

# East Central Area Plan



## **Public Review Draft 2 Feedback Summary:**

- 1-month review period from 5/29/20 to 7/1/20
- 590 individual comments received
- Most comments focused on small changes and clarification
- 31 substantive changes were made
- Major substantive changes to the plan based on community input:
  - Added more requirements around affordable housing for the incentive height recommendation
  - Added a policy for additional strategies for equitable community engagement
  - Added recommendations to better support small businesses
  - Added recommendations explore near-term bicycle and pedestrian improvements tested in COVID-19 Shared Streets program
  - Updated public safety recommendations

## **Substantive Changes by Topic:**



### **Land Use & Built Form**

- Added language to Policy L1 to recommended Large Development Review for large institutional sites
- Refined Places map to better align with height recommendations in southern Capitol Hill
- Policy L3 has been updated to clarify that affordable housing associated with the height incentive shall be provided on-site.
- Policy L3 has been updated to recommend coordination of strategies to add more low and very low income housing
- Policy L3 has been updated to clarify that open space must be publicly accessible
- Added language to Policy L3 that City Council must approve specific benefit requirements for any development using height incentives
- Refined Maximum Building Heights map to better match existing height allowances in Row House areas of southern Capitol Hill and western Cheesman Park
- Policy L5 – This policy has been updated to recommend that ADUs should allowed as accessory to duplex and rowhouse forms
- Modified Policy L9 to articulate the use of the Discover Denver survey
- Added Policy L11 to recommend strategies for equitable community engagement
- Strategy C-L1.A.1 - language added about balancing the needs of streetscapes, amenity zones, landscaping, on-street parking, and right-of-way dedication
- Modified Policy C-L1.D to include all lots in the evaluation of parking requirements (instead of just small lots with MS-3 zoning) and to recommend that the evaluation focus on the impact of parking requirements through an equity lens, including affordable housing, pedestrian and bicycle safety, and technological changes (e.g. vehicle automation, ridesharing, goods delivery, etc.) in addition to impacts on street parking supply.
- Policy C-L2 has been updated to clarify that affordable housing associated with the height incentive shall be provided on-site.

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- Policy C-L2 has been clarified to make clear that affordable housing is a priority for the height incentive, but the other community benefits should also be considered

## E

### Economy & Housing

- Added reference to Business Improvement Districts (BIDs) to Policy E3
- Added strategy E4.I - Evaluate the impacts of construction on local businesses and develop strategies to mitigate those impacts.
- Added strategy E4.H - Ensure on-street parking is effectively managed to support local businesses (see Policies M10 & M11).
- Added sub-strategy E7.C.1 - Establish a working group with BIDs and the city to develop strategies for how BIDs can help new businesses move into permanent locations.
- Strategy E8.A – Foreclosure prevention was added to the list of programs to help residents stay in their homes.
- Strategy E10.C – Non-profit housing developers was added to the list of partners that the City should support in acquiring land for affordable housing development
- Strategy E10.F.4 – This strategy was clarified to state that affordable housing should provide long-term affordability and be dedicated for a period of time consistent with or greater than adopted policy.
- Policy E10.B has been updated to clarify that affordable housing associated with the height incentive shall be provided on-site.

## M

### Mobility

- Added pedestrian priority to 16th Avenue transformative street on the Transformative Street Opportunities map
- Updated Strategy M1.K to include enhanced review of historic parkway and clarify trail materials
- Added sub-strategy M1.N.2.b to improve pedestrian environment on 13th Ave between Washington and Grant Streets
- Added sub-strategy M1.P.1.d to explore near-term implementation of pedestrian and bicycle priority elements tested in COVID-19 Shared Street due to community feedback
- Added proposed high comfort bikeway on Pennsylvania St to Bike Network map due to community feedback
- Added Strategy M3.H to study feasibility of a high comfort bikeway on Pennsylvania St, due to community feedback
- Per community feedback, clarified language in Strategy M3.A to recognize success and community support for COVID-19 Shared Street on 11th Ave and outline considerations for corridor study

## QL

### Quality of Life Infrastructure

- Policy Q17: A strategy focused on reducing crime through environmental design has been revised to focus on practices that are more likely to have equitable outcomes. The policy now prioritizes community-led implementation that focuses on inclusivity

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- Policy Q17: The Pedestrian Lighting Priority Areas have been updated on the Street Activation through Design Concepts map. The previous version mapped these along the Vision Zero High Injury Network (HIN) and on streets that Blueprint designated as pedestrian priority areas. The updated version maps them along the HIN and on streets that the Mobility section of this plan designates as pedestrian priority streets

## **Frequently Asked Questions:**

- How were comments reviewed and changes to the draft plan made?
  - Staff reviewed every comment made and provided a response to each, which can be found here. For comments that suggested a change to the plan that was consistent with the plan vision and adopted citywide policy, the change was made and noted in the revised document. When comments conflicted or if additional direction was needed, the East Central steering committee provided guidance. Meeting notes from committee meetings are available on the plan webpage.
- What is the remaining planning process?
  - The third draft of the plan is now available on the website. You may review the draft and provide comments for the upcoming Planning Board and City Council hearings. Dates and times for the hearings will be posted on the website. If you have any questions, staff will be happy to talk with you.
- Should the planning process be put on hold because of COVID-19?
  - Now is not the time to stop our work. More than ever, we need plans and policies that promote equity, support the health of our residents and our planet, keep communities connected to the services they need and help address the short- and long-term economic challenges the city and its residents will be facing in the wake of the pandemic. Several of the priority policy recommendations in the East Central draft plan, such as assistance to small locally owned businesses, preventing involuntary displacement of low-income residents, enhanced social services for residents experiencing homelessness, access to quality jobs and job training, a strong healthcare sector and affordable housing for hospital employees are now even more important.
- Do the plan recommendations need to change because of COVID-19?
  - The East Central Area Plan is a long-term (20-year) vision covering a variety of topics. The recommendations are flexible to accommodate changes in the city over that timeframe, and the broader goals remain applicable:
    - Quality-of-life amenities and housing options for all people
    - Complete sidewalks, street crossings, trails, and transportation networks
    - Parks or open space within a 10-minute walk of each neighborhood
    - More access to opportunity, from schools to healthcare to healthy food choices to recreation centers, parks, and libraries that offer innovative

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programming and great facilities that promote participation and better health outcomes – particularly in underserved neighborhoods

- Will the street closures because of COVID-19 be made permanent?
  - The Department of Transportation and Infrastructure is using this time to evaluate these changes to the street network, which will help inform how the plan recommendations are implemented. Decisions have not been made on how long the current closures will remain in place.
- Will COVID-19 impact the implementation of the plan?
  - Some aspects of implementing the plan rely on the city’s budget, which may continue to see impacts from COVID-19. However, over the 20-year life of the plan, current budget issues will have less impact on the implementation of the plan. In addition, many plan recommendations can be accomplished through partnerships or existing or alternative funding sources.
- Why does the plan recommend increasing density?
  - Blueprint Denver, the citywide land use and transportation plan, adopted in 2019, includes a growth strategy for all of Denver. To strategically direct the projected additional 189,000 residents and 136,000 jobs Denver expects to gain by 2040, the plan recommends focusing growth in centers and corridors (mixed use areas) with access to quality public transit, but acknowledges that every neighborhood will need to accept some growth.
  - East Central has a shortage of 3,100 affordable housing units today, while 11,000 households are cost burdened. Over the next 10 years, agreements on 46% of existing income-restricted housing units will expire and could become unaffordable. What we’ve heard from many members of the East Central community is a desire for their neighborhoods to offer a range of housing options in support of a diverse community, where residents have an opportunity to live in their neighborhoods long-term. Additional housing must be provided to meet these goals, along with all the other tools the plan recommends to address the affordable housing shortage.
- How will community benefits be determined?
  - The East Central Area Plan would require community benefits be provided for any property that wishes to exceed its currently allowed maximum height, up to the maximum heights indicated on the map on page 33 of the plan. The priority community benefits are described in Policy L3 on page 32 of the plan, but the details, including things such as the specific number of affordable housing units or the amount of open space, are not specified. Specific details such as these are determined through regulatory processes and usually occur after a plan recommendation has been adopted. Regulatory processes, such as rezonings or zoning text amendments, conduct additional, more detailed analyses and provide opportunities for community input and require a decision by City Council for changes to take effect.
- How does this plan relate to the Colfax Bus Rapid Transit project?

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- The East Central Area Plan is being closely coordinated with Colfax Bus Rapid Transit (BRT), but they are separate projects and at different stages of approval. The Colfax BRT was approved by voters and received \$55 million in funding as part of 2017's general obligation bond election. The City intends to leverage the \$55M in funding, along with funds from other available sources, to secure additional grant funds to achieve the full vision for the East Colfax BRT. Large scale, federally-funded projects generally follow five major phases: preliminary project development/conceptual design, environmental evaluation and clearance, design, Right-of-Way acquisition, and construction.
- The East Colfax BRT is currently set to initiate the environmental evaluation and clearance phase. Based on typical timelines for large scale, federally-funded projects, we estimate it will take 5-8 years from the start of the environmental assessment until construction completion.
- Colfax Avenue has the highest bus ridership of any corridor in region. The 15/15L routes combined see seven million annual boardings — over 22,000 per weekday — and weekday ridership is projected to increase to over 50,000 in 2035. The East Central Area Plan provides an opportunity to plan for the long-term future of the area, ensuring that the community benefits both from its existing transit access and the improvements planned with BRT. To learn more about Colfax BRT, please visit [www.colfaxbrt.org](http://www.colfaxbrt.org).