of re-designing to further complete streets goals. Take advantage of the maintenance schedule to move changes forward.

- 2.15. Utilize impact fees based on actual costs and benefits, and other mechanisms, to tie development activity to nearby multimodal transportation improvement needs that further the overall city transportation goals.
- 2.16. Work done by Xcel and other agencies during times when cars are cleared for street sweeping should be coordinated so that the street sweeping will still be completed.
- 2.17. Denver's transportation planning is interdependent on transportation planning in surrounding communities. Ensure that plans across communities are coordinated, while maintaining Denver's ability to move towards our transportation goals.
- 2.18. Wayfinding signage should be implemented for all modes. Rollout of bike and walk directional and distance signage should be accelerated, and street signs should be visible to people coming from any direction. Designated truck routes in and near neighborhoods should be marked and enforced.

3. Safety / Health

- 3.1. Denver should commit itself, at the highest levels, to the Vision Zero goals of eliminating traffic fatalities and serious injuries, learning from the emerging best practices in other cities. This is a moral issue – life and health are of paramount importance, and the transportation systems and features should lessen the impact when inevitable human errors occur.
- 3.2. Safety data, both from crash incidents and from citizen feedback, is crucial for prioritizing safety improvements. The city should, at a minimum, regularly provide information on crashes and continuously improve crash reporting procedures. This information should be available to the public in order to inform decision-making on safety improvements.
- 3.3. Speed control for safety should be best achieved by street design, including lane widths, not simply speed limit signage and police enforcement which are never sufficient to change behavior. Where speeds can and should be reduced, signage may be necessary but is not sufficient.
- 3.4. Evaluate and revise lane width standards and speed limits using a detailed street typology and considering safety best practices from other cities. Where neighborhoods find that safety and livability would be enhanced by lane width reductions, "road diets," street realignments, or roadway, viaduct or highway removals, while preserving or enhancing overall transportation effectiveness, such changes must be seriously considered by all departments and agencies.
- 3.5. Traffic speeds in residential neighborhoods should be lower than speeds on main arterials between neighborhoods. "Neighborhood slow zones" are a promising design/policy response to the safety effects of cut-through traffic. The City should amend its design standards to include speed humps as an option for traffic calming.
- 3.6. When speed cameras, photo-radar and intersection cameras are considered, the emphasis and priority should be on increasing safety, not on ticket revenue. Safety metrics should determine where cameras go, and metrics on safety improvement should be collected and published.
- 3.7. Context-appropriate street and pedestrian lighting is encouraged, including mechanisms for assured maintenance. Revise existing policies that discourage the installation of pedestrian lighting.
- 3.8. Street lighting standards should be reexamined to avoid night-sky light pollution and increase the quality of lighting.
- 3.9. Denver must enforce state laws regarding cell phone use while driving.

- 3.10. Education and outreach programs on safe cycling, sharing the road, and new and novel facility types are important parts of an overall safety program.
- 3.11. Denver should develop policies that prioritize the safety of vulnerable road users.
- 3.12. Damage to roadways, including openings made for directional boring, water taps, and gas lines, must be filled level to avoid creating hazards for people who drive, walk, and bike. Contractors damaging the roads without appropriate and timely repairs, or making inadequate repairs, should be cited and penalized on future bid processes.
- 3.13. Denver's ever-increasing number of potholes in streets and alleys throughout the city pose serious safety hazards to drivers, bicyclists, pedestrians and vehicles and to the quality of life in neighborhoods and business districts. Greater attention and funding for systematic pavement maintenance is necessary. In addition, warranties on paving contracts should be enforced against contractors that do sub-standard paving.

4. Walkability

- 4.1. The pedestrian network is fundamental to making all other modes of transportation possible, including transit and biking.
- 4.2. Denver should adopt measures to preserve and complete sidewalk networks, including flagstone sidewalks where that is part of the established character of an area.
- 4.3. Denver should replace the current city policy that makes individual homeowners responsible for the cost of installing or repairing walks with alternative sources of funding. Leverage the city's negotiating power to get the best value on sidewalk installation and maintenance.
- 4.4. Denver should continue to apply for grants and allocate resources towards implementing the Pedestrian Master Plan's goals.
- 4.5. Denver should partner with INC and the Mayor's Pedestrian Advisory Committee to identify and revise confusing or contradictory regulations concerning sidewalks.
- 4.6. Denver must ensure that suitable sidewalks will be included in new construction projects, and close the loophole that exists when the project is "not increasing density."
- 4.7. Denver should provide more effective education and enforcement of the city's snow shoveling regulations, and should support the expansion and awareness of volunteer assistance programs, like "Snow Buddies," for residents who need help with snow and ice removal.
- 4.8. Denver must find and implement a sensible solution to the problem of homeowners who are required to shovel walks to which they have no easy access (such as mid-block sections behind residential properties along arterials).
- 4.9. Denver must continue to refine and modify its snow plowing practices, which throw chunks of ice and snow onto already shoveled sidewalks and transit stops, to strike a reasonable balance between the need to keep traffic moving and at the same time the need to provide a safe route for pedestrians and wheelchairs.
- 4.10. Transit stops must be a high priority for snow shoveling.
- 4.11. Denver should move expeditiously to create a comprehensive Denver Moves: Pedestrians and Trails plan, focused on actionable policy changes and implementation. The plan should include a map of pedestrian priority streets and corridors at the neighborhood level. The plan should also include improved, enforceable design standards for these streets and their intersections

- 4.12. Some sidewalk café patios seriously degrade the pedestrian environment. Streetscape guidelines should prevent the private claiming of large amounts of public right-of-way when it results in pushing pedestrians against moving traffic, or significantly diminishing the sidewalk. The design standards should emphasize the importance of a safe, comfortable pedestrian realm. The Department of Excise and Licenses and the Public Works Department should be involved to explore ways to limit the permanent claiming of public right of way for outdoor cafes that are only used a few hours per week, seasonally.
- 4.13. Denver should develop improved streetcape standards, options, and funding mechanisms for street trees, pedestrian lighting, public art, and amenities to promote place-making in pedestrian zones and along pedestrian corridors.
- 4.14. Denver must catch up with other Colorado municipalities in making pedestrian-activated flashing crossings an option in key locations where no reasonable intersection crossing is available. Learn from the best practices developed in other cities. Adopt enhanced pedestrian crossings along pedestrian corridors, including use of “Yield for Pedestrians, It’s the Law” signs that are widely used in other Colorado cities.
- 4.15. Use WalkScope data and other citizen-provided data to identify and prioritize walkability issues.
- 4.16. The Mayor’s office and Public Works should empower the Mayor’s Pedestrian Advisory Committee to advise on direction for pedestrian topics that have been persistently ignored for so long in Denver.
- 4.17. Denver should consider prohibiting “Right Turn on Red (RTOR)” at locations with very high pedestrian crossing volumes.
- 4.18. Denver needs to clarify and meaningfully emphasize Pedestrian Priority Zones – these now exist, in areas such as Cherry Creek, but it’s not clear what they mean.
- 4.19. Denver should complete rollout of signal timing changes per federal standards, so people who are walking get the full time required. Implement countdown timers so time remaining for people who are walking is apparent.
- 4.20. Denver should strive for Platinum Walk Friendly Communities designation.

5. Bikeability

- 5.1. We support the Denver Moves: Bikes plan’s primary goal: “Creating and maintaining a biking and walking network where every household is within a quarter mile (5-minute walk or 2-minute bicycle ride) of a high ease of use facility.” The bicycle network should create “bicycle arterial” facilities that connect neighborhoods across the city for safe and reliable movement of people on bicycles. These facilities should be vertically-separated from traffic for safety and comfort.
- 5.2. Denver should work with neighborhoods to prioritize implementation of bicycle facilities, as envisioned in community discussions captured in Denver Moves: Bikes. Focus on the build-out of a network of facilities comfortable for the main population of interested riders who do not feel comfortable riding in fast or heavy traffic. Use data to inform discussions of tradeoffs that are inherent to changes, including on-street parking in some areas.
- 5.3. Denver should complete its update to Denver Moves: Bikes (2011) with enhanced bikeway recommendations as presented in late 2014, which was developed with significant community feedback.
- 5.4. We support Denver Moves’ call for Bike Boulevards (“Neighborhood Bikeways”) where developed in conjunction with neighborhoods.

- 5.5. We support the exploration of bike-triggered signal detection at major intersections where automobile signal detection is already in use.
- 5.6. Optimized signal timing for comfortable biking speeds should be implemented along key corridors of the bicycle network.
- 5.7. Denver and other agencies involved in transportation and community health should support the continued health and future expansion of B-Cycle, and other bike share options that may emerge. Biking for certain trips becomes much more attractive when bike maintenance and security are no longer a concern for the rider.
- 5.8. Work with bike advocacy organizations like BikeDenver and Bicycle Colorado to help establish and reinforce community norms for polite cycling and interactions with pedestrians, vehicles, and other bicyclists.
- 5.9. City Council and the Mayor's office should continue putting budget priority on the implementation of Denver Moves Bikes.
- 5.10. Adopt standards for parklets and bike corrals that encourage their creation without being financial hardships on neighborhoods. There are many health and economic benefits based on these design features and those benefits are not being considered in the current plan for the bicycle corrals which requires the installing businesses to pay a permit fee they would not have to pay if the space was left as an on street parking space.
- 5.11. Denver should strive for Platinum or Diamond Bicycle Friendly Communities designation.
- 5.12. Bike lanes should be plowed and cleaned, just as general traffic lanes are.

6. Transit

- 6.1. We support the creation of the Denver Transit Plan, and call for extensive neighborhood involvement in setting the vision, goals, and approaches in this plan. The plan should set the vision for a transit system that a much higher proportion of citizens will choose to use.
- 6.2. After completion of the Denver Transit Plan, the City should move quickly towards implementation, with public discussions about funding and governance options and best practices from other cities leading to implementation. The Denver Transit Plan should not languish for a decade or more without action, as some citywide plans have done.
- 6.3. RTD should improve bus routes and operations to increase ridership. Improvements in route clarity and all-day frequency should be emphasized and key activity centers should be connected.
- 6.4. RTD should catch up with other cities in providing real-time bus/rail information (not just schedule information) at stops and via mobile devices.
- 6.5. We encourage the rollout of RTD stored-value and pass smart cards. RTD should learn from other cities that have significantly decreased loading time by arranging off-board fare payment and allowing multi-door boarding on all vehicles for smart card users.
- 6.6. RTD should complete FasTracks as soon as possible, and ensure that promised bus enhancements from FasTracks are realized.
- 6.7. The City and RTD should explore the creation of Bus Rapid Transit corridors in Denver to provide enhanced, frequent, attractive and rapid service on major streets without rail service.

- 6.8. Denver and RTD should support the Neighborhood EcoPass program for Denver, as is done in Boulder, by reducing the cost and administrative burden of the program for neighborhoods that are interested. This can also be explored for all employees of key centers such as Downtown and Cherry Creek. No Denver neighborhood has been able to implement the program in its current state.
- 6.9. RTD should migrate to low-floor light rail in order to allow every door to be used by people of all abilities, as has been done in many other US cities, and in keeping with the ease of use of the level boarding on the new commuter rail lines opening in 2016.
- 6.10. Quality, safe transit stops are vital to make transit usable by all, in all weather. Bus stop signs in the mud or ice are unworthy excuses for transit facilities.
- 6.11. Transit stops and stations must be accessible. RTD and Denver should ensure bicycle and pedestrian access to and from transit stops and stations, provide secure bicycle parking, and identify and eliminate other barriers to transit access.
- 6.12. We support lower-cost transit programs for low-income residents.
- 6.13. Denver should explore innovative transit options from both public and private providers, in order to attract more people to efficient modes of travel for at least some of their trips.

7. Parking

- 7.1. Denver Public Works should have sufficient staff to work with neighborhoods facing increasing on-street parking pressure in order to match tools from the Strategic Parking Plan to the neighborhoods' unique challenges and to implement area management programs.
- 7.2. Denver Public Works, after seeking and considering citizen comment, should finalize the Rules and Regulations for the new parking permit programs developed for neighborhoods based on the Strategic Parking Plan's recommendations.
- 7.3. Denver should clarify and consistently enforce rules regarding abandoned cars.
- 7.4. Denver should engage neighborhoods and other local stakeholders in collaboration when exploring tradeoffs between on-street parking and other uses of right-of-way space (bike facilities, sidewalks, lane widths, etc.), with an emphasis on fulfilling the broader city plans for multimodal connectivity.
- 7.5. Continue to work with car share providers and further Denver's innovative on-street parking policies to make car share an even more attractive transportation option. Data should be regularly collected to assess the effectiveness of car share programs in reducing on-street parking demand, and to refine policies and locations based on those findings.