

TO: Denver Planning Board
From: Crestmoor Park (2nd Filing) Homes Association
Crestmoor Park Home Owners, 1st Filing
Date: April 1, 2013
Re: Buckley Annex GDP Submittal by LRA

Please accept this letter, and the attached survey results, as our objection to certain facets of the submitted GDP for the Buckley Annex by the Lowry Redevelopment Authority.

The Crestmoor Park (Filing 2) Homes Association, 490 single family homes directly adjacent to the Buckley Annex and the Crestmoor Park Home Owners Inc., 1st Filing Association (96 Single Family Homes), strongly oppose the current Buckley Annex plan. A recent neighborhood survey (attached) confirms this opinion is nearly unanimous. Approximately 400 homes received the survey by e-mail and 183 responded, a 46% response rate. The Crestmoor Neighborhoods are in favor of reasonable redevelopment of the Annex but we ask that it be consistent with the character of the surrounding neighborhoods and that it responsibly addresses issues of traffic and parking for both the short and long term.

Our first objection is **density**. This proposed project will be considerably denser than most of the surrounding area and all of the newly developed Lowry parcel. It is clearly inconsistent with "Blueprint Denver." "Blueprint Denver" will be discussed later in this letter. The 800 units of new housing, 11.4 dwelling units per acre, is almost 3 times that of the surrounding neighborhoods. Our neighborhoods are 2.4 units per acre. Low density neighborhoods are greatly sought in Denver and have high values. While this is fewer homes than originally proposed, the original number of units planned was a number arrived at arbitrarily to start with. Why start at 1,200 units, why not start at 120 units? Though some argue that the final result was a compromise with the neighborhoods, there was no agreement by the neighborhoods that 800 was an acceptable number and the reduction in density was a small response to mounting neighborhood pressure. While some see the future in high density, surely there will always be a place for low or medium density. High density is not appropriate for every infill project in Denver. Each project should be evaluated separately taking into consideration the nature of the surrounding neighborhoods, traffic impact and the desires of the neighborhoods. The Buckley Annex proposal, in its current iteration, is inappropriate. While many proposed and completed high density projects in Denver sit either downtown or adjacent to mass transit (either light rail or satisfactory RTD service) there is no realistic mass transit, and no plan for mass transit, in the Buckley Annex area. The proposal is inconsistent with existing adjacent neighborhoods, and will increase traffic beyond what the road system can bear.

Secondly, **traffic**. The project will create over 9,500 new daily traffic trips (estimated in a study commissioned by LRA) at build out, exacerbating the already congested traffic in the area. Some of our intersections already have low level of service ratings. All 5 existing intersections will fall at least one rating, with 2 projected to be at or beyond capacity. Traffic will be pushed into our neighborhood, increasing accidents, endangering our children, and increasing air and noise pollution thus impacting our quality of life. Traffic counts taken in 2008 and 2012 show that traffic has increased by about 10%. This is presumably from the final build out of Lowry and the growth of the metropolitan area. Modeling projections of what traffic will be like in the year 2030, have also increased. Some argue that the narrowing of Lowry Blvd. from 4 lanes to 3 lanes will help ameliorate the traffic situation. We believe that this narrowing will have the opposite effect, pushing drivers to 1st Ave and then utilizing that Avenue as a shortcut through the Crestmoor neighborhoods. A reading of the survey participant's comments already reflects an impatience with

the traffic situation throughout our neighborhood and especially the traffic on Monaco and Quebec. Traffic numbers submitted by traffic engineers are a great start but we think the parenthetical comments by our homeowners actually are a better indication of the situation on Monaco, Sixth, First, Alameda and Quebec. Our neighbors drive these streets and sit at these intersections everyday and they can attest first hand at the quagmire created daily at these intersections. Some cite the fact that when fully operational the Buckley Annex and Lowry Base created many more trips (I don't have the exact numbers) and that the new build out will only bring us back to pre closing numbers but these statements do not take into account the growth of the entire metropolitan area, in those intervening years, without infrastructure support for that generated traffic alone.

Third, **Parking**. The plan does not make adequate allowances for parking, already a huge problem in some areas of Lowry. These impacts should be mitigated now, not after the project is built. While decreased driving may be a goal for the future, forcing neighborhoods to suffer unbearable parking difficulties to achieve that goal, is not a good plan.

Fourth, **Height of Structures**. The plan calls for buildings of a maximum 65 feet in much of Buckley. This is higher than anything in the original Lowry plan, and unmatched in nearly every surrounding neighborhood. Many of these buildings will be located close to the edges of our neighborhoods instead of toward the center of Buckley, despite promises to the contrary.

Fifth, **commercial development**. We oppose commercial development anywhere close to Crestmoor Park, a crown jewel of Denver and the centerpiece of our neighborhoods. It is crucial that we maintain the openness of the east side of the park along Monaco. We urge that any commercial/retail center be placed near the current Town Center and not at a second, competing, location. Current drawings show a huge and massive building within 175 feet of Monaco. There is no gradual transition from the open space of the park to these towering structures. This will affect the Crestmoor Park experience for everyone. Parks, like Crestmoor, should be buffered from development, not diminished by it. The Park will already be seriously affected by the noise and air pollution of the projected 13,500 daily vehicles expected along Lowry Boulevard which dumps onto Monaco Blvd. at the center of the Park.

Sixth, **Blueprint Denver**. The development as planned violates major principles of Blueprint Denver. It does not respect existing surrounding and stable neighborhoods. It is not consistent with current housing and use patterns surrounding it. It does not mirror existing land use on its edges. Unlike other areas of change, Buckley Annex is not on a major transportation corridor. Blueprint Denver states that "adding density to areas that are single use, far from transit with a low density street pattern simply adds an equal number of auto trips." It does not allow for a smooth transition from areas of low density, such as our neighborhoods, to areas of high density.

An additional note: the neighborhoods surrounding Buckley are largely owner-occupied homes. According to Habitat for Humanity, there are many community advantages of home ownership, including higher reading and math scores and a 25% higher graduation rate of children in owned homes. We should be building multi-price for-sale homes to promote these advantages for Denver.

As mentioned previously a recent survey (within the last two weeks) of Crestmoor Park neighbors (attached) resulted in a huge response—46% of our 400 member email list responded. Many, many people added thoughtful and detailed remarks. The survey concluded:

- 92% believed density was too high
- 82% were very concerned about increased traffic, only 4% were not concerned

- Only 16% felt commercial close to Monaco was acceptable
- 60 % opposed 65 foot buildings anywhere within Buckley and only 4% would approve it close to Monaco.

We understand that new urbanism with high density is now thought to be the wave of the future. It may be that high density is a great goal at the right time in the right place. It is not appropriate for every parcel development in the city and it is not appropriate for every part of every parcel where it might be appropriate. Our neighborhoods feel strongly that it is not appropriate on this site, not appropriate right next to a magnificent park, and not appropriate where there is no mass transit to serve it.

Thanks you for your consideration of these objections.

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