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Purpose and Overview

The Near Southeast Briefing Book serves as a resource for the planning process for the neighborhoods of Goldsmith, Indian Creek, University Hills North, Virginia Village, and Washington Virginia Vale. The briefing book was developed to offer participants a clear and detailed context from which the planning discussion will emerge. Offering a collection of background information, existing conditions data, benchmark comparisons, and summaries of existing plans and studies, the briefing book may be read as a narrative document or used as a reference guide to be consulted and built upon throughout the planning process.
Area Map
Near Southeast includes the statistical neighborhoods of Goldsmith, Indian Creek, Virginia Village, Washington Virginia Vale, and the portion of University Hills north of Yale Avenue, commonly referred to as University Hills North. The plan boundaries are roughly Alameda Avenue on the north, Quebec Street and the Denver city limit on the east, Yale Avenue on the south, and Colorado Boulevard on the west.
Aerial Map
Near Southeast includes a variety of housing types, significant commercial corridors including Colorado Boulevard, Evans Avenue and Leetsdale Drive, and amenities like sections of the Cherry Creek Greenway and the Highline Canal.
Council Districts
Near Southeast includes portions of three City Council Districts: 4, 5, and 6. Council District 6 makes up the largest portion at 58% of the area.
Near Southeast - Registered Neighborhood Organizations

Registered Neighborhood Organizations (RNO's)

There are 27 Registered Neighborhood Organizations (RNOs) in and around Near Southeast, many of them small and a few that cover larger areas. These groups are formed by residents and property owners within a neighborhood who meet regularly and whose organizational and contact information is kept on file with the City of Denver.

Legend
Age
The ages of Near Southeast residents skew younger, with the greatest number in the 20-30 range, and nearly 60% of the population under 40.

Race / Ethnicity
The largest racial group in Near Southeast is white, with significant populations of Hispanic/Latina/Latinx/Spanish and Black and smaller populations of Asian and other races and ethnicities.
Just under 15% of the Near Southeast population was born in another country, similar to the Denver average. Most neighborhoods are close to this average, with University Hills North significantly less.

The percent of residents in Near Southeast who speak English less than well according to the 2018 American Community Survey ranges from four percent in University Hills North to 10% in Washington Virginia Vale.
Disability
About 12% of Near Southeast residents have a disability, with most neighborhoods close to this average except Indian Creek, which is significantly lower.

Population Trends
The population of Near Southeast increased 36% between 1970 and 2019, from about 26,000 to about 40,000. Much of that growth occurred in Washington Virginia Vale, while the populations of University Hills North and Virginia Village are now about the same as they were in 1970, with some fluctuations in between.
Population Density
There are 7,383 people per square mile in Near Southeast, which is denser than the city as a whole at 6,108 per square mile. Each neighborhood has a similar density to the area average except University Hills North, which is significantly less dense.

DRCOG Projections
The Denver Regional Council of Governments projects the number of households in Near Southeast will increase by around 3,000 by the year 2040, to 22,843, with much slower growth in the following 10 years to 2050.
Key Indicators

The table summarizes key indicators that have been compiled from analyses throughout the briefing book. The table is organized by plan topic and provides a comparison of how the plan area performs relative to the city as a whole. These data help identify strengths and weaknesses unique to Near Southeast for further discussion and analysis during the planning process.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Indicators</th>
<th>Near Southeast</th>
<th>Denver</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>General</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Population Density (People Per Square Mile)</td>
<td>7,383</td>
<td>6,108</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-Institutionalized with Disability</td>
<td>11.67%</td>
<td>9.51%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Foreign Born</td>
<td>14.74%</td>
<td>15%</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Economy and Housing</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unemployment Rate</td>
<td>4.40%</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Household Income</td>
<td>$59,691</td>
<td>$68,592</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poverty Rate</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adults over 25 with a bachelor’s degree</td>
<td>48%</td>
<td>49%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Renter Occupied Units</td>
<td>57%</td>
<td>50.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percentage of units that are income restricted</td>
<td>2.8%</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Housing Vacancy Rate</td>
<td>8.25%</td>
<td>5.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cost Burdened Households</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>35%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Median Home Value</td>
<td>$370,933</td>
<td>$390,600</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Median Gross Rent</td>
<td>$1,385.80</td>
<td>$1,311</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Mobility</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Households with No Vehicle</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Households within a 1/4 mile of a transit stop</td>
<td>65%</td>
<td>75%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Households within a 1/4 mile of a frequent transit stop</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>36%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Residents who drive alone to work</td>
<td>76%</td>
<td>70%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Pedestrian Crashes per 100,000 residents</td>
<td>227</td>
<td>316</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bicycle Crashes per 100,000 residents</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>221</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vehicle Crashes per 100,000 residents</td>
<td>14,120</td>
<td>10,859</td>
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<tr>
<td>Missing Sidewalks</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Quality of Life Infrastructure</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Tree Canopy</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>19%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Impervious Surface</td>
<td>39%</td>
<td>44%</td>
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<tr>
<td>High Surface Temperature</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>19%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Violent Crime Per 1,000 Residents</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>60</td>
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<tr>
<td>Equity Index</td>
<td>3.20</td>
<td>3.15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percent Delayed Medical Care Due to Cost</td>
<td>12.1%</td>
<td>13.9%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Equity Index

The Equity Index is a measure developed by the Denver Department of Public Health and Environment (DDPHE). It is a calculation that incorporates the following elements: socioeconomic (families in poverty and education attainment), built environment (access to full service grocery stores and parks or open space), healthcare (first trimester care during pregnancy), morbidity (children and youth that are overweight or obese), and life expectancy.

Higher numbers indicate better equity; the best possible score is a five. Denver neighborhoods range from 2.0 to 4.4. The average score for Denver is 3.15, and the median is 3.0. Near Southeast has an Equity Index score of 3.2.
Access to Opportunity

Access to opportunity reflects the Blueprint Denver goal for all neighborhoods to be complete with equitable access to a high quality of life. It is evaluated based on the measures listed below, according to which Near Southeast has moderate access to opportunity. Access to transit is high in the southwest portion of the area, near the RTD Light Rail stations, while access to centers and corridors is lower in the interior of neighborhoods. The Neighborhood Equity Index scores, which is a measure of barriers to opportunity, vary somewhat across the area, but are generally moderate.

**ACCESS TO OPPORTUNITY**

1. **Neighborhood Equity Index:**
   a. Social determinants of health
      - Percent of high school graduates or the equivalent for those 25 years of age or older
      - Percent of families below 100% of the federal poverty line
   b. Access to fresh food: percent of residents within ¼ mile (10 minute walk) to a full-service grocery store
   c. Access to parks: percent of living units within ¼ mile (10 minute walk) to a quality park or open space
   d. Access to health care: percent of pregnancies without first trimester prenatal care
   e. Children at a healthy weight: percent of children that are overweight or obese
   f. Average life expectancy

2. Access by walkshed (1/2 mile), bikeshed (2-mile) and driveshed (5-mile) to each local center, local corridor, community corridor and regional center from the future places map.

3. **Access to quality transit**: households within ½ mile of high-capacity transit or ¼ mile from the frequent transit network.
Denver residents value diversity, inclusiveness and opportunity for all. These values are threatened by involuntary displacement, which occurs when residents or businesses can no longer afford to stay in an area due to increasing property values and rents. This can also include displacement caused by a loss of culture, family, and other factors. Vulnerability to Displacement is measured by several factors shown below that have been linked to involuntary displacement. The southwest and northeast portions of Near Southeast are the most vulnerable to displacement, scoring high on all three measures of the index. Indian Creek and the center of Virginia Village have relatively low vulnerability to displacement.
Housing Diversity
Diversity of housing and jobs captures the city’s vision for complete neighborhoods with equitable access to quality employment options and housing choices that accommodate households of different ages, sizes, and incomes. It is evaluated based on the measures listed below. Near Southeast has relatively low housing diversity, particularly in the center of Virginia Village. University Hills North has the best housing diversity in Near Southeast, but still only scores a two out of five, scoring low in middle-density housing, rental housing, and income-restricted housing.

Housing Diversity
1. Percent of middle-density housing (housing with 2-19 units)
2. Home size diversity
3. Ownership vs. rental
4. Housing costs
5. Amount of affordable (income-restricted) housing units

Jobs Diversity
1. Jobs density
2. Jobs diversity
Jobs Diversity
Near Southeast has fairly low jobs diversity, with relatively few jobs and those jobs skewed to retail in many areas. The intensity of colors on the map indicate the number of jobs, and the areas without color do not have enough jobs to conduct the diversity analysis. Only one portion of the area, in eastern Goldsmith, has a job makeup similar to the rest of Denver, with the other parts of Near Southeast skewed primarily towards retail.
LAND USE AND BUILT FORM
LAND USE AND NEIGHBORHOODS

Goldsmith Neighborhood

Area: 0.8 square miles
Population: 5,827
Households: 2,729
Jobs: 1,730
Indian Creek Neighborhood

Area: 0.5 square miles
Population: 3,927
Households: 2,001
Jobs: 931
Virginia Village Neighborhood

Area: 1.9 square miles
Population: 14,437
Households: 6,379
Jobs: 7,553
Washington Virginia Vale Neighborhood

Area: 1.8 square miles
Population: 14,973
Households: 6,774
Jobs: 1,882
University Hills North Neighborhood

Area: 0.4 square miles
Population: 1,547
Households: 770
Jobs: 3,999
Existing Land Use
The most common land use in Near Southeast is Single-Unit Residential, accounting for 44% of the land area, followed by Multi-Unit Residential at 21% and Commercial/Retail at 8%.
Existing Zoning
Residential zoning makes up two-thirds of Near Southeast, while commercial mixed-use makes up about 15% and open space makes up about 10%. The remainder is industrial, industrial mixed-use, or custom zoning.
Overlays
Zoning overlays apply additional allowances or restrictions on the underlying base zoning. The overlays in Near Southeast include the UO-1 Adult Use Overlay, UO-2 Billboard Use Overlay, UO-3 Historic Structure Overlay, and CO-5 Krisana Park Conservation Overlay.
LAND USE AND NEIGHBORHOODS

Public Land and Facilities

Most public land in Near Southeast is park land, but public facilities also include the Virginia Village Library, Cook Park Recreation Center, Four Mile House, the Cherry Creek Transfer Station, and a fire station.
Blueprint Neighborhood Context
The majority of Near Southeast is designated Suburban context in Blueprint Denver, with a few smaller areas of Urban Center, General Urban, Urban Edge, and Special District.
The largest portion of Near Southeast is designated Residential Low place in Blueprint Denver, with significant Community Corridors along Colorado Boulevard, Evans Avenues, and Leetsdale Drive, and a Regional Center around Colorado Station.
Blueprint Growth Areas

The majority of Near Southeast falls in the All Other Areas of the City growth designation in Blueprint Denver, intended to accommodate 20% of new households and 10% of new jobs citywide by 2040, while the Centers and Corridors are intended to accommodate a greater share of growth.
Age of Structure
Over 40% of structures in Near Southeast were built in the 1950s, with another 22% built in the 1960s. Less than 3% were built before 1950, and only about 4% have been built since 2000.
Building Heights

The majority of buildings in Near Southeast are two stories (30 feet) or less in height. Most taller buildings are concentrated along Colorado Boulevard and near Colorado Station.
Permit Activity
Over the past five years, around 2000 permits with total valuation of almost $350 million have been issued in Near Southeast. University Hills North has seen the greatest investment, with $170 million in permitted construction, while Goldsmith has seen the least, with under $10 million in total valuation.

Legend

Residential Permit Valuations
- Up to $10,000
- $10,000 - $50,000
- $50,000 - $100,000
- $100,000 - $250,000
- Over $250,000

Commercial Permit Valuations
- Up to $100,000
- $100,000 - $500,000
- $500,000 - $1,000,000
- $1,000,000 - 10,000,000
- Over $10,000,000
Major Projects
The map shows some of the larger development projects in either the planning or development stages at the time of the creation of this briefing book (Summer 2021). The information below is subject to change.

- The Arkansas project (former CDOT headquarters) is still in the planning stages but will include at least 150 affordable residential units and at least 150,000 square feet of commercial space.
- The Cameron project has two phases, with phase one under construction with 361 residential units, and phase two still in the planning stages as either commercial or residential development.
- The Embrey Leetsdale project is expected to contain about 120 residential units.
- The Holly project (former CDOT facility) is expected to contain about 200 residential units.
- The Monaco & Evans project (former Kmart) is expected to contain 400-425 residential units.
GDPs and LDFs

There is one General Development Plan (GDP) in Near Southeast, at Colorado Station, and two complete Large Development Review (LDR) frameworks, at Evans and Monaco and along Leetsdale Drive.
ECONOMY AND HOUSING
Top Employers and Industry Sectors
There are a total of 33,680 jobs in Near Southeast. There is a greater proportion of jobs within the Administrative and Support and Waste Management and Remediation Services and Healthcare and social Assistance jobs compared to Denver overall. Conversely, this area has a lower share of Government, Manufacturing, and Transportation and Warehousing jobs than the city overall.
Unemployment

The unemployment rate in Near Southeast is 4.4 percent, higher than the citywide rate of three percent. The rates vary across neighborhoods, with a low of 1.2 percent in Indian Creek and a high of seven percent in University Hills North.
Individual Wages
The average employed resident within Near Southeast earns $42,563.20 annually, compared to $58,886 for Denver. There are significant differences between neighborhoods, with the average wage in Indian Creek being $50,759 while the average in Goldsmith is $35,239. Wages increased by about $10,000 in all neighborhoods between 2015 and 2019.
The median annual household income in Near Southeast is $59,691, compared to the Denver median of $68,592. There are significant differences between neighborhoods within Near Southeast: the median income in Indian Creek is $73,874, while University Hills North is $44,388. Incomes in Near Southeast area have generally increased between 2015 and 2019. It is not clear from the data how much of the change is attributable to household incomes improving as a result of low income households moving out of the area or those with higher incomes moving in.
Poverty
Households are in poverty if their income is less than about $13,300 annually for an individual, or about $26,000 annually for a family of four. The poverty rate in Near Southeast is 11 percent, slightly lower than the overall Denver rate of 12 percent. There are wide differences between the neighborhoods, however, with a low of four percent in Indian Creek and a high of 15 percent in Virginia Village. The number of households in poverty decreased by eight percent between 2010 and 2019 in Near Southeast. Most of the decrease was in Goldsmith and Indian Creek, where it is not clear from the data how much of the change is attributable to household incomes improving or how much the decrease has resulted from impoverished households moving out of the area or those with higher incomes moving in.
Level of Education

The percentage of adults over the age of 25 with a bachelor’s degree or higher in Near Southeast is 48 percent, compared to 49 percent in Denver. The individual neighborhoods have similar rates, with the lowest being Goldsmith at 41 percent and the highest being Virginia Village and Indian Creek at 53 percent. Most neighborhoods in Near Southeast from 2010 to 2019 have seen an increase in residents with college degrees. However, the rate of residents with the college degree decreased in Washington Virginia Village and remained the same in Indian Creek.
Schools

There are eight public elementary, middle and high schools and three private primary and secondary schools in Near Southeast. Denver Public Schools no longer uses the DPS School Performance Framework (SPF) and will be using the Colorado Department of Education’s SPF in the future. According to DPS’ Strategic Regional Analysis, this planning area is expected to experience enrollment declines in the local elementary schools and increases in enrollment for middle and high schools through 2024. Overall this area is seen as relatively stable with fairly consistent enrollment and demographics over the past several years.
Childcare
Licensed childcare centers in Near Southeast have a maximum capacity of 2,040 for children under the age of five, resulting in a ratio of 2.1 children in the Near Southeast for every one childcare spot. In Denver, there are 1.8 children per childcare spot. Washington Virginia Vale has the greatest number of childcare spots in Near Southeast and has more childcare spots than children under five, with a ratio of 0.88 children for every one available spot. Conversely, Indian Creek has the least number of childcare spots than children under the age of five, with a ratio of 5.1 children for every one available spot.
There are three special districts of three different types in Near Southeast. There is one Metropolitan District which provides various public improvements and services through additional property assessments. There is one Water and Sanitation District which provides water and sanitation services. The Holly Hills Water and Sanitation District distributes Denver water to 3,500 residents in Denver and unincorporated Arapahoe County. There is one Tax Increment Finance (TIF) District which pays for improvements and services to facilitate redevelopment of blighted areas by collecting incremental tax increases generated by redevelopment and reinvesting them back into the District.
Enterprise and Opportunity Zones
The Enterprise Zone Program was created to encourage development in economically distressed areas of the state. Businesses located within an Enterprise Zone are eligible for state income tax credits and sales and use tax exemptions for specific business investments. Additionally, tax payers who contribute to enterprise zone projects may receive income tax credits.
Sales Tax
Tax receipts in Near Southeast increased by 4.4% percent between 2015 and 2020. However, sales tax receipts decreased from 2019 to 2020 likely due to the COVID-19 pandemic, which required many businesses to temporarily close. Sales tax receipts increased in all neighborhoods except University Hills North, which saw a slight decline.
Near Southeast has 19,926 housing units and 18,653 households. Overall, Near Southeast household sizes are slightly smaller than the city overall. Most households in the planning area, 41 percent, are 1-person households, slightly higher than Denver’s rate of 38 percent.

An estimated 57 percent of housing units in Near Southeast are occupied by renters. The highest percentages of renter-occupied units are located in the southern portion of the plan area, with 69 percent in Goldsmith and 64 percent in University Hills North. All of the neighborhoods within the planning area have more renter-occupied units than owner-occupied units except for Indian Creek, which has only 32 percent renter-occupied units. In comparison, 50 percent of Denver’s housing units are renter-occupied.

Household composition in the Near Southeast differs slightly from Denver overall. Thirty percent of the study area are married couple families, 15 percent are other families, and 14 percent are non-families.
Cost Burdened Households
Housing affordability is measured by calculating the amount a household spends on housing costs as a percentage of its income. Households that spend more than 30 percent are considered cost-burdened, and those that spend more than 50 percent are considered severely cost-burdened.

A total of 6,406 households, or 35 percent of all households, in Near Southeast are cost-burdened. Likewise, 35 percent of households citywide are cost burdened. The map shows Indian Creek, the eastern portion of Virginia Village, and central Washington Virginia Vale have the highest percentage of cost-burdened households in Near Southeast. Further, 17 percent, or 3,170 households, are severely cost-burdened.
Income Restricted Units

Income-restricted housing units have a covenant or other restriction that requires them to be affordable to tenants with certain income levels. These types of units are distinguished from naturally occurring affordable housing, which may be affordable to tenants due to current market conditions but are not required to be maintained as affordable.

Near Southeast currently has 541 income-restricted units, which account for 2.8 percent of the housing units in the plan area. For comparison, Denver has 24,191 income-restricted units overall, which is approximately 7 percent of all housing units in the city. Of the 563 income-restricted units in the study area, 62% are located in Washington Virginia Vale. Approximately 58 percent of the covenants requiring affordability are set to expire within the next 20 years, which would result in a reduction of about 121 affordable units in Near Southeast.*

*43 of these units will expire within the next year, however, the covenants may be renewed
Housing Vacancy
The percentage of vacant housing units in Near Southeast is 8.25 percent, compared to 5.9 percent in Denver. University Hills North and Goldsmith have the highest housing vacancy rates at 8.1 percent and 8.7 percent, respectively. Indian Creek has the lowest vacancy rate with 2.7 percent of housing units being vacant.
### Median Home Value

Median home values are the property owner or resident’s estimate of how much the property (house and lot) would sell for if it were for sale. The median home value in Near Southeast is $370,933 which is lower than the citywide median of $390,600. The rates vary greatly across neighborhoods, with the highest home values located in Goldsmith with a median of $431,500 and the lowest in Indian Creek with a median home value of $274,600. All neighborhoods have seen an increase in home values between 2015 and 2019. While the most recent data is from 2019, it is likely homes values have continued to increase rapidly in 2020 and 2021 due to high demand and low supply.

### Median Property Value

The median property value in Near Southeast is $385,000 just under the citywide median of $390,000. Most Southeast area neighborhoods are close to this median value except Indian Creek, which is somewhat lower.
Median Rent

Median gross rent is the rental price of a unit plus the estimated average monthly cost of utilities and fuel. The median gross rent in Near Southeast is $1,385.80 slightly higher than the Denver median of $1,311. There are significant differences between neighborhoods within the Near Southeast: the median gross rent in Goldsmith is $1,130, while Indian Creek is $1,557. Rents in Near Southeast have increased between 2015 and 2019 and rent prices have increased most significantly in Indian Creek.
MOBILITY
**Travel Mode**

Approximately 68 percent of commuters in Near Southeast drive alone to work, ranging from 59 percent in University Hills North to 80 percent in Indian Creek. This percentage is slightly lower than the citywide average of 70 percent.
Vision Zero
The Denver Vision Zero Action Plan included extensive data collection and analysis that identified a High Injury Network (HIN) representing the corridors in Denver with the highest number of fatal and injury crashes. Collectively, the HIN accounts for five percent of streets in Denver but 50 percent of traffic deaths. There is a concentration of vehicle crashes along the HIN within Near Southeast. In the entire planning area, there were over 13,000 vehicle crashes per 100,000 residents from 2011 through 2015, compared to more than 10,000 crashes per 100,000 residents citywide.
Street Network
The street network in Near Southeast consists of Local, Collector and Arterial Streets. Local Streets are designed for the highest degree of property access and the lowest amount of through movement. Arterial Streets (such as Leetsdale Drive, Evans Avenue and Colorado Boulevard) are designed for the highest amount of through movement and the lowest degree of property access. Collector Streets (such as Dahlia Street and Florida Avenue) are in between a Local Street and an Arterial Street; they collect movement from Local Streets and convey it to Arterial Streets.
Vehicle Ownership
Within Near Southeast, 10 percent of households do not have a vehicle which is similar to the Denver average of 11 percent. The University Hills North Neighborhood (25%) and the Washington Virginia Vale Neighborhood (16%) show the highest percentage of households that do not own a car based on this data.
Sidewalk Inventory
The sidewalk inventory indicates where sidewalks are missing or too narrow (less than four feet wide) in Near Southeast. More than 90 percent of Near Southeast has sidewalks, but almost two-thirds of those sidewalks are less than four feet wide; approximately 30 percent of the study area has sidewalks that are more than four feet wide. Approximately two percent of the study area does not have sidewalks at all, compared to nine percent citywide.
Pedestrian Network

This map documents existing pedestrian infrastructure including crosswalks, sidewalks and trails. Also included are deficient sidewalk widths (less than 4’ wide) and routes used by pedestrians to navigate Near Southeast. DRCOG Opportunity Zones are areas with a high concentration of short tips (2 miles or less) that hold the potential for converting car trips to bicycle trips.

The Denver Moves: Pedestrian and Trails plan created a tiered approach to constructing sidewalks in areas of missing sidewalks. Tier 1 projects are along the HIN, tier 2 projects are along high-frequency transit access projects or within 600 feet of a rail station and have high-priority destinations (schools, parks, civic centers, etc.), tier 3 projects are the remaining high-capacity transit access projects, tier 4 projects cover the remaining areas near transit stops, tier 5 projects cover remaining high-priority destinations, and tier 6 cover the remaining areas with missing sidewalks.
Pedestrian Collisions
The Denver Vision Zero Action Plan included extensive data collection and analysis that identified a High Injury Network (HIN) representing the corridors in Denver with the highest number of fatal and injury crashes. Collectively, the HIN accounts for five percent of streets in Denver but 50 percent of traffic deaths.

In the extensive data analysis that was part of the Vision Zero plan development, Colorado Boulevard has the sixth highest crash rate. Quebec Street, Evans Avenue and Leetsdale Drive are also within the HIN. There is a pattern of crashes involving pedestrians along the HIN within Near Southeast as measured by crashes per 100,000 residents between 2011 and 2015. During those years, Near Southeast had 227 pedestrian crashes per 100,000 residents compared to 316 pedestrian crashes per 100,000 citywide residents.
Bicycle Network and Infrastructure
Bicycle facilities include protected bikeways (which have the highest ease of use), separated bikeways, and shared roadways (which are still bike facilities but have a lower ease of use than protected and separated facilities). This map includes planned but not existing shared roadways as future facilities will have a higher standard of comfort and usability than some of the current facilities.
Bicycle Collisions

The Denver Vision Zero Action Plan included extensive data collection and analysis that identified a High Injury Network (HIN) representing the corridors in Denver with the highest number of fatal and injury crashes. Collectively, the HIN accounts for five percent of streets in Denver but 50 percent of traffic deaths.

In the extensive data analysis that was part of the Vision Zero plan development, Colorado Boulevard has the sixth highest crash rate. Quebec Street, Evans Avenue and Leetsdale Drive are also within the HIN. There is a pattern of crashes involving bicyclists along the HIN within Near Southeast as measured by crashes per 100,000 residents between 2011 and 2015. During those years, Near Southeast had 38 bicycle crashes per 100,000 residents compared to 221 bicycle crashes per 100,000 citywide residents.
Transit Frequency by Route

People are more likely to use transit when the service operates frequently, runs on a predictable schedule, and is easily accessible within a 1/4 to 1/2-mile distance.

Within Near Southeast, the most frequent transit occurs along Colorado Boulevard (RTD 40) and the Light Rail lines (E and F). Leetsdale Drive (RTD 83) also provides frequent service and these east-west bus routes primarily ferry commuters from neighborhoods in the Near Southeast area to Cherry Creek and the Central Business District for work and other social activities.
Transit Frequency by Stop
When deciding whether to use transit, one of the most important factors people consider is the distance to a transit stop. Generally speaking, the neighborhoods within Near Southeast have a fine-grained street network that supports such access to transit. Not surprisingly, these neighborhoods show a higher than average percentage of residents that commute by transit.

Most of the ridership in Near Southeast occurs along Colorado Boulevard, Leetsdale Drive, Monaco Parkway and Quebec Street. These major intersections tend to yield the largest ridership levels. Transit ridership is also significantly higher at the Colorado Boulevard and Yale Avenue Light Rail Stations.

Top Three Stops:
1. Colorado Station
2. Leetsdale Avenue and Quebec Street (Westbound)
3. Leetsdale Avenue and Monaco Parkway (Southbound)
QUALITY OF LIFE INFRASTRUCTURE
Park Access

A walkshed is the area that someone could walk to or from an origin or destination within a given distance. Park access is measured as a half mile (approximately a ten-minute walk) from a park. Approximately 60 percent of the households in Near Southeast are within a ten-minute walk to a park.*

*Four Mile Historic Park located in the Washington Virginia Vale neighborhood and the proposed new park located in the University Hills neighborhood are not counted in this analysis.
PARKS AND OPEN SPACE

Parkways

Parkways place additional restrictions such as setbacks on designated streets. Parkways in Near Southeast include Alameda Avenue, Cherry Creek Drive, Colorado Boulevard, and Monaco Parkway.
Tree Canopy

Urban tree canopy cover is an important metric for a variety of reasons. The shade that trees provide helps keep urban environments cooler and helps to reduce air and water pollution by sequestering carbon dioxide from above and stabilizing soils from below. The urban forest is an important cultural and aesthetic part of the city’s identity.

At 40 percent, Near Southeast has a higher-than-average tree canopy coverage compared to the citywide average (19%) with significant coverage found in the Washington Virginia Vale and Virginia Village neighborhoods. Significant gaps in tree canopy coverage occur along the major arterial streets in the study area, especially those lined with surface parking lots.
ENVIRONMENT

Impervious Surface

Many surfaces that were once permeable have now become impermeable. These absorb the sun’s energy while trapping heat. Over the scale of a city, this extra absorption of energy causes urban landscapes and air temperatures to become hotter than their surrounding rural counterparts. Locally hotter temperatures cause discomfort for residents, increase cooling costs and stress local plants.

The Near Southeast’s impervious surface coverage of 39 percent is lower than the citywide average of 44 percent. However, a significant amount of impervious surface can be found in the parking lots along Colorado Boulevard, Evans Avenue and Leetsdale Drive.
Stormwater Basin / Flood Areas
The Near Southeast is home to the Upper Cherry Creek Basin (located in Virginia Village, Indian Creek) and Washington Virgina Vale) and parts of the Overland/University Basin (University Hills North) and City Park/Park Hill Basin. These basins are responsible for capturing much of this rainwater.

To help mitigate the effects of flooding for the surrounding neighborhood, the current stormwater drainage system in these basins needs to be improved. The City Park/Park Hill Basin (located in the northern portion of Washington Virgina Vale) has been identified as a priority basin for storm drainage and water quality improvements.
Floodplain
This map shows the potential inundation areas during a 100-year and 500-year storm event. Throughout Denver, the streets are designed to handle up to 12 inches of stormwater. The location and depth of the potential inundation areas is a result of the natural terrain, undersized stormwater infrastructure system, increased impervious surface effecting stormwater runoff, and duration and intensity of a rain event. Depths greater than 12 inches are considered potential inundation areas and are shown on the map with orange/pink/green tones. The map shows some areas of the Near Southeast area with flood depths greater than 12 inches, specifically along the Highline Canal and Cherry Creek, and parts of Monaco Parkway in the Virginia Village and Goldsmith neighborhoods.
**Surface Temperature**

The surface temperature index is associated with decreased air quality and increased energy consumption for cooling. Surface temperatures in Near Southeast tend to be hotter where impervious surface coverage is greater, especially along the major corridors in the study area. The warmest average surface temperatures tend to be found along Colorado Boulevard, Evans Avenue and Leetsdale Drive. Collectively, approximately 23 percent of the study area has a hot surface temperature compared to the citywide average of 19 percent. According to Denver Parks and Recreation Game Plan, future summers in Denver are predicted to be hotter with an average high of 96°F, a full ten degrees warmer than today’s average.
Hazard

This map shows potential environmental health hazards based on data from the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment. Many of these hazards have been mitigated previously, but the map indicates areas where extra precaution should be taken, and additional expense may be incurred by new development for required remediation.
Food Access
A walkshed is the area that someone could walk to or from an origin or destination within a given distance. Food access is measured as a half mile (approximately a ten-minute walk) from a full service grocery store, which is defined as a supermarket, a supercenter, or a warehouse club store. Approximately 50 percent of the households in Near Southeast are located within a half mile of a full service grocery store.
Healthcare Access

This map shows the percentage of households in each neighborhood which experience delayed medical care due to cost. On average, just over 12 percent of households in the Near Southeast have experienced some delay in medical care due to the cost of the care which is lower than the Denver average of 13.9 percent.
**Violent Crime**

Between 2016 and 2020, there were around 1,600 violent crime incidents in Near Southeast, or about 39 per 1,000 people - less than the Denver average of 60 per 1,000 people. While Washington Virginia Vale had the highest number of incidents, University Hills North had the most per 1,000 people. Indian Creek had the lowest, both in number and per 1,000 people.
ADOPTED PLANS
Studies and Surrounding Neighborhood Plans

Colorado Boulevard Plan
The Colorado Boulevard Plan covers the Colorado Boulevard corridor between 1st Avenue and Iliff Avenue. At the time of its creation the primary concern was increasing traffic and congestion on the corridor. The plan includes recommendations aimed at easing congestion without displacing traffic, including widening intersections, encouraging alternative travel modes, limiting development intensity, and promoting a mix of uses. The plan also includes urban design recommendations to promote consistency along the corridor.

Vision:
This portion of South Colorado Boulevard is, and should continue to be, a regionally distinct transportation, business, and residential corridor accommodating a wide range of development types and sizes which serve the shopping, business, and entertainment needs of nearby residents, as well as providing destination opportunities for a wider community.

While serving as a gateway to the cities of Glendale and Denver and the Cherry Creek area, Colorado Boulevard will provide for functional and efficient traffic flow both within and through the corridor. There will be a growing role for transit and a more friendly and safe environment for pedestrians.

Higher standards of both public and private urban design will create a positive human-scale image and a cohesiveness which will distinguish “the Boulevard” from typical strip commercial areas, while retaining the separate identities of Glendale and Denver. Design considerations will reinforce the integrity of adjacent residential areas by enhancing their privacy and livability.
Cherry Creek Greenway Master Plan

The Cherry Creek Greenway Master Plan covers the land around Cherry Creek between the Cherry Creek Reservoir dam and University Boulevard. The plan describes recommended improvements to parks and open space, mobility, and urban design along the greenway to achieve the vision. The plan also includes recommendations for better connecting surrounding neighborhoods to the greenway and improving the environmental quality of the creek corridor.

Vision:

“A natural area with parks, walking paths, biking trails, open areas, served by pedestrian-friendly streets” is perhaps the best description of the intent and vision for the Cherry Creek Greenway. No longer a focus of commuter vehicle traffic into the downtown core, the Cherry Creek corridor is envisioned as one of the jewels along the emerald strand of Denver Parks and regional open space. Not only one of the last remaining natural buffers and continuous linkages between developing neighborhoods, the portion of the corridor is planned also as an 8-mile long safe haven for the enjoyment of natural vegetation and wildlife, its peaceful surroundings, and as an area for pedestrian-oriented, people-friendly activities.
The Colorado Station Area Framework Plan covers the area just south of the Colorado Station on the RTD Southeast Line, bounded by Colorado Blvd, Evans Ave, I-25, and Colorado Center Dr. The plan was adopted in 2003, before the completion of the Southeast Line, to provide guidance for development and mobility around the new station. Much of the plan is concerned with promoting ridership at station, by ensuring an appropriate land use mix and density, mobility connections, parking, and transportation demand management.

Guiding Principles:

Development/Redevelopment: Create a mixed-use development for the area within the “wedge” and directly adjacent to it, which emphasizes residential uses and provides enough density to promote a high level of transit ridership for people who may live or work near the station.

Transportation - Autos: Create a balance between density and traffic impact on streets surrounding the station area and develop a network of streets inside the wedge, which promotes multiple access locations for vehicles.

Transportation - Transit: Provide a convenient alternative to driving to the station by encouraging transit, which serves the surrounding neighborhoods.

Transportation - Bikes & Pedestrians: Create safe and direct pedestrian and bicycle systems connecting the station to adjoining districts, neighborhoods, and transit parking, as provided by the City’s pedestrian and bicycle plans.

Parking: Develop a shared parking solution, which serves both development and transit and minimizes impacts to the surrounding neighborhoods.

Travel Demand Management (TDM): Utilize travel demand management measures to reduce single occupant automobile demand related to development near the station.

Development Tools: Planning, zoning and innovative partnerships are proposed as incentives to initiate station area development that reflects the Guiding Principles. The purpose for their inclusion is to expose property owners and developers to the array of alternatives that may aid in the successful development at the Colorado Station. Topics discussed include adjusting zoning around light rail stations to promote desirable development, regulatory incentives, and public/private partnership opportunities.
Yale Station Area Study
The Yale Station Area Study looks at the area immediately surrounding the Yale Station on the RTD Southeast Line and assess potential development scenarios in anticipation of the opening of the station at the time. The study describes guiding principles for future development to balance the opportunity of transit-oriented development with impacts on the surrounding neighborhood.
Lowry Reuse Plan
The Lowry Reuse Plan outlines strategies for redevelopment of the former Lowry Air Force Base after it closed. The plan lays out a vision for a new mixed-use community on the site that transitions well into surrounding existing neighborhoods. The plan calls for high-quality urban design, multi-modal transportation, economic vibrancy, and a variety of parks and open spaces.
University Park Plan
The University Park Neighborhood Plan was created following Blueprint Denver in 2002 but before the adoption of the Denver Zoning Code in 2010 and establishes a vision for a stable single-family neighborhood with active edges along University and Colorado Boulevards and near the University and Colorado Stations. The plan calls for improved zoning and development patterns along Colorado Boulevard and a mixed-use urban neighborhood near Colorado Station.
Neighboring Jurisdiction Plans

Arapahoe County Four Square Mile Area Plan
The Four Square Mile Area Plan covers the area just east of Indian Creek, between Parker Road and Yale Avenue. The plan calls for maintaining the existing character, ensuring compatible residential development, improving the quality of commercial development, and providing better mobility and public services. Key relevant recommendations include improving the usability of and access to the Cherry Creek and Highline Canal trails.

Arapahoe County Comprehensive Plan
The Arapahoe County Comprehensive Plan provides guidance for growth and development in the unincorporated areas of Arapahoe County, including the enclaves within Near Southeast. The plan incorporates the Four Square Mile Area Plan, so does not provide additional guidance for that area. The plan designates the enclaves as Urban Residential, which calls for predominantly single-unit development with some higher densities and community-serving uses mixed in, consistent with the existing development pattern.

Glendale Comprehensive Plan
The Glendale Comprehensive Plan lays out goals and policies for achieving Glendale’s vision of becoming an urban village. The plan calls for various types of mixed-use development and improved mobility connections, including to and through Denver. The plan also calls for working with Denver on improvements to the Cherry Creek channel and providing community services including affordable housing.
Citywide Plans

Denver Parks and Recreation Game Plan for a Healthy City

Game Plan for a Healthy City provides guidance for the growth and operation of Denver’s park and recreation amenities. The plan focuses on equitable access to resources to improve health and resiliency. Game Plan identifies neighborhoods with High Need for improved access to amenities, including Goldsmith in Near Southeast, along with Moderate Need neighborhoods, including Washington Virginia Vale and Virginia Village. The plan recommends addressing these needs in part through NPI plans, by identifying opportunities to increase park and recreation amenities, improving access to existing amenities, and tailoring services to the needs of these communities.

Denver Food Vision

The Denver Food Vision lays out goals and strategies for improving food quality and access in the city. The vision is based on four pillars, calling for a food system that is resilient, vibrant, inclusive, and healthy. The vision includes recommendations related to land use, including encouraging community gardens, promoting healthy food retailers, and facilitating community food production. The vision states these goals should be incorporated into new city plans, including neighborhood plans developed through the Neighborhood Planning Initiative like Near Southeast.

Housing an Inclusive Denver

Housing an Inclusive Denver is a five-year housing policy, strategy, and investment plan. It provides recommendations for assisting low-income residents and people experiencing homelessness, as well as programs to increase the supply of housing units that are affordable to low- and moderate-income residents. The plan seeks to create and/or preserve 3,000 housing units by 2023 and provides strategies for spending Denver’s $150 million housing fund to support the creation and preservation of affordable housing.
Denver Moves: Transit

Denver Moves: Transit is Denver’s local transit vision and guiding framework that identifies near- and long-term transit system investment and improvement strategies and actions to move more people more efficiently and safely as Denver continues to grow and develop as a city. Denver Moves: Transit was developed through technical analysis and community input and is used to guide investment decisions to meet Denver’s current and future mobility needs. The plan recommends transit capital improvements along corridors and at stops and stations, service frequency improvements, safe and accessible connections to transit, and transit-supportive programs and policies.

The Denver Moves: Transit goals were developed to align with the overarching Denveright vision and to meet Denver’s mobility needs and priorities. These goals are used to identify corridors for service and capital investments, establish policy and programmatic strategies and actions to support transit improvements, and guide the development of metrics to help track how the plan is implemented:

- Make transit more appealing by making it reliable and competitive with driving, increasing the frequency of transit service, enhancing the passenger experience, and increasing transit ridership.
- Make transit easier to use by improving legibility and rider information, investing in new technologies, and expanding educational transit programs.
- Connect people and places to transit by strengthening regional and neighborhood connections, integrating with land use development patterns envisioned in Blueprint Denver, and enhancing multimodal access and first/last mile connections to and from transit.
- Improve community health and access to opportunity by developing a more equitable and more affordable system for all, improving the environment, and promoting community health. Support a transit system in Denver that will be successful over the long-term by pursuing sustainable funding sources, identifying resources (staffing, programs, policies, and more) to support the expanding system, and developing an approach to tracking progress.

Denver Moves: Pedestrian and Trails

Denver Moves: Pedestrians & Trails is a long-term, community-developed plan for achieving a vision for walking and trails in Denver. This plan was developed through the Denveright process and significant effort was made through Denver Moves: Pedestrians & Trails’ development to ensure a high degree of integration between the pedestrian, bicycle, trails and transit networks. Denver Moves: Pedestrians & Trails identifies priorities for projects, policies and programs so that elements of the community-developed vision can be achieved as quickly and efficiently as possible. For pedestrians, the Plan identifies a Complete Network of new sidewalks, widening of existing sidewalks, at-grade crossings of streets and grade-separated crossings of major barriers such as freeways, railroads and rivers. Many design treatments contribute to a highly walkable environment, including geometric treatments, traffic signal treatments and streetscape treatments. Denver Moves: Pedestrians & Trails focuses on the most essential elements of a transportation system for people walking. This plan identifies the overall cost for each of these elements, along with implementation priorities.
Denver Moves: Bikes
Denver Moves: Bikes was a collaboration between Public Works and Parks & Recreation to expand the vision for non-motorized transportation and recreation systems in Denver, completed in 2011.

Denver Moves: Bikes identified two overarching goals:

- Creating a biking and walking network where every household is within a quarter mile of a high ease of use facility. (In 2011, 40 percent of households met this threshold.)
- Achieve a 15 percent bicycling and walking commute mode share by 2020. (In 2009, the bicycle and walking commute mode share was 6 percent.)

To work towards these goals, this plan outlined an intent to greatly expand the bicycle facilities in the city, with an emphasis on easy-to-use facilities. Denver Moves proposed to more than double the facilities that existed in 2011, bringing the total to 440 miles of bicycle facilities. The plan also established implementation principles such as embracing a “complete street” approach.

Ultra Urban Green Infrastructure Guidelines
Site-scale green infrastructure best management practices (BMPs) are the focus of Denver’s 2015 UltraUrban Green Infrastructure Guidelines which was published by the department of Public Works in 2016. Inside the document there are detailed fact sheets for street-side stormwater planters, bump out stormwater planters, green gutters, green alleys, and tree pit/ tree trenches as well as information on how to design the above to maximize safety and ease of maintenance. The guidelines explain that it is imperative that the design detailing for the planters is uniform across the area, and that the design of the green-infrastructure should be customized while emphasizing safety.

Denver Green Infrastructure Strategic Plan
Site-scale green infrastructure best management practices (BMPs) are the focus of Denver’s 2015 UltraUrban Green Infrastructure Guidelines which was published by the department of Public Works in 2016. Inside the document there are detailed fact sheets for street-side stormwater planters, bump out stormwater planters, green gutters, green alleys, and tree pit/ tree trenches as well as information on how to design the above to maximize safety and ease of maintenance. The guidelines explain that it is imperative that the design detailing for the planters is uniform across the area, and that the design of the green-infrastructure should be customized while emphasizing safety.