



**TO:** South Platte River Committee (SPRC) of City Council  
**FROM:** David Gaspers, CPD Planning Services  
**DATE:** October 23, 2025  
**RE:** Downtown Denver Area Plan

Community Planning and Development (CPD) and the Downtown Denver Partnership (DDP) is pleased to submit the draft of the Downtown Area Plan for your final consideration and approval as a supplement to Comprehensive Plan 2040. The Denver Planning Board unanimously approved the plan after holding a required public hearing on October 15, 2025. This memorandum documents the plan 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 South Platte River Committee that the draft Plan is forwarded on for full council consideration.

## 1. Inclusive Community Process

The Downtown Area Plan is based on a robust public engagement process that kicked off in September 2024 and lasted approximately a year. The main components of the community process for the plan are summarized below:

- **Community Advisory Committee-** The Downtown Plan was guided and informed by an Advisory Committee with input from City Council members Chris Hinds (District 10), Darrell Watson (District 9), and Amanda Sandoval (District 1). Participants represented neighborhood and community organizations, non-profits, businesses, major property owners, and long-time residents. The Committee met approximately monthly for 10 meetings over the one-year planning process. Members helped develop the plan's vision and recommendations, reviewed and refined the plan content, and served as liaisons to the larger Downtown community.
- **Community Workshops, Online Events and Surveys** - Various events were held throughout the planning process. These events occurred in three distinct community engagement windows, each including a combination of in-person public workshops, online surveys and review opportunities.
  - **September 24, 2025 – Community Kickoff Meeting**
  - **December 4, 2025 – Public Meeting #2**
  - **May 20, 2025 – Public Meeting #3**
- **Neighborhood and Business Group Meetings and Events** – The planning team engaged with downtown residents and business owners through neighborhood organizations such as the Lower Downtown Neighborhood Association and the Upper Downtown Neighborhood

Association and existing business groups such as Visit Denver and multiple Downtown Denver Partnership committees.

- **Equitable Engagement** – A tiered framework was developed by the consultant team to engage with a diverse group of residents, youth, culture bearers, grassroots organizers, and more throughout the engagement process.

**Tier 1:** Broader community engagement at existing neighborhood and cultural events targeting the public who attended these events. Incentives and/or compensation were not provided.

**Tier 2:** Targeted focus group conversations for residents who represent specific demographics and have lived experience regarding specific themes and topics. Incentives and/or compensation were provided.

**Tier 3:** Detailed, one-on-one interviews with specific residents who shared a wealth of lived experience and expertise on Downtown Denver and its vibrant, cultural history. Incentives and/or compensation were provided.

The following key themes were identified:

- Housing as a fundamental right and tool for Equity
- Authentic Cultural Reclamation and Inclusive Storytelling
- Community-Led Vision and Funding
- Comprehensive Accessibility and Enhanced Safety
- Sustainable Economic Opportunity and Diverse Business Support
- Dynamic and Diverse Programming and Public Space
- Accountability and Authentic Engagement

For a full review of the findings of the equitable engagement efforts, please see the Equitable Engagement Report in the “Reports and Studies” section of the appendix.

- **Downtown Office Hours** – The planning team (CPD, DDP, consultants) staffed a community studio at 918 16th Street in four-hour periods, typically on Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays from October 2024 through May 2025. The office had its busiest day during the DDP Summer Kickoff event on June 1 with over 300 visitors.
- **Public Review Draft** – The public draft plan was available for review and comment in August 2025. Over 1,100 public comments were received. Major themes of the comments include transportation improvements, safety, access, affordability, jobs and economic investment. Staff will review these themes and the accompanying edits to the final draft during the October 15<sup>th</sup> Planning Board meeting.
- **Communications**- Promotion of the Downtown Area process and advertisement of meetings, surveys and draft material was conducted by CPD and DDP Communications.
  - Outreach methods included email distribution, media releases, website information, social media, and additional outreach through City Council offices.
  - Bilingual flyers were distributed throughout Downtown to promote engagement opportunities.
  - Project information, agendas, meeting materials, draft content, and announcements were posted to [www.denverdowntownareaplan.com](http://www.denverdowntownareaplan.com)
  - Interpretation services were provided at all 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.

***Finding: The Downtown 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 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 nearterm 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. The Downtown 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.

**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.***

- 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 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 notes that “small area plans are necessary for effective planning because they provide a level of analysis, detail and guidance on issues affecting local areas that citywide plans cannot” (p.60). The section below 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 Downtown Area Plan including appendices contains content addressing each of the minimum standards listed above. Additionally, the Downtown 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.

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

- C. 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 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.
- 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.
- 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 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.

***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.***

- 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 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.***

- C. Explore ways to increase use of public spaces for non-permanent fresh food retail, including farmers markets and mobile vending.

***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 Downtown Area Plan is consistent with Comprehensive Plan 2040 and Blueprint Denver.***

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

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. This 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. It is a long-term collective aspiration for what our downtown could be that reflects community values and bold imagination.

***Finding: The Downtown Area Plan has an appropriate long-term perspective.***

### **Staff Recommendation:**

Based on the findings that the Downtown Area Plan used an inclusive public process, is consistent with Comprehensive Plan 2040 and Blueprint Denver, and takes a long-term view, staff recommends that the South Platte River Committee **forward the Downtown Area Plan for consideration by the full Denver City Council.**

### **Attachments:**

1. Downtown Area Plan
2. Downtown Area Plan Implementation Matrix
3. Reports and Studies
4. Public Comment Log