



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: April 25, 2023
RE: Proposed 38th & Huron Urban Redevelopment Plan

Planning Board Finding

The Denver Planning Board is pleased to forward its finding to City Council that the proposed 38th & Huron 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 7 to 0 in favor of the proposal at its regular meeting on April 19, 2023.

Background

The Urban Redevelopment Area (URA) is an approximately 3.3-acre area located in the Globeville statistical neighborhood. It covers slightly more than an entire city block bounded by North Galapago Street, West 38th Avenue, a future North Huron Street and West 39th Avenue. The Urban Redevelopment Area was previously used as a heavy equipment rental and storage facility until 2020 when the storage business vacated the site and the property has since remained unoccupied.

The subject area is zoned C-MX-20, UO-2, a Denver Zoning Code Urban Center Mixed Use district allowing up to 20 stories with the Billboard Use Overlay. The property was rezoned in 2019 to better align with land use recommendations in the 41st & Fox Station Area Plan which envisions a Denver, transit-oriented neighborhood near the RTD commuter rail station which opened in 2019.

The surrounding area includes a mix of uses with primarily industrial and commercial activity on the east side of the Burlington Northern and RTD railroad tracks and primarily residential uses across the tracks west of North Inca Street.

A conditions study (referred to in state statute as a “blight study”) was conducted in February 2023. The study found that there are five blight factors present in the Urban Redevelopment Area, including inadequate street layout and public improvements, deteriorating structures, environmental contamination and vacancy, thus meeting the standards of “blight” as described in Colorado Revised Statutes § 31-25-101, the Urban Renewal Law.

Urban Redevelopment Plan

The proposed Urban Redevelopment Plan (URP) establishes the 38th and Huron Urban Redevelopment Area. The Urban Redevelopment Plan is intended to promote complete and equitable neighborhoods through the following objectives:



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 enhance the multimodal transportation network serving the URA.
4. To promote a diverse, sustainable neighborhood economy.
5. To encourage land use patterns within the URA and its environs that result in a more environmentally sustainable city.
6. To assist the City in cultivating complete and inclusive neighborhoods.
7. To more effectively use underdeveloped land within the URA.
8. To encourage land use patterns within the URA and its environs where pedestrians are safe and welcome.
9. To improve the economy of the City by stabilizing and upgrading property values.
10. To encourage high and moderate density development where appropriate near regional transportation access.
11. 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 April 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), Globeville Neighborhood Plan (2013) and the 41st & Fox Station Area Plan (2009). 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 April 19, 2023, meeting, the Denver Planning Board finds that the proposed 38th and Huron Urban Redevelopment Plan conforms with Denver's adopted Comprehensive Plan and its applicable supplements.

Attachments

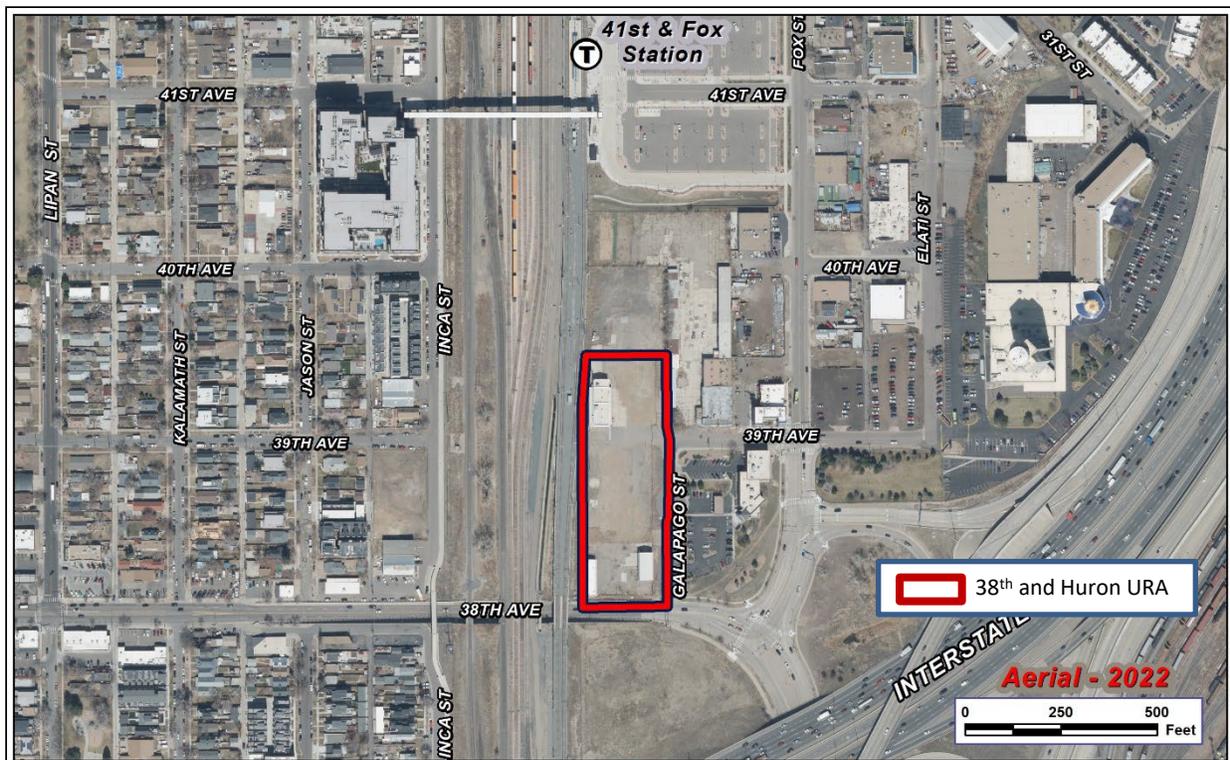
1. CPD Planning Board staff report



TO: Denver Planning Board
FROM: Brandon Shaver, Senior City Planner
DATE: April 12, 2023
RE: 38th & Huron Urban Redevelopment Plan

Staff Report and Recommendation

Colorado law charges Denver’s Planning Board with reviewing an urban redevelopment plan and making a recommendation as to its conformity with the Comprehensive Plan (Colorado Revised Statutes Title 31 Government Municipal § 31-25-107(2)). Community Planning and Development staff finds that the proposed 38th and Huron Urban Redevelopment Plan conforms to Denver’s Comprehensive Plan and applicable supplements and recommends that the Planning Board take formal action at its April 19, 2023 meeting to make this finding.



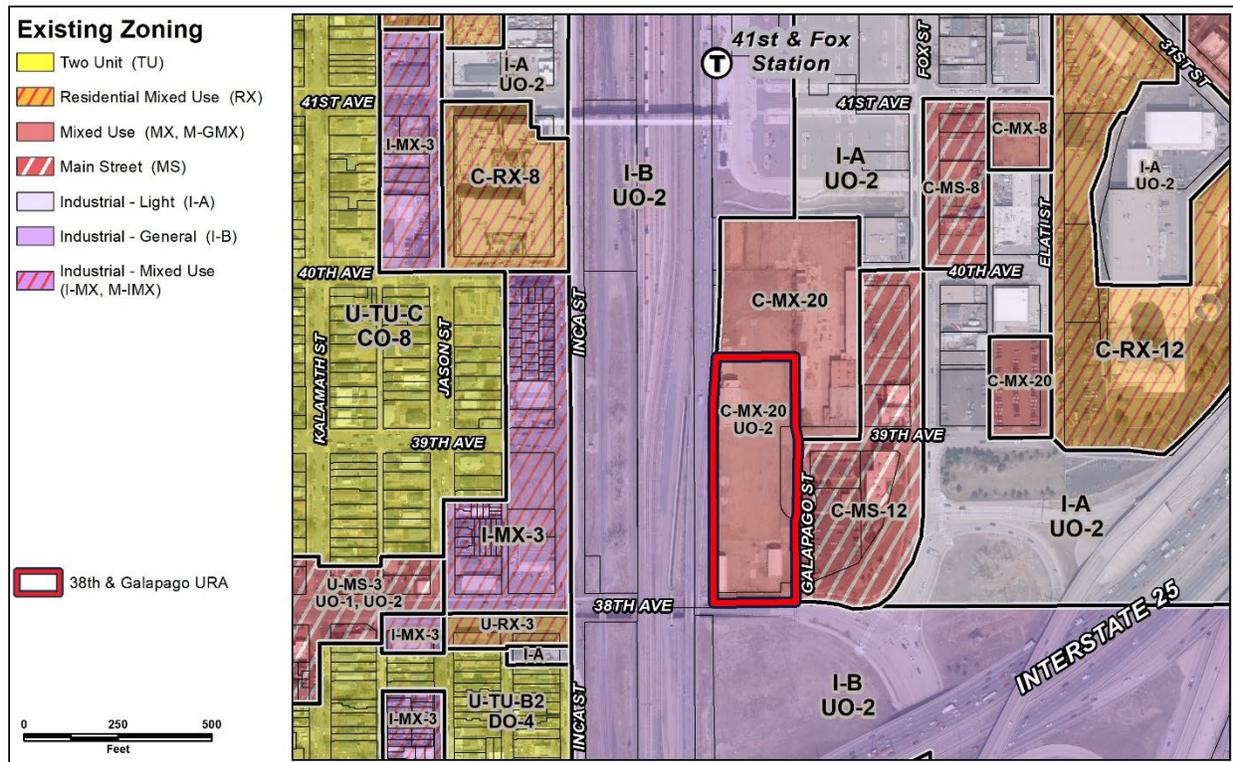
Proposed Urban Redevelopment Area

Background

The Urban Redevelopment Area (URA) is an approximately 3.3-acre area generally bounded by privately owned property to the north, the alignment of North Galapago Street to the east, West 38th Avenue to the south and the rail tracks to the west. The URA was formerly used as a heavy equipment rental and

storage facility until 2020 when the storage business vacated the site, and the property has since remained unoccupied. The URA's infrastructure was suitable for serving the previous industrial user but in its current state it cannot accommodate the envisioned uses for the site, as described in the 41st & Fox Station Area Plan and permitted under the property's mixed-use zoning designation. The URA is only accessible by a single road and lacks the public improvements required for property in a mixed-use urban neighborhood and the street access needed to adequately connect the site to the surrounding transportation network. The revitalization of the URA requires the establishment of new infrastructure that will incorporate the site into the surrounding urbanized street grid, provide appropriate pedestrian and bicycle accommodations and improve the transportation connectivity of the 41st & Fox Station Area.

Existing Zoning



The subject area is currently zoned C-MX-20, UO-2, a Denver Zoning Code Urban Center Mixed Use district allowing up to 20 stories with the Billboard Use Overlay. The property was rezoned in 2019 to better align with land use recommendations in the 41st & Fox Station Area Plan which envisions a dense, transit-oriented neighborhood near the RTD commuter rail station which opened in 2019.

Existing Land Use



The surrounding area includes a mix of uses with primarily industrial and commercial activity on the east side of the Burlington Northern and RTD railroad tracks and primarily residential uses across the tracks west of North Inca Street.

A conditions study (referred to in state statute as a “blight study”) was conducted in February 2023. The study found that there are five blight factors present in the Urban Redevelopment Area, including inadequate street layout and public improvements, deteriorating structures, environmental contamination and vacancy, thus meeting the standards of “blight” as described in Colorado Revised Statutes § 31-25-101, the Urban Renewal Law.

Urban Redevelopment Plan

The proposed Urban Redevelopment Plan (URP) establishes the 38th and Huron Urban Redevelopment Area. The Urban Redevelopment Plan is intended to promote complete and equitable neighborhoods through the following objectives:

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 enhance the multimodal transportation network serving the URA.
4. To promote a diverse, sustainable neighborhood economy.
5. To encourage land use patterns within the URA and its environs that result in a more environmentally sustainable city.
6. To assist the City in cultivating complete and inclusive neighborhoods.
7. To more effectively use underdeveloped land within the URA.
8. To encourage land use patterns within the URA and its environs where pedestrians are safe and welcome.
9. To improve the economy of the City by stabilizing and upgrading property values.
10. To encourage high and moderate density development where appropriate near regional transportation access.
11. To achieve goals as outlined in adopted City Plans.

As outlined in the attached Urban Redevelopment Plan document from DURA, tax increment financing is requested within the project area to facilitate civil infrastructure improvements associated with the redevelopment and revitalization of existing structures and support the development of new mixed-use structures containing housing, retail and neighborhood services. The project area's infrastructure improvements are expected to include street and sidewalk improvements, alleys, streetscape and pedestrian facilities and parking facilities.

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 redevelopment plan conforms with the jurisdiction's comprehensive plan. DURA then conveys the Planning Board finding to City Council.

Analysis of Comprehensive Plan Conformity

CPD staff finds that the proposed Urban Redevelopment Plan conforms to the Denver Comprehensive Plan and its applicable supplements, Blueprint Denver, Globeville Neighborhood Plan and the 41st & Fox Station Area Plan.

Comprehensive Plan 2040

CPD staff finds that the Urban Redevelopment Plan conforms to Comprehensive Plan 2040 by furthering several city-wide objectives, policies and actions in the plan, including the following under the Equitable, Affordable, and Inclusive vision element:

- *Goal 1, Strategy A:* Increase development of housing units close to transit and mixed-use developments (p. 28).
- *Goal 2, Strategy A:* Create a greater mix of housing options in every neighborhood for all individuals and families (p. 28).
- *Goal 7:* Make neighborhoods accessible to people of all ages and abilities (p. 30).

The development contemplated by the URP would advance several strategies under the Strong and Authentic Neighborhoods vision element:

- *Goal 1, Strategy A:* Build a network of well connected, vibrant, mixed-use centers and corridors (p. 34).
- *Goal 1, Strategy B:* Ensure neighborhoods offer a mix of housing types and services for a diverse population (p. 34).
- *Goal 1, Strategy C:* Ensure neighborhoods are safe, accessible, and well-connected for all modes (p. 34).
- *Goal 1, Strategy D:* Encourage quality infill development that is consistent with the surrounding neighborhoods and offers opportunities for increased amenities (p. 34).

The following strategies under the Connected, Safe and Accessible Places vision element would be advanced by this Urban Redevelopment Plan:

- *Goal 2, Strategy B:* Build streets that are safe for everyone, especially for the most vulnerable, including the elderly, those with disabilities and children (p.40).
- *Goal 3, Strategy A:* Create streets to foster economic activity, contribute to great urban design and accommodate green infrastructure, including street trees (p.40).
- *Goal 4, Strategy A:* Ensure focused transportation investment - on streets as well as neighborhood trails - in areas with populations more dependent on walking, rolling and transit (p. 41).
- *Goal 8, Strategy B:* Promote transit-oriented development and encourage high density development, including affordable housing near transit to support ridership (p. 42).

Similarly, the following strategies of the Environmentally Resilient vision element would be advanced by the URP:

- *Goal 8, Strategy B:* Encourage mixed-use communities where residents can live, work and play in their own neighborhoods (p. 54).
- *Goal 8, Strategy C:* Focus growth by transit stations and along high- and medium- capacity transit corridors (p. 54).

Additionally, the following strategy from the Healthy and Active vision element would be advanced by the URP:

- *Goal 1:* Create and enhance environments that support physical activity and healthy living (p. 58).

Blueprint Denver (2019)

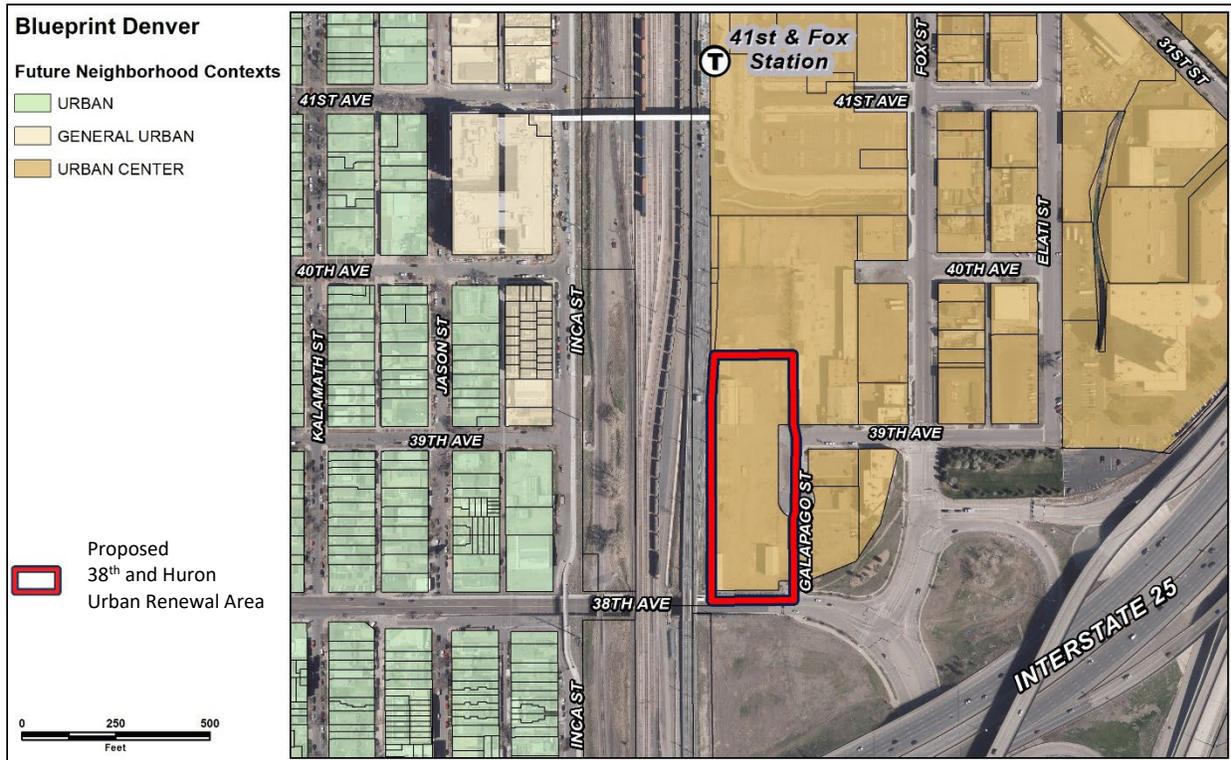
Blueprint Denver is Denver's citywide, 20-year land use and transportation plan. It was adopted by City Council in 2019 as a supplement to Comprehensive Plan 2040. The plan calls for an inclusive, equitable city through complete neighborhoods and transportation networks and a strategic growth strategy that focuses growth in key areas.

In Blueprint Denver, future neighborhood contexts are used to help understand differences in land use and built form and mobility options at a higher scale, between neighborhoods. *Blueprint Denver* identifies the subject property within the Urban Center Neighborhood Context. The proposed 38th and Huron URA is identified as a Community Center Place Type. The proposed Urban Redevelopment Plan

will promote development that is consistent with the intent of the neighborhood contexts, future place, street types and growth area maps in the plan.

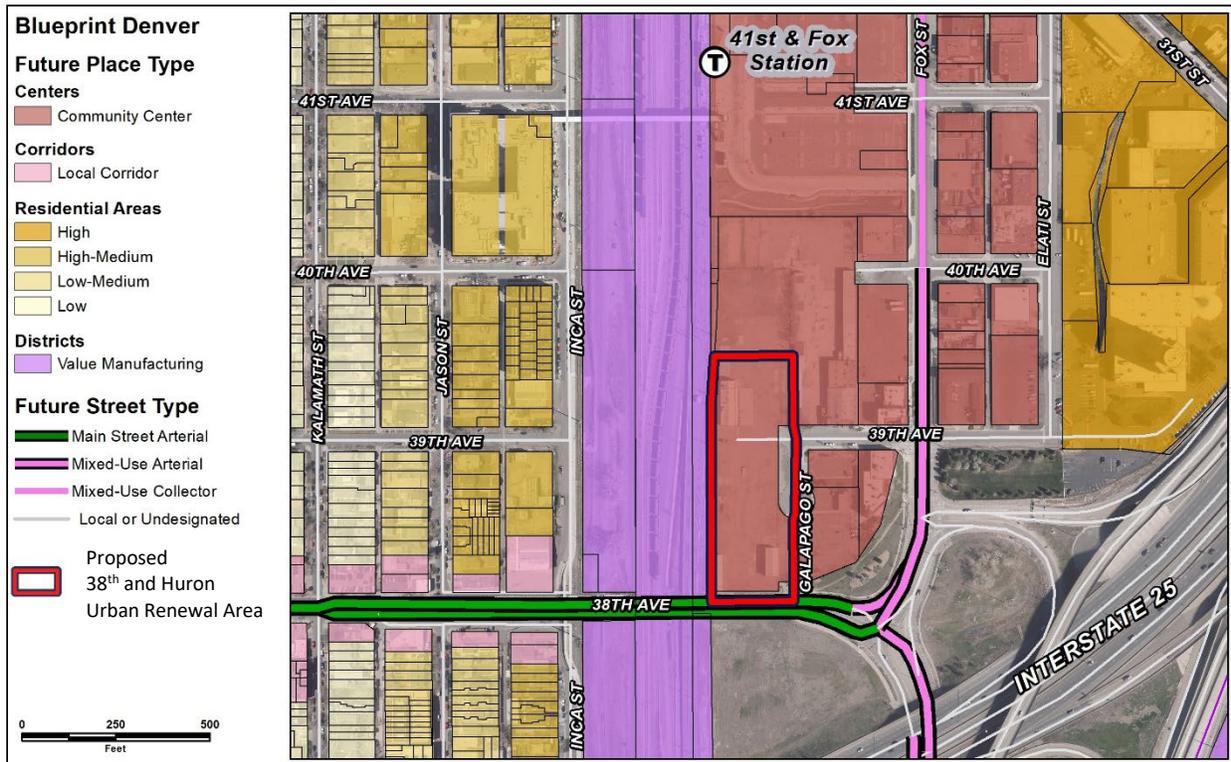
In addition, the proposed URP furthers several recommendations as described below.

Neighborhood Context



The proposed Urban Redevelopment Area is within the Urban Center context, which is described as “dense and vibrant areas that support residents and visitors. This context contains high intensity residential and significant employment areas. Development typically contains a high mix of uses, with good street activation and connectivity” (p 251). The current C-MX-20 zone district is intended to “enhance the convenience, ease and enjoyment of transit, walking, shopping and public gathering within and around the city’s neighborhoods” (DZC 7.2.2.1).

Future Places

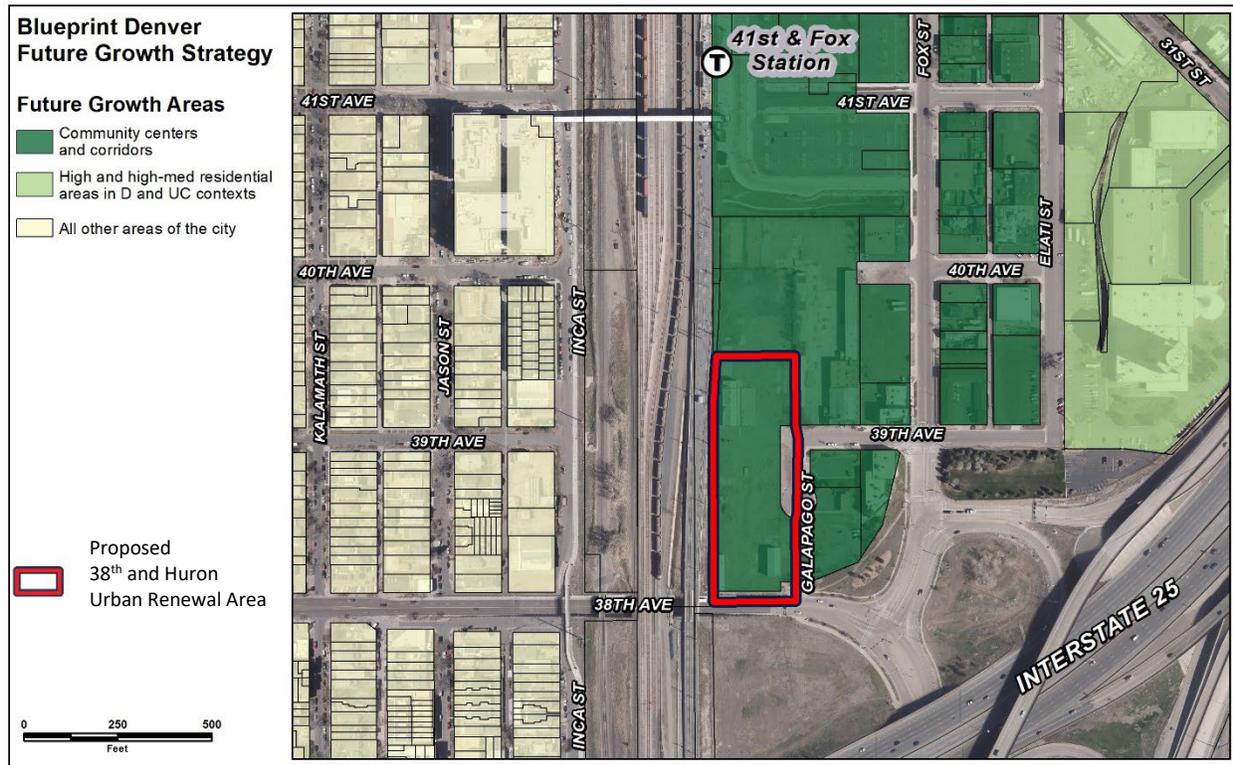


The Future Places map shows the subject property as part of a Community Center. The proposed URA will promote development that is consistent with the Community Center plan direction by supporting the infrastructure improvements needed to establish an urbanized street grid, improve transportation connections to the surrounding area and enhance the pedestrian environment.

Blueprint Denver describes Community Centers as having “A wide customer draw both of local residents from surrounding neighborhoods and from other parts of the city. Activity levels vary depending on the type and mix of uses. Buildings have a distinctly linear orientation along the street. Building footprints are typically larger. Heights are generally up to 12 stories in the taller areas and should transition gradually within the center’s footprint to the surrounding residential areas” (p.256).

Blueprint Denver classifies West 38th Avenue as a main-street arterial and North Galapago Street as a local or undesignated. Streets in this context usually have high degrees of pedestrian activity. Main streets and mixed-use streets provide a sidewalk amenity zone with benches, trees and/or planters to provide a buffer between people walking and auto traffic, while residential streets provide a tree lawn” (p. 262).

Growth Strategy



Blueprint Denver shows the subject property as part of a Community Centers and Corridors future growth area. The proposed URA will promote development that supports employment and residential growth in a Community Center where it has been determined to be most appropriate and is consistent with the *Blueprint Denver* growth strategy map.

The Community Centers and Corridors are anticipated to see 25% of new housing growth and 20% of new employment growth by 2040 (p. 50 - 51).

Focusing growth in Community Centers and Corridors “helps to provide a variety of housing, jobs and entertainment options within a comfortable distance to all Denverites and is a key element of building complete neighborhoods throughout Denver” (p. 49).

Other recommendations furthered by the proposed URP

Blueprint Denver provides policy recommendations and strategies to create complete neighborhoods and networks, guide future growth, and promote equitable development. The proposed URP will further many of these recommendations, including the following (with reference to *Blueprint Denver*):

- *Land Use and Built Form – General Policy 1:* Promote and anticipate planned growth in major centers and corridors and key residential areas connected by rail service and transit priority streets (p. 72).
- *Land Use and Built Form – General Policy 2:* Incentivize or require efficient development of land, especially in transit-rich areas (p. 72).

- *Land Use and Built Form – General Policy 7:* Integrate infrastructure needed to support the community into more areas of the city (p. 76).
- *Land Use and Built Form – Housing Policy 6:* Increase the development of affordable housing and mixed-income housing, particularly in areas near transit, services and amenities (p. 85).
- *Land Use and Built Form – Housing Policy 8:* Capture 80 percent of new housing growth in regional centers, community centers and corridors, high-intensity residential areas, greenfield residential areas, innovation flex districts and university campus districts (p. 86).
- *Land Use and Built Form – Economics Policy 2:* Improve equitable access to employment areas throughout the city to ensure all residents can connect to employment opportunities (p. 90).
- *Land Use and Built Form – Design Quality and Preservation Policy 4:* Ensure an active and pedestrian-friendly environment that provides a true mixed-use character in centers and corridors (p. 103).
- *Mobility Policy 1:* Encourage mode-shift – more trips by walking and rolling, biking and transit – through efficient land use and infrastructure improvements (p. 108).
- *Mobility Policy 2:* Align the impacts of private development with transportation infrastructure and promote development that creates walkable, transit-friendly communities (p. 108).
- *Mobility Policy 3:* On all streets, prioritize people walking and biking over other modes of transportation (p. 109).
- *Quality of Life Infrastructure Policy 5:* Ensure attractive streets and outdoor spaces in all centers and corridors, giving priority to pedestrian spaces and amenities (p. 121).
- *Quality of Life Infrastructure Policy 10:* Work with public and private partners to improve access to shops, restaurants, entertainment, civic uses, services and a variety of daily needs for all Denver residents (p. 124).

Globeville Neighborhood Plan (2013)

The *Globeville Neighborhood Plan* establishes near-term aspirations and a long-term vision for the future development of the Globeville neighborhood. The *Globeville Neighborhood Plan* outlines recommendations and strategies to achieve its vision of creating a unique, strong, connected, and healthy Globeville.

Recommendations furthered by the proposed 38th and Huron Urban Redevelopment Plan

- A11: Create unique neighborhood destination areas (p. 25)
- B14: Improve access to housing (p. 45)
- B15: Improve neighborhood services (p. 46)
- C8: Build sidewalks (p. 58)
- C9: Design streets to accommodate pedestrians and bicycles (p. 58)
- C10: Explore new pedestrian and bicycle connections (p. 58)
- C11: Improve key intersections to better accommodate bicycles and pedestrians (p. 59)
- C12: Complete the bicycle network (p. 59)
- C14: Build and connect to commuter rail (p. 62)
- D11: Improve street infrastructure (p. 76)
- D12: Improve street connectivity (p. 76)
- D16: Create complete streets (p. 76)

41st & Fox Station Area Plan (2009)

The *41st & Fox Station Area Plan* guides future land use and infrastructure decisions for the ½ mile area surrounding the 41st & Fox commuter rail station. This plan envisions the ½ mile area developing “over the coming decades into the focal point of a diverse, transit supportive and environmentally sustainable urban center” (p. vii). The plan’s vision establishes the basis to five primary goals for the station area:

- Improve pedestrian connections to the station, between neighborhoods, and along major corridors.
- Create opportunities to add more housing, jobs and services to the station area.
- Incorporate plazas, parks and open space into redevelopment areas.
- Capitalize on the station area’s proximity to Downtown and location on the Gold Line and Northwest Rail corridors.
- Balance the needs of new development and existing uses.

The proposed urban redevelopment plan will help achieve many of the 41st & Fox Station Area Plan’s primary goals by supporting a project that will redevelop vacant property, add more housing opportunities close to the transit station and make several infrastructure improvements that will improve the transportation connectivity of the 41st & Fox Station Area as well as the pedestrian environment within the station area.

CPD Staff Recommendation

Based on the analysis presented in this staff report, CPD staff recommends that the Planning Board find the proposed 38th and Huron Urban Redevelopment Plan to be in conformance with the Denver Comprehensive Plan and its applicable supplements.

Attachments

1. DURA Planning Board Memorandum
2. Proposed Urban Redevelopment Plan