



STAFF REPORT

Planning Commission

CASE #SAP-006-18/URP-002-12-16-18

PC Date: June 5, 2018

Case Planner: Jenny Axmacher

CC Date: June 18, 2018

Case Summary

Request:	Review and approval of the proposed Mile High Greyhound Park Urban Renewal Plan for the Mile High Greyhound Park Urban Renewal Area.
Project Description:	Urban Renewal Plan/Sub-Area Plan for the CCURA owned Mile High Greyhound Park.
Key Approval Criteria:	Conformity with the City's Comprehensive Plan
Staff Recommendation:	Approval

Background Information

Case History

For more than 60 years, the former Mile High Greyhound Park was a vibrant entertainment destination, drawing thousands of people from across Colorado. An economic engine for the City, the park employed hundreds of residents and sales tax revenues were reinvested in community projects. When greyhound racing ended in 2008, visitors and activity in the historic heart of the City slowed.

The Commerce City Urban Renewal Authority (CCURA) purchased the property in August 2011, intent on redeveloping the empty and blighted site as an economic engine for a new generation. Demolition of existing structures was completed in 2013 to prepare the property for development. The Suncor Boys & Girls Club opened in 2015 on 2.5 acres of land donated by the Authority to anchor the southeast corner of the redevelopment.

It is envisioned that the CCURA and a partnering developer, ReGen, LLC, will create a TIF (tax increment financing) to help finance any redevelopment activity for this site. Because of certain legal restrictions regarding TIF financing, it was determined that in order to secure the financing for the maximum period permitted by statute, the best course of action would be to create a new urban renewal plan for the area. That plan is what is currently presented for approval before Planning Commission.

Urban Renewal Areas are governed by the provisions of the Urban Renewal Law of the State of Colorado, Part 1 of Article 25 of Title 31, Colorado Revised Statutes, 1973, as amended (the "Act"). Under the Act, an urban renewal area is a blighted area, which has been designated as appropriate for an urban renewal project. In each urban renewal area, conditions of blight, as defined by the Act,

must be present, and in order for the Authority to exercise its powers, the City Council must find that the presence of those conditions of blight, “substantially impairs or arrests the sound growth of the municipality or constitutes an economic or social liability, and is a menace to the public health, safety, morals or welfare.”

The Mile High Greyhound Park Current Conditions Survey, prepared by City staff, dated December, 2016, demonstrates that the Mile High Greyhound Park Urban Renewal Area included in the Survey, is a blighted area under the Act. The City Council of Commerce City approved Resolution #2016-130 declaring the Study Area as a blighted area under the Act on December 19, 2016.

Planned Unit Development (PUD) zoning unique to the Mile High Greyhound Park site was approved on January 9, 2017 to guide development on the site. It allows for Residential, Mixed Use, Commercial, Institutional, Drainage, Park and Public uses on the property in compliance with the Comprehensive Plan’s mixed use designation.

Site Information

The boundaries of the Area include approximately 65 acres of land generally defined to include 5 legal parcels plus public rights-of-way located within the former Mile High Greyhound Park property. Geographically, it is bound by 64th Avenue on the north, 62nd Avenue to the south, Holly Street to the east and Highway 2 to the west in south central Commerce City.

As required by State Law, the city sent notice of this plan to all property owners within this area. The CCURA and the City are the only property owners in the area.

Development Review Team Analysis

Planning Commission’s Role:

As prescribed by State Law, the role of the Planning Commission is to review and recommend to City Council conformity with the City’s Comprehensive Plan.

The CCURA, with the cooperation of the City, private enterprise and other public bodies, will undertake the Urban Renewal Project described in the Plan in order to eliminate the conditions of blight identified within the area in the Survey while implementing the goals and objectives of the Comprehensive Plan and any subsequent updates.

Implementation of this Urban Renewal Plan supports the objectives and requirements of the Comprehensive Plan with respect to development and redevelopment. As development occurs in the Area, it shall conform to the Comprehensive Plan and any subsequent updates, the City Building and Land Development Code and any rules, regulations, and policies promulgated pursuant thereto, any site-specific planning documents that might impact properties in the Area including, but not limited to, City-approved site, drainage, and public improvement plans, and any applicable City design standards, all as in effect and as may be modified from time to time.

All development within the Area will comply with the current zoning and Comprehensive Plan.

General development objectives for the Urban Renewal Area include redevelopment of the Area for the purpose of generating revenue sufficient to fund improvements that address conditions of blight that are serving as obstacles to private investment within this former regional destination.

Correspondingly, to provide funding for a range of improvements and enhancements that will serve to stabilize adjacent residential neighborhoods and established commercial centers.

Specific objectives include the following:

1. Eliminate and prevent blight
2. Implement elements of the Comprehensive Plan
3. Support and advance actions identified in existing and any future plans prepared by the City of Commerce City related to redevelopment in the vicinity of the Area that are consistent with the vision of this Plan
4. Take a vacant infill parcel and put it into productive use
5. Promote greater stability in surrounding neighborhoods through the introduction of a mix of uses
6. Catalyze reinvestment over an extended period of time through a fiscally-sound phased development program
7. Complete improvements that benefit properties beyond the Area including infrastructure that supports business development and City infrastructure improvements including streetscape amenities and storm water management.
8. Provide a range of financing mechanisms to incent private and not-for-profit investment

The Development Review Team is confident that the Mile High Greyhound Park Urban Renewal Plan is in conformance with the Comprehensive Plan based on the objectives of the plan.

Comprehensive Plan

The DRT recommendation for this case is supported by the following Comprehensive Plan Goals and Policies:

- **Goal ED 2 – Retain and increase a strong employment base:** the City will retain and expand its existing industrial base, and attract and recruit new businesses that contribute positively to City revenues. (C3 Vision, p. 99)
- **ED 2.2 – Educated Workforce:** Retain and continue to develop a highly-educated workforce. Establish partnerships with K-12 and higher educational organizations to develop facilities and programs within the city that could provide industry-specific training for students, residents, and existing businesses. (C3 Vision, p. 99)
- **Infill Investment and Redevelopment:** The C3 Vision recognizes the benefits of infill and redevelopment for the City’s sustainable future. Infill and redevelopment are efficient kinds of development, but need to be sensitive to the neighborhood context. This Plan identifies targeted redevelopment locations and includes best practices to guide appropriate infill.
- **Established Neighborhoods:** The C3 Vision identified neighborhoods that could benefit from infrastructure improvements and nearby redevelopment. The redevelopment of this property helps achieve this objective.
- **Redevelopment and Reinvestment goals address:**
 1. Increasing focus on infill and redevelopment; (C3 Vision, p. 122)
 2. Strengthening viability of targeted areas through redevelopment; (C3 Vision, p. 122) and
 3. Strengthening existing neighborhoods with renewal efforts. (C3 Vision, p. 124)

Detailed references to specific objectives, policies and strategies are presented in Appendix I of the Urban Renewal Plan.

In addition, the Dog Track area is highlighted as one of the city's five targeted redevelopment areas (Figure 8.1 Commerce City C3Vision Plan) Redevelopment Areas.

Development Review Team Recommendation

The Development Review Team is recommending that Planning Commission recommend to City Council that the proposed Mile High Greyhound Park Urban Renewal Plan is consistent with the City's Comprehensive Plan.

Recommended Motion

To recommend approval:

I move that the Planning Commission find the Mile High Greyhound Park Urban Renewal Plan contained in case SAP-006-18/URP-002-12-16-18 is in conformity with the City of Commerce City Comprehensive Plan and, therefore, recommend approval of the Mile High Greyhound Park Urban Renewal Plan by the City Council.

Alternative Motion

To recommend denial:

I move that the Planning Commission find the Mile High Greyhound Park Urban Renewal Plan contained in case SAP-006-18/URP-002-12-16-18 is not consistent with the City's approved Comprehensive Plan for the reasons listed below and, therefore, do not recommend approval of the Mile High Greyhound Park Urban Renewal Plan by the City Council.

List the criteria not met