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East Colfax Community Collective calls for greater protections against resident displacement

Alayna Alvarez, Colorado Politics Nov 21, 2019 Updated 6 min ago



Brendan Greene, spokesman for the East Colfax Community Collective, kicks off the Thursday morning press conference. The grassroots organization is advocating for anti-displacement policies and a more equitable engagement process in the East Area Plan.

(Alayna Alvarez/Colorado Politics)

The East Colfax Community Collective, a newly formed grassroots organization advocating for anti-displacement policies, held a press conference Tuesday ahead of the East Area Plan workshop scheduled this Saturday to voice community concerns and call for more equitable and inclusive engagement with its most vulnerable residents.

Collective leaders highlighted challenges facing renters, refugees and the disabled community in East Colfax. The group wants deeper protections against displacement before Denver's Community Planning and Development Department (CPD) moves forward with two major development projects.



[East Colfax urban redevelopment plan passes Denver City Council's muster](https://www.coloradopolitics.com/denver/east-colfax-community-collective-calls-for-greater-protections-against-resident/article_4547ddc4-0c97-11ea-9...)



[Denver development plan will ruin character of Colfax neighborhoods, some residents contend](#)

“Before these developments are built on the backs of these communities — their tax dollars, their homes — we hope to see safeguards in this plan that will give residents some recourse if pledges are not honored, so what is said is actually done,” said Kim Brewer with the group Rename Stapleton.

Specifically, the group called for an expansion of wealth building programs and Section 8 vouchers, along with concrete metrics to prioritize the creation of 30% and below area median income housing, for accommodations for the disabled community, and a more involved and fair engagement process to ensure the East Area Plan meets community needs.

“How does it happen that a city that seems to embrace equity at every chance it gets, clearly and profoundly lacks the ability” to take care of its most vulnerable populations, asked Tim Roberts, president of the East Colfax Neighborhood Association.

“I have been attending meetings organized by CPD regarding the East Area Plan since the summer. The format of those meetings has not allowed for many resident discussions on particular aspects of the plan, and I am not confident that City Planning is actually listening to the residents’ concerns,”

said Towanna Henderson, an East Colfax community leader.

“We have invited City Planning to meet with the East Colfax Community Collective to ensure that our voices are heard and to work together to develop an inclusive and equitable process for our residents,” she said.

As of 2015, according to the East Area Plan Briefing book, East Colfax represents more than a third of Denver’s eastern area of about 33,000 people. Nearly 25% of East Colfax residents are immigrants, and a third of its population speaks a language other English at home.

More than 30% of its families are living in poverty.

The East Planning Area neighborhoods include South Park Hill, Montclair, Hale and East Colfax.

“As a collective, we are committed to bringing our communities to the table,” said Brendan Greene, the collective’s spokesman. “We look forward to having the city join us at our table, meet with the collective, think outside of the box and create the solutions we need to protect our community before the East Area Plan is finalized.”

Denver City Councilwoman Amanda Sawyer said in a statement that more than 300 neighbors have RSVP’d for the East Area Plan workshop, and that CPD “expects a full house.”

The workshop will be held from 10 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. this Saturday, Nov. 23, at Johnson and Wales (1900 Olive St.).

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