Supporting Denver’s Policy on Equity Through Effective Community Engagement in Safe Routes to School

Source: DPS
Me: Department of Transportation and Infrastructure (DOTI), formerly Denver Public Works.

Until January, with Denver Department of Public Health and Environment (DDPHE). In January, moved to DOTI.

Leadership recognized the importance of the intersection of Public Health with Transportation and Infrastructure.
In the beginning (well, in 1938 Denver), there was redlining.
Equity as Policy from City Leadership

Denver Mayor Michael Hancock launches ‘equity movement’ during State of the City Speech

Mayor Hancock Doubles Down on Equity Platform

2019 Budget Reflects Equity, Access, Affordability and Neighborhood Preservation

DENVER — This morning, Mayor Michael B. Hancock submitted his 2019 spending plan to City Council, a $1.46 billion budget that sets a record for affordable housing funding, will help preserve neighborhood character and allows the city to keep pace with the ongoing demands of a growing population.

The proposed budget will advance Mayor Hancock’s Equity Platform, unveiled during his State of the City Address in July, to connect more people in more neighborhoods to the unprecedented economic opportunities Denver is enjoying today.

DENVER — The mayor declared that Denver was at a “transformational moment in our history” before he laid out his plan to meet some of the biggest challenges facing the city in his 2018 State of the City Address Monday.

Mayor Michael Hancock pitches November vote on new Denver department promoting “transportation equity”

Reorganized public works department is giving new focus to transit, bike and pedestrian mobility options.
Equity as a Policy in our Comprehensive Plan

The plan outlines nine goals supported by key actions we can take to reduce inequity and improve affordability:

1. Ensure all Denver residents have safe, convenient and affordable access to basic services and a variety of amenities.
2. Support housing as a continuum to serve residents across a range of incomes, ages and needs.
3. Develop housing that is affordable to residents of all income levels.
4. Preserve existing affordable housing.
5. Reduce the involuntary displacement of residents and businesses.
6. Integrate equity considerations into city policies, processes and plans.
7. Make neighborhoods accessible to people of all ages and abilities.
8. Increase housing options for Denver’s most vulnerable populations.
9. Improve equitable access to quality education and lifelong learning opportunities.

For our strategies to achieve these goals, read pages 28-31 of Comprehensive Plan 2040.
Equity Index Scoring

The GIS based equity index was developed to provide a spatial reference used to supplement project prioritization and development. The data layer identifies areas of need using variables determined to be critical for locating transportation related projects in an equitable manner.
Equity Index Variables

- Percentage of Minority Populations (3)
- Households with Poverty Level Income (2)
- Education less than HS Equivalent (2)
- Traffic Safety (2)
- Key Destinations and Children (2)
- Populations Age 65+ (2)
- Households with no vehicle (2)
- Female Heads of Household (2)
- Disabled Populations (2)
- Health model (1)
- Language Challenged Populations (1)
Equity Index Output

- Citywide Mean = 44
- Areas with a score of 44 or higher are considered Areas of Need
- 49% of city area within Area of Need (does not include DIA)
- Aligns with other departments’ equity models (inverted L)
Why the Equity Index Score is Relevant
Applying EI Scores to Other Data
Equity in our work is a Denver policy.

Understanding the needs of all informs how we can do this successfully.

How we engage to understand those needs influences our ability to ensure equity.

Listen
Be honest
When unsure, under-commit
Over deliver
Know the history.
Care
Ask, “What’s it like to be you?”
Find a solution that works.
Be honest and explain why when the answer is “no.”
### Engagement Spectrum and Some SRTS Examples

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- **Inform**
  - Safety demonstrations
  - Program introductions

- **Consult**
  - 311 requests
  - School transportation observations
  - Baseline counts

- **Involve**
  - Community story mapping events
  - School safety day trainings at school

- **Collaborate**
  - Safe drop off planning with community
  - Adverse event response

- **Empower**
  - School community coalitions (new)
  - SRTS Teacher Champion program
10 Step Tier 1 Priority Support

1. Identify School cohort
2. Inform Initial meeting and discussion
3. Inform Program kickoff
4. Involve Storymapping, data collection Baseline evaluation
5. Consult Analyze data
7. Consult Recommend Process evaluation
8. Empower Community coalitions Process evaluation
9. Collaborate Travel Plan creation Process evaluation
10. Involve Implement Programmatic evaluation
How does this relate to equity?
Examples of projects

Traffic calming improvements. Plans in process.

A school-wide safety day.

A safe drop off plan built through community collaboration to design the solution.
Questions?
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