

Here are notes/comments from my reading of "Game Plan for a Healthy City" -- Diana Helper

The title is confusing. Is this The Game Plan or a part of it regarding the health of the city? One thinks it means that open green park space (trees, clean air, respite from noise of city, natural beauty) is seen as the answer to a Healthy City – whereas it turns out to be just a small part of the picture. A Healthy City is described as a well-run city with smooth traffic, housing, business, parking, good economy, etc. and parks*. Nowhere is it Emphasized that the greener a city is, the better is its economy.!

[*at a recent meeting City now referred to this as "Dual Goals."]

The earlier park description is from the founders of Denver, who saw the great value of open green park space as an end in itself, necessary to our mental and physical wellbeing. That is its "activation." The document alludes to keeping the city's historic character as a Goal. Then it speaks of putting many Events and Uses into the parks. Nowhere does it mention that many park use decisions should be returned to vote of City Council, elected by the people, rather than by a director chosen by the Mayor.

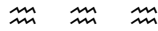
With surging population Denver needs More open green park space, which is not achieved by filling up the present parks with Activities- sports, shows, runs, festivals, especially any events that take up public park space for a ticketed event, any event that prevents folks from using a public park...a place in Nature to stroll, bring the kids to play, read a book. We need More separate sports fields, playgrounds- pocket parks, festival parks built for such events, purchase of land – a process for acquisition, NOT more activities stuffed in all parks. It is not up to DPR to provide space for everything- sponsors, entrepreneurs, partners, can provide it.

"Healthy" also has the meaning of "Green" or "Sustainable" which is not brought to the fore as the underlying *No. 1 concern* to address and on which *to base every other city strategy*.

To follow its own theme, "Denverright," one could expect the document would be set up as it indicates— it must address what is "wrong." For example-- There would be a "Wrong: the present 2000 document allows developers to provide much too little open space in projects, and has ways to opt out entirely." Then a "Right: developers must be required to provide a given ratio of open green space, on their site or immediately adjacent, to serve as ample/useful park space for the number of persons living in, or working in, the new structure. " [need a study of space per person needs to make this process] This format would let us know what needs to change and why.

As it is, there is a lot of redundancy, first just telling the categories, eventually getting to the suggested goals, then strategies, then strategies for the strategies. Some are possible, some counter-productive, and many questions remain on how these would be accomplished. And no over-all No. 1 concern for Climate Change. To make plans for the future with an understanding of what it will become as the earth and oceans warm, more heavy weather events beset it, and how we can meet and work to solve these matters in every city plan, seems only logical.

Finally, there is the Appendix, which might be the best part of the document. It's the 3-year beginning plan of this 20-year document (to be checked/revised in '22). Says focus is on Climate Change (!) and Growth, Increased Uses, Lack of Funding, New Parks, More Programming, drought Resilience, Facility Upgrades. Some of this is inconsistent. Some seems new to the preceding 210 pages. But it is a fairly concise recap of the document:



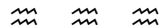
“Adopt to the changing climate and limited resources.” Then a chart with items, what dept. is involved to do them.

“Diversify Parks and Recreation Services” (fill them up, Events!)

“Grow the Park System and Recreation Access” (Expand Programs, Rec Centers – survey showed 80% Rec Ctr. Users deemed them “poor.” Need acquisition process !!)

“Reinvest in Denver’s Parks and Recreation Resources and People” (suggests developers provide more but no “How.” And not say MORE parks needed for different uses. Train staff better.)

“Connect to Denver’s Nature and Culture “ (Add festivals, entertainment, work with Arts/Venues- does not say we need More Parks to accommodate such activities.)



NOTE- Because I have attended at least 3 major meetings about DENVERIGHT at which various city staff presented the city’s “company line” and very well versed, thoughtful, attendees added their points of view, all in a civil, understanding way, my take on this Document includes thoughts from many people. One felt at times that the staff may also have had some questions, and we realize that they are doing their job...and it is vital for us to see what the City is doing.

Major Points to Stress:

-Climate Change is No 1, to undergird city planning with a view of the future situation, needs.

-Developers should be Required to provide enough open green space for ample use by people in buildings

-What we need is More Parks, separate for “other uses” than the main historic reason for parks as a respite From the city, still necessary for peace of mind, physical and mental health, Nature, quiet, activity at one’s own pace, a playground for kids, clearer air, safety, etc.. New parks can have festivals, runs, team sports, paid events. Each kind of park has its own sort of “activation.”

-Every bit of greenery, every tree is needed, beneficial to our atmosphere. None should be destroyed, not without replacement in kind, or improved. Conversion to natural grass must consider that less water also is a loss to the air around us and to the growing things. Trees must be Planted, and all maintained.

-This document is a huge piece of work, taking time, resources, difficult to bring to the public. It is long, often redundant, general, in need of strategy detail, sometimes counter-productive and contradictory. These must be addressed. Most people will never read any part of it, and general comments/opinions will be just that, not formed by study of the very long and hard-to-access document. Many thanks to all the city staff who have produced it, and may take and consider- even adopt- public comment in good spirit.

-Climate First.

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