

DENVER

# Downtown Area Plan Amendment

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Central Platte Valley - Auraria District

**LUTI DRAFT**  
**5/15/2018**

Prepared by:  
City and County of Denver  
Community Planning & Development Department



**DENVER**  
COMMUNITY PLANNING  
& DEVELOPMENT

In association with:  
Downtown Denver Partnership



Downtown  
Denver  
Partnership

# DENVER

## Downtown Area Plan Amendment

Central Platte Valley - Auraria District

### **City and County of Denver**

Community Planning and Development

Public Works

Parks and Recreation

Department of Public Health & Environment

Office of Economic Development

Department of Finance

City Attorney's Office

### **Downtown Denver Partnership**

Prepared under the direction of:

**The Downtown Area Plan Amendment Steering Committee**



**DENVER**  
COMMUNITY PLANNING  
& DEVELOPMENT



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Partnership

# Acknowledgments

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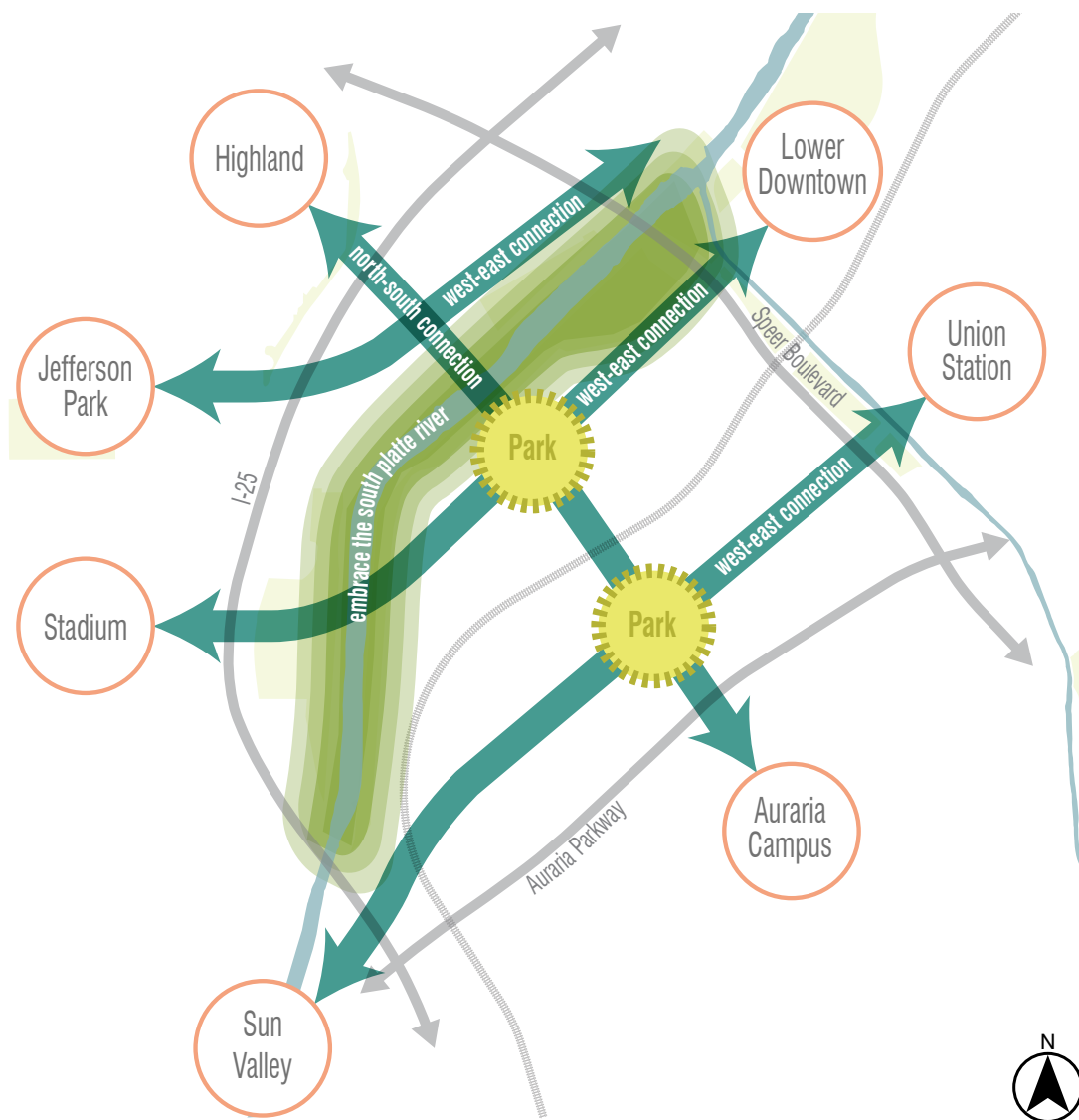
## i. Introduction

The goal of this Amendment to the Denver Downtown Area Plan (2007) is to guide future development in the Central Platte Valley – Auraria District, to build upon the area’s assets and to reflect the community’s vision of a prosperous, walkable, distinctive, diverse, and green Downtown Denver.

# Executive Summary

The Central Platte Valley – Auraria District sits at the crossroads of Denver’s past and future. It is positioned along the South Platte River between the Central Business District, Union Station, Lower Downtown, Auraria Campus, and vibrant neighborhoods like Jefferson Park and the Highlands. Despite its prime location and a history that dates to the founding of the city, the area is less developed than other parts of central Denver. However, the city’s continued growth will bring change. As private property owners in the district consider redevelopment options, the community must work together to ensure that the coming change reflects the vision of area stakeholders and all Denver residents.

This document outlines the community’s vision and provides specific recommendations and strategies to ensure that the vision is implemented. As an amendment to the 2007 Downtown Area Plan, it builds on the vision elements that were established for Denver’s downtown while providing a more specific framework to guide the coming changes in the Central Platte Valley – Auraria District. The plan amendment recognizes the area’s existing assets, including the river and major civic anchors like the Elitch Gardens amusement park, the indoor Pepsi Center arena, the Children’s Museum and the Downtown Aquarium. It also acknowledges that these anchors are under private ownership and may move or be redeveloped to accommodate additional uses. The existing uses are highly valued and how can we help support them while making better use of their prime location? What should happen if they do move or change? How can the district develop to reflect the established vision for a Prosperous, Walkable, Distinctive, Diverse, and Green Downtown? A 12-month planning process concluding in the spring of 2018 answers these questions within an updated community vision for the district.





# Executive Summary

The Central Platte Valley – Auraria District will become more integrated with adjacent downtown and residential neighborhoods while maturing into its own diverse and distinctive neighborhood that connects the city to the river and brings enhanced amenities to existing residents. A new grid of walkable streets will support a variety of development, including tall, slender towers that enhance the skyline and house new jobs and residents. Despite significant development intensity, the district will be a place for people, with a variety of housing types, affordable residential options and human-scale design that creates an intimate scale for pedestrians. This will be achieved by leveraging the value of new development to support implementation initiatives, including:

- New parks and open space, and a renewed focus on the river with new pedestrian access points, bridges, and paths, as well as development that activates the riverfront
- A multi-modal street grid that improves existing infrastructure and extends it into a connected network with shared streets and ‘green spines’ that prioritize pedestrians and bikes over automobiles
- New connections, including connections over the river near the aquarium, the railroad at 7th Street, and Interstate 25 south of Speer Boulevard to integrate the district with surrounding neighborhoods
- Mobility options, including bike sharing, extended bus service, and integration of the district’s two existing light rail stops into a new, walkable neighborhood without minimum requirements for vehicle parking
- Public and private improvements that build on the area’s existing anchor attractions to promote development of a unique and distinctive neighborhood at the heart of the city
- Economic development and land use strategies to promote a diverse mix of land uses to ensure an active and prosperous district
- Updated zoning requirements that allow taller buildings but require active streetscapes, spacing between towers, high-quality design details and other features that will promote a distinctive and human-scale neighborhood with particular attention to lower building intensity near the river, Water Street and existing buildings
- Affordable housing requirements (including requirements for on-site housing) that extend beyond the provisions of Denver’s citywide Affordable Housing Linkage Fee to promote economic and cultural diversity
- Resilient infrastructure, including carbon neutral power systems, green waste management strategies, and sustainable storm water management systems
- Environmental cleanup in conjunction with new development to address contamination produced by a long history of rail and industrial operations

The plan amendment details policies to support implementation of the initiatives listed above and many others. Implementation is dependent upon incremental redevelopment of the area. Many objectives, such as vibrant streets, new connections, active parkland, and significant affordable housing cannot be successfully implemented without significant development intensity to activate the area and help finance recommended improvements.

As a policy document, the plan amendment does not create specific requirements, although it does direct future updates to zoning and other regulations that will shape the area. The Moving Forward chapter prioritizes the steps that will be necessary to translate policy into reality. Successful completion of these steps will require partnership between area residents, property owners, developers, the City and County of Denver and other agencies. The long-term vision may not be fully realized for 20 or more years, but the community can anticipate an exciting transformation as the area develops into a prosperous, walkable, distinctive, diverse and green extension of Denver’s vibrant downtown.

# Plan Amendment Background

## Purpose

The Denver Downtown Area Plan (2007) provided clear guidance for how to develop Downtown Denver, including the Central Platte Valley, and it identified specific transformative projects that helped shape much of the recent development in Lower Downtown, Arapahoe Square, Golden Triangle, Auraria Campus, and Ballpark. However, the plan provided limited recommendations on the vision and strategies for the Central Platte Valley – Auraria District, which is located between Speer Boulevard, Auraria Parkway, and Interstate 25.

Since 2007, Downtown Denver has experienced significant growth and Blueprint Denver (2018) projects that this growth will continue. The Central Platte Valley – Auraria District is part of the downtown core, and it has 60 acres of prime downtown real estate that currently exists as surface parking lots. Given the likelihood of this area developing, the City and County of Denver identified a need for a community-driven vision to inform future development within the Central Platte Valley – Auraria District.

This area is under relatively consolidated property ownership, is within the downtown limits, and has a mile of the South Platte River running through it. Particularly compared with cities that are constrained by scarce urban real estate, the unique situation in the Central Platte Valley - Auraria District provides an opportunity for Denver's downtown core and the city as a whole. This significant land resource allows the City to continue to evolve and prosper with new businesses, jobs, and residents in its core. It is a rare occasion for the City to create a bold and flexible vision for a new downtown neighborhood that supports its broader goals, including reinforcing Blueprint Denver's vision for increasing density and development intensity within Downtown and promoting Downtown as a major regional center.

## Intent

Denver's Community Planning and Development Department (CPD) began the planning process to amend the Downtown Area Plan in 2017. This document aims to provide comprehensive, long-range guidance for the future of the Central Platte Valley – Auraria District over the next 20 years while allowing for flexibility as the area develops and responds to new challenges (see Figure 1.0 for the Downtown Area Plan Amendment area, which is referred to as the "plan area").

The Amendment provides a community-driven policy basis to establish the plan area as a great downtown neighborhood while strengthening Downtown Denver's role as the heart of the region.

## How to Use This Plan Amendment

This Amendment builds on the visions, strategies, and recommendations detailed in the Downtown Area Plan, which will continue to apply to the Central Platte Valley – Auraria District plan area. Within this plan area, the Amendment supersedes the Downtown Area Plan where strategies and recommendations are conflicting. This Amendment also supersedes portions of previous plans that include the Central Platte Valley – Auraria District: Auraria West Station Area Plan (2009) and the Jefferson Park Neighborhood Plan (2005).

The Amendment strategies and recommendations are organized according to the five vision elements established in the Downtown Area Plan: Prosperous, Walkable, Distinctive, Diverse, and Green. The Moving Forward chapter identifies specific priorities for implementation of this Amendment, and highlights multiple steps that may facilitate implementation of the strategies and recommendations. The plan provides direction to guide development agreements, land use decisions, future zoning and density, connectivity and mobility, public investment, private development, and public-private partnerships.

This plan sets the broad vision for the area, and there will be many ways to meet that vision. The specific maps and graphics contained in this plan show one way to meet the vision, but they are not the only way. The plan is flexible by design because detailed planning will come later. This plan is focused on intent to enable it to respond to changing circumstances, new constraints, and specific project development.

# Plan Amendment Background

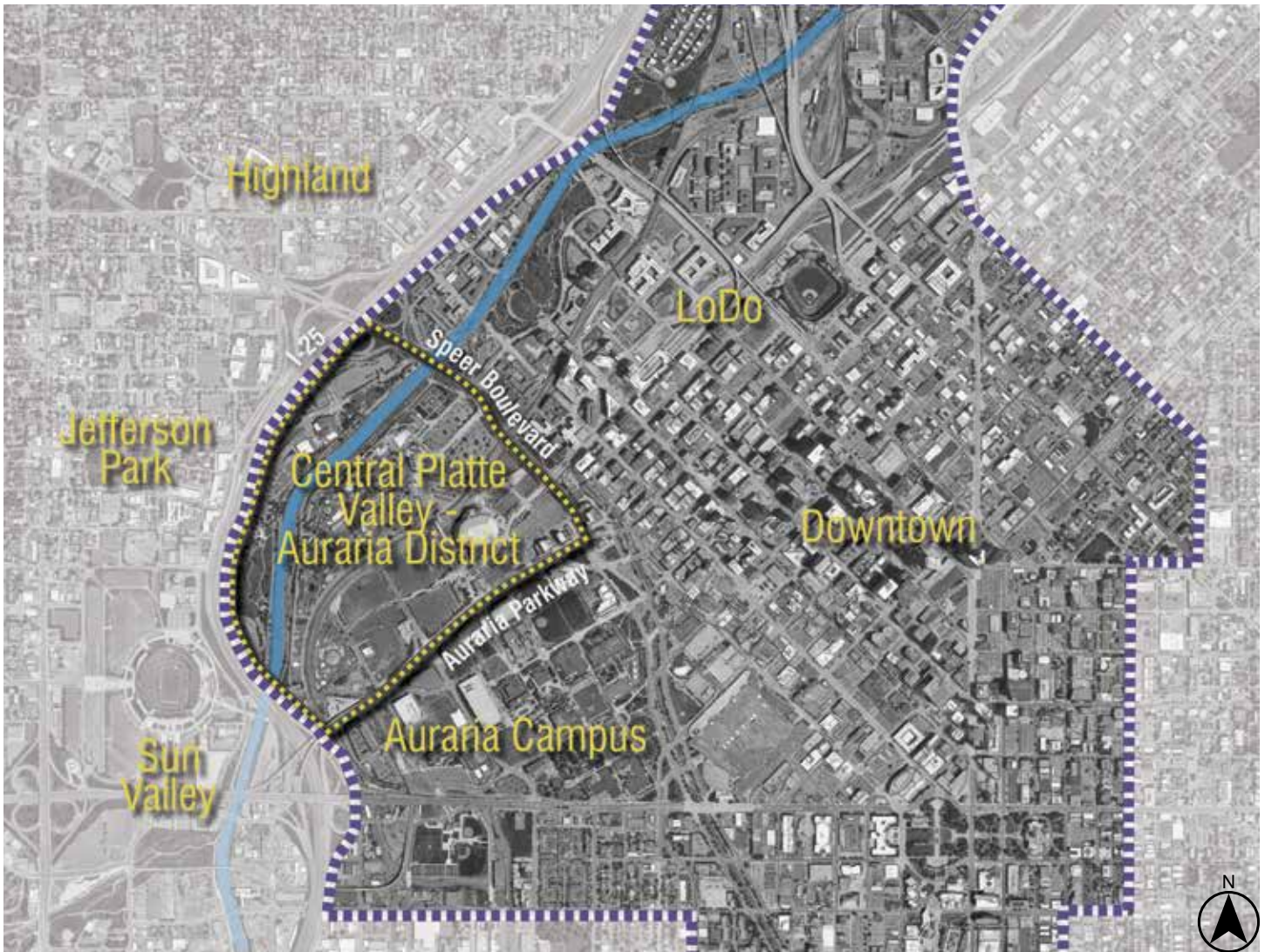


Figure 1: Plan Areas

■ ■ ■ Downtown Area Plan (2007)     ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ Downtown Area Plan Amendment

# Plan Area Context

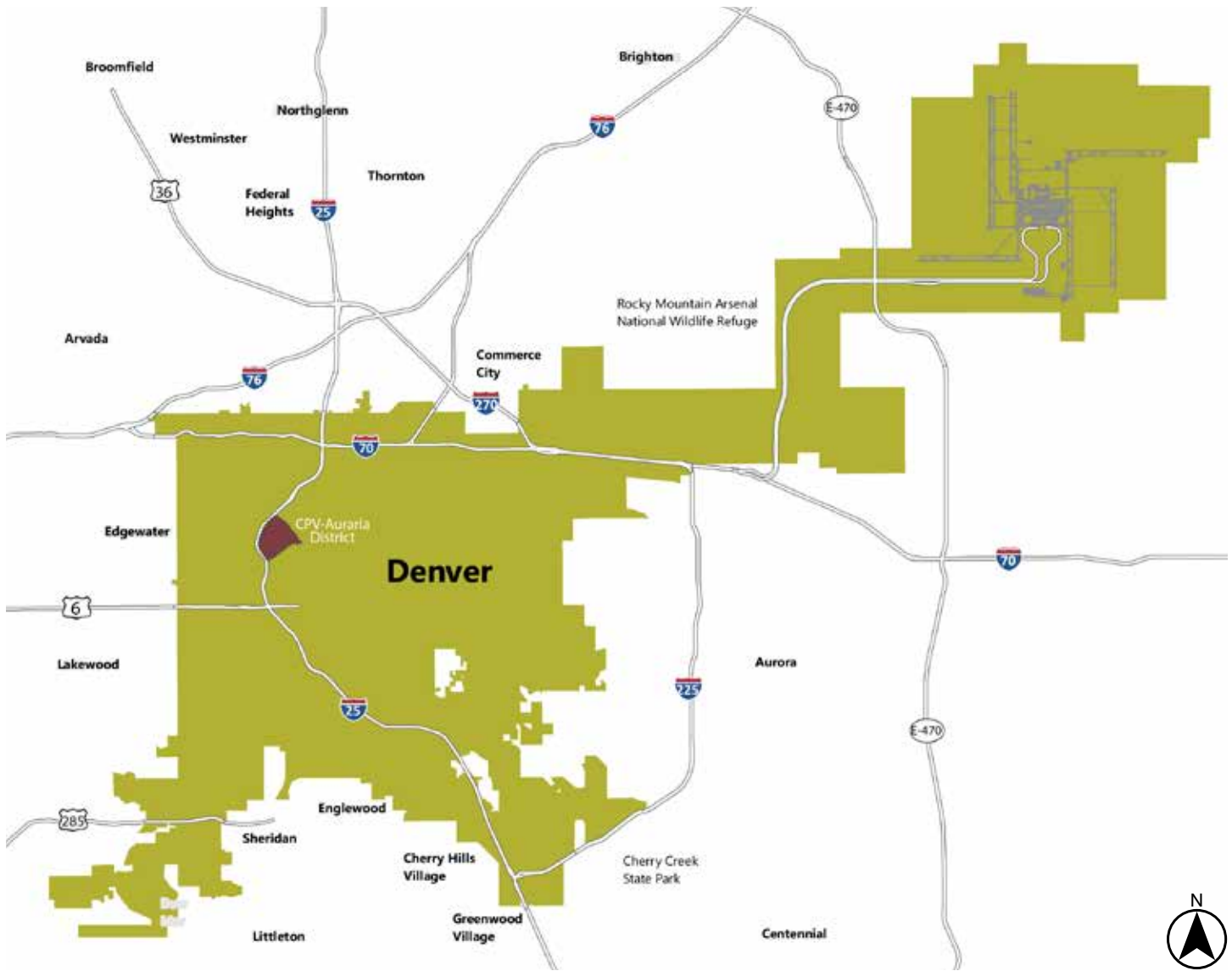


Figure 2: Plan Area City Context

■ City and County of Denver ■ Plan Amendment Area

## City Context

Denver is the region's main hub of commerce, transportation connections, government, and social and cultural amenities, and the city also boasts a diverse array of residential neighborhoods that support a growing population. People travel from throughout Colorado and nearby states to conduct business, shop, attend performances and sporting events, visit museums, or fly in or out of Denver International Airport. Downtown Denver is located in the heart of the city at the confluence of the South Platte River and Cherry Creek, with the Central Platte Valley - Auraria District creating a cornerstone of the Downtown area.

# Plan Area Context

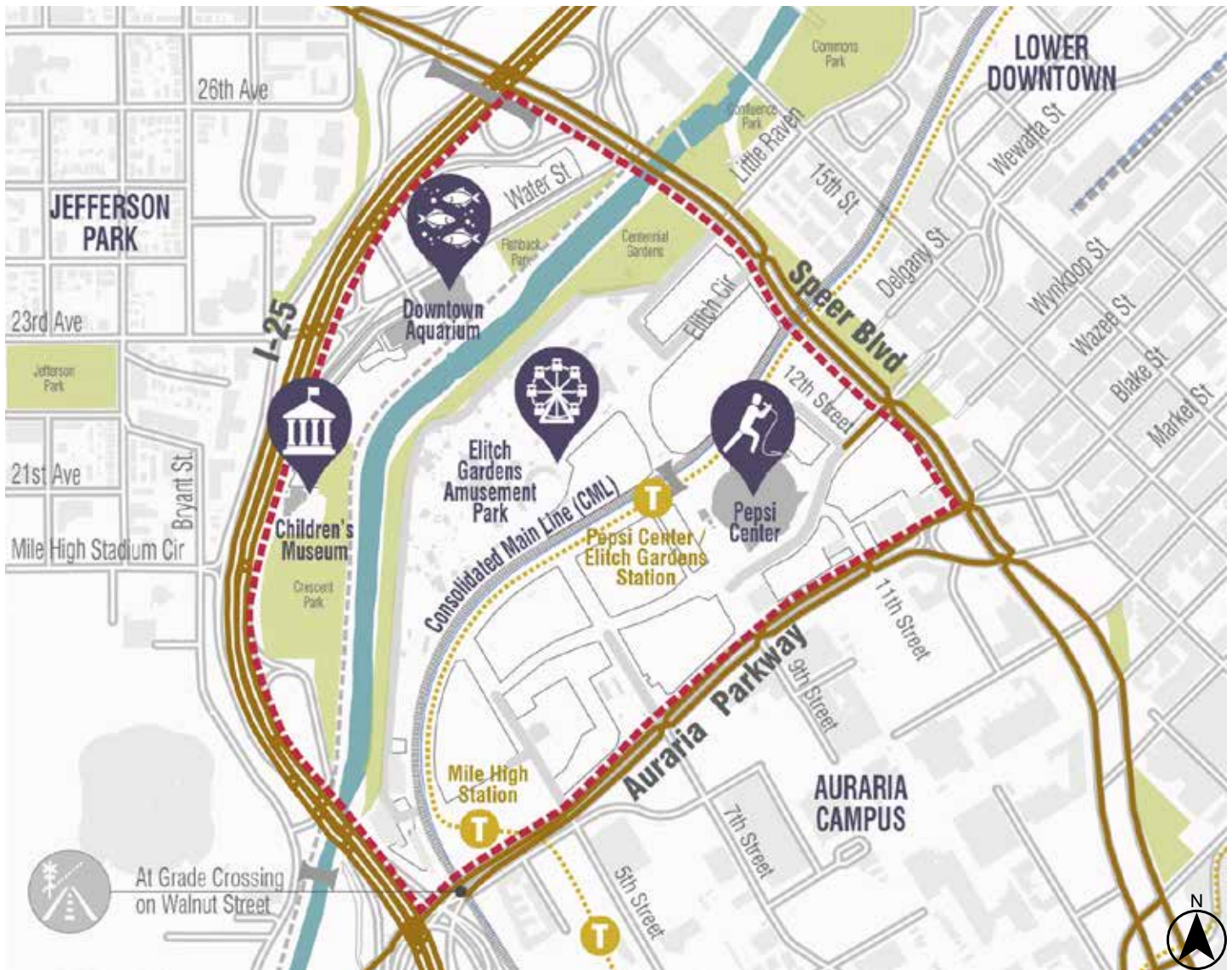


Figure 3: Plan Area

- - - - Plan Area
- T Existing Light Rail
- Existing CML
- Platte Valley Trolley
- ↔ Major Thoroughfare
- Existing Ped & Bike Bridge
- Existing Parks

## Local Context

The plan area is bounded by Interstate 25 to the north and west, Speer Boulevard to the east, and Auraria Parkway to the south. It is located between Lower Downtown, the Auraria Campus, and Jefferson Park neighborhoods. The plan area contains two light rail stations: the Pepsi Center/Elitch Gardens Station and the Mile High Station, which are both served by the C, E, and W light rail lines. The Consolidated Main Line (CML) for freight rail passes adjacent to the light rail and cuts through the center of the plan area and a single pedestrian bridge at the Pepsi Center/Elitch Gardens Station connects the plan area over the CML. A mile of the South Platte River passes through the plan area, separating Water Street from Elitch Gardens, and has three adjacent public parks: Centennial Gardens, Fishback Park, and Crescent Park. The South Platte River trail runs along both sides of the river's embankment and there is a seasonal open-air trolley parallel to the west bank. The major uses within the study area are entertainment-related and include the Children's Museum, the Downtown Aquarium, Elitch Gardens Amusement Park, and the Pepsi Center sports arena. Most of the adjacent street grid does not extend into the plan area. Limited internal roads and circulation result in a pattern of very large blocks, or superblocks, containing primarily surface parking.

# Plan Area Context

The plan area is naturally divided by several landmarks into distinct geographies, which are defined below and referenced throughout this document (see Figure 4).

## Water Street Area

The northwestern portion of the plan area containing Water Street. It is bounded by I-25, the South Platte River, and Speer Boulevard.

## River Area

The South Platte River area, which intersects with the West of the CML area, Speer Boulevard, and I-25.

## West of the CML Area

The current Elitch Gardens site. It is bounded by the river, the CML, Speer Boulevard, and I-25.

## East of the CML Area

The southeast portion of the plan area that contains the Pepsi Center. It is bounded by the CML, Auraria Parkway, and Speer Boulevard.

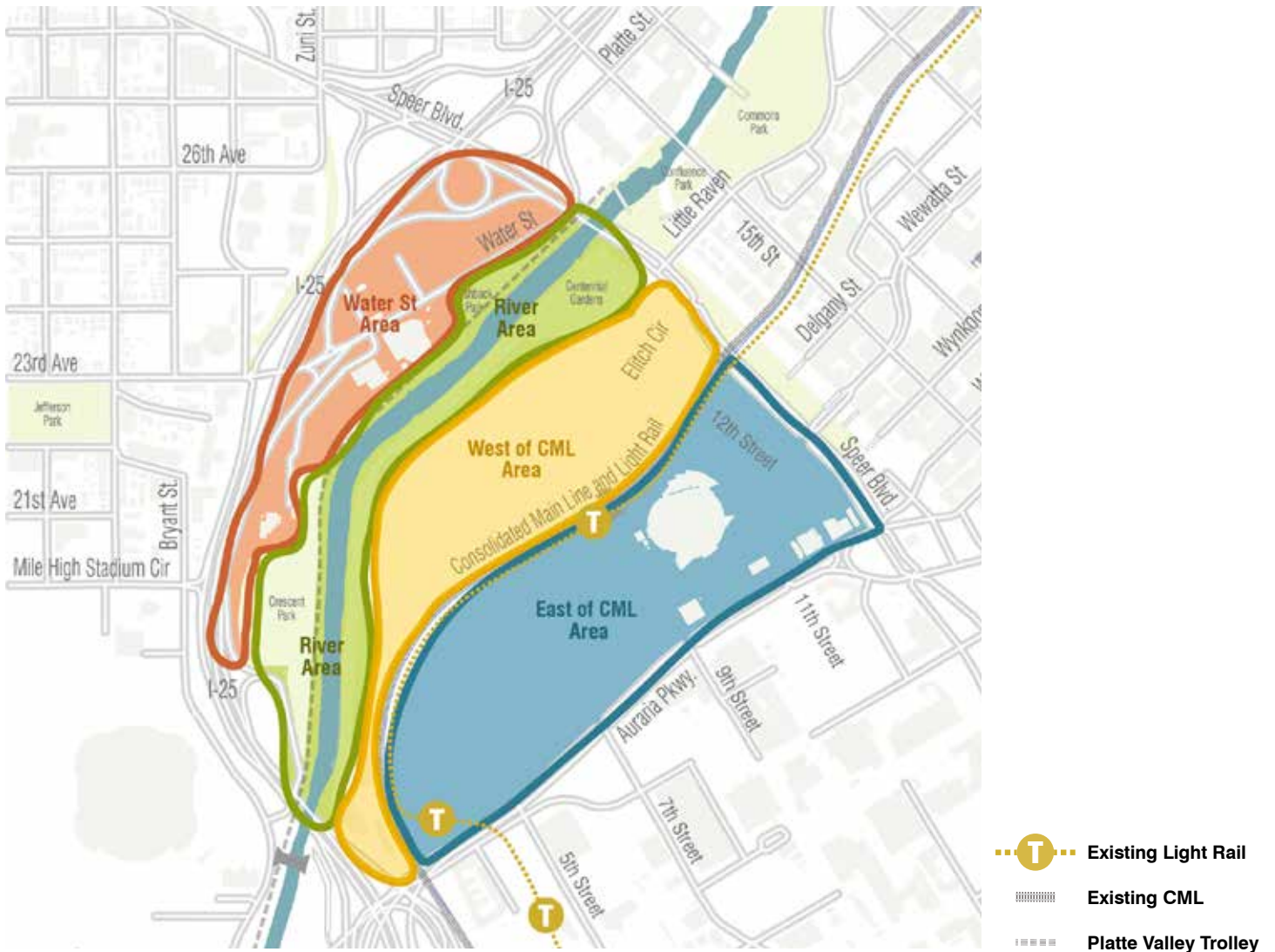


Figure 4: Geographies Map



Figure 5: Aerial of Plan Area Context

# Historic Context



Figure 6: 1933 Aerial



Figure 7: 1971 Aerial

In 1858, prospectors settled at the confluence of the South Platte River and Cherry Creek and named the first permanent settlement of the area Auraria, followed soon after by Denver City on the east side of Cherry Creek. No significant amounts of gold were ever found, but the settlement quickly developed as a waypoint for mining towns further west. While Auraria had grown to include 150 homes, stores, hotels, saloons, meat markets, and various other shops, persistent flooding eventually pushed many residents and businesses to the east side of the creek.

The economic boom that followed the arrival of the railroad in 1870 resulted in the establishment of rail yards, warehouses, freight depots, breweries, coal yards, and some clusters of residences along the South Platte River. Local industries also occupied the north side of the river by 1890. Aerial imagery from 1933 (see Figure 6) shows multiple freight rail lines, a roundhouse, and a bridge that connected Colfax Avenue to Water Street at 7th Street.

Many of the businesses in the area closed during the Great Depression. By 1950, most of the industrial uses had disappeared, but warehouses and freight facilities remained. During the 1950s, construction of I-25 cut through the plan area, and the bridge across the river at 7th Street continued to span the river but no longer provided a connection over the rail tracks.

The aerial image from 1971 (see Figure 7) shows a flood had destroyed the 7th Street bridge over the river, and construction on I-25 was complete at that point in time.



# Historic Context



Figure 8: 1993 Aerial

The Children’s Museum opened at its current location in 1984, and freight rail was consolidated in 1986. By 1993 (see Figure 8), Mile High Stadium had been reconfigured, the McNichols Sports Arena had been completed, and Auraria Campus had established a presence. The viaducts at 15th Street and 16th Street had also been removed.

In 1995, the rail yards were consolidated to make way for Elitch Gardens, and the Pepsi Center opened in 1999. Urban renewal efforts contributed to bringing the Downtown Aquarium in 1999 and expansion of the Children’s Museum in 2015.



Figure 9: 2016 Aerial

New riverfront parks and the light rail tracks were built under the Regional Transportation District’s FasTracks program. There was also a proliferation of new entertainment land uses: Coors Field, a relocated Elitch Gardens, and Mile High Stadium.

By 2016, aerial imagery (see Figure 49) shows a renovated Union Station and urban development in the Central Platte Valley.

# Planning Process

This Amendment incorporates and responds to public input that was collected throughout the planning process; the process is detailed below.

The Downtown Area Plan Amendment was prepared over a 12-month period that spanned three planning phases: existing conditions assessment and visioning; development of concept strategies; and implementation of final strategies and recommendations. The planning process collected public input to identify assets, issues and opportunities and to inform the Amendment.

## Steering Committee Meetings

The project was guided by a steering committee comprised of stakeholders within the plan area and surrounding communities. The committee was a broad and diverse group, representing City Council, property and private business owners, educational institutions, cultural facilities, neighborhood organizations, and community activists. This committee served as the policy advisory group by discussing and guiding the vision, strategies, and the final Plan Amendment.

The planning process included seven steering committee meetings:

1. April 26, 2017: Introduction to the plan area, context, and analysis
2. May 24, 2017: Identifying strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats
3. June 28, 2017: Identifying the vision
4. July 26, 2017: Establishing strategies and recommendations within the vision elements
5. September 27, 2017: Review and confirm Amendment strategies
6. October 18, 2017: Review and confirm revised Amendment strategies
7. February 20, 2018: Review and confirm final Amendment draft

## Public Outreach

The planning process featured three public meetings, two online surveys, and a public charrette.

**Public Meeting #1** Kick-off meeting and introduction to the plan area was held to identify public input on strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats, and the vision for the plan area.  
July 13, 2017

**Online Survey #1** An online public survey identified strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats, and prioritized community needs and desires; the survey was open for one month and was completed by more than 480 participants.  
August 1-30, 2017

**Public Charrette** A public design charrette was conducted to identify strategic planning direction of mobility, land use, density, connectivity and community benefits.  
October 18, 2017

**Public Meeting #2** Meeting involved reviewing plan strategies based on input from previous public meeting and the steering committee and receiving comments.  
November 2, 2017

**Online Survey #2** An online public survey of the final Amendment draft vision, strategies and recommendations; the survey was open for one month and was completed by more than 80 participants.  
February 13-  
March 13, 2018

**Public Meeting #3** Meeting involved reviewing and receiving comments on the draft Plan Amendment.  
February 22, 2018

CPD also established a webpage for the Amendment to provide updates and important plan resources as well as additional opportunities for participation to the general public.

# Planning Process

## Coordination with Local Groups

There were also several meetings with the Downtown Denver Partnership boards and neighborhood organizations that informed these groups of the Amendment overview and progress to date, answered questions, and received feedback that was incorporated into the final plan:

- September 14, 2017 Downtown Denver Partnership's Denver Civic Ventures Board
- September 14, 2017 Downtown Denver Partnership Board
- October 10, 2017 Downtown Denver Partnership Board
- November 1, 2017 Auraria Higher Education Center Board
- November 30, 2017 Jefferson Park United Neighbors and Sloan's Lake Neighborhood Association
- December 6, 2017 La Alma-Lincoln Park Neighborhood Association
- December 12, 2017 Highland United Neighbors Inc.
- January 9, 2018 Federal Boulevard Partnership public meeting with Jefferson Park United Neighbors
- January 11, 2018 Downtown Denver Partnership's Denver Civic Ventures Board
- February 19, 2018 Lower Downtown Neighborhood Association
- February 22, 2018 Downtown Denver Partnership Council
- February 27, 2018 Meeting with 1143 & 1127 Auraria Parkway residents
- March 14, 2018 Urban Land Institute and the Downtown Denver Partnership
- March 15, 2018 Meeting with 1143 & 1127 Auraria Parkway residents
- March 15, 2018 Meeting with Jefferson Park United Neighbors and Sloan's Lake Neighborhood Association
- March 24, 2018 Inter-Neighborhood Cooperation
- April 10, 2018 Meeting with 1143 & 1127 Auraria Parkway residents

## Coordination with Concurrent and Future Planning Efforts

The planning team coordinated with related ongoing planning efforts within the City and County of Denver and other partner organizations to help ensure consistency:

- Blueprint Denver (2018)
- 5280 Loop
- Colorado Department of Transportation Planning and Environmental Linkage Study
- Colorado Department of Transportation 23rd Street Bridge redevelopment
- Denver Urban Waterways Restoration Study
- 2019 Storm Drainage Master Plan Update
- Green Infrastructure Implementation Strategy

## Public Input: Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats

Throughout the process detailed above, the steering committee and the public identified the plan area's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats. The feedback from this section informed the priorities and content of the Plan Amendment. A high-level summary of this feedback is outlined on the following pages. Detailed feedback from each public meeting is included in the Appendix.

# Public Feedback

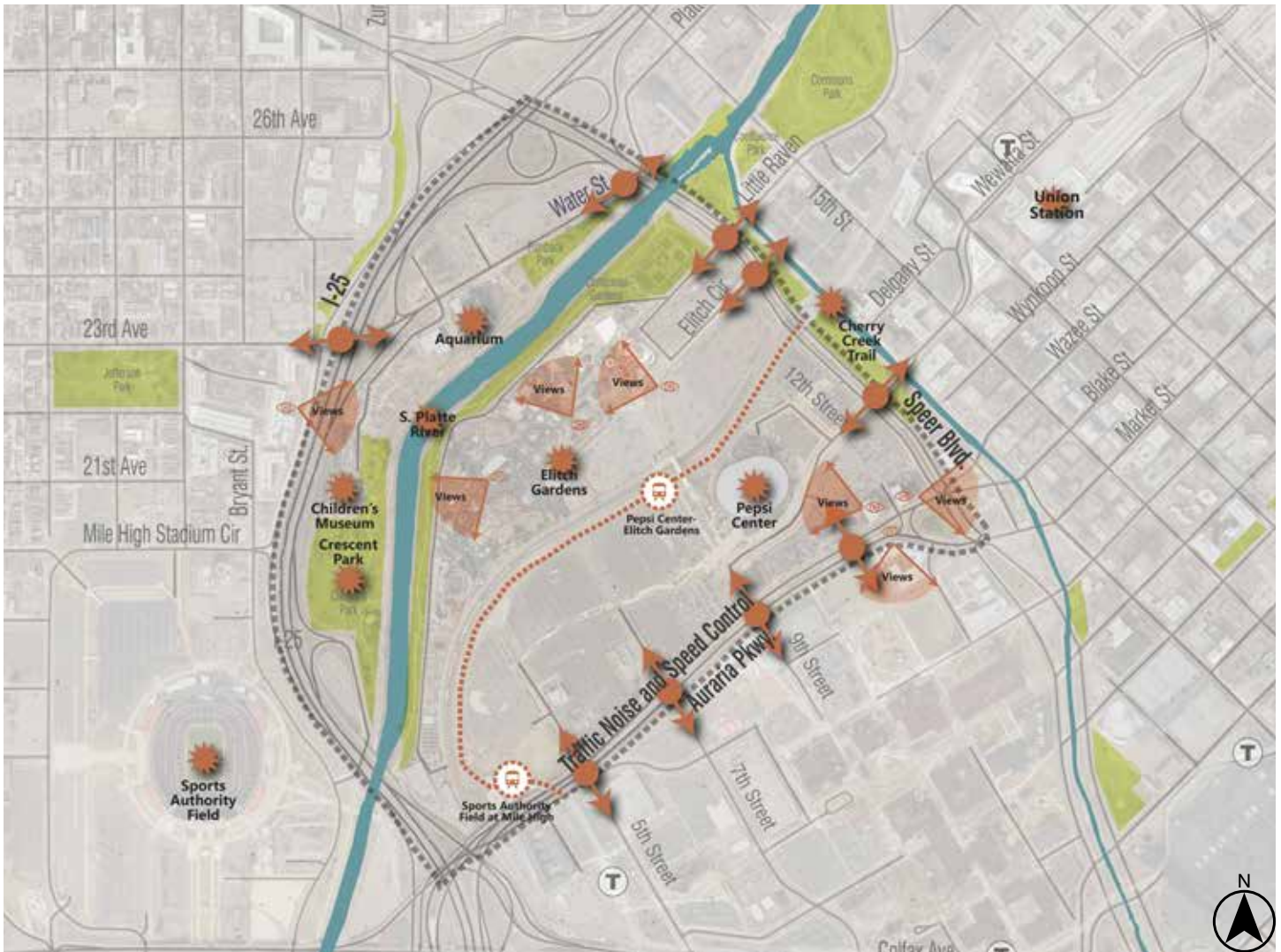


Figure 10: Strengths Diagram  Street Entry Points  Light Rail Stop  Views  Unique Assets

## Strengths

Participants identified a list of strengths in the study area:

- The South Platte River
- Proximity to the high density of office and commercial uses downtown, mixed uses downtown and in the Highland neighborhood, and educational uses on the Auraria Campus
- Current uses that attract visitors such as the Downtown Aquarium, the Children’s Museum, the Pepsi Center, and Elitch Gardens
- Good views, both into the plan area from surrounding neighborhoods and from the plan area towards Downtown Denver and west toward the Rocky Mountains
- Two light rail stations serving the area (Mile High and Pepsi Center/Elitch Gardens stations)
- Denver Moves: Transit identifies Speer Boulevard and Auraria Parkway as high priority bus transit corridors
- Existing network of parks, trails, and open space

# Public Feedback

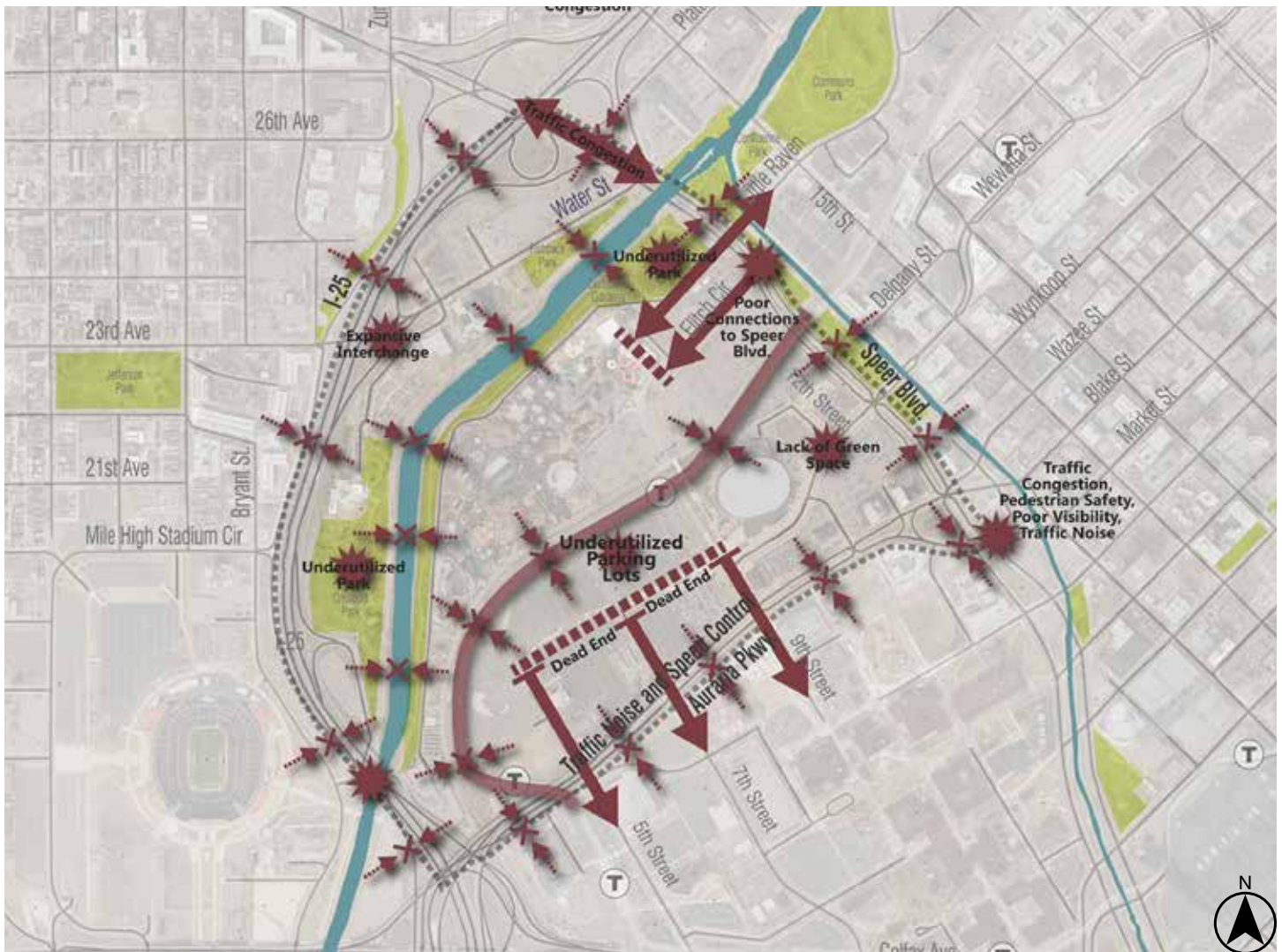


Figure 11: Weaknesses Diagram



## Weaknesses

Participants also identified potential weaknesses to consider as the area redevelops:

- Lack of physical connectivity to surrounding areas due to natural barriers (the river) and structural barriers (Interstate 25, Auraria Parkway, and Speer Boulevard)
- Limited connectivity due to the discontinuous street grid
- I-25 running along the western boundary of the plan area contributes to noise and air pollution
- Area is not built on a human-scale
- Freight rail bisects the plan area
  - There are only two opportunities to safely cross the tracks in the plan area
  - Freight rail activity contributes to noise and air pollution
- Surface parking lots in the plan area create underutilized land
  - The surface parking results in an expanse of impervious surface that is devoid of activity
  - There is a general lack of green space and tree canopy coverage

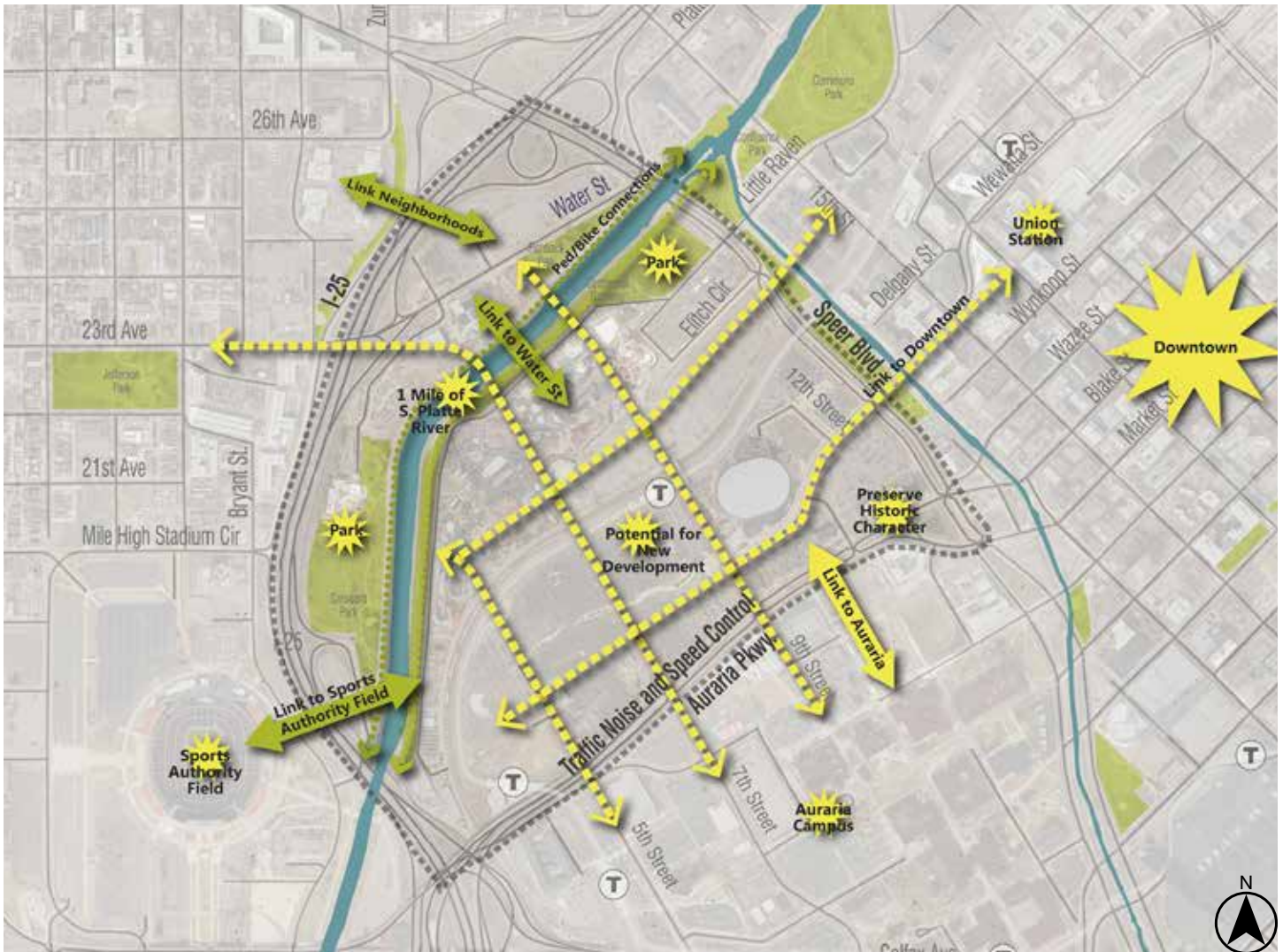
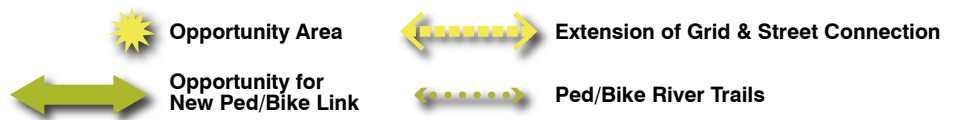


Figure 12: Opportunities Diagram



## Opportunities

Participants identified many opportunities to leverage strengths and overcome weaknesses, including opportunities to:

- Create a new downtown neighborhood with active streets and new parks
- Create an extension of the existing downtown with mobility options connecting to surrounding streets, across the river and railway, to surrounding neighborhoods, and attractions
- Create multimodal connections within the plan area and to Downtown and surrounding neighborhoods
- Potentially utilize best practices and innovative design solutions for architecture, streets, green infrastructure, etc.
- Improve access to and from I-25
- Consolidate surface parking lots into shared structured parking and create space for a variety of housing
- Develop an active riverfront with uses that vary from hardscape edges with retail, food and beverage uses that spill over into the public realm to softscape edges that allow for natural riparian habitat to flourish
- Connect to surrounding neighborhoods



Figure 13: Threats Diagram



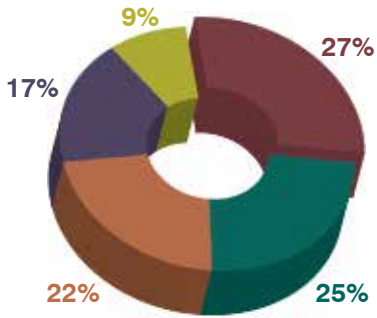
## Threats

Participants identified several potential threats, including:

- Failing to realize the vision and the potential of the plan area to become a new downtown neighborhood of dense, high-quality, mixed-use development
- Failing to meet the city's demand for and this area's potential to provide new parkland
- Logistical challenges of development, including identifying locations for and building rail crossings, competing with the 16th Street Mall and the Union Station area for retail, the development impacts of a potential future economic downturn, and protecting delicate riparian habitat
- Development that is not thought out and planned
- Environmental threats, including flood risks (or low points where overflow from the river is expected in the event of a flood), air and noise pollution from the CML and I-25, soil contamination from historic uses, and the danger of hazards from tanker cars on the freight rail
- Potential of missing out on the opportunity to create mobility connections that enhance transit, biking, and walking
- Relocation of sports franchises out of the plan area and Denver

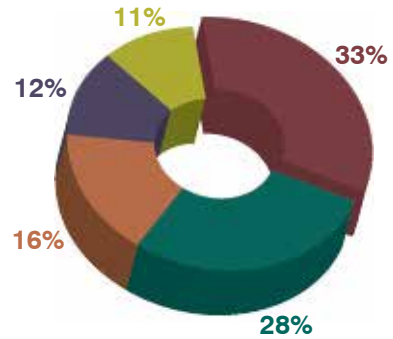
# Public Feedback

Which type of public space is most important to you to be incorporated across the study area?



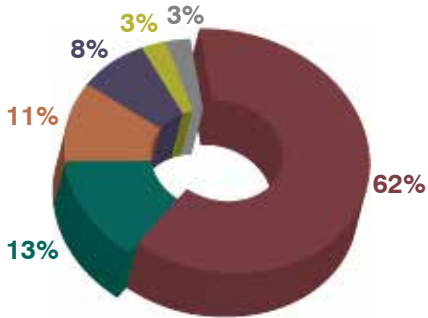
- Retail and/or restaurants with outdoor seating
- Public space with interactive features
- Plaza with seating and events space
- Small pocket parks
- Park with turf grass and space to recreate

Which type of public space is most important to you to be incorporated along the river?



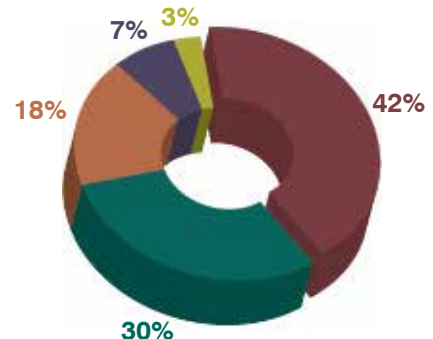
- Retail and/or restaurants with outdoor seating
- Pedestrian plaza or promenade
- Natural habitat with trails
- Boardwalks with overlooks
- Riverfront access for recreation

What would attract families to live here?



- All are important
- Affordable housing
- Early child education
- Daycare/childcare
- Grocery stores

Of these assets, which are most important to incorporate into the study area so it is distinctive?



- Pedestrian promenades
- Distinctive architecture
- Iconic bridges
- Gateway entry features
- Public art

## Live Survey

During Public Meeting #2 there was a survey conducted with live results. The results from this meeting are summarized above.

The questions focused on getting more detailed feedback about the public spaces, assets and amenities that could occur in the plan area. The survey results show a preference for public spaces that have active edges with retail and/or restaurants with outdoor seating. People also identified pedestrian promenades as an asset that should be incorporated into future development. There was a recognition that attracting families to the plan area will require a combination of several different amenities.



## Vision Element Overview

Success of the Downtown Area Plan Amendment depends on the implementation of the vision elements through the supporting recommendations and strategies for the Central Platte Valley – Auraria District.

Each vision element is comprised of topics that are supported by specific recommendations and strategies. The Vision Elements chapter provides planning direction through these recommendations and strategies for land use, economic development, a multimodal transportation network, diverse housing opportunities, building intensity and form, public spaces, and addressing environmental conditions.

### Use of the Vision Elements

The Downtown Area Plan (2007) used five vision elements to shape the future of Downtown Denver. Within each vision element, there were strategies and projects used to shape districts such as the Golden Triangle, Auraria Campus, Lower Downtown (LoDo), Central Platte Valley (Union Station), Ballpark and Arapahoe Square.

The Vision Elements from the Downtown Area Plan apply to this Amendment and are shown in the light gray boxes. In addition to the topics listed to the right, new topics were created for this Amendment that are listed on the next two pages.

## Downtown Area Plan (2007) Vision Elements and Topics

### A. A Prosperous City

- A1. The Downtown of the Rocky Mountain Region
- A2. Energizing the Commercial Core
- A3. A Comprehensive Retail Strategy
- A4. Clean and Safe

### B. A Walkable City

- B1. An Outstanding Pedestrian Environment
- B2. Building on Transit
- B3. Bicycle City
- B4. Park the Car Once
- B5. Grand Boulevards

### C. A Diverse City

- C1. Downtown Living
- C2. A Family-Friendly Place
- C3. Embracing Adjacent Neighborhoods
- C4. An International Downtown

### D. A Distinctive City

- D1. District Evolution
- D2. Connecting Auraria
- D3. Downtown's New Neighborhood: Arapahoe Square

### D. A Green City

- E1. An Outdoor Downtown
- E2. A Rejuvenated Civic Center
- E3. Sustainable Use of Resources

## A Prosperous City

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### A5. Land Use

- Encourage a mix of uses.
- Promote a specific variety of uses that create an active, livable neighborhood.
- Locate active uses on the ground floor across the plan area and in strategic locations to ensure accessible and walkable streets.

### A6. Access to Economic Opportunity

- Promote robust and diverse businesses, amenities, and commercial services.
- Explore economically advantageous clustering of complementary uses that relate to existing uses in the plan area, Downtown, and in surrounding neighborhoods.



## A Walkable City

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### B6. Connected, Multimodal Street Network

- Extend the existing street grid from surrounding neighborhoods to provide structure for a connected multimodal transportation network.
- Create Complete Streets by utilizing street design that promotes multimodal connectivity.
- Update existing facilities to reflect the desired character and function.
- Provide new connections to and within the plan area to complete the mobility network.

### B7. A Place for Pedestrians

- Create a comprehensive pedestrian network with pedestrian facilities on all streets in the plan area.
- Designate and enhance priority pedestrian connections and intersections.
- Develop an intimate block size to create a comfortable and safe walking environment.

### B8. Robust Bicycle Network

- Provide comprehensive bicycle facilities throughout the plan area.
- Connect to existing and planned bicycle facilities.

### B9. Mobility Hub

- Establish protocol to transform Pepsi Center/Elitch Gardens and Mile High light rail stations into mobility hubs.
- Provide additional transit services to and through the plan area.

### B10. Transportation Demand Management

- Require Transportation Demand Management.
- Remove parking minimums and establish parking maximums.



## A Diverse City

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### C5. Diverse Housing Options

- Include a variety of market-rate and affordable housing to accommodate diverse households and incomes in the plan area.
- Implement requirements to ensure that affordable and workforce housing is provided in the plan area.
- Ensure that housing is appropriately located throughout the plan area.

### C6. Support a Diverse Community

- Offer services and facilities that support families.
- Provide amenities and facilities that support seniors and people with disabilities.
- Explore strategies to attract a diverse group of businesses, employees, and visitors.
- Encourage the formation of neighborhood partnerships.

### D4. Variety of Building Intensity

- Adopt new or updated zoning standards to require a variety of building intensities.
- Promote a variety of building heights and intensities.
- Calibrate allowed building height and intensity by context.
- Leverage increases in allowed building intensity to promote community benefits.
- Ensure a minimum intensity of development.

### D5. High Quality Design

- Adopt new or updated zoning standards to promote high quality design.
- Adopt design standards and guidelines (DSG's) and implement a design review process to promote high quality design.
- Promote a pedestrian-oriented street frontage.
- Promote human-scale building design.
- Promote distinctive building design.
- Minimize visual impacts associated with automobiles.
- Acknowledge, preserve, or enhance key views.
- New development adjacent to the South Platte River should respect the river and its public amenities as a natural resource.
- Adopt regulatory tools that require streetscape, landscape, and public space standards that contribute to the character of the public realm and create stronger physical and programmatic relationships between the landscape and architecture (see A Green City and A Walkable City).

### D6. Branding and Identity

- Encourage branding and marketing efforts to create awareness and attract people to live, work and play.
- Encourage a sense of neighborhood identity.
- Develop ways to create a sense of place and identity through public art and civic land uses.



### E4. Vibrant Parks and Public Spaces

- Create new designated parks and open space.
- Establish opportunities for existing and new parks to accommodate a variety of activities and programs year-round.
- Re-envision Centennial Gardens as an accessible and active park with updated features and programmable space for activities.
- Provide a variety of amenities within parks, open spaces and public spaces.
- Contribute to a green public realm.
- Activate parks and open space edges.
- Provide opportunities for healthy living.
- Utilize the guidelines and principles of the Outdoor Downtown Plan by incorporating its policies, projects, and programs.
- Create specific standards and policies for the maintenance and upkeep of both public and private parks and public spaces.

### E5. South Platte River

- Create an enhanced green zone along the South Platte River.
- Protect the river as a natural resource.
- Coordinate all river improvements and development near the river with ongoing studies from other departments or external entities.

### E6. Resilient Infrastructure

- Embrace ways to efficiently use resources and reduce waste.
- Build development with an enduring life-cycle.
- Encourage green and sustainable communities.
- Future development should address stormwater and implement sustainable green infrastructure where possible.

### E7. Environmental Conditions

- Address environmental contamination to allow for mixed-use development.
- Address the floodplain within the plan area.
- Address the health impacts of noise and air pollution for development adjacent to the CML and I-25.
- Implement best practices to address the proximity of the freight rail to proposed mixed-use development.





## ii. Vision Elements

There are five Vision Elements supported by topics, which are then followed by specific recommendations and strategies for the plan area.

# A PROSPEROUS CITY

## Accommodating future growth

A prosperous city attracts jobs, growth, and investment. It can increase access to opportunity for residents, employees, and businesses by fostering innovation, providing equitable access to capital, jobs and education, providing a variety of diverse social interactions, and promoting a great quality of life. Thoughtful planning that encourages high density, high-quality, mixed-use development with ample public space can enable prosperity by creating a place where all residents share in economic, technological, and social progress.

As Denver works to attract and retain intellectual capital, the plan area provides a unique opportunity with its location adjacent to Downtown and the Auraria Campus to become an extension of the downtown in the form of an innovation district. It also has a mile of the South Platte River, which is a notable asset that lends itself to becoming an engaging and welcoming public place for people to interact and visit thriving businesses. Activity along both the river and key corridors through the plan area create a destination while supporting economic prosperity.

The 2007 Downtown Area Plan developed four topics to achieve the vision element of becoming A Prosperous City. In addition to A1 through A4 (listed below), two new topics apply to the Central Platte Valley – Auraria District:

### 2007 Plan Topics

- A1. The Downtown of the Rocky Mountain Region
- A2. Energizing the Commercial Core
- A3. A Comprehensive Retail Strategy
- A4. Clean and Safe

### Plan Amendment Topics

- A5. Land Use
- A6. Access to Economic Opportunity



# A5. Land Use

## Goal

Enable a deliberate mix of uses to create a prosperous neighborhood that is vibrant throughout the day and night.

## Why It's Important

A mix of uses that provides a variety of everyday needs allows people to live, work, shop, relax, entertain, and dine all in one area. This results in a vibrant neighborhood that is active at all times of the day and all days of the week. This consistent activity supports a sense of place as well as prosperity for the people who live, work, or spend time in the area.

## Recommendations and Strategies

### A5a. Encourage a mix of uses.

- **Downtown Concept Land Use:** Update the Blueprint Concept Land Use to Downtown (see [Figure 14](#)).
  - The desired land use for the plan area is an extension of the land use in Downtown Denver; it consists of a mix of residential, commercial, office, civic, institutional, and entertainment uses. Land uses can be mixed in each building, development, or block. Vertical and horizontal mixed-use is encouraged so residential and non-residential uses are within walking distance of one another.
- **Regulations:** Update zoning regulations to encourage an appropriate mix of uses (as detailed further in [A5b](#), [A5c](#), and [E7c](#)) as well as flexibility to incentivize a variety of uses in a concentrated area.
  - Updated zoning regulations should include parking maximums rather than parking minimums (see [B10b](#)).
    - For development replacing surface parking lots, some amount of the parking removed can be replaced with structured parking. The amount of parking for all development should be regulated by parking maximums that are calibrated using shared parking methodologies rather than by parking minimums (see [B10b](#)).



### Public Input:

There is a desire for a vibrant neighborhood with a mix of uses that contributes to a complete neighborhood.



# A5. Land Use

## Recommendations and Strategies (continued)

### A5b. Promote a specific variety of uses that create an active, livable neighborhood.

- **Complete Neighborhood:** Explore regulatory tools that incentivize appropriate uses that complement a variety of residents living in an urban neighborhood (see [A Diverse City](#)). The quality of life and walkability of the neighborhood will be best supported by a variety of housing types (see [A Diverse City](#)) as well as complementary uses such as grocery stores, pharmacies, banks, medical services, coffee shops, schools and childcare, playgrounds, dog parks, and other amenities that are within a close walking distance to each other and to residential units.
- **Commercial Uses and Services:** Promote uses to support the development of an employment center, which include high-density commercial development and live/work opportunities as well as complementary uses such as office supply stores, shipping services, hotels, and food and beverage establishments.
- **Civic and Community:** Promote civic and community uses such as libraries, community centers, schools, art venues, environmental education centers, and recreational centers to provide complete neighborhoods and attract diverse residents, employees, and visitors.
- **Entertainment and Cultural Uses:** Leverage existing entertainment uses and support the growth of entertainment, cultural, and exhibition uses around the Pepsi Center, Downtown Aquarium, and the Children’s Museum as well as any potential new complementary uses.
  - The need for parking for these uses should be studied and parking should be provided within multi-story structures, as explained in [D5d](#) and portrayed in [Figure 28](#).
  - Encourage entertainment and cultural uses to share parking with each other and with other uses.
  - Existing entertainment and cultural uses are an asset to the plan area and if their facilities become outdated, the City should work with property owners and operators to redevelop new facilities within the plan area.
- **Public Spaces:** Ensure development of new multi-functioning public spaces that are accessible to all (see [A Green City](#)).



**Public Input:**  
There should be restaurants and cafés with outdoor seating along tree-lined streets.





# A5. Land Use

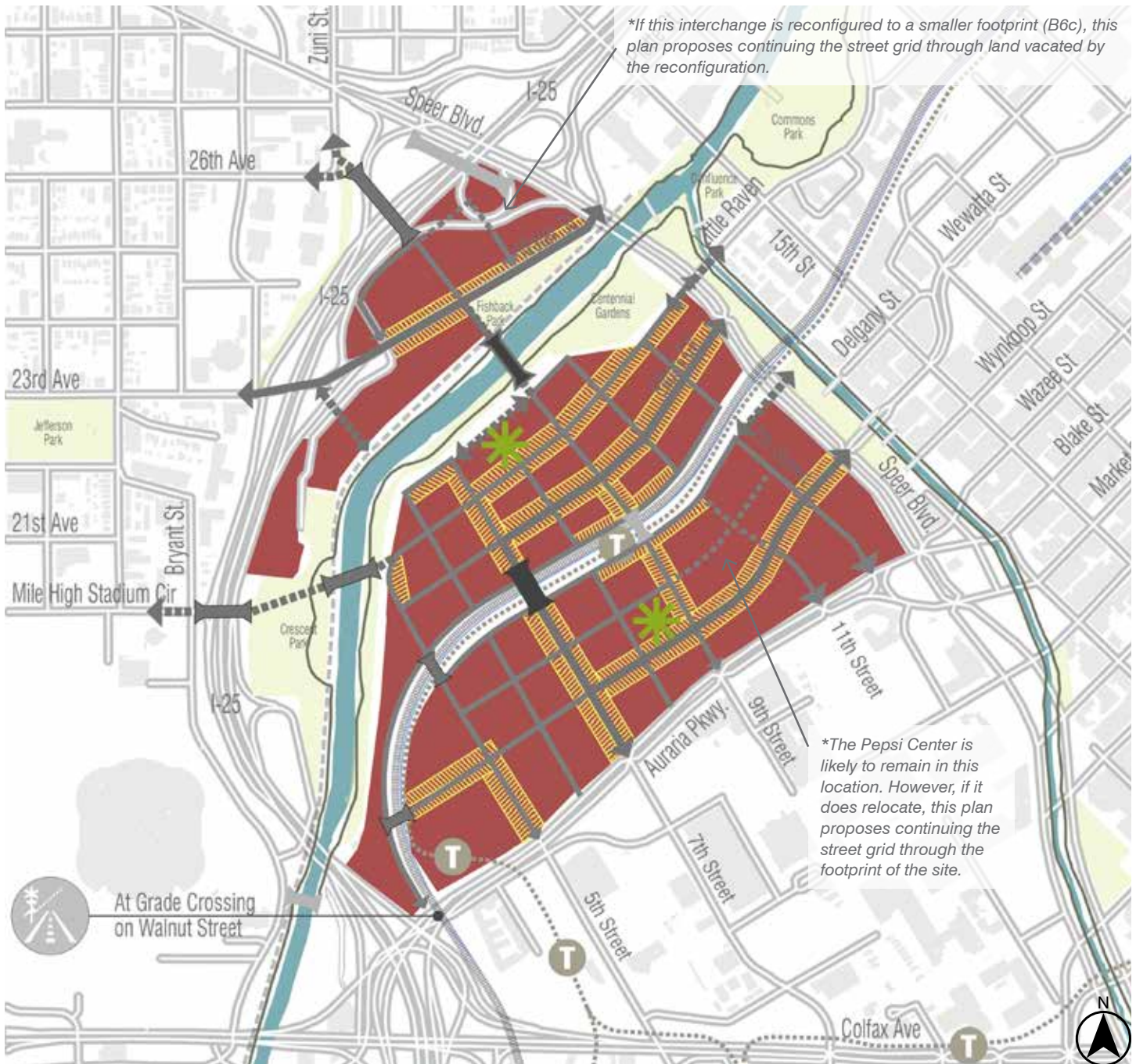
## Recommendations and Strategies (continued)

### A5c. Locate active uses on the ground floor across the plan area and in strategic locations to ensure accessible and walkable streets.

- **Active Corridors:** Through the implementation process as development progresses, identify streets that should become active corridors (see [Figure 14](#)).
  - Active corridors should be located along streets with high expected pedestrian and bicycle volume; for example, streets around Mobility Hubs developed at the two light rail stations and other internal transit services, streets designated as Downtown Collectors, streets that converge with the river, and streets that are adjacent to public spaces (see [A Walkable City](#)).
  - Locations designated as active corridors should include adequate public space to accommodate spill over of ground floor uses into the public realm.
- **Active Riverfront:** Identify a substantial portion of the riverfront for active uses.
  - Prioritize active uses along public right-of-way parallel to the river to enliven the public realm along the riverfront.
  - Provide a balance of active urban and passive natural spaces to create an active riverfront with a variety of experiences along its length (see [E5a](#)).
- **Active Uses:** Ensure that active ground floor uses generate activity throughout the day and night in specific locations as defined above.
  - Incentivize the uses listed in [A5b](#).
  - Encourage active uses, especially retail and food and beverage services, to spill out of buildings and into the public realm.
  - Limit residential uses on the ground floor.
    - Residential uses should have a minimal frontage along Active Corridors.
    - While the riverfront should be primarily active, there is a desire for distinct pockets of more passive uses. A limited amount of residential use is desired along the Active Riverfront. Public access should always be maintained along the river, including within areas that are deliberately passive. This recommendation is contingent on purposeful building design that defines public and private space (see [A Distinctive City](#)).
  - Exclude primary and accessory uses such as:
    - Mini-storage facilities or wholesale trade or storage
    - Car wash bays and drive-thru services
  - Ensure future parking structures do not have visible parking (see [D5d](#)).



# A5. Land Use



**Figure 14: Conceptual Land Use Map with Potential Active Corridors**

*This is one potential scenario to implement this Plan Amendment's recommendations. There are multiple active corridor configurations that would implement this plan, dependent on the configuration of mobility connections and the road hierarchy.*

- |           |                            |                    |  |
|-----------|----------------------------|--------------------|--|
| --- T --- | Existing Light Rail        | Wide Arrow         | Proposed All Mode Bridge               |
| -----     | Existing CML               | Narrow Arrow       | Proposed Ped & Bike or All Mode Bridge |
| .....     | Platte Valley Trolley      | Thin Arrow         | Proposed Ped & Bike Bridge             |
| ↔         | Downtown Collector Streets | Dashed Arrow       | Proposed Ped & Bike Connection         |
| ↔         | Local Streets              | Green Star         | Proposed Park/Open Space               |
| .....     | *Local Streets             | Red Box            | Downtown (Mixed-Use)                   |
| ↔         | Existing Ped & Bike Bridge | Orange Hatched Box | Potential Active Corridor              |

## A6. Access to Economic Opportunity

### Goal

Create an environment that promotes innovation and encourages a range of businesses to flourish.

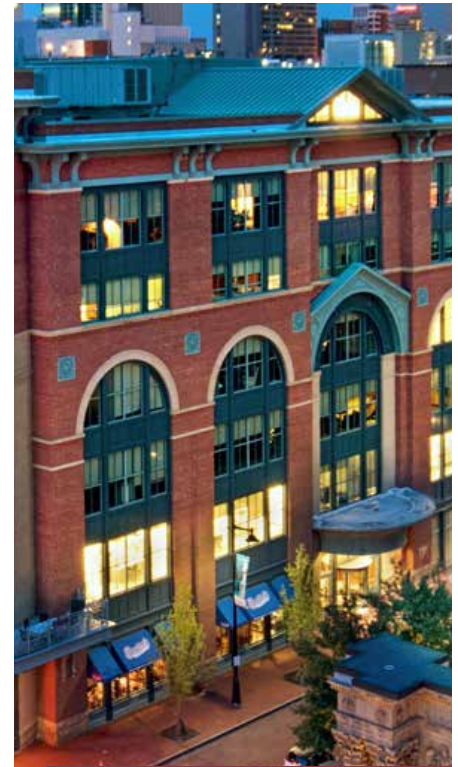
### Why It's Important

Innovation and thriving businesses are essential for attracting jobs, growth, and investment. Innovation attracts new ideas and people to a neighborhood and a city, and flourishing businesses provide both jobs and services to residents and visitors.

### Recommendations and Strategies

#### A6a. Promote robust and diverse businesses, amenities, and commercial services.

- **Business Creation:** Coordinate with the Office of Economic Development to explore economic development incentives or tools to recruit development that serves as an engine for economic growth by focusing on job creation and providing opportunities for a wide variety of employment.
  - Create opportunities that support local businesses, including vendors and shops, and encourage use of locally produced goods to promote local entrepreneurship and investment in the community.
  - Provide opportunities that would complement local businesses and attract key retail tenants to draw residents and visitors to the neighborhood.
  - Encourage the integration and involvement of community serving non-profits.
- **Downtown Denver Partnership:** Work with the Downtown Denver Partnership to coordinate commercial and business developments that build upon the plan area's assets and strengthen its identity.
- **Business Coordination:** Encourage the use of good neighbor agreements to reduce potential conflicts between adjacent uses.



#### Public Input:

This area has great potential to offer new spaces for businesses



## A6. Access to Economic Opportunity

### Recommendations and Strategies (continued)

#### A6b. Explore economically advantageous clustering of complementary uses that relate to existing uses in the plan area, Downtown, and in surrounding neighborhoods.

- **Auraria Campus:** Consider establishing an innovation district in close proximity to the Auraria Campus.
  - Promote private-sector sponsored opportunities for the Auraria Campus professors and students to research and develop new businesses within the plan area.
  - Provide incentives for collaboration between the Auraria Campus educational institutions, private sector businesses, and research and development industries.
  - Encourage supportive development that offers spaces for uses such as research and innovation labs, student and faculty housing (see C5a), and campus-supportive services.
- **Downtown:** Build off of the success of the downtown core by utilizing largely undeveloped land in the plan area to provide similar uses that meet the demand of a growing downtown.
- **Sports Arenas:** Leverage the Mile High Stadium and the Pepsi Center with complementary sports-oriented businesses adjacent to the Pepsi Center and along the edge of the plan area across from the Mile High Stadium.
- **Downtown Aquarium and Children’s Museum:** Locate other community- and family-serving businesses, services, and recreation near the Downtown Aquarium and Children’s Museum.
- **Residential Neighborhoods:** Promote businesses that provide goods and services that are not accommodated within surrounding neighborhoods that will support those neighborhoods as well as existing residences.



**Innovation District:**  
Defined by the Brookings Institution as a “geographic area where leading-edge anchor institutions and companies cluster and connect with start-ups, business incubators, and accelerators.”



# A WALKABLE CITY

## A multimodal downtown

Walkability depends on transportation infrastructure as well as other factors such as a mix of uses, tree canopy, and density. It is a key ingredient to a successful urban environment. Creating a robust transportation network within the plan area that is connected to the surrounding neighborhoods is a fundamental element of realizing the vision for the Central Platte Valley – Auraria District. Additionally, the plan area is located adjacent to downtown and has two light rail stations and high-frequency bus transit; therefore, it is uniquely positioned to be a better-connected, multimodal neighborhood.

Prioritizing walking, bicycling, and transit supports Denver’s broader transportation goals articulated in the Mobility Action Plan. These goals include accelerating safety improvements and implementing the *Denver Vision Zero Action Plan* through a multimodal network that encourages non-automobile trips, protects the environment, and improves public health. Additionally, Denver Moves: Pedestrians & Trails aims to create a pedestrian network that provides residents, employees, and visitors with a walkable environment that is comfortable for all users. Denver Moves: Making Bicycle and Multi-Use Connections also aims to create a bicycle network of facilities that are comfortable for all users.

Creating a transportation network that prioritizes pedestrians, bicyclists, and transit users also supports placemaking; improving walkability means providing street-level experiences that invite and stimulate pedestrians, which fosters personal interactions, increases economic vitality, and reinforces the other vision elements in this plan.

The Downtown Area Plan developed five topics to achieve the vision element of becoming A Walkable City. In addition to B1 through B5 (listed below), five new recommendation topics apply to the Central Platte Valley – Auraria District:

### 2007 Plan Topics

- B1. An Outstanding Pedestrian Environment
- B2. Building on Transit
- B3. Bicycle City
- B4. Park the Car Once
- B5. Grand Boulevards

### Plan Amendment Topics

- B6. Connected, Multimodal Street Network
- B7. A Place for Pedestrians
- B8. Robust Bicycle Network
- B9. Mobility Hub
- B10. Transportation Demand Management (TDM)



# B6. Connected, Multimodal Street Network

## Goal

Create a network that accommodates all modes of transportation and prioritizes active transportation (walking, bicycling, and transit) over automobiles.

## Why It's Important

A mobility network that prioritizes active transportation creates safer streets for all users, encourages non-automobile travel, encourages activity, and fosters a sense of community. Prioritizing active transportation also reinforces Denver's Living Streets Initiative, which aims to combine context sensitive development with complete streets to promote active living, increase mobility, capitalize on infrastructure investments, and stimulate economic development on urban corridors. An integrated, multimodal transportation network would help the plan area become the next downtown neighborhood.

## Recommendations and Strategies

### **B6a. Extend the existing street grid from surrounding neighborhoods to provide structure for a connected multimodal transportation network.**

The plan area currently has minimal road infrastructure; therefore future development will need to build a multimodal transportation network. Figure 16 illustrates one potential scenario to implement this recommendation and the following strategies. There are multiple network configuration scenarios that would accomplish these recommendations. The final design for the mobility network, including the connections detailed in B6c, should include an evaluation of traffic demands of current uses in addition to increased future density. The design will also need to adapt and respond through implementation and development. Additional infrastructure may be needed as a result of these complete transportation studies. Regional infrastructure improvement costs should be shared among development in the area; implementation may be phased. The final design should accomplish the following:

- **Extend Streets:** Extend the existing surrounding streets to create a connected street grid across the plan area.
  - Extend Little Raven Street, Elitch Circle, and Wewatta Street running parallel to the river; the extension of Little Raven Street, which is identified as a part of the green spine (see E4a), should include a robust tree canopy as a continuation of the extensive canopy adjacent to Commons Park. A green spine is considered a street with enhanced or wider pedestrian walkways and amenity zones with additional street trees or green infrastructure. They should facilitate access to public spaces, including parks, and to surrounding neighborhoods. Green spines are encouraged throughout the plan area in locations shown in Figure 29 and an example cross-section is illustrated in Figure 15.
  - Extend 5th Street, 7th Street, 9th Street, and 11th Street running perpendicular to the river (see Figure 16).



**Public Input:**  
Future roads should extend from and connect to the existing road network.

# B6. Connected, Multimodal Street Network

## Recommendations and Strategies (continued)

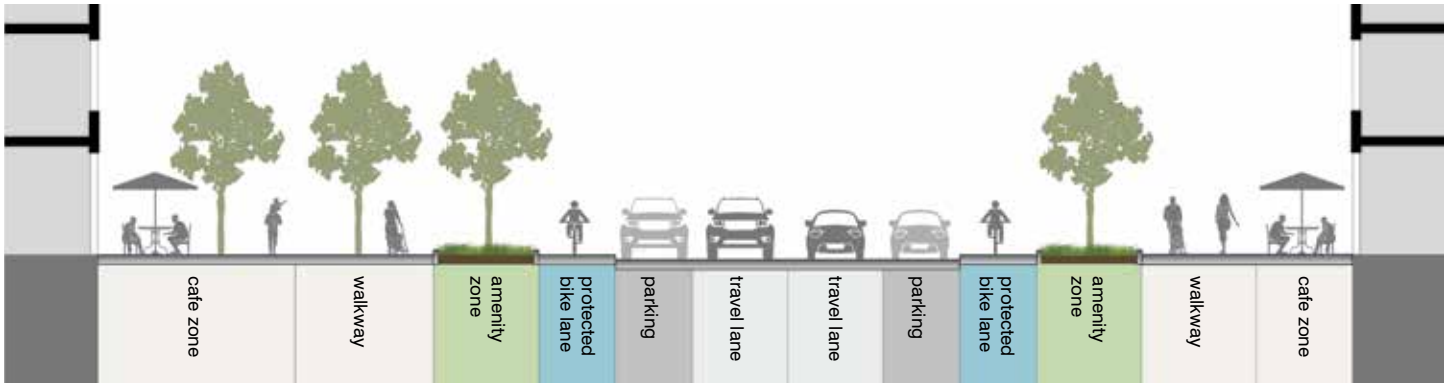


Figure 15: Potential Extension of Little Raven Street in the Plan Area

- **Create a Street Grid:** Create a street grid based on block sizes that promote walkability (see [B7c](#)) and can accommodate alleys (see [B6b](#)) and the desired building form (see [A Distinctive City](#)).
  - Create small blocks; a potential range of block sizes would be 200 feet by 200 feet to 250 feet by 400 feet. Larger block sizes (250 feet by 400 feet) can be used to reflect the fabric of the existing downtown block grid.
  - Allow for some flexibility in block sizes and the grid pattern to accommodate development with a larger footprint East of the CML, particularly along Speer Boulevard and Auraria Parkway and for specific entertainment uses such as a potentially relocated Pepsi Center. This plan does not recommend the removal of the Pepsi Center. However, if it does relocate, this plan proposes continuing the street grid through the footprint of the site. Smaller block sizes are appropriate closer to the river.
    - If the clover leaf interchange at Speer Boulevard and I-25 is rebuilt in a more compressed interchange configuration, consider extending the street grid north of Water Street to complete a pedestrian-scale grid in the space vacated by the current interchange footprint.
- **Connect to Other Facilities:** Connect to existing and planned trails and pathways.
  - Integrate the 5280 Loop (an approximately five-mile multi-use path connecting major institutions and creating a loop through Downtown Denver) into the plan area and provide clear and direct connections to it. The planned route connects to the eastern edge of the plan area through 11th Street and Wynkoop Street at Speer Boulevard.
  - Evaluate existing trails and pathways along the South Platte River to determine potential design and infrastructure updates.
    - Integrate the future mobility network and connections by providing additional access to existing trails and pathways.
- **Enhance the River:** Design the mobility network to enhance the riverfront by prioritizing non-motorized transportation along the river.
  - Provide bicycle, pedestrian, and recreation access along the riverfront; new connections over the river should connect to rather than interrupt pedestrian and bicycle access along the river.
  - Streets that run adjacent to the river should not accommodate higher-capacity vehicular traffic; any vehicle access along these streets should be limited to low-speed access with a clear priority for pedestrians and bicyclists.

# B6. Connected, Multimodal Street Network

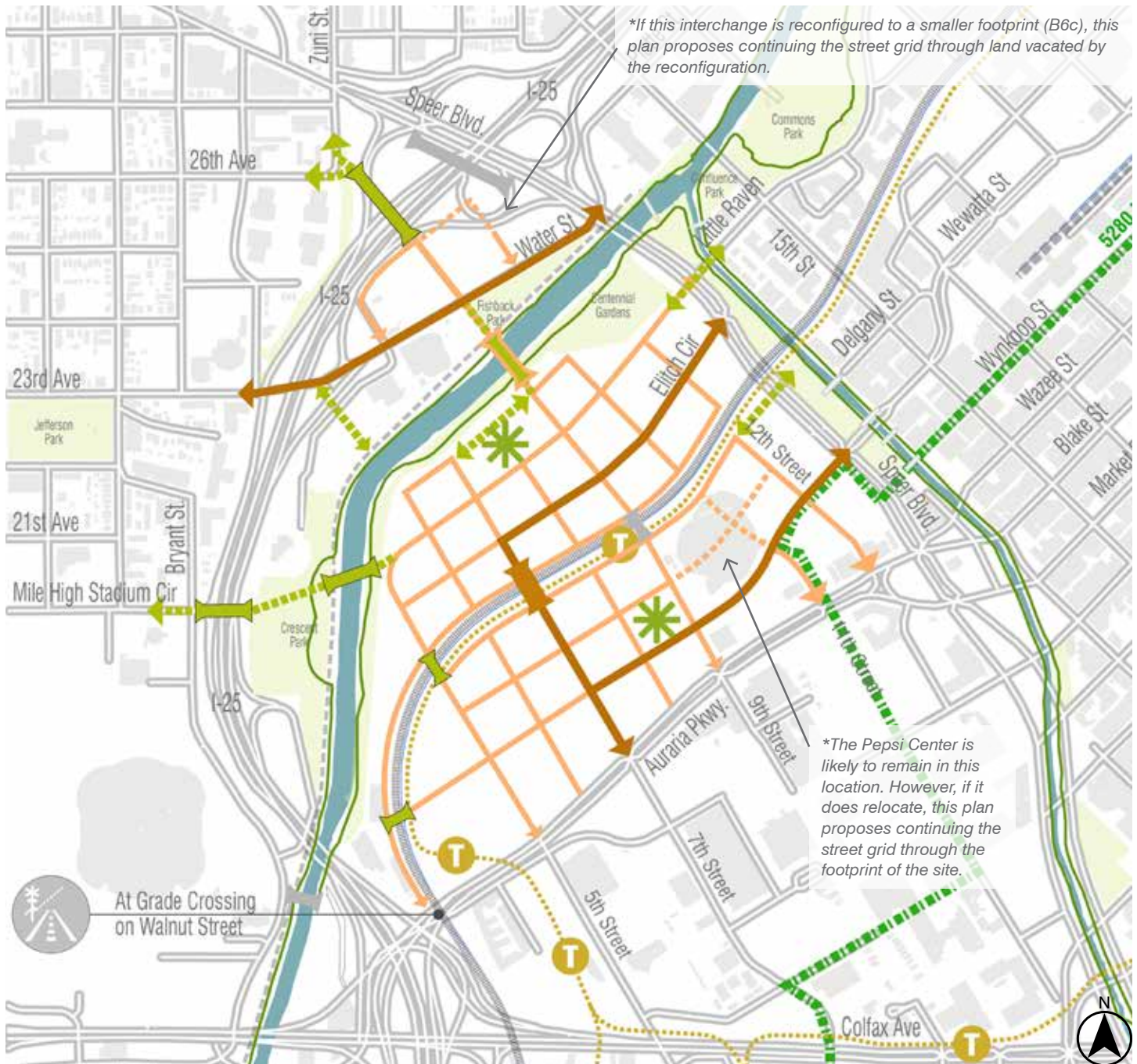


Figure 16: Conceptual Road Hierarchy

This is one potential scenario to implement this plan's recommendations. There are multiple network configurations that would implement this plan. This plan allows flexibility in block sizes to accommodate a variety of uses that might require a larger footprint. Alleys are not shown in this diagram, but should be included in nearly all blocks. Shared streets are not shown on this diagram, but can be implemented on appropriate street segments.

- Existing Light Rail
- Existing CML
- Platte Valley Trolley
- Downtown Collector Streets
- Local Streets
- \*Local Streets
- Existing Ped & Bike Bridge
- Proposed All Mode Bridge
- Proposed Ped & Bike or All Mode Bridge
- Proposed Ped & Bike Bridge
- Proposed Ped & Bike Connection
- Potential All Mode Connection
- Planned 5280 Loop
- Proposed Park/Open Space



# B6. Connected, Multimodal Street Network

## Recommendations and Strategies (continued)

### B6b. Create Complete Streets by utilizing street design that promotes multimodal connectivity.

The connected transportation network detailed in [B6a](#) should be comprised of streets that prioritize active transportation and support placemaking goals for the plan area. The street typologies below, which vary by right-of-way and amenities, can also be adjusted as appropriate if designated as a Priority Pedestrian Connection (see [B7b](#)) or a green spine (see [E4a](#)).

- **Street Typologies:** Implement the following street typologies to create a safe environment for all pedestrians, bicyclists, and motorists through limiting the number of vehicle lanes and utilizing streetscape strategies to calm motor vehicle traffic:
  - **Downtown Collectors** provide the backbone of the plan area's street grid and are identified as the main streets to move vehicles, bikes, and pedestrians through the plan area (see [Figure 17](#)). Downtown Collectors efficiently connect through the plan area and to surrounding areas. Within the plan area, Downtown Collectors should typically have:
    - One vehicular travel lane in each direction, plus a turning lane where necessary with flexibility to accommodate transit if needed (see [B9b](#)); if there are circumstances that warrant additional traffic lanes, street section design should still prioritize limiting the right-of-way dedicated to vehicles;
    - Separated or protected bicycle infrastructure, such as a protected bike lane (potentially including parking-protected), shared use path, buffered bike lane or bike lane;
    - Large sidewalks that accommodate a high volume of pedestrians; explore regulatory tools that ensure this area is distinct from additional space for outdoor seating to accompany active ground floor uses. The sidewalk design may be further enhanced along Priority Pedestrian Connections (see [B7b](#));
    - Provide an amenity zone that accommodates infrastructure to support healthy, large trees on every street and can act as a buffer to protect the walkways from the travel lanes;
    - Designate on-street parking where possible; in locations with limited right-of-way, on-street parking should be a lower priority than the uses listed above; and
    - Discourage curb cuts; instead, direct loading and access to alleys.

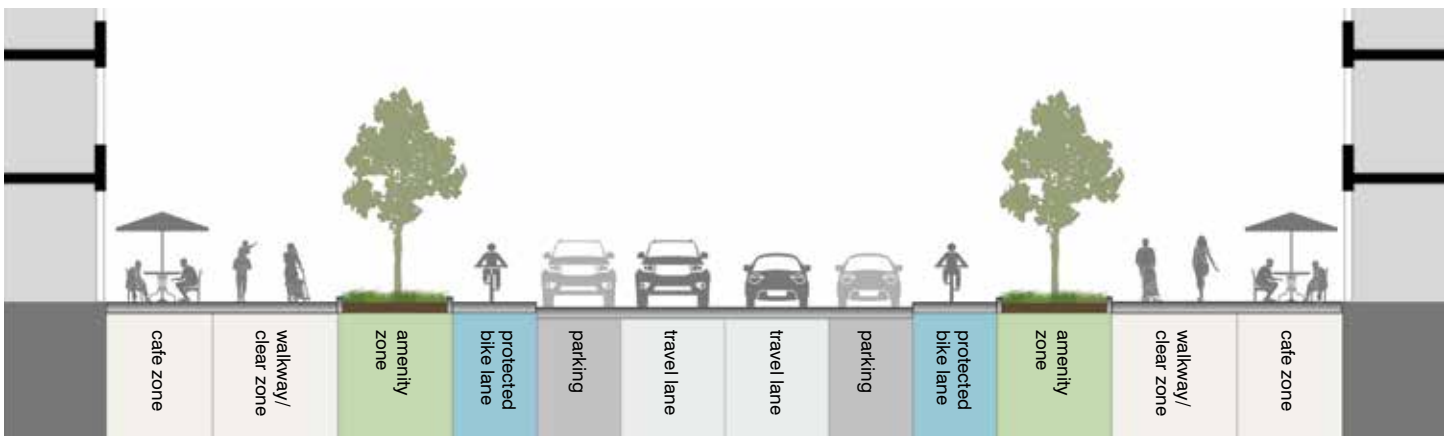


Figure 17: Downtown Collector Street

*This is one potential way that these recommendations could be implemented, but there can be a variation in the street cross section consistent with this plan's stated intent for Downtown Collector Streets.*

# B6. Connected, Multimodal Street Network

## Recommendations and Strategies (continued)

- **Local Streets** primarily serve local trips, and they prioritize bicyclists and pedestrians over vehicles (see [Figure 18](#)). Within the plan area, local streets should typically have:
  - One vehicular travel lane in each direction, plus a turning lane where necessary with flexibility to accommodate transit if needed (see [B9b](#));
  - Bicycle infrastructure that varies from a protected bike lane (potentially including parking-protected) to a bike lane to a shared roadway;
  - Medium to large sidewalks that accommodate a low to moderately high volume of pedestrians that also provide room for outdoor seating to accompany active uses where appropriate. The sidewalk design may be further enhanced along Priority Pedestrian Connections (see [B7b](#));
  - Provide adequate space for an amenity zone that accommodates infrastructure to support healthy, large trees on every street and can be permeable yet act as a buffer;
  - Designate on-street parking where appropriate; in locations with limited right-of-way, on street parking should be a lower priority than the uses listed above; and
  - Discourage curb cuts; instead, direct loading and access to alleys.

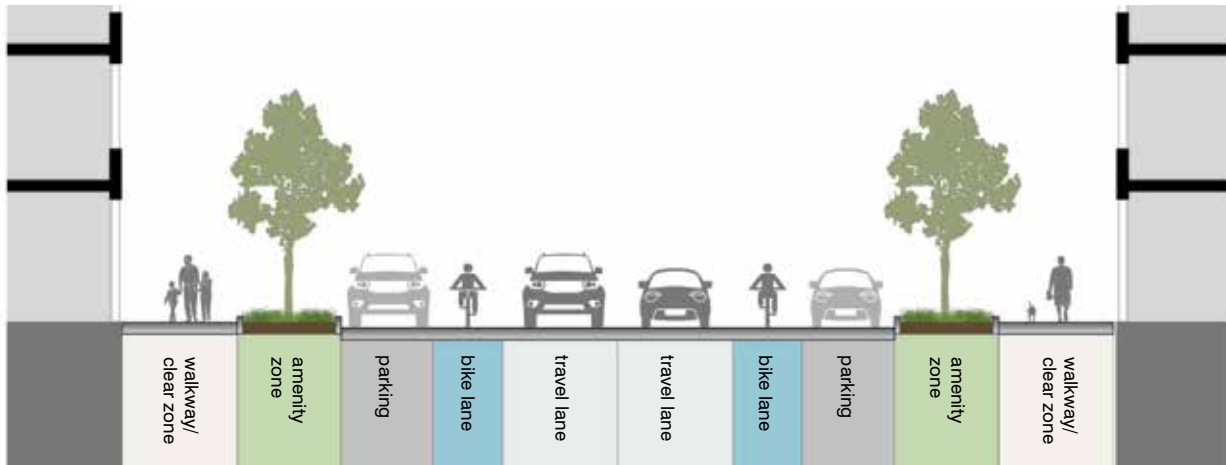


Figure 18: Local Street

*This is one potential way that these recommendations could be implemented, but there can be a variation in the street cross section consistent with this plan's stated intent for Local Streets.*

# B6. Connected, Multimodal Street Network

## Recommendations and Strategies (continued)

- **Shared Streets** are shared by pedestrians, bicyclists, and vehicles at all times and typically feature little to no formal distinction between spaces dedicated to different modes (see [Figure 19](#)). Shared streets are most appropriate in deliberate locations where vehicle volumes and speeds are low or expected to be sufficiently reduced with implementation of a shared street. Shared streets should have trees and planters where possible to provide shade. Shared streets are not shown on [Figure 16](#), but can be implemented on appropriate street segments. Potential locations for shared streets include commercial areas, along important pedestrian and bicycle connections (see [B7b](#) and [B8a](#), respectively), or on the proposed extension of 12th Street adjacent to the existing buildings on the north side of Auraria Parkway.

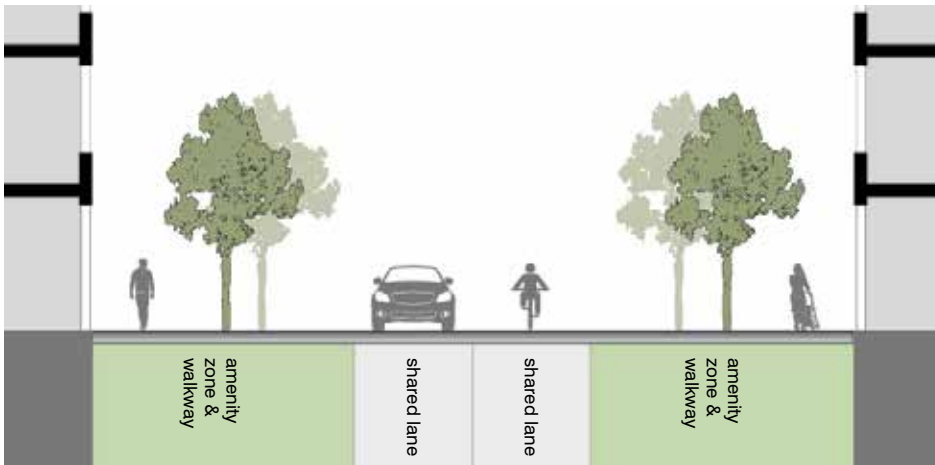


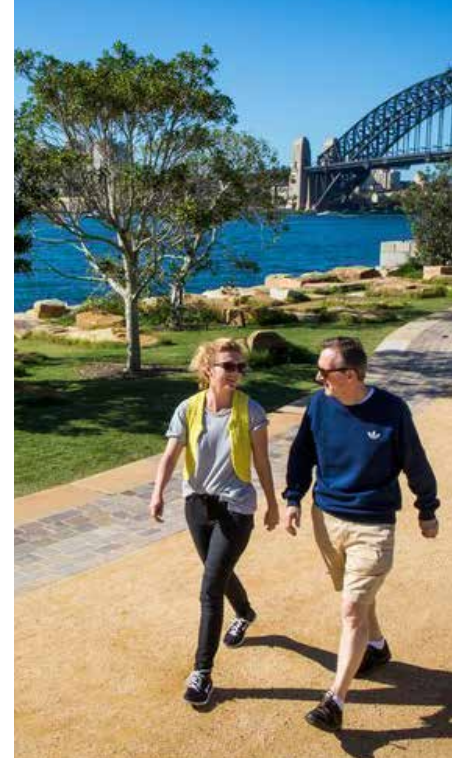
Figure 19: Shared Street

*This is one potential way that these recommendations could be implemented, but there can be a variation in the street cross section consistent with this plan's stated intent for Shared Streets.*

- **Alleys** are where loading, garage access, waste pickup, and other back-of-house uses should occur. Alleys need to be wide enough to accommodate these activities. The characteristics of alleys will vary depending on the type and intensity of adjacent uses, but their primary function is to accommodate these activities on the blocks they serve and to keep these uses and curb cuts off the other street types. They may also serve as multi-functioning spaces and allow spillover from active ground floor uses. Alleys are not shown on [Figure 16](#), but are recommended on nearly all blocks.



**Public Input:**  
Prioritize pedestrians and bicyclists in future mobility connections.



# B6. Connected, Multimodal Street Network

## Recommendations and Strategies (continued)

### B6c. Update existing facilities to reflect the desired character and function (see Figure 22).

- **23rd Avenue Improvements:** Work with the Colorado Department of Transportation to prioritize rebuilding the 23rd Avenue overpass over I-25 to Water Street to include robust pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure (cross-section illustrated in Figure 20; see A in Figure 22). The outcome of these improvements should be a safer, intuitive, and direct bicycle and pedestrian connection from the Jefferson Park neighborhood to Water Street and to the South Platte River trails.
  - Address conflicts between vehicles entering and exiting the freeway and pedestrians and bicyclists traveling along 23rd Avenue/Water Street where the on- and off-ramps intersect with 23rd Avenue and Water Street; in addition to long-term solutions, explore interim improvements such as adjusted signal timing and striping and signage updates that can be implemented quickly.



Figure 20: Potential 23rd Avenue Improvement

- **Water Street Improvements:** Improve Water Street so it provides multimodal connections through the plan area, to the Jefferson Park neighborhood, and under Speer Boulevard to Platte Street (cross-section illustrated in Figure 21; see B in Figure 22).
  - Water Street should become a Downtown Collector Street (as defined in B6b) and should be improved accordingly. Because this is an existing road with a constrained right-of-way, Water Street would be an example of a Downtown Collector street without on-street parking in the short-term before redevelopment of adjacent parcels.

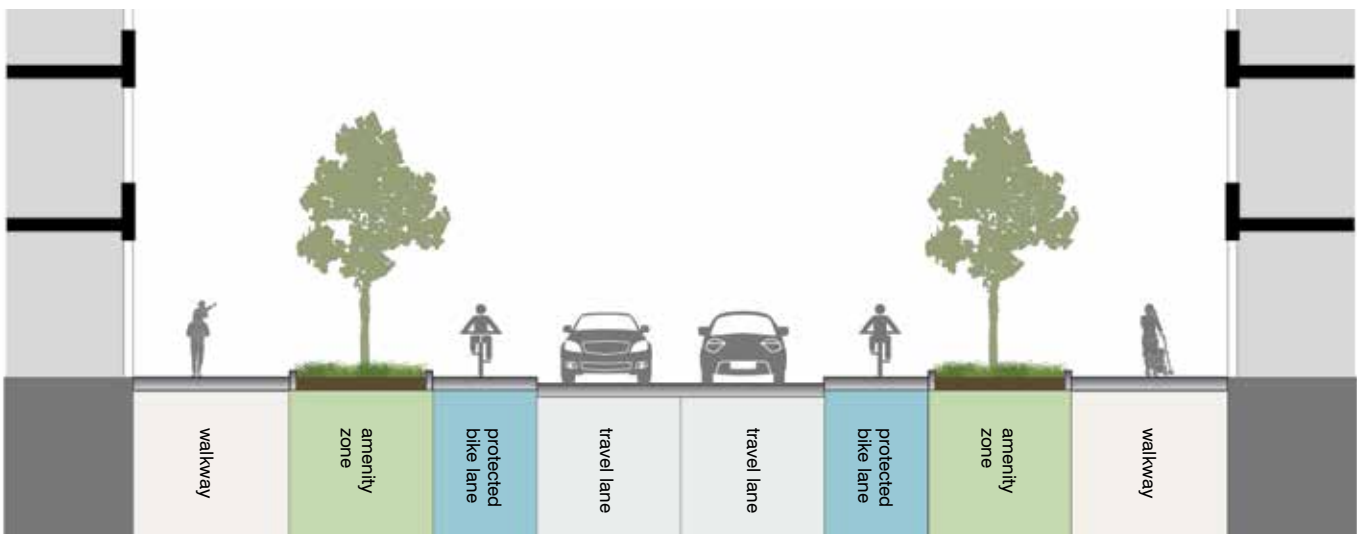


Figure 21: Potential Water Street Improvement

## B6. Connected, Multimodal Street Network

### Recommendations and Strategies (continued)

- **Walnut Street Improvements:** Redesign the portion of Walnut Street within the plan area to provide multimodal connections through the plan area and to Mile High Stadium and surrounding areas (see C in [Figure 22](#); see [B9a](#)).
  - Walnut street should become a Local Street or potentially a Shared Street (as defined in [B6b](#)) and should be improved accordingly.
  - Enhanced pedestrian and bicyclist safety measures should be implemented at the at-grade rail crossing on Walnut Street to improve the safety of this crossing and the overall environment, which includes the area negatively impacted by the I-25 and Auraria Parkway overhead bridge structures (additional bicycle and pedestrian connections would reduce the need for this at-grade crossing in the long-term).
  - Integrate clear signage and wayfinding.
  - Provide direct pedestrian and bicycle access from the Mile High Station and Pepsi Center/Elitch Gardens stations to the at-grade crossing at Walnut Street.
- **CML Pedestrian Bridge Improvements:** Enhance the existing pedestrian bridge across the CML to ensure it is safe and convenient for pedestrians and bicyclists (see D in [Figure 22](#)).
- **Speer Boulevard and Auraria Parkway Improvements:** Enhance Speer Boulevard and Auraria Parkway (both along the corridors and specifically at intersections) to reflect the desired character and function for the future of these roads defined in this plan (see E in [Figure 22](#)). This should include implementing strategies listed in both the Denver Vision Zero Action Plan (which identifies Speer Boulevard as part of the High Injury Network) to improve safety along the corridor as well as the Public Works-led report *Connecting Auraria: Improving Connectivity Across Speer, Colfax, and Auraria Parkway*.
  - Improve all intersections of Speer Boulevard and Auraria Parkway in the plan area to meet City Standards and Guidelines for new downtown intersections including:
    - Enhance the connection under Speer Boulevard at Little Raven Street to safely accommodate pedestrians and bicyclists.
    - Restripe crosswalks to a high-visibility.
    - Improve the intersection of Speer Boulevard and Chopper Circle/Wewatta Street as a priority pedestrian intersection (see [B7b](#)).
    - Consider short-term improvements such as evaluating and updating signal timing for pedestrian crossings.
  - Consider corridor-wide upgrades to Speer Boulevard and Auraria Parkway, including:
    - Acknowledge the importance of a corridor-wide approach to slow vehicles and establish clear priority zones for pedestrians and bicyclists.
    - Acknowledge the unique nature of pedestrian and bicycle movement and flow as it relates to both special event activities at the Pepsi Center as well as campus activities.
    - Reconfigure medians and add landscaping.
- **Implement Vision Zero:** Updates to Speer Boulevard and Auraria Parkway (as detailed above), as well as throughout the entire plan area, should implement the improvements and strategies detailed in the Denver Vision Zero Action Plan to reduce traffic fatalities and serious injuries.

## B6. Connected, Multimodal Street Network

### Recommendations and Strategies (continued)

- **CDOT Coordination:** Coordinate with the Colorado Department of Transportation on their Planning and Environment Linkages (PEL) study of I-25, and incorporate the following into future improvements of I-25 in this area (see F in Figure 22).
  - Reduce the amount of land consumed by interchanges throughout the plan area (including the Speer Boulevard and I-25 interchange) by exploring more urban, compressed design alternatives appropriate for the downtown context.
  - Improve safety by reducing conflict points at interchanges, especially at 23rd Avenue (see 23rd Street improvements, above).
  - Explore the possibility of improvements such as collector-distributor roads from 17th Avenue to Speer Boulevard to maintain critical access to I-25 and to minimize complicated, large footprint interchanges.
  - Reconnect the neighborhoods to the west by providing new pedestrian and bicyclist connections over I-25; Consider locations listed in B6d.
  - To minimize noise from I-25 along potential development sites north of Water Street, future design solutions should explore multiple layers of landscaping to mitigate noise pollution. If physical barriers become necessary, they should be screened with landscaping to limit their visual presence.

# B6. Connected, Multimodal Street Network

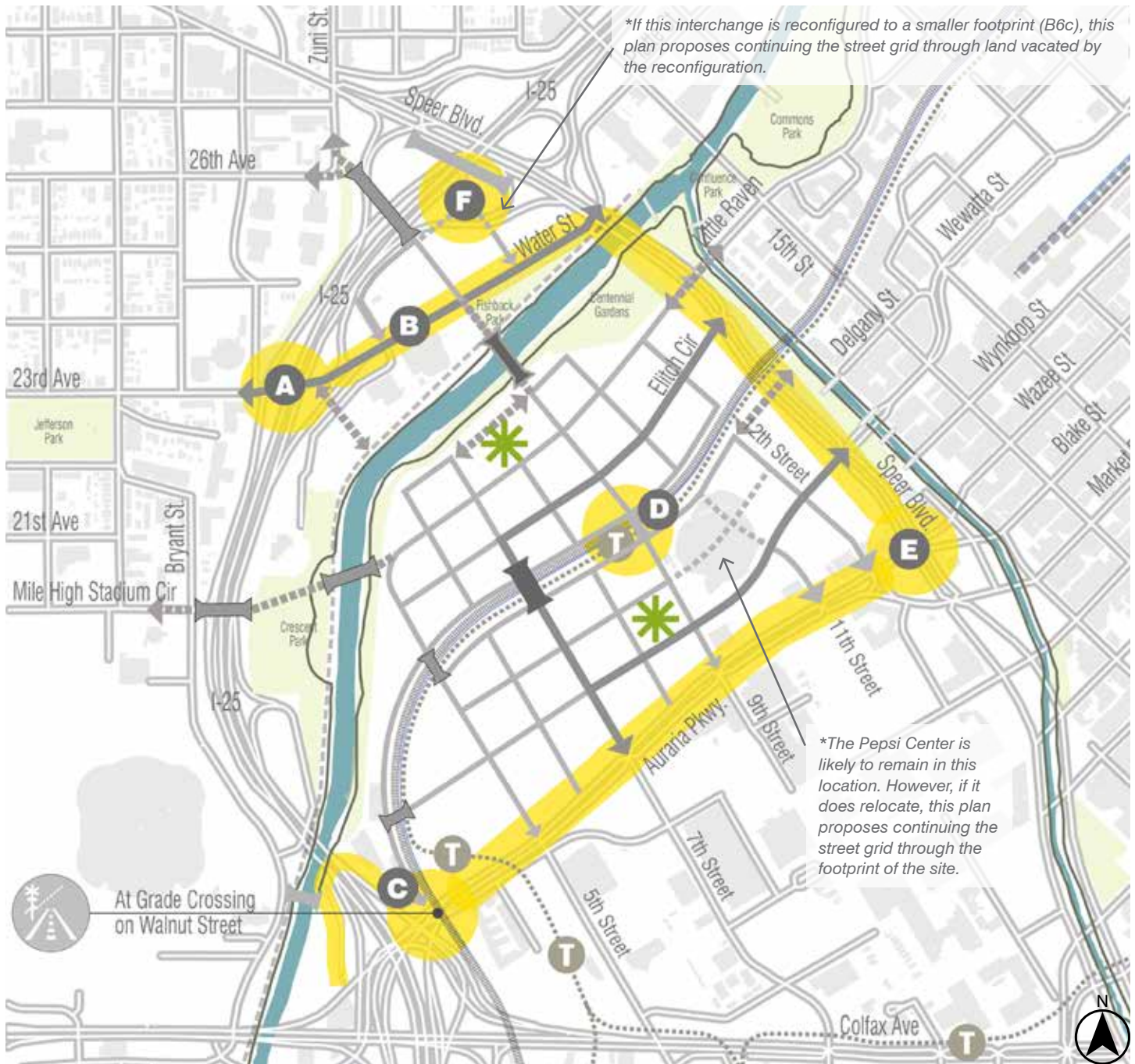


Figure 22: Proposed Improvements

- |  |  |   |
|--|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li> Existing Light Rail</li> <li> Existing CML</li> <li> Platte Valley Trolley</li> <li> Downtown Collector Streets</li> <li> Local Streets</li> <li> *Local Streets</li> <li> Existing Ped &amp; Bike Bridge</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li> Proposed All Mode Bridge</li> <li> Proposed Ped &amp; Bike or All Mode Bridge</li> <li> Proposed Ped &amp; Bike Bridge</li> <li> Proposed Ped &amp; Bike Connection</li> <li> Proposed Park/Open Space</li> <li> Proposed Improvements to Existing Infrastructure</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>A</b> 23rd Avenue Improvements</li> <li><b>B</b> Water Street Improvements</li> <li><b>C</b> Walnut Street Improvements</li> <li><b>D</b> CML Bridge Improvements</li> <li><b>E</b> Speer Boulevard and Auraria Parkway Improvements</li> <li><b>F</b> CDOT Coordination</li> </ul> |
|--|--|---|

# B6. Connected, Multimodal Street Network

## Recommendations and Strategies (continued)

### B6d. Provide new connections to and within the plan area to complete the mobility network.

Figure 23 illustrates one potential scenario to implement this recommendation and the following strategies. There are multiple network configurations that would accomplish these recommendations. Proposed pedestrian and bicycle connections can occur in locations vehicles cannot travel such as between the Highland Bridge over the South Platte River and Platte Street. Where possible, these new connections and improvements to existing connections should occur at ground level; flyover structures and new bridges should be limited to connections that cannot be accommodated at ground level. In cases where an elevated connection is required, such as over the river, connections should be safe and easy to use for pedestrians and bicyclists, and new infrastructure should be attractive and unique.

- **7th Street Connection:** Extend 7th Street across the consolidated main line (CML) to provide a multimodal connection across the railroad to serve as the main vehicular connection between the East of the CML and West of the CML areas (see A in Figure 23).
  - Use fill to raise the grade adjacent to the CML; this enables a connection over the CML that is at the same grade as adjacent buildings and therefore provides a connection with seamless integration into the future surrounding development rather than requiring a bridge that would disrupt public spaces, development, and travel.
- **North/South Connections:** Provide a new North/South connection from the plan area to the surrounding neighborhoods as an extension of 9th Street (see B in Figure 23); this connection should have an iconic design. The connection should meet the function and character of one of these options, and development and planning should not preclude either option:
  - **Scenario 1:** A bicycle- and pedestrian-only bridge would provide a high quality, convenient, safe, and attractive connection across the river. A bridge of this character should provide separate space for bicyclists and for pedestrians. If possible, placemaking elements such as planters and built-in seating can be incorporated. A pedestrian- and bicycle-only bridge would not be able to accommodate transit vehicles and would therefore eliminate this connection as a potential new transit route between the Jefferson Park neighborhood and the plan area.
  - **Scenario 2:** A bridge for all modes of transportation would provide access for pedestrians, bicyclists, transit, and other vehicles across the river. A bridge of this character and function, if feasible at this location, should:
    - Clearly prioritize pedestrians and bicyclists;
    - Be carefully designed to avoid attracting high volumes of private vehicles or becoming a short cut between the Jefferson Park neighborhood and Speer Boulevard; and
    - Prioritize transit vehicles, and potentially limit vehicular access to transit, emergency, and service vehicles only.



**Public Input:**  
People are excited to see a variety of new connections.





# B6. Connected, Multimodal Street Network

## Recommendations and Strategies (continued)

- Future studies in conjunction with development scenarios should be conducted to determine which bridge character and function might be needed for anticipated growth. Further study will also be required to determine the exact location of the connection, which should provide direct access to surrounding bicycle and pedestrian facilities. Additionally, a bridge at this location is not accounted for in the Army Corps UWR/South Platte River Study and will need to meet certain regulations, including freeboard and no-rise criteria.
- **Connection to the Jefferson Park and Highland Neighborhoods:** To supplement the prioritized improvements to Water Street and the 23rd Avenue bridge over I-25 (see B6c), encourage a new connection over I-25 that connects the Jefferson Park and Highland Neighborhoods to the plan area (see C in Figure 23).
  - The additional connection should align with the North/South connection over the South Platte River and continue to connect to the intersection of 26th Avenue and Zuni Street.
  - This connection could be achieved by a bridge or by a cap over I-25.
- **West Connections:** Provide new connections from the study area to the neighborhoods to the west of the study area (see D in Figure 23).
  - Prioritize a pedestrian and bicycle connection over the South Platte River from the West of the CML area to Crescent Park (a bridge at this location is not accounted for in the Army Corps UWR/South Platte River Study and will need to meet certain regulations, including freeboard and no-rise criteria).
  - Encourage a connection over I-25 that connects Mile High Stadium Circle and Bryant Street to the plan area.
    - The connection should align with the prioritized East/West connection over the South Platte River and connect to Crescent Park.
- **East Connection:** Continue a connection to the east across Speer Boulevard to Cherry Creek and into Downtown by providing at least one intuitive, safe, and convenient crossing of Speer Boulevard on both sides of the CML along priority pedestrian corridors (see E and F in Figure 23; see B7b).
  - The specific configuration of a pedestrian and bicycle route from East of the CML to Cherry Creek and into Downtown at or under Speer Boulevard (see E in Figure 23) will depend on the final buildout and topography of the adjacent land.
- **Southwest/Sun Valley Connection:** Provide a connection to Sun Valley and other neighborhoods to the southwest.
  - Encourage a new pedestrian and bicycle connection over the CML north of the Mile High Stadium light rail station, potentially aligned with the extension of Wewatta Street/Chopper Circle (see G in Figure 23).
  - Work with city agencies and the Metropolitan Football Stadium District to coordinate future development and to provide wayfinding and other improvements along the Platte River Trail to establish a bicycle and pedestrian connection between the plan area, Sun Valley, and other neighborhoods south of Colfax Avenue (see B6c).



# B6. Connected, Multimodal Street Network

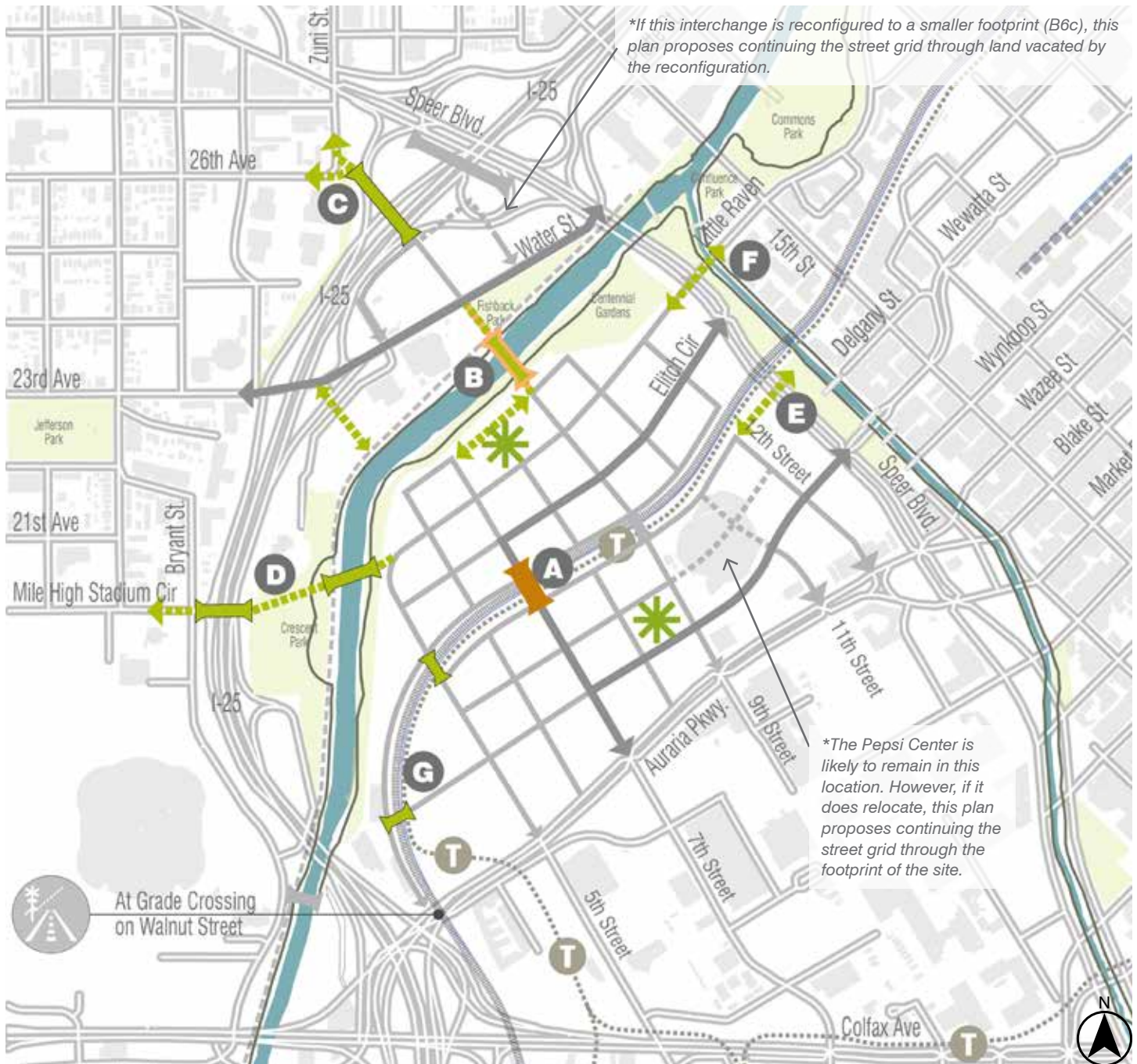


Figure 23: New Connections

This is one potential scenario of connections to implement this plan's recommendations. There are multiple connection configurations that can implement this plan.

- Existing Light Rail
- Existing CML
- Platte Valley Trolley
- Downtown Collector Streets
- Local Streets
- \*Local Streets
- Existing Ped & Bike Bridge
- Proposed All Mode Bridge
- Proposed Ped & Bike or All Mode Bridge
- Proposed Ped & Bike Bridge
- Proposed Ped & Bike Connection
- Potential All Mode Connection
- Proposed Park/Open Space
- 7th Street Connection
- North/South Connections
- Connection to Jefferson Park and Highland Neighborhoods
- West Connection
- East Connection
- East Connection

# B7. A Place for Pedestrians

## Goal

Prioritize pedestrians by creating streets that are safe, comfortable, attractive, and appealing for walking so residents, employees, and visitors want to get around on foot.

## Why It's Important

Walkability is a key ingredient to a successful urban environment—it enhances public safety, improves health, fosters more personal interactions, and increases economic vitality. Creating a comprehensive pedestrian network promotes an easy transition to adjacent neighborhoods (including the adjacent Auraria Campus with thousands of students, staff, and faculty), which supports the goal of creating an extension of downtown. Additionally, the mix of land uses detailed in A Prosperous City supports walkability by locating daily necessities for commercial and residential tenants within walking distance and enabling shared parking.

## Recommendations and Strategies

### B7a. Create a comprehensive pedestrian network with pedestrian facilities on all streets in the plan area.

- **Pedestrian Amenities:** Construct all new roads with pedestrian amenities that contribute to a quality built environment and encourage users to engage with their surroundings. Amenities include lighting, seating, wayfinding, and interactive elements such as public art or water features.
- **Pedestrian-Friendly Intersections:** Construct all intersections with best practice design elements; for example, all stop-controlled intersections should have well-marked and protected crossings, limit crossing distance with curb extensions, be ADA compliant, disallow right turn bypass, and include pedestrian signals.
- **Safe Routes to School:** Design pedestrian and bike networks to accommodate future schools as envisioned in the plan area (see [C6a](#)). Construct new networks to protect vulnerable pedestrians while encouraging physical activity.

### B7b. Designate and enhance priority pedestrian connections and intersections.

Priority pedestrian connections and intersections should meet the standards outlined in [B7a](#), and they should also exceed these standards by providing excellent facilities for safety, wayfinding, and aesthetics. Segments of priority pedestrian connections may be appropriate for the shared street typology (see [B6b](#)). [Figure 24](#) illustrates one potential scenario to implement this recommendation. There are multiple network configuration scenarios that would accomplish this recommendation. The final design should accomplish the following:



# B7. A Place for Pedestrians

## Recommendations and Strategies (continued)

- **Identify Priority Connections:** Identify priority pedestrian connections in the plan area. Priority connections should reinforce desired connections detailed in [B6d](#), including the proposed bridges. The priority pedestrian connections should include:
  - North/South: A direct route from Auraria Parkway to and across the South Platte River to any future connections north of the river; potential alignment is along 9th Street, and segments of this connection could be the shared street typology (see A in [Figure 24](#); see [B6b](#)).
  - East/West 1: A direct route on the west side of the CML from Downtown to Jefferson Park and the Mile High Stadium area; potential alignment is along Little Raven Street (see B in [Figure 24](#)).
  - East/West 2: A direct route on the east side of the CML from Downtown to Jefferson Park and the Mile High Stadium area; potential alignment is along the extension of Wewatta Street/Chopper Circle (see C in [Figure 24](#)).
- **Identify Priority Intersections:** Identify priority pedestrian intersections in the plan area; these should be the intersection of any priority pedestrian connections, and there should be a minimum of one priority pedestrian intersection along the streets closest to the river and adjacent to any significant public space. Priority pedestrian intersections should also include major connections from the plan area to the surrounding neighborhoods, such as Chopper Circle at Speer Boulevard and any major future streets that connect to Speer Boulevard or Auraria Parkway.
- **Design Elements:** At these priority pedestrian connections and intersections, dedicate enhanced right-of-way to pedestrian facilities, and prioritize design elements that enhance pedestrian safety, comfort, and convenience.
- **Existing Connections and Intersections:** Improve existing connections and intersections as detailed in [B6c](#).

### **B7c. Develop an intimate block size to create a comfortable and safe walking environment.**

- **Block Size:** Design blocks that are small enough to provide a pedestrian-friendly block rhythm (see [B6a](#), [B6b](#), [B6c](#), and [B6d](#)), but large enough to accommodate both alleys (see [B6a](#), [B6b](#), [B6c](#), and [B6d](#)) and efficient parking garage layout that allows for active uses to wrap the entire facade (see [D5c](#), [D5d](#), and [D5f](#)).



# B7. A Place for Pedestrians



**Figure 24: Potential Priority Pedestrian Connections and Intersections**

- Existing Light Rail
- Existing CML
- Platte Valley Trolley
- Downtown Collector Streets
- Local Streets
- \*Local Streets
- Existing Ped & Bike Bridge
- Proposed All Mode Bridge
- Proposed Ped & Bike or All Mode Bridge
- Proposed Ped & Bike Bridge
- Proposed Ped & Bike Connection
- Proposed Park/Open Space
- Priority Pedestrian Connection
- Priority Pedestrian Intersection
- Planned 5280 Loop
- A North/South
- B East/West 1
- C East/West 2

## B8. Robust Bicycle Network

### Goal

Provide clear bicycle network connections via high-quality, on- and off-street facilities including parking and storage into and through the plan area.

### Why It's Important

Increased bicycle use enhances the overall livability of Downtown, improves public health and air quality, and implements a key goal from Denver Moves: Bicycles. Improved bicycle facilities also reinforce the goal of having a high ease of use bicycle facility within a quarter mile of every household.

### Recommendations and Strategies

#### **B8a. Provide comprehensive bicycle facilities throughout the plan area.**

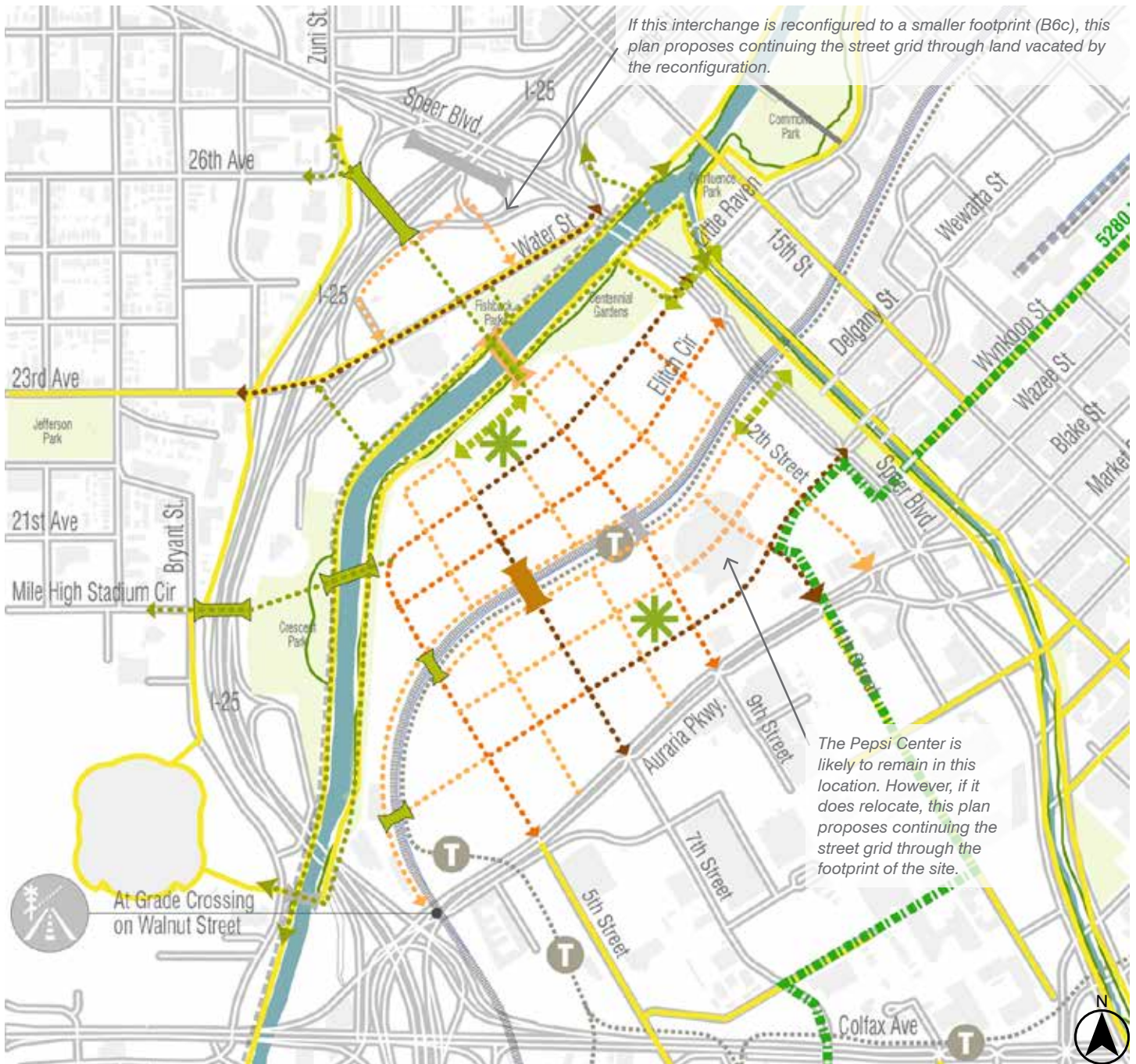
All streets in the plan area that include bicycle facilities should ensure these facilities are safe and comfortable for bicycle riders of all ages and abilities. Facilities should range from protected bike lanes on higher capacity streets to shared roadways on quiet streets with low vehicle volumes. The specific design of the bicycle network is dependent on the final design of the street network; therefore, what is shown in [Figure 25](#) is conceptual and not intended as a literal master plan. However, regardless of the final street design, the bicycle network should accomplish the following objectives:

- **Protected Facilities:** Protected bicycle facilities within the plan area should connect to existing or planned protected facilities in the surrounding neighborhoods; for example, a bike lane along Elitch Circle should extend and connect to the existing shared use path on Little Raven Street, rather than ending at Speer Boulevard, which does not have any bicycle facilities.
- **Facility Design:** Bicycle lanes and routes should have clear wayfinding and be contiguous; while there is some flexibility in the specific design of bicycle facilities, variation in width and quality along a single route within the plan area should be minimized.
- **Determining Facility Type:** Particularly for new roads that are not limited by a constrained existing right-of-way, protected and conventional bicycle lanes can be applied where vehicle volumes are lower than where they might otherwise be recommended.
- **Intersections:** Intersections should be designed to provide safe, comfortable, and convenient crossings for bicyclists by prioritizing bicyclists through designated bicycle signals where appropriate based upon facility type. Specific intersection treatments should be determined with each design.
- **Parking:** Bicycle parking should be available and convenient throughout the plan area.

#### **B8b. Connect to existing and planned bicycle facilities.**

- **Existing Facilities:** The bicycle network within the plan area should provide a direct connection to the existing facilities, including bicycle infrastructure on 5th Street, 11th Street, the Platte River Trail, and along the Cherry Creek Trail.
- **Planned Facilities:** The bicycle network within the plan area should also connect to the planned facilities detailed in Denver Moves: Bicycles.
- **5280 Loop:** The network should connect to the planned 5280 Loop.

# B8. Robust Bicycle Network



**Figure 25: Bike Facilities**

This is one potential scenario to implement this plan's recommendations. There are multiple network configurations that would implement this plan.

- Existing Light Rail
- Existing CML
- Platte Valley Trolley
- Existing Ped & Bike Bridge
- Proposed All Mode Bridge
- Proposed Ped & Bike or All Mode Bridge
- Proposed Ped & Bike Bridge
- Proposed Ped & Bike Connection
- Protected Bike Lane
- Bike Lane
- Shared Roadway
- Multi-Use Trail
- Planned 5280 Loop
- Existing Bike Network

# B9. Mobility Hub

## Goal

Leverage the existing transit connections within the plan area and create a robust network connecting to local, regional, statewide, and national services to make traveling by transit safe and convenient.

## Why It's Important

The two light rail stations within the plan area are an opportunity create a Mobility Hub by fully integrating the stations into the plan area and other transit services, to increase the viability of using transit, and to enhance first/last mile connections. Creating a Mobility Hub also would leverage the plan area's potential as the next downtown neighborhood.

## Recommendations and Strategies

### B9a. Establish protocol to transform Pepsi Center/Elitch Gardens and Mile High light rail stations into Mobility Hubs.

Mobility Hubs, which are a type of transit-oriented development, are locations served by transit that seamlessly integrate transit services into the surrounding transportation network, including other transit services, bicycle facilities, and walkable destinations. In addition to higher density (see [D4a](#), [D4b](#), and [D4c](#)) and well-designed transit plazas ([E4a](#)), mobility hubs should also include:

- **Pedestrian and Bicycle Connections:** Provide excellent pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure around light rail stations to create clear and convenient connections to the stations; provide pedestrian and bicycle connections across Speer Boulevard to existing transit services on 15th Street.
- **Bicycle Parking:** Provide convenient and secure bicycle parking at the stations.
- **Bicycle Share:** Encourage bike share programs at station areas in locations that are visible and convenient to the stations.
- **Ride Share:** Provide ride share and transportation network company pick-up and drop-off.
- **Car Share:** Encourage car share programs at station areas.
- **Transit Facilities:** Provide bus shelters and ticketing kiosks for connecting services.
- **Transit Information:** Provide real-time transit information and schedules.
- **Wayfinding:** Include clear wayfinding for all modes of travel throughout the station area.
- **Emerging Technology:** Incorporate advanced technology solutions for transportation and mobility systems.
  - Explore how new mobility options such as autonomous vehicles, electric vehicles, and sub-grade transit can address mobility needs while reducing the demand for dedicated space for private vehicles.
  - Address the projected effect of smart and autonomous vehicles on traffic management and parking solutions.





## B9. Mobility Hub

### Recommendations and Strategies (continued)

#### B9b. Provide additional transit services to and through the plan area.

- **Evaluate Light Rail Service:** Coordinate with RTD to evaluate the impact of the proposed new development in the plan area on current light rail service; work with RTD to adjust service to and through the Pepsi Center/Elitch Gardens and Mile High Stadium light rail stations as needed to ensure that light rail is a convenient and comfortable way to access the plan area.
- **Extended Bus Service:** Consider extending bus services (including bus stop amenities) along a new street network to connect to the light rail stations, including transit connections to surrounding neighborhoods, including the Jefferson Park and Sun Valley neighborhoods.
- **Existing Facilities:** Leverage existing transit services and facilities.
  - Improve existing bus stops and provide amenities such as shelters, benches, waste receptacles, and schedule information to promote more efficient and equitable use.
  - Integrate the Denver Trolley, the restored historic trolley that travels along the northeast bank of the river from Speer Boulevard to Colfax Avenue, as both a tourist attraction as well as a neighborhood connector.
- **Last-Mile Service:** Consider implementing last-mile transit options such as a shuttle circulator system with frequent service to provide a connection between the light rail stations, the riverfront, Union Station, and other surrounding neighborhoods; this system is an opportunity for potential innovations such as autonomous, electric vehicles.



# B10. Transportation Demand Management (TDM)

## Goal

Reduce the need for vehicle infrastructure and to encourage residents, employees, and visitors to travel to and within the site by walking, biking, and taking transit rather than by driving alone.

## Why It's Important

Transportation Demand Management (TDM) refers to a suite of strategies that aim to reduce automobile traffic congestion and vehicle emissions by helping people use the transportation system more efficiently; TDM strategies aim to reduce drive-alone automobile trips, particularly during peak traffic periods, by shifting those trips to other modes of travel or to other times of day. The City is preparing to launch a TDM planning effort that aims to create a tool and chart a path towards a citywide coordinated TDM plan for all new development. Implementation of a robust TDM strategy will be a critical element of the success of the plan area; it will enable the multi-modal transportation network detailed in previous sections to adequately serve the land uses and intensities envisioned for this area. Development of TDM strategies for the plan area should be coordinated with citywide efforts, but may need to proceed ahead of the City's process depending on the development schedule and completion of the City's TDM efforts.

## Recommendations and Strategies

### B10a. Require Transportation Demand Management.

- **TDM Plan:** New development should work with the City and County of Denver and the Downtown Denver Partnership, which is the local Transportation Management Association (TMA), to manage, implement, measure, and enforce a TDM plan for the entire plan area or for appropriate subsections. Depending on specific development and physical constraints, different strategies may be appropriate for different portions of the plan area.

### B10b. Remove parking minimums and establish parking maximums.

- **Parking Maximums:** Regulations that apply to the plan area should not include required parking minimums; instead, they should establish appropriate parking maximums to support the multi-modal goals of this plan (see A5a).
  - Consider opportunities for shared parking, which is a land use and transportation strategy that allows complementary land uses to share spaces rather than produce separate spaces for separate uses, when establishing appropriate parking maximums. Land uses that can most effectively share spaces have different peak parking demand, such as office (daytime peak) and residential (nighttime peak) or entertainment uses (nighttime peak) and academic uses (daytime peak).

## TDM STRATEGIES

**The suite of TDM strategies is evolving and expanding, and certain strategies are more effective in specific circumstances. Therefore any TDM plan should be measured by trip reduction outcomes and be flexible enough to incorporate new strategies.**

### Programmatic Strategies

- Discounted (or free) EcoPasses for employees, residents, and low-income residents
- Discounted car-share memberships
- Promotional campaigns such as Bike to Work Day, Walk to Work Day
- Leverage programs identified in the DRCOG Regional TDM Short Range Plan (2012-2016)
- Individualized marketing

### Design Strategies

- Information boards/kiosks
- Direct route to transit
- Bike parking
- Passenger loading zones for ride shares, autonomous vehicles, etc. particularly at locations with high peak periods such as entertainment uses
- Locate parking out-of-site with alley access
- Right-of-way improvements that encourage walking, biking, or ride sharing

### Transit Strategies

- Shuttle service to/from transit
- Subsidized transit passes
- Bus shelters that are covered, well-lit, and provide seating
- Informative and visible signs and maps
- Accommodations for bicycles on transit vehicles
- Wireless capabilities for riders

### Parking Strategies

- Unbundle residential parking (sell or lease parking spaces separately from residential units)
- Parking cash-out options for on-site "free" employee parking
- Parking maximums instead of minimums (a lower volume of vehicles entering and exiting from garages will also enable garages access on alleys)
- Parking management: car share, electric vehicle sharing, public parking garages

### Commute Trip Reduction Strategies

- Carpool, Vanpool, Schoolpool, and ride share
- Guaranteed ride home
- Showers and lockers
- Flexible work schedule

# A DIVERSE CITY

## Being a socially and economically inclusive place

A diverse city is a place that welcomes and attracts people of all ages, races, religions, or incomes who want to live, work or play downtown.

Neighborhoods support diversity by expanding availability of housing options at a range of prices, offering services, facilities, and businesses that support different kinds of households, and encouraging civic participation to ensure that different voices are represented. Diverse communities tend to be safer, more vibrant, economically resilient, healthier, and more appealing.

The Downtown Area Plan developed four topics to achieve the vision element of becoming A Diverse City. In addition to C1 through C4 (listed below), two new recommendation topics apply to the Central Platte Valley – Auraria District.

### 2007 Plan Topics

- C1. Downtown Living
- C2. A Family-Friendly Place
- C3. Embracing Adjacent Neighborhoods
- C4. An International Downtown

### Plan Amendment Topics

- C5. Diverse Housing Options
- C6. Support a Diverse Community



## C5. Diverse Housing Options

### Goal

Provide a variety of affordable and market-rate, family-sized, and live/work housing options to support a diverse community.

### Why It's Important

Fostering an equitable, affordable, and inclusive community is an integral part of creating a thriving downtown neighborhood. A diverse range of housing that attracts a variety of households of different sizes, ages, and incomes is a fundamental requirement to enable a dynamic, diverse, and active community. This also supports the core goals of the Office of Economic Development's Housing an Inclusive Denver strategy, which recommends creating affordable housing in areas of opportunity, preserving affordability and housing quality, and promoting equitable and accessible housing options. Additionally, the plan area provides a significant opportunity to implement Housing an Inclusive Denver's recommendation to leverage new development as a way to bring affordability to areas near transit, jobs centers, and schools.

### Recommendations and Strategies

#### **C5a. Include a variety of market-rate and affordable housing to accommodate diverse households and incomes in the plan area.**

A diverse range of housing should include cross-cutting variety of both affordable and market-rate options across the following measures:

- **Variety of Building Types:** Promote a variety of affordable and market-rate building types that include, but are not limited to, apartments, condominiums, townhomes, and live/work units.
- **Mixture of Unit Sizes:** Promote a variety of affordable and market-rate unit sizes to accommodate a range of age groups and household sizes.
  - Units should range in size from studios and one-bedroom units to units with three or more bedrooms to accommodate larger households or families.
- **Ownership and For-Rent Units:** Promote both ownership and for-rent affordable and market-rate housing opportunities to provide flexibility and ensure an equitable community.
- **Residential Amenities:** Promote provision of on-site residential amenities that attract residents of all ages, including families with children as well as elderly residents in both affordable and market-rate units.

#### **C5b. Implement requirements to ensure that affordable and workforce housing is provided in the plan area.**

As of January 1, 2017, all new commercial and residential development in Denver is charged a linkage fee based on the square footage of the project. These fees are used to help create or preserve affordable homes for low- to moderate-income families citywide, but they do not specifically require provision of affordable housing in a particular area. However, relatively consolidated property ownership in the plan area and the ability to leverage the value of increased development potential provides an opportunity for a master plan provision of on-site affordable units.

A survey conducted by the Office of Economic Development found that living in areas with diverse neighbors—those of different races and ethnicities, economic statuses, or ages and lifestyles—is important for the majority of respondents.



## C5. Diverse Housing Options

### Recommendations and Strategies (continued)

- **Level of Requirement:** Leverage increased development potential to require additional affordable housing beyond what is required by the citywide linkage fee (see [D4d](#) for recommendations and strategies relating to regulatory tools that may allow increased development potential that could be conditional upon provision of affordable housing).
- **Affordable On-Site Units:** Develop regulatory tools to require affordable units to be built on-site rather than through payment of the citywide linkage fee. Multiple-phase developments are encouraged to include affordable housing in each phase.
- **Level of Affordability:** Ensure that regulatory tools require housing that is affordable for low to moderate income households.
- **Duration of Affordability:** Explore opportunities to dedicate housing units as affordable for as long as possible, potentially extending the time-frame defined by current policies.

### C5c. Ensure that housing is appropriately located throughout the plan area.

- **Dispersed Affordable Units:** Ensure that when affordable housing is planned through regulatory tools, such as a built alternative plan or other housing strategy, require affordable units to be geographically dispersed throughout the plan area rather than concentrated in a specific location.
  - Specifically avoid concentrating affordable units near I-25 or the CML (see [E7c](#) for strategies regarding residential uses adjacent to the CML or I-25).
- **Location of Family-Sized Units:** Ensure that both affordable and market-rate family-appropriate housing units are located to provide safe access to educational facilities, parks and other recreational opportunities, transit, and fresh food.
- **Location of Student Housing:** If student housing is provided in the plan area it should be in close proximity and accessible to Auraria Campus.



## C6. Support a Diverse Community

### Goal

Create a vibrant neighborhood by intentionally attracting a diverse range of residents, employees, entrepreneurs, and visitors.

### Why It's Important

Diversity is a measure of success in a community for a variety of reasons; diverse communities are vibrant, inclusive, and resilient to change. Metrics for diversity include income, race, employment, education and housing tenure. One metric of diversity is the number of children in a community. Supporting young families means that residents can continue to contribute to the vibrancy of downtown even as their family structure changes, and it means that fewer families have to move out of cities resulting in additional urban sprawl. Building a community that supports children results in a city that is inclusive and sustainable.

A diverse array of businesses enables more resilient and adaptable commercial activity, job markets, and visitor attractions, and it also supports a broader variety of residents' needs and desires.

### Recommendations and Strategies

#### C6a. Offer services and facilities that support families.

- **Childcare:** Explore funding opportunities or partnerships with developers and providers to introduce child care, including affordable child care, and daycare services into the plan area.
- **Community Gathering Spaces:** Create unique places with diverse uses, activities, services and gathering spaces that help to draw people together and create desirable destinations in the community.
  - Design community gathering spaces to be versatile, accessible and adaptable to appeal to a broad range of groups and interests, including resident groups, families, clubs, sports teams and community groups.
  - Encourage recreational centers to have a combination of the following programs: gym, pool, community meeting rooms, after-school activities, daycare, or activities for seniors.
  - Encourage new development to provide indoor and outdoor community gathering spaces such as shared or semi-private spaces (particularly located near a cluster of units that have three or more bedrooms to become spaces where children from different households can play independently, but supervised) or lobbies that promote lingering and casual social interaction.
  - Designate public open space for recreational uses (see [E4a](#)).
- **In-Unit Amenities:** Promote amenities such as laundry facilities and additional storage space (such as space for strollers) within units that have three or more bedrooms.
- **Schools:** Collaborate with Denver Public Schools (DPS) to explore the opportunity for new primary and secondary schools to be integrated within the plan area as necessary.

In 2015, Toronto's City Planning Division conducted a study to determine how downtown development can better accommodate the needs of households with children. The study resulted in a set of guidelines, including the recommendations that 15% of new buildings' units include two bedrooms, and 10% include three bedrooms. The guidelines recommend locating these larger units near each other and on lower floors with adjoining outdoor spaces to foster observed yet independent play and interaction among families.



## C6. Support a Diverse Community

### Recommendations and Strategies (continued)

- **Education Opportunities:** Partner with educational outreach programs through local primary and secondary schools to utilize public spaces for interactive, inclusive and diverse learning experiences.

#### **C6b. Provide amenities and facilities that support seniors and people with disabilities.**

- **Universal Design:** Incorporate Universal Design principles and American Disability Act design guidelines in public and communal spaces.
- **Healthcare Facilities:** Incentivize health and rehabilitation-related businesses within the plan area.

#### **C6c. Explore strategies to attract a diverse group of businesses, employees, and visitors.**

- **Diverse Businesses:** Work with the Office of Economic Development (OED) and non-profits to identify organizations, businesses, or entrepreneurs that can leverage retail, office, lab, or other new spaces in future development.
- **Adult Education:** Cultivate partnerships to broaden adult educational and job placement opportunities, such as collaboration between neighborhoods and the institutions operating on Auraria Campus.

#### **C6d. Encourage the formation of neighborhood partnerships.**

- **Registered Neighborhood Organizations (RNO's):** Existing and future residents and property owners should consider joining or forming an RNO to be informed and play a role in ongoing City efforts.
- **Other Neighborhood and Business Organizations:** Support the formation of Business Improvement Districts (BID), General Improvement Districts (GID) or other partnership organizations that can provide community-initiated services.



# A DISTINCTIVE CITY

## Placing value on the special identity, people, and unique characteristics of a place

Places with a distinctive identity differentiate themselves from other neighborhoods and residents, visitors, and businesses view them as special and unique. A distinctive identity arises from unique characteristics and qualities that can be defined and expressed through architecture and building forms, streetscapes, public spaces, public art, and cultural amenities that improve our experience of the built environment. The mile of the South Platte River is an invaluable resource that can define a distinct identity for the plan area. It connects multiple riverfront parks and open spaces, offers comprehensive urban recreational experiences, and provides a unique central feature for the plan area.

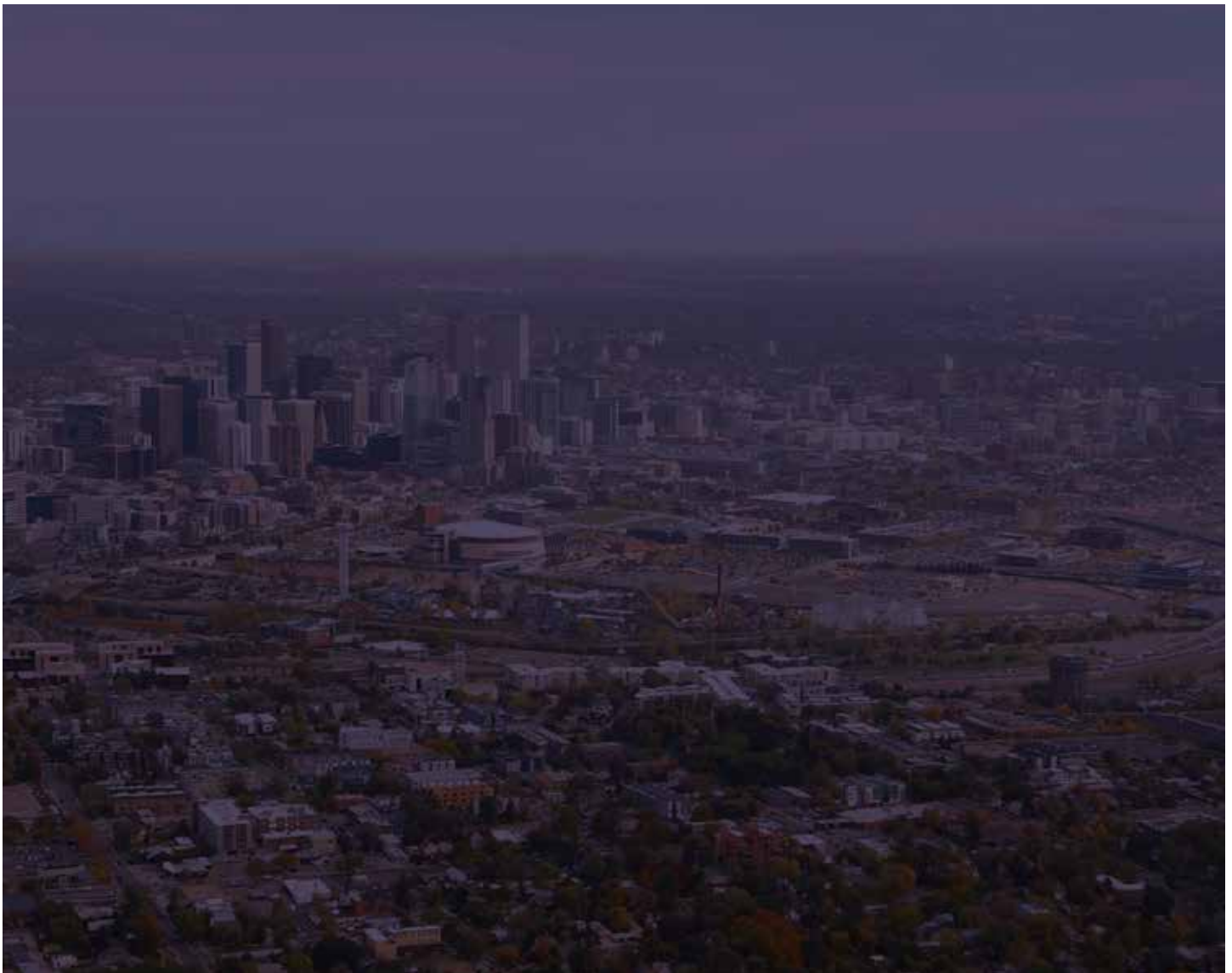
The Downtown Area Plan developed three topics to achieve the vision element of becoming A Distinctive City. In addition to D1 through D3, three new recommendation topics apply to the Central Platte Valley – Auraria District.

### 2007 Plan Topics

- D1. District Evolution
- D2. Connecting Auraria
- D3. Downtown's New Neighborhood: Arapahoe Square

### Plan Amendment Topics

- D4. Variety of Building Intensity
- D5. High Quality Design
- D6. Branding and Identity





## D4. Variety of Building Intensity

### Goal

Promote new development that creates diverse places and activities through a variety of building densities and intensities within a mixture of building forms that reinforce a comfortable, human-scale pedestrian experience.

### Why It's Important

Walkable high intensity mixed-use development around mass transit and adjacent to some of Denver's greatest downtown assets can bring social and economic vitality to both the plan area and the city. Development intensity considers the overall height and mass of buildings, including open spaces and spacing between towers. While a relatively high intensity is consistent with the plan vision, a variety of building forms and massing should provide a comfortable human-scale at the street level, similar to successful pedestrian-oriented areas such as Lower Downtown (LoDo) and Platte Street. Regulatory tools to promote a variety of building intensity could include zoning, design standards and guidelines, development agreements or other tools that require or incentivize desired development outcomes.

### Recommendations and Strategies

#### D4a. Adopt new or updated zoning standards to require a variety of building intensities.

New or updated zoning standards will be an important regulatory tool to implement recommendations and strategies in D4b-D4e below.

- **New Zone Districts:** Develop new zone districts to implement the objective for a variety of building intensity.
- **Overlay Zone Districts:** New overlay districts that adjust some requirements within underlying zone districts could also be appropriate to promote a variety of building intensities.

#### D4b. Promote a variety of building heights and intensities.

The Plan recognizes the need for a relatively high development intensity to support affordable housing, parks and other benefits, but it seeks to balance that need with varied building heights and massing to support a human-scale pedestrian environment.

- **Building Height:** Allow tall building heights if the regulatory tools for building intensity and massing described below are implemented.
- **Overall Building Intensity/Massing:** Encourage a variety of building intensities by requiring design features that break down the mass of larger, taller buildings to promote human-scale and ensure access to light and air. Regulatory tools could include:
  - Maximum Floor Area Ratio (FAR).
  - Building floor plate limits.
  - Minimum spacing between towers.
  - Mass reduction requirements (percentage reductions in building mass as building height increases).
  - Upper story setbacks or stepbacks.
  - Design standards and guidelines to break down the mass and scale of larger buildings.



## D4. Variety of Building Intensity

### Recommendations and Strategies (continued)

#### D4c. Calibrate allowed building height and intensity by context.

The Plan Amendment envisions a variety of building intensities (building height and massing) across the plan area. Lower building intensity is appropriate near the river and around existing lower scale buildings. Greater building intensity with more frequent towers is appropriate in the most active areas away from the river and away from existing lower scale buildings (see [Figure 26](#)).

- **Highest Intensity of Development:** Includes taller buildings and/or more building mass. Below are areas where the highest building intensity is encouraged:
  - At mobility hubs near light rail stations (see [B9a](#)).
  - Along the Consolidated Main Line (CML).
  - Along 7th Street.
- **Lowest Intensity of Development:** A lower intensity of development is appropriate on the riverfront and portions of the plan area that transition to surrounding lower-scale development. Such areas include:
  - The South Platte Riverfront (within about 1.5 blocks on the southeast side of the river and about 1 block on the northwest side of the river)
    - Limits on building mass.
    - Significant spacing between towers and/or a specific limit on building height.
    - Areas adjacent to I-25 interchanges may be appropriate for towers with limits on building mass.
  - Along the transition to the Lower Downtown Historic District and Auraria Campus (including the area with existing buildings along Auraria Parkway near Speer Boulevard).
    - Limits on building mass.
    - Significant spacing between towers and/or a specific limit on building height.

#### D4d. Leverage increases in allowed building intensity to promote community benefits.

In many cases, the development intensities described in [D4c](#) will be greater than current zoning allowances. This provides an opportunity to ensure new development shares a portion of the value of increased development intensity through community benefits (see [Implementation](#)), such as affordable housing, public space and amenities, or new infrastructure, that wouldn't otherwise be required. Regulatory tools to implement this strategy could include:

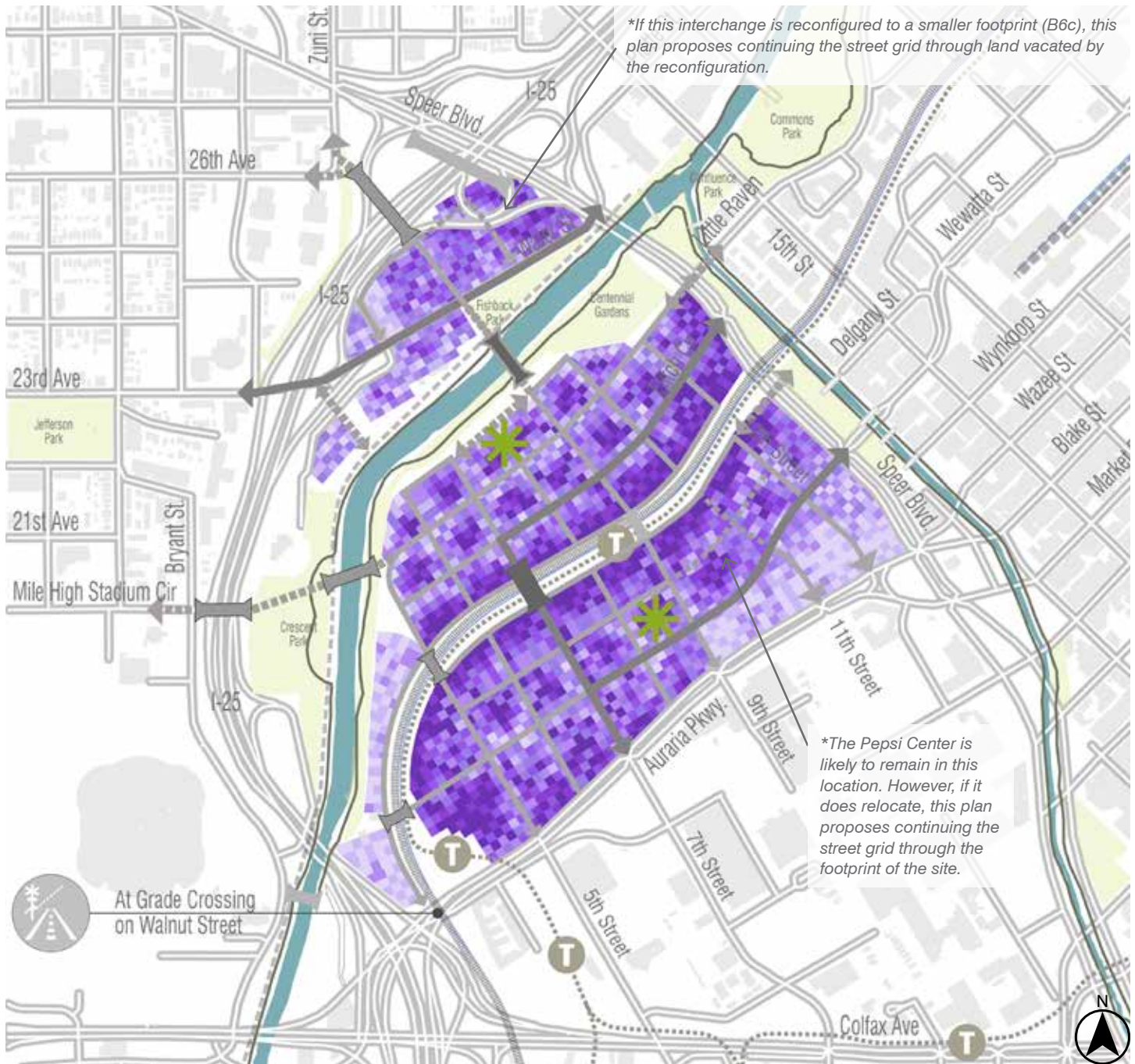
- **Zoning Incentives:** Development beyond a set base intensity could be required to provide specific community benefits.
- **Development Agreements:** Development agreements could be negotiated between the City and individual developers to require specific community benefits.

#### D4e. Ensure a minimum intensity of development.

- **Minimum Building Intensity Requirements:** Use regulatory tools to require minimum floor area ratios or building heights to prevent under-development.



# D4. Variety of Building Intensity



**Figure 26: Conceptual Building Intensity**

*This is one potential scenario to implement this plan's recommendations.*

- Existing Light Rail
  - Existing CML
  - Platte Valley Trolley
  - Downtown Collector Streets
  - Local Streets
  - \*Local Streets
  - Existing Ped & Bike Bridge
  - Proposed All Mode Bridge
  - Proposed Ped & Bike or All Mode Bridge
  - Proposed Ped & Bike Bridge
  - Proposed Ped & Bike Connection
  - Proposed Park/Open Space
- Building Intensity**
- Lower Intensity Higher Intensity

# D5. High Quality Design

## Goal

Prescribe high quality urban design, landscape and architectural principles, which inform building aesthetic, quality, longevity, and durability of the built environment.

## Why It's Important

Because aesthetic quality affects the experience of a place, a successful neighborhood where people enjoy walking, shopping, dining, living, and going to work depends on thoughtful planning, urban design and architecture. A well designed urban environment provides a draw as well as a strong sense of comfort and safety. Regulatory tools to promote high quality design include zoning, design standards and guidelines, development agreements or other tools that require or incentivize specific development outcomes.

## Recommendations and Strategies

### D5a. Adopt new or updated zoning standards to promote high quality design.

New or updated zoning standards will be an important regulatory tool to implement recommendations and strategies D5c-D5i below (see [D4a](#) for more information).

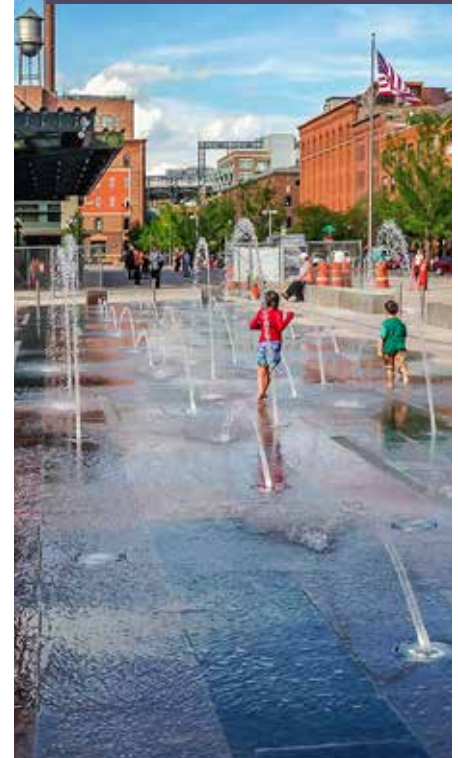
### D5b. Adopt design standards and guidelines (DSG's) and implement a design review process to promote high quality design.

A design review process supplements adopted zoning requirements by providing context-sensitive review of individual projects, including civic buildings and infrastructure on a case-by-case basis using adopted design standards and guidelines. The design review process will be an important regulatory tool to implement the recommendations and strategies in D5c-D5i below.

- **Design Standards and Guidelines:** Adopted design standards and guidelines will be a regulatory tool to implement many of the recommendations and strategies described in D5.
- **Design Review Board:** A design review board, or design advisory board, will review and make recommendations on proposed development using the adopted design standards and guidelines. A board should include a variety of members, such as:
  - Well-informed community members
  - Real estate development professionals
  - Design professionals (architects, urban designers, landscape architects, planners, engineers, etc.)



**Public Input:**  
There is a desire for well-designed buildings, streets, and public spaces.



## D5. High Quality Design

### Recommendations and Strategies (continued)

#### D5c. Promote a pedestrian-oriented street frontage.

Requirements should consider some or all of the following potential implementation strategies to promote a pedestrian-oriented street frontage:

- **Build-to and Setbacks:** Relate frontage requirements to street types and building uses.
  - On active corridors (see [A5c](#)), require a high build-to percentage to promote active building facades along streets.
  - Require a minimum setback for ground-floor residential units to ensure a transition from public to private space and to allow for entry features.
- **Transparency:** Require significant street level transparency (windows and other elements that connect building uses to the pedestrian realm), particularly on active corridors.
- **Street Level Building Height:** Require the street level of buildings to be tall enough to provide space that can accommodate a variety of uses and is adaptable for the potential conversion of one use to another.
- **Pedestrian Access:** Implement tools to connect building uses to the street, such as a requirement for street level residential uses to have individual entries from the street.

#### D5d. Promote human-scale building design.

- **Universal Design:** Ensure streets and buildings meet the needs of all potential users regardless of age, ability or disability (see [C6b](#)).
- **Public Realm Enclosure:** Provide a comfortable sense of enclosure through building massing and height in relationship to block sizes and street widths. Techniques can include required upper story setbacks or setbacks that relate to street width (see [Figure 28](#)).
- **Facade Articulation:** Promote articulated facade designs that provide a human-scale rhythm of building elements. Facade articulation can include vertical and horizontal design elements, such as wall offsets, material changes and other techniques.
- **Facade Materials and Finishes:** Ensure the use of high-quality, durable materials and finishes that contribute to the overall aesthetics and longevity of development.
  - Where applicable, new development should be respectful to surrounding historic context regarding scale, materials, proportions, and architectural details of facade elements.



## D5. High Quality Design

### Recommendations and Strategies (continued)

#### D5e. Promote distinctive building design.

- **Timeless Design:** Promote a sense of permanence by incorporating classic proportions and materials into new building designs to provide a sense of permanence. Timeless design can incorporate modern design innovations if new techniques and building forms reference traditional design principles or existing buildings in the surrounding context.
- **Design Variety:** Promote variety in landscape and architectural design.
- **Distinctive Skyline Design:** Promote distinctive upper story building designs that will contribute to a skyline that is recognizable for its unique and iconic architecture.
- **Adaptable Design:** Require adaptable design to accommodate potential future needs, such as minimum street level height (see [D5a](#)) or convertible parking design (see [D5f](#)).

#### D5f. Minimize visual impacts associated with automobiles.

- **Wrapped Parking:** Require most structured parking to be wrapped with other uses so that it is not visible from the street (see [Figure 28](#)). Such requirements are especially important along active corridors and the river frontage.
- **Screened Parking:** Where structured parking is not wrapped with other uses, promote parking facade designs that are integrated with portions of the facade that do not contain parking. Integration could include use of similar materials, articulation and window patterns.
- **Convertible Parking Design:** Promote structured parking designs that are convertible for other uses. Techniques include parking levels that are not ramped and have sufficient ceiling height to allow for future conversion of space to non-parking uses.
- **Parking Entrances:** Minimize the impact of parking entrances on the public realm by encouraging entrances to be accessed through alleys (see [B6b](#)).



# D5. High Quality Design



Figure 27: Conceptual Building Enclosure Ratios

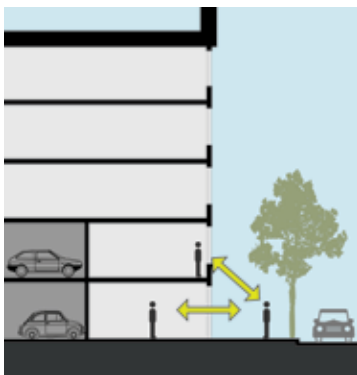


Figure 28: Diagram of Wrapped Parking

## D5. High Quality Design

### Recommendations and Strategies (continued)

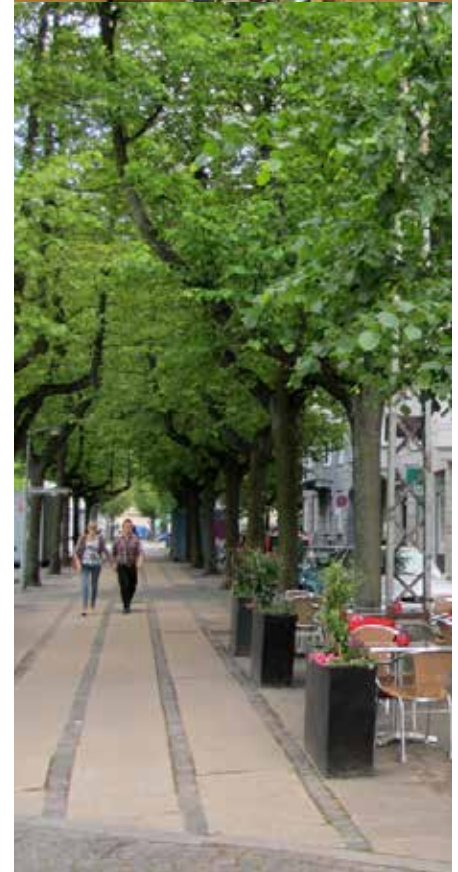
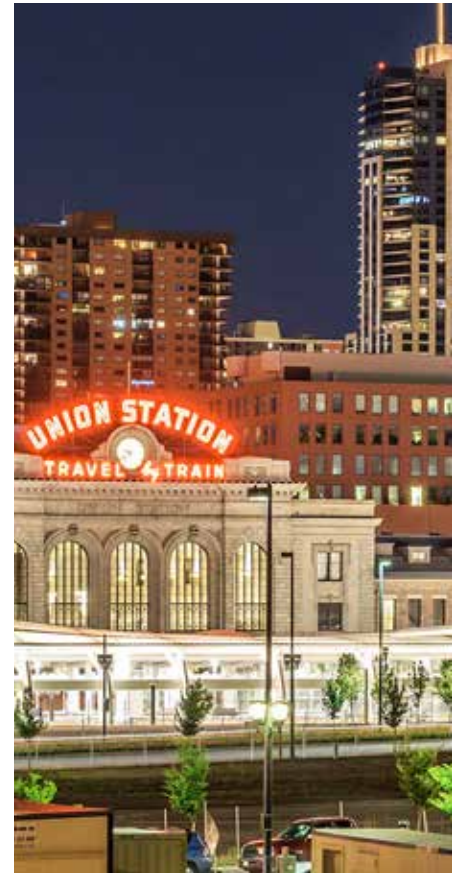
#### D5g. Acknowledge, preserve, or enhance key views.

- **Identify View Corridors:** Conduct view studies concurrently with establishing future street layouts and developable lots. View studies should identify a street configuration and key sites that contribute to key views, including:
  - Sites with broad visibility that impact views from nearby locations into the plan area; this includes sites along Water Street that impact the view from the intersection of Zuni Street and 26th Avenue and sites along I-25 or the South Platte River.
  - Sites at key entry points into the plan area that impact views into, out of, and through the plan area.
  - Sites within the plan area that have potential views to the mountains and into Downtown Denver.
- **Special Design:** Consider enhancing views of special building design or site elements, such as:
  - Tall building elements that help enclose a view
  - Interesting/detailed facade designs or materials
  - Public spaces or art
  - Primary building entries
  - Interesting signage
  - Enhanced landscaping
- **Old City Hall Mountain View Plane:** Analyze the effectiveness of the Old City Hall Mountain View Plane once DSG's have been created and consider removing the view plane if the new tools effectively enhance key views and render the view plane obsolete.

#### D5h. New development adjacent to the South Platte River should respect the river and its public amenities as a natural resource.

- **Accessibility:** Promote a lively riverfront using regulatory tools such as build-to, active use and entrance requirements to ensure that new development promotes public access to the riverfront.
- **Human-Scale:** Encourage building height, massing, form, setbacks, and tower spacing to be sensitive to the surrounding natural environment along the river's edge, parks and open space.
- **Access to Daylight:** Conduct sun/shade studies of future development to assist with calibration of regulatory tools such as tower spacing and upper-story setbacks to prevent overshadowing of the river and adjacent open space.
- **Building Facade:** Promote building facades to contribute to a quality interface between private development, the public realm and the river through facade articulation and materials.

#### D5i. Adopt regulatory tools that require streetscape, landscape, and public space standards that contribute to the character of the public realm and create stronger physical and programmatic relationships between the landscape and architecture (see [A Green City](#) and [A Walkable City](#)).





## D6. Branding and Identity

### Goal

Encourage branding of the plan area to help generate visibility and a positive perception of future development. Utilize distinctive elements that can be implemented and built to create a sense of identity for the plan area.

### Importance

A branding strategy and a distinctive identity will help create a sense of arrival in a unique place, which is important to attract people to visit the area and enjoy a space. Having an identity will create a distinction between the plan area and other neighborhoods and Downtown.

### Recommendations and Strategies

#### D6a. Encourage branding and marketing efforts to create awareness and attract people to live, work and play.

- **Downtown Neighborhood:** Create a branding and marketing strategy that will capture the identity of the plan area as a unique downtown neighborhood.
- **Diverse Community:** Encourage branding efforts to promote Downtown living and working options that accommodate a diverse community of incomes, ages, races, and household sizes.

#### D6b. Encourage a sense of neighborhood identity.

- **Identifying Gateways & Entries:** Identify entries, intersections, or points within the mobility network that can become specific gateways or entry points into the plan area such as Auraria Parkway and 7th Street, Speer Boulevard and Wewatta, Speer Boulevard and Elitch Circle, Speer Boulevard and Little Raven, and the proposed new bridges into the plan area. These high profile and heavily traveled entries present an opportunity to generate interest, curiosity and memory of a place. Gateway features could be integrated into highly visible signature buildings, or formed by vertical elements, landscape forms, walls, pylons, special lighting and public art.
- **Signage:** Develop signage that creates a unique graphic identity and contributes to the sense of place (see [E4d](#)).

#### D6c. Develop ways to create a sense of place and identity through public art and civic land uses.

- **Public Art:** Encourage an arts and cultural strategy to create, reinforce and enhance a sense of place (see [E4d](#)).
  - Explore partnerships with the Office of Economic Development and Arts and Venues to identify economic incentives that encourage creative and arts-based uses such as galleries and public art installations.
- **Civic and Cultural Uses:** Explore unique land uses such as regional civic and cultural destinations that contribute to a distinctive identity (see [A5b](#)).



# A GREEN CITY

## Building a greener downtown

The Central Platte Valley – Auraria District has a unique opportunity to be a leader in green practices; the mile of riverfront and large amounts of undeveloped space adjacent to downtown presents a rare opportunity for a precedent-setting public space network with parks, open space, plazas, and other community uses. The plan area’s potential to be developed as part of a cohesive plan rather than parcel by parcel also provides an opportunity to explore innovative green infrastructure techniques and environmental sustainability that address environmental concerns and contributes to placemaking.

The Downtown Area Plan developed three topics to achieve the vision element of becoming A Green City. In addition to E1 through E3 (listed below), four new recommendation topics apply to the Central Platte Valley – Auraria District.

### 2007 Plan Topics

- E1. An Outdoor Downtown
- E2. A Rejuvenated Civic Center
- E3. Sustainable Use of Resources

### Plan Amendment Topics

- E4. Vibrant Parks and Public Spaces
- E5. South Platte River
- E6. Resilient Infrastructure
- E7. Environmental Conditions



## E4. Vibrant Parks and Public Spaces

### Goal

Incorporate new parks and public spaces and enhance existing parks to celebrate and activate the outdoor downtown as part of an economically thriving neighborhood. Foster a diverse and livable neighborhood that cultivates Denver's culture and identity, and provides environmentally and functionally sustainable outdoor spaces.

### Why It's Important

Where nearby Commons Park serves as a respite through passive recreation, the plan area provides a rare opportunity to implement a network of quality parks and public open spaces that vary in size and character. With regular programming in well-maintained, safe and comfortable parks and public spaces, the plan area will be vibrant as adjacent residential, commercial and retail businesses thrive unlike any other neighborhood in the city.

### Recommendations and Strategies

#### E4a. Create new designated parks and open space.

New parks and public spaces should be developed throughout the plan area, as described below, and be integrated within or connected to existing parks and trails and future development. Utilize future north/south and east/west mobility connections to physically connect parks and public spaces. At least two large parks are encouraged: one north of the CML and one south of the CML (see [Figure 29](#)). In addition, centrally located plazas and public spaces are encouraged within the plan area and adjacent to transit stops.

- **Retain Land for Accessible Parks and Open Space:** Retain land to provide equitable recreation and public space.
  - Per the Outdoor Downtown Plan, expand upon parks and public spaces to ensure all residents are within a five-minute walk of a park (either a neighborhood or special-use park, which is a pocket park with a themed or specialized space), and within a three-minute walking distance to a quality outdoor public space.
  - The amount of land dedicated for public and private parks and open space should be based upon density and population. Innovative design solutions should be considered to address the amount and types of users.



## E4. Vibrant Parks and Public Spaces

### Recommendations and Strategies (continued)

- **Types of Spaces:** Provide public spaces that have a variety of engaging uses that generate a sense of place. Spaces could include:
  - Large social gathering spaces that can support community events such as neighborhood parties, farmers' markets, seasonal pop-up events, and festivals
  - Programmable space for community events or concerts
  - Special-use parks (a pocket park with a themed or specialized space)
  - Recreational space
  - Playgrounds
  - Commercial use space such as recreational equipment rentals
  - Outdoor dining/retail/food trucks
  - Dog park
  - Informal seating space
  - Promenades
  - Boardwalks
  - Natural habitat and riparian areas
- **Enhance Connectivity:** Public spaces should be accessible and usable to the general public, and they should be located strategically and designed to tie into and enhance the overall mobility network, including mobility hubs around light rail stations (see [B9a](#)).
- **Green Spines:** Implement green spines to facilitate access to public spaces, including parks, and to surrounding neighborhoods (see [B6a](#), [Figure 15](#), and [Figure 29](#)).
- **Designated Parks:** In addition to the new parks connected by green spines, additional parks may be warranted based on the five-minute walk metric and the population density (see [Figure 29](#)). Great urban parks, old and new, vary in size from 5 to 10 acres. The parks are centrally located in neighborhoods surrounded by residential, commercial and retail similar to traditional town squares. These parks function as the “heart” of the neighborhood bringing life and vibrancy to the area, and defining the character of the neighborhood. Successful urban parks are accessible, inviting and comfortable with a variety of amenities and activities that create an enjoyable experience for daily use, year-round.
  - Examples of great urban parks, include: Washington Square Park (NYC), Klyde Warren Park (Dallas), Downtown East Commons Park (Minneapolis), Bryant Park (NYC), and Jamison Square (Portland). These public parks are managed and operated daily through successful public-private partnerships.
- **Privately-Owned Public Spaces:** Establish a variety of privately-owned and operated public spaces integrated through private development, both in the right-of-way and in tract, that can include public spaces like parks, plazas and promenades that can vary from an urban plaza character to a natural park character.



In the Greenest City 2020 Action Plan, the City of Vancouver set a goal of having all residents live within a five-minute walk of a park, greenway, or other green space; as of 2010, this was the case for more than 92 percent of residents.



## E4. Vibrant Parks and Public Spaces

### Recommendations and Strategies (continued)

#### E4b. Establish opportunities for existing and new parks to accommodate a variety of activities and programs year-round.

- **Existing Parks:** Strengthen existing parks and open space through focusing on social, recreational, and cultural needs (see E4c).
  - Update the plaza adjacent to the Mile High Stadium light rail station to provide for efficient and convenient flow of pedestrian traffic while also connecting to future development.
  - Encourage the creation of public space at the Pepsi Center/ Elitch Gardens light rail station.
- **Adaptable Parks:** Existing parks and new parks, open spaces, and public spaces should be designed to host events, accommodate a variety of activities for all ages, and be enjoyed year-round.
  - Address multi-generational considerations, such as playground areas for children, seating for adults, and interactive play features for all ages including games, dancing, art, learning and theater.
  - Encourage small-scale commercial activities, such as recreational equipment rentals, that further activate the park with uses.
  - Design some public spaces to allow people to enjoy quieter or relaxing activities, such as sitting and sightseeing.
- **Food and Beverage Services:** Establish opportunities for increased seasonal or temporary food and beverage services with outdoor seating to be near, adjacent to, or within parks or public spaces.
  - Allocate spaces for vendors, booths/kiosks, and small truck access.
  - Streamline events and vendor permitting; the permitting process should be affordable and should provide for serving food and beverages.
  - Promote food and beverage services to operate throughout the day and especially in the evening so parks and public spaces are activated.
- **Educational Center:** Incorporate an environmental education center adjacent to or fronting nearby parks, trails and public spaces.
  - Work with the Children’s Museum, Denver Public Schools, and non-profits to promote educational and interactive programs to occur within the educational center and parks and open space.

#### E4c. Re-envision Centennial Gardens as an accessible and active park with updated features and programmable space for activities.

- **Centennial Gardens:** Redesign the park to be open, accessible, welcoming and integrated into future development and the river.



## E4. Vibrant Parks and Public Spaces

### Recommendations and Strategies (continued)

#### E4d. Provide a variety of amenities within parks, open spaces and public spaces.

- **Lighting:** Establish a lighting plan that promotes the use of public spaces and provides safety for those spaces but does not contribute to light pollution.
- **Seating:** Incorporate permanent and movable seating within existing and future public spaces.
- **Interactive Features:** Encourage interactive features and attractive elements within parks and open spaces such as water features.
- **Public Art:** Provide facilities, access and programs that support performing arts (dance, music, theatre) and promote the incorporation of iconic and noteworthy public art into public spaces (reference [D6c](#)).
  - Encourage integrated and interactive art installations that reflect the history and heritage of the area.
  - Consider continuous temporary installations of prominent artists that will draw visitors.
  - Fund public art for the study area through developer contributions and an art fee established within other organizations, such as a potential owner association.
  - Establish a committee that oversees, selects, and manages public art installations.
- **Facilities:** Develop opportunities for integrating year-round programs and services by building functional and adaptable facilities (see [E4b](#)).
  - Implement necessary amenities like shade, seating, and restroom facilities for people using parks and open space.
  - Designate space for vendors, booths/kiosks, and small truck access (see [E4b](#)) and possibly other commercial uses that serve the park and visitors' needs, such as farmers markets, movies in the park, fitness classes, winter activities/temporary ice rink, cultural events, and public events.
- **Signage and Wayfinding:** Develop and implement a signage and wayfinding master plan that provides meaningful and attractive tools to help users effectively navigate the plan area, surrounding neighborhoods, and the South Platte River trails (see [D6b](#)).
- **Safety:** Utilize the best practices in Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED), including lighting and design and placement of fencing, walls, and landscaping.
- **Space for Dogs:** Coordinate with residential developments to provide adequate space for dogs, especially near entrances to residential buildings.

#### E4e. Contribute to a green public realm.

The public's highest priority in The Outdoor Downtown plan was to grow the urban forest and plant street trees. Tree plantings in the right-of-way, parks, and open space create a comfortable and more enjoyable experience.

- **Tree Canopy and Streetscape:** Promote an active and vibrant green public realm through incorporating a multitude of trees and a diverse arrangement of vegetation within the amenity zones and public spaces.



## E4. Vibrant Parks and Public Spaces

### Recommendations and Strategies (continued)

- All streets should be tree-lined and the street trees should have varying widths and species for biodiversity and natural habitat.
- Locate trees and vegetation appropriately and provide adequate room for the biological needs of the plants (soil, light, and water) so that urban vegetation can thrive.
- **Utility Location:** Locate utilities in zones that allow for repair or replacement with minimal disruption to vegetation, including trees.
- **Best Practices for Planting:** Coordinate with the City Forester, Parks and Recreation, and Public Works to identify standards that enhance the streetscape and public realm. Use best practices for tree design, installation, maintenance, and management of vegetation within the right-of-way to ensure landscaping thrives and serves multi-functional needs.
  - Use native plants or endemic species where possible.
  - Encourage the use of landscaping as a screening mechanism as opposed to screens, railings, or walls.

#### E4f. Activate parks and open space edges.

- **Vibrant Active Edges:** Encourage vibrant active edges around parks and public spaces that may include residential or commercial uses (see [A5b](#) and [A5c](#)).

#### E4g. Provide opportunities for healthy living.

- **Physical Activity:** Offer opportunity for physical activity for all ages in public spaces.
- **Fitness Trail:** Develop a portion of an existing or new multi-use path as a fitness trail.
  - Incorporate the 5280 Loop within the plan area to be easily accessible as a potential extension of a fitness trail.
  - Identify segments of multi-use paths along the river that can create a fitness loop.
- **Adaptable Space:** Provide amenities and programs year-round to encourage multi-generational recreational and physical activity.
  - Elements within public open space should be adaptable to have the ability to be used for fitness activities.
- **Recreation Center:** Incorporate a city recreation center adjacent to or fronting nearby parks, trails and public spaces.

#### E4h. Utilize the guidelines and principles of the Outdoor Downtown Plan by incorporating its policies, projects, and programs.

#### E4i. Create specific standards and policies for the maintenance and upkeep of both public and private parks and public spaces.

- **Maintenance District:** Explore opportunities for a district to provide maintenance of privately-owned public spaces (POPS) and streetscapes.
- **Maintenance Facility:** Designate land for a central maintenance facility for the Downtown Parks Operations team.
- **Increase Maintenance Resources:** Provide adequate resources to ensure existing and new parks receive sufficient maintenance and upkeep.



# E4. Vibrant Parks and Public Spaces



Figure 29: Conceptual Green Network Diagram

This is one potential scenario to implement this plan's recommendations.

- Existing Light Rail
- Existing CML
- Platte Valley Trolley
- Downtown Collector Streets
- Local Streets
- \*Local Streets
- Existing Ped & Bike Bridge
- Planned 5280 Loop
- Proposed All Mode Bridge
- Proposed Ped & Bike or All Mode Bridge
- Proposed Ped & Bike Bridge
- Existing Multi-Use Trail
- Proposed Park/Open Space
- Existing Park
- Enhanced Green Zone
- Green Spine



## E5. South Platte River

### Goal

Embrace the South Platte River as an asset and protect and leverage it as an amenity for future development.

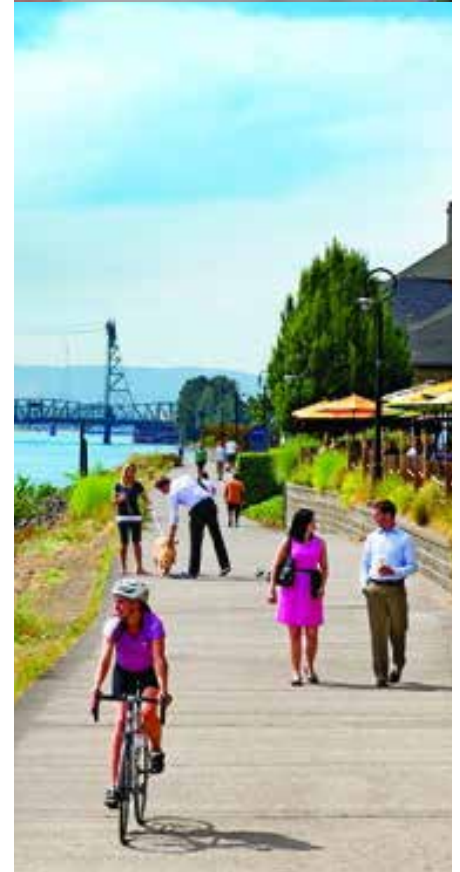
### Why It's Important

The South Platte River is a valuable natural resource. Future development along the river should be respectful of its delicate nature and recognize the importance of the biodiversity it supports as well as its value for mitigating the urban heat island effect and providing climate resiliency. The plan area is within the Central Platte Valley stormwater basin, which has been identified as a priority basin within Denver most in need of stormwater treatment. As detailed in the *Ultra-Urban Green Infrastructure Guidelines*, protecting and enhancing the river through design reinforces the City's aim to make green infrastructure a fundamental part of the long-term stormwater management strategy.

### Recommendations and Strategies

#### E5a. Create an enhanced green zone along the South Platte River (see [Figure 29](#)).

- **Access:** Encourage existing and future designated parks, open space, public space and development to foster an interactive relationship with the river by providing efficient, convenient and clearly marked access.
- **Greenway:** Explore opportunities to improve the river's function, including enhancing and widening the existing greenway to include trails and park spaces for active and passive recreation, as well as space for storm water collection and filtering.
  - The greenway includes the river corridor and its undeveloped land preserved for recreational use or environmental protection.
- **Flooding:** The greenway along the river, which includes parks, open space, and public space, should accommodate flooding of the river and include space for storm water collection and filtering.
  - Utilize flood resistant design where possible.
- **Activities:** Promote opportunities for a broad range of activities such as fishing, kayaking, and eating and drinking on decks and patios.
- **Existing Parks:** Strengthen existing parks along the river by improving their connection and integration to the river, trails, and future development.



## E5. South Platte River

### Recommendations and Strategies (continued)

- **Riverside Conditions:** Engage the river by encouraging focused and integrated riverside conditions that further activate and attract visitors to the riverfront or enhance wetland and riparian zones, which may include a combination of built and natural spaces such as:
  - Urban space, or active hardscaped spaces such as:
    - Plazas
    - Events space
    - Promenades
    - Destinations to attract visitors
  - Natural space, or passive native spaces such as:
    - Natural habitat
    - Riparian zones
    - Boardwalks and trails
    - Access to the water for fishing, paddle boarding, etc.
    - Seating

### E5b. Protect the river as a natural resource.

- **Natural Resource:** Recognize the river as a valuable natural resource that should be managed and protected.
- **Ecology:** Strengthen and maintain the river's presence as a native corridor by improving and creating natural habitat that increases biodiversity.

### E5c. Coordinate all river improvements and development near the river with ongoing studies from other departments or external entities.

- **Green Infrastructure:** Reference and implement strategies detailed in the *Ultra-Urban Green Infrastructure Guide* and the *Green Infrastructure Implementation Strategy*.
- **River Restoration:** Ensure coordination of ongoing studies by the Urban Drainage and Flood Control District and U.S. Army Corp of Engineers.



## E6. Resilient Infrastructure

### Goal

Create infrastructure that enables flourishing ecosystems, restores natural habitat, promotes carbon neutrality, and withstands and adapts to environmental stresses and changes created over time.

### Why It's Important

Cities that are built to be resilient have the capacity to adapt to stresses and changes over time, including environmental changes due to a changing climate. Resiliency also includes an inherent responsibility to build a pathway to carbon neutrality and create a flourishing environment for everyone.

### Recommendations and Strategies

#### E6a. Embrace ways to efficiently use resources and reduce waste.

- **Waste Management:** Create and implement innovative waste management systems and incentives to reduce trash, increase recycling and reuse, and provide opportunities for composting.
- **Carbon Neutrality:** Create a district-wide strategy that will guide development towards achieving carbon neutrality, including:
  - Developing and implementing a strategy to incorporate a district-wide heating and cooling system to reduce resource consumption.
  - Encouraging the use of solar power or other renewable energy sources.
- **Net-Zero Water:** Encourage innovative and adaptable gray water treatment and efficient use of water within future development.
  - For larger projects capable of making a meaningful contribution to Denver Water's One Water strategy, the City should work with stakeholders to promote on-site treatment and delivery of raw water, including developing funding strategies that make the investment economically viable for the stakeholders involved.

#### E6b. Build development with an enduring life-cycle (see [D5b](#) and [D5j](#)).

- **Resource-Efficient Building Life-Cycle:** Encourage green buildings that embody a structure and promote application of processes that are environmentally responsible and resource-efficient throughout the building's life-cycle: planning to design, construction, operation, maintenance, renovation, and demolition.
- **Resilient Materials and Components:** Incorporate materials and components throughout the entire plan area that are resilient and require minimal maintenance or replacement over time and have an efficient life-cycle.



## E6. Resilient Infrastructure

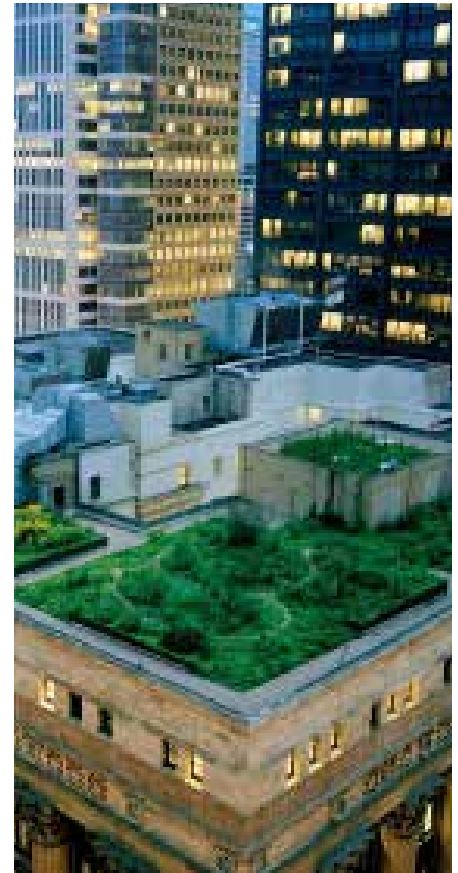
### Recommendations and Strategies (continued)

#### E6c. Encourage green and sustainable communities.

- **EcoDistrict:** Encourage the plan area to become an EcoDistrict, or a nationally certified area that prioritizes ecological and social sustainability, and utilize its guidance for a collaborative, holistic, neighborhood-scale approach to community design.
  - Follow EcoDistrict protocol that recognizes the urgency of embracing equity, resiliency, and climate protection and establishes priorities for achieving meaningful outcomes.

#### E6d. Future development should address stormwater and implement sustainable green infrastructure where possible.

- **Natural Water Cycle:** Develop sustainable green infrastructure systems that protect, restore, or mimic the natural water cycle, improve water quality, and enhance land resources and ecology.
- **Water Quality:** Improve water quality by naturally treating all stormwater runoff through green infrastructure systems before it reaches the river or a pipe.
- **Flood Resiliency:** Utilize resilient design strategies that allow opportunities for green infrastructure to mitigate flooding and stormwater runoff volumes and provide water quality.
- **Best Practices:** Use best practices for storm drainage design and green infrastructure design.
  - Best practices for the design, installation, maintenance, and management of green infrastructure components should be used to ensure it thrives, is functional, and remains effective.
  - Use best practices that are aligned with the goals of Denver's Ultra Urban Green Infrastructure Guide for future design and renovation of parks, public spaces, and streets.
  - Utilize the Urban Drainage and Flood Control District (UDFCD) Urban Storm Drainage Criteria Manual: Volume 3 and the Department of Public Works (DPW) Storm Drainage Design and Technical Criteria Manual.
- **Impervious Surfaces:** Work with City departments to establish regulations to minimize impervious surfaces and utilize materials and techniques that allow for natural water absorption and flow.
  - For denser urban areas, work with the City and the Urban Drainage and Flood Control District to develop new and improved methods for runoff volume reduction, such as the use of infiltration-based water quality methods rather than volume-based methods for stormwater management.
  - Work with the City, Department of Public Works, and agencies to develop green street details and requirements that would allow for permeable paving in the ROW, and within the roadway cross-section.



## E7. Environmental Conditions

### Goal

Create development that responds to environmental conditions to protect and enhance the health of both the river and the people who live, work, and visit the plan area.

### Why It's Important

This Amendment provides direction for a new downtown neighborhood in the form of high-density, mixed-use development. However, the plan area has an industrial history that resulted in significant environmental contamination, is within a floodplain, and is adjacent to or contains two known air and noise pollution sources: I-25 and the Consolidated Main Line (CML). While these conditions should not preclude the development recommended in this plan, they do require careful assessment and mitigation throughout the development process.

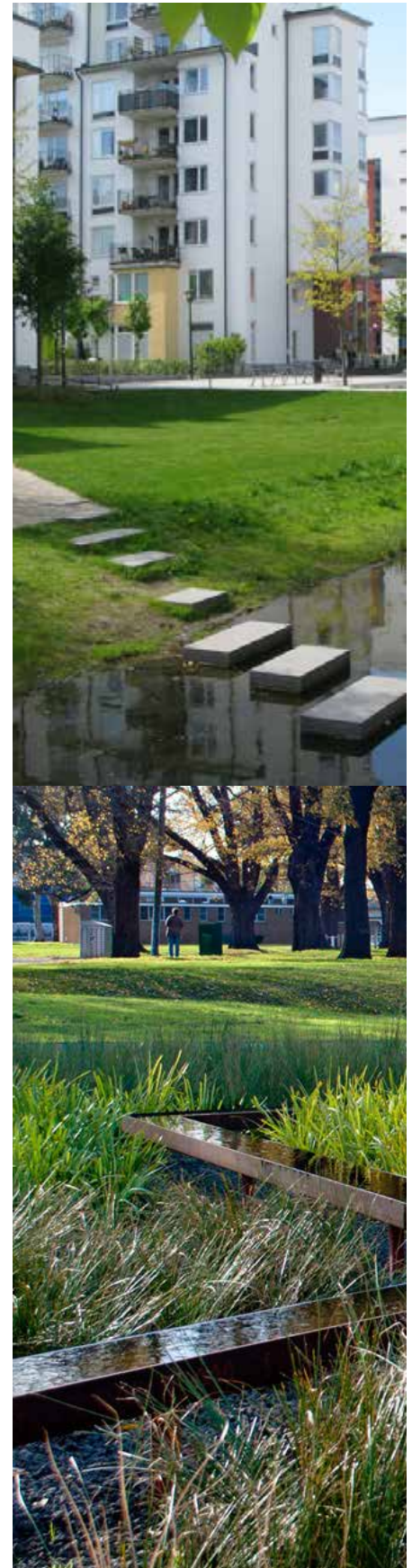
### Recommendations and Strategies

#### E7a. Address environmental contamination to allow for mixed-use development.

Portions of the plan area have a history of industrial uses spanning more than 100 years. Rail yard and railroad operations, manufactured gas and related coal tar industries encompassed most of the area east of the South Platte River, and urban fill operations took place in the area west of the South Platte River. Because of these industrial uses, environmental contaminants exist on portions of the plan area. Confirmed and suspected contaminants include petroleum-related constituents, coal tar derivatives, solvents, metals, and buried urban fill, among others.

Some of these contaminants have gone through partial remediation to address the exposure risks associated with the plan area's current land uses. Specifically, limited remediation took place on the property where Elitch Gardens Theme and Water Park is located pursuant to a 1992 Consent Agreement with the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment ("CDPHE"), and on the property where the Pepsi Center is located pursuant to a voluntary cleanup plan approved by the CDPHE in 1997. Because remediation standards are tailored to specific land uses, any redevelopment of the plan area will likely trigger the need for additional investigation and remediation or mitigation measures to address the exposure risks associated with new land uses such as residential and mixed uses.

- **Mitigate Contamination:** Work with property owners to execute a development agreement to address environmental concerns including, but not limited to the following:
  - Investigate each site prior to redevelopment to characterize the nature and extent of contamination, the potential for human exposure and environmental harm, and suitability for the intended land use;
  - Develop an environmental management and cleanup plan tailored to the existing conditions and intended future use of the site; and



## E7. Environmental Conditions

### Recommendations and Strategies (continued)

- Secure the approval of the state and local public health agencies for the environmental management and cleanup plan prior to establishing the desired land use.

#### E7b. Address the floodplain within the plan area.

The Urban Drainage and Flood Control District (“UDFCD”) is currently in the process of updating the City’s South Platte River floodplain boundary. The preliminary results of this process indicate that, due to overland spills from the main channel of the South Platte River, certain properties within the plan area are at a higher risk for flooding than as indicated on FEMA’s Flood Insurance Rate Maps (FIRM’s) dated 11/20/2013. The City has partnered with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and UDFCD on an Urban Waterways Restoration Study to address flood risks and identify holistic and preemptive solutions to flooding.

- **Preemptive Flood Risk Management:** Property owners who are contemplating redevelopment should contact the City early in the process to understand the flood risk(s) associated with their properties. Developers in high risk areas are encouraged to analyze in-river improvements that reduce flood risk by lowering the water surface elevation of the South Platte River by widening and lowering the river to further the City’s goal to enhance the South Platte River.
- **Run-Off and River Health:** With a large stretch of riverfront property, development in the plan area has the potential to substantially impact the quality of run-off water entering the South Platte River.
  - Address storm water run-off on-site in planning future development as required by D.R.M.C. § 56-111.
  - Filter and slow stormwater run-off on-site through green infrastructure and green roofs (see E6d).
  - Use tools that improve the health of the river, expand wetland and riparian habitats, and enhance the recreational user experience adjacent to the river identified in the Urban Waterways Restoration Study.

#### E7c. Address the health impacts of noise and air pollution for development adjacent to the CML and I-25.

Current research links proximity to high traffic roads with adverse health effects in children and adults. Pollutants directly emitted from motor vehicles include particulate matter, carbon monoxide, and nitrogen oxides, as well as other compounds that lead to the formation of ozone. People who live, work, or attend school near high-volume roadways (over 100,000 vehicles per day in urban areas) show increased risk for a variety of short- and long-term health effects, including asthma, reduced lung function, impaired lung development in children, and cardiovascular effects in adults, such as heart attacks. Children are particularly susceptible to health problems from air pollution exposure because their respiratory systems are not fully developed, and they are more active and breathe more rapidly than adults. Motor vehicle pollutant concentrations tend to be higher closer to roads, with the highest levels generally within the first 500 feet from a high-volume roadway.



## E7. Environmental Conditions

### Recommendations and Strategies (continued)

Noise pollution has also been linked to increased risk of cardiovascular disease in people chronically exposed to high levels of road noise. Noise can damage health depending on its intensity, duration, type, and source. Long-term exposure to moderate levels of noise can adversely affect sleep, school, and work performance, and increase risk of cardiovascular disease, high blood pressure, and heart attacks. The U.S. EPA considers noise exceeding 55 decibels outdoors and 45 decibels indoors as an annoyance that can interfere with daily activities. Highway noise along I-25 has been measured at 57 to 75 decibels, and train horn noise at 90 to 100 decibels. Like air pollution, noise pollution from vehicles is typically highest within 500 feet of high-traffic roadways.

- **Implement Best Practices:** Development within the plan area should consider utilizing the following best practices to mitigate the impacts of air and noise pollution within close proximity to I-25 and the CML:
  - Use construction techniques for buildings such as design elements and siting to avoid subjecting adjacent new development to noise/vibration and air pollution. Solutions should allow for design innovation and may include:
    - Locating building air intake systems to minimize intake of automobile exhaust;
    - Including mitigation measures such as insulation and air filtration systems designed to filter pollutants that are known asthma triggers; and
    - Consulting best practice resources such as International Well Building Institute “WELL Building Standard” recommendations or the California Air Resources Board “Strategies to Reduce Air Pollution Exposure Near High-Volume Roadways”.
  - Evaluate additional mitigation measures for sensitive uses such as residential, school, elder care, and childcare uses (see C5c).
- **Explore Citywide Tools:** While I-25 and the CML are known air and noise pollution sources within the plan area, many other parts of the City are also affected by these and other sources of air and noise pollution. Therefore, the City should explore the creation of citywide tools to ensure that development incorporates best practices to mitigate the impacts of air and noise pollution.

#### **E7d. Implement best practices to address the proximity of the freight rail to proposed mixed-use development.**

In 2016, the Mayor’s Railroad Safety Working Group issued a report to develop recommendations for the City’s policies and practices around safety and hazard mitigation in areas near rail. Recommendations from this report that are relevant to the plan area include:

- **Implement Best Practices:** Work with relevant agencies and partners to implement the following best practices:
  - Reduce train speed through the downtown context
  - Restrict hazardous, toxic, or flammable goods in tankers or containers to be parked within the downtown context.
  - Require a more frequent check of rail lines for maintenance within the downtown context.
- **Create a Disaster Plan:** Create an evacuation plan for emergencies related to potential toxic releases from freight accidents or other man-made or natural disasters, considering the type of development adjacent to freight activity along the CML.
  - Consider requiring a fire station within the plan area adjacent to the 7th Street bridge and the CML.





## iii. Moving Forward

In this chapter, there are strategies and priorities outlined to help streamline the implementation process to achieve the vision, recommendations and specific strategies of this Plan Amendment.

# Implementation

The Denver Downtown Area Plan Amendment provides a Vision, Recommendations and Strategies that set the framework for the development of the Central Platte Valley – Auraria District for the next 20 years. This Amendment provides guidance and allows for flexibility to respond to unforeseen opportunities, challenges, market forces and public policies that would contribute to future development patterns within the plan area.

## Realizing the Vision

As a policy document, this Plan Amendment directs updates to zoning and other requirements that will shape the area, and it also informs future conversations about infrastructure investment. New zoning and other regulations applied to the plan area will be required to be consistent with this plan.

The goals, strategies, and recommendations detailed in this Amendment are interconnected and complex, and much of the proposed development is expected to be initiated by private property owners. Therefore the successful implementation of this plan amendment will require coordination between multiple agencies and the private sector. Plan implementation takes place over the course of many years, and for large underdeveloped areas, the plan may take shape in multiple phases.

## Types of Implementation Activities

Recommendations within the plan may require a public-private partnership to achieve optimal results. Implementation efforts often focus on public sector measures, many of which aim to create a positive environment that enables actions by other groups, such as property owners, developers, neighborhood organizations, districts or homeowners. However, while public actions can help set the stage, in many cases private actions (such as constructing new buildings, opening new businesses, and attracting new residents) are the critical elements to achieving a plan's vision. The following are the most important priorities to be accomplish by both public and private entities for the plan area. These have been organized in this section by implementation type: regulatory, public infrastructure, and public-private partnerships (PPP).

## Regulatory Strategies

Regulatory strategies include text amendments to the Denver Zoning Code to introduce new or revised tools to implement Plan objectives and Denver Zoning Code map amendments to change the specific zoning regulations that apply to properties within the plan area. Regulatory strategies may also include new rules and regulations, such as development application or design review procedures. Note that zoning changes must be adopted by the City Council in a public hearing.

### Regulatory Priorities:

- Adopt zoning tools to implement plan recommendations that encourage a mixed-use neighborhood with active streets and concentrated active corridors (see [A5a](#), [A5b](#), and [A5c](#)).
- Adopt zoning tools that provide incentives for integration of mixed-income and affordable housing that promotes equitable communities, and incorporate community benefits described in the plan (see [C5a](#), [C5b](#), [C5c](#), [C6a](#), and [C6b](#)).
- Adopt zoning tools that incentivize higher intensity transit-oriented development near light rail stations (see [A5c](#) and [D4c](#)).
- Adopt zoning tools that achieve the plan recommendations for a variety of building heights and densities throughout the plan area (see [D4a](#), [D4b](#), and [D4c](#)).
- Implement Design Standards and Guidelines to create diverse and desired architectural building form and streetscapes (see [D5a](#), [D5b](#), [D5c](#), [D5d](#), [D5e](#), and [D5i](#)).
- Establish a volunteer board to conduct design review using adopted design standards and guidelines. The board should consist primarily of professionals in the design, real estate development or planning fields, and it should also include representatives with relevant background from the neighborhood (see [D5b](#)).

## Public Infrastructure Strategies

Public Infrastructure Strategies are improvements to existing bridges, roads, bike facilities, public parks, or construction of new utilities. 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 partner with private developers. New streets, utilities, open space and other major public infrastructure associated with new development are typically led and funded by private developers or through PPP (see Partnership Strategies below).

Some strategies may require detailed studies and further assessment to identify appropriate solutions, particularly improvements to road and bridge networks, that must consider existing and projected mobility demands. These studies will inform future needs and capacities and also determine project cost and funding eligibility.

### Public Infrastructure Implementation Priorities:

Explore opportunities to leverage public investments for major infrastructure and facility improvements to implement the strategies and recommendations of this Amendment.

- Coordinate with CDOT and Public Works regarding studies of the 23rd Avenue bridge and the I-25 on and off ramps that connect to Water Street (see [B6c](#)).
- Implement improvements for pedestrian and bike connectivity at all major intersections along Auraria Parkway and Speer Boulevard (see [B6c](#), [B7b](#), and [B9a](#)).
- Implement recommendations to reduce fatalities and injuries on Speer Boulevard as listed in the Denver Vision Zero Action Plan for 'High-Injury Network' (see [B6c](#)).
- Improve connectivity and safety for all existing modes of transportation (see [B6c](#)).
- Address floodplain controls within the South Platte River (see [E5a](#), [E5b](#), [E5c](#), [E6d](#), and [E7b](#)).
- Implement environmental remediation efforts to improve soil and water conditions (see [E7a](#) and [E7b](#)).
- Create a walkable urban fabric with intimate and varied block sizes that have human-scale proportions, including working with Public Works to modify standards to allow for specific recommendations such as the Shared Street typology (see [B6a](#), [B6b](#), and [B7c](#)).
- Achieve new transit connectivity to and from abutting streets and within the plan area (see [B6b](#), [B6d](#), [B9a](#), and [B9b](#)).
- Establish new pedestrian and bicycle connections to and from abutting neighborhoods and within the plan area (see [B8a](#) and [B8b](#)).
- Improve all existing parks and public spaces and create an extensive tree canopy throughout the plan area (see [E4b](#), [E4c](#), [E4e](#), and [E5a](#)).
- Create new parks and public spaces (see [E4a](#), [E4f](#), and [E5a](#)).
- Create resilient infrastructure and utilities by utilizing tools in the Ultra Urban Green Infrastructure Guidelines and other sustainable innovative solutions recommended in this plan (see [E4e](#), [E6a](#), [E6b](#), [E6c](#), and [E6d](#)).

## Partnership Strategies

Partnership strategies encourage a variety of ways to implement projects through PPP. These can be public subsidies for private development projects, shared cost of infrastructure funding, or funding for improvements to public uses and facilities.

### Partnership Priorities:

- Work with the Office of Economic Development and other potential partners to explore opportunities for new affordable and mixed income housing (see [C5a](#), [C5b](#), and [C5c](#)).
- Reinvigorate existing public parks and trails along the South Platte River (see [E4c](#), [E5a](#), [E5b](#), and [E5c](#)).
- Investigate a future multimodal connection over the South Platte River connecting Water Street to Little Raven (see [B6d](#)).
- Implement a Transportation Demand Management program to minimize the use of individual private vehicles and reduce parking needs (see [B10a](#) and [B10b](#)).

## Community Benefits

Community benefits are public amenities and/or mitigations that support a livable, economically viable, diverse, equitable, and family-oriented community in exchange for increased development intensity. These community benefits, which can include public, social, economic, infrastructure, or environmental benefits, are critical for the success of development. The cost of some of these benefits may be shared between the private and public sectors. Several tools can be used to achieve community benefits, including land use, zoning, design standards and guidelines (DSG), infrastructure planning, the entitlement process and development agreements.

### Community Benefits Priorities:

- Work with the Department of Public Health and Environment, Public Works, and US EPA to address environmental cleanup of contaminated land within the plan area (see [E7a](#)).
- Coordinate with Urban Drainage and Flood Control District and U.S. Army Corp of Engineers for environmental remediation of the South Platter River, while addressing flood control capabilities (see [E7b](#)).
- Partner with developers to create an equitable affordable housing plan that provides affordable housing on site (see [C5a](#), [C5b](#), and [C5c](#)).
- Improve upon existing mobility and connectivity networks (see [B6c](#)).
- Improve upon existing public parks, open spaces, and trail connectivity (see [E4b](#), [E4c](#), [E4h](#), and [E5a](#)).
- Provide new mobility connections across the plan area (see [B6a](#), [B6b](#), [B6d](#), and [B7a](#)).
- Provide new parks and public spaces throughout the plan area (see [E4a](#), [E4d](#), [E4e](#), [E4f](#), [E4g](#), [E4h](#), and [E5a](#)).
- Incentivize development of retail goods and services with concentration near light rail stations and active corridors (see [A5c](#)).
- Encourage development of uses that appeal to a variety of household types, including families and the elderly (see [A5b](#), [C5a](#), [C6a](#), [C6b](#), [E4b](#), and [E4g](#)).

## Funding Alternatives

Plan implementation is typically championed by community leaders, registered neighborhood organizations (RNO's), property owners and developers. These entities may work with the mayor and City Council representatives to promote and encourage development and improvement efforts. Implementation of the Downtown Area Plan Amendment will require the coordinated involvement of many different organizations in pursuing a variety of activities with existing and new funding sources.

### A variety of funding resources may be utilized for this plan area:

- **Tax Base Support:** Tax base supported sources are characterized by the involvement of the local sales and property taxing authorities.
- **Annual Budget:** The most common tax base support is through the City's annual budget, especially the annual Capital Improvements Program (CIP). Available CIP funds are typically limited to a few million dollars a year.
- **Bonds:** Periodically, the City requests its voters to approve a tax increase to pay for specific public improvements. Future bond issuances could potentially provide an opportunity to secure funding for some existing infrastructure improvement projects.
- **Tax Increment Finance (TIF):** TIF is another means of tax base support, which is most typically associated with an Urban Renewal Area. Once created by the City Council and the Denver Urban Renewal Authority (DURA), property and sales tax over and above the base year are paid to DURA to fund eligible public improvements or finance gaps for private development. To qualify for tax increment financing through urban renewal, an area must first meet certain criteria to establish the presence of "blight," as defined in the state statute.
- **Grants:** Grant funding opportunities come from public and private entities. Public entities are typically interested in encouraging a specific outcome and these grants typically include specific conditions and requirements as to how the funds may be deployed. For instance, a state or federal transportation grant will need to be used for street, mass transit, or regional mobility studies or projects. The Office of Economic Development receives federal funds to support housing and other types of projects. Additionally, private entities provide grants for projects aligned with the organization's goals, such as green spaces, creative enterprises or social services.
- **Special Districts:** The city charter and state statute enable various types of districts to be created. Examples of special districts include business improvement districts, general improvement districts, metropolitan districts, and local improvement or maintenance districts. These districts are often created by a localized group of citizens who want to achieve specific outcomes in their locality and are willing to pool their economic resources to implement identified projects. Special districts are a useful tool when a local population desires and is willing to pay for an enhanced level of public improvement. District revenues can be used to pay for improvements on a "pay-as-you-go" basis for ongoing operations and maintenance, or to support repayment of bonds. To be established, special districts typically require the approval of the Denver City Council and a vote of the electorate within the area.

## Works Cited

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