

# West Area Plan

## Land Use, Transportation, & Infrastructure Committee

February 28, 2023



# Today's Presentation

- Overview of Plan Structure & Content
- Review Criteria
  - Public Process
  - Plan Consistency
  - Long-Term View



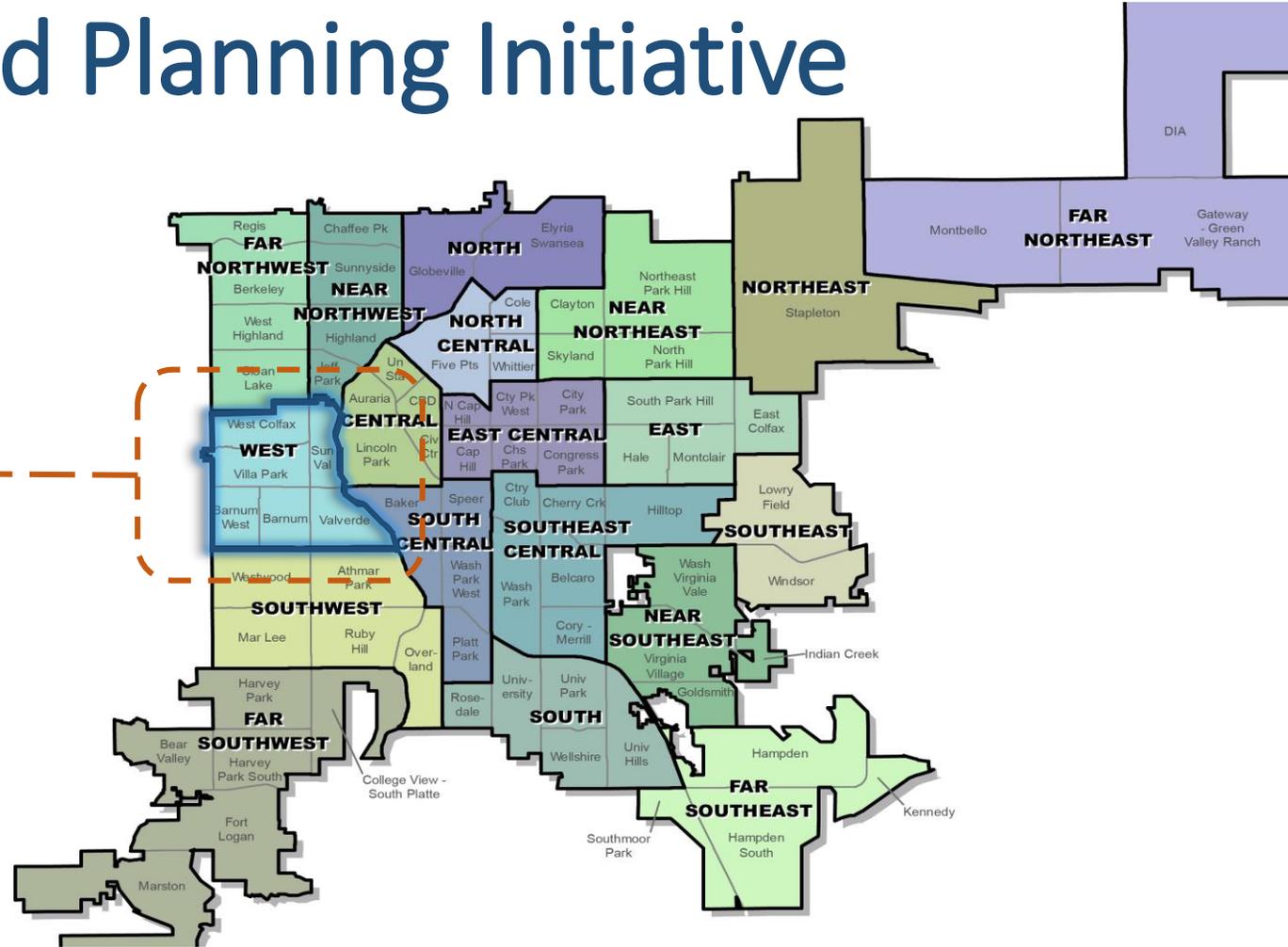
# Plan Overview

## Structure and Content

# Neighborhood Planning Initiative



neighborhood  
PLANNING INITIATIVE



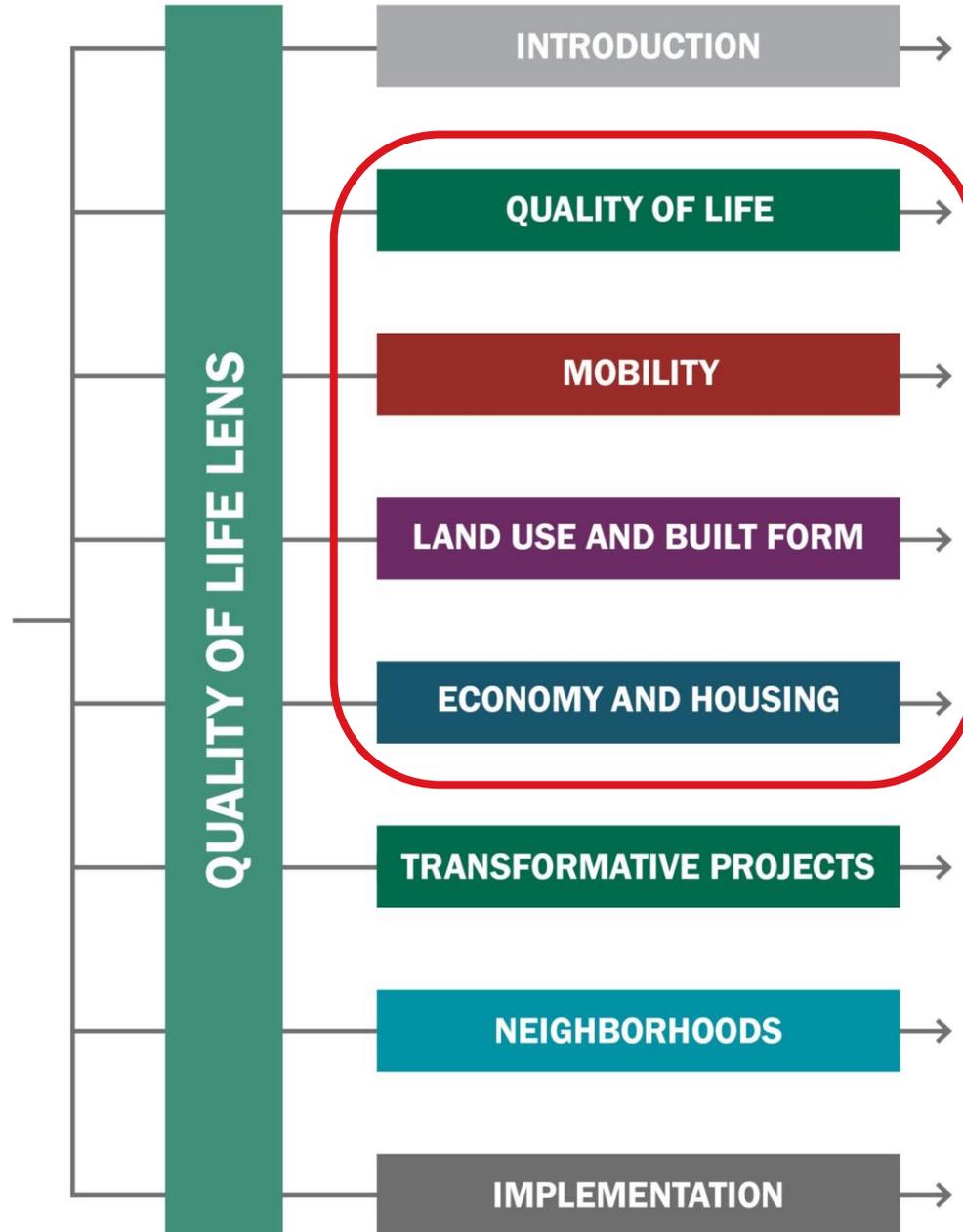
**Barnum  
Barnum West**

**Valverde  
Villa Park**

**Sun Valley  
West Colfax**



# West Area Plan – Centering the Quality of Life Lens



# Quality of Life Woven Throughout Plan

## Mobility

### 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.

## Economy

### 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 The 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 one 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.

## Land Use

### Denver's Green Building Ordinance

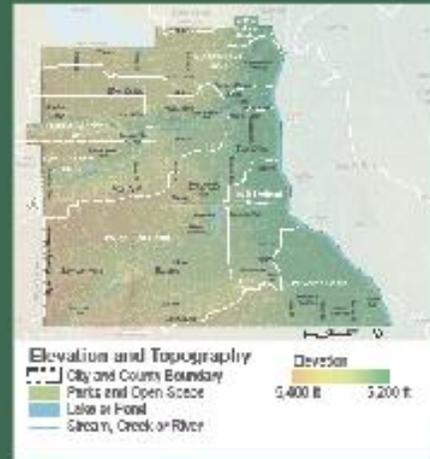
Denver's Green Buildings Ordinance (GBO) went into effect November 2, 2018. This city law requires developers and property owners to select from a menu of strategies for more sustainable development, which collectively seeks to increase green spaces, improve water and stormwater management, increase 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

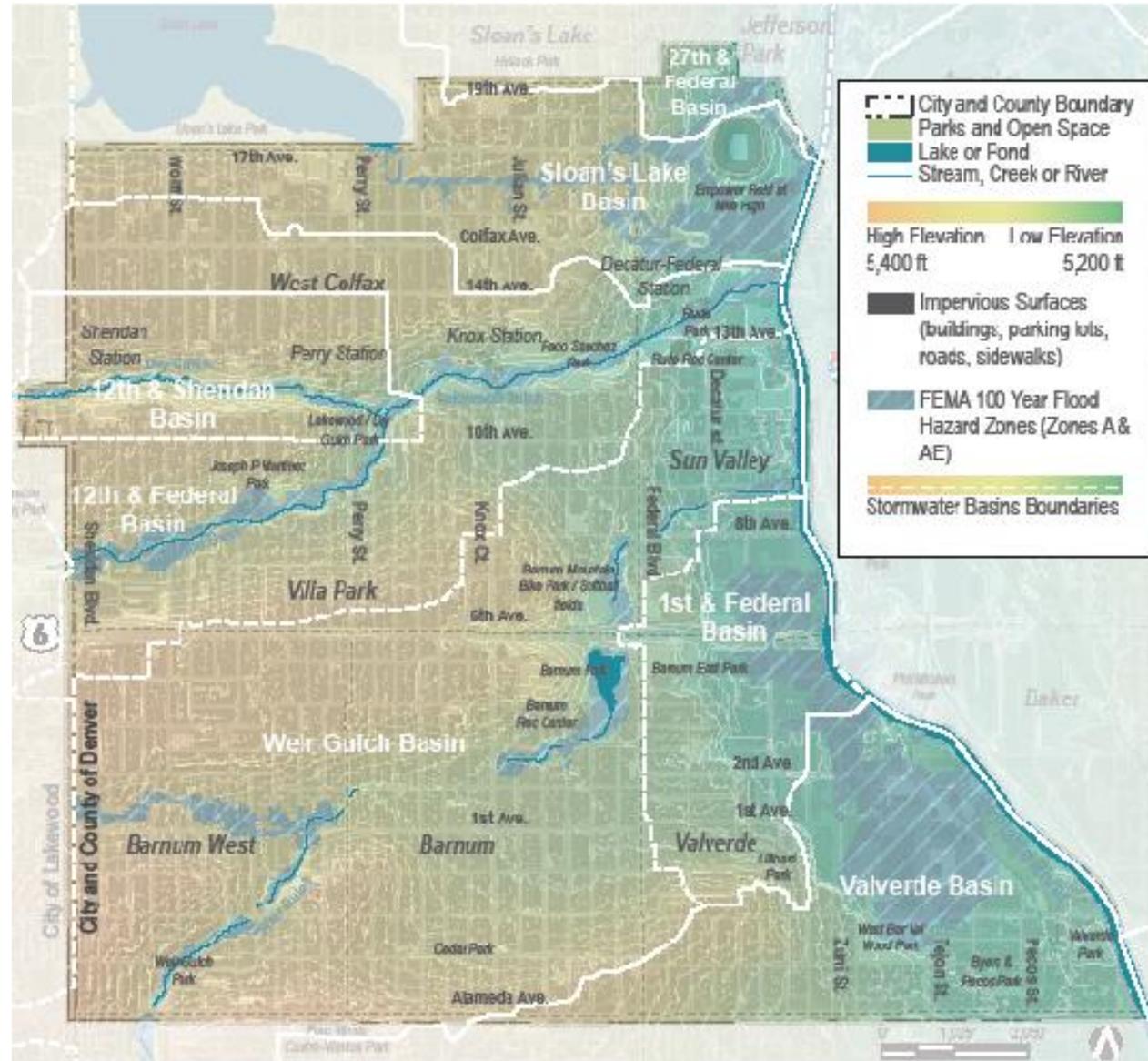
The ordinance does not apply to parking structures, temporary buildings, air-supported structures, greenhouses, single-family homes, duplexes, or dwelling units constructed in a group of three or more attached units where each unit extends from foundation to the roof, and is no more than 3 stories above 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.

# The Role of Water in the West Area

## TOPOGRAPHY

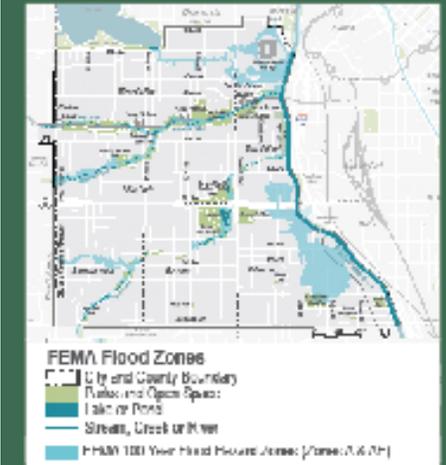


## IMPERVIOUS SURFACES

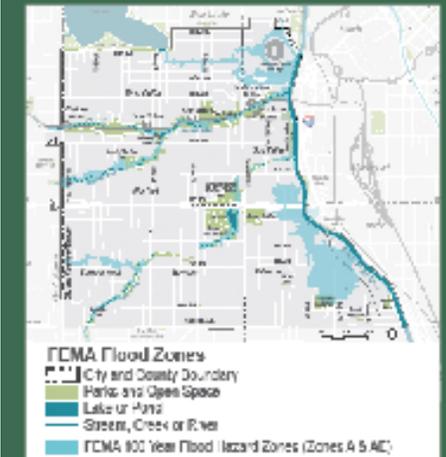


West Area Plan

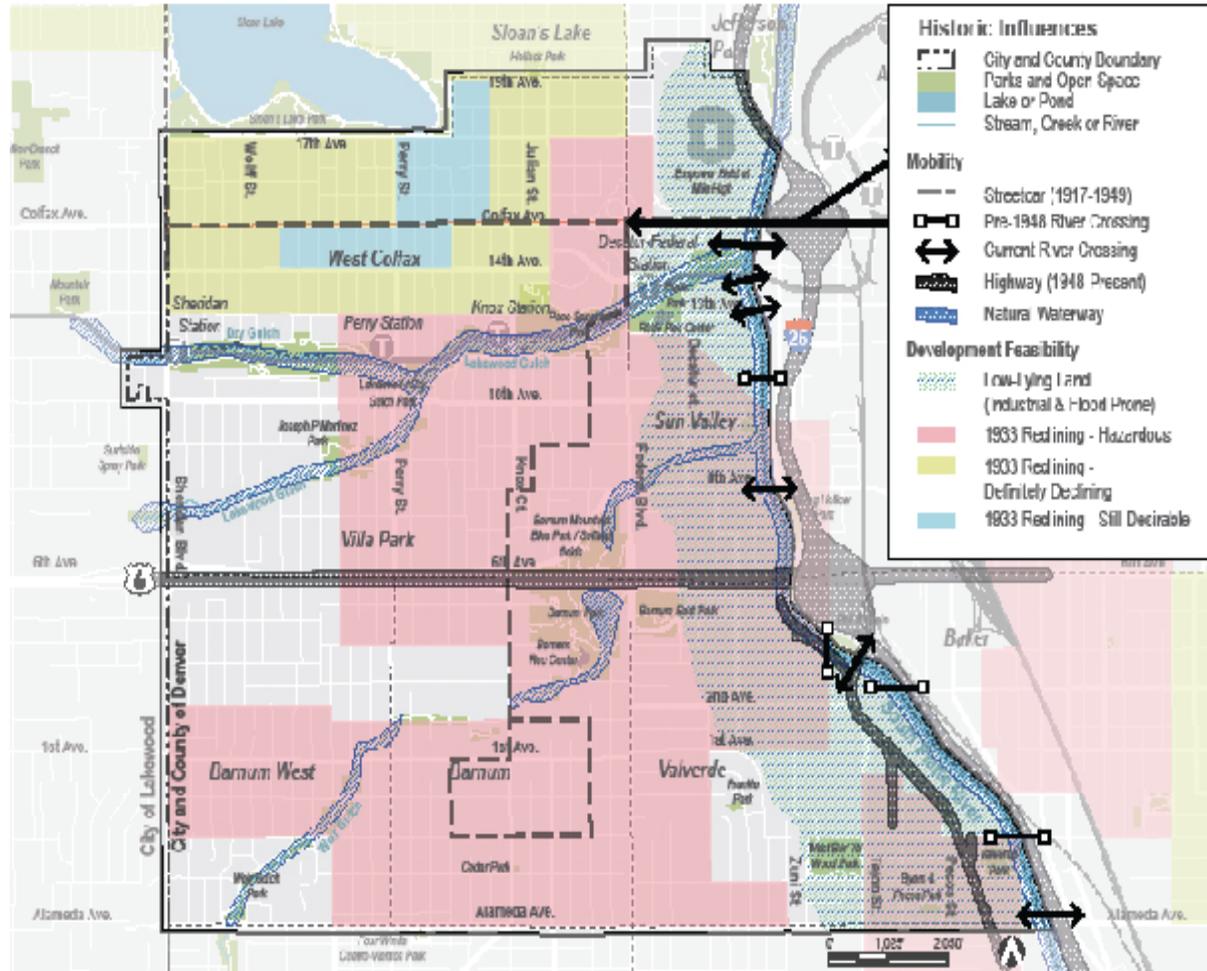
## FLOODPLAIN



## WATER QUALITY



# Historic and Present Inequities in West



## HISTORIC AND PRESENT INEQUITIES IN WEST

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

In 1925, Denver adopted its first zoning code. This code designated large portions of Valverde and Sun Valley for industrial uses, although these neighborhoods also contained many residential areas. These neighborhoods have been designated as industrial ever since. In the 1930s, the federal government's Home Owner Loan Corporation created maps for most urban areas, including Denver, which assigned grades to each neighborhood based on their perceived character. These maps were used to deny home loans to residents of neighborhoods that were predominately made up of diverse ethnic populations. In West, Villa Park, Sun Valley, Barnum, and Valverde were deemed "Hazardous" and West Colfax "Definitely Declining," meaning that these neighborhoods posed the greatest risk for lenders, thereby, restricting access to home 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 1980s have physically divided and isolated the West neighborhoods from one another. Locating high-traffic roads directly adjacent to these residential neighborhoods created major challenges related to pedestrian safety and public health. This also accelerated the industrialization of Valverde. The Flood of 1985 on the South Platte River revealed and exacerbated the consequences of discriminatory housing practices and environmental racism in West. The flood resulted in 2,500 families losing their homes, and 23 people being killed in Valverde. In Sun Valley, entire blocks of homes were swept away, leaving vacant land that was later redeveloped by Denver Housing Authority as Sun Valley Homes, a public housing complex.

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

# Historic Timeline

## 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.



1880s



## 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.

1904

## 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.



1917

1880s



1883

## 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.



## 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.

1906

## 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.



1925



## 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.

# Review Criteria

# Planning Board Review

Planning Board approved the plan (9-0) on February 15, 2023 with the condition that the document be edited for clarity and correctness.

- 12 speakers at the public hearing

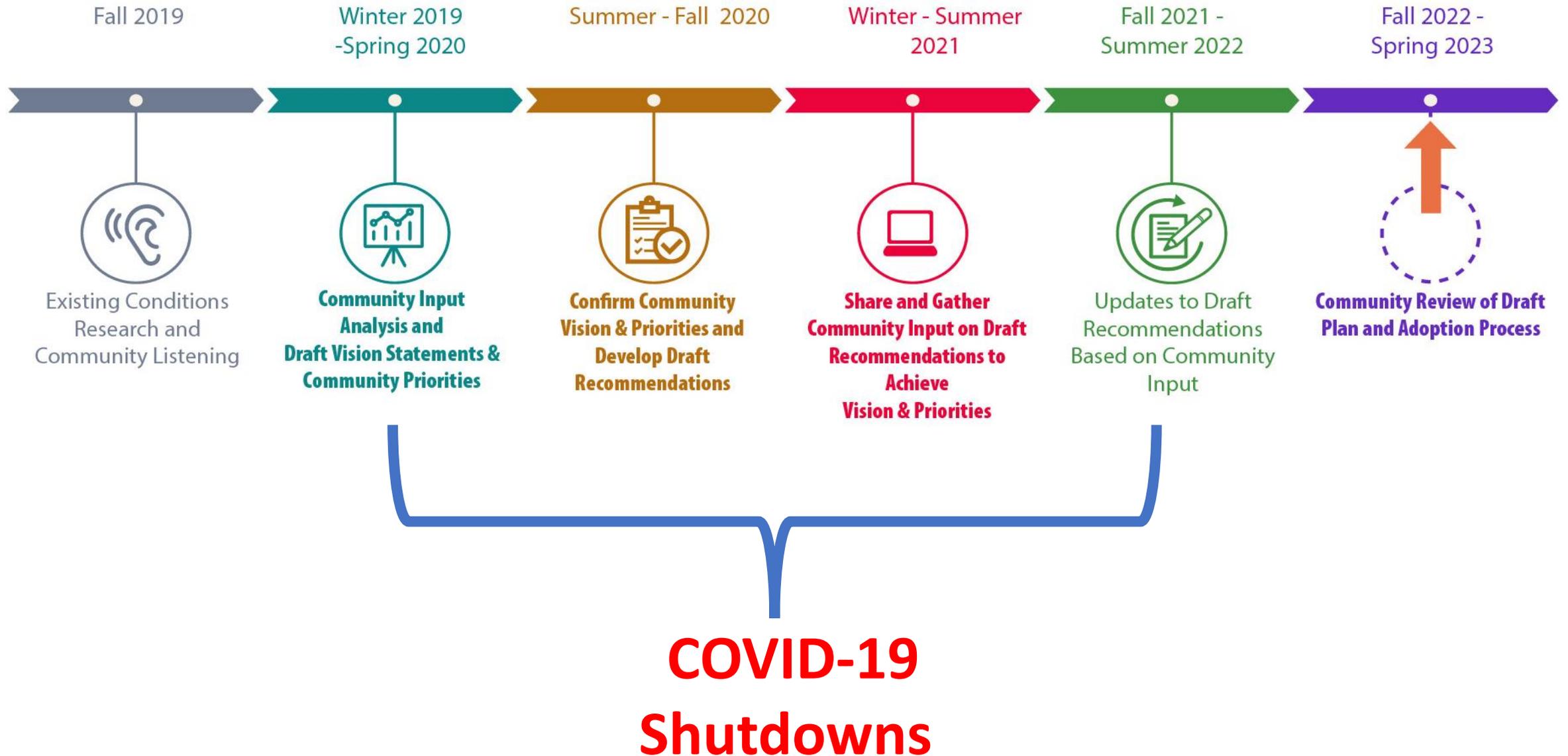
# West Area Planning Board Review

When evaluating plans to be adopted as supplements to *Comprehensive Plan 2040*, the Denver Planning Board and City Council shall consider the following criteria:

1. An inclusive community process was used to develop the plan.
2. The plan is consistent with the vision, goals and strategies of *Comprehensive Plan 2040*.
3. The plan demonstrates a long-term view.

# 1. Inclusive Community Process

# Process Timeline



# Community Engagement

- Workshops and Online Events
  - 3 in-person community-wide workshops
  - 1 online open house
  - 1 webinar
- Online Surveys and Review Drafts
  - 3 online surveys
  - 2 public review drafts
- Community Meetings
  - 46 RNO or community group meetings
- Office Hours
  - 30 virtual sessions
  - 5 in-person sessions
- Steering Committee
  - 36 steering committee meetings
  - 8 working group meetings



# Draft Plan Review

## Draft 1 (May 2022 to October 2022)

- 368 Comments
- 4178 Page Views

## Draft 2 (October 2022 to January 2023)

- 559 Comments
- 4034 Page Views

TOTAL COMMENTS SUBMITTED: 927

TOTAL PAGE VIEWS OF WEST DRAFTS: 8,212

# Communication Tools and Reach

## Email Newsletters

- Subscribers: 1,337
- Emails sent: 24
- Reach: 7,809

## Social Media

- Twitter:
  - Followers: 5,641
  - Posts: 24
  - Reach: 36,192
- Nextdoor:
  - Users in plan area: 7,809
  - Posts: 19
  - Reach: 22,196

## Earned Media

- Denver North Star
  - Stories: 2
- Denverite
  - Stories: 2



**You can still comment on the draft plan!**  
**¡Aún puedes comentar sobre el borrador del plan!**

Share your thoughts / Comparta su opinión

Talk with planners one-on-one / Hable con planificadores uno a uno

Thank you to the many West Denver residents who joined the community workshop last month to learn about the draft West Area Plan. Those who attended the event shared their thoughts on the long-term vision that the draft plan provides for West Area neighborhoods. City planners

Gracias a todos los residentes del Oeste de Denver que participaron en el taller comunitario el mes pasado para aprender sobre el borrador del Plan del Área Oeste. Los que asistieron al evento compartieron sus pensamientos sobre la visión a largo plazo que el borrador del plan proporciona para los vecindarios de la Área Oeste. Los planificadores de la

**THE DENVER NorthStar** SNOW DAY

TOP STORIES COMMUNITY POLITICS EDUCATION HEALTH ARTS DINING

HOME > POLITICS > West Area Plan Could Shape the Future of West Colfax and Westside Neighborhoods

### West Area Plan Could Shape the Future of West Colfax and Westside Neighborhoods

March 12, 2020 David Sabados Politics 0

#### Population Growth *Crecimiento de la población*

Percentage Population Growth, 2010 - 2019

Percentage Population Growth, 2010 - 2019	43.9%
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The West Area has added 6,800 residents (19%) since 2010.

El Área Oeste ha agregado 6.800 residentes (19%) desde 2010.

WEST neighborhood PLANNING INITIATIVE

# Inclusive Engagement

- Spanish language interpretation, food and childcare were provided at all workshops
- Bilingual flyers were distributed throughout the West area to promote each workshop
- Door-to-door flyering to promote Draft #1 - **9,500 flyers distributed**
- Electronic communication, web materials and online activities are compatible with smart phones, ADA accessible and available for auto-translation
- Print copies of materials and additional language services were made available upon request

# 1. Inclusive Community Process

***Finding:** The West Area Plan was developed through an inclusive community process*

## 2. Plan Consistency

# Consistency with Comprehensive Plan 2040



- Equitable, Affordable, & Inclusive

- 9 Goals, 19 Strategies



- Strong & Authentic Neighborhoods

- 8 Goals, 21 Strategies



- Connected, Safe, & Accessible

- 8 Goals, 17 Strategies



- Economically Diverse & Vibrant

- 4 Goals, 8 Strategies



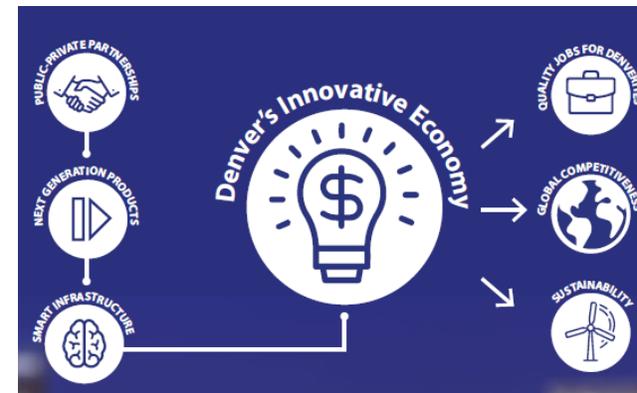
- Environmentally Resilient

- 5 Goals, 11 Strategies



- Healthy & Active

- 5 Goals, 11 Strategies



# Consistency with Blueprint Denver



- Land Use & Built Form (General)
  - 5 Policies, 10 Strategies
- Housing
  - 4 Policies, 6 Strategies
- Economic
  - 5 Policies, 7 Strategies
- Design Quality & Preservation
  - 5 Policies, 17 Strategies



- Mobility
  - 5 Policies, 15 Strategies



- Quality of Life Infrastructure
  - 7 Policies, 19 Strategies



"A well connected, diverse, friendly, pedestrian-scaled community"

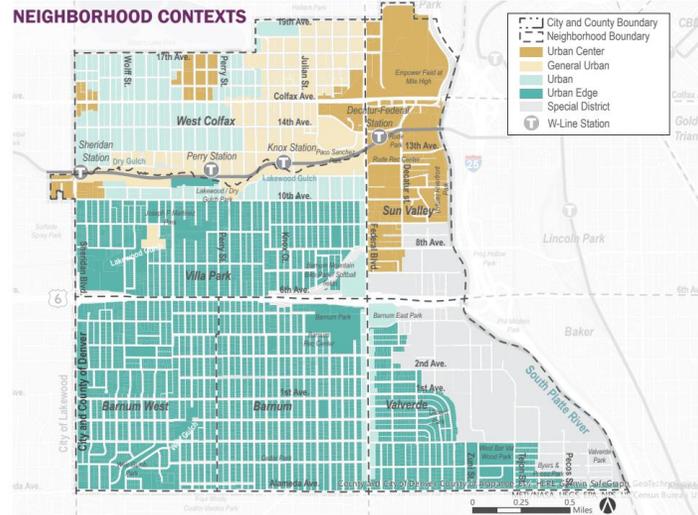
"Very healthy...fun, active prosperous, engaged, and easily mobile"



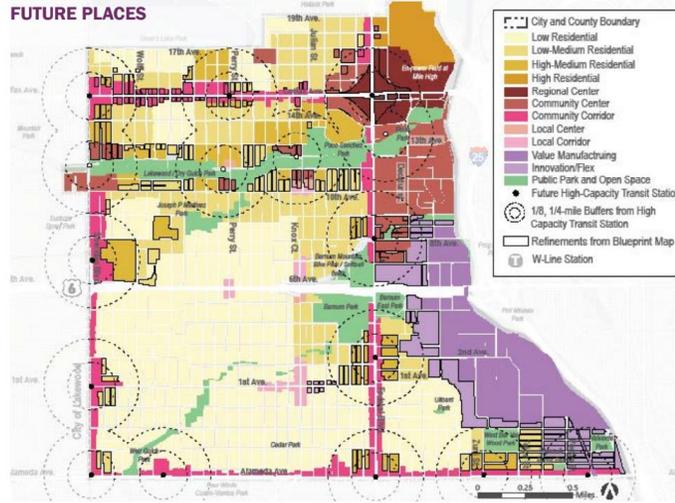
"a robust transportation system"

# Consistency with Blueprint Denver

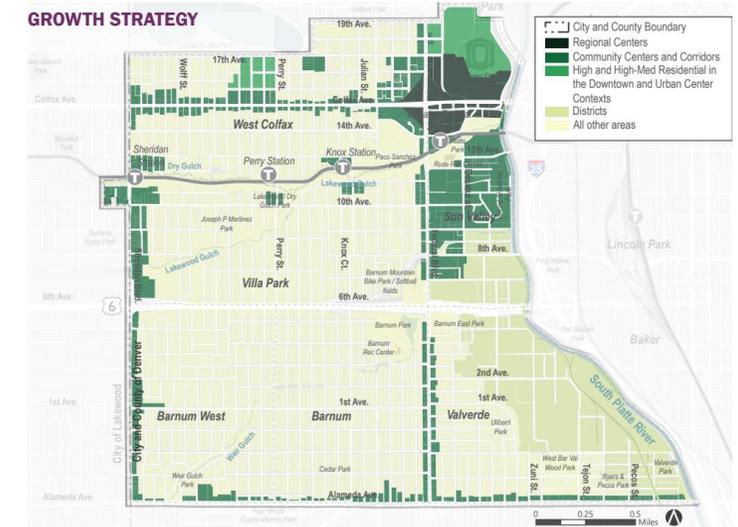
## Neighborhood Contexts



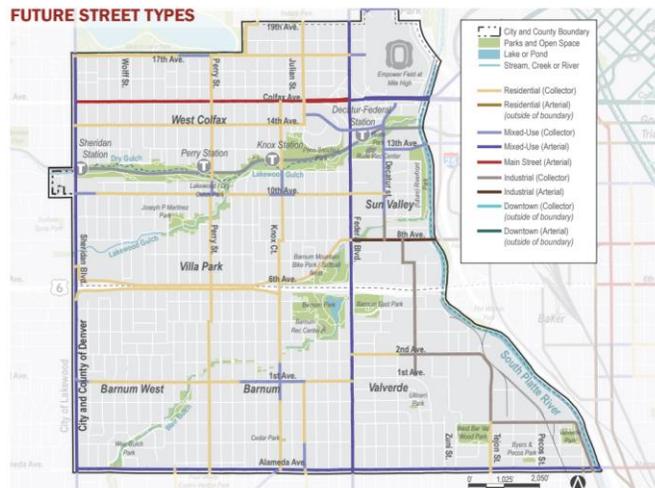
## Future Places



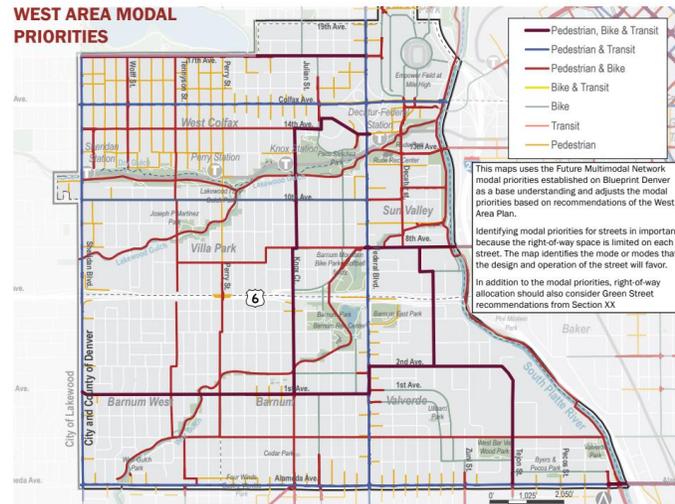
## Growth Strategy



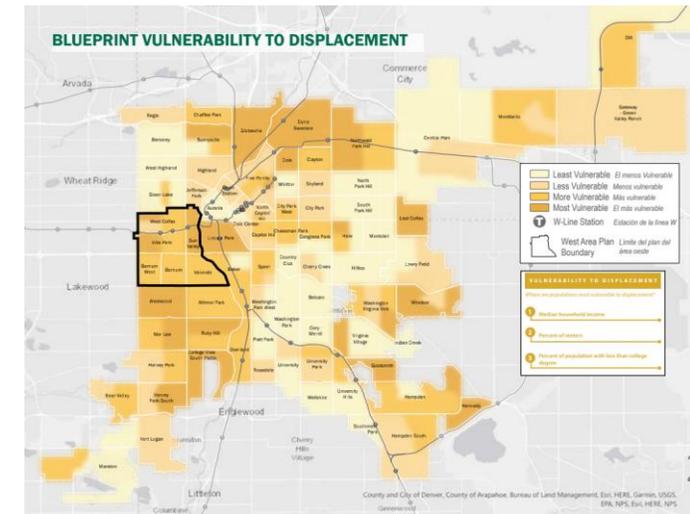
## Future Street Types



## Modal Priority



## Equitable Planning



## 2. Plan Consistency

***Finding:** The West Area Plan is consistent with Comprehensive Plan 2040 and Blueprint Denver*

## 3. Long-Term View

# Long-Term View

## The West Area Plan:

1. Has a 2040 planning horizon
2. Establishes a vision for the community that addresses Quality of Life, Mobility, Economy and Housing, and Land Use and Built Form
3. Has an aspirational vision and implementation strategy that will take many years to achieve

### 3. Long-Term View

***Finding:** The West Area Plan has an appropriate long-term perspective*

## Staff Recommendation:

**Staff recommends that the Land Use, Transportation and Infrastructure Committee forward the West Area Plan for consideration by the full Denver City Council.**

# Next Steps



- Feb 28 – LUTI Committee
- Mar 13 – City Council first reading
- Mar 28 (Tues)– City Council courtesy public hearing