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July 7, 2020

Scott Robinson, AICP
Senior City Planner | Community Planning and Development
City and County of Denver
201 W Colfax Ave
Denver, CO 80202

RE: CHUN Support for the East Central Area Plan

Dear Mr. Robinson,

Capitol Hill United Neighborhoods, Inc. (“CHUN”), Denver’s largest, oldest registered neighborhood organization (RNO), is pleased to announce its support for the East Central Area Plan (the “Plan”). We cite the following as just a few reasons for our organization lending its endorsement for the Plan:

- **Community engagement is paramount to successfully planning neighborhoods for future generations.** At the heart of CHUN’s mission is citizen participation. Our organization’s leadership has closely monitored the level of citizen engagement throughout this process. With more than 9,500 online responses, 54 community meetings, 14 focus groups, 11 walking audits, etc., city planners have delivered on their commitment to an open, fair, and participative process. CHUN was proud to provide free meeting space at 1290 Williams St.—our historic Tears-McFarlane House—throughout this process and was host to a number of membership meetings where the East Central Area Plan was a core component of the agenda.
- **Preserving historic, architectural assets is essential to maintaining neighborhood character and enduring legacy.** The Plan encourages the preservation of historic and character-defining buildings by promoting the adaptive reuse of historic structures and allowing a broader range of uses. CHUN was integral to the efforts to preserve Tammen Hall and recently endorsed the restoration/reuse of the former Cathedral School at 18th Ave. and Grant St. We are excited to see other innovative uses for many of our city’s oldest, treasured structures.

- **Bringing Denverites together at the local level makes our community stronger.** The Plan is comprehensive and provides a framework by which creating new neighborhood gathering spots will be central to future planning. Enhancing existing community open spaces, parks, and recreation facilities is equally important. These public assets, like Cheesman Park for example, should be made readily available to a broad, diverse range of Denverites regardless of race, class, or other socioeconomic background.
- **In 2019, CHUN reaffirmed our commitment to environmental sustainability.** We love living in an urban setting and believe that neighbors should not be precluded from enjoying the many beautiful, natural settings we cherish. Our RNO encourages smart, environmentally friendly neighborhood design. Trees, climate appropriate landscaping, and preserving Denver’s tree canopy will be a defining feature of this new plan.
- **CHUN joins thought-partners like the Denver Streets Partnership in a shared mission to ensure safe streets for everyone – no matter their zip code, their financial means, or how they may get from one point to the next.** The Plan makes modifications to myriad mobility systems with an emphasis on safety, mobility, and accessibility. We are pleased to see that key areas like 23rd Ave and Gaylord St., Montview Blvd. and Colorado Blvd., 8th Ave. and Sherman St., and many others within (or near) CHUN’s geographic boundaries will be improved subsequent to the adoption of this Plan.
- **Access to affordable housing is paramount to achieving economic self-sufficiency.** Adopting this Plan will facilitate stronger partnerships with nonprofit agencies and direct service providers. Such relationships will complement the city’s infrastructure and capacity to deliver more affordable housing units for years to come. We are hopeful that integrating missing-middle housing into some residential areas, coupled with discouraging demolitions and encouraging affordability, will promote greater access to home ownership.
- **Finally, a diverse, thriving workforce bolstered through locally owned businesses and collaborative work culture is the heart of Denver’s evolving economy.** Recruiting new small to mid-sized businesses provides opportunities for workforce development and economic opportunity. We agree that diversity of housing and jobs captures our shared vision for neighborhoods with equitable access to quality employment options and housing choices that accommodate households of different ages, sizes, and incomes.

On Thursday, June 18, 2020, the Capitol Hill United Neighborhoods Board of Directors held a regularly scheduled board meeting. Sarah Wells moved to endorse the East Central Area Plan and issue a letter of support; the motion was seconded by James LaRue.

- Votes **favoring** the motion: 24
- Votes **opposing** the motion: 1
- Votes **abstaining** from taking a position: 4
- Absent Votes: 6

CHUN's mission is ***Preserving the Past, Improving the Present, and Planning for the Future*** of Greater Capitol Hill through historic preservation, affordable housing and tackling homelessness, promoting smart land use and zoning, advancing public safety, and encouraging community enhancements.

We acknowledge some may have concerns about this Plan and its implementation. However, it's important to examine this initiative in a thoughtful, comprehensive way. In doing so, the proposed East Central Area Plan brings a fresh, forward looking perspective to vexing City issues while maintaining the qualities and characteristics that make Denver unique. Moreover, RNOs including CHUN, will be fully engaged in the Plan's implementation and future development within our boundaries.

We urge responsible City leaders—including members of the Denver Community Planning and Development, Denver City Council, Denver Planning Board, et al—to adopt this plan.

Should you or other members of your team have questions, please do not hesitate to contact us at chun@chundenver.org or call 303-830-1651.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Travis Leiker". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a horizontal line extending to the right.

Travis Leiker, MPA
President, Board of Delegates
Capitol Hill United Neighborhoods, Inc.