



38th and Blake Station Area Plan Public Meeting #3 Meeting Summary

The 38th and Blake Open House was held on **June 3, 2009 from 5:30-7:30pm at the Dry Ice Factory, 3300 Walnut Street**. The purpose of this meeting was to gather feedback on a preferred plan developed for the station area.

Gideon Berger and Courtland Hyser, Project Managers for the City and County of Denver, provided an overview of the study area, the existing conditions, and recommendations for improved circulation and stormwater mitigation. Laura Aldrete of PB PlaceMaking gave an overview of the preferred land use concept. The full powerpoint presentation may be viewed on the City's website at:

<http://www.denvergov.org/StationAreas/38thBlakeStation/tabid/395234/Default.aspx>

Many questions were asked about the relationship between this process and the City Zoning Code Update, which is currently underway. The City will be holding a series of public meetings throughout the summer as part of the release of the new Zoning Code. It is anticipated that this plan will be adopted prior to the new Zoning Code and thus reflected in the final Zoning Code and map to be adopted. Once adopted this plan will offer guidance as to the appropriate use and form when rezonings occur within the Station Area.

The draft text of the Zoning Code has been posted to <http://newcodedenver.org>. Information on upcoming public meetings for the new zoning code can also be found on that website.

The following summarizes the questions from the public following the presentation.

Questions:

- 1) Once this plan is reviewed by the City's traffic engineering department, could the circulation recommendations change?
 - a. (Answer): The planning department has been and continues to work closely with Public Works and the Transportation Department. The plan is currently being reviewed internally within these departments. The traffic engineering department is reviewing it to ensure there are no fatal flaws with this plan. It is possible that there will be modifications in the street design/recommendations as a result of a follow-up transportation operations study that is scheduled to begin immediately following the adoption of this station area plan.
- 2) Where would the second pedestrian crossing of the tracks be located?
 - a. A secondary pedestrian crossing is proposed at 31st Street. The 31st Street bridge is a lower priority than the proposed pedestrian bridge at 36th Street.
- 3) Where are the two Central Corridor stops planned along Downing?
 - a. At 33rd and at 35th Avenues. RTD will be initiating an environmental evaluation of the Central Corridor in the Fall of 2009. Both of these stations, as well as the end of line station near the 38th and Blake station, will need to be evaluated in greater detail in that study.



- 4) Comment: In addition to a cross-section for Brighton, we would like to see a cross-section completed for Blake Street. The street is currently a very wide one-way street and needs traffic calming, tree lawns, sidewalks, etc.
- 5) How far will the conversion of one-way to two-way streets extend from the station?
 - a. The plan envisions that the Blake Street conversion would extend at least to Broadway. The remainder of streets would be converted from one-way to two-way through the length of the study area.
- 6) Will Blake Street be two-way near the station?
 - a. Blake will be two-way through its entire length, including the portion that is currently one-way north of 35th Avenue. Currently there are only 3,000 vehicles per day utilizing the one-way portion of Blake Street. By making it two-way, traffic will be slowed down. One goal of this plan is to redirect traffic off of Blake Street and disperse the vehicles to Larimer or Downing Streets. The station should serve as a destination that is accessible and safe for pedestrians, bicycles and vehicles.
- 7) Question from Judy Montero, Denver City Councilwoman: Have all of the plans that are either completed or are underway within this station area been incorporated into this plan? Specific plans: *Brighton Boulevard Urban Design Guidelines*, *General Development Plan for Brighton Boulevard*, *River North Greenway Master Plan*, *Zoning Code Update*, *Creative Spaces Study*, *Northeast Downtown Neighborhoods Plan (upcoming)*, *River North Plan* and the *Living Streets Plan*.
 - a. Yes, all of these plans formed the basis of this study. We are incorporating the proposed Brighton Boulevard cross-section into our plan. Consistent with the Design Guidelines, our plan does not recommend bicycle lanes on Brighton Boulevard and instead puts them on parallel streets. This is due to the existing and anticipated high traffic volumes as well as private property acquisition required to install new lanes. Brighton Boulevard is designated an Enhanced Transit Corridor in Blueprint Denver, and thus is a candidate for the Living Streets Initiative. In terms of implementing creative spaces for artists, 37th Street in River North is envisioned as a Main Street for artists---this plan seeks to build upon the synergy of artist work spaces and galleries already happening in the area. The River North Plan was the foundation from which this Station Area Plan began and its recommendations were re-examined as part of this planning process. The green spaces identified in the River North Area and along the South Platte River reinforce the findings of the Greenway Master Plan that was recently completed by the Parks and Recreation department. The informal GDP work was also incorporated into station area plan's parks and open space recommendations. The *Northeast Downtown Neighborhoods Plan* will commence once this plan is adopted. Lastly, the New Zoning Code will use this Station Area Plan to inform its zoning recommendations in this area.
- 8) Comment from Judy Montero, Denver City Councilwoman: There seems to be a lot of attention paid to vehicles in this study—pedestrian and bicycle facilities need to be prioritized as well. The City is beginning a Health Impact Assessment in neighborhoods within Council District 9 to evaluate the linkages between health, transportation and land use. Upcoming plans, including the *Northeast Downtown Neighborhood Plan*, should incorporate a Health Impact Assessment.
- 9) What are the future plans for the UP Railroad? Have they been involved in this plan?
 - a. CDOT has been completing a study to evaluate the possible relocation of the railroad outside of the City. This study is still ongoing and it is likely the railroad will be here at least in the short term. RTD has to acquire the air rights from the UP to



construct a pedestrian bridge, whether at 38th Street or at 36th Street, and is currently in discussions with them.

- 10) Comment: A two-way conversion of Blake Street is definitely preferred. Push the cars to the middle of the street-slow the traffic, install tree lawns. The plan should outline the specific sidewalk widths recommended on all of the streets, as well as the streetscape amenities recommended.
 - a. The plan text more fully outlines these recommendations.
- 11) Will there be pedestrian lighting on 36th Street near the station?
 - a. Yes, that is a recommendation. 36th Street is identified in the plan as being a primary pedestrian route to the station, and as such is a top candidate for new pedestrian infrastructure and amenities.
- 12) What are the construction timeframes for the East Corridor and for this plan?
 - a. The City has \$2 million in bond money to make circulation improvements around the station. This money will be spent in the next 3-5 years. RTD is anticipated to begin construction on the East Corridor in 2011. Opening day for the East corridor is 2015.
- 13) It seems like this plan will not be palatable if RTD does not move the pedestrian bridge (from 38th to 36th).
 - a. RTD has a pedestrian bridge planned at 38th Street. If they are not able to move it to 36th, the City still wants a pedestrian bridge at 36th to better serve the community. If the 36th Street bridge is not constructed by RTD, the City would need to find separate funding for that bridge.
- 14) What are the recent zoning changes along Blake and how do they affect this plan?
 - a. The changes are a conversion from Industrial to R-MU-30 to allow for mixed-use development similar to the loft-style development already occurring along Blake. The City asked property owners to hold off on rezoning parcels within the study area until after this plan had been completed, but the property owners are moving forward with their rezonings.
- 15) Will this plan rezone properties in the area?
 - a. No, but it establishes City policy for future rezonings in this area. If property owners approach the City about rezoning their property, the City will compare their proposed rezoning with this plan to ensure they are consistent.
- 16) The Upper Larimer Neighborhood Association merged with the RiNo Neighborhood Organization to form the RiNo Neighbors. Need to make sure that the City is sending announcements to RiNo Neighbors about rezonings.
 - a. The project managers will inform the City's Plan Implementation staff of this change.

Next Steps

We need your input! The plan will be released to the public in the next few weeks. An email will be sent out to the mailing list to let the public know that the plan is available for comment. A presentation on this plan will be made to Planning Board on Wednesday, June 17th (City and County of Denver Wellington Webb Building, 3 PM). The Planning Board Public Hearing will then be held either July 1st or 15th. The plan is anticipated to be adopted by City Council in early-August. The public has an opportunity to comment at all of these meetings/hearings.

Please send any questions or comments to Gideon Berger (720-865-2932), Gideon.berger@denvergov.org or Courtland Hyser (720-865-2924), Courtland.hyser@denvergov.org, Project Managers for the City and County of Denver.