



TO: Denver Planning Board, Joel Noble, Chair
FROM: Scott Robinson, CPD Planning Services
DATE: April 12, 2023
RE: Near Southeast Area Plan Public Hearing

Community Planning and Development is pleased to submit the Planning Board review draft of the Near Southeast Area Plan for your final consideration and approval as a supplement to Comprehensive Plan 2040. This memorandum documents the plan contents and process based on the three criteria established in Comprehensive Plan 2040:

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

The memo concludes with the staff recommendation to the Denver Planning Board.

1. Inclusive Community Process

The Near Southeast Area Plan is based on a robust public engagement process that kicked off in May, 2021 and lasted approximately two years. The main components of the community process for the plan are summarized below:

- **Steering Committee-** The Near Southeast Area Plan was guided and informed by a Steering Committee with input from City Council members Kendra Black (District 4), Amanda Sawyer (District 5), and Paul Kashmann (District 6). Participants represented neighborhood and community organizations, non-profits, businesses, major property owners, and long-time residents. The Committee met approximately monthly for 19 meetings over the two-year planning process. Members helped develop the plan's vision and recommendations, reviewed and refined the plan content, and served as liaisons to the Near Southeast community.
 - At their April 6, 2023 meeting, the Steering Committee decided to endorse the plan by providing a letter of support. That letter is included as an attachment to this staff report.
- **Community Workshops, Online Events and Surveys-** The planning team held various events throughout the two-year planning process. These events took the form of in-person public workshops, online webinars, and self-directed online surveys and review opportunities.
 - **July 20, 2021** – Community Kickoff (virtual meeting via Zoom)
 - **July-September, 2021** – Kickoff Online Survey
 - **March 1, 2022** – Virtual Community Workshop – Land Use and Housing (virtual meeting via Zoom)

- **March 10, 2022** – Virtual Community Workshop – Parks and Mobility (virtual meeting via Zoom)
 - **March-May, 2022** – Topic-specific Online Surveys
 - **July 13, 2022** – Virtual Community Workshop – Draft Recommendations (virtual meeting via Zoom)
 - **July 21, 2022** – In-person Community Workshop – Draft Recommendations (Four Mile Historic Park)
 - **July-September, 2022** – Draft Recommendations Online Survey
 - **December 6, 2022** – In-person Community Workshop – Draft Plan (Cook Park Recreation Center)
 - **December 14, 2022** – Virtual Community Workshop – Draft Plan (virtual meeting via Zoom)
 - **November, 2022-January, 2023** – Draft Plan 1 Online Review
 - **February-March, 2023** – Draft Plan 2 Online Review
- **Neighborhood Meetings and Events-** Listed below are meetings hosted by Near Southeast Area neighborhood groups and organizations, or other City of Denver departments or teams that Near Southeast Area Plan team members attended, community events at which the plan had a booth/table or was part of a larger booth or table representing the City of Denver, and other pop-up engagement activities.
- 12/7/2019 – Council District 6 Town Hall
 - 12/15/2020 – University Hills North Community RNO Meeting
 - 2/16/2021 – Cook Park RNO Meeting
 - 6/9/2021 – Lynwood Neighborhood Association RNO Meeting
 - 7/31/2021 – Virginia Village Library Denver Days Event
 - 8/3/2021 – National Night Out at Cook Park
 - 8/13/2021 – Four Mile Historic Park Pop-up Event
 - 8/13/2021 – Cook Park Pool Pop-up Event
 - 8/14/2021 – University Hills Farmers Market
 - 8/21/2021 – South by Southeast Festival
 - 8/24/2021 – Colorado Station Pop-up Event
 - 8/25/2021 – Jewish Community Center Pop-up Event
 - 8/28/2021 – University Hills Farmers Market
 - 9/14/2021 – Virginia Village Ellis Community Association RNO Meeting

- 10/27/2021 – Council District 4 Town Hall
- 4/12/2022 – Virginia Vale Community Association RNO Meeting
- 4/16/2022 – University Hills Spring Market
- 4/21/2022 – Indian Creek Neighborhood Association RNO Meeting
- 4/26/2022 – Schlessman YMCA Pop-up Event
- 4/30/2022 – Dia del Nino at McMeen Elementary
- 5/7/2022 – Cook Park Soccer Pop-up Event
- 5/7/2022 – Shakespeare in the Park at Cook Park
- 5/12/2022 – McMeen Elementary Multicultural Night
- 5/14/2022 – Bible Park Pop-up Event
- 5/25/2022 – Winston Downs Community Association RNO Meeting
- 8/2/2022 – National Night Out at Cook Park
- 8/18/2022 – McMeen Elementary Back to School Night
- 8/20/2022 – South by Southeast Festival
- 10/25/2022 – Council District 4 Town Hall
- 11/30/2022 – University Hills North Community RNO Meeting
- 1/19/2023 – Cook Park RNO Meeting
- 1/19/2023 – Lynwood Neighborhood Association RNO Meeting
- 3/21/2023 – University Hills North Community RNO Meeting

• **Intentional Outreach and Focus Groups** – Throughout the planning process the planning team monitored who was participating and who wasn't and focused intentional engagement efforts on those we were not hearing from. These were aimed mostly at renters in the area and youth. In addition, the team held several focus group meetings to dive deeper into specific topics.

- **April-May, 2021** – George Washington High School student kickoff survey
- **May-June, 2021** – Kickoff focus groups with stakeholders including residents, property owners, business owners, community groups, and partner organizations
- **October, 2022** – George Washington High School presentation, activity, and survey
- **May-June, 2022** – Recommendation development focus groups with community members and subject matter experts regarding land use and development; health, safety, and housing; sustainability and resiliency; local businesses; and parks and green space
- **June, 2022** – Minority-owner business survey
- **June 4, 2022** – Refugee family meeting

- **July 23, 2022** – Jacobs Park food truck event targeting renters
 - **August 18, 2022** – Ramac Apartments food truck event targeting renters
 - **October, 2022** – Draft recommendation focus groups with community members and subject matter experts regarding land use and development; health, safety, and housing; sustainability and resiliency; local businesses; and parks and green space
 - **October 3, 2022** – George Washington High School presentation, activity, and survey
 - **October 11, 2022** – Rocky Mountain School of Expeditionary Learning presentation and activity
 - **December 15, 2022** – Hudson Apartments dinner event targeting renters
 - **January 21, 2023** – Refugee family meeting
- **Office Hours-** CPD staff held office hour sessions during the draft recommendations and draft plan stages of the process to answer questions and take feedback from the community.
- **July 27, 2022** – Cook Park Recreation Center
 - **August 3, 2022** – Jewish Community Center
 - **August 10, 2022** – Schlessman YMCA
 - **August 16, 2022** – Virginia Village Branch Library
 - **December 13, 2022** – Schlessman YMCA
 - **January 11, 2023** – Cook Park Recreation Center
 - **January 12, 2023** – Jewish Community Center
- **Project Newsletters-** Near Southeast Area Plan newsletters were released alongside various milestones in the planning process to draw attention to events, surveys, and other plan-related opportunities.
- 1/14/21: Ready to roll up your sleeves?
 - 6/24/21: Save the date: Join us July 20 for community kickoff!
 - 7/15/21: Share your voice at the community kickoff this Tuesday
 - 7/19/21: REMINDER: Share your voice at community kickoff tomorrow
 - 8/8/21: Take the survey and find us in your neighborhood
 - 8/26/21: DON'T FORGET: Take the kickoff survey
 - 11/15/21: You had a lot to say about your neighborhood! Here's what we heard
 - 2/22/22: Save the date for March workshops
 - 2/27/22: Reminder: Housing and land use workshop Tuesday
 - 3/3/22: Take our surveys!

- 3/17/22: Don't forget to take the surveys!
- 4/14/22: REMINDER: Online surveys still available!
- 4/26/22: Have you taken the online surveys?
- 6/15/22: Save the dates!
- 7/7/22: REMINDER: Community workshops coming next week!
- 7/14/22: Take the surveys!
- 7/20/22: TOMORROW: Join us in person!
- 8/6/22: We have some questions for you!
- 8/18/22: Don't Forget: We have some questions for you!
- 8/31/22: Have you taken our surveys?
- 11/17/22: Save the dates! Community workshops coming in December
- 11/21/22: Thank you, Near Southeast community!
- 12/1/22: Don't forget! In-person workshop happening next week
- 12/11/22: Join the virtual workshop Wednesday
- 1/10/23: Got comments?
- 1/17/23: Let's talk about safer streets
- 3/1/23: An updated draft plan is now ready for your review!
- 3/23/23: Don't Forget: An updated draft plan is now ready for your review!

•**Communications-** Promotion of the Near Southeast Area process and advertisement of meetings, surveys and draft material was conducted by CPD Communications.

- Outreach methods included email distribution, media releases, website information, social media, and additional outreach through City Council offices.
 - Email- 30 emails sent; 19,123 emails opened
 - Twitter- 15 posts; 12,141 views
 - Nextdoor- 12 posts; 5,392 views
 - Facebook- 7 posts; 23,564 views
- Bilingual flyers were distributed throughout the Near Southeast area, including libraries, recreation centers, schools, apartment buildings and community-serving businesses to promote engagement opportunities.
- Project information, agendas, meeting materials, draft content, and announcements were posted to www.denvergov.org/NearSoutheastPlan
- Interpretation services were provided at all virtual and in-person community workshops.
- Electronic communication, web materials and online activities were compatible with smart phones, ADA accessible and available for auto-translation.
- Printed copies of materials and language translation were made available to any resident who requested it.

- A hard copy of the draft plan was provided at the Virginia Village Branch Library for review and comment.

Finding: The Near Southeast Area Plan was developed through an inclusive public process.

2. Plan Consistency

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

Comprehensive Plan 2040

Comprehensive Plan 2040 includes many goals divided across six vision elements. The Near Southeast Area Plan addresses these same topics and provides additional detail and guidance specific to the Near Southeast area. The Near Southeast Area Plan is consistent with the following goals and strategies found in Comprehensive Plan 2040:

Equitable, Affordable and Inclusive

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

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

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

- A. Create a greater mix of housing options in every neighborhood for all individuals and families.
- B. Ensure city policies and regulations encourage every neighborhood to provide a complete range of housing options.
- C. Foster communities of opportunity by aligning housing strategies and investments to improve economic mobility and access to transit and services.
- D. Increase the development of senior-friendly and family-friendly housing, including units with multiple bedrooms in multifamily developments.

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

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

Goal 4: Preserve existing affordable housing.

- A. Expand existing tools, such as tax relief programs, to preserve the long-term affordability of housing throughout Denver.
- B. Create additional tools, including community land trusts and regulatory incentives, to preserve existing affordable housing.
- C. Incentivize the reuse of existing smaller and affordable homes.

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

- A. Advance a comprehensive approach to mitigating involuntary displacement that includes expanding economic mobility, creating new affordable housing and preserving existing affordability.
- B. Stabilize residents and businesses at risk of displacement through programs and policies that help them to stay in their existing community.
- C. Evaluate city plans, projects and major regulatory changes for the potential to contribute to involuntary displacement; identify and implement strategies to mitigate anticipated impacts to residents and businesses.

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

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

Goal 7: Make neighborhoods accessible to people of all ages and abilities.

- B. Prioritize infrastructure improvements that allow for residents of all abilities to access and live in any neighborhood.

Goal 8: Increase housing options for Denver's most vulnerable populations.

- A. Expand investments in housing options and services for people experiencing homelessness.
- C. Ensure that city regulations enable a range of flexible housing options to meet the needs of those experiencing or transitioning out of homelessness.

Goal 9: Improve equitable access to quality education and lifelong learning opportunities.

- B. Promote and encourage use of the Denver Public Library system, community centers, schools, and other resources that provide opportunities for lifelong learning.
- C. Promote and encourage use of the Denver Public Library system, community centers, schools and other resources that provide opportunities for lifelong learning.

Strong and Authentic Neighborhoods

Goal 1: Create a city of complete neighborhoods.

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

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

- C. Create people-oriented places that embrace community character with thoughtful transitions, aspirational design and an engaging public realm.
- D. Use urban design to contribute to economic viability, public health, safety, environmental well-being, neighborhood culture, and quality of life.

Goal 3: Preserve the authenticity of Denver's neighborhoods and celebrate our history, architecture and culture.

- C. Ensure city policies and regulations support historic preservation and eliminate barriers in city processes to help all neighborhoods preserve what matters most.
- E. Support the stewardship and reuse of existing buildings, including city properties.

Goal 4: Ensure every neighborhood is strong and vibrant

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

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

- B. Design public spaces to facilitate social connections and enhance cultural identity.

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

- A. Continue to strengthen trust and communication between the city and all neighborhoods.
- B. Provide proactive communication and transparency about city policies, public safety, processes and plans.
- C. Improve the engagement and representation of all Denverites, including communities of color, in neighborhood groups and city processes.
- D. Build the capacity of underrepresented citizens and provide resources to increase their involvement in decision-making.

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

- B. Embrace existing communities and their cultural assets.
- C. Integrate community-inspired art and artistic expression into the public realm.
- D. Use city-owned facilities to expand arts and cultural programming.

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

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

Goal 9: Ensure all neighborhoods are safe.

- A. Encourage design and new development to improve public health and safety.
- C. Actively involve communities in strategies to promote safety.

Connected, Safe and Accessible Places

Goal 1: Deliver a multimodal network that encourages more trips by walking, rolling, biking and transit.

- A. Prioritize transportation projects that will advance Denver’s mode share goals.
- B. Adopt policies that require Transportation Demand Management (TDM) programs for developments to maximize use of alternative modes and reduce single-occupancy vehicle trips on Denver’s streets.

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

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

Goal 3: Maximize the public right-of-way to create great places.

- A. Create streets to foster economic activity, contribute to great urban design and accommodate green infrastructure, including street trees.
- C. Protect, enhance and expand Denver’s legacy pathways: its historic parkways, boulevards, greenways and trails.

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

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

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

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

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

- A. Create a citywide network for bicycling, walking and rolling that is safe and accessible to people of all ages and abilities.
- B. Implement the bicycle network, including facilities easy to use, recommended in Denver Moves: Bicycles.
- C. Implement the complete network of pedestrian infrastructure recommended in Denver Moves: Pedestrians & Trails.

Goal 7: Expand funding options for multimodal infrastructure.

- A. Explore new and long-term funding tools to enable increased investments in mobility projects and services.

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

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

Goal 9: Advance innovative curb lane management and parking policies.

- A. Promote strategies to balance demand for the curb lane (where vehicles park and load) that responds to the land uses on that street.
- B. Promote on-street parking management strategies that maximize use of the curb lane and are tailored to the context and needs of specific areas at different times of day.
- C. Balance the demand for on- and off-street parking with other community goals including affordability and sustainability.

Goal 10: Embrace innovations in transportation policy and technologies to improve movement throughout the city.

- B. Proactively plan for the impacts of new technology, including driverless vehicles.

Economically Diverse and Vibrant

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

- A. Improve economic mobility through workforce training, career development, quality education and wealth creation.
- C. Support business development and grow the talent necessary to compete in the global economy.

Goal 2: Grow a strong, diversified economy.

- B. Facilitate the growth of a diverse business sector that serves as the foundation for a global, innovative economy.
- D. Ensure a broad range of jobs to align with the skills and interests of local residents.

Goal 3: Sustain and grow Denver's local neighborhood businesses.

- A. Promote small, locally-owned businesses and restaurants that reflect the unique character of Denver.

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

- A. Develop a highly trained local workforce with the skills and knowledge to effectively compete for a diverse range of local jobs.
- B. Provide training and programs to connect Denverites to high quality jobs at a range of skill levels.

- C. Encourage businesses to work with local workforce training and education organizations to better prepare residents for job and career opportunities.

Goal 8: Expand participation in arts and culture and ensure that arts and culture are accessible to all.

- B. Remove barriers that limit participation in arts and culture including physical, economic and cultural barriers.

Environmentally Resilient

Goal 1: Mitigate climate impact by significantly reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

- B. Reduce energy use by buildings and advance green building design, including green and cool roofs.
- C. Invest in multimodal transportation and support a clean, carbon-free transportation system.

Goal 2: Prepare for and adapt to climate change.

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

Goal 3: Conserve water and use it more efficiently.

- A. Encourage requirements for water-conserving landscaping for private development and publicly owned land.

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

- A. Embrace stormwater as an asset and integrate it into the design of streets, open spaces and neighborhoods.
- B. Restore and enhance waterways so they serve as community amenities.
- D. Encourage low-impact development that reduces impervious surfaces and positively impacts community health by using trees, low-water landscaping and green infrastructure.

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

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

Goal 7: Improve solid waste diversion and conserve raw materials.

- A. Increase Denver's solid waste diversion rate through increased composting and recycling, including multifamily and commercial sectors.
- C. Prioritize the reuse of existing buildings and explore incentives to reuse or salvage materials from demolished structures.

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

- A. Promote infill development where infrastructure and services are already in place.
- B. Encourage mixed-use communities where residents can live, work and play in their own neighborhoods.
- C. Focus growth by transit stations and along high- and medium-capacity transit corridors.

Goal 9: Protect and improve air quality.

- B. Improve Denver’s air by reducing the use of single-occupancy vehicles, advancing renewable energy sources, expanding the use of transit, promoting innovative and alternative technologies and supporting mixed-use, walkable neighborhoods

Healthy and Active

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

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

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

- A. Ensure equitable access to parks and recreation amenities for all residents.
- C. Expand the supply of parks, recreational facilities and programs relative to Denver’s population growth.

Goal 3: Ensure access to affordable, nutritious culturally-diverse food in all neighborhoods.

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

Goal 4: Increase access to health services for all.

- A. Improve collaboration between health organizations, schools, faith-based organizations and other community organizations to promote preventive care and improve access to health services.

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

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

Denver and the Region

Goal 1: Be a regional leader in smart growth.

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

Goal 2: Embrace Denver’s role as the center of regional growth.

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

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

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

Blueprint Denver

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

- A detailed vision for the future of the area that aligns with the comprehensive plan vision and the vision of Blueprint Denver.
- Strategies for achieving the vision, including recommendations for land use, built form, mobility and quality-of-life infrastructure.

- An implementation section identifying strategies by type, responsible entities, timelines, and any metrics for tracking plan progress over time.
- A summary of intended updates to Blueprint Denver.

The Near Southeast Area Plan contains content specifically addressing each of the minimum standards listed above. Additionally, the Near Southeast Area Plan is consistent with the following policies and strategies found in Blueprint Denver:

Land Use and Built Form

General Recommendations- Land Use and Built Form

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

- A. Use zoning and land use regulations to encourage higher-density, mixed-use development in transit-rich areas including:
 - Regional centers and community centers
 - Community corridors where medium- and high-capacity transit corridors are planned
 - High and medium-high residential areas in the downtown and urban center contexts.
- B. Implement regulatory land use changes in coordination with transit investments. For example, rezonings to support transit-oriented development should be closely timed with the implementation of transit priority streets

Policy 2: Incentivize or require efficient development of land, especially in transit-rich areas.

- A. In regional centers, urban center community centers and urban center community corridors, study and implement requirements or incentives for density. An example of a tool to implement this could include establishing minimum building heights.
- B. In transit-rich areas, including downtown, revise the zoning code to limit auto-oriented commercial uses that do not contribute positively to activating the public realm, such as mini-storage, drive-throughs and car washes. This may also apply to other desired mixed-use areas of the city, such as transit priority streets.
- C. Allow increased density in exchange for desired outcomes, such as affordable housing, especially in transit-rich areas.
- E. In historic areas, balance efficiency with preservation through strategies that encourage the reuse of structures.

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

- A. Rezone properties from the Former Chapter 59 zoning code so that the entire city is covered by the DZC, including continuing to incentivize owners to come out of the old code.

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

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

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

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

Housing Recommendations- Land Use and Built Form

Policy 2: Diversify housing options by exploring opportunities to integrate missing middle housing into low and low-medium residential areas.

- A. Integrate missing middle housing into low and low-medium residential areas, especially those that score low in Housing Diversity. This should be implemented through holistic revisions to the zoning code at a citywide scale, with a focus on discouraging demolition and encouraging affordability.

Policy 3: Incentivize preservation and reuse of existing smaller and affordable homes.

- A. Implement zoning tools to incentivize the preservation of smaller, more affordable housing options. An example would be to allow the owner of an existing house to add an additional unit or accessory dwelling unit if the original structure is preserved.

Policy 6: Increase development of affordable housing and mixed-income housing, particularly in areas near transit, services and amenities.

- A. Incentivize affordable housing through zoning, especially in regional centers, community centers and community corridors adjacent to transit. This could include a process—informed by community input—to create citywide height bonuses in the zoning code, where additional height is allowed in exchange for income restricted units. Incentives for affordable housing are particularly important for areas that score high in Vulnerability to Displacement and score low in Housing Diversity.

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

- A. Align high-density residential areas near regional centers to support housing growth near major job centers with access to transit priority streets.
- C. Ensure land use regulations, small area plans and major transit investments support desired growth areas
- D. Advance housing affordability recommendations from this plan and Housing an Inclusive Denver to ensure new units include units affordable to a range of income levels.

Economic Recommendations- Land Use and Built Form

Policy 1: Capture 90 percent of job growth in regional centers, community centers and corridors, certain districts and high-intensity residential areas in downtown and urban center contexts. Of the 90 percent job growth, focus 30 percent downtown.

- B. Promote the development and redevelopment of regional centers, including downtown, to meet the land use and transportation needs of targeted industries. This means encouraging regional centers to have strong connections to transportation options, especially passenger rail and transit priority streets, and fostering the mix of uses needed to attract businesses with a wide variety of jobs.

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

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

Policy 3: Preserve high-value manufacturing areas and allow low-value manufacturing areas to transition to higher intensity uses.

- D. Within innovation/flex districts, enable housing and other uses to complement manufacturing. Promote urban, pedestrian-friendly building forms that are appropriate for vibrant, mixed-use districts.

Policy 4: Promote creative industries, maker spaces, artists and small businesses as vital components of Denver's innovation economy.

- C. Develop programs and identify potential incentives to maintain existing spaces, reduce rent costs and other business costs and help create new spaces for hand crafted manufacturing, maker spaces, artists and other small, locally-owned businesses, especially in areas that score high for Vulnerability to Displacement.

Policy 5: Support organizations and districts within the city's centers and corridors to aid in attraction and retention of employment and commerce.

- D. Partner with organizations that are actively supporting economic opportunity across Denver.

Policy 6: Ensure Denver and its neighborhoods have a vibrant and authentic retail and hospitality marketplace meeting the full range of experiences and goods demanded by residents and visitors.

- A. Support locally-owned businesses—new and old—to expand and evolve to meet the changing needs of residents and visitors. Support could include assisting businesses, especially in the most underserved or distressed neighborhoods, with regulatory processes, education, training, helping with marketing or increasing access to capital.

Design Quality and Preservation- Land Use and Built Form

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

- A. Continue the city's commitment to existing historic districts and landmarks and use historic designation to preserve the character of an individual structure or district or where there is historic, architectural, cultural, and/or geographic significance.
- B. Use conservation overlays in areas where the key goal is to conserve distinctive features in order to enhance and retain existing character. Although these overlays can be area-specific, they can also be used for multiple areas of the city where common conservation outcomes are desired.
- C. Use design overlays as targeted tools in developing or redeveloping areas that have a specific design vision, ideally one articulated through a planning process. Although these overlays tend to be specific to a particular area — such as a river corridor or newly developing neighborhood — it is also appropriate to create design overlays for multiple areas where common design outcomes are desired.
- D. For residential places, revise the zoning code to create more contextual bulk and scale requirements for primary and accessory structures. This may include stricter bulk planes, limitations on height, changes to setback requirements, changes to maximum lot coverage, changes to transparency features and/or entry feature requirements. These changes should vary by neighborhood context to better reflect the built character. In creating new zoning standards, consideration should be given to light, air, privacy, engagement of the public realm and human-scaled design.
- F. Promote the use of pattern books to identify character defining features and/or desired design outcomes for an area. Pattern books can be developed during neighborhood planning and used to inform regulatory tools including, but not limited to, conservation overlays and design overlays. Discover Denver, the citywide building survey, can contribute valuable data on character defining features to be incorporated into pattern books.

- I. Promote incentives to preserve the reuse of historic buildings and the unique historic features of Denver's neighborhoods.

Policy 3: Create exceptional design outcomes in key centers and corridors

- C. Create a system of design tools, including standards and guidelines, that are scalable and repeatable to enable baseline design requirements that can be applied to a range of contexts and locations and be modified with a smaller subset of locally-applicable features.
- E. Revise the zoning code to provide standards for new mixed-use development that better responds to the surrounding context. Standards to examine for improvement include build-to ranges, transparency minimums, lot coverage, and entry features.
- F. Implement additional zoning tools to create appropriate transitions between places, especially for areas where centers and corridors are close to residential places. This may include standards related to height, massing and uses.
- H. Use urban quality evaluation and metrics, often developed through small area planning and assessments, to help define design problems and to help identify possible solutions.
- K. Identify important mixed-use historic structures and encourage their continued use or adaptive reuse.

Policy 4: Ensure an active and pedestrian friendly environment that provides a true mixed-use character in centers and corridors.

- A. Require strong street-level active use standards for local centers and corridors. This may include a prohibition on residential units for a portion of the street level building. Given the intent of these small-scale places to provide services embedded in the neighborhood, it is important for them to provide more than residential uses.
- B. Study and implement stronger street-level active use requirement for community and regional centers and community corridors. Tools could include regulations on floor-to-floor heights for the first story to facilitate conversion to commercial uses and reconsideration of appropriate street-level uses.

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

- A. Revise large build-to and setback ranges currently allowed in mixed use/commercial zone districts in the suburban and urban edge contexts. Although these contexts should have some flexibility beyond the more urban contexts, building placement in mixed-use areas should still provide an active, pedestrian-friendly environment that is accessible through all modes of transportation.
- B. Revise zoning code to provide better site design requirements for pedestrians, particularly internal circulation within large, multi-building developments.

Policy 6: Incentivize the preservation of structures and features that contribute to the established character of an area, even if they are not designated as landmarks or historic districts.

- A. Integrate historic resources surveys, like Discover Denver, that identify and provide data on buildings into land use planning and regulations.
- C. Create new regulations to encourage the reuse of existing buildings. This could include requirements to salvage or reuse building materials after a structure is demolished or allowing flexibility in uses or density when an existing structure is reused and maintained.

Policy 7: Improve requirements for landscaping, with a focus on climate-appropriate vegetation, for private property.

- B. Study and implement revisions to landscaping standards to improve neighborhood character, support compatibility and to advance environmental goals.

- D. Promote new development that integrates trees, vines, planters or other live plants into the building design and their outdoor spaces to soften architecture, frame spaces, minimize bulk and avoid harsh edges.

Mobility Recommendations

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

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

Policy 2: Align the impacts of private development with transportation infrastructure and promote development that creates walkable, transit-friendly communities.

- A. Adopt policies that require Transportation Demand Management programs for developments to maximize use of alternative modes and reduce single-occupancy vehicle trips on Denver's streets.
- B. Work with city agencies to explore the feasibility and effectiveness of increased participation from new development to improve transportation infrastructure.

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

- A. Ensure safe pedestrian crossings, especially along the High Injury Network identified by Vision Zero.
- F. Explore options to assist property owners when improvements required by redevelopment, such as sidewalks, is cost-prohibitive.

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

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

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

- A. Build streets that are safe for everybody and implement the Vision Zero Action Plan to achieve zero traffic related fatalities by 2030.
- B. Advance the goals of the Vision Zero Action Plan in the Neighborhood Planning Initiative (NPI).
- C. Collaborate with Neighborhood Traffic Management Program in NPI.
- D. Support the safe routes to school program.
- F. Create slow zones in priority areas such as school zones, major park zones and areas with a high concentration of seniors.

Quality of Life Infrastructure Recommendations

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

- A. Explore a variety of methods to provide permanent, sustainable funding options for park, trail and recreation needs. This could include working with city agencies to seek increased participation from new development to help meet increased demand for park and recreations services and facilities.

- B. Evaluate the need to increase requirements and/or create incentives for publicly accessible outdoor space for mid- and large-scale developments in centers, corridors and districts.

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

- A. Prioritize trees in green infrastructure facilities to improve urban tree canopy.
- B. Support a robust street tree canopy by prioritizing trees in right-of-way design.
- D. Strengthen standards to protect trees and explore requirements and/or incentives to mitigate tree loss during redevelopment on both public and private property to help achieve Denver's tree canopy goal.

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

- B. Include a floodplain analysis and considerations in all plans and proactively seek to protect communities from future flood risk.
- D. Encourage adaptable, multi-functional stormwater facilities to support redevelopment and provide neighborhood recreational amenities.
- E. Provide room for our waterways, where feasible, to help restore natural functionality that has been impaired due to increased urbanization and channelization.

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

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

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

- A. Consider updating the Parkway and Boulevards Design Guidelines to improve the integration of parkway requirements with other street standards. This could include how to integrate a complete sidewalk network into our parkways.

Policy 7: Recognize greenways and trails as multimodal connections providing a variety of experiences and habitats for people, plants and wildlife.

- B. Explore opportunities for public and private development to enhance and expand Denver's trail network.

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

- B. During small area planning, identify opportunities to expand healthy, culturally-relevant food access and programming. In areas with limited food access, community gardens, greenhouses, edible landscaping and mobile produce markets are tools that can be calibrated to develop culturally relevant recommendations.
- C. Explore ways to increase use of public spaces for non-permanent fresh food retail, including farmers markets and mobile vending.
- D. Support recreation centers, schools and libraries as hubs for a healthy community and identify opportunities for them to provide spaces for community gardens, fresh food retail and health education.

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

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

- D. Support safe and equitable access to daily needs including public restrooms and water bottle filling stations.

Finding: The Near Southeast Area Plan is consistent with Comprehensive Plan 2040 and Blueprint Denver.

3. Long-Term View

The Near Southeast Area Plan establishes a community vision for the year 2040 of an equitable, inclusive, and resilient part of our city. The Near Southeast area is envisioned to have a mix of housing options that ensure affordability and reduce involuntary displacement while maintaining the look and feel the community values. There are bustling commercial areas with safe and comfortable mixed-use corridors. In this future Near Southeast is an example of sustainable design and responsible development, where parks and publicly accessible open spaces are within a 10-minute walk of every resident. The interconnected network of trails, public spaces, bikeways, and natural areas have reduced air and water pollution, and the urban forest tree canopy contributes to the comfort and overall quality of life for everyone. This vision reflects the aspirations of the community and will take many years to achieve.

Finding: The Near Southeast Area Plan has an appropriate long-term perspective.

Staff Recommendation:

Based on the findings that the Near Southeast Area Plan used an inclusive public process, is consistent with Comprehensive Plan 2040 and Blueprint Denver, and takes a long-term view, staff recommends **approval with the condition that the document be edited for clarity and correctness.**

Attachments:

1. City Councilmember Letter of Endorsement
2. Steering Committee Letter of Endorsement
3. Public comments