

West Area Plan Steering Committee Meeting #3



Date and Time:

Location:

Attendees

STEERING COMMITTEE MEMBERS (PRESENT)

Rosemary McDonnell-Horita

Yara Vaneau

Jeanne Granville

Sean Brady

Dan Shah

Maureen McCanna

Bree Davies

Adriana Pena

Chala Mohr

Crystal Reed

Jennifer Piper

Jessica Dominguez

Kaye Kavanagh

Tamil Maldonado

Korey Whitaker

Jaime Aguilar

ELECTED OFFICIALS/COUNCIL DISTRICT AIDS

Councilwoman Amanda Sandoval, District 1

Councilwoman Jamie Torres, District 3

Naomi Grunditz, District 1

COMMUNITY PLANNING PROJECT TEAM

Eugene Howard

Valerie Herrera

Beth Vogelsang, OV

Fernando Abbud, OV

Becca Dierschow

Sung Han

Anne Kuechenmeister, MBI

Zackary Wallace, Public Work

Meeting Summary

1. WELCOME

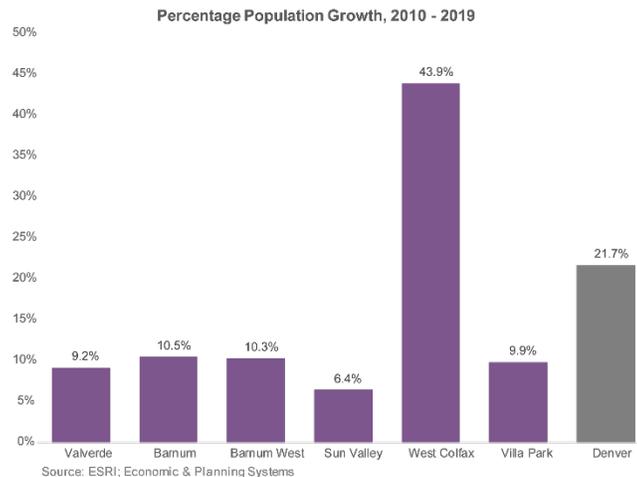
Eugene opened the meeting at 6:10 pm

2. AGENDA FOR THE EVENING

This evening's agenda focused on existing Land Use and Zoning in the six project neighborhoods. Beth began the presentation by showing a topographical map of the study area, illustrating the correlation between elevation and development with residential development being on higher ground and industrial development closer to and along the S. Platte River.

Maps illustrating the current zoning and existing uses in the six neighborhoods, which generally line up throughout the neighborhoods were shown.

The next series of maps showed the population density of the six neighborhoods, as well as the percentage of population growth, between 2010 and 2019. The majority of growth was concentrated in the West Colfax neighborhood.



Next, “Era of Construction” maps were shown to help reveal the evolution of the neighborhoods over time and periods of history.

The presentation moved to the industrial areas, which are located in the Valverde and Sun Valley neighborhoods. These areas differ from the residential areas in many ways, including parcel size, with industrial parcels being much larger, and a difference in transportation and connectivity needs. The industrial areas have more heavy truck traffic and are oriented toward the highways in the study area. These truck routes, the railroad, and the industrial uses are barriers limiting mobility. They restrict connectivity to the S. Platte River from the surrounding residential neighborhoods.

Conversely, the industrial areas are a major employment center for the city and surrounding area. Due to location, this is ‘naturally occurring’ employment for residents. The co-occurrence of residents to employment opportunities is an advantage that many Denver neighborhoods do not have.

The businesses in the planning area employ 20-25 employees on average. The project team and steering committee members discussed the need to consider the employment opportunities available on the east side of the S. Platte River in the La Alma/Lincoln Park and Baker neighborhoods. Although separated by the S. Platte, increased connectivity and mobility could greatly enhance synergy between the two areas. Eugene noted that while this planning area has a defined geography, the east side of the river will be considered an “area of influence”.

Steering Committee Questions and Comments

- Do we know how many jobs in the industrial areas are related to the marijuana industry? (Specifically grow operations).
- Do we know how many residents from the planning area have jobs in these industrial districts? Or, are they staffed by workers from outside of the six neighborhoods?
- Valverde lacks residents, making it difficult to advocate for the neighborhood. Does the city have any resources to help residents build relationships with businesses in the area? Could a relationship between the businesses be developed to strategically involve employers, residents and their employees?
- Could the project team break down industrial uses in the area?
- Councilmember Sandoval: Industrial and Commercial zone districts have very different form standards. Could the plan call out new form standards for Industrial Zone Districts?
- Sun Valley and Valverde are partially defined by the Platte River. How is the proximity to the river playing a role in development standards and future developments in Sun Valley and Valverde?

The Valverde neighborhood has parks and open spaces located within industrial areas. This leads to a feeling of separation and isolation when traveling to these parks on foot or by bike. This feeling of separation, and the safety implications makes these areas less desirable and therefore less used. They don't feel like community amenities.

Councilmember Torres: These neighborhoods are very interconnected, they form community, but physical barriers do exist between them.

- Can the project team and steering committee discuss how industrial jobs are/could be assets? Do the jobs pay a living wage? Do industrial area workers live in the surrounding neighborhoods?
- Do non-area employees spend money in the neighborhoods? What percentage of workers live within a 1 or 2-mile radius of their job?
- Can the steering committee have a map showing opportunity zones in the planning area? How might Opportunity Zones impact development in the area?
- Are there ways that the community and residents see improving transitions between the residential and industrial areas? Improvements to accessing the river and other amenities?

Eugene noted DEDO conducted an industrial market analysis across the city during Blueprint Denver and may have identified industry in Valverde as a "preservation" area. Additionally, a lot of land along the river is owned by Denver and used for City operations.

Becca Dierschow presented on the historic development patterns and residential character of the single-family zones. The area was first developed pre-1900 when several small farms operated the land. After the 1893 Silver Crash, the area was relatively quiet, until the 1910s – 1920s, when Jewish residents moved to the area. Craftsman bungalows were a desired architectural style of the period. In the 1930s -1950s, the area saw a proliferation of Minimal Traditional homes, built for a growing military industry and post-war veterans taking advantage of their GI Bill benefits. These houses were built quickly to meet the period's demand for housing.

Due to many eras of development, there are varied architectural styles, building forms and land uses from single family, duplex and multi-family housing, including traditional garden court apartments, to original 1960s public housing development. The area is characterized by a wide variety of architectural styles and types, which are all intermixed.

Steering Committee Questions and Comments

- Are there potential historic districts in the planning area, given the architectural diversity? (Any determination will require closer study.)
- CPD is working with Historic Denver's Discover Denver program to survey West Colfax. The desired hope is to eventually include other West Denver neighborhoods.
- Denver is also looking at Cultural Districts, which may be a way for the neighborhood to protect culturally-significant areas.
- Are there current landmarks in the area? Yes, there are 7 – five are houses in the Stuart Street historic district, one is a church, one is Lake Middle
- What about designated parkways? Don't think any of the parkways extend out this far – (Confirmed – no historically designated parkways. Federal is a Parks Parkway, but Landmark does not have any purview over this corridor.)

Eugene then gave a presentation on Denver's form-based zoning code and how it creates a "building envelope" that dictates how single-family development occurs. The presentation included illustrations using the building and zoning code regulations for site design and building placement to help the steering committee members understand the parameters of the residential built environments in their communities. December's steering committee meeting will cover multi-unit and commercially zoned areas.

In closing, the steering committee was given "homework." They were asked to photograph (or search online) for building forms they believe would "fit" or that are appropriate for their neighborhoods. The homework is meant to identify design elements that the committee would like to see promoted in the West Area Plan.

3. ANNOUNCEMENTS AND OTHER BUSINESS

- **December Steering Committee Pot-Luck**
 - Thursday, December 19, 2019
West Colfax BID Offices
3275 West 14th Avenue, Suite 202, Denver, CO 80204
6:00-7:30 PM
- **PUBLIC MEETING #2**
 - Tuesday, January 14, 2020 (*Weather Delay: 1/28/20*)
Lake Middle School
1820 Lowell Blvd, Denver, CO 80204
5:30-7:30 PM