East Central Area Plan
Steering Committee Meeting
April 11th, 2019
Tears-McFarlane House Community Room
# East Central Area Plan

**Steering Committee Meeting**  
**April 11, 2019**  
**CHUN Tears-McFarlane House Community Room | 1290 Williams St**

**AGENDA**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Objective</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>6:00 – 6:10</td>
<td>Approval of march meeting summary</td>
<td>Confirm or make edits to meeting summary</td>
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<tr>
<td>6:10 – 6:30</td>
<td>Remaining Community Engagement</td>
<td>Update on engagement to date and remaining community meetings</td>
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<tr>
<td>6:30 – 7:30</td>
<td>Preliminary Recommendations</td>
<td>Provide input on high level recommendations and priorities taking shape</td>
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<td>7:30 – 8:00</td>
<td>Performance Measures and Long Range Targets</td>
<td>Provide input on how we are measuring successful outcomes and tracking progress on implementation</td>
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Remaining Community Engagement
EAST CENTRAL AREA NEIGHBORHOOD PLANNING INITIATIVE SCHEDULE

STEERING COMMITTEE MEETINGS

FOCUS GROUPS
[FOCUS TOPICS & AREAS]

ALL COMMUNITY MEMBERS

NEIGHBORHOODS AND TARGETED OUTREACH
[EXISTING EVENTS, NEIGHBORHOOD SPECIFIC MEETINGS, RNOS, COMMUNITY CONNECTORS & OUTREACH TEAMS, UNDERREPRESENTED GROUPS]

We are here

VISION AND GUIDING PRINCIPLES

STRATEGIES

KICK-OFF WORKSHOP

AREA WORKSHOP

DRAFT PLAN PUBLIC OPEN HOUSE

JUL 2017 - DEC 2018

2018 | 2019

JAN | FEB | MAR | APR | MAY | JUN | JUL

1,288 SURVEY PARTICIPANTS

16 EVENTS

15 STEERING COMMITTEE MEETINGS

FRAMING ISSUES AND DIRECTION

NEIGHBORHOOD WORKSHOPS

STRATEGIES
Remaining Focus Group Meetings | 6:00pm – 8:00pm
Carla Madison Rec Center

April 17: Mobility
April 18: Design Quality & Character Preservation
April 23: Affordable Housing (rescheduled from 4/10)
Remaining 2019 Engagement

April/May RNO Meetings

- April 9<sup>th</sup>: Uptown on the Hill - Complete
- April 17: City Park West Neighborhood Association
- April 17: Swallow Hill
- May 1: CHUN (Capitol Hill United Neighbors)
- May 15: South City Park Neighborhood Association
- May 16: Congress Park Neighbors

May 21<sup>st</sup> East Central Area Workshop – Draft Recommendations

June TBD East Central Area Workshop – Draft Plan

Late Summer/Fall Planning Board and City Council Adoption Process
East Central Steering Committee Dates

**May 9:** Review priority recommendations/focus areas/transformative projects

**June 13:** Review draft plan

**July 11:** Approve Draft East Central Area Plan
Focus Group Summary
Preliminary Recommendations
3 Questions to Focus On:

1. Do we disagree with any of these recommendations?
2. What recommendations are we missing?
3. How should we prioritize recommendations?
Economy Recommendations

- Healthcare & Wellness as the economic anchor
- Broaden healthy food access
- Protect community-serving retail/small business
- Nurture & Promote small office niche
- Downtown adjacencies
Economy

Healthcare & Wellness Recommendations (in partnership with hospitals):

1. Establish quality workforce housing *(community workshops #1)*
2. Attract high-level talent *(hospitals focus group #1)*
3. Create community-based workforce training
4. Allow residents to “age in place”
5. Weave services throughout neighborhoods
6. Blend the edges of the hospital campuses
7. Strengthen daily services, retail, and dining options
8. Create strong transportation connections
9. Attract hotels, including extended stay
10. Attract spinoff jobs and entrepreneurs
Economy

Recommendations to Broaden Healthy Food Access:

1. Recruit/incentivize small- or mid-sized grocery in the low-access area (City Park West/North Cheesman along Colfax)
   - 60% of East Central households are not within walking distance to a full-service grocery

2. Expand availability of healthy food options in convenience stores
   - #1 community priority in workshops

3. Creative recruitment/incentives for more healthy (and affordable) dining/fast-food establishments

4. Partnerships with hospitals to promote fresh food access and community health
Economy

Recommendations to Protect Community-Serving Retail:
(25 total presented to focus groups)

1. The regulatory process
   - Dedicated staff position/liaison within CPD/DEDO to help navigate City processes
   - Allow flexibility in the zoning code to ease burden of opening new business and/or changing a use

2. Technical assistance
   - Marketing package of small businesses
   - Provide TA & legal support with succession/transition planning, lease negotiations, etc.

3. Financial incentives (for businesses and/or landlords)
   - BRT construction mitigation

4. Community-minded ownership models
Economy

Nurture and Promote Small Office Niche

*Rising Downtown & Cherry Creek rents are pressuring small professional firms to relocate*

**Recommendations:**
1. Coworking
2. Live-work spaces
3. Small-format commercial spaces
4. Innovative flex spaces – i.e., more blending between office, retail, and light industrial
5. Ground floor activation beyond retail – i.e., creative office uses appropriate for ground floors
Economy

Downtown Adjacencies Recommendations:

1. Consistency/connection with Downtown Area Plan, Upper Downtown Plan (in process), and others

2. Linkages between Downtown and Uptown hospital district, other destinations

3. Nuance of job and residential growth along the Downtown edge and in the highest density areas of the East Central Area
Questions & Discussion

What do you think are the highest priority projects?
# Affordable Housing, Social Services, Financial Stability

| Estimated Shortage of Affordable Rentals | **3,100 units at less than $625/month**  
These renters are paying between $875 and $1,250 |
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<td>Units Renting at $750 or Less</td>
<td><strong>Year 2000: 80%  Year 2017: 23%</strong></td>
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<td>Homeownership Trends</td>
<td>Declining ownership for racial and ethnic minorities, particularly City Park West</td>
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<td>Homeownership Opportunities</td>
<td>Virtually non-existent for households with incomes less than $50,000 – (172 condo or attached units available in 2017, 0 SF homes)</td>
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Affordable Housing Preliminary Recommendations: TOOLS

1. Community Development Block Grant Program (CDBG)
2. HOME Investment Partnership Program (HOME)
3. Low Income Housing Tax Credit Program (LIHTC)
4. Direct funding
5. Fee waivers/rebates
6. Subsidies and grants
7. Change of City regulations or policy
8. Density bonuses
9. Technical assistance
10. Pilot programs
11. Education and marketing
12. Public-private partnerships
Affordable Housing Preliminary Recommendations: APPLICATIONS

1. Preservation
2. More Apartments Near Transit
3. ADUs
4. Non-Conventional Housing
5. New Affordable Housing
6. Supportive Services
7. Miscellaneous

Focus Group rescheduled to 4/23
What do you think are the highest priority projects?
Developer Focus Group Summary

- Colfax is unique from other corridors in Denver – BRT is accentuating this, and creates uncertainty
- Physical challenges:
  - Small lots – land assemblage is critical to make projects profitable – both horizontally (along Colfax) and vertically (behind Colfax)
  - A 6-mile corridor can’t all be activated with retail
- Regulatory and delivery system challenges:
  - Regulatory: change-in-use (also heard in small business owner forums), occupancy code, parking requirements – all too rigid
  - Delivery System: more cumbersome than it used to be, inconsistencies amongst staff, timely and unpredictable
- Preliminary solutions discussed: amend change-in-use policies, density bonuses, transfer of development rights, interdisciplinary “Action Team” for Colfax development reviews
Land Use + Built Form – COLFA RX AVENUE

• Treat the future of Colfax Avenue as a **neighborhood-serving street** with a series of **nodes**, rather than a corridor/arterial.

• Nurture a culture for **small-scale development** and **adaptive reuse**.

• **Protect historic assets** and **cultural significance** of the past while encouraging **sustainable growth around transit**.
Colfax as a Neighborhood-Serving Street

Refine “community corridor” place type to match future nodal character of street.

Limit ground floor residential adjacent to transit, but allow/support it in between (allow new building forms in certain locations)

Add BRT (or enhanced transit) platform as additional limitation for drive thru building forms in MS districts.

Require a 2-story minimum in new construction for MS-5 and MS-8.
A Culture of Small-Scale Development and Adaptive Reuse (SITE IMPROVEMENTS)

Adaptive Reuse Ordinance + Colfax Ombudsmen/Coordinated Review Team

Rule of lenience for new projects with very constrained sites.

Coordinate with BRT Design and consider during development review

- Develop sensitive design solutions for small/narrow sites.
- Consider phasing and timing of construction when reviewing.

63% Of lots on Colfax are “very small” to “small” which are already challenging to redevelop. Required public realm improvements significantly increase the burden.
A Culture of Small-Scale Development and Adaptive Reuse

(DEVELOPMENT)

Adaptive Reuse Ordinance + Colfax Ombudsmen/Coordinated Review Team

Create a “Developer’s Guide” to small-scale development and adaptive reuse on Colfax.

Eliminate or significantly reduce parking requirements for small lots and existing buildings constructed prior to 19XX (TBD).

BUSINESS AND DEVELOPER INPUT

- Small business owners and developers, with support from BIDs, note public improvement requirements, change in use triggers, small lots, and “process” as the biggest challenges for Colfax.
Protect Historic Assets/Culture while Encouraging Sustainable Growth Near Transit

Adaptive Reuse Ordinance

TDR Program

Local Colfax Historic/Cultural District (boundary TBD)

- Open up financial incentives
- Design review

Density bonus program for MS-3 properties near transit (define).

- Affordable housing
- Publicly accessible open space

Combine parking district with parking maximums.

WORKSHOP PARTICIPANT INPUT

- Priorities for new development on Colfax included: saving existing buildings, design review, small businesses, and publicly accessible open space.
Land Use + Built Form – NEIGHBORHOOD CHARACTER + MISSING MIDDLE

• Legalize ADUs everywhere in East Central.

• Create a Conservation Overlay “starter kit” for neighborhoods to rein in massing, scale and cost.

• Create a “Character Home” incentive program with density bonuses near transit.
Legalize ADUs in East Central

Allowed almost everywhere already.
Infrastructure supports (alleys).
Neighborhood supported.
Many older examples on-the-ground.
Context-sensitive density and affordability.

WORKSHOP PARTICIPANT INPUT

- East Central Area attendees voted ADUs as 2nd highest option for most desired “missing middle” (live/work was #1)
Modify standards in SU and TU districts to bring scale and cost of new construction down.

- Eliminate building coverage exemptions in new construction.
- Side wall standards.
- Modify bulk plane.

**Conservation Overlay Starter Kit**

- **With existing exemptions**: $770K
- **Eliminate exemptions**: $564K
- **Side wall standards**: $564K
- **Modify bulk plane**: $466K

**WORKSHOP PARTICIPANT INPUT**

- East Central Area attendees voted “**height** and **mass and scale**” as the top two concerns with new construction in SU and TU.
Character Home Program

Incentivize additions over demolition.

- Establish criteria – must save X% of original home, build before 19XX, save certain architectural characteristics, etc.

- Allow exemptions and incentives.

SURVEY INPUT

- 28% expressed concern about **design quality**.
- 26% listed **architecture/historic character** as what they liked MOST about their neighborhood.
Character Home Program + Density Bonus Near Transit

Incentivize additions over demolition and encourage sensitive density and affordable housing options near transit.

- **Establish criteria** – proximity to transit, must save X% of original home, build before 19XX, save certain architectural characteristics, etc.

- **Allow exemptions and provide incentives.**

**WORKSHOP PARTICIPANT INPUT**

- Strong support for directing growth/density near transit, but also concerns about transitions and loss of architectural character.
Questions & Discussion

What do you think are the highest priority projects?
Green Infrastructure Preliminary Recommendations

• Maintain and modernize our tree canopy and tree lawns
• Rethinking Park Ave. and other right-of-ways (12th, 16th, alleys)
• Create additional park space
  ▪ Parkways as linear parks – creating contemporary parkways
  ▪ Use underutilized lots for parks/green space
• Encourage the use of green infrastructure & natural vegetation to reduce Runoff and increase infiltration
Maintain Healthy Trees and Increase Coverage

Protect select trees based on forester’s assessment

Provide free replacement trees throughout neighborhoods
Redesign Tree Lawn for Water Quality: Infiltration and Runoff reduction
Rethink Park Avenue

Implications & Recommendations:

1. Safety concerns at the intersection of Colfax/Park Avenue warrants closure (vs. key route for highway access)

2. “Put the Park back in Park Avenue” – link the triangle parks with a linear park element and reduce vehicular capacity (vs. maintain traffic flow) – Create a contemporary parkway

3. Program and activate the park to avoid safety concerns

WORKSHOP PARTICIPANT INPUT

- East Central Area attendees were divided about Park Ave @ Colfax. 48% think we should absolutely explore the idea (safety and green space). 34% think we should not explore the idea (homeless concern and highway access).
Rethink Park Avenue

Original Design:
100’ ROW with 20’ tree lawn, two rows of trees and 12’ sidewalk

1937 widening increased curb to curb from 33’ to 56’ and lost one row of trees

Extension changed block between Franklin and Humboldt

THE ORIGINAL DESIGN (1909) OF PARK AVE. TERMINATED AT A RIGHT ANGLE BETWEEN FRANKLIN AND HUMBOLDT STREETS AS SEEN IN THIS OVERLAY. IN 1933, TWO SINGLE FAMILY HOMES WERE ACQUIRED IN ORDER TO WIDEN AND EXTEND PARK AVE. TO COLFAX AVE. AS IT SITS TODAY.
Rethink our R.O.W. (Streets & Alleys)

Implications & Recommendations:

1. 12th Avenue
2. 16th Avenue (bike/ped connection to downtown)
3. Alleys (Green and/or Mobility?)

WORKSHOP PARTICIPANT INPUT

82% of participants (East Central) think we should re-think public right of way for parks and open space
Increase Our Park Space

Implications & Recommendations:

1. Parkways as Linear Parks
2. Transition underutilized lots to Pocket Parks by incentivizing private development?
3. Create shared public green spaces (schools/institutions/carriage lots)

92% of participants (East Central) think we should re-think parkways to provide better pedestrian bike connections.

90% of participants (East Central) think we should explore converting vacant/parking lots into park space.

Shared green spaces was #2 strategy to make the area more resilient (East Central)
Parkways as Linear Parks/ Contemporary Parkways
Increase Green Infrastructure

**Implications & Recommendations:**

1. Reduce runoff and increase infiltration through native vegetation and green infrastructure facilities
2. Reintroduce nature to our built environment
3. Increase park space by combining with detention or water quality improvements

*Project team analysis shows perpendicular streets to Colfax (one block north/south) as good opportunities for GI.*

*Workshop participant input*

*Native vegetation was the #3 strategy to make the area more resilient (East Central & East)*
Questions & Discussion

What do you think are the highest priority projects?
Mobility

**Transformative Streets:** Provide treatments to streets that enhance safety and/or multi-modal options

Types of Potential Treatments

- One-Way to Two-Way Street Conversion
- Additional/Improved Bike/Pedestrian Crossings
- Improved Transit Speed & Reliability
- More Usable Green Space & Enhanced Bike Facilities

Potential Locations

- **13th & 14th Avenue** - Broadway to Yosemite  
  (focus on Bike/Pedestrian Improvements)
- **Park Avenue**  
  (focus on Transit/Pedestrian Improvements)
**Mobility**

*Bicycle Facility Improvements*

**Types of Potential Treatments**

- Protected and buffered bike lanes
- Neighborhood bikeways
- Intersection treatments (operational and facility)

**Potential Locations**

- Enhanced East-West connections between **Broadway and Cheesman Park** (Capitol Hill Neighborhood)
- Improve planned facility on **16th Avenue** – Broadway to City Park Esplanade
Mobility

Intersection Safety Improvements:

Types of Potential Treatments

- Pedestrian Facility Treatments (Reduced Crossing Distances, Signs+Markings, etc.)
- Operational Treatments (Parking Restrictions, New Signal, etc.)
- Bicycle Facility Treatments (Bike Boxes, Bicycle Signals, etc.)
- Simplified Intersections / Modified Grid

Potential Locations

- Colfax Ave & Colorado Blvd.
- 17th/18th Ave & Franklin St.
Mobility

New Pedestrian and Bicycle Crossings

Types of Potential Treatments

• Operational Treatments
  (New Crossing Signals, Crosswalks, etc.)
• Pedestrian Facility Treatments
  (Reduced Crossing Distances, etc.)
• Bicycle Facility Treatments
  (Bike Boxes, Bicycle Signals, etc.)

Potential Locations

- **7th Ave Pkwy** – Colorado Blvd to Josephine St
- **12th Ave** & Colorado Blvd
- **11th – 12th bicycle connection** through Cheesman Park
Mobility

Mobility Hubs

Types of Potential Treatments

• Enhanced customer amenities (real-time arrival info, high quality shelters, etc.)
• High Capacity Bicycle Parking
• Bike/Ped Facility and Access Treatments
• Streetscape Elements (Wayfinding, Seating, Lighting, etc.)
• Access for Car Share, Bike Share, etc.

Potential Locations

• Colorado Blvd & 11th Ave
• All Colfax BRT stops
Mobility
Neighborhood Traffic Calming

Types of Potential Treatments
- Pedestrian activated signals
- Curb extensions/neck downs
- Reduced lane widths
- Diverters
- Traffic Circles
- Parklets

Potential Locations
- 8th, 13th, 14th, 17th
- 16th from York to Broadway
Mobility
Other Potential Project Types

- Sidewalk Improvements
- Transit Service Improvements
- Policy Recommendations
- Transportation Demand Management
- Freight/Delivery zones
- Parking
What do you think are the highest priority projects?