

## **Cherry Creek Area Plan**

### **Focus Group Meeting Notes from July 6<sup>th</sup>, 2011 meeting**

#### **Economic and Development Opportunity Focus Group**

##### **Vision Statement: Prosperous, World Class, Distinct**

###### Why is this important?

Tax Revenue

Property Values

Maintain & improve quality of life/uniqueness

Great/appealing neighborhood

Attract new tenants and customers

Stay competitive

Accessibility to region

Contribute to success of City and region

Mixed use

Build upon previous investments/successes

###### What are existing assets that contribute to the vision?

Shopping Center-unique combination of national and local retailers

Proximity of shopping center and “lifestyle” center

Central location

Mix of uses support each other-symbiotic

Streetscaping in CCN; quality of pedestrian environment

Proximity to Cherry Creek Greenway and parks

“Full service” district

Cultural events-CC Arts Festival, CC Theater

Owner-occupant businesses

###### What else is needed?

Connectivity across 1<sup>st</sup> Avenue, to Creek and multiple transportation modes

Density and mix of uses to support live/work/play lifestyle

High quality streetscape and pedestrian environment

Hotels—the right type, form and location

Integrate surrounding areas/neighborhoods (Glendale, downtown) with CCN

Look outward as well as inward

Expand BID?

Space large business expansion, if recommended in the plan

Strong transportation (LRT) connection to CBD and global marketplace

LRT station in heart of CC will/could help maintain prominence

Improve Creek and amenities

Recommend a “park once and walk” strategy

Change perceptions of 1<sup>st</sup> Avenue east of Steele

East end of 3<sup>rd</sup> needs more vitality, protecting existing boutique retail, add new generators

## **Opportunity Sites: Reinvestment and Redevelopment**

### Cherry Creek Shopping Center-West End

Why key—eventually this will be one of the very best 10-acre development sites in town; gateway to the Shopping District; potential for high density mixed-use development to support vision

Current status—highly profitable big-box retail and restaurants with surface parking; site of Cherry Creek Farmers Market

Impediments—viable use, no motivation to change, development agreement, existing leases

Inducements—when the time is right it will happen

Opportunities—better connection to Cherry Creek Greenway; more urban frontages for University and 1<sup>st</sup> Avenue

### Cherry Creek Shopping Center-East End

Why key-- gateway to the Shopping District; potential for high density mixed-use development to support vision

Current status—Safeway, Rite-Aid, surface parking; provides neighborhood-serving retail to “central Cherry Creek”; pedestrian access especially important to seniors (Allied Jewish) and others without cars

Impediments—current leases; Steele/1<sup>st</sup> intersection; pedestrian connections to Cherry Creek East; height limits to protect view of Macy’s sign from 1<sup>st</sup> Avenue; low rise protects views from CCE residential towers

Inducements—when the time is right it will happen

Opportunities—better connection to Cherry Creek Greenway; more urban frontage on 1<sup>st</sup> and Steele; incorporate supermarket into new development

### Cherry Creek Shopping Center-Center/Saks

Why key—highly visible elevation; better visual and physical connection for the full mall frontage (University to Steele) and to Cherry Creek North and Fillmore

Current status—vacant department store

Impediments

Inducements

Opportunities—expand footprint; add transparency; improve pedestrian environment

### Columbine Corridor-1<sup>st</sup>, University, Columbine/Clayton alley, 3<sup>rd</sup>

Why key—larger/assembled sites, larger office buildings, no residential edge; proximity to Clayton Lane including Sears and Whole Foods

Current status—taller office buildings, low-scale retail, vacant post office

Impediments—one way split of University and Josephine makes retail difficult; land assembly

Inducements—greater height for southern portion, lower at 3<sup>rd</sup>;

Opportunities—2<sup>nd</sup> Avenue as pedestrian street from Colorado to University; density transfer to provide open space

### Third Avenue Corridor (many factors apply to 2<sup>nd</sup> and named streets between 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup>)

Why key— shopping street known for local businesses/boutiques; considered “fragile”; important pedestrian/bike street connecting Cherry Creek with Hilltop to the east and Country Club to the west; scale and rhythm of street adds character and authenticity to district

Current status—residential reinvestment nearly complete; shopping district segment has small parcels and shops; many need reinvestment; branch library at 3<sup>rd</sup> and Milwaukee

Impediments—multiple owners, small parcels; assembly may be needed to accomplish new

development; land assembly adds time, cost and complexity to development; lack of investment poses

threat of lesser quality retail and less active upper stories; lack of a valued attraction or asset leaves the east of the shopping district less viable; quality of retail and frontage along named streets connecting 3<sup>rd</sup> to 2<sup>nd</sup> and 1<sup>st</sup> variable from block to block; local business proprietors retire with succession unlikely; too many realtors, nail salons, etc.; perception of parking issues

Inducements—more density; new retail; “anchor” business(es)

Opportunities—Cherry Creek Square site in the long term, in short term leasing is stabilizing; more density may be needed to incent new development and offset land cost

#### First and Steele

Why key—all four corners have redevelopment potential; gateway to the Shopping Center and Shopping District (also see East End of Shopping Center)

Current status—in flux with pending development; intersection configuration meets purpose of directing traffic to Alameda rather than 1<sup>st</sup> (east of Steele)

Impediments—1<sup>st</sup> and Steele intersection complex for drivers and challenging for pedestrians and bikes; access to east side of Steele limited

Inducements—relook at intersection

Opportunities—zoning in place for new development; “hinge” connecting 4 of the 5 subdistricts

#### Alameda Triangle

Why key—gateway to Cherry Creek from the south (I-25 via Colorado Blvd); significantly underutilized

Current status—mix of newer large residential and office buildings, smaller buildings and surface parking lots

Impediments—lack of connection to Cherry Creek Greenway and parks; congestion and competition on Colorado Blvd; street layout, lack of connection

Inducements—Alameda Parkway concept; north-south connection on Garfield; greater height and density

Opportunities—major new mixed-use development; larger parcels; density to support major transit stop; hotel with relationship to Creek

#### Madison and Bayaud (all 4 corners)

#### Colorado Boulevard Gateways at 1<sup>st</sup> and Bayaud

## **Urban Form and Public Realm Focus Group**

This focus group discussed character, scale and building heights. The focus group was divided into two separate working groups. Notes from each group are combined into this list and organized by geographic area.

### **Cherry Creek North Residential**

#### Character Topics Discussed:

- Relationship between building and street
- Pedestrian Realm
- Transitions

### Recommendations and Defining Characteristics.

- Maintain pattern of 3 story maximum
- Maintain small pocket of 5 story residential at Clayton to Fillmore
- Orient entrances to the street and provide pedestrian access to the sidewalk
- Consider important gateways into the residential area such as are 2nd and Steele and 2nd and Colorado
- Align building heights between adjacent residential and commercial/mixed use areas to provide proper transitions, where feasible
- Provide building height transitions on commercial/mixed use properties

### **Cherry Creek East**

#### Character Topics Discussed:

- Relationship between building and street
- Adjacency to multiple transportation modes
- Transitions

### Recommendations and Defining Characteristics.

- Maintain pattern of 3 story maximum in residential area
- Orient the highest densities along key transportation routes such as Steele, 1<sup>st</sup> Avenue(west of Steele) and Alameda
- Consider a maximum 5 Story form along east side of Harrison to serve as a buffer to Colorado Blvd
- Maintain pattern of 3 story mixed use development along 1<sup>st</sup> Avenue east of Monroe and taller buildings west of Monroe
- Residential - Orient entrances to the street and provide pedestrian access to the sidewalk
- Streets are wider in this neighborhood in comparison to Cherry Creek North.
- Align building heights between adjacent residential and commercial/mixed use areas to provide proper transitions, where feasible
- Confirm the heights of 3 and 5 stories at Madison and Bayaud
- Provide the building height transition on commercial/mixed use properties
- Recognize the existing built condition west of Madison and transition east of Madison

### **Cherry Creek North BID**

#### Character Topics Discussed:

- Relationship between building and street
- Adjacency to multiple transportation modes
- Transitions
- Pedestrian Realm

- Predictability of development patterns

Recommendations and Defining Characteristics.

- Maintain primarily 3 stories around edges where adjacent to 3 story residential areas
- Introduce 5 stories mid block where near residential, but not adjacent
- Accommodate 8 stories where further removed from residential and block patterns can support higher density
- Transition building heights lowest to highest north to south and east to west
- Orient the highest densities along 1<sup>st</sup> Avenue and the key intersections with University and Steele
- Maintain pattern of building entrances and transparency at the sidewalk
- Maintain Solar Access provisions to the street
- Maintain fine grain pattern of buildings
- Maintain, where possible, building height consistency on both sides of the street
- Maintain the quality of the pedestrian realm by providing an upper story stepback on taller buildings (*NOTE*: mix of suggested datums ranging from 3 stories to 55 feet)
- *NOTE*: Consider opportunities for cultural amenities
- Consider allowing greater heights than currently allowed if paired with improved form standards
- Improve predictability of development patterns for the benefit of both neighboring properties and property owners/developers
- Explore strategies for encouraging active edges and active ground floor uses

**Alameda Triangle**

Character Topics Discussed:

- Relationship between building and street
- Adjacency to multiple transportation modes
- Transitions
- Pedestrian Realm

Recommendations and Defining Characteristics.

- Maintain opportunities for density in Alameda Triangle due to current and future opportunities for Alameda as an enhanced transit corridor (and possibly streetcar line)
- Transition building heights lowest to highest north to south from 5 to 8 to 12 moving south
- Improve Alameda Parkway to offer an enhanced buffer to the Cherry Creek East residential area
- Provide buildings and entrances directly at the sidewalk
- Offer a destination and/or area of interest along Garfield due to the proposed bike route

- Improve the walkability
- Provide gateways at Colorado Blvd

## Shopping Center

### Character Topics Discussed:

- Relationship between building and street
- Adjacency to multiple transportation modes
- Site prominence
- Transitions
- Pedestrian realm
- Predictability of Development Patterns

### Recommendations and Defining Characteristics.

- Orient the highest densities for the whole area along 1<sup>st</sup> Avenue, Steele and University
- Transition building heights from 12 stories to 8 stories west of Clayton Lane to align building heights on north side of 1<sup>st</sup> Avenue.
- Create a finer grain pattern of streets, blocks and buildings as site redevelops
- Provide buildings and entrances directly at the sidewalk – particularly along 1<sup>st</sup> Avenue and Steele Street
- Improve connectivity to the east
- Embrace the Creek
- Weave into existing fabric/pattern north of 1<sup>st</sup> Avenue
- *NOTE:* Some believed that a prominent site (such as at the end of Filmore) should be a park/open space not a tall building; after further discussion same where okay with upper story setback (55ft datum)
- Maintain the quality of the pedestrian realm by providing an upper story stepback on taller buildings (*NOTE:* mix of suggested datums ranging from 3 stories to 55 feet)

## Mobility, Connections and Infrastructure Focus Group

### Primary Vehicle Circulation:

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#### *Map edits requested:*

- *“Potential future traffic signal instead of “potential new traffic signal”*

Comments:

Potential Future Signal at Alameda and Garfield

- Some concern heard last week regarding the potential future signal at Alameda and Garfield due to its potential to increase cut-through traffic through Cherry Creek East.
- General agreement that a signal at Alameda and Garfield is the best way to facilitate north/south bike and pedestrian movements across Alameda.

#### Potential Future Signal at Cherry Creek North Drive and Garfield

- General agreement that a signal at Cherry Creek North Drive and Garfield is the best way to facilitate north/south bike and pedestrian movements across Cherry Creek North Drive and would provide the only crossing to the Cherry Creek Bike Path/linear park between the intersections of Colorado Blvd. and Alameda and Cherry Creek North Drive.
- The need for a future bridge access from Garfield across Cherry Creek North Drive to Cherry Creek Bike Path/linear park has already been identified in Cherry Creek Greenway Corridor Report and the 2000 Cherry Creek Neighborhood Plan.

#### E. 1<sup>st</sup> Avenue and Steele

- There was some discussion regarding additional signals/stop control east of Steele on E. 1<sup>st</sup> Avenue. The opportunity for additional signals from Steele to Colorado Blvd. along this corridor was analyzed during the 1<sup>st</sup> Avenue Improvement Study and was not determined to be a possibility based on the conditions. This discussion and opportunities to improve the conditions will need to be revisited.
- There was also some discussion regarding improvements to the intersection of 1<sup>st</sup> Avenue and Steele for bikes and pedestrians. Anecdotal observation that people choose to cross at 1<sup>st</sup> and Adams as opposed to 1<sup>st</sup> and Steele because it is a simpler movement. This discussion and opportunities to improve the conditions will likely need to be revisited.

#### Other

- Need to continue to discuss connection improvements to destinations east of Colorado Blvd. including Glendale.

### **Bicycle Circulation**

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#### *Map edits requested:*

- *Change “Neighborhood Greenway” to “Bicycle Boulevard”*

#### 1<sup>st</sup> Avenue

- Discussion regarding the addition of an at-grade connection between 1<sup>st</sup> Avenue and University (where the Cherry Creek Bike Path diverts south) and the “sidewalks, bikes permitted” facility on Steele Street that continues south.

- General agreement that a connection is needed and that the sidewalks, bikes permitted condition is most appropriate for the near term.
- General agreement that a connection routed through the Cherry Creek North area (2<sup>nd</sup> or 3<sup>rd</sup> Ave) is not appropriate due to frequent stop control, high parking turnover, narrow streets, pedestrians, etc.).
- There is desire to have a wider sidewalk eventually for this connection and some way to regulate the interplay of pedestrians and bicycles along this path through either a striped line or different pavement markings/materials.
- There was also discussion that this facility could transition to an eventual cycle-track but the idea was tabled out of concern that such a formalized facility would draw much more cycling traffic off the Cherry Creek Trail and encourage much faster speeds.

#### Bicycle Boulevard on Garfield (Prioritizing through movements on Garfield)

- General agreement that the bicycle boulevard route belongs on Garfield due to the continuity it provides between regional destinations (e.g. City Park to the north and Cherry Creek Bike Path/linear park to the south).
- In addition, plans for a new signage system will provide clear direction to other destinations not located along the Bike Boulevard (e.g. A sign would direct cyclists west from the Bike Boulevard along the striped route on Bayaud to the Cherry Creek East Village Center and onwards to the Cherry Creek Shopping Center).
- Acknowledgement that the two potential future traffic signals facilitate bike/ped movements across the busier, higher volume streets at Alameda and Cherry Creek North Drive.

#### Shared Route on St. Paul

- General agreement

#### Bicycle Boulevard on 4<sup>th</sup> Ave (Prioritizing through movements on 4<sup>th</sup> Ave)

- This facility type is proposed in Denver Moves and extends west of Garfield, through the Country Club neighborhood, to south of Cheesman Park at Williams.
- Discussion regarding the implication of this facility generated questions regarding the impacts on the existing stop control (stop signs) and the additional bicycle traffic through the Country Club neighborhood.
- General agreement that the facility could provide a good east/west connection but group would like to review the recommendation in Denver Moves, speak with their neighborhood organizations, and discuss further.

#### **Pedestrian Circulation**

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- General agreement on the Pedestrian Priority Zone concept and the Pedestrian Priority Intersection concepts.

- Prompted additional conversation regarding bicycle movements and potential future traffic signals.
- 1<sup>st</sup> and Steele remains a challenge because of the multiple movements required to navigate the crossing

### **Bus Enhancements**

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- Began discussing the characteristics and goals of improved bus service to Cherry Creek
- Will continue this discussion in Focus Group Meeting #3

### **Other**

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- Additional information requested on the “Wheels and Heels” effort for the Cherry Creek Path (aka the effort to separate the bicycle and pedestrian movements)
- Additional information requested on the proposed improvements to Cherry Creek South Drive and Steele Street (enhanced crossing and improved sidewalk)
- Denver Moves facility map for Cherry Creek area will be sent to focus group for closer review prior to Wednesday.