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Fletcher Plaza Urban Renewal Plan

Aurora, Colorado

Adopted January 27, 2003

Amended _____, 2014

Prepared for:

Aurora Urban Renewal Authority

Aurora, Colorado City Council

Fletcher Plaza Urban Renewal Plan

Aurora, Colorado

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DRAFT Fletcher Plaza Urban Renewal Plan

Aurora, Colorado

Section 1.0 Introduction

In adopting this Amended Urban Renewal Plan, it is the intent of the City of Aurora, Colorado (the "City") to comply with the requirements of Colorado Urban Renewal Law (C.R.S. § 31-25-101 et seq.) Specifically, Colorado law requires that before an urban renewal project may be undertaken, the governing body of the City must determine that the proposed urban renewal area is designated a blighted area. In making the determination of blight, the boundaries of the proposed urban renewal area must be drawn as narrowly as feasible to accomplish the planning and development objectives of the urban renewal project.

1.1 Background

The Fletcher Plaza Urban Renewal Area (FPURA) and Fletcher Plaza Urban Renewal Plan ("Urban Renewal Plan") have arisen out of decades of planning. Out of an extensive community process that started in 1992, the Colfax Main Street Master Plan (Main Street Plan) was adopted by City Council in 1996 as part of the City's Comprehensive Plan. The Main Street Plan was intended "to serve as a guide for the redevelopment of the [Colfax] corridor... [based on] the consensus reached as to the community's vision for the corridor and recommendations on how to achieve it." (Main Street Plan, pp. 3-4). While the overall community vision has been for a longer segment of Colfax Avenue, the Main Street Plan targets the property within the FPURA as the heart of all redevelopment efforts:

The concourse [Dayton to Florence streets on Colfax] area is the critical mass of the [Main Street] plan, the three-block area that is enveloped by the longer pedestrian district The plan will reinforce this historic area through its new park, special events, cafes, convenient public parking, and local landmarks such as the Fox Theater... (Main Street Plan, p. 16).

The importance of targeting the FPURA for redevelopment has since been reinforced by the recommendations of the Original Aurora Redevelopment Feasibility Analysis in May of 2000. The purpose for creating the FPURA and pursuing the urban renewal projects defined in the Urban Renewal Plan is to serve as a catalyst for the elimination and prevention of the development or spread of blight in the FPURA and surrounding areas. The Aurora Urban Renewal Authority (AURA), in close coordination with the City, intends to utilize the powers granted by the Colorado Urban Renewal Law and appropriate private and public resources to encourage and contribute to the needed rehabilitation and redevelopment of the FPURA.

1.2 Blight Findings

The Fletcher Plaza Enhancement Area Blight Study (the "Blight Study"), conducted by the Denver office of HNTB Corporation (the "Consultant"), a national firm of architects, engineers and planners, clearly demonstrated that the FPURA was blighted as defined under Colorado law (see Appendix A: Fletcher Plaza Enhancement Area Blight Study Survey, 2002), as of the original plan adoption date of January 27, 2003. Additional Blight Confirmation documentation from a visual survey in August 2013 (see Appendix D) confirms the continued presence of blight in the portion of the Urban Renewal Area designated for tax increment financing.

1.3 Urban Renewal Area/Boundary Determination

Based on the Blight Study, the City has determined that the FPURA should encompass the 12 square block area bounded by the west right of way (ROW) of Dallas Street from the south ROW of E. 14th Avenue to the north ROW of E. 16th Avenue; the north ROW of E. 16th Avenue to the west ROW of Dayton Street; west ROW of Dayton Street to the north ROW of E. 17th Avenue; north ROW of E. 17th Avenue to the east ROW of Emporia Street; east ROW of Del Mar Parkway to the north ROW of E. 16th Avenue; north ROW of E. 16th Avenue to the east ROW of Galena Street; east ROW of Galena Street to the south ROW of Del Mar Parkway; south ROW of Del Mar Parkway to the east ROW of Florence Street; east ROW of Florence Street to the south ROW of E. 14th

Avenue; south ROW of E. 14 Avenue to west ROW at Dallas Street. A detailed legal description of the FPURA boundary is presented in Appendix B. Overall, this area contains approximately 51 acres.

Exhibit 1: FPEA Blight Study Area



Section 2.0 Finding of Blight

Before an urban renewal plan can be adopted by a city, the area to which the plan pertains must be determined to be a blighted area as defined in the Colorado Urban Renewal Law (C.R.S. § 31-25-101 *et seq.*). In order to be designated as blighted, at least four of the following factors must be present in the area:

- a) Slum, deteriorated or deteriorating structures;
- b) Predominance of defective or inadequate street layout;
- c) Faulty lot layout in relation to size, adequacy, accessibility, or usefulness;
- d) Unsanitary or unsafe conditions;

- e) Deterioration of site or other improvements;
- f) Unusual topography;
- g) Defective or unusual conditions of title rendering the title nonmarketable;
- h) The existence of conditions that endanger life or property by fire or other causes;
- i) Buildings that are unsafe or unhealthy for persons to live or work in because of building code violations, dilapidation, deterioration, defective design, physical construction, or faulty or inadequate facilities;
- j) Environmental contamination of buildings or property; or
- k) Inadequate public improvements or utilities.

Approximately 160 parcels within the FPURA were surveyed and photographed by the Consultant in 2002. The Consultant also conducted research of public records on various factors, such as crime, public utilities and building and zoning code violations. The results, summarized in Exhibit 2 below, showed that all of the blocks exhibited four or more conditions of blight, including deteriorated or deteriorating structures, unsanitary or unsafe conditions, deterioration of site or other improvements and inadequate public improvements and utilities.

Exhibit 2: Summary of FPEA Blight Study Findings

Properties	Factors of Blight										
	a	b	c	d	e	f	g	h	i	j	k
Block 1	x			x	x						x
Block 2	x	x		x	x				x		x
Block 3	x	x		x	x						x
Block 4	x			x	x				x		x
Block 5	x	x		x	x				x	x	x
Block 6	x		x	x	x				x		x
Block 7	x			x	x				x		x
Block 8					x						x
Block 9	x			x	x					x	x
Block 10	x	x		x	x				x		x
Block 11	x	x	x	x	x				x	x	x
Block 12	x			x	x				x		x
Block 13	x	x		x	x						x
Block 14	x			x	x						x
Overall Area	x	x	x	x	x				x	x	x

* See Exhibit 1.

** See above described factors of blight.

The Blight Study clearly demonstrated that eight blighting conditions were present throughout the FPURA, with no concentration in a particular block. Based upon this finding, the City determined that the FPURA meets the definition of a blighted area. With the predominance of blighting influences, it is likely that more properties will continue to deteriorate unless there are new investments and a revitalization initiative within this area.

Therefore, it was the conclusion of the Blight Study that the FPURA is blighted "by reason of the presence of at least four" of the blighting criteria established in Colorado Urban Renewal Law. Furthermore, in its blighted condition, this area "substantially impairs or arrests the sound growth of the municipality, retards the provision of housing accommodations, or constitutes an economic or social liability, and is a menace to the public health, safety, morals or welfare."

Section 3.0 Plan's Relationship to Local Objectives

The overall objectives for the redevelopment of the FPURA are built upon years of community planning and brainstorming for the revitalization of the entire Colfax corridor. The Urban Renewal Plan's vision and strategies and their relationship to the City's Comprehensive Plan and Main Street Plan are described in this section.

3.1 Compliance with Area Master Plans

This Urban Renewal Plan is in compliance with the City's 1998 Comprehensive Plan (the "Comprehensive Plan"). The overall vision for the FPURA is stated in the Comprehensive Plan as follows:

The Fletcher Plaza Enhancement Area (FPEA) is the center of Original Aurora, the focal point where area residents and visitors come for community, civic, entertainment, cultural and retail business services. FPEA represents a destination where a healthy balance of arts, civic, residential and retail activities bring together a diverse mix of people and culture in a pedestrian scale environment.

The vision for the redevelopment of the FPURA as stated in this Urban Renewal Plan embraces several of the opportunities identified for this area by the Comprehensive Plan. For instance, the Comprehensive Plan comments on the importance of capitalizing on the fact that downtown Aurora " ... is the most ethnically diverse, historic, and walkable or pedestrian-oriented part of Aurora: a true urban neighborhood." The redeveloped FPURA is expected to be a place *where a diverse mix of people come together in a pedestrian scale environment*. The Comprehensive Plan also identifies Colfax Avenue as " ... centrally located to serve the surrounding neighborhoods," and the vision for this part of Colfax Avenue as *"the focal point ... where residents ... come for ... services."* Lastly, the Comprehensive Plan identifies the downtown and Original Aurora area as having " ... good regional road access and 24-hour bus service," therefore making it suitable as a regional *"destination"* (1998 Comprehensive Plan, pp. 39-40).

3.2 Compliance with Main Street Plan

The Comprehensive Plan goes on to recommend the implementation of the Main Street Plan for the downtown Original Aurora area. This Urban Renewal Plan furthers many of the primary goals and objectives of the Main Street Plan (Main Street Plan, p. 17), as described below:

Main Street Program Goals:

- Make the Colfax corridor a destination where people are welcome to shop, eat and spend leisure time.
- Appreciate what exists:
- Be compatible with positive existing conditions. Mitigate negative conditions.
- Improve the access to, and convenience of, public parking.

Main Street Program Objectives:

- Create a gradual intensity in the arrival experience, culminating in the concourse [Dayton to Florence] area.
- Create an image through the development of an adopted theme.
- Coordinate public and private actions.
- Reinforce public safety wherever possible.

Section 4.0 Urban Renewal Plan Goals and Objectives

4.1 Urban Renewal Plan Goals

In order to eliminate, prevent and/or mitigate the existence of blight in the FPURA, the Urban Renewal Plan will contribute to the redevelopment of the FPURA in a manner consistent with the goals and objectives of the Main Street Plan. The purposes of the Urban Renewal Plan are:

- To promote the creation of a civic and cultural core for area residents.
- To create and/or revitalize housing options that attract people to live in the area.
- To build upon the existing community assets and attract residents and visitors to the area.
- To expand the arts and cultural attraction~ and establish an identity as an arts district.
- To improve traffic circulation and access to convenient public parking.
- To further the sound economic growth of the area.
- To provide opportunities for private redevelopment and investment to address existing conditions of blight.
- To provide adequate park and open space in a high-density urban environment.

4.2 Urban Renewal Plan Objectives

The FPURA plan addresses the objectives of the Main Street Plan and the Comprehensive Plan by:

- Targeting the recognized core of the FPURA for the largest initial public and private investments.
- Encouraging rehabilitation of buildings and infrastructure in and immediately surrounding the FPURA.
- Adopting multiple strategies related to the arts district theme and integrating the theme throughout the FPURA.
- Coordinating public and private investments to maximize the impact of both.

- Providing for close collaboration between AURA and City agencies responsible for public safety, neighborhood revitalization and small business development.

4.3 Appropriate Land Uses

The FPURA has been characterized by a poorly integrated, aging and poorly maintained combination of residential and commercial uses. The current land use patterns in the FPURA cause recurring conflicts between existing residential and commercial uses and inhibit the successful redevelopment of both.

The rebirth of downtown districts throughout the nation over the past decade has proven the success of introducing housing into what have been historically commercial areas. By combining residential and commercial land uses -- often with the development of mixed-use projects -- communities have been able to reinvigorate their downtowns with positive activity that extends beyond the eight-hour workday. This plan includes the development of at least one large-scale mixed-use project that introduces a minimum of 200 residential and live/work units and 10,000 square feet of support commercial space.

In addition to promoting the development of a large mixed-use project, the Urban Renewal Plan seeks to promote the redevelopment of commercial space along the Colfax corridor. Colfax Avenue is the historic "main street" for the surrounding community, and therefore, is an appropriate location for healthy commercial businesses.

Furthermore, the recommendation to focus much of the new and redeveloped commercial space for arts related business is an effective way to differentiate the City's downtown area from other town centers and main streets in surrounding areas.

Lastly, the civic building and open spaces that make up a significant component of the proposed land uses is also compatible with the area's history of being the community's primary gathering place and historical home to City Hall. The new MLK, Jr. Library and Municipal Services Center building and the expanded Fletcher Plaza area are intended to knit together the adjacent commercial, cultural and residential uses and be recognized as the heart of the community and a destination for visitors.

The existing B-2 (Central Business District) zoning offers a workable framework for implementing the Urban Renewal Plan at this time, and zoning modifications are not anticipated in the short-term.

4.4 Improved Traffic

The principal streets passing through the proposed urban renewal area include Colfax Avenue, Dayton Street and Florence Street/Del Mar Parkway. With the exception of a few confusing intersections, these and all other streets within the area are currently functioning adequately. The Urban Renewal Plan, nonetheless, addresses potential future needs that may result from redevelopment in the FPURA, as well as redevelopment at Stapleton, Lowry and Fitzsimons.

The existing street infrastructure does not allow for good access into and through the core downtown area. For example, turn movements are limited on Colfax Avenue at Emporia and Elmira streets. These intersections should be full-movement intersections, as is the case with other north-south streets on Colfax Avenue. To allow area residents and visitors to come to, and traverse through, the site, urban renewal projects will need to address vehicular access to Elmira and Emporia streets from Colfax Avenue, as well as the problematic intersections at Florence/Del Mar Parkway and 14th Avenue, and at 16th Avenue and Florence Street. In addition, the medians within the core downtown area will be evaluated for possible improvements to pedestrian traffic across Colfax Avenue. Currently, the medians are physical and visual barriers to north-south integration and movement.

According to the July 2002 Traffic Impact Study for the MLK, Jr. Civic Project, conducted by LSC Transportation Consultants, Inc., the intersection of Colfax Avenue and Dayton Street is expected to fail by year 2025 due to increased traffic from the surrounding redevelopments of Lowry, Stapleton and Fitzsimons. Future study and planning of the traffic circulation and street connections needs related to the redevelopment projects at Lowry, Stapleton and Fitzsimons are anticipated as part of the Urban Renewal Plan implementation.

4.5 Public Transportation

The FPURA currently has service from the metro area's only 24-hour RTD bus line. This service is expected to continue, and become an even more valuable asset, as future metro-area plans for light rail include a Park-N-Ride site at Colfax Avenue and Potomac, approximately 1.5 miles to the east. In order to encourage greater usage of this service, however, the Urban Renewal Plan strongly encourages improvements to the existing bus stops, with the addition of structures, landscaping and other amenities.

The University of Colorado Health Sciences Center (UCHSC) currently has a shuttle bus that passes through the FPURA as it transfers individuals from the 9th Avenue & Colorado Boulevard campus to the newly developing campus at Fitzsimons. AURA will pursue the possibility of having the shuttle stop in the FPURA and at the community college on the Lowry campus on its way between the two destinations. This will require an agreement between the UCRSC, the Community College of Aurora and the City.

4.6 Public Utilities

City staff has determined that infrastructure for major utilities, including water, sewer and lighting, are generally adequate to meet immediate needs, but may require upgrading to accommodate redevelopment.

4.7 Recreational and Community Facilities/Community Design and Amenities

The City's expansion of Fletcher Plaza is intended to dramatically increase the amount and quality of open space and gathering places for visitors and residents in the FPURA. An expanded Fletcher Plaza is projected to be the site of an array of cultural arts and entertainment activities. As redevelopment progresses, particularly as residential uses are added to the FPURA, it will be important to ensure upgrades to existing streetscape and green space.

City Park, a seven acre park at the north end of the FPURA, is an important asset to the area and an amenity that required major improvements to better serve existing

residents. AURA collaborated closely with the City's Parks and Open Space Department to define, design and seek the financial resources to renovate City Park.

Section 5.0 Undertakings and Activities

5.1 Development Concept

The overall redevelopment concept for the FPURA has three major components as described below. These concepts are illustrated on the map in Appendix C.

- **Building of a civic and cultural core in the FPURA.** The City built a new \$10.3 million Martin Luther King, Jr. Library and Municipal Services Center. In addition, this City investment provided the opportunity to expand the existing Aurora Fox Arts Center and Fletcher Plaza to allow for larger and more frequent performances and community events.
- **Support of the arts.** Building on the assets of the Aurora Fox Art Center and several art galleries and studios that have emerged in the area, the City has established incentive programs to encourage additional buildings in the FPURA to be reused for arts related business. This helps to secure the reputation of the FPURA as a unique environment and contribute to the overall success of any large-scale investments by improving the appearance and appeal of neighboring properties.
- **Development of urban residential and new retail space.** In order to increase positive activity in the FPURA, AURA assisted a private developer in developing a large residential, live-work and commercial project within the FPURA that can attract the artist market and provide adequate space for unique business and retail establishments.

5.2 Redevelopment Strategies and Techniques

To successfully implement the above-described concepts, and additional concepts that will evolve in the future, a variety of complementary strategies and techniques have been and will be used by AURA that are consistent with the powers authorized in the Colorado Urban Renewal Law. These strategies will be used as appropriate and needed for the various urban renewal projects undertaken.

- **Land acquisition.** AURA may acquire property using its powers of eminent domain, if and when needed, for Urban Renewal projects in the FPURA, such as the residential mixed use project on the north side of Colfax Avenue between Dayton and Florence streets.

The largest private-sector project within the FPURA is anticipated to encompass up to 7 acres. Much of the land targeted was vacant ground or parking. Therefore, the private developer selected to work with AURA attempted to independently acquire individual properties within the project site via independent negotiations. In the event that the developer was unable to assemble all parcels required for the project, AURA intended to use its condemnation powers to assemble the remaining parcels and relocate displaced business owners and residents.

Although no additional land acquisitions are contemplated at this time, AURA may use land acquisition strategies in the future, if needed, to successfully attract and implement projects consistent with the Urban Renewal Plan.

- **Demolition and removal of structures.** The residential/mixed-use project required demolition and removal of existing structures, including both single-family residential structures and commercial buildings.

It is, however, the intention of the Urban Renewal Plan to retain many of the existing commercial storefront buildings on Colfax Avenue. Future projects are likely to include additional demolition and removal to assemble sites large enough to make development projects of today's scale feasible.

- **Improvements.** Among the significant blighting factors in the FPURA are the confusing intersections, limited access roadways, and deteriorating streetscape. Steps will be taken to identify potential funding sources to support the reconstruction of these components.
- **Rehabilitation.** Within the FPURA, there exists a significant amount of commercial space and some residential buildings that could be rehabilitated to bring them into compliance with City building codes, and make them more attractive and more compatible with the overall redevelopment scheme. The City's commercial loan and grant program and the arts district loan fund are some of the resources available for this effort. These programs will be heavily marketed within the FPURA for this purpose.
- **Planning and zoning changes.** The majority of the FPURA is zoned B-2, Central Business District. This zone allows for the types of uses proposed in this plan including typical retail and commercial uses, multi-family residential and "artspaces" (live/work space for artists).
- **Maximum densities.** Maximum densities will be in accordance with the applicable requirements of the City Zoning Code, as it shall be amended from time to time. The current zoning for the area establishes a maximum residential floor area ratio density of 1.5:1 (residential square footage divided by site area).
- **Building Requirements.** All new buildings must conform to City masonry requirements in Aurora City Code, Chapter 146, Article 13. In the future, AURA and the City may consider adopting downtown Aurora design guidelines, to which all future new construction must conform.
- **On-going Programs.** The successful redevelopment of the FPURA will require on-going efforts as well as one-time investments in real estate. As redevelopment continues in the area, the City will ensure the continued intensified code enforcement efforts, increased public safety measures such as

additional police foot patrol, and the support of cultural and special events in the area.

Section 6.0 Relocation

Relocation of residents or businesses from the FPURA may be necessary as part of the redevelopment process. There appears to be adequate space available for the relocation of any individuals, families or businesses that may be displaced by an urban renewal project.

Should it find that feasible relocation methods exist, City Council may adopt a relocation policy for this area. Historically, City relocation policy has followed the guidelines established by the Federal Uniform Relocation Act (42 U.S.C. § 4601, et. seq.) and Colorado Urban Renewal Law (C.R.S. § 31-25-107(4)(a) and (b)).

Section 7.0 Project Financing

Urban renewal projects may be financed in a variety of ways. Urban renewal authorities are authorized by statute (C.R.S. § 31-25-105) to borrow money, issue bonds and accept grants from public or private sources. However, the principal method for financing urban renewal projects is through the sale of notes, bonds or other obligations secured by property and/or municipal sales tax increments from the Urban Renewal Area.

Tax Increment Financing (TIF) may include property taxes or municipal sales taxes, or both. The increase in assessed valuation of real and personal property and sales tax growth from new development that occurs in the project area are the sources of tax increment revenue, unless other funds, public or private, are also pledged, directly or on a contingent basis, to provide additional security for the tax increments bonds or other debt. The certified assessed value in effect at the time an Urban Renewal Plan (or a plan amendment containing the required tax allocation wording) is adopted is used to determine the base year for calculating how much, if any revenue is available to pay the debts associated with the project. If a new area is added to an existing urban renewal area, the certified assessed value as of the time the plan is modified to include such area

is used as the base year for calculating ad valorem tax allocations in the new area. Each year following adoption of the plan, the taxes generated by the incremental assessed valuation above the base roll or the amount of City sales tax that exceeds the base year level, or both, are paid to the urban renewal authority for repayment of project debt.

Tax increment financing was not contemplated for use in the FPURA at the time of the original adoption of this plan. However, with this 2014 substantive amendment, AURA intends to establish a City sales and use tax TIF Area within the FPURA. The TIF Area represents approximately one a square block of the larger Urban Renewal area. It includes 15 parcels fronting the north and south sides of E. Colfax Avenue between N. Dayton Street and N. Emporia Street, a portion of a parcel fronting the north side of E. Colfax Avenue between N. Emporia Street and N. Elmira Street, as well as seven additional contiguous parcels south of E. Colfax Avenue fronting N. Dayton Street or N. Emporia Street. The TIF Area is legally described in Appendix E and outlined in the map shown in Appendix F.

The creation of this TIF Area is responsive to current market conditions and will support the emergence of new food and beverage establishments along the Colfax corridor. New retail businesses, particularly restaurants, will diversify the neighborhood commercial base, complement the offerings of the Aurora Cultural Arts District, and support the 2012 Colfax Visioning outcomes. The visioning workshops identified Fletcher Plaza as an Arts & Entertainment Opportunity Area and set Arts, Entertainment and Tourism as one of the community's top priorities. AURA, in cooperation with the City, intends to employ additional financing techniques to fund redevelopment of the FPURA, including, but not limited to, the following:

- **Community Development Block Grants.** These funds, in the form of direct grants, as well as matching loans and grants, made through the Commercial Loan and Grant Program have contributed to funding the expansion of Fletcher Plaza, and will continue to be available to private investors who wish to renovate their property in the area.

- **Private sector investment.** The proposed large residential/mixed use project will require a significant investment from the private developer selected by the AURA. In addition, individual investors, businesses, and property owners who use any of the City's incentive programs are typically required to commit some of their own funds to the project.
- **City of Aurora Capital Improvement Program.** In March 2000, the City Council allocated \$3 million from the City's General Fund to support redevelopment efforts in downtown Aurora in the form of direct development incentives and loans made through the Arts District Loan Fund. These funds will be used to support the expansion of Fletcher Plaza, the creation of the Arts District Loan Fund, and for an upfront cash incentive for the private sector residential/mixed-use project. AURA may request additional support for appropriate capital improvement projects from the City's Capital Improvement Projects Fund.
- **U.S. Housing and Urban Development funds.** Loans through the HOME and Multifamily Rehabilitation Loan programs will continue to be made available to property owners within the FPURA who are interested in renovating their residences.
- **Environmental Protection Agency Brownfields Assessment and Remediation grants.** These funds will pay for Phase I and Phase II testing of sites being considered for major construction projects. If contamination is identified that needs to be remediated, there is limited funding from this source for those purposes as well.
- **City of Aurora Private Activity Bond (PAB) Allocation.** The City's annual PAB allocation may, as needed, be allocated to housing construction and revitalization when the proposed project meets specific affordability and other criteria established by the Federal government.

Section 8.0 Plan Amendments

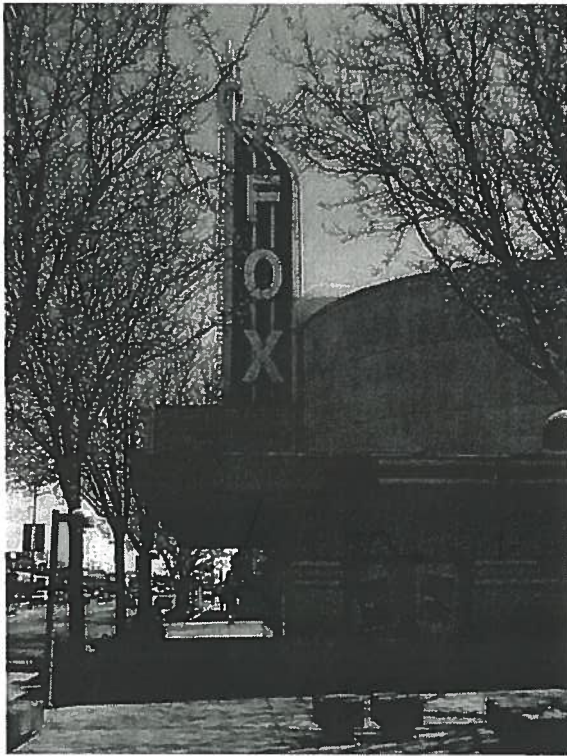
This Urban Renewal Plan may be modified pursuant to the provisions of the Colorado Urban Renewal Law (Section 31-25-1077, C.R.S.)

Section 9.0 Minor Variations

AURA may, in specific cases, allow minor variations from the provisions of this Urban Renewal Plan if it determines that a literal enforcement of the provisions would constitute an unreasonable limitation beyond the intent and purpose of said Plan.

**APPENDIX A – Fletcher Plaza Enhancement Area
Blight Study Survey (2002)**

Kay Miller copy



Fletcher Plaza Enhancement Area Blight Survey

Prepared By
HNTB Corporation
For
The City of Aurora
September 2002

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1.0 Blight Survey Definition and Scope

HNTB was retained by the City of Aurora Urban Renewal Division (AURD) to perform an independent survey of the Fletcher Plaza Enhancement Area and to determine if it constitutes a blighted area as defined below. Based upon the conditions existing in the Survey Area, this document will make a recommendation as to whether the Survey Area contains the characteristics of a blighted area. The actual determination itself remains the responsibility of the City of Aurora.

The determination that an area constitutes a blighted area is a cumulative conclusion, attributable to the presence of several physical, environmental, social and economic factors. Blight is attributable to a multiplicity of conditions which, in combination, tend to accelerate the deterioration of an area. For the purposes of this survey, the pertinent portion of the definition of a blighted area is articulated in the Colorado Urban Renewal Law (the "Act"), Colorado Revised Statute § 31-25-103(2), as follows:

A "blighted" area means an area that, in its present condition and use and, by reason of the presence of at least four of the following factors, substantially impairs or arrests the sound growth of the municipality, retards the provision of housing accommodations, or constitutes an economic or social liability, and is a menace to the public health, safety, morals or welfare:

- a. Slum, deteriorated, or deteriorating structures;
- b. Predominance of defective or inadequate street layout;
- c. Faulty lot layout in relation to size, adequacy, accessibility, or usefulness;
- d. Unsanitary or unsafe conditions;
- e. Deterioration of site or other improvements;
- f. Unusual topography;
- g. Defective or unusual conditions of title rendering the title non-marketable;
- h. The existence of conditions that endanger life or property by fire and other causes;
- i. Buildings that are unsafe or unhealthy for persons to live or work in because of building code violations, dilapidation, deterioration, defective design, physical construction, or faulty or inadequate facilities;
- j. Environmental contamination of buildings or property;
- k. Inadequate public improvements or utilities.

Several principles have been developed by Colorado courts to guide the determination of whether an area constitutes a blighted area under the Colorado Urban Renewal Law. First, the absence of widespread violation of building and health codes does not, by itself, preclude a finding of blight. Second, the presence of one well maintained building does not defeat a determination that an area constitutes a blighted area. Lastly, a governing body's determination as to whether an area is blighted...is a legislative question and the scope of review by the judiciary is restricted.

2.0 Survey Methodology

An important objective of this Survey is to obtain and evaluate data, where possible, on a wide range of physical and non-physical conditions present in the Survey Area. Data was collected from various public agencies and field research was conducted on these various topics: parcel and ownership patterns and history; traffic, circulation and parking; utilities; street, building, and site conditions; vacancies; land use; environmental conditions; and compliance with the city of Aurora's Comprehensive Plan and city ordinances.

Supplemental information was sought from various professionals and public agencies concerning the conditions of public facilities, services and issues in the Survey Area. Several variables have been considered, as required by the state statutes.

The Blight Survey is divided into several tasks as follows:

- Task 1: Collect base data associated with the project and research, as well as prepare base maps of, existing conditions for the Fletcher Plaza Enhancement Area
- Task 2: Conduct interviews with individuals from various departments within the City of Aurora as well as consultants to the City of Aurora
- Task 3: Conduct field surveys to determine if conditions of blight, as defined in the Act, exist in the survey area
- Task 4: Document survey findings in graphic and report forms, and present the findings as required by the signed contract

Information for this survey has been gathered from three principal sources:

- Examination of existing reports and records of the City of Aurora and other public and quasi-public agencies;
- Interviews with existing and former staff in various operating departments of the City of Aurora, and;
- A comprehensive field investigation of conditions in the Survey Area.

3.0 Fletcher Plaza Enhancement Area Description

3.1 Survey Area Location and Boundaries

The Survey Area is located in the City of Aurora, with portions of the study area in both Adams and Arapahoe Counties, Colorado. The City of Aurora is located approximately 10 miles east of downtown Denver.

The Fletcher Plaza Enhancement Area is approximately 12 city blocks in size, bounded by East 16th Avenue on the north, East 14th Avenue on the south, Dallas Street on the west, and Galena Street on the east. The Area also includes the City Park and surrounding area bordered by Dayton Street and Florence Street. (Figure 1). The boundaries of the survey area were identified for the consultant by the City of Aurora.

The Fletcher Plaza Enhancement Area is positioned along East Colfax Avenue and includes much of Aurora's Historic Downtown. It lies within an area traditionally known as Original Aurora, which is centered among three of the nation's largest redevelopment projects - Fitzsimons Army Hospital Site, Stapleton International Airport Site, and Lowry AirForce Base Site.

The topography of the area is flat. No major landforms or grades are present. East Colfax Avenue, a major regional vehicular and transit corridor, bisects the area.

3.2 Existing Land Use

The Fletcher Plaza Enhancement Area is composed of a variety of commercial and residential uses typical of what was a streetcar neighborhood and now is a commercial corridor, including: single family homes, apartments, offices, retail, small personal services and eating establishments. There are close to one hundred and fifty buildings occupying the 12-block area, with four principal streets running through or around the area.

- Approximately 21% of the land is residential
- Approximately 35% of the land is retail
- Approximately 16% of the land is parking
- Approximately 28% of the land is other (including offices, churches, schools, restaurants, banks, and auto repair shops)
- Dayton Street, Florence Street, East Colfax Avenue, and Del Mar Parkway are the principal streets running through the area

The development of East Colfax Avenue and Original Aurora began in the 1890s, but reached its peak in the 1940s and 50s when East Colfax Avenue was the primary thoroughfare to the Rocky Mountains. East Colfax Avenue and downtown businesses thrived on the automobile tourism traffic and the surrounding residential areas provided housing for the employees of the nearby military bases. With the introduction of the enclosed suburban mall and the opening of the Interstate 70, most of the area's major

commercial tenants abandoned the area. The closing of Fitzsimons Army Medical Center, Lowry Airforce Base, and Stapleton Airport in the 1990s was the final blow to the community as many employees of those sites chose to move elsewhere.

Currently, most of the houses are deteriorating, and the businesses have deteriorated at the same rate, if not faster. The streets have undergone some reconstruction in the past few decades. Many of the land parcels have been neglected, there is a lack of landscaping, an accumulation of weeds and debris, and basic deterioration of the structures.

3.3 Existing Planning and Zoning

3.3.1 Existing Planning

There are many existing plans for the revitalization of this area. All are aimed to bring people back to northwest Aurora by creating economic opportunities, creating a sense of community, and improving the infrastructure within the area. When looking at the combination of all the goals which these plans set forth, a clear sense of direction is evident. The following two plans, created by the City of Aurora, contain adopted policies relevant to this Blight Survey:

- 1998 Comprehensive Plan for the City of Aurora
- Colfax Main Street Master Plan

The goals of the 1998 Comprehensive Plan for the City of Aurora were to improve on the open space, transportation, and urban design in the Study Area. Some of the objectives of this Plan were to maintain views of the mountains, create pedestrian friendly neighborhoods with high-quality architecture, encourage the use of alternate transportation, increase adequate access and circulation throughout the area, and incur quality infill design. These visions were not being realized when the field survey was conducted. Open spaces often are not landscaped and contain debris. Sidewalks are cracked, uneven, and narrow. Housing exteriors are often deteriorating. Bus stops and bike routes are either in poor condition or non-existent. Alleyways are small and unsafe for travel. Parking lots are often too small and unmarked for internal circulation. Therefore, the Study Area is not in compliance with the 1998 Comprehensive Plan for the City of Aurora.

The Colfax Main Street Master Plan was adopted in order to improve the quality of life along Colfax Avenue. This was to be accomplished by providing adequate services, as well as focusing on the quality presentation of these services. Some of the objectives of the plan are to provide bike routes covering the area, eliminate overhead powerlines, develop functional bus stops, and provide decorative street furniture. All of these objectives had not been met when the field survey was conducted. There is no evidence of bike routes in the area. Overhead powerlines are still in use. Bus stops exist, but are of low quality, often missing benches, shelters, trash cans, and landscaping. Some street furniture is in place, but only in a

few, unsafe locations. Therefore, the Study Area is not in compliance with the Colfax Main Street Master Plan.

3.3.2 Existing Zoning

Under the classifications defined in Subsection A of Chapter 146, Article 6, Section 600 of the Aurora City Code, the Fletcher Plaza Enhancement Area is primarily zoned B-2, 'Central Business District.' "The purpose of this district is to provide for urban business areas that are more intensive and that have a longer history of urban use. It provides goods and services of a similar nature as the B-1 district. Of all the business districts, the B-2 district has the highest proportion of pedestrian or 'walk-in' traffic to motor vehicle traffic." The Study Area also includes a few lots zoned B-1, 'Retail Business District.' "The purpose of this district is to provide retail goods and services such as convenience goods, groceries and drugs, home furnishings, clothing, restaurants, recreation, and personal services to satisfy the household and personal needs of the residents of nearby residential neighborhoods." The Study Area also includes a few lots zoned R-1 and a few zoned R-4, both falling under 'Multi-Family Residential Districts.' "The purpose of this category of district shall be to:

1. promote and encourage a suitable environment for residential neighborhoods;
2. provide various types of medium density housing with adequate amounts of usable open space and amenities;
3. encourage the location of these districts to be in close proximity to collector streets and public transit facilities; and
4. prohibit all activities of a commercial nature, except for customary home occupations and services normally found within certain types of neighborhoods."

In the Study Area, the land currently has commercial type uses occurring within, with some residential uses. When these commercial and residential lots were surveyed, a few of the zoning laws within the Aurora City Code were found to be broken. The Code calls for landscaping around facilities – both buildings and roads. Often times there is little or none that can be viewed. Another problem was found with the amount of parking spaces available to the public for specific buildings. A place of business that expects a certain number of people to use their building is required to provide a correlated number of parking spaces. In some cases, the required number of spaces was not provided. Finally, the Code states that pawn shops are to be a minimum linear distance from one another. In the Study Area, this distance was not upheld and pawnshops were sometimes located next door to one another.

*Violations
of current
code.*

4.0 Determination of Blight

The significant findings of the Fletcher Plaza Enhancement Area Blight Survey are presented in this section. This evaluation is based on an analysis of documents and reports, interviews, and several field surveys conducted in April and May of 2002. Each property and building along with all public improvements within the survey area were evaluated and deficiencies noted. Condensed field inventory forms are provided in **Appendix II**. The purpose of this blight survey is to determine whether conditions of blight as defined by the Act, exist in the survey area.

The following standards were applied to aid our consideration of structures and improvements:

Standard, Sound

These buildings or sites contain no or relatively minor defects, are adequately maintained and require no treatment outside of normal ongoing maintenance.

Substandard, Minor Deficiencies

These buildings or sites contain deficiencies which require minor/major repairs to secondary structural elements, such as fascia/soffits, gutter/downspouts, exterior finishes, windows, doors, stairwells and fire escapes. Sites with surface pavement deterioration of 25-75% of the survey area are considered minor deficiencies. These types of deficiencies might possibly be corrected through normal maintenance; however, replacement or rebuilding of components by people skilled in the building trades is recommended.

Substandard Major Deficiencies

These buildings or sites contain major defects over a widespread area and would be difficult to correct through normal maintenance. Buildings in the major deficiency category would require replacement or rebuilding of components by people skilled in the building trades. Sites with surface pavement deterioration of 75% or more of the survey area are considered major deficiencies.

The following conditions were observed in the Survey Area, and the factors that contribute to the blight conditions are described below. They are not listed in order of importance. Representative photos showing blight conditions in the Fletcher Plaza Enhancement Area are provided in **Appendix I**.

4.1 Slum, Deteriorated, or Deteriorating Structures

Within the Fletcher Plaza Enhancement Area are many examples of this blight factor, falling under the substandard minor deficiency defined above. Crumbling brick, lack of paint, and weathering stains are present on many structures' exteriors. Approximately 90% of dumpsters and mechanical equipment surveyed are unscreened. This does not conform to Aurora's Zoning Code. Although most of the curb and gutter in this area, when present, is in good condition, there are spots where it is broken down and deteriorating. Signage

problems are also evident on some of the private signs in the area. Signs are deteriorating, with many missing letters, diminishing paint, and faulty supports.

4.2 Predominance of Defective or Inadequate Street Layout

One example of this blight factor is the lack of through streets in the area - requiring the use of the alleys as the local street network. The alleys are not designed or built to local two-way street standards. This hinders their use. The fact that alleys are sometimes used for loading is also a problem. When a semi-truck is unloading, it often blocks the whole alley from through travel.

Del Mar Parkway, a principal street which joins Florence Street in the Fletcher Plaza Enhancement Area, is not well signed. Intersections between Del Mar Parkway and the side streets are quite confusing. There is a lack of signing and striping, adding to the confusion of the street layouts. One example occurs at Del Mar Parkway and East 14th Avenue. Poor visibility, poor signage, poor and confusing alignment, and poor traffic circulation are evident at this intersection.

According to the Colfax Mainstreet Master Plan, there are supposed to be three bike routes running in the area: along East 14th Avenue, Emporia Street, and Del Mar Parkway. There is a lack of evidence of these routes.

4.3 Faulty Lot Layout

There are many small, narrow lots fronting along Colfax Avenue found in the Study Area. These lots are being used for commercial (retail/personal service) land uses. Many of the smaller lots off of Colfax Avenue are being used for single-family housing. In today's marketplace, these commercial lots are too small for today's larger retail users. The residential lots, if redeveloped as residential lots, would provide an economic return too low to make the endeavor worthwhile.

In addition, there is a fragmented ownership pattern among the commercial buildings on Colfax Avenue. In many cases one person owns several of the parcels within the area, but not all together. This pattern hinders redevelopment in the area.

4.4 Unsanitary or Unsafe Conditions

There are many examples of this blight factor. Often the alleyways and parking lots are inadequately lit. Lighting either does not exist or is in poor condition. Street lighting is in place, but does not adequately cover all intersections and streets.

The sidewalks in the area are cracked and uneven. Most sidewalks in the residential areas do not meet ADA standards, due to their width.

Over 25% of the parking lots in the area have poor drainage, in turn causing excessive potholes and rutting. These factors make travel unsafe within the parking lots.

Unsanitary conditions found include damaged gutters and downspouts; excessive debris, trash, and weeds; and barbed wire fences.

Graffiti was found within the Fletcher Plaza Enhancement Area on walls, alleys, and signage. According to the Aurora Police Department Gang Intervention Unit, there has been an influx of Hispanic Gangs in the area, leading to an increase in tagging.

At City Park, located within the study area, many vagrants were found at all hours during our site visits. They were also loitering in Fletcher Plaza. A street fight was witnessed in the City Park.

In Fletcher Plaza and the smaller plazas on the other side of East Colfax Avenue at Elmira Street and Emporia Street, located within the Study Area, many vagrants were found at all hours during the site visits.

According to Fire Inspection Records obtained from the City of Aurora, there were several commercial buildings within the area that have been cited for multiple violations. The violations had to do with placement, quantity, and inspection of fire extinguishers; illuminating exit signs; use of commercial zoned buildings as residential dwellings; faulty electrical wiring; and faulty sprinkler systems.

4.5 Deterioration of Site or Other Improvements

A lack of landscaping exists in most areas, both on residential and commercial property. This lack of landscaping is in direct violation of Aurora's Zoning Code. A lot of "site maintenance" problems occur on vacant parcels of land. Abandoned vehicles were found in parking lots, contributing to the poor appearance of the community. As mentioned above, graffiti was found throughout the area as well.

Overhead utilities were found on most streets within the Fletcher Plaza Enhancement Area.

The rear sides of many commercial buildings are deteriorating. Crumbling brick, exposed wiring, stained walls, and broken window glass gives evidence of this deterioration. Holes in the walls due to vandalism, weathering, and poor design are also proof of deterioration. Most of the commercial buildings with rear deterioration are located along Colfax Avenue. These buildings have alleyways running behind them, which increase the opportunity for exposed rear sides to deteriorate.

4.6 Unsafe or Unhealthy Buildings

There are several examples observed of this blight factor, falling under the substandard major deficiency defined above. Foundation settling of homes and commercial buildings is evidenced by the cracks in the walls of these structures. Signs of settlement could also be seen on six different porches where cracking and deterioration are present.

Numerous instances of Building Code violations were observed. In two residential structures and one retail structure, a stoop or landing outside of the front door is not present; instead the staircase begins at the door. On most commercial sites, mechanical equipment is unscreened and can be viewed from the street. In some places, unscreened

mechanical equipment resides on the ground – an unsafe condition because of the exposed fan blades.

4.7 Environmental Contamination

Environmental Assessments of the area show several reasons for further environmental testing to occur, if improvements are to be made in the area. There are two underground storage tanks still buried within the study area. Their continued presence could result in leaking or they could be damaged, causing spillage. There is a good chance asbestos or lead-based paint may be present in various buildings on site. This conclusion was drawn because of the age of the buildings in the area. There were several sites that were formerly auto repair shops. These sites have a history of contaminated soil and groundwater. Two other shops previously in existence also have a history of contamination – a photo developing shop and a laundry/cleaners retail business. Again, further tests need to be done to determine if contamination actually does exist.¹

4.8 Inadequate Public Improvements or Utilities

The sidewalks, as mentioned previously, are not in compliance with ADA Standards. Currently, most residential sidewalks are two and one-half feet wide. The sidewalks show signs of major deterioration in most areas.

Street lighting in the area, as mentioned above, is in place but does not adequately cover all intersections and streets. The overhead utilities need to be removed.

Curb and gutter deterioration occurs in the Fletcher Plaza Enhancement Area. In many places, the concrete is crumbling. Cracks in the curb and gutter are evident throughout the Area. Weeds are also growing from the seams of the curbs and gutters.

Many of the vacant lots are used for parking and are non-compliant. Many of the lots are also unpaved, causing drainage problems to occur, as well as allowing debris to accumulate within the gravel and dirt. Aurora's Zoning Code is violated in many lots, demonstrated by a lack of curb stops and striping, and inadequate turning radiuses. This causes many problems having to do with accessibility and usefulness within the parking lot. This also creates safety concerns, due to the lack of directional guidance.

Many parking lots do not meet ADA Standards, causing both hindrances and safety concerns. Handicapped parking spots, when put into the parking lots, do not have adequate signing or striping, and accessible ramps are not in place. More often, however, handicapped spots are not present in the parking lots. This is again in direct violation of Aurora's Zoning Code.

¹ Phase I Environmental Site Assessment North Fletcher Plaza Impact Area, October 2001; Phase I Environmental Site Assessment, December 2000; Asbestos, Regulated Building Materials, and Lead-based Paint Survey Report, November 2001.

Smaller parking lots often provide inadequate internal circulation paths. Irregular shaped lots also provide inadequate internal circulation paths, and do not maximize parking volumes.

Many of the lots have an inadequate number of parking spaces for the structures' uses. Also, bicycle parking facilities are not provided in addition to the vehicle parking. These factors are in violation of Aurora's Zoning Code.

5.0 Summary of Findings

It is the conclusion and recommendation of this survey that the Fletcher Plaza Enhancement Area, in its present condition and use, is a blighted area as defined in Colorado Revised Statute § 31-25-103(2). By reason of the presence of numerous factors identified in Section 103(2) of the Urban Renewal Law and discussed above in Chapter 4, the Survey Area substantially impairs or arrests the sound growth of the City of Aurora, retards the provision of housing accommodations, constitutes an economic or social liability, and is a menace to the public health, safety, morals and welfare.

While some properties in the Survey Area are in standard or sound condition, a predominance of deteriorated and substandard conditions are present. It should be noted that this conclusion is for the Survey Area as a whole, and is not based on separate individual properties.

As described in this survey, conditions existing in the Survey Area constitute at least four of the factors or incidents indicative of a blighted area. The conclusion of this survey is based on the following summaries of the eight blighted conditions found in the Survey Area and described previously in this report. A summary of findings is presented in **Table A** below.

1. Slum, Deteriorated, or Deteriorating Structures. There is a presence of the deterioration of exterior finishes on structures, unscreened trash and mechanical enclosures, deteriorated curb and gutter, missing and damaged signage, and broken windows.
2. Predominance of Defective or Inadequate Street Layout. There is a presence of defective and inadequate planning of the street layouts leading to the use of the alleyways as primary access routes to businesses, confusion on the streets, and a lack of bike lanes.
3. Faulty Lot Layout. There is a presence of faulty lot layout – small, narrow lot sizes (both commercial and residential) constraining redevelopment opportunities, and of fragmented ownership patterns among parcels.
4. Unsanitary or Unsafe Conditions. There is a presence of vagrants, graffiti, street fighting, lack of adequate lighting, cracked and uneven sidewalks, nonconforming sidewalks, poor drainage in parking lots, unkept gutter and downspouts, trash, debris, weeds, barbed wire fence, thorn bushes, and unsafe mounting of mechanical equipment.
5. Deterioration of Site or Other Improvements. There is a presence of unkept landscaping, maintenance problems at vacant sites, abandoned vehicles, graffiti, and overhead utilities.

6. Unsafe or Unhealthy Buildings. There is a presence of structural settlement, lack of adequate stoops or landings, and unscreened trash and mechanical enclosures.
7. Environmental Contamination. There is the potential presence of leaking or spilling storage tanks, asbestos, lead-based paint, and contamination due to land uses either past or present including: auto repair shops, photo developing shop, and laundry/cleaner retail businesses.
8. Inadequate Public Improvements or Utilities. There is a presence of nonconforming and deteriorating sidewalks, deteriorating curb and gutter, inadequate street lighting, overhead utilities, an unpaved alley, unpaved parking lots, improper use of curb stops, lack of curb stops and striping, inadequate public parking, and inadequate handicapped parking.

Table A: Factors of Blight in the Study Area

Properties	Factors of Blight										
	a	b	c	d	e	f	g	h	i	j	k
Block 1	x			x	x						x
Block 2	x	x		x	x				x		x
Block 3	x	x		x	x						x
Block 4	x			x	x				x		x
Block 5	x	x		x	x				x	x	x
Block 6	x		x	x	x				x		x
Block 7	x			x	x				x		x
Block 8					x						x
Block 9	x			x	x					x	x
Block 10	x	x		x	x				x		x
Block 11	x	x	x	x	x				x	x	x
Block 12	x			x	x				x		x
Block 13	x	x		x	x						x
Block 14	x			x	x						x
Overall Area	x	x	x	x	x				x	x	x

See “Figure 4: Block Map” for block locations.

Factors of Blight:

- a. Slum, deteriorated, or deteriorating structures
- b. Predominance of defective or inadequate street layout
- c. Faulty lot layout in relation to size, adequacy, accessibility, or usefulness
- d. Unsanitary or unsafe conditions
- e. Deterioration of site or other improvements
- f. Unusual topography
- g. Defective or unusual conditions of title rendering the title non-marketable
- h. The existence of conditions that endanger life or property by fire and other causes
- i. Buildings that are unsafe or unhealthy for persons to live or work in because of building code violations, dilapidation, deterioration, defective design, physical construction, or faulty or inadequate facilities
- j. Environmental contamination of buildings or property
- k. Inadequate public improvements or utilities

6.0 Sources

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Original Aurora Economic Development Plan, Aurora Rehabilitation Authority, Aurora, Colorado, January 1997. ? still relevant?

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HNTB Field Survey, April 18, 2002.

HNTB Field Survey, April 25, 2002.

Telephone Interview, Vern Adams, Utilities Division, City of Aurora, April 2002.

Telephone Interview, Terry Anderson, Code Division, City of Aurora, April 2002.

Telephone Interview, Paul Andrus, Community Development Division, City of Aurora, April 2002.

Telephone Interview, Dawn Barrett, Original Aurora Renewal Division, City of Aurora, April 2002.

Telephone Interview, Scott Berg, Building Division, City of Aurora, April 2002.

Telephone Interview, Linda Clohessy, Maps Division, City of Aurora, April 2002.

Telephone Interview, Peter Francis, project manager for MLK Jr. Library, April 2002.

Telephone Interview, Rick Hunter, Public Works Division, City of Aurora, April 2002.

Telephone Interview, Jim Ives, Planning Division, City of Aurora, April 2002.

Telephone Interview, Doug McBee, Fire Division, City of Aurora, April 2002.

Telephone Interview, Mary Paczosa, Police Division, City of Aurora, April 2002.

Telephone Interview, Sgt. Peterson, Gang Intervention Unit, April 2002.

Telephone Interview, Manjeet Ranu, Zoning Division, April 2002.

Telephone Interview, Alan Sumura, Public Works Division, April 2002.

Telephone Interview, Bob Watkins, Maps Division, April 2002.

City of Aurora, Aerial Base Map.

City of Aurora, Zoning Map.

City of Aurora, Parcel Map.

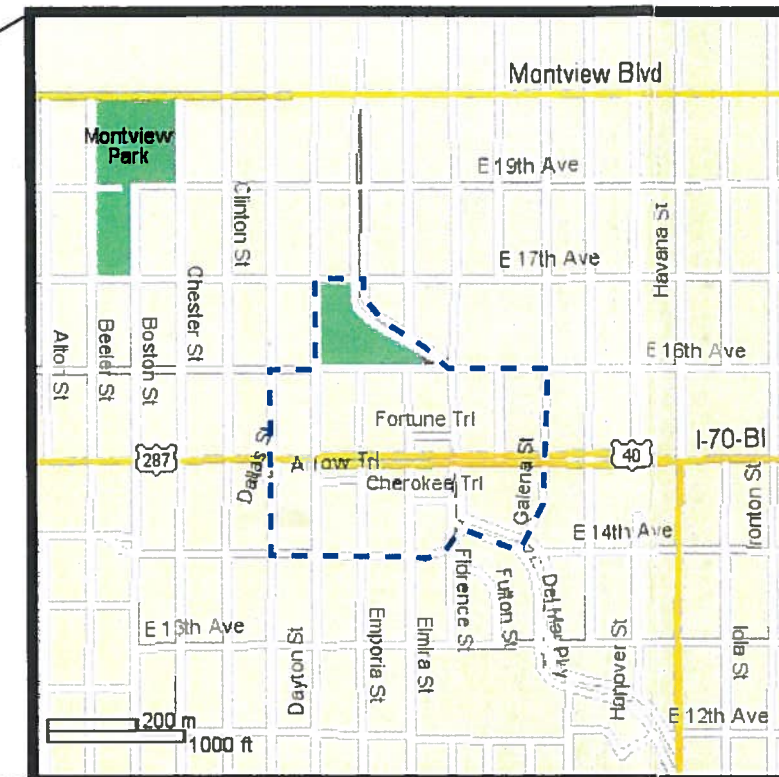
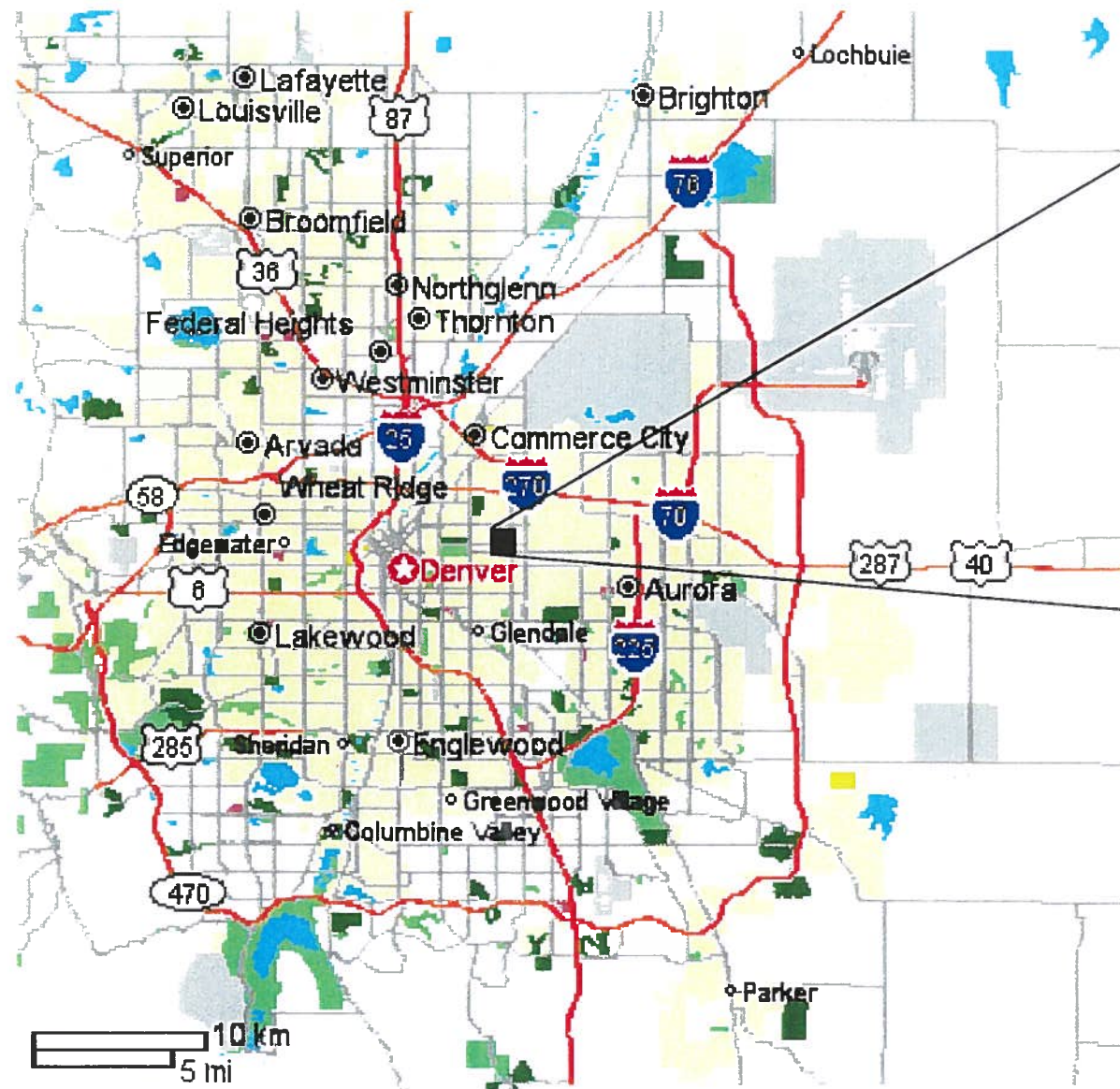
**FLETCHER PLAZA
ENHANCEMENT AREA**

HNTB JUNE 2002

AREA OF DETAIL

**REGIONAL
LOCATION
MAP**

REGIONAL MAP



LEGEND

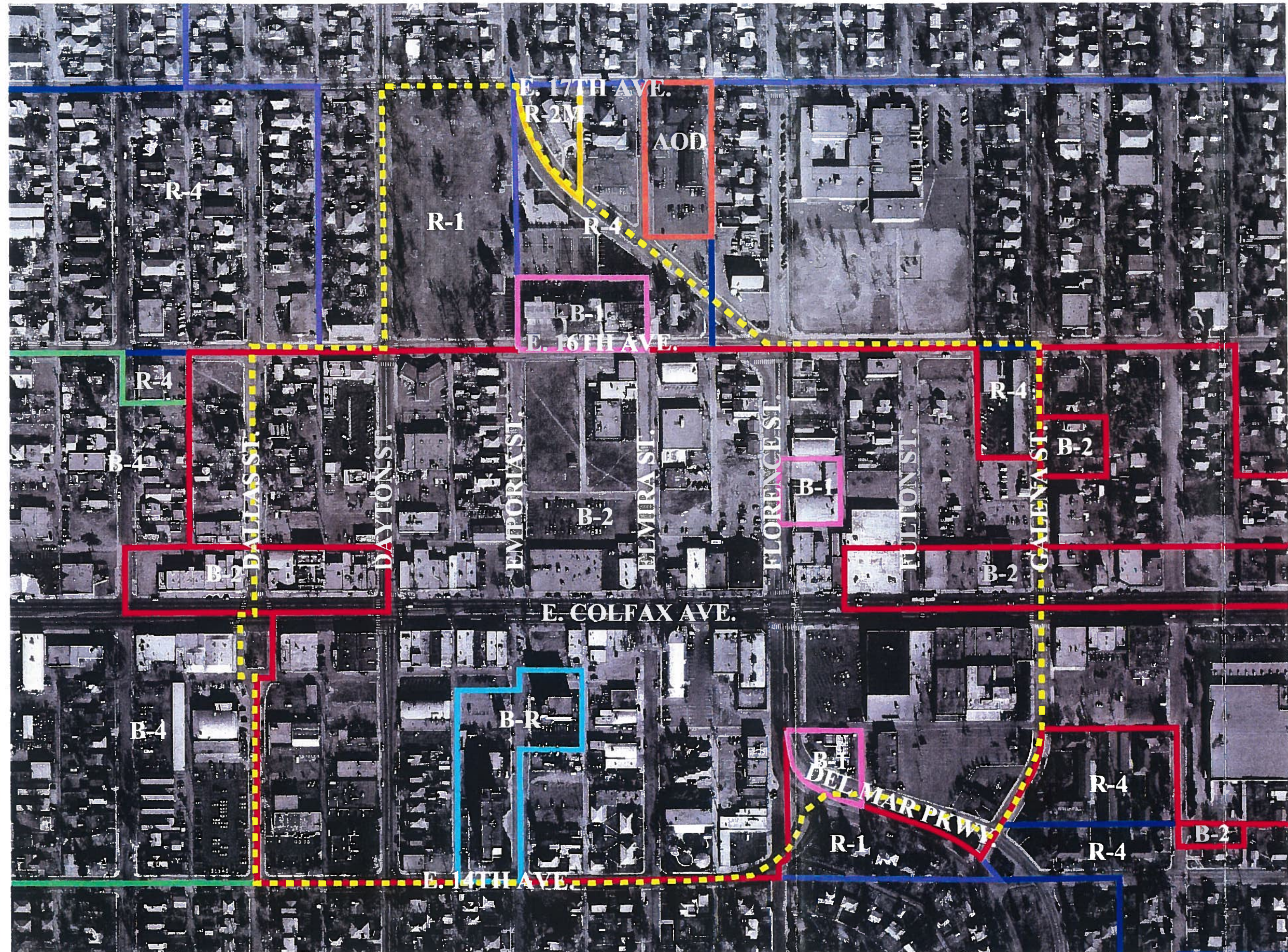
--- STUDY AREA
BOUNDARY



FLETCHER PLAZA
ENHANCEMENT AREA

HNTB JUNE 2002

ZONING



LEGEND

- AOD
- B-1 = RETAIL BUSINESS DISTRICT
- B-2 = CENTRAL BUSINESS DISTRICT
- B-4 = BUSINESS AND COMMERCIAL DISTRICT
- B-R = BUSINESS RESIDENTIAL OVERLAY
- R-1 = RESIDENTIAL 1
- R-2M = RESIDENTIAL 2M
- R-4 = RESIDENTIAL 4
- STUDY AREA BOUNDARY

FLETCHER PLAZA
ENHANCEMENT AREA

HNTB JUNE 2002

BASEMAP



200 0 200 400 Feet

LEGEND

- PARCELS
- STUDY AREA BOUNDARY



BLOCK MAP

LEGEND

- BLOCK BOUNDARIES
- STUDY AREA BOUNDARY

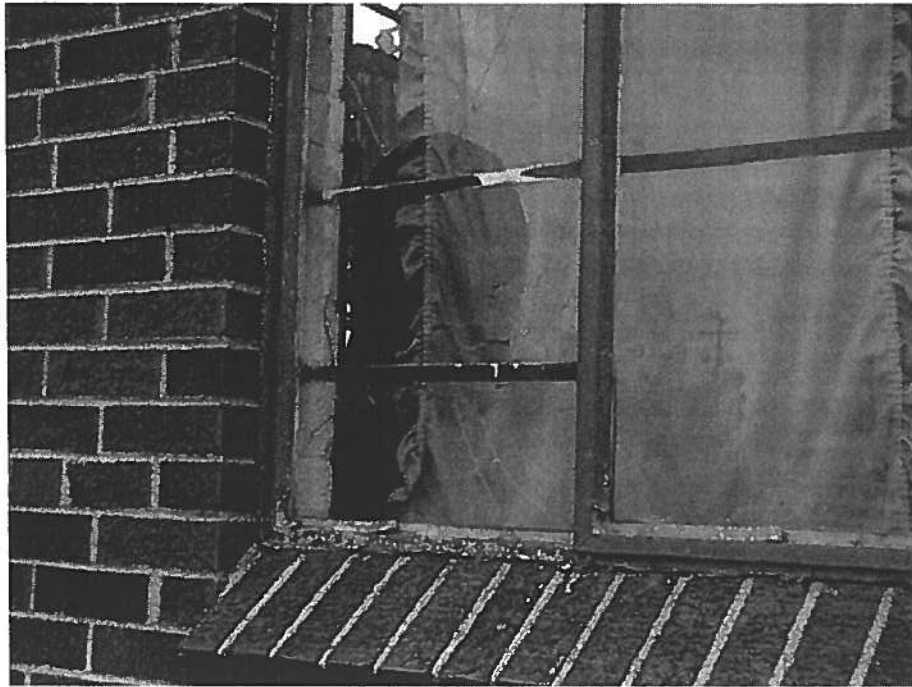


Appendices

- I. Photo Inventory
- II. Field Inventory

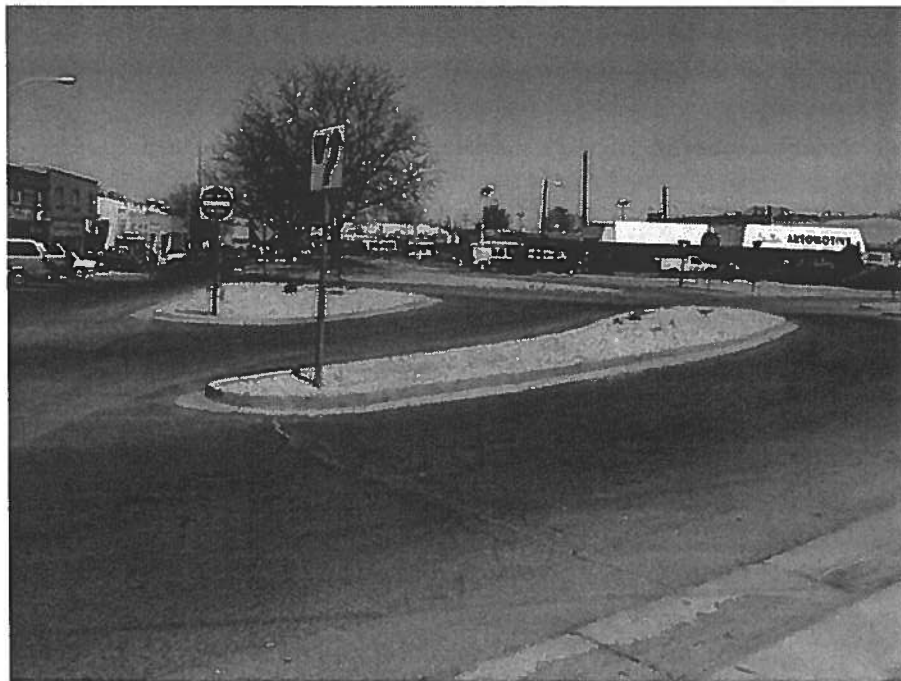
Appendix I

Photo Inventory



broken window

a. Slum, Deteriorated, or Deteriorating Structures



defective street layout

b. Predominance of Defective or Inadequate Street Layout

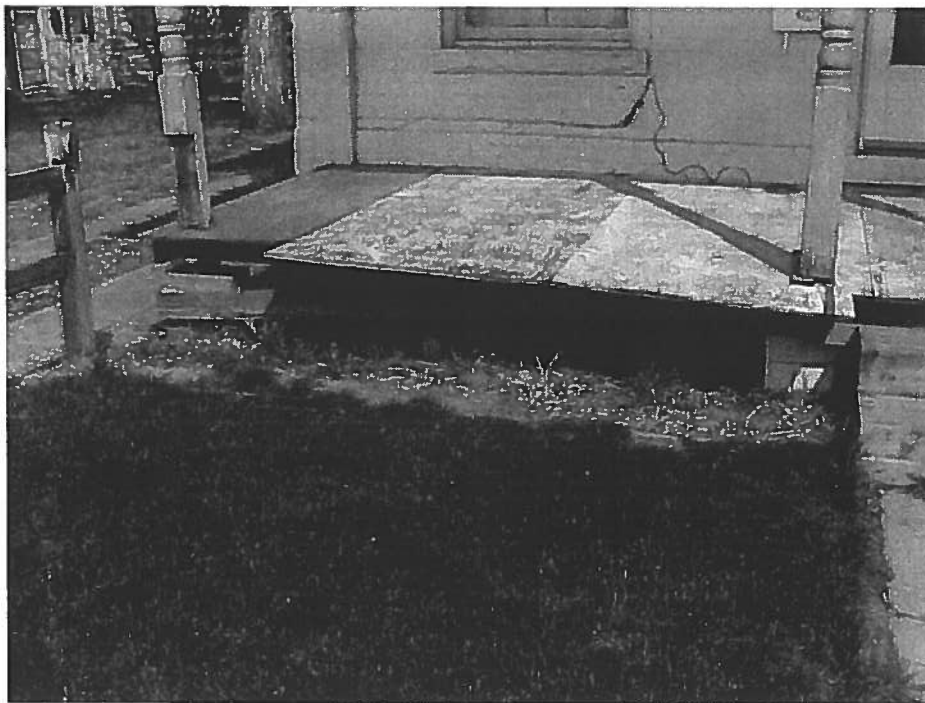


inadequate parking lot layout, exterior deterioration, drainage problems

a. Slum, Deteriorated, or Deteriorating Structures

c. Faulty Lot Layout

e. Deterioration or Unsafe Conditions



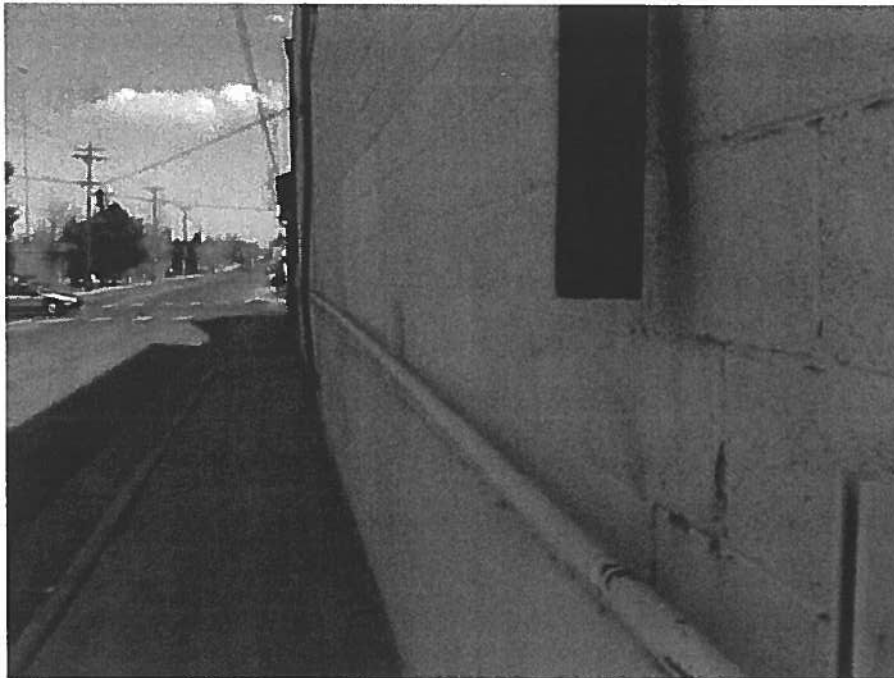
foundation deterioration

i. Unsafe or Unhealthy Buildings



exterior wall surface, overhead utilities, debris, unscreened dumpster, unpaved alley

- a. Slum, Deteriorated, or Deteriorating Structures
- d. Unsanitary or Unsafe Conditions
- e. Deterioration of Site or Other Improvements
- k. Inadequate Public Improvements or Utilities



gutter and downspout deterioration, exterior deterioration, overhead utilities

- a. Slum, Deteriorated, and Deteriorating Structures
- d. Unsanitary or Unsafe Conditions
- e. Deterioration of Site or Other Improvements
- k. Inadequate Public Improvements or Utilities



settlement cracking
i. Unsafe or Unhealthy Buildings



deteriorated signage, lack of landscaping
a. Slum, Deteriorated, or Deteriorating Structures
e. Deterioration of Site or Other Improvements



signage problem

a. Slum, Deteriorated, or Deteriorating structures



substandard sidewalk

d. Unsanitary or Unsafe Conditions

k. Inadequate Public Improvements or Utilities



unscreened mechanical
a. Slum, Deteriorated, or Deteriorating Structures



lack of landscaping , inadequate parking lot layout
e. Deterioration of Site or Other Improvements
k. Inadequate Public Improvements or Utilities



graffiti

d. Unsanitary or Unsafe Conditions



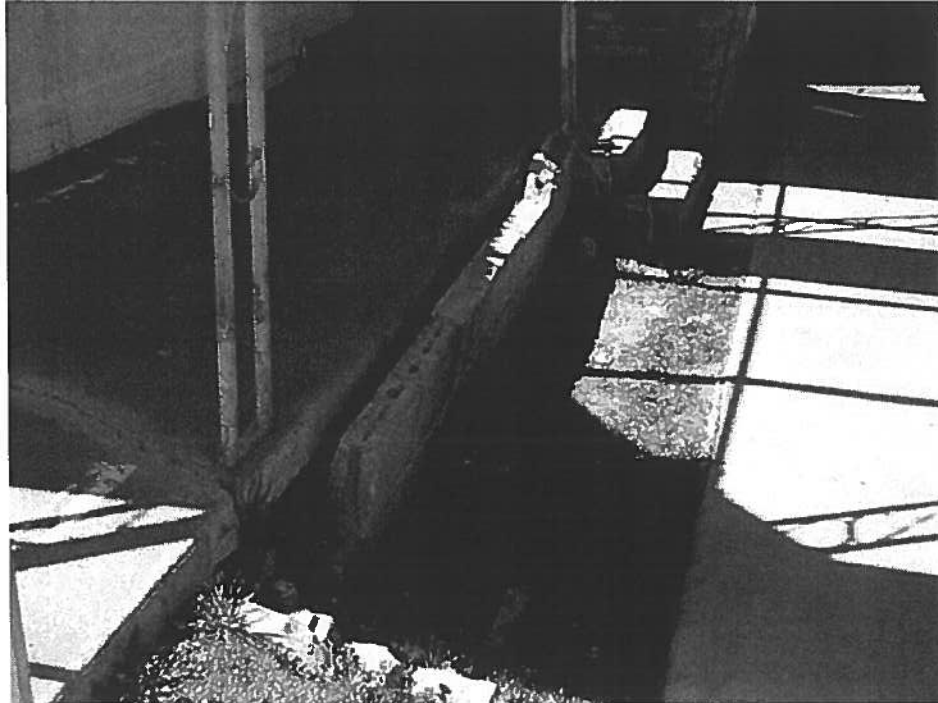
inadequate parking lot layout, unscreened dumpsters, overhead utilities, lack of landscaping,
inadequate lighting

- a. Slum, Deteriorated, or Deteriorating Structures
- c. Faulty Lot Layout
- e. Deterioration of Site or Other Improvements
- k. Inadequate Public Improvements or Utilities



weeds and debris, deteriorated door, deteriorated exterior, gutter/downspout deterioration, wall deterioration

- a. Slum, Deteriorated, or Deteriorating Structures
- d. Unsanitary or Unsafe Conditions



foundation deterioration, lack of landscaping

- i. Unsafe or Unhealthy Buildings
- e. Deterioration of Site or Other Improvement



deteriorating wall, debris and weeds
a. Slum, Deteriorated, or Deteriorating Structures
i. Unsafe or Unhealthy Buildings



unsafe mounting of mechanical equipment
d. Unsanitary or Unsafe Conditions



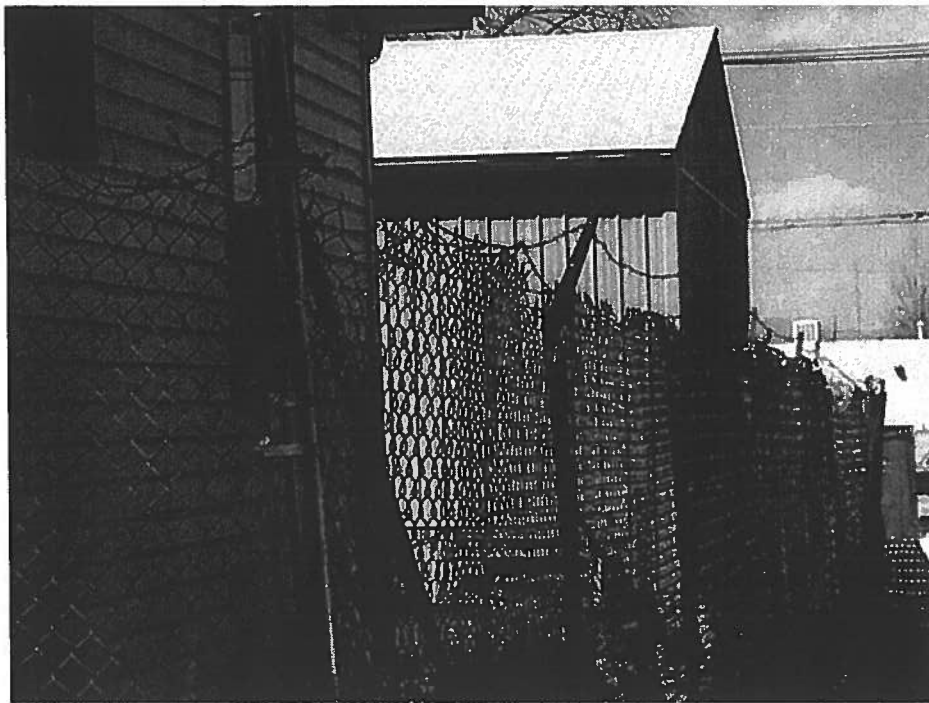
weeds, uncovered dumpster, exterior deterioration, unpaved alley, overhead utilities

- a. Slum, Deteriorated, or Deteriorating Structures
- d. Unsanitary or Unsafe Conditions
- e. Deterioration of Site or Other Improvements



settlement cracking, exterior deterioration

- a. Slum, Deterioration, or Deteriorating Structures
- i. Unsafe or Unhealthy Buildings



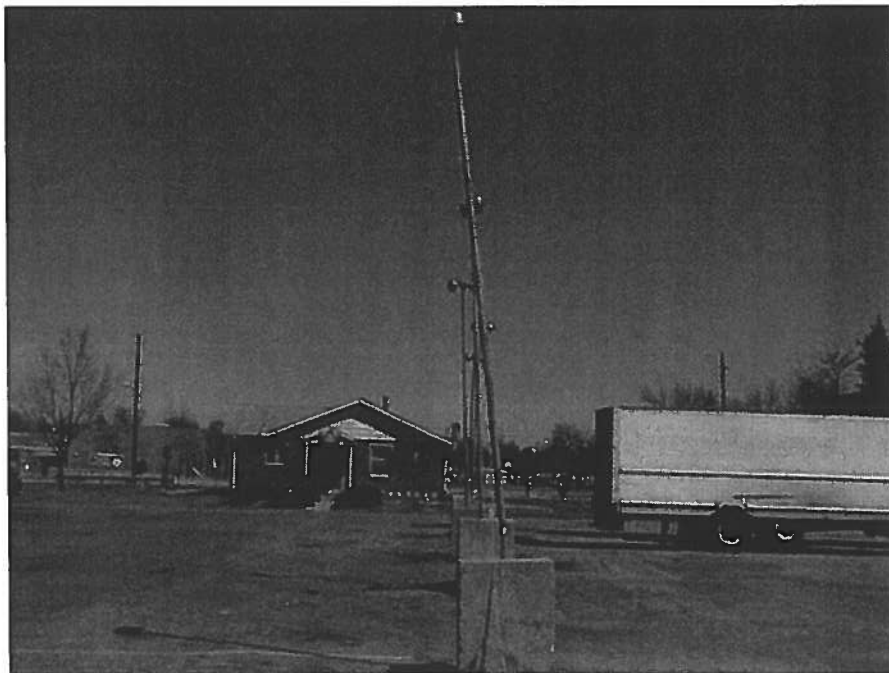
barbed wire fence
d. Unsanitary or Unsafe Conditions



curb and gutter deterioration
a. Slum, Deteriorated, or Deteriorating Structures



unscreened trash dumpsters
a. Slum, Deteriorated, or Deteriorating Structures



inadequate lighting
d. Unsanitary or Unsafe Conditions

APPENDIX B – Fletcher Plaza Urban Renewal Area Legal Description (2002)

A parcel of land situated in the SE ¼ and SW ¼ of Section 34, T3S, R67W, City of Aurora, Adams County, State of Colorado and the NE ¼ and NW ¼ of Section 3, T4S, R67W, City of Aurora, Arapahoe County, State of Colorado, more particularly described as follows:

Beginning at the southeast corner of Lot 25, Block 39, Aurora;

Thence southerly along the west right-of-way line of Dallas Street to the southeast corner of Lot 24, Block 26, Aurora;

Thence southerly along the extension of the west right-of-way line of Dallas Street to the intersection with the centerline of East Colfax Avenue right-of-way;

Thence westerly along said centerline to the intersection with the northerly extension of the east line of Lot 10, Block 1, The Gilligan – Add.;

Thence southerly along said extension to the northeast corner of said lot;

Thence southerly along the east line of said lot to the intersection with the north line of Lot 38, Block 4 of said subdivision;

Thence easterly along the north line of Lot 38, Block 4 of said subdivision to the northeast corner of said lot;

Thence southerly along the west right-of-way line of Dallas Street to the northeast corner of Lot 50, Block 6 of said subdivision also being a point on the south right-of-way line of East 14th Avenue;

Thence easterly along said south right-of-way line to the northeast corner of Lot 20, Block 3, Del Mar Amended Plat;

Thence northeasterly to the southern most northwest corner of Lot 1, Block 5 of said subdivision;

Thence northeasterly along the westerly boundary of Block 5 of said subdivision also being the easterly right-of-way line of East 14th Avenue to the intersection with the southeasterly right-of-way line of Del Mar Parkway;

Thence easterly along said southeasterly right-of-way line of Del Mar Parkway also being the northerly boundary of Block 5 of said subdivision to the intersection with the southwesterly extension of the easterly right-of-way line of Galena Street with the northerly line of Lot 23, Block 5 of said subdivision;

Thence northeasterly along said extension of and the easterly right-of-way line of Galena Street to the southwest corner of Lot 24, Block 46, Aurora also being a point on the north right-of-way line of East 16th Avenue;

Thence westerly along said north right-of-way line to the intersection with the west right-of-way line of Del Mar Parkway as dedicated by Book 2229, Page 809 to a point on the south lot line of Lot 24, Block 43;

Thence northerly and northwesterly along said west right-of-way line to the intersection with the south right-of-way line of East 17th Avenue, also being the northeast corner of Lot 48, Block 41, Aurora;

Thence westerly along said south right-of-way line to the intersection with the east right-of-way line of Dayton Street, also being the northwest corner of Lot 1, Block 41, Aurora;

Thence southerly along said east right-of-way line to the intersection with the north right-of-way line of East 16th Avenue, also being the southwest corner of Lot 24, Block 41, Aurora;

Thence westerly along said north right-of-way line of East 16th Avenue to the Point of Beginning.

APPENDIX C - Fletcher Plaza Urban Renewal Study Area (2002)



- Urban Renewal Area
- ▨ Black Creek Communities Project
- - - Original Aurora Arts District
- • • • MLK Library Project

Fletcher Plaza Urban Renewal Study Area



APPENDIX D – TIF Area Blight Confirmation Memo (2014)



Fletcher Plaza Blight Confirmation

Visual Survey, August 2013

Background:

The original conditions survey for the Fletcher Plaza Urban Renewal Area, *Fletcher Plaza Enhancement Area Blight Study Survey*, was prepared by HNTB Corporation in 2002 for the Aurora Urban Renewal Authority. The study area boundaries were 16th Avenue to the north, Clinton Street to the west, 14th Avenue to the south and Galena Street to the east, a 12-block area including approximately 160 parcels and covering approximately 51 acres.

Per the Colorado Urban Renewal Law, C.R.S. Section 31-25-103(2), the definition of a blighted area is an area that... "in its present condition and use, and by the existence of the presence of at least four factors of blight, substantially impairs or arrests the sound growth of the municipality, retards the provision of housing accommodations, or constitutes an economic or social liability, and is a menace to the public health, safety, morals, or welfare."

The 2002 Fletcher Plaza Blight Study found eight significant factors of blight (out of a possible eleven factors cited in the legislation) throughout the study area. As a result of those findings the Fletcher Plaza area was declared as blighted and appropriate for urban renewal by the Aurora City Council. Following the City Council's declaration of blight for the area, the Fletcher Plaza Urban Renewal Area was adopted by the Aurora City Council in January 2003.

The primary purposes of creating the Urban Renewal Area was to support the City's redevelopment initiatives in the area: acquisition of property and creation of the Martin Luther King Municipal Services Center, Fletcher Plaza, and the mixed use Florence Square project at 9801 E. Colfax Avenue. The 2003 Urban Renewal Plan was adopted without the designation of TIF areas but specified that "... AURA may in the future seek an amendment to the Urban Renewal Plan in accordance with statutory procedures to permit the use of such financing."

Since the addition of a TIF Area constitutes a substantive modification to the Fletcher Plaza Urban Renewal Plan (within the meaning of the State Statute Section 31-25-107-7), such an amendment requires confirmation that blight still exists in the target area and requires approval of that finding through a public hearing process.

2013 Visual Survey of Blight on Fletcher Plaza Urban Renewal Area Parcels:

The attached map shows the location of the newly surveyed parcels within the context of the greater Fletcher Plaza Urban Renewal Area, as well as the geographic boundaries of the recommended future TIF Area. The 2002 Fletcher Plaza Blight Study found seven (7) significant factors of blight located on the two blocks that encompass the current proposed future TIF Area. (The entire 2002 Blight Study area contained a total of eight (8) significant factors of blight overall.) Staff conducted a 2013 visual survey to update the 2002 Blight Study and has re-confirmed that most factors of blight continue to exist. The table below summarizes and compares the 2002 and 2013 survey results.

Comparison of Blight Surveys, 2002 and 2013

Blight Factor	2002	2013
(a) Slum, deteriorated, or deteriorating structures	X	X
(b) Predominance of defective or inadequate street layout	X	
(c) Faulty lot layout in relation to size, adequacy, accessibility, or usefulness		X
(d) Unsanitary or unsafe conditions	X	X
(e) Deterioration of site or other improvements	X	X
(f) Unusual topography or inadequate public improvements or utilities		X
(g) Defective or unusual conditions of title rendering the title nonmarketable		Not Surveyed
(h) The existence of conditions that endanger life or property by fire or other causes		Not Surveyed
(i) Buildings that are unsafe or unhealthy for persons to live or work in because of building code violations, dilapidation, deterioration, defective design, physical construction, or faulty or inadequate facilities	X	Not Surveyed
(j) Environmental contamination of buildings or property;	X	Not Surveyed
(k) The existence of health, safety, or welfare factors requiring high levels of municipal services or substantial physical underutilization or vacancy of sites, buildings, or other improvements	X	X

The August 2013 visual survey found evidence for the following six (6) significant factors of blight described below. Selected photographs are attached.

(a). *Slum, deteriorated, or deteriorating structures.*

The exterior condition of the buildings in the Area shows physical deterioration and therefore continues to confirm this blight factor.

(c). *Faulty lot layout in relation to size, adequacy, accessibility or usefulness.*

This portion of the urban renewal area contains many small parcels fronting East Colfax Avenue. These parcels are nearly 100% built out and have no individual off-street parking, thereby meeting the conditions of this blight factor due to their inadequate lot size. Commercial users of these properties must rely on limited on-street parking or shared parking lots that serve the district.

(d). *Unsanitary or unsafe conditions.*

The area continues to show evidence of numerous unsanitary or unsafe conditions that contribute to this blight factor. Common findings include cracked or uneven surfaces for pedestrians; the presence of trash, debris, and hazardous conditions; and evidence of vagrants, vandalism and graffiti.

(e). *Deterioration of site or other improvements.*

Properties in the area continue to meet the criteria for this blight factor. There are numerous instances of inadequate site maintenance; deteriorated site pavement, fencing, and/or site fixtures; as well as inadequate lighting.

(f). *Unusual topography or inadequate public improvements or utilities.*

Sidewalks, curbs and gutters are insufficient or deteriorated. Street furniture and streetscape elements are dated and in disrepair. Public planters are unmaintained and dead street trees

have not been replaced. These observations throughout the area provide evidence of the presence of this blight factor.

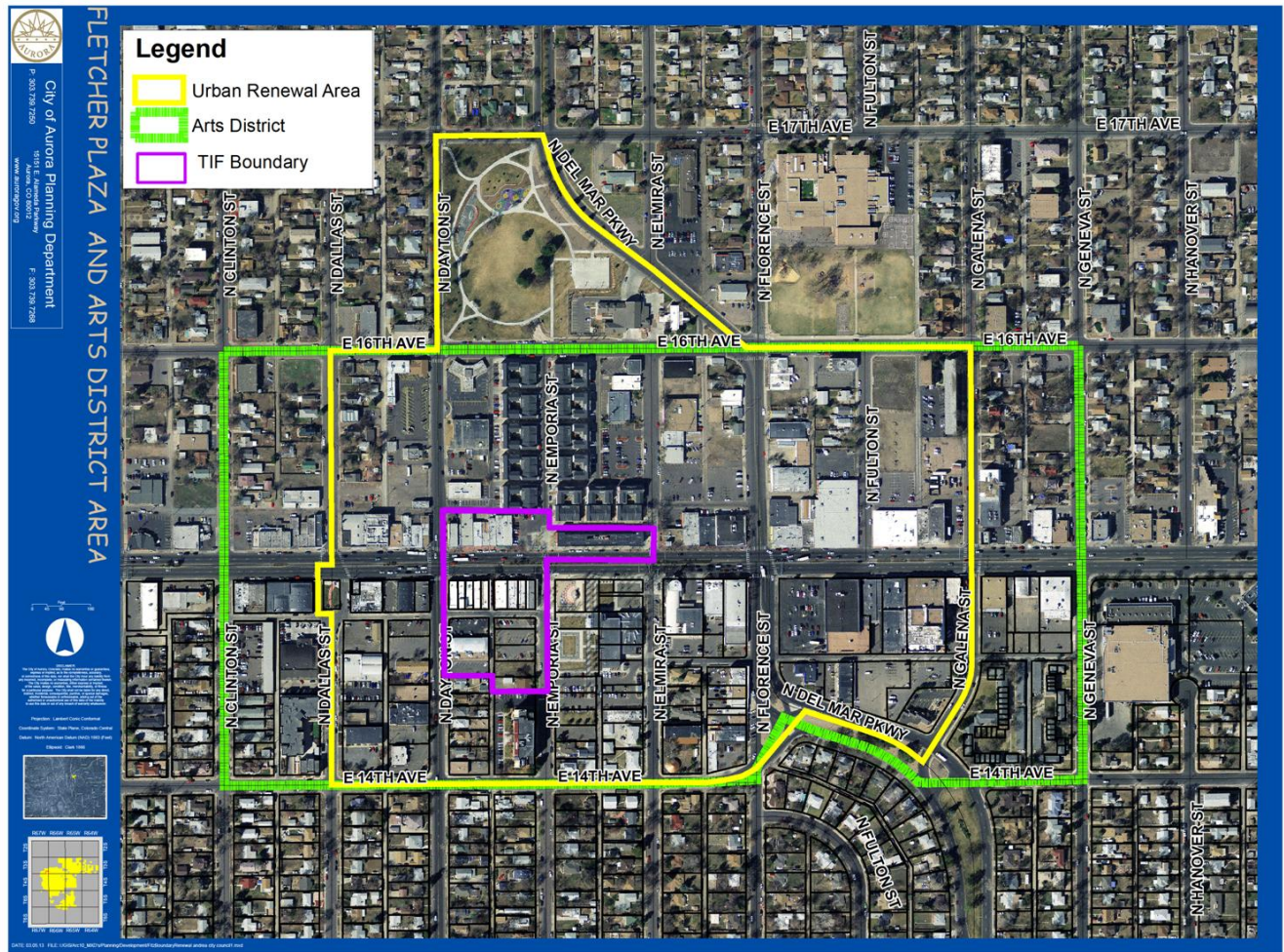
(k). The existence of health, safety, or welfare factors requiring high levels of municipal services or substantial physical underutilization or vacancy of sites, buildings, or other improvements.

Field observations have confirmed the continued presence of vacant or underutilized properties, which contribute to this blight factor. E. Colfax has high traffic volumes and nearly continuous building frontage, yet numerous retail spaces are unoccupied or have been converted to other uses.

Conclusion:

Most of the initial blight factors that were found on the proposed TIF Area parcels in the 2002 Fletcher Plaza Blight Study still exist today and new factors have emerged. The area remains appropriate for redevelopment in alignment with the goals of the Fletcher Plaza Urban Renewal Plan and staff recommends that the Fletcher Plaza Urban Renewal Plan be amended by creating boundaries for the new TIF Area.

Fletcher Plaza Urban Renewal Area Map



Properties within the Proposed TIF Area

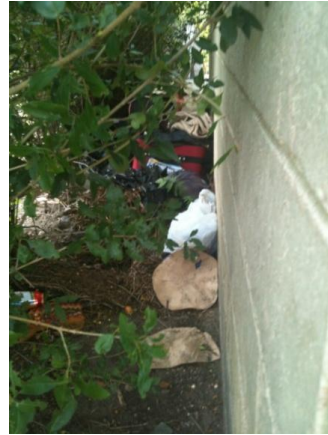
Address	County	Parcel ID	Owner	Use	Acreage
9801 E COLFAX AVE (<i>Granny Annie Peachie Pie & Café Paprika</i>)	Adams	0182334424029	FLORENCE SQUARE OWNERSHIP GROUP II LLC		
9701 E COLFAX AVE	Adams	0182334423005	WAXMAN FAMILY ENTERPRISES LLC 50% ANDGOLYANSKY LEONID 50%	Commercial (5180 SF)	0.0900
9709 E COLFAX AVE	Adams	0182334423006	COAPLAND FAMILY TRUST UTD THE	Commercial (3838 SF)	0.0900
9715 E COLFAX AVE	Adams	0182334423023	PASTERNAK PROPERTIES LLC	Commercial (3425 SF)	0.1500
9735 E COLFAX AVE (<i>Mu Brewery</i>)	Adams	0182334423009	S AND J LLC	Commercial (1785 SF)	0.0500
9745 E COLFAX AVE	Adams	0182334423011	PASTERNAK PROPERTIES LLC	Commercial (4750 SF)	0.1435
9755 E COLFAX AVE	Adams	0182334423012	CITY OF AURORA		0.1808
9700 E Colfax Ave	Arapahoe	1973-03-1-07-036	Ksd Llc	COMMERCIAL GENERAL RETAIL (2,605 SF)	0.060
9706 E Colfax Ave	Arapahoe	1973-03-1-07-035	Ksd Llc	COMMERCIAL GENERAL RETAIL (2,119 SF)	0.0490
9714 E Colfax Ave	Arapahoe	1973-03-1-07-028	9714 E Colfax Llc	COMMERCIAL GENERAL RETAIL (2,250 SF)	0.0520
9720 E Colfax Ave	Arapahoe	1973-03-1-07-027	9714 E Colfax Llc	COMMERCIAL GENERAL RETAIL (2,250 SF)	0.0520
9724 E Colfax Ave	Arapahoe	1973-03-1-07-026	9714 E Colfax Llc	COMMERCIAL GENERAL RETAIL (2,250 SF)	0.0520
9726 E Colfax Ave	Arapahoe	1973-03-1-07-025	Ksd Llc	COMMERCIAL GENERAL RETAIL (3,780 SF)	0.0870
9740 E Colfax Ave	Arapahoe	1973-03-1-07-024	Nunez Norma & Nunez Living Trust	COMMERCIAL GENERAL RETAIL (2,988 SF)	0.0690
9746 E Colfax Ave	Arapahoe	1973-03-1-07-023	Nunez Norma & Nunez Living Trust	COMMERCIAL GENERAL RETAIL (2,196 SF)	0.0500
9758 E Colfax Ave	Arapahoe	1973-03-1-07-037	City of Aurora	COMMERCIAL GENERAL RETAIL (5,680 SF)	0.1300
Dayton St	Arapahoe	1973-03-1-07-032	Ksd Llc	COMMERCIAL PAVED LOT	0.176
1468 Dayton St	Arapahoe	1973-03-1-07-029	Vintage Theatre Productions Inc	COMMERCIAL GENERAL RETAIL (15,937 SF)	0.3660
9758 E Colfax Ave	Arapahoe	1973-03-1-07-037	City of Aurora	PAVED LOT	0.1300

Address	County	Parcel ID	Owner	Use	Acreage
1459 Emporia St	Arapahoe	1973-03-1-07-020	City of Aurora	PAVED LOT	0.146
1457 Emporia St	Arapahoe	1973-03-1-07-019	City of Aurora	PAVED LOT	0.146
1455 Emporia St	Arapahoe	1973-03-1-07-018	Housing Authority of the City of Aurora	VACANT COMMERCIAL LAND	0.146
1443 Emporia St (Paninoteca)	Arapahoe	1973-03-1-07-017	City of Aurora	OTHER PARTIAL EXEMPT (6,375 SF)	0.146

Selected Blight Photographs



Deteriorated external walls, deteriorated external finishes, cracked/uneven surfaces, poor drainage, deteriorated site pavement, graffiti/vandalism (Factors **a**, **d**, and **e**)



Evidence of vagrants (Factor **d**)



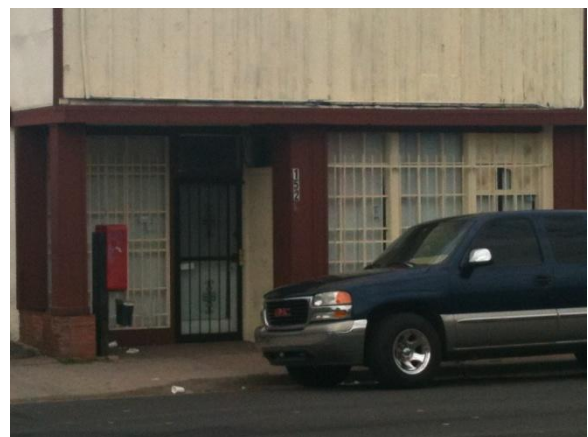
Hazardous condition, deteriorated utilities, deteriorated site pavement, presence of trash (Factors **d**, **e**, and **f**)



Deteriorated external walls, deteriorated external finishes, deteriorated fascia/soffits, lack of gutter/downspouts, deteriorated windows, deteriorated fencing (Factors **a** and **e**)



Deteriorated exterior finish, deteriorated fencing, deteriorated lighting, hazardous condition (Factors **a** and **d**)



Deteriorated external walls, vacancy/underutilization (Factors **a** and **k**)



Cracked/uneven surfaces, trip/fall hazard, deteriorated pavement, deteriorated utilities (Factors **d** and **f**)



Irregular lot configuration/no street parking, deteriorated curb/gutter, vacancy/underutilization (Factors **c**, **f**, and **k**)



Deteriorated public improvement, Cracked/deteriorated street pavement and curb/gutter (Factor **f**)



Trip/fall hazard, deteriorated public improvements (Factors **d** and **f**)



Deteriorated exterior finish, hazardous condition, deteriorated site utilities (Factors **a**, **d**, and **e**)



Deteriorated external walls, deteriorated external finishes, deteriorated site pavement, graffiti (Factors **a**, **d**, and **e**)

APPENDIX E – TIF Area Legal Description (2014)

A parcel of land situated in the SE $\frac{1}{4}$ of Section 34, T3S, R67W, City of Aurora, Adams County, State of Colorado and the NE $\frac{1}{4}$ of Section 3, T4S, R67W, City of Aurora, Arapahoe County, State of Colorado, more particularly described as follows:

Beginning at the northwest corner of Lot 20, Block 24, Aurora, a subdivision recorded in Adams County;

Thence easterly along the north line of said Lot 20 to the northeast corner of said Lot;

Thence easterly to the southwest corner of Lot 1, Block 1, Florence Square Redevelopment Subdivision Filing No. 2;

Thence easterly along the southerly lines of said Lot to the southeast corner of said Lot also being the northeast corner of Lot 27, Block 24, Aurora;

Thence southerly along the east lines of Lots 27 and 26, of said Block 24 to the southeast corner of said Lot 26;

Thence easterly to a point on the west line of Lot 1, Block 1, Florence Square Redevelopment Subdivision Filing No. 1, said point being 55 feet north of the south line of said Lot;

Thence easterly on a line 55 feet north of and parallel with said south line to the east line of said Lot;

Thence continuing easterly along the extension of said north line to the intersection with the centerline of Elmira Street right-of-way;

Thence southerly along said centerline to the intersection with the centerline of E. Colfax Ave. right-of-way;

Thence westerly along said centerline to the intersection with the centerline of Emporia St. right-of-way;

Thence southerly along said centerline of Emporia St. right-of-way to the intersection with the easterly extension of the south line of Lot 35, Block 1, East Colfax Avenue Park, a subdivision recorded in Arapahoe County;

Thence westerly along said extension to the southeast corner of said Lot 35;

Thence westerly along the south line of said Lot 35 to the southwest corner of said Lot;

Thence westerly along the extension of said south line to the centerline of the alley right-of-way;

Thence northerly along the said centerline to the intersection with the easterly extension of the south line of Lot 12 of said Block 1;

Thence westerly along said extension to the southeast corner of said Lot 12;

Thence westerly along the south line of said Lot 12 to the southwest corner of said Lot 12;

Thence westerly along the westerly extension of said south line to the intersection with the centerline of Dayton St. right-of-way;

Thence northerly along said centerline to the intersection with the centerline of E. Colfax Ave. right-of-way;

Thence continuing northerly along said centerline to the intersection with the westerly extension of the north line of Lot 20, Block 24, Aurora;

Thence easterly along said extension to the Point of Beginning.

Excepting there from any and all alley right-of-way within Lots 20 and 27, Block 24, Aurora.

Said parcel contains 209,646 square feet (4.8128 Acres) more or less.

APPENDIX F - Fletcher Plaza Urban Renewal Area and TIF Area Map (2014)

