



1st Bank Development Project and Its Size and Traffic Issues

The major 1st Bank development project is being planned for the southern half of the 1st Bank block surrounded by the streets of Steele on the east, 1st Avenue on south, and St. Paul on the west. The project is composed of two phases: a **ten (10) story office / retail building** (phase 1) facing St. Paul and 1st Avenue, and a **seven (7) story condo / retail / office building** (phase 2) facing Steele Street.

The CCNNA Board would like to share some data with you so that you can begin to visualize the potential impact of this new development, particularly the need to minimize future increased traffic in the neighborhood.

Let's start with some definitions and facts.

Site Area - The size of the property is **81,291 sq ft**, which represents about 75% of the 100 block surrounded by St. Paul, 2nd Avenue, Steele, and 1st Avenue.

Development Area - The sizes of the proposed buildings to be constructed on the site are:

- ∞ **Phase 1** - 10 story retail / office tower (**210,905 sq ft**)
- ∞ **Phase 2** - 7 story retail / condos / office building (**79,370 sq ft**)

Required Parking – This project includes four levels of underground parking below its buildings. The City Code requires 1 parking space for each 300 sq ft of office / retail space. If the development is all office / retail space, the number of required parking spaces would be:

Phase 1:	210,905 sq ft or 703 parking spaces
Phase 2:	<u>79,370</u> sq ft or 262 parking spaces
Total	290,275 sq ft or 965 parking spaces

If Phase 2 is primarily condo, then the parking requirements may differ slightly, but the underground garage will still be required to have over 900 parking spaces.

Floor Area Ratio (FAR) – This ratio is the relationship between floor area (building size) and the site area (property size). As a simple example, a 10,000 sq ft site with a FAR of 2.0 normally means the construction of a 20,000 sq ft building. The proposed FAR on this 1st Bank project is:

Total Project Sq Ft -	290,275 sq ft
FAR:	290,275 sq ft / 81,291 sq ft = 3.6

What does this 3.6 FAR mean to the neighborhood? To understand the size and scale of this development, it is helpful to compare it to similar size 1st Avenue developments. Below are some FARs of current developments on 1st Avenue between University and the 1st Bank project site.

- Clayton Lane (Includes JW Marriott, Janus Building) - 1.5
- North Creek (Includes condo tower and three other buildings) - 2.1
- Fillmore Place (Includes Pura Vida building and buildings along Fillmore Plaza and 2nd Avenue) - 1.9
- American National Bank (across St. Paul from the 1st Bank site) - 1.7

1st Bank Development - 3.6 (71% > North Creek and 140% > Clayton Lane)

How do size and site impact traffic?

(1) **Size** – FAR determines the size of the development and the number of required parking spaces. The more parking spaces, the greater the potential traffic impact in CCN. What would be the approximate development sizes and parking spaces for this 81,291 sq ft site at different floor area ratios (FAR)?

<u>FAR</u>	<u>Development Sq Ft</u>	<u># of Parking Spaces</u>
2.0	162,500	540
2.25	183,000	610
2.5	203,000	675
3.0	244,000	810
3.25	265,000	880
3.6	290,000	965

If the project's FAR is reduced, the number of parking spaces will be reduced, thereby decreasing the volume of new traffic.

(2) **Site** – Although the 1st Bank site is a highly desirable location for the developer, the traffic generated by the development may have a significant impact on the CCN neighborhood. Please see the diagram to help visualize the area.

Advantage for Developer – The site is located on the portion of 1st Avenue that curves south into Steele Street past the Safeway and the Shopping Center. Due to the curve, the 10 story tower will be positioned slightly further south than the other 1st Avenue high rise buildings, making it visibly prominent on 1st Avenue.

Disadvantage for the Neighborhood – The location at the 1st Avenue and Steele Street intersection is already the most complex intersection in the area. The two-way traffic flow goes around the curve on 1st Avenue or Steele, and cars can stop at the light and proceed up or down 1st Avenue to Colorado Boulevard or University Boulevard. Another degree of complexity may be added to this intersection. A major hotel is planned for the southeast corner of 1st Avenue and Steele Street. (Please see diagram.)

The primary exit of the proposed 900+ space 1st Bank parking garage will be on St. Paul. This will require vehicles to make a left turn across northbound traffic to reach 1st Avenue. It is anticipated that cars may be directed north to 2nd Avenue instead. The primary reasons may be: (1) for traffic and pedestrian safety and (2) for the prevention of a back up of cars at the St. Paul and 1st Avenue traffic light. Drivers may well choose the path of least resistance and go right out of the garage onto St. Paul to 2nd or 3rd Avenues to access Colorado Boulevard, or to go up St. Paul, Steele, and other residential streets to access 5th Avenue westbound or 6th Avenue east bound. *Per the recent Transportation Solutions Traffic Survey, the number one concern of CCN residents was "cut through traffic" in our neighborhood.*

Do the size and traffic issues of the 1st Bank project mean that CCNNA should oppose this development?

Not necessarily, if the traffic issue is successfully addressed. CCNNA has been supportive of balanced Cherry Creek economic growth and the 1st Avenue high rise developments related to Clayton Lane, North Creek, and Fillmore Place. As many residents noted at the November General Resident Meeting, the building has a most attractive design and will be an asset to the Cherry Creek community.

However, being supportive of the project does not mean we support the "out of scale" as illustrated in the FAR comparisons. This development, with its proposed 3.6 FAR is entirely out of line with other high rise

1st Avenue development sizes, and its approval would set an **undesirable precedent for future CCN development**. Out of scale development will produce increased traffic and congestion at key intersections. The Cherry Creek Neighborhood Plan clearly identifies traffic as a key issue to be addressed as a result of continuing CCN development, predicting *“As volume and congestion increase on major streets, drivers increasingly will use local, residential streets.”*

What can be done to minimize the impact of the site’s increased traffic?

(1) **FAR Reduction** - An important benefit that would be realized in reducing this project’s FAR would be the associated reduction of required parking spaces. As examples, lowering the 1st Bank project FAR to the 1.7 ratio of the American National Bank or the 2.1 ratio of North Creek would reduce required parking by **400 to 500 spaces or a reduction of 41 to 52%**. Traffic will still be an issue, but a significant reduction in parking spaces should help.

(2) **Project Redesign to Improve Traffic Flow** – As currently designed, the primary garage entry is on St. Paul, which is wider than Steele, and has minimal on street parking. A major garage exit onto Steele would create a worst traffic situation due to its shorter distance to 1st Avenue, significant on street parking, and the intersection’s traffic flow complexity. A parking garage exit onto 1st Avenue is not presently planned but should be considered. If the project could be redesigned to channel traffic onto 1st Avenue, the increase in neighborhood traffic might be reduced.

(3) **1st Avenue / Steele Street Intersection Redesign** - A redesigned 1st Avenue / Steele Street intersection could possibly have the most positive impact on this project’s traffic flow, allowing a parking garage exit directly onto 1st Avenue with a traffic light control. Additionally, another developer’s planned Steele Street hotel will also impact this intersection and needs to be addressed in the traffic planning for the 1st Bank project.

Are Councilwoman Jeanne Robb, the City, and the developers addressing these issues?

Councilwoman Robb has set up a meeting with CCNNA, City Traffic Engineering, the 1st Bank developer, and other interested parties during the first week in April. All residents will receive a report on this meeting. At our March 12th CCNNA Board meeting the developers, Leslie Mitchell (1st Bank President) and Paul Powers (Pauls Corporation), expressed their willingness to work closely with CCNNA on this traffic mitigation issue.

What can CCNNA and you do?

In addition to the April meeting, CCNNA has established a small working group of residents who are architects, developers, planners, and engineers to evaluate traffic mitigation options for the entire neighborhood. No matter what happens with the 1st Bank project, CCN growth and development will continue and increased traffic will impact our neighborhood, so we need to begin the planning process now.

The CCNNA Board is asking all residents to please give us your comments, ideas, and suggestions. We appreciate and welcome your feedback on this new 1st Bank development project. Send your comments and / or questions to Wayne New, CCNNA Board President, at newleeway@msn.com.