

# National Western Center Zoning Strategy Report - Stage 1 Executive Summary

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*Prepared by the City and County of Denver  
Community Planning & Development Department  
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With adoption of the 2015 Master Plan and funding for infrastructure, construction and site improvements in place, vertical development on the National Western Center (NWC) campus is anticipated to begin as early as late 2019. In advance of this, Denver's Community Planning and Development (CPD) Department is preparing zoning amendments by which all future projects will be reviewed and permitted. As a first step in this effort, CPD created a Zoning Strategy Report to share initial recommendations and solicit feedback.

This Executive Summary highlights the fundamental recommendations identified in the Zoning Strategy Report. It is a companion to the following documents:

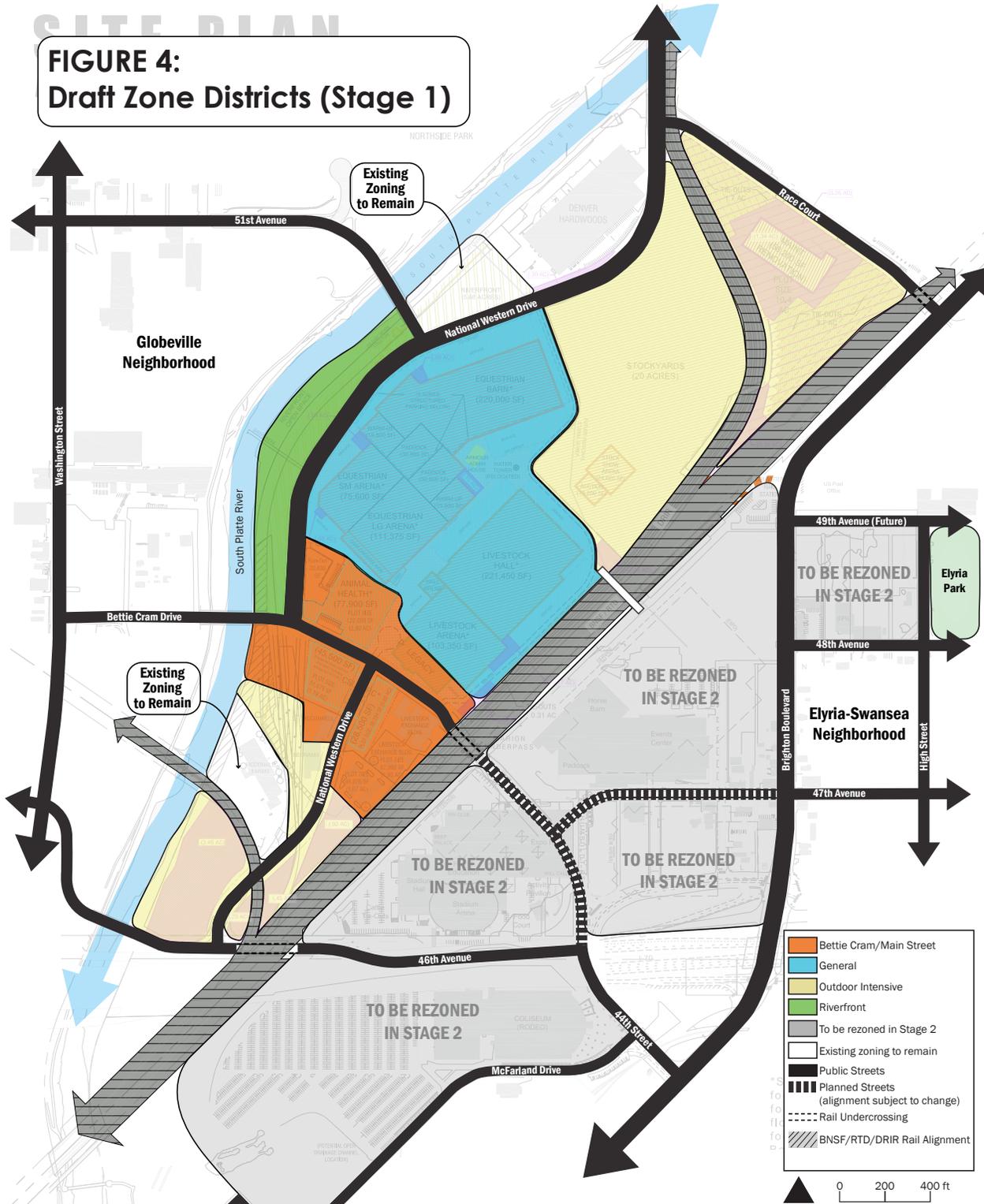
- **Strategy Report.** The Strategy Report establishes a preliminary intent and strategy for the NWC zoning amendments at campus-wide level and for different sub-districts. It recommends draft zone districts and a regulatory strategy for each. It is intended for readers that want to understand the zoning recommendations at a qualitative level.
- **Technical Appendix.** The Technical Appendix provides draft zoning standards for land use and urban design topics. This section is consistent with the intent and direction in the Strategy Report, but drills down to a technical level. It includes preliminary quantitative requirements for site and building design, as well as recommendations for permitted and prohibited land uses. This section is intended for readers that want to understand the potential impacts of the zoning recommendations on project design.

# A. Zoning Strategy

This section outlines the fundamental components of the NWC Zoning Strategy.

## 1. Identify and Map Distinct Zone Districts

A series of new zone districts should be created to address land use and design. The regulations that apply to each district should be tailored to accommodate unique campus programming requirements, ensure safe and efficient campus operations, allow flexibility and change over time, facilitate a pedestrian-friendly environment and maintain compatibility with surrounding neighborhoods. Draft zone districts are shown on the map below (Figure 2 from the Strategy Report). Note that areas east of the BNSF rail tracks, commonly referred to as the “Triangle”, will be rezoned in a second project “Stage” at a later date. See the Strategy Report’s introduction for more details on the two-stage rezoning approach.



## **2. Establish the Intent for Each District**

There is a distinct land use and urban design intent for each proposed district, which are provided below. Note the zone districts below utilize “working names” for ease of review. Final zone district designations will use lettering and numbering abbreviations per Denver Zoning Code (DZC) conventions.

- **Bettie Cram/Main Street.** This zone district will be the geographic and cultural epicenter of campus. Medium floorplate buildings will house a variety of indoor uses. Development will contribute to an excellent pedestrian experience along Bettie Cram and National Western Drives. This means contributing to safe, comfortable and interesting neighborhood connectivity through the heart of campus. This area will provide critical pedestrian entry points to site interiors. Programming in this area is more permanent as compared to other districts, with several key anchor facilities planned.
- **General Campus.** This zone district is intended to accommodate a wide range of unique uses that support the activities of the National Western Stock Show and other regular events throughout the year in highly flexible, large floorplate buildings. Large arenas, barns, livestock halls and structured parking are all anticipated here. A wide range of outdoor and service activities will be accommodated by flexible plaza spaces and loading areas, including some spaces where access is restricted during special events. Development will contribute to a safe, comfortable and visually interesting experience along National Western Drive, which is a key neighborhood connector.
- **Outdoor Intensive.** This zone district is intended to accommodate the widest variety of uses on campus, including short- and long-term outdoor uses alongside complementary enclosed uses. This will also be home to the Stockyards, which will accommodate livestock and provide flexible space for small and large-scale outdoor events. This zone district will be home to “back-of-the-house” activities that are required for the campus to operate successfully. Outdoor storage of maintenance vehicles, energy-generating utilities and materials storage will all occur here alongside cattle tie-out areas and livestock pens. Complementary enclosed campus uses may include artist studios, professional offices, utility buildings or light industrial facilities. Streets flanking properties in this district will meet their service requirements while establishing comfortable and safe pedestrian routes. Given the functional requirements of roadways in this zone district, zoning must build in flexibility for the design of sites and buildings adjacent to the street.
- **Riverfront.** This zone district is intended to accommodate passive open space, programmed activity nodes, pedestrian circulation, natural riparian habitat and formal green and plaza spaces. It will accommodate small format, low scale buildings intended to activate the area and support programmed outdoor functions. Education facilities, community-oriented programming and eating/drinking establishments are all appropriate. Public art and interpretive features will enrich the experience here. The Riverfront zone district must facilitate safe and direct access to the South Platte River and serve as an amenity for users of the NWC and the surrounding neighborhoods. Where buildings are constructed in this district, they should be visually subordinate to the open space amenity and establish a strong visual and physical relationship to National Western Drive and the South Platte River.

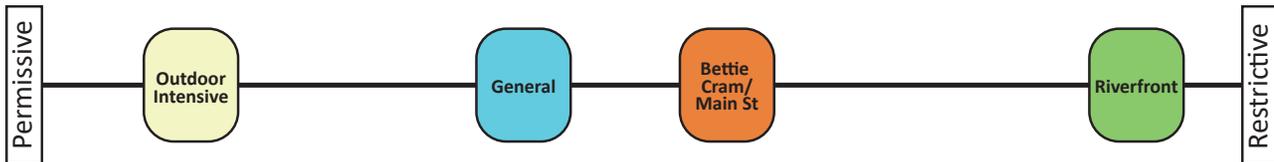
### 3. Tailor Zoning Regulations to Meet Intent

NWC zoning amendments will create requirements for a variety of specific land use and urban design topics. In many cases, the proposed approach will vary from district to district to adequately capture the intent.

The diagrams below indicate a zoning approach spectrum ranging from permissive to restrictive for a series of topics. It provides a “cheat sheet” for understanding the zoning strategy and how it differs for each proposed district. Districts bundled together graphically on the diagrams below indicate a similar level of permissiveness/restrictiveness.

#### Land Use

Zoning will establish which land uses are permitted and prohibited. A permissive approach allows for a wider range of land uses, including permanent intensive outdoor activities. A restrictive approach targets a narrower range of land uses with a focus on permanent enclosed activities and outdoor amenities.



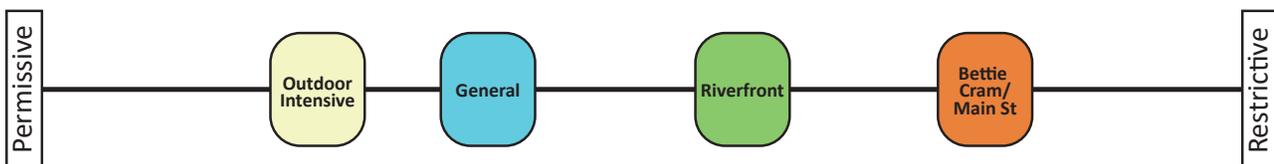
#### Required Parking

Zoning will indicate required off-street parking for each land use. A permissive approach does not dictate required parking and instead allows campus operators the flexibility to determine parking needs. A restrictive approach requires minimum parking to be provided on-site.



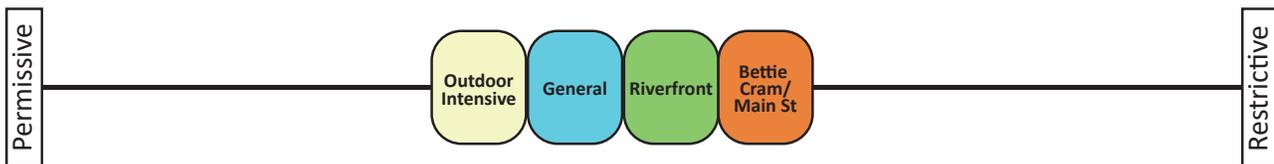
#### Street Edge Character

Zoning will address street edge character (the design of sites and buildings adjacent to a street) to ensure a visually interesting and comfortable pedestrian experience. A permissive approach allows for a wider range of methods for achieving these objectives. A restrictive approach imposes a more limited set of options to ensure a building and site maximize the pedestrian-orientation of an adjacent street.



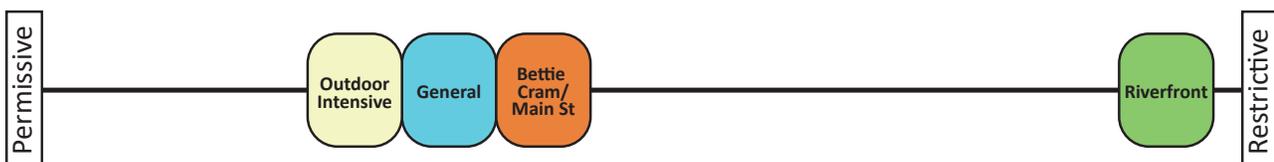
#### Neighborhood Scale Compatibility

Zoning will address neighborhood compatibility by imposing more restrictive height requirements for building edges adjacent to single-family neighborhoods.



#### Overall Building Height

Zoning will set maximum overall building heights allowed for each zone district. A permissive approach allows for taller buildings. A restrictive approach will impose lower maximum building heights for all or part of a zone district.



#### ***4. Encourage Innovative Signage Compatible with Adjacent Neighborhoods***

Zoning amendments should establish a mechanism through which greater flexibility for sign type and design is allowed. This flexibility would be permitted in exchange for a higher level of material durability, creativity, visual coordination and design quality. Such signs would be permitted with preparation and approval of a District Sign Plan.

The intent of the District Sign Plan mechanism is to permit greater flexibility in the scale, type, location, and other characteristics of signs than are allowed within a baseline zoning district provided that certain criteria and standards for quality are met. Criteria established for the District Sign Plan may address materials, design coordination, neighborhood impacts and other similar factors.

### **B. Next Steps**

The following steps will occur following preparation of the Strategy Report.

#### ***Solicit Feedback on the Stage 1 Strategy***

CPD will accept written and verbal comments on the Strategy Report, including through meetings with the NWC Citizen Advisory Committee (CAC).

#### ***Prepare Draft Zoning Amendment Text and Maps***

Based on feedback received on the Strategy Report, CPD will prepare technical zoning amendment language and maps for public review.

#### ***Solicit Feedback on Draft Amendments***

CPD will accept written and verbal comments on the draft zoning amendments, including through meetings with the NWC CAC.

#### ***Prepare Zoning Amendment Text and Maps for Adoption***

CPD will prepare a final draft of the zoning text and mapping for use during the adoption process.

#### ***Adopt the Zoning Amendments***

CPD will provide and present proposed zoning amendments to Planning Board, City Council and other groups as required for adoption.

#### ***Complete Stage 2 Zoning Amendments Process***

At a future date to be determined, CPD will conduct a public process to complete zoning amendments for the Triangle properties east of the BNSF rail tracks.

