



MEMORANDUM

TO: Michael Hancock, Mayor
Denver City Council

FROM: Molly Urbina, Interim Manager, Community Planning and Development

DATE: June 14, 2012

SUBJECT: Cherry Creek Area Plan
Transmittal of Planning Board Approval

As Interim Manager of CPD, I am pleased to submit Planning Board's approval of the final draft of the Cherry Creek Area Plan for your final consideration and adoption as a supplement to the Denver Comprehensive Plan. This memorandum documents Planning Board's finding that the plan meets the three criteria established in the Denver Comprehensive Plan 2000:

1. Consistency with the Denver Comprehensive Plan and applicable supplements
2. Inclusive public process
3. Long-term view

1. Plan Consistency

Denver Comprehensive Plan 2000

Land Use Chapter

Objective 3: Preserve and enhance the individuality, diversity and livability of Denver's neighborhoods and expand the vitality of Denver's business centers

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

3-B—Encourage quality infill development that is consistent with the character of the surrounding neighborhood...

4-B—Ensure that land-use policies and decisions support a variety of mobility choices including light rail, buses, paratransit, walking and bicycling, as well as convenient access for people with disabilities.

Mobility Chapter

Objective 1: Provide Denver's diverse residents, workers and visitors with a choice of transportation modes that are safe and convenient.

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

1-C—Identify areas throughout the city where transportation policies should reflect pedestrian priorities. These include areas such as schools, child-care centers, civic institutions, business centers, shopping districts and parks.

Objective 8: Provide safe and convenient facilities to encourage bicycling and walking for commuting, recreation and other trips.

3-A—Strengthen the 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.

Objective 8: Provide safe and convenient facilities to encourage bicycling and walking for commuting, recreation and other trips.

Denver's Legacies Chapter

9-C—Protect and expand the network of parkways and trails connecting Denver's parks to the regional system.

Housing Chapter

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

Economic Activity Chapter

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. Consider the following strategies as key priorities

- Maintain the Cherry Creek Shopping Center, Cherry Creek North and other nearby areas as the premier retail destination in the Denver metro area and Rocky Mountain region.

Neighborhoods Chapter

Objective 1: Strengthen the positive attributes and distinctive character of each neighborhood to help sustain Denver as a healthy, vital city.

Arts and Culture Chapter

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.

Blueprint Denver

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
- 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 Cherry Creek Area Plan is recommending a change to the Area of Change and Area of Stability designations for Cherry Creek.

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.
- Includes an assessment of the current and future transportation needs of the Speer/Leetsdale travelshed.

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 (SPP) (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 Cherry Creek Area Plan is consistent with the Denver Comprehensive Plan and applicable supplements and policy documents.

2. Inclusive public process

Public Involvement Process

- Denver City Council—interim presentations at Land Use, Transportation and Infrastructure (LUTI) Committee regarding plan process and content; final review and adoption as a supplement to the Comprehensive Plan
- 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
- Plan Leadership Team—small group of Steering Committee members assigned to guide the planning process
- Cherry Creek Steering Committee—A long-established group of 25 individuals representing business and neighborhood interests. The Steering Committee had frequent work sessions and up-dates regarding the plan contents.
- Focus Groups—a series of work sessions held during the summer of 2010 to focus on key issues of urban form and the public realm, mobility and connections and economic and development opportunities to refine the plan contents
- Working Groups—following release of the public draft in March, the Leadership Team recommended that small groups refine the plan recommendations for
 - Transit
 - Alameda Parkway
 - Harrison/Colorado
 - Cherry Creek Shopping Center
 - Cherry Creek North Urban Form
- RNOs—the Planning Team made periodic presentations to the affected RNOs including Cherry Creek East, Cherry Creek North, Capitol Hill United Neighbors, and Country Club
- General Public
 - Public Meetings
 - Online Surveys
 - Individual Correspondence
 - [Denvergov.org/CherryCreek](http://denvergov.org/CherryCreek)

Over 1000 people participated in the planning process over the course of the two-year plus process.

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

3. Long-term view

The Cherry Creek Area has been changing rapidly and therefore has required considerable planning attention with a new plan every 10 to 12 years. The planning horizon for the 2012 Plan is expected to be 20 years or more, reflecting the maturing character of Cherry Creek's neighborhoods and mixed use areas.

Finding: the plan has an appropriate long term perspective.

Denver Planning Board Approval

The Planning Board held an information item regarding the Cherry Creek Area Plan on May 16, 2012, and a public hearing on June 6, 2012. The public hearing included the staff recommendation to approve the plan with the condition that the document be edited for clarity and correctness, that the recommendations for improving the Colorado-Harrison blocks be clarified, and that the Cherry Creek North urban form goals be expanded, specifically:

- References to “mixed-use areas of change” were modified to “areas of change” to remove any inference that the Harrison-Colorado blocks would become mixed-use.
- The Cherry Creek North urban form goal statements on p. 61-62 provide expanded language to better reflect the intent of the goals stated in the Urban Form White Paper.
- “Alameda Triangle” to be renamed “Cherry Creek Triangle”

Public testimony included five letters and 18 speakers summarized below:

Letters:

1. Cherry Creek Steering Committee, June 4, 2012
The Steering Committee supports the approval of the plan with two conditions: Kenneth Ho Economic Study and Urban Form Working Group White Paper be adopted as “reference appendices” and Alameda Triangle be renamed Cherry Creek Triangle.
2. Cherry Creek East Association, June 5, 2012
Support the approval of the plan and support the Steering Committee resolutions
3. CHUN, June 5, 2012
Supports the plan with the conditions that the building heights be removed from the plan, that the Urban Form White Paper be attached to the plan as a supporting document and used in subsequent zoning deliberations. CHUN also urges that inclusionary housing be included in the plan vision.
4. Toni Saiber to Jeanne Robb, May 7, 2012
Concern about height and density being the appropriate tools for revitalizing Cherry Creek North
5. Michelle and Michael Oakes to Jeanne Robb (no date)
Oppose increased height and density in Cherry Creek North

Speakers:

1. Jeff Bernard-166 Jackson-support
2. Brad Cameron-1200 Humboldt-n/a
3. Paul Ramsey-2414 E. 3rd Ave.-n/a
4. Pat Dawe (CCNNA)-2805 E. 4th Ave.- support
5. Brooks Waldman (CCE)-3329 E. Bayaud-support
6. Chris Dunn (CCN BID)-134 Monroe-support
7. Bob Flynn (CCN BID)-1400 Wewatta-support
8. Joe Halpern-519 Ogden-oppose
9. Caroline Schomp (CHUN)-1166 Gaylord-n/a
10. Mary Ewing-720 Gilpin-oppose
11. Wayne New (CCNNA)-443 Adams-support
12. Rich McClintock (Transportation Solutions)-280 Columbine #360-support
13. Christine DesEnfants (Cherry Creek Chamber)-100 Fillmore #100-n/a
14. Jonathan Saiber-255 Clayton-support
15. Trish Palamara (Cherry Creek Steering Committee)-209 S. Jackson-support
16. John Sheridan-240 Milwaukee-support
17. William Murane (Country Club Historic Neighborhood)-181 High-oppose
18. Dave Hadsell-161 Detroit-support

A number of the speakers conditioned their support on including the “Cherry Creek Shopping District Development Study” (KHO Consulting, 2012) and the “Cherry Creek North Urban Form Study” White Paper (May 2012) as “reference appendices”.

Following the public testimony, Planning Board unanimously (6-0) voted in favor of the motion to approve the Cherry Creek Area Plan with the condition that the document be edited for clarity and correctness, that the recommendations for improving the Colorado-Harrison blocks be clarified, that the Cherry Creek North urban form goals be expanded, and that Alameda Triangle be renamed the Cherry Creek Triangle.

Transmittal of Planning Board Approval

The Cherry Creek Area Plan is hereby transmitted to the Mayor and City Council with the approval of the Denver Planning Board. The Final Draft of the plan incorporates the approved changes. The “Cherry Creek Shopping District Development Study” (KHO Consulting, 2012) and the “Cherry Creek North Urban Form Study” White Paper (May 2012) are included as reference appendices. Although not adopted as part of the Plan, these appendices will provide a solid and informative basis to guide future implementation actions.