

West Area Neighbors' Planning Guide:

Opportunities for reparative and regenerative
development for the Neighborhood Planning
Initiative

Prepared June 2022 by Quality of Life Working Group, West Area Plan

“Our challenge, as we enter the new millennium, is to deepen the commonalities and the bonds between these tens of millions, while at the same time continuing to address the issues within our local communities by two-sided struggles that not only say “no” to the existing power structures but also empower our constituencies to embrace the power within each of us to create the world anew.” ~ Grace Lee Boggs

Welcome, Neighbors and Allies!

Thank you for your commitment to equitable development through the West Area Plan (WAP) of the Neighborhood Planning Initiative (NPI).

We write to you as neighbors in the Sun Valley, Valverde, Barnum, Villa Park, and West Colfax neighborhoods who have been actively involved (2019-2022) as members of the WAP Steering Committee, guided by the City and County of Denver’s Community Planning and Development (CPD) Department. As we’ve worked together to plan for the future, we’ve also been navigating a pandemic that has challenged the resilience of our communities, revealing underlying systemic structures driving long-existing health disparities. In so many ways, the year 2020 heightened our collective vision - helping us all see the rampant injustices in our nation more clearly, and to envision alternative futures possible through transformative change. 2020 also heightened our awareness of false solutions to our most pressing challenges - solutions that often look good on the surface, but actually perpetuate systemic harm.

We have created this document together to share our emerging vision - both of false solutions, and of the solutions we really need; the ones that make us whole, through repair and regeneration. We’ve designed our presentation of recommendations to align with the main sections of the [“West Area Plan Plan Draft”](#) posted by NPI for public comment. We know that the framing language, specific strategies - *and the manner in which we enact change* - will ultimately determine the extent to which we move together toward whole, healthy community life.

We hope that by sharing our observations, analysis, insights and vision that we can **open powerful conversations** that support us in springing forward to reparative, regenerative economic development, rather than bouncing back to business as usual. Knowing that we don’t have all the answers, we all have blindspots, and silver bullet solutions do not exist for complex challenges, we trust that by uniting in our diversity, the solutions will emerge around us as we move forward together.

We invite you to join us in this journey of curious, compassionate, courageous co-creation for the sake of a common home where we all get to be alive, well, and free.

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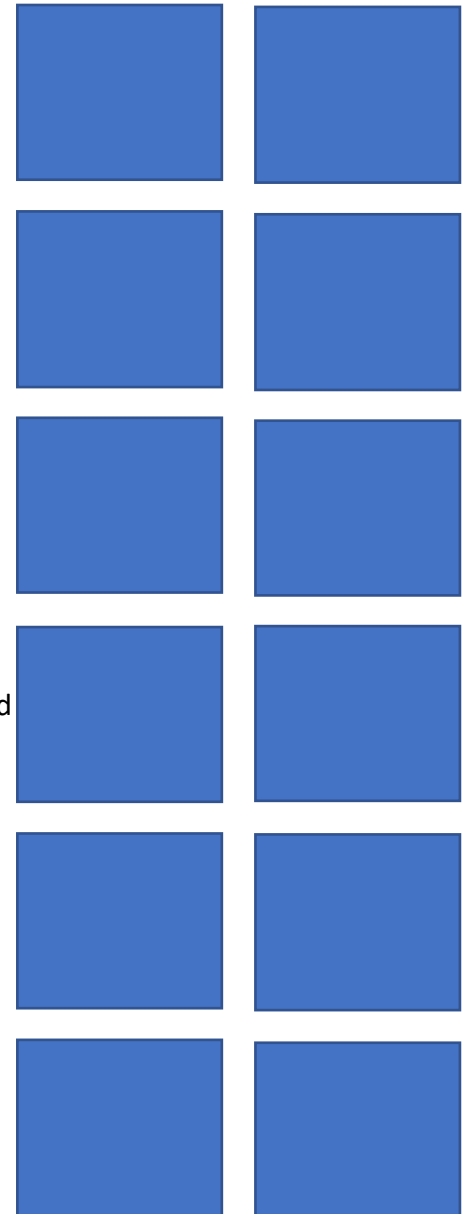
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Framework for Repair, Regeneration & Transformation (I)



We are all excited that the West Area Plan has the promise to be a transformational, rather than transactional approach to racial equity and neighborhood development.

We recognize that a transformational approach must at once transcend black and white, ideological thinking, yet also engage in a two-sided struggle of

1. **exposing and opposing false solutions,** and
2. **creating and codifying strategies that heal our neighborhoods and make us whole,** where we all get to be alive, well, and free - even in the face of global pandemics and climate change.

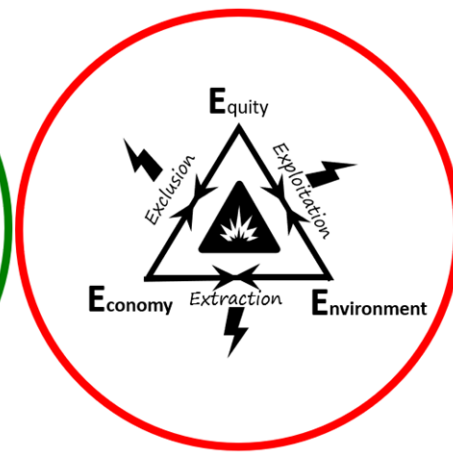
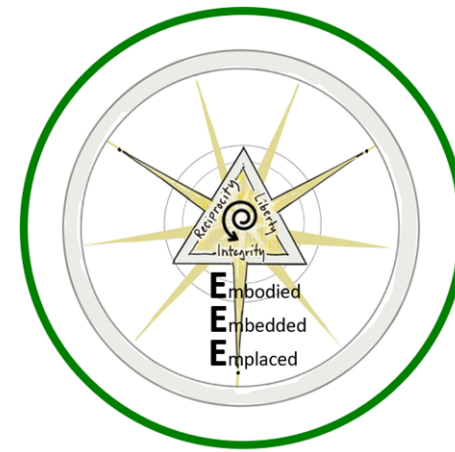


FALSE SOLUTIONS

It is important to name the false solutions - solutions that we’re often encouraged to accept (and sometimes look great on the surface!), even though we’ve seen them fail time and time again to advance equity and ecological integrity. In this document, we discuss some common recommendations that fall under the “False Solutions” umbrella, including solutions that claim to be “sustainable” but are mostly about sustaining growth of an extractive, exploitative, and exclusive economy by making it a little less harmful. This has led to intergenerational trauma for many, intergenerational wealth and health for few, and climate change for all.

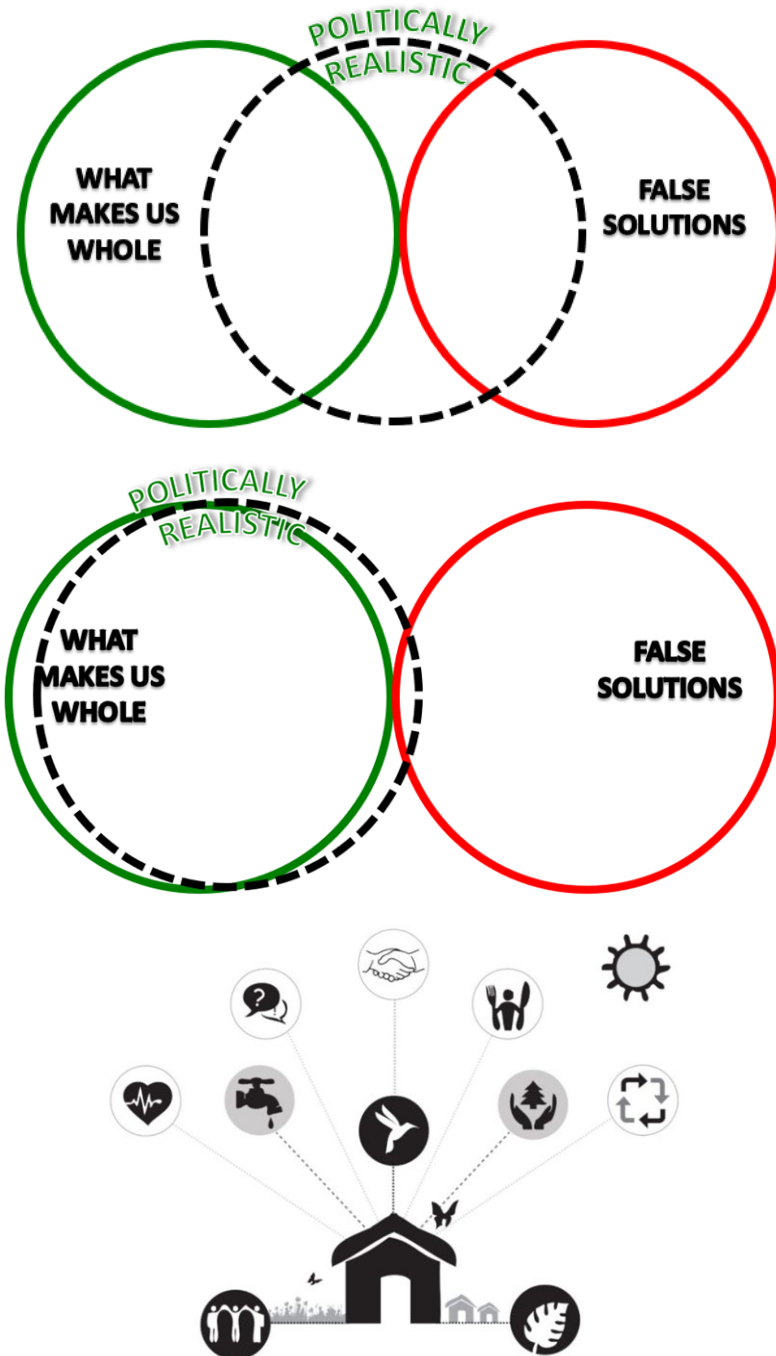
WHAT MAKES US WHOLE

What we really want - and what ultimately allows us to be whole – is an equitable, regenerative economy - an economy governed by the laws of nature that works in service of life in its full diversity, with liberty, vitality, and justice for all.



Instead of relationships governed by extraction, exploitation, and exclusion, it’s time to embody the principles of integrity, reciprocity, and liberty, embed them in our organizations, and emplace them in our neighborhoods. It’s time to invest in civic, cultural, biological and physical infrastructures that support such transformation - from “Opportunity Zones” for exclusive economic growth to “Vitality Zones” for equitable, regenerative development supporting intergenerational, community-rooted health and wealth.

Framework for Repair, Regeneration & Transformation (II)



In the remainder of this document, we will provide our perspectives on the four general sections of West Area Plan Recommendations, using a “three circles” framework to distinguish between solutions that “make us whole” (e.g. ,what we really want and need) and “false solutions.”

BEYOND POLITICALLY REALISTIC

We make these distinctions with full awareness that some of what we really want – solutions that will restore integral health and wellbeing – may not be politically realistic - **TODAY**. Yet, we also note three key pitfalls of focusing on what is immediately “politically realistic,” especially for long-term planning.

First, hundreds of years of structural oppression in the United States have shaped what is currently politically realistic. The 5 I’s of oppression – Ideological, Infrastructural, Institutional, Interpersonal, and Internalized – shape our current conditions, as well as our imagined futures. We must stretch our imaginations beyond the traditional “American Dream” to co-create a just and regenerating world.

Second, when we ground ourselves in a clear vision and organize together – with folks who live, learn, work, worship, and play in our neighborhoods across private, public, and civic sectors – we can move the realm of “politically realistic” to the solutions we really need.

Third, practically speaking, if we don’t say what we really want, and don’t start building towards it, it will never happen. Without being clear on what we really need and generating solutions, we will be stuck reacting to a system designed for exclusion, exploitation, and extraction.

INTERGENERATIONAL, COMMUNITY-ROOTED WEALTH & HEALTH

The global crises of COVID19 and climate change urge us to transform our local economies, so we may repair harm and regenerate well-being. We remember that *economy* comes from the Greek roots, “eco/oikos”, meaning home, and “nomy/nomos”, meaning norms, customs, or laws. At its roots, “economy” means “home management.” Aristotle deemed economics to be the science of “household management,” concerned with the use of resources required for the Good (and Virtuous) Life. It’s time for us to transform our norms and laws to manage our common home for intergenerational, community-rooted health & wealth.

Facing History: Recognizing Patterns of Displacement

Moving forward to a future of intergenerational, community-rooted health and wealth requires that we look back at patterns of economic growth that brought us to our current state of social inequity, ecological degradation, and vulnerability to displacement. Since the onset of settler colonialism in the 1880s, patterns of exploitative, extractive, and exclusive economic growth have triggered displacement, dispossession, and socio-ecological harm in West Denver. We identify three key waves of displacement eroding intergenerational, community-rooted health and wealth.

Wave 1: Colonization

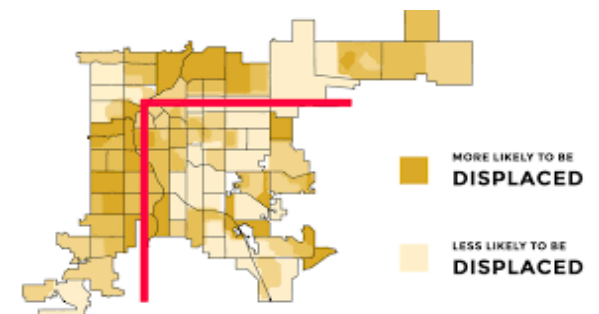
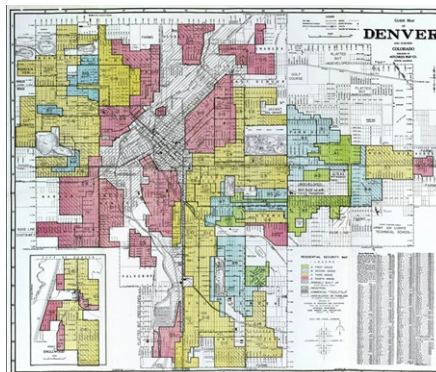
Patterns of forced displacement began in West neighborhoods after the Colorado Gold Rush of 1859 brought waves of white settlers and soldiers to extract resources. For centuries before, the Arapaho, Cheyenne, and Ute peoples called these areas home. The Platte River, which runs along the eastern edge of the West Area, once supported a fertile green valley known as *niinenii-niicie* or, “tallow river” by the *hinono’eino’biito’owu’* - the Arapaho people. Tallow was synonymous with good eating, and good times; the South Platte River Valley offered an abundance of buffalo, protein-rich prairie turnips, sweet ground plums, pungent wild licorice root, and chokecherries for juice, space, pemmican, and soup. As laid out in the 1851 Treaty of Fort Laramie, the land was governed and tended by the *hinono’eino’biito’owu’* as a commons. This treaty was short-lived. The Gold Rush of ‘59 catalyzed settler colonialism, with genocidal and ecocidal battles waged by the United States between 1860 to 1890 to “win the west,” including the Sand Creek Massacre.

Wave 2: Redlining & Urban Renewal

By 1890 in Denver, diverse immigrants settled along the shores of the South Platte, attracted by fertile farmland and factory jobs along the river. However, by the 1930s, New Deal legislation and infrastructure investments in transportation and housing once again triggered patterns of displacement that primarily advantaged “white” Americans at the expense of communities of color. In 1934, the federal government created the Home Owners Loan Corporation (HOLC) in response to the Great Depression (caused in part by the soil degradation resulting from ecocidal settler colonialism). HOLC some parts of neighborhoods as “highly desirable” and others, coded in red, as “hazardous.” They would not offer mortgages in these redlined neighborhoods. HOLC marginalized neighborhoods based on race and ethnicity, as well as level of industry, eroding intergenerational wealth & health for communities of color and working class families. Today, formerly redlined neighborhoods have been particularly vulnerable to gentrification, COVID19 and climate change.

Wave 3: Foreclosure & Gentrification

The foreclosure crisis of 2008 resulted in another round of displacement and dispossession. Homes that had been owned by families or individuals were scooped up by speculative investors. With completion of the W-line as part of Denver Fast Tracks light rail investment package in 2013, West Area neighbors become vulnerable to another wave of displacement. This time, the promise of Transit Oriented Development (TOD) and upzoning in the 2016 West Colfax neighborhood plan allowed for new waves of investment to come into historically blighted West Area neighborhoods. Despite the TOD emphasis, West Colfax and other West Area neighborhoods are still designed for automobile-dependent mobility for access to basic needs. The displacement pressures of gentrification are not just that rents have been increasing,. Rent, mortgage, and taxes are difficult to pay with increasing medical costs and barriers to accessing healthy food, housing, mobility options, and recreation.



Guiding Principles: Equity, Integrity, Reciprocity, & Liberty

Remembering our way forward, we can shift from patterns of extraction, exclusion and exploitation to development guided by the nature’s principles of vitality in living systems to support equitable, intergenerational, community-rooted health, wealth, and regenerative vitality.

Equity

We embrace PolicyLink’s definition of equity as **“just and fair inclusion into a society in which all can participate, prosper, and reach their full potential.”** Equal treatment isn’t enough to create that outcome; when we start with an uneven playing field and diverse players, we must create context-appropriate solutions that create conditions for everyone to reach their full potential and to contribute to collective wellbeing and vitality.

Equity, as defined here, is the key to creating intergenerational, community-rooted health and wealth; when everyone is free to contribute fully to community life, there is more collective prosperity. Since the 1930s, home equity—subsidized through federal tax policy—has been a primary means for white middle-class families to build intergenerational wealth. However, inequitable housing, infrastructure, and zoning policies have (1) generated environmental injustices and (2) limited intergenerational health and wealth for people of color. Advancing equity is not just about increasing homeownership. Equitable development requires that we repair harm from past policies and adopt principles, practices, and policies for thriving, equitable communities. Blueprint Denver emphasizes we must improve access to opportunity, reduce vulnerability to displacement, and expand housing and jobs diversity. We also emphasize embracing three key principles of vitality in living systems in our plans: integrity, reciprocity, and liberty.



Integrity

The principle of integrity calls us to return to wholeness and integral health. This includes integrating across departments, organizations, and neighborhood boundaries to align our work with our shared vision; honoring our word (and our plans) through our collective actions, and monitoring performance targets. It also includes recognizing ourselves and our neighbors as whole, human beings who are each essential, dignified parts of larger, whole, diverse communities, and ecosystems.

Reciprocity

The principle of reciprocity calls us to give and gratefully receive gifts in networks of mutual flourishing. As ecologist Robin Wall Kimmerer notes, long before humans arrived, “a solar economy of plants created a living world from inanimate materials, constantly regenerating life through networks of reciprocity.” At the neighborhood scale, reciprocity calls us to practice asset-based community development - appreciating and building upon our communities’ diverse assets to nurture collective vitality.

Liberty

The principle of liberty calls us to exercise our powers of awareness, creativity, and choice in service of life in abundance. Through engaged participation in neighborhood development, we can expand our freedom to choose – e.g., among a diverse array of healthy options for mobility, housing, food, jobs, and other quality of life amenities and services. Liberty calls us to practice sovereignty together, which can include cooperative ownership and governance of our food, housing, and mobility systems.

Quality of Life: Repair & Regeneration of Wellbeing

We envision socially and ecologically resilient West Area Neighborhoods supported by regenerative infrastructure, land use, and economies that offer healthy food, connection, and habitat for all who dwell here.

WHAT MAKES US WHOLE

- When we recognize that our land, water, and ecosystems are gifts of nature given to support life in its full diversity, we remember that owning land is a *responsibility* to support quality of life as members of a community governed by nature's principles (e.g. reciprocity, integrity, and liberty), not just a private *right* to pursue profit.
- Equitable investments in regenerative infrastructures and land uses that provide social, ecological, and economic benefits, including provision of healthy water, air, soil, and food; mitigation of flood risks, heat island effects, and local carbon emissions; and reduction of traffic speeds and psychological stress (e.g., investments in the urban tree canopy, community gardens, food forests, Via-Verde networks, and planning around water quality basins). [Highlight River Sisters' Turquoise Necklace & Westwood Via Verde]
- Coordinating our investments in "green infrastructure" with our investments in housing infrastructure and mobility infrastructure through an integrated, systems-based approach, as a means to prevent "green gentrification" and advance environmental justice.
- Translating our Quality of Life goals into Performance Metrics that support the integrity of the Plan over time, through intentional adaptation and targeted universalism (where we allow context-appropriate solutions to achieve universal quality of life aims), e.g., through performance zoning in green industrial areas. Example, [DHA's Healthy Living assessments](#) used in Sun Valley.
- Variance allowance for regenerative development that incorporates systems-design involving (1) the capturing of resources (compost, water, sun, etc.), growing nutrient dense foods, food preparation and production, and distribution; and (2) the augmentation and amplification of existing community strengths, community capitals, and ecosystems services. Reclaiming our stormwater and greywater (often called "waste water") to meet goals for the South Platte and our streams, gulches (e.g., riparian areas and water basins).
- Food systems with shared governance, ownership, and equity options (e.g., community sovereignty for distribution, cold storage, deliveries, hubs, etc), and more food in parks and public land.

FALSE SOLUTIONS

- Idea that quality of life in an era of climate change can be generated by private developers whose primary legal responsibility is to produce a return on financial investment within a five year horizon.
- Idea that "open space" is desirable unto itself, that open means undeveloped - when development is needed to support quality of life, just not development for financial capital gain alone.
- Default assumption is that you can manage water, trees + soil without living systems awareness and regenerative design; that water, trees, soil, and pathways are abstract values that are subject to trade-offs in public debates and project budgets, rather than essential interdependent elements of life in relationship with one another.
- Idea that food sovereignty, mobility, and housing are separate concerns and not completely interdependent on each other; for instance (1) individual access and between food producers, sellers, and consumers (2) use of public land and rights of way (e.g., resiliency & mobility corridors connecting social housing), and (3) use of private land for production of food, habitat, and other ecosystem services.
- The idea that having cheap food in mass produced and subsidized national food system can work for us; Asking industry what they want to supply and subsidizing it; rather than investing in our local and regional farmers, soil, and adjusting to changing bioregional conditions.
- Idea that our food access needs can be fully met by trusting in market forces to deliver grocery stores (which are generally tied to massive global supply chains that are vulnerable to 21st century crises).
- Idea that the way to support local food producers - growers and value-add entrepreneurs - is simply to host weekly farmer's markets.
- Idea that building green roofs or greenhouses is impossible for developers or able to be required by the city; Altius Farms, for example, shows what is possible (<https://altiusfarms.com/>)

Mobility: Corridors of Connection & Resilience

We envision connected West Area Neighborhoods that allow all who roll, stroll, ride and stride here to move freely through vibrant, verdant, multi-modal resiliency corridors to access all they need for vital, thriving lives.

WHAT MAKES US WHOLE

- Multi modal transit infrastructure in all plans and developments. Major emphasis on creating connected, protected, and signaled infrastructure that supports commuting by bike networks (electric or basic, mobility devices, skate- and hover- board—and parking for all of these modes), sidewalk infrastructure (to make room for walking, sitting, shade and ecology, cafe seating, mobility device parking, and water mitigation), and transit routes along major and connector corridors to include shelter and amenities important to transit riders and increasing frequency stops.
- Supporting mobility networks ensuring that we are stacking functions by planning for mobility infrastructure to be combined with resiliency corridors.
- Co-creating mobility networks with resilience corridors we can work towards interdisciplinary goals of mobility and food access, economic liberation, climate change, mental and physical well being, support of local and small business, along with the myriad of other issues connected to mobility . All mobility corridors should be resilience corridors along with dedicated, protected, and signaled infrastructure, for all modes, that are wide enough to accommodate the variety of non Single Occupancy Vehicle transportation.



Once upon a time, the bridge over the Platte at Alameda was a place for cross-town joy-rides.



Today, the West Corridor hike and bike trail supports e-bike commuters (and local e-bike businesses!).

FALSE SOLUTIONS

- The idea that we have to have cars to move; they're our only option; this doesn't work for the young and the old, and caretakers of both - and, this does not work for a future of climate justice where we break our dependency on an extractive economy powered by fossil fuels.
- The idea that transportation can't be free.
- Bikeways built w/no bike infrastructures on busy streets like 14th. A [West 35th Avenue Neighborhood Bikeway Feasibility Study Final Report](#) where very few if any parking spots were lost to create
- The SHARROW used in place of bike infrastructure
- Bump outs that give the illusion of safety but seems to only add to parking/car infrastructure
- Parking minimums
- Roundabouts to slow vehicular traffic but mostly don't provide other benefit/infrastructure for bike or pedestrians (caveat: if they include infrastructure for multi modal then they can work). See "[Should Law Subsidize Driving.](#)"
- Sidewalks and bike lanes that exist but are not wide enough for all of the uses that are intended to be shoved into that space (street trees, cafe seating, bike parking, ADA accessible infrastructure).
- The idea that car infrastructure supports small business, since research shows that [Bike and Ped. infrastructure Support Small Business at higher rates than cars](#)
- Using cars to solve the car problem, create friction, EV, Uber/Lift
- Rights on Red that move traffic but harm pedestrian infrastructure

Economy and Housing: Healthy Habitats for All

We envision West Area Neighborhoods with vibrant economies, where we manage resources in ways that provide shelter, healthy habitats, and vitality for all who dwell here - human beings and more-than-human beings alike.

WHAT MAKES US WHOLE

- A **healthy economy** is one where the norms/rules that govern our interactions with each other in our common home support life, liberty, and vitality for all - after all, “eco” means home.
- A **healthy home** is one that not only offers shelter, but also access to life-giving water, air, food, energy, sunlight, and community, as well as regenerative infrastructure to manage waste and stormwater and mobility infrastructures that allow fossil-fuel free options to connect with vital public and private services and outdoor recreation.
- **Complete neighborhoods** offer a diverse range of green, healthy, context-sensitive housing options that (1) meet the functional needs of intergenerational neighborhoods with diverse, differently abled neighbors, (2) offer diverse options for equity, ownership, and shared governance to support community-rooted health and wealth, and (3) include anti-displacement and affordability strategies for diverse economic means. [highlight westcolfaxlampstand.com]
- **Life-Sustaining Work** that supports community-rooted health and wealth in central urban neighborhoods while contributing to regenerative food systems, drought and wildfire resilience, habitat protection, equitable mobility systems powered by renewable energy, and ecosystems where small, local entrepreneurs fill niche needs within their communities in unconventional ways.
- **Reimagining our industrial areas** as places that support local business development and support and regenerate our fragile ecologies along the rivers and gullies; Performance zoning in our industrial areas can support healthy industrial ecologies;
- **Encouraging local and cooperative ownership** and regenerative economic development that provide desirable services like food services (e.g., culturally relevant groceries, restaurants, farms), child care, mobility services (e.g., car shares), etc. <https://www.denverpost.com/2019/03/15/cooperatives-revival-colorado/>
- **Supporting & attracting community-oriented developers** (e.g., those who aim to provide diverse, intergenerational housing opportunities and use tools like community land trusts, housing cooperatives, ADUs, and diverse ownership models); Designing incentives and support for an increased diversity of units.

FALSE SOLUTIONS

- **Simply increasing density limits is a false solution to (1) our affordable housing crisis and (2) our need for vibrant, resilient local economies.** Some argue that increasing maximum building heights will solve affordable housing by (a) allowing the market to meet increasing demand by providing more housing units in high demand areas, and (b) encouraging walkable, roll-able communities. However, up-zoning encouraged by the West Colfax 2006 plan in anticipation of the W-Line appears to have accelerated gentrification without decreasing auto-dependent behavior. Generally: (1) increased height allowances beyond 5 stories have not historically increased affordable housing supply, and (2) upzoning in high-demand areas can escalate gentrification pressures that displace low- and middle-income families, threaten closure of local schools (e.g, decreased enrollment), and exacerbate climate change through the suburbanization of low-income households (who often have highest public transit ridership rates, but are relegated to environments where car ownership, maintenance and travel is usually a costly necessity).
- **Simply limiting density is a false solution to (1) our affordable housing crisis and (2) our need for vibrant, resilient local economies.** Some who have witnessed gentrification pressures resulting from up-zoning (e.g., in the West Colfax neighborhood, following the 2006 neighborhood plan in advance of the 2014 W-line investments) argue that we must keep maximum building heights and density low to combat gentrification. However, the most common forms of exclusionary zoning – e.g. zoning deliberately designed to exclude lower income households – are prohibitions of multi-family zoning and requirements of minimum lot sizes for single family housing. Density limits alone neither increase affordable housing or reliably preserve it. Moreover, housing costs cannot be separated from our other costs of living, especially the costs of transportation, food, and health-care. Low-density development drives these living costs up, while increasing climate-change inducing sprawl. The IPCC is unequivocal that we need density to get to low-carbon cities. Compactness is just more energetically efficient, and there are ways to get its benefits with few of its drawbacks.

Land Use & Built Form: Developing Equity + Vitality

We envision West Area Neighborhoods governed by land use, zoning, and design principles and policies that support investment in equitable, regenerative development for complete, resilient neighborhoods.

WHAT MAKES US WHOLE

- Community planning and development that uses policy tools and infrastructure investments to heal past harm and support the **regenerative vitality** of our land, soil, water, and ecosystems - including the human beings and more-than-human beings dwelling there. Informed by indigenous land management traditions, a reparative and regenerative approach to development recognizes diverse, dynamic, healthy ecosystems as the foundation of life, liberty, and intergenerational health and wealth for all.
- Investing in **regenerative infrastructure** and **industrial ecologies** that transform waste into resources is an environmental justice and climate resilience priority. Instead of treating natural resources such as water and compost as something to be expedited out of our communities, we design infrastructure and processes to transform waste into resources that cycle through communities/ecosystems.
- **Performance zoning** with **Key Performance Indicators** aligned with our Quality of Life goals, including intergenerational health and wealth measured through Community Capitals framework; mix of uses allowed to the extent that they catalyzes growth in community capitals. Performance zoning standards are adopted to mitigate the damaging effects of development and operation, rather than prescribing definite uses for specific parcels of land. Performance zoning relies on the community or City to set the overall limits in regards to traffic congestion, noise abatement and densities, allowing for potential developers to determine how these guidelines will be reached. While a developer has the flexibility to meet these criteria in ways that best meet their project plans, the development must satisfy a certain percentage of these criteria in order to approve development. This allows for versatile in land use by landowners and developers, while adhering to agreements set by the City and community members.
- **Form-Based Codes** for zoning and design to activate the street level in appropriate, dynamic locations that provide flexible, appropriately sized commercial spaces that support diverse, compatible enterprise and services.

FALSE SOLUTIONS

- **Simply segregating land uses is a false solution for public health, vitality, and equity.** From the very beginning, zoning and land-use regulation have been used to enforce and codify racial exclusion and socioeconomic segregation under the guise of promoting public health and wealth; traditional Euclidean zoning has not only separated land uses, it has also segregated communities by race and class and contributed to health inequities.
<https://www.planning.org/blog/9228712/grappling-with-the-racist-legacy-of-zoning/>
- **Simply allowing a mix of land uses is a false solution for public health, vitality, and equity.** Some argue that allowing mixed-used development with ground floor retail and greater height allowances on main corridors near transit stations will result in vital, diverse, local economies; However, without intentional design and aligned incentives, these efforts often generate empty storefront blight, having failed to provide smaller more flexible, affordable commercial spaces that activate the street level in appropriate, dynamic locations that work for local entrepreneurs, community enterprise, and food access. Large developers constructing new apartment buildings with large commercial spaces on the bottom floor — all financed by large banks — is hardly a recipe for building strong, economically productive town (see [What's up with all those empty commercial storefronts in new mixed-use developments?](#)) Moreover, mixed uses are also not necessarily compatible uses.
- **Simply exporting our waste and dumping it on other communities and ecosystems is a false solution** for equity, vitality, and climate resilience.
- **Defining (and designing for) “highest and best use” for land based on the maximum financial return on investment it can offer** is a false solution to supporting intergenerational, community-rooted health & wealth. Although increasing property values can yield increased property tax revenue for public services, land use dominated by speculative markets focuses on distributing short term returns of financial capital to investors; yet financial capital is the only form of capital that does not directly contribute to health.

Vitality Zones & Resiliency Corridors

We envision West Area Neighborhoods where recommendations for Quality of Life, Mobility, Economy and Housing, and Land Use & Built Form all come together to support vitality zones and resiliency corridors that support equitable and regenerative development with vitality and resilience for all.

WHAT MAKES US WHOLE

- Creating **Vitality Zones**, i.e. equity-centered and ecology-based development in community-identified, nutrient rich nodes which attract development partners who aim to contribute to whole, thriving, equitable communities through mutually beneficial, reciprocal relationships.
- Connecting Vitality Zones via **Resiliency Corridors** with activated, shady, biophilic streets, that support multi modal transportation, food access, native and indigenous species - corridors that enable the transport of nutrients, resources, and diverse human and more-than-human beings between Vitality Zones. Westwood's Via Verde Network and the proposed River Sisters Turquoise Necklace concept are excellent examples.
- Learning from other communities that have established "**Green Zones**" through proactive planning approaches that help communities advance environmental justice by instituting new standards, target investments, and attract beneficial developments. Elements of green zones include stricter regulation/enforcement, local involvement in land-use decision making, support for greening local businesses, increased green spaces, and green jobs and businesses. Examples include Los Angeles, CA; Minneapolis, MN; Eugene, OR; National City, CA; Washington, DC, and Fulton County, GA. [see <https://www.planning.org/publications/document/9212433/>]
- Community planning that uses our natural resources, like water systems, as its base map and lets ecology and biomimicry to inform how the natural environment and people exist in a space. As an example, see the whole systems-based design approach for the Colfax Avenue and Federal Boulevard Interchange in Denver, Colorado (picture to right).

FALSE SOLUTIONS

- While the Denver Blueprint goal that all neighborhoods be complete with equitable access to opportunities to enjoy a high quality of life is laudable, too often, "**Opportunity Zones**" have been promoted in ways accelerate gentrification, increasing wealth of outside investors more than increasing community-rooted health and wealth for long-term residents. For instance, the "Opportunity Zones" program created by the 2017 Tax Cuts and Jobs Act has offered lucrative federal tax breaks to wealthy developers who invest in new businesses or commercial projects in designated low-income neighborhoods, including parts of West Colfax (Census Tract 7.02) and Sun Valley (Census Tract 8.00). While creating opportunity-rich neighborhoods is a priority, we need to keep asking "opportunity for whom?" and "resilience of what?" while actively employing anti-displacement and resilience strategies that support vitality for *all*, including diverse human beings and more-than-human beings.



Appendices

- I. What is Equity?
- II. What is transactional v. transformative development?
- III. What is sustainable v. regenerative development?
- IV. Further stories of serial forced displacement
- V. Further stories of neighborhood resistance, resilience, and regeneration

when we speak of a transformational approach, we seek to:

Name and address the root causes of the problems that affect our neighborhoods, including contemporary crises like COVID-19 pandemic and climate change that threaten lives, wellbeing, and freedom in our communities.

Support a shift in values, beliefs, relationships and structures that drive economic development - from those that divide us, to those that help make us whole;

Engage those directly harmed by inequities in redressing harm and advancing community wellbeing;

Engage across sectors and organizational boundaries to collaboratively develop and implement the vision of the West Area plan, experimenting along a path of emergent strategy, while shifting cultural values and cultivating political will to create racial equity and ecological well being.

What does it mean to take a “transformational” approach?

<i>Transactional Approach</i>	<i>Transformational Approach</i>
Solves technical problems	Solves an adaptive problem
Problem is easy to identify	Problem is easy to deny (under the surface)
Routine solution using skills and experience readily available	Requires change in values, beliefs, roles, relationships, and structure of operations
Often solved by an authority or expert	People facing the problem are involved in the work of solving it
Requires change in just one or a few places, contained within organizational boundaries	Requires change across organizational boundaries
People tend to be receptive to the technical solution	People tend to avoid (or push back on) addressing the adaptive challenge
Solution can often be implemented quickly, sometimes by edict	Transformation requires experiments and new discoveries, takes a long time to implement, cannot be implemented by edict
Produces short-term gains for communities, but leaves the existing structure in place	Shifts cultural values and political will to create racial equity

Excerpted from, GARE Resource Guide,
*Advancing Racial Equity and Transforming
Government*