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Subject: CPFAN Request for ECAP Comment Period Extension

Date: Tue, Feb 4, 2020 11:10 am



Dear Denver City Council Members and City Planners:

I am writing to ask that the East Central Area Plan (ECAP) public comment period be extended from 2/5/2019 until 6/5/2020. The planning process needs to be slowed so that residents currently excluded from the planning initiative can participate.

Currently, I am the president of City Park Friends and Neighbors (CPFAN), a delegate to Inter-Neighborhood Cooperation (INC), a member of Congress Park Neighbors, Inc.(CPN) and a 40 year resident of Congress Park. I have known about the ECAP for almost 2 years and attended many meetings with City Planners. My comments reflect these experiences.

There are multiple reasons why the comment period should be extended. These include:

- RNOs representing other ECAP affected residents are asking for a similar extension of the public comment period. CPFAN agrees with many of the views expressed in their letters and wishes to support these efforts.
- There is evidence of poor community outreach with persisting widespread ignorance about the ECAP despite a planning process beginning in 2017. These include:
 - A CPN survey released in July 2019. <https://www.congressparkneighbors.org/2019/07/13/results-of-survey/> documents that many respondents did not know about the ECAP.
 - Meetings with Denver City Planners on 8/13/19, 8/25/19, 11/13/19 and 1/28/20 during which many attendees expressed ignorance of the ECAP and were upset about not being informed.
- Issues related to transparency and lack of public input into the ECAP and East Area Plan (EAP). Some of these concerns were discussed at a 9/14/19 meeting and panel presentation arranged by INC.

Subsequently, changes were made to the EAP planning process, but not to the ECAP planning effort.

- Community outreach for the ECAP remains overly reliant on email, social media, on-line surveys, and RNO outreach. This process excludes input from older, less internet knowledgeable residents who do not communicate electronically or use social media. Importantly, residents and property owners were never notified by mail about the ECAP.
- City Planners used a different, more inclusive community outreach strategy for the EAP resulting in greater neighborhood engagement and participation.
- The Federally Funded Professional Services Agreement between City and County of Denver and Progressive Urban Management Associates (PUMA) for planning and design services describes a variety of measures to assure equitable community involvement in the planning process. These strategies were not applied uniformly to the ECAP and EAP.
- The ECAP planning process is unequal and inequitable compared to that used for the EAP. This is improper for an intergovernmental project receiving federal funds.
- Extending the public comment period until 6/5/20 will provide sufficient time to correct deficiencies in the ECAP planning process and engage currently excluded residents.

Please extend the comment period until early June so that the current problems with the ECAP can be remedied.

Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Respectfully,

Stephen V. Eppler

President, Congress Park Friend and Neighbors