
Single Unit Development in Higher Density Zone Districts

BUDGET & POLICE COMMITTEE | MARCH 23, 2026

Council Members Flynn and Parady



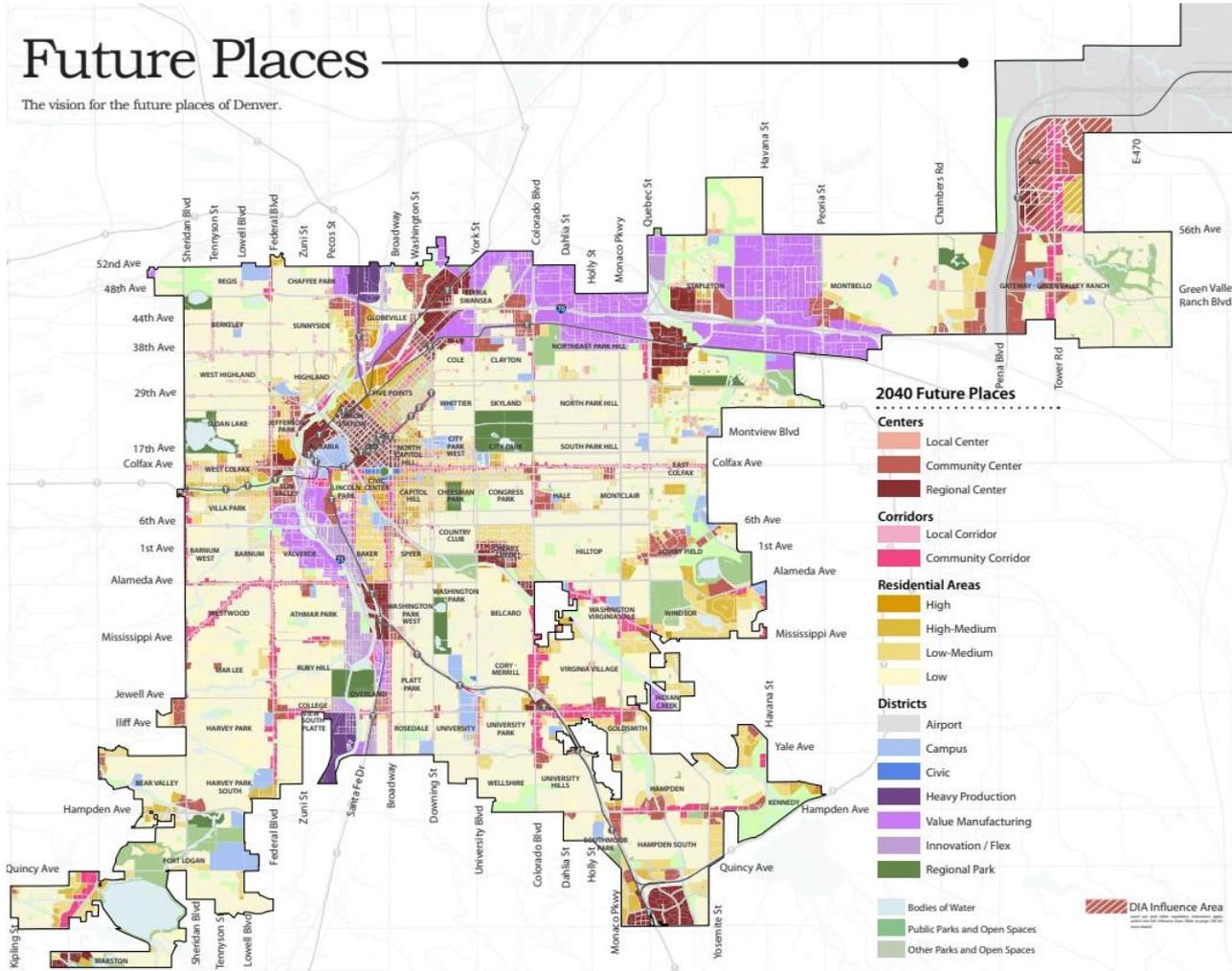
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Overview

- Blueprint Denver identified the need to provide for 90,000 new households by 2040
- 80% of that growth was to occur in Regional Centers, Community Centers and Corridors, High and High Medium residential areas in Downtown and Urban Center contexts, greenfield residential areas and Districts
- 20% of that growth was to occur in “All other areas of the city,” which is comprised of about 54% of the city excluding DIA



Overview continued



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Overview continued

Many residential areas zoned for higher density allow construction of new single-family units as use-by-right

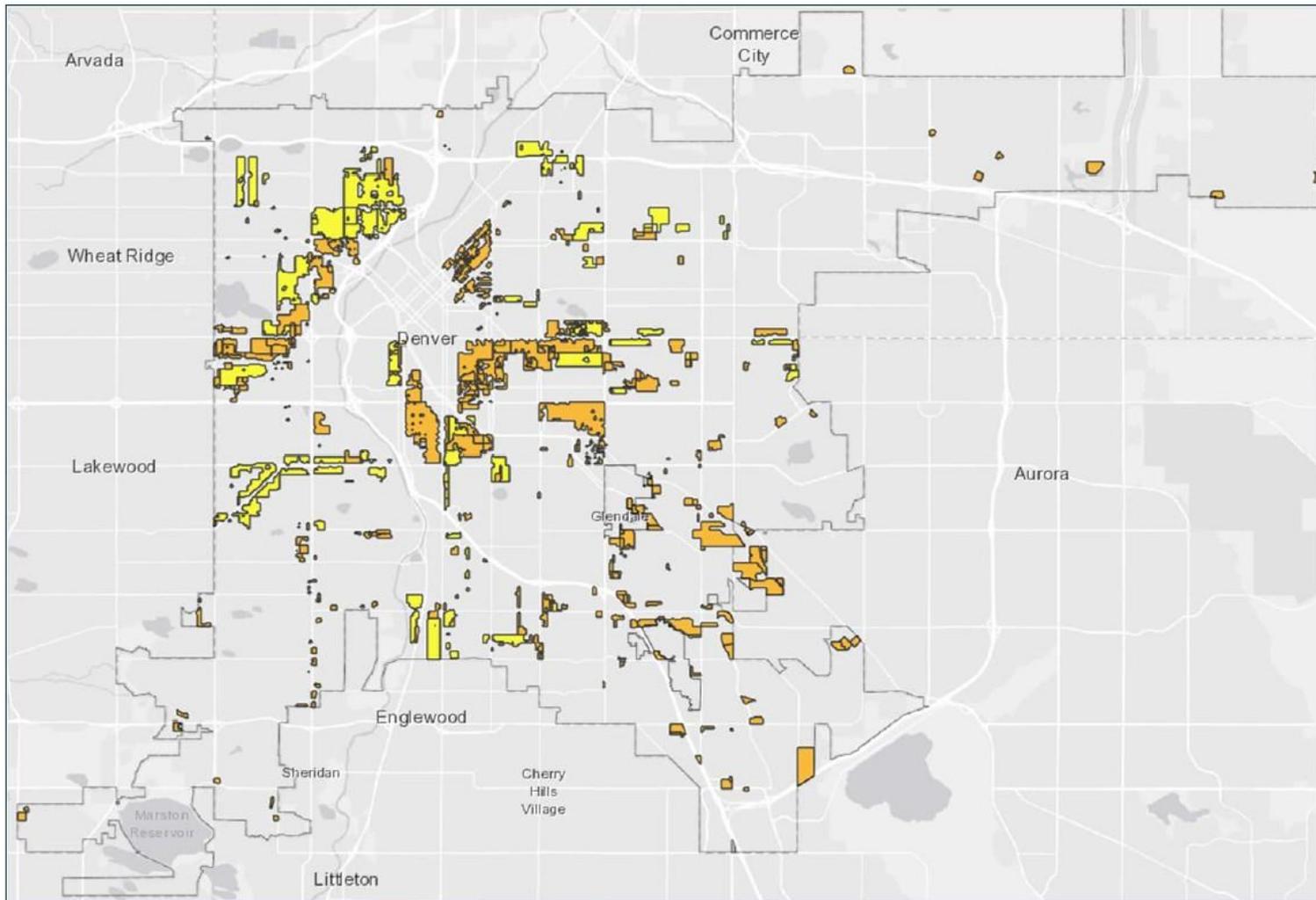
Most of these areas already contain numerous single-family homes

Of 28,000 dwelling units built in Denver since 2019:

- 3,374 single unit homes citywide (~12% of total units built)
- 247 were built in TU, RH, and MU districts (7.3% of all new single unit dwellings and ~0.8% of all new units)
- 150 single unit homes were built in TU districts
- 97 single unit homes were built in RH and MU districts



TU, RH and MU zones



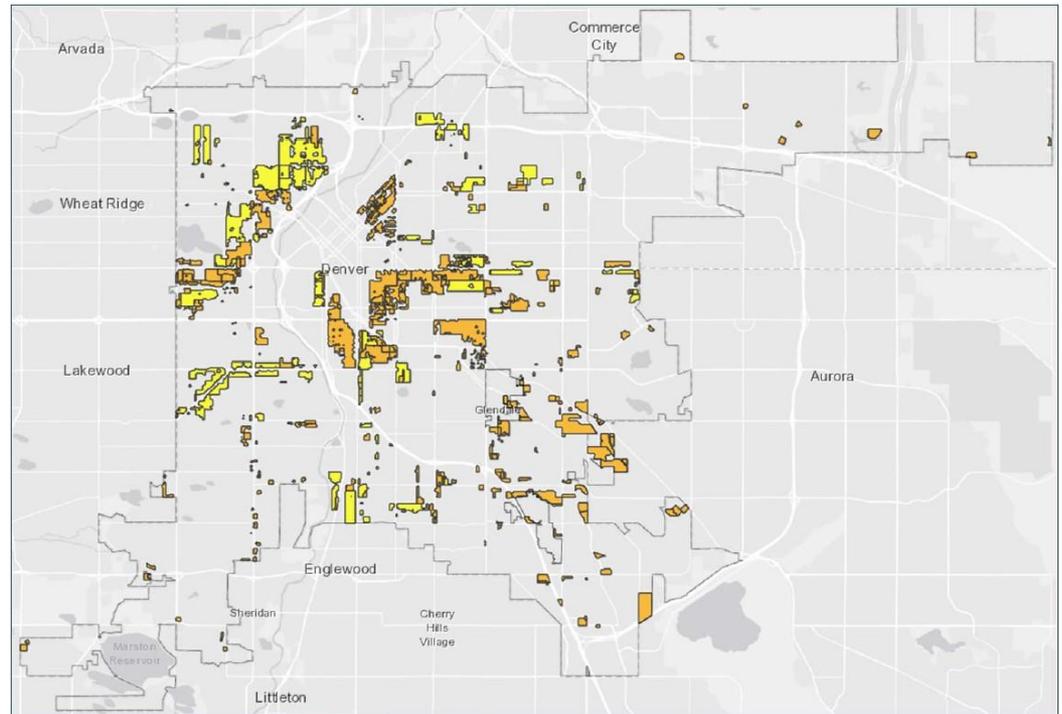
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Land area

Zone District	Percentage of City by Land Area
Multi-Unit (MU)	2.18%
Row House (RH)	1.67%
Two-Unit (TU)	3.25%

MU, RH and TU cover about 7.1% of Denver's land area.

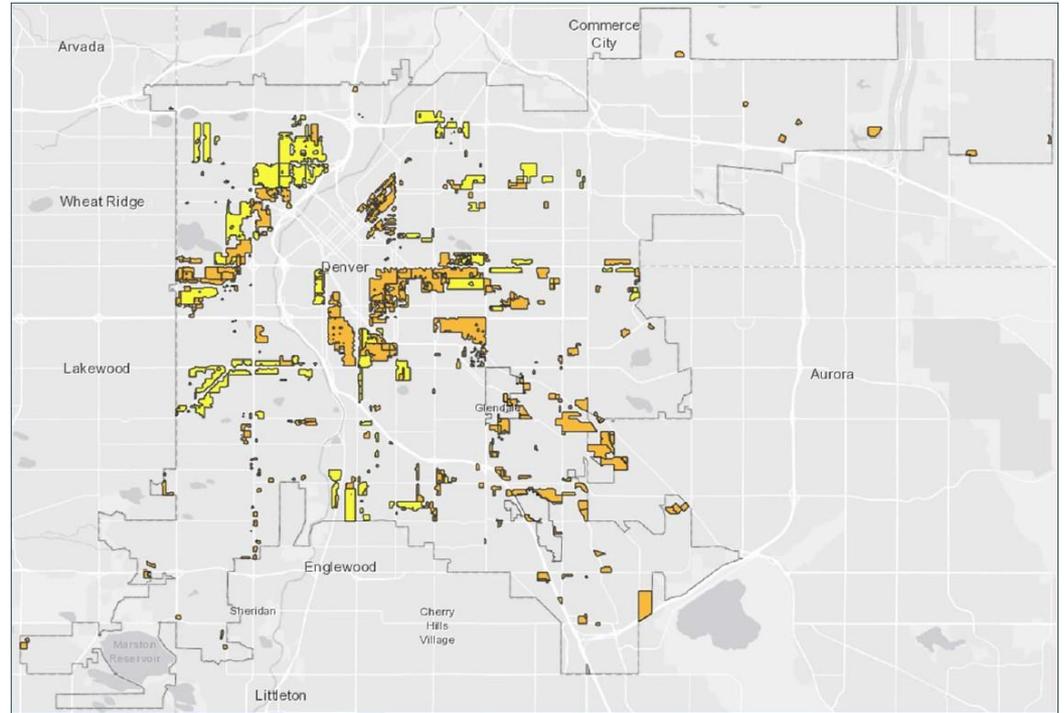
*excludes airport zoning



Zone district purpose and mapping

Zone District	Parcels with single-unit uses
TU (Two-Unit)	57.11%
RH (Row House)	39.86%
MU (Multi-Unit)	16.26%

- Most of these areas were mapped over existing development.
- These districts allow a variety of housing types since they were often mapped in areas with a variety of existing housing.



Key questions

Should Denver consider either a limit or a prohibition on new single unit dwellings in areas where the city has planned and zoned for higher density?

Two approaches:

- Remove SU as a permitted use in higher density zones
- Keep SU as a permitted use but disallow new SU dwellings



Approach 1

Remove SU as a permitted use

- This would prevent any new single-unit home in TU, RH and MU
- However, this would make existing homes nonconforming
- This would create issues for homeowners who want to build additions, rebuild or renovate
- This often makes property difficult to finance



Approach 2

Disallow new SU structures but keep SU as a permitted use

- Prevents new single unit dwellings, but existing homes considered conforming
- Precedent in the code where existing SU dwellings are allowed to remain in industrial districts
- Renovation or addition to an existing SU that removed 40% or more of exterior walls would be considered a new unit



Next steps

- Collaborate with CPD, both within and outside of the Unlocking Housing Choices project, to understand implementation challenges and opportunities
- Gather additional data
- Build a public engagement plan



Questions and Discussion



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