Meeting Objectives:

• Review community comments on the proposed zoning and design standards/guidelines (DSG)
• Consider final adjustments to the proposed DSG
• Agree that the proposed zoning and DSG are ready to enter the legislative process
• Receive task force direction on zone district mapping in Curtis Park

Task Force Members in Attendance: Councilman Albus Brooks, John Desmond, Dick Farley, Joel Noble, Judy Schneider, Chris Smith, Craig Supplee, Tracy Winchester, Bill Windsor, Howard Witkin; CPD Staff: Abe Barge, Analiese Hock, Sarah Showalter, Brandon Shaver; Facilitator: Mike Hughes

Observers: Larry Bell, Nancy Bell, Michelle Puyear, Kim Kliewer, Joe Sanchez, Peggy Race, Keith Pryor, John Hayden (President, Curtis Park Neighbors), Eileen Feltman (Curtis Park Neighbors), Hugh Brown, Mike McCarty

I. Open House & Community Feedback Summary

City staff summarized the results of the March 9, 2016 open house and provided an overall summary of community feedback received to date. The summary included the following:

- Community ideas and comments on building height
  - Interest in a better height transition between Clements historic district and 20-story and 12-story areas; the transition to 8 stories in Ballpark is appropriate
  - Idea to maintain a 3-story base along Park Avenue West and then set back to a higher height of 8 stories and then 12 stories to create a more gradual transition
  - Interest in having no height limits – build as high as you can because Denver is growing

- Community ideas and comments related to parking requirements
  - Support for not having a parking requirement because it reinforces that the goal is a pedestrian and transit-focused neighborhood
  - Support for a parking maximum
  - Interest in taking steps to ensure that developments meet parking demand because area residents are seeing demand for the limited number of existing parking spaces

- Support for the focus on design at the pedestrian level
- Wide sidewalks are essential
- Open space at the ground level should be integrated into the fabric of the neighborhood and the City should take steps to ensure that it remains publicly accessible
- Support for four-sided design
- Alley activation is important
- Development adjacent to an historic district requires more screening of above-grade parking
- The references to ‘quality building materials’ is vague and is a step back from the existing DSG which requires 60% masonry
II. Recommended DSG Updates Based on Community Comment

City staff provided a summary of recommended updates to the proposed design standards and guidelines based on community comments. These included three substantive recommendations for updates to the DSG:
- Require wrapping high-quality façade design around alley corners
- Clarify façade design requirements adjacent to historic resources, and
- Clarify the recommended placement of Point Tower building forms

III. Task Force Discussion

The Task Force discussed the staff-recommended DSG updates and requested final additional DSG updates to complete the package for Planning Board and City Council consideration, as summarized below.

High Quality Design Wrapping Around Alley Corners
- The idea from the public to wrap the design elements into the alley is an excellent addition
- Concern that this could increase the cost of construction

Design Requirements Adjacent to Historic Districts
- Context-sensitive design is important; the idea of design on the alley side when across from the historic district makes sense
- It’s complicated when the historic district boundary is irregular as is the case with Clements
- The guidelines should address development that is visible from the historic district
- That could greatly expand which buildings would have to take the historic district into account
- The Task Force requested that staff revise the definition of facades that are adjacent to historic districts to include all visible facades facing the Ballpark, Clements and Curtis Park historic districts (this includes all facades facing the alleys between Lawrence and Larimer and Welton and Glenarm, even when they are not directly adjacent to the historic district boundary).

Point Tower Placement
- We don’t want to mandate that all point towers are on the on the corners
- We need to ensure that the photos in the DSG aren’t misleading
- We can assume that the developer of a point tower will work hard to maximize views - and will place the tower (whether mid-block or on the corner) to get maximize views
- The language as written doesn’t dictate the placement of point towers
- The newly added language seems to be more limiting regarding Point Tower placement

Uses Allowed in Front of Wrapped Parking on an ‘Incentive Building Form’ (General with Height Incentive and Point Tower forms)
- If the minimum dimension is 15’, the builder may be tempted to use the area for storage or a dog run or some other use that doesn’t serve the intent
- The goal is to have human activity on the 1st, 2nd, 3rd floor so that there are eyes on the street and the lower floors are truly active; we don’t want just the appearance of activity
- We will have a transition as the area develops when there won’t be demand for all of the required ground-floor retail
- The zoning is not for today, it’s for tomorrow; we have to have a visionary outlook
- We are trying to get functional active uses
- If the development is getting the height incentive, we should insist on uses that perform in ways that improve the activation of the street
- A general statement to that effect is sufficient - it demonstrates intent while allowing flexibility in how each project finds the solution
If too vague, we are subject to unexpected interpretations
We need to define a bit more about the type of activation that we want to see
The Task Force requested that staff update the DSG to ensure that uses wrapping structured parking in an incentive building form provide a level of activation that is similar to residential and commercial uses.

Building Materials
- We ought to leave this question to the design review committee and to the professionals who have a knowledge materials
- At the start of the process, we set the goal of promoting creativity; we lose that if we dictate the percent of masonry
- We should take an urban design point of view - on 21st Street because of its particular character, the lower stories of the buildings should be comprised primarily of masonry; we should be strategic about the areas
- The masonry materials standards are already in the draft DSG for 21st Street and facades adjacent to historic districts, including across Park Avenue from Curtis Park
- The Design Advisory Board will have some leverage to interpret that the material or application of the material can meet the intent of ‘high-quality and durable’
- Staff will review the material standards and guidelines for clarity.

Parking
- We started this process with a focus on affordability and incentives for affordability; by removing the parking minimums we allow flexibility for more affordable development
- It is important to recognize that although the city is not mandating parking, it does not mean that there should not be parking; it is hard from year to year determine how much parking will be needed for development
- The fact that builders are including parking in their projects shows that the market is already providing far more than required
- At the same time, the neighborhood residents are concerned about parking
- This area would benefit from an area parking management plan
- Given the mix of public input on parking, we got it right

Connecting this Effort to the 21st Street Urban Design Work
- It’s important to ensure that the documents we are producing align with the 21st Street effort
- The current draft DSG are consistent with draft recommendations from the 21st Street urban design planning project
- Staff noted that the DSG can be updated in the future to integrate any specific additional recommendations regarding urban design on 21st Street

Related to Open Space requirements in the Cherry Creek North zoning and DSG
- Cherry Creek code addressed publicly accessible open space
- Staff indicated that the definitions from the CCN zone have been carried over

Composition of the Design Advisory Board
- As drafted, there would be one neighborhood representative from the downtown area
- Additionally, someone may be a design professional and also live in the neighborhood
- The draft should include a clarification that Curtis Park and Five Points would be considered within the downtown area
- The Task Force requested that staff add a note to clarify that the Design Advisory Board could include representatives from surrounding neighborhoods such as Curtis Park and Enterprise Hill
IV. Consensus Recommendation

With no other questions or topics for discussion and revision, the Task Force agreed that to recommend the full package of zoning code and design standards and guidelines to the Planning Board and the City Council for adoption, leaving only the question of the final mapping in Curtis Park.

V. Curtis Park Areas that are Mapped Downtown Arapahoe Square - D-AS

Staff Recommendation
Staff clarified that they would recommend rezoning those parcels in Curtis Park that now carry D-AS zoning to heights that correspond to the heights in the Northeast Downtown Area Plan.

Observer Input
Before its deliberation, the Task Force asked the observers to offer their thoughts about the areas in Curtis Park. The input included the following:

- The Curtis Park area’s history is important; three-story height aligns with that history
- Five stories along Park Avenue West makes sense
- The registered neighborhood organization in Curtis Park supports five-story heights for the parcels in question because there are adjacent uses at four stories and this small area is not three stories now
- Five-story zoning would put more eyes on the street, something the neighborhood need
- The landmark review will ensure that a five-story development will be made compatible
- Three-story zoning is a down-zoning from the current zoning
- This is a transit-oriented development area that can support five stories
- This is an industrial area that is different from the three-story, residential area adjacent to it, so five stories makes sense
- A down-zoning is not the fair thing to do
- A group of very nearby residents are concerned about the height and prefer three stories
- A height transition from downtown is essential
- Five story zoning here would encourage others who would want to redevelopment to seek five stories
- The Northeast Downtown Area Plan considered these areas and set the height at three
- More people are moving here and there is demand for more density, so five stories makes sense
- Five stories would be appropriate height for the Greyhound site and is appropriate in the areas zoned D-AS in Curtis Park

Task Force Discussion on Zone District Mapping in Curtis Park
- This is an industrial part of Curtis Park; it is different in character from the residential areas of Curtis Park
- The neighborhood association has considered this and will recommend five-story zoning
- Curtis Park should sort this out; this shouldn’t be decided by those who are focusing on Arapahoe Square
- A neighborhood planning process in Curtis Park would take care of this question; we should recommend that the City initiate the neighborhood plan update
- We could leave D-AS as it exists today in the zoning code and make no change to these parcels
- This needs a more careful neighborhood discussion and this process is not the place for it
- Because this is a Curtis Park question, we should do as little as we can - less is more in this case
- The approach that is the most respectful to Curtis Park is to recommend that - if it cannot stay as is - then the City should find the zoning category that is closest to the existing zoning and height and rezoning it accordingly, leaving the height at five stories.

- The task force reached consensus on the following recommendation: That the existing D-AS zoning remain in place for the portion of Curtis Park northeast of Park Avenue and northwest of Champa Street that would otherwise be proposed for rezoning to U-MX-3 and C-MX-3; and if that is not possible, that the zoning reflect as closely as possible the existing approximate five-story height limit. The Task Force also agreed to recommend that the City assist Curtis Park to initiate a neighborhood plan update.

VI. Task Force Participation in the Next Phase

Task Force members are encouraged to attend the Planning Board and City Council public hearings to voice their support for the proposed zoning text amendment, zoning map amendment and design standards/guidelines. The Planning Board public hearing for the zoning text and map amendments is scheduled for April 20. The Planning Board public hearing for the design standards and guidelines is scheduled for May 4.