East Area Plan
Overview for Online Community Workshop Materials
October 31, 2019
What’s in This Presentation?

• Overview of the East Area Plan
  • Planning Process
  • East Area Vision – What We’ve Heard So far
  • Feedback and updates on draft recommendations
  • Schedule and next steps

• Introduction to Heights & Neighborhood Housing Options

Surveys, second draft of plan recommendations, additional input opportunities, and FAQs at
www.denvergov.org/eastplan
East Area Plan Overview
East Area Plan Boundaries

- South Park Hill
- East Colfax
- Hale
- Montclair
Why Plan?

- Create a shared long-term vision that addresses the diverse needs and concerns of the community
- Anticipate change to ensure community’s goals are achieved

What Do Plans Do?

Plans inform how things should evolve in the future for the benefit of the community

- Engage people in a dialog about the future
- Define a vision and recommend strategies to achieve it
- Inform decision-making (public & private)

*Plans are policy documents, not regulations*
Neighborhood Planning Initiative

E. Montclair/E. Colfax: 1994 neighborhood plan
Park Hill: 2000 neighborhood plan
Montclair and most of Hale: no plan
How does the East Area Plan relate to Citywide plans?

**Citywide Plans** (Comprehensive Plan, Blueprint, Game Plan, Denver Moves)

- Set broad citywide policies and recommendations
- Strong focus on equity and complete neighborhoods

**Area Plans**

- Detailed recommendations that apply only to specific areas/neighborhoods
- Address many topics and show how systems inter-relate
- Adopted by City Council as a supplement to Comprehensive Plan and must be consistent with Citywide vision and policies
Comprehensive Plan 2040: Equitable, Affordable, and Inclusive Vision

In 2040, Denver is an equitable, inclusive community with a high quality of life for all residents, regardless of income level, race, ethnicity, gender, ability or age.

To achieve our vision for an equitable city, with the promise of opportunity for all Denverites, we must focus on the needs of our most vulnerable residents. This means the benefits of growth and change are equitably shared by all community members and no neighborhood is disproportionately burdened by the region’s growth. It also means providing reliable and quality basic services—including public safety and clean water—for all of our residents. Denver strives to be inclusive for all community members by reducing involuntary displacement and expanding equitable access to the services, amenities and places that make our city great.
Blueprint Denver

A City of Complete Neighborhoods and Networks

The vision for a city of complete neighborhoods, connected by a complete transportation network, so that all Denverites can access their daily needs.
East Area Plan Process

- 6 workshops
- 3 rounds of online and in-person surveys
- 45+ community events and meetings
- 14 focus groups
- 11 walk audits
- 3 office hours
- 21 steering committee meetings
- Adding up to 3,000+ direct touchpoints with community members
How does the East Area Plan relate to the Colfax Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) project?

- The East Area Plan is being closely coordinated with Colfax BRT, but they are separate projects and at different stages of approval. The Colfax Bus Rapid Transit project (BRT) was approved by voters and received $55 million in funding as part of 2017’s general obligation bond election. The project will make major improvements to the transit corridor with dedicated bus lanes, off-bus ticketing, and more.

- Colfax Avenue has the highest bus ridership of any corridor in the region. The 15/15L routes combined see 7 million annual boardings — over 22,000 per weekday — and weekday ridership is projected to increase to over 50,000 in 2035. The East 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.
East Area Vision for 2040: What We’ve Heard
SUPPORT FOR SMALL BUSINESSES
STABLE HOUSING FOR A DIVERSE, INCLUSIVE COMMUNITY
**Race & Ethnicity**

Sixty-three percent of the East Area is Non-Hispanic White, as compared to 53% of the overall Denver population.

Nearly 37% of East Area residents, including 63% of East Colfax residents, are a race or ethnicity other than Non-Hispanic White. The most prevalent minority populations include 16% Hispanic or Latino, 12% Black or African American, and 5% Asian.

**PLACE OF BIRTH AND LANGUAGE**

Fourteen percent of East Area residents were born in another country, and 19% speak a language other than English at home.

When looking at the individual neighborhoods, East Colfax has the largest percentage of foreign born residents (23%) and non-English speakers (33%). For comparison, 16% of the Denver population is foreign born and 27% speak a language other than English.
4,700 households (1/3 East households) are cost-burdened.

Cost-burdened is defined as spending more than 30% of a household's income on housing costs.
1,400 affordable units are needed for existing residents
Vulnerability to Displacement in East Colfax and Hale
Many of East’s Employees Can’t Afford to Live Here

Many occupations pay less than Denver’s Median Income

- Kindergarten teachers: $51,890
- Emergency & medical techs & paramedics: $42,420
- Bus drivers: $32,920
- Home health aides: $24,980
- Denver Area Median Income (for Single-Person Household): $65,000

Source: City and County of Denver; Bureau of Labor Statistics
Safer & More Convenient
Walking, Biking,
Rolling & Public Transportation
53% of sidewalk network is missing or less than 4 feet wide.
Neighborhood Traffic Calming Examples
More Open Space, a Healthy Tree Canopy, and Keep Neighborhoods Safe From Flooding
Preserve Valued Buildings and Neighborhood Character
Built 1941
Size 858sf

Built 2011
Size 2,357sf
A collection of vibrant neighborhoods anchored by Colfax Avenue, Denver’s “Main Street,” where it’s easy and safe to get around and where a wide range of people and families can live and work.
First Draft of Recommendations – May 2019

• **33 recommendations**
  • Affordable housing
  • Small business support
  • Jobs and education
  • Open space and green infrastructure
  • Neighborhood character
  • Building form and scale
  • Over 30 transportation projects
First Draft of Recommendations – Community Feedback, May-October

Workshop, Registered Neighborhood Organization meetings, Online Surveys, Office Hours, and emailed comments

• 1,500+ participants at workshop and in 4 online surveys
• 150 participants at 3 office hours
• 250+ emailed comments

Note, totals include redundancy
• All 33 recommendations had majority support in workshop and online surveys

• Most divided responses and concerns about draft recommendations for:
  • Height incentives for community benefits
  • Integrating new housing options in residential areas

• Other comments and priorities:
  • Stabilization of existing residents and businesses vulnerable to displacement
  • Traffic calming on neighborhood streets to slow cut-through traffic
  • More tools to preserve residential character
  • New parks and open space
• Updated recommendations based on public input
  • More detailed and refined recommendations for economy, housing, open space, green infrastructure, mobility, urban design, and more
  • Modified and added new transportation projects

• No new updates for height and housing options – we need your help to craft these recommendations
  • Community discussion to inform new draft of recommendations
  • See online survey and attend upcoming workshop
Background for Building Heights & Housing Options Discussion

*See surveys at denvergov.org/eastplan to participate online*
PURPOSE OF COMMUNITY DISCUSSION

More discussion in response to feedback on two recommendations:

1) How can we use increased height to create affordable housing and community benefits?
2) How should we guide housing options in neighborhoods to improve affordability and preserve existing homes?

**CHARACTER HOME PRESERVATION INCENTIVE**

A character home preservation incentive would be similar to an ADU in that you can add a unit within an existing home. However, first the home would have to meet certain location criteria and architectural characteristics and, if adding a unit, the original structure would have to be saved and rehabilitated. In other words, if the building is demolished or does not meet certain criteria, the lot would not be eligible to add a unit. This incentive could also be used to promote attainable ownership models, through shared wall agreements, condominiums, or cooperative models.

**ADDITIONAL HOUSING TYPES WITH AFFORDABILITY TOOLS**

This recommendation suggests exploring additional housing types, including duplexes, tandem houses, triplexes, row houses, and cottage courts, with integrated tools to ensure affordability. This is especially relevant in areas where small, more attainable existing homes on large lots are at risk of being scraped for larger, more expensive homes. New building forms could also be used to promote attainable ownership models.

- **DUPLEX (2 UNITS)**
- **TANDEM HOUSE (2 UNITS)**
- **COTTAGE COURT (3-4 UNITS)**
GOALS FOR THESE RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. Address Displacement and Affordability
2. Maintain Character of Neighborhoods
3. Require More Benefits from Development
Address Displacement and Affordability

Character Home Preservation & Integrating New Housing Options

Community Benefit: Attainable options

Seniors or others on fixed income that want to age-in-place

Single adults

Young couples trying to save money

Renters at risk of being displaced from existing housing
1 Address Involuntary Displacement and Affordability

Draft Plan Recommendations include 22 strategies under four key housing policies
1. Stabilize Residents at Risk of Involuntary Displacement
2. Preserve Existing Affordability & Housing Quality
3. Create Near Affordable Housing Near Transit
4. Expand diversity of housing types and affordability to support households of different sizes, ages, and incomes.

Heights & neighborhood housing options are just two of the strategies to help meet housing goals
1 Address Displacement and Affordability

COMMUNITY BENEFIT: Provide affordable space for local business
2 Maintain Character of Neighborhoods

INCENTIVE HEIGHT FOR SAVING BUILDINGS

HOW CAN WE SAVE THE BUILDINGS WE LOVE WHERE EVERYONE WINS?

• Incentives can help
• Once a transfer of development rights (TDR) occurs, the “sending” site would be Landmarked
• Property owners win
• Neighborhood wins

Historic status of Tom’s Diner up to Denver City Council as owner confirms plans to close

Tom Messina says his namesake eatery on East Colfax will shut down regardless of his building’s landmark status.
2 Maintain Character of Neighborhoods

COMMUNITY BENEFIT: Save existing “character” buildings (TDR)
2 Maintain Character of Neighborhoods

CHARACTER HOME PRESERVATION
2 Maintain Character of Neighborhoods

CHARACTER HOME PRESERVATION
3 Require More of Development

INCENTIVE HEIGHT FOR AFFORDABLE HOUSING + OTHER BENEFITS

Fill up the “box”;

Meet standard zoning requirements
3 Require More of Development

INCENTIVE HEIGHT FOR AFFORDABLE HOUSING + OTHER BENEFITS

FILL UP NEW “BOX”;

REQUIRE:

AFFORDABLE HOUSING
OPEN SPACE
SMALL BUSINESS SPACE
SAVE EXISTING BUILDING
3 Require More of Development

INCENTIVE HEIGHT FOR AFFORDABLE HOUSING + OTHER BENEFITS

Prepare guidelines for sensitive transitions adjacent to single unit and two-unit districts and historic buildings

Consider the following:
A. Increased side setbacks to be more compatible with front setbacks of buildings on side streets
B. Increased upper story setbacks
C. Four-sided facade treatments and contextual building materials
D. Parking and loading location and design
E. Ventilation and refuse container location
F. Lighting
G. Enhanced landscape buffers, including an option to create agreements with adjacent property owners to install enhanced landscaping on their property
H. Sun access
I. Balcony and window design to enhance privacy
J. Landscaped facades, such as climbing vines, 'green screens,' and balcony planters

Draft recommendations also suggest improving transition standards
3 Require More of Development

CHARACTER HOME PRESERVATION

SAVE A HOUSE; CREATE TWO AFFORDABLE UNITS

OR

SCRAP A HOUSE; CREATE ONE UNAFFORDABLE UNIT

DON’T KEEP EXISTING BUILDING?

DON’T GET ADDITIONAL UNIT
DO INCENTIVES WORK?

SEATTLE (2006-2016)

14%
ON-SITE AFFORDABLE UNITS
318 OUT OF 2,252
Source: City Auditor

LOS ANGELES (2016-19)

20%
PROPOSED + BUILT LOW-INCOME AFFORDABLE UNITS
4,000 OUT OF 20,000
Source: LA Times

SAN DIEGO (2007-17)

473
PROPOSED + BUILT LOW-INCOME AFFORDABLE UNITS
OUT OF (UNKOWN)
Source: Next City

- Seattle has offered Incentive Zoning since 1960s
- New York City has had Incentive Zoning since 1961
- State of California enacted Density Bonus Law in 1979
- State of Washington HB 2984 passed in 2006
HELP US CREATE AN APPROACH TO ACHIEVE OUR GOALS:

CURRENT BLUEPRINT DENVER POLICY:

- Generally up to 5 stories along Colfax with additional height for community benefits (maximum not defined)
- Generally up to 8 stories for Community Centers on Colorado Blvd. (Colfax/Colorado and 9th/Colorado)
- Recommends incentivizing affordable housing by increasing height (maximum not defined)
- Amount of additional height would be determined through future regulatory process that includes defining specific benefits.
HELP US CREATE AN APPROACH TO ACHIEVE OUR GOALS:

1. Draft recommendation shared in May 2019 – 5, 8 & 12 story incentive height areas
2. Incentive heights up to 7 stories
3. Incentive heights at 5 stories
4. Other approach? Share your ideas
HELP US CREATE AN APPROACH TO ACHIEVE OUR GOALS:

CURRENT BLUEPRINT DENVER POLICY:

• In low and low-medium residential areas, allow 2-4 unit structures, tandem houses, and/or smaller minimum lot sizes in locations where slightly higher density may be appropriate (corner lots, near transit, adjacent to commercial areas).

• Allowance should advance goals for affordability.

• Encourage reuse of structures. This could be accomplished by allowing additional unit(s) to be added if structure is preserved.
HELP US CREATE AN APPROACH TO REACH OUR GOALS:

**APPROACH 1: MAPPED AREAS TO GUIDE FUTURE REGULATORY PROCESS**

Map areas + include more detailed criteria

**APPROACH 2: SET EAST AREA-SPECIFIC CRITERIA TO GUIDE FUTURE REGULATORY PROCESS (NO MAP)**

Don’t map areas; include more detailed criteria to be analyzed in future regulations

**FACTORS TO CONSIDER**

- Defines specific criteria to be further analyzed in future regulatory process
- Locations are less-defined

**KEY ELEMENTS**

- **Location Criteria**
  - Age of structure
  - Historic areas
  - Lot/home size
  - Areas vulnerable to displacement
  - Lot location on block
  - Adjacent to commercial corridor or center
  - Near transit
  - Major streets
  - Existing mix of housing types on lot/block
  - Flood-prone areas
  - Other?

- **Additional Guidance**
  - Affordability requirements and tools
  - Ownership requirements
  - Discouraging short-term rentals
  - Addressing street parking
  - Discouraging "flipping"
  - Limiting building coverage or addition size
  - Other?
NEXT STEPS

• Participate Online
  • Review and provide comments on updated draft recommendations
  • Take the building heights and housing options surveys

• Attend the November 23rd workshop

• Visit the plan website for additional input opportunities

• Early 2020
  • Draft area plan based on community feedback will be shared for public review

Surveys, Draft Recommendations, and Additional Input Opportunities
www.denvergov.org/eastplan