

The MOC FreshLo Project



Business, Arts, Workforce & Aviation Committee
August 26, 2020

Doug Selbee, DEDO Project Administrator



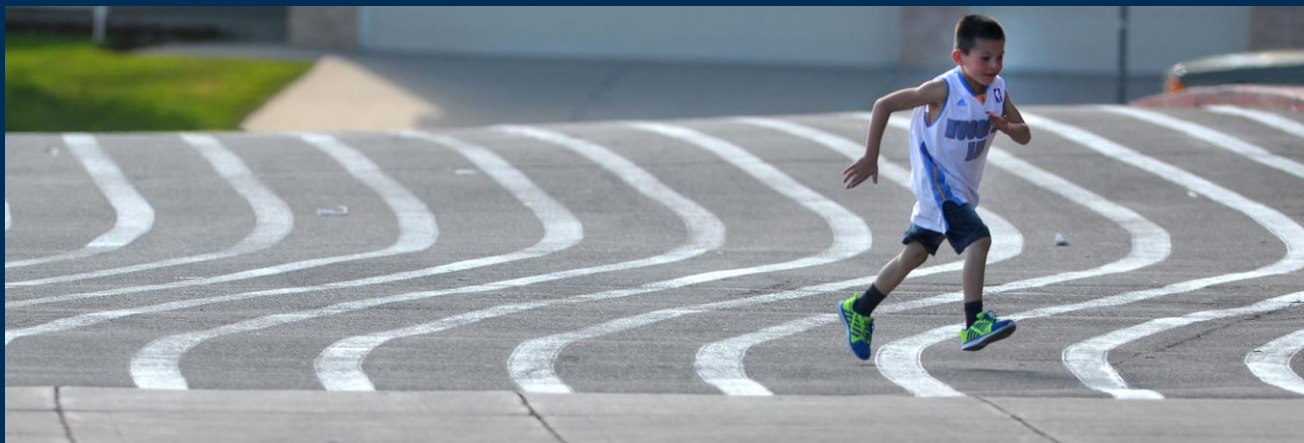
DENVER
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT
& OPPORTUNITY

Background

The Montbello Organizing Committee (MOC) is developing the former RTD Park & Ride site located at 4690 Peoria Street (aka 12300 Albrook Drive), 80239. This exciting project, known as the Montbello FreshLo Hub, is the result of a multi-year planning process that included the participation of more than 2,500 residents.

The FreshLo Project will include a grocery-store, nonprofit cultural hub, retail space, meeting rooms, parking, and 96 units of affordable housing at between 30% and 70% AMI.

MOC successfully bid on the property in a sealed bid process conducted by RTD. MOC is the single member of Montbello FreshLo, LLC, the entity that now owns the land at 4690 Peoria Street. Funding from the City is anticipated to support that purchase, which was made possible through an interim (bridge) loan. The city is expected to provide \$600,000 plus \$100,000 committed for predevelopment costs.



Project Team

- ✓ Burgess Development Services was hired in 2018 to represent MOC as its developer.
- ✓ SB Clark Financial Services was retained to pursue Low Income Housing Tax Credits and New Market Tax Credits.
- ✓ Letters of interest in working as housing partners are available from Colorado Housing and Finance Authority and SPARCC, and Colorado Enterprise Fund.
- ✓ The Roybal Corporation developed the initial architectural plans.
- ✓ The FreshLo plan was also validated and deemed feasible by national panel of experts with the Urban Land Institute.



Addressing residents' concerns

Back in 2016, MOC began a community-driven planning process to address issues that had been identified by residents. These issues included:

- the need for a full-service grocery store and access to fresh food grown locally;
- the closure of the RTD Park & Ride;
- the lack of retail business within the community;
- the breach among the diverse cultures represented within the neighborhood;
- the proliferation of fast food restaurants, liquor stores, pawn shops, and marijuana dispensaries along the Peoria Corridor;
- the lack of affordable housing options; and
- the looming threat of gentrification/displacement.

Community engagement

118 stakeholders in the Montbello community participated with feedback for the panel from the Urban Land Institute (ULI), which included in-depth interviews with residents, a thorough market analysis, and coordination with the city's Neighborhood Planning Initiative.

The key focus area for the ULI Panel within the Montbello neighborhood was around the RTD site, given that developing the RTD site would bring exciting opportunities to the redevelopment of the entire surrounding area.





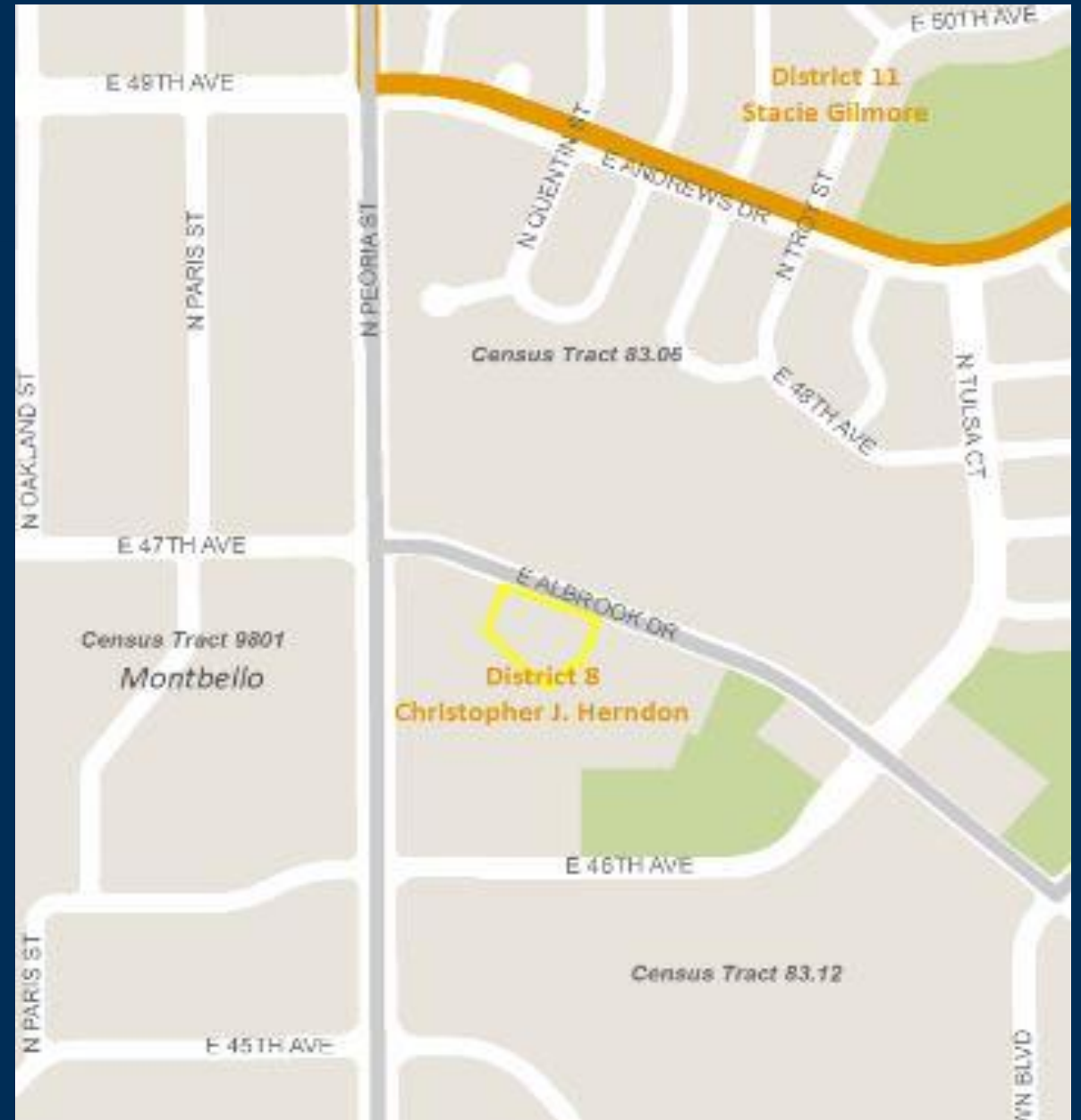
View from Albrook Looking Southwest



3D View



Street View



City support: CDBG financing

The MOC will use this \$700,000 performance loan from the City of Denver to support the acquisition (\$600,000) and predevelopment (\$100,000).

The terms of the city's proposed investment:

- Total amount of \$700,000 – including \$100,000 for predevelopment
- Performance loan (0% APR)
- Term of seven years from the execution of the Promissory Note
- Performance metric: the nonprofit facility

Estimated Total Project - \$30M

Creating a Wealth of Access

Active transportation: The lack of wide and connected sidewalks prevents Montbello residents from incorporating “active transportation,” such as walking and bicycling, into their daily routines. There also is a lack of access to public transportation.

Inclusion of affordable housing: With rising housing prices in the Denver metro area, Montbello residents are being priced out of their homes. The community is characterized by multiple generations living under one roof because people cannot afford the cost of rent or buying their own home.

Access to high-quality food: Montbello is characterized as both a food desert and a food swamp. There are limited places within the neighborhood to have a sit-down, healthy meal with family or friends.



“. . . a stronger, more cohesive Montbello”

Access to health care: Montbello lacks primary care and urgent care facilities, causing many residents to use costly emergency room visits to obtain basic care.

Social connectivity:

- In recent years, Montbello shifted from being a predominantly African American community to a predominantly Latino one.
- The communities face similar challenges regarding a lack of access to health care, fresh food, and community spaces.
- While many notable activities have occurred where diverse groups work together on behalf of the community, a more intentional and cross-cutting approach is needed to create a stronger, more cohesive Montbello.

Summary of Vision

- An ideal location for the creation of affordable housing, additional services, and jobs due to its proximity to I-70 and the RTD commuter rail.
- Housing development in this area would not replace existing housing or cause displacement.
- Investment in the area will mitigate its food desert status.
- Vastly improve connectivity across the I-70 barrier.
- An opportunity exists to create better public transportation linkages for this historically isolated community.



DISCUSSION

