

Scope of Services

Task 1: Project Kickoff

We will begin the project with an internal kickoff meeting with the DURA executive director followed by a meeting with other key staff at DURA. This will be a listening session for the Consultant Team to understand the history and context of this assignment, the Executive Director's and Senior Staff's perspectives, potential issues and challenges, the Board's perspective, and the desired results from this strategic planning process. We will also discuss our approach to the first DURA Board Workshop, described below.

Task 2: Board Workshop #1

The next key early task is proposed to be a facilitated discussion or workshop with the DURA Board. The purpose of this workshop will be to identify the major themes, issues, and challenges DURA faces, and to begin to define the initial direction of the strategic plan and areas for the Consultants to focus on in follow up research and external stakeholder interviews. Topics to cover could include:

- What are the major issues and priorities of the Board?
- How has DURA's role changed over time? How will it need to evolve to best serve Denver residents and businesses?
- What is the external image?
- Who are its key partners? Will that change going forward?
- What are the key outcomes from this strategic planning process?

The workshop will be professionally facilitated by EPS and MIG senior staff and recorded with a wall graphic. Interviews – either one-on-one or in small groups – with DURA staff will be conducted ahead of and/or after the workshop as well.

To illustrate the Strategic Plan process, we will create a process graphic, which is a visual display of key milestones including team coordination activities, engagement activities, work products, and documentation of results. The process graphic helps the team, stakeholders, and the greater organization understand the project schedule and the relationship between key activities.

Task 2 Deliverables

- Wall graphic (may be left on display at DURA)
- Summary of Board issues memorandum

Task 3: Ongoing Board and Staff Engagement

This task covers the regular check-in discussions with the Board to incrementally present findings and recommendations, synthesize the Board's input, adjust direction as needed, and build towards the Strategic Plan document. For each meeting, the Board and Staff will receive material ahead of time.

Being three to four blocks away, we are prepared to engage regularly with the Board, but defer to DURA's, including the Board's, input on how often and at what points they wish to be engaged. The description below also serves as an outline of the general work flow in the subsequent and more specific tasks.

Workshop 1 – Board

This is described in Task 2, above. It is the initial "kick off" with the Board to make introductions and begin to explore the vision, priorities, and challenges.

Workshop 2 – Staff

The focus of Workshop 2 is a "report back" on findings from external stakeholder engagement (Task 4). We would also present draft initial findings from the Programming and Needs Assessment and Best Practices research. Input and direction from the Staff would be used to refine and complete those analyses prior to presenting to the Board.

Workshop 3 – Board

Workshop 3 will be particularly important as it will begin to frame the Strategic Plan. In this workshop we propose to:

- Report on external outreach
- Review the Programming and Needs Assessment Analysis
- Review the Best Practices Research
- Discuss strategic plan priorities based on results from external outreach and needs assessment
- Discuss communication/messaging strategy

Workshop 4 – Staff

By Workshop 4, enough Board and staff input, outreach, and research and analysis will have been assembled to use as a starting point for the Strategic Plan. In this workshop we will present and discuss a Draft Strategic Plan Framework, prior to drafting the Strategic Plan.

Workshop 5 / TBD – Board and Staff

In Workshop 5, we will review and discuss the Draft Strategic Plan with the Board. We could return to a workshop format or regular DURA meeting to present the final Plan at DURA's discretion.

Task 4: External Stakeholder Engagement

External stakeholders are important to engage in this process as they may inform DURA's overall priorities, its external communications, and its approach to partnering to advance community and economic development. We will discuss and identify the key stakeholders to engage. Based on our knowledge of Denver, we anticipate that these could include:

- City and County of Denver key departments such as OED, Planning, and Public Works
- Mayor and City Council Members
- Key Registered Neighborhood Organizations (RNOs)
- Regional Transportation District (RTD)
- Denver Housing Authority (DHA)
- Downtown Denver Partnership (DDP)
- Major Business Improvement Districts (BIDs)
- Real estate developers and key property owners, potentially represented by trade associations such as the Urban Land Institute (ULI) or the National Association of Office and Industrial Property Owners (NAIOP).

Senior staff from EPS and MIG will conduct one on one or small group interviews with these entities. We will listen to their input, with structured questions, on DURA's current and future roles, its effectiveness in achieving key policy outcomes, and suggestions for programming and resource prioritization. A summary of ideas on programs, policies, and priorities will be produced for consideration by the Board and Staff.

Task 5: Needs Assessment

The purpose of the Needs Assessment is to identify potential new or adjusted program areas based on:

- How well DURA's existing programs and policies align with the community's goals and values
- How effective current programs are in achieving the desired outcomes
- The degree of alignment between Comprehensive Plan 2040, Blueprint Denver and DURA's current practices.

The evolution of urban renewal is the backdrop to this research and analysis, and the Best Practices research in Task 5. With a history of displacement resulting from historical activities such as slum clearance and blight removal, urban renewal has and should evolve into broader community development and economic development tool that addresses social equity. The social equity lens is very much a component of Comprehensive Plan 2040.

Identifying new programs/priorities will come from the qualitative stakeholder process (internal and external) and more quantitative analysis of DURA's budgeting and program spending, and any existing performance metrics used by DURA. The metrics should be examined to determine how they address social equity, affordable housing, as well as economic development and revitalization. The ROI of specific programs could be examined, to compare the resources allocated to each program to the measured outcomes.

Deliverables

- Memorandum and presentation summarizing potential program areas
- Memorandum and presentation evaluating existing programs and performance metrics

Task 6: Best Practices

Urban renewal law requires the tool to be used in conformance with local plans. With the adoption of Comprehensive Plan 2040, DURA may need to adjust some of its approaches. DURA is therefore interested in how other communities use urban renewal to address vision elements of Comprehensive Plan 2040:

- Equitable, affordable and inclusive
- Strong and authentic neighborhoods
- Connected, safe and accessible places
- Economically diverse and vibrant
- Environmentally resilient
- Healthy and active

We will research the urban renewal policies of selected communities through document reviews and discussions with their staff. EPS and MIG have numerous contacts in URAs throughout Colorado including the Front Range. We will identify specifically how, or if, the selected communities address the vision elements listed above.

Communities have different priorities in how they use urban renewal based on their policy goals and objectives, local economic and real estate conditions, their views on incentives, and politics. It is informative however to evaluate the urban renewal, incentive, and community development program funding approaches in other communities to identify best practices and innovative or different approaches that could be adopted. We may suggest putting more weight on the issues the comparable communities are trying to address, rather than their degree of socioeconomic, political, or physical comparability to Denver. Potential communities for considering could include:

- Fort Collins
- Broomfield (also a consolidated City and County)
- Pueblo
- Colorado Springs
- Wheat Ridge
- Aurora

Urban renewal law varies from state to state which will affect the practices from other cities outside of Colorado. However, some useful examples could come from progressive cities such as Austin, TX; San Antonio, TX; Portland, OR; and Minneapolis, MN.

Other important issues to consider are their general approaches to incentives and the use of TIF. For example:

- How do Colorado URAs work with other taxing districts?
- Do they favor project specific incentives or area-wide TIF investments?
- How do they evaluate financial need – the “but for” test?
- What public benefits are required? How is affordable housing addressed with urban renewal and TIF?

Deliverables

- Memorandum and presentation on Best Practices

Task 7: Strategic Plan

The Strategic Plan will be created from the synthesis of the work in Tasks 1 through 5. This work will create an informed, evidence-based, and data driven platform on which to build the Strategic Plan. The process will have built organizational alignment and buy-in through meaningful engagement of a wide range of Board Members, staff, and stakeholders, resulting in an actionable Plan.

Draft Plan Framework

We will begin with a Draft Plan Framework comprised of an annotated outline and process graphic summarizing key tasks, steps and timing. Rather than draft an entire document, this Framework will be presented to the Board and Staff in draft form for discussion, critique, and refinement (Workshop 4). The Framework will also contain a Vision Statement which will be particularly important to vet with DURA.

The Framework will include most of the key elements of the Draft and Final Strategic Plans including:

- Goals
- Priorities
- Funding and resource allocation
- External communications and image strategies
- Roles and responsibilities for DURA staff, Board Members, and partner agencies
- A prioritized tactic and action list by time period (short term, mid-term, long-term).

Draft and Final Plan

After taking the input from rigorous discussion and review by DURA, EPS and MIG will proceed to writing the Draft Strategic Plan document. The style will be concise and reader friendly, emphasizing the Mission and Vision, Goals, Key Outcomes, and Prioritized Actions. Illustrative graphics, process charts, and tables/matrices will be used to highlight important points and guide the users of the Plan.

The Draft Plan will be submitted and presented to DURA for review. The Final Plan document will be revised. Two rounds of revisions are budgeted for, with DURA staff responsible for compiling comments and reconciling any conflicting comments.