



DOWNTOWN DENVER AREA PLAN



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Glossary of Abbreviations

AMI	Area Median Income	DEDO	Denver Economic Development + Opportunity
BID	Downtown Denver Business Improvement District	DOF	Department of Finance
BIPOC	Black, Indigenous and People of Color	DOTI	Department of Transportation + Infrastructure
CASR	Office of Climate Action, Sustainability + Resiliency	DPD	Denver Police Department
CCD	City + County of Denver	DPL	Denver Public Library
CLT	Community Land Trust	DPR	Denver Parks + Recreation Department
CPD	Community Planning + Development Department	FAR	Floor Area Ratio
DAM	Denver Art Museum	HOST	Department of Housing Stability
DAP	Downtown Area Plan (the Plan)	MO	Mayor’s Office
DAV	Denver Arts + Venues Agency	ROW	Right-of-way
DDA or DDDA	Denver Downtown Development Authority	RTD	Regional Transportation District
DDP	Downtown Denver Partnership (the Partnership)	SOV	Single-occupancy Vehicle
		TDM	Transportation Demand Management

TODAY'S ACTIONS TO
IMPROVE AND INVEST IN
DOWNTOWN'S



SAFETY

AFFORDABILITY



GOVERNANCE

LOCAL
BUSINESS
+ OFFICE



CONNECTION
+ ACCESS



WITH A FOCUS
ON PLAY TO SPARK



PLAY



EQUITY



CONNECTION



STORIES



INNOVATION



INVESTMENT



RESILIENCE

... ARE GUIDED BY
FOUNDATIONAL ELEMENTS OF
THE PLAN'S BUILDING BLOCKS

DELIVERY OF SHORT-TERM
PROJECTS...

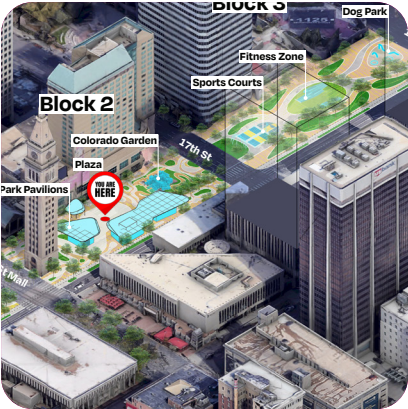
CIVIC CENTER
NEXT 100



PLAZA



PARK



BROADWAY



CHERRY CREEK/SPEER



TRANSFORMATIONAL
PARK



... IN SUPPORT OF
TOMORROW'S
LONG-TERM
CHANGE

01

ABOUT THE PLAN

INTRODUCTION

Downtown Denver is the epicenter of economic vitality, cultural celebration and civic engagement of the Rocky Mountain region. Many Tribal Nations, including the Cheyenne, Arapaho, Ute, Comanche, Kiowa, Lakota, and Sioux—consider the Denver area a part of their homelands. Tribal origin stories reference the landscape of the Front Range and the Continental Divide. The confluence of the South Platte River and Cherry Creek served as a vital gathering place for trade, tradition and community. Throughout our history as a city, downtown has had an impactful legacy as the hub for connection and commerce.

When communities flourish and business thrive, our center city's foundation becomes stronger. As Denver continues to be an international destination, its downtown remains a symbol of shared identity and evolving possibility. As such, every Denverite, many Coloradans and even out-of-state visitors have a special relationship and connection to this part of our city.

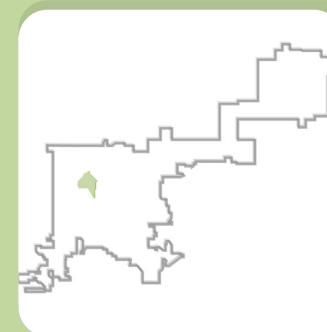
This Plan has served as the platform for the community to collaborate on thinking about what is next for downtown, and in that process, to acknowledge the people of this land – those who have come before, those who are here now, and those who will lead into the future.

IMPACT OF DOWNTOWN DENVER

1.8%

of Denver's Land Area

Sources: City Of Denver, Esri Business Analyst, SB Friedman (2024)



30.0%

of Jobs in Denver

Sources: Esri Business Analyst, LEHD, Placer.ai, SB Friedman (2023)

4.7%

of Population in Denver

Sources: Esri Business Analyst, SB Friedman (2024)

20.3%

of Denver's Taxable Value

Sources: City of Denver, Esri Business Analyst, SB Friedman (2023)

21.0%

of Denver's Lodging + Retail Sales

Sources: City of Denver, Esri Business Analyst, SB Friedman (2023)

+/- 34K

Downtown Residents

Sources: Esri Business Analyst, SB Friedman (2024)

+/- 300K

Residents within 3 Miles of Downtown

Sources: Esri Business Analyst, SB Friedman (2024)

53M

Out-of-Market Visits (2024)

Sources: Placer.ai, SB Friedman (2024)

+/- 155K

Downtown Workers

Sources: City of Denver, Esri Business Analyst, LEHD, SB Friedman (2023)

+/- 47K

Downtown Students

Sources: Esri Business Analyst, SB Friedman (2023)



THE DOWNTOWN AREA PLAN

A COLLABORATIVE APPROACH

Downtowns across the nation are facing historic changes in how they function, look and are experienced. During this pivotal moment in the city’s history, the City and County of Denver (CCD) and the Downtown Denver Partnership (the Partnership) have collaborated to develop an updated Downtown Area Plan—a tool to help community leaders, decision-makers and Denverites build upon downtown’s assets and guide strategic investment and priority projects within Downtown Denver over the next 20 years, reflecting the community’s vision of a robust, healthy and complete downtown.

THE STUDY AREA

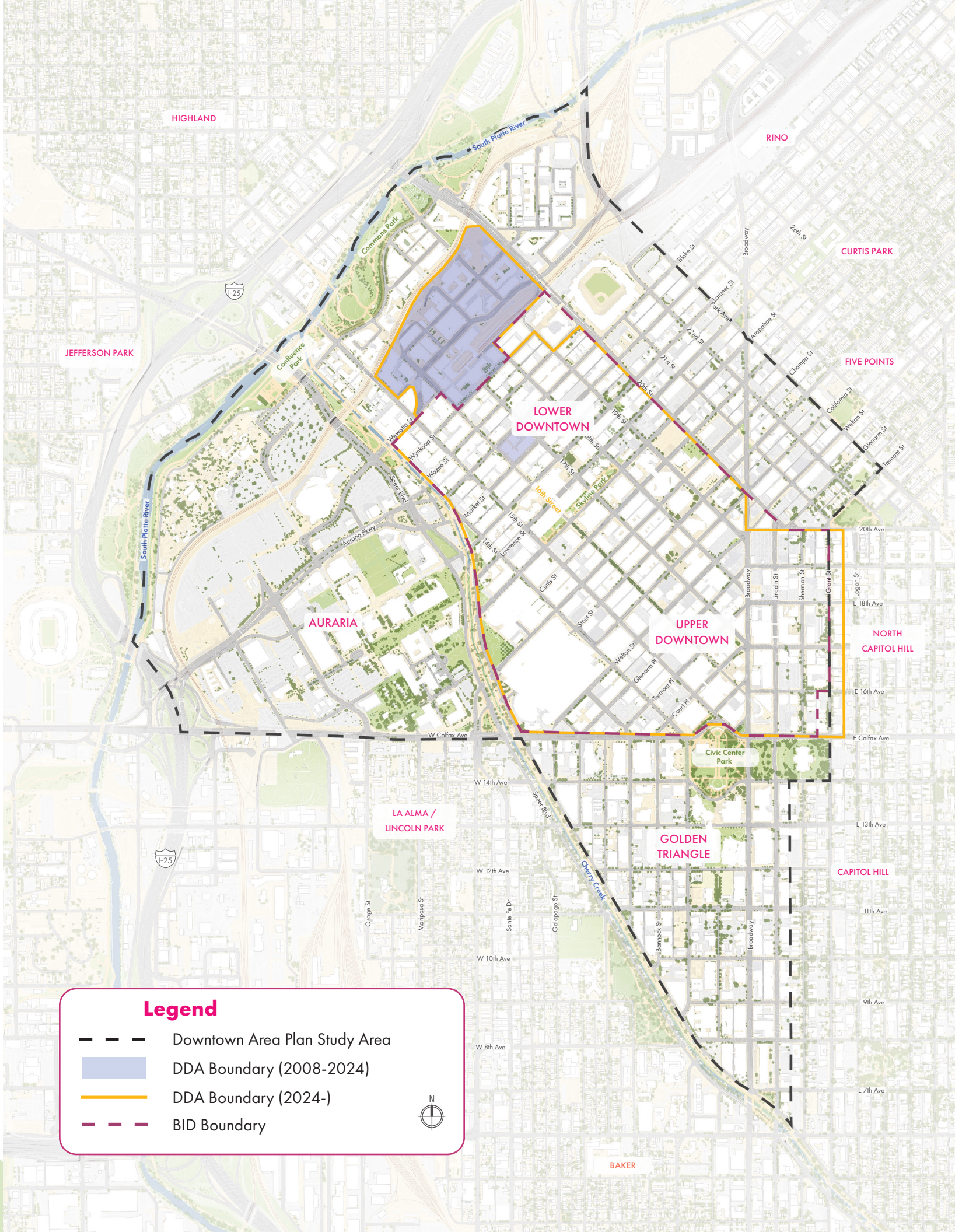
The Downtown Area Plan covers a 2.5 square mile area bounded by the South Platte River on the west, Park Avenue on the north, Grant Street on the east, and Speer Boulevard and Colfax Avenue on the south. This boundary encompasses the Downtown Denver Business Improvement District (BID), the statistical neighborhoods of Union Station (including Lower Downtown), Central Business District (including Upper Downtown) and Civic Center (including Golden Triangle) and portions of surrounding neighborhoods that fuel the character and economy of downtown. It also mirrors the geography used in previous downtown planning efforts and studies while considering the interconnected nature this geography has with its surrounding neighborhoods and districts.

THE DENVER DOWNTOWN DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY

In 2008, the Denver Downtown Development Authority (Denver DDA) was created to support the redevelopment of Denver Union Station and Market Street Station. The \$500 million public investment leveraged over \$3 billion in private development activity, representing a return of over six times the initial investment. The Denver DDA repaid its loans at the end of 2024 – 15 years earlier than planned – offering the opportunity to expand the Authority’s boundaries and make new catalytic investments.

In 2024, more than 80 percent of eligible voters approved Measure 6A to renew and expand the boundary of the Denver DDA, unlocking a \$570 million loan to be repaid by tax increment financing (TIF) specifically for investment in downtown revitalization.

The Denver DDA is focused on specific economic development targets while the Downtown Area Plan identifies community priorities and policy guidance to inform additional public investments, civic and governance initiatives, programming and partnerships to build upon DDA efforts.



BUILDING UPON DOWNTOWN’S
PAST AND PRESENT

As a place where people have always gathered, stories are woven into the urban fabric of downtown. Many Tribal Nations, including the Cheyenne, Arapaho, Ute, Comanche, Kiowa, Lakota, and Sioux—consider the Denver area a part of their homelands. Tribal origin stories reference the landscape of the Front Range and the Continental Divide. Since time immemorial, Tribes migrated through the region, gathered at the Confluence of the Platte River and Cherry Creek, and wove the geography and environment of the Front Range into their languages and culture. For Indigenous peoples, this land has never been simply a physical place; it is a living, spiritual, and cultural landscape intrinsically tied to their heritage.

The confluence of the Cherry Creek and South Platte River is a gathering place where many Tribes came to trade and hunt. The area’s strategic location and natural resources made it a crossroads for various Indigenous groups, fostering cultural exchange for centuries before European settlement. During and following the rapid growth of the city during the gold rush and expansion of railroads, Downtown Denver was also a hub for connection and commerce, which is reflected in both its historic and modern built environment. Downtown’s impactful legacy as a place to gather, do business and have memorable experiences continues to this day.

While downtown’s efforts to celebrate and acknowledge this past thus far have been limited, emerging examples show how our history is honored through thoughtful completed and proposed projects, community-centered events and comprehensive plans.

With this Downtown Area Plan as a platform to launch initiatives that continue to tell our overlooked, current and future stories, Downtown Denver can become a more inclusive place where all belong.



Ballpark/Sakura Square
Japanese-American Internment
Coors Field and the Rockies



Lower Downtown
Denver’s Chinatown
Anti-Chinese Riot
The Railroad
Little Raven Street
Larimer Square



Skyline Park
Skyline Urban Renewal Project
Creation of 16th Street Mall
Film Row
Union Station
Theater Row



Five Points/ Curtis Park
Five Points: “Harlem of the West”
The Rossonian



Upper Downtown/Civic Center
Gang of 19
Urban Renewal
Civic Center/City Beautiful Movement
Carnegie Library Movement



Speer Boulevard/Cherry Creek
Cherry Creek Flood
The Confluence
Auraria
St. Cajetan’s
Chicano Movement

More information in Appendix A:
Denver’s Stories

DOWNTOWN DENVER STORIES TODAY

Snapshots captured below are some of many community and neighborhood-led activations, programming, development and initiatives that form the unique identity of downtown Denver



By honoring and capturing downtown Denver’s stories, past and present, the plan aims to build upon Denver’s unique identity and offers to enhance what’s already happening on the ground while continuing the work towards a more inclusive, accessible and complete downtown.

WHY NOW?

Since the adoption of the Downtown Area Plan in 2007, Denver has experienced extraordinary growth and transformation. The city has achieved several of the plan’s key goals, including the revitalization of historic Union Station and the Central Platte Valley, the development of a rail connection between downtown and the airport, and the modernization of aging infrastructure along 16th Street. These accomplishments have helped shape a more connected and accessible urban center.

Now, as Denver nears the 20-year horizon of that original plan, new challenges demand a fresh, bold vision for downtown. Across the country, urban cores are grappling with high office vacancy rates stemming from remote work trends, persistent labor shortages, rising construction costs and interest rates, and an escalating housing affordability crisis. Denver is no exception.

Yet, despite these headwinds, downtown continues to thrive as both an economic engine and a growing residential neighborhood. Its population growth now outpaces that of the surrounding metro area, the state, and the nation*. This vitality affirms that Downtown Denver remains central to the health and prosperity of the entire city.

The new Downtown Area Plan aims to confront today’s complex realities head-on while harnessing the momentum of recent successes. By prioritizing the community’s vision for a vibrant, healthy and complete downtown, the Plan seeks to ensure that Downtown Denver remains a place where businesses flourish, residents thrive and the whole city benefits. A strong and sustainable future for Denver depends on a thriving urban core.

* data sourced from ESRI Business Analyst, DDP

INTEGRATING PAST PLANNING EFFORTS

Since the completion of the Downtown Area Plan in 2007, there have been numerous planning efforts related to parks and open space, mobility, urban design and other topics. Each of these efforts has critical recommendations that have provided strategic direction and guidance on the implementation of key projects and wins for downtown. These plans and projects have all served as the foundation for this Downtown Area Plan update, building upon their recommendations to jumpstart community conversations, ensure alignment of past plans and focus on the prioritization and implementation of projects.

- 2007 ○ Downtown Area Plan
- 2010 ○ 16th Street Urban Design Plan
- 2011 ○ NE Downtown Neighborhood Plan
- 2014 ○ Golden Triangle Neighborhood Plan
- 2016 ○ The Next Stage: The Future of DPAC
- 2016 ○ 16th St.: Small Steps Towards Big Change
- 2017 ○ The Outdoor Downtown Plan
- 2019 ○ 5280 Trail Vision Plan
- 2019 ○ Upper Downtown Plan
- 2021 ○ Denver Moves Downtown
- 2021 ○ Reimagine Skyline Park Plan
- 2022 ○ Civic Center Next 100 Plan
- 2023 ○ Ground-floor Activation Strategy

MAJOR PROJECTS SINCE 2007

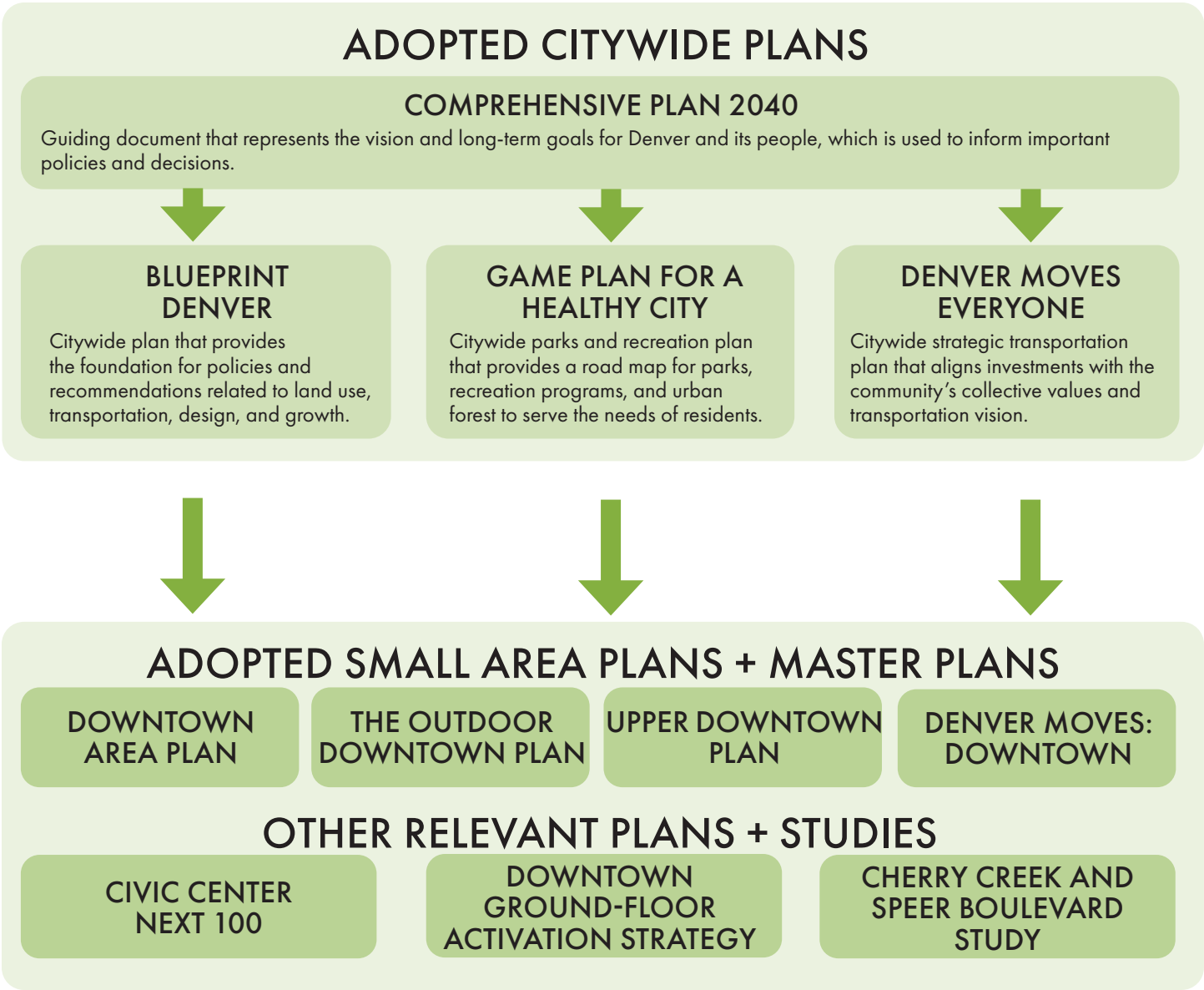


USING THE DOWNTOWN AREA PLAN

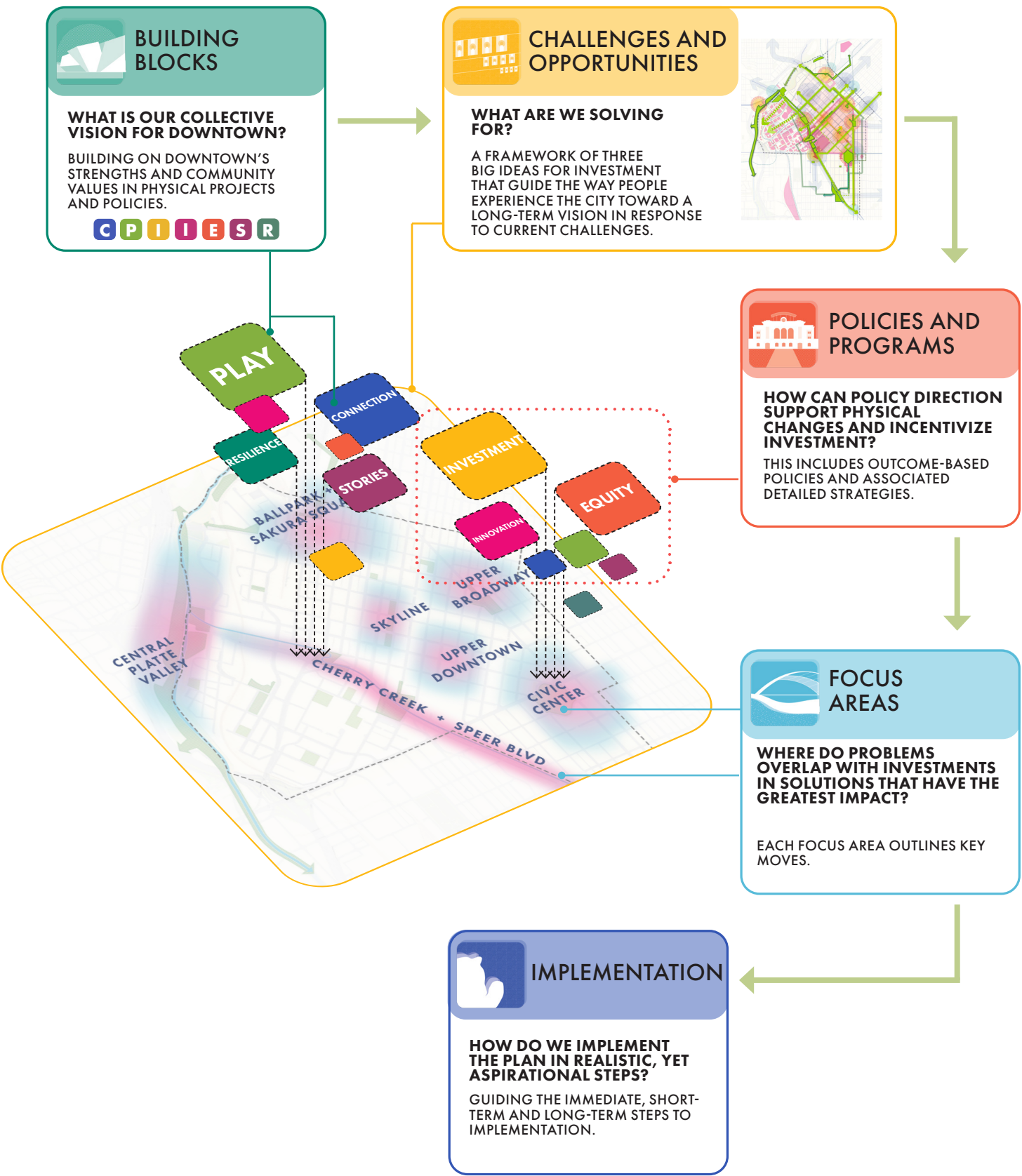
LEVELS OF PLAN GUIDANCE

Area plans that focus on neighborhoods, station areas, corridors and other focused geographies provide a level of analysis, detail and guidance on issues affecting local areas that citywide plans cannot. They engage stakeholders in identifying a future vision for the area and provide recommendations and strategies for achieving that vision.

Like all area plans, the Downtown Area Plan serves as a supplement to Comprehensive Plan 2040 and advances citywide visions and values by providing specific guidance for downtown. This Plan incorporates relevant recommendations from previous planning efforts and identifies key recommendations for near-term implementation. This Plan has the potential to spur and accelerate private development and investment into the center city, furthering the vision set forth by the community.

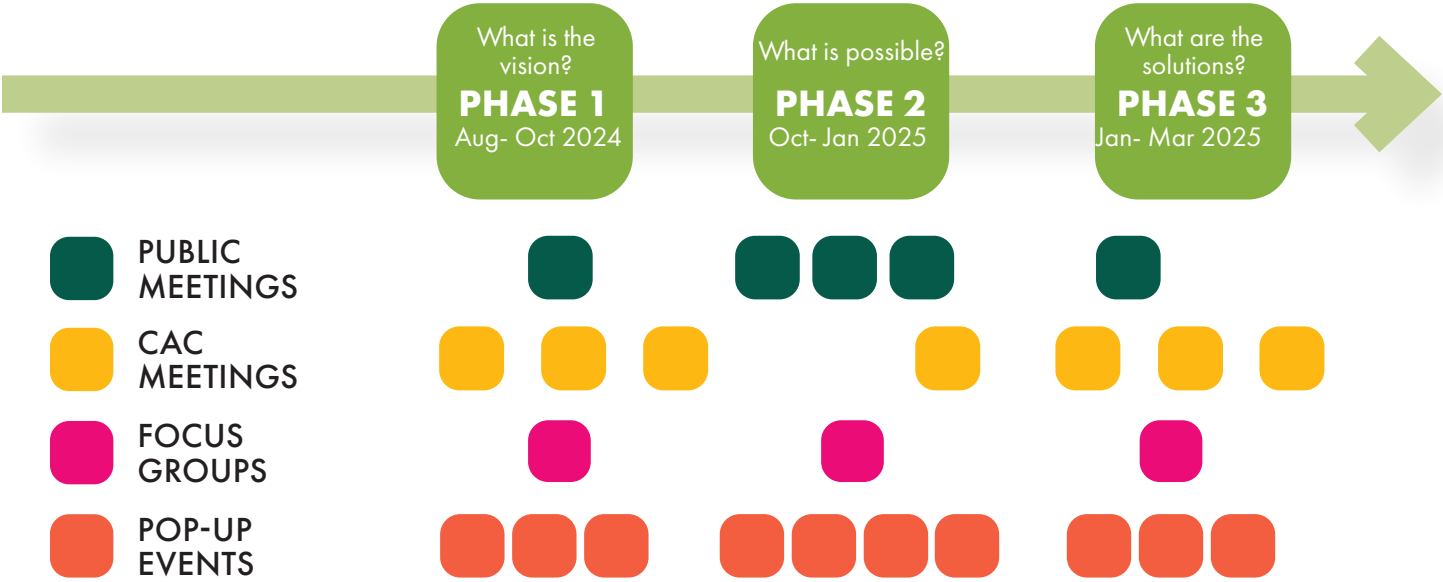


PLAN STRUCTURE



ENGAGING THE COMMUNITY: HOW YOUR IDEAS GUIDE THE PLAN

THE ENGAGEMENT PROCESS



PHASE 1: DISCOVERY + ALIGNMENT

During the first three months of the planning effort, public engagement goals included generating community interest in the planning process, sharing information with the public, confirming community values and identifying issues that need to be solved by the Plan. A dedicated project website, a public kickoff open house, four pop-up events, five focus group conversations and a CoMap online survey got the word out to the community and identified key ideas and recommendations for further analysis. This helped establish a foundation to advance the planning effort while ensuring alignment across the many agencies and partners ultimately responsible for implementing the Plan.

PHASE 2: BIG IDEAS + CONCEPT DIRECTION

Once downtown’s many stakeholders helped identify the key issues and priorities for the area, Phase 2 of the engagement process put forward seven Building Blocks to capture the community vision and serve as guiding principles for the Plan. These Building Blocks define

the components of a vibrant, healthy and complete downtown that are missing, need improvement or are critical for downtown’s success moving forward. Community feedback from a public workshop, online survey, two focus groups and four pop-up events helped to understand the types of projects and programs that were most important. This phase also informed the identification of the focus areas in Chapter 4 of this Plan.

PHASE 3: IMPLEMENTATION

The final phase of community engagement aimed to understand public priorities around specific projects, programs and policies for each of the focus areas and for the recommendations that apply throughout downtown. This included ensuring alignment with community needs so that the Plan would best maximize public benefits upon implementation. Through a public workshop, online survey, pop-up event and focus group meeting, community feedback was used to develop an action-oriented implementation plan, including a chronological roadmap, to ensure that public investment strategically meets the community vision for downtown.



30+
Equity-focused
Touchpoints



40+
Stakeholder
Conversations
(130+ Attendees)

8,400+
Unique Project Website
Visitors



750+
Public Meeting
Attendees

7
Community Advisory
Committee (CAC)
Meetings



3,300+
People engaged at
Pop-up Events

Accessibility for walking, rolling, biking, driving and transit

Arts and cultural programming that represents everyone

Local stores and restaurants

Safety and security

Reconciliation and purposeful engagement with displaced communities

More neighborhood amenities: grocery stores, childcare, parks, etc.

Affordable housing and more options for families

... and more!

Opportunities to start a business

Climate resilience

Street trees

3,300+
Online Survey
Respondents

02

BUILDING BLOCKS

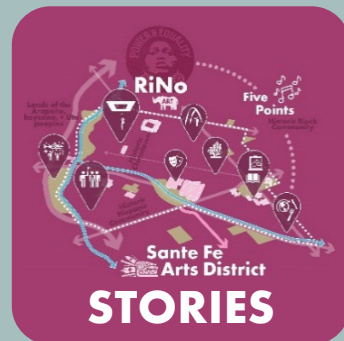
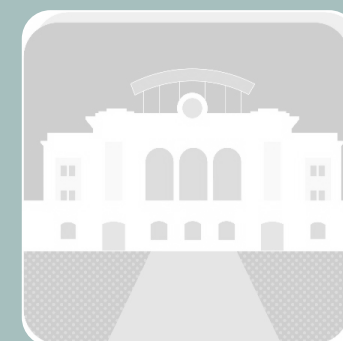
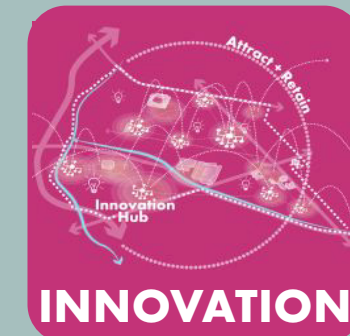
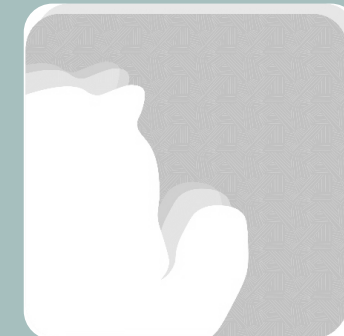
THE VISION

A VIBRANT, HEALTHY AND COMPLETE DOWNTOWN

The Downtown Area Plan vision serves as a compass for guiding future growth, investment and transformation, while fostering and protecting the places that contribute to its identity. It is a collective aspiration for what our downtown could be that reflects community values and bold imagination.

This chapter frames the downtown vision as more than a statement, but as a foundation with seven Building Blocks to guide the implementation of the vision. The Building Blocks, identified through community engagement, inform the key components that are needed to fully achieve a downtown that is vibrant, healthy and complete.

THE BUILDING BLOCKS OF THE VISION:

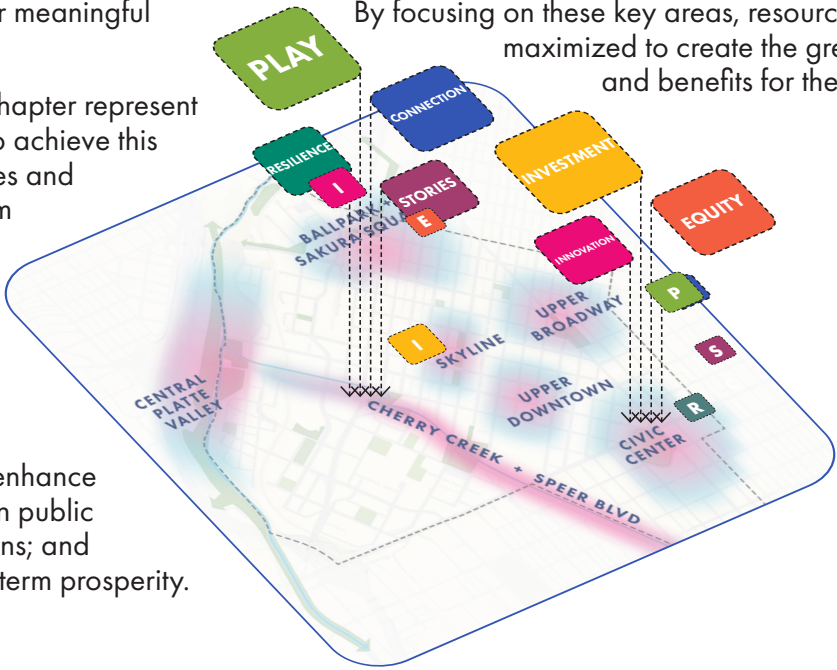


HOW BUILDING BLOCKS WORK

Downtown’s transformation requires a holistic approach that balances economic vitality with social inclusivity and environmental sustainability. The vision encompasses a downtown where business success is intertwined with community well-being, where cultural expression represents everyone, and where public spaces serve as gathering places for meaningful interaction.

The Building Blocks outlined in this chapter represent the foundational elements needed to achieve this vision. Each addresses the challenges and opportunities and together, they form a comprehensive framework for decision-making that will guide public and private investments.

Building Blocks aren’t isolated initiatives, but are interconnected systems that reinforce one another. Improvements to mobility networks enhance economic opportunity; investments in public spaces strengthen cultural connections; and resilient infrastructure supports long-term prosperity.



This Plan prioritizes investment where multiple building blocks overlap. This approach recognizes that the most successful urban places address multiple needs simultaneously—providing transportation options, cultural experiences, economic opportunities, and ecological benefits within the same physical space. By focusing on these key areas, resources can be maximized to create the greatest impact and benefits for the community.

KEY METRICS

As this Plan is implemented, progress should be measured against these clear metrics that reflect key aspirations for the Building Blocks.

✓ INCREASE THE NUMBER OF RESIDENTIAL UNITS

✓ INCREASE INCOME-RESTRICTED AND AFFORDABLE UNITS

✓ IMPROVE AND EXPAND ACCESS TO DAILY LIFE SERVICES AND AMENITIES*

✓ REDUCE SINGLE-OCCUPANCY VEHICLE (SOV) SHARE OF DOWNTOWN TRIPS

✓ IMPROVE AND EXPAND ACCESS TO QUALITY AND QUANTITY OF PARKS

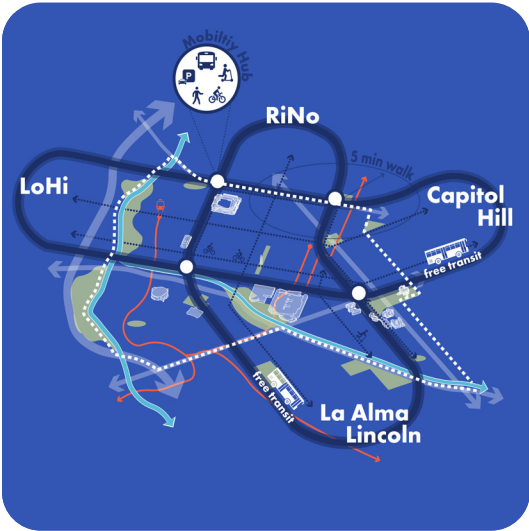
✓ INCREASE THE TAX BASE

✓ INCREASE TREE CANOPY AND REDUCTION OF IMPERVIOUS SURFACES**

* Daily life services and amenities: Services and amenities that support the daily needs of a diverse residential population, including healthcare, grocery stores, banking, childcare, etc. (from recommendation 5.B)

** Impervious surface: Land surfaces that repel water and do not let rainwater infiltrate, or soak into, the ground. This includes roads, sidewalks, driveways and parking lots. More of these surfaces contribute to the Urban Heat Island effect and exasperate flooding from stormwater issues. (Blueprint Denver)

BUILDING BLOCKS



C

CONNECTION ADVANCES THESE KEY METRICS

✓ IMPROVE AND EXPAND ACCESS TO DAILY LIFE SERVICES AND AMENITIES

✓ REDUCE SINGLE-OCCUPANCY VEHICLE (SOV) SHARE OF DOWNTOWN TRIPS

✓ IMPROVE AND EXPAND ACCESS TO QUALITY PARKS

✓ INCREASE TREE CANOPY AND REDUCTION OF IMPERVIOUS SURFACES

DOWNTOWN IS WHERE CONNECTION HAPPENS

In 2045, downtown is served by a transportation system that is built around the human experience. It is a network that serves all modes of transportation and prioritizes safety, comfort and accessibility of the most vulnerable road users. By focusing on the human aspects of mobility, downtown becomes a place where moving around is not just functional but joyful, strengthening connections between people and places.

DOWNTOWN IS SAFE AND EASY TO TRAVEL TO AND THROUGH BY...

- Breaking down physical and perceived barriers to getting to downtown from surrounding neighborhoods
- Prioritizing the safety and experience of people walking and rolling
- Integrating networks for people walking, rolling, biking or taking transit to make transferring between modes seamless
- Improving the legibility and accessibility of transit



DOWNTOWN IS WHERE PLAY HAPPENS

In 2045, downtown is a safe, playful urban environment that weaves shopping, dining, recreation, entertainment, events and memory-making into every corner, street and shared space. By transforming public spaces, investing in arts and culture, and enhancing programming to spark discovery, delight and connection, downtown becomes a place where play is an integral part of daily life.

DOWNTOWN IS THE NATION'S LARGEST SIGNATURE "PLAY" DISTRICT BY...

- Hosting events like night markets, concerts, seasonal fairs and pop-up performances that create memorable experiences
- Activating underutilized areas with interactive art installations, food trucks and temporary stages to invite spontaneous gatherings
- Enhancing parks, plazas and open spaces with water features, art, multi-age playgrounds, places to hang out and fitness areas
- Cultivating a pedestrian-oriented shopping and dining landscape with stores and restaurants that spill out onto the sidewalk
- Integrating playful design elements like creative lighting, digital games and musical installations into the public realm*
- Creating a feeling of safety that invites children of all ages to have fun



P PLAY ADVANCES THESE KEY METRICS

- ✓ IMPROVE AND EXPAND ACCESS TO DAILY LIFE SERVICES AND AMENITIES
- ✓ IMPROVE AND EXPAND ACCESS TO QUALITY PARKS
- ✓ INCREASE THE TAX BASE
- ✓ INCREASE TREE CANOPY AND REDUCTION OF IMPERVIOUS SURFACES

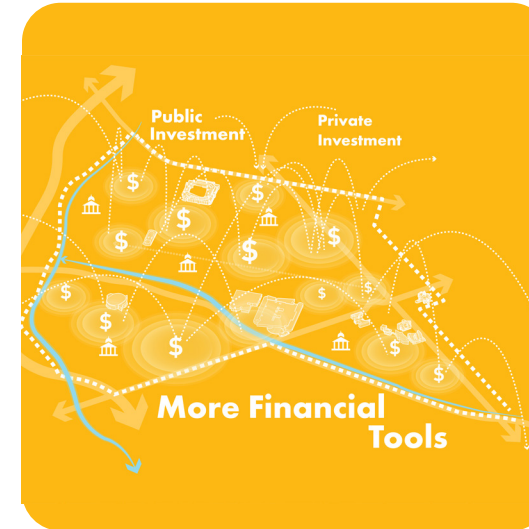
*Public Realm: Any publicly owned streets, pathways, right-of-ways, parks and publicly owned and accessible open spaces. (Blueprint Denver)

DOWNTOWN IS WHERE INVESTMENT HAPPENS

In 2045, downtown is driven by a coordinated investment strategy that fuels economic growth, attracts capital across sectors and enhances the urban environment. Public funding, streamlined processes, expectations for quality design and targeted incentives work in concert to generate lasting value for private stakeholders and bring pride and prosperity to the broader community.

DOWNTOWN IS THE BEST PLACE FOR BUSINESSES, LARGE AND SMALL, TO INVEST BY...

- Encouraging adaptive reuse of existing buildings to suit the needs of smaller and local businesses
- Directing public investments in infrastructure and maintenance to create a physical environment that attracts people and business
- Ensuring efficient permitting and review processes with clear expectations
- Implementing design guidelines worthy of a world-class downtown while providing flexibility for creative approaches that meet desired outcomes
- Deploying financial incentives strategically to spur catalytic investments in priority areas that deliver on multiple plan objectives and create quality jobs across industries and talents in order to have a diverse and vibrant downtown



I INVESTMENT ADVANCES THESE KEY METRICS

- ✓ INCREASE THE NUMBER OF RESIDENTIAL UNITS
- ✓ INCREASE INCOME-RESTRICTED AND AFFORDABLE UNITS
- ✓ IMPROVE AND EXPAND ACCESS TO DAILY LIFE SERVICES AND AMENITIES
- ✓ INCREASE THE TAX BASE

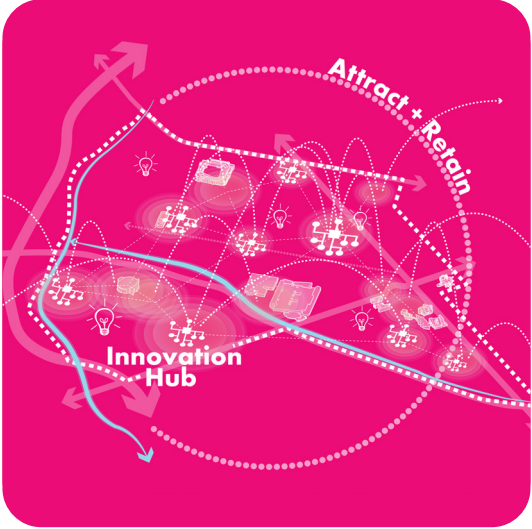


DOWNTOWN IS WHERE INNOVATION HAPPENS

In 2045, downtown is a living laboratory for new ideas, leveraging proximity and density to spark collaboration, opportunity and breakthroughs. In an increasingly digital economy, downtown offers the infrastructure to blend technological systems with the physical experiences that attracts talent and enterprises eager to innovate.

DOWNTOWN DRIVES CREATIVITY AND ADVANCEMENT BY...

- Establishing innovation districts and start-up incubators that provide the physical infrastructure and networks new ventures need to grow
- Creating spaces that adapt to evolving work patterns and emerging industries, emphasizing Denver’s competitive sectors
- Supporting incubator programs, technical assistance and networking opportunities to strengthen economic diversity
- Cultivating employment, internship and apprenticeship opportunities for Auraria Campus students to bring energy into the neighborhood and provide real-world learning environments



I INVESTMENT ADVANCES THESE KEY METRICS

- ✓ IMPROVE AND EXPAND ACCESS TO DAILY LIFE SERVICES AND AMENITIES
- ✓ INCREASE THE TAX BASE

DOWNTOWN IS WHERE EQUITY HAPPENS

In 2045, downtown is an inclusive neighborhood through deliberate strategies that ensure access to opportunities for people of all backgrounds, abilities and income levels. The downtown offers a mosaic of districts, activities and experiences that reflect and celebrate the diversity of the community while thoughtful planning, policy and investment alleviate historical inequities.

DOWNTOWN FOSTERS INCLUSION BY...

- Retaining and expanding affordable housing options alongside market-rate housing to serve the full socioeconomic spectrum
- Preserving and creating spaces for locally owned businesses and community and cultural organizations
- Improving access to everyday essentials such as fresh food, healthcare, childcare, education, recreation and services without reliance on a car
- Embedding universal design and accessibility standards in public spaces, transportation and infrastructure
- Provide a safe and welcoming environment throughout the day



E EQUITY ADVANCES THESE KEY METRICS

- ✓ INCREASE INCOME-RESTRICTED AND AFFORDABLE HOMES
- ✓ IMPROVE AND EXPAND ACCESS TO DAILY LIFE SERVICES AND AMENITIES
- ✓ REDUCE SINGLE-OCCUPANCY VEHICLE (SOV) SHARE OF DOWNTOWN TRIPS
- ✓ INCREASE THE TAX BASE

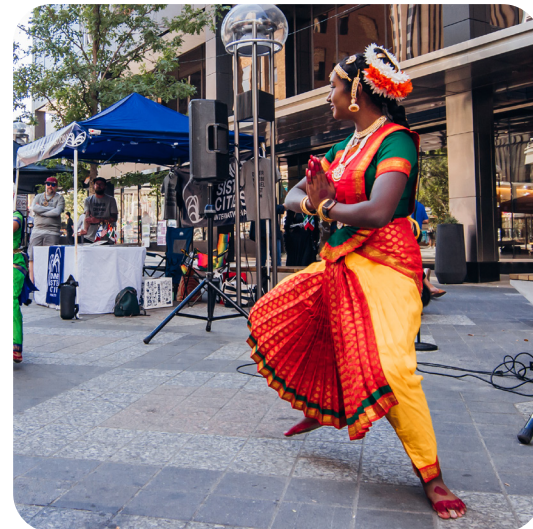


DOWNTOWN IS WHERE STORIES HAPPEN

In 2045, downtown is a vibrant cultural ecosystem where shared history and diverse perspectives and experiences come to life through experience and memory of place. By weaving public art, programming and storytelling into everyday urban spaces, downtown becomes a stage for telling authentic stories, cultural tourism destination, and learning about our city and our neighbors.

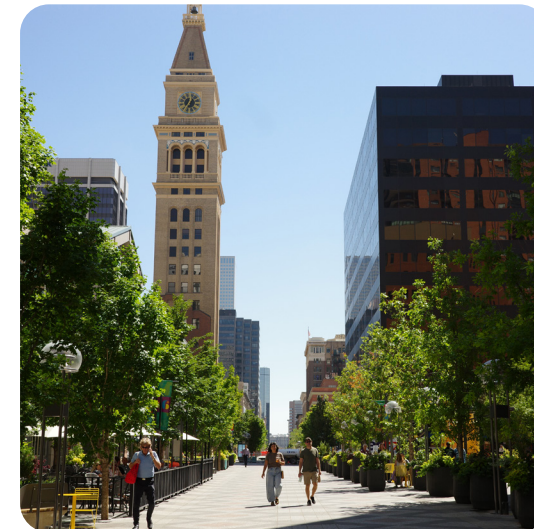
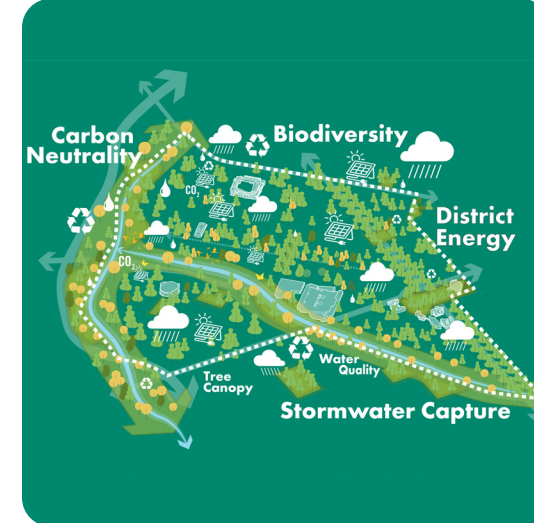
DOWNTOWN IS A HUB FOR ARTS, CULTURE AND HISTORY BY...

- Prioritizing the continued use of Denver's historic spaces and buildings that tell our stories
- Preserving historic buildings and activating spaces with galleries, studios and performance spaces so those artists can thrive
- Integrating art, events and community gatherings throughout streets, parks and plazas to make creativity part of daily life downtown
- Unlock the stories connected with Downtown's historic sites to support interpretative storytelling that honors Denver's history, including recognition of its Indigenous communities and displaced Aurarian residents
- Providing platforms for diverse voices through festivals, forums, performances and digital channels, so every community sees itself reflected in the story of downtown



S STORIES ADVANCE THESE KEY METRICS

- ✓ IMPROVE AND EXPAND ACCESS TO DAILY LIFE SERVICES AND AMENITIES
- ✓ IMPROVE AND EXPAND ACCESS TO QUALITY PARKS
- ✓ INCREASE THE TAX BASE



R RESILIENCE ADVANCES THESE KEY METRICS

- ✓ INCREASE INCOME-RESTRICTED AND AFFORDABLE UNITS
- ✓ IMPROVE AND EXPAND ACCESS TO DAILY LIFE SERVICES AND AMENITIES
- ✓ REDUCE SINGLE-OCCUPANCY VEHICLE (SOV) SHARE OF DOWNTOWN TRIPS
- ✓ IMPROVE AND EXPAND ACCESS TO QUALITY PARKS
- ✓ INCREASE TREE CANOPY AND REDUCTION OF IMPERVIOUS SURFACES

DOWNTOWN IS WHERE RESILIENCE HAPPENS

In 2045, downtown is supported and enhanced by sustainable infrastructure that adapts to environmental, economic and social challenges while elevating quality of life. By integrating resilient systems that advance climate goals and public health, downtown becomes a benchmark for urban resilience.

DOWNTOWN IS A ZERO-CARBON DISTRICT THAT ADAPTS TO CHANGE BY...

- Encouraging reuse of existing buildings leading to waste reduction and the preservation of materials
- Implementing renewable district energy systems and smart technologies that boost efficiency, cut emissions and lower costs for property owners and tenants
- Expanding green infrastructure to manage stormwater, reduce urban heat and incorporate natural experiences into attractive public spaces
- Strengthening social and economic resilience with community spaces, local food systems, childcare, education and affordable housing



03

CHALLENGES + OPPORTUNITIES

TURNING CHALLENGES INTO OPPORTUNITIES

As Downtown Denver navigates shifting urban dynamics, this chapter explores the complex landscape of challenges and the transformative opportunities they present. The downtown area is more than a collection of buildings and streets—it is a living, breathing reflection of Denver’s identity, aspirations and resilience. Addressing the issues facing downtown today is not solely about fixing problems—it’s about unlocking potential.

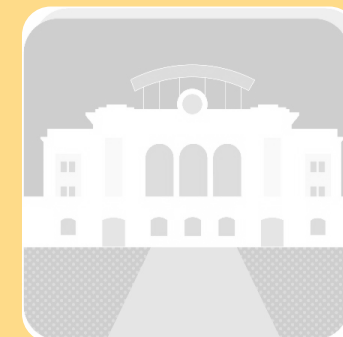
From mobility to affordability and active streets to quality public space, each challenge offers a chance to reimagine downtown with bold creativity and intentionality. As Denver emerges from the disruptions of

the COVID-19 pandemic, this chapter outlines strategies to respond to immediate concerns and the long-term ambitions of this Plan’s vision and Building Blocks. By acknowledging where systems fall short, City agencies, partners and downtown stakeholders can build a neighborhood that truly serves everyone.

This chapter introduces a framework to enhance connectivity, revitalize public space, reimagine land use, and attract quality development that elevates Downtown Denver. The path forward is not without obstacles—but within each challenge lies the opportunity for transformation.

**CHALLENGE 1:
BARRIERS TO
CONNECTION**

**OPPORTUNITY 1:
CONNECT ALL**



**CHALLENGE 2:
INCONSISTENT
INVESTMENT**

**OPPORTUNITY
2: ACTIVATE THE
MARKET**



**CHALLENGE 3:
LACK OF PLACES
TO EXPLORE AND
LINGER**

**OPPORTUNITY 3:
ELEVATE PLAY**

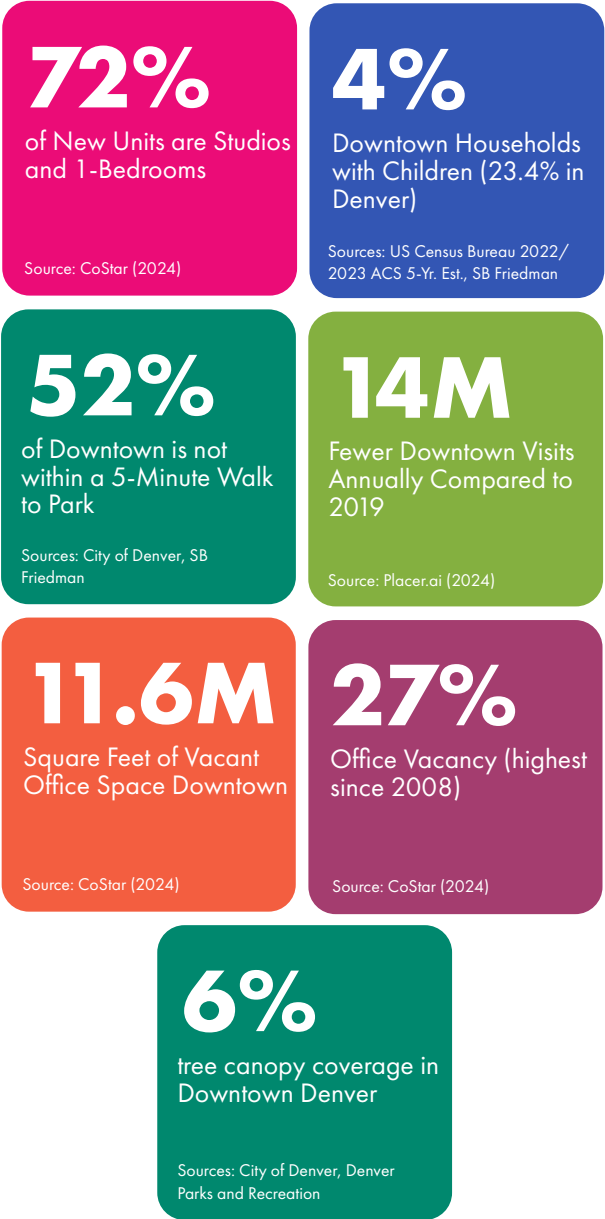
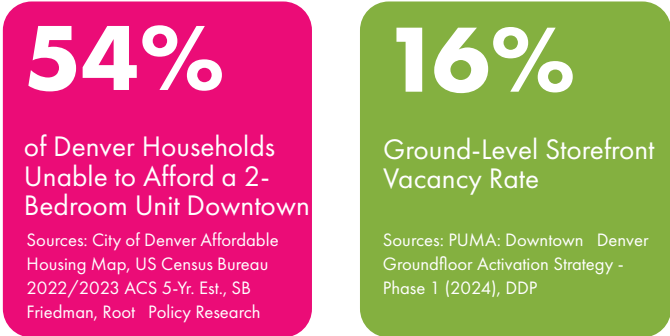
CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES IN FOCUS

While downtown possesses remarkable assets and an enviable foundation for future growth, the area also faces significant challenges that require bold, coordinated action.

Physical barriers from legacy infrastructure at the edges of downtown pose long-standing connectivity limitations like gaps in transit and a transportation system that fails to provide a competitive alternative to cars. These roadblocks present an opportunity to improve connectivity through investments in streets, transit and parking systems.

Existing public spaces like parks and plazas are insufficient for the current demand, and demand will only increase with an increasing population. By elevating “play” in a network of streets, plazas and other shared places, downtown has the opportunity to better use the parks and open spaces that we already have and build upon them.

The pandemic accelerated shifts in how people work, live and interact with urban centers, leaving downtown with unprecedented office vacancies, reduced foot traffic and economic uncertainty. Simultaneously, housing affordability remains a persistent crisis, with too few units—especially family-friendly and attainable living options—to meet growing demand. These difficulties demonstrate the need—now more than ever—to invest in addressing barriers to the types of investments that will invigorate downtown. Through a mix of incentives and removing barriers to the types of development the City and community want to see, private investment can help transform downtown into a mixed-use neighborhood that provides for the basic needs of residents, workers and visitors alike.



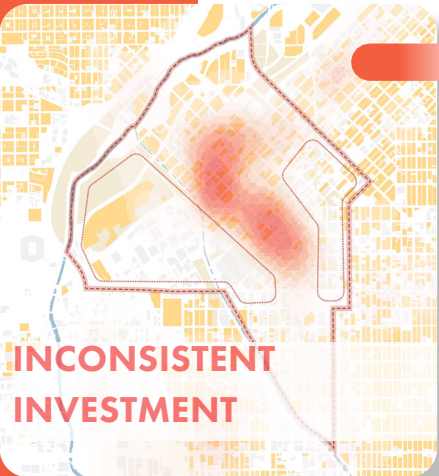
While downtown is a place where people from different neighborhoods and backgrounds meet and interact, many residents from historically marginalized and displaced communities don’t see their cultures and experiences reflected in downtown. Downtown has the potential to deepen its role as the neighborhood for everyone.

These challenges demand multifaceted responses—re-imagining how buildings function, how streets connect, how public spaces are used, and ultimately, how downtown can become the inclusive, vibrant heart of Denver that all Denverites deserve.

CHALLENGES



- Improve the urban grid for all
- Create a park-once, access-oriented mentality



- Enhance the business core
- Catalyze nodes and investment zones

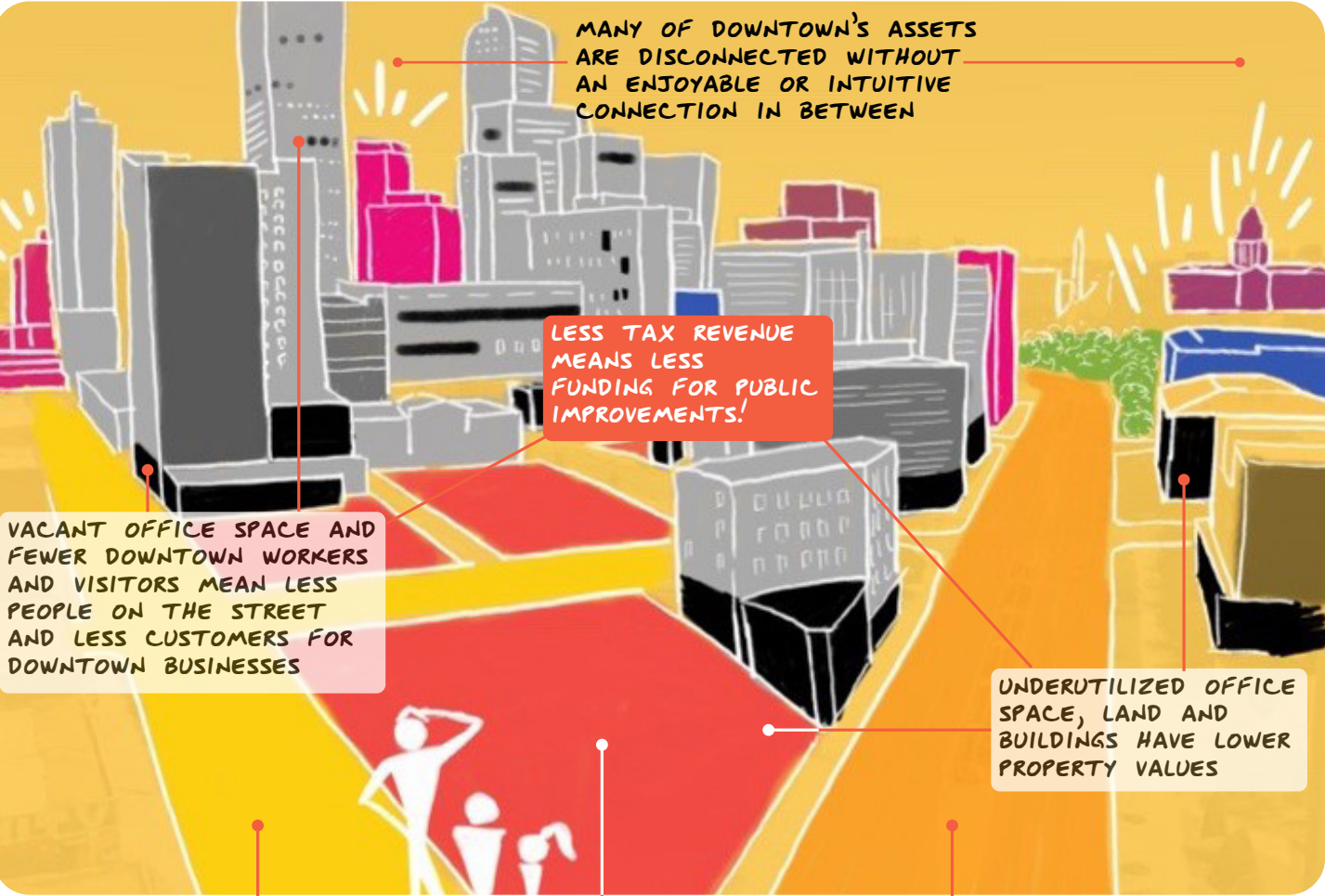


- Use what we have and build upon it
- Create a network of shaded streets to wander
- Activate places for people to stay

OPPORTUNITIES



EXPERIENCING DOWNTOWN TODAY



MANY OF DOWNTOWN'S ASSETS ARE DISCONNECTED WITHOUT AN ENJOYABLE OR INTUITIVE CONNECTION IN BETWEEN

LESS TAX REVENUE MEANS LESS FUNDING FOR PUBLIC IMPROVEMENTS!

VACANT OFFICE SPACE AND FEWER DOWNTOWN WORKERS AND VISITORS MEAN LESS PEOPLE ON THE STREET AND LESS CUSTOMERS FOR DOWNTOWN BUSINESSES

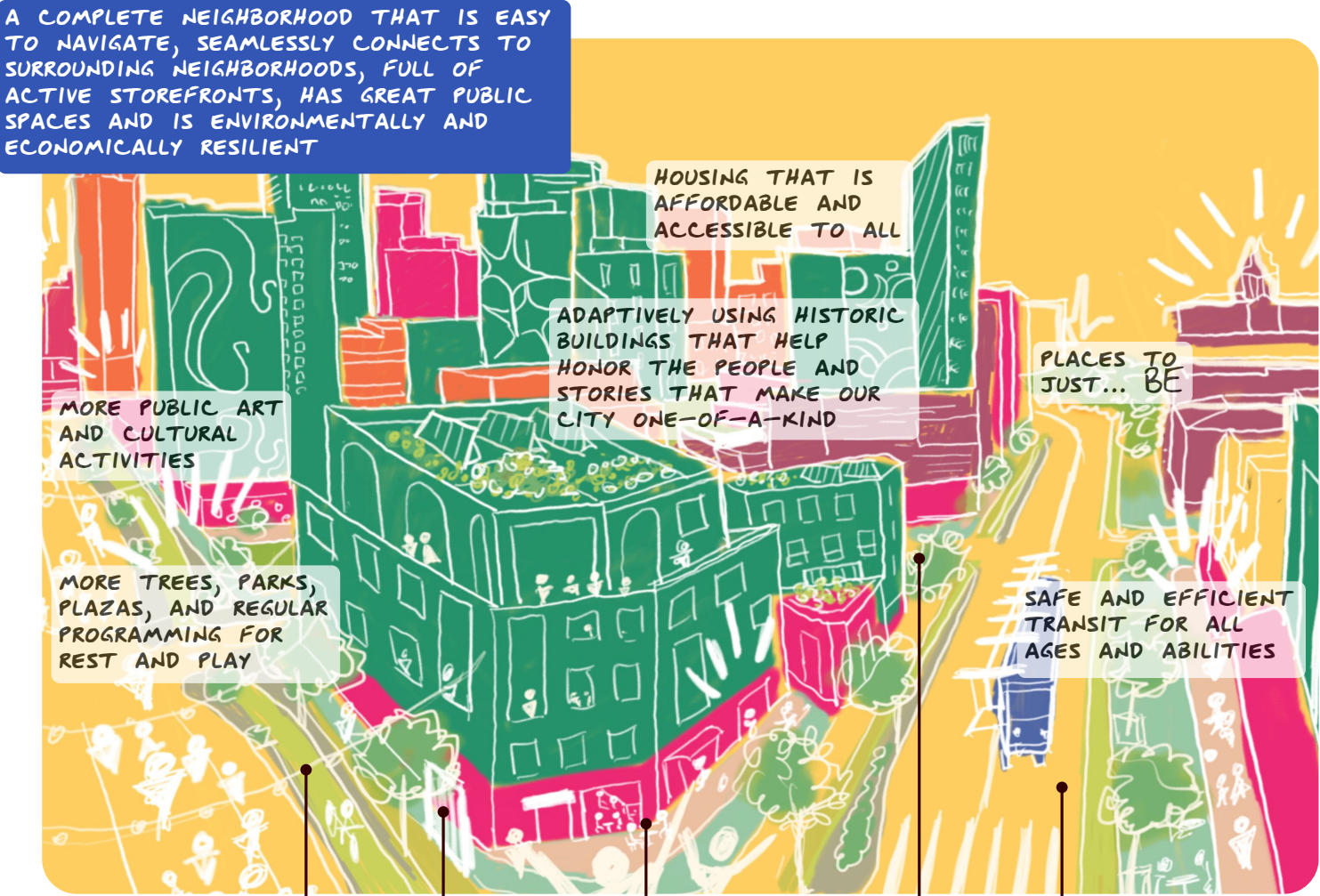
UNDERUTILIZED OFFICE SPACE, LAND AND BUILDINGS HAVE LOWER PROPERTY VALUES

ONE-WAY STREETS THAT ARE INEFFICIENT FOR GETTING WHERE DRIVERS WANT TO GO AND MAKE DOWNTOWN HARDER TO NAVIGATE FOR EVERYONE

SURFACE PARKING LOTS ARE VISIBLE BUT DON'T ACTIVATE STREETS, INCREASE URBAN HEAT AND REDUCE THE APPEAL OF OTHER MODES OF TRANSPORTATION

MAJOR ROADS PRIORITIZE THE FAST MOVEMENT OF CARS OVER THE SAFE NAVIGATION AND COMFORT OF ALL USERS, WHICH CREATES BARRIERS TO ACCESSING AND NAVIGATING DOWNTOWN FOR PEOPLE WALKING, ROLLING, USING MICROMOBILITY AND BIKING

... WHAT IT COULD BE



A COMPLETE NEIGHBORHOOD THAT IS EASY TO NAVIGATE, SEAMLESSLY CONNECTS TO SURROUNDING NEIGHBORHOODS, FULL OF ACTIVE STOREFRONTS, HAS GREAT PUBLIC SPACES AND IS ENVIRONMENTALLY AND ECONOMICALLY RESILIENT

HOUSING THAT IS AFFORDABLE AND ACCESSIBLE TO ALL

ADAPTIVELY USING HISTORIC BUILDINGS THAT HELP HONOR THE PEOPLE AND STORIES THAT MAKE OUR CITY ONE-OF-A-KIND

PLACES TO JUST... BE

MORE PUBLIC ART AND CULTURAL ACTIVITIES

MORE TREES, PARKS, PLAZAS, AND REGULAR PROGRAMMING FOR REST AND PLAY

SAFE AND EFFICIENT TRANSIT FOR ALL AGES AND ABILITIES

TWO-WAY STREETS ENHANCED WITH SHADE, LIGHTING AND STORMWATER MANAGEMENT TO IMPROVE SAFETY AND AESTHETICS

ACTIVE GROUND-FLOORS WITH NEW AND EXISTING BUSINESSES THAT BRING VITALITY TO THE STREETS

"COMPLETE STREETS" THAT SAFELY ACCOMMODATE ALL

CLEAR SIGNAGE AND WAYFINDING FOR PEOPLE WALKING, BIKING, DRIVING, AND USING TRANSIT

STATE-OF-THE-ART DISTRICT ENERGY SYSTEM TO HEAT AND COOL BUILDINGS WITHOUT CARBON POLLUTION

CHALLENGE 1:
BARRIERS TO CONNECTION

Downtown’s edges are defined by large barriers that effectively isolate it from surrounding neighborhoods. Major roadways, like Broadway, Lincoln Street, Speer Boulevard, Colfax Avenue and Interstate 25, form hard boundaries that physically and psychologically separate Downtown from La Alma/Lincoln Park, Capitol Hill, North Capitol Hill, Five Points, Curtis Park, RiNo, Highland, Jefferson Park, and Sun Valley. The South Platte River and Cherry Creek, while natural assets, further contribute to this divide by creating additional boundaries that are difficult to cross, especially for people walking, rolling, and biking.

These physical barriers have led to development patterns that turn inward rather than connecting outward, limiting the potential for economic and social exchange between downtown and nearby neighborhoods. The resulting “island effect” diminishes downtown’s ability to function as a resource for area residents.

Despite significant investment in transit infrastructure, Downtown Denver struggles with a transit network that fails to adequately serve residents, workers and visitors. The current transit system—operated by the Regional



Transportation District (RTD)—lacks the frequency, reliability and coverage needed to make it a preferred transportation option for many users. Although the core of downtown is transit-rich, many of downtown’s densest residential areas lack frequent transit service.

RTD has struggled to restore transit service following pandemic-era reductions, creating barriers to ridership growth. With service levels still constrained, commuters remain reliant on single-occupancy vehicles, perpetuating a cycle where limited transit options hinder ridership recovery. Addressing this challenge will require investments in service, physical infrastructure, and user experience improvements to build a more seamless and accessible transit network.

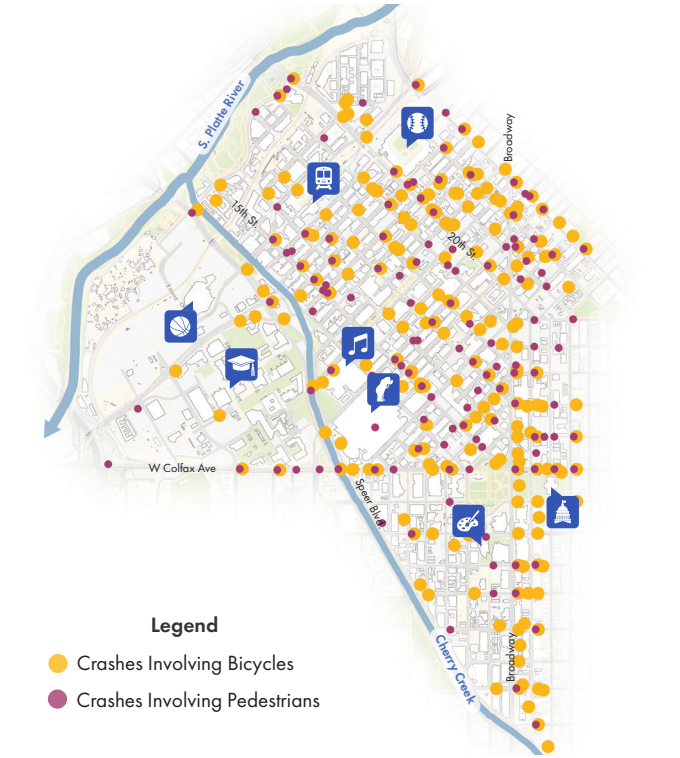
While the bike network has grown over the years, it is hampered by key missing connections, less robust bike infrastructure in nearby neighborhoods, and inconsistent infrastructure. The growth of trips for people on bikes and scooters is even more impacted by real and perceived barriers to downtown like Broadway, Lincoln Street, Speer Boulevard, Colfax Avenue and Interstate 25, demonstrating the need for infrastructure investments crossing these thoroughfares.

For all road users, the experience of getting around downtown is hindered by inconsistent branding, wayfinding and infrastructure, making these systems difficult to navigate for occasional users and reasons why some people avoid downtown.

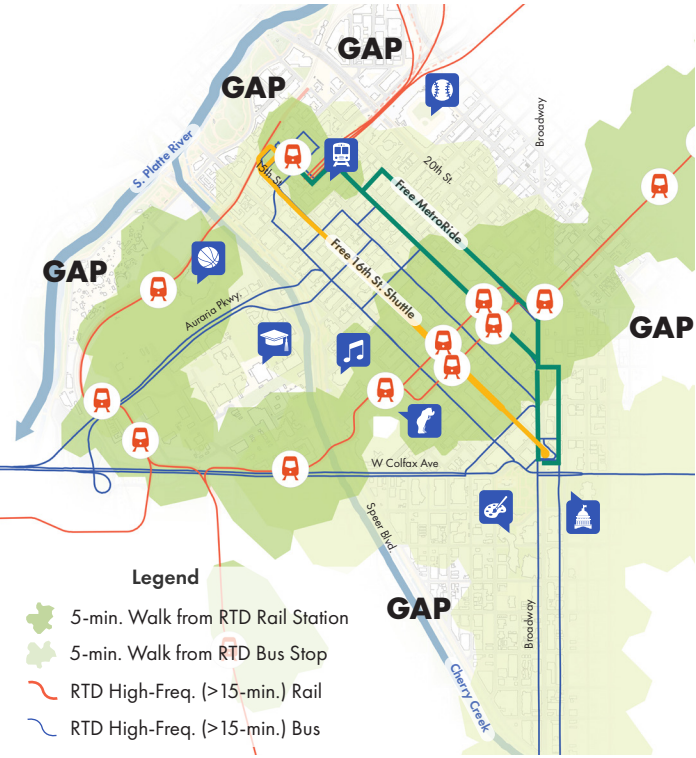
BARRIERS TO CONNECTION

- MAJOR THOROUGHFARES LIMIT LOCAL ACCESS AND CONNECTIVITY
- CONFUSING CIRCULATION FOR BIKES AND CARS
- INCONSISTENT AND UNCOMFORTABLE INFRASTRUCTURE FOR PEOPLE THAT WALK, ROLL AND BIKE
- LIMITED LIGHT RAIL ACCESS TO DENSE CENTRAL NEIGHBORHOODS
- LARGE CAR COMMUTER BASE IN CLOSE PROXIMITY
- RAIL TRANSIT IS DESIGNED FOR LONG RANGE COMMUTER

WIDE-SPREAD SAFETY CONCERNS FOR PEOPLE WALKING AND BIKING



GAPS + PERCEIVED BARRIERS IN TRANSIT SERVICE



BUSY ROADS SURROUND AND CUT THROUGH DOWNTOWN



OPPORTUNITY 1:
CONNECT ALL

CConnection

PPlay

EEquity

RResilience

Improve access to, through and around downtown by breaking barriers, clarifying movements and minimizing conflicts between modes of travel.

BARRIERS TO CONNECTION

CONNECT ALL

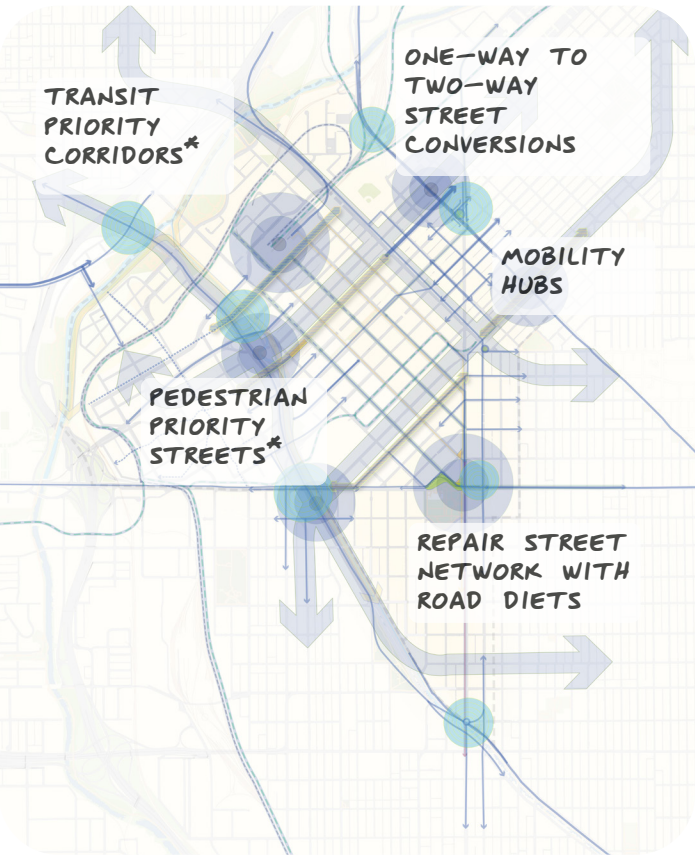
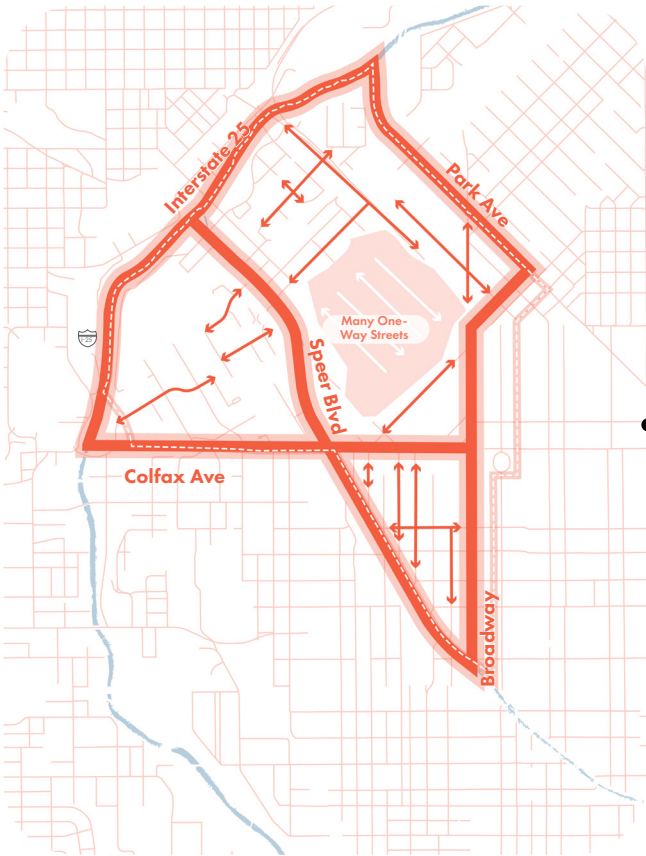


FIGURE INTENDED TO BE DIAGRAMMATIC SEE APPENDIX B: MAP BOOK FOR DETAIL

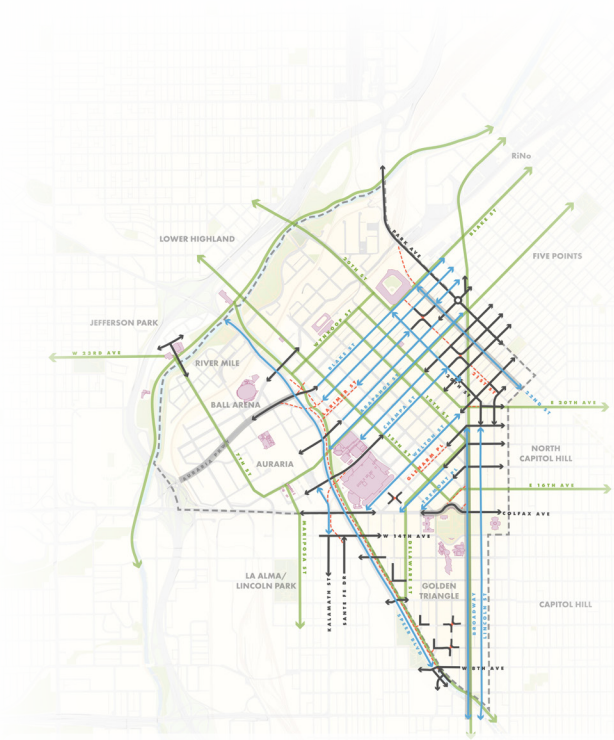
*Priority Corridors: Priority corridors identify optimal routes for pedestrians, bicyclists, and transit to reduce conflict between users and improve efficiency.

Downtown’s mobility network must evolve to meet changing needs and overcome longstanding challenges. This Plan reimagines downtown’s street grid to create a more intuitive and accessible system that works better for all modes of transportation.

A key element is the conversion of one-way streets to two-way operation, which will improve navigability, reduce speeds and support retail visibility. Streets like Broadway, Lincoln and Welton are priorities for conversion, creating a network that is easier for visitors and residents alike to navigate.

Recommendations in the Plan also address major barriers at downtown’s edges. Redesigning arterials like Speer Boulevard, Broadway and Colfax Avenue as multimodal urban boulevards will help connect downtown to surrounding neighborhoods while improving safety for all users. Strategic closures or narrowing of certain streets will create opportunities for new public spaces while maintaining mobility connections.

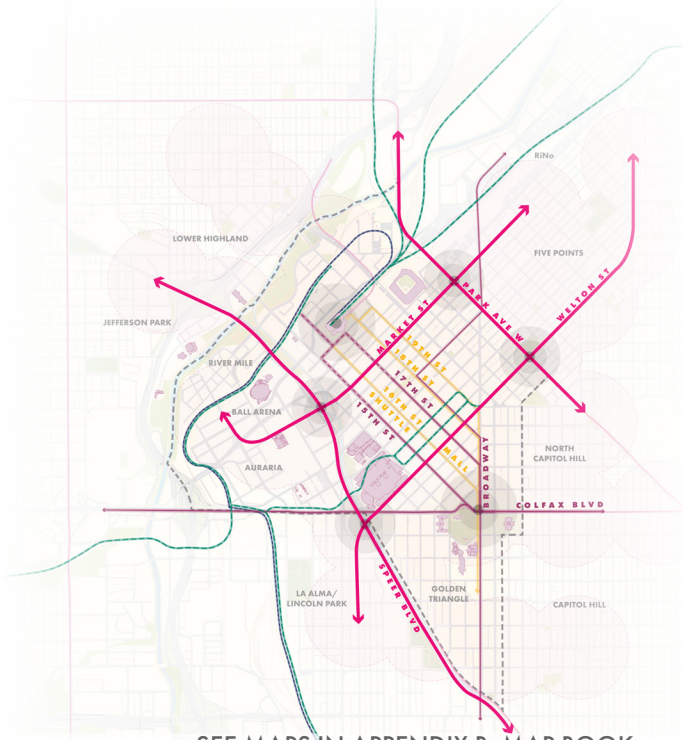
TWO-WAY STREETS, SHARED STREETS AND STREETS THAT PRIORITIZE PEOPLE



Within downtown, the Plan establishes a clearer hierarchy of streets with different functions and designs. Transit priority corridors, pedestrian-focused streets and bicycle routes will be clearly defined and designed accordingly, reducing conflicts between different users and improving efficiency for all modes.

The importance of human-scaled design throughout the transportation network is also emphasized. Wider sidewalks, shorter crossing distances, improved lighting and integration of green infrastructure will create a more comfortable and inviting environment for people walking, rolling or using transit. This should include improving pedestrian safety, visibility and comfort by redesigning intersections where feasible as well as upgrading existing bikeways with permanent materials or streetscaping.

TRANSIT THAT SERVES DOWNTOWN AND NEARBY NEIGHBORHOODS



SEE MAPS IN APPENDIX B: MAP BOOK

CHALLENGE 2:
INCONSISTENT INVESTMENT

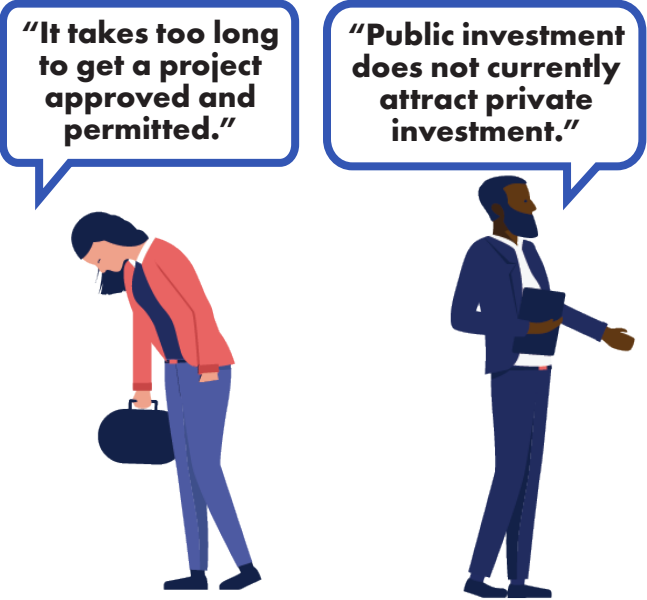
There are disinvested and underutilized areas of downtown that disrupt a cohesive urban development.

The pattern of limited investment tends to concentrate in specific areas, creating stark contrasts between high-activity zones and areas with less recent development activity. This uneven pattern reduces downtown’s overall vibrancy and creates challenges related to safety and appeal. Recent public investments (e.g., the revitalization of 16th Street) demonstrate the potential for catalytic projects to attract new business. Transforming underinvested areas and downtown-wide infrastructure (e.g., energy systems, streets, public spaces) will require targeted public investment to catalyze private development interest.

Downtown has experienced significant decline in visitation patterns that threaten its role as an economic engine and a regional destination. Downtown residents, employees and visitors increasingly moved away from existing trends of traditional retail shopping and office visitation, which was accelerated by the COVID-19 pandemic. Many businesses have struggled to adapt to these evolving consumer behaviors.

The changing composition of downtown visitors, along with fewer daily office workers, has impacted sales tax revenues alongside the value of office and retail space. In 2024 there were 14 million fewer visits to downtown compared to 2019. This shift requires rethinking traditional activation strategies and business models that relied on predictable weekday visitation. The changing visitation patterns particularly impact ground floor businesses, cultural institutions and public spaces that depend on consistent foot traffic. Creating a more resilient downtown requires diversifying the reasons people visit, providing a safe and inclusive environment, and ensuring that the downtown experience meets the needs and expectations of changing visitation patterns.

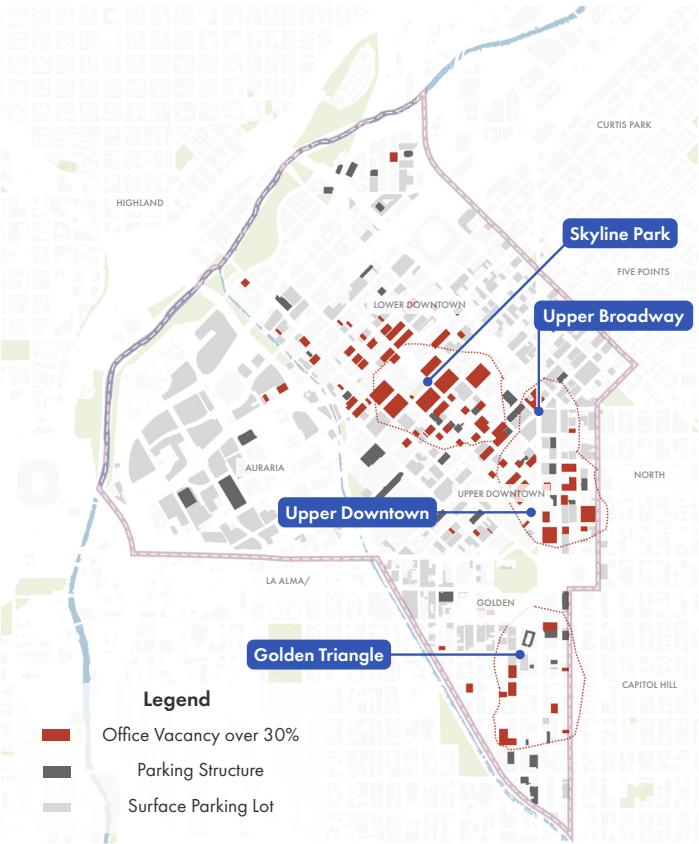
Downtown faces a paradoxical situation where job growth has not translated to increased office occupancy, creating challenges for the commercial real estate market and the overall downtown economy. The rise of remote and hybrid work models has fundamentally



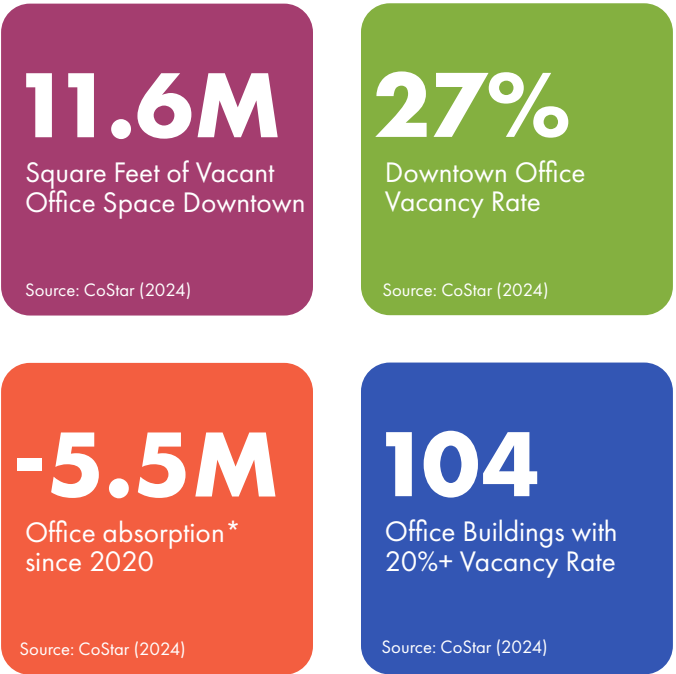
INCONSISTENT INVESTMENT

- CONCENTRATED AREAS OF SURFACE PARKING AND VACANT OFFICE SPACE
- HIGHEST OFFICE VACANCY SINCE THE GREAT RECESSION
- OLDER OFFICE BUILDINGS NO LONGER MEET THE NEEDS OF MODERN EMPLOYERS
- REGULATORY AND PROCEDURAL BARRIERS TO PRIVATE INVESTMENT
- FEWER TOURIST VISITS AND IN-PERSON OFFICE WORKERS
- LAGGING SALE TAX REVENUES
- AREAS WITH LIMITED PUBLIC INVESTMENT

CONCENTRATED AREAS OF SURFACE PARKING AND VACANT OFFICE SPACE



NEGATIVE OFFICE ABSORPTION DESPITE POSITIVE JOB GROWTH



*Office Absorption: The change in office occupancy over a given time period.

FEWER VISITS TO DOWNTOWN



changed the relationship between employment and office space demands. Even as companies add jobs to the downtown market, many are reducing their amount of office space, leading to increasing office vacancy rates that threaten the economic foundation of downtown.

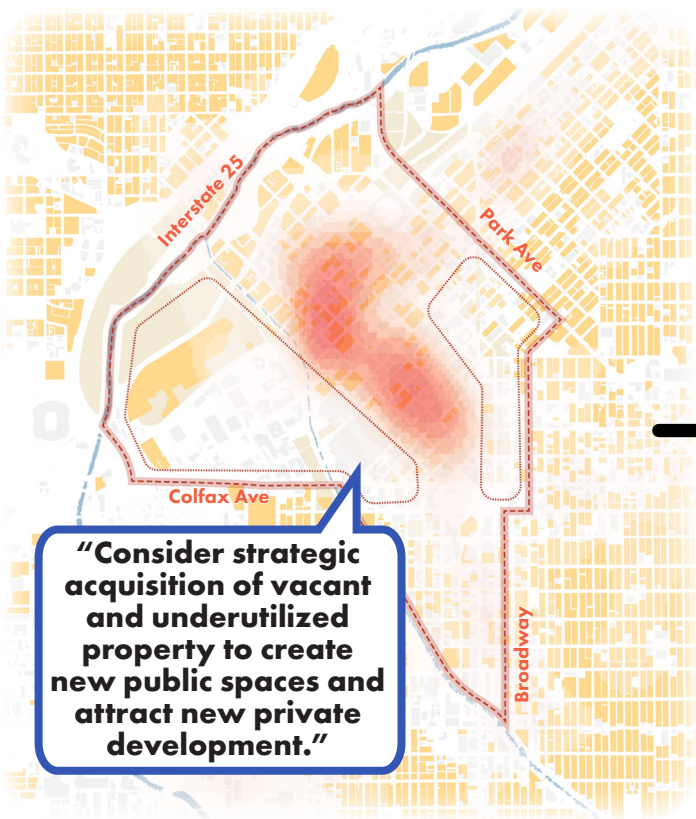
This trend particularly impacts older office buildings, which struggle to compete with newer properties that offer amenities and configurations better suited to contemporary workplace preferences. The resulting vacancy in aging office spaces creates challenges for property owners, reduces foot traffic for ground-floor businesses and threatens the city’s tax revenues as these properties are beginning to be reassessed at lower values. Additionally, the uncertain future of office demand complicates long-term planning and investment decisions. Stabilizing the office market requires both short-term strategies to fill vacant space and longer-term approaches to repurpose obsolete buildings for alternative uses.

OPPORTUNITY 2:
ACTIVATE THE MARKET



Establish key areas to pilot, concentrate and incubate programs, policies and funding to catalyze the Central Business District from both the inside and the edges while doubling down on existing initiatives and developments.

INCONSISTENT INVESTMENT



“Consider strategic acquisition of vacant and underutilized property to create new public spaces and attract new private development.”

ACTIVATE THE MARKET

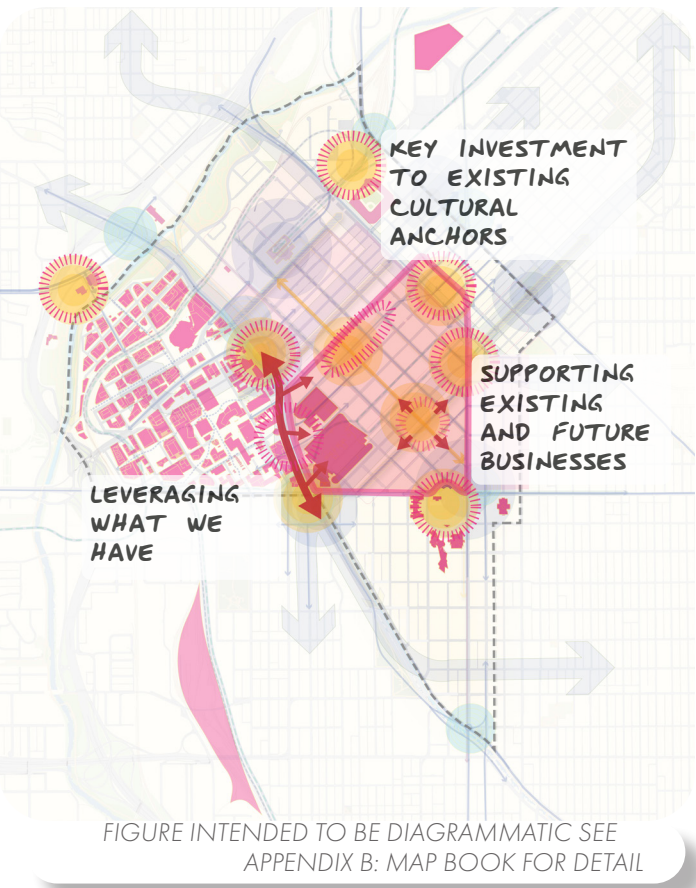


FIGURE INTENDED TO BE DIAGRAMMATIC SEE APPENDIX B: MAP BOOK FOR DETAIL

Downtown Denver has a solid urban foundation of recent investments in public infrastructure, private development and public spaces have already begun transforming parts of the center city. Many aspects of this Plan focus on leveraging existing assets and ongoing initiatives to accelerate positive change.

The Plan recommends capitalizing on existing anchor institutions like the Colorado Convention Center, the Arts Complex, historic Denver Union Station and other cultural destinations by improving connections and complementary uses between them and nearby to support the large number of visitors and activity. To bolster these energy centers, strategic investments can be made in the surrounding areas.

Additionally, by completing planned improvements to spaces like Skyline Park and Civic Center Park, extending the success of the 16th Street revitalization to additional blocks and supporting the expansion of successful programs like outdoor dining and retail pop-ups, downtown can catalyze progress while longer-term initiatives take shape.

Finally, this Plan also emphasizes the potential for upcoming developments on the Auraria Campus and at Ball Arena and River Mile to draw thousands of daily visitors. The recently updated Auraria Campus Framework Plan proposes significant densification and introduction of mixed-uses. Ball Arena and River Mile will also add thousands of new housing units, increasing foot traffic and overall demand and consumption of goods and services downtown.

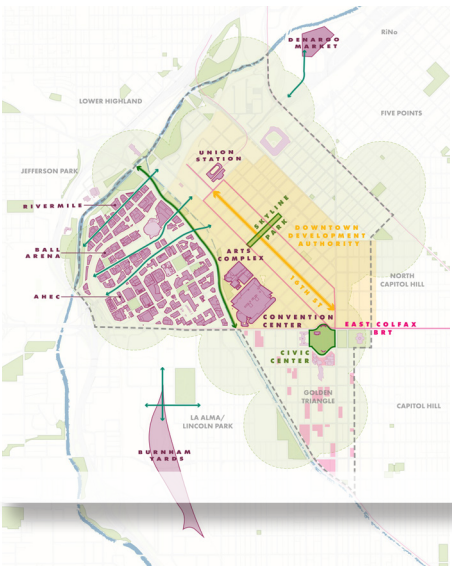
Not all of downtown can be transformed simultaneously. The Plan identifies specific nodes and districts where concentrated investment can have the greatest catalytic impact. By focusing resources and attention on these targeted areas, nodes can be created that demonstrate what is possible for the rest of downtown.

Each investment zone will have a distinct character and purpose, reflecting the unique assets and opportunities of its location. The focus areas identified in Chapter 5 represent priority investment zones, including Civic Center, Upper Downtown, Skyline Park, Upper Broadway, Ballpark/Sakura Square, Cherry Creek/Speer Boulevard and Central Platte Valley.

Within these zones, the Plan recommends deploying a comprehensive set of tools, including public realm improvements, adaptive reuse incentives, strategic infill development, cultural programming and business support. This coordinated approach ensures that investments reinforce each other, creating a whole greater than the sum of its parts.

Critical to this strategy is the expanded Denver Downtown Development Authority (Denver DDA), which will provide a powerful financing tool for catalytic public and private investment to spur transformative redevelopment projects similar to the Denver Union Station revitalization.

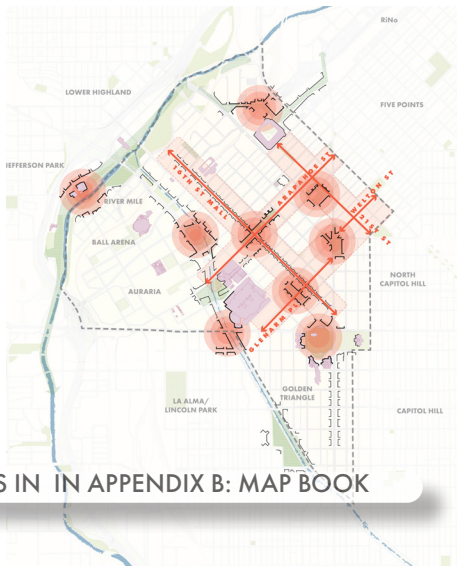
LEVERAGE WHAT WE HAVE



SUPERCHARGE THE DOWNTOWN CORE



FOCUS ON KEY INVESTMENT SITES



SEE MAPS IN APPENDIX B: MAP BOOK

CHALLENGE 3:
LACK OF PLACES TO EXPLORE AND LINGER

Downtown Denver lacks sufficient access to a variety of high-quality public spaces that invite lingering, interaction and a sense of belonging and safety for diverse users. The existing public realm offers limited opportunities for active and passive recreation, cultural expression and community gathering. Parks and plazas are inconsistently programmed and are sometimes perceived as unwelcoming or unsafe, reducing their effectiveness as community assets.

Additionally, ground-floor activation is inconsistent, with many streets lacking the vibrant edge conditions* that create interest for pedestrians. When combined with limited tree canopy and shade structures, the overall public realm experience discourages extended stays, particularly in the heat or during extreme weather events. Urban heat islands are caused by dark, impermeable surfaces like pavement, rooftops, and buildings which absorb and store more heat than natural landscapes, resulting in temperatures significantly higher than surrounding rural areas. This can cause increased air pollution, energy bills and negative health effects, particularly for at-risk populations. Solutions include increasing green infrastructure such as trees and parks, using reflective cool roofs and pavement, and improving urban design to promote better airflow. Creating



a Downtown where people want to linger requires physical improvements to public spaces, programming that reflects the diversity of residents and visitors, and a sense of safety for all. This goes beyond farmers markets and events in the public realm; it requires partnerships with private enterprises, cultural organizations and the arts community to deliver varied authentic experiences.

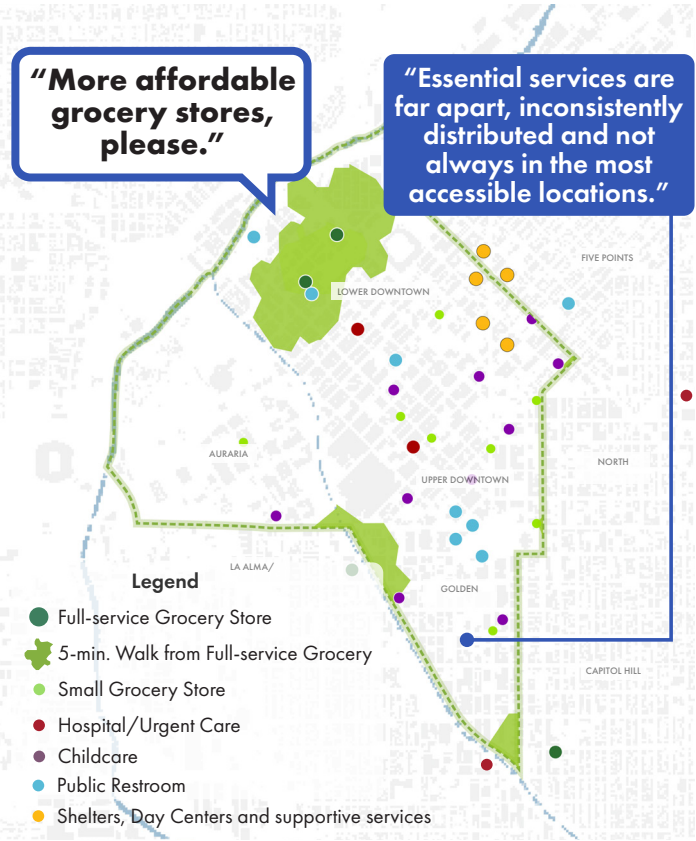
Downtown struggles to function as a complete neighborhood due to limited housing diversity and gaps in essential services. The current housing stock is heavily weighted toward luxury apartments with high rents that are largely studios and one-bedroom units. As a result, there are insufficient housing options for middle-income households, families with children and for those seeking ownership opportunities. This imbalance threatens downtown's social diversity and limits potential for community building. The scarcity of neighborhood-serving amenities—grocery stores, healthcare facilities, schools, childcare centers and daily retail needs—forces residents to travel elsewhere for basic services. This service gap creates a significant barrier to attracting new residents, particularly families and seniors who require proximity to essential services. Additionally, soon-to-expire affordability restrictions on existing affordable units threaten to further reduce housing accessibility. Creating a livable Downtown requires both expanding housing options across the affordability spectrum and strategically filling service gaps to support daily life.

LACK OF PLACES TO EXPLORE AND LINGER

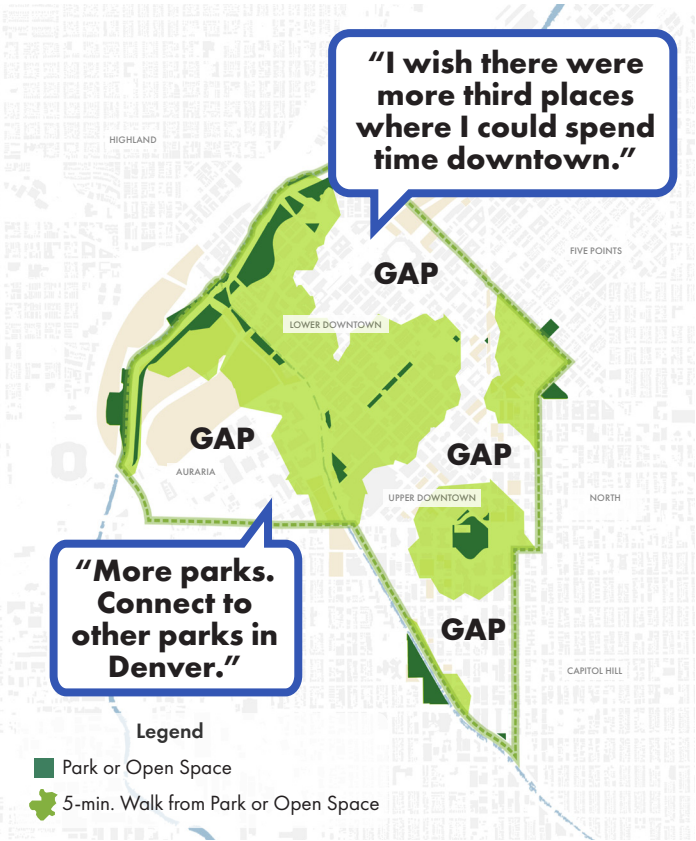
- LACK OF AFFORDABLE HOUSING
- LITTLE DIVERSITY OF HOUSING TYPES (ESPECIALLY FOR FAMILIES)
- 52% OF DOWNTOWN IS NOT WITHIN A 5-MINUTE WALK TO A PARK
- LIMITED PROGRAMMING OF PUBLIC SPACES
- DISCONNECT BETWEEN NEIGHBORHOOD SERVICES AND WHERE PEOPLE LIVE

*Vibrant Edge conditions generally refer to the transition between public spaces, such as streets, and their surrounding uses, such as buildings. Vibrant edge conditions use elements like activated storefronts or public art to create interest for pedestrians.

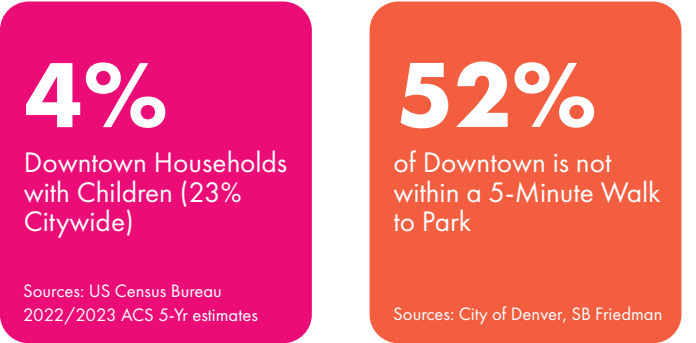
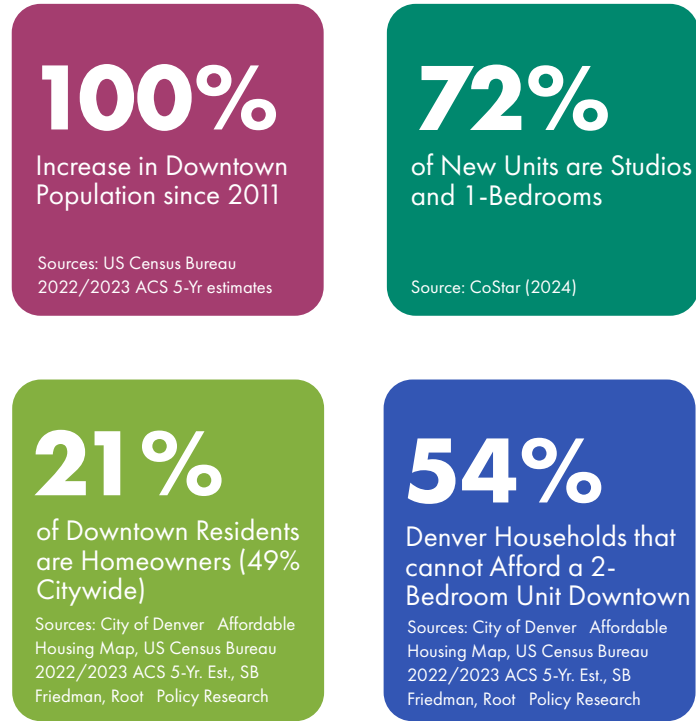
GAPS IN NEIGHBORHOOD SERVICES



GAPS IN ACCESS TO PARKS



INSUFFICIENT HOUSING OPTIONS AND LACK OF AFFORDABILITY



OPPORTUNITY 3:
ELEVATE PLAY

C

P

E

S

Connection

Play

Equity

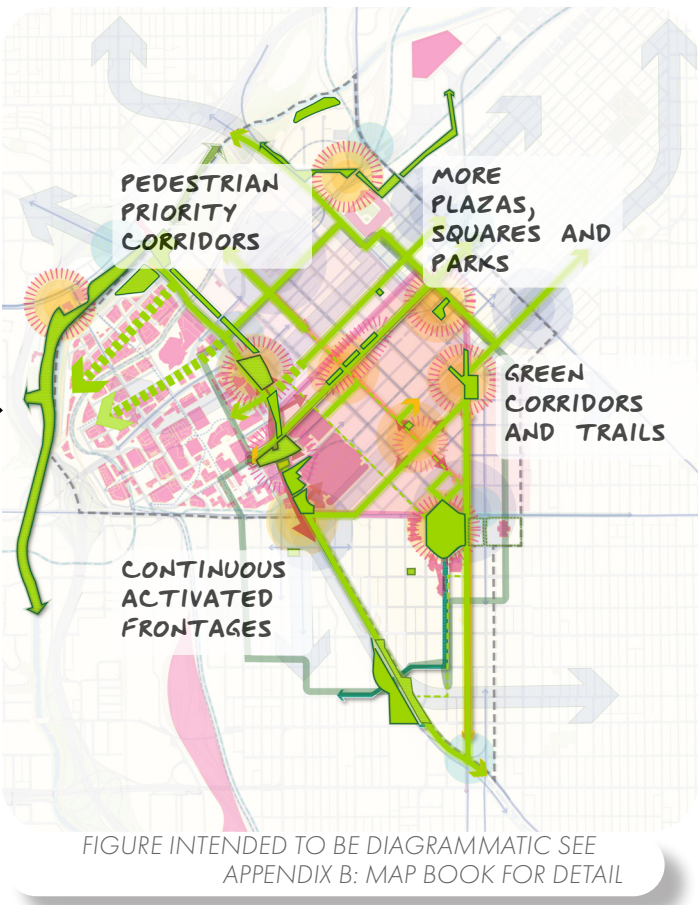
Stories

Create a hierarchy of public realm improvements to enhance connections to key areas and build a network of parks, plazas, and open spaces for people to gather, recreate and relax.

LACK OF PLACES TO EXPLORE AND LINGER



ELEVATE PLAY



A great downtown invites exploration and serendipitous discovery. Downtown Denver needs more places where people want to spend time, connect and engage with their community, especially without the need to spend money. Many strategies in the Plan aim to create a network of compelling pathways, corridors and routes that encourage people to wander and experience the city on foot or by bike.

Primary pedestrian corridors—such as 16th Street, Curtis Street and Wynkoop Street—will receive significant investment in the public realm, including wider sidewalks, street trees, seating and active ground floors. Additional corridors will provide quieter alternatives with their own distinctive character. Key to this network’s success will be creating clear connections between downtown’s major destinations and open spaces. Improved wayfinding, consistent design elements, and strategic programming will help people navigate between key nodes within Downtown.

The Plan also calls for tools to increase daily life amenities downtown, improve urban design and user comfort amenities in the public realm, preserve existing affordable units while expanding affordable housing*, increase the overall housing stock with an emphasis

on units to support a diverse community, and expand access to quality public open space through acquisition, renovations, maintenance and programming.

*** Affordable housing – Housing that costs an occupant no more than 30% of their gross income, including utilities. Income restricted housing is a type of affordable housing that requires occupants to meet certain Area Median Income (AMI) requirements.**

Denver AMI levels:

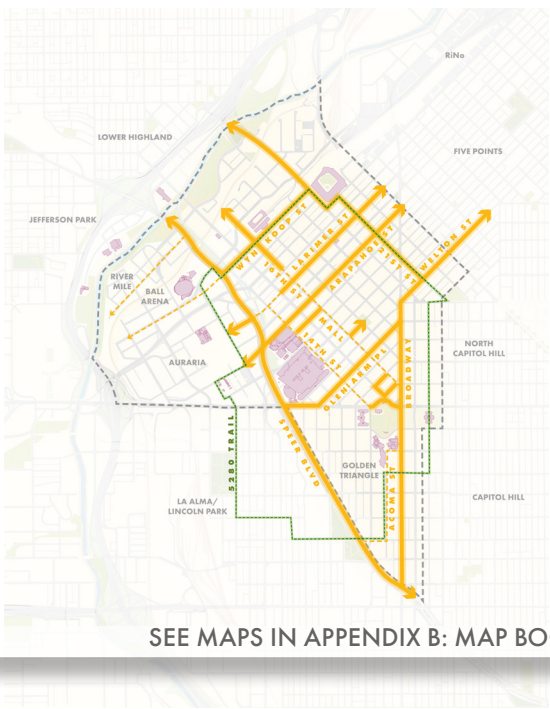
- HUD Income Designations for Denver AMI levels:
- 80% AMI - Low Income (\$71,900 for 1 person, \$102,650 for 4 person household)
 - 50% AMI - Very Low Income (\$45,650 for 1 person, \$65,200 for 4 person household)
 - 30% AMI - Extremely Low Income (\$27,400 for 1 person, \$39,100 for 4 person household)

Source: Denver Department of Housing Stability, 2024

ACTIVATE PLACES FOR PEOPLE TO STAY



A NETWORK OF STREETS WORTH WANDERING



SEE MAPS IN APPENDIX B: MAP BOOK

04

POLICIES + PROGRAMS

POLICY AND PROGRAM BUNDLES

Policy and program strategies provide the essential framework to transform downtown into the vibrant, healthy and complete neighborhood called for by the vision and building blocks of this plan. These seven interconnected bundles of strategies (shown below) establish the governance structures, regulatory reforms, funding mechanisms, and collaborative partnerships needed to turn that vision into reality.

The program and policy bundles are organized around seven critical goals identified through the planning process. These goals establish the need for strengthening civic and government systems, enhancing downtown identity and legibility, enlivening public spaces, supporting economic vitality and promoting sustainability. When implemented alongside the

ACHIEVING THE BUILDING BLOCKS

Each policy and program strategy is evaluated by which building blocks will be positively impacted through implementation of the strategy.

Connection
Play
Investment
Innovation
Equity
Stories
Resilience
C P I I E S R

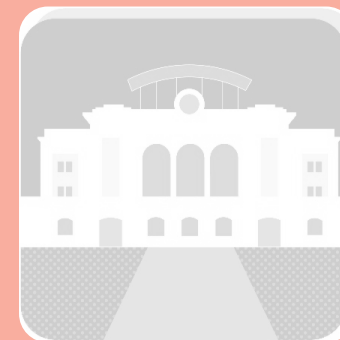
opportunities identified in this Plan, the strategies will support the implementation of physical improvements, increase the efficiency of regulations and improve the business climate.

**1. CIVIC +
GOVERNANCE
FRAMEWORK**

**2. NAVIGATION +
LEGIBILITY**

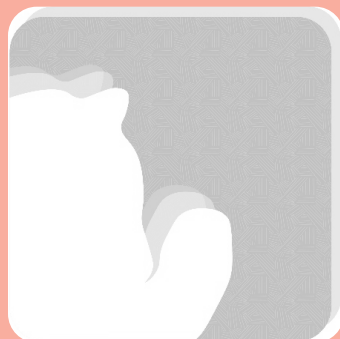


**3. SAFETY,
PROGRAMMING
+ ACTIVATION**



**4. OFFICE +
WORKFORCE**

**5. RESIDENTIAL +
DAILY LIFE**



**6. GROUND-
FLOOR EXPERIENCE**



**7. SUSTAINABILITY
+
INFRASTRUCTURE**



1

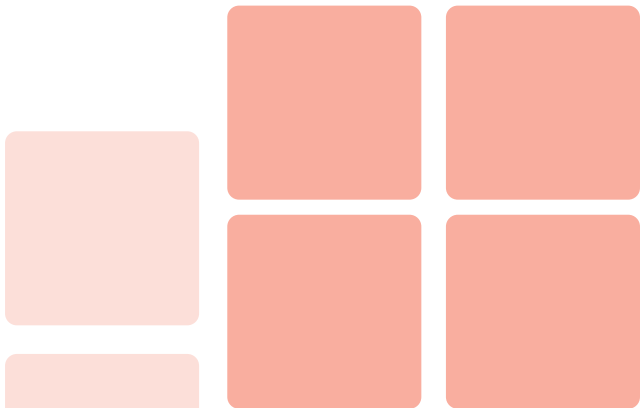
CIVIC + GOVERNANCE
FRAMEWORK

GOAL: Effective government and clear partnerships push ideas forward to deliver positive change.



WHAT WE'RE
SOLVING FOR

- Better alignment on downtown priorities across city agencies and partners to effectively implement plans and reduce permitting time.
- Better coordination across City agencies on infrastructure investments and policy guidance is needed in order to have a greater collective impact.
- While numerous entities such as the Partnership are actively involved across much of this work, more impact is needed to shift the current trends.



RECOMMENDED STRATEGIES

BUILDING BLOCKS

A Major, impactful downtown projects are accomplished through the effective coordination and collaboration of City agencies and partner organizations. **CPIIESR**

1. Identify or establish a project champion(s) in the Mayor's Office or Denver Permitting Office that is empowered to align department priorities to coordinate private downtown development proposals and City-led projects.
2. Establish working groups with representation from relevant City agencies and external stakeholders to improve collaboration on public and private investments downtown.
3. Explore the creation of a downtown-specific capital plan that links complex, multi-agency projects with existing funding sources in order to capitalize and expand the pile of existing resources.

B Underutilized downtown properties are identified and redeveloped in the community's interest through public-private partnerships. **CPIIESR**

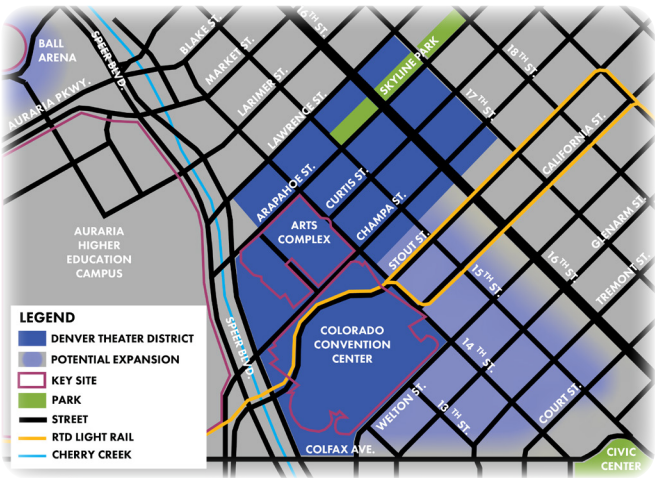
1. Identify a lead agency – internal or external to the City – to serve as “master developer” for public-private partnerships by identifying land and funding opportunities to actively facilitate redevelopment of underutilized downtown properties.

C The development and redevelopment process in downtown is predictable and efficient. **CPIIESR**

1. Identify and remedy areas with complex or multiple overlapping regulations that result in development barriers (e.g. view planes, overlay districts) including the Speer Boulevard corridor near Lower Downtown.
2. Review existing processes for development review to identify opportunities for increased efficiency to achieve development that is in support of the plan goals and other city-wide goals.
3. Assess opportunities to streamline the Downtown Urban Design Standards and Guidelines (UDSG) review process for downtown projects (e.g., administrative review for projects that achieve exceptional design).

D Regulatory tools, including zoning and Urban Design Standards and Guidelines (UDSG) result in high-quality urban design that reflects downtown's role as the heart of a world-class city. **CPIIESR**

1. Replace outdated B-5 Urban Design Standards and Guidelines with the Downtown UDSG, tailored to the Downtown context, to ensure quality urban design that reflects Denver's culture and climate, enhances and connects to nature and creates a lively, safe and inviting public realm.
2. Increase maximum building height and floor area ratio (FAR) in specific areas to implement recommendations for the Arts Complex and the East Central Area Plan.
3. Update zoning and UDSG to incentivize below-grade parking and reduce the prominence of parking downtown that are simple to implement and do not create barriers to redevelopment. Require above-grade parking wrapping, count above-grade parking toward FAR maximums and review new and existing incentives (e.g., below-grade parking bonus) for effectiveness.
4. Establish standards or guidelines for downtown building design to simplify existing sunlight preservation standards and encourage point-tower design through standards for tall building spacing, solar access and/or sky exposure.
5. Allow limited expansion of the Downtown Theater District (D-TD) to strategic locations (see map at right) adjacent to the existing D-TD zone district where additional signage, enhanced lighting and digital art installations can support street activation and visual interest along entertainment-focused corridors and on blank facades. Update the District Sign Plan to ensure signage standards place appropriate limits on scale, location, energy usage and light impacts from signage on residential uses and provides funding for cultural programming and other benefits.
6. Identify opportunities for specialized district elements, such as signage, to be expanded to other entertainment-focused areas that are outside of the D-TD zone district (e.g., Ball Arena, McGregor Square) with limitations on scale, location, energy usage and light impacts on residential uses and administered by the D-TD or similar entity.



SEE MAP IN APPENDIX C: REFERENCE MAPS

2

NAVIGATION + LEGIBILITY

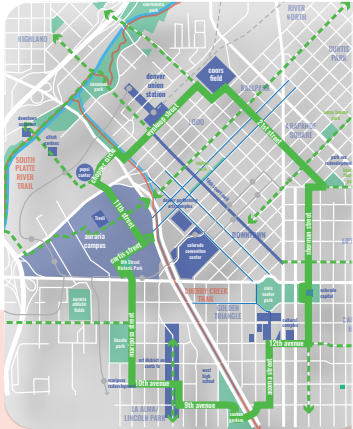
GOAL: *Downtown is accessible for everyone, easy to navigate and integrates Denver’s rich history into public spaces.*

WHAT WE’RE SOLVING FOR

- Many one-way streets and inconsistent space and amenities for people walking, rolling, biking or taking transit results in a downtown street grid that is difficult to navigate.
- There is a lack of consistent signage, wayfinding, branding, and a cohesively and attractively designed public realm that provides a Denver-specific experience and orients people to the area.
- Key services and amenities, like transit and parking, are difficult to understand in terms of wayfinding and cost—creating barriers to their use, especially for new and infrequent users.

WHY THE 5280 TRAIL?

The 5280 Trail is an envisioned 5.280-mile urban trail connecting people with each other through Downtown Denver’s neighborhoods, parks, and cultural landmarks, from the Santa Fe Arts District to Benedict Fountain Park and Union Station to the State Capitol. The design of the Trail reimagines downtown streets as safe, inviting corridors and provides beautiful places to actively explore downtown while adapting to the varying conditions found within each neighborhood. By linking residents and visitors to everyday destinations and cultural landmarks alike, the 5280 Trail strengthens Denver’s civic spine, fosters healthier and more active lifestyles, and celebrates the city’s spirit of creativity and community. Designed for all ages and abilities, the 5280 Trail invites everyone to explore Denver at their own pace and see the city in a new light. Learn more about the 5280 Trail in Chapter 5 of this plan and at www.the5280trail.com.



SEE MAP IN APPENDIX C: REFERENCE MAPS

C P I I E S R

A

The physical and visual experience of downtown streets prioritizes the safety, comfort, and enjoyment of people walking, rolling, using micromobility and biking.

1. Conduct a comprehensive study that analyzes one-way to two-way street conversions and potential impacts on the downtown street network including curb-use, transit and bikeway operations with a focus on connecting transit hubs to key activity areas.
2. Evaluate existing complete streets and urban design guidelines and consider adjustments to downtown-specific street standards to prioritize people walking, rolling, using micromobility, biking and using transit and ensure trees a priority in policy recommendations and street design guidelines. Reevaluate and revise development criteria related to new street tree requirements and associated infrastructure to ensure better outcomes.
3. Update downtown streetscape guidelines to provide greater consistency where desired in materials, landscaping, signage, furnishings, lighting and dimensions.
4. Clarify the prioritization of overlapping standards and guidelines and how to enforce them consistently.
5. Establish alternative approaches and review criteria for constrained or adaptive reuse projects that achieve desired outcomes when standards and guidelines cannot be met.
6. Create a comprehensive downtown canopy plan to strategically prioritize corridors based on existing projects, development, utilities, heat island mitigation needs and available space.
7. The City acknowledges and understands the community interest in the 5280 trail and supports the community partners as they work to fund and build its linkages through private investment, philanthropy and grants.
8. Continue targeted placemaking investment in re-imagined streets as shared streets, festival streets* and pedestrian zones (e.g., 21st St, Wynkoop St, Acoma St, Larimer St, Glenarm Pl, Arapahoe St, Cleveland Pl, Curtis St.).

* Festival Streets: Streets that are closed to vehicle traffic for the use of community events, festivals, and celebrations. Festival streets have enhanced public realm elements, and may be temporary or permanent.

B

The RTD transit system and services are approachable and easy to navigate.

1. Increase the legibility and user experience of existing RTD service downtown through consistent branding, signage, maps and digital mobility guides with a focus on maximizing utility of the dedicated bus lanes on 15th and 17th streets and connecting high-density residential areas of nearby neighborhoods.
2. Work with RTD to deploy enhanced stop technology and infrastructure, art, and placemaking elements for downtown transit stations and lines, including real-time transit information on digital kiosks.
3. Evaluate aligning downtown stops into “super stops” for key trunk bus routes, such as the O and 83 routes, with the planned stop improvements for the East Colfax BRT service.

C P I I E S R

C

Downtown history and stories are integrated into the experience of being downtown through wayfinding, signage, public art and placemaking.

1. Establish a branding and wayfinding program for downtown that can be used across districts for storytelling, monumentation of public facilities and signage.
2. Cultivate partnerships with Denver’s American Indian community to incorporate indigenous language, culture, and knowledge into signage, public spaces, events and community resources.
3. Explore models for empowering displaced and historically marginalized communities to integrate art, language and storytelling into downtown streets and public spaces.

C P I I E S R

D

Existing on- and off-street parking, both public and private, is utilized efficiently using technology, signage, and pricing.

1. Support a competitive pricing structure between on- and off-street parking and encourage the availability of mid-range duration rates (2-4hrs) across privately owned parking facilities.
2. Coordinate the use of technology to enhance the parking user pay interface and encourage data-sharing around parking utilization and pricing.
3. Standardize wayfinding and pricing signage to increase legibility and parking price transparency.
4. Establish a parking management entity to coordinate parking pricing, technology and wayfinding throughout downtown.
5. Pilot priority locations to encourage a “park once” system with clustered parking facilities that have access to last-mile mobility options such as transit and micromobility.

C P I I E S R

3

SAFETY, PROGRAMMING + ACTIVATION

GOAL: Downtown is a safe and exciting destination that attracts Denverites and visitors to visit, work and live.



WHAT WE'RE SOLVING FOR

- Reduced foot traffic and activity, along with safety concerns during and since the pandemic, have resulted in negative news stories and perceptions of downtown that have, in turn, led to fewer visits from Denver residents and visitors.
- The closure of businesses during and following the pandemic and downtown construction projects have made streets less active and created fewer reasons for people to visit downtown.
- Downtown struggles with the citywide perception that there is not "something for everyone."

RECOMMENDED STRATEGIES

BUILDING BLOCKS

C P I I E S R

A

Downtown is a place where everyone belongs and feels safe.

1. Improve lighting and visibility on downtown streets, alleys and public spaces.
2. Prioritize opportunities for multi-agency collaboration and culturally responsive approaches to ensuring safety for the downtown community.
3. Increase the functionality and presence of the Downtown Ambassador program to include safety officers.
4. Create a uniform downtown marketing campaign to improve perceptions of downtown and attract new businesses and visitors.
5. Assess the maintenance capacity of the city and other entities to identify where additional services are needed and make recommendations as to the appropriate funding sources.

B

Visitors, workers and residents enjoy easy access to public amenities and services throughout downtown.

C P I I E S R

1. Create and upgrade public spaces and publicly accessible private spaces downtown with amenities like public restrooms, water fountains, public Wi-Fi, charging stations and other conveniences.
2. Hire and train social workers, security personnel, paramedics, and operations and maintenance staff to service public spaces. Consider adding social service kiosks throughout downtown.

C

Downtown streets are activated with foot traffic, third places, events, public art, programs and economic activity, with special focus on 16th Street to capitalize on recent infrastructure investments.

C P I I E S R

1. Reestablish the "Meet in the Streets" program to temporarily close 16th Street to transit and provide activities and programming.
2. Develop a downtown public art plan that identifies existing art assets, needs, opportunities, and priority locations for artwork that attracts residents and visitors, tells Denver's story and activates downtown, including publicly or privately funded artwork located in both public spaces and publicly accessible private spaces.
3. Continue efforts to support creative place-making through available liquor license options.
4. Identify and reduce barriers to closing streets for events downtown.
5. Explore activation of difficult to program public spaces (e.g., vacant parcels, areas beneath viaducts, wide sidewalks or right-of-way with limited foot traffic) with purposeful design and programming such as skate parks and bike parks.

D

Downtown parks and public spaces are staffed, well-maintained and offer a variety of programs, activities and experiences.

C P I I E S R

1. Create a toolkit for downtown parks to identify and create sustainable revenue streams to support staffing, operations, maintenance and programming.
2. Create opportunities for food, beverage, limited retail and events in downtown parks.
3. Promote volunteer opportunities so that community members can participate in plan implementation.

E

Downtown programming and events are inclusive and representative of Denver's diverse communities.

C P I I E S R

1. Better utilize existing events and programming infrastructure (such as MyDenver Day) to expand BIPOC and multi-generational events and programming.
2. Establish grants to support capacity-building around events and programming across agencies.

F

Downtown offers opportunities for businesses of all sizes and types (street vendor, kiosk, truck, market stall and storefront) to grow from start-up to storefront.

C I I E S R

1. Identify areas where food carts, food trucks and kiosks can provide activation benefits to facilitate a "food cart to storefront" pipeline.
2. Establish standards for vendors that protect visibility and access to storefront businesses.
3. Simplify the permitting process for food trucks, street vendors and street events to incentivize more activation and programming.

4

OFFICE + WORKFORCE

GOAL: *Downtown is the center of innovation, connection and opportunity, making the district the most desirable place to work in the region.*



WHAT WE'RE SOLVING FOR

- Despite positive job growth in downtown there is less demand for office space, leading to office vacancy well above the national average.
- Much of the office building stock in downtown is aging and does not work well for modern office needs, resulting in high vacancy.
- There is not a strong pipeline of talent from Denver's education system, including the Auraria Campus institutions, into the downtown job market, leading employers to recruit out-of-town talent for jobs.

RECOMMENDED STRATEGIES

BUILDING BLOCKS

A

Build connections between Auraria students (Community College of Denver, Metropolitan State University of Denver, and University of Colorado Denver) and downtown activities, businesses and employment opportunities.

C I I E S R

1. Support coordination between Auraria institutions and downtown employers to create a work-force development center downtown.
2. Encourage increased engagement between Auraria programs and students and downtown businesses.
3. Engage with Auraria students and institutions on efforts to incubate start-up businesses, attract and retain employers, and develop events and public spaces.

B

Strengthen and focus on youth workforce development.

C I I E S R

1. Collaborate with Denver Public Schools to ensure multiple career pathways for all students, including 4-year degrees, 2-year degrees, short-term industry-recognized credentials, apprenticeships or direct-to-employment opportunities, prioritizing quality jobs in growth industries.
2. Partner with Denver employers to expand work-based learning opportunities for local youth.
3. Identify and collaborate with evidence-based training providers that offer proven pathways to industry-recognized short-term credentials.
4. Support the expansion of Registered Apprenticeship programs across key industries and increase youth access to these opportunities.

C

Partner with downtown businesses to address workforce needs.

C I I E S R

1. Engage directly with Downtown employers to identify in-demand occupations, required skills and relevant industry-recognized credentials.
2. Build and leverage a network of education and training providers offering pathways to employment in Downtown Denver.
3. Recruit job seekers including Veterans, disconnected youth and other priority populations into education, training and employment programs.
4. Facilitate direct connections between businesses and a skilled talent pipeline, including hosting dedicated recruitment events for downtown Denver employers.

D

The office market is stabilized through incentives for prospective downtown office tenants and adaptive reuse or strategic removal of aging office buildings.

C P I I E S R

1. Create a dedicated office improvement program that identifies gap financing to provide rental assistance or tenant improvement dollars for the occupation of vacant office space.
2. Create a tax abatement program for non-profit tenants in for-profit spaces that guarantee a discounted rent in exchange for the abatement.
3. Expand the Downtown Tax rebate to include all historic districts and Landmarks in the plan area.
4. Work with State to increase the allocation of funds for the Historic Preservation Tax Credits.
5. Identify gap funding for adaptive reuse that replace or remove aging office product with the intent of right-sizing the office market to match supply.
6. Support adaptive reuse of office buildings for housing and alternative uses, including studio space for artists, entertainment venues, indoor public space, small-scale manufacturing, recreational amenities and vertical horticulture.

5

RESIDENTIAL + DAILY LIFE

GOAL: *Downtown is a complete neighborhood that offers an abundance and variety of housing options supported by the necessary infrastructure, services and conveniences.*



WHAT WE'RE SOLVING FOR

- Along with the rest of Denver, residential population growth downtown has slowed in recent years, resulting in a smaller than desired residential population.
- Downtown lags behind many peer cities in terms of population density and the percentage of the overall city population that lives in downtown neighborhoods.
- Lack of affordable housing, diverse housing options and daily life amenities make it harder for existing and new residents to enjoy the same quality of life offered in surrounding neighborhoods and limit economic and social diversity.
- Construction defects law in Colorado has led to very few for-sale condos constructed in downtown.

RECOMMENDED STRATEGIES

BUILDING BLOCKS

A

Downtown's residential population is doubled by offering a variety of attractive, attainable housing options that reflect the diversity of the community.

C P I I E S R

1. Partner with an existing Community Land Trust (CLT) to provide stable housing opportunities downtown, with emphasis on helping displaced communities return to downtown neighborhoods through home ownership.
2. Create a dedicated program aimed at the preservation of soon-to-expire dedicated affordable units.
3. Establish a funding mechanism to support maintenance and improvements to existing affordable housing units.
4. Provide gap financing for family-centric housing projects targeting missing middle incomes of 80-120 percent Area Median Income (AMI).
5. Encourage the creation of housing units that serve a variety of household sizes and types including both rental and ownership opportunities so residents can build families, age-in-place and provide space and amenities for seniors in downtown.

B

Services and amenities support the daily needs of a diverse residential population to create a complete neighborhood.

C P I I E S R

1. Consider tools and incentives to encourage the establishment of businesses and amenities that support daily life needs such as healthcare, grocery stores, banking, parks, arts and culture, etc. with a focus on small and local businesses.
2. Establish a childcare fund program to open new childcare facilities in underutilized structures, new developments or public facilities across downtown with a focus on small and local businesses
3. Create publicly accessible spaces that serve as outdoor living rooms for a diverse and growing residential population through collaboration with private developers and community organizations.

C

Downtown offers housing options, stability services and other support to prevent homelessness and reduce downtown's unhoused population.

C P I I E S R

1. Identify and fund permanent supportive housing solutions to address needs of the unhoused population in downtown.
2. Consider tools and incentives that establish and sustain services to improve access to healthcare, mental health services, substance abuse treatment and employment assistance.

D

Downtown users are always within ¼ mile (5-minute walk) of a publicly accessible open space.

C P I I E S R

1. Create and activate usable, publicly accessible parks, plazas, green infrastructure, and other common spaces as part of redevelopment and development.
2. Establish a program for securing public access to private common space and amenities (e.g., plazas, rooftops, restrooms, indoor or outdoor gathering spaces) including incentives for participation and priority locations and amenity types.
3. Create a dedicated parkland acquisition fund for downtown parks to reflect the unique costs and space limitations of downtown.
4. Reduce barriers to transfer of right-of-way to parkland to facilitate dedication of park space in areas with limited acquisition options.
5. Work with public and private partners to identify locations for destination play features and tourism attractions that builds off Outdoor Downtown and Outdoor Adventure Plan with a focus on Upper Downtown and 16th Street.

6

GROUND-FLOOR EXPERIENCE

GOAL: Downtown streets are activated by thriving businesses that increase foot traffic, engage with the public realm and energize formerly underutilized spaces.



WHAT WE'RE SOLVING FOR

- Fewer workers and downtown visitors means more struggling ground-floor businesses or vacant storefronts that create a pattern of inactivity and lack of vibrancy along streets.
- Large areas of surface parking lots that could be activated with homes, businesses and places where people gather are instead used to store cars, which contributes to the sense of lifelessness in some parts of downtown.
- Limited opportunities for local and small businesses to start and grow downtown limit the diversity of places to eat, drink, shop and be entertained.

RECOMMENDED STRATEGIES

BUILDING BLOCKS

C P I I E S R

A

Surface parking lots reduce their visual and environmental impacts or convert into housing, businesses, public space and other more active uses.

1. Work with the Assessor's Office to ensure that downtown property values accurately reflect value.
2. Update regulations for downtown to encourage shared parking, transportation demand management (TDM), parking management systems and other tools to use new and existing parking more efficiently.
3. Improve the experience of existing parking lots by updating standards (e.g., landscaping, lighting, public art and urban design) and thresholds for compliance.
4. Encourage the redevelopment of surface parking lots downtown – prioritizing active uses, quality urban design and public amenities. Simultaneously, identify opportunities to increase publicly accessible parking options, including the potential development of at least one municipally operated parking lot to address near-term demand.
5. Pilot recreational, arts and cultural activities and pop-up events in parking lots that are underutilized or during off-peak hours in ways that do not disrupt essential parking supply.
6. Explore opportunities to repurpose surface parking lots into parks, public space, community amenities and green infrastructure.

B

Active ground-level uses and amenities increase the level of activity and reduce ground-level vacancy along key corridors and near signature public spaces in downtown.

C P I I E S R

1. Build upon the 16th Street pilot program to establish a ground floor activation grant program for rental assistance and/or tenant improvements along key corridors and around signature public spaces.
2. Continue to refine and streamline the Outdoor Places Program, DOTI right-of-way encroachment rules and stormwater regulations to remove barriers to patios, fencing, and alcohol consumption within the public right-of-way.
3. Identify additional exceptions to land use, transparency and build-to regulations to allow for creative ground floor designs.
4. Create or support programs to attract and establish creative businesses in vacant or underutilized ground-level spaces.
5. Encourage efforts to temporarily or permanently activate public spaces or private areas that front the public realm.
6. Expand funding for active programming in park spaces to support nearby ground-level uses.

C

Downtown is a destination for new and legacy businesses to establish, grow, and serve Denver's many communities – reflecting the diversity of the city.

C P I I E S R

1. Continue supporting efforts to engage and attract small, local, and minority-owned retail, service, and hospitality businesses to downtown.
2. Encourage the creation of new markets that feature small, local, and minority-owned businesses.
3. Encourage the reuse of both existing and historic buildings that provide smaller space and lower rent for locally and/or minority owned businesses*.
4. Create or support programs to establish small, local, and minority-owned businesses* in vacant or underutilized ground-level spaces.
5. Support the curation of businesses to express historic and cultural identity of the places they occupy, such as the creation and emphasis on retail and market districts that reflect Denver heritage and cultural legacies of downtown and surrounding neighborhoods.
6. Explore opportunities to incorporate small businesses into parks and public spaces.

*Small, local and minority-owned businesses as identified by Division of Small Business Opportunity (DSBO): DSBO supports the growth, capacity, and sustainability of small, disadvantaged, minority, and women-owned businesses. DSBO also works to increase opportunity and access through partnerships with stakeholder groups, such as the Asian, Black, Hispanic, Indian and Women's Chambers, as well as nonprofit resource partners including the Hispanic Contractor Academy, Black Business Initiative, COMTO, and ACEC to implement specific programmatic actions.

7

SUSTAINABILITY + INFRASTRUCTURE

GOAL: Infrastructure and environmental systems accommodate growth, adapt to community needs and elevate resilience.



WHAT WE'RE SOLVING FOR

- New technologies, shifting mobility patterns and a changing climate are putting pressure on downtown's energy, water, transportation and waste management infrastructure.
- Downtown's transit connections and infrastructure for walking, rolling and biking limit the ability to transform the area into a safe and accessible neighborhood for all users.
- Future growth, when combined with further changes to technology, human behavior and climate, pose the risk of stifling progress on many issues.
- Previous efforts to improve Denver's extremely low 6% tree canopy coverage have been unsuccessful because of piecemeal, uncoordinated approaches dependent on individual property owners rather than a holistic coordinated approach.

RECOMMENDED STRATEGIES

BUILDING BLOCKS

A

Downtown is a zero-carbon district powered by cost-effective, efficient, and climate resilient infrastructure and energy systems.

C I I E S R

1. Proactively identify opportunities for large scale developments or districts in downtown to share energy and stormwater infrastructure or share in the cost of providing infrastructure including through the use of public spaces.
2. Coordinate with energy utility providers to study downtown-specific energy needs, evaluate current system capacity, identify locations of future power infrastructure, and assess options to minimize cost and support overall grid reliance.
3. Invest in improvements and expansion of downtown's district energy systems to affordably heat and cool buildings without carbon pollution.
4. Consider climate forecasts in stormwater feasibility and modeling work to inform infrastructure investments.
5. Review standards for infrastructure, public spaces and landscaping to ensure they advance climate resilience and sustainability.

B

Trips to and within downtown are affordable, convenient and accessible by walking or rolling, biking or transit.

C P I I E S R

1. Work with RTD to create programs that reduce the cost of transit and incentivize the use of transit for downtown trips, such as an EcoPass district, expanding EcoPass access, fare-free zones, routes and days, or discounts through partnerships with downtown restaurants, hotels, conventions and entertainment venues.
2. Work with RTD to update their Comprehensive Operational Analysis (previously the System Optimization Plan) to improve service frequency, coverage and reliability in downtown and nearby neighborhoods. In particular:
 - Build upon RTD's ART District Connector to improve connections across downtown between Five Points, LoDo, Auraria and La Alma Lincoln Park.
 - Evaluate Welton Street, within Downtown and Five Points, as a trunk transit line that increases the frequency and coverage of service.
3. Conduct an analysis of all downtown streets to identify mobility constraints and physical or perceived barriers to safety and comfort. Work with property owners and parking operators to reduce conflicts between people walking, using mobility devices, and biking with vehicles entering and existing parking facilities.
4. Identify and develop more public spaces for the dedicated use of people walking, using mobility devices, and biking (e.g., plazas, shared streets, greenways).
5. Expand and improve the network of protected bikeways and intersections downtown to ensure there are safe and comfortable places to bike and scooter.
6. Expand access to secure bicycle parking to reduce theft and vandalism.
7. Convert successful temporary infrastructure interventions (e.g., painted bike lanes, flex-post bulb-outs) into permanent infrastructure.
8. Establish regulations that reduce conflicts between micro-mobility (scooters, bike-share, etc.) and pedestrians including usage of designated parking areas and limitations on sidewalk use.

C

Downtown's public spaces and streets are inviting, comfortable and resilient through expanded tree canopy and green infrastructure.

C P I I E S R

1. Develop a specialized downtown forestry team with knowledge and focus specifically on urban tree health and maintenance
2. Identify and establish reliable funding sources to support downtown tree planting initiatives, the necessary supporting infrastructure, and the dedicated forestry team.
3. Reduce barriers to permitting structures in the right-of-way that could complement tree canopy and landscaping, such as shade structures, structural solutions and landscaping protection structures.
4. Develop design standards for downtown greenways and incorporate green infrastructure, pollinator gardens, water quality enhancements, and other landscaping to support biodiversity into public space and right-of-way.

05

FOCUS AREAS

THE FIRST SPARKS OF A CHAIN REACTION

Focus areas identified in this plan have been selected through a process of combining public feedback with detailed planning and economic analysis. This strategic public investment in these areas guide private development toward the preferred outcomes identified by the community.

ACHIEVING THE BUILDING BLOCKS

Each focus area strategy is evaluated by which building blocks will be positively impacted through implementation of the strategy.

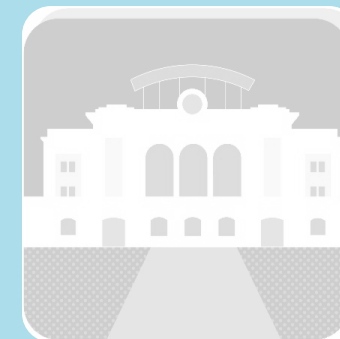
Connection
Play
Investment
Innovation
Equity
Stories
Resilience
C P I I E S R

1. CIVIC CENTER Denver's Civic Heart

2. UPPER DOWNTOWN A Central Neighborhood District

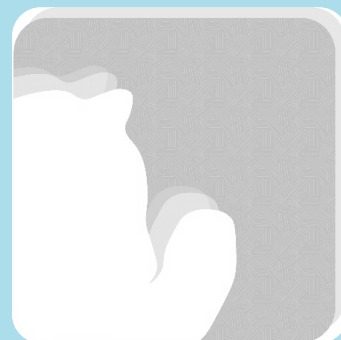


3. SKYLINE PARK Denver's Crossroads of Play



4. UPPER BROADWAY From Gridlock to Gathering Place

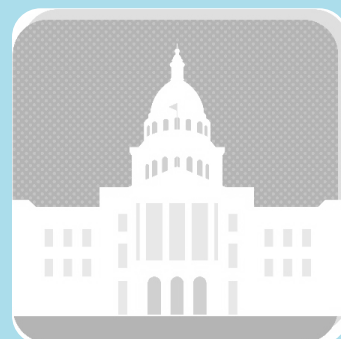
5. BALLPARK/ SAKURA SQUARE Celebrating Denver's Cultural Heritage

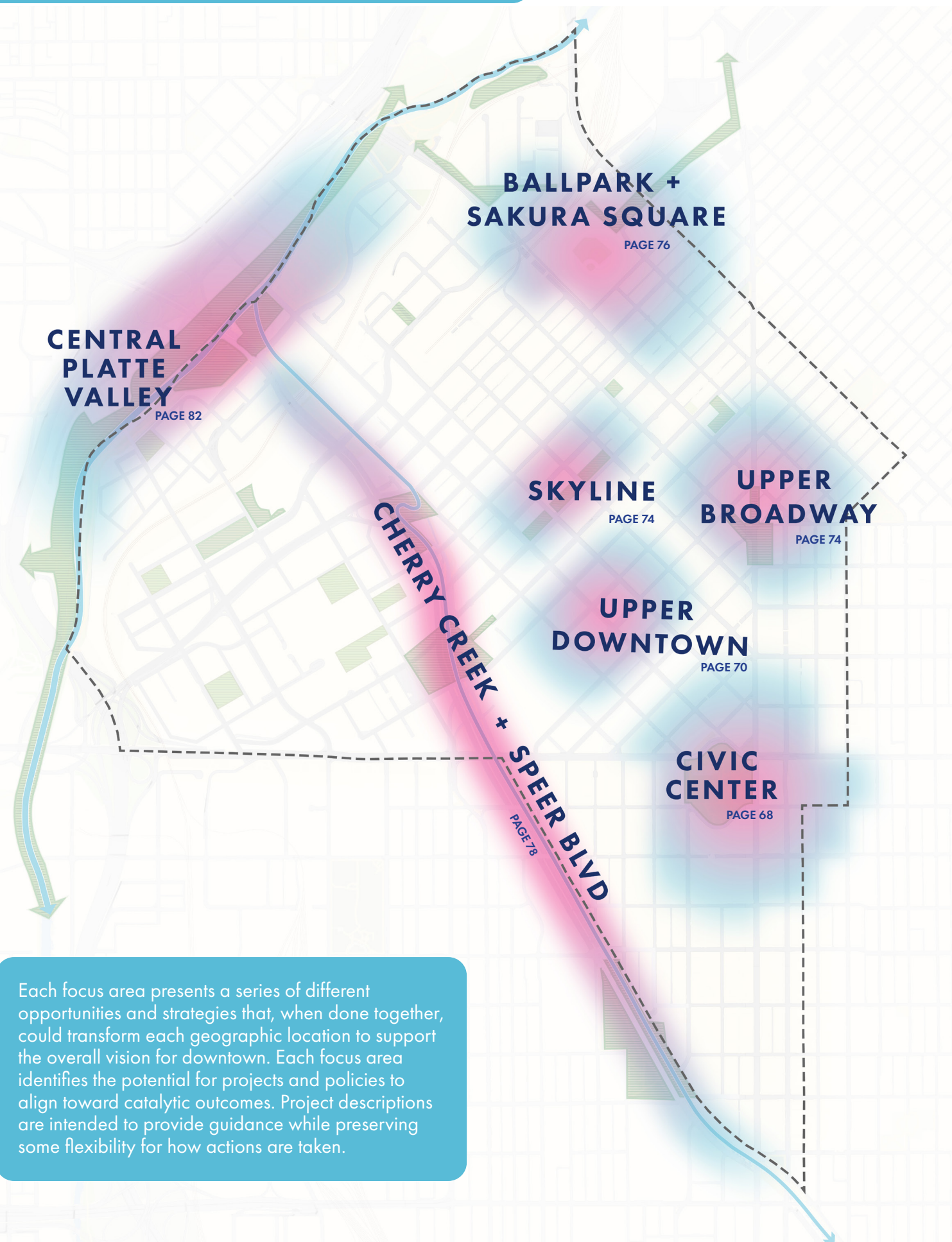


6. CHERRY CREEK/ SPEER BOULEVARD Where Downtown Meets Colorado



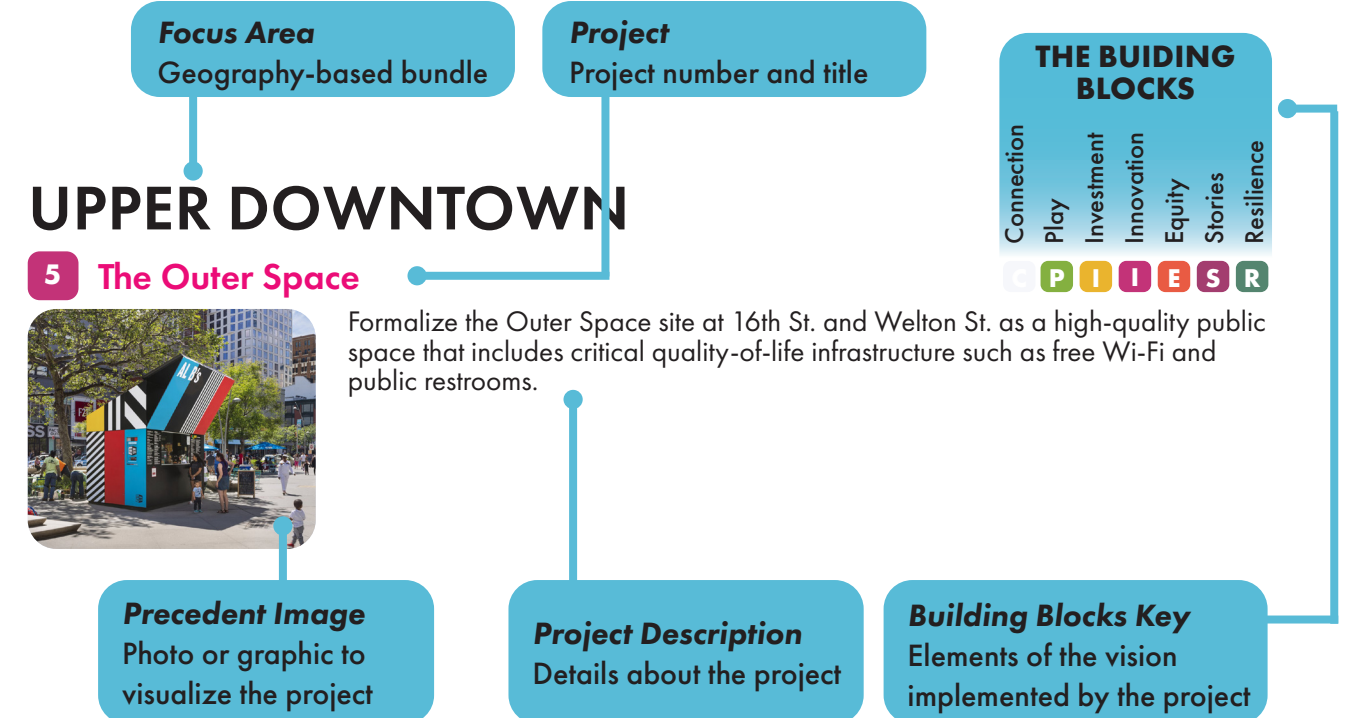
7. CENTRAL PLATTE VALLEY Downtown's Newest Neighborhoods





Each focus area presents a series of different opportunities and strategies that, when done together, could transform each geographic location to support the overall vision for downtown. Each focus area identifies the potential for projects and policies to align toward catalytic outcomes. Project descriptions are intended to provide guidance while preserving some flexibility for how actions are taken.

HOW TO READ THE FOCUS AREAS



DEFINITIONS

The following terms and icons are used throughout this chapter and are defined as follows:

- Pedestrian Priority Corridor:** Streets that prioritize investment in enhanced walkability through widened sidewalks, consistent streetscapes, wayfinding/signage, art and placemaking elements and lighting. Additional corridors may be established by DOTI and other plans.
- 5280 Trail:** Re-imagined public right-of-way to prioritize people walking, rolling, and biking to connect neighborhoods and key locations on a 5+ mile loop.
- Bike Priority Corridor:** Streets that prioritize investments in a network for bikes and scooters through dedicated, protected bike facilities. Additional corridors may be established by DOTI and other plans.
- Roadway Operations and Access:** Streets that are identified for further evaluation to improve vehicular circulation and local access (e.g., reduce the number/size of vehicle lanes, conversion from one-way to two-way traffic).
- Transit Priority Corridor:** Streets that prioritize bus and rail mobility. Additional corridors may be established by DOTI, RTD and other plans.
- District Energy System:** Leverage existing infrastructure into a state-of-the art district energy system to affordably heat and cool buildings without carbon pollution.
- Tree Canopy Priority Corridor:** Streets that prioritize improved tree canopy and tree health through new plantings, reconstruction that includes structural soil cells, and integrated stormwater and green infrastructure design.
- Future Development Opportunity:** Existing surface parking lots or publicly-owned land that is suitable for infill development
- Enhanced Public Realm:** Investment in sidewalk, streetscape, and accessibility upgrades within public right-of-way
- Activated Ground-Level:** Ground-level spaces that, if activated, will support adjacent uses and active streets.
- Enhanced/New Public Space:** Investments in existing parks/ public space, or the development of new publicly-accessible open

CIVIC CENTER

DENVER'S CIVIC HEART

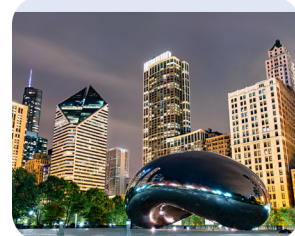
Civic Center is an iconic example of City Beautiful architecture and public space and a regional focal point for arts, culture, and government activity. Civic Center Park is also Denver's gathering place to celebrate, protest, and socialize. Despite its central location and cultural significance, Civic Center can be difficult to navigate due to a confluence of major roadways.

Transforming the district with pedestrian-friendly streets and improved bike and transit connections will allow the seamless movement of people between nearby

neighborhoods via a rejuvenated Civic Center Park. Development of underutilized land into new housing and activation of existing office and public buildings with ground-floor retail, arts and culture, and neighborhood amenities have the potential to create a complete community.



1 Civic Center Next 100 C P I I E S R



Reimagine the Greek Amphitheater and Bannock St. to create safer and more welcoming spaces while preserving its role as a major events and free speech gathering place with a signature art installation that celebrates Denver's spirit.

2 Civic Center Play Hub P I I E S R



Create a play hub that integrates the area's world-class cultural offerings at the DAM, DPL, and Civic Center Park that encourage multigenerational discovery, blends recreation with arts, education, and cultural programming for all ages.

3 Acoma Shared Street C P I I E S R



Complete the Acoma St. segment of the 5280 Trail to create a seamless pedestrian connection between Civic Center Park and Golden Triangle with green infrastructure, tree canopy, public gathering spaces and ground-floor retail.

4 Transform Broadway C I I E S R



Convert Broadway into a two-way street (along with Lincoln St.) to better connect Upper Downtown and Golden Triangle. Reduce traffic lanes, add major bike facilities, and extended transit options like the Metroride or 16th St. Shuttle.

5 Colfax + Cleveland



Strengthen connections to Upper Downtown by calming Colfax Ave and simplifying pedestrian crossings. Close or convert Cleveland Pl., Cheyenne Pl. and 14th St. into shared or park-like streets with expanded tree canopy and activated with retail kiosks that minimize cut-through traffic. Link key bike corridors through Cleveland Pl.

6 Transit-Oriented Infill C P I I E S R



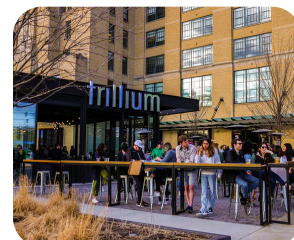
Activate Civic Center Station as a mixed-use transit hub by converting underutilized properties into residential development with ground-floor retail and common spaces that increase daily activity.

7 Active Ground-Floors C P I I E S R

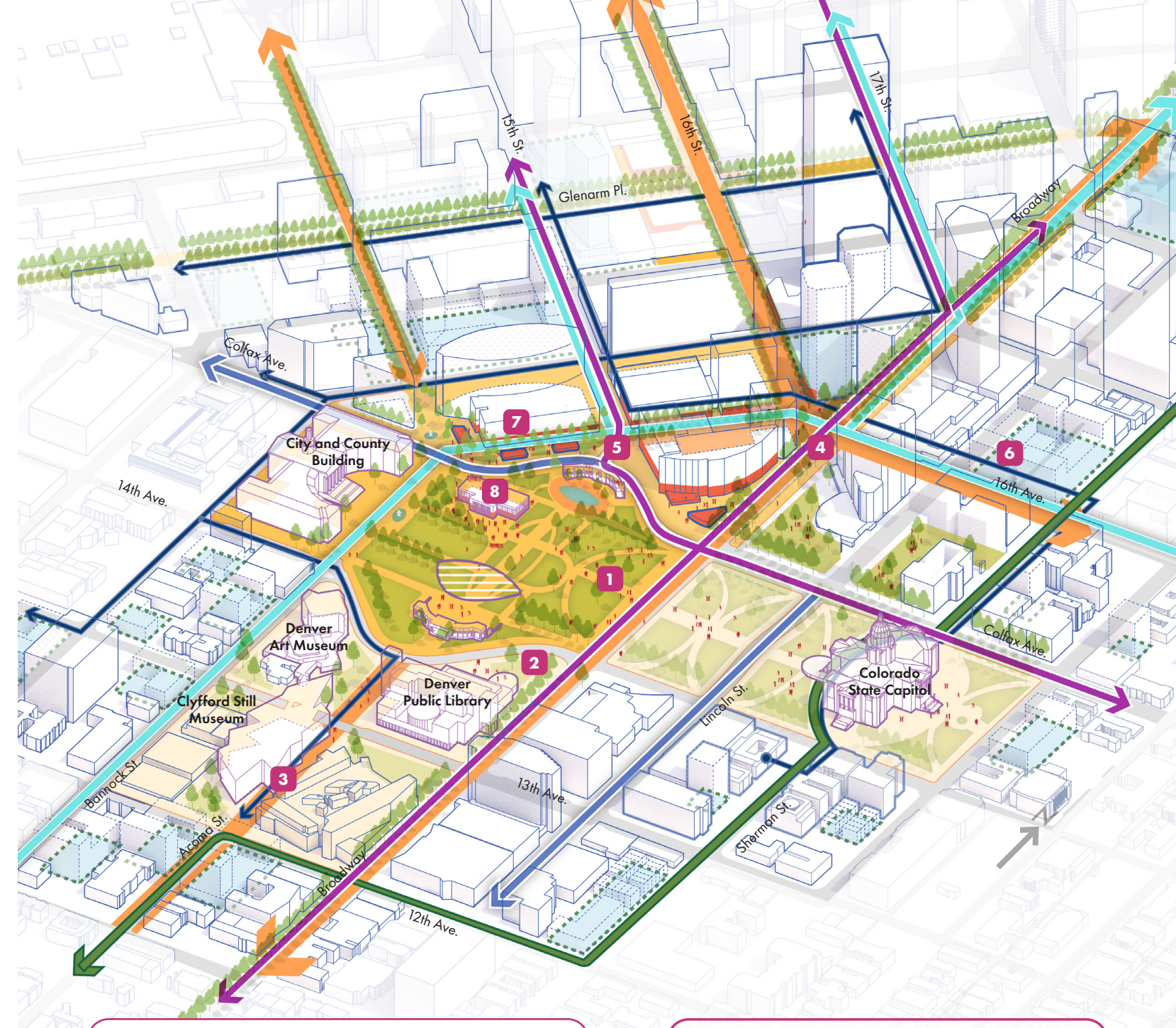


Activate ground-floors of publicly owned buildings north of Colfax Ave. with uses such as food halls, public markets, childcare, or other public-serving activities to create a mixed-use destination with increased foot traffic.

8 Food + Culture Hub C I I E S R



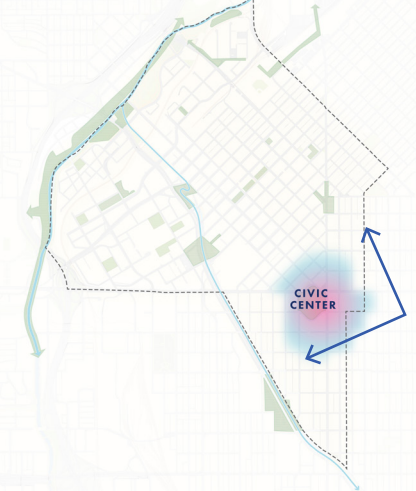
Expand food, beverage, arts, and cultural offerings in and around Civic Center Park by leveraging and enhancing public spaces and buildings, like McNichols, to bring activity to the area, create a destination, and celebrate Denver's diverse cultures.



Legend

- Pedestrian Priority Corridor
- 5280 Trail
- Bike Priority Corridor
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- Future Development Opportunity
- Enhanced Public Realm
- Activated Ground-Level
- Enhanced/New Public Space

Key Map



UPPER DOWNTOWN

A CENTRAL NEIGHBORHOOD DISTRICT

The Upper Downtown district and the Downtown Historic District have historically been the center of office employment and tourism activity in downtown. The economic and societal changes of recent years have made the area feel lifeless at times and demonstrated the need for a more diverse and resilient neighborhood that recaptures its role as a place to work and visit, but also live and access daily needs. With the highest percentage of vacant office space in downtown and a small residential population, the Upper Downtown district has been disproportionately impacted by low return-to-work rates and a dip in tourist visits.

1 Glenarm Plaza

C P I I E S R



Develop an iconic gathering space at Glenarm Plaza that incorporates art, lighting, shade, placemaking elements and improvements to the Denver Pavilions building to anchor Upper Downtown and add fun for all ages.

2 Residential Infusion

C P I I E S R



Support the creation of a vibrant 18+ hour district by increasing residential development in Upper Downtown. Convert surface parking and underdeveloped sites (e.g., the parking lots along 15th behind the Pavilions) into residential units.

3 Welton Transit Corridor

C I I E S R



Reimagine Welton Street as a two-way transit-priority corridor to connects La Alma/Lincoln Park and the Santa Fe Arts District to Five Points to each other and the core of downtown's job center.

4 Tourism Centerpiece

C P I I E S R



Work with public and private partners to identify sites and potential anchor draws that could augment existing tourist attractions to bring more visitors and spur longer and more frequent visits to Upper Downtown.

Supercharging this distressed area is one of the most critical actions over the next few years. This will require strategic investment in ground-floor activation along 16th Street, construction of iconic public spaces and a high-quality public realm, and incentivization of adaptive reuse of underutilized building and redevelopment of surface parking lots.

THE BUILDING BLOCKS

Connection
Play
Investment
Innovation
Equity
Stories
Resilience

5 The Outer Space

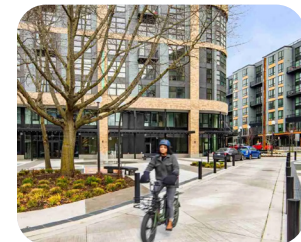
C P I I E S R



Formalize the Outer Space site at 16th St. and Welton St. as a high-quality public space that includes critical quality-of-life infrastructure such as free Wi-Fi and public restrooms.

6 Mixed-use Infill

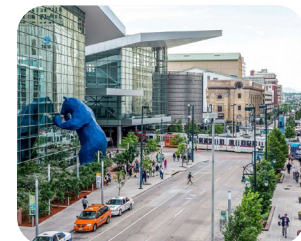
C P I I E S R



Incentivize mixed-use development on the surface parking lots. The development should prioritize mixed-income housing, high-quality public realms, consolidated parking, and complementing historic fabric with new development.

7 Activate 14th Street

C P I I E S R



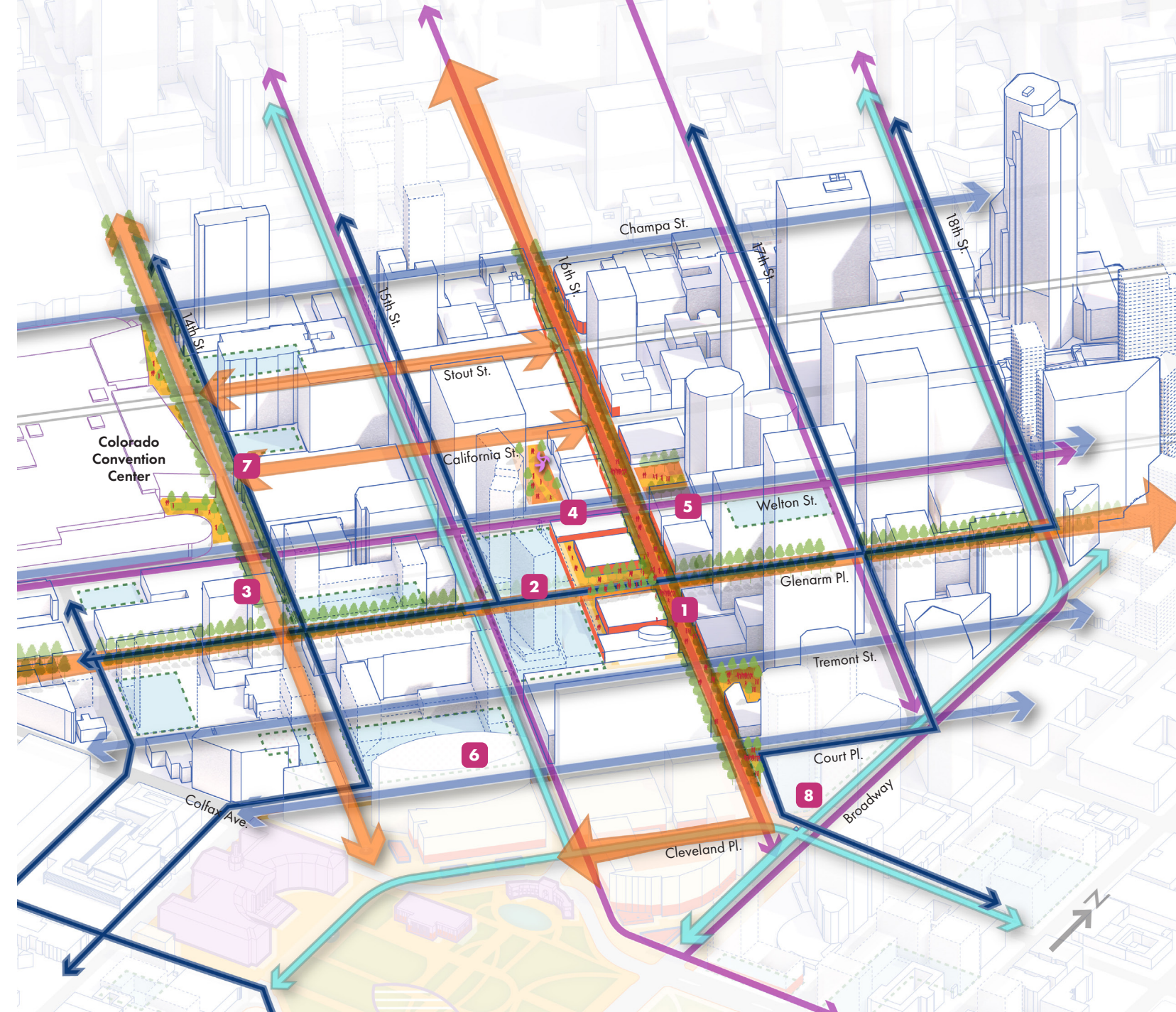
Create a functional open space along 14th St. in front of the Colorado Convention Center. Replace vacant and underutilized parcels along the corridor with infill development that is activated with new residents and businesses.

8 Strategic Reuse

C P I I E S R



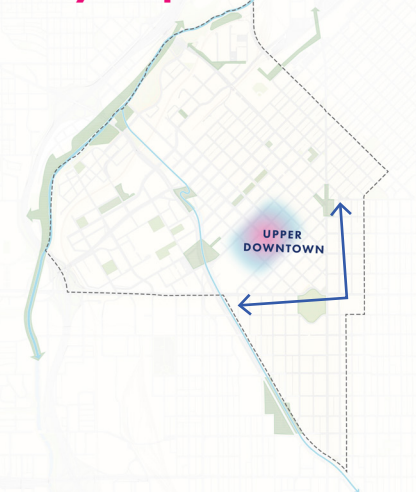
Consider strategic reuse or removal of highly vacant, distressed office spaces in Upper Downtown with the goal of redeveloping properties into mixed-use, mixed-income housing with active ground-floor uses.



Legend

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Key Map



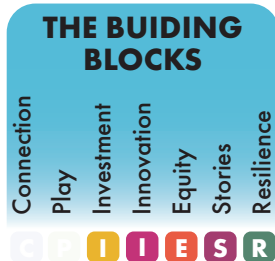
SKYLINE PARK

DENVER'S CROSSROADS OF PLAY

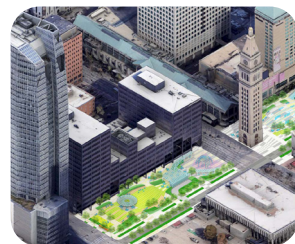
Skyline Park, and the intersection of 16th and Arapahoe streets, is the geographic and activity center of downtown. The district is home to the Theater District, Arts Complex and Colorado Convention Center, but it suffers from vacant office buildings and storefronts that leave streets inactive outside of peak periods.

The planned overhaul of Skyline Park will kickstart reinvestment in the surrounding area - serving as a catalyst for infrastructure improvements and redevelopment. Upgrades to Arapahoe St. and Curtis

St. will create a network of streets worth wandering, improve connections to the Arts Complex, and transform how people connect to downtown and move through the district. Essential investments in ground-floor activation and adaptive reuse, with a focus on the creative economy and cultural tourism, are essential to capturing the benefits of improved infrastructure and public space.



1 The New Skyline Park C P I I E S R



Complete planned improvements to all three blocks of Skyline Park to create a more functional open space for people of all ages to gather and play. Enhance the sense of safety and spur reinvestment in adjacent buildings with the increased activity.

5 Active Ground-floors C P I I E S R



Bring people and energy to Skyline Park, 16th St., and other public spaces by activating vacant buildings and ground-floors with uses such as public markets or food halls for local entrepreneurs.

2 Arapahoe Greenway C P I I E S R



Reimagine Arapahoe St. as a park-like greenway that prioritizes people walking, rolling, and biking and connects Skyline Park and 16th St. to Auraria Campus, major redevelopment projects to the east, and Curtis Park.

6 Federal Reserve Block C P I I E S R



Leverage potential federal disposition plans for the Federal Reserve Building to adaptively reuse the iconic Brutalist building and block for a mixed-use, affordable housing development with public spaces and active ground-floor uses.

3 Curtis Street C I I E S R



Convert Curtis St. into a primary pedestrian corridor between 16th St. and the Arts Complex. Incorporate art, placemaking, wayfinding and lighting elements, widen sidewalks, expand tree canopy, and activate ground-floors.

7 Strategic Infill C I I E S R



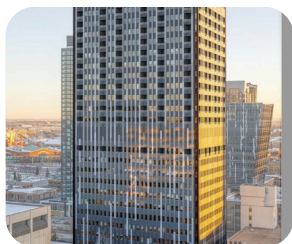
Incentivize infill development of underutilized properties and parking lots around Skyline Park to leverage catalytic investment in the park

4 Connect to the Creek C P I I E S R

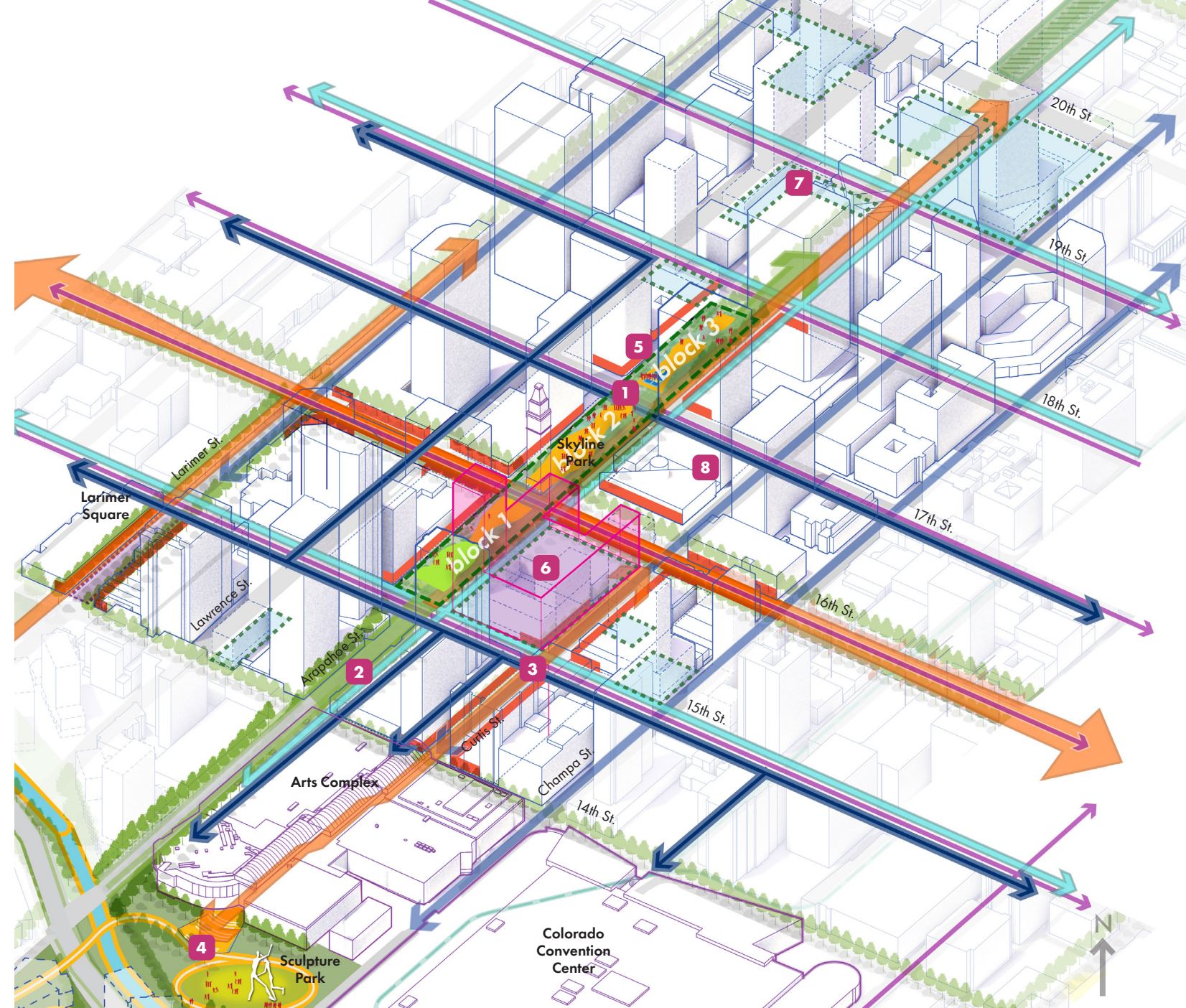


Facilitate a connection between downtown and natural experiences along Cherry Creek and in Sculpture Park. Celebrate milestones along the way by programming and activating public spaces at the Arts Complex.

8 Adaptive Reuse C I I E R



Infuse new life into high-vacancy office buildings through adaptive reuse projects that improve office spaces or convert them into other uses. Encourage the activation of ground-floors with dining, retail, and community-oriented uses.



Legend

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Key Map



UPPER BROADWAY

FROM GRIDLOCK TO GATHERING PLACE

The construction of Broadway roughly a century ago cut through the downtown street grid and transformed a pedestrian-friendly urban fabric and into an auto-oriented corridor. Reimagining the Broadway right-of-way (ROW) to function better for transit and people walking, rolling, and biking will help to reconnect Curtis Park and Five Points to Downtown.

As the residential population in this area has grown, the need for open space has become acute. Building a new park at Broadway and Welton – made possible

by rerouting through traffic around this complex, six-way intersection – will be a catalytic investment that will transform the experience of the area by simultaneously improving mobility and quality of life.

THE BUILDING BLOCKS

Connection	Play	Investment	Innovation	Equity	Stories	Resilience
C	P	I	I	E	S	R

1 Transformational Park C P I I E S R



Create a new park along Broadway between 19th and 20th Streets and acquire private land to create a new 2+ acre park that provides open space and recreational amenities for the growing population in the Broadway/Arapahoe Square area.

4 A Green Boulevard C P I I E S R



Turn Broadway into a transit greenway between 18th and Colfax as a two-way transit street with widened public realm and enhanced tree canopy to create a strong link between Civic Center and the new park.

2 Activate the Park C P I I E S R



Activate the park with new infill residential and mixed-use development to create constant activity and catalytic development opportunities around the park's edges.

5 Re-imagined ROW C P I I E S R



Reimagine Broadway north of 20th as a multimodal green boulevard while converting 20th Street and Lincoln Street to two-way streets, distributing traffic flow with improvements on Welton and California.

3 Reroute Broadway C P I I E S R

Reroute traffic on Broadway between 18th and 20th Streets to create a sizable open space and allow for construction of a mixed-use catalytic anchor tower, while maintaining pedestrian and bicycle access through an open space easement.

6 Welton Transit Corridor C P I I E S R

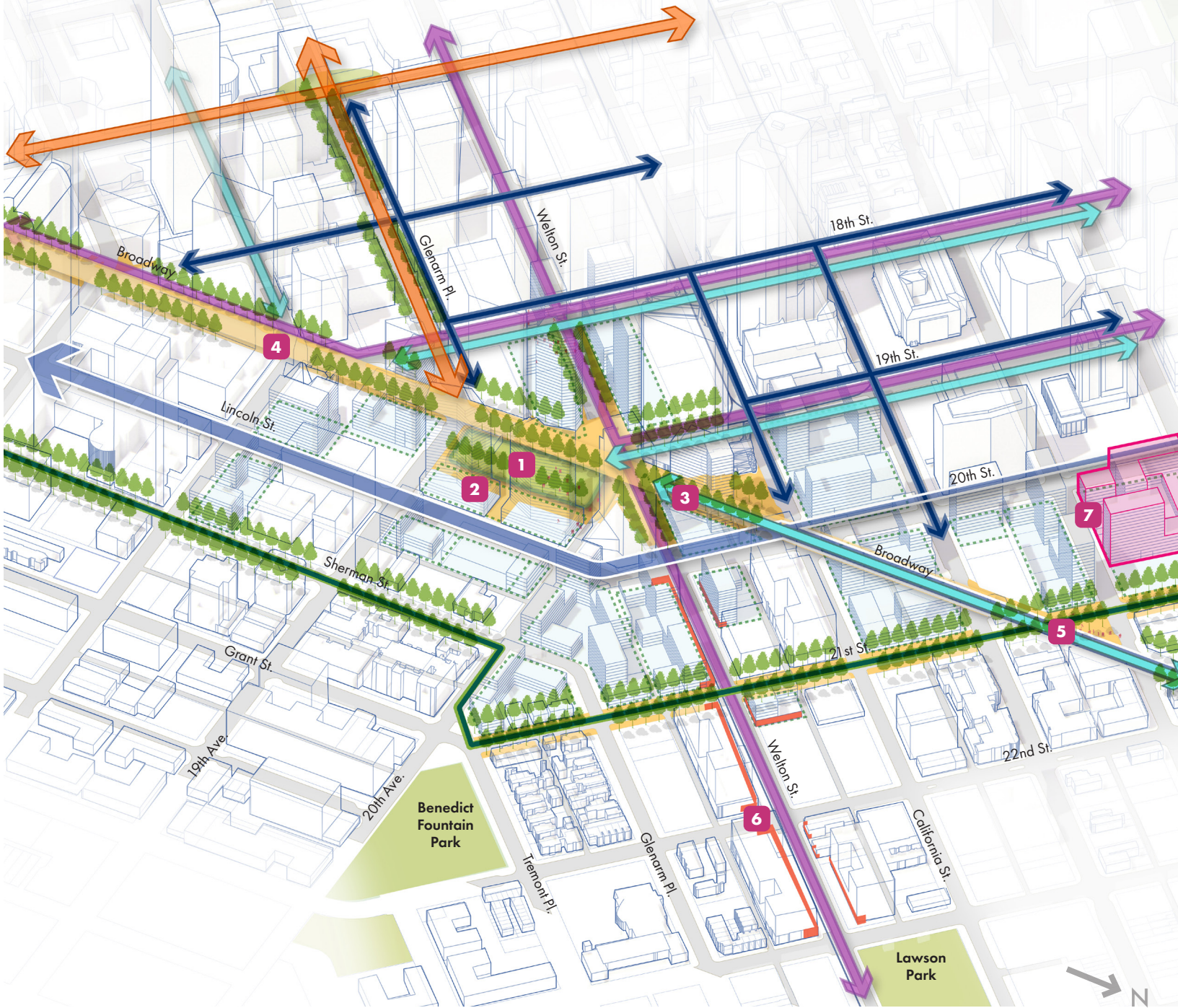


Transform Welton Street into a two-way transit corridor with re-imagined transit service and public realm enhancements to restore its function as a great urban street connecting Five Points through downtown.

7 US Post Office Site C P I I E S R



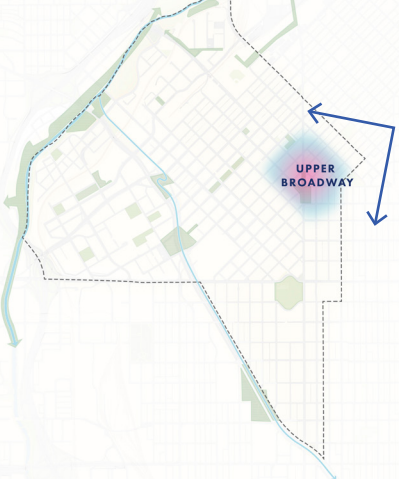
Prioritize redevelopment of the underutilized US Postal Service facility at 21st St. and Curtis St. if the federal property becomes available. Convert the site into a mixed-use development with affordable housing, ground-level retail, and open space.



Legend

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- Enhanced/New Public Space

Key Map



BALLPARK/SAKURA SQ.

CELEBRATING DENVER'S CULTURAL HERITAGE

Coors Field is an iconic destination in downtown and another success story in the history of catalytic investment in the city. Its opening in 1995 sparked a renaissance for the surrounding area, which attracted residential development and businesses and has become one of the largest concentrations of entertainment and nightlife in the city. The Ballpark Neighborhood Historic District preserves the character of the area, while creating placemaking opportunities into a vibrant neighborhood – both day and night. Improvements to the public realm

and development of surface parking lots into housing, restaurants, and places to shop will bring increased foot traffic, daytime energy, and a greater diversity of activities and attractions. The redevelopment of Sakura Square has the potential to create a premier cultural destination that celebrates and integrates the history of Denver's Japanese-American community into the district.

THE BUILDING BLOCKS						
Connection	Play	Investment	Innovation	Equity	Stories	Resilience
C	P	I	I	E	S	R

1 Wynkoop Shared Street C P I I E S R



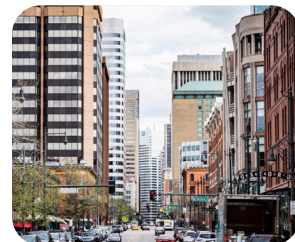
Strengthen the connection between Cherry Creek, Union Station, and Coors Field along Wynkoop St. – a designated place on the 5280 Trail. Expand tree canopy and transform the street to prioritize pedestrians and allow the street to host events.

5 21st Shared Street C P I I E S R



Reimagine 21st St. as a greenway and shared festival street along the 5280 Trail with enhanced tree canopy, wider sidewalks, bike facilities, and areas to rest. Create a public space at Larimer St. and 21st St. with a strategic closure at Larimer St.

2 Two-way Streets C P I I E S R



Study the conversion of 20th St., 22nd St., and Park Ave. into two-way streets with improved transit connections, wider sidewalks, and dedicated bike infrastructure to improve connections to downtown from Highland and North Capitol Hill.

6 Larimer Street C P I I E S R



Attract daytime activity and ground-floor retail to Larimer St. with tenant subsidies and investments in tree canopy, wide sidewalks, and an enhanced public realm – especially around Sakura Square—to reinforce Larimer St. as a main north-south connection.

3 Sakura Square C P I I E S R



Redevelop Sakura Square as cultural destination that celebrates the history of Denver's Japantown, preserves the Buddhist temple, provides affordable housing and creates quality outdoor space.

7 Redeveloped Parking C P I I E S R



Long-term redevelopment of surface parking lots north of Coors Field, while coordinating for stadium operations and parking demands.

4 Ballpark Greenway C P I I E S R

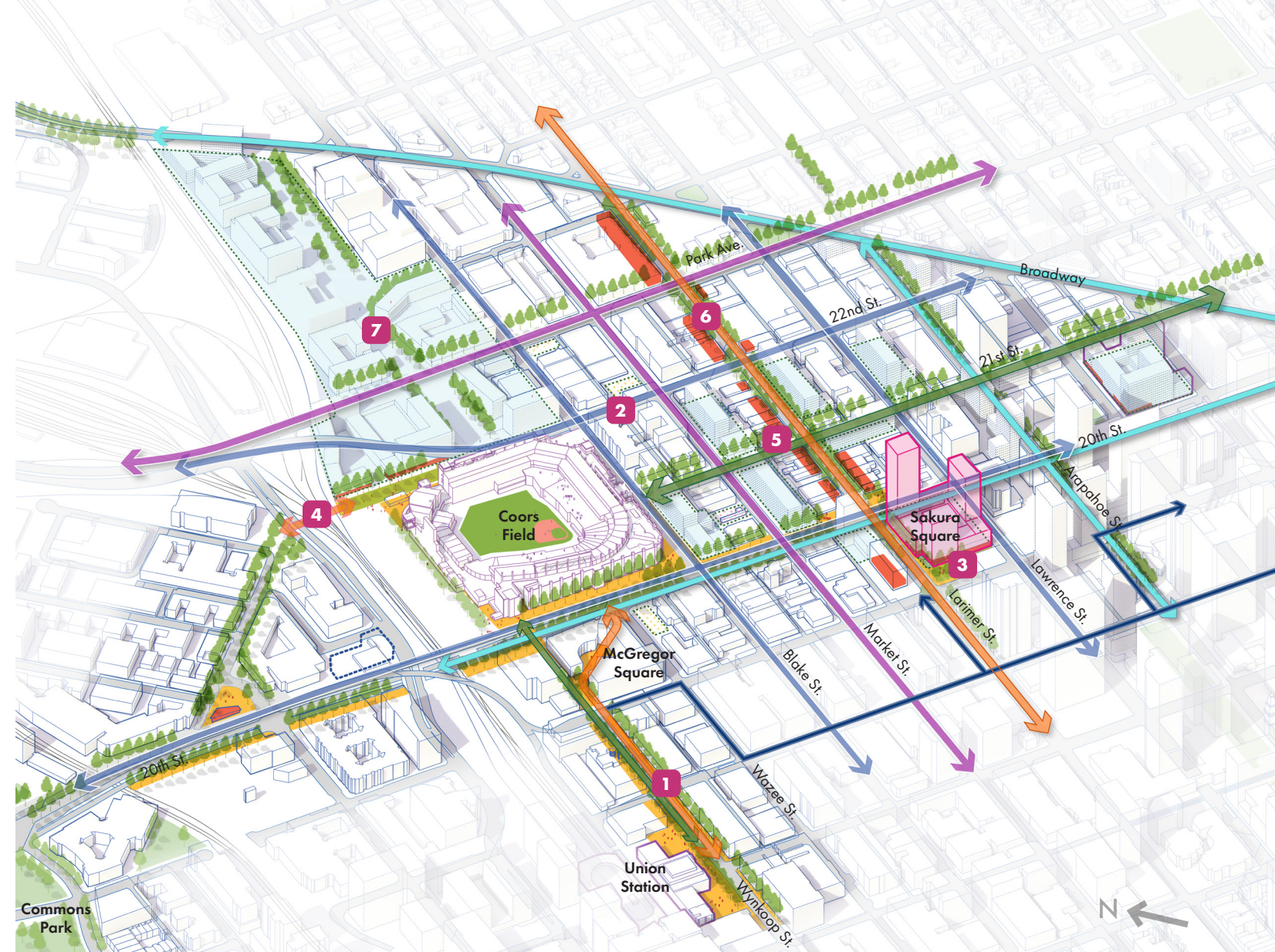


Connect Coors Field and the Ballpark area with Commons Park and the South Platte River via a linear greenway with pedestrian bridge and transformed public realm.

8 Safety + Comfort C P I I E S R



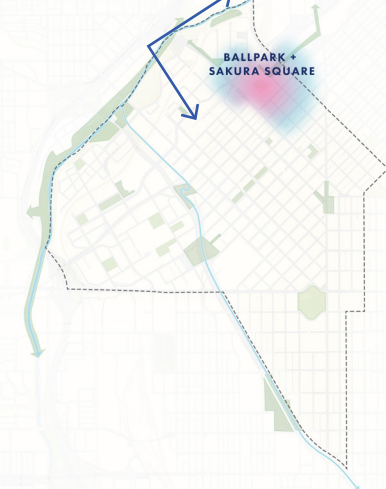
Increase the nighttime presence of DPD officers, outreach workers, and security personnel and improve lighting and visibility on district streets and public spaces.



Legend

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Key Map



CHERRY CREEK/ SPEER BLVD (NORTH)

WHERE DOWNTOWN MEETS COLORADO

Speer Boulevard and Cherry Creek are fundamental to the history of downtown and the Denver region. The confluence of Cherry Creek and the South Platte River was an important gathering place for Indigenous peoples before White settlers arrived. Auraria – Denver’s oldest neighborhood – was home to a diverse Hispanic community that was displaced by targeted urban renewal before becoming the Auraria Campus. As Denver developed, the channeling of the creek to prevent flooding also helped create an iconic urban boulevard and Denver Landmark.

Unfortunately, Speer Boulevard has also become a barrier that separates downtown from what could be a premier open space along Cherry Creek. Transforming the boulevard and improving access to and across Cherry Creek presents a tremendous opportunity to reconnect Auraria with downtown, integrate natural systems and recreation into the city, attract new investment, and elevate the stories and experiences of communities that have been displaced from the area.

THE BUILDING BLOCKS						
Connection	Play	Investment	Innovation	Equity	Stories	Resilience
C	P	I	I	E	S	R

1 Realigned Boulevard C P I I E S R



Realign and consolidate Speer Boulevard on the west side of Cherry Creek to better connect downtown to Auraria and unlock open space and development opportunities. The goal is to create a more cohesive park system that improves the quality and usability of green space while maintaining or even exceeding the existing total acreage.

3 Urban Riverfront



Create an urban waterfront along Cherry Creek with one or more signature play spaces along the downtown side between Blake Street and Confluence Park, reimagining the public realm along the creek.

4 Cherry Creek Play C P I I E S R



Invite community into the creek by making water quality improvements and water-based play opportunities.

5 Unite Auraria C P I I E S R

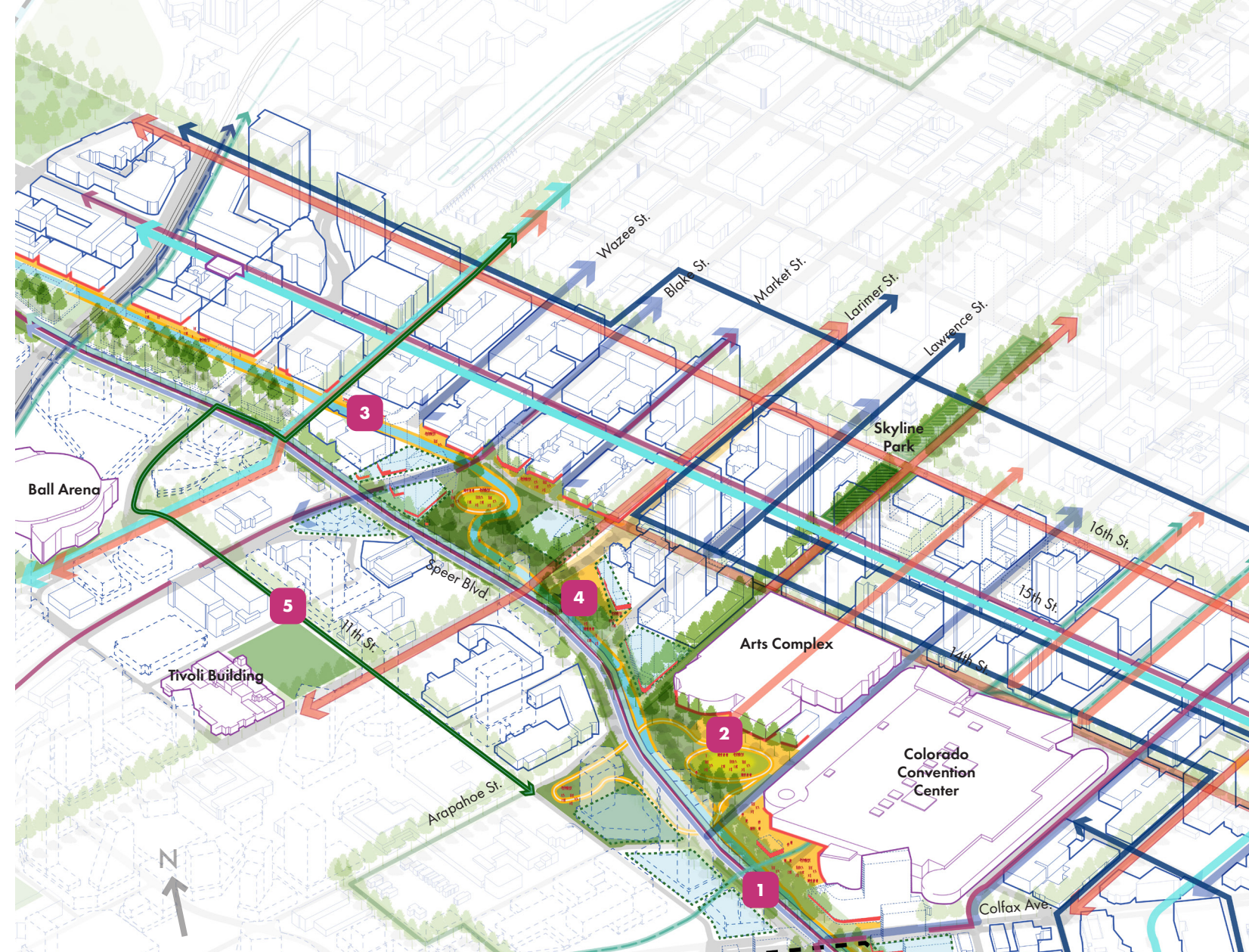


Connect Denver’s oldest neighborhood to downtown by reestablishing the street grid, enhancing the open space along the realigned Speer Blvd., and reimagining publicly owned land as new affordable housing and development.

2 Sculpture Park C P I I E S R



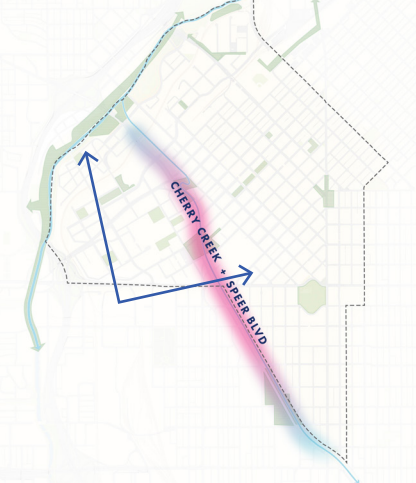
Enhance Sculpture Park to create new open space and access points to the creek from downtown and to better integrate it with the Arts Complex, while still ensuring it functions as an important outdoor venue and event space.



Legend

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- ← District Energy System
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- Future Development Opportunity
- Enhanced Public Realm
- Activated Ground-Level
- Enhanced/New Public Space

Key Map



CHERRY CREEK/ SPEER BLVD (SOUTH)

GOLDEN TRIANGLE'S NEW FRONT PORCH

Golden Triangle is one of Denver's fastest growing residential neighborhoods and yet it can feel disconnected from nearby neighborhoods and lacks any quality open space. By realigning of Speer Boulevard. to the west side of Cherry Creek for a portion of this corridor, the neighborhood gains access to the natural feature, has improved connections to Sunken Gardens Park and becomes a more complete urban community. A re-imagined Speer Boulevard right-of-way, coupled with transit and mobility improvements and the future

extension of the 5280 Trail, links Golden Triangle to La Alma/Lincoln Park and other neighborhoods along Speer Boulevard. These improvements are dependent on a re-imagined intersection at Colfax Avenue and Speer Boulevard. that would turn a tangle of roads, rails, and bridges into the western gateway to downtown.

THE BUILDING BLOCKS

Connection	Play	Investment	Innovation	Equity	Stories	Resilience
C	P	I	I	E	S	R

6 Colfax and Speer



Reconfigure the intersection of Colfax and Speer to reduce conflicts between vehicles, transit, and people walking, rolling, and biking and create a new gateway that connects four central neighborhoods.

9 Sunken Gardens



Implement the Sunken Gardens Vision Plan (2021) by upgrading trails and accessible pathways and constructing an expanded playground and new dog park to serve the growing community while honoring the park's historic character.

7 Transition at 11th



Study the potential for transitioning Speer Blvd. vehicle traffic to its original configuration at 11th Street. Reimagine the east side of the creek between Colfax and 11th as a park and multimodal greenway that serves transit and people walking, rolling, and biking.

8 Cherry Creek Bridge

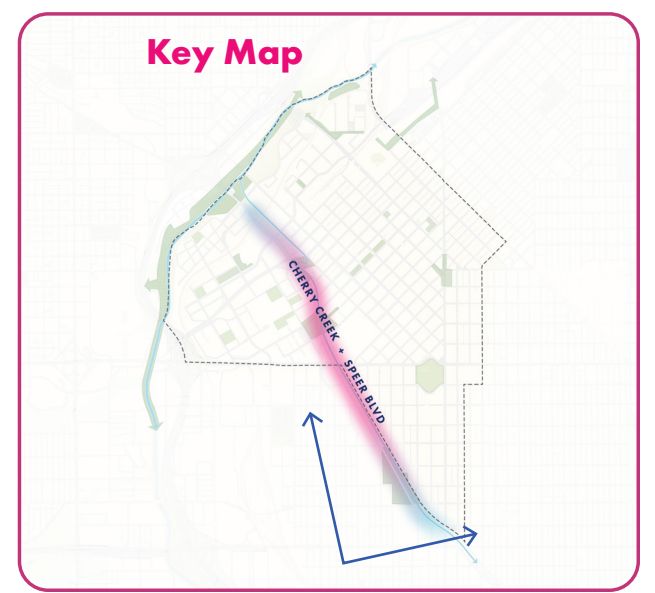


Link Golden Triangle to Sunken Garden Park with an at-grade crossing of Speer Blvd. and a pedestrian bridge over Cherry Creek at 10th Ave. and Cherokee St.



Legend

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CENTRAL PLATTE VALLEY

DOWNTOWN'S NEWEST NEIGHBORHOODS

The South Platte is Denver's greatest natural asset and serves as an important ecological and recreational amenity for residents. Prioritizing the health of the river and increasing public access to and along the river corridor are critical in transforming the South Platte River into a premier urban corridor, where people and nature thrive in harmony. Future investments and developments at River Mile, Ball Arena, and the Auraria Campus create the opportunity to expand and transform downtown along and adjacent to the river. With millions of square feet of new commercial space, thousands of new housing

units, and public amenities, these developments will each become their own unique neighborhoods that will contribute to downtown and its long-term success.

Strategic improvements to the street network, transit service, and recreational amenities will better connect downtown to the river and surrounding neighborhoods, improving quality of life for all users.

THE BUILDING BLOCKS						
Connection	Play	Investment	Innovation	Equity	Stories	Resilience

1 Routes to Walk + Ride C P I E S R



Improve pedestrian and bike safety, comfort, and connections across the South Platte River and I-25 (particularly along 20th St., 15th St., and Speer Blvd.) to reduce barriers to river access and nearby neighborhoods from downtown.

5 Children's Playground C P I E S R



Build an iconic new destination children's playground at Commons Park to provide recreational opportunities for downtown residents and serve as a regional draw for families.

2 Gates Crescent Park C P I E S R



Expand and reimagine riverfront parks as recreational anchors along the river to provide additional open space for downtown and surrounding neighborhoods.

6 Waterfront Promenade C P I E S R



Indigenous Heritage: Improve public access and interpretation at the confluence of Cherry Creek and South Platte to commemorate, advance and reestablish the intergenerational importance of the river and the future legacy of Colorado's First Nations.

3 16th Street Extension C P I E S R



Improve the connection between Central Platte Valley and Highland to downtown by extending the recent improvements to 16th St. from Market St. to the Millennium Bridge.

7 A New Neighborhood C P I E S R



Develop a new mixed-use neighborhood between I-25 and the South Platte River from Speer Blvd. to 17th Ave. by repurposing surface parking lots and reducing the footprint of highway interchanges.

4 Extend the Riverfront C P I E S R



Extend open space and water quality improvements from City of Cuernavaca Park to the new Denargo Market development and into RiNo to better connect these emerging districts to the core of downtown.

8 Celebrate Chinatown C P I E S R



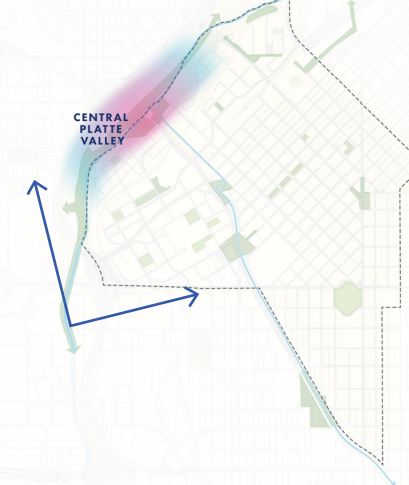
Integrate the story of Denver's Historic Chinatown into Downtown by reimagining the alley between Wazee St. and Blake St. between 15th St. and 17th St. Create a pedestrianized corridor that offers dining and retail alongside historic and cultural amenities.



Legend

- ← Pedestrian Priority Corridor
- ← 5280 Trail
- ← Bike Priority Corridor
- ← Roadway Operations and Access
- ← Transit Priority Corridor
- ← District Energy System
- Tree Canopy Priority Corridor
- Future Development Opportunity
- Enhanced Public Realm
- Activated Ground-Level
- Enhanced/New Public Space

Key Map





06

IMPLEMENTATION

A ROADMAP FOR ACTION

This chapter provides a roadmap to the successful implementation of the Downtown Area Plan. Although this Plan outlines over 150 policies, projects and programs that should be advanced, not all of those strategies can be completed at once. As such, it is important to establish a strategic approach to implementing the Plan that reflects community priorities, market trends, opportunities in funding and partnerships, and the realistic timeline needed to successfully achieve the desired outcomes.

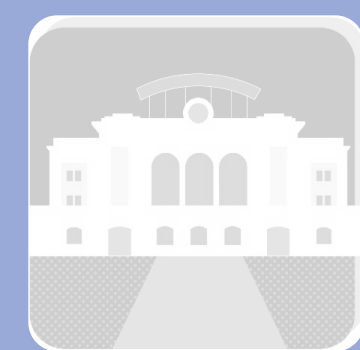
The roadmap on the following pages outlines a potential timeline for immediate and short-term strategies that present impactful “quick wins” to kickstart interest and investment in Downtown Denver, as well as longer-term efforts that have initial actions to move forward but that will ultimately take years or decades to complete.



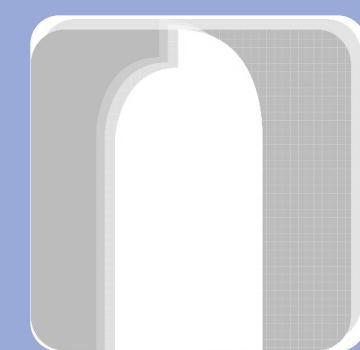
**A VISION FOR
PROJECT
PHASING**



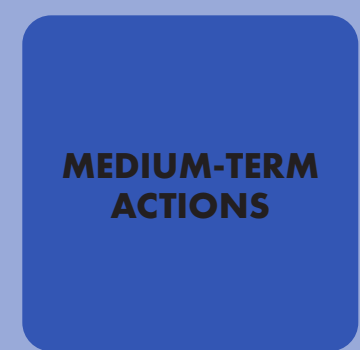
**IMMEDIATE
ACTIONS**



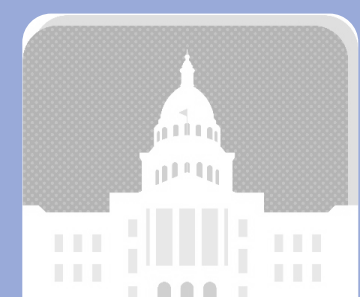
**SHORT-TERM
ACTIONS**



**MEDIUM-TERM
ACTIONS**



**LONG-TERM
ACTIONS**

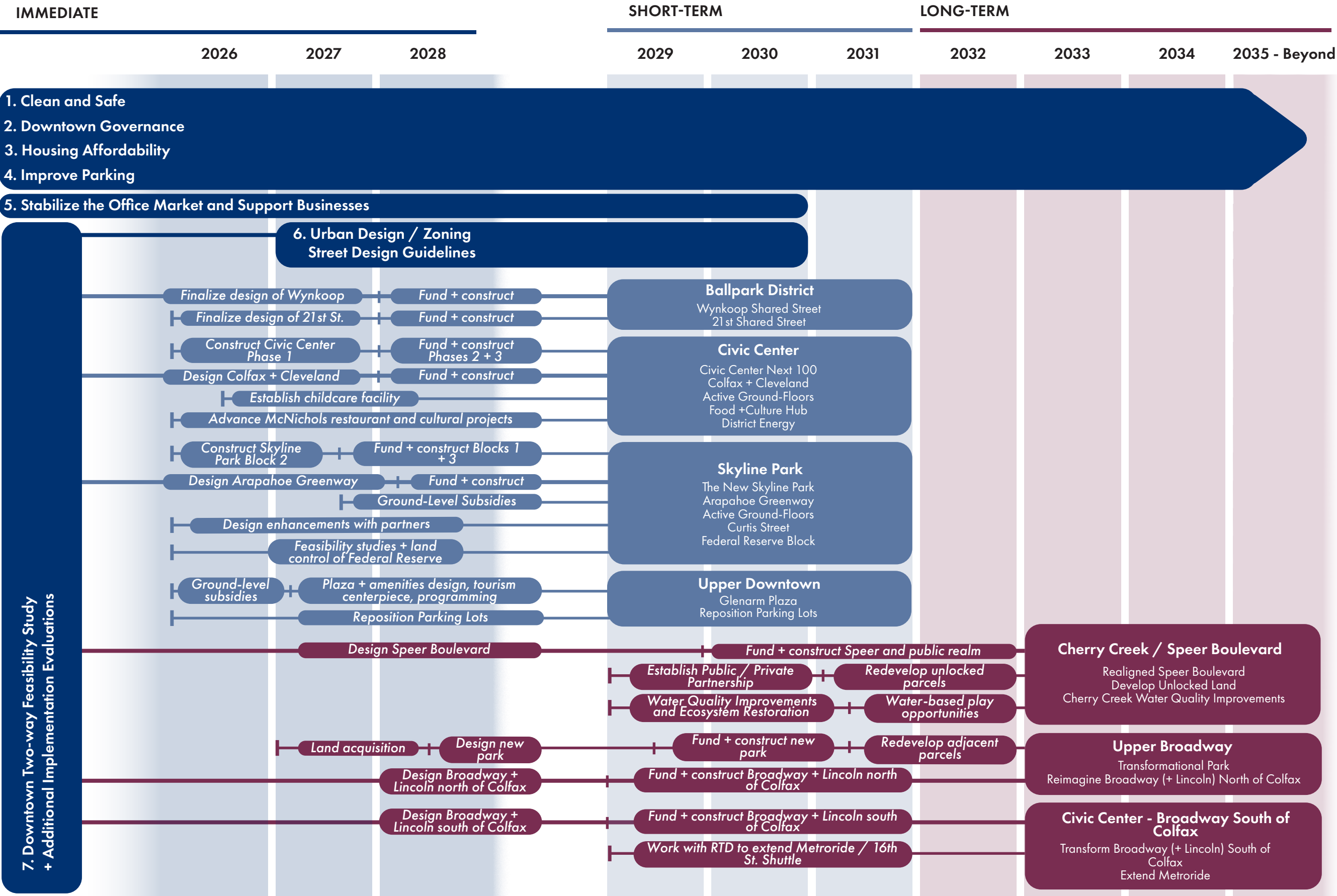


A PLAN FOR ACTION

Outlined over the next several pages are the key priority action packages that should be implemented across immediate (plan adoption until 2028), short-term (2029 until 2032) and long-term (after 2032) time horizons. Major projects are shown based on the ideal timeline for substantial completion, although initial actions begin much more quickly.

There are seven critical first steps identified as immediate actions that the city, the Downtown Denver Partnership and other key stakeholders should start implementing quickly upon adoption of the plan. These studies, policies and programs improve the experience and perceptions of downtown while setting up processes and regulation to support the implementation actions that follow.

For more detailed information on implementation for specific projects, please see the Implementation Plan, found in the Appendix.



IMMEDIATE ACTIONS

TODAY - 2028



16th Street, facing east

1 Deliver a Clean and Safe Downtown

Public confidence in the safety of downtown is central to creating positive experiences, increasing foot traffic, attracting business investment and retaining and growing jobs. A downtown that is safe—and perceived to be safe—is foundational for the success of all other strategies. Key actions include:

- Hire and train social workers, security personnel, paramedics, and operations and maintenance staff to service public spaces. Consider adding social service kiosks throughout downtown. [3.B.2]
- Create a toolkit for downtown parks to identify and create sustainable revenue streams to support staffing, operations, maintenance and programming. [3.D.1]
- Create a uniform downtown marketing campaign to improve perceptions of downtown and attract new businesses and visitors. [3.A.4]

2 Reimagine Downtown Governance

The residents of Denver want government and governance that work effectively and deliver projects and outcomes that are needed to foster safety, community and economic development. Creating internal and external working groups, reimagining existing development-focused entities, and creating a more robust funding and operations strategy for parks, public realm and open spaces are essential for the many strategies outlined in this Plan and are near-term priorities. Key actions include:

- Identify or establish a project champion(s) in the Mayor's Office or Denver Permitting Office that is empowered to align department priorities to coordinate private downtown development proposals and City-led projects. [1.A.1]
- Establish working groups with representation from relevant City agencies and external stakeholders to improve collaboration on public and private investments downtown. [1.A.2]
- Explore the creation of a downtown-specific capital plan that links complex, multi-agency projects with existing funding sources in order to capitalize and expand existing resources. [1.A.3]

- Identify a lead agency – internal or external to the City – to serve as “master developer” for public-private partnerships by identifying land and funding opportunities to actively facilitate redevelopment of underutilized downtown properties. [1.B.1]
- Promote volunteer opportunities so that community members can participate in plan implementation. [3.D.3]

3 Expand Housing Affordability and Housing Choice Options

Housing affordability was cited by the community as one of the most important issues facing downtown today. With hundreds of current restricted units set to expire in coming years, preservation of existing affordability Downtown is essential and is one of the highest priority housing strategies. Strategies to subsidize and incentivize the creation of new affordable units downtown are also needed with the aim to deliver more affordability than is currently required by city policy. Lastly, creating new and expanding existing tools, such as the new Middle Income Housing Pilot, to incentivize the creation of 80-120% AMI units (with an emphasis on multi-bedroom units) are priorities to fill the gap in housing options downtown. Key strategies to advance housing affordability are:

- Partner with an existing Community Land Trust (CLT) to provide stable housing opportunities downtown, with emphasis on helping displaced communities return to downtown neighborhoods through home ownership. [5.A.1]
- Create a dedicated program aimed at the preservation of soon-to-expire dedicated affordable units. [5.A.2]
- Establish a funding mechanism to support maintenance and improvements to existing affordable housing units. [5.A.3]
- Provide gap financing for family-centric housing projects targeting missing middle incomes of 80-120 percent Area Median Income (AMI). [5.A.4]
- Encourage the creation of housing units that serve a variety of household sizes and types including both rental and ownership opportunities so residents can build families, age-in-place and provide space and amenities for seniors in downtown. [5.A.5]
- Identify and fund permanent supportive housing solutions to address needs of the unhoused population in downtown. [5.C.1]

4 Improve Parking System Legibility and Function

Today, over sixty-five percent of visitors Downtown come by private automobile. While the goal is to reduce the need to travel downtown in a car by providing many different travel options, short-term demand for parking. There is no shortage of parking downtown, but navigating accessible parking can be difficult. Some retail businesses and office tenants have cited this difficulty as a deterrent in investing downtown. Short-term priorities include creating a dedicated strategy for shared parking, on- and off-street parking management, and cohesive branding and technology. Key actions include:

- Support a competitive pricing structure between on- and off-street parking and encourage the availability of mid-range duration rates (2-4hrs) across privately owned parking facilities. [2.D.1]
- Coordinate the use of technology to enhance the parking user pay interface and encourage data-sharing around parking utilization and pricing. [2.D.2]
- Standardize wayfinding and pricing signage to increase legibility and parking price transparency. [2.D.3]
- Establish a parking management entity to coordinate parking pricing, technology and wayfinding throughout downtown. [2.D.4]
- Pilot priority locations to encourage a “park once” system with clustered parking facilities that have access to last-mile mobility options such as transit and micromobility. [2.D.5]

5 Stabilize the Office Market and Support Businesses

A stable office market and strong businesses environment are critical to the future of downtown. Office market struggles, vacant commercial spaces and strained businesses have ripple effects on foot traffic and tax revenues. With long-term goals of reducing office vacancy by 7 million square feet and achieving a stable office vacancy around 11 percent, the short-term priority is to retain existing office tenants. While other priority categories respond to often-cited concerns around safety, parking and access, permitting and city processes, additional strategies within this section to subsidize tenant improvement and adaptively reuse existing buildings reduces overall vacancy and supports street level activity. Key actions include:

- Create a dedicated office improvement program that identifies gap financing to provide rental assistance or tenant improvement dollars for the occupation of vacant office space. [4.D.1]
- Support adaptive reuse of office buildings for alternative uses, including studio space for artists, entertainment venues, indoor public space, small-scale manufacturing, recreational amenities and vertical horticulture. [4.D.6]
- Create or support programs to establish small, local, and minority-owned businesses in vacant or underutilized ground-level spaces. [6.C.4]
- Adaptive Reuse - Infuse new life into high-vacancy office buildings through adaptive reuse projects that improve office spaces or convert them into other uses. Encourage the activation of ground-floors with dining, retail, and community-oriented uses. [Skyline Park 8]

6 Update Urban Design, Zoning and Street Design Guidelines

Immediate action to update urban design standards and guidelines for streets and private property is needed so that future private development improves the downtown experience. Priorities also include transformation of key locations along the planned 5280 trail to create high-quality public spaces downtown. Key strategies include:

- Replace outdated B-5 Urban Design Standards and Guidelines with the Downtown UDSG, tailored to the Downtown context, to ensure quality urban design that reflects Denver’s culture and climate, enhances and connects to nature and creates a lively, safe and inviting public realm. [1.D.1]
- Allow limited expansion of the Downtown Theater District (D-TD) to strategic locations (see map at right) adjacent to the existing D-TD zone district where additional signage, enhanced lighting and digital art installations can support street activation and visual interest along entertainment-focused corridors and on blank facades. [1.D.5]
- Evaluate existing complete streets and urban design guidelines and consider adjustments to downtown-specific street standards to prioritize people walking, rolling, using micromobility, biking and using transit and ensure trees a priority in policy recommendations and street design guidelines. Reevaluate and revise development criteria related to new street tree requirements and associated infrastructure to ensure better outcomes. [2.A.2]
- Continue targeted placemaking investment in re-imagined streets as shared streets, festival streets* and pedestrian zones (e.g., 21st St, Wynkoop St, Acoma St, Larimer St, Glenarm Pl, Arapahoe St, Cleveland Pl, Curtis St.). [2.A.8]
 - Complete the Acoma St. segment of the 5280 Trail to create a seamless pedestrian connection between Civic Center Park and Golden Triangle with green infrastructure, tree canopy, public gathering spaces and ground-floor retail. [Civic Center 3]
 - Wynkoop Shared Street - Strengthen the connection between Cherry Creek, Union Station, and Coors Field along Wynkoop St. – a designated place on the 5280 Trail. Expand tree canopy and transform the street to prioritize pedestrians and allow the street to host events. [Ballpark / Sakura Sq. 1]

- Reimagine 21st St. as a greenway and shared festival street along the 5280 Trail with enhanced tree canopy, wider sidewalks, bike facilities, and areas to rest. Create a public space at Larimer St. and 21st St. with a strategic closure at Larimer St. [Ballpark / Sakura Sq. 5]

7 Implementation Evaluations

Many of the infrastructure projects outlined in this Plan will require additional study. Unpacking the cumulative impact of the recommendations in this Plan is essential to inform the design of individual geographies. Other studies are also necessary to advance key projects:

- Downtown Two-way Feasibility Study: Conduct a comprehensive study that analyzes one-way to two-way street conversions and potential impacts on the downtown street network including curb-use, transit and bikeway operations with a focus on connecting transit hubs to key activity areas. [2.A.1]
- Downtown Greenways Evaluation: Develop design standards for downtown greenways and incorporate green infrastructure, pollinator gardens, water quality enhancements, and other landscaping to support biodiversity into public space and right-of-way. [7.C.4]
- Welton Transit Corridor Evaluation: Conduct a study to evaluate the future of transit on Welton and how to deliver the connection to 38th and Blake. Plan references:
 - Evaluate Welton Street, within Downtown and Five Points, as a trunk transit line that increases the frequency and coverage of service. [7.B.2]
 - Transform Welton Street into a two-way corridor with re-imagined transit service and public realm enhancements to restore its function as a great urban street connecting Five Points through downtown. [Upper Broadway 6]
- Downtown Energy Evaluation: Coordinate with energy utility providers to study downtown-specific energy needs, evaluate current system capacity, identify locations of future power infrastructure, and assess options to minimize cost and support overall grid reliance. [7.A.2]
- Downtown Play Evaluation: Work with public and private partners to identify locations for destination play features and tourism attractions that builds off Outdoor Downtown and Outdoor Adventure Plan with a focus on Upper Downtown and 16th Street. [5.D.5]
- Downtown Public Arts Plan: Develop a downtown public art plan that identifies existing art assets, needs, opportunities, and priority locations for artwork that attracts residents and visitors, tells Denver’s story and activates downtown, including publicly or privately funded artwork located in both public spaces and publicly accessible private spaces. [3.C.2]
- RTDs Comprehensive Operational Analysis: Work with RTD to update their Comprehensive Operational Analysis (previously the System Optimization Plan) to improve service frequency, coverage and reliability in downtown and nearby neighborhoods. [7.B.2]



Precedent: Seattle Bikeways

SHORT-TERM ACTIONS

2029-2032



Civic Center Next 100 concept rendering

1 Civic Center

With initial phases of Civic Center Park reconstruction and the McNichols building renovation now funded, including investment by the Denver DDA, essential next steps include funding additional phases of the park and better connecting the area to the rest of downtown. Implementation priorities include street and public realm improvements around the edges of the park, with particular emphasis on the area encompassing Colfax Avenue, 15th Street and Cleveland Place. Longer-term steps, like activating the ground-floors of additional city-owned buildings, will be most effective after reconstruction, although essential daily-life needs like childcare could be implemented prior or during construction.

- Civic Center Next 100 - Reimagine the Greek Amphitheater and Bannock St. to create safer and more welcoming spaces while preserving its role as a major events and free speech gathering place with a signature art installation that celebrates Denver's spirit. **[Civic Center 1]**
- Civic Center Play Hub - Create a play hub that integrates the area's world-class cultural offerings at the DAM, DPL, and Civic Center Park that encourage multigenerational discovery, blends recreation with arts, education, and cultural programming for all ages. **[Civic Center 2]**
- Colfax + Cleveland - Strengthen connections to Upper Downtown by calming Colfax Ave and simplifying pedestrian crossings. Close or convert Cleveland Pl., Cheyenne Pl. and 14th St. into shared or park-like streets with expanded tree canopy and activated with retail kiosks that minimize cut-through traffic. Link key bike corridors through Cleveland Pl. **[Civic Center 5]**
- Active Ground floors - Activate ground-floors of publicly owned buildings north of Colfax Ave. with uses such as food halls, public markets, childcare, or other public-serving activities to create a mixed-use destination with increased foot traffic. **[Civic Center 7]**
- Expand food, beverage, arts, and cultural offerings in and around Civic Center Park by leveraging and enhancing public spaces and buildings, like McNichols, to bring activity to the area, create a destination, and celebrate Denver's diverse cultures. **[Civic Center 8]**

- District Energy - Invest in improvements and expansion of downtown's district energy systems to affordably heat and cool buildings without carbon pollution. **[7.A.3]**

2 Skyline Park

Following initial city and Denver DDA investment in Skyline Park Block 2 the next steps are to fund and construct Blocks 1 and 3 of the park. This work will also include activation of the park edges with implementation of the Arapahoe Greenway and new ground-floor uses. Near-term interventions for Curtis Street include incorporating art, wayfinding, placemaking and lighting elements. The widened sidewalks and expanded tree canopy are long-term improvements. Acquiring the Federal Reserve property to create a mixed-use development with an active ground floor and public realm is a long-term goal.

- The New Skyline Park - Complete planned improvements to all three blocks of Skyline Park to create a more functional open space for people of all ages to gather and play. Enhance the sense of safety and spur reinvestment in adjacent buildings with the increased activity. **[Skyline Park 1]**
- Arapahoe Greenway - Reimagine Arapahoe St. as a park-like greenway that prioritizes people walking, rolling, and biking and connects Skyline Park and 16th St. to Auraria Campus, major redevelopment projects to the east, and Curtis Park. **[Skyline Park 2]**
- Curtis Street - Convert Curtis St. into a primary pedestrian corridor between 16th St. and the Arts Complex. Incorporate art, placemaking, wayfinding and lighting elements, widen sidewalks, expand tree canopy, and activate ground-floors. **[Skyline Park 3]**
- Active Ground floors - Bring people and energy to Skyline Park, 16th St., and other public spaces by activating vacant buildings and ground-floors with uses such as public markets or food halls for local entrepreneurs. **[Skyline park 5]**
- Federal Reserve Block - Leverage potential federal disposition plans for the Federal Reserve Building to adaptively reuse the iconic Brutalist building and block for a mixed-use, affordable housing development with public spaces and active ground-floor uses. **[Skyline Park 6]**



Precedent: Vancouver's Rainbow Park



Civic Center Park + Banonock St. Concept Design



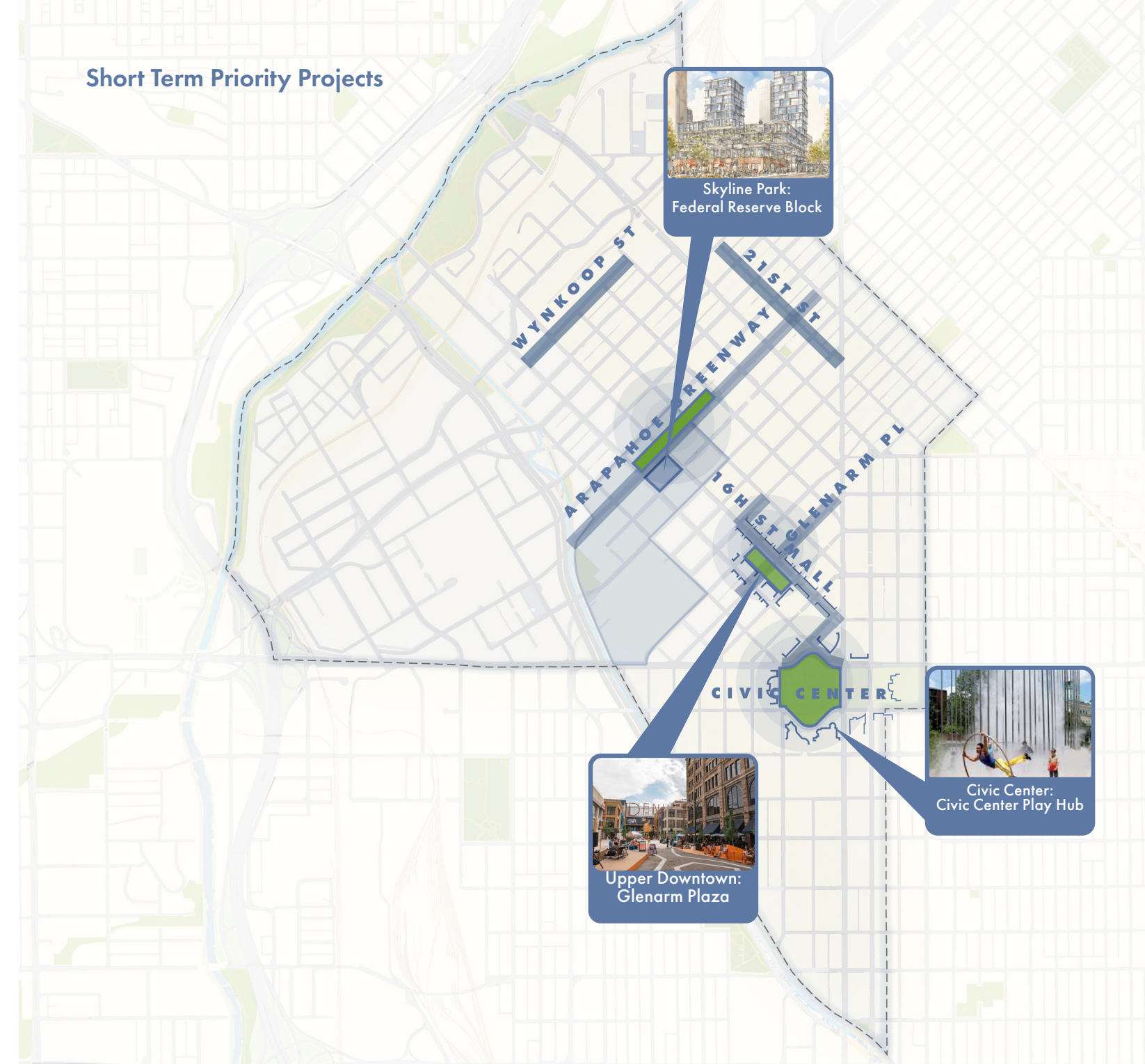
Glenarm Plaza, facing 15th Street

3 Upper Downtown

The near-term focus includes leveraging the Downtown Two-Way Feasibility Study to further pedestrianize Glenarm and support the area through ground-floor activation subsidies, placemaking, art and programming. The announcement by the Denver DDA to begin the acquisition process of the parking lots on the back side of the Pavilions is a huge step in revitalizing the Glenarm Plaza area, and the eventual redevelopment of those parcels will help provide long-term activation in the heart of Upper Downtown. Full realization will likely take five to ten years or longer. Longer-term goals also include possible reimagination of the Pavilions themselves in alignment with parking lot redevelopment.

- Glenarm Plaza - Develop an iconic gathering space at Glenarm Plaza that incorporates art, lighting, shade, placemaking elements and improvements to the Denver Pavilions building to anchor Upper Downtown and add fun for all ages. **[Upper Downtown 1]**
- Residential Infusion - Support the creation of a vibrant 18+ hour district by increasing residential development in Upper Downtown. Convert surface parking and underdeveloped sites (e.g., the parking lots along 15th behind the Pavilions) into residential units. **[Upper Downtown 2]**
- Create and upgrade public spaces and publicly accessible private spaces downtown with amenities like public restrooms, water fountains, public Wi-Fi, charging stations and other conveniences. **[3.B.1]**
- Tourism Centerpiece - Work with public and private partners to identify sites and potential anchor draws that could augment existing tourist attractions to bring more visitors and spur longer and more frequent visits to Upper Downtown. **[Upper Downtown 4]**

Short Term Priority Projects



4 Ballpark District

In addition to improving the general experience in the Ballpark District through increased safety and cleanliness, short-term actions include finalizing the design and construction of two key corridors to enhance the pedestrian experience and better connect the district to other parts of downtown.

- Wynkoop Shared Street - Strengthen the connection between Cherry Creek, Union Station, and Coors Field along Wynkoop St. – a designated place on the 5280 Trail. Expand tree canopy and transform the street to prioritize pedestrians and allow the street to host events. **[Ballpark / Sakura Sq. 1]**
- 21st Shared Street - Reimagine 21st St. as a greenway and shared festival street along the 5280 Trail with enhanced tree canopy, wider sidewalks, bike facilities, and areas to rest. Create a public space at Larimer St. and 21st St. with a strategic closure at Larimer St. **[Ballpark / Sakura Sq. 5]**

LONG-TERM ACTIONS

2033 - BEYOND

1 Civic Center - Broadway South of Colfax

Contingent on the outcomes of the Downtown Two-Way Feasibility Study, reimagine Broadway and Lincoln as two-way streets, transforming Broadway into a primary retail street and signature downtown greenway that prioritizes transit, multimodal movement and tree canopy. This corridor has the ability to better connect Capitol Hill and Golden triangle to the rest of downtown, emphasizing the need to provide legible and frequent transit connection in this area.

- Transform Broadway - Convert Broadway into a two-way street (along with Lincoln St.) to better connect Upper Downtown and Golden Triangle. Reduce traffic lanes, add major bike facilities, and extended transit options like the Metroride or 16th St. Shuttle. [Civic Center 4]

2 Cherry Creek / Speer Boulevard

The reimagination of Cherry Creek and Speer Boulevard is a transformational project with incredible potential, but is very complex project and will take more than a decade for complete realization. The Downtown Two-Way Feasibility Study is an essential first step to inform additional traffic and development impact studies. Goals of this project include shifting traffic patterns, improving transit, providing areas for new development, creating a greenspace spine through downtown that connects pedestrian spaces to development areas and providing areas for multi-generational play while improving water access. The first step in transforming Cherry Creek into a place people can play in, recreate and enjoy is to improve water quality and make it safe for play. Improving water quality will require a watershed-wide effort, and improving the creek ecosystem within downtown necessitates ecological study and design development prior to implementation.

- Realigned Boulevard – Realign and consolidate Speer Boulevard on the west side of Cherry Creek to better connect downtown to Auraria and unlock open space and development opportunities. The goal is to create a more cohesive park system that improves the quality and usability of green space while maintaining or even exceeding the existing total acreage. [Cherry Creek / Speer Blvd. 1]
- Cherry Creek Play - Invite community into the creek by making water quality improvements and water-based play opportunities. [Cherry Creek / Speer Blvd 4]
- Unit Auraria - Connect Denver's oldest neighborhood to downtown by reestablishing the street grid, enhancing the open space along the realigned Speer Blvd., and reimagining publicly owned land as new affordable housing and development. [Cherry Creek / Speer Blvd 5]

3 Upper Broadway

With the Downtown Two-Way Feasibility Study as a first step, additional detailed traffic studies and roadway designs of Broadway and Lincoln and the surrounding areas are also needed. At the same time, the city can explore acquiring surface parking lots near 19th and Broadway with the goal of long-term development into public open space and additional development nearby.

- Transformational Park - Create a new park along Broadway between 19th and 20th Streets and acquire private land to create a new 2+ acre park that provides open space and recreational amenities for the growing population in the Broadway/Arapahoe Square area. [Upper Broadway 1]
- Activate the Park - Activate the park with new infill residential and mixed-use development to create constant activity and catalytic development opportunities around the park's edges. [Upper Broadway 2]
- Reimagine Broadway (+ Lincoln) North of Colfax -



- Reroute Broadway - Reroute traffic on Broadway between 18th and 20th Streets to create a sizable open space and allow for construction of a mixed-use catalytic anchor tower, while maintaining pedestrian and bicycle access through an open space easement. [Upper Broadway 3]
- A Green Boulevard - Turn Broadway into a transit greenway between 18th and Colfax as a two-way transit street with widened public realm and enhanced tree canopy to create a strong link between Civic Center and the new park. [Upper Broadway 4]
- Re-imagined ROW - Reimagine Broadway north of 20th as a multimodal green boulevard while converting 20th Street and Lincoln Street to two-way streets, distributing traffic flow with improvements on Welton and California. [Upper Broadway 5]



07

APPENDIX

APPENDIX A: DENVER'S STORIES 100

APPENDIX B: MAP BOOK 102

APPENDIX C: REFERENCE MAPS 112

ADDITIONAL ITEMS PROVIDED IN SEPARATE DOCUMENT(S)

IMPLEMENTATION MATRIX

IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

REPORTS + STUDIES

APPENDIX A: DENVER’S STORIES

BUILDING UPON DOWNTOWN’S PAST AND PRESENT DOWNTOWN DENVER’S HISTORY

Upper Downtown/Civic Center

Gang of 19	Some of the foundational protests that ignited the disability rights movement took place in Denver in 1978, just around the corner from the Denver Public Library at Colfax and Broadway. 19 disabled activists, known as “The Gang of 19,” threw themselves in front of buses in an attempt to convey their disenfranchisement. The group blocked the intersection chanting their mantra, “We will ride!” until representatives of the Regional Transportation District (RTD) were willing to talk about the absence of wheelchair- accessible buses. It was this initial protest that brought to light the many other kinds of discrimination and abuse faced by the disabled community.
Urban Renewal	In 1967, voters overwhelmingly approved a plan, known as the Skyline Urban Renewal Project, to demolish 120 acres (approximately 30 blocks) of Denver’s downtown. The thought was that by clearing away old, often blighted buildings, space could be made for new development and an influx of capital. The Skyline project left in its wake a sea of parking lots and displaced thousands of businesses and poor residents.
Civic Center/City Beautiful Movement	Named a National Historic Landmark in 2012, Civic Center is a complex of parks, civic buildings, and cultural institutions stretching between the State Capitol and the City and County Building in the heart of Denver. Plans for the complex, which was developed in stages from the 1890s to the 1930s, involved many of the city’s most important politicians, architects, landscape architects, and artists. The influence of the City Beautiful Movement, an outgrowth of the 1893 Columbian Exposition in Chicago, can be seen in Civic Center’s symmetrical design and classical architecture.
Carnegie Library Movement	The original Central Branch of the Denver Public Library, now known as the McNichols Events Center, was built in 1909 with a donation by philanthropist Andrew Carnegie. This was the first, and largest, of the nine Carnegie libraries built in Denver. Carnegie donated \$56 million to build over 2500 libraries worldwide.

Lower Downtown

Denver’s Chinatown	The first Chinese immigrants arrived in Colorado in the 1860s. Chinese immigrants founded communities in and around many of Colorado’s mining towns, where they came seeking work on the railroads, in the mines, or in growing service industries needed by white miners. These communities faced significant discrimination and outright attacks from other miners and settlers of European descent. As the mining boomtowns dwindled throughout the late nineteenth century, many of their inhabitants relocated to larger cities such as Denver. Denver’s Chinatown was located in what is now Lower Downtown (LoDo), primarily in the area along Wazee and Market streets between 15th and 20th streets.
Anti-Chinese Riot	In 1880, members of the white population of Denver rioted against the residents of the city’s Chinatown. Though there were few Chinese in Colorado, many Anglo-Americans and European immigrants viewed them as an economic threat. The riot led to the destruction of many Chinese-owned businesses and homes, and resulted in the death of at least one individual. Denver’s Chinatown was left in a state of near- ruin. In 2022, the city of Denver issued a formal apology for the Anti-Chinese Riot.

The Railroad	In 1867, when the Union Pacific Railroad bypassed Denver in favor of a route through Cheyenne, Wyoming, Denver business leaders resolved that “if the railroads would not build to Denver, then Denver would build to the railroads.” The Denver Pacific Railroad was constructed in 1870, connecting Denver to Cheyenne. Later that same year, the Kansas Pacific Railroad connected Denver with Kansas City and St. Louis. The arrival of the railroads allowed Denver to quickly become a thriving city and the commercial and industrial hub for the Rocky Mountain region.
Little Raven Street	Little Raven Street is named for Chief Little Raven, a Southern Arapaho chief who was known for his commitment to maintaining peace. Little Raven led an Arapaho band on the Front Range of Colorado during the mid-nineteenth century. His people were among several Cheyenne and Arapaho bands slaughtered by U.S. troops during the Sand Creek Massacre of 1864. He signed the Little Arkansas Treaty of 1865, hoping that his people would receive the promised reparations for the massacre. Descendants of the massacre victims have not received what was promised.

Ballpark/Sakura Square

Coors Field and the Rockies	Coors Field, home of Major League Baseball’s Colorado Rockies, opened in 1995. The Rockies began as an expansion team in 1993, and played at Mile High Stadium, home of the Denver Broncos, until Coors Field was ready. Coors Field has hosted the 1998 and 2021 MLB All-Star Games, and in addition to baseball is used for concerts and other events.
Japanese American Internment	Executive Order 9066, issued by President Franklin D. Roosevelt in 1942, authorized the forced removal of all persons deemed a threat to national security from the West Coast to “relocation centers” further inland. Thousands of Japanese and Japanese American men, women, and children were forcibly removed from West Coast locations and confined in isolated, fenced, and guarded concentration camps. Nearly 70,000 of the evacuees were American citizens. After they were freed near the end of the war, many came to Denver and settled in the area near today’s Sakura Square and in neighboring Five Points.
Larimer Square	Located in the heart of downtown Denver, Larimer Square refers to the 1400 block of Larimer Street, which was named for a city founder, William Larimer, and served as its main street for more than three decades. In the 1960s, Denver preservationist Dana Crawford worked to save the block between Fourteenth and Fifteenth Streets from demolition by the Denver Urban Re- newal Authority, turning the late nineteenth-century buildings of Larimer Square into a model of adaptive reuse and historic preservation. (Source: Colorado Encyclopedia)

Skyline Park

Skyline Urban Renewal Project	The Skyline Urban Renewal Project demolished 120 acres (approximately 30 blocks) of Denver’s downtown, clearing the way for redevelopment. This one-acre linear park and plaza was constructed between 1972 and 1975 on area made vacant by urban renewal. Designed by Lawrence Halprin, the plaza was intended as an urban oasis and gateway to central downtown. (Source: https://www.tclf.org/landscapes/skyline-park)
Creation of 16th Street Mall	The 16th Street Mall opened in 1982 as a pedestrian and transit mall. Designed by the renowned architectural firm of I.M. Pei & Partners, the 1.25-mile-long mall runs along 16th Street in downtown Denver, from Wewatta Street (at Union Station) to the intersection of 16th Avenue and Broadway. The original granite stone sidewalks and streets were designed by I.M Pei to resemble the scale pattern of the western diamondback rattlesnake. In 2022, construction started on a \$149 million multi-year rebuild of the mall and completed in 2025.

Film Row In major cities with large numbers of first and second-run movie theaters, film companies leased office and storage space in buildings called “film exchanges.” The area where the exchanges were located was often called “film row.” Denver’s film row was located in the area surrounding 21st Street and Broadway. Many of these buildings remain today, and their decorative Art Deco and Art Moderne detailing hint at their connection to Hollywood’s golden age.

Union Station Denver Union Station is the main railway station and central transportation hub in Denver. The central, main terminal opened in 1914, the latest of three rail stations to stand on this site. Union Station was designed by Denver architects Gove & Walsh in the Beaux-Arts style. Denver Union Station underwent a major renovation from 2012-2014, reopening with the Crawford Hotel, restaurants, and retail shops.

Theater Row Denver’s “theater row,” located on Curtis Street between 15th and 18th streets, was once lined with movie theaters with fanciful names such as the Isis, the Strand, the Rivoli, and the Empress. Theaters featured decorative architecture, elaborate signs, and thousands of lights. After a visit in 1915, Thomas Edison reported, “There isn’t a place in America -- not even boastful New York -- that can equal the illumination of your “Movie Row.””

Five Points/ Curtis Park

Five Points: “Harlem of the West” Denver’s Five Points neighborhood, which takes its name from the five-way intersection of Welton Street, Washington Street, 27th Street, and E. 26th Avenue, was the center of the city’s Black community for much of the twentieth century. Though redlining restricted minorities largely to Five Points well into the 1960s, the area became a vibrant multi-cultural community with Black, Chinese, Latino, Jewish and Japanese residents and businesses. Known as the “Harlem of the West,” until the 1960s Five Points had a vibrant music scene centered around Welton Street.

The Rossonian The Rossonian Hotel was one of the most important jazz clubs between St. Louis and Los Angeles from the late 1930’s to the early 1960’s. Jazz greats such as Duke Ellington, Louis Armstrong, Count Basie, Nat King Cole, George Shearing, and Dinah Washington stayed at the Rossonian Hotel and entertained at the Rossonian Lounge. These major African American entertainers were denied lodging in most Denver hotels due to the racial segregation practices of the period. (Source: <https://www.nps.gov/places/rossonian-hotel.htm>)

Curtis Park Denver’s Curtis Park neighborhood is one of the city’s oldest and its first “streetcar suburb.” Denver’s first streetcar line, equipped with horse-drawn cars, traveled up Champa Street from downtown, turning around at 27th Street. The line allowed residents to live outside downtown Denver and commute between downtown jobs and suburban homes. Curtis Park is home to 8 Denver landmark districts, with well-preserved homes dating from the 1870s.

Speer Boulevard/Cherry Creek

Cherry Creek Flood Denver experienced its first major flood in 1864 when, after days of rain, Cherry Creek and the South Platte River overflowed their banks. The flood devastated the young city of Denver, killing a number of individuals and demolishing most buildings located near the waterways, including City Hall and the offices of the Rocky Mountain News.

The Confluence For centuries, the confluence of the South Platte River and Cherry Creek was a gathering place for Indigenous tribes, including the Cheyenne, Ute, and Arapaho. Confluence Park is located at the confluence of these two streams cutting through the heart of Denver. The towns of Denver City, Auraria, and Highland were founded adjacent to the confluence after gold was discovered nearby in 1858. In 1859, the towns were consolidated as the City of Denver, Auraria, and Highland, which would become known as Denver City.

Auraria The Auraria neighborhood was largely demolished to make way for the Auraria Higher Education Campus, home to Metropolitan State University, University of Colorado-Denver, and Community College of Denver. In order to build the Auraria Campus, which opened to students in 1974, the Denver Urban Renewal Authority displaced 343 households, 770 people, and more than 100 businesses. Prior to its demolition, Auraria was a mostly-Latino neighborhood containing modest homes and small businesses.

St. Cajetan’s St. Cajetan’s Catholic Church opens in the Auraria neighborhood. The first church for Spanish-speaking Catholics in Denver, its construction indicates the evolution of Auraria as Hispanics from Southern Colorado and New Mexico settle in the neighborhood. St. Cajetan’s becomes a central institution in the Hispanic community of west Denver.

Chicano Movement Frustrated over the lack of political representation, pervasive poverty, and systemic racism, many Chicanos and Latinos joined protests during the civil rights era of the 1960s. The Chicano Movement in Denver, or El Movimiento, consisted of grassroots organizing by numerous activists, including the Crusade for Justice, established by Rodolfo “Corky” Gonzales and many others. Social justice organizations held many protests and meetings throughout Denver, typically at the public parks where many young people gathered for events or in the streets downtown near Civic Center Park and the Colorado State Capitol. The West High School student walkout, known as the West High Blowout, was a galvanizing event that helped broadcast the Crusade’s activism across generations of Chicanos in Denver and beyond.



Theater Row along Curtis Street, 1926



Skyline Urban Renewal-Cooper Building Demolition, 1970



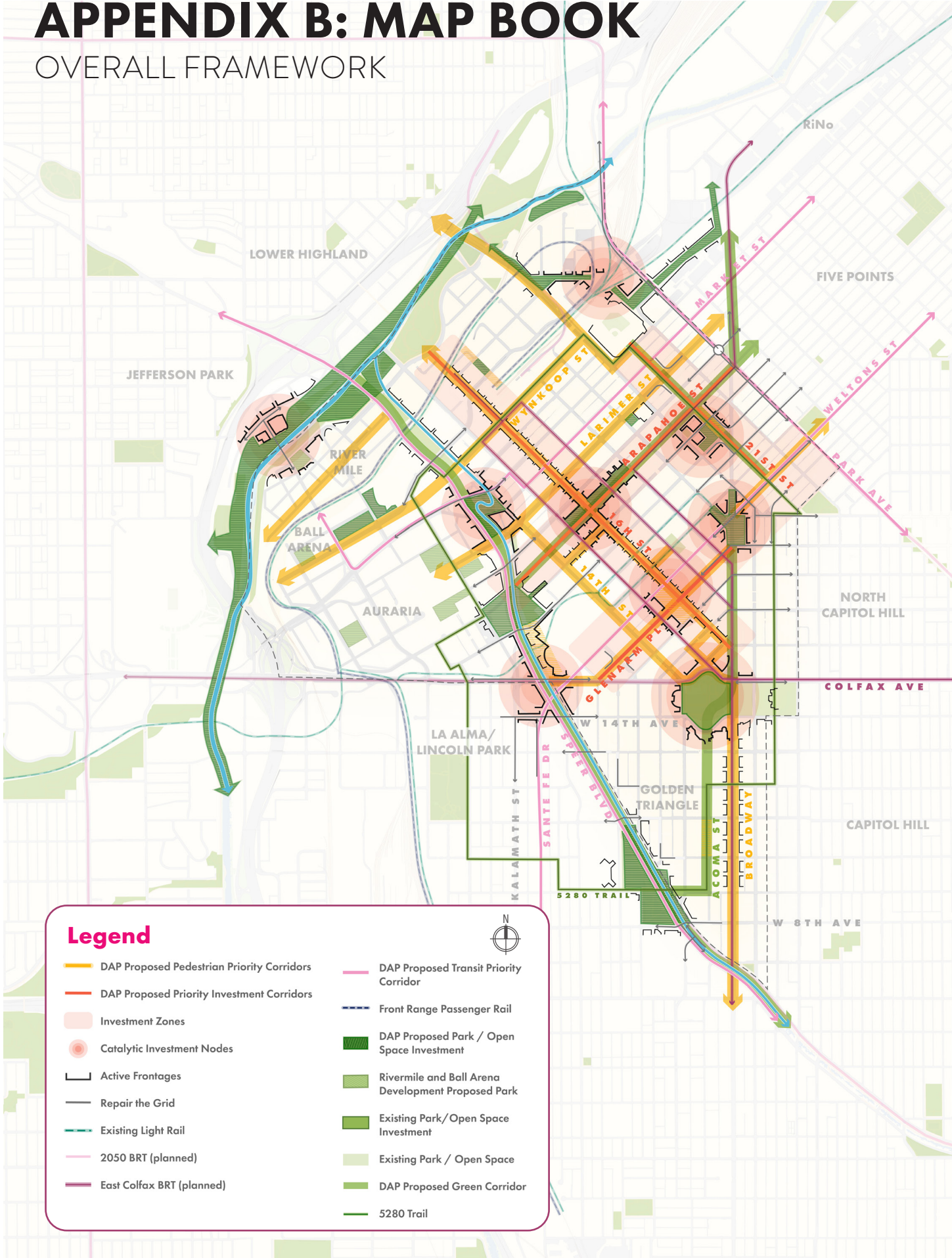
West High Blowout, 1969



Construction of the Greek Amphitheatre in Civic Center Park, 1917-1918

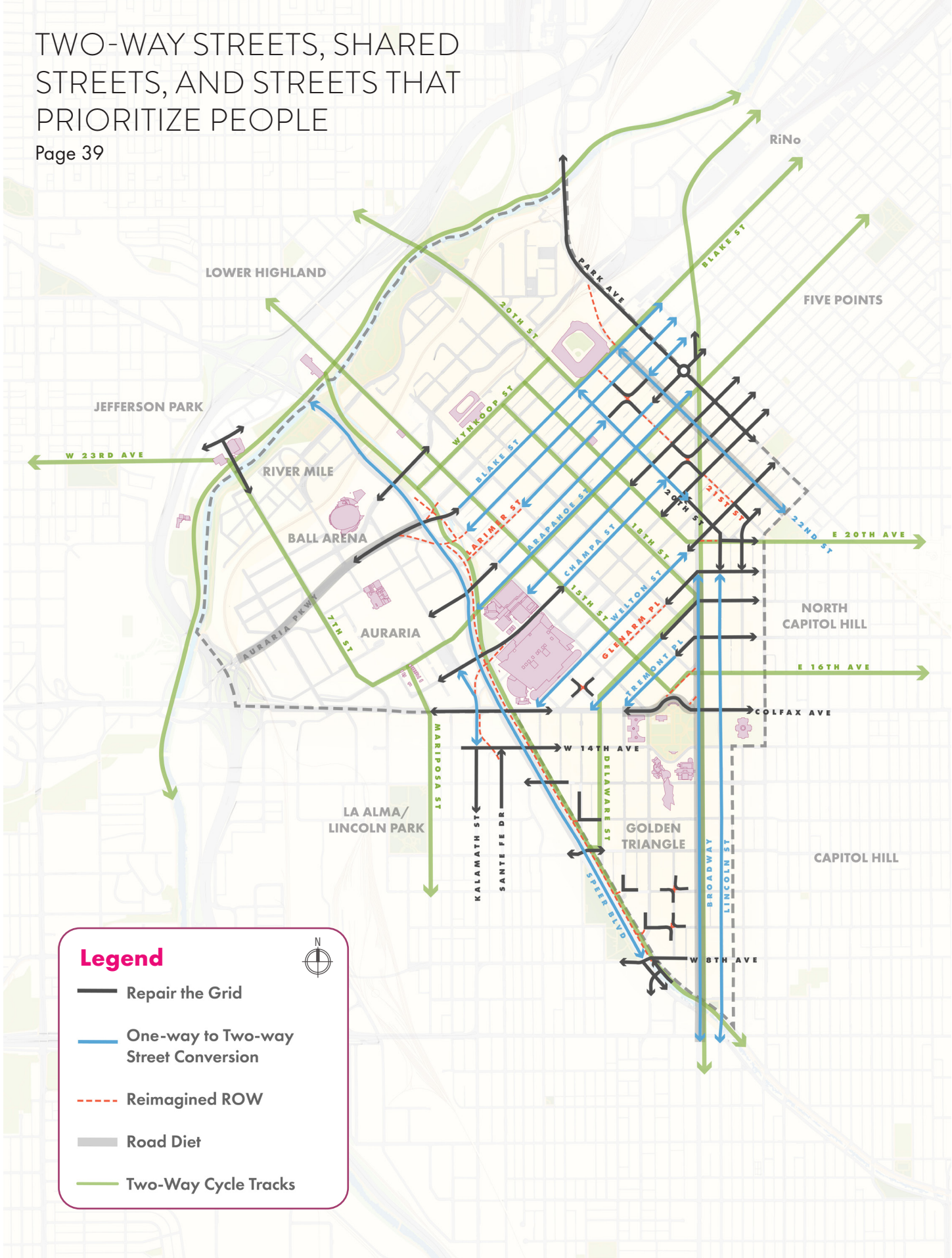
APPENDIX B: MAP BOOK

OVERALL FRAMEWORK



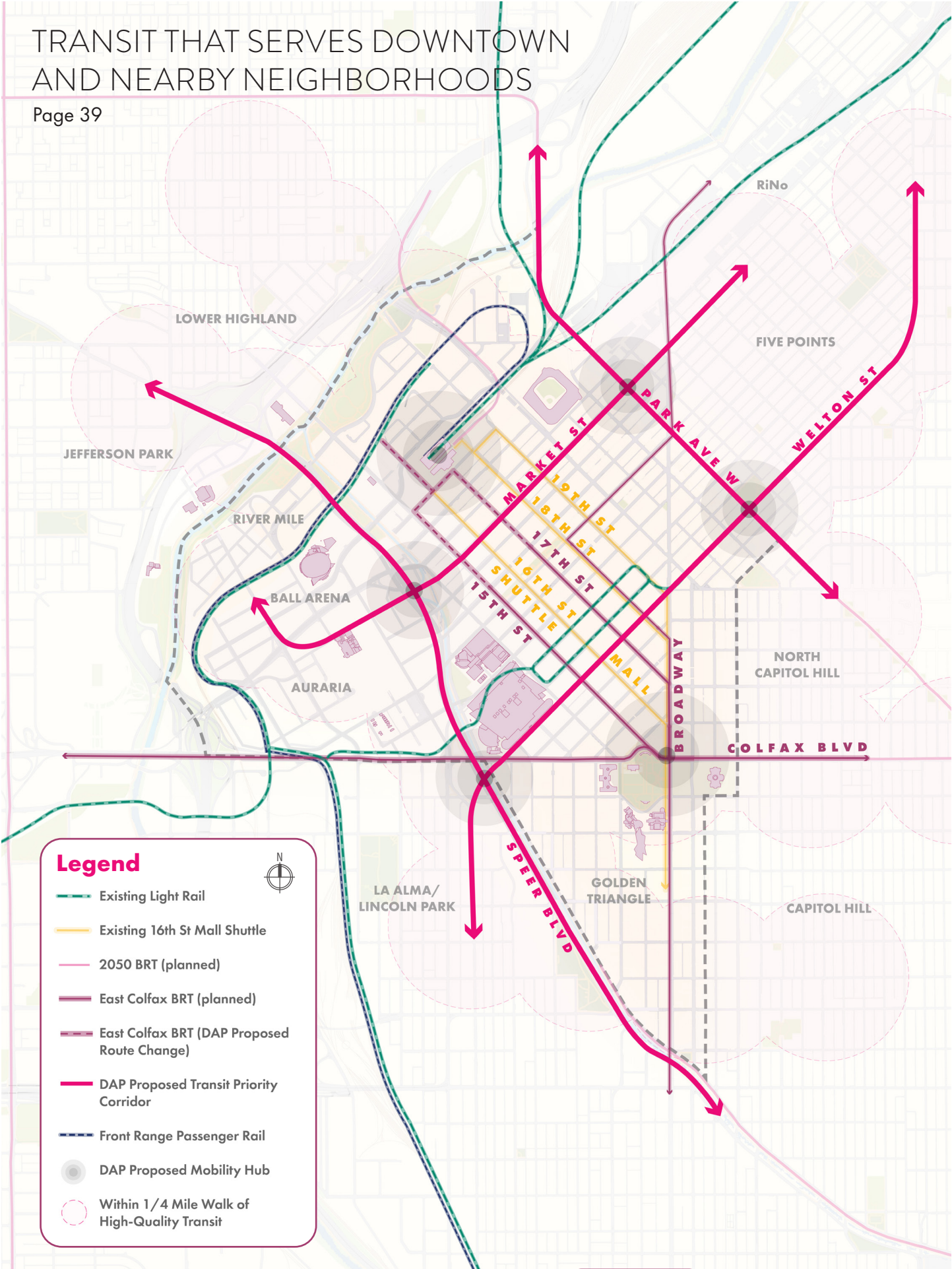
TWO-WAY STREETS, SHARED STREETS, AND STREETS THAT PRIORITIZE PEOPLE

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TRANSIT THAT SERVES DOWNTOWN AND NEARBY NEIGHBORHOODS

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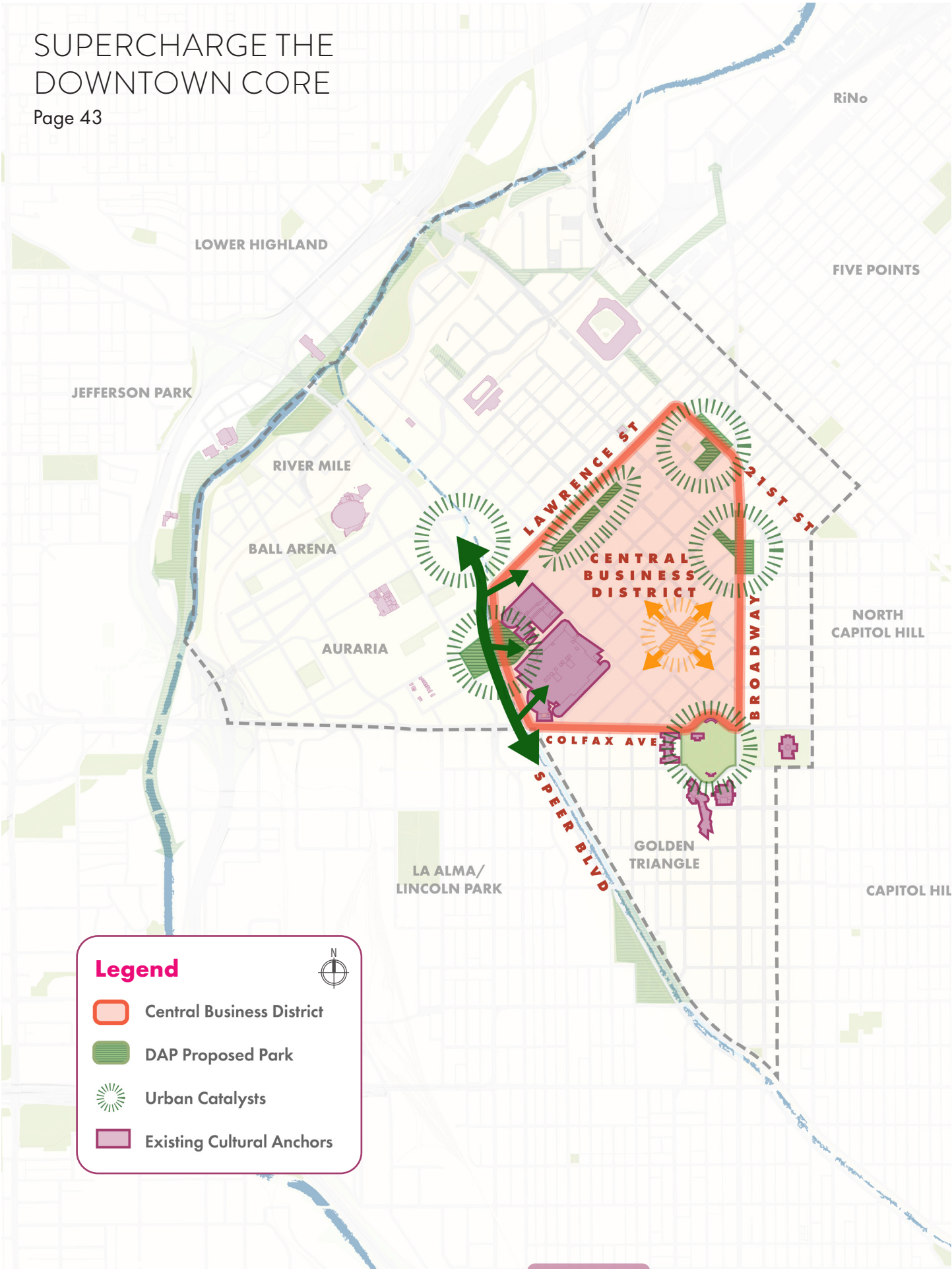
LEVERAGE WHAT WE HAVE

Page 43



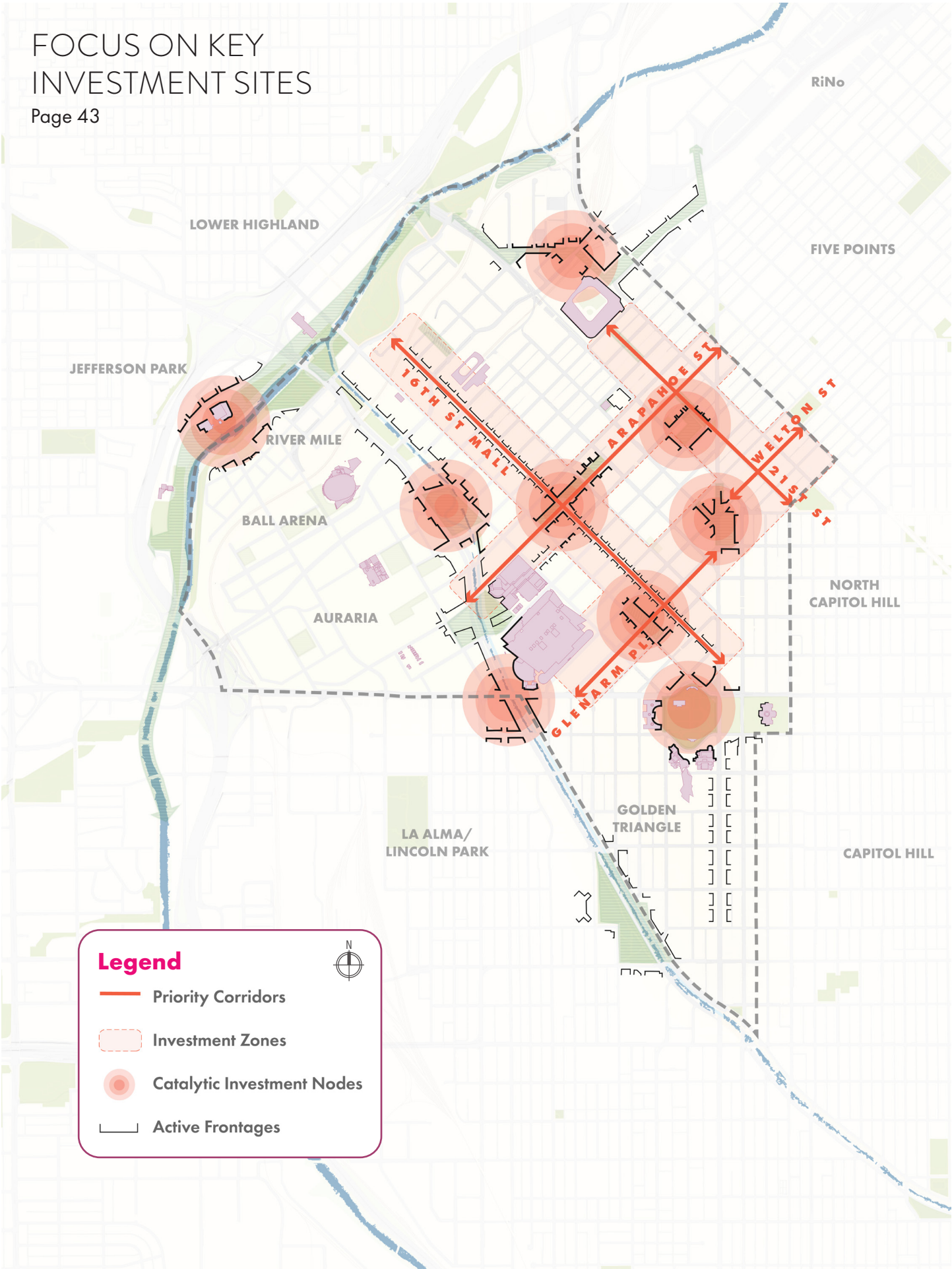
SUPERCARGE THE DOWNTOWN CORE

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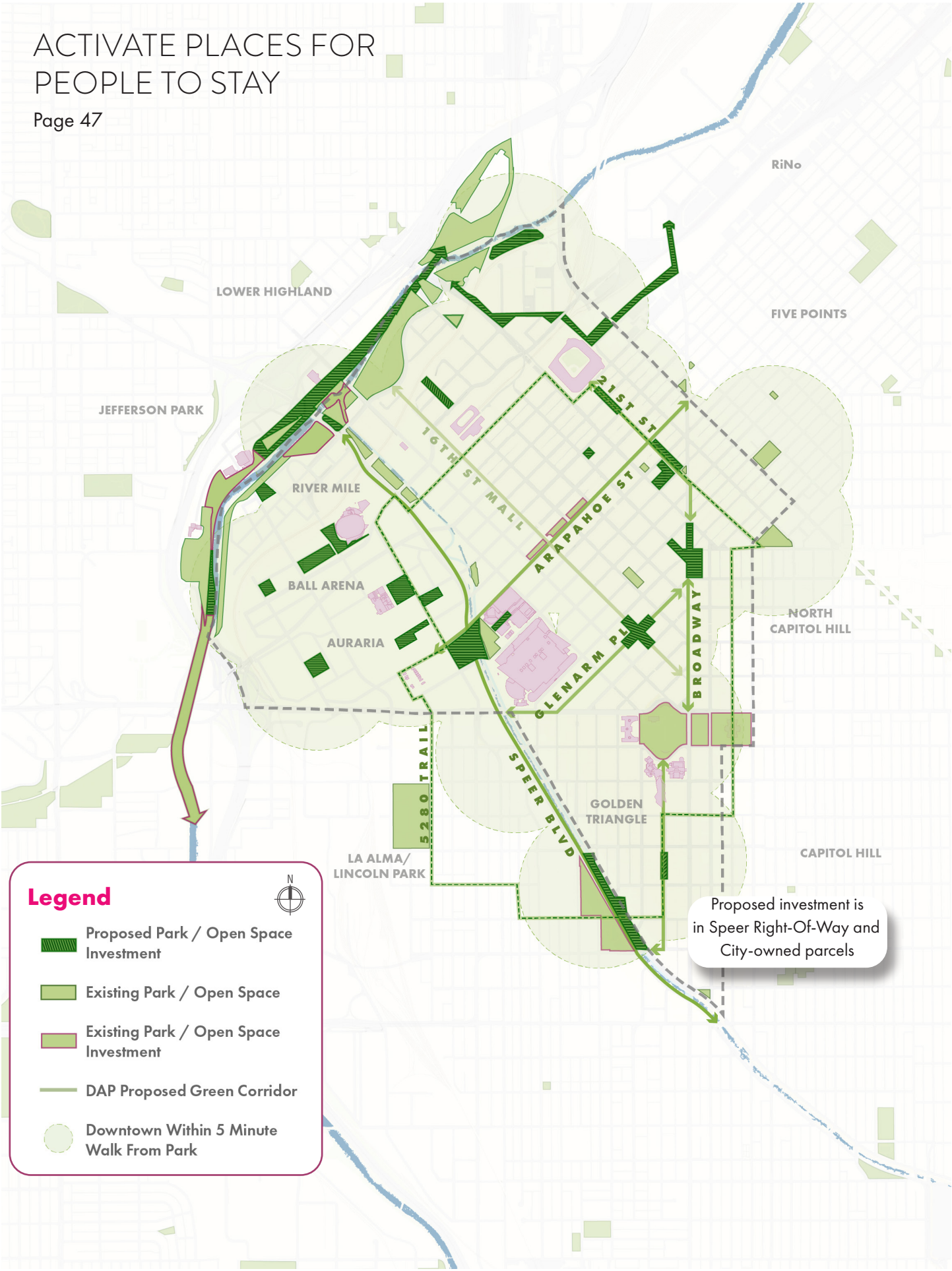
FOCUS ON KEY INVESTMENT SITES

Page 43



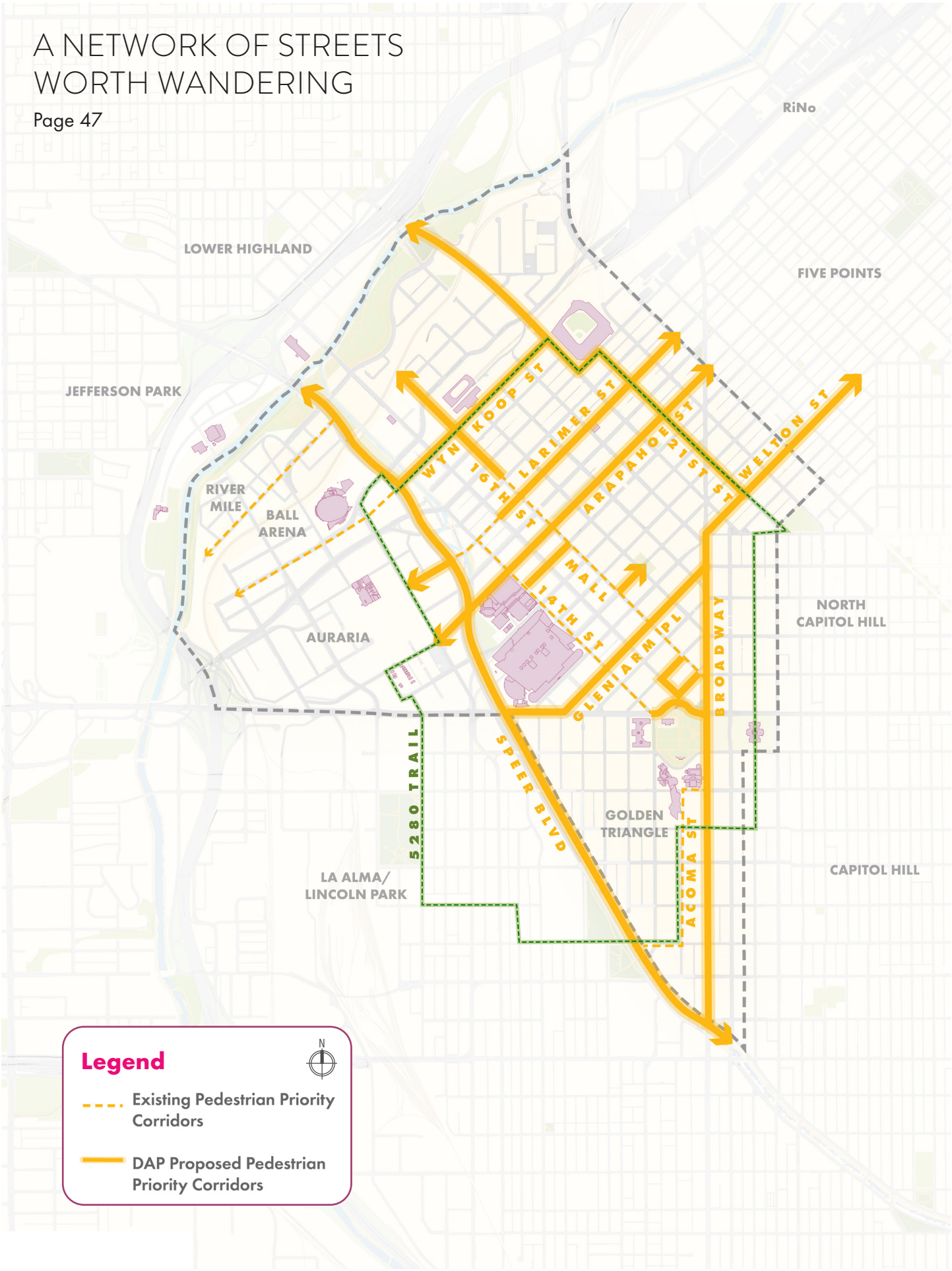
ACTIVATE PLACES FOR PEOPLE TO STAY

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A NETWORK OF STREETS WORTH WANDERING

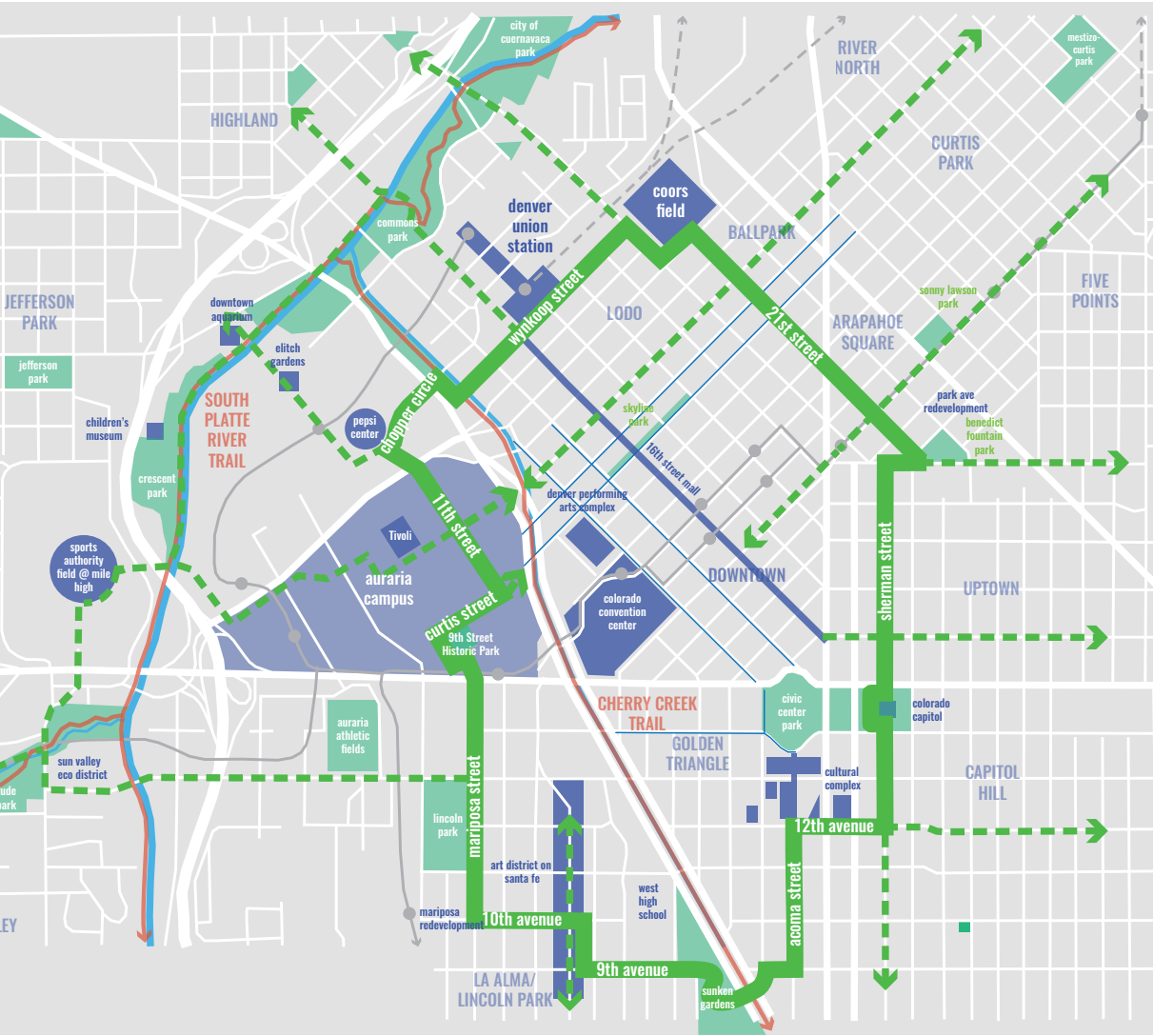
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APPENDIX C: REFERENCE MAPS

5280 TRAIL MAP

For reference only



LINKING NEIGHBORHOODS CONNECTING PEOPLE

- primary trail
- additional trail-links
- off-street trails
- protected bike Lanes
- landmarks/destinations
- parks

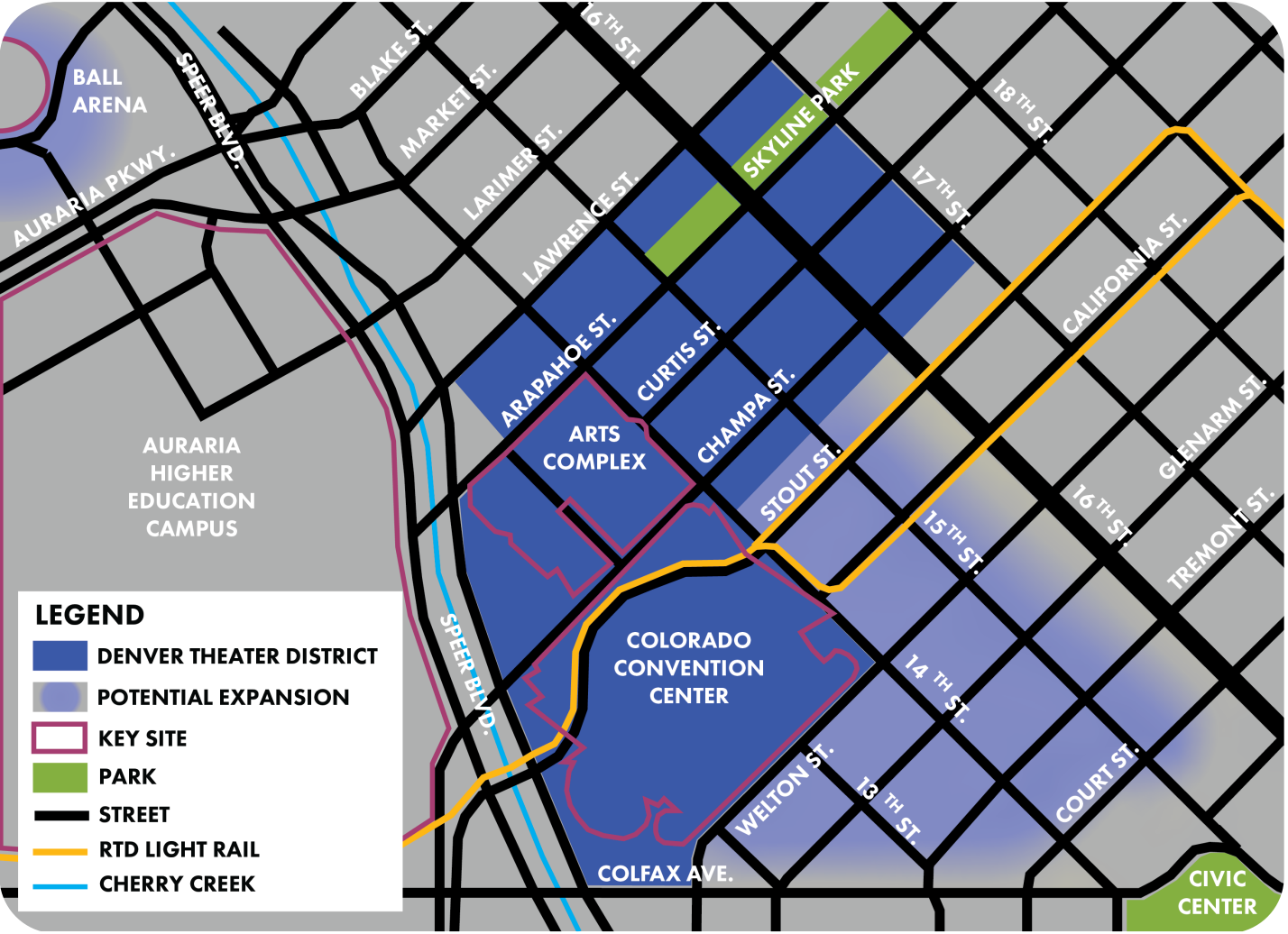


 Downtown
Denver
Partnership

The5280Trail.com

PROPOSED THEATRE DISTRICT EXPANSION

For reference only



- LEGEND**
- DENVER THEATER DISTRICT
 - POTENTIAL EXPANSION
 - KEY SITE
 - PARK
 - STREET
 - RTD LIGHT RAIL
 - CHERRY CREEK

