

Fellow Neighbors of Hilltop -

We felt it necessary to respond to the recent postings on the RNO and Neighborhood websites as well as Mailbox flyers that have been recently distributed regarding the proposed rezoning at 10S – 50S Colorado Blvd.

Approximately 14 months ago, our partnership purchased the former Church property at 30S – 50S Colorado. Our intent was to acquire the property in its current dilapidated and troubled state and improve the property through an appropriate redevelopment. The fact that the property has not had a viable congregation for over 15 years and provides a open and uncontrolled entry to the Hilltop neighborhood, inviting crime and noise, formed a important part of our decision to invest in the property and reverse that decline.

The generally recognized fact that the area needs redevelopment was also not lost on the City of Denver, and they noted such by designating this site as an “Area of Change” within the master plan of Blueprint Denver.

This designation was put in place long before we acquired the property and we believe is indicative of the reality of the site – the current E-SU-D zoning simply does not work. E-SU-D zoning means that only single family homes with a lot area of no less than 6,000 SF are allowed (note that the current Church building is a variance to the existing zoning).

As longtime Denver, Crestmoor Park and Hilltop residents we care about the neighborhood and also know that single family homes FRONTING on Colorado Blvd. in this area are not viable. They would not be viable for families, not for the neighborhood and not on an economic basis. For this reason, we began to explore different zoning concepts for the property.

Immediately after our acquisition in late 2014, we met with the Hilltop RNO Zoning Committee and Councilman Susman to introduce both ourselves and our goals for the property. We began a process of conducting both large neighborhood meetings as well as small group focus meetings on the various planning alternatives. These meetings were attended by various interested parties within the neighborhood and the City and provided valuable feedback to us and our planning team. This process has brought us to our current position of requesting a specific rezoning for the property.

Given neighborhood and City feedback, we have revised our initial concepts from Mixed-Use Commercial or Office with height levels of 5 to 4 stories down to a specific Residential ONLY zone category (as per the request of the majority of meeting participants) with a 3 story height limit.

Based on direct negotiations with our immediate neighbors on the West side of Albion we have also found common ground to expand the property to help reduce project related traffic in the Private alley boundary between our properties. Further, we have agreed to increased setbacks and height limitations below the normal regulations of the zoning category we are requesting. In a further concession to the direct neighbors on Albion Street, we have also agreed to limit the height of any new development to only 2 stories on the Northern edge of the Property fronting Ellsworth.

We are requesting to rezone the property from E-SU-D to G-MU-3.

This zone category allows for Multi-Unit Residential property types that include Rowhouses, Townhomes, Duplexes and Apartments. To be clear, NONE of these types of Buildings could be constructed with the current zoning. Buildings in the G-MU-3 zone category cannot exceed 3 occupied stories in height.

**To correct a point noted in recent postings and on the flyers, we are not applying for a particular project for the site at this time. We are applying for a rezoning as noted to allow for the type(s) of residential building for the site that we (and many others involved in this process) believe is reasonable, rational and appropriate for this challenging edge to the Hilltop neighborhood.**

The imagery that we have shared during the process has been to help all parties get a visual sense of the planning envelope that we are working with. It is important to note that the 3 story limitation under the G-MU-3 zoning is no more than what is currently in place. In fact, we welcome interested parties to walk in the immediate area to see new 3 story construction occurring in the neighborhood (e.g. several examples exist at Ash and Bayaud and Albion and Bayaud). Given the topography of the site as it drops downward from Ellsworth to Bayaud and from Albion to Colorado Blvd. , we feel strongly that our zoning request is reasonable and appropriate.

There are always challenges and legitimate concerns of a site rezoning like this one. We welcome feedback and we have been listening to the concerns of neighbors over the past year. So please do come to the public meetings and get the facts so you can make an informed judgment for yourself that is not based on rumors or innuendo.

Sincerely,  
SMW Hilltop, LLC