



DENVER
THE MILE HIGH CITY

Community Planning and Development
Planning Services
Plan Implementation

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TO: Denver City Council
Land Use, Transportation and Infrastructure Committee
FROM: Rocky Piro, Manager
DATE: March 20, 2013
RE: Decatur-Federal Station Area Plan in the Sun Valley Neighborhood

Community Planning and Development is pleased to transmit the *Decatur-Federal Station Area Plan* to the Land Use, Transportation and Infrastructure Committee of the Denver City Council. The Planning Board unanimously approved the plan at its regular meeting on March 6, 2013 and recommended that the City Council approve the plan as a supplement to the *Denver Comprehensive Plan*.

After a year of public engagement and outreach, a Draft Plan was released for public review on January 8, 2013. Modifications were made to the plan based on public review. The Planning Board held the required public hearing at its March 6, 2013 meeting, during which time additional public testimony was heard, primarily in support of the overall plan. Included with this letter are ten letters of support from Sun Valley area residents, neighborhood organizations, non-profit organizations and property owners.

The Planning Board approved the plan on the basis of the findings for the three established criteria for a supplement to the Comprehensive Plan:

1. Consistency with the Comprehensive Plan and applicable supplements
 - a. Achieves Comprehensive Plan goals and recommendations:
 - i. Ensures environmental stewardship of natural resources
 - ii. Encourages mixed use, transit-oriented development
 - iii. Provides workers, residents and visitors with a choice of safe and convenient transportation modes
 - iv. Builds upon Denver's legacies
 - v. Creates clean and safe neighborhoods that inspire community pride
 - vi. Builds a skilled workforce and economic opportunities for all
 - vii. Encourages mixed use, mixed income housing development near transit lines
 - viii. Supports a range of artistic and cultural opportunities
 - b. Builds upon previous planning efforts:
 - i. Blueprint Denver
 - ii. Strategic Transportation Plan
 - iii. River South Greenway Master Plan (RISO)
 - iv. River Vision Implementation Plan (RVIP)

2. An inclusive public process
 - a. In total, over 50 stakeholder meetings, neighborhood meetings, workshops, tours in the course of a year, including 4 large public meetings
 - b. 2,500 stakeholders engaged
 - c. 1,600 website hits
 - d. 10 letters of support received
3. An appropriate long term perspective
 - a. 20-30 year plan horizon
 - b. 10 year implementation strategies
 - c. First step: help create formal partnerships to “champion” implementation

The Planning Board staff report documenting the details of these findings is attached for your reference.

Thank you for your support and consideration of the *Decatur-Federal Station Area Plan*.

cc: Michael Hancock, Mayor, City and County of Denver
Brad Buchanan, Chair, Denver Planning Board



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MEMORANDUM

TO: Brad Buchanan, Chair, Denver Planning Board

FROM: Barbara Frommell
CPD-Planning Services

DATE: February 26, 2013

SUBJECT: Decatur-Federal Station Area Plan
Staff Report and Recommendation

Planning Services is pleased to submit the final draft of the Decatur-Federal Station Area Plan for your final consideration and approval as a supplement to the Denver Comprehensive Plan. This memorandum documents the plan contents and process based on the three criteria established in Plan 2000:

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

The memo concludes with the staff recommendation to the Denver Planning Board.

1. Plan Consistency

Denver Comprehensive Plan 2000

Environmental Sustainability Chapter

Objective 1: Distribute environmental burdens and benefits.

- 1-A - Encourage redevelopment of vacant, underutilized and environmentally compromised land known as brownfields.

Objective 2: Ensure environmental stewardship of natural resources, taking into account the entire ecosystem, not just human needs. Preventing pollution will be the action of first choice in accomplishing this objective.

2-D- Conserve energy by: Promoting energy-efficient technologies and the use of renewable energy (including solar, hydro, wind and others) in the home, the workplace, and for transportation.

2-E- Conserve raw materials by: Promoting efforts to adapt existing buildings for new uses, rather than destroying them.

2-F – 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.
- Creating more density at transit nodes.

- Sharing parking at activity centers.
- Protecting natural corridors, wetlands and floodplains from the encroachment of development.
- Encouraging the redevelopment of brownfields.

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...

Objective 4: Ensure that Denver's [plans] and regulatory system support the development of a clean, efficient and innovative transportation system that meets Denver's future economic and mobility needs.

4-A—Encourage mixed-use transit-oriented development that makes effective use of existing transportation infrastructure, supports transit stations, increases transit patronage, reduces impact on the environment, and encourages vibrant urban centers and neighborhoods.

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-B - Promote public transit, both bus and rail, as a safe, attractive and convenient choice for people who might otherwise drive to employment, education, cultural, shopping or other destinations.

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.

1-D - Consider and provide for the special transportation needs of people without cars, families with small children relying on transit, school-aged children, people with physical disabilities, and low-income persons.

1-F - Address the transportation needs of visitors, tourists and people attending special events and major attractions.

Objective 7: Address neighborhood transportation issues in a manner that balances overall mobility with neighborhood integrity.

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

8-A—Ensure safe and convenient access and accommodation of bicycle riders, pedestrians and transit riders.

Denver's Legacies Chapter

Objective 3: Incorporate visionary urban design principles into new development patterns to achieve a higher concentration and more diverse mix of housing, employment and transportation options in identified areas of the city.

Objective 5: Preserve Denver's historic resources.

Objective 9: Plan for the maintenance and expansion of Denver's parks and recreation system.

Objective 11: Strengthen Denver's system of "green" connections: trails, bicycle routes, parkways, greenways and watercourses.

Housing Chapter

Objective 3: Build partnerships with other government agencies and nonprofit organizations to creatively deliver increased housing assistance.

3-C- Support DHA's efforts to meet the needs of households requiring very low-income housing. These efforts include:

- improvement in the design and quality of its housing;
- improved maintenance of its units;
- revitalization of neighborhoods in which public housing is located;
- replacement of demolished units on a one-for-one basis;
- expansion of partnerships for project development; and
- cooperation with private service providers to integrate support services to DHA residents.

Objective 6: Encourage mixed-use, mixed income housing development in Denver's core area and along transit lines.

6-B—Continue to support mixed-income housing development that includes affordable rental and for-purchase housing for lower-income, entry level and service employees, especially in Downtown and along transit lines.

Economic Activity Chapter

Objective 1: Ensure a skilled workforce. Economic development policies and initiatives should stress workforce needs for advancement, education and training, child care, a full range of affordable housing options, and transportation.

Objective 3: Continue to expand economic opportunity and the City's economic base with focused efforts to retain and expand existing businesses and to attract new businesses, especially in target industries.

Objective 5: Support the creation and growth of neighborhood businesses that enhance the vitality and quality of life in their communities.

Neighborhoods Chapter

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

Objective 3: Make neighborhoods clean and safe places that inspire community pride, where residents and visitors feel secure and comfortable.

Objective 5: Maintain the physical and operational integrity of community facilities.

Arts and Culture Chapter

Objective 1: Support and promote a flourishing artistic community.

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.

Objective 4: Broaden the scope, richness and attachment to the arts in Denver by encouraging ethnic diversity in cultural expression.

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 Change

- Contribute to urban design vision
- Respect valued attributes of area
- Expand transportation choice
- Improve environmental quality

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

Civic Responsibilities of Small Area Plans

- Affordable housing
- Transportation system integrity
- Transit oriented development
- Community facilities
- Consistency with adopted plans

Strategic Transportation Plan

Vision

A great city is livable for all of its citizens now and in the future. The STP creates a multimodal transportation system to support a livable, connected and sustainable city.

- Multimodal
 - Safe pedestrian linkages
 - Comprehensive bicycle system
 - Dependable transit options
 - Efficient and well-maintained infrastructure
- Safe, Efficient, Reliable

- Connected multimodal system
- Safe transportation network
- Manage congestion
- Accessible to all

Innovation

- A transformative approach to transportation.
- Plans for travel sheds, not just travel corridors.
- Move people, not just vehicles.
- Does not grow Denver's road footprint.

Strategy

- Maintenance and efficiency are fundamental to our current transportation system, followed by improvements and planning for future transportation.
- A balance of behavioral, physical and operational recommendations are included.
- The result is a comprehensive plan for each travel shed.

River South Greenway Master Plan (RISO)

Urban Greenway Corridor

The RISO plan identifies this stretch of river as an “Urban Greenway Corridor”. The plan calls for creating a Sun Valley riverfront park between Weir Gulch and 11th Avenue, wrapping around the south, east and north sides of the current DHA Sun Valley Homes property. It recommends that park space extend up Weir Gulch and Lakewood Gulch to provide green, open space connections into the Sun Valley neighborhood, Rude Park and the RTD station, and the Platte River Trolley.

Finding: the proposed Decatur-Federal Station Area Plan is consistent with the Denver Comprehensive Plan and relevant amendments and supplements

2. Inclusive public process

- Steering Committee Meetings
 - held before each public meeting
 - two workshops during draft plan review
- Focus Groups
 - Riverfront workshop (in combination with the South Platte River Brownfields Area Wide Study)
 - Federal Boulevard Workshop
 - Small Property Owners Meetings
 - Children’s Workshop
 - Multi-family Housing Tour w/ DHA Residents
- Individual Stakeholder Meetings (throughout planning process)
 - Held on an as-needed basis throughout the planning process.
 - Business Community Interviews
- Neighborhood / Stakeholder Meetings
 - Villa Park
 - Jefferson Park
 - Federal Boulevard Partnership
 - West Colfax Neighborhood
 - Sun Valley Homes Local Residents Council (monthly)
 - Sun Valley Stakeholders (quarterly)
- Metropolitan Football Stadium District Board of Directors
- Denver Housing Authority Board of Directors
- Urban Land Institute (ULI) Technical Assistance Panel (TAP)
 - Day long “Mini-TAP” process held in September 2011.
- Public Meetings
 - Listening Session- January 2012 (137 in attendance)
 - Neighborhood Identity- April 2012 (148 in attendance)
 - Placemaking- June 2012 (57 in attendance)
 - A Brighter Future - October 2012 (125 in attendance)

Finding: the public process has been inclusive. Hundreds of people have attended various public meetings. The Plan distribution list includes 480 individuals, organizations, and families.

3. Long-term view

Plan implementation is expected over twenty or thirty years providing an appropriate long-term perspective. This plan’s Moving Forward section includes implementation strategies phased over the next 10 years, with the recommendation that the Implementing Partnerships oversee implementation activities for the long term.

Finding: the plan has an appropriate long term perspective.

Staff Recommendation: approval with the condition that the document be edited for clarity and correctness.