



TO: Denver City Council
FROM: Denver Planning Board
CC: Tracy Huggins, Executive Director, Denver Urban Renewal Authority
DATE: August 26, 2025
RE: Proposed Rock Drill Urban Redevelopment Plan

Planning Board Finding

The Denver Planning Board is pleased to forward its finding to City Council that the proposed Rock Drill Urban Redevelopment Plan conforms with Denver’s adopted Comprehensive Plan 2040 and its applicable supplements. This finding is required by the Colorado Revised Statutes, Sec. 31-25-107(2). Planning Board made its finding by a unanimous vote in favor of the proposal at its regular meeting on July 16, 2025.

Background

The Urban Redevelopment Area is an approximately 8.1-acre area located in the Cole statistical neighborhood. The property in the Area is generally bounded by East 40th Avenue to the north, Franklin Street to the west, East 39th Avenue to the south, and Williams Street to the west. The context is residential to the south, a mix of residential, commercial, and industrial uses to the west and the east, and the Union Pacific switching station to the north. The site was home to the Denver Rock Drill Manufacturing Company from 1910 to 1961, the Butler Fixture and Manufacturing Company from the 1970’s until 1988, and has primarily been used as industrial warehousing since its most recent purchase in 1992. The site contains several legacy buildings, including multiple classic sawtooth-roofed machine shops.

The Area is currently zoned I-B, UO-2 and C-MU-10 with Waivers. The I-B is a General Industrial District intended to be an employment area containing industrial uses. The C-MU-10 is a Former Chapter 59 (FC 59) commercial mixed-use zone district. It allows limited high-intensity commercial uses appropriate for high-visibility locations. There is a concurrent proposal to rezone the property to Urban Center – Mixed Use – 12 and 16 story districts.

A conditions study (referred to in state statute as a “blight study”) was conducted. The study found that there are five blight factors present in the Urban Redevelopment Area, including 1) deteriorated or deteriorating structures; 2) deterioration of site or other improvement; 3) buildings that are unsafe or unhealthy for persons to live or work in because of building code violations, dilapidated deterioration, defective design, physical construction or faulty or inadequate facilities; 4) environmental contamination of buildings or property; and 5) existence of health, safety or welfare factors requiring high levels of municipal services or substantial physical underutilization or vacancy of sites, buildings, or other improvements, thus meeting the standards of “blight” as described in Colorado Revised Statutes § 31-25-101, the Urban Renewal Law.

Urban Redevelopment Plan

The proposed Urban Redevelopment Plan (URP) establishes the Rock Drill Urban Redevelopment Area. The Urban Redevelopment Plan is intended to promote complete and equitable neighborhoods through the following objectives:

1. To eliminate the present factors which contribute to the blight in the Urban Redevelopment Area. Such blighting factors are detrimental to the community and limit the development potential of the surrounding area.
2. To renew and improve the character and environment of the Urban Redevelopment Area and its surroundings by enhancing and improving existing historical buildings which will prevent or ameliorate economic, physical, and environmental deterioration.
3. To more effectively use underdeveloped land within the Urban Redevelopment Area.
4. To encourage residential, commercial and retail development that is socially and economically inclusive and from which the Urban Redevelopment Area and its environs can draw economic strength.
5. To encourage the reuse of existing buildings where appropriate, including historic preservation and adaptive reuse.
6. To promote a diverse, sustainable neighborhood economy, including mixed use and commercial development opportunities within the Urban Redevelopment Area.
7. To encourage land use patterns within the Urban Redevelopment Area and its environs where pedestrians are safe and welcome.
8. To encourage high and moderate density development where appropriate.
9. To encourage the participation of existing property owners within and adjacent to the Urban Redevelopment Area in the redevelopment of their property.
10. To improve and provide for employment centers at areas proximate to multimodal transit centers and access.
11. To assist the City in cultivating complete and inclusive neighborhoods.
12. To improve the economy of the City by stabilizing and upgrading property values.
13. To achieve goals as outlined in adopted City Plans.

The proposed URP would facilitate the revitalization of the existing structures and encourage residential, commercial, and retail development that is socially and economically inclusive.

Planning Board Authority

Colorado Revised Statutes 31-25-107(2) requires that a jurisdiction's planning board or commission make a finding that a proposed urban renewal plan conforms with the jurisdiction's comprehensive plan.

Analysis of Comprehensive Plan Conformity

At the July 16, 2025, Planning Board meeting CPD staff recommended that the proposed Urban Redevelopment Plan conforms with the adopted plans that apply to the area, including Denver Comprehensive Plan 2040, Blueprint Denver (2019), the 38th & Blake Station Area Plan (2014), the Elyria & Swansea Neighborhoods Plan (2015), and the River North Plan (2003). See the attached Planning Board staff report for details.

The Final Denver Planning Board Finding

Based on the CPD staff report and board deliberations at its July 16, 2025, meeting, the Denver Planning Board finds that the Rock Drill Redevelopment Plan conforms with Denver's adopted Comprehensive Plan and its applicable supplements.

Attachments

1. CPD Planning Board staff report