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1.1 INTRODUCTION

1.1.1 Area Overview

The West Area Plan, is the small area plan for the neighborhoods of West Colfax, Villa Park, Sun Valley, Barnum, Barnum West, and Valverde. Throughout the plan the area within the six neighborhoods of the West Area Plan boundaries is also commonly referred as the West Area or West. The plan provides a vision and policy guidance for land use, urban design, housing, mobility, parks, the local economy, and many other topics for the next 20 years. The plan covers the area roughly between Sheridan Boulevard and the South Platte River, and between 19th Avenue and Alameda Avenue in west Denver.

These neighborhoods are located southwest of downtown Denver and west of the South Platte River. The area is predominately made up of lower-scale residential neighborhoods that are connected by a few interior north-south running streets that provide connections across neighborhood gulches and State Highway 6.

The natural amenities in the West Area make the area unique with neighborhood gulches and the South Platte River serving as valuable parks and transportation facilities for surrounding residents. The neighborhoods are also connected by four major commercial streets that provide regional connections throughout the Denver metro area and are home to many small, local, and ethnically diverse businesses. A large employment base consisting of manufacturing, warehousing, and other light industrial businesses is also located in West along the eastern boundary of the area. The people of West are diverse with larger households and younger children than Denver as a whole.

Area
5.1 square miles

Population
42,170 people

Housing Units
14,800 units

Employment
12,300 jobs

Source: ESRI; Economic & Planning Systems

AGE COMPOSITION (2019)

Source: American Community Survey; 5-year average, 2015-2019 (Table S0101)

RACE/ETHNICITY COMPOSITION (2019)

Source: American Community Survey; 5-year average, 2015-2019 (Table B03002)
* Non-Hispanic
1.1.2 Community Engagement

**Approach**

From developing long-term citywide policies to the rezoning of an individual lot, planning is guided by community input, and the West Area Plan is no different. The City and County of Denver believes a successful plan should be guided by the vision community members voice for it. Before and while developing this plan, Denver’s Community Planning and Development Department (CPD) prioritized and listened to residents to unpack and understand complex topics that exist in the West Area. This community feedback helped inform goals, policies, strategies, and recommendations described in subsequent chapters.

Community engagement for the West Area Plan kicked off in October 2019 with a robust public launch, attended by over one hundred residents, community groups, organizations and city agencies, and continued through 2022. However, beginning in March 2020 and onwards, CPD and community members were nimble as CPD devised and implemented innovative ways to continue meaningful engagement throughout the COVID-19 global pandemic. Where in the past CPD often relied on in-person events to gather information, ideas and feedback, the inability to gather in-person during the pandemic necessitated developing creative virtual engagement strategies and an increased reliance on online surveys. The pandemic required a slowdown in the planning process, and CPD added several months to ensure West residents had the time needed to develop a meaningful NPI plan for its residents.

In addition to more online-based outreach, a variety of community engagement tools and methods were used to ensure CPD could reach the widest and most diverse audience possible under the circumstances. Approaches were developed to target specific communities in the West Area who were most likely to be adversely affected by development and who have been historically underrepresented in city processes. This intentional engagement was done to supplement traditional outreach methods. The community engagement tools and approaches CPD used throughout the West Area planning process included:

- Public meetings, including question and answer listening sessions
- City office hours where members of the community could have one-on-one discussions with West Area planners
- Printed and digital surveys, including:
  - The Community Conversations Survey
  - Land Use Opportunities Survey
  - Mobility Opportunities Survey
  - Economy Opportunities Survey
  - Quality Of Life Opportunities Survey
  - Youth Survey
- Project website updates and newsletters
- Focus groups on key plan topics
- A community led PhotoVoice Project to document key community concerns from a variety of perspectives
- Webinar Educational opportunities
- Strategic pop-up events in each of the plan neighborhoods
- Neighborhood block party events
- Monthly Steering Committee meetings
- Intentional outreach and engagement partnerships
- 1-on-1 community interviews and intercept surveys
- Social media communication, including Facebook Live broadcasts
- Outreach to local news outlets
- Flier distributions throughout the community, including to:
  - Private residences throughout West
  - Barnum Elementary
  - Cheltenham Elementary
  - Colfax Elementary
  - Cowell Elementary
  - Eagleton Elementary
  - Fairview Elementary
  - Lake International Middle School
  - Newlon Elementary
  - STRIVE Prep Lake Middle School
Intentional engagement efforts included collaboration with the following groups:

- Athmar Park Neighborhood Association
- Barnum Recreational Center members
- Barnum Registered Neighborhood Organization
- Barnum West Community Co-Op at 1st
- Colorado Jobs with Justice team
- Columbine Homes Community Advisory Group
- Congregation Zera Abraham
- Denver Environmental Justice Committee
- Denver Food Project & Casa de Rosal
- Denver Sustainable Food Policy Council (SFPC)
- Denver Urban Gardens
- Far East Center Business District
- Food activists and Denver Food Rescue participants
- Food in Communities Regional Initiative
- Historic Denver
- Latino/Latina/Latinx communities
- Sloan’s Lake Citizen Group
- Sun Valley Kitchen Sun Valley Community Advisory Group
- Sun Valley Registered Neighborhood Organization
- Valverde Movement Project
- Valverde Parent Teacher Leadership Team
- Valverde Registered Neighborhood Organization
- Valverde Youth Empowerment Center
- Veterans of Foreign Wars on Colfax
- Vietnamese and Asian communities
- Villa Park Neighborhood Association
- West Colfax Association of Neighbors (WeCAN)
- West Colfax Business Improvement District (BID)
- West Denver Community Leadership Committee
- West Denver Renaissance Collaborative (WDRC) Community Leadership Council
- Westridge Homes Community Advisory Group
- Youth, in partnership with Denver Public Schools
1.1.3 What We Heard

Below is a condensed summary of some of the most common feedback that was heard throughout the community engagement process. The plan includes policies, strategies and recommendations that respond to the ideas and concepts represented below. Please note the items listed below is not meant to be a complete list of feedback CPD received but does reflect meaningful community direction that significantly informed the plan throughout every plan development phase.

**QUALITY OF LIFE**
- Prioritize the Quality-of-Life section as the foundational component of the plan. Other topic areas should be evaluated based on the tenets in the Quality-of-Life section.
- Prioritize environmental justice as the key focal point
- Respect the desire surrounding water and air quality
- Increase safety through lighting, signage and wayfinding
- Celebrate West Area parks, open spaces through organized community events
- Promote access to recreational centers and facilities for youth
- Increase the urban tree canopy in public spaces
- Address concerns regarding homelessness and drug use in public spaces
- Support services that are both accessible and affordable for families
- Resources for seniors and the elderly, including recreational programs and services
- Language access through translation and interpretation for everyday living
- Attention to public right-of-way comfort and safety, for people walking, rolling, biking and driving.
- Community spaces for locally sourced, nutritious and cultural appropriate food
- Access to year around community serving facilities such as seating and restrooms in parks

**HOUSING**
- A desire for more affordable housing options
- Support more types of housing (triplex, garden court, rowhome, townhome, condominiums)
- Current housing trends are out of reach for working class families and seniors
- The West Area is growing too fast
- Need housing and commercial development that “fits” in the neighborhood
- Need better design standards and guidelines so new and old developments work together
- Promote preservation and respect history and culture
- A desire for strategies to counter gentrification and displacement

**BUSINESS & ECONOMICS**
- Incentives for local businesses to stay in place and attract new customers
- Food retailers that provide healthy food closer to residents in need
- Opportunities for business development for local employment
- Businesses in neighborhoods that reuse existing buildings
- Increase local jobs, job training and employment opportunities in the neighborhood
THE COMMUNITY PHOTOVOICE PROJECT

In 2019 CPD launched a Community PhotoVoice Project that included a free photography training workshop to help West community members learn how to use photos to tell their neighborhood’s stories. Following community members’ efforts to document West, CPD worked with residents to compile photographs in time for the public kick-off of the West Area Plan. A total of 12 community members participated, resulting in 12 signature photographs illustrating their view of life in West Denver.

MOBILITY
- Improve pedestrian safety along major roads like Federal Boulevard
- Have better and safer connections to buses, trains, local shops, schools, etc.
- Improve transit service throughout the West Area
- Support transportation options for youth and elderly residents
- Promote easy access to affordable forms of transportation
- Improve sidewalks, paths and trails for people with limited mobility (e.g., wheelchairs), especially during winter months
- Address sidewalk issues such as missing or narrow sidewalks throughout the West to make it easier for people to use them
- Improve safety and comfort for people walking or biking including lighting.
- Improve the bicycle network throughout the West Area, by creating a safe, direct and comfortable network for a variety of bicycle users and paying careful consideration to its unique terrain

TOP CHALLENGES FOR WEST
The top 5 most important challenges to be addressed in West, according to survey respondents:
- Access to fresh, healthy and affordable food
- Drivers speeding on residential streets within the neighborhoods and along major corridors.
- Community safety
- Neighborhood history, character and beauty
- Need for new and improved sidewalks
1.1.4 Plan Vision and Guiding Principles

VISION FOR WEST DENVER

In 2040, West Denver is a thriving, culturally rich, safe, and connected part of our city. The residents reflect the diversity of residents and small businesses that have called West Denver home for decades. It has a mix of housing options that appeal to all types of residents at varying stages of life at all income levels. There are bustling commercial areas, and ample job and employment opportunities for locals from high-schoolers to retired seniors looking for ways to give back to their community. West Denver is an example of sustainable design and responsible development, where parks and publicly accessible open spaces are within a 10-minute walk every resident. The interconnected network of trails, public spaces, bikeways, and natural areas have reduced air and water pollution, and the urban forest tree canopy contributes to the comfort and overall quality of life for everyone.

STEERING COMMITTEE

A steering committee of local stakeholders guided the development of the plan. Members represented residents from each neighborhood, local organizations, and business owners. They helped develop the plan’s guiding principles and recommendations, reviewed and refined the plan content, and served as liaisons to the West community. In addition, the steering committee was instrumental in ensuring that considerations related to residents’ quality of life are centered in this plan, including the integration of content concerning equity, ecology, resiliency and more throughout the West Area Plan.

A NOTE ON GUIDING PRINCIPLES

The following guiding principles originate from Blueprint Denver and Denver’s Comprehensive Plan 2040. They were adapted by the Area Plan’s steering committee and refined to reflect the character and nature of West Denver. A subset of the steering committee developed a document titled The West Area Neighbors’ Planning Guide: Opportunities for Reparative and Regenerative Development for the Neighborhood Planning Initiative. This community-developed guide outlines a vision that seeks to make the area whole through repair and regeneration and offers solutions to the complex existing challenges in support of “a common home where we all get to be alive, well, and free”. This document also addresses some of the tensions between various proposed solutions to common neighborhood challenges that surfaced during the public engagement process. Feedback and ideas from this document and the steering committee have been integrated throughout this plan and form the basis for the community’s guiding principles detailed on the next page.
GUIDING PRINCIPLES FOR THE WEST AREA PLAN

Equity
Equity can be defined as the “just and fair inclusion into a society in which all can participate, prosper, and reach their full potential.” The West Plan strives to offer context-appropriate solutions that create conditions for everyone to reach their full potential and to contribute to collective well-being, vitality and access to opportunity.

Integrity
The principle of integrity calls for a return to a mindset that values the full spectrum of wholeness and health. This includes integrated decision-making across departments, organizations, and neighborhoods to align this work with the shared vision for West, honoring this plan through our collective actions, and monitoring performance targets.

Reciprocity
The principle of reciprocity calls for people to collaborate: to give and gratefully receive ideas, programs and projects that lead to mutual flourishing. At the neighborhood scale, reciprocity calls for the practice of asset-based community development - appreciating and building upon our communities’ diverse assets to nurture collective vitality within the realm of health, safety and well-being that Denver can provide.

Liberty
The principle of liberty calls for people to make conscious selfless contributions in service of their communities’ well-being. Through engaged participation in neighborhood planning and decision-making, people have the freedom to choose among a diverse array of options for health, safety, mobility, housing, food, jobs, and other quality of life amenities and services.

The West Area planning process began with Blueprint Denver’s six vision elements, listed at the base of this graphic. From here, the community crafted the area-specific guiding principles of Equity, Integrity, Reciprocity, and Liberty.
1.1.5 Planning Context

To advance the vision and core values of Comprehensive Plan 2040, the City and County of Denver and its departments rely on a series of plans (including Blueprint Denver: A Blueprint for an Inclusive City and Game Plan for a Healthy City) to provide high-level policy direction and guide decision making.

The West Area Plan serves as a supplement to Comprehensive Plan 2040 and advances citywide visions and core values by providing important and specific guidance for the West Colfax, Villa Park, Sun Valley, Barnum, Barnum West, and Valverde neighborhoods.

NPI Overview

The West Area Plan is a part of the Neighborhood Planning Initiative (NPI). NPI is a long-term commitment by the city and Community Planning and Development (CPD) to ensure every neighborhood in the city can enjoy the benefits of planning and the implementation of community recommendations and investment priorities. NPI provides a framework for neighborhood planning that is intentional, equitable, and measurable, and is flexible enough to allow each plan to address the specific circumstances and concerns of each neighborhood.

Existing Neighborhood Plans

The West Area Plan replaces the previous neighborhood plans in the area. Through the development of the West Area Plan, previous plans were evaluated to identify recommendations that were still aligned with current neighborhood values and priorities. These recommendations were updated as needed and incorporated in the West Area Plan. The following plans are superseded by this West Area Plan:

- West Colfax Plan (2006)
- Valverde Neighborhood Plan (1991)
- Villa Park Neighborhood Plan (1991)
- West Colfax Neighborhood Plan (1987)
- Barnum/Barnum West Neighborhood Plan (1986)

The plan also overlaps portions of several neighborhood and small-area plans that cover areas outside of West. In the locations where this plan overlaps another plan, the West Area Plan supersedes the other plan for those locations, but the other plan remains in effect for the areas not covered by this plan. As with the plans listed above, recommendations that are still aligned with current neighborhood values and priorities for these areas have been incorporated into this plan. This applies to the following plans:

- Decatur-Federal Station Area Plan (2013)
- Sheridan Station Area Plan (2009)

The Stadium District Master Plan will continue to be active and provide more detailed policy guidance for future investments within the Stadium District.

Consistency with Citywide Plans

Citywide plans offer a high-level framework to guide and influence decisions that affect the future of the city. They are used as a foundation for the more specific vision, recommendations, and strategies contained in the West Area Plan. Comprehensive Plan 2040 provides the vision for the entire city. All small-area plans and some citywide plans are adopted as supplements to Comprehensive Plan 2040 to provide additional direction for certain topics or areas. Blueprint Denver is the citywide land use and transportation plan, adopted as a supplement to Comprehensive Plan 2040.

The West Area Plan is consistent with and furthers the policies and recommendations of Comprehensive Plan 2040 and Blueprint Denver, refining the citywide guidance for a smaller area. The West Area Plan updates Blueprint Denver’s future place, neighborhood context, and street type recommendations as further described in the plan. Any future updates to citywide plans should incorporate and refine recommendations for West based on this plan.
As Denver continues to evolve as an inclusive city, we must strive to create complete neighborhoods for everyone. Access to vital community amenities should not be limited to only certain neighborhoods in our city. Although Denver aspires to be a city of complete neighborhoods, this does not mean all neighborhoods should be the same or remain static. Even complete neighborhoods continue to evolve. The completeness of each neighborhood is defined by its distinct and authentic history, culture, and character, as well as its access to a variety of housing types, services, green spaces, and employment opportunities.

The context-appropriate integration of utility infrastructure is also part of a complete neighborhood.

Blueprint Denver establishes a framework to plan and implement complete neighborhoods. Three interrelated elements form the foundation of a complete neighborhood: land use and built form, mobility, and quality-of-life infrastructure. How the complete neighborhood elements vary and come together result in the different places and streets found in our city’s many neighborhoods. How places and streets interact in turn results in the various neighborhood contexts found across the city.

The ability to calibrate the different elements of a complete neighborhood by neighborhood context, place, and street type provides a considerable amount of nuance when mapping our unique and evolving neighborhoods. The West Area Plan refines and updates the context, place, and street type designations of Blueprint Denver. This plan also advances the land use and built form, mobility, and quality-of-life infrastructure recommendations of Blueprint Denver and adds a new element of economy and housing. Together, these tools can be used to create the complete neighborhoods necessary to achieve the vision of Blueprint Denver for an equitable and inclusive city.

To achieve neighborhood planning goals, the plan includes refinements to the future places established in Blueprint Denver, including more specific height guidance, as well as recommendations for residential and commercial design, historic and character preservation, and compatible infill development.

Source: Blueprint Denver (2019)
The West Area Plan is a policy document that does not rezone any property. All rezonings must follow the standard rezoning process including Planning Board and City Council public hearings. However, the West Area Plan, as an adopted city plan, will play an important role in guiding rezoning decisions. Future rezonings must be consistent with West Area Plan guidance for neighborhood context, place, building height, street type, equity, and other characteristics.

Some of the zoning recommendations in this plan are intended to be implemented legislatively (i.e., initiated by the city) either through citywide processes or area-specific text amendments, instead of through applicant-driven rezonings (e.g., see Policy B-2 (P. 272). In addition, many of the zoning recommendations anticipate public investments in infrastructure improvements, such as bus rapid transit.

Therefore, requests for one-off applicant-driven rezonings should be evaluated to determine if they are better suited as part of a legislative rezoning effort to more effectively advance the vision and recommendations of the plan.

1.1.6 How to Use This Plan

The recommendations identified in this plan provide direction to guide day-to-day decision making related to land use, public investment, private development, and partnerships. The plan gives the latitude needed to pursue unforeseen opportunities that will arise and to respond to new challenges over the coming years. There is a planning glossary available in English and Spanish that may be helpful to use as a reference while reading the plan. Visit denvergov.org/planningterms to access the planning glossary. The West Area Plan is divided into five sections:

Introduction
This section provides an overview of the West Area and the planning process, lays out the vision and high-level recommendations for the area in the Executive Summary, and describes how the plan advances equity.

Area-Wide Recommendations
This section provides the recommendations that are applicable across the entire West Area, divided into four topics:

- Quality-of-Life
- Mobility
- Land Use and Built Form
- Economy and Housing

Within each topic, the plan describes the community’s vision, key existing conditions, and recommendations. The recommendations are formatted as follows:

- Background - illustrates the context for the policies;
- Policies - key recommendations to advance the vision;
- Strategies – more detailed actions to advance the policies.

Topic sections also include maps showing where the policy concepts are most relevant in West.

Transformative Projects
Transformative projects illustrate how plan recommendations overlap to make significant neighborhood improvements and advance the community’s vision.

Neighborhoods of West
Each neighborhood in West has its own section summarizing existing conditions, providing recommendations, and identifying transformative projects specific to that neighborhood. The neighborhoods are:

- West Colfax
- Villa Park
- Sun Valley
- Barnum and Barnum West
- Valverde

Although Barnum and Barnum West are two statistical neighborhoods as defined by the City and County of Denver, the history and development of the two are tightly linked. As the two neighborhoods have historically been considered one, their neighborhood chapter will consider the two together.

Implementation
The implementation section describes the tools and partnerships that will be used to achieve the vision of the plan, identifies priority recommendations, and describes how implementation progress will be measured.
HOW DOES THIS PLAN ADDRESS ENVIRONMENTALISM?

(rg. 25)– A link to learn about environmental justice across West and Denver from the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)

Beginning on (pg. 46)– A section on advancing Health Equity and Environmental Resiliency

(pg. 50)– Information about Denver’s Department of Climate Action, Sustainability & Resiliency (CASR), and Denver Parks & Recreation (DPR’s) Resiliency Program

(pg. 54)– Denver’s Green Building Ordinance

Beginning on (pg. 60) – Water section in the West area, includes information about existing conditions such as floodplains and recommendations to promote healthy watersheds and ecosystems

(pg. 73)– Green Infrastructure Concepts

(pg. 68)– A summary of the River Sisters Partnership

Beginning on (pg. 76)– Recommendations related to preserve and expand access to parks, trails, and open spaces

Beginning on (pg. 90)– Creating a complete food environment

(pg. 111)– Summary of the Denver Electric Vehicle Action Plan

Beginning on (pg. 110)– Advancing mobility for pedestrians, bikes, transit, and other transportation modes that are environmentally friendly

(pg. 131)– Reducing transportation pollution

(pg. 188)– Making land use and the built form more climate friendly

(pg. 218)– Denver’s Green Workforce Development Strategy

(pg. 224)– Plans for the restoration of the greenway and South Platte River

(pg. 226)– A vision for Colfax and Federal Interchange that includes opportunities to integrate green infrastructure, stormwater management, and multimodal transportation infrastructure.
Understanding a neighborhood’s history, particularly how past public policy and infrastructure decisions have affected the 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 and zoning decisions, and resulting development patterns. Urban planning practices such as these have greatly impacted 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 as local agricultural community for many years. Throughout history, the sandy-bottomed South Platte River has frequently flooded and carved new paths across the adjacent low-lying areas.

*All historic references and images are courtesy of the Denver Public Library.*
**History Summaries**

**1858-1880**  
Following the 1864 Congressional Grant recognizing Denver as a city, early railroad investments and water supply improvements drove city growth to the east, northeast and northwest. The West Area topography presented challenges to locating railroads along the west bank of river, resulting in early city investments primarily east of the river.

**1883-1940**  
Near the turn of the century, the Colfax viaduct, street car services and new factories and industrial development fostered economic and residential growth west of the South Platte River. However, redlining practices of the 1930’s discouraged residential lending to West Area residents, making it impossible for West Area residents to purchase land and depreciating area land values.

**1948-1979**  
Booming war efforts brought jobs to the Denver Ordinance Plant on the west side and spurred housing growth around the plant. The construction of US 6 and I-25 also gave rise to increasing auto travel, industrialization and suburban growth patterns that fragmented West Area neighborhoods. Beginning in the 1960’s, Denver’s downtown urban renewal practices displaced Auraria neighborhood residents, many of whom moved to the West Area. The 1965 South Platte River flood brought destruction to low lying residential and industrial areas along the river and changed life for many Valverde residents permanently.

**1980s-Today**  
The economic recession of the 1980’s stifled city development and subsequently, resulted in continued disinvestment in the West Area. A focus on the commercial downtown core became a priority to improve Denver’s economy and spur job creation. By the late 80’s and early 90s, West Area neighborhoods were engaging in some of their first neighborhood plans seeking ways to offset the years of disinvestment. From roughly 2010, Denver has experienced economic growth, a surge in population and an increasing demand for affordable housing that has put pressure on West Area neighborhoods and created a pattern of gentrification and displacement.

**Annexation and Development**

The following maps illustrate Denver’s annexation boundaries and the parcel development pattern from as early as 1890 when early settlement growth was east of the South Platte River and northwest toward the Highlands and Berkeley neighborhood areas. As Denver grew and annexed additional land at the turn of the century, development intensified to the northwest, expanded east toward Park Hill and moved south along the Broadway corridor. In the early 1900’s, the West Area remained primarily local agricultural and farming uses. By the end of World War II, the west side was experiencing growing industrial use along the low-lying river land and increasing neighborhood expansion west of the river. It was not until the 1950’s that highway investments in both I-25 and 6th Avenue began to influence a rise in west area development.
Indigenous History
The history of West Denver is tied to the genocide of indigenous people. As long as 600 years ago, the Indigenous peoples (Ute, Cheyenne, and Arapaho) called the area near the confluence of the South Platte River and Cherry Creek waterways home, trading and hunting along their banks. The Gold Rush of ’58 catalyzed settler colonialism, with wars waged by the United States between 1860 to 1890 to “win the west.” The Sand Creek Massacre in 1864 was one of the most significant events in a series known as the Colorado War.

Villa Park
The original Villa Park subdivision was purchased in 1865 and planned as a neighborhood for wealthy residents in 1873. The subdivision went bankrupt in 1875 before construction could begin and was later purchased by P.T. Barnum as the Barnum subdivision.

City of Denver Established
In 1860, the early settlements of Denver and Auraria joined to become Denver City, and in 1864, the new city was recognized through a congressional grant. Relatedly, the Homestead Act was passed in 1862 to spur development of the American West. This allowed for the provision of 160 acres of federal land to anyone who agreed to farm it.

Denver Streetcar
The introduction of the streetcar influenced development patterns and neighborhood wealth across the city. Outside of West Colfax Avenue service, however, no other streetcar service was provided west or southwest of the South Platte River until much later, leaving Valverde and Sun Valley agricultural in nature.

City Ditch
After an early attempt in the late 1860’s was unsuccessful, the Capitol Hydraulic Company was approved for the design and construction of City Ditch. City Ditch provided much needed water to the East, furthering residential and commercial development east of the river.

Industrial Immigration
Immigrants came to Denver to support railroad and smelting industries, bringing all classes of workers from poor and working class to many upper- and middle-class professionals and merchants. In Denver, as in cities across the West, increased discrimination forced immigrants into culturally distinct neighborhoods.
**Rail**
By 1880, rail lines occupied the majority of space along the eastern side of the South Platte River, where the topography and commercial development made operations effective. In addition to industrial growth, passenger rail service grew as well, and Union Station became the front door to Downtown Denver. Without railroad investment on its banks, the West Side remained primarily agricultural.

**City Beautiful**
The City Beautiful movement led by Mayor Speer in Denver brought street lighting, sidewalks, sewer system improvements, as well as tree plantings and the development of the Parkways. These city investments, however, were focused east of the South Platte River and similar improvements were limited to the west.

**Jewish Settlement**
West Colfax and Sun Valley were initially settled by the Jewish community and were a thriving neighborhood of businesses, farms, factories, and healthcare facilities, most notably for tuberculosis treatment.

**Colfax Viaduct & Barnum Streetcar**
The Colfax viaduct was constructed to connect Colfax and Sun Valley to Denver by streetcar. By 1933, six viaducts and ten bridges crossed the South Platte River and adjacent industrial use. These were concentrated north of 8th Avenue and only a few served the West Area. The Barnum Streetcar Line was constructed to connect with the Colfax Streetcar, creating a vital neighborhood and regional link to the city and fostering development.

**Barnum Subdivision**
The Barnum subdivision was platted from proposed Villa Park land. Barnum incorporated as its own town in 1887, but even with an early rail connection, development remained slow, in part because of the inconvenience of the connection. Barnum was annexed to Denver in 1896.

**Colburn Automobile Factory**
The Colburn Automobile factory opened in 1906. While only open until 1911, the factory acted as a catalyst for manufacturing and industrial growth west of the South Platte River. Today this industrial pattern continues along the river contributing to pollution associated with stormwater runoff and truck circulation in the area.

**Denver’s First Zoning Code**
In coordination with Denver’s first zoning code, the Sun Valley and Valverde neighborhoods were designated as Industrial zone districts along the South Platte River.
**Redlining**
Home Owner Loan Maps restricted home loan approvals by designating West Colfax, Villa Park, Sun Valley, Barnum and Valverde as either “Hazardous” or “Definitely Declining”. The majority of homes south of 13th Avenue in the West Area were designated as “Hazardous”. This began a pattern of disinvestment in neighborhoods of color that lasted for decades and is still felt today.

**Mile High Stadium**
Starting in 1909, the present-day Empower Stadium site was used as one of three city dumping grounds. In 1948, the land was redeveloped for the original construction of Mile High Stadium serving a variety of professional baseball and soccer teams until it was demolished in 2002.

**End of Streetcar**
In the wake of automobile prioritization, the Denver streetcar network was slowly dismantled, including the West Colfax line.

**US 40**
US Highway 40 was created in 1926 to connect between San Francisco, California and Atlantic City, New Jersey. Highway 40 aligned with West & East Colfax Avenue through the City of Denver, making ease of automobile travel possible.

**Denver Ordnance Plant**
The Denver Ordnance Plant brought war munition manufacturing jobs and drove workers to seek housing in the West Area. The war efforts lasted from 1939-1945.

**Highways and Fragmentation**
During the Great Depression, Denver acquired much low-lying land along the South Platte River, some of which was within the Valverde neighborhood, and began planning for the Valley Highway or Interstate 25 (I-25). The first phase of I-25 was constructed between 1948 and 1958 and spanned 11 miles. I-25 accelerated residential displacement and industrialization in Valverde and Sun Valley neighborhoods.

The construction of US Highway 6 began as early as 1951, including the addition of the US 6 and I-25 interchange. These highways divided Jewish, Eastern European and Latino neighborhoods, which were further impacted by the Colfax and Federal “Cloverleaf” in 1959.
Urban Renewal
Urban Renewal was an attempt to bring prosperity back into the city core by removing “blight” and making room for future highways. The demolition of the Auraria neighborhood in 1972 led to the relocation of many Latino/a/x families as well as St. Cajetan Church to Alameda Avenue in the West Area.

1960-1972

Refugee Resettlement
After the Vietnam War, resettlement of Southeast Asian refugees put pressure on the Colorado public housing system. Reports estimated over 6,200 refugees had been resettled in Colorado as of June 1979. While the public housing system had vacancy prior to this resettlement, the system waitlist included 1,200 families after refugee resettlement.

1979

Latino/a/x Communities
An influx of new residents into the West Area resulted in a 50% Hispanic population. West Denver residents such as Fred and Elaine Ulibarri helped build the local Chicano movement. Increasing Latino/a/x businesses gave owners and the community a feeling of pride and ownership in the West Area. The businesses were generally founded in existing commercial strips, adding historic and cultural significance to these structures. For families and elders, the parks system provided space for impactful recreation opportunities.

1970s

1980s

1965

1986-1991

1980s Recession
The 1980s marked Denver’s second great recession. At its peak, unemployment reached a high of 9.1 percent in March 1987. Downtown buildings lay vacant, net migration slowed, and in 1985, Colorado was the nation’s top state for business failures with 326.3 out of every 10,000 failing that year.

Neighborhood Plans
From the late 80s through the early 90s, the City of Denver generated the first neighborhood plans for West Area neighborhoods. These included plans for Barnum/Barnum West, West Colfax, Villa Park and Valverde. The Sun Valley neighborhood was not included in this planning effort.

While the Valverde neighborhood plan called for rehabilitation of a youth center, the city proposed a detention center in the neighborhood. Neighborhood activists spoke out against the proposal and the proposal was withdrawn in 1997.
New Resources in Sun Valley
In 1999, Denver Human Services invested in the West side by moving its offices to Sun Valley. This was followed in 2003 by the city’s construction of the Rude Recreation Center, a local community asset. By 2016, Sun Valley EcoDistrist planning was underway.

RTD West Line
In 2012, the Regional Transportation District invested in the West line along West 13th Avenue becoming a keystone for local transit. In conjunction with this investment, the city improved Lakewood Gulch and enhanced adjacent pedestrian crossing and facilities along the Gulch.

Paco Sanchez Park
Paco Sanchez Park redesign completed construction in West Colfax neighborhood, celebrating Paco Sanchez’ legacy of starting Denver’s first Latino radio station in 1948. Sanchez was the founder of the Good American’s Organization (GAO) and its corresponding credit union that made it easier for minorities and low-income people to obtain financing and fund low-income housing projects. Sanchez also served in the Colorado House of Representatives starting 1968.

Empower Field at Mile High
Adjacent to the original Mile High Stadium site, construction of Empower Field at Mile High began in 1999 and was completed by 2001. In 2019, the city’s Stadium District Master Plan was adopted to envision a growing mix of uses and entertainment destinations in proximity of the West rail station.

Ulibarri Park
In 2022, after several years of work by the Valverde Neighborhood Association and others, Denver City Council approved the naming of Ulibarri Park in Valverde to honor Elaine and Fred Ulibarri, longtime residents and local leaders of the Chicano movement.
The West Area is a vibrant and innovative community today. But the years of disinvestment, historic redlining practices and impacts of infrastructure decisions continue to create barriers between neighborhoods, affect economic conditions and isolate sections of the community today. Affordable housing is rapidly decreasing in West Area neighborhoods as Denver’s population growth continues and gentrification rises. Increasing traffic congestion is resulting in the need for mobility options, pedestrian safety improvements and dedicated bicycle facilities. As growth continues, West Area neighborhoods experience an ever-increasing demand for outdoor space, recreational opportunities and access to trails and parks along the South Platte River.

The West Area Plan addresses the inequities and impacts of historical decisions by identifying equitable investment opportunities and future projects that help retain residents, improve quality of life, enhance mobility solutions and reflect neighborhood values and culture for years to come.
HISTORIC AND PRESENT INEQUITIES IN WEST

When planning for an equitable West, it is important to reflect on and understand the neighborhoods’ 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 6th Avenue in the 1950s and 1960s have physically divided and isolated the West neighborhoods from one another. This history had an especially profound effect on the Sun Valley and Valverde neighborhoods. 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 which brought with it environmental challenges that we still face today. For more information regarding environmental conditions visit the Environmental Protection Agency online interactive map at eis.screen.epa.gov/mapper/. The Flood of 1965 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.
How the Plan Improves Access to Opportunity

There are several policies and strategies in this plan that will help improve access to opportunity and address the gaps identified above. Select relevant recommendations include promoting employment opportunities for local area residents, improving infrastructure to support multi-modal mobility options, improving access to community parks, open spaces, and recreation facilities, and increasing access to fresh food.

How the Plan Reduces Vulnerability to Displacement and Expands Housing and Jobs Diversity

There are several policies and strategies in this plan that will help reduce vulnerability to displacement and expand housing and jobs diversity. In addition to the tools listed on the next page, select recommendations in this plan that seek to promote on-site affordable housing near high-capacity transit corridors and centers, expand ADUs and other naturally affordable housing types to support a variety of households throughout West, and provide high quality local employment opportunities.

This Section 1.5 Planning for Equity provides additional details on the equity gaps that have been identified in West, as well as references to specific sections and policies in this plan that will improve access to opportunity, reduce vulnerability to displacement, and expand housing and jobs diversity.

1.3 PLANNING FOR EQUITY

Equity means everyone, regardless of who they are or where they are from, has the opportunity to thrive in Denver. A primary goal of Blueprint Denver is to guide change to improve equity across the city. To advance this goal, the plan evaluates equity through the lens of three core concepts: Access to Opportunity, Vulnerability to Displacement, and Housing & Jobs Diversity. Using Blueprint Denver’s method of analyzing equity, neighborhoods are given a scoring metric on each equity concept from most equitable to least equitable. Incorporating these three concepts into the planning process helps to define and prioritize recommendations to promote a more equitable Denver by highlighting equity-based needs in particular areas.

For the West Area Plan, the three equity concepts have influenced the strategies and recommendations and their prioritization by highlighting areas with particular equity concerns. This approach enables West to work towards a vision that prioritizes equity within the plan area and also contributes to a more equitable Denver.

The data and analyses that inform the core concepts on the following pages are intended to provide a high-level overview of the plan area rather than parcel-by-parcel direction. The specific measures of Access to Opportunity, Vulnerability to Displacement, and Housing & Jobs Diversity should be used as indicators that highlight the need for further investigation.
**Equity Analysis and Brief**

If an Large Development Review (LDR) or a rezoning application meets certain criteria used to determine potentially inequitable impacts of development, then city planners conduct an equity analysis to determine how the LDR and/or rezoning can mitigate potential adverse impacts and improve equity indicators. Identifying issues of inequity in a specific area helps identify opportunities for new development to reduce those inequities. By specifically addressing the low-scoring metrics, we can improve the equity for the community around the site and throughout the entire city.

**Advancing Equity in Rezonings**

City planners are currently working with community members to review Denver’s process for rezoning properties and recommend potential updates. The year-long project is focusing on implementing city goals around equity. The project aims to improve transparency and access to the rezoning process, consider the impact of rezonings on neighboring residents and properties, and explore how rezonings can lead to equitable outcomes that better serve all community members, such as access to open space, public transportation, housing, and employment opportunities.

**Expanding Housing Affordability**

On June 6, 2022, Denver City Council voted to approve the historic “Expanding Housing Affordability” policy (EHA). The EHA policy complements existing affordable housing programs to ensure that as new homes are built in Denver, new affordable homes are built too – both to rent and to buy. Additional information can be found online at www.denvergov.org/affordabilityincentive
DENVERIGHT concept includes a measurement that is mapped geographically across the city to understand disparities and:

a. Average life expectancy

b. Access to high-capacity transit

c. Access to parks: percent of living units within ¼ mile

d. Median household income

e. Percent of families below 100% of the federal poverty line

Where are populations most vulnerable to displacement?

Introduction)

Helps to assess whether we are meeting our goals to

More Access

Menos acceso

Less Access

Light Rail Stations

Estaciones de tren ligero

West Area Plan Boundary

Limites del plan del área occidental
1.3.1 Improving 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.

To better understand the way access to opportunity is distributed throughout the city, neighborhoods were rated on a scale of zero to five, with zero representing the least access to opportunity, and five representing the most access to opportunity.

How is Access to Opportunity Calculated
The Access to Opportunity Equity Concept represents the cumulative score from the evaluation of the following eight components:

- **Social determinants of health**: measured by a) percent of high school graduates or the equivalent for those 25 years of age or older and b) percent of families below 100% of the Federal Poverty Line
- **Access to fresh food**: Area scores low when there is a low percent of residents within 1/4 mile of a full service grocery store
- **Access to parks**: Area scores low when there is a low percent of residents within 1/4 mile of a park
- **Access to health care**: Area scores low when there is a high percent of pregnancies without access to first trimester prenatal care
- **Children at a healthy weight**: Area scores low when there is a high percent of children that are overweight
- **Average life expectancy**: Area scores low when there is low life expectancy
- **Access to corridors and centers**: Area scores low when there is low access to corridors and centers through walked (1/2 mile), bikeshed (2 miles) or driveshed (5 miles)
- **Transit access**: Area scores low when there is a low number of units near transit (half-mile from existing light rail station or quarter-mile from existing high-frequency bus route).

For a more detailed description on the methodology and the individual scores for each component please visit the Blueprint Denver Key Equity Concepts Map, which is part of the Blueprint 2022 Annual Report. The report is available at DenverGov.org/blueprint. The data on this online map is updated annually and allows the user to zoom into specific areas. It also displays the total equity concept score as well as the scores from the individual components.

**West Area Neighborhoods Score in Access to Opportunity**

Neighborhoods in West generally have low access to opportunity (i.e., average scores of three or below). As seen on the map on the previous page, the neighborhoods in West are shown with a darker purple than some of the areas of the city. Key drivers of an overall low access to opportunity score include low scores in individual components such as, access to fresh food, access to parks, access to healthcare, average life expectancy, and transit access. Many of the low scores can be found in the neighborhoods located south of 6th Avenue.

**How the Plan Improves Access to Opportunity**

There are several policies and strategies in this plan that will help improve access to opportunity and address the gaps identified above. Relevant sections are listed and summarized below:

- **Economic Vitality, People – Section 2.4.4 on page 220** Promotes employment opportunities for local area residents.
- **High Comfort Bikeway – Section 2.2.3 on page 126** Plans for creating new and upgrading existing bikeways.
- **Pedestrian Improvements, Intersection Safety and New Crossings – Section 2.2.2 on page 121** Plans to invest in pedestrian infrastructure including the installation of new sidewalks, upgrades to existing sidewalks, and installing safer crossings.
- **Transit and Mobility Hubs – Section 2.2.6 on page 140** Promotes enhanced transit service and stops/stations along major arterials and neighborhood streets.
- **Health, Equity, and Environmental Resiliency – Section 2.1.2 on page 46** Identifies the opportunity to further study and fill in the gaps regarding social determinants of health.
- **Parks, Trails, and Open Space – Section 2.1.4 on page 76** Plans to improve access to existing parks and create new or expand existing community parks, open spaces, and recreation facilities.
- **Complete Food Environment – Section 2.1.5 on page 90** Plans to increase access to fresh food through a variety of channels and partnerships.
BLUEPRINT VULNERABILITY TO DISPLACEMENT

Metrics that the city is committed to measure:

1. Jobs density
2. Jobs diversity
3. Percentage of households that are underweight, overweight, or obese
4. Access to fresh food: percentage of residents within ¼ mile (10 minute walk) to a quality park or open space

VULNERABILITY TO DISPLACEMENT

Where are populations most vulnerable to displacement?

1. Median household income
2. Percent of renters
3. Percent of population with less than college degree

The map shows the West Area Plan with different shades indicating levels of vulnerability to displacement.
1.3.2 Reducing Vulnerability to Displacement

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.

To better understand how residents in different neighborhoods across Denver are more or less vulnerable to displacement, neighborhoods were rated on a scale of zero to three. Zero representing the least vulnerable and three representing the most vulnerable to displacement.

How is Vulnerability to Displacement Calculated

The Vulnerability to Displacement Equity Concept represents the cumulative score from the evaluation of the following three components:

- **Median household income**: Area is considered vulnerable when the median household income is lower than Denver’s.
- **Percent of renters**: Area is considered vulnerable when percent of renter-occupied units is higher than Denver’s average.
- **Percent of population with less than college degree**: Area is considered vulnerable when percent of residents with less than a bachelor’s degree is higher than Denver’s average.

For a more detailed description on the methodology and the individual scores for each component please visit the Blueprint Denver Key Equity Concepts Map, which is part of the Blueprint 2022 Annual Report. The report is available at DenverGov.org/blueprint. The data on this online map is updated annually and allows the user to zoom into specific areas. It also displays the total equity concept score as well as the scores from the individual components.

**West Area Neighborhoods Score in Vulnerability to Displacement**

Neighborhoods in West are generally considered more vulnerable or most vulnerable to displacement (i.e., average scores of either 2 or 3), especially compared to other areas just north and east.

In terms of median household income, all of the neighborhoods except West Colfax and Valverde are considered vulnerable since they have a lower median household income than citywide. From a perspective of percent of renters, all of the neighborhoods except Barnum, Barnum West and the eastern part of Villa Park are considered vulnerable because the percent of renter-occupied units is higher than Denver’s average. In terms of population with less than college degree all of the neighborhoods, except West Colfax are considered vulnerable because the percentage of residents with less than a bachelor’s degree is higher than Denver’s average.

**How the Plan Reduces Vulnerability to Displacement**

There are several policies and strategies in this plan that will help reduce vulnerability to displacement and address the identified gaps. Relevant sections are listed and summarized below:

- **Growth Strategy – Section 2.3.5 on page 172** Promotes on-site affordable housing near high-capacity transit corridors and centers.
- **Housing Options/Design & Preservation – Section 2.3.6 on page 180** Promotes expansion of ADUs throughout all residential areas and reduce barriers to construction. Also identifies opportunities to construct missing middle housing beyond ADUs that include on-site affordable housing, and looks at ways to promote natural affordability by preserving older homes.
- **Housing Affordability – Section 2.4.2 on page 206** Promotes preserving existing and expanding new affordable housing that can support different types of households.
- **Economic Vitality, Places & People – Sections 2.4.3 on page 214 & 2.4.4 on page 220** Promotes local employment and the stabilization of existing residents and local businesses at risk of involuntary displacement.
1.3.3 Expanding Housing and Jobs 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.

To better understand the diversity of housing across the city, neighborhoods were rated on a scale of zero to five, with zero representing the least housing diversity, and five representing the most housing diversity. The map on the next page shows the map of local jobs diversity, which uses measures of job density (the amount of jobs in a certain part of the city) and job diversity (the mix of jobs in various industries in a certain part of the city) to determine an area’s access to employment.

How is Housing and Jobs Diversity Calculated

The Housing and Jobs Diversity Equity Concept is made up of two different analysis and maps. One that calculates housing diversity and another one that calculates job diversity and density.

The housing diversity analysis represents the cumulative score from the evaluation of the following five components:

- **Percent of middle-density housing (housing with 2-19 units):** Area is considered less diverse if there is a lower percent of housing in the 2-19 unit range compared to Denver.
- **Home size diversity:** Area is considered less diverse if there is a large ratio between the number of units with 0-2 bedrooms compared to units with 3+ bedrooms.
- **Ownership vs. rental:** Area is considered less diverse if the ratio between owner-occupied vs. renter-occupied units is larger than it is citywide.
- **Housing Costs:** Measured by ratio of housing units affordable up to 80% AMI to units affordable to 120%+ AMI.
- **Amount of affordable (income-restricted) housing units:** Area is considered less diverse when the number of income restricted units per census tract is lower than the citywide average.

The jobs diversity analysis represents the cumulative score from the evaluation of the following two components:

- **Jobs density:** Measured by the number of jobs per acre.
- **Jobs diversity:** Measured by the percent of jobs type (retail, innovation, manufacturing) compared to the citywide job mix.

For a more detailed description on the methodology and the individual scores for each component please visit the Blueprint Denver Key Equity Concepts Map, which is part of the Blueprint 2022 Annual Report. The report is available at DenverGov.org/blueprint. The data on this online map is updated annually and allows the user to zoom into specific areas. It also displays the total equity concept score as well as the scores from the individual components.

West Area Neighborhoods Score Housing and Jobs Diversity

Most of the West Area scores less diverse in most of the individual components except from a home size perspective where most of the area is considered diverse. There are some other areas considered diverse from different perspectives. West Colfax, Sun Valley and Valverde are seen as diverse from a middle-density housing perspective. From a tenure perspective West Colfax is the only neighborhood seen as diverse as its mix of owner vs. renter occupied units is closer to Denver as a whole. From a housing cost perspective West Colfax and Villa Park are the two neighborhoods that are considered diverse. Finally, Diversity in terms of affordable units can be seen in Valverde, Sun Valley, West Colfax, and the western side of Villa Park.

With respect to jobs diversity, manufacturing is the predominant job type in West, with some retail along the southern portion of Federal and Sheridan Boulevards, and innovation at the western portion of West Colfax Avenue. If an area had less than 100 jobs per census block, they were not included in the analysis.

How the Plan Expands Housing and Jobs Diversity

There are several policies and strategies in this plan that will help expand housing and jobs diversity, and address the gaps identified above. Relevant sections are listed and summarized below:

- **Growth Strategy – Section 2.3.5 on page 172** Promotes on-site affordable housing near high-capacity transit corridors and centers.
- **Housing Options/Design & Preservation – Section 2.3.6 on page 180** Promotes expansion of ADUs and missing middle housing in targeted geographic locations.
- **Economic Vitality, Places & People – Sections 2.4.3 on page 214 & 2.4.4 on page 220** Preserves and expands the employment base of the existing West Area Manufacturing Districts and promotes diverse employment opportunities for residents.
1.4 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1.4.1 Executive Summary

One of the most diverse areas of Denver, the West Area is made up of six dynamic neighborhoods that are connected to downtown by a network of beautiful gulches and trails. With the South Platte River to the east, Colfax Avenue to the north, and the Rocky Mountains visible to the West, the area exemplifies many of Denver’s most beloved characteristics and stands out locally for its mix of vibrant cultures and unique history.

The city launched the West Area planning effort in 2019 to ensure that the community’s values and visions for their neighborhoods were reflected in the plan. While development of the plan was prolonged by the COVID-19 pandemic, Denver planners worked with residents, business owners, and community leaders throughout the three-year process to create a plan that reflects the community’s priorities, honors the history and diversity of the West Area, recommends strategies to address challenges identified by residents and stakeholders through the planning process, and guides growth in a way that aligns with and balances city and neighborhood goals.

In a first for neighborhood plans in Denver, the West Area plan acknowledges the historic inequities the area has faced as well as their roots in past public policy decisions. Through partnerships with local organizations, virtual discussions, online surveys and intentional engagement of the West Area’s Latino, Asian, and Jewish communities, the West Area planning process prioritized previously marginalized voices and surfaced the following priorities for Denver’s West Area:

- Helping residents and local businesses stay in their neighborhoods
- Making it easier for residents to access healthy food
- Improving transportation options and street safety so locals can get around easily and comfortably using a variety of modes, giving special attention to the pedestrian, bicycle and transit networks that are in much need of improvements
- Supporting the culture and diversity of West Area neighborhoods

The West area plan is intended to serve as a guide for how the neighborhoods of Barnum, Barnum West, Sun Valley, West Colfax, Valverde, and Villa Park should evolve over the next 20 years. The following is a summary of the main themes of the plan, organized by chapter.

Chapter 2: Area Wide Recommendations

Quality of Life: The Quality of Life section is the backbone of the West Area plan. Throughout the city’s engagement with local communities, residents emphasized that issues related to and recommendations for improving the quality of life in West were of the utmost importance, and that all other content in the plan should be informed by these considerations. For this reason, Quality of Life is the leading section of the Area Wide Recommendations chapter, and ideas from this section have been integrated throughout all other sections of the plan. This section includes information about and ideas to improve the places, amenities, trees, plants, parks, and outdoor spaces that contribute to health, comfort, environmental resilience, and social connectedness throughout West. In a first for a Denver neighborhood plan, this section includes a focus on water, and the ways in which management of local waterways and water infrastructure can be improved to achieve a more resilient future for the West Area.

Mobility: The Mobility section emphasizes West Area residents’ desire for a city that promotes a variety of transportation options beyond the automobile and provides safe and convenient routes to move throughout their neighborhoods using their transportation mode of choice. Predominately organized by transportation mode, this section calls for improvements to the infrastructure and amenities to allow people to walk, bike, roll, and ride transit frequently and comfortably throughout West and beyond. Towards the end of the chapter, the plan puts the various recommendations together using maps, and speaks to the importance of having more balanced corridors throughout the area. A summary matrix is also provided to easily see which recommendations apply to which major streets.

Land Use and Built Form: The Land Use and Built Form section covers the basic elements necessary for creating equitable and complete neighborhoods as the West Area grows and changes over the next 20 years. Land use refers to the location of human uses and activities such as housing,
shopping, employment, recreation, transportation, industry, education, and more. Built form refers to the design, quality, and density of new buildings, infill development, and renovations within the uses identified above. Across this wide variety of use and form considerations, this section puts forth recommendations to guide West’s growth in a strategic and desirable way that is compatible with the existing environment while allowing for local businesses to thrive, existing residents to remain in their neighborhoods, and the aesthetic design of the area to honor the past.

**Economy and Housing:** During the planning process, community members expressed concerns over involuntary displacement of residents and locally owned small businesses, the lack of jobs held by local residents compared to the area’s overall population and proximity to jobs, and local schools with projected declines in enrollment. The Economy and Housing section addresses these challenges, providing recommendations and strategies to help the West neighborhoods support a diverse, opportunity-rich community, with a range of businesses, employment options, housing types and affordability levels.

**Chapter 3: Transformative Projects**

Transformative projects illustrate how plan recommendations overlap to make significant neighborhood improvements and advance the community’s vision. Multi-layered and long-term in nature, these projects will take a concerted effort by both public and private sectors. This chapter includes details and visualizations of four transformative projects recommended for the West Area, including an enhanced transit system; restoration of the South Platte River and enhancement of the greenway; new and improved crossings for pedestrians and cyclists, and a major reimagining of the Colfax and Federal Interchange.

**Chapter 4: Neighborhoods of West**

This chapter provides a closer look at each of the six neighborhoods that make up West, with a section each dedicated to West Colfax, Villa Park, Sun Valley, Barnum and Barnum West, and Valverde. While many issues affect all six neighborhoods and the area-wide recommendations that appear earlier in the plan detail those, this section provides more detailed guidance and some unique recommendations for each neighborhood to address challenges or opportunities that go beyond the area-wide recommendations.

Each neighborhood section includes a summary of all the area-wide recommendations that also apply to that neighborhood, an overview of the neighborhood’s existing characteristics and distinctive features, summaries of neighborhood-specific feedback received from community members during the planning process as well as any previously adopted plans and concludes with neighborhood-specific recommendations and transformative projects. This section will give neighborhood residents, local organizations, and other neighborhood stakeholders a better understanding of how the West Area Plan affects them, and where community-desired investments and the elements of a complete neighborhood apply.

**Chapter 5: Implementation**

The West Area Plan sets forth the community’s vision for the area and includes recommendations to achieve it. To make that vision reality, the plan recommendations must be implemented. This section describes the types of implementation tools available, identifies the recommendations that are priorities for implementation and the expected timeline for completion, and explains how implementation efforts will be monitored and tracked. Successfully implementing this plan will require the combined efforts of the city, external organizations, and the community, and this section also identifies relevant action partners for each recommendation.
The West Area Plan is written as an action-oriented document to assist community members, city government: its leaders, elected officials and staff across departments, as well as partners and organizations, in implementing the vision put forth in this document. For this reason, the recommendations are organized into four key subject areas that will best allow the city to undertake this plan’s implementation. The main subject areas include:

Quality of Life (Q)

Mobility (M)

Land Use and Built Form (L)

Economy and Housing (E)

Throughout the plan the abbreviations noted in the parentheses above will be used to refer to these subject areas.

**QUALITY OF LIFE**

**Health, Equity, and Environmental Resiliency**
- 01 Health Equity
- 02 Racial and Social Equity
- 03 Noise and Air Pollution
- 04 Climate Resilience
- 05 Urban Forest Tree Canopy

**Water**
- 06 Water Policy
- 07 Waterways
- 08 Water Management Practices
- 09 Green Infrastructure in Development
- 10 Green Infrastructure in Neighborhoods
- 11 Green Streets and Alleys

**Parks, Trails, and Open Space**
- 12 Access to Parks, Open Spaces, and Facilities
- 13 Facilities and Programming
- 14 New Parks, Open Spaces, and Facilities
- 15 Access to Trails and Waterways

**Complete Food Environment**
- 16 Community Food Environment
- 17 Fresh Food Access
- 18 Food Insecurity

**Community Safety and Well-Being**
- 20 Community Safety and Security
- 21 Universal Design Practices

**Animal Protection**
- 24 Animal Protection

**Community Building**
- 25 Youth Violence
- 26 Community Pride
- 27 Local Culture
MOBILITY

Pedestrian Improvements, Intersection Safety, and New Crossings
- Sidewalks
- Intersection Crossings

High Comfort Bikeway
- Bikeway Infrastructure

Trails
- Trail Facilities
- Wayfinding

Neighborhood Traffic Calming
- Traffic Calming Strategies

Transit and Mobility Hubs
- Transit Amenities
- Transit Service

Transportation Demand Management
- Transportation Demand Management Strategies

Balanced Corridors
- Balanced Corridors

LAND USE AND BUILT FORM

Commercial Services and Uses
- Existing Commercial Areas
- Reuse of Commercial Buildings

Growth Strategy
- Future Growth in Centers and Corridors
- Compatible Redevelopment

Housing Options/Design & Landmark Preservation
- Small-Scale Multi-Unit Housing Options
- Preservation of Existing Housing
- Neighborhood-Compatible Housing
- Culturally Significant Buildings

Urban Design Framework
- Design Within Centers and Corridors
- Design Along Natural Areas
- Design Within Industrial Areas

ECONOMY AND HOUSING

Housing Affordability
- Housing Affordability and Quality
- Affordable Housing Diversity
- Overall Housing Diversity
- Support Programs for Unhoused Community Members
- Long-term Housing Stability
- Social Services

Economic Vitality – Places
- Economic Vitality of Corridors
- Manufacturing Employment Base
- New Businesses

Economic Vitality – People
- Involuntary Displacement
- Employment Opportunities
# 2 AREA WIDE RECOMMENDATIONS

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# 2.1 Quality of Life

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**2.1.1 INTRODUCTION**

What is it?

Quality of life refers to the places, amenities, trees, plants, parks, and outdoor spaces that contribute to health, comfort, environmental resiliency, and social connectedness. These elements of a complete neighborhood support the need for individuals to connect with nature, access nutritious and culturally appropriate foods, feel safe, and enjoy a clean environment. Extensive research demonstrates that the way we design and build our neighborhoods impacts how we live, work, learn, and play. Our surroundings shape how physically active we are, how we eat, and whether we have access to schools, jobs, transportation, health care, and opportunities to prosper. Well-designed neighborhoods can improve health, while environments that lack amenities and services to support healthy lifestyles can contribute to chronic diseases such as diabetes, heart disease, and obesity.

Similarly, quality of life also refers to the conditions in the natural environment that impact residents’ health and comfort. Air and water quality, as well as climate change-related impacts such as increases in flooding and surface temperature, can have lasting social, political, and economic consequences. One method many communities have been adopting to help address environmental resiliency in complete neighborhoods is green infrastructure. Green infrastructure can provide environmental, economic, and quality-of-life benefits, as well as help improve water and air quality, reduce flood risks and heat island effects, absorb local carbon emissions, increase physical activity, improve mental wellbeing, reduce stress, lower traffic speeds, and improve property values.

Vision for an Inclusive City

In Denver, many neighborhoods—including parts of West—do not have access to basic amenities that contribute to quality of life. These inequities across the city conflict with Denver’s values of fairness and impede access to opportunities for success. Many of those who are impacted live in neighborhoods that were historically marginalized and that are now experiencing rapid reinvestment and gentrification. To achieve our vision for an equitable city with the promise of opportunity for all, there must be a focus on the needs of our most vulnerable residents.

As communities and local governments work together to address social and racial inequities within the built environment, Denver is making space to talk about the history of significant events that disproportionately impact non-white populations, such as historical red-lining of neighborhoods that began in the 1930s and ended in 1968. The vision for an inclusive city means that the growing disparities between neighborhoods will be reversed and all Denver residents will have access to opportunities to meet their daily needs and have a healthy quality of life. The proximity to and affordability of amenities (including quality jobs, schools, parks, health care services, and healthy food, and more) are important elements of access to opportunity. Equitable access to opportunities strengthens our collective prosperity and improves outcomes for all.

West is a place where residents love raising families, aging in place, and being connected to one another. West residents prioritize regenerative and resilient approaches and land use practices. Through careful planning, engagement, and leadership support, this section addresses many of the important elements that make West extraordinary, including its environmental make-up, cultural and historic significance, and unique sense of place. This section also includes strategies to increase the area’s access to amenities and improve the quality of life for local residents.

Green Infrastructure

Green infrastructure exists at many scales. At a larger scale, green infrastructure in the West Area is the network of parks, open spaces, urban trees, waterways, and floodplains. These work together to provide ecological benefits across neighborhoods. Site-scale green infrastructure refers to smaller, engineered practices which generate similar benefits of the larger network, but in individual locations. Examples of site-scale green infrastructure are planters that collect water flowing down the street when it rains, and street trees which intercept falling rain before it hits the ground.

Green Infrastructure can be used to address many of the negative consequences created by an abundance of impervious surfaces. The West Area impervious surface coverage of 53% is high in comparison to the Denver average of 48%. The impervious coverage is concentrated in large industrial areas, non-residential areas, major corridors, and surface parking. Because of these conditions, much of the West Area falls in a high-need Water Quality Priority Basin according to Denver’s Green Infrastructure Implementation Strategy. This means the area is particularly suited to benefit from green infrastructure investments.

Urban Heat Island Effects

Urban heat islands are caused by high amounts of impervious surface and low or limited vegetation and tree canopy. Materials such as asphalt and concrete retain heat and result in warmer temperatures, especially at night. Increasing temperatures also reduce air quality and require more energy for cooler buildings.

Areas of significantly warmer temperatures are clustered on the eastern edge of West, along the South Platte River within the industrial use area.
Health, Equity, and Environmental Resilience

Q1 Health Equity
Prioritize health equity such as developing trainings and programs that support the integration of best practices. Strive for all health equity initiatives within West to support citywide policies, efficiently deliver public services, and identify resources that eliminate institutional biases and barriers within the system.

Q2 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.

Q3 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).

Q4 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.

Q5 Urban Forest Tree Canopy
Make efforts to protect, preserve, and expand the urban forest tree canopy in all redevelopment efforts through West. Prioritize industrial areas, and increase tree canopy coverage within public rights-of-way by means such as community tree planting programs and initiatives.

Water

Q6 Water Policy
Integrate water policy with land use, energy, urban agriculture, and other types of projects that are affected by water management activities.

Q7 Waterways
Implement a cohesive approach to development and infrastructure improvements that prioritizes the protection and enhancement of the South Platte River’s environmental, ecological, and recreational needs.

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
Study the feasibility to 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.

The recommendations on the following page represent an overview of all the Quality of Life recommendations that will be further described within the chapter.
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 culturally relevant design elements.

**Q14 New Parks, Open Spaces, and Facilities**
Work to 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.

Complete Food Environment

**Q16 Community Food Environment**
Strive to build an inclusive, healthier, and more complete West Area community food environment.

**Q17 Fresh Food Access**
Study ways to 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.

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.

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

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

**Q21 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
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.
2.1.2 HEALTH, EQUITY, AND ENVIRONMENTAL RESILIENCY

What’s going on in West?

Access to Care

Many factors impact community access to comprehensive and quality health care services, including cost, time, availability of culturally-competent care and physical proximity to services. One indicator of whether residents have access to the care they need is the percentage of women receiving prenatal care during the first trimester of pregnancy. The goal for this metric under the Healthy and Active vision element is to have at least 82 percent of women who are pregnant receiving prenatal care during the first trimester, which is aimed at reducing health inequities within Denver neighborhoods, according to Comprehensive Plan 2040.

Healthy Children and Families

The health of children and youth can be greatly influenced by their physical environment because children are generally less mobile than adults, and often spend more time at home, at school, and in nearby parks. The quality of local surroundings and nearby amenities that are beneficial to a young person’s quality of life can have a positive impact on early lifestyle behaviors. These elements include access to parks, adequate sidewalks, bicycle infrastructure, healthy food, clean air, and supportive social networks. Neighborhoods lacking these amenities contribute to poor childhood health outcomes, such as obesity. Overweight children can experience early onset Type 2 Diabetes. The goal for West is to meet the Comprehensive Plan 2040 target of at least 86 percent of children at a healthy weight in order to reduce health inequities within Denver neighborhoods.

Access to Nutritious and Culturally-Appropriate Food

Access to affordable, nutritious, and culturally-appropriate food means being able to obtain the types of foods needed for a healthy diet and a strong and resilient quality of life. Living closer to healthy and nutritious food is associated with better eating habits, and healthy eating is associated with higher life expectancy and lower risk for Type 2 diabetes, high blood pressure, heart disease, certain cancers, and obesity. Part of creating economically diverse and vibrant communities is to promote a dynamic food economy and leverage Denver’s food industry to accelerate economic opportunity and to promote diverse and environmentally responsible food systems. In order to meet the Comprehensive Plan 2040 goal of reducing health inequities in West, the solution is to support Denver as an epicenter of a regional food economy. Per the Healthy and Active vision element, Denver must ensure access to quality foods in all neighborhoods, including those in the West Area.

Access to Green Infrastructure (Parks, Open Space, Waterways and Trails)

Living within walking, rolling, or biking distance of outdoor recreational opportunities can positively impact overall health outcomes by encouraging physical activity, time in nature, and providing places to interact with members of the community. This plan measures park access by the percent of households within a half-mile walk of a park (approximately a ten-minute walk) according to Denver Parks and Recreation’s walkshed analysis. The goal of this metric is to reinforce the Game Plan for a Healthy City’s goal of having 100 percent of residents in each neighborhood within a ten-minute walk of parks and
recreational amenities. Under Blueprint Denver’s Healthy and Active vision element, Denver will provide high-quality parks, recreational facilities and programs that serve all Denver residents.

**Life Expectancy**

Life expectancy varies dramatically by neighborhood within the West Area. As of 2015, the average life expectancy in Barnum West was 80-82 years, compared to 67-77 years in other West Denver neighborhoods such as Valverde, Sun Valley, and West Colfax. Gaps in life expectancy across neighborhoods can stem from multiple factors related to the built environment, including access to schools, jobs, quality of housing, opportunities to exercise and eat healthy foods, proximity to highways, access to doctors and hospitals, access to public transit, and residential segregation. In keeping with the metrics outlined in the Comprehensive Plan, the goal for the West Area average life expectancy is 79 years, which is the average for the Denver neighborhood with the highest life expectancy as of the adoption of Comprehensive Plan 2040.

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**Types of Community Capital for Collective Health, Wealth, & Equity**

- **“Human Capital”** refers to the capacities and capabilities of people to develop and enhance their resources, to access outside resources and bodies of knowledge, and to contribute to personal, community, and ecological health and well-being. Health and education are central components of human capital.

- **“Social Capital”** refers to the strength of relationships among people and organizations or the social cohesion that makes things happen. Political capital is also included within social capital. Community organizing efforts build social capital and community power that make mutual aid networks and political reform possible.

- **“Cultural Capital”** reflects the heritage, values, languages, and traditions that shape the way people “know the world” and how we act within it, with each other, and within the ecosystems of which we are a part. Cultural capital influences how creativity, innovation, and influence emerge and are nurtured.

- **“Natural Capital”** refers to assets that are naturally generated and present within the ecosystem in which the community resides. Included are goods and services, natural resources (e.g., clean air, water, soil, food, fuel, recreational space), amenities, and beauty. Natural capital also shapes the cultural capital connected to people and place.

- **“Economic Capital”** refers to the financial resources available to invest in community capacity-building, including business development (civic and social entrepreneurship), community employment and well-being, and wealth generation for ongoing community development.

- **“Built/Physical Capital”** includes the physical infrastructure to support the healthy distribution and regeneration of these forms of community capital and associated activities, including housing, transportation, public facilities, and land-uses that promote community health and wealth.
Urban Tree Canopy

Denver’s urban tree canopy consists of approximately 2.2 million trees with 13% of trees located in Denver parks. Trees provide critical environmental, economic, and health benefits. According to the local non-profit The Park People, Denver’s urban tree canopy contributes $122M in annual community benefits such as natural air-conditioning, stormwater management, and sound and pollution mitigation, in addition to increased property values. Tree canopy coverage in the West Area is 9% compared to the city average of 13%. West Area trees are concentrated along gulches, in parks, and along public rights of way. Street trees are noticeably missing in industrial and nonresidential areas in West. There are a variety of citywide challenges impacting Denver’s Tree Canopy health. Many streets are devoid of trees due to inadequate irrigation and soil volume, climate change impacts, invasive pests, and lack of consistent maintenance.

Denver’s urban tree canopy and forestry neighborhood initiatives target communities of the highest need for improved urban tree canopy. Partnerships with non-profit organizations and annual tree replacement programs like the “Be A Smart Ash Program” collectively aims to plant 3,000 new trees per year across Denver. Sun Valley and Valverde are two high need neighborhoods for significant tree canopy improvements in the West Area. Other programs and support come from organizations such as Denver Urban Gardens (DUG) that are actively finding opportunities and ways to integrate more food forestry and community gardens into the neighborhoods of Denver as connectors of the urban tree canopy. Food forests and community gardens - when maintained and upkept, serve as a form of placemaking and added green infrastructure for community to enjoy and the environment to thrive..

Denver Designated Parkways and Boulevards

In 1894, The Park and Parkway System established Denver as a city of neighborhoods connected by recreational and cultural destinations. Older Denver streets, with tree-lined sidewalks and landscaping, create visual beauty and contribute to the unique character that defines older, established Denver neighborhoods. A framework of Denver’s designated parkways and boulevards elevate these streets types to a higher standard of urban design. Parkways are both street and parkland, and they create a network that ties our historic parks and neighborhoods together. Their importance is recognized by their listing on the National Register of Historic Places.

Three departments - the Department of Transportation and Infrastructure (DOTI), Denver Parks and Recreation (DPR), and Community Planning and Development (CPD), are working together to preserve the intended character of historic parkways and boulevards while evolving and adapting the meaning of a modern Parkway and Boulevard.

Federal Boulevard is the only designated parkway in the West Area. While it is designated as such, it does not express the character of a historic parkway. Federal Boulevard is also a Colorado Department of Transportation (CDOT) highway and is not owned by the City and County of Denver. As a result, methods to enhance its aesthetic quality must be explored in partnership with the state agency.

48 | Area Wide Recommendations

West Area Plan
DENVER PARKS & RECREATION RESILIENCY PROGRAM

Denver Parks and Recreation’s Resiliency Program creates a more sustainable park system in the face of climate change and a growing population. By developing holistic management strategies, and by implementing both large and small-scale projects, DPR plays a critical role in the city’s resilience to environmental challenges. Project focus areas include:

- Expanding resilient and low-water landscapes
- Conserving energy and water resources
- Improving the ecological health of waterways
- Implementing sustainability best practices
- Increasing opportunities for people to connect with nature

The Resiliency Program coordinates the efforts of DPR with other city and state agencies and partners such as The Department of Transportation and Infrastructure (DOTI), Department of Public Health and Environment (DPHE), Denver Water, and the Mile-High Flood District, among others.

DENVER PARKS & RECREATION OUTDOOR ADVENTURE INITIATIVE

Denver Parks and Recreation (DPR) is currently developing an Outdoor Adventure and Alternative Sports Master Plan. The plan will identify nontraditional outdoor recreational trends and best practices, and determine how DPR can better leverage its current assets while identifying new opportunities (i.e. partnerships, mountain parks, etc.) over the next 20 years, specifically focusing on equity. The planning process will consist of:

- Inventory and needs assessments (including gap analyses)
- Community outreach and engagement to identify needs, priorities, and opportunities

The Outdoor Adventure and Alternative Sports Plan advances DPR’s Game Plan for a Healthy City, and its Strategic Acquisition Plan.

DENVER CLIMATE ACTION, SUSTAINABILITY & RESILIENCY (CASR)

The Denver Office of Climate Action, Sustainability, and Resiliency (CASR) works to enable a sustainable, resilient, climate-safe future for all of Denver. It develops policies and programs, centered on equity, including:

- Net zero energy buildings and homes
- Zero waste and circular economy
- Zero emission mobility options
- Climate adaptation and resilience
- Environmental Justice
- Renewable power for all regardless of income
- Engaging community voices in policy and program development
- Sustainable business support programs
TREE CANOPY PRIORITY

Environmental Resiliency Recommendations

City and County Boundary

Parks and Open Space
Lake or Pond
Stream, Creek or River
Light Rail Stations
Increase Tree Canopy

52 | Area Wide Recommendations

West Area Plan
Denver’s Green Building Ordinance

Denver’s Green Buildings Ordinance (GBO) went into effect November 2, 2018. This city law requires developers and property owners to select from a menu of strategies for more sustainable development, which collectively seeks to increase green spaces, improve water and stormwater management, increase the use of solar and other renewable energies, foster the design of more energy-efficient buildings, and increase adoption of national green building programs, such as Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED). The ordinance applies to the following:

- New buildings 25,000 square feet or larger
- Existing buildings 25,000 square feet or larger
- Building additions 25,000 square feet or larger

The ordinance does not apply to parking structures, temporary buildings, air-supported structures, greenhouses, single-family homes, duplexes, or dwelling units constructed in a group of three or more attached units where each unit extends from foundation to the roof, and is no more than 3 stories above the grade plane. Additionally, certain residential buildings only have to meet the ordinance’s cool roof requirement and are not required to choose a compliance option.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Health Equity

Prioritize health equity such as developing trainings and programs that support the integration of best practices. Strive for all health equity initiatives within West to support citywide policies, efficiently deliver public services, and identify resources that eliminate institutional biases and barriers within the system.

Community members expressed the need for historical past harms that negatively impacted health to be identified and addressed within this plan. Residents asked that equity specific to health be prioritized in all sections of this plan, and not exclusively in quality of life. The city is asked to lead with a race-forward approach to promote systems that seek to benefit our most vulnerable community members.

A. Take specific actions that address the social determinants of health by identifying health disparities through the health equity index and other resourceful citywide maps, by listening to the qualitative data of people who face disparities, and ensure that West community members have the opportunity to thrive within their neighborhoods.

B. Continue developing common goals around improved health, equity, and inclusivity by supporting the neighborhoods of West through strengthened relationships between city agencies, Registered Neighborhood Organizations (RNOs), and local residents to gain or improve access to health services and programs.

1. Promote city agency newsletters and notifications to local groups and registered neighborhood organizations (RNOs) to connect residents to city services and programs.

2. Explore ways to advertise health equity programs and services to residents, community and neighborhood organizations, and non-profit service providers. If a health need is not being met, or if there is a health disparity in a community, identify gaps within health systems, and create policies that reform or close those gaps.
**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.

West Denver neighborhoods were once part of the historic racist redlining practices that permeated the United States from the 1930s to 1968. Today, Denver is working to undo the social and racial impacts of these past practices that have resulted in disparities in our natural and built environment. A version of the historic redline map of Denver can be found in Section 1.3, Planning for Equity. Racial and social equity is achieved through the advancement of policies and practices that center those who are underrepresented and have been historically disadvantaged.

**A.** The integration of equity, diversity and inclusion are important citywide policies, and should be integrated through all agencies and organizations within the City and County of Denver. These policies may be led by the Office of Social Equity and Inclusion (OSEI) and should be promoted in policies, programs, and agencies such as:

1. Arts and Culture
2. Contracts for Minority/Women Business Enterprise (M/WBEs), Small Business Enterprise (SBEs), Disadvantaged Business Enterprise (DBEs)
3. Criminal Justice
4. Development and Sustainability
5. Youth and Education
6. Housing and Transportation
7. Rezonings and development projects in review that include equity analysis or are within a NEST neighborhood.
Q3

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).

Community members within West have expressed concerns related to the negative health impacts of noise and air pollution, particularly in areas adjacent to state highways and major industry. There exists a need for recommendations and solutions that mitigate and improve the existing conditions related to noise and air pollution that have historically impacted the residents in West. Trees and plants capture carbon, “rinsing” the air of pollutants while releasing clean oxygen back into the air. Trees also provide a sound baffle from city and highway noise.

A. Ensure residents have access to most amenities, including health services, within a 15-minute walk or roll of their community to reduce the need for vehicle trips, local vehicle miles, and associated air pollution.

B. Monitor air pollution, especially around schools and community serving facilities. Require strong landscape and sound buffering requirements new and redevelopment to include major corridors, highways and buildings.

C. Encourage private developments to include vehicle charging infrastructure in support of low-emission electric vehicles to be more inclusive with innovative transportation options. Continue to advance multimodal pedestrian, bike, and transit systems.

D. Incentivize all new multi-unit, mixed use and commercial development projects to provide publicly accessible electric vehicle charging stations and infrastructure. Power these systems with renewable energy systems (e.g., solar photovoltaic and wind generation systems). Parks, libraries, recreation centers and public places are also ideal places for charging stations to be located.

E. Promote renewable energy multimodal transportation options (e.g., car and bikeshare programs) which are quieter and help mitigate noise and air pollution.

F. Plant trees as a buffer to vehicle traffic, for community beautification and stormwater management/flood mitigation.
**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.

Through a 3-year public planning process, the community has identified a clear prioritization for the equitable integration of climate action goals and solutions focused on environmental resiliency, ecologically based planning, and regenerative processes. Blue gamma, western yarrow and turf fescue are some of the native grass species recommended by community members that require little water to survive.

A. Continue to prioritize areas of West to convert water-intensive turf grass to adaptive, drought-tolerant landscapes that reduce water use, provide increased wildlife habitat, increase shade, and educational opportunities.
   1. Restore and enhance large-scale green infrastructure networks.
   2. Restore the ecology, habitat, stability, and water quality treatment potential of waterways.
B. Connect open spaces and green streets to expand green infrastructure along public rights-of-way.
C. Promote and expand urban tree canopy, food forests and community gardens throughout west neighborhoods, primarily in pockets that heat islands exist. Work with community partners such as Denver Urban Gardens (DUG) for support.
D. Strengthen natural habitats through vegetation, including pollinators that help support and maintain a healthy ecosystem.
E. Promote education within commercial, residential, and public efforts to protect pollinators and provide pollinator habitats.
F. Use a multi-strategy approach called Integrated Pest Management (IPM) to reduce damage while assessing environmental resiliency, cost, and most importantly, staff and public safety.
G. Require energy-efficiency and green building practices in support of Denver’s Climate Action plans, initiatives, and climate action targets.

**NON-NATIVE LANDSCAPING**

Refers to the landscape typologies within the upland, riparian, and hydrologic systems as defined by the Landscape Typology Manual that contain less than 50% non-native species. Native landscape is typically referred to as “natural areas” or “open spaces”.

**POLLINATOR GARDENS**

Any landscaped area that contains diverse native plant species that provide habitat for native pollinating species including bees, butterflies, insects, birds, and bats. Can be a formal planting bed or open space.
**Urban Forest Tree Canopy**

Make efforts to protect, preserve, and expand the urban forest tree canopy in all redevelopment efforts through West. Prioritize industrial areas, and increase tree canopy coverage within public rights - of way by means such as community tree planting programs and initiatives.

Denver’s Climate Action Sustainability and Resiliency Office (CASR) is in the process of conducting outreach and engagement through the Promotoras program for the neighborhood of Valverde specifically due to the low percentage of tree canopy and high levels of urban heat islands that stem from the industrial areas that are adjacent to the neighborhood. CASR is asking residents if they would like to participate in planting trees on private property and is offering to maintain, water and upkeep the new trees for up to 3 years for the property owner. Denver Urban Garden’s food forest Initiative is centered around dense planting of regionally appropriate perennial trees, bushes and vines arranged in guilds - complementary groupings - in order to improve their chances of success. While fruit and nut trees do not typically grow to the size and expanse of shade trees, their contribution to the canopy, shade, biodiversity, habitat and food sovereignty is significant.

A. Strengthen development standards that protect existing trees, and increase requirements that mitigate tree loss in redevelopment and new construction projects as part of regulatory reform identified in the Game Plan for a Healthy City.

1. Prioritize the preservation of healthy trees in the existing tree canopy in all development projects along West Colfax Avenue, Federal Boulevard, Sheridan Boulevard, and West Alameda Avenue, as well as within large redevelopment projects (e.g., Stadium District, Westridge Homes).

2. Provide incentives and explore regulations to require the retention and protection of existing, healthy, mature trees, and the planting of new, regionally appropriate trees.

B. Prioritize funding to promote the urban tree canopy. Collaborate and coordinate efforts with the Denver City Forester to support the removal and replacement of unhealthy trees in public rights-of-way to ensure a healthy, sustainable, and species appropriate tree canopy as a beneficial and supportive community asset.

C. Increase tree canopy coverage through city-sponsored community replacement programs utilizing climate and site appropriate species.

D. Develop community-based partnership programs in West to increase the maintenance and care requirements for Denver’s urban tree canopy and provide educational programs that help residents learn tree maintenance and health practices. Offer incentives to property owners, and build programs that recognize and reward communities for healthy tree canopy coverage, maintenance, and long-term tree survival.

E. Promote Urban Forestry plans and priorities that seek to meet city-wide canopy goals in support of neighborhood equity, preservation, maintenance, implementation, and funding for the urban forest.

F. Work with private property owners and community organizations like DUG to increase tree canopy coverage throughout West. Focus on existing heat islands with paved impervious surfaces.

G. Evaluate non-residential streets to develop a street tree coverage standard to expand the urban tree canopy and associated benefits in non-residential areas.

H. Prioritize the preservation of existing tree canopies in all public and private rights-of-way. Non-residential areas that connect residents and pedestrians to other areas within West should be held to the same standards as residential areas with tree amenities zones.

I. Pair tree planting and replacement programs with construction, maintenance, and improvement programs when possible. Construct and enhance the infrastructure necessary to ensure long-term health and sustainability of mature trees, and avoid the negative impacts of impervious infrastructure.

J. Implement annual tree planting programs within West Area neighborhoods.

K. Promote regionally appropriate tree planting on private property green spaces.

L. Continue data collection and tracking of the urban tree canopy throughout the West Area neighborhoods. Provide annual reporting on the ecological benefits and positive impacts of a healthy and vibrant tree canopy. Track the existing tree canopy for improvements that come as the result of new development and green infrastructure investments.

M. Use future ecological impact statements and reports to support preservation efforts and replacement programs that expand and enhance the health of the urban tree canopy in West.

N. Track maintenance, costs, and social, emotional, and environmental rewards associated with a healthy and vibrant urban tree canopy to demonstrate the advantages attributed to green infrastructure investments.
COMMUNITY TREE PLANTING INITIATIVE:
CASR is piloting a program to increase tree canopy on private property in heat vulnerable neighborhoods, including in the West Area. The program will provide volunteer coordination, large-scale tree planting, community relationship building, and support for ongoing tree care. The goal is to plant at least 350 trees per year over three years.

Denver Urban Gardens Food Forest Initiative
Food forests are multi-layered, public-access spaces full of perennial food crops including fruit trees, nut trees, berries, shrubs, and vines. Cared for by volunteers, they preserve green space and provide a low-maintenance source of food in marginal urban areas, and can educate visitors while establishing areas of rest and relaxation. Perennial plants sequester carbon, slow and filter runoff, improve soil, create shade and habitat, and require less maintenance over time. They are less water-intensive than an equivalent area of grass or annual garden, and can produce several tons of food in the size of a standard city lot. They are generational spaces that can become woven into the fabric of the city, and will inspire caretaking and ownership far into the future.

DUG’s Food Forest Initiative will be installing new sites on an ongoing basis, but any group or organization could use the same principles to create their own urban food forest with advice and resources from DUG or others. Ideal sites: marginal, unused area (slopes, strips, unconventional parcels, unused lawn), existing water access for establishment watering, north or east facing slope, community support for maintenance and care, easy access for materials and community visitation, and potential for harvesting stormwater runoff.
2.1.3 WATER IN THE WEST AREA

What’s going on in West?
Rapid development and global climate change are creating new challenges and opportunities for Denver, and the West Area’s water infrastructure and waterways. In recent years, the western U.S. has experienced record-breaking heat waves that have fueled massive wildfires, bringing the consequences of severe drought into the public eye. The consequences of urban development and growth coupled with climate change directly impact the communities of West along with Denver and other front range communities. As the threat of increasingly variable and extreme weather events prompt concerns regarding the potential for catastrophic flooding, the recreational, aesthetic, and environmental benefits afforded by the West Area’s urban waterways are increasingly recognized and valued by residents. In the West Area, the path forward is through collaboration on new water projects, programs, and policies that both respect the original indigenous people’s water practices coupled with modern engineering and green infrastructure solutions.

The City and County of Denver, Colorado Water Conservation Board, Denver Water, Metro Water Recovery, Mile High Flood District, and The Greenway Foundation/The Water Connection have come together with residents and community stakeholders to develop a framework for water management called The Denver One Water Plan. These partner agencies are responsible for many aspects of the urban water cycle, including water supply and demand, wastewater, storm, and flood protection, water quality, watersheds, and waterway management. The Denver One Water Plan charts a course for holistic and resilient water management, and land use strategies for Denver through collaboration, multi-benefit projects, and strong policies that promote healthy watersheds and ecosystems in an equitable, economically, and environmentally beneficial manner. Using The Denver One Water Plan as a foundation, this chapter of the West Area Plan addresses challenges and strategies particular to West neighborhoods.

Topography and Waterways
The West Area has a unique topography compared to other areas within the City and County of Denver. The topography on the west side of the South Platte River reaches a high elevation point in a shorter distance than on the east side of the river, resulting in an abrupt elevation change. For example, in the West Area there is an elevation change of nearly 200 feet from the South Platte River to its highest point within Barnum West. This same elevation change occurs on the east side of the South Platte River over a distance that’s twice as large.

In addition to an abrupt elevation change, there are several waterways running through the West Area that contribute to the unique conditions found in the area. The South Platte River represents the eastern boundary of the West Area Plan. The land directly adjacent to the South Platte River to the west used to be a low-lying part of the riverbed and is characterized today by its mostly industrial character.

In addition to the South Platte, Lakewood/Dry Gulch and Weir Gulch are two waterways within the West Area that run from higher elevation points in the west, east towards the South Platte River. These two waterways provide natural open drainage channels for the area. While the gulches are great amenities and natural drainage systems for the West Area, they are also part of a hilly terrain that limits the area’s overall connectivity.
EXISTING WATER ELEMENTS

FLOODPLAIN

WATER QUALITY
**Impervious Surfaces**

Impervious surfaces make up a large percentage of the land area within any city. Building rooftops, paved areas (streets, driveways, and parking lots), sidewalks and paved trails are all examples of common impervious surfaces. These surfaces absorb the sun’s heat, raise ambient air temperatures, and contribute to excessive surface runoff during rain events. Surface runoff is a main contributor to localized urban flooding and increased water pollution as rain is prohibited from being naturally absorbed into the soil.

Impervious surfaces make up 52 percent of the surface area within West’s neighborhoods. This is higher than Denver’s overall average impervious surface area of 44 percent. Industrial uses found along the low-lying area adjacent to the South Platte River in West contribute significantly to the overall percentage based on the development patterns of large buildings with large surface parking lots.

**FEMA Flood Zones**

As defined by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), flood hazard areas (zones A & AE), or flood zones, are areas that have a 1 percent chance of experiencing a 100-year flood event in any given year. These areas are commonly referred to as the “regulatory floodplain.”

Several large areas of land within the West Area’s neighborhoods fall into the FEMA 100-year regulatory floodplain. These include areas along Weir, Lakewood, and Dry Gulches, as well as areas of Valverde and Sun Valley that are within the low-lying areas adjacent to the South Platte River. Many factors impact the possibility for West to experience a flood event, including the area’s topography, drainage system capacity, impervious surface area, plus the frequency, intensity, and duration of local rain events.

**Water Quality**

Denver’s Green Infrastructure Implementation Strategy, a study performed in 2018, defines the city’s urban watershed and water quality impairments that exist within each water quality basin. The study ranks and prioritizes each water quality basin based on an analysis of primary and secondary criteria from a variety of perspectives including water quality, imperviousness, heat island, transportation pollution, and social justice (see Green Infrastructure Implementation Strategy for more details about the criteria and prioritization methodology).

By understanding the primary pollutants of concern, and pollutants found within each basin, the City and County of Denver can design and implement innovative strategies that reduce pollutant contaminants finding their way into our urban waterways. The focus of the Green Infrastructure Implementation Strategy is to identify green infrastructure projects that target multiple pollutants while also providing additional benefits such as increased open space, climate resiliency, improved air quality, urban heat island mitigation, better connectivity, and enhanced community livability.

Four water quality basins exist within the West Area Plan boundary, and most of them are on the higher spectrum of priority determined by the DOTI Stormwater Management Group. Valverde and Weir Gulch basins are high priority basins, Lakewood/Dry Gulch basin is a medium-high priority basin, and the Sloan’s Lake/Highland basin is a medium-low priority basin.
The Denver One Water Plan provides a unified and sustainability-centered framework for implementing holistic and resilient water management and land use strategies through collaboration, multi-beneficial projects, and strong policies that promote healthy watersheds in an equitable, economically, and environmentally beneficial manner. While this plan addresses the city as a whole, the West Area Plan has integrated relevant content from this plan for West into the recommendations found in this section.

Aligned with Denver’s Comprehensive Plan 2040 and other regional plans, this document is developed by and for local water management agencies who, up until now, have primarily worked independently to supervise water supply and quality, wastewater, water reuse, storm and flood protection, watersheds, and waterways. One Water encourages standardized collaboration between multiple water agencies to reliably manage Denver’s water systems to meet public and environmental needs while reducing costs, improving resilience, and enhancing community livability.

**Denver Urban Water Cycle**

The One Water Plan takes a holistic and integrated approach to planning, considering all aspects of the urban water cycle from stormwater, surface water, ground water, recycled water, potable water wastewater and treating it as “One Water.”

### Key One Water Plan Partners

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Key One Water Plan Partners</th>
<th>Roles and Responsibilities in Managing Denver’s Urban Water Cycle</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>City and County of Denver</td>
<td>Wastewater collection and stormwater management infrastructure.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Denver Water</td>
<td>Water supply, treatment, and distribution; recycled water treatment and distribution.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Metro Wastewater Reclamation District</td>
<td>Wastewater transmission and treatment.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mile High Flood District</td>
<td>Regional stormwater and flood protection.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Greenway Foundation / The Water Connection</td>
<td>Watershed protection and revitalization.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**THE DENVER ONE WATER PLAN**

The Denver Urban Water Cycle

Rain/Stormwater

Surface Water

Groundwater

Recycled Water

Drinking Water

Wastewater
**The South Platte River Needs Assessment**

**Description:** The South Platte River Needs Assessment is a planning process that assessed gaps and prioritized project plans to restore and protect the entire 11 miles of the South Platte River within Denver County. The needs assessment is necessary to advance integrated water management solutions by placing priority on a healthy South Platte River, on quality human experiences within the river corridor, and on mobility strategies that create better community connections and access to the South Platte River.

**Project benefits:** Restoration of the South Platte River as it winds through Denver provides an opportunity to enhance management of peak flow events and mitigate flooding potential. At the same time, this coordinated planning effort offers opportunities to improve the aquatic ecosystem and increase public access to this recreational and aesthetic community amenity.

**Project partners:** City and County of Denver, Metro Wastewater Reclamation District, Mile High Flood District, The Greenway Foundation/The Water Connection, Denver Trout Unlimited, and Colorado Water Conservation Board

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**The Sun Valley Ecodistrict**

**Description:** The Denver Housing Authority and the City and County of Denver were awarded a $30 million Choice Neighborhoods Implementation Grant to implement the Sun Valley Neighborhood Transformation Plan. The Sun Valley Redevelopment vision includes youth and education, food access, growth opportunities, intentional housing, connections to open space, and sustainable infrastructure.

**Project benefits:** The Sun Valley Ecodistrict Redevelopment will include the development of a new section of the Riverfront Park to promote renaturalization and will reconnect the neighborhood to the South Platte River. It will also feature restoration of the Weir Gulch to provide a healthy, safe stream corridor with access to the natural environment. The Sun Valley Healthy Living Initiative will influence the overall design by considering how the built environment may best encourage healthy living opportunities within the neighborhood. The development will also include several green infrastructure initiatives such as water detention and retention facilities, and the site may also offer opportunities for sewer heat recovery.

**Project partners:** City and County of Denver, Denver Housing Authority, Housing and Urban Development, Metro Wastewater Reclamation District, Sun Valley Ecodistrict

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**Waterway Resiliency Program**

**Description:** The Waterway Resiliency program (previously called Urban Waterways) is a program of projects that aims to restore and/or enhance 6.5 miles of ecosystem along the South Platte River and reduce flood risk for over 500 homes and structures along the South Platte River, Weir and Harvard Gulches. This program is based on a U.S. Army Corps study (the Final Integrated Feasibility Report and Environmental Impact Statement, “Final EIS”) that was completed in 2019 and authorized in the Federal Water Resources and Development Act 2020. The program received $350M from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers in April 2022. This funding will accelerate project delivery and create opportunities to transform, restore, and build resiliency in the South Platte River, Weir Gulch, and Harvard Gulch waterways more quickly than originally anticipated.

**Project benefits:** The recommended plan along the South Platt River will restore approximately 160 acres of critical riparian corridor and wetland habitat and nearly 100 acres of aquatic habitat and reconnect an additional 190 acres of existing habitat. Additionally, incidental flood risk management benefits along the South Platte River will remove approximately 100 structures from the regulatory floodplain. The recommended flood risk management plan along Weir Gulch, which includes channel and culvert widening, will reduce flood risk for 360 structures located in a neighborhood that has experienced inequities in environmental justice and protection. The recommended flood risk management plan along East Harvard Gulch will implement nonstructural flood risk management measures for approximately 175 structures. These projects will improve and/or increase access to trails and open space along the South Platte River and Weir Gulch.

**Project partners:** The City and County of Denver is working with its partners at the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Mile High Flood District, and The Greenway Foundation to ensure this program has a robust strategy for effective community engagement and efficient project delivery. For further details about the project, please visit [www.denvergov.org/WaterwayResiliency](http://www.denvergov.org/WaterwayResiliency).
RECOMMENDATIONS

Water Policy

Integrate water policy with land use, energy, urban agriculture, and other types of development projects that are affected by water management activities.

This recommendation is in line with goal #2 of Denver’s One Water Plan, ‘Implement Multi-Benefit Projects and Programs.’ Nearly any water management activity has the potential to create multiple benefits, when planning and implementation is conducted through a One Water lens. For example, a stream restoration project driven by a need to improve waterway ecosystem health can also provide an opportunity to enhance flood protection and improve recreational access or educational signage along the waterway.

A. Create a framework with comprehensive criteria to identify and prioritize multi-benefit projects or water management strategies based on measures of social, environmental, ecological, and economic benefits and costs. The framework should have an evaluation and prioritization process that assigns an overall score to potential projects.
   1. Update development regulations to create a definitive path forward for public and private developers to implement enhanced water conservation, water reuse, flood mitigation, ecosystem restoration, water quality, greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions reduction, and energy recovery plans into their projects.

B. Consider the water-energy nexus when evaluating new development and land use plans to maximize funding opportunities.

C. Strengthen land-water-food-energy nexus by linking urban water management more closely to urban agriculture for increased food security, community benefits, and environmental health.
   1. Identify opportunities where regulatory updates can be made to allow urban agriculture (urban gardens, plant nurseries, etc.) to improve existing agricultural systems and management practices, and streamline the permit process.
   2. Establish policies and regulations that create a path forward for public and private development to take advantage of the food security goals established by the 2017 Denver Food Plan and Comprehensive Plan 2040. Incorporate mobility, food access and native planting into the built environment.

D. Consider requirements and/or incentives for public and private development to achieve enhanced water conservation measures, water reuse, ecosystem restoration, water quality improvements, energy recovery, and/or GHG emission reduction plans in projects.
**RECOMMENDATIONS**

**Q7 Waterways**
Implement a cohesive approach to development and infrastructure improvements that prioritizes the protection and enhancement of the South Platte River’s environmental, ecological, and recreational needs.

The residents of West have expressed a clear prioritization for the preservation and enhancement of the waterways and green infrastructure networks that connect and flow throughout the six neighborhoods. Concepts and examples of different types of green infrastructure approaches can be found on page 33 of this section. Community priorities include gulches, Sloan’s Lake, Weir Gulch and other tributaries and water detention areas that support a healthy river and are woven thru our neighborhoods.

- A. Leverage opportunities on city-owned property to convert impervious surfaces to vegetated open spaces and/or pervious surfaces to mitigate the impacts of urban heat, to filter and treat stormwater run-off before it reaches the South Platte River.
- B. Promote the expansion of parks and open spaces along the South Platte River for recreational uses through the city’s park land acquisition strategy.
- C. Promote the development of wildlife habitats along the South Platte River on city-owned properties, and through programs and incentives on new developments that front or are adjacent to the South Platte River.
- D. Implement a new “Riparian Corridor” street typology for developments that occur along the South Platte River, that are context-sensitive and respond to the design guidelines found in the Denver Complete Streets Design Guidelines.
- E. Prioritize the designation of streets within West as candidates for Ultra-Urban Green Street overlays, designated tree lined parkways, or a combination thereof. A street that could be used as an example is Alameda Avenue, at the southern boundary of West.
- F. Prioritize opportunities to continue to grow the River Sisters Circle and Partnership regionally to further preserve and sustain waterway connections.
  1. Secure sustainable funding for community anchors to deliver community-led, shared projects, programs, exchanges that advance resiliency and regeneration through the celebration and empowerment of the historically denied contributions of Indigenous and Mexican/Chicano knowledge and culture.
  2. Identify technical support and funding to develop a proof of concept based on indigenous-based community engagement and open space design, planning, and construction.
  3. Continue inter-generational organizing around community health and environmental stewardship through dynamic conversations and place-making programs.
  4. Develop and celebrate relationships between Sun Valley Park and others along South Platte and Weir Gulch, including Carpio Sanguinetti in Globeville, City of Cuernavaca Park, Sunken Gardens and Valverde “Ulibarri” Park.

**Q8 Water Management Practices**
Develop and implement land use and water regulatory policies and programs that support sustainable and resilient water management practices at a neighborhood scale.

Implementing water planning approaches and policies to reliably meet water supply, wastewater, and stormwater management needs through a range of future conditions will increase Denver and West’s water resilience and climate change preparedness. This recommendation aligns with Goal #4 in the Denver One Water Plan. ‘Increase Resilience and Climate Change Preparedness’.

- A. Update rules and recommendations to encourage and require use of sustainable and resilient water management strategies and reuse in development.
- B. Implement regulatory policies that promote water use efficiencies and good water management strategies.
- C. Identify the cause of primary sources of harmful runoff and create strategies to eliminate those sources of runoff and their negative impacts on the watershed, in conjunction with the Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System permit policies.
- D. Implement water efficiency and consider expanding water reuse projects on public and private sites to improve local water supply reliability.
Overview of the River Sisters Circle & Partnership

The River Sisters Circle (RSC) flows from a 2018 Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) signed by Mayors Michael B. Hancock and Jose Enrique Reina Lizarraga establishing a bi-national partnership between the peoples of Denver, Colorado, and San Luis Rio Colorado, Sonora, Mexico. Two distant cities, whose fates are equally tied to the Colorado River. The River Sisters Circle Initiative is composed by community groups like the Latino Cultural Arts Center and El Laboratorio and community members including Alfredo Reyes, Nita Gonzales, Adriana Abara, Stella Madrid, Lisa Saenz, Solicia Lopez, Jenny Santos, Jorge Figueroa, and Paul Hellmund. Beginning in 2019, River Sisters Circle Initiative, partnered with residents of Sun Valley, the Denver Housing Authority, and the city in their community-driven Master Redevelopment Plan to revitalize the neighborhood (a 10+ year planning process) and create a new riverfront park.

RSC continues to use the established authentic community-driven process in designing and implementing a “Turquoise Necklace,” a Riverwalk concept along a rediscovered South Platte River in Denver. Our goal is to “heal” our sister, the river, and ourselves, by building access and restoring the health of Denver’s only river and our open spaces, while expanding creative, cultural, educational, and economic exchanges, locally and beyond.

The “Turquoise Necklace” Concept

The Turquoise Necklace continues a story as ancient as water and snow. Turquoise has long been revered for its mysteries. It was valued by the Aztecs more so than gold, which is why it was offered to the goddess of ground waters, Matlalcueye. Among the Dine Nation (Navajo), Turquoise was ground with coral to summon rain and was recognized as a symbol of good fortune. Together, the River Sisters Circle and Turquoise Necklace awaken our connection to and dependence on rivers, and to each other, while honoring and caring for the rivers and the Earth.

Opportunities for West Denver

- To become a global leader in climate disaster mitigation and restoration.
- To help Denver become a transnational city with actionable environmental and cultural exchanges with Mexico.
- To create healthy river and land spaces where community can gather for stewardship, recreation, learning, healing, and community building.
- To immortalize the presence and achievements of Indigenous, Mexican, and Chicano peoples throughout our beloved city’s history, sharing and celebrating these cultural connections widely.
- Partnership Collaboration Efforts: Latino Cultural Arts Center and El Laboratorio.
**RECOMMENDATIONS**

**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.

Denver voters passed the 2018 Ballot Measure 2A: Parks and Open Space Sales Tax, a 0.25% that is dedicated to the improvement and expansion of Denver Parks, allowing implementation of Game Plan for a Healthy City to begin. The additional tax funds, combined with existing city general funding, will create new opportunities to realize the Game Plan’s goals and leave a rich legacy of green space for future generations.

A. Provide new and enhanced programs and resources to property owners, development and conservation interests, local governments, and other stakeholders that assist in making informed land use decisions, to maintain natural landscapes that protect green infrastructure investments, and ensure the health, safety, and general welfare of the West Area community.

B. Enhance water quality of impaired waterways by reducing the volume and pollution loading of non-point source stormwater runoff contaminants, and increase the effectiveness of local stormwater management programs that capture, divert and treat stormwater runoff before it reaches natural waterway systems.

C. Work with architects of the built environment and community members to incorporate community gardens and food forests into all relevant designs, capturing the multitude of benefits that they provide.

**Q10**

**Green Infrastructure in Neighborhoods**

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.

Ecological and regenerative development practices have been identified as key priorities by residents in West Denver. Stakeholders believe regenerative practices will promote responsible and sustainable land use addressing the historic inequities that have led to the current existing challenges faced by West Area communities.

A. Evaluate existing conditions to identify new opportunities for green infrastructure that leverage the potential of existing natural ecology, topography, and other unique site conditions to create sustainable and resilient outcomes within the West Area. The following areas should be prioritized:
   1. High capacity transit centers, particularly those adjacent to the South Platte River, gulch, and trails.
   2. Industrial areas, particularly in the Sun Valley and Valverde neighborhoods.
   3. Connection and coordination with the River Sisters Partnership to advance restoration of the river.
   4. West-Bar-Var-Wood Park as a site for a potential stormwater quality and detention project.

5. Weir Gulch Park at Irving Street, Paco Sanchez Park, Dry Gulch Park as sites to be further study for potential stormwater quality projects

B. Promote on- and off-site improvements that work together as one cohesive system to address the ecological issues that exist at district and neighborhood scales. Work with community members to identify need and want for community gardens and food forests built in collaboration with them.

C. For larger development projects, prioritize the creation of publicly accessible parks, open spaces, and community gathering places during their early phases of development. Look for opportunities to install fitness trails along the gulches and transit connections where space is available.
**GREEN STREETS AND ALLEYS**

Study the feasibility to 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.

**DEVELOPING A NETWORK OF GREEN STREETS AND GREEN AMENITY STREETS**

A network of green streets and green amenity streets throughout West will result in regional and local connections that unite surrounding neighborhoods and jurisdictions to West. These networks are high performing ecological landscapes that include climate appropriate trees and vegetation in clean pervious soils which work in concert to provide shade, treat stormwater, contribute to community beautification, and calm traffic. The following strategies further explain the difference between green streets and green amenity streets.

**A.** Implement a network of green streets of site-scale green infrastructure improvements to address air and water quality, and reduce flooding.

1. Define two (2) categories of Green Streets: “Green Streets” that include various stormwater and water quality infrastructure improvements; “Green Amenity Streets” that include maximized street trees that provide shade, but may not be appropriate for stormwater or water quality infrastructure in all places. The two types of green streets can coexist on a single block.

2. Prioritize green street typologies based on the city’s Green Infrastructure Implementation Strategy.

3. Prioritize green street typologies that coincide with pedestrian priority, bicycle priority, transit priority, Safe Routes to Schools, and connections to key neighborhood destinations such as parks, open spaces, regional trails, waterways, the South Platte River, recreational centers and schools.

4. Prioritize streets that are prone to urban heat island effects and flash flooding.

**B.** Look for opportunities through city alley resurfacing programs to design and implement sustainable and resilient Green Alleys to manage stormwater and provide alternative bicycle and pedestrian routes for area residents. Use design features such as permeable paving, improved lighting, signage, wayfinding, art as means to establish community branding and elevate neighborhood identity, along with other physical design elements that reduce vehicle speeds and improve pedestrian safety and security.

**C.** Incentivize and encourage the development of new or expanded green street networks, shared streets and alleyways, and associated infrastructure as part of the Large Development Review process.

**D.** Partner and collaborate with local organizations such as Denver Urban Gardens, Denver Public Schools, and other stakeholders in west to advance the garden project vision and activate community spaces throughout west neighborhoods.
WATER ELEMENTS RECOMMENDATIONS

City and County Boundary
Parks and Open Space
Lake or Pond
Stream, Creek or River
Light Rail Stations
Detention Priority Areas
Green Amenity Streets
Green Streets (Water Quality)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE CONCEPTS (WATER)</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>RAIN GARDEN</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Small, shallow, sunken vegetated areas that collect stormwater runoff from roofs, streets, and sidewalks. Also known as bioretention cells, they are designed to mimic the natural ways water flows over and absorbs into land to reduce stormwater pollution.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>WATER QUALITY PLANTERS</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Urban rain gardens with vertical walls and either open or closed bottoms. Usually found in downtown areas, they collect and absorb runoff from streets, sidewalks, and parking lots. Ideal for areas with limited space, planter boxes can be a useful way to beautify city streets.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>GREEN AMENITY STREETS</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>BIOSWALEs</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vegetated, linear green infrastructure feature which conveys stormwater like a channel or ditch, but also slows and filters the stormwater as it flows through.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
1. GREEN AMENITY STREET - PED AND TRANSIT PRIORITY

2. GREEN AMENITY STREET - BICYCLE PRIORITY

3. GREEN STREET (WATER QUALITY) - BICYCLE PRIORITY

4. GREEN STREET (WATER QUALITY) - PED PRIORITY
EXAMPLES OF STORMWATER PLANTERS
What’s going on in West?
During the first two decades of the 2000s, Denver experienced a rapid rate of growth. As West neighborhoods continue to absorb population growth and become more dense, demands on parks and open spaces continues to increase. As a result, providing more open spaces and preserving the area’s urban tree canopy are critical for West’s long-term public amenity goals. Park and open space expansion efforts will also help to address long-held inequities and disparities in Denver communities of color.

The parks and open space system is one of West Denver’s most prized assets. Parks, trails, open spaces, recreational centers, and the urban tree canopy are among the most commonly cited assets by West area residents in survey responses when asked to identify the most important and prized places in their neighborhoods.

In all, the West Area includes over 220 acres of public parkland. Parkland is distributed across facilities of various scales, ranging from small neighborhood pocket parks to larger community parks to regional athletic complexes that support a wide array of recreational amenities. West Denver is also home to the recently renovated Paco Sanchez Park, one of Denver’s premier parks and a regional draw from across the metropolitan area.

Parks are relatively well-distributed throughout the West Area, with approximately 85 percent of households within walking distance of a park. Today, 86 percent of Denver residents live within a half mile (about a 10-minute walk) of a park. Roughly 52% of Denver’s residential parcels are not within a 10-minute walk of a playground.

In terms of the amount of open space, West Denver has an open space ratio of approximately 6.7 acres/1,000 residents. This is below the city’s target median goal of 9 acres/1,000 residents, and is less than the target goal outlined in Denver’s Game Plan for a Healthy City, which seeks 13 acres per 1,000 residents to meet widely-accepted national goals.

### Community Feedback on Existing Parks and Open Spaces:

“I really appreciate the amount of green space we have in our neighborhood.”

“I love the green space, bike paths, and diversity of people in our neighborhoods.”

“Beautiful views of downtown, mature trees, (small) recreation center, a lake (but it needs cleaning), wildlife, nice trails, connections to Villa Park over the bridge, swimming pool, splash pad, and great place for families to gather.”

“Paco Sanchez Park is an amazing park. It is well kept and has beautiful views of the city. I like that there is a lot of open space so the city view isn’t blocked.”

### Five Characteristics of High-Quality Parks

1. **High-Quality Parks Are in Excellent Physical Condition**
2. **High-Quality Parks Are Accessible to All Potential Users**
3. **High-Quality Parks Provide Positive Experiences for Park Users**
4. **High-Quality Parks Are Relevant to the Communities They Serve**
5. **High-Quality Parks Are Flexible and Adaptable to Changing Circumstances**
DENVER’S GAME PLAN FOR A HEALTHY CITY

Parks and open spaces, trails, urban tree canopies, parkways, and natural features are all vital elements of neighborhood infrastructure, and are key to ensuring that Denver realizes its vision of an inclusive, equitable, connected, resilient, and healthy city. Parks, open space, and recreational areas are often identified by residents as key neighborhood resources that contribute to dynamic, civic social spaces and Denver’s quality-of-life. These places serve communities by providing critical amenities that support recreation, leisure, and social activities bringing people together, building community relationships, connectedness, and creating more comfortable spaces for everyone to enjoy. The availability of open spaces, trails, park amenities, and local programming has a strong impact on the overall quality of life, health and well-being of Denver residents. A well-designed neighborhood with amenities and services that support healthy lifestyles can improve health where all people can lead fulfilling and productive lives.

The Denver Game Plan for a Healthy City highlights that, “Many neighborhoods do not have pedestrian access to places to experience nature, and the mountain parks are difficult to access for families without a car.” These barriers and inequities are added obstacles to maintaining healthy lifestyles and can have lasting negative social and economic consequence. Passive uses, such as an open lawn, can foster informal recreational, leisure, and social activities, while active spaces, like basketball and tennis courts, or recreational centers can create communal neighborhood destinations. One of the city’s guiding principles as expressed in Game Plan is to “ensure equity in the distribution of parks and park resources and programming so that all residents have the opportunity to improve their personal health and well-being”.

Recreational areas and centers complement parks and open spaces by providing year-round locations for activities and community spaces in indoor environments and in some cases, outdoor if there is access to swimming pools or water features that residents can enjoy. Whether our community parks or public spaces are passive or programmed, they all have an impact on the overall health outcomes of neighborhood residents as they provide a variety of amenities that contribute to a community’s sense of place and enhance active and passive uses.

The Every Drop strategy found in the Game Plan for a Healthy City plan states that trees and vegetation in our parks, as well as along our parkways and streets, help to clean the air we breathe and provide comfort (i.e., shade) that decreases the load demands on our energy infrastructure during summer months. Our parks and urban forests capture, clean, and filter stormwater of contaminants, decreasing the demands on our storm sewer systems. Bikeways create important mobility networks that facilitate physical fitness and provide alternatives for commuter traffic on congested streets. Investment in parks and recreational facilities have positive ripple effects and benefits throughout our city.

In addition to publicly owned parks and open spaces, privately-owned spaces also function as an important component to the city’s overall open space network. While privately managed and maintained, the city reviews their design and requires a legal mechanism (e.g., public access easement) be applied to ensure permanent public access. These are most often created in association with large-scale developments, particularly greenfield sites, but can also be applied to other landscape areas.
To meet this resident per acre target the park system will need to expand to match the area’s population growth. While there are existing parks and recreational facilities in West, there is a need for better connectivity to and between them. There are opportunities to improve the multimodal networks and off-street trail systems to better connect residents to these parks and open spaces. Other related quality of life improvements needed within the West neighborhoods include facility, maintenance, and programming upgrades, improved access to existing facilities (e.g., fields, aquatic facilities, recreational centers, gathering spaces, accessible playgrounds with accessible play features, youth service programs), and expanded recreational center hours of operation for seniors and youth.

Other community priorities include the preservation of open spaces with scenic views of natural areas and downtown, respect for waterways as “neighborhood centerpieces,” and diversifying park amenities to include family-friendly gathering spaces like grilling areas, covered plazas, and more locations for public art and murals that are created by local artists. West communities are rich in community culture and history, and residents have expressed that increasing opportunities to highlight the unique cultures of West is extremely important. Providing more space for public art and other educational installations will help to preserve and advance the historic significance of West’s neighborhoods.

Community feedback also suggests there is a strong desire and high need for more neighborhood and pocket parks with lighting, abundant trash and recycling receptacles, network connectivity to the regional trail system, and improved access to neighboring parks, trails, transit, and downtown Denver.

**Inclusive Play**

Playgrounds are places for imagination, play, exercise, and socialization. They should be accessible, inclusive and welcoming for users of all ages and abilities. Denver’s Department of Parks and Recreation strives to create play environments that are accessible and enjoyed by all users, despite any physical, social, emotional, cognitive, communication, or sensory differences. To satisfy the need for inclusive playgrounds, West Area facilities must be designed, redesigned, constructed, and maintained for use by all area residents.

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**Goals from Denver Housing Authority and Denver Parks and Recreation:**

- When possible, integrate water quality elements into park designs.
- Incorporate River Sisters and First Nations/Indigenous People concepts seamlessly into park designs.
- Protect or relocate existing playground elements in new park designs.
- Maintain and improve South Platte River trail connectivity, signage, wayfinding and user comfort whenever/wherever possible.

**Goals from the Community**

- Create an active recreation destination.
- Provide places for large and small community gatherings.
- Incorporate food opportunities and/or places for food trucks in or nearby the park.
- Celebrate the cultures of the community in the park design.

**Relationship to Nearby Community and Neighborhood Parks**

Sun Valley’s Riverfront Park has four community and neighborhood parks within a 1-mile radius. Each of the surrounding parks has a variety of amenities, from traditional and destination playgrounds, to softball fields, and recreational centers. Programming in the existing parks helps to inform what amenities should be included in the new Riverfront Park.

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**Quotes from the Community:**

“Paco Sanchez, Nettie Moore, and Sloan’s Lake Parks are our favorite spots to visit weekly. The playground at Perry Street and 12th Avenue could use some shade during the hot summer months.”

“A little park with a basketball hoop and some great trees is here in the Valverde Neighborhood. Unfortunately, it is regularly littered with trash (there is only occasionally a trash can there). Can some play equipment be added? Even swings would be great. There is a scarcity of parks within walking distance in this particular area of our neighborhoods.”
The Denver Department of Parks and Recreation (DPR) has developed an Equity Index tool to help plan, prioritize, and implement park facilities and recreational programming equitably throughout the city. The equity index assesses a variety of factors, including access to parks, historic investments in communities over time, and the percentage of open space acres per resident. The index also considers demographic data including race, poverty, obesity, and population density. Based on the Equity Index analysis, neighborhoods in the West Area ranked in the highest category of park need with an equity score of 5 on a 1-5 point scale where one is low need and five is the greatest need.

This result is consistent with Denver’s broader history of under-investment in lower-income minority communities of color.

In 2018, voters passed Ballot Measure 2A: Parks and Open Space Sales Tax (2A funding), which is a 0.25% sales tax dedicated to the improvement and expansion of Denver’s parks and recreational system, accelerating the implementation of the Denver Game Plan for a Healthy City. Additional funds provided by Measure 2A, combined with funds from the City’s General Fund, will create new opportunities to accelerate the Game Plan’s goals.

Park expansions and programming investments will enhance the outdoor culture that Denver Parks and Recreation (DPR) will leave as a legacy to future generations.

This investment framework creates opportunities to achieve Game Plan goals in the following areas: acquisition of land for future parks, trails, and open spaces; improvements and maintenance for existing parks, trails and open spaces, (including Denver Mountain Parks); building and maintaining new parks and trails; restoring and protecting natural features (e.g., waterways, rivers, canals, and streams); and expanding the urban tree canopy in parks, along parkways, and in public rights-of-way. DPR has a dedicated source of funding for parks, trails and facility improvements, including land acquisition.

Building upon The Game Plan for a Healthy City, and the Parks Legacy Fund (2A) Five-Year Plan, in 2021 DPR completed a Strategic Acquisition Plan to help grow and maintain an equitable, sustainable and resilient parks and recreation system for a healthier city.

The DPR Strategic Acquisition Plan provides a clear framework for decision-making that identifies priorities, describes strategies, and explains criteria for success associated with completing and funding future parkland acquisitions. This framework will ensure Denver’s urban and mountain parks, open spaces and recreational systems will equitably meet the recreational needs of the entire community, while also ensuring Denver remains a resilient, sustainable and healthy city. The Strategic Acquisition Plan highlights six focus areas as identified in the Parks Legacy Fund (2A) Five-Year Plan: Equity; 10-Minute Walk or Roll to a Park; Resiliency, Habitat Restoration & Waterways; Downtown, High-Density, & Growth Areas; Facilities; and Mountain Parks.
PARKS, TRAILS, OPEN SPACE RECOMMENDATIONS

City and County Boundary
Parks and Open Space
Lake or Pond
Stream, Creek or River
Light Rail Stations

Priority Area for New Parks
Park Access Improvements
Civic Space Opportunities
School / Shared Open Space Opportunity

Enhanced Trail / Crossing Improvements
Complete Gaps in Existing Trail
Recreation Centers
Development Incentive
Priority Areas for New Public Space

West Area Plan
## DENVER PARKS AND RECREATION GAME PLAN (2019) - GUIDING PRINCIPLES

| 1.2 | RESILIENT LANDSCAPES  
Create select park areas to incorporate climate resilient landscape and drought tolerance. |
| 1.5 | ECOSYSTEM RESTORATION  
Restore functional ecosystems emphasizing healthy waterways and lakes. |
| 1.6 | URBAN FOREST EXPANSION  
Protect and expand tree cover in areas of high urban heat. |
| 1.8 | RIGHT-OF-WAY TREES  
Redefine municipal roles and responsibilities for the establishment, care and replacement of trees in the ROW. |
| 1.12 | MOUNTAIN PARK FIRE MANAGEMENT  
Work with regional partners to research and develop best practices for Mountain Park forest management and fire mitigation. |
| 1.13 | ENERGY EFFICIENT FACILITIES  
Make facilities more energy-saving and efficient, reducing energy use in park and recreation operations by 25 percent in 10 years. |
| 1.15 | WASTE REDUCTION & RECYCLING  
Address waste more efficiently, increase user responsibilities, and expand recycling in parks and recreation facilities. |
| 2.2 | RECREATION PROGRAMMING  
Adapt recreation facilities and programming to promote active lifestyles consistent with the culture of the surrounding community. |
| 2.3 | EMERGING TRENDS  
Actively research, test, and implement new park facilities and programs to respond to emerging trends. |
| 2.7 | ENGAGEMENT  
Develop Departmental capabilities to deepen community and employee outreach and engagement to better understand perspectives and needs. |
| 3.1 | GROW PARKS  
Acquire land and build facilities to keep pace with growth and meet 10-minute walk standard and service goals. |
| 3.2 | EXPAND PARTNERSHIPS  
Partner with residents, the private sector and non-profit organizations to support facility and program expansion. |
| 3.5 | 10 MIN WALK ACCESS  
Ensure a ten minute walk for park and open space for every neighborhood. |
| 3.6 | MULTI-MODAL ACCESS  
With partners, improve multi-modal transportation systems and pathways in neighborhoods with barriers or safety issues. |
| 4.1 | EQUITABLE ACCESS  
Identify and implement strategies to achieve level-of-service targets for facilities and programming to ensure equity. |
| 4.7 | STAFF GROWTH & DEVELOPMENT  
Support and invest in staff development and professional growth to support engagement and retention. |
| 4.9 | UPGRADE FACILITIES  
Upgrade operation and user facilities to meet baseline standards. |
| 4.12 | PARTNERSHIP WITH DPS  
Develop a citywide mutually beneficial relationship with DPS to share resources. |
| 4.16 | DEVELOPMENT SUPPORT  
Work with other City agencies to seek increased participation from new development to improve park and recreation opportunities for new residents. |
| 4.3 | ALTERNATIVE FUNDING  
Explore alternative funding strategies to address unmet standards and expand and enhance Department services. |
| 5.3 | TREE-LINED STREETS  
Expand a system of tree-lined streets to improve mobility, tree canopy, and water quality. |
| 5.5 | PARKS ACTIVATION  
Collaborate with agencies and organizations to activate parks and support art, cultural, and social community events. |
| 5.9 | INNOVATIVE PUBLIC SPACES  
Expand new innovative park and recreation amenities to encourage active lifestyles and improve health. |
| 5.12 | NATURE IN THE CITY  
Create nature experiences and access to natural areas in every community. |
| 5.13 | MOUNTAIN PARK ACCESS  
Expand access, amenities, programs, and ease of use to improve the experience of the mountain parks to encourage more use by Denver residents. |
The Joseph Martinez Park Master Plan was completed in January, 2021. Next steps, including final design and construction of Phase 1A, will include new and exciting amenities that support active recreation and play. This is a multi-phased project that will, once completed, revitalize the park and celebrate the history of Colorado resident Joseph Martinez and the park named in his honor. The renovations will be funded by DPR’s Capital Improvement and Legacy Park programs.

Guiding Principles

- Enhance connections to and visibility within the park and nearby destinations.
- Activate the park with health, wellness and educational opportunities.
- Celebrate the cultural heritage and history of the surrounding West Area community.
- Engage the Lakewood/Dry Gulch and natural features found within the park itself.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Q12

Access to Parks, Open Spaces, and Recreational Facilities

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

Increased accessibility to existing parks, open spaces, and recreational facilities is a vital priority for West Denver residents. Denver’s Parks and Recreation Department (DPR) routinely seeks opportunities to expand access to non-traditional recreational trends, activities, and best practices to determine how DPR can best leverage its current assets.

A. Clearly establish primary park, open space, and recreational center entrances with upgraded lighting, signage, and multimodal pathways and crossings to improve pedestrian safety and security.
   1. Add pedestrian street crossings at all park, open space, and recreational facility entrances, adjacent intersections, and regional trail crossings.
   2. Improve or add pedestrian-scale lighting at park and open space entrances, adjacent intersections, local and regional trail crossings, and around community and recreational facilities.

B. Install priority access points for new pedestrian and bicycle access to the South Platte River, both north and south of the 6th Avenue Highway when part of any right-of-way or development projects.

C. Identify linkages between key community facilities (e.g., schools, libraries, community centers) that are proximate to parks. Prioritize enhancing safety and comfort of connected pedestrian routes.

1. Work with Denver Public Schools and West Area residents to develop Safe Routes to School (SRTS) travel plans. Implement traffic calming measures around neighborhood schools to encourage and facilitate safe walking and biking. Consider virtual school buses, and remote drop-off locations that include kiss and go lanes in locations that are safer and more secure for young students and families.
RECOMMENDATIONS

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.

Community guidance collected throughout the planning process highlighted the desire that all parks, open spaces, trails, and recreational facilities be inclusive and accessible for all. The adaptive recreation project under Denver Parks and Recreation promotes diversity, inclusion, and access through programs that improve quality of life, foster independence, and boost self-esteem for everyone.

A. As recommended in Game Plan for a Healthy City, strengthen partnerships with Denver Public Schools to increase access to recreational and play opportunities within the community. Potential locations include the following:
1. Colfax Elementary
2. Cheltenham Elementary
3. Cowell Elementary
4. Eagleton Elementary
5. Fairview Elementary
6. Newlon Elementary
7. Barnum Elementary
8. Florence Crittenton High School

B. Provide appropriate recreational and cultural activity programming (e.g., group fitness programs for users of all ages and abilities, youth sports and recreational programs, arts and culture, etc.) to promote active lifestyles that are consistent with the desires of area residents of all ages and interests. Develop programming for children, the elderly, and residents whose first language is not English.

C. Improve health and wellness options and opportunities within community parks, open spaces, and recreational centers.

D. Prioritize the expansion of seating, lighting, signage, and outdoor socializing opportunities (e.g., picnic areas, gazebos, covered shelters) throughout all parks as funding allows.

E. Continue to advertise the Parks & Recreation Looking to Assist You (PLAY) program, which offers affordable memberships and programming rates to low-income Denver residents, prioritizing areas with high health disparities.

F. Work with Denver Arts and Venues and community organizations to expand arts and cultural opportunities and installations in the public realm. Improve health and wellness options and opportunities within community parks, open spaces, and recreational centers.
**NEW PARKS, OPEN SPACES, AND RECREATIONAL FACILITIES**

Work to 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.

West Denver neighborhoods are well covered by the city’s objective to have every resident within a 10-minute walk to an existing park, open space, or recreational amenity. Although there is ample coverage generally, there are a few areas in West that should be considered for future DPR amenities. Areas along Sheridan Boulevard south of 6th Avenue, areas north of Alameda Avenue near Federal Boulevard, and in the industrial areas of Valverde and Sun Valley closer to the South Platte River. (See the existing park access map on page 44.)

**STRATEGIES**

A. Identify and prioritize land acquisitions for park locations in areas currently deficient of adequate open space and outside the desired goal of a 10-minute walk or roll of a park.

B. Align future parks and public open space priorities with the city’s Game Plan for a Healthy City and DPR’s Strategic Acquisition Plan.

C. Incentivize and/or require publicly accessible open spaces, particularly in centers and corridors, as part of high-quality private developments and redevelopment projects. For example, publicly-accessible privately-owned public space amenities can be considered a community benefit in exchange for additional development rights, particularly along major corridors such as Federal and Sheridan Boulevards, West Colfax Avenue, and West Alameda Avenue.

D. Develop citywide standards and guidelines that ensure privately-owned public spaces are accessible, and contain design and amenities that respond to the community context, character, and community benefit priorities.

E. Integrate new inclusive play spaces within parks and open spaces in accordance with DPR’s Inclusive Play Strategy and guidance. Consider providing amenities in West Denver that are similar to programs available in other communities (such as the Montbello bicycle skills course).
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.

Community feedback suggests a high need of increased accessibility, connections, and directional signage guiding users to our parks, open spaces, waterways, and regional trail networks. Feedback also suggests increased signage, lighting, and wayfinding will improve the perception of safety and security throughout the plan area. Wayfinding should be multiple languages for inclusion.

A. Improve Weir Gulch Trail from Alameda Avenue to the South Platte River by establishing a continuous trail with enhanced crossings that is easy to navigate.
   1. Improve and enhance existing sections of the trail to bring them up to the new DPR collector trail standards.
   2. Establish well-marked signage and wayfinding at crossings where the trail crosses local streets.
   3. Improve and/or establish pedestrian-scaled lighting along the trail to address and improve the sense of user safety and security.
   4. Promote development that faces and addresses Weir Gulch to increase the sense of safety and security along the gulch network.

B. Fill gaps in the existing trail network throughout the West neighborhoods to provide continuous access between neighborhoods and the South Platte River trail which provides citywide connections. This can be done through public and private investment opportunities as they come in and by exploring re-purposing under utilized right-of-way to provide safe and comfortable connections where these gaps exist.

C. Align gulch connections and future improvements to proposed West Area Green Streets and Safe Routes to Schools throughout area neighborhoods

D. Establish clear requirements and standards for pedestrian access to the South Platte River and public and/or private use of riverfront property.

E. Explore federal, state, local, private, and public partnerships for funding to support environmental remediation of brownfield areas and ecological restoration along the South Platte riverbank and adjacent waterways and natural areas.
   1. Coordinate with private projects and investments along West Area trails, waterways, the gulch network, and South Platte River for publicly accessible ecological improvements.
   2. Identify ownership and/or control mechanisms for land and property improvements that adjoin the South Platte River and plan area waterways to create direct access to the waterfront and natural areas, trails, and gulch networks.
   3. Further collaborate and coordinate with neighboring jurisdictions such as the cities of Lakewood and Edgewater to improve access to and along the gulch networks. Create new environmental and recreational opportunities that enhance safety, comfort, and connectivity.
   4. Coordinate public investments, projects, and programs to promote publicly accessible waterways, natural areas, trails and gulch networks through private, public, nonprofit and entertainment partnerships.

Quotes from the Community:

“We would like more trails for walking and running, and places to kayak and paddle board along the South Platte River”

“I’ve seen many types of birds and wildlife in the area. People in the community use the gulch trails for exercise and getting around the neighborhood and to parks.”

“Great potential for improved parks and trails throughout West neighborhoods.”

“Love Weir Gulch trails and Barnum Park! How about some updates to the southwest corner? The park is ALWAYS packed. Let’s upgrade the basketball courts and revamp the metal swings.”

“The Lakewood Gulch Trail is so beautiful! The trail leads downtown and has amazing city views.”
TRANSFORMATIVE PROJECT: SOUTH PLATTE RIVER ENHANCEMENT

- BAYAUD GREEN AMENITY STREET
- VALVERDE PARK CONNECTED TO SOUTH PLATTE RIVER
- BAYAUD PED/BIKE BRIDGE
- CONNECTION TO BAKER NEIGHBORHOOD
- SOUTH LIPAN GREEN STREET
- FUTURE WATER QUALITY PARK
- NEIGHBORHOOD CIVIC SPACE
- ENHANCED RIVER TRAIL
- REMOVAL OF SOUTH PLATTE RIVER DRIVE
- SOUTH PLATTE RIVER
- VALVERDE PARK
**2.1.5 COMPLETE FOOD ENVIRONMENT**

**What is it?**

Nutritious healthy food is central to the health, well-being, economic resilience, cultural heritage and self-preservation of communities. Access to nutritious food was listed as a key priority among West Denver residents at both the neighborhood and regional level. The 2030 Denver Food Vision Plan, adopted in 2017, envisions a Denver where every neighborhood contains a complete food environment, meaning every resident has access to a full range of food amenities and the food system infrastructure to support it. A complete food environment includes the cultural, commercial, and agricultural aspects of food and community. According to the 2016 Denver Food System Baseline Report, 1 in 5 children and 1 in 6 adults in Denver suffer from food insecurity.

Neighborhood conditions often dictate access to nutritious, affordable foods and poor conditions contribute to food insecurity and negative health outcomes. According to analysis conducted and further described in the Mobility section of this Plan, 0% of households reside within a half mile (roughly a ten-minute walk) of a full-service grocery store in West. Diseases like cardiovascular disease, diabetes, and obesity are often more prevalent in communities of color. Immigrant communities, older adults, people with mobility challenges, and single parent households are more likely to experience food insecurity and negative diet-related health outcomes compared with more affluent Denver neighborhoods. The same communities are also more likely to experience higher incidents of chronic stress due to poverty, systemic racism, lack of access to health care, transportation, and basic goods and services. This can negatively impact one’s mental, emotional, and behavioral health, and contributes to lower overall life expectancy. The long-term vision of the West Area Plan is to identify gaps in the complete food system and develop solutions that bring healthier, more accessible food options to the neighborhoods of West Denver.

Access to nutritious food across Denver can vary considerably by neighborhood. For example, full-service grocery stores are less likely to locate in lower income areas due to the perception that disposable household incomes are too low, and therefore retail profits will be too low for long-term viability. Small corner and convenience stores are more common in the West Area than full-service grocery stores. Convenience stores often have lower quality, nutrient-poor foods, far less variety of foods than full-service grocery stores, and higher prices. Often smaller stores find keeping fresh food inventories challenging due to mandatory minimum order requirements from distributors, limited on-site storage and refrigeration space, and limited access to farms. While consumer food access is primarily dependent upon physical proximity to a store, other important factors include affordability and the availability of culturally-relevant food. Food access is also dependent on the time, capacity, and knowledge about how to prepare and eat healthy food. Cost is often the first barrier, but these other factors play an important role in a community member’s access to health and overall well-being.

**Complete food environment systems include the following components:**

- **Food Production** - This includes farmers and ranchers; suppliers of critical inputs (land, water, seeds, technologies, capital); and community, school and home gardeners.
- **Distribution and Aggregation** - Distributors, aggregators, wholesalers, and brokers store and deliver farm and grocery products to processors and retailers.
- **Food Processing** - Processors modify foods through preparing, packaging, and freezing foods to create snacks, ready-to-eat foods, and beverages.
- **Markets & Purchasing** - Food Consumers drive most of the food system through their purchases, investments, and engagement in related public policy.
- **Preparation & Consumption** - Food Processors modify foods through preparing, packaging, and freezing foods to create snacks, ready-to-eat foods and beverages.
- **Resource & Waste Recovery** - An estimated 40% of the U.S. food supply goes uneaten each year. This takes an enormous environmental toll in terms of water and energy use.
DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH AND ENVIRONMENT - DENVER FOOD VISION PLAN GUIDING PRINCIPLES & COMPONENTS OF A FOOD SYSTEM

**Vision Pillar**
- **Inclusive**: Inclusive cities require strong neighborhoods that reflect unique food cultures.
- **Healthy**: Healthy, productive populations require food systems that promote healthy food for everyone.
- **Vibrant**: Vibrant economies require strong regional food systems.
- **Resilient**: Resilient cities require diverse and environmentally responsible food systems.

**Denver's Food System**

- **Economy**
- **Health**
- **Community**

**Components**
- Consumers
- Producers
- Retailers
- Distributors
- Processors
What's going on in West?

**Neighborhood Inventory and Cultural Assets**
The West Denver neighborhoods are rich with facilities and cultural assets. These provide access to educational programs that can teach people of all ages and backgrounds how to grow and cook food, and how to care for an environment that promotes local food cultivation. Opportunities include those offered by community food co-ops and commercial kitchens like Sun Valley Kitchen, where meetings and events reiterate the importance of maintaining a healthy lifestyle for local residents. Local organizations can promote farmer's markets and low-cost grocery programs such as the Community Co-op at 1st, reaching those typically underrepresented in public planning processes.

**Connecting and Leveraging Food Access Points**
Food security and affordability efforts are strong among community members, local leaders, and non-profit organizations in the West neighborhoods and the adjacent City of Lakewood. Community feedback emphasized the need to research and provide more food-related land use opportunities within residential, commercial, and industrial areas. Some examples of desired actions that were identified by the community include increasing mobile markets of all varieties (food, retail, and health related), increasing the number of food distribution points that accept public assistance benefits (e.g. SNAP and WIC), and expanding additional low-cost food options such as food pantries, community gardens, and urban farms. To support the ongoing efforts aimed at creating more equitable and inclusive food environments, an emphasis on Denver regional partnerships must continue through the Denver Department of Public Health and Environment's (DDPHE) and the Food in Communities (FIC) Initiative (see FIC highlighted on page 185).

**Community Outreach and Engagement**
Through workshops and feedback, communities identified a high need for increased access to fresh and healthy food, as well as affordable food within the neighborhoods of West. The desire for fresh food that can be grown in public spaces is a very highly sought community priority. West Denver is an area of opportunity where regional coordination efforts like those between Lakewood, Wheat Ridge, and Aurora can be supported. There is a high need and reliance on personal vehicles to access foods that are deemed desirable, affordable, and culturally appropriate because they are not available within West Denver. Furthermore, the community has stated biking, walking, and rolling are often difficult ways to successfully grocery shop, especially for family and senior households. Traveling long distances is further hampered by the challenging topography in this area, and speeding vehicles along the commercial corridors where retail shops are located present additional challenges related to residents' perceptions of safety and security (see Community Safety and Security section for additional information on page 188).
Rewards of a Strong Food System

- **Community Impacts:** Denver residents want to live in communities that have convenient, affordable food retail with fresh food choices. They also want to feel proud of their neighborhood and feel connected to the people and businesses located within walking distance. However, not all communities experience these advantages equally, and large disparities exist between neighbors and neighborhoods. When community members, businesses, and government work together, the food system can play a significant role in creating more equitable, just, and inclusive neighborhoods.

- **Economic Impacts:** As Denver grows, demand for grocery stores, restaurants, specialty markets, farmers’ markets, and commercial kitchens grows as well. This demand creates jobs and helps build strong local businesses. For entrepreneurs, innovators, and small businesses across the city, the food industry is an engine for community wealth building and multigenerational economic opportunity.

- **Health Impacts:** Access to convenient, affordable, healthy foods are goals that can decrease rates of chronic disease and premature death when adopted by a community. In a city like Denver, where one in two adults are obese or overweight and one in three children are either overweight or obese, reducing these health complications is a top priority. These challenges can begin to be addressed when the food system is considered holistically.
**RECOMMENDATIONS**

**Q16**

**Community Food Environment**

Strive to build an inclusive, healthier, and more complete West Area community food environment.

West residents and community members support equitable and affordable access to complete food environment systems. Existing conditions and market analyses suggest there may be opportunities for a full-service grocery store within the city boundaries of West Denver.

A. Promote efforts to create welcoming and inclusive community cultural hubs that provide nutritious food options and other community-desired services. Hubs should incorporate education and encourage local restaurants to source and offer locally-grown and culturally significant foods.

B. Develop programs that fund local food entrepreneurs seeking to open innovative businesses that offer healthy food options.

C. Support healthy food retailers with multilingual resources to advertise in area news outlets, community resource maps, signage, and marketing tools.

D. Increase education and outreach programs on healthy eating and shopping practices, and how to cook nutritious and culturally-important meals to increase demand for nutritious food.

E. Expand the availability of healthy meal options available in the West Denver area.

1. Recruit healthy, fast-casual restaurants in local centers and along corridors within West Denver.

2. Develop incentive programs through city agencies (e.g., Denver Economic Development and Opportunity (DEDO)) and other local organizations like Business Improvement Districts (BIDs) to reward restaurants that offer healthy and affordable food retail.

**Q17**

**Fresh Food Access**

Study ways to increase fresh food access, availability, and affordability throughout all West Denver communities.

Encouraging healthy and affordable food retail along community corridors within West can improve access in retail locations within established business corridors. Organizations such as Denver Urban Gardens (DUG) are working with community partners and the city to expand community gardens and food forests throughout west neighborhoods to help address food security, local production and education.

A. Identify economic development opportunities for healthy and nutritious food (i.e. The Co-op at 1st) where other community-serving local businesses can share space and associated costs. This could increase long-term financial viability and access to community desired goods and services through a conveniently located shared facility with ample, comfortable, and safe multimodal access.

B. Support community-led transformative projects related to filling the food system gaps and in support of resident education, health, and overall well-being and improved health outcomes.

C. Leverage public and private investments (i.e. Stadium District Master Plan, Sun Valley Ecodistrict, West Colfax Avenue and Federal Boulevard Interchange Transformation Project, Denver Housing Authority’s Westridge Master Plan, and future projects) to expand food nutrition, access, and education through publicly accessible, shared community facilities.

D. Support farmers’ markets and community-supported agriculture (CSA) programs in the West Area.

1. Encourage food providers and farmers’ market programs to accept a range of payment forms such as credit and Electronic Benefit Transfer (EBT) cards for SNAP (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Programs), Women, Infants and Children (WIC) benefits, Double Up Food Bucks (DUFB), and the Senior Farmers’ Market Nutrition Program.

E. Support new and expanded food businesses in new commercial areas with safe, comfortable and convenient transportation access, existing neighborhood shopping centers, future mixed-use locations, and Transit-Oriented development.

1. Consider permitting incentives (e.g., expedited permit reviews, dedicated and/or specialized city review staff), increased translation and interpretation services to assist applicants, and fee/fine waivers or reductions for fresh food service providers and grocery retailers, mobile food market providers, and other fresh food businesses looking to locate and/or serve in areas of moderate and high need.

2. Seek federal, state, and local resources and programs dedicated to open or expand healthy food retail service providers in moderate and high need areas.

3. Seek to reduce administrative, financial, and regulatory barriers for mobile markets and food delivery service providers to promote creative food delivery and access throughout the West Area.
**RECOMMENDATIONS**

**Q18: Food Insecurity**
Support initiatives that seek to minimize food insecurity by assisting food retailers with routine maintenance and facility improvements.

*Food insecurity affects households within West. The Federal Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) is intended to help families purchase healthy, affordable food. However, only 81% percent of SNAP qualified families in West are enrolled. Food rescue organizations are a strong asset in the west but could offer more and better food with additional assistance.*

**A.** Recruit and support new small- to mid-sized grocery retailers and specialty stores including culturally significant markets to locate along local corridors and within local neighborhood centers.

1. Attract small- or medium-sized grocery outlets and specialty stores to serve high-need food access areas.

2. Work with Business Improvement Districts (BIDs) and DEDO to highlight financial resources and provide fast-track permitting.

**B.** Promote and maintain the importance of healthy food options in West Area food retailers.

1. Encourage existing corner and convenience stores in West to sell a greater variety of healthy food items through the Double Up Food Buck fresh food incentive program.

2. Retain small food retail businesses, particularly those already selling healthy food, in areas where commercial rents or property costs have become burdensome.

3. Streamline permit processes for food aggregation, storage, processing, and distribution facilities.

**C.** Expand the capacity, efficiency, and public awareness of West Area food pantries and food rescue networks.

**Q19: Food Providers**
Develop regulatory tools and creative solutions that streamline city processes and help providers close food access gaps.

*Food industry advocates and providers have identified regulatory requirements in residential zone districts as obstacles in providing fresh, healthy food services. The city is considering amending existing policies to allow for greater access to food in West. Outreach and engagement within the community will be part of next steps in this process.*

**A.** Streamline and/or fast-track permit processes for grocery store retailers, mobile food market providers, and other fresh food businesses in high need areas, as well as facilities related to food aggregation, storage, processing, and distribution that accommodate small, local producers and food businesses.

**B.** Increase translation and interpretation services.

**C.** Provide waivers or fee reductions.

**D.** Increase translation and interpretation services, and waivers or reductions for grocery store retailers, mobile food market providers, and other fresh food businesses in high need areas.

**E.** Consider federal, state and local incentives for healthy food retail stores to open or expand in high need areas.

**F.** Promote mobile markets and food delivery options to improve food access. Focus on congregate living facilities, seniors, and those with limited-to-no access to mobility.

**G.** Encourage educational programs for seniors, families, and youth about the importance and physical rewards of healthy nutrition, and how to grow, cook, budget, and shop for healthy food choices.

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**Denver Food in Communities Regional Group (FIC)**

Denver Food in Communities was a three-year project with the goal of strengthening complete neighborhood food environments through needs-assessment analysis and community collaborations to design and test food access, justice, and business pilot projects. The project team also provided support to food policy councils to advocate for policies that support community food needs.

Outcomes of the project included increasing: food access points, supportive food system policies and laws, equitable access to ‘fresh, affordable, culturally relevant food,’ and investment in neighborhood food environments. Denver Food in Communities is a project outlined in the Denver Food Action Plan, a supplementary document to the city and county food systems plan, the Denver Food Vision. This collaborative effort includes working closely with community residents and organizations to define food access gaps in their neighborhoods and propose local resident-driven solutions across the region.

These collaborative strategies included:

- Working in partnership with community members to identify assets and needs related to food in their communities.
- Collaborating with new or existing neighborhood groups to design and test food access, food justice, or food business pilot projects.
- Supporting local food policy councils or coalitions to advocate for food policies that support community food needs and priorities.
- Addressing food policy or food access from a regional perspective with the goal of working across the political boundaries of individual cities and counties.
GoFarm Distribution

“Strengthening the Local Food System and Building Healthier Communities”

GoFarm is a nonprofit organization working to strengthen and transform local food systems. What’s a local food system? It’s how local food gets from the farm to your plate, and everything in between. How food is grown, distributed, and taking into account who can access and afford the food is the focus and priority of this organization. By working on all of these elements combined, the local food system can be transformed into one that is thriving, environmentally sustainable, and equitable for all.

These collaborative strategies include:

- Working in partnership with community members to identify assets and needs related to food in their communities.
- Collaborating with new and existing groups to design and test food access, food justice, and food business pilot projects.
- Supporting local food policy councils and coalitions to advocate for food policies that support community food needs and priorities.
- Addressing food policy or food access from a regional perspective with the goal of working across the political boundaries of individual cities and counties.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Q20

Local Food Production

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

Many West Area residents are concerned with food insecurity. Advocates suggest expanding local food production through sustainable, water efficient urban farming, regional processing, and local food manufacturing are areas to explore short and long-term solutions. It’s important to reconnect the community to the land and the food they want to eat by providing the space, resources and support to grow their own food.

A. Reduce regulatory barriers that inhibit the expansion of gardens, farms, and greenhouses in backyards, schools, and other community settings.

B. Promote gardens and “edible landscapes” by planting environmentally and culturally appropriate mixes and varieties of fruits and vegetables. Strive that “extra produce” are collected and donated to residents through neighborhood educational programs and distribution centers like schools, and recreational or senior centers.

C. Expand public awareness of the Denver Sustainable Food Policy Council to influence policies and programs that foster food security for all community members.

D. Expand the use of Denver’s Residential Sales of Fresh Produce permitting, which allows residents to sell produce privately grown, and certain food products privately prepared to be publicly sold.

E. Work with Denver Urban Gardens (DUG) and other local community organizations to promote funding opportunities for farming and gardening activities. Collaborate with community to identify locations suitable for new community gardens and other forms of urban agriculture.

F. Address the barriers and constraints to food production on public and private properties in West. Address zoning and other regulatory barriers.

G. Support food recovery and reduction of waste:

1. Educate the public about reducing the amount of food that is wasted in homes and food-related businesses, and how private citizens can modify food buying habits to minimize waste.

2. Redirect excess perishable grocery and unused restaurant resources to food pantries and other community-based organizations.

3. Promote and expand the city’s residential and commercial compost programs.
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.

Innovative food delivery models can increase access to fresh, healthy, and culturally relevant foods, particularly for populations who have limited access to fresh food. It’s also important to encourage people to walk and bike as much as possible.

A. Install missing sidewalks that are compliant with the Americans with Disabilities Act for accessibility, and make crosswalk safety upgrades near food providers, prioritizing improvements near major grocery stores and around areas with larger senior populations.

B. Support the build-out of a complete multimodal transportation network that provides adequate pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure, transit access, and traffic calming to provide safe, comfortable access to grocery stores, food pantries, and community gardens.

C. Develop connectivity networks (i.e., bus routes, on-demand circulator shuttle services) to full-service grocery stores. (Currently, all full-services grocery retailers are located outside the geographic boundaries of the West Area communities). Utilize underutilized locations throughout west for uses like farmer markets and food truck courts.

D. Encourage affordable housing developers, institutions like schools and hospitals, and regional transportation partners such as the Regional Transportation District (RTD) to incorporate amenities related to food access for communities in high need of completing the food environment system.

Voices from the Community:

“I like that co-ops bring people together, offering healthy activities, access to fresh food, and services that the community needs.”

“Lowell Street Gardens provides a wonderful place for growing food and cultivating community.”

“We need businesses to come into the area. Grocery stores, coffee shops, restaurants. There is a wildly limited number of available options for food and leisure here.”

“Sun Valley Kitchen + Community Center is an integral part of the Sun Valley community -- providing food access, job opportunities and a community gathering place.”

“The southwest corner of Sheridan and 10th has an opportunity to connect as a transit-hub and better serve the community with better amenities and food access. Possibly even a farmers market.”

Healthy Food for Denver Kids Program

Through the 2018 Denver Ballot Measure 302, the Healthy Food for Denver’s Kids (HFDK) Initiative proposed to increase taxes to establish a fund for healthy food and food-based education for Denver’s youth. The ballot measure was approved by 59% of voters on November 6, 2018 and went into effect in January 2019. The 0.08% increase in sales and use tax within the City and County of Denver is expected to generate approximately $11 million dollars annually and will sunset after 10 years. Funds will be collected from Jan. 1, 2019 through Dec. 31, 2028 and distributed by Dec. 31, 2029.

The funds are distributed through competitive grants to agencies of local government, public schools in Denver, and non-profit organizations, with an emphasis on serving low-income youth. Funding decisions are determined by a commission made up of 13 non-profit, government, and community member volunteers. The Commission is staffed by the Denver Department of Public Health & Environment (DDPHE). Since the passage of Ordinance 302, significant progress has been made on Healthy Food for Denver’s Kids, including: creating a commission with bylaws, hiring staff, developing an evaluation structure, and granting out nearly $18 million dollars to more than 80 organizations.
2.1.6 COMMUNITY SAFETY AND WELL-BEING

What is it?
Community safety and well-being is a key component in creating strong and authentic neighborhoods that feel safe and comfortable. The built environment can have a significant impact on the perception of safety and mental well-being. According to the World Health Organization, well-being is achieved when “every individual in a community can realize his or her own potential, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively and fruitfully, and is able to make a contribution to his or her community.”

Denver’s Comprehensive Plan 2040 highlights safety as part of the Equitable, Affordable and Inclusive vision element. This means that providing reliable and quality basic services, including public safety, is at the top of the city's priority list for all ongoing and future efforts. Under the Strong and Authentic Neighborhoods vision element, safety is a large piece of the urban design fabric or makeup of neighborhoods. Leveraging intentional urban design strategies can contribute to the economic viability, public health, safety, environmental well-being, neighborhood culture, and quality of life for everyone.

What’s going on in West?

Through community feedback collected throughout the planning process, West residents consistently highlighted the perception that their neighborhoods were deficient in receiving ample public safety improvements like increased street lighting resources, maintenance resources for sidewalk repairs, funding for right-of-way landscaping, and traffic calming. Other elements of community safety and well-being prioritized by West community members included Sheridan and Federal Boulevards, and Alameda Avenue. Signage was another topic that was raised by residents when offering ideas for how the city can provide improved comfort for residents and visitors by guiding and directing users of pedestrian and bike paths from point A to point B. For signage and wayfinding to be effective, it must be accessible, visible, and well lit.

Feedback also reflected the community’s desire for safer and more enjoyable public places where people can be active and feel like they are truly a part of the community. Proper and effective design and use of buildings, their adjacent areas, and publicly accessible spaces can lead to a reduction in the perception of fear and incidences of crime while improving the quality-of-life for everyone.

West Denver communities should continue collaboration and partnership with Denver Police Department Districts One and Four for educational programming and other resource opportunities that connect with Community Outreach Coordinators. DPD Outreach Coordinators provide assistance with existing programs that are resident- and neighborhood-serving.

Crime can be discouraged to some extent by promoting a built environment that provides a safe sense of place and promotes vibrant, active community spaces within neighborhoods. Public art and art installation programs can help reduce crime by establishing a positive sense of community pride and identity.

To expand outreach and engagement within community groups in the West Area, the Denver Police Department Districts One and Four are highly involved and active in the neighborhoods, with a focus on violence prevention among the area’s youth. Community group involvement keeps residents informed on specific issues, concerns, and important events within the neighborhoods. Crime prevention can be molded by involving active members of the community in decision-making processes, which are often initiated by neighborhood associations.

Denver has established a Police Department
Citizen’s Advisory Group (CAG) in recent years which is specifically designed for communities to receive police updates and statistics, create opportunities to meet police command leadership, and ask specific questions on issues facing neighborhoods. It is an opportunity to get to know local law enforcement officers while staying informed.

Denver police districts also have Community Resource Officers (CROs) who provide assistance on community issues such as neighbor disputes, public nuisance complaints, fraud and crime prevention, and other neighborhood concerns. CROs routinely attend neighborhood organization meetings and provide training on programs like neighborhood watch programs, commercial and home security practices, gang awareness, and crime prevention.

In addition to having CROs available for each police district, Outreach Case Coordinators (OCCs) have been introduced to approach public safety with a focus on helping and addressing the needs of residents and communities. This is accomplished through providing long-term connections to programs, resources, and support services. Clients could include community members who are experiencing substance misuse, behavioral health challenges, the unhoused or those needing housing system navigation, immigrant and refugee system navigation, and human services navigation, among many others.

Overall, streetlight coverage in West Denver appears to be adequate, as shown on the Existing Street Lighting Map on page 64. However, there are gaps in lighting coverage and maintenance that impact actual and perceived safety and security within West Denver. Another factor in ample lighting coverage is the type of luminaire and bulb wattage installed on public rights-of-way, as well as on private property. Over time, streetlights may differ in the bulb wattage and type of bulb installed or replaced. Currently in West, there are a variety of bulbs in use that differ in their ability to effectively light public areas. There may also be dark spots in-between light poles.

In addition, property owners are responsible for lighting their properties, including walkways around apartment complexes, commercial parking lots, and industrial areas. When lights are missing or inadequate, the community as a whole can feel under-lit, and therefore unsafe after dusk.

There is also a need for additional street lighting in existing industrial areas within the Sun Valley and Valverde neighborhoods. In addition, there are several privately-owned multi-unit housing communities and businesses along the major corridors of Alameda Avenue and the South Platte River that could benefit from improved lighting. Residents have voiced strong desires to see increased lighting for safety and security along the gulch and trail networks, and around transit stations and stops.

Voices from the Community:

“We need to make this area safer for families that walk. Especially with strollers in mind.”

“We like the new streetlights! They cast a great light!”

“Pedestrian safety and walking around the neighborhoods is important to our family.”

“This area could utilize some work to increase its walkability and safety (clean up, improve sidewalks and lighting, or better yet, make a pedestrian bridge), especially for families with young children.”
Denver’s Street Lighting Initiative

Through the LED street lighting program, Denver aims to provide safety, energy efficiency, and sustainability. The program began in 2019 and aims to convert 44,000 street lights across Denver to Light Emitting Diodes (LEDs) which are considered one of today’s most energy-efficient and durable lighting technologies.

The conversion to LED street lights is the next big step in Denver’s commitment to energy conservation and work to address climate change at the local level. LED lighting effectively illuminates sidewalks and roadways, which makes community members feel safer to walk, roll, scoot, bike, and drive as they move about town.

Phase 1 prioritized Federal Boulevard and West Colfax Avenue, two stretches of the city’s High Injury Network (HIN) running through the West Area. Conversion to and maintenance of LED lights specifically addresses recommendations in Denver’s Vision Zero Action Plan calling for these treatments along HIN roadways to improve safety and security.

In addition to enhanced quality of lighting and the potential of reducing nighttime light pollution, the efficiency of LED lights provides operational cost savings of 4-7%. Plus, energy-efficiency gains begin immediately with a 50% reduction in energy use leading to reduced greenhouse gas emissions.
RECOMMENDATIONS

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.

*Denver, like other metropolitan areas, seeks to increase the sense of community safety and security through maintaining energy efficient street lighting, providing opportunities for culturally relevant public art, and promoting street level activation in commercial, retail, recreational, and community public gathering places. Community gardens and food forests are activated urban spaces that bring people together.*

A. Utilize pedestrian-scale lighting solutions, prioritizing corridors and intersections along Denver’s Vision Zero Action Plan High Injury Networks and in Communities of Concern.

B. Maintain and increase energy efficient safety and security through annual maintenance evaluations to assess the effectiveness of street and trail lighting for its overall community benefit (i.e., light fixtures, effectiveness in illuminating key areas for safety such as parks, open spaces, trails, and other public facilities – particularly at access points).

C. Use energy efficient street and trail lighting and power sources (i.e., LEDs, photovoltaic solar-power, wind power, etc.) in all publicly owned projects and facilities, and incentivize energy efficient lighting solutions in private development projects for increased energy conservation in pursuit of Denver’s Climate Action Goals, greenhouse gas reduction targets, and Green Building Code recommendations.

Q23

Universal Design Practices

Encourage public and private agencies, urban design practitioners, and private developers to incorporate regenerative development principles that promote safety and sustainability in the built environment. Promote universal design practices with a focus on unintentional cultural biases, and increased equity, diversity, and inclusion.

*The goal of these strategies is to foster social interaction, create a sense of community, and improve safety and well-being. Participants in public workshops listed “activity on the street and public art” as their top two priorities for creating and enhancing welcoming, inclusive, and accessible public spaces.*

A. Continue the discovery of places to celebrate which are culturally appropriate and relevant to the community and West Denver residents.

B. Prioritize improvements in highly-utilized places such as parks and open spaces, trails and gulches, transit stops and station areas, and major commercial corridors such as West Colfax Avenue, Sheridan Boulevard, and Alameda Avenue.

C. Encourage and incentivize the inclusion of public art and culturally significant design elements in development projects, urban designs, and landscapes that celebrate West Denver history and culture and instills a sense of community pride.

D. Acknowledge and include the history, culture, and rich diversity that exists within West Denver neighborhoods in development projects, public improvements, and urban design projects.

E. Encourage the creation and establishment of long-lasting art murals, public plazas, gathering spaces that are culturally, emotionally, and psychologically important to West Denver residents.
2.1.7 ANIMAL PROTECTION

What is it?
Denver Animal Protection (DAP) provides animal care and protection services for Denver County. DAP operates Denver Animal Shelter (DAS), an open-admission municipal shelter that is home to more than 7,500 lost and abandoned pets each year. DAP’s mission is to foster the human-animal bond by protecting the safety and welfare of Denver’s animals and people.

What’s going on in West?
Community engagement throughout the planning process confirmed that the following issues contribute to challenges of animal protection:

- There are limited veterinary care options available within the community, including spay/neuter services vaccinations.
- Limited access to affordable pet healthcare, supplies, food, grooming, and pet daycare services.
- Many pets lack microchips, collar identification or licenses, making it difficult to return to owner when found.
- Many dogs and cats are unaltered, contributing to rapid increases in pet populations.
- Some dog owners fail to keep their pets constrained and on their property.
- DAP partners with organizations such as Metro Denver Cat (MDC) who provide resources for community cats across Denver neighborhoods.

In response to these challenges, Denver Animal Protection is committed to “building relationships and saving lives.” DAP strives to take a non-judgmental, supportive approach to helping animals and their owners by working directly with pet owners. DAP has focused outreach services in West Denver neighborhoods through it’s Community Engagement Program. The community engagement program is highly proactive in attending events, fairs, neighborhood meetings and conducts door-to-door outreach to provide pet support. Data has shown that meeting residents where they are removes barriers and provides support directly to people and their pets. DAP Community engagement program also hosts free biannual pet vaccination events. These events take place at various school campuses within our focused areas. Up to 300 pet vaccinations are administered per event to meet residents in their own communities and further promote preventative animal health care.

Other services DAP provides include free to low-cost spay/neuter surgery, pet licenses, microchip tracking, collars, leashes, kennels, beds, dog homes, cat litter, dog and cat food, education resources and other city referrals.

DAP coordinates efforts with various city agencies to respond to referral for pet support and education. This has contributed to relationship-building, trust, and support within the community, creating a two-way avenue for communication between DAP, the city, and the community members being served.

DAP has seen in evaluating their programs and services that increased pet resources such as preventative veterinary care, up-to-date vaccinations and humane education can help reduce the number of lost animals, pet health concerns and overall improve the well-being and quality of life for animals and people in Denver. The community engagement program offers affordable pet services that can help mitigate challenges for our residents and their pets.
RECOMMENDATIONS

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.

Pet ownership rates in West are among the highest in the city. As a result, there are also higher rates of loose or feral animals. Denver Animal Protection (DAP) is currently located in the Valverde neighborhood, which gives the agency the ability to provide direct resources to the West area through low-to-no cost programs and services that support enhanced pet health.

A. Integrate animal shelters and veterinary clinic facilities within neighborhoods to provide community members with opportunities to increase their petcare abilities through hands-on interactions with animals and veterinary professionals.
   1. Re-establish lost connections – Thousands of lost and injured pets are reunited with their owners through animal shelters each month.
   2. Adopt a new best friend – Many human-animal love connections are developed thanks to animal shelters and rescue groups. Lifelong best friends have been established through opportunities like low-cost and free adoption and pet healthcare services.
   3. Improve pet health – Animal shelters are great ambassadors for healthy animals. This helps stabilize pet populations as well as increases the general health and well-being of communities.

B. Promote pet education in the absence of animal shelters or rescue groups.
   1. Stem the tide of unwanted animals - With aggressive spay and neutering campaigns, outreach programs, community partnerships, and low-to-no-cost initiatives, Denver Animal Protection is leading communities in proactive measures that reduce the number of stray and unwanted dogs and cats.
   2. Expand and fund pet education opportunities for children, leveraging in- and after-school programs, summer programs, and programs in recreational centers and libraries in order to increase their awareness and comfort around dogs, cats, and other pets.

C. Support local pet organizations that compliment and add to DAP services and programs.
   1. University partnerships and programs such as the Graduate School of Social Work (GSSW) are working with Denver Animal Protection to create programs that intentionally assist residents in lower-income communities in West Denver. These types of collaborations and partnerships in communities are highly effective and should be supported and funded through city policies and programs.
   2. West Denver residents and those new to pet ownership often encounter barriers to accessible and affordable pet health care. Denver, it's residents, and pet-affiliated organizations should continue supporting and promoting services that streamline access to pet care.
2.1.8 COMMUNITY BUILDING

The Importance of Social Capital within a Community

Social capital refers to the resources individuals access through connections to social organizations in their communities and among their social networks. Mental well-being is “a state in which individuals realize their own abilities; can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively... and are able to make a contribution to their community” per the World Health Organization. The built environment can promote or hinder mental well-being. The quality and characteristics of the settings we inhabit – the places in which we live, work, and play – influence our mental health. Well-maintained, safe places with exposure to green spaces promote positive feelings of well-being. Public art and a comfortable public realm can promote feelings of community pride among residents. Conversely, places that are dangerous, dark, or lack exposure to accessible natural/green areas can lead to irritability, anxiety, distress, and a poor quality of life.

There are significant advantages to fostering social capital in a community or neighborhood. Ongoing research suggests outcomes include respect for diverse perspectives, agency in decision-making, support for the development and implementation of short- and long-term community goals, and better transparency with partner agencies and organizations that support grassroots and community efforts that advance equity and complete communities.

Sustainable Futures through Community Building

Community connections and relationship-building form the basis for strong neighborhoods when the quality of life of residents and community members are prioritized. It allows residents to support one another, interact with respect, share experiences and cultivate communities that are inclusive and equitable. Having this open bond with others is what builds valuable relationships, fostering a deeper sense of belonging and community.

Youth Engagement in the West Area

Children and youth are the future. Youth are often more impacted by their physical environments than adults. Youth are generally less mobile than adults and often spend more time at home, school, and in nearby public open spaces. Lifestyle behaviors including physical activity and nutritional habits are often shaped by a person’s early life experiences and environments. These can be positive if they include:

- Safe, accessible and welcoming parks, open spaces, playgrounds, recreational centers with relevant programming, and mobility networks that connect to meaningful and relevant destinations
- Adequate sidewalks and safe routes to nearby schools and community destinations
- Access to safe, high-comfort bicycle facilities and well-connected multimodal infrastructure
- Access to healthy, nutrient-rich food
- Clean air for healthy outdoor activities
- Access to employment opportunities
- Safe, comfortable, and affordable access to transit
- A social network of adults able to provide safety and wellbeing for children and youth

Youth engagement is a significant component of the West Denver area planning process. More than 30% of the residents in West are made up of youth under the age of 18 years old. Engaging the area’s youth has provided guidance and inspiration for this plan. They are who will inherit this area and are the future leaders of Denver. Youth attitudes can be influenced by the sentiments expressed through social media, lived experiences, activities, place, and their environment. Studies show that environments shape a person’s state of physical, mental and emotional health and well-being, and this is particularly true for children and youth. Because
of this profound impact on our future generations, West residents have emphasized their participation in the planning process as a high community priority. It is important that this plan emphasize the creation and continuation of activities, events and programs oriented toward young people. Residents expressed an ongoing desire to support community-serving local centers like the Sun Valley Kitchen and the Community Co-Op at 1st Avenue for their positive impacts on West Area youth.

There is an authenticity and rich cultural history that is unique and special to the neighborhoods of West. Throughout the West Area planning process, city planners heard from parents and teachers in community meetings, small-groups, after school workshops, and firsthand in one-on-one conversations with students. The need for more community activities geared towards youth has been acknowledged and captured within the recommendations of this plan. Feedback captured by students include the need for youth-related events and programming, better access to healthy food, more sports facilities and after-school programming, support for animal services (including requests for an additional animal shelter), more trees along streets, in public rights-of-way, in parks, and increased street lighting to improve safety and comfort, particularly along the trail and gulch networks and at transit stations and stops. Every West Denver student has tremendous potential to leverage access to opportunity, and an innate ability to succeed, despite the challenges posed by the current built environment. West Area youth want to be heard and want to contribute – as we have seen through the collection of feedback and comments throughout the planning process. Through robust and meaningful engagement, we can empower West Area youth by giving them a voice and a seat at the table.

**Cultural & Historic Preservation in West Denver**

Preserving the history of a neighborhood through its significant historic resources gives a community its unique character and provides a link between the roots of the community and its people. The preservation of culturally significant traditions can be through the preservation of tangible resources such as buildings, neighborhoods, or murals, or it can be through education and the sharing of traditions, beliefs, customs and practice. Historic buildings and sites, murals and other forms of art such as monuments are ways to record events, people, places, emotions and culture within a community. All of these sites honor a community’s cultural heritage and are irreplaceable once lost.

Historic preservation is not only about preserving buildings for their cultural value. Rehabilitating old buildings to their original appearance not only adds character to the area, but can also help attract investment, as well as tourists if the structures are historically significant. For example, a historic but abandoned industrial building can be turned into small business space, or a mixed-use development – giving new life to a building and even a whole neighborhood.

In terms of environmental considerations, repairing and reusing existing buildings uses energy and material resources more efficiently and reduces waste. New materials don’t need to be created and older materials are kept out of the landfill. The act of demolishing a building can release pollutants in the environment. Many older materials such as brick, wood, and glass can be repaired and continue to be used, while many modern materials such as vinyl cannot be repaired and instead must be replaced, leading to a cycle of further waste production.

Thus, in many different ways, preservation of the West area’s unique cultural heritage can greatly improve the quality of life for the entire community.

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**Tips for the mentorship of our youth include the following:**

- Establish strong personal relationships and connections that are grounded in trust.
- Listen actively and provide a safe space knowing that young people are not typically given the opportunity to be heard.
- Be comfortable with being uncomfortable and make yourself available to a student or young person that may be struggling with difficult life lessons or challenges. Try to steer the individual into a more positive direction in life and assist with direction to city and community resources available to young people within our communities.
- Help create realistic goals and expectations that are both short and long term and check-in periodically to ensure that the student or young person is meeting their goals.
- If a young person asks for advice, focus on solutions and try to avoid judgment.
- Help local government staff include youth in their community engagement efforts by reaching out to populations that are under-represented. This will help to ensure that barriers, opportunities, and different perspectives are included and addressed in local government plans and studies.
Denver Economic Development and Opportunity (DEDO)

Denver Economic Development & Opportunity works to ensure an inclusive and innovative economy for all Denver residents, businesses, and neighborhoods.

Denver’s public sector workforce is ready to serve, regardless of what highs and lows our regional economy faces. DEDO has programs developed to assist our city’s unemployed, underemployed, dislocated workers, veterans, older aged 50+ workforce, people with disabilities, immigrant and refugee arrivals, and people in transition out of the justice system.

Denver’s workforce programs receive local, state and federal funds. Some are also grant-funded, with programs and services offered free of charge, including wraparound services (wraparound is an approach to service delivery that is a team-based, collaborative case management approach offered for additional support.) With an equal focus on responding to an ever evolving workplace and emerging high-demand industries, DEDO’s free employer services help unite thousands of residents with companies as they recruit and retain their most critical business asset—people.

The Denver Youth Employment Program helps young individuals between the ages of 14 and 24 who face barriers in education, training, and employment. Through personalized coaching and services that address individual challenges and needs, Denver prepares youth for post-secondary education and employment opportunities, attain educational and/or skills training credentials, and secure employment with career advancement and promotional opportunities. The program is housed within the Department of Economic Development and Opportunity (DEDO).

RECOMMENDATIONS

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.

Denver’s Youth Empowerment Center is currently located in the Valverde neighborhood and is managed by the Office of Children Affairs (OCA). The purpose of the Center is to connect young people and their families to a network of services and programs developed for Denver’s youth. Organizations like Denver Urban Gardens support youth by giving them something to care for, take pride in, and be involved.

A. Promote inclusive space and environments that support healthy development of relationships with youth demographics when planning through city projects and initiatives.
B. Provide quality education and understanding for students and faculty by working with school systems such as Denver Public Schools and other to provide access to city planning; what it is, and why it is important that students get involved.
C. Strengthen youth skills by finding ways to integrate mentor opportunities and internships with the city.
D. Offer unique space for youth and their families to access support services ranging from workforce development, vocational and entrepreneurial training, education, mental health, recreational activities, wrap-around services and youth violence prevention. See the Valverde Neighborhood Chapter.

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.

Cultural identity and heritage are important components of West Denver. Residents voiced support for a built environment that respects the people that have lived in these neighborhoods for generations. The creation of new and preservation of existing culturally relevant and community serving places and organizations can be further supported through the following strategies:

A. Continue partnership opportunities and ongoing collaboration with “I Am Denver” - a program within the City and County of Denver - to engage and capture the histories and stories of the six West Area neighborhoods through video, audio, and photography.
B. Utilize Landmark Preservation to document the existing historic buildings such as churches and schools as gathering spaces for local community groups and reoccurring or popup cultural events.
C. Explore the creation of a “Legacy Business Program” that will protect and direct resources towards the long-standing local small businesses.
Denver Human Services (DHS)

Denver Human Services partners with community to protect those in harm’s way and help all people in need. Currently, 1 in 3 Denverites are served everyday throughout the 78 statistical neighborhoods throughout the city. The community is seen as a valued partner at the agency and there are several programs that DHS administers to ensure that the agency continues to be a vital source of support for community. The Supplemental Nutritional Assistance Program (SNAP) provides direct relief for people and families experiencing food insecurity and the agency helps Denver residents apply and enroll folks to ensure that people of all ages live safer, healthier, and more productive lives when they have access to nutritious food.

DHS programs support people across life stages from young children to older adults, to veterans and people with intellectual and developmental disabilities, and immigrants and refugees, all valued members of our community. Located in the Sun Valley neighborhood, the Richard T. Castro Human Services Center is located within the West area neighborhoods and provides direct lines of services and support to these neighborhoods. Working alongside community, the agency is committed to addressing food insecurity and food justice efforts, child support services, child and adult protective services, Medicaid resources, and direct cash benefit programs that provide equity to vulnerable communities throughout Denver.

Human Together 2022-2024 will inform and guide DHS’ work over the next three years and will serve as a tool to continue developing strategic partnerships, best practices and employee and client engagement, including ways to increase equity by addressing the unique needs of every person.

As part of this effort, DHS unveiled the DHS Index, which is an online tool that aggregates 16 key indicators that illustrate where societal and systemic challenges may be limiting opportunities across the Denver community. Through the use of this tool, DHS will have enhanced data-driven insights to guide service design, delivery and evaluation within the West area and throughout Denver.

RECOMMENDATIONS

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.

Public art and urban design work together to create welcoming and exciting environments that have been proven to strengthen community pride and identity. Community feedback revealed a desire to enhance local public art and urban design to enhance the unique communities that make up the neighborhoods of West Denver. Focus areas include alleyways, community and local corridors, viaducts, parking lots, and other areas that may be enhanced through public art and activation.

A. Prioritize parks, open spaces, recreational facilities, civic locations, schools, churches and privately-owned public spaces as opportunities for public art and infrastructure improvements.

B. Create more publicly accessible community gathering places that are inclusive, inviting, and culturally relevant. Enhance the attractiveness of these spaces with ongoing and sustained improvements, maintenance that includes safe and comfortable multimodal connectivity.

C. Increase installations of public art throughout the communities of West to increase the cultural, aesthetic, and economic vitality of the community. It is now a well-accepted principle of urban design that public art contributes to a community’s identity, fosters community pride and a sense of belonging, and enhances the quality of life for its residents and visitors.

D. Continue to prioritize community investments in West parks and open spaces. Designs should include art and activities with input and direction from the community, and focus on amenities like parks, plazas, event spaces, and other places where community members seek to gather.

Voices from the Community:

We love our murals and wish for more artistic activation in the neighborhood. Gives a sense of place, culture, rich history and support for our community and our artists. More please!”

“The murals at Cheltenham Elementary school. Students at this school don’t have a lot but they get to attend a school with murals by some of the most internationally famous street artists that have uplifting inspirational messages and imagery to inspire them.”

“We’d love to have more meaningful places to hold community events and festivals. Outdoor seating and plazas with safety and lighting are highly encouraged priorities for us.”

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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 BIKEWAYS (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)
2.2.1 INTRODUCTION

West Area residents and businesses rely on transportation infrastructure to move about their neighborhoods, the city, and the region. They require transportation networks that are safe, accessible and comfortable for walking, rolling, biking, taking transit, moving goods and services, and driving. Residents have asked for mobility options and travel choices that align with their vision for a safe, comfortable, and connected community.

West features diverse development patterns that vary from neighborhood-to-neighborhood. Because the mobility network has developed over time in line with land use and development patterns and practices from those times, the transportation system is generally older to the north and east, and newer to the west. Areas within neighborhoods nearest Federal Boulevard and West Colfax Avenue developed prior to the proliferation of the personal automobile, and therefore exhibit transportation, density, and land use patterns that are better-equipped to support car-optional lifestyle choices.

The newer areas closer to Sheridan Boulevard were developed primarily in the 1950s as the personal automobile gained in popularity. Because the personal automobile was seen as the “way of the future,” land use development often lacked (and still lacks) critical pedestrian infrastructure like wide sidewalks and accessible street crossings. In addition, major highway developments including Interstate 25 (I-25) and State Highway 6 have fractured West neighborhoods with physical barriers that have segmented and isolated some neighborhoods from the rest of Denver. Today, as a result of these major vehicular investments from the 1950s and 1960s, the communities of West have several High Injury Network (HIN) streets as identified in Denver’s Vision Zero Action Plan. HIN streets have a history of crashes resulting in serious injuries and deaths - making the need for an intentional focus on pedestrian safety a recurring theme and high priority identified by area residents and safety advocates throughout the West Area planning process.

The policies and strategies outlined in this section aim to significantly reduce crashes and eliminate fatalities while establishing even stronger north-south and east-west connections within West and beyond. The policies and strategies prioritize people over cars, and identify new opportunities that ensure all mobility options are accessible, safe, and connected.

Some portions of the existing West transportation and mobility network have received recent improvements including pedestrian and transit investments along Federal Boulevard and West Colfax Avenue. The mobility policies and strategies in this plan will help continue to guide future investments and infrastructure improvements throughout the remainder of West that have yet to realize and benefit from the same level of infrastructure investment.

LONG TERM VISION

In 2040, West Area residents move safely and conveniently throughout their neighborhoods by their mode of choice, and easily meet their daily needs. A well-connected network of streets that prioritizes walking, rolling, biking, and riding transit makes travel safe and comfortable for everyone of all ages and abilities. Crashes have been significantly reduced everywhere, fatalities are non-existent, and past High Injury Networks have transformed into vibrant multimodal streets where pedestrian safety, comfort, and convenience are the top priority.

New and improved intersections, wide sidewalks, and traffic calming infrastructure have made it easy for people to walk to nearby shops, parks, trails, and frequently running transit services. Residents easily cross State Highway 6 and I-25 using new pedestrian-friendly facilities on their way to visit the adjacent neighborhoods and their locally-owned shops and restaurants. Families and young children frequently travel and recreate on wide, connected regional trails that line area gulches and the South Platte River. Trail lighting techniques balance the community’s needs for comfort and safety with the impacts to the natural environment and systems.

Transit in West is reliable, frequent, and affordable, with well-maintained stations and mobility hubs. Both residents and visitors of the area enjoy the high-capacity transit lines that run along Federal and Sheridan Boulevards, and along West Colfax and Alameda Avenues, providing regional rapid transit services throughout the Denver metropolitan area.
The mobility recommendations in this section are consistent with the mobility recommendations in the following plans:

- **Comprehensive Plan 2040** – The 20-year vision for Denver and its people reflects the voices of thousands of Denverites who have shared their hopes, concerns, and aspirations for the city’s future. The Comprehensive Plan aims to:
  » Maximize the public right-of-way to create great places.
  » Deliver a robust, diversified, multimodal network.
  » Strengthen local and regional connections, and focus growth, development, and jobs in transit rich areas.

- **Mobility Action Plan (MAP)** – Denver’s plan to reinvent its transportation system with a focus on mobility, safety, access, equity, sustainability, and smart technology to improve connectivity, economic opportunity, and quality of life for everyone.

- **Vision Zero** – Denver’s action plan to eliminate all traffic deaths and serious injuries by 2030 with a focus on safety improvements along the city’s High Injury Network (HIN) corridors particularly in communities of concern.

- **Denver Moves Transit, Denver Moves Pedestrians and Trails, and Denver Moves Bicycle map** – Three Mobility Plans developed by mode that contain near and long-term strategies for moving more people through the city.

- **Denver Moves Everyone (DME) 2050** is a citywide plan identifying transportation solutions that will make it easier to get where we want to go. At time of the West Area Plan adoption, DME was in progress. Coordination between these two plans to align recommendations took place during the West Area Plan Process.

- **Denver Game Plan for a Healthy City** – The citywide parks plan with recommendations to improve parkways and trails, including:
  » Ensuring all Denver residents are within a 10 minute walk of a park.
  » Encouraging the creation of new “Contemporary Parkways” with guidance for updating existing and future parkways that reflect current transportation and mobility needs for all Denver residents.

- **Transportation Demand Management (TDM) Policies** – Citywide regulatory efforts that integrate strategies to improve transportation and mobility options for users in new and existing larger scale developments with the goal of reducing or replacing short-distance trips taken by single-occupant vehicles.

- **Denver Electric Vehicle (EV) Action Plan** - This plan seeks to increase adoption of electric vehicles in Denver to achieve our climate and air quality goals.

**CITYWIDE PLANS**

- **Denver Electric Vehicle (EV) Action Plan**
- **Transportation Demand Management (TDM) Policies**
- **Vision Zero**
- **Denver Game Plan for a Healthy City**
- **Denver Moves Transit**
- **Denver Moves Pedestrians**
- **Denver Moves Bicycle**
- **Denver Moves Everyone (DME) 2050**
MOBILITY

Pedestrian Improvements, Intersection Safety, and New Crossings

**M1 Sidewalks**
Install new, upgrade existing, and make repairs to West Area sidewalks to create a more connected, safe and user-friendly pedestrian realm throughout all neighborhoods.

**M2 Intersection Crossings**
Install new and improve existing intersection crossings. Focus on locations with high pedestrian and bicycle activity, or where data suggests safety may be of concern.

High Comfort Bikeway

**M3 Bikeway Infrastructure**
Create new bikeway connections and improve existing bikeway infrastructure in accordance with Denver’s Bikeway Design Manual.

Trails

**M4 Trail Facilities**
Improve the quality and comfort of trail facilities (also see recommendation Q15).

**M5 Wayfinding**
Install signage and wayfinding along rights-of-way to improve access to trails, and along bicycle and pedestrian networks (also see recommendation Q15).

Neighborhood Traffic Calming

**M6 Traffic Calming Strategies**
Implement traffic calming strategies along neighborhood streets directly surrounding senior living facilities, schools, parks, hospitals, libraries, commercial areas, and recreational centers.

Transport and Mobility Hubs

**M7 Transit Amenities**
Enhance transit services, including stations and bus stop amenities along key travel corridors throughout the West Area.

**M8 Transit Service**
Provide more frequent and reliable transit service throughout the West Area.

Transportation Demand Management

**M9 Transportation Demand Management Strategies**
Promote Transportation Demand Management (TDM) policies and future strategies through development and redevelopment projects to shift travel behavior and to assist Denver in meeting its mode share and climate goals.

Balanced Corridors

**M10 Balanced Corridors**
Create bold changes to the West Area mobility system by repurposing, reimagining, and reprioritizing streets and key corridors to increase safety for accessible walking, rolling, biking, enhanced transit, existing and future mobility options.
**Measurable Goals**

The following metrics evaluate current transportation and mobility conditions and set future targets to realize a walkable, bikeable, and transit-friendly community vision for West while also supporting citywide mobility and safety goals.

**Mode Share**

Mode share is defined and measured by the U.S. Census Bureau as the percentage of travelers using a particular transportation type (e.g. walking, biking, transit, driving, etc.) to get to work. Denver has a goal to reduce drive-alone rates in single occupancy vehicles (SOVs) to balance and reduce the stress on their transportation systems.

In 2017, Denver’s Mobility Action Plan (MAP) set citywide commute mode share goals for 2030. The West Plan’s 2040 transportation mode share targets improve upon the MAP 2030 goals, with West neighborhoods exceeding the 2030 MAP targets by the year 2040. The data within this section is averaged for all neighborhoods in West, though there is great variation within the area, with the West Colfax and Sun Valley neighborhoods already meeting the citywide goals for SOVs and transit commuting.

Denver’s Department of Transportation and Infrastructure (DOTI) has set citywide mode share goals for 2050 through Denver Moves Everyone (DME), a 30-year citywide transportation plan. This plan will also establish targets for specific mode share goals at the neighborhood level.

This plan states goals should be more aggressive than those outlined in the Mayor’s 2020 Mobility Action Plan, and continues to advance Denver’s pedestrian safety, environmental sustainability, and climate action goals.

**Killed and Serious Injury (KSI) Crashes**

Denver’s Vision Zero Action Plan aims to eliminate all traffic deaths and serious injuries on Denver’s roads by 2030. Vision Zero tracks statistics on those killed and seriously injured in roadway crashes annually. The Action Plan focuses on reducing frequent crash types on Denver’s roadways, with a focus on High Injury Networks, Priority Areas for Transportation Equity, and educating residents on issues like speeding and distracted and intoxicated driving.

West contains several High Injury Network streets in need of safety improvements and all six neighborhoods are classified as Priority Areas for Transportation Equity. Vision Zero tracks 3-year average rates of pedestrians killed or seriously injured (KSI). The 3-year average (2018-2020) KSI for all West neighborhoods combined was approximately 30 people (see graph below for 3-year averages by neighborhood). The 2040 target for all Denver neighborhoods is to have a KSI 3-year average trending towards zero.

![2050 Mode Share Targets Citywide](image)

**3-Year Average for Killed and Serious Injuries (KSI) by Neighborhood**

![Graph showing 3-year average for KSI by neighborhood](image)

Source: CCD Crash Data January 2016 to July 2021
FUTURE STREET TYPES

City and County Boundary
Parks and Open Space
Lake or Pond
Stream, Creek or River
Residential (Collector)
Residential (Arterial)
(outside of boundary)
Mixed-Use (Collector)
Mixed-Use (Arterial)
Main Street (Arterial)
Industrial (Collector)
Industrial (Arterial)
Downtown (Collector)
(outside of boundary)
Downtown (Arterial)
(outside of boundary)

West Area Plan

City and County of Denver
FUTURE STREET TYPES

City and County Boundary
Parks and Open Space
Lake or Pond
Stream, Creek or River
Residential (Collector)
Residential (Arterial)
(outside of boundary)
Mixed-Use (Collector)
Mixed-Use (Arterial)
Main Street (Arterial)
Industrial (Collector)
Industrial (Arterial)
Downtown (Collector)
(outside of boundary)
Downtown (Arterial)
(outside of boundary)

West Colfax
Sheridan Station
Dry Gulch
Perry Station
Knox Station
Paco Sanchez Park
Decatur-Federal Station
Rodeo Rec Center
Decatur Park
Empower Field at Mile High
25

Sun Valley
Villa Park
Turner Rec Center
Perry Park
Barnum Mountain Bike Park/Softball fields
Barnum Park
Barnum Rec Center
Barnum East Park

Barnum West
City and County of Denver
West Colfax
Perry St.
Colfax Ave
19th Ave.
17th Ave.
14th Ave.
Knox Ct.
13th Ave.
10th Ave.
6th Ave.
1st Ave.
2nd Ave.

South Platte River
City of Lakewood
City and County Boundary
Parks and Open Space
Lake or Pond
Stream, Creek or River
Residential (Collector)
Residential (Arterial)
(outside of boundary)
Mixed-Use (Collector)
Mixed-Use (Arterial)
Main Street (Arterial)
Industrial (Collector)
Industrial (Arterial)
Downtown (Collector)
(outside of boundary)
Downtown (Arterial)
(outside of boundary)
FUTURE STREET TYPES

Blueprint Denver outlines a complete multimodal transportation network that provides mobility choices to all residents, organized into four user categories: Pedestrian, Bike, Transit, and Auto/Goods movement. This complete network will give residents the ability to choose how they access jobs, education, residential, commercial, and leisure destinations.

Denver also uses a system called the “functional classification system” for categorizing different types of streets into Local, Collector, and Arterial. Blueprint Denver updated this system to include how surrounding character and context might affect the street’s design or operation. This resulted in more nuance types of these original street classification categories based on the surrounding land uses and future land use guidance. In addition the recently adopted Complete Street Design Guidelines provide a framework to guide the design, constructing and maintaining complete streets based on their transportation function and land use context. For each of the Future Street Types, is provides design parameters and priorities for the public-right-of way and direction on use of general design features.

See Future Street Types map (pg. 115) for the types and location of Future Street Types in the West Area. The West Area Plan includes bold strategies to prioritize multimodal transportation along key corridors to make it easier and safer for people to walk, roll, bike, or take transit.

RESIDENTIAL

- **Land Use.** Characterized primarily by residential uses, but may also include parks, schools, civic uses, or small retail nodes.
- **Function.** Traffic calming encourages slower speeds and promotes safety for all users. Signalized cross walks with high visibility markings provide ample crossing opportunities.
- **Buffer.** Street trees provide a buffer between people walking or rolling and traffic.

MIXED USE

- **Land Use.** Varied mix of uses including retail, office, residential, and restaurants.
- **Function.** Driveways are more frequent than main streets, but still limited to provide a friendly environment for people walking, rolling, or using bicycles.
- **Buffer.** Fairly consistent buffer between people walking, rolling, and traffic.

MAIN STREET

- **Land Use.** Characterized by a mix of uses such as retail, services, restaurants, and residential.
- **Function.** Wide sidewalks with fewer driveways to prioritize people walking and rolling.
- **Buffer.** Consistent street trees and/or amenity zones provide a buffer between people walking, rolling, and traffic.

INDUSTRIAL

- **Land Use.** Characterized by manufacturing, but may contain other uses. Buildings are generally low-rise and may be set back to accommodate site-specific needs.
- **Function.** Adequate sidewalk space is provided, but driveway access is more frequent and streets may be wider.
- **Buffer.** Consistent buffer between people walking, rolling, and transit.
CRASHES WITH A SERIOUS INJURY OR FATALITY

Source: CCD Crash Data January 2016 to July 2021
MODAL PRIORITY STREET TYPE CONCEPTS

TRANSIT PRIORITY
Streets designed to improve transit frequency, transit capacity, and provide enhanced amenities at stops. Pedestrian and bicycle connections to and from transit stations are also included.

(Photo: Transit Priority, Source: Nacto.org)

PEDESTRIAN PRIORITY
Streets that provide a safe, accessible, comfortable, and interesting walking and rolling experience through additional pedestrian crossings. Reduced crossing distances, wider sidewalks, and safer crossings.

(Photo: Pedestrian Priority, Source: Denverpost.com)

BIKE PRIORITY
Streets designed to provide a safe, convenient, and comfortable experience for people riding bicycles or micromobility devices with intersections that reduce conflicts with vehicles.

(Photo: Bike Priority, Source: Denver.streetsblog.org)

RELATED RECOMMENDATIONS IN THIS PLAN

Mobility is closely tied to other Land Use and Quality of Life recommendations in this plan. Related recommendations in other topic areas of this plan include:

- Direct future growth along high-capacity transit corridors and centers.
- Encourage high-quality design and activation within centers and along corridors.
- Address the health impacts of noise and air pollution for development and redevelopment adjacent to State Highway 6 and Interstate Highway 25, and the South Platte Regional Trail.
- As proposed in the One Water Plan, implement a cohesive approach to development and infrastructure improvements that prioritizes the protection and enhancement of the South Platte River’s environmental, ecological, and recreational needs.
- Create a system of green streets and connected alleys that unite open spaces, reduce pollution, improve stormwater, beautify neighborhoods, and reduce urban heat island effects.
- Improve and increase accessibility to existing community parks, open spaces, and recreation facilities for all users, ages, and abilities.
- Enhance and improve access to existing regional trails, waterways, and the South Platte River.
- Improve access to nutritious, fresh, and culturally-appropriate food through improved physical connections and multimodal networks. Prioritize access to goods and services.
This map uses the Future Multimodal Network modal priorities established on Blueprint Denver as a base understanding and adjusts the modal priorities based on recommendations of the West Area Plan.

Identifying modal priorities for streets is important because the right-of-way space is limited on each street. The map identifies the mode or modes that the design and operation of the street will favor.

In addition to the modal priorities, right-of-way allocation should also consider Green Street recommendations from Section XX.
What is it?
Pedestrian safety is critical, as everyone walks or rolls at some point in their day. Sidewalks should ideally be detached from the curb and provide a safe, accessible, and comfortable walking environment with amenities like benches, landscaping, and pedestrian-scale lighting. Denver requires sidewalks to be a minimum of 4-feet as required by American Disabilities Act accessibility standards, though the city strives to meet even higher standards. Denver's Complete Street Design Guidelines provides more detailed guidelines base for sidewalk width and amenity zone width as it relates to its Blueprint Street Type Classification. An amenity zone is a portion of the public right-of-way that falls between the sidewalk and the curb, and typically includes landscaping, green infrastructure, street trees, or other streetscape elements.

In 2019, Denver completed Denver Moves: Pedestrians and Trails, a citywide plan to achieve a vision for walkability across the city that includes sidewalk and trail design guidelines and prioritizes pedestrian infrastructure projects. As a result of the community-driven prioritization established through this plan, Denver will prioritize the completion of missing sidewalk segments before the process of widening sidewalks that are too narrow. The prioritization follows a tiered system where the highest priority projects are those that run along High Injury Networks (HIN) identified in Denver’s Vision Zero Action Plan and related pedestrian improvement projects. Denver set a goal in the Vision Zero Action Plan to build 14 miles of sidewalks per year in 2018-2019, and 20 miles of sidewalks per year by 2020-2023.
Pedestrian Improvements, Intersection Safety, and New Crossings in West

Today, 68% of the existing sidewalk network in West is made up of narrow sidewalks that are less than 5 feet in width. In addition, approximately 10%-30% of streets in each neighborhood are missing sidewalks - with some neighborhoods like Barnum and Sun Valley exceeding 20%.

Currently, 68% of all crashes involving a pedestrian in the West Area occurred along a High Injury Network (HIN) A key part of building safe streets is ensuring safety at intersections by installing proven countermeasures for reducing pedestrian, bicyclist, and driver exposure to crashes. Signalized crossings provide a safe pedestrian experience, especially on streets where vehicle speeds and volumes are high. If the distance between signalized intersections is perceived as “too far to walk,” pedestrians may cross streets mid-block or at less safe locations.

EXISTING PEDESTRIAN CHALLENGES

EXISTING SIDEWALK NETWORK BY TYPE (ALL WEST NEIGHBORHOODS)

- Narrow Sidewalk - less than 5ft
- Sidewalk - 5ft or greater

32% 68%
PEDESTRIAN IMPROVEMENTS, INTERSECTION SAFETY AND NEW CROSSINGS

Sidewalks
Install new, upgrade existing, and make repairs to West Area sidewalks to create a more connected, safe, and user-friendly pedestrian realm throughout all neighborhoods.

A considerable number of West Area residents rely upon sidewalks to conduct their daily needs. Many area residents rely upon sidewalk infrastructure for social, cultural, and religious purposes and find sidewalks vital to their quality of life. As a result, sidewalk infrastructure quality is of utmost importance to community members and should be prioritized whenever possible.

A. Complete and/or expand the sidewalk network where there are missing segments to improve pedestrian safety, comfort and mobility by installing new sidewalks following the citywide prioritization for sidewalks (identified in the Denver Moves: Pedestrians and Trails Plan) with additional priority for the corridors identified by residents as pedestrian priorities in the West Plan (see “priority locations list” below).

B. Improve the pedestrian realm by improving the quality, safety, width, and comfort of existing pedestrian facilities following Denver’s citywide prioritization guidelines for sidewalks.

C. Improve access to transit by ensuring sidewalk infrastructure is present at all major transit facilities.

Priority locations:
- West Colfax Avenue
- Alameda Ave
- Sheridan Blvd
- Federal Blvd
- 17th Avenue
- 13th Avenue
- 10th Avenue
- 8th Ave
- 2nd Ave
- 1st Avenue
- Bayaud Avenue
- Tennyson Street
- Perry Street
- Knox Court
- Hazel Court
- Decatur Street
- Bryant Street
- Tejon Street
**Intersection Crossings**

Install new and improve existing intersection crossings. Focus on locations with high pedestrian and bicycle activity, or where data suggests safety may be of concern.

Feedback from area residents clearly indicates that infrastructure built for cars in communities reliant upon walking don’t always mix. Denver Vision Zero has identified all six West Area neighborhoods as “Priority Areas for Transportation Equity” with a disproportionately high number of pedestrian involved crashes and fatalities. To improve safety and eliminate fatalities, intersection and crossing improvements are priorities in this plan.

**A.** Address pedestrian and bicyclist safety and comfort at existing crossings. Interventions may include, but are not limited to reducing crossing distances, bicycle specific interventions, visibility and clear sight distance, implementation of green and gray stormwater infrastructure, lighting, signage, street trees, wayfinding and/or art.

1. See West Area Pedestrian Recommendations map (pg. 123) for the location all the intersections that need improvements.
2. Prioritize intersections that fall within with the corridors identified by residents as pedestrian priorities in the West Plan (see list of priority locations in Policy M1 or West Area Pedestrian Recommendations Map.
3. Prioritize crossings near transit stops and community assets such as schools, parks, recreation centers, libraries, and commercial corridors and at-grade railroad crossings.
4. Explore the feasibility of installing pedestrian controlled mid-block crossings, such as a HAWK (“high-intensity activated crosswalk beacons”) signals, especially at Federal and Bayaud Avenue, to improve safety and connectivity between the Barnum and Valverde neighborhoods.
5. Ensure the existing connection to the South Platte River Trail at 3rd Avenue remains a reliable access point.

**B.** Study the feasibility of new safe, comfortable and accessible crossings and connections.

1. Study the feasibility of a grade-separated pedestrian and bicycle crossing of Alameda Avenue at Weir Gulch Trail, and of Sheridan Boulevard at Lakewood Gulch Trail. Study should be tied to Lakewood Gulch trail extending further west of Wolff Street.
2. Study the feasibility of a pedestrian and bicycle connection with public space and a pocket park along Bryant Street to connect to 1st Avenue/Alcott Street (see Quality of Life section).
3. Coordinate with Denver Housing Authority (DHA) to ensure a bicycle/pedestrian connection at the north end of the Columbine Homes property when the property redevelops to connect the Bayaud Avenue bicycle facilities between Zuni and Yuma Street and extend further east along the north side of West Bar Val Wood Park to connect with Tejon Street.
4. Study the feasibility of reconnecting the grid (Decatur Street, Canosa Court, or Bryant Street) between 8th Avenue and 6th Ave as properties redevelop.
5. Study the feasibility of additional connections to the South Platte River Trail from adjacent neighborhoods.

**C.** Explore and study the feasibility of future connections across major barriers (I-25, 6th Ave and the South Platte River) to better connect the neighborhoods. Areas to be studied should include:

1. Adding a new bicycle and pedestrian connection over 6th Avenue at a location between Perry Street and Sheridan Boulevard, ideally in the vicinity of Tennyson St.
2. Adding a new bicycle and pedestrian connection over the South Platte River and Interstate 25 at a location between 2nd and Alameda Avenues, ideally in the vicinity of Bayaud Avenue where a river crossing existed prior to the construction of Interstate 25.
3. Adding a new connection over the South Platte River and Interstate 25 between 2nd Avenue and 8th Avenue, ideally in the vicinity of 2nd/3rd Avenue where a river crossing existed prior to the construction of Interstate 25.
4. Adding a new connection over the South Platte River and Interstate 25 at or near 11th Ave where a river crossing existed prior to the construction of Interstate 25 to reconnect the neighborhoods on both sides of I/25 and the South Platte River.
5. Coordinate with partners on key projects such as the Interstate 25 Valley Highway and Burnham Yards to secure additional east-west crossings over the South Platte River and Interstate 25 wherever possible.
6. Explore the idea of providing a better connection between both sides of Barnum Park across 6th Avenue. See Major Crossings Transformative Project (X).
7. Coordinate with the Federal Colfax Interchange Transformative Project (X) for improved future crossing.
What is it?
Streets that provide safe and comfortable bikeways allow people of all ages and abilities to bike for transportation, exercise, and enjoyment. In Denver, a variety of bikeways currently exist throughout the city. Many plans call to expand the number of streets with high-comfort bikeways and to upgrade current routes with safer, more comfortable infrastructure. High-comfort bikeways are safe and comfortable spaces designated for bicyclists through use of pavement markings and/or a separated path. Intersections are designed to reduce conflicts between bicyclists and vehicles by improving visibility and marking dedicated space in the right-of-way for cyclists.

Research shows that these facilities also help to calm traffic on corridors. High-comfort bikeways include neighborhood bikeways, protected bike lanes, trails, and shared-use paths. Bikeways come in many forms to match the mobility needs of each street, and their safety treatments provide an opportunity to add space for placemaking, green infrastructure, and pedestrian improvements.

A recent study conducted in Denver and published in the Journal of Transport and Health concludes that high-comfort bike infrastructure doubles as traffic calming infrastructure, which reduces fatalities and improves safety for all modes. Lower traffic streets improve safety and provide more opportunities for interactions with neighbors. Increasing the number of people riding bikes has many benefits including reduced greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions, lower wear and tear on roads, and reduced need for additional travel lanes and parking.

Denver is committed to reducing the single-occupancy vehicle (SOV) commuter rate to below 50%, and increasing the percentage of bicycle commuters. Investing in high comfort bikeways and bicycle infrastructure is essential to encouraging this mode shift, as “interested but concerned” bicyclists will be more likely to choose to ride if the infrastructure feels safe.

Bikeways in West Today
In West, the bike network currently consists of bike lanes, shared roadways, and trails, but contains connectivity gaps and safety challenges that make riding more difficult than it needs to be.

Recommendations in this plan build upon those of Denver Moves: Bikes by adding neighborhood context and detail to planned bicycle improvements with the goal of providing a complete, comfortable, convenient, and safe bicycle network.
PERCENT OF WEST AREA COMMUTERS WALKING, BIKING, OR TAKING TRANSIT IN 2019 VS 2050 GOALS

2019 West Area: 13%
2019 City of Denver: 14%
2050 Citywide and West Area Goals: >35%

Source:
2019: ACS 5-Year Estimates (Census)
Vision Zero Action Plan
2050: Citywide goals set by DOTI Denver Moves Everyone (DME), a 30-year plan to 2050 anticipated to be complete in 2023
BIKE NETWORK RECOMMENDATIONS

West Area Plan Recommendations

- Bike Network Additions
- Upgrade Existing and Proposed

Bikeways by others

- Proposed bikeways by Stadium District and Sun Valley
- Proposed bike connection by Colfax Federal Transformation Project

Existing/Planned Denver Moves Bikes
- Shared Roadway
- Neighborhood Bikeway
- Shared Use Path
- Bike Lane
- Buffered Bike Lane
- Protected Bike Lane
- Trail
BIKEWAY TYPES

Bikeways are safe and comfortable spaces designated for bicyclists through use of pavement markings and/or a separated path. Intersections are designed to reduce conflicts between bicyclists and vehicles by improving visibility and marking dedicated space in the right-of-way for cyclists. Research shows that these facilities can also help to calm traffic on corridors. See Policies M3, M4, & M5.

**NEIGHBORHOOD BIKEWAY**
Low-volume, low-speed streets modified at the intersections and mid-block to enhance bicycle safety and comfort. These facilities act as shared streets with enhanced intersections that improve safety for all modes.
(Photo: Shared Neighborhood Bikeway, NACTO.org)

**PROTECTED BIKE LANE**
An exclusive bike facility with a path physically separated from motor traffic and distinct from the sidewalk. Intersections are designed for safety and facilitate turning movements for bicyclists.
(Photo: Protected Bike Lane, Source: www.kimley-horn.com)

**BIKE LANE**
Exclusive space for bicycles noted by pavement markings and signage (without buffers or barriers to separate from traffic).

**BUFFERED BIKE LANE**
The same facility as a traditional bike lane, but with an additional buffer space that helps to separate the cyclist from adjacent vehicle travel lanes and/or parking.

**TRAIL.SHARED-USE PATH**
Completely separated from the roadway and typically shared with pedestrians.
**Recommendations**

**M3**

**Bikeway Infrastructure**

Create new bikeway connections and improve existing bikeway infrastructure in accordance with Denver’s Bikeway Design Manual.

West Area residents expressed support for bicycle infrastructure. Many residents use existing bicycle networks for commuting in addition to recreation and leisure. Residents indicated that improved facilities would increase safety and comfort, which would help to increase ridership among more area residents.

A. Implement planned Denver Moves:Bicycles bikeway recommendations. See dashed routes at Bike Network Recommendations (pg. 128) for routing and facility type details.

B. Study the feasibility to upgrade to the following Denver Moves:Bicycles bikeway recommendations. See “Upgrade Existing and Proposed” on map (pg. 128)
   1. 8th Ave: Study upgrade in relationship to parallel facility of Wier Gulch and its role in connectivity along the viaduct.
   2. Bryant St: Upgrade to better manage the interface between cyclists and truck traffic in this industrial area while providing a critical north/south connection.
   3. 1st Ave /2nd Ave/Tejon St route: Study upgrade to address high vehicle speeds as well as industrial traffic. Enhancements should include improvements to the shared use path connection at the intersection of 1st Ave, Federal Blvd, and 2nd Ave and adequate wayfinding. Also include the route along 2nd Ave between Lowell Boulevard and Tejon Street.
   4. Weir Gulch: Improve Weir Gulch Trail quality to provide a parallel high comfort bicycle facilities east of Federal Boulevard (see section 2.2.4 on page 132 for more detailed recommendations for Weir Gulch Trail).
   5. 14th Avenue: As noted by community input, traffic speeds and volumes have increased along 14th Avenue as a cut through route for Colfax. Further study 14th Avenue east/west bicycle corridor. Study should include facility type, safety and comfort elements, and potential alternative parallel routes.
   6. Knox Ct: Community input identified Knox Ct corridor from 8th Ave to 14th Ave as uncomfortable for people on bikes due to high traffic volumes and steep terrain. Remove neighborhood designation north of 8th Ave and instead connect to proposed Neighborhood Bikeway at Hazel Court via 8th Avenue. Explore additional north/south connections along King or Lowell Streets. The future design of this bikeways will need to ensure that the bikeway is well connected to the Knox Station through wayfinding and the Lakewood Gulch Trail.
   7. Wolff St: Study the feasibility of a north-south high-comfort bicycle facility along Wolff St/Xavier St from 17th Avenue to Alameda Avenue. Construction of new facility is dependent on the feasibility of future connection across 6th Avenue in this area. Also See Policy M2 (P. 125)
   8. 4th/5th Ave: Study the feasibility of a high-comfort bicycle connection from along 4th and/or 5th Avenue from Barnum Park west to Sheridan Boulevard to connect to bicycle facilities in Lakewood.
   9. 8th/7th Ave: Study connecting the Tennyson/Perry bicycle facility with 8th Ave and Wier gulch along 8th/7th Avenue.
   10. Alameda Ave: Study the feasibility of implementing a high comfort bike facility along, or parallel to Alameda Avenue to connect West...
Reducing Transportation Pollution

Transportation is the largest source of air pollution in Denver, and the second-largest source of greenhouse gas emissions after buildings and homes. Denver’s Department of Climate Action, Sustainability & Resiliency (CASR) works to reduce pollution by advocating for cleaner mobility options and expanding our electric vehicle infrastructure. By shifting away from fossil fuels in how we get around, we will have cleaner air, lower costs and better health. Some key ways CASR has contributed to reducing transportation pollution include:

- **E-bike Rebates:** Denver launched a rebate program that covers up to 100% of the cost for an e-bike or e-cargo bike to Denver residents. These rebates are designed to encourage a market transformation, helping residents replace car trips with cleaner and more efficient transportation. To date, more than 3000 e-bikes have been purchased, and residents have saved an average of 78% off the cost of an e-bike through the income-qualified program.

- **E-bike Libraries for Essential Workers:** CASR partnered with Northeast Transportation Connections and the West Corridor Transportation Management Association to open multiple e-bike libraries, including in the West Area. These programs provide 70 e-bikes in under-resourced neighborhoods for residents to use for their commutes and other trips.

- **E-cargo bikes for Denver Food Rescue:** CASR provided Denver Food Rescue with six e-cargo bikes to deliver donated food to neighborhoods lacking access to fresh and healthy foods.

- **Electric Carshare Expansion:** CASR provided seven electric vehicles and five charging stations for Colorado Carshare’s service. This included one location in the neighborhood of Sun Valley in west Denver.

11. **Lakewood Gulch Trail:** Implement missing segments of the Lakewood Gulch Trail from Wolff Street to Sheridan Boulevard (see section 2.2.4 on page 132 for more detail recommendations for Lakewood Gulch Trail)

**D.** Work with community groups, business improvement district and transit providers to install bicycle parking near transit stops, business corridors and community facilities where missing

**E.** Focus on providing bicycle network improvements that leverage the trails along the waterways. Due to the West Area unique topography, the trails act as the backbone of the bicycle network in the area due to their gentle elevation change and extension throughout the West Area.

**F.** Coordinate bicycle network implementation with Green Streets recommendations on section XX
What is it?
Trails throughout the West serve as key recreational and multi-modal transportation facilities for area residents. Trails provide an off-street transportation network dedicated to pedestrians and bicyclists that connects different neighborhoods together. These trails also create opportunities for users to enjoy and engage with natural open spaces in West including the South Platte River, Lakewood/Dry and Weir gulches, and other parks and open space systems. The trail system in West also provides access to area parks, and supports and encourages active, healthy lifestyle choices for residents.

Trails in West Today
The gulches provide a unique recreational asset not found in many other parts of Denver. While there is a fairly robust trail network associated with the gulch system in West, there are opportunities for better connections and other improvements to the network. The Lakewood/Dry Gulch provides continuous trail access through West from the South Platte River Trail west to the City of Lakewood. However, Weir Gulch is discontinuous through Barnum and Barnum West, forcing users onto local area streets in certain areas in order to continue along the trail.

The South Platte River Trail serves as a major amenity in West. This will be especially true when new improvements are made through the Denver Housing Authority (DHA) Sun Valley Redevelopment, and as other public projects are completed. However, the connectivity and quality of the South Platte River Trail has aged and is in need of repair south of Weir Gulch, particularly where many of the current industrial uses are located.

Recommendations in this plan aim to create new and improved access to trails, increase safety and comfort, and improve the overall quality of the trail system throughout West. This will be accomplished by completing trail segments where missing, adding new trail components to respond to growth in the area, and reinvesting in existing trail corridors that widen and increase capacity for anticipated future growth and development. Recommendations also focus on recognizing historic and cultural significance of First Nation/Indigenous people who lived in the West prior to the settling of Denver, environmental remediation of conditions created by past heavy industrial and manufacturing activities, and strengthening signage, wayfinding, lighting, and user comfort for persons of all ages and abilities.

COMMUNITY FEEDBACK
When asked about desired improvements to the area gulches and trails, the vast majority of community members agreed or strongly agreed with the following ideas:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Improvement</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fill missing segments</td>
<td>93%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Improve access and crossings</td>
<td>93%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Add new crossings to surrounding neighborhoods</td>
<td>86%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Improve trails</td>
<td>89%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Upgrade signage</td>
<td>74%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Improve lighting</td>
<td>84%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Improve green spaces</td>
<td>90%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


RECOMMENDATIONS

**M4**

**Trail Facilities**

Improve the quality and comfort of trail facilities (also see recommendation Q15).

Area residents enjoy their trail facilities, but have suggested that increased ease, comfort, and access to trails, increasing the number of trail access points, signage, wayfinding, lighting, will help improve the overall safety and security for all users of all abilities.

A. Overall trail strategies

1. Consider state and federal funding for trail improvements with the system being identified in the Denver Regional Council of Governments (DRCOG) Long Range Fiscally Constrained Plan as a candidate for state and federal funding and improvements.
2. Explore opportunities to widen the trail network to accommodate multimodal and diverse users as growth and development continues and area population grows.
3. Improve access to trails by eliminating physical obstacles and barriers that prevent bicyclists, pedestrians, and residents from accessing trails from the surrounding communities, and additional access points where feasible.
4. Improve the trail environment by implementing wayfinding and lighting along trails and along access routes for increased comfort, safety and security.
5. Improve trail crossing
6. Improve street crossings of the West Area trails for increased safety and comfort.

B. South Platte River Trail Specific Strategies

1. Recognize the history and importance of the South Platte River to First Nations and Indigenous peoples.
2. Reimagine the relationship of the South Platte River and trail to the Valverde neighborhood by providing green spaces for gathering, additional access points, and recreational and resting areas.
3. Coordinate with DOTI providing public access to the South Platte River Trail via the 3rd Ave bridge near the Wastewater Building while maintaining security needs of DOTI facilities on this site
4. Study relocating the trail from Bayaud Avenue to Phil Milstein Park from its current location on the east side of the river next to I-25 to the west side of the river which could allow for more access points from the Valverde neighborhood. Denver Parks and Recreation is working with its partners to develop concept plans and is working to identify grant opportunities to fund the construction,
5. Develop a multi-disciplinary/multi-agency river plan to guide the future of the South Platte including its environmental, stormwater, water quality, flood mitigation, recreation, and urban design components.
6. Explore opportunities to widen the trail to accommodate more/diverse users comfortably.
7. Study the feasibility of elevating the existing South Platte River Trail as a major regional trail corridor to improve user comfort, safety, and provide additional capacity

C. Lakewood/Dry Gulch Specific Strategies

1. Extend the Lakewood/Dry Gulch Trail west of Wolff Street and coordinate with the City of Lakewood to continue the trail west of Sheridan Boulevard connecting to West 11th Avenue – including a new grade separated crossing (underpass) at Sheridan Boulevard
2. For detailed recommendations for street crossings of Lakewood Gulch trail please see the Neighborhood Transportation Management Program (NTMP) for this area.
3. Further study access improvements to the Lakewood/Dry Gulch trails, especially from the South. Improvements to be study should include cul-de-sac access points, wayfinding, marked crossing and formalized access points and paths.

D. Weir Gulch Specific Strategies

1. Complete the Wier Gulch network by closing gaps that exist and implementing access and connections where they are missing. See trail recommendations map (pg. 135) for more detailed location of gaps.
2. Improve the quality of Wier Gulch trail by upgrading the quality and comfort of materials used and implementing lighting and wayfinding. See trail recommendations map (pg. 135) for more potential locations for wayfinding.
Wayfinding
Install signage and wayfinding along rights-of-way to improve access to trails, and along bicycle and pedestrian networks (also see recommendation Q15)

To help area residents and facility users navigate networks through the West, residents have called for improved wayfinding signage along bicycle and pedestrian networks.

A. Implement signage, wayfinding, and lighting along the trails in the West Area (South Platte River, Lakewood/Dry Gulch Trail, and Weir Gulch) to guide users and increase comfort, safety, and security for current and future users.

B. Improve neighborhood visibility, clear identification, and community celebration along the South Platte River trail to let users know which neighborhood they are going through, and where to exit/enter the trail.

C. Improve wayfinding to access the South Platte River Trail via the 3rd Ave bridge near DOTI’s Wastewater building. Wayfinding should direct users through city-owned property from 2nd Avenue to the trail access point.

D. Add wayfinding to direct bicyclists from 2nd Avenue/Tejon Street to the South Platte River Trail via the West Bayaud Avenue.

E. Implement wayfinding along 2nd Avenue to direct users to Wier Gulch Trail access points.

F. Implement signage and wayfinding along the Federal Boulevard shared use path to inform bicyclists of how to stay on the 2nd Avenue bicycle facility.

G. Improve access to the trail along the Valverde and Sun Valley neighborhoods by improving the physical environment and implementing signage, wayfinding, and lighting for increased comfort.

H. Implement lighting, signage, wayfinding and improved access to and along all the trails in the West Area (South Platte River, Lakewood/Dry Gulch Trail, and Weir Gulch) Prioritize locations along the following corridors (see below) that guide users to trail access points.

Priority locations:
- South Platte River Trail
- Lakewood Gulch
- Weir Gulch Trail
- 13th Ave
- 14th Ave
- 10th Ave
- 8th Ave
- 2nd Ave
- 1st Ave
- Knox Court
- Bryant Street
- Perry Street
- Avondale Ave
- Tennyson
- Irving Street / Julian Street
- Bayaud Avenue
TRAILS RECOMMENDATIONS

West Area Plan

City and County Boundary
Parks and Open Space
Lake or Pond
Stream, Creek or River
Light Rail Stations
Existing Trail
Trail Access Wayfinding
Complete Gaps in Existing Trail

0' 1,025' 2,050'

Existing Trail
Trail Access Wayfinding
Complete Gaps in Existing Trail
What is it?
Neighborhood traffic calming includes infrastructure upgrades and operational improvements to neighborhood streets that are intended to address safety concerns such as insufficient pedestrian crossings, speeding on local streets, and difficult sight lines. Traffic calming elements are intended to provide visual and physical cues to slow drivers' speed, and can be quick, low-cost improvements such as signage, pavement markings, art, green infrastructure/stormwater management solutions, or physical barriers to reduce conflicts between bicyclists, pedestrians, and vehicles.

Currently Denver's Neighborhood Transportation Management Program (NTMP) takes a neighborhood-scale approach to quickly implement traffic calming and small-scale transportation improvements. These efforts help to improve safety and calm traffic in Denver's neighborhoods by working with residents to quickly identify and install relatively low-cost safety improvements such as stop signs, daylighting at intersections (restricting traffic and parking close to intersections that results in limited pedestrian and bicyclist visibility), and new or improved crossings. By taking a strategic geographic approach to implementing solutions, traffic calming efforts can target areas where safety is of the utmost concern such as schools, parks, commercial nodes, and near high-volume transit stations and stops.

Traffic Calming in West Today
With the exception of a few marked crossings, neighborhood traffic calming infrastructure is fairly limited in West today. However, the NTMP recently completed a study of West Colfax and Villa Park, with improvements to be installed during the 2021-2023 calendar years. These improvements range from additional marked crossings to rectangular rapid flashing beacons with curb extensions.

Future improvements will continue to be guided by the Villa Park & West Colfax Neighborhood Transportation Management Program (NTMP) Action Plan and the West Area Plan, prioritizing improvements along High Injury Networks (HIN), busier neighborhood streets, and key destination areas.
NEIGHBORHOOD TRAFFIC CALMING CONCEPTS

Traffic calming concepts include infrastructure upgrades and operational improvements to neighborhood streets and intersections. They address problems like insufficient pedestrian crossings, speeding, and visibility issues.

DAYLIGHTING INTERSECTIONS
Removing parking spaces immediately adjacent to intersections to improve sight lines and visibility.

PHYSICAL BARRIERS
Roundabouts, traffic diverters, or other physical cues that slow or limit traffic on local streets.

LANE REDUCTION/CHICANES
Reducing lane widths and/or forcing new travel patterns requires drivers to pay more attention, which helps to slow traffic and increases awareness for all modes.

INTERSECTION IMPROVEMENTS
Bulb-outs, medians, lighting, and raised crosswalks are some examples of intersection improvements.

LIMIT VEHICULAR TRAFFIC
In certain situations, half or full closures of streets to vehicles can create a vibrant and safe neighborhood space.
NEIGHBORHOOD TRAFFIC CALMING

Traffic Calming - Corridor
Traffic Calming - Area
Restaurant
School
Rec Center
Park
Library
RECOMMENDATIONS

Traffic Calming Strategies
Implement traffic calming strategies along neighborhood streets directly surrounding senior living facilities, schools, parks, hospitals, libraries, commercial areas, and recreational centers.

Due to the safety concerns expressed by area residents, crash data, and policies outlined in Denver Vision Zero, this plan suggests measures to slow traffic along neighborhood streets directly surrounding senior living facilities, schools, parks, hospitals, libraries, commercial areas, and recreational centers be explored.

A. Evaluate reducing speed limits and installing traffic calming interventions per Vision Zero plan guidance. There is a variety of traffic calming intervention and approaches, the following are examples of potential interventions:
   1. Curb extensions which also reduce crossing distances
   2. Raised medians with pedestrian refuge
   3. Traffic diverters that discourage vehicular traffic on certain streets
   4. Mini Roundabouts
   5. Signage (speed, traffic control and school zones)
   6. Stop Signs
   7. Visual elements such as trees encourage drivers to slow down
   8. Speed Bumps

B. Implement physical improvements aimed at lowering speeds, including stormwater management/green infrastructure improvements, public artwork, signage, lighting, etc

C. Explore incorporating physical improvements to the roadway that simultaneously slow traffic, improve the visual appearance and condition of the street, celebrate community gateways, and highlight important community.

D. Coordinate improvements with Safe Routes to School programs

Priority locations:
- 17th Avenue
- 14th Avenue
- 11th and 12th (south of Gulch)
- Windsor Drive and Weir Drive
- Knox Court
- Perry Street
- 1st Avenue
- Decatur/Bryant/2nd/Tejon Corridor
- Areas near community assets such as parks, recreation centers, schools, libraries, and commercial corridors
2.2.6 TRANSIT AND MOBILITY HUBS

What is it?
Transit is the most space-efficient form of transportation, with the ability to move 6 to 15 times as many people in the same space as private vehicles (NACTO 2016). This is especially relevant in Denver as population increases and there is a limited amount of space on Denver’s roads.

The primary transit service provider in Denver is the Regional Transportation District (RTD), which provides bus, rail, Access-a-Ride, and FlexRide (formerly Call-n-Ride) services that connect people between neighborhoods and cities around the Denver Region. Denver Moves: Transit, a near- and long-term transit vision and guiding framework for the city, was completed in January 2019 and sets the priorities for making transit enhancements in Denver. The plans also take increased accountability for improvements within the right-of-way that benefit transit (Denver Moves II and Speed and Reliability).

Denver Moves: Transit supports local and regional transit systems by identifying Denver-focused transit improvements through capital investment corridors, enhancing multimodal access to transit, and identifying first and last mile solutions. The recommendations for the Transit Capital Investment Corridors are organized into three tiers: High-Capacity Transit, Medium-Capacity Transit, and Speed and Reliability. High- and Medium-Capacity Transit Corridors are served by higher capacity modes such as Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) as part of a well connected transit network, and include improvements such as dedicated transit lanes and enhanced stops and stations. Speed and Reliability Corridors include improvements such as transit signal priority to help transit move through the corridor faster and more reliably. The corridors referenced in this neighborhood plan typically extend beyond the boundaries of West, and Denver Moves: Transit provides a citywide lens for transit improvements. Improving transit benefits Denver’s economic, health, environmental, and accessibility outcomes. Denver Moves: Transit also supports the Mayor’s Mobility Action Plan and its mode shift goal of increasing the number of transit commuters to 15%.

Transit in West Today
Transit service in West is characterized by a mix of local bus, limited bus (fewer stops than local service), rail, and FlexRide options that provide coverage to much of West, though some gaps in coverage are present. Despite a relatively decent level of coverage across much of the West, limited operating hours, infrequent service, physical barriers, insufficient or missing sidewalk infrastructure, and unimproved bus stops can make riding transit in West difficult and a less attractive travel option.

While transit routes in this area generally operate on a grid network, due to West’s proximity to downtown and limited crossings of the South Platte River, Interstate 25, and BNSF railroad tracks, many routes deviate from straight lines to cross these barriers and to provide transfer opportunities. Many routes converge at or near the Decatur-Federal Station, a large regional transit hub located in the Sun Valley neighborhood that provides access to multiple bus routes and the Regional Transportation District.
(RTD) W-Line. Despite its prominence in the transit network, some boarding areas at the station are separated by Federal Boulevard, and require crossing eight lanes of traffic in order to transfer buses or to access the surrounding neighborhood.

West is currently served by a series of East-West routes: 1 (1st Avenue), 3 (Alameda Avenue), 4 (Morrison Road), 9 (10th Avenue), 15L (East Colfax Limited), 16 (West Colfax), 16L (West Colfax Limited), 20 (20th Avenue), and the RTD W Line. North-south routes are more limited than east-west routes, and are mostly concentrated on Federal Boulevard: 30 (South Federal), 31 (Federal Boulevard), 30L (South Federal Limited), 36L (Fort Logan Limited), and 51 (Sheridan Boulevard).

Additionally, the Platte Valley Flex Ride (formerly Route 33) provides 8 trips in each direction per weekday through the Sun Valley and Valverde neighborhoods. It functions as a circulator and connects the Alameda Station to the Decatur-Federal Station before continuing its route through the more industrial areas east in the La Alma/Lincoln Park and Baker neighborhoods. The Platte Valley Flex Ride operates a flexible route, meaning it can deviate from a defined route within a certain limited distance, but does have specific stops it must make at pre-determined specific times. Within West, there are 2 designated stops/time points: 5th Avenue & Bryant Street, and the Decatur-Federal Station. There are also 5 express routes that pass through West via State Highway 6 that provide commuter services to downtown Denver from the western suburban areas; however, these routes do not stop in the West neighborhoods at this time.

Currently, West does not have any existing transit-only lanes, and there aren’t currently any mobility hubs. The city is conducting mobility hub pilot programs at Civic Center Station and the Carla Madison Recreation Center, and should consider expanding mobility hub trials (and permanent solutions) along West transit corridors in the future. The lack of defined space for transit, both on- and off-street, causes delays and impacts to the speed and reliability of all surface transit routes in West.

While no transit-only lanes exist currently, dedicated space for buses is planned and is currently being designed and engineered (along with other safety improvements) for West Colfax Avenue. This dedicated space may take the form of “bus bypass lanes,” and will run the two blocks between Yates Street and Sheridan Boulevard, in the westbound lanes. The purpose of a bus bypass lane is to help buses get through an area of heavy congestion and reduce delays. Just these two blocks of dedicated space are expected to save an average of 30 seconds per bus trip, with even larger time savings during peak travel times. This time savings benefits riders by reducing travel time and allowing riders to more reliably make connections to other bus routes, especially those riding during peak travel times who currently experience heavy delays approaching Sheridan Boulevard. These lanes also allow Regional Transportation District (RTD) to provide more reliable, efficient, and attractive bus service to the West neighborhoods and beyond.
M7

**Transit Amenities**
Enhance transit services, including stations and bus stop amenities along key travel corridors throughout the West Area.

For Denver to realize its transit use and climate goals, transit facilities must meet the needs of users. Among these needs are safe, reliable services, real-time information, stations and stops that protect users from the elements, that are clearly defined and accessible to everyone.

**A.** Elevate all stops to the basic standards established by the Department of Transportation and Infrastructure (DOTI) Passenger Amenity Program guidelines to provide adequate and safe waiting areas.

**B.** Study the feasibility of implementing mobility hubs at high ridership transit stops to improve connections and provide amenities such as:
   1. Real time transit information
   2. Ticketing kiosks
   3. Multimodal resources, such as bike and micromobility parking, rideshare drop-off/pickup zones, etc.
   4. Urban design placemaking components, such as street furniture, seating areas, shade structures, programmed space, art, etc.
   5. Improved lighting and safety components
   6. Electrified charging kiosks (using photovoltaic solar panels, or other regenerative, energy production solutions).
   7. Public restrooms.

**C.** Study the feasibility of implementing local mobility hubs at lower ridership stops.

**D.** Increase connections to regional and local transit services provided at Sheridan Station, Decatur Federal Station, and Alameda Station (outside the plan area to the east).

Priority locations:
Regional Mobility Hub candidate locations include:
- Federal Boulevard at: 17th Avenue, Decatur-Federal Station, 8th Avenue, 2nd Avenue, Alameda Avenue, Colfax Avenue
- Sheridan Boulevard at: West Colfax Avenue, Sheridan Light Rail Station, Alameda Avenue
- Alameda Avenue and Yuma Street

Local Mobility Hub candidate locations include:
- West Light Rail Line at: Knox Station, Perry Station
- Knox Court at: 10th Avenue, 1st Avenue
- Sheridan at: 8th Avenue, 1st Avenue
- Alameda: Between Vrain Street and Raleigh Street, Navajo Street
- West Colfax Avenue and Perry Street
**DENVER MOVES: TRANSIT**

*Denver Moves: Transit* is the city’s first transit plan and recommends building out capital investment corridors, enhancing multimodal access to transit, and identifying first and last mile solutions. The plan organizes corridor recommendations into the following categories:

- **High-Capacity Transit (HCT):** Corridors with high levels of passenger capacity, very frequent services, and high-quality design. These include features to make transit more reliable and rapid, such as BRT or rail infrastructure, and additional improvements including dedicated transit lanes and enhanced stops and stations.

- **Medium-Capacity Transit (MCT):** Corridors with slightly lower levels of passenger capacity, service frequency, and design than HCT. MCT corridors are served by rapid bus with bus-only lanes and other transit-priority treatments throughout the corridor. Full BRT may be possible on some MCT corridors.

- **Speed and Reliability (S+R):** Corridors with slightly lower levels of passenger capacity, service frequency, and design than HCT and MCT corridors. S+R corridors benefit from investments such as transit priority signals, improved stop amenities, and can include dedicated transit lanes at key locations to help buses move faster and reliably. All capital investment corridors begin as S+R corridors until funding is identified to build out the full HCT or MCT vision identified in the plan.

**RECOMMENDATIONS**

**M8**

**Transit Service**

*Provide more frequent and reliable transit service throughout the West Area.*

Residents have called for improving transit service in and through West to provide residents with higher-frequency service that meets their mobility needs, and increased transit use. To provide increased transit services, the City is encouraged to coordinate efforts with service providers, including the Regional Transportation District (RTD).

**A.** Implement recommendations outlined in Denver Moves: Transit by providing high-capacity transit service, increased frequency, expanded hours of service, and rider amenities at stops.

1. Advance the implementation of High-Capacity Transit (Full Bus Rapid Transit) along West Colfax Avenue and Federal Boulevard.
2. Advance the implementation of Medium-Capacity Transit (rapid bus to full Bus Rapid Transit) along Alameda Avenue.
3. Advance the implementation of Speed and Reliability transit (Enhanced bus) along Sheridan Boulevard and 8th Avenue east of Federal Boulevard.
4. Evaluate improvements to the Platte Valley FlexRide (formerly known as Route 33) to provide more frequent, reliable, valuable, and predictable connections for residents and businesses in Sun Valley and Valverde, and better connect them to regional and local transit services provided at Alameda Station and Decatur Federal Station. Denver Moves: Transit calls for 15-minute frequencies along portions of this existing route.

**B.** Study options for frequent, reliable inter-neighborhood micro-transit options that better connect neighborhoods to high-capacity transit corridors and commercial corridors in surrounding neighborhoods, as well as neighborhood amenities and regional destinations.

**C.** Improve the speed and reliability of existing transit routes such as Route 9 (along 10th Ave) and Route 1 (along 1st Avenue) service within the neighborhoods.
What is it?
Transportation Demand Management (TDM) is the practice of applying various strategies, programs, and policies that shift the how, when, and where of people’s travel behavior to increase the efficiency of our transportation system, maximize travel choices, and help reduce greenhouse gas emissions. Employer-based programs can also be TDM strategies, including strategies such as alternative work schedules or teleworking, both of which are rising in prominence coming out of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Denver City Council adopted an Ordinance, and DOTI and CPD followed with Rules and Regulations in 2021 requiring all new development over a certain size to implement TDM strategies to lower the number of single-occupancy vehicle trips. The regulations further require these TDM strategies to be maintained in perpetuity.

Denver also encourages participation in programs available through DRCOG’s Way to Go program, and the network of Transportation Management Associations (TMAs) that help employers, building owners, and activity centers meet multi-modal goals. TMAs typically serve specific regions, central business districts, suburban office parks, residential areas, transportation corridors, and tourist venues by helping their members improve transportation and air quality conditions more than any one entity could alone.

TDM in West Today
The entirety of West is served by the West Corridor TMA. The West Corridor TMA takes on a variety of responsibilities and initiatives to create and promote more convenient transportation options for people. In 2021, they worked with UrbanTrans to develop free eBike libraries across several DHA properties in Denver to provide more mobility options for residents.

The city’s newly-adopted TDM regulations will help provide more mobility options, particularly within the mixed-use areas of West where higher intensity developments are anticipated.
**RECOMMENDATIONS**

**TRANSPORTATION DEMAND MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES**

Promote Transportation Demand Management (TDM) policies and future strategies through development and redevelopment projects to shift travel behavior and to assist Denver in meeting its mode share and climate goals.

*Denver has grown rapidly in the last two decades. For the city to accommodate new and future residents within our finite boundaries, we must explore alternative strategies to single occupant, fossil fueled vehicles that are affordable, accessible, convenient and diverse.*

- **A.** Encourage all new development, regardless of size, to incorporate TDM strategies to help shift the how, when, and where of people’s travel and increase the efficiency of our transportation system, maximize travel choices, and help reduce greenhouse gas emissions, as required by Denver’s TDM Rules and Regulations.

- **B.** Encourage businesses and BIDs to join area TMAs to have access to services that promote TDM programs.

- **C.** Encourage the Mile High Stadium District and other entertainment providers in the area to provide transit passes or other transit incentives for ticket holders to local entertainment and cultural events, and/or new fare options such as multi-day and weekend passes.

- **D.** Work with TMAs, employers, residences, Registered Neighborhood Organizations (RNOs), local organizations, and Business Improvement Districts (BIDs) to provide reduced or free Regional Transportation District (RTD) fares for residents and employees.

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**Denver Regional Mobility and Access Council (DRMAC)**

Denver Regional Mobility and Access Council (DRMAC) is a nonprofit entity serving as the Regional Coordinating Council for the Denver metro area. DRMAC provides extensive information and education for people with mobility challenges (older adults, people with disabilities, people with limited English proficiency, veterans, and people with lower incomes) who are seeking transportation options or education on how to use community transportation services.

DRMAC’s Getting There mobile app and Getting There Guide are free tools available to help metro area residents identify transportation resources. Staff answering DRMAC’s Transportation Helpline (303-243-3113) provide mobility options to individuals who prefer to talk with someone about their individual transportation needs.

DRMAC’s Getting There Travel Training is a series of virtual training sessions on how to use RTD’s rail and bus services as well as Lyft scooters and bikes. Additionally, DRMAC serves as a “connector and convener” of a wide variety of regional stakeholders who care about mobility for all.
2.2.8 BALANCED CORRIDORS

What is it?
Balanced corridors are a key recommendation in this plan. Also referred to as “transformative streets” in other NPI plans, the term was updated to “balanced corridors” in this plan to better reflect the desired outcome for the end-user. They represent bold modifications to roadway facilities built during the 1950s and 1960s when vehicles were the predominant form of transportation and mobility. Recommendations in this section seek to flip the narrative, prioritizing pedestrians over vehicles through the introduction of safe, functional, and diverse multimodal transportation solutions.

Balanced corridors present the best opportunity to retrofit streets for West Area residents and meet their vision for a safe, connected, comfortable, and functional transportation network that connects communities and destinations at the local and regional level.

Rolling refers to people using mobility devices such as wheelchairs and other forms of transportation to assist their movement and require considerations beyond ADA standards to better protect these roadway users. Most of the current road network prioritizes the personal automobile, and the balanced street recommendations suggest how to best re-balance and re-allocate existing roadway space to meet citywide goals.

While space will be reallocated for other modes, Denver expects 50% of work trips to be made by personal automobiles in 2030, and a representative portion of the road network will remain focused on moving automobiles. Denver’s Vision Zero program found that driver safety greatly improves following the types of safety treatments recommended in this section. Creating more reliable, connected, affordable, and safe mobility options will improve quality of life and help the city meet its mobility goals.

Examples of potential improvements to create balanced corridors include:

• Repurposing existing street space to enhance pedestrian safety through reducing crossing distances at intersections.
• Closing gaps in the sidewalk network, providing wider sidewalks that meet current regulations and accessibility requirements.
• Reducing speeds on local streets by adding stormwater infrastructure and green street amenities.
• Providing new street crossings and enhancing existing crossings.
• Repurposing street space to add transit-only lanes, bicycle lanes, neighborhood bikeways, and shared streets.

Elements to consider on any particular street will vary based on existing conditions including roadway classifications, existing land use characteristics, and neighborhood contexts.

COMMUNITY FEEDBACK

Community members expressed concerns regarding speeding cars and crashes that occur along major streets, such as Colfax Avenue and Federal Boulevard, as well as interior neighborhood streets such as Knox Court and 1st Avenue. Providing safe and high-quality mobility options including pedestrian, bicycle, and transit service is a top priority of residents.

Three out of the five most important challenges identified by community members were related to safety and mobility.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>What are the 5 most important challenges in your neighborhood?</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Speeding Cars</td>
<td>49%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Residents</td>
<td>46%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Feeling Safe</td>
<td>42%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Better/More Sidewalks</td>
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</table>

49% | 46% | 42%
**Streets in West Today**
West represents a great opportunity within Denver to make significant progress toward the city’s mobility goals of 30% of people walking, biking, or taking transit, and zero traffic fatalities by 2030. Despite many auto-centric corridors, the West neighborhoods, on average, exhibit drive alone mode shares below the city average, and transit usage above the city average. Bicycle mode share in West is on par with the citywide average. Additional transit and bicycle facilities will help these neighborhoods exceed citywide goals, expand access to these already-popular modes, and create more comfortable conditions for the large number of residents already utilizing bicycling and transit options.

West is served by several arterial roadways:
1. Federal Boulevard
2. West Colfax Avenue
3. Alameda Avenue
4. Sheridan Boulevard.

All four of these streets were identified as major barriers by the community and also happen to be High Injury Networks identified in Denver’s Vision Zero Action Plan. In addition to these barriers, West is bounded by Interstate 25, and is intersected by State Highway 6, both of which compound the physical barriers in this area. Within neighborhoods, other barriers include gulches, and at-grade railroad tracks that interrupt the street grid. There are also numerous gaps in sidewalks, as well as many undersized, non-conforming sidewalks. Sidewalk improvements would benefit all West Area residents, and especially those utilizing mobility devices.

**PERCENT COMMUTERS DRIVING ALONE IN 2019 VS 2040 GOALS**

- West Area: 68%
- City of Denver: 69%
- Commuters driving alone in cars: <50%
- Traffic Fatalities: 0

**West Area 2040 Goals**

Source: 2019: ACS 5-Year Estimates (Census)
Vision Zero Action Plan
WHY IS COLFAX AVENUE IMPORTANT?

- Identified in the DRCOG Long Range Fiscally Constrained Plan as a Transit Planning Corridor Project and is an ongoing candidate for federal funding.
- Connects the West neighborhoods to Downtown Denver and points east, as well as Lakewood, Edgewater and Golden to the west.
- Provides local and regional services to West, as well as the broader regional community.
- Is supported by recommendations throughout Denver Moves: Transit plan.
- Is planned for future transit and pedestrian improvements.
- Has several projects identified in Denver’s CIP and DRCOG’s 2050 MVRTP.
- The nearby West light rail corridor is a complement to the analysis and development of East Colfax Avenue Bus Rapid Transit.

WHY IS ALAMEDA AVENUE IMPORTANT?

- 2020 RTD Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) Feasibility Study recommends Alameda Avenue as a future corridor.
- Local businesses, future development, and investment opportunities.
- Major regional connector for residents, business and manufacturing.
- Is a Denver Moves: Transit Medium-Capacity corridor.
- Identified in the DRCOG Long Range Fiscally Constrained Plan as a future Regional BRT Project and candidate for federal funding.

WHY IS SHERIDAN BOULEVARD IMPORTANT?

- Identified in the DRCOG Long Range Fiscally Constrained Plan as an Arterial Safety/Regional Vision Project/Program candidate for federal funding.
- Supported by Denver Moves: Transit as a potential future high-capacity transit corridor.
- Local businesses are located along this corridor and will benefit from transit and pedestrian improvements.
- Regional connections intersect with the corridor, making it a vital component of regional mobility.

WHY IS FEDERAL BOULEVARD IMPORTANT?

- As identified in the DRCOG Long Range Fiscally Constrained Plan, Federal Boulevard is a future Regional Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) Project and potential candidate for federal funding.
- Advance recommendations contained in the Federal Boulevard Alternatives Analysis to explore the feasibility of implementing high-capacity transit alternatives along the corridor.
- Support local businesses through safety and connectivity improvements along the corridor.
- Regional connections intersect with the corridor, making it a vital component of regional mobility.
- Connection to major destinations (i.e., Mile High Stadium, Downtown Denver, future infill developments).
M10

**Balanced Corridors**

Create bold changes to the West Area mobility system by repurposing, reimagining, and reprioritizing streets and key corridors to increase safety for accessible walking, rolling, biking, enhanced transit, existing and future mobility options.

West Area residents, along with city and regional transportation studies, have identified the need for more streets to be reimagined to improve safety, with an emphasis on key corridors used by residents for walking, rolling, biking, and connecting to transit.

**A.** The following corridors were identified as balanced corridors, and therefore as priority locations for bold changes to the mobility system including new crossings and future connections. See Balanced Corridors recommendation map (pg. 151) for details on the modal priority for each corridor:

- 17th Avenue
- Colfax Avenue
- Old Colfax Road
- 14th Avenue
- 13th Avenue
- 10th Avenue
- 7th/8th Avenue
- 1st/2nd Avenue
- Alameda Avenue
- Sheridan Boulevard,
- Tennyson/Perry
- Knox Court
- Federal Boulevard,
- Decatur/Bryant
- Bayaud Avenue
- Lakewood/Dry Gulch, Weir Gulch, and South Platte River Corridors

**B.** Study and implement pedestrian and traffic calming improvements along the balanced corridors to increase safety. Improvements should consider roadway reallocations to reduce lanes or lane widths, crosswalk enhancements that improve and reduce crossing distances, greater separation between the sidewalks and roadways, implementation of green and gray stormwater interventions to slow traffic, lighting, signage, wayfinding and/or art. (See Policies “M1”, “M2” and “M8”)

**C.** Study and implement bicycle recommendations along the balanced corridors to increase bicycle mobility and safety. (See Policy “M3”)

**D.** Study and implement transit recommendations to improve transit service and amenities along the balanced corridors (See Policies “M7” and “M8”)

**E.** Further study and implement green infrastructure and green amenities along the balanced corridors to improve the pedestrian experience, safety and comfort, as well as water quality improvements. (See Policy “Q11”)

**F.** Where necessary for future implementation, conduct follow-up studies to determine the multimodal vision for the Balanced Corridors following the modal priority identified on the Balanced Corridors Recommendation map ((pg. 151)) Use further studies to determine the feasibility of the different recommended improvements. Consider the modal priority as a guide in cases where the existing right-of-way might not accommodate all recommended improvements.

**G.** Integrate infrastructure, mobility, and safety recommendations identified in existing plans such as DOTI’s Neighborhood Transportation Management Program, the Colfax Avenue and Federal Boulevard Interchange Transformation Project, Stadium District Master Plan, West Colfax Avenue Viaduct Study, West Colfax Pedestrian Crossing and Transit Improvements Project, Denver Housing Authority’s (DHA) Sun Valley Ecodistrict, Westridge...
Create bold changes to the West Area mobility system by repurposing, reimagining, and reprioritizing streets and key corridors to increase safety for accessible walking, rolling, biking, enhanced transit, existing and future mobility options. (continued from prior page)

West Area residents, along with city and regional transportation studies, have identified the need for more streets to be reimagined to improve safety, with an emphasis on key corridors used by residents for walking, rolling, biking, and connecting to transit.

H. Coordinate future mobility projects to include state and regional transit and transportation priorities, plans, and initiatives, including those authored by Colorado Department of Transportation (CDOT), Denver Regional Council of Governments (DRCOG) Metro Vision Regional Transportation Plans (MVRTP).

I. Coordinate future mobility projects to include local transit and transportation plans, including City and County of Denver Capital Improvement Programs (CIPs), multimodal infrastructure, pedestrian safety, transit, transportation, and freight plans.

J. Partner and consult with City of Lakewood and City of Edgewater on safety, pedestrian, and transit improvements along our jurisdictional boundaries to improve conditions for all area users.
## 2.2.9 MOBILITY SUMMARY

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MOBILITY CONCEPTS

BALANCED CORRIDORS
Streets that improve safety, comfort and prioritize walking, rolling, biking, and transit.
- Improved transit frequency, capacity, and enhanced stops.
- Safe, accessible, and comfortable walking and rolling environment.
- Improved facilities and safety enhancements for people biking or riding.

INTERSECTION SAFETY IMPROVEMENTS
Safety improvements at intersections, including trail/roadway intersections, to create a safe, comfortable, and accessible crossing for pedestrians and bicyclists.

HIGH COMFORT BIKEWAYS
Bikeways that improve safety and comfort for bicyclists as well as pedestrians at intersection crossings. High comfort bikeways include a spectrum of design options.

IMPROVED SIDEWALKS
Safe, comfortable, and accessible walking environments. Where possible, stormwater management infrastructure, climate appropriate vegetation, art, signage, wayfinding, and lighting should be considered and incorporated to enhance the user experience, encourage walking, rolling, biking, and the use of transit. (See Section 2.3.5 for more information.)

TRANSIT AND MOBILITY HUBS
Transit stops with enhanced amenities that allow for seamless transition between modes. Transit and mobility hubs can vary in scale and amenities depending on context. Local mobility hubs have basic transit stop amenities related to one or two modes, while regional mobility hubs may have more amenities related to multiple mobility networks and systems.
MOBILITY RECOMMENDATIONS
SUMMARY

Balanced Corridor with Transit Priority
Balanced Corridor with Bike Priority
Balanced Corridor with Pedestrian Priority
Balanced Corridor with Green Street or Green Amenity Street Priority (See Quality of Life Section Q8 Recommendation)
Further Study New Crossing
Explore Future Connection
Existing/Proposed High Comfort bikeways
Regional Mobility Hub
Local Mobility Hub
2.3 Land Use and Built Form

<table>
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2.3.1 INTRODUCTION

The Land Use and Built Form topic covers the basic elements necessary for creating equitable and complete neighborhoods as the West Area grows and changes over the next 20 years. Land use refers to the location of human uses and activities such as housing, shopping, employment, recreation, transportation, industry, education, and more. Built form refers to the design, quality, and density of new buildings, infill development, and renovations within the uses identified above.

The desired land uses and built forms in the West Area neighborhoods are described using neighborhood contexts and future places (see sections 2.3.2 and 2.3.3).

- **Neighborhood Contexts** describe the general characteristics of an area, including street and block patterns and the overall intensity of development.
- **Places** describe more specifically what uses and building scales are appropriate.

Together, neighborhood contexts and places describe how the West Area is envisioned to evolve, look, and feel by 2040. They also set the foundation for policies and strategies which provide more detailed development guidance to address the concerns and desires expressed by the community over the course of the planning process.

The policies and strategies outlined in this section are organized by the following subsections:

- **Commercial Services and Uses**: Aims to promote community desired commercial and retail uses within centers and corridors. There should be a focus on strengthening opportunities for locally-owned, culturally-relevant small businesses that meet the needs and desires of the West Area’s diverse residents.
- **Growth Strategy**: Promotes investments along high-capacity transit corridors and centers, leverages current and future transit investments, facilitates complete communities, and supports Denver’s climate action and sustainability goals. Growth strategies also provide guidance for future redevelopment and the redevelopment of large institutional sites.
- **Housing Options/Design & Preservation**: Provides guidance on the diversification of housing options within lower-scale residential neighborhoods, the design and quality of residential construction, and preservation of historic and culturally-significant buildings.
- **Urban Design Framework**: Establishes a framework for buildings, streets, public spaces, and site design in mixed use centers, corridors, manufacturing areas, and along natural areas to promote exceptional urban design and desired outcomes.

Detailed information regarding current conditions, community feedback, and desired outcomes are included in the introductions of each subsection.
LAND USE AND BUILT FORM

Commercial Services and Uses

1. Existing Commercial Areas
Support existing commercial areas by promoting community-desired uses and enhancing the physical environment to create quality gathering places for residents.

2. Reuse of Commercial Buildings
Encourage reuse of existing commercial buildings and make it easier to develop lower-scale buildings on small lots.

Growth Strategy

3. Future Growth in Centers and Corridors
Consistent with adopted citywide policies in Blueprint Denver and in coordination with citywide efforts, direct future growth along high-capacity transit corridors and centers, and ensure future development results in neighborhoods that are more complete with mobility, quality of life enhancements, and access to opportunities for all residents.

4. Compatible Redevelopment
Ensure compatible redevelopment and/or repurposing of institutional sites within neighborhoods.

Housing Options/Design & Landmark Preservation

5. Small-Scale Multi-Unit Housing Options
Expand housing options within Low Residential places.

6. Preservation of Existing Housing
Encourage retaining, rather than demolishing, existing older homes to promote natural affordability within Low Residential places.

7. Neighborhood-Compatibe Housing
Work with neighborhoods within low and low medium residential areas composed primarily of single-unit, duplex, and row house structures to ensure that zoning tools help new construction fit into the neighborhood.

8. Culturally Significant Buildings
Preserve historic and culturally significant buildings in the West Area.

Urban Design Framework

9. Design Within Centers and Corridors
Encourage high-quality design and neighborhood compatibility within Centers and Corridors.

10. Design Along Natural Areas
Encourage high-quality design and neighborhood compatibility along natural areas.

11. Design Within Industrial Areas
Encourage high-quality design and neighborhood compatibility within Blueprint Denver’s Value Manufacturing and Innovation Flex future places.
2.3.2 NEIGHBORHOOD CONTEXTS

Neighborhood contexts reflect established land patterns such as lot and block sizes, era of construction, and existing building heights and densities. Neighborhood contexts also reflect future expectations for how new development should respond to existing patterns. The recommended contexts can be found in the Denver Zoning Code as well as Blueprint Denver. For complete context descriptions, please refer to Blueprint Denver, Chapters 4 and 5.

- **Urban Center** features a high mix of uses where the highest densities are planned in the West Area. Urban centers are largely concentrated within the Stadium District, Sun Valley Eco District, the Sheridan Station area, and the former St. Anthony’s Hospital site. This context includes multi-story, mixed-use building forms located close to streets that have excellent transit access and diverse mobility options.

- **General Urban** primarily consists of rowhomes and townhomes with some single-and two-unit residential. This context serves as a transition between urban centers and other types of urban areas. Higher-density developments include larger multi-story residential and mixed-use/commercial buildings along Colfax Avenue and Federal Boulevard, and near the Regional Transportation District’s West light rail line station platforms along the Lakewood/Dry Gulch.

- **Urban** contains a mix of housing types and commercial uses with higher-intensity developments located along West Colfax Avenue and Sheridan Boulevard. Housing types range between single-unit and smaller-scale multi-unit and rowhomes buildings to multi-story residential building forms. The majority of commercial uses are located along the West Colfax Avenue and Federal Boulevard corridors.

- **Urban Edge** is primarily a single- and two-unit residential context with some embedded small scale, multi-unit development. The Urban Edge context is located close to Lakewood/Dry and Weir Gulches, and along major corridors such as Alameda Avenue and Sheridan Boulevard. This context is a transition between urban and suburban areas. Commercial and mixed-use development is primarily found along major corridors with some smaller-scale commercial buildings located within the interior of the residential areas. Most blocks have alleys, and most sidewalks are attached to the curb.

- **Districts** are primarily manufacturing areas with various production, logistical operations, design and flex businesses. Districts are located in Sun Valley and Valverde neighborhoods along Federal Boulevard and the South Platte River corridor. District areas in the West Area are adjacent to urban edge contexts.
2.3.3 FUTURE PLACES

Future Places are an organizational system from Blueprint Denver that describe the look and feel of an area. Future places work together to promote complete neighborhoods for the residents living within or near each of them. Each future place expresses itself differently depending on the neighborhood context and geographic location. Through the West Area planning process, the future places identified by Blueprint Denver have been adjusted in key locations to better reflect community priorities (see pg. 166). Future places provide guidance on building heights, future growth, and development.

Below are brief descriptions of the context and future place combinations found in the West Area. For complete future places descriptions, please refer to Chapters 4 and 5 of Blueprint Denver.

**URBAN CENTER**

**CENTERS AND CORRIDORS**

**Community Center**
- Provides some mix of office, commercial, and residential uses.
- Buildings are larger scale than those found in local centers, and orient to the street or other public spaces.
- Urban design characteristics feature mostly continuous building frontages and distinct streetscape elements that help to define the public realm.

**Regional Center**
- Contains a high mix of uses providing a dynamic environment of living, dining, entertainment, shopping, and a diverse set of employment options.
- Larger scale mixed-use buildings are common. Structures should respond in form and mass to the streets and public spaces around them.
- High degree of urban design with continuous building frontages that define the public realm.

**Community Corridor**
- Typically provides a mix of office, commercial, and residential uses.
- Buildings have a distinctly linear orientation along the street.
- Building footprints are typically larger.

**RESIDENTIAL**

**High**
- Includes many large scale, multi-unit residential uses and building forms.
- Features a high mix of uses such that commercial uses are prevalent with the residential uses.

**High-Medium**
- Contains a mix of uses, including multi-unit residential, but at a slightly lower intensity compared to the high residential areas.
Community Center
- Typically provides a mix of office, commercial, and residential uses.
- Buildings are larger than those found in local centers and orient to the street and other public spaces. There is a strong degree of urban design with continuous building frontages that define the public realm.

Community Corridor
- Typically provides some mix of office, commercial, and residential uses.
- Buildings have a distinctly linear orientation along the street.
- Building footprints are typically larger.

RESIDENTIAL
High-Medium
- Mix of low- to medium-scale multi-unit residential uses with some neighborhood-serving mixed-use development distributed throughout.
- Block patterns are consistent, and pedestrian-scaled buildings clearly define and activate the street.

Low-Medium
- Primarily residential, with a mix of single and two-unit homes interspersed amongst lower-scale, multi-unit buildings.
- Neighborhood-serving commercial uses are limited, and are primarily found at intersections and along corridors.
- Lot coverage may be high, and setbacks generally respect the existing neighborhood character with buildings oriented towards the street.

URBAN & URBAN EDGE

CENTERS AND CORRIDORS
Community Center/Corridor
- Typically provides some mix of office, commercial, and residential uses.
- Buildings are larger in scale than those found in local centers, and are oriented toward the street or other public spaces.
- Building frontages are continuous and define the public realm with a strong degree of urban design.

Local Center/Corridor
- Primarily provides for commercial and retail activities like dining, entertainment, and shopping and may also include residential uses and employment opportunities.
- Centers are more intimate with active street frontages that are designed at a comfortable pedestrian scale.
- Buildings have a distinctly linear orientation along the street.
WEST AREA PLAN UPDATES TO BLUEPRINT DENVER FUTURE PLACES

The West Area Plan updates the Blueprint Denver Future Places map. These updates are highlighted on the map and summarized below:

- **Refinements around future high-capacity transit stations.** Higher-intensity places have been designated to support high-capacity transit stations and services that are envisioned throughout the West Area. This will encourage more ground floor activation and allow residents of the area, including those living in affordable housing, to have access to transit and nearby amenities.

- **Refinements along the south side of the West Light Rail Line.** Adjustments have been made to concentrate mixed-use and higher-intensity development directly adjacent to rail station areas. This refinement provides gradual transitions to existing neighborhood contexts by applying a future place category that will encourage development that is more consistent with the scale of the existing neighborhood.

- **Refinements along the edge of adjoining industrial and residential areas.** Innovation/Flex has been added along the residential edges of the Value Manufacturing districts to allow for a mix of uses that provides a softer transition between contexts, while preserving the core of the value manufacturing district.

### RESIDENTIAL

#### High-Medium

- Combination of mid-scale multi-unit residential building forms containing a mix of neighborhood-serving uses appropriate for collector streets and intersections as well as arterial streets and intersections.

#### Low-Medium

- Mix of low- to mid-scale multi-unit residential building forms.
- Small-scale multi-unit buildings are dispersed among single and two-unit residential building forms.

#### Low-Medium Incentive Areas

- Mix of single-unit, two-unit, row house, three-story multi-unit and accessory dwelling unit building forms.
- The West Area Plan applies the “low-medium incentive areas” subcategory in areas where row house, town house, and three-story multi-unit buildings and accessory dwelling units would be appropriate based upon future regulatory processes that expand missing middle housing and incentivize affordable housing in mixed use and commercial areas. (see Policy E2 (P. 210)).
- Limited neighborhood serving commercial can be found, particularly at intersections. In the General Urban context, uses may be mixed throughout Residential Low-Medium areas.

#### Low

- Predominately single and two-unit building forms on small to medium-sized lots.
- Accessory dwelling units and duplexes are appropriate and can be integrated where compatible.
- Some civic and institutional uses are compatibly integrated throughout. A limited mix of uses can occur along arterial and collector streets, as well as where commercial uses are existing.

### DISTRICTS

**Value Manufacturing**

- Advanced large-scale craft manufacturing, research, design labs, robotics, technology, and flex spaces are found in these areas. Residential uses are not compatible.
- Often located in business parks or on extra-large superblocks, value manufacturing typically consists of single or multi-tenant buildings that are designed to accommodate freight movement and product storage.

**Innovation/Flex**

- Assembly facilities, laboratories, small logistics, warehousing, local food production and catering, tech firms, value manufacturing, and related office uses are found in these areas. Residential uses are compatible.
- Buildings may be multi-tenant, with office uses in front and manufacturing in back.
COMMUNITY FEEDBACK

At neighborhood workshops community members expressed the desire for commercial services that meet the day-to-day needs of residents while also supporting an environment for small businesses that reflect the rich history and culture of the West Area. The following includes results from the first community kick-off survey and community land use workshops.

“What kinds of places and activities are most important to you in your neighborhood?”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Place/Activity</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Grocery stores</td>
<td>71%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Restaurants</td>
<td>60%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Culturally meaningful places/events</td>
<td>57%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shopping and entertainment</td>
<td>52%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

“What is your vision for the centers and corridors”

- “Market, restaurants/not empty car lots, gift shops”
- “Support transit and walkable environments: quality grocery stores and restaurants”
- “Small businesses that serve neighborhood”

2.3.4 COMMERCIAL SERVICES & USES

What is it?
Access to neighborhood-serving goods and services is a key component to creating a complete neighborhood. Another key component is ensuring that the built environment is conducive to retaining and creating new opportunities for locally-owned businesses throughout various commercial areas including smaller areas interior to neighborhoods, as well as larger commercial corridors.

What’s going on in West?
The majority of commercial services in West are located along the major corridors that bound the plan area, particularly along Federal Boulevard, Alameda Avenue, and West Colfax Avenue. Smaller commercial nodes also exist within neighborhoods along key streets that provide direct connections within and throughout these neighborhoods such as 1st Avenue.

The overall retail presence in the West Area is primarily composed of smaller retailers with average establishment size (rentable square feet) ranging from a low of 3,900 square feet along Federal Boulevard to a high of 5,900 square feet found along Sheridan Boulevard.

Community members expressed the desire to attract and support locally-owned retailers, to promote small business development, and increase the availability of retail and commercial services that can meet the day-to-day needs of community members. A key priority includes enhancing existing local commercial nodes within the interior of the neighborhoods so they serve as community gathering spaces for residents. For example, the intersection of 1st Avenue and Knox Court has been identified as a potential location for investment and promotion. Community members expressed an idea of a “Downtown Barnum” where area residents can walk, roll, or take transit along comfortable, safe, tree-lined streets to local cafes, restaurants, barber shops, flower shops, or dry-cleaners that are owned by local area residents.
2.3.4 COMMERCIAL SERVICES & USES

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- Neighborhood commercial area at 1st Avenue and Knox Court
- The Co-op at 1st Avenue and Zenobia Street
- Commercial area along major corridor at Federal Boulevard and Bayaud Avenue
RECOMMENDATIONS

L1

Existing Commercial Areas

Support existing commercial areas by promoting community-desired uses and enhancing the physical environment to create quality gathering places for residents.

Community members have expressed their desire for enhancing and attracting more investment to their existing neighborhood commercial nodes that are embedded within the neighborhoods. These nodes are more than just a collection of businesses at an intersection, they are places where residents come together to address daily needs, celebrate neighborhood culture, and build a collective history. They have the opportunity to evolve and transform into attractive commercial nodes that can provide daily services and amenities and serve as gathering places for the community.

A. Prioritize neighborhood-serving retail uses such as coffee shops, local restaurants, small-format grocery stores, after-school youth-oriented services, and other daily services. Within Active Neighborhood Main Streets, residential and office should serve as supporting uses but not be the predominant ground floor use.
   1. Incentivize these uses and services by creating opportunities for small-business development.

B. Help realize the full potential of these Active Neighborhood Main Streets through various short-term improvements, including:
   1. Organize community revitalization events to clean up commercial areas by removing litter, graffiti, and weeds, and reduce surface-level blight.
   2. Utilize and improve maintenance of existing infrastructure to the maximum extent possible such as integrating street trees and fixing existing light poles.
   3. Improve the overall design and experience of the streetscape by providing new pedestrian-scaled lighting, streets trees, and landscaping, and through the addition of district branding elements to existing light poles, and through public art that celebrates the unique character, history, and culture of the area.

4. Pilot temporary measures that generate excitement and exhibit community priorities through leveraging opportunities along streetscapes and in or along roadways, such as installing temporary community art for traffic calming at major intersections, planters or barriers to shape curb extensions, striped vehicle parking spaces, or community-painted crosswalks.

C. Consolidate and establish more efficient off-street parking systems through shared parking agreements/easements and through transportation demand management solutions that include micro-transit alternatives and mobility hubs.

D. Study the potential for requirements, should redevelopment occur, to incentivize local business tenanting.

E. Offer financial support to rehabilitate local commercial areas, including storefront improvements, tenant signage upgrades, and unexpected repairs and building rehab.

CASE STUDY: Re-Imagine West Colfax

In 2015, the West Colfax BID (Business Improvement District) partnered with the city and other community volunteers to initiate the “Re-imagine West Colfax Design Demonstration.” This demonstration gathered community feedback on temporary designs to help inform plans for longer-term improvements which came to fruition through the West Colfax Pedestrian Crossing & Transit Improvements. This one-day workshop included enhanced crosswalks, median refuges, wider sidewalks, and small pop-up parks along Colfax - all paired with food, music, and art. This allowed community members to experience and visualize the full potential of their commercial corridor.

Source: West Colfax Business Improvement District

CASE STUDY:
Re-Imagine West Colfax

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Source: West Colfax Business Improvement District
RECOMMENDATIONS

Reuse of Commercial Buildings

Encourage reuse of existing commercial buildings and make it easier to develop lower-scale buildings on small lots.

The community has expressed the desire to retain and incorporate existing buildings as new development occurs on the corridor. These existing, older commercial buildings often provide smaller commercial spaces and lower rents - resulting in more naturally occurring affordable commercial spaces for small businesses that provide residents with access to essential goods and services within their neighborhoods. However, some current zoning and building requirements can make reusing or repurposing an existing structure difficult. It is important to adapt the rules and regulations for these types of structures to support smaller businesses in the West Area.

A. Study the reuse potential for existing commercial buildings to:
   1. Provide sensitive transitions to existing neighborhoods and ensure pedestrian-friendly frontages.
   2. Provide smaller-format commercial spaces within larger buildings to accommodate small format businesses and business start-ups.
   3. Preserve the historical and cultural significance of the West Area.
   4. Provide incentives and financial assistance to maintain historic character and preserve naturally-occurring affordability.

B. Explore opportunities to modify standards and reduce regulatory barriers for existing structures that are being reused or repurposed, while ensuring a pedestrian-friendly environment along corridors and centers. Considerations include:
   1. Balancing the needs for streetscape, amenity space, landscaping, and on-street parking with development impacts of right-of-way dedications. In particular, try to avoid land dedication requirements when it would result in a lot being less than 75-feet deep.
   2. Financial assistance or design alternatives for required streetscape improvements for lots less than 75 feet deep.
   3. Analyze whether requiring alley access may reduce the need for curb cuts at the street, which can create conflicts between pedestrians and vehicles and make walking less attractive.
   4. Eliminate requirements for additional off-street parking spaces and allow applicants to repurpose existing parking spaces into outdoor space that benefits the adaptive reuse project objectives.

C. Explore providing dedicated staff for technical assistance to adaptive reuse and small-scale development to help small businesses navigate the permitting process in an efficient, predictable, and timely manner.

D. Explore adopting an adaptive reuse ordinance as a tool to simultaneously address barriers across multiple departments and codes, and applying new and/or future codes and code revisions, and certain permit provisions, including health, fire, and change of use.
What is it?
Blueprint Denver provides a growth strategy where the majority of new jobs and housing are directed to centers, corridors, and districts. The growth strategy helps manage the physical evolution of neighborhoods by informing goals for affordable housing, historic preservation, and infrastructure improvements, and makes residents aware of planned changes across the city.

What’s going on in West?
Blueprint Denver’s Growth Strategy directs the majority of future housing and employment growth to regional centers, community centers, and along corridors. In West, regional centers are primarily located within the Stadium District and at the intersection of West Colfax Avenue and Federal Boulevard, while community centers and corridors are found along the area’s four major corridors (i.e., West Colfax Avenue, Federal Boulevard, Sheridan Boulevard, and Alameda Avenue). Additionally, the large industrial districts in the Valverde neighborhood are anticipated to accommodate a modest share of future employment growth.

Community input on future growth has remained consistent with the policy direction set forth by Blueprint Denver as described above. The community has expressed the desire to channel future growth along major corridors, in centers, and in areas where major transit investments, like rail stations and bus rapid transit, either exist or are planned.

These areas provide an opportunity to increase density, mixed-uses, and building heights. To ensure that more intense development can be accommodated effectively, this plan identifies specific nodes and centers that would be most appropriate for growth based on land availability, proximity to existing or future high-capacity transit stations, and parcel depth. Key locations include areas near high capacity transit stations, which are primarily made up of community and regional centers, corridors, and high-medium residential areas.

Collectively, future growth and investment within these areas, in addition to the other community and regional corridors and centers, align with and advance the community’s desires for the elements that create complete neighborhoods (see (pg. 178)). The elements that advance the creation of complete neighborhoods will need to be provided to fully achieve the growth, sustainability, and desired public realm urban design outcomes described in this section (See Policy “L3”).
Building Heights
While Blueprint Denver’s place categories provide general guidance on building heights, this plan provides detailed height guidance for specific areas of West. Building heights in West vary, with the tallest buildings concentrated within the Community and Regional Centers designated near the Stadium District and intersection of West Colfax Avenue and Federal Boulevard area. Taller buildings are also recommended around existing and future high-capacity transit stations. Neighborhood transitions have also been considered, particularly near the local RTD Perry and Knox rail stations. The height recommendations in this plan have tailored the general height guidance provided by Blueprint Denver in those areas to establish better transitions so that the tallest heights are concentrated directly adjacent to the stations and step down as one moves further away from the station areas (see illustrations to the right).

Height recommendations along with future place designations (see Blueprint Denver Section 2.1.3) and strategies within the urban design framework (see Section 2.1.8) should guide appropriate zone districts and development patterns in West. Building heights within the Stadium District follow the guidance in the Stadium District Master Plan. Per the Stadium District Master Plan (recommendation 1.5), zoning regulations for the district establish a base height of five stories, beyond which special building mass reduction, affordable housing, and other complete neighborhood requirements apply.

Height recommendations in this plan include height bonus incentives found in the Denver Zoning Code. Protected district standards that reduce maximum building heights in areas adjacent to lower-scale residential neighborhoods and other protected districts have also been factored into this plan and its height guidance where transitions to adjacent sensitive areas are required.
This map shows the maximum possible building heights when taking the Expanding Housing Affordability (EHA) policy into account. In certain cases, EHA allows for additional height allowances in exchange for an increase in the number of affordable housing units. Please see page XX of this plan or www.denver.gov/affordabilityincentive for more details on EHA.
**TOOLS FOR ADVANCING EQUITABLE DEVELOPMENT**

**Community Impact Reports**
If an Large Development Review (LDR) or a rezoning application meets certain criteria used to determine if there may be potentially inequitable impacts of development, then city planners conduct an equity analysis to determine how the LDR and/or rezoning can mitigate potential adverse impacts and improve equity indicators. Identifying issues of inequity in a specific area helps identify opportunities for new development to reduce those inequities. By specifically addressing the low-scoring metrics, we can improve the equity for the community around the site and throughout the entire city.

**Advancing Equity in Rezonings**
City planners are currently working with community members to review Denver’s process for rezoning properties and recommend potential updates. The year-long project is focusing on implementing city goals around equity. The project aims to improve transparency and access to the rezoning process, consider the impact of rezonings on neighboring residents and properties, and explore how rezonings can lead to equitable outcomes that better serve all community members, such as access to open space, public transportation, housing, and employment opportunities.

**Expanding Housing Affordability**
On June 6, 2022, Denver City Council voted to approve the historic “Expanding Housing Affordability” policy (EHA). The EHA policy complements existing affordable housing programs to ensure that as new homes are built in Denver, new affordable homes are built too – both to rent and to buy. Additional information can be found online at www.denvergov.org/affordabilityincentive

**RECOMMENDATIONS**

**L3**

**Future Growth in Centers and Corridors**
Consistent with adopted citywide policies in Blueprint Denver and in coordination with citywide efforts, direct future growth along high-capacity transit corridors and centers, and ensure future development results in neighborhoods that are more complete with mobility, quality of life enhancements, and access to opportunities for all residents.

Corridors and centers throughout West provide regional connections to surrounding neighborhoods and jurisdictions. These areas will experience more intense development and accommodate the majority of West’s future growth. They hold the greatest opportunities to support transit and serve as vibrant, active places where people can live, work, and play. The following strategies will help to ensure that new development positively contributes to the area and its residents by making each of the West neighborhoods more complete.

**A.** Allow higher-intensity mixed-use growth on vacant and underutilized lots along major corridors and within major centers. Support rezoning and higher-intensity development particularly within high-capacity transit centers where there is the potential for land aggregation.

**B.** Encourage transit-supportive uses and intensities within high-capacity transit centers that support current and future transit investments. The following should be considered:
1. Establish a maximum number of off-street vehicle parking spaces that can be constructed on a site, or eliminate off-street vehicle parking requirements altogether.
2. Modify regulations to reduce or prohibit auto-dominant, inactive, and low-density building forms like one-story service and drive-through uses and mini-storage. Instead, promote safe, comfortable, pedestrian-friendly site design by placing any required vehicle stacking, fueling, and parking areas away from walkways, public streets, and transit stations and stops.

**C.** Collaborate with the City of Lakewood to integrate redevelopment and investment initiatives along both sides of the Sheridan Boulevard corridor.

**D.** Promote the construction of affordable housing through incentives like Denver’s Expanding Housing Affordability Program. Incentive heights in this plan have been incorporated into building height recommendations and heights map.

**E.** In addition to affordable housing, seek to provide other elements of complete neighborhoods that are needed in the West area, especially within and along high-capacity transit centers and corridors.

**F.** Provide incentives that encourage leasing to local businesses for newly developed spaces.
RECOMMENDATIONS

Compatible Redevelopment
Ensure compatible redevelopment and/or repurposing of institutional sites within neighborhoods.

Institutional uses, such as schools and places of worship, are typically embedded within residential areas and provide key services to surrounding residents. Some make up a whole neighborhood block and when these uses cease or move away, they can leave a vacant site that has the potential to provide additional neighborhood services and more diverse/affordable housing options without displacing existing residents. Any redevelopment on these existing large campus sites should be designed to complement the surrounding neighborhood.

A. Prioritize the following for infill/redevelopment and repurposing of institutional sites:
   1. Pursue options and alternatives that seek to preserve and reuse institutional buildings that are historic or culturally significant.
   2. Integrate uses that are compatible with and resourceful for the surrounding neighborhood such as affordable housing, childcare, cafés, community meeting spaces, and other low-impact uses.
   3. Ensure neighborhood compatibility through design standards, including height transitions to lower scale adjacent homes and pedestrian-friendly building frontages.
   4. Incorporate new public open spaces and pedestrian connections, and/or vehicular connections to reconnect or extend the existing street grid.

B. Rezone properties from Campus Zone District to zone districts that are more compatible with the neighborhood and advance the priorities listed under L4.A.

C. Seek conversations with current property owners and neighbors to discuss other additional community needs and priorities as new plans are considered for redeveloping an institutional site.

D. Coordinate with Denver Public Schools to proactively engage and work with the community as school consolidation or redevelopment plans are considered in the West area.
HIGH PRIORITY ELEMENTS FOR CREATING COMPLETE NEIGHBORHOODS IN WEST DENVER

Promoting complete neighborhoods is a concept baked into the DNA of this plan. The elements of a complete neighborhood (Land Use and Built Form, Mobility, and Quality of Life Infrastructure) are also the organizing elements of the Plan’s area-wide recommendations. Some aspects of creating complete neighborhoods are best achieved through new development and by directing growth in a responsible manner (see Land Use Policy L3). These are elements that will help advance various community aspirations articulated throughout the plan and benefit the community at-large but are less likely to be directly provided by the city because they need to occur on private property. Identified community needs for creating complete neighborhoods in West Denver are listed below and organized by the different sections of the area-wide recommendations. These examples are not meant to be an exhaustive list but rather priorities highlighted by residents during the West Area planning process.

**LAND USE & BUILT FORM**
- Enhanced public realm, including improved amenity zones, green infrastructure and stormwater management, street furniture, pedestrian lighting, etc.
- Incorporation of green building practices, sustainability, and energy-efficiency
- Preservation of an existing older structure, particularly if it holds historic or cultural merit
- Integration of art, culture, and history in new development
- Mixed-use development on-site with a focus on commercial, retail and community uses that are needed and desired in the area

**MOBILITY**
- Subsidized transit (RTD Neighborhood or Business Eco-pass programs)
- Circulator or shuttle to connect employees/residents to transit
- Enhanced trails, trail entrances, signage, and wayfinding
- Free shared bicycle, e-bike, or micromobility share on-site, and other creative Transportation Demand Management (TDM) strategies

**ECONOMY**
- Permanent affordable housing that can accommodate a range of Area Median Income (AMI) levels, especially for very low-income households
- On-site job training, apprenticeships, and tutoring programs
- Local employment for youth, women, minorities, immigrants, and seniors
- Affordable childcare
- Below-market commercial space for small businesses, non-profits, incubator space, cultural uses, or community-serving enterprises

**QUALITY OF LIFE**
- Off-site park or trail connections close to development sites that increase access, acreage and/or quality of local parks
- Regenerative green infrastructure improvements (e.g., natural landscapes that support pollinators and other elements of a healthy ecosystem; or which bear fruit and/or vegetables for human consumption)
- Publicly-accessible open space and parks, including those privately owned
- Fresh food uses on-site such as community gardens, local markets, produce boxes, food distribution/food delivery, or full-service grocery stores
Area Wide Recommendations

West Area Plan

- Regenerative green infrastructure improvements
- Trail connections
- Circulator or shuttle to connect employees/residents to transit
- Community gardens
- Permanent affordable housing
- On-site job training
What is it?
The residential areas identified in Blueprint Denver’s Future Places map are where a majority of West Area residents live today. They provide a broad range of housing options and accommodate the varying needs and lifestyles of different households (single person households, families, the elderly, etc.) The built form, style, and scale of homes contribute to the overall design aesthetics of the West Area neighborhoods. Design aesthetics helps to vitalize the public realm so that residents can enjoy their regular commutes, daily activities, and strolls through the neighborhood.

The preservation of historic and culturally-significant places contributes to placemaking and the overall identity of a neighborhood, and creates a link to the roots of the community and its people. Preservation opportunities exist not only within the residential areas, but also along corridors and within centers and districts.

What’s going on in West?

HOUSING OPTIONS
In the West Area, 55% of all dwellings are single-unit homes. This is a higher proportion than in the city overall, where 46% of units are single-unit homes. As with other characteristics, housing types vary from one neighborhood to the next. Sun Valley is predominantly multifamily housing; only 10% of units are single-unit homes, while 52% are in structures with five units or more. Barnum West represents the other end of the housing spectrum, where 88% of dwellings are single-unit homes.

Community input identified the desire to expand housing options within West that are appropriately tailored to different areas within neighborhoods (e.g., near schools, parks, or transit stops). Residents thought that smaller forms of housing, such as ADUs, duplexes, and fourplexes were generally more appropriate south of the Lakewood/Dry Gulch, where more lower-scale homes currently exist, compared to multi-unit structures which were thought to be more appropriate in the northern portions of the West Colfax and Sun Valley neighborhoods.

In addition to housing options, residents expressed concern about decreasing affordability and losing the historic neighborhood character due to the intensity of new construction. Given these concerns, thoughtfully allowing additional units through additions and renovations of existing homes could help to preserve those homes while expanding housing options.
HOUSING DESIGN QUALITY & COMPATIBILITY
Significant growth and new construction of homes has occurred primarily north of the Lakewood/Dry Gulch in West Colfax – averaging 200 new housing units per year from 2010-2019. Residents said they have seen increased demolition of exiting homes and construction of new homes that have maximized the full building envelope of the zoning standards, and they expressed the desire for new construction and additions to be built in styles similar to existing homes in the area.

LANDMARK PRESERVATION
While no historic landmark districts exist in West, a few landmark structures have been designated throughout the West Area, including select homes along Stuart Street and Lake Middle School in the West Colfax neighborhood, and a church in Villa Park. Many more landmark preservation opportunities exist in West and the community has expressed interest in exploring more preservation opportunities for structures and places that help provide a link to the historic and cultural roots of the community and its people.

DESIGN QUALITY TOOLS IN LOWER-SCALE RESIDENTIAL AREAS
The Denver Zoning Code (DZC), adopted in 2010, sets regulations for development of private property by neighborhood context, including uses, building placement, height, design, and parking. Regulatory tools exist within and outside of the DZC to better align the design of future residential construction with community priorities:

- **Conservation Overlay**: A zoning code tool that is intended to perpetuate existing elements of neighborhood character as change occurs. In particular, the conservation overlay district tool has been used to better match allowed height and building coverage to the surrounding neighborhood.

- **Design Overlay**: A zoning code tool that is intended to establish a common design character for future development.

Chapter 30 of the Denver Revised Municipal Code (DRMC) also provides criteria to create and regulate historic districts and individual landmarks. These regulatory tools exist outside of the Denver Zoning Code but provide communities with the opportunity to honor the historic character of their neighborhood:

- **Historic Districts**: Adds a design review process, using design guidelines and limits to demolition. Some other special district overlays, such as conservation overlays, can be combined with historic district designation. Applications for work in a historic district are administered by the city's Landmark staff, with some projects requiring review by the Landmark Preservation Commission.
Small-Scale Multi-Unit Housing Options
Expand housing options within Low Residential places.

Providing diversified housing options can help accommodate households of varying income levels and lifestyles. In West, single-unit homes are the predominate use in low residential areas, and other types of housing options are limited. Residents expressed a desire to see diverse housing options permitted in their neighborhood, and would like to see these housing options provided in targeted locations (i.e., near parks and schools) in a manner that respects existing neighborhood contexts.

A. Expand “missing middle” housing in targeted locations. The following should be considered:
   1. Allow low-medium “missing middle” housing (e.g., duplex, fourplex) on corner lots and/or near transit, parks/open spaces, gulches, and schools. Greater allowances should be considered when one or more units provide long-term affordability.
   2. Encourage family-friendly housing with larger units, more bedrooms, and family-supportive amenities (see Blueprint Denver Policy LU-H 07 and West Plan Policy E-5).

B. Implement adopted citywide policies from Blueprint Denver to diversify housing choice throughout all residential areas by expanding detached and attached accessory dwelling units (ADUs) while also addressing context-sensitive detached ADU design and the removal of barriers to ADU construction.
   1. Detached ADUs should be an allowed building form in all low residential areas, including duplex and rowhouse districts.
   2. Until a uniform citywide approach to ADU development is complete, consider neighborhood-wide and individual rezonings to allow ADUs where prohibited.

3. Study and implement zoning tools to remove barriers to ADU construction while ensuring context-sensitive design. Consider and study the following in greater detail:
   » Changes that make more properties eligible for detached ADUs, including evaluating minimum lot size requirements.
   » Modifications to form standards including height and bulk plane requirements.
   » Site design requirements including parking and lot coverage.
   » Use of complimentary building materials and techniques.

C. Support community partner programs and efforts to create more affordable housing options within low residential neighborhoods (see Policy E3 (P. 211)).
WHAT IS “MISSING MIDDLE” HOUSING?

“Missing middle” housing refers to homes such as duplexes, triplexes, rowhomes, and similar neighborhood housing options that fall “in the middle” between single unit and small multi-unit apartment buildings. “Missing middle” also refers to units that are attainable to middle-income households. These housing types can help provide affordable options for middle-income households and homeownership opportunities for residents who currently rent. Examples of missing middle housing have historically existed in West Denver neighborhoods where the West Area Plan recommends continuing the integration of those housing options in appropriate locations.

Missing middle housing development is an important strategy to help ease Denver’s housing shortage and make neighborhoods more diverse and inclusive. In particular, these housing options have helped seniors remain in neighborhoods they know and love as they adapt to fixed incomes and smaller households as children move away (this is often referred to as “aging in place.”)

Missing middle homes can also make neighborhoods more family-friendly, as households with children often desire yards and locations within residential areas as opposed to apartments on commercial streets like West Colfax Avenue. Missing middle housing can provide affordable housing options to families at more attainable housing prices compared to single unit homes.
To promote preservation and minimize the demolition of older housing stock while expanding housing options in neighborhoods, cities across the U.S. have adopted, or are in the process of adopting, zoning standards that incentivize the retention of older homes by allowing additional entitlement (square footage or units) when the older home is preserved. Below are descriptions of preservation policies that other cities have either adopted or are currently considering:

- **Austin, TX:** As proposed, updated zoning would grant an additional unit if the older home is preserved (at least 30 years of age) and the preserved home is exempt from FAR (floor area ratio) and parking requirements, and granted additional lot coverage.
- **Portland, OR:** As adopted, Portland’s zoning grants additional FAR when adding units to an existing home to convert to a duplex, triplex, or fourplex.
- **Seattle, WA:** As adopted, Seattle’s zoning allows a 50% exemption from FAR requirements when adding units to an existing home.
New construction in residential areas can sometimes be misaligned with neighborhood context due to the greater mass and scale of new buildings in contrast to older buildings. Modifying zoning requirements such as setbacks, building coverage, and building height can help ensure new buildings and additions make good neighbors and fit in with the established context and scale of the surrounding neighborhood.

**NEIGHBORHOOD-COMPATIBLE HOUSING**

Work with neighborhoods within low and low medium residential areas composed primarily of single-unit, duplex, and row house structures to ensure that zoning tools help new construction fit into the neighborhood.

**BACKGROUND**

New construction in residential areas can sometimes be misaligned with neighborhood context due to the greater mass and scale of new buildings in contrast to older buildings. Modifying zoning requirements such as setbacks, building coverage, and building height can help ensure new buildings and additions make good neighbors and fit in with the established context and scale of the surrounding neighborhood.

**POLICY STRATEGIES**

A. Use the West Area Pattern Book to help guide future community conversations regarding the use of regulatory design quality tools, such as conservation overlays. Pattern Books can serve as an initial starting point to help identify and prioritize where these design quality tools may be most appropriate and speak to the initial community design values and input received from the West Area planning process regarding residential design quality and desired building form characteristics.

B. Update zoning regulations to create more contextual standards for massing, materials, scale, and height. The following should be considered and studied in greater detail:

1. Adjustments to the building lot coverage standard to ensure compatibility with existing neighborhood patterns and side setback standards to promote more gradual transitions in height, size and scale.
2. Adjustments to the height and bulk plane standards to promote more compatible scale and massing.
3. Additional form standards to reduce the appearance of building scale and incentives to promote architectural features (e.g., front porches) that are unique to a neighborhood and/or desired by residents.

**ZONING STANDARDS**

MASSING & FORM

Zoning standards shape the general massing and form of new construction. Within lower-scale residential areas, these standards typically address:

- **Minimum Setback**: Regulates how far away a structure needs to be set back from the street or adjacent zone lots.
- **Maximum Height**: Regulates how tall structures can be.
- **Bulk Plane**: Regulates the overall massing by having the setback planes essentially form a “tent” over the lot, rising from the zone lot lines for a set height (e.g., 10 ft.) then angling in at 45-degree angles from the side and rear (see image above).
- **Building Coverage**: Regulates the maximum amount of area (e.g., 40%) that structures are allowed to cover the zone lot.
- **Design Elements**: Regulates certain building features such as attached garages, rooftops, and pedestrian entry features.

In addition to zoning, overlays and historic districts serve as additional design quality tools for neighborhoods (see p(pg. 181)).
Culturally Significant Buildings
Preserve historic and culturally significant buildings in the West Area.

Preserving the history of a place through its significant historic resources gives a community its unique character. Historic preservation provides a link to the roots of the community and its people. Rehabilitating older buildings not only adds character to the area and celebrates neighborhood history, but it can also help attract new investment.

A. Recognize and honor the diverse history and culture of the West Area.
   1. Organize with community groups, council offices, and preservation organizations to promote and honor the West Area’s diverse cultures and history.
   2. Engage local community members and preservation partners to identify areas or sites for potential historic designation - at a local, state or national level.
   3. Utilize the city’s Latino/Chicano Historic Context study (and future historic context studies) to identify culturally and historically significant event locations, buildings, and sites throughout the West Area.

B. Utilize Discover Denver and other community projects to survey West Area neighborhoods to identify buildings or areas that are historically, architecturally, geographically, or culturally significant to inform potential preservation strategies.
   1. Build upon the existing survey of West Colfax (completed in 2020) to launch future survey and preservation efforts.
   2. For areas identified as an “Area of Historic Significance” in the Discover Denver Survey Reports, partner with interested community members, council offices, and preservation organizations to engage residents and explore potential individual landmarks, historic districts, cultural historic districts, conservation overlays, or other preservation options.
   3. Explore cultural historic districts to preserve the West Area’s unique cultural heritage. These groups may include the Jewish community, the Latino/Chicano community, and the Asian community.

C. Connect property owners to resources to encourage designation, such as:
   1. Technical assistance writing designation applications.
   2. Financial incentives, such as fee reductions and tax credits.
   3. Grants for low-income homeowners to assist with maintenance and repair of historically significant homes.
   4. Assistance with community engagement when historic districts, cultural historic districts, or other preservation projects are proposed.

D. For undesignated properties, promote the use of other preservation tools like easements, historic covenants, and conservation overlay districts in addition to designation.

Discover Denver is a citywide building survey focused on identifying buildings that are historically, architecturally, or culturally significant to Denver’s history. The survey documents the city’s individual buildings, the histories of its neighborhoods, and the stories important to its communities. Led by Historic Denver, Inc. and the City and County of Denver, the project is funded primarily by a grant from the Colorado State Historical Fund. In West, a survey has been completed for the West Colfax neighborhood.
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.
What is it?
Improving the quality of design advances the broader goal of fostering exceptional urban design and preserving and creating authentic places that thoughtfully integrate streets, public spaces, and buildings. While the previous section touched on enhancing design quality in lower-scale residential areas, the strategies in this section specifically apply to all other areas of West where the community lives, works, and plays.

What's going on in West?
The current design quality and opportunities to enhance design in West vary widely, and are identified in this plan.

Enhanced Centers and Corridors
With the exception of newer developments, centers and corridors are generally characterized by smaller commercial buildings with varying frontage types – some that are built right up to the sidewalk and others that are set back to allow for vehicular parking or drive-through facilities. In addition, the safety and comfort of pedestrians are challenged by numerous curb cuts along a single block face, absence of a consistent street wall of shopfronts and buildings set close to the street, and minimal landscaping. The strategies in this section aim to address these challenges and encourage better, high-quality design for West.

Natural Space
Unique opportunities exist in West to uplift many of the public amenities like publicly accessible open spaces, gulches, trails, and waterways, as well as existing/future high-capacity stations by better orienting and designing new development in a manner that complements and builds on these public assets. This can help advance many of the community's sentiments about wanting more high-quality gathering and pedestrian-friendly places to meet friends and family.

Manufacturing Transition and Preservation
Establishing more sensitive and gradual development transitions, particularly for neighborhoods that are near industrial areas, has been identified as an important issue. The strategies for West’s Value Manufacturing and Innovation Flex areas aim to accomplish improved gradual transitions by providing clearer guidance on the design and orientation of future buildings, and the location of future uses.

2.3.7 URBAN DESIGN FRAMEWORK

DESIGN OVERLAY AND DESIGN REVIEW DISTRICTS
Design tools used by the city include Design Overlays (DO) and Design Standards and Guidelines (DSG).

- **Design Overlay (DO):** A zoning code tool that is intended to establish a common design character for future development.
- **Design Standards and Guidelines (DSG):** A document that provides more qualitative and prescriptive guidance on site and building design, building mass and scale, streetscape design, and signage. DSG helps provide additional guidance to address certain design elements (e.g., human-scaled elements or façade articulation) that wouldn’t be possible through zoning alone. DSG may be administered by city staff or a stakeholder board to conduct case-by-case reviews of proposed developments.

The policies and strategies included in this section should inform the development and application of any future Design Overlays and/or Design Standards and Guidelines in the West Area.
ENHANCED CENTERS AND CORRIDORS

NATURAL SPACE

VALUE MANUFACTURING AND INNOVATION FLEX
ENHANCED MIXED-USE DESIGN
Centers, corridors, and high-medium residential areas where the majority of future growth is prioritized and higher design quality is encouraged to preserve and create authentic places for surrounding community members (see Policy L8). To provide more tailored strategies for different mixed-use contexts, two subareas are recommended:

- **High-Capacity Transit Centers.** Encourage more transit-supportive uses and intensities, and high-quality design. See Policies L3 and L8.
- **Neighborhood Main Streets.** Support an active retail environment and encourage quality gathering spaces. See Policies L1 and L8.

LOW RESIDENTIAL CONSERVATION AND GRADUAL EXPANSION
Low-residential places where strategies encourage diverse housing options through incorporating missing middle housing in targeted areas such as around schools and parks. Encourages preservation of existing homes through renovations and additions that create additional units. See Policies “L5” and “L6”.

ENHANCED RESIDENTIAL DESIGN
Low and low-medium residential places where modifications to current zoning standards and exploration of new development tools are recommended to better align new construction with the design and scale of older homes in the neighborhood. See Policy L7.

MANUFACTURING DISTRICTS
Manufacturing districts are a significant economic engine in the West Area, and play an important role in the city and region’s industrial landscape. They are located in close proximity to the residential areas of Sun Valley and Valverde, which can generate health and safety issues for residents (e.g., noise, truck traffic, air pollution). To continue preserving the strongly-performing employment base, while providing sensitive transitions to and balancing the needs of the nearby residential areas, two subareas are recommended:

- **Transition.** An area made up of Innovation/Flex places with strategies to provide more sensitive and gradual transitions between manufacturing and residential areas.
- **Preservation.** An area comprised of Value Manufacturing places with additional strategies to preserve and expand the employment base. See Policy “L11”.

NATURAL SPACE
Parks, open spaces, gulches, and trails with strategies to encourage improved access and higher design quality outcomes for adjacent properties so they complement and activate natural areas in the West Area. See Policy “L10”.
Design Within Centers and Corridors
Encourage high-quality design and neighborhood compatibility within Centers and Corridors.

Improving the design quality for future development along corridors and within centers is necessary to preserve and create authentic places for residents and businesses. It is essential that future development responds to its surrounding physical, social, and historical contexts so that it is thoughtfully integrated within neighborhoods. This is especially true for many of our commercial/mixed-use and transit-rich areas where the majority of new growth will be directed.

A. Encourage high-quality building design that promotes a pedestrian-friendly environment and compatible transitions to adjacent lower-scale residential neighborhoods:

1. Street Enclosure and Building Height. Lower story heights and other design elements of the building and public realm (e.g., building façades, street trees) should work together to develop a proportionate sense of street enclosure to slow traffic and contribute to pedestrian comfort. Along major corridors and within centers, taller building heights should be focused at the intersections of two primary corridors or at planned/future transit stations. Taller buildings may also be appropriate on sites that are larger with the ability to provide an enhanced buffer (e.g., larger setbacks, landscaping), which can reduce solar cast on adjacent structures while allowing for greater intensity of development.

2. Neighborhood Transitions. Building height should step down gradually when directly adjacent to lower-scale residential neighborhoods. Side setbacks should be compatible with front setbacks of buildings on side streets. Horizontal façade lines should match adjacent residential buildings to the extent possible and include vertical “plane-breaks” that transition from smaller to larger setback conditions. Reduction of side setbacks should not be considered, particularly for neighborhood main streets, if it discourages a consistent condition where all buildings are uniformly set along the street edge making what is referred to as a consistent “street wall” or sense of enclosure created by the uniform placement of buildings along a street.

3. Building Frontage. Building frontage should be continuous and only be broken for public spaces such as plazas or outdoor areas associated with building uses (like dining). Alleys that front along corridors should be enhanced to be activated by pedestrian activity. Street level activation should be designed to promote a pedestrian-scaled environment using canopies, recessed entries, changes in street level setbacks, and other elements such as street furniture, art, planters, etc. that add visual interest to avoid unarticulated blank walls. Given the limited length of façades along neighborhood main streets, frontages should be coordinated at the block scale to ensure the overall urban street wall experience along the block is consistent.

4. Building Façade. The ground floor of buildings should be highly transparent (i.e. glass façades that allow the streetscape outside to interact visually with the building uses inside. For new development, building entrances should be regular, contain “plane breaks,” and contain other elements that make façades interactive. Long, uninterrupted façades are discouraged, especially for larger developments. Instead, façades must provide variation in building material and scaled transitions to create the appearance of a series of smaller urban buildings. Service aspects of building use and any associated equipment should not be accommodated on main façades. Horizontal façade lines should also match adjacent properties along neighborhood main streets.

5. Building Orientation. Buildings closest to transit station platforms should be oriented toward the transit station, promote human-scaled activation, and create a pedestrian-friendly environment. Key considerations can include incorporating high levels of transparency at the ground floor, pedestrian-scaled architectural elements, upper story setbacks, frequent building entries, and outdoor patios.
Buildings oriented toward transit station platforms

Highly transparent ground floor and variations in building façades

Sensitive transitions to lower scale residential areas

Taller building heights located at two primary intersections

Continuous building frontage with pockets of public space

Pedestrian-scaled environment using canopies, recessed entries, changes in street level setbacks, and other elements
RECOMMENDATIONS

L9

Design Within Centers and Corridors

Encourage high-quality design and activation within Centers and Corridors. (continued from prior page)

Improving the design quality for future development along corridors and within centers is necessary to preserve and create authentic places for residents and businesses. It is essential that future development responds to its surrounding physical, social, and historical contexts so that it is thoughtfully integrated within neighborhoods. This is especially true for many of our commercial/mixed-use and transit-rich areas where the majority of new growth will be directed.

B. Within High Capacity Transit Centers, encourage ground floor activation and high-quality site design to promote a pedestrian-friendly environment:

1. **Ground Floor Activation.** Encourage neighborhood-serving retail uses at the ground floor to generate activity along the street. When considering major intersections of primary streets and transit centers, ground floor retail and active uses should be located in a manner to activate corners, transit plazas, and stations to the greatest extent possible. Other additional uses should be considered within major centers as identified in the neighborhood land use recommendations.

B. Within High Capacity Transit Centers, encourage ground floor activation and high-quality site design to promote a pedestrian-friendly environment:

2. **Public Realm.** Larger amenity zones should be designed and improved by including street furniture, art, continuous tree canopies, and other improvements that will support an active retail environment and quality gathering spaces. Various short-term improvements and initiatives should be pursued to support existing commercial areas (see Policy L1).

C. Along neighborhood main streets, encourage ground floor activation and high-quality site design to promote pedestrian-friendly environment:

3. **Connections and Access.** Future development should facilitate direct and convenient access to station platforms, establishing multiple access points and pedestrian pathways. Buildings should be arranged and designed to provide clear visual and physical connections to stations, including the use of mid-block passageways.

4. **Vehicle Parking.** Vehicle parking should be located to the interior of developments, accessible from side streets, and concealed with vegetation and low height walls to minimize visual impacts on adjacent areas. Existing alleys should be utilized to the extent possible to access garages or surface vehicle parking, limiting curb-cuts onto streets.

5. **Block Size.** Larger developments should include walkable block sizes typically no more than 450 feet in length that promote a pedestrian-oriented environment. Blocks should break up long facades into smaller components, except where necessary to align with existing mixed-use and residential block patterns and street connections.

1. **Ground Floor Activation.** Encourage neighborhood-serving retail uses (see Section 2.1.5) at the ground floor level to generate activity along the street. Services and other loading areas that support ground floor retail uses should be limited to alleys and side streets, only utilizing side streets when absolutely necessary, ensuring there are visual buffers from adjacent residential uses.

2. **Public Realm.** Amenity zones should be designed and improved by including street furniture, art, continuous tree canopies, and other improvements that will support an active retail environment and quality gathering spaces. Various short-term improvements and initiatives should be pursued to support existing commercial areas (see Policy L1).

3. **Vehicle Parking.** Surface vehicle parking should be located behind buildings and concealed with vegetation and low height street walls to minimize visual impacts on adjacent areas. However, when adaptive reuse or renovations occur, vehicle parking may occur on infill lots with similar concealment measures and reduction of curb-cut widths.
Ground floor activation
Larger amenity zones
Vehicle parking located to the interior and rear of buildings
Direct, convenient access to station platforms
Walkable block sizes
Ground floor activation
Larger amenity zones
**Recommendations**

**L10. Design Along Natural Areas**

Encourage high-quality design and neighborhood compatibility along natural areas.

Open space and trail networks serve as key amenities and transportation infrastructure for the West neighborhoods. Having future developments that are better oriented and designed around these key systems will help bolster these systems and create more inviting and pedestrian-friendly spaces for residents and visitors. It will also allow for a more seamless transition and integration of publicly- and privately-owned open spaces.

A. **Stormwater Management.** Proactively plan for and around the movement and retention of stormwater. Improve water quality through natural groundwater filtration techniques, and reverse the effects of erosion through low impact development strategies, such as bioswales, rain gardens, and by planting/replanting native vegetation.

B. **Open Space Improvements.** Larger developments should design for and focus attention on open space improvements that complement and strengthen connections to adjacent open spaces and trail networks. Techniques may include incorporating publicly accessible open spaces or plazas that connect to and complement adjacent trails and parks/open spaces while also enhancing the landscape to preserve and/or restore local ecological systems.

C. **Building Orientation and Frontages.** Buildings should treat both natural areas and primary streets as primary frontages, encouraging the design and scale of building façades to promote activation and create a human scaled, pedestrian-friendly environment. Key considerations should include incorporating high levels of ground floor transparency, pedestrian-scaled architectural elements, upper story setbacks, frequent building entries, outdoor plazas and patios, and mid-block passageways that strengthen visual and physical connections between the South Platte River, Lakewood/Dry Gulch, Weir Gulch, and surrounding neighborhoods. For lower-scale residential neighborhoods, low-medium housing options (e.g. townhomes, courtyard apartments) with common, publicly accessible open spaces should either treat gulches and trails as primary frontages and/or prioritize common open spaces near the South Platte River, Lakewood/Dry Gulch and/or Weir Gulch.

D. **Connections and Access.** Frequent and direct pedestrian connections should be provided between buildings and adjacent trails. Where gaps exist within the current trails system, new developments should help fill in those gaps and enhance and strengthen trail and mobility networks.

E. **Neighborhood Transitions.** Larger developments should provide sensitive transitions to lower scale residential areas by increasing building setbacks and upper story setbacks, increasing side setbacks to be more compatible with front setbacks of adjacent homes, and including enhanced landscape buffers.
Sensitive transitions to lower scale residential areas

Open space improvements that complement adjacent open spaces

Frequent and direct pedestrian connections

Improve water quality

Building façades promote activation and pedestrian-friendly environment
**RECOMMENDATIONS**

**Urban Design Framework**

**Design Within Industrial Areas**
Encourage high-quality design and neighborhood compatibility within Blueprint’s Value Manufacturing and Innovation Flex future places.

The current state of the West Area manufacturing areas do not promote walkability and a pedestrian-friendly environment. Future reinvestment and redevelopment within these manufacturing areas has the potential to create more attractive environments for both residents and employees. Guidance related to certain built form considerations such as building frontages, walkable block sizes, and transitions to adjacent residential neighborhoods are critical to creating more attractive places in manufacturing areas.

A. **Building Orientation and Frontage.** Buildings should orient to the street and be designed to promote pedestrian-scaled environments, particularly along frontages that directly face residential areas. Use canopies, recessed entries, changes in street level setbacks, and other elements that add visual interest to avoid unarticulated blank walls. When developing housing near manufacturing areas or within industrial mixed-use districts, orient primary façades away from industrial uses, set buildings back from industrial uses, utilize parking or landscaped areas as buffers, and ensure construction materials and building mechanical systems mitigate environmental impacts of adjacent industrial zones.

B. **Block Size.** Any redevelopment of manufacturing area to residential, commercial, and/or mixed-use developments, particularly within Manufacturing Transition Areas, should include walkable, pedestrian-friendly sized blocks that are no more than 450 feet in length to promote a pedestrian-oriented environment and break up long façades into smaller components.

C. **Public Realm and Open Space.** Amenity zones should be maximized within the Manufacturing Preservation Area, particularly along frontages where high levels of truck traffic exist, to promote safe and comfortable pedestrian environments. Where Manufacturing Transition areas and residential areas share and front along the same shared street, the amenity zones should consist of streets trees, distinctive paving materials, street furniture, stormwater management systems, pedestrian-scale lighting, wayfinding signage, or other amenities that promote a safe and comfortable pedestrian environment. Publicly accessible open spaces should be provided and designed to serve as gathering and resting places for nearby employees and residents. Permanent and temporary commercial land uses around Manufacturing Transition Areas should be encouraged to increase industrial user access to food production, food access, culture, and entertainment.

D. **Neighborhood Transitions.** Sensitive and gradual transitions to lower scale residential areas should be provided by locating lower impact uses within Manufacturing Transition Areas (e.g., commercial, office) closer to residential areas, and higher impact uses (such as hazardous material processing) further away from residential areas. The height of new development should step down towards lower-scale residential neighborhoods.

E. **Neighborhood Impacts.** Regulate the impacts from noise and other nuisances from existing and future industrial and commercial development on adjacent areas through noise and nuisance standards found in the Denver Municipal Code. Evaluate potential environmental impacts of existing industrial uses along the transition zones of Manufacturing Transition and Preservation Areas, and ensure proposed land uses within future redevelopment project sites are compatible with adjacent industrial uses and operations within Manufacturing Preservation Areas.
Amenity zones maximized along frontages with high levels of truck traffic
Walkable block sizes
Lower impact uses provide a more sensitive, gradual transition
Primary façades orient away from industrial uses
Publicly accessible open spaces
Temporary commercial uses to promote activation
## 2.4 Economy and Housing

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2.4.1 INTRODUCTION

The neighborhoods that make up the West Area are a significant force within the City and County of Denver economy, which is in turn an integral part of the overall Denver Metropolitan Area economy. Economic conditions in the West Area currently vary. The industrial areas located along the Platte River are a significant economic engine in West and play an important role in the city and region’s industrial landscape. Recognizing the importance of preserving the strong-performing employers and industrial uses while balancing the needs of the nearby residential areas is critical to enhancing economic vitality and quality of life for residents.

The West Area residents and neighborhoods face challenges, including socio-economic differences in prosperity, access to opportunity, unemployment, and educational attainment levels. Affordable housing is highly needed throughout West to stabilize current residents. There are underutilized commercial areas in need of public and private sector investment. Residents expressed concerns over involuntary displacement of locally-owned small businesses, the lack of jobs held by local residents compared to the area’s overall population and proximity to jobs, and local schools with projected declines in enrollment.

A strong local economy that includes affordable housing and vibrant commercial areas is vital to a complete neighborhood, and the built environment both shapes and is shaped by local economic activity.

The policies and recommendations in this section will help the West neighborhoods support a diverse, opportunity-rich community, with a range of housing types and affordability levels. They will help to achieve a diverse blend of economic activity that benefits residents while serving markets and visitors from around the region and the world.

The Economy and Housing section is organized by the following subsections below.

- **Housing Affordability** aims to preserve existing housing affordability where it exists today and expand new opportunities for housing affordability everywhere in West to meet the diverse housing needs of residents.
- **Economic Vitality - Places** aims to develop and retain small-businesses in the area and preserve and expand the employment base of West while improving the environment for residents.
- **Economic Vitality - People** aims to stabilize residents at risk of involuntary displacement and promote employment opportunities for local residents.

LONG TERM VISION

In 2040, the West Area is home to households of all incomes and sizes, including families, seniors, recent immigrants, and young professionals. Multi-unit and mixed-use buildings along its major corridors provide convenient, affordable, high-quality housing, where many residents work just a short walk, bike, or transit ride away. Smaller-scale housing options such as ADUs are found within the residential neighborhoods. They provide wealth-building opportunities for homeowners and housing diversity and choice for residents who desire the family-friendly neighborhoods in the area. Long-term residents have found new housing opportunities and access to financial resources to remain in place in their communities.

Locally-owned small businesses thrive in West, contributing to the overall character of the neighborhoods, and providing more retail goods and services for surrounding residents. Current businesses have expanded and new small businesses have been created in the West Area.

The number of jobs in West has risen, along with the number of residents who are locally-employed, strengthening the local economy and creating new economic opportunities for area residents. In addition, public and private investments in infrastructure have made it easier and safer for residents to get around, including improved access to parks, trails, gulches, and the South Platte River.
**ECONOMY AND HOUSING**

**Housing Affordability**

- **Housing Affordability and Quality**
  Preserve existing housing affordability and housing quality.

- **Affordable Housing Diversity**
  Explore strategies so affordable housing is available everywhere by implementing approaches that promote a diversity of affordable housing options within all neighborhoods and new development.

- **Overall Housing Diversity**
  Expand diversity of housing types and affordability to support households of different sizes, ages, and incomes in all neighborhoods.

- **Support Programs for Unhoused Community Members**
  Expand and improve temporary support programs and initiatives between partnering organizations.

- **Long-term Housing Stability**
  Support long-term housing stability for residents experiencing homelessness.

- **Social Services**
  Build access to, awareness of, and support of social services for residents in West.

**Economic Vitality – Places**

- **Economic Vitality of Corridors**
  Strengthen the economic vitality of corridors to create opportunities for community-serving retail, and small-business development to stabilize small businesses at risk of involuntary displacement.

- **Manufacturing Employment Base**
  Preserve and expand the employment base of the existing West Area Manufacturing Districts (i.e., Heavy Production and Value Manufacturing), while improving the built and natural environment for adjacent residential uses and the promotion of sustainable development.

- **New Businesses**
  Attract new businesses to West to better serve residents' needs.

**Economic Vitality – People**

- **Involuntary Displacement**
  Stabilize residents at risk of involuntary displacement.

- **Employment Opportunities**
  Promote employment opportunities for local area residents of all skill and education levels.
What is it?
The most common measure of housing affordability assesses the “burden” that housing costs put on a household. If a household pays more than 30% of their gross income in rent or mortgage payments, taxes, and basic utilities, they are considered to be “cost-burdened” and susceptible to displacement should housing costs increase. The higher the cost burden, the greater the vulnerability, which leaves residents with less money to spend on other daily needs. Affordability does not just refer to subsidized housing for people at extremely low income levels; it also affects an increasingly wide spectrum of working households in the city.

What’s going on in West?
In West, 42% of households are cost burdened compared to the city’s overall average of 36%. The highest percentage of cost burdened households is in the Valverde neighborhood, where 46% of households are considered cost burdened. In addition, per capita income is lower in West compared to Denver’s average per capita income, and the West Area has a greater percentage of households living below the federal poverty line.

The current socio-economic conditions of West coupled with rising housing costs present a housing affordability challenge for many households living in the area.

The residential market in the West Area has two distinct components: the areas located north of the Lakewood Dry Gulch, and the areas south of the gulch. The residential market north of the gulch has experienced significant changes including a rapid increase in new home sales and increases in home price. The residential market south of the gulch has experienced less growth; homes in this area are currently less expensive than those north of the gulch. However, areas south of the gulch are experiencing a similar trend of rapidly-accelerating and appreciating prices.
AVERAGE SALE PRICE, 2019

$535,600  $343,396

North of Lakewood Gulch  South of Lakewood Gulch

Source: CoStar; Economic and Planning Systems

ANNUAL AVERAGE SALE PRICE INCREASE SINCE 2007

12%  10%

North of Lakewood Gulch  South of Lakewood Gulch

Source: CoStar; Economic and Planning Systems

HOUSEHOLDS THAT RENT THEIR HOMES

55%  51%

West  Denver

Source: ESRI; Economic and Planning Systems

West Area Plan
**Housing Concepts**

**Income-Restricted Housing**
Income-restricted housing is housing that has a covenant that requires rents to be affordable for residents. The requirements are typically tied to specific Area Median Income levels, and many income-restricted units involve a subsidy to help maintain lower rents. See Policies “E1” & “E2”. (Photo: Vida at Sloan’s Lake, West Colfax)

**Cooperative Housing**
Cooperative housing is housing that is owned or rented by members who intentionally and equitably share resources, governance, rights, and responsibilities. Cooperative housing can help expand access to housing for all, and increases opportunities for home ownership and wealth building for middle-income earners living in increasingly expensive areas. See Policy “E3”. (Photo: Chrysalis Cooperative, Boulder)

**Supportive Housing**
Supportive housing combines apartments where residents pay rent based on what is affordable for their income along with on-site and community-based services to help individuals and families transition out of long-term homelessness back to having a safe place to call home. See Policies “E2” & “E3”. (Photo: West End Flats, West Colfax)

**Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs)**
An ADU is a second unit located on the same zone lot as a primary residence. An ADU may be either “attached” (e.g., a basement unit) or “detached” (e.g., a unit over the garage or a smaller house in the backyard). These units provide sensitive ways to integrate affordable living into established neighborhoods while accommodating the varying lifestyles of different residents. See Policies “L5”, “E2”, and “E3”. (Photo: ADU, Denver)

**Co-housing**
Co-housing is an intentional community of private homes clustered around shared space. Shared spaces and amenities may include community kitchens, dining areas, laundry, parks, and recreational spaces. Co-housing provides more opportunities for community interaction and collaboration for its residents. The shared spaces and amenities also help ease the burden on public parks and recreational spaces as the residential population of a neighborhood increases. See Policy “E3”. (Photo: Aria Cohousing, Denver)

**Missing Middle Housing**
Missing middle refers to 2 to 4 unit homes such as duplexes, triplexes, row houses, and similar neighborhood housing options that fall “in the middle” between single unit and small apartment buildings. Missing middle also refers to units that are attainable to middle-income households. See Policies “L5” and “E3”. (Photo: Highlands Garden Village, Denver)

**Family-friendly Housing**
Housing designed to serve households of more than one generation, usually including children. This includes housing units with more than one bedroom as well as on-site amenities, such as daycares and playgrounds, that serve a variety of ages. See Policies “L5” and “E3”. (Photo: Mariposa, Denver)

**Preservation of Existing Naturally Occurring Affordable Housing**
Naturally Occurring Affordable Housing (NOAH) refers to affordable housing that operates without subsidy or covenant requirements. A majority of affordable housing falls into this category, and NOAH is an important housing option for low-income families or individuals who do not qualify for income-restricted housing. See Policy “E1” (Photo: NOAH, East Colfax, Denver)

**Senior Housing**
Senior housing serves an aging population, ranging from independent living to 24/7 assisted care. There is a stronger emphasis on safety, accessibility, adaptability, and longevity that many conventional housing choices lack. See Policy “E3”. (Photo: Casa de Rosal, Villa Park)
**E1 RECOMMENDATIONS**

**Housing Affordability and Quality**

Preserve existing housing affordability and housing quality.

Preserve, protect, and expand affordable housing by providing public agencies, community organizations, and the private development community with the tools and strategies needed to preserve and promote safe and affordable housing for low- and moderate-income renters. In the face of increased demand fueled by changing demographics, private and public investment, and other factors, housing must be on the agenda for those who envision a healthier future for the West Area.

**A.** Preserve existing income-restricted affordable properties by:

1. Extending expiring affordability covenants through strategies and incentives such as working with potential purchasers to extend affordability through long-term commitments, and enhancing maintenance and support for tenants.
2. Exploring partnerships (i.e., non-profits and foundations) to work with owners of existing income-restricted properties to encourage retention and extension of affordability covenants and, where needed, to encourage resale to qualified buyers.
3. Working with property owners through non-profits and housing providers to address challenges related to maintenance costs and rising property taxes.

**B.** Preserve naturally occurring affordable housing, particularly in areas close to transit and in areas vulnerable to displacement, through existing and new tools such as:

1. Incentive programs for owners and landlords that provide financing for rehabilitation of small multi-unit properties and homes in exchange for affordability commitments.
2. Partnering with existing cooperatives and other community-based organizations to assist tenants with acquiring and transforming housing into cooperative housing.
3. Partnerships between the city, land trusts, non-profit organizations, and residents to develop new financial and/or regulatory tools.

**C.** Retain and improve the quality of housing through programs that encourage upgrades and improvements for increased accessibility, energy efficiency, maintenance, and rehabilitation.

**D.** Connect property owners and landlords to federal (e.g., HUD, enterprise zones), state (e.g., enterprise zones, tax credits), and city (e.g., Business Impact Opportunity Fund) programs that offer tenant assistance and help with maintenance and rehabilitation.

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**CASE STUDY:**

West Denver Single Family Plus (WDSF+) ADU Pilot Program

In late 2018, the West Denver Renaissance Collaborative (WDRC), in partnership with the city, launched a forgivable loan pilot program to finance ADUs in nine west Denver neighborhoods. The program provides moderate- and low-income qualified homeowners (those earning up to 120 percent of the area median income) with development, financing, and construction resources to develop detached ADUs. Additionally, some homeowners may be eligible for a forgivable loan of up to $25,000 to cover costs of building an ADU. ADUs created through the program are designated as affordable housing for 25 years, to be occupied or rented at a rate no higher than the 80-120 percent area median income maximum rent. As part of the program, the city is working to streamline permitting for prototype ADU designs offered by WDRC.
EXPANDING HOUSING AFFORDABILITY

In 2020, the Expanding Housing Affordability project was launched to establish market-based programs for new development that complement existing tools and resources, enabling the city to address housing needs for households in every neighborhood. The project proposes the creation and/or expansion of three interrelated tools:

- **Linkage Fee**: Fee-based tool that applies to all new development that provides funds for the production or preservation of affordable housing. This is a current tool that will be updated to include updated fees.

- **Mandatory Affordable Housing Program**: Requires new residential development of 8 or more units to include a portion of affordable housing. Alternative compliance requirements are also proposed per the requirements of state law (HB21-1117).

- **Incentive Zoning**: Tool that will incentivize affordable units on-site and increase the supply of affordable housing. Incentives include: increases in allowed building height, parking reductions, permit fee reductions, and affordable housing review team.

Denver City Council adopted this proposal in July 2022. More information can be found at Denvergov.org.

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**RECOMMENDATIONS**

### E2 Affordable Housing Diversity

Explore strategies so affordable housing is available everywhere by implementing approaches that promote a diversity of affordable housing options within all neighborhoods and new development.

While prior policies focus on stabilizing residents and preserving affordability, there is a need to create new affordable housing in West Denver. Between 2013-2019, annual home prices increased by an average of 13.5%. By January 2022, the average closing price for a single family home in Denver reached $689,711. Advancing housing affordability has been an important priority and recurring theme throughout the planning process. Housing affordability should be advanced throughout all of the West Area, including along major corridors, where higher-intensity developments are planned, and within lower-scale residential neighborhoods to increase housing choice and opportunity for all residents.

**A.** Ensure the value of increased development potential is shared within communities through the provision of on-site affordable housing, a diversity of housing types, and elements that promote complete neighborhoods (see Policy “L3”). Appropriate tools include:

1. Mandatory affordable housing programs and affordable housing zoning incentives including Expanding Housing Affordability (EHA) or future efforts.

2. Encourage projects subject to LDR including transformative projects such as Federal Boulevard and Colfax Avenue Interchange and Stadium District Master Plan to provide affordable housing beyond minimum requirements.

**B.** Prioritize new affordable housing and increase housing diversity within lower-scale residential neighborhoods that are more context-sensitive. Introduce residents to programs such as the West Denver Renaissance Collaborative’s West Denver Single Family Plus program, ADU Pilot program, Stay-In-Place programs, land trusts, and land banking programs (see Policy “L5”).

**C.** Support the acquisition of land for future affordable housing development.

**D.** Promote the use and expansion of tools, such as Low-Income Housing Tax Credits, Tax Increment Financing, and the Affordable Housing Fund to promote and support the development of affordable housing.

**E.** Partner with nonprofit housing providers, Denver Public Schools, and other major employers to develop workforce housing.

**F.** Strive to provide means so new housing meets community needs, including:

1. Affordable to households earning very low, low, and moderate incomes, consistent with adopted city policies.

2. Addressing the shortage of units affordable to very low-income households that are either currently living in the plan area or have been involuntary displaced due to rising housing costs.

3. Housing designed to accommodate a range of households, including families, multi-generational living, aging in place, seniors, residents with disabilities, and residents needing supportive services.

4. Providing a diversity of housing types and opportunities for renters to move into homeownership.
Overall Housing Diversity
Expand diversity of housing types and affordability to support households of different sizes, ages, and incomes in all neighborhoods.

When community members were asked about housing options in the area, a majority felt West needed more options for both low- and moderate-income households—illustrating the need to expand diversity of housing types. The area’s housing types should reflect the diverse population that lives here currently and those that seek to live in West, and should include quality options for vulnerable populations, aging in place, non-traditional living arrangements, and families.

A. Increase the supply of permanent and supportive housing by combining deeply affordable housing units with health care and other holistic supportive services to create stability and security for vulnerable residents.

B. Integrate accessory dwelling units (ADUs) and missing middle housing (See Policy L5) in locations with strategies that promote affordability and wealth-building for low- and moderate-income residents, such as:
   1. Providing technical assistance and reducing barriers in permitting and construction for existing homeowners.
   2. Supporting and partnering with local organizations on housing initiatives/pilot programs and other efforts, such as the West Denver Single Family Plus (WDSF+) ADU Pilot Program lead by the West Denver Renaissance Collaborative (WDRC).

C. Expand housing options for non-traditional households to support aging-in-place, co-housing, cooperatives, and group living.
   1. Support citywide efforts to revise regulations in response to the demands of Denver’s unique and modern housing needs (see Blueprint Denver Policy LU-H 01).

D. Encourage family-sized units (2-3 bedrooms) and family-supportive amenities in residential developments (see Blueprint Denver Policy LU-H 07).
   1. Family-sized units should be located close to family-friendly facilities and amenities such as schools, parks, public open spaces, trails, and recreation centers.
   2. Work with community partners, affordable housing developers, and community land trusts to identify opportunity sites for affordable, family-friendly housing. Develop partnerships and affordable housing pilot programs that can be refined over time to expand affordable family housing options throughout the West Area.

E. Explore new financial tools and incentives including tax abatement and expedited permit reviews for existing and new residential properties that provide income-restricted affordable units.

F. Increase access to homeownership for low- and moderate-income renters by implementing citywide programs and working with partners to create new pilot programs, such as:
   1. Creating ownership options that are affordable to moderate-income residents by utilizing the diverse range of housing types being promoted in strategies B-D above.
   2. Working with community land trust and cooperative partners to implement land trusts and cooperatives in the West Area.
   3. Supporting existing and creating new programs intended to make homeownership more attainable for residents of income-restricted rental housing.
   4. Helping residents to become homeowners through programs such as targeted homebuyer counseling services that integrate financial coaching and education with down payment assistance.
   5. Creating a homeownership catalyst pilot program that provides technical assistance and financial incentives, such as a program that provides incentives and down payment assistance for maintaining good credit, and shared equity models and programs.
Support Programs for Unhoused Community Members
Expand and improve temporary support programs and initiatives between partnering organizations.

There are currently hundreds of providers and volunteers working across the city to address the issue of homelessness. Ensuring the strength and resiliency of the system means building stronger partnerships between existing services providers across the board, doing so can help reduce duplication, inefficiency, and increase accountability to better meet the diverse needs of residents experiencing homelessness.

A. Identify existing homelessness prevention resources and programs such as rapid-rehousing, drug and alcohol rehabilitation, and others to collaborate in administrating services in West and citywide.
   1. Explore models and partnerships that can better promote and co-locate services.

B. Conduct gap analysis with homeless service partners, school and early childhood partners, and human services partners to identify needs and missing resources such as navigation centers, hygiene centers, housing, and others.
   1. Invest in new partnerships for service provisions, including mini-grants to fund innovative work from local community partners.

C. Identify locations to create safe places for parking or sleeping spaces, such as local places of worship.

D. Identify sites for possible redevelopment as tiny home communities, permanent supportive housing, non-congregate shelters, and other community activities.

E. Increase funding for substance and mental health treatment services (including training and implementation of cross-sector teams to address needs of people experiencing homelessness, school children, immigrants, refugees or other vulnerable populations).
Long-term Housing Stability
Support long-term housing stability for residents experiencing homelessness.

Homelessness is a multi-faceted issue requiring many-sided solutions. Long term solutions towards housing stability for residents experiencing homelessness requires further investments in programs and infrastructure to improve the quality of life and everyday needs of residents. The strategies below aim to encourage innovative solutions and models that integrate homeless service provisions into other mainstream services to address existing gaps in the system.

A. Develop more permanent supportive housing, combining low-barrier affordable housing, health care, and other supportive services to help create stability for vulnerable residents.

B. Partner with Denver Housing Authority and Colorado Division of Housing to leverage federal and state resources to expand tenant-based long-term vouchers with the ability to layer on supportive services when needed.

C. Expand support for permanent supportive housing pipeline through continued partnership with Denver Housing Authority and Colorado Division of Housing, local services funding, and creation of locally funded voucher program.

D. Explore innovative opportunities and financing models to bring on additional housing, including hotel acquisition and rehabilitation and social impact bond financing based on health savings created by supportive housing, training and implementation of cross-sector teams to address needs of people experiencing homelessness, school children, immigrants, refugees or other vulnerable populations.

Social Services
Build access to, awareness of, and support of social services for residents in West.

Successfully addressing the issue of homelessness requires the commitment and sustained advocacy of all partners involved, from city agencies, to service providers, and especially local communities. The strategies below aim to strengthen the social service system by proactively engaging residents around the issues related to homelessness to increase the knowledge of available resources.

A. Implement HOST’s Five-Year Strategic Plan and administer the Early Intervention Team outreach program to support residents in encampments with help regaining housing, connection to safe, temporary places to stay, and connection to behavioral health and crises stabilization resources when needed to reduce harms.

B. Prioritize non-police and law enforcement contact and continue to support growth in city programs that deploy emergency response teams to pair a mental health clinician with emergency medical technician to respond to individuals experiencing crises related to mental health issues, poverty, homelessness, and substance abuse.

C. Expand early intervention team responding to 311 calls to better serve individuals.
What is it?
Supporting small business development and job creation and growth is critical to strengthening the economic vitality of the West Area. By supporting the development of existing small businesses and creating opportunities for new businesses, we can help to increase local job opportunities, attract community-serving retail that serves nearby residents, and attract visitors from outside the area.

The presence of employees in the value manufacturing and innovation/flex districts helps to provide a daytime population that supports surrounding businesses. These jobs also provide employment opportunities for local residents. This plan aims to preserve employment areas while also improving transitions to adjacent residential uses and improving access to the South Platte River. Doing so will help to strengthen economic assets that serve as a significant economic engine in the West Area while also improving quality of life.

What’s going on in West?
The industrial market is the strongest component of the West Area’s commercial market, and a key part of the city’s industrial landscape. There is over 4.3 million square feet of industrial space in the West Area, primarily located in Sun Valley and Valverde. These properties are employment generators as well; in 2018, 42 percent of jobs in the West Area were classified as “Production” sector jobs (including Construction, Manufacturing, and Wholesale Trade) heavily concentrated in these industrial areas.

West had a total of 1.35 million square feet of retail space across its four corridors of Alameda Avenue, Federal Boulevard, West Colfax Avenue, and Sheridan Boulevard in 2019. Alameda Avenue and Federal Boulevard have the most retail establishments, while West Colfax Avenue and Sheridan Boulevard have fewer but larger buildings. West is primarily made up of smaller retailers and includes a combination of locally-owned and national retailers.

Vacancy rates are relatively low in both retail and industrial markets, indicating strong market demand for employment and growth.
**VACANCY RATES, 2019**

- **Industrial**: 3.8%
- **Commercial**: 4.0%

Source: Costar; Economic & Planning Systems

**AVERAGE ESTABLISHMENT SIZE OF RETAILERS, 2019**

- **3,900 - 5,900 sf**

Source: Costar; Economic & Planning Systems

**POTENTIAL NEW JOBS IN THE NEXT 10 YEARS**

- **2,670 - 4,900**

Source: QCEW; Economic & Planning Systems
### Community Relief Programs
These programs help residents stay in their homes by providing both short- and long-term assistance including temporary rental and utility assistance, property tax rebates, homeowner preservation initiatives, shared equity, ownership programs, etc.

### Preservation and Expansion of Employment Base
This concept is about preserving and expanding the current employment base, while improving the built and natural environment for surrounding residents.

### Small-Business Development and Retention
This concept is about offering financial/technical resources and connecting small businesses with commercial spaces so that they can grow and stay in place.

### Local Employment
This concept is about connecting local area residents to local employers through strategic partnerships, incentive programs, educational opportunities, apprenticeships, and mentor programs.

### Incubators and Co-Working Spaces
These organizations offer small businesses and entrepreneurs shared work space, mentoring, business development training, funding support, equipment, childhood to adult classes, and job training.

### ECONOMY CONCEPTS
**E7 Economic Vitality of Corridors**

Strengthen the economic vitality of corridors to create opportunities for community-serving retail and small-business development to stabilize small businesses at risk of involuntary displacement.

The community and local corridors are home to many small businesses in the West Area. Residents have expressed the desire to support local businesses while allowing new opportunities for community-serving retail in areas where many car lots and vacant land exist today. Small businesses have the opportunity to increase community-desired retail that serve the needs of local residents and attract new visitors to the area. Leveraging and connecting businesses to business development tools and financial resources, and tailoring regulatory tools, can help strengthen existing businesses while allowing for new businesses to be established and thrive.

**A. Provide incentives for local merchants leasing newly developed spaces along major corridors and centers, and incentivize new projects that offer smaller retail spaces and/or provide below-market commercial spaces with incentives such as height bonuses, low-interest financing, and direct subsidies.**

**B. Consider Tax Increment Financing (TIF), urban renewal investment, and revitalization programs, particularly within major centers and along corridors to encourage new and redevelopment projects with an emphasis on those that deliver community desired goods and services.**

**C. Assist interested small businesses in buying their building or condo space by utilizing programs such as the Small Business Administration’s 504 Loan Program and mobilizing community development organizations such as Community Development Corporations (CDCs) to acquire commercial property.**

**D. Connect businesses to existing city resources that provide financial support, such as business development programs, financing opportunities, grants, and financial incentives.**

**E. Offer new forms of financial support for upgrading or expanding existing retail space, storefront improvements, business signage upgrades, and unexpected repairs and building rehabilitation. Support can come in varied forms, including fee waivers or deferrals, low-interest loans, or small grants.**

**F. Make financial resources more accessible and known through coordination with Business Improvement Districts, translation of materials and applications, and targeted outreach to businesses.**

**G. Offer financial incentives to landlords and property owners that are willing to sign long-term leases with small businesses.**

**H. Identify brownfields and leverage grants/private investment to remediate and invest in these sites.**

**I. Encourage adaptive reuse of older commercial buildings to support the creation of an ongoing commercial opportunity for local and small businesses (see Policy “L2”).**

**J. Explore the creation of Business Improvement Districts to promote business expansion and investment, and Cultural Districts to celebrate the rich diversity of West and promote services, food, and events that are culturally relevant to surrounding residents.**

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**CASE STUDY: South Thornton Attraction & Revitalization (STAR) Grant**

The STAR Grant is designed to enhance and revitalize commercial areas in the South Thornton Development Area in Thornton, Colorado by attracting and supporting new and expanding businesses to the area, assisting business owners with building improvements, and assisting with the cost of permitting and licensing, regulatory compliance, equipment purchases, or exterior and façade improvements.

This grant has been in place for several years and helped many businesses in the surrounding area to continue their operation. This investment continues to grow and improve these businesses that provide necessary services to surrounding residents and contribute to the overall placemaking of the area.
**RECOMMENDATIONS**

**E8**

*Manufacturing Employment Base*

Preserve and expand the employment base of the existing West Area Manufacturing Districts (i.e., Heavy Production and Value Manufacturing), while improving the built and natural environment for adjacent residential uses and the promotion of sustainable development.

The industrial area located along the South Platte River is a significant economic engine in the West Area, and plays a vital role in the city and region’s industrial landscape. Industrial areas within the city have been under pressure to redevelop, and residential market opportunities can erode the quality and strength of industrial areas. Preservation of industrial areas provide an opportunity to retain and strengthen an economic asset through supporting and increasing the proximity of industrial businesses to each other, while improving the built and natural environment for residents located nearby, including enhanced connections through to the South Platte River and regional trail system.

A. Preserve land capacity for employment uses in the Value Manufacturing District. Protect and improve the quantity and quality of all lands, especially those that are vulnerable to conversion to non-industrial, non-employment uses.

B. As low density or underutilized properties within the industrial area (e.g., surface parking lots, truck storage facilities) redevelop, accommodate and encourage higher intensity uses that are specifically industrial in nature.

C. Improve the relationship between the industrial area and surrounding residential neighborhoods by promoting sensitive and gradual transitions (see Policy “L11”).

D. Promote incentives, green certification systems, and/or building requirements (e.g., “Green Codes”) that the construction of high-performance commercial buildings, structures, and systems, including existing buildings subject to alterations and additions, utilizing both traditional and innovative construction practices.

E. Encourage improved environmental and health performance and support building structures that are restorative, regenerative, and an integral component of the local ecology and culture (See Policies “Q4”).

1. Encourage businesses to participate and join the “Certifiably Green Denver” Business Program.
**New Businesses**
Attract new businesses to West to better serve residents’ needs.

Many community members have identified the need for more local businesses, especially in walkable and bikeable areas. There is a particular need for more food and beverage businesses to help provide the community with access to fresh, nutritious food (see Policies Q17 and Q20). Encouraging new types of business models and incentives can create a more vibrant business community as well as job opportunities in West.

A. Work with property owners and business organizations to develop small business incubators and/or accelerators, particularly in existing vacant and underutilized structures, to test market new neighborhood serving retail and services. Successful incubator tenants should then be encouraged to move to permanent storefront locations within West with assistance from local organizations.

B. Incentivize new projects that offer smaller retail spaces and/or provide below-market commercial space with incentives such as height bonuses, low-interest financing, and direct subsidies.

C. Utilize small business loan programs, such as the Small Business Investment Fund and tax credit programs (e.g., business personal property and state Enterprise Zones).

D. Focus business attraction efforts towards more local restaurants (options such as healthy, family friendly, and outdoor seating, etc.), grocery stores, recreational retail or services, and other local services such as coffee shop and neighborhood serving retail.

E. Encourage existing business to fill service gaps by expanding or adding additional products with limited availability in area.
What is it?
Involuntary displacement occurs when residents or businesses can no longer afford to stay in an area due to increasing property values, rents and/or expenses. As multigenerational families and local businesses leave neighborhoods where they’ve been for years, it decreases the diversity of the population and employment opportunities, reduces local school enrollment, weakens the long-standing social networks in the area, and pulls at the threads of the rich culture of West.

Stabilizing the long-term residents and business tenants in West is critical to strengthening the economic vitality of the area. By connecting residents and businesses to available resources and new opportunities, they can better position themselves to thrive economically and continue being part of the West community.

What’s going on in West?
All West neighborhoods are either considered more vulnerable or most vulnerable to displacement based on the Blueprint Denver Key Equity Concepts, which accounts for median household income, percentage of renters, and educational attainment. As discussed in previous sections, housing affordability is a key obstacle for the community that needs to be addressed.

There is a significant concentration of employment within the West Area, particularly industrial employment in Sun Valley and Valverde. Many of the jobs in the West Area pay strong wages and provide employment opportunities to residents throughout the region. While only 4 percent of jobs within the West Area are held by local residents, for the small geography that is represented by the study area, this is a reasonably high local share. Opportunities to connect local employers with residents will be critical to creating new economic opportunities and improving upward mobility for West households.
DENVER’S GREEN WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY

In 2021, Denver’s Office of Climate Action, Sustainability and Resiliency’s (CASR) and Office of Economic Development & Opportunity Workforce (DEDO) underwent a strategic planning process to develop a vision and plan for Denver that would address economic inclusion, workforce development, and climate action and sustainability.

CASR has since partnered with DEDO to launch a Green Workforce program Development Strategy. Our vision is to create career pathways and expand opportunities for people from under-resourced communities as we enable a just transition to a climate-resilient future for Denver. This includes ensuring that green jobs are quality jobs that provide livable wages and benefits from employers who provide quality services and products that allow workers to build skills and competitiveness in the workforce.

A green workforce is made up of a variety of career pathways that directly contribute to moving our city and the built environment toward sustainability and resiliency. This includes current jobs that require new skills to meet green standards, jobs that are in higher demand because of green initiatives, and entirely new and evolving occupations.

Community College of Denver, Denver Public Schools, Energy Efficiency Business Coalition, GRID Alternatives, International Facility Management Association, and Mile High Youth Corps all provide training and other career services to Denver residents through this program.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Involuntary Displacement
Stabilize residents at risk of involuntary displacement.

All six neighborhoods in the West Area are considered “vulnerable to displacement” based on a Blueprint Denver equity indicator that measures educational attainment, percentage of renters, and median household income – all key factors that contribute to a household’s ability to stay in place. In addition, residential property taxes have also increased between 20%-35% throughout the neighborhood, which is higher than the city median value of 12%. This can increase financial burdens, particularly for fixed-income households. Household poverty rates and the percentages of households that are cost-burdened (i.e., spending more than 30% of their gross annual income on housing costs) are also higher in West than in the city as a whole.

A. Support community relief programs to help residents stay in their homes, including temporary rental and utility assistance, property tax rebates, homeowner preservation initiatives, ownership programs, eviction legal defense, tenant rights counseling, financial empowerment training, energy and accessibility assistance, home rehabilitation assistance, foreclosure prevention, food access, and emergency relief funds.

B. Support citywide efforts to explore preference policies that would give preference for income-restricted units to existing residents that are at risk of involuntary displacement.

C. Integrate resources and strategies to address equity considerations and mitigate involuntary displacement of residents with the implementation of major city investments and projects, including regulatory changes, large-scale rezonings, and transportation infrastructure improvements. Strategies include incentives or requirements for affordable housing and targeted engagement to connect vulnerable residents and business owners with available resources.

D. Work with partners to increase access and awareness to programs that help residents stay in place, increase utilization of public housing programs (including city, state and non-profit programs), increase homeownership, and explore land trust and land banking programs to promote affordable housing retention and development.

E. Conduct outreach with community partners and service organizations (i.e., Denver Public Schools, Denver Human Services, local non-profits, etc.) to understand the needs of seniors, low-income families, and other demographic groups that are at risk of involuntary displacement and explore and develop additional assistance options.
**Employment Opportunities**
Promote employment opportunities for local area residents of all skill and education levels.

While there are a significant number of jobs in the West Area, many of these jobs are not held by residents. In 2017, only 4 percent of jobs in the West Area were held by residents of the area with many employees living nearby West including neighborhoods to the south and Lakewood to the west. These jobs offer strong wages that can benefit the residents of the area and place them in an industry that can provide more financially stability.

**A.** Encourage industrial growth that provides job opportunities for the city’s residents and maintains the city’s fiscal viability by maintaining and attracting new uses that provide local job opportunities for West Area residents.

1. Utilize and expand workforce and education systems between employers and educational institutions interested in Career and Technical Education (CTE).
2. Identify and explore hiring incentives for employers that hire local workers who have completed eligible training programs.
3. Assist business owners with local, state and federal programs such as Redevelopment Project Areas and Enterprise and Empowerment Zones.
4. Explore and create a platform for incubators, accelerators, and co-working spaces for small manufacturers that serves as a forum for entrepreneurial development, where new companies co-locate in a physical space or join a virtual network to exchange ideas, access key business support services, and test-drive their ideas.
5. Work with established businesses and startups to create information exchange systems for a cooperative supply chain management exchange program focused on sharing product materials, knowledge, and physical spaces.

**CASE STUDY:**
Southwest Brooklyn Industrial Development Corporation

The Southwest Brooklyn Industrial Development Corporation (SBIDC) in New York City is a 40-year membership non-profit organization assisting businesses through a range of business services, workforce services, policymaking, and advocacy. Over the years SBIDC has built strong relationships with local manufacturers by providing valuable services including business training programs and connection to a variety of incentives, from capital improvements to equipment purchasing support to energy costs savings programs, among others. Meanwhile, SBIDC connects low-income residents of these neighborhoods to jobs in the district through a workforce center the organization runs in partnership with New York City.

Similarly, West has a significant number of jobs and employers in the area. Partnerships between the city, businesses, residents, and non-profit agencies can help connect local residents to local jobs and support business development.

Source: Connecting Local People to the Prosperity of Place, Workforce Development Meets Industrial Revitalization, June 2019
3 TRANSFORMATIVE PROJECTS

3.1 INTRODUCTION 194
3.2 ENHANCED TRANSIT 195
3.3 GREENWAY AND RIVER RESTORATION 196
3.4 MAJOR CROSSINGS 197
3.5 COLFAIX AND FEDERAL INTERCHANGE 198
3.1 INTRODUCTION

Transformative projects illustrate how plan recommendations overlap to make significant neighborhood improvements and advance the community’s vision. Multi-layered and long-term in nature, these projects will take a concerted effort by both public and private sectors.

While some transformative projects are specific to one neighborhood, others apply area-wide or extend across multiple neighborhood boundaries. This chapter includes only the area-wide transformative projects that apply to multiple neighborhoods. The neighborhood-specific transformative projects are found in their respective neighborhood sections in “4 Neighborhoods of West”. A list of both area-wide and neighborhood-specific transformative projects are included on the right.
### 3.2 ENHANCED TRANSIT

#### WHAT IS IT?

Four transit priority corridors are recommended in West:

- **High-Capacity Transit (Colfax Avenue & Federal Boulevard).** High-Capacity Transit (HCT) Corridors have high levels of passenger capacity, very frequent services, and high-quality design. HCT corridors include features to make transit more reliable and rapid, such as bus rapid transit (BRT) or rail infrastructure, dedicated transit lanes, and enhanced stops and stations.

- **Medium-Capacity Transit (Alameda Avenue).** Medium-Capacity Transit (MCT) Corridors have slightly lower levels of passenger capacity, service frequency, and design than HCT corridors. MCT corridors are served by rapid bus with bus-only lanes and other transit-priority treatments throughout the corridor. Full BRT may be possible on some MCT corridors.

- **Speed and Reliability Corridor (Sheridan Boulevard).** Speed and Reliability (S+R) Corridors have slightly lower levels of passenger capacity, service frequency, and design than MCT corridors. S+R corridors benefit from investments such as transit priority signals and improved stop amenities, and can include dedicated transit lanes at key locations to help buses move more quickly and reliably. All capital investment corridors begin as S+R corridors until funding is identified to build out the full HCT or MCT vision identified in the plan.

In addition to the transit services, mobility hubs are also recommended along each corridor. Mobility hubs are transit stops with enhanced amenities that allow for a seamless transition between modes. Properties surrounding these mobility hubs that may be able to support transit uses have been identified as high-capacity transit centers in the Land Use and Built Form Section.
WHAT IS IT?

The South Platte River runs along the eastern edge of the West area, presenting a great opportunity to connect residents to a rich amenity that provides important recreational, ecological, and transportation functions. The Waterway Resiliency Program will restore a 6.5-mile portion of the South Platte River between 6th and 58th Avenues and reduce flood risk along the Weir Gulch and East Harvard Gulch tributaries. The Program will restore and reconnect important river habitats and provide flood protection for homes and structure near the waterways, as well as enhance and/or increase access to open space and trails along the South Platte River and Weir Gulch. Additional projects include Sun Valley Riverside Park, River Mile, and Denargo Market. These improvements will focus on restoring the local ecology, expanding park space, connecting people to the river, providing comfortable recreational paths, and more.

The Greenway and River Restoration transformative policies promote similar types of improvements for the South Platte River and trail system within West. Key recommendations include:

- Encourage future river-adjacent development to be better oriented towards and designed with the river in mind.
- Strengthen neighborhood connections to the river.
- Improve the quality and comfort of trails.
- Protect and enhance the river’s environmental, ecological, and recreational uses.
- Improve access and wayfinding.

3.3 GREENWAY AND RIVER RESTORATION

- Water filtration and stormwater infrastructure improvements on city-owned property
- Frequent access points and strong connectivity
- Opportunities to view and engage with the river
- Water filtration and retention
- Culturally-reflective design
3.4 MAJOR CROSSINGS

**WHAT IS IT?**

Major crossings across significant barriers including state highways, gulches and rivers, and busy arterial roads have been identified as a key priority by the community. These crossings would prioritize pedestrians and cyclists and establish more safe, convenient connections throughout the West area.

Various types of crossings should be explored from “big ideas” like a cap and cover across 6th Avenue to connect Barnum Park and Barnum Softball together, to enhanced pedestrian bridges that are wide and amenity-rich (e.g., seating, landscaping). New pedestrian and bicycle crossings are identified in the Mobility section. To see a list of all the existing crossing needing improvements, new crossings to be further study and future connections to be explored see section 2.2.2 on page 121.
3.5 COLFAX AND FEDERAL INTERCHANGE

Vision and Goals

Land Use and Built Form

Create a vibrant, inclusive urban neighborhood that supports year-round activity and provides a diverse mix of uses and experiences for residents and visitors. When combined with various market-rate and affordable housing options, a mix of uses provides for a variety of every day needs that allow people to live, work, shop, enjoy entertainment, recreate, and dine all in one area.

- Ensure a diverse mix of land uses that promote an active, livable neighborhood.
- Provide ground floor active uses that activate the key connections through the site with retail, office, and neighborhood-serving uses as well as public spaces and transit facilities.
- Integrate affordable housing throughout the area and accommodate households of different ages, sizes, abilities, cultural backgrounds, and income levels.
- Provide a variety of building heights and intensities. Taller buildings should incorporate design techniques to reduce massing and be located closer to transit.
- Ensure human-scale and high-quality design throughout. There should be a comfortable sense of enclosure through the relationship of street widths and building height/massing.
- Ensure buildings are designed to activate the street edges and promote pedestrian use. Site buildings close to the street or key public spaces. Ensure high levels of transparency, durable materials, building entries, wide sidewalks, and high visual interest.
- Encourage a strong connection between buildings and the public realm. This could include creating a consistent pedestrian experience at the ground-level by minimizing curb cuts along key connections and encouraging active building

- Mitigate the significant change in grade from west to east with development and a street grid that connects directly to existing streets and grades. Development and streets should be designed at-grade, minimizing the need for tunnels, bridges, and elevated connections that detract from neighborhood continuity, physical and perceived comfort and safety, and a high-quality public realm and streetscape.

Mobility

The future street network should prioritize multimodal features such as bikeways, detached sidewalks, and traffic calming measures that encourage a shift from driving to other travel modes such as walking or rolling, biking, and transit. The plan area should be accessible to people of all ages, abilities, and income levels and provide affordable mobility options that meet all needs.

- A connected, multimodal street network should be created by enhancing existing streets and creating new streets within the area.
- Implement new north/south and east/west connections across the area that provide at-grade connections to the existing street grid. Pedestrian and bicyclist desire lines should be used to inform new connections, in addition to desire lines for vehicular traffic.
- A variety of street types should be incorporated that utilize complete street design, green infrastructure, stormwater management, and support the function of every day and event day mobility. Use the city’s current guides and standards and the most recent innovative approaches for street design.
- Prioritize pedestrians by incorporating walkable streets with enhanced pedestrian facilities. Implement enhanced pedestrian facilities on streets that eventually connect to the South
Platte River, transit stations and stops, and to the stadium schools, parks, open space, trails, and other amenities.

- Create a complete network of high ease-of-use bicycle facilities. Incorporate bicycle facilities across the area that connect to existing facilities. Prioritize connecting bicycle facilities to the Decatur-Federal and Mile High transit stations, Lakewood Gulch, and the South Platte River.
- Increase access to multi-use trails and pathways. This includes incorporating new trails and pathways, as well as connecting to existing trails and pathways.
- Increase and enhance transit and shared mobility options. This includes providing improved and additional high capacity transit connections and stops; improving the pedestrian experience leading to and from transit stations; encouraging shared mobility options; leveraging transportation demand management; and dedicating curb space in appropriate areas for on-demand transportation.
- Design streets for reduced vehicular speeds, including through traffic along Colfax Avenue and Federal Boulevard.

**Quality-of-Infrastructure**

Future development should create a precedent-setting public space network that incorporates a variety of publicly accessible spaces for people of all ages and abilities to use year-round.

- New public spaces should contribute to the broader public space network outlined in the Stadium District Master Plan and West Area Plan, and seamlessly integrate into existing and new development.
- New public spaces should accommodate a variety of activities for people of all ages, abilities, cultural backgrounds, and incomes to enjoy year-round. They should be designed to promote safety and comfort, have open sight lines, and encourage social interaction.
- New public spaces should have a variety of amenities that promote public life, contribute to a sense of place, and enhance active and passive uses. Amenities should support everyday use and be functional and adaptable to contribute to year-round services, programs, and events.
- Tree canopy should be expanded throughout the area.
- Best practices and innovative solutions for stormwater management should be used to improve water quality and mitigate flooding.

There should be a network of large-scale and site-scale green infrastructure within publicly- and privately-owned spaces that mitigates the impacts caused by impervious surfaces. Best practices should be used to ensure storm drainage design, installation, maintenance, and management incorporates strategies and design solutions identified in Denver’s Ultra Urban Green Infrastructure Guide and the Mile High Flood District’s (MHFD) Urban Storm Drainage Criteria Manual.

**Equity**
- Mutually Beneficial Access for All
- Mutually Beneficial Multi-Modal

**Resiliency**
- Strengthen Options
- Visibly Integrated Transportation
- Recovery Timeline
- Green Infrastructure
- Impacts of Climate Change

**Connectivity**
- Efficient Access
- Transition between Modes
- Enhance Mobility
- Compatible with Development
- Transit-Oriented
- Facilitate Alternate Transportation

**Health & Safety**
- Safe Movement
- Multiple Modes
- Public Safety
- Local & Regional
- Integrate Landscape
- Pedestrian-Scale
- Access to Services
- Safe Movement
- Multiple Modes

**Mobility**
- Reduce Flooding
- Community Education
- Locally-Owned Affordable Housing
- Community-Serving Job-Training
- Community Identity
- Current and Future Needs

**Environmental & Stormwater**
- Recovery Timeline
- Green Infrastructure
- Impacts of Climate Change
- Mutually Supportive Uses
- Integrated Economic Ecosystem
- Flexible Open Space Healthy Lifestyles
- Sense of Community
- Clear Connections
- Wayfinding Integration

**Land Use & Economics**
- Enhance Mobility
- Compatible with Development
- Transit-Oriented
- Facilitate Alternate Transportation
- Pedestrian-Scale Access to Services

**Open Space, Public Realm, & Placemaking**
- Public Safety
- Local & Regional
- Integrate Landscape
- Pedestrian-Scale Access to Services

**Source:** Colfax and Federal Interchange Transformation, Vision Framework
4 NEIGHBORHOODS OF WEST

4.1 INTRODUCTION (P. 234)
4.2 WEST COLFAX (P. 236)
4.3 VILLA PARK (P. 252)
4.4 SUN VALLEY (P. 260)
4.5 BARNUM AND BARNUM WEST (P. 270)
4.6 VALVERDE (P. 280)
4.1 INTRODUCTION

The West Area is made up of six distinct neighborhoods including West Colfax, Villa Park, Sun Valley, Barnum, Barnum West, and Valverde. While there are some issues that affect all six neighborhoods, there are many that impact individual neighborhoods differently and require unique recommendations. This section provides more detailed guidance for neighborhoods than area-wide recommendations.

Although Barnum and Barnum West are two separate statistical neighborhoods as defined by the City and County of Denver, the history and development of the two are tightly linked. As the two neighborhoods have historically been considered one both through historic development patterns and also by long-term, multigenerational residents, Barnum and Barnum West will be addressed together in one chapter. Each neighborhood section is organized as follows:

- **Plan on Page:** Provides an overview of area-wide recommendations and where or how they apply in each neighborhood.
- **Neighborhood Overview and Characteristics:** Provides an analysis of the existing characteristics and distinctive features of typical structures in the neighborhood.
- **Community Feedback and Previously Adopted Plans:** Provides summaries of the community input received from the neighborhood during the planning process, and descriptions of any previously adopted plans for the neighborhood.
- **Neighborhood Recommendations and Transformative Projects:** Provides illustrations and descriptions of ongoing and potential new projects that will significantly advance many of the plan policies established for West.

This section will give neighborhood residents, local organizations, and anyone else interested in a neighborhood a better understanding of how the West Area Plan impacts them, and where community desired investments and the elements for a complete neighborhood apply. Each neighborhood’s individual recommendations also work together with area-wide recommendations to achieve the community’s overall vision for West. In each neighborhood chapter there are summaries of all previous recommendations in the plan because these recommendations also apply to each neighborhood. If a recommendation appears in gray in the summary for a particular neighborhood section, that indicates that it is not relevant for that neighborhood.
4.2 WEST COLFAX

4.2.1 Neighborhood Characteristics

Street Pattern
West Colfax has strong east-west connections along West Colfax Avenue, 14th Avenue, and 17th Avenue. Many of the less traveled east-west roadways are not continuous through the neighborhood. Both Federal Boulevard (east side) and Sheridan Boulevard (west side) bound the neighborhood, providing connections to the north and south. In the interior of the neighborhood, Perry Street connects West Colfax to Villa Park to the south (over the Lakewood/Dry Gulch). Knox Court also crosses the Gulch, but does not go north of West Colfax Avenue. Very few streets connect to other communities, and are more valuable as interior streets to live, walk, or roll along.

Parks and Open Space
Park space is somewhat limited within West Colfax. However, Sloan’s Lake Park, a large regional park visited by many neighbors from the area, is directly north of the neighborhood. The Lakewood/Dry Gulch also stretches the length of the neighborhood along its southern border, with Paco Sanchez Park at the southeastern boundary.

Overlays and Special Districts
West Colfax has one major design overlay – the South Sloan’s Lake Design Overlay (DO-5), which adds building height limitations on the periphery of the Saint Anthony’s redevelopment site to create a transition to the surrounding residential neighborhood. It has a few other use overlays: UO-1 (Adult Use Overlay), UO-2 (Billboard Overlay), and UO-3 (Historic Structure Use). Historic Landmarks include five houses along Stuart Street and Lake Middle School.

Visual Landmarks
Lakewood/Dry Gulch, neon signs and commercial character on West Colfax Avenue, Lake Middle School, and Chapel Plaza are key area landmarks.
4.2.3 Neighborhood Overview

**ERA OF CONSTRUCTION**

- 2001-2019: 28%
- 1901-1925: 13%
- 1946-1955: 17%

**EXISTING LAND USE**

- Single Unit Residential: 57%
- Multi Unit Residential: 21%
- ROW/Road: 32%

**ZONING**

- Multi Unit Residential: 47%
- Main Street: 11%
- Single Unit: 12%

**RESIDENTIAL PARCEL SIZE (SF)**

- Less than 3,000: 39%
- 3,001-4,500: 12%
- 6,001-9,000: 31%
- 5,384 sq ft Average Res. Lot Size
4.2.2 Community Feedback
West Colfax neighbors shared lots of feedback about their community. Below are some insights shared during the planning process about the neighborhood:

**Assets**
- Proximity to Sloan’s Lake Regional Park.
- Access to local and regional recreational trails.
- Proximity to restaurant and retail businesses along West Colfax Avenue.
- Connections to Downtown Denver, City of Lakewood and Mile High Stadium.

**Opportunities**
- More small parks throughout the neighborhood.
- Construction of Bus Rapid Transit on West Colfax Avenue, Sheridan and Federal Boulevards.
- Additional and/or completion of bicycle infrastructure.
- Traffic calming to slow speeding or traffic that cuts through the neighborhood.

**Weaknesses**
- Speeding vehicles and traffic that cuts through the neighborhood.
- Lack of modern sidewalks, missing sidewalks.
- Pedestrian safety challenges at major intersections and along busy roads.
- West Colfax Avenue and Federal Boulevard Interchange (Cloverleaf) is dangerous for pedestrians and bicyclists.
- Out-of-character ‘Slot Homes’ and an increasingly unaffordable supply of new housing.
- Lack of residential construction with bedrooms or amenities for families, seniors, or religious and/or cultural practices.

4.2.4 Plan on a Page
*Historic preservation and context-sensitive design.* Support historic preservation efforts and modify regulations so new residential construction is more consistent with the size, scale and form of older homes in the area.

*High-quality design and affordable housing.* Encourage high-quality design, more affordable housing options, and housing diversity along the gulch and around rail station areas. (See Policy “WC-3”)

*Small-business retention.* Partner with the West Colfax Business Improvement District to support the retention and development of businesses along West Colfax Avenue. (See Policy “WC-6”)

*Safer streets and crossings.* Improve safety and comfort along key streets and at crossings by reprioritizing street space for walking, biking, rolling and more transit mobility options. (See Policies “M1” through “M10”)

*High-capacity transit.* Advance the implementation of High Capacity Transit along West Colfax Avenue, Sheridan and Federal Boulevards. (See Policies “M7” and “M8”)

*Fresh and healthy food.* Explore non-traditional food retail models that can increase access to fresh, healthy foods, and provide more multi-modal connections to fresh food providers. (See Policies “Q16” through “Q21”)

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**PREVIOUS PLANS**

The West Colfax neighborhood received a neighborhood plan in 2006. This plan recommended strengthening the mix of uses throughout the district, improving the quality of urban design for new construction, and enhancing mobility options for residents. These recommendations continue to be relevant and are consistent with the policies found in the West Area Plan.

Two more recent plans developed by community partners include Reimagine West Colfax (Denver Street Partnerships, 2015), and Westridge Master Plan (DHA, 2019). These two plans focus on specific areas within the West Colfax neighborhood: West Colfax Avenue and the Westridge Homes property along 13th Avenue. These plans call for increasing connectivity, pedestrian improvements at crossings along West Colfax Avenue, and universally accessible buildings, pedestrian mobility, and transit to key neighborhood services.
A Brief History of West Colfax

The earliest development in the West Colfax neighborhood, Jacob’s Addition and Cheltenham Heights, date to 1872. Jacob’s Addition encompasses what today is considered “Old” or “Lower” W. Colfax Avenue. In the late 1880s a settlement developed along the west side of the South Platte River at Colfax Avenue. Businesses were typical of the era and included a wagon repair business, a blacksmith shop, and a feed store. Many, but not all, of the residents of this settlement were recent Jewish immigrants.

Many of these new immigrants came mostly from eastern European countries such as Russia, Poland, and Romania. The first organized congregation west of the river was Zera Abraham, founded in 1887, which initially met in a member’s home. In 1891, residents west of the South Platte River incorporated as the Town of Colfax.

In the late 19th and early 20th century, tuberculosis was the leading cause of illness and death in the United States. Because of its dry and sunny climate, by the 1880s Colorado had earned the nickname of “The World’s Sanatorium”. It was the Denver Jewish community that was the first to found two nationally based sanatoriums: The National Jewish Hospital for Consumptives (NJH), founded in 1899, and the Jewish Consumptives’ Relief Society (JCRS) in 1904.

Westward Expansion: 1900s to 1940s

Jewish immigrants continued to flock to Denver in the coming decades. Historians estimate that by World War I, half of Colorado’s Jewish population lived in this area known simply as the “West Side,” and that for the next 35 years the area was almost entirely Jewish. Most homes built during this period were modest. Simple Gable Front and Classic Cottage homes were common in the first two decades of the 20th century, while the 1920s saw the construction of hundreds of brick bungalows in the Craftsman style.

As residential development moved westward, commercial development along W. Colfax Avenue moved with it. Neat one-story brick buildings with commercial storefronts lined the street, providing virtually everything needed by nearby residents. Most shops were owned and operated by Jewish families living nearby and provided goods and services targeted at Jewish customers.

Streetcars continued to run along W. Colfax Avenue through the 1940s, providing easy access to homes and businesses alike. As the automobile became more commonplace, filling stations and service garages arose along W. Colfax Avenue.

Urban Renewal

The 1950s were the start of a time of great change for West Colfax. The rise of the automobile, the end of Denver’s streetcar era in 1950, and the growing importance of W. Colfax Avenue as a part of the national highway system all contributed to a demographic shift in the neighborhood.

By the early 1950s, much of the eastern part of West Colfax was deemed blighted by city officials. The first of a series of redevelopment efforts occurred in 1952 with the construction of the Westridge Townhomes. Denver’s first large-scale urban renewal project, Avondale, was conceptualized in 1956 and, over the next sixteen years, redeveloped much of the now known as the Cloverleaf. Demolished were homes, synagogues, and businesses. 249 families were displaced by the project.

Denver saw a migration in the 1950s and 1960s to the suburbs from urban neighborhoods. Urban renewal and the increasingly chaotic W. Colfax Avenue commercial corridor hastened the move to the suburbs for many on the West Side. As existing West Colfax families moved from the neighborhood, Latino families moved in. Buildings that had previously been used by the Jewish community found new uses that met the needs of the new neighborhood residents.
Demographic shifts continued with increased Latino migration to West Colfax although a significant Jewish population still lives in the neighborhood, largely due to the continued presence of the Zera Abraham congregation.

In 2002, Blueprint Denver, a 20-year citywide land use and transportation plan, identified 27% of the West Colfax neighborhood as an “area of change” where development was desirable. It didn’t take long for those changes to begin. A booming economy and increased zoning ignited residential redevelopment. The neighborhood continues to see dramatic redevelopment through the present. Today, Blueprint Denver describes West Colfax as an urban area with primarily low and low-medium residential uses.

Notable Buildings in West Colfax

While surveying in West Colfax, Discover Denver uncovered a number of significant buildings that illustrate a slice of neighborhood history. Some of these buildings are residences, others commercial and civic structures. All tell the story of a rich and active community.

3506 W. Conejos Pl. - Constructed in 1925-6, this structure was the home of the Yad Achas synagogue until 1965. Yad Achas was organized on September 1, 1903. During the congregation’s first weeks, services were held in a tent on Colfax Avenue and 1st Street. The congregation moved into the building on West Conejos Place when it was completed in 1926 and operated there until 1965, when the congregation was disbanded.

575 Yates St. - Constructed c.1889, this was the home of Gustav Winter, founder of the Denver Iron Fence Company. This property is a rare Denver example of an all stone Queen Anne with a stepped gable and an extensive array of iron ornamentation, including iron porch columns and railings, finials, and roof cresting. Likely the extensive iron work is related to the original owner, Gustave Winter of the Denver Iron Fence Company.

3900 W. Colfax Ave - Constructed in 1924, this building was a grocery store run by Harry Perlmutter. Originally Perlov’s Grocery, and later West Hill Grocery, this structure was constructed in conjunction with the development of Denver’s streetcar lines. Additionally, the grocery store played an important role in serving the Jewish Community keeping a stock of kosher and other hard-to-find foods, including some that were made by the store owner’s family. Additionally, the store ran special hours that catered to those observing the Jewish Sabbath, closing at sundown on Fridays and opening again at sundown on Saturdays.
HIGHLIGHTS FROM DISCOVER DENVER

For the purposes of the Discover Denver project, an “Area of Significance” is identified as an area having a concentration of buildings in which most buildings retain their historic physical integrity and have the ability to convey a shared history. While there is widespread redevelopment across the West Colfax survey area, eight “Areas of Significance” were identified, each having sufficient physical integrity to convey a part of the neighborhood’s history.
Area of Significance #1

One-story Craftsman bungalows and terraces, many of them duplexes, line the blocks in Area of Significance #1. Several significant cultural and commercial buildings are located here, including the Hebrew Educational Alliance, the Lake Steam Baths, the Spivak Institute building (constructed in honor of Jewish physician and philanthropist Dr. David Spivak), and Yeshiva Toras Chaim, which has served as both a synagogue and a yeshiva.

Area of Significance #5

This block consists of a row of 1940s English Norman Cottage-style homes, many with small turrets, built primarily in the mid-1940s by William H. King. Early owners include prominent Jewish business leaders associated with the Star Bakery and Siegel Oil Company. Homes were built primarily in the mid-1940s. Zera Abraham, a synagogue, was built on this block in 1960 and continues to operate here.

Area of Significance #8

This area consists of sprawling Ranch and revival-style homes facing Sloan’s Lake Park. Most homes along the park were built from the late 1940s through the early 1960s and were positioned to take advantage of their lakeside view. Prominent residents along the lake included Eddie Bohn, owner of the Pig ‘N’ Whistle, and Rabbi Manuel Laderman of the Hebrew Educational Alliance.
4.2.5 Area Wide Recommendations

The following summary of recommendations includes a list of all of the area wide West Area Plan Recommendations. Most of the area wide recommendations are applicable to the West Colfax neighborhood. The few recommendations that do not apply to are faded out.

## QUALITY OF LIFE

### Health, Equity, and Environmental Resiliency
- **1** Health Equity
- **02** Racial and Social Equity
- **03** Noise and Air Pollution
- **04** Climate Resilience
- **05** Urban Forest Tree Canopy

### Water
- **06** Water Policy
- **07** Waterways
- **08** Water Management Practices
- **09** Green Infrastructure in Development
- **10** Green Infrastructure in Neighborhoods
- **11** Green Streets and Alleys

### Parks, Trails, and Open Space
- **12** Access to Parks, Open Spaces, and Facilities
- **13** Facilities and Programming
- **14** New Parks, Open Spaces, and Facilities
- **15** Access to Trails and Waterways

### Complete Food Environment
- **16** Community Food Environment
- **17** Fresh Food Access
- **18** Food Insecurity

### Community Safety and Well-Being
- **20** Community Safety and Security
- **21** Universal Design Practices

### Animal Protection
- **24** Animal Protection

### Community Building
- **26** Youth Violence
- **27** Community Pride
- **28** Local Culture
## MOBILITY

**Pedestrian Improvements, Intersection Safety, and New Crossings**
- M1 Sidewalks
- M2 Intersection Crossings

**High Comfort Bikeway**
- M3 Bikeway Infrastructure

**Trails**
- M4 Trail Facilities
- M5 Wayfinding

**Neighborhood Traffic Calming**
- M6 Traffic Calming Strategies

**Transit and Mobility Hubs**
- M7 Transit Amenities
- M8 Transit Service

**Transportation Demand Management**
- M9 Transportation Demand Management Strategies

**Balanced Corridors**
- M10 Balanced Corridors

## LAND USE AND BUILT FORM

**Commercial Services and Uses**
- L1 Existing Commercial Areas
- L2 Reuse of Commercial Buildings

**Growth Strategy**
- L3 Future Growth in Centers and Corridors
- L4 Compatible Redevelopment

**Housing Options/Design & Landmark Preservation**
- L5 Small-Scale Multi-Unit Housing Options
- L6 Preservation of Existing Housing
- L7 Neighborhood-Compatible Housing
- L8 Culturally Significant Buildings

**Urban Design Framework**
- L9 Design Within Centers and Corridors
- L10 Design Along Natural Areas
- L11 Design Within Industrial Areas

## ECONOMY AND HOUSING

**Housing Affordability**
- E1 Housing Affordability and Quality
- E2 Affordable Housing Diversity
- E3 Overall Housing Diversity
- E4 Support Programs for Unhoused Community Members
- E5 Long-term Housing Stability
- E6 Social Services

**Economic Vitality – Places**
- E7 Economic Vitality of Corridors
- E8 Manufacturing Employment Base
- E9 New Businesses

**Economic Vitality – People**
- E10 Involuntary Displacement
- E11 Employment Opportunities

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West Area Plan
WEST COLFAX
RECOMMENDATIONS

WC-1

Ensure high-quality building and site design along West Colfax Avenue that will help preserve and create authentic community gathering places for residents.

Out of the four major corridors that run throughout the area, West Colfax Avenue has experienced more reinvestment and redevelopment in recent years. This corridor is home to many businesses and residents, and past plans have called for West Colfax Avenue to transform into a pedestrian-friendly main street. To do so, it is important to bolster the unique characteristics of the corridor including the presence of alleys and unique signage.

A. Activate existing alleys and ensure future redevelopment encourages enhanced design solutions that help activate these spaces. Key considerations include:
   1. Working with Business Improvement Districts and Denver Arts and Venues to provide financial or technical assistance to property owners for public art and public realm enhancements.
   2. Modify standards so that improvements over utility easements for amenities like seating, lighting, and public art are encouraged.
   3. Encourage commercial spaces to orient towards and use alleys for outdoor dining or other types of gathering spaces in non-residential areas.

B. Amend sign regulations to allow creative solutions to signs that fit the character of West Colfax Avenue:
   1. Work with the community to identify desirable iconic, vintage features of existing West Colfax Avenue signs. Features to consider should include blade, roof, illumination, and mural signage, and signs with historic significance.
   2. Modify regulations to encourage preservation of existing desirable signage and new signs that reflect West Colfax Avenue’s unique urban design characteristics and history.
   3. Ensure signage does not negatively impact surrounding residential areas.

WC-2

Celebrate the history and culture of the Jewish community and encourage housing options that meet their needs.

The Jewish community has been living in the West Colfax neighborhood for over a century. Over time, as existing single family homes have been scraped and redeveloped, they have expressed concerns regarding these physical changes, which represent the loss of affordable, larger format homes and a sense of place for the community.

A. Work with the long-standing Jewish community to explore and implement a historic cultural district in West Colfax to preserve and uplift the community’s history and culture in the neighborhood.

B. Meet the housing needs of the Jewish community by encouraging affordable family-sized units and family-supportive amenities in residential developments.
WEST COLFAX
RECOMMENDATIONS

Ensure high-quality building and site design, and generate new affordable housing along Lakewood Gulch and within the Knox and Perry transit station areas.

Neighborhood rail line stations and neighborhood natural features, such as Lakewood Gulch, are important community assets that serve as vital gathering spaces for nearby residents. The design and orientation of future development surrounding these assets are critical to the overall placemaking and sense of safety for people.

A. Encourage high-quality design and neighborhood compatibility at station areas and Lakewood Gulch. (See Policies L9 and L10) Other recommendations include:

1. Prioritize pedestrian-friendly uses and ground-floor commercial activity along building and gulch frontages, 12th and 13th Avenue, and streets that provide direct, safe connections to transit station areas and transit platforms.

2. Leverage topography in the area to encourage compatible density and transitions to adjacent residential neighborhoods north and south.

B. Promote and encourage higher intensity zoning within the station areas that would allow for taller heights and expanded building forms in exchange for affordable housing. (See Policy L3)

C. Smaller housing types, especially missing middle housing, should orient towards Lakewood Gulch. In cases where orientation is not possible, building façades facing Lakewood Gulch should have equivalent treatment of the primary building façade – i.e., avoiding blank walls and incorporating façade articulation and details.

Help guide community conversations and support local efforts that aim to study the potential use of regulatory design quality tools for residential areas.

West Colfax has experienced a significant number of demolitions and redevelopment of older homes in the last 10 years, leading to a change in how the neighborhood looks and feels today. Changes to existing zoning regulations and/or application of new zoning regulations can help encourage new development to be more consistent with the scale and form of older homes in the area. Discover Denver has also completed a neighborhood-wide building survey for West Colfax, which will serve as a resource and help guide future preservation efforts in the neighborhood.

A. Conduct detailed studies of recent and historic residential construction to better understand current conditions and community desired architectural outcomes as they relate to the overall size, scale, and design of new residential construction. Studies can address the following:

1. Current conditions and issues, including the identification of important character-defining features of the neighborhood.

2. Community-desired outcomes and objectives for new infill development, remodel, and retrofit projects.

3. Proposed regulatory adjustments, design standard and guideline tools.

B. Build on the West Colfax Survey developed by Discover Denver to guide community conversations and recommendations.

C. Studies should consider incentives that aim to preserve historic and/or culturally significant buildings, while allowing opportunities to increase missing middle housing. (See Policy L6)

Support implementation of the Denver Housing Authority Westridge Homes Master Plan.

The redevelopment of Westridge Homes owned by Denver Housing Authority will improve functionality of each dwelling unit, expand home types, and create better connections to the larger West Colfax and Denver community. Building a new mixed income community expands the amount of affordable housing and helps combat cycles of poverty and displacement in West Denver.

A. Support rezonings in the area south of 13th Avenue to mixed-use zone districts to allow for a mix of uses and services, and to increase diverse housing options near transit for seniors and DHA residents.

B. Coordinate with DHA on streetscape and public realm improvements envisioned in the Westridge Homes Master Plan.

C. Study and implement safe, comfortable crossings that lead into Westridge Homes, particularly along Knox Court.

Partner and support the West Colfax Business Improvement District (WCBID) in supporting small-business retention and development.

The West Colfax BID promotes business expansion, investment and development and sponsors improvements to the ROW to recast West Colfax Avenue as Denver’s sustainable Main Street. Ongoing coordination and partnership with the BID will be key to supporting small businesses along the corridor.

A. Coordinate with and connect the BID (and its businesses) to city and outside resources to revitalize West Colfax Avenue as a sustainable main street.
WHAT IS IT?

The redevelopment of Westridge Homes was spurred by a unique partnership between the Denver Housing Authority (DHA) and the City and County of Denver in an effort to combat the affordable housing crisis by accelerating the production of permanently affordable rental housing. DHA worked with the community from 2019-2021 to establish a vision, goals, and design concepts to guide the future redevelopment of the property. Key concepts are highlighted by the images on the right. More detail regarding the Master Plan goals and redevelopment concepts can be found in the Westridge Homes Master Plan.

Policy W-L5 includes key strategies, such as rezoning and partnership on key public realm and streetscape improvements to support and advance implementation of the Westridge Homes Master Plan.

TRANSFORMATIVE PROJECT: WESTRIDGE HOMES

- Accessible green areas and strong connectivity
- Diverse, accessible housing options
- Replace all current public housing units and add more affordable units,
- 13th Avenue promenade with pedestrian amenities and community-serving uses
- Complement existing buildings
- Quality pedestrian improvements
- Buildings oriented toward pedestrian spaces
- Mid-block mews for daily social interaction

Note: More detailed information regarding the vision for Westridge Homes is found in DHA's Westridge Homes Master Plan.
WEST COLFAX COMMUNITY URBAN GARDEN

The West Colfax Community Urban Garden was established in the neighborhood in 2012 and is adjacent to Vrain Street and West Wells Place. This garden is supported by Denver Urban Gardens (DUG) partnership and is open to the public.

Denver Urban Gardens (DUG) supports gardens within the communities by:

- Cultivating community-driven garden leadership, including volunteer gardener leader recruitment and placement.
- Provides garden maintenance support.
- Provides fiscal management of garden accounts (when requested).
- Provides liability insurance coverage for gardens and serve as liaison between gardens and city officials, agencies and water providers.
- Establishes working relations with garden property owner agencies and negotiate and maintain garden site use agreements.
- Coordinates volunteer groups and supervise large maintenance and improvement projects.
- Mediates inter-community gardener conflicts as requested.
- Organizes peer-to-peer networking and learning events for gardeners and garden leaders.

Honoring Nettie Moore, an activist and West Colfax resident who voiced her opinion on development and advocating for grass root causes over many decades.
4.3 VILLA PARK

4.3.1 Neighborhood Characteristics

Street Pattern
Villa Park has few east-west connecting streets. 10th Avenue runs the length of Villa Park, while the other east-west connecting streets are interrupted by the Lakewood/Dry Gulch, and become staggered as they cross Lowell Boulevard. 6th Avenue located on the southern boundary of the neighborhood is also Colorado State Highway, and is not well integrated into the neighborhood. Both Federal Boulevard and Sheridan Boulevard bound the neighborhood, providing connections north and south. In the interior of the neighborhood, Perry Street connects Villa Park to West Colfax to the north and Barnum to the South. Knox Court also crosses the Lakewood/Dry Gulch and 6th Avenue. Tennyson Street and Lowell Boulevard also serve as smaller north-south connecting streets within Villa Park.

Parks and Open Space
Villa Park is home to the Lakewood and Dry Gulch trails, which merge around Newton Street and continue east. Paco Sanchez Park is located on the eastern boundary of the neighborhood. Joseph Martinez Park is another large park that has many different amenities with the Lakewood Gulch running through the park. Lakewood and Dry Gulch Trails also feature pockets of open space that are integrated throughout the neighborhood.

Overlays and Special Districts
There are no design overlays in Villa Park, and few use overlays: UO-1 (Adult Use Overlay), UO-2 (Billboard Overlay) along Federal Boulevard. There is one historic landmark: 7th Avenue Congregational Church of Christ.

Visual Landmarks
Views to downtown Denver from the gulch trails, Joseph Martinez Park, and Presentation of Our Lady Church exist throughout Villa Park.
4.3.2 Neighborhood Overview

ERA OF CONSTRUCTION

1956-1965
15%

1946-1955
40%

1901-1925
15%

EXISTING LAND USE

Residential
41%

Park/Open Space
12%

ROW/Road
28%

ZONING

Two Unit Residential
15%

Single Unit Residential
49%

RESIDENTIAL PARCEL SIZE (SF)

6,001-9,000
64%

4,501-6,000
18%

7,137 sq ft
Average Res. Lot Size

+9,000
10%

Denver Community Planning and Development

Map date: 7/19/2019

Data source: Community Planning and Development -
Landuse, 3/21/2019
4.3.3 Community Feedback
Villa Park neighbors shared lots of constructive feedback about their community. Below are some key elements shared about their neighborhood:

**Assets**
- Parks and Open Space, including Joseph Martinez Park, are highly valued.
- Great connections exist to the South Platte River Trail and Downtown Denver.
- There is a strong connection to community and neighborhood pride shared among neighbors.

**Opportunities**
- New and enhanced grocery store retail that is affordable is needed in the neighborhood.
- There is a strong desire for more places for kids and families to play.
- The community would like better, more reliable and accessible transit connections to and through the neighborhood, especially for seniors and transit dependent riders.

**Weaknesses**
- A lack of a sense of safety, especially in areas along the Lakewood/Dry Gulch Trails, and particularly at night.
- Excessive traffic speeds, lack of complete and missing sidewalks, undersized sidewalks that impede upon pedestrian safety.
- Colorado State Highway 6 (6th Avenue) bisects the neighborhood with very limited crossings.
- Lack of affordable housing and concerns with new development that does not fit the existing size, scale and character of the neighborhood.

4.3.4 Plan on a Page

**10th Avenue.** Introduce more diversified housing options along the corridor with community-serving retail at key intersections. (See Policy “V-1”)

**High-quality design and affordable housing.** Encourage high-quality design and encourage more affordable housing options along the gulch and around high capacity bus and rail station areas. (See Policy “V-2”)

**Support small businesses.** Prioritize preservation and adaptive reuse efforts along Federal Boulevard to preserve affordable tenant spaces for small, locally-owned businesses. (See Policy VP-4)

**Safer streets and crossings.** Improve safety and comfort along key streets and crossings by reprioritizing street space for walking, biking, rolling and transit mobility options. In addition, strengthen existing and create new opportunities for north-south connections. (See Policies “M1” through “M10”)

**Improve Lakewood and Dry Gulches Trail Networks.** Create a more continuous, high-quality trail system along Lakewood and Dry Gulch by expanding the width of trails where necessary and incorporating wayfinding. (See Policies “Q15”, “M3”, “M4”, and “M5”)

**Increase Urban Tree Canopy.** Protect, expand and diversify the urban tree canopy with climate resilient species throughout the neighborhood. (See Policy “Q5”)

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PREVIOUS PLANS
Villa Park received its last neighborhood plan in 1991. The plan guidance at that time called for a strong residential character with a clear neighborhood identity. The 1991 neighborhood plan also called for improving the neighborhood arterial streets, overall environmental conditions, and enhancing neighborhood infrastructure and safety. Many of these recommendations remain relevant today, and are consistent with the policies and recommendations found in this West Area Plan.
4.3.5 Area Wide Recommendations

The following summary of recommendations includes a list of all of the area wide West Area Plan Recommendations. All of the area wide recommendations are applicable to the Villa Park neighborhood.

QUALITY OF LIFE

Health, Equity, and Environmental Resiliency
- Health Equity
- Racial and Social Equity
- Noise and Air Pollution
- Climate Resilience
- Urban Forest Tree Canopy

Water
- Water Policy
- Waterways
- Water Management Practices
- Green Infrastructure in Development
- Green Infrastructure in Neighborhoods
- Green Streets and Alleys

Parks, Trails, and Open Space
- Access to Parks, Open Spaces, and Facilities
- Facilities and Programming
- New Parks, Open Spaces, and Facilities
- Access to Trails and Waterways

Complete Food Environment
- Community Food Environment
- Fresh Food Access
- Food Insecurity

Food Providers
Local Food Production
Physical Connections to Fresh Food

Community Safety and Well-Being
- Community Safety and Security
- Universal Design Practices

Animal Protection
- Animal Protection

Community Building
- Youth Violence
- Community Pride
- Local Culture
### MOBILITY

**Pedestrian Improvements, Intersection Safety, and New Crossings**
- Sidewalks
- Intersection Crossings

**High Comfort Bikeway**
- Bikeway Infrastructure

**Trails**
- Trail Facilities
- Wayfinding

**Neighborhood Traffic Calming**
- Traffic Calming Strategies

**Transit and Mobility Hubs**
- Transit Amenities
- Transit Service

**Transportation Demand Management**
- Transportation Demand Management Strategies

**Balanced Corridors**
- Balanced Corridors

### LAND USE AND BUILT FORM

**Commercial Services and Uses**
- Existing Commercial Areas
- Reuse of Commercial Buildings

**Growth Strategy**
- Future Growth in Centers and Corridors
- Compatible Redevelopment

**Housing Options/Design & Landmark Preservation**
- Small-Scale Multi-Unit Housing Options
- Preservation of Existing Housing
- Neighborhood-Compatible Housing
- Culturally Significant Buildings

**Urban Design Framework**
- Design Within Centers and Corridors
- Design Along Natural Areas
- Design Within Industrial Areas

### ECONOMY AND HOUSING

**Housing Affordability**
- Housing Affordability and Quality
- Affordable Housing Diversity
- Overall Housing Diversity
- Support Programs for Unhoused Community Members
- Long-term Housing Stability
- Social Services

**Economic Vitality – Places**
- Economic Vitality of Corridors
- Manufacturing Employment Base
- New Businesses

**Economic Vitality – People**
- Involuntary Displacement
- Employment Opportunities
VP-1
Create more housing opportunities and community-serving retail at key intersections along the 10th Avenue corridor.

Limited services and amenities are available within the residential areas of Villa Park. 10th Avenue has the opportunity to provide commercial activity at key intersections along the corridor to provide community desired retail. In addition to retail, 10th Avenue can also accommodate more diverse housing options – as it provides a continuous east-west connection through the neighborhood and access to other key street and mobility options.

A. Encourage development of missing middle housing and vertical-mixed-use development in scale with the surrounding neighborhood. Active ground-floor commercial uses should be prioritized near the following intersections that serve as key connections for the neighborhoods:
   1. Tennyson Street.
   2. Perry Street.
   3. Knox Court.
   4. Hooker Street.

B. Support higher intensity zone districts that allow for the development of missing middle housing in vertical mixed-use developments. Particularly for the identified mixed-use intersections above, consider a combination of mixed-use and main street zone districts that allow buildings up to 2 and 3 stories in height.

C. Prioritize pedestrian-friendly active ground-floor uses when a mixed-use or main street zone district rezoning is being considered for approval, or when development projects are being proposed or are under design review at these intersections.

VP-2
Ensure high-quality building and site design everywhere, and promote affordable housing along Lakewood/Dry Gulch, and within the Sheridan, Knox, and Perry station areas.

Neighborhood rail line stations and neighborhood natural amenities such as the Lakewood/Dry Gulch, are important community assets. The location, design and orientation of future development should address and engage these assets, and are critical to the overall success of placemaking and a sense of safety for residents and gulch trail users.

A. Encourage high-quality design and neighborhood compatibility at station areas and along Lakewood/Dry Gulch. (See Policies L9 and L10) Other recommendations include:
   1. Prioritize pedestrian-friendly frontages and active ground-floor commercial along gulch frontages, 10th and 12th Avenues, and streets that provide safe and direct connections to transit station platforms.
   2. Leverage topography to encourage compatible infill development in a manner that provides respectful transitions to adjacent residential neighborhood areas.

B. Promote and encourage higher intensity zoning in and around station areas that can support taller heights and expanded building forms in exchange for affordable housing. (See Policy L3)

C. Smaller housing types, especially missing middle housing, should orient towards the Lakewood/Dry Gulch. In cases where orientation is not possible, buildings façades facing the gulch should have equivalent treatments of the primary building façade – i.e., avoiding blank walls and incorporate articulation in façade design.

VP-3
Encourage low-impact commercial uses in the Local Corridor node at 6th Avenue and Perry Street in order to reduce heavy truck traffic.

While the commercial node at 6th Avenue and Perry Street has the opportunity to connect retail services to adjacent residents, nearby community members have expressed concerns related to the frequency of heavy truck traffic that travels through the neighborhood from 6th Avenue in order to serve the businesses in the area.

A. Encourage low-impact commercial uses that do not require or generate frequent heavy truck traffic through the community in order to provide goods and on-site services to area businesses.
VILLA PARK
RECOMMENDATIONS

Prioritize preservation and adaptive reuse efforts along Federal Boulevard, outside of the High Capacity Transit Center Opportunity Area, to create an environment that is conducive to the success of small, locally-owned businesses.

Federal Boulevard is home to many small and/or local businesses. The corridor provides affordable rents for these businesses and commercial real estate trends show strong demand for affordable commercial retail space along the corridor. Adaptive reuse efforts and improvements to the public realm infrastructure can help the corridor be more welcoming for pedestrians while supporting local business success.

A. Encourage the use of programs through Denver Economic Development & Opportunity (DEDO) and other agencies, where appropriate, to support small business development, reinvestment, and success.

B. Support adaptive reuse efforts and if redevelopment does occur, provide incentives or requirement for local business retention.

C. Focus on public realm improvements that address mobility, open space, stormwater, green infrastructure, signage, wayfinding, safety and accessibility improvements.

PACO SANCHEZ REGIONAL PARK, BRINGING HEALTHY RECREATIONAL OPTIONS FOR DENVER’S WEST NEIGHBORHOODS

This 30-acre park in West Denver is ideal for this new regional attraction because the communities surrounding Paco Sanchez Park have been historically underserved by park space and recreational amenities. The improvements to Paco Sanchez Park also bring access to play and healthy activities greatly needed in this community. Connections to the West Light Rail station at Knox Court, and the Lakewood Gulch Trail provide regional accessibility to this facility.

Paco Sanchez Park goes beyond play by including activity and programming with the goal of engaging children and families with a lifetime of curiosity, physical fitness, and activity. The 9-million-dollar project was a collaboration with and partial funding recipient from the Colorado Health Foundation.

- The design focuses on multi-generational activities and programming, with a goal of inspiring children and families to engage in physical health and play.
- The park transforms the existing activity of prescribed play to a complex and multi-faceted experience that challenges and engages users of all ages, abilities, and backgrounds.
- The adventure playground is themed around music after the park’s namesake Paco Sanchez, who started the first Spanish-language radio station in Denver.
4.4 SUN VALLEY

4.4.1 Neighborhood Characteristics

Street Pattern
Sun Valley is a long, narrow neighborhood. 8th Avenue connects the neighborhood east – west, and also connects to Villa Park to the west. Decatur Street runs north – south, but does not connect north of West Colfax Avenue, which presents a large physical barrier between the northern and southern portions of the neighborhood. Redevelopment plans for the Denver Housing Authority complex in Sun Valley call for the reintroduction of several neighborhood streets, including Bryant Street, Holden Place, and 10th Avenue, which will increase street connectivity though the neighborhood.

Parks and Open Space
Sun Valley is home to the Rude Recreation Center, Rude Park, and Lower Lakewood Gulch Park. These amenities are connected by the Lakewood Gulch Trail. The Weir Gulch Trail runs through the southern portion of the neighborhood. To the east, the South Platte River and the South Platte River Trail connect the neighborhood to trails downtown and to other Denver neighborhoods. Redevelopment plans for the area also include large open space improvements along the South Platte River between 13th Avenue and Weir Gulch.

Overlays and Special Districts
There are no design overlays in Sun Valley, but there are large areas with use overlays: UO-1 (Adult Use Overlay) and UO-2 (Billboard Overlay). The UO-2 overlay is found primarily in the southern portion of the neighborhood, which is more industrial in use. There are no designated historic landmarks in the Sun Valley neighborhood.

Visual Landmarks
Mile High Stadium (Empower Field), South Platte River, Old Colfax Avenue.
4.4.2 Neighborhood Overview

**ERA OF CONSTRUCTION**

- **1966-1980**: 10%
- **1956-1965**: 12%
- **1946-1955**: 8%
- **1981-2000**: 9%
- **Unknown**: 49%

**EXISTING LAND USE**

- **ROW/Road**: 23%
- **Parking**: 20%

**ZONING**

- **Light Industrial**: 29%
- **Mixed Use**: 19%
- **Chapter 59**: 31%

**RESIDENTIAL PARCEL SIZE (SF)**

- **3,001-4,500**: 26%
- **+9,000**: 26%
- **6,001-9,000**: 26%
- **31,374 sq ft**: 26%

Data source: Community Planning and Development - Denver Community Planning and Development.

Map date: 7/19/2019.
4.4.3 Community Feedback

Sun Valley neighbors shared lots of feedback about their community during the planning process. Below are comments shared about their neighborhood:

Assets
- Strong community centers, such as the Sun Valley Kitchen and the Sun Valley Youth Center provide food access, job training and employment opportunities and a community gathering place.
- New developments by the Denver Housing Authority and future private sector projects will connect Sun Valley to the South Platte River and will provide more accessible public open space in the neighborhood.

Opportunities
- Redevelopment of underutilized surface parking lots around Mile High Stadium (Empower Field) will provide more housing, mixed use development, public amenities, multimodal connectivity and jobs to the area.
- Mixed-income housing initiatives will help existing residents stay in place and draw in new community members through an increase in housing supply.

Weaknesses
- Mile High Stadium (Empower Field) currently provides limited year round activity, and therefore limited activation around the Decatur-Federal Light Rail Station or within the community.
- Federal Boulevard is identified as a High Injury Network in Denver’s Vision Zero Plan, and is uncomfortable for pedestrians, bicyclists, and those with limited or impaired mobility.

4.4.4 Plan on a Page

Transformative Projects - Support the ongoing planning and implementation of key transformative projects. (See Policy SV-1)

Mixed-use Redevelopment - Direct growth and ensure high-quality design at 8th and Federal to provide more housing options and neighborhood-serving retail uses, and support bus rapid transit investments. (See Policy SV-2)

Local Employment - Connect local jobs to local residents. (See Policy SV-4)

Safer Streets and Crossings - Improve safety and comfort along key streets and crossings by reprioritizing street space for walking, biking, rolling and transit mobility options. In addition, strengthen existing and create new opportunities for east-west connections. (See Policies “M1” through “M10”)

Trail System and Gulch Improvements - Create a continuous, high-quality, connected trail system along Weir Gulch by expanding the width of trails and incorporating wayfinding, particularly as area population projections anticipate significant growth. (See Policies “Q15”, “M3”, “M4”, and “M5”)

South Platte River enhancement - Prioritize the protection and enhancement of the South Platte River’s environmental, ecological, and recreational needs. (See Policies “Q7”, “Q8”, “Q10”, “Q11” and the transformative project “Greenway and River restoration” on page 228)
SUMMARY OF SUN VALLEY 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
- Refinements from Blueprint Map

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

QUALITY OF LIFE
- Park Access Improvements
- Civic Space Opportunities
- School / Shared Open Space Opportunity
- Complete Gaps in Existing Trail
The following summary of recommendations includes a list of all of the area wide West Area Plan Recommendations. All of the area wide recommendations are applicable to the Sun Valley neighborhood.

### QUALITY OF LIFE

#### Health, Equity, and Environmental Resiliency
- 01 Health Equity
- 02 Racial and Social Equity
- 03 Noise and Air Pollution
- 04 Climate Resilience
- 05 Urban Forest Tree Canopy

#### Water
- 06 Water Policy
- 07 Waterways
- 08 Water Management Practices
- 09 Green Infrastructure in Development
- 10 Green Infrastructure in Neighborhoods
- 11 Green Streets and Alleys

#### Parks, Trails, and Open Space
- 12 Access to Parks, Open Spaces, and Facilities
- 13 Facilities and Programming
- 14 New Parks, Open Spaces, and Facilities
- 15 Access to Trails and Waterways

#### Complete Food Environment
- 16 Community Food Environment
- 17 Fresh Food Access
- 18 Food Insecurity

- 019 Food Providers
- 020 Local Food Production
- 021 Physical Connections to Fresh Food

#### Community Safety and Well-Being
- 022 Community Safety and Security
- 023 Universal Design Practices

#### Animal Protection
- 024 Animal Protection

#### Community Building
- 025 Youth Violence
- 026 Community Pride
- 027 Local Culture
MOBILITY

Pedestrian Improvements, Intersection Safety, and New Crossings
  M1 Sidewalks
  M2 Intersection Crossings

High Comfort Bikeway
  M3 Bikeway Infrastructure

Trails
  M4 Trail Facilities
  M5 Wayfinding

Neighborhood Traffic Calming
  M6 Traffic Calming Strategies

Transit and Mobility Hubs
  M7 Transit Amenities
  M8 Transit Service

Transportation Demand Management
  M9 Transportation Demand Management Strategies

Balanced Corridors
  M10 Balanced Corridors

LAND USE AND BUILT FORM

Commercial Services and Uses
  L1 Existing Commercial Areas
  L2 Reuse of Commercial Buildings

Growth Strategy
  L3 Future Growth in Centers and Corridors
  L4 Compatible Redevelopment

Housing Options/Design & Landmark Preservation
  L5 Small-Scale Multi-Unit Housing Options
  L6 Preservation of Existing Housing
  L7 Neighborhood-Compatible Housing
  L8 Culturally Significant Buildings

Urban Design Framework
  L9 Design Within Centers and Corridors
  L10 Design Along Natural Areas
  L11 Design Within Industrial Areas

ECONOMY AND HOUSING

Housing Affordability
  E1 Housing Affordability and Quality
  E2 Affordable Housing Diversity
  E3 Overall Housing Diversity
  E4 Support Programs for Unhoused Community Members
  E5 Long-term Housing Stability
  E6 Social Services

Economic Vitality – Places
  E7 Economic Vitality of Corridors
  E8 Manufacturing Employment Base
  E9 New Businesses

Economic Vitality – People
  E10 Involuntary Displacement
  E11 Employment Opportunities
SUN VALLEY RIVERFRONT PARK

The rehabilitation and restoration of Weir Gulch and its confluence with the South Platte River, paired with the creation of attractive recreational spaces for the residents of Sun Valley, are realized by the ecological and social potential of the Sun Valley Riverfront Park. The Riverfront Park is designed to achieve these goals at two scales: the neighborhood scale, informed by community input from organizations like The River Sisters, local First People/Indigenous residents and the broader Sun Valley community; and the city scale, in coordination with the River Vision Implementation Plan.

This park vision includes ecological and habitat improvements, wetland creation, native plant establishment, and backwater areas. Improved river access and visibility in the design is achieved by opening the floodplain and the riverbank. Recreational opportunities are integrated through an improved and updated regional trail section, custom bridge, concrete jetties, and neighborhood park located outside of the floodplain.

Preferred park amenities per community input and feedback from the River Sisters Partnership Team include the following design elements:

- Community Gardens / Food Forests / Urban Farm
- Cultural Plaza to Celebrate Community
- Native Landscape / Botanic Garden
- Public Art
- Natural Play Areas
- Water Play Areas
- Tranquility Garden
- Team Sports such as Pickle Ball or Hockey

The rehabilitation and restoration of Weir Gulch and its confluence with the South Platte River, paired with the creation of attractive recreational spaces for the residents of Sun Valley, are realized by the ecological and social potential of the Sun Valley Riverfront Park. The Riverfront Park is designed to achieve these goals at two scales: the neighborhood scale, informed by community input from organizations like The River Sisters, local First People/Indigenous residents and the broader Sun Valley community; and the city scale, in coordination with the River Vision Implementation Plan.

This park vision includes ecological and habitat improvements, wetland creation, native plant establishment, and backwater areas. Improved river access and visibility in the design is achieved by opening the floodplain and the riverbank. Recreational opportunities are integrated through an improved and updated regional trail section, custom bridge, concrete jetties, and neighborhood park located outside of the floodplain.

Preferred park amenities per community input and feedback from the River Sisters Partnership Team include the following design elements:

- Community Gardens / Food Forests / Urban Farm
- Cultural Plaza to Celebrate Community
- Native Landscape / Botanic Garden
- Public Art
- Natural Play Areas
- Water Play Areas
- Tranquility Garden
- Team Sports such as Pickle Ball or Hockey

POLICY

Support ongoing planning and implementation efforts in the Sun Valley DHA Redevelopment, Stadium District, and West Colfax/Federal Boulevard Interchange (Cloverleaf) Study.

Sun Valley has received a significant amount of planning and investment in recent years as part of the Sun Valley Homes DHA redevelopment. Most recently, the Stadium District Master Plan was adopted in 2019, which envisions a regional mixed-use environment surrounding Mile High Stadium. It will be critical for the city to continue supporting the redevelopment of Sun Valley and Stadium District Master Plan vision, as well as guiding future development and investments in Sun Valley to best respond and complement area investments.

Federal Boulevard is a key corridor where bus rapid transit (BRT) is envisioned as a priority in Denver. Residents have expressed a desire for more retail services that meet day-to-day needs. The 8th Avenue and Federal Boulevard intersection has been identified as a mobility hub for future BRT. This intersection is ideal for adjacent land uses to transition into a more mixed-use center that can provide retail services to residents. It can also serve as a transition to adjacent industrial land uses and business located east of Federal Boulevard.

A. Advance and implement the goals, recommendations, and strategies of the Stadium District Master Plan through a variety of regulatory tools such as new zoning and design standards and guidelines.

B. Ensure future development surrounding the Sun Valley Redevelopment District responds to its overall form, use, architecture, and urban design by considering the following:
   1. Location of privately-owned open space.
   2. Pedestrian-priority areas where ground-floor commercial uses and pedestrian-friendly frontages are prioritized.
   3. Compatible building heights and massing.
   4. Key pedestrian connections, including mid-block crossings.

C. Leverage DHA’s Sun Valley Design Standards and Guidelines to encourage high-quality design within the Sun Valley DHA Redevelopment area.

A. Encourage high-quality design and transitions. (See Section 2.1.8) Other recommendations include:
   1. Encourage active ground-floor uses including neighborhood-serving retail such as coffee shops, local restaurants, small-format grocery stores, after-school and youth-oriented services, and other daily services. Other non-residential uses listed in the Innovation/Flex place type designation should also be encouraged.
   2. Support the adaptive reuse of existing warehousing and flex buildings.
   4. Housing and mixed-use developments should be prioritized near any proposed BRT station, and along the western edge of the industrial transition areas in Sun Valley.
TRANSFORMATIVE PROJECT: STADIUM DISTRICT

Diverse mix of active uses
Affordable housing that accommodates various households
Publicly-accessible open spaces and network
Variety of building heights and intensities

Multimodal and walkable street network
Variety of street types
Human-scale and high-quality design
Enhance public space adjacent to the river

WHAT IS IT?

Adopted in 2019, the Stadium District Master Plan establishes a long-range vision and guiding principles for the future development of the southern portion of the Metropolitan Football Stadium District (MFSD) property. This area primarily consists of surface parking lots used only during football games, and other sporting or special events. The plan envisions: 1) A regional destination with one-of-a-kind game day or special event experiences, as well as a variety of year-round activities, amenities, with access to waterways; and 2) A new seamless multimodal mobility network that better connects people to and through the plan area. Public agencies and private entities will use the Stadium District Master Plan for many purposes and actions that will realize the plan’s vision.
**SUN VALLEY RECOMMENDATIONS**

**SV-3**

Prioritize preservation and adaptive reuse efforts along Federal Boulevard, outside of the High Capacity Transit Center Opportunity Area, to create an environment that is conducive to the success of small, locally-owned businesses.

Federal Boulevard is home to many small and/or local businesses. The corridor provides affordable rents for these businesses and commercial real estate trends suggest there is strong demand for affordable commercial space. Adaptive reuse efforts and public realm urban design improvements can help make the corridor more welcoming for pedestrians while supporting local business success.

A. Encourage the use of programs through Denver Economic Development & Opportunity (DEDO) and other agencies, where appropriate, to support small business development and success.

B. Support adaptive reuse efforts and if redevelopment does occur, provide incentives or requirement for local business tenanting.

C. Focus on public realm improvements to address mobility and open space improvements.

**SV-4**

Establish partnerships between area residents and employers to strengthen connections with businesses in the industrial area to foster and create local employment opportunities.

There is a significant concentration of industrial employment in Sun Valley and Valverde. Many of the jobs in the West Area pay strong wages and provide employment opportunities to residents throughout the region. Working with local employers and other stakeholders to connect jobs to residents of Sun Valley can help create more career opportunities and financial stability for residents.

A. Establish a working group among residents, neighborhood leaders, local employers, and city staff to address the following:

1. Identify the needs of local employers from a workforce and business development perspective to help strengthen existing businesses and the local economy.

2. Create new career opportunities that benefit all parties. Explore programs that involve workforce development, local employment, capital improvements, grants, and low-interest financing programs.

3. Develop career apprenticeship programs and partnerships that advance after-school learning opportunities, mentorship, and training opportunities for the youth and young adults.

4. Continue to coordinate programs and support food, business and entertainment opportunities under the viaduct like the Sun Valley Rising event.

**NEIGHBORHOODS**

**DECATUR FRESH MARKET**

Decatur Fresh is a grocery market, workforce training program, and community space. The 1,800 square space offers local residents affordable, culturally relevant and nutritious food options. Located in a food desert, the market serves almost 2,000 Sun Valley residents, local nonprofits, and the broader Denver community. Decatur Fresh is committed to combating inequities in food and providing international and fresh food options in Denver’s most diverse neighborhood.

Decatur Fresh is committed to addressing food scarcity in Sun Valley and all residents receive discounts and utilize programs like SNAP and the Double Up Bucks Program to affordability access quality, nutritious, and culturally relevant food. Community input is built into the fabric of Decatur Fresh’s operations; resident preferences inform product inventory.

Decatur Fresh also operates a paid training and internship program for Sun Valley residents interested in growing their careers in customer service or grocery store management. Residents receive necessary certifications in a classroom setting, complete a 120-hour internship, build concrete skillsets in food retail, and determine their next educational or career opportunity with support from Decatur Fresh’s staff.
SUN VALLEY KITCHEN
The Sun Valley Kitchen & Community Center is a safe and supportive space to explore life’s possibilities. The Center provides children and families in Sun Valley with opportunities for self-expression, self-awareness and personal growth, while fostering unity within the dynamic, multi-cultural neighborhood.

Core Values:
- Nourish – Community dinners, no cost grocery program, kitchen and restaurant
- Enrich – Weekly cooking classes for youth, art, music, dance programming for youth, a safe and supportive space for youth
- Educate – After-school tutoring, education programs, scholarship funds
- Unite – Food access for the neighborhood, collaborative founding partner, monthly neighborhood meetings, day-to-day space for connection
- Employ – Directly hiring youth in Sun Valley, kitchen employment, opportunities for residents

LATINO CULTURAL ARTS CENTER
The Latino Cultural Arts Center is at the center of the 90+ acres of undeveloped parking lots. LCAC is a grass-roots cultural art center that was born from a community-engaged research project, and a 50 year legacy in art, education, and business in the Sun Valley. They leverage social impact with economic empowerment to the benefit of artists, educators, youth and families. Current programs and partnerships span environmental stewardship, mental health and workforce development. The LCAC is an anchor institution in the West Area plan and key partner.
4.5 BARNUM AND BARNUM WEST

4.5.1 Neighborhood Characteristics

Street Pattern
Barnum and Barnum West have strong east-west street connection with 5th Avenue, 1st Avenue and Bayaud Avenue all providing access across the neighborhood. Sheridan and Federal Boulevards provide regional north-south connections, while Perry Street and Knox Court provide vital north-south connections internal to the neighborhood.

Parks and Open Space
Barnum has the Barnum Park and Recreation Center in its northeast corner, adjacent to 6th Avenue. The Weir Gulch trail runs through both Barnum and Barnum West, providing the only green space for the Barnum West neighborhood. Weir Gulch is unique in that it runs directly through residential areas, providing small ‘pocket’ parks throughout the neighborhood.

Overlays and Special Districts
There are no design overlays in Barnum and Barnum West. There is a small area along Federal that is subject to both the UO-1 (Adult Use Overlay) and UO-2 (Billboard Overlay). There are no designated historic landmarks in the Barnum and Barum West neighborhoods.

Visual Landmarks
Barnum Elementary, Ross-Barnum Library, St. Cajaten’s Church, Iglesia Luterana Cristo Rey.
4.5.2 Neighborhood Overview

### ERA OF CONSTRUCTION

- **1901-1925**: 18%
- **1926-1945**: 16%
- **1946-1955**: 43%

### EXISTING LAND USE

- **Single Unit Residential**: 50%
- **Row/Road**: 35%
- **Park/Open Space**: 5%

### ZONING

- **Single Unit**: 81%
- **Open Space**: 8%
- **Mixed Use**: 6%

### RESIDENTIAL PARCEL SIZE (SF)

- **6,001-9,000**: 66%
- **+9,000**: 10%
- **4,501-6,000**: 16%
  - Average Res. Lot Size: 6,594 sq ft

West Area Plan | Neighbors of West | 271
4.5.3 Community Feedback
Barnum and Barnum West neighbors shared lots of feedback about their community. Below are some things they shared about their neighborhood:

**Assets**
- Strong sense of community and neighborhood character
- Good connections to downtown Denver and the mountains
- Great views of the city

**Opportunities**
- Improve and beautify 1st Avenue and other main streets for pedestrians, community gathering
- Construct improved street crossings along Weir Gulch to protect users
- Create more culturally-inclusive art in the neighborhood
- Community gardens and more green space

**Weaknesses**
- Lack of access to green space in Barnum West
- Dangerous traffic speed, lack of sidewalks, pedestrian safety
- Lack of businesses such as grocery store, cafe or community gathering spaces.
- Lack of community maintenance: streetlights, trash along Gulch trail, medians, etc

4.5.4 Plan on a Page
**Downtown Barnum** - Pursue regulatory changes, community partnerships, and infrastructure investments to create a vibrant “Downtown Barnum”, with a focus on the intersection of 1st Avenue and Knox Court. See Policy B1 and B2.

**Safer streets and crossings** - Improve safety and comfort along key streets and crossings by reprioritizing street space for walking, biking, rolling and transit mobility options. In addition, strengthen existing and create new opportunities for north-south connections. (See Policies “M1” through “M10”)

**Improve the trail system along gulches** - Create a more continuous, high-quality trail system along Weir Gulch by expanding the width of trails and incorporating wayfinding. (See Policies “Q15”, “M3”, “M4”, and “M5”)

**Fresh and healthy food.** Explore non-traditional models that can increase access to fresh, healthy foods, and provide more multi-modal connections to fresh food providers. (See Policies “Q16” through “Q21”)
SUMMARY OF BARNUM 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
- Refinements 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
- Future Connection

QUALITY OF LIFE
- Park Access Improvements
- School / Shared Open Space
- Complete Gaps in Existing Trail

West Area Plan
Neighborhoods of West | 273
### 4.5.5 Area Wide Recommendations

The following summary of recommendations includes a list of all of the area wide West Area Plan Recommendations. All of the area wide recommendations are applicable to the Barnum and Barnum West neighborhoods.

#### QUALITY OF LIFE

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The following summary of recommendations includes a list of all of the area wide West Area Plan Recommendations. All of the area wide recommendations are applicable to the Barnum and Barnum West neighborhoods.
**MOBILITY**

- **Pedestrian Improvements, Intersection Safety, and New Crossings**
  - Sidewalks
  - Intersection Crossings

- **High Comfort Bikeway**
  - Bikeway Infrastructure

- **Trails**
  - Trail Facilities
  - Wayfinding

- **Neighborhood Traffic Calming**
  - Traffic Calming Strategies

- **Transit and Mobility Hubs**
  - Transit Amenities
  - Transit Service

- **Transportation Demand Management**
  - Transportation Demand Management Strategies

- **Balanced Corridors**
  - Balanced Corridors

**LAND USE AND BUILT FORM**

- **Commercial Services and Uses**
  - Existing Commercial Areas
  - Reuse of Commercial Buildings

- **Growth Strategy**
  - Future Growth in Centers and Corridors
  - Compatible Redevelopment

- **Housing Options/Design & Landmark Preservation**
  - Small-Scale Multi-Unit Housing Options
  - Preservation of Existing Housing
  - Neighborhood-Compatible Housing
  - Culturally Significant Buildings

- **Urban Design Framework**
  - Design Within Centers and Corridors
  - Design Along Natural Areas
  - Design Within Industrial Areas

**ECONOMY AND HOUSING**

- **Housing Affordability**
  - Housing Affordability and Quality
  - Affordable Housing Diversity
  - Overall Housing Diversity
  - Support Programs for Unhoused Community Members
  - Long-term Housing Stability
  - Social Services

- **Economic Vitality – Places**
  - Economic Vitality of Corridors
  - Manufacturing Employment Base
  - New Businesses

- **Economic Vitality – People**
  - Involuntary Displacement
  - Employment Opportunities
BARNUM AND BARNUM WEST RECOMMENDATIONS

**B-1**
Partner with the current business owners and residents to develop an overall brand and identity for “Downtown Barnum” around the intersection of 1st Avenue and Knox Court that speaks to the neighborhood’s heritage, history, and vision for the future.

A significant component of the “Downtown Barnum” concept is the ability to foster an identity that is unique and reflective of the community’s values, and create a safe, comfortable environment for pedestrians. This will require strong partnerships with businesses and surrounding residents of the area, and physical infrastructure improvements.

A. Collaborate with neighborhood groups and business associations, like the Community Coalition for Barnum and others, to plan and conduct community events along West 1st Avenue.

B. Consider the establishment of a localized Business Improvement District that will link local community and business interests and goals with supportive services and infrastructure improvements, if feasible.

C. Add some semi-permanent elements that can be reconfigured, if needed, in the future. Add more substantial placemaking elements that speak to the local community’s brand and identity, such as pedestrian-scaled lighting, community art/sculptures, banners, movable planters, and other elements that can be fixed.

**B-2**
Encourage zoning changes and other regulatory tools that will help foster a main street environment within “Downtown Barnum.”

The building and site design of private properties play a key role in contributing to a pedestrian-friendly main street. Adjustments to the zoning and/or application of new zoning tools can help ensure that future improvements and new construction contribute to a successful main street environment. Future engagement with property owners, businesses, and residents of the area will also be critical to ensure an inclusive process and outcome.

A. Conduct a more detailed land use/urban design study along 1st Avenue and Knox Court commercial node to better understand current conditions and desired outcomes from community members. The study can address the following:
   1. Geographic extent to which the concept of a “Downtown Barnum” applies.
   2. Overall design objectives that will foster Downtown Barnum’s vibrancy.
   3. Current conditions and issues.
   4. Proposed regulatory adjustments/tools

B. Supplemental to the study, explore the application of E-MS zoning and/or existing design overlays to promote ground-floor active commercial uses and pedestrian-friendly frontages.

**B-3**
Ensure high-quality building and site design along Weir Gulch.

Weir Gulch is an important community asset that serves as a transportation and open space amenity. The design and orientation of future homes surrounding these assets are critical to the overall placemaking and sense of safety for people.

A. Smaller housing types, especially missing middle housing, should treat Weir Gulch similar to their primary frontages. Building facades facing the Weir Gulch should have equivalent treatment of the primary building façade – i.e., avoiding blank walls and incorporating building entries, windows, façade articulation, etc.

B. Parking should be located away from the gulch and instead should prioritize common open spaces near the gulch.
TRANSFORMATIVE PROJECT: DOWNTOWN BARNUM

WHAT IS IT?

“Downtown Barnum” is a concept that applies to a commercial area embedded within Barnum at the intersection of 1st Avenue and Knox Court. Residents have expressed their desire to transform this area into a vibrant, commercial main street with active storefronts where area residents can walk, roll, or take transit along comfortable, safe, tree-lined streets to local cafes, restaurants, barber shops, flower shops, and other neighborhood amenities/services. Downtown Barnum will serve as a gathering space for residents and visitors to enjoy and celebrate the rich culture of West. Policies B-L1 and BL2 and their respective strategies promote the necessary partnerships, improvements, and regulatory changes needed to realize this vision.
BARNUM AND BARNUM WEST
RECOMMENDATIONS

Prioritize preservation and adaptive reuse efforts along Federal Boulevard, outside of the High Capacity Transit Center Opportunity Area, to create an environment that is conducive to the success of small, locally-owned businesses.

Federal Boulevard is home to many small and/or local businesses. The corridor provides affordable rents for these businesses and commercial real estate trends show that there is strong demand for this space. Adaptive reuse efforts and improvements to the public realm can help make the corridor more welcoming for pedestrians while allowing local businesses to thrive.

A. Encourage the use of programs through Denver Economic Development & Opportunity (DEDO) and other agencies, where appropriate, to support small business development and success.
B. Support adaptive reuse efforts and if redevelopment does occur, provide incentives or requirement for local business tenanting.
C. Focus on public realm improvements to address mobility and open space improvements.

COMMUNITY CO-OP AT 1ST

The Community Co-Op at 1st Avenue is a neighborhood store and year-round farmers market. They are gardeners and artisans that provide unique, local gathering place full of real people making community connections, providing education, advancing empowerment and assisting others. The co-op is the place you'll find quality food, products, services and experiences within the Barnum neighborhoods and is located along West 1st Avenue and Sheridan Boulevard. The co-op is independent, caring and consistent, leading with their hearts and passionately devoted to being a good friend to the Barnum communities and good stewards of Earth. The co-op is actively involved with these environmental programs – Certified Green Business, Environmental Leadership and Food Waste Recovery Challenge.

Mission: The Co-op at 1st is committed to providing quality foods, products and services while supporting the health and wellness of members and the community through education, information, service, sustainability and collaboration. They also work hand-in-hand with a variety of organizations and businesses who align with our mission and values.

What is a Co-op? A cooperative is a farm, business or other organization that is owned and run jointly by its members, who share the profits and/or benefits. Rather than rewards going to outside investors, a co-op returns surplus revenue to its members in direct proportion to how much they use the co-op. This democratic approach results in a powerful economic force which serves the co-op, its members and the community as a whole.
4.6 VALVERDE

4.6.1 Neighborhood Characteristics

Street Pattern
Valverde is bounded by Federal Boulevard and Alameda Avenue, which provide the most efficient means of crossing the neighborhood. Topography and industrial areas often make travel, particularly for pedestrians, difficult. West Cedar Avenue, 2nd Avenue and 5th Avenue all provide east-west connections. Clay Street provides a north-south connection for the residential portion of the neighborhood, while Tejon Street and Yuma Street provide the same for the industrial area.

Parks and Open Space
Valverde has three large parks: West Bar Val Wood Park, Valverde Park, and Barnum East Park. West Bar Val Wood Park and Valverde Park are in the southern part of the neighborhood, while Barnum East Park is located in the northwest corner of the neighborhood. Majority of the park space is designed to accommodate for more active recreational uses. A smaller pocket park also exists in the residential portion of the neighborhood located to the south. There are limited connections from the neighborhood to the South Platte River, which flows along the eastern edge of the neighborhood and serves as the neighborhood’s eastern boundary.

Overlays and Special Districts
There are no design overlays in Valverde, but there are large areas with use overlays: UO-1 (Adult Use Overlay) and UO-2 (Billboard Overlay). The UO-2 overlay is found primarily in the northern portion of the neighborhood, which is zoned for industrial uses. There are no locally designated historic landmarks in Valverde.

Visual Landmarks
Dog sculpture at Denver Animal Shelter, Florence Critterson High School, Valverde Neighborhood House.
4.6.2 Neighborhood Overview

### ERA OF CONSTRUCTION

- **1900 or earlier**: 13%
- **1901-1925**: 11%
- **1926-1945**: 40%
- **1946-1955**: 19%

### EXISTING LAND USE

- **Industrial**: 33%
- **Single-Unit Residential**: 19%
- **ROW/Road**: 23%

### ZONING

- **Single-Unit**: 17%
- **Light Industrial**: 17%
- **General Industrial**: 20%

### RESIDENTIAL PARCEL SIZE (SF)

- **4,501-6,000**: 13%
- **6,001-9,000**: 73%
- **+9,000**: 8%
- **7,049 sq ft**: Average Res. Lot Size
PREVIOUS PLANS
Valverde stakeholders created a neighborhood plan in 1991. Plan recommendations from 1991 focused on providing residents with access to quality, affordable housing, well-paying jobs, and goods and services. The plan also highlighted the need to protect residents from pollution and environmental damage caused by the neighboring industrial areas. These recommendations continue to be relevant and are consistent with the policies found in the West Area Plan.

4.6.3 Community Feedback
Valverde neighbors shared lots of feedback about their community. Here are some things they shared about their neighborhood:

**Assets**
- Local businesses are a good source of well-paying jobs
- Cultural diversity of the neighborhood
- Proximity to South Platte River

**Opportunities**
- Improve sidewalks and bike lanes, especially on the way to the South Platte River Trail
- Embed more neighborhood-serving commercial and retail into commercial/industrial area
- Improve multi-modal transit options to lessen pollution and improve safety
- Improve drainage and water quality through neighborhood to South Platte River

**Weaknesses**
- Lack of tree canopy, green infrastructure and high amounts of pollution from cars and industrial uses
- Lack of sidewalks, especially in industrial area

4.6.4 Plan on a Page

**Industrial transitions** - Pursue regulatory changes that will promote more compatible transitions between residential and industrial areas, and address the environmental impacts of existing industrial uses. See Policy VA-L2

**Local employment** - Connect local jobs to local residents. See Policy VA-E2

**Safer streets and crossings** - Improve safety and comfort along key streets and crossings by prioritizing street space for walking, biking, rolling and transit mobility options. In addition, strengthen existing and create new opportunities for east-west connections. (See Policies “M1” through “M10”)

**South Platte River enhancement** - Prioritize the protection and enhancement of the South Platte River’s environmental, ecological, and recreational needs. (See Policies “Q7”, “Q8”, “Q10”, “Q11” and the transformative project “Greenway and River restoration” on page 228)

**Fresh and healthy food.** Explore non-traditional models that can increase access to fresh, healthy foods, and provide more multi-modal connections to fresh food providers. (See Policies “Q16” through “Q21”)

SUMMARY OF VALVERDE RECOMMENDATIONS

LAND USE AND BUILT FORM
- Low Residential
- Low-Medium Residential
- High-Medium Residential
- High Residential
- Regional Center
- Community Center
- Local Center
- Value Manufacturing
- Innovation/Flex
- Public Park and Open Space
- Refinements from Blueprint Master Plan

MOBILITY
- Transformative Corridor
- Transit Priority
- Bike Priority
- Pedestrian Priority
- Proposed Green Street or Green Amenity Streets
- New Crossing
- Future Connection
- Existing/Proposed High Comfort bikeways
- Improvements to an Existing Crossing

QUALITY OF LIFE
- Park Access Improvements
- Civic Space Opportunities
- School / Shared Open Space Opportunity
- Complete Gaps in Existing Trail
### 4.6.5 Area Wide Recommendations

The following summary of recommendations includes a list of all of the area wide West Area Plan Recommendations. All of the area wide recommendations are applicable to the Valverde neighborhood.

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<td>06  Water Policy</td>
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<th>Community Pride</th>
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DENVER’S YOUTH EMPOWERMENT / VIOLENCE PREVENTION CENTER

The City and County of Denver is in the process of developing a center for connecting young people and their families to a network of services in Valverde.

The Youth Empower Center (YEC) is a shared vision of Denver’s young people and community-based organizations, which will offer a unique and safe space for youth and their families to access support services ranging from workforce development, vocational and entrepreneurial training, education, mental health, recreational activities, wrap-around services and youth violence prevention.

A Youth Empowerment Center would include services for families and/or caregivers with the bulk of available services intended to serve youth between the ages of 12 – 24.

The Youth Empowerment Center model addresses protective factors the city aims to build, recognizing that safe community spaces and protective community environments are at the core of that effort. For that reason, the Office of Children Affairs (OCA) has developed a process that is youth informed, community- led and city supported to design programs, recruit and engage youth, and design trauma- informed services that remain relevant to young people.

Through this partnership model, we will achieve:

- Stronger representation of the young people and families we aim to serve;
- Gain trust from young people who see authentic, youth-centered services being delivered in their communities;
- The strengthening of caring adult relationships.

The South Platte River is a significant asset for the neighborhood and surrounding region but there are many barriers that prevent residents from accessing and enjoying the river. Regulatory adjustments tailored for properties along the South Platte River can help restore local ecology and create access for residents.

**Strategies**

**A.** Integrate more zoning requirements that are more context-sensitive to the South Platte River, including:
1. Changes to the permitted uses and/or new use limitation requirements for heavier industrial uses, such as greater setbacks.
2. Changes to general design standards to require more green infrastructure that better filters and absorbs stormwater.
VALVERDE RECOMMENDATIONS

**V-3**
Prioritize preservation and adaptive reuse efforts along Federal Boulevard, outside of the High Capacity Transit Center Opportunity Area, to create an environment that is conducive to the success of small, locally-owned businesses.

Federal Boulevard is home to many small and/or local businesses. The corridor provides affordable rents for these businesses and commercial real estate trends show that there is strong demand for this space. Adaptive reuse efforts and improvements to the public realm can help make the corridor more welcoming for pedestrians while allowing local businesses to thrive.

- **A.** Encourage the use of programs through Denver Economic Development & Opportunity (DEDO) and other agencies, where appropriate, to support small business development and success.
- **B.** Support adaptive reuse efforts and if redevelopment does occur, provide incentives or requirement for local business tenanting.
- **C.** Focus on public realm improvements to address mobility and open space improvements.

**V-4**
Establish partnerships to strengthen the businesses in the industrial area and create local employment opportunities.

There is a significant concentration of industrial employment in Sun Valley and Valverde. Many of the jobs in the West Area pay strong wages and provide employment opportunities to residents throughout the region. Working with local employers and other stakeholders to connect jobs to residents of Valverde can help create more career opportunities and financial stability for residents.

- **A.** Establish a working group among residents, neighborhood leaders, local employers, and city staff to address the following:
  1. Identify the needs of local employers from a workforce and business development perspective to help strengthen existing businesses and local economy.
  2. Create new opportunities that benefit all parties including workforce development, local employment, capital improvements, grants, and low-interest financing program.
  3. After-school learning, mentorship, and training opportunities for the youth.

**V-5**
Address the potential for loss of housing units through redevelopment in the industrial area.

A stronger mix of industrial and residential uses exist in Valverde west of South Raritan Street and South of Bayaud Avenue. Future industrial/office redevelopment may result in loss of housing units, however, implementing a unit replacement requirement can help support the retention and creation of new affordable housing in the area.

- **A.** Given the potential for housing units to be lost within the industrial area, prioritize the Alameda corridor for the replacement of these units through a unit replacement requirement in new development along and adjacent to the corridor.
5.1 IMPLEMENTATION

Plan Implementation
The West Area Plan sets forth the community’s vision for the area and includes recommendations to achieve it. To make that vision reality, the plan recommendations must be implemented. This section will describe the types of implementation tools available, identify the recommendations that are priorities for implementation, and explain how implementation efforts will be monitored and tracked. Successfully implementing this plan will require the combined efforts of the city, external organizations, and the community. Implementation activities generally fall into three categories: regulatory changes, infrastructure, and services/programs. Each fills a different role, but all are necessary to successfully achieve the vision.

As a policy document, this plan directs updates to zoning and other regulations that will shape the area, and it also informs future conversations about infrastructure investment. Plan implementation takes place over the course of many years. It is also the result of large and small actions by the public, private and non-profit sectors, many times in partnership.

Realizing the Vision
The West Area Plan identifies the vision, recommendations, and implementation strategies for the community. This plan proposes new infrastructure and other projects in many areas, as well as several transformative projects that, if implemented, would have a positive, catalytic, and transformative effect on the surrounding neighborhoods. The plan sets forth a comprehensive, holistic approach that will help to create complete neighborhoods within west. It will take a concerted and collaborative alignment of resources for the west plan to attain its vision. The City and County of Denver, relevant local and state government agencies, non-profit stakeholders, residents, business and property owners, developers, and other key parties must all be strong partners in moving the neighborhoods forward.

5.1.1 Regulatory
Most community development comes from private investment. The city can ensure private investment advances community goals by adopting or amending appropriate regulations. Typical examples include Denver Zoning Code text and map amendments, requirements for infrastructure improvements associated with development projects, and Parks and Recreation rules regarding the provision parks and open space. Developing these regulations based on the guidance of this plan will involve additional community engagement. Some regulatory implementation priorities include:

- 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. (See Policy “Q4”)
- Encourage regenerative processes that restore, renew, and revitalize green infrastructure. Prioritize sustainability and resiliency with an emphasis on district and neighborhood-scale implementation. (See Policy “Q12”)
- 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. (See Policy “Q19”)
- Work with neighborhoods to ensure that zoning tools help new construction fit into the neighborhood. (See Policy “L7”)

5.1.2 Infrastructure & Public Investment
Public infrastructure strategies are those involving an investment in a publicly owned facility or asset. Examples include public investment in street reconstruction, bicycle lane installations, new transit routes, park improvements, or new or expanded recreation centers. The city, or other governmental entities, typically take the lead in designing, constructing and funding these projects and may use a variety of public funding mechanisms or partnerships with the private sector. New streets, utilities, open space and other major public infrastructure associated with new development are typically led and funded by private developers or through public-private partnerships (see Partnership Strategies, on this page). Some strategies may require detailed studies and further assessment to identify appropriate solutions that must consider existing and projected mobility demands. These studies will inform future needs and capacities and also determine project costs and funding eligibility. Public infrastructure implementation priorities for west include the following:

- Create bold changes to the mobility system by repurposing, reimagining, and reprioritizing street
space along key corridors to balance use for safe and accessible walking, rolling, biking, and transit mobility options. (See Policy “M10”)

- Establish new balanced corridor connections that improve local connectivity, increase user comfort, and provide overall safety. (See Policy “M10”)
- Implement planned Denver Moves: Bicycles bikeway infrastructure recommendations. Consider upgrades to high-comfort facilities where possible. (See Policy “M3”)
- Study routes planned in Denver Moves: Bicycles for facility type upgrades and alternative route realignments and reconfigurations. (See Policy “M3”)
- Install new bikeways not previously identified in Denver Moves: Bicycles (See Policy “M3”)
- Install new sidewalks along corridors identified by the community as priority areas following Denver’s citywide prioritization guidance. (See Policy “M1”)
- Improve the pedestrian realm by improving the quality, safety, width, and comfort of pedestrian facilities following Denver’s citywide prioritization guidelines for sidewalks. (See Policy “M1”)

5.1.3 Partnerships, Services, and Programs

Where neither the city nor the private sector can alone achieve the vision, partnerships offer an opportunity to work together to advance community goals. Many partnerships focus on services, with the city working alongside an outside organization to provide for community needs. Other partnerships can provide infrastructure through public-private financing arrangements. There are many different potential partners identified for specific recommendations throughout the plan to accomplish many different goals. Partnership priorities include:

- 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. (See Policy “Q12”)
- Support initiatives that seek to minimize food insecurity by assisting food retailers with routine maintenance and facility improvements. (See Policy “Q19”)
- 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. (See Policy “Q14”)
- Promote comprehensive solutions to youth violence. Encourage community empowerment through access to education, employment, job training resources, and other supportive services for all ages. (See Policy “Q25”)
- Strengthen the economic vitality of corridors to create opportunities for community-serving retail and small-business development to stabilize small businesses at risk of involuntary displacement. (See Policy “E4”)

- Preserve and expand the employment base of the existing West Area Manufacturing Districts while improving the built and natural environment for adjacent residential uses and the promotion of sustainable development. (See Policy “E5”)
- Stabilize residents at risk of involuntary displacement. (See Policy “E6”)
- Promote employment opportunities for local area residents of all skill and education levels. (See Policy “E6”)

5.1.4 Priorities

Over the 20-year life of this plan, the city will evolve, recommendations will be implemented, and circumstances will change. All of these will impact which recommendations are the highest priorities for the city to focus on. An appendix will identify the current top priorities and will be updated regularly to reflect the changing situation.

5.1.5 Summary of Updates to
Blueprint Denver
The West Area Plan is adopted as a supplement to Comprehensive Plan 2040 and updates Blueprint Denver. This plan advances the vision of Comprehensive Plan 2040 and is consistent with Blueprint’s overall approach including topics, maps, legend categories, and system hierarchies. This plan takes a closer and more detailed look at West and is intended to refine Blueprint Denver’s guidance for this part of the city. Where this plan addresses topics also addressed by Blueprint, Blueprint’s maps should be updated to be consistent with this plan, including the following maps:

- Neighborhood Context (Section 2.3.5 on page 172)
- Future Places (Section 2.3.3 on page 164)
- Growth Strategy (Section 2.3.5 on page 172)
- Street Types (Section 2.2.1 on page 110)
- Mobility Chapter (Modal Priorities) (Section 2.2.1 on page 110)

5.1.6 Progress Metrics
Each topic within the Area Wide Recommendations section has associated performance measures to evaluate whether this plan is having the desired impact in achieving the community’s vision. In addition to measuring the outcomes from the plan, it is also important to track how the recommendations of this plan are implemented. To determine how much progress the city is making in implementing this plan, the number of individual projects the plan calls for under each topic will be tracked. See the numbers to the right for the number of implementation projects that the plan’s recommendations call for to be completed over the life of the plan.

- Quality of Life Projects
- Mobility Projects
- Land Use and Built Form Projects
- Economy & Housing Projects
## 2.1 QUALITY OF LIFE

### IMPLEMENTATION RECOMMENDATIONS

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<td>Quality of Life - 1</td>
<td>Prioritize health equity such as developing trainings and programs that support integration of best practices. Strive for all health equity initiatives within West to support citywide policies, deliver public services within West, and allocate resources to eliminate institutional biases and barriers within the system.</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
<td>Regulatory</td>
<td>All Agencies</td>
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<td>Quality of Life - 2</td>
<td>Increase systems, policies, and practices that promote racial and social equity in support of citywide efforts throughout all West Denver neighborhoods.</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
<td>Regulatory &amp; Infrastructure</td>
<td>All Agencies</td>
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<td>Racial and Social Equity</td>
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<td>Quality of Life - 3</td>
<td>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).</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
<td>Infrastructure</td>
<td>CPD DOTI CASR DPR</td>
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<td>Noise and Air Pollution</td>
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<td>Quality of Life - 4</td>
<td>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.</td>
<td>Long-Term</td>
<td>Regulatory</td>
<td>CPD DOTI CASR DPR</td>
<td>Mile High Flood District The Greenway Foundation Colorado Conservation Board Metro Wastewater Reclamation District</td>
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<td>Climate Resilience</td>
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<td>Quality of Life - 5</td>
<td>Make efforts to protect, preserve, and expand the urban forest tree canopy in all redevelopment efforts, and increase tree canopy coverage within public rights-of-way by means such as community tree planting programs and initiatives.</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
<td>Regulatory</td>
<td>CPD DOTI CASR DPR</td>
<td>River Sister Circle Partnership Denver Urban Gardens Denver Public Schools</td>
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<td>Urban Forest Tree Canopy</td>
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<td>Quality of Life - 6</td>
<td><strong>Water Policy</strong> Integrate water policy with land use, energy, urban agriculture, and other types of development projects that are affected by water management activities.</td>
<td>Long-Term</td>
<td>Regulatory &amp; Infrastructure</td>
<td>CPD DOTI CASR DPR</td>
<td>All Action Partners</td>
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<td>Quality of Life - 7</td>
<td><strong>Waterways</strong> Implement a cohesive approach to development and infrastructure improvements that prioritize the protection and enhancement of the South Platte River’s environmental, ecological, and recreational needs.</td>
<td>Long-Term</td>
<td>Infrastructure</td>
<td>CPD DOTI CASR DPR</td>
<td>The River Sister’s Circle Partnership</td>
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<td>Quality of Life - 8</td>
<td><strong>Water Management Practices</strong> Develop and implement land use and water regulatory policies and programs that support sustainable and resilient water management practices at a neighborhood scale.</td>
<td>Long-Term</td>
<td>Infrastructure</td>
<td>CPD DOTI CASR DPR</td>
<td>All Action Partners</td>
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<td>Quality of Life - 9</td>
<td><strong>Green Infrastructure in Development</strong> Foster and promote green infrastructure utilizing both the natural environment and engineered systems in public and private developments to provide clean water, conserve ecosystem functionality, and offer a wide array of benefits to people and wildlife.</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
<td>Infrastructure</td>
<td>CPD DOTI CASR DPR</td>
<td>All Action Partners</td>
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<td>Quality of Life - 10</td>
<td><strong>Green Infrastructure in Neighborhoods</strong> 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.</td>
<td>Long-Term</td>
<td>Regulatory &amp; Infrastructure</td>
<td>CPD DOTI CASR DPR</td>
<td>All Action Partners</td>
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<td>Quality of Life - 11</td>
<td><strong>Green Streets and Alleys</strong> Study the feasibility to create a system of connected green streets and alleys to unite open spaces, manage stormwater, beautify neighborhoods, and reduce urban heat island effects.</td>
<td>Long-Term</td>
<td>Regulatory &amp; Infrastructure</td>
<td>CPD DOTI CASR DPR</td>
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<td>Quality of Life - 12 Access to Parks, Open Space and Recreation</td>
<td>Increase and improve accessibility to existing community parks, open spaces, and recreational facilities for all users.</td>
<td>Long-Term</td>
<td>Infrastructure</td>
<td>DPR</td>
<td>All Action Partners</td>
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<td>Quality of Life - 13 Facilities and Programming</td>
<td>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.</td>
<td>Long-Term</td>
<td>Infrastructure</td>
<td>DPR</td>
<td>All Action Partners</td>
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<td>Quality of Life - 14 New Parks, Open Spaces and Recreation</td>
<td>Work to create new and expand existing community parks, open spaces, and recreational facilities throughout West to ensure all of West Denver is within a 10-minute walk of an amenity.</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
<td>Infrastructure</td>
<td>DDPHE DHS OCA</td>
<td>All Action Partners</td>
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<td>Quality of Life - 15 Access to Trails and Waterways</td>
<td>Improve access to regional trails, waterways, and the South Platte River through enhanced signage, wayfinding, safety, security, waste management and lighting improvements.</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
<td>Infrastructure</td>
<td>DDPHE DHS OCA</td>
<td>All Action Partners</td>
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<td>Quality of Life - 16 Community Food Environment</td>
<td>Strive to build an inclusive, healthier, complete West Area food environment.</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
<td>Infrastructure</td>
<td>DDPHE DHS OCA</td>
<td>Sustainable Food Policy Council &amp; All Action Partners</td>
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<td>Quality of Life - 17 Increase Fresh Food Access</td>
<td>Study ways to increase fresh food access, availability, and affordability throughout all West Denver communities.</td>
<td>Long-Term</td>
<td>Regulatory</td>
<td>DDPHE DHS OCA</td>
<td>Sustainable Food Policy Council &amp; All Action Partners</td>
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<td>Quality of Life - 18 Food Insecurity</td>
<td>Support the expansion of local food production, urban farming, food processing, and manufacturing.</td>
<td>Long-Term</td>
<td>Infrastructure</td>
<td>DDPHE DHS OCA</td>
<td>Sustainable Food Policy Council &amp; All Action Partners</td>
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<td>Quality of Life - 19 Food Providers</td>
<td>Develop regulatory tools and creative solutions that streamline city processes and help providers close food access gaps.</td>
<td>Long-Term</td>
<td>Infrastructure</td>
<td>DDPHE DHS OCA DOTI</td>
<td>Sustainable Food Policy Council &amp; All Action Partners</td>
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| Quality of Life - 20                 | **Local Food Production**  
Support the expansion of local food production, urban farming, food processing, and manufacturing.                                                                                                           | Ongoing  | Infrastructure | DDPHE   DHS OCA DOTI                                  | Sustainable Food Policy Council & All Action Partners |      |
| Quality of Life - 21                 | **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.                                      | Ongoing  | Infrastructure | DDPHE   DHS OCA DOTI                                  | Sustainable Food Policy Council & All Action Partners |      |
| Quality of Life - 22                 | **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. | Long-Term | Infrastructure | CPD DOTI  DPD DPR                                    | Xcel Energy & All Action Partners                     |      |
| Quality of Life - 23                 | **Universal Design Practices**  
Encourage public and private agencies, urban design practitioners, and private developers to incorporate regenerative development principles that promote safety and sustainability in the built environment. Promote universal design practices with a focus on unintentional cultural biases, and increased equity, diversity, and inclusion. | Long-Term | Regulatory     | CPD DEDO CASR                                      | Private agencies Developers Architects               |      |
| Quality of Life - 24                 | **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. | Ongoing  | Services/Programs | DDPHE                              | All Action Partners                                 |      |
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<tr>
<td>Quality of Life - 25</td>
<td>Promote comprehensive solutions to youth violence.</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
<td>Services/Programs</td>
<td>OCA &amp; DHS Youth Empowerment Center</td>
<td>Denver Public Schools, Denver Urban Gardens, All Action Partners</td>
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<td>Youth Violence</td>
<td>Encourage community empowerment through access to education, employment, job training resources, and other supportive services for all ages.</td>
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<td>Quality of Life - 26</td>
<td>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.</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
<td>Infrastructure &amp; Services/Programs</td>
<td>CPD DEDO DHS DDPHE DPR Arts and Venues Storytelling</td>
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<td>Community Pride</td>
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<tr>
<td>Quality of Life - 27</td>
<td>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</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
<td>Infrastructure &amp; Services/Programs</td>
<td>CPD DEDO DHS DDPHE DPR Arts and Venues Storytelling</td>
<td>All Action Partners</td>
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<td>Local Culture</td>
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</table>
## 2.2 MOBILITY
### IMPLEMENTATION RECOMMENDATIONS

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Recommendation Type</th>
<th>Policy Action</th>
<th>Timeline</th>
<th>Action Type</th>
<th>City Agencies</th>
<th>Action Partners</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mobility - 1 Sidewalks</td>
<td>Install new, upgrade existing, and make repairs to West Area sidewalks to create a more connected, safe and user-friendly pedestrian realm throughout all neighborhoods.</td>
<td>Long-Term</td>
<td>Infrastructure</td>
<td>DOTI CPD DPR</td>
<td>CDOT</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mobility - 2 Intersection Crossings</td>
<td>Install new and improve existing intersection crossings. Focus on locations with high pedestrian and bicycle activity, or where data suggests safety may be of concern.</td>
<td>Long-Term</td>
<td>Infrastructure</td>
<td>DOTI CPD DPR</td>
<td>CDOT</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mobility - 3 Bikeway Infrastructure</td>
<td>Create new bikeway connections and improve existing bikeway infrastructure in accordance with Denver’s Bikeway Design Manual.</td>
<td>Long-Term</td>
<td>Infrastructure</td>
<td>DOTI CPD</td>
<td>CDOT</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mobility - 4 Trail Facilities</td>
<td>Improve the quality and comfort of trail facilities (cross reference recommendation Q15).</td>
<td>Long-Term</td>
<td>Infrastructure</td>
<td>DOTI CPD</td>
<td>CDOT</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mobility - 5 Wayfinding</td>
<td>Install signage and wayfinding along rights-of-way to improve access to trails, and along bicycle and pedestrian networks (cross reference recommendation Q15)</td>
<td>Short-Term</td>
<td>Infrastructure</td>
<td>DOTI CPD</td>
<td>CDOT</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mobility - 6 Traffic Calming Strategies</td>
<td>Implement traffic calming strategies along neighborhood streets directly surrounding senior living facilities, schools, parks, hospitals, libraries, commercial areas, and recreational centers.</td>
<td>Short-Term</td>
<td>Infrastructure</td>
<td>DOTI</td>
<td>CDOT</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mobility - 7 Transit Amenities</td>
<td>Enhance transit services, including stations and bus stop amenities along key travel corridors throughout the West Area.</td>
<td>Short-Term</td>
<td>Infrastructure</td>
<td>DOTI</td>
<td>CDOT</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mobility - 8 Transit Service</td>
<td>Provide more frequent and reliable transit service throughout the West Area.</td>
<td>Long-Term</td>
<td>Infrastructure</td>
<td>DOTI</td>
<td>CDOT</td>
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<td>Recommendation Type</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mobility - 9</td>
<td>Promote Transportation Demand Management (TDM) policies and future strategies through development and redevelopment projects to shift travel behavior and to assist Denver in meeting its mode share and climate goals.</td>
<td>Long-Term</td>
<td>Infrastructure</td>
<td>DOTI</td>
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<td>TDM Strategies</td>
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<td>Mobility - 10</td>
<td>Create bold changes to the West Area mobility system by repurposing, reimagining, and reprioritizing streets and key corridors to increase safety for accessible walking, rolling, biking, enhanced transit, existing and future mobility options.</td>
<td>Long-Term</td>
<td>Infrastructure</td>
<td>DOTI DPR</td>
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<td>Balanced Corridors</td>
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## 2.3 LAND USE AND BUILT FORM
### IMPLEMENTATION RECOMMENDATIONS

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<th>Recommendation Type</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Land Use &amp; Built Form - 1 Existing Commercial Areas</td>
<td>Support existing commercial areas by promoting community-desired uses and enhancing the physical environment to create quality gathering places for residents.</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
<td>Infrastructure</td>
<td>CPD</td>
<td>Community serving facilities Local businesses</td>
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<tr>
<td>Land Use &amp; Built Form - 2 Reuse of Commercial Buildings</td>
<td>Encourage reuse of existing commercial buildings and make it easier to develop lower-scale buildings on small lots.</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
<td>Infrastructure</td>
<td>CPD DEDO</td>
<td>Developers</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Land Use &amp; Built Form - 3 Future Growth in Centers and Corridors</td>
<td>Consistent with adopted citywide policies in Blueprint Denver and in coordination with citywide efforts, direct future growth along high-capacity transit corridors and centers, and ensure future development results in neighborhoods that are more complete with mobility, quality of life enhancements, and access to opportunities for all residents.</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
<td>Regulatory &amp; Infrastructure</td>
<td>CPD DEDO</td>
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<tr>
<td>Land Use &amp; Built Form - 4 Compatible Redevelopment</td>
<td>Ensure compatible redevelopment and/or repurposing of institutional sites within neighborhoods.</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
<td>Infrastructure</td>
<td>CPD DEDO</td>
<td>Developers</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Land Use &amp; Built Form - 5 Small-Scale Multi-Unit Housing Options</td>
<td>Expand missing middle housing options within Low Residential places.</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
<td>Infrastructure &amp; Services/Programs</td>
<td>CPD HOST NEST DEDO</td>
<td>Denver Housing Authority Affordable housing developers</td>
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<tr>
<td>Land Use &amp; Built Form - 6 Preservation of Existing Housing</td>
<td>Encourage retaining, rather than demolishing, existing older homes to promote natural affordability within Low Residential places.</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
<td>Infrastructure &amp; Services/Programs</td>
<td>CPD HOST NEST DEDO</td>
<td>Historic Denver</td>
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<tr>
<td>Land Use &amp; Built Form - 7 Neighborhood-Compatible Housing</td>
<td>Work with neighborhoods within the Enhanced Residential Design Areas (areas composed primarily of single-unit, duplex, and row house structures) to ensure that zoning tools help new construction fit into the neighborhood (cross reference section 2.3.4)</td>
<td>Short-Term</td>
<td>Regulatory</td>
<td>CPD</td>
<td>Historic Denver</td>
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<td>Recommendation Type</td>
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<tr>
<td>Land Use &amp; Built Form - 8</td>
<td>Preserve historic and culturally significant buildings in the West Area.</td>
<td>Long-Term</td>
<td>Infrastructure &amp; Services/Programs</td>
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<td>Land Use &amp; Built Form - 9</td>
<td>Encourage high-quality design and neighborhood compatibility within the Mixed-Use Design Areas.</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
<td>Regulatory</td>
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<td>Land Use &amp; Built Form - 10</td>
<td>Encourage high-quality design and neighborhood compatibility along Neighborhood Natural Areas.</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
<td>Regulatory</td>
<td>CPD</td>
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<tr>
<td>Design Along Natural Areas</td>
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<tr>
<td>Land Use &amp; Built Form - 11</td>
<td>Encourage high-quality design and neighborhood compatibility within existing and transitioning Manufacturing Areas</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
<td>Regulatory</td>
<td>CPD</td>
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<tr>
<td>Design Within Industrial Areas</td>
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## 2.4 ECONOMY AND HOUSING
### IMPLEMENTATION RECOMMENDATIONS

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<tr>
<th>Recommendation Type</th>
<th>Policy Action</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Economy &amp; Housing - 1</td>
<td>Preserve existing housing affordability and housing quality.</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
<td>Infrastructure &amp; Services/Programs</td>
<td>CPD HOST NEST DEDO</td>
<td>Denver Housing Authority Affordable housing developers</td>
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<tr>
<td>Economy &amp; Housing - 2</td>
<td>Explore strategies so affordable housing is available everywhere by implementing approaches that promote a diversity of affordable housing options within all neighborhoods and new development.</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
<td>Infrastructure &amp; Services/Programs</td>
<td>CPD HOST NEST DEDO</td>
<td>Denver Housing Authority Affordable housing developers</td>
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<tr>
<td>Economy &amp; Housing - 3</td>
<td>Expand diversity of housing types and affordability to support households of different sizes, ages, and incomes in all neighborhoods.</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
<td>Infrastructure &amp; Services/Programs</td>
<td>CPD HOST NEST DEDO</td>
<td>Denver Housing Authority Affordable housing developers</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Economy &amp; Housing - 4</td>
<td>Strengthen the economic vitality of corridors to create opportunities for community-serving retail and small-business development to stabilize small businesses at risk of involuntary displacement.</td>
<td>Long-Term</td>
<td>Infrastructure &amp; Services/Programs</td>
<td>CPD HOST NEST DEDO</td>
<td>Denver Housing Authority Affordable housing developers</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Economy &amp; Housing - 5</td>
<td>Preserve and expand the employment base of the existing West Area Manufacturing Districts while improving the built and natural environment for adjacent residential uses and the promotion of sustainable development.</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
<td>Infrastructure &amp; Services/Programs</td>
<td>CPD HOST NEST DEDO</td>
<td>Denver Housing Authority Affordable housing developers</td>
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<tr>
<td>Economy &amp; Housing - 6</td>
<td>Stabilize residents at risk of involuntary displacement.</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
<td>Infrastructure &amp; Services/Programs</td>
<td>CPD HOST NEST DEDO</td>
<td>Denver Housing Authority Affordable housing developers</td>
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<tr>
<td>Economy &amp; Housing - 7</td>
<td>Promote employment opportunities for local area residents of all skill and education levels.</td>
<td>Long-Term</td>
<td>Services/Programs</td>
<td>CPD HOST NEST DEDO</td>
<td>Denver Housing Authority Affordable housing developers</td>
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## 2.4 NEIGHBORHOOD RECOMMENDATIONS

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<tr>
<th>Recommendation Type</th>
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<th>City Agencies</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>West Colfax WC-1</td>
<td>Ensure high-quality building and site design along West Colfax Avenue that will help preserve and create authentic community gathering places for residents.</td>
<td>Long-Term</td>
<td>Regulatory &amp; Infrastructure</td>
<td>&quot;CPD HOST NEST DEDO&quot;</td>
<td>All appropriate action partners</td>
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<tr>
<td>West Colfax WC-2</td>
<td>Celebrate the history and culture of the Jewish community and encourage housing options that meet their needs.</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
<td>Services/ Programs</td>
<td>&quot;CPD HOST NEST DEDO&quot;</td>
<td>&quot;Historic Denver Local organizations&quot;</td>
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<tr>
<td>West Colfax WC-3</td>
<td>Ensure high-quality building and site design, and generate new affordable housing along Lakewood Gulch and within the Knox and Perry transit station areas.</td>
<td>Long-Term</td>
<td>Regulatory &amp; Infrastructure</td>
<td>&quot;CPD HOST NEST DEDO&quot;</td>
<td>All appropriate action partners</td>
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<tr>
<td>West Colfax WC-4</td>
<td>&quot;Help guide community conversations and support local efforts that aim to study the potential use of regulatory design quality tools for residential areas.&quot;</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
<td>Regulatory</td>
<td>&quot;CPD HOST NEST&quot;</td>
<td>All appropriate action partners</td>
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<tr>
<td>West Colfax WC-5</td>
<td>Support implementation of the Denver Housing Authority Westridge Homes Master Plan.</td>
<td>Long-Term</td>
<td>Infrastructure &amp; Services/ Programs</td>
<td>&quot;CPD HOST NEST DEDO&quot;</td>
<td>&quot;Denver Housing Authority Westridge community&quot;</td>
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<tr>
<td>West Colfax WC-6</td>
<td>Partner and support the West Colfax Business Improvement District (WCBID) in supporting small-business retention and development.</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
<td>Infrastructure &amp; Services/ Programs</td>
<td>&quot;CPD DEDO&quot;</td>
<td>&quot;Neighborhood organizations Business Improvement Districts&quot;</td>
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<tr>
<td>Villa Park VP-1</td>
<td>Create more housing opportunities and community-serving retail at key intersections along the 10th Avenue corridor.</td>
<td>Long-Term</td>
<td>Regulatory &amp; Infrastructure</td>
<td>&quot;CPD HOST NEST DEDO&quot;</td>
<td>&quot;Neighborhood organizations Business Improvement Districts&quot;</td>
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<tr>
<td>Villa Park VP-2</td>
<td>Ensure high-quality building and site design everywhere, and promote affordable housing along Lakewood/Dry Gulch, and within the Sheridan, Knox, and Perry station areas.</td>
<td>Long-Term</td>
<td>Regulatory &amp; Infrastructure</td>
<td>&quot;CPD HOST NEST DEDO&quot;</td>
<td>All appropriate action partners</td>
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<tr>
<td>Villa Park VP-3</td>
<td>Encourage low-impact commercial uses in the Local Corridor node at 6th Avenue and Perry Street in order to reduce heavy truck traffic.</td>
<td>Long-Term</td>
<td>Infrastructure</td>
<td>&quot;CPD DOTI HOST NEST DEDO&quot;</td>
<td>&quot;CDOT RTD&quot;</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Villa Park VP-4</td>
<td>Prioritize preservation and adaptive reuse efforts along Federal Boulevard, outside of the High Capacity Transit Center Opportunity Area, to create an environment that is conducive to the success of small, locally-owned businesses.</td>
<td>Long-Term</td>
<td>Infrastructure</td>
<td>&quot;CPD DOTI HOST NEST DEDO&quot;</td>
<td>&quot;CDOT RTD Business Improvement Districts All appropriate action partners&quot;</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sun Valley SV-1</td>
<td>Support ongoing planning and implementation efforts in the Sun Valley DHA Redevelopment, Stadium District, and West Colfax/Federal Boulevard Interchange (Cloverleaf) Study.</td>
<td>Long-Term</td>
<td>Infrastructure &amp; Services/Programs</td>
<td>&quot;CPD HOST NEST DEDO&quot;</td>
<td>&quot;Neighborhood organizations Industrial property owners Business Improvement Districts&quot;</td>
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<td>Barnum/Barnum West B-3</td>
<td>Ensure high-quality building and site design along Weir Gulch.</td>
<td>Long-Term</td>
<td>Infrastructure</td>
<td>&quot;CPD DPR CASR HOST NEST DEDO&quot;</td>
<td>&quot;River Sisters Partnership Denver Urban Gardens&quot;</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sun Valley SV-2</td>
<td>&quot;Promote high-quality building and site design, and provide transitions along the industrial edges of Sun Valley with additional focus on the identified mixed-use redevelopment node at 8th Avenue and Federal Boulevard.&quot;</td>
<td>Long-Term</td>
<td>Infrastructure</td>
<td>&quot;CPD HOST NEST DEDO&quot;</td>
<td>&quot;Neighborhood organizations Industrial property owners Business Improvement Districts&quot;</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sun Valley SV-3</td>
<td>&quot;Prioritize preservation and adaptive reuse efforts along Federal Boulevard, outside of the High Capacity Transit Center Opportunity Area, to create an environment that is conducive to the success of small, locally owned businesses.&quot;</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
<td>Infrastructure &amp; Services/ Programs</td>
<td>&quot;CPD DOTI HOST NEST DEDO&quot;</td>
<td>&quot;CDOT RTD Historic Denver&quot;</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sun Valley SV-4</td>
<td>&quot;Establish partnerships between area residents and employers to strengthen connections with businesses in the industrial area to foster and create local employment opportunities.&quot;</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
<td>Services/ Programs</td>
<td>&quot;CPD HOST NEST DEDO&quot;</td>
<td>&quot;Neighborhood organizations Industrial property owners Business Improvement Districts&quot;</td>
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<td>Barnum/Barnum West B-1</td>
<td>&quot;Partner with the current business owners and residents to develop an overall brand and identity for “Downtown Barnum” around the intersection of 1st Avenue and Knox Court that speaks to the neighborhood’s heritage, history, and vision for the future. &quot;</td>
<td>Short-Term</td>
<td>Infrastructure</td>
<td>&quot;CPD DEDO&quot;</td>
<td>&quot;Neighborhood organizations Business Improvement Districts&quot;</td>
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<tr>
<td>Barnum/Barnum West B-2</td>
<td>Encourage zoning changes and other regulatory tools that will help foster a main street environment within “Downtown Barnum.”</td>
<td>Short-Term</td>
<td>Regulatory &amp; Infrastructure</td>
<td>&quot;CPD DEDO&quot;</td>
<td>&quot;Neighborhood organizations Business Improvement Districts&quot;</td>
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<tr>
<td>Barnum/Barnum West B-4</td>
<td>Prioritize preservation and adaptive reuse efforts along Federal Boulevard, outside of the High Capacity Transit Center Opportunity Area, to create an environment that is conducive to the success of small, locally-owned businesses.</td>
<td>Long-Term</td>
<td>Infrastructure &amp; Services/Programs</td>
<td>&quot;CPD DOTI HOST NEST DEDO&quot;</td>
<td>&quot;CDOT RTD Historic Denver&quot;</td>
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<tr>
<td>Valverde V-1</td>
<td>Promote compatible transitions from industrial to commercial and residential land uses.</td>
<td>Long-Term</td>
<td>Infrastructure</td>
<td>&quot;CPD HOST NEST DEDO&quot;</td>
<td>&quot;Neighborhood organizations Industrial property owners Business Improvement Districts&quot;</td>
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<tr>
<td>Valverde V-2</td>
<td>Promote more environmentally sensitive development along the South Platte River.</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
<td>Infrastructure</td>
<td>&quot;CPD DPR CASR HOST NEST DEDO&quot;</td>
<td>&quot;River Sisters Partnership Denver Urban Gardens&quot;</td>
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<td>Valverde V-3</td>
<td>&quot;Prioritize preservation and adaptive reuse efforts along Federal Boulevard, outside of the High Capacity Transit Center Opportunity Area, to create an environment that is conducive to the success of small, locally owned businesses.&quot;</td>
<td>Long-Term</td>
<td>Infrastructure</td>
<td>&quot;CPD HOST NEST DEDO&quot;</td>
<td>&quot;CDOT RTD&quot;</td>
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<tr>
<td>Valverde V-4</td>
<td>Establish partnerships to strengthen the businesses in the industrial area and create local employment opportunities.</td>
<td>Short-Term</td>
<td>Services/Programs</td>
<td>&quot;CPD HOST NEST DEDO&quot;</td>
<td>&quot;Neighborhood organizations Industrial property owners Business Improvement Districts&quot;</td>
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<tr>
<td>Valverde V-5</td>
<td>Address the potential for loss of housing units through redevelopment in the industrial area.</td>
<td>Long-Term</td>
<td>Regulatory &amp; Infrastructure</td>
<td>&quot;CPD HOST NEST DEDO&quot;</td>
<td>&quot;Neighborhood organizations Industrial property owners Business Improvement Districts&quot;</td>
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