

Highlights from the Draft West Area Plan

What's in the Plan?

Plan Chapter Organization

Introduction

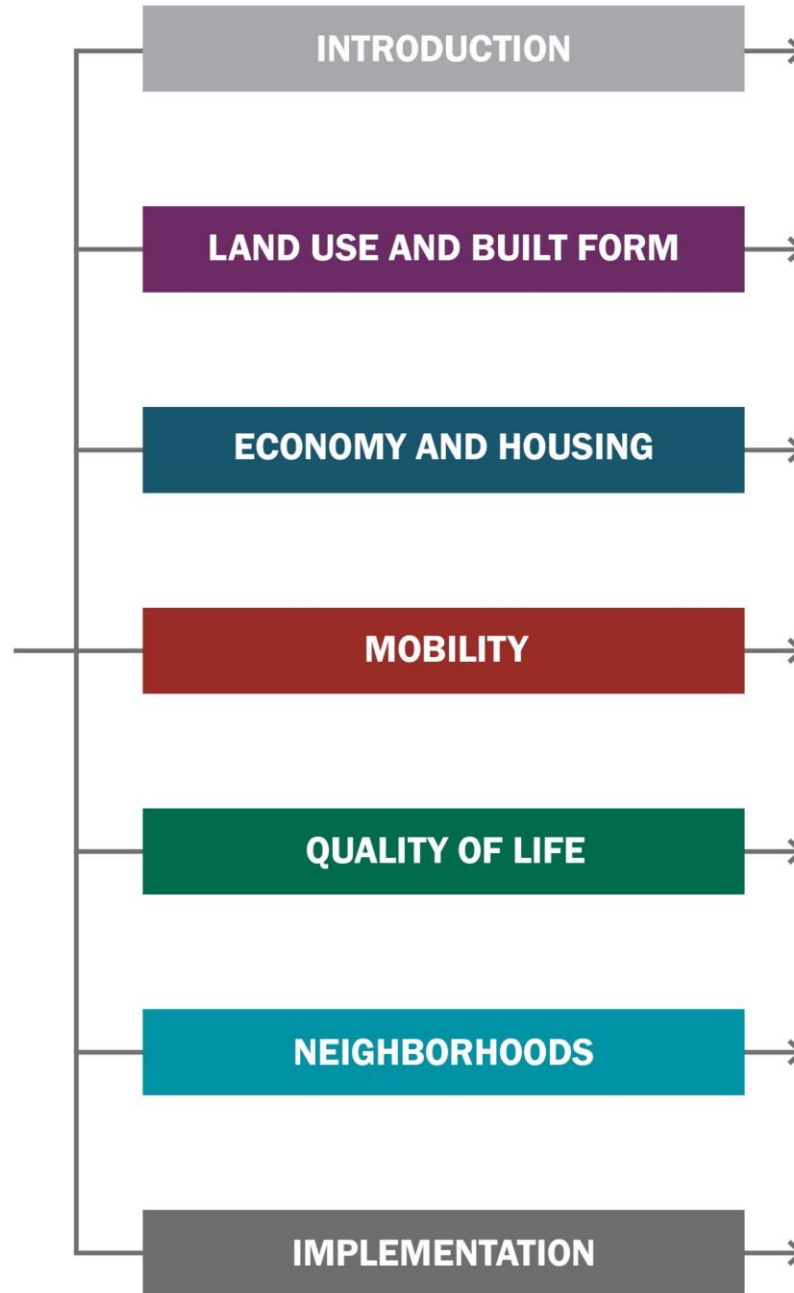
- Community Engagement
- Plan Vision
- Recommendations
Overview
- West Area History
- Planning for Equity
- Executive Summary

Plan Topics

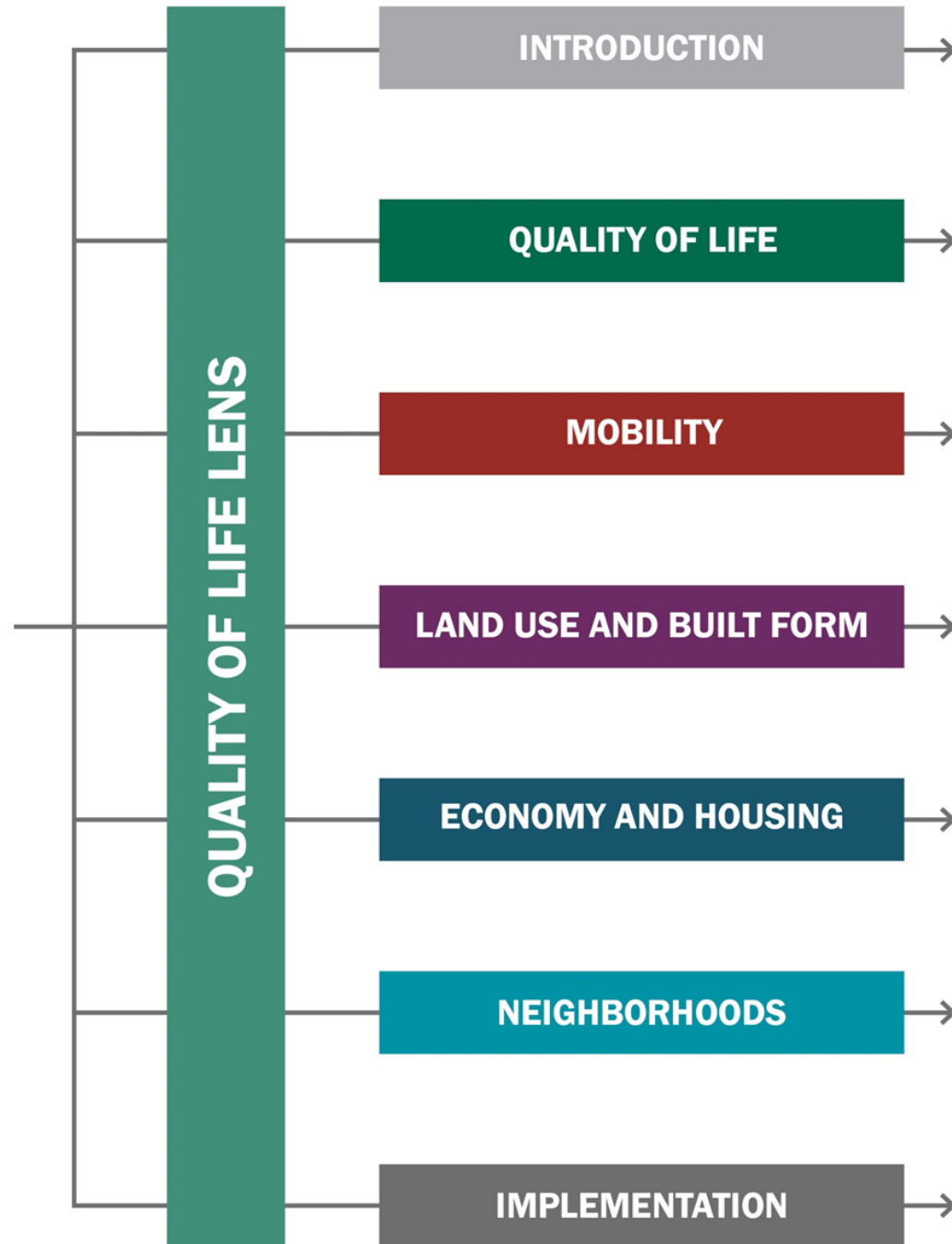
- Quality of Life (health, parks, environmental quality, water)
- Mobility
- Land Use and Built Form
- Economy and Housing

**Transformative Projects
Neighborhoods
Implementation**

Typical Framework for Neighborhood Plans



West Area Plan – Centering Quality of Life Lens



Overall: Recommendation Summaries

Summaries developed for introduction, and beginning of each chapter, for easier viewing, and in neighborhoods

Q8 Water Management Practices

Develop and implement land use and water regulatory policies and programs that support sustainable and resilient water management practices.

Q9 Green Infrastructure in Development

Foster and support green infrastructure that incorporates both the natural environment and engineered systems in public and private developments to provide clean water and promote ecosystem functionality.

Q10 Green Infrastructure in Neighborhood

Promote policies and development practices that use green infrastructure improvements to restore, renew, and revitalize ecological systems while managing and improving stormwater quality. Prioritize sustainability and resiliency and focus on district and neighborhood-scale implementation.

Q11 Green Streets and Alleys

Create a system of connected green streets and alleys to unite open spaces, manage stormwater, beautify neighborhoods, and reduce urban heat island effects. See page 143 for definition of urban heat island effects.

Parks, Trails, and Open Space

Q12 Access to Parks, Open Spaces, and Facilities

Increase and improve accessibility to existing community parks, open spaces, and recreational facilities for all users.

Q13 Facilities and Programming

Enhance existing facilities and programming at community parks, open spaces, and recreational facilities. Improve overall facility accessibility and incorporate universal design principles in projects, including community-desired, culturally relevant design elements.

Q14 New Parks, Open Spaces, and Facilities

Create new and expand existing community parks, open spaces, and recreational facilities throughout West to ensure all West Denver is within a 10-minute walk of an amenity.

Q15 Access to Trails and Waterways

Improve access to regional trails, waterways, and the South Platte River through enhanced signage, wayfinding, safety, security, waste management and lighting improvements.

Complete Food Environment

Q16 Community Food Environment

Build an inclusive, healthier, and more complete West Area community food environment.

Q17 Fresh Food Access

Increase fresh food access, availability, and affordability throughout all West Denver communities.

Q18 Food Insecurity

Support initiatives that seek to minimize food insecurity by assisting food retailers with routine maintenance and facility improvements.

Q19 Food Providers

Develop regulatory tools and creative solutions that streamline city processes and help providers close food access gaps and barriers to fresh, healthy, and affordable products.

Q20 Local Food Production

Support the expansion of local food production, urban farming, food processing and manufacturing.

Q21 Physical Connections to Fresh Food

Improve access to fresh and healthy food and nutrition through improved physical connections and multimodal networks. Prioritize access to nutritious food, goods, and services.

Community Safety and Well-Being

Q22 Community Safety and Security

Increase community safety and security through the maintenance of energy efficient street lighting. Prioritize lighting around public gathering spaces, parks and open spaces, trails, transit facilities, commercial corridors and centers, and streets designated as pedestrians and bicycle priority areas.

Q23 Encourage Regenerative Green Building Practices

Encourage public and private agencies, urban design practitioners, and private developers to incorporate regenerative green building practices and innovation in the built environment. Promote universal design principles with a focus on avoiding unintentional cultural biases, and increase equity, diversity, and inclusion.

QUALITY OF LIFE

Q23 Universal Design Practices

Encourage public and private agencies, urban design practitioners, and private developers to incorporate regenerative green building practices and innovation in the built environment. Promote universal design principles with a focus on avoiding unintentional cultural biases, and increase equity, diversity, and inclusion.

Animal Protection

Q24 Animal Protection

Support ongoing funding for the Denver Animal Protection Community Engagement Program and similar programs that provide access to information and education, veterinary healthcare resources, and services for pet owners at low to no cost.

Community Building

Q25 Youth Violence

Promote comprehensive solutions to youth violence. Encourage community empowerment through access to education, employment, job training resources, and other supportive services for all ages.

Q26 Community Pride

Support the strong sense of place, culture, and identity of West Denver. Seek opportunities to promote communal pride by supporting the elements that define the neighborhoods – including culturally relevant businesses and organizations that benefit the community.

Q27 Local Culture

Recognize local culture, history, and identity in city supported improvements, public art, and park and open space designs. Name spaces in a manner that promotes West Denver's sense of place

Introduction: Grounding Ourselves in History

1.3 WEST AREA HISTORY

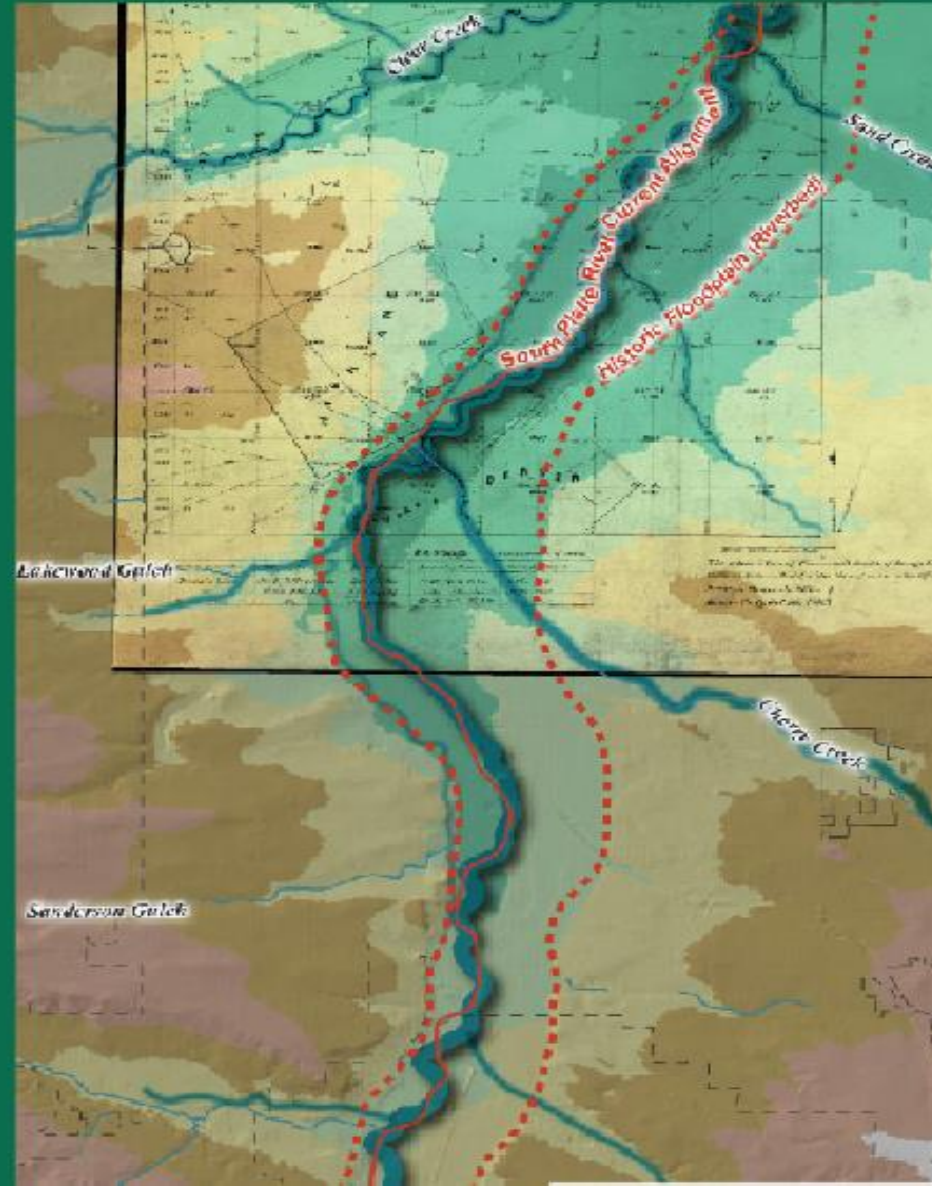
Understanding a neighborhoods' history, particularly how past public policy and infrastructure decisions have affected community, can provide insight to the conditions that affect the day-to-day lives of residents today. For West Area neighborhoods, Quality of Life today is impacted not only by the area's topography, but by the many historic transportation investments, land use zoning and development patterns and urban planning practices over the last century, many of which have left a disproportionate impact on West Area residents.

Past policies and investment decisions continue to have a lasting impact on the West Area today, and new issues present additional challenges for area neighborhoods. The policies and strategies outlined in the West Area Plan address these historic inequities, improve community Quality of Life, Mobility, Land Use and Built Form and Economy and Housing, and ensure that future policy decisions and investments reflect the communities' priorities and vision for the future.

The following timeline highlights significant events that have shaped the West Area over the last century or more and inform the recommendations in the West Area Plan.

Topography

The land to the west of the South Platte River features a steeper topographical rise than land to the east in what today is Downtown Denver. This difference in topography and the meandering nature of the South Platte River influenced early settler decisions to establish the City east of the South Platte River, leaving the majority of the west side



Introduction: Section on Historic Injustice

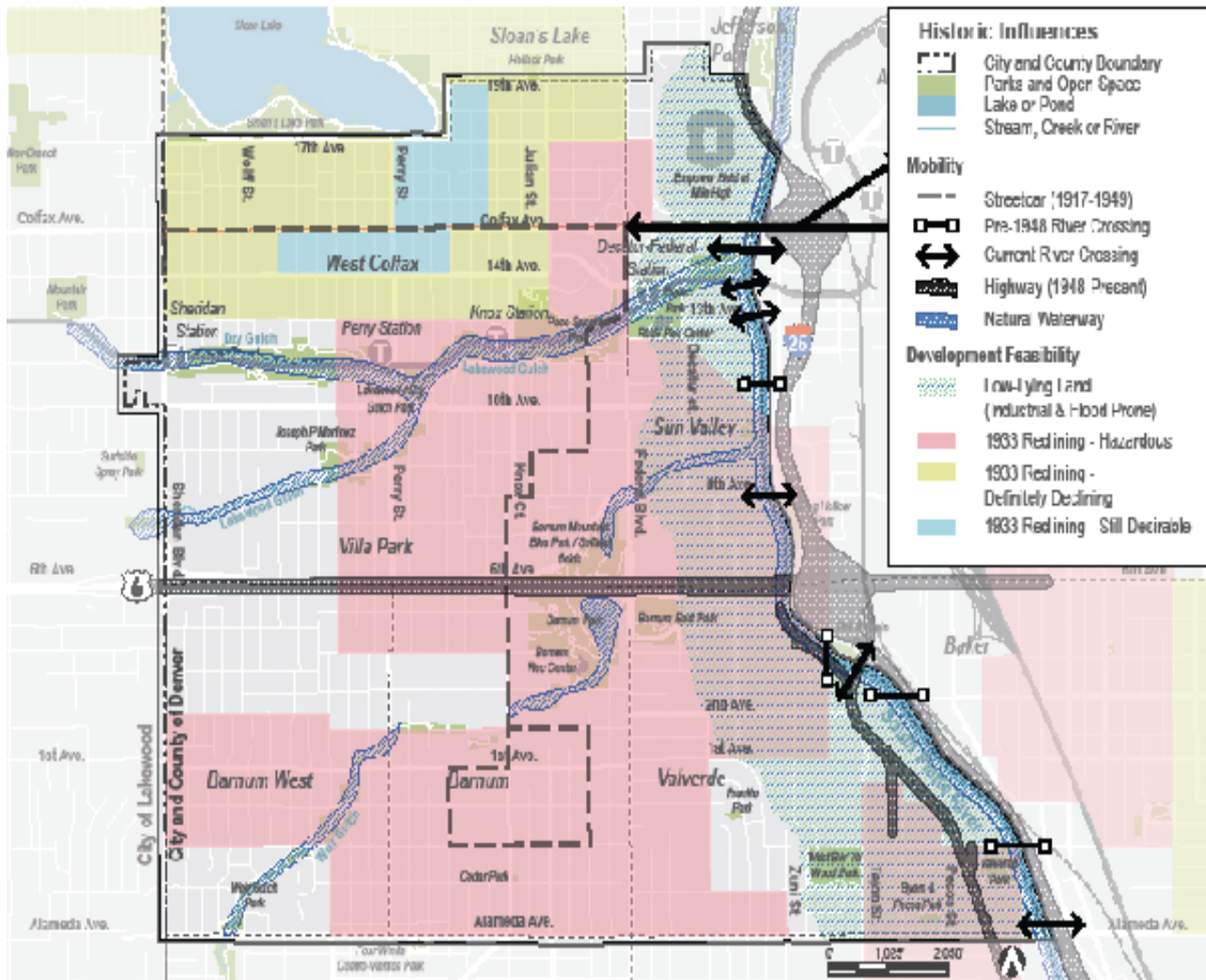
HISTORIC AND PRESENT INEQUITIES IN WEST

When planning for an equitable West, it is important to reflect on and understand the neighborhood's histories, particularly how past public policy decisions have affected these communities and how those decisions continue to affect the day-to-day lives of residents today. Throughout the last century there have been a series of discriminatory policies and practices in West that have left a disproportionate impact on its residents.

In 1925, Denver adopted its first zoning code. This code designated large portions of Valverde and Sun Valley for industrial uses, although these neighborhoods also contained many residential areas. These neighborhoods have been designated as industrial ever since. In the 1930s, the federal government's Home Owner Loan Corporation created maps for most urban areas, including Denver, which assigned grades to each neighborhood based on their perceived character. These maps were used to deny home loans to residents of neighborhoods that were predominately made up of diverse ethnic populations. In West, Villa Park, Sun Valley, Barnum, and Valverde were deemed "Hazardous" and West Colfax "Definitely Declining," meaning that these neighborhoods posed the greatest risk for lenders, thereby, restricting access to homes loans in the area. Racially-restrictive covenants were also used in wealthier, whiter neighborhoods to prohibit the sale or rental of properties to certain ethnic groups. These mechanisms restricted where people of color could live.

In addition to zoning and redlining, major highway developments of I-25 and 8th Avenue in the 1950s and 1980s have physically divided and isolated the West neighborhoods from one another. Locating high-traffic roads directly adjacent to these residential neighborhoods created major challenges related to pedestrian safety and public health. This also accelerated the industrialization of Valverde. The Flood of 1985 on the South Platte River revealed and exacerbated the consequences of discriminatory housing practices and environmental racism in West. The flood resulted in 2,500 families losing their homes, and 23 people being killed in Valverde. In Sun Valley, entire blocks of homes were swept away, leaving vacant land that was later redeveloped by Denver Housing Authority as Sun Valley Homes, a public housing complex.

Past policies and planning decisions continue to have a lasting impact on West today, and new issues present additional challenges for the neighborhoods (see charts on the right). The policies and strategies outlined in the West Area Plan aim to address many of these inequities and ensure that policy decisions and future investment in the neighborhoods reflect the community's priorities and vision for West.



Introduction: Guiding Principles

EQUITY

INTEGRITY

RECIPROCITY

LIBERTY



Equitable, Affordable and Inclusive
Strong and Authentic Neighborhoods

Connected, safe and Accesible Places

Economically Diverse and Vibrant

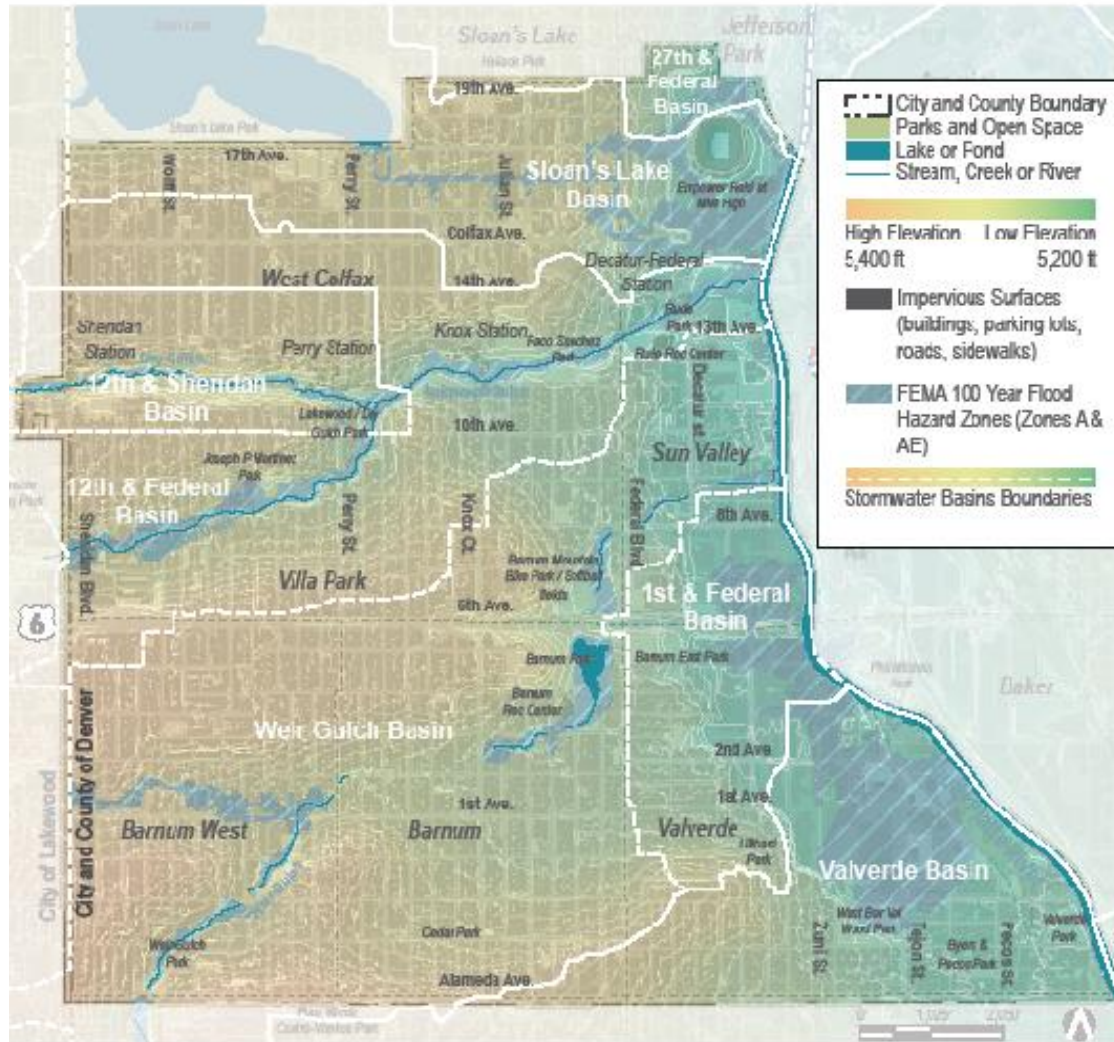
Environmentaly Resilient

Healthy and Active

Quality of Life: Section on Water

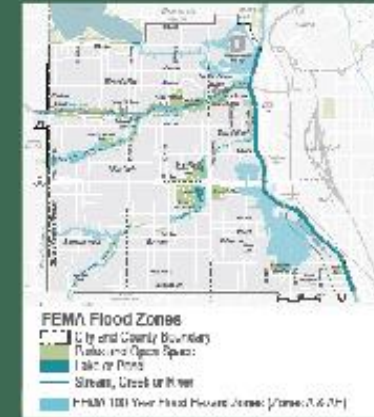
Section: 2.1.3 Devoted to the Role of Water in the West Area

EXISTING WATER ELEMENTS

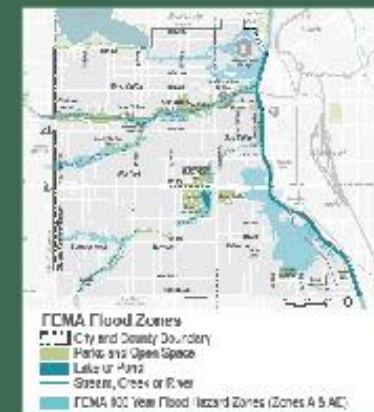


West Area Plan

FLOODPLAIN



WATER QUALITY



Area Wide Recommendations | 23



neighborhood
PLANNING INITIATIVE

Mobility:

Mobility Matrix to Summarize & Streamline Recommendations for Major Streets

2.2 Mobility

2.2.1 INTRODUCTION (P. 110)

2.2.2 PEDESTRIAN IMPROVEMENTS, INTERSECTION SAFETY, AND NEW CROSSINGS (P. 121)

2.2.3 HIGH COMFORT BIKEWAY (P. 126)

2.2.4 TRAILS (P. 132)

2.2.5 NEIGHBORHOOD TRAFFIC CALMING (P. 136)

2.2.6 TRANSIT AND MOBILITY HUBS (P. 140)

2.2.7 TRANSPORTATION DEMAND MANAGEMENT (P. 146)

2.2.8 BALANCED CORRIDORS (P. 148)

2.2.9 MOBILITY SUMMARY (P. 154)

Land Use:

Incorporated Climate Action into Land Use Section



LAND USE AND BUILT FORM + CLIMATE ACTION

Denver's Department of Climate Action, Sustainability & Resiliency (CASR) is working on a number of initiatives aimed at reducing the greenhouse gas emissions of existing and new buildings and increasing buildings' sustainability and resiliency. Some key initiatives include:

New Buildings and Homes:

To create a climate-safe future, we must move all new construction toward resiliency, sustainability and net zero energy. CASR's goal is that, by 2030, the city's building code will require all new construction of buildings and homes to achieve net zero energy. CASR works in partnership with Community Planning and Development (CPD) for this phased process. CASR is supporting the community in this transition with resources, incentives and education.

Existing Homes (Single Family Residential):

Existing homes are responsible for 15% of Denver's greenhouse gas emissions. In 2022, CASR will scale emission reduction solutions for existing homes with outreach and education, and by offering incentives for homeowners to electrify, adopt solar and install electric vehicle chargers.

Existing Buildings (Commercial and Multifamily Residential):

Existing commercial and multifamily buildings are responsible for 49% of Denver's greenhouse gas emissions. CASR is co-creating equitable resources for under-resourced buildings (URBs). URBs are typically located in underserved areas and/or serve frontline communities (ex. affordable housing or human service providers).

Green Building Ordinance:

All commercial buildings in Denver 25,000 square feet or larger are required to comply with the Green Building Ordinance. One option allows developers or owners to pay a fee in lieu to comply. Those fees go into the Green Building Fund which is managed by

CASR. As of December 31, 2021, the fund had nearly \$800,000 available. These funds can be used to create and improve green space, green infrastructure, green roofs, our urban forest, and advance solar and energy efficiency projects for low-income households.

Renewable Denver Community Solar:

Through the Renewable Denver Community Solar initiative, the city will build, own and operate community solar projects hosted on municipal rooftops, parking lots and vacant land. At least 30% of the power generated through these projects will provide financial relief to income-qualified households, create workforce training opportunities, and conduct educational programs with Denver Public Schools.

Denver Solar Co-Op:

Gives homeowners a discount on solar installation through group purchasing. It's free to join, with no obligation to install, and the Climate Protection Fund provides additional rebates to income-qualified households.

Renewables and Resilience Incentive Program:

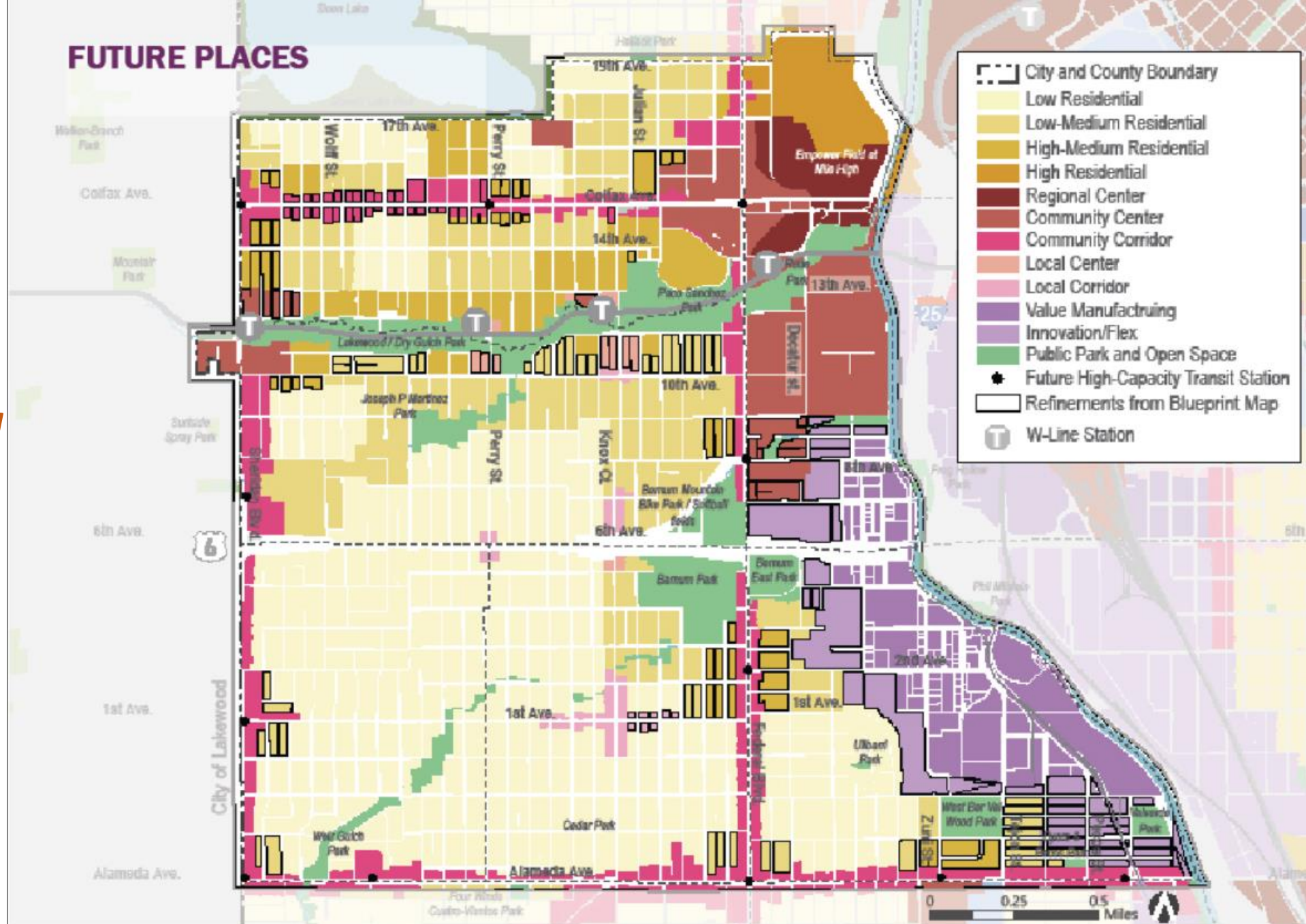
Offers financial incentives to nonprofit organizations dedicated to providing human services, such as shelters and day cares. Non-profits are encouraged to adopt solar, battery storage, and electric vehicle charging equipment to reduce their greenhouse gas emissions by at least 20%.

Solar Outdoor Learning Incentive Program:

Allowing students to learn about clean energy through curriculum, lessons and career exploration.

Land Use:

Revised Blueprint Denver Future Places Mapping



Neighborhoods:

*Created
Recommendation
Summary Maps
for each
Neighborhood*

SUMMARY OF WEST COLFAX RECOMMENDATIONS

LAND USE AND BUILT FORM

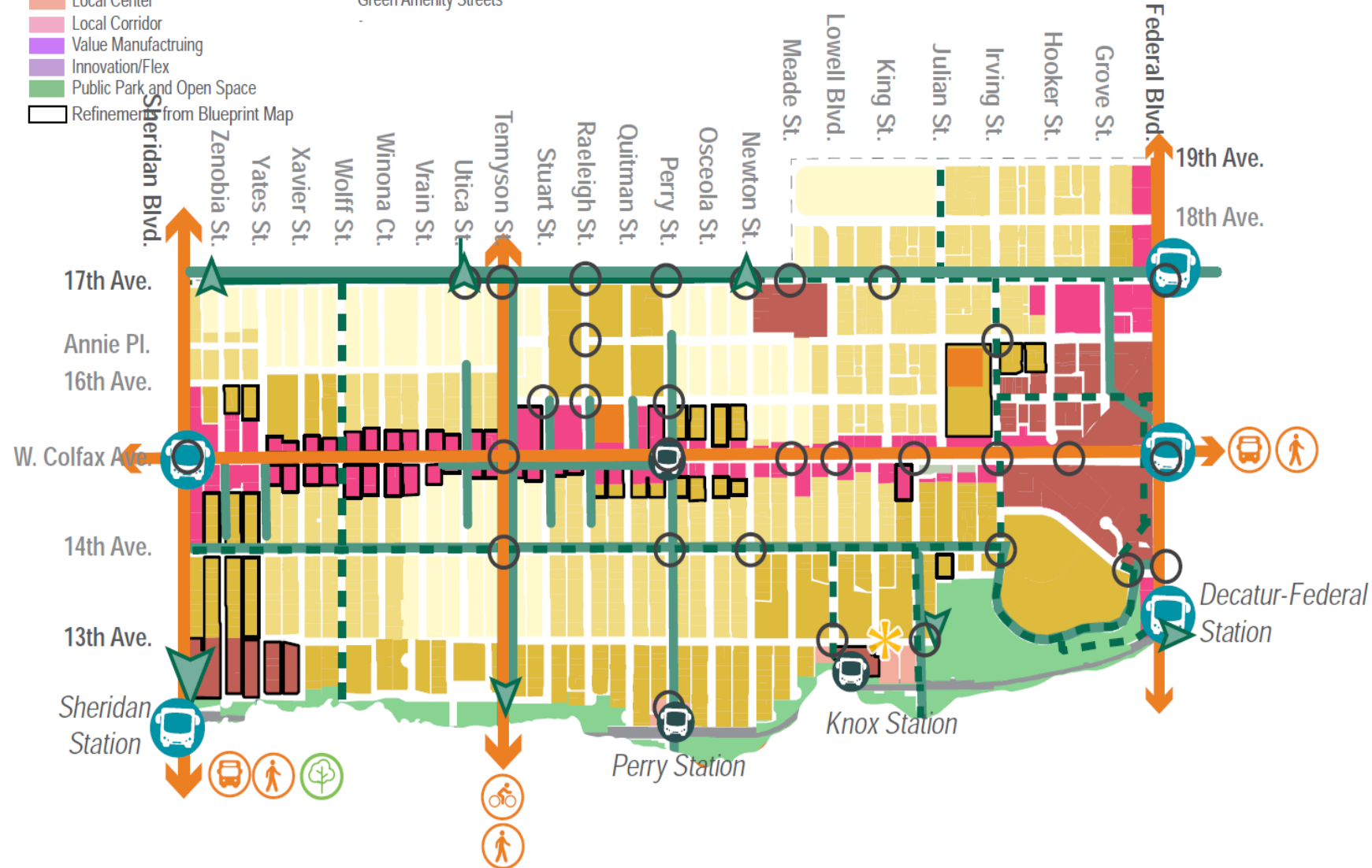
- Low Residential
- Low-Medium Residential
- High-Medium Residential
- High Residential
- Regional Center
- Community Center
- Community Corridor
- Local Center
- Local Corridor
- Value Manufacturing
- Innovation/Flex
- Public Park and Open Space
- Refinement from Blueprint Map

MOBILITY

- Transformative Corridor
- Transit Priority
- Bike Priority
- Pedestrian Priority
- Proposed Green Street or Green Amenity Streets
- Existing/Proposed High Comfort bikeways
- Improvements to an Existing Crossing
- Regional Mobility Hub
- Local Mobility Hub

QUALITY OF LIFE

- Park Access Improvements
- Civic Space Opportunities
- School / Shared Open Space Opportunity



Implementation: Detailed Matrix

2.1 QUALITY OF LIFE

IMPLEMENTATION RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendation Type	Policy Action	Timeline	Action Type	City Agencies	Action Partners	Page
Quality of Life - 1 Health Equity	Prioritize health equity by developing trainings and programs that support integration or best practices. Ensure all health equity initiatives within West intentionally support citywide policies, deliver public services within West, and allocate resources to eliminate institutional biases and barriers within the system.	Ongoing	Regulatory	All Agencies	All Action Partners	
Quality of Life - 2 Racial and Social Equity	Increase systems, policies, and practices that promote racial and social equity in support of citywide efforts throughout all West Denver neighborhoods.	Ongoing	Regulatory & Infrastructure	All Agencies	All Action Partners	
Quality of Life - 3 Noise and Air Pollution	Address the noise and air pollution impacts to health for developments adjacent to major roadway corridors such as 6th Avenue, Alameda Avenue, Sheridan Boulevard, and Interstate 25 (I-25).	Ongoing	Infrastructure	CPD DOTI CASR DPR	CDOT RTD	
Quality of Life - 4 Climate Resilience	Utilize the policies and recommendations in the Denver Climate Action Plan and similar plans to improve environmental performance and climate resilience within West Denver neighborhoods.	Long-Term	Regulatory	CPD DOTI CASR DPR	Mile High Flood District The Greenway Foundation Colorado Conservation Board Metro Wastewater Reclamation District	
Quality of Life - 5 Urban Forest Tree Canopy	Protect, preserve, and expand the urban forest tree canopy in all redevelopment efforts, and increase tree canopy coverage within public rights-of way through community tree planting programs and initiatives.	Ongoing	Regulatory	CPD DOTI CASR DPR	River Sister Circle Partnership Denver Urban Gardens Denver Public Schools	