



MEETING MINUTES LOWRY DESIGN REVIEW COMMITTEE

Zoom

**Thursday, March 5, 2026
8:30 a.m.**

● **Call to Order** **8:30 am**

The meeting was called to order at 8:31 am. Carla McConnell, Kevin Yoshida, Robin Ault, and Jessie Johnson were in attendance.

● **Approve Meeting Minutes from February 5, 2026** **8:30-8:35 am**

The meeting minutes from February 5, 2026, were unanimously approved with edits.

● **79 N. Rampart Way – Valor Townhomes** **8:35 – 9:20 am**
○ **Design Development #2 Review**

The Design Team reviewed some of the updates made in response to the committee’s comments, including to the balconies and materials. The team reviewed the project’s landscape plan. The existing tree lawn with trees and irrigation will remain, with the addition of mulch around the tree bases, placed inside a “shovel edge”. The landscape will be comprised of low-maintenance turf grass and planting beds, along with xeriscaping and pollinator plants.

Bill Wenk wasn’t able to attend, but submitted these comments about the project:

“Site elements

It appears that there is landscape edger between different ground cover types but not specified.

What type of edger is it, or is there no edging?

There is very little area for snow storage except in the planting beds. Plantings in larger areas where snow can be stored should be evaluated for their resilience to long periods of covered by snow and salt, or replaced with groundcover of some type anticipating snow storage.

As previously discussed, bike racks are desirable, but it is doubtful that they would be used often, if at all because of the strong possibility of theft. I don't see other defensible space elsewhere on the plan unfortunately.

Shrub and perennial plantings

I'd like to complement the landscape architect for selection of plantings that are not often seen in residential development projects. That's said, some of the plants specified may be difficult to source locally. Also, shrub and perennial plantings are drought, tolerant, hardy, and sized appropriate for the small planting areas although I would caution using plants that sucker, such as the honeysuckle specified.

Tree plantings

In several cases, large street trees that have more spreading habits, such as coffee tree are planted extremely close to the buildings, requiring frequent pruning that will miss shape the tree and/or damage the building façade as they grow overtime. More upright tree species such as columnar oaks might be a better choice.

In another area, limber pine is planted in a space roughly 16 feet wide between a building wall and pedestrian walkway. Again, overtime the tree will probably encroach on the walkway and building requiring. More upright, evergreen trees should be considered, or alternative plant types as suggested below for building entries.

Hawthorn trees are planted flanking multiple townhouse entries. Hawthorns are known for their spreading, low branching habit and long sharp thorns that could be present a significant hazard for visitors, residents, and especially children. Consider alternative species with more ascending form, such as Amelanchier, tree form lilac, redbud, or similar large shrub/small tree species.”

Kevin asked if the landscape plan had been approved by Denver; the team clarified that they are close and working through comments from Denver on the landscape plan. Kevin asked about the turf area adjacent to the first building; the team clarified that it's Tahoma 31 Bermuda grass. Kevin asked if the landscape plan was drafted with information from a soils report. The landscape architect reported that she does not typically refer to a soils report and generated the landscape plan more off of the climate. Kevin expressed concerns about the irrigation, plants and trees proximity to the structures. The team said there would be a 1.5-inch gravel band between the landscaped area and the buildings. The team also said that they would likely put some plantings on a drip system close to the foundation of the buildings and that change will need to be made to the landscape plan. The owner confirmed that the landscape plan was acceptable without following soils report recommendations and the landscape will be implemented to the submitted plan.

Kevin asked if the team reviewed the larger plantings / trees and their proximity to the buildings. The design team said that they had reviewed that. The design team pointed out that the tree canopy shown on the landscape plans are at shown at full maturity versus, as Kevin pointed out, 2/3 maturity, which is standard.

Kevin asked about the gas line or easement and if the design constraints that preclude a usable porch is clearly shown and the team clarified that Xcel doesn't have an easement there, but requested a 5-foot offset between the line and plantings and was unable to show how close the constraint is to the porch as a limiting factor.

Carla asked about the tree lawn and the “shovel edge” around the base of the trees where mulch will be placed and concerns if the mulch will blow away. Mulch anchor was recommended to keep the mulch in place; it has been used successfully at Lowry.

Jessie said that, from her perspective, architecturally, the recommended architectural changes were made positively. Robin agreed with Jessie that the changes were sufficient to address the comments from the last meeting and positive.

Kevin said that the porch size still does not render it useful space and doesn't meet the Design Guidelines requirement to create a good pedestrian realm for the project. Robin confirmed Kevin's point that the size of the porch doesn't render it very useful. The committee accepts the applicants explanation that the porch is as close as possible to the gas line constraint. The gas line easement should be shown on plans to clarify this design parameter.

Kevin pointed out that there are several minor things that should be adjusted in the Landscape Plan. Given that, Kevin is not inclined to approve the Landscape Plan as-is and the plan would need to be resubmitted with changes and/or responses to the committee's concerns and comments.

Jessie moved to approved Design Development #2 with the caveat that revisions need to be made to the Landscape Plan based on the committee's comments for the next review stage. The motion was unanimously approved.

- **8892 E Lowry Blvd – Development 1**
 - **Independent Living Building + Parking Garage**
 - **Re-Submission, Variance Renewal**

9:20-10:05 am

The Development 1 design team presented the changes to the originally approved structures, site plans, and parking.

The number of units was reduced from 157 to 154. The team is proposing to provide 236 parking spaces and asking for a renewal of the variance to allow 1.5 spaces per unit.

They would be removing the originally proposed porte cochere at the entrance and replaced with awning, supported on the facade

The design team reviewed the plan for deliveries, loading and unloading, trash and recycling pick-up. The committee clarified that there was a removal of the pickleball courts.

The Design Team also said they would like to change the balcony railings, but they didn't have any information or renderings about the newly proposed balcony railings so that they will have to be approved separately.

The Design Team also said that there are changes to some of the building elevations, which they showed.

Jessie had questions about moving the transformers and asked for renderings, which were not available in the submitted packet.

Kevin asked for clarification on the parking variance renewal request. He asked for the number of proposed spaces before and after the change. The original proposal had 299 spaces that were 8.5 feet wide. The new proposal has 236 spaces that are 9 feet wide.

The committee moved into discussion. Kevin stated that the committee is lacking before and after the architectural changes. Carla pointed out that although the projects are separate projects now that there is still a relationship between them and the committee should review the site as a whole.

Robin pointed out that, in the previous landscape plan submission, there are guest parking spaces adjacent to the entry.

Carla proposed that the committee approve the parking variance but requires the design team to re-submit any and all architectural and site changes with before and after renderings for the committee to review, including the relocation of the transformers, the balcony railings, the change in elevations.

Kevin agreed with Carla that there needs to be a clear before and after of any and all architectural, site, and landscaping changes.

Jessie moved to approve the renewal of the parking variance for the project. Robin seconded the motion. The committee voted unanimously to approve the renewal of the parking variance for the project with parking numbers as presented.

The committee determined that the design team will need to submit for approval before and after renderings and materials for any and all architectural, site, and landscape plan changes at a future meeting to receive renewed approval for the project as a whole.

The design team also requested a renewal of the height variance that had lapsed, with no changes to the proposed height of the project. Jessie moved to renew the height variance, Robin seconded, the committee voted unanimously to renew the height variance for the project.

- **8890 E Lowry Blvd - Development 2**
 - **55+ Residential**
 - **Schematic Design Review**

10:05-10:50 am

The design team presented the schematic design review for Development 2. The units are for rent, not for purchase.

Carla asked about the tandem parking and guest parking. Kevin asked about a very similar development in Minnesota that counts what is listed as a den in the Lowry proposed development as a third bedroom.

Kevin also asked for clarification on the main level transparency percentage required by the city and the design team said that they are over 30% main level transparency.

Carla asked how they monitor the number of tenants if the City of Denver allows two people per bedroom. In other words, how would they ensure that there weren't people using the den as a third bedroom.

Jessie asked about the treatment on the sides of the two units that border the courtyard area and confirmed that it is the same.

Bill Wenk's comments:

"It is unfortunate that the outdoor gathering area has moved from the entry of the main building to the corner of Yosemite and Lowry Boulevard. Its proposed location at the corner of Two major streets exposes it to a much greater level of noise and exhaust from these heavily traveled roadways. The original location to the north of the main entry to the project on Yosemite made it much more usable for both the main building and the proposed villas. In that location it would have much better sun exposure for shoulder seasons and is better protected from north and west winds. Understanding that moving the gathering area north allows for four more units on the site, I think much greater value would be realized if the northern of the two buildings along Yosemite could be moved to the north, and the south of the two buildings along Yosemite rotated 90°, allowing for a gathering area at the north edge of the main entry drive as shown in the original plan, accessible to residents of both building complexes."

Robin clarified that the roundabouts tend to be tricky, traffic-wise and that there is a lot of traffic there. Mary suggested that, based on the history of the roundabouts on Lowry Blvd, that, at the very least, a protective wall should be on that corner. Robin said that the proposed landscaped space will not be used because of its proximity to traffic and noise.

Robin also addressed the parking spaces in Development 2 and compared it to the use of parking spots in Development 1. Robin found it unfortunate that all of Development 2's parking has been shifted. Jessie agreed with Robin and described it as a parking lot with buildings in it, citing the lack of landscaping. Carla compared it to an alley without amenities.

The design team presented their parking analysis and the proposed parking numbers meet the Design Guideline's requirements.

Jessie requested less parking and more landscaping and noted that there likely won't be a need for so much guest parking. Carla agreed.

Jessie also noted that the entrance has lost its "grandness." Robin agreed that the change is unfortunate. Robin said the site looks like a parking lot with the exact same building repeated in the parking lot with some landscaping at a busy corner roundabout.

Carla commented that the design isn't being utilized to frame usable spaces.

Kevin agrees with the comments about the site layout and raised questions about the use of the den room as another bedroom. Carla pointed out that part of the aesthetic of Lowry is usable outdoor spaces. Jessie pointed out that the LDRC is supposed to uphold the walkability and pedestrian friendly nature of developments.

Carla noted that the market demand can change what the project becomes from 55+ rental to just rentals as has happened in other parts of Lowry.

Kevin asked for clarification from the committee on parking requirements and how the committee should review the parking numbers.

Jessie stated that two-bedroom units with a study are pretty common and the potential for the development being sold is a risk that would be taken but the city of Denver will also have to approve the development with the den not being a bedroom.

Carla asked if the guest parking in front of the garages would be better used as land for site amenities instead of guest parking spaces.

Jessie stated that there are enough site concerns that the design team has not completed Schematic Review. Carla agreed that the site planning and amenity spaces are not complete.

Regarding the architecture, Robin stated that, similar with the landscaping, there does not seem to be a symbiotic relationship between the landscaping and the site or the adjacent development and the site and that it is repeated buildings, as many as can be fit on the site. There is no site sensitivity for the architecture. Robin appreciates that the applicant has met the masonry requirement in the Design Guidelines. Robin advised that perhaps two kinds of brick is enough and that the third kind of brick might not be necessary (BR03) and adds a layer of complexity that is not seen in the historic buildings on the Lowry campus. Robin thinks it is unfortunate that it's the exact same building repeated ten times on the site.

Kevin built on Robin's feedback, stating that the structures almost looks like mini office buildings, asking if a difference in the roof slope might change the mood of the site from commercial to more residential. Robin is not opposed to a low-slope roof, but thinks that the same thing could be accomplished by simplifying the material pallet and being more responsive architecturally to the site.

The committee determined that the project is not ready to move out of the Schematic Design review phase and the Schematic Design should be continued with the expectation that the applicant would revise the submittal to integrate comments and concerns.

- **Environmental Appendix Revisions**

10:50-10:55 am

The committee discussed the changes to the revised Environmental Appendix and their addition to the Design Guidelines.

- **Other Business**

10:55 – 11:00 am

Mary confirmed that, in future LDRC agendas, the recommended agenda timetable from the Design Guidelines would be included on the agenda for the relevant stage of review and shared specifically with the design teams.

- **Adjourn**

11:00 am

The meeting was adjourned at 11:00 am.