TO: Denver Planning Board  
FROM: Curt Upton, Principal Planner; Liz Weigle, Senior City Planner  
DATE: September 9, 2020  
RE: East Area Plan Information Item

After over three years of community engagement and discussion, Community Planning and Development has shared the second draft of the East Area Plan for public review. Community input was received on two rounds of draft recommendations, shared in May 2019 and October 2019. This was followed by the first draft of the East Area Plan, which was available for public comment from March 2020 through July 1, 2020. The second draft was shared on September 4, 2020.

- The draft East Area Plan is available at: denvergov.org/eastplan

Community engagement for the plan has included steering committee meetings, community workshops, online surveys, RNO meetings, office hours, focus groups, pop-up events, and targeted engagement for a total of over 100 community events and over 10,400 community member interactions. This memo summarizes the priority recommendations in the plan, highlights policy recommendations that have received mixed community feedback, and summarizes changes to the draft plan that have been made based on community feedback.

**Priority Recommendations**

1. Help current residents and small businesses stay in the community long-term by connecting them to resources and making more housing options available and affordable to families and individuals. Priority recommendations include:
   a. Creating an East Colfax community center and services hub that provides job and entrepreneurship training and placement, financial empowerment, legal services, rent and food assistance, recreation, healthcare, and small business support (see Policies E5, E6, E7, E14, and Q3).
   b. Prioritizing current residents for new affordable housing (see Policy E1) and small business owners with financial assistance due to BRT construction and rising costs (see Policies C-E4 and C-E5).
   c. Elevating community voices on projects in the area, including changes to regulations (See Policies L3, L4, L5, and L6), affordable housing (see Policy E3), and projects using tax increment financing (TIF) (see Policy C-E2 and EC-E7).

2. Ensure the East area is an inclusive place in the future by increasing the amount of affordable housing using all available methods. Priority recommendations include:
   a. Building more affordable housing near bus rapid transit stops on Colfax using zoning, tax credits, tax increment financing, partnerships and direct investment of city, state, and federal funds (see Policies L3 and E3).
   b. Permanently preserving existing affordable housing (see Policy E2).
   c. Adding more diverse housing options in residential neighborhoods in appropriate locations (see Policies L6 and E4).
3. Make Colfax Avenue a street that brings the East area’s diverse community together. Priority recommendations include:
   a. Creating new rules for high quality design and ensuring that buildings are good neighbors to adjacent homes (see Policy L7).
   b. Making it easier to reuse existing buildings, build small-scale development, and start new small businesses (see Policies E8 and C-L1).
   c. Improving the streetscape to be more comfortable, safe, and inviting by planting trees, widening sidewalks, and adding patios, and plazas (see Policies M1, Q5, and C-Q2).
   d. Growing the corridor’s independent and diverse cultural identity by establishing an International/Cultural District (see Policy C-E3).

4. Celebrate the architectural history of East Area neighborhoods by encouraging the preservation of existing homes and requiring complementary design of new housing. Priority recommendations include:
   a. Updating design standards to ensure newly built houses fit in better with neighborhoods (see Policy L5).
   b. Creating requirements to preserve older homes with valued architecture when new housing options are added (see Policy L6).
   c. Surveying neighborhoods for historical significance and taking steps to protect historic buildings (see Policy L8).

5. Preserve trees and landscaped areas. Create new parks and community-gathering spaces and use green approaches to storm-water management to make the East area safe from flooding, healthier, and more climate resilient. Priority recommendations include:
   a. Adopting new rules to protect mature trees during redevelopment (see Policy Q6).
   b. Building green storm water infrastructure in streets and public spaces (see Policies Q7).
   c. Adding a new public park in the Mayfair Town Center (see Policies Q3 and MC-Q3).

6. Save lives and reduce pollution by making streets safer, slowing down traffic, adding protected bike lanes, completing the sidewalk network, and improving bus connections and reliability. Priority recommendations include:
   a. Making Colfax, 13th, 14th, and 17th Avenues and Quebec Street much safer to cross and travel along (see Policy M1).
   b. Slowing vehicle speeds with traffic calming near schools, parks, and other community gathering areas (see Policy M9).

Recommendations with Mixed Community Feedback
Although most of the draft plan recommendations have broad support, a few policy recommendations continue to receive mixed feedback. Throughout the process, CPD staff has worked to address community input and extended the planning process to allow for more community conversation on the following recommendations:
- Increase building heights on Colfax only when affordable housing and other community benefits are provided
- Integrate missing-middle housing options (2-4 unit, such as duplexes and rowhouses) in low residential areas

Substantive Changes Based on Community Feedback
The East Area Plan process has included two drafts of recommendations and two draft plans with a combined review period of over one year. Over 1,100 were received on the first public review draft of the plan, and updates were made based on the comments. Most comments and changes focused on small fixes and clarifications to the plan. However, 85 substantive changes were made to plan recommendations. Key changes are listed below. A complete list of changes is available on the website linked above.
• Added more guidance for community benefits and engagement to the incentive height recommendation
• Clarified recommendations for missing middle and accessory dwelling units
• Added recommendations to further affordable housing and small business goals
• Added mobility safety improvements in multiple locations and two new north-south bike connections
• Improved recommendations for parks, historic parkways, and green infrastructure