East Area Plan

Overview of Community Feedback & Recommendations Updates

March 2020
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East Area Plan Process

- **Summer 2017 - Spring 2018**: Existing Conditions Research & Community Listening
- **Spring - Fall 2018**: Community Input Analysis, Draft Vision Statements & Community Priorities
- **Winter 2018 - Spring 2019**: Confirm Community Vision & Priorities
- **Spring - Summer 2019**: Draft Recommendations to achieve Vision and Priorities
- **Fall - Winter 2019**: Updates to Draft Recommendations
- **Winter 2019 - Spring 2020**: Draft Plan

*We Are Here*
Overview of Recommendation Updates
Key Updates: Neighborhood Housing Options

- **What We Heard**
  - The map option “singled out” certain blocks, neighborhoods, and the East area in general for more housing, rather than evaluating all of Denver.
  - The map option limited housing opportunities for areas of East that were not included in the map.
  - We need tools to ensure affordability for a range of households.
  - Additional housing will change the character of neighborhood and have negative impacts, such as lack of available street parking.

- **What Updates Were Made in Draft Plan**
  - Broadened the location of the recommendation to include the whole East area and treat every neighborhood equally.
  - Recommending that zoning changes occur citywide, not just in the East area and not from individual property owner rezonings.
  - Added clarifying language for missing middle in single unit areas – single unit areas should remain primarily single unit. ADUs are still appropriate everywhere, as recommended in Blueprint Denver.
  - Added language to create new design rules to ensure new housing fits in better with neighborhoods.
  - Added language to ensure East area-specific guidance is addressed during the citywide regulatory process to add missing middle housing, including:
    - Preserving older homes with valued architecture.
    - Addressing street parking.
    - Stormwater management.
    - Encouraging homeownership.
    - Discouraging short term rentals.
    - Helping existing homeowners take advantage of missing middle housing rather than just developers.
    - Affordability.

- **Review and Comment on Updated Recommendations**
  - Policy L6 in Section 2.1 Land Use and Built Form.
  - Policy E4 in Section 2.2 Economy and Housing.
Key Updates: Building Heights & Community Benefits

• What We Heard
  • Most respondents would prefer predictability, with differing opinions on maximum heights allowed
  • Concerns about the ability to deliver community benefits, particularly affordable housing and open space
  • Concerns about impacts on parking, traffic, shadows and transitions to neighborhoods

• What Updates Were Made in Draft Plan
  • Still recommending a height map for predictability
  • Recommending most of Colfax Avenue as a maximum of 3 and 5 stories
    • Heights above 5 total stories are limited to Colorado (already allowed), Krameria (up to 7 stories) and Yosemite (up to 7 stories)
    • Some additional, potential 5-story areas were added for larger sites if additional BRT stops are added in the future
    • Increased setbacks from single unit areas — no height incentive areas over 5 stories is recommended adjacent to single unit zone districts
  • Added language that priority community benefit in the Mayfair Town Center is a public park, with a community gathering space and stormwater management as this is a key flooding area
  • Removed public open space as a community benefit for other areas and prioritized affordable housing
  • Added language recommending inclusive community engagement in regulatory process

• Review and Comment on Updated Recommendations
  • Policy L7 in Section 2.1 Land Use and Built Form
Key Updates: Anti-Displacement Strategies

• **What We Heard**
  • Preventing involuntary displacement of vulnerable residents and existing small businesses is a top priority
  • Need stronger recommendations to preserve existing affordability and create new income-restricted housing
  • Increase support and reduce barriers to access for the immigrant and refugee community in East Colfax

• **What Updates Were Made in Draft Plan**
  • Added language about prioritizing new affordable housing for low-income households and preserving existing affordable units
  • Added language about better connecting East Colfax residents to housing assistance, homeownership programs, and legal services. This includes working with partners to explore a neighborhood service hub and pilot programs.
  • Added language about financial assistance to businesses facing challenges such as rising property taxes
  • Added language about assistance with the permitting process
  • Added language to the recommendation to create an International District to help maintain a diversity of businesses and provide businesses with more services, such as legal assistance, assistance with purchasing their building, and façade improvements.
  • Added language to create more formalized community input, like a Steering Committee, to advise City Council and DURA on TIF projects

• **Review and Comment on Updated Recommendations**
  • Section 2.2 Economy and Housing
  • Section 3.2 East Colfax
Key Updates: What Else is New?

- Smaller updates were made throughout the draft recommendations based on community feedback. Highlights include:
  - More guidance for a new public park at Mayfair Town Center (see Policy MC-Q3)
  - Recommendation for a community center at Yosemite and Colfax (See Policy EC-L3)
  - Recommendation to study two additional BRT stops to increase access (See Policy M1)
  - Added more detailed mobility recommendations for each neighborhood (See Chapter 3)
  - Added more guidance to support adaptive reuse and small-scale development on Colfax (See Policy C-L1)

- Introduction
  - Review the Executive Summary in Chapter 1 for a quick overview of the plan and priority recommendations

- Neighborhood & Colfax Sections
  - See recommendations for each statistical neighborhood in Chapter 3
  - See recommendations for Colfax Avenue in Chapter 4

- Implementation
  - Review next steps in Chapter 5
Review and Comment on the Draft Plan
Reviewing the Draft Plan

• Review the draft plan and provide your feedback online via the plan website:
  • Comment directly on the draft plan
  • Download or print the PDF and send comments through the comment form

• Have questions or want to set up a phone call a planner?
  • Email Liz Weigle at Elizabeth.Weigle@denvergov.org or Curt Upton @ Curt.Upton@denvergov.org

• Additional input opportunities
  • Stay tuned to the denvergov.org/eastplan for additional input opportunities
  • Sign up on the webpage to receive email updates
Community Feedback Summary:
Draft 2 Recommendations, Workshop, and Surveys
October 2019 – January 2020

- November 23 Community Workshop
- Online Surveys & Commenting
- Office Hours
- Emails
- Organization Meetings
  - East Colfax Community Collective (ECCC)
  - Denver East Neighborhoods First (DENF)
  - Street Fraternity
- Steering Committee

- More than 1,400 touchpoints with community (not unique individuals)

Note: Demographic questions were not asked at targeted engagement meetings

Neighborhood

East Colfax: 19%
Hale: 11%
Montclair: 12%
South Park Hill: 48%
Other Neighborhood - Denver: 8%
Other - Outside of Denver: 2%

Race & Ethnicity

- White
- Some Other Race/Ethnicity
- Native Hawaiian or Other... Middle Eastern or North...
- Hispanic, Latino, or Spanish
- Black or African American
- Asian
- American Indian or Alaska.

Household Income

- $200,000 or more
- $150,000 - $199,999
- $100,000 - $149,999
- $75,000 - $99,999
- $50,000 - $74,999
- $35,000 - $49,999
- $25,000 - $34,999
- $15,000 - $24,999
- $10,000 - $14,999
- Less than $10,000

Age

- 85 AND OVER
- 80-84
- 75-79
- 70-74
- 65-69
- 60-64
- 55-59
- 50-54
- 45-49
- 40-44
- 35-39
- 30-34
- 25-29
- 20-24
- 15-19

Total Respondents (online survey and Nov 23 meeting only): 712
Total Respondents ((online survey and Nov 23 meeting only): 748
Total Respondents 1,035: East Colfax 193, Hale 118, Montclair 123, South Park Hill 492; Another Denver Neighborhood 87, Other Neighborhood (Not in Denver) 22, No Response (to neighborhood questions) 437

Total Respondents (online survey and Nov 23 meeting only): 453
Building Heights & Community Benefits
Building Heights & Community Benefits: Workshop and Online Survey

Question

Should we use increased height to achieve community benefits? If so, how should the plan balance input, vision, and citywide goals?

• Citywide guidance:
  • Direct growth near transit
  • Every neighborhood should provide a variety of housing options
  • 5 stories is generally appropriate along Colfax and 8 stories is generally appropriate at Colorado
  • More/less height may be appropriate based on a number of factors, including community benefits
Building Heights & Community Benefits: Options Discussed

Approach 1: Mix of up to 4, 8, and 12 stories

Approach 2: Mix of up to 3, 5, and 7 stories

Approach 3: Mix of up to 3 and 5 Stories
Building Heights & Community Benefits: Online Survey Results

Total Online Responses: Of the approaches shared, which do you like best?

- **Approach 1:** Mix of up to 5, 8, and 12 stories - 23%
- **Approach 2:** Mix of up to 3, 5, and 7 stories - 11%
- **Approach 3:** Mix of up to 3 stories - 30%
- **Keep Existing Citywide Policy (5, 8, and 5, 8, and determine incentive heights through future process)** - 16%
- **I would suggest another approach** - 20%

Total Respondents: 429
## Building Heights & Community Benefits: Online Survey Results

### Online Responses by Neighborhood: Of the approaches shared, which do you like best?:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Neighborhood</th>
<th>Approach 1: Mix of Up to 5, 8, and 12 Stories</th>
<th>Approach 2: Mix of Up to 3, 5, and 7 Stories</th>
<th>Approach 3: Mix of Up to 3 and 5 Stories</th>
<th>Keep Existing Citywide Policy (5, 8, and determine incentive heights through future process)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>East Colfax</td>
<td>49%</td>
<td>34%</td>
<td>36%</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hale</td>
<td>50%</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>No Response</td>
<td>32%</td>
<td>34%</td>
<td>36%</td>
<td>33%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Total Respondents 429: East Colfax 35, Hale 29, Montclair 33, South Park Hill 104; Another Denver Neighborhood 26, Other Neighborhood (Not in Denver) 16, No Response (to neighborhood questions) 186*
Online Comments - Of the approaches shared, which do you like best?

**Approach 1: Mix of Up to 5, 8, and 12 Stories**

“It just makes sense for today’s modern living and what Colfax is. A major corridor of the city”

Likes:
- Preservation of significant architecture
- Heights tied to affordable housing/community benefits

**Approach 2: Mix of Up to 3, 5, and 7 Stories**

“I like that it adds heights to the areas around a town center where there is easier access to grocery and shopping”

- Seven (7) stories is a compromise
- Infrastructure is needed

**Approach 3: Mix of Up to 3 and 5 stories**

“The smaller and lower limits the better. Already dense enough.”

- Skepticism about community benefits: “… no ‘buying out’ of the affordable housing requirements”

**Approach 4: Keep Existing Citywide Policy**

Mix of comments:
- “We want growth, but responsible growth.”
- “I like Approach 1 and [4], and will support any approach that maximizes heights on East Colfax…”
- “If you are so concerned about increasing density, upzone all of Denver to be fair!!”
I would suggest another approach

Of those who left comments, about 60% (23 people) generally opposed more heights

“None, this area does not need any cheap, mass housing.”

“Build out existing density and height currently allowed under 2010 Code.”

“I want more vertical growth than Approach 1.”

“Beautify what is existing now instead of gentrifying the neighborhood.”
Total Online Responses: Which factors are most important to you in considering the height approach? Choose up to 3.

- Potential to achieve community benefits (more sites, taller heights)
- Opportunity for more people to live near transit
- Community influence over key sites
- Need to address traffic, parking, and visual impacts
- Predictable building heights
- Predictable community benefits (e.g. % affordable units)
- Other

Total Responses: 980
Building Heights & Community Benefits: November 23 Workshop

Themes from Table Discussions

Options
- Approach 2 (Mix of 3, 5, 7) and Approach 3 (Mix of 3 and 5 stories) appear to be evenly split with the most support
- Generally not in support of Approach 4 (existing citywide policy) should not be under consideration
- One table of all Park Hill residents favored Option 1 (8 story max)

Common Themes
- Impacts to infrastructure: parking, traffic, schools, water/sewer, etc.
- How will affordability or community benefit (open space) be guaranteed?
  - Affordability requirements should come with density increases in neighborhoods
- Feeling that East area is being “singled out” to solve city’s housing shortage
- Better design that fits in with neighborhood is needed
- Concerns with short term rentals
- More community input desired on specific projects
- Visual impacts of height: shadows, privacy

Participation by Neighborhood: Breakout Groups
November 23 Workshop – Other General Themes from Comments

- A mix of excitement and skepticism about BRT
  - Recurring concern about the safety of RTD buses (15/15L) and whether more people will use the bus
- Concerns about what affordability means and who we’re planning for
- Concern about developer driven growth (profits over quality and affordability)

Equity Issues to Consider from Comments Received

- Participant demographics are not representative of East Area demographics (White and higher-income households are over-represented)
- Some participants expressed opinions that more, diverse housing options don’t need to be integrated in all neighborhoods
- Some participants characterized renters as causing a disruption to single-unit neighborhoods
- Some participants prioritized potential impacts (parking, traffic, visual) over more affordable housing options
Building Heights & Community Benefits: Organization Comments

**Denver East Neighborhoods First**
- Keep existing zoning capacity. Work with community on further defining community benefits before upzoning
- Link development to infrastructure improvements; require more parking
- Use other citywide affordable housing tools (e.g., landbanking, tax credits, etc.), instead of zoning.
- Strengthen park space, green infrastructure, and stormwater recommendations
- Concerned about singling out the East Area; should be meeting City’s goals with citywide implementation

**East Colfax Community Collective**
- Prioritize rezoning all of Colfax to 5 stories where all housing is income-restricted, rather than allowing additional height where affordable housing cannot be guaranteed
- Prioritize deep affordability
- Need immediate housing programs to stabilize residents
- Concerned about small business displacement
  - Use every tool, including density bonuses, low-interest financing, and direct subsidies to ensure businesses stay in the neighborhood
Neighborhood Housing Options
Neighborhood Housing Options: Workshop and Online Survey

Question

How should we guide housing options in neighborhoods to improve affordability and preserve existing homes? How can we best balance input, vision and citywide goals?

• Citywide guidance:
  • Integrate housing options into low residential areas throughout Denver, ensuring we advance goals for affordability and encourage the reuse of structures
Neighborhood Housing Options: Options Discussed

Approach 1: Maps areas to guide future regulatory process

Approach 2: Set East Area-specific criteria to guide future regulatory process (not mapped)

Approach 3: Use existing citywide policy to guide future regulatory process
Of the approaches shared, which do you like best?

- **Approach 1**: Map areas to guide future regulatory process (23%)
- **Approach 2**: Set area-specific criteria to guide future regulatory process (26%)
- **Approach 3**: Use existing citywide policy to guide future regulatory process (18%)
- **Other or None of the Above**: (33%)

Total Respondents 298
Neighborhood Housing Options: Online Survey Results

- **Approach 1:** Map Areas to Guide Future Regulatory Process
- **Approach 2:** Set East-Area-Specific Criteria to Guide Future Regulatory Process (No Map)
- **Approach 3:** Use Existing Citywide Policy to Guide Future Regulatory Process
- **Other or none of the above**

Total Respondents 298: East Colfax 16, Hale 24, Montclair 24, South Park Hill 73; Another Denver Neighborhood 15, Other Neighborhood (Not in Denver) 6, No Response (to neighborhood questions) 140
Comments – Tell us what you like about the approach or what you would change or add?

Approach 1: Map Areas to Guide Future Regulatory Process

“Yes! I think cottage courts, ADUS, duplexes all of them are great. I want design review to be brought in and historic dwellings preserved.”

“I like the map-based approach because it allows predictability in what developments will be expected with a property in the future.”

“Tearing down a single family home to put in a triplex is never anything I would support. It totally changes the character and livability of neighborhoods.”

Approach 2: Set East-Area-Specific Criteria to Guide Future Regulatory Process (No Map)

“I am much more inclined to favor this approach. This approach allows for great variation in the character of different neighborhood blocks in the planning area.”

“This is too vague and doesn’t address the community concerns about defining allowances.”

“I wonder what other areas have done with the non-map approach. I would worry that there would be too much inconsistency with how that approach was enacted.”

Approach 3: Use Existing Citywide Policy to Guide Future Regulatory Process

“This is the way to go! Our current system is working well (why change something that is working well for our neighborhoods?)”

“I like the current guidelines and feel they address opportunities for housing for people of different income levels.”

“this sounds pretty reasonable, I am opposed to rapid, high density growth in our neighborhood.”

Other or none of the above

“These approaches allow increased density in an area that is fully built out and does not need additional structures or zoning changes.”

“All of these options will change the fundamental nature of the neighborhood. […] I don't believe the neighborhood can handle the increased density.”
Neighborhood Housing Options: Themes from Table Discussions

Options:
- Approach 2 (Set East Area-specific criteria to guide future regulatory process) appeared to have the most consensus

Common Themes:
- General support for strategies to encourage preservation and more in-character buildings
  - More details/strengthen design guidelines/review
- Concern that new units will not be affordable
- Need more specifics regarding benefits and criteria
- Impacts to infrastructure: parking, traffic, schools, water/sewer, etc.
- Visual impacts of height: shadows, privacy
- Feeling that East Area (or parts of it) are being “singled out” to solve city’s housing shortage
- Concerns about mapped boundaries — both in favor and against:
  - Some think they are being unfairly targeted for missing middle housing
  - Others feel the benefits should be extended to other areas.
- Concerns with short term rentals
- Some support for adding units in exchange for historic preservation in Park Hill
Neighborhood Housing Options: Organization Comments

Denver East Neighborhoods First
- Do not support zoning changes that permit the addition of units to homes
- Immediate implementation of neighborhood character/preservation zoning changes
- Keep existing zoning capacity. Work with community on further defining community benefits before upzoning.
- Concerned about parking, infrastructure, and ability to provide affordable housing options

East Colfax Community Collective
- Prioritize stabilization: stop real estate speculation and “flipping”
  - Implement neighborhood character zoning changes
- No net loss of affordable units
- Prioritize affordability and homeownership opportunities for renters
- Tiny Home Village program
- ADU program
Comments Received on Other Plan Topics
• Provide more protections and opportunities for small businesses

• Prioritize stabilization of vulnerable residents and need for deep affordability

• Foster small-scale development
Mobility Feedback

• Many comments about parking recommendations (both positive and negative), especially those that would reduce or meter current free street parking

• Many brought up Montview, Monaco, Quebec, 13th, 14th, 23rd, and Colorado as difficult streets to cross

• Need more N/S bike connections

• Need clarifying language about shared streets and bike/ped priority streets to better delineate these as concepts

• Narrow sidewalks and lack of sidewalks are often-cited concerns.
Quality of Life Feedback

• Need more specific recommendations around opportunities to create new open space
  • Identification of locations and function of new spaces
  • Theses spaces should include dual-purpose open space that can address stormwater management in areas of flooding concern while also providing a community gathering space

• Need more emphasis on stormwater/flooding concerns
Next Steps

- Review and comment on the draft plan online
- Stay tuned for additional input opportunities

[Denver.gov/EastPlan](http://Denver.gov/EastPlan)