

## East Colfax Neighborhood Association (ECNA)

**General Meeting - February 19, 2019**

**Counterpath - 7935 E. 14<sup>th</sup> Avenue**

### Announcements

**Street Fraternity's** Community Celebration & Fundraiser – Sunday, February 24, 2:00 – 5:00 pm.

**ECNA Food Bank** – A couple thousand dollars worth of donations were provided during first three weeks of operation, almost all of which have been distributed to those in need.

**ECNA Membership Dues** have been **discontinued**. Fundraiser being planned for September.

**Denver Police Dept, District 2** will attend ECNA meetings once per quarter (every 3<sup>rd</sup> meeting). **Larry Drees**, Board Member, will be the liaison with DPD2 if you have concerns between meetings. Also, the **District 2 Citizen Advisory Board (2CAB)** meets every other month.

**City Council and Mayoral Debates** will be held at Counterpath each Saturday during March at 11:00 am. Great moderators will participate.

Thanks to folks who invited other people to attend under the **Each One, Reach One** initiative.

**ECNA Workshops** - Thanks to **Don Johnson (handyman)** and **Ted Thompkins (tree expert)** for conducting workshops on Sunday, February 17<sup>th</sup>. If you have expertise to share, contact ECNA President Tim Roberts at tr@counterpathpress.org or EastColfaxNeighborhood@gmail.com.

**Outreach efforts** are being enhanced through the ECNA website: ***EastColfaxNeighborhood.org***

**ECNA Reading Group** is commencing March 12<sup>th</sup>. First topic: Urban Blight. The article to be discussed is available.

### Open Comment Period

Leslie Twarogowski announced that the **Vision Zero Grant** was obtained in conjunction with the McAuliffe School, Councilman Herndon, and ECNA. Community input is being requested for neighborhood needs. \$23 million is available from cancelled plans for widening the Quebec corridor. Bus stop painting is planned for May 11<sup>th</sup>.

### Regal Bakery

Victoria Groteweil purchased **Regal Bakery and Chess Cafe** at 12th and Syracuse in August. The bakery had existed for 3 years, but the former owners did not do marketing. Café is open from 7:00 am to 2:00 pm and is available for events, fundraisers, chess instruction and other classes afterhours. For more information, please visit: <https://regalbakeryandchesscafe.com>.

### East Colfax Sectors

**Megan Tortorelli**, Board Member, has been plotting population sectors in the East Colfax neighborhood. The map was displayed and is available. Segments of 1,000-1,100 people with the intent of having a representative from each sector. Perhaps the representatives will form a secondary or advisory board within ECNA. This is in development (participation welcomed) and will be similar to the program in the Park Hill Neighborhood Association.

### Enterprise Zones

**Joanne Greek** from the Denver Office of Economic Development presented information regarding **Enterprise Zones**. Criteria include: <75% of state average incomes, population growth, etc. State income and sales tax credit program for businesses. Business Income Tax Credits including commercial vehicle investments, job training, new employees, agricultural processor new employees, employer sponsored health insurance, R&D increase tax credit, and a vacant building rehabilitation cost credit.

Website: <https://choosecolorado.com/doing-business/incentives-financing/ez/>

East Colfax/80220 – Tax Year End 2016, 2017 & 2018 (partial) provided:

- \$7.2 million capital investments,
- \$20k in training (Auto Zone, Chase, Sherwin Williams, Fiction Beer),
- Fiction Beer Co. took R&D credits and ag processor tax credits for new employees.
- Other incentives were also provided.

Businesses need to pre-certify annually (simple online application). Pre-certification can be completed up to 3 months in advance of the business' tax year start date. No cost or obligation to pre-certify. For application information, see the website above.

Enterprise Zones have strict boundaries. However, new businesses in Denver or expanding into Denver are available can realize **Business Personal Property** tax credits regardless of location. Specific criteria need to be met. Applications will be available online in April for Tax Year 2018, separate from the EZ portal. Express interest to receive an email reminder. Businesses can apply for both EZ and BBP credits if the business is located within an Enterprise Zone and meets the Business Personal Property criteria.

### Opportunity Zones

**John Michael Hill** from the Denver Office of Economic Development presented information on **Opportunity Zones**. The Opportunity Fund encourages investments through deferring and possibly eliminating the capital gain tax on long-term investments. Capital gains tax *basis* will be reduced by 10% of the net gain if the property is held for 5 years, by 15% if held for 7 years. If the investment is held for 10 years, the taxpayer pays no capital gains tax on appreciation. Website: <https://choosecolorado.com/doing-business/incentives-financing/oz>

### Denver Clerk & Recorder

Candidate **Peg Perl** – Senior Counsel for Colorado Ethics Watch.

Peg is dedicated to making elections fair through policy changes and population outreach. Working to eliminate discrimination, such as with immigrants, homeless, youth. Went to law school in DC and has experience with ethics committees and so forth. Plans to make documents online instead of requiring residents to go in-person to the Webb Building and pay 25 cents per page. Peg also plans to change voting bottlenecks and wait times so that more people can vote. Website: [www.perlfordenver.com](http://www.perlfordenver.com)

### Urban Renewal Area Conditions Study (“Blight”)

Tracy Huggins, Executive Director of Denver Urban Renewal Authority (DURA).

East Colfax Corridor – business investment is being solicited (such as the EZ and BPP programs previously presented).

Pros – have merchants more readily available, clean up vacant properties, reduce crime.

Cons – possible gentrification forcing low-income families out of their homes, traffic, parking.

DURA is charged under state law to help eliminate slums and blighted areas.

DURA works with and through the City Council.

DURA has Two Departments: “Redevelopment” (tax financing) and “Housing” (residential rehabilitation loans and grants).

The Built Environment involves the:

#### Public Sector

- Big Picture Visioning
- Overseer / Occasional Builder
- Long Term View
- Safety / Equity / Predictability
- Trunk Infrastructure

#### Development Community

- Site Specific
- Creator / Builder

Short Term View  
 Profit / Marketability / Reputation  
 In-tract Infrastructure  
 Capital Markets  
 Macro & Micro  
 Analyzer / Gate Keeper  
 Medium Term View  
 Marketability / Risk  
 Money (which needs to be paid back)

***When not enough money is available, DURA can provide support.***

#### The Process

Ideas come from City Administration, Community / City Council, and Developers.

DURA Analysis – City Council has to determine area is “blighted.”

Market Feasibility. Financial gap, eligible Costs, TIF Capacity.

Legal Documents – Urban Renewal Plan, Cooperation Agreements, Property Tax

Agreements with Denver Public Schools, UDFC and others.

Approvals – DURA Board, Planning Board, City Council, Mayor’s Signature.

**East Colfax Corridor Urban Redevelopment Area** planning process is underway.

Area: Monaco to Yosemite along Colfax Avenue.

Of the 11 factors listed in the Colorado State Statute, at least 4 must be met.

Needs to be consistent with the proposed RTD plan, Comp Plan 2040, Blueprint Denver, and Small Area/Neighborhood Plans.

Comp Plan 2040 has six vision elements.

Blueprint Denver has a strong focus on Equitability – improving access to opportunity, reducing Vulnerability to displacement, and expanding housing and jobs diversity.

**Urban Redevelopment Plan Components** include a number of items. For details and to see the slide presentation, please visit: <http://renewdenver.org>

Also, the DURA slide presentation will be available through the ECNA website, and the ECNA meeting is being recorded for Facebook Live.

**Denver Community Planning & Development** is gathering information from neighborhoods. The **East Area Plan** is being coordinated by **Elizabeth Michael**. Visit: [denvergov.org/eastplan](http://denvergov.org/eastplan)

The intent is to generate taxes from the new enterprises to fund the investment incentives. This may impact adjacent property owners though general valuation increases for the area.

Also, there may be other unexpected consequences, such as other new businesses attracted to the area due to the DURA improvements, thereby increasing property values in general.

The article published yesterday (Monday) emphasized families being “booted out” of blighted properties but did not mention the hundreds of houses that DURA has helped rehabilitate. We need to think about things differently to strike a balance between improvement of properties and displacement of existing residents. This is a collaborative process with all stakeholders.

What is the definition of “low-income housing” versus “affordable housing” and how can we preserve housing for existing low-income neighbors? How can we give everyone a voice?

**Councilman Lopez** of the west side reminded us that the use of public funds is subject to the public’s oversight. ECNA can be a third-party to **Community Benefits Agreements**.

Question: How much does our voice actually count? Answer: An awful lot. Input is actively encouraged. Remember the Wal-Mart controversy, which the public won. DURA doesn’t have it all figured out and wants and needs to collaborate with neighborhood associations and all other interested parties.

Meeting Adjourned.