

University Hills-Schlessman YMCA Redevelopment Project Questions and Answers

January 2022

1. *Why is the YMCA envisioning changes to the University Hills location?*

There are several reasons. First, the University Hills-Schlessman YMCA buildings were constructed in 1957 and 1960 and present many challenges for meeting the needs of our members and the community. The University Hills buildings have an inefficient layout and design, unusable spaces, and a lack of energy efficiency/sustainability features. The buildings are not able to be expanded without significant capital investments.

Second, prior to the pandemic, the YMCA experienced five years of declining membership revenue. The highest percentage of membership loss were amongst our families.

Lastly, the YMCA has less than 1% market penetration in Denver. The University Hills YMCA is capable of being a much better community asset and hub, serving all populations and helping us to carry out our mission to become more equitable and inclusive.

2. *What studies have been done showing the YMCA's challenges and what input has been received from the community and other stakeholder groups?*

Even before the pandemic, many YMCAs nationally have undergone significant self-evaluation to determine the best way to improve the health and well-being of each distinct community. The YMCA of Metro Denver has been doing similar visioning and is looking at the University Hills property through a broader health and wellness lens.

To gain a full grasp of the University Hills-Schlessman YMCA campus and all the nuances, opportunities and challenges it presents, the YMCA has been diligent in conducting studies, in addition to garnering feedback from our members and surrounding community. The YMCA retained a mission-driven consulting firm, GRO, to conduct a real estate development and optimization study to determine the state of our centers and the opportunities for long-term sustainability. GRO was founded by former YMCA staff nationally, and their focus is to specifically help non-profits evaluate their facilities and provide guidance to create highly performing centers for youth development, health and wellness, and community engagement (www.gro-summit.com).

Additionally, the YMCA conducted seven listening tours, three focus groups, and six surveys with members of the YMCA as well as the broader community between October of 2018 and April of 2019. The feedback from

the communities in which we operate gave us insights into the societal and health challenges that our members and families face but where we were falling short. Membership was dropping, program services weren't relevant, our facilities were not efficient nor inviting, and there were gaps in services for teens. In short, we weren't fulfilling our mission and purpose.

3. *When did the YMCA start evaluating the University Hills-Schlessman Campus for redevelopment?*

In 2018, the YMCA of Metro Denver began an evaluation of its current operations, a series of surveys, studies and listening tours, that culminated in our [Strategic Roadmap for 2019-2022](#). Our overarching purpose is to "Serve as a catalyst to transform lives & communities." One of our strategic priorities is focused on the YMCA's organizational capacity and ensuring our long-term sustainability and impact. As a non-profit and good steward of our resources, we conducted a review and assessment of our real estate assets including the University Hills-Schlessman campus which was completed by GRO in 2019.

4. *Will the YMCA sell the property—or part of it—to a developer? Why is the YMCA creating a partnership with a developer and how will it work?*

Ultimately, the YMCA will retain ownership of the portion of land upon which its new facility will be built, and Y CoRe, the selected development partner described below, will own the remainder of the land within the campus. The YMCA will design and construct its building in concert with Y CoRe's design and construction of the private buildings. The Y will provide input into the master plan to ensure its vision of a Well-Community Hub.

The partnership with Y CoRe allows the YMCA the opportunity to leverage the collective skillset of a best-in-class team of place makers – this collaboration will ensure the YMCA that the overall design and programming of the campus integrates feedback from the community and YMCA members. Y CoRe's team will lead the process of engaging with the surrounding community, designing the master plan for the campus and navigating the City of Denver's development review process.

The YMCA's nearly 6-acre property needs a master plan to enable a full offering of services for the community. The master plan will allow the YMCA to serve as a true health and wellness hub at the heart of a new community-servicing campus. Further, a master plan lays the foundation to provide enhanced safety and access in, around, and through the campus, enabling much needed accessible housing and a unique set of retail and restaurant offerings paired with distinctive public spaces - collectively a re-envisioned campus can inspire and promote healthy lifestyles.

5. *Who is Y CoRe?*

Bringing decades of local and national real estate development experience including active partnerships with the YMCA, Republic Metropolitan and Confluent Development have formed a joint venture partnership named Y CoRe to deliver a modern vision for the redevelopment of the University Hills-Schlessman YMCA campus.

Confluent is a versatile full-service real estate investment and development firm headquartered in Denver, CO. Confluent's team is comprised of 40 real estate professionals who call Colorado and Denver home, as well as many proud graduates of the nearby University of Denver. Confluent currently has several complex and custom projects in active development along the front range. Confluent is focused on building projects that enhance neighborhoods and have a lasting positive impact to their respective communities. The company fuses its best-in-class team and stakeholders to create real estate solutions for communities to innovate, grow and inspire. Confluent is a part-woman owned organization and is focused on building housing, vibrant retail, and innovative office spaces for the City of Denver.

Additional background on the Confluent Development can be found on their website:
www.ConfluentDev.com

With a focus on public-private and institutional/non-profit partnerships, Republic Metropolitan (ReMet) is part of the Republic Family of Companies, a privately owned, full-service real estate investment, management and development enterprise. Republic has a deep history of developing best-in-class mixed-use real estate projects across the country. Republic has executed multiple private & public sector projects and was recently awarded bids to redevelop YMCA properties in Los Angeles, California, Arlington, Virginia and Burbank, California, a First Methodist Church property in Downtown Los Angeles and an American Legion property in Redwood City, California. Republic is committed to inclusive and equitable hiring, sustainable construction & operational practices and promoting social justice in its projects, partnerships, and corporate culture.

Additional background on the Republic Family of Companies can be found on their website: www.RepublicFamilyofCompanies.com

6. *How will you engage the community in discussions about what they would like to see on this site?*

Community engagement is a critical component of this project. We want to build a place that reflects the community's desires, as well as addresses their needs. The only way to do that is to genuinely involve neighbors, business,

RNOs, individuals and all other stakeholders which is a responsibility we take seriously. We want to hear from you!

The meeting held on October 26, 2021, at YMCA was just the start of many community meetings and conversations that will take place over the course of this project. Our outreach will include scheduled community meetings as well as targeted outreach to adjacent neighbors, RNOs, elected officials and other interested parties.

We are at the early stages of kicking off a design process for the property with our selected development partner and commit to being proactive in communicating and listening to the broader community that the YMCA serves. We want to hear your input, your perspectives and most importantly - your ideas on how you envision the University Hills-Schlessman YMCA of the future. We will hold many in-person and zoom scheduled meetings, meet one-on-one for coffee, walk and talk, while also providing an online platform with updates and the ability to submit feedback and comments. We will start that process with a community meeting in January 2022. We are confident that by engaging and hearing from as many people as possible we'll build a place that everyone will be proud of.

7. *How is the YMCA going to ensure it has long term financial solvency, and how does this project advance our financial health?*

The YMCA is fully committed to serving its members and community – providing child care, health and wellness programs for adults and families, services for seniors, youth sports programs and activities for teens. To do that, the YMCA must have modern facilities that are equipped with the types of spaces and flexibility to serve these specific audiences. A strong and sustainable membership and program and donor base is critical to maintaining the YMCA's revenue streams – the foundation on which the YMCA is built.

Responsible stewardship of our limited resources is also vital to the financial solvency of the YMCA of Metro Denver and the University Hills-Schlessman YMCA. Operating and maintaining two 60+ year old inefficient buildings on this campus has become financially unsustainable. Annually, the YMCA spends \$500,000 to operate and maintain these buildings and would need to spend \$15 million in required building health and safety upgrades over the next 5-10 years, in order to continue operating in these buildings under their current arrangement.

A comprehensive master plan improves the University Hills-Schlessman YMCA's long-term financial solvency. Aided by the additional revenue streams the partnership with Y CoRe affords us, a new right-sized YMCA helps set a more predictably successful financial future in a welcoming modern facility capable of attracting and retaining new members and program participants. The YMCA leadership, staff and board of directors is

keenly aware of how these decisions impact our members and supporters and we pledge to keep their interests at the heart of this exciting process.

8. *Will the YMCA remain open during construction and redevelopment of the site? How would access for seniors and others/pedestrians be handled? How will programming and activities be handled at the YMCA during the construction?*

Yes, the YMCA intends to remain open during the redevelopment of the master planned project. We will balance the delivery of a new modern facility with the ongoing needs of our members and the critical daily services that we provide to the community, including our child care center and senior services.

While design and phasing of the property is a long way out, the YMCA and Y CoRe will prioritize access and safety at the campus, before, during and after redevelopment.

9. *How will parking and traffic be handled during construction? How will parking and traffic be handled in the new project?*

The phasing of the project is yet-to-be determined, but the main goals are to maintain safe and convenient access to the site while also retaining as much on-site parking as possible during construction for YMCA members and visitors.

The final master plan of the campus will depend on several factors, including much needed input from the community and the City of Denver, but on-site parking will be vital to the success of the YMCA and the other uses. As part of the master planning process, we will conduct transportation studies, parking studies and alternative mobility studies. Depending on final programming there may be shared parking arrangements with complimentary uses.

The type of parking, where it is located within the master plan and how it is integrated within buildings will be determined by Y CoRe and the YMCA throughout the design of the campus. One of the main priorities will be to locate convenient ground level parking throughout the campus and to provide safe and quick drop-off and pick-up for YMCA child care center parents.

Primary access to the redeveloped campus will be from Colorado Blvd. and Yale Avenue. There is no intent to create a vehicular access point to or from Jackson Street.

Y CoRe and the YMCA are also focused on engaging with the community to integrate alternative modes of transportation into the development. Some of the ideas include use of shared vehicle programs, bicycle access, mass

transit via the two light rail stations within a one-mile radius; and connections to the Harvard Gulch Trail.

The goal in investigating these alternatives is to develop better connections to the neighborhoods and create a vibrant and engaging entrance to this under-appreciated community asset.

10. *What is the development plan for the site? How many units or square feet? How tall? What uses are you proposing?*

We are at the initial stages of kicking off a design process for the site. While it is too early to say for certain what will be built on this site, we envision a new YMCA facility at the heart of a mixed-use campus featuring new apartment homes, curated and community focused retail offerings, chef-driven and convenient restaurants and community gathering places as well as open spaces.

The intention is for the new and improved University Hills-Schlessman YMCA to contribute to a thriving new place that the community wishes to interact in. We plan to have health, wellness and sustainability help drive the design process.

We also recognize we are adjacent to a wonderful set of neighborhoods and residents who will be concerned with issues such as traffic, parking, access and safety and other important issues. The YMCA and our development partner are committed to being thoughtful and to include the community in the design process.

11. *Will the new project include affordable housing?*

Yes, contributing to solving Denver’s affordable housing crisis is something the YMCA and Y CoRe believe is important and appropriate for this site and in a mixed-use context.

Housing at both attainable and affordable price points will be critical to the mix of housing within the campus. Again, since we have not designed the master plan for the campus or any specific buildings, we cannot provide specifics at this point, but we want the community to know our commitment to creating both attainable and a component of affordable housing within the development.

12. *What is the current zoning of the site? Do you plan to rezone the site?*

It can be surprising when reminded that the YMCA ownership parcel is about 6 acres between Jackson St. and Colorado Blvd., and Yale Avenue and the Harvard Gulch Trail. And that the parcel is split east/west by a combination of 2 zone districts: (1) CMP-EI2 (Campus - Educational Institution) on the

west and (2) S-CC-5x (Suburban - Commercial Corridor - 5-stories) on the east.

CMP-EI2 permits a mix of educational and institutional uses, along with residential, office and others. Building heights step up from the perimeter/property line and go up to 75-feet (5-stories) within a 175-foot distance from a single-family zone district. Outside of 175-feet, building heights can go up to 12-stories, which is a smaller portion of the current CMP-EI2 zoned site.

S-CC-5x allows for a wide variety of commercial corridor uses, from retail and auto-oriented uses, to residential, office and others. Building heights for S-CC-5x are allowed up to 5-stories (70-feet).

In these early stages of project programming and concept design, we are evaluating the ways in which the current zoning can accommodate the new YMCA and the accompanying development program under the goal of creating a thoughtful, inviting, and vibrant community hub. However, it's possible that some form of rezoning may prove to be the appropriate tool to achieve that goal.

13. *What is the timeline for the entire project?*

The YMCA and Y CoRe are at the beginning of a long process to create a valued community hub for this neighborhood that the residents, both current and future, can be proud of. We intend to take our time in the initial master planning process to ensure that the design is one that is cohesive with the surrounding community and creates a mix of uses that is embraced by our neighbors, members and community stakeholders.

This process will take years to play out and we will continue to provide timelines to our community as we navigate this complex process.