

# Loretto Heights Area Plan Steering Committee Meeting # 7



Date and Time: Tuesday, April 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2019 from 6:00-8:00pm  
Location: Loretto Heights Library – 3001 S. Federal Blvd.

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## Attendees

### STEERING COMMITTEE MEMBERS (AND ALTERNATES)

In attendance: John Olson, Jim Gibson, Adriana Peña, Zachary Wallace (Denver Public Works), Norma Brown, Mark Witkiewicz, Sister Mary Nelle Gage, Tara Durham, Councilman Kevin Flynn, Tony Hernandez, Jennifer Siegel (Denver Economic Development and Opportunity), Andrew Rogge, Clare Harris, AnaClaudia Magalhaes (Denver Parks & Recreation), Hany Khattab, Martha Kirkpatrick, Donna Repp, Dana Montano

### COMMUNITY PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT STAFF

Steve Nalley, Jason Morrison, Jenny Buddenborg, Fran Peñafiel Vial

## Meeting Summary

### 1. WELCOME

Jason began the meeting by welcoming the steering committee members and members of the public in attendance. He invited the public to fill out comment cards if they had any questions or comments during the meeting or if they had any general questions and comments about the area plan process. He then introduced the topics of discussion for the evening: 1) historic preservation, and 2) parks and open space.

### 2. WHAT WE'VE HEARD: HISTORIC PRESERVATION

Jenny presented a brief highlight of the comments from the online survey that centered around the topic of "historic preservation". A pie chart demonstrated that most comments (64%) fell into the "likes/assets" category. The data and charts that followed further illustrated and grouped the likes, concerns, hopes and opportunities the public has voiced thus far. When examining the preservation requests/comments by existing buildings on the former campus, the Administration Building was the most common response which has been consistent throughout this process.

### 3. HISTORIC PRESERVATION DISCUSSION

Jenny reintroduced the Historic Resources and Survey Report. She emphasized that the report is helping to inform the planning process in respect to the future of the historic buildings and how they might meet the vision of the Loretto Heights Area Plan. Jenny again walked the steering committee through the maps contained within the report that detail the consultant's evaluations for local and national designation of individual buildings and potential historic districts. A discussion ensued on the difference between local designation (Denver Landmark) and national designation (National Register of Historic Places (National Register), and how the

“significance” and “integrity” of a building or collection of buildings is an important factor in determining eligibility for designation. The report is one professional opinion on the suggested approaches for historic designation of significant buildings at the national and historic level and, in combination with the feedback from the community on this matter, the City has used this as a starting point to guide conversations about the role of the historic buildings in the campus redevelopment. There are various approaches to be considered and Jenny presented an alternative approach based on feedback from the community.

Martha Kirkpatrick inquired as to why the cemetery was not included in the alternative option #2 grouping/district approach and Jenny responded that the cemetery will have its own designation.

The project team prepared multiple questions for discussion for the steering committee including, “what does historic preservation of the Loretto Heights campus mean to you?” and below are some of the abbreviated responses by the steering committee members (*please note CPD Staff may not have captured every sentiment in full or 100% accurately*):

- Sister Mary Nelle – hopes the redevelopment can represent the faithful courage of the women who wanted to serve in the area and who provided an education for other women and others in the area. The redevelopment should preserve some interior and exterior features, so the history can be enjoyed for the decedents of those that worked here and new residents alike
- Claire – agrees strongly with Sister Mary Nelle. Historic preservation is not necessarily just about the buildings but rather the feeling. The redevelopment should include historic artifacts and symbols “sprinkled” throughout the community
- Adriana – historic preservation means honoring the community’s past and conserving the symbol of the campus and what it represents. It is also an opportunity for provide a fresh start/new community which is inclusive for everyone
- Norma – the term historic preservation is very sacred and agrees strongly with the comment from Sister Mary Nelle but would like to add the additional wording, “people that worked here and the women and students that were educated here”. The buildings remind residents and visitors of the former campus and the beauty of the grounds is breathtaking.
- Hany - historic preservation of the former campus means that a visitor or a stranger can arrive from out of state and a resident can explain what this campus was by using buildings and community space as visual cues. Historic preservation also means repurposing and reusing buildings. The redevelopment should bring people to the area and those people should come here and know exactly what it was like on the former campus during that time. It should continue to serve as a landmark and a beacon of “home”
- Mark – historic preservation of the former campus means being able to walk on the grounds and know exactly what it is when you arrive. Many buildings and features were added over the years and adding additional buildings and reusing existing buildings continue the legacy of the former campus. We must honor the past and contribute to

the future, design with integrity and, although it is no longer a campus, you should make a nod to the history. Preservation means community, it means fun

- Andrew – historic preservation means that many different buildings have been maintained
- Tara – historic preservation means that many of the iconic buildings have been preserved on the outside but also allows for flexibility for the buildings to be reused on the inside
- Tony – historic preservation means maximizing the campus character that fosters community engagement through adaptive reuse as the jewel of southwest Denver utilizing financing tools like tax credits, bonds, Community Development Block Grants (CDBG) and other tools to achieve that vision
- John – successful historic preservation projects (example: Camp Hale - 10th mountain division) still have a sense of place (what was occurring here) but also allow for growth and vitality. Loretto heights was a place of growth and people could thrive and it has the opportunity to do so again.
- Councilman Flynn – generally agreed with Andrew and John whereas historic preservation means “people” the constant is people and community. Historic preservation for this campus occurs when generations of people can use the site. If we treat the site as an artifact, we will lose it forever. What changes is the use of the building. One of the best examples is Union Station in Denver
- Zach – the tower is the most iconic sense of being “home”. It is about giving buildings a new life but respecting the past
- Father Dang – Historic preservation is about history, community, education and community service
- Jim – Historic preservation is about character defining features and the ways in which the buildings interact with one another. It’s an “I’ll know it when I see it” mentality

The steering committee discussion on historic preservation ran long so Staff will be sending out an assignment to gather feedback from the last two questions:

1. Which of the Loretto Heights historic buildings and features should be a part of the campus redevelopment?
2. What level of change to the historic buildings and features are you comfortable with in the redevelopment?

City Staff will share the results of the assignment at the May 28<sup>th</sup> steering committee meeting.

#### 4. WHAT WE’VE HEARD: PARKS AND OPEN SPACE

Jason presented a brief highlight of the comments from the online survey that centered around the topic of “parks and open space”. A pie chart demonstrated that most comments (56%) fell into the “likes/assets” category. The data and charts that followed further illustrated and grouped the likes, concerns, hopes and opportunities the public has voiced thus far. The most common subtopic/keyword concerned the (future) connection to the existing Loretto Heights

Park. Area residents care deeply for the park and would like to see it maintained, expanded and improved.

#### 5. *GAME PLAN FOR A HEALTHY CITY*

AnaClaudia Magalhaes (Denver Parks and Recreation) presented information on *Game Plan for a Healthy City*. This Plan is a citywide, long-range parks and recreation plan to help the city respond to challenges including growth, limited water resources, and changes in our climate. The plan proclaims easy access to parks and open space as a basic right for all residents, and establishes our city's parks, facilities and recreational programs as essential for healthy environment, healthy residents, and a high quality of life for everyone. AnaClaudia walked the steering committee through the 5-10-minute walk gap analysis which is one method used to help prioritize the placement of parks throughout Denver. Also considered is physical access barriers and if it is safe and convenient to get to a park.

Members of the steering committee asked who maintains the parks. If the parks are designated, the City and County of Denver maintains the park. If the park is privately owned, the private property owner handles those responsibilities.

AnaClaudia also presented the typology of parks and talked about the programming of regional parks, pocket parks, and everything in between. Loretto Heights Park is considered a neighborhood park.

#### 6. *PARKS AND RECREATION DISCUSSION*

Jason led a discussion around the parks and recreation topic. Steering committee members were asked specifically about Loretto Heights Park as well as the future programming of the former Loretto Heights campus. City Staff will share the results of these questions at the May 28<sup>th</sup> steering committee meeting.

#### 7. *CLOSING*

Jason presented the remaining schedule for the planning process and briefly described the focus of May's meeting which will include a recap of previous meetings and some of the concepts that have risen to the top. The May 28<sup>th</sup> meeting will also focus on the implementation of these concepts.

METTING SUMMARY PREPARED BY COMMUNITY PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT –  
APRIL 25<sup>TH</sup>, 2019