EAST CENTRAL AREA PLAN

Steering Committee Meeting

September 13, 2017
6:00PM – 8:00PM
Webb Municipal Building
Existing Plans and Studies

• 4 adopted plans: Uptown, Capitol Hill/Cheesman Park, Congress Park, East Colfax
  • Highlight of recommendations that are still relevant
  • Steering Committee will have an opportunity to review in more detail later

• 12 previous studies
  • Highlight of relevant findings

• These plans and studies will inform the East Central Plan
  • The new plan will supersede previous plans
  • Need to ensure valid recommendations are being carried forward
  • Provide useful data and context
Uptown Neighborhood Plan (1986)

• Covers North Capitol Hill and City Park West
• Concern about loss of housing and residents
• Increase in surface parking lots
• Unbalanced incentives between office and residential development
Uptown Neighborhood Plan (1986)

• Recommendations:
  • Provide a broad mixture of housing types and ownership/renter patterns
  • Encourage mixed use projects
  • Reduce parking requirements for residential uses
  • Consider removing commercial parking as a use by right
  • Eliminate billboards
  • Prohibit drive-throughs
  • Improve linkages to City Park and Cheesman Park
  • Increase utility of Park Avenue as a linear park
Capitol Hill/Cheesman Park Neighborhood Plan (1993)

• Covers Capitol Hill and Cheesman Park
• Concerns about vacant and abandoned properties, disinvestment
• Traffic making walking and cycling more difficult
• Diversity of neighborhood-oriented businesses being lost
Capitol Hill/Cheeseman Park Neighborhood Plan (1993)

• Recommendations:
  • Support compatible higher density
  • Support infill development
  • Encourage a diversity of businesses
  • Encourage residential uses in retail projects
  • Encourage community gardens
  • Eliminate billboards
  • Emphasize historic preservation
  • Underground utility lines
  • Improve linkages to parks
Capitol Hill/Cheesman Park Neighborhood Plan (1993)

• Recommendations:
  • Widen and buffer narrow sidewalks
  • Study the conversion of one-way streets
  • Study the potential narrowing of 13th Avenue
  • Give priority to walking as the most desirable form of transportation
  • Give higher priority to bicycles
  • Rezone the neighborhood to accommodate transit impacts
  • Discourage surface parking lots
  • Encourage community use of schools
Congress Park Neighborhood Plan (1995)

• Covers Congress Park
• Desire to maintain and enhance community feel
• Stabilize commercial areas
• Manage transitions between residential and commercial uses
Congress Park Neighborhood Plan (1995)

• Recommendations:
  • Create and reinforce buffers along the neighborhood borders and between residential and commercial areas
  • Remove all billboards
  • Enhance the use of alternative modes (walking, bicycling, and transit)
  • To enhance the residential and pedestrian environment, where appropriate consider physically or visually narrowing local and collector streets
  • Support streetscaping, lighting, façade improvements, trees, flowers, and other aesthetic enhancements for businesses
East Colfax Plan (2004)

• Covers portions of all six neighborhoods – one block on either side of Colfax
• Desire to spur development and enhance character along the corridor
• Take advantage of future transit improvements
East Colfax Plan (2004)

• Recommendations:
  • Support infill development of retail, office, and residential uses
  • Develop tools that adequately address the transition between the corridor and the neighborhood
  • Consider alley vacations to create linear assemblage along the corridor and to form natural boundaries between residential and commercial properties
  • Design a regulatory and economic development framework that is responsive to challenges presented by a range of lot sizes and ownership structures and which encourages project concepts consistent with the vision of this plan
East Colfax Plan (2004)

• Recommendations:
  • Build partnerships with key property owners at transit station areas to leverage private investment in these locations. Work with existing property owners to identify future development potential of large assemblages or opportunities for co-development
  • Limit the number of access points or curb cuts especially in transit station areas to increase vehicular and pedestrian safety, improve the pedestrian area, reinforce an uninterrupted street wall and improve circulation
  • Control signage (private commercial, regulatory and directional) and promote creative guidelines that contribute to visual aesthetics of the corridor, reintroduce artful neon design, aid building and use identification, promote safety and express the Colfax brand image
Land Use Studies

- Civic Center Station Transit District Plan
- Colfax Avenue BRT TOD Continuum Analysis
Civic Center Station Transit District Plan

• Establishes a long-term vision for the future of the station area as a revitalized urban transit hub
  • Analyzes activation and implementation strategies for a 20,000 square-foot developable parcel along the north side of Colfax Avenue between Broadway and Lincoln Streets
  • Calls for the redevelopment of seven (7) underutilized district properties to serve as a catalyst for development near the station area

• The intent of this plan is to serve as a model of how multiple transit services can organize within a very active, yet constrained urban area while maintaining high quality connectivity for bicycles, pedestrians and vehicles
  • Create a sense of place, create a unique identity, improve pedestrian/bike connections as well as overall safety in the area
Colfax Avenue BRT TOD Continuum Analysis

• Economic analysis using the same analysis framework as Denver’s TOD Strategic Plan

• Fine grained land use, development, and block patterns
  • Redevelopment and infill opportunities: commercial properties fronting Colfax
  • Strategy: Focus on promoting reinvestment and redevelopment along Colfax while preserving the stability of adjoining neighborhoods

Economic and Planning Systems, August 2017

Studies: Land Use
Colfax Avenue BRT TOD Continuum Analysis

• TOD Continuum: metric-based classification rating analysis
  
  • **Energize:**
    • Strong market conditions for TOD
    • No significant development or infrastructure deficiencies impeding TOD from occurring;
    • Typically already experiencing TOD investment and only need limited, targeted, short-term actions
  
  • **Catalyze:**
    • Station areas with strong market conditions for TOD
    • Need for specific infrastructure or amenity investment to catalyze TOD

Economic and Planning System, August 2017
Transportation

• Denver Strategic Transportation Plan
• Denver Moves: Bikes
• Denver Living Streets Initiative
Denver Strategic Transportation Plan

• Vision:
  • Multi-modal
  • Safe, efficient, reliable
  • Connected
  • Green & Sustainable
  • Healthy, livable community

• Innovation
  • Focus on moving people rather than vehicles (person trips vs. vehicle trips)
  • Doesn’t grow Denver’s road footprint
  • Travel sheds instead of just travel corridors

Department of Public Works, 2008
Denver Strategic Transportation Plan

East Colfax Travel Shed

Legend

- **Study Area Boundary**
- **Future Transit Station**
- **Future Transit Line**
- **Existing Transit Station**
- **Existing Transit Line**
- **Investment Corridors**
- **Bike Routes and Trails**
- **Forecast Growth in Person Trips to and from Travel Shed**
- **Blueprint Denver Areas of Change**

Department of Public Works, 2008

Studies: Transportation
Denver Strategic Transportation Plan

East Colfax Travel Shed

• Improvement recommendations:
  • Attention should focus on safety enhancements as well as pedestrian and bicycle connectivity improvements
  • Streetcar is suggested for the corridor as part of the continuing Colfax Avenue revitalization efforts

Department of Public Works, 2008

Studies: Transportation
Denver Moves: Bikes

• Purpose: to expand the vision for non-motorized transportation and recreation systems in Denver

• Goals:
  • Creating a biking and walking network where every household is within a quarter mile of a high ease of use facility
  • Achieve a 15% bicycling and walking commute mode share by 2020

Studies: Transportation

Department of Public Works, 2011
Denver Moves: Bikes

• Planned Network

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Facility Type</th>
<th>Existing miles</th>
<th>Miles added with Denver Moves</th>
<th>Total network miles</th>
<th>Percentage of system</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Multi-use (trails, on sidewalk)</td>
<td>107</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>131</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Separated in-roadway (cycle track, bike lanes—regular, buffered, climbing)</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>121</td>
<td>172</td>
<td>39%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Enhanced shared roadway (sharrow, party parking, pave shoulder)</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>17%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bike Boulevards</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td><strong>172</strong></td>
<td><strong>270</strong></td>
<td><strong>442</strong></td>
<td><strong>100%</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

• Implementation Principles
Denver Living Streets Initiative

• Partnership to shape future street investments and policies and transform existing commercial corridors into living streets
  • Success requires transportation strategies that are built by balancing operational, physical, and behavioral components

• The initiative calls for:
  • Reduction in the number of travel lanes
  • Creation of a pedestrian and transit friendly streetscape
  • Orientation of buildings to the street
  • Implementation of green-infrastructure strategies
  • Partnerships between public (city/state/federal) and private sectors

City and County of Denver, December 2014
Economic Development

• Colfax Corridor Connections Economic Development Analysis
Colfax Corridor Connections Economic Development Analysis

• Compared estimated economic impacts of Enhanced Bus, BRT, and Modern Streetcar

• Used property values as a proxy for overall economic impact

• Evaluated the entire transit corridor from Auraria to I-225
Colfax Corridor Connections Economic Development Analysis

- Properties along Colfax are expected to increase in value by $2.5 billion to $3.5 billion by 2035 without transit improvements.
- This increase is expected to be greatest closer to Downtown.
- BRT is expected to add an additional $124 million to $346 million in property value increases.
- This is expected to be most pronounced toward the eastern end of the corridor.
- Areas closer to Downtown are expected to see less impact from BRT because the area is already relatively heavily developed and significant new development is constrained.

Department of Public Works

Studies: Economic Development
Housing

• Mitigating Involuntary Displacement
Mitigating Involuntary Displacement

• **Purpose:** Understand the magnitude of involuntary displacement and inform direction on OED's investments and programs

• **Goals:**
  • Identify factors in both residential and commercial displacement
  • Identify neighborhoods where displacement is currently happening or could happen
  • Research best practices
  • Inform investments with goal of equitable neighborhood revitalization
Mitigating Involuntary Displacement

Areas Vulnerable to Gentrification

UPDATE: Based on 2015 Demographic Data
Source: American Community Survey

A tract is categorized as Vulnerable if it meets at least two of these criteria:
- median household income is lower than Denver’s
- % renter-occupied units is higher than Denver’s
- % residents with less than a Bachelor’s Degree is higher than Denver’s

Legend:
- Neighborhood Boundaries
- Census Tracts
- Vulnerable Neighborhoods (2015)
Mitigating Involuntary Displacement

Findings & Recommendations

**THERE IS NO SILVER BULLET**
1. Collaborate with agencies on strategies to mitigate displacement
2. Address potential for involuntary displacement in neighborhood plans

**INVESTMENT IN AFFORDABLE HOUSING CONTINUES TO BE A CRITICAL NEED**
3. Create robust permanent funding source
4. Preserve existing affordable housing
5. Bank land
6. Protect existing homeowners (defer property taxes)
7. Use neighborhood typologies to prioritize investments

**ACCESS TO ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY NEEDS TO BE CONSIDERED AS PART OF PUBLIC INVESTMENTS**
8. Provide technical support to businesses to manage changes in customer base
9. Tie business incentives to community engagement that benefits low-income residents
10. Make job training available
11. Support resident-owned businesses
12. Preserve industrial and commercial spaces that provide middle-skill jobs

Office of Economic Development, May 2016

Studies: Housing

THERE IS NO SILVER BULLET

INVESTMENT IN AFFORDABLE HOUSING CONTINUES TO BE A CRITICAL NEED

ACCESS TO ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY NEEDS TO BE CONSIDERED AS PART OF PUBLIC INVESTMENTS

Office of Economic Development, May 2016

Studies: Housing
Health

• Denver Food Vision
Denver Food Vision

DENVER FOOD VISION
DRAFT FOR PUBLIC REVIEW AND COMMENTS
RELEASED DECEMBER 21, 2016

INCLUSIVE
Inclusive cities require strong neighborhoods that reflect unique food cultures

HEALTHY
Healthy, productive populations require food systems that promote healthy food for everyone

VIBRANT
Vibrant economies require strong regional food systems

RESILIENT
Resilient cities require diverse and environmentally responsible food systems

GUIDING PRINCIPLE
Invest in building complete neighborhood food environments

Expand community food production and sharing

Improve access to a wide variety of healthy food retail options

Ensure that healthy food is affordable for everyone

Promote Denver as an epicenter for the regional food economy

Support the creation, expansion, and success of food businesses in Denver

Spur innovation and entrepreneurship across food and agricultural industries

Promote environmentally responsible and climate-smart food systems

PRIORITIES

Office of Economic Development, December 2016 (Draft)
Green Infrastructure

- Denver Green Infrastructure Strategic Plan
- Denver Ultra Urban Green Infrastructure Guidelines
Denver Green Infrastructure Strategic Plan

• Focus is to identify green infrastructure strategies that target multiple pollutants while also providing additional city benefits
  • Outlines Denver’s priorities in reducing water quality impairments
  • Documents both small-scale and large-scale techniques

• Introduces a water quality scorecard
  • Water Quality Scorecard
    • City Park/Park Hill Basin (Montclair Basin) and Central Platte Valley/CBD identified as two of six “priority basins”
• Site-scaled green infrastructure best management practices (BMPs)
  • Detailed fact sheets for street-side stormwater planters
• Key Takeaways and Recommendations:
  • Imperative that the design detailing for the planters is uniform
  • Design should be customized and emphasize safety as well as accommodate cross-traffic

Department of Public Works, 2015
Business Improvement District (BID) Studies

- Colfax BID Streetscape Plan
- Bluebird BID Area Plan
Colfax BID Streetscape Plan

• At its simplest, the plan seeks to:
  • Improve safety
  • Improve appearance
  • Improve development

• Based on its colorful past, this document imagines Colfax Avenue as an original masterpiece that simply needs to be “restored”
• The new streetscape and public realm design should allow the unique qualities of Colfax, such as its iconic architecture and venues, to shine.
• Future design should be simple and timeless and not overdone.
• The design should reference the past while looking to the future
Bluebird BID Area Plan

• The plan aims to enhance the appearance and attractiveness of the area, provide a safe and clean shopping environment, attract new business owners and retain existing businesses and promote the district through marketing
  • Short-term, medium-term and long-term improvements that build on one another to provide a comprehensive vision for area investment
  • Provides a toolbox of low-cost improvements that other BIDs may want to consider for pedestrian and public space improvements

• Goals
  • Create a strong sense of place
  • Create pedestrian, bike, bus and vehicle conditions that allow users to access the district easily and safely
  • Improve pedestrian and bike safety in the area for all users
  • Increase the business owner revenues and investments through education, technical assistance and increased visitors to the district
  • Continue to develop and improve Bluebird District recognition
Neighborhood Histories

• We’ll be researching and writing history summaries for each neighborhood that will go in the final plan, and we want the committee’s direction before we start.

• Understanding the history is important in formulating plan direction:
  • It illuminates the forces that have shaped the neighborhood
  • It provides evidence for what works and what doesn’t work
  • It identifies the trends that are currently at play in the neighborhood
  • It can help ensure all relevant issues are addressed in the plan
Neighborhood Histories

• What’s important to understand about the history of each neighborhood and the Colfax corridor?

• For example:
  • The presence of streetcar lines along Colfax and through the neighborhoods contributed to its development as a dense, walkable, mixed-use area. How might this influence the plan direction for the neighborhoods?
History Themes

• Development: primarily platted in the 1870s & 1880s
• Change of western neighborhoods from mansions to mixed density
• Colfax: initially residential, rise and decline of commercial as US 40 (1927)
• Parks: Cheesman Park/cemetery – 1859, 1893-1958 conversion; City Park - 1881
• Institutions: East High (1925); Hospitals and redevelopment
• Depopulation in the later 20th Century
Maptionnaire Summary 9/7/17

• East Central:
  • 899 Total Respondents
  • 1530 Map Responses
  • 601 Demographic Responses

• East:
  • 1131 Total Respondents
  • 1559 Map Responses
  • 748 Demographic Responses
Multiple Choice Responses

Why are you interested in the study area? Check all that apply.

- I live in the area
- I work in the area
- I own property in the area
- I visit the area
- Other

Which neighborhoods are you most interested in? Check all that apply.

- I don't know
- North Capitol Hill
- Congress Park
- City Park West
- City Park
- Cheesman Park
- Capitol Hill
Multiple Choice Responses

Walking in the East Central Area is...

- Not easy
- Fairly easy
- Very easy

Biking in the East Central Area is...

- Not easy
- Fairly easy
- Very easy

I use public transit in the East Central Area...

- Never
- Rarely
- Occasionally
- Frequently
Multiple Choice Responses

I feel safe in the East Central Area...

- Rarely
- Usually
- Always

The East Central Area has good housing options for... (Check all that apply)

- Other
- Disabled Residents
- Low-income Residents
- Seniors
- Young Professionals
- Families
Multiple Choice Responses

The businesses in the East Central Area...

- Don't meet my daily needs
- Meet some of my daily needs
- Meet most of my daily needs

The top amenities for me in the East Central Area are... (Select up to three)

- Other
- Education Opportunities
- Outdoor Seating & Plazas
- Recreational Activities
- Cultural Amenities & Events
- Medical Services
- Child Care
- Dining
- Shopping (other) & Entertainment
- Shopping (grocery)
Concerns
338 Responses
Survey Respondents

Own vs. Rent

- Own: 78%
- Rent: 22%

How long have you lived/worked in the area?

- Under 5 years: 43%
- 5-10 years: 31%
- Over 10 years: 26%

East Central Area

Own vs. Rent

- Own: 70%
- Rent: 30%

How long have you lived in your home?

- Under 5 years: 12%
- 5-15 years: 26%
- Over 15 years: 62%
Survey Respondents

East Central Area

Race/Ethnicity

- Asian: 1.23%
- Black/African American: 0.35%
- Latino/Hispanic: 2.81%
- Native American: 0.35%
- Hawaiian/Pacific Islander: 0.00%
- White/Caucasian: 0.35%
- Other: 0.00%

Race/Ethnicity

- Asian/Pacific Islander: 2.92%
- Black/African American: 6.12%
- Latino/Hispanic: 9.50%
- Native American: 0.74%
- White/Caucasian: 0.70%
- Other: 0.00%
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<th>Date</th>
<th>Event Description</th>
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<td>9/15/2017</td>
<td>Seniors in September – Botanical Gardens</td>
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<tr>
<td>9/20/2017</td>
<td>DPS Superintendent Parent Forum</td>
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<td>9/20/2017</td>
<td>South City Park RNO meeting</td>
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<td>9/21/2017</td>
<td>Blueprint Denver Workshop</td>
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<td>9/26/2017</td>
<td>SCPNA Summer Block Party</td>
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<td>City Park Esplanade Fresh Market</td>
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Equitable Outreach Discussion

Under-Represented Groups:

1. Renters
2. Young people (under 25)
3. Low income residents
4. People of Color
5. Businesses/Employees

Discussion Questions:

1. Why hasn’t this group participated?
2. Why is this group’s participation important?
3. How can we improve participation from this group?