

CITY PLANNING COMMISSION AGENDA

STAFF: CARL SCHUELER

FILE NO:
CPC CA 16-00043 – LEGISLATIVE

PROJECT: ACADEMY BOULEVARD EOZ PLAN

APPLICANT: CITY OF COLORADO SPRINGS – PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT

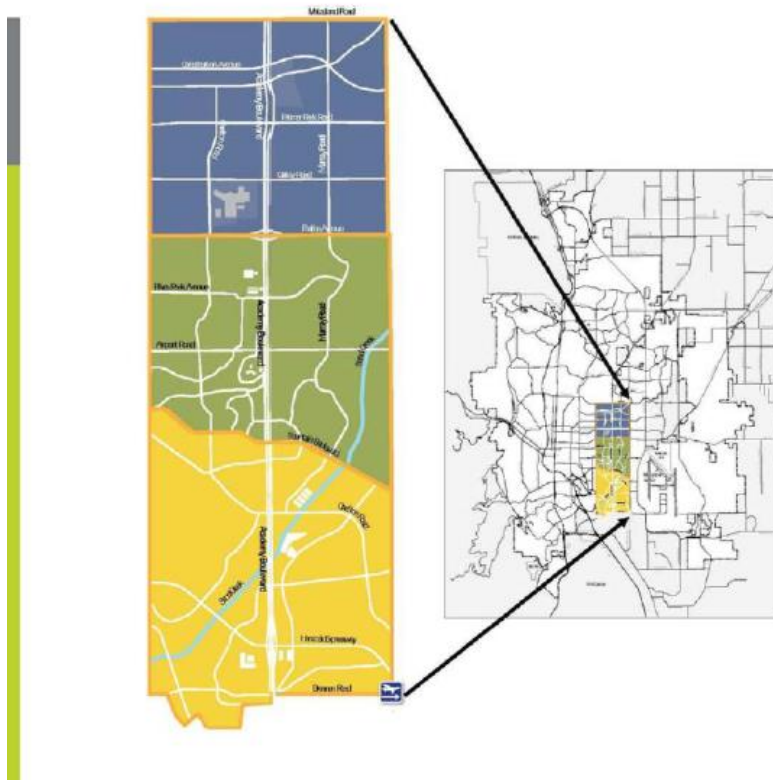
PROJECT SUMMARY:

Approval of a Resolution Adopting the Academy Boulevard Colorado Springs Economic Opportunity Zone Action Plan, for Strategic Planning Purposes (Legislative).

The draft City Council resolution is included as **FIGURE 1**

The Academy Boulevard Economic Opportunity Zone Action Plan document is attached as **FIGURE 2**.

Implementation Boundaries



BACKGROUND

In 2013 at the request of then Mayor Steve Bach, Fred Veitch assembled Task Forces for Academy Boulevard and North Nevada as part of larger EOZ Solutions Team. The co-chairs for the Academy Boulevard effort were Tiffany Colvert of NAI- Highland Commercial and Councilman Merv Bennett. Additional members are listed in the report. The purpose of the effort was to recommend specific strategies to implement revitalization of the south and central Academy Boulevard area, particularly following from the approved Academy Boulevard Corridor Great Streets Plan (2011).

The report recommends a focus on four catalyst areas:

- Academy Boulevard/ Hancock Expressway
- Academy and Fountain Boulevard
- Citadel Mall area, and
- Rustic Hills Mall area

The Action Plan also presents 28 recommendations that vary in time frame, specificity and responsibility. Some are more pro-active, and others are more responsive, from the City's perspective.

The general approach of Action Plan and the City's approach focus on pursuing specific projects and plans and leveraging opportunities. One example has been the largely completed plans for substantially reconfiguring and reconstructing the intersection at Academy Boulevard and Hancock Expressway and securing funding for a first phase project at that location.

Although TOD-supporting rezoning along this corridor has been subsequently recommended as part of the recent 2016 Infill Action Plan, the need for City-initiated rezoning is not considered as high a priority for this corridor as it has been for North Nevada Avenue.

If adopted, staff suggests that these recommendations be treated and used by the City as a "menu" of available strategic options, consistent with the approach and progress to-date.

The general approach of the City with respect to these recommendations has been to focus on getting the plans and regulations in place to support the emerging vision and expected development activity in this corridor.

To-date the City has moved forward with projects and initiatives along this corridor on a logical and opportunistic basis. For example, one area of focus has been on the Academy Boulevard/ Hancock Expressway intersection. A plan for a major 'renovation' of this intersection, access and multimodal facilities in this area is almost complete and funding for a first phase project is being finalized.

The *de-facto* project manager for this EOZ effort is the City's Comprehensive Planning Manager who coordinates with a variety of City departments and other groups and agencies.

This action would be consistent with the overall intent of the City Strategic Plan, and with several of its particular recommendations. These include:

“Improve our image by addressing blight, improving medians and rights-of-ways, and encouraging development of EOZs (Economic Opportunity Zones)

‘Implement priorities of the Infill & Revitalization Steering Committee

Facilitate increased private sector investment in EOZs through improving infrastructure, updating planning efforts, and changing related City policies.

Partner with stakeholders to continue development in EOZs.”

STAKEHOLDER PROCESS AND INVOLVEMENT:

The stakeholder’s process for this document involved an overall EOZ Solutions Team endorsed by then Mayor Bach and chaired by community member Fred Veitch. Two EOZ task forces were organized by Mr. Veitch, one for this area and one for Academy Boulevard, each with a City Council and community co-chairs. A complete list of Task Force members is included in the report.

ANALYSIS OF REVIEW CRITERIA/MAJOR ISSUES

With respect to the recommendations in the Academy Boulevard EOZ Action Plan, staff recommends adoption but notes that the recommendations represent a broad “menu” of general-to-specific recommendations, some of which are more or less suited for a proactive approach from the City as this time. The recommendations are also not resource constrained.

Compared with the North Nevada Avenue corridor, these recommendations place less of an emphasis on creating new zoning and more on the City role in strategic public and private projects.

These recommendations align with the City’s current Comprehensive Plan including the recently adopted Infill Supplement and Infill Action Plan. They are also supported by the City’s Strategic Plan. Since it was created, the City has been using this document for guidance on strategic initiatives including for further transportation and land use planning for this corridor.

RECOMMENDED MOTION:

Move to recommend approval to the City Council of a resolution adopting the Academy Boulevard Economic Opportunity Zone Action Plan for strategic planning purposes.