

ADVANCING DOWNTOWN - LDDA Board Retreat Board Minutes

Friday, February 11 8:30 am – Longmont Economic Development Partnership Office – 1925 Pike Ave. (2nd Floor)

Present: John Creighton; Ex-officio Member: City of Longmont, Jim Golden; Chris McGilvray; Kirsten Pellicer; Joe Perrotto; Jim Wardell; City Council Member, Shiquita Yarbrough
Guests: Erin Fosdick
Staff: Executive Director, Kimberlee McKee; Del Rae Heiser; Colin Argys; Amy Mullen, Emelie Torres

Start: 8:30 am

8:30 am EXECUTIVE SESSION for the purpose of determining positions relative to matters that may be subject to negotiations, developing strategy for negotiations, and/or instructing negotiators, under C.R.S. Section 24-6-402(4)(e). (Possible Hotel Development)
End: 8:52 am

8:52 am **Welcome and Introductions (15 min)**

Ice Breaker
Review of Agenda & Day

9:05 am **State of Downtown Review / Data Collection (45 min) –**

Six main categories per the Master Plan were shown on the slides with corresponding data collected:

- Review of CEDAR survey results & LDDA tracked metrics –
Survey was sent via Cityline and paid social media. There was a mixture of comments from approximately 650 responses received. Below highlights responses and metric report from survey.
 - Positive feedback on the look and feel of downtown – outside seating a plus
 - Great food and ambiance offered by restaurants
 - Connectivity: Not enough parking, loud traffic, access by way of car, walking and biking
 - 70% of respondents were somewhat to extremely satisfied with downtown
 - 20% neutral
 - 10% somewhat or extremely dissatisfied (mostly from youngest or oldest respondents)
 - Most of the respondents were 35-54 old, majority were from Longmont, 12% outside of Longmont
 - More than 70% of people come to downtown by car, the rest walk, bike or use public transit
 - Average trips to downtown – weekly, monthly, daily, yearly
 - Only 32% of respondents have children
 - What brought them downtown – 70% food/beverage, 60% shopping/browsing, 50% special events, 30% arts and music/public library (closed for a while), 20% public spaces/professional services

What prevented people from visiting downtown:

- Traffic – 25%
- Inadequate parking – 25%
- Not enough to do – 25%
- Other – 30% (not specified, homelessness issues)

What people wanted to see more of (in order of votes):

- Shopping/entertainment
- Public art/dining/events

- Free programming/cultural diversity/bike infrastructure/historic preservation/sustainable business and landscaping

Job Opportunities in downtown:

- 19% extremely or somewhat satisfied
- 71% neutral
- 10% extremely dissatisfied

Safety:

- 25.1% extremely satisfied
- 41.5% somewhat satisfied
- 19% neutral
- 8.1% somewhat dissatisfied

What respondents like most about downtown Longmont?

- Small town/community feel
- Local business/dining
- Walkable/history/vibe

Suggestions to improve experience or visit:

- Better and more quiet connectivity
- More shopping & dining options
- Increased gathering space & clean-up

What respondents disliked most about downtown Longmont:

- Connectivity
- Activities/choices/feel
- Need for more services for the community

TIF Review – Tax increment, existing tax base and new tax base metrics were shared.

Chris asked Jim G. LDDA funding model if TIF was going away. TIF is being used as a revenue funding source for capital budgets, improvements, projects, Creative District and A&E to include staffing, GID, parking fund etc. When this goes away it would affect these funds as well as incentive programs.

Graphs shared by Kimberlee reflected values since formation of the LDDA in 1983 to date:

- Total assessed value in property downtown - graph showed growth from \$7.6M in 1983 to \$64.5M in 2021.
- Total TIF - The LDDA had \$1.1M in 2010, amount declined when 50% went back to taxing bodies. Base year from 1982 to 1992 (10 years of LDDA) also decreased the TIF. School District also shared an amount backfilled by State. If backfill from the State was given back to the DDA, funds would also be available in the community and School District would still keep their shared amount. LDDA TIF investments have helped increase it back to \$1.3M.
- Total Sales Tax – Goes to general fund, graph showed a big dip during COVID-19 in 2020, rebounding in 2021
- Building permits and value investments – since 2012, 3 housing catalyst projects and \$3.18M property incentive investments
- Projects in active pipeline – 9 business prospects including development prospects
- Parking permit revenue from 2011-2021 – evident dip during COVID-19 in 2020-2021 and closure of 500 West lot from Spoke on Coffman construction
- Pedestrian Counters from 2019-2021 – foot traffic decreased in 2020 due to COVID-19 and has started to rebound in 2021. A data of revised/shorter business hours foot traffic would be helpful.

Kirsten posed the idea of having businesses collect foot traffic data.

- ESRI recent data showed 458 total number of businesses in downtown based on: Other Services with highest percentage followed by Retail Trade, Professional Services, Government, etc. Lowest percentage was manufacturing.
- 3,763 total employees in downtown from ESRI data – yielded similar data as total businesses in downtown
- Downtown Gift Card sales in dollars – data showed consistent growth from 2011 (\$3,495) to 2021 (\$74, 515)
- Downtown Gift Card redemptions in dollars – 2011 at \$3,986 - 2021 at \$50,228
- Social Media metrics – Overall FB showed the highest number of followers followed by Instagram. Metrics included LDDA and Creative District posts and downtown events.
- 2021 site traffic – top 5 were home page, calendar, shop, eat/drink and Moe’s Bagels
- Top page visits – calendar and homepage, concerts/events and shop/dine

Facilitation questions: Erin Fosdick

1. What is one thing that surprised you?
 - Walking - Walkability of downtown, safety issues and dark mid-block crossings, pedestrians not a priority on Main St. Dark interior of businesses don’t help with lighting when crossing or walking Main St. Traffic safety – cars, train crossing Main St. Erin cited the Main St. Corridor Plan recognizes this. Flashing signals or visible signs may help pedestrians feel safer.
 - Transportation – Elderly may not be used to public transportation, housing affordability is far from downtown
 - Community is pleased with the progress and redevelopment in Downtown
 - Percentage of families without kids
 - Low vacancy rate
 - Desire for connectivity, access, parking etc.

2. What makes you most proud?
 - Adaptability
 - Viability
 - Variety of businesses and investments made in downtown
 - Positive energy
 - The change in downtown over the past 10 years driven by catalyst projects like RPA and SMS
 - Explore best ways to educate residents - It was in the survey, Kimberlee will provide at next meeting.
 - Increase in residents
 - Resilience of businesses over the last couple of years through pandemic
 - Overall level of satisfied positive comments
 - Growth in all aspects over last 5 years

3. What could use improvement and what is one suggestion of how LDDA can effect positive change?

What’s missing in downtown?

 - Figure out online tool to get responses
 - Survey from downtown business/property owners regarding future plans and developments (5years?)
 - Include qualitative data
 - Pieces of downtown areas and attractions people are excited about
 - Parking awareness (help people identify where to park, signage showing public parking), parking is about people (hot to make the walking experience better after they park)

- Include people who could potentially have an impact but haven't done the survey
 - Parking issues (real or perception) need to be addressed
 - Traffic, maybe provide transportation for seniors to come downtown
 - Tracking occupancy rates for residential, office and retail
 - 18-hour day – staff stipend for extended hours, subsidize afternoon Sunday staffing
 - More mobile block parties for seniors etc.
 - Are residents near downtown embracing the lifestyle?
 - Figure out customer base at the Village of the Peaks or other shopping areas
4. What else would be useful to know/track in the future?
- Kirsten asked if data collection on reduced business hours would be possible. Staffing with reduced hours and winter hours are challenging. Would a grant be effective to incentivize businesses to extend hours?
 - Joe – Survey helpful to get data
 - Jim G – Number of employees downtown. How many are remoteing that used to work downtown.
 - Wes – Type of businesses or services missing that would increase number of people downtown
 - Shiquita - Data from other shopping centers in Longmont (Harvest Junction)
 - Chris – Doing a comparative analysis of data shared to look at trends over time
 - Colin – Gift Card redemptions

BREAK

10 am **Sugarmill + STEAM + Slope (45 min)** – Erin Fosdick

- Presentation by Project Team for initiative above, update of market study data and update of work surrounding “The Slope”

Subarea planning is being done, focusing on looking at opportunities and challenges, urban design, multimodal connections, public & private phasing and infrastructure. Slides shown included the items below:

Goals - Housing, Transportation, Development, Community, Sustainability – Community survey was conducted.

Existing Planning Guidance – Existing data and community feedback are important
ULI Advisory Panel conducted a thorough study of the 250 acres land and presented recommendations and key takeaways (available in City website).

Prior STEAM Visioning (2019) with 7 Narratives

Context – current projects, pre-apps

Land ownership – survey sent to current land owners in the area

Zoning

Open space

Streets – connectivity is better on west side

Pedestrian Access – connectivity south of 3rd Ave, East side

Bike Infrastructure – moving people to different areas

Transit – west side served better

Opportunities – build on prior work, gateway to downtown, housing options, open space, pilot projects/best practices (sharing right of way, recognition of all modes of transportation)

Challenges – clean-up work with State

Preliminary market observations:

- Demographic shifts - aging households 82%, decelerating growth - lowest birth rate, more deaths, slower in-migration
- Economy – drivers, housing growth
- Meeting housing demand with a mix of housing types and tenure options – diversity, missing middle, affordability, buy or rent?
- Pandemic divergent outlooks for Longmont’s real estate market – industrial, office, retail
- Flexibility and convenience
- Community Engagement – online presence, survey feedback, graph of appropriate housing types
- Priorities for connectivity – shared mobility
- Appropriate Cultural Hub – live music venue, restaurants and beverage
- Sustainability

Kimberlee added a Presentation by Project Team for above initiative, update of market study data and work surrounding “The Slope”. Sample the Slope event is on March 12 - includes logo, community engagement and t-shirt giveaways to participants.

Facilitation questions (Breakout groups):

1. What are the top 2 – 3 things needed to connect STEAM into Downtown (e.g. physical transportation connections, wayfinding, design guidelines, etc.)

Group 1: *Kimberlee, Chris, Joe, John, Wes, Jim G, Colin, Amy*

- Wayfinding and design guidelines for connectivity especially toward the south and east parts of downtown
- Connectivity, transportation hub, walking paths
- Transportation - downtown loop, Wayfinding, bike paths/lanes
- Sidewalk, greenway, multi-use trail, Non-Main St. to Downtown, Wayfinding/signage
- Housing, Transportation – open space & bike path, bus/trolley (Coffman-Sugar Mill), Wayfinding
- Getting 1st and Boston or 1st & Main Transportation Hub planning, physical transportation connections

Group 2: *Erin, Shiquita, Jim W, Kirsten, Del Rae, Emelie*

- Bike paths to downtown
- Transportation, Create identity of connection
- Continuity – same look and feel of downtown
- Business diversity that extends and compliments the LDDA
- Live & Play
- Single family housing, Engage Longmont, Connect downtown core to The Slope
- Extend bicycle and pedestrian amenities, Enhance 3rd Ave/Main intersection
- Calming traffic/signage

2. How do we best build upon what we have and complement the strengths of Downtown (without causing competition) in these areas?

Group 1: *Kimberlee, Chris, Joe, John, Wes, Jim G, Colin, Amy*

- Performing arts/live music – live & play
- Maker space/food kitchen
- Keep ‘Live and Play’ - walkability to locations
- Housing
- Outdoor recreation
- Connectivity
- Business diversity
- Continue to focus on infill redevelopment, wayfinding and consistent design standards

- Wayfinding/signage
- Added housing could help with 18-hour day
- Public transit/downtown loop

Group 2: *Erin, Shiquita, Jim W, Kirsten, Del Rae, Emelie*

- Recognition and excitement of the area below 3rd Ave.
- Similar look to downtown core
- 3rd-6th blocks get more because of GID where they pay more

3. What 1 – 2 things are most important to make progress in The Slope area?

- Connectivity/safety
- 100 block investments in the pipe will help
- Transportation hub
- Invest in properties - property owners not making investments
- Collect property tax if market dips – continue pipeline
- Improve 200 block by acquiring the halfway house
- Focus on parking options
- Mid-block crossing
- Off Main St. connection – alleys, non-Main St., sidewalks – all on both sides
- Look at recommendations from STEAM – alleys, center medians, access, sidewalks
- Focus on enhancing walkability by placing pedestrians first—address alleyways south of 3rd, sidewalks, make progress with 1st & Main or 1st and Boston Transportation Hub that RTD has designated funds towards, continue to engage with property owners and business owners of underutilized parcels in The Slope to encourage development and investment

4. What role should this Board and the DDA have in supporting future redevelopment in this area?

- Keep consistent with TIF
- Extend Mill Levy to Boston
- Get engaged
- Major role by providing incentives for developments/improvements
- Engage property owners down to Boston area
- Keeping people involved
- Communicate with development – LDDA, Main ST. Corridor, STEAM and Sugarmill
- Investments – flexibility with existing projects
- Engage different interest groups, social media, creative partnerships – private/public
- Continue to plug-in excitement

BREAK

11:10 am **Future of Parking within LDDA Boundaries**

- Review of Parking Study (High Level)
- Review of 20 Characteristics of Effective Parking Management

Kimberlee stated the first parking study was done in 2016 with Kimley Horn. Recommendations for a parking system included the following:

- Shared vision for parking management
- Invest in Staff
- Use parking as economic development tool
- Help people make the right choice
- Maximize existing resources

- Branding and communication a priority
- Adapting a parking management
- Sustainable parking funding
- Continue to collect data on trends and turn-over
- Organizational home for parking

Kirsten asked if there is a movement within the City staff to change parking management. Downtown has timed parking but more revenue comes from outside of downtown. Most of management would be done for downtown.

Kimberlee shared the 20 Characteristics of Effective Parking Management from previous study by Kimley Horn. Parking needs to be a larger City conversation. Consistent philosophy hasn't been a high priority. Parking continues to be a challenge to communities. Downtown surface lots are under-utilized assets. How do we manage parking after these are developed?

Todd Fleming, Business Analyst for the City, is looking at paid parking for the City. He shared information where revenue from 2017 exceeded expense based on 2 parking enforcement staff. Also shared were number of tickets between downtown and citywide.

Chris asked how the changing demographics affect future parking issues.

Jim W added that their customer base said 2 hours of free parking is not enough. They offered to pay their parking ticket. No one has come forward yet.

John added that progress will be slow for downtown, why not make it a pedestrian issue? Plan a strong message about downtown being pedestrian friendly.

Kirsten added discomfort of moving from east to west side prevents people from getting to their location. Crossing the street is somehow difficult for them.

Speed limit on Main St. makes it non-pedestrian friendly.

Facilitation Questions (Breakout Groups):

Erin stated parking codes were updated a few years ago. Residential requirements were not updated. Mixed Use Corridor zoning is now being looked at in the downtown district. New residential developments are now required to provide 1 parking space per 1 bedroom apartment and asked the Board how they feel about maximizing parking in residential developments.

Kimberlee cited SMS parking space challenge with only 1 space per apartment. Based on affordability issues and people employed elsewhere, tenants tend to share apartments thus requiring 2 parking spaces. SMS is now looking at parking partnership with LDDA. There is no ideal solution to this but the market will dictate the need. A parking study submitted to the City by graduate student who did 4-5 residential developments on Main St. based on the amount, required and provided parking, showed that parking utilization was under than what was required. City acknowledges the challenges and is considering shifting requirements from minimum to maximum spaces.

Joe added that rental spaces are more valuable with more parking.

Study also showed that required garage parking are not utilized.

GID benefits didn't require a parking space which now makes it challenging to ask for parking space from properties.

John asked what the real concern is. Under-projecting and dealing with parking afterwards. It detracts people from leasing.

Erin added they will continue to work with LDDA and share coding updates and recommendations to the DDA Board prior to Council meeting.

1. What do you believe should be our Philosophy on Parking? Read options on pages 6-8 in 20 Characteristics of Effective Parking Management.

Group 1: Kimberlee, Chris, John, Shiquita, Kirsten, Colin, Amy

- People first and pedestrians first. It will only work with infrastructure investment.

- Messaging/communication about having parking in downtown will make it a destination.
 - Charge for parking.
 - Offsite free parking options available.
 - Curb/Valet parking, maps, wayfinding
2. On a scale from 1 (not a barrier at all) – 5 (biggest barrier to our success), how much of a barrier is parking availability to attracting future investments into Downtown?

Group 1: Kimberlee, Chris, John, Shiquita, Kirsten, Colin, Amy

- ‘Pedestrians first’ mindset
- Garage on Coffman, need to get word out
- Pedestrian experience is a problem
- Discussion/meeting with CDOT and traffic stakeholders on pedestrian initiatives
- Strategic investments on parking garages which are present in housing developments

Chris thought it is a challenge but doesn’t believe parking is more of a perceived challenge versus an actual challenge when it comes to attracting future investments into our Downtown.

Kimberlee added that group 1 also talked about making Main St/3rd to 9th Ave. a boulevard, becoming a pedestrian district. We need to push City staff and Council members involved at making this a priority as a CIP. Historically, projects in downtown have been pushed at later dates such as the alley work, 1st/Main transit etc. Leadership under our Master Plan includes bringing projects to the forefront.

John added being in favor of resident permit on Emery St. It could be a political issue but this could create a ripple effect that parking 1 or 2 blocks away isn’t bad.

3. What are the top three things we can do to make our parking system more sustainable? Use *20 Characteristics of Effective Parking Management* as a guide.

Group 2: Erin, Joe, Wes, Jim G, Jim W, Del Rae, Emelie

- Better signage/wayfinding
- Strategic paid parking
- Use of technology effectively – ability to find parking, QR code
- Management of curbs better, valet service, parking enforcement, QR codes/business directory
- Strategic paid parking in downtown
- One-Way traffic both ways Downtown which includes angle parking—this will slow traffic down dramatically, look into timing of paid parking

4. On a scale from 1 (not important at all) – 5 (critically important), how important is it for us to make investments in alternate transportation? Knowing that investing in alternative transportation will reduce parking demand, where does the Board prioritize these investments (add specifics if possible)? A. Better transit access/facilities downtown; B. Better bicycle/e-bicycle access/facilities downtown; or C. Better pedestrian access/facilities downtown; D. Other (please specify).

Group 2: Erin, Joe, Wes, Jim G, Jim W, Del Rae, Emelie

- Importance of investing now than later
- Invest in better transit – circulator or trolley
- People want options
- Invest in easy pedestrian experience – safety, direct connections, and traffic calming
- Better bikes/pedestrian access, significant improvements to pedestrian walkability is needed throughout downtown (specifically the Slope), increased investment bike access throughout

- Recommend residential permit parking

12:10 pm LUNCH

CODE UPDATES TO PARKING (Based on Main St. Updates):

1. The City is looking at updating parking requirements consistent with the recommendations of the Main Street Corridor Plan. They have discussed proposing using parking maximums rather than minimums or looking at a reduced standard for residential uses. What aspects of these approaches would the board support? What do we want to make sure City Council knows as they consider changes to parking requirements in the Downtown for residential uses?
 - Chris would support more paid parking and strategically looking at times, code for maximums, a long-term look at making downtown 1-way/lane in both directions to include angle parking off of Main

12:45 pm **Redevelopment Land Opportunities & Use of LDDA/GID parking lots for future development**

- Review land map

Facilitation Questions (Breakout Groups):

1. What are the top 2 – 3 land uses the LDDA should invest in that would not be possible without our participation?
 - a. Answers included mixed use, lodging, pedestrian/connectivity improvements, redevelopment of surface lots, entertainment venues and parking investments
2. What criteria should we use to evaluate which projects be considered for use of public lands? (Highest & Best Use to Fill GAPS in the Market; Bring Employment? Bring Housing? Bring Entertainment?)
 - a. Answers included highest & best use including filling gaps in market, adding employment uses, mixed use, entertainment, Private/public partnerships. We should develop criteria
3. How do we determine what parking needs to be replaced (on-site or off-site) and/or other transportation infrastructure be put in place when projects are built on GID lots?
 - a. Answers included making sure we have off site options for employees, replace parking in other locations, figure out what needs actually are
4. In order, what are the 2 – 3 most impactful projects for redevelopment (DDA Lots, Existing Buildings, Infrastructure Investments, etc. other), what is the project and what role do we play? (Land banking, Incentivizing, Partnering)
 - a. Pedestrian improvements/1-lane Main St.; Surface lot redevelopment; Parking; Land Banking; Medians on 200 Block; Specialty development

1:15 pm **Future of LDDA TIF funding / top priorities**

Review of master plan –

- Individual Report Out of these questions
- Group Prioritization

1. What is the top DEVELOPMENT AND/OR OTHER PROJECT (proposed or not proposed) that should be completed in the next 10 years and, if relevant, where is it located? (Infrastructure, Redevelopment of existing building and/or lot, Specific mixed-use development, etc.)
 - a. Answers included: Lodging; Transportation Hub; Median/1-lane traffic from 1st – LP); S & J Parking; Connect/Enhance 3rd Ave

2. What is the top STRATEGY (Based on our Master Plan of Development) we should spend dollars on in the future and the one thing that will be accomplished? (Economic Vitality, Placemaking & Urban Design, Creative District, Connectivity & Access, Land Use, Leadership)
 - a. Connectivity & Access; Economic Vitality; Land Use; Placemaking; Leadership

3. What is the top PRIORITY we should spend time on in the future and one thing that will be accomplished? (Investing in projects that increase employment, investing in projects that bring more entertainment, investing in bike infrastructure/alternate transportation, investing in more housing, investing in more retail)
 - o More retail and diverse options to give folks a reason to visit downtown
 - o Pedestrian focus, safe and clean walkways, housing, entertainment
 - o Retail and entertainment
 - o Invest on projects with more entertainment to draw more people downtown
 - o Invest on more projects to bring more people downtown
 - o Nightlife/18 hour entertainment
 - o 1st & Main Revitalization Plan realization---1st & Main and/or 1st and Boston Hub

3. Imagine it is 10 years from now and we no longer have a TIF – what has the Board/LDDA put into place to ensure future success for Downtown Longmont? (Project implementation/Alternative Funding/Placemaking Elements /Infrastructure Investments / Housing Investments/ Employment Options /Connectivity Elements)
 - a. Answers included: Pedestrian improvements; Developed alternative funding; maximize Public/private partnerships; successful TIF extension

Kimberlee added that DDAs do a comprehensive management of downtown to make sure it is invested and maintains clean and safe. TIF helps catalysts and public/private partnerships happen.

Chris asked what resources the LDDA could give to public policy and advocacy to keep TIF.

Kimberlee will meet with other DDA's to talk about this during the DCI conference on April 12-15 and will report back information.

Adjourn: 2:32 pm

Respectfully yours,

Kimberlee McKee
Executive Director, LDDA

Chris McGilvray
Board Chair, LDDA