



**TO:** Denver Planning Board  
**FROM:** Joe Green, Associate City Planner  
**DATE:** November 26, 2025  
**RE:** Official Zoning Map Amendment Application #2023i-00146

## Staff Report and Recommendation

Based on the criteria for review in the Denver Zoning Code, Staff recommends **denial** for Application #2023i-00146.

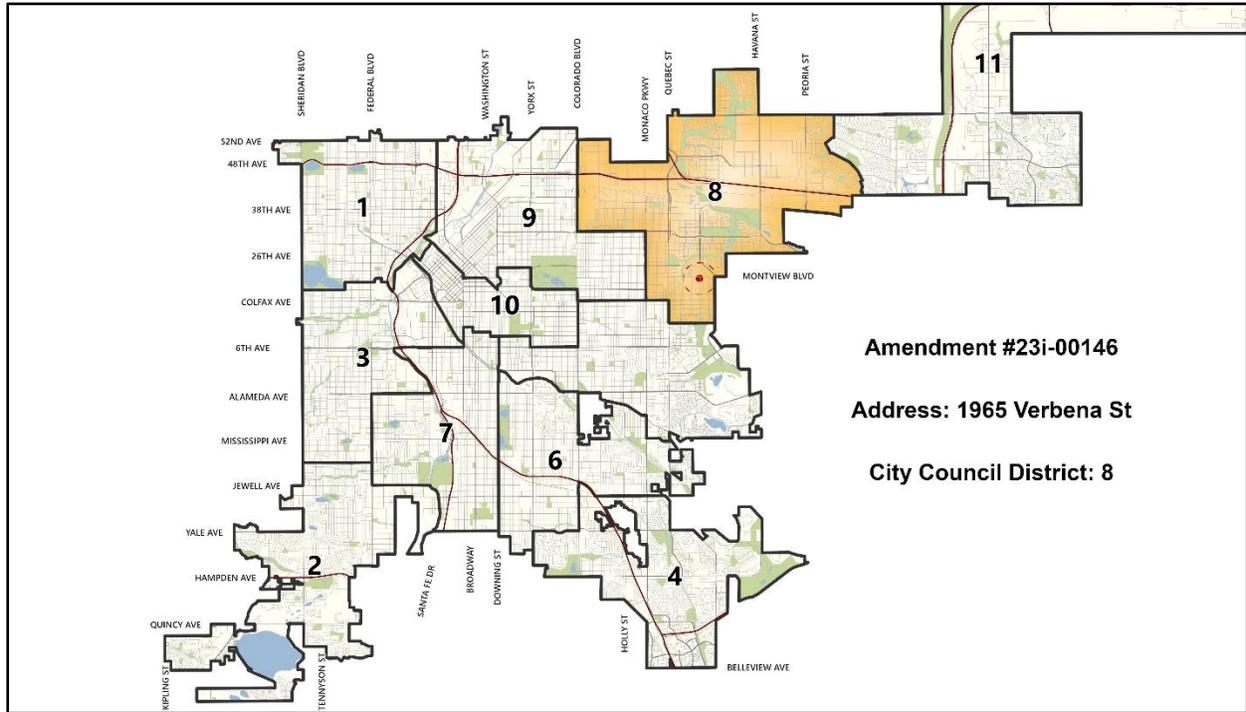
## Request for Rezoning

Address: 1965 N. Verbena St  
Neighborhood/Council District and CM: East Colfax / Council District 8, CM Lewis  
RNOs: East Colfax Neighborhood Association, Central Park United Neighbors, Opportunity Corridor Coalition of United Residents, Inter-Neighborhood Cooperation.  
Area of Property: 9,370 square feet or .2 acres  
Current Zoning: E-SU-Dx  
Proposed Zoning: E-SU-B  
Property Owner(s): Pavel and Olga Demchenko

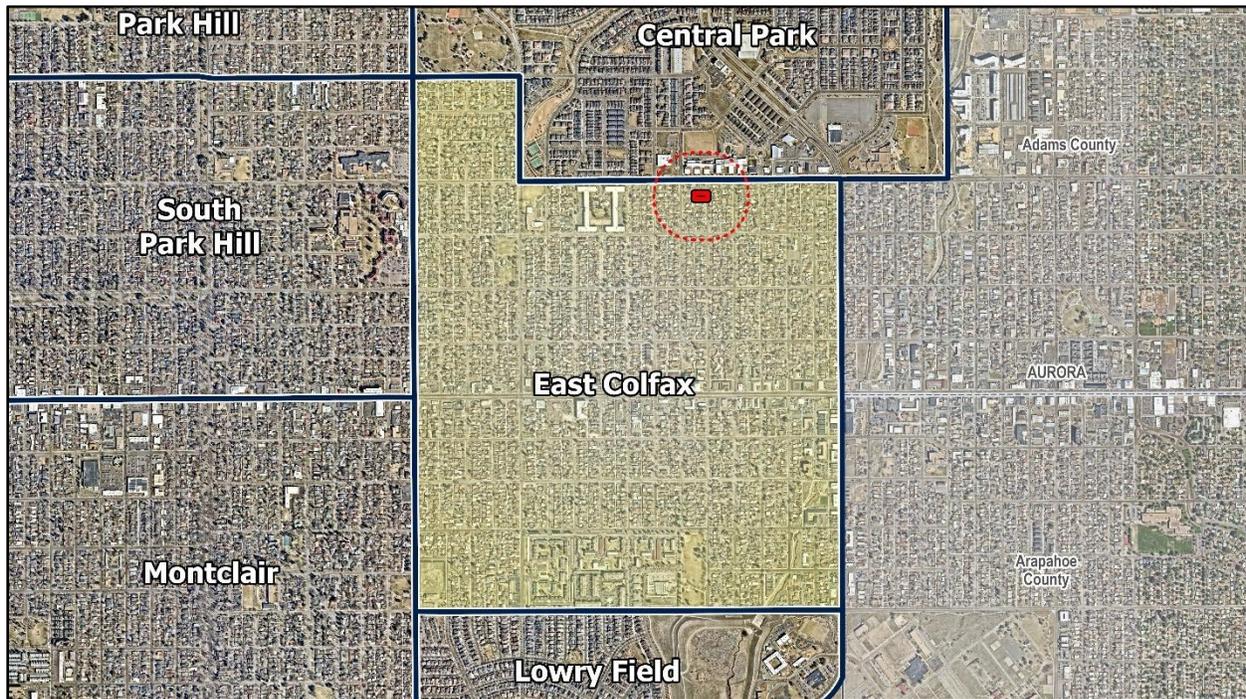
## Summary of Rezoning Request

- The subject site is located in the East Colfax neighborhood on the west side of North Verbena Street. It is just south of the Denver School of Science and Technology – Montview, which contains both a middle and high school.
- The site currently contains a single-unit house, built in 1889.
- The current zoning E-SU-Dx (Urban Edge – Single Unit – Dx) allows a single-unit house with an accessory dwelling unit on a minimum lot size of 6,000 square feet.
- The requested zone district E-SU-B (Urban Edge – Single Unit – B) allows a single-unit home with an accessory dwelling unit on a minimum lot size of 4,500 square feet. Further details of the requested zone district can be found in the proposed zone district section of the staff report (below) and in Article 4 of the Denver Zoning Code (DZC).
- The rezoning request would allow the applicant to split their lot and build two single-unit houses with accessory dwelling units.
- *Blueprint Denver* explicitly states when it is appropriate to allow smaller lot sizes in Residential Low areas through an applicant-driven rezoning. If there is not an existing pattern of similar lot sizes in the surrounding area, then it is not consistent with the guidance in *Blueprint Denver* (page 215). While this rezoning application is consistent with some guidance in *Comprehensive Plan 2040*, the *East Area Plan*, and *Blueprint Denver*, staff does not find a pattern of similar lot sizes in the area and, therefore, recommends denial of this rezoning application.

### City Location



### Neighborhood Location



## Existing Context



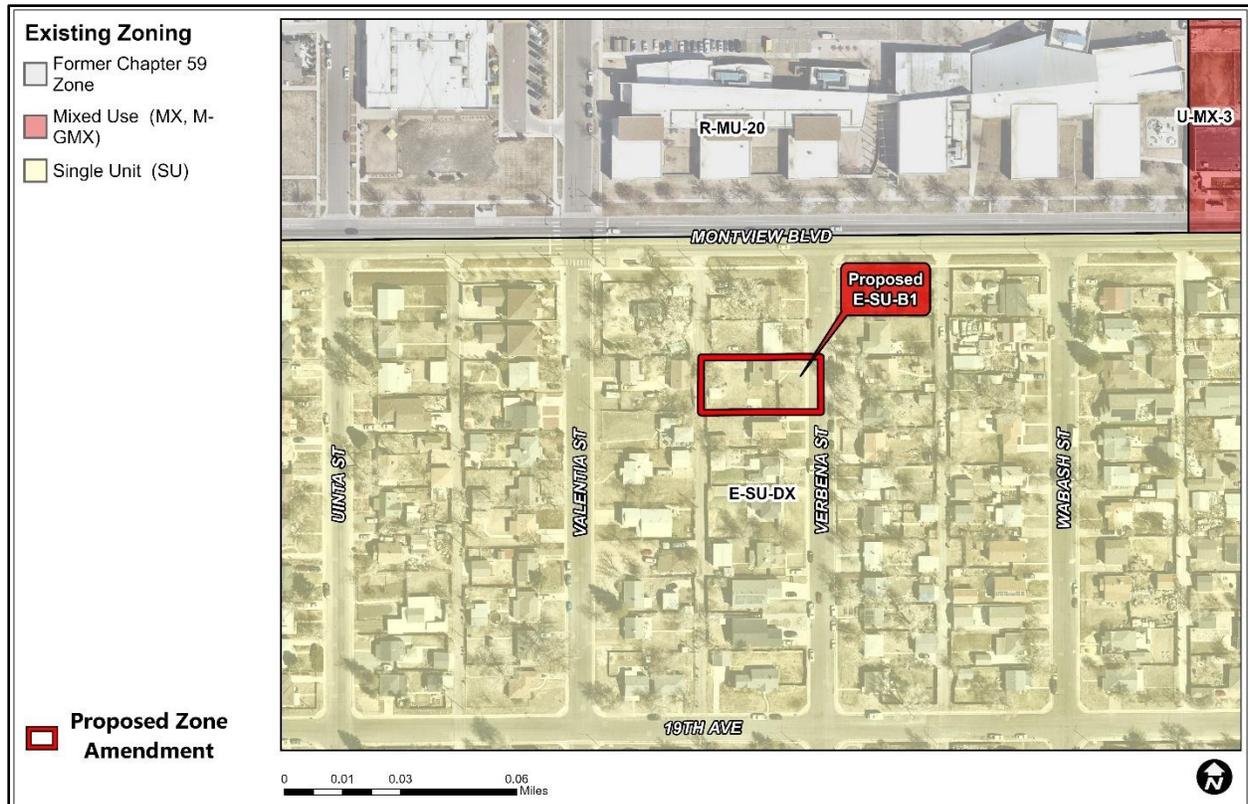
The subject property is in the East Colfax neighborhood, which is characterized primarily by single-unit, two-unit and multi-unit residential uses with several public/quasi-public uses in the vicinity. The Denver School of Science and Technology – Montview is across the street to the north of the site, along with several gas stations and auto-oriented retail. The site is located on N. Verbena Street between Montview Boulevard and E. 19<sup>th</sup> Avenue. Colfax Avenue, which is about four blocks south of the site, runs through the middle of the neighborhood and Yosemite Street, which is five blocks east of the site, is the eastern edge. Mixed-use and multi-unit zoning concentrates along these two corridors. The single-unit zoning in the neighborhood is E-SU-Dx throughout.

The subject property is served by the 20 RTD bus line along Montview Boulevard and is ½ of a mile from the 15-bus line along Colfax Avenue, which is under construction for bus rapid transit service.

The following table summarizes the existing context proximate to the subject site:

	Existing Zoning	Existing Land Use	Existing Building Form/Scale	Existing Block, Lot, Street Pattern
Site	E-SU-Dx	Single-unit residential	A single-story house with alley access.	Regular grid of streets. Block sizes and shapes are consistent and rectangular with alleys in the middle of blocks. 3 ft rollover sidewalks without a tree lawn.
North	E-SU-Dx	Single-unit residential	A single-story house with alley access.	
South	E-SU-Dx	Single-unit residential	A single-story house with driveway on Verbena St and alley access.	
East	E-SU-Dx	Single-unit residential	A single-story house with an attached garage and driveway on Verbena St. and alley access.	
West	E-SU-Dx	Single-unit residential	A single-story house with driveway on Valentia St and alley access.	

### Existing Zoning



E-SU-Dx is a single unit district allowing Suburban and Urban House primary building forms on a minimum lot area of 6,000 square feet and a minimum lot width of 50 feet. The maximum allowed height of the Urban House building form is 30 to 35 feet for the front 65% of the zone lot and 17 to 19 feet in the rear 35% of the zone lot, while the maximum height of the Suburban House building form is 30 to 35 feet across the entire lot. An accessory dwelling unit is allowed.

### Existing Land Use Map



**Existing Building Form and Scale**



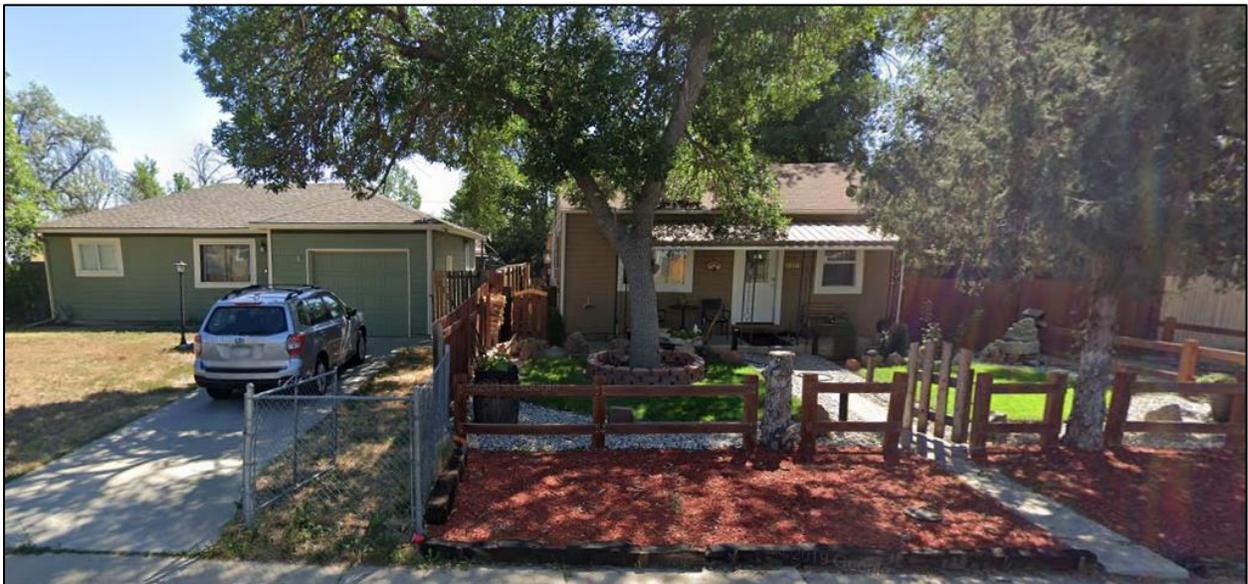
View of the subject property looking west from N. Verbena St.



View of the property to the north, looking west from N. Verbena St.



View of the property to the south, looking west, from N. Verbena St.



View of the property to the east, looking east, from N. Verbena St.



View of the property to the west (across the alley), looking east on N. Valenia St.

## Proposed Zoning

E-SU-B is a single unit district allowing the Urban House primary building form on a minimum lot area of 4,500 square feet and a lot width of 35 feet. The maximum allowed height of the Urban House building form is 30 to 35 feet for the front 65% of the zone lot and 17 to 19 feet in the rear 35% of the zone lot. An accessory dwelling unit is allowed.

The primary building forms allowed in the existing zone district and the proposed zone district are summarized below. The main difference between the zone districts is the minimum lot size and width and the allowance of the suburban house building form (only allowed in the existing E-SU-Dx district).

Design Standards	E-SU-Dx (Existing)	E-SU-B
Primary Building Forms Allowed	Urban House; Suburban House	Urban House
Maximum Height in Stories/Feet, Front 65% of Zone Lot	2.5 stories / 30 feet	2.5 stories / 30 feet
Maximum Height in Stories/Feet, Rear 35% of Zone Lot	Urban House: 1 story / 17 feet Suburban House: 2.5 stories / 30 feet	Urban House: 1 story / 17 feet
DADU Maximum Height in Stories / Feet	24 feet	24 feet
Zone Lot Size (Min.)	6,000 square feet	4,500 square feet
Zone Lot Width (Min.)	50 feet	35 feet
Primary Street Block Sensitive Setback Required / If not	Yes / 20 feet	Yes / 20 feet
Side Street Setback (Min.)	5 feet	5 feet
Side Interior Setback (Min.)	5 feet	3' min one side/ 10' min combined*
Primary Structure Rear Setback, Alley / No Alley	12 feet / 20 feet	12 feet / 20 feet
DADU Rear Setback	5 feet	5 feet
Building Coverage per Zone Lot including all accessory structures (Max.), not including exceptions	45 %	45%
Detached Accessory Building Forms Allowed	Detached Accessory Dwelling Unit, General Detached Structure, Minor Detached Structured	Detached Accessory Dwelling Unit, General Detached Structure, Minor Detached Structured

\* Assumes lot width greater than 30' and up to 40'

## **Summary of City Agency Referral Comments**

As part of the DZC review process, the rezoning application is referred to potentially affected city agencies and departments for comment. A summary of agency referral responses follows:

**Assessor:** Approved – No Response.

**Asset Management:** Approved - No Response

**Denver Public Schools:** Approved – No Response.

**Development Services - Fire:** Approved – No Comment.

**Development Services – Project Coordination:** Approve Rezoning Only - Will require additional information at Site Plan Review

- It is highly recommended to seek a pre-application for a Zone Lot Amendment prior to continuing to pursue the rezoning if you have not already. The location and size of existing house in relation to the required setbacks and zone lot width in the E-SU-B present some concerns that the proposed zone districts would not result in the desired outcome. A different outcome may be to request the E-SU-B for the existing house but then E-SU-A for the proposed new lot. This would allow for more flexibility to place the shared side interior zone lot line in the needed location to approve the zone lot amendment that would eventually be needed. The location of the existing structure to remain may require either sufficient separation to meet building and fire code or modifications to the structure to meet building and fire code.
- Any future construction will require building and zoning permits through the Residential review team.

**Development Services - Transportation:** Approved – No Response.

**Development Services – Wastewater:** Approved – No Response.

**Parks and Recreation:** Approved – No Response.

**Public Health and Environment:** Approved – No Response

**Department of Transportation & Infrastructure – City Surveyor:** Approved - No Comments

**Public Review Process**

	<b>Date</b>
Property legally posted for a period of 15 days within 10 days of the submission of a complete application and CPD informational notice of receipt of the rezoning application to all affected members of City Council, registered neighborhood organizations, property owners, and tenants:	<b>06/26/2025</b>
Property legally posted for a period of 15 days and CPD written notice of the Planning Board public hearing sent to all affected members of City Council, registered neighborhood organizations, property owners, and tenants:	<b>08/19/2025</b>
Planning Board Public Hearing:	<b>09/03/2025</b>
CPD written notice of the Land Use, Transportation and Infrastructure Committee meeting sent to all affected members of City Council and registered neighborhood organizations, at least ten (10) working days before the meeting:	<b>09/02/2025 (tentative)</b>
Land Use, Transportation and Infrastructure Committee of the City Council moved the bill forward:	<b>09/16/2025 (tentative)</b>
Property legally posted for a period of 21 days and CPD notice of the City Council public hearing sent to all affected members of City Council and registered neighborhood organizations:	<b>09/29/2025 (tentative)</b>
City Council Public Hearing:	<b>10/20/2025 (tentative)</b>

**Public Outreach and Input**

As part of the application process, the applicant reached out to community members and notes support from neighbors in the summary included with the application. The engagement is documented as part of the attached application.

**East Colfax Neighborhood Association (ECNA)**

The applicant also provided as part of the application a letter of support from ECNA, submitted by the RNO president John Mckinney. This letter stated that seven board members and several community members voted to support the application unanimously. The letter cited that smaller lot housing is more affordable and that more housing should be provided near a wide range of amenities in the East Colfax Neighborhood.

**General Public Comments**

As of the date of this staff report, no comment letters have been received by staff.

## Criteria for Review / Staff Evaluation

The criteria for review of this rezoning application are found in DZC, Sections 12.4.10.7 as follows:

1. Consistency with Adopted Plans
2. Public Interest
3. Consistency with Neighborhood Context Description, Zone District Purpose and Intent Statements

### Consistency with Adopted Plans

The following adopted plans apply to this property:

- *Denver Comprehensive Plan 2040* (2019)
- *Blueprint Denver* (2019)
- *East Area Plan* (2020)

### Overview

*Blueprint Denver* explicitly states when it is appropriate to allow smaller lot sizes through an applicant-driven rezoning. If there is a not an existing pattern of similar lot sizes in the surrounding area, then it is not consistent with the guidance in *Blueprint Denver* (page 215). While this rezoning application is consistent with some guidance in *Comprehensive Plan 2040*, the *East Area Plan*, and *Blueprint Denver*, staff does not find a pattern of similar lot sizes in the area. Staff, therefore, does not find the application consistent with adopted plans.

### Denver Comprehensive Plan 2040

The proposed rezoning could potentially further adopted *Denver Comprehensive Plan 2040* strategies, including:

- Equitable, Affordable and Inclusive Goal 2, Strategy A – Create a greater mix of housing options in every neighborhood for all individuals and families (p. 28).

E-SU-B would allow for two smaller lots on the proposed site, potentially facilitating one additional primary dwelling unit and one detached accessory dwelling unit than what would be allowed under the current zoning. Smaller lots are likely less expensive than larger lots because of the reduced cost of land.

- Strong and Authentic Neighborhoods Goal 1, Strategy B.: "Ensure neighborhoods offer a mix of housing types and services for a diverse population" (p. 34).

The proposed rezoning would allow for two smaller lots, potentially facilitating infill development appropriate for the surrounding neighborhood that broadens the range of housing types available.

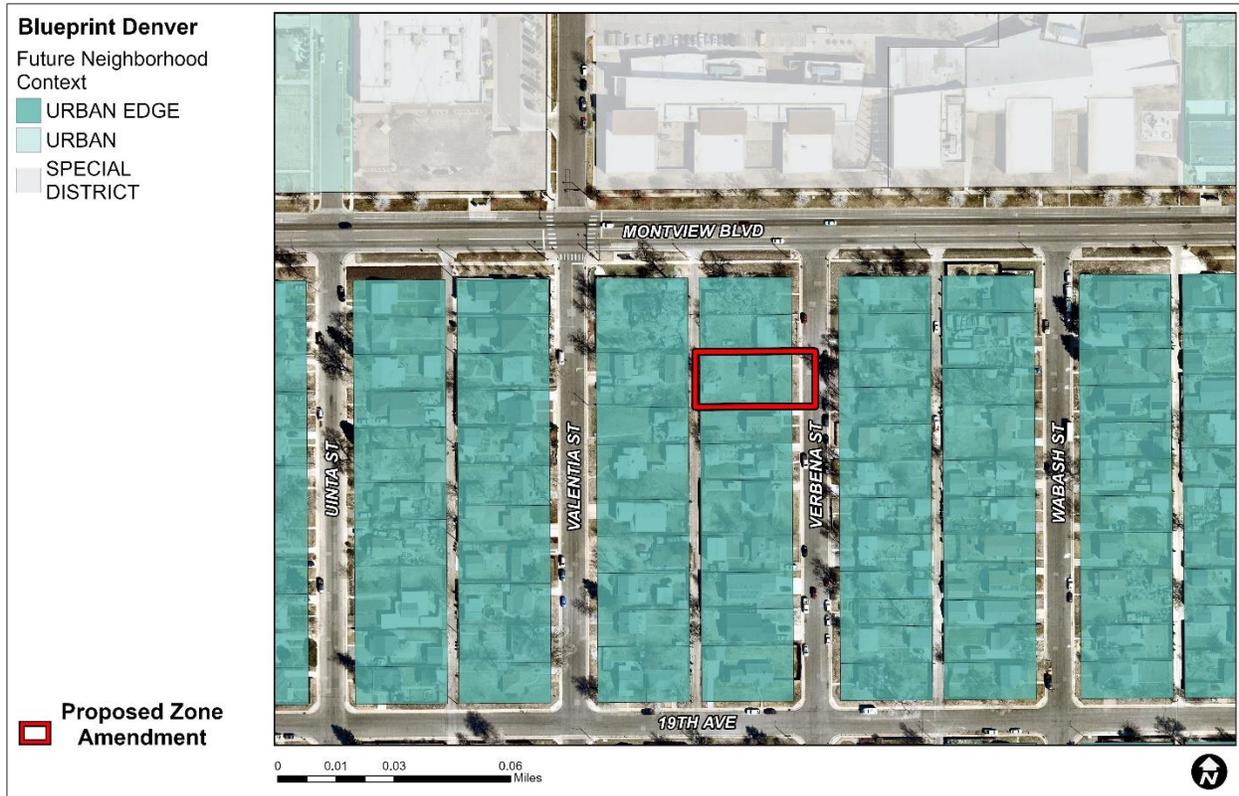
- Environmentally Resilient Goal 8, Strategy A – Promote infill development where infrastructure and services are already in place (p. 54).

The proposed map amendment would allow for two smaller lots, facilitating one additional primary dwelling unit and one detached accessory dwelling unit on a site where infrastructure and services such as water, stormwater, and streets already exist. This would Denver promote land conservation. Because it could facilitate the strategies cited above, the rezoning is consistent with *Comprehensive Plan 2040*.

### **Blueprint Denver**

*Blueprint Denver* was adopted in 2019 as a supplement to *Comprehensive Plan 2040* and establishes an integrated framework for the city’s land use and transportation decisions. *Blueprint Denver* identifies the subject property as part of a Low Residential future place within the Urban Edge future neighborhood context and provides guidance on the future growth strategy for the city.

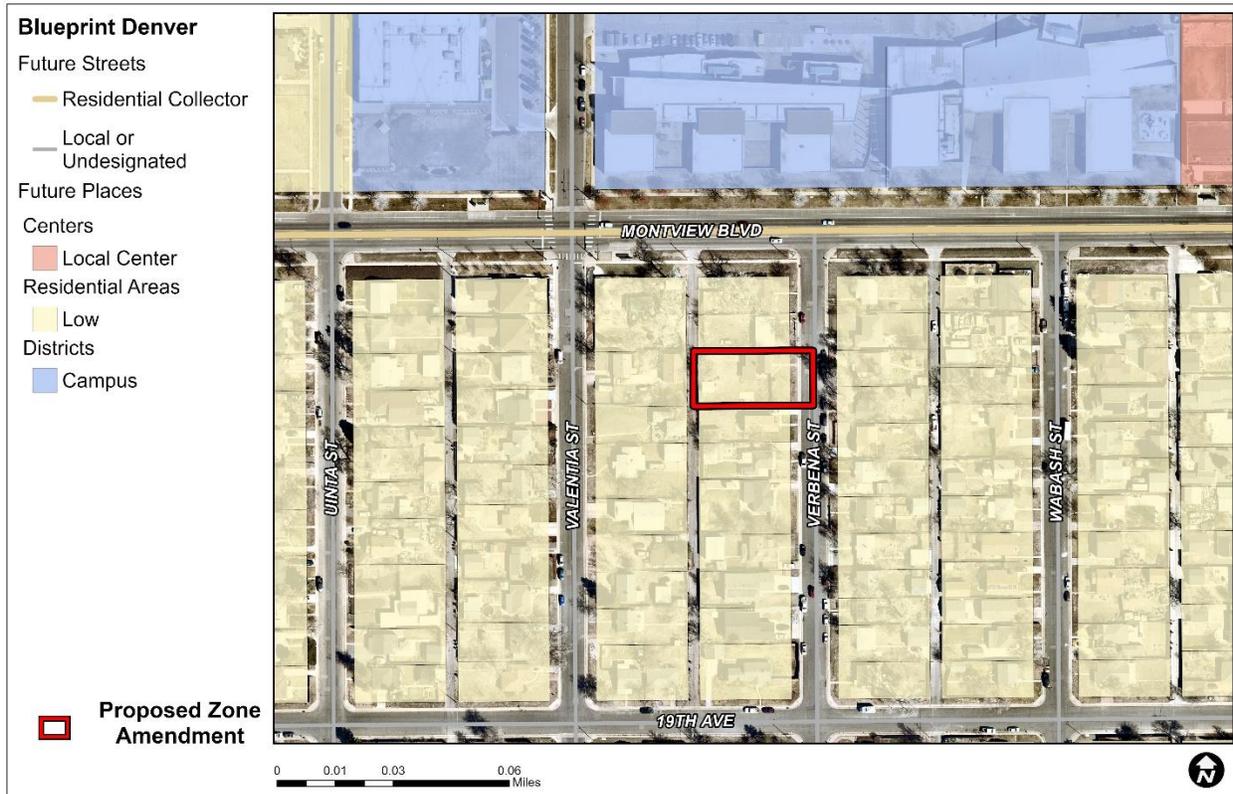
### Blueprint Denver Future Neighborhood Context



In *Blueprint Denver*, future neighborhood contexts are used to help understand differences in things like land use and built form and mobility options at a higher scale, between neighborhoods. The subject property is shown on the context map as Urban Edge neighborhood context. The neighborhood context map and description help guide appropriate zone districts (p. 66). The Urban Edge neighborhood context is described as “predominantly residential” typically low-scale single- and two-unit residential with some small-scale multi-unit residential” (p. 205).

The proposed E-SU-B zone district is part of the Urban Edge context and is intended to “promote and protect residential neighborhoods” and “provide a consistent framework to property owners, developers, and neighborhood residents to reinforce desired development patterns, encourage affordable housing, and accommodate reinvestment in residential districts” (DZC 4.2.2.1). Since the proposed district allows a small increase in density without an increase in building forms, the proposed rezoning to an Urban Edge context is consistent with this plan guidance.

Blueprint Denver Future Places

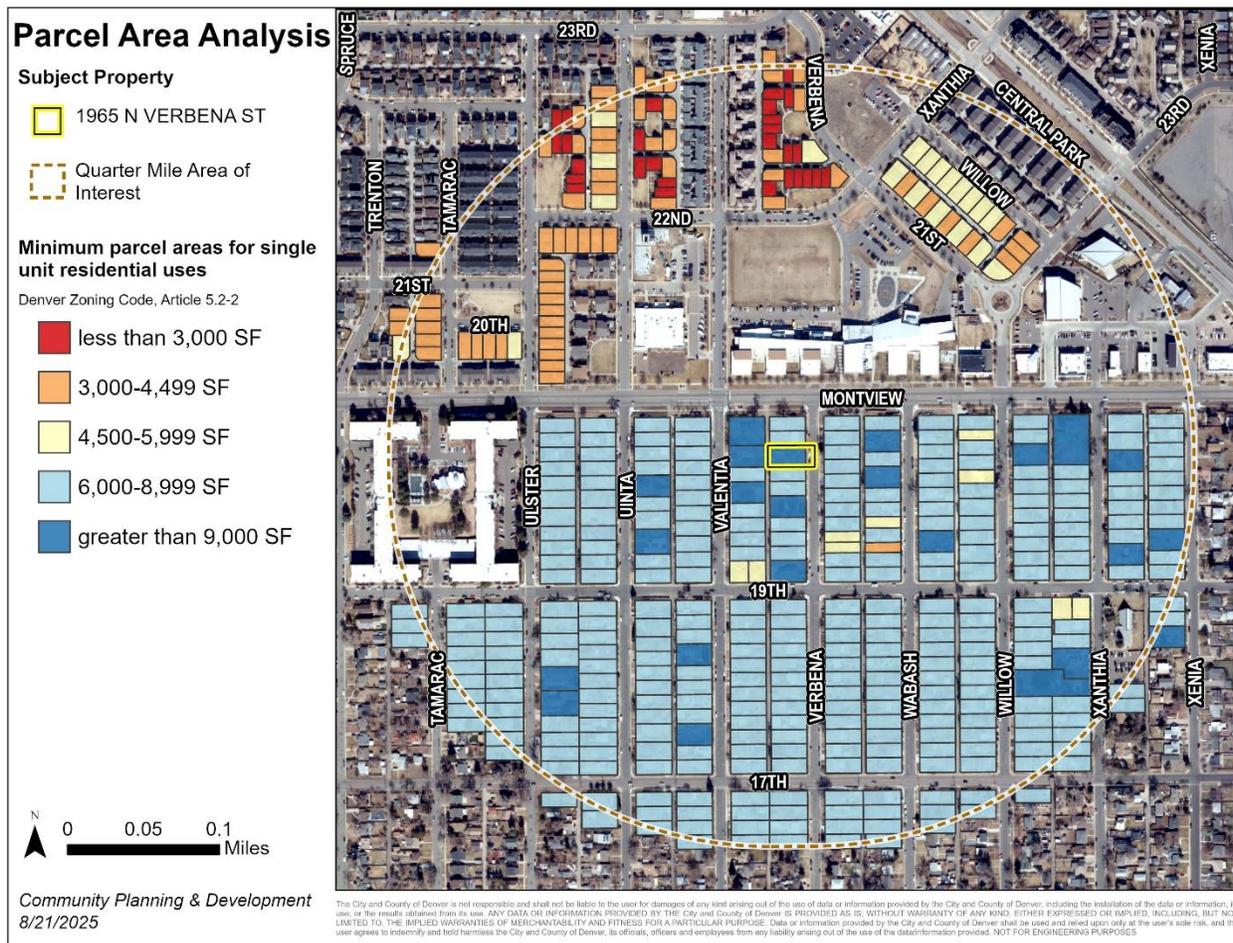


*Blueprint Denver* designates the subject property as Residential Low Future place, which is described as “Predominantly single- and two-unit uses on small or medium lots. Accessory dwelling units and duplexes are appropriate and can be thoughtfully integrated where compatible” (p. 214). *Blueprint Denver* provides further guidance for rezonings in residential Low places regarding minimum lot sizes. The plan states:

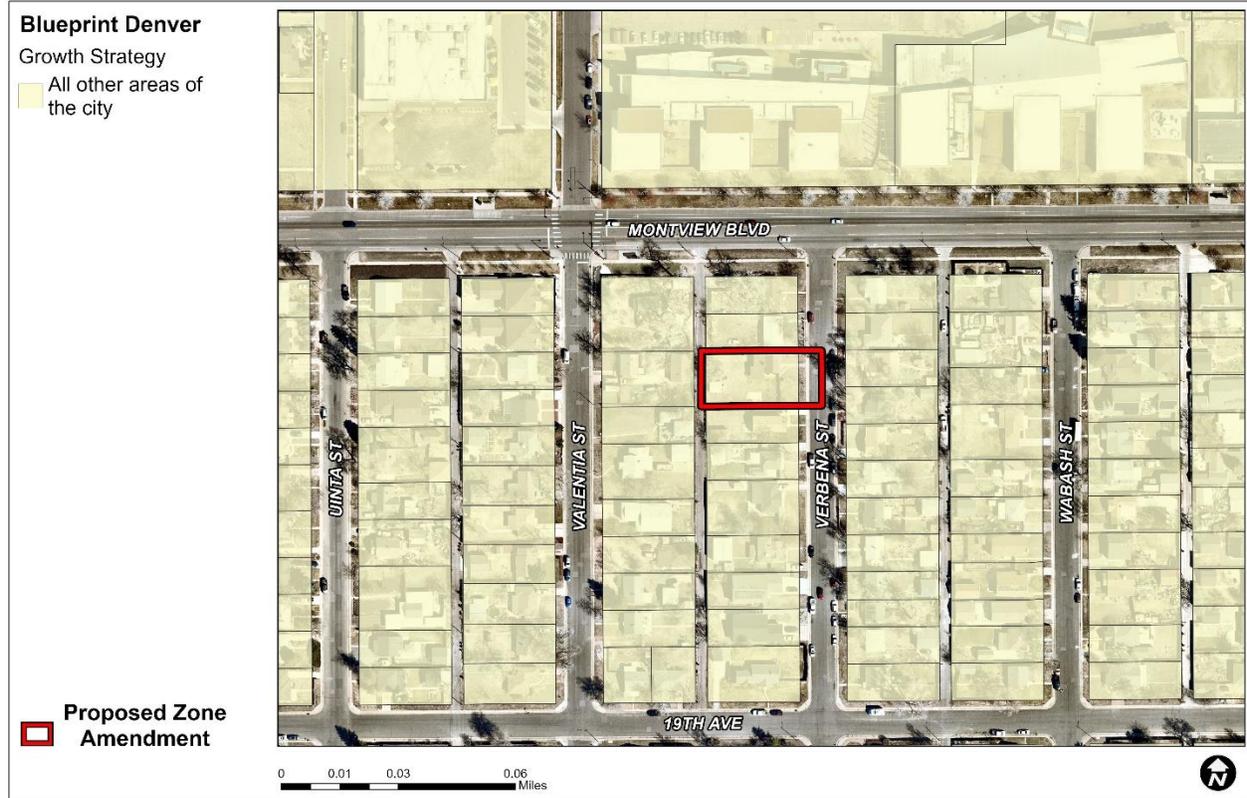
“For applicant-driven requests that are individual sites or small assemblages, typically it is only appropriate to allow smaller lot sizes than the existing zone district if there is an established pattern in the surrounding blocks of smaller lots with similar uses that would be consistent with the zone district request. A departure from the established lot pattern may be appropriate if the request includes a larger area, generally greater than one block, and the intent is to set a new pattern for the area, as expressed by an adopted small area plan or significant neighborhood input (p. 214).”

The proposed rezoning is an applicant-driven request for an individual site, so this guidance applies. The graphic below (Parcel Area Analysis) demonstrates the pattern of lot sizes and uses in the surrounding blocks. The proposed E-SU-B district requires a minimum lot size of 4,500 square feet, while the existing E-SU-Dx zoning requires a minimum lot size of 6,000 square feet. In the blocks surrounding the site, only six parcels have lot sizes less than 6,000 square feet as allowed by the E-SU-B district. The vast majority of lots are 6,000 square feet or larger, which is consistent with the existing E-SU-Dx district. Staff finds that the pattern on surrounding blocks is inconsistent with the requested zone district.

Further, the small area plan, as described later in this staff report, does not express the intent to set a new pattern for the area. There has also not been significant neighborhood input expressing the desire to set a new pattern for the area. Therefore, staff finds that the requested rezoning would be inconsistent with the existing pattern and does not meet the plan guidance for individual rezonings.



### Blueprint Denver Growth Strategy



*Blueprint Denver's* growth strategy map is a version of the future places map, showing the aspiration for distributing future growth in Denver (p. 51). The subject property is part of all other areas of the city. These areas are anticipated to see around 20% of new housing growth and 10% of new employment growth by 2040 (p. 51). The proposed map amendment to E-SU-B will focus small-scale growth where it has been determined to be most appropriate.

### Blueprint Denver Street Types

In *Blueprint Denver*, future street types work in concert with future places to evaluate the appropriateness of the intensity of the adjacent development (p. 67). The three volume classifications of Local, Collector, and Arterial, are further refined by six types of surrounding context. N. Verbena Street is a local street which is predominantly defined by residential uses. The proposed E-SU-B zone district is consistent with this street type as it would allow for residential uses.

### Equity and climate

Because the data available to measure the equity concepts is not available at the parcel-level scale, and they are intended to show patterns across large areas, they cannot be effectively applied to small-scale rezonings (p. 67). However, smaller rezonings can still implement policies and strategies related to equity and climate. This rezoning supports the city's goals to reduce climate impacts by allowing for smaller lots sizes and, therefore, potentially enabling additional housing where infrastructure already exists and where transit is available.

### Other *Blueprint Denver* Strategies

Land Use & Built Form: Housing Strategy 2 recommends “Diversify[ing] housing options by exploring opportunities to integrate missing middle housing into low and low-medium residential areas.” It further recommends “Integrate missing middle housing into low and low-medium residential areas.... This should be implemented through holistic revisions to the zoning code at a citywide scale, with a focus on discouraging demolition and encouraging affordability” (p. 82). While the proposed rezoning could facilitate additional housing options in a low residential area through smaller lot sizes, the rezoning is not consistent with the plan guidance that recommends a city-wide approach to implementing this strategy. *Blueprint Denver* also recommends individual rezonings be considered using the guidance regarding existing patterns described above in the staff report.

### **East Area Plan (2020)**

The *East Area Plan* recommends a building height of 2.5 stories (p. 32) and designates the subject property as Low Residential Single-Unit, where only single-unit homes with accessory dwelling units are appropriate (pg. 27). The proposed E-SU-B district is consistent with this guidance. The plan does not speak to lot sizes and does not recommend establishing a new pattern for lot sizes in this area.

The plan also includes guidance for integrating additional housing options in Low Residential Areas, as follows:

- In describing Low Residential: Single Unit, the plan states: “This subcategory is recommended in areas where single-unit homes with accessory dwelling units are appropriate. Additional primary units would only be appropriate where they already exist or as determined through a future regulatory process to integrate missing middle housing in some locations (see Policy L6).” (p. 27)
- Land Use and Built Form Policy 6: “Ensure East Area neighborhoods are inclusive places by thoughtfully integrating compatibly-designed missing middle housing and accessory dwelling units (ADUs) in appropriate locations.” Strategy C in Policy 6 states: “Implement zoning changes to encourage missing middle housing at the citywide scale, not just in the East Area...”

Consistent with *Blueprint Denver*, this plan guidance recommends a holistic, citywide approach rather than individual rezonings. Therefore, while this rezoning could facilitate additional housing through smaller lot sizes, it is not consistent with the *East Area Plan’s* guidance.

### **Public Interest**

The proposed official map amendment could further Public Interest by facilitating additional housing options. However, the City’s adopted plans recommend a wholistic, citywide approach that consider many factors such as affordability and neighborhood compatibility. Therefore, this individual rezoning could hinder the public interest by proceeding the holistic approach.

## **Consistency with Neighborhood Context Description, Zone District Purpose and Intent Statements**

The requested E-SU-B zone district is within the Urban Edge Neighborhood Context. The neighborhood context generally consists of single-unit residential building forms and uses. The proposed rezoning would allow the same residential building forms and uses.

The Urban Edge Residential zone districts are intended to “promote and protect residential neighborhoods within the character of the Urban Edge Neighborhood Context [and] provide a consistent framework to property owners, developers, and neighborhood residents to reinforce desired development patterns, encourage affordable housing, and accommodate reinvestment in residential districts” (DZC 4.4.4.1).

The specific intent of the E-SU-B zone district is to allow a “single unit district allowing only urban houses with a minimum zone lot area of 4,500 square feet and detached accessory dwelling units” (DZC 4.2.2.2.D).

The proposed E-SU-B zone district is consistent with plan guidance to maintain Low Residential uses and building forms, but is not consistent with guidance regarding the existing pattern of lot sizes in the neighborhood.

## **Attachments**

1. Application + public outreach
2. RNO letter of support