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CURTIS PARK NEIGHBORHOOD ASSESSMENT

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Elected Officials
John W. Hickenlooper, Mayor

City Council
District 8 - Elbra Wedgeworth
District 8 - Carla Madison

Denver Planning Board
Barbara Kelley, Chair
Laura Aldrete
Brad Buchanan
Frederick Corn, P.E.
Richard Delanoy
William H. (Bill) Hornby
Mason Lewis
Judith Martinez
Bruce O’Donnell
Thomas W. Potter
Jeffrey Walker

Mayor’s Cabinet
Peter J. Park, Manager,
Department of Community Planning and Development

Department of Community Planning and Development
David Becker, retired,
former Project Manager
Tyler Gibbs

Department of Public Works
Gretchen Hollrah
James MacKay
Brian Mitchell
David Weaver

Department of Parks and Recreation
Helen Kuykendall

Office of Economic Development
Jodi Adkins
Jerry Garcia
Bill Lysaught
Chris Smith

Blair-Caldwell African American Research Library

Regional Transportation District
Mike Turner

Curtis Park Neighborhood
Hugh Brown
David Carnicelli
Marva Coleman
Rich Maginn
Joel Noble
Holly Parker
Kathy Struble
Bill West

University of Denver
Dr. Noah Fritz
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY
Curtis Park is located directly northeast of downtown within the Five Points statistical neighborhood. It is one of the city’s oldest and most historic urban neighborhoods with residential areas that provide a strong sense of character and community pride. Walkable tree-lined streets with historic structures and new infill predominate the neighborhood northeast of Park Avenue. Mestizo-Curtis Park, the Curtis Park Community Center and the nearby Blair-Caldwell Library serve as local gathering spaces. The light rail operates southeast of the neighborhood along Welton Street. This line provides connections to the Southeast and Southwest Corridors and will be extended to connect with the East Corridor in the future. The Curtis Park neighborhood is experiencing a renaissance with new infill construction and many new residents moving into the area.

The purpose of the Curtis Park Neighborhood Assessment is to provide a baseline of community information, identify issues and opportunities and recommend next steps. The Assessment will answer questions for the community such as how does the community compare to the region, what is the composition of our neighborhood and what are transportation projects are planned for the area.

Through analysis zoning, preservation and the neighborhood’s relationship to surrounding areas emerged as priority issues to address next. The zoning issues that need resolution include are long standing inconsistency between land use and zoning in residential areas. A neighborhood typology will be conducted to help classify character areas and inform appropriate zoning. The key preservation issue that needs to be addressed is undesignated historic properties. These are generally found in areas within the neighborhood that have received National Register Designation, but have yet to be locally designated, as well as areas that may be eligible for local designation outside of the National Register District. Another priority issue is to help identify the character and vision for the future for not just Curtis Park, but also the surrounding and overlapping neighborhoods and corridors. Portions of Curtis Park southwest of Park Avenue and within Arapahoe Square have served as the transition between downtown and residential neighborhoods to the north east, but have suffered from a lack of vision for the future. An area plan for a portion of the Five Points neighborhood including Curtis Park can provide a comprehensive study of these areas which address their future function, form and implementation actions.

The key follow-up planning activities are to:

- Conduct a neighborhood typology study
- Work with neighborhood representatives on local historic designation
• Initiate and complete an area plan for an area that includes Curtis Park, Arapahoe Square, Ballpark and adjacent portions of the Welton, Downing, 20th Avenue and Park Avenue Corridors

Other planning activities that relate to Curtis Park are:

• Update Blueprint Denver
• RTD’s continued evaluation of the Central Corridor extension
INTRODUCTION
II. INTRODUCTION

PURPOSE AND INTENT

This assessment documents the current conditions and trends in the Curtis Park neighborhood as described by Denver’s Comprehensive Plan 2000 and Blueprint Denver: An Integrated Land Use and Transportation Plan. These two guiding documents have placed a priority on land use, transportation, housing, environmental sustainability and protection of Denver’s historic legacies. This document is not a plan, but is intended to
provide a foundation of data and information for future planning for the Curtis Park neighborhood. The findings and recommendations of the report provide an action plan for the City and community to use in collaboration to address the priority issues identified by The Department of Community Planning and Development, in consultation with other city departments, the City Councilperson, and the community. The city will lead the response to follow up on the findings and recommendations in the Assessment.

**PROCESS**

This neighborhood assessment provides an overview of issues that have been identified within a short period of time from readily available data and with some community input. This baseline assessment can be refined and expanded as needed. This effort began with the identification of the neighborhood’s strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats in a neighborhood forum. As part of the neighborhood planning process, this information and the issues identified were discussed with the public in order to ensure that all the important planning issues have been identified and addressed. This assessment was originally developed in the summer of 2006 with data and information updated in Spring 2007.

**LOCATION**

The Curtis Park neighborhood is located to the northeast of downtown Denver within the Five Points statistical neighborhood. The neighborhood is bounded to the east by the alley between California and Welton Streets, to the west by Larimer Street, to the south by 20th Street and to the north by Downing Street, as identified on the Curtis Park Study Area Map. Some sections of the Curtis Park neighborhood are included in other studies. While these areas and general neighborhood statistics are included in the Assessment, more detailed information can be found in the following plans. The area between Lawrence and Larimer is included in the 1995 *Northeast Downtown Plan*. The area between 20th Street and Park Avenue West is part of the Arapahoe Square neighborhood and is included in the *Downtown Area Plan*.

**HISTORY**

Curtis Park was developed in the 1860s and 1870s as a residential suburb just north of downtown Denver. Its development was spurred by the city’s first streetcar line established in January of 1871 when the Denver Horse Railroad Company opened its first one track line from downtown into the Curtis Park suburb. The cars were pulled by horses, beginning at 7th and Larimer Street, coming into Curtis Park on Champa from 16th Street to 27th Street. The area was named in honor of Samuel Curtis, an early settler who was a stockbroker and the first postmaster for Denver. Two pioneering surveyors, Francis Case and Frederick Ebert, donated land...
at 31st and Curtis in 1868 for Denver’s first city park, now known as Mestizo Curtis Park.

From the late 1870s to the turn of the century, the social elite made the area home, including merchants and professional men, bankers, railroad and real estate developers. But within the same area, more modest dwellings housed blacksmiths, bank clerks, tailors and grocers. The mixed-income neighborhood includes a wide range of housing types from modest cottages, flat-roofed row houses and single-story duplexes to grand Victorian mansions, Denver Square and Queen Anne-style houses.

Many of these historic homes are now recognized as part of the Curtis Park Historic District, which was designated in the National Register of Historic Places by the National Park Service in 1975 with an expansion in 1983. In addition there are four locally designated districts referred to as Curtis Park A – D. The exact boundaries of the districts are shown on the Historic Districts map. A number of structures are individually designated; including the Margery Reed Mayo Day Nursery, Kinneavy Terrace, Kaub House and the Anfenger House.

Curtis Park has been home to numerous ethnic groups, from Germans and Irish in the mid 19th Century, to Japanese, African American and Hispanic families in the early 20th Century.

Today, Curtis Park remains one of the center city’s most accessible and unique neighborhoods, characterized by its tree-lined streets, its broad range of housing types, and its social, economic and ethnic diversity. From its favorable geographical location, Curtis Park enjoys proximity to downtown Denver, to the Larimer, Downing and Welton commercial corridors, and to rail transit along Welton Street, as well as views to the mountains. The neighborhood has a diverse population in terms of age, race, and income, and a citizenry that is well-organized and actively committed and involved in improving Curtis Park. Its residents have access to neighborhood parks, community centers, and the Blair-Caldwell African American Research Library, and are well served by police and other city services.

**EXISTING PLANS AND STUDIES**

Such adopted plans as the Curtis Park Neighborhood Plan (1987), Denver Comprehensive Plan 2000, and Blueprint Denver, as well as other relevant plans and studies, have been consulted and evaluated. The Curtis Park Neighborhood Plan was adopted in 1987 and re-adopted as a supplement to the Denver Comprehensive Plan 2000. The neighborhood plan focused on housing, diversity, parks, zoning, traffic and businesses. Residential housing issues, particularly preserving the historic character and retaining diversity, were top priorities. In addition, the B-8 zoning was identified as allowing incompatible non-residential use. At the same
time local neighborhood-serving businesses were acknowledged and identified as uses that should be allowed to continue to operate and improve, though they may be non-conforming uses. Other concerns included the one-way streets channeling fast traffic through the neighborhood and the condition and use of Mestizo-Curtis Park.

The *Downtown Area Plan* was updated in July 2007. Neighbors from Curtis Park have been involved in the downtown planning process both as active participants for the area south of Park Avenue transitioning into the downtown, and as a surrounding neighborhood.

Another relevant study was the 2001 Fehr & Peers *Curtis Park/Five Points One-Way to Two-Way Conversion Study* which evaluated the technical feasibility of converting the existing one-way streets in Curtis Park to two-way operations, and developed planning-level implementation cost estimates for the technically feasible solutions. The study analyzed the impact of the conversion to two-way streets on travel patterns, traffic operations (Level of Service, etc.), parking, travel speeds, access and circulation, parks and schools, transit, bicyclists, and pedestrians and concluded that the conversion to two-way streets was technically feasible for all of the Curtis Park one-way streets.

Transit reports and planned projects, such as the one-way conversion study, may need to be reevaluated in regard to the proposed extension of the existing Welton Street rail corridor to Downing. this extension, part of the FasTracks initiative, would provide a connection between the Welton rail line and the East Corridor extending to Denver International Airport.
Socio-Economic Data
III. SOCIO-ECONOMIC DATA

Population Characteristics

According to the U.S. Census Bureau, the total population for the Curtis Park Study Area (hereafter called Curtis Park) in 2000 was 4,356 people. In 2000, Curtis Park had a population density of 14,798 people per square mile compared to the Denver average of 3,529 people per square mile.

According to the 2000 U.S. Census 44% of Curtis Park’s residents are Anglo, 15% are African American and 34% are “Other” which represents non-disclosures. Less than 5% of the population is recorded as Multi-racial, American Indian or Eskimo and Asian. The Census Bureau tracks individuals with a Hispanic background separately from other ethnicities and races. Within Curtis Park 56.3% of the residents are of Hispanic heritage, significantly greater than the 31.7% average for Denver as a whole.

In terms of gender, in 2000 Curtis Park was recorded to have 2,550 (58.5%) males in 2000 compared to 1806 females (41.5%). Comparable citywide rates were males at 50.5% and females at 49.5%.
The data indicates that Curtis Park’s residents are slightly younger than the City’s residents as a whole. In 2000, the median age for all residents in Curtis Park was 32.23 years compared to the citywide median age of 33.1. The median age of Curtis Park males was 31.19 versus 32.2 for the citywide median age for males. The median age of Curtis Park females was 32.7 compared to the citywide average of 34.3. While there are some slight variations between the age distribution within Curtis Park as compared to that of the city as a whole, they are fairly minor, with fewer residents over the age of 65 and a greater distribution of children and middle aged individuals.

In 2000, 38.8% of the households consisted of families (either married or single parents) with children, 13.2% consisted of families without children and 35.8% consisted of non-family households. The data also indicates that Curtis Park has slightly larger household sizes than the city as a whole, 2.68 persons per household compared to 2.27 in the city.

**Education Level**

Curtis Park is contained within a larger statistical neighborhood, Five Points. Only a limited amount of data, such as population, ethnicity and race, and family composition, is available for the geographic boundaries of Curtis Park. Other statistical information on education, employment and income status are not available for
The data used for these categories includes the entire Five Points neighborhood. While the Five Points statistics does include large portions that are outside of the Curtis Park neighborhood boundaries, it is inclusive of the entire neighborhood.

The number of persons 25 or older with high school or higher education levels has increased significantly in the Five Points neighborhood between 1990 and 2000. However, the number of persons with a college degree in the Five Points neighborhood, 23.6% is still substantially below that of Denver which was 39.4% in 2000.

The number of students attending Denver Public Schools has been on a decreasing trend in the past ten years. The number of students not proficient in English has fluctuated yearly between 18 and 24% as compared to the Denver wide percentage of 20.9.
Five Points Highest Level of Education Achieved 1990 to 2000

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level of Education</th>
<th>1990</th>
<th>2000</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No HS Diploma</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HS Diploma</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Some College</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>College Degree</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Denver Public School Enrollment (Grades 1-12) in Five Points

- 1995: 1500
- 1996: 1300
- 1997: 1200
- 1998: 1100
- 1999: 1000
- 2000: 900
- 2001: 800
- 2002: 700
- 2003: 600
- 2004: 500

Denver Public Schools Enrollment

Gilpin Pre K - 8 School
SOCIO-ECONOMIC DATA

Economic and Employment Characteristics

The average household income in Five Points in 2000 was $35,518 whereas the average household income in Denver was $55,129. The rate of Curtis Park persons in poverty in 2000 was 30.7% compared to a citywide average of 14.3%. The rate of children in poverty in 2000 in the neighborhood was 25.4% compared to 20.3% in Denver as a whole.

Curtis Park and immediately adjacent areas have long been a major employment center, providing employment opportunities not just for its own residents but also for residents throughout the City and beyond. The Denver Regional Council of Governments (DRCOG) estimated that in 2005, there were 6,288 people working in Census Tract 16 and 776 people working in Census Tract 24.03 in various types of jobs (see the next page for the relationship of census tracts to the neighborhood). These jobs were filled by people from throughout the metropolitan area. Despite the nearby presence of employment opportunities, Census Tract 16 and 24.03 residents have had a higher unemployment rate than City residents - 17.9% in Census Tract 16 and 7.9% in Census Tract 24.03 in 2000, compared to a citywide rate of 5.7%.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>INDUSTRY</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Construction</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional and maintenance services</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retail trade</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Educational, health and social services</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arts, entertainment and food services</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manufacturing</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Information</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other services (except public administration)</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transportation and warehousing, utilities</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Finance, insurance and real estate</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public administration</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wholesale trade</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting, and mining</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
According to the 2000 Census, construction, and professional and maintenance services are the industries with the highest percentage of employees. Education, health services, and social services as well as retail trade are also important industries. The following employment breakout is for census tracts 16 and 24.03.

**Comparison by Block Group**

In order to better assess the dynamics of the census data within the Curtis Park and Five Points neighborhood, the following map illustrates Census Tracts 16 and 24.03. Tract 16 includes the western portion of the neighborhood, along with a large portion of land with minimal residential uses. Tract 24.03 includes the eastern portion of the neighborhood as well as the Welton corridor.

The table on the next page shows that while household and family incomes within tract 16 are considerably higher than those within tract 24.03, the per capita income in both is well below that of Denver, and the percentage of people in poverty is much higher than the average within Denver. One reason for the disparity between Census Tract 16 and Census Tract 24.03 may have been the presence of the East Village Apartments, outside of Curtis Park, but within the bounds of Tract 24.03. The East Village Apartments provided affordable housing but had fallen into disrepair and were acquired and demolished by the Denver Housing Authority after the 2000 census. The Housing Authority is currently in the process of redeveloping the area (bounded roughly by Tremont Place, Washington Street, and Benedict Fountain Park), into a mixed-income development built to market rate standards.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Census Tract</th>
<th>Population</th>
<th>Median HH Income</th>
<th>Med. Fam. Income</th>
<th>Per Cap Income</th>
<th>Poverty %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>3,483</td>
<td>31,117</td>
<td>30,490</td>
<td>16,108</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24.03</td>
<td>3,661</td>
<td>17,626</td>
<td>20,590</td>
<td>12,776</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Denver</td>
<td>554,636</td>
<td>39,500</td>
<td>48,195</td>
<td>24,101</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
HOUSING
In 2000, the U.S. Census counted a total of 1,396 housing units in the Curtis Park neighborhood. These figures for the Curtis Park neighborhood include all of the area as well as some portions outside of the geographically defined neighborhood boundaries, as illustrated in the map on page 15. Of this number, 1,286 or 92% were occupied and 110 or 8% were vacant. Of the 1,286 occupied housing units, 476 (or 37%) were owner-occupied while 810 (or 63%) were renter occupied. Denver’s housing vacancy rate in 2000 was 5% and of all its occupied housing units, 53% were owner occupied and 47% renter occupied. By early 2004, the City and County of Denver estimated that the number of housing units had increased to 2,728 just in Census Tract 16, which reported only 1,057 housing units in 2000. This may in part reflect new housing construction in the area from Denver Housing Authority’s Hope VI development program and other housing developments including some outside of Curtis Park in the River North area.

The Denver Housing Authority (DHA) Hope VI project is comprised of eight square blocks between 25th and 34th Streets, Lawrence to Arapahoe Streets, including the Arapahoe Housing Co-ops on the south and the Upper Lawrence Housing Co-ops on the north. Since the Hope VI development program inception, 286 housing units were replaced with 419 mixed-income housing units including 358 rental units and 61 home ownership units. There are also near term plans for 133 for-sale multi-family housing units throughout the Hope VI project. DHA has also provided subsidized mortgage assistance for 74 low-income families in the neighborhood.

Curtis Park was one of Denver’s earliest developed neighborhoods and that historical fact is manifested in the census data. The 2000 U.S. Census stated that 62.5% of the housing units in Census Tract 16 and 41.2% of the housing units in Census Tract 24.03 were built before 1940 compared to only 24.5% of all housing in Denver built before 1940. The relative longevity of residents was also revealed in the 2000 Census-32.2% of Census Tract 16 residents lived in the same house between 1995 and 2000 compared to 42.7% in Denver as a whole.

The sales price and cost of housing is another interesting and important housing indicator. A variety of comparisons between Curtis Park (Census Tract 16 and 24.03) and the citywide averages indicate that the average sales price of housing within Curtis Park has been below that of Denver in the past but there have been some recent changes. In 2002 the average sales price for a home in Curtis Park exceeded that of the city as a whole, however the price per square foot within Curtis Park was still below that of Denver.

By using city data from 2006 more neighborhood specific information can be attained for types of structures.
Within Curtis Park over 82% of the structures are single family dwellings. 66% of the single family dwellings are detached individual buildings, while the remaining 16% are rowhouse style structures. The next largest category of structures is 3 - 8 units which accounts for 9% of the total number of dwellings. Both duplex and 9+ units accounted for approximately 5% of the residential structures within the geographic boundaries of Curtis Park. Comparing the housing type by number of units rather than by number of structures gives a different characterization of the neighborhood. The majority of the units (56%) are found in structures of 9 or more units, followed by 27% of the units in single-family buildings, 14% in structures of 3 – 8 units and 3% in duplex structures.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Structure Type</th>
<th># of units</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Single Family</td>
<td>611</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Duplex</td>
<td>71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3- 8 Units</td>
<td>328</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9+ Units</td>
<td>1,275</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>2,285</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Land Use

The Curtis Park neighborhood is located just northeast of downtown Denver. It is adjacent to the emerging Larimer Street mixed use corridor to the west and to the Welton Street commercial corridor to the east. The Welton corridor also provides light rail service to downtown, the southwest line to Mineral, and now with the opening of T-Rex, access to the expanding rail network and the southeast line to Lincoln Avenue. The downtown grid terminates at Downing Street, a corridor which is comprised of a variety of uses including residential, commercial and office. Residential uses predominate from Lawrence to the northeast and California on the southeast from Park Avenue West on the south up to the northern neighborhood edge along Downing, referred to as the residential core. There are sizeable amounts of industrial land uses and industrial and semi-industrial land uses located on the western edge of the study area between Larimer and the alley between Larimer and Lawrence, and between 20th Street and Park Avenue West, though some of these uses are scattered through the residential core as well. Retail and office uses are generally located in the southern and western edges of adjacent mixed use neighborhoods, though as with other uses some office and retail uses are scattered throughout the residential core of the neighborhood. Additionally a substantial number of vacant parcels are

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Land Use</th>
<th>Acres</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Vacant</td>
<td>18.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Residential</td>
<td>49.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Multi-Family</td>
<td>38.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commercial/Retail</td>
<td>19.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parking</td>
<td>15.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Institutional</td>
<td>12.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Industrial</td>
<td>32.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parks</td>
<td>10.2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
located within Curtis Park, with small and large lots within the residential core, as well as a significant number of dedicated surface parking lots generally located between Park Avenue West and the southern neighborhood edge at 20th Street.
LAND USE AND ZONING

Zoning

The neighborhood’s predominant existing zoning district is R-3 with approximately 129 acres. The residential core, bounded by Park Avenue northeast to Downing, and Lawrence southwest to California, is predominantly zoned R-3 and R-2 (almost 19 acres), with B-8 in portions of the area between 24th and 28th Streets. The R-2 zone is a moderate-density district which allows duplexes to be built at a density of 14.5 units per acre. R-3 is a high-density zone where the number of units is controlled by bulk standards and open space requirements. The development cannot exceed three times the site area (3:1 Floor Area Ratio).

B-8 and B-8A zoning, located between 20th & Broadway, along Broadway and between 24th and 28th Streets total 142 acres or nearly the same acreage as the R-3 and R-2 zoned areas. The B-8 zone is an intensive general business/high intensity residential district which provides for the concentration of retail, personal and business services, as well as cultural uses. B-8A is similar to B-8, but includes design review and a maximum height. B-4 zoning is found along Downing Street. It is a medium intensity business district that encourages commercial uses adjacent to arterial streets. R-MU-30 allows intensive residential development and a mix of other uses, while C-MU-30 allows intensive commercial uses with a mix of other uses and C-MU-10 allows low intensity commercial

Existing Zoning by Type (in detail)

This detailed chart breaks the zoning down into detailed categories, while the more simplified chart above provides more generalized categories to interpret the data.
The current zoning became established in Curtis Park during the mid-1950’s, when Denver was updating its long range comprehensive plan and substantial increases in population and employment were projected for Denver. To help accommodate this projected growth, many neighborhoods close to Downtown, including Curtis Park, were up-zoned in 1956 to higher density zoning districts including B-8 and R-3. In the past fifty years, only a comparatively small percentage of land has been developed for higher density residential in the R-3 zone district and for higher intensity commercial and residential uses in the B-8 zone district in Curtis Park. A significant portion of the B-8 zoning between 24th and 28th Street is smaller scale historic residential. In fact, 3 of the 4 locally landmarked historic districts are found within this area. Some larger scale infill has occurred over time and there is potential that additional areas will be impacted by infill that may be inappropriate in smaller scale residential contexts.
Concern over the potential impact of development that would be allowed within the B-8 area motivated Curtis Park residents and property owners to take action. In 1975 neighborhood residents initiated a down-zoning from R-3 to R-2 for a portion of the single family and multi-family residential properties located between 27th and 30th Streets, along Arapahoe, Curtis and Champa. Between 1995 and 1997 the four Curtis Park Historic Landmark Districts were designated. The landmark district designations did not change the underlying B-8 zoning; however, they do provide design review and assist in preserving the historic character of the districts. In 2003, the City worked with the neighborhood on several additional re-zonings-1) B-8 to B-8A/OD5 for about 17 acres mostly located between Park Avenue West and 24th Street, Arapahoe to Welton, and 2) B-8 to CMU-10 for about 3.6 acres generally located between 24th and 25th Streets, Arapahoe to Champa. However, a third rezoning proposal, B-8 to R-MU-20, for about 25 acres, mostly located between 27th and 24th Streets, and Arapahoe to California, failed at the City Council public hearing due to the strong opposition of property owners. The challenge within Curtis Park, as well as other historic neighborhoods surrounding downtown Denver, is to provide zoning that allows for infill on historically small lots. This issue is currently being studied through the Zoning Code Update.

Blueprint Denver Map
Blueprint Denver includes classification of both Areas of Stability and Areas of Change as well as recommended land uses.
Blueprint Denver classifies the city into Areas of Stability and Areas of Change. The majority of the residential core of Curtis Park is designated as an Area of Stability from approximately 24th Street to 33rd. This indicates the importance of maintaining existing character while accommodating new infill development and reinvestment to provide additional stability to an area recognized for its character. Additionally, the Area of Stability and some surrounding blocks are designated as Urban Residential. Portions of the Areas of Stability may need to be expanded to reflect recent changes, such as the Hope VI redevelopment area. Other portions of Curtis Park were designated as Areas of Change. This designation indicates the need for substantial reinvestment and revitalization and includes the transition areas between the residential core and Downing, Welton, Larimer, and downtown Denver. Land in these areas was chosen due to the existence of underutilized land, proximity to transit corridors and the potential for redevelopment. Designations in the Area of Change include Mixed Use with the transition between the residential core and downtown beginning at 24th Street along Larimer; Transit Oriented Development along Downing, which will be a future transportation corridor for the rail extension to 40th & 40th Station and a fringe of Pedestrian Shopping, which is an extension from Welton Street corridor. It is not clear why the Pedestrian Shopping designation extended to California and this designation should be addressed at the first opportunity.

**Land Use and Zoning Issues**

A quantitative comparison of the land use and zoning designations by number begins to identify some of the challenges in Curtis Park. A comparison of the land use map on page 23 and the zoning map on page 25 serves best to illustrate the discrepancies between the land use and zoning.

There are two areas that are most significantly challenged. One is the B-8 zone between 24th and 28th Streets. A significant portion of this northern B-8 area is dominated by moderate intensity residential uses. As mentioned earlier, three of the four local historic districts are located within this zone and there are a significant number of historic residential and several small scale commercial structures found within this zone. A majority of this area is also designated as an Area of Stability indicating the importance of retaining existing housing stock and encouraging appropriate redevelopment on infill lots.

The other area showing an inconsistency is the R-3 zone, particularly southeast Arapahoe. Like the B-8 district, this area has a significant portion of single family and moderate intensity multifamily units. Currently, the City is in the process of a Zoning Code update which seeks to bridge the gap that exists between current zoning and recently adopted plans such as Blueprint Denver. One issue identified by the Zoning Code Update is the gap in density allowances between R-2 and R-3 providing no zone district that would be consistent with the existing residential uses in neighborhoods like Curtis Park.
Other issues include some of the designations within Blueprint Denver such as the boundaries of the Areas of Stability, and the Pedestrian Shopping District. There may be a need to assess the boundaries of the Areas of Stability along Arapahoe, Stout and California and potentially as well as other areas surrounding the existing designated stability zone. In addition the designation of the Pedestrian Shopping district along one side of California, which is currently generally established residential uses should be reviewed.

**Opportunities for Redevelopment**

Numerous vacant or underutilized lots are present in Curtis Park. These sites provide opportunities for redevelopment and could provide housing, neighborhood serving retail, employment opportunities and overall economic development. They include vacant land owned by the Denver Housing Authority along Park Avenue and Arapahoe Street as well as numerous surface parking lots and many smaller scattered lots throughout the neighborhood. In addition there are a number of underutilized historic structures, such as the Temple Emanuel Synagogue, the Epworth Church and the Puritan Pie Company Building.
HISTORIC PRESERVATION, URBAN FORM AND HISTORY
Historic Preservation

Since Curtis Park is one of Denver’s oldest established residential neighborhoods, historic preservation is one of the major tools cited in previous neighborhood and citywide plans that can help maintain and protect the historic character of the neighborhood.

In 1975 Historic Denver, Inc. successfully nominated the Curtis Park Historic District for listing on the National Register of Historic Places maintained by the National Park Service. In 1983 the District boundaries were expanded through a nomination from Historic Denver, Inc. In 1993-1994 Front Range Research Associates was hired to prepare a neighborhood historical assessment. The final report, entitled Denver Neighborhood History Project, 1993-94 Denver Landmark Application: Curtis Park (August, 1994) described and documented the historical, architectural, and geographic significance of the residential, commercial and public structures in the neighborhood. It proposed that the Curtis Park Historic District be designated as a landmark district by the Denver Landmark Preservation Commission. The proposed Landmark District boundaries were very similar to those of the National Register of Historic Places designation.

Using the 1994 Front Range report, neighborhood residents prepared and submitted to the Denver Landmark Preservation Commission an application to create one small historic district for the square block bounded by 24th and 25th Streets, California, and Stout. The Curtis Park Historic District A was approved in January of 1995. Three additional historic districts were approved between 1995 and 1997 including Curtis Park Historic Districts B, C and D.

The Landmark designation of the four Curtis Park Historic Districts between 1995-1997 provides significant protection to many historic structures in the neighborhood. Once historic districts are designated by the City Council, the Landmark Preservation Commission reviews all proposed exterior alterations such as rehabilitation, restoration, addition, new construction, and demolition. The intent of this review is to encourage project proposals and improvements that are compatible with the historic character and integrity of the Landmark structure or district. All landmarked structures are subject to review and approval by the Commission. Tax credits are a potential benefit that may apply to property owners whose structures are designated within a Landmark district.
Historic Preservation Issues

While many structures within Curtis Park appear eligible for local historic designation, generally found within the National Register District, a significant number remain undesignated. There seems to be considerable support and concern for the preservation of those undesignated historic structures and the urban character that they help convey. An initial visual assessment of the undesignated portions of the National Register District indicated that all areas within the boundaries would merit review for designation. In addition, other areas outside the identified district were noted, including a portion of Champa south of 25th Street, California between Downing and 30th Street, Curtis between 25th and 26th Streets and other individual structures throughout the neighborhood. A more detailed investigation may indicate other districts, boundary extensions or individual structures outside of the National Register District.
One of the best documented description of Curtis Park's existing urban design character is found in the previously referenced 1994 Front Range Research Associates Inc.'s report entitled Denver Neighborhood History Project 1993-94 Denver Landmark Application Curtis Park District. This detailed research report identifies the following residential architectural styles within the boundaries of the National Register Historic District: Queen Anne, Vernacular Masonry, Italianate, Gothic Revival, Terrace, Second Empire, Victorian Eclectic, Vernacular Wood Frame, Dutch Colonial Revival, Foursquare, Early Modern Industrial, and 20th Century Commercial. There is a varied character and a wide range of house sizes, from small wood frame structures and row houses to grand brick mansions. In addition to the historic structures there are numerous non-historic structures scattered throughout both the residential core and the transition areas. Small neighborhood-serving commercial, office and industrial uses are found in limited locations within the residential core. The Denver Housing Authority has a large multifamily development located between Arapahoe and Lawrence from 26th Street to 34th Street. Retail and industrial uses are more predominant along Larimer Street with some of these uses mixed in with the residential along Arapahoe and Lawrence Streets. The transition area between downtown and the residential core of Curtis Park south of Park Avenue is typified by a mix of dedicated parking lots, industrial, commercial and office uses.

Residents have voiced a desire to see the historic character of Curtis Park preserved through rehabilitating and restoring single and multi-unit dwellings. Several issues that have been identified by neighbors as threats to the historic character include vacant lots and structures and concern regarding the compatibility and quality of infill structures. These concerns over compatibility relate to the height, setbacks, parking, open space and scale of infill projects: particularly those that take place on assemblages of multiple lots within the residential core of the neighborhood.

**Residential Sub-Areas**

The Curtis Park Neighborhood includes a mix of housing types and architectural styles:

- The Curtis Park Hope VI replaced 286 public housing units with 419 mixed income housing units (358 rental units and 61 home ownership units), and an additional 133 home ownership units are planned in the near future. The Denver Hosing Authority has also provided subsidized mortgage assistance for 74 low-income families within the neighborhood.
Residential units range widely throughout the neighborhood from detached single family to multi-family. Single-family structures make up the largest percentage of properties and cover the most significant amount of acreage, but the largest percentage of units is found in 9 or more unit buildings.

**Historic Preservation and Urban Design Assets**

Some key residential framework elements should be taken into consideration when new development is undertaken:

- Historic resources
- Tree lawns and landscaping
- Sandstone sidewalks
- Scale of housing

**Urban Design Issues**

Many historically significant structures and districts remain locally undesignated, leaving them vulnerable to demolition and neglect. There is no design review for alterations to structures that remain undesignated and limited incentive programs to maintain and preserve the properties which can have a significant impact on the urban design of the neighborhood. Numerous residents have indicated significant interest in pursuing additional local landmark district designations, which would help address some of the urban design issues.
TRANSPORTATION/MOBILITY
VII. TRANSPORTATION/MOBILITY

Streets and Highways

We begin with the street network and vehicular traffic since this is the predominant travel mode and it is also the mode that most concerns the neighborhood. Denver’s street classification system classifies streets into three categories: arterials, collectors, and local streets. The Revised Municipal Code (Section 54), defines the street types as follows:

- **Arterials** are defined as a street which has the primary function of carrying through traffic, but which also provides access to abutting property. An arterial street is also a through street.

- A collector street shall mean a street which has the primary function of providing for the distribution of traffic within neighborhoods, and which carries through traffic and provides access to abutting property. A collector street is also a through street.

- A local street shall mean a street which has the primary function of providing access to abutting property, and which does not normally carry through traffic.

All of the streets in the neighborhood that connect it to Downtown (the streets running northeast/southwest) are classified as arterials. All numbered streets are designated as local streets. California and Lawrence Streets were converted from one-way to two-way in the Fall of 2007 and are classified as collector and local streets respectively.

A number of previous studies have discussed traffic and circulation issues within the neighborhood including the one-way streets, access and connectivity.

From the 1987 Curtis Park Neighborhood Plan:

- “Another threat to the residential character of Curtis Park is traffic. Four of the six streets traversing the neighborhood (California, Stout, Champa, and Lawrence) are one-ways which bring heavy traffic volumes, along with air and noise pollution, to the area. The one-way streets also have the effect of dividing the neighborhood into strips. It is, therefore, recommended that the current one-way streets bisecting the neighborhood be studied with an eye to converting them to two-way local streets, diverting heavy traffic to the north.” (p. 3).
From the 1995 Northeast Downtown Plan

- “Study the future function and needed improvements of Blake, Market/Walnut, Larimer and Lawrence, including studying the possibility of making Lawrence and Larimer, and Champa and Stout, two-way streets northeast of Broadway.” (p. 14).

In 2001, the City and County of Denver contracted with transportation consulting firm Fehr & Peers Associates, Inc. to:

1) Evaluate the technical feasibility of converting the existing one-way streets in Curtis Park to two-way operations, and

2) Develop planning level implementation cost estimates for the technically feasible solutions.

The key finding of the consultant’s 2001 final report, Curtis Park/FivePoints One-Way to Two-Way Conversion Study, which analyzed the impact of the conversion to two-way streets on travel patterns, traffic operations, parking, travel speeds, circulation, parks, schools, bicyclists, and pedestrians; was that the conversion to two-way streets was technically feasible for all of the Curtis Park one-way streets. Based on the technical feasibility finding, Denver’s Department of Public Works is currently working on the conversion of Lawrence Street and California Street from one-way to two-way streets. This project, which includes signing, striping, and traffic signal modifications, is scheduled to begin in the Spring of 2007, and will be funded with $600,000 from the 1998 Citywide bond issue.

The funding request for the conversion of Champa and Stout Streets from one-way to two-way streets is recommended to be delayed and removed from listing in the 2007-2012 Department of Public Works Capital Improvements Program (CIP). This delay in the funding request for the remaining conversions is based upon concerns about the potential extension of rail lines along Downing. The Fehr & Peers study suggested the use of Downing as a transition street between the one-way couplet of Martin Luther King Jr Blvd and a 2-way Stout. This transition would require additional traffic lanes that may be constrained by the extension of the rail line. While this does not mean that the potential conversion is not still a possibility, it does mean that the project needs to be re-examined once more details are available on the Downing rail extension.

It is important to note that the 2007-2012 CIP is a fiscally unconstrained plan, and the cost of projects included in the plan far exceed available and projected City revenues. CIP projects seek funding from a variety of sources, including City capital funds, Federal funds, City bonds and grants. Development of the 2008-2013
CIP will include several major changes, including a fiscally constrained Six Year budget. The 2008-2013 CIP will also include projects from the City’s Strategic Transportation Plan (STP), scheduled for completion in Fall 2006. Realistically, the funding for the conversion of Champa and Stout Streets will not emerge in the short-term, due to the limited City capital improvements funds. However this project will continue to be tracked each year through the City’s CIP process as future funding and project catalysts evolve.

Champa and Stout Streets have been identified as candidates for a road diet, reducing the number of auto travel lanes between Broadway and Downing. A road diet does not alter the function of the street from one-way to two-way; it only reduces the number of overall travel lanes. Studies are underway to determine the final design and configuration of the project. This work was scheduled for 2007, but has been delayed and is anticipated to move forward in 2008.

One-way streets remain a neighborhood concern to the present time. One of the neighborhood weaknesses stressed at the neighborhood meeting in December, 2005 was that one-way streets have a negative impact on the neighborhood as related traffic speeds and volumes and a perception of neglect and physical deterioration of structures located along one-way streets.

Other connectivity issues in the southern portion of Curtis Park were identified within the Downtown Multi-modal Access Plan (DMAP) which makes the following recommendations, for Broadway and 20th Street both of which carry significant traffic volumes and are perceived as barriers:

• Add a raised median in Broadway to visually reduce the width of the street and to provide a pedestrian refuge area

• Reconfigure the intersection of Broadway, 20th Street, and Welton Street

• Reconfigure the intersection of Broadway, 21st Street, and Champa/Stout Streets

• Enhance pedestrian facilities for 20th Street along Blake, Larimer, and Arapahoe Streets linking the Curtis Park, Ballpark, and Upper Larimer neighborhoods to Downtown

**Bus and Light Rail Transit Routes**

In addition to vehicular travel, there is a widespread recognition for and support of alternative travel modes in Denver, including rail, bike, and pedestrian. Citywide and neighborhood plans have consistently supported and recommended policies and strategic actions to build up the full range of alternative travel modes. The Denver
Comprehensive Plan 2000’s Mobility chapter includes objectives for diverse mobility options and other objectives included support for public transit, neighborhood transportation solutions, and walking and bicycling. Blueprint Denver’s Transportation Component recommends neighborhood traffic management, pedestrian enhancements, bicycle enhancements, and enhanced bus transit services. One of the most important themes of Blueprint Denver: An Integrated Land Use and Transportation Plan, is linking land use and transportation planning, facilities, and development through transit oriented development and connectivity.

Curtis Park has a well-developed system of bus and light rail transit routes that will be supplemented as new projects come on line.

- Route 44 provides bus service on Larimer and Lawrence Streets to the northeast and Downtown where connections to many other routes are provided.

- Route 38 provides bus service on Stout and California, again with many connections to other bus and light rail routes.
RTD has worked with the city and its consultants to coordinate its bus service on Routes 44 and 38 when Lawrence Street and California Street were converted from one-way to two-ways streets in the Fall of 2007.

Curtis Park has been well-served by the D Line Light Rail Transit along Welton Street since October of 1994 when RTD launched its light rail service between I-25/Broadway and 30th/Downing. The D Line enters the Welton Corridor from Downtown at 20th and Welton and continues along Welton to the temporary terminus at 30th and Downing. Transit stations are located at 20th and Welton, 25th and Welton, 27th and Welton, 29th and Welton, and 30th and Downing. The D Line provides access to residents, employees, and visitors to and from the Welton corridor and the surrounding area to the ever expanding RTD light rail network.

As part of the I-70 East Corridor Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) project, RTD, the Colorado Department of Transportation (CDOT), and the City and County of Denver have been studying alternatives for the Welton D Line and for the Downing Street transit extension to 40th/40th. The alternatives being considered for the existing Welton D Line Light Rail Transit include the retention of the D Line Light Rail Transit and a street car alternative, both of which would retain current stops along Welton at 20th, 25th, 27th, 29th, and at 30th/Downing. RTD says that other alternatives for the Welton alignment include more detailed investigation of operating options, scheduling, and transfer connections for light rail and streetcars. Options for terminating selected D-Line trains at 20th/Welton will be considered in parallel to transfer connections to the streetcar. Track work, signals, future connections, and pedestrian movements will be addressed.

Three alternatives are being studied for the Downing Street extension from its current terminus at 30th/Downing to the proposed transfer station in the vicinity of 40th Street/40th Avenue. These alternatives are light rail, street car, and enhanced bus service. They were identified based on input received from community meetings in 2005 as well as recommendations from the EIS project team. The light rail alternative of double tracking along the west side of Downing Street was recommended for evaluation in the Draft EIS after a comparison of other alternatives that included single track options, alignments on the east side of Downing Street, and an option to run one-way service on both Downing Street and Marion Street. The light rail alternative includes one transit stop between 30th/Downing and 40th/40th (perhaps near 33rd Avenue and Downing). Historic impact evaluation is part of the EIS process.

The streetcar and enhanced bus service alternatives for the Downing extension have been recently suggested and are now being developed and analyzed. The streetcar alternative would have one or two stops between 30th/Downing and 40th/40th. Locations of these stops would be determined and refined during the Draft EIS.
Streetcar and bus stops may not be the same as light rail stops as more frequent stops are typical for streetcar and bus service. Enhanced bus transit service is defined in Blueprint Denver as “higher frequency bus service, BRT, and bus priority signalization” (p. 98). One or two bus stops are also envisioned for the Downing extension segment under the enhanced bus service option.

The preferred alternative for the Welton segment and for the Downing Street extension will be selected as part of the EIS that is projected to be completed in 2007. Selection will be based on meeting Purpose and Need, but also more specifically on criteria related to operating efficiencies, travel time, convenience, connectivity, access, circulation/traffic and mobility—from the perspectives of the transit user, pedestrian, and traffic impacts. The likely timetable for implementation of the preferred alternative is uncertain. No detailed construction timetable has been established, although the general construction timetable for East Corridor projects are identified for 2011-2014 in Red’s Fastbacks website, schedule last updated in March of 2006.

**Bicycle Routes**

Curtis Park is well-served by bike routes. The map below identifies officially designated bike routes and lanes from the Denver Bicycle Master Plan and Map and proposed routes and lanes. According to the City Bicycle Planner, the following are different types of bicycle routes and lanes on the Map:

- **Bicycle Lane (on street):** Signs and pavement markings defining a portion of the roadway for the exclusive or preferential use by bicyclists
- **Bicycle Route (on street):** On-street facility with bicycle route signing
- **Bicycle Route (off-street/sidewalk):** designation of an existing sidewalk for off-street usage by bicyclists
- **Grid Bike Route:** Numbered principal bike route that connects from city limit to city limit
- **Neighborhood Bike Route:** Bike route for travel within the neighborhood (often times connecting with a Grid Bike Route)

Although only Bike Route D-4 is located within Curtis Park (along Curtis Street between Downing and 21st Street), this route provides bicyclists with many connections to other bike routes that go to Downtown, the South Platte River, City Park, and other destinations. At the June 1, 2006 meeting of the Mayor’s Bicycle...
Advisory Committee, the City Bicycle Planner and the Committee recommended adding the following additional bicycle facilities affecting Curtis Park to the Bicycle Master Plan and Map:

- Northbound bike lane on Lawrence Street between Park Avenue West and 36th Avenue
- Southbound bike lane on Larimer Street between 37th Avenue and 18th Street
- Bike route on 36th Avenue between Lawrence and Lafayette (in adjacent Cole neighborhood)
- Bike route on 37th Avenue between Larimer and Lafayette (in adjacent Cole neighborhood)

In addition to these recommended additional bike routes and bike lanes, the Curtis Park neighborhood hopes that the conversion of the remaining one-way streets to two-way operations will provide an opportunity to provide additional bike lanes. The Department of Public Works is aware of this interest and will accommodate where feasible. There are currently no bike lanes planned as part of the California and Lawrence one-way to two-way conversion projects.
Pedestrian Connections and Travel

Given Curtis Park’s proximity to Downtown and the Welton and Larimer Street corridors, pedestrian travel has always been important for the neighborhood.

In August, 2004, the City and County of Denver published its Pedestrian Master Plan which:

- Inventoried sidewalks, walk able neighborhoods, pedestrian routes, pedestrian plan projects, and established pedestrian policies and recommendations for the City and neighborhoods

- The Sidewalk Inventory Map identified Curtis Park as having detached sidewalks with no missing sidewalks.

- The Pedestrian Potential Model Map classified Curtis Park as one of “those areas within the City that are more likely to draw high pedestrian traffic due to the types of surrounding land uses.” (p. 59).

- The Pedestrian Route Network Map identifies Champa Street (Park Avenue West to Martin Luther King), 30th Street (Champa to 29th Avenue), and Park Avenue West (Welton to Larimer) as Green Streets and part of the City’s comprehensive pedestrian system.

The two primary elements used to develop the pedestrian network included Green Streets, as defined in the Department of Parks and Recreation’s 2003 master plan entitled Game Plan, and enhanced bus transit corridors, as identified in Blueprint Denver. Streets in the pedestrian network were selected “based on their ability to connect pedestrians from one civic place with another, to provide access to transit, and to accommodate infrastructure that encourages pedestrian travel.” Green Streets “are defined as a system of continuous, safe, and accessible connections among Denver neighborhoods.” The Green Streets system builds upon the historic boulevards and parkways, strengthening connections between schools, parks, and other neighborhood amenities. Green Streets/Pedestrian Routes have guidelines to enhance their pedestrian function and status, including a 13’ minimum pedestrian zone, an 8’ minimum green tree lawn, a 5’ minimum continuous detached sidewalk, continuous perpendicular curb ramps at every intersection, pedestrian signals at all signalized arterials, and marked crosswalks at major intersections.

Pedestrian Policy 5.4 in the Pedestrian Master Plan is particularly applicable for Curtis Park: “Preserve historic character and design including historic flagstone sidewalks, appropriate tree preservation/replacements and respect for the spatial design of parkways.” (p. 31). Although there were no pedestrian projects identified as
TRANSPORTATION/MOBILITY

needed for the Curtis Park area in the Pedestrian Master Plan, it is recommended that the neighborhood be ever vigilant to maintain, improve, and expand pedestrian connections as changes occur in the area.
PUBLIC SAFETY AND HEALTH
Curtis Park is located within the limits of Denver Police Department's District 6, which has a police station at 1566 Washington Street. Police department headquarters are located at 1331 Cherokee Street. A new COP (Community Oriented Policing) Shop has opened at the corner of West Park Avenue and Curtis Street.

Crime has long been an issue for the Five Points area, including Curtis Park, as public safety, actual and perceived, is an important component of neighborhood livability. Each year, the Denver Police Department publishes crime statistics for the City's 76 Statistical Neighborhoods and Five Points is consistently at or near the top of the list for neighborhood crime rates. The total crime rate for the Five Points Neighborhood is approximately 2 times higher than that of Denver for 2004, with the burglary rate 1.5 times higher than Denver and violent crimes 2.3 times higher than Denver. The 2004 statistics reflect a significant decline in all categories from the crime rates of the early 1990's. Between 1994 and 2004 there was a reported 48% decline in crimes against persons, a 45% decline in burglaries and a 32% decline in violent crimes in the Five Points statistical neighborhood.

In addition, detailed crime studies have been conducted recently for Five Points and Curtis Park, including a focused neighborhood crime trends study by Dr. Noah Fritz. The Denver Police Department has worked with the University of Denver's National Law Enforcement and Corrections Technology Center to analyze and study neighborhood crime trends and produced detailed crime information and maps for Five Points and Curtis Park.
The findings of the study conducted by the National Law Enforcement and Corrections Technology Center were presented to Curtis Park neighbors in April of 2006. Staff worked closely with the District 6 Police Station to analyze 2004 and 2005 crimes in the Five Points area, using non-aggregated data to identify crime patterns by location. The crimes experienced in the residential core of the neighborhood tend to be property crimes, specifically burglary and motor vehicle theft. Violent crimes including sexual assault, robbery, and auto theft and theft from motor vehicles occur predominately in the surface parking lots located between the neighborhood and downtown.
aggravated assault are seen to occur at the neighborhood's periphery on or south of Park Avenue West, and along Welton Street. Auto theft and theft from motor vehicles occur predominately in the surface parking lots located between the neighborhood and downtown.

Using crime pattern analysis and visualization techniques, the Denver Police Department is increasing their sophistication in targeting hot-spots by type of crime. Curtis Park has a good working relationship with the Denver Police Department, partly because of the special study attention outlined above and partly because the neighborhood police officers stay closely connected to the neighborhood through their attendance at the monthly meeting of the Curtis Park Neighbors organization. Recently some significant progress has been made in regard to providing additional neighborhood policing of the local issues including the new Cop Shop and efforts to organize a neighborhood watch program.

**Public Safety Issues**

Neighborhood concerns about public safety include serious crimes and quality of life issues.

**Crimes**

- Home burglary
- Auto theft and vandalism
- Drug dealing and prostitution

**Quality of Life Issues**

- Vehicle speed through neighborhood streets
- Transient population, panhandling and day laborers
- Billboards

The neighborhood has been taking steps towards addressing the public safety and quality of life issues. Community policing and a working relationship with the Denver Police Department have been successful in both identifying areas of concern and solving some of the issues.
The Curtis Park neighborhood is in close proximity to downtown Denver and close to a number of major roadways including I-25. The major environmental concerns are pollution and lead based paint in residential structures. In addition a small portion of the neighborhood is located within the Vasquez Boulevard and I-70 (VB/I70) Superfund site along Downing between Larimer and Champa Streets. VB/I70 is characterized by soil contamination with arsenic and lead from former smelting operations in the area. Residential properties in this area may have been impacted by pesticide applications by residents in the past.

Industrial activities in the Curtis Park neighborhood include dry cleaning, manufacture of paints, and automotive repair. Environmental concerns associated with these types of operations are metals (zinc, nickel, chromium, copper), paint, varnish, petroleum products and chlorinated solvents. Subsurface contamination associated with these types of operations can include both soil and groundwater. In addition, there are 16 reported leaking underground storage tanks in this area under various stages of cleanup. The environmental concern associated with these tanks is the release of refined petroleum products into both soil and groundwater.
COMMUNITY FACILITIES AND ORGANIZATIONS
Curtis Park is well-served by a number of community facilities and organizations, both public and private, that are located within the neighborhood or within a short walking distance in adjacent neighborhoods. Curtis Park’s community facilities and organizations are among the most important assets and contributors to the quality of life of the neighborhood’s property owners and residents.

**Parks, Recreation and Open Space**

The original Mestizo/Curtis Park was established in 1868 and is Denver’s oldest park. The original boundaries were 32nd Street, 31st Street, Arapahoe and Curtis Streets. For nearly 140 years, Mestizo/Curtis Park has provided a green haven for the surrounding neighborhood. Residents have enjoyed the park for walking, playing, picnicking, and other activities. It has also changed over the years. The park was expanded in the 1930’s to its present boundaries and size. The expanded areas were developed to provide additional activities such as swimming, tennis, and basketball.

Concerns about traffic and noise led Curtis Park neighbors to request changes that were funded in Neighborhood Bond passed by Denver voters in 1998. Specifically, the neighbors asked for closing Curtis Street between 31st and 32nd Streets to expand the amount of useable parkland and reduce the impacts of traffic. The street was vacated in about 2000. In 1999, planners from the Department of Parks and Recreation and staff from the Housing and Neighborhood Development Agency worked with a committee of neighborhood residents and prepared a master plan for the park. Although not adopted as part of the official Denver Parks’ Master Plan, the long range plan for Mestizo/Curtis Park is being used by Parks planning staff to guide improvements and maintenance as funding allows.

The goals of the Mestizo/Curtis Park Master Plan are to:

- Improve the park and reclaim it as a neighborhood centerpiece
- Focus on family activities that encourage the use of the park as a community-oriented gathering place
- Balance active and passive uses in the park
- Increase safety and security in the park
The improvements proposed in the Mestizo/Curtis Park Master Plan would greatly enhance the park as a centerpiece of the neighborhood. Already completed are lawn and trees along the vacated portion of Curtis Street. The existing flagstone sidewalk was widened to create a 15’ pedestrian promenade. Benches, ramps and other site amenities have been provided along the promenade. The expanded width accommodates pedestrian, bicyclists and emergency vehicle access. Plans include an extensive display of ornamental gardens encircling the southern end of the park between 30th and 32nd Streets west of the vacated Curtis Street with a youth sized soccer field.

Historic interpretive signs for the park and neighborhood are planned on the existing storage building near 32nd Street. The playground is in good condition. Other planned improvements include planting additional street and ornamental trees.

The neighborhood welcomes these improvements but continues to have concerns about drugs and prostitution in the park that serve to inhibit the community’s use of the park.

Sonny Lawson Park is located at the edge of the neighborhood, bounded by Park Avenue West, 24th, California and Welton Streets next to the Blair Caldwell African American Library. The park features a basketball court and a lighted softball field.

Another open space issue important to the neighborhood is the maintenance of the grassy triangles located along Downing Street. These triangles provide an aesthetic enhancement to the neighborhood.

Glenarm Recreation Center is located at 2800 Glenarm Place near the Welton Street corridor. It is not located within Curtis Park but is adjacent to the neighborhood and is within walking distance for most Curtis Park property owners. The Department of Parks and Recreation is currently doing an assessment of all its recreation centers, including Glenarm, and will be making broad recommendations for future operations. Their recent assessment recommended improvements to increase the budget for fitness equipment and to strengthen the fitness programs.

Schools

Curtis Park is home to two Denver Public School facilities, Gilpin Pre K – 8 and the Crofton School facility. Gilpin Pre K - 8 is located between 30th Street on the north, halfway between 29th and 28th Street on the south, Stout to California Streets. The school is currently in the process of transiting from an elementary school to a kindergarten through 8th Grade middle school. Sixth grade classes were added this school year, 7th will be

The Stout Street Children’s Park, at the corner of 25th and Stout Streets, includes a basketball court, playground and picnic area.

Sonny Lawson Park is located at the edge of the neighborhood, bounded by Park Avenue West, 24th, California and Welton Streets next to the Blair Caldwell African American Library.
added in the 2006 – 2007 school year and the transition will be complete with the addition of the 8th grade classes in 2007 – 2008. They offer before and after school programs as well as a full day kindergarten and a language acquisition program for second language learners. Approximately 27% of the 2004 – 2005 school year student population was English language learners and 90% received a free or reduced price lunch.

The Crofton School Facility is located on the square block bounded by 24th and 25th Streets, Lawrence to Arapahoe Streets. Crofton was utilized as an elementary school with a learning landscape for learning playground installed in 2002 – 2003. The site is currently used by the Denver Public Schools for administrative offices for the Department of Extended Learning, childcare and curriculum training.

**Community Centers**

The Curtis Park Community Center, 929 29th Street, is a non-profit organization established in the 1930’s to support community needs. The center currently provides numerous services to the community including an on-site child care center, a senior lunch program, victim service program and emergency services (food and clothing distribution of Colorado Shares). Over the years it has also provided space for various community functions and activities such as election voting and health fairs. It has allowed Curtis Park Neighbors, the
general neighborhood wide organization, to meet in their building and rents out space to community organizations.

King Trimble Center, located directly north of the Curtis Park Community Center, is leased by the Denver Housing Authority to the Mayor’s Office of Work Force Development for various educational and training activities.

**Blair-Caldwell African American Research Library/DPL Branch Library**

In 2003, the Blair-Caldwell African American Research Library opened at 2401 Welton Street. This splendid facility, which doubles as a branch of the Denver Public Library, is a premier facility and repository for local Black history, civil rights, businesses, and cultural organizations and events.

**Healthcare Facilities**

Curtis Park has accessibility to two neighborhood serving healthcare facilities. The Inner City Health Center, 3405 Downing, is a private non-profit healthcare organization that provides primary healthcare services (pre-natal, pediatrics, adult medical, dental, and pastoral counseling) to uninsured families and individuals. The Eastside Family Health Center, a facility of the Denver Health Medical Center, is located just outside of the neighborhood at 501 28th Street, directly east of the Welton Street corridor.

**Fire and Police Service**

Fire protection service is provided by Denver Fire Station #3 located at 25th and Washington, just east of the Welton corridor. Curtis Park is provided with police protection by District 6, located at 1566 Washington Street. In addition to regular patrols there is a Neighborhood Police Officer assigned to Curtis Park who is responsible for investigating and addressing recurring problems and quality of life issues as well as to meet with neighborhood groups, community leaders and individuals.

**Denver Enterprise Center**

Since 1986 the Denver Enterprise Center, 3003 Arapahoe Street, a 501 c3 non-profit organization, has provided important employment training and business incubator services to Curtis Park, surrounding neighborhoods, and indeed the entire city. It provides two main functions: 1) it is business incubator that helps individuals and small businesses selling goods and services get started by providing technical assistance in various areas (preparing a business plan, accounting, marketing, employee/employer relations, language training), and subsidized rent and utilities; and 2) in 1996 a kitchen incubator was opened to assist food vendors, caterers,
and those canning food and beverages with the same type of services and assistance as mentioned above. The majority of their clients come from Curtis Park and surrounding neighborhoods.

**The Women’s Bean Project**

The Women’s Bean Project is an entrepreneurial business and job skills program for low-income women and is housed in a renovated firehouse. For more than 16 years, they have helped women break the cycle of poverty and unemployment by teaching workplace competencies for entry-level jobs and by teaching job readiness skills in their gourmet food production business.

**Curtis Park Neighbors**

Curtis Park is well-served by a general neighborhood organization, the Curtis Park Neighbors. It was organized in 1977 and is currently focusing on such issues as historic preservation, zoning, traffic and coordinating with various city departments.

**Churches**

Curtis Park has a number of churches whose members are actively engaged in both spiritual and community improvement activities. Including the Agape Christian Church, the Central Baptist Church, Templo Gethsemani Aog, the Church of The Risen Lord and Mt. Zion Church of God In Christ.

The Black American West Museum is also located within Curtis Park at 30th and California.
ISSUES FOR FURTHER CONSIDERATION
Curtis Park is experiencing reinvestment and redevelopment and has been working cooperatively with a number of different entities to make significant enhancements to the neighborhood. Recently funding and project approval were acquired for Lawrence and California Streets to be converted from one-way to two-way. Potential transportation projects have also been identified for Champa and Stout Streets. The neighborhood organization has prioritized historic preservation concerns and is working towards potential local designation for several undesignated areas of Curtis Park. Other efforts include working with Police District 6 to establishing a new Cop Shop at the corner of Park Avenue West and Stout Street.

Issues for further consideration for the neighborhood are noted by section of the Assessment:

**Socio-Economic Data**

1. Continue collecting demographic data to enable comparisons of changes over time for both Curtis Park and the surrounding Five Points neighborhood.

**Housing**

1. Continue to track building permit activity, sales prices and changes in housing options (rental vs. owner) to monitor neighborhood investment and revitalization as well as change surrounding the Denver Housing Authority Hope VI site.

**Land Use and Zoning**

1. Examine the possibility of updating the stable residential portion of the B-8 and areas of R-3 zoning districts to a more appropriate zoning category(ies) through the Zoning Code Update.

2. Pursue updating the Blueprint Denver designations including:

   A. Land Use Designations map; exclude California Street from the Pedestrian Shopping District along the Welton corridor

   B. Expanding the Area of Stability Designation to include the recent Hope VI housing development between Arapahoe & Lawrence
Historic Presentation Urban Form

1. Neighborhood representatives should continue pursuing expansion and additions to existing local historic districts and individually recognized structures.

2. Complete a typology study of the neighborhood to document the urban form which may help inform the zoning concerns and potential changes to zoning through the Zoning Code Update.

Transportation/Mobility

1. Monitor and assess the impacts and benefits of the conversion of the one-way to two-way conversions of California and Lawrence Streets.

2. Monitor and assess the progress of the potential road diets for Champa and Stout Streets.

3. Continue to monitor implementation of Downtown Multimodal Access Plan including considerations for improvements to Broadway, 20th, 21st, Larimer and Arapahoe.

4. Review and evaluate RTD’s Central Corridor extension, the connection between the Central Corridor and East Corridor.

5. Assess potential for additional pedestrian and bicycle circulation improvements within the neighborhood and linking to downtown Denver; these may include additional bike lanes, pedestrian crossings and road diets.

Public Safety and Health

1. Continue to track crime data and activity to enable comparisons of changes over time and to help evaluate the effectiveness of community policing and the new COP Shop along Park Avenue.

Environment

1. Continue to monitor neighborhood for any environmental concerns.

Community Organizations and Facilities

1. Monitor enrollment and testing trends to judge effectiveness of recent changes to Gilpin School
Overall:
All of these issues in addition to elements identified in the Downtown Area Plan indicate that a neighborhood plan should be initiated. The scope of the neighborhood plan should extend beyond the boundaries to provide a comprehensive vision and direction for a larger portion of the Five Points neighborhood, particularly the link between Downtown and close-by neighborhoods including Ballpark, Arapahoe Square and Curtis Park. A comprehensive plan would identify issues and opportunities at the neighborhood level as well as within sub-areas.