



TO: Land Use, Infrastructure, and Transportation Committee
FROM: Curt Upton and Liz Weigle, CPD Planning Services
DATE: October 15, 2020
RE: East Area Plan

Community Planning and Development is pleased to submit the LUTI draft of the [East Area Plan](#) for City Council's final consideration and approval as a supplement to *Comprehensive Plan 2040*. The Denver Planning Board approved the plan with a 6-3 vote after holding a required public hearing on October 7, 2020. The approval included two conditions: 1) the document be edited for clarity and correctness; and 2) to delete recommendation L.6.A.1 reading that single unit areas should remain primarily single unit. The second condition has been incorporated and a new draft of the plan has been posted on the plan [website](#). There were 37 speakers at the public hearing. Councilmembers Herndon and Sawyer intend to discuss the second condition during the LUTI meeting on October 20, 2020.

This memorandum documents the plan contents and process based on the three criteria established in *Comprehensive Plan 2040*:

1. An inclusive community process was used to develop the plan.
2. The plan is consistent with the vision, goals and strategies of *Comprehensive Plan 2040*.
3. The plan demonstrates a long-term view.

The memo concludes with the staff recommendation to the Denver Planning Board.

1. Inclusive Community Process

The East Area Plan is based on a robust three-year public engagement process, as described below:

•**Steering Committee**- The East Area Plan was guided and informed by a 13-person Steering Committee nominated by City Council member Christopher Herndon (District 8) and former City Council member Mary Beth Susman (District 5). Participants represented neighborhood and community organizations, non-profits, businesses, major property owners, and long-time residents. The Committee met regularly for 24 meetings over a 39-month period. Members developed the plan's vision statements, identified focus topics and community focus areas, reviewed and refined draft materials, and provided guidance throughout the process.

- At their September 23, 2020 meeting, the Steering Committee voted 8-1 to endorse the East Area Plan. Those supporting the plan determined the plan had been developed through a comprehensive and equitable process and the recommendations in the plan would advance the plan vision. The member who opposed the plan did not support plan recommendations for additional height on Colfax Avenue and desired additional park recommendations for South Park Hill. One additional member briefly joined, but did not participate in the vote. The three remaining members of the committee were absent. Of the four members who were not present for a vote, two had attended only 3 meetings during the entire 39-month process and one had not attended a meeting in over a year.

- **Community Workshops and Open Houses** - The planning team held nine community workshops and open houses during the three-year planning process. The meetings were well-attended, with a total of over 920 attendees across the meeting series.
- **Online Surveys**- eleven online surveys were conducted at different stages throughout the process. Surveys were typically open for several months each, and they were taken by over 4,060 participants.
- **Focus Groups**- To help develop the recommendations, 17 focus group meetings were held with local subject matter experts on key issues such as affordable housing, local business, mobility, immigrant and refugee services, green infrastructure, and design.
- **Community Groups, Pop-ups, and Targeted Engagement** - Over the course of the plan, CPD staff attended and/or hosted 49 meetings with community groups, such as registered neighborhood organizations and business improvement districts, and targeted engagement and pop-up events primarily focused in East Colfax.
- **Field Surveys**- CPD staff conducted 11 field surveys with members of the community to evaluate urban design quality in mixed-use areas throughout East.
- **Office Hours**- CPD staff held nine office hour sessions , both in-person and virtually, for a total of 18 hours to answer questions and take feedback on the draft plan and recommendations.
- **Communications and Additional Outreach**- Promotion of the East process and advertisement of meetings, surveys and draft plans was conducted by CPD Communications and consultants.
 - Outreach methods included email distribution, media releases, website information, social media, the Neighborhood Planning Initiative newsletter, and additional outreach through City Council offices and community partners.
 - Flyers and other printed materials were provided at 150 locations and pop-up events.
 - An area-wide mailer was sent to over 15,000 households with information about the plan and draft recommendations.
 - Planning Board held four informational items on the plan, which were broadcast on Denver’s public access channel and online.
 - At least nine stories were covered by local media including the Denver Post, Denver’s 7, 9News, and Fox 31.
 - Project information, agendas, meeting materials, draft content, and announcements were posted to <http://www.denvergov.org/EastPlan>.
 - Interpretation services, childcare, and food were provided at all community workshops and at several targeted engagement events.
 - Multilingual flyers were distributed throughout the East Area, including libraries, recreation centers, schools, apartment buildings and community-serving businesses to promote each workshop.
 - Electronic communication, web materials and online activities were compatible with smart phones, ADA accessible and available for auto-translation.
 - Print copies of materials and language translation and/or interpretation were made available to any resident who requested it.
- **Targeted Outreach**- Throughout the process, CPD staff tracked the demographics of those participating in plan activities and compared them to the demographics of area residents.

Where discrepancies were found, targeted outreach was directed at the underrepresented groups. In the area, this was primarily lower-income and non-white households. In addition, the immigrant and refugee community, which faces language barriers in participation, was targeted for additional outreach. To address barriers, over 20 meetings and events were held in the East Colfax neighborhood and the team worked with local partners to provide multilingual interpretation, free transportation to meetings, food and childcare. Review periods of the draft plan and recommendations were also extended to allow for more participation. CPD staff worked with the following groups for targeted outreach:

- Hope Communities Hidden Brook Apartments (affordable housing provider)
- East Colfax Community Collective (East Colfax residents, including immigrants and refugees, and small business owners)
- Street Fraternity (organization serving young men)
- Immigrant and refugee service providers
- Xenia Village Apartments (affordable housing provider)
- Regal Café (small business)
- Shephard’s Motel (motel providing short-term housing)
- Avenue 8 at Mayfair (apartment community)
- Northeast Transportation Connections (Transportation Management Association serving Northeast Denver)

Finding: The East Area Plan was developed through an inclusive public process.

2. Plan Consistency

Small area plans must be consistent with *Comprehensive Plan 2040*. Because it is a key supplement to the comprehensive plan and provides specific guidance for the Neighborhood Planning Initiative, a consistency analysis is also provided for *Blueprint Denver*, below.

Comprehensive Plan 2040

Comprehensive Plan 2040 includes many goals divided across six vision elements. The East Area Plan includes vision statements for each Comprehensive Plan 2040 vision element and advances many of the goals of the plan. The East Area Plan is consistent with the following goals and strategies found in Comprehensive Plan 2040:

Equitable, Affordable and Inclusive

Goal 1: Ensure all Denver residents have safe, convenient and affordable access to basic services and a variety of amenities.

- A. Increase development of housing units close to transit and mixed-use developments.
- B. Implement a high-quality, affordable and accessible multi-modal transportation system.
- C. Improve equitable access to resources that improve quality of life, including cultural and natural amenities, health care, education, parks, recreation, nutritious food and the arts.
- D. Improve equitable access to city resources and city meetings through proactive and transparent communications, easy-to-access information and materials available in more than one language.

Goal 2: Build housing as a continuum to serve residents across a range of incomes, ages and needs.

- A. Create a greater mix of housing options in every neighborhood for all individuals and families.

- B. Ensure city policies and regulations encourage every neighborhood to provide a complete range of housing options.
- C. Foster communities of opportunity by aligning housing strategies and investments to improve economic mobility and access to transit and services.
- D. Increase the development of senior-friendly and family-friendly housing, including units with multiple bedrooms in multifamily developments.

Goal 3: Develop housing that is affordable to residents of all income levels.

- B. Use land use regulations to enable and encourage the private development of affordable, missing middle and mixed-income housing, especially where close to transit.
- D. Develop and promote programs to help individuals and families, especially those most vulnerable to displacement, access affordable housing

Goal 4: Preserve existing affordable housing.

- A. Expand existing tools, such as tax relief programs, to preserve the long-term affordability of housing throughout Denver.
- B. Create additional tools, including community land trusts and regulatory incentives, to preserve existing affordable housing.
- C. Incentivize the reuse of existing smaller and affordable homes.

Goal 5: Reduce the involuntary displacement of residents and businesses.

- A. Advance a comprehensive approach to mitigating involuntary displacement that includes expanding economic mobility, creating new affordable housing and preserving existing affordability.
- B. Stabilize residents and businesses at risk of displacement through programs and policies that help them to stay in their existing community.

Goal 6: Integrate equity considerations into city policies, processes and plans.

- A. Adopt strategies to ensure that city plans and processes, including budget decisions, incorporate equity.
- B. Track the information and measure the data needed to understand disparities and to evaluate the equity impacts of public programs and projects.

Goal 7: Make neighborhoods accessible to people of all ages and abilities.

- B. Prioritize infrastructure improvements that allow for residents of all abilities to access and live in any neighborhood.

Goal 8: Increase housing options for Denver's most vulnerable populations.

- B. Partner with organizations to develop permanent and transitional housing affordable to very low-income populations.
- C. Ensure that city regulations enable a range of flexible housing options to meet the needs of those experiencing or transitioning out of homelessness.
- D. Expand the supply of housing accessible to seniors and people with disabilities, including more housing choices for seniors to age in place.

Goal 9: Improve equitable access to quality education and lifelong learning opportunities.

- B. Improve the quality, availability and affordability of early childhood care, education and child development services.
- C. Promote and encourage use of the Denver Public Library system, community centers, schools, and other resources that provide opportunities for lifelong learning.

Strong and Authentic Neighborhoods

Goal 1: Create a city of complete neighborhoods.

- A. Build a network of well-connected, vibrant, mixed-use centers and corridors.

- B. Ensure neighborhoods offer a mix of housing types and services for a diverse population.
- C. Ensure neighborhoods are safe, accessible and well-connected for all modes.
- D. Encourage quality infill development that is consistent with the surrounding neighborhood and offers opportunities for increased amenities.

Goal 2: Enhance Denver's neighborhoods through high-quality urban design.

- C. Create people-oriented places that embrace community character with thoughtful transitions, aspirational design and an engaging public realm.
- D. Use urban design to contribute to economic viability, public health, safety, environmental well-being, neighborhood culture, and quality of life.

Goal 3: Preserve the authenticity of Denver's neighborhoods and celebrate our history, architecture and culture.

- C. Ensure city policies and regulations support historic preservation and eliminate barriers in city processes to help all neighborhoods preserve what matters most.
- E. Support the stewardship and reuse of existing buildings, including city properties.

Goal 4: Ensure every neighborhood is strong and vibrant

- A. Grow and support neighborhood-serving businesses
- B. Embrace the international nature of our neighborhoods through support of immigrant-owned businesses.
- C. Make city-led catalytic investments in neighborhoods to advance community goals.

Goal 6: Empower Denverites to be involved and collaborative in city government.

- A. Continue to strengthen trust and communication between the city and all neighborhoods.
- B. Provide proactive communication and transparency about city policies, public safety, processes and plans.
- C. Improve the engagement and representation of all Denverites, including communities of color, in neighborhood groups and city processes.
- D. Build the capacity of underrepresented citizens and provide resources to increase their involvement in decision-making.

Goal 7: Leverage the arts and support creative placemaking to strengthen the community.

- C. Embrace existing communities and their cultural assets.

Goal 8: Conduct intentional, equitable and measurable neighborhood planning.

- A. Create diverse and inclusive opportunities for communities to participate in planning.
- B. Ensure all neighborhoods have a future vision that is both community-driven and long-term.
- C. Ensure neighborhood plan recommendations are consistent with the local vision and with this comprehensive plan.

Goal 9: Ensure all neighborhoods are safe.

- A. Encourage design and new development to improve public health and safety.
- C. Actively involve communities in strategies to promote safety.

Connected, Safe and Accessible Places

Goal 1: Deliver a multimodal network that encourages more trips by walking, rolling, biking and transit.

- A. Prioritize transportation projects that will advance Denver's mode share goals.
- B. Adopt policies that require Transportation Demand Management (TDM) programs for developments to maximize use of alternative modes and reduce single-occupancy vehicle trips on Denver's streets.

Goal 2: Provide a safe transportation system that serves all users.

- A. Implement the city's *Vision Zero Action Plan* to achieve zero traffic-related deaths and serious injuries by 2030.
- B. Build streets that are safe for everyone, especially for the most vulnerable, including the elderly, those with disabilities and children.
- C. Create a transportation system to serve all ages and physical abilities.

Goal 3: Maximize the public right-of-way to create great places.

- A. Create streets to foster economic activity, contribute to great urban design and accommodate green infrastructure, including street trees.
- C. Protect, enhance and expand Denver's legacy pathways: its historic parkways, boulevards, greenways and trails.

Goal 4: Create an equitable and connected multimodal network that improves access to opportunity and services.

- A. Ensure focused transportation investments—on streets as well as neighborhood trails—in areas with populations more dependent on walking, rolling and transit.
- B. Use the multimodal network to connect vulnerable populations to employment, education, parks and health services.

Goal 5: Ensure the development of a frequent, high-quality and reliable transit network.

- A. Promote a citywide network of frequent transit service—including buses— that is reliable, safe and accessible to users of all ages and abilities.
- B. Implement *Denver Moves: Transit*, including the frequent transit network and transit capital investment corridors.

Goal 6: Build and maintain safe bicycle and pedestrian networks.

- A. Create a citywide network for bicycling, walking and rolling that is safe and accessible to people of all ages and abilities.
- B. Implement the bicycle network, including facilities easy to use, recommended in *Denver Moves: Bicycles*.
- C. Implement the complete network of pedestrian infrastructure recommended in *Denver Moves: Pedestrians & Trails*.

Goal 8: Strengthen multimodal connections in mixed-use centers and focus growth near transit.

- A. Improve multimodal connections within and between mixed-use centers including downtown, Denver International Airport and major urban centers.
- B. Promote transit-oriented development and encourage higher density development, including affordable housing, near transit to support ridership.

Goal 9: Advance innovative curb lane management and parking policies.

- A. Promote strategies to balance demand for the curb lane (where vehicles park and load) that responds to the land uses on that street.
- B. Promote on-street parking management strategies that maximize use of the curb lane and are tailored to the context and needs of specific areas at different times of day.
- C. Balance the demand for on- and off-street parking with other community goals including affordability and sustainability.

Economically Diverse and Vibrant

Goal 1: Ensure economic mobility and improve access to opportunity.

- A. Improve economic mobility through workforce training, career development, quality education and wealth creation.
- C. Support business development and grow the talent necessary to compete in the global economy.

Goal 2: Grow a strong, diversified economy.

- B. Facilitate the growth of a diverse business sector that serves as the foundation for a global, innovative economy.
- D. Ensure a broad range of jobs to align with the skills and interests of local residents.

Goal 3: Sustain and grow Denver's local neighborhood businesses.

- A. Promote small, locally-owned businesses and restaurants that reflect the unique character of Denver.
- B. Target investments and small business support to the most underserved or distressed neighborhoods.
- C. Address the needs of culturally- relevant businesses that are most vulnerable to involuntary displacement.

Goal 4: Ensure Denver has a productive, educated, competitive and knowledgeable workforce.

- A. Develop a highly trained local workforce with the skills and knowledge to effectively compete for a diverse range of local jobs.
- B. Provide training and programs to connect Denverites to high quality jobs at a range of skill levels.
- C. Encourage businesses to work with local workforce training and education organizations to better prepare residents for job and career opportunities.

Goal 10: Create a vibrant food economy and leverage Denver's food businesses to accelerate economic opportunity.

- B. Support the creation, expansion and economic vitality of Denver food businesses.
- C. Spur innovation and entrepreneurship across food and agricultural industries.

Environmentally Resilient

Goal 2: Prepare for and adapt to climate change.

- A. Prepare for the impacts of climate change including increased temperatures, loss of tree canopy, infrastructure damage, increased frequency of extreme weather events and reduced snowpack and earlier snow melt.
- B. Plan for climate change through collaboration, innovation and special attention to the city's most vulnerable populations, who are disproportionately impacted by climate change.

Goal 3: Conserve water and use it more efficiently.

- A. Encourage requirements for water-conserving landscaping for private development and publicly owned land.

Goal 4: Integrate stormwater into the built environment by using green infrastructure to improve water quality and reduce runoff.

- A. Embrace stormwater as an asset and integrate it into the design of streets, open spaces and neighborhoods.
- B. Restore and enhance waterways so they serve as community amenities.
- C. Encourage low-impact development that reduces impervious surfaces and positively impacts community health by using trees, low-water landscaping and green infrastructure.

Goal 6: Protect and expand Denver's green infrastructure network.

- A. Recognize parks, public space, trees and plants as vital elements of green infrastructure and ensure that the provision of these elements keeps pace with Denver's growth.
- B. Connect parks, open spaces, trails, river corridors, parkways and street trees into an integrated green infrastructure network.
- C. Maintain and expand the citywide tree canopy.
- D. Preserve and enhance the city's system of parkland and adapt park landscapes to be more climate and heat resistant.

Goal 7: Improve solid waste diversion and conserve raw materials.

- C. Prioritize the reuse of existing buildings and explore incentives to reuse or salvage materials from demolished structures.

Goal 8: Clean our soils, conserve land and grow responsibly.

- A. Promote infill development where infrastructure and services are already in place.
- B. Encourage mixed-use communities where residents can live, work and play in their own neighborhoods.
- C. Focus growth by transit stations and along high- and medium-capacity transit corridors.

Healthy and Active

Goal 1: Create and enhance environments that support physical activity and healthy living.

- A. Recognize parks, recreation and the urban forest as vital components of a complete community.
- B. Promote walking, rolling and biking through the development of a safe and interconnected multimodal network.
- C. Design safe public spaces and recreational areas to serve people of all ages and backgrounds.

Goal 2: Provide high-quality parks, recreation facilities and programs that serve all Denver residents.

- A. Ensure equitable access to parks and recreation amenities for all residents.
- C. Expand the supply of parks, recreational facilities and programs relative to Denver's population growth.

Goal 3: Ensure access to affordable, nutritious culturally-diverse food in all neighborhoods.

- A. Expand efforts to recruit and retain fresh-food retailers in low-income and underserved areas.
- B. Expand community food production and sharing.
- C. Build community-driven food resources.

Goal 4: Increase access to health services for all.

- A. Improve collaboration between health organizations, schools, faith-based organizations and other community organizations to promote preventive care and improve access to health services.

Goal 5: Incorporate health analysis into relevant city policies, processes and planning.

- A. Integrate health impacts and considerations into relevant city programs and projects.
- B. Work across multiple city departments and partners to address health impacts.

Denver and the Region

Goal 1: Be a regional leader in smart growth.

- A. Demonstrate the benefits of compact, mixed-use development for the region.

Goal 2: Embrace Denver's role as the center of regional growth.

- A. Direct significant growth to regional centers and community centers and corridors with strong transit connections.

Goal 3: Lead the advancement and promotion of regional collaboration.

- B. Coordinate with RTD, DRCOG and local jurisdictions to lead investments in multimodal regional connections, including transit corridors.

Blueprint Denver

Blueprint Denver Section 3.1 (Plan in Action- Implementation) identifies NPI area plans as “the greatest opportunity for covering all of Denver with small area plans that provide more specific guidance than *Blueprint Denver*.” The section describes how NPI area plans update and refine *Blueprint Denver* and establishes the following minimum content for NPI plans:

- A detailed vision for the future of the area that aligns with the comprehensive plan vision and the vision of *Blueprint Denver*.
- Strategies for achieving the vision, including recommendations for land use, built form, mobility and quality-of-life infrastructure.
- An implementation section identifying strategies by type, responsible entities, timelines, and any metrics for tracking plan progress over time.
- A summary of intended updates to *Blueprint Denver*.

The East Area Plan contains content specifically addressing each of the minimum standards listed above. Additionally, the East Area Plan is consistent with the following policies and strategies found in *Blueprint Denver*:

Land Use and Built Form Recommendations

General Recommendations- Land Use and Built Form

Policy 1: Promote and anticipate planned growth in major centers and corridors and key residential areas connected by rail service and transit priority streets.

- A. Use zoning and land use regulations to encourage higher-density, mixed-use development in transit-rich areas including:
 - Regional centers and community centers
 - Community corridors where medium- and high-capacity transit corridors are planned
 - High and medium-high residential areas in the downtown and urban center contexts.

Policy 2: Incentivize or require efficient development of land, especially in transit-rich areas.

- B. In transit-rich areas, including downtown, revise the zoning code to limit auto-oriented commercial uses that do not contribute positively to activating the public realm, such as mini-storage, drive-throughs and car washes. This may also apply to other desired mixed-use areas of the city, such as transit priority streets.
- C. Allow increased density in exchange for desired outcomes, such as affordable housing, especially in transit-rich areas.
- E. In historic areas, balance efficiency with preservation through strategies that encourage the reuse of structures.

Policy 3: Ensure the Denver Zoning Code continues to respond to the needs of the city, while remaining modern and flexible.

- A. Rezone properties from the Former Chapter 59 zoning code so that the entire city is covered by the DZC, including continuing to incentivize owners to come out of the old code.

Policy 4: Ensure equitable planning processes and include underrepresented residents in plans and plan implementation.

- A. Include multilingual engagement in all public outreach.
- D. Integrate equity and environmental justice considerations into plans and identify methods to measure and reduce inequities as part of the planning process.

Policy 9: Promote coordinated development on large infill sites to ensure new development integrates with its surroundings.

- B. Use large development review, or similar tools, to coordinate infrastructure and open space on large infill sites while minimizing and mitigating negative impacts on surrounding communities.
- C. Implement regulatory tools to set clear and predictable requirements for large redevelopments to provide benefits to the community such as affordable housing and open space.

Housing Recommendations- Land Use and Built Form

Policy 2: Diversify housing options by exploring opportunities to integrate missing middle housing into low and low-medium residential areas.

- A. Integrate missing middle housing into low and low-medium residential areas, especially those that score low in Housing Diversity. This should be implemented through holistic revisions to the zoning code at a citywide scale, with a focus on discouraging demolition and encouraging affordability.

Policy 3: Incentivize preservation and reuse of existing smaller and affordable homes.

- A. Implement zoning tools to incentivize the preservation of smaller, more affordable housing options. An example would be to allow the owner of an existing house to add an additional unit or accessory dwelling unit if the original structure is preserved.

Policy 4: Diversify housing choice through the expansion of accessory dwelling units throughout all residential areas.

- B. Identify strategies to prevent involuntary displacement —especially in areas that score high for Vulnerability to Displacement —in conjunction with expanding the allowance for ADUs.

Policy 6: Increase development of affordable housing and mixed-income housing, particularly in areas near transit, services and amenities.

- A. Incentivize affordable housing through zoning, especially in regional centers, community centers and community corridors adjacent to transit. This could include a process—informed by community input—to create citywide height bonuses in the zoning code, where additional height is allowed in exchange for income restricted units. Incentives for affordable housing are particularly important for areas that score high in Vulnerability to Displacement and score low in Housing Diversity.
- D. Continue to advocate for changes to state law that remove barriers to access affordable housing options.

Policy 8: Capture 80 percent of new housing growth in regional centers, community centers and corridors, high-intensity residential areas, greenfield residential areas, innovation flex districts and university campus districts.

- C. Ensure land use regulations, small area plans and major transit investments support desired growth areas
- D. Advance housing affordability recommendations from this plan and *Housing an Inclusive Denver* to ensure new units include units affordable to a range of income levels.

Economic Recommendations- Land Use and Built Form

Policy 2: Improve equitable access to employment areas throughout the city to ensure all residents can connect to employment opportunities.

- A. Invest in high- and medium-capacity transit corridors to connect all Denver residents to the city's regional, community centers and community corridors.
- B. Promote and incentivize the development of affordable and family-friendly housing, as well as a full range of job opportunities, in and near regional centers, community centers and community corridors.
- C. Encourage entrepreneurship and provide opportunities for new locally-owned businesses, especially businesses owned by women and people of color, to locate in regional centers.
- D. Align workforce training, career development and education programs with job opportunities in regional centers and create programs to connect workers with employers in regional centers.

Policy 4: Promote creative industries, maker spaces, artists and small businesses as vital components of Denver's innovation economy.

- B. Develop programs and identify potential incentives to maintain existing spaces, reduce rent costs and other business costs and help create new spaces for hand crafted manufacturing, maker spaces, artists and other small, locally-owned businesses, especially in areas that score high for Vulnerability to Displacement.

Policy 5: Support organizations and districts within the city's centers and corridors to aid in attraction and retention of employment and commerce.

- B. Provide information, technical assistance and support to commercial areas interested in creating a business organization, merchants' association or similar entity.
- C. Actively foster interaction between Denver Economic Development & Opportunity and existing business development organizations and partnerships to align citywide economic development initiatives with needs of the local areas.
- D. Partner with organizations that are actively supporting economic opportunity across Denver.

Policy 6: Ensure Denver and its neighborhoods have a vibrant and authentic retail and hospitality marketplace meeting the full range of experiences and goods demanded by residents and visitors.

- A. Support locally-owned businesses—new and old—to expand and evolve to meet the changing needs of residents and visitors. Support could include assisting businesses, especially in the most underserved or distressed neighborhoods, with regulatory processes, education, training, helping with marketing or increasing access to capital.

Design Quality and Preservation Recommendations- Land Use and Built Form

Policy 2: Ensure residential neighborhoods retain their unique character as infill development occurs.

- A. Continue the city's commitment to existing historic districts and landmarks and use historic designation to preserve the character of an individual structure or district or where there is historic, architectural, cultural, and/or geographic significance.
- B. Use conservation overlays in areas where the key goal is to conserve distinctive features in order to enhance and retain existing character. Although these overlays can be area-specific, they can also be used for multiple areas of the city where common conservation outcomes are desired.
- D. For residential places, revise the zoning code to create more contextual bulk and scale requirements for primary and accessory structures. This may include stricter bulk planes, limitations on height, changes to setback requirements, changes to maximum lot coverage, changes to transparency features and/or entry feature requirements. These changes should vary by neighborhood context to better reflect the built character. In creating new zoning standards, consideration should be given to light, air, privacy, engagement of the public realm and human-scaled design.
- F. Promote the use of pattern books to identify character defining features and/or desired design outcomes for an area. Pattern books can be developed during neighborhood planning and used to inform regulatory tools including, but not limited to, conservation overlays and design overlays. Discover Denver, the citywide building survey, can contribute valuable data on character defining features to be incorporated into pattern books.
- I. Promote incentives to preserve the reuse of historic buildings and the unique historic features of Denver's neighborhoods.

Policy 3: Create exceptional design outcomes in key centers and corridors

- C. Create a system of design tools, including standards and guidelines, that are scalable and repeatable to enable baseline design requirements that can be applied to a range of contexts and locations and be modified with a smaller subset of locally-applicable features.

- E. Revise the zoning code to provide standards for new mixed-use development that better responds to the surrounding context. Standards to examine for improvement include build-to ranges, transparency minimums, lot coverage, and entry features.
- F. Implement additional zoning tools to create appropriate transitions between places, especially for areas where centers and corridors are close to residential places. This may include standards related to height, massing and uses.
- H. Use urban quality evaluation and metrics, often developed through small area planning and assessments, to help define design problems and to help identify possible solutions.
- K. Identify important mixed-use historic structures and encourage their continued use or adaptive reuse.

Policy 4: Ensure an active and pedestrian friendly environment that provides a true mixed-use character in centers and corridors.

- A. Require strong street-level active use standards for local centers and corridors. This may include a prohibition on residential units for a portion of the street level building. Given the intent of these small-scale places to provide services embedded in the neighborhood, it is important for them to provide more than residential uses.
- B. Study and implement stronger street-level active use requirement for community and regional centers and community corridors. Tools could include regulations on floor-to-floor heights for the first story to facilitate conversion to commercial uses and reconsideration of appropriate street-level uses.

Policy 6: Incentivize the preservation of structures and features that contribute to the established character of an area, even if they are not designated as landmarks or historic districts.

- A. Integrate historic resources surveys, like Discover Denver, that identify and provide data on buildings into land use planning and regulations.
- C. Create new regulations to encourage the reuse of existing buildings. This could include requirements to salvage or reuse building materials after a structure is demolished or allowing flexibility in uses or density when an existing structure is reused and maintained.

Policy 7: Improve requirements for landscaping, with a focus on climate-appropriate vegetation, for private property.

- C. Limit the amount of impervious surface, such as paved areas, allowed on zone lots. This should be calibrated by context to reflect the differences between higher intensity areas, such as the urban center and downtown contexts, and lower-intensity residential areas (see more in quality-of-life policy 4).
- D. Promote new development that integrates trees, vines, planters or other live plants into the building design and their outdoor spaces to soften architecture, frame spaces, minimize bulk and avoid harsh edges.

Mobility Recommendations

Policy 1: Encourage mode-shift — more trips by walking and rolling, biking and transit — through efficient land use and infrastructure improvements.

- A. Implement the bicycle, pedestrian and transit networks in *Denver Moves* plans.
- D. Increase the number of services and amenities that are available by walking, rolling and biking by integrating more local centers and corridors into residential areas, especially for areas that score low in Access to Opportunity.
- E. Promote mixed-use development in all centers and corridors.

Policy 2: Align the impacts of private development with transportation infrastructure and promote development that creates walkable, transit-friendly communities.

- E. Adopt policies that require Transportation Demand Management programs for developments to maximize use of alternative modes and reduce single-occupancy vehicle trips on Denver's streets.

Policy 3: On all streets, prioritize people walking and rolling over other modes of transportation

- A. Ensure safe pedestrian crossings, especially along the High Injury Network identified by Vision Zero.
- F. Explore options to assist property owners when improvements required by redevelopment, such as sidewalks, is cost-prohibitive.

Policy 8: Connect centers and corridors across the city through a variety of modal choices.

- A. Implement the sidewalk network in *Denver Moves: Pedestrians & Trails*.
- B. Implement the bicycle network in *Denver Moves: Bicycles*.
- C. Update the bicycle network from the *Denver Moves: Bicycles* plan to ensure low-stress bicycle connections to centers and corridors.
- E. Implement the Transit Capital Investment Corridors in *Denver Moves: Transit*.

Policy 9: Improve safety on Denver's streets and collaborate with city departments on safety programs when developing small area plans.

- A. Build streets that are safe for everybody and implement the *Vision Zero Action Plan* to achieve zero traffic related fatalities by 2030.
- B. Advance the goals of the *Vision Zero Action Plan* in the Neighborhood Planning Initiative (NPI).
- C. Collaborate with Neighborhood Traffic Management Program in NPI.
- D. Support the safe routes to school program.
- F. Create slow zones in priority areas such as school zones, major park zones and areas with a high concentration of seniors.

Quality of Life Infrastructure Recommendations

Policy 1: Expand tools and regulations to ensure high-quality parks and outdoor public spaces keep pace with Denver's growth.

- A. Explore a variety of methods to provide permanent, sustainable funding options for park, trail and recreation needs. This could include working with city agencies to seek increased participation from new development to help meet increased demand for park and recreations services and facilities.
- B. Evaluate the need to increase requirements and/or create incentives for publicly accessible outdoor space for mid- and large-scale developments in centers, corridors and districts.

Policy 2: Protect and expand Denver's tree canopy on both public and private property.

- A. Prioritize trees in green infrastructure facilities to improve urban tree canopy.
- B. Support a robust street tree canopy by prioritizing trees in right-of-way design.
- D. Strengthen standards to protect trees and explore requirements and/or incentives to mitigate tree loss during redevelopment on both public and private property to help achieve Denver's tree canopy goal.

Policy 3: Minimize flooding and effectively manage stormwater as part of a larger integrated ecological system.

- B. Include a floodplain analysis and considerations in all plans and proactively seek to protect communities from future flood risk.
- D. Encourage adaptable, multi-functional stormwater facilities to support redevelopment and provide neighborhood recreational amenities.
- E. Provide room for our waterways, where feasible, to help restore natural functionality that has been impaired due to increased urbanization and channelization.

Policy 4: Promote environmentally-friendly development strategies in the public and private realms.

- A. Create incentives for private development to integrate green infrastructure — such as pervious surfaces, permeable pavement and plantings that provide water quality — into project design.
- B. Study and implement requirements to preserve existing green infrastructure, including trees, within the right-of-way. This could include regulations to replace green infrastructure components when preservation is not feasible.
- E. Limit the amount of impervious surface on private property. Consider neighborhood context or places to calibrate impervious surface limits.
- F. Include water conservation requirements for landscaping for new developments, such as irrigation standards that incorporate water budgeting and hydrozone analysis. Promote efficient water use for landscaping.

Policy 5: Ensure attractive streets and outdoor spaces in all centers and corridors, giving priority to pedestrian spaces and amenities.

- A. Encourage street design that minimizes impervious surfaces and look for opportunities to re-purpose parts of the street to enhance the pedestrian realm.
- C. Identify public safety improvements to streets, including appropriate levels of lighting.
- F. Prioritize pedestrian relationships in design such as building orientation, vehicular access points and public wayfinding.

Policy 6: Preserve and rehabilitate Denver's designated parkways and boulevards.

- A. Consider updating the Parkway and Boulevards Design Guidelines to improve the integration of parkway requirements with other street standards. This could include how to integrate a complete sidewalk network into our parkways.

Policy 8: Develop tools to improve access to healthy foods to support community health outcomes.

- B. During small area planning, identify opportunities to expand healthy, culturally-relevant food access and programming. In areas with limited food access, community gardens, greenhouses, edible landscaping and mobile produce markets are tools that can be calibrated to develop culturally relevant recommendations.
- C. Explore ways to increase use of public spaces for non-permanent fresh food retail, including farmers markets and mobile vending.
- D. Support recreation centers, schools and libraries as hubs for a healthy community and identify opportunities for them to provide spaces for community gardens, fresh food retail and health education.
- F. Incentivize and support efforts to recruit and retain grocery stores in centers and corridors, with focus on areas of low food access.

Policy 10: Work with public and private partners to improve access to shops, restaurants, entertainment, services and a variety of daily needs for all Denver residents.

- A. Prioritize street and trail improvements and connections leading to and through existing and future centers and corridors.
- C. Promote development that compatibly integrates and includes daily needs such as child care centers, grocery stores and community-serving retail.
- D. Support safe and equitable access to daily needs including public restrooms and water bottle filling stations.

Finding: The East Area Plan is consistent with Comprehensive Plan 2040 and Blueprint Denver.

3. Long-Term View

The East Area Plan has a planning horizon of 2040 and establishes a vision for supporting local businesses and diverse housing options, preserving the diversity of Colfax Avenue as well as neighborhood architecture, providing trees and open spaces, and making it easier and safer to get around, while directing a majority of growth to centers and corridors in areas that are served by transit. This vision will take many years to achieve.

Finding: The East Area Plan has an appropriate long-term perspective.

Staff Recommendation:

Based on the findings that the East Area Plan used an inclusive public process, is consistent with *Comprehensive Plan 2040* and *Blueprint Denver*, and takes a long-term view, staff recommends **approval with the condition that the document be edited for clarity and correctness.**

Attachments:

1. Organization comments (received on first public review draft of the plan)
2. Public comments (received since the Steering Committee recommendation on 9/23/20)