

SOUTHMOOR STATION PLAN FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

What is the purpose of this planning process and who are the partners?

- Reality of Development Pressure: Popularity of neighborhoods and anticipated population and employment growth creates market pressure. In Denver, vacant land and underutilized sites located near important amenities such as parks, expressways, and light rail stations experience the greatest likelihood for in-fill development and redevelopment.
- Planning Partners: Community Planning and Development (CPD), Public Works (PW), Parks, Office of Economic Development (OED), Mayor's Office, Denver Regional Council of Governments (DRCOG), Regional Transportation District (RTD), Registered Neighborhood Organizations (RNO), Planning Board, City Council, property owners, business owners, and residents.
- Benefits of a Collective Vision: Through a collaborative planning process partners can think about a unified circulation system, consider land use transitions, designate open space, identify infrastructure priorities, plan for traffic increases, and plan for community service needs such as schools and public safety.

How can the city, neighbors and others use and implement the plan?

- Private Land: This Station Plan is not a development plan or construction plan. When the city completes a plan, it is up to the private sector to implement concepts on private land. The city does not act as a developer nor have they been working with a developer on a specific project. To assist with the planning process, the city retained the firm of Crandall Arambula, consultants based in Portland who are experts in land use, urban design, infrastructure and transportation planning near transit stations.
- Zoning Changes: As mentioned above, the plan establishes a guide the city can use when evaluating proposed amendments to the zoning map or the zoning code that may result from the vision established during the planning process.
- Public Right-Of-Way: Because the plan will identify infrastructure priorities, the city can begin implementation by seeking funding for improvements to the right-of-way (ROW). For example, if identified in the plan, the city can allocate funding for improvements to streets, sidewalk installations, or bike facilities.

Will the city or RTD use eminent domain to implement this plan?

- Eminent Domain- City: Because there are several other mechanisms to implement this type of plan, it is not the city's policy to use eminent domain.
- Eminent Domain – RTD: RTD's enabling legislation only allows the use of condemnation for transit purposes (transit operations, parking, bus operations, etc.). RTD could not condemn for development purposes. In addition, RTD only uses its condemnation powers as a last resort when there is a need to purchase land for transit purposes. RTD is supportive of proactive planning, but defers to local jurisdictions for the lead on planning and zoning because RTD does not have jurisdiction over land use.

What does current zoning and other regulations allow?

- Current Zoning: The planning area includes land south of Hampden and west of Monaco. The majority of this land is zoned B-1 and B-3 with a small strip of Hampden frontage zoned B-A-3.
- Uses Allowed By Right: Current zoning are business districts and entitle landowners a wide range of land uses such as multiple family residential, commercial, professional offices, medical clinics, automobile services and sales, restaurants; and civic uses such as churches, recreation centers, libraries and schools.
- Building Size Requirements: Current zoning entitles a maximum building floor area ratio of 1 to 1. This means the total gross floor area cannot exceed the lot size (e.g if the lot size is 10,000 square feet then the building cannot exceed 10,000 square in size). Larger sites in the B-1 district (the RTD site) can increase that floor area ratio to 2 to 1, which means the total floor area can be twice the lot size.
- Southmoor Park View Plane: The Southmoor Park View Plane restricts building height for sites zoned for business to 42 feet (Chapter 10 of the Denver Municipal Code). Depending on building design, this can yield a maximum of 3 to 4-story buildings. This is a requirement that planning concepts cannot violate.

- Development Agreement: There is a development agreement between Contalp LLC and the Southmoor Park East Homeowners Association. This agreement limits development to less than allowed by zoning.

What is the planning process thus far and how were the neighborhoods involved?

- Timeframe: This process began in January 2007 as part of a citywide effort to develop plans for stations.
- Meetings and Outreach:
 - General: Created website, distributed newsletter, developed e-mail contact database
 - Focus Group: The focus group included Councilwoman Lehmann, property owners in the immediate area, a representative from the local business association and representatives from University Hills, Southmoor Park, Southmoor Park East and Hampden neighborhoods (RNO's).
 - Elected and Appointed Official Briefings:
 - Individual Council Member Updates: On-going since January 2007
 - Planning Board Briefings: March 7, 2007 and June 20, 2007
 - FasTracks Council Committee Briefing: April 17, 2007
 - Mayoral Station Planning Briefings: Summer 2007 every 2-3 weeks
 - Focus Group Meeting Feb 2007: Discussed the purpose of the process; generated ideas for the initial concept alternatives, and charged the group engaging their members/neighbors.
 - Focus Group Meeting April 2007: Discussed a draft of alternatives in preparation for the May public meeting and provided details of the public meeting to disseminate.
 - May Public Workshop Notification: Sent mailer to property owners within a 0.5 mile radius of the station; sent e-mails to database contacts with workshop information and flyers; information also sent via Councilwoman Lehmann's email list and newsletter and posted on the TOD website.
 - Summer RNO Meeting Attendance: Briefed University Hills (September 5th), Southmoor Park East (August 8th), Southmoor Park (August 16th)
 - Focus Group Meeting September 2007: Discussed the draft concept and obtained feedback prior to the October public meeting and provided details of the public meeting to help distribute.
 - October Public Workshop Notification: E-mails, flyers, focus group participants, website, and Councilwoman Lehmann's office to distribute information about the meeting.

Does the plan include low income housing?

Our planning process for the Southmoor Station does not identify any "Low-Income" or "Public Housing" in our concepts. In accordance with Denver's Inclusionary Housing Ordinance, any development with 30 for-sale units or more shall offer 10% affordable units. This regulation applies throughout the city regardless of planning or zoning and addresses the citywide responsibility to consider housing for all citizens.

Has there been consideration of impacts and schools and traffic?

- School Impacts: We met with representatives from Denver Public Schools (DPS), and they reiterated Southmoor Elementary School is currently over-capacity. As the planning process moves forward, we will continue to address with DPS the current and long term populations of the neighborhoods and schools surrounding the Southmoor Station. We will work together to consider solutions for the long term needs of Southmoor Elementary School, other nearby schools, and residents of any new development at the station.
- Traffic: Current development generates approximately 10,000 to 12,000 trips per day. Additional development allowed under current zoning could double that traffic onto Hampden and Monaco. The substantial traffic volume increase is because of the allowable high trip generating commercial uses and the lack of adequate circulation connections. A unified circulation network, greater mix of uses, residential uses and emphasis on pedestrians, bikes, light rail and buses can reduce trip generation. This planning process can identify necessary improvements such as traffic signals, additional lanes and traffic calming. Once documented and prioritized in a plan, we have the support needed to seek funding sources through our capital improvement budget or other funding sources.