



TO: Denver Planning Board
FROM: Scott Robinson, Principal Planner
DATE: February 22, 2023
RE: Near Southeast Area Plan Information Item

Project Background

The Near Southeast Area Plan is a Neighborhood Planning Initiative (NPI) project that includes the neighborhoods of Goldsmith, Indian Creek, Virginia Village, Washington Virginia Vale, and University Hills north of Yale Avenue. CPD launched the Near Southeast Area planning effort in the Summer of 2021 and since that time has been working with a variety of community stakeholders to develop the plan. Through this planning process, staff worked with Council Members Kendra Black (District 4), Amanda Sawyer (District 5), and Paul Kashmann (District 6) as well as the Near Southeast Steering Committee and the community as a whole to create a plan for the Near Southeast Area.

After approximately one and a half years of public process, a public review draft of the Near Southeast Area Plan was released on November 21, 2022. Since then, CPD staff have been working to collect community input on the draft, respond to comments, and make revisions. An updated draft that incorporates most of these revisions is attached to this memo for Planning Board's preliminary review. Staff will present this draft to Planning Board at an information item on March 1 that will cover the following:

- Planning process overview/summary
- Themes/priorities heard from the community
- Summary of key plan content and recommendations
 - Land Use and Built Form
 - Housing and Economy
 - Mobility
 - Quality of Life
- Q&A from Planning Board

Draft Plan Recommendations

Key recommendations of the Near Southeast plan include:

- The plan directs the majority of growth to community corridors and regional and community centers at significant intersections on those corridors. This is paired with recommendations for improved design and mobility and ties increases in height to the provision of adequate infrastructure.
- Balances additional housing options with improved design, affordability, and preservation by identifying low residential areas that can support duplexes with improved design outcomes and incentives for preservation and affordability in priority areas. In addition, new low-medium

residential places allow for additional missing middle housing options as transitions from mixed-use corridors and along some larger streets.

- Balanced mobility corridors call for improvements for pedestrians, cyclists, and transit users while enhancing safety for all. Contemporary parkways, green streets, and appropriate landscaping will complement the mobility improvements.
- The draft plan addresses sustainability, climate action, and resiliency by directing growth near transit, promoting resource efficiency, facilitating multi-modal transportation, and strengthening natural systems.

Community priorities are further summarized in the executive summary section of the plan.

Key Accomplishments

Since the release of the draft plan on November 21st, Staff has been working to incorporate feedback from community members, city council representatives and various city staff. Below is a summary of the key accomplishments:

- Clarified missing middle policies and strengthen affordability recommendations
- Allowed additional growth along Evans corridor with clearer recommendations for improving mobility infrastructure
- Adjusted place and height recommendations to achieve better transitions and compatibility with neighborhoods
- Updated economy related sustainability recommendations to include “Waste No More”
- Expanded arts/cultural economy and continuing education policies with additional recommendations from community input
- Updated and added additional housing statistics and goals
- Added more detail to trail improvement recommendations
- Improved streetscape and landscape recommendations for key corridors and parkways
- Identified additional intersections for pedestrian and bicycle safety improvements
- Identified additional streets for traffic calming opportunities
- Added recommendations for additional bike lane opportunities and identify those existing bike lanes needing an upgrade
- Included additional intersection safety improvements based on neighborhood level feedback

Next Steps

A second public review draft of the plan has been shared with the community and we are actively soliciting feedback. There will be an opportunity to incorporate Planning Board’s feedback on the attached draft alongside any additional public comments that are received over the next several weeks. These changes will be reflected in an updated draft that will be provided in advance of the Planning Board Public Hearing on April 19th.