

Tools for the S. Platte River

South Platte River Committee
March 26, 2025

Today's Presentation

- Our shared goals for the river
- Current zoning for the river
- Recommended zoning/regulatory tools
- Proposed river review criteria
- Sample development areas on the river
- Summary of benefits for the river

Reinvesting in the South Platte River to enhance:

- ✓ health, safety, and resiliency
- ✓ community connectivity
- ✓ access to open space
- ✓ economic vitality
- ✓ vibrancy of a historic, cultural, and natural amenity

Shared Goals for a Healthy River



Enhance and protect the South Platte River



Provide room for our waterways to help restore natural functionality



Restore functional ecosystems emphasizing healthy waterways and lake



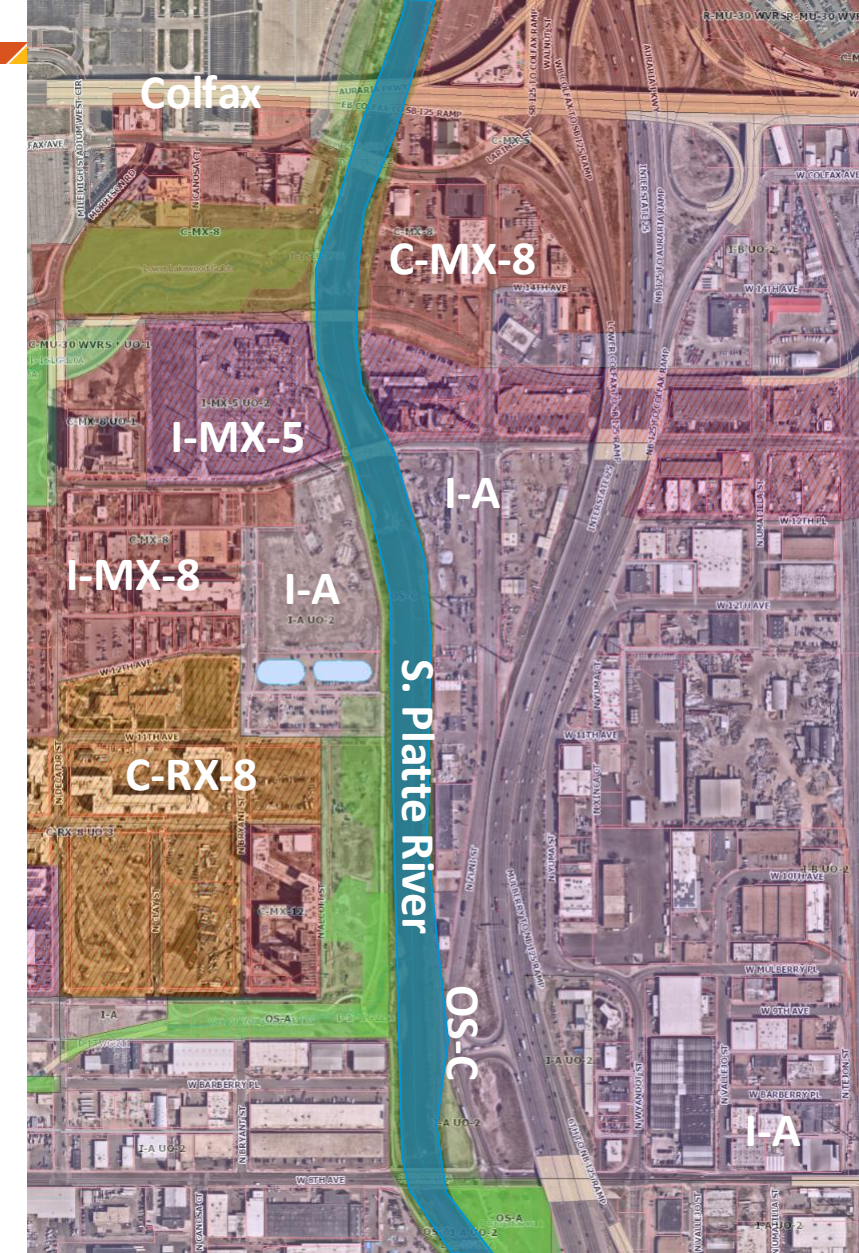
Restore habitat and reduce impervious surfaces along the South Platte River



Provide room along waterway corridors for restoration and multi-modal (non-motorized) purposes

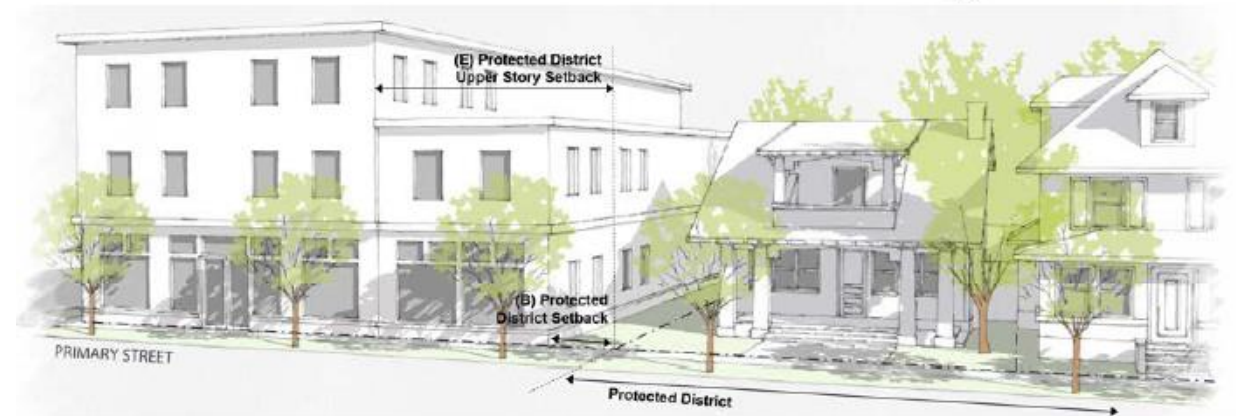
Overview of Current Zoning

- Zoning shapes development citywide
- Most of the river is zoned Open Space - Conservation (OS-C)
- Zoning for properties along the river reflects goals for the surrounding districts and neighborhoods



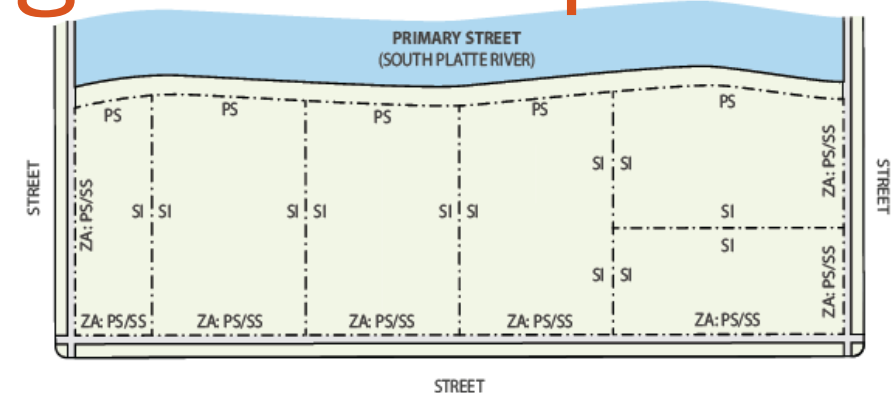
Overview of Current Zoning - Tools

- Maximum height
- Minimum setbacks
- Build-to
- Vehicle and Pedestrian Access
- Transparency
- Allowed uses/allowed street level uses



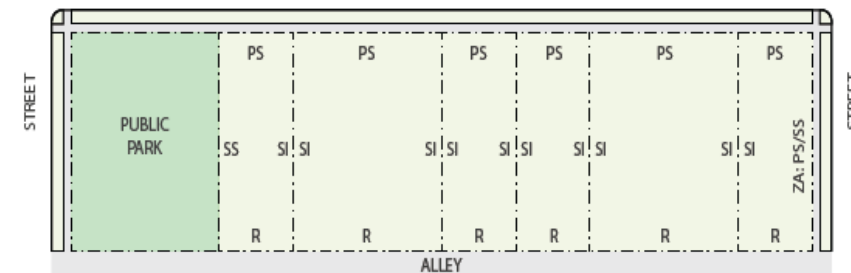
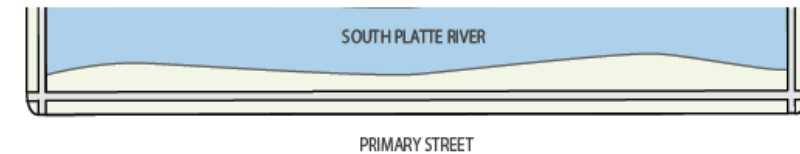
Overview of Current Zoning – River Specific

- Zoning: River North Design Overlay (DO-7)
- Rules and Regulations: Downtown Design Standards and Guidelines (applies in the Central Platte Valley-Auraria area)



Not to Scale. Illustrative Only.

PS - Primary Street
 SS - Side Street
 SI - Side Interior
 R - Rear
 ZA - Zoning Administrator

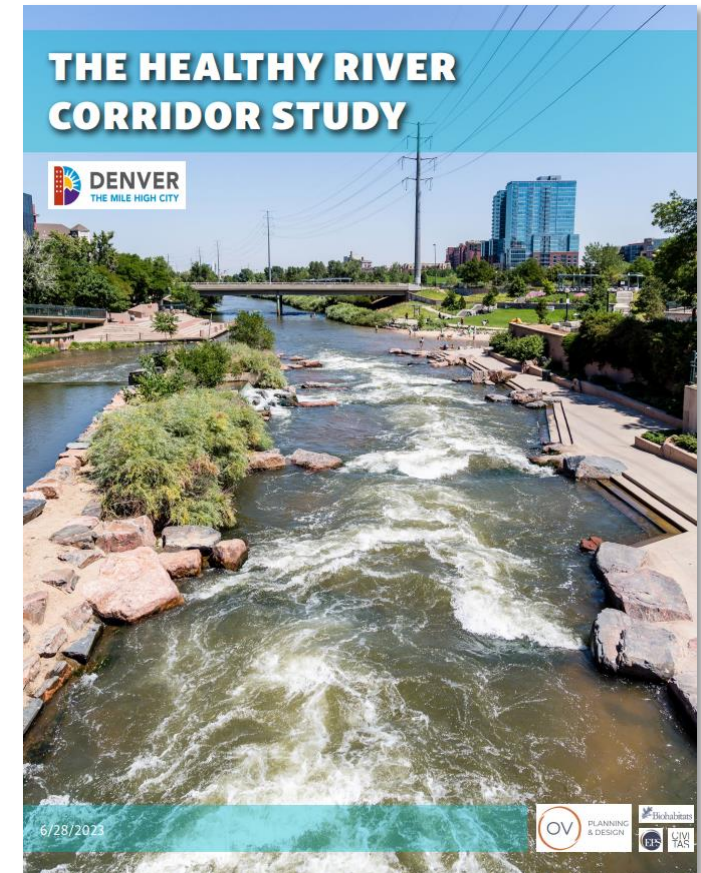


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Future Zoning/Regulatory Tools for the River

- Recommended by plans:*
 - Zoning/zoning overlays
 - Urban design standards and guidelines
- Review criteria are proposed to guide development along the river until a later zoning update project

*Note that neighborhood plans, like the current Southwest plan will update recommendations



South Platte River Review Criteria

South Platte River Committee
March 26, 2025



South Platte River Corridor

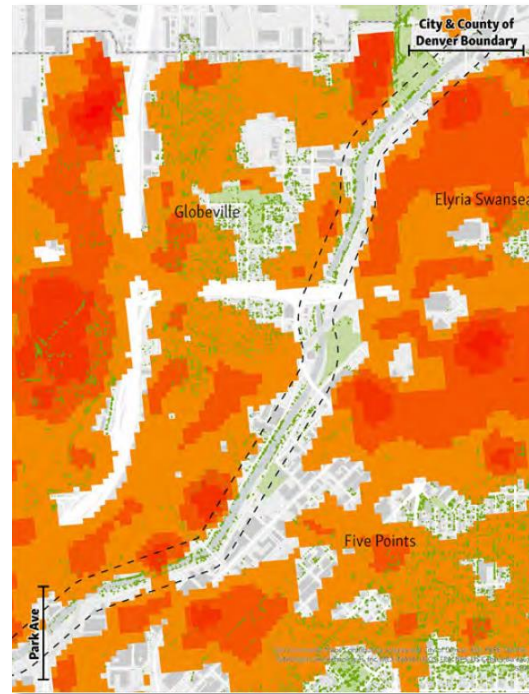
Background

Development Pressure



RJ Sangosti, The Denver Post

Changing Climate



North Denver Urban Heat Map

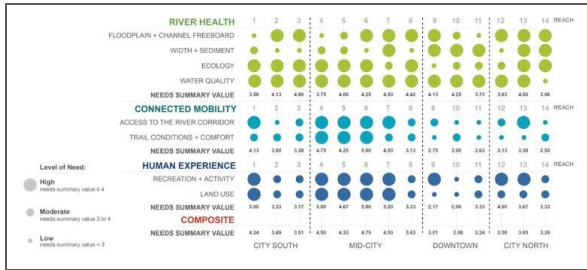
Ecological Challenges



Process for Creating a Healthy River

SPR Needs Assessment

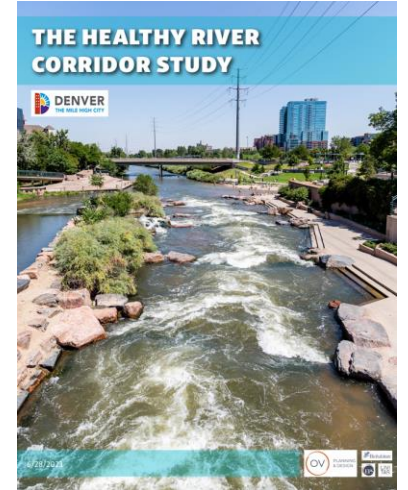
June 2022



Community Engagement
Spring 2022 - Spring 2023

Healthy River Corridor Study

June 2023



Review Criteria

Zoning Code Update/
Design Guidelines



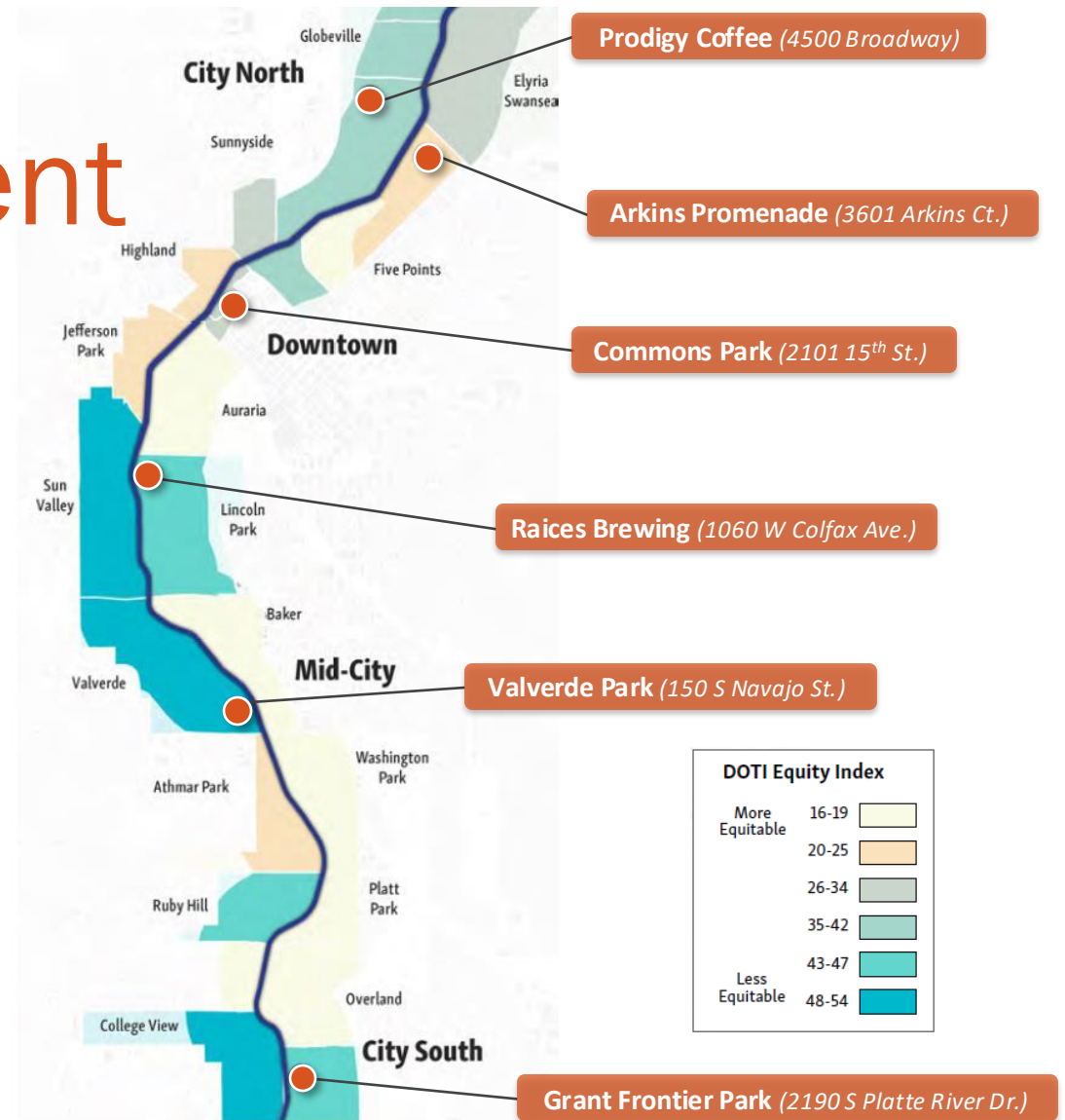
Community Engagement

Stakeholder meetings: 4

Community meetings: 6

Goals: Increase awareness, share information, gather feedback

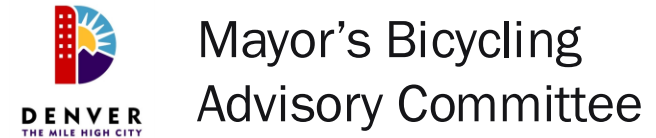
Feedback Collected: Community values, concerns, and experiences of the corridor



Stakeholder Advisory Group



Metro Basin Round Table



Shared Goals for a Healthy River



Land Use & Development



Mobility & Recreation



Water



Ecology

Influence Zone & Guidance



PRIORITIES

GUIDANCE (examples)

- Native plants & trees
- Trails & Sidewalks
- Recreational Amenities
- Retaining Walls
- Utility Intakes & Outfalls
- Buildings & Parking Lots

	150'	50'	150' - 200'	50'	150'
	Health & Access Area	Riparian Priority Area	Official Channel of the South Platte River	Riparian Priority Area	Health & Access Area
	Mobility & Recreation	Natural Ecosystem	Water Conveyance & Habitat Health	Natural Ecosystem	Mobility & Recreation
Native plants & trees	✓ YES	✓ YES	✓ YES	✓ YES	✓ YES
Trails & Sidewalks	✓ YES	* Reviewed	× NO	* Reviewed	✓ YES
Recreational Amenities	✓ YES	* Reviewed	* Reviewed	* Reviewed	✓ YES
Retaining Walls	✓ YES	* Reviewed	* Reviewed	* Reviewed	✓ YES
Utility Intakes & Outfalls	* Reviewed	* Reviewed	✓ YES	* Reviewed	* Reviewed
Buildings & Parking Lots	* Reviewed	× NO	× NO	× NO	* Reviewed

Applicability

Applies to

Commercial

Residential including
3 or more units

Capital improvements
& infrastructure

Does NOT apply to

Single family,
including ADU

Duplex

Existing uses

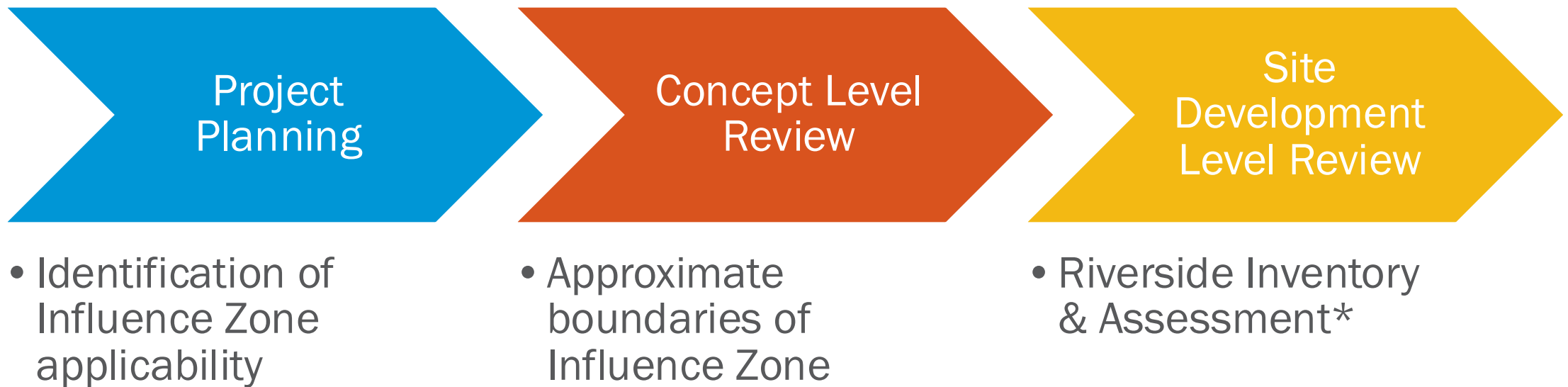
Process

Existing processes

(Site Development Plan Reviews)

No additional
review time

Application Process



*Riverside Inventory & Assessment - Map identifying Influence Zone and floodplain boundaries, topographic contours, noxious weeds, native plants and trees, and habitat features

Implementation of River Criteria

- Review Criteria to pilot new guidance and apply transparent, comprehensive City expectations for development along the SPR
- Identify best practices and lessons learned
- Develop River Overlay Zone District and Design Standards & Guidelines



Interactive Dashboard

Private Parcels
40

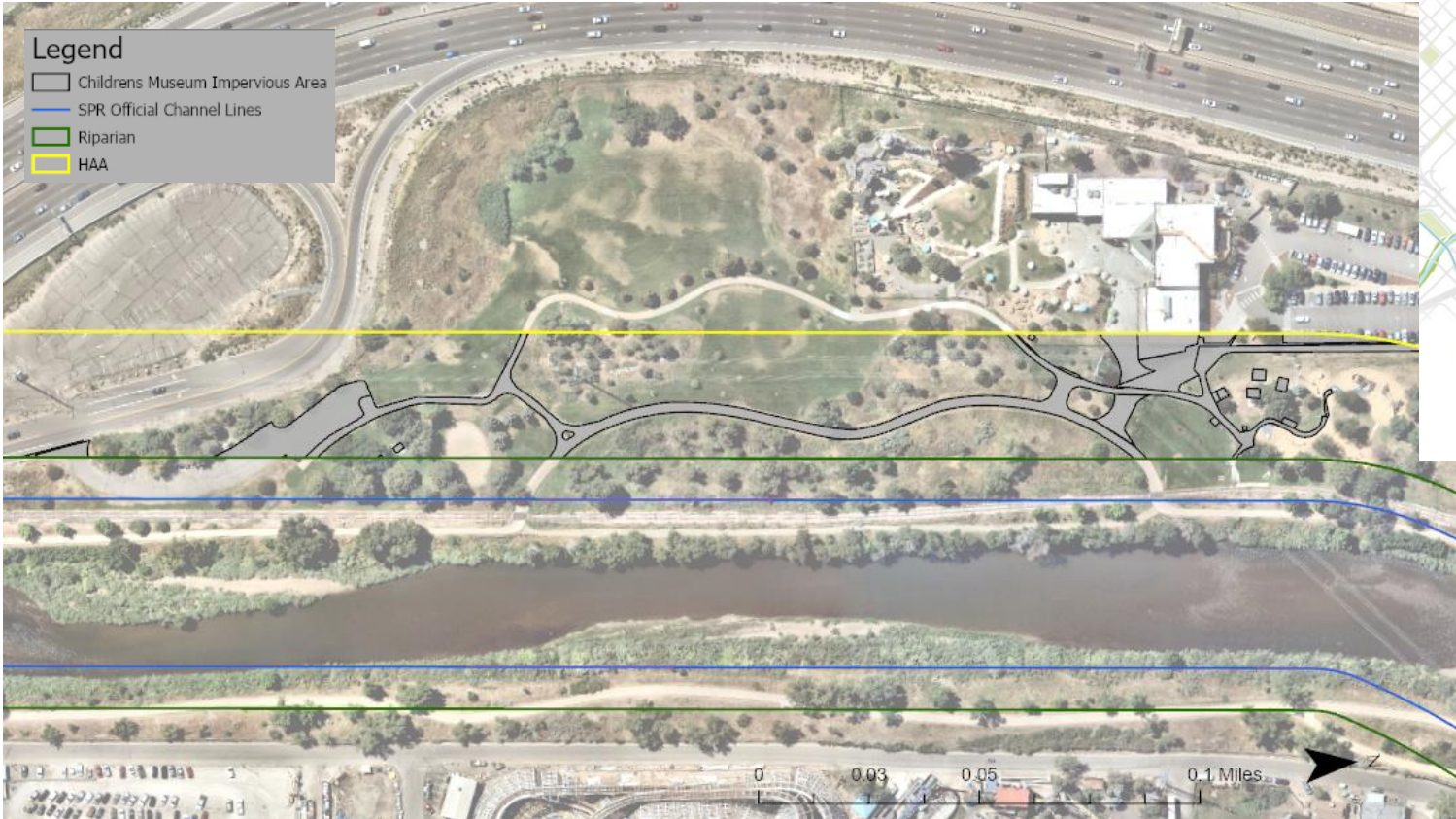
Quasi Gov Parcels
43

CCD Parcels
32



[Interactive Dashboard weblink](#)

Children's Museum



23% Impervious

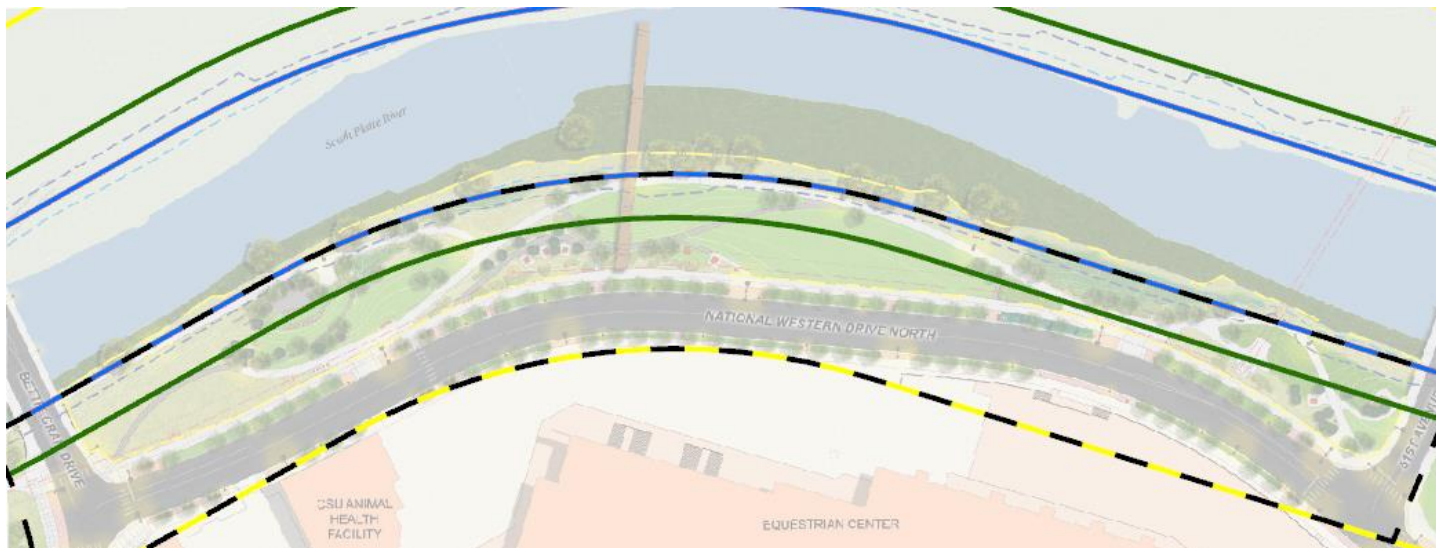
Sun Valley



46.5% Impervious








National Western Center

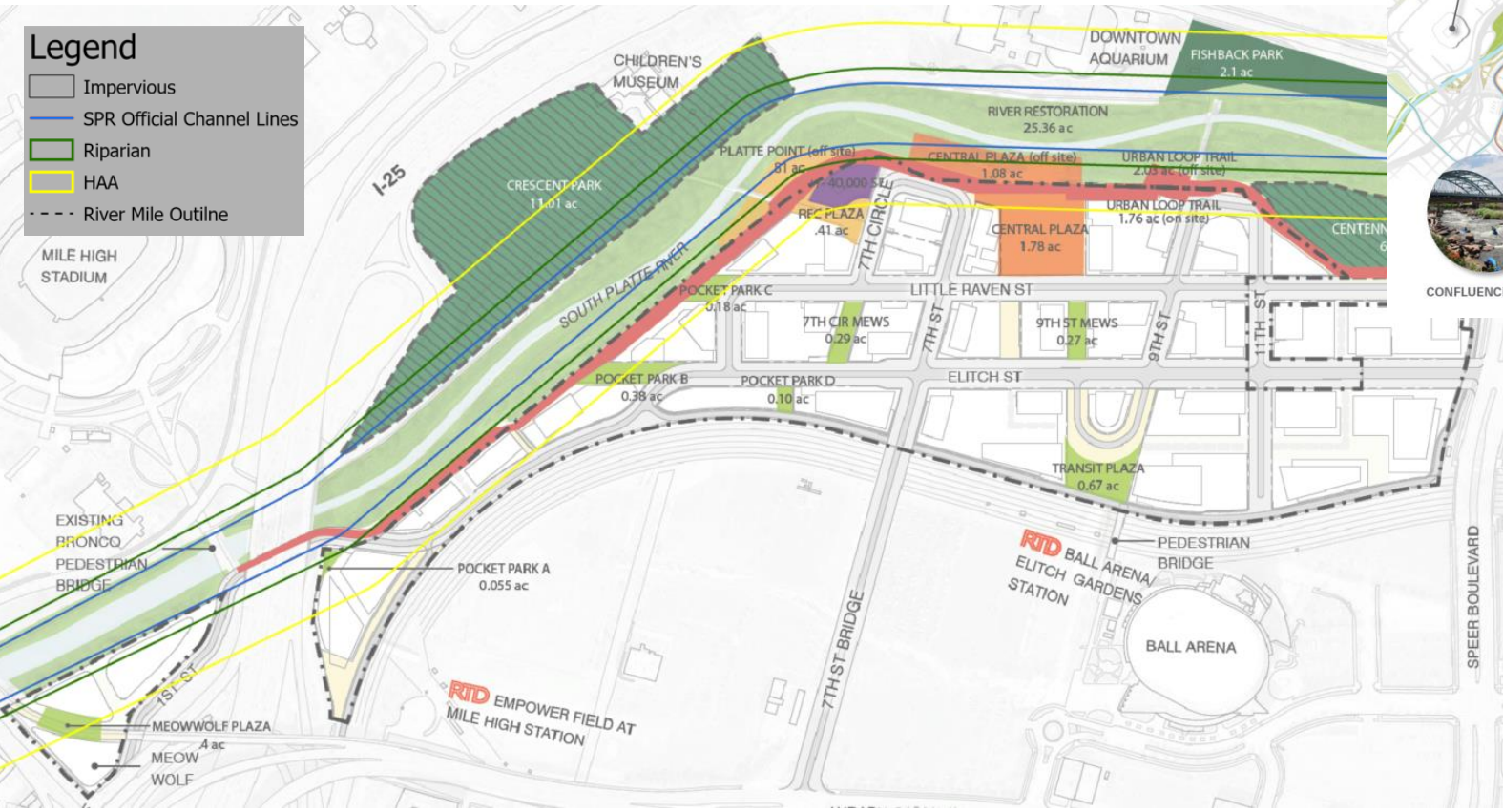


54% Impervious

River Mile

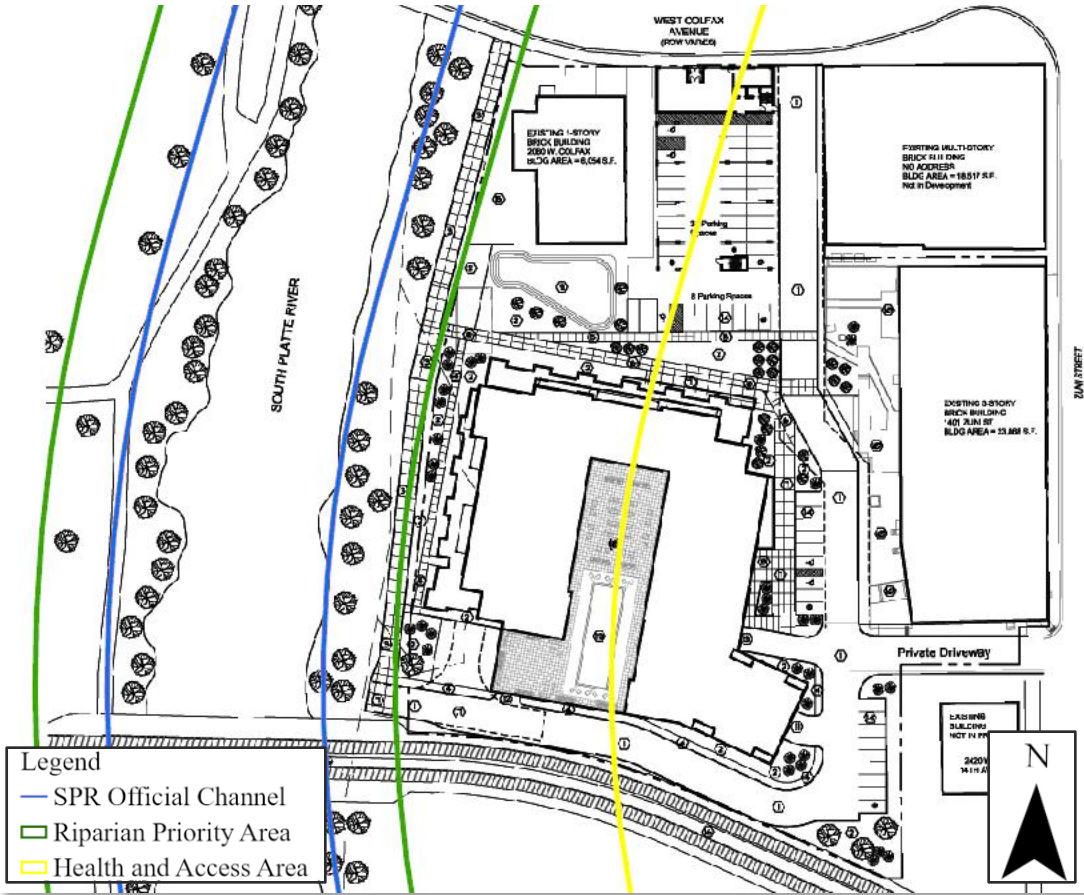
Legend

-  Impervious
-  SPR Official Channel Lines
-  Riparian
-  HAA
-  River Mile Outline



74% Impervious

Steam on the Platte



Value of Improved Waterways

Healthy, safe, resilient to climate change

Community connection, open space, access to nature

Economic vitality, vibrant corridor



Source: *The Economic Impacts of Transforming Denver's South Platte River and Cherry Creek: 1965-Pesent (2017)*

Thank you

Questions and Discussion