

SASAKI



DENVER
COMMUNITY PLANNING
& DEVELOPMENT



Downtown
Denver
Partnership

Downtown Area Plan

South Platte River
Committee

October 29,
2025



When we are able
to see the
potential...



Great things will happen!

An aerial night view of a city skyline. The image shows several tall buildings, some with glowing windows and others with illuminated signs. A prominent clock tower with a red roof and yellow-lit clock faces is in the center. To the right, a building has 'CHASE' and 'Xactly' signs. To the left, a building has 'ASHFORD.EDU' on its side. The city lights extend into the distance under a dark blue sky.

This is about a Near-Term Focus...

And Long-Term Vision

We Need Downtown: Critical to the City Economy

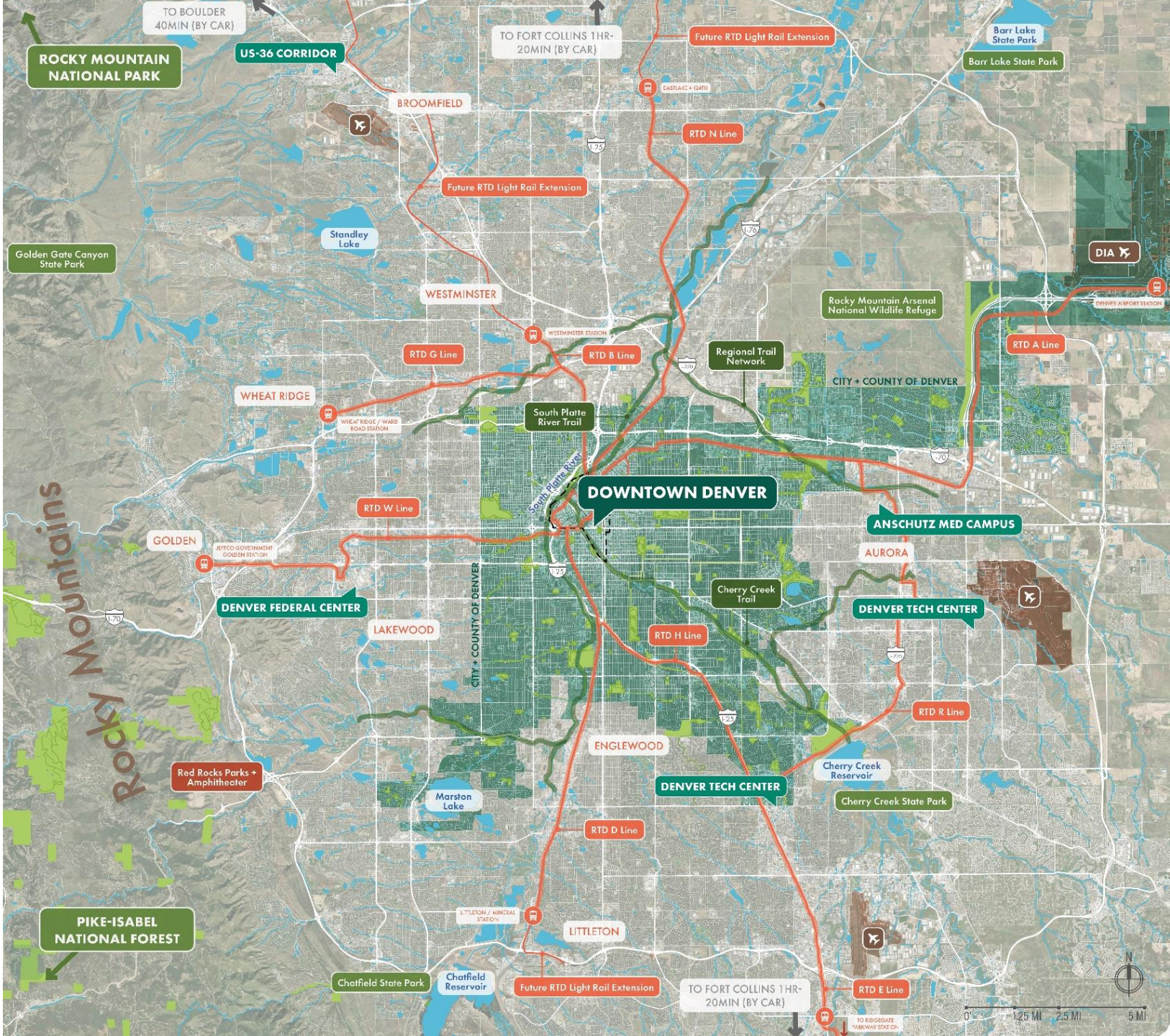
1.8%
of land
area

30%
of jobs

4.6%
of
population

20.3%
of taxable
value

21%
of lodging
and retail
sales



But Downtown needs us too

26.5%

Office
Vacancy
(highest
since 2008)

16%

Downtown
Land Area
is Surface
Parking Lots

4%

Downtown
Households
with kids
(23.4% in
Denver)

11.6M

Square Feet
of Vacant
Office
Space
Downtown

72%

Of New
Units Since
2016 are
Studios and
1-Bedrooms

85%

Of
Downtown
Not Within 5-
Minute Walk
of Park

16.3%

Vacant
Ground-
Level
Storefronts

17.2M

Fewer
Downtown
Visits
Annually
since 2017

A Loud + Supportive Community Voice

The Vision and Framework Aligns with the Broader Community Vision for Downtown born from Broad and Diverse Feedback



120+

Attendees at Focus Group Conversations



35+

Stakeholder Conversations



2,000+

Online Survey Respondents Over 3 separate surveys

20

Equity Focused Touchpoints



7

Community Advisory Committees Meetings

750+

Attendees at Public Open Houses

Over **70%** live or work in downtown

Pop Up Events

Skyline Park Rink
Christkindl Market
Mile High Tree
Parade of Lights
16th Street Kickoff

1,300+

People Engaged at Pop-Up Events





Where Denver goes to

PLAY









BANK OF AMERICA

Downtown
Denver
Partnership

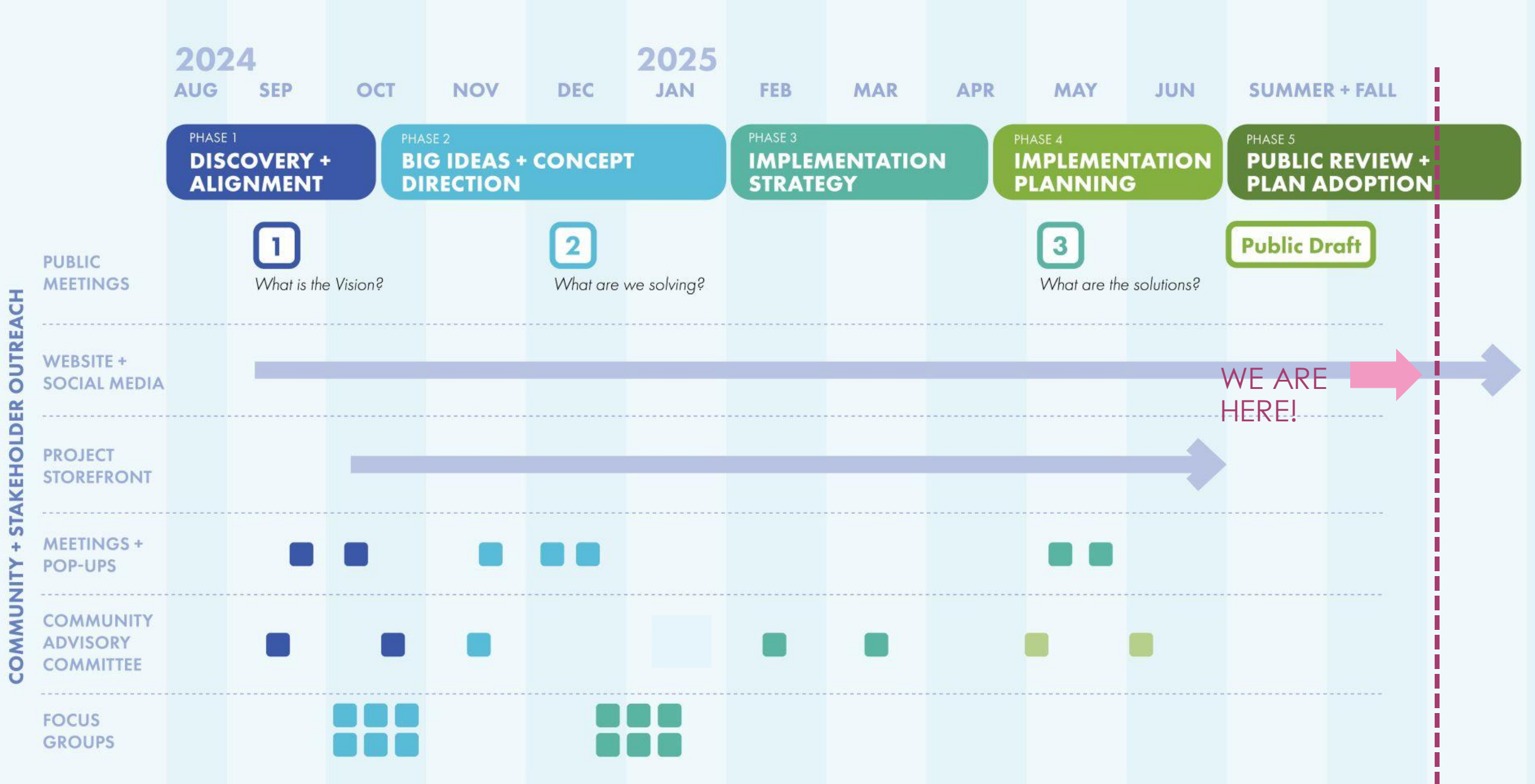


Adam R. Scripps
Foundation

Downtown Area Plan

- 1. Comment Resolution and Plan Content**
- 2. City Council Criteria Evaluation**
- 3. Recommendation – Forward to full City Council**

Current Schedule | We are approaching the end of process!



1. Comment Resolution and Plan Content

Over 1500 Comments:

- August Public Review Draft
- Community Advisory Committee Review
- Internal Review
- Planning Board Review

Major Themes:

- Safety
- Affordability
- Job Creation and Economic Investment
- Mobility and Access
- Better Streets and Public Spaces
- Arts and Culture
- Green and Sustainable

The screenshot displays the Denver Community Planning & Development website. The header includes navigation links for Home and My Comments, along with Join and Log In options. The main content area features the Denver Community Planning & Development logo and the title "Community Planning and Development". Below this, a banner reads "Read and comment on what we're working on." The main heading is "Downtown Area Plan (DAP) Public Review Draft", followed by the subtext "Read and comment on the public review draft of the Downtown Area Plan!". A note states "Comment Period Closes August 29 at 11:59pm (MDT)". A disclaimer asks users to keep comments focused on the content of the Plan and refrain from using offensive language or making personal attacks. A search bar and a "Select" dropdown are visible. The main content area is divided into two columns: "RECOMMENDED STRATEGIES" and "BUILDING BLOCKS". The "RECOMMENDED STRATEGIES" section includes two main categories, A and B, each with a list of numbered strategies. Category A focuses on safety and security, while Category B focuses on public spaces and amenities. The "BUILDING BLOCKS" section is partially visible on the right. The footer shows a language selector set to English.

Home My Comments Join Log In

DENVER
COMMUNITY PLANNING
& DEVELOPMENT

Community Planning and
Development

Read and comment on what we're working on.

Downtown Area Plan (DAP) Public Review Draft

Read and comment on the public review draft of the Downtown Area Plan!

Comment Period Closes August 29 at 11:59pm (MDT)

Please keep your comments focused on the content of the Plan. Please refrain from using offensive, profane or explicit language and from making personal attacks. Visit the project page for additional ways to get involved: [DenverDowntownAreaPlan.com](https://denverdowntownareaplan.com)

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Type to search

Select

RECOMMENDED STRATEGIES

A Downtown is a place where everyone belongs and feels safe.

1. Create a uniform downtown marketing campaign to improve perceptions of downtown and attract new businesses and visitors.
2. Prioritize opportunities for multi-agency collaboration and culturally responsive approaches to ensuring safety for the downtown community.
3. Increase the functionality and presence of the Downtown Ambassador program to include safety officers.
4. Support efforts to increase staffing and visibility of security guards, police officers, Denver Health paramedics and outreach workers downtown.
5. Improve lighting and visibility on downtown streets and public spaces.

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

1. Create and upgrade public spaces and publicly accessible private spaces downtown with amenities like public restrooms, water fountains, public Wi-Fi, charging stations and other conveniences.

BUILDING BLOCKS

English



DOWNTOWN DENVER AREA PLAN

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



SAFETY

AFFORDABILITY



GOVERNANCE

LOCAL BUSINESS + OFFICE



CONNECTION + ACCESS

ON PLAY TO SPARK

WITH A FOCUS

PLAY



EQUITY



CONNECTION



STORIES



INNOVATION



INVESTMENT



RESILIENCE

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

DELIVERY OF SHORT-TERM PROJECTS...

CIVIC CENTER
NEXT 100



GLENARM PLAZA



NEW SKYLINE
PARK



BROADWAY
REIMAGINED



CHERRY CREEK/ SPEER
REALIGNED



BROADWAY
TRANSFORMATIONAL PARK



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

01

ABOUT THE PLAN

INTRODUCTION

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

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

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

IMPACT OF DOWNTOWN DENVER

1.8%

of Denver's Land Area

Sources: City of Denver, Esti Business Analyst, SB Friedman (2024)



30.0%

of Jobs in Denver

Sources: Esti Business Analyst, LEHD, Placeris, SB Friedman (2023)

4.7%

of Population in Denver

Sources: Esti Business Analyst, SB Friedman (2024)

20.3%

of Denver's Taxable Value

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

21.0%

of Denver's Lodging + Retail Sales

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

+/- 34K

Downtown Residents

Sources: Esti Business Analyst, SB Friedman (2024)

+/- 300K

Residents within 3 Miles of Downtown

Sources: Esti Business Analyst, SB Friedman (2024)

53M

Out-of-Market Visits (2024)

Sources: Placeris, SB Friedman (2024)

+/- 155K

Downtown Workers

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

+/- 47K

Downtown Students

Sources: Esti Business Analyst, SB Friedman (2023)



BUILDING UPON DOWNTOWN'S PAST AND PRESENT

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

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

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

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



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



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



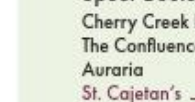
Skyline Park
Skyline Urban Renewal Project
Creation of 16th Street Mall
Film Row
Union Station
Theater Row



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



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



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

More information in Appendix A: Denver's Stories

DOWNTOWN DENVER STORIES TODAY

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



McGregor Square events & activations

Historic Five Points Festivals

Sakura Square Cultural Hub and small businesses

Larimer Square preservation and activation

Historical markers and murals of Denver's Chinatown

Green spaces
Proposed project aimed at bringing local businesses downtown

DDGA adaptive reuse
Proposed project to expand housing downtown

Auraria Campus: Early Learning and Workforce Housing

Civic Center
A park where thousands show up to either exercise their civil liberties or share their collective love for our sports teams

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

02

BUILDING BLOCKS

THE VISION

A VIBRANT, HEALTHY AND COMPLETE DOWNTOWN

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

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

THE BUILDING BLOCKS OF THE VISION:





The Building Blocks of a Vibrant, Healthy, and Complete Downtown



Downtown Denver is a mosaic of distinct neighborhoods that serves as a microcosm of Colorado, transforming downtown into a central community that celebrates culture, people, and business.

03

CHALLENGES + OPPORTUNITIES

TURNING CHALLENGES INTO OPPORTUNITIES

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

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

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

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

CHALLENGE 1: BARRIERS TO CONNECTION

OPPORTUNITY 1: CONNECT ALL



CHALLENGE 2: INCONSISTENT INVESTMENT

OPPORTUNITY 2: ACTIVATE THE MARKET



CHALLENGE 3: LACK OF PLACES TO EXPLORE AND LINGER

OPPORTUNITY 3: ELEVATE PLAY

CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES IN FOCUS

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

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

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

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

54%

of Denver Households Unable to Afford a 2-Bedroom Unit Downtown

Sources: City of Denver Affordable Housing Map, US Census Bureau 2022/2023 ACS 5-Yr. Est., SR Roadways, Riser Policy Research

16%

Ground-Level Storefront Vacancy Rate

Sources: PDMA Downtown Denver Groundfloor Activation Strategy, Phase 1 (2024), DOP

72%

of New Units are Studios and 1-Bedrooms

Sources: CoStar (2024)

4%

Downtown Households with Children (23.4% in Denver)

Sources: US Census Bureau 2022/2023 ACS 5-Yr. Est., SR Roadways

52%

of Downtown is not within a 5-Minute Walk to Park

Sources: City of Denver, SR Roadways

14M

Fewer Downtown Visits Annually Compared to 2019

Sources: Placemeter (2024)

11.6M

Square Feet of Vacant Office Space Downtown

Sources: CoStar (2024)

27%

Office Vacancy (highest since 2008)

Sources: CoStar (2024)

6%

tree canopy coverage in Downtown Denver

Sources: City of Denver, Denver Parks and Recreation

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

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

CHALLENGES

BARRIERS TO CONNECTION

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

INCONSISTENT INVESTMENT

- Enhance the business core
- Catalyze nodes and investment zones

LACK OF PLACES TO EXPLORE AND LINGER

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

OPPORTUNITIES

CONNECT ALL

ACTIVATE THE MARKET

ELEVATE PLAY

EXPERIENCING DOWNTOWN TODAY



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

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

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

... WHAT IT COULD BE

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



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

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

"COMPLETE STREETS" THAT SAFELY ACCOMMODATE ALL

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

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

04

POLICIES + PROGRAMS

POLICY AND PROGRAM BUNDLES

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

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

ACHIEVING THE BUILDING BLOCKS

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



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

**1. CIVIC +
GOVERNANCE
FRAMEWORK**

**2. NAVIGATION +
LEGIBILITY**

**3. SAFETY,
PROGRAMMING
+ ACTIVATION**

**4. OFFICE +
WORKFORCE**

**5. RESIDENTIAL +
DAILY LIFE**

**6. GROUND-
FLOOR EXPERIENCE**

**7. SUSTAINABILITY
+
INFRASTRUCTURE**

2

NAVIGATION + LEGIBILITY

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

WHAT WE'RE SOLVING FOR

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

WHY THE 5280 TRAIL?

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



C P I I E S R

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

05

FOCUS AREAS

THE FIRST SPARKS OF A CHAIN REACTION

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

ACHIEVING THE BUILDING BLOCKS

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

Connection
Play
Investment
Innovation
Equity
Stories
Resilience

C P I T I E S R

1. CIVIC CENTER Denver's Civic Heart

2. UPPER DOWNTOWN A Central Neighborhood District



3. SKYLINE PARK Denver's Crossroads of Play



4. UPPER BROADWAY From Gridlock to Gathering Place

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



6. CHERRY CREEK/ SPEER BOULEVARD Where Downtown Meets Colorado



7. CENTRAL PLATTE VALLEY Downtown's Newest Neighborhoods



CIVIC CENTER

DENVER'S CIVIC HEART

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

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

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



1 Civic Center Next 100 P I E S R



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

2 Civic Center Play Hub P I T I E S R



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

3 Acoma Shared Street C P E S R



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

4 Transform Broadway C I I E R



Convert Broadway into a two-way street (along with Lincoln St.) to better connect Upper Downtown and Golden Triangle. Reduce traffic lanes, add major

5 Colfax + Cleveland



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

6 Transit-Oriented Infill I I E R



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

7 Active Ground-Floors P I E R



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

8 Food + Culture Hub C I I E R



Expand food, beverage, arts, and cultural offerings in and around Civic Center Park by leveraging and enhancing public spaces and buildings, like McNichols, to



Legend

- Pedestrian Priority Corridor
- 5280 Trail
- Bike Priority Corridor
- Roadway Operations and Access
- Transit Priority Corridor
- District Energy System
- Tree Canopy Priority Corridor
- Future Development Opportunity
- Enhanced Public Realm

Key Map



06

IMPLEMENTATION

A ROADMAP FOR ACTION

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

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



**A VISION FOR
PROJECT
PHASING**



**IMMEDIATE
ACTIONS**



**SHORT-TERM
ACTIONS**



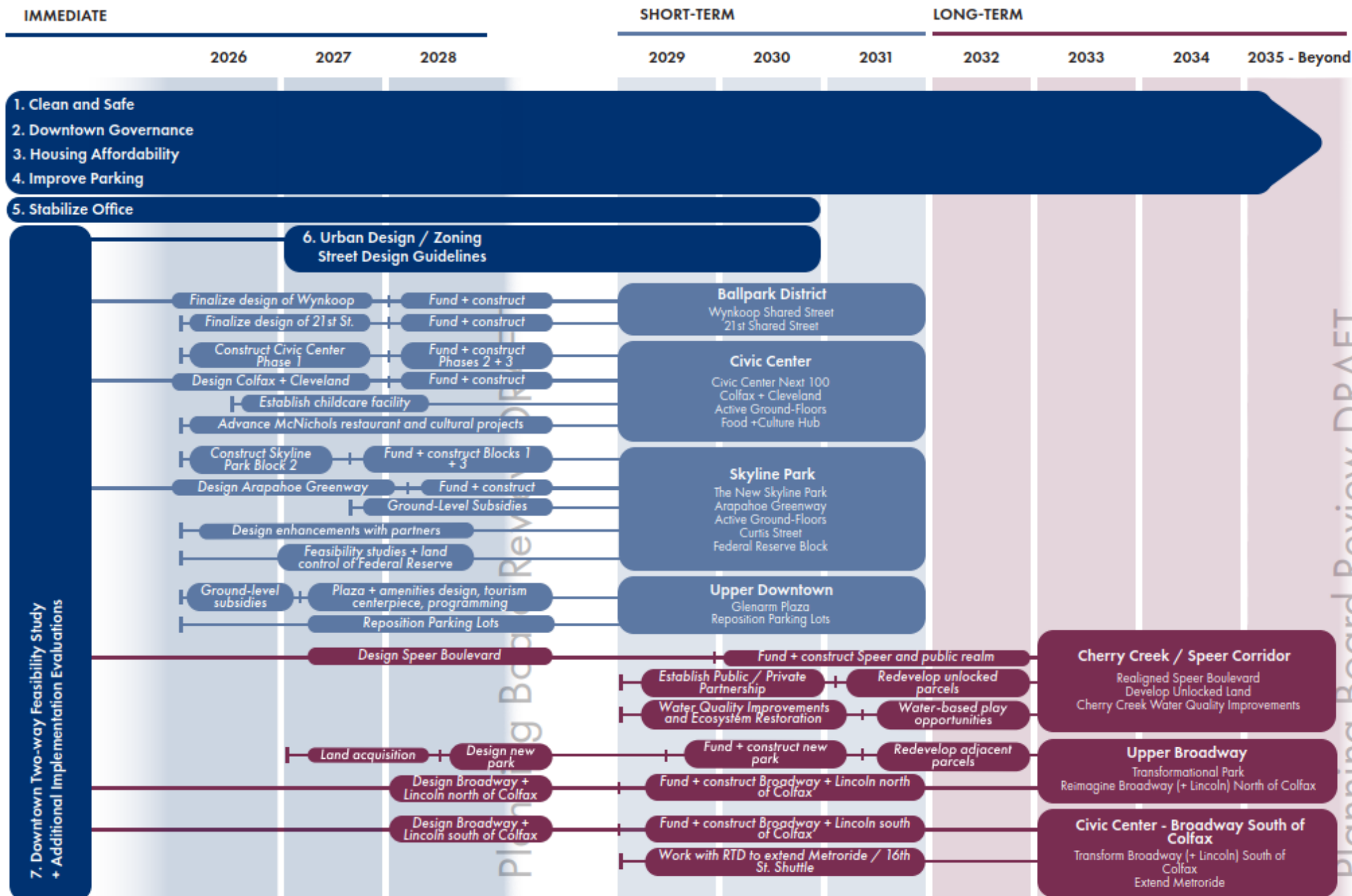
**MEDIUM-TERM
ACTIONS**



**LONG-TERM
ACTIONS**



For more detailed information on implementation for specific strategies or focus areas, please see the Implementation Plan in the Appendix.





07

APPENDIX

APPENDIX A: DENVER'S STORIES 100

APPENDIX B: MAP BOOK 102

APPENDIX C: REFERENCE MAPS 112

ADDITIONAL ITEMS PROVIDED IN SEPARATE DOCUMENT(S)

IMPLEMENTATION MATRIX

IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

REPORTS + STUDIES

2. Criteria Evaluation

When evaluating plans to be adopted as supplements to *Comprehensive Plan 2040*, the Denver Planning Board and City Council shall consider the following criteria:

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

Inclusive Process

A Loud + Supportive Community Voice

The Vision and Framework Aligns with the Broader Community Vision for Downtown born from Broad and Diverse Feedback



120+

Attendees at Focus Group Conversations

40+

Stakeholder Conversations (130+ attendees)



3,300+

Online Survey Respondents Over 3 separate surveys

30

Equity Focused Touchpoints



10

Community Advisory Committees Meetings

750+

Attendees at Public Open Houses

Over **70%** live or work in downtown

Pop Up Events

Skyline Park Rink
Christkindl Market
Mile High Tree
Parade of Lights
16th Street Kickoff

3,300+

People Engaged at Pop-Up Events



Consistency with *Comprehensive Plan 2040*



Equitable, Affordable, & Inclusive
8 Goals, 22 Strategies



Environmentally Resilient
8 Goals, 17 Strategies



Strong & Authentic
Neighborhoods
9 Goals, 23 Strategies



Healthy & Active
3 Goals, 7 Strategies



Connected, Safe, & Accessible
9 Goals, 18 Strategies



Economically Diverse & Vibrant
5 Goals, 8 Strategies

Consistency with *Blueprint Denver*



Land Use & Built Form (General)

5 Policies, 9 Strategies

Housing

2 Policies, 4 Strategies

Economic

4 Policies, 6 Strategies

Design Quality & Preservation

5 Policies, 12 Strategies



Mobility

5 Policies, 15 strategies



Quality of Life Infrastructure

7 Policies, 15 strategies

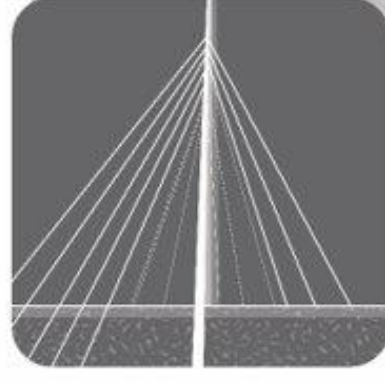
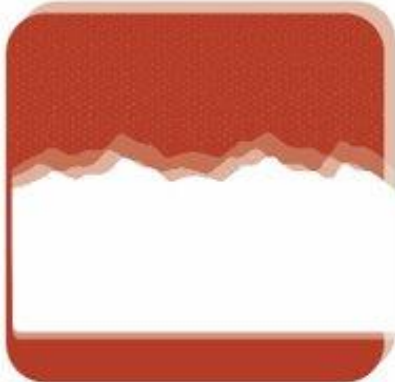
Long Term View

The Downtown Area Plan:

- Long-term collective aspiration of the community
- Envisions a vibrant, healthy and complete Downtown
- Compass for guiding future growth and investment

3. Recommendation

Forward to full City Council for consideration.



Focus Areas

- Civic Center
- Upper Downtown
- Skyline Park
- Central Platte Valley
- Ballpark/Sakura Square
- Upper Broadway
- Cherry Creek/Speer Blvd.



CIVIC CENTER

DENVER'S CIVIC HEART

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

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

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

THE BUILDING BLOCKS



1 Civic Center Next 100 P I E S R



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

2 Civic Center Play Hub P I I E S R



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

3 Acoma Shared Street C P E S R



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

4 Transform Broadway C I I E R



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

5 Colfax + Cleveland



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

6 Transit-Oriented Infill I I E R



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

7 Active Ground-Floors P I E R

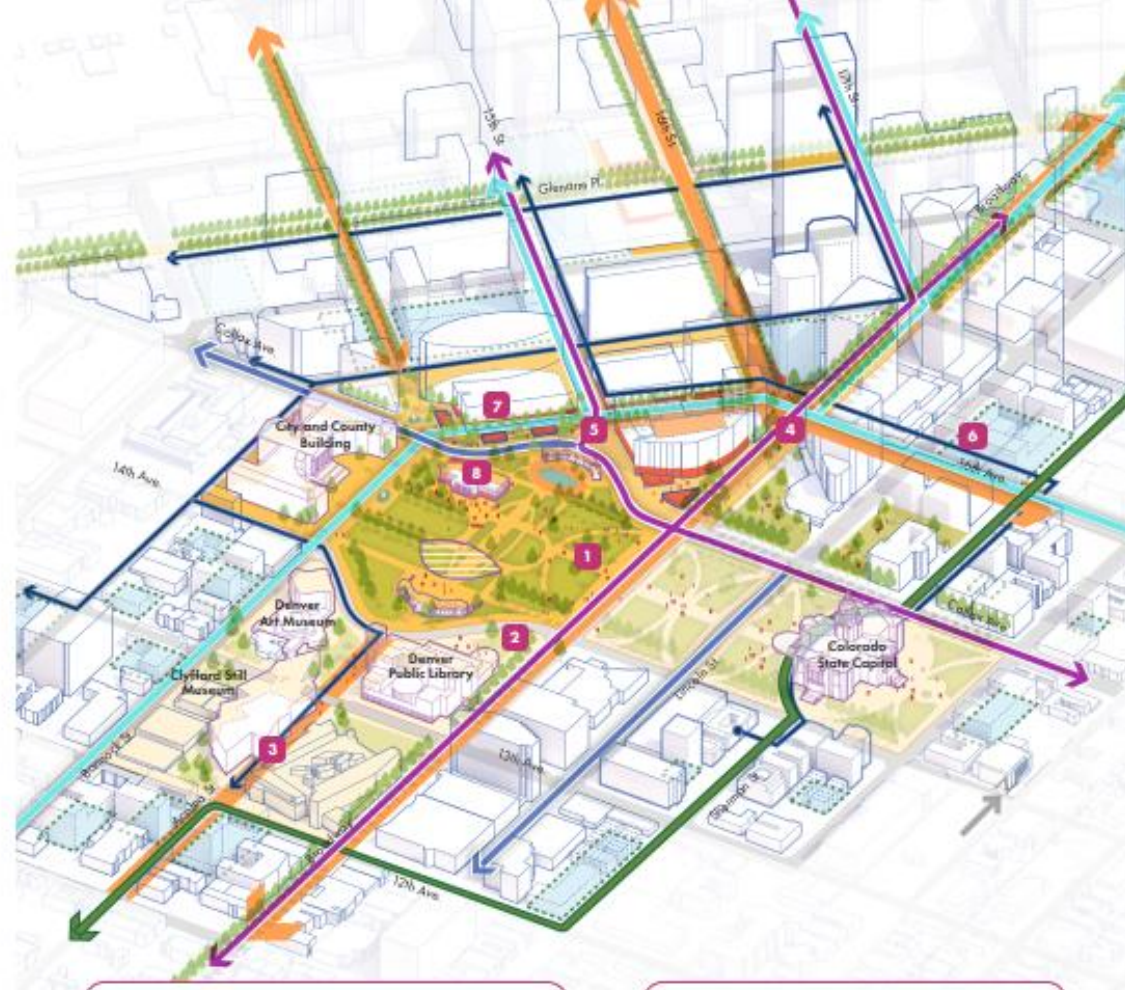


Activate ground-floors of publicly owned buildings north of Colfax Ave. with uses such as food halls, public markets, childcare, or other public-serving activities to create a mixed-use destination with increased foot traffic.

8 Food + Culture Hub C I I E R



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



Legend

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

Key Map



CONNECTING CIVIC CENTER

TIMEFRAME
IMMEDIATE
2026-2028

Roles + Responsibilities:

While the improvements to the right-of-way and traffic patterns fall under the purview of DOTI, it is strongly recommended that the design of the improvements be conducted by a partnership between the Civic Center Parks Conservancy, DPR, DDP, and DOTI all with equal representation and ownership as outlined in a Cooperative Endeavor Agreement (CEA)

Estimated Cost Range:

\$25M-40M (Includes full ROW reconstruction at \$75-120/sf plus traffic signal upgrades)

Potential Funding Sources:

Capitol Improvement Budget, BID funds, Conservancy Funds (Philanthropy), DDDA Funding

ACTION STEPS

1

Next Six Months:

Develop CEA between stakeholders and raise initial funds for concept design stage from various sources. DDP to issue RFP for Concept Design.

2

Within 12 Months:

Submit CIP and DDDA funding request for construction. Develop full scope of work and release RFP for full design services (typically, similar design projects are led by urban design firms).

3

Within 24 Months:

Begin Construction so that it aligns with Park and BRT construction as to limit repeat disturbances. If retail pavilions are provided within ROW, work on lease agreements.

4

After Construction:

Work on activation of ground floor spaces with Post and Webb (part of a separate effort to be led by DEDO).

PROJECT NARRATIVE

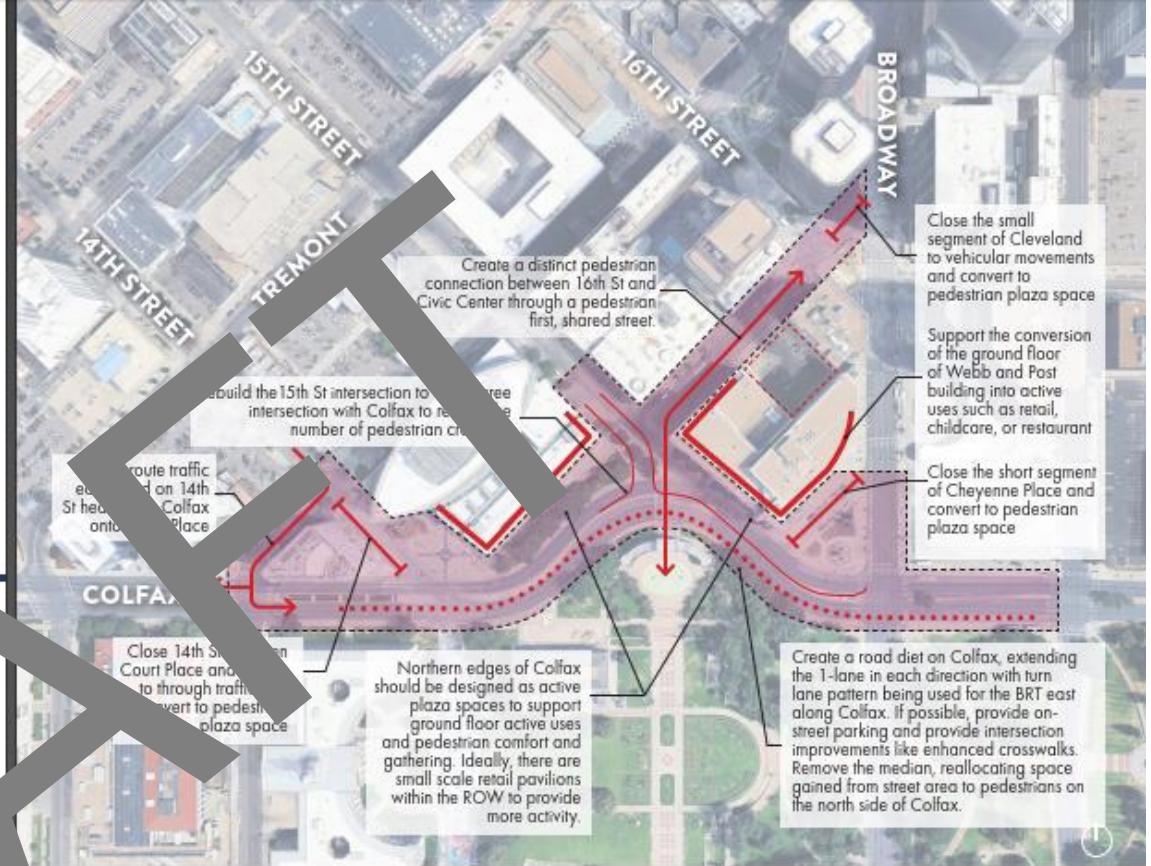
With the recently announced DDDA investment in the park improvements of Civic Center, it is critical to ensure that the Park be better connected to Upper Downtown. The current northern edges of Civic Center are harsh, contribute to pedestrian, vehicular and biking conflicts and safety concerns, and actively hinder the park's ability to function as a centerpiece of Downtown. Without improvements to the edge infrastructure, investments in programming and park space will continue to struggle to add value to the park space.

This plan proposes a full reimagining of the northern edges of Civic Center Park. This is to accomplish several goals outlined below:

- Connectivity between Upper Downtown and the park. The 16th Street enhancements along Cleveland Place should provide a pedestrian first shared-street. This should provide service and garage access but should provide no through traffic. Materials should match 16th Street and bike access should connect from the 16th Ave bike-way.
- Reorganizing the intersection of 15th, Cleveland and Colfax to eliminate one pedestrian crossing and slow bus and car travel speeds by requiring them to turn.
- Extend grade-separated bike connections between Bannock and 15th along the eastern edge of the Webb Building.

- Providing a sub-street road diet to Colfax between Court and 15th to reduce travel lanes to the absolute minimum. To the extent possible the center turn lane should be removed. Additional space should be added to the northern park space.
- Removal of unnecessary segments on 14th, 15th, and Cleveland.
- Redesign the northern edges of Colfax ROW to provide open spaces that support future commerce and active ground floor uses of the Webb and Post Buildings. Consideration should be made for additional architectural pavilions within the ROW that could house retail hangings.

The design of this space should prioritize pedestrian space, comfort, and safety above all other elements. The goal of these improvements should be to provide space to linger, to create active edges to the park, reduce vehicular conflicts, traffic, and connect the park to the City. Vehicular service and convenience of bus turning movements, and movements of bikes should be secondary objectives. It is recommended that this work is done as one project to reduce construction timelines and demonstrate the full potential of this space. Ideally this would align with construction of the park and BRT improvements.



POLICY CONSIDERATIONS

There are several key policy considerations that need to be contemplated through this project. The first is who "owns" the design and management of the public realm. As outlined in this Plan, more partners need to be part of the design. The second is the creation of spaces for commerce within the ROW. The edges of the park should be active and the ROW should be used to support that. The third is the use of City facilities for revenue generating private businesses that spill out and activate the public realm. All of these concepts must be contemplated together for this project to be a success.

DAP Implementation Starts with Policy

Strong Relationship with the DDDA

- Bundle public infrastructure projects to catalyze private redevelopment
- Underutilized Downtown properties are redeveloped in the community's interest through public-private partnerships.

Improve City Processes and get Better Design Outcomes

- Fix areas with multiple overlapping regulations that result in development barriers
- Establish consistent expectations for all downtown projects and achieve high-quality development outcomes, with design worthy of a great downtown

Create a Cross-Departmental Downtown Team with a Strong Lead

- Establish a project champion empowered to align department priorities for Downtown

Briefing Outcomes

1. **The Downtown Plan** - A long-term vision with near-term focus for a Greater Downtown Denver
2. **The Downtown Vision** – Vibrant, Healthy and Complete
 - Building Blocks deliver the full vision, but **PLAY** has risen to the top
 - Every path leads to Play – Wherever you go, Play is Everywhere!
 - A Complete Neighborhood that Balances Work and Life
 - Embrace and Build Upon What's Great
3. **The Immediate Focus Areas and Policies Start Now**
 - Civic Center
 - Upper Downtown
 - Skyline
 - Policy changes that strive for efficiency
 - 20-year Game Plan - Implement all Focus Areas including Central Platte Valley

Questions?

Appendix

- **Current Schedule**

- Release draft plan in early Q3
- Expected plan adoption in Q4

- **Additional Focus Areas**

- Cherry Creek/Speer
- Upper Broadway
- Ballpark
- Central Platte Valley

- **Additional Key Policy Recommendations**

Additional Key Policy Recommendations

Branding, Navigation, And Legibility

- Update downtown streetscape guidelines to provide a consistent streetscape experience on downtown streets
- Establish alternative streetscape design approaches and review criteria for constrained or adaptive reuse projects
- Increase the legibility of existing RTD service downtown
- Support RTD in efforts to reduce barriers to transit use downtown (e.g., fare-free zone, fare-free routes, EcoPass districts).

Safety, Programming and Activation

- Prioritize opportunities for multi-agency collaboration and culturally responsive approaches to ensuring safety for the downtown community
- Improve lighting and visibility on downtown streets and public spaces.
- Create and upgrade public spaces downtown with amenities like public restrooms, water fountains, public Wi-Fi, charging stations, and other conveniences

Additional Key Policy Recommendations

Office and Workforce

- Create a tax abatement program for non-profit tenants in for-profit spaces.
- Create a dedicated office improvement program to provide rental assistance or tenant improvement dollars for the occupation of vacant office space.
- Create a fund for gap financing adaptive reuse and demolition of aging office products to “right-size” the office market to match supply.

Residential and Daily Life

- Partner with an existing Community Land Trust (CLT) to provide stable housing opportunities downtown, with emphasis on helping displaced communities return to downtown neighborhoods through homeownership.
- Create a dedicated program to preserve soon-to-expire dedicated affordable units.
- Establish a mechanism to fund maintenance and improvements to existing affordable housing units.
- Explore the creation of a dedicated parkland acquisition fund for downtown parks.

Additional Key Policy Recommendations

Ground Floor Activation

- Incentivize the redevelopment of surface parking lots downtown – prioritizing active uses, quality urban design, and public amenities.
- Build upon the 16th Street pilot program to activate ground floors along key corridors and around signature public spaces.
- Create or support programs to attract and establish creative businesses in vacant or underutilized ground-level spaces.
- Encourage the creation of new markets that feature small, local, and minority-owned businesses.

Sustainability and Infrastructure

- Improve and expand downtown's district energy system to provide efficient, low-cost, resilient, and carbon-free energy to downtown buildings.
- Convert successful temporary infrastructure interventions (e.g., painted bike lanes, flex-post bulb-outs) into permanent infrastructure.

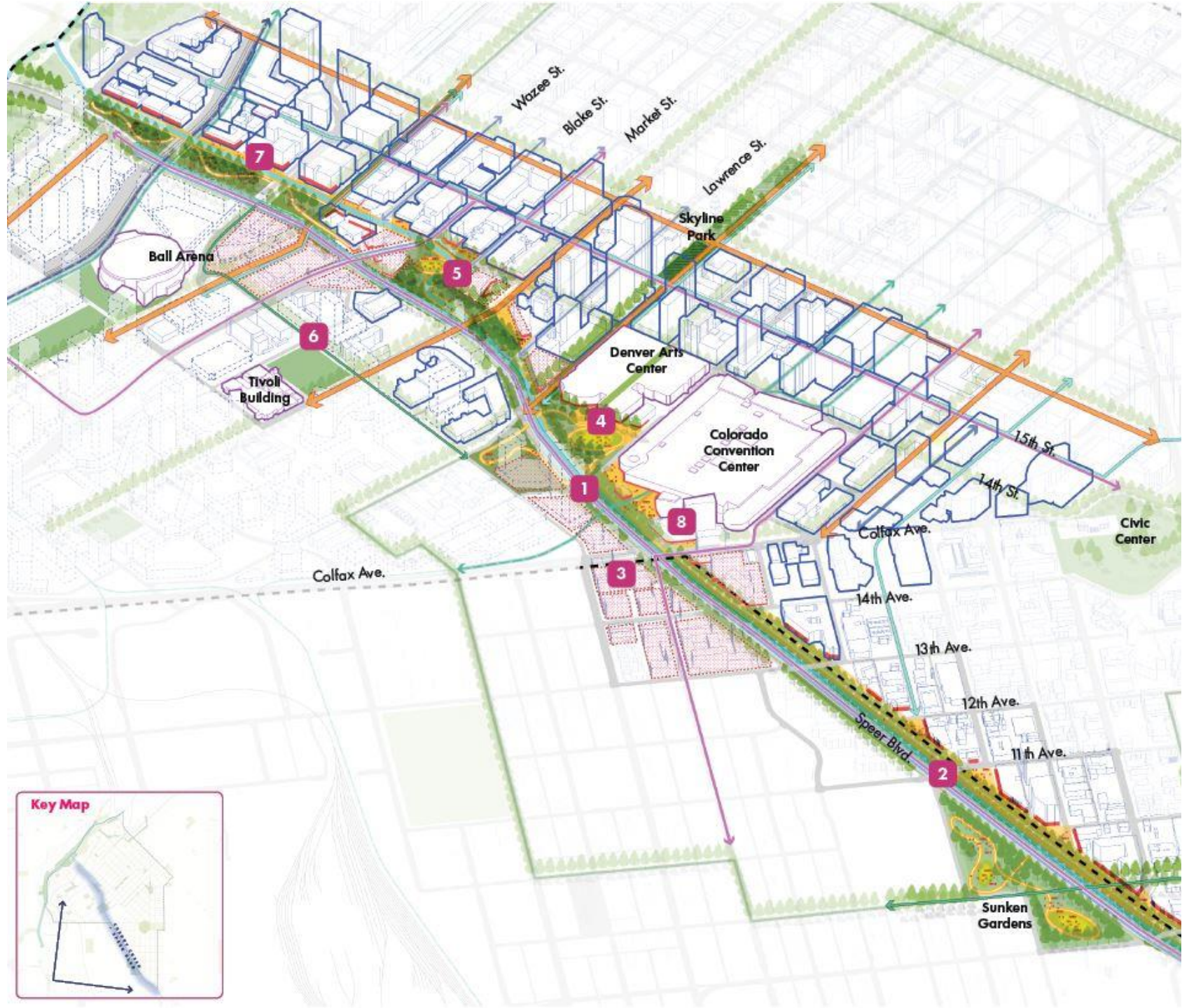
Focus Areas

Cherry Creek + Speer Blvd.

A New Active Gateway into Downtown

Kickstart a transformation in recreation and connection by:

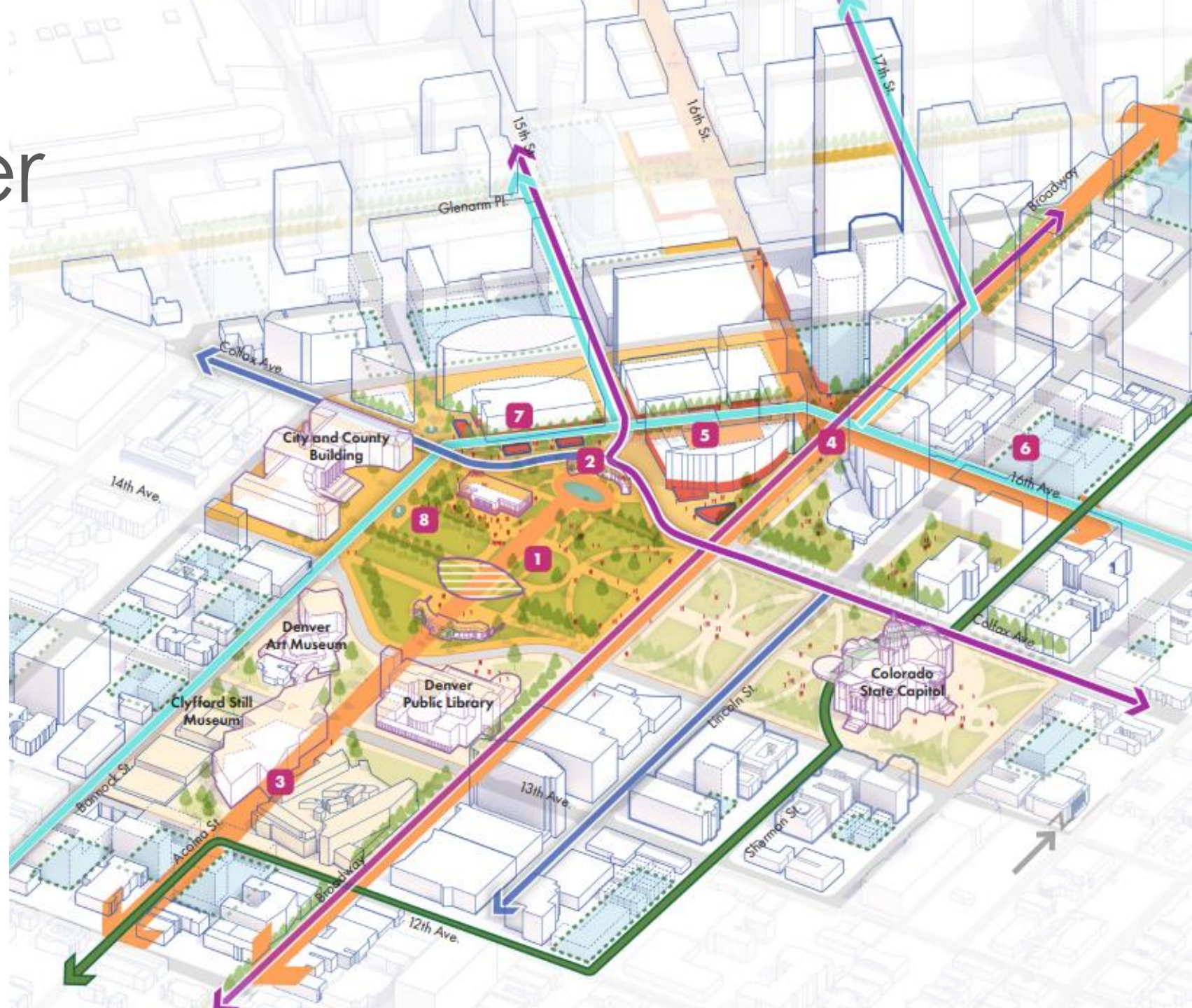
- Improving **water quality** and studying environmental impacts,
- Identifying **new development** sites,
- Defining and **activate** park spaces,
- **Simplifying traffic movements**, and
- Establishing a second “**front door**” experience for **Arts Complex and Convention Center**.
- Connecting Golden Triangle to the Creek and Adjacent Parks



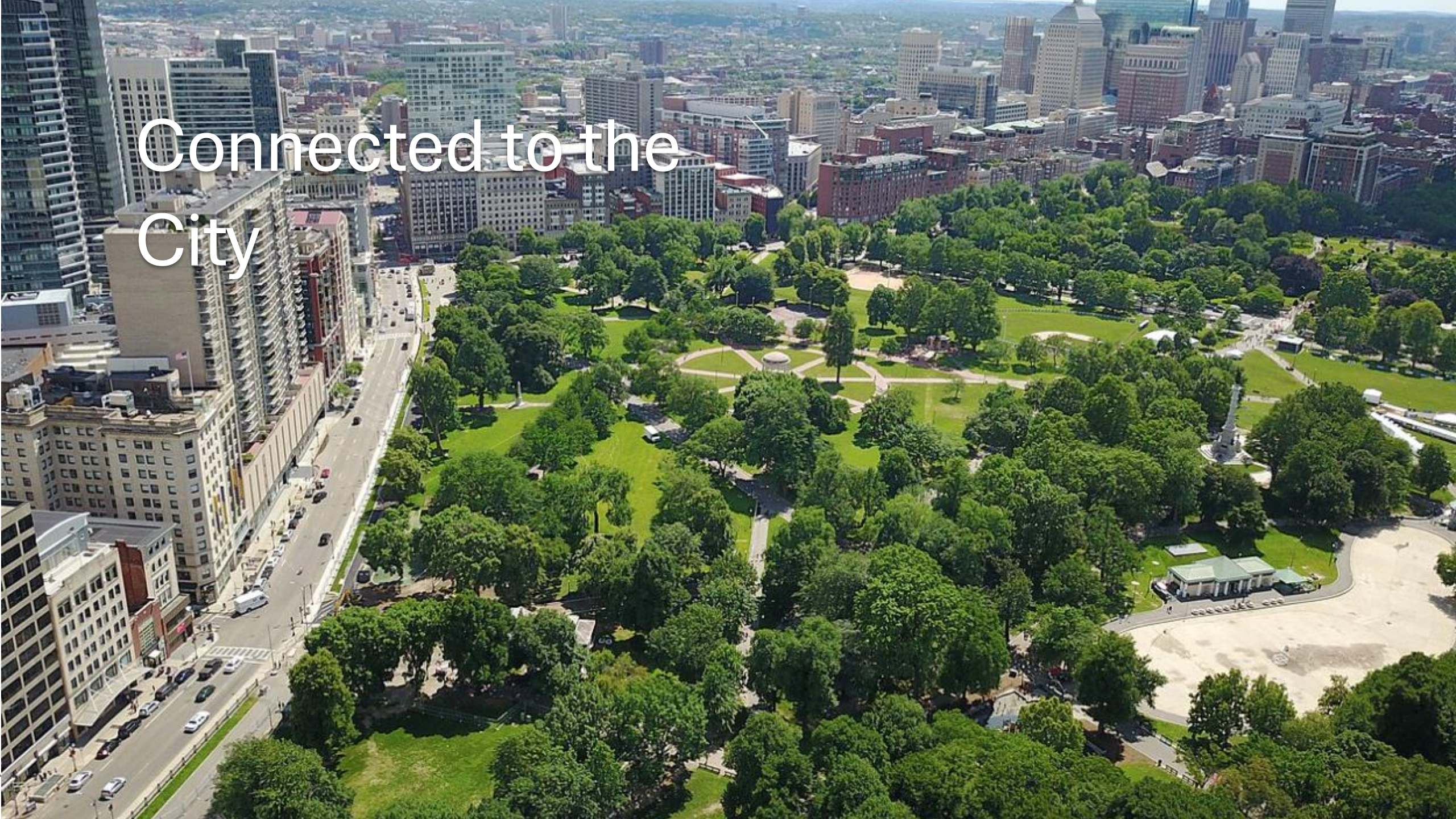
NEW FOCUS AREAS AFTER THIS

Civic Center

- 1 A Daily Life Park
- 2 Reimagine Colfax
- 3 Acoma Shared Street
- 4 Transform Broadway
- 5 Cleveland Connector
- 6 Transit-Oriented Infill
- 7 Active Ground-floors
- 8 Food + Cultural Hub

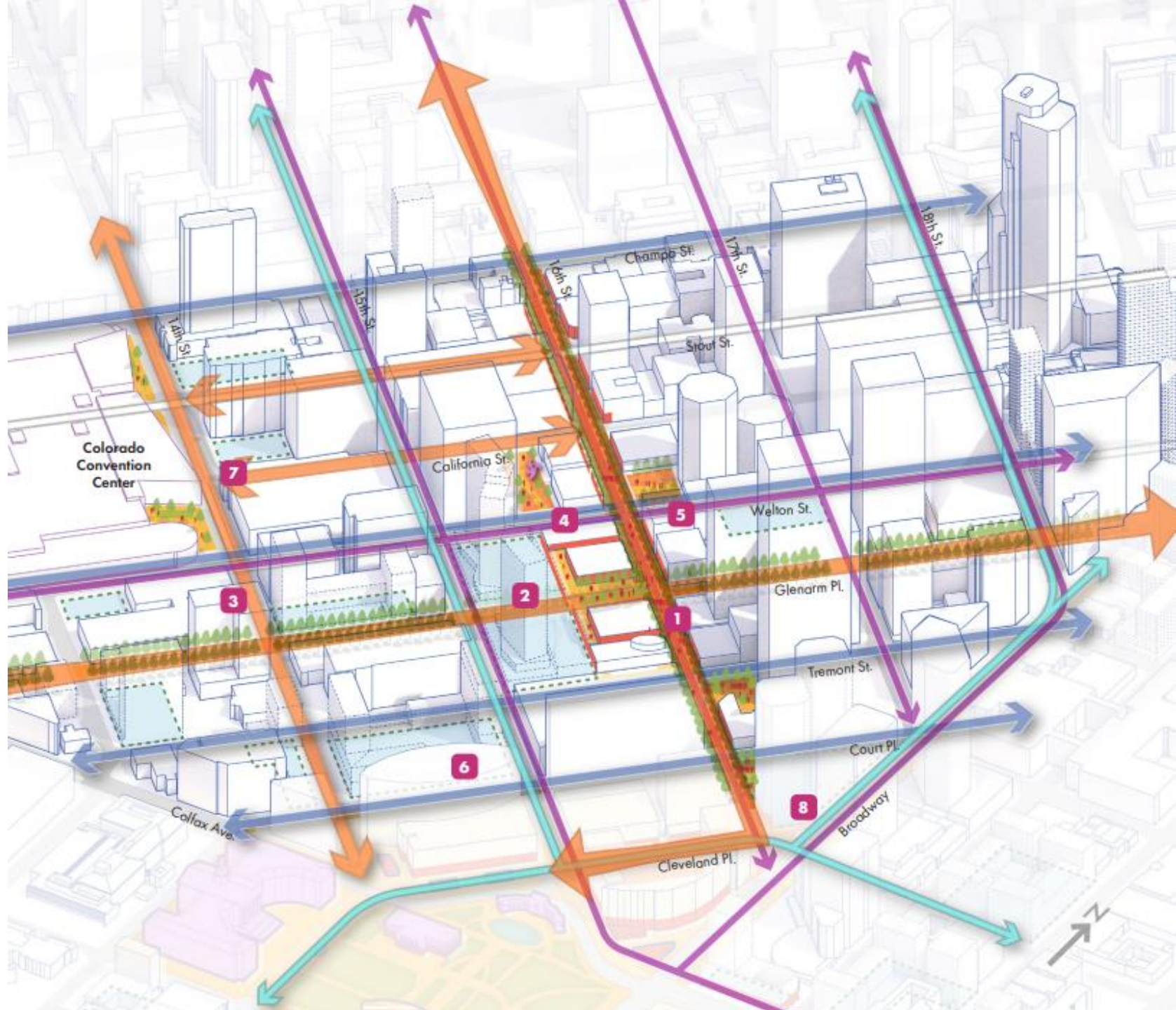


Connected to the
City



Upper Downtown

- 1 Glenarm Plaza
- 2 Residential Infusion
- 3 Welton Transit Corridor
- 4 Tourism Centerpiece
- 5 The Outer Space
- 6 Mixed-use Infill
- 7 Activate 14th Street
- 8 Strategic Demolition

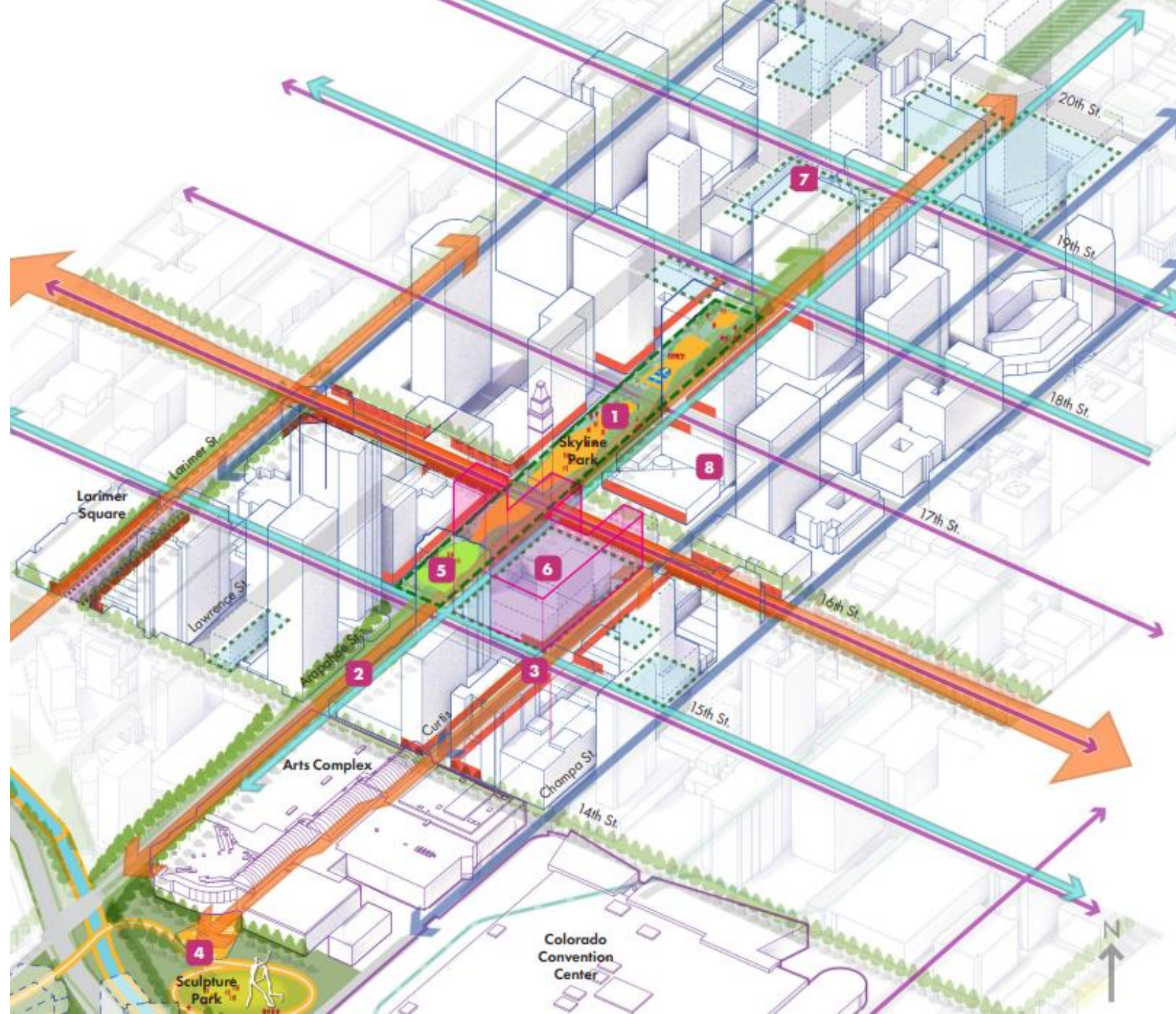


A Dynamic Central Gathering Space



Skyline Park

- 1 New Skyline Park
- 2 Arapahoe Greenway
- 3 Curtis Street
- 4 Connected to the Creek
- 5 Active Ground-floor
- 6 Federal Reserve Block
- 7 Strategic Infill
- 8 Adaptive Reuse

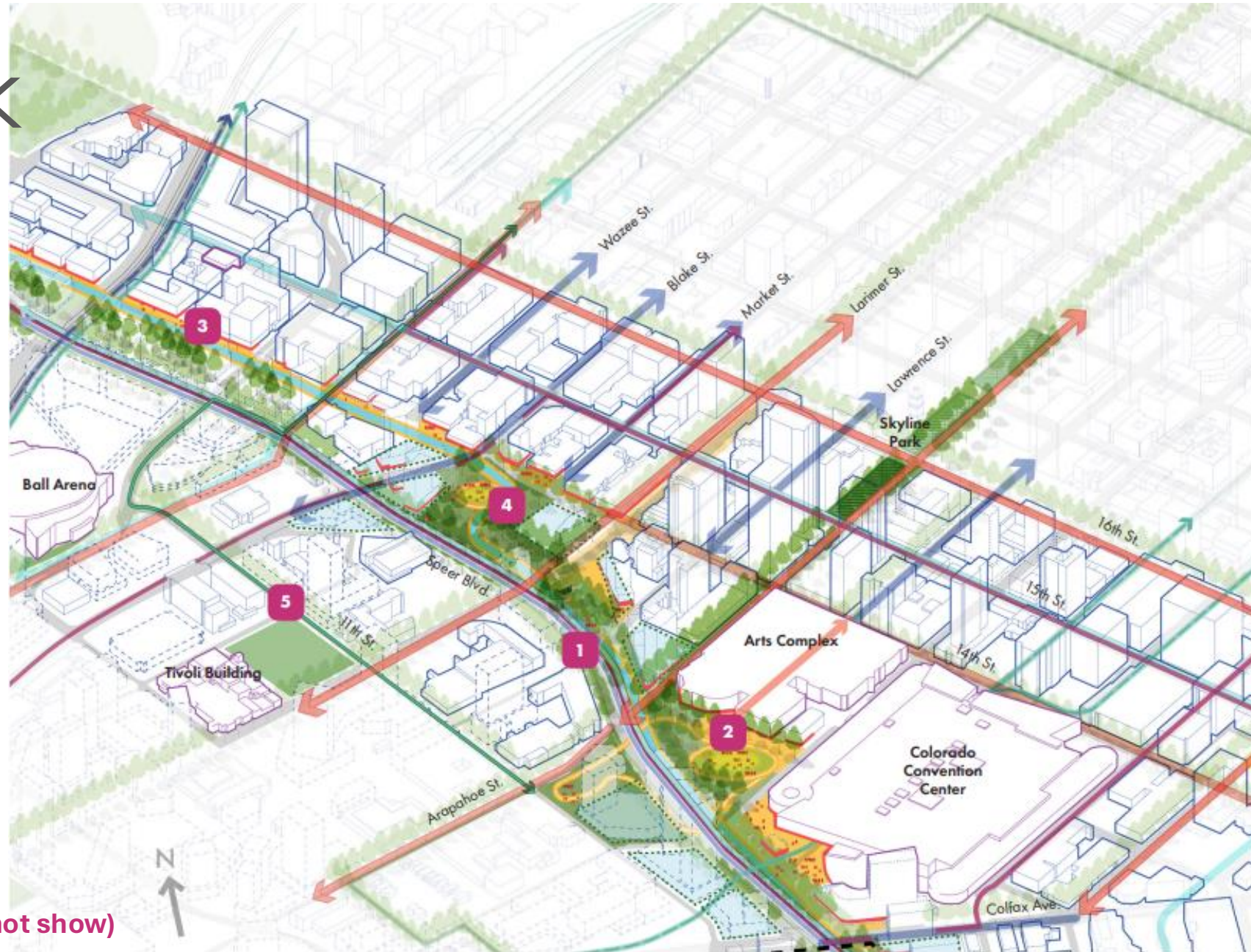


Park and Green Street Connections



Cherry Creek + Speer Blvd.

- 1 Realigned Boulevard
- 2 Sculpture Park
- 3 Urban Riverfront
- 4 A New Creek Path
- 5 Unite Auraria
- 6 Colfax and Speer (not shown)
- 7 Transition at 11th (not shown)
- 8 Cherry Creek Bridge – 5280 Trail (not show)



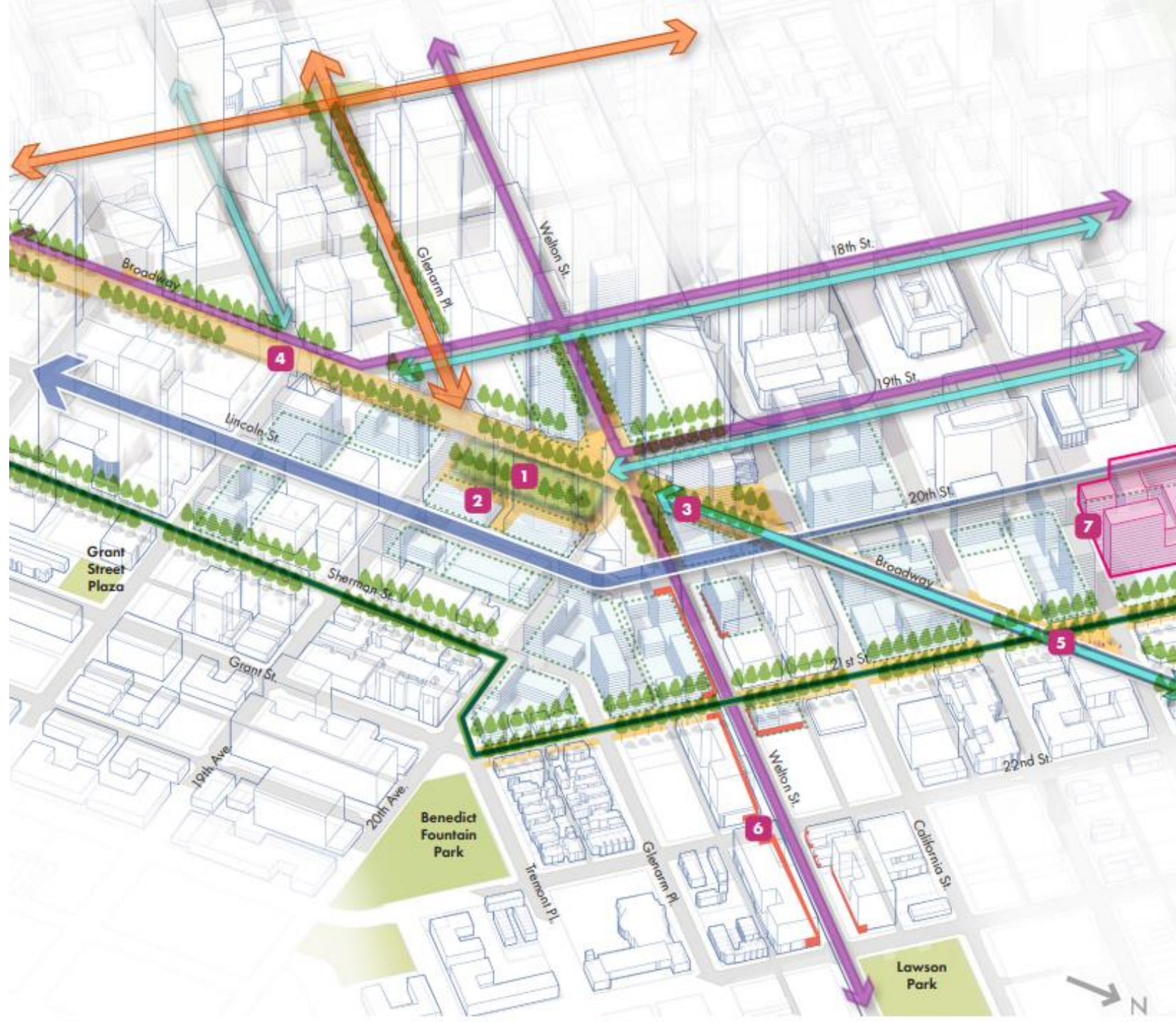
A Cherry Creek
that is loved



Focus Areas

Upper Broadway

- 1 Transformational Park
- 2 Park Activation
- 3 Reroute Broadway
- 4 A Green Boulevard
- 5 Reimagined Right-of-Way
- 6 Welton Transit Corridor
- 7 US Post Office Site



A new park in the
middle of a village



Ballpark District + Sakura Square

1 Wynkoop Shared Street – 5280 Trail

2 Two-way Streets

3 Sakura Square

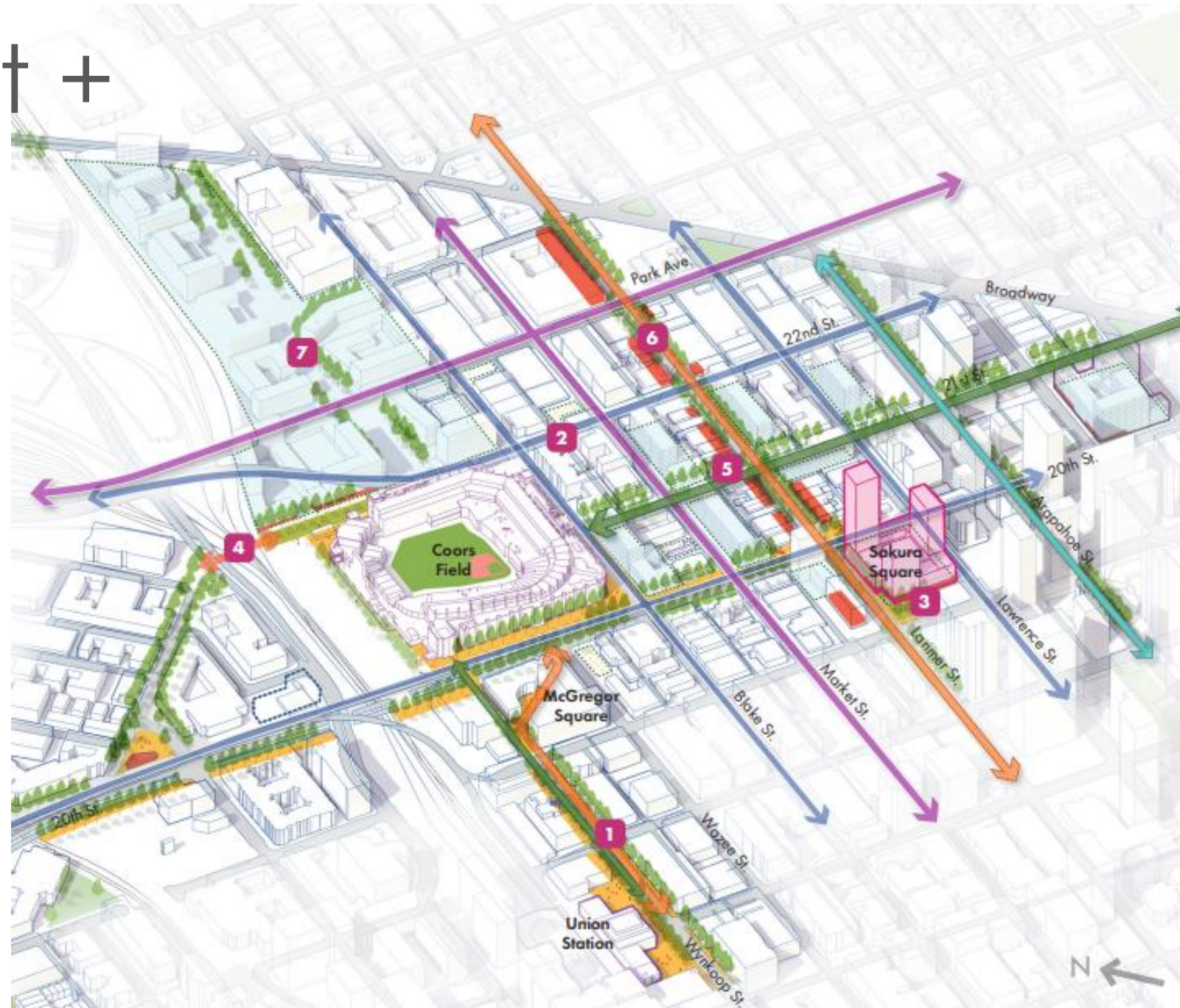
4 Ballpark Greenway

5 21st Street – 5280 Trail

6 Larimer Street

7 Redeveloped Parking

8 Safety + Comfort



Surrounded by Festival Streets



Central Platte Valley

- 1 Routes to Walk + Ride
- 2 Gates Crescent Park
- 3 16th Street Extension
- 4 Extend the Riverfront
- 5 Children's Playground
- 6 Waterfront Promenade
- 7 A New Neighborhood
- 8 Celebrate Chinatown

