East Area Plan
Steering Committee Meeting
January 30, 2020
Webb Municipal Building
## AGENDA

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Item</th>
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<tr>
<td>6:00 – 6:10</td>
<td>Welcome</td>
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<tr>
<td>6:10 – 6:30</td>
<td>Presentation</td>
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<td>• Recap</td>
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<td>• Summary of Community Feedback</td>
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<td>6:30 – 7:30</td>
<td>Presentation and Discussion</td>
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<td>• Building Heights</td>
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<td>• Neighborhood Housing Options</td>
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<td>• Other Plan Topics</td>
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<td>7:30 – 7:35</td>
<td>Next Steps</td>
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Ground Rules

INCLUSIVE
• Everyone is welcome
• Keep your comments brief so everyone has more time to participate
• First before seconds
• Not okay to interrupt or disrupt the discussion

RESPECTFUL
• Tensions are real, but discuss respectfully
• When disagreeing: focus on the idea, not the person/personalities

SOCIAL MEDIA
• Focus on ideas and concepts, not individuals
• Share online input opportunities with your neighbors
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
Recap of Steering Committee Role
WHAT IS A STEERING COMMITTEE?

- A small group of representative stakeholders who engage in the planning process at a level of detail that is not possible with the general public or larger groups

WHAT DOES THE STEERING COMMITTEE DO?

- Represent a diverse set of community interests
- Advise on planning process, outreach, and public meetings
- Help communicate information to other groups
- Develop and refine plan content and ideas
- Make a recommendation to planning board & city council on the final plan
EXPECTATIONS FOR STEERING COMMITTEE MEMBERS

- Attend 2-hour monthly meetings
- Complete work assignments, as needed, outside of meetings
- Represent and communicate with a larger group of stakeholders
- Be a constructive participant and committed to building consensus
HOW DO STEERING COMMITTEE MEETINGS WORK?

• All meetings are open for public to observe

• Chair
  • Works with city staff to set agendas
  • Runs the meetings

• Group operates on consensus
  • Work to address concerns and reach agreement

• City staff produces a meeting summary
  • Reviewed and endorsed by the committee at the beginning of each meeting
**GROUND RULES**

- **SHOW UP ON TIME AND COME PREPARED**
  Be prompt in arriving to the meeting and in returning from breaks. Be prepared to contribute to achieving the meeting goals. Come to the meeting with a positive attitude.

- **LET EVERYONE PARTICIPATE**
  Share time so that all can participate. Be patient when listening to others speak and do not interrupt them. Respect each other’s thinking and value everyone’s contributions.

- **LISTEN WITH AN OPEN MIND**
  Value the learning from different inputs, and stay open to new ways of doing things. You can respect another person’s point of view without agreeing with them.

- **STAY ON POINT AND ON TIME**
  Respect the group’s time and keep comments brief and to the point. When a topic has been discussed fully, do not bring it back up. Save time by not repeating what others have said.

- **ATTACK THE PROBLEM, NOT THE PERSON**
  Respectfully challenge the idea, not the person. Blame or judgment will get you further from a solution, not closer. Honest and constructive discussions are necessary to get the best results.

- **JOINTLY DESIGN NEXT STEPS**
  This ensures that everyone is committed to moving forward together as a team.
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 guiding documents, not regulations
How does the East Area Plan relate to Citywide plans?

Citywide Plans
- Broad citywide policies and recommendations
- Strong focus on equity, inclusivity and complete neighborhoods

Area Plans
- Detailed recommendations that apply only to specific areas/neighborhoods
- Provide guidance for how Citywide goals can be furthered in the area
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.
Vision

In 2040, the East area is home to households of all incomes and sizes, including families, seniors, recent immigrants, and young professionals. Multi-unit and mixed-use buildings along Colfax Avenue and major corridors provide convenient, affordable, and high-quality housing, where many residents work just a short walk or bus ride away. Several of Colfax’s motels have been transformed into innovative housing models and new buildings have been developed around them, providing housing options and daily amenities and services, including shops, restaurants, social activities, job training, language services, and health care. East takes pride in its diverse community, where recent immigrants are welcomed, neighbors support one another, and everyone has access to high-quality housing and the services they need to succeed. As a result, fewer people are experiencing homelessness, residents do not worry about displacement due to increasing costs or major life changes, and the community is safe and stable. East’s residential neighborhoods remain the backbone of the community, with a housing stock that respects the historic character and provides a range of housing options, such as a post-WWII cottage for a growing family looking to buy their first home, a carriage house rented by a young professional who works at a nearby hospital, a four-plex in a large, historic home shared by a group of aging friends looking to downsize, or a small apartment building just off Colfax that provides supportive housing. All residents have the option to stay and grow in the area over their lifetime with housing that fits their budget and needs.
In 2040, the East area is home to a multi-cultural yet cohesive community living together in high quality, well-preserved neighborhoods. Pedestrian friendly streetscapes, open spaces, and charming neighborhood commercial destinations help neighbors meet and get to know each other, resulting in a close-knit, small town feel. Colfax Avenue has retained its unique, gritty character while evolving into a community destination and a gateway that celebrates the recent arrivals who’ve come to call the East Area home. Renovated shopfront buildings, adaptively-reused motels, and distinctive neon signs intermingle with new mixed-income and mixed-use, multi-story buildings along the iconic street. New development on Colfax Avenue and Colorado Boulevard, along with some smaller infill of housing such as duplexes and backyard cottages within residential areas, has been thoughtfully designed to be compatible with the historic character of surrounding neighborhoods and the additional units have helped ease the severe housing shortage of decades past. As a result, each neighborhood has a diverse mix of residents, including many seniors who have been able to “age in place” by downsizing to smaller, more affordable homes without leaving the families, friends, and neighborhoods they cherish. The easy access to high capacity transit, along with essentials such as groceries, childcare, housewares, and pharmacies, has reduced car traffic and maintained the quiet, residential feel of residential areas. Colfax Avenue is the community’s vibrant main street, even in the evenings when its lively storefronts and wide, well-lit sidewalks are filled with families pushing strollers and seniors chatting on the numerous patios and benches. Blocks along Colfax that used to feel unsafe at night are now bustling with teenagers and young adults who love hanging out in the small plazas where there are always things to do, from multi-cultural markets, food trucks, games, art installations and concerts, to quieter areas where students use the free high speed internet to study.
Vision

- Balance of preservation and development
- High quality design
- Affordable housing
- Inclusive and welcoming to all walks of life
- Focus multi-story mixed use development on Colfax while preserving small unique buildings and locally owned businesses
- Easy access to high quality transit
- More diverse housing options in neighborhoods, while preserving valued characteristics
- Quiet neighborhoods with less driving
- Fewer people experiencing homelessness
- Residents are protected from displacement and have resources needed to improve their economic situation.
Community Feedback Summary:
Draft 2 Recommendations, Workshop, and Surveys
October 2019 – January 2020

Note: This presentation includes input received to-date. Additional meetings with the East Colfax Community Collective are scheduled, and more updates will be made before the draft plan is released for public review.
Community Engagement: October 2019 - January 2020

• Community Workshop
• Office Hours
• Online Surveys & Commenting
• Emails
• Organization Meetings
  • East Colfax Community Collective (ECCC) – additional meetings scheduled for February
  • Denver East Neighborhoods First (DENF)
  • Street Fraternity

• 1,400+ Touchpoints with community members (includes redundancy)
Community Engagement: October 2019 - January 2020 Demographics

Race & Ethnicity

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

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

Note: Demographic questions were not asked at targeted engagement meetings; neighborhood was assigned, but participants are not included in other demographic results.
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 5, 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
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 and 5 stories (30%)
- Keep existing citywide policy (5, 8, and determine incentive heights through future process) (16%)
- I would suggest another approach (20%)

Total Respondents: 429
Online Responses by Neighborhood: Of the approaches shared, which do you like best?

- **Approach 1:** Mix of Up to 5, 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
- **Keep Existing Citywide Policy (5, 8, and determine incentive heights through future process)**

Total Respondents 429: East Colfax 35, Hale 29, Montclair 33, South Park Hill 104; Another Denver Neighborhood 26, Other Neighborhoods (Not in Denver) 16, No Response (to neighborhood questions) 186
## Building Heights & Community Benefits: Online Survey Results

### Online Comments - Of the approaches shared, which do you like best?

<table>
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<tr>
<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>Approach 4: Keep Existing Citywide Policy</th>
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<tr>
<td>“It just makes sense for today’s modern living and what Colfax is. A major corridor of the city”</td>
<td>“I like that it adds heights to the areas around a town center where there is easier access to grocery and shopping”</td>
<td>“The smaller and lower limits the better. Already dense enough.”</td>
<td>Mix of comments:</td>
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<td>Likes:</td>
<td>Seven (7) stories is a compromise</td>
<td>Skepticism about community benefits: “… no ‘buying out’ of the affordable housing requirements”</td>
<td>“We want growth, but responsible growth.”</td>
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<td>➢ Preservation of significant architecture</td>
<td>➢ Infrastructure is needed</td>
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<td>➢ “I like Approach 1 and [4], and will support any approach that maximizes heights on East Colfax…”</td>
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<td>➢ Heights tied to affordable housing/community benefits</td>
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<td>➢ “If you are so concerned about increasing density, upzone all of Denver to be fair!!”</td>
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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): 7%
- Opportunity for more people to live near transit: 12%
- Community influence over key sites: 18%
- Need to address traffic, parking, and visual impacts: 29%
- Predictable building heights: 18%
- Predictable community benefits (e.g., % affordable units): 12%
- Other: 8%

Total Responses: 980
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

East 11%  Colfax  12%  Hale  63%  Montclair  6%  South Park Hill  7%  Other  0%
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
- Participant demographics are not representative of East Area demographics (White, higher-income, and homeowner households are over-represented)
- Opinions that more, diverse housing options don’t need to be integrated in all neighborhoods
- Characterizing renters as causing a disruption to single-unit neighborhoods
- Prioritizing potential impacts (parking, traffic, visual) over more affordable housing options
Building Heights & Community Benefits: Other Comments

DENF
• 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

ECCC
• 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
Building Heights & Community Benefits: Discussion

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

Potential Direction for Discussion:
1. For more predictable change, provide a height map rather than rely on citywide guidance
2. Modify approach #2 (as a balance between 1 and 3)
3. Keep some areas of additional height (7 stories) at Mayfair Town Center, with a priority for achieving public open space
   • Stormwater management
   • Minimum size to also accommodate usable park space
   • Limit height increases to large parcels (grocery store sites)
4. Remove public open space as a community benefit for other areas and prioritize affordable housing
5. Keep additional incentive height (7 stories) at Yosemite and Quebec
6. Add some additional 5-story areas on height map
   1. Larger, key sites (125’ of depth and greater)
   2. Recommend 2 additional BRT stops

• Plan guidance:
  • Include open space benefit and minimum size in Mayfair Town Center
  • Regulatory implementation should include inclusive community engagement
  • Include priority language about affordable housing

Note, updates are in-progress and provided for Steering Committee input. Additional updates will be made before the draft plan is released for public review.
Neighborhood Housing Options: Discussion

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.
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
Neighborhood Housing Options: Online Survey Results

Of the approaches shared, which do you like best?

- **Approach 1**: Map areas to guide future regulatory process (23%)
- **Approach 2**: Set East-area-specific criteria to guide future regulatory process (no map) (26%)
- **Approach 3**: Use existing citywide policy to guide future regulatory process (18%)
- **Other or none of the above** (33%)

Total Respondents: 298
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?

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<td>“Yes! I think cottage courts, ADUS, duplexes all of them are great. I want design review to be brought in and historic dwellings preserved.”</td>
<td>“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.”</td>
<td>“This is the way to go! Our current system is working well (why change something that is working well for our neighborhoods?”</td>
<td>“These approaches allow increased density in an area that is fully built out and does not need additional structures or zoning changes.”</td>
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<td>“I like the map-based approach because it allows predictability in what developments will be expected with a property in the future.”</td>
<td>“This is too vague and doesn’t address the community concerns about defining allowances.”</td>
<td>“I like the current guidelines and feel they address opportunities for housing for people of different income levels.”</td>
<td>“All of these options will change the fundamental nature of the neighborhood. […] I don't believe the neighborhood can handle the increased density.”</td>
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<td>“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.”</td>
<td>“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.”</td>
<td>“this sounds pretty reasonable, I am opposed to rapid, high density growth in our neighborhood.”</td>
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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: Other Comments

DENF
• 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

ECCC
• 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
Neighborhood Housing Options: Discussion

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?

Potential Direction for Discussion:
• Do not map neighborhood housing options
• Plan guidance:
  • Plan guidance should be implemented through an inclusive, citywide process, not through individual rezonings
  • Zoning updates to protect neighborhood character should be implemented together with allowances for more units
  • Incorporate strategies to ensure affordability and to assist existing homeowners
  • Encourage homeownership to provide more opportunities for renters to become homeowners
  • Evaluate street parking impacts
  • Incorporate stormwater management requirements in flood prone areas
  • Create rules to preserve historically significant older homes
    • Age/architecture criteria
    • Building preservation criteria consistent with historic district protections
  • Single-unit areas should remain predominantly single-unit
    • Include criteria for the types of lots/conditions that should be considered for additional units (see preliminary criteria in housing options activity from workshop)

Note, updates are in-progress and provided for Steering Committee input. Additional updates will be made before the draft plan is released for public review.
Other Plan Topics
Economy & Housing Feedback

• 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
  - These 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

• **Late February/Early March:** Public Review Draft
• **Late February - April:** Online & In-Person Feedback
• **May:** Steering Committee Recommendation
• **May / June:** Public Hearing Draft
• **June - July:** Planning Board and Council hearings and adoption process