1000 S Logan Street
Proposed Zoning Change from U-RH-3A to U-MX-3
Case number: 2024i-00062
October 29, 2024

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this proposed rezoning. My name is Kathryn Fontaine. I live at 1025 S Pearl St, one block east of the proposed rezoning. These are my personal comments.

The applicant, Narrate, is to be commended for reaching out to the immediate neighbors and working with the West Washington Park Neighborhood Association (WWPNA) to negotiate a Community Benefit Agreement (CBA). Narrate's proposed development plan is preferred over what would otherwise be allowed by strict adherence to the parcel's current U-RH-3A zoning (which would require Narrate to build two buildings instead of one). However, as discussed below, it is inappropriate to apply mixed use zoning at a location where a safe, active, and pedestrian-scaled, diverse area is infeasible. Instead, relief should be provided through a PUD zoning that incorporates the dimensional requirements of the CBA once it is negotiated.

Background

The applicant for this rezoning, Narrate, has proposed a project that largely conforms to the current U-RH-3A zoning of this parcel. They have offered to limit the height of the proposed building to 38 feet and limit the use to residential, consistent with the current zoning.

My understanding is that the main drivers of this rezoning request are:

1. Narrate's desire to build a single building, which would exceed the maximum allowable U-RH-3A zone lot size of 16,000 sf, and
2. Narrate's desire to move the building further into the front setback and away from the alley.

Building a single building would facilitate Narrate's proposal to

1. provide parking for every resident and
2. incorporate design features that would provide additional privacy to the neighbors across the alley.

Narrate does not wish to rezone to U-MX-2 (which would be consistent with the building across from it on E Tennessee at 990 S Logan St) because that zoning would limit the building height to 30'.

However, rezoning to U-MX-3 is not appropriate, as discussed below.

Staff Recommendation

The Planning Staff has recommended rezoning this parcel to U-MX-3 (**U**rban, **Mix**ed Use, **3**-story maximum height). The Staff's basis for this recommendation is that this "zone district is designed for areas or intersections served primarily by local or collector streets where a building scale of 1 to 3 stories is desired. It is intended to provide safe, active, and pedestrian-scaled, diverse areas along corridors and embedded in residential neighborhoods."

This is an absurd justification for rezoning, as it could be met by nearly every parcel in the city.

- ✓ Served primarily by local street or collector streets,
- ✓ 1 to 3 stories desired,
- ✓ Intended to provide safe, active, and pedestrian-scaled, diverse areas along corridors and embedded in residential neighborhoods.

However, based on a cursory examination, this parcel does not appear to meet the intent of U-MX-3 zoning, and would more appropriately be zoned as U-RH-3A with variances or as a PUD.

Served primarily by local street or collector streets?
No.

The parcel frontage is on South Logan Street (S Logan), classified as a Residential Arterial Street. It seems like a stretch to assert a mixed-use parcel is primarily served by a street other than its frontage.

Vehicle access will primarily be from East Tennessee Avenue (E Tennessee) **via S Logan**. The parcel can also be accessed via North Buchtel Boulevard (N Buchtel), but N Buchtel is a one-way street with direction of travel from southeast to northwest. This would only be a convenient access path when traveling from the southeast. When approaching from the north, west or south, E Tennessee via S Logan would be the expected access path as shown below.

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1 to 3 stories desired?
Yes.

Narrate is proposing a three-story apartment building.

Intended to provide safe, active, and pedestrian-scaled, diverse areas along corridors and embedded in residential neighborhoods?
No.

Oddly, this justification for rezoning is based on intent. However, this location is not capable of providing a safe, active, and pedestrian-scaled, diverse area along a corridor, as discussed below, and the applicant does not intend to do so. Narrate has clearly communicated to the immediate neighbors that they intend to develop this parcel for residential housing only.

<u>S Logan at this location fraught with danger to every type of traveler.</u>

- Vehicles
    - Intersection of N Buchtel and S Logan
        - At the intersection where N Buchtel tees into S Logan, it is impossible for a person in a vehicle on N Buchtel to see the cross-traffic traveling north (towards them) without entering and completely blocking the pedestrian crosswalk.
        - When vehicles turning left enter the crosswalk, vehicles turning right must pull even farther forward because their view is now blocked.
        - During rush hour, there is an almost uninterrupted flow of traffic traveling north across the S Logan bridge regardless of the traffic signal at E Mississippi. Vehicles are either continuing north from S Logan or turning left onto S Logan from E Mississippi.
    - Intersection of E Tennessee from S Logan
        - As noted above, there is an almost uninterrupted flow of cross-traffic traveling north across the S Logan bridge. This makes it very difficult to turn onto S Logan from E Tennessee or turn left onto E Tennessee from S Logan.
        - After turning on to E Tennessee, a driver is immediately faced with a narrow street crowded with vehicles parked on either side.
- Pedestrians:
    - Intersection of N Buchtel and S Logan
        - As noted above, vehicles turning on to S Logan from N Buchtel must routinely enter the crosswalk. This forces pedestrians to walk behind the first row of cars at this crosswalk.
    - Intersection of E Mississippi and S Logan
        - Once across the N Buchtel crosswalk, a pedestrian on their way to Sprouts must cross S Logan at E Mississippi. This intersection has a stop light with a pedestrian signal. However, there is a steady stream of traffic turning left from E Mississippi to S Logan, and the signal has no red left turn arrow, so pedestrians are not well protected once the light turns green.

- Intersection of E Tennessee and S Logan
  - One way to avoid the N Buchtel crosswalk would be to cross at the newly painted pedestrian crosswalk at the corner of S Logan and E Tennessee. However, there is no stop sign or signal at this crosswalk. Drivers are not accustomed to a crosswalk at this location, and many don't see it. Therefore, the painted crosswalk offers little protection.

- Safe alternative
  - The only truly safe alternative for pedestrians to cross S Logan is to walk two blocks north to the traffic signal at E Ohio Ave. This is not a reasonable solution.

- Cyclists:
  - There are no bike lanes on S Logan. Cyclists would travel the same paths as pedestrians and face the same hazards.

View of N Buchtel from S Logan bridge. Vehicle attempting to make a left turn from N Buchtel to S Logan has pulled into the pedestrian crosswalk to see the northbound traffic coming across the bridge.

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View of S Logan from N Buchtel

View of S Logan from N Buchtel. Vehicle in the left lane has completely blocked the crosswalk. There is a vehicle in front of the Ford Escape that is not visible in the photo. It has pulled even farther forward to see around the vehicle in the left lane. Pedestrians must routinely cross behind the first row of vehicles at this crosswalk.

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View of E Tennessee just after entering turning off S Logan. Vehicles are typically parked on both sides of the street almost to the corner.

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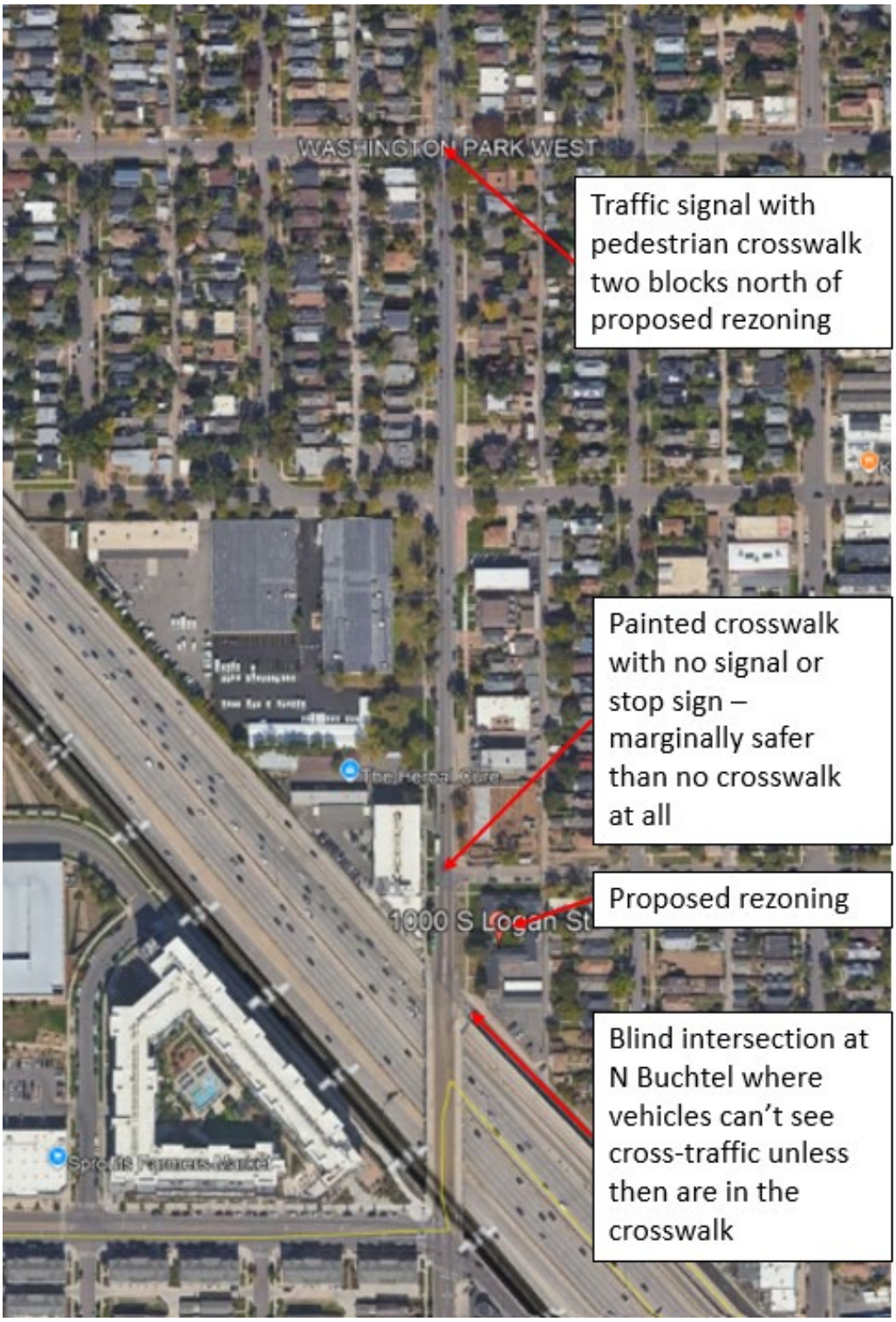

Overhead view showing possible options for pedestrians crossing N Buchtel or S Logan. The only truly safe option is to travel two blocks to the north and cross at the signal at E Ohio Ave.

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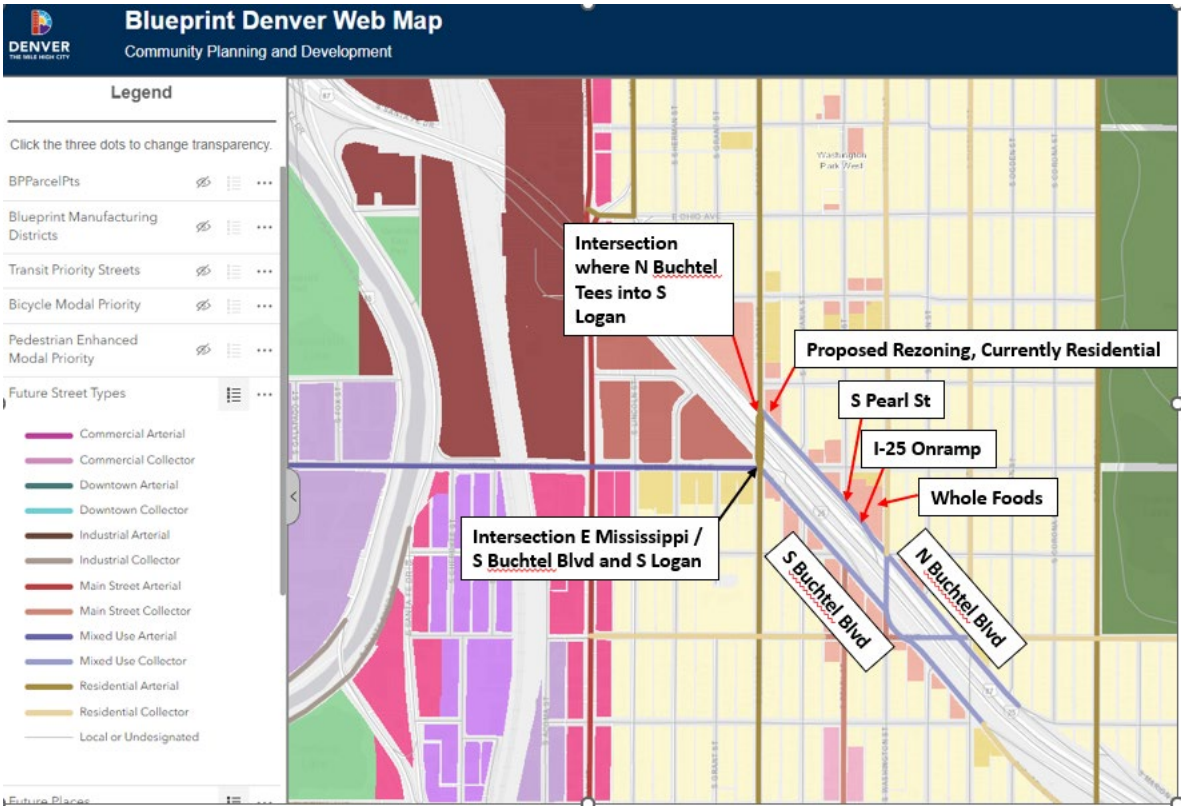
N Buchtel Blvd classified as a Mixed Use Collector

As shown on the map below, N Buchtel is classified as a Mixed Use Collector. However, there are no commercial uses beyond South Pearl St (S Pearl), so N Buchtel should arguably be classified as a residential collector from S Pearl to where it Tees into S Logan.



Conclusion

This parcel should not be rezoned to U-MX-3. The transportation infrastructure at the corner of N Buchtel and S Logan and the corner of E Tennessee and S Logan is unsafe for motor vehicles, cyclists, and pedestrians. Future use as a local center is unsupportable because a safe, active, and pedestrian-scaled, diverse area is infeasible at this location under the current traffic conditions.

Recommendation

Narrate's proposed development plan is preferred over what would otherwise be allowed by strict adherence to the parcel's current U-RH-3A zoning. But, it is inappropriate to apply mixed use zoning at a location where a safe, active, and pedestrian-scaled, diverse area is infeasible and is not the applicant's intent. Instead, relief should be provided through a PUD zoning that incorporates the dimensional requirements of the CBA once it is negotiated.