



**DENVER**  
THE MILE HIGH CITY

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**TO:** Carla Madison, Chairperson, Blueprint Denver Committee  
**FROM:** Deirdre M. Oss, AICP, Senior City Planner  
**DATE:** June 16, 2010  
**RE:** **Zoning Map Amendment Application #2009I-00042**  
**Odyssey Family Housing - 4725 High Street**

**I. Scope of Rezoning**

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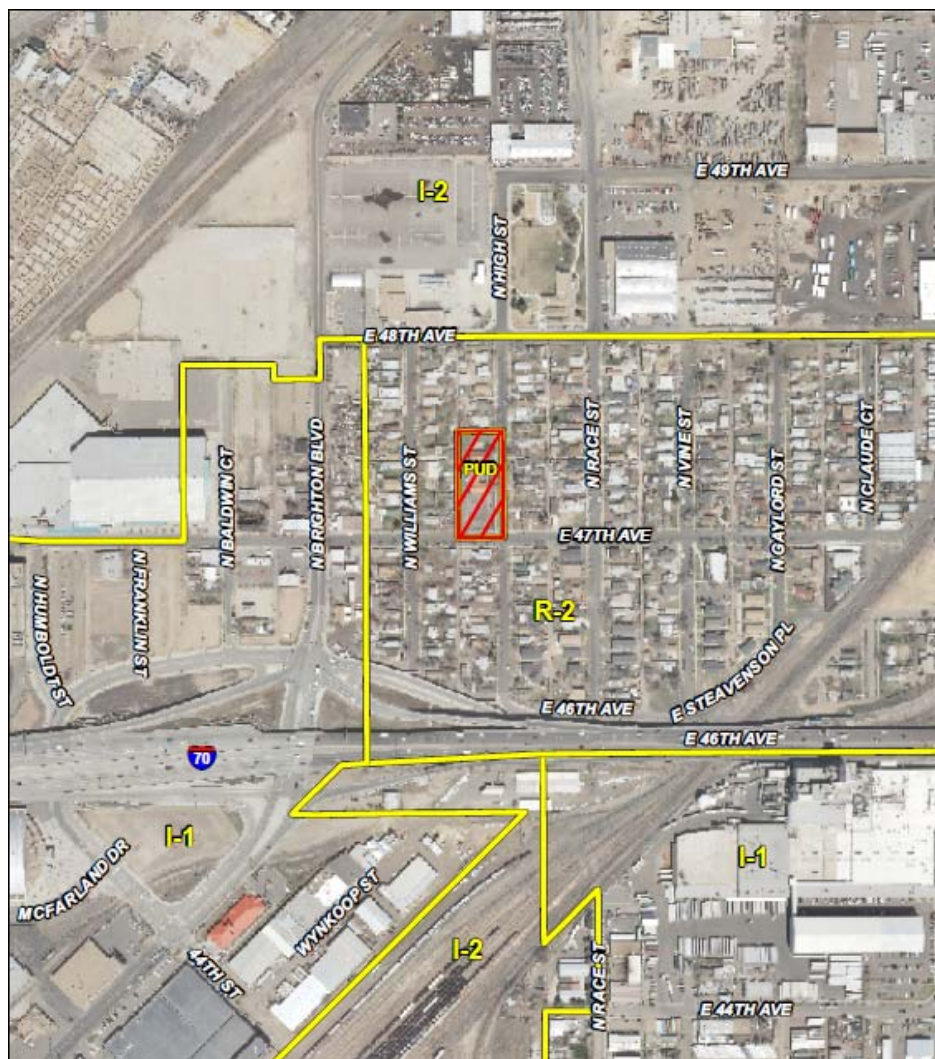
Application:	<b>Elyria School PUD – 4725 High Street</b>
Address:	4725 High Street
Neighborhood/Council Dist.:	Elyria Swansea (Council District #9)
RNO's:	Elyria Swansea/ Globeville Business Association; Inter-Neighborhood Cooperation; Ballpark Neighborhood Association; Neighborhood Congress
Area of Property:	37,418 SF/.85 acres
Current Zoning:	PUD 250
Proposed Zoning:	<b>PUD</b>
Applicants/Owners:	Jim Mercado
Contact Person:	Blake Lasley

**II. Summary of Proposal**

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**Vicinity Description**

The subject property is located in the Elyria Swansea neighborhood one block north of I-70 and five blocks west of the Union Pacific Railroad corridor. The property is home to the designated historic landmark Elyria Elementary School, a 6,000 SF structure built in 1924. The school closed in the 1980s but property owners received special PUD zoning to open the El Centro Su Teatro in 1989. One of the oldest Chicano theatre companies in the country, Su Teatro originally opened on Denver's west side but relocated to Elyria upon the opening of Auraria Campus. Over the years, the theatre has become the heart of the neighborhood, hosting community theatre classes, events and performances. Su Teatro recently found a new home at the Denver Civic Theatre, with its first play presented in March 2010.



### **A View of Current Conditions**

The Elyria school building is approximately 6,000 SF on a 37,000 SF property surrounded on all sides by lower density residential development zoned R-2. Housing was predominantly built between the late 1800's and 1950's. The neighborhood is considered a stable residential area, with older housing stock making up a majority of the residential development. The property has always been home to nonresidential land uses that generated both daytime and nighttime traffic during morning and evening peak hours. Current residential density is approximately 14 dwelling units per acre. Future zoning of the surrounding residential development as part of the New Code is proposed as E-TU-B, a two-unit residential district similar in density to the current R-2 zoning.

Setbacks for structures along both sides of the High Street contain variations between 7-20 feet. The adjacent residential structure to the north is built on the property line.



*From left to right, adjacent property to the east and north*

**Proposal**

The applicant, James Mercado, proposes to rezone the property from PUD 250 to PUD in order to reutilize the existing historic structure for offices and services related to housing for women veterans and their children. The Empowerment Program, Inc, a 20 year old non-profit organization specializing in womens issues, will own and operate a 34,700 SF structure housing the 36-unit residential component. The proposed project has been approved by the Denver Landmark Commission to allow a new structural addition that connects the school to the residential component.

***PUD Application Highlights***

<b>PUD Proposal</b>	
<b>Allowable Uses:</b>	36 multifamily apartments within a 34,700 SF three-story structure in addition to 6,300 SF related office and community services Total: 41,000 SF
<b>Maximum density</b>	42 dwelling units per acre
<b>Minimum landscape area</b>	The site will contain 34.3 percent landscaped and/or permeable surface
<b>Parking</b>	28 spaces located on the north side of the existing structure
<b>Setbacks And Building Separation</b>	(Side) North: 5' (Side) South: 5' (Front) East: 10' (Rear) West: 5'  Minimum Spacing Between Buildings = 15 feet
<b>Maximum building height</b>	45'

### III. Legal Justification for Rezoning

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#### Change of Conditions

The existing structure, built originally as an elementary school in 1924 was closed to that use in 1981. Su Teatro Theatre Company opened in 1989 and after 20 successful years opened a new venue on Santa Fe Drive. The site is currently vacated. As explained in the application, the need for veteran housing has soared since 2001. Female veterans are becoming homeless at a faster rate than men, largely due to the struggling economy, unemployment, and the outfall of post traumatic stress disorders<sup>1</sup>. Reuse of the subject property is important to maintaining neighborhood stability.

### IV. Zoning Context

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	Zoning	Existing Land Use	Blueprint Denver-River North Plan
<b>Site</b>	PUD 250	Vacated school and performance/theatre space	Area of Stability/Single Family Residential
<b>North</b>	R-2	Single Family	Area of Stability/Single Family Residential
<b>South</b>	R-2	Street/Single family	Area of Stability/Single Family Residential
<b>East</b>	R-2	Street/ Single Family	Area of Stability/Single Family Residential
<b>West</b>	R-2	Alley/ Single Family	Area of Stability/Single Family Residential

### V. Summary of Legal Notice and Public Process

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The property was legally posted for a period of 15 days announcing the Denver Planning Board public meeting, and written notification of the hearing has been sent to all affected registered neighborhood organizations for the Blueprint Denver Committee meeting.

### VI. Summary of Agency Referral Responses

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- Assessor No Comment.
- Asset Management Approved – No Comment.
- Denver Public Schools No Comment.

<sup>1</sup>CNN: <http://www.cnn.com/2009/LIVING/09/25/homeless.veterans/>

- Denver Landmark: Approved by Commission-comments attached.
- Fire No Comment.
- Parks & Recreation/Forestry No Comment.
- Development Review Review alley ROW-this has been completed.
- Public Works-DES – Surveyor Approved.
- Site Engineering – Transportation Approved.
- Site Engineering – Wastewater Approved.

## **VII. Community Response**

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Odyssey Housing assembled an advisory committee early in the process, in addition to working with local neighborhood groups to gain support for the proposal. The Elyria Neighborhood Association and Elyria/Swansea/Globeville Business Association provided a positive response, although no formal vote was taken by the registered neighborhood groups. The Elyria Neighborhood Association group also cited the need for the future development to make room for community needs when appropriate, including assistance in finding a proper location for an accessible school in the neighborhood. The Association's letter is referenced in the application.

## **VIII. Criteria for Review**

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The criteria for review of this rezoning application includes analysis of whether the proposed PUD conforms to City plans and zoning standards. Applicable plans are as follows:

- *Denver Comprehensive Plan 2000*
- *Blueprint Denver*
- *Swansea/Elyria Neighborhood Plan*
- *Elyria/Swansea Neighborhood Assessment*
- *Denver Zoning Code*

### ***Denver Comprehensive Plan 2000***

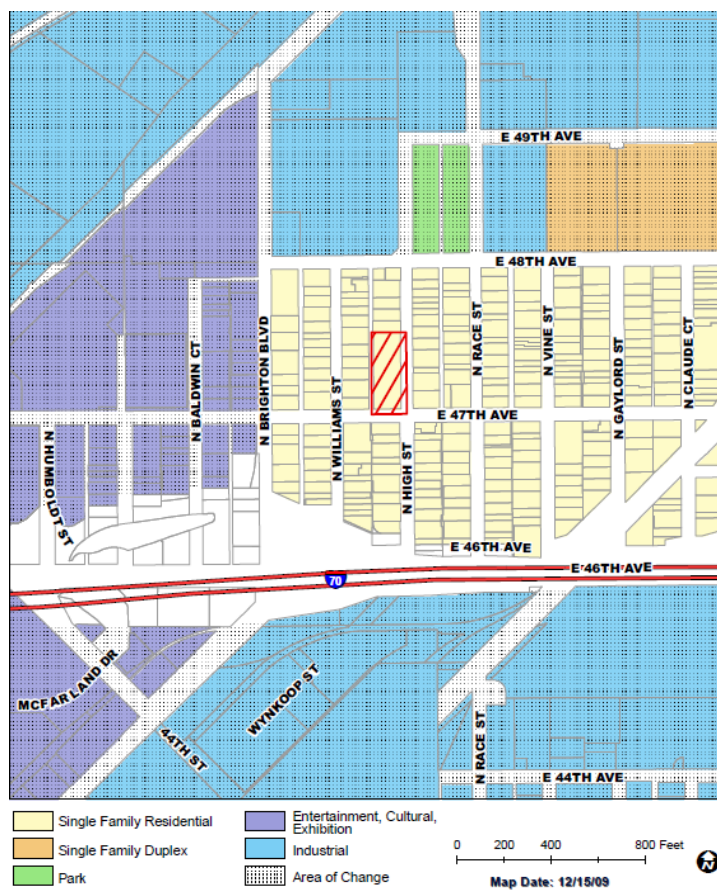
The proposal is consistent with and positively addresses many Denver Comprehensive Plan strategies, including:

- Environmental Sustainability chapter, Strategy 2F is to *Conserve Land by promoting infill development within Denver at sites where services and infrastructure are already in place; designing mixed use communities and reducing sprawl so that residents can live, work and play within their own neighborhoods; and creating more density at transit nodes* (p. 39). This proposal clearly allows the opportunity for reuse of an existing structure and proposes development on vacant land.
- Land Use chapter, Strategy 1B states that an important goal is to *"maintain the integrity of the street grid..."* This development will work within the confines of the existing street grid.
- Land Use chapter, Strategy 4B to *"Ensure that land-use policies and decisions support a variety of mobility choices including...walking and bicycling, as well as convenient access for people with disabilities."* Due to the specific type of housing proposed for this site, the applicant group is not only locating proximate to existing bus routes but will also be providing pooled transportation options for veterans seeking off site community services.

- Housing Objective 2 and Strategies 2D, 2F to encourage infill housing and exploration of additional development opportunities to expand housing along with commercial and retail projects. This project expands housing choice to an underserved group of citizens returning from military duty. In addition, the existing Elyria School will be used for services related to this special population to support the housing objective.

### **Blueprint Denver**

Blueprint Denver, the City's Land Use and Transportation Plan, identifies the property as being within an Area of Stability with a recommendation for Single Family Residential development. Single Family Residential development is considered to incorporate predominately single family housing. Through the update to the Denver Zoning Code, this neighborhood worked through existing conditions, current zoning, and desired land use questions to arrive at a future two-unit zoning for the area, reinforcing the need for additional infill to maintain neighborhood stability. The current PUD was designed to allow a nonresidential use for several years.



The proposed PUD requests returning a portion of the site to residential, though the requested density is higher than a typical two-unit neighborhood. The density is a function of the specialized community housing environment needed to support returning female veterans. Given the extensive neighborhood outreach, specialized product and detailed PUD information, CPD supports this rezoning to incorporate new residential development into the site.

### **Elyria Neighborhood Plan and Elyria Neighborhood Assessment**

The Elyria Neighborhood Plan adopted in February 1983 identifies this property within Subarea B, a stable, primarily single-family residential neighborhood. The plan supports reinforcing the neighborhood character with residential infill development but points to challenges for new residential in this neighborhood surrounded by industrial uses proximate to I-70.

The Elyria Neighborhood Assessment was completed in 2003, pointing to similar characteristics of stable residential development amidst industrial challenges that surround the Elyria neighborhood. While the assessment does not provide future land use recommendations, it does identify the opportunities to preserve Elyria's affordable housing stock, increased buffering from nonresidential uses, and encouragement for residential infill and redevelopment to be pursued.

### **Denver Zoning Code**

Per Chapter 59-512, PUD Description, the PUD district is an alternative to conventional land use regulations, combining use, density and site plan considerations into a single process. The PUD district is intended to encourage diversification and flexibility in site design. In addition to creating a district that meets the goals of the Comprehensive Plan and is done in scale with surrounding uses, a PUD is also initiated to provide for innovative housing opportunities that result in adequate housing for varying income levels.

The proposed PUD establishes a new housing infill use on the property and allows reuse of an existing historic landmark. Through extensive outreach and analysis with the neighborhood, Denver Landmark Commission, and City staff, the applicant proposes a PUD district plan that serves a unique population and meets goals of the City's housing objectives. The PUD also provides a detailed district plan with architecture approved by the Landmark Commission. This, in turn, offers predictability to the neighborhood regarding future use and building form.

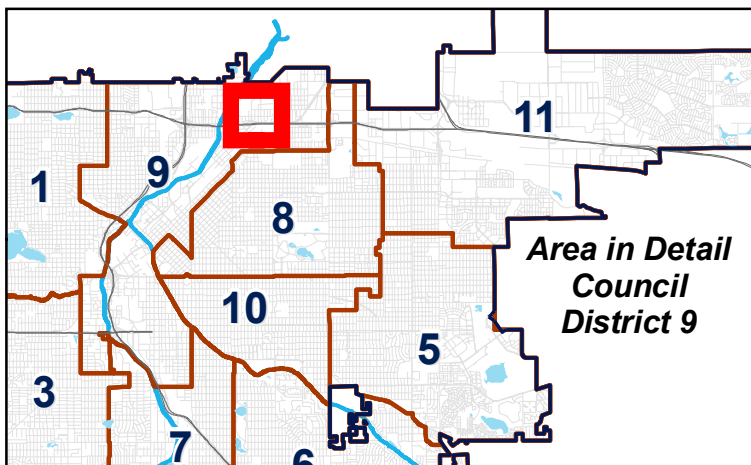
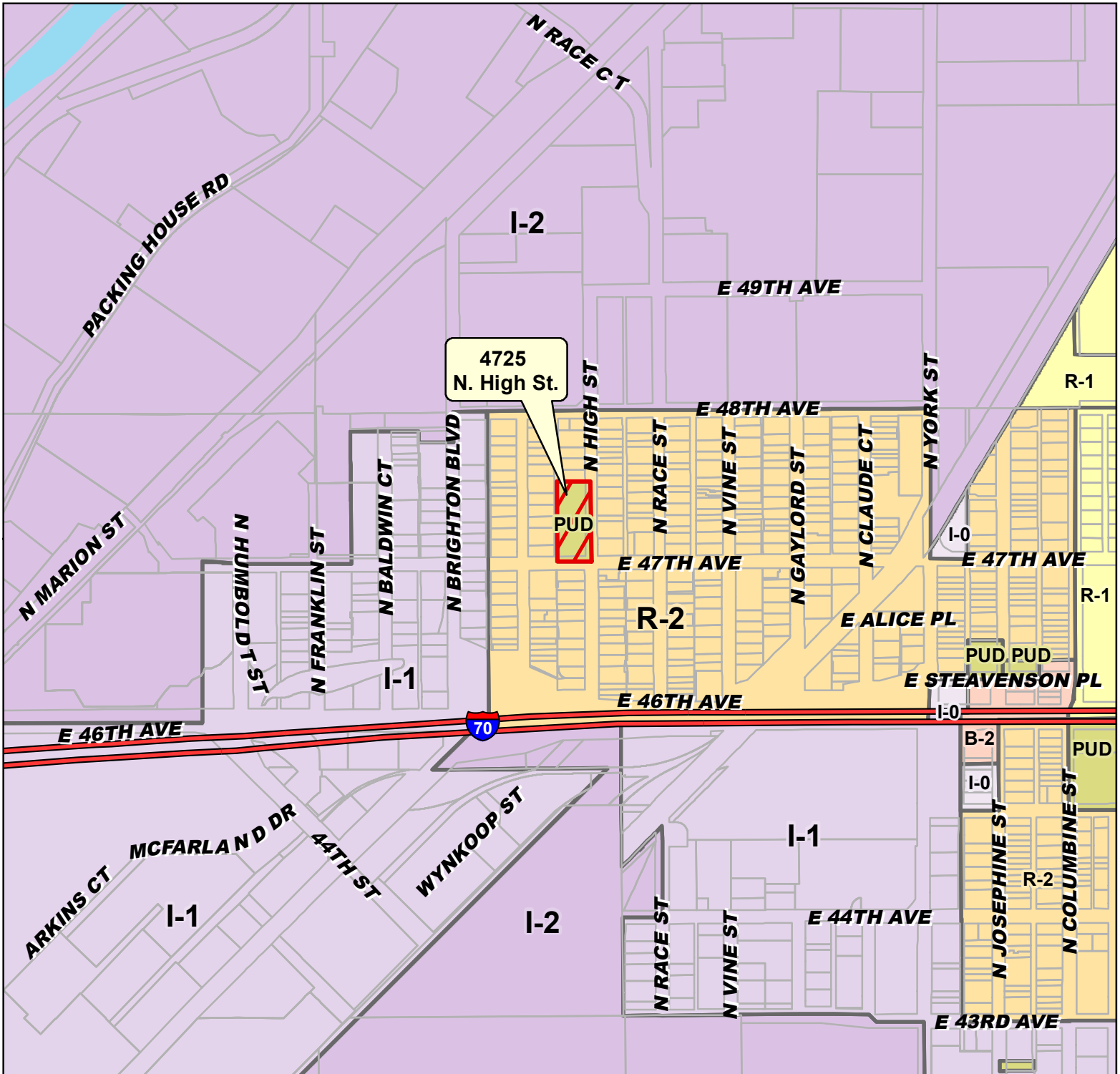
## **XI. STAFF RECOMMENDATION AND PLANNING BOARD RECOMMENDATION**

Staff finds the proposed PUD meets the intent of a PUD. While the housing proposed is higher density than surrounding residential, the current and future zoning for the neighborhood consists of a two-unit multifamily district to encourage additional development over time. The project's specific housing objectives are compliant with the City's Comprehensive Plan, and the PUD continues to preserve a neighborhood landmark in the Elyria School building. In addition, the applicant did extensive research to understand the neighborhood and share their detailed plans for development of the site as required for a unique PUD rezoning application.

Planning Board approved the proposed PUD unanimously on June 16, 2010. The motion also included two amendments: a recommendation to incorporate a resolution signed by the board of Su Teatro, the listed owner, as part of the Power of Attorney; and a motion to include additional community-related uses from Chapter 59 that appropriately represent potential additional community-related uses.

**Staff recommends Approval for Application 2009I-00042 at 4725 High Street.**

# Pending Zone Map Amendment #2009I-00042



Application #2009I-00042  
 Location: 4725 N. High St.

 Proposed Rezoning  
 From: PUD #250  
 To: PUD



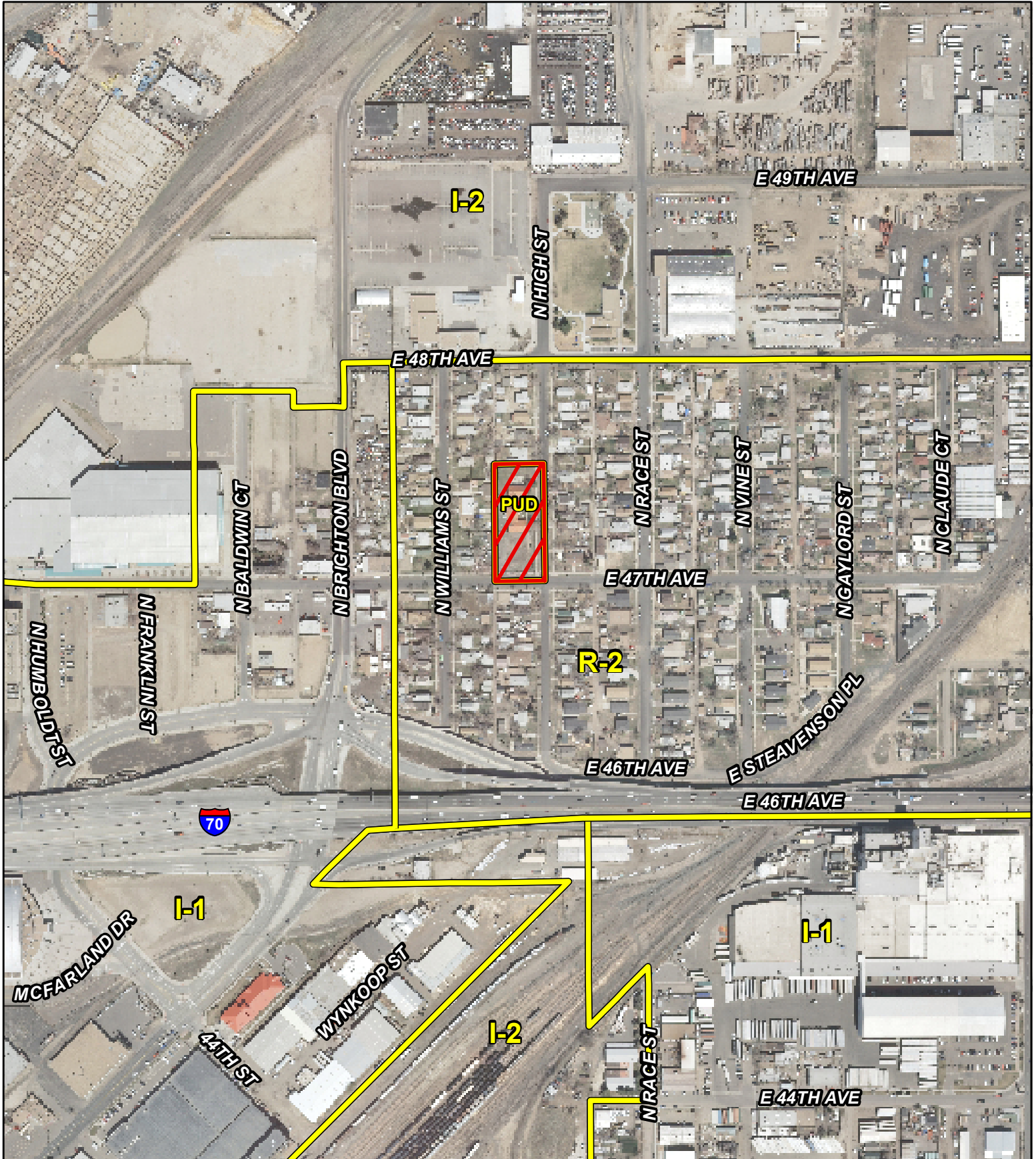
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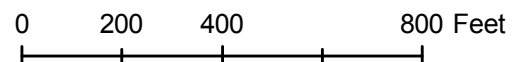


# Pending Zone Map Amendment - Aerial & Zoning Overlay

 Application #2009I-00042



Aerial Photo: April 2008  
Community Planning and Development

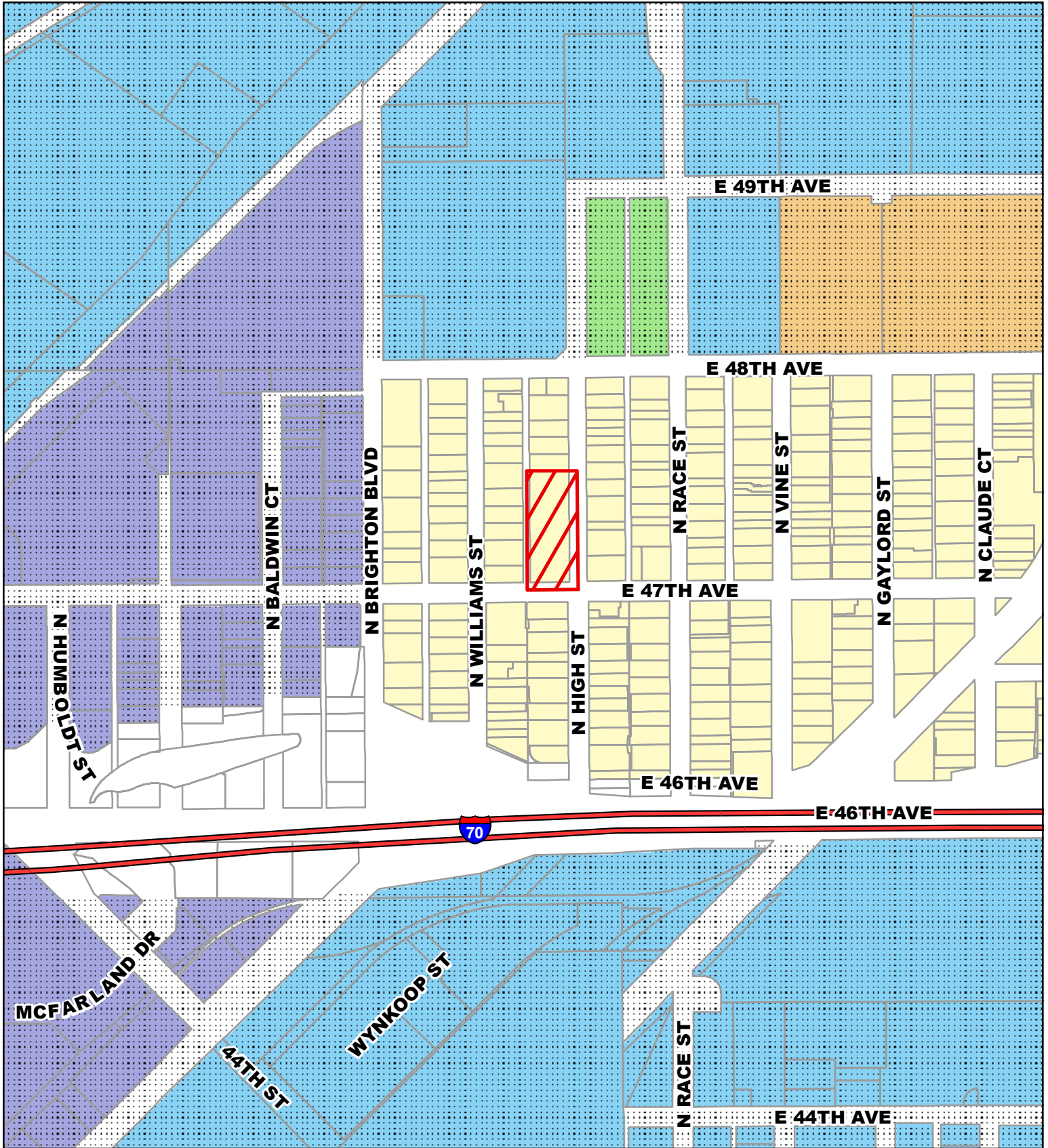








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# Pending Zone Map Amendment - Blueprint Denver Overlay

 Application #2009I-00042



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|--|---|
|  Single Family Residential |  Entertainment, Cultural, Exhibition |
|  Single Family Duplex      |  Industrial                          |
|  Park                      |  Area of Change                      |

0 200 400 800 Feet

Map Date: 12/15/09

