



**TO:** Land Use, Transportation, and Infrastructure Committee  
**FROM:** Jason Morrison, AICP, CPD Planning Services  
**DATE:** August 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2019  
**RE:** Loretto Heights Small Area Plan

Community Planning and Development is pleased to submit the *Loretto Heights Small Area Plan* to the Land Use, Transportation, and Infrastructure Committee (LUTI) of the Denver City Council. The Denver Planning Board unanimously approved the plan after holding a required public hearing on August 7<sup>th</sup>, 2019 as a supplement to the *Comprehensive Plan 2040* with the condition that the document be edited for clarity and correctness. This condition is being addressed by staff and will be incorporated into the draft plan prior to the filing deadline.

This memorandum documents the plan contents and process based on the three criteria in *Comprehensive Plan 2040*:

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

The memo concludes with the staff recommendation to move the *Loretto Heights Small Area Plan* to City Council for adoption as a supplement to *Comprehensive Plan 2040*.

## 1. Inclusive Community Process

The Loretto Heights Small Area Plan is based on a robust approximately year-long public engagement process, which was authentic, fair and inclusive:

**Steering Committee-** The Loretto Heights Small Area Plan was guided and informed by a 17-person steering committee nominated by City Council member Kevin Flynn (District 2). Participants represented neighborhood and community organizations, non-profits, businesses, major property owners, and long-time residents. This group built upon the previous work done by local leaders and neighborhood groups who have been eager to put a plan in place for many years. The committee met for 10 meetings over a 10-month period and all meetings were open to the public. Approximately 150 community members attended these meetings to observe. Steering committee members developed the plan's vision statements, identified focus topics and focus areas, reviewed and refined draft materials, and provided guidance throughout the process.

**Public Meetings-** The planning team held four community meetings, including an all-Spanish language community meeting. Strong community participation was sustained throughout the process and the meetings were very successful, with an average attendance of approximately 100 people per meeting and a total attendance of 450 participants across the meeting series.

**Online Surveys-** Two online surveys were created for those who were unable to attend the public meetings. This provided everyone an opportunity to participate in the planning process.

The first survey was created to replicate the first public meeting to ensure that the feedback received online could be evaluated alongside the feedback received in person. The second survey provided an opportunity for the community to submit their feedback on the draft plan. Paper versions of the surveys were also made available. Over 750 additional members of the community participated in the online surveys and provided 2,300 individual comments.

**Community Events-** CPD staff attended additional community events including RNO meetings, Cabinet in the Community at College View Community Center and a Loretto Heights panel discussion at Regis University during alumni weekend. CPD staff provided information, maps, and a place for community feedback at each community event.

**Communications and Additional Outreach-** Promotion of the Loretto Heights Small Area Plan process and advertisement of meetings, surveys and draft plans was conducted by CPD Communications:

- Outreach methods included email distribution, media releases, website information, social media, and additional outreach through City Council offices.
- Project information, agendas, meeting materials, draft content, and announcements were posted to [www.denvergov.org/LorettoHeights](http://www.denvergov.org/LorettoHeights)
- An executive summary of the plan, meeting materials, and Public Meeting boards were translated into Spanish after every outreach event.
- Interpretation services and child care were provided at all public meetings.

***Finding: The Loretto Heights Small Area Plan was developed through an inclusive public process.***

## **2. Plan Consistency**

Small area plans must be consistent with *Comprehensive Plan 2040*. Because it is a key supplement to the comprehensive plan and provides specific guidance for the Neighborhood Planning Initiative, a consistency analysis is also provided for *Blueprint Denver*, below.

### **Comprehensive Plan 2040**

The *Loretto Heights Small Area Plan* is consistent with the following goals and strategies found in *Comprehensive Plan 2040*:

#### **Equitable, Affordable and Inclusive**

***Goal 1: Ensure all Denver residents have safe, convenient and affordable access to basic services and a variety of amenities.***

- A. Increase development of housing units close to transit and mixed-use developments.
- B. Implement a high-quality, affordable and accessible multi-modal transportation system.
- C. Improve equitable access to resources that improve quality of life, including cultural and natural amenities, health care, education, parks, recreation, nutritious food and the arts.
- D. Improve equitable access to city resources and city meetings through proactive and transparent communications, easy-to-access information and materials available in more than one language.

***Goal 2: Build housing as a continuum to serve residents across a range of incomes, ages and needs.***

- A. Create a greater mix of housing options in every neighborhood for all individuals and families.

**Goal 3: Develop housing that is affordable to residents of all income levels.**

- B. Use land use regulations to enable and encourage the private development of affordable, missing middle and mixed-income housing, especially where close to transit.
- D. Develop and promote programs to help individuals and families, especially those most vulnerable to displacement, access affordable housing.

**Goal 4: Preserve existing affordable housing.**

- A. Expand existing tools, such as tax relief programs, to preserve the long-term affordability of housing throughout Denver.

**Goal 5: Reduce the involuntary displacement of residents and businesses.**

- A. Advance a comprehensive approach to mitigating involuntary displacement that includes expanding economic mobility, creating new affordable housing and preserving existing affordability.
- B. Stabilize residents and businesses at risk of displacement through programs and policies that help them to stay in their existing community.

**Goal 6: Integrate equity considerations into city policies, processes and plans.**

- A. Adopt strategies to ensure that city plans and processes, including budget decisions, incorporate equity.
- B. Track the information and measure the data needed to understand disparities and to evaluate the equity impacts of public programs and projects.

**Strong and Authentic Neighborhoods**

**Goal 1: Create a city of complete neighborhoods.**

- A. Build a network of well-connected, vibrant, mixed-use centers and corridors.
- B. Ensure neighborhoods offer a mix of housing types and services for a diverse population.
- C. Ensure neighborhoods are safe, accessible and well-connected for all modes.
- D. Encourage quality infill development that is consistent with the surrounding neighborhood and offers opportunities for increased amenities.

**Goal 2: Enhance Denver's neighborhoods through high-quality urban design.**

- A. Enhance collaboration between city agencies to ensure quality design and innovation across the public and private realm.
- C. Create people-oriented places that embrace community character with thoughtful transitions, aspirational design and an engaging public realm.
- D. Use urban design to contribute to economic viability, public health, safety, environmental well-being, neighborhood culture, and quality of life.
- E. Ensure civic buildings and public spaces enhance and contribute to the design legacy of Denver.

**Goal 4: Ensure every neighborhood is strong and dynamic**

- A. Grow and support neighborhood-serving businesses
- C. Make city-led catalytic investments in neighborhoods to advance community goals

**Goal 5: Create and preserve parks and public spaces that reflect the identity of Denver's neighborhoods.**

- A. Ensure that parks and recreational programs reflect the unique context and cultural identity of the neighborhoods they share.

**Goal 6: Empower Denverites to be involved and collaborative in city government.**

- A. Continue to strengthen trust and communication between the city and all neighborhoods.
- B. Provide proactive communication and transparency about city policies, public safety, processes and plans.
- C. Improve the engagement and representation of all Denverites, including communities of color, in neighborhood groups and city processes.

**Goal 7: Leverage the arts and support creative placemaking to strengthen the community.**

- B. Embrace existing communities and their cultural assets.

**Goal 8: Conduct intentional, equitable and measurable neighborhood planning.**

- A. Create diverse and inclusive opportunities for communities to participate in planning.
- B. Ensure all neighborhoods have a future vision that is both community-driven and long-term.
- C. Ensure neighborhood plan recommendations are consistent with the local vision and with this comprehensive plan.

**Goal 9: Ensure all neighborhoods are safe.**

- A. Encourage design and new development to improve public health and safety.

**Connected, Safe and Accessible Places**

**Goal 2: Provide a safe transportation system that serves all users.**

- A. Implement the city's Vision Zero Action Plan to achieve zero traffic-related deaths and serious injuries by 2030.
- B. Create a transportation system to serve all ages and physical abilities.

**Goal 4: Create an equitable and connected multimodal network that improves access to opportunity and services.**

- A. Ensure focused transportation investments—on streets as well as neighborhood trails—in areas with populations more dependent on walking, rolling and transit.
- B. Use the multimodal network to connect vulnerable populations to employment, education, parks and health services.

**Goal 5: Ensure the development of a frequent, high-quality and reliable transit network.**

- A. Promote a citywide network of frequent transit service—including buses— that is reliable, safe and accessible to users of all ages and abilities.
- B. Implement *Denver Moves: Transit*, including the frequent transit network and transit capital investment corridors.

**Goal 6: Build and maintain safe bicycle and pedestrian networks.**

- A. Create a citywide network for bicycling, walking and rolling that is safe and accessible to people of all ages and abilities.

- B. Implement the bicycle network, including facilities easy to use, recommended in *Denver Moves: Bicycles*.
- C. Implement the complete network of pedestrian infrastructure recommended in *Denver Moves: Pedestrians & Trails*.

**Goal 8: Strengthen multimodal connections in mixed-use centers and focus growth near transit.**

- A. Improve multimodal connections within and between mixed-use centers including downtown, Denver International Airport and major urban centers.
- B. Promote transit-oriented development and encourage higher density development, including affordable housing, near transit to support ridership.

**Economically Diverse and Vibrant**

**Goal 1: Ensure economic mobility and improve access to opportunity.**

- C. Support business development and grow the talent necessary to compete in the global economy.

**Goal 4: Ensure Denver has a productive, educated, competitive and knowledgeable workforce.**

- A. Develop a highly trained local workforce with the skills and knowledge to effectively compete for a diverse range of local jobs.
- B. Provide training and programs to connect Denverites to high quality jobs at a range of skill levels.
- C. Encourage businesses to work with local workforce training and education organizations to better prepare residents for job and career opportunities.

**Environmentally Resilient**

**Goal 2: Prepare for and adapt to climate change.**

- A. Prepare for the impacts of climate change including increased temperatures, loss of tree canopy, infrastructure damage, increased frequency of extreme weather events and reduced snowpack and earlier snow melt.
- B. Plan for climate change through collaboration, innovation and special attention to the city's most vulnerable populations, who are disproportionately impacted by climate change.

**Goal 4: Integrate stormwater into the built environment by using green infrastructure to improve water quality and reduce runoff.**

- B. Restore and enhance waterways so they serve as community amenities.

**Goal 6: Protect and expand Denver's green infrastructure network.**

- A. Recognize parks, public space, trees and plants as vital elements of green infrastructure and ensure that the provision of these elements keeps pace with Denver's growth.
- B. Connect parks, open spaces, trails, river corridors, parkways and street trees into an integrated green infrastructure network.
- C. Maintain and expand the citywide tree canopy.
- D. Preserve and enhance the city's system of parkland and adapt park landscapes to be more climate and heat resistant.

**Goal 8: Clean our soils, conserve land and grow responsibly.**

- B. Encourage mixed-use communities where residents can live, work and play in their own neighborhoods.

- C. Focus growth by transit stations and along high- and medium-capacity transit corridors.

### **Healthy and Active**

#### ***Goal 1: Create and enhance environments that support physical activity and healthy living.***

- A. Recognize parks, recreation and the urban forest as vital components of a complete community.
- B. Promote walking, rolling and biking through the development of a safe and interconnected multimodal network.
- C. Design safe public spaces and recreational areas to serve people of all ages and backgrounds.

#### ***Goal 2: Provide high-quality parks, recreation facilities and programs that serve all Denver residents.***

- A. Ensure equitable access to parks and recreation amenities for all residents.
- B. Make Denver's healthy outdoor lifestyle accessible to residents of all ages and backgrounds.

#### ***Goal 3: Ensure access to affordable, nutritious and culturally-diverse foods in all neighborhoods.***

- A. Expand efforts to recruit and retain fresh-food retailers in low-income and underserved areas.
- B. Expand community food production and sharing.
- C. Build community-driven food resources.

#### ***Goal 5: Incorporate health analysis into relevant city policies, processes and planning.***

- A. Integrate health impacts and considerations into relevant city programs and projects.
- B. Work across multiple city departments and partners to address health impacts.

### **Denver and the Region**

#### ***Goal 1: Be a regional leader in smart growth.***

- B. Demonstrate the benefits of compact, mixed-use development for the region.

#### ***Goal 2: Embrace Denver's role as the center of regional growth.***

- A. Direct significant growth to regional centers and community centers and corridors with strong transit connections.

#### ***Goal 3: Lead the advancement and promotion of regional collaboration.***

- B. Coordinate with RTD, DRCOG and local jurisdictions to lead investments in multimodal regional connections, including transit corridors.

#### ***Goal 4: Capitalize on Denver's role as a transportation hub and enhance connections to the region and beyond.***

- A. Leverage the regional investment in RTD's FasTracks program to develop a network of transit-oriented centers at rail stations.

## Blueprint Denver

*Blueprint Denver* Section 3.1 (Plan in Action- Implementation) identifies NPI area plans as “the greatest opportunity for covering all of Denver with small area plans that provide more specific guidance than *Blueprint Denver*”. The section describes how NPI area plans update and refine *Blueprint Denver* and establishes the following minimum content for NPI plans:

- A detailed vision for the future of the area that aligns with the comprehensive plan vision and the vision of *Blueprint Denver*.
- Strategies for achieving the vision, including recommendations for land use, built form, mobility and quality-of-life infrastructure.
- An implementation section identifying strategies by type, responsible entities, timelines, and any metrics for tracking plan progress over time.
- A summary of intended updates to *Blueprint Denver*.

The *Loretto Heights Small Area Plan* contains content specifically addressing each of the minimum standards listed above. Additionally, the *Loretto Heights Small Area Plan* is consistent with the following goals and strategies found in *Blueprint Denver*:

### **Land Use and Built Form**

General Recommendations- Land Use and Built Form

***Policy 1: Promote and anticipate planned growth in major centers and corridors and key residential areas connected by rail service and transit priority streets.***

- A. Use zoning and land use regulations to encourage higher-density, mixed-use development in transit-rich areas including:
  - Regional centers and community centers
  - Community corridors where medium- and high-capacity transit corridors are planned
  - High and medium-high residential areas in the downtown and urban center contexts.

***Policy 3: Ensure the Denver Zoning Code continues to respond to the needs of the city, while remaining modern and flexible.***

- A. Rezone properties from the Former Chapter 59 zoning code so that the entire city is covered by the DZC, including continuing to incentivize owners to come out of the old code.
- C. Update the zoning code to reflect the contexts and places envisioned in this plan. Create new zone districts where appropriate.

***Policy 4: Ensure equitable planning processes and include underrepresented residents in plans and plan implementation.***

- A. Include multilingual engagement in all public outreach.
- D. Integrate equity and environmental justice considerations into plans and identify methods to measure and reduce inequities as part of the planning process.

***Policy 9: Promote coordinated development on large infill sites to ensure new development integrates with its surroundings.***

- B. Use large development review, or similar tools, to coordinate infrastructure and open space on large infill sites while minimizing and mitigating negative impacts on surrounding communities.
- C. Implement regulatory tools to set clear and predictable requirements for large redevelopments to provide benefits to the community such as affordable housing and open space.

Housing Recommendations- Land Use and Built Form

**Policy 8: Capture 80 percent of new housing growth in regional centers, community centers and corridors, high-intensity residential areas, greenfield residential areas, innovation flex districts and university campus districts.**

- C. Ensure land use regulations, small area plans, and major transit investments support desired growth areas.
- D. Advance housing affordability recommendations from this plan and Housing an Inclusive Denver to ensure new units include units affordable to a range of income levels.

Economic Recommendations- Land Use and Built Form

**Policy 2: Improve equitable access to employment areas throughout the city to ensure all residents can connect to employment opportunities.**

- A. Invest in transit priority streets to connect all Denver residents to the city's regional, community centers and community corridors.
- B. Promote and incentivize the development of affordable and family-friendly housing, as well as a full range of job opportunities, in and near regional centers, community centers and community corridors
- D. Align workforce training, career development and education programs with job opportunities in regional centers and create programs to connect workers with employers in regional centers.

Design Quality and Preservation- Land Use and Built Form

**Policy 2. Ensure residential neighborhoods retain their unique character as infill development occurs.**

- A. Continue the city's commitment to existing historic districts and landmarks and use historic designation to preserve the character of an individual structure or district or where there is historic, architectural, cultural, and/or geographic significance
- C. Use design overlays as targeted tools in developing or redeveloping areas that have a specific design vision, ideally one articulated through a planning process. Although these overlays tend to be specific to a particular area — such as a river corridor or newly developing neighborhood — it is also appropriate to create design overlays for multiple areas where common design outcomes are desired.
- F. Promote the use of pattern books to identify character defining features and/or desired design outcomes for an area. Pattern books can be developed during neighborhood planning and used to inform regulatory tools including, but not limited to, conservation overlays and design overlays. Discover Denver, the citywide building survey, can contribute valuable data on character defining features to be incorporated into pattern books
- I. Promote incentives to preserve the reuse of historic buildings and the unique historic features of Denver's neighborhoods.

**Policy 3. Create exceptional design outcomes in key centers and corridors**

- C. Create a system of design tools, including standards and guidelines, that are scalable and repeatable to enable baseline design requirements that can be applied to a range of contexts and locations and be modified with a smaller subset of locally-applicable features.
- E. Revise the zoning code to provide standards for new mixed-use development that better responds to the surrounding context. Standards to examine for improvement include build-to ranges, transparency minimums, lot coverage, and entry features.



- F. Implement additional zoning tools to create appropriate transitions between places, especially for areas where centers and corridors are close to residential places. This may include standards related to height, massing and uses.
- K. Identify important mixed-use historic structures and encourage their continued use or adaptive reuse.

***Policy 5. Create design outcomes in suburban and urban edge contexts that promote active, pedestrian-friendly places.***

- B. Revise zoning code to provide better site design requirements for pedestrians, particularly internal circulation within large, multi-building developments.

**Mobility Recommendations**

***Policy 1. Encourage mode-shift — more trips by walking and rolling, biking and transit — through efficient land use and infrastructure improvements.***

- A. Implement the bicycle, pedestrian and transit networks in *Denver Moves* plans.
- D. Increase the number of services and amenities that are available by walking, rolling and biking by integrating more local centers and corridors into residential areas, especially for areas that score low in Access to Opportunity.
- E. Promote mixed-use development in all centers and corridors.

***Policy 3. On all streets, prioritize people walking and rolling over other modes of transportation***

- A. Ensure safe pedestrian crossings, especially along the High Injury Network identified by Vision Zero.
- C. Ensure that café seating in the public right-of-way provides ample and high-quality space for pedestrians and streetscaping, especially in areas with high pedestrian volumes.
- D. Develop policies for shared spaces in appropriate locations to safely accommodate all users, flexible spaces and opportunities for events.

***Policy 4. On all streets, prioritize people walking and rolling over other modes of transportation***

- B. Create and adopt a citywide “Complete Streets” policy to support comprehensive street design guidelines.
- D. Align street design guidelines, standards and rules and regulations to support Vision Zero goals and improve safety along the High Injury Network.
- E. Ensure regulations promote design outcomes that prioritize pedestrians.

***Policy 8. Connect centers and corridors across the city through a variety of modal choices.***

- A. Implement the sidewalk network in *Denver Moves: Pedestrians & Trails*.
- B. Implement the bicycle network in *Denver Moves: Bicycles*.
- C. Update the bicycle network from the *Denver Moves: Bicycles* plan to ensure low-stress bicycle connections to centers and corridors.
- E. Implement the Transit Capital Investment Corridors in *Denver Moves: Transit*.

***Policy 9. Improve safety on Denver's streets and collaborate with city departments on safety programs when developing small area plans.***

- A. Build streets that are safe for everybody and implement the Vision Zero Action Plan to achieve zero traffic related fatalities by 2030.
- B. Advance the goals of the Vision Zero Action Plan in the Neighborhood Planning Initiative (NPI).

- D. Support the safe routes to school program.

### **Quality of Life Infrastructure Recommendations**

#### ***Policy 1. Expand tools and regulations to ensure high-quality parks and outdoor public spaces keep pace with Denver's growth.***

- A. Explore a variety of methods to provide permanent, sustainable funding options for park, trail and recreation needs. This could include working with city agencies to seek increased participation from new development to help meet increased demand for park and recreations services and facilities.
- B. Evaluate the need to increase requirements and/or create incentives for publicly accessible outdoor space for mid- and large-scale developments in centers, corridors and districts.

#### ***Policy 2. Protect and expand Denver's tree canopy on both public and private property.***

- B. Support a robust street tree canopy by prioritizing trees in right-of-way design.

#### ***Policy 3. Minimize flooding and effectively manage stormwater as part of a larger integrated ecological system.***

- D. Encourage adaptable, multi-functional stormwater facilities to support redevelopment and provide neighborhood recreational amenities.
- E. Provide room for our waterways, where feasible, to help restore natural functionality that has been impaired due to increased urbanization and channelization.

#### ***Policy 5. Ensure attractive streets and outdoor spaces in all centers and corridors, giving priority to pedestrian spaces and amenities.***

- A. Encourage street design that minimizes impervious surfaces and look for opportunities to re-purpose parts of the street to enhance the pedestrian realm.
- F. Prioritize pedestrian relationships in design such as building orientation, vehicular access points and public wayfinding.

#### ***Policy 6. Preserve and rehabilitate Denver's designated parkways and boulevards.***

- B. Create corridor plans to help refine the approach to some parkways where the vision for the character has not been fully implemented, such as Colorado Boulevard and Federal Boulevard.

#### ***Policy 8. Develop tools to improve access to healthy foods to support community health outcomes.***

- C. Explore ways to increase use of public spaces for non-permanent fresh food retail, including farmers markets and mobile vending.
- E. Analyze areas with a saturation of unhealthy food uses and develop regulatory tools to address impacts, particularly on vulnerable populations.
- F. Incentivize and support efforts to recruit and retain grocery stores in centers and corridors, with focus on areas of low food access.

#### ***Policy 10. Work with public and private partners to improve access to shops, restaurants, entertainment, services and a variety of daily needs for all Denver residents.***

- A. Prioritize street and trail improvements and connections leading to and through existing and future centers and corridors.
- C. Promote development that compatibly integrates and includes daily needs such as child care centers, grocery stores and community-serving retail.

**Finding: The Loretto Heights Small Area Plan is consistent with Comprehensive Plan 2040 and Blueprint Denver.**

### **3. Long-Term View**

The Loretto Heights Small Area Plan establishes a vision for maintaining the character and development patterns in established residential neighborhoods, guide sustainable new growth within community centers and corridors in the plan area, and honor the rich history of the Loretto Heights campus through the preservation and reuse of historic buildings and sensitive infill. The plan is intended to be flexible to accommodate opportunities that arise, and be able to adapt and respond to new challenges over the coming years. This vision will take many years to achieve.

**Finding: The Loretto Heights Small Area Plan has an appropriate long-term perspective.**

#### **Staff Recommendation:**

Based on the findings that the Loretto Heights Small Area Plan used an inclusive public process, is consistent with Comprehensive Plan 2040 and Blueprint Denver, and takes a long-term view, **staff recommends moving the Loretto Heights Small Area Plan to City Council for adoption as a supplement to Comprehensive Plan 2040.**

#### **Attachments:**

##### **1. Public Comment**

- a. Letter of endorsement from the Loretto Heights Steering Committee
- b. Resolution of the City Council of the City of Sheridan endorsing the Loretto Heights Small Area Plan and recommending approval by the City and County of Denver's Planning Board and City Council
- c. Letter of endorsement from Mr. Andrew Rogge, City of Sheridan Planning Department
- d. Letter of endorsement from Libby Brien, School Directed at DSST College View Middle School
- e. Letter of endorsement from Sister Barbara Nicholas, Sisters of Loretto President
- f. Letter of endorsement from Sister Mary Nelle Gage, Sisters of Loretto
- g. Letter of endorsement from Rev. Joseph Tung Dang, Vietnamese-American Community of Colorado
- h. Letter of endorsement from Mr. Mark Witkiewicz, Westside Investment Partners, Inc.
- i. Letter of endorsement from Martha Kirkpatrick, Loretto Heights Alumni
- j. Letter of endorsement from Mr. & Mrs. Ratkewicz, Loretto Heights Alumni
- k. Letter of endorsement from Mrs. Norma Brown, Loretto Heights Alumni
- l. Letter of endorsement from Ms. Clare Harris, President, College View RNO
- m. Letter of endorsement from Mr. James Hoxworth
- n. Letter of endorsement from South Mar Lee / Brentwood / Sharon Park RNO
- o. Letter of endorsement from Mr. Andrew Chapin
- p. Letter of endorsement from Mr. Tom Leavitt
- q. Letter of endorsement from Mr. John Moore, Dartmouth Heights Association
- r. Letter of endorsement from Mr. Carl Christianssen
- s. Letter of opposition from Ms. Karen Kalavity
- t. Letter of endorsement from South Mar Lee / Brentwood / Sharon Park Board

- u. Letter of endorsement from College View RNO
  - v. Letter from Bonnie DeHart
  - w. Letter from Janet Fuiks
2. **Loretto Heights Small Area Plan**

## Statement regarding the City of Denver Loretto Heights Small Area Plan

As Neighbors of the Loretto Heights campus, Advocates of Loretto Heights and its history, Leaders charged with envisioning the campus' future and Members of the Loretto Heights Small Area Plan Steering Committee, we fully support the Loretto Heights Small Area Plan.

The Plan outlines a compelling vision for activating the campus and building it into an asset for southwest Denver while appropriately preserving its storied history and minimizing impacts on existing communities.

Furthermore, we:

1. Express gratitude to Councilman Kevin Flynn for organizing a Small Area Plan effort to bring focused, coordinated planning to the campus at a critical juncture in its history;
2. Commend Westside Investment Partners for submitting this project to the Small Area Plan process;
3. Recognize the City Planning Services Department for leading the Small Area Plan process, including organizing multiple community meetings and synthesizing a variety of viewpoints into a consensus-driven vision.

John Joe DHA (Dartmouth Heights)

Margent Hayes DHA

Marty Phau DAA

Oliver Harris College View

Jan Dahn South Marlee / Sharon Park / Brentwood

Kassandra Corneles SWDC

H/K MO, DHA

Norma Brown Loretto Summit

Donna Noble Repp SMLBSP RNO

Sr. Mary Nell Stage, SL (Sisters of Loretto, Loretto Community)

## Statement regarding the City of Denver Loretto Heights Small Area Plan

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Alumni Alternate-SAP/LH Steering Committee  
LHC 1982

CITY OF SHERIDAN, CO  
RESOLUTION NO. 23-2019

**A RESOLUTION OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF SHERIDAN  
ENDORING THE LORETTO HEIGHTS AREA PLAN AND RECOMMENDING  
ITS APPROVAL BY THE CITY AND COUNTY OF DENVER'S PLANNING  
BOARD AND CITY COUNCIL**

WHEREAS, the City of Sheridan participated in the Loretto Heights Steering Committee (“the Committee”) and the drafting of the Loretto Heights Area Plan (“the Plan”); and

WHEREAS, Sheridan residents provided input on the future of the Loretto Heights campus and the Plan through an extensive public engagement process including online surveys and community meetings; and

WHEREAS, the impending redevelopment of the Loretto Heights campus and implementation of the Plan is of the utmost importance to the communities and neighborhoods of southwest metro Denver; and

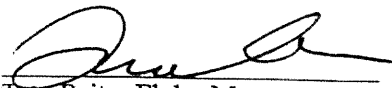
WHEREAS, the City Council of the City of Sheridan has been provided regular updates on the progress of the Committee and reviewed the Plan at a study session; and

WHEREAS, the City Council of the City of Sheridan supports the Plan's recommendations and specifically recommends that the City and County of Denver consider traffic impacts to Federal and Dartmouth Avenue, view corridors to and from the City of Sheridan and historic preservation of buildings on the campus.


THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF SHERIDAN, COLORADO, THAT:

The City of Sheridan City Council endorses the Loretto Heights Area Plan and recommends its approval by the City and County of Denver's Planning Board and City Council.

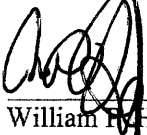
Done and resolved the 29th day of July, 2019.

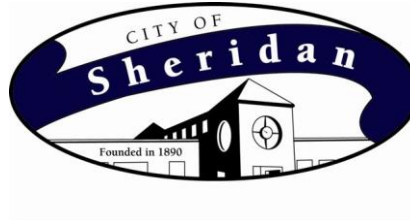
  
Tara Beiter-Fluhr, Mayor

ATTEST:

  
Arlene Sagee, City Clerk

APPROVED AS TO FORM:

  
William H. Hayashi, City Attorney



July 30, 2019

ATTN: Jason Morrison  
Planning Services  
Community Planning and Development  
201 W. Colfax Ave., Dept. 205  
Denver, CO. 80202

**RE: Loretto Heights Steering Committee**

Dear Mr. Morrison,

On behalf of the City of Sheridan I would like to express our thanks to Denver's Community Planning and Development Department (CPD) for the invitation to participate in the Loretto Heights Steering Committee and the creation of the Area Plan for the Loretto Heights campus. Over the past ten months I have attended monthly Steering Committee meetings and am truly astonished at the level of input and collaboration which CPD was able to gather throughout this process.

As a planner in southwest metro Denver I appreciate the unique challenges that come with engaging residents and community leaders in important planning decisions. Early on, it was evident that a diverse group of stakeholders, neighborhood groups, and organizations were represented at Steering Committee meetings. Throughout the planning process CPD was able to obtain input from 1,300 community members and made a concerted effort to engage Spanish-speaking residents—who represent 66% of the residents in the Plan's Study Area.

The City of Sheridan looks forward to collaborating with the City and County of Denver in the future and on the implementation of the Loretto Heights Area Plan.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Andrew Rogge".

Andrew Rogge  
Senior Planner

cc: Tara Beiter-Fluhr, Mayor  
Devin Granbery, City Manager



# DSST PUBLIC SCHOOLS

## COLLEGE VIEW

August 10, 2019

To whom it may concern at the Denver Planning Board;

This letter enthusiastically supports the Loretto Heights Area Plan. As you may know, DSST College View Middle School sits along the South edge of the Loretto Heights Campus. We have been privy to the many changes occurring with the property over the course of the last 5 years and are deeply invested in the property and its future. We are thrilled to have had the opportunity to engage in such a collaborative process as the plan has come to fruition. Our staff, students, families, and neighbors are eager to see how the landscape and opportunity of the surrounding area will change in coming months and years.

The current draft plan has clearly synthesized the input, ideas, and voices of a diverse collection of residents and community members within the plan boundary- including many members of the DSST College View community. We expressed our hopes for green space, community resources, and plans to ensure traffic through our school boundary does not increase- and see the application of these ideas throughout the plan. In addition, we believe the current draft plan will benefit the diverse needs of our school community and the surrounding neighborhood- and will benefit individuals from a variety of socioeconomic, racial, and linguistic backgrounds- something that is core to our mission.

We appreciate the ability to collaborate and provide input throughout the planning process and are excited to work as continued partners through the execution of this plan.

With many thanks,



Libby Brien  
School Director  
DSST College View Middle School  
Email: [Libby.brien@scienceandtech.org](mailto:Libby.brien@scienceandtech.org)  
Phone: 303.802.4170

LORETTO COMMUNITY  
Sisters of Loretto · Co-Members of Loretto  
*Office of the President*

August 5, 2019

Dear Community:

The Loretto Community (Sisters of Loretto at the Foot of the Cross and Loretto Co-Members) affirms the public/private collaboration during the last 10 months to develop the community-driven vision of the re-vitalization of the Loretto Heights campus. While the planning for the perpetual care of the Loretto Heights cemetery is still in process, we do want to acknowledge our appreciation for the careful attention paid to the history of the campus, to honor the educational services provided during the last 125 years. We commend the intentions to both honor the legacy as well as to bring new life to the campus.

The plan for affordable housing, the hope for a revitalized theatre, the prospect of re-purposing and enhancing existing buildings, the value of ample open space and the maintenance of the majestic mountain vistas are goals we share. We are especially grateful for the recognition of the sacredness of the cemetery.

Thank you to the City of Denver, neighborhood associations, civic stakeholders, Westside Investment Partners, and conscientious individuals who have given time talent, and treasure in this labor to both honor the past and create a vibrant future in Southwest Denver.

Sincerely yours,



Sister Barbara Nicholas SL President  
Sisters of Loretto and Co-Members of Loretto

515 Nerinx Road, Nerinx, Kentucky 40049-9999  
Phone: 270-865-5811 ext. 3102 Mobile: 502-550-5925  
bnicholas@lorettocommunity.org

*We work for justice and act for peace because the Gospel urges us.*

Dear Community,

It has been my honor to serve the Sisters of Loretto as representative on the Loretto Heights Area Plan Steering Committee. I am inspired by the by the dedicated work of the Denver City Planners, Southwest Denver neighbors, civic agency representatives, and Westside Investment Partners. The area plan process has been positive in bringing a wide variety of stakeholders together, both appointed members and interested citizens, to share hopes and fears as well as dreams and dreads.

My devotion to the campus is deeply rooted in my life as a graduate of Loretto Heights College as well as a Sister of Loretto for 50 years. Since early 2017 I have been encouraged by the public outpouring of interest in the re-vitalization of the campus. The goals consistently articulated are for historic preservation, appreciation of the natural beauty, perpetual care for the sacred cemetery, maintaining the prominence of the Academy/Administration Building and attached chapel, repurposing of buildings, as well as envisioning a campus where current and future SW Denver needs and desires are fulfilled.

Westside has invested significant time in learning about the history of Loretto Heights and is committed to the values expressed by the community. I trust that we all will continue working with Westside to ensure that the renewal of Loretto Heights will be a place of peace, beauty, and joy for those who come to live, to work, to learn, to pray and to play.

Sincerely yours,

Sister Mary Nelle Gage, S.L.



**CỘNG ĐỒNG NGƯỜI VIỆT QUỐC GIA COLORADO**  
**VIETNAMESE-AMERICAN COMMUNITY of COLORADO**

1907 West Mississippi Ave, Denver, Colorado 80223

Phone: 720-213-8783

<http://congdongcolorado.weebly.com>

[vaccdenver@gmail.com](mailto:vaccdenver@gmail.com)

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August 2, 2019

ATTN: Jason Morrison  
Planning Services  
Community Planning and Development  
201 W Colfax Ave., Dept. 205  
Denver, CO 80202

RE: Loretto Heights Steering Committee

Dear Mr. Morrison,

On behalf of the Vietnamese American Community of Colorado, I am honored to participate in the Loretto Heights Steering Committee and the creation of the Area Plan for the Loretto Heights campus. Over the past ten months, I have attended monthly at the Steering Committee meetings; public input open houses; and worked closely with you, Councilman Flynn, Sisters of Loretto, and mostly Mr. Mark Witkiewicz. I am super impressed with the astonishing level of input and collaboration with the Community Planning and Development process.

The Vietnamese American Community of Colorado is fully supporting the area plan for Loretto Heights. We are looking forward to seeing Loretto Heights Development to kick in, as soon as possible. The building has been vacant too long and a vandalism hotspot. We believe the future of this great area will be a new hub for our Southwest community, where it can serve as a multicultural center.

I will continue to do my best to collaborate with the City and County of Denver and Westside Investment Partners, in any way I can to support the implementation of the Loretto Heights Area Plan.

Sincerely,

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Rev. Joseph Tung Dang  
Community Relations Liaison

Cc: Mr. Thang Le, VACC President  
Councilman Kevin Flynn  
Mr. Mark Witkiewicz, Westside Investment Partners.



## WESTSIDE INVESTMENT PARTNERS

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4100 East Mississippi Avenue, Suite 500 Glendale, CO 80246

July 30, 2019

Re: Letter of Support for Loretto Heights Small Area Plan

On behalf of ACM Loretto VI, dba Westside Investment Partners, (“Westside”), we would like to enthusiastically endorse the Loretto Heights Small Area Plan. When Westside purchased the Loretto Heights campus approximately one year ago, we had choices. We could have developed the property under its current zoning, which would have allowed very high density and buildings up to 157’ in height; or we could have immediately submitted a rezoning application based on our vision for the property. But, knowing that the City was interested in pursuing a Loretto Heights Small Area Plan, we chose to hit pause on any decisions and/or planning for the Loretto Heights campus and instead looked to the community to seek their thoughts, ideas and needs.

The Loretto Heights Small Area Plan is the result of a community driven Area Planning process. The Plan reflects the community benefits our neighbors are seeking and what the community values. The City-led community meetings and workshops distilled key learnings into the Plan, most importantly, the “Spirit of Loretto” and what our neighbors desire in a “Community”. Community is more than the bones, both natural and manmade, that make up this amazing campus. Community is creating a place where everyone is welcome and there is a common sense of pride and ownership. We believe the vision articulated in the Loretto Heights Area Plan will breathe life back into this emerging Southwest Denver neighborhood and are excited for the future of the Loretto Height campus.

Sincerely,

Westside Investment Partners

Andy Klein

Mark Witkiewicz

Otis Moore

Kevin Smith

Kenneth Ho

## Letter of Support for Loretto Heights Small Area Plan

My name is Martha (Newlin) Kirkpatrick. I am an alternate for the Alumni seat at the Steering Committee table. I am a 1982 graduate of Loretto Heights College, and received my Bachelor of Arts degree in Theatre, with a double major in Acting and Directing. I grew up in Southwest Denver, the Harvey Park and Bear Valley neighborhoods, and I currently live in Englewood. Loretto Heights has been part of my life for my entire life.

Through community groups and my alumni group, I became very involved and of course, concerned about what the future held for Loretto Heights. When Westside purchased the property in July of 2018, things took a decidedly positive turn. Westside agreed, and welcomed, this Small Area Plan process, so that they could dive deeply into what the community wanted and needed.

Through a well thought-out and methodical approach in appointing people from adjoining neighborhoods, alumni, the Sisters of Loretto, community leaders and others, Jason Morrison and his team have joined hands with us through 10+ months of meetings, insights, discussion, and debate.

Four community meetings on the campus have hosted over 400 people lending their support, their voices, and their concerns for what is to become of a beloved piece of history and a touchstone for many in the southwest Denver area.

While most of us understand that not everyone will get everything they want, most of us will get something we do. And what this larger community wants is a gathering place, somewhere to find respite in either a good meal, a street fair, lush green space, an outdoor concert, or a beautiful home.

The words that come to mind are respect, reverence, reuse, reclaim. And the other RE word that many don't wish to utter, redevelopment. However, this redevelopment is being done in a different way. By respecting the wishes of the community that will be using it and living nearby. By revering the past, by letting it inform the future. By reusing or reclaiming what was once grand, and bringing it back to a full, colorful, vibrant life.

Dedication to this process and to the community, seems to be foremost in the minds of the city planning team. I personally feel that every one of the team members has gone above expectations to deliver a vision that we can all "build" on.

The community that has been brought together through the city-led Small Area Plan process is truly the seed that will begin the new life that is being envisioned for the Loretto Heights campus.

In closing, I fully support the Loretto Heights Small Area Plan. I am greatly and deeply appreciative of the partnership which has been created with those on the city planning team, and with Westside.

Thank you,



Martha Kirkpatrick

**From:** [B and A Ratkewicz](#)  
**To:** [Morrison, Jason P. - CPD City Planner Senior](#)  
**Cc:** [mary gage](#); [Lydia Pena](#)  
**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] Loretto Heights Area Plan  
**Date:** Tuesday, July 16, 2019 4:56:16 PM

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Mr. Morrison:

[jason.morrison@denvergov.org](mailto:jason.morrison@denvergov.org)

We are voicing our support of the Loretto Heights Area Plan. This latest version includes many of the ideas and suggestions we passed on through the surveys and meetings. As a LHC graduate and a USAFA graduate, we feel strongly that the historical significance and beauty of the campus be preserved throughout the redevelopment and into the future. This plan appears to meet that goal.

Since we live in Colorado Springs, one way we are supporting the city's effort is to purchase meals and items in Denver and pay sales tax. The last three times we were in the Denver area, we shopped and had meals with family and friends in Denver. This idea came from Jefferson County. They had signs at Colorado Mills Mall explaining how sales tax dollars helped pay for parks, trails, open space and development. We hope that some of the sales taxes we pay in Denver can go towards such projects, specifically at Loretto Heights. We talked about this at Barb's LHC class reunion party this weekend at a Denver restaurant.

Thank you for your work in developing the Loretto Heights Area Plan. We encourage the Denver City Council to accept the recommendations.

Sincerely,  
Barb & Art Ratkewicz  
Colorado Springs, CO  
Cell: 719-330-3729

cc: Sr. Mary Nelle Gage  
Sr. Lydia Pena

## **Morrison, Jason P. - CPD City Planner Senior**

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**From:** LESLIE BROWN <normales@comcast.net>  
**Sent:** Thursday, August 1, 2019 3:41 PM  
**To:** Morrison, Jason P. - CPD City Planner Senior  
**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] Planning Area Committee for Loretto Heights

Planning Committee for Loretto Heights area,

I am Norma Brown - a member of the stakeholders committee on Denver's Southwest Area Plan for Loretto Heights. I am the representative for the alumni. It has been most interesting to have worked on this committee for the Area Plan for "The Heights" the past 10 months. I feel this plan is something Denver will be very proud of on its fruition. We have discussed and argued, at times, on the many aspects of making this area a comfortable, beautiful, thriving, and historical community for all who live here.

I agree with the written plan that is being presented to the Planning Board.

Norma Brown

Loretto Heights Alumni Representative Class of 1959



**From:** [Clare Harris](#)  
**To:** [Morrison, Jason P. - CPD City Planner Senior](#)  
**Cc:** ["Mark Witkiewicz"; Flynn, Kevin J. - CC Member District 2 Denver City Council; Clark, Jolon M. - CC President Denver City Council; cvnadenver@gmail.com](#)  
**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] Re: Loretto Heights Area Plan :: Planning Board Information  
**Date:** Monday, July 29, 2019 8:36:31 AM  
**Attachments:** [image001.png](#)

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To Denver Planning Board,

I have represented the College View neighborhood at all meeting of the Loretto Heights Area Plan committee, as well as ancillary informational groups that provided further detailed info (tours of the campus, etc.), and the large community meetings. I have lived within 3 miles of Loretto Heights for almost 50 years, and for the past 25 years, live 4 blocks east of the campus. I attended and graduated from Loretto Heights College in 1978 with my BSN, subsequently hosted students who attended Teikyo Loretto Heights over a period of about 10 years in the 1990s and early 2000s, and attended many campus events. I worked nearby for 25 years, at Colorado Mental Health Institute at Fort Logan. My son also lives within 4 blocks of the campus. I have been on the College View Neighborhood Association board for 25 years, as President, vice President, secretary and now treasurer. My relationship to this historical, educational, cultural and spiritual place is strong and constant.

The dedicated group who worked together to identify priorities, important issues re. land use, cultural, neighborhood, etc. impacts, city and local wishes, and all possible aspects of development here, spent our time discussing, negotiating, agreeing until the final Small Area Plan was finalized. We recognize the wonderful opportunity for citizens in the area by the developer, Westside Investment Partners, especially their representative, Mark Witkiewicz, to give our perspective about redevelopment of an area treasure.

I, as the College View representative, fully support our Small Area Plan and look forward to this project's completion and its positive impact for the future of our neighborhood.

Thank you,  
clare harris  
CVNA

**From:** [James Hoxworth](#)  
**To:** [Morrison, Jason P. - CPD City Planner Senior](#)  
**Cc:** [Flynn, Kevin J. - CC Member District 2 Denver City Council](#); [Mark Witkiewicz](#)  
**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] Letter for Planning Board  
**Date:** Sunday, August 4, 2019 4:33:42 PM

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Jason,

I regretfully cannot make the planning board meeting on Wednesday as I will be out of town. I am submitting this letter in hopes that my voice could be “heard” and that this would be included in public comment or a file of some sort in support of the Small Area Plan for Loretto Heights. Please let me know if you have any other questions, and thanks for your hard work on leading the process on this for the city.

Regards,

James Hoxworth

**August 2nd, 2019**

**To Jason Morrison and the City of Denver Planning Board:**

My name is James Hoxworth, a local pastor, and a member of our community who has a deep interest in the future of Loretto Heights. I had the privilege of leading a special Christmas Service in the historic chapel in December of 2018 in partnership with Councilman Kevin Flynn and Father Joseph Dang, chaplain for DPD. At that event we saw approximately 300 members of the community come out in force to celebrate Christmas in such a beautiful and sacred space. The evening foretold of the potential of the renewal of the campus for the sake of the community.

After looking over the Small Area Plan, I believe this plan will accomplish the dreams of the city and the community as a whole. This plan will help create a deeper identity for southwest Denver and will seek to be a community that engages people from all walks of life. I believe the history of the campus will be honored by "re-purposing with integrity" such a beautiful space.

In conversations I've had with Westside, other members of the community, and the steering committee I have been encouraged by how sensitive the developer has been when it comes to maintaining the integrity of the area by giving it new life for long-term use and enjoyment. I personally attended many of the steering committee meetings, and I found the process thorough and well-executed. I would like to encourage the planning board to approve the plan, as submitted, that the steering committee has brought forward for approval. The process was filled with integrity and hard work and I hope no further delays would hinder the progress that has been made.

If I can be of service to you or the planning board, please don't hesitate to contact me.

Kind Regards,

James Hoxworth  
602.410.6865

# S Mar Lee/Brentwood/Sharon Park Registered Neighborhood Organization

Donna Noble Repp, president  
Chris Arteaga, vice president  
Tara Durham, secretary

August 5, 2019

The City of Denver Planning Board  
201 W Colfax Ave, Dept 205  
Denver CO 80202

Dear Members of the Denver Planning Board,

The S Mar Lee/Brentwood/Sharon Park Registered Neighborhood Organization (SMLBSP RNO), along with our Council Member, Kevin Flynn, other organizations and many interested parties, participated in the formation of the Loretto Heights Small Area Plan. The plan was written as a result of a year-long collaborative community process.

The SMLBSP RNO's primary representative at the table was Tara Durham, the secretary of our RNO board of directors; I served as the backup representative. Several of our RNO members attended almost every meeting. Tara provided updates at every monthly RNO meeting and collected input and questions from the members of our RNO to share with Planning Department staff. We are pleased that the communication to and from staff flowed freely and we are satisfied that our comments/concerns were addressed in the plan.

We commend the owners of Loretto Heights, Westside Investments, for pushing the "pause button" on development in order to truly understand the pulse of the surrounding community. There were three community meetings held (and an additional meeting for Spanish speakers). Shortly after hearing the community express need and desire for affordable housing, Westside Investments announced they would be repurposing Pancratia Hall for that very purpose. This was exciting because it showed Westside Investments is listening and is putting their money where their mouth is.

As steering committee members and representatives of the SMLBSP RNO, Tara and I would like to offer our enthusiastic support of the small area plan. The plan will help shape the development as a reflection of the community-driven process, and will ultimately improve the quality of life for those of us who live in SW Denver.

Thank you for your consideration!

Sincerely,

Donna Noble Repp  
President, S Mar Lee/Brentwood/Sharon Park RNO

Tara Durham  
Secretary, S Mar Lee/Brentwood/Sharon Park RNO

**From:** [Andrew Chapin](#)  
**To:** [Morrison, Jason P. - CPD City Planner Senior](#)  
**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] Loretto Heights Area Plan  
**Date:** Tuesday, August 6, 2019 9:50:43 AM

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Hi Jason,

My family and I live on the Grove Street block in the Planning Area (2773 S. Grove St.), just north of Loretto Heights. We are a ten minute walk from the admin. building. I've attended all of the public meetings and feel like our voices have been heard and incorporated into this area plan.

In general, my family is excited for this plan and the potential of a mixed-use redevelopment that will include a variety of housing (both types and levels of affordability) along with small scale retail, while at the same time maintaining some of the prominent historical buildings. This should become a wonderful place for people to live and hang out.

Some of the more popular areas around Denver are Gaylord St., Pearl St. and Tennyson St., which are great examples of successful small retail blocks that locals can walk to. Ever since we bought our house seven years ago, we've wished for something like that within walking distance from our home. We now feel like that could become a reality with this small area plan.

We are also excited for quality development and walkable streets where we can take our dog for a walk. I think it is important for neighborhoods to be connected and not isolated. While I would like a little more connectivity to the west on Irving, I'm glad to see at least one road connection. I would recommend making that a three-way T-intersection in order to slow traffic going downhill.

Overall it was great to be included in this process and we are excited for the future of this site. As involved neighbors, my family fully supports this plan and the efforts that the planning team put behind it. Thank you for your time.

--

Andrew Chapin  
(509) 432.4265

**From:** [Tom Leavitt](#)  
**To:** [Morrison, Jason P. - CPD City Planner Senior](#)  
**Cc:** [Flynn, Kevin J. - CC Member District 2 Denver City Council](#)  
**Subject:** Fwd: [EXTERNAL] Letter for Planning Board  
**Date:** Wednesday, August 7, 2019 10:25:42 AM

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**August Seventh, 2019**

**To Jason Morrison and the City of Denver Planning Board:**

As a resident in the community for over 50 years I have a fervent interest in the future of Loretto Heights. After reviewing the Small Area Plan, I believe this plan will accomplish building a stronger and more diverse community surrounding Loretto Heights. In addition, as a leader employed in the social services sector for 25 years I strongly support affordable housing options for the diverse populations identified in the plan. This plan will help create a stronger identity for our southwest Denver community that integrates people from varied spectrums of ethnic and economic backgrounds. I also highly support the intentions of the committee to preserve the very beautiful and unique historical sites of Loretto Heights that are a vital part of our community identity.

I support the planning board to approve the plan, as submitted, that the steering committee has brought forward for approval.

Sincerely local resident,

Tom Leavitt

August 7, 2019

To: Denver City Council Planning Board

From: Dartmouth Heights, a Registered Neighborhood Organization bordering most of the westside of the Loretto Heights campus

**Letter of support from Dartmouth Heights regarding the Loretto Heights Small Area Plan**

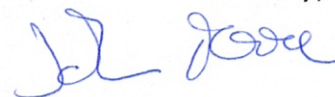
Dartmouth Heights supports approval of the Loretto Heights Small Area Plan. There are many aspects of the plan that are exciting to our neighborhood and we are supportive of Westside's efforts to 'activate' the campus. We appreciate Westside's commitment to preserving the Administration building and creating new green/open space.

However, the re-development also poses real challenges and threats to our neighborhood as well. In particular, Dartmouth Heights has been a quiet, residential community with only local traffic for 35+ years and we will continue to insist that not change.

We have voiced these goals throughout the Small Area Plan process and have come to compromise solutions with representatives from the City and Westside. The details of these compromise solutions matter and are integral to our support for the Small Area Plan, which is why we are documenting them below. It is only logical and fair that those compromise solutions remain intact all the way through the implementation phase of this project.

1. Dartmouth Avenue not be pushed through from Federal Ave to S Irving Street/S Julian Way under any circumstance.
2. The residential alleys between the 'Bates Avenue' extension road and South Irving Street be designed to serve only the homes living along those alleys and not be used as thoroughfares.
3. Vehicular access to the rowhouses in the southwestern pocket of the campus be via Dartmouth Avenue as described in the "Service Plan for Loretto Heights Metropolitan District No. 1" documents. These rowhouses should not have vehicular access to South Julian Way.
4. Traffic-calming and traffic deterrence measures be undertaken by the City in order to maintain the current residential nature of the streets in Dartmouth Heights (Dartmouth Avenue, South Irving Street, South Julian Way).

Sincerely,



John Moore

President, Dartmouth Heights Association

**From:** [CARL Christianssen](#)  
**To:** [Morrison, Jason P. - CPD City Planner Senior](#)  
**Cc:** [James Hoxworth](#); [Flynn, Kevin J. - CC Member District 2 Denver City Council](#); [markw@westsideinv.com](mailto:markw@westsideinv.com)  
**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] Letter to Planning Commission Regarding Loretto Heights Development  
**Date:** Wednesday, August 7, 2019 12:08:06 PM

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### **To Jason Morrison and the Denver Planning Commission**

My name is Carl Christianssen, and I am a SW Denver community member residing in the Harvey Park South neighborhood. Although I am unable to attend the Planning Commission meeting today, I wanted to express my support for the intentional work which has been done by the development group and community steering committee for the development of the Loretto Heights campus.

It is evident they have made important strides in gathering community input in order to help this property integrate and augment the surrounding communities. I appreciate their attention to the diverse population which exists in the southwest Denver neighborhoods, and the desire to see the development of this campus serve to bring the whole community together. Additionally, the thoughtful implementation of this plan has great promise for spurring renewal along the south Federal corridor.

The potential for this campus to become a community gathering place was witnessed this past winter when several hundred members of the community gathered at the chapel for an inter-denominational Christmas celebration. Providing venues for these kind of activities will hopefully foster a greater sense of community in southwest Denver – a priority in our ever self-isolating culture.

I strongly encourage the Planning Commission to approve the development plan. Thank-you!

Carl Christianssen

**From:** [Flynn, Kevin J. - CC Member District 2 Denver City Council](#)  
**To:** [Morrison, Jason P. - CPD City Planner Senior](#)  
**Subject:** Fwd: [EXTERNAL] Tomorrow's Loretto Heights Planning Board Hearing  
**Date:** Wednesday, August 7, 2019 1:10:58 PM

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**From:** Karen Kalavity <integradesign1@yahoo.com>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, August 6, 2019 12:32:39 PM  
**To:** Mary Gage <gageadoptex@yahoo.com>; Jim Gibson <gibsonjim@comcast.net>; john.stewart.law@gmail.com <john.stewart.law@gmail.com>; Larry Ambrose <larryswic@gmail.com>; Larry Ambrose <lda@earthnet.net>; niccolo@environmentalproductions.com <niccolo@environmentalproductions.com>; planningb.board@denvergov.org <planningb.board@denvergov.org>; Gregorio Alcaro <grgalcaro@aol.com>; Mark Witkiewicz <markw@westsideinv.com>; Flynn, Kevin J. - CC Member District 2 Denver City Council <Kevin.Flynn@denvergov.org>  
**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] Tomorrow's Loretto Heights Planning Board Hearing

To all who are concerned about Loretto Heights:

I have sent this opinion on to the Denver Planning Board and will speak about it tomorrow at the Planning Board Hearing:

## Denver's Loretto Heights Small Area Plan:

The Loretto Height's Small Area Plan was SUPPOSED to be a culmination of months of research and responses from the residents of Denver, RTD, CDOT, city officials and the developers of the site (Westside Investment) to allow implementation of the BEST for this iconic site in southwest Denver.

Unfortunately, though paid for by the City of Denver and with the time, enthusiasm and efforts of people from the city of Denver and beyond, the Small Area Plan is really nothing more than a propaganda tool for Westside Investment. The developers want to use this plan to enable them to make the most per square inch of this site without recognizing its true potential to the community.

Whereas I attended almost all the public meetings as well as most of the meetings that were conducted independently by LHCI (Loretto Heights Community, hosted by Jim Gibson), it has become clear that the participants in this public comment and participation were not really listened to. This is contrary to the report of 96% support for land use, etc. I do not know who was surveyed for this portion of the plan, but it certainly was not the groups I listened to with regard to the best use of the site. I am guessing that Andy Klein, Mark W. and his secretary got together and gave this plan a



96% positive rating, because no one else ever would. All I ever heard is that people wanted much MORE green space, did NOT want 8 story buildings, did NOT want density that would generate more cars and traffic, on and on and on.....

In the Small Area Plan Report, itself, there is a community member quoted as saying: "As long as the development focuses on walkability, biking and green space, it will be great." Well, the plan doesn't focus on any of these things.

<!--[if !supportLists]-->• <!--[endif]-->There is NO green space in this plan except for a skinny line along the existing drainage route. Not even the Sister's Cemetery has been spared from an overlay of proposed 3 to 8 story buildings to be built. Biking corridors? I didn't see a one. Pedestrian corridors? Ditto. A minimum of 10% Parks and Open Space must be shown for this plan to meet even minimum requirements for "Green Space". Progressive cities and communities around the world are ADDING GREEN SPACE to their "Municipal Portfolios" because they know that Parks and Open Space protect water, air quality, biodiversity and overall health and recreational opportunities for people and wildlife within the area. A percentage of at least 30% Designated Parks and Open Space should be required of this valuable resource to be kept on the site. As of now, the existing Loretto Heights is made up of over 90% Parks, Lawns and Open Space....and along with the magnificent historic structures it is **THE MAIN REASON** that Loretto Heights is such a valuable and desirable resource for people within the region.

I would NEVER presume to think, and no one else should ever presume to think, that it will be up to the conscience of the developers to include these features in one of their purchased and "amputated" parcels. The developers will take the minimum shown in the Small Area Plan and run with it ... that is what developers DO!

<!--[if !supportLists]-->• <!--[endif]-->This is not a three-dimensional plan any more than it is a holistic plan. The site's topography is not figured into any of these plan areas. If it were, you would not see grids all over the place. A site with steep topography is NOT a site that will support a grid layout, just look at mountain communities and the meandering roads that make it to the summit.

<!--[if !supportLists]-->• <!--[endif]-->The utility easement on the north side of the plan, running along the northern boundary and supporting a sanitary or storm sewer is not even shown, much less respected. I get the feeling that these development "experts" do not even understand that you can NOT build over a utility easement. If they did understand this basic development FACT, then they would not be showing the obliteration of the Sisters of Loretto's Cemetery and the construction of a bunch of structures right up to the northern boundary line.

<!--[if !supportLists]-->• <!--[endif]-->Keeping the open ditch has been a source of concern for many people especially those who care about the existing mature trees along this water corridor and for those who know that wildlife in the area depend on this water supply. Also, the huge wildlife/ drainage corridor to the south with its deep ravine and existing mature trees is proposed to be razed in order to support new housing. Apparently, these developers do not understand the concept of regional drainage for projects. My guess is that they have never been the master planner of a large acreage project or have had to go to court with municipalities in order to meet the drainage

needs of a project this size. Nowhere is there any space set aside for the existing and prospective drainage needs for this site within this plan.

• 8 story buildings should NOT BE making up a predominance of the plan on the west side of this site. The views to the west are probably some of the greatest within the whole of Denver...and the thought of obliterating them with 8 story buildings is almost sinful. Don't these guys have a clue what these views are worth in themselves? A lot, especially if the existing structures were kept intact to take advantage of these views with smaller (lower) buildings around them, thus keeping view corridors intact from within and from outside the site itself.

I am guessing that Andy Klein and his gang are using the "affordable housing" carrot to condone the excessive density shown in this "Small Area Plan". This is the same "device" that developers have been using for the last 5-10 years, ever since these same developers came into the city of Denver (and other places)...took advantage of the recession, which was created in large part by the housing and real estate development sector in the 2008-2014 years, forcing people into foreclosures and lost real estate value, which the developers then took advantage of and started buying up property for cheap, forcing generations of people off their rightful properties, contributing to the homelessness in cities such as Denver, L.A., etc. and then claiming that they are doing their part by providing "affordable" housing to the very same people the industry displaced and destroyed. It is SICKENING! And HYPOCRITICAL!

• CDOT and RTD were to be contacted and their input brought to bear upon the plan. Again, I don't see a darn thing that shows where public transportation or a reduction of cars in the form of bike lanes, pedestrian pathways, etc. are given even the slightest standing or prominence within the plan: Only the Report's photos and other propagandized visuals would give anyone the idea that these very real concerns are even being considered, much less actually being addressed.

• Sustainable building methods such as net zero energy use is not even mentioned within the plan. Denver passed an ordinance a couple of years ago requiring green roofs which would require either green/plant cover on roofs or solar panels and collection. These building techniques and regulations would help offset greenhouse gases generated by structures that now depend on fossil fuels for heating, and more importantly, air conditioning in a continually warming planet. But developers within the region have been ignoring this ... including Westside Investments, and including the City of Denver Planning Department. Green Building and infrastructure MUST be incorporated within ALL new developments, including Loretto Heights!

• The Commercial Zoning is badly planned out in this version of the Small Area Plan. Whereas, it would make perfect sense to include Commercial/Mixed-Use zoning in parts of the truly historic area at the top of the hill, the only Commercial Zoning is placed near Federal Boulevard. Very real concerns of fast-food joints becoming the first thing a person sees and experiences along the perimeter of this site are all too real with this version of the Small Area Plan.

The Westside Investment developers regularly compare their handling of the site to the

development firm Catellus, which did not end up purchasing and developing the site. That is because Catellus let the public know EARLY on in their studies what the site would likely become under their "jurisdiction". And no one liked it. Catellus would have been under the guidelines for a Small Campus Zoning which would have allowed for some housing and no commercial on the site. But, with the Small Campus Zoning, they would have been obliged to keep minimum distances between buildings, and would have been obligated to leaving large athletic and green spaces such as the soccer field facing Federal Boulevard, intact. Under Westside's (and the subsequently, the "City of Denver's") Small Area Plan, none of these large green spaces are being kept. It all becomes part of this urban, concrete space without the one true benefit of this site...its function as a type of regional green space for miles around.

• This Small Area Plan DOES do a fairly good job of protecting the historic structures at the top of the hill, but seems to do so at the expense of the remainder of the site, which has become over-dense with many tall buildings in order to compensate. The entire site needs to be well-planned, not just the historic structure's area.

This plan needs to be overhauled before it can be used as a basis for re-zoning and development.

Loretto Heights is WAY too valuable to leave in the hands of compromised developers and City of Denver Planners (Jason Morrison) who originally worked with the developers before being hired to come up with this very deficient plan.

Westside Investments contributed both to Councilman Flynn's reelection campaign, and more significantly, contributed to Mayor Hancock's reelection campaign to the tune of over \$300,000+ during the last week of the mayor's reelection. If you don't see anything fishy about this plan, then you probably have not even looked at it.

Karen Kalavity

(Born in Denver in 1957...lived in Denver for over 35 years)

# MEMO

Date: Thursday, August 15, 2019

To: Members of S Mar Lee/Brentwood/Sharon Park Registered Neighborhood Organization

From: Tara Durham, secretary of SMLBSP RNO, primary representative on Loretto Heights Steering Committee  
Donna Repp, president, backup representative on Loretto Heights Steering Committee

Subject: Loretto Heights Small Area Plan

---

**Summary:** The SMLBSP RNO was invited to have a seat on the Loretto Heights Steering Committee, a group that meets monthly to discuss the visionary document called the *Loretto Heights Small Area Plan*.

**Background:** Westside Investment Partners purchased the 72-acre property at 3001 S Federal Blvd in the summer of 2018. Shortly after purchasing the property, Westside Investment Partners agreed to hold off on development to spend a year with the community, the Denver Planning Department, and other interested parties to develop the *Loretto Heights Small Area Plan*, a visionary document. The purpose of the small area plan is to shape development; it is not intended to be a site plan. Steering committee members included the following organizations (most had a primary and backup representative):

- Sisters of Loretto Heights
- Loretto Heights Alumni
- Denver City Council, Wards 2 and 7
- Catholic Charities
- Historic Denver
- RTD
- Westside Investments
- DPS
- Vietnamese American Community of CO
- SMLBSP RNO
- Southwest Denver Coalition
- Dartmouth Heights Association
- College View Neighborhood Association
- Harvey Park Community Organization
- Loretto Heights Community Initiative

The steering committee met once a month, starting Tuesday, October 30, 2018. There was a total of 10 steering committee meetings. Steering committee members were tasked with communicating with their organization and acting as a liaison between their organization and the steering committee.

The City of Denver Planning Department organized 3 community meetings, which were held in in Machebeuf Hall on the Loretto Heights Campus. There was a 4<sup>th</sup> community meeting for Spanish speakers. The purpose of the meetings was to share information and to listen to the desires/ideas/concerns of the neighbors. For folks who were unable to attend community meetings, the City of Denver Planning Department created an online survey in order to capture their perspective and opinion.

Shortly after the first community meeting took place on January 15, 2019, yielding more than 200 attendees, Westside Investment Partners, hearing the community loud and clear, announced that Pancratia Hall would be

# South Mar Lee/Brentwood/Sharon Park Registered Neighborhood Organization

August 22, 2019

City Council Members  
1437 Bannock St, Rm 451  
Denver CO 80202  
Via email to: [jason.Morrison@denvergov.org](mailto:jason.Morrison@denvergov.org)

Dear Members of Denver City Council,

The S Mar Lee/Brentwood/Sharon Park Registered Neighborhood Organization (SMLBSP RNO), along with our Council Member, Kevin Flynn, other organizations and many interested parties, participated in the formation of the *Loretto Heights Small Area Plan*. The plan was written as a result of a year-long collaborative community process.

Our RNO was well represented by Tara Durham at the steering committee table and several of our RNO members attended every meeting. Tara provided updates at our monthly RNO meetings and collected input and questions from the members of our RNO to share with Planning Department staff. We are pleased that the communication to and from staff flowed freely and we are satisfied that our comments/concerns were addressed in the plan.

We commend the owner of Loretto Heights, Westside Investments, for pushing the “pause button” on development in order to truly understand the pulse of the surrounding community. There were three community meetings held (and an additional meeting for Spanish speakers). Shortly after hearing the community express need and desire for affordable housing, Westside Investments announced they would be repurposing Pancratia Hall for that very purpose. This was exciting because it showed Westside Investments is listening and is putting their money where their mouth is. Furthermore, we are thrilled that Westside Investments is committed to the perpetual care of the cemetery. This was a desire expressed repeatedly by the community throughout the process.

The SMLBSP RNO met for our annual meeting on Thursday, August 15, at which time about 25 members and the board discussed the *Loretto Heights Small Area Plan*. A motion was made to offer the RNO's full support of the plan and to recommend that City Council adopt the plan. The motion was **unanimously** passed by the board and members of our RNO.

On behalf the SMLBSP RNO, we wish to offer our enthusiastic support of the *Loretto Heights Small Area Plan* and we urge you to adopt the plan. The plan will help shape the development as a reflection of the community-driven process and will ultimately improve the quality of life for those of us who live in SW Denver.

Thank you for your consideration!

Sincerely,



Donna Noble Repp, President (S Mar Lee)

cc: Chris Arteaga, Vice President (Brentwood)  
Tara Durham, Secretary (Sharon Park)

repurposed for affordable housing and subsequently applied for tax credits. They announced they would partner with Hartman Ely Investments and Proximity Green of Denver, firms known for their expertise in sustainability and repurposing historic buildings. The message was clear: Westside Investments was listening to the community's needs.

The first draft of the *Loretto Heights Small Area Plan* was released on June 12, 2019. Comments were being accepted through July 12, 2019. The comments from the SMLBSP RNO were that members were concerned about the following:

- Building heights
- Traffic
- View sheds/planes

These topics are addressed in the plan.

**Recommendations:** We believe the success of the development of the Loretto Heights Small Area Plan has been accomplished by the City of Denver Planning Department, Westside Investments, and all other organizations and interested parties because of the collaborative approach to the process. The members of the committee come from diverse backgrounds. For the following reasons, we **do recommend** the SMLBSP RNO support the *Loretto Heights Small Area Plan* and recommend City Council adopt it:

- The process was inclusive of neighborhood representatives, in addition to experts in their field
- The planning staff made it easy and accessible to get information to/from them
- The result of the small area plan is 100% community driven
- The developer's commitment to provide perpetual care of the cemetery aligns with the community's wishes
- If approved by City Council, the next step for the developer is to downzone the property (if **not** approved by City Council, the developer could erect 15-stories on the property, for example)
- The viewsheds/view planes which currently exist protect the façade of the Administration Building so no new buildings will be built to obscure that view
- The development will result in a property accessible to all who live in SW Denver and will ultimately be a destination location

**Next Steps:** The following are the next steps:

1. **COMPLETE:** August 7, 2019: Denver Planning Board (Approved unanimously)
2. August 27, 2019: Small Area Plan review by City Council's Land Use, Transportation, and Infrastructure Committee
3. September 16, 2019: City Council Public Hearing to adopt the *Loretto Heights Small Area Plan*
4. TBD: A Design Review Committee will be formed in order to maintain the character of Loretto Heights

~ end ~

**From:** [Clare Harris](#)  
**To:** [Morrison, Jason P. - CPD City Planner Senior](#)  
**Cc:** [Flynn, Kevin J. - CC Member District 2 Denver City Council](#)  
**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] Westside development at Loretto Heights  
**Date:** Thursday, August 22, 2019 8:37:51 AM

---

I have represented the College View neighborhood at all meetings of the Loretto Heights Area Plan committee, as well as ancillary informational groups that provided further detailed info (tours of the campus, etc.), and the large community meetings.

The dedicated group who worked together to identify priorities, important issues re. land use, cultural, neighborhood, etc. impacts, city and local wishes, and all possible aspects of development here, spent time discussing, negotiating until the final Small Area Plan was finalized. We recognized the opportunity for citizens in the area by the developer, Westside Investment Partners, especially their representative, Mark Witkiewicz, to give our neighborhood perspective about redevelopment of an area treasure. I have presented this information periodically at the College View Neighborhood Association meetings during the past year.

The College View Neighborhood Association Board unanimously voted to support the Small Area Plan on August 4, 2019, and we look forward to this project's completion and its positive impact for the future of our neighborhood.

Thank you,  
Clare Harris  
CVNA treasurer and representative



Virus-free. [www.avg.com](http://www.avg.com)

**From:** [Planningboard - CPD](#)  
**To:** [Morrison, Jason P. - CPD City Planner Senior](#)  
**Subject:** FW: [EXTERNAL] Loretto heights plan  
**Date:** Wednesday, August 7, 2019 7:32:35 PM

---

-----Original Message-----

From: bdehart <mistyheart@comcast.net>  
Sent: Wednesday, August 7, 2019 3:48 PM  
To: Planningboard - CPD <planningboard2@denvergov.org>  
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Loretto heights plan

I am a resident of harvey park for over 30 years. I feel strongly about the historic preservation piece of the plan and particularly that the cemetery be preserved, maintained, and cared for into perpetuity. Form an endowment to do so if need be. Also preserve the administration building and the open view of it from federal. Blvd. Preserve the older trees throughout. Please. Once gone there is no getting this back. I've attended 2 of the 4 community meetings. Still unclear about care of cemetery.

Bonnie DeHart  
2575 s. Raleigh st  
Denver, co. 80219

303 935-8995

Sent from Xfinity Connect Application



**From:** [JANET FUIKS](#)  
**To:** [Morrison, Jason P. - CPD City Planner Senior](#)  
**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] comments for Council committee review set for Aug. 27 ( Loretto Heights plan)  
**Date:** Monday, August 19, 2019 6:08:52 PM

---

I am a homeowner at Julian and Floyd across the road from Loretto Heights property. I have a few points to make. Everyone should be able to see the tower as they drive down US 185, or anyway near the college. Westside may want to put in an 8 story building and I hope it won't be near the tower.

Westside has listened to many wants and wishes but really hasn't said which they will do. They are wondering how the new people will get out of the new buildings they will put up. Putting alleyways letting out onto Irving and possibly at the sharp curve where those two streets meet would be very dangerous. At least one of the residents on Irving ct. didn't like the possible one heading toward his house. There is another narrow street named Irving on the south side of Loretto Heights, and east of the already built apartments, the Irving that runs into Old Hampden Rd. , that could handle some of the traffic.....

- At some point there was a colorful map and statements from the new owners saying that new SINGLE houses would face all Dartmouth Heights Homeowners' houses on Irving, and Julian. Then A new colorful map came out end of May (figure 2.2) showing new single low houses on Irving . After the big curve north of Dartmouth Ave. and heading down along Julian Ave. the colors show the buildings will be low-medium of duplex and row houses ending about W. Floyd. Then the buildings heading down Julian to W. Knox/Lowell will have high-medium Multi-units. This last map came out while we were gone 1 week. I talked to Mark W. and said that was a BIG CHANGE at the last big community meeting.
- As you look at that map you'll see that much of the Loretto Heights land will be community center: healthy grocer, restaurant, coffee shop, etc.
- I need to see the proposed road network again. Mark said people on Dartmouth Ave - east of the college - won't want to drive through.
- In our subdivision: No one expected anyone to drive out from new houses onto Irving at the top of the hill , or onto Julian. Yes Westside said they wouldn't put in a road to connect the two Dartmouths together. BUT On one of their other maps they did a "path" connecting the two.
- Seems like the Library should remain, for small/or large receptions to rent out.
- Thank you for seeing and understanding the concern.
  
- from Jan Fuiks, 3404 W. Floyd Ave., Denver, 80236 email [jrfuiks@msn.com](mailto:jrfuiks@msn.com) 303-797-3569

# Loretto Heights

## Small Area Plan

LUTI Draft - August 22, 2019



**DENVER**  
COMMUNITY PLANNING  
& DEVELOPMENT



# ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The Loretto Heights Small Area Plan is the result of extensive work and collaboration among a range of stakeholders, community and business leaders, elected officials, and members of the public who care deeply about the future of southwest Denver. In particular, the following are recognized for their contributions to this effort:

## Mayor Michael B. Hancock

### Denver Planning Board

Joel Noble, Chair  
Andrew Abrams  
Heidi Aggeler  
Erin Clark  
Ignacio Correa-Ortiz  
Don Elliott  
Renee Martinez-Stone  
Frank Schultz  
Susan Stanton  
Simon Tafoya  
Gosia Kung

### Denver City Council

District 1 - Amanda Sandoval  
District 2 - Kevin Flynn  
District 3 - Jamie Torres  
District 4 - Kendra Black  
District 5 - Amanda Sawyer  
District 6 - Paul Kashmann  
District 7 - Jolon Clark, President  
District 8 - Christopher Herndon  
District 9 - Candi CdeBaca  
District 10 - Christopher Hinds  
District 11 - Stacie Gilmore  
At-Large - Robin Kniech  
At-Large - Deborah "Debbie" Ortega

## Steering Committee

Norma Brown  
Loretto Heights Alumna  
Father Joseph Dang  
Vietnamese American Community of CO  
Tara Durham  
South Mar Lee/Brentwood/Sharon Park Neighbors  
Sister Mary Nelle Gage  
Sisters of Loretto  
Jim Gibson  
Harvey Park Community Organization  
Clare Harris  
College View Neighborhood Association  
Tony Hernandez  
Loretto Heights Community Initiative  
John Moore  
Dartmouth Heights Association  
John Olson  
Historic Denver, Inc  
Kasandra Ornelas  
Southwest Denver Coalition  
Adriana Peña  
Denver Public Schools  
Denver School of Science and Technology  
Andrew Rogge  
City of Sheridan  
Bill Van Meter  
Regional Transportation District  
Stacy Wahrer  
Catholic Charities  
Mark Witkiewicz  
Westside Investment Partners, Inc

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### City Attorney's Office

Maureen McGuire, City Attorney



THE HONORABLE  
*Kevin Flynn*  
 COUNCILMAN DISTRICT 2

*City and County of Denver*  
 CITY COUNCIL

3100 S. Sheridan Blvd., Unit D  
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 kevin.flynn@denvergov.org

Dear Community,

I am very pleased to endorse the Loretto Heights Area Plan, a community-driven document that is the culmination of more than two years of grassroots organizing and engagement – all triggered by a most unexpected event.

In November 2016, nearly three years ago, Colorado Heights University announced it was closing and offering for sale the historic Loretto Heights campus. The commanding hilltop site is the most recognizable location in southwest Denver, while its signature Loretto Academy building with soaring red sandstone bell tower has been a visible landmark from all around Denver since 1891. With no clear path forward even for basic maintenance and upkeep of the historic buildings and 70-plus acres of grounds, the people of southwest Denver as well as many in the broader community who can claim a connection to the campus were rightly apprehensive about the possibility of losing this irreplaceable jewel.

In response, my council office quickly organized a community-based stakeholder group to bring together neighborhood leaders, college alumni and the Sisters of Loretto, the order that operated the campus through 1988. The vision that emerged from that effort served as the framework for this, the first land use plan ever pursued in southwest Denver. After a developer bought the campus one year ago, we proposed a pause in any site planning until the community could come together and arrive at a broad consensus on what southwest Denver wanted to see. It turned anxiety over potential loss into excitement for a lively, welcoming addition to our part of town where new neighbors of all means and cultures could prosper, the community could gather together with them, the campus buildings could be restored and re-used, and the rich legacy of the Spirit of Loretto could be preserved.

One hundred percent of this plan’s content originated in the community. More than 1,300 individuals participated, and more than 2,300 public comments were woven into the plan, a remarkable level of involvement for such a small area plan, but indicative of the strong desire in the community for a remarkable place. I am grateful to every one of them. In the end, we achieved agreement from the public ranging from 85 percent to 97 percent for the land use, mobility and quality of life recommendations. As a result, I am honored to bring this plan to you.

Kevin Flynn  
 Council Member, District 2





THE HONORABLE  
*Jolon Clark*  
 COUNCILMAN DISTRICT 7

*City and County of Denver*  
 CITY COUNCIL

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 jolon.clark@denvergov.org

I want to extend my sincere thanks to the Loretto Heights Steering Committee, Denver Community Planning and Development, Westside Investment Partners, and most importantly, all of the residents who participated in the Loretto Heights Area Plan. I would also thank our neighboring cities of Sheridan and Englewood as well as community partners such as Denver Public Schools (DPS), Regional Transportation District (RTD) and Historic Denver for all of their contributions to this planning effort.

Not only am I the Denver City Council representative directly to the east of Loretto Heights, my mother moved to Denver to go to school at Loretto Heights and is a Loretto graduate. I cannot say thank you enough for the dedication of our community to participate in 10 steering committee meetings, four community meetings including one all-Spanish language meeting, two online surveys with 2,300 total points of feedback.

Through the collaborative efforts of various community organizations and community members a plan that includes parks and public spaces with an eye toward historic preservation emerged. The Loretto Heights Area Plan also uses an equity lens to drive this vision for the future of this site. The surrounding communities have taken pride in the opportunity to shape future development on this land through community input and discussion.

The Loretto Heights Area Plan will help set the tone for the new development of the area while respecting and preserving the rich history of the site. I look forward to seeing this community vision become reality, and once again, thank you to everyone who participated and helped this truly be the community's vision for the future of Loretto Heights.

Thank you.

Jolon Clark  
 Council Member, District 7



# CHAPTER SUMMARY

1

## OVERVIEW

This section introduces the plan area, describes the planning process and presents the community's overall vision for the plan area.

2

## LAND USE & BUILT FORM

This section addresses topics related to growth, development, urban design, economics, historic preservation and affordable housing.

3

## MOBILITY

This section addresses the mobility network in the Loretto Heights plan area and is organized by transportation mode.

4

## QUALITY-OF-LIFE INFRASTRUCTURE

This section addresses topics that contribute to the quality of life for all residents and visitors in the plan area. Topics include health, food access, parks and recreation and environmental quality.

5

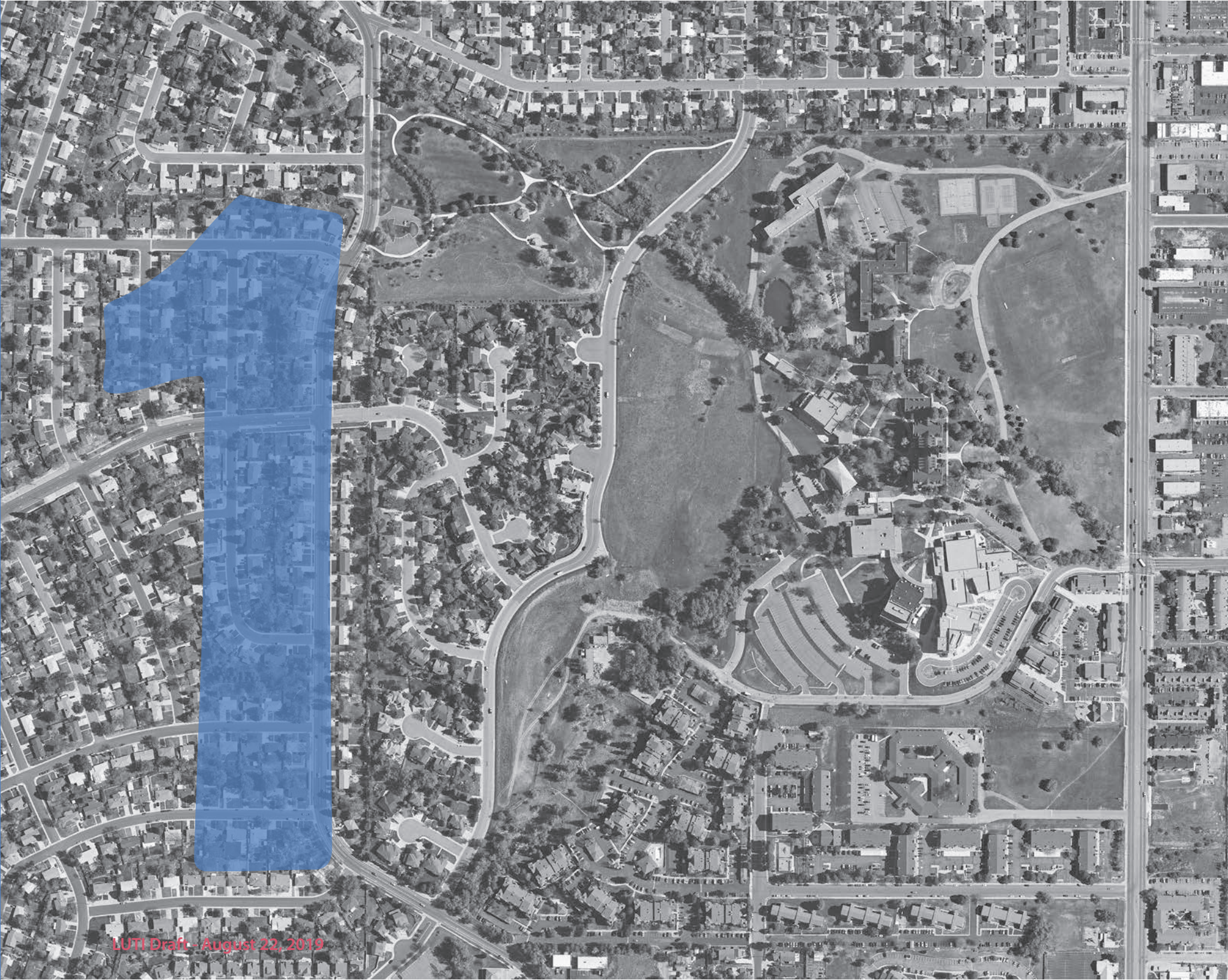
## IMPLEMENTATION


This section identifies implementation priorities, responsibilities and phasing for plan recommendations.

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# Chapter 1 **OVERVIEW**

## In this chapter:

- 1.1 Introduction
- 1.2 Plan Area
- 1.3 Plan Process
- 1.4 How to Use the Plan
- 1.5 Loretto Heights Vision
- 1.6 Planning for an Equitable Loretto Heights
- 1.7 Complete Neighborhood

*"I love the tower and being able to see it from a distance. It is a marker."*

*- Community Member*

Photo: Circa 1945



## 1.1 Introduction

The history of the Loretto Heights campus is integral to the evolution of southwest Denver as one of its earliest developed sites. Since 1891, the Administration Building, with its soaring and enduring bell tower, has served as a familiar and constant landmark. The campus sits on one of the highest points in the city and enjoys a commanding view of the Rocky Mountains and Denver skyline. Over its more than 125-year history, the campus has been a significant feature of the Denver metropolitan area.

The hilltop property was purchased by the Sisters of Loretto in 1888 to be the site of a new Catholic boarding school for elementary and high school girls. The Loretto Heights Academy opened in 1891 and Loretto Heights College in 1918. Both institutions were dedicated to the education of women. In 1941, the Academy closed due to declining enrollment, but the College remained robust. It admitted its first male students in 1970. By 1988, declining enrollment also forced the College to close its doors and thus end over a century of legacy of the Sisters of Loretto on the prominent hilltop. In 1989, Teikyo University purchased the campus for educational use.

In 2018, Teikyo University sold the Loretto Heights campus to Westside Investment Partners, Inc., presenting a unique opportunity to build on the site's legacy through a sensitive redevelopment that incorporates the vision of the surrounding community. In addition to the iconic and recognizable tower of the Administration Building, a variety of significant structures designed by well-known architects representing a range of

architectural styles from the 1890s to the 1980s populate the site. Throughout this planning process, the community has advocated for the area to become a destination and a gathering place for the entire community of southwest Denver. The community desires to find a balance between preserving the old and embracing the new.

The Loretto Heights Small Area Plan builds on previous work by local leaders and neighborhood groups to create a collective, planned vision for this unique site. Like all neighborhood planning processes, this small area plan is informed by the *Denver Comprehensive Plan 2040* and *Blueprint Denver*, the city's land use and transportation plan. The guiding language in these citywide documents and other citywide plans like the *Game Plan for a Healthy City* and *Housing an Inclusive Denver*, provide direction for all of Denver. While there is citywide guidance and direction, southwest Denver has no small area plan, and therefore no current policy guidance in place that reflects the community's vision for the area. The Loretto Heights Small Area Plan is a community-driven public process which gives the public an opportunity to have input in the future of this treasured campus and the communities surrounding it. The plan provides specific policy recommendations based on community input that will help guide future redevelopment and the anticipated impacts that development will have on the adjacent neighborhoods.

Throughout the public input process, community members made it clear that the issues they most

want to see addressed in the plan are historic preservation, mobility options, parks, recreation and public spaces, and the threat of gentrification. Community members also expressed a desire to see all new development held to a high standard. This means appropriate development should encompass high-quality design and construction materials, distinctive architecture, and be human-scaled. In response to these identified priorities, and in keeping with the vision elements identified in the *Denver Comprehensive Plan 2040*, the Loretto Heights Small Area Plan goals and recommendations are organized around the elements of a complete neighborhood. Three interrelated elements form the foundation of a complete neighborhood: land use and built form, mobility, and quality-of-life infrastructure. A truly inclusive city is composed of complete neighborhoods and great places accessible to everyone, regardless of age, ability or income.

An additional element informs every part of the Loretto Heights Small Area Plan: Equity. Equity means everyone, regardless of who they are or where they are from, can thrive. *Blueprint Denver* includes three equity concepts that inform this plan: Improving Access to Opportunity, Reducing Vulnerability to Displacement, and Expanding Housing and Jobs Diversity. These concepts are interlinked with all the elements of a complete neighborhood. During plan implementation, equity-based recommendations and strategies should be given priority to ensure that the redevelopment of the campus helps Denver achieve its vision for inclusive, complete neighborhoods.

# 1.2 Plan Area

## Regional Context

The plan area is in southwest Denver, home to several regional assets such as Marston Lake, Fort Logan National Cemetery and the Denver Sports Center. The area is also home to additional natural features, including the South Platte River, Harvey Park, and Bear Valley Park. The city of Sheridan is located south and the city of Englewood is located southeast of the plan area. Both jurisdictions are within Arapahoe County, allowing for the opportunity to collaborate on multi-jurisdictional planning efforts.

There are roughly 55,000 residents in 22,500 housing units in southwest Denver. The area's development has been influenced over the years by several different factors. Between 1943 and 1973 the City and County of Denver annexed thousands of acres within Arapahoe and Jefferson counties, which helped contribute to the creation of what is now southwest Denver. Annexation is thus integral to understanding the history of this area as the lines between jurisdictions are blurred, further complicating the sense of place and the relationship of its citizens to the City and County of Denver. Furthermore, investment and construction of major thoroughfares including Federal Boulevard and Highway 285 (Hampden Avenue) also contributed to the growth of this area by providing a high degree of regional accessibility.

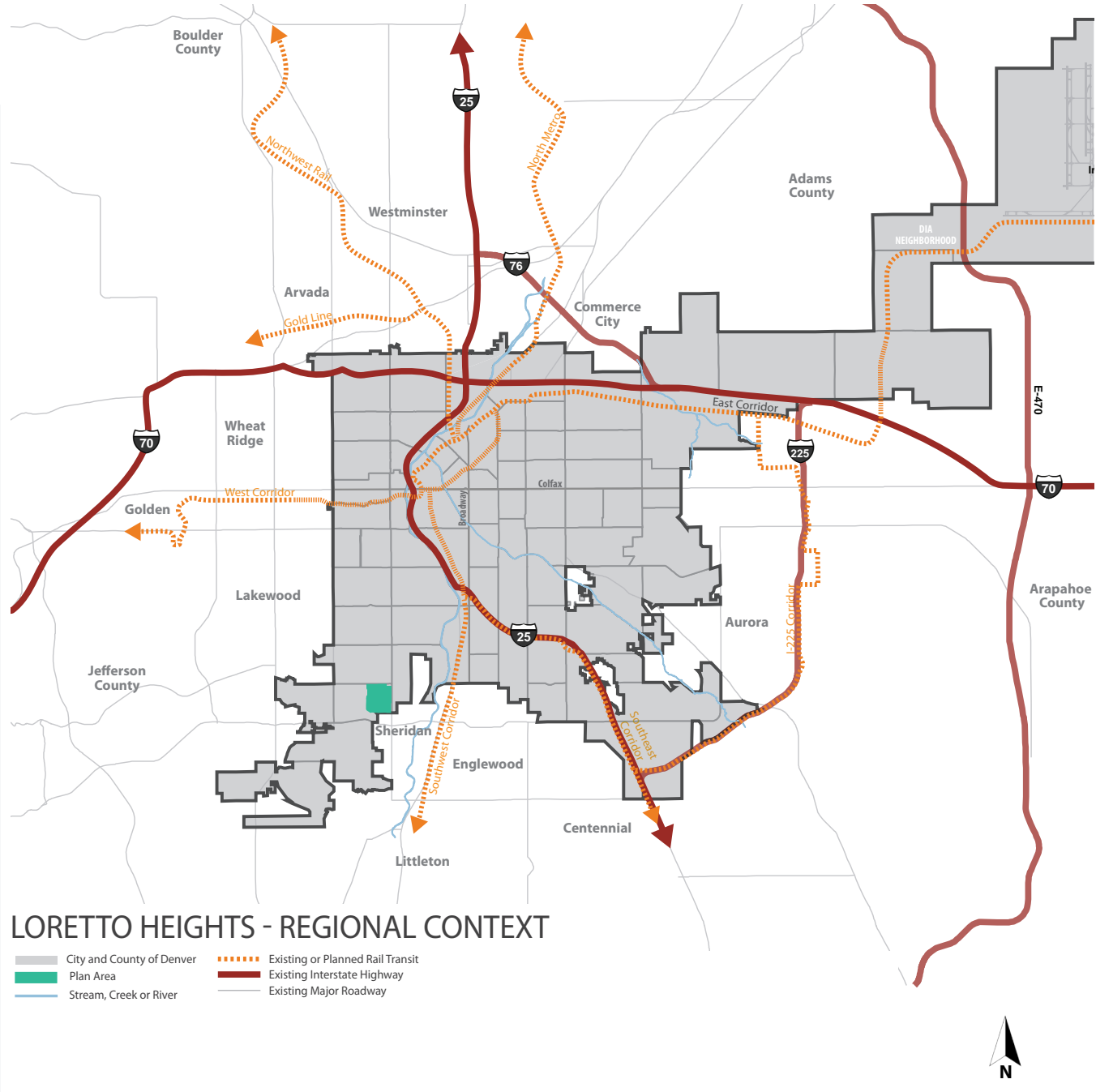


Figure 1.1: Regional Context

## Neighborhood Context

The Loretto Heights campus is in the Harvey Park South neighborhood of southwest Denver. This neighborhood is directly adjacent to the Harvey Park neighborhood to the north, College View–South Platte neighborhood to the east, Bear Valley neighborhood to the West and the city of Sheridan (Arapahoe County) to the south.

Most residences are in the suburban context, generally found in areas located along the edges of the City and County of Denver. This context is predominately low-density, single-unit residential with mixed-use corridors along major roads and larger centers at key intersections. It is representative of the Post-World War II development of the area and is supported by compatible uses of a complete neighborhood such as schools, parks and commercial and retail uses.

The Harvey Park South neighborhood is characterized by architecture primarily from the 1950s. Ranch style houses make up most of the housing styles within the plan area with some modestly sized Minimal Traditional style houses located north of the plan area (see image 1 in Figure 1.3). There are several corner lots with single-unit houses angled to the corner that lend a unique character to the neighborhood. The Federal Boulevard corridor contains a mix of commercial, multi-unit residential and single-unit houses spanning several eras of development from the 1940s to present day. The small portion of the College View–South Platte neighborhood within the plan area includes commercial and multi-unit residential along Federal Boulevard that transitions

into smaller-scaled, multi-unit and single-unit residential as one moves farther east. The single-unit residential of the College View–South Platte neighborhood represents an earlier mix of architectural styles primarily from the 1930s and 1940s. South of the campus and adjacent to the city of Sheridan is multi-unit residential from the 1960s to present.

Future redevelopment and investment in the plan area presents a unique opportunity for the area to develop into a vibrant, mixed-use destination that connects to and supports the surrounding southwest Denver community, while remaining a unique community attraction that honors the historic character and legacy of the former educational campus.



Figure 1.2: Plan Area

### Plan Area Boundary

The area of the Loretto Heights Small Area Plan is considered to be most directly influenced by the redevelopment of the 72-acre Loretto Heights campus. It includes parts of the Harvey Park South and College View–South Platte neighborhoods and is located within Denver City Council District 2 and 7. The plan area boundary was selected based on the following four factors:

**1** Yale Avenue defines the northern boundary because it captures the surrounding character of single-unit homes in the northern portion of the Harvey Park South neighborhood.



Example of Minimal Traditional style housing

**2** Lowell Boulevard defines the western boundary because it captures Loretto Heights Park and the surrounding character of single-unit homes.



Example of housing in Dartmouth Heights development

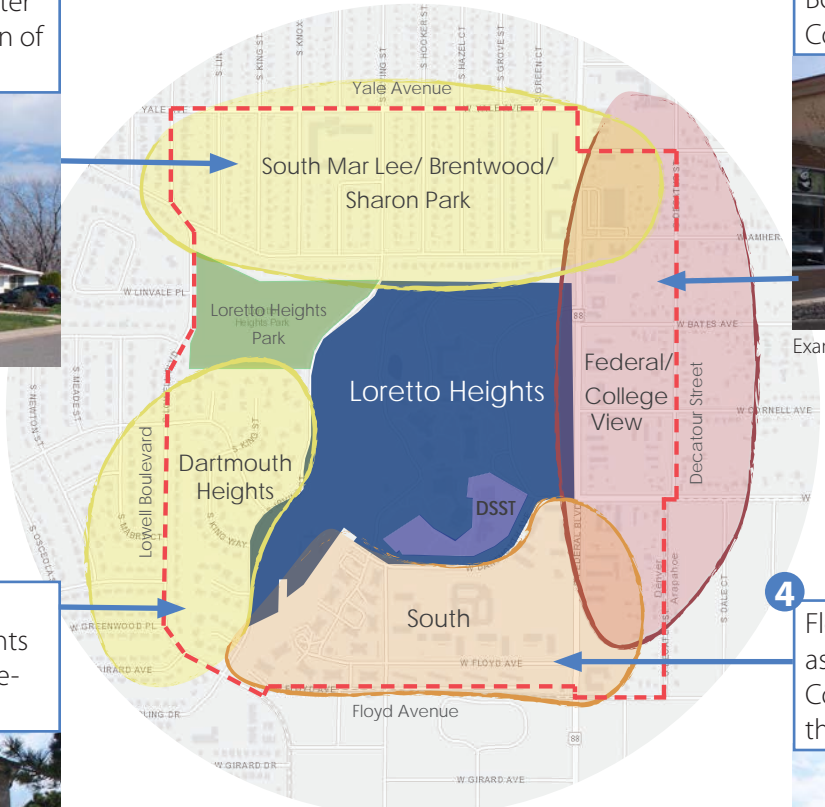


Figure 1.3: Plan Area Boundary

**3** Decatur Street defines the eastern boundary to include the commercial uses along Federal Boulevard and the residential uses of the College View–South Platte neighborhood.



Example of commercial development on Federal Boulevard

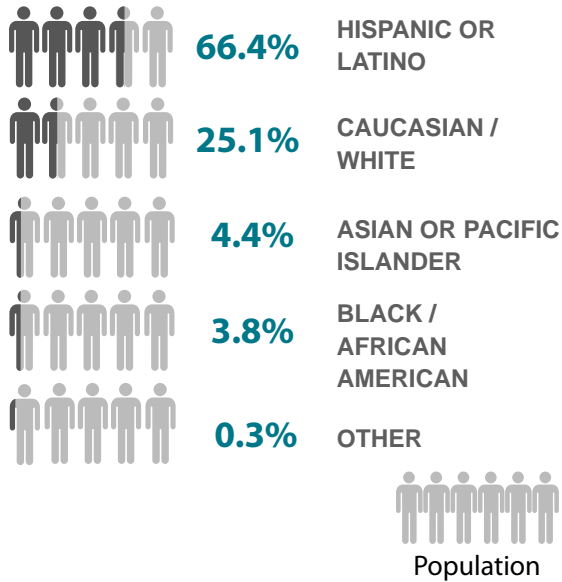
**4** Floyd Avenue defines the southern boundary as it is the line between Denver and Arapahoe County. The multi-unit residential character to the south is also captured within the boundary.



Example of multi-unit housing on Federal Boulevard

## Race and Ethnicity

in Harvey Park, Harvey Park South and College View-South Platte



Harvey Park Neighborhood 12,760  
 Harvey Park South Neighborhood 8,870  
 College View-South Platte Neighborhood 7,925  
 Loretto Heights Plan Area 4,494

Denver 649,654

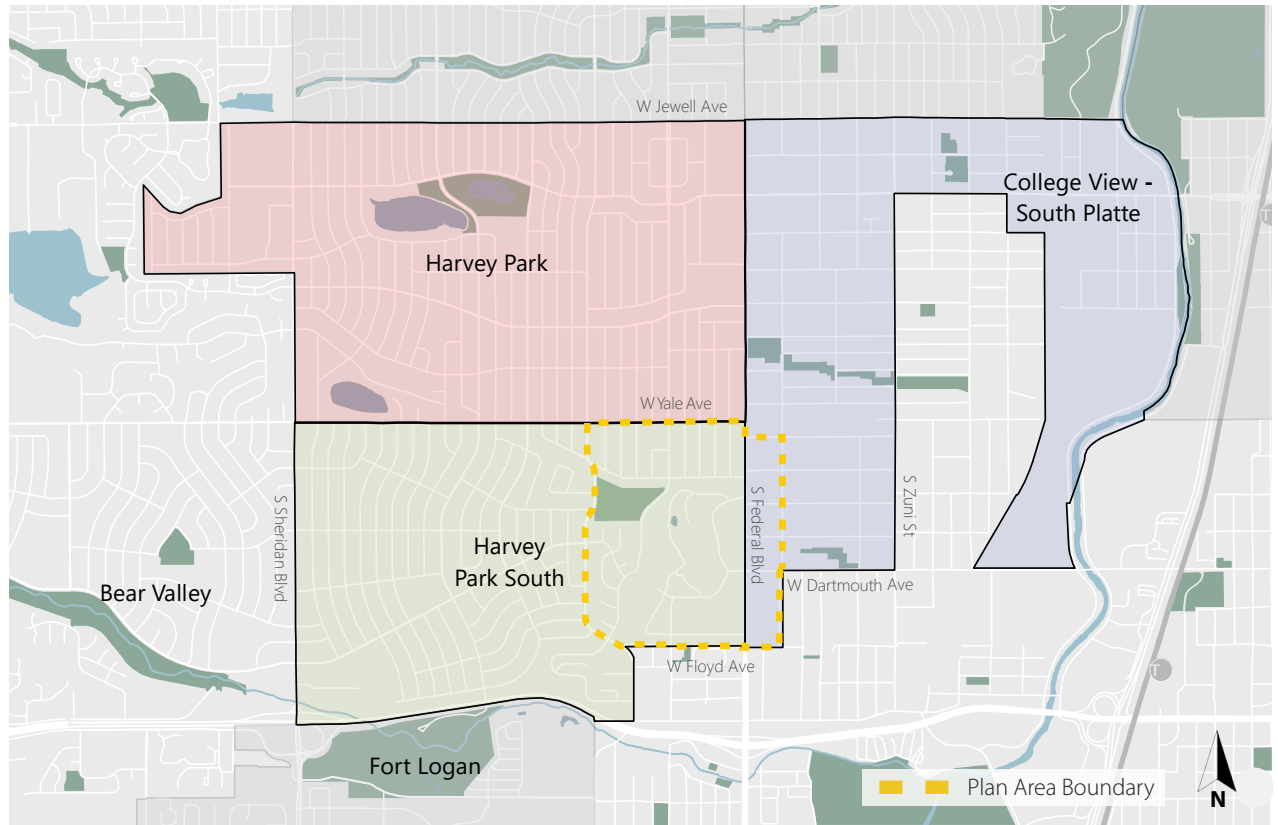
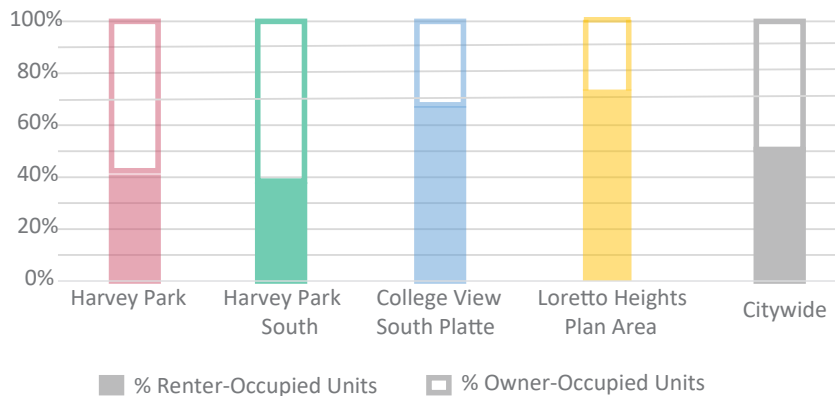
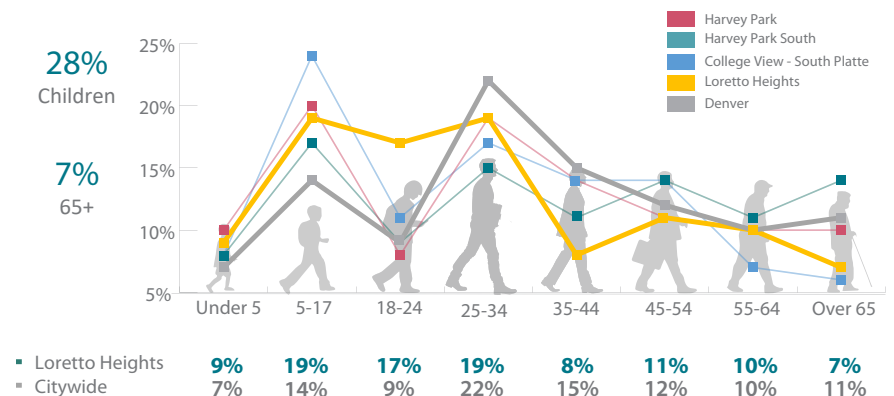


Figure 1.4: Neighborhood Context

## Renter/Owner Occupied



## Age Distribution



LUTI Draft - August 22, 2019



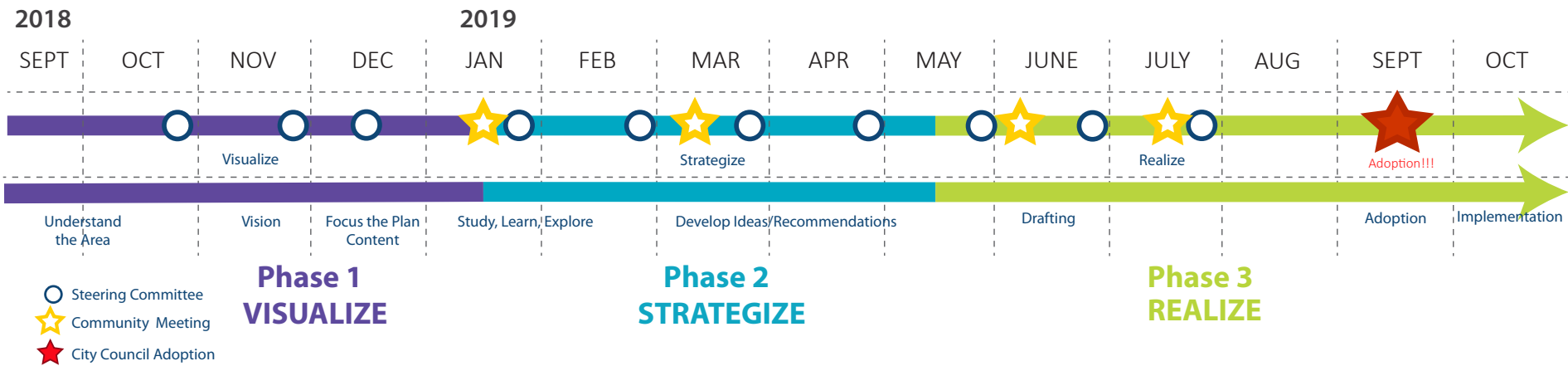
# 1.3 Plan Process

## Background

The Loretto Heights Small Area Plan describes the community's vision for the next 20 years and will help inform community priorities and public investment during that time. The Loretto Heights Small Area Plan was prepared over a 12-month period that spanned three planning phases: Visualize, Strategize, and Realize.

The planning process included extensive engagement of residents, business owners, property owners, government agencies, nonprofits, and others who expressed interest in participating. There were a variety of public engagement and outreach efforts, with participation from over 1,300 members of the community.

## Project Schedule



Phase 1 focused on studying the area's existing conditions to identify issues for the plan to address. Additionally, stakeholders built consensus around a future development vision for the area.

Phase 2 focused on the creation of high-level recommendations that will guide future development and achieve the overall vision identified in Phase 1.

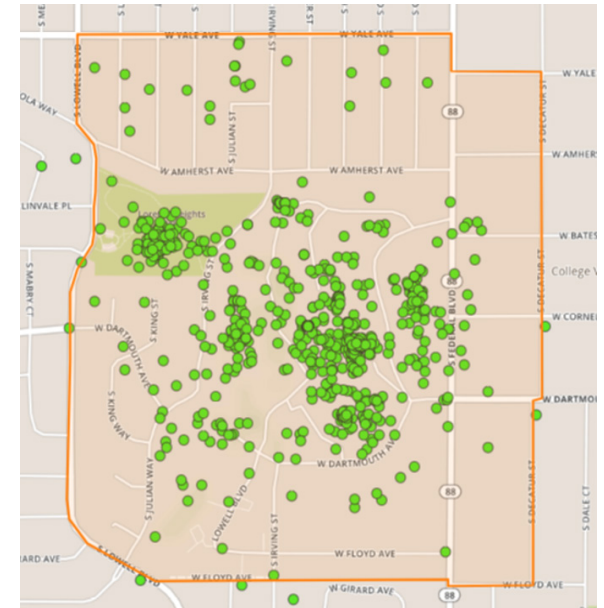
Phase 3 focused on the development and refinement of the recommendations and strategies that provide specific guidance for the plan area and inform future implementation.

## Steering Committee

The planning process was guided and informed by a steering committee comprised of community members and area leaders representing a variety of diverse organizations and constituencies. The steering committee served as the policy advisory group and was instrumental in guiding the development of the vision, recommendations and strategies that are included in this plan. Ten steering committee meetings were held over a 12-month period. All meetings were open to the public and held in the Library on the Loretto Heights campus or at the All Saints Church Hall. Steering committee members were instrumental in generating community interest and participation throughout the community engagement process.

## Online Surveys

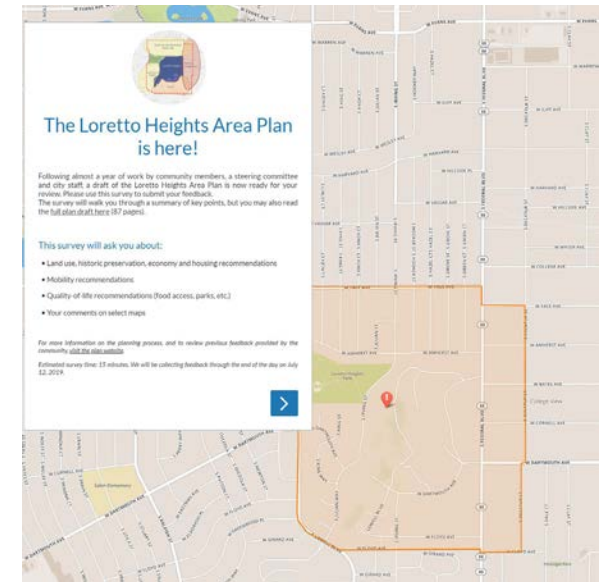
Online surveys were created for those who were unable to attend the community meetings, providing them an opportunity to participate in the planning process. The first survey was created to replicate the first public meeting to ensure that the feedback received online could be evaluated alongside the feedback received in person. The second online survey provided an opportunity for the community to submit their feedback on the draft of the Loretto Heights Small Area Plan. Paper versions of the surveys were also available. Over 750 community members participated in both of the online surveys and provided 2,300 individual comments.



Spatial representation of "Community Assets" according to first survey (January 2019)



Steering Committee Meeting #7



Second survey asking for feedback on the draft plan (June 2019)

## Community Meetings

Community meetings were held at key points throughout the planning process in order to solicit input and guidance from the public. These meetings provided background information regarding the plan area and the planning process, new information about the plan, and a variety of creative ways to gather feedback from the community.

### Community Meeting #1

The first community meeting in January of 2019 served as a kick-off meeting and an opportunity for the public to learn about the planning process and the intent of the Loretto Heights Small Area Plan. City staff and steering committee members volunteered at the meeting, which was attended by 230 community members. The community provided feedback on several different topics and weighed in on the assets, challenges, and hopes and opportunities of the plan area. Community members helped prioritize elements of a complete neighborhood and reviewed the six vision statements developed by the steering committee.



Community Meeting #1

### Community Meeting #2 - All-Spanish Language

In March of 2019, city staff organized an all-Spanish language community meeting. City staff organized the meeting to mimic the agenda of the January community meeting, however, the meeting was designed more as a community gathering complete with breakfast and a variety of interactive children's activities. Meeting attendees provided feedback on a variety of different topics through four open-house stations. City staff and various steering committee members volunteered at this meeting, which was attended by 30 community members.



All-Spanish Language Community Meeting #2

### Community Meeting #3

The third community meeting in June of 2019, served as an opportunity for the public to explore options and provide feedback on the proposed and existing mobility network, the open space network, neighborhood character and proposed benefits to the community in the plan area. City staff and various steering committee members volunteered at this meeting, which was attended by 100 community members.

### Community Meeting #4

The final community meeting held in July of 2019 was an opportunity for the public to review and comment on the public draft of the Loretto Heights Small Area Plan. Community members also provided feedback on final plan concepts, recommendations and strategies. City staff and various steering committee members volunteered at this meeting, which was attended by 75 community members.



Community Meeting #3

## Evaluating Community Feedback





A variety of feedback was received throughout the planning process, which consisted of responses to targeted questions and thousands of community comments. After every steering committee meeting, community meeting and public engagement event, the project team compiled all the feedback for further evaluation. This evaluation included identifying common themes and understanding areas of consensus, conflict, and concern. The content found in the Loretto Heights Small Area Plan has been informed and guided by this data collection process.




Steering Committee Meeting #6

**LORETTO HEIGHTS "ACADEMY"**  
Attendee Report Card

Student Name: \_\_\_\_\_

SUBJECTS:	GRADE
 History	
 Geography	
 Visual Arts	
 Composition	

Winter Semester 2019 

Community Meeting #1 Report Card



Community Meeting #1

## May Bonfils Stanton Theater Feasibility Study

The community identified the May Bonfils Stanton Theater, a 1,000-seat proscenium style theater, as a treasured asset to be revitalized as a performing arts center. In 2019, Keen Independent Research conducted a feasibility study of retaining the theater as a fully functioning cultural facility. It analyzed the existing capacity and demand for performing arts venues, identified market gaps, and forecasted future venue demands. That baseline information led to a report that details performing arts and non-performing arts uses for the space that could support operational sustainability; identifies building improvements required for venue operations; provides revenue and cost structure recommendations to maximize cost-effectiveness for community performing arts organizations and other uses; and recommends potential ownership and governance structures to create a sustainable theater operation. The team facilitated three community workshops to obtain input regarding the theater's feasibility, potential improvements, and governance structure.



# STORY OF THE SITE

**1876** Colorado attains statehood

**1888** Sisters of Loretto founded

**1892** Loretto Academy

**1911-1912** Mother of Loretto purchase of Loretto Heights Academy

**1918** Rectory constructed

**1941** Loretto Academy

**1950** Amphitheater constructed

**1951** Landscape architect S.R. DeBoer develops campus master plan

**1955** Machebeuf Hall constructed

**1957** Marian Hall and Swimming Pool constructed

**1958** City of Denver annexes Loretto Heights

**1962** Preservation of the block

**1967** Walsh Hall, Library and Theater constructed

**1968** Sister Patricia Jean Manion becomes president and first nun to appear in secular dress

**1970** Frank E. Edbrooke Administration Building constructed and opens

**1971** Penetrata Hall

**1972** Penetrata Hall

**1973** Penetrata Hall

**1974** Penetrata Hall

**1975** Penetrata Hall

**1976** Penetrata Hall

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**2017** Penetrata Hall

**2018** Penetrata Hall

**2019** Penetrata Hall

Display from Community Meeting #1 "Share Your Connection to Loretto Heights"

**1969** Secular churches created

**1970** Music & Musick Architects develop campus master plan

**1972** Loretto Heights College admits first male students

**1978** Performance of the Nutcracker! My first line ride!

**1988** Teiko University closes

**1989** Loretto Heights College closes due to enrollment; coursework and facilities moved to Regis College

**1992** Bullet wounds!

**1995** First Susan graduate

**1998** Teiko University purchases campus

**2017** Westside Ir LLC purchase

**2018** Loretto Heights Alumnae Keep Cemetery & Provide Perpetual Care

**2019** Loretto Heights College reopens

**2020** Loretto Heights College reopens

**2021** Loretto Heights College reopens

**2022** Loretto Heights College reopens

**2023** Loretto Heights College reopens

**2024** Loretto Heights College reopens

**2025** Loretto Heights College reopens

**2026** Loretto Heights College reopens

**2027** Loretto Heights College reopens

**2028** Loretto Heights College reopens

**2029** Loretto Heights College reopens

**2030** Loretto Heights College reopens

**2031** Loretto Heights College reopens

**2032** Loretto Heights College reopens

**2033** Loretto Heights College reopens

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**2040** Loretto Heights College reopens

**2041** Loretto Heights College reopens

**2042** Loretto Heights College reopens

**2043** Loretto Heights College reopens

**2044** Loretto Heights College reopens

**2045** Loretto Heights College reopens

**2046** Loretto Heights College reopens

**2047** Loretto Heights College reopens

**2048** Loretto Heights College reopens

**2049** Loretto Heights College reopens

**2050** Loretto Heights College reopens

**LORETTO HEIGHTS**

Who, I am so glad to see that historic Loretto Heights is thriving! It is everything - community center, trails, park, garden, eco-friendly structures (buildings, homes), shopping - including groceries... I could live here!

To: Me in 2019  
From: Me in 2040

**LORETTO HEIGHTS**

¡Gustaría en un futuro ir a las escuelas de D.P.s que haya espacios seguros para los niños y Jóvenes. Mejorar el transporte público más parques para niños y Jóvenes.

To: Me in 2019  
From: Me in 2040

**LORETTO HEIGHTS**

It's great to be able to walk through a new neighborhood that has a diversity of destinations and income levels. It's nice to see a variety of housing types both rental and for sale. Our family has been able to stay and be enriched because of this.

To: Me in 2019  
From: Me in 2040

**LORETTO HEIGHTS**

The I just went to have dinner + drinks with my friends. I am happy to have them come to my neighborhood + explore it with me. I am happy to have a cute, vibrant, desirable + thriving neighborhood to live in now, compared to how it used to be. It is clean, safe + welcoming to all visitors. It is also an easy place to meet neighbors.

To: Me in 2019  
From: Me in 2040

**LORETTO HEIGHTS**

What an amazing community center! I can't believe they preserved the view outside Macchabert Hall so that everyone can enjoy coffee + the mountains. It has been a lot of work, but finally the community has a central gathering place to grow together + thrive!

To: Me in 2019  
From: Me in 2040

**LORETTO HEIGHTS**

Que mejor el acceso a la escuela de DPS, DSST CV. Que haya espacios seguros para los jóvenes y niños. Vivienda accesible y se respete la diversidad de la comunidad.

To: Me in 2019  
From: Me in 2040

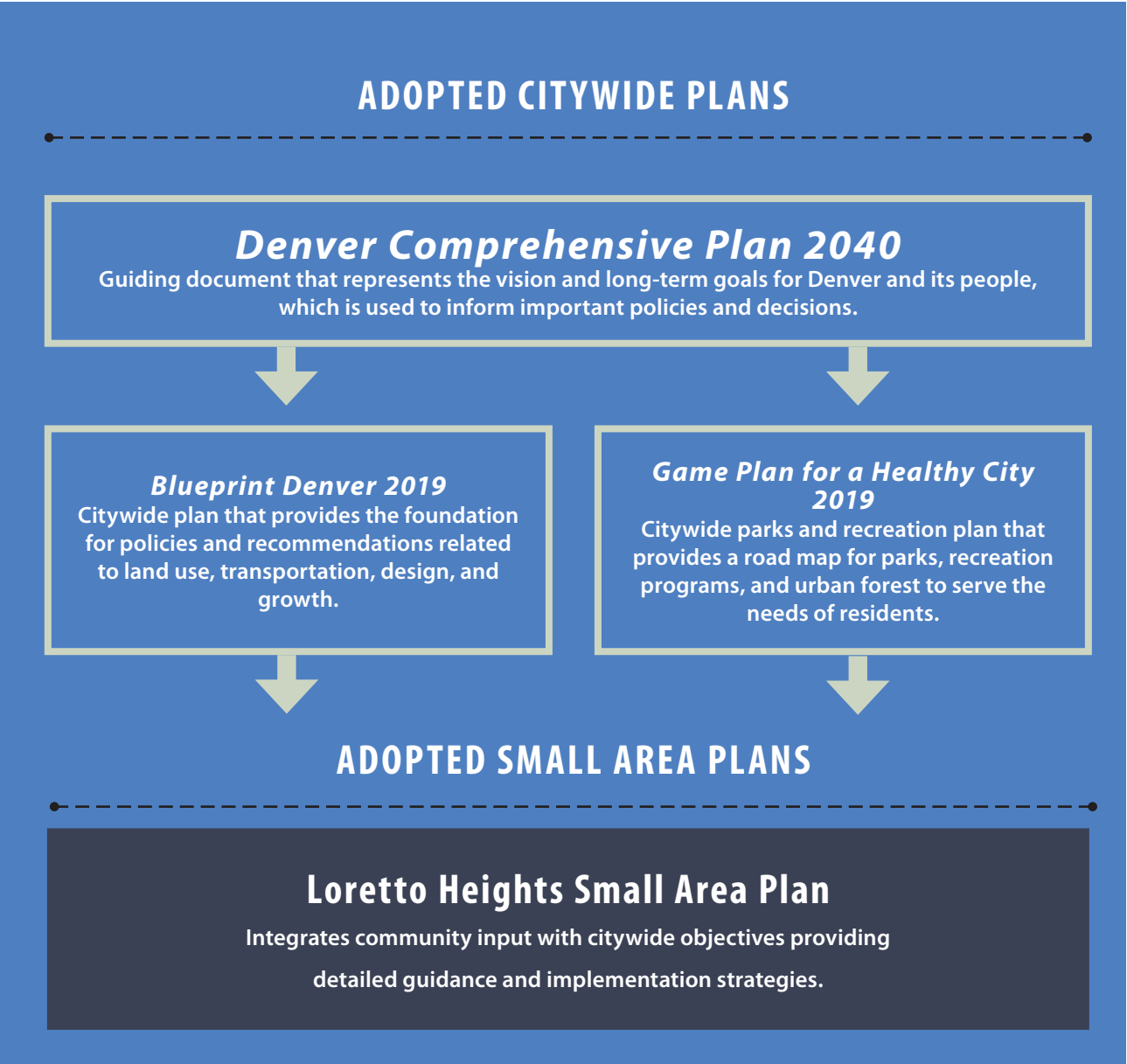
Sample of postcards from Community Meeting #1

# 1.4 How to Use the Plan

## Levels of Plan Guidance

Small area plans provide a level of analysis, detail, and guidance on issues affecting local areas that citywide plans cannot. The plans typically focus on neighborhoods, station areas, corridors and other geographic areas. They engage neighborhood stakeholders in identifying a future vision for the area and provide recommendations and strategies for achieving that vision. These recommendations help ensure neighborhoods grow as envisioned by the small area plan. The Loretto Heights Small Area Plan represents the land use, mobility and quality-of-life infrastructure vision for the Loretto Heights plan area.

As an adopted small area plan, the Loretto Heights Small Area Plan works within the framework created by *Blueprint Denver* and refines *Blueprint Denver*'s recommendations for this area. The Loretto Heights Small Area Plan advances the vision of citywide plans while providing specific recommendations, strategies and implementation actions for the Loretto Heights plan area. Any updates to citywide plans should incorporate recommendations for this plan.



## Intent of Loretto Heights Small Area Plan

This plan establishes a long-range vision and guiding principles for future development in the plan area and redevelopment of the Loretto Heights campus. Public agencies and private entities will use this plan for many purposes and actions that will affect the form and function of the plan area. The recommendations identified in this plan provide direction to guide day-to-day decision-making. They are intended to be flexible to accommodate opportunities that arise and adapt and respond to new challenges over the coming years.

As with the *Denver Comprehensive Plan 2040* and its supplements, the Loretto Heights Small Area Plan's recommendations provide guidance. This plan does not rezone any property, nor does it designate any property for local or national historic designation. Future implementation actions such as map amendments (rezoning) or text amendments, historic designations, capital improvements and other public-private partnerships will require specific actions on the part of the city, property owners and various stakeholders.

## Comprehensive Plan 2040 Vision Elements

The *Denver Comprehensive Plan 2040* identifies six vision elements that serve as the basis of the Denver Comprehensive Plan 2040. These vision elements articulate a sustainable, comprehensive vision for the city, and are linked to a set of broad, long-term goals. Each recommendation and strategy within this plan contributes to achieving one or more of the elements of the vision.



In 2040, Denver is an equitable, inclusive community with a high quality of life for all residents, regardless of income level, race, ethnicity, gender, ability or age.



In 2040, Denver's neighborhoods are complete, unique and reflective of our diverse history



In 2040, Denver is connected by safe, high-quality, multimodal transportation options.



In 2040, Denver is a global city with a robust economy that reflects the diversity of our community.



In 2040, Denver is a thriving, sustainable city connected to nature and resilient to climate change.



In 2040, Denver is a city of safe, accessible and healthy communities.



## 1.5 Loretto Heights Vision

### Loretto Heights Vision Statements

The foundation of the Loretto Heights Small Area Plan is expressed in the form of the *Denver Comprehensive Plan 2040* six vision elements. The steering committee refined the ideas and concepts within each element based on relevancy to the Loretto Heights plan area. The broader community provided feedback on multiple drafts of the vision statements and reaffirmed the ideas and concepts through various exercises during the first community meeting. The result is a series of statements within each element that is consistent with the citywide vision, while at the same time defining what each element means specifically for the Loretto Heights plan area.



#### Equitable, Affordable and Inclusive

In 2040, residents, employees, and visitors find unique public gathering spaces among a dynamic and diverse mix of uses that cater to a variety of socio-economic levels. The area is a regional destination for the community and provides a collective identity for southwest Denver. A range of housing types provides opportunities for residents of all income levels to live, work, and play while minimizing impacts of gentrification and rising housing costs. All residents have the option to stay and grow in the area over their lifetime with housing that fits their budget and needs. The redevelopment and revitalization of Loretto Heights encourages further investment and redevelopment along Federal Boulevard to be more feasible and attractive, transitioning into a distinctive, enhanced corridor that will become a source of pride for the Denver Metropolitan Area.



#### Strong and Authentic Neighborhoods

In 2040, Loretto Heights is one of the most authentic and recognizable places in Denver and serves as a vibrant, local gathering space for residents and visitors alike. Its rich history is honored through the preservation and re-use of historic buildings and sensitive infill that reflects more than a century of diverse architectural styles. Enhancement of the grounds and open space maintains sweeping views of Denver and the Rocky Mountains. Cultural amenities reflect the diversity of the surrounding neighborhoods and respect the sacred and historical integrity of the former campus.



#### Connected, Safe and Accessible Places

In 2040, residents, employees, and visitors enjoy walking, biking, and using other forms of transportation on well-maintained streets which equitably serve the surrounding neighborhoods. All residents and visitors, including children, seniors, and people with disabilities, have safe and convenient options to get to work, shop, play or visit a park in the area. As a pedestrian, it is easy to navigate through the site because of a comprehensive and complete pedestrian network with sidewalks and crossings that are safe and accessible. The community is served by bicycle infrastructure that is accessible for all riding levels. Reliable, frequent, and affordable transit connects the area, and well-maintained transit stops are easy to access and provide a comfortable place to wait.



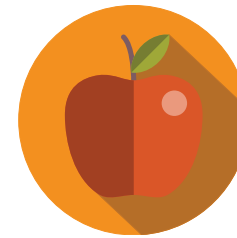
## Economically Diverse and Vibrant

In 2040, the community benefits from its strong, thriving economy. Federal Boulevard and the other corridors and mixed-use centers in the area are welcoming to all with diverse, multicultural and locally-owned businesses that complement the surrounding residential neighborhoods and showcase the area's diverse culture. The community cultivates opportunities for residents and workers by supporting and encouraging new development and the retention of businesses, employment, education, and training options. A vibrant local arts and culture community has transitioned the area into a regional destination, enhancing the quality of life for residents, workers and visitors, as well as strengthening the local businesses in the area.



## Environmentally Resilient

In 2040, the community has a healthy and robust natural ecosystem. An enhanced open space network of mature trees, trails, parkways, and natural plazas is thoughtfully woven into the neighborhood and takes advantage of the unique topography of the area. Seamlessly integrated green storm water infrastructure provides beautification through abundant vegetation while improving the water quality of neighboring creeks and rivers. The community guides growth and development in a responsible and sustainable way to protect and enhance the natural environment for future generations.



## Healthy and Active

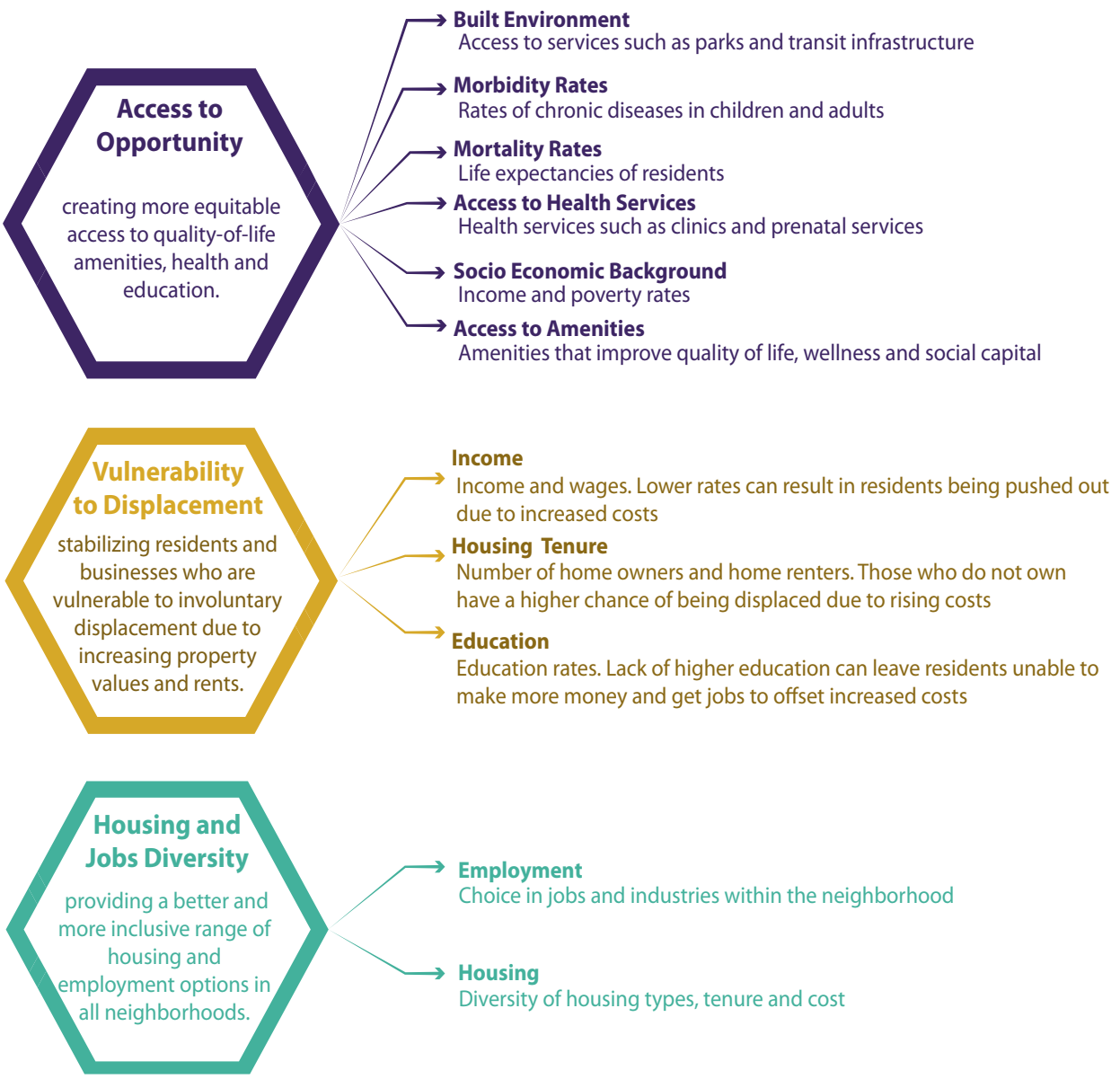
In 2040, an equitable allocation of community assets has increased opportunity for people who face barriers to good health and an active lifestyle. All households have safe, walkable and bikeable access to an array of diverse, affordable and healthy food, including grocery stores, community gardens, and restaurants. Residents can safely access well-maintained parks, trails and open space networks with a mix of amenities and recreational activities where everyone feels safe and welcome. There is a strong sense of community; neighbors know one another, public spaces are vibrant and active, and residents enjoy improved health and access to opportunity.

# 1.6 Planning for an Equitable Loretto Heights

While all the vision statements are essential to the future success of the Loretto Heights plan area, equity is an overarching concept to help ensure opportunity for everyone in the community. Equity is when everyone, regardless of who they are or where they come from, can thrive. Where there is equity, a person's identity does not determine their outcome. As a city, we advance equity by serving individuals, families and communities in a manner that reduces or eliminates persistent institutional biases and barriers based on race, ability, gender identity and sexual orientation, age and other factors.

This equity concept is especially important for the Loretto Heights plan area since it has not seen significant investment in decades and contains a diverse mix of residents from many different backgrounds. Three equity indexes should be considered when guiding policies and investments that will result from this plan to ensure the benefits of growth and change are equitably shared by everyone in the Loretto Heights plan area: Access to Opportunity, Vulnerability to Displacement, and Housing and Jobs Diversity. This plan recognizes the lack of current residents within the Loretto Heights campus and, therefore, the following equity measurements are taken from the Harvey Park, Harvey Park South and College View-South Platte neighborhoods.

Refer to Appendix C in *Blueprint Denver* for a more detailed methodology and for individual maps of each measurement and indicator.



## Improving Access to Opportunity

Access to opportunity reflects the goal for all neighborhoods to be complete with equitable access to a high quality-of-life. It is based on the vision for every Denver resident—regardless of income, race, ethnicity, age or ability—to live in a complete neighborhood of their choice with basic services and amenities. This includes equitable access to quality education.

Areas with low access to opportunity lack key components of a complete neighborhood and often exhibit low quality-of-life outcomes—including life expectancy, educational attainment and income level—compared to the city as a whole. Unfortunately, many areas with low access to opportunity are also areas where the majority of residents are minorities. This pattern illustrates the need to improve equity across neighborhoods and to remove barriers to opportunity that negatively impact many communities of color.

### Improving Access to Opportunity in the Plan Area

Of the nine indicators used to create this measure, the plan area scores lower than the citywide average in six categories. Key indicators where the score could be improved include: socio-economic, access to healthcare, childhood obesity, death rate and access to high frequency transit and centers at all scales (local, community and regional).

The following recommendations address prioritizing access to opportunity through Land Use and Built Form, Mobility and Quality-of-Life Infrastructure:

- Recommendation 09 in Land Use and Built Form
- Recommendation 01, 02, 04, 05, 06, 07, 08, 09 in Mobility
- Recommendation 02, 03, 04 in Quality-of-Life Infrastructure

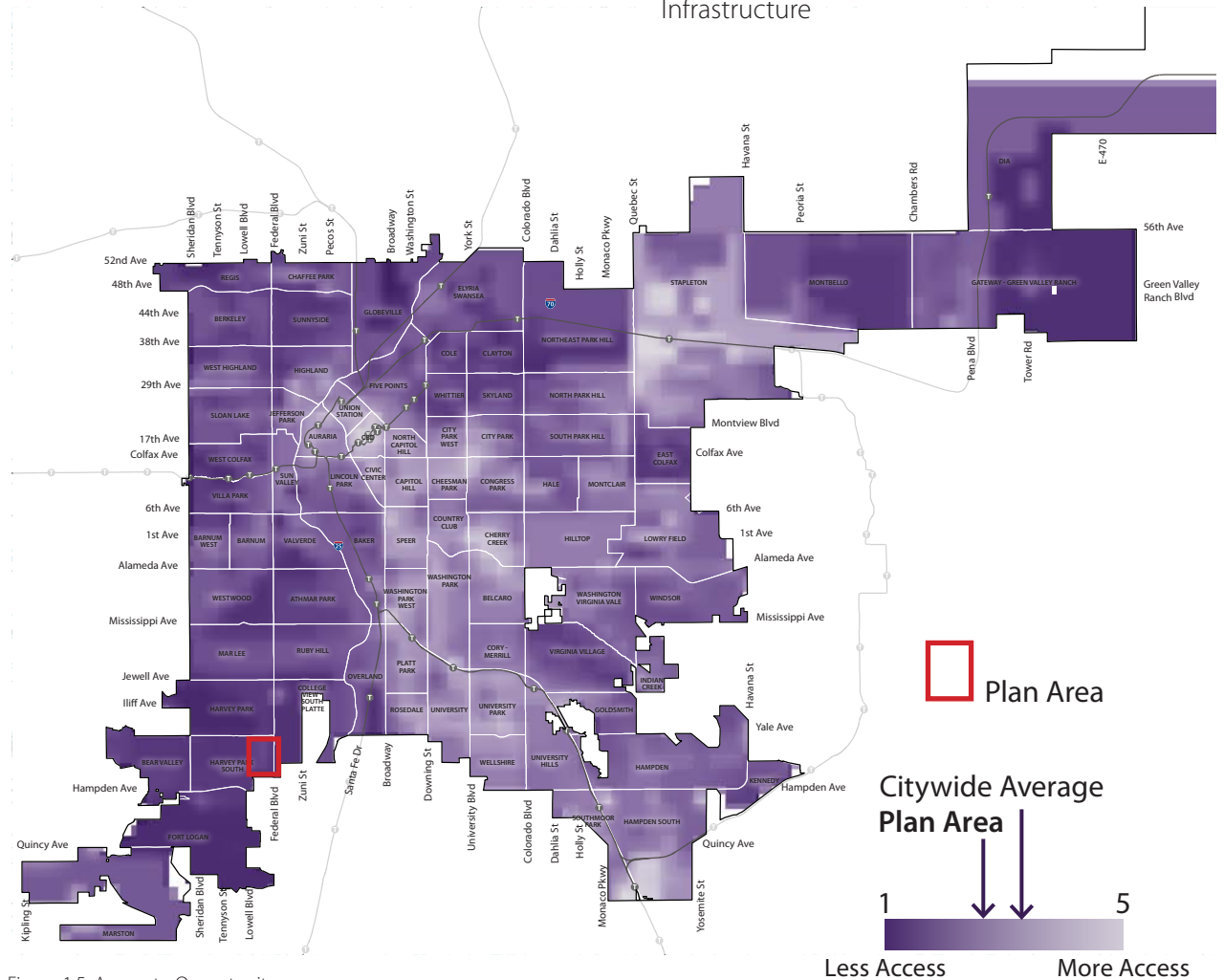


Figure 1.5: Access to Opportunity

### Reducing Vulnerability to Displacement

Growth within the City and County of Denver brings a variety of change. One is the changing demographics of the city and its neighborhoods. This includes historically underrepresented areas where dramatic swings in income, racial and ethnic composition have occurred in just the last decade. With these changes comes increasing concern around the gentrification of neighborhoods. The term “gentrification” captures a complex group of neighborhood dynamics that occur when an area experiences new investment and an influx of higher-income residents. Involuntary displacement, which occurs when residents or businesses can no longer afford to stay in an area due to increasing property values and rents, is a negative impact of gentrification. Mitigating involuntary displacement is necessary to allow current residents and businesses to remain in the neighborhood and provide equitable access to the benefits of economic growth for all residents and business owners.

### Reducing Vulnerability in the Plan Area

According to a metric based on income, tenure (owners vs. renters) and education, the plan area is more vulnerable to displacement than the citywide average. While western portions of the study area have higher incomes and education rates, the College View-South Platte neighborhood will be most vulnerable to displacement when development of the former campus occurs. Special attention should be paid to all cost-burdened households in the vicinity to effectively mitigate against involuntary displacement. Households

that spend more than 30% of their household income on utilities and housing are considered “cost-burdened” and may have difficulty addressing other needs such as food, clothing, medicine, transportation or childcare costs.

The following recommendations address reducing vulnerability to displacement through Land Use and Built Form:

- Recommendation 01, 08, 10, 11 and 12 in Land Use and Built Form

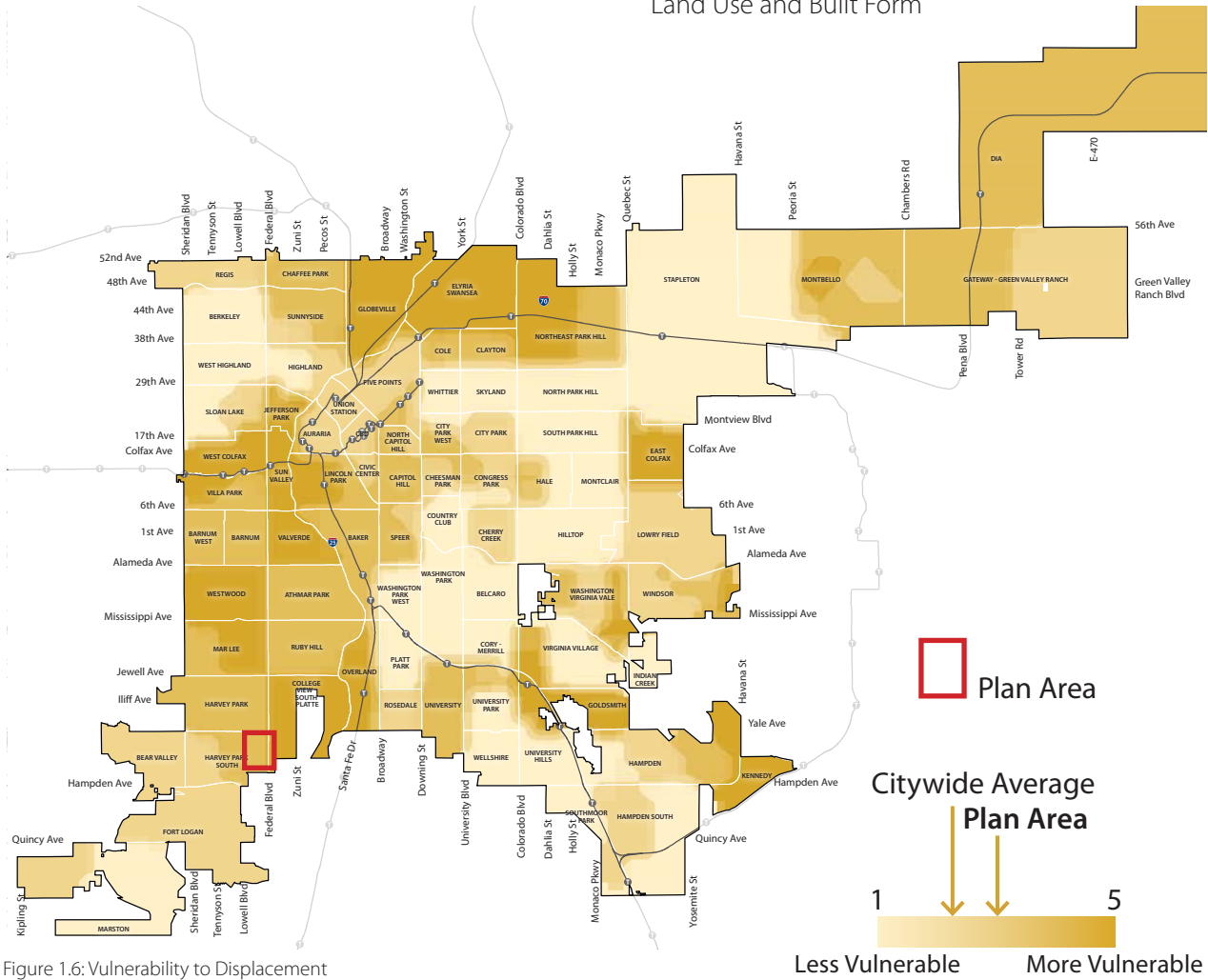


Figure 1.6: Vulnerability to Displacement

## Expanding and Measuring Housing Diversity

Housing diversity captures the community's vision for a complete neighborhood with equitable access to quality housing options and choices that accommodate households of different ages, sizes and incomes. A diverse range of housing options—including a mix of rental and for-sale options—is key to encouraging complete neighborhoods where families and households of all types and incomes can choose to live. Housing diversity includes single-unit homes that are already found in many Denver neighborhoods, as well as units of different types and sizes that complement the existing single-unit pattern of an area. The vision is for every Denver neighborhood to offer affordable housing options.

### Expanding and Measuring Housing Diversity in the Plan Area

Of the five indicators used to calculate this metric, the plan area scored lower than the citywide average in only one category and has more housing diversity than the citywide average. When considering middle-density housing, meaning housing containing 2-19 units such as duplexes, rowhomes, and smaller multi-unit developments, the study area and surrounding neighborhoods offer little to none of these important housing options.

As the desirability of the Loretto Heights plan area rises, providing a range of housing options will be crucial to advancing the goal of maintaining and increasing racial, ethnic and socioeconomic diversity. The historic campus provides a unique opportunity to help meet this need through adaptive re-use of existing buildings that are well-suited for use as affordable housing.

The following recommendations address increasing housing diversity:

- Recommendation 01, 02, 11 and 12 in Land Use and Built Form

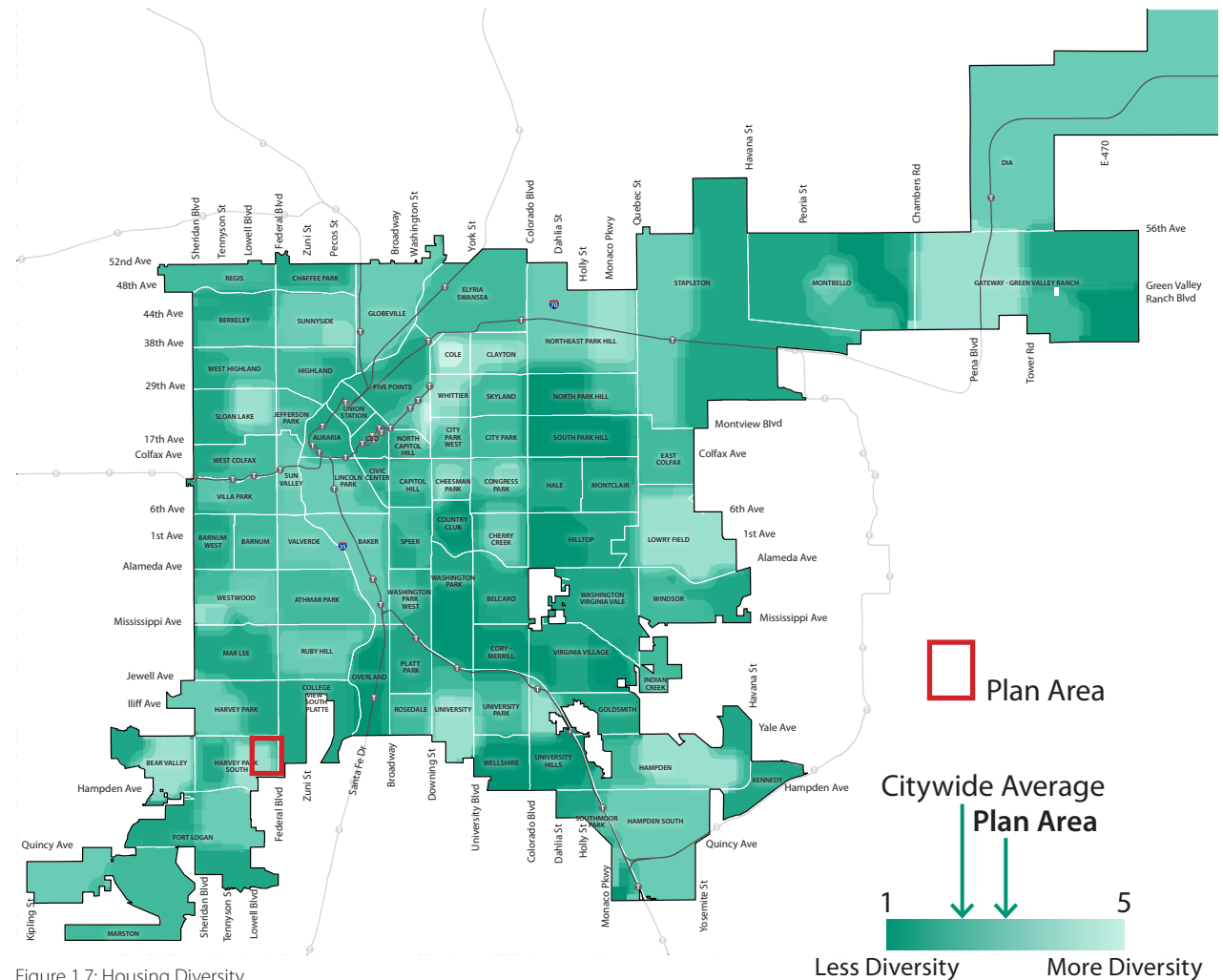


Figure 1.7: Housing Diversity

### Expanding and Measuring Job Diversity

Job diversity captures the community's vision for a city of complete neighborhoods with equitable access to quality employment options.

Access to a range of quality jobs enables people of different incomes and education levels to find employment and wealth-building opportunities.

### Job Diversity in the Plan Area

As this measurement examines the diversity of employment in census block groups based on job density (amount of jobs) and industry diversity (types of jobs), the plan area underperforms in both categories. The majority of census block groups in the study area contain less than 100 jobs and are not included in the analysis of job types. The types in the area are predominately retail with some manufacturing in the College View–South Platte neighborhood east of Federal Boulevard. While it is natural for some parts of the city to contain a more prevalent job type, patterns of predominate job types can inform policies and strategies to increase job diversity. As the Loretto Heights campus is envisioned as an active, mixed-use destination, residents in the area should have greater access to a range of well-paying, quality employment options.

The following recommendation address increasing job diversity:

- Recommendation 09 in Land Use and Built Form

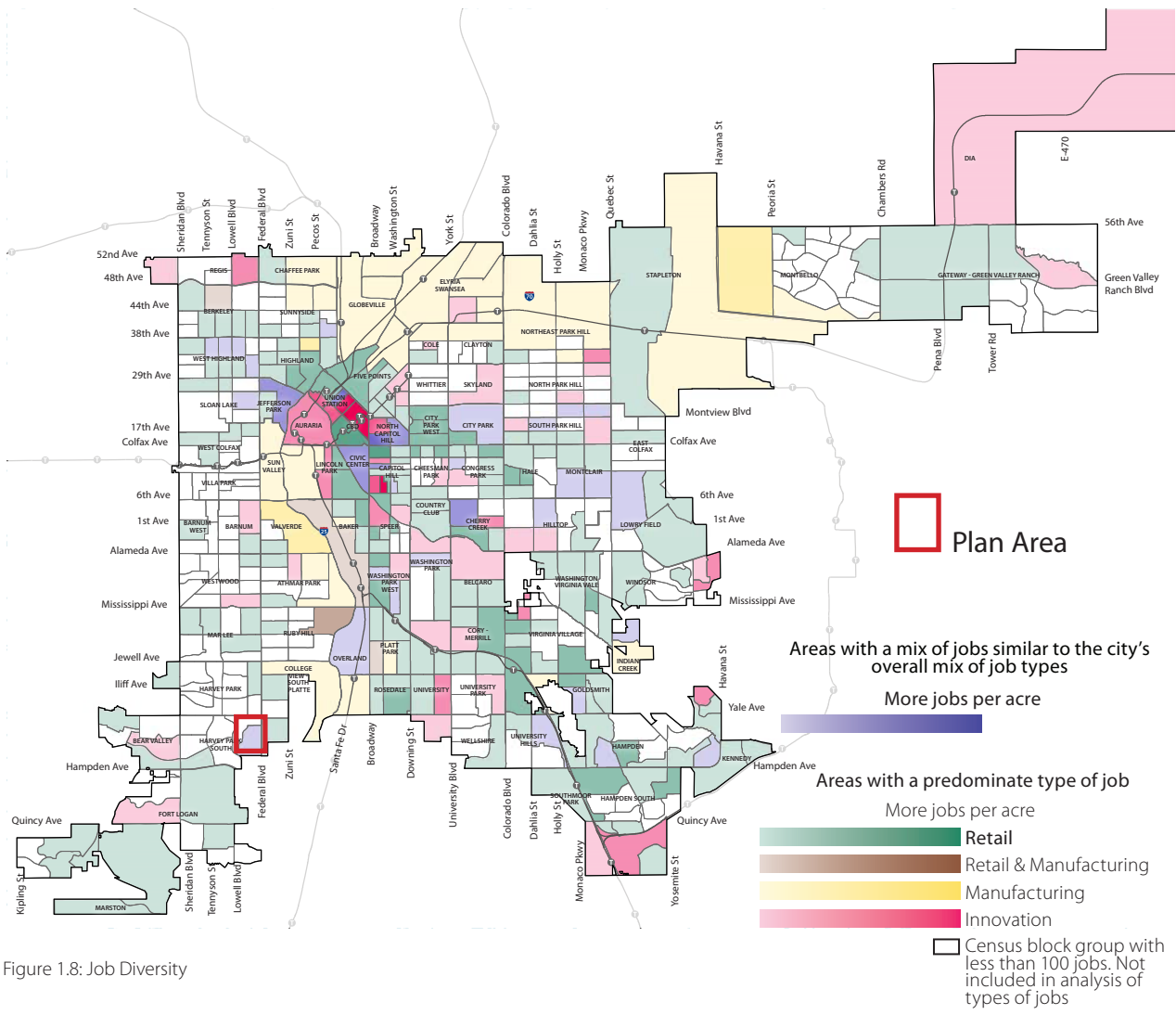
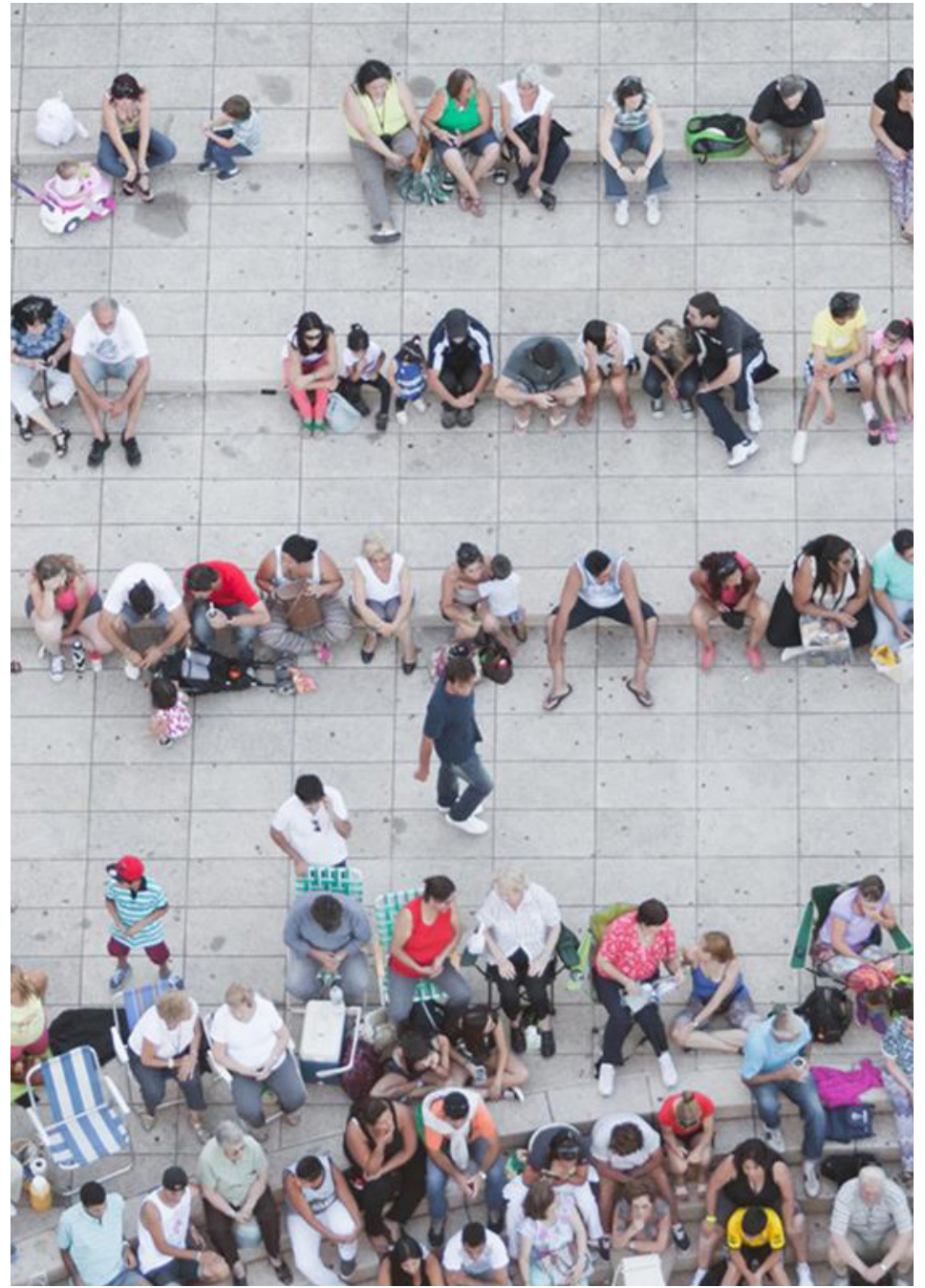


Figure 1.8: Job Diversity



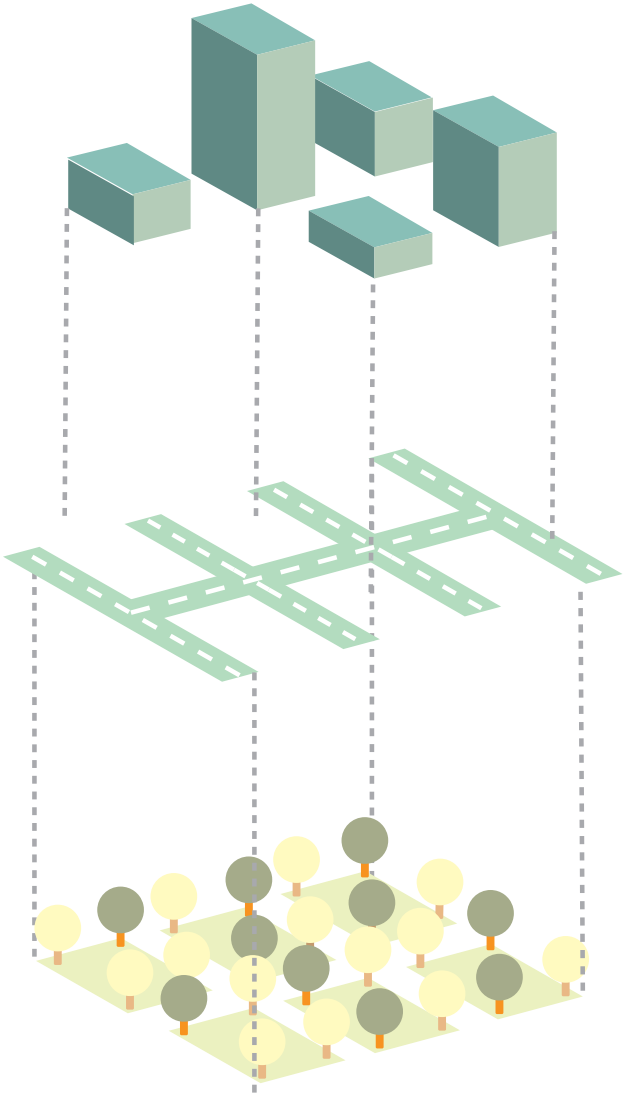


# 1.7 Complete Neighborhood

The vision and goals found in *Blueprint Denver* are realized through the planning and implementation of complete neighborhoods connected by a complete multimodal transportation network. Complete neighborhoods are accessible to everyone, regardless of age, ability, or income. The completeness of each neighborhood is defined by its distinct and authentic history, culture and character, as well as its access to a variety of housing types, services, green spaces and employment opportunities. Three interrelated elements form the foundation of a complete neighborhood: land use and built form, mobility, and quality-of-life infrastructure. Everything that makes a neighborhood complete— diverse housing options, great urban design, historic character, street trees, parks and open spaces, walkable streets and convenient services—falls within these three elements.

### Elements of a Complete Neighborhood

- **Land Use and Built Form** - Elements contributing to the character and quality of places including block pattern, scale, the relationship between buildings and the street, and the mix and intensity of uses.
- **Mobility** - The multimodal transportation elements to connect people to the places where they live, work and play.
- **Quality-of-Life Infrastructure** - The parks, open spaces, trees, plants, natural features, recreation opportunities and healthy food options and dynamic civic and social spaces that contribute to our quality-of- life.



## ELEMENTS OF A COMPLETE NEIGHBORHOOD



### Land Use & Built Form

Enhance the character and quality of neighborhoods



### Mobility

Connect people to the neighborhood places where they live, work, and play



### Quality-of-Life Infrastructure

Provide neighborhoods with parks, trees, natural features, recreation opportunities, and civic and social spaces

**Plan Goals**

**Plan Recommendations**

**DIVERSIFY  
uses and experiences**

**BUILD  
quality places**

- LU - 01 Promote a diverse mix of land uses
- LU - 02 Promote and anticipate growth in areas adjacent to transit priority streets
- LU - 03 Encourage coordinated development to ensure appropriate benefits to the community are provided
- LU - 04 Encourage high-quality public realm design that contributes to the neighborhood character and sense of place
- LU - 05 Promote a variety of building heights and intensities
- LU - 06 Promote high-quality, human scale design

- LU - 07 Preserve and re-use historic structures and features on the Loretto Heights campus
- LU - 08 Identify and preserve the historic character of neighborhoods surrounding the redevelopment area
- LU - 09 Promote a full range of employment options
- LU - 10 Minimize involuntary displacement and gentrification
- LU - 11 Encourage and incentivize more affordable housing development
- LU - 12 Integrate affordable housing throughout the plan area to accommodate households of different ages, sizes and incomes

**CONNECT  
neighborhoods**

- MOB - 01 Build a complete street network
- MOB - 02 Enhance the existing street network
- MOB - 03 Promote street network safety
- MOB - 04 Increase access to multi-use trails, pathways and parks and open space
- MOB - 05 Create a complete pedestrian network

- MOB - 06 Create a complete bikeable network
- MOB - 07 Enrich the public transit experience
- MOB - 08 Increase the use of shared mobility options
- MOB - 09 Improve resident access to transit

**GROW  
access to public space**

**ENHANCE  
the public realm**

- QOL - 01 Increase fresh food access, availability and affordability
- QOL - 02 Connect existing open space, parks, trails and recreational assets
- QOL - 03 Create new community gathering spaces to accommodate a variety of activities for residents and visitors
- QOL - 04 Provide a variety of amenities that contribute to a sense of place, and enhance active and passive uses

- QOL - 05 Encourage higher quality design of parks and public spaces
- QOL - 06 Strengthen and expand the tree canopy
- QOL - 07 Design and implement natural and engineered green infrastructure systems



## Chapter 2

# LAND USE AND BUILT FORM

### In this chapter:

- 2.1 Neighborhood Contexts and Future Places
- 2.2 Building Intensity and Quality Design
- 2.3 Historic Preservation
- 2.4 Economy and Affordable Housing

# LAND USE & BUILT FORM

## GOALS:

Create a vibrant neighborhood destination that provides a range of housing and employment options as well as a diverse mix of uses and experiences for residents and visitors. The plan's key recommendations include the preservation of the campus' historic character and the promotion of high-quality development that reinforces a comfortable, human-scale pedestrian experience.

## WHY IT'S IMPORTANT:

When combined with a variety of market-rate and affordable housing options, a mix of uses that provides for a variety of every day needs in a pedestrian-friendly environment allows people to live, work, and play and creates a vibrant and inclusive environment. Supporting walkable, mixed-use development is an important part of Denver's ongoing social, environmental and economic vitality and it is equally important that new development help retain the authenticity of the campus and create an attractive, comfortable neighborhood.



## Challenges and Opportunities

During the planning process, a variety of land use challenges and opportunities were identified by the community. While the opportunities greatly outnumber challenges, it is important to understand the barriers and constraints of the plan area as it redevelops to ensure it is compatible with the existing historic character and surrounding neighborhoods. The low-density development patterns to the north and west of the campus and lack of east-west connections make it difficult or impractical to walk, bike or take transit. Additionally, the topography and steep grades, especially to the west, make the area more prone to automobile dependence.

## Community Feedback

- Redevelopment of the campus with a mix of land uses will improve access, make the area safer for other modes of transportation and create an identity for southwest Denver.
- Lack of access and safe connections between the site and to the neighborhoods.
- Concerns that new development will overshadow the existing buildings or lead to their demolition and that the historic character of the campus will be lost.
- Concerns of involuntary displacement and gentrification due to campus redevelopment that will result in higher housing costs in adjacent neighborhoods.

- Preserving the Cemetery, Administration Building and Chapel should be prioritized. The community is also interested in maintaining the Pool and May Bonfils Stanton Theater as a performing arts center. They also support the preservation and adaptive use of Pancratia Hall, Machebeuf Hall and the Library.
- A wide range of housing options, unit types and affordability should be included on the campus to attract a diverse group of households from different backgrounds and income levels.
- The need for local, neighborhood-serving businesses and retail options was repeated throughout the planning process. Often, residents are forced to shop in nearby commercial areas like Bear Valley Shopping Center and River Point in Sheridan, further accentuating the need for a personal vehicle.
- Any future development should be integrated with the topography and take advantage of mountain views while maintaining the Ruby Hill Park View Plane and restricting maximum heights of new campus development to below the height of the Administration Building roofline.

## 2.1 Neighborhood Contexts and Future Places

The Loretto Heights Small Area Plan refines *Blueprint Denver's* guidance on neighborhood contexts and future places within the plan area and updates the future places map. It also provides guidance on building heights. This may be greater or less than the ranges identified by *Blueprint Denver's* place descriptions.

As the vision for the plan area is realized through the planning and implementation of complete neighborhoods, it is important to understand the key elements of neighborhood context and future places and their role in the overall framework. Simply put, neighborhood contexts are made up of places and street types that are made up of the elements of a complete neighborhood. This context-based approach sets guidelines for character-compatible development by explaining the varied expectations and aspirations for the plan area.

*"The most successful urban areas are those that have many intersections of the old and new, giving us the best of both."*

*-Community Member*

### Neighborhood Contexts

Denver's neighborhoods typically reflect the era in which they were built. Neighborhood contexts help us understand the differences in the built environment across the city. Many built environment features, including the mix of uses, density, scale of buildings, architectural styles, lot sizes, block pattern, parking and types of green space vary by neighborhood largely due to the preferred transportation options available at the time of development. *Blueprint Denver* establishes seven neighborhood contexts (Suburban, Urban Edge, Urban, General Urban, Urban Center, Downtown, and Districts).

There are three future neighborhood contexts mapped in the Loretto Heights plan area: Suburban, Urban and District. Similar to the larger southwest Denver area, the majority of the plan area is within the Suburban neighborhood context. Areas along Federal Boulevard and northeast of the District are envisioned as Urban context. Portions of the campus parcel and all of Denver School of Science and Technology (DSST) are within the District context.

### Future Places

Future places describe the desired character of an area. They work to promote complete neighborhoods for residents living within or near each of them. These places vary in scale and intensity depending on the neighborhood context location.

The community expressed concern with the potential loss of existing historic character on the Loretto Heights campus. The Future Places categories of the Loretto Heights Small Area Plan should aspire to maintain the existing character reflective of the historic campus while also establishing new, complementary places. There are four basic categories of future places designated for the plan area: Centers, Corridors, Residential Areas and District.

The following pages provide detail on these Future Places and why they were selected. Chapter 5 of *Blueprint Denver* provides even greater detail on the descriptions of each.

## Neighborhood Context

### Suburban

The suburban context is significantly influenced by the needs of the automobile although there are both walkable and bikeable areas with some access to transit. Homes in the suburban context are largely single-unit but can also include smaller lot sizes, higher intensity residential such as multi-unit structures and apartment buildings. Commercial development is typically located along main corridors and in centers bordering residential areas.

### Urban

The urban context is walkable, with a lower reliance on single-occupancy vehicles, due to a predictable street grid, bike infrastructure and the availability of transit. Homes in this context vary from multi-unit developments to compact single-unit homes. Mixed-use buildings are sited in a pedestrian-friendly manner near the street. Parking is generally located behind buildings or on-street.

### Districts

Districts are contexts with a specially designed purpose. Although they have a strong primary purpose, these places can also be mixed-use and offer a diverse range of amenities and complementary services to support the district's primary function. Block patterns, building height, orientation, urban design and mobility connections in this context can vary based on specific use. Many districts provide large scale public open space and community gathering areas.

Figure 2.1: Neighborhood Contexts



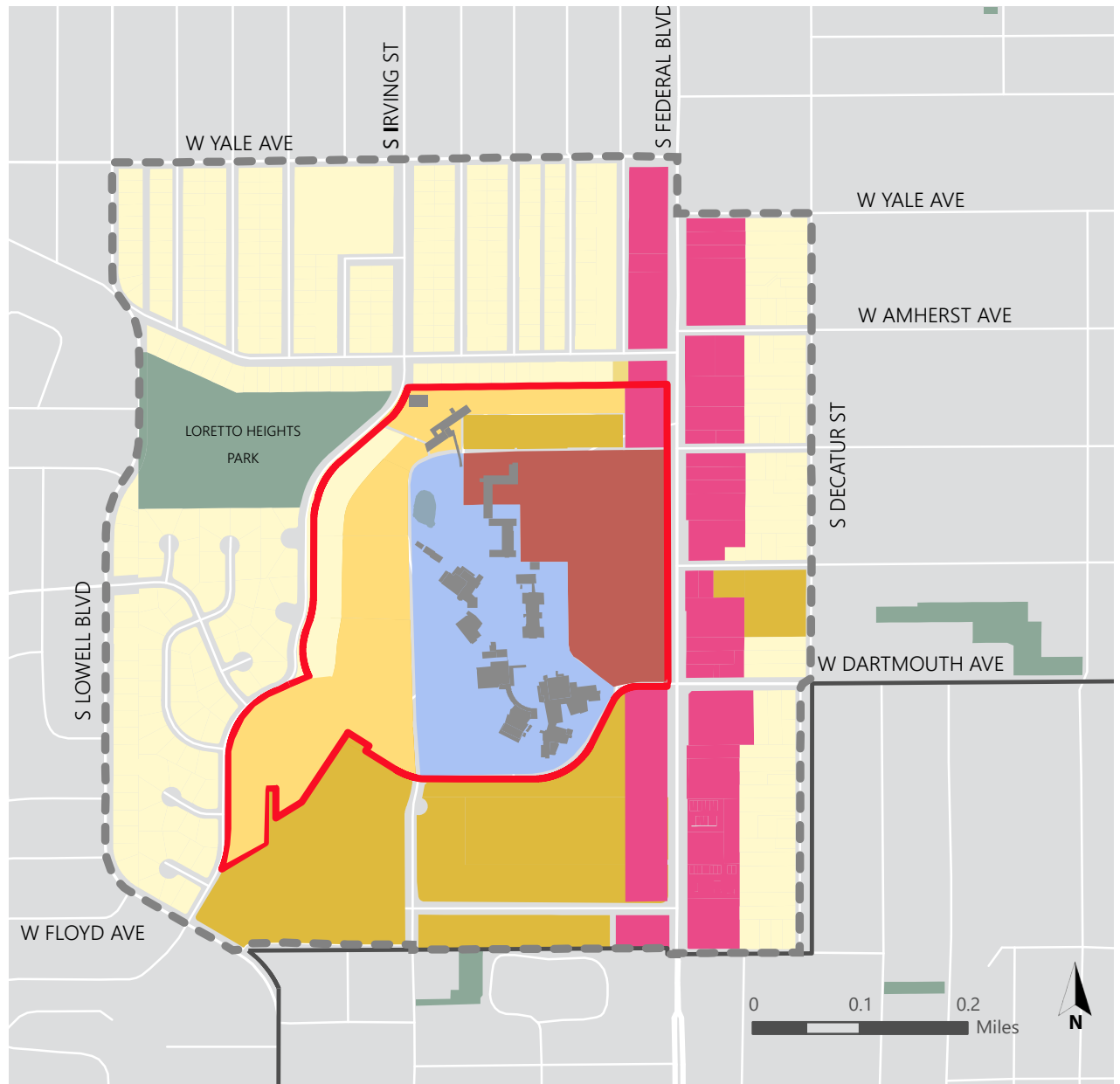
## Future Places

**Centers:** The community expressed a desire for the creation of a strong commercial core within the redevelopment of the Loretto Heights campus. In fact, the number one hope and opportunity comment (25% of comments) in the land use category centered around the creation of a community destination for residents and visitors alike, with a variety of mixed-use, commercial and retail activity.

**Corridors:** The community identified the transformation of Federal Boulevard from a dangerous, automobile-dominated state highway to a safe and vibrant community corridor. As safety improvements are made along the corridor and the Loretto Heights campus redevelops, Federal Boulevard should become a larger target for investment and revitalization.

**Residential Areas:** The community consistently recognized the need for a variety of housing options within the redevelopment of the Loretto Heights campus but advocated for residential development to be properly scaled with the surrounding context and of high quality design. Along the western and northern border of the Loretto Heights campus, there is a strong desire to keep like-for-like when it comes to residential character. That is to say that the community encourages single-unit homes adjacent to single-unit homes with a transition to higher intensity the closer you get to the core of the campus. To the south of the Loretto Heights campus the community supports maintaining the higher intensity of residential uses – high medium – which has already been established.

Figure 2.2: Future Places



**Corridors**

Community Corridor

**Residential Areas**

High-Medium  
Low-Medium  
Low

**Districts**

Campus

Plan Area Boundary

Loretto Heights Campus Boundary

County Boundary

Public Parks and Open Space



**Campus:** Part of the future place designation within the plan area is campus. Although the campus will no longer serve a specifically designed purpose, the preservation of existing buildings, integration of open space and thoughtfully designed infill development will help maintain and further promote the vision for a unique campus feel. Within this designation, buildings vary greatly in size and form, but multi-story, single and mixed-use buildings are typical. Supporting retail, commercial and residential uses occur and, when adjacent to lower intensity development, the campus should transition gradually to respect the surrounding neighborhood.

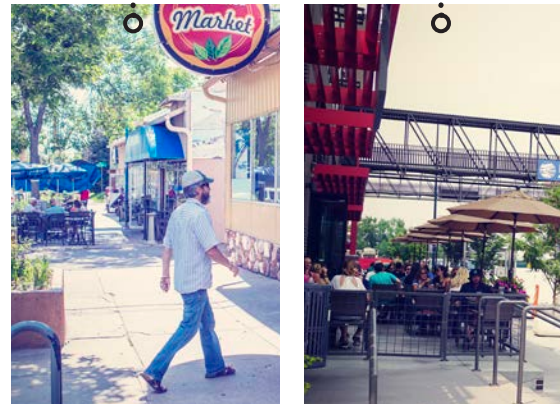
**Parks and Open Space:** These areas are city-owned parks and spaces that are a vital component of quality-of-life infrastructure. Not including regional parks, Denver’s park and open space system includes 250 parks and open spaces across all neighborhood contexts and future places.



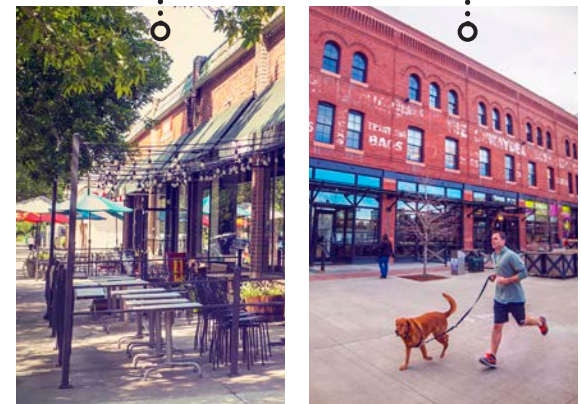
Centers are mixed-use places of different scales. They are typically oriented around a shared space or set of spaces. People often go to centers to engage in social activities and entertainment, such as shopping, dining and cultural events. Some centers are well-connected to the local neighborhood and supported by neighborhood residents; other centers are larger, attracting people from a wide geographic area, and may require residents to take a bus, train or a car to visit them.



Corridors are mixed-use places of different scales oriented along a street. They provide spaces for people to engage in social activities and entertainment, such as shopping and dining. Corridors are often embedded in neighborhoods and serve nearby residents.



- Mix of office, commercial and residential uses
- Strong degree of urbanism with continuous building frontages



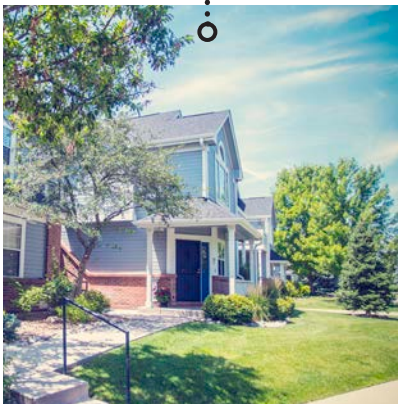
- Mix of office, commercial and residential uses
- Distinct linear orientation of buildings along Federal Boulevard



## RESIDENTIAL AREAS

Residential areas are places where the predominate use is residential. They are supported by a variety of embedded uses needed for a complete neighborhood including schools, recreation and nodes of commercial and retail uses. They occur at three scales: low, low-medium and high-medium. Some residential areas in this plan differ slightly from Blueprint Denver with low residential areas characterized by single-unit uses only and low-medium residential areas including duplexes.

### LOW



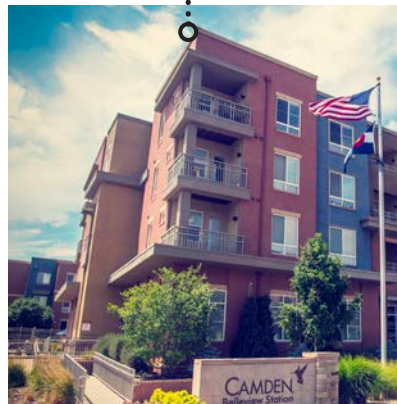
- Single-unit homes
- Accessory Dwelling Units
- Mix of attached and detached garage forms

### LOW-MEDIUM



- Mix of low to mid-scale residential options including single and two- unit uses and rowhomes

### HIGH-MEDIUM



- Mix of medium-scale multi-unit residential types
- Can accommodate compatible commercial/retail uses



## DISTRICTS

Districts are places with a specifically designed purpose, such as educational campuses or industrial areas. Although they have a strong primary purpose, these places also contain a mix of uses and offer a diverse range of amenities and complementary services to support the district's primary function.

### CAMPUS



## Design Standards and Guidelines

Design standards and guidelines supplement adopted zoning requirements by supporting context-sensitive review of individual projects on a case-by-case basis. Design review of proposed projects is usually conducted by city staff or an appointed design advisory board. Any structures and/or historic districts on the Loretto Heights campus locally designated for preservation will be subject to adopted Design Guidelines for Denver Landmark Structures & Districts.

Newly-adopted design standards and guidelines are one potential tool to ensure that new buildings in the Campus Core incorporate high-quality, human-scale design that complements adjacent historic buildings. Note that multiple sets of design standards and guideline should not apply to a single property. Recommendations LU-05 and LU-06 include design standards and guidelines as a potential implementation tool for the plan area

## 2.2 Building Intensity and Quality Design

To reinforce a comfortable, human-scale pedestrian experience it is fundamental to promote high-quality development that creates diverse neighborhood places and experiences through a variety of building intensities. Building intensity considers the overall height and mass of buildings, including open spaces and spacing between buildings. Allowing for increased building intensity in this plan must be balanced with a variety of building heights and massing that respect the existing architectural character and development patterns of the historic campus and surrounding neighborhoods.

Likewise, prescribing high-quality urban design, landscape, and architectural principles that inform building aesthetic, longevity and durability of the built environment will create an attractive, comfortable neighborhood where people want to live, work and play. Regulatory tools to promote a variety of building intensity and high-quality design may include zoning, design standards and guidelines, development agreements or other tools that require or incentivize desired development outcomes.

*“The view of the area surrounding the campus is spectacular. It should be preserved and celebrated.”*

*-Community Member*

### Urban Design

Urban design is a vital component of the planning process. It is the art of making authentic places that thoughtfully integrate streets, public spaces and private property. Urban design is more comprehensive than just the design of buildings. Urban design structures the patterns of movement and urban form, the relationships between the natural environment and the buildings within it and between people and the places they inhabit. The process of urban design is intended to bring order, clarity and harmony to the public realm of an area, and to establish a framework and process to facilitate successful development while promoting an enduring and compatible design that responds to an evolving community.

While a variety of components contribute to placemaking, it is the identity associated with a place that makes it memorable, pleasant and meaningful. Within the Loretto Heights plan area, there is already a strong sense of place connected with the enduring presence of the historic campus. Any redevelopment of the campus needs to retain this identity while incorporating new urban design elements that will contribute to even more dynamic placemaking. For example, activated streets framed by development, with well-designed building facades that are compatible with existing historic character, promote civic pride and tend to have a greater sense of place than those streets that lack transparency or active uses for the pedestrian.

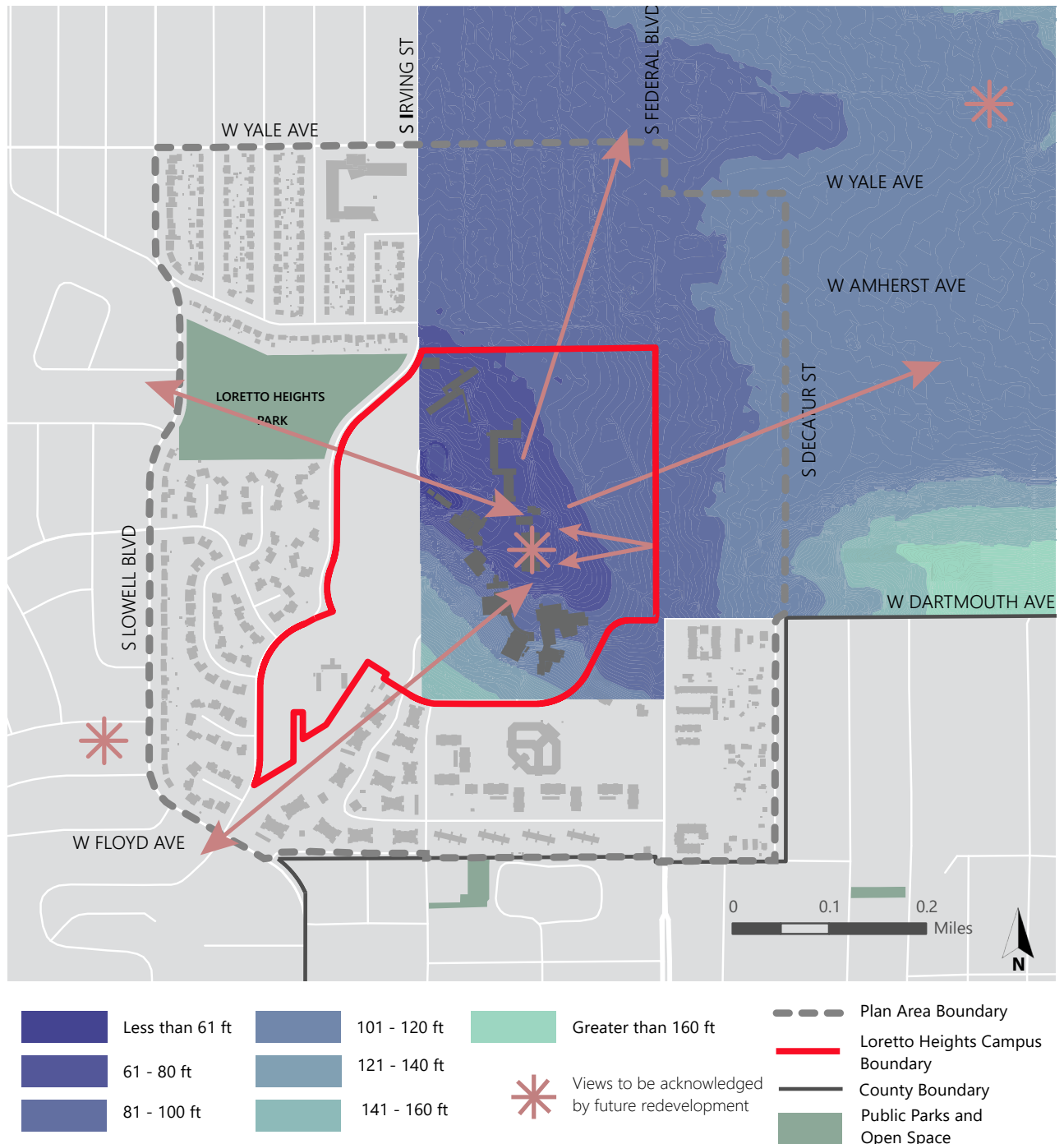
### View Plane and Viewshed

The Ruby Hill Park View Plane, enacted in 1969, begins at an origin point in Ruby Hill Park and stretches west to Irving Street. The View Plane guides the building heights that can be achieved with the campus redevelopment. Denver’s view planes preserve and protect views from various parks and public places by limiting building height. The Ruby Hill Park View Plane provides clear limits on building height for the historic campus core and the northeast section of the plan area.

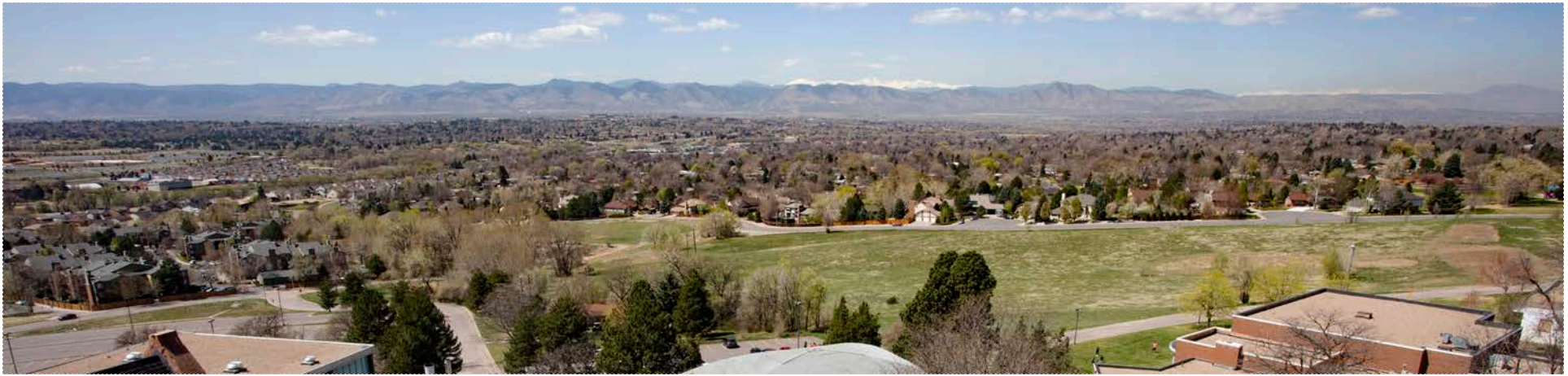
Per the View Plane, maximum allowable building heights range from roughly 50 feet to 155 feet. The View Plane establishes a height ceiling that supersedes the maximum allowable building heights identified in Figure 2.5. Future building intensity and design in areas both within and outside of the view plane should complement existing character and context through regulation of elements like building massing, scale and spacing.

One of the defining characteristics of the Loretto Heights campus is the visual prominence of the Administration Building tower and the sweeping views of Denver and the Front Range of the Rocky Mountains. As redevelopment occurs on the campus, it will be important to maintain viewsheds to and from it. Historically, there was a grand view of the Administration Building from Federal Boulevard and the community finds this viewshed to be one of the most important attributes to preserve. The Administration Building tower, at 160 feet, pierces the View Plane and will remain the tallest structure in the plan area.

Figure 2.3: Maximum building heights as per the Ruby Hill Park View Plane



View looking southwest towards the Rocky Mountains



### Maximum Allowable Building Heights

The maximum allowable building heights map (Figure 2.5) directs appropriate development intensity in the plan area. The Ruby Hill Park View Plane, community input, existing building heights, zoning allowances, site topography and development patterns inform the maximum heights. When combined with design requirements related to, for example, massing, spacing, and façade articulation, new building intensity can be compatible with existing distinctive materials,

features, spaces and settings of the Loretto Heights campus and surrounding neighborhoods.

The proposed maximum building heights fall within ranges prescribed by Blueprint Denver for each of the proposed future place types. The building heights respond to the campus future place types by allowing for a gradual transition of higher intensity development in the core of the plan area to lower intensity moving towards the residential

neighborhoods. Not every portion of the eight-story maximum area indicated in Figure 2.5 allows for buildings to reach that level of intensity. The view plane provides the guiding control over the location of any building over five stories and the downward sloping topography of the site to the west restricts its placement. Design requirements will further restrict the number and placement of any building over five stories on the site to a single location and a limited footprint to protect the view of the Administration Building.

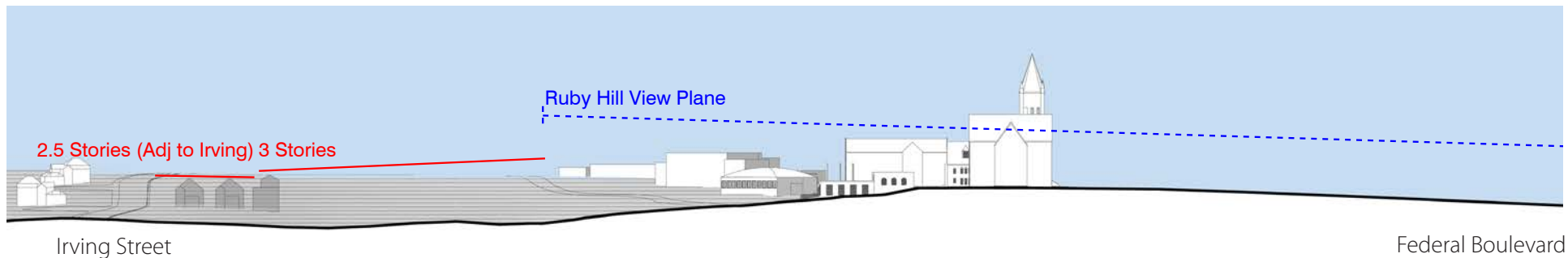


Figure 2.4: East/west cross-section of Loretto Heights campus, showing building heights and Ruby Hill Park View Plane

### Maximum Allowable Building Heights Map

Community feedback emphasized protection of the visually prominent Administration Building tower. At roughly 160 feet tall, the tower is well above the Ruby Hill Park View Plane height restriction of approximately 73 feet at its location. In the Denver Zoning Code, five stories allows for up to 70 feet in height for building forms in the Urban and Suburban neighborhood contexts. That means that a newly constructed five-story building near the Administration Building would be below the roofline height of the H-shaped portion of the building.

New buildings and the continued use or re-use of existing buildings on the campus should respect both the design integrity of existing buildings and the historic development pattern. Zoning regulations, design standards and guidelines, and/or development agreements and other tools should ensure new development complements the existing character and context of the plan area.

*"The Administration Building is iconic. I hope that whatever is built around it complements the structure."*  
 -Community Member

Figure 2.5: Maximum Allowable Building Heights



- |  |  |  |   |   |  |
|--|--|--|---|---|--|
| <span style="display: inline-block; width: 20px; height: 10px; background-color: #c8e6c9; border: 1px solid #000;"></span> 2.5 Stories | <span style="display: inline-block; width: 20px; height: 10px; background-color: #81c784; border: 1px solid #000;"></span> 3 Stories | <span style="display: inline-block; width: 20px; height: 10px; background-color: #4db6ac; border: 1px solid #000;"></span> 5 Stories | <span style="display: inline-block; width: 20px; height: 10px; background-color: #004d40; border: 1px solid #000;"></span> 8 Stories* | <span style="display: inline-block; width: 20px; height: 10px; background-color: #002d22; border: 1px solid #000;"></span> 12 Stories | <span style="border-top: 1px dashed grey; width: 20px; display: inline-block;"></span> Plan Area Boundary  |
|  |  |  |   |   | <span style="border-top: 2px solid red; width: 20px; display: inline-block;"></span> Loretto Heights Campus Boundary                                   |
|  |  |  |   |   | <span style="border-top: 1px solid black; width: 20px; display: inline-block;"></span> County Boundary   |
|  |  |  |   |   | <span style="display: inline-block; width: 20px; height: 10px; background-color: #8bc34a; border: 1px solid #000;"></span> Public Parks and Open Space |

\* The eight story maximum area is limited by the view plane, meaning some areas won't actually reach the eight story maximum

## 2.3 Historic Preservation

Historic preservation is the identification, protection, activation and celebration of the diverse historic fabric that makes our neighborhoods authentic and desirable places to live and visit. The historic buildings, sites and objects that are woven into this fabric help provide a strong sense of place and community identity. Continued use and re-use of historic places, along with compatibly designed new development, contributes to vibrant communities, healthy local economies and sustainable design.

The Loretto Heights campus is endowed with historic buildings commissioned by the Sisters of Loretto over a period of more than 100 years to serve the educational needs of the Loretto Heights Academy and College. They represent a variety of architectural styles ranging from 19th-Century Richardsonian Romanesque to Mid-Century Modernism, designed by several prominent local architects and intentionally placed on a hilltop with commanding views of the Rocky Mountains and downtown Denver. Honoring the history of the campus and preserving and re-using the historic resources that define it is an integral piece of the community's vision.

The Administration Building and Chapel, designed by Frank E. Edbrooke, resonate most deeply with the community. The Administration Building's iconic tower is a place marker, seen for great distances in all directions. People also strongly connect with the Cemetery, Pancratia Hall and Theater, and to a lesser degree with the Library, Pool and Machebeuf Hall. Figure 2.6 shows the eight priority historic resources

identified by the community. These should be the focus of historic preservation treatment in the implementation phase.

In 1891, when the Sisters of Loretto opened the Academy, little development dotted the natural landscape in the area besides the U.S. Army's Fort Logan. Development of neighborhoods surrounding the campus largely occurred post-World War II, introducing common Mid-Century architectural forms like Minimal Traditional and Ranch. Since that era, the neighborhoods and campus experienced minimal change and look much the same as their original and major phases of development. Balancing compatible new development with this existing historic character is key to building a vibrant, inclusive community.

There are many tools that can be employed to achieve historic preservation in the small area plan, including historic designation, preservation easements, historic covenants and other design regulations like site design standards and guidelines. These should be used as short-term, transitional and/or long-term mechanisms to protect and promote continued use and re-use of the priority historic resources. For example, historic covenants could be placed on buildings to prevent their demolition and promote compatible design alterations until such time that they are locally designated. Roughly four percent of the buildings in the City and County of Denver are designated Denver Landmarks or are in Denver Landmark Districts, and southwest Denver is nearly absent of any such historic designations. It is important that

the diverse heritage of Denver is recognized to ensure that our city's whole story is shared. Implementing some or all of the historic preservation tools for building use and re-use in the small area plan will promote enduring and compatible design. It will also respond to an evolving community while embracing the historic fabric and cultural heritage of the Loretto Heights campus. The campus is truly one-of-a-kind and offers immense opportunity to embrace its authenticity through new uses of the historic buildings and site in the campus redevelopment.



From top to bottom: Theater and Administration Building

Figure 2.6: Aerial map of historic resources





## INVENTORY OF HISTORIC RESOURCES AND SURVEY REPORT

The City and County of Denver commissioned Square Moon Consultants, LLC to research and evaluate the history and built environment of the Loretto Heights Academy and College between 1891 and 1988 to inform this small area plan. The resulting report, completed in March 2019, details the inspiring story of the school's founding by the Sisters of Loretto and their pursuit of educational excellence for women. It describes a campus that evolved over the years with architectural and landscape designs by Frank E. Edbrooke, Harry Edbrooke, John Monroe, Musick & Musick and S.R. DeBoer. In addition to the Richardsonian Romanesque-style Administration Building with its iconic bell tower, the campus contains one of the most intact collections of Mid-Century Modern institutional buildings in Denver, including the locally beloved May Bonfils Stanton Theater.

The report evaluates the significance and integrity of 15 historic structures and features on the campus and provides guidance on the eligibility of each for listing in the National Register of Historic Places and Denver Landmark designation. The evaluation indicates that 10 of the structures and features are individually eligible for designation in the National Register of Historic Places and 11 historic resources are individually eligible for Denver Landmark designation. The report also offers options for designating a collection of structures and features as a historic district, noting that a district

designation is an ideal approach given the shared history of all campus historic resources.

Visual aspects and physical details that contribute to the property's significance, known as character-defining features, are also identified in the report. Character-defining features contribute to understanding the historic character of a place, a term referenced throughout this small area plan to help ensure that new development is compatible with existing development. Key character-defining features identified in the report include architectural details of the individual historic structures (building shape, materials, craftsmanship, decorative details and interior spaces); variety of architectural styles and resource ages; spacing of structures and features; prominent hilltop location that affords expansive views to downtown Denver and the Rocky Mountains; concentration of structures and features in the center of the campus with a quad at the core; and landscape features like the ditch and retention pond.

Beyond the potential for historic designation, which is one implementation tool to achieve historic preservation goals, the report provides baseline information to make informed decisions on the future of the historic resources in the campus redevelopment. The report should be used as a guide in the implementation of the historic preservation recommendations.



Top to bottom: Pool, Cemetery and Chapel

## 2.4 Economy and Affordable Housing

Denver is fortunate to have a strong economy that plays a contributing role in the global market. However, there are still neighborhoods in need of new businesses and improved economic opportunity, like those within the Loretto Heights plan area. As Denver becomes even more creative and innovative in building the next generation economy, it is imperative that all neighborhoods have access to high-quality jobs, education and affordable housing that supports strong connections between economic growth, equity and healthy communities.



Pancratia Hall

### Jobs and Education

Access to jobs and a quality education is key to achieving *Blueprint Denver's* vision which calls for a more inclusive city where all residents have equitable access to a quality education, jobs and services which are not vulnerable to displacement, and an increasing number in the diversity and quantity of available jobs. A successful local economy exists when there is an adequate framework of financial resources and opportunities to enable households to thrive and when there is a strong presence of employment opportunity. Similarly, schools are a civic asset and an important part of the social infrastructure of a neighborhood. Neighborhood schools like Denver School of Science and Technology (DSST): College View Middle and High Schools and Gust Elementary School and nearby College View Elementary School help foster neighborhood cohesion and civic pride.

As southwest Denver continues to grow, the Loretto Heights plan area should contribute to providing employment and training opportunities. A range of employment types is critical to attracting local talent and providing a broad spectrum of goods and services. A steady and consistent flow of labor and capital across neighborhood boundaries expands employment options for local residents.

### Community-Serving Retail

A strong, authentic and diverse community-serving retail environment is one that serves a range of demographics and income levels. This environment provides neighborhood residents with convenient access to daily goods and services and attracts visitors who are seeking a unique shopping, dining or entertaining experience. *Blueprint Denver* acknowledges the need to ensure Denver and its neighborhoods have a vibrant and authentic retail and hospitality marketplace meeting the full range of experiences and goods demanded by residents and visitors.

Throughout the planning process, the community emphasized that a strong local economy needs community-serving commercial uses. When small businesses thrive, they can invest back into their businesses, employees and the community. With this growth, businesses are able to expand their goods and services, making an even larger selection available closer to home. According to the community, there is a need and a desire for a larger selection and greater variety of businesses and restaurants in the Loretto Heights plan area. Having more options to shop, dine and play offers a unique experience and can create an emotional connection to the area.

**HOUSING AN INCLUSIVE DENVER**

In early 2018, the City and County of Denver adopted *Housing an Inclusive Denver*, a five-year housing plan to guide housing policy, strategy and investment priorities. The housing plan has four key goals:

1. Create affordable housing in vulnerable areas and areas of opportunity
2. Preserve affordability and housing quality
3. Promote equitable and accessible housing options
4. Stabilize residents at risk of involuntary displacement

*Blueprint Denver* advanced the housing plan's policies and strategies by incorporating land use strategies that expanded affordable and mixed-income housing options throughout the city. It also has specific recommendations to advance the four key goals, including many strategies related to preserving affordability and mitigating involuntary displacement.



**Affordable Housing**

A diverse range of housing options, including different prices, sizes, types and a mix of rental and for-sale is key to encouraging complete neighborhoods where families and households of all types and incomes can choose to live. Housing diversity includes the single-unit homes that are already found in many Denver neighborhoods like Harvey Park, Harvey Park South and College View–South Platte, as well as units of different types and sizes that can complement an existing single-unit pattern. The vision in *Blueprint Denver* is for every neighborhood to offer affordable housing options in a variety of unit types and sizes.

Affordability does not just refer to subsidized housing and options for people at extremely low-income levels. It also affects an increasingly wide spectrum of Denver's workforce such as teachers, service professionals and medical care specialists who consistently struggle to find affordable housing. The most common measure of affordability assesses the "burden" housing costs put on a household. If a household pays more than 30% of their gross income in rent or mortgage payment, taxes, and basic utilities, they are considered to be "cost-burdened." The higher the cost burden, the greater the need for affordable housing. Cost burden is important because it also indicates how well a household can manage other expenses and how much disposable income they have to contribute to the economy.

Access to safe, affordable housing has never been more important in Denver. Today, 100,000 more people live in Denver than in 2010, and this growth is expected to continue for the foreseeable future. Home prices and rents have risen dramatically making housing increasingly unaffordable to many.

Existing housing in the study area consists largely of single-unit and multi-unit residential dwellings generally with more than 20 units per building. Residents of the Loretto Heights plan area have expressed worry over involuntary displacement and gentrification that could result from the redevelopment of the former campus. Long-term residents also fear affordability will diminish as the community grows increasingly more popular with young families and first-time home buyers. This fear, coupled with the community's desire to have the option to age-in-place, accentuates the need for a variety of housing options. Adaptive re-use of existing campus buildings as affordable housing, such as Pancreatia Hall, can help meet this need.

# Recommendations

## LU - 01 Promote a diverse mix of land uses

- A Explore partnership opportunities that promote civic and community land uses that support the surrounding community such as community centers and multi-generational care centers
- B Explore opportunities to incentivize grocery stores, medical services, childcare and other land uses that serve local residents, especially families
- C Encourage the development of a variety of housing types attainable to a diverse demographic
- D Promote an active, livable neighborhood that enhances the community draw and unique identity of southwest Denver by providing a wide mix of office, commercial and residential uses
  - i Encourage a strong sense of urban design and activity with continuous building frontages that define the public realm
  - ii Enhance the existing identity of the campus through new development that is compatible with the historic character



## LU - 02 Promote and anticipate growth in areas adjacent to transit priority streets

- A Encourage higher-density, mixed-use development along Federal Boulevard
- B Support transit-oriented development through land use regulations in close conjunction with transit investments

## LU - 03 Coordinate larger-scale development to promote connections with existing neighborhoods and provision of appropriate benefits to the community

- A Use large development review (LDR), development agreement(s) and/or other tools to provide open space, affordable housing, per recommendation LU-12, and infrastructure while minimizing and mitigating negative impacts of new development on surrounding residential areas
- B Integrate development with existing street and block patterns where possible and provide connections from existing, surrounding neighborhoods to new and existing open spaces in the redevelopment area

*"I would love to see a walkable mixed-use type of layout with housing, retail and restaurants, we could be a destination for not just residents of this neighborhood, but a draw for surrounding areas such as Denver, Englewood and Lakewood."*

*-Community Member*

## Recommendations

### LU - 04 Encourage high-quality public realm design that contributes to neighborhood character and sense of place

- A Create engaging, pedestrian-oriented streets through attractive building facades, street trees, landscaping, lighting and street furnishings
- B Promote new development within centers and along corridors to create an active street frontage by:
  - i Providing street-facing buildings with high levels of transparency within centers and along corridors
  - ii Providing street-level, pedestrian-oriented uses
  - iii Providing direct pedestrian access from sidewalks to building entrances
  - iv Provide enhanced setbacks and open space that relate to interior uses, such as space for cafe seating or retail spillover
- C Create a variety of public spaces for recreational and social interaction such as plazas, pocket parks, playgrounds and community gardens
- D Encourage building massing, height and design that appropriately reflect the human scale, street width, and historic development patterns, especially within centers, campuses, and along corridors
- E Enhance placemaking by providing additional decorative elements such as paving, public art, and unique, high-quality signage
- F Prioritize key intersections to promote active uses, human-scaled design and a safe pedestrian environment
- G Discourage surface parking
  - i Use landscaping to screen any primary street facing surface parking to minimize visibility of cars from the street
  - ii Explore options to relocate or consolidate parking into structures that are positioned away from major pedestrian and bike facilities
  - iii Encourage wrap ground floor parking along key streets, centers and corridors.

### LU - 05 Promote a variety of building heights and intensities

- A Limit building heights consistent with the Maximum Allowable Building Heights Map and maintain the visual prominence of the Administration Building by preserving the Ruby Hill Park View Plane. See Figure 2.5
- B Leverage increases in allowed building height or intensity to further promote provision of appropriate benefits to the community such as affordable housing, open space and infrastructure. See LU-3 for more information on provision of appropriate community benefits
- C Apply zoning regulations or other regulatory tools to provide a height transition between areas with single-unit houses and future redevelopment with higher-intensity mixed-use buildings, especially along the western and northern edges of the redevelopment site
- D Apply zoning regulations, design standards and guidelines or other regulatory tools to ensure that the height and mass of larger new buildings in the campus core are compatible with existing historic and lower scale buildings. Tools should:
  - i Protect and frame key views as identified in the plan
  - ii Promote human scale massing for buildings over five stories in height, where allowed
  - iii Promote compatible mass and scale relationships between new buildings and adjacent historic buildings (including all priority historic resources identified in Figure 2.6) or existing lower-scale development

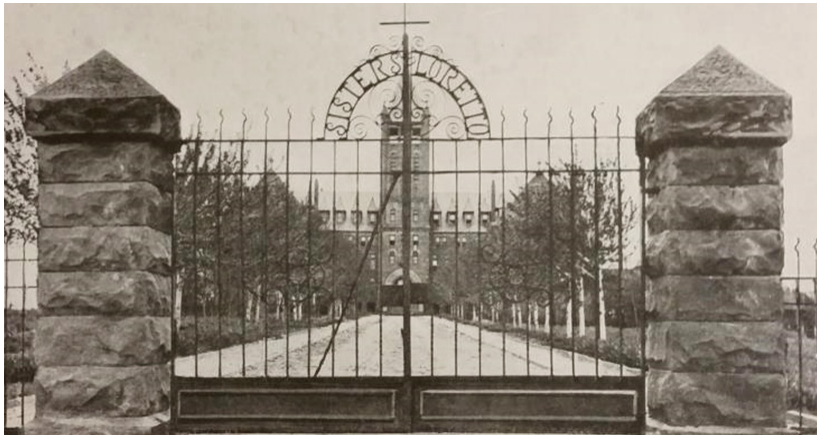
*"I hope that any redevelopment will remain in character with the surrounding residential area."*

*-Community Member*

# Recommendations

## LU - 06 Promote high-quality, human-scale design

- A Apply zoning regulations or other regulatory tools to promote high-quality human scale design throughout the plan area
- B Apply zoning regulations or other regulatory tools to ensure that the facades of new buildings facing existing residential neighborhoods (such as the west-facing facades of new buildings along Irving Street/Julian Street, particularly if front doors do not face the street) incorporate high quality, human scale design to promote a compatible interface between existing and new development. Such tools could address:
  - i Façade articulation
  - ii Façade materials
  - iii Transparency
  - iv Balcony locations
- C Apply zoning regulations, design standards and guidelines or other regulatory tools to ensure that new buildings in the Campus Core incorporate high-quality, human-scale design that complements adjacent historic buildings (including all priority historic resources identified in Figure 2.6). Such tools could address:
  - i Façade articulation
  - ii Façade materials
  - iii Architectural details
  - iv Building massing



Original entrance to the Loretto Heights campus

## LU - 07 Preserve and re-use historic structures and features on the Loretto Heights campus

- A Utilize historic preservation tools such as historic designation, preservation easements and historic covenants as short-term, transitional and/or long-term protection measures for the preservation and re-use of historic structures and features
  - i Designate as a Denver Landmark the iconic and locally beloved Administration Building & Chapel
  - ii Provide long-term protection to the Cemetery and encourage a funding mechanism for its long-term maintenance
  - iii Provide long-term protection to Pancratia Hall with local historic designation or a preservation easement
  - iv Evaluate long-term protection of all other historic structures and features on the campus, with emphasis on priority resources identified by the community: May Bonfils Stanton Theater & Library, Pool and Machebeuf Hall
  - v Historic designation should be applied to individual structures, historic district(s) or a combination thereof. For example, this could include a historic district encompassing the Administration Building & Chapel and Pancratia Hall with an individual designation of the Theater & Library.
- B Determine viable use/re-use options for historic structures and features
  - i Use the Keen Independent Research market feasibility study of the May Bonfils Stanton Theater to help determine its viability for continued use as a performing arts venue
  - ii Assess re-use viability for all historic structures and features on the campus, with emphasis on priority resources identified by the community: Administration Building & Chapel, Pancratia Hall, Theater (if continued use as a theater is not justified), Library, Pool and Machebeuf Hall
  - iii Consider application of historic preservation tools in any use/re-use feasibility assessment to enable incentives like state and federal rehabilitation tax credits

## Recommendations

### LU - 08 Identify and preserve the historic character of existing neighborhoods surrounding the redevelopment area

- A Complete neighborhood building surveys, possibly as part of the citywide building survey Discover Denver, to identify historically and architecturally significant structures and areas
- B Apply historic preservation tools like historic district designation and conservation overlay districts to regulate design changes in areas of significance
- C Promote use of state rehabilitation tax credits for historically designated properties to assist homeowners with property maintenance and rehabilitation that contributes to neighborhood character preservation

### LU - 09 Promote a full range of employment options

- A Expand the allowance for creative industries and small businesses
- B Encourage a variety of different types of spaces for different types of businesses in the plan area
- C Identify incentives to reduce rent and business costs to help create new spaces for small neighborhood-serving businesses
- D Support business development-oriented organizations that are geared towards creating economic opportunity across Denver
- E Actively foster a relationship with Denver Economic Development & Opportunity to align citywide goals and initiatives with the needs of the local community
- F Promote workforce development programs, such as construction workforce apprenticeship programs.
- G Encourage quality educational opportunities for all residents
- H Identify barriers contributing to lower educational attainment
- I Provide support to under-served and under-represented communities via regulatory processes, early childhood education, training, marketing assistance or increasing access to capital

### LU - 10 Minimize involuntary displacement and gentrification

- A Promote programs that help stabilize residents in the Loretto Heights plan area as identified in *Housing an Inclusive Denver*
  - i Leverage and promote citywide efforts to expand rent, mortgage and utility assistance programs that provide emergency funding to low-income households, single-parent families, fixed-income seniors and persons with disabilities
  - ii Connect individuals and families vulnerable to displacement with the city's program for tax relief
  - iii Increase the number of income-restricted rental and for-sale units in the planning area
  - iv Work with landlords, property owners and developers to renew expiring deed-restricted units through financial incentives, maintenance assistance grants and other financial programs

### LU - 11 Encourage and incentivize more affordable housing development

- A Encourage incentives for new affordable housing, especially along high-transit corridors like Federal Boulevard, consistent with citywide approaches
- B Support housing development funds, grant programs, public-private partnerships and other financial tools to acquire land for affordable housing development
  - i Prioritize sites near centers and transit corridors
  - ii Prioritize mixed-use, mixed-income projects to incorporate services and amenities for low/moderate income households
- C Explore mechanisms to ensure housing created is available to nearby residents

**LU - 12 Integrate affordable housing throughout the plan area to accommodate households of different ages, sizes, and incomes**

- A Ensure provision of affordable housing units within the plan area, especially in the redevelopment area. Affordable housing should be:
  - i Affordable to households earning very low, low, and moderate incomes, consistent with adopted city policy
  - ii Dispersed throughout the plan area, including within buildings containing market-rate housing units
  - iii Sized to accommodate a variety of households from studios to three or more bedrooms
  - iv Of similar types (condos, apartments, townhouses, etc.) to market-rate housing units built within the plan area
  - v Dedicated as affordable for a period of time consistent with or greater than adopted city policy
- B Explore options to adaptively re-use existing buildings and structures, such as Pancreatia Hall, for affordable housing. See LU-07 B for more information on the adaptive re-use of existing buildings and structures
- C Encourage the preservation and re-use of existing smaller and affordable homes in the plan area
- D 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



Recently completed mixed-income housing in Denver

*“My biggest hope for the site is that it can be a development that brings great amenities while protecting the affordability of the area and builds a space that truly serves the needs and is inclusive of diverse racial/ethnic and socio-economic communities around it.”*

*-Community Member*



# 3



# Chapter 3

## MOBILITY

### In this chapter:

- 3.1 Street Types
- 3.2 Future Streets
- 3.3 Complete Networks

# MOBILITY

## GOALS:

The street network should prioritize high-quality, multimodal transportation options that safely and efficiently move people, and encourage a shift from driving to other travel modes such as walking or rolling, biking, and transit.

## WHY IT'S IMPORTANT:

Citizens should be given a variety of choices to satisfy their mobility needs and this plan will help facilitate the creation of a multi-modal, inviting, and accessible mobility network. It should prioritize active transportation, creates safer streets for all users, encourages non-automobile travel, promotes physical activity, and fosters a sense of community.



## Challenges and Opportunities

The existing suburban context of the Loretto Heights plan area contains many variations in development patterns and mobility options. This context consists of large areas of low-density residential in the surrounding Harvey Park South and College View–South Platte neighborhoods, with mixed-use corridors along major roads like Federal Boulevard. These suburban development patterns have created conditions where residents and visitors are more dependent on vehicles. In fact, data shows that 79% of residents in the plan area commute alone when it comes to daily travel habits, which is slightly higher than the Denver average of 76%. Although this context is more auto-oriented than others, there should still be quality multimodal connectivity. Residents of this context should be able to walk and bike to neighborhood destinations safely. However, sidewalk condition analysis reveals that some sidewalks in the plan area are narrow (25%), in disrepair, or missing altogether (20%). Residents, especially those with children, seniors and persons with disability report discomfort walking to destinations because of these conditions.

Residents have reported that the existing bike infrastructure feels uncomfortable and presents many challenges because of the lack of protection and close proximity to the flow of traffic. These safety and comfort concerns have led to conflicts between bicyclists and motorists and a reluctance to bike within the plan area. These networks are often incomplete and lack connections to many of the desired community destinations.

## Community Feedback

- Concerns with the lack of safe pedestrian sidewalks and street crossings, especially along Federal Boulevard, Yale Avenue, Irving Street and at the Dartmouth Avenue and Federal Boulevard intersection.
- Concerns that impacts from new development will increase congestion and speeding in the plan area.
- Frequent transit services along Federal Boulevard, Yale Avenue and Dartmouth Avenue are vital to increase connectivity between the plan area and jurisdictions of Sheridan and Englewood.
- Comprehensive and complete multimodal connections to the surrounding community and to public transit are vital. This includes providing easy walking and biking access to existing trail and recreation corridors like Bear Creek Trail and the South Platte River Trail.
- Residents said they felt the campus was “closed off” to the community and indicated a desire for improved access. However, residents oppose direct cut-through connection with the east-west Dartmouth Avenue connection providing direct street access from Federal Boulevard to South Irving Street.

## 3.1 Street Types

The City and County of Denver uses the functional street classification system established by the U.S. Federal Highway Administration. Functional street classifications describe the purpose and character of the street network. Designations convey if streets have been designed to move traffic at certain speeds, provide access to property with some level of frequency and predictability, and are linked to surrounding land uses. Standard street function categories classify roads into three groups: local, collector and arterial.

**Local streets** primarily serve residential areas. These streets provide the shortest trips, at the lowest speeds with the lowest volume of traffic with the lowest degree of through travel. They provide the highest degree of property access and have the least number of travel lanes.

**Collector streets** serve medium distance trips with moderate speeds, moving a moderate volume of traffic with medium distance trips. There are a moderate number of access points along this designation of street and connections with other routes through a moderate number of travel lanes.

**Arterial streets** serve the longest types of trips at the highest speeds. Arterials move the maximum number of vehicles over the longest distances. There are few access points and additional lanes to move large traffic volumes at faster speeds.

Blueprint Denver developed a typology for describing streets by their adjacent land use and character in addition to the already established functional class. Added to local, collector and arterial streets are the categories of residential, commercial, and mixed-use. Each of these street subcategories can be paired with local, collector or arterial designations to characterize the nature and function of the complete street network. The existing street type network in the plan area is composed of local streets and collector streets that primarily serve residential areas. Local streets feed traffic to collector streets. Arterial streets link individual neighborhoods to the rest of Denver.

**Residential streets** connect individual neighborhoods to schools, parks, local retail centers and other similar uses. Posted travel speeds are low to prioritize safety for the area residents.

**Mixed-use streets** are a future street type desired by residents in the Loretto Heights plan area. The vision is that mixed-use streets will be introduced alongside future mixed-use development.

**Shared Streets** are an approach to street design where pedestrians, bicyclists and vehicles share street space at all times, or at regularly scheduled times for special events. These streets typically feature little to no formal distinction between spaces dedicated to these modes and are most appropriate where vehicle volumes and speeds are expected to be sufficiently reduced.



Blueprint Denver Residential Local Street



Blueprint Denver Residential Collector

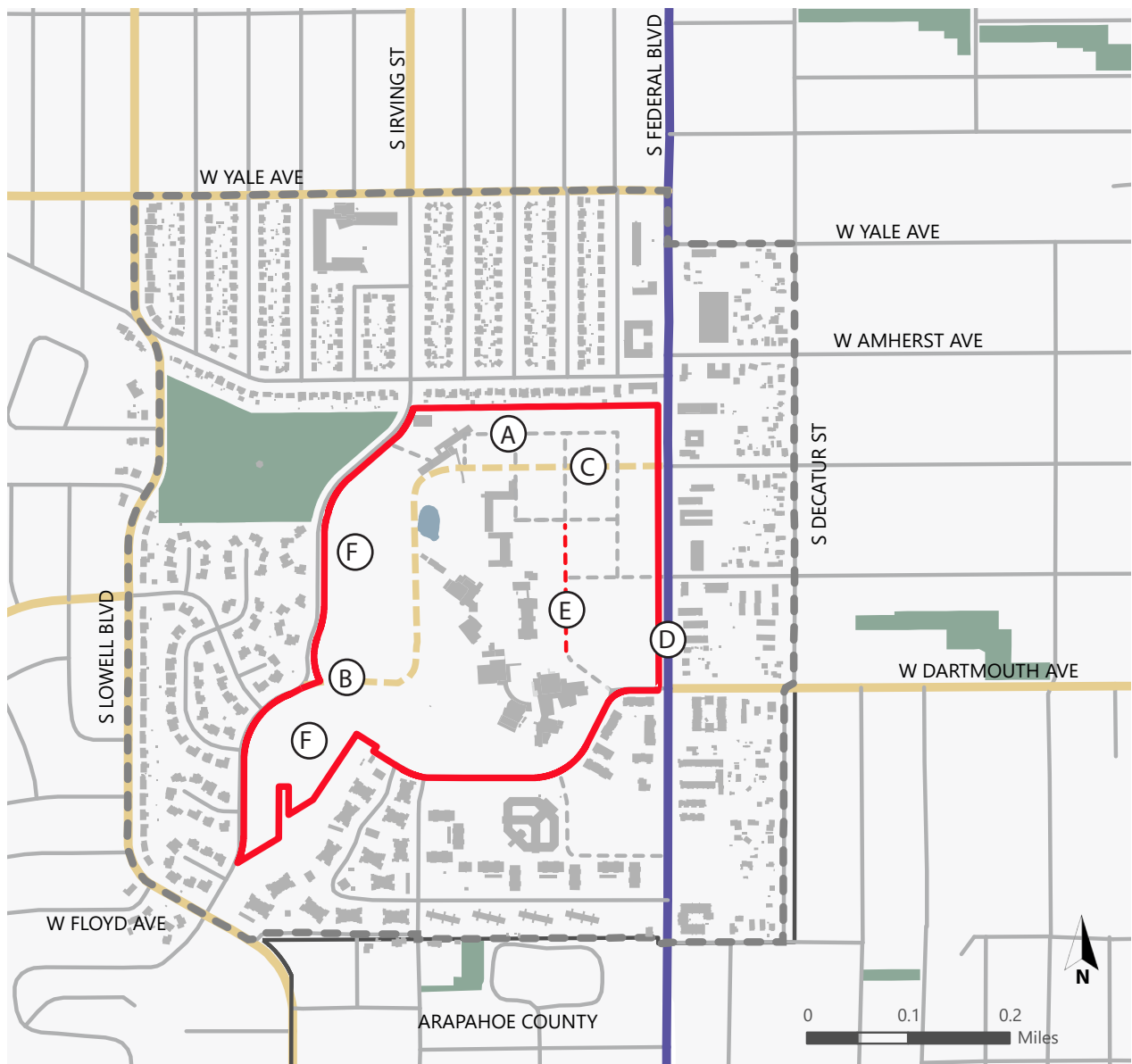


Blueprint Denver Mixed-unit Collector/Arterial

### 3.2 Future Streets

The proposed future streets found in figure 3.1 are based upon the proposed future Land Use Place Types in Chapter 2. These connections are considered essential to improving connectivity within the plan area. The intent behind the street layout is to fully realize the vision for a complete street network within the Loretto Heights plan area. Where streets do not yet exist, this plan outlines a system of street recommendations that will work together to provide a comprehensive transportation system that supports future growth, development, and economic vitality that aligns with the vision developed by the community. The complete street network presented in this plan is meant to demonstrate an aspirational level of multimodal connectivity. Denver Public Works is the authority on all public right-of-way development and will make final decisions on all roadway planning, engineering, and design determined by future travel demand studies and analysis. After the adoption of *Blueprint Denver* Public Works is making significant changes to street design standards and guidelines to encourage the movement of people and not cars.

Figure 3.1: Future Street Network



- (A) Residential Local Street
- (B) Residential Collector Street
- (C) Mixed-Use Collector Street
- (D) Mixed-Use Arterial Street
- (E) Shared Street
- (F) Residential Access

Existing Mixed-Use Arterial	Potential Residential Collector	Plan Area Boundary
Existing Residential Collector	Potential Local or Undesignated	Loretto Heights Campus Boundary
Existing Local or Undesignated	Potential Shared Street	County Boundary
		Public Parks and Open Space

*This map is conceptual and is one potential scenario to implement the plan recommendations.*

### 3.3 Complete Networks

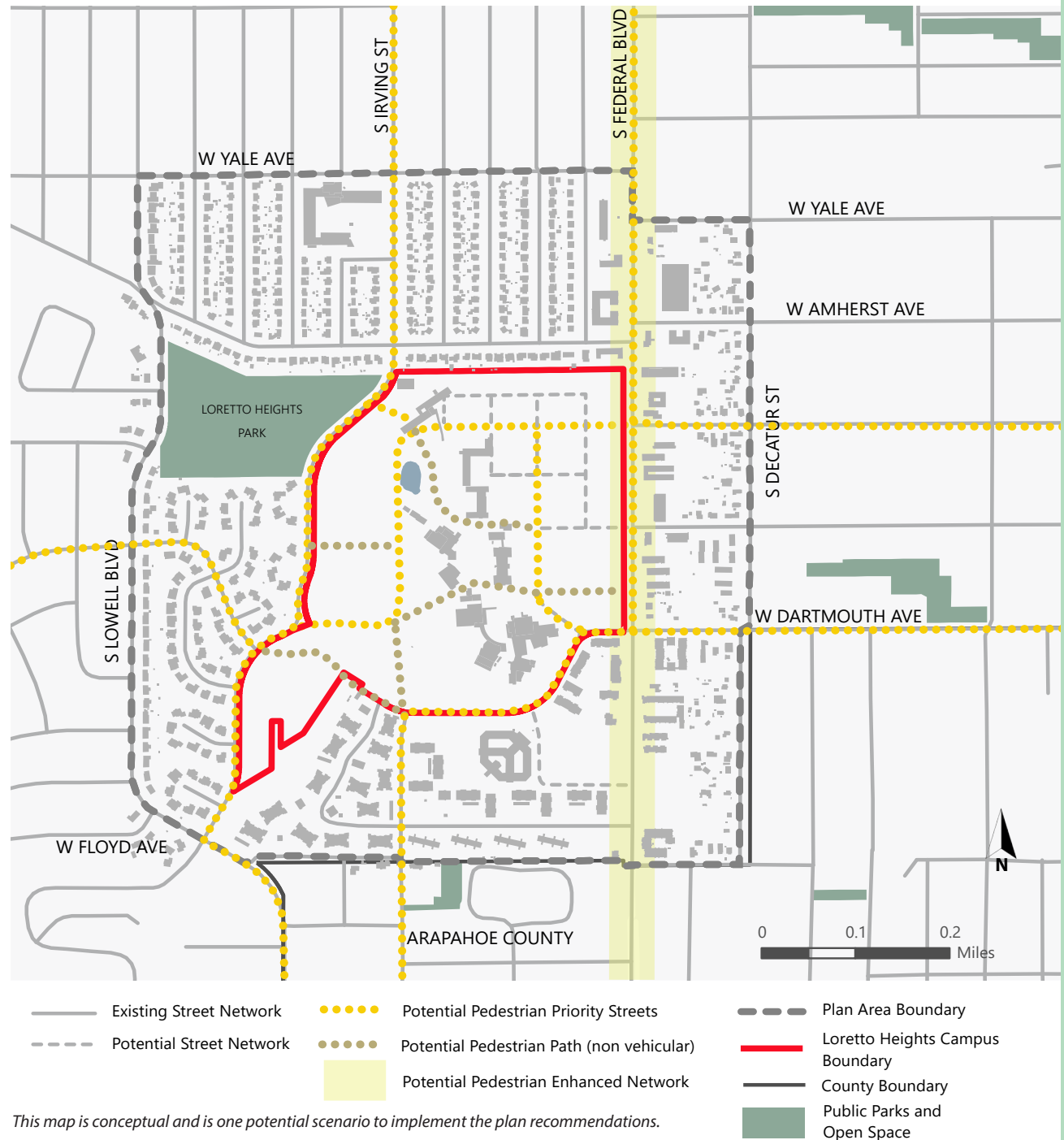
A high-quality and efficient multimodal transportation system is made up of several networks, each of which serves a transportation mode that moves people and goods. Identifying modal priority streets indicates where investment will occur to support people walking or rolling, biking or taking transit. These modal priorities, paired with street function classifications and land use place types, contribute to the development of complete streets for complete neighborhoods

#### Pedestrian Priority Streets

Pedestrians are at the heart of the transportation system and are the priority in the design of all streets. This includes providing a safe crossing environment, adequate and complete sidewalk space and good walking conditions. Pedestrian priority streets are areas where the surrounding land uses offer opportunities to enhance the pedestrian environment to create walkable, vibrant public places. This includes creating a wider pedestrian realm (the combined tree lawn or amenity zone and sidewalk), requiring slower vehicle speeds and prioritizing people walking and rolling over other modes in both the design and operation of the street. Pedestrian enhanced features include:

- A. Safety Features (crosswalks, medians, etc.)
- B. Amenities (public art, benches, etc.)
- C. Lighting
- D. Green Infrastructure (street trees, planters, water quality, etc.)
- E. Wider Sidewalks

Figure 3.2: Pedestrian Network



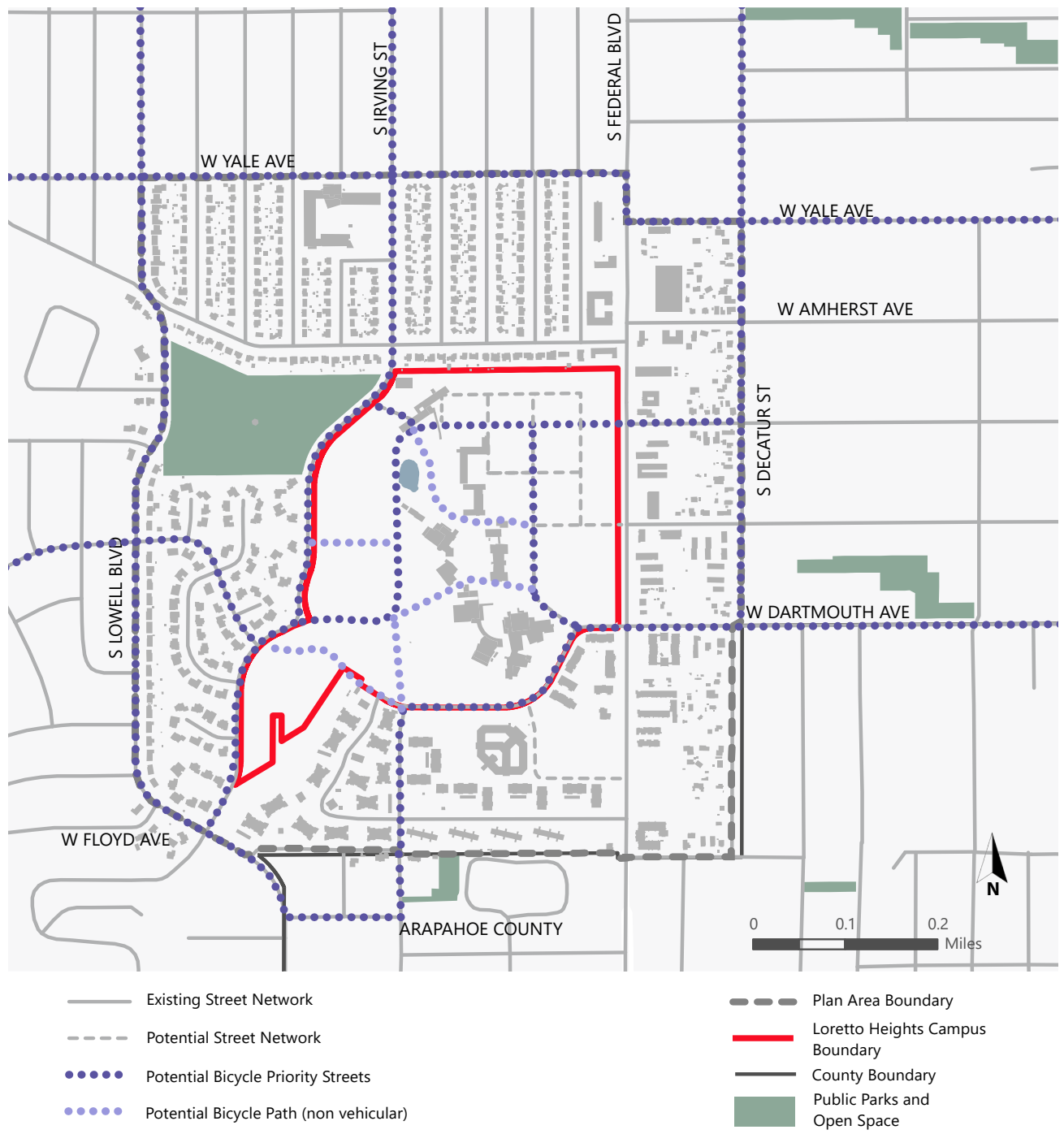
This map is conceptual and is one potential scenario to implement the plan recommendations.

### Bicycle Priority Streets

Bicycle priority streets highlight safety, comfort, convenience and ease of use for people who wish to travel by bike. On bicycle priority streets, design and operation prioritizes people riding bicycles over other modes. Bicycle priority streets utilize the high and moderate ease-of-use bicycle facilities identified in the 2011 *Denver Moves: Bicycles* plan. Ease-of-use refers to the level of comfort experienced by the user of the bikeway. This includes bikeways where bicyclists are separated from moving traffic by a physical or natural barrier and busy intersections are designed to easily and safely be crossed on a bicycle. These facilities encourage biking by increasing the level of comfort for those who may not otherwise choose to ride a bicycle on a city street. Bikeway designations in Denver are typically selected based on a street's width, number of travel lanes, vehicle volume and speed. The following highlights features of bicycle priority streets:

- A. Protected Bike Lanes
- B. Intersection Treatments
- C. Signage
- D. Bike Signals / Detection

Figure 3.3: Bicycle Network



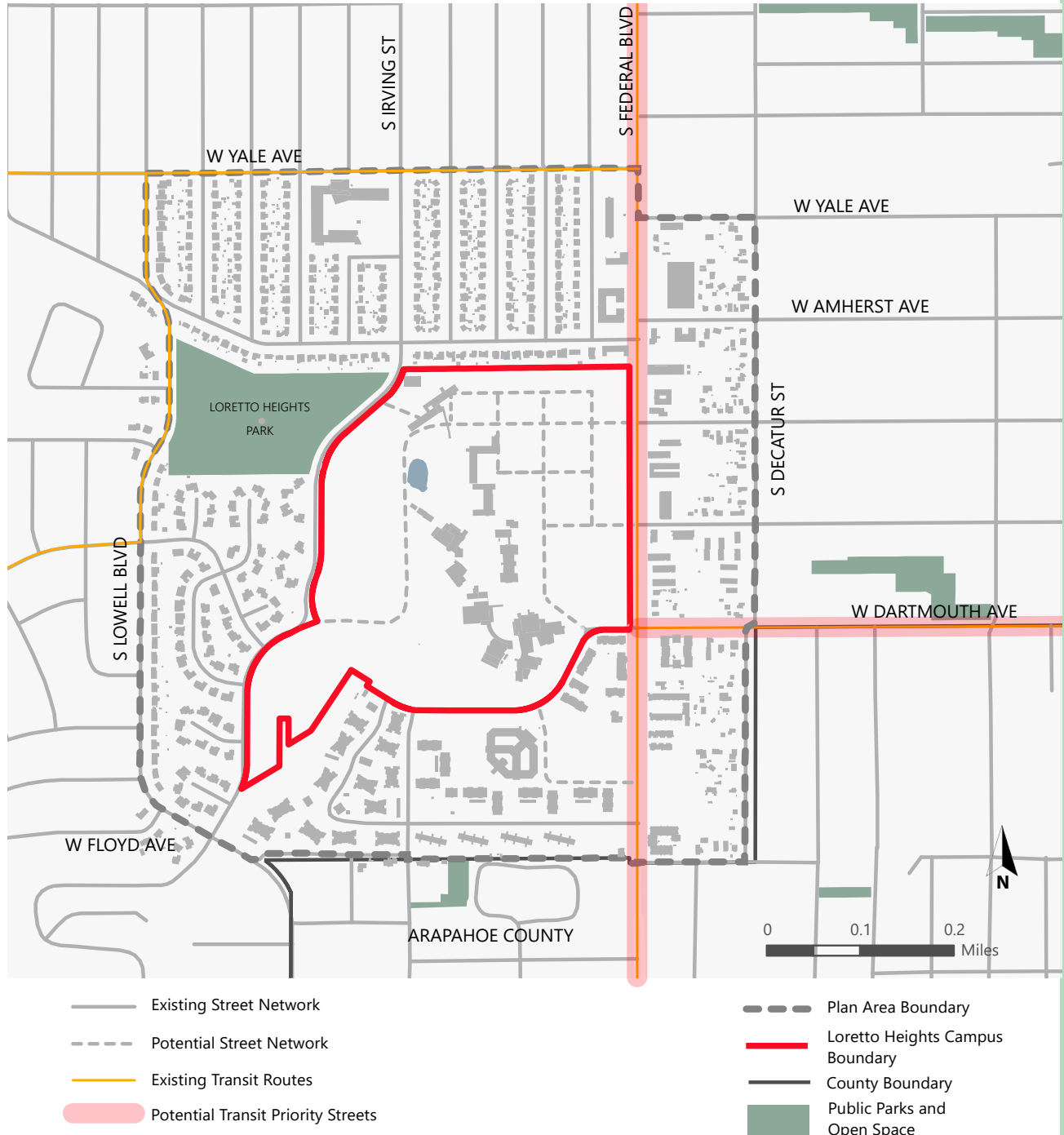
*This map is conceptual and is one potential scenario to implement the plan recommendations.*

### Transit Priority Streets

*Blueprint Denver's* growth strategy is founded on rapid, reliable and high-quality transit connecting Denver's centers and corridors to people, jobs, services and housing. Transit priority streets are those where transit is prioritized over other modes when making decisions about how to design or operate the right-of-way. Transit priority streets allow transit to be rapid and reliable with special attention to accessible, safe and enhanced transit stops. By prioritizing the design or operation of a street to benefit transit, it will help transit reach its potential to move more people rapidly and reliably. The following highlights some example features of transit priority streets:

- A. Operational - Operational improvements, such as transit signal priority to prioritize transit at traffic signals, reduces travel time and improves reliability
- B. High Capacity Vehicles - Vehicles such as rail or rapid bus have the ability to increase the person throughput of a corridor.
- C. Dedicated Bus Lanes - Transit runs in exclusive lanes or in dedicated guide-ways (such as rail). This helps transit to move the most amount of people reliably and efficiently.
- D. Enhanced Bus Stops / Bus Stations - Stops with shelters that protect riders from the elements, real-time transit information and off-board ticket stations are some of the amenities that will be expected on transit priority streets.

Figure 3.4: Transit Network



*This map is conceptual and is one potential scenario to implement the plan recommendations.*



## Recommendations

### MOB - 01 Build a complete street network as shown in Figure 3.1

- A Build new north/south and east/west connections and implement traffic calming and deterrence measures across the plan area with the goal of maintaining the residential character of existing local streets in residential areas
- B Due to the community's concerns about through traffic and negative impacts traffic could have on the neighborhood, this plan recommends prevention of an unobstructed vehicular connection that directly links Dartmouth Avenue from Federal Boulevard to South Irving Street
- C Given the unique topography and steep grades along the western portion of the Loretto Heights campus, future streets should work with the topography to the extent possible in order to create walkable and accessible streets and sidewalks to reduce automobile dependence in the plan area
- D Encourage new street connection extending south from the Denver School of Science and Technology (DSST) campus towards the existing service road north of Floyd Avenue as depicted in Figure 3.1 as a way to relieve DSST traffic congestion along Dartmouth Avenue
- E Encourage new streets across the plan area to have enhanced or wider pedestrian walkways and amenity zones with additional street trees, lighting, green infrastructure, or landscape
- F Incorporate a variety of street types
  - i New and existing streets should be aligned with the street types identified in Figure 3.1
    - 1. Work with property owners and Denver Public Works to implement elements that achieve the vision for the identified street types
  - ii Use the city's current guides and standards and the most recent and innovative approaches for street design
    - 1. Denver Public Works approval is needed if a non-standard proposed street cross-section is desired and for updates to city standards and policies

- that will allow the implementation of new and innovative street designs
- 2. Explore options for street types that test alternative street designs which explore going above and beyond city standards to calm traffic and prioritize pedestrians and bicyclists by incorporating elements such as, but not limited to: curb-less streets, different varieties of paving and permeable paving, raised intersections, medians, and alternative locations and design of streetscape amenities
- iii Reduce potential conflicts between pedestrians
  - 1. Encourage outdoor seating zones with adequate space for pedestrians and streetscaping, especially in areas with high pedestrian volumes
  - 2. Create spaces along streets that provide pedestrian refuge, are flexible spaces, and provide opportunities for events
- iv Explore the construction of shared streets or festival streets located within the Loretto Heights campus
  - 1. Streets can be designed to be closed for special events but also function for every day vehicular, pedestrian and bicycle travel
  - 2. Streets should allow for close integration with and respect for historic character of the former campus and development that transitions into open and passive community gathering areas

*"In general, being a pedestrian/cyclist anywhere near Loretto Heights is a scary endeavor. As a resident, I would appreciate much more attention be paid to people that aren't in cars. I don't want to have to worry about being able to get somewhere safely without driving."*

*- Community Member*

## MOB - 02 Enhance the existing street network

- A Update existing streets to improve their functionality, connectivity and safety
  - i Transition Federal Boulevard from an auto-dominated state highway to a safe and vibrant community corridor using guidance from the *Federal Boulevard Corridor Plan*
  - ii Implement safety, aesthetic improvements, and traffic calming measures such as medians and crosswalks along Federal Boulevard, South Irving Street, South Julian Street, Dartmouth Avenue, and Amherst Avenue to improve the pedestrian experience, encourage pedestrian activity and bolster pedestrian safety along these streets
  - iii As redevelopment occurs, explore and implement any necessary street improvements, operational enhancements, and traffic calming measures along South Irving Street south of the Loretto Heights campus to help mitigate traffic impacts and improve the connectivity of the area
- B Update existing intersections to increase safety and comfort for pedestrians and bicyclists
  - i Prioritize implementing recommendations to reduce the number of fatalities and injuries along Federal Boulevard, as listed in the Denver Vision Zero Action Plan, by collaborating with Denver Public Works to improve pedestrian, bicycle, and vehicular safety at the Federal Boulevard and Dartmouth Avenue intersection
  - ii Collaborate with Denver Public Schools and Denver Public Works to prevent vehicle stacking on Dartmouth Avenue east towards Federal Boulevard intersection
  - iii Partner with CDOT and the City of Sheridan to study and implement intersection improvements at South Knox Court and US Highway 285 to allow for better pedestrian and bicycle safety and comfort in accessing the regional trail system from the plan area

## MOB - 03 Promote street network safety

- A Collaborate with local law enforcement to enforce posted speed limits in the plan area
- B Provide traffic calming measures within the plan area, and more specifically on Dartmouth from Irving to Lowell, Amherst from Federal to Lowell, and Irving/Julian from Amherst to Lowell.
- C Study traffic impacts new development may have in the plan area



## Recommendations

### MOB - 04 Increase access to multi-use trails, pathways and parks and open space

- A Prioritize creating seamless pedestrian and bicycle connections to Loretto Heights Park
  - i Explore methods for traffic calming such as painted crosswalks, medians, High-Intensity Activated Crosswalk (HAWK) signal along South Irving Street to reduce the speed of vehicles and increase pedestrian safety
  - ii Connect any new sidewalk system in the redevelopment to the existing sidewalks found in Loretto Heights Park and add additional sidewalks as necessary. All sidewalks should be ADA accessible and include curb ramps
- B Update and improve connections to the regional trail system and transit
  - i Partner with the City of Englewood and the City of Sheridan to prioritize sidewalk improvements along West Dartmouth Avenue extending east to the Englewood Light Rail Station
  - ii Provide additional multi-use trails or sidewalk access extending southwest through the former Loretto Heights campus to improve access to the Bear Creek Trail and South Platte River Trail



### MOB - 05 Create a complete pedestrian network

- A Prioritize the construction of missing sidewalks and increase the width of sidewalks less than four feet in the plan area, with emphasis on connections to schools, community gathering spaces, transit stops and employment centers
  - i Work with Denver's Sidewalk Gap Program to determine implementation and funding
  - ii Prioritize walking access to all transit stops regardless of level of service
  - iii Encourage new sidewalks to include tree lawns
- B Create a robust street tree canopy by using best practices for tree planting and maintenance
- C Incorporate green infrastructure and streetscape amenities on all streets such as: attractive landscaping, planters, restaurant seating, benches, public art, and trash/recycling receptacles
- D Create block sizes that are walkable
- E Provide pedestrian facilities on all streets and ensure safe pedestrian access for people walking or rolling
  - i Implement enhanced pedestrian facilities on those streets identified as pedestrian enhanced in *Blueprint Denver*, including along Federal Boulevard



# Recommendations

## MOB - 06 Create a complete bikeable network

- A Update *Denver Moves* to reflect the bicycle connections shown in Figure 3.3
- B Update and provide connections to existing bicycle infrastructure outside of the plan area
- C Incorporate bicycle amenities throughout the plan area including bicycle racks placed appropriately along streets and in public spaces
- D Explore the following bike corridor improvements
  - i Implement enhanced bicycle facilities on those streets identified as bicycle priority in Blueprint Denver, including Lowell Boulevard, Yale Avenue, Dartmouth Avenue, Irving Street, and Decatur Street
  - ii Implement enhanced bicycle facilities on any proposed collector street on the Loretto Heights campus as identified in Figure 3.3.
  - iii Extend a shared use path connection along West Dartmouth Avenue through the plan area
- E Extend a bike connection between the Loretto Heights campus and Loretto Heights Park
  - i Explore options for a bicycle trail along the existing irrigation ditch, linking Loretto Heights Park and Loretto Heights campus

*“As long as the development focuses on walkability, biking, and green space it will be great!”*

*-Community Member*



## Recommendations

### MOB - 07 Enrich the public transit experience

- A Implement the *Denver Moves Transit Plan* recommendations for a “High-Capacity Transit Corridor” along Federal Boulevard
- B Study and implement the strategies and recommendations identified in the *Federal Boulevard Corridor Plan* along Federal Boulevard including transit stop locations and enhancements and corridor improvements such as median and crosswalk installation
- C Maintain and support enhancements to existing local bus service and coverage in the plan area
  - i Partner with the Regional Transportation District (“RTD”) to establish new bus routes and/or update existing bus routes as needed to provide better service across the plan area
  - ii As the redevelopment takes place, explore options to provide more frequent service along west Dartmouth Avenue east to the Englewood Light Rail Station.
- D Improve bus stop amenities in the plan area
  - i Partner with RTD to include bus shelters, benches, trash receptacles and schedule information at every bus stop
  - ii Include elements such as landscaping, trees, public art, wayfinding and sustainable materials and promote ongoing maintenance of these features
  - iii ADA accessibility improvements should be included at all bus stops and along routes that lead to transit corridors

*“Last mile gap is huge in this area!”*

*-Community Member*

### MOB - 08 Increase the use of shared mobility options

- A Encourage the use of shared mobility options such as electric scooters, electric bikes, bike shares, etc.
- B Support efforts to improve last-mile connections, including ridesharing and carsharing programs, short distance shuttle service, private shuttles, and wayfinding signage
- C Adapt to changing technology that influences mobility usage and demand by incorporating alternative transit energy sources such as EV charging stations

### MOB - 09 Improve resident access to transit

- A Conduct neighborhood outreach to provide new transit option updates, and to collect information related to potential transit route demand and access needs
- B Work with RTD to explore possible reduced fare programs based on income and potential group rate options





## VISION ZERO

In 2016, the City and County of Denver announced its commitment to Vision Zero, an initiative to eliminate all traffic-related deaths and serious injuries on Denver's roadways by 2030. This transportation philosophy recognizes that no other goal is acceptable, and that everyone has the right to safely travel on our streets no matter where they are going and how they choose to get there. Five goals guide the plan:

1. Enhance City Processes and Collaboration
2. Build Safe Streets for Everyone
3. Create Safe Speeds
4. Promote a Culture of Safety
5. Improve Data and Transparency

An element of Vision Zero particularly relevant to the Loretto Heights plan area is the measurement of the High Injury Network (HIN). Federal Boulevard is classified as a HIN corridor, meaning it has one of the highest numbers of fatal and injury crash incidents compared to other corridors in the city. Collectively, HIN corridors comprise only 5% of streets in Denver but 50% of traffic deaths.

Similarly, much of the Loretto Heights plan area falls into Vision Zero's label of a "Community of Concern." These areas allow for higher traffic speeds and are in closer proximity to schools, concentrated elderly populations, and populations with no vehicle ownership. In short, populations that are more reliant on the safety of public infrastructure. Bicyclists, pedestrians, children, elderly, and the disabled are disproportionately vulnerable to unsafe traffic conditions. Residents of low-income neighborhoods and communities of color are injured and killed by traffic violence at higher rates than residents of other communities. The Loretto Heights Small Area Plan mobility recommendations help implement the goals of Vision Zero to improve safe streets.





## Chapter 4

# QUALITY-OF-LIFE INFRASTRUCTURE

### In this chapter:

4.1 Healthy and Active Living

4.2 Parks, Recreation and Open Space

4.3 Green Infrastructure



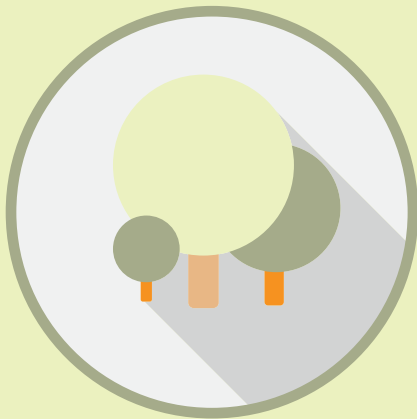
# QUALITY-OF-LIFE INFRASTRUCTURE

## GOALS:

Future development in the plan area should ensure that everyone – regardless of age or ability – has access to parks, outdoor spaces, recreation amenities, healthy food options and outdoor gathering spaces. Growth and development in the plan area should be done in a responsible and sustainable manner which fosters a diverse and livable neighborhood that cultivates southwest Denver’s culture and identity.

## WHY IT’S IMPORTANT:

Well-designed neighborhoods can improve health, while environments that lack amenities and services to support healthy lifestyles can contribute to a variety of chronic diseases. Air and water quality, as well as other climate impacts, such as increases in flooding and surface temperature, can have lasting social, political and economic consequence.



## Challenges and Opportunities

Quality-of-Life refers to the places, trees, plants, parks and outdoor spaces that stitch together our communities and contribute to the health, comfort, environmental resilience and social connectedness of an area. During the planning process, a variety of quality-of-life challenges and opportunities were identified by the community, and much of this feedback centered around having improved access to these opportunities. An equitable community or society is one where all people have fair opportunity to lead healthy and productive lives. However, certain populations and communities have historically faced barriers and inequities and continue to experience added obstacles to maintain healthy lifestyles.



## Community Feedback

- Access to healthy and fresh food is difficult, especially for those lacking access to a personal vehicle.
- There is a strong desire to have a variety of community gathering spaces in the plan area.
- The regional trail system is seen as an asset; however, connections to these recreational opportunities, like Bear Creek Trail and South Platte River Trail are often challenging or lacking altogether.
- Access to the Loretto Heights Park is limited and needs improvement. Many believe that the park could also benefit from added amenities for residents and visitors of all ages and abilities.
- Desire for improved pedestrian comfort along major corridors like Federal Boulevard.
- Having an abundant tree canopy is important and coincides with concerns about the growing number of impervious surfaces.

*“It would be nice if we could have a fresh produce market. Fresh fruits and vegetables, meat and seafood, and other small grocery items.”*

*-Community Member*

## 4.1 Healthy and Active Living

Living within walking distance of fresh, healthy food and outdoor recreation opportunities are key elements of the built environment that impact an individual's overall health. Well-designed neighborhoods can improve health, while neighborhoods that lack amenities and services to support healthy lifestyles can contribute to chronic disease such as diabetes, heart disease and obesity. A neighborhood's infrastructure plays a vital role in how physically active a person is. Parks, trails, and open spaces provide opportunities for increased physical activity, as do bike trails and pedestrian facilities that connect people to transit infrastructure, services, amenities and destinations. These facilities should be designed in a way that makes it safe for residents to access them.

Physical activity and the opportunity to enjoy the outdoors are key factors in maintaining good health. The existing land use and mobility infrastructure in the plan area plays a substantial role in shaping the physical activity of area residents and visitors alike. While the regional connectivity of the area has served area residents well, the plan area possesses barriers to a healthy and active lifestyle. When considering mobility, one of the most common concerns of survey respondents was that access to the campus was difficult and that it felt separated from the rest of the community. In addition, the suburban development pattern of the plan area – wider, curvilinear streets with larger residential and commercial lots – creates challenging environments for walking and biking. As a result, the percentage of households within a quarter mile walk of a full-service grocery store

and a quality park or open space in the plan area is less than the citywide goal of at least 45% of households.

Access to healthy food options is also a key factor in maintaining good health. According to *Denver's Food Vision (2017)*, food is considered the “great connector” not only connecting us to our cultures and past, but also connecting us to the land where food is grown and the people and businesses who transport, prepare, sell and share food. Unfortunately, far too many people have limited or unequal access to healthy food options,

and that includes those living within the plan area. In addition to lacking a full-service grocery store within walking distance, residents also voiced frustration about a lack of healthy restaurant options. Accessing healthy, culturally relevant and affordable food isn't only about making environmental changes in a community, such as building more grocery stores and restaurants, but it is also about creating the policies and systems needed to address the root causes that contribute to inequitable access to food.



## 4.2 Parks, Recreation and Open Space

Denver's urban parks, trails, parkways, historic sites, urban forest, and other recreational areas are vital ingredients in the future of Denver. As Denver continues to grow, so does the demand for parks and recreational programs and activities, especially in areas where access to these amenities is currently inadequate today. Providing and preserving open space and community gathering spaces can have a lasting impact on the ability of residents to live an every day healthy lifestyle. Improving access to public open space has the potential to increase levels of physical activity, and to have mental health benefits and reduce healthcare and other costs. In addition, there are environmental benefits of urban parks and open space. A network of parks and open spaces that include natural lands and other green areas is critical to providing healthy environments for humans, wildlife and plants.

The Loretto Heights plan area contains a variety of designated parkland, natural areas, and open space networks. The Loretto Heights campus was traditionally designed with a collection of impressive buildings set amongst a rural landscape with a quad at its core. Two master site plans, one designed by S.R. DeBoer and one by Musick and Musick, were never fully implemented, but both expressed the compatible nature of a core building collection surrounded by passive open space. Many in the adjoining neighborhoods enjoy these open spaces and acknowledge that they help preserve the expansive views of Denver and the Rocky Mountains. The community is concerned that the future redevelopment will eliminate much of these open spaces. The number one concern of survey respondents in the parks and recreation category is the loss of open space areas.

Although Loretto Heights Park has consistently been identified as an asset to the community, there is an undeniable need for better connectivity between the park, new mobility networks and the off-street trail systems. Survey respondents would also like to see added amenities within the park to equitably serve the neighborhood. The community also expressed a desire to have new areas to gather on the Loretto Heights campus, in the form of natural and open areas, smaller parks, plaza space or turf areas. These new community gathering spaces should be integrated into the existing parks and recreation system and should positively impact and contribute to the larger open space network.



## Proposed Parks and Open Space

The proposed parks and open space network represents a collective vision to strengthen the Loretto Heights community by creating an interconnected network of green spaces throughout the plan area through the use of recreation areas, parks, trails, public squares, and community gathering spaces. By targeting these areas, this network will help to create new, safe and healthy spaces. This network will provide residents and visitors better access to site amenities, while also providing a new recreational and non-vehicular transportation network. The green network presented in this plan is meant to demonstrate an aspirational level of parks and open space connectivity.



*"I would like to see green space that could be a gathering place for the surrounding neighborhoods. A walking trail or bicycle path, a playground and places for people to sit and visit or read."*

- Community Member

Figure 4.1: Future Parks and Open Space



This map is conceptual and is one potential scenario to implement the plan recommendations.

### 4.3 Green Infrastructure

Denver’s growth accentuates the need for protecting and expanding the tree canopy, as well as enhancing green infrastructure technology and finding new ways to utilize drought tolerant measures in the face of climate change. Green infrastructure is defined as natural or built systems that use roots, soils or vegetation and natural processes to capture and treat stormwater runoff. The Loretto Heights campus has an existing ditch and retention pond that can help meet green infrastructure needs.

The benefits of green infrastructure are often difficult to pinpoint to a specific field since they provide benefits across several disciplines. For instance, a green infrastructure facility can provide things such as: environmental, economic and quality-of-life benefits to the community by helping improve water and air quality, reduce flood risks and heat island effect, absorb local carbon emissions, improve mental wellbeing, reduce stress, lower traffic speeds, and improve property values.



#### Pervious Surfaces

Throughout Denver’s development history, the city’s permeable surfaces have been replaced with impervious surfaces. Impervious surfaces, such as asphalt or concrete, can have many lasting negative effects, including the absorption of the sun’s energy causing increases in the surface temperature. In addition, high concentrations of impervious surfaces prohibit stormwater from permeating into the ground, resulting in more stormwater runoff and, in some cases, increased flooding throughout urban neighborhoods. Much of this runoff contains harmful pollutants and chemicals which discharge directly into our urban waterways, significantly reducing the water quality throughout the city.

Many residents within the plan area expressed concern of the potential impact of future development contributing to an increase in impervious surfaces. Residents expressed the desire for future development to address stormwater drainage and increase water quality. The Loretto Heights plan area’s impervious surface coverage of 41% is below the Denver average of 48%. This impervious coverage is concentrated primarily along the Federal Boulevard corridor, which includes multiple retail and commercial outlets served by a large quantity of surface parking.

The plan area is located within the West Harvard Gulch and Bear Creek stormwater basins, both of which have been identified as priority basins meaning there is a greater need for water quality improvements and green infrastructure investments. The scorecard methodology is detailed in Denver Public Works’ *Green Infrastructure Implementation Strategy*.



## Tree Canopy

The environmental and health benefits of a strong tree canopy are profound. Trees produce oxygen, prevent soil erosion, and reduce the overall concentration of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere. Access to trees, green spaces, and parks promotes greater physical activity and social interaction, and reduces stress, while improving the quality-of-life in cities and towns.

The topic of trees was the third most popular comment in the parks and recreation category of the first online survey. The tree canopy within the plan area is 15% and is slightly higher than the Denver average of 13%. Trees are concentrated within the campus, especially parallel to the existing irrigation ditch running northwest to southeast through the site. There is also a concentrated tree canopy throughout the open space corridor extending from the center of the campus southwest to Lowell Boulevard. Tree canopy coverage is also very strong along many residential streets in the Dartmouth Heights, Sharon Park/South Mar Lee and parts of the College View – South Platte Neighborhoods. However, there are no street trees along some of the major streets, including South Irving Street, Amherst Avenue and the Federal Boulevard corridor. There are also large areas with minimal tree coverage on the campus and south of the campus near the Denver School of Science and Technology (DSST) and within the existing adjacent multi-unit dwellings to the south. This areas, where development patterns include larger building footprints and more surface parking lots tend to have minimal tree canopy coverage.



## Recommendations

### QOL - 01 Increase fresh food access, availability and affordability

- A Encourage a healthier community food environment
  - i Explore opportunities for a new grocery store in the plan area
  - ii Encourage small food stores and full-service grocery stores to sell expanded healthy food options
  - iii Encourage space for community gardens and farmers' markets
  - iv Use zoning, licensing, or other regulatory tools to limit the concentration of fast food retailers in the plan area, specifically along Federal Boulevard
  - v Work with restaurants to offer healthier food and beverage options
  - vi Increase community demand for healthy food options through education and outreach programs about healthy eating, how to shop for healthy options, and cooking nutritious, culturally relevant meals
    1. Use the voter-approved sales tax, "Healthy Food for Denver Kids" program as a new funding source for healthy food services in the plan area
    2. Promote healthy food retail options through multilingual marketing tools including newsletters, community maps and signage
- B Provide a variety of transportation options to access fresh food in the Loretto Heights plan area
  - i Work with the RTD to ensure frequent and reliable bus routes to full-service grocery stores and other healthy food retail outlets inside and outside of the plan area
  - ii Expand safe and direct pedestrian and bike access to food retail by increasing neighborhood connectivity of sidewalks and paths
  - iii Promote mobile markets and food delivery options to improve food access

- C Support food recovery and reducing wasted food
  - i Educate the public about reducing the amount of food that is wasted in homes, restaurants and other food retail and commercial outlets
  - ii Re-distribute grocery retail and restaurant overstock to food pantries and other community based-organizations in the plan area
  - iii Promote and expand the city's residential and commercial composting program



## Recommendations

### **QOL - 02 Connect existing open space, parks, trails and recreational assets**

- A Improve the connection between Loretto Heights Park and the Loretto Heights campus
  - i Encourage the development of multiple green networks across the plan area as shown in Figure 4.1. A green network is a series of open spaces, green infrastructure, plazas, and/or pocket parks that are connected by multimodal infrastructure prioritizing the movement of pedestrians and bicyclists to these space
  - ii Explore options for a pedestrian and bicycle path along the existing irrigation ditch that runs northwest to southeast into the redevelopment site
- B Connect the redevelopment of the former Loretto Heights campus with the existing regional trail system
  - i Build a comprehensive pedestrian and bicycle trail network extending southwest through the redevelopment to connect to the existing Bear Creek Trail and South Platte River trail systems
  - ii Prioritize pedestrian and bicycle facility improvements along Dartmouth Avenue (west and east of campus)
  - iii Collaborate with the South Platte Working Group (Arapahoe County) on east-west connections to the South Platte River

### **QOL - 03 Create new community gathering spaces to accommodate a variety of activities for residents and visitors**

- A Encourage new public spaces that are dispersed throughout the plan area
  - i Locate community gathering spaces in appropriate locations to accommodate residents living within a 5-10-minute walking distance
  - ii Preserve the prominence of the Administration Building from Federal Boulevard by incorporating a publicly accessible open area or promenade

- iii Maintain the character and functionality of the quad by providing a publicly accessible community gathering space
  - iv Explore ways to seamlessly integrate passive open spaces with any future residential uses along South Irving Street
  - v Use open space as a buffer around the Cemetery to respect the sacred character of the cemetery
- B Identify underutilized right-of-way space to provide additional public space
  - C Encourage all privately owned and operated open spaces and facilities to be publicly accessible

### **QOL - 04 Provide a variety of amenities that contribute to a sense of place, and enhance active and passive uses**

- A Enhance Loretto Heights Park with year-round recreational activities and programs that support community needs and desires
  - i Partner with local community organizations and schools like nearby Denver School of Science and Technology (DSST) to support education and recreation programs within Loretto Heights Park
- B Provide park amenities that are multi-generational, such as play features that promote play and fitness for all ages and abilities, and seating for adults
  - i Encourage the uses of sustainable materials that contribute to the usability and enjoyment of those spaces
- C Encourage a signage and wayfinding plan to be developed to provide meaningful and attractive tools to help users effectively navigate the Loretto Heights plan area, surrounding neighborhoods, and the regional trail network

### **QOL - 05 Encourage higher quality design of parks and public spaces**

- A Require a maintenance plan to be implemented for public spaces that have higher levels of use and need specialized maintenance



## Recommendations

### QOL - 06 Strengthen and expand the tree canopy

- A Provide enough trees to exceed Denver Parks and Recreation's goal of 20% tree canopy coverage in every neighborhood as identified in *Game Plan for a Healthy City*
  - i Encourage the revitalization of the tree canopy by replacing diseased trees and planting new indigenous species
  - ii Prioritize the planting of street trees within the public right-of-way to improve the pedestrian experience, especially along Federal Boulevard, South Irving Street, Dartmouth Avenue, and Amherst Avenue
  - iii Develop educational programming and partnerships within the community to increase understanding around maintenance and care of the tree canopy



### QOL - 07 Design and implement natural and engineered green infrastructure systems

- A Encourage a network of large-scale and site-scale green infrastructure within public and privately-owned spaces that mitigates the impacts caused by impervious surfaces, including the existing ditch and retention pond on the campus
  - i Prioritize using sustainable green infrastructure systems that protect, restore, or mimic the natural water cycle, improve water quality, and mitigate flooding and storm water runoff volumes.
  - ii Create opportunities to implement green infrastructure that provides multiple benefits such as reducing stormwater runoff, improving water quality and mitigating the urban heat island effect
  - iii Explore best practices to ensure green infrastructure components thrive, are functional, and remain effective
- B Improve water quality in the West Harvard Gulch and Bear Creek Stormwater Basins by incorporating green infrastructure systems that treat all storm water runoff prior to the introduction into these larger systems of waterways
- C Use best practices to ensure storm drainage design, installation, maintenance, and management incorporates strategies and design solutions identified in Denver's *Ultra Urban Green Infrastructure Guide*
  - i Incorporate new technologies and practices in the plan area, such as streetside stormwater planters, bumpout stormwater planters and storm inlet filtration devices, as they are approved by the city
- D Work with other city departments to establish regulations to minimize impervious surfaces and utilize materials and techniques that allow for natural water absorption and flow
- E As a result of the redevelopment of the former Loretto Heights campus, the new street layout should accommodate both stormwater and wastewater needs



Photo by Mark Upshaw, 2019

*"Let's be a premiere example of environmentally friendly development."*

*-Community Member*

## Ultra-Urban Green Infrastructure Guidelines

### What is it?

The City and County of Denver is making green infrastructure a fundamental part of the city's long-term stormwater management strategy by looking at ways to incorporate large-scale green infrastructure with small or site-scale green infrastructure. On a large scale, green infrastructure refers to a network of parks, open spaces, drainageways, and floodplains which help mitigate the impacts caused by impervious (hard) surfaces. Site-scale green infrastructure refers to smaller, engineered, structural practices which mimic larger natural systems and use vegetation, soils, and roots to slow and filter stormwater runoff.

Site-scale green infrastructure best management practices (BMPs) are the focus of Denver's new *Ultra-Urban Green Infrastructure Guidelines*. Detailed fact sheets for streetside stormwater planters, bumpout stormwater planters, green gutters, green alleys, and tree pit/ tree trenches are included within the guidelines. Each practice within the Ultra-Urban Green Infrastructure Guidelines has been chosen for its suitability in Denver's dense, urban environment and for use in the right-of-way and on private redevelopment and infill sites like the Loretto Heights campus. Benefits of green infrastructure, regardless of scale, include improved water quality as well as better air quality, reduced flooding risks, urban heat island effect mitigation, reduced energy demands, climate change resiliency, and enhanced community livability.





# Chapter 5

## IMPLEMENTATION

In this chapter:

- 5.1 Realizing the Vision
- 5.2 Collaboration
- 5.3 Types of Implementation Activities

# IMPLEMENTATION

## Goal

To prioritize the recommendations and strategies included in the Loretto Heights Small Area Plan and develop an achievable path towards implementation through a variety of strategies, including leveraging private development investment and thoughtful collaboration between multiple city agencies and the private sector.

## Why It's Important

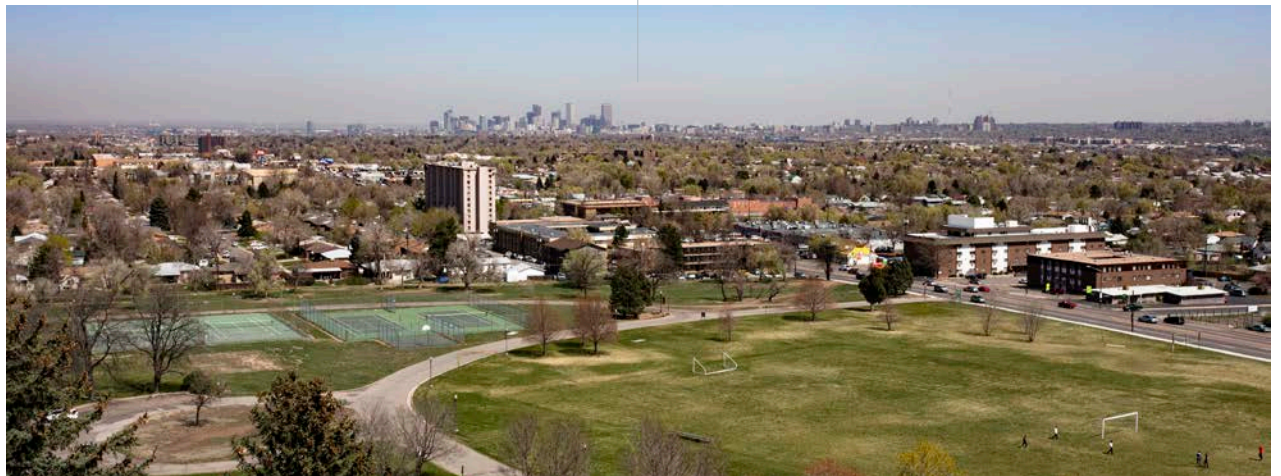
Implementation is the process of turning the recommendations and strategies in the Loretto Heights Small Area Plan into reality. Providing clear, measurable and achievable steps to implementation is important to ensure that the community's vision and goals for the plan area are realized. Implementation is most successful when it is guided by a living, flexible document and if there is ongoing evaluation of the progress being made. The approaches that follow in this implementation chapter are intended to set forth a clear path towards implementation while allowing for flexibility to respond to unforeseen opportunities, obstacles, market forces and public policies that would contribute to future development patterns within the plan area.

## 5.1 Realizing the Vision

The Loretto Heights Small Area Plan sets forth a vision for the future of the plan area with recommendations aimed at achieving that vision. Small area plan implementation can take place in a short amount of time or over many years and is the result of large and small actions by both the public and private sectors. The recommendations found throughout are intended to provide direction for future actions on the part of the city and other public entities, private sector developers, non-profits, and community and neighborhood groups. These key stakeholders must be strong partners for any implementation to be successful.

As a policy document, this plan directs updates to zoning and other regulatory tools that will help shape the area. 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.

Many of the plan goals, recommendations, and strategies are interconnected and complex and rely in large part on development activity by the private sector. Additional area studies, such as traffic studies to support public infrastructure and right-of-way dedication, will need to be initiated by the developer well in advance to support the implementation process. Given the size of the Loretto Heights redevelopment area, the plan's vision will likely be implemented through large scale, phased development over the course of many years. Therefore, adopting comprehensive development agreements between the developer and the city will be a critical component to ensure that new development contributes to achieving the comprehensive and holistic community vision envisioned by the plan.



View Looking northeast Towards downtown Denver

## 5.2 Collaboration

Achieving the collective vision for the plan area will take collaborative, sustained effort among all stakeholders to tackle the initiatives in the Loretto Heights Small Area Plan and chart the course for successful implementation. The City of Denver and its various agencies and departments all share the primary responsibility for plan implementation. To facilitate this coordinated effort and sustained commitment, it is critical that these entities form a strong partnership to champion redevelopment efforts and continue to collaborate with area stakeholders toward the success envisioned in the Plan. It will also be critical to work closely with local neighborhood representatives and community groups to ensure that the benefits to the community described throughout this plan, including support for local businesses, re-use of existing historic assets, and community-oriented and cultural uses, are given priority during the implementation process.

The community has played an important role in shaping the recommendations and strategies of this plan and they should be an integral part of its implementation through additional outreach, meetings, and engagement. Many recommendations and strategies within this plan require the community, the city and other organizations to continue to work together to identify priorities for future projects, investments, regulatory tools, and policies.

## 5.3 Types of Implementation Activities

*Blueprint Denver* identifies three types of implementation actions: Regulations, Investments, and Partnerships. These actions are generally public-sector actions intended to create a positive environment that enables actions by other groups, such as property owners, developers, neighborhood organizations or homeowners. While public actions can help set the stage, in most cases it is private actions (such as constructing new buildings and homes, opening new businesses and attracting new residents) that are the most critical elements to achieving a plan's vision. Each of the three implementation action types is described in detail, with specific implementation priorities provided in each category.

### Regulatory and Policy Strategies

Regulatory and policy strategies change city codes or regulations to affect desired outcomes. Typical examples include historic designation, Denver Zoning Code text and map amendments, Department of Public Works requirements for infrastructure improvements associated with development projects, and Parks and Recreation requirements regarding open space and plantings. The following pages contain a summary of regulatory implementation priorities for the Loretto Heights plan area with references to the plan elements they help to achieve



## Public Investment Strategies

Public investment strategies are those involving public funding of public infrastructure. Examples include street reconstruction, bike lane installation, new transit lines, park improvements and new or expanded recreation centers. The City and County of Denver takes the lead in designing, constructing, and funding these projects and may use a variety of public funding sources such as the annual Capital Improvements Program, bond funds, or state or federal grant programs. In some cases, this plan identifies public transportation projects as studies because the impacts and consequences of a particular improvement on the transportation system are so complex that the broader system must be examined to determine feasible options to meet the intent. Extensive study and analysis may also be needed to meet eligibility criteria to apply for federal funding. The following pages contain a summary of public investment implementation priorities for the Loretto Heights plan area with references to the major plan elements they help to achieve Partnership strategies represent the most diverse category of implementation activities. Public-private partnership activity has expanded greatly in recent years and has gone well beyond its roots of public subsidies for private development projects. Increasingly, public-private partnerships are being used to fund infrastructure projects.



## Recommendations

### Regulatory and Policy Strategies

- IMP - 01** Designate historic structures and features on the Loretto Heights campus to ensure their protection and incentivize their continued use and re-use in new development
- A Locally designate the Administration Building & Chapel
  - B Evaluate local and federal historic designation of all eligible structures and features as identified in the 2019 Loretto Heights Academy and College Inventory of Historic Resources and Survey Report
- IMP - 02** Apply zoning or other regulatory tools to promote a high mix of uses, including those consistent with the Suburban Neighborhood Context, Urban Neighborhood Context, Community Corridor and Community Center Place Type guidance contained in Blueprint Denver



## Recommendations

- IMP - 03 Apply zoning and/or other regulatory tools that support the plan's recommendation to achieve a variety of building heights and intensities throughout the plan area
- IMP - 04 Apply regulatory or other tools to achieve benefits to the community described in the plan, including a diverse mix of housing types, forms, and sizes for people of all incomes, ages, and abilities and support for local businesses
- IMP - 05 Complete a subdivision or Infrastructure Master Plan process for the Loretto Heights campus area that includes street cross-sections, street corridor hierarchies, and primary and side street classifications in accordance with plan recommendations. These combined elements outline the on-site and off-site infrastructure and open space requirements as well as any other required traffic measures associated with developing the property in the future. Any supporting supplemental engineering studies will include conceptual design and layout of transportation, water, wastewater, stormwater and open space.
- IMP - 06 Apply zoning, design standards and guidelines, development agreements or other regulatory tools to achieve human-scale building forms and streetscapes that are compatible with existing historic character envisioned by the plan

## Public Investment Strategies

- IMP - 07 Pursue opportunities for future analysis and partnering to leverage public investments for major infrastructure and facility improvements to implement the strategies and recommendations of this plan
- IMP - 08 Establish new pedestrian and bicycle connections to and from abutting neighborhoods and within the plan area, consistent with this plan's recommendations and in accordance with *DenverMoves* plans
- IMP - 09 As development occurs, work with DHA and Denver Economic Development and Opportunity to create opportunities for the provision of on-site affordable housing at a variety of income levels
- IMP - 10 Encourage the use of state and federal rehabilitation tax credits to support preservation and re-use of historic assets
- IMP - 11 Work with the Colorado Department of Transportation, Department of Public Works and the Department of Parks and Recreation to implement the strategies and recommendations identified in the Federal Boulevard Corridor Plan (2017) along Federal Boulevard, a designated parkway
- IMP - 12 Work with the Department of Parks and Recreation on investing in equitable access to Loretto Heights Park and future supported private-sector open spaces to and from surrounding neighborhoods
- IMP - 13 Work with the Department of Parks and Recreation to ensure all residents within the plan area are within a ten-minute walk to a neighborhood park
- IMP - 14 Work with the Department of Parks and Recreation to improve Loretto Heights Park by leveraging community input to establish priorities for park programs, amenities, and activities. Encourage privately-owned open spaces to incorporate programs, amenities, and activities that are complementary to the Loretto Heights Park



### Partnership Strategies

Public-private partnerships come in many forms. They require an investment from the city, property owners, private developers or a combination thereof. Common examples include tax increment financing (TIF), New Markets Tax Credits (NMTC), State and Federal Rehabilitation Tax Credits and Special Districts (such as a Metropolitan District or a Business Improvement District). The public sector can help to reduce risks by implementing many of the strategies described in the Loretto Heights Small Area Plan, such as:

1. A clear vision for the redevelopment of the area
2. Streamlined and clear decision-making that supports that vision
3. Public investments in infrastructure
4. Flexible entitlements that allow the developer to respond to changes in market conditions



Library

Given that a large portion of the redevelopment site is owned by one owner, many of the plan recommendations will rely on some form of partnership between the city and the private owner. In some cases, partnerships may include additional parties such as community groups, non-profits, and developers/leaseholders to implement the following priorities:

- Partner with Historic Denver, Inc. to implement appropriate protection mechanisms for the historic resources identified in the plan, such as preservation easements
- Partner with the City and County of Denver and Historic Denver, Inc. to complete neighborhood building surveys via Discover Denver



Machebeuf Hall

- Partner with Denver Digs Trees to increase tree canopy in parks, public right-of-ways and private properties
- Partner with Denver Economic Development and Opportunity to incorporate Mixed-Income and affordable housing development
- Partner with the Department of Public Works to implement Stormwater and Water Quality Improvements
- Explore partnerships to retain the former pool for an added community asset
- Partner with Denver’s Sidewalk Gap Program to determine implementation and funding of sidewalk improvements
- Improve the access to healthy food, grocery stores, retail goods and services including implementation of the “Healthy Food for Denver Kids” program
- Development indoor/outdoor gathering spaces for community meetings, church services and other activities
- Partner with the Cities of Sheridan and Englewood and Arapahoe County to study and implement transit, bike, and pedestrian improvements to W. Dartmouth Avenue and crossing improvements at US-285 and Knox Court



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