



MEMORANDUM

TO: City Council
FROM: David Gaspers and Deirdre Oss
CPD-Planning Services
DATE: January 9, 2013
SUBJECT: 61st and Pena Station Area Plan Adoption

Planning Services is pleased to submit the 61st and Pena Station Area Plan for your final consideration and adoption as a supplement to the Denver Comprehensive Plan. Planning Services staff presented the plan to the City Council Land Use, Transportation, and Infrastructure Committee on December 3, and December 17, 2013. An additional recommendation addressing future bicycle facilities in the station area (B.2, page 20) was added after the Committee's initial review.

The Planning Board unanimously approved the plan as a supplement to the Denver Comprehensive Plan after holding the required public hearing at its regular meeting of November 20, 2013.

The Planning Board approved the plan on the basis of the findings for the three established criteria for a supplement to the comprehensive plan:

1. Consistency with the Comprehensive Plan and applicable supplements;
2. An inclusive public process;
3. An appropriate long-term perspective.

The details of the findings are listed below for your reference. Thank you for your support and consideration of the 61st & Pena Station Area Plan.

Planning Board Staff Report and Recommendation

Based on the criteria for small area plans, Staff recommends approval for the 61st and Pena Station Area Plan.

Small Area Plan Criteria

1. Plan Consistency

- **Denver Comprehensive Plan 2000**

Environmental Sustainability

Strategy 2-B: Protect and improve air quality by...Reducing vehicular pollution by expanding the use of transit and other travel alternatives, supporting telecommuting and home-based employment, increasing the mix of uses within neighborhoods, and expanding the use of alternative fuels.

Strategy 4-A: Promote the development of sustainable communities and centers of activity where shopping, jobs, recreation and schools are accessible by multiple forms of transportation, providing opportunities for people to live where they work.

Strategy 4-D: Promote convenient public transit for the community, including buses, light rail and other alternatives to single-occupancy vehicles.

Strategy 4-E: Use neighborhood development, such as Stapleton, as projects that incorporate principles of sustainable development at the community level. Use these neighborhoods as models to encourage sustainable development throughout the city over time.

Land Use

Objective 1: Balance and coordinate Denver's mix of land uses to sustain a healthy economy, support the use of alternative transportation, and enhance the quality of life in the city.

Strategy 1-C: Incorporate relevant recommendations from neighborhood, corridor and area plans that are supplements to Plan 2000.

Strategy 3-A: Complete neighborhood and area plans for parts of Denver where development or redevelopment is likely or desirable.

Strategy 4-A: Encourage mixed-use, transit-oriented development that makes effective use of existing transportation infrastructure, supports transit stations, increases transit patronage, reduces impact on the environment, and encourages vibrant urban centers and neighborhoods.

Mobility

Strategy 1-A: Advocate transportation investments that increase mobility of people and their connections to employment, education, shopping, cultural opportunities and other activities.

Strategy 2-C: Support the development of major transportation corridors into, around and through Denver as outlined in DRCOG's MetroVision 2020 Plan. Specifically, the City should recognize the East, Southeast and West Corridors as priorities for regional investment.

Strategy 2-D: Create more convenient connections between different modes of transportation, as in pedestrian to transit, bus to light rail, or bike to transit.

Objective 3: In urban centers and in new development areas, plan, design and invest in transportation infrastructure and systems that support the principal uses within the area, provide well-integrated connections to urban centers and other destinations, and address the mobility needs of frequent users.

Strategy 3-A: Strengthen multimodal connections and transportation improvements within and between existing and potential urban centers, including Downtown/Central Platte Valley, DIA/Gateway, Stapleton, Cherry Creek/Colorado Boulevard, Denver Tech Center, and the South Wadsworth Corridor.

Strategy 3-B: Promote transit-oriented development (TOD) as an urban design framework for urban centers and development areas. Development at transit stations should provide both higher ridership to the transit system and viability and walkability in the area.

Objective 5: Encourage investment in various modes of transit, including light rail, commuter rail, bus/HOV lanes and the bus system to better link transportation and land use, increase mobility for Denver residents, and improve air quality.

Strategy 5-D: Determine the potential for transit-oriented development at public transit stations, and encourage such opportunities whenever possible.

Strategy 6-A: Support major improvements to the roadway system based on detailed subarea or corridor studies that investigate all mobility options, not just automobiles or transit. Detailed subarea or corridor plans require input from the whole community, as well as a comprehensive assessment of transportation, land use and other factors.

Strategy 8-A: Ensure safe and convenient access and accommodation of bicycle riders, pedestrians and transit riders.

Legacies

Strategy 3-A: Identify areas in which increased density and new uses are desirable and can be accommodated.

Strategy 3-B: Create regulations and incentives that encourage high-quality, mixed-use development at densities that will support Denver's diverse housing needs and public transportation alternatives.

Housing

Strategy 2-F: Explore opportunities for housing in all proposed development and redevelopment projects, including commercial and retail projects.

Strategy 6-B: Continue to support mixed-income housing development that includes affordable rental and for-purchase housing for lower-income, entry-level and service employees, especially in Downtown and along transit lines.

Economic Activity

Strategy 1-G: Support the development of a greater number of efficient, convenient and affordable options for workforce mobility, including rapid transit, improved bus service, pedestrian and bicycle access, private shuttle services and employer-sponsored transportation programs.

Strategy 4-B: Enhance existing business centers and establish new business centers in a manner that offers a variety of high-quality uses that support Denver's business environment, complements neighboring residential areas, generates public revenue, and creates jobs.

Arts and Culture

Strategy 1-C: Support a full range of cultural and artistic opportunities within Denver's neighborhoods and among its diverse communities including festivals, performing and visual arts events, and cultural activities.

Strategy 2-B: Help public cultural facilities to expand responsibly and ensure that they are integrated with their surrounding communities.

• Blueprint Denver (2002)

Key Concepts:

- All areas of Denver are either an Area of Stability or Change, or on a continuum from change to stability
- Direct growth to places that will benefit from an infusion of activity, population and investment
- Character preservation, reinvestment and limited growth are the primary concerns for stable residential neighborhoods
- Regulations should encourage development with standards for appropriately located density
- Public private partnerships create innovative projects
- Public infrastructure investments stimulate private investment and improve the physical environment
- Smart growth connects residents to transit, jobs and centers of activity, and increases housing and employment opportunities

Guiding Principles: Areas of Stability

- Respect valued development patterns
- Respect valued attributes
- Respect adjoining property
- Expand transportation choice
- Minimize traffic impacts on neighborhood streets
- Respect environmental quality

Guiding Principles: Areas of Change

- Contribute to urban design vision
- Respect valued attributes of area
- Contribute to the economic vision
- Expand transportation choice
- Improve environmental quality

Civic Responsibilities of Small Area Plans

- Affordable housing
- Transportation system integrity
- Transit oriented development
- Community facilities
- Consistency with adopted plans

Small Area Planning Policies

"Small area plans must be in agreement with Plan 2000 and Blueprint Denver prior to adoption by City Council... If the small area plan conflicts with these two plans, it must be reviewed and reconciled, either through modifications to the small area plan or Blueprint Denver."

In this case, the 61st and Pena Station Area Plan is recommending a change to the Conceptual Land Use Map in the station area.

- **Strategic Transportation Plan (2008)**

- The STP creates a multimodal transportation system to support a livable, connected and sustainable city that is livable for all its citizens now and in the future.
- Presents a vision to create safe pedestrian linkages, a comprehensive bicycle system, dependable transit options, and an efficient and well-maintained infrastructure
- Promotes Denver's opportunity to maximize person-trip capacity as exponentially greater than the ability to accommodate additional vehicle-trip capacity.
- Takes a transformative approach to transportation by planning for travel sheds that move people, not just travel corridors.

The STP identifies three types of recommendations that can increase person trip capacity through three primary areas:

- Capital improvements - New types of facilities that can be added to or changed within the public right-of-way but does not grow Denver's current roadway footprint.
- Operational improvements - Improvement of the function or efficiency of existing facilities in the public right-of-way with minimal changes to the physical footprint and equipment.
- Behavioral changes - Increasing the likelihood that an individual will choose alternative transportation through the promotion of alternative modes of travel such as walking, biking and use of the public transit system.

- **Denver Moves (2011)**

Denver Moves is the next phase of making bicycle and multi-use connections in the Mile High City.

- A physical and action-oriented plan that builds upon the Bicycle Master Plan Update, Denver Parks and Recreation Game Plan, Pedestrian Master Plan, and transit-oriented development (TOD) plans.
- Integrates the off-street and on-street networks identified in these past planning efforts to create safe, comfortable corridors that link neighborhoods, parks, employment centers, business districts, transit hubs, and other destinations in all parts of Denver.
- Recommends improvements for Denver's bicycle corridors, as well as a phasing plan for implementation. Adds 270 miles of facilities to the existing 172 miles.
- Serves as a guide for City staff, stakeholders, and the public interested in the development of the non-motorized network.

Sets two goals for biking and walking in Denver:

- A biking and walking network where every household is within a quarter mile (5-minute walk or 2-minute bicycle ride) of a high ease of use facility.
- Achieve a 15% bicycling and walking commute mode share by 2020.

Sets four objectives to achieve these goals:

- Create a new identity
- Build a simpler system
- Embrace innovative, practical ideas
- Include all users

- **Strategic Parking Plan (2010)**

This guiding document for on and off street parking policies in Denver is a comprehensive, city-wide framework that helps articulate and clarify the threefold vision and approach for parking management in Denver.

- Acknowledge a variety of land use patterns and contexts so that no one-size-fits-all approaches are unilaterally applied
- Manage parking as a valuable asset to keep the asset healthy and sustainable for the public good
- Take an integrated approach to parking management with partnerships, coordination, and public outreach

The SPP establishes a five-step process with incremental tools and strategies to deal with parking pressures from an asset-management perspective to maximize use of existing parking inventories.

- **Demand** –tools that mitigate or reduce the demand for parking
- **Location** - tools that move demand away from the core and into areas with excess parking supply and clearly locate or define where parking is available for users
- **Time** – tools that introduce or modify time restrictions to encourage turnover and better use of parking spaces.
- **Pricing** – tools that introduce a fee, which provides a wide range of flexibility. When appropriately calibrated, pricing tools can reduce occupancy in high demand areas and create a market for off -street parking
- **Supply** – tools that evaluate existing supply and work to optimize its use to the maximum extent before building/developing new supply.

Finding: The 61st and Pena Station Area Plan is consistent with the Denver Comprehensive Plan and applicable supplements.

2. Inclusive Public Process

Public Involvement Process

- **Denver Planning Board**—interim presentations on plan process and content; informational presentation on draft plan; public hearing; recommendation of approval and transmittal of its recommendation to the Mayor and City Council
- **61st and Pena Area Plan Stakeholder Committee**— The property owners within the station area. The Stakeholder Committee had dozens of work sessions and reviewed technical memorandums with key plan content throughout the process. Once a draft plan was completed, the Stakeholder Committee had multiple review periods to provide comments and suggestions.

- **Community Organization Outreach**— Registered Neighborhood Organizations that participated in the station area plan process and/or received invitations to participate include:
 - Inter Neighborhood Cooperation
 - Denver Neighborhood Association, Inc.
 - Green Valley Ranch Citizens Advisory Board
 - Wild Horse Ridge Homeowners Association
- **General Public**
 - Public Meetings
 - July 18, 2013
 - November 14, 2013
 - Individual Correspondence
 - 61st and Pena Station Area Plan webpage at www.denvergov.org

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

3. Long-term View

The existing small area plan that includes the land within the 61st and Pena Station Area Plan boundaries is the Gateway Area Development Plan, which was adopted in 1990 and revised in 1993. As the opening of the East Commuter Rail Line in 2016 nears, this station area plan will provide a new vision for the area surrounding the 61st and Pena Station, which was not included in the early Gateway plan document. The expected planning horizon for the 61st and Pena Station Area Plan is 20 years, with intended review of the plan document within 10 years to determine if an update would be beneficial due to changing conditions.

Finding: The plan has an appropriate long-term perspective.