

TO: Denver City Council
FROM: Julie Underdahl, Chair, Denver Planning Board
CC: Tracy Huggins, Executive Director, Denver Urban Renewal Authority
DATE: September 28, 2017
RE: Proposed I-25 and Broadway Urban Redevelopment Plan

Planning Board Finding

The Denver Planning Board is pleased to forward its finding to City Council that the proposed I-25 and Broadway Urban Redevelopment Plan conforms with Denver Comprehensive Plan 2000 and its applicable supplements. This finding is required by the Colorado Revised Statutes, Sec. 31-25-107(2). Planning Board made its finding by unanimous vote at its regular meeting on September 6, 2017.

Background

The proposed Urban Redevelopment Area (URA) is an 85-acre area in the Baker neighborhood bounded by I-25 to the north, Santa Fe Drive to the west, Broadway to the east, and Mississippi Avenue to the south. The area is bisected by freight and light rail tracks and contains the I-25 and Broadway station. The area has numerous zoning districts, including C-MS-12, C-MX-12, C-MX-8, C-MX-16, OS-A, and C-RX-8.



The URA is a large area that encompasses the former Gates Rubber factory site that ceased operations in the early 1990s. In 2003, the city approved the Cherokee Gates General Development Plan (GDP) that included a framework for the future land uses and infrastructure for this area. This GDP was never implemented. A new ownership group purchased the properties in 2014 with new plans that did not align with the GDP. As a result, in 2015, the city coordinated with DURA and others on several items to establish the land use and development framework on the site, including a station area plan, infrastructure master plan, and zoning entitlements.

A conditions study (referred to in state statute as a “blight study”) was completed in July 2017. The study found that there are five blight factors present, constituting the URA as a “blighted area.”

Urban Redevelopment Plan

The proposed Urban Redevelopment Plan (URP) establishes the Urban Redevelopment Area for the I-25 and Broadway area. The general objectives of the plan are to reduce or eliminate blighted conditions and to stimulate the growth and development of the Urban Redevelopment Area and its environs.

The I-25 and Broadway URP sets forth legislative findings, land use goals and objectives, financing methods, and several other items. The land use goals and objectives in the URP primarily defer to those in the I-25 and Broadway Station Area Plan.

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 September 6 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 2000, Blueprint Denver (2002), and the I-25 and Broadway Station Area Plan (2016). 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 September 6, 2017 meeting, the Denver Planning Board finds that the proposed I-25 and Broadway Urban Redevelopment Plan conforms with the Denver Comprehensive Plan and its applicable supplements.

Attachments

1. CPD Planning Board staff report



TO: Denver Planning Board
FROM: Jeff Hirt, Senior City Planner
DATE: August 29, 2017
RE: I-25 and Broadway Urban Redevelopment Plan

Staff Report and Recommendation

Colorado law charges Denver's Planning Board with reviewing an urban renewal plan and making a recommendation as to its conformity with the Comprehensive Plan (Colorado Revised Statutes Title 31 Government Municipal § 31-25-107(2)). Community Planning and Development staff finds that the proposed I-25 and Broadway Urban Redevelopment Plan conforms to Denver's Comprehensive Plan and applicable supplements and recommends that the Planning Board take formal action at its September 6, 2017 meeting to make this finding.

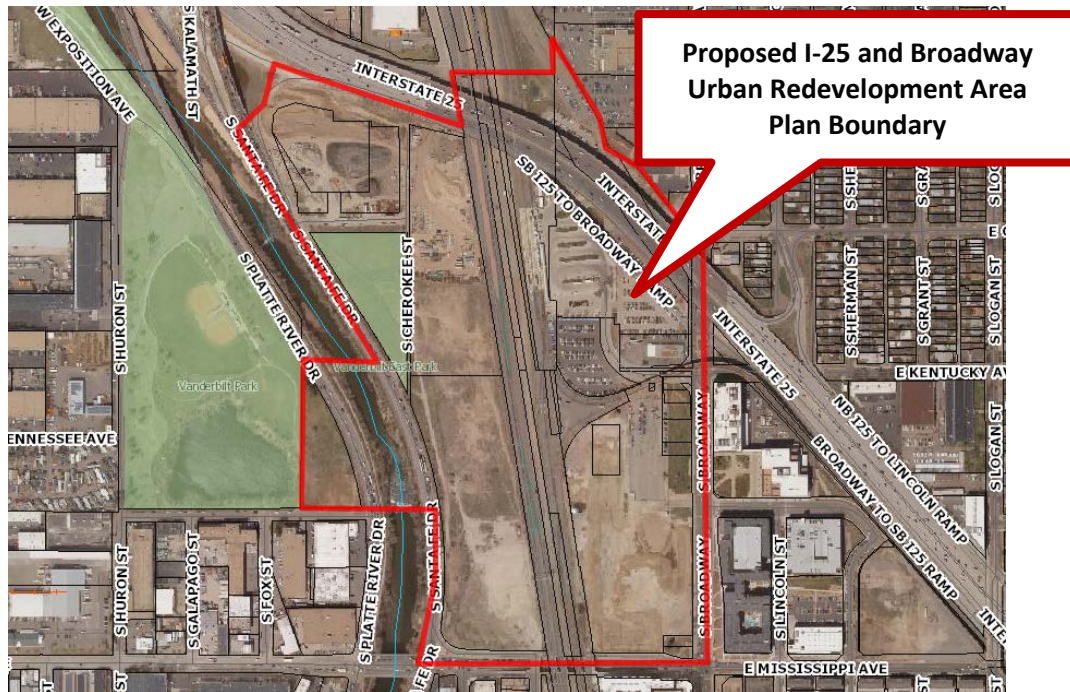
Background

The proposed Urban Redevelopment Area (URA) is an 85-acre area in the Baker neighborhood bounded by I-25 to the north, Santa Fe Drive to the west, Broadway to the east, and Mississippi Avenue to the south. The area is bisected by freight and light rail tracks and contains the I-25 and Broadway station. The area has numerous zoning districts, most predominately C-MX (see map below).

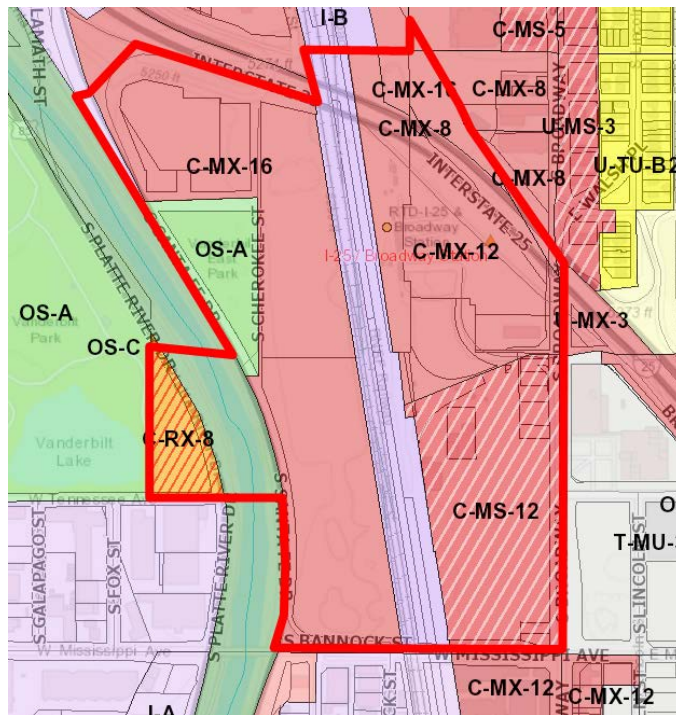
The URA is a large area that encompasses the former Gates Rubber factory site that ceased operations in the early 1990s. In 2003, the city approved the Cherokee Gates General Development Plan that included a framework for the future land uses and infrastructure for this area. This GDP was never implemented. A new ownership group purchased the properties in 2014 with new plans that did not align with the GDP. As a result, in 2015, the city coordinated with DURA and others on several items:

- I-25 and Broadway Station Area Plan (Adopted April 2016): this plan established the overall vision and framework for redevelopment of this area through a city-led public process.
- Infrastructure Master Plan (IMP) (approved May 2016): this plan established the detailed, technical infrastructure plans to implement the vision expressed in the Station Area Plan for the Broadway Station Partners property.
- Urban Design Standards and Guidelines (June 2016): this document established detailed building and urban design standards and guidelines to implement the vision expressed in the Station Area Plan for the Broadway Station Partners property.
- Zoning Entitlements (June 2016): the city initiated several rezonings in the URA area at the close of the station area plan and IMP process that reflect the current zoning map today.
- GDP Repeal (Sept 2016): the city repealed the existing GDP, since the various recently approved policies and regulations for the area made the GDP obsolete.

A conditions study (referred to in state statute as a “blight study”) was completed in July 2017. The study found that there are five blight factors present, constituting the URA as a “blighted area.”



Zoning Map



Site Images

Looking northeast from Santa Fe Drive towards the I-25 overpass



Looking south from I-25



Looking west from Mississippi Avenue showing the rail underpass



Looking northwest from South Platte River Drive and W Tennessee Avenue



Urban Redevelopment Plan

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The I-25 and Broadway URP sets forth legislative findings, land use goals and objectives, financing methods, and several other items. The land use goals and objectives in the URP primarily defer to those in the I-25 and Broadway Station Area Plan.

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. DURA then conveys the Planning Board finding(s) to City Council.

Analysis of the Comprehensive Plan Conformity

CPD staff finds that the proposed Urban Redevelopment Plan conforms to the Denver Comprehensive Plan and its applicable supplements, Blueprint Denver and the I-25 and Broadway Station Area Plan, as described in detail below.

Denver Comprehensive Plan (2000)

CPD staff finds that the I-25 and Broadway Urban Redevelopment Plan conforms to Comprehensive Plan 2000 by furthering several city-wide objectives, policies and actions in the plan, including the following:

- Use public-private partnerships to facilitate development and redevelopment projects that advance the City's goals and objectives. When appropriate, take advantage of the Denver Urban Renewal Authority's powers and experience. (Economic Activity Strategy, 4-C, Page 136).
- Conserve land by promoting infill development within Denver at sites where service and infrastructure are already in place, by designing mixed-use communities and reducing sprawl, and by creating more density at transit nodes (Environmental Sustainability Strategy 2-F, Page 39);
- Provide market-based incentives and tax incentives to encourage sustainable development (Environmental Sustainability Strategy, 3-D, Page 41);
- Encourage quality infill development that is consistent with the character of the surrounding neighborhood; that offers opportunities for increased density and more amenities; and that broadens the variety of compatible uses (Land Use Strategy, 3-B, Page 60);
- Promote standards and incentives for design that enhance the quality and character of the city, including the preservation of significant historic structures and features (Legacies Strategy, 1-B, Page 98); and
- Identify areas in which increased density and new uses are desirable and can be accommodated (Legacies Strategy, 3-A, page 99).

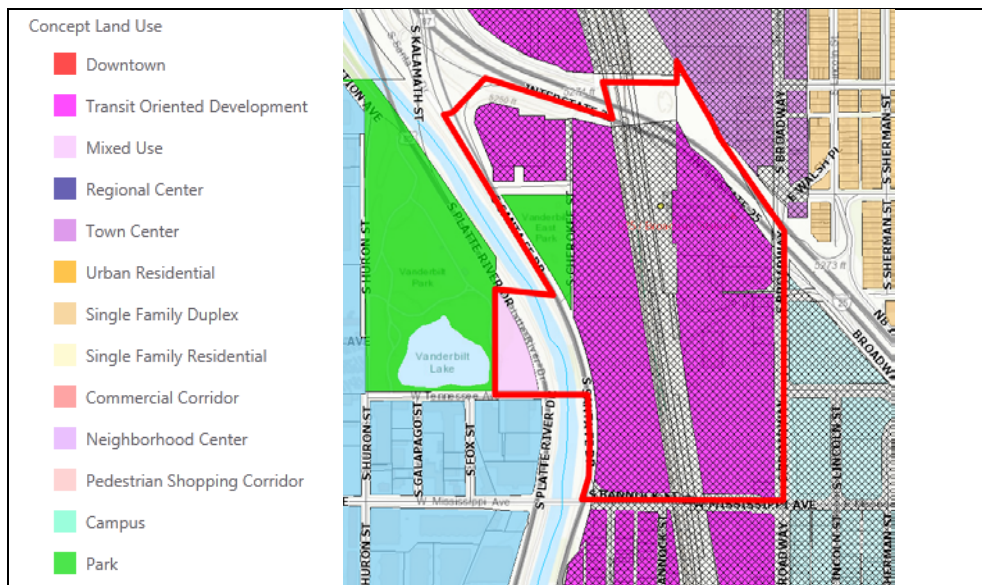
Blueprint Denver (2002)

Blueprint Denver, Denver's integrated land use and transportation plan adopted by City Council in 2002, identifies the Urban Redevelopment Area as being primarily located in Areas of Change (cross hatched area) and with the concept land use categories shown below.

The predominant concept land use is Transit Oriented Development, which is for development sites located at stations along rail lines within a mass transit network. Key attributes of these sites should include a balanced mix of uses, compact development, and a variety of housing types and prices, including affordable housing opportunities. (see page 44)

The two areas that are Areas of Stability have a future concept land use of Parks or Mixed Use. Parks are typically not in Areas of Change. The Mixed Use-designated property is currently a vacant, approximately 2.5 acre parcel between South Platte River Drive and Vanderbilt Park that represents about 3% of the URP area.

Blueprint Denver Concept Land Use Map



Regarding Areas of Change, Blueprint Denver states, “The purpose of Areas of Change is to channel growth to where it will be beneficial and can best improve access to jobs, housing, and services with fewer and shorter auto trips. Areas of Change are parts of the city where most people agree that development or redevelopment would be beneficial” (page 127). It further goes on to state that “a major goal is to increase economic activity in the area to benefit existing residents and businesses, and where necessary, provide the stimulus to redevelop” (page 127).

I-25 and Broadway Station Area Plan (2016)

The URP area encompasses the majority of the defined “Core Station Area”. The purpose of the URP is to catalyze future investment that must be consistent with the station area plan. With this, there are numerous station area plan goals and policies that the URP is consistent with. For example:

- Integrate all modes of transportation safely and efficiently (page 23) and “Reknit the Urban Fabric” (page 30)
- “Promote Urban Center Densities” (page 54)
- “Incorporate High Quality Urban Design” (page 58)
- “Create a new and distinct District” (page 60)



CPD Staff Recommendation

Based on the analysis presented in this staff report, CPD staff recommends that the Planning Board find the proposed I-25 and Broadway Urban Redevelopment Plan to be in conformance with the Denver Comprehensive Plan and its applicable supplements.

Attachments

1. Denver Urban Renewal Authority Planning Board Memo
2. Proposed I-25 and Broadway Urban Redevelopment Plan