



SOUTHWEST AREA PLAN



ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Land Acknowledgement

The City and County of Denver honors and acknowledges that the land on which we reside is the traditional territory of the Ute, Cheyenne, and Arapaho Peoples. We also recognize the 48 contemporary tribal nations that are historically tied to the lands that make up the state of Colorado.

We honor Elders past, present, and future, and those who have stewarded this land throughout generations. We also recognize that government, academic and cultural institutions were founded upon and continue to enact exclusions and erasures of Indigenous Peoples.

May this acknowledgement demonstrate a commitment to working to dismantle ongoing legacies of oppression and inequities and recognize the current and future contributions of Indigenous communities in Denver.

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Dear Southwest Denver Neighbors,

The Southwest Area Plan reflects a thoughtful, community-centered approach to planning that recognizes health, equity, and quality of life as foundational – not secondary to land use and development decisions. This plan acknowledges that where people live, how they move, and what they have access to directly shapes long-term outcomes for families, children, and elders.

Southwest Denver has long experienced inequities rooted in historic decisions about land use, infrastructure, and environmental burden. The South Platte River corridor and the neighborhoods that surround it were shaped by policies that prioritized industrial activity, highways, and disinvestment over community health and stability. The impacts of those choices are still felt today by residents who live with higher exposure to pollution, flooding risks, unsafe streets, and limited access to resources. This plan represents a continued effort to confront that history and begins the work of righting historic wrongs to the land, to the river, and to the people who have lived, worked, and raised families here for generations.

Central to this plan is the South Platte River corridor, which runs through much of Southwest Denver and serves as both a historic asset and a future opportunity. The plan's focus on the river and its surrounding neighborhoods recognizes the South Platte not only as an environmental resource, but as a key driver of the social determinants of health access to open space, clean air and water, safe mobility, recreation, and community connection. By prioritizing river access, trail connections, flood resilience, and environmental restoration, the plan advances healthier outcomes for residents who have historically borne the impacts of industrial land use and infrastructure decisions.

This planning process also stands out because it coincided with a meaningful commitment to investment. During the development of the Southwest Area Plan, City Council approved a Community Investment Fund connected to the women's professional soccer stadium project adjacent to this area. This fund represents an important step toward aligning long-term planning with real resources, helping ensure that growth in Southwest Denver delivers tangible benefits to the surrounding neighborhoods, supports community priorities, and reinvests in an area that has experienced decades of underinvestment.

The Southwest Area Plan does not shy away from history. It clearly acknowledges the legacy of redlining, displacement, environmental burdens, and infrastructure decisions that shaped current conditions. Importantly, the plan uses that history as a pivot point—seeking to balance future growth with anti-displacement strategies, housing stability, cultural preservation, and improved access to opportunity. Too often, communities like Southwest Denver are told they must choose between investment and stability. This plan works intentionally to advance both.

Throughout the plan's development, residents, business owners, youth, elders, and community organizations contributed their voices. From Federal Boulevard and Morrison Road to the South Platte River, Westwood, Athmar Park, Ruby Hill, Mar Lee, and Overland – the plan reflects a shared vision for safer streets, better access to parks and transit, support for small and culturally rooted businesses, and neighborhoods where families can stay and thrive.

Southwest Denver's neighborhoods have long been home to working-class families and immigrant communities who built their lives here through hard work, mutual support, and deep ties to the place. These neighborhoods have historically provided attainable entry points to homeownership, often for first-generation homeowners and first-generation small businesses through modest homes and store fronts, multi-generational living, and small-scale housing types. As Denver continues to grow, adding density such as duplexes, townhomes, accessory dwelling units, and missing-middle housing in a thoughtful and intentional manner is a necessary part of sustaining that legacy. Increasing housing supply while respecting existing neighborhood character helps ensure that working families are not pushed out, but instead can continue to live, build wealth, and achieve homeownership in the communities they already call home.

We are proud to support the Southwest Area Plan and grateful to the advisory committee members, Community Planning and Development staff, partner agencies, and most importantly the residents who dedicated their time and lived experience to shaping this document. This plan is a meaningful step toward repairing past harms, advancing health equity, and guiding future investment in a way that honors the people, cultures, and land that define Southwest Denver.

Councilwoman Flor Alvidrez, District 7

Councilwoman Jamie Torres, District 3

Councilman Kevin Flynn, District 2



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1.1 BACKGROUND AND PROCESS

1.1.1 Overview

The City of Denver's Department of Community Planning and Development (CPD) leads the Neighborhood Planning Initiative— a community-driven effort to shape the future of neighborhoods across the city. These plans reflect what matters most to residents and help guide decisions about land use, transportation and quality of life.

1.1.2 Southwest Area Snapshot

The Southwest Area has unique mix of people, places, and businesses. It includes five neighborhoods: Athmar Park, Mar Lee, Overland, Ruby Hill and Westwood. The area is bounded by Alameda Avenue to the North, Yale and Jewell Avenues to the south, Sheridan Boulevard to the West and the South Platte River and Broadway to the east.

About 52,000 people live in the Southwest Area. Of those, 67% identify as Hispanic and nearly half are under age 30. The area has a higher-than-average number of residents born outside the U.S., and 30% of households include four or more people.

Most of the area is suburban, with limited space for new development. Housing is mostly single-family homes, many of which are considered affordable by Denver standards. The local economy is supported by retail and industrial businesses, along with a strong and culturally diverse enterprises. Each neighborhoods has its own business and shopping hubs, with key connections to Federal Boulevard, Morrison Road, and Broadway.

The area features several large regional parks and trails, including Ruby Hill Park, Overland Golf Course, and the South Platte River Trail. However, highways, railroad tracks and the river itself can make it hard to reach these spaces.

Alameda, Mississippi and Evans Avenues offer some east-west travel options, but they are part of Denver's

High Injury Network and see a high number of crashes each year. Many sidewalks are missing or in poor conditions, and bike routes are incomplete.

1.1.3 Creating a 20-year vision for your neighborhood

The Southwest Area planning process began in mid-2024 and continued in multiple phases that included community engagement to hear residents desires for their neighborhood's future. In addition to this engagement, a local advisory committee helped guide the plan with a focus on equity.

Crafted by Your Community - Highlights

- Mailer to 23,000 households, yard signs throughout area
- Kickoff public meeting and open house with over 300 attendees between both events
- Youth outreach to local high schools
- Pop events at parks, rec centers, manufactured home communities
- Workshops and regular attendance to Registered Neighborhood Organizations
- Various focus groups including topics on housing, industry, river, small businesses, etc
- Surveys at all phases of the planning process
- Attending major community events
- Over 2000 public comments

Public feedback on the draft plans' guiding principles, policies, outcomes, and focus areas were incorporated into the plan leading up to a final draft that goes through a formal adoption with public hearings with the Denver Planning Board and Denver City Council.



Workshops with neighborhood groups



Equity Sub Committee Meeting



Over 220 community members in attendance at the Kick-off workshop

1.1.4 Planning for Equity

Equity means that everyone, no matter their background or circumstances, has the chance to succeed and lead a fulfilling life. It ensures that a person's identity - whether defined by race, income, or where they come from - doesn't limit their opportunities. This plan puts equity at the center, so all Denver residents can enjoy a high quality of life.

The plan looks at equity through three main lenses:

Access to Opportunity – Are people able to reach jobs, schools, parks,, and other resources?

Vulnerability to Displacement – Are residents at risk of being pushed out of their neighborhoods due to rising costs or redevelopment?

Diversity of Housing & Jobs – Does the area offer different types of homes and employment options to meet diverse needs?

By focusing on these areas, the plan identifies where equity challenges exist and offers strategies to address them. For the Southwest Area Plan, these ideas helped shape the recommendations, especially in neighborhoods that need more support to ensure fairness and opportunity.

Overall, the Southwest neighborhoods score lower on equity compared to other parts of Denver. This is due to a combination of historical development patterns and current conditions, including:

- Limited access to fresh food, healthcare, and frequent transit •
- Lower household incomes and education levels •
- A high concentration of single- family housing with fewer rooms paired with larger families •
- Large percentage of land dedicated to industrial uses and limited/less job options in the immediate are •
- History of redlining and restrictive racial covenants



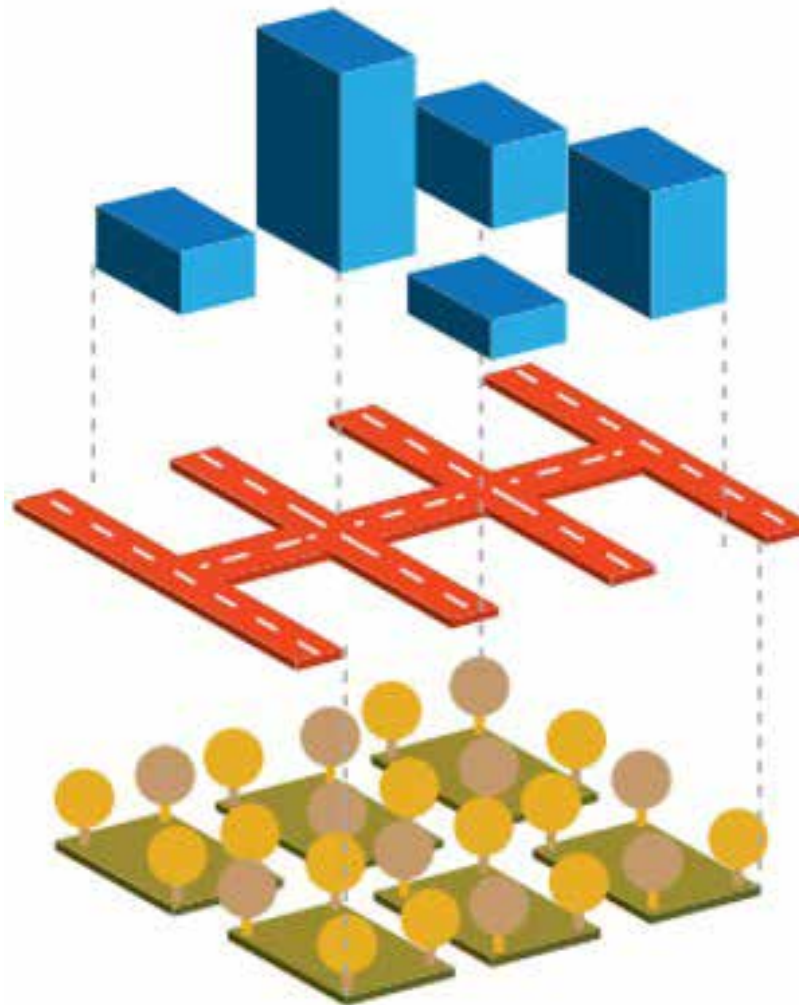
1.2 SOUTHWEST AREA VISION

1.2.1 Community Priorities and Recommendations Overview

This draft plan is organized around six guiding community priorities that reflect what the Southwest community said matters most. These priorities were shaped by community input, current conditions in the area, and citywide planning goals.

- **Land Use (L):** What gets built and where. This includes ways to improve the look, feel, and function of the neighborhood through buildings and public spaces.
- **Mobility (M):** How people get around. This includes making it safer and easier for everyone to walk, bike, drive, and take transit to the places they live, work and play.
- **Quality of Life (Q):** What makes a neighborhood feel welcoming and livable. This includes parks, open spaces, nature and places where people can gather and connect.

By following these community priorities, the plan offers a well-rounded approach to future growth and development—one that reflects the community's values and helps ensure a more connected, vibrant, and resilient Southwest Area.





DIVERSE CULTURAL HUBS

By 2045, the Southwest Area will be a vibrant cultural hub that honors its history and celebrates the diversity of its people, businesses, and neighborhoods.

- L1** Southwest residents should have affordable and secure housing options that accommodate a wide range of needs.
- L6** Local businesses should be supported to create a thriving, regional cultural hub providing resources, services, and goods.
- L9** Historic, cultural, and architecturally significant structures should be preserved and recognized.
- L10** Design vibrant commercial Centers and Corridors that preserve and reflect the neighborhood's cultural character and create spaces that are pedestrian-friendly, comfortable, and welcoming for all.
- Q4** Food resources should be increased and more accessible to residents.
- Q7** Public spaces and community placemaking should celebrate and embrace the diverse cultural fabric and traditions of the Southwest neighborhoods.



SAFE COMMUNAL SPACES

By 2045, the Southwest Area will offer a variety of safe, comfortable and welcoming spaces that bring people together and improve access to services, recreation, civic institutions, and the arts.

- L8** Community institutions and other non-profit campuses should be well integrated into the community.
- L10** Design vibrant commercial Centers and Corridors that preserve and reflect the neighborhood's cultural character and create spaces that are pedestrian-friendly, comfortable, and welcoming for all
- M1** The Southwest area mobility network should have safe crossings of major barriers, multimodal corridors, and connect residents key places.
- M4** Prioritize safety for all users by incorporating traffic calming to reduce heavy vehicle impacts on residential streets while delivering added community benefits.
- Q2** Parks should stay well-connected and offer amenities that reflect local culture and needs.
- Q3** Trails and greenways should be well-connected and include amenities and services that reflect the community's culture and needs.
- Q5** Healthcare and public health facilities should be reliably accessible.
- Q6** All Southwest neighborhoods should be safe and welcoming.
- Q7** Public spaces and community placemaking should celebrate and embrace the diverse cultural fabric and traditions of the Southwest neighborhoods.



INTEGRATED INDUSTRY

By 2045, the Southwest Area will remain a key center for industrial production and manufacturing, with stronger connections to surrounding neighborhoods

- L7** Employment areas throughout the Southwest should provide equitable job opportunities
- RC-L1** Centers and Corridors within the riverside communities area should be active community gathering and commercial spaces that connect the river to the surrounding communities
- RC-L2** The industrial areas should support new and existing industrial businesses and ensure they are part of a healthy community
- RC-L3** Design and development in industrial areas should improve the built form while retaining the area's character and creating a more walkable and pedestrian-oriented environment.
- RC-M1** Communities on both sides of the river are safely and comfortably connected to each other and to the river corridor by a variety of modes.
- RC-Q4** Industrial areas should be good neighbors to other adjacent uses with appropriate transitions and limited environmental impacts for human health and health of the environment and nonhuman life that supports it.



HOUSING STABILITY AND OPTIONS

By 2045, the Southwest Area will continue to offer housing that is affordable, stable and suitable for families from all backgrounds. New housing will be added in ways that reflect the character of each neighborhood and help prevent displacement.



IMPROVED INFRASTRUCTURE

By 2045, the Southwest Area will have streets, sidewalks, trails and landscaping that make it easier, safer, and more comfortable for people to get around.



NATURAL RESOURCES

By 2045, the Southwest Area will protect its natural resources—like water and open spaces—and make sure residents can enjoy and access them.

- L1** Southwest residents should have affordable and secure housing options that accommodate a wide range of needs.
- L2** Ensure adequate supply of high-quality, well maintained housing that meets the needs of the community.
- L3** Low Residential places should allow for additional housing growth while promoting affordability, design, and preservation.
- L4** Low-Medium, High Medium, and High Residential Places in proximity of major corridors should allow for additional housing growth while promoting affordability, design, and preservation.
- L5** Affordable housing should be available in Centers and Corridors alongside business and services to ensure these areas remain vibrant economic and cultural hubs.
- L9** Historic, cultural, and architecturally significant structures should be preserved and recognized.

- M1** The Southwest area mobility network should have safe crossings of major barriers, multimodal corridors, and connect residents key places.
- M2** Bike infrastructure should provide safe and comfortable connections to parks, neighborhood destinations, and surrounding communities.
- M3** Public transportation should comfortably connect residents to local destinations, neighborhood services, and regional centers.
- M4** Prioritize safety for all users by incorporating traffic calming to reduce heavy vehicle impacts on residential streets while delivering added community benefits
- M5** Make walking to and around key community destinations safer and more comfortable by improving pedestrian infrastructure.

- Q1** Environmental impacts should be minimized by using green infrastructure.
- Q2** Parks should stay well-connected and offer amenities that reflect local needs and culture.
- Q3** Trails and greenways should be well-connected and include amenities and services that reflect the community's needs and culture.
- Q6** All Southwest neighborhoods should be safe and welcoming.
- M2** Bike infrastructure should provide safe and comfortable connections to parks, neighborhood destinations, and surrounding communities.
- RC-Q1** Parks, streets and public spaces along the river corridor, and the river itself, should be accessible, safe and reflective of the Southwest Culture
- RC-Q2** Areas along the river should be safe from stormwater and river flooding
- RC-Q3** The natural health and stewardship of the South Platte River and connecting waterways should be restored and protected.



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Neighborhoods

7.2

Square Miles

51,847

Population

18,148

Housing Units

1.1 INTRODUCTION

1.1.1 Plan Area Overview

The City of Denver's Department of Community Planning and Development (CPD) facilitates the Neighborhood Planning Initiative (NPI) a community-driven effort to develop the vision, plans, and priorities for various neighborhoods throughout Denver. Neighborhood plans reflect what residents care most about and inform the prioritization of important future neighborhood projects.

The *Southwest Area Plan* is the neighborhood plan for Athmar Park, Mar Lee, Overland, Ruby Hill, and Westwood. It lays out a shared vision and policy guidance for the next 20 years, covering land use, urban design, housing, transportation, parks, and the local economy. The planning area is bound by Alameda Avenue to the north, Sheridan Boulevard to the west, Yale and Jewell Avenues to the south, and the South Platte River and Broadway to the east.

These neighborhoods have grown and changed alongside the City of Denver, resulting in a mix of building styles and development patterns. The area is shaped by several major streets and highways, including Federal Boulevard, Alameda Avenue, Santa Fe Drive, and Interstate I-25. Natural features and recreational spaces in the Southwest Area include the South Platte River, Sanderson Gulch, Weir Gulch, Ruby Hill Park and the Overland Golf Course—offering residents access to nature and outdoor activities close to home.

Population by Race

67%
Hispanic

24%
White

2%
Black

4%
Asian

3%
Other

Population by Neighborhood

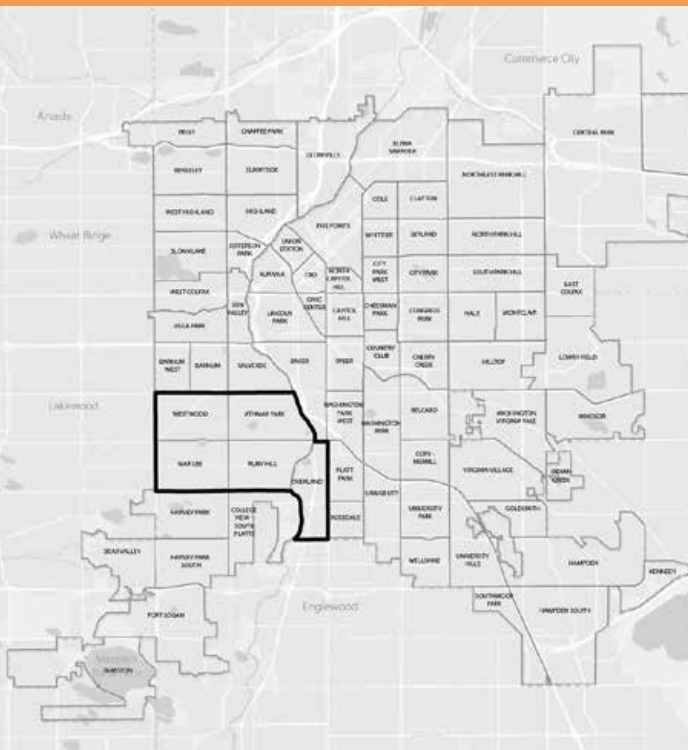
16,891
Westwood

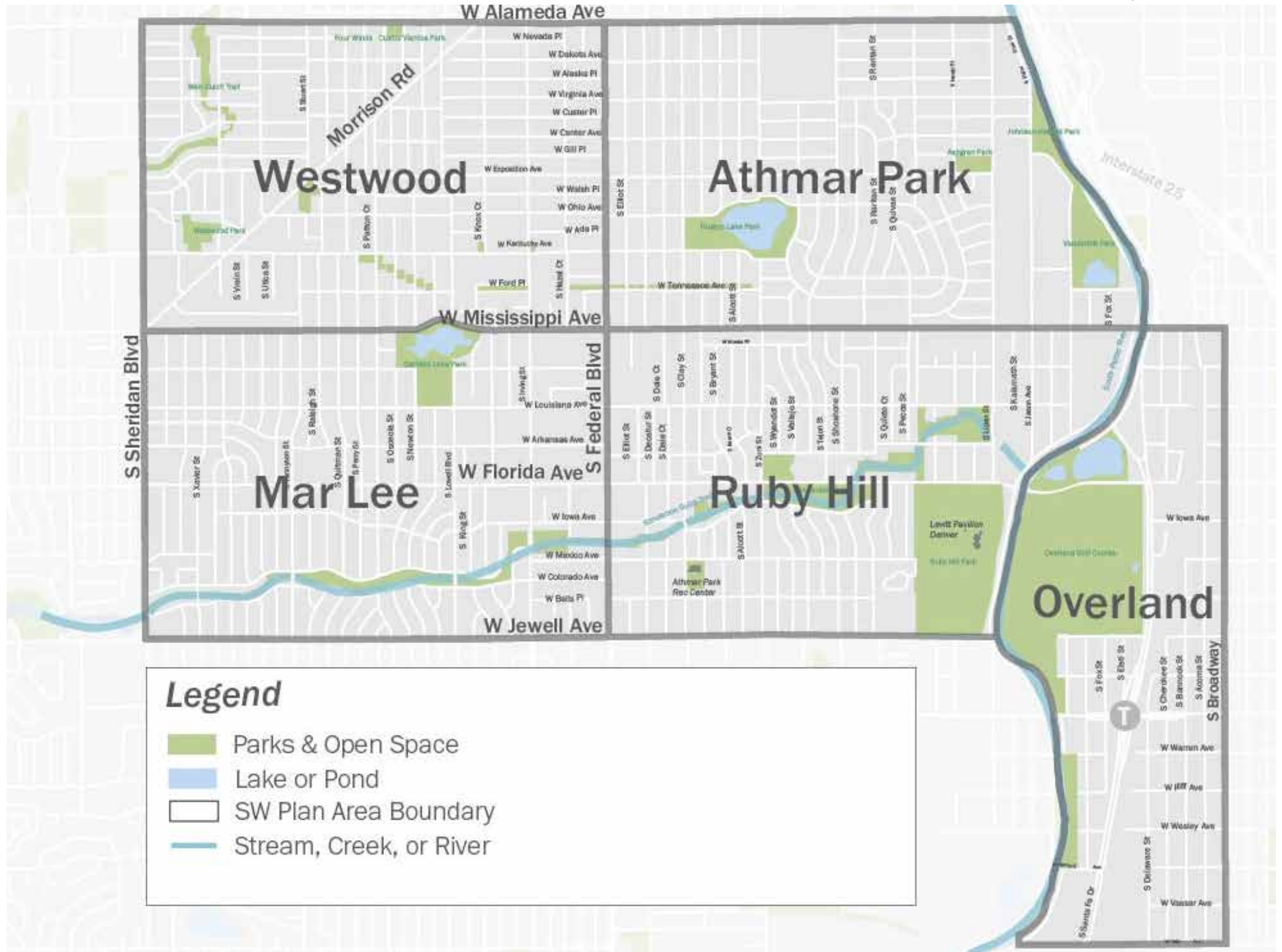
13,451
Mar Lee

8,434
Athmar Park

9,754
Ruby Hill

3,371
Overland





1.1.2 Area History Highlights

A neighborhood's history—including past policies, infrastructure decisions, and land use—helps to explain the conditions residents experience today. In the Southwest Area, natural topography, transportation development, zoning and urban planning have shaped how the community looks and functions. Some past decisions created lasting inequities, and new challenges continue to emerge. The *Southwest Area Plan* aims to address these issues and reflect the community's vision for a more equitable future.

The time line below highlights key events that have shaped the Southwest Area over the past century and beyond.

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

In the mid-1800s, treaties reduced tribal lands, and westward expansion led to violent conflicts and the genocide of Indigenous people. One of the most significant events was the Sand Creek Massacre in 1864, part of the broader Colorado War.

1857-1859 - First Settlements: Spanish, Mexican, and Indigenous cultures shaped early settlements throughout the region. Gold was first discovered in the South Platte River. In 1857, Montana City, an early colonizer settlement, was established but later abandoned. In 1859, Rufus H. Clark founded a potato farm—(now the site of Overland Park and Golf Course). The area soon expanded to include other farms and greenhouses.

1870-1890s - Industry and Railroads: Although no major gold deposits were found, red garnets discovered in the hills gave Ruby Hill its name. Railroads were built along both sides of the South Platte River between 1870 and 1872 - connecting Denver to growing industries. Mills along the river produced paper, cotton, iron, wool, radium, and other goods.



Railroad engine, late 1800s.

1896 – First Country Club: Evolving from potato farm to horse racing track, the Overland area became home to Denver's first Country Club. It later became an automobile racetrack, (speeds up to 35 mph), a motor camp, and eventually the Overland Golf Course which expanded to 18 holes in 1957.

1900s-1930s - Road Expansion and Early Development: At the turn of the century, County Road 8 - later Morrison Road was built as a direct route to Mount Morrison. By the 1930s, Alameda Avenue became a parkway to Red Rocks Park. These connections including a river crossing helped commercial hubs grow as the automobile became central to American life.

1920s & 1930s - First Zoning Code & Redlining: Denver's first zoning code in 1925 designated parts of the South Platte River corridor as Industrial. These decisions were influenced by then-Mayor Stapleton, a member of the Klu Klux Klan. Klan members spread their hateful messages by burning crosses from Ruby Hill to be seen from across the river. Redlining practices excluded minority residents from home loans limiting access to housing and wealth-building opportunities. See map on next page.

1940s-1960s -Suburbanization & Annexation: After World War II, farmland was converted into suburban neighborhoods, attracting many Mexican immigrants. Denver annexed nearby towns and unincorporated areas up until 1973. During this time, some neighborhoods included restrictive racial covenants that excluded people of color. As housing grew, so did new shopping centers. Alameda Square, Denver's first outdoor shopping mall, opened in 1953. The area was connected to Interstate 25, opening in 1958 - changing transportation patterns. The Hadley Branch Library opened in 1964 built with city capital improvement funds as the area's population continued to grow.

1965 - The Great Flood: Heavy rains leading up to June 15, 1965 caused severe flooding - resulting in 21 deaths and over \$4 billion in damages. Athmar Park and Valverde were hit the hardest, with over 300 houses condemned and 70 completely lost. The flood led to the re-alignment of I-25 on a more western alignment causing many residents to move out of the area. It also impacted the creation of the Urban Drainage and Flood Control District and other major regional infrastructure improvements.

1960s-1980s - Chicano Movement: World War II and its accompanying industrial mobilization caused the largest influx of Latinos to Denver up to that point. New residents flooded into the established neighborhoods including those west of the South Platte River. This time is also defined by efforts of Latino/a/x and Chicanos to become more active and engaged in their communities, coming together to fight against racial discrimination and demand reforms in education, farm worker rights, healthcare, housing, military service, and labor, which coalesced into El Movimiento, the Chicano Movement.

1968 - Ruby Hill Park Created: Ruby Hill Park has an evolving history. Oil wells were discovered here in the 1920s and an automobile bon-fire with 130+ vehicles torched was hosted here for entertainment in the 1930s. It then served as a trash dump for many years. But similar to other dumps in city, it was repurposed and turned into a new park space in the 1960s. Ruby Hill Park has continued to grow and became a true destination with the addition of the Rail Yard snowboarding hill in 2007 and Levitt Pavilion in 2017.

1970s-1980s - South Asian Migration: After the Vietnam War, many families from Southeast Asia settled in Southwest Denver and continue to live in these neighborhoods. In 1986, the Far East Center opened to celebrate Vietnamese culture and architecture. It was added to the State Register of Historic Places in 2024.

1981 - Denver Indian Center Opens: Originally built as the Belmont School in 1945, the Denver Indian Center moved to this site in 1981. It grew from organizations like the White Buffalo Council and Denver Native Americans United which supported Indigenous people relocated to Denver through federal programs since the 1950s. The Center remains a vital resource for Native communities. It was recognized on the National Register of Historic Places in 2025.

1990s - 2000s - Light Rail & Environmental Clean Up: Light rail expanded with the opening of the I-25/Broadway Station in 1994 and the Evans Station in 2000. Former industrial sites, like the Shattuck Site, were cleaned up for future development.

2020s - Cultural Celebrations: Community groups in Southwest Denver continue to celebrate cultural heritage through events like Saigon Azteca, Lunar New Year, and Muertos en Westwood among others, strengthening neighborhood identity and connection.



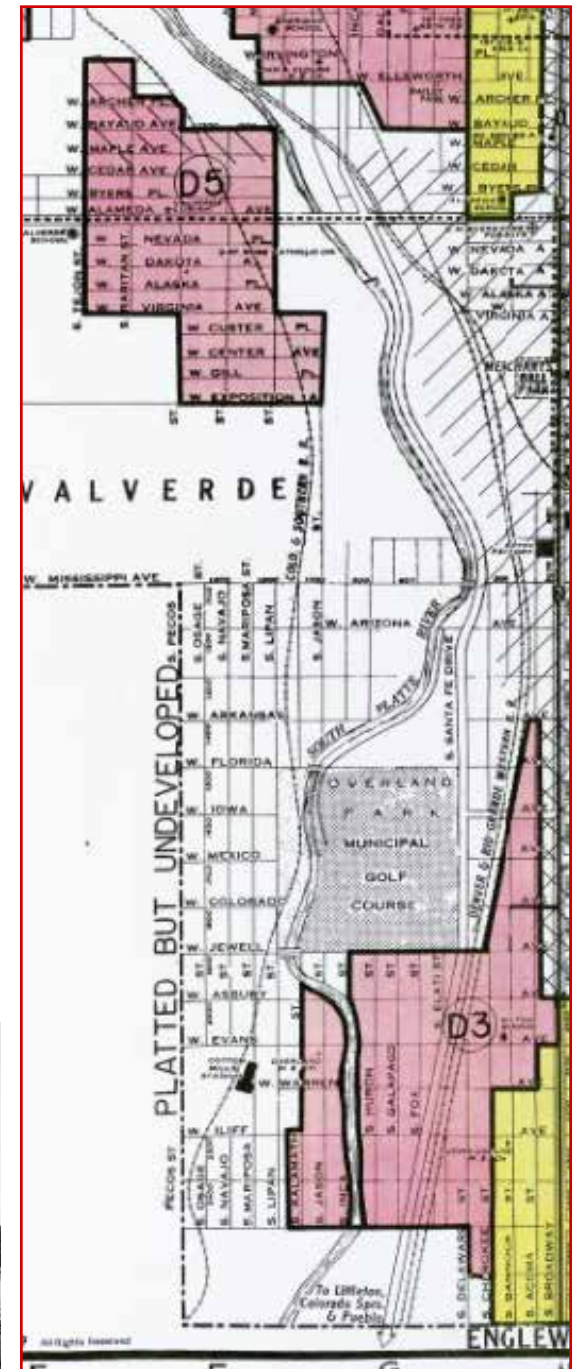
Golfing in Overland, early 1900s.



Advertisement for new shopping center, 1950s.



Damage from flooding, June 1965.



Portions of Overland, Ruby Hill, and Athmar Park (then the town of Valverde) were marked as "Hazardous" and considered to be poor investments, often due to racial or ethnic populations in the areas.

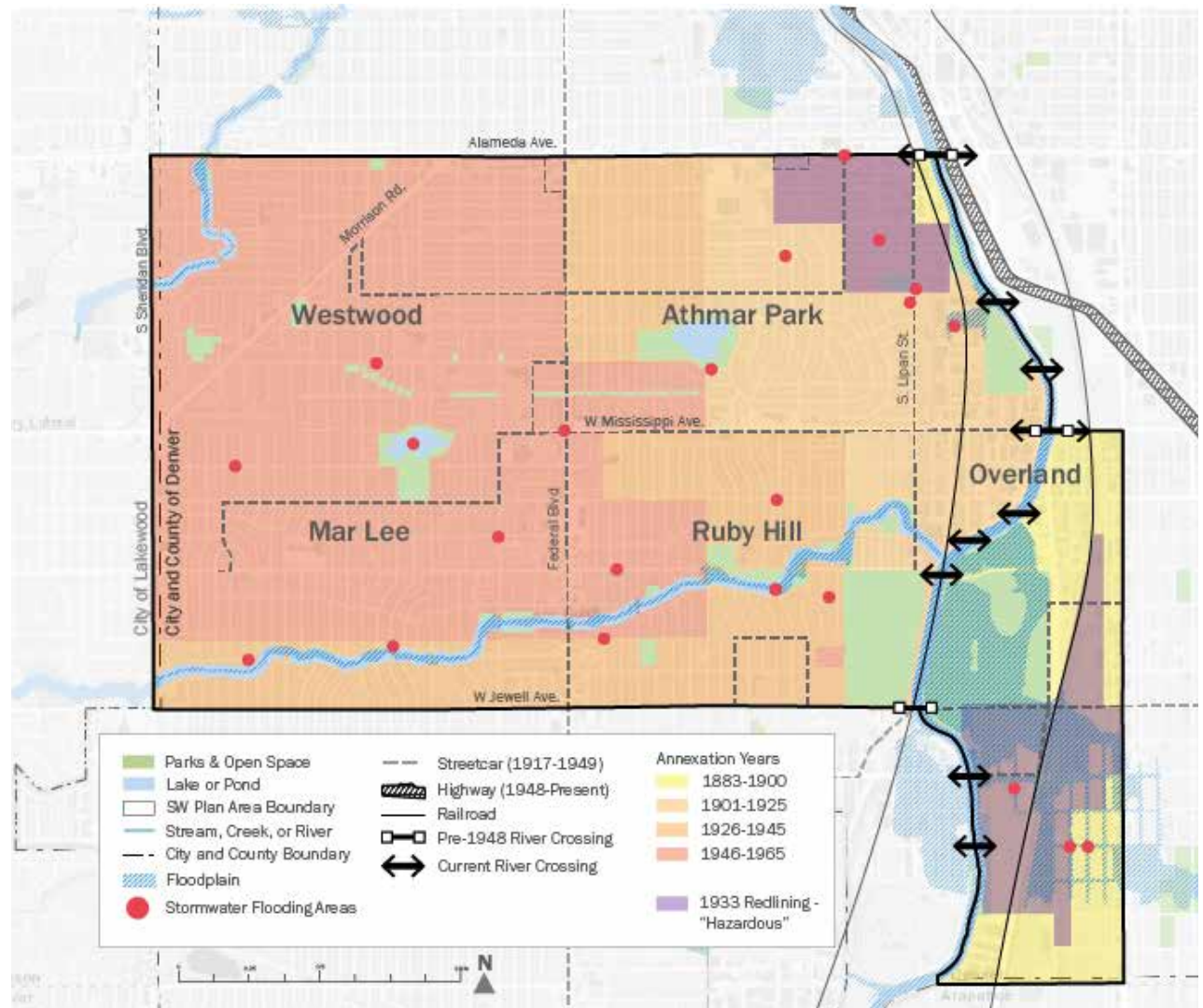
The Southwest Area Today

The Southwest Area is a vibrant and forward-thinking community. However, past decisions—such as disinvestment, redlining, and infrastructure choices—still affect residents today.

Affordable housing is becoming harder to find as Denver's population grows and gentrification increases. Traffic congestion is rising, creating a need for safer streets, better pedestrian access, and more bike-friendly routes. As the area grows, there's also a greater demand for parks, trails, and outdoor spaces—especially along the South Platte River and its tributaries.

The *Southwest Area Plan* responds to these challenges by identifying opportunities for equitable investment and future projects. The goal is to help residents stay in neighborhoods, improve quality of life, expand mobility options, and ensure that future changes reflect the values and culture of the community. We are committed to this equitable approach because we value strong neighborhoods where all residents have the support and life opportunities they need to thrive.

SOUTHWEST HISTORICAL IMPACT MAP





1.1.3 Planning Process

Overview

The *Southwest Area Plan* planning process began in March 2024 and is focused on creating a shared community vision for the area. The plan includes policies and outcomes to help support and achieve that vision. This work is guided by extensive public engagement, bringing together residents, local organizations, business owners, city planners and staff from relevant agencies and departments. Everyone involved contributed their perspectives, knowledge, expertise, and ideas to shape the plan.

Advisory Committee

A local advisory committee helped guide the development of the plan with a focus on equity. Members included residents, local organizations, and business owners. The committee played a key role in:

- Sharing accurate information with the community
- Interpreting feedback and input from residents
- Reviewing and shaping plan recommendations
- Serving as a bridge between the planning team and the Southwest community

Outreach and Engagement

Community engagement is an essential part of every phase of the planning process:

- Understanding the area
- Refining recommendations
- Drafting the plan
- Adoption

Each phase includes a tailored set of outreach strategies, with a strong focus on reaching voices that are often left out of traditional planning processes.

Phase 1: Understanding the Area

This phase focused on listening to established community partners and learning about local needs and priorities.

Phase 2: Refining Recommendations

The team shared early ideas based on citywide guidance and gathered feedback from the community. This “Saturation Engagement” phase aimed to reach as many people as possible. Outreach efforts included:

- A mailer to 23,000 households
- Flyers, postcards, yard signs, and 37+ community touch points
- A kickoff survey and a public meeting with 220+ attendees
- Workshops with neighborhood organizations
- Pop-up events at parks and recreation centers
- Outreach to mobile home communities and high school students
- An online survey with 280+ responses
- Additional outreach through community navigators, resulting in 200 more responses

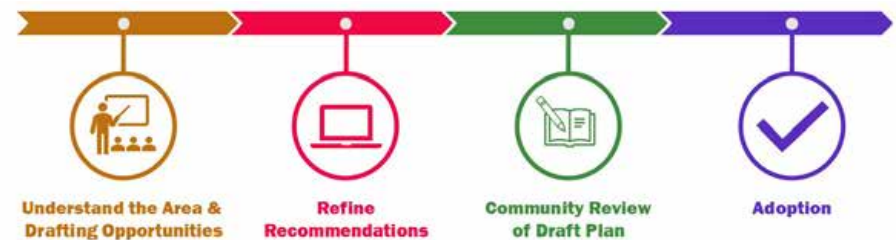
Phase 3: Reviewing the Draft Plan

This phase invites public feedback on the draft plan’s guiding principles, policies, outcomes, and focus areas. Outreach efforts included:

- Two public drafts published with nearly 400 comments
- Community focus groups including targeted topics on housing, small businesses, riverside communities
- Over 900 paper surveys collected from community-based partners and community navigators
- Continuation of Southwest Advisory Committee meetings

Phase 4: Adoption

The final draft goes through the formal adoption process, including a public hearing with the Planning Board and a public hearing and final vote by City Council.



1.1.4 Planning Context

Neighborhood Planning Initiative Overview

The *Southwest Area Plan* is part of Denver's Neighborhood Planning Initiative (NPI)— a long-term commitment to ensure every neighborhood benefits from thoughtful planning and community-driven development. NPI provides a flexible framework that allows each plan to reflect the unique needs, priorities, and circumstances of its neighborhood. It emphasizes intentional, equitable, and measurable outcomes.

Existing Neighborhood Plans

The *Southwest Area Plan* replaces several older plans for the area. As part of this process, the planning team reviewed previous plans and carried forward recommendations that still reflect current community values. These recommendations were updated as needed and included in the new plan. Plans replaced by the *Southwest Area Plan*:

- *Westwood Neighborhood Plan* (2016)
- *Athmar Park Perimeter Plan* (2000)
- *Overland Neighborhood Plan* (1993)
- *Shattuck District Plan* (2003)

The *Southwest Area Plan* also overlaps with parts of other small-area plans. However, the other plans remain in effect for areas outside the Southwest boundary. Relevant recommendations were updated as needed and included in the new plan.

Overlapping plans include:

- *I-25 & Broadway* (2016)
- *South Platte Corridor Study* (2013)
- *Evans Station Area Plan* (2009)
- *Alameda Station Area Plan* (2009)
- *Federal Boulevard Corridor Plan* (1995)

Consistency with Citywide Plans

Citywide plans offer a high-level framework to guide and influence decisions that affect the future and serve as the foundation for more detailed neighborhood plans like this one.

The *Comprehensive Plan 2040* includes the city's overall goals, while *Blueprint Denver* focuses on land use and transportation. Both are adopted citywide and guide decisions across all neighborhoods.

The *Southwest Area Plan* Builds on these plans by applying their principles to the local context. Once adopted by the City Council, the *Southwest Area Plan* will officially update the recommendations in *Comprehensive Plan 2040* and *Blueprint Denver* for this part of the city. Future updates to citywide plans will incorporate for the *Southwest Area Plan's* recommendations.



Workshops with neighborhood groups



Members of the Advisory Committee



Over 220 community members in attendance at the Kick-off workshop

1.2 HOW TO USE THIS PLAN

1.2.1 Plan Organization

The *Southwest Area Plan* offers guidance for everyday decisions about land use, public investment, private development and partnerships. It's designed to be flexible—able to respond to new challenges and take advantage of future opportunities. This is a high-level, aspirational document that does not create new requirements for the city.

The plan is organized into six main sections.

- **Introduction:** Background on the Southwest area and the planning process. This section also outlines the community's vision and explains how the plan advances the city's goals for equity.
- **Area-Wide Recommendations:** This Guidance that applies across all Southwest neighborhoods, organized into three topics:
 1. Land Use and Built Form
 2. Mobility
 3. Quality of Life Infrastructure

Within each topic, the plan describes the community's vision, how success will be measured in achieving that vision, key existing conditions, and recommendations. The recommendations are formatted as follows:

1. Policies, which are the key recommendations to advance the vision;
 2. Background, which illustrates the context for the policies;
 3. Outcomes, which describe the desired elements that make up the policy.
 4. Framework maps show where key recommendations apply.
- **Focus Areas:** Examples of how area-wide recommendations work together in specific locations. This section also provides more detailed guidance where needed.

- **Federal Boulevard:** Specific recommendations for Federal Boulevard and the surrounding commercial, mixed-use, and residential areas.
- **Neighborhoods of Southwest:** Each neighborhood—Westwood, Mar Lee, Athmar Park, Ruby Hill, and Overland—has its own section with tailored recommendations and a summary of local conditions.
- **Implementation:** Describes how the plan will be carried out, including tools, partnerships, and next steps.

1.2.2 Applying the Southwest Area Plan to Rezoning

This plan does not change zoning on its own. All rezonings must go through the city's standard process, which may include public hearings with the Planning Board and City Council.

However, as an adopted city plan, the Southwest Area Plan will help guide future rezoning decisions. Any proposed rezoning should align with the plan's recommendations, including neighborhood context, place types, street types, and equity goals.

Some zoning changes suggested in this plan may be implemented through broader citywide updates or area-specific amendments, rather than through individual rezoning applications which saves staff and community time and money to better serve community and fulfill the plan's visions.

1.2.3 Plan Boundaries

These recommendations in this plan apply only to areas within the defined boundaries. If a boundary follows a street, the plan applies only to one side of that street. The other side are addressed by previous (West and Far Southwest) or future planning efforts. This plan may serve as a starting point for those future plans, with the goal of creating consistent and connected corridors.

HOW TO READ THE RECOMMENDATIONS

Policy

A key recommendation that advances the plan vision. The first letter(s) of the policy number indicate the section:

In the areawide chapters the first letter relates to the following sections:

- L - Land Use & Built Form
- M - Mobility
- Q - Quality of Life

In the focused chapters the first letter relates to the following sections

- RC - Riverside Communities
- MS - Mississippi Shopping Center
- F - Federal Boulevard
- A - Athmar Park
- M - Mar Lee
- R - Ruby Hill
- O - Overland
- W - Westwood

Header

Sub-section headers may be located before the recommendation, indicating the specific topic of policy or policies to follow.

Community Priority

Icons that indicate which community priority or priorities this policy relates to

Background

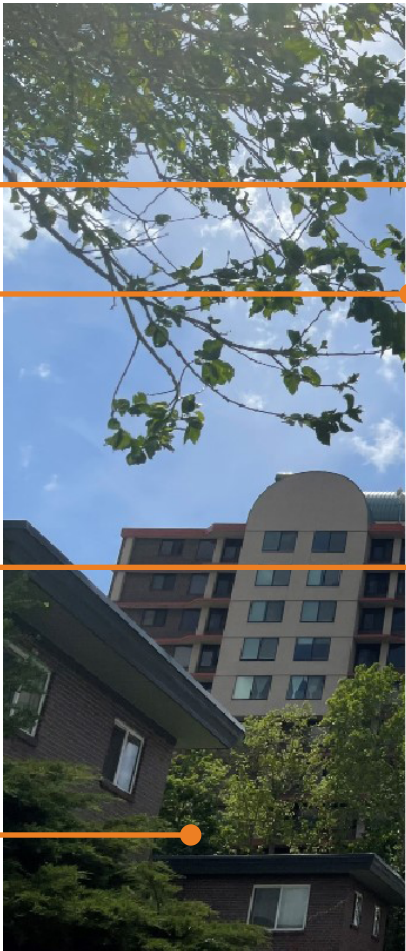
This text provides helpful context to improve understanding of the policy and related outcomes.

Outcomes

These are the desired outcomes resulting from the policy.

Side Bar

An image, case study or supplemental information may be located here.



RECOMMENDATIONS

HOUSING SUPPLY



Ensure there is adequate supply of high-quality, well maintained housing that meets the needs of the community.

BACKGROUND POLICY

Adding more housing is one way to reduce housing costs and make homes more affordable. While much of Southwest Denver is already developed, there are still opportunities to build new housing—especially through infill development. This means adding new homes on vacant lots or redeveloping underused properties. By introducing a variety of housing types, the area can better support families of different sizes, older adults who want to age in place and residents who want to stay in or return to their neighborhood.

OUTCOMES

- A. More housing should be added in Southwest Denver through both new construction and renovation. These homes should include options for renters and buyers, helping meet the needs of a wide range of residents.
 - 1. Small-scale, locally owned developers should be encouraged to improve and/or build properties for rent and for sale.
 - 2. Condominiums should be built, especially along key Centers and Corridors to increase affordable home ownership options.
 - 3. Develop more attainable housing through community land trusts or similar programs. These efforts can focus on acquiring, renovating, or building units, with a focus on vacant or underutilized properties.
- B. Small-scale multi-unit development, like duplexes, triplexes, and quadplexes, can offer lower-cost, family-friendly housing options in areas where currently limited to single-unit residential areas or along Centers and Corridors. This type of housing - often called the "missing middle" - should be encouraged in the Southwest Denver, ideally as part of a project to expand housing options citywide.
- 1. The city should explore allowing additional homes to be built on parcels with single- and two-unit zoning. Doing so would provide affordable homes, for renting and buying. These options should be consistent with the look and feel of existing homes.
- C. Encourage the construction of Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs) by offering programs, prototypes, and base models to reduce building costs. ADUs can provide flexible housing for extended family members support aging in place and help homeowners maintain equity—while also reducing displacement.
- D. Homes currently located in primarily industrial areas should be relocated to vacant residential lots instead of being demolished. This helps preserve housing while improving safety and quality of life.
- E. Continue to build housing that serves families by offering larger units with more bedrooms.
- F. In coordination with the Green Building Ordinance, renovation and new construction should be sustainable. This includes taking steps to reduce energy and water use and address other environmental concerns. If demolition is required, materials should be salvaged.
- G. All new housing should reflect the design, scale, and character of the surrounding area (See L9).



1.3 SOUTHWEST AREA VISION

1.3.1 What We Heard: Key Takeaways

The key themes of what the community expressed during the planning process include the following:

Land Use

When asked about future growth, residents emphasized the importance of green space, improving streetscapes, and increasing affordable housing. The biggest challenge to housing affordability is the cost of rent, followed by housing availability, and utility costs. To support families, residents highlighted the need for safe streets, nearby parks, trails, and recreation centers, and more housing with three or more bedrooms. Cultural events, traditions and the people themselves were seen as key elements that define the Southwest community.

Mobility

Speeding is a major concern, especially along or near Federal Boulevard, Kentucky Avenue, and Morrison Road. Residents said it's difficult to cross busy streets safely, and drivers often don't see pedestrians. There's strong support for traffic calming, pedestrian crossing, and better public transit—especially more direct routes to places like Evans Station and Santa Fe. Challenges in and around the river and railroad corridors create barriers and limit connections to key community destinations. There is need for connecting and building a safer network for all mobility types.

Quality of Life

Residents value their parks and trails for recreation and connecting with nature. Many want better trail connections, more shade, and upgraded amenities—like expanded recreation facilities, community events, and gathering spaces. There's also concern about limited access to healthy food and everyday grocery stores. Many people travel long distances to meet basic needs. Residents are proud of their neighborhood's cultural diversity and want to see it preserved and celebrated to ensure the area remains safe, welcoming, and inclusive.

1.3.2 Community Priorities

The community priorities in this plan reflect what we heard from the community, what we know about current conditions, and the direction set by citywide policies. Together, they form the foundation for the Southwest Area's long-term vision.

Each priority is supported by policies and outcomes organized into three core components that define great places:

- **Land Use:** Considers what gets built where. It includes ways to strengthen the quality and character of the community through the built environment.
- **Mobility:** Considers how people move around. It includes strategies to make it safer, easier, and more comfortable for everyone to get to the places they live, work and play.
- **Quality of Life:** Considers what makes great neighborhoods. This includes things like parks, open spaces, natural features and places where people can gather and connect.

By following these community priorities, the plan offers a well-rounded approach to future growth and development—one that reflects the community's values and helps ensure a more connected, vibrant, and resilient Southwest Area.



DIVERSE CULTURAL HUBS



SAFE COMMUNAL SPACES



HOUSING STABILITY AND OPTIONS



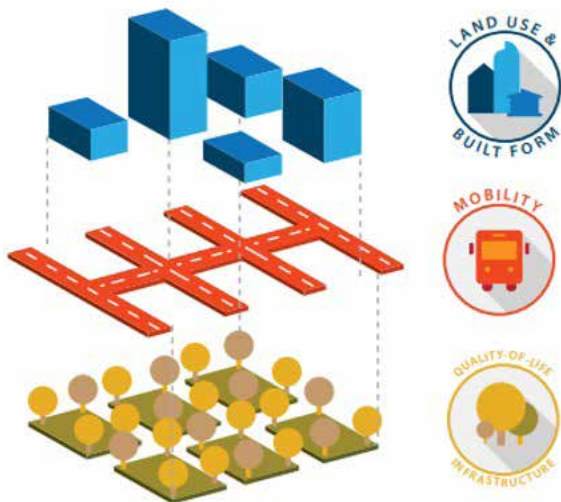
INTEGRATED INDUSTRY



IMPROVED INFRASTRUCTURE



NATURAL RESOURCES





Saigon Azteca celebration taking place along Morrison Road



Institutions such as the Athmar Park Library are found within community hubs.



Public Art helps to express neighborhood character and culture.



Vision:

By 2045, the Southwest Area will continue to be a vibrant cultural hub that honors its history and celebrates the diversity of its people, businesses, and neighborhoods.

DIVERSE CULTURAL HUBS

Background: Southwest Denver's neighborhoods have been shaped by generations of residents from many cultural backgrounds. Historic migrations—particularly from Asian and Latino communities— have left a lasting imprint on the area. Today, that cultural richness is reflected in the people, language, food, music, and community spaces that define the Southwest.

What We Heard: Community feedback highlighted the Southwest Area's rich cultural identity—particularly the vibrant presence of Latino and Asian communities. Residents expressed a strong desire to celebrate the histories and contributions of immigrant and entrepreneurial groups through events, storytelling, and cultural recognition. At the same time, there's growing concerns about displacement. Community members emphasized the importance of preserving the people, traditions, businesses, foods, and cultural expressions that define these communities. Commercial corridors—such as Federal Boulevard, including the Little Saigon District, and Morrison Road—are seen as vital cultural and economic hubs. These areas are essential for fostering community identity, supporting local businesses, and sustaining cultural traditions, and should be preserved and enhanced as key gathering places as well as to create new hubs.

"Incentives for local businesses and ways to use vacant storefronts for artist or pop-up shops will help active our community and show our unique cultures." – Open House Participant

Recommendations to support this vision:

L1

Southwest residents should have affordable and secure housing options that accommodate a wide range of needs.

L6

Local businesses should be supported to create a thriving, regional cultural hub providing resources, services, and goods.

L9

Historic, cultural, and architecturally significant structures should be preserved and recognized.

L10

Design vibrant commercial Centers and Corridors that preserve and reflect the neighborhood's cultural character and create spaces that are pedestrian-friendly, comfortable, and welcoming for all.

Q4

Food resources should be increased and more accessible to residents.

Q7

Public spaces and community placemaking should celebrate and embrace the diverse cultural fabric and traditions of the Southwest neighborhoods.



Existing linear park along Athmar Park has the opportunity to become an active space for people to gather.



The area does include great regional and community parks greatly used and cherished by residents and visitors.



Existing shopping centers represent one of the areas where the community currently spends time.



Vision:

By 2045, the Southwest Area will offer a variety of safe, comfortable, and welcoming public spaces that bring people together and improve access to services, recreation, civic institutions, and the arts.

SAFE COMMUNAL SPACES

Background: Southwest neighborhoods are densely populated, with most of the land used for housing, shopping centers, and roads. While parks of various sizes offer important recreational space, the area lacks dedicated places for people to connect and gather. Because of this, recent community festivals have taken place in parking lots or temporarily closed streets.

What We Heard: Community feedback shows strong interest in creating more spaces for people to gather—like public plazas, small parks, and welcoming “third-spaces” such as coffee shops, breweries, and recreational spots. Residents want these spaces to be walkable and bikeable with easy access to services, and cultural experiences like public art and community programs. People value cultural connection to local businesses, art, and events and want to enhance and expand this feeling in the neighborhood. They also want more local shops and services to better meet their everyday needs.

“People have to feel safe walking through the neighborhood. Safety and security should be a priority in the community.”
“There is a need for more walkable and bikeable places!” - Public Draft #1 Precipitants

Recommendations to support this vision:

L8

Community institutions and other non-profit organizations should be well integrated into the community.

L10

Design vibrant commercial Centers and Corridors that preserve and reflect the neighborhood’s cultural character and create spaces that are pedestrian-friendly, comfortable, and welcoming for all.

M1

The Southwest area mobility network should have safe crossings of major barriers, multimodal corridors, and connect residents to key places.

M4

Prioritize safety for all users by incorporating traffic calming to reduce heavy vehicle impacts on residential streets while delivering added community benefits.

Q2

Parks should stay well-connected and offer amenities that reflect local culture and needs.

Q3

Trails and greenways should be well-connected and include amenities and services that reflect the community’s culture and needs.

Q5

Healthcare and public health facilities should be reliably accessible.

Q6

All Southwest neighborhoods should be safe and welcoming.

Q7

Public spaces and community placemaking should celebrate and embrace the diverse cultural fabric and traditions of the Southwest neighborhoods.



Existing Aspen Terrace manufactured housing community in the Athmar Park Neighborhood.



Historic house from the early 20th century.



Multi-unit apartments along Federal Boulevard provide affordable options services near transit.



HOUSING STABILITY & OPTIONS

Vision:

By 2045, the Southwest Area will offer a range of affordable, high-quality housing options that meet the needs of families from diverse backgrounds. New housing will be added in ways that reflect neighborhood character and help prevent displacement.

Background: Southwest neighborhoods have evolved from rural farmland and retreats to a mix of urban and suburban residential developments. Today, the area offers a range of housing options and is nearly evenly split between renters and homeowners. It remains one of the more affordable parts of the city. However, over the past decade, many lower income households have moved away and have been replaced by moderate-income households.

What We Heard: Community residents are concerned with keeping the area affordable as new development pressures often displace people through elements such as cost of living or incentive to sell or move out of the area. Residents want to maintain their neighborhood character while balancing options for “missing middle” housing types (tandem homes, duplexes, condos, triplexes, and other similar forms) within more walkable and transit-friendly areas. Residents want all neighbors to have access to safe and affordable housing options and improve their quality of life without the burden of related living costs. Residents want to make sure their neighbors can stay and thrive in their neighborhood.

“Affordable and stable homes are very important physically, emotionally, culturally, and spiritually. It’s the start to so many things.” – Student Workshop Participant

Recommendations to support that vision:

- L1** Southwest residents should have affordable and secure housing options that accommodate a wide range of needs.
- L2** Ensure adequate supply of high-quality, well maintained housing that meets the needs of the community.
- L3** Low Residential places should allow for additional housing growth while promoting affordability, design, and preservation.
- L4** Low-Medium, High Medium, and High Residential Places in proximity of major corridors should allow for additional housing growth while promoting affordability, design, and preservation.
- L5** Affordable housing should be available in Centers and Corridors alongside business and services to ensure these areas remain vibrant economic and cultural hubs.
- L9** Historic, cultural, and architecturally significant structures should be preserved and recognized.



Historic industrial building near rail in Overland



Existing manufacturing industrial business along Lipan Street.



Few rail crossings currently exist in the industrial area, creating barriers to neighborhood east-west connectivity and access to the river



Vision:

By 2045, the Southwest Area will remain a key center for industry and manufacturing in Denver, with stronger connections to surrounding communities.

INTEGRATED INDUSTRY

Background: The Southwest Area includes one of the few remaining industrial zones within Denver's city limits. This area is home to a mix of businesses, mostly focused on light manufacturing, retail and distribution, with smaller number involved in heavy industry. These industrial areas are located in the low-lying parts of the city near the South Platte River, close to rail lines and highways - which have become prone to flood risks and other stormwater issues. These employment centers should be preserved to maintain jobs and economic vitality for the area. This intersection of jobs and nearby natural waterways has raised challenges for environmental concerns for nearby residential areas and physical barriers to travel through the neighborhoods.

What We Heard: Community members have expressed the need to balance support for industrial businesses with improvements that better connect these areas to surrounding neighborhoods. Residents specifically highlighted the need for safer, more comfortable pedestrian and bike connections between neighborhoods and the river, which are currently blocked or limited by industrial land uses. There is strong interest in transforming the edges of industrial zones into flexible, mixed-use transition areas that can host community-serving amenities—such as gathering spaces, local restaurants, coffee shops, and cultural hubs. Additionally, communities have voiced concerns about the environmental and health impacts of industrial activity.

"With the close proximity of industrial and residential uses, air quality, safety, pollution, and traffic are concerns for those living nearby." - Open House Participants

Recommendations to support this vision:

L7

Employment areas throughout the Southwest should provide equitable job opportunities

RC-L1

Centers and Corridors within the Riverside Communities area should be active community gathering and commercial spaces that connect the river to the surrounding communities.

RC-L2

The industrial areas should support new and existing industrial businesses and ensure they are part of a healthy community.

RC-L3

Design and development in industrial areas should improve the built form while retaining the area's character and creating a more walkable and pedestrian-oriented environment.

RC-M1

Communities on both sides of the river are safely and comfortably connected to each other and to the river corridor by a variety of modes.

RC-Q4

Industrial areas should be good neighbors to other adjacent uses with appropriate transitions and limited environmental impacts for human health and health of the environment and nonhuman life that supports it.



Rail crossings in the industrial area create barriers that limit east-west connectivity and access to the river.



Arterial roads such as Federal, Alameda, Sheridan, Santa Fe are difficult to cross.



Many residents noted the need for improved crosswalks with longer time for crossings.



IMPROVED INFRASTRUCTURE

Vision:

By 2045, the Southwest Area will have well-designed infrastructure such as roads, trails, sidewalks and landscaping that supports safe, comfortable, and connected travel for everyone.

Background: Southwest Denver is surrounded and crossed by major roadways like Federal Boulevard, Alameda Avenue, and Santa Fe Drive. While the transportation network is well established, it's mostly designed for cars. These busy roads are difficult to cross for people walking or biking, creating barriers between neighborhoods. The area's layout and natural features—such as the South Platte River, rail lines, and I-25—also limit east-west connections, making it harder to get around without a car. Public transportation is available through bus routes and light rail (on the east side of the river), but options are limited. As a result, most people rely on personal vehicles. In addition, many neighborhood edges experience heavy truck traffic due to nearby industrial areas and access to major highways.

What We Heard: Community members voiced strong concerns about vehicle speeding in the Southwest area, particularly along Federal Boulevard, Kentucky Ave, and Morrison Road, where crossing feels unsafe due to high traffic and low driver visibility of pedestrians. Many emphasized the need for traffic calming measures, improved pedestrian safety, and more direct public transit routes to key destinations such as Evans Station and the Levitt Pavilion. Additionally, building safe crossings over or under major highways, rivers, and railroads emerged as a high priority, alongside making major corridors more comfortable and secure for walking. To strengthen pedestrian and bicycle connectivity, community members highlighted Florida Avenue and Iliff Avenue as essential links, with Jason Street and Tennessee also noted as important connectors for inter and intra neighborhood mobility.

"Our neighborhoods need improvement of traffic slowing methods like more stop signs, bumps, traffic circles etc." - Open House Participant

Recommendations to support this vision:

M1

The Southwest area mobility network should have safe crossings of major barriers, multimodal corridors, and connect residents to key places.

M2

Bike infrastructure should provide safe and comfortable connections to parks, neighborhood destinations, and surrounding communities.

M3

Public transportation should comfortably connect residents to local destinations, neighborhood services, and regional centers.

M4

Prioritize safety for all users by incorporating traffic calming to reduce heavy vehicle impacts on residential streets while delivering added community benefits.

M5

Make walking to and around key community destinations safer and more comfortable by improving pedestrian infrastructure.



Sanderson Gulch runs through the Mar Lee and Ruby Hill neighborhoods providing natural and open space areas.



Existing view point near Overland Pond.



Neighborhood parks and recreation centers offer space to exercise and connect with neighbors.



Vision:

By 2045, the Southwest Area will protect and celebrate its natural resources like water, open spaces, and the South Platte River through strong environmental protections and improved community access.

NATURAL RESOURCES

Background: The Southwest Area is home to valued natural spaces that serve as vital community assets. Regional parks like Ruby Hill offer unique features such as the Levitt Pavilion and a bike park. Community parks like Huston Lake and Garfield Lake provide green space for recreation and gathering, while smaller neighborhood parks like Aspgren and Westwood are woven into residential areas. Sanderson Gulch runs through Mar Lee and Ruby Hill, connecting people to water, open space, and parks along its path.

The South Platte River is a major natural feature flowing through Athmar Park, Ruby Hill, and Overland. It offers green spaces like Vanderbilt Park, Grant Frontier Park, and Pasquinel's Landing Park. Local businesses help activate the riverfront and the South Platte River Trail provides a key route for walking and biking. However, the river corridor is underused due to limited access points, few community spaces along its banks, and concerns about maintenance and safety.

What We Heard: Community feedback reflects strong pride in the area's unique natural assets—such as Ruby Hill Park, Sanderson Gulch, Garfield Lake Park, and the South Platte River. However, residents also expressed a need for better maintenance to keep these spaces clean, improved safety for all users, and more accessible connections to ensure everyone can enjoy them. Residents seek additional park improvements such as picnic areas but also events and festivals in the parks. There is also a very limited tree canopy in all the neighborhoods. Residents echoed the need to plant more trees and other green improvements.

"I absolutely agree with this. I know that every time I go to park, the river is trashed and the water level has reduced. To see it go back to natural beauty would be truly great!!"- Student Workshop Participant

Recommendations to support that vision:

Q1

Environmental impacts should be minimized by using green infrastructure.

Q2

Parks should stay well-connected and offer amenities that reflect local n

Q3

Trails and greenways should be well-connected and include amenities and services that reflect the community's culture and needs.

Q6

All Southwest neighborhoods should be safe and welcoming.

M2

Bike infrastructure should provide safe and comfortable connections to parks, neighborhood destinations, and surrounding communities.

RC-Q1

Parks, streets and public spaces along the river corridor, and the river itself, should be accessible, safe and reflective of the Southwest Culture

RC-Q2

Areas along the river should be safe from stormwater and river flooding

RC-Q3

The natural health and stewardship of the South Platte River and connecting waterways should be restored and protected.

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1.4 PLANNING FOR EQUITY

Equity means that everyone, no matter their background or circumstances, has the chance to succeed and lead a fulfilling life. It ensures that a person's identity - whether defined by race, income, or where they come from - doesn't limit their opportunities. This plan puts equity at the center, so all Denver residents can enjoy a high quality of life.

As a city, Denver works to advance equity by reducing or removing long-standing barriers based on race, ability, gender identity, sexual orientation, age, and other factors. However, not all neighborhoods have equal access to basic needs like parks, clean air and water, affordable transportation, or quality education. These gaps often lead to poorer health, lower incomes, and fewer opportunities to build stability and wealth. Many residents in these areas face a higher risk of being pushed out of their neighborhoods due to rising costs and reinvestment pressures. This threatens Denver's values of diversity and cultural richness. These historical patterns of displacement and under-resourcing undermine Denver's stated commitment to equity and diversity.

Blueprint Denver, the city's long-range land use and transportation plan, aims to address these challenges. It uses three core concepts to guide decisions: **Access to Opportunity, Vulnerability to Displacement, and Housing & Jobs Diversity**. Incorporating these three concepts into the planning process helps to define and to prioritize recommendations to promote a more equitable Denver by highlighting equity-based needs in particular areas.

For the *Southwest Area Plan*, the three equity concepts have influenced the outcomes and recommendations and their prioritization by highlighting areas with an intentional effort to bring fairness through access and support to all. This approach enables Southwest neighborhoods to work towards a vision that prioritizes equity within the plan area and also contributes to a more equitable Denver.

The data used to inform these concepts provides a broad overview of the area—not detailed, block-by-block direction. Instead, it highlights where further attention and action are needed. Overall, the Southwest neighborhoods score lower on equity compared to other parts of Denver. This is due to a combination of historical development patterns and current conditions, including:

- Limited access to fresh food, healthcare, and frequent transit
- Lower household incomes and education levels
- A high concentration of single- family housing with fewer rooms paired with larger families
- Large percentage of land dedicated to industrial uses and limited job options in the immediate area
- History of redlining and restrictive racial covenants



1.4.1 Improving Access to Opportunity

Access to Opportunity reflects the *Blueprint Denver* goal that every neighborhood should offer a high quality of life. This means having access to things like good schools, parks, healthy food, healthcare, and reliable transportation.

In the Southwest Area, Access to Opportunity is considered moderate overall. However, some neighborhoods—especially around Federal Boulevard in Athmar Park, Westwood, and Ruby Hill—score lower due to barriers that limit access to essential resources.

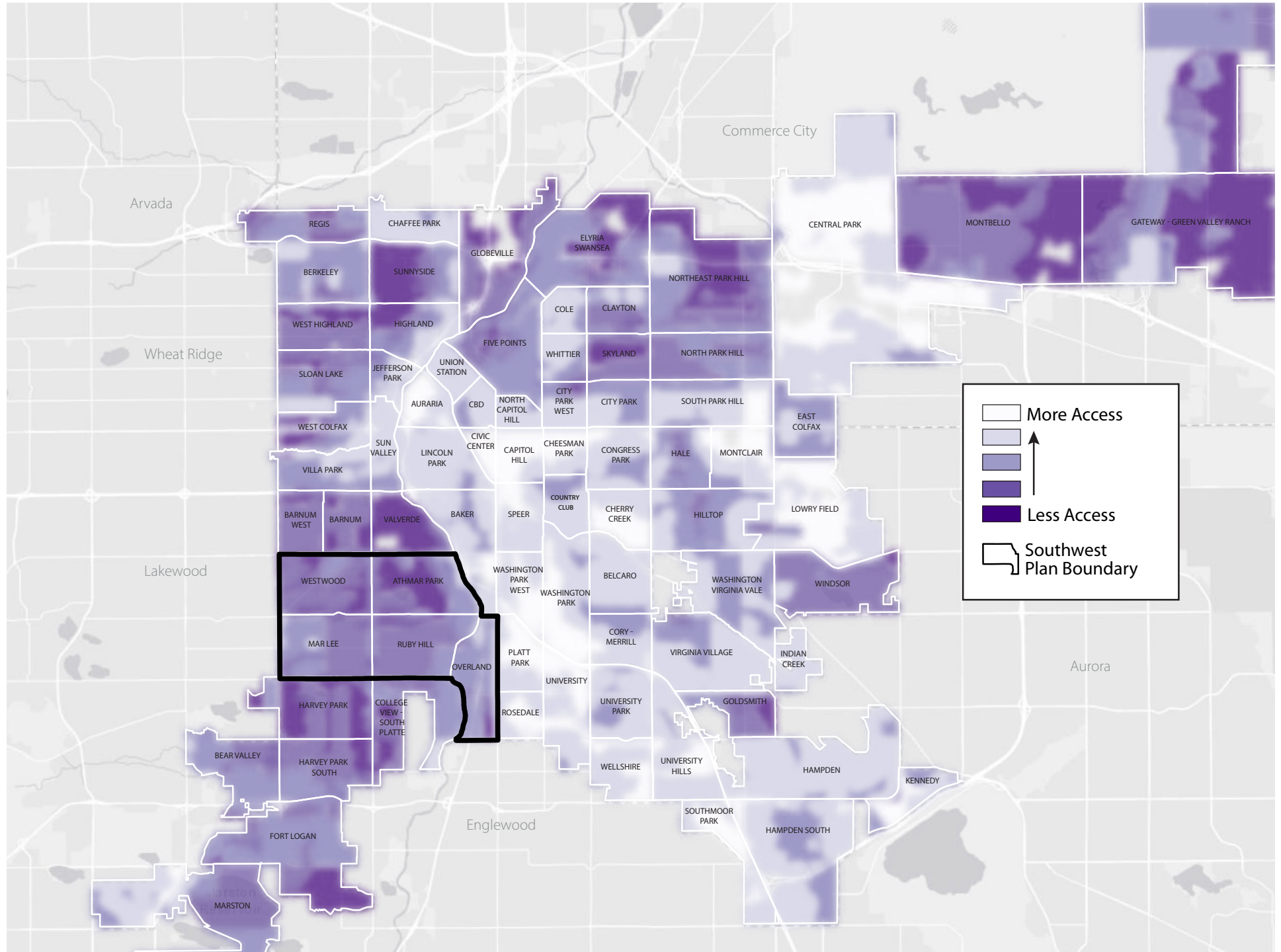
The **Access to Opportunity Equity Concept** represents the cumulative score from the evaluation of the following components:

- Social determinants of health: measured by a) percent of high school graduates or the equivalent for those 25 years of age or older and b) percent of families below 100% of the Federal Poverty Line
- Access to fresh food: Area scores low when there is a low percent of residents within 1/4 mile of a full-service grocery store
- Access to parks: Area scores low when there is a low percent of residents within 1/4 mile of a park
- Access to health care: Area scores low when there is a high percent of pregnancies without access to first trimester prenatal care
- Children at a healthy weight: Area scores low when there is a high percent of children that are overweight
- Average life expectancy: Area scores low when there is low life expectancy
- Access to corridors and centers: Area scores low when there is low access to corridors and centers through walked (1/2 mile), bikeshed (2 miles) or driveshed (5 miles)
- Transit access: Area scores low when there is a low number of units near transit (half-mile from existing light rail station or quarter-mile from existing high-frequency bus route)

There are several policies and strategies in this plan that can improve Access to Opportunity in Southwest:

L1	Southwest residents should have affordable and secure housing options that accommodate a wide range of needs.	M1	The Southwest area mobility network should have safe crossings of major barriers, multimodal corridors, and connect residents key places.	Q1	Environmental impacts should be minimized by using green infrastructure.
L5	Affordable housing should be available in Centers and Corridors alongside business and services to ensure these areas remain vibrant economic and cultural hubs.	M2	Bike infrastructure should provide safe and comfortable connections to parks, neighborhood destinations, and surrounding communities.	Q2	Parks should stay well-connected and offer amenities that reflect local culture and needs.
L6	Local businesses should be supported to create a thriving, regional cultural hub providing resources, services, and goods.	M3	Public transportation should comfortably connect residents to local destinations, neighborhood services, and regional centers.	Q3	Trails and greenways should be well-connected and include amenities and services that reflect the community's culture and needs.
L8	Community institutions and other non-profit organizations should be well integrated into the community.	M4	Prioritize safety for all users by incorporating traffic calming to reduce heavy vehicle impacts on residential streets while delivering added community benefits.	Q4	Food resources should be increased and more accessible to residents.
L10	Design vibrant commercial Centers and Corridors that preserve and reflect the neighborhood's cultural character and create spaces that are pedestrian-friendly, comfortable, and welcoming for all.	M5	Make walking to and around key community destinations safer and more comfortable by improving pedestrian infrastructure.	Q5	Healthcare and public health facilities should be reliably accessible.
				Q6	All Southwest neighborhoods should be safe and welcoming.
				Q7	Public spaces and community placemaking should celebrate and embrace the diverse cultural fabric and traditions of the Southwest neighborhoods.

IMPROVING ACCESS TO OPPORTUNITY MAP



1.4.2 Reducing Vulnerability to Displacement

Denver residents value diversity, inclusiveness and opportunity for all in part because these traits make up the richness of our communities. These values are threatened by both voluntary and involuntary displacement. Involuntary displacement occurs when residents or businesses can no longer afford to stay in an area due to increasing property values and rents. This can also include displacement caused by a loss of culture, family, and other factors that threaten a felt sense of belonging. Vulnerability to Displacement is measured by several indicators that have been linked to involuntary displacement. While data shows that all neighborhoods in the Southwest Area are vulnerable to displacement, Westwood and the northern portion of Ruby Hill rank among the highest across the city.

The **Vulnerability to Displacement Equity Concept** represents the cumulative score from the evaluation of the following components:

- Median household income: Area is considered vulnerable when the median household income is lower than Denver's
- Percent of renters: Area is considered vulnerable when percent of renter-occupied units is higher than Denver's average
- Percent of population with less than college degree: Area is considered vulnerable when percent of residents with less than a bachelor's

There are several policies and strategies in this plan that can improve Vulnerability to Displacement in Southwest:

- | | |
|--|---|
| L1 Southwest residents should have affordable and secure housing options that accommodate a wide range of needs. | L7 Employment areas throughout the Southwest should provide equitable job opportunities |
| L2 Ensure adequate supply of high-quality, well maintained housing that meets the needs of the community. | L8 Community institutions and other non-profit organizations should be well integrated into the community. |
| L3 Low Residential places should allow for additional housing growth while promoting affordability, design, and preservation. | L9 Historic, cultural, and architecturally significant structures should be preserved and recognized. |
| L4 Low-Medium, High Medium, and High Residential Places in proximity of major corridors should allow for additional housing growth while promoting affordability, design, and preservation. | Q4 Food resources should be increased and more accessible to residents. |
| L5 Affordable housing should be available in Centers and Corridors alongside business and services to ensure these areas remain vibrant economic and cultural hubs. | Q5 Healthcare and public health facilities should be reliably accessible. |
| | Q6 All Southwest neighborhoods should be safe and welcoming. |
| | Q7 Public spaces and community placemaking should celebrate and embrace the diverse cultural fabric and traditions of the Southwest neighborhoods. |



1.4.3 Expanding Housing and Job Diversity

Creating complete neighborhoods means offering a mix of housing and job options that meet the needs of people of different ages, incomes, and household sizes. In the Southwest Area, housing and job diversity varies across neighborhoods.

Housing Diversity

The most variety of housing options and building forms are found in the southeastern part of Westwood. In contrast, areas like western Mar Lee, southern Ruby Hill, Athmar Park, and Overland have less housing variety—mostly made up of single-unit homes or similar types.

The **Housing Diversity Equity Concept** is measured using several factors:

- Middle-density housing: Areas score lower if they have fewer homes with 2–19 units (like duplexes or small apartment buildings).
- Home size variety: Areas with mostly small or mostly large homes score lower.
- Ownership vs. rental mix: A neighborhood is considered less diverse if it has a much higher share of either renters or homeowners compared to the city average.
- Housing affordability: Areas score lower if most homes are only affordable to higher-income households.
- Income-restricted housing: Areas with fewer affordable, income-restricted units score lower. Percent of middle-density housing (housing with 2-19 units): Area is considered less diverse if there is a lower percent of housing in the 2-19 unit range compared to Denver

Job Diversity

The Southwest has a strong concentration of manufacturing jobs in and around the South Platte River, in both Athmar Park and Overland. There's also a wide range of retail jobs, particularly near Federal Boulevard and south of Mississippi Avenue. Innovation jobs—such as those in education, tech, or research—are often located near large school campuses. The intensity of colors on the map indicates the number of jobs, and the areas without color do not have enough jobs to conduct the diversity analysis.

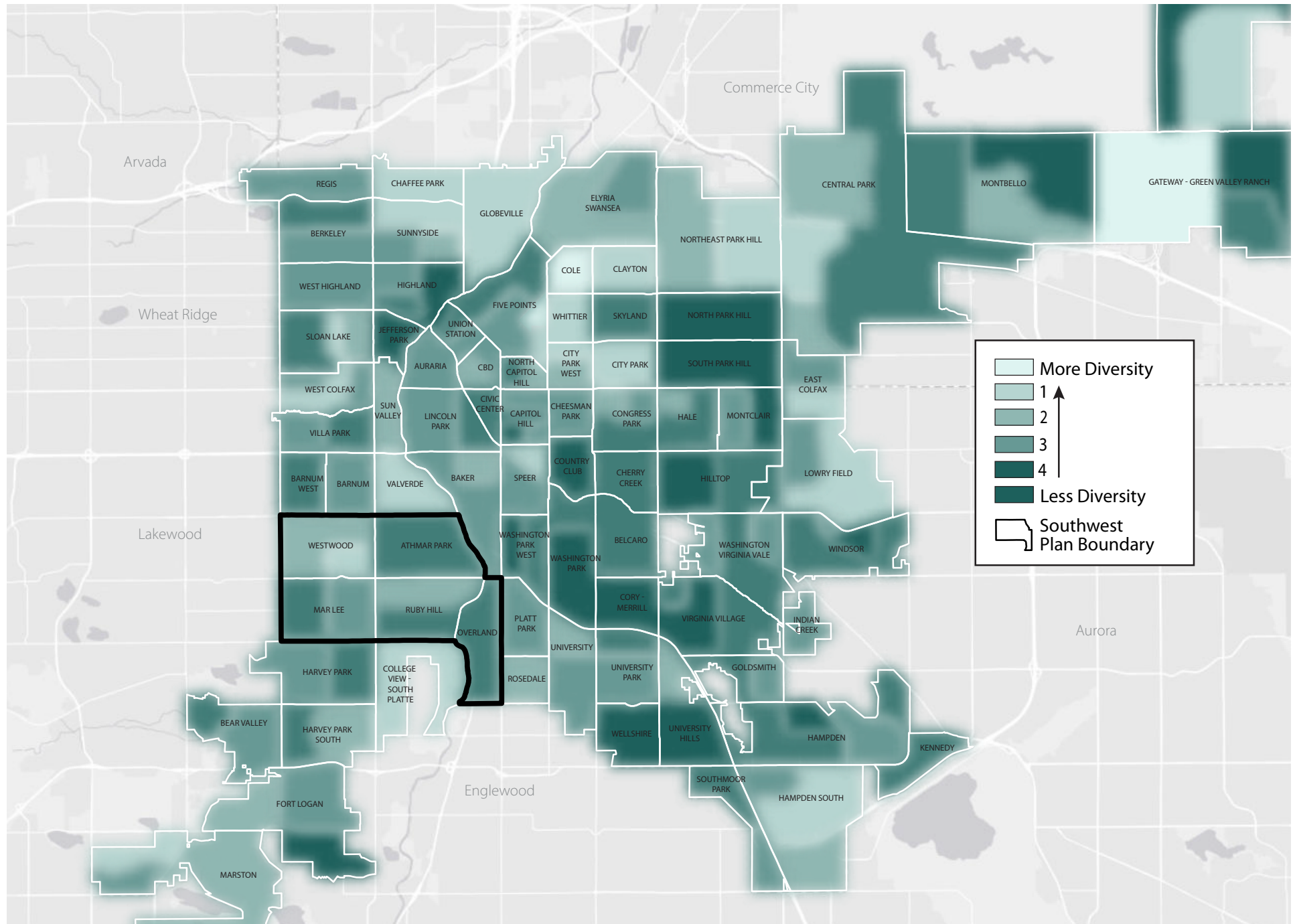
The **Jobs Diversity Equity Concept** is measured using the following factors:

- Measured by the number of jobs per acre
- Measured by the percent of jobs type (retail, innovation, manufacturing)

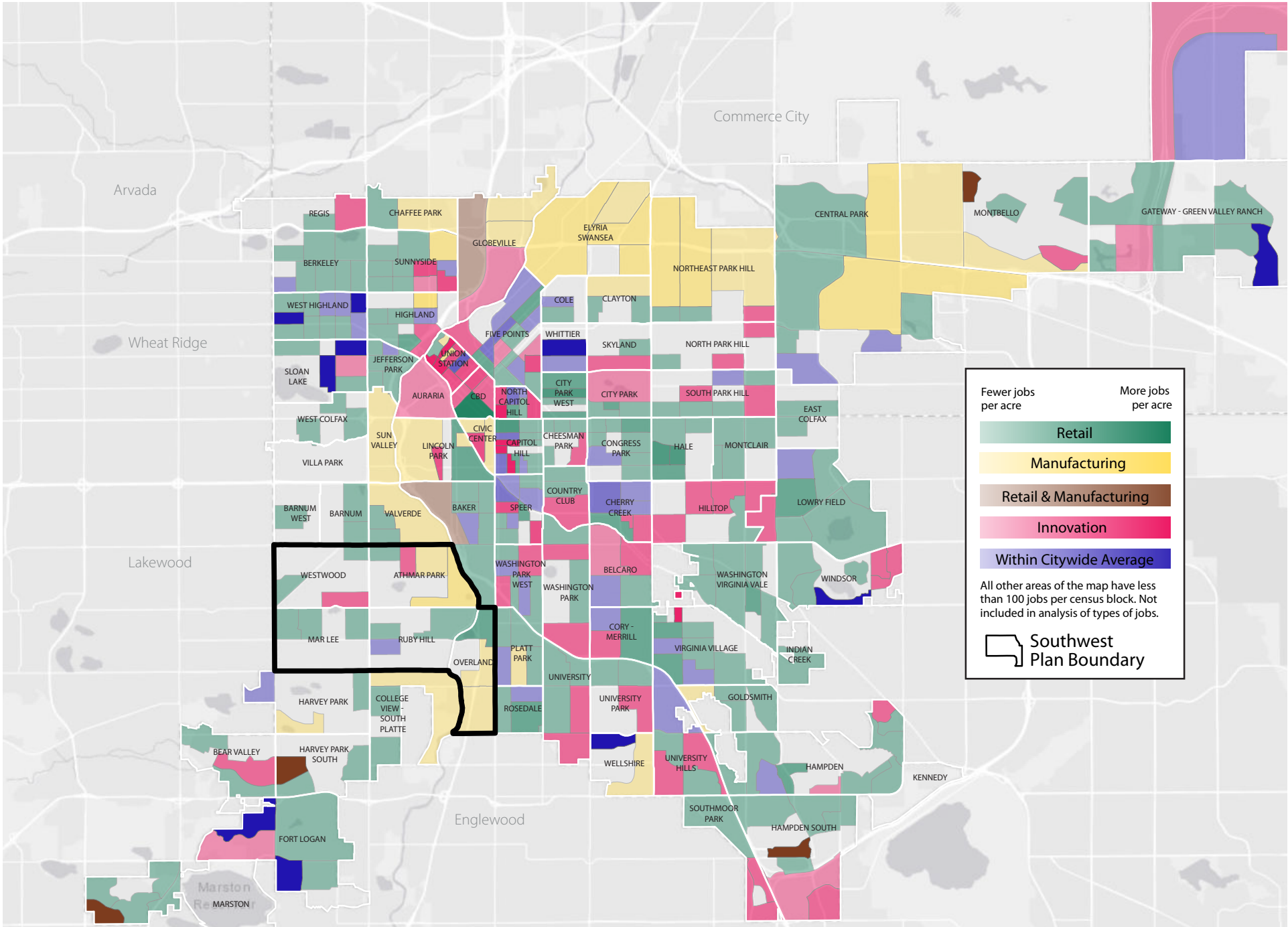
There are several policies and strategies in this plan that can improve Housing and Job Diversity in Southwest:

- | | | |
|--|--|--|
| L1 Southwest residents should have affordable and secure housing options that accommodate a wide range of needs. | L4 Low-Medium, High Medium, and High Residential Places in proximity of major corridors should allow for additional housing growth while promoting affordability, design, and preservation. | L7 Employment areas throughout the Southwest should provide equitable job opportunities |
| L2 Ensure adequate supply of high-quality, well maintained housing that meets the needs of the community. | L5 Affordable housing should be available in Centers and Corridors alongside business and services to ensure these areas remain vibrant economic and cultural hubs. | L8 Community institutions and other non-profit organizations should be well integrated into the community. |
| L3 Low Residential places should allow for additional housing growth while promoting affordability, design, and preservation. | L6 Local businesses should be supported to create a thriving, regional cultural hub providing resources, services, and goods. | L10 Design vibrant commercial Centers and Corridors that preserve and reflect the neighborhood's cultural character and create spaces that are pedestrian-friendly, comfortable, and welcoming for all. |

HOUSING DIVERSITY MAP



JOB DIVERSITY MAP



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2. LAND USE & BUILT FORM

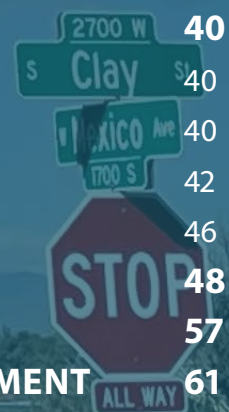
2.1 INTRODUCTION

- 2.1.1 Background
- 2.1.2 Future Neighborhood Context
- 2.1.3 Future Places
- 2.1.4 Growth Strategy

2.2 HOUSING STABILITY & OPTIONS

2.3 ECONOMIC AND COMMUNITY HUBS

2.4 COMMUNITY CHARACTER, DESIGN, AND DEVELOPMENT





2.1 INTRODUCTION

2.1.1 Background

This chapter brings together key parts of the built environment, including:

- Land Use & Built Form
- Housing
- Economy
- Design

These elements help shape the vision for how the Southwest area will grow and change over the next 20 years. They guide decisions about where different types of buildings and businesses should go, and how new development can reflect the character of each neighborhood.

This section relates to where and how to accommodate the City's growing population, and how to address housing affordability and reduce involuntary displacement. It looks at how people access services and amenities, how to support local businesses and create jobs, and how design can reflect the area's cultural history and identity.

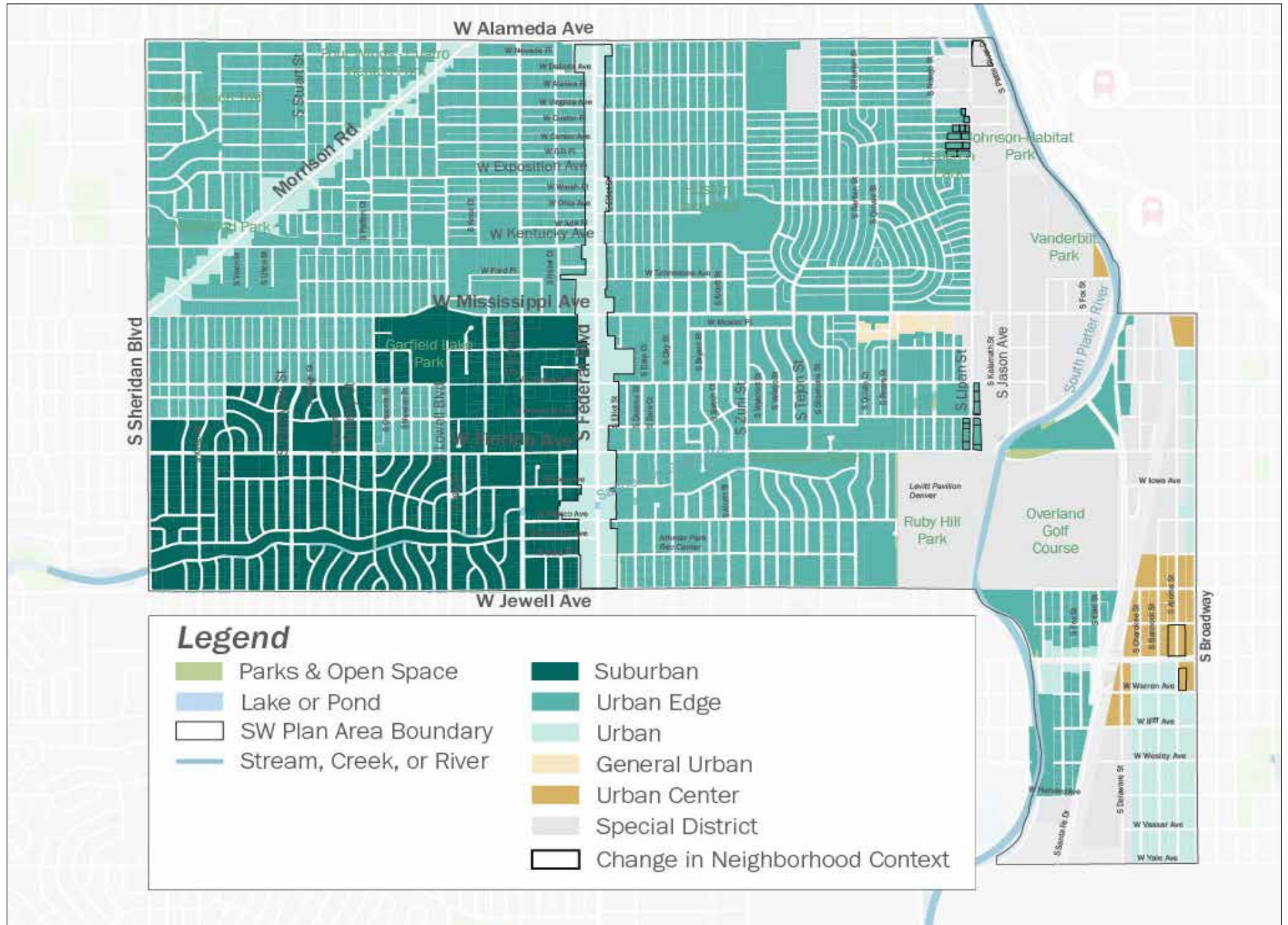
Together, these topics aim to build a thriving, sustainable community that balances growth while preserving the unique feel of each neighborhood.

2.1.2 Future Neighborhood Context

Southwest Denver includes a mix of homes, businesses, industrial areas, parks, and open spaces. The *Blueprint Denver* Neighborhood contexts help explain how differ in their built environment. Neighborhood Contexts describe the layout and character of an area—things like lot and block sizes, building heights, and density. They also set expectations for how new development should fit in with what's already there.

Most of Southwest neighborhoods are classified as Urban Edge, with Mar Lee as Suburban, areas near light rail stations as Urban Center, and industrial zones as Special Districts. You can find full descriptions of these contexts in *Blueprint Denver*, chapter 5. These contexts are part of the Denver Zoning Code.

FUTURE NEIGHBORHOOD CONTEXT MAP





Urban Center | Community Center



Urban Center | Regional Center



Urban Center | Community Corridor



Urban Center | High Residential



Urban Center | High-Medium Residential



General Urban | Community Center

2.1.3 Future Places

Places are an organizational system that describe the desired character and makeup of land uses for an area. Places work together to promote complete neighborhoods. The intensity and character of each place differs slightly depending on the neighborhood context (see previous map). The *Southwest Area Plan* updates the *Blueprint Denver* place designations and provides more specific building height guidance as needed. If height not specified in the Southwest Area Plan, height guidance should be based on *Blueprint Denver* guidance based on neighborhood context and future place. Additional guidance has been included for Low Residential Future Place types for the Southwest Area. A brief description of place types is below; see Chapter 5 of *Blueprint Denver* for more detailed descriptions.

URBAN CENTER

CENTERS AND CORRIDORS

Regional Center

- Contains a high mix of uses providing a dynamic environment of living, dining, entertainment, shopping, and a diverse set of employment options. Larger scale mixed-use buildings are common. Structures should respond in form and mass to the streets and public spaces around them. High degree of urban design with continuous building frontages that define the public realm. Heights are generally the tallest in the context and transition gradually within the center to the surrounding residential areas.

Community Corridor

- Typically provides a mix of office, commercial, and residential uses. Buildings have a distinctly linear orientation along the street. Building footprints are typically larger. Heights are generally up to 8 stories. Due to shorter lot depths, special attention may be needed for transitions to nearby residential areas.

RESIDENTIAL

High

- Includes many large scale, multi-unit residential uses and building forms. Features a high mix of uses such that commercial uses are prevalent with the residential uses. Buildings are generally the tallest of the residential places in this context.

High-Medium

- Contains a mix of uses, including multi-unit residential, but at a slightly lower intensity compared to the high residential areas. Heights are generally up to 8 stories.

GENERAL URBAN

CENTERS AND CORRIDORS

Community Center

- Typically provides a mix of office, commercial, and residential uses.
- Buildings are larger than those found in local centers and orient to the street and other public spaces. There is a strong degree of urban design with continuous building frontages that define the public realm. Heights are generally up to 8 stories and should transition gradually within the center to the surrounding residential areas.

RESIDENTIAL

High-Medium

- Mix of low- to medium-scale multi-unit residential uses with some neighborhood-serving mixed-use development distributed throughout. Block patterns are consistent, and pedestrian-scaled buildings clearly define and activate the street. Buildings are generally up to 8 stories in height.

Low-Medium

- Primarily residential, with a mix of single and two-unit homes interspersed amongst lower-scale, multi-unit buildings. Neighborhood-serving commercial uses are limited, and are primarily found at intersections and along corridors.



General Urban | Community Corridor



General Urban | High-Medium Residential



General Urban | Low-Medium Residential



Urban & Urban Edge | Community Corridor



Urban & Urban Edge | Local Center/Corridor



Urban & Urban Edge | Low-Medium Residential

- Lot coverage may be high, and setbacks generally respect the existing neighborhood character with buildings oriented towards the street. Heights are generally up to 3 stories.

URBAN

CENTERS AND CORRIDORS

Community Center/Corridor

- Typically provides some mix of office, commercial, and residential uses. Buildings are larger in scale than those found in local centers, and are oriented toward the street or other public spaces.
- Building frontages are continuous and define the public realm with a strong degree of urban design.
- Heights are generally up to 5 stories. Intensity should transition to the surrounding residential areas.

Local Center/Corridor

- Primarily provides for commercial and retail activities like dining, entertainment, and shopping and may also include residential uses and employment opportunities.
- Centers are more intimate with active street frontages that are designed at a comfortable pedestrian scale.
- Buildings have a distinctly linear orientation along the street. Heights are generally up to 3 stories.

RESIDENTIAL

High-Medium

- Combination of mid-scale multi-unit residential building forms containing a mix of neighborhood-serving uses appropriate for collector streets and intersections as well as arterial streets and intersections. Buildings are generally up to 5 stories in height. Building heights and scaling help provide transitions to adjacent places.

Low-Medium

- Mix of low- to mid-scale multi-unit residential building forms. Small-scale multi-unit buildings are dispersed among single and two-unit residential building forms. Limited neighborhood serving commercial can be found, particularly at intersections. This includes duplexes, triplexes, quadplexes, and similar building forms. Buildings are generally 3 stories or less in height.

URBAN EDGE

CENTERS AND CORRIDORS

Community Corridor

- Typically provides some mix of office, commercial, and residential uses. Buildings are larger in scale than those found in local centers, and are oriented toward the street or other public spaces.
- Building frontages are continuous and define the public realm with a strong degree of urban design.
- Heights are generally up to 5 stories and should transition gradually within the center to the surrounding lower intensity residential areas.

Local Center/Corridor

- Primarily provides for commercial and retail activities like dining, entertainment, and shopping and may also include residential uses and employment opportunities.
- Centers are more intimate with active street frontages that are designed at a comfortable pedestrian scale. Buildings have a distinctly linear orientation along the street.
- Heights are generally up to 3 stories and generally will transition area as they are already well integrated into the surrounding neighborhood. In some situations, a limited transition may be needed.



Urban & Urban Edge |
Low Residential

RESIDENTIAL

Low

- Predominately single and two-unit building forms on small to medium-sized lots.
- Accessory dwelling units and duplexes are appropriate and can be integrated where compatible as part of a citywide project, the city should explore whether small multi-unit developments, can be compatibly integrated into Low Residential areas.
- Some civic and institutional uses are compatibly integrated throughout. A limited mix of uses can occur along arterial and collector streets, as well as where commercial uses are existing. Low to medium buildings coverage. Building are generally up to 2.5 stories in height.

Low-Medium

- Mix of low- to mid-scale multi-unit residential options. Some multi-unit such as duplex, tandem house, triplex, or quadplex interspersed with single residential. Buildings are generally 3 stories or less in height.



Suburban | Low

SUBURBAN

RESIDENTIAL

Low

- Generally characterized by single-unit uses on larger lots. Accessory dwelling units and compatible duplex, tandem house, triplex are appropriate and can be thoughtfully integrated where compatible as part of a citywide project, the city should explore whether other small multi-unit development are appropriate. Buildings are generally 2.5 stories or less in height.

Low-Medium

- Mix of low-to mid-scale multi-unit residential options. Small-scale multi-unit buildings are interspersed between single and two unit residential. Limited mixed-use along some arterial and collector streets and some intersections. Buildings are generally 3 stories or less in height.



Suburban | Low-Medium

SPECIAL DISTRICTS

Heavy Production

- Heavy production and construction related activities, utility providers, major warehousing and storage facilities are found on large, multiple acre parcels. Most buildings have large footprints with significant land needs for equipment and material storage.

Value Manufacturing

- Advanced large-scale craft manufacturing, research, design labs, robotics, technology, and flex spaces are found in these areas. Residential uses are not compatible.
- Often located in business parks or on extra-large superblocks, value manufacturing typically consists of single or multi-tenant buildings that are designed to accommodate freight movement and product storage.



Value Manufacturing

Innovation/Flex

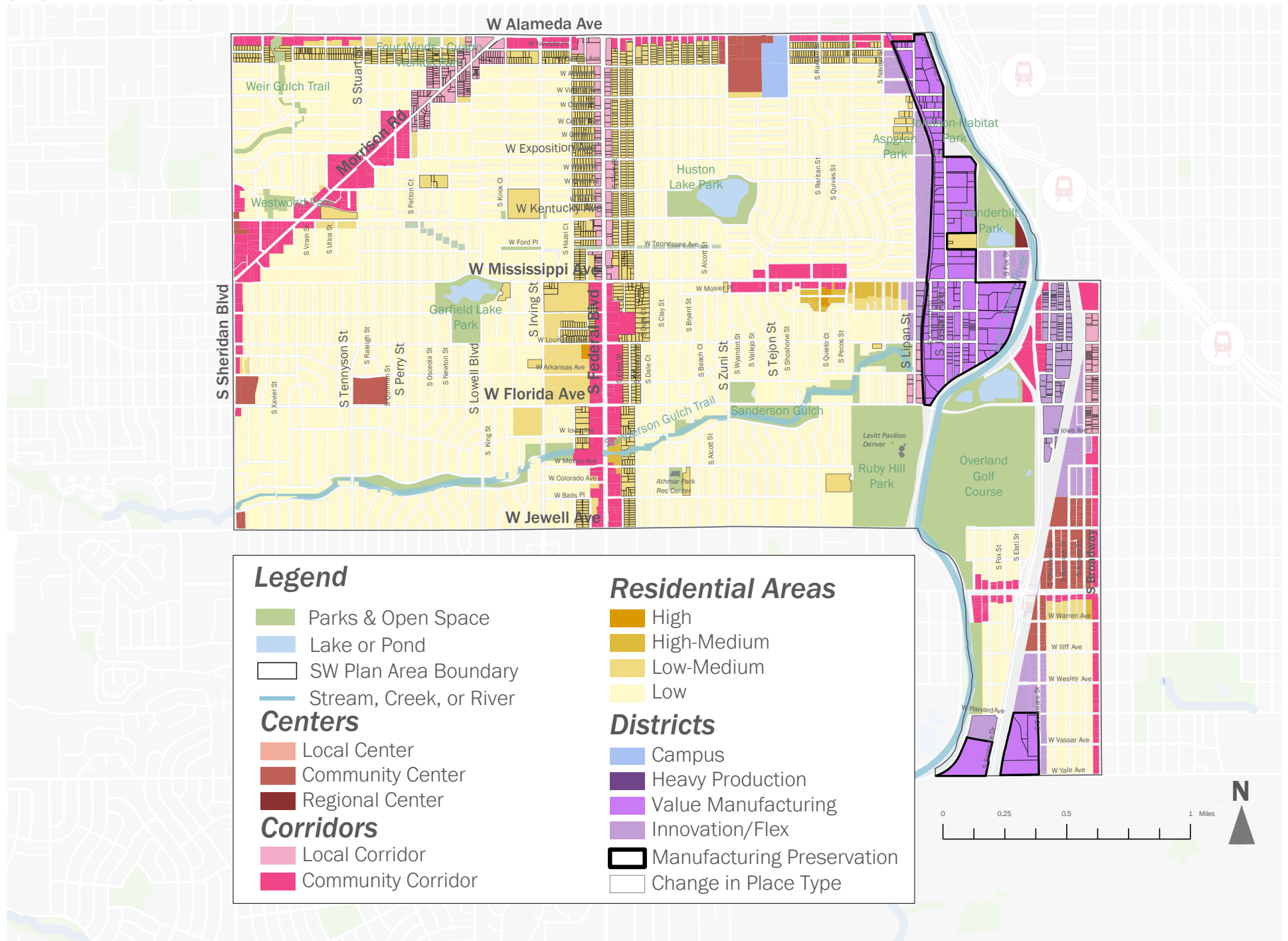
- Assembly facilities, laboratories, small logistics, warehousing, local food production and catering, tech firms, value manufacturing, and related office uses are found in these areas. Limited residential may be compatible.
- Buildings may be multi-tenant, with office uses in front and manufacturing in back. Heights may be up to 3 stories or up to 5 stories, [See Focus Areas](#).



Innovation/Flex

Campus

- Campus buildings vary greatly in size and form. These areas are typically dominated by a single, large institutional user. Universities, medical centers and large research facilities are examples. When adjacent to lower intensity development, campuses should transition gradually to respect the surrounding neighborhood.



2.1.4 Growth Strategy

The growth framework below outlines how housing, jobs, business, and industrial policies will support growth while protecting the Southwest area's unique character.

High Intensity - Mixed Use Areas: These areas will see the most growth in housing and jobs. Policies in this plan aim to guide development in a way that respects the unique character of the Southwest Denver's corridors and centers—balancing historical and cultural elements with climate-friendly growth. [See L10.E.](#)

Low Intensity - Mixed Use Areas: These areas are culturally, historically, and economically significant. Growth will be limited and carefully managed to prioritize preservation and community improvements. This includes parts of Morrison Road (between Alameda and Perry), Federal Boulevard (Little Saigon, between Alameda and Mississippi), and South Broadway (Antique Row, north of Iowa). See [L10.D.](#)

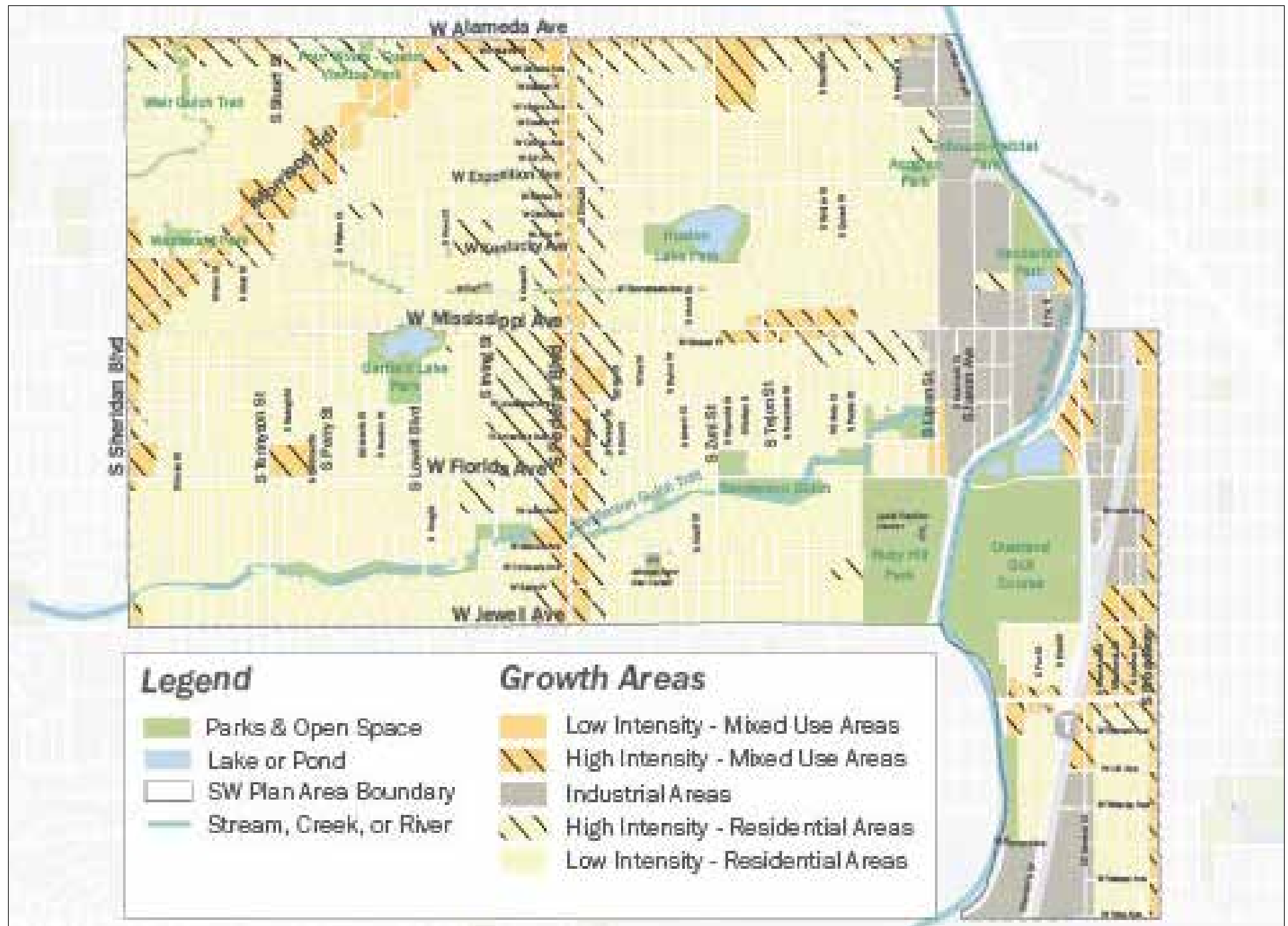
Industrial Areas: The districts will continue to support manufacturing and industrial jobs. Growth here will focus on strengthening existing industries while allowing for some commercial and residential uses in key locations to better connect with surrounding neighborhoods. [See Riverside Communities Focus Area.](#)

Low Intensity - Residential Areas: These areas make up most of Southwest Denver's land. The focus here is on preserving affordability, preventing displacement, and maintaining the character of single-unit and two-unit neighborhoods. The city may explore allowing small multi-unit buildings—like tandem homes, duplexes, and triplexes, if they fit well with existing homes. [See L3.](#)

High Intensity - Residential Areas: These areas may support more housing density, but any new development should match the surrounding neighborhood and support affordability goals. These areas should consider duplexes, triplexes, and quadplexes. [See L4](#) & [L5.](#)



LAND USE FRAMEWORK MAP



2.2 HOUSING STABILITY & OPTIONS

Southwest Denver saw major housing growth in the early and mid-20th century, especially after World War II, when many suburban neighborhoods were built. Today, new housing continues to be added—mostly in the Overland neighborhood.

Compared to rest of Denver, Southwest neighborhoods are generally more affordable. In 2023, the average rent in Southwest was \$977 compared to \$1,554 citywide. The median home value in Southwest during that same year was \$392,000 compared to \$540,400 citywide. About half of Southwest residents rent their homes, and half own them—similar to citywide trends. Overland has a higher share of renters. Only 3.6% of the housing units in Southwest are vacant, compared to 6.3% citywide.

Despite these numbers, many residents—especially in Westwood and parts of Ruby Hill—face risks of displacement. In recent years, concerns have grown about redevelopment, investor purchases, and fluctuating home values. Rising maintenance costs, rent, mortgages, and other housing expenses have made it harder for people to stay in the area.

Key Finding from Root Policy Research's Housing Market Analysis Study (2025)

- **Population trends:** The Southwest planning area's population grew by 3.6% between 2010 and 2020, much slower than Denver's simultaneous population growth of 19.2%. From 2020 to 2023, Southwest's population decreased by 1.8% as Denver's decreased by 0.2%. Population changes since 2010 varied greatly by neighborhood. Overland's population grew by 74% overall, while populations decreased in Athmar Park, Ruby Hill, and the east sides of Westwood and Mar Lee.
- **Demographic Shifts:** The share of Hispanic residents has decreased from 71% in 2010 to 66% in 2023 while non-Hispanic White residents increased from 22% in 2010 to 25% in 2023. These changes were most noticeable in Athmar Park, eastern Mar Lee, and northern Ruby Hill.
- **Homeownership:** In 2023, 52% of Southwest area households owned their homes—down from 56% in 2010 but still higher than Denver's overall rate of 49%. Homeownership dropped by 10 percentage points or more in Mar Lee and Overland, often driven by investor purchases or new rental construction.
- **Income and housing affordability:** The share of renter households with low or very low incomes (0-50% AMI) decreased from 71% in 2010 to 57% in 2023. The share of owner households with extremely low, very low, or low incomes (0-80% AMI) decreased from 66% in 2010 to 57% in 2023. These shifts suggest that lower-income households are leaving the area and being replaced by moderate-income households.

DEFINING AFFORDABILITY

Housing affordability is often measured by how much of a household's income goes toward housing costs. If a household pays more than 30% of their gross income in rent or mortgage payment (including taxes and basic utilities), it is considered cost burdened. The higher the cost burden, the greater the risk of eviction, foreclosure, and homelessness.

Households spending 50% or more of their income on housing are considered severely cost burdened and at risk of homelessness. These households are especially vulnerable to rising rents, property taxes, or changes in income.

Cost burden matters because it affects a household's ability to pay for other expenses like childcare, transportation, and health care. It also limits how much disposable income they can contribute to the local economy.

HUD INCOME CATEGORIES

Eligibility for housing programs is based on income levels set by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). Within the City and County of Denver, the Department of Housing Stability (HOST) sets income limits to determine eligibility for housing programs. Brackets are set by Area Median Income (AMI):

- **Extremely Low Income (ELI):** Households earning 30% or less of AMI; below the federal poverty level.
- **Very Low Income:** Households earning 31% to 50% AMI
- **Low Income:** Households earning 51% to 80% AMI
- **Moderate Income:** Households earning 80% to 120%.

Area Median Income limits vary by household size. The 2024 AMI for a two-person household in Denver is \$104,320; a four-person household has an AMI of \$130,400.

Source: Root Policy Research

EXPANDING HOUSING AFFORDABILITY

In 2022, Denver adopted the Expanding Housing Affordability text amendment to help meet housing needs in every neighborhood. The project introduced new tools for developers and expanded existing ones to support the creation and preservation of affordable housing. Here are the three key tools:

- Linkage Fee - A fee applied to all new development. The money collected funds affordable housing projects. This existing tool will be updated with new fee amounts.
- Mandatory Affordable Housing Program - Requires new residential development of 10 or more units that includes affordable housing.
- Zoning Incentives - Encourages developers to include affordable housing on-site by offering benefits. Incentives include: increase building height, permit fee reductions, and expedited permit review.

UNLOCKING HOUSING CHOICES

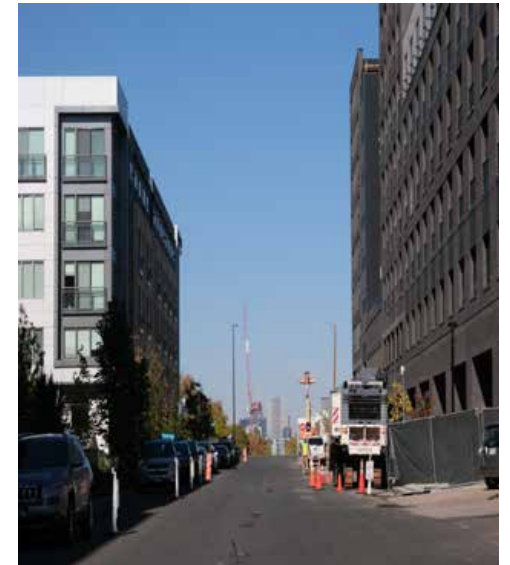
In 2025, Denver's Community Planning and Development Department launched an inclusive community process with the goal of allowing more middle housing in residential neighborhoods. This effort may lead to updates to the Denver Zoning Code and other city rules and regulations. The project is focusing on enabling more middle housing types while working to preserve existing affordability and ensure that new development adds more attainable housing stock.

Middle housing refers to small multi-unit structures like duplexes, tandem houses, fourplexes and other house-scaled multi-unit housing. The changes to the zoning regulations will focus on low- and low-medium-residential zone districts ranging from single-unit (SU) to rowhouse (RH), and the comparable Former Chapter 59 zone districts.

What are the top challenges that you are facing related to housing?

Phase 1 Engagement Top Survey Results:

- Need for car to access work/services
- General housing upkeep
- Mortgage/Rent
- Taxes
- Insurance



Housing options range from single-unit ranches to large multi-unit apartments across all Southwest neighborhoods.

RECOMMENDATIONS

L1



POLICY

BACKGROUND

OUTCOMES

Southwest residents should have affordable and secure housing options that accommodate a wide range of needs.

Most Southwest neighborhoods are made up of single-unit homes. But as Denver's population continues to grow—and housing costs rise—there are growing concerns about gentrification and displacement. Many long-time residents, whether they rent or own, can no longer afford to stay in the area. While rental prices in Southwest area are still lower than the citywide average, they continue to climb along with the cost for everyday essentials. Redevelopment pressures are increasing due to many factors, including land values being higher than the value of existing buildings, market conditions, proximity to amenities and services, and lower- than-average home prices compared to the rest of the city. These pressures make it more difficult to preserve affordability and community stability.

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| <p>A. All housing should be designed to accommodate a range of households, including families, multi-generational living, aging in place, residents with disabilities, and residents needing supportive services to increase wealth building.</p> <p>B. Affordable housing should be preserved where it already exists.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Naturally occurring affordable housing should be protected and maintained. These homes are essential to keeping the community inclusive and affordable. 2. Previously established covenants for income-restricted units should be extended and no-net loss of units should occur if properties are redeveloped. 3. Small houses and manufactured home communities can provide “starter” home options for local residents and should be retained. Additional incentives or programs should be developed to reduce development pressures. These incentives could include allowing additional units if existing affordable units and structures are retained (See L3). <p>C. Displacement and its effects should be minimized to help residents stay in their communities.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Grow support programs by implementing the City's Prioritization Policy, which helps direct resources to those most at risk. | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2. Make sure residents know about rental assistance programs. Explore new strategies to lower rents and housing costs so people spend less of their income on housing. 3. Encourage ways for homeowners to earn extra income, such as building Accessory Dwelling Units, starting at-home businesses, or offering in-home childcare. 4. Help low- and moderate-income renters become homeowners with a focus on local and first-time buyers. 5. Offer job training and workforce development programs to help residents increase income and housing stability (See L7). 6. The City should consider affordability and anti-displacement tools for individual rezonings in order to protect existing residents. <p>D. The Southwest Area should offer housing options, stability services and other support to prevent homelessness and reduce southwest's unhoused population</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Identify and fund permanent supportive housing solutions to address needs of the unhoused population of Southwest. <p>E. Increase outreach and financial assistance so all residents are aware of and can access housing affordability programs.</p> | <p>F. Support programs and incentives that help residents maintain and improve their homes. This includes rehabilitation, energy efficiency, maintenance and upkeep, landscaping, and other housing needs.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Encourage safety improvements such as sound barriers, heavy duty windows/doors, and other noise-proofing solutions near high-traffic and industrial areas. <p>G. Expand affordable housing programs and policies. This will help increase housing options and reduce displacement, while supporting long-term affordability.</p> <p>H. Denver Housing Authority (DHA) properties should continue to offer affordable housing options and support additional amenities and units with future improvements.</p> <p>I. The zoning established on DHA-owned dispersed sites throughout the area should allow for redevelopment and improvements that include a range of housing forms within individual lots that allow for affordable options both for rent and for sale. Buildings should front the street and reflect surrounding setback or grid context to activate nearby amenities such as parks and recreation centers. Height should reflect the surrounding context up to 2-3 stories and allow for more density and bedroom units to support families.</p> |
|---|---|---|



RECOMMENDATIONS

HOUSING SUPPLY



POLICY

Ensure there is adequate supply of high-quality, well maintained housing that meets the needs of the community.

BACKGROUND

Adding more housing is one way to reduce housing costs and make homes more affordable. While much of Southwest Denver is already developed, there are still opportunities to build new housing—especially through infill development. This means adding new homes on vacant lots or redeveloping underused properties. By introducing a variety of housing types, the area can better support families of different sizes, older adults who want to age in place and residents who want to stay in or return to their neighborhood.

OUTCOMES

- A. More housing should be added in Southwest Denver through both new construction and renovation. These homes should include options for renters and buyers, helping meet the needs of a wide range of residents.
 - 1. Small-scale, locally owned developers should be encouraged to improve and/or build properties for rent and for sale.
 - 2. Condominiums should be built, especially along key Centers and Corridors to increase affordable home ownership options.
 - 3. Develop more attainable housing through community land trusts or similar programs. These efforts can focus on acquiring, renovating, or building units, with a focus on vacant or underutilized properties.
- B. Small-scale multi-unit development, like duplexes, triplexes, and quadplexes, can offer lower-cost, family-friendly housing options in areas where currently limited to single-unit residential areas or along Centers and Corridors. This type of housing - often called the “missing middle” - should be encouraged in the Southwest Denver, ideally as part of a project to expand housing options citywide.
 - 1. The city should explore allowing additional homes to be built on parcels with single- and two-unit zoning. Doing so would provide affordable homes, for renting and buying. These options should be consistent with the look and feel of existing homes.
- C. Encourage the construction of Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs) by offering programs, prototypes, and base models to reduce building costs. ADU's can provide flexible housing for extended family members support aging in place and help homeowners maintain equity—while also reducing displacement.
- D. Homes currently located in primarily industrial areas should be relocated to vacant residential lots instead of being demolished. This helps preserve housing while improving safety and quality of life.
- E. Continue to build housing that serves families by offering larger units with more bedrooms.
- F. In coordination with the Green Building Ordinance, renovation and new construction should be sustainable. This includes taking steps to reduce energy and water use and address other environmental concerns. If demolition is required, materials should be salvaged.
- G. All new housing should reflect the design, scale, and character of the surrounding area ([See L9](#)).

RECOMMENDATIONS

LOW RESIDENTIAL PLACES

L3



POLICY

BACKGROUND

OUTCOMES

Low Residential places should allow for additional housing growth while promoting affordability, design, and preservation.

Southwest Denver is primarily residential, with nearly 60% of homes being single-unit houses. Residents support growth, but they want to make sure it happens in a way that maintains the neighborhood's character and reduces displacement. Even though much of the area is already built out, there are still opportunities to add housing in thoughtful ways. The following strategies aim to strike a balance between adding new homes and preserving what makes Southwest neighborhoods unique.

- A. Naturally occurring affordable housing should be protected and maintained in all low residential areas. These homes are essential to keeping the community inclusive and affordable.
- B. Low Residential places should include a variety of housing options in addition to single family homes. Explore at the citywide level ways to allow more housing types across the city in Low Residential places. Ensure any additional housing options introduced respond to the needs and character of the Southwest Area including the following considerations:
 - 1. Existing forms that are already well-integrated into the neighborhoods should be replicated such duplex, tandem house, and triplex. Continue to explore other choices at a citywide level (see examples on following pages).
 - 2. Multi-generational or shared housing arrangements.
 - 3. Accessory Dwelling Units to provide flexible, affordable housing.
 - 4. All new housing should reflect the design, scale, and character of the surrounding area ([See L9](#)).
- C. Revise zoning rules to ensure new buildings are compatible with the surrounding areas. This includes adjusting building size, scale, placement, setbacks, bulk, unit size, and open space.
- D. Promote the development of additional units by additions or new structures to enable the preservation of existing structures, reducing to discourage demolition of existing houses ("scrapes").
 - 1. Additional units should be added to single-unit structures to create duplexes or tandem houses. Individual rezonings are not consistent with this plan unless there are tools or agreements in place to promote affordability and discourage displacement.
 - 2. Building additions should follow design standards that reflect the neighborhood's character and preserve historic or architectural features. ([See L9](#)).
- E. Lots larger than 9,000 square feet should be split into two or more lots. This allows for more housing while keeping lot sizes consistent with the surrounding area.

MEDIUM TO HIGH RESIDENTIAL PLACES

L4



POLICY

BACKGROUND

OUTCOMES

Low-Medium, High Medium, and High Residential Places near major corridors should allow for additional housing growth while promoting affordability, design, and preservation.

Most of the Southwest neighborhoods are single-unit residential. Less than 3% of the area represents these high intensity residential areas or housing types. These housing types are typically found near major corridors. Maintaining and adding additional units will help increase supply and reduce displacement. These areas represent opportunity to add more housing units that are affordable to reduce displacement.

- A. Naturally occurring affordable housing should be protected and maintained in all medium- and high-density residential areas. These homes are essential to keeping the community inclusive and affordable.
- B. Update design and zoning requirements to ensure compatibility with the surrounding areas including modifications to massing, scale, building placement, setback, bulk, height, unit size, and open space.
- C. Encourage multi-unit housing that supports families. These options should be compatible with the neighborhood character and should support families, multi-generational families, and co-living. Housing types could include 3+ bedroom units to be created through renovation or new construction.
- D. Allow more options for live-work housing, especially near commercial centers and corridors, transit stations, and other employment hubs.
- E. Low-Medium residential places near Federal and Alameda should include a variety of housing options to support transit in addition to single family homes. Allow more housing density within two blocks of Transit Priority Streets like Federal Boulevard and Alameda Avenue, especially where Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) improvements are planned. New buildings should match successful designs already found in nearby neighborhoods like duplexes, tandem house, triplexes, and quadplexes.
 - 1. Rezonings should happen at the legislative level. Individual rezonings that do not include affordability and anti-displacement tools to protect existing residents may be found inconsistent with this plan.
- F. Residential areas near Morrison Road should be preserved and offer a mix of affordable and diverse housing options.
- G. All new housing should reflect the design, scale, and character of the surrounding area ([See L9](#)).

WHAT IS “MISSING MIDDLE” HOUSING?

Missing middle housing refers to 2 to 19 unit residential buildings, such as duplexes, triplexes, row houses, small apartments, and similar neighborhood housing options that fall “in the middle” between single unit and large apartment buildings. Missing middle housing also refers to units that are attainable to middle-income households. These housing types can help provide more affordable options for middle-income households and homeownership opportunities for residents who rent. Examples of missing middle housing have traditionally existed in many of the Southwest neighborhoods.

Missing middle housing is an important strategy to help ease Denver’s housing shortage and make neighborhoods more inclusive. In particular, missing middle housing options have helped seniors remain in neighborhoods they love when family sizes are reduced from children moving out or when incomes become fixed from retirement (often referred to as “aging in place”).

Missing middle housing can also keep neighborhoods family-friendly, as households with children often desire yards and locations within residential areas, as opposed to apartments. Missing middle housing can provide these options to families at more affordable prices compared to single unit homes.



Duplex



Multiplex



Courtyard Homes



Row Homes

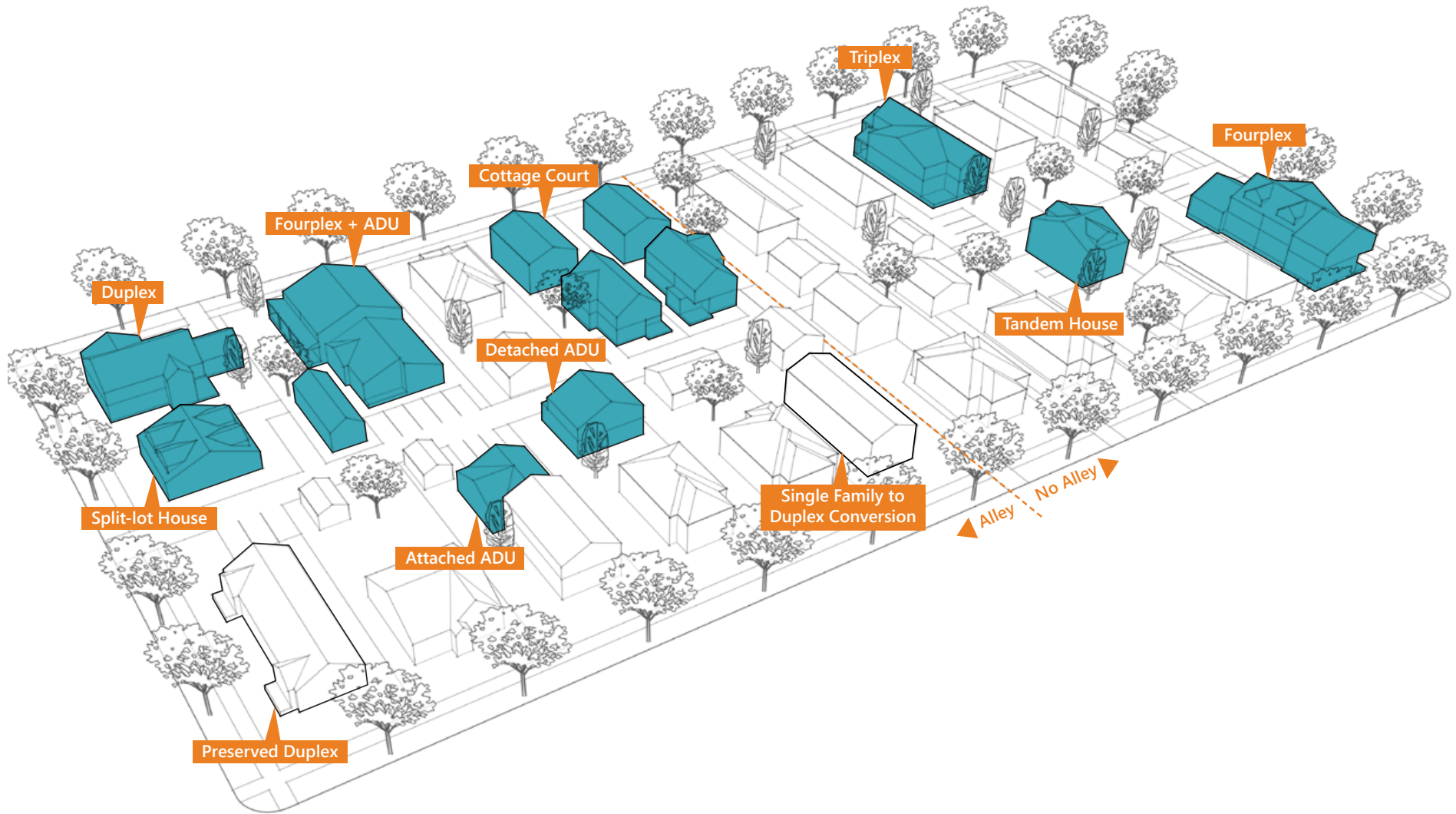


Duplex



Multiplex

MISSING MIDDLE CONCEPTS - TRADITIONAL GRID



This illustrative diagram represents a conceptual idea of how missing middle building forms could be thoughtfully integrated into a traditional street grid. The appropriate building forms and number of units for each Neighborhood Context and Future Place designation should be explored at a citywide level process. [See L3](#) for Southwest Area considerations for Low-Residential and [L4](#) for Southwest Considerations for Low-Medium.

MISSING MIDDLE CONCEPTS - NON-TRADITIONAL GRID



This illustrative diagram represents a conceptual idea of how missing middle building forms could be thoughtfully integrated into a non-traditional street grid. The appropriate building forms and number of units for each Neighborhood Context and Future Place designation should be explored at a citywide level process. [See L3](#) for Southwest Area considerations for Low-Residential and [L4](#) for Southwest Considerations for Low-Medium.

RECOMMENDATIONS

HOUSING IN CENTERS & CORRIDORS



POLICY

Affordable housing should be available in Centers and Corridors alongside business and services to ensure these areas remain vibrant economic and cultural hubs.

BACKGROUND

Some naturally occurring affordable housing and higher density housing exists within the corridors or centers or in the surrounding area. Additional housing in these areas will increase the desired mixed-use character and walkable communities close to jobs, services, and other destinations.

OUTCOMES

- A. Protect high-density and naturally occurring affordable housing along major centers and corridors, including future BRT corridors ([See L1](#)).
- B. Increase the number of homes in areas close to transit stations, services, and amenities.
 - 1. New development should prioritize affordable units for workforce housing as well as mixed-income options.
 - 2. Offer a range of unit sizes, from 1 bedroom to 3+ bedroom units, to serve individuals, families and multi-generational households.
 - 3. Use funding tools like Denver Regional TOD Fund to acquire land and build diverse housing types in Centers and Corridors.
 - 4. All new housing should reflect the design, scale, and character of the surrounding area ([See L9](#) and [L10](#)).
- C. If redevelopment occurs, new development should replace residential units at a one-to-one ratio or increase number of units. New buildings should also provide commercial spaces of comparable size and price. Previous tenants should be given first priority to return to the site after redevelopment ([See L10](#)).

What type of amenities would you like to see in your business district?

Phase 3 Engagement Top Survey Results:

- Trees and landscaping
- Recreation or Cultural Center
- Public plaza or park with seating areas
- Infill mixed-use buildings



2.3 ECONOMIC AND COMMUNITY HUBS

Southwest Denver is a great place to live—not just because it offers a variety of affordable housing options, but also because it's home to a vibrant mix of local businesses and community organizations.

Many of these resources are located along major corridors at the edges of each neighborhood. Compared to other parts of the city, Southwest is a hub for small, culturally rooted businesses, especially those from immigrant communities. These businesses provide access to jobs, essential services, and everyday needs—and they also serve as important community gathering spaces where people come together to celebrate, connect, and build relationships. There is also a large concentration of community non-profit organizations that serve the neighborhoods as well as the region.

RECOMMENDATIONS

HISTORIC AND CULTURAL

L6



POLICY

Local businesses should be supported to create a thriving, regional cultural hub providing resources, services, and goods.

BACKGROUND

Southwest Denver is home to a variety of business districts and shopping centers that serve both local residents and visitors. These areas are vital to the community's economy and identity—but they're facing several challenges. Retaining existing businesses is a growing concern, especially as redevelopment pressures increase. Vacant storefronts are affecting the vibrancy of commercial areas. Manufacturing businesses report difficulty attracting and keeping employees with specialized skills. Across all sectors, businesses are struggling to find affordable commercial space and are feeling the impact of rising development costs. Supporting these businesses is key to maintaining Southwest Denver's unique character and ensuring long-term economic opportunity for the community.

OUTCOMES

- Existing and new businesses should have access to affordable commercial spaces and be supported with technical and financial assistance to help them succeed and grow.
- Programs should help existing businesses expand and avoid displacement. They should also help new businesses become sustainable and thrive in the long term.
- Businesses owners should work with financial institutions and other resources to purchase their building and access to other financing.
- City agencies and other organizations should work with business owners and business organizations to incorporate other benefits and services, including childcare, transit options, and language access to their employees.
- New tools and/or policies should be created to prevent displacement and/or provide relocation of small businesses if redevelopment occurs ([See L11](#)).
- Assess and improve barriers to permitting and licensing for small businesses and mobile vending related to regulatory and/or zoning requirements.



Many shopping centers house local businesses and services.

- G. Existing business should be supported with resources to expand their offerings, fill gaps in local services, or open new locations. This includes adding products or services that are currently limited or unavailable in area.
- H. Southwest Denver is home to many culturally rooted businesses and districts that reflect the community's diversity. These businesses should be celebrated and supported through a variety of programs, including:
 1. Establishing a Cultural or Historic District
 2. Promoting creative industries, maker spaces, and artisans
 3. Adding interpretive informational displays or public art that shares cultural stories
 4. Creating educational opportunities that honor cultural traditions
 5. Expanding the City's Legacy Business Program to protect long-standing businesses
 6. See additional outcomes in [Q7](#).
- I. Southwest Denver's immigrant communities have created a vibrant pop-up and entrepreneur economy. This should be encouraged by activating underutilized storefronts, creating spaces like public markets, business co-ops and artist studios near transit stations, parks, plazas, and commercial areas.
 1. Pop-up businesses should have access to resources and support to help them grow into permanent brick- and- mortar shops.
- J. More affordable, shared commercial spaces should be available and affordable for businesses owners.

- K. Explore opportunities to allow small businesses as accessory uses and live-work building options to support entrepreneurs and community serving businesses within neighborhoods (at a citywide level).
- L. Encourage semi-permanent or mobile vendors such as food trucks or kiosks within Centers and Corridors.
- M. Incentives or programs should be explored to attract, recruit, and retain small and minority-owned businesses, as well as multi-generational ownership. Encourage filling missing services such as cafes, small grocers, and other community serving businesses.
- N. Collaborative efforts can create a more supportive business environment and boost neighborhood pride. These efforts should include: formal business organizations (e.g. merchant groups), Business Improvement Districts (BIDs) or similar organizations based on need and capacity. Some areas where this could be beneficial include Federal Boulevard, Morrison Road, Broadway or the neighborhood shopping centers.
 1. Collaborative marketing and branding efforts should be developed to attract residents and visitors to shopping areas to increase foot traffic and sales.
 2. Community groups and small businesses should organize local markets, festivals, and other ongoing activities to celebrate the local community and activate business districts.
 3. Increase networking opportunities among area businesses.
- O. Safety improvements such as lighting, police patrolling, etc should be expanded ([See Q6](#)).
- P. Energy and related utilities should be improved and more efficient to support commercial services.
- Q. City agencies, community groups, and property owners should create gathering spaces, streetscape amenities, tree planting, landscaping, public art, signage, and other elements of the public realm ([See L10](#) for additional outcomes).

- R. Empty or underused properties should be activated to support new businesses and services. Additionally, existing properties should be improved and brought up to code.
 1. Instead of tearing down buildings, we should fix and reuse them. These spaces can be used for start-ups, incubators, or businesses owned by the community.
 2. Make low-interest loans, grants, or tax credits available to help pay for renovations and storefront upgrades. Renovations should be in ways that reduce waste and protect the environment.
 3. [See L9](#) and [L10](#) for additional outcomes.
- S. Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) and transit priority corridors should support business growth.
 1. New and existing buildings should include small commercial spaces that are more affordable.
 2. Update zoning rules to encourage more shops and businesses on the ground floor of new buildings, especially near BRT stations and other commercial areas.
 3. Limit auto-focused buildings and uses like drive-thrus, gas stations, and car dealerships within ¼ mile of BRT stations.
- T. In Innovation/flex Future Places, create neighborhood-serving businesses that connect industrial and residential areas. These businesses should also offer community gathering spaces ([See Riverside Communities Focus Area](#) for additional outcomes).
- U. See additional policies and outcomes for specific sites in the [Neighborhoods](#), [Focus Areas](#), and [Federal Boulevard](#) chapters.



Southwest is home to many popular eateries.

RECOMMENDATIONS

EMPLOYMENT

L7



POLICY

Employment areas throughout Southwest should provide equitable job opportunities

BACKGROUND

Retail and industrial jobs are the main sources of employment in Southwest neighborhoods. But many residents have to drive elsewhere to find work. By offering better job training and local employment opportunities, we can help grow the local economy and create more stable jobs.

OUTCOMES

- A. Major employers, Denver Public Schools, and community organizations should collaborate with residents to connect them to new opportunities through workforce training, technical training, and continuing education. Opportunities to expand a “green workforce” should be expanded.
- B. Employers of all sizes should host job and employment fairs to connect with local residents on job opportunities.
- C. Existing efforts should be supported and built upon from organizations such as BuCu West, Re:Vision, Hecho in Westwood, and other local organizations for targeted economic development and wealth building programs.
- D. Industrial areas should support a variety of jobs with a range of education and skill levels. Additional policies and outcomes can be found in the Riverside Communities Focus Area.
- E. A training apprenticeship program should be established within the industrial areas of the Southwest neighborhoods to ensure trainees are learning appropriate skills and connections.
 - 1. A training facility should be established in key locations such as Centers and Corridors or reuse institutional or city-owned buildings.
- F. Explore new opportunities to diversify job and industry sectors that can be based in established centers and corridors or industrial areas.



RECOMMENDATIONS

COMMUNITY RESOURCES



POLICY

BACKGROUND

OUTCOMES

Community institutions and other non-profit organizations should be well integrated into the community.

These neighborhoods have a strong and growing network of nonprofit organizations. They help meet community needs like health, jobs, education, housing, and more. However, many leaders say their organizations don't have enough resources to fully support the community. In Westwood, the Westwood Community Center hosts many non profits and events, but similar spaces and organizations are limited in other neighborhoods.. The area also includes schools, churches, and other institutions. As of this plan, there are concerns about school closures and what might happen to those large buildings if they're left empty.

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| <p>A. Community serving organizations and businesses should co-locate at key locations within neighborhoods, including Centers and Corridors or vacant lots. Existing campuses or non-profit campuses should have flexibility to expand their footprint while maintaining the neighborhood character.</p> <p>B. Public, private, and non-profit partners should strengthen their partnerships and resources to continue and expand interconnected services, coordination, knowledge sharing, outreach efforts and capacity building.</p> <p>C. Resources for funding, technical assistance, and capacity building should be identified on an on-going basis to address community needs. Perform additional studies as needed to find gaps in services and identify short-term and long-term goals or needs.</p> <p>D. Explore unique partnerships that could result in increased programming, services and spaces to vulnerable populations, such as young people, older adults, and cultural and migrant communities. These populations should be connected with neighborhood amenities like libraries, as well as other resources like workforce development, trails and parks.</p> | <p>E. Additional community meeting spaces are needed and should be incorporated into new developments or non-profit campuses, especially east of Federal Boulevard (Athmar Park, Ruby Hill and/or Overland).</p> <p>F. Consider tools and incentives that establish and sustain services to improve access to healthcare, mental health services, substance abuse treatment and employment assistance</p> <p>G. Childcare services should be more accessible and affordable for Southwest residents. The Friends Family Neighbor network and related programs should be expanded to fill service gaps.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Create more childcare options—this could be through new businesses, co-ops, partnerships with places of worship, or other creative solutions. The goal is to offer families more affordable and local choices. Offer more training for caregivers, especially in bilingual care and care for children with disabilities. <p>H. Neighborhood schools should be sustained and supported as community anchors.</p> <p>I. Additional educational opportunities should be provided, especially for language services, classes and social clubs, including English classes but also Spanish and Vietnamese for English speakers that want to learn those languages (See L7).</p> | <p>J. Vacant, empty, or underused institutional buildings or sites like schools or places of worship should be reused and/or integrated into new development. These spaces can incorporate community- serving uses such as continuing education, affordable housing, park or open space, and/or local services as well as “Urban Design Features and Amenities”. This includes sites as but not limited to: Zuni Street Warming Shelter, Colorado Public Radio site, La Paz housing community site and underused areas of the Westwood Community Center.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. If new buildings are added, the Large Development Review (LDR) or a similar process should be used to make sure the size and design of the buildings fit well with the neighborhood. 2. See L9 for Preservation Opportunity Sites. <p>K. Large sites that become available for redevelopment should go through a Large Development Review (LDR) or a similar process to make sure the size and design of the buildings fit well with the neighborhood and elements of the complete neighborhood are incorporated (see L10).</p> |
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2.4 COMMUNITY CHARACTER, DESIGN, AND DEVELOPMENT

The look and feel of a neighborhood helps create sense of place and connection. Many parts of this area were built after World War II and feature Mid-Century Modern architecture and car-focused designs, like wide streets and shopping plazas. As one moves through the Southwest neighborhoods—whether by walking, driving, biking, or taking the bus—they'll notice design patterns that make the area unique. Historic features give the neighborhoods a strong identity. It's important to balance preserving these features with allowing new development to support growth. The recommendations below offer ways to make sure new buildings and spaces match the character of the neighborhood. By including design elements that reflect the area's history, cultural diversity, and future goals, we can improve how the neighborhood looks and feels.

RECOMMENDATIONS

HISTORIC AND CULTURAL

OUTCOMES BACKGROUND POLICY

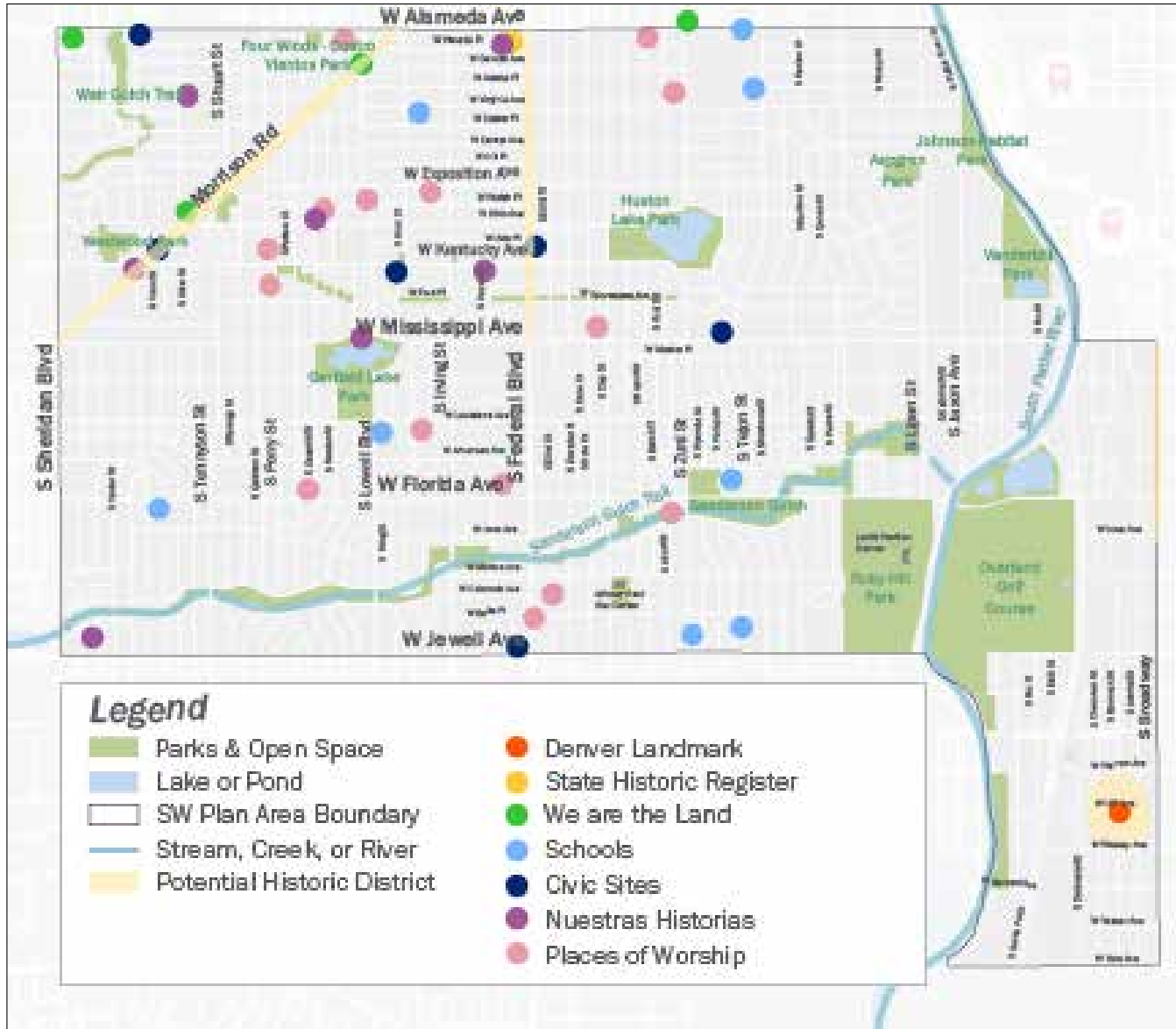


Historic, cultural, and architecturally significant structures should be preserved and recognized.

Southwest neighborhoods reflect a wide mix of cultures, which you can see in the buildings and architecture. While there's only one officially recognized local historic landmark in the area, residents say the overall look and feel of their neighborhoods provides a unique sense of place compared to other parts of the city.

- A. Study areas and buildings identified as “potentially historic” or “key structures” to explore options for preservation and adaptive reuse. Additional Discover Denver surveys should be done to better document each neighborhood (Westwood's survey was completed in 2025). Further studies should be considered for potential historic districts including:
 - 1. Morrison Road
 - 2. Little Saigon
 - 3. Antique Row/South Broadway
 - 4. South Platte River Industrial areas (citywide)
 - 5. Area surrounding John Collins United Methodist Church
- B. Recognize places that are historically, culturally, or architecturally important at the local, state, and/or national level through formal designations..
- C. Identify design features that give each neighborhood its unique character. Use of community input should help guide future regulations.
- D. Adaptive reuse of vacant buildings, particularly city-owned properties, should be encouraged.

HISTORIC CONTEXT MAP



Other potential historic districts may be considered based on the “Historic Building Types of Southwest” on the following page. Many neighborhoods have distinct patterns of these building types and may require additional research or documentation. Additional sites were surveyed in Westwood with Discover Denver identifying “areas of significance” and other neighborhood historic features. [See Neighborhood Chapter - Westwood for details.](#)

The following sites were identified in recent “Denver in Context” series:



Nuestras Historias Historic Context

- Historic District: Morrison Road
- St Cajetan
- St Anthony of Padue
- Knapp Elementary School
- Kepner Middle School
- Denison Montessori
- MGM's nightclub
- Mi Casa Resource Center
- Garfield Lake Park



We are the Land: American Indian Life, Legacy and Future in Denver Historic Context

- Denver Indian Center
- White Horse Bar
- Native American Multicultural Education School (NAMES)
- Bootleggers Liquor Store

HISTORIC BUILDING TYPES OF SOUTHWEST



Bungalow

From the Craftsman era of architecture, the Bungalow was widespread across the country and popular in early 20th century. These are typically one-and-a-half stories tall, made of wood or brick, with a gently pitched roof with a gable. Open porches are common.



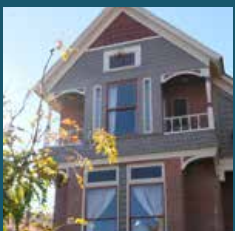
Minimal Traditional

These homes evolved from Bungalows and Cottage styles and are the most common in the Southwest neighborhoods. Most were built around World War II. They were simple and economical to build in large developments. They are characterized by their one-story, boxy appearance, with simple decorative features like shutters. Roofs are low-pitched gables or hipped with small overhangs or eaves. Many feature central entrances.



Ranch and Raised Ranch

Evolving from characteristics of the Craftsman and Prairie styles, the Ranch house originated in California in the 1930s. It grew in popularity and became common by the 1960s. Typical features include an elongated, asymmetrical facade, low/horizontal orientation, one-story in height, a low pitch roof, and integrated garages.



Queen Anne

This style was popular in Colorado around the 1880s and 1890s and can vary in architectural detail. Common features are tall, narrow shapes, uneven layouts, corner towers or turrets, decorative porches, steeply pitched gables, and a mix of materials—usually brick and wood.



Duplex, Multi-Family, & Mid-Century Affordable Housing

The Southwest neighborhoods are dominated by mostly single unit houses, but there are various examples of duplexes and multi-family housing. There are no distinct patterns or periods of intense building of these types identified. Large housing towers were built, typically along major corridors - of note, Columbine Towers.



Googie

The Googie style in Denver is preceded by the automobile-orientated restaurant architecture that developed in California after WWII, these structures are often free-standing buildings with indoor seating and drive-up services. Dramatic roofs, modern materials, plate glass window, iconic signage, and neon lights are common.



Postwar Suburban Development

Much of the neighborhoods were platted and developed in the 1950s and 1960s as the city grew from annexation. For example, in Athmar Park, Perl-Mack (national home building company) built 149 homes in 1955 and all of them sold within one month. Many still retain their windowless basements, which were advertised as fallout shelters.



Social Institutions

The Southwest neighborhoods have grown to a diverse area, and religious centers have played a central role in the community. Additional social clubs were established in the 1950s and 1960s, including Denver's first Boys & Girls Club.



SPR Industrial

Within and beyond the Southwest neighborhoods, there may be potential for a larger industrial historic district representing business growth along the South Platte River.



John Collins UM Church

This site is the only locally designated landmark in the Southwest. The area surrounding Bannock street should be evaluated for potential landmarks or as a historic district.



Civic Institutions

As the neighborhoods were built-up, additional services and resources were built near the residential areas such as Fire Station No. 23 (1953) and two libraries (Hadley Branch and Athmar Park Branch) in the late 1960s. This also includes many schools with distinctive brickwork. Most are low-rise with horizontal massing.

RECOMMENDATIONS

CENTERS & CORRIDORS

L10



POLICY

Design vibrant commercial Centers and Corridors that preserve and reflect the neighborhood's cultural character and create spaces that are pedestrian-friendly, comfortable, and welcoming for all.

BACKGROUND

Centers and Corridors are a defining element of the built environment in the Southwest Area. Much of the areas was designed with cars in mind – which now makes the area less welcoming for people walking, biking, or using transit. They have become home to many local businesses and community staples, but they often lack places to gather and experience the neighborhoods. Several shopping plazas include design elements reflective of the cultural influences of the Southwest. While Centers and Corridors are well integrated into the neighborhoods, they offer an opportunity to redesign commercial hubs as more walkable spaces with attractive streets, new housing options, and entertainment that is more comfortable and better connected while still celebrating the unique identity of the Southwest.

OUTCOMES

- A. Mixed-use and commercial areas are encouraged to incorporate **“Urban Design Features and Amenities”** to create more inviting and vibrant spaces. This includes:
 1. Public plazas, event areas, and small parks with community events or activities
 2. Opportunities for business kiosks or small entrepreneur spaces
 3. Green infrastructure
 4. Increased public and private landscaping and tree-lined streets
 5. Improved wayfinding signage
 6. Art in public places
 7. Access to healthy, affordable food
 8. Amenities such as benches, shade structures, and bike parking
 9. Creative, well-designed signage for businesses and commercial centers to reduce visual clutter
 10. Urban design elements, architectural forms, and landscaping features that respond to the cultural identity of the neighborhood
 11. [See page 67](#) for more information and other examples.
- B. **New development and infill** within Centers and Corridors should incorporate designs that reflect the historic and cultural identity of the Southwest neighborhoods and create a better experience for all users within these areas.
 1. Development should prioritize design elements and materials that are compatible with the existing neighborhood and highlight the cultural significance of the area. Historic buildings and features should be preserved ([See L9](#)).
 2. Redevelopment should happen first on empty lots and places with available space, especially along major transit routes. Areas right next to Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) stations or busy intersections should be top priority.
 3. The tallest buildings should be placed along major streets or in the central areas of sites to help transition smoothly to nearby homes and businesses.
 4. Drive-thrus, gas stations, car dealerships, and similar businesses and building forms should be limited and are not a good fit within a quarter mile of a BRT station. If these sites become empty, they should be reused or redeveloped to support walking, biking, and transit use.
- C. **Streets** should be built to a high standard that puts safety and comfort first, especially for people walking. Reduce conflict points between cars and people walking or biking ([See Mobility chapter](#) for additional policies and outcomes).
 1. This includes breaking up large blocks to create smaller, walkable areas.
 2. Add street trees and landscaping—especially near sidewalks—to improve comfort and reduce environmental impacts. ([See Q1](#).)
 3. Use lighting to make public areas easier to see and feel safer.
 4. Expand bike lanes and bike parking to improve connections across neighborhoods.
 5. Add gateway signs, kiosks, cultural features, and wayfinding tools in key spots, using a consistent design. ([See Q7](#).)
 6. High-quality buildings and streetscapes should be built in all areas, even if they don't have a business district or organization.



- D. Preservation should be a priority in the **Low Intensity - Mixed Use Areas** to enhance the key local corridors that feature the cultural, historic, and economic corridors of Morrison Road, Federal north of Mississippi (Little Saigon), and Broadway north of Iowa (Antique Row). [See map page 47](#)
1. Using tools and programs can help manage growth and minimize displacement in areas while allowing thoughtful improvements that respect their unique cultural, physical, social, and economic elements.
 2. Buildings in these areas should be between 1 and 3 stories tall. Historic, architecturally, or culturally significant buildings should be preserved and allow for growth through design-sensitive additions or renovations. Additional growth or infill development should minimize redevelopment pressures and align with zoning. Buildings are encouraged to have first-floor active uses and upper-story housing.
 3. These unique districts should be celebrated through design, business organizations, and programming ([See L6, L9, and Q7](#)).
 4. For more details on each district, [see Neighborhood](#) and [Federal Boulevard](#) chapters.

- E. Buildings in Community Centers and Corridors identified as **High Intensity - Mixed Use Areas** should generally range from 1 story up to 5 stories tall to accommodate the desired housing and employment growth. [See map page 47](#).
1. Building heights and forms should create a gradual transition between primarily commercial areas and primarily residential areas. Buildings are encouraged to have first-floor active uses and upper-story housing.
 2. Building frontages should be pedestrian-friendly to increase comfort, safety, and visual interest at the ground floor.
 3. Buildings should be located closer to the street to create a sense of enclosure and human scale in mixed-use areas while still allowing for wide sidewalks, landscaping, parking, and amenity space. Parking should be located to side, rear, or interior of the buildings.

L10


POLICY
OUTCOMES

Design vibrant commercial Centers and Corridors that preserve and reflect the neighborhood's cultural character and create spaces that are pedestrian-friendly, comfortable, and welcoming for all. (Continued)

- F. **Shopping centers** should evolve and be redesigned to support additional growth and more pedestrian friendly elements. This includes adapting configurations to allow for more walkable development and to create opportunities for housing and jobs.
1. Designated areas should be created for recreational or cultural centers, community gatherings, festivals, markets, and other events. Permanent parks or plazas should be incorporated. These elements can vary in size and scale based on the center.
 2. Upper-story housing options should be added when feasible.
 3. Surrounding streets should be integrated into the center through creating interior streets/drive aisles and smaller blocks within the centers. Pedestrian walkways or sidewalks should be clearly and safely marked and connected to the perimeters of the centers.
 4. Flexible parking arrangements should be developed to better right-size surface lots and provide opportunities for infill development and amenities. Underground parking options should be considered whenever feasible.
 5. New street configurations should include bike lanes and parking to promote alternative transportation options.
 6. The tree canopy and landscaping should be increased wherever possible, but especially near sidewalks or pathways.
 7. Phased infill redevelopment on underused areas should be considered as these areas evolve over time.
 8. All developments should incorporate general design recommendations ([See L10.A](#)), and green infrastructure ([See Q1](#)). See specific recommendations for key shopping centers in the [Neighborhood](#) and [Focus Area chapters](#).

NEIGHBORHOOD SCALE DEVELOPMENT



This is a sample concept of how shopping centers can be modernized and better connected to their surrounding neighborhood. This design can be phased over time to maintain services and allow for sustainable growth.

URBAN DESIGN FEATURES AND AMENITIES



Public Plazas & Parks

Gathering places can serve many functions. They can host festivals, offer space to meet neighbors, or simply provide a quiet spot to relax. These spaces can range from small pocket parks in business districts to formal parks.



Art in Public Places

Colorful and expressive pieces elevate communities. They add whimsy and vibrancy to what might otherwise have been a plain blank wall. Public Art throughout Denver is incorporated for major developments over \$1 million to add a minimum of 1% of art (mural, sculpture, etc.) to new development.



Affordable Housing

Diversity in housing types and options expands opportunities for affordable housing and reduces displacement. This can include larger apartment buildings or smaller options like Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs), which provide options for all ages.

See Land Use Policies 1-5 for more recommendations.



Space for Culturally Relevant, Local, & Community Serving Businesses

Local businesses provide services that are needed for daily activities. Compact business districts improve our quality of life and reduce our dependency on cars. Diversity within business districts brings opportunities for unique experiences and creates an identity for the area.



Green Infrastructure

Tools like stormwater management, tree planting, and solar energy can help protect the environment and support a healthier neighborhood. For more ideas and examples, [see Q1](#).



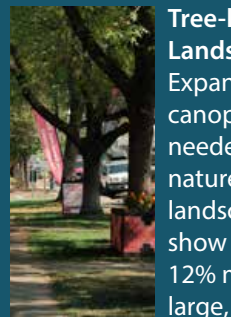
High Quality Streetscapes

Strong streetscape designs can create a comfortable spaces for all users. Trees and shade keep it cool for people using the area. Benches and other street furniture provide a place to stop and relax. Wide sidewalks allow more space for people using the street. Art brings vibrancy. Intersection buffers add safety for all modes.



Gateways and Wayfinding

Creating a sense of place, entry, and community identity can be achieved through placemaking at key entries or points of interest in a neighborhood. This could be a major intersection, connection from a trail, or other public places. Good directional signage in a consistent design will also welcome and direct residents and visitors to key neighborhood destinations.



Tree-lined & Landscaped Streets

Expanding the tree canopy provides much-needed shade and nature to the urban landscape. Studies show shoppers spend 12% more in areas with large, cared for trees.



Historic Preservation

Preserving older structures that are identified as "potentially historic" to retain the historic character of the neighborhood, while accommodating growth in the area. [See L9](#) and related resources.



Incorporate Food Production into Local Places

Landscaping can help address food access by creating and expanding community gardens, food forests, as well as small- or large-scale orchards that can be incorporated to parks, plaza, or other green infrastructure.



Design Quality

Providing human-scaled design by ensuring that the design and massing of buildings provide a sense of place and comfort for people.

RECOMMENDATIONS

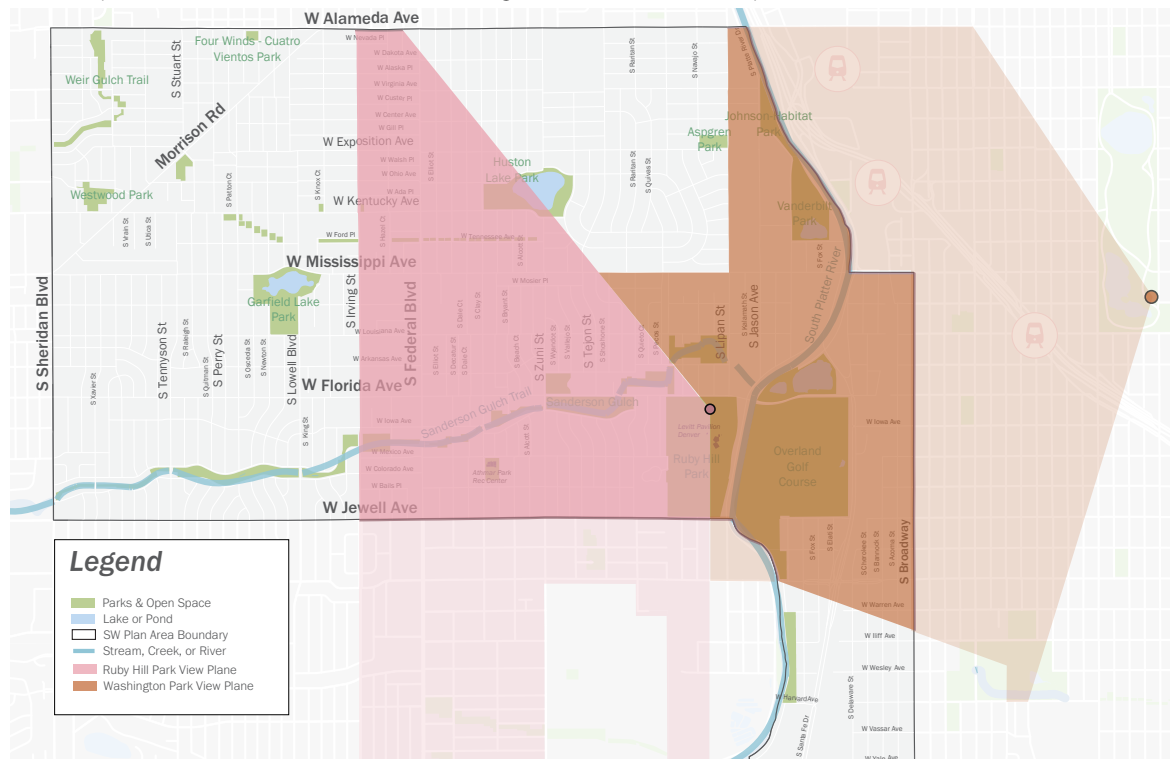
ZONING

L11

Zoning regulations should evolve to improve design outcomes, equity, and responsiveness.

Zoning updates can improve the Southwest's development and help achieve this plan's goals. These regulatory tools can improve outcomes to Southwest neighborhoods by making larger legislative rezonings and updating other code related tools.

- Denver Zoning Code districts should be used to better implement the desired design outcomes of this plan and improve responsiveness. Areas with Former Chapter 59 zoning should be rezoned to Denver Zoning Code.
- Larger-scale, legislative rezonings should be prioritized over site-by site rezonings to implement plan recommendations.
- Billboard overlay districts (UO-2) should be removed through the rezoning process. Billboards are not appropriate and are inconsistent with this plan.
- The Washington Park and Ruby Hill View Planes should remain in place to protect mountain views and new development must adhere to the related height limits of these view planes (see below).



FORMER CHAPTER 59

Denver adopted the Denver Zoning Code in 2010, replacing an older code, known as Former Chapter 59 (FC59). However, not all properties were brought into the new code, and less than 4% or nearly 175 acres of the Southwest area has retained FC59 zoning. Those properties were left in the old code because they had some form of customization, such as a planned unit development, waivers and conditions, or a planned building group. These customizations create several problems for the area such as:

- Lack of transparency and predictability - Each instance of custom zoning is unique. When there are many instances of custom zoning within an area, it can become difficult to understand what is allowed on a particular property. This is because each instance of custom zoning follows its own rules that must be reviewed and understood on a case-by-case basis.
- Not flexible over time - Custom regulations tend to become outdated, sometimes very quickly, depending on the shifting needs and desires of an area. The only way to change those regulations is to rezone, which can be a lengthy and costly process.
- Unpredictable process - The wide use of custom zoning can result in inequitable outcomes since neighborhoods with more resources are often able to have a stronger voice in negotiations during the rezoning process. It is also a longer and more complicated process for applicants to navigate, with unknown outcomes.
- Difficult to administer over time - It is more challenging for staff to review and understand site-specific rules for multiple properties across the city. This results in more resources spent reviewing and enforcing special standards.

Therefore it is a key recommendation of this plan to bring these FC59 properties into the Denver Zoning Code as soon as possible (see Policy L11).

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3. MOBILITY

3.1 INTRODUCTION

3.1.1 Overview

3.2 STREET TYPES

3.3 MOBILITY FRAMEWORK

3.4 RECOMMENDATIONS

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5166 CO.

3.1 INTRODUCTION

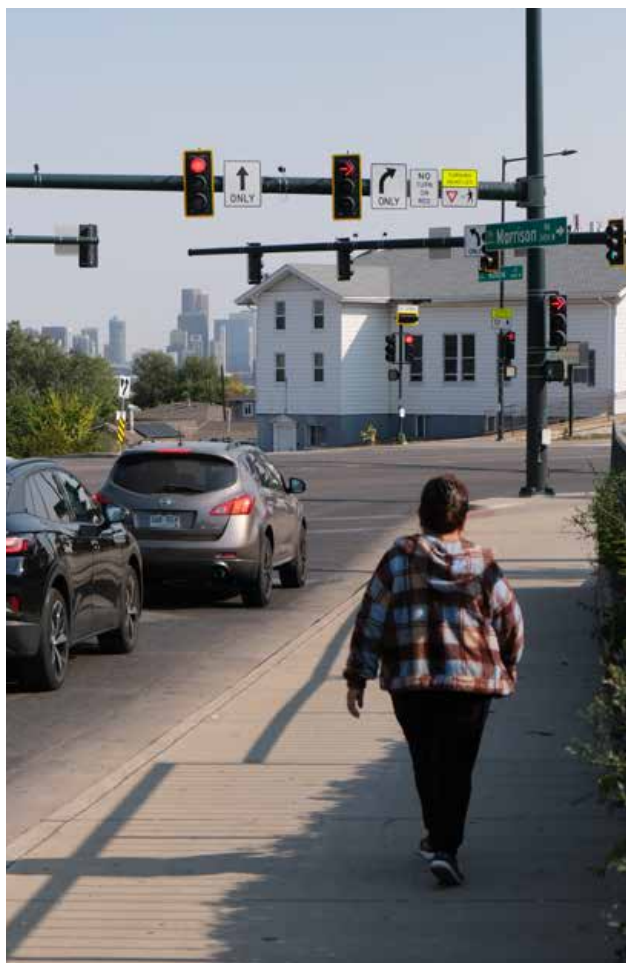
3.1.1 Overview

Southwest residents and businesses rely on the local transportation network to get to where they need to go. The area is framed by major high-traffic corridors that have created a car-centric focus for development and moving around the area.

While car travel is dominant, these corridors are served and connected by bus lines, trails, intersections, crosswalks, and other connections. While the network is well established, there are still barriers like Interstate -25, railroad crossings, and the natural topography of the South Platte River. These barriers have limited connections and crossings, especially from east to west, which keeps the area very dependent on car travel.

Mobility is closely tied to the Land Use & Built Form and Quality of Life Infrastructure chapters in this plan. Transportation options influence neighborhood affordability, safety, and health. Many residents have expressed the need for more walkable and bikeable routes and removing barriers to make moving from place to place safer and comfortable for all ages and all modes. Transit options are limited to only a few corridors, which leaves room to deliver on residents' desire for more frequent stops and options. Some trails provide an alternative to on-street routes but lack key connections to the neighborhoods. The street grid is very predictable, but safety concerns of small and disconnected sidewalks, challenging crossings, as well as unprotected bike lanes can be difficult for all ages.

Recent transportation improvements have been completed, and others are planned. The following recommendations provide a framework for building a more holistic and accessible network as the area continues to grow.



3.2 STREET TYPES

Blueprint Denver outlines a complete multimodal transportation network that provides mobility choices to all residents. These options are organized into four user categories: Pedestrian, Bike, Transit, and Auto/ Goods movement. This complete network will give residents the ability to choose how they access jobs, education, residential, commercial, and recreation.

Denver also uses a system called the “functional classification system” for categorizing different types of streets. *Blueprint Denver* updated this system to include how surrounding character and context might affect a street’s design or operation. This update added residential, commercial, main street, and mixed-use designations to the functional classification system.

STREET CLASSIFICATIONS

Local

Streets that are designed for the highest amount of property access and the lowest amount of through movement/traffic.

Collector

Streets whose main function is to collect movement from local streets and convey it to arterial streets.

Arterial

Streets designed for the highest amount of through movement and lowest amount of property access.



MIXED USE

- Land Use: Varied mix of uses including retail, office, residential, and restaurants.
- Function: Driveways are more frequent than main streets, but still limited to provide a friendly environment for people walking, rolling, or using bicycles.
- Buffer: Fairly consistent buffer between people walking, rolling, and traffic.



MAIN STREET

- Land Use : Characterized by a mix of uses such as retail, services, restaurants, and residential.
- Function: Wide sidewalks with fewer driveways to prioritize people walking and rolling.
- Buffer: Consistent street trees and/or amenity zones provide a buffer between people walking, rolling, and traffic.



RESIDENTIAL

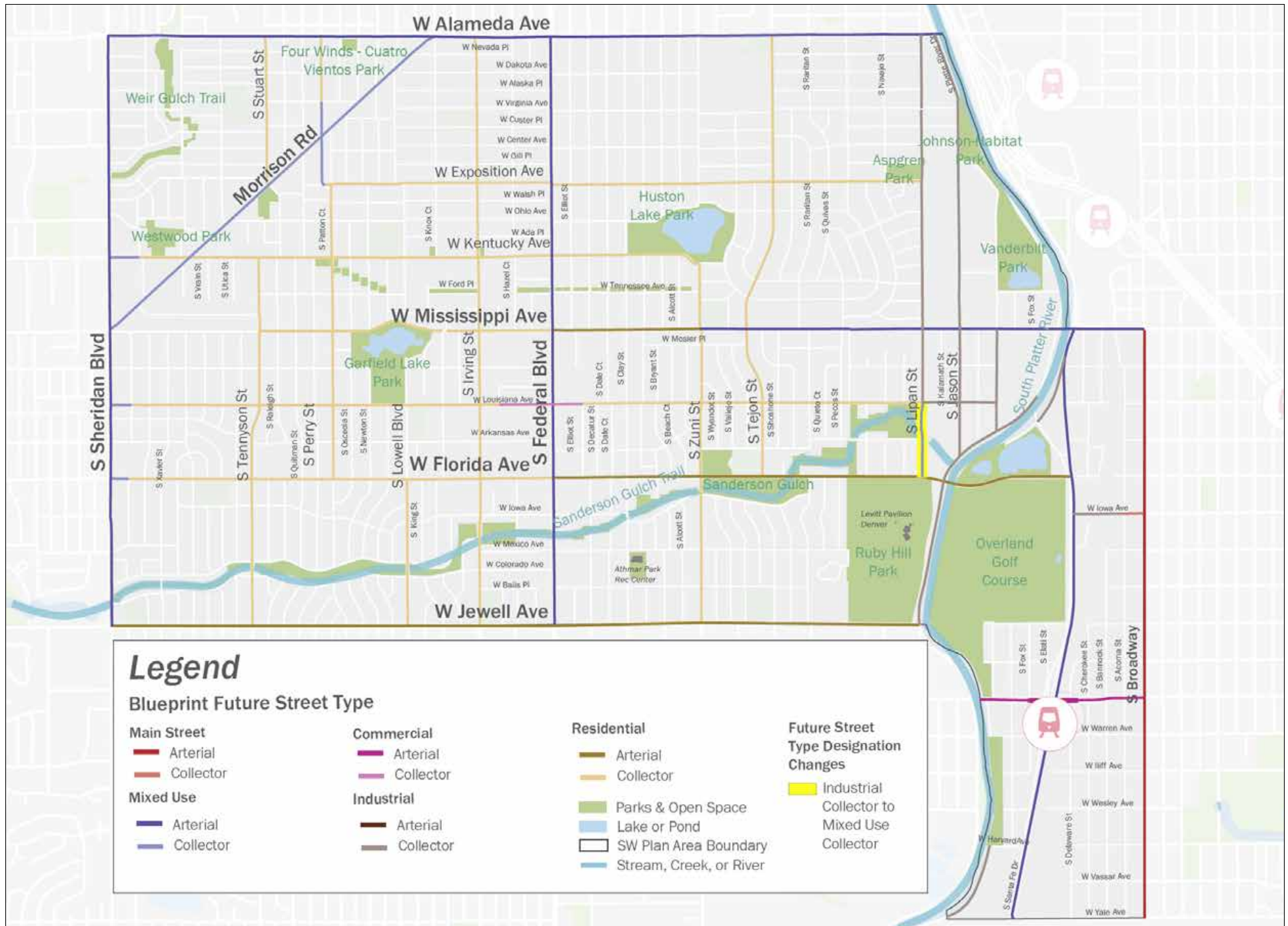
- Land Use: Characterized primarily by residential uses, but may also include parks, schools, civic uses, or small retail nodes.
- Function: Traffic calming encourages slower speeds and promotes safety for all users. Signalized cross walks with high visibility markings provide ample crossing opportunities
- Buffer: Street trees provide a buffer between people walking or rolling and traffic.



INDUSTRIAL

- Land Use: Characterized by manufacturing, but may contain other uses. Buildings are generally low-rise and may be set back to accommodate site-specific needs.
- Function: Adequate sidewalk space is provided, but driveway access is more frequent and streets may be wider.
- Buffer: Consistent buffer between people walking, rolling, and transit.

FUTURE STREET TYPES MAP

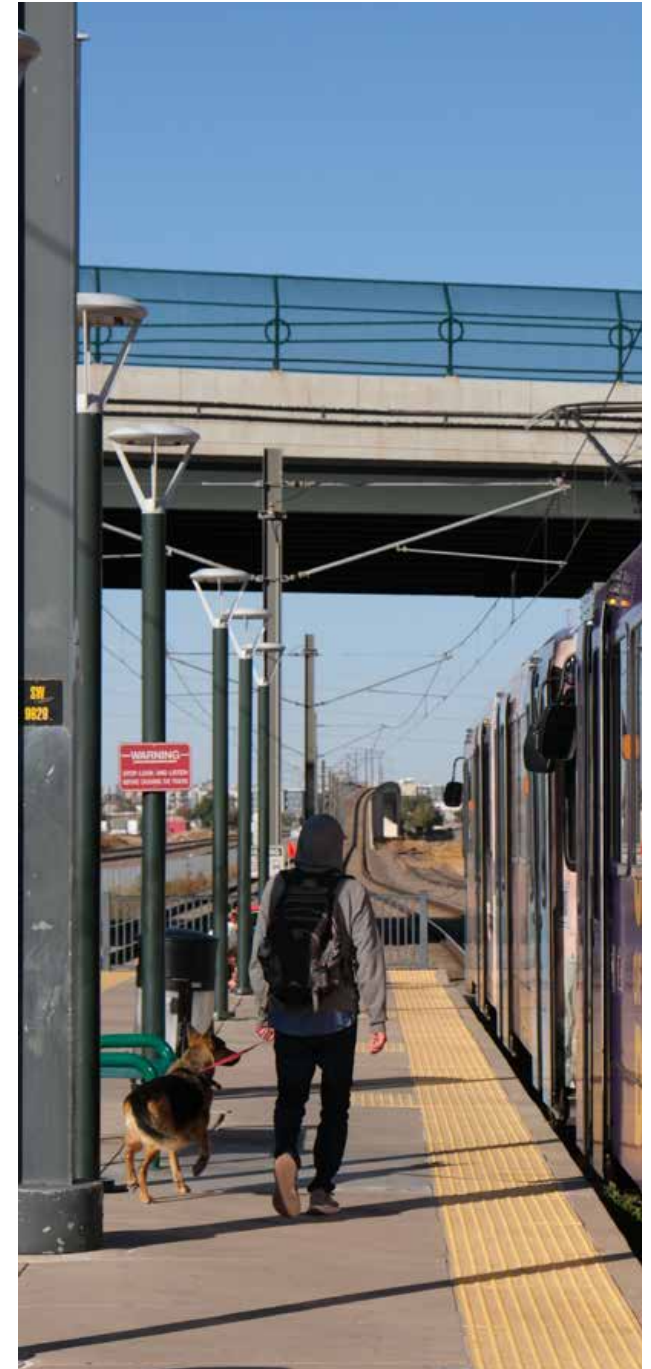


3.3 MOBILITY FRAMEWORK

The mobility framework for the Southwest area is centered on connecting residents to each other, to key destinations, and to the broader Denver region through a variety of transportation modes. Regional Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) corridors will provide Southwest neighborhoods with rapid and reliable transit service along major arterial roads like South Federal Boulevard and Alameda Avenue. Investments in these corridors will also fund pedestrian infrastructure and address vehicle travel needs while providing better transit service. The Core Bike Network will provide cyclists with high-comfort bike facilities for east-west and north-south routes through the Southwest area. City investments in improved crossings will better connect neighborhoods together and provide safe comfortable access for all road users crossing barriers like rail, highways, and the river. Parks, people, and destinations will be connected through a “Southwest Loop” that highlights various future mobility connections for inter and intra-neighborhood travel.

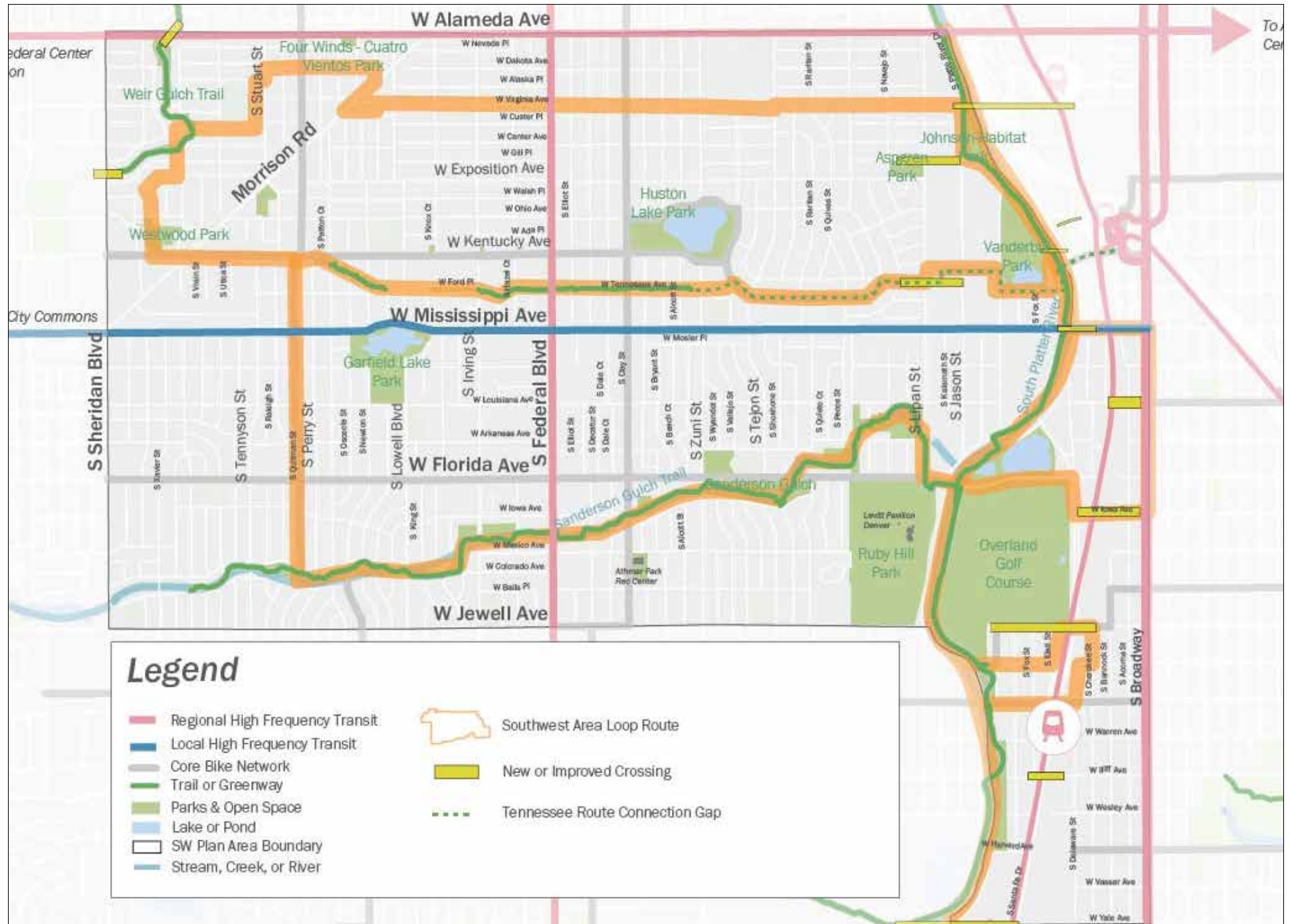


The 31 Bus RTD Bus Line Along Federal Boulevard in Southwest Denver.



Evans Station in Southwest Denver.

PROPOSED MOBILITY FRAMEWORK MAP



3.4 RECOMMENDATIONS

RECOMMENDATIONS

MAJOR MULTIMODAL & BRIDGE PROJECTS

M1



POLICY

The Southwest area mobility network should have safe crossings of major barriers, multimodal corridors, and connect residents to key places.

BACKGROUND

Major Multimodal Projects in the Southwest area (Figure in the following page) include two future Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) associated multimodal improvements on Alameda Avenue and Federal Boulevard, streetscape improvements which include safety and comfort improvements to the right of way, and several trail improvement projects, as well as several rail and river crossing projects. Streetscape improvements projects are planned for Morrison Road, Alameda Avenue, Kentucky Avenue, and Mississippi Avenue. Of the multimodal projects outlined on the map on the following page, some have recently been completed or will soon begin construction such the Iowa Avenue Underpass Bicycle/Pedestrian Improvements, the Alameda Avenue Bridge Replacement and Multi-Modal Improvements, and the Jewell Avenue Bike and Pedestrian Bridge. These improvements provide Southwest residents with safe and multimodal crossings to the South Platte River and its parks across railroad and highway barriers. Many of these projects were identified by previous planning efforts such as the West Area Denver Neighborhood Planning Initiative, Evans Station Area Plan 2009, the Westwood Neighborhood Plan 2016, Denver Moves: Bikes, Denver Moves Everyone 2050, and the Westwood-Athmar Park NTMP.

OUTCOMES

- A. The Southwest area should include safe and comfortable connections across major barriers such as highways, rivers, and rail lines. These connections will support more accessible, navigable, and reliable travel for people walking, biking, or using mobility devices.
- B. Along and across arterial streets, the pedestrian and rolling experience should be improved to enhance safety and comfort.
- C. Advance planned Bus Rapid Transit Streetscape and Intersection Improvement and planned Near-Term Streetscape Improvements.
- D. Implement NPI Proposed Evans Avenue Streetscape Improvements (see [O-M1](#)).
- E. Implement NPI proposed Trail Crossings (marked in dashed blue on the figure in the following page) along the following streets:
 1. Exposition Avenue or Gill Place, based on further analysis
 2. Tennessee Avenue
 3. South Jason Street
- F. Advance planned Bridge or Underpass or Improvement across the river, railroad, or highway.
- G. Implement the following NPI proposed Bridge, Underpass, or Improvement across the river, railroad, or highway (marked in dashed yellow on the figure in the following page):
 1. West Louisiana Avenue over the railroad
 2. West Jewell Avenue over the South Platte River
 3. West Yale Avenue
- H. Access to the South Platte River trail, parks along the river and the river itself should be improved (see [RC-M1](#)).

MAJOR MULTIMODAL PROJECTS MAP



RECOMMENDATIONS

BIKE & MICROMOBILITY

M2



POLICY

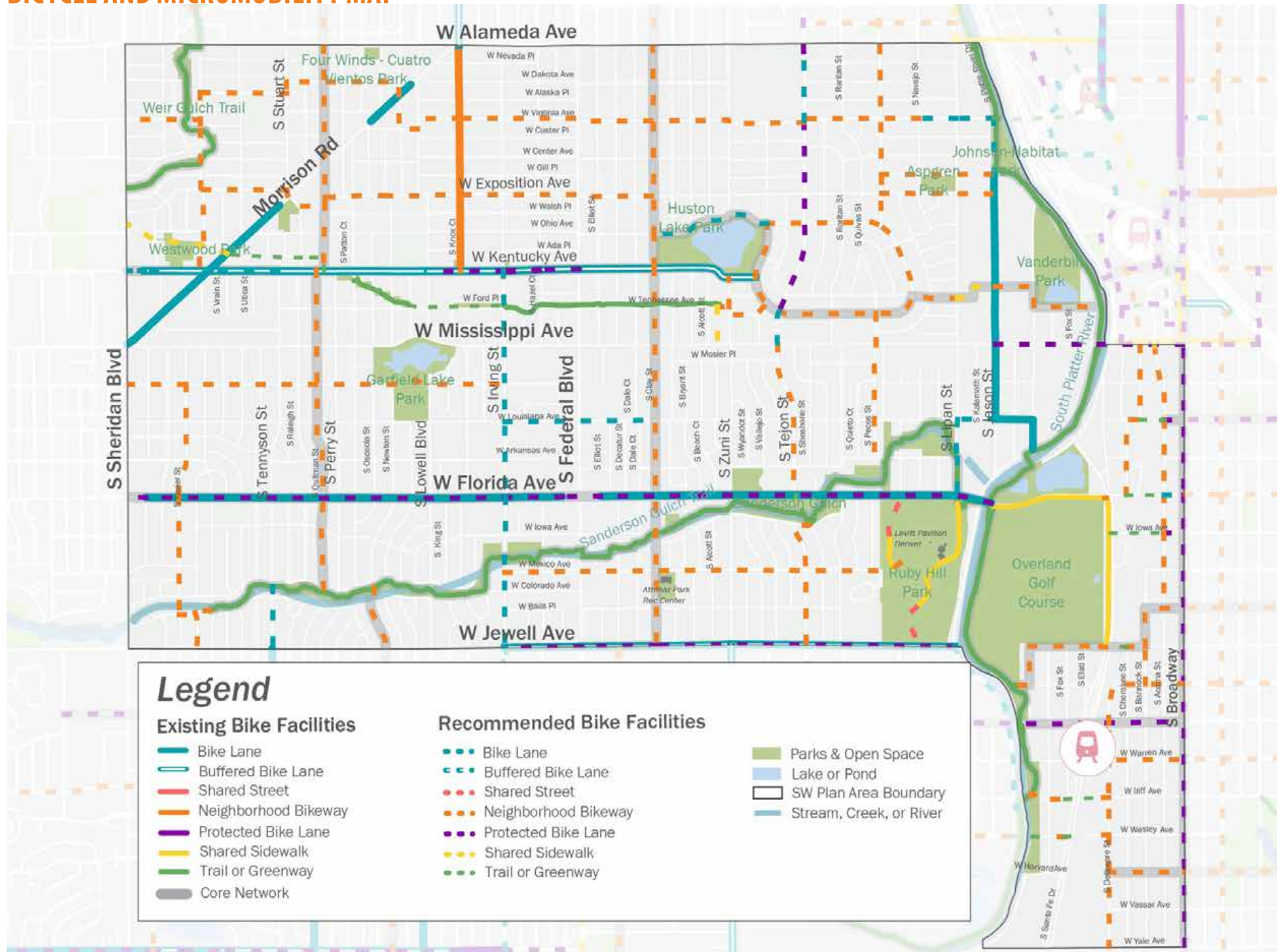
Bike infrastructure should provide safe and comfortable connections to parks, neighborhood destinations, and surrounding communities.

BACKGROUND

The Denver Moves Bikes 2025 plan, identifies a “core network” of key cycling corridors essential for both citywide and neighborhood connectivity. These corridors—shown in grey in the map in the following page—are recommended for high-comfort bike facilities. Additional routes, such as the West Florida Avenue bike lane, also contribute to traffic calming and safer travel. The Denver Moves Bikes proposed bike facilities map further enhances connectivity by offering Southwest residents a dense network of bike facilities linking local destinations to the broader citywide system.

OUTCOMES

- A. Bike facilities in the Southwest area will provide safe and comfortable east/west connections.
- B. Traffic calming and other improved pedestrian infrastructure should be incorporated into proposed bike infrastructure.
- C. Advance the *Denver Moves: Bikes 2025* plan bike facilities recommendations (shown in the figure on the following page).
- D. Advance the feasibility of upgrading the *Denver Moves: Bikes* recommendations (integrated in the Proposed Bike Facilities on the figure in the following page) to higher-comfort designs that prioritize access to key destinations such as neighborhood parks, commercial centers, multimodal hubs, community centers and surrounding communities, this include the following corridors:
 - 1. A high-comfort connection along Exposition Avenue in Athmar Park to connect Southwest Residents to the South Platte River Trail and neighboring parks.
 - 2. An extension of the Jewell Avenue proposed high-comfort bike facility to safely connect riders to Ruby Hill Park and the Levitt Pavilion.



HIGH COMFORT BIKEWAY CONCEPTS

High comfort bikeways are safe and comfortable spaces designated for bicyclists through use of pavement markings and/or a separated path. Intersections are designed to reduce conflicts between bicyclists and vehicles by improving visibility and marking dedicated space in the right-of-way for cyclists. Research shows that these facilities can also help to calm traffic on corridors.



NEIGHBORHOOD BIKEWAY

Low-volume, low-speed streets modified at the intersections and mid-block to enhance bicycle safety and comfort. These facilities act as shared streets with enhanced intersections and traffic calming measures that improve safety for all modes. *(Photo: Shared Neighborhood Bikeway, NACTO.org)*



BUFFERED BIKE LANE

The same facility as a traditional bike lane, but with an additional buffer space that helps to separate the cyclist from adjacent vehicle travel lanes and/or parking.



PROTECTED BIKE LANE

An exclusive bike facility with a path physically separated from motor traffic and distinct from the sidewalk. Intersections are designed for safety and facilitate turning movements for bicyclists.

(Photo: Protected Bike Lane, Source: www.kimley-horn.com)



TRAIL/SHARED-USE PATH

Completely separated from the roadway and typically shared with pedestrians.



BIKE LANE

Exclusive space for bicycles noted by pavement markings and signage (without buffers or barriers to separate from traffic).

RECOMMENDATIONS

TRANSIT PROJECTS

M3



POLICY

Public transportation should comfortably connect residents to local destinations, neighborhood services, and regional centers.

BACKGROUND

Transit projects in the Southwest area include two Regional Bus Rapid Transit Corridors along Federal Boulevard and Alameda Avenue, one Local Bus Rapid Transit Corridor along Mississippi Avenue, and one Bus Priority Corridor along Sheridan Boulevard. These transit projects were identified by Denver Moves: Transit and refined by Denver Moves Every-one 2050. These transit projects are shown in the Figure to the right with additional outcomes discussed below.

OUTCOMES

- A. Advance Planned Bus lines to improve frequency and reliability of transit in the Southwest area.
- B. Key transit corridors, such as planned Bus Rapid Transit and Bus Priority corridors should have upgraded bus stops with amenities as recommended by the *Denver Moves: Transit Passenger Amenities Analysis*. This includes:
 1. Federal Boulevard,
 2. South Broadway
 3. Mississippi Avenue
 4. Alameda Avenue
 5. Sheridan Boulevard
- C. As part of the West Mississippi Avenue Local BRT route, the 14 and 11 RTD bus lines will be consolidated along Mississippi Avenue in the Southwest Area and will run more frequent and reliable east/west service.
- D. Frequent and reliable transit lines will connect residents to NPI Proposed regional destinations not adequately connected by transit such as the Levitt Pavilion, and other local destinations.
- E. The public realm and land use along Bus Rapid Transit Corridors should be activated with transit-oriented places, active uses, public space and multi-modal amenities that support and reflect Southwest Denver's cultural and business districts ([See L10](#)).
- F. Additional rail services including the previously terminated C line should be studied to increase transit options in cooperation with Regional Transportation District. The C line would directly connect residents to Downtown and other regional centers through higher frequency rail services and destinations.
- G. Micro-transit services (such as ride-shares or the West Denver Connector Service) will better connect residents to services as well as rail stations and other community destinations such as Levitt Pavilion. These services should be well promoted to residents to increase and improve transit options.

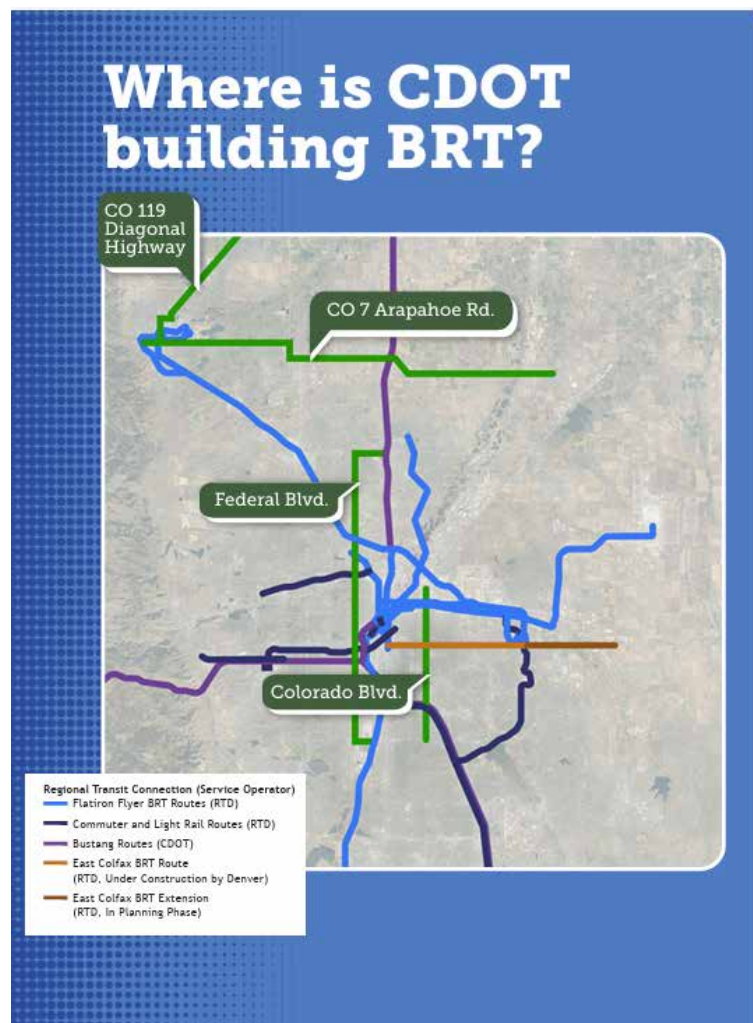


TRANSIT MAP

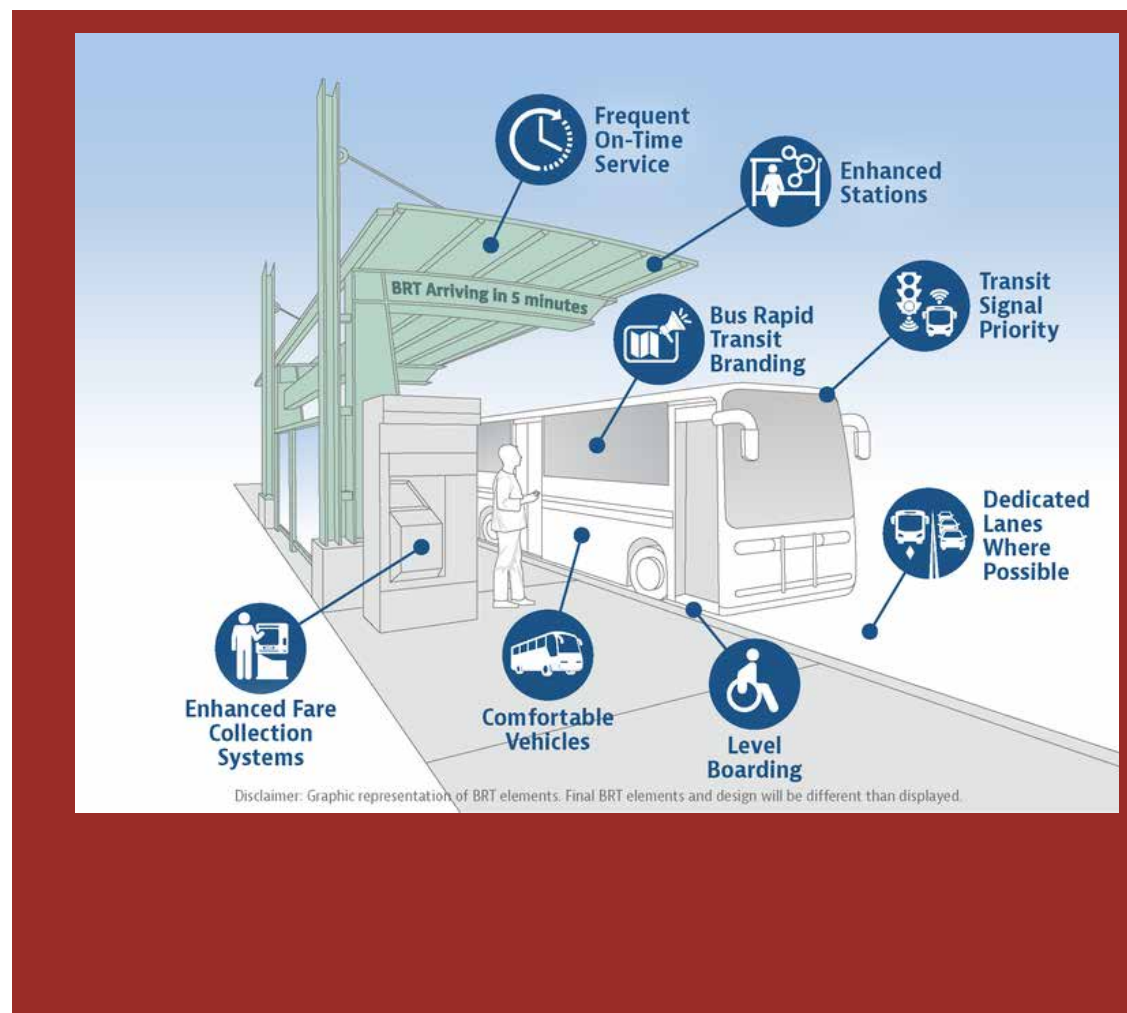


WHAT IS BUS RAPID TRANSIT?

Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) is a high-capacity, efficient bus service that incorporates elements of light rail. These include enhanced stations, all-door boarding, purchasing tickets before riding, and in some locations, dedicated bus lanes. BRT achieves high-quality service because it minimizes delays, such as making frequent stops and getting stuck in traffic at intersections.



Source: CDOT.



Source: CDOT.

RECOMMENDATIONS

TRAFFIC CALMING & URBAN AMENITIES

M4



POLICY

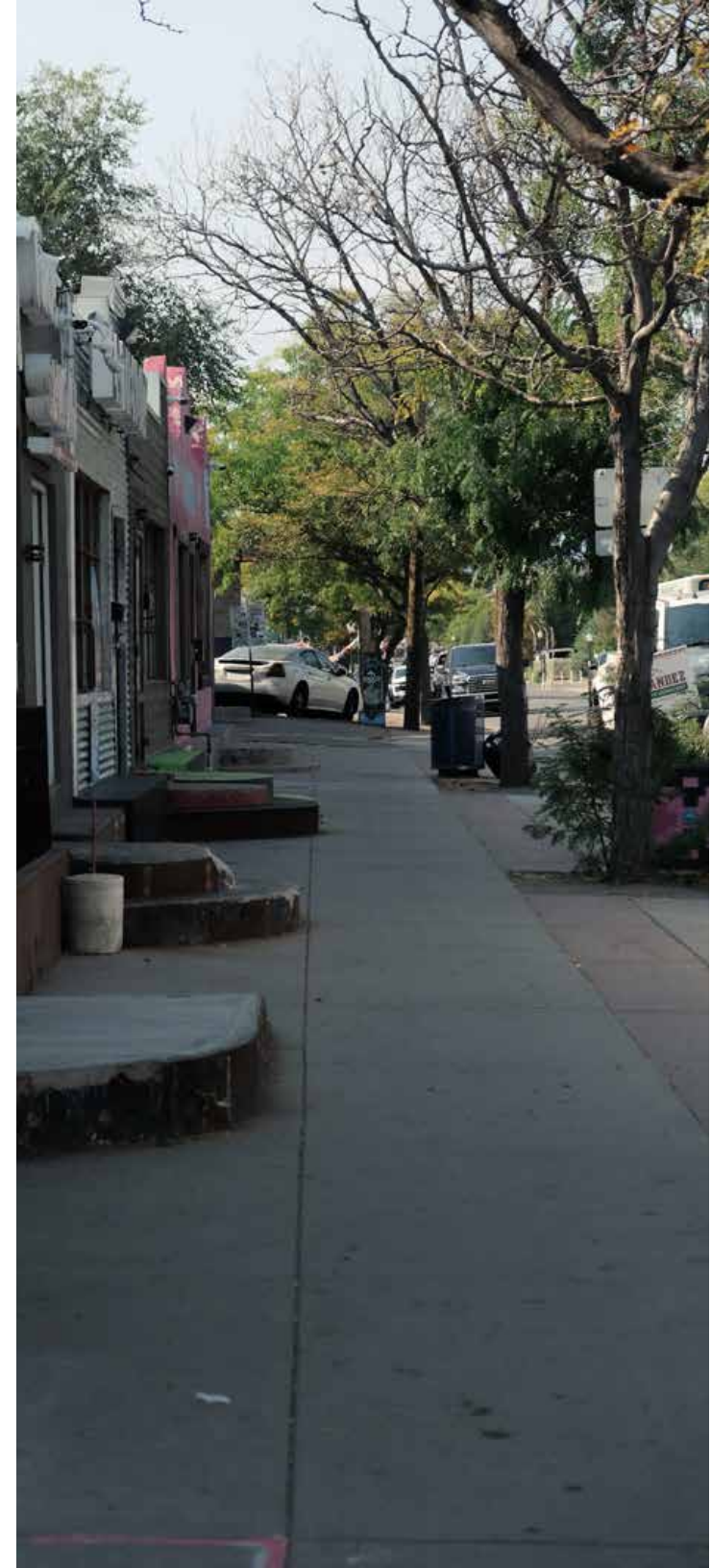
Prioritize safety for all users by incorporating traffic calming to reduce heavy vehicle impacts on residential streets while delivering added community benefits.

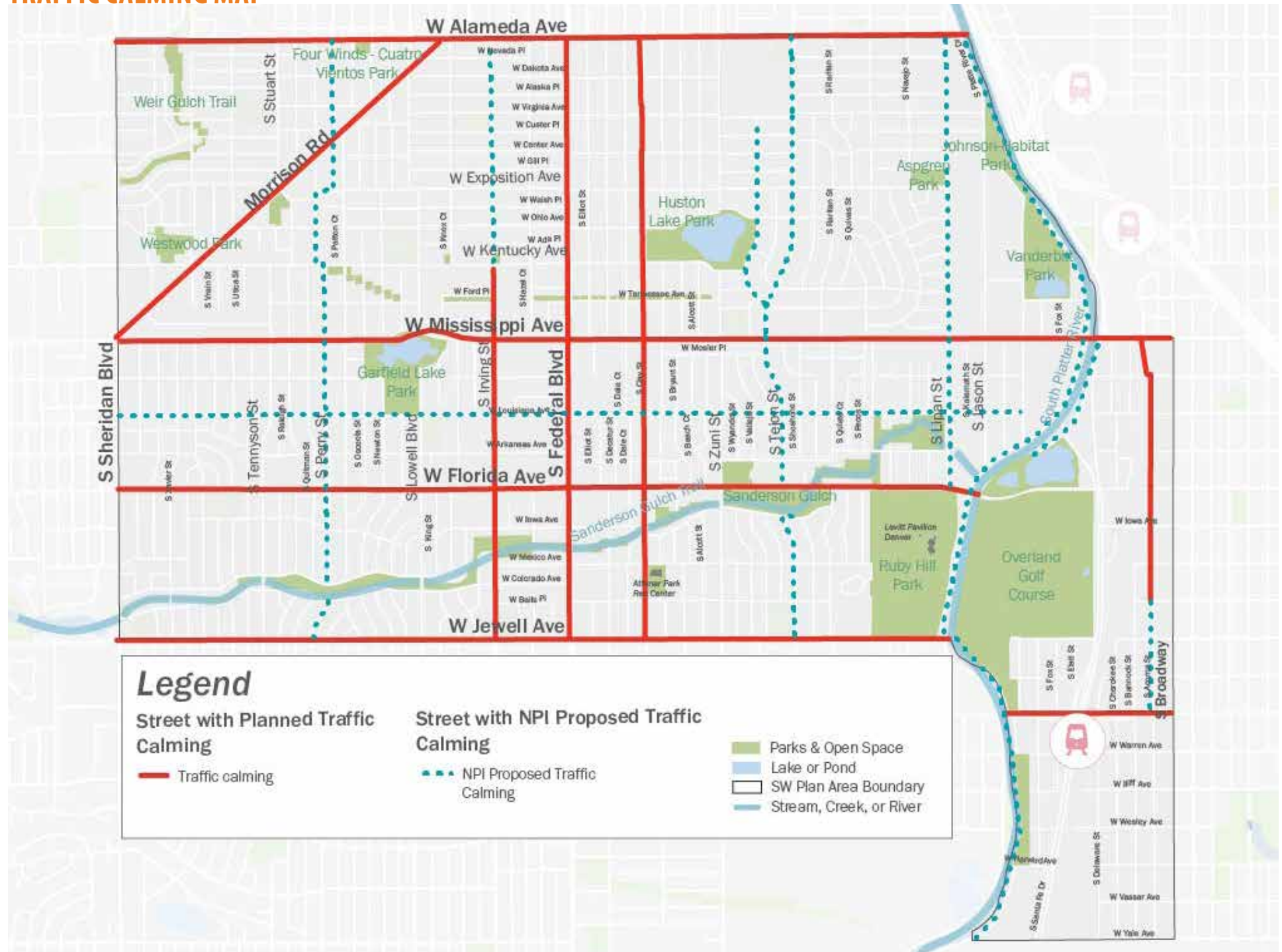
BACKGROUND

Traffic calming initiatives are planned throughout Southwest Denver along key arterial and collector streets to enhance safety and support multimodal travel. This includes BRT improvements along Federal and Alameda Boulevards. The Denver Moves Transit 2019 plan also identifies West Mississippi Avenue and Evans Avenue as future Local BRT corridors, where bus enhancements will contribute to safer, slower-moving streets. The Morrison Road Improvements Project will introduce streetscape upgrades aimed at reducing vehicle speeds and improving pedestrian safety. Additional corridors, including Jewell Avenue, West Florida Avenue, and South Clay Street are slated for traffic calming and cycling infrastructure improvements that will strengthen the area's micromobility network. These efforts build on previous planning initiatives such as the Neighborhood Transportation Management Program: Westwood–Athmar Park (2021), West Denver Safer Streets (2022), Denver Moves Bikes, and the West Denver Community Transportation Network plan.

OUTCOMES

- A. Implement traffic calming measures on north/south streets parallel to Federal Boulevard. Consider the following collector streets, currently without upcoming planned improvements:
 1. South Perry Street
 2. South Tejon Street
 3. West Louisiana Avenue
 4. South Vallejo Street
- B. Bicycle and micromobility projects in Southwest Denver should make streets safer for all roadway users. This could include traffic calming, sidewalks, improved pedestrian crossings, and transit stop improvements
- C. Future mobility projects should be coordinated with stormwater infrastructure needs to establish green streets with multiple community benefits in the Southwest Area ([See Q1](#)).
- D. Improve traffic safety by improving traffic safety enforcement including enforcement of non-street legal vehicles and racing ([see Q6](#)).





NEIGHBORHOOD TRAFFIC CALMING CONCEPTS

Traffic calming concepts include infrastructure upgrades and operational improvements to neighborhood streets and intersections. They address problems like insufficient pedestrian crossings, speeding, and visibility issues.



DAYLIGHTING INTERSECTIONS

Removing parking spaces immediately adjacent to intersections to improve sight lines and visibility.



INTERSECTION IMPROVEMENTS

Bulb-outs, medians, lighting, and raised crosswalks are some examples of intersection improvements.



PHYSICAL BARRIERS

Roundabouts, traffic diverters, or other physical cues that slow or limit traffic on local streets.



LIMIT VEHICULAR TRAFFIC

In certain situations, half or full closures of streets to vehicles can create a vibrant and safe neighborhood space.



LANE REDUCTION/ CHICANES

Reducing lane widths and/or forcing new travel patterns requires drivers to pay more attention, which helps to slow traffic and increases awareness for all modes.



DENVER'S SIDEWALK ENTERPRISE PROGRAM

In November 2022, voters approved citizen initiative 307, also called “Denver Deserves Sidewalks,” which adopted an ordinance that authorized the creation of the Sidewalk Enterprise Fund to collect fees mandated to be used for sidewalk construction, reconstruction, and repair throughout the City. Revenue collection began in early 2025 and provides a dedicated source of funding to build and maintain sidewalks. Sidewalk prioritization and a timeline for implementation will be established through the Sidewalk Implementation Plan (kicking off fall 2025) that will establish a feasible timeline for repairing sidewalks, addressing deficient sidewalks, and constructing sidewalks citywide – including in the Far Southwest Area.

PEDESTRIAN CROSSING IMPROVEMENTS

Pedestrian crossing treatments at unsignalized intersections are determined by Denver’s Uncontrolled Pedestrian Crossing Guidelines. The number of lanes, traffic speeds, and traffic volumes are factors in choosing the appropriate treatment. Examples of pedestrian crossing improvements include but are not limited to:

- High intensity activated crosswalks (HAWKs)
- Rectangular rapid flashing beacons (RRFBs)
- Pedestrian refuge islands
- Curb extensions
- Raised crosswalks
- Parking restrictions near intersections

RECOMMENDATIONS

PEDESTRIAN INFRASTRUCTURE

M5



POLICY

Make walking to and around key community destinations safer and more comfortable by improving pedestrian infrastructure.

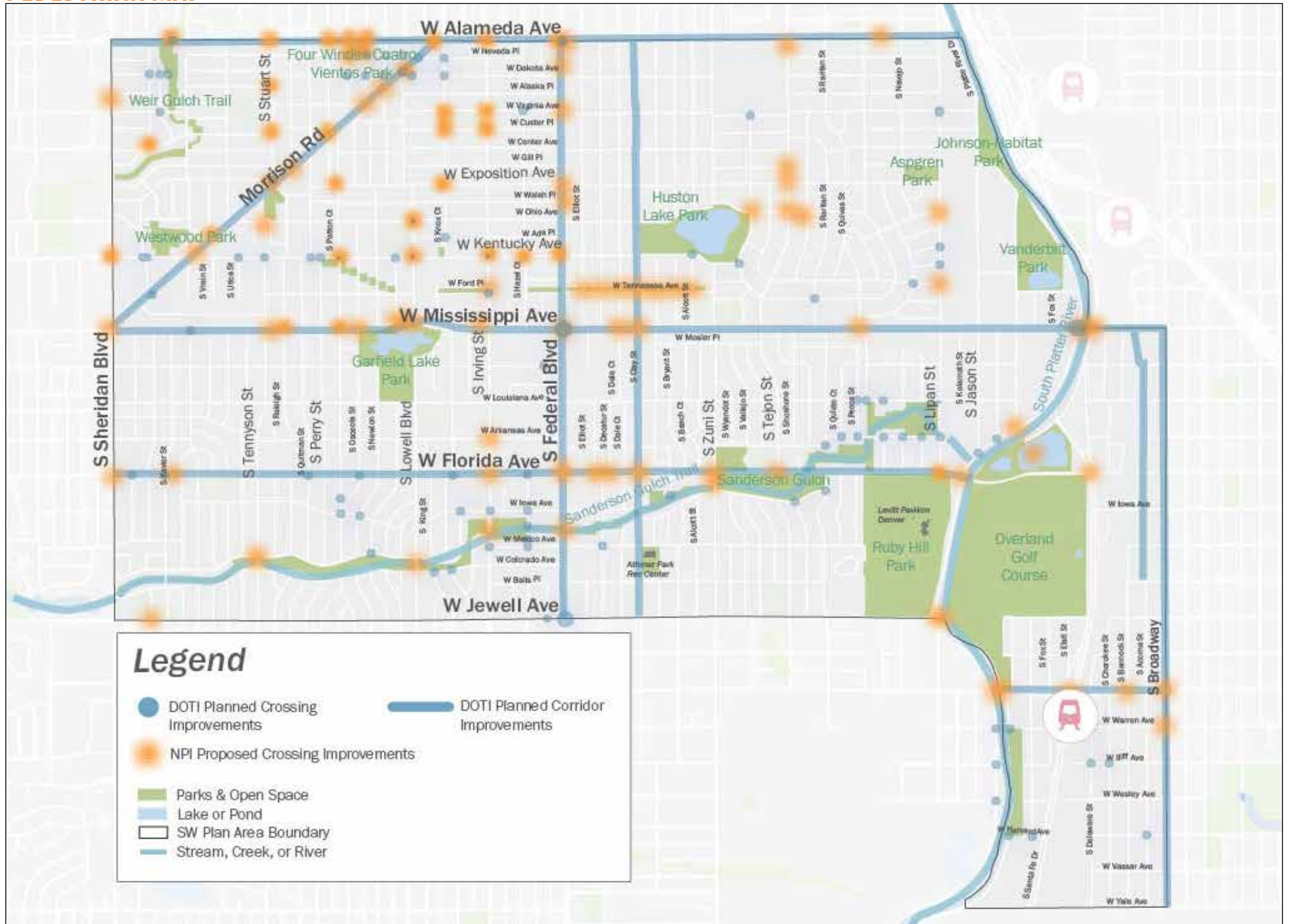
BACKGROUND

Pedestrian infrastructure projects in this area are delivered through two primary approaches: corridor improvements and crossing enhancements. Many of the community’s desired crossing upgrades align with planned DOTI corridor projects identified in the 2019 Denver Moves Transit plan for Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) and the 2025 Denver Moves Bikes plan. Gaps in pedestrian infrastructure not yet addressed by these planned efforts are highlighted in orange in the map on the following page. Additional gaps were also identified near key destinations such as trails, schools, and commercial centers.

OUTCOMES

- Green infrastructure should be prioritized near community destinations and *Blueprint Denver* priority areas ([See Q1](#)).
- Regional and local destinations in the Southwest area should be safe and comfortable to access by sidewalks and paths in adjacent neighborhoods.
- Sidewalks along Community Centers, Community Corridors, and other key destinations should be separated from the street to improve safety and comfort for people walking. The visibility and safety of pedestrians should be prioritized at intersections near schools, parks, venues, and *Blueprint Denver* Community Center and Corridor designations.
- Add design features at intersections in Southwest Denver to help drivers stop more consistently and safely.
- Advance DOTI Planned Crossing Improvements and DOTI Planned Corridor Improvements.
- Gaps in pedestrian infrastructure highlighted in orange on the following map and not addressed by planned improvements should be included into the City’s work program. These pedestrian gaps include:
 - Tennessee Avenue along the trail Intersections near Tejon Street
 - Jason Street and Santa Fe Drive
 - Santa Fe Drive and Florida Avenue
 - South Tejon Street From Mississippi Ave to Alameda Avenue
 - Kentucky Avenue from Sheridan Boulevard to Federal Boulevard
 - Stuart Street north of Mississippi Avenue
 - Lipan Street and Florida Avenue

PEDESTRIAN MAP





4. QUALITY OF LIFE

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Residents enjoying water aerobics at Athmar Rec Center



Muertos en Westwood Festival on Morrison Road



View of the Rocky Mountains from Huston Lake Park

4.1 INTRODUCTION

4.1.1 Background

Quality-of-life infrastructure includes both natural features—like trees, waterways, parks, and outdoor spaces—and community amenities such as food, healthcare, art, recreation, and entertainment. These elements stitch together our communities, contributing to our health, comfort, environmental needs, and social connectedness. Our surroundings shape how physically active we are, how we socialize and create community, and whether we have access to schools, jobs, transportation, health care and opportunities to prosper.

The natural environment affects our health and comfort. Poor air and water quality, increased flooding, and extreme heat can have lasting social, health, political, and economic consequences. Addressing these challenges through green infrastructure and other climate-resilient solutions can create healthier communities. The built environment shapes how we connect with daily activities. When resources and amenities for physical and general wellbeing are lacking within a neighborhood, residents may need to travel elsewhere to reach them. Increasing access to grocery stores, doctors, and other key resources through partnerships will improve our connection to the neighborhood and the rest of Denver.

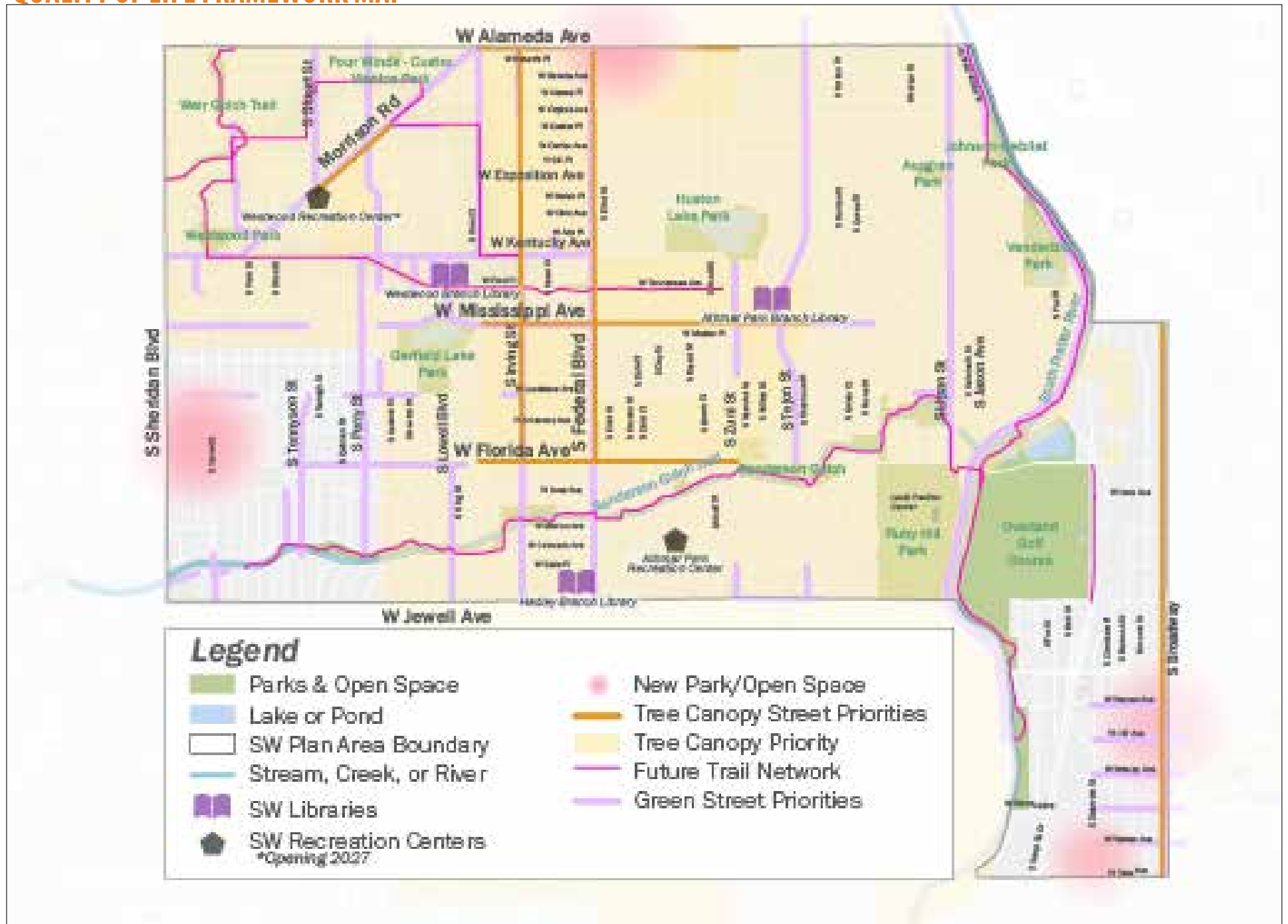
Southwest Denver is home to a variety of parks, trails, and natural features. The area is defined by the South Platte River, nearby gulches, as well as the changing topography. While parks and trails are popular, residents feedback and data show that there is a lack of trees and shade. Many residents want better access to a healthier South Platte River, but physical barriers within neighborhoods make this difficult. The Southwest neighborhoods are also home to growing number of community organizations and cultural initiatives. These are visible in places like community centers and libraries, and in events such as Cinco de Mayo, Lunar New Year, and many more representing the cultural hub that is Southwest Denver.

Well-designed, sustainable, and resource-rich neighborhoods can improve health and overall wellbeing. Improving and expanding these quality-of-life elements will strengthen all parts of this plan and benefit the community.

The following citywide plans offer guidance:

- *Game Plan for a Healthy City (2019)*
- *DPR Strategic Acquisition Plan (2021)*
- *Denver Food Vision (2017)*
- *Storm Drainage Master Plan (2025)*
- *Green Infrastructure Implementation Strategy*
- *Urban Forestry Strategic Plan (2024)*

QUALITY OF LIFE FRAMEWORK MAP



4.2 ENVIRONMENT & RECREATION

RECOMMENDATIONS

STORMWATER & GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE



Environmental impacts should be minimized by using green infrastructure.

Southwest neighborhoods continue to face several environmental challenges such as flooding, stormwater, urban heat island effect, pollution, and other concerns. This stems from limited tree cover, large areas of pavement and cement that limit water filtration, ongoing risks of flooding or drought, and air pollution from various industries near and far. Sustainable solutions at various levels can help make the Southwest a more climate resilient and environmentally responsible place to live, work, and play.

- A. Green infrastructure improvements should be implemented in priority areas based on the following criteria: flood risk, urban heat island effect, water quality, soil quality, air quality, and community input. Green infrastructure features should also be included in major multimodal improvements ([See M1](#)).
 1. Water basins in and around Valverde Gulch, Sanderson Gulch, and West Harvard Gulch should be prioritized for green infrastructure improvements as identified in the *Green Infrastructure Implementation Plan*.
 2. Priority streets include: Tejon, Knox, Virginia Ave near Monroe Elementary, Alameda, South Platte River Drive, Exposition, Federal, Morrison, and any wide right-of-way street.
 3. Priority parks and trails include: Aspgren Park, Ruby Hill Park, Garfield Lake Park, connections and parks along South Platte River and River Trail, Sanderson Gulch, and the Via Verde trails.
 4. [See Quality of Life Framework Map](#)
- B. Southwest's tree canopy and landscaping should be protected and expanded in areas with low canopy coverage, especially along the right-of-way.
 1. In Community Centers and Corridors, plant trees and use climate-friendly landscaping along streets and in parking lots to create a buffer between roads and sidewalks.
- C. The public should be well educated on proper planting, maintenance, and long-term management of trees and landscaping. Resources should be easily accessible through community partnerships, outreach, and other programs.
 2. In residential areas, the existing tree canopy should be protected and expanded with new tree plantings and landscaping on private property and key residential corridors. Schools, churches, and other institutional properties should expand tree canopy and landscaping within their campuses.
 3. In industrial areas, tree plantings and landscaping should be added to available land with priority to areas lacking shade or greenspace to reduce impervious surface area and mitigate stormwater runoff.
 4. In parks and along trails, tree plantings and landscaping improvements should be expanded with priority to areas lacking shade and amenities.
 5. In new developments or redevelopments, ecological beneficial landscaping, trees and other green infrastructure should be incorporated wherever possible through best practices.
- D. To grow and protect the tree canopy in Southwest neighborhoods, regulatory tools should be expanded to protect trees on private property during new and redevelopment. These changes should align with the *2024 Urban Forestry Strategic Plan*.
- E. Green infrastructure should be used to improve Southwest's air and water quality, and flooding risk including:
 1. Water and air quality should be regularly monitored.
 2. Stormwater pipes should be replaced and/or improved as specified by the *Stormwater Drainage Master Plan*.
 3. Streets identified by DOTI as "Water Quality Priority Streets" should be prioritized for green infrastructure implementation.
 4. Additional water quality improvements recommendations for the Riverside Communities Focus Area can be found in RC-Q2
- F. Additional research and studies should be performed to identify missing gaps or information to address on-going and future environmental concerns and considerations.

GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE & ECOLOGICAL BENEFICIAL LANDSCAPING



Creeks, Canals, and Gulches

Existing waterways provide vital stormwater management benefits as well as access to recreation, education, and nature. Opening existing piped waterways and ensuring clear flow of water can provide improved benefits and recreation, wildlife habitat, and improved look and feel in neighborhoods.



Green Streets

Roadways that integrate stormwater management and water quality treatments. Elements include engineered systems such as stormwater planters and permeable paving, as well as naturalized tree planting beds and tree canopy. Green streets can work in conjunction with streets that prioritize multimodal mobility by providing a more comfortable environment. Brighton Boulevard is a local example of a green street working in conjunction with a bicycle facility.



Stormwater Intercept Improvements

Opportunity areas around stormwater intercept drains along low-lying streets and trail segments adjacent to I-25 that are designed to better treat water quality before it flows underground via pipes to the South Platte River.



Green Roof

Typically vegetation in lightweight soil over a waterproofing system on top of a flat or low sloped roof. Soil depth can vary from around 4" up to 30" or more to accommodate a mix of ground covers, flowering plants, shrubs and/or small trees. These can vary from large commercial buildings to bus transit shelter as shown in the image to the left.



Tree Lined Streets

Streets that maximize and prioritize trees to provide shade where they don't exist today and/or provide more consistency along key streets that provide connections to neighborhood parks and commercial areas.



Private Property Practices

Small improvements—like installing rain gardens, using rain barrels, or adding permeable pavers to driveways—can help water soak into the ground and improve its quality. When done collectively, these efforts offer meaningful environmental benefits and support a healthier community.



Ecological Beneficial Landscaping

Trees and plants bring many benefits to the community and appropriate ones are used to achieve the goals of this plan, such as improving the look and feel, sustainability and resiliency, and the health of the ecosystem. Plant types should be selected to achieve some or all of these aims:

- Native or Climate-adaptive – plants that can thrive in Denver because they evolved here or have been adapted to the environment.
- Low or no water – plants that need minimal irrigation and therefore reduce demand on the water system.
- Drought resistant/climate appropriate – plants that withstand the temperatures and weather in Denver, both now and as the climate changes, including periods of extreme heat or drought.
- Pollinator friendly – plants that support bees and other pollinators, which in turn support the broader health of the ecosystem.
- Edible – plants that generate food that community members can eat, such as fruit trees.
- Wildlife habitat – plants that provide places and food for wild animals.
- Stormwater management – helps to slow and absorb runoff during large rain events, naturally filter and clean the water, and overall reduce flooding impacts
- Appearance – provides beauty, interest and shade benefits



RECOMMENDATIONS

PARKS

Q2



POLICY

Parks should stay well-connected and offer amenities that reflect local culture and needs.

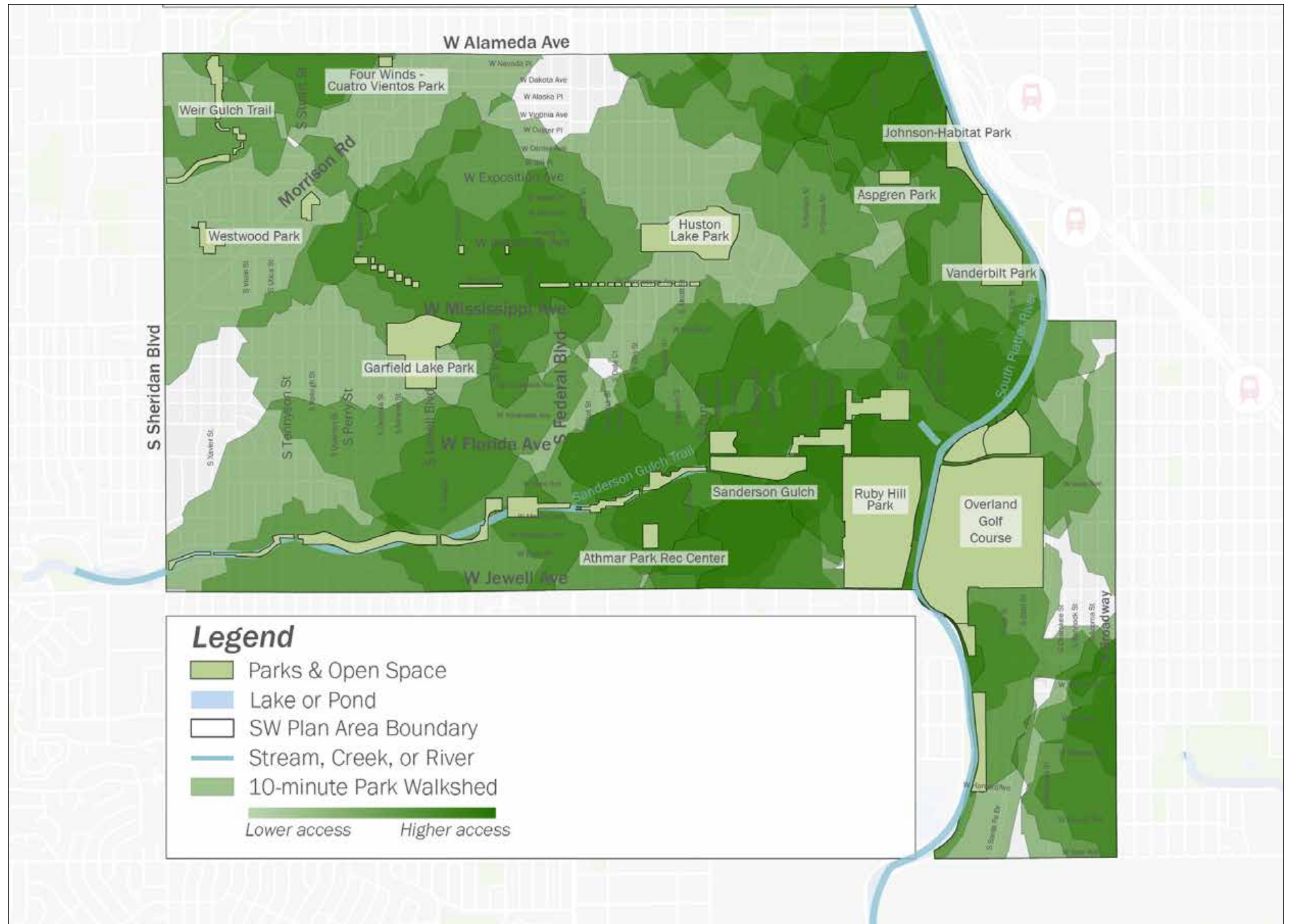
BACKGROUND

Southwest neighborhoods have a variety of parks, both large and small, that residents value as key amenities and favorite places to spend time. While most of the Southwest is already developed, there are opportunities to incorporate new greens spaces in the form of pocket parks or plazas with additional greenery and amenities. Denver Parks & Recreation's plans such as "Game Plan for a Healthy City" and "Strategic Acquisition Plan" provide additional citywide guidance to improve parks throughout the city.

OUTCOMES

- A. Existing parks should be improved to meet the culture and needs of Southwest neighborhoods.
 - 1. Park access should be improved via new sidewalks, crosswalks, pathways, and ADA-friendly features.
 - 2. Refurbish or add amenities such as but not limited to benches, picnic tables/areas, shade structures, spaces for large gatherings or events, lighting, public art, drinking fountains, permanent restrooms, sport fields/courts, dog parks, and trash/recycle receptacles.
 - 3. Park improvements should incorporate green infrastructure ([See Q1](#)) and protect and restore healthy wildlife habitats and functional ecosystem.
 - 4. Visitors should feel safe and comfortable in and around the parks. Maintenance, safety improvements, and security should be added in coordination with park rangers and public safety ([See Q6](#)).
 - 5. Lighting should be added where limited and/or areas of concerns, such as low visibility areas.
- B. Create new parks and open spaces in Southwest neighborhoods where they're currently missing, and design them to reflect the community's needs and culture.
 - 1. Opportunities to create new greenspaces and parks should be identified and studied where access is currently limited: Florida/Sheridan, Alameda/Federal, Evans/Broadway, and near Yale/city border.
 - 2. Green infrastructure, landscaping, tree plantings, safe access paths, and other amenities should be incorporated with new park development ([See Q1](#)).
 - 3. New pocket parks or plazas at underutilized or vacant properties should be added and include additional greenspace. This includes large re-developments, especially in commercial Centers and Corridors and other large properties such as the Colorado Public Radio site. The Large Development Review (LDR) or similar process should be used to ensure community amenities are provided. "Urban Design Features and Amenities" should be incorporated whenever possible ([See L10](#)).
- 4. Access to Denver Public School's playgrounds and facilities as accessible shared open space should be reviewed when feasible.
- C. All parks and open spaces should provide on-going programs or special events to activate the neighborhoods and address residents' recreational needs through community partnerships. Youth and older adult programs should be prioritized as well as cultural festivals or celebrations.
- D. Recreational Centers should be improved or expanded with additional amenities, upgrades, sports courts/fields, community spaces/rooms, and additional programming.
- E. All parks should be well connected to other neighborhood resources by creating a neighborhood greenway or green street network.
 - 1. See Southwest Neighborhood Loop ([Q3](#)), and [RC-Q1](#) for park recommendations for parks near the river..

ACCESS TO PARKS MAP



It is a citywide goal that all residents live within a 10 minute walk (about a half mile) to a park. While most of the Southwest area is in close distance to one of the parks, there is opportunity for additional greenspaces and parks to enhance the neighborhoods. 97

RECOMMENDATIONS

TRAILS

Q3



OUTCOMES BACKGROUND POLICY

Trails and greenways should be well-connected and include amenities and services that reflect the community's culture and needs.

Trails run throughout Southwest neighborhoods and connect to other parts of the city and region. People use them to explore the outdoors, connect with nature, and commute between home and work. While these trails are popular, there are opportunities to improve the experience of the people who use them.

- A. Access to trails should be improved with additional trailheads with safe access, vehicular and bicycle parking, wayfinding/identification signage, and other amenities. Trails should include improved access points to the river for outdoor recreation (See [RC-Q1](#), [RC-M1](#)).
- B. Existing trails should be expanded and connected to other bikeways to create a Southwest Neighborhood Loop for non-motorized and recreational travel (see next page). When feasible, dedicated paths for cyclists and pedestrians should be considered.
 - 1. If trails include on-road segments, improve safety and comfort along these routes.
 - 2. Rail line corridors should be used as multimodal corridors if they ever consolidate or removed.
 - 3. Power Line easements or overhead transmission line corridors that are underground should be used as multimodal corridors to provide neighborhood mobility and recreation.
 - 4. The "Via Verde" neighborhood greenway in Westwood should be completed and extended into Athmar Park (see [Westwood](#) and [Athmar Park](#) neighborhoods for more details).
- C. Additional parks, plazas, viewsheds, resting areas, and other gathering spaces should be added at key locations along the trails and greenways.
- D. Trail improvements should incorporate green infrastructure elements ([See Q1](#)) as well as protect and restore healthy wildlife habitats and functional ecosystems.
- E. Additional amenities such as permanent restrooms, drinking fountains, public art, shade structures, dog waste bag stations, and trash/recycle/compost receptacles should be added and well placed along the trail corridors.
- F. Visitors should feel safe and comfortable in and around the trails. Maintenance, safety improvements, and security should be added in coordination with park rangers and public safety ([see Q6](#)).
- G. Lighting should be added where limited and/or areas of concerns, such as underpasses or low visibility areas.
- H. Street crossings and other key intersections along trails should be updated for safety improvements. Underpass crossings should be explored where feasible.
- I. Connections to business districts should be safe and well defined. Businesses should implement trail and bike friendly practices such as adding bike parking, outdoor seating, and water stations.
- J. Specialized programming should be incorporated along the trails to activate the trail and surrounding areas through community partnerships. These can include fun runs, themed bike rides, community beautifications, or environmental and educational efforts among other opportunities.
- K. Trails should celebrate the identity and culture of the neighborhood it goes through with public art, interpretive signage, and wayfinding ([See Q7](#)).
- L. Trail maintenance and upkeep should be prioritize to make sure trails are safe and comfortable.



SOUTHWEST NEIGHBORHOODS LOOP



Which trail amenities would you like prioritized in your neighborhood?

Phase 1 Engagement Top Survey Results:

- Shade Structures
- Dog Waste Stations
- Restrooms
- Trash Cans
- Drinking Fountains

Many existing and planned trails cross through the Southwest neighborhoods. This informal loop connects them together through bikeways or green streets for recreational uses. See the Mobility Chapter Bicycle and Micromobility Map and [policy M2](#) for more specific recommendations (page 78).



SOUTHWEST FOOD COALITION

The Southwest Food Coalition (SWFC) is a collaborative network of food champions working across the Southwest Denver to expand access to nutritious, culturally relevant food and to transform local food systems. SWFC functions as a hub that convenes community members, non-profits, and public partners to align efforts, share resources, and mobilize action around food justice. The coalition focuses one:

- Convening and coordination between partners
- Systems-focused approach to address food insecurity
- Ensuring that they center the voices of those most impacted by doing ongoing authentic community engagement

Outcomes of their intentional approach to being a community driven entity have been stronger network capacity due to them acting as a convener, coordinator, support in food distribution, and sustained community ownership as they always center the voices of those most impacted by food insecurity through their power sharing model.



4.3 COMMUNITY AMENITIES & SERVICES

RECOMMENDATIONS

FOOD ACCESS



POLICY

Food resources should be increased and more accessible to residents.

OUTCOMES BACKGROUND

Southwest neighborhoods have a mix of restaurants and some grocery stores. Most are located on major roadways such as Federal Boulevard or Sheridan Boulevard as well as smaller shopping centers. Access to everyday goods that are both healthy and affordable is increasingly challenging to residents. Many community resources are working to address these growing concerns within this food desert.

- Continue to support and expand neighborhood collaboration with the Southwest Food Coalition (SWFC) and related programs to identify gaps and increase access to healthy food.
- Support local access partners such as food banks and donation centers to improve their sustainability, operations, and efficiency.
- Innovative, community-based food access models should be expanded, as should other initiatives that reduce food waste and promote sustainability, environmental responsibility, and increased food access. This includes mobile markets and food delivery or rescue programs.
- Opportunities for community gardens, food forests, urban farming, and/or a localized organic diversion site should be identified and expanded with additional green infrastructure, community activation, and land improvements. Prioritize areas with access to water.
- Farmers markets should meet the cultural and affordability needs of residents. Markets should be integrated into community spaces and events.
- Businesses and services should be retained, expanded, and attracted within key Centers and Corridors to provide neighborhood scale, affordable, healthy food retail, restaurant outlets, and culturally relevant food options through food-related business education and training.
 - Explore educational and job opportunities for youth around food access.
- Opportunities to reuse existing buildings for grocery stores (large scale and smaller, corner stores/bodegas) that provide access to daily and fresh food needs should be explored and identified, especially within walking distance from residential concentrations.
 - Priority for areas that currently do not have a grocery store within close proximity: Westwood, Athmar Park, and Overland.
- School lunch programs and offerings should provide more healthy and local options.

DENVER FOOD VISION 2030: 2024 PROGRESS REPORT

The Denver Food Vision 2030 (launched 2017; progress report released October 2024) lays out a citywide framework across four pillars being Inclusive, Healthy, Vibrant, and Resilient, to build an equitable, climate-smart food system. The 2024 Progress Report provides a midpoint check on strategies, metrics, and implementation.

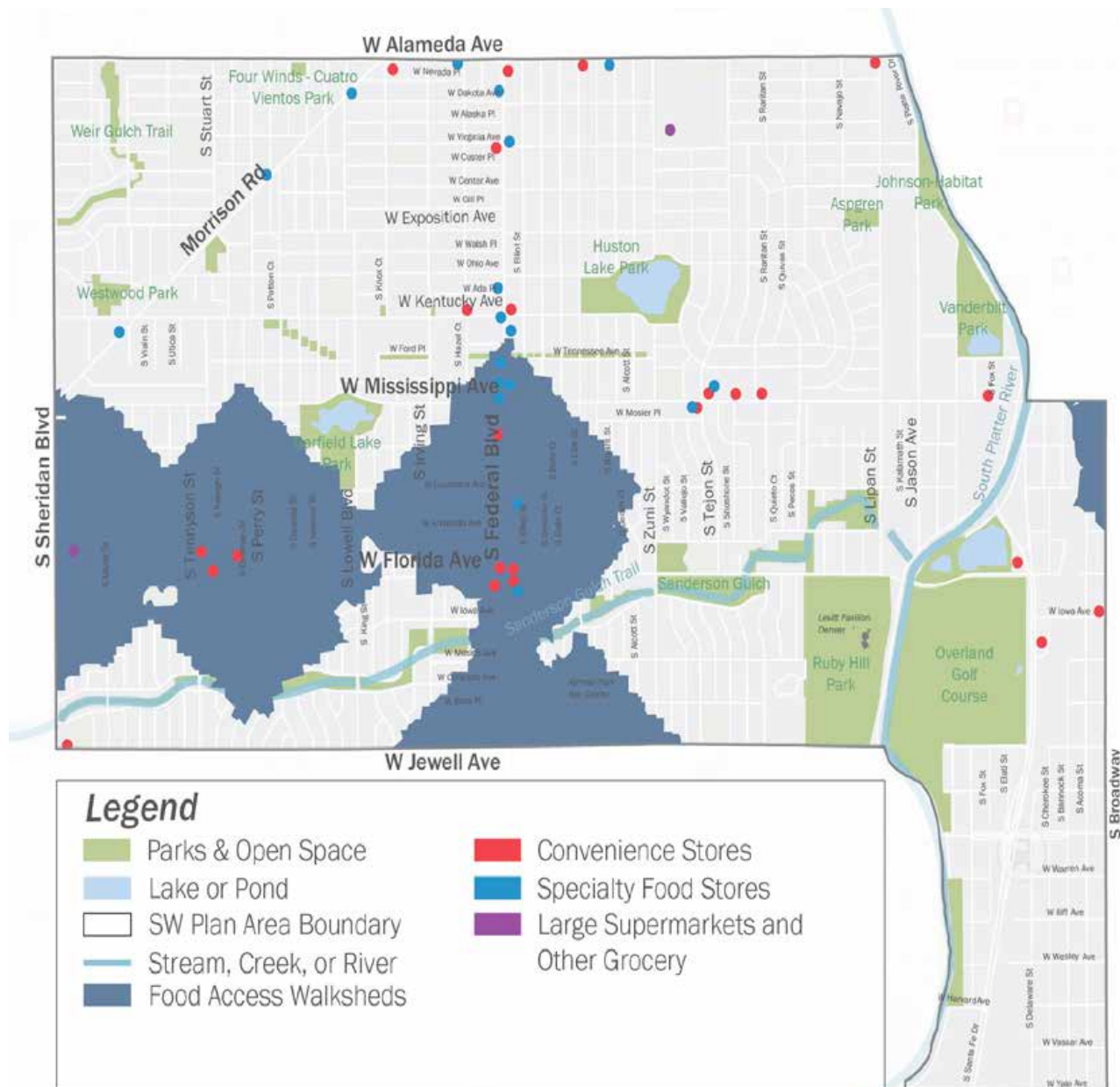
Citywide Progress to Date:

- Midpoint assessment shows 95% of the plan's strategies are underway, with more than half near completion.
- Denver has invested \$67M+ across programs to reduce food insecurity, strengthen local production and distribution, and boost healthy food access.
- Through the voter-approved Healthy Food for Denver's Kids (HFDK) sales tax, \$66M+ has supported 90+ non-profits and schools for meals, gardens, and nutrition education (funded through 2029).
- The Vision tracks concrete goals (e.g., 25% of public-institution food purchases from Colorado and growth of the local food economy) providing a policy hook for procurement, infrastructure, and workforce actions.

Relevance for Southwest Denver

- Neighborhood projects (healthy food retail, urban agriculture, procurement pilots) can tie directly to Food Vision pillars and metrics which are helpful for funding logic, accountability, and reporting.
- City initiatives can be geographically targeted to SW neighborhoods and implemented with local partners.

ACCESS TO FOOD WALKSHED MAP



Southwest residents desire better access to traditional grocery stores or markets. This map shows an existing 10 minute walkshed from large supermarkets and other grocery. Most existing stores are located at the edge of the neighborhoods. Mar Lee, Westwood, Ruby Hill, and the northern edge of Overland are the most limited to having fresh food within a walking distance or short drive. Sheridan Boulevard, Federal Boulevard, and Broadway area locations could help improve this challenge as well as provide job opportunities.

RECOMMENDATIONS

HEALTH

Q5



POLICY

Healthcare and public health facilities should be reliably accessible.

BACKGROUND

There are no hospitals within these neighborhoods. Urgent care clinics, medical offices, and pharmacies are limited – most are located on major corridors. Many are accessible only by car or transit.

OUTCOMES

- A. Healthcare facilities, clinics, and pharmacy services should be increased. Explore and support opportunities with Denver Health or other medical organizations (SCL, Centura, UCHHealth) to expand reach within Southwest, including urgent care facilities and pop-up clinics. Behavioral health screenings and interventions should be integrated with these services. 24/7 emergency options should be available.
- B. Collaborations between health organizations, schools, faith-based communities, and other community organizations should be improved and expanded to promote preventive care and increase access to health services.
 - 1. Clinics in partnerships with Denver Public Schools should be supported to provide a variety of services for students and their families.
 - 2. Models that promote co-locations of services should be encouraged, especially in key Centers and Corridors.
 - 3. Community campaigns and additional outreach for these services should be provided to improve access and education to residents.
 - 4. Encourage and promote community volunteer opportunities with these related services.
 - 5. Improved transit routes as well as informal transit access such as “access-a-ride” or neighborhood transit programs should be incorporated into area mobility options ([See M3](#)).

SAFETY

Q6



POLICY

All Southwest neighborhoods should be safe and welcoming.

BACKGROUND

Throughout public outreach during the planning process, many residents identified growing concerns about overall safety within their neighborhoods. Physical improvements and improved civic engagement can build community pride and connectivity.

OUTCOMES

- A. Street lighting should be improved in areas where it does not feel safe to be at night, especially around parks, public spaces, schools, alleys, transit stations, and commercial corridors. Work with community members to identify additional locations.
- B. Safety should be improved through additional security and other improvements to the built environment.
- C. Youth programs and other community-based initiatives should be supported and expanded to reduce youth violence, encourage civic engagement, and community socialization connections.
- D. Communications with city agencies, police departments, fire departments, and local organizations should be improved to support relations with residents.
- E. Neighborhood watch programs should be developed and/or incorporated to ongoing efforts to create more “eyes on the street.”
- F. Community beautification efforts should be encouraged and supported such as neighborhood clean-ups, yard improvements, graffiti removal, and alley improvements to spur community pride.
- G. Ensure and encourage that vacant and derelict buildings are secured and made safe for the public. The Neglected and Derelict Building and other related protocols should be followed.

RECOMMENDATIONS

COMMUNITY & CULTURE

Q7



OUTCOMES BACKGROUND POLICY

Public spaces and community placemaking should celebrate and embrace the diverse cultural fabric and traditions of the Southwest neighborhoods.

As Southwest neighborhoods grew, residents brought cultural traditions that are now reflected in the built environment, local food, community events, and much more. South Asian, Latino/a/x, Indigenous, and other communities have helped shape the area into a vibrant cultural hub—and continue to do so today. In community surveys, when asked “What elements best define culture and community in your neighborhood from your perspective?” The top response was People and Community, followed by Cultural Events and Traditions, and Culturally Relevant Businesses.

- A. Public spaces should be created and expanded to honor and recognize the culture and history of the Southwest neighborhoods. This should include public plazas, cultural districts, parks, and similar spaces. These Public spaces should include amenities like spaces for temporary vendors or events, amenities for all ages and seating areas to support community gatherings.
- B. Interpretative signage, monuments, community gateways, and other placemaking elements should be incorporated into public spaces, trails, business districts, and other historic sites to recognize the cultural contributions to the region.
- C. Public art should be expanded throughout the neighborhoods, especially in public areas such as the key preservation corridors (Little Saigon, Morrison Road, and Antique Row,) parks, and similar locations. Public art should be an opportunity to share the local culture of the neighborhood and the area.
- D. New and existing events, festivals, and other celebrations should be created or expanded to incorporate cultural heritage and educational opportunities. Organization of these events should be supported with a diversity of funding sources and resources.
- E. Cultural businesses and business clusters should work together to create and promote a unique shopping experience and destination ([See L6](#)).
- F. Historic, cultural, and architecturally significant sites or districts should be designated as local, state, or national landmark considerations ([See L9](#)).
- G. Food heritage, tourism, and traditions should be retained and promoted, especially along Federal Boulevard. See additional recommendations in the [Federal Boulevard chapter](#).
- H. Community engagement, input, and promotions should be expanded and included to shape community decisions and activities. Outreach should include youth and schools as well as provide information in multiple languages for expanded community access. Wealth building programs should be incorporated to these efforts, especially for Latino/a/x, South Asian, and other migrant communities.
- I. Existing and new cultural centers or hubs should be strengthened to celebrate and educate the community. They should be located in key Centers and Corridors or former institutional or city-owned buildings. [See Mississippi Shopping Center](#) as example in Focus Area chapter.
- J. Create inclusive, safe, and affirming spaces with dedicated programming that supports the well-being and visibility of diverse groups.
- K. Foster cultural pride and belonging by integrating the area’s diverse languages into signage, public art, events, and shared community spaces.
- L. Enable residents to extend private life into the public realm by supporting fences and gates that create front-yard plazas, reflecting Latino/Hispanic cultural traditions.



Lunar New Year Festival in the Far East Center



Community celebration at the Denver Indian Center



Interpretive Signage near the Evans Station



5. FOCUS AREAS OF SOUTHWEST

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5.1 FOCUS AREAS OF SOUTHWEST OVERVIEW

The Focus Areas chapter explains how broader recommendations in the plan are applied to specific parts of the community. It acts as a practical guide to show how planning ideas could turn into real-world changes. In some cases, the chapter includes extra guidance, goals, or graphics to make things clearer. Each of the focus area has a catalytic project that represents a city project intended to catalyze improvements in the focus area. The graphics and diagrams provided are only for illustrative and conceptual purposes and not a literal representation of a future vision. Some focus areas are located within a single neighborhood, while others span multiple neighborhoods.

Detailed recommendations for the focus areas within a single neighborhood can be found in the neighborhood chapter. These focus areas include the following:

- **Morrison Road:** see recommendations in the [Westwood Neighborhood](#)
- **Mar Lee Neighborhood Shopping Center:** see recommendations in [Mar Lee Neighborhood](#)
- **Alameda Square Shopping Center:** see recommendations in [Athmar Park Neighborhood](#)

Detailed recommendations for the focus areas that span multiple neighborhoods can be found in this chapter or the Federal Boulevard chapter. These focus areas include the following:

- **Federal Boulevard:** see recommendations in the [Federal Boulevard](#) chapter
- **Riverside Communities:** see recommendations in this chapter
- **Mississippi Neighborhood Shopping Center:** see recommendations in this chapter

FOCUS AREA OVERVIEW MAP



FOCUS AREAS AND CATALYTIC PROJECTS

Morrison Road (page 178)

- Catalytic Project: Morrison Road Streetscape Improvements

Mar Lee Shopping Center (Page 158)

- Catalytic Project: Re-introduction of street grid

Federal Boulevard (page 124)

- Catalytic Project: Federal Boulevard Bus Rapid Transit Project

Alameda Square Shopping Center (page 153)

- Catalytic Project: Zuni Street City property redevelopment with community serving uses

Mississippi Shopping Center (page 122)

- Catalytic Project: Business organization into formal district

Riverside Communities (page 108)

- Catalytic Project: Reconnect neighborhoods on both sides of the river. Projects that improve east-west connectivity across major barriers including crossings at Gill/Exposition, Tennessee and Lipan, near Louisiana and the railroad tracks, South Platte River Drive as a shared street, Iliff and Santa Fe, and the bridge between Ruby Hill Park and South Platte River trail.



*Historical images of the impacts of the 1965 flood
(Source: Denver Public Library)*

5.2 RIVERSIDE COMMUNITIES

5.2.1 Background and Context

The South Platte River runs through the heart of Denver and connects many neighborhoods, including Athmar Park, Ruby Hill, and Overland. Over time, we have turned our backs to the river, leading to environmental, connectivity, and community challenges along the river corridor. Today, there is a growing interest in re-connecting with and re-imagining the river as community asset.

Historically, the river flowed naturally through a wide, meandering path, covering the low-lying land on either side of the river channel. This natural riverbed was as wide as one mile in some locations. This area has long been important, and continues to be important today, to the Indigenous communities who view the river as a sacred space tied to nature, sustainability, stewardship, cultural traditions, and education. It's a place of learning, connection, and belonging.

In the late 1800s, Denver grew as a city and the low-lying land along the river, often referred to as “the bottoms,” became home to railroads, industry, and farming. This industrial growth also brought the emergence of housing and immigrant populations along the river. These neighborhoods along the industrialized river corridor were largely neglected and by the 1930s were marked as “high-risk” in redlining maps, essentially eliminating investment in these neighborhoods and in land adjacent to the river. These practices impacted not only the livelihood of the people within these neighborhoods, but also the environmental conditions and ecological health of the river and adjacent land.

As the city continued to grow, the river grew as an industrialized barrier between the east and west. By 1933, ten bridges and six viaducts spanned the river corridor attempting to link the east and the west sides of the City. Alameda Bridge was a primary crossing in the Southwest area.

Following World War II, the National Highway System established the national highways which included an 11-mile stretch of I-25 through Denver, known as the Valley Highway. The alignment of the highway adjacent to the river meant the acquisition of properties along the river in Denver's west and southwest neighborhoods. Completed in 1958, the new highway stood as a significant barrier between communities on either side of the river, and a barricade to the river from communities east of the river.

In June of 1965, a major flood of the South Platte River flooded the highway and devastated the low-lying areas along the river including the neighborhoods of Overland, Athmar Park, and Valverde. Over 300 houses were condemned and 70 completely lost within these neighborhoods. Following the flood, I-25 was realigned westerly through the Southwest and the river channelized, further impacting residents in these neighborhoods.

5.2.2 South Platte River Today

The social and environmental impacts of our past policy and infrastructure decisions remain evident in Denver's Southwest neighborhoods. The once meandering river now flows in a constricted path edged by industry, rail lines and I-25 - often invisible to the adjacent community. Flood control measures, channelization, and infrastructure have weakened the ecological function of the river, reduced riparian habitat, and negatively impacted the river's overall health.

The human experience of the river in the Southwest neighborhoods is also challenging. Transportation infrastructure such as Santa Fe Drive, Platte River Drive, and rail lines are a physical barrier to connectivity to the river from the neighborhood. These same transportation infrastructure affect noise and air quality. Trails through this section of river are narrow in places, confined and difficult to access. There are few multimodal crossings and limited opportunities to move from one side of the river to the other.

Because of the industrial and transportation pattern, there is limited opportunity for Southwest neighbors to interact and experience the river. Overland Pond and Johnson Habitat highlight the potential for river-integrated experiences, while parks like Ruby Hill, Vanderbilt, and Valverde are separated from the river by roads and other barriers. Southwest neighborhoods along the river are eager to address these challenges and improve the river corridor health, mobility, and experience for their communities.

5.2.3 Vision Overview

The overall vision for the South Platte Riverside Communities area is a safe, healthy, and welcoming place for everyone. The river will be restored and protected as a natural asset that reflects the rich history and diverse cultures of the surrounding communities. People will be able to easily access the river and move across it, with comfortable spaces to gather, relax, and connect with neighbors.

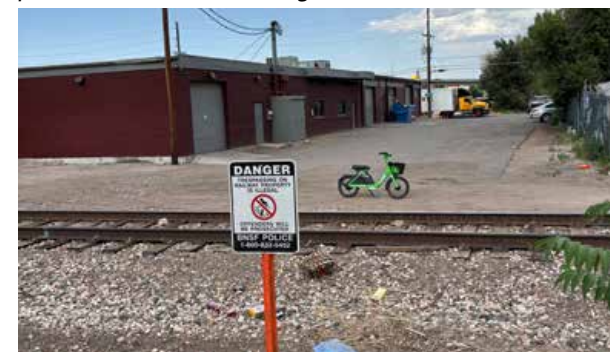
The area will continue to support industrial jobs while also allowing for a mix of new uses—like homes, shops, and live-work spaces—that blend well with nearby neighborhoods. Flood protection and environmental improvements will help keep communities safe, while efforts to reduce industrial impacts will support a cleaner, more livable environment for all.



The South Platte River supports a diverse range of habitats along its course



The South Platte River trail serves as a key multimodal path for the Southwest neighborhoods



Railroad tracks act as a connectivity barrier in the Athmar Park neighborhood

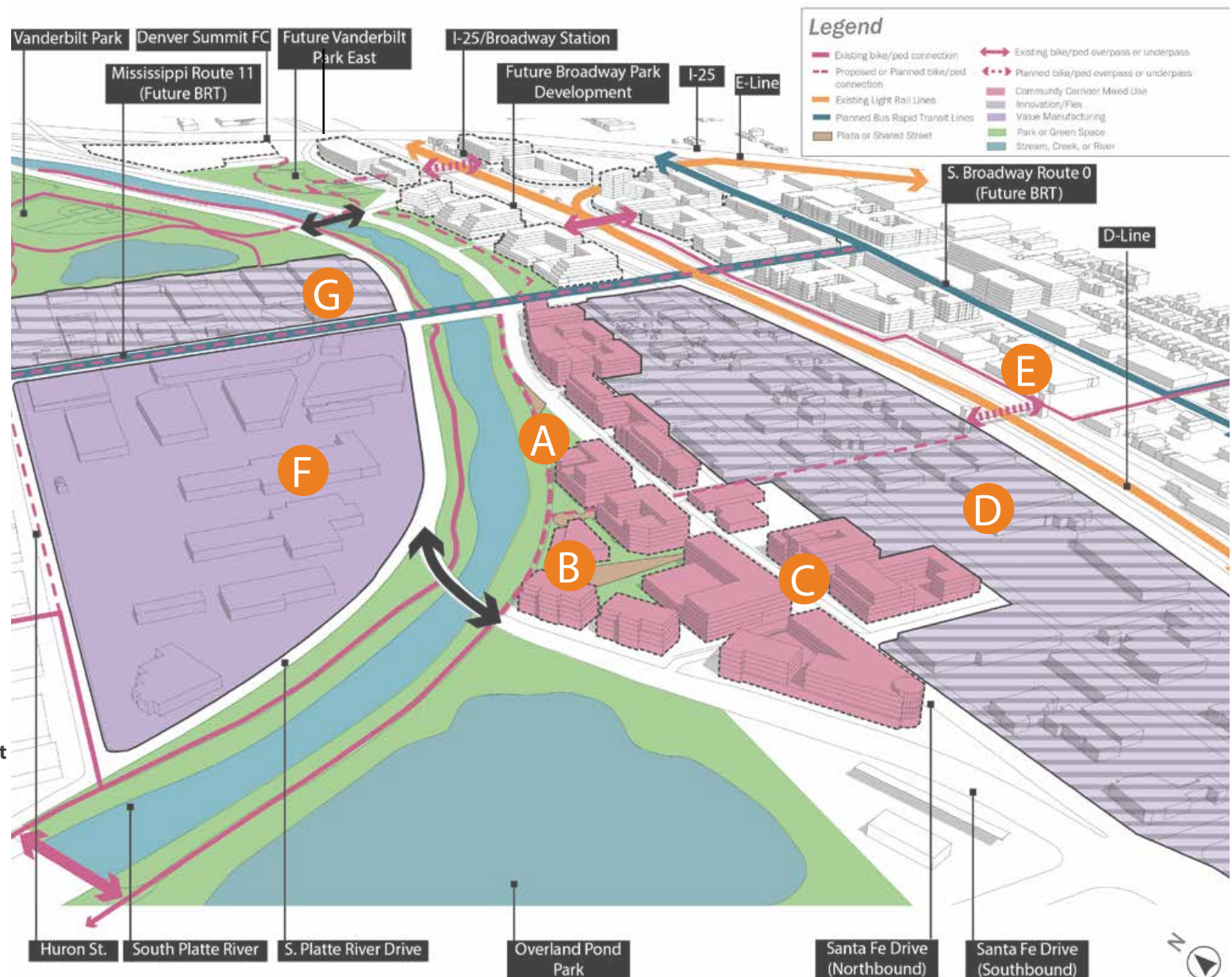
5.2.4 Sub Areas Visions

- 1 South Platte River Vision:**
The South Platte River serves as an important ecological and recreational amenity for residents. Prioritizing the health of the river and increasing public access to and along the river corridor are critical in transforming the South Platte River into a premier urban corridor, where people and nature thrive in harmony. The South Platte corridor should build upon the South Platte River Trail as the connector between parks, businesses, and active gathering spaces with great urban design.
- 2 South of Vanderbilt Park:**
In the Athmar Park Neighborhood, the area south of Vanderbilt Park and north of Mississippi Avenue should allow a mix of industrial, commercial, and limited residential uses to serve as a transition from the industrial uses to the river the I-25/Broadway station and the future Denver FC Summit soccer stadium. Access to Vanderbilt Park, the South Platte River trail, and the Broadway and I-25 station should be improved. Industrial impacts on existing residential should be mitigated and landscaping should be improved to ensure residents have access to opportunity and quality of life.
- 3 Santa Fe Corridor Vision:**
In the Overland neighborhood, the area between the South Platte River and the railroad tracks from Mississippi to Iowa, which includes the Santa Fe corridor should transition from an auto-oriented commercial and industrial area into a mixed use, vibrant, transit-oriented neighborhood. South Platte River Drive in this section should become a shared public space that connects the river and the trail to a mixed-use pedestrian corridor along Santa Fe Drive. The Santa Fe corridor itself should become a walkable mixed-use corridor. The area between Santa Fe and Broadway should allow for a mix of industrial, commercial and residential uses. An additional bicycle and pedestrian connection between Mississippi and Iowa should be added to help connect this area to the Broadway corridor.
- 4 Lipan Street Vision:**
Lipan Street has the potential to become a vibrant and active corridor that fulfills the community need for more gathering and community spaces while serving as a transition from the higher intensity industrial uses further east. A local commercial community hub north of Ruby Hill Park and a mix of community serving businesses, industrial spaces, and limited small scale residential along the rest of the corridor would create a corridor that serves the community and provides space for industrial business as well. At the same time this corridor can provide a safe and comfortable north-south route for pedestrians that includes a complete sidewalk network, safe crossings, street parking, tree canopy, lighting, and wayfinding to connect neighborhoods, parks, and the South Platte River and a connection to east-west routes.
- 5 North of Evans Station**
The Innovation/flex area north of Evans Station and should allow a mix of commercial, industrial and residential uses, prioritizing community-serving uses and small manufacturing, with a mix of compatible residential types. These areas should serve as a transition from the higher intensity uses closer to Evan Avenue.
- 6 South of Evans Station**
The Innovation/flex area south of Evans Station and should allow a mix of commercial, industrial and limited residential uses, prioritizing community-serving uses and small manufacturing, with a mix of compatible residential types. These areas should serve as a transition from the higher intensity industrial uses further south.
- 7 Manufacturing Preservation Areas**
The Manufacturing Preservation represent areas where preservation of industrial uses is prioritized .These areas are mapped value manufacturing future places where industrial and manufacturing uses are prioritized with limited commercial and no residential uses.
- 8 Evans Corridor**
The area north and south of Evans Avenue at South Platte River Drive should evolve into a river-oriented destination with a mix of uses.



SOUTH PLATTE, SOUTH VANDERBILT PARK, AND SANTA FE CORRIDOR DIAGRAM

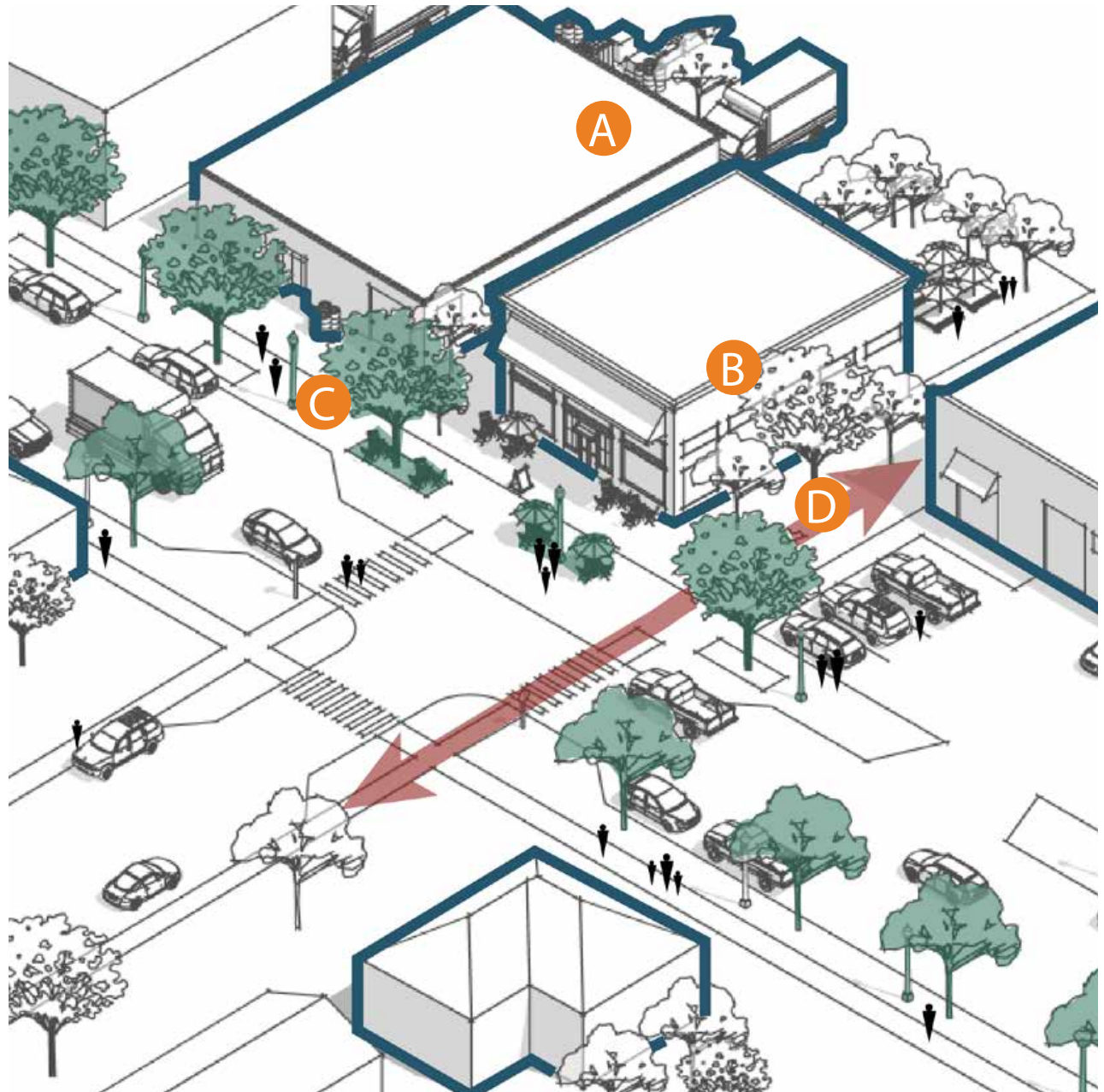
- A** South Platte River with improved river health and stewardship
- B** Gathering spaces along the river that connect to commercial areas
- C** Santa Fe as a mixed use walkable corridor that connects to the river
- D** Industrial uses mixed with commercial and residential uses
- E** Bike and pedestrian connection to Broadway Corridor
- F** Preservation of industrial areas
- G** Industrial uses mixed with commercial and limited residential uses that connect with the park and the future soccer stadium



This illustrative diagram represents a conceptual idea of the key components and recommendations for the this section of the Riverside Communities Focus Area.

LIPAN STREET DIAGRAM

- A** Allow and support existing industrial business
- B** Allow commercial community serving uses and limited residential uses along the corridor. Prioritizing adaptive reuse.
- C** Improve pedestrian environment and intersections. Consider tree canopy and lighting.
- D** Improve connections from Lipan Street to Jason Street, Vanderbilt Park, the I-25 Station and future soccer stadium.



This illustrative diagram represents a conceptual idea of the key components and recommendations for Lipan Street. It is not intended to represent any specific intersection but rather the key elements of the vision for Lipan Street.

5.2.5 Land Use Recommendations

RECOMMENDATIONS

RIVERSIDE COMMERCIAL NODES

RC-L1

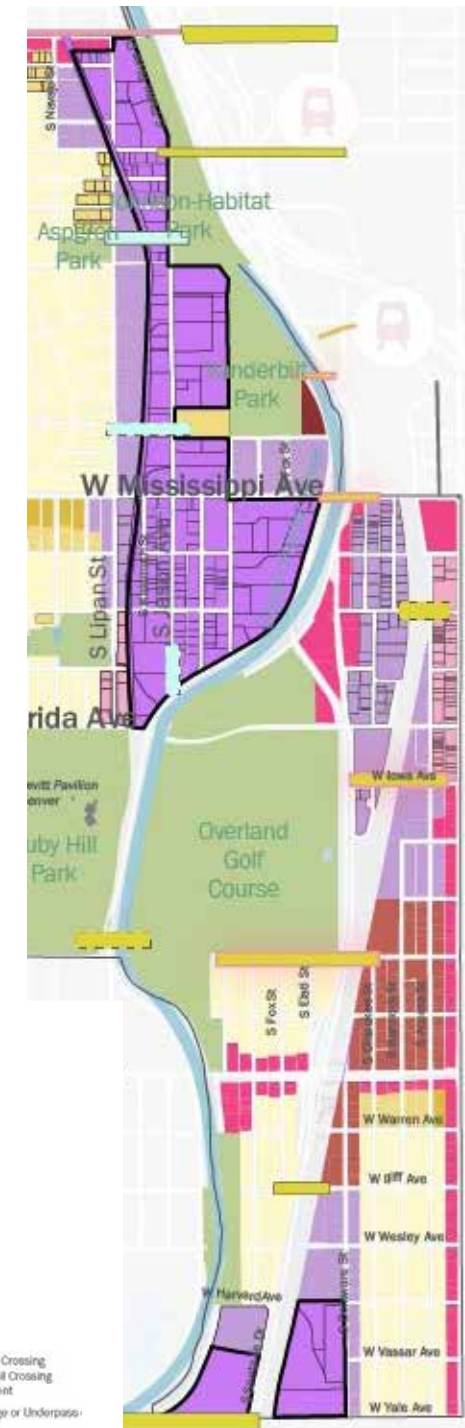


OUTCOMES BACKGROUND POLICY

Centers and Corridors within the Riverside Communities Focus Areas should be active community gathering and commercial spaces that connect the river to the surrounding communities (see L10 for more details on Centers and Corridors).

Communities located along the river have mentioned the need for more public and commercial gathering spaces for the community to come together, especially spaces that connect to the river or are in close proximity to the river or other public parks and spaces. Community input has highlighted spaces as Table Public House and Nixon's in Littleton as good examples from public feedback.

- A. **Santa Fe Corridor:** The Santa Fe Corridor should evolve into a walkable, mixed-use destination.
 1. Capitalize on the investments and redevelopment of the Broadway Station area to the north which includes the proposed Denver FC Summit soccer stadium, increased density, and connectivity improvements.
 2. Future development should be pedestrian-oriented and include active commercial uses fronting Santa Fe Drive with massing that steps down to the street level but could include taller buildings that take advantage of mountain views to the west on upper floors.
 3. Development should consider the opportunity of better connecting to the river by re-imagining South Platte River Drive as a shared street that acts as a public gathering space (See RC-M1).
- B. **Evans Avenue Corridor:** The area north and south of Evans Avenue at South Platte River Drive should evolve into a river-oriented destination with a mix of uses.
 1. Build upon the success of existing community spaces in this area, such as Table Public House, making use of the nearby park amenities and access to the South Platte River.
 2. Support adaptive reuse of existing buildings into active commercial spaces.
3. Development in this area should be mixed-use, oriented to the river and neighborhood-scale with high-quality, pedestrian-friendly design to create a walkable, mixed-use destination.
4. Businesses and future development should consider the opportunity of better connecting to the river by re-imagining South Platte River Drive as a shared street that acts as a public gathering space (See RC-M1).
- C. **Lipan Street Local Corridor:** The section of Lipan Street from Louisiana to Florida should evolve into a local commercial node that serves the community and visitors of Ruby Hill Park.
 1. Existing industrial uses between Louisiana Avenue and Florida Avenue should be allowed to remain. This segment of the corridor should evolve over time into a local, community-serving commercial corridor and hub that supports businesses that cater to the community and Ruby Hill Park visitors.
- D. Commercial activity nodes within the South Platte River corridor should be well connected to other public gathering spaces, parks, and recreation along the corridor.



RECOMMENDATIONS

INDUSTRIAL USES

RC-
L2

The industrial areas should support new and existing industrial businesses and ensure they are part of a healthy community.

Southwest contains key industrial areas that contribute to the area and city's overall economic and fiscal health. These areas provide employment opportunities for those with trade skills and range of educational backgrounds. Manufacturing employers generally provide higher wages without requiring an advanced degree, enhancing the area's access to opportunity.

- A. **Value Manufacturing Future Places** should prioritize light industrial and manufacturing uses with limited commercial and no residential uses.
1. Light industrial should continue to be the primary uses allowed.
 2. Commercial uses may be allowed along the edges of industrial place types, particularly along the South Platte River, Alameda Avenue, and Mississippi Avenue.
 3. Complimentary alternative uses should be allowed to provide flexibility for industrial businesses and building to evolve.
 4. Preservation of industrial uses should be focused on the areas mapped as value manufacturing and located within the Manufacturing Preservation Area boundary.
- B. Innovation/flex **Future Places** should have a mix of light industrial, craft manufacturing, and commercial uses with limited residential uses.
1. Zoning should ensure commercial and light industrial are the primary uses, with limited residential allowed, depending on the needs of each location (See outcomes C-G below).
 2. Where residential is allowed, live-work units should be encouraged.
 3. Commercial uses should be concentrated along the edges of industrial future place types, particularly along the South Platte River.
 4. Complimentary alternative uses should be allowed to provide flexibility for industrial businesses and buildings to evolve. Small manufacturing uses should be promoted and helped to remain in the areas.
- C. **South of Vanderbilt Park Area:** In the Athmar Park Neighborhood, the Innovation/flex area south of Vanderbilt Park and north of Mississippi Avenue should allow a mix of industrial, commercial, and limited residential uses to serve as a transition from the industrial uses to the river, the I-25/Broadway station, and the future Denver FC Summit soccer stadium. Access to Vanderbilt Park, the South Platte River trail, and the Broadway & I-25 station should be improved. Industrial impacts on existing residential should be mitigated and landscaping should be improved to ensure residents have access to opportunity and quality of life.
- D. **Santa Fe Corridor Area:** In the Overland neighborhood, the Innovation/flex area between Santa Fe and Broadway should allow a mix of uses, including residential, to reflect changes along Santa Fe and around the Broadway and I-25 station, which includes the future Denver FC Summit soccer stadium. As the mix of uses in the area change, design, mobility infrastructure and landscaping should be improved to support new residents including maintaining the street and alley grid and improving sidewalk widths.
- E. **Lipan Street Corridor:** In the neighborhoods of Ruby Hill and Athmar Park, the area along Lipan Street acts as the western edge of the industrial area. The Innovation/flex future places along this corridor should allow a mix of industrial, commercial and limited residential uses, prioritizing community-serving uses, small manufacturing, and compatible residential types at a low-medium scale that include first floor activation or units facing the streets. The area should serve as a transition from the higher intensity industrial uses further east. Existing industrial uses along the west side of Lipan Street between West Virginia Avenue and West Gill Place should be allowed to remain. This segment of the corridor should evolve into residential blocks with a mix of low residential and Low-Medium residential as mapped on the Future Places map. A parking management strategy plan should be completed to address flow and supply of a mixed-use area.
- F. **South of Evans Area:** The innovation/flex area south of Evans Station should allow a mix of commercial, industrial and limited residential uses, prioritizing community-serving uses and small manufacturing, with a mix of compatible residential types. These areas should serve as a transition from the higher intensity industrial uses further south.
- G. **North of Evans Area:** The innovation/flex area north of Evans between Colorado Avenue and the railroad should allow a mix of industrial, commercial, and residential uses, prioritizing community-serving uses and small manufacturing, with a mix of compatible residential types. These uses can serve as a transition between the rail lines and the Broadway Corridor.

RECOMMENDATIONS

INDUSTRIAL
DESIGNRC-
L3POLICY
BACKGROUND
STRATEGIES

Design and development in industrial areas should improve the built form while retaining the area's character and creating a more walkable and pedestrian-oriented environment.

The industrial areas within the Southwest area are located along the South Platte River and adjacent to residential areas. Because these areas represent some of the few remaining industrial areas within the City of Denver. Preserving them is a priority. At the same time, with changes in industrial needs and the considerations of the surrounding context, these have the opportunity to better serve the surrounding neighborhood.

- A. Buildings should be designed to face the river, with loading and storage areas away from the river. Active and commercial uses should be concentrated near trail and river access points.
- B. **Innovation/flex places** should require buildings that relate to the public street at a pedestrian scale and include active ground floors, while providing flexibility for a range of uses.
 1. Building scale and siting should be compatible with surrounding uses and serve as a transition to higher-intensity industrial uses.
 2. Adaptive re-use of buildings should be encouraged.
 3. Buildings in Subarea 2 (South of Vanderbilt park) within the Innovation/flex places should be up to five stories following the guidance from the *I-25 and Broadway Station Area Plan* (2016).
 4. Buildings in the Subarea 3 (Santa Fe Corridor) within the Innovation/flex places should be up to five stories as they relate to the similar heights on the Community Corridor along Santa Fe Avenue and as a transition from the higher densities further north closer to the I-25 Broadway Station area and Denver FC Summit soccer stadium.
 5. Buildings in the Subarea 4 (Lipan Street) within the Innovation/flex places should be up to three stories and serve as a transition from the industrial uses.
 6. Buildings in the Subarea 5 (South of Evans Avenue) within the Innovation/flex places should be up to 3 stories following the guidance of the *Evans Station Area Plan* (2009)
 7. Buildings in the Subarea 6 (North of Evans Avenue) within the Innovation/flex places should serve as a transition from the taller heights closer to the Evans station into the surrounding areas. The area closer to the station between Colorado Avenue to Iowa Ave Should be up to 5 stories. The area between Iowa Avenue and Louisiana Avenue should be up to 3 stories.
- C. **Value Manufacturing places** should balance the design needs of industrial uses with those of other visitors. Development regulations should allow buildings that accommodate a wide range of light industrial uses, while transitioning to adjacent uses through scale and siting, particularly when abutting residential areas.



5.2.6 Mobility Recommendations

RECOMMENDATIONS

RIVERSIDE NETWORK



POLICY

Communities on both sides of the river are safely and comfortably connected to each other and to the river corridor by a variety of modes (see [M1](#), [M2](#), [M3](#), [M4](#) and [M5](#)).

OUTCOMES BACKGROUND

Many barriers such as the river, railroad tracks, and highways exist within the area of the Riverside Communities resulting in few connections between communities on both sides of the river and few access points to the river corridor itself.

- A. Parks and gathering spaces along the South Platte River will be more accessible and should be connected through a network of pedestrian and bicycle routes.
- B. South Platte River Drive in the area between Arizona Avenue and Santa Fe Avenue, and between Evans Avenue and Grant Frontier Park, should be re-imagined as a shared street and public space that is better integrated with the South Platte River Trail and supports a pedestrian and bicyclist friendly environment, improves traffic calming, provides mobility connections, and serves as public gathering spaces along the river.
- C. Santa Fe Drive should support dedicated pedestrian movement and increase pedestrian visibility.
 - 1. Redesign intersections with pedestrian crossings that reduce crossing distances and increase visibility of the pedestrian.
 - 2. Improve overall streetscape experience with wide sidewalks, increased tree canopy, and other urban commercial streetscape amenities.
 - 3. Explore the possibility of on-street parking to serve future commercial uses and serve as a buffer and traffic-calming.
- 4. Improve pedestrian safety and access by bringing existing sidewalks up to standard and installing new sidewalks where they are missing including South Santa Fe Drive, south of West Florida on the eastern side of the street, and corridors connecting to Santa Fe Drive.
- 5. Upgrade the wood fence between Santa Fe Drive and homes in Overland to reduce noise and make the area more comfortable. Explore an opportunity for business in the area to use the barrier for marketing purposes.
- D. New crossings that allow for bicycle and pedestrian mobility should be incorporated into the mobility network.
 - 1. Explore an east-west bike/ped crossing of the railroad tracks at Exposition Avenue or Gill Place connecting the neighborhood to Vanderbilt Park, the river and the trail.
 - 2. Explore an east-west bike/ped crossing of the railroad tracks that connects the future Tennessee route in Athmar Park to Vanderbilt Park, the river and the South Platte River Trail.
 - 3. Explore a bike/ped crossing of the Railroad tracks that connects the Santa Fe corridor with the Broadway corridor between Mississippi and Iowa.
- 4. Explore a bike/ped crossing of the South Platte River that connects the South Platte River trail and Jewell bridge to Ruby Hill Park.
- 5. Explore a bike/ped crossing of Santa Fe Drive and the railroad tracks at Iliff Avenue to connect Evans Station and connect the eastern side of Overland with the river and South Platte River Trail.
- E. Study and install new connections not previously identified in *Denver Moves: Bikes* to complete gaps in the bicycle network for access to the Sanderson Gulch and South Platte River Trail such as an enhanced Lipan Street connection between Sanderson Gulch and the South Platte River.
- F. New bicycle and pedestrian improvements of the Alameda Avenue crossing of the South Platte River and I-25 should connect to the bicycle and pedestrian network of the Southwest area.
- G. Support a safe and comfortable pedestrian environment along Lipan Street by prioritizing a wide and complete sidewalk network.

RECOMMENDATIONS

TRUCK
ROUTESRC-
M2

POLICY

Truck routes should be designated and enforced to minimize impacts on residential areas. (See M4).

OUTCOMES BACKGROUND

Industrial and residential proximity creates safety and comfort issues for pedestrians due to truck traffic in residential streets.

- A. Regulations should limit the impacts of heavy truck traffic on surrounding uses by designating and enforcing truck routes away from residential areas, designing sites to place driveways and loading areas away from surrounding uses paired with adequate screening, and limiting idling of trucks on streets and in parking and loading areas.

RECOMMENDATIONS

STADIUM
TRAFFICRC-
M3

POLICY

The traffic impacts of the future Denver Summit FC soccer stadium on the Southwest area should be studied and addressed.

BACKGROUND OUTCOMES

The incoming Denver FC Summit Stadium in the Baker neighborhood is adjacent to the Overland and Athmar Park neighborhoods in the Southwest Area. As a new regional destination in Denver, this venue may increase traffic volumes, parking, and mobility needs in the surrounding neighborhoods.

- A. A curbside Area Management Plan in the Athmar Park and Overland neighborhoods should be completed to identify on-street curbside strategies based on parking impacts of the Denver Summit FC soccer stadium.
- B. Parking impact on Industrial Areas in the Athmar Park and Overland neighborhoods should be mitigated by limiting parking as a primary use on industrial lots or through other strategies.
- C. A multimodal access study should be performed from surrounding neighborhoods including nearby transit stations and park-and-ride considerations.



5.2.7 Quality of Life Recommendations

RECOMMENDATIONS

SAFE RIVER CORRIDOR PUBLIC SPACES



POLICY

Parks, streets, and public spaces along the river corridor and the river itself should be accessible, safe and reflective of the Southwest culture (See Q2 and Q7).

BACKGROUND

Parks and open spaces along the river corridor are desired by community residents. Currently there is limited access to the river itself as well as few amenities. This also includes safety concerns when these areas are underused.

OUTCOMES

- A. Restore parks along the river by improving accessibility, maintenance, and amenities on existing parks such as Johnson Habitat, Vanderbilt Park, Overland Pond Park, Grant Frontier Park, and Pasquinel's Landing which see lower park usage based on lack of access.
- B. River access and river recreation activities should be considered in relationship to adjacent parks, access points, and land uses.
- C. Maintenance on the South Platte River, the South Platte River Trail, and adjacent parks and open space should ensure a safe and comfortable environment.
- D. Enforcement and signage of illegal uses such as camping and substance use along the South Platte River Trail should be improved to ensure a safe and comfortable environment (See L1-L5 for housing policies and L8 for outcomes regarding community services).
- E. Built environment improvements that improve safety such as lighting, visibility and activity points should be considered along the South Platte River Trail including elements that support safety for all users including women and families.
- F. The cultural importance of the river should be honored and celebrated by recognizing the importance of the South Platte River to Indigenous People.
 - 1. Partnerships with organizations such as River Sisters Circle should be strengthened and expanded to honor and celebrate the South Platte River as an important cultural element.
 - 2. Public spaces, such as parks, along the river corridor should connect between them and form a network. The spaces within this network should foster a sense of belonging, embrace diverse communities, and provide opportunities for celebration, education, art, and storytelling. These spaces represent an opportunity to pass down shared knowledge, cultural heritage, traditions and stories of the communities connected to the river about the importance of the South Platte River from the Indigenous perspective.
- G. Street lighting and wayfinding should be included as part of street improvements to Lipan Street and Santa Fe Corridor to improve the overall safety and comfort.

RECOMMENDATIONS

FLOODING IMPACTS



POLICY

Areas along the river should be safe from stormwater and river flooding (See Q1).

BACKGROUND

Due to the low elevation and landscape of the areas adjacent to the river, impervious surfaces, and small capacity stormwater systems, stormwater that runs from the higher elevation areas ends up accumulating in this area. In addition some areas have flooding risk from the river.

OUTCOMES

- A. The low-lying parts of the basin, which usually coincides with the industrial areas should be improved for reduced flooding risk from stormwater flooding impacts. Explore solutions that improve the capacity of the stormwater system while providing additional benefits that could include decreased impervious surface, green infrastructure, or open space. Prioritize areas noted as potential inundation areas in the City's *Stormwater Drainage Master Plan* or areas where flooding has been previously reported by community input such as the Lipan Corridor.
- B. Support efforts to reduce flooding impacts from the river and provide information about potential impacts and resources.
- C. Areas on the east side of Santa Fe should be improved for reduced flooding risk from Harvard Gulch (See O-Q2).
- D. Locations at risk of river or stormwater flooding should be visibly designated with appropriate warning signs.

RECOMMENDATIONS

RIVER HEALTH

RC-Q3



POLICY

The natural health and stewardship of the South Platte River and connecting waterways should be restored and protected.

BACKGROUND

The strategic location and abundant natural resources of the South Platte River and Cherry Creek confluence made it a crossroads for many tribes, fostering trade and cultural connection. Over time, with settlement and industry we turned our backs to the river. Many residents are concerned about the health of the river and often avoid the area all together. The South Platte River connects us all in Denver. There is opportunity to restore the natural habitat and health of the river, and to reclaim this natural asset. The Denver South Platte River Corridor Needs Assessment (2022) evaluated indicators of River Health, Connected Mobility, and Human Experience. The Assessment determined that the reaches within the Southwest have some of the highest needs within Denver, particularly those reaches north of West Louisiana Avenue.

OUTCOMES

- A. The South Platte River Influence Zone ([see graphic on the following page](#)), as highlighted in the Review Criteria Governing Development and Infrastructure Adjacent to the South Platte River (2025), includes 200' from each side of the official river channel. The initial 50' from the edge of the river channel should be prioritized to re-establish water quality and riparian function, generally free of new structures. The next 150' should focus on enhancing connections to the river, providing space for recreation and open space, and an enhanced and activated connection between the river and the adjacent development. Existing properties within the South Platte River Influence Zones should continue to exist as they are. New development or redevelopment that takes place within these influence zone should occur in accordance with the City's Review Criteria.
 1. Green infrastructure tools and the reduction of impervious surface should be implemented within all development surrounding the river to support stormwater transport, water quality, reduce erosion, and improve the overall ecosystem health. Covered waterways should be opened whenever possible.
 2. The Waterway Resiliency Program should be advanced to restore and reconnect important habitats and provide flood protection of nearby structures. This includes identifying, acquiring, and preserving land for conservation or public use (i.e., habitat reserves or parks).
 3. Partnerships with organizations such as River Sisters Circle and Greenway Foundation should be strengthened and expanded to continue to restore the corridor by incorporating diverse cultural perspectives and traditional Indigenous knowledge in the stewardship, environmental care, restoration and sustainability efforts of the South Platte River.
 4. Community clean-ups and educational opportunities along the river and trail should be supported and expanded.
 5. Establish and preserve wild native habitat areas along the river corridor to enhance biodiversity and support local wildlife populations.
- B. The health and water quality of the river and connecting gulches should be restored and protected.
 1. Green infrastructure tools and the reduction of impervious surface should be implemented within all development surrounding the river to support stormwater transport, water quality,



SOUTH PLATTE RIVER INFLUENCE ZONE

The Review Criteria Governing Development and Infrastructure Adjacent to the South Platte River (2025) align land use, transportation, recreation, and water planning practices essential to guide future development and infrastructure projects in a manner that embraces the river as an amenity. The Review Criteria establish the South Platte River Influence Zone, define a direction for future investments, and provide for a healthy, safe, and resilient river corridor, improving community connections, access to open space, and economic vitality, while contributing to the vibrancy of Denver.



Graphic from the Healthy River Corridor Study and Review Criteria Governing Development and Infrastructure Adjacent to the South Platte River.

RECOMMENDATIONS

INDUSTRIAL GOOD
NEIGHBORS

POLICY

Industrial areas should be good neighbors to other adjacent uses with appropriate transitions and limited environmental impacts for human health and health of the environment and nonhuman life that supports it.

BACKGROUND

Industrial uses located in Athmar Park, Ruby Hill, and Overland are situated at the edge of the river as well as residential areas and parks. As these areas change and grow, additional protocols need to be considered to find a balance between the uses and finding more environmentally friendly practices to create a more cohesive transition through the neighborhoods.

OUTCOMES

- A. Regulations for industrial uses should be environmentally just and should be updated as needed to limit air, water, noise, light pollution, and litter. The cumulative impact of regulations and requirements should be assessed, and support should be provided to help businesses meet them and operate successfully. While improving impacts to surrounding areas, these regulations should look to a good experience for users of the industrial areas as well.
 1. Landscaping for new developments should be designed, placed, and maintained to buffer industrial uses from surrounding uses and mitigate impacts including noise, pollution, urban heat island effects, as well as visual impacts around these sites. Where possible, existing developments should update landscaping around the perimeter of their sites to achieve these goals.
 2. Industrial and surrounding buildings should be designed and use materials to mitigate noise, pollution, and urban heat island impacts.
 3. Buffering/screening should prioritize tree plantings, landscaping, and solid fence or wall materials ([See Q1](#)).
 4. Improve monitoring of air quality in or around industrial areas to better understand impacts.
- B. New uses that replace obsolete or underutilized infrastructure and/or industrial uses that are decommissioned or leave the area, should address environmental justice considerations while also reflecting broader city priorities like job creation and preservation.
- C. Encourage adaptive reuse of existing buildings ([See RC-L3](#) and [L9](#)).
- D. Existing truck routes should be evaluated for traffic impacts on surroundings uses including air/noise pollution ([See RC-M2](#)).
- E. Stormwater management should be improved in industrial areas to reduce localized flooding, limit stormwater runoff, and mitigate pollution to South Platte River and its tributaries ([See RC-Q2](#)).
- F. Communication to surrounding communities should be expanded to inform and educate the public on all potential impacts.
- G. Drive-thrus, gas stations, and similar auto oriented uses and building forms should be limited and are not a good fit for areas within the South Platte River Influence Zone.
- H. As technology evolves, impacts of emerging industrial business, such as data centers, to the surrounding communities should be assessed in terms of environmental impacts, public health an equity

5.3 MISSISSIPPI SHOPPING CENTER

Vision:

Mississippi Avenue shopping centers should be recognized, branded, and promoted as a singular, walkable shopping and cultural hub with key anchors such as the recently remodeled Athmar Park Library. Physical connections between centers should be made as well as adding public spaces for community events and greenspace. This area should expand as a developing Latino/a/x hub for businesses and culture.



5.2.8 Land Use Recommendations

RECOMMENDATIONS

MS-L1



MISSISSIPPI SHOPPING CENTER

POLICY The Mississippi shopping center should support existing business and mixed-use infill development that grow the area as a Latino/a/x cultural and business destination ([See L6](#) and [L10](#)).

BACKGROUND The shopping centers along Mississippi Avenue currently include a variety of local businesses in suburban strip mall form in proximity of an elementary school, library, and multi-unit housing. Recently the area was identified as an area of concern due to crime. Community input also highlights the need for more walkable community serving resources within the neighborhood.

- OUTCOMES**
- A. Offer support for existing small, neighborhood-serving businesses who wish to remain in the neighborhood.
 - B. Evolve shopping area into a mixed-use destination for the neighborhoods of Athmar Park and Ruby Hill that builds on the Latino/a/x culture of the area and considers the following elements:
 1. Preserve significant neighborhood-serving retail and affordable housing when looking for infill opportunities.
 2. Attract new community serving businesses while retaining key existing services.
 3. Encourage adaptive reuse of appropriate structures to allow uses to change over time to provide affordable commercial spaces. Remove barriers that may make reusing buildings too costly to pursue for local businesses or entrepreneurs.
 4. Encourage incremental infill redevelopment, especially on underutilized properties and parking lots to add more active and needed uses to serve the community, like neighborhood gathering spaces, community-serving retail, daily services, food access, and affordable housing.
 5. Land use and urban design elements like placemaking and wayfinding along Mississippi should support future transit as a local BRT route which will provide improved and more frequent transit service in partnership with RTD.
 6. Create a central plaza or gathering space as part of a future development that can serve as a multi-use destination for the neighborhoods and commercial center which can also serve as a transit plaza. In addition a separate smaller plaza along Mississippi could be provided for transit purposes.
 7. Update rules, regulations, or zoning to reflect a more pedestrian-friendly built environment.
 8. Protect existing renters near the site from displacement pressures from redevelopment and encourage residential uses, including affordable housing, adjacent to existing low-scale residential lots to ensure context sensitive infill.
 9. Promote active ground floor uses along Mississippi, especially near transit stops. Side streets like Tejon and Raritan may also present opportunities for more neighborhood-scaled commercial streets as well.
 10. Preserve the Athmar Park Shopping Center sign and incorporate into branding and marketing opportunities.
 11. Encourage a formal business organization structure to lead improvements within the area that support the vision of the area as a Latino/a/x cultural and business destination.

5.3.1 Mobility Recommendations

RECOMMENDATIONS

MISSISSIPPI AREA CONNECTIVITY

MS-
M1

POLICY

The Mississippi Shopping center should be well connected to the surrounding areas and provide same and comfortable connections within shopping district itself (See [M1](#), [M2](#), [M3](#), [M4](#) and [M5](#)).

BACKGROUND

The Mississippi Shopping center includes the commercial and public areas on both sides of Mississippi Avenue near Raritan Street. Connectivity across and along Mississippi as well as to the surrounding areas should be improved.

OUTCOMES

- Improve connectivity and break up large, mega-blocks into more neighborhood-scale blocks.
- Require more north-south connectivity between Tejon and Quivas through the existing large-scale commercial blocks.
- Maintain existing alleys and encourage use for access to parking, especially for residential uses.
- Encourage greenways or internal corridors with active first floor uses or shared streets through large properties that provide pedestrian access and align them with other streets, alleys, or pathways with additional sidewalk improvements.
- Internal streets and streets surrounding the site should include traffic calming elements.
- Site improvements should include transit amenities along Mississippi that align with the future Local BRT along Mississippi.
- As infill mixed use development occurs consider parking availability within the site itself to avoid parking impacts to surrounding residential areas.

5.3.2 Quality of Life Recommendations

RECOMMENDATIONS

MISSISSIPPI PUBLIC PLACES

MS-
Q1

POLICY

The Mississippi Shopping center should build on the existing Latino/a/x culture and business and provide public and greenspaces (See [Q1](#) and [Q7](#)).

BACKGROUND

Currently this shopping center is a growing hub for Latino/a/x business but lacks gathering plazas or spaces for the community. The evolution of this area should build on this character and culture while at the same time providing more public spaces and green spaces for community and cultural events.

OUTCOMES

- Transform Mississippi Avenue from Zuni to Quivas Streets into a “green boulevard” to signify this area as a neighborhood destination and commercial district and improve pedestrian comfort. Improvements could include adding landscaping like low-growing grasses, shrubs and trees, landscaped medians, or eliminating the center turn lane for a wider planting and amenity area on the north and south sides of Mississippi Avenue.
- Develop a cultural hub for the Latino/a/x community within the for the Athmar Park and Ruby Hill neighborhoods. These cultural hub concept should build upon the “Linear Mercado” concept (linear market) along Morrison Road that represents a hub for the Latino/a/x community in Westwood. The cultural hub within Mississippi Shopping Center should build on existing Latino/a/x business and continue to grow this area as a cluster of Latino/a/x centric businesses that align around a central plaza, public space, or corridor surrounded by ground floor uses, businesses, mobile vendors, and activity that extends into a series of connected public spaces where community events and gatherings can take place. The Mississippi Latino/a/x Cultural Hub should connect to Morrison Road via the Tennessee path and Via Verde servings as two important hubs for the Latino/a/x community in the area.





6. FEDERAL BOULEVARD

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6.1 BACKGROUND

6.1.1 Overview

Federal Boulevard is a major north/south roadway throughout the region, and in Southwest Denver it touches four of the five neighborhoods within the plan area. Because of its importance as both a transportation route and a commercial hub, the corridor deserves focused planning and its own chapter in the *Southwest Area Plan*. One of the biggest changes coming to Federal Boulevard is the planned Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) project. This high-capacity transit service is expected to reduce travel times, improve reliability, and reshape how people move through the corridor. As a result, the area is likely to experience a significant transformation.

The geographic boundaries of the Federal corridor are defined as the area within a half-mile of Federal Boulevard. This distance reflects a comfortable 10-minute walkshed to Federal Boulevard. The Federal corridor, illustrated on pages 128-129, is bordered by Alameda and Jewell Avenues, to the north and south, and by Zuni Street and Lowell Boulevard, to the east and west, respectively.

This chapter outlines current conditions, planning goals, and recommendations for the corridor. These recommendations are grouped into three categories:

- Land Use: Encourage transit-friendly development, align zoning with community goals, and protect affordable housing
- Mobility: Make it safer and easier to walk, bike, and use transit
- Quality of Life: Improve public spaces, add greenery, and embrace the cultural significance of corridor

Many broader recommendations from other chapters—like Land Use and Built Form, Mobility, and Quality of Life Infrastructure—also apply to Federal Boulevard. To avoid repetition, they are not restated here.

6.1.2 Corridor Conditions

Federal Boulevard is a state-owned road maintained by the Colorado Department of Transportation (CDOT). It's classified as a Principal Arterial, meaning it's designed to carry high volumes of traffic over long distances at higher speeds. These roads often have separate lanes for each direction, divided by physical barriers like center medians. In the Southwest Area, Federal Boulevard typically includes:

- Three southbound lanes
- Two northbound lanes
- A raised center median made of stamped concrete

Sidewalk conditions vary along the corridor. Some are detached from the street, others are attached. Their width and condition range from standard to substandard, and many do not meet accessibility standards. The tree canopy is sparse and only exists at a few locations. There are no dedicated bike lanes along Federal Boulevard. The speed limit is 40 mph, and the fast-moving traffic makes walking and biking feel unsafe. The land use along Federal Boulevard reflects a car-focused design typical of suburban commercial corridors. Features include:

- Frequent driveway entrances (curb cuts)
- Large surface parking lots
- Buildings set far back from the street
- Auto-oriented businesses like gas stations, strip malls, drive-thrus, used car lots, and auto repair shops

This layout prioritizes car access and comfort, while offering limited support for pedestrians, cyclists, and transit users. The lack of greenery, safe walking and biking paths, and proximity to fast traffic creates an environment that favors driving over other ways of getting around.

Federal Boulevard has the potential to become a more transit-friendly corridor. To support the upcoming Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) project, planning efforts should focus on shifting the area away from being car-oriented and toward a design that better supports transit riders, pedestrians, and cyclists. A more transit-supportive corridor would include:

- Safe and connected walking and biking paths for first-mile/last-mile travel
- More trees and landscaping to improve comfort and appearance
- Transit-oriented development with better urban design
- Updated zoning and development rules that align with transit goals
- Expanded and preserved affordable housing options.

The recommendations in this chapter focus heavily on the changes needed to better support the Federal Boulevard BRT project. Implementing these recommendations would have a transformative impact on the built environment and maximize the significant public investment in future BRT service through increased ridership.



6.1.3 Federal Boulevard BRT

The Federal Boulevard BRT project is being sponsored and planned by CDOT, in coordination with local jurisdictions, including the City and County of Denver. As of publication of this plan, the current schedule anticipates final design will be completed in 2026 with construction starting in 2027. Opening year and service are expected in 2030.

The project is planned as side-running BRT, meaning buses will travel in dedicated curbside lanes that are reserved for transit only. The route will stretch about 18 miles, connecting Westminster in the north to Englewood in the south. It mostly follows Federal Boulevard, with small detours to reach RTD's Wagon Road Park-and-Ride at the north end and Englewood Station at the south. In the Southwest area, the BRT route runs entirely along Federal Boulevard. Potential station locations include:

- Alameda Avenue
- Exposition Avenue
- Mississippi Avenue
- Louisiana Avenue
- Florida Avenue
- Colorado Avenue

Within the entirety of Southwest, the BRT project requires roadway widening to add one additional travel lane. The widening is needed to balance the current lane configuration and provide space for two general purpose lanes and one curbside bus-only lane in both directions. BRT vehicles will be equipped with transit signal priority (TSP) technology, which will communicate with traffic lights at every intersection in the corridor and reduce delays.

6.1.4 Little Saigon

The stretch of Federal Boulevard between Alameda Avenue and Mississippi Avenue—known as Little Saigon—is a culturally significant area in Southwest Denver and the broader metro region. It began to take shape in the late 1970s and 1980s, as Vietnamese and other Southeast Asian immigrants settled in Denver following the Fall of Saigon in 1975. Families and businesses gathered along Federal Boulevard, creating a strong, supportive community, and cultural hub for Denver's Asian population. This area and other parts of Federal Boulevard have also been influenced by Latino/a/x culture as seen in Aztec art or symbols, popular lowrider car cruising, and religion among other cultural traditions.

Today, Little Saigon is home to a dense mix of Asian-owned stores, small businesses, supermarkets, restaurants, religious institutions, and professional services. It's a regional destination for authentic international cuisine, including Vietnamese, Cambodian, Chinese, Thai, and Mexican food. The area also includes important cultural destinations like the Far East Center, which is listed on Colorado's State Register of Historic Properties.

The City in partnership with Colorado Asian Pacific United (CAPU), is currently exploring the creation of a designated cultural district for Little Saigon. This effort aims to honor the area's heritage while promoting economic growth, safety, vibrancy, and inclusivity.

As part of this initiative, CAPU conducted extensive community outreach, including the "Little Saigon Oral History Memory Project," which gathered stories from 38 community members. These personal insights helped shape the planning recommendations for Little Saigon included in this chapter.

6.2 KEY OPPORTUNITIES

The following figures illustrate key planning opportunities within the Federal Boulevard corridor. To reflect the unique characteristics of two distinct character areas, separate sections have been developed for the northern and southern portions of the corridor. This includes the Little Saigon district from Alameda Avenue to Mississippi Avenue and South Federal from Mississippi Avenue to Jewell Avenue. These maps serve as a visual representation of the land use, mobility, and quality-of-life recommendations, described in greater detail in the following Recommendations section.

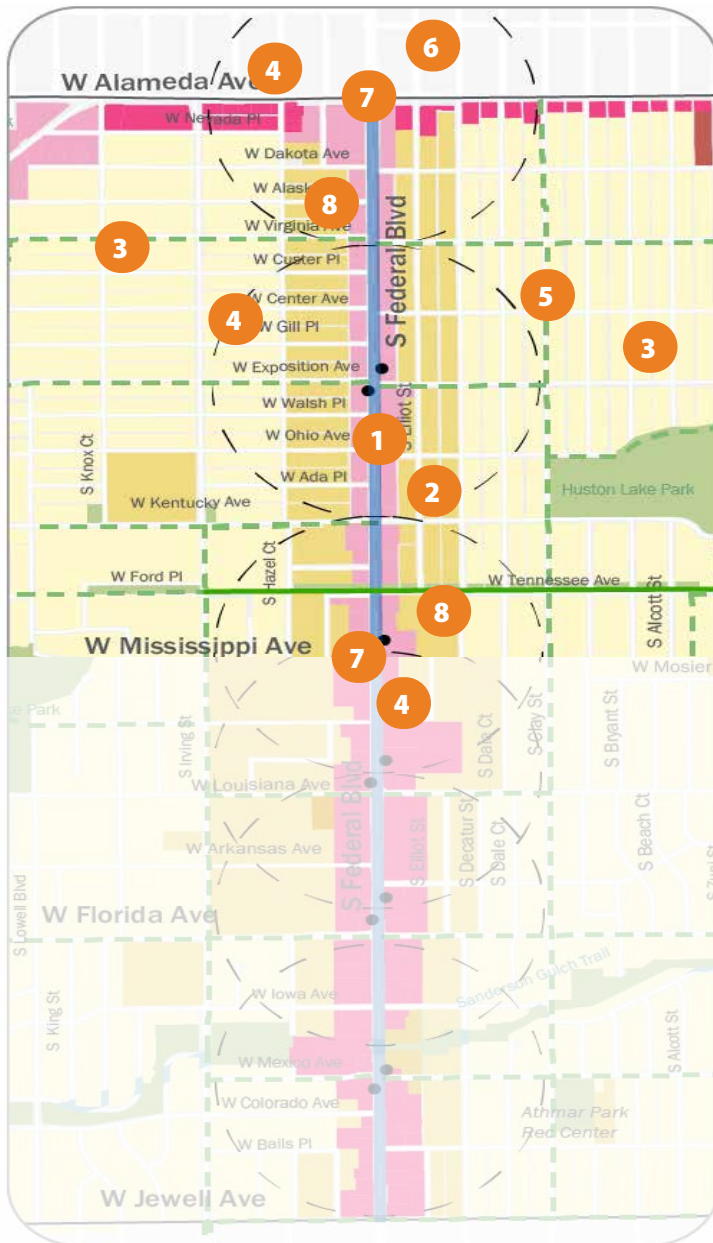
KEY OPPORTUNITIES IN LITTLE SAIGON (BETWEEN ALAMEDA & MISSISSIPPI)

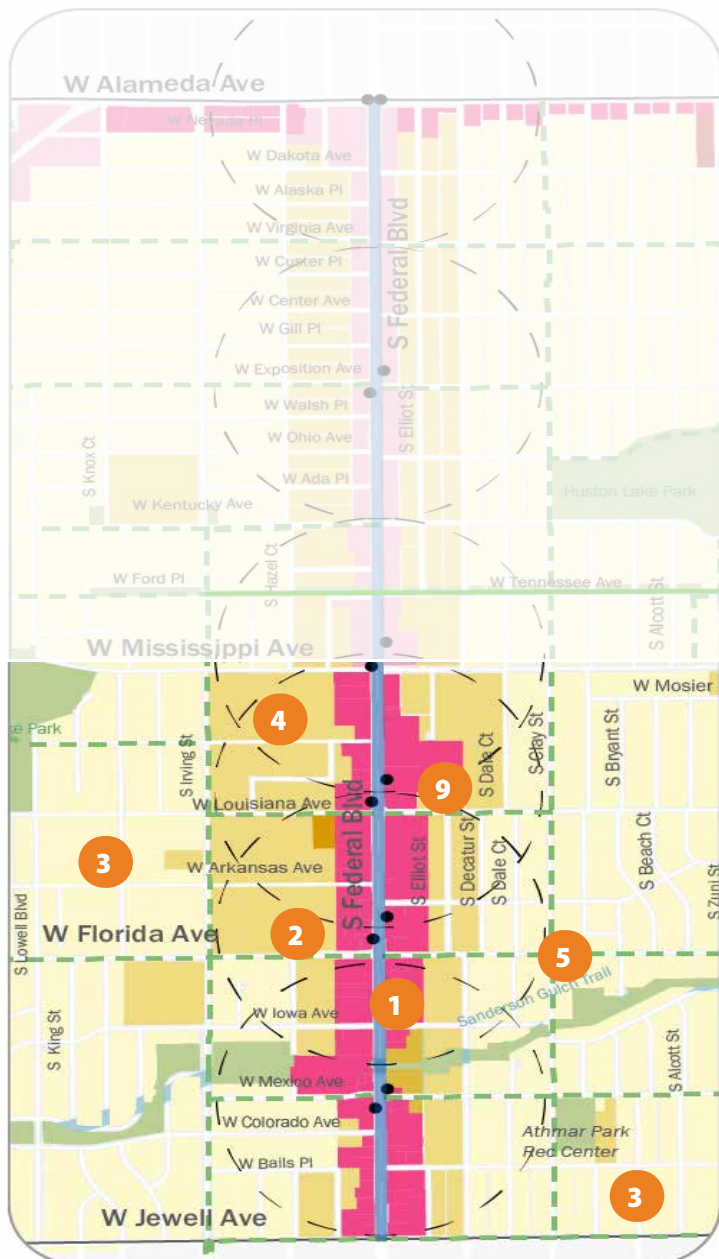
- 1** Retain and preserve culturally significant local businesses ([F-L3](#), [L6](#)).
- 2** Allow duplex, tandem houses, triplex, and quadplex housing options two blocks away from Federal that support affordability and fit within the neighborhood character ([F-L5](#), [L4](#)).
- 3** Preserve existing affordable housing options for neighborhood residents ([L-1](#)).
- 4** Priority Areas for Multi-Modal Transportation Connections to Transit ([F-L4](#), [F-L5](#)).
- 5** Recommended Bike Facilities ([F-M1](#)).
- 6** New park/open space priority area ([Q2](#), [F-L2](#)).
- 7** Proposed Little Saigon Gateway Areas ([F-L1](#)).
- 8** Opportunity Areas for Festival, Market, and Gathering Spaces ([F-L2](#)).

Legend

- Parks & Open Space
- Regional Center
- Local Corridor
- Community Corridor
- Low-Medium Residential
- Low-Residential
- Recommended Bike Facilities
- Trail
- BRT

 BRT Station and 1/4mi Buffer
- BRT Alignment





KEY OPPORTUNITIES IN SOUTH FEDERAL (BETWEEN MISSISSIPPI & JEWELL)

- 1 Retain and preserve culturally significant local businesses ([F-L3](#), [L6](#)).
- 2 Allow duplex tandem houses, triplex, and quadplex housing options two blocks away from Federal that support affordability and fit within the neighborhood character ([F-L5](#), [L4](#)).
- 3 Preserve existing affordable housing options for neighborhood residents ([L-1](#)).
- 4 Priority Areas for Multi-Modal Transportation Connections to Transit ([F-L4](#), [F-L5](#)).
- 5 Recommended Bike Facilities ([F-M1](#)).
- 9 BRT station areas should feature multi-story, mixed-use development with active street front uses ([F-L5](#), [L10](#)).

Legend

- Parks & Open Space
- Regional Center
- Local Corridor
- Community Corridor
- Low-Medium Residential
- Low- Residential
- Recommended Bike Facilities
- Trail
- BRT Station and 1/4mi Buffer
- BRT Alignment

6.3 RECOMMENDATIONS

6.3.1 Land Use Recommendations

The Federal Boulevard corridor developed primarily to serve individuals in cars and strongly reflects an auto-oriented development pattern. This pattern includes numerous curb cuts, expansive surface parking, and buildings set back far from the street. With the planned expansion of BRT service, the corridor should transition to better support the improved transit. Urban design elements that support transit ridership include infrastructure improvements that give priority to people walking, such as shallow building setbacks, building entrances fronting streets, limiting driveways, and parking located behind buildings. Zoning and land use should be better aligned to facilitate transit-supportive development. Doing so could require rezonings, zoning overlay districts, and the implementation of new zone district standards.

Immigrant-run small businesses are the backbone of Little Saigon and South Federal. The entrepreneurial spirit of immigrant communities defines the character of the district. These small businesses are integral to the community and should be preserved. Businesses are facing real threats from rising costs, gentrification, displacement, and the potential for construction impacts from BRT. Business owners mention rising rents, property taxes, labor, and food costs as major challenges to maintaining profitability.

There is a shared desire among residents to preserve Little Saigon's unique cultural significance and history. Community outreach from Colorado Asian Pacific United (CAPU) found that community members have identified the need to maintain a space to remind Vietnamese people of their traditions and culture, to showcase Vietnamese history and where the younger generation can connect with their root and other cultures.



RECOMMENDATIONS

LITTLE SAIGON CULTURAL IDENTITY

F-L1



POLICY

Strengthen the cultural identity and sense of place of Little Saigon through creative placemaking and design.

BACKGROUND

The boundaries of the Little Saigon district are not easily identifiable. Little Saigon lacks prominent gateway features signifying you have entered the district. A small welcome sign is located on Mississippi Avenue at Federal Boulevard that signifies entrance to the district, but it lacks prominence and visibility. The district also lacks consistent streetscape or design elements to create visual continuity and foster a cohesive identity. There is a shared vision to preserve Little Saigon's unique cultural significance and history to share for future generations.

OUTCOMES

- A. Streetscape improvements such as lighting, signage, banners, and landscaping should be explored. Unique elements like Torii Gates, guardian lion statues, lanterns, etc. should be incorporated into these designs and branding.
- B. Gateway signs should be prioritized at the Alameda and Mississippi intersections. Additional interpretative signage, monuments, community, memorials, and other placemaking elements should be incorporated into public spaces to recognize the cultural contributions to the region.
- C. The planned BRT stations (Alameda, Exposition, and Mississippi) should incorporate elements of cultural significance in their design. Related signage, windscreen, and platform should be customized to reflect the surrounding area. Additional elements like green infrastructure, lighting, public art should enhance the stations.
 - 1. Additional design investments are considered to be appropriate for a limited number of stations in unique locations. All three stations should be considered for a higher level of investment and design elements to promote a strong sense of place throughout the district. If funding is limited, priority stations for investment should be Alameda Avenue (Far East Center) and Mississippi Avenue (Asia Center) to bookend the district with gateway markers.
- D. Honor the heritage of the area and promote economic growth, safety, vibrancy, and inclusivity by creating a Cultural District for Little Saigon. The area should retain its Asian flavor, preserving places where people can get traditional foods and products and recognizing it as a cultural space where people feel comfortable. Build upon the Far East Center's historic designation. Identify and preserve other cultural, architectural, and historic sites.

Southwest Area

COMMUNITY SPACES

FL-2



POLICY

Community gathering spaces and plazas should be expanded throughout the corridor.

BACKGROUND

Visiting Little Saigon has been described as transactional - where you drive from business to business with little opportunity to walk or linger. Residents long for a central gathering space and cultural hub that serves as a center for events, food, and shopping with connected pathways. There currently is not a dedicated space for community events. Existing events such as the Lunar New Year Celebration at the Far East Center is held in the center's converted parking lot, while parking for festival-goers is pushed into the neighborhoods.

OUTCOMES

- A. Encourage the creation of a central gathering space within the Little Saigon district where people of all backgrounds can come together to experience cultural events and build community ties. This central hub should be connected to nearby shops, restaurants, and other community destinations.
- B. Additional gathering spaces such as small parks or plazas should be incorporated along the corridor in shopping centers or where open space is currently limited.
- C. Existing parking lots or streets should be adapted and used for special events, festivals and other community programs year round as temporary or permanent options - like Far East Center or Tennessee Avenue and connections to nearby trails or greenways.

RECOMMENDATIONS

SMALL BUSINESS SUPPORT



POLICY

Support and retain small businesses in Little Saigon and South Federal.

BACKGROUND

The immigrant-run small business along Federal Boulevard are what make this corridor a special destination. Immigrant entrepreneurs capture the spirit of the community and that spirit should be embraced and preserved to maintain the district's character. Issues such as rising rents and labor and food costs impact day-to-day business operations, and the planned BRT construction will change how businesses are run in the future.

OUTCOMES

- A. Long-standing businesses and neighborhood institutions should be supported. Support the long-term operation of legacy businesses to allow for continuation by younger generations. Foster cultural continuity through maintaining generational businesses and traditions.
- B. Minimize negative impacts of BRT construction on small businesses through financial support and other creative solutions or resources during and after construction.
- C. Property within the right-of-way required to construct the BRT should be minimized in the design process to mitigate impacts to business access or parking supply. Where negative impacts are expected businesses should be fairly and justly compensated following existing policies.
- D. Encourage business owners to purchase their properties to reduce displacement. Explore communal ownership models to pool the resources of many businesses to achieve local land ownership and control when feasible.
- E. Invest in upgrades to commercial buildings to make the district more welcoming and inviting to visitors. Explore incentives or other financial assistance to support renovations.
- F. Explore districts (BID, GID, TIF, etc.), that could provide additional funding and resources to achieve the community's vision. Work with business and property owners to select the right tools to achieve their vision.
- G. Improve collaborative marketing and branding of the district to help businesses grow and thrive.

RECOMMENDATIONS

TOD & BRT



Explore Transit Oriented Development(TOD) Opportunity Site Planning in Little Saigon.

Commercial hubs in and around Little Saigon have the opportunity to become a more transit friendly area with select site development. Criteria should consider undeveloped properties, ease of parcel assemblage, ownership, proximity to BRT stations, topography, and environmental constraints. These sites within the TOD plan could serve to catalyze new development that meets the community's vision with additional planning charrettes to turn conceptual design into a reality.

- A. Explore a communal ownership model for sites, like the model used to construct the Far East Center and lease the commercial spaces.
- B. Explore a community land trust to develop a central business hub with affordable commercial space for Asian and immigrant focused businesses. Consider community ownership as an anti-displacement strategy. Encourage a residential component for members of the Little Saigon community who desire to live in the area.
- C. Consider multi-story mixed-use development that would add transit-supportive density to the corridor.
- D. Through the TOD plan, the City should complete planning tasks, like legislative rezonings, to remove barriers to redevelopment.
- E. The TOD study should be explored to create an inspiring vision for a culturally relevant redevelopment that provides multiple community benefits. This vision and completed planning work could garner community support, financial backing, create project champions, and gather momentum towards implementation.



Encourage transit-supportive development and high land utilization near future Bus Rapid Transit areas.

Federal Boulevard is a highly auto-oriented corridor that includes existing transit. With the proposed BRT service, this area can become more transit and pedestrian friendly to evolve large expansive parking lots and single-use development into a walkable, vibrant, and transit-supportive corridor with key hubs near stations. An additional level of land use policy or guidance should be considered at stations to ensure development efficiently utilizes surrounding land, ensuring more residents, employees, and businesses can benefit from the proximity to transit.

- A. Zoning should allow for a diverse mix of residential and commercial uses, at transit-supportive densities.
 1. Within Little Saigon, (Alameda to Mississippi) building heights should be up to 3 stories. South of Mississippi to Jewell, building heights should be up to 5 stories.
 2. Building and site design along Federal Boulevard should reflect a transit-supportive development pattern, as exhibited through buildings directly fronting streets and parking located behind buildings.
 3. Bring properties with Former Chapter 59 zoning into the current Denver Zoning Code.
 4. Allow duplex, tandem houses, triplex, and quadplex housing options two blocks away from Federal that support affordability and fit within the neighborhood character.
- B. Limit auto-focused buildings and uses like drive-thrus, gas stations, and car dealerships within ¼ mile of BRT stations.
- C. New development along Federal Boulevard should transition to be consistent with the scale of surrounding single-family neighborhoods.
 1. Curb cuts should be limited along Federal Boulevard to improve BRT operations and improve safety conditions by reducing conflict points between vehicles.
 2. Oversized parking lots should be explored for additional development and community resources.
- D. Encourage transit-supportive development and high land utilization near future BRT stations.
 1. Station areas should feature a vibrant and diverse mix of land uses. They should provide goods and services to transit-riders, in addition to new housing options. Ground floor residential uses should face the street.
 2. Development should promote walking, transit ridership, and provide opportunities for community interactions and gathering spaces.
 3. Station areas should feature active ground floor uses and be free of car-oriented buildings, like drive-thrus.
 4. Before redevelopment occurs, interim uses should be explored such as activate and enhance sites such as food truck, community gathering spaces, and outdoor dining.

This series of conceptual images illustrates how Federal Boulevard may evolve over time from a car-oriented corridor to one that better supports transit and pedestrians.



The existing land use pattern along Federal Boulevard is primarily auto-oriented. The example shown here depicts an automobile serving business (auto parts/tire shop) with surface parking adjacent to a BRT station and buildings set back far from the street.



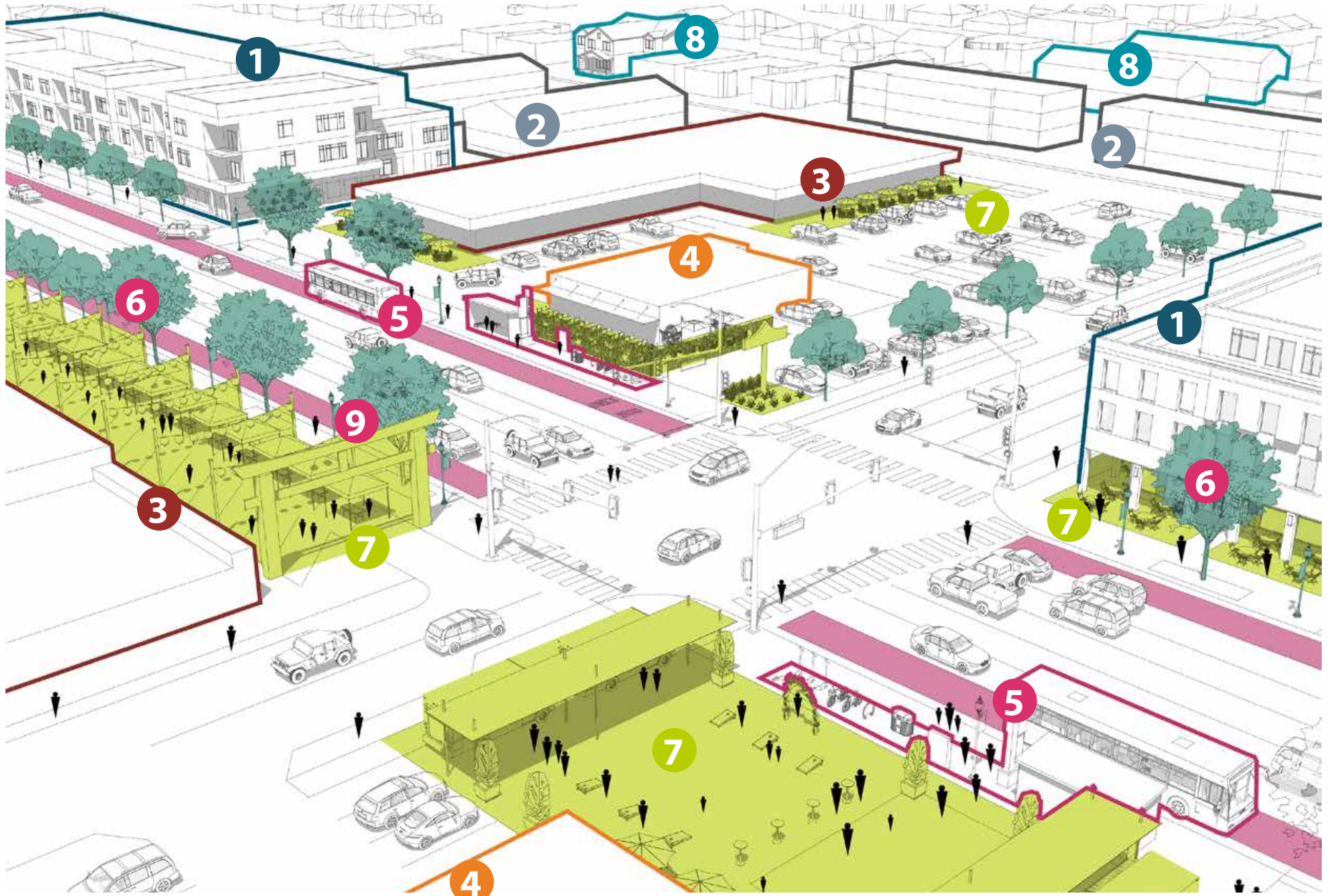
Before redevelopment occurs, interim uses should be explored to activate and enhance land utilization at BRT stations. The example shown here incorporates food trucks, temporary park and community gathering spaces, and outdoor dining.



When redevelopment occurs at stations new buildings should follow best practices of transit-oriented development. The example illustrated here includes multi-story mixed-use development with buildings fronting the street, active ground floor uses, outdoor dining, and ample space for pedestrian use.

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LAND USE SKETCH UP: LITTLE SAIGON



This illustrative diagram represents a conceptual idea of how the area of the Little Saigon Areas of Federal Corridor (Alameda to Mississippi) could incorporate the desired outcomes for the corridor.

LAND USE

- 1** Mixed-use, pedestrian-friendly development near BRT stations.
- 2** Preserve existing affordable housing options for neighborhood residents.
- 3** Retain and preserve culturally significant local businesses.
- 4** Encourage small-scale redevelopment and adaptive reuse to increase commercial opportunities for small and minority-owned businesses.
- 5** BRT station design should reflect the cultural significance of the Little Saigon district with unique elements that promote a strong sense of place.
- 6** Upgrade the streetscape and tree canopy along Federal Boulevard to improve the safety, comfort, and desirability of walking and rolling.
- 7** Expand community gathering places through small parks, plazas, outdoor dining, and market or festival spaces.
- 8** Allow duplex, triplex, and quadplex housing options up to two blocks away from Federal that support affordability and fit within the neighborhood character.
- 9** Streetscape elements with a consistent design unique to Little Saigon should be explored to promote a district-wide sense of place.



6.3.2 Mobility

Recommendations

Walking along Federal Boulevard today often feels unsafe and uncomfortable. Many sidewalks are narrow, poorly maintained, or located right next to fast-moving traffic without any buffer. In some areas, sidewalks are missing altogether. The lack of trees and landscaping means little shade or protection from heat, making the experience even more difficult—especially in summer.

As Federal Boulevard transitions from a car-focused road to a transit-served, mixed-use corridor, improving the pedestrian environment is essential. Residents have consistently identified streetscape improvements—like wider sidewalks, safer crossings, and more greenery as top priorities.

Safety is a major concern for all types of travel along the corridor, including walking, biking, e-scooting, transit, and driving. Projects like the North Federal Boulevard Pedestrian Safety Project have already made progress by adding features such as:

- HAWK signals for safer crossings
- Bulb-outs to shorten crossing distances and slow turning vehicles
- Green infrastructure to improve drainage and reduce heat
- Curved street designs to calm traffic

These efforts reflect a broader goal: to make Federal Boulevard a safer, more welcoming place for everyone—not just drivers.



RECOMMENDATIONS

MOBILITY

F-M1



Improve safety on Federal Boulevard for all roadway users.

Federal Boulevards is a busy and well traveled road. Public feedback shows residents and visitors enjoy the restaurants and shops along the corridors but find it a challenging to move around. Many stated dangerous intersections to cross on foot or bike. This includes visibility, length of time to cross, and the surrounding environment. Many cross this major corridor to get to school, to commute to work, or to visit friends and family. Pot holes were often mentioned in public settings causing damage to vehicles or resulting in accidents. Residents desire a more comfortable, safe, and welcoming corridor in their neighborhoods with improved transit.

- A. Sidewalks should be safe for all users. They should be brought up to ADA standards and safe and comfortable conditions providing consistent, wide, and feature accessible ramps at all intersections. Additional street trees and landscaping should be planted to create a buffer from the roadway and sidewalks.
 - 1. Consolidate curb cuts and direct vehicle access points to reduce conflicts between cars and people walking.
 - 2. Additional streetscape upgrades should be included to improve the pedestrian experience and corridor vibrancy.
- B. Pedestrian safety and visibility should be increased. Improvements should include but are not limited to: lighting, painted crosswalks and enhancements, improved crossing times, tight turning raddi, directional curb ramps, protected median relief areas, and pedestrian priority signals.
- C. Safe pedestrian crossings and connections should be improved along the corridor. The following should be prioritized:
 - 1. Intersections: Alameda, Virginia, Exposition, Jewell, Mississippi, and Florida Avenues
 - 2. Sanderson Gulch Trail - consider increased red light compliance at this intersection
 - 3. Near transit stations including future Bus Rapid Transit stations
- 4. Improve safety at the school crossing on Mississippi Avenue, where parent queuing is unsafe
- 5. Pedestrian pathways should be provided from Federal Boulevard through large parking lots to commercial hubs to enhance safety
- D. As part of the High-Injury Network, additional focus and priority should be placed on Federal Boulevard to improve safety and mitigate severe crash types.
 - 1. Enact safe, context-sensitive speed limits and conduct enforcement to limit speeding.
 - 2. Consider speed reduction and traffic calming and other safety improvements at high-crash intersections, like Federal at Alameda and Mississippi Avenues.
 - 3. Consider limiting turns without stopping, turns on red, and using dedicated turn arrows at dangerous intersections.
 - 4. Dynamic signage should be installed to message safe speeds, increase compliance with laws, and provide feedback to drivers.
 - 5. Install other traffic-calming techniques in addition to other recommendations that naturally slow down traffic (buildings closer to the street, street trees, on-street parking, lighting, signage, etc.).
 - 6. Consider traffic cameras at busy intersections with red light enforcement ticketing.
 - 7. Increase police presence to enforce speeding and noise violations.
- E. Federal Boulevard should be repaved and maintained to address pothole issues.
- F. Support BRT implementation as a corridor-wide safety improvement.
- G. Create a better connected and safe network for bicyclist and e-scooters near Federal.
 - 1. Add an east-west bike commuting alternative in proximity to Mississippi Avenue.
 - 2. Provide comfortable bicycle facilities parallel to Federal Boulevard.
 - 3. Existing bike lanes along Yale Avenue and Florida Avenue should be upgraded to protected bike lanes.
 - 4. Safety for e-scooters should be improved by providing a comfortable network of e-scooting facilities parallel to Federal Boulevard.

RECOMMENDATIONS

MOBILITY



POLICY

Essential first-mile/last-mile projects needed for connectivity to Federal Bus Rapid Transit should be advanced to implementation.

BACKGROUND

CDOT will be supporting a limited number of first-mile/last-mile elements in the base scope of the Federal BRT project. The City has identified a list of additional projects that will improve access to and operation of the BRT. These projects should be advanced to implementation through next step activities like conceptual design, cost estimating, and consideration for bond funding. Projects should be in place when the line opens to ensure neighborhood connectivity to the new route.

OUTCOMES

- A. Implement critical first-mile/last-mile improvements to enhance accessibility, mobility, and safety, including ADA upgrades near BRT stations and local bus stops, upgraded bike infrastructure, improved pedestrian facilities, and efficient transit flow. Modernization of aging infrastructure near BRT stations will contribute to a more sustainable and well-connected transportation network.
- B. Ensure key first-mile/last-mile projects are constructed and operational to coincide with the opening of BRT service.



POLICY

Encourage shifts in mode share and travel demand management strategies (TDM) within the Federal Boulevard corridor.

BACKGROUND

To maximize the investment in BRT, policies should be in place that promote shifts in mode share resulting in less driving and more transit ridership, walking, and biking.

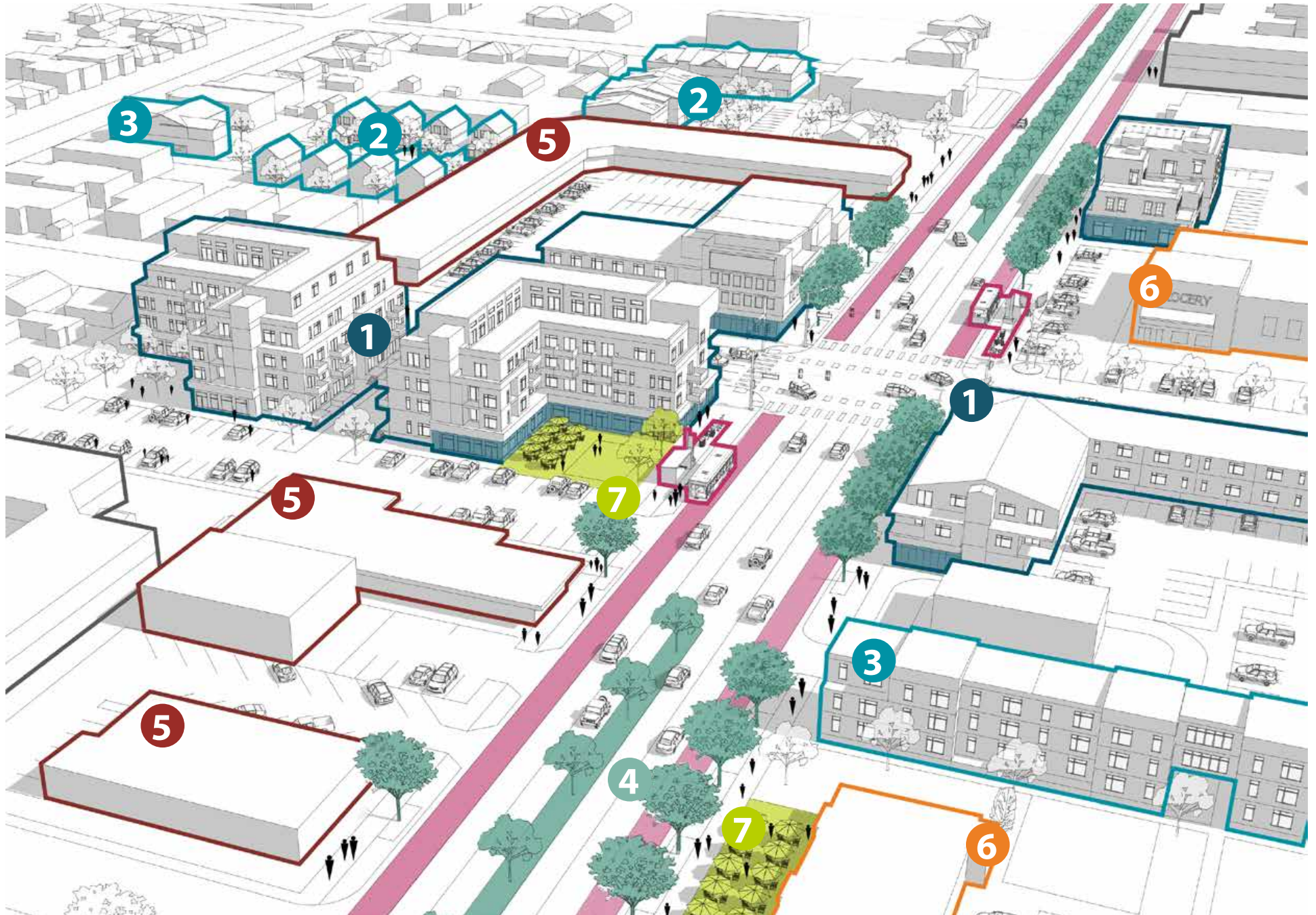
OUTCOMES

- A. Ensure the comfort and viability of taking transit over driving through supportive streetscapes, lighting, and visibility.
- B. Coordinate with employers along the corridor to provide community incentives, including free/reduced bus passes or rewards to employees who use alternative transportation.
- C. Naturally occurring affordable housing options along the corridor should be preserved to ensure residents benefit from transit investments.
- D. Coordinate with RTD and CDOT to provide free transit passes for corridor residents and businesses impacted by Federal BRT construction.



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MOBILITY SKETCH UP: SOUTH FEDERAL



This illustration represents a conceptual idea of how the Federal Corridor between Mississippi and Jewell could incorporate the desired outcomes.

- 1** BRT station areas should feature multi-story, mixed-use development with active street front uses.
- 2** Allow duplex, triplex, and quadplex housing options two blocks away from Federal that support affordability and fit within the neighborhood character.
- 3** Preserve existing affordable housing options for neighborhood residents.
- 4** Upgrade the streetscape and tree canopy along Federal Boulevard to improve the safety, comfort, and desirability of walking and rolling.
- 5** Retain existing and expand commercial opportunities for small and minority-owned businesses
- 6** Encourage small-scale development and adaptive reuse to maintain the eclectic, organic, and “local” feel of the district.
- 7** Outdoor dining should be encouraged adjacent to BRT stations through relaxed requirements for building setbacks and sidewalk amenity zones.



6.3.3 Quality of Life Recommendations

Along the corridor are many well known and popular eateries. This has made Little Saigon and other shopping centers a destination for experiencing specialty foods and markets. These cultures and traditions are imbedded in the local businesses. While these are popular businesses, there is a concern of a lack of grocery stores or markets for local, day-to-day goods. The food and businesses also represent a key feature of the local culture and immigrant population along the corridor.

This area represents strong Southeast Asian and Latino/a/x communities. Beyond food and businesses, it is often represented in local festivals as well as public art. There are opportunities to enhance and celebrate these cultures through additional public spaces with art, memorials, plazas, and creative design to show the distinct and unique elements of Federal Boulevard. There is a strong desire throughout all the neighborhoods but especially in key community spaces to create place to connect and gather in a walkable setting. Building upon the corridor's culture and local business tied to improved transit and green infrastructure can create a more welcoming and celebrate center with in the Southwest along this famous corridor.



RECOMMENDATIONS



POLICY

Provide a robust network of green infrastructure within the Federal Boulevard corridor to reduce environmental impacts .

BACKGROUND

Green infrastructure is noticeably deficient in the Federal corridor and it provides multiple benefits of reducing stormwater runoff, improving water quality, and mitigating the urban heat island effect. Tree canopy is also lacking and has been identified as a neighborhood equity concern within the city. Green infrastructure projects provide an important opportunity to expand shade coverage in areas where it is greatly needed.

OUTCOMES

- A. The tree canopy and landscaping should be protected and expanded. Regularly spaced street trees are encouraged along Federal Boulevard to create a buffer between the roadway and sidewalk to create a safe experience. New plantings should be focused in areas lacking shade, near transit stations, and areas to manage stormwater. Small parks or parklets should be considered when feasible.
- B. Green infrastructure should be incorporated into the corridor with both natural and engineered elements to reduce stormwater runoff and flooding. This includes implementing the planned "Federal Boulevard Green Infrastructure Project" in conjunction with the Federal BRT design and construction.
- C. Additional green infrastructure improvements should be explored and addressed with major cross roads such as Mississippi Avenue.



POLICY

Food heritage and access should be retained and expanded in the corridor.

BACKGROUND

Food is central to the culture of Federal Boulevard and is celebrated through various popular restaurants and food trucks. International food options serve as a regional draw for diners. Food access has been identified as an area-wide issue with the need for more grocery or market options for everyday needs of residents around the corridor.

OUTCOMES

- A. Grocery store options should be expanded within the corridor, particularly near the intersection of Federal and Alameda Avenue.
- B. Authentic and affordable international food will continue to attract people from all over Denver and should be protected.
- C. The existing food culture should be enhanced through food tourism, marketing, community food halls, and farmers markets that support the exchange of produce and ethnic foods within the community.
- D. Community spaces should be created where culturally meaningful foods can be grown, prepared, or shared. These spaces can help preserve traditional food practices across generations and improve access to healthy, familiar foods.



OUTCOMES BACKGROUND POLICY

Celebrate the multi-cultural aspects of Federal Boulevard through public art.

Federal Boulevard is known for being a central location for Latino/a/x and Southeast Asian populations. Public art provides opportunities to celebrate and support these cultures and traditions.

- A. Expand place-based public art and wayfinding signage that reflects and celebrates the diverse cultural significance of the corridor. Identify new locations that activate community hubs. This includes shopping centers, parks, and other community destinations.
- B. Coordinate with RTD, CDOT, and other community partners to include public art and other design elements at BRT and other transit stations.



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7.1 OVERVIEW

Southwest Denver includes five distinct neighborhoods. The U.S. Census Bureau defines their boundaries as “statistical neighborhood boundaries.” While some issues affect all neighborhoods, many challenges are unique to each area and require tailored solutions. This section provides individual guidance for each neighborhood, offering more detailed recommendations than the broader area-wide strategies.

- The neighborhood summary map, called a “Plan on a Page,” provides a summary of key opportunities and where they apply in each neighborhood.
- The overview provides an analysis of the existing character in each neighborhood and the distinctive features of typical structures.
- Recommendations include policies and outcomes that apply only to the neighborhood with references to area-wide policies that are particularly important to the neighborhood.
- Additionally, the Focus Areas will illustrate how recommendations can be combined into a single project to advance the vision.

Previous Plans

The *Southwest Area Plan* replaces several older plans for the area. As part of this process, the planning team reviewed previous plans and carried forward recommendations that still reflect current community values. These recommendations were updated as needed and included in the new plan. Plans replaced by the Southwest Area Plan:

- **Athmar Park Neighborhood Perimeter Plan (2000):** The vision for the *Athmar Park Perimeter Plan* is to achieve a multi-ethnic, multi-cultural residential neighborhood surrounded by local and regional businesses that provide jobs and services to residents. Individuals representing different community organizations will work together to preserve neighborhood character, provide safety, and ensure Athmar Park is recognized as an important part of Denver.
- **Westwood Neighborhood Plan (2016):** The *Westwood Neighborhood Plan* seeks to have a connected, celebrated, and resilient, Westwood. It’s connected through ensuring safe, multi-modal access, green connections, and enhanced streets. It is celebrated by enhancing neighborhood culture, prioritizing public space and promoting unity in diversity. Finally, it’s resilient by promoting responsible development, enhancing the local economy, and promoting community ownership.
- **Overland Neighborhood Plan (1993):** The vision in the *Overland Neighborhood Plan* is to have quiet residential areas with little traffic. South Broadway is a bustling business district. The South Platte River is accessible to bikes and pedestrians with a greenbelt. Industrial areas are clean and revitalized. There are community-serving uses and yearly festivals that celebrates the culture of the neighborhood.

The *Southwest Area Plan* also overlaps with parts of other small-area plans. In areas where another plan overlaps with the Southwest Area boundary, the *Southwest Area Plan* will provide guidance as relevant recommendations were updated as needed and included in this plan. However, the other plans remain in effect for areas outside the Southwest boundary. Overlapping plans include:

- *I-25 & Broadway (2016)*
- *South Platte Corridor Study (2013)*
- *Alameda Station Area Plan (2009)*
- *Evans Station Area Plan (2009)*
- *Shattuck District Plan (2003)*
- *Federal Boulevard Corridor Plan (1995)*



7.2 ATHMAR PARK

7.2.1 Neighborhood Character

DEVELOPMENT PATTERN AND CONNECTIVITY

Athmar Park is bordered by Alameda Avenue to the north, Mississippi Avenue to the south, the South Platte River to the east, and Federal Boulevard to the west. Commercial corridors along major roads define the north, south, and west edges of Athmar Park, and industrial development and intermittent open space is located east.

The neighborhood has three different street layouts. On the west side, streets run north and south in a grid pattern. In the northeast, streets follow an east-west grid. In the southwest, streets curve and form a tighter pattern with several T-shaped intersections.

Even with these changes in layout, most of the neighborhood still has well-connected blocks and alleys. However, sidewalks are narrow throughout and do not meet accessibility standards.

PARKS, OPEN SPACE, AND LANDMARKS

The Athmar Park neighborhood is home to four parks:

- Johnson-Habitat Park along the South Platte River corridor connecting to the river
- Vanderbilt Park along the South Platte River corridor but separated from the river by South Platte River Drive.
- Aspgren Park in the east at the intersections of Lipan Street and Exposition Avenue
- Huston Lake Park in the center of the neighborhood

There are no Denver-designated landmarks in the neighborhood.

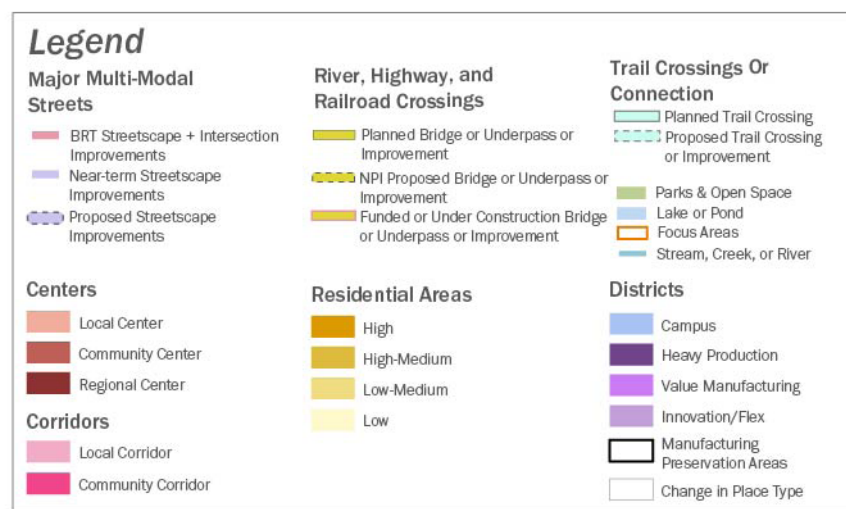
RESIDENTIAL CHARACTER

Most of the residences in Athmar Park are detached, single-unit homes with pockets of two-unit and multi-unit development along Alameda Avenue, Federal Boulevard, and Mississippi Avenue.

- Most residences are a single story tall with siding or brick exteriors
- Homes have large front yards and side driveways ending in a garage or carport, even though most are adjacent to an alley

7.2.2 Athmar Park Key Opportunities

- 1 Housing Affordability and Options for Diverse Needs:** Preserve existing and offer new housing options that prioritize affordability, prevent displacement, and respect neighborhood context especially within two blocks of future Federal & Alameda BRT corridors. ([See A-L1](#))
- 2 Federal Boulevard:** Prioritize pedestrian safety alongside bus rapid transit investments, and preserve and celebrate the unique identity of the Little Saigon (Alameda to Mississippi) by supporting local businesses and maintaining a small-scale feel ([See Federal Boulevard chapter](#)).
- 3 Integrated Industrial Areas:** Preserve industrial jobs in the value manufacturing areas. Support local businesses and allow a mix of industrial, commercial, and limited residential uses along Lipan Street and south of Vanderbilt Park that provide jobs, services, housing while creating a smoother transition to nearby homes, parks, and the river ([See Riverside Communities Focus Area](#)).
- 4 Enhance Connectivity:** Improve connectivity to key locations within the neighborhood and from the neighborhood to the South Platte River, parks, the river trail, I-25 transit station and the future Denver FC Summit soccer stadium ([See A-M1](#) and [Riverside Communities Focus Area](#)).
- 5 Safe and Healthy River Corridor:** Improve river health and make currently underutilized public spaces like the South Platte River Trail, Vanderbilt Park, and Johnson-Habitat Park feel safer, more comfortable, accessible, and welcoming while celebrating local culture and history ([See Riverside Communities Focus Area](#)).
- 6 Mississippi Shopping Center:** Unify and promote the Mississippi Avenue shopping centers as a walkable cultural and retail hub, anchored by the renovated Athmar Park Library and local cultural businesses. Support mixed-use and infill development that grow the area as a Latino/a/x cultural and business destination with improved connections, community services, and public or green spaces for the community to gather ([See Mississippi Shopping Center Focus Area](#)).
- 7 Alameda Square:** Promote Alameda Square as a vibrant, safe and accessible community shopping destination anchored by established businesses and complemented by infill opportunities at city owned property or underused land, that provides active public spaces, and important community services ([See Alameda Square Focus Area](#)).



7.2.3 Athmar Park Land Use Recommendations

RECOMMENDATIONS

ATHMAR PARK HOUSING

A-L1



POLICY

Preserve affordable housing options in Athmar Park while allowing for housing options that serve a diversity of needs (See L3 and L4).

OUTCOMES BACKGROUND

Housing affordability, anti-displacement considerations, and housing options that serves a variety of needs important priorities for residents of Athmar Park.

- A. Support and preserve the Manufactured Home Community of Aspen Terrace located in Athmar Park.
- B. Preserve and maintain homes values in Athmar Park as recent home value decreases have been more drastic for the Athmar Park neighborhood compared to citywide decreases and other parts of the city.
- C. Allow for a variety of housing options in the form of single family, duplex, and triplex with consideration for affordability, anti-displacement and character considerations two blocks from future transit corridors of Federal and Alameda Boulevards.

7.2.4 Athmar Park Mobility Recommendations

RECOMMENDATIONS

NEIGHBORHOOD CONNECTIONS

A-M1



POLICY

Improve connections within Athmar Park to key destinations (See M1, M2, M5, Q3 and the Riverside Communities Focus Area).

OUTCOMES BACKGROUND

Connectivity between key Athmar Park destination such as Huston Lake Park, Athmar Park Shopping Center, and the Tennessee trail could be improved as well as connections to the east side of the river.

- A. Formalize alley connection from the Tennessee Trail to Huston Lake Park through wayfinding, lighting, and improved park access.
- B. Continue the connection along the Tennessee trail as part of the Southwest Loop (See Q3) from where it ends near Zuni Street to the I-25 Station area and the future Denver FC Summit soccer stadium. Include the following components:
 1. Connection from where the trail ends to Mississippi Avenue through the open area under the utility lines.
 2. Connection from where the trail ends to Tennessee Avenue for bikes and pedestrians.
 3. Improved bike and pedestrian environment along Tennessee Avenue to Lipan Street.
 4. Future bike and ped connection from Lipan Street over the railroad tracks to Jason Street and Vanderbilt Park.
 5. Improved connection from Vanderbilt Park to the I-25/Broadway and future Denver FC Summit soccer stadium Area.
- C. Improved connection from a future neighborhood bikeway along Tennessee Avenue to the Athmar Park Shopping Center.

7.2.5 Athmar Park Quality of Life Recommendations

RECOMMENDATIONS

PARKS AND OPEN SPACES

A-Q1



POLICY

Improve connections, access, maintenance, and amenities of Huston Lake Park and open spaces in the neighborhood. (See Q2, M1, Q6)

OUTCOMES BACKGROUND

Huston Lake Park, the trail along Tennessee Avenue, Aspgren Park, and the parks along the river represent the parks and open spaces in the neighborhood. Community Input indicates a desired for better upkeep, and access.

- A. The parks within the neighborhood should be well-maintained, improved, and provide safe, comfortable, and welcoming environments for all users.
- B. Enforcement of unauthorized motor vehicles should be enforced.
- C. Open space should be included whenever possible as the Tennessee trail expands (see A-M1.B).
- D. Parks along the river should have better access from the Athmar Park neighborhood (See Riverside Community Focus Area).

7.2.6 Alameda Square Shopping Center Focus Area

Vision:
Alameda Square, one of Denver’s oldest open-air shopping centers, should be a vibrant and integrated district that supports both large and small businesses while adding missing community benefits. By using city-owned land and developing underutilized areas, this district will create active public spaces and new opportunities expanding upon the existing Vietnam War Memorial and public art . The vision for this area prioritizes safety, comfort, and a strong connection between businesses, community services, and the surrounding residential community, ensuring a thriving and balanced neighborhood.



RECOMMENDATIONS

ALAMEDA SQUARE



POLICY
BACKGROUND
OUTCOMES

The Alameda Square Shopping Center should be a vibrant, safe, and accessible mixed use shopping destination (See L6, L10, and Q6).

Alameda Square is a shopping center with both large and small businesses serving the Asian and Latino/a/x communities. Located along Alameda Avenue, it is surrounded by residential areas as well as Valverde Elementary to the east. The following outcomes provide guidance for the entire area mapped as community center including the area on the west side of Zuni Street which includes vacant land and a city-owned property, currently used as a cold weather shelter, which could help meet future community needs.

- A. This area should continue to host small cultural businesses that serve the community as well as large anchor tenants. New business are encouraged to fill vacant spaces.
- B. If development takes place, it should be in the form of infill development on underutilized parking lots, vacant properties, city owned property, or build upon existing buildings and structures to allow for new commercial and residential uses to create a walkable mixed-use destination.
- C. The Alameda Square Shopping Center focus area should provide missing elements of a complete neighborhood such as gathering spaces, public plazas, events space, community spaces, and small parks to become a community activity node that serves the surrounding educational and residential uses. Businesses and community services in this area should enhance safety and comfort for the surrounding residents and schools. There is an opportunity to expand upon the existing Vietnam War Memorial.
- D. There is an opportunity for the City owned parcel currently being used as a cold weather shelter and the vacant land of the west side of Zuni Street to provide community serving uses such as gathering spaces, public spaces, recreation, food access, community serving retail, resources, services or affordable housing. Future uses in this site should respond to the needs of the adjacent residential neighborhoods.
- E. Buildings on the northwest corner of the shopping center should have better interaction with the Alameda Avenue through physical improvements such as orientation towards the street, wayfinding or signage updates, or other building improvements.
- F. If an anchor tenant leaves, redevelopment of this site should consider reconnecting the site to the surrounding grid, a mix of uses, and human scale building forms that prioritize a pedestrian environment while transitioning in scale and intensity into the surrounding residential uses and scale.
- G. Safety improvements such as lighting, safe street crossings (especially along Alameda Avenue), additional pedestrian pathways or sidewalks, upgraded transit stations, and other enhancements should be enhanced or added to support the shopping center as well as surrounding neighborhoods and schools to create a welcoming and connected community hub.



7.3 MAR LEE

7.3.1 Neighborhood Character

DEVELOPMENT PATTERN AND CONNECTIVITY

Mar Lee is bordered by Mississippi Avenue to the north, Jewell Avenue to the south, Federal Boulevard to the east, and Sheridan Boulevard to the west. Major roads define its edges to the south, east, and west. Commercial development is concentrated on the neighborhood's eastern edge, with smaller commercial spaces located on the western boundary and in the center of the neighborhood. Three schools are in Mar Lee, many covering large blocks.

The streets in the northwest primarily follow a north/south grid pattern with alleys and well-connected blocks. East of Garfield Lake, blocks become larger and denser as the neighborhood transitions to commercial development. The streets on the south side are longer and more curved as development runs into Sanderson Gulch. Most sidewalks are narrower than five feet and do not meet accessibility standards.



PARKS, OPEN SPACE, AND LANDMARKS

The neighborhood includes Garfield Lake Park along its northern boundary. The Sanderson Gulch travels through the southern portion of the neighborhood and includes the Irving and Java Park along the path. There are no Denver-designated landmarks in Mar Lee.

RESIDENTIAL CHARACTER

Most residences in Mar Lee are single-unit detached homes with some multi-unit development along Federal Boulevard on the east side of the neighborhood.

- Single-story homes with driveways are most prevalent
- Most homes have a central entrance with siding or brick exteriors
- Roofs have shallow overhangs or small porches
- Homes have generous setbacks and large front yards



7.3.2 Mar Lee Key Opportunities

- 1 Housing Affordability and Options for Diverse Needs:** Preserve existing and offer new housing options that prioritize affordability, prevent displacement, and respect neighborhood context especially within two blocks of the future Federal BRT corridor which includes some larger or vacant lots ([See M-L1](#)).
- 2 Federal Boulevard:** Prioritize pedestrian safety alongside bus rapid transit investments, accommodate a mix of growth in housing and jobs near future BRT stations, and retain and expand existing commercial opportunities for local businesses ([See Federal Boulevard Chapter](#)).
- 3 Mar Lee Shopping Center:** Strengthen the commercial area near Florida and Tennyson by building upon existing community uses and anchors such as Save-a-Lot and community services such as the post office. Enhance connections to the surrounding community and support mixed-use and infill development on underused land to create vibrant spaces for community activities, local business, community services, and public spaces for the community to gather ([See Mar Lee Shopping Center Focus Area](#)).
- 4 Sanderson Gulch:** Improve amenities, access, and connections to and from Sanderson Gulch ([see M-Q1](#)).
- 5 Sheridan Boulevard Commercial Node:** Support the Sheridan and Florida commercial node by strengthening existing businesses and encouraging infill development on underused land, anchored by a regional-serving grocery store and community-focused services ([See M-L2](#)).



Legend

Major Multi-Modal Streets

- BRT Streetscape + Intersection Improvements
- Near-term Streetscape Improvements
- Proposed Streetscape Improvements

Centers

- Local Center
- Community Center
- Regional Center

Corridors

- Local Corridor
- Community Corridor

River, Highway, and Railroad Crossings

- Planned Bridge or Underpass or Improvement
- NPI Proposed Bridge or Underpass or Improvement
- Funded or Under Construction Bridge or Underpass or Improvement

Residential Areas

- High
- High-Medium
- Low-Medium
- Low

Trail Crossings Or Connection

- Planned Trail Crossing
- Proposed Trail Crossing or Improvement

- Parks & Open Space
- Lake or Pond
- Focus Areas
- Stream, Creek, or River

Districts

- Campus
- Heavy Production
- Value Manufacturing
- Innovation/Flex
- Manufacturing Preservation Areas
- Change in Place Type

7.3.3 Mar Lee Land Use Recommendations

RECOMMENDATIONS

MAR LEE
HOUSING

M-L1



POLICY

Preserve affordable housing options in Mar Lee while allowing for housing options that serve a diversity of needs ([See L3](#) and [L4](#)).

BACKGROUND

Housing affordability, anti-displacement considerations, and housing options that serves a variety of needs important priorities for residents of Mar Lee

OUTCOMES

- A. Prioritize preservation of naturally occurring affordable housing.
- B. Allow for a variety of housing options in the form of single family, duplex, and triplex with consideration for affordability, anti-displacement and character considerations two blocks from future transit corridor of Federal.

RECOMMENDATIONS

SHERIDAN
SHOPPING

M-L2



POLICY

Support and improve the commercial area along Sheridan from Mississippi to Florida ([See L6](#) and [L10](#)).

BACKGROUND

Sheridan Boulevard from Mississippi to Florida is home to many small business and a grocery store that supports the surrounding area. Support for local business and preserving food access is important for the community.

OUTCOMES

- A. Preserve the grocery store that provides food access to Mar Lee and surrounding neighborhoods.
- B. Support existing local businesses along this commercial corridor.
- C. Allow for mixed use infill development in underused land such as parking lots. Infill development should provide spaces that support community needs like public spaces, indoor community gathering spaces, and community serving retail.

7.3.5 Mar Lee Mobility Recommendations

RECOMMENDATIONS

MAR LEE MOBILITY

M-M1



OUTCOMES BACKGROUND POLICY

Mobility within Mar Lee and across major barriers should be improved (See M1).

Sanderson Gulch is a great east-west mobility route within the Mar Lee Neighborhood. However, the roads that bound the neighborhood such as Sheridan Boulevard and Federal Boulevard represent mobility barriers.

- A. Mobility along and across Sheridan Boulevard should be improved including enhanced sidewalks, tree canopy, and improved crossings.
- B. The intersection of Mississippi Avenue, Sheridan Boulevard, and Morrison Road should be improved including enhanced pedestrian circulation and re-evaluation of the one-way block of Mississippi Avenue.
- C. Improve mobility along and across Federal Boulevard (See [Federal Boulevard chapter](#) for more details).

7.3.4 Mar Lee Quality of Life Recommendations

RECOMMENDATIONS

PARKS AND OPEN SPACES

M-Q1



OUTCOMES BACKGROUND POLICY

Improve connections, access, maintenance and amenities of Garfield Lake Park and Sanderson Gulch (See Q2, Q3, M1, Q6)

Sanderson Gulch and Garfield Lake Park have been mentioned as a great community asset. People like the mix of open space with parks it provides. Access, safety, and maintenance of spaces has been mentioned as a need.

- A. Improve street crossings of Sanderson Gulch. Explore underpasses at major corridors such as Federal Boulevard.
- B. Improve maintenance and upkeep of park amenities and facilities along Sanderson Gulch such as the basketball court near Colorado Avenue which has received reports of flooding.
- C. Sanderson Gulch should have better lighting conditions to provide a sense of safety and comfort.
- D. Garfield Lake Park should be well-maintained, improved, and provide safe, comfortable, and welcoming environments for all users.



7.3.6 Mar Lee Shopping Center Focus Area

Vision:

The commercial area near Florida and Tennyson should be a place that builds upon the existing community uses, better connects the surrounding community, and creates spaces for community business to thrive and community activities to take place.

RECOMMENDATIONS

MAR LEE SHOPPING CENTER



M-L3

POLICY

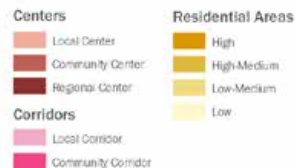
Improve the Mar Lee Shopping Center building on key community uses to create a space for community business to thrive and activities to take place (See L6 and L10).

BACKGROUND

The Mar Lee Center future place is community center and it sits along a major arterial street within a neighborhood almost entirely comprised of single-family homes. There is opportunity for this small site to serve the needs of the largely Hispanic/Latino/a/x neighborhood. The redevelopment potential is high but should consider some of the existing community-serving uses such as the Save-A-Lot grocery store and the post office that were mentioned as important assets by community input. General recommendations and considerations are described in Land Use Policy L10. All the general policies area applicable to the Mar Lee Shopping Center. The following outcomes and policies provide specific guidance for this shopping center.

OUTCOMES

- Support existing business while attracting new community serving businesses.
- Future infill development should build upon existing assets by encouraging the adaptive reuse of existing structures, ensure access to fresh food remains on the site and provide opportunities for existing businesses to continue to operate on the site and maintain connections to the community.
- Infill development should be concentrated along Florida and appropriately scaled for the surrounding neighborhood context.
- Infill development should include of small businesses and a major anchor to activate the site.
- Encourage new uses that provide spaces for the community to gather, come together and build community such as a coffee shop, brewery, or restaurants.
- Consider the phasing of potential infill development or redevelopment to maintain the affordable grocer and community assets such as the post office and minimize community impact.
- Ensure zoning supports the vision of this area as an active community node that serves as a focal point for the surrounding residential community with a mix of uses, land use and building height transitions, and communal plazas and green spaces.



RECOMMENDATIONS

MAR LEE SHOPPING CONNECTIVITY

M-M2



POLICY

Improve connections within the Mar Lee Shopping center and to the surrounding areas ([See M1, M2, M3, M5, Q3](#)).

OUTCOMES BACKGROUND

The Mar Lee shopping center also has the opportunity to tie into existing trails and green infrastructure both to the north and south to create increased accessibility to the site.

- A. Convert drive aisles to streets to form an internal street network.
- B. Create additional bike and pedestrian connections to nearby greenways and parks such as Sanderson Gulch Trail and Garfield Lake Park.
- C. Consider a signalized ped crossing from Mar Lee to Sanderson Gulch Trail.
- D. Build out and repair sidewalk network and other safety improvements such as repaving parking areas.





7.4 OVERLAND

7.4.1 Neighborhood Character

DEVELOPMENT PATTERN AND CONNECTIVITY

Overland is bounded by Mississippi Avenue to the north, Yale Avenue to the south, Broadway to the east, and the South Platte River to the west. While most of the neighborhood follows a grid of blocks and alleys, this pattern is divided into four sections by major transportation corridors: Santa Fe Drive with railroad tracks and Evans Avenue. Santa Fe Drive and the rail lines - including light rail serving Evans Station - provide north-south travel but create barriers to east-west connectivity. Evans Avenue offers east-west mobility but limits north-south access. Additional east-west arterials such as Mississippi Avenue and Florida Avenue further fragment the area. Sidewalks are missing in some places, and where they exist, widths vary and most do not meet accessibility standards. Commercial development lines Broadway on the east, while industrial uses cluster around the railroad tracks.



PARKS, OPEN SPACE, AND LANDMARKS

There are three parks in the Overland neighborhood. All of them are located along the South Platte River on the west side of the neighborhood with limited connectivity across the railroad tracks and Santa Fe Avenue from the east side of the neighborhood:

- Overland Pond Park
- Pasquinel's Landing Park
- Grant Frontier Park

The northwest area of the neighborhood near the South Platte River is home to the Overland Municipal Golf Course which is the largest open space in the neighborhood, and a second golf range, Aqua Golf, sits just north of the course.

John Collins United Methodist Church is a Denver-designated historic landmark at 2300 South Bannock Street in the neighborhood and planning area.



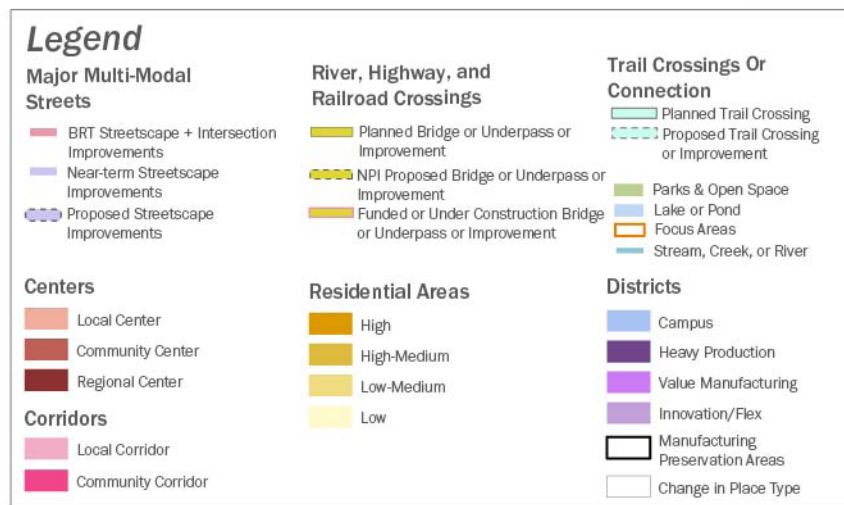
RESIDENTIAL CHARACTER

Overland has a mix of housing styles. Along major streets, you'll find tall multi-unit buildings with metal and brick exteriors and ground-floor windows. Triplexes and duplexes can be found throughout the neighborhood. These structures have brick or metal exterior siding and are typically between two and two-and-a-half stories tall. Single-unit detached homes can be found throughout the neighborhood, but are more prevalent south of Evans Avenue or near the Overland Golf Course.

- Single-unit homes are one or two stories tall with siding, brick, or stucco exteriors
- Gable roofs are prevalent, and many have front porches
- Setbacks vary throughout the neighborhood, but most homes have a front yard
- Most homes do not have a driveway as many have alley access

7.4.2 Overland Key Opportunities

- 1 Housing Affordability and Options for Diverse Needs:** Preserve existing and offer new affordable housing options that fit the neighborhood character near the and light rail station, the Broadway and Santa Fe corridors, and within the industrial mixed-use areas ([See O-L1](#) and [Riverside Communities Focus Area](#)).
- 2 Enhance Connectivity:** Improve connections between the four parts of Overland, across the South Platte River to connect with neighborhoods on the west side of the river, and to the Evans Light Rail Station. ([See Riverside Communities Focus Area](#)).
- 3 Walkable Mixed Use Santa Fe Corridor:** Transform the auto-oriented Santa Fe corridor into a vibrant, walkable, transit-friendly area that connects to the river ([See Riverside Communities Focus Area](#)).
- 4 Integrated Industrial Areas:** Within the industrial districts, preserve industrial uses south of Harvard Avenue. Allow a mix of industrial, commercial, and residential uses elsewhere to support neighborhood needs and serve as transitions to residential areas or commercial corridors ([See Riverside Communities Focus Area](#)).
- 5 Safe and Healthy River Corridor:** Improve river health and make public spaces like the South Platte River Trail, Grant Frontier Park and Pasquinel's Landing Park safer, more comfortable, accessible, and welcoming while celebrating local culture and history ([See Riverside Communities Focus Area](#)).
- 6 Gathering Spaces:** Create new public spaces by reimagining South Platte River Drive near Santa Fe and Evans as shared streets linking the river and the trail to recommended neighborhood community and commercial gathering spaces in nearby mixed-use areas ([See Riverside Communities Focus Area](#)).
- 7 Maintain Broadway's Main Street Character:** Maintain and improve Broadway's pedestrian-friendly, local-scale character, and support local businesses ([See O-L2](#)).
- 8 Food Access:** Prioritize food access resources and services in Overland to better serve residents ([See Q4](#)).



7.4.3 Overland Land Use Recommendations

RECOMMENDATIONS

OVERLAND HOUSING OPTIONS

O-L1



Provide housing options near the light rail station. (See L3 and L4).

There is opportunity for additional housing options that provide a transition from the light rail station and the residential areas.

OUTCOMES BACKGROUND POLICY

- A. Naturally occurring affordable housing should be protected and maintained. These homes are essential to keeping the community inclusive and affordable.
- B. As additional housing options within low residential places are explored at the citywide scale, duplexes in Overland should be prioritized in the areas highlighted in the 2009 *Evans Station Plan* paired with affordability, anti-displacement and neighborhood character tools.
- C. As additional housing options within low residential and low-medium residential places are explored at the citywide scale, other small scale multi-unit housing options in Overland should be prioritize as a transition from higher scale densities near the station paired with affordability, anti-displacement and neighborhood character tools.
- D. Affordable housing should be prioritize near the Evans Station including exploring community land trusts.

RECOMMENDATIONS

BROADWAY CORRIDOR

O-L2



Maintain the “traditional main street” character and scale of South Broadway with local business and transit supportive use (See L6, and L10).

Broadway is a key commercial corridor in Overland and the surrounding neighborhoods. The walkable, traditional main street buildings should be maintained, and new development should be consistent with the existing character. While much of Broadway has retained much of its historic character, there are some auto-oriented uses and structures. New development along the corridor should encourage a pedestrian-friendly environment.

OUTCOMES BACKGROUND POLICY

- A. Foster business organizational efforts to explore a special district(s) unique to South Broadway that can provide additional maintenance, marketing, branding, and other needs. Work with existing maintenance districts and businesses to determine the most appropriate districting tool to achieve desired outcomes.
- B. Explore unique identity and branding opportunities for this segment of South Broadway and surrounding areas.
- C. Remove barriers to opening a new business or improving existing businesses to avoid relocation.
- D. Promote the northern segment of the corridor known informally as “Antique Row” for its concentration of antique businesses as a destination for small, local businesses.
- E. The Antique Row segment is one of the neighborhood’s key cultural, historic, and economic corridors. Its historic character and walkable small business hub should be preserved.
- F. Preserve existing “traditional main street” character through context- sensitive regulations (e.g. typically one to two-story brick buildings close to the street with shared side walls).
- G. Support small-scale development that respects the small lots that exist in the neighborhood today.
- H. When lots are consolidated to create a larger development opportunity, encourage new development that respects the historic scale and character of South Broadway.
- I. Ensure building heights along the corridor (up to 3 stories in Antique Row and 5 stories elsewhere) maintain a pedestrian scale.
- J. Prioritize ground-floor commercial uses and other active uses on South Broadway.
- K. Provide appropriate setbacks/buffers for ground floor homes along railroad and South Broadway to preserve privacy and reduce noise.
- L. Incentivize the transition away from auto-oriented uses on the corridor.
- M. Drive-thrus, gas stations, car dealerships, and similar auto-oriented uses and building forms should be limited along the corridor. If these sites become empty, they should be reused or redeveloped to support walking, biking, and transit use.
- N. Support patio expansions that engage the sidewalk and provide more “eyes on the street” where appropriate.

RECOMMENDATIONS

EVANS STATION



Support transit oriented uses to activate the area near Evans light rail station.

The Evans light rail station is the only station within the boundaries of the Southwest Area Plan. Building upon the work started by the Evans Station Area Plan, the area surrounding the station has the opportunity to become an active community hub connected to the Broadway corridor and the rest of the neighborhood. The Evans Station Area Plan provided height guidance for the areas near the Evans Station. The height guidance in the outcomes below used the Evans Station Plan height guidance as a baseline and provided refinements as needed.

- A. Work with RTD to envision the highest and best use for the land directly adjacent to the station platform (currently a park and ride).
- B. The blocks facing West Evans Avenue as well as blocks surrounding Evans Station should allow for a mix of uses and prioritize ground-floor commercial uses and other active uses to support transit, activate the station area, and maintain “eyes on the street.”
- C. Explore opportunities to enhance the area under the Evan Avenue bridges, including the space near the Evans Station and Evans Avenue service roads, considering:
 - Activation and programming
 - Placemaking
 - Art
 - Lighting
 - Improved streetscape elements
 - Gathering space
- D. Noise reduction improvements should be explored along the rail lines to improve the comfort of the areas adjacent to the rail lines.
- E. Heights near the Evans Station area should support Transit Oriented Development and create mixed use and active places.
 1. The Evans Avenue Community Corridor designation should be up to three stories with opportunity for up to five stories for properties facing the river.
 2. The Broadway Community Corridor designation should be up to five stories both north and south of Evans Avenue.
 3. The Community Center designation area near the station and between Evans Avenue and Colorado Avenue should be generally up to five stories. However, buildings as tall as 8 stories are recommended in strategic locations, such as adjacent to the tracks. This higher level of intensity may also be considered for prominent buildings or intersections within a redevelopment project that provides elements of the complete neighborhood to significantly advance the community priorities and vision for the Southwest area and the Overland neighborhood.

RECOMMENDATIONS

INSTITUTIONAL SITES



Incorporate community serving uses into vacant or underused institutional sites or buildings in Overland (See L8).

The city owned parcel near Iliff Avenue and Fox Street is currently being used for a temporary use housing, “La Paz” micro community. If the current use comes to an end there is an opportunity for this parcel to provide community needs and services expressed by the Overland neighborhood.

- A. Once the temporary use for the “La Paz” community is no longer needed, the future of this site should be prioritized for neighborhood serving uses and amenities such as community gathering spaces, food access, parks and open space, recreation, community gardens, or affordable housing.
- B. The existing wood fence along Santa Fe Avenue should be enhanced for better noise control and safety.



EVANS STATION AREA PLAN (2009)

This plan supersedes the *Evans Station Area Plan* within the *Southwest Area Plan* boundary. The *Evans Station Area Plan* will continue to provide guidance for the areas outside the *Southwest Area Plan* boundary. Relevant recommendations from the *Evans Station Area Plan* that had not been completed at the time of this plan have been incorporated into the *Southwest Area Plan*. Below is a summary of its key contents and recommendations.

LAND USE & URBAN DESIGN:

- Diversify land uses on Delaware to support mixed-use and “creative industries.”
- Create a main street on Broadway by discouraging auto-oriented forms and supporting retail, residential, and office uses.
- Connect the station to Broadway by focusing higher-intensity development and a better pedestrian environment along Evans Ave.
- Redevelop underutilized industrial areas into mixed-use, transit-oriented uses with diverse housing opportunities.
- Respect the character in existing neighborhoods while supporting diverse housing types.
- Create a comprehensive open space system with new east-west connections and pockets of urban open space and plazas.

MOBILITY & INFRASTRUCTURE

- Implement new east-west connections across Santa Fe Drive and railroad tracks, including bridges at Jewell and Iliff, in addition to the Evans Avenue bridge.
- Invest in Harvard Gulch improvements to remove floodplain restrictions along Broadway, Delaware, and north of Evans.
- Create multi-modal streets throughout the station area with a priority on Evans, Broadway, Delaware, Jewell, Warren, and Asbury.

ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY

- Consider special assessment districts for funding neighborhood improvement, amenities, and public art.
- Celebrate the area as a creative industries niche for music, art, and design-related businesses.
- Create a neighborhood Marketplace Initiative to market South Broadway and Evans Station area and call attention to the lifestyle, businesses and amenities this neighborhood offers.
- Pursue public-private partnerships and other innovative strategies for carrying out the recommendations for critical infrastructure projects and open space/plazas.

7.4.4 Overland Mobility Recommendations

RECOMMENDATIONS

RECONNECTING OVERLAND



Improve connectivity between the four sub-sections of Overland and the surrounding areas.

Major transportation corridors such as Santa Fe Drive, Evans Avenue, and railroad tracks divide the Overland neighborhood into four sections. Reconnecting these sections and improving connections to surrounding areas has been a top community priority.

- Evans Avenue should be a safe and comfortable east-west connection across Santa Fe Drive, the railroad tracks, and the river while having safe and comfortable north-south crossings. Considerations include:
 - Improved bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure along Evans Avenue and bridge.
 - Streetscape improvements such as pedestrian lighting.
 - Improved intersections at Broadway, Bannock, Santa Fe Drive, Galapago Street, and South Platte River Drive. Intersection improvements should include considerations for pedestrian, bike, and vehicular movement from Evans Avenue to this key corridor. As redevelopment takes place, reevaluate street classification for Galapago, Delaware, and Bannock Streets.
- Evans Avenue service roads and the spaces under the bridge should be safe and comfortable spaces ([See O-L3](#)).
- A vertical connection for pedestrians and bicycles should connect the Evans Avenue bridge and the Evans Station.
- Future replacement of the Evans Avenue bridge as a long-term improvement should include better pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure.

- Build on the recent Jewell bicycle and pedestrian bridge investment by
 - Improving the crossing at Broadway and Jewell.
 - Add a river crossing near Jewell Avenue on the south side of Ruby Hill Park ([See RC-M1](#)).
- Implement a bicycle and pedestrian crossing of Santa Fe Drive and the railroad tracks at Iliff Avenue.
- Railroad spurs within the neighborhood that are abandoned should be transformed into multimodal corridors.

RECOMMENDATIONS

BROADWAY MOBILITY



The Broadway corridor should be accessible, safe, and comfortable to cross ([See M1](#), [M2](#), [M4](#), and [M5](#)).

The South Broadway corridor has had pedestrian improvements in recent years that improved the pedestrian experience along the corridor. However, crossing the corridor can still be challenging.

- Provide more, safe crossings on South Broadway. This can be done through intersection improvements or new mid-block crossings.
- Prioritize additional crossings in high-use areas and where existing distance between crossings is more than ¼ mile, or a 5-minute walk.
- Provide intuitive and safe connections and signage along east-west bike routes that connect South Broadway with routes like Sherman Street neighborhood bikeway to the east, and the South Platte River trail to the west.
- Reduce traffic speeds with traffic calming, speed enforcement, and improved signage.
- Maintain and expand existing streetscape elements to ensure longevity and support tree growth.

RECOMMENDATIONS

BROADWAY PARKING



Manage parking along the Broadway corridor.

Business along the Broadway corridor mentioned parking availability and other modes of transportations as a key component to the vitality of the corridor. At the same time, making sure parking is managed within the corridor was important for nearby residents.

- Explore residential parking permits to limit commercial parking overflow into residential areas.
- Encourage other modes of transportation and to the corridor and Transportation Demand Strategies to minimize parking demand that build on existing assets such as the Evans light rail station, the Broadway transit corridor, and the South Platte River trail as well as on planned improvements such as the extension of the existing bike route along Broadway further north ([See M2](#) for more details).
- Encourage shared parking arrangements and other strategies to maximize existing parking areas.
- Provide dedicated and frequent bicycle and scooter parking zones.
- This area should perform a curbside management plan that takes into account impacts from the Broadway corridor and the future nearby Denver FC Summit soccer stadium.

7.4.5 Overland Quality of Life Recommendations

RECOMMENDATIONS

BROADWAY IDENTITY



POLICY BACKGROUND OUTCOMES

Maintain the unique identity of South Broadway and the surrounding areas through preservation of the built environment, placemaking, art and cultural events ([See Q7](#)).

This section of South Broadway has a distinct identity shaped by its industrial character, antique shops, and local retailers. Enhancing that identity through art, placemaking, and cultural events is a great way to celebrate the neighborhood's unique character

- A. Seek opportunities for locally sourced, placemaking art and gateway elements to celebrate the identity and welcome visitors to this unique district.
- B. Look for underutilized public spaces to feature community art, such as the retaining walls at Iowa and Acoma, where a community mural could be installed.
- C. Encourage public art that aligns with the spirit and identity of the neighborhood.
- D. Look for opportunities to install gateway features and district branding to signify the entrance to the South Broadway district and the Evans Station. Considerations include:
 1. Iconic station tower or vertical element to help increase the station visibility from Evans Avenue, Santa Fe Drive, Broadway and other neighborhood areas.
 2. Gateway opportunities include the Broadway Corridor, along the future Jewell and Iliff bridges and mobility routes and along Evans Avenue.
 3. Coordinate these efforts with existing and future branding, wayfinding/signage, and public art installations within the South Broadway and Evans Station areas.
- E. Create an "Off Broadway" arts and music scene north of Evans Avenue and west of South Broadway that maintains the industrial character while breathing new life and vibrancy into the neighborhood. Build on the creative industries character and identity of the area that include music, art, design, woodworking and antique industries.
- F. Encourage developers to retain industrial buildings that define the neighborhood and convert them into affordable spaces for local arts and music venues.
- G. The Overland Neighborhood should be further study from a historic context perspective as there is opportunity for historic preservation efforts ([See L9](#))

RECOMMENDATIONS

PARKS AND OPEN SPACES

O-Q2



POLICY

Overland parks and public spaces should be accessible and safe from flooding risk (See Q2, and RC-Q2).

BACKGROUND

The existing parks within the Overland neighborhood are all located next to the river on the western side of the neighborhood and hard to access from the east side of Santa Fe Avenue. Additionally flooding risk from Harvard Gulch, local stormwater flooding, or river flooding creates flooding risk for areas on the eastern side of Santa Fe Avenue

OUTCOMES

- A. Improved access to riverside parks located on the west side of the neighborhood across major barriers (See O-M1, RC-M1, and M1).
- B. The low-lying areas downstream of Harvard Gulch including areas near the Broadway corridor, Asbury Avenue and Delaware Street should have reduced flooding risk from stormwater drainage improvements to Harvard Gulch, local stormwater management improvements and river flooding improvements.
- C. Opportunities for new pocket parks in areas outside of the park watershed map including the area west of Broadway and north of Evans (See Q2). Explore opportunities for a park on this area to help flooding risk in this area. (See outcome B).
- D. The Overland Golf Course should be connect with residents from the surrounding communities through program like their "First Tee Program" for youth.





7.5 RUBY HILL

7.5.1 Neighborhood Character

DEVELOPMENT PATTERN AND CONNECTIVITY

Ruby Hill is bordered by Mississippi Avenue to the north, Jewell Avenue to the south, the South Platte River to the east, and Federal Boulevard to the west. The north and west edges of the neighborhood are defined by commercial corridors along major roads, and the northeast is marked by industrial development. While the southern boundary is Jewell Avenue, the Evans Corridor - just a few blocks south - continues to provide many services and resources to this neighborhood, including a grocery store and other commercial and retail business.

Florida Avenue is a major road that runs east/west through the middle of the neighborhood. Ruby Hill's streets mostly run north and south, with a mix of straight and curving segments. Streets tend to curve more as they get closer to Sanderson Gulch. Many streets are wide, which can lead to speeding. The size and shape of blocks vary across the neighborhood.

PARKS, OPEN SPACE, AND LANDMARKS

There are several parks in the neighborhood:

- Ruby Hill Park, the namesake feature is located in the east of the neighborhood
- Godsmen Park is centrally located
- Athmar Park and Athmar Recreation Center are in the south.
- Sanderson Gulch cuts through the neighborhood from Federal Boulevard on the west to Lipan Street on the east and incorporates a linear park located at Florida Avenue and Raritan Street.

There are no Denver-designated landmarks in Ruby Hill.

RESIDENTIAL CHARACTER

Most of the neighborhood's homes are detached, single units with some attached townhomes and multi-unit homes on the north and west corridors.

- Most detached homes are one-story tall and have brick exteriors
- Recessed entryways and front patios are common
- Most homes have driveways and large front yards, although alley access is also common

7.5.2 Ruby Hill Key Opportunities

- 1 Housing Affordability and Options for Diverse Needs:** Preserve existing and offer new housing options that prioritize affordability, prevent displacement, and maintain neighborhood character. This includes new housing options within two blocks of future Federal BRT corridor as well as support for existing DHA properties such as Mountainview Apartments and Walsh Manor Homes ([See R-L1](#)).
- 2 Federal Boulevard:** Prioritize pedestrian safety alongside Ruby Hill bus rapid transit investments, accommodate a mix of growth in housing and jobs near future BRT stations, and retain and expand existing commercial opportunities for local businesses ([See Federal Boulevard Chapter](#)).
- 3 Integrated Industrial Areas:** Preserve industrial jobs in the value manufacturing areas. Support local businesses and allow a mix of industrial, commercial, and limited residential uses along Lipan Street ([See Riverside Communities Focus Area](#)).
- 4 Local Commercial Node:** Create a commercial node along Lipan Street from Louisiana to Florida that serves as a gathering space with a mix of uses for residents and visitors to Ruby Hill Park ([See Riverside Communities Focus Area](#)).
- 5 Enhance Connectivity:** Improve connections within the neighborhood that include a better connection between the South Platte River Trail and Sanderson Gulch. Additionally a river crossing near Jewell Avenue on the south side of Ruby Hill Park builds upon recent investments of the future Jewell bike/pedestrian bridge linking the Ruby Hill neighborhood and park to the Overland neighborhood including the South Platte River trail, nearby parks, and the Evans Station ([See Riverside Communities Focus Area](#)).
- 6 Mississippi Shopping Center:** Unify and promote the Mississippi Avenue shopping centers as a walkable cultural and retail hub, anchored by the renovated Athmar Park Library and local cultural businesses. Support mixed-use and infill development that grow the area as a Latino/a/x cultural and business destination with improved connections, community services, and public spaces for the community to gather ([See Mississippi Shopping Center Focus Area](#)).
- 7 Sanderson Gulch:** Improve amenities, access, and connections to and from Sanderson Gulch especially from Lipan Street to the South Platte River Trail ([See R-Q1](#)).



7.5.3 Ruby Hill Land Use Recommendations

RECOMMENDATIONS

RUBY HILL HOUSING

R-L1



POLICY

Preserve affordable housing options in Ruby Hill while allowing for housing options that serve a diversity of needs ([See L3](#) and [L4](#)).

BACKGROUND

Housing affordability, anti-displacement considerations, and housing options that serves a variety of needs important priorities for residents of Ruby Hill

OUTCOMES

- Prioritize preservation of naturally occurring affordable housing.
- Allow for a variety of housing options in the form of single family, duplex, and triplex with consideration for affordability, anti-displacement and character considerations two blocks from future transit corridor of Federal.
- Mountainview and Walsh Manor (managed by DHA) should allow for additional community amenities and resources on site. If redevelopment occurs, additional density should be allowed through various housing forms and heights to create more affordable housing for households of all sizes and needs. These locations are located along or near BRT transit improvement corridors and should include transit-orientated improvements.

RECOMMENDATIONS

INSTITUTIONAL SITES

R-L2



POLICY

Incorporate community serving uses into vacant or underused institutional sites or buildings in Ruby Hill ([See L8](#) and [Q2](#)).

BACKGROUND

The Ruby Hill neighborhood has expressed a variety of community needs that could be provided in large or vacant institutional sites within the neighborhood such as the Colorado Public Radio (CPR) site, schools, or places of worship.

OUTCOMES

- Consider opportunities for the future of the CPR site to include community serving uses highlighted through input from this plan for the Ruby Hill neighborhood such as community gathering spaces, community retail, parks, open space and recreation, community gardens, housing, or additional parking for Levitt Pavilion.
- Schmitt Elementary School has been identified by DPS as a school to be closed. This site should be reused as a community asset that includes community- serving uses such as continuing education, affordable housing, park or open space, and/or local services as well as "Urban Design Features and Amenities". ([See L8](#))

7.5.4 Ruby Hill Mobility Recommendations

RECOMMENDATIONS

NEIGHBORHOOD CONNECTIONS



POLICY

Improve connections within Ruby Hill and to key destinations ([See M1, M2, M3, M5, Q3](#) and the [Riverside Communities Focus Area](#)).

OUTCOMES BACKGROUND

Connectivity between key Ruby Hill destinations such as Sanderson Gulch, Ruby Hill Park, and commercial areas should be improved as well as connections to the east side of the river.

- A. Improve street crossings of Sanderson Gulch. Explore underpasses at major corridors such as Federal Boulevard.
- B. Create a connection of Sanderson Gulch to the South Platte River trail. Explore connection through Jason Street on the short term. If redevelopment of private property occurs near this area, provide connection through redevelopment.
- C. Ruby Hill Park should be well connected across the river to the South Platte River trail and the future Jewel bike/ped bridge and therefore the Overland neighborhood.
- D. Expand Micro-transit service boundary to include Levitt Pavilion and Ruby Hill Park.
- E. The intersection at Lipan Street and Florida should be improved to connect access to Ruby Hill Park from future neighborhood commercial node ([See Riverside Communities Focus Area](#)).

7.5.5 Ruby Hill Quality of Life Recommendations

RECOMMENDATIONS

PARKS AND OPEN SPACES



POLICY

Improve connections, access, maintenance and amenities of Ruby Hill Park and Sanderson Gulch ([See Q2](#), and [RC-Q2](#)).

OUTCOMES BACKGROUND

Ruby Hill Park is a great assets for the neighborhood and the region, including Levitt Pavilion. Sanderson Gulch provides great open spaces, parks and east-west mobility in the neighborhood. There is opportunity for improved access, amenities, and overall maintenance.

- A. Ruby Hill Park and Sanderson Gulch should be well-maintained, improved, and provide safe, comfortable, and welcoming environments for all users.
- B. Ruby Hill Park should continue to realize the vision set forward in the *Ruby Hill Master Plan*.
- C. The Athmar Recreation Center should be improved with additional amenities, upgrades, and additional programming.





7.6 WESTWOOD

7.6.1 Neighborhood Character

DEVELOPMENT PATTERN AND CONNECTIVITY

Westwood is bordered by Alameda Avenue to the north, Mississippi Avenue to the south, Federal Boulevard to the east, and Sheridan Boulevard to the west. A cultural hub along Federal Boulevard serves Denver's Asian American, Native Hawaiian, and Pacific Islander communities. Morrison Road runs diagonally through Westwood and serves as a community anchor for Latino/a/x and Hispanic culture.

The neighborhood's streets mostly follow a grid pattern. The east side has alleys and regular, connected blocks. The west side has denser blocks, few alleys, and more curved streets as development runs into Weir Gulch, which meanders through the northwest corner of the neighborhood. Sidewalks are only three-feet wide throughout the neighborhood and do not meet accessibility standards.

PARKS, OPEN SPACE, AND LANDMARKS

There are seven parks in Westwood.

- Weir Gulch Park is in the northwest corner of the neighborhood, crossing into the boundary at Alameda Avenue and ending at Sheridan Boulevard to the west.
- Cuatro Vientos Park is on the north side along Alameda Avenue
- Westwood Park and Westwood Recreation Center are on the southern end of Morrison Road.
- Two pocket parks are located on the corners of Kentucky Avenue and Knox Court and Kentucky Avenue and Irving Street
- Ford Place is a linear park in the southeast corner of the neighborhood.
- There are no Denver-designated landmarks in Westwood. The Denver Indian Center is currently going through a National Register designation process.

RESIDENTIAL CHARACTER

Most homes in Westwood are single-unit detached residences. The neighborhood also includes manufactured, two-unit, and multi-unit homes along its commercial corridors.

- Most single-unit homes are one-story with siding, brick, or a mix of both on the exterior
- Setbacks vary throughout the neighborhood, and many homes have large front yards
- Many homes have driveways, but street parking is also common
- Gables and small front porches are common characteristics
- Many homes have front yard fences and gates popular in the Latino/a/x culture

7.6.2 Westwood Key Opportunities

- 1 **Housing Affordability and Options for Diverse Needs:** Preserve existing and offer new housing options that prioritize affordability, prevent displacement, and maintain neighborhood character. This includes housing for multigenerational and multi-family households as well as support for existing DHA properties such as Westwood Homes ([See W-L1](#)).
- 2 **Morrison Road :** Continue to thrive as a cultural and community hub that builds upon recent investments such as the future recreation center to achieve the vision of a vibrant linear market. Incorporating design features that celebrate the area's unique history and improved streetscaping will enhance the corridor's appearance and improve the pedestrian experience. Support to local business and nearby diverse and affordable housing, including family and intergenerational options, will continue to ensure activity along the corridor ([See Morrison Road Focus Area](#)). The streetscape improvements along the corridor are consider a catalytic project for this focus area.
- 3 **Federal Boulevard:** Prioritize pedestrian safety alongside bus rapid transit investments, and preserve and celebrate the unique identity of the Little Saigon Area (Alameda to Mississippi) by supporting local businesses and maintaining a small-scale feel ([See Federal Boulevard Chapter](#)).
- 4 **Community Spaces and Organizations:** Support and grow the neighborhood's network of community-serving institutions to ensure residents have continued access to vital services, programs, and gathering spaces ([See L8](#)).
- 5 **Food Access:** Prioritize food access resources and services in Westwood to better serve residents ([See Q4](#)).



7.6.3 Westwood Land Use Recommendations

RECOMMENDATIONS

WESTWOOD HOUSING

W-L1



OUTCOMES BACKGROUND POLICY

Preserve affordable housing options in the Westwood neighborhood while allowing for housing options that serve a diversity of needs (See L3 and L4).

Housing affordability, anti-displacement considerations, and housing options that serves a variety of needs are highly important for Westwood Residents.

- A. Westwood Homes (managed by DHA) should allow for additional community amenities and resources on site. If redevelopment occurs, additional density should be allowed through various housing forms and heights to provide more affordable housing for households of all sizes and needs.
- B. Retain existing naturally occurring affordable housing.
- C. Work with an existing land trust, or form a new one dedicated to Westwood, that can purchase properties to maintain long-term neighborhood affordability.
- D. Support and preserve the Manufactured Home Community of Montevista located in Westwood.
- E. Allow for a variety of housing options in the form of single family, duplex, and triplex with consideration for affordability, anti-displacement and character considerations two blocks from future transit corridors of Federal and Alameda.
- F. As additional housing options within low residential places are explored at the citywide scale consider the following elements
 1. Duplexes in Westwood should be prioritized in the areas highlighted in the *Westwood Neighborhood Plan* (2016) paired with affordability, anti-displacement and neighborhood character tools.
 2. Promote development of middle housing buildings to enable intergenerational housing.
 3. Encourage accessory dwelling units to accommodate extended family members while maintaining equity and home ownership.
 4. Incentivize the development of larger unit sizes of 3 or more bedrooms to allow families to grow in place.
 5. As mapped in the *Westwood Neighborhood Plan* (2016), establish a transition zone between Morrison Road and existing low-density residential housing in the Westwood neighborhood to taper from Morrison Road's 3-5 story scale to 1-2 story scale.
 6. Provide opportunities for residential options that supports live/work business.
 7. Promote home ownership options and new for-sale housing.

RECOMMENDATIONS

HISTORIC WESTWOOD

W-L2

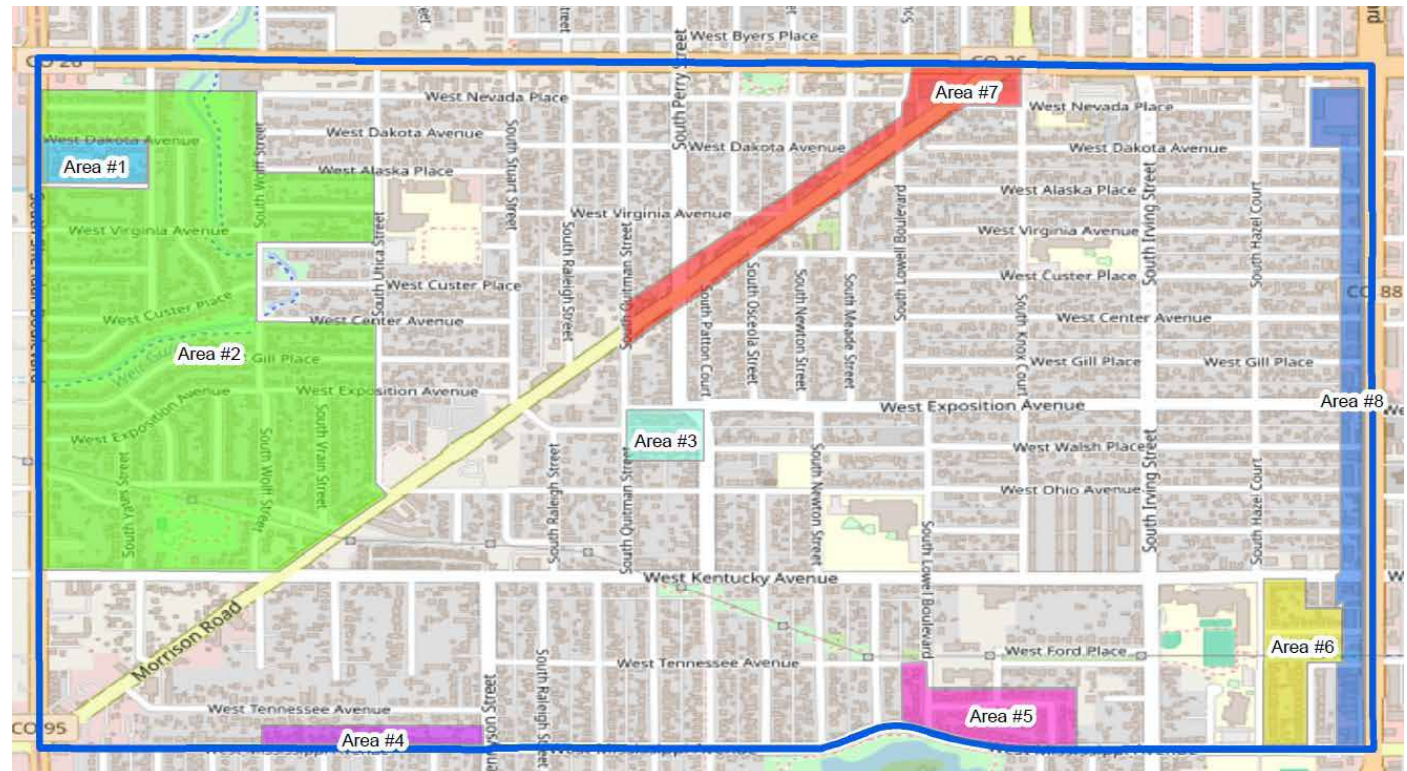


OUTCOMES BACKGROUND POLICY

Preserve significant historic areas and structures in the Westwood neighborhood that contribute to the unique character of the area (See L9).

Discover Denver is a citywide building survey focused on identifying buildings that are historically, architecturally, or culturally significant to Denver's history. The survey documents the city's individual buildings, the histories of its neighborhoods, and the stories important to its communities. Led by Historic Denver, Inc. and the City and County of Denver, the project is funded primarily by a grant from the Colorado State Historical Fund. In the Southwest, a survey has been completed for the Westwood neighborhood.

- A. The following "Areas of Significance" have been identified as key historic, architectural or culturally significance areas and should be further studied for designation.
- Area 1 - Contemporary Design
 - Area 2 - Post-War Housing Boom
 - Area 3 - Rowan-Jacobs Subdivision
 - Area 4 - Transitional Ranch Homes
 - Area 5 - Ranch Dwellings
 - Area 6 - Minimal Traditional Homes
 - Area 7 - Morrison Road
 - Area 8 - Little Saigon District



Map Source: Discover Denver Study

7.6.4 Westood Mobility Recommendations

RECOMMENDATIONS

WESTWOOD
MOBILITY



POLICY Mobility within the Westwood neighborhood and across and along its arterial streets that bound the neighborhood should be improved ([See M1](#), [M5](#)).

BACKGROUND The Westwood neighborhood is bounded by the arterial streets of Federal Boulevard, Alameda Avenue and Sheridan Boulevard that are hard to cross and usually uncomfortable to walk along. Key corridors such as Kentucky Avenue provide internal mobility option connecting many neighborhood destinations.

- OUTCOMES**
- A. Kentucky Avenue is a key pedestrian connection to schools and neighborhood destinations. Pedestrian improvements along this corridor should include enhanced pedestrian crossings, buffered sidewalks with street trees or green infrastructure ([See M5](#)).
 - B. The Montevista Community located along Kentucky Avenue should have safe access points and internal circulations. Improvements to the access points to this community should be improved for visibility concerns and non-stop traffic.
 - C. Explore alley improvements as opportunities to provide additional mobility, recreation, placemaking, and green infrastructure within the alleys in Westwood.
 - D. Improve mobility along and across Federal Boulevard ([See Federal Boulevard chapter](#) for more details).
 - E. Mobility along and across Alameda Boulevard should be improved including enhanced sidewalks, tree canopy, and improved crossings at Knox, Perry, and a Weir Gulch underpass.
 - F. Mobility along and across Sheridan Boulevard should be improved including enhanced sidewalks, tree canopy and improved crossings including a grade separated crossing of Weir Gulch once the Weir Gulch trail is developed on the Lakewood side.
 - G. The intersection of Mississippi Avenue, Sheridan Boulevard, and Morrison Road should be improved including enhanced pedestrian circulation and re-evaluation of the one-way block of Mississippi Avenue.



7.6.5 Westwood Quality of Life Recommendations

RECOMMENDATIONS

WESTWOOD PUBLIC SPACES



OUTCOMES BACKGROUND POLICY

Public and open spaces within the neighborhood should be safe, accessible, and represent the culture and needs of the neighborhood.

Public spaces within the Westwood neighborhood include the parks, commercial corridors, and the completed parts of the neighborhood greenway “Via Verde” which is a connected network of green spaces that provide mobility and recreational opportunities. There is an opportunity to improve existing open spaces such as Weir Gulch, complete the “Via Verde” network and create new plazas and public spaces that represent the neighborhood culture.

- A. Neighborhood parks and open spaces should be well-maintained, improved, and provide safe, comfortable, and welcoming environments for all users.
- B. Weir Gulch should be improved into a safe and comfortable stream and trail with active open spaces. Improvements should include:
 1. Gulch improvements should improve the natural ecosystem and reduced flood risk.
 2. The trail along the gulch should be an intuitive and safe multi-use trail including a grade separated crossing of Alameda Boulevard, wayfinding signage, better access from the neighborhood, and improved lighting. A grade separated crossing of Sheridan Boulevard should be considered once the extension of the Weir gulch trail is developed on the Lakewood side.
 3. The reconstruction effort of this greenway should include amenities such as: public art, shade structures, seating, small playground, community gardens, and wayfinding signage.
- C. Explore gateway elements at the boundary of the neighborhood that reflect the Mexican American culture of Westwood.
- D. Prioritize opportunities for culturally relevant public spaces and plazas along Morrison Road, Federal Boulevard, Alameda Avenue, and Kentucky Avenue. ([See Q7](#)).
- E. The neighborhood greenway “Via Verde” should be completed to provide a connected network of green spaces within the neighborhood that provide mobility and recreational opportunities. Improvements should include the missing segments including improvements to Weir Gulch, the connection between Weir Gulch and Westwood Park, the connection between Westwood Park and the Kentucky Avenue, and the green streets that are part of the network.
- F. The Westwood Community Center is a key public space and resource center for the Westwood Community. The center should continue to provide existing services and resources and should explore ways of expanding the resources or services it provides such as food access, affordable housing, parks and open spaces, or other community needs ([See L8](#)) while maintaining the scale and character of the area.



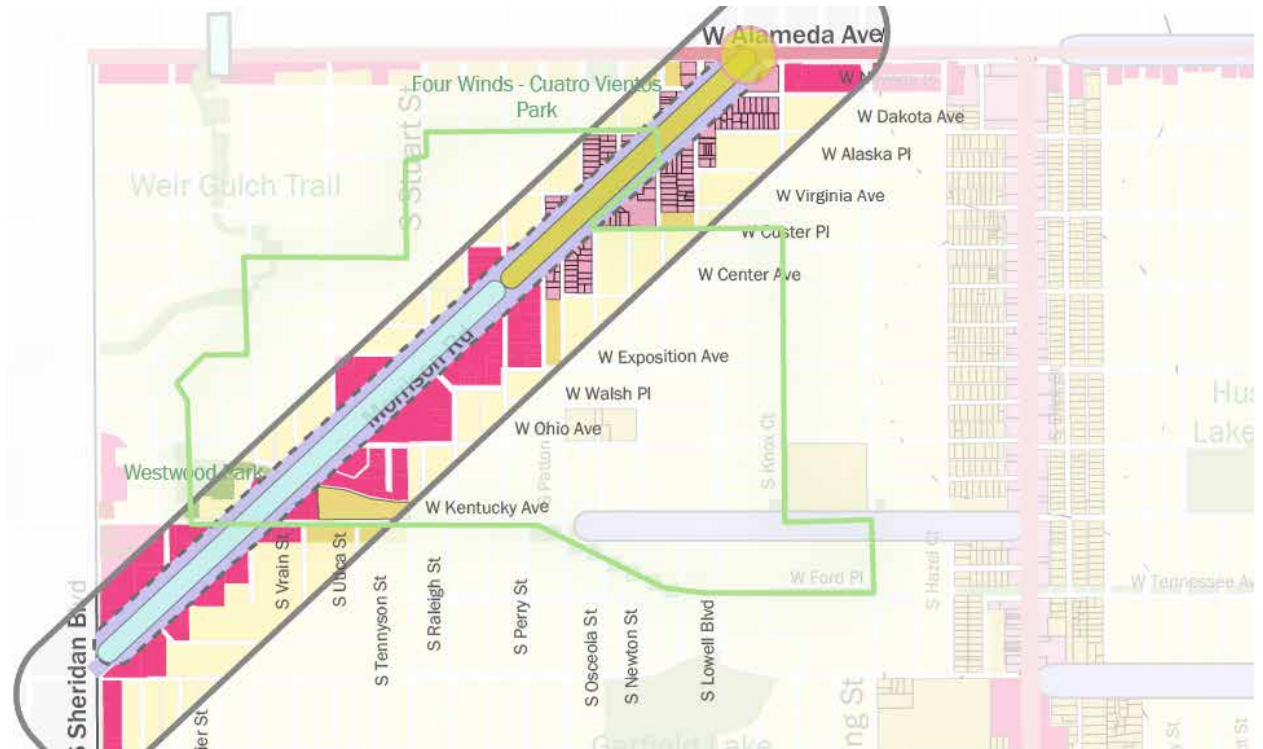
7.6.6 Morrison Road Focus Area

Vision:

Morrison Road will continue to serve as a cultural, community, and economic hub celebrating the unique culture and history of the neighborhood. The concept of a “Linear Mercado” (linear market) from the *Westwood Neighborhood Plan* (2016) captures the vision for Morrison Road as a unique neighborhood commercial district. The vision includes safe and comfortable mobility and streetscape improvements. Neighborhood serving uses, business, and development that engage the street while respecting and transitioning into the surrounding residential areas. Public spaces designed and programmed for cultural community gatherings in the public and private realm. All of this within a cohesive and coordinate effort that prioritizes representing the culture, uses, needs, art, languages of the Westwood neighborhood in the Morrison Road corridor. The corridor is divided into four segments:

- The Commercial District (Alameda Avenue to Nevada Place) should be the gateway into the corridor.
- The Arts District (Nevada Place to Perry Street) should be focused on preservation and celebration of the arts and Westwood culture.
- The Community Core (Perry Street to Kentucky Avenue) should be focused on community uses.
- The Entertainment District (Kentucky Avenue to Sheridan) should include restaurants and nightlife uses.

Nearby areas will offer diverse affordable housing, including family and intergenerational options.



Legend

Major Multi-Modal Streets

- BRT Streetscape + Intersection Improvements
- Near-term Streetscape Improvements
- Proposed Streetscape Improvements
- Arts District Segment
- Entertainment and Core Segment
- Gateway Feature
- Parks & Open Space
- Via Verde Trail

Centers

- Local Center
- Community Center
- Regional Center

Corridors

- Local Corridor
- Community Corridor

Residential Areas

- High
- High-Medium
- Low-Medium
- Low

Districts

- Campus
- Heavy Production
- Value Manufacturing
- Innovation/Flex
- Change in Place Type



Graphic from Westwood Neighborhood Plan of 2016

RECOMMENDATIONS

MORRISON ROAD USES AND BUSINESS

W-L3

BACKGROUND POLICY
OUTCOMES

Morrison Road should continue to be a key community and cultural hub and evolve into an active neighborhood corridor that follows the concept of a “Linear Mercado” established in the *Westwood Neighborhood Plan* of 2016 ([See L10](#)).

The diagonal geography of Morrison Road results in unique parcel configuration and challenges along the corridor. The activity along the corridor includes small business such as restaurants, auto shops, and specialty stores combined with a cultural assets such as the Denver Indian Center, BuCu West, Revision, Hecho In Westwood among others. The 2016 Westwood Neighborhood Plan established the vision for Morrison Road as a “Linear Mercado” (linear market) which is a unique neighborhood commercial district with streetscape amenities, neighborhood serving uses, businesses, and activity that engage the street and extends into plazas and public spaces along the corridor. The section of Alameda to Perry includes the commercial core and arts district, while the section of Perry to Sheridan includes the community core and entertainment district. While at the time of this plan, the streetscape improvements are in the design phase and the future recreation center is under construction. The land use vision of the character as an active linear market has not come to fruition in its totality.

- | | | |
|--|---|---|
| <p>A. The design and construction of Morrison Road Streetscape should be finalized. (Catalytic Project). Enhancements should be added over time.</p> <p>B. Explore additional funding mechanisms for future enhancements, maintenance, waste management and community clean ups.</p> <p>C. Support local and minority-owned businesses that align with the vision for Morrison Road.</p> <p>D. Encourage community ownership of buildings, support live/workspaces, and artists co-ops.</p> <p>E. The corridor should offer a distinctive retail mix that meets local needs and celebrates the area's unique Mexican cultural identity.</p> <p>F. Development facing Morrison Road should include a mix of uses with a focused on pedestrian oriented, active commercial uses with entries facing Morrison Road and increased street level transparency.</p> <p>G. Development facing residential areas, should create a transition area to ensure development does not turn its back on the established neighborhoods. These transition area should be mid-density residential in character with units facing the street as a transition the low-density residential areas.</p> | <p>H. Due to the irregularly shaped parcels development along the Morrison Road should creatively incorporate public spaces and plazas in the left over spaces.</p> <p>I. Explore existing tools and zone districts, or zoning modifications to accomplish the vision of the Arts District (Perry to Nevada) and Commercial District (Alameda to Nevada). The goal for these areas is to continue serving as a neighborhood destination that responds to the eclectic, cultural, and artistic character while allowing flexibility on particularly challenging diagonal lots. Consider the following:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Discourage lot assemblages, promote the preservation of smaller building footprints and support incremental development. 2. Retain a maximum building height of 3 stories in zoning. Encourage smaller building footprints and buildings that are 2 or 3 stories tall to create a comfortable street enclosure. 3. Maintain current zoning flexible build-to requirements to allow for efficient building forms on angled lots. 4. Allow semi-permanent or mobile vending structures. 5. Encourage adaptive reuse of existing buildings. 6. Do not impose minimum parking requirements for commercial uses. | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 7. Maintain flexible setbacks and allowances for parking in front/side setbacks where there is limited access and/or no alleys. 8. Provide flexibility in setbacks adjacent to Protected Districts for small, angled lots. 9. Remove the UO-2 overlay that allow billboard signs. 10. Incorporate streetscape & building design that serves local foot and bike traffic. <p>J. Support growth of mixed uses, including housing and commercial uses, in the Community Core (Perry to Kentucky) and Entertainment District (Kentucky to Sheridan) where there are opportunities for infill development on larger lots with the following considerations:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Heights in this section of the corridors should be up to 5-stories. 2. Ground floor commercial uses should be encouraged. 3. Maintain adjacent TU zoning as a transition to lower intensity residential areas. 4. Allow for semi-permanent or mobile vending structures similar to the arts district section. 5. Encourage adaptive reuse of existing buildings. 6. Do not impose minimum parking requirements for commercial uses. 7. Remove the UO-2 overlay that allow billboard signs. |
|--|---|---|

RECOMMENDATIONS

MORRISON ROAD IDENTITY

W-Q1

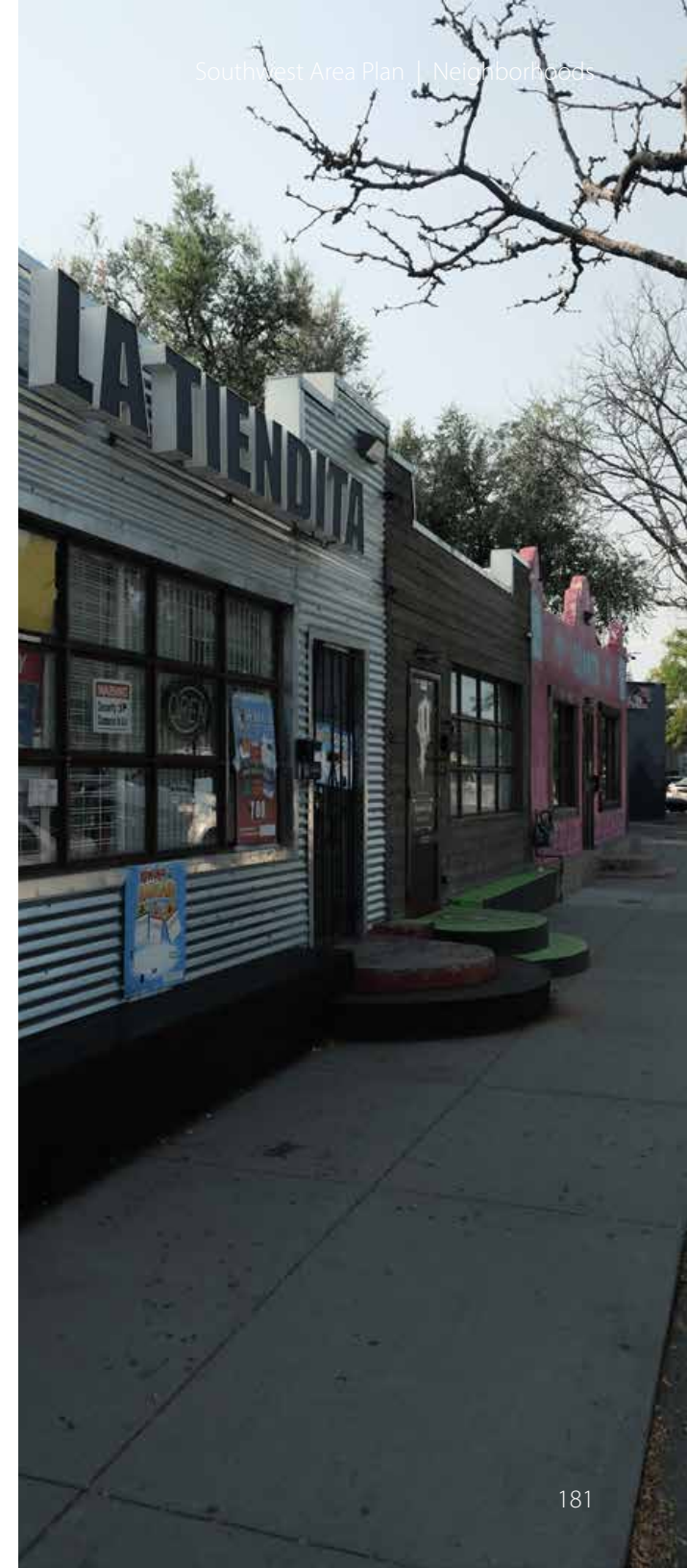


OUTCOMES BACKGROUND POLICY

Build upon the unique community character of Morrison Road as a key cultural hub through placemaking that celebrates the diverse cultural fabric of Morrison Road (See Q7).

Morrison Road is an important cultural center for the Latino/a/x community, offering businesses, services, and celebrations that reflect its heritage. As it evolves into a linear mercado, it's important to preserve and strengthen the unique character that defines the corridor.

- A. Morrison Road remains a unique and authentic cultural, artistic, and community-focused place.
- B. Protect and enhance non-profits, community centers, and local businesses.
- C. Protect historically or culturally significant architecture and public spaces along Morrison Road.
- D. Morrison Road should be recognized as a cultural district, providing a cohesive organizational structure that enables greater funding opportunities, technical assistance, and resources for improvements, cultural events, and marketing.
- E. Promote cultural district specific wayfinding.
- F. Support cultural celebrations, community events, tours, storytelling events, etc.
- G. Encourage the creation of culturally relevant, active and flexible public spaces such as plazas that bring people together (See Q7).
- H. Interpretative signage, monuments, community gateways, and other placemaking elements should be incorporated into public spaces along Morrison Road to recognize the cultural contributions to the region.
- I. Create a gateway to Morrison Road at the significant intersection of Morrison and Alameda.
- J. Following the "Mercado Lineal" concept plan, highlight and grow the identity of four distinct segments along the corridor: 1) The Commercial District (Alameda and Morrison Road), 2) The Arts District (Perry to Nevada), 3) The Community Core (Kentucky to Perry), 4) The Entertainment District (Sheridan to Kentucky).
 - 1. Encourage dynamic placemaking strategies and business retention and recruitment strategies that support these unique segments of the corridor.
 - 2. Strengthen the identity of "Arts District" segment of the corridor (Perry to Nevada) by supporting local artists' creative expression within the public realm. Encouraging more arts and creative businesses to locate in this area to create synergy.
 - 3. The identity of the "Community Core" and "Entertainment District" is highlighted by having nightlife and entertainment destination in the area between Sheridan and Kentucky.



Highlights from the *Westwood Neighborhood Plan* (2016) and the *Morrison TAP Report* (2018)

This plan supersedes the *Westwood Neighborhood Plan* (2016). Relevant recommendations that had not been completed at the time of this plan have been incorporated into the *Southwest Area Plan*. Below is an overview of the key contents and recommendations from the *Westwood Neighborhood Plan*.

LAND USE & URBAN DESIGN:

- Support public art that's embedded in streetscape improvements, gateway elements, plazas, and transportation corridors.
- Create flexible and activated community gathering public spaces that are versatile, accessible, and adaptable to a broad range of cultural programs.
- Encourage a diversity of housing types with a wide range in size and size to accommodate various family structures.
- Evaluate zoning tools related to *Blueprint Denver* Future Place type designations, heights, and uses to promote infill design that is sensitive to the surrounding area for small scale incremental and avoids lot assemblage.
- Facilitate high-quality urban design by promoting human-scaled facades, and requiring mixed-use and residential active edges.

MOBILITY & INFRASTRUCTURE:

- Create a neighborhood greenway – Via Verde – which links existing open spaces to each other and to neighborhood destinations.
- Repair and enhance the existing sidewalk network and amenity zones by adding seating, cafe patio spaces, and tree lawns.
- Prioritize sidewalk & intersection improvements according to *Westwood Neighborhood Plan's* Proposed Pedestrian Network Map.

- Implement mobility hubs at Priority Bus Stops on Morrison Road.
- Create an integrated system of bicycle infrastructure within Westwood that links residents to neighborhood destinations and the citywide bicycle network.
- Improve underutilized alleys to create a network of enhanced alleyways that offer placemaking, recreation, green infrastructure and greater multi-modal connectivity.
- Transform and celebrate Morrison Road to a corridor that connects the neighborhood through multi-modal improvements, streetscape enhancements, and additional public spaces.

ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY:

- Promote the "Pop-Up" economy and enable Linear Mercados in Westwood by exploring mechanisms to address barriers to mobile vending, cultivate more opportunities for public market and residential food sales, and streamline permitting for events & markets.
- Explore a Business Improvement District on Morrison Road that builds on the existing Local Maintenance District to fund placemaking efforts along the corridor.



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8. IMPLEMENTATION

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8.1 TYPES OF IMPLEMENTATION

8.1.1 Turning the Vision into Action

The *Southwest Area Plan* outlines the community's vision, recommendations, and the steps needed to achieve it. To turn this vision into reality, the recommendations in the plan must be put into action. This section explains the tools available for implementation, highlights priority actions, and describes how progress will be tracked. Successfully implementing this plan will require the combined efforts of the city, external organizations, and the community.

Implementation activities generally fall into three categories: regulatory changes, public investment, and partnerships. Each fills a different role, but all are necessary to successfully achieve the vision. Implementation priorities have been identified for each implementation type based on community input. The plan policy for each priority is indicated for more information.

8.1.2 Regulatory

Most community development comes from private investment. The City can ensure private investment advances community goals by adopting or amending appropriate regulations. Typical examples include Denver Zoning Code text and map amendments, requirements for infrastructure improvement associated with development projects, and rules regarding the provision of parks and open space. Developing these regulations based on the guidance of this plan will involve additional community engagement. Regulatory implementation priorities include:

- Affordability, design and missing middle housing in neighborhoods (L1).
- Require active street-level uses and preserve certain corridors within commercial areas along Morrison, Federal, and Broadway (L5).

8.1.3 Public Investment

To ensure community members have access to all the amenities that make a complete neighborhood, the City must provide infrastructure and public facilities that complement private investment. Examples include public investment in affordable housing, street reconstruction, bicycle lane installations, new transit routes, park improvements, or new or expanded recreation centers. The City, or other governmental entities, typically take the lead in designing, constructing and funding these projects and may use a variety of public funding mechanisms or partnerships with the private sector. New streets, utilities, open space and other major public infrastructure associated with new development are typically led and funded by private developers or through public-private partnerships (See Partnerships below). Some strategies may require detailed studies and further assessment to identify appropriate solutions that must consider existing and projected mobility demands. These studies will inform future needs and capacities and also determine project costs and funding eligibility. Public investment implementation priorities include:

- Implement Bus Rapid Transit improvements along Federal Boulevard (M3).
- Add trees and green infrastructure improvements to Alameda Avenue and Federal Boulevard (Q1).

8.1.4 Partnerships

Where neither the city nor the private sector can alone achieve the vision, partnerships offer an opportunity to work together to advance community goals. Many partnerships focus on services, with the city working alongside an outside organization to provide for community needs. Other partnerships can provide infrastructure through public-private financing arrangements. There are many different potential partners identified for specific recommendations throughout the plan to accomplish many different goals. Partnership priorities include:

- Work with property owners and community organizations to activate underutilized and vacant properties in centers and corridors (L6).
- Improve the health and water quality of the South Platte River and connecting gulches (RC-Q1).
- Create safe and welcoming community gathering places (Q7).

8.1.5 Implementation Plan

Over the 20-year life of this plan, the city will grow and change. As recommendations are put into action and new circumstances arise, priorities may shift. To reflect this, an implementation appendix lists the current top priorities and will be updated regularly to stay aligned with the community's evolving needs.

The implementation plan appendix also provides more details on steps to take to accomplish some of the recommendations in this plan, providing additional guidance for the city in implementing the plan's vision.

8.1.6 Summary of Updates to Blueprint Denver

The *Southwest Area Plan* is adopted as a supplement to *Comprehensive Plan 2040* and updates *Blueprint Denver*. This plan advances the vision of *Comprehensive Plan 2040* and is consistent with *Blueprint Denver's* overall approach including topics, maps, legend categories, and system hierarchies. This plan takes a closer and more detailed look at Southwest and is intended to refine *Blueprint Denver's* guidance for this part of the city. Where this plan addresses topics also addressed by *Blueprint*, *Blueprint's* maps should be updated to be consistent with this plan, including the following maps:

Neighborhood Context

Future Places

Growth Strategy

Street Types

Mobility Chapter (Modal Priorities)