



Denver Planning Board
Joel Noble, Chair

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TO: Denver City Council
FROM: Denver Planning Board
CC: Tracy Huggins, Executive Director, Denver Urban Renewal Authority
DATE: October 24, 2022
RE: Proposed 27th & Larimer Urban Redevelopment Plan

Planning Board Finding

The Denver Planning Board is pleased to forward its finding to City Council that the proposed 27th & Larimer Urban Redevelopment Plan conforms with Denver's adopted Comprehensive Plan and its applicable supplements. This finding is required by the Colorado Revised Statutes, Sec. 31-25-107(2). Planning Board made its finding by a vote of 10 to 0 in favor of the proposal at its regular meeting on October 19, 2022.

Background

The Urban Redevelopment Area (URA) is an approximately 4.85-acre area located in the Five Points statistical neighborhood. It covers an entire city block bounded by Larimer Street, 27th Street, Lawrence Street and 26th Street, and a smaller area along Larimer Street south of 26th Street. The Urban Redevelopment Area contains a range of 1- to 3-story structures, including the local offices, a warehouse and food distribution facility owned by Volunteers of America, a VA-based low-income housing and services provider. VOA will retain its offices at the site but plans to relocate its other activities to larger facilities outside the Urban Redevelopment Area. Most other properties within the URA boundaries contain vacant structures, surface parking or are undeveloped.

The subject area is zoned PUD-G 28, a Planned Unit Development District based on the Denver Zoning Code's Urban Center Mixed Use (C-MX-5, C-MX-8) and General Urban Residential Mixed Use (G-RX-5) zone districts with customized regulations for building height, setbacks, upper story setbacks and other standards. The variations granted by the PUD address the site's location along a Blueprint Denver Community Corridor; its role as an important pedestrian-oriented commercial node; its proximity to a lower scale historic residential area; and the integration of open space and existing structures into future redevelopment. The PUD also requires preservation of the building façade of the currently vacant Joe's Liquor.

The surrounding area includes a mix of uses with primarily retail and commercial activity across and along Larimer Street and 27th Street, and primarily residential uses across from the site along Lawrence Street and 26th Street.

A conditions study (referred to in state statute as a "blight study") was conducted in December 2021. The study found that there are four blight factors present, constituting the proposed URA as a "blighted area."

Urban Redevelopment Plan

The proposed Urban Redevelopment Plan (URP) establishes the Urban Redevelopment Area for the 27th and Larimer site. The Urban Redevelopment Plan is intended to promote the following (or any combination of the following) local objectives respecting appropriate land uses:

1. To eliminate the present factors which contribute to the blight in the Urban Redevelopment Area. Such blighting factors are detrimental to the community and limit the development potential of the surrounding area.
2. To renew and improve the character and environment of the Urban Redevelopment Area and its surroundings by preventing or ameliorating economic, physical and environmental deterioration.
3. To improve access to healthy transportation options, healthy foods, and existing and new parks.
4. To promote a diverse, sustainable neighborhood economy, including mixed use and commercial development opportunities within the Urban Redevelopment Area.
5. To encourage land use patterns within the Urban Redevelopment Area and its environs that result in a more environmentally sustainable city.
6. To encourage commercial, residential and retail development and redevelopment that is socially and economically inclusive and from which the Urban Redevelopment Area and its environs can draw economic strength.
7. To assist the City in cultivating complete and inclusive neighborhoods.
8. To more effectively use underdeveloped land within the Urban Redevelopment Area.
9. To promote a diverse mix of attainable housing options.
10. To promote a diverse, sustainable neighborhood economy, including mixed use and commercial development opportunities within the Urban Redevelopment Area.
11. To encourage land use patterns within the Urban Redevelopment Area and its environs where pedestrians are safe and welcome.
12. To improve the economy of the City by stabilizing and upgrading property values.
13. Encourage high and moderate density development where appropriate.
14. To achieve goals as outlined in adopted City Plans.

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 October 19, Planning Board meeting CPD staff recommended that the proposed Urban Redevelopment Plan conforms with the adopted plans that apply to the area, including Comprehensive Plan 2040, Blueprint Denver (2019), and the Northeast Downtown Neighborhoods Plan. 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 October 19, 2022, meeting, the Denver Planning Board finds that the proposed 27th and Larimer Urban Redevelopment Plan conforms with Denver's adopted Comprehensive Plan and its applicable supplements.

Attachments

1. CPD Planning Board staff report