

# denver

## DOWNTOWN AREA PLAN

prepared by



Moore Iacofano Goltsman, Inc.  
Progressive Urban Management Associates

In Association with

Fehr and Peers Transportation Consultants

UrbanTrans Consultants, Inc.

Carl Walker, Inc.



July 2007

The logo for the Denver Downtown Area Plan. It features a horizontal bar with a blue background on the left and an orange background on the right. The word "denver" is written in white lowercase letters across the blue section. Below the bar, the words "DOWNTOWN AREA PLAN" are written in orange uppercase letters.

**denver**  
**DOWNTOWN AREA PLAN**

**City and County of Denver  
Denver Civic Ventures, Inc.  
Downtown Denver Partnership, Inc.**

Prepared by



**Moore Iacofano Goltsman, Inc.  
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**Prepared under the direction of  
The Denver Downtown Area Plan Steering Committee**

# acknowledgements

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- global trends and implications for downtown denver
- visual preference survey summary
- phase 1 report: existing conditions assessment







# i. introduction

**D**enver's Downtown Area Plan is a tool to help community leaders, decision-makers, and citizens build upon Downtown's assets and guide future development to reflect the community's vision of a livable, healthy, sustainable and vibrant Downtown.

WITH A DIVERSE COMMUNITY OF 573,000 citizens and an economy that employs more than 560,000 people, the City and County of Denver serves as the transportation, business, entertainment and cultural center of the Denver metropolitan area and the greater Rocky Mountain West. Both public and private agencies will use the 2007 Denver Downtown Area Plan in the coming years to guide decisions and actions that affect the form and function of Downtown. The plan provides a sound policy basis for citywide decision-making and strengthening Downtown's role as the heart of the region.

The 2007 Denver Downtown Area Plan builds on the 1986 Downtown Area Plan by providing an updated Vision and set of goals and recommendations for Downtown. While much of the Vision as conveyed in the 1986 plan remains valid, many conditions have changed dramatically over the past 20 years. Further, most of the areas surrounding the Downtown core have established new plans and carried out significant public and private investment, altering the role and relationship of these various districts. While much of the success of the 1986 plan was related to the completion of major projects, the 2007 plan recommends "1000 small steps" that strengthen Downtown's fabric and make it economically, socially and environmentally more vital.

As a result of these changed circumstances, the City and County of Denver, Denver Civic Ventures and the Downtown Denver Partnership agreed in 2005 to undertake a significant and comprehensive look at the Downtown area and its direction for the next 20 years. This document outlines the major components of the plan and the steps toward **making Downtown Denver one of the most livable places in the world.**



## planning process



The planning process included numerous community workshops and forums to help craft the Vision and plan strategies.

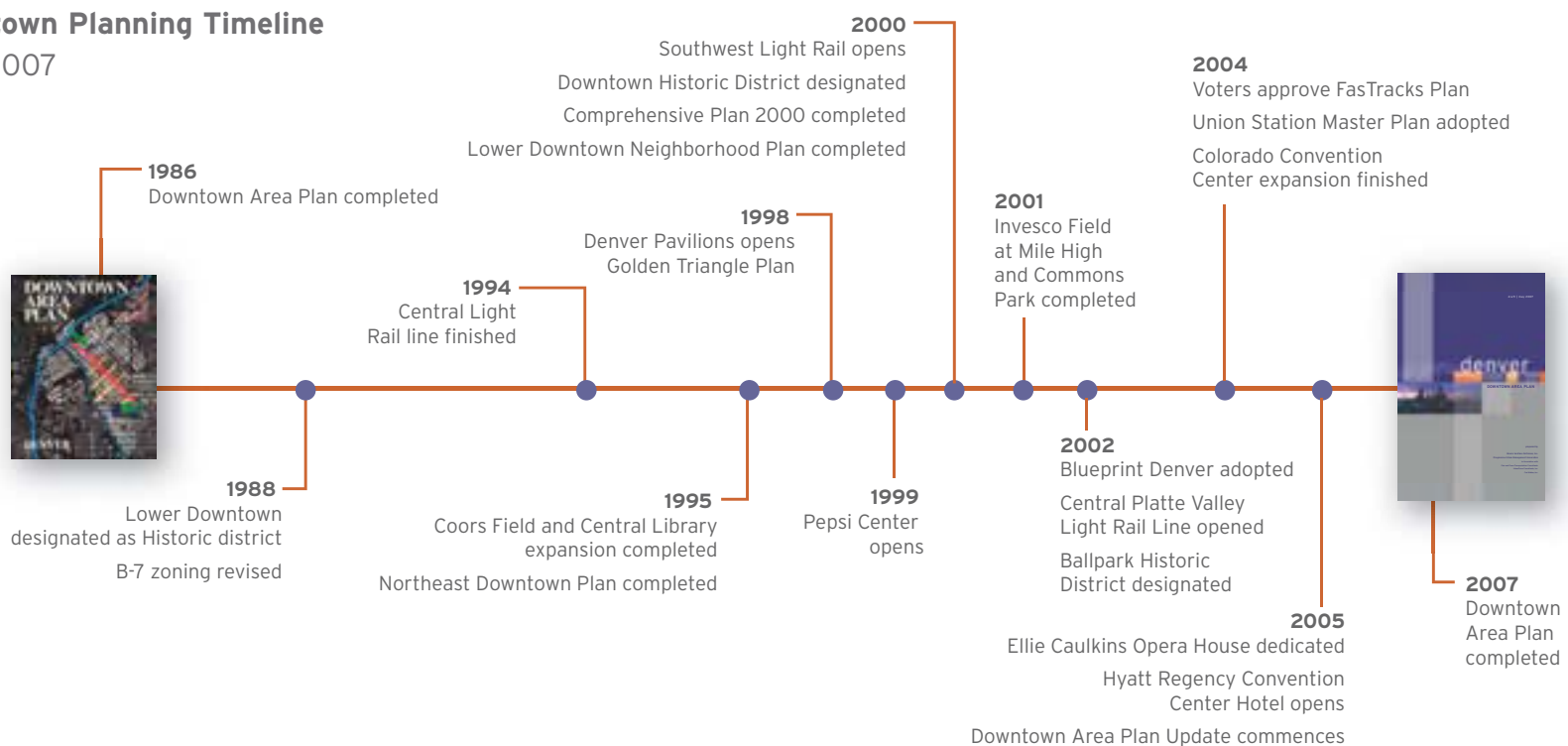
The 2007 Downtown Area Plan process integrated visioning and urban planning recommendations within a comprehensive public participation and outreach process.

Steering, Technical and Executive committees were formed to help guide the process. The Steering Committee represented a broad and diverse group of public officials, private businesses, residents, educational institutions and cultural facilities. This committee served as the policy advisory group for the plan, discussing and approving the vision, strategies and final plan. The Technical Committee was composed of staff members from several City of Denver agencies and the Downtown Denver Partnership. Technical Committee responsibilities included plan research, analysis, administrative duties and communications. The six-person Executive Committee oversaw administration during the planning process, set Steering Committee meeting agendas, and served as the public face of the Steering Committee. The makeup of the Executive Committee reflected the joint responsibility for the plan shared by the City of Denver and the Downtown Denver Partnership.

The Downtown Area Plan was crafted over a 15-month period that spanned four planning phases: Existing Conditions Assessment, Visioning for Downtown, Development of Concept Plan and Strategies, and Final Implementation Plan. Each phase of the process featured extensive outreach, and over the course of the process more than 2,000 participants lent their voice to shaping the Downtown Area Plan. Specific outreach events included:

- Thirteen Steering Committee meetings open to the public;
- Visual Preference Survey in person and on-line;
- Downtown Outlook Survey;
- Four Community Workshops;
- Four Neighborhood Roundtable Meetings;
- Interviews with key stakeholders, including the Minority Chambers of Commerce; various economic development organizations; Denver Public Schools; and the Mayor and City Council; and
- Three Community-wide educational sessions focused on the topics of sustainability, living in Downtown, and a family-friendly Downtown.

### Downtown Planning Timeline 1986-2007



# plan context

## SETTING

Downtown Denver's unique setting and historical role in the region help position it for continued leadership and innovation in the 21st century. Denver is the largest urban center in the Rocky Mountain West, and Downtown serves both the city and a burgeoning metro area of more than 2.7 million. Greater Denver comprises about half of Colorado's population of more than 4.8 million.

## Regional Context

As the region's main hub of commerce, transportation connections, government, and social and cultural amenities, Denver influences trends and patterns throughout the West. People drive from throughout Colorado and nearby states to conduct business, shop, attend performances and sporting events, visit museums, or catch a plane at Denver International Airport. Major cities such as Fort Collins, Boulder, Greeley, and Colorado Springs are within an hour's drive. The state's world-renowned winter resorts and year-round outdoor recreation attract millions of national and international visitors, with most making their passage through the Denver area.

Little has done more to reinforce the importance of Downtown Denver to the region than the 2004 passage of the FasTracks Regional Transit Plan. FasTracks will provide regional transit connections from Denver Union Station east to Denver International Airport, north to Thornton, northwest to Broomfield, Boulder and Longmont, west to Arvada and west to Lakewood. The importance of Denver Union Station as the region's transit hub will reinforce Downtown Denver's central role in the metro area.

## City Context

Downtown Denver is located in the heart of the city at the confluence of the South Platte River and Cherry Creek. The grand mountains of the Front Range provide a beautiful backdrop to the bustling Downtown environment that includes a visually dynamic mix of historic and contemporary buildings. In 2005, approximately 9,000 people lived in the Downtown core. An estimated population of 80,000 resided in Downtown and its adjacent neighborhoods, defined as those within 1.5 miles of Downtown. These neighborhoods, each with its own sense of community, surround the city center and provide a strong base of housing, small-scale retail, and landscaped open spaces.

## Planning Context

Since 1986, the City has undertaken numerous plans for portions of the area incorporated in the Downtown Area Plan, and these studies influence the direction of the 2007 Area Plan. The most significant of these plans are listed below and described in the Appendices:

- Denver Comprehensive Plan (2000);
- Blueprint Denver: An Integrated Land Use and Transportation Plan (2002);
- Denver Union Station Master Plan (2004);
- Downtown Multimodal Access Plan (2005);
- Civic Center District Plan (2005);
- Lower Downtown Neighborhood Plan (2000);
- Golden Triangle Neighborhood Plan (1998);
- Bicycle Master Plan (2001); and
- Pedestrian Master Plan (2004).



Denver is at the heart of Rocky Mountain West.



Denver is the largest city in Colorado and the economic and social hub of the Front Range region.



Downtown Denver is at the city's crossroads and is surrounded by many robust neighborhoods.

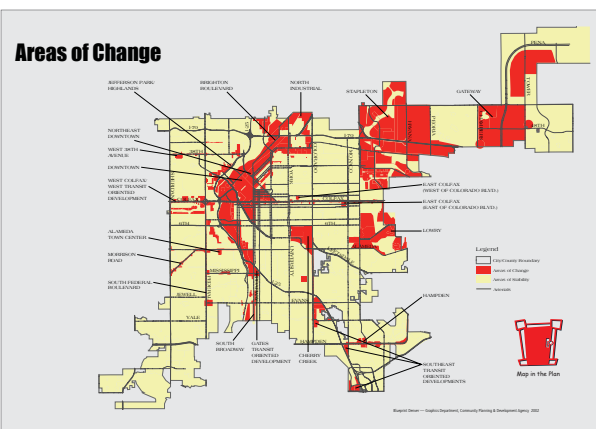




Skyline Park is an attractive open space amenity in the heart of Downtown.



The Central Platte Valley is a district booming with new residential and mixed-use development.



Blueprint Denver divides the city into Areas of Change and Areas of Stability. Downtown and its surrounding neighborhoods are designated Areas of Change, projected to accommodate the highest densities and widest mix of uses.

The diagram to the right illustrates the Downtown Area Plan study area (multi-colored districts), a transition area (orange), and surrounding neighborhoods (tan).

### DOWNTOWN STUDY AREA

The 2007 Downtown Area Plan study area boundary (see map below) encompasses approximately 1,800 acres and is divided into eight districts. The following districts are included in the study area and addressed in detail in the plan:

- Commercial Core
- Cultural Core
- Golden Triangle
- Auraria
- Lower Downtown (LoDo)
- Central Platte Valley
- Ballpark
- Arapahoe Square

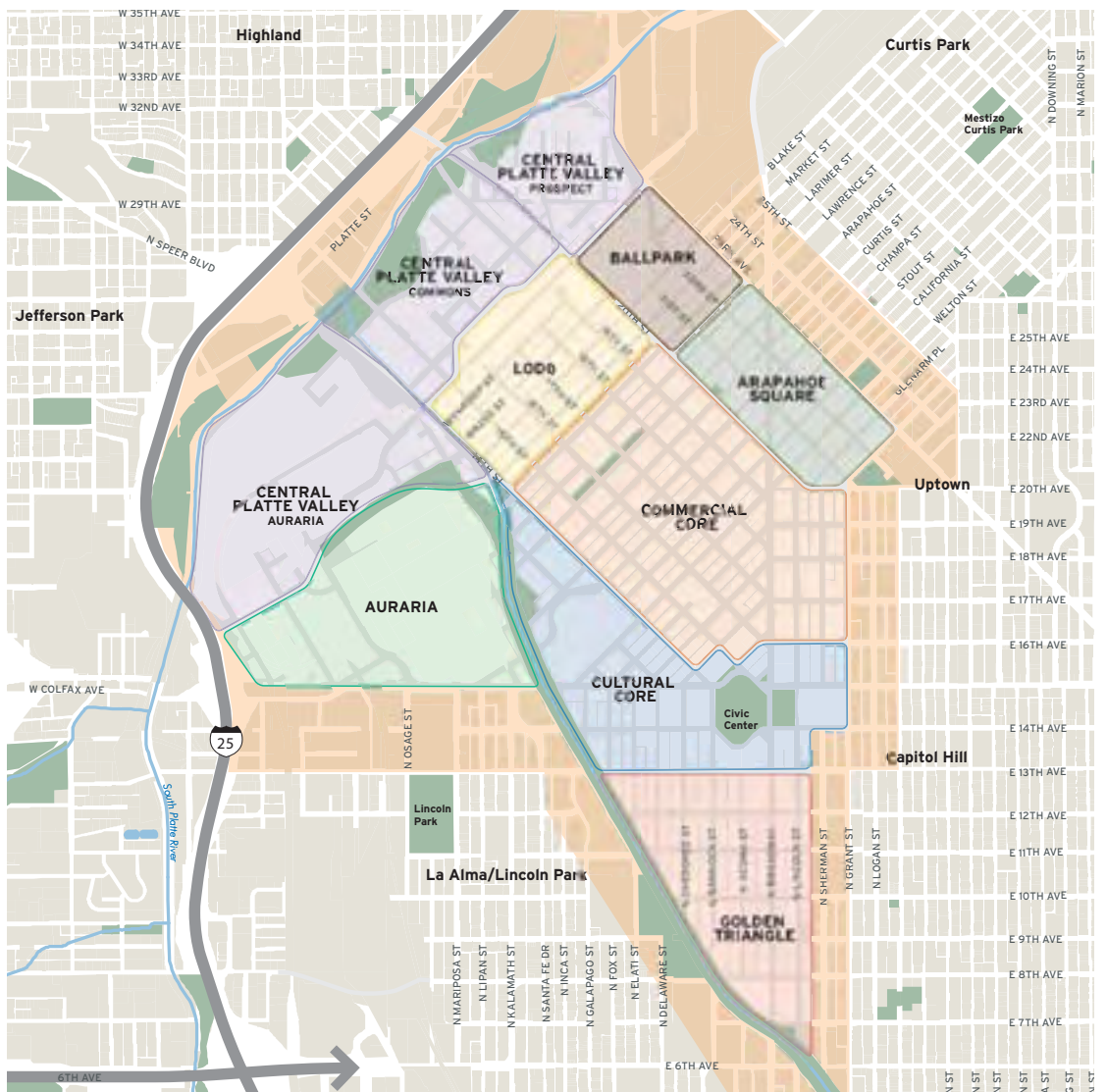
### Relationship to Surrounding Areas

Planning for these districts also involves careful consideration of the need for improved connections beyond the defined Downtown core. The planning effort included analysis of a “transition area” (in orange in the diagram below) that links the Downtown districts to surrounding neighborhoods.

The extensive redevelopment of the Central Platte Valley’s railyards into mixed-use housing and open space has transformed Downtown’s relationship to the Highland neighborhood to the northwest. The construction of Coors Field, Pepsi Center and INVESCO Field at Mile High has brought millions of visitors into Downtown.

Light rail service in Curtis Park has also helped to activate the neighborhood. The La Alma/Lincoln Park neighborhood has begun to be recognized due to its proximity to Downtown, 10th and Osage light rail station, and emerging arts district on Santa Fe.

While not within the Downtown Area Plan boundary, all of these surrounding historic neighborhoods are important to the success of the plan and are addressed with respect to adjacencies, relationships, connections and impacts.



## how to use this plan

The 2007 Downtown Area Plan supersedes the highly successful 1986 Downtown Area Plan. To be as successful over two decades, the 2007 plan paints a vision of the direction Downtown Denver must take in the 21st century to succeed globally, not just nationally. The plan is intended to give the latitude needed to pursue unforeseen opportunities that will certainly arise and to respond to new challenges. The plan must also give enough direction to guide day-to-day decision making related to land use decisions, public investments, and development opportunities.

Both public and private agencies will use the 2007 Denver Downtown Area Plan in the coming years to guide decisions and actions that affect the form and function of Downtown. The plan provides a sound policy basis for citywide decision-making and strengthening Downtown's role as the heart of the region. It also educates present and future generations about Downtown's importance to Denver and Colorado.

The remainder of the Downtown Area Plan consists of the following chapters:

### **Chapter II: Strategy Framework**

This chapter lays out a 20-year vision for Downtown. To support the vision, the chapter presents five elements that are supported by 19 strategies. The chapter identifies the seven "transformative projects" from the greater list, and presents a development concept to guide future growth.

### **Chapter III: Plan Strategies and Projects**

This chapter expands upon the 19 strategies that support the vision and identifies projects and programs to carry out each strategy.

### **Chapter IV: District Strategies**

This chapter focuses on applying plan strategies to individual districts within Downtown and provides additional recommendations for specific districts.

### **Chapter V: Moving Forward**

This chapter outlines the active, ongoing commitment to implementation that is needed to realize the 20-year vision for Downtown Denver.

### **Appendices**

Several Appendices accompany this document. The Appendices consist of background reports and technical documents that offer additional information on topics described in this Downtown Area Plan.







## ii. strategy framework

**D**owntown Denver must solidify its reputation as the region's economic, cultural and recreational capital. To accomplish this overarching goal, the Downtown Area Plan establishes five vision elements and 19 strategy elements, of which seven are major "transformative" projects. Accompanying each of these elements is a set of strategies and actions that will help turn the Downtown vision into reality.

As it has for the past 150 years, central Denver epitomizes the lifestyle of the urban Rocky Mountain West to the region, nation and the world. Quality of life is an increasingly important factor in location choices by individuals, families, and businesses. The combination of its rich history, well-protected historic building fabric, population growth, public infrastructure, and cultural assets uniquely position Downtown Denver at the forefront of the 21st century urban West.

Vibrancy and economic vitality are keystones of this plan. Downtown Denver's future depends on its ability to attract growth and investment, maintain an inviting and active urban environment, and responsibly manage resources and infrastructure. Authentic and appropriate urban forms, high quality design of both private buildings and the public realm, a dense mix of compatible activities and land uses, and preservation of historic assets are all essential elements in assuring Downtown's continued vitality and uniqueness. Balancing and meeting these demands will position Downtown to fulfill the vision of the plan.

The economic prosperity of Downtown will depend on the city's ability to capitalize on the opportunities described in the following section and implement the vision outlined in the remainder of this chapter.



# accomplishments, challenges and opportunities



Accomplishment: Coors Field



Accomplishment: Outdoor dining and activity



Challenge: The wide expanse of Colfax Avenue



Challenge: Undeveloped surface parking lots

Since 1986, Downtown Denver has emerged as one of the nation's pre-eminent urban success stories. Downtown is continuing its transformation into a "24/7" environment, with a variety of uses that together create an energetic ambiance and make Downtown a preferred location for working, living and entertainment.

The 1986 Downtown Area Plan set the framework for many of the **accomplishments** in Downtown Denver, including:

- Designation of Lower Downtown as a Denver Landmark District and public-private partnership strategies resulted in a highly successful mixed-use district;
- The conversion of the Central Platte Valley from a rail yard to an urban neighborhood;
- Access improvements in and out of Downtown, including the removal of viaducts and the installation of improved entryways such as Auraria Parkway and Park Avenue;
- Emergence of a regional transit system that is centered on Downtown;
- Development of new housing, primarily in areas surrounding the core; and
- Creation of significant new parks and open spaces along the South Platte River.

Other changes in Downtown were not envisioned in 1986, but have added to its overall vitality, including:

- Growth of dining and entertainment as an economic engine generating sales tax revenue and helping to position Downtown as a regional destination;
- Development of new venues for sports and culture, including Coors

Field, Pepsi Center, INVESCO Field at Mile High, and an expanded Denver Performing Arts Complex;

- Development and expansion of the Colorado Convention Center and the emergence of Denver as the top visitor destination in the state;
- On-going historic preservation efforts, including designation of the Downtown Denver Historic District, and the Ballpark Historic District;
- Development of housing in the core of the central business district, in addition to adjacent districts; and
- Construction of the Hyatt Regency Hotel at the Convention Center.

Despite these significant accomplishments, some **challenges** remain:

- Downtown's employment level has remained largely unchanged;
- Retail sales of goods have diminished Downtown;
- Downtown lacks a cohesive pedestrian environment and strong connections to adjacent neighborhoods;
- Named streets throughout Downtown lack distinction;
- Infrastructure and assets such as the 16th Street Mall and most Downtown office buildings are 25-30 years old and in need of reinvestment;
- Underutilized sites contribute to an inconsistent street environment;
- Arterial streets, such as Speer, Broadway and Colfax, create physical and perceptual barriers around Downtown; and
- The economic success of Downtown and its surrounding neighborhoods has made the current housing market unaffordable to many people.

## NATIONAL AND GLOBAL TRENDS

In addition to local and regional market forces that influence potential changes in Downtown Denver, national and global trends create challenges and opportunities for the city center. Key findings particularly applicable to Downtown Denver are:

- Embracing cultural and demographic diversity;
- Diversifying housing options and amenities;
- Leveraging transit for development;
- Fostering healthy and active lifestyles;
- Making Downtown event-friendly;
- Providing a quality pedestrian environment;
- Capitalizing on established attractions; and
- Creating an environmentally, socially and economically sustainable Downtown.

Demographic trends point toward the country **gaining significant population and becoming more ethnically diverse** in the coming decades. Overall, the population continues to grow, supported significantly by immigration. Both the older and younger markets have fueled Downtown population growth over the past decade and are poised to continue to populate urban environments. As this growing population ages, significant demand will be placed on the urban environment to accommodate the changing mobility and housing needs. America will become increasingly culturally and ethnically diverse, creating an advantage for downtowns that welcome, accommodate and celebrate diversity.

Broader distribution of information technologies is encouraging bottom-up innovation from entrepreneurs throughout the globe. Downtowns are poised to continue to attract creative vocations if they can **offer a business climate favorable to the incubation and growth of small dynamic enterprises.**

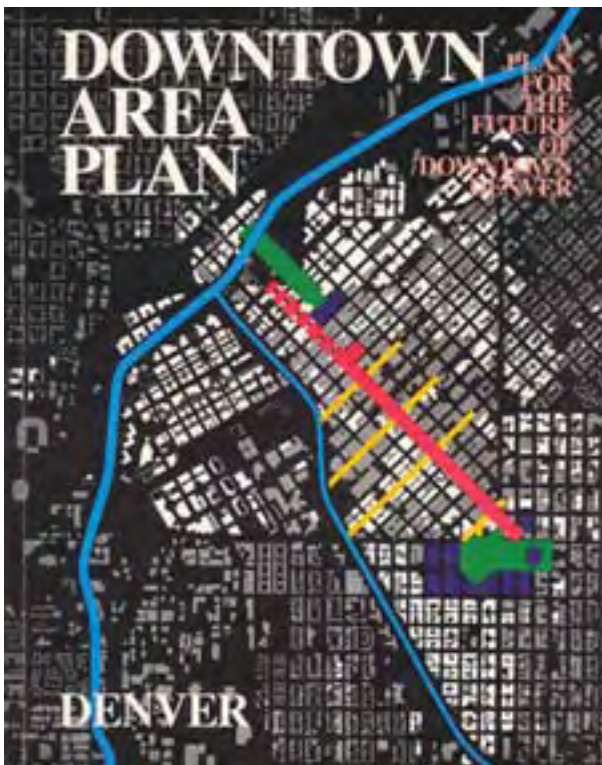
The emergence of an international middle class, currently demonstrated by rapid growth and urbanization in countries like China and India, will continue to strain the supply and increase the costs of non-renewable resources over the next 20 years. Increased petroleum and construction costs are likely to dramatically affect American lifestyles, making traditional suburban land use and transportation patterns increasingly expensive and inefficient. Cities will look to maximize the use of existing infrastructure and explore sustainable development policies. **Vibrant downtowns are well positioned to capitalize on an economic imperative to downsize consumption**, while offering lifestyle advantages of entertainment, culture, recreation, transportation options and human interaction.

To capture the potential for change created by these overall trends, Downtown Denver must create an environment that caters to changing demographics, provides a high-quality urban lifestyle, and maximizes the ability of local businesses to compete globally.



Dramatic growth in many places throughout the world will impact how Downtown Denver evolves. Cities like Hong Kong, China (above), will be in direct competition with Denver for natural resources, building materials and intellectual capital in the coming years.





1986



2007

The 1986 Downtown Area Plan (top) set forth a physical framework that in many ways remains in place today (bottom). As Downtown grows, the framework will continue to evolve and expand, particularly on the “named” streets (facing page).

### DEVELOPMENT CONCEPT

The Development Concept presents the broad, foundational components for development in Downtown Denver.

Physical assets and amenities frame cities. As the 1986 plan stated, “A harbor, a large urban park, a specialty shopping district, a historic area, a cathedral, distinctive office towers - these are elements which people remember . . . The specific arrangement of these elements, the links among them, and the character of their landmarks distinguish one city from another.”

Downtown Denver is blessed with an abundance of such features. From the nationally-recognized 16th Street Mall and Coors Field to the historic Union Station and modern Denver Art Museum; from the flowing, natural environments of the South Platte River and Cherry Creek to the grand beauty of Civic Center Park, the essence of Downtown - its sense of place - begins with its major physical features.

#### 16th Street Mall

Following the framework envisioned by the 1986 Downtown Area Plan, 16th Street continues to be the spine of Downtown in the 2007 Development Concept. This corridor is anchored by the Civic Center on the southeastern end and Denver Union Station to the northwest.

#### Grand Boulevard

The wide, auto-oriented barriers of Speer, Colfax, Broadway, Park Avenue and Auraria Parkway are addressed through pedestrian improvements and development that is brought to the street edge.

- Activity Node
- Existing Intra-Downtown Transit
- Future Intra-Downtown Transit

These grand boulevards link three major activity nodes in Downtown: the evolving Arapahoe Square/Ballpark area, an urbanizing Auraria district, and a strengthened Civic Center. The fourth activity node, centered around Denver Union Station, is connected via an intra-Downtown transit network that links all of the nodes and branches outward to surrounding neighborhoods.

Additional transit connections, such as the Downtown Circulator along 18th and 19th streets and a connection along Larimer Street between Auraria and Ballpark, boost business development and employment opportunities Downtown.

- LRT Stop
- LRT Line
- FasTracks Rail Line

Transit-oriented development is important to organizing building forms and uses to create pedestrian friendly environments in and around existing and planned rail stations.

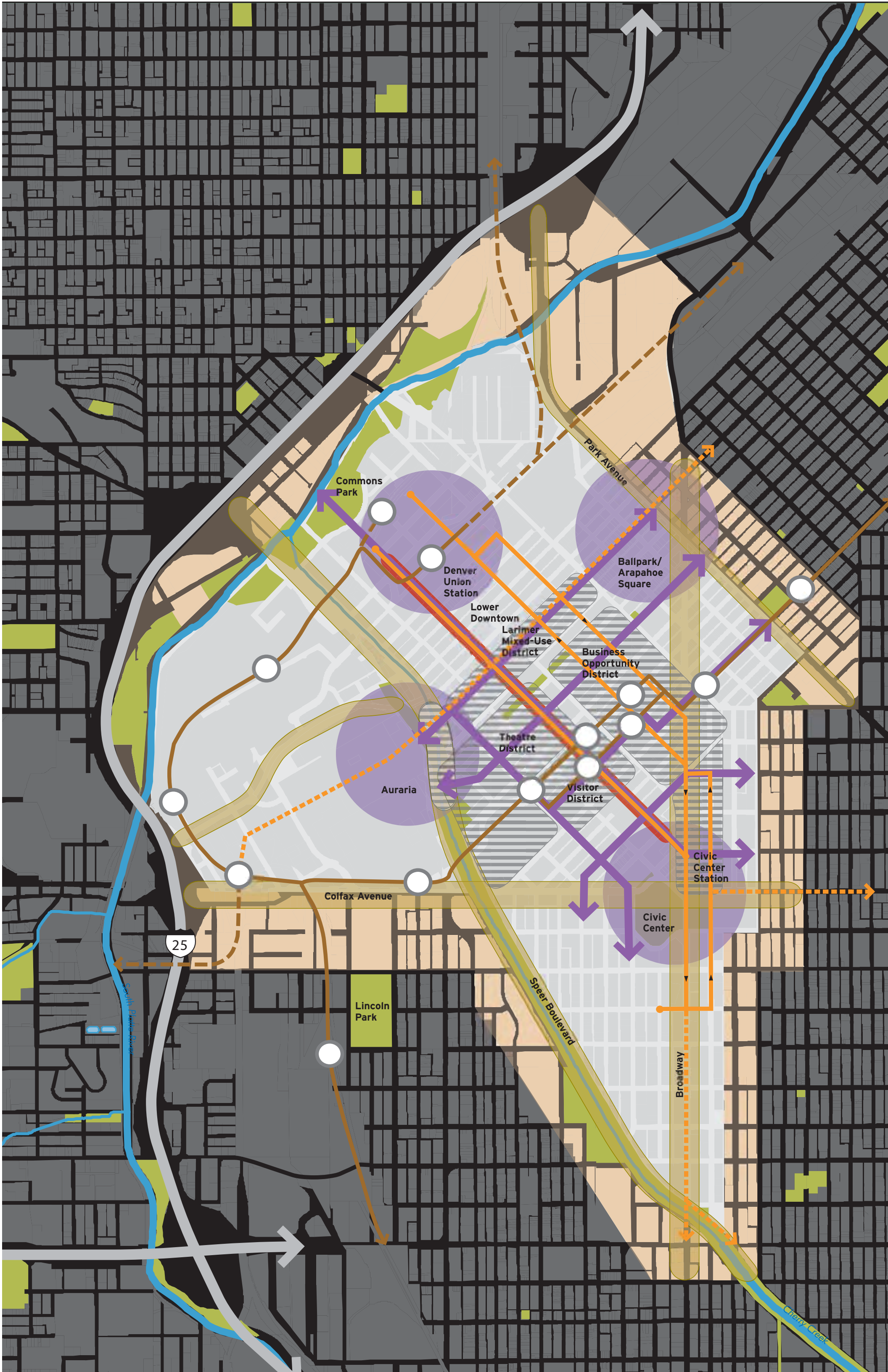
- Priority Pedestrian Connection

High quality pedestrian connections are essential to linking the Downtown core to the rest of the study area. Initial priority projects include 14th Street and the Named Streets Initiative—Larimer, Curtis, California and Tremont.

- Focus Area

Focus Areas such as the Theatre District, Visitor District, and Business Opportunity District help lend definition to areas of the core and create additional development interest.

Together, these elements create a structure to guide and foster future development Downtown.



Commons Park

Denver Union Station

Ballpark/ Arapahoe Square

Lower Downtown  
Larimer Mixed-Use District

Business Opportunity District

Theatre District

Auraria

Visitor District

Civic Center Station

Civic Center

Colfax Avenue

Lincoln Park

Speer Boulevard

Broadway

25

South Platte River

Cherry Creek



## the vision elements

To achieve a vibrant, economically healthy, growing and vital downtown, Denver must be committed to a sustained effort in each of the elements: **Prosperous, Walkable, Diverse, Distinctive and Green.**

The numbered strategies and projects in each category are critical for Downtown to remain competitive within local, state, national and international markets in the coming decades. The orange bars indicate the seven transformative projects described below. All of the strategies and projects are outlined in detail beginning on page 16.



### A. A Prosperous City

Attracting Jobs, Growth, and Investment

**A1. The Downtown of the Rocky Mountain Region**

**A2. Energizing the Commercial Core**

**A3. A Comprehensive Retail Strategy**

**A4. Clean and Safe**



### B. A Walkable City

Putting Pedestrians First

**B1. An Outstanding Pedestrian Environment**

**B2. Building On Transit**

**B3. Bicycle City**

**B4. Park The Car Once**

**B5. Grand Boulevards**

## seven transformative projects

These seven projects are identified as the most critical steps to advance Downtown development - and enhance livability and economic health - over the next 20 years.

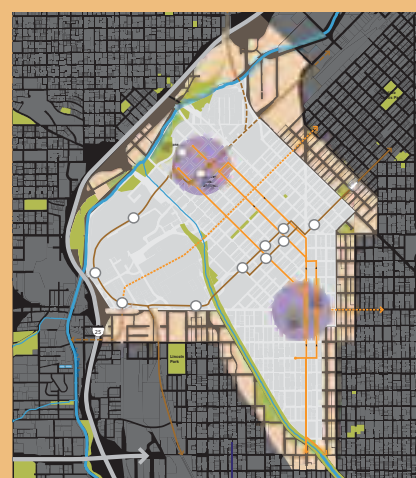
Multi-layered and long-term in nature, these projects will take concerted effort and collaboration by both the public and private sectors. All energy and resources should be harnessed toward making these a reality. Only through executing these projects can Downtown Denver truly transform and achieve the vision of a vibrant, livable 21st century city center.

### A2. Energizing the Commercial Core



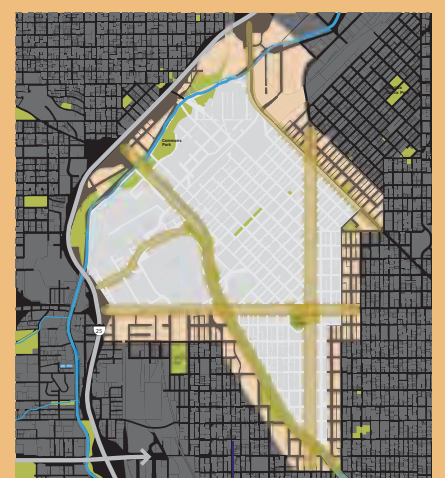
Bolster economic development opportunities and enhance the pedestrian experience in the Commercial Core.

### B2. Building On Transit



Couple the regional transit network with an equally ambitious local Denver-serving transportation system that provides quick and efficient connections.

### B5. Grand Boulevards



Transform Speer, Colfax, Broadway, Park Avenue and Auraria Parkway into memorable, multi-modal boulevards as a complement to Denver's parkway system.

# the vision for downtown denver

## VIBRANT An Economically Healthy, Growing and Vital Downtown



**C. A Diverse City**  
Being a Socially and Economically Inclusive Place



**D. A Distinctive City**  
Cultivating a Mosaic of Urban Districts



**E. A Green City**  
Building a Greener Denver

C1. Downtown Living

C2. A Family-Friendly Place

C3. Embracing Adjacent Neighborhoods

C4. An International Downtown

D1. District Evolution

D2. Connecting Auraria

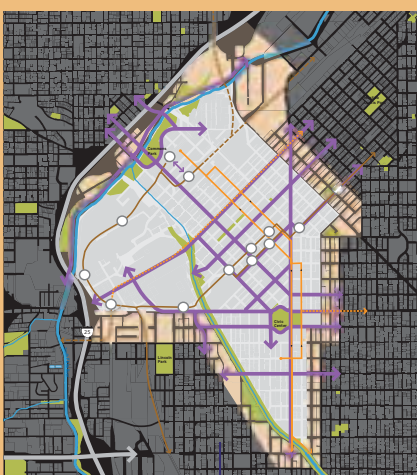
D3. Downtown's New Neighborhood: Arapahoe Square

E1. An Outdoor Downtown

E2. A Rejuvenated Civic Center

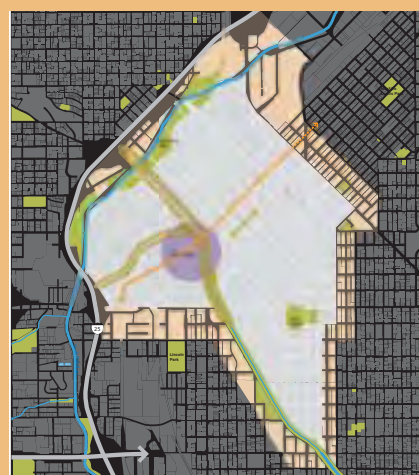
E3. Sustainable Use of Resources

### C3. Embracing Adjacent Neighborhoods



Enhance pedestrian, bike and transit connections between Downtown and the surrounding neighborhoods.

### D2. Connecting Auraria



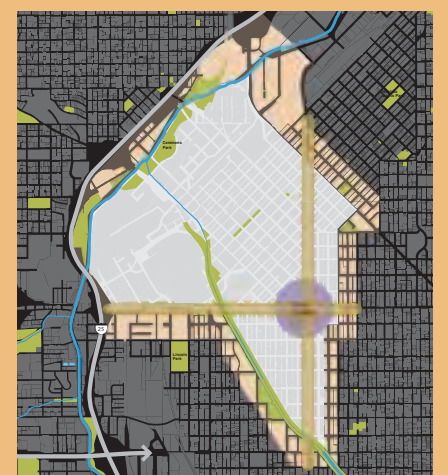
Foster expanded physical and programmatic connections between the Auraria Campus and the rest of Downtown.

### D3. Downtown's New Neighborhood: Arapahoe Square



Redevelop Arapahoe Square as a cutting-edge, densely populated, mixed-use area and center of innovative businesses.

### E2. A Rejuvenated Civic Center



Restore and reactivate Civic Center to attract more visitors, residents, workers and students to the park.





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# iii. plan strategies and projects

**S**uccess of the Downtown Area Plan depends on the implementation of high impact strategies and projects throughout the city center. This chapter outlines the action plan for Downtown.

Strategies and projects are organized according to the five vision elements that support the overarching vision of a vibrant Downtown:

- A. A Prosperous City
- B. A Walkable City
- C. A Diverse City
- D. A Distinctive City
- E. A Green City

Within the 19 strategies and projects, seven transformative projects are highlighted for extra emphasis. While all 19 strategy elements are essential to achieving the Plan vision, seven of them are highlighted as transformative projects because without early and concerted effort in these areas, the other elements of the plan will not be as successful. These projects are listed below and indicated on the following pages by orange bars.

- A2. Energizing the Commercial Core
- B2. Building on Transit
- B5. Grand Boulevards
- C3. Embracing Adjacent Neighborhoods
- D2. Connecting Auraria
- D3. Downtown's New Neighborhood:  
Arapahoe Square
- E2. A Rejuvenated Civic Center





## a. a prosperous city

### ATTRACTING JOBS, GROWTH AND INVESTMENT

Since its historical beginnings, Downtown Denver has served as the economic and cultural hub for a vast interior region ranging from Mexico to Canada and from the Great Basin to the Missouri River Valley. Downtown Denver is well positioned to continue this role through the next century. A key to Denver's continued prosperity will be adapting to the economic realities of a global economy. Economists point to urban livability as the single most important factor in attracting and retaining the intellectual capital needed to sustain an information-based, creative economy. New business development will be increasingly dependent on small firms seeking a progressive environment that encourages innovation. Jobs, businesses and investment are the critical building blocks for a vital city center.

Strategies and projects for making Downtown Denver a **prosperous** city are listed below and described in detail on the following pages:

**A1. The Downtown of the Rocky Mountain Region**

**A2. Energizing the Commercial Core**

**A3. A Comprehensive Retail Strategy**

**A4. Clean and Safe**

## A1. The Downtown Of The Rocky Mountain Region

### GOAL

Ensure Downtown's continued primacy as the business center of the region and establish its role as a leader in the 21st century global economy. Add 35,000 new jobs by 2027.

### WHY IT'S IMPORTANT

A key to Denver's continued economic dominance will be adapting to the economic realities of a global economy. New business development will be increasingly dependent on small firms seeking a progressive environment that encourages innovation.

### POLICIES, PROJECTS AND PROGRAMS

A1a. Create a program to support small- and medium-sized businesses, bolstering Denver as the best place for businesses to thrive

- Cultivate new business clusters (e.g. alternative energy)
- Support start-ups
- Sponsor a national small business conference
- Overcome barriers such as health care, transportation costs, and childcare

A1b. Create a world class portal from Denver International Airport to Denver Union Station via the East Line, an essential FasTracks line for Downtown

A1c. Create a brand identity that promotes Downtown as a place to live, work, play, visit and learn

A1d. Strengthen the effective coordination of Downtown, City, regional and state business retention, expansion and recruitment programs

A1e. Cultivate arts and culture as key economic drivers

- Retain and expand the clusters of world-class arts, cultural, and performance facilities in Downtown
- Provide temporary and permanent creative space to meet the broad spectrum of needs for administrative, rehearsal, performance and studio functions
- Establish connections to emerging arts districts such as Santa Fe, Five Points, Golden Triangle and River North (RiNo)
- Establish an urban tourism program that highlights historic buildings and districts as part of Denver's story

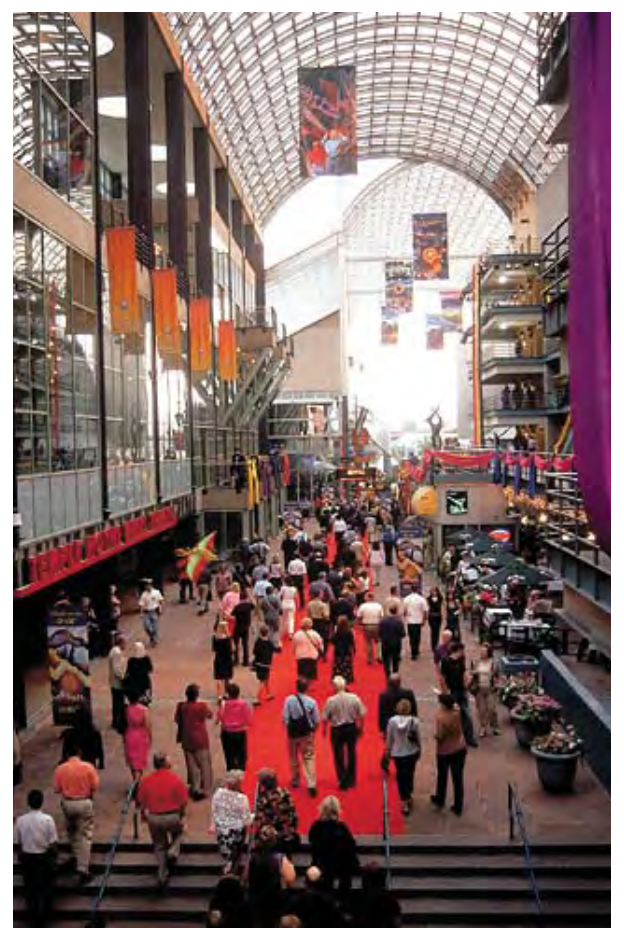
A1f. Promote Downtown as the most transit-rich location in the state and tailor planning, marketing, and investment to capitalize on regional transit investment and resulting access to jobs and housing

A1g. Preserve, reuse and reinvest in historic buildings and places throughout Downtown. These buildings and places demonstrate to future generations Denver's pre-eminence as a western city over the past 150 years

A1h. Enhance the appearance of the vehicular connection from I-70 to Downtown along Brighton Boulevard and provide signage identifying it as a direct route to Downtown



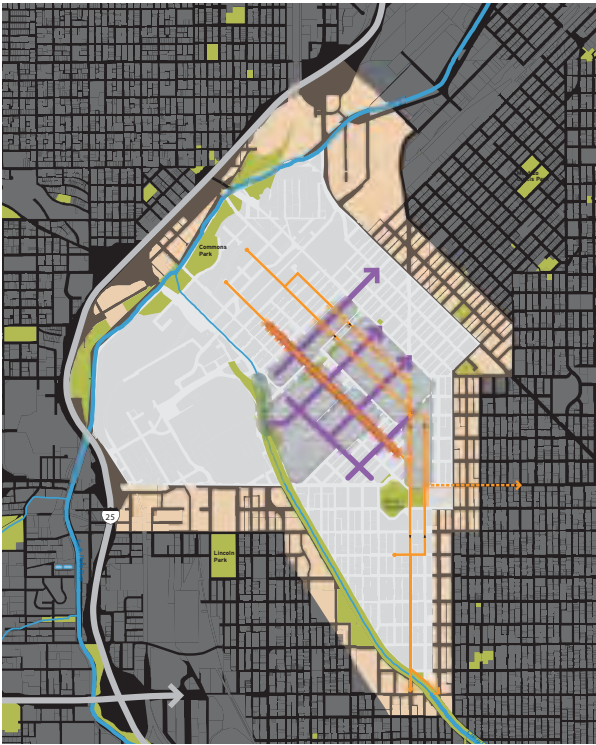
Enhancing Downtown's strengths as the region's office and financial capital is paramount to the plan's success.



Arts and cultural facilities are vital elements of community life that can also be leveraged for economic development.



## A2. Energizing the Commercial Core



Strategy Diagram: Energizing the Commercial Core



The 16th Street Mall is a nationally recognized symbol of Downtown Denver's vitality.

### THEATRE AND VISITOR DISTRICTS

Establishment of new destination districts is a key element of energizing the Commercial Core. The Theatre District, with a central axis along Curtis Street that connects the 16th Street Mall, Denver Performing Arts Complex and Auraria, will have enhanced signage, venues for outdoor cultural events, and arts-related commercial activities. The Visitor District, with a central axis along California Street, will connect the Colorado Convention Center to the 16th Street Mall and 17th Street hotels. It will contain a mix of authentic and unique urban retail that serves both locals and visitors (see Development Concept on page 11 for district locations).

### GOAL

Invigorate the Commercial Core by enhancing the pedestrian and transit experiences and creating an economically thriving district for business, retail and tourism.

### WHY IT'S IMPORTANT

As the city center's defining district, a vital and vibrant Commercial Core is critical to the overall real and perceived success of the Downtown.

### POLICIES, PROJECTS AND PROGRAMS

A2a. Design the Downtown Circulator to provide high frequency, high quality transit service that enhances the economic development and transit benefits of the investment

A2b. Establish a Business Opportunity District and the Larimer Mixed-Use District to capitalize on transit investments and rebalance Downtown economic activity

- Market the area along the Downtown Circulator to employers and developers
- Use the new Larimer transit line to strengthen economic activity and identity in the Larimer Mixed-Use District.
- Evaluate development potential on vacant sites to assure that current regulations result in desired building forms and street character

A2c. Strengthen the vitality of the 16th Street Mall

- Create and enhance recognized sub-districts along the Mall, including Theatre and Visitor districts
- Create and implement a Mall activities strategy
- Develop a balanced retail strategy that includes entertainment, dining and specialty retailers
- Conduct a study of Mall infrastructure to assess needs and reconstruct to meet the goals of sustainability, usability and respect for the existing design
- Re-evaluate 16th Street Mall transit service in light of the Downtown Circulator frequency, operation, and technology

A2d. Create distinct identities along named streets through physical improvements

- Visitor District along California
- Theatre District along Curtis

A2e. Build 14th Street as envisioned in the 14th Street Initiative; establish it as a model sustainable streetscape



The streetscape of the Commercial Core, shown here at 18th and Tremont (left), can be enhanced to create a more attractive environment that will help re-energize the Commercial Core (right).



## A3. A Comprehensive Retail Strategy

### GOAL

Improve Downtown's overall economic vitality by restoring the area as an important retail center for an expanding residential, workforce, and visitor customer base. Add approximately 1.5 million square feet of diverse retail uses that serve these customers throughout the plan area by 2027.

### WHY IT'S IMPORTANT

The vibrancy of Downtown retail depends on a growing residential population and offering a diverse range of options and activities to those who live, work and seek entertainment in Downtown.

### POLICIES, PROJECTS AND PROGRAMS

A3a. Reinforce existing or develop new retail clusters at key locations: Larimer Street, 16th and California, Denver Union Station, and Auraria (see Retail Strategy diagram below)

- Establish a retail management and enhancement program for 16th Street between Welton and Curtis

A3b. Develop a public market as a regional destination in the core of Downtown

A3c. Create and implement a marketing plan to promote Downtown retail goods and services to in-place markets, including residents, workers, visitors and students

A3d. Encourage neighborhood serving retail in every district

- Encourage small retail businesses by eliminating parking requirements where appropriate

### Downtown Denver Retail Strategy



A European-style public market would be a focal point of Downtown retail. The market would draw residents and visitors year-round, with fresh produce, specialty goods, and places to sit and eat.



Large format retailers can be designed for urban environments, such as this multi-story Target store with structured parking in Stamford, CT.

### RETAIL STRATEGY

The Retail Strategy for Downtown identifies areas for development of greater retail identity, focus and differentiation.

All types of retail should be encouraged throughout Downtown. However, in order to foster clusters of healthy retail and commercial services, different areas may take on distinct retail identities.

Around Denver Union Station, transit-oriented urban retail with some larger format stores (designed to fit in the urban environment) will serve residents and commuters. Along the Mall, the lower, middle and upper sections will all serve a broad range of users but should take on unique identities to break up the length of the street. These areas, along with California Street, will also have a focus on visitor and tourist serving retail. The northeast part of Auraria should be developed with retail that serves students, faculty and staff while also orienting across Speer Boulevard to attract other Downtown shoppers. Neighborhood-serving retail in the core of the Golden Triangle and Ballpark districts and throughout LoDo will aim to meet the everyday needs of residents.

## A4. Clean and Safe



The Downtown Denver Business Improvement District currently funds daily cleaning and maintenance efforts.



Police services enhance the real and perceived safety of residents, workers and visitors in Downtown.

### GOAL

Downtown Denver remains an environment where people feel safe and the streets and sidewalks are clean, well-maintained and well-lit – basic underpinnings of an enjoyable urban experience for residents, workers and visitors.

### WHY IT'S IMPORTANT

A clean and safe environment is a prerequisite for all activity that happens within Downtown, including business, living and entertainment. Public perception of clean and safe is just as important as the reality.

### POLICIES, PROJECTS AND PROGRAMS

A4a. Implement Denver's Road Home in Downtown

- Establish 24-hour shelters for the homeless
- Advocate for balanced distribution of service providers throughout the metropolitan area

A4b. Strengthen regulatory requirements for building, property and sidewalk maintenance

A4c. Expand clean and safe programs, including policing, ambassador, and sidewalk washing, beyond the BID boundaries

A4d. Install more uniform and consistent lighting of sidewalks, parks and open spaces

### DENVER'S ROAD HOME

As of 2007, there were more than 4,600 homeless men, women and children in Denver, with many of these individuals living in and around Downtown. Through transitional housing, counseling, treatment services and employment training, Denver's Road Home aims to decrease the City's cost of homelessness while giving people the tools to become self-sufficient. Over 10 years, the program is determined to achieve the following goals:

#### 1. Permanent and Transitional Housing

Develop 3,193 permanent and transitional housing opportunities.

#### 2. Shelter System

Make safe and legal shelter beds and activities for all populations both day and night until adequate permanent housing is in place including the addition of 110 beds in year one of the Plan.

#### 3. Prevention

Provide Denver residents facing homelessness more tools to keep them from ending up on the streets or in emergency shelters.

#### 4. Services

Provide better access to supportive services that promote long-term stability and improved functioning.

#### 5. Public Safety and Outreach

Improve public safety by increasing homeless outreach efforts to reduce panhandling, loitering and crimes.

#### 6. Education, Training and Employment

Assist 580 people who are homeless to obtain skills and knowledge necessary to participate in the workforce.

#### 7. Community Awareness and Coordinated Responses

Build community awareness and support for coordinated responses to eliminate homelessness.

#### 8. Zoning, Urban Design and Land Use

Reform Denver's zoning, building and development codes to facilitate an adequate supply of emergency and affordable housing.

## b. a walkable city

### PUTTING PEDESTRIANS FIRST

Walkability is a key ingredient to a successful urban environment. It enhances public safety, fosters personal interactions, and increases economic vitality.

The great cities of the West, including Vancouver, Seattle, Portland and San Francisco, all feature street-level experiences that invite and stimulate the pedestrian. Denver's emergence as a truly livable city requires a new emphasis on the pedestrian environment.

Strategies and projects for making Downtown Denver a **walkable** city are listed below and described in detail on the following pages:



#### **B1. An Outstanding Pedestrian Environment**

#### **B2. Building On Transit**

#### **B3. Bicycle City**

#### **B4. Park The Car Once**

#### **B5. Grand Boulevards**



## B1. An Outstanding Pedestrian Environment



With its streetscape amenities, mix of uses, slower traffic and active ground floors, LoDo has an outstanding pedestrian environment.



The great cities of Europe, including Barcelona, Spain, feature street-level experiences and design that engage pedestrians and promote walking.



Bulb-outs, brightly-striped crosswalks and landscaping help to make this intersection in Germany more pedestrian friendly.

Curtis Street looking south from 18th Street (right, above) is illustrative of many streets Downtown, with long blank walls and empty spaces that are unfriendly to pedestrians. Recommended improvements (right, below) include permanent seating and kiosks, public art, and special pavement to create a more active and attractive space.

### GOAL

Make every street safe, comfortable and attractive for pedestrians as recommended in the Downtown Denver Pedestrian Master Plan.

### WHY IT'S IMPORTANT

Walkability is a key ingredient to a successful urban environment - it enhances public safety, fosters more personal interactions, and increases economic vitality. Denver's emergence as a truly livable city requires a new emphasis on the pedestrian environment.

### POLICIES, PROJECTS AND PROGRAMS

- B1a. Designate Downtown as a "pedestrian priority zone" incorporating universal access standards, Complete Streets policies, which insure safe and convenient access for all transportation modes, and priority to capital investments in pedestrian-oriented improvements in the public right of way
- B1b. Require ground floor active uses throughout Downtown through changes to zoning and design guidelines
- B1c. Develop a comprehensive streetscape plan and funding strategy
  - Require surface parking lots to comply with landscaping requirements
  - Improve the pedestrian environment on named streets; start with Larimer, Curtis, California and Tremont
  - Extend connections into surrounding neighborhoods to include the enhancement of existing infrastructure particularly over I-25 along West 23rd Avenue, Colfax and Park Avenue
  - Enhance pedestrian crossings through the use of bulb-outs, mid-block crossings, pedestrian refuge islands, pedestrian count down signals and improved signage and striping
- B1d. Create and maintain a comprehensive wayfinding system throughout Downtown for pedestrians, transit users, bicyclists and drivers utilizing available technology
- B1e. Convert selected streets from one-way to two-way as identified in the Downtown Multimodal Access Plan and other plans





## B2. Building On Transit

### GOAL

Reinforce Downtown as the region's largest and most convenient transit district with local, regional, statewide and national connections.

### WHY IT'S IMPORTANT

In an era of decreasing resources and increasingly consumptive lifestyles, transportation alternatives will provide competitive advantages for urban centers. The development of both FasTracks and a complementary local transit system will make transit-based living possible in Downtown. Furthermore, transit stops and stations are appropriate locations for nodes of higher intensity uses.

### POLICIES, PROJECTS AND PROGRAMS

B2a. Reinforce Denver Union Station as the regional transit hub and Civic Center Station as the local transit hub

- Advocate for development of Denver Union Station as conveyed in the vision, goals and principles of the Denver Union Station Master Plan
- Ensure that the Downtown Circulator is constructed as an attractive, high-quality, high frequency transit connection between Union Station, Civic Center Station, and the Cultural Complex, as described in the Downtown Multimodal Access Plan and FasTracks Plan
- Complete a study of the multi-modal access to Civic Center Station and address potential conflicts between pedestrians, cyclists, motorists and transit vehicles
- Support studies of high-frequency fixed guideway transit on East Colfax, Broadway and Broadway/Speer/1st Avenue as the first components of the Denver focused transit system

B2b. Create a free fare zone within Downtown

B2c. Introduce car sharing services (such as Zip Car or Flex Car) as an alternative to private vehicles

B2d. Expand bus connections between Downtown and adjacent neighborhoods; explore high-frequency circulator service similar to the Hop, Skip and Jump in Boulder

B2e. Provide cross-town transit on Larimer and/or Lawrence to connect Auraria West Station with Ballpark and Arapahoe Square

B2f. Change regulations to improve taxi service, especially for short-distance trips, in the Downtown area.



Strategy Diagram: Building on Transit



Denver Union Station and Civic Center Station will work in concert as hubs of regional and local transit.



Strengthening transit will increase opportunities for transit-oriented development, such as this mixed-use housing project in San Francisco, CA.



Streetcars can provide quick, efficient and attractive intra-Downtown transit connections.



Civic Center Station will be strengthened as the local transit hub, with improved connections throughout Downtown and to the surrounding neighborhoods.



## B3. Bicycle City



Strong connections to the greater city and region will promote increased ridership in Downtown.



"Critical mass" bicycle rides elevate the concept of biking as a viable form of transit.

### GOAL

Provide clear bicycle network connections into and through the Downtown, and incorporate services and facilities that address the whole trip.

### WHY IT'S IMPORTANT

Given Denver's relatively flat terrain, favorable climate and recreational orientation, bicycling is a viable transit option that can work for a variety of individuals given the appropriate infrastructure. Increased bicycle use also enhances the overall livability of Downtown and augments the Denver Bicycle Master Plan.

### POLICIES, PROJECTS AND PROGRAMS

B3a Accommodate bicycle riders on all Downtown streets through the adoption and implementation of Complete Streets policies

B3b. Connect the local, regional and Downtown bike networks

- Initiate a pilot project to connect the West 14th Avenue, East 16th Avenue, and 12th Avenue routes into Downtown
- Complete the Creekfront trail project

B3c. Improve bicycle parking and amenities throughout Downtown

- Establish bicycle stations at Denver Union Station, Civic Center Station and other locations
- Add more bike parking, especially near 16th Street
- Explore installation of shared bike stations as recommended in the Downtown Multimodal Access Plan



Bicycles are an intrinsic part of the urban environment in Copenhagen, Denmark.

## B4. Park The Car Once

### GOAL

Make parking easy to find and access, and connect parking facilities with clear and logical transit and pedestrian linkages.

### WHY IT'S IMPORTANT

For many visitors to the city core, parking is the first and last impression of their overall Downtown experience. Making parking logical and easy will help the visitor experience. Ensuring an adequate supply of strategically located parking is also important to support retail, employment and new development.

### POLICIES, PROJECTS AND PROGRAMS

B4a. Create a public/private parking management organization to implement a comprehensive parking management program that utilizes available technology

- Explore opportunities to share large reservoirs of parking to accommodate the needs of commuters, large events and visitors
- Identify strategic locations for additional parking, if needed
- Create a comprehensive parking identification system identifying available parking spaces

B4b. Retain and expand the availability of on-street parking throughout Downtown

- Identify opportunities for flex parking lanes during off-peak hours

B4c. Establish financing mechanisms to reinvest in the parking management program



On-street parking must be managed to ensure that it is supportive of and integrated with the pedestrian-oriented Downtown.



A good wayfinding system will include informational and directional signage that guides people from parking facilities to Downtown destinations.



New technology such as real-time displays of parking availability will enhance usability of Downtown parking.



## B5. Grand Boulevards



Strategy Diagram: Grand Boulevards



This boulevard in Paris, France allows through-traffic to travel down the center while local traffic travels down slower side access lanes.



Cherry Creek and Speer Boulevard should relate to each other and contribute to a complementary design, such as this green street in Dusseldorf, Germany.

### GOAL

Transform Speer Boulevard, Colfax Avenue, Broadway, Park Avenue and Auraria Parkway into celebrated, multimodal boulevards to overcome the physical and perceptual barriers of these major thoroughfares.

### WHY IT'S IMPORTANT

The Grand Boulevards provide an opportunity to expand the 1907 parkway system - one of Denver's most cherished and defining features - into Downtown. Like the historic parkways 7th, 17th and 6th avenues, the Grand Boulevards can help define the community and facilitate personal interactions. These major streets should provide a memorable experience that is comfortable, safe and attractive for all users.

### POLICIES, PROJECTS AND PROGRAMS

- B5a. Apply urban design concepts to distinguish the grand boulevards: align building facades with the street; scale buildings to the width of the street; orient active uses to the boulevard; consider unique features such as the green triangles created by the intersecting Downtown and City street grids; and improve the access to and visibility of Cherry Creek from Speer
- B5b. Provide safe and attractive pedestrian crossings of Speer; give first priority to the Speer and Larimer intersection
- B5c. Complete a plan for Speer Boulevard that enhances it as an historic parkway, location for quality development, and a truly great street
- B5d. Design and construct Broadway north of 20th as a green boulevard as recommended in the Downtown Multimodal Access Plan
- B5e. Enhance pedestrian crossings of East and West Colfax to provide good connections within the Cultural Core district
- B5f. Design each Grand Boulevard with specific plans that respond to the unique context and environment of each street



Grand boulevards are streets that are designed to help foster a sense of community and strong personal interactions; are physically comfortable and safe for pedestrians; and are places that are interesting and memorable. The world-famous Champs-Élysées in Paris, France, has multiple lanes for auto traffic but maintains a pedestrian-friendly atmosphere through elegant landscaping, wide sidewalks, cafes and retail shops, and mid-rise buildings that are in scale with the street.

## c. a diverse city

### BEING A SOCIALLY AND ECONOMICALLY INCLUSIVE PLACE

Downtowns thrive on diversity of people and opportunity. Attracting more jobs, residents, amenities and visitors is key to the future of Downtown Denver. Housing affordable to families and Downtown workers, jobs of all types, educational opportunities, and global connections are all part of this equation.

Strategies and projects for making Downtown Denver a **diverse** city are listed below and described in more detail on the following pages:



#### C1. Downtown Living

#### C2. A Family-Friendly Place

#### C3. Embracing Adjacent Neighborhoods

#### C4. An International Downtown



## C1. Downtown Living



LoDo is one of many districts experiencing a boom in housing.



To compete with the experience offered by other cities, such as Vancouver, B.C., Downtown must provide environments for a range of people, including families, seniors, those with disabilities, and people with a range of income levels.

### GOAL

Expand housing options to broaden the array of household types and income levels in Downtown, and provide amenities for a range of people. Add 18,000 new housing units to Downtown by 2027.

### WHY IT'S IMPORTANT

Affordable housing is important to provide options to the Downtown workforce. Family housing can help provide a continuum for young couples to stay downtown as they have children. Eventually, a significant Downtown population will help increase the demand for retail services.

### POLICIES, PROJECTS AND PROGRAMS

- C1a. Continue to attract more people to live Downtown with expanded housing opportunities in different types and prices, including:
- Housing suitable for families
  - Housing for seniors
  - Housing for students, faculty and retired faculty
  - Affordable housing options, including units below 50 percent or 30 percent of adjusted median income (AMI)
  - Housing for Downtown employees
- C1b. Create regulatory incentives that encourage a more diverse array of housing options
- C1c. Take advantage of the diversity of available housing opportunities as center city transportation options expand
- Leverage close-in transit stations as an opportunity for a broader range of housing
  - Use enhanced connections to adjacent neighborhoods to expand housing choices including family housing, retail market and cultural diversity
- C1d. Inventory existing affordable housing units in Downtown, identify when affordability expires and work to preserve existing units



Mixed-use housing with active ground floor frontages will increase the attraction of living in Downtown.



## C2. A Family-Friendly Place

### GOAL

Attract children and their parents to visit, go to school, recreate, explore and live Downtown.

### WHY IT'S IMPORTANT

Children bring liveliness and a sense of comfort and safety to any neighborhood. Downtown Denver has yet to tap into the economic benefits of family markets. Increased family patronage will help boost retail, entertainment and special events. Family-oriented businesses, housing and amenities offer a variety of development opportunities to stimulate future investment in Downtown.

### POLICIES, PROJECTS AND PROGRAMS

C2a. Create quality education options for Downtown residents and workers and their families

- Establish a magnet K-8 school in the core
- Provide early childhood education options in Downtown

C2b. Launch a series of events aimed at attracting children and youth to Downtown

C2c. Integrate fun features, such as fountains and play environments, into the 16th Street Mall, streetscapes, and open spaces

C2d. Create and distribute a marketing piece aimed at families living, visiting and shopping Downtown

C2e. Provide transit, bike and pedestrian connections to family attractions



Family-oriented retail options will help keep families with small children Downtown.



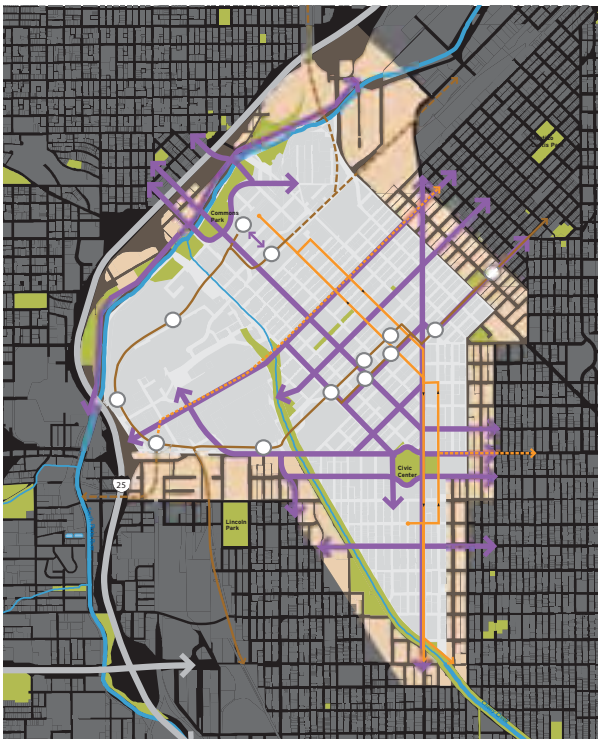
Fun events and activities, such as ice skating at Rockefeller Plaza in New York, NY, are vital to attracting families to explore and live in Downtown.



Family-oriented open spaces and pathways weave through Downtown Vancouver, BC.



## C3. Embracing Adjacent Neighborhoods



Strategy Diagram: Embracing Adjacent Neighborhoods



The surrounding neighborhoods add vitality to the urban core of Downtown.

### GOAL

Link Denver's neighborhoods more closely with its Downtown.

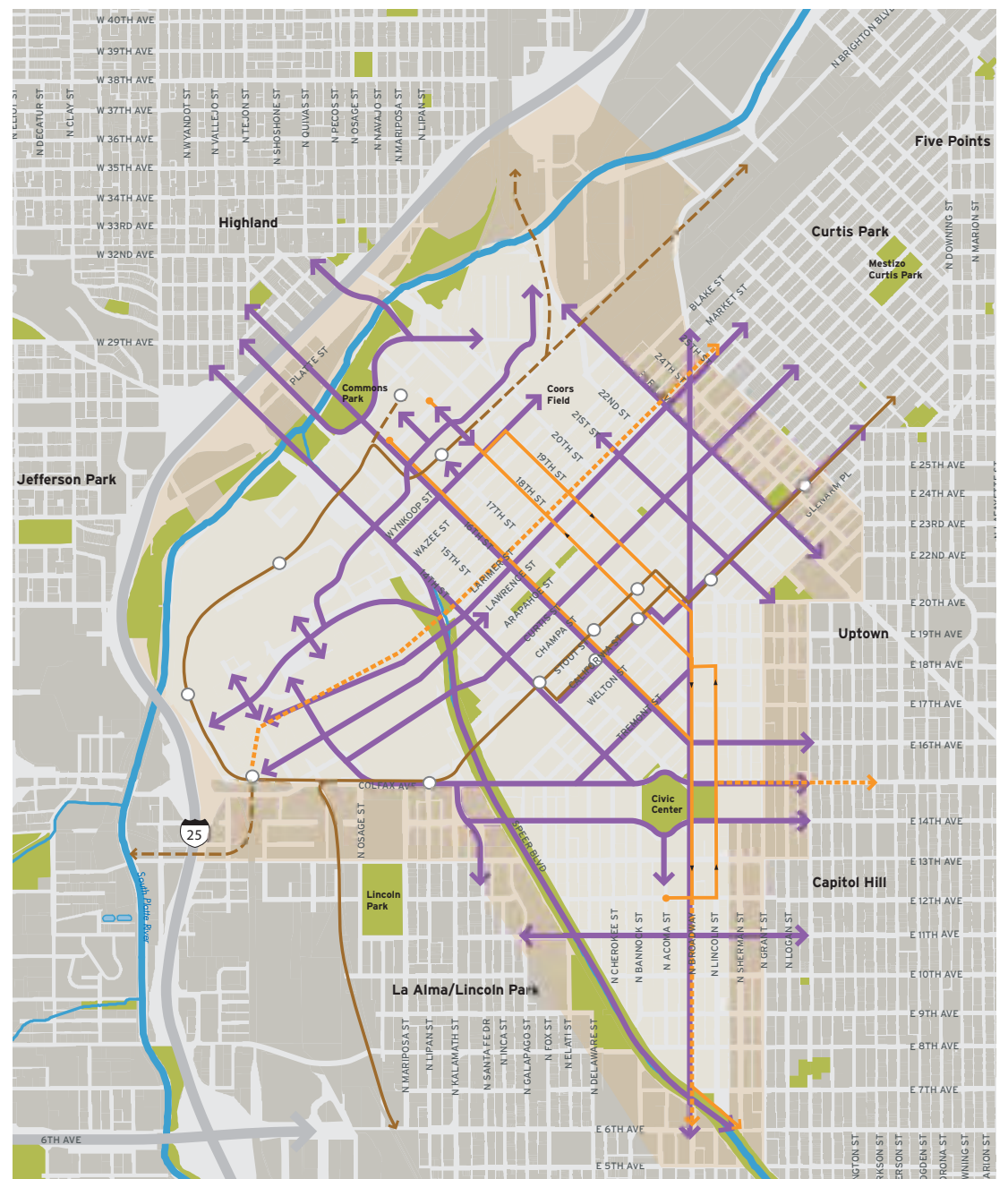
### WHY IT'S IMPORTANT

Downtown Denver has emerged as a residential neighborhood over the past 20 years with nearly 10,000 new units of housing in the core. It is important to recognize that a number of vital neighborhoods surround Downtown as well, and strong connections between these areas will benefit the City as a whole.

### POLICIES, PROJECTS AND PROGRAMS

- C3a. Connect the Downtown pedestrian and bicycle network to the surrounding neighborhoods
- C3b. Create new RTD routes or rebrand existing routes to be special circulators to and from adjacent neighborhoods
- C3c. Ensure that zoning and design guidelines direct a "stepping down" in density outward to nearby neighborhoods
- C3d. Provide enhanced pedestrian crossings at key locations along the Grand Boulevards (beginning with Speer, Colfax and Broadway/Lincoln) to connect Downtown with established and emerging neighborhoods and districts such as Denargo Market, River North, Uptown Health Care District, Santa Fe Drive and Five Points
- C3e. Strengthen neighborhood schools in addition to creating schools within the Downtown core
- C3f. Link visitors to the core to surrounding neighborhoods, particularly Santa Fe Drive and Welton Street, to support local arts and culture

### Major Neighborhood Connection Points





## C4. An International Downtown

### GOAL

Recognize and celebrate the diverse backgrounds of Downtown residents, employees and visitors while making Denver a more inviting worldwide destination.

### WHY IT'S IMPORTANT

As the local population becomes more diverse, featuring a wider range of business and amenities will create a competitive advantage for Downtown. Offering events that appeal to world travelers will also enhance the city center as a tourist destination.

### POLICIES, PROJECTS AND PROGRAMS

- C4a. Create a wayfinding system that welcomes international visitors as part of the comprehensive wayfinding system
- C4b. Encourage businesses that reflect ownership of and cater to culturally diverse markets; Sakura Square is an example
- C4c. Create and advocate for event-friendly policies to attract and retain events appealing to a variety of cultures



Oktoberfest in Larimer Square draws thousands of people to eat, drink and relax with friends and experience German culture.



Cinco de Mayo parades and other events celebrate Latin American culture and should be a part of an increasingly diverse Downtown Denver.



Downtown is a place that embraces its ethnic diversity, providing activities and experiences for all.



African-American culture is featured during Denver's Juneteenth event.



Greater social and economic connections to Asian cultures will enhance Downtown's competitiveness and enrich its residents.



## d. a distinctive city



### CULTIVATING A MOSAIC OF URBAN DISTRICTS

Downtown Denver has often been overshadowed by its dramatic sense of place at the foot of the Rocky Mountains. In recent years, Lower Downtown and the 16th Street Mall have emerged as nationally recognized destinations within the city center, creating a definable civic identity. Downtown can build upon these notable features and encourage the creation of a mosaic of distinct districts that each build on their own unique features, and collectively create a city known for its diverse, well-designed and vital urban environment. In turn, the image of Downtown Denver will become as well known as its setting.

Strategies and projects for making Downtown Denver a **distinctive** city are listed below and described in detail on the following pages:

#### D1. District Evolution

#### D2. Connecting Auraria

#### D3. Downtown's New Neighborhood: Arapahoe Square

## D1. District Evolution

### GOAL

Restore and activate the iconic features, such as mountain views, major public buildings, cherished historic buildings and parks and parkways, that provide distinctive identity to Downtown and the Denver region, and foster a collection of identifiable districts throughout Downtown.

### WHY IT'S IMPORTANT

Great cities have tangible and memorable features, including distinct districts and architectural elements that have an authentic basis in the city's history, climate and geography. Denver can build upon its existing environmental strengths - its sunny and temperate climate, mountain and urban views, 21st century innovation, cultural diversity and architectural richness to cultivate truly memorable districts.

### POLICIES, PROJECTS AND PROGRAMS

D1a. Use features such as transit stations, changes in the grid, terminating vistas, grand boulevards, character of existing buildings, and relationships to adjacent districts and neighborhoods to influence district form including the intensity of development, height of buildings, ground floor activity, and mix of uses. Enact zoning and design guidelines to realize desired district character

- Modify the B-5 Zone District and Design Guidelines to incorporate desired building attributes including views, solar access, energy efficiency, ground floor activity, open space, parking location and appearance, and other factors
- Identify mid- and high-rise building forms that promote intense use while maintaining a pleasant street environment with light, views, and visual interest

D1b. Use distinctive ground floor retail, other active uses, and the street environment to reinforce district identity

D1c. Retain and reuse historic buildings to fortify the distinct identity of districts

D1d. Coordinate master planning efforts with owners of underutilized districts such as the Central Platte Valley-Auraria District; incorporate recommendations of the Downtown Area Plan and Auraria Master Plan

D1e. Prepare and update adopted plans for district areas (e.g. Golden Triangle Neighborhood Plan, Central Platte Valley Plan and Northeast Downtown Plan) to reflect changing character and other planning issues



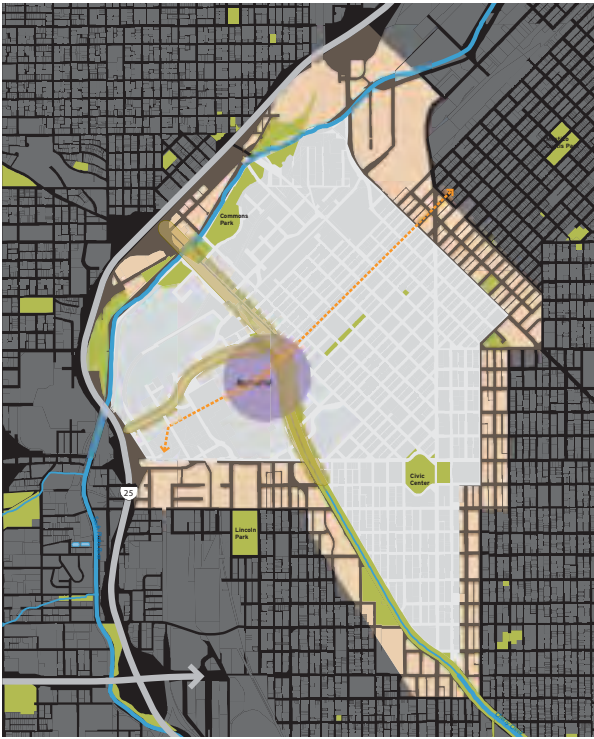
New development around the Denver Art Museum and Civic Center is poised to change the area.



Robust neighborhoods, like Little Italy in New York, NY, evolve and grow while deepening their district identities.



## D2. Connecting Auraria



Strategy Diagram: Connecting Auraria



Portland State University in Portland, OR, seamlessly connects with the downtown along a green street.



The physical and perceptual gap between Downtown and Auraria must be closed (above). The Larimer Street connection, among others, should be improved with wider sidewalks, distinctive paving and crosswalks, and development that comes to the edge of Speer Boulevard (as depicted in the simulation at right).

### GOAL

Fully integrate the Auraria Campus and the Downtown core through strong physical, social, economic and programmatic connections.

### WHY IT'S IMPORTANT

With three college campuses, Auraria is a critical educational amenity that can fortify Downtown's economy by providing educational, employment, and knowledge transfer opportunities for students, workers and businesses. Coordinate closely with the Auraria Campus Master Plan (2007) to accomplish the goals of both plans.

### POLICIES, PROJECTS AND PROGRAMS

- D2a. Enhance Speer Boulevard between Arapahoe and Wewatta as an urban gateway to better connect Auraria to the adjacent districts and by bringing buildings closer to the street, expanding sidewalk areas, augmenting landscaping and improving access to Cherry Creek
- D2b. Promote a public-private development project on campus that connects to the Commercial Core and LoDo to boost Downtown vitality
- D2c. Establish programmatic, economic and cultural links between Downtown and Auraria
- Market Downtown retail to students, faculty and staff
  - Develop employee training and student internship programs
  - Market continuing education programs to the Downtown community
  - Develop a knowledge and technology transfer program
  - Market campus cultural, sports and recreational events and facilities to the Downtown community
- D2d. Connect Auraria and Auraria West Station and Downtown with the Larimer/Lawrence transit line





## D3. Downtown's New Neighborhood: Arapahoe Square

### GOAL

Redevelop Arapahoe Square as a cutting edge, densely populated, mixed-use area that provides a range of housing types and a center for innovative businesses.

### WHY IT'S IMPORTANT

Arapahoe Square affords great opportunity for another distinct district to develop in Downtown. The relatively large amount of underutilized land presents an opportunity to intensify that is unique within the core.

### POLICIES, PROJECTS AND PROGRAMS

- D3a. Reinforce neighborhood character by restoring the landscaped tree lawns (the area between the sidewalk and curb) and converting selected one-way streets to two-way
- D3b. Improve Broadway and Park Avenue streetscapes
- D3c. Revise land use regulations to implement the Plan
- D3d. Provide building space and amenities to attract innovative businesses
- D3e. Complete a small area plan for Ballpark and Arapahoe Square as a cutting edge, mixed-use district that has an exciting intensity of residential development and innovative businesses
  - Issues for Arapahoe Square include zoning and design guidelines, protection of historic buildings, retail needs, local transit connections, and street design for the Grand Boulevards – Park Avenue and Broadway
  - Examine zoning and create and adopt design guidelines for the Ballpark District to reinforce historic character through compatible infill development



Strategy Diagram: Downtown's New Neighborhood - Arapahoe Square



Vibrant urban districts like Yaletown in Vancouver, BC are models for future redevelopment of Arapahoe Square.



The simulation at left illustrates some of the building types that will someday replace the area's existing surface parking lots and underutilized properties (above). Proposed concepts include slender residential towers, cutting-edge space for innovative businesses, mid-rise mixed-use buildings, ground floor active uses, and new open spaces.



## e. a green city



### **BUILDING A GREENER DENVER**

Downtown Denver enjoys a variety of local and regional-serving outdoor amenities, from plazas, pocket parks and civic landmarks to natural river corridors.

It also has a sunny and dry climate that fosters extensive use of these spaces.

Enhancing existing amenities, creating outdoor places, and extending the well landscaped public realm of Denver's residential areas - thereby connecting individual green spaces as part of a larger network - will make Downtown Denver a more livable and inviting destination.

Building on Greenprint Denver, Downtown Denver has a unique opportunity to be a leader in "green" practices as well. The Rocky Mountain Region has many natural resources that can be harnessed to provide sustainable energy options such as abundant sunshine and reliable winds. Through providing a dense mix of appropriate land uses, enhancement of the the multimodal transportation system, implementation of energy efficient building standards, promotion of progressive energy preservation techniques, and the utilization of natural resources, Downtown Denver is positioned to be a model city for environmentally friendly, sustainable living.

Strategies and projects for making Downtown Denver a **green** city are listed below and described in detail on the following pages:

#### **E1. An Outdoor Downtown**

#### **E2. A Rejuvenated Civic Center**

#### **E3. Sustainable Use of Resources**

## E1. An Outdoor Downtown

### GOAL

Strengthen connections between existing parks, plazas and recreation areas, and enhance the public realm to provide venues for outdoor activity throughout Downtown.

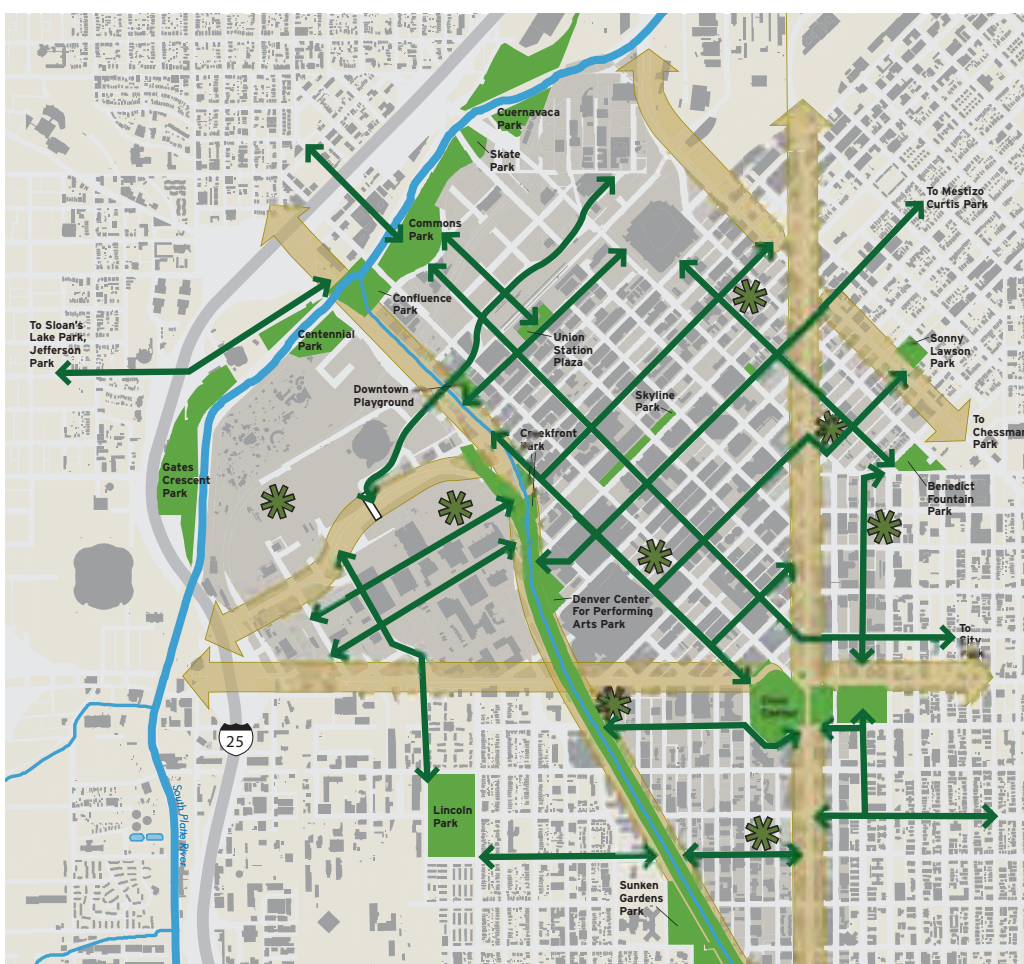
### WHY IT'S IMPORTANT

Providing venues for residents, workers and visitors to gather, relax and play in public is a key component of fostering a balance between urban life and the outdoors.

### POLICIES, PROJECTS AND PROGRAMS

- E1a. Create a green public realm in Downtown by adding street trees and landscaping in the public right-of-way, in private open spaces and on rooftops
- E1b. Host events that promote biking and walking in Downtown and develop educational and interactive programs such as walking and bicycle tours
- E1c. Create and implement a Downtown parks and open space master plan incorporating existing parks, open space and connecting routes in and around Downtown. Include the South Platte River, Cherry Creek and other parks near Downtown
- Promote healthy living with more active outdoor spaces
  - Improve bike and pedestrian connections to the Cherry Creek and South Platte River greenways
  - Provide new pocket parks or other publicly accessible open spaces in underserved areas
- E1d. Activate Skyline Park as a central gathering place for the Downtown community
- Complete the 2004 Skyline Park design, including reactivation of the fountains, enhanced park lighting, signage and paving of selected gravel areas
  - Activate the park through programming that appeals to a diverse audience
  - Create a family-friendly environment through amenities and activities with particular emphasis on children and youth
- E1e. Continue to cluster world-class sports facilities in Downtown

### Downtown Denver Open Space Strategy



Commons Park plays host to both formal and informal recreational activities.



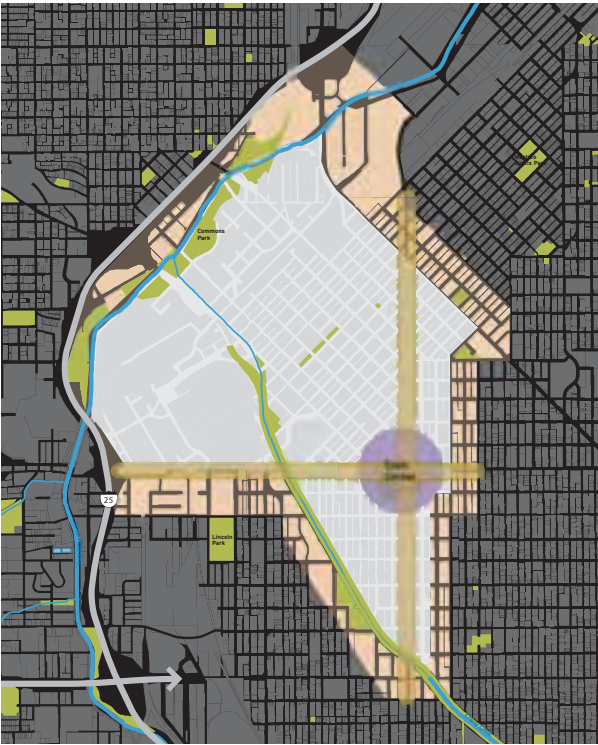
Skyline Park plays host to a range of activities in the center of Downtown.



Paley Park in New York, NY is a small, intimate urban plaza that brings life to the surrounding area.



## E2. A Rejuvenated Civic Center



Strategy Diagram: A Rejuvenated Civic Center



Civic Center's Carnegie Library does not currently activate the park (above). Proposals for revitalizing the space (below) include opening up the space with outdoor dining, walkways and other pedestrian-oriented enhancements to enliven the area.



### GOAL

Strengthen Civic Center as an outdoor amenity to attract visitors, residents, workers and students to the park.

### WHY IT'S IMPORTANT

As one of the most iconic elements of Downtown Denver, Civic Center Park must be restored and reactivated to support the vision elements of green and distinctive.

### POLICIES, PROJECTS AND PROGRAMS

- E2a. Restore and reactivate the Civic Center
- E2b. Restore the Carnegie Library to accommodate new uses that help activate the park based on the recommendations of the Civic Center District Plan and Civic Center Park Master Plan
- E2c. Create clear street-level pedestrian connections to link 14th Street and Colfax; 15th Street and Colfax to the Acoma Plaza; and Civic Center Station to the Art Museum
- E2d. Provide enhanced safety and maintenance services to the park
- E2e. Enhance the park's function as the central downtown location for community celebrations and festivals
- E2f. Invest in the Civic Center area, including the station, park and cultural facilities
- E2g. Implement street enhancements identified in the Civic Center District Plan for West Colfax Avenue and West 14th Avenue between Speer Boulevard and Bannock Street
- E2h. Encourage a mix of activities and vibrant, transparent ground-floor uses in buildings facing the park



## E3. Sustainable Use of Resources

### GOAL

Incorporate sustainability as a core value for Downtown and integrate its concepts into all future projects, programs and policies.

### WHY IT'S IMPORTANT

Global trends find that sustainable building, water conservation, and energy utilization practices will be increasingly important to propel economic growth as articulated in Greenprint Denver. With a region rich with research and development facilities for renewable resources, Downtown Denver can emerge as a national leader in reduced energy use and sustainable energy production.

### POLICIES, PROJECTS AND PROGRAMS

E3a. Develop a Downtown-wide strategy to reduce resource consumption, especially energy, water and materials, and to reduce greenhouse gas emissions

- Install energy efficient street lighting that meets “Dark Skies” standards
- Retrofit existing buildings and encourage new buildings to be more energy efficient
- Encourage reuse of existing buildings to retain embedded energy
- Establish sustainable street design practices beginning with 14th Street

E3b. Build a high-profile renewable energy project, such as the Colorado Convention Center roof solar panels

- Aggressively recruit companies involved in developing alternative energy and sustainable building technologies

E3c. Expand existing transportation demand management programs for employees, businesses and residents to decrease use of single occupant vehicles

E3d. Develop a sustainable storm water management system for Downtown

- Integrate green street elements, such as bioswales, along streets and in parking lots to attenuate surface runoff and minimize impervious surfaces

E3e. Establish parking lot landscaping requirements that reduce heat island and storm water impacts

E3f. Expand and enhance public sector, residential and business waste reduction programs



Water is perhaps the most precious resource in Denver’s semi-arid climate.



Portland, Oregon has made great strides in incorporating green street elements that naturally channel and filter stormwater into its streetscape designs.





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## iv. district strategies

**G**reat city centers are not simply centers of commerce. Instead, they are distinguished by a collection of distinct districts that work together. New York, Chicago, Paris, London and Tokyo are good examples of vibrant central cities composed of multiple, interconnected districts, each with their own urban form, character and individual identities.

Strong districts possess key anchors and points of identity - such as an historic monument, specific economic activity or land use, or a special street environment - that contribute to their character and vibrancy. They also feature intense activity areas, such as gateway elements, distinct building scale, and physical connections that signal to people that they are within, or entering into, a distinctive place. The amalgamation of several districts in a Downtown environment enables a **richness of commerce, lifestyles and experiences** that no single district could achieve on its own.

Downtown Denver is indeed a **mosaic of districts**. Some are strong, established neighborhoods that are the foundation of Denver's history and success; others are new and evolving, trying to take hold and create their own economic identity and urban character. Together they will make Denver a premier national and international city in the 21st century.

Each district contains a unique combination of features that will influence public and private decisions about future development location and intensity, planning, and public investment. Important considerations are shown on each of the district maps.





## commercial core



**Related overall plan strategies and transformative projects include:**

**A1. The Downtown of the Rocky Mountain Region**

**A3. A Comprehensive Retail Strategy**

**A2. Energizing the Commercial Core**

**B1. An Outstanding Pedestrian Environment**

The Commercial Core is the **heart of Downtown’s bustling commerce and economic activity**. The district is comprised primarily of large office buildings generally housing major employers and small businesses. One unique aspect of the district is the Downtown Historic District, comprised of 43 individual structures such as the Brown Palace Hotel, D&F Tower, and Equitable Building.

The area that is often referred to as “the Wall Street of the West” encompasses the large office buildings along 17th, 18th and 19th streets. This collection of tall buildings defines Denver’s skyline. The east end of the district is most densely developed. Private plazas provide some visual relief to the canyon effect that dominates some blocks, but these plazas also diminish the sense of vibrancy if oversized or inadequately activated. Blocks to the west and north of this office node have a greater mix of tall buildings, historic buildings, parking garages, and surface parking or vacant sites. The Downtown Federal Center is within this area and includes the historic Byron White Courthouse and the Customs House, as well as many contemporary courthouse and office buildings. The security requirements of this federal district have diminished the sense of activity as entrances have been consolidated and parking eliminated.

The 16th Street Mall is the most distinctive contemporary urban design feature of Downtown Denver. The Mall’s length, quality design and materials, heavily used transit and pedestrian accommodations make it the dominant organizing element of the Commercial Core. However, the Mall’s infrastructure is aging and it has struggled in recent years to maintain a healthy and diverse balance of retail and other active uses.

In addition to the Mall, major corridors through the Commercial Core include 15th, 17th, 18th, and 19th streets and Broadway. These streets vary in character and intensity along their lengths but are generally marked by sizable mid- to high-rise buildings, frequent parking structures, some surface parking lots, and a mix of experiences at the street level - from a few attractive, walkable blocks to numerous blank walls and pedestrian-unfriendly spaces. New residential and hotel development is occurring along 14th street.

To remain vital as other districts such as Lower Downtown and the Central Platte Valley develop, the Commercial Core must build on its strengths, including a large office worker population, and enhance its role as Denver’s central business district by incorporating a greater mix of uses and activities. The coming investment in transit connections such as the Downtown

Curtis Street and 16th Street (right, top) is envisioned as the spine of a lively Theatre District straddling the Commercial Core and Cultural Core. Proposed improvements (right, bottom) include enhanced streetscapes and crosswalks, dramatic lighting, use of public art, development or redevelopment of key sites, and highlighting of the Denver Performing Arts Complex as a visual landmark and terminus to the street.





Circulator will create additional development opportunities. As the Mall bus service reaches capacity with continued development in the core area and completion of FasTracks, the Downtown Circulator will provide a vital role as another transit connection.

The expanding residential population in the Commercial Core provides an opportunity to improve urban plazas and integrate them into the open space system. Goods and services oriented to residents, not just visitors, will also need to expand in order

to meet the needs of a growing local population. Both recreational and retail amenities can serve employees and students as well.

It will also be essential to reinvest in the 16th Street Mall infrastructure and adjacent buildings in order to maintain both the Mall's retail viability and its reputation as the region's premier pedestrian environment; it is necessary for the continued efficient operation of the Mall shuttle, which is essential to the regional transit system in Downtown.



This 3-D model highlights existing (dark orange) and potential future development (light orange) in the Commercial Core.

### KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

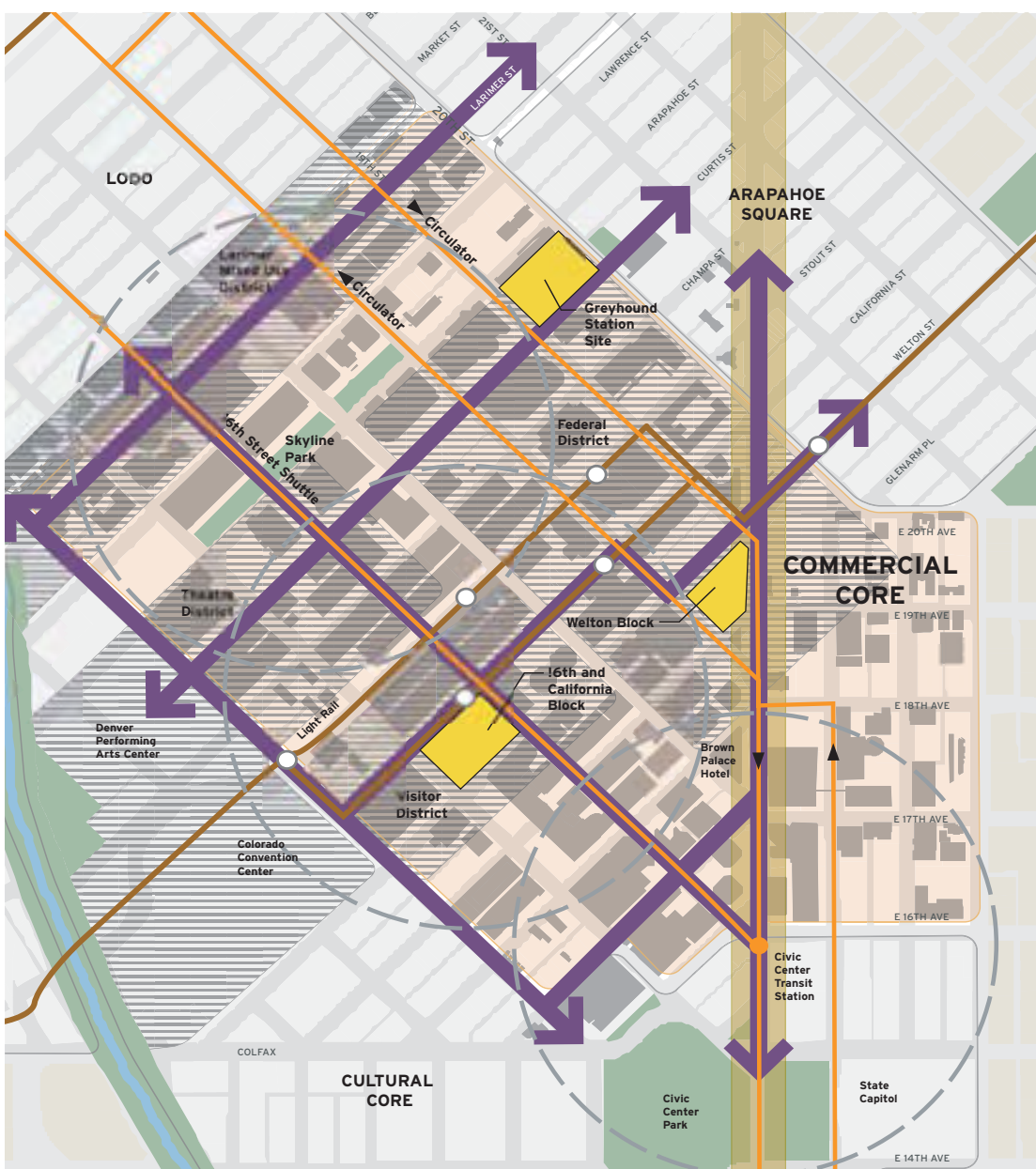
- Embrace a named streets initiative to enhance connections along Larimer, Curtis, California, Welton and Tremont streets.
- Continue development of the 14th Street cultural corridor.
- Develop focus areas, especially the Theatre, Visitor, Larimer Mixed-Use, and Business Opportunity districts.
- Establish the Downtown Circulator.
- Continue development of enhancements to Skyline Park.
- Conduct an urban form study as the basis for modifying B-5 zoning and design guidelines.
- Preserve historic buildings and districts through established design review and demolition protection.

### OPPORTUNITY SITES

Opportunity sites are identified in the strategy diagram on this page and on all of the district diagrams in this chapter.

Two main criteria define the selection of these areas. First, each site is chosen for its strategic location and potential to not only shape new development on the site itself, but also catalyze additional development in the surrounding areas. Second, these sites are usually either vacant or underutilized parcels, or they possess building form that is an obstacle to catalyzing future development (such as a building that has large, blank walls that inhibit pedestrian connectivity).

Development or redevelopment of these key opportunity sites is essential to creating a dynamic, connected and walkable Downtown Denver.



### Commercial Core Strategy

#### Legend

- LRT Stop
- LRT Line
- Proposed FasTracks Rail Line
- Intra-Downtown Transit
- Opportunity Site
- Grand Boulevard
- Special District
- Priority Pedestrian Connection
- 1/4-mile Radius Around Key Node/Transit Hub
- Neighborhood-Serving Retail



## cultural core



**Related overall plan strategies and transformative projects include:**

**B2. Building On Transit**

**B5. Grand Boulevards**

**E2. A Rejuvenated Civic Center**

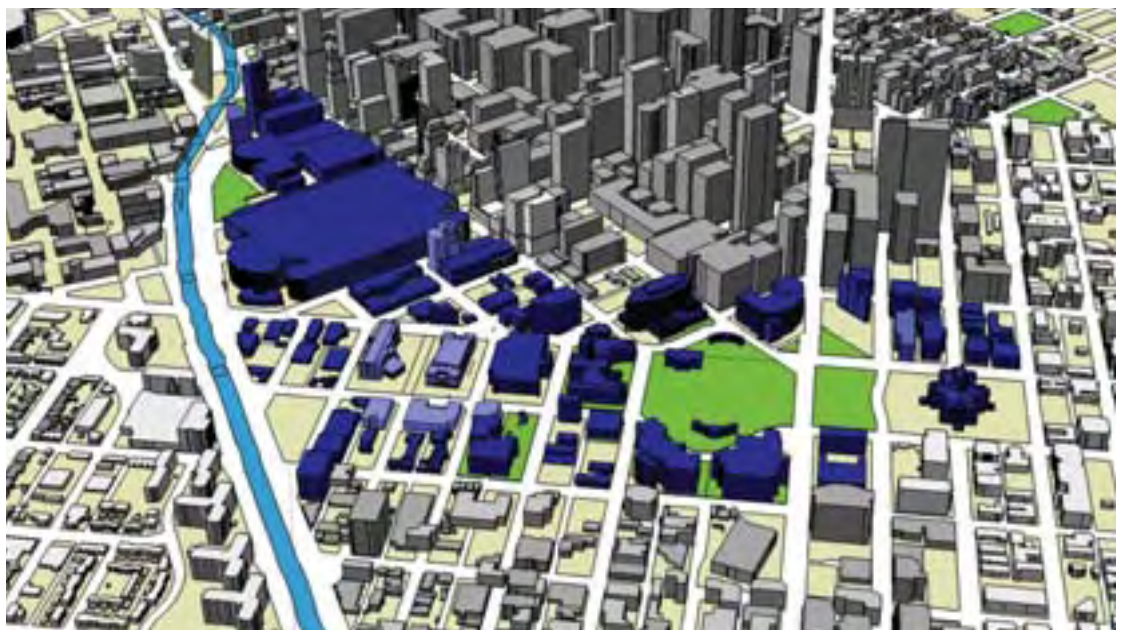
The Cultural Core is the robust civic, government and cultural center of the city and state. At the district's center lies Civic Center Park, a grand, City Beautiful-era green space that anchors the area and is home to many special events and public celebrations. Major local, state and federal buildings - the State Capitol, City and County Building and the Denver Mint - define the central portion of the district.

Government buildings are located on an east-west civic axis that extends from the State Capitol to the City and County Building, and then west to the Justice Center. Cultural facilities are clustered along a cultural axis at Acoma and continues to the north-west along 14th street. The Denver Art Museum, Denver Public Library, and Colorado History Museum are all located south of Civic Center Park, while the Colorado Convention Center Denver Performing Arts Complex and the planned Justice Center are at the northern and western end of the district. These civic and cultural

buildings epitomize the image of the area. However, nascent residential development is adding a new element to the Cultural Core, creating a more round-the-clock district.

The area is at the crossroads of three major auto corridors - Speer Boulevard, Colfax Avenue and Broadway/Lincoln Street - that connect the Cultural Core outward to the city and region. Cherry Creek runs along the western edge of the district.

Homelessness and other social issues plague the public realm. Restoration and activation of Civic Center Park, along with improved access and regular programming, will be vital to creating a safe, clean and thriving place for all Denver residents.



This 3-D model highlights existing and proposed development (dark blue) and potential future development (light blue) in the Cultural Core.

The Grand Boulevards of Speer, Colfax and Broadway/Lincoln provide vehicular connection to the region, but act as severe barriers to pedestrian movement within, into and out of the district. These obstacles must be overcome to effectively connect the Cultural Core to adjacent Downtown districts as well as the nearby neigh-

borhoods of La Alma/Lincoln Park, Curtis Park and Capitol Hill - resulting in better movement and access for residents and tourists alike.

## KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

Restore and reactivate Civic Center Park.

Study multimodal access to Civic Center Station, the local transit hub.

Create a link to the Commercial Core via 14th Street as a cultural connector.

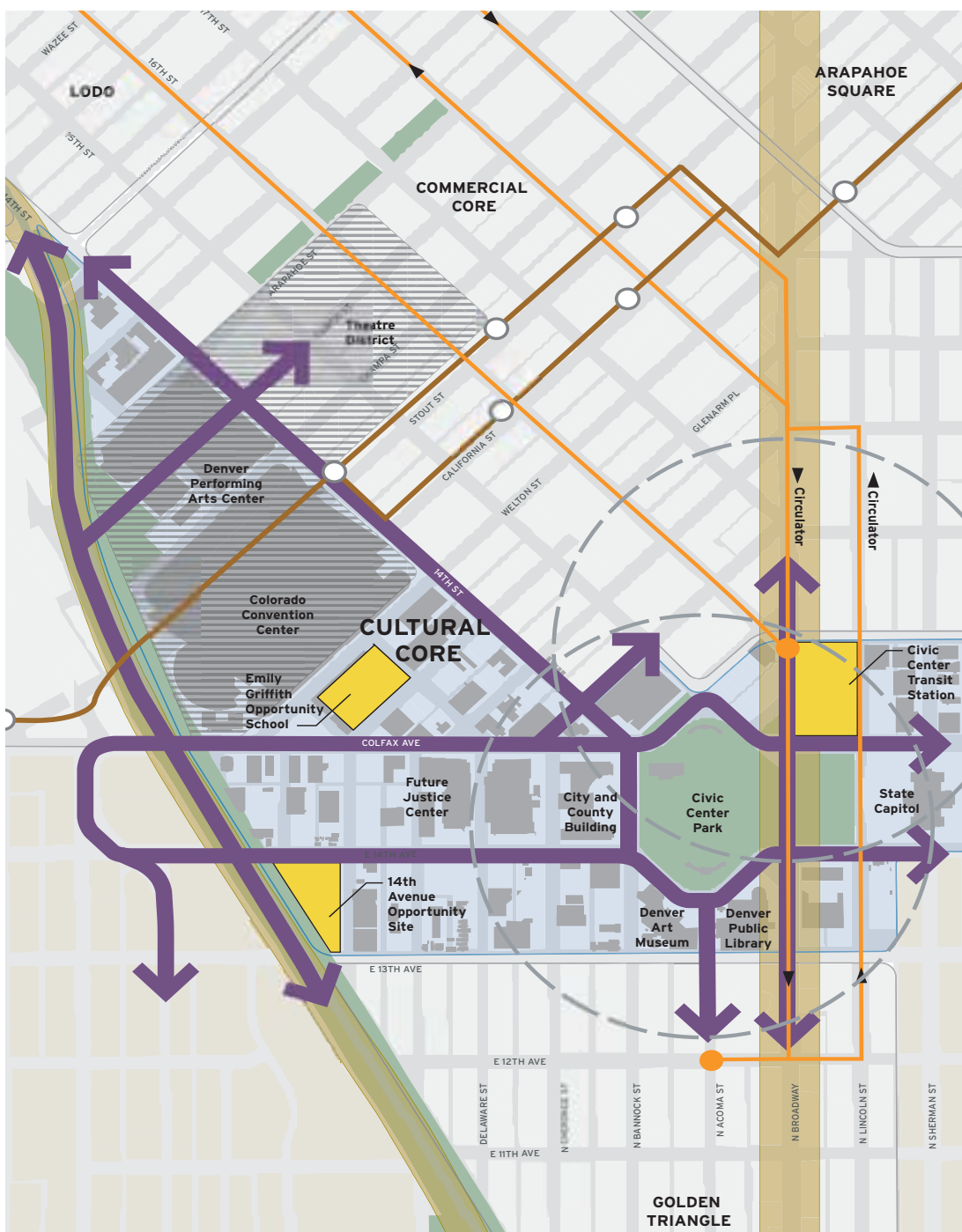
Create a mixed-use, public-private development that includes the Emily Griffith Opportunity School and other complementary uses.

Implement pedestrian improvements on Speer, 14th Street, Colfax, 14th Avenue and Broadway.

Preserve the Civic Center Historic District through established design review and demolition protection.










Similar to Denver's Civic Center, Boston Common in Boston, MA is an active public park with green space, civic uses, and recreation surrounded by a dense built realm.



## Cultural Core Strategy

### Legend

-  LRT Stop
-  LRT Line
-  Proposed FasTracks Rail Line
-  Intra-Downtown Transit
-  Opportunity Site
-  Grand Boulevard
-  Special District
-  Priority Pedestrian Connection
-  1/4-mile Radius Around Key Node/Transit Hub
-  Neighborhood-Serving Retail



## golden triangle



**Related overall plan strategies and transformative projects include:**

**B5. Grand Boulevards**

**C1. Downtown Living**

Located just south of the Cultural Core, Golden Triangle is experiencing significant residential development and emerging as an arts-oriented district. The 1998 Golden Triangle Neighborhood Plan set the stage for the development occurring today.

The northern part of the district is home to the Denver Art Museum (shared with the Cultural Core), Civic Center Cultural Complex Parking Garage and surrounding joint development, and the new Denver Justice Center. The recent museum expansion forms a campus centered on Acoma Street, which will become a pedestrian promenade connecting to Civic Center Park. Many surface parking lots are nearby, especially along blocks between 11th Avenue and 13th Avenue. The museum expansion is fueling new residential development, ranging from low-rise townhouses to 20-story towers, on many of these lots.

Cherokee Street is the primary residential street in the Golden Triangle, with a variety of housing types, but predominately multi-family. Acoma Avenue of the Arts connects the Art Museum and Central Library with Downtown via Civic Center. In addition to civic, cultural and residential uses, the district is home to small professional firms such as architects,

landscape architects, and attorneys. Neighborhood retail - such as art galleries, restaurants, entertainment venues, coffee shops, salons and health clubs - serve the area, especially along Broadway and Lincoln Street on the district's eastern edge.

Opportunity abounds for the Golden Triangle, as public sector improvements - particularly related to arts, civic and cultural resources - will continue to catalyze private sector investment in the area.

The Broadway/Lincoln Street corridor remains a dominant feature that brings tens of thousands of cars through the area, limiting pedestrian mobility and access, particularly between Capitol Hill and parts of the Cultural Core. The same is true for Speer Boulevard and La Alma/Lincoln Park to the west. As discussed in the Grand Boulevards strategy, the transformation of these major streets will add character and definition to the Golden Triangle, as well as embrace pedestrian access to surrounding neighborhoods. Appropriately designed and scaled buildings along Speer Boulevard will urbanize the district's western edge, while Broadway's historic architectural character can be enhanced with compatible infill development.



This 3-D model highlights existing and proposed development (dark pink) and potential future development (light pink) in the Golden Triangle.

The future Downtown Circulator connection, which will terminate in the northern part of the district and connect to Denver Union Station, will be key in connecting to the core of Downtown and, in turn, will foster additional housing in the district. As housing increases, more neighborhood-serving retail will be needed,

as will smaller parks and gathering spaces for residents. The neighborhood feel and pedestrian friendliness of the Golden Triangle would be further enhanced by returning Cherokee and Delaware to two-way traffic.

## KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

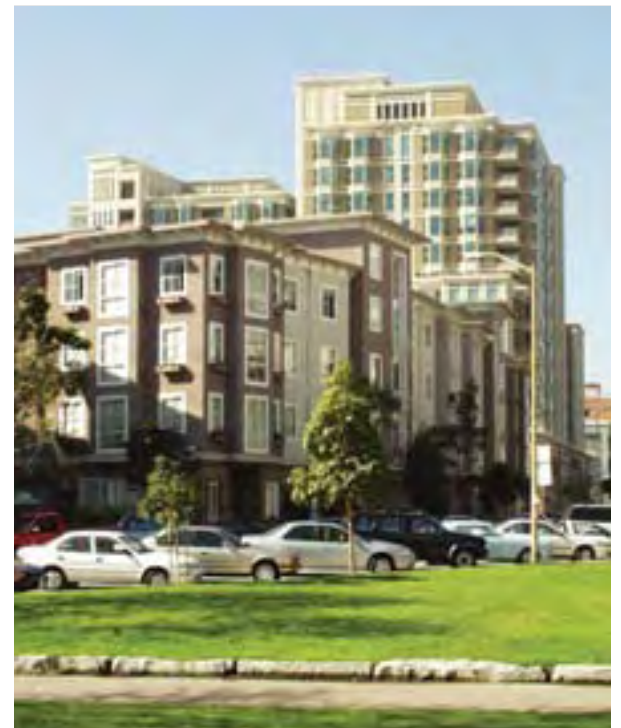
Activate the restored Evans School and develop compatible infill on the remainder of the site to facilitate appropriate development along Acoma Avenue of the Arts.

Enhance the pedestrian and bike environment throughout the district and provide improved pedestrian crossings of the Grand Boulevards where appropriate.

Connect to Civic Center Station via the Downtown Circulator.

Orient development to reinforce the scale, quality and character of Speer and Broadway/Lincoln, the bordering Grand Boulevards.

Encourage growth of existing arts-oriented retail uses.



Urban open spaces, like this park in San Francisco, CA, can provide an outdoor amenity as development in the Golden Triangle intensifies.



## Golden Triangle Strategy

### Legend

- LRT Stop
- LRT Line
- Proposed FasTracks Rail Line
- Intra-Downtown Transit
- Opportunity Site
- Grand Boulevard
- Special District
- Priority Pedestrian Connection
- 1/4-mile Radius Around Key Node/Transit Hub
- Neighborhood-Serving Retail



## auraria



The historic Tivoli Brewery is now the Auraria Student Center. Views of the Tivoli from other parts of the campus and Lower Downtown are important.

### Related overall plan strategies and transformative projects include:

#### B5. Grand Boulevards

#### D2. Connecting Auraria



Speer Boulevard will become a more stately and accessible Grand Boulevard and gateway street to Downtown. Recommended improvements to create a pedestrian-oriented boulevard include enhanced sidewalks and intersections, greening of the landscape, a transit connection up Larimer Street, and buildings that come to the street edge.

Incorporating the campuses of three higher education institutions - the University of Colorado at Denver/Health Sciences Center, the Community College of Denver, and Metro State College - Auraria's **location and features offer great opportunities** for Downtown. The district is currently a mix of low-density brick structures with many surface parking lots. Lawns and pedestrian pathways surround the buildings. The Library stands out as a unique metal-paneled structure among the red brick buildings. The historic Tivoli Brewery now serves as a Student Union and offers retail shops and a movie theater complex.

The campus is part of Downtown but is physically and perceptually isolated from it by difficult crossings at each of its edges. Speer Boulevard separates Auraria from the Cultural Core, Commercial Core and Lower Downtown. Similarly, the campus boundaries to the northwest (Auraria Parkway) and south (Colfax Avenue)

are diminished by fast-moving vehicular traffic. Both of these streets serve as main vehicular routes for traffic accessing I-25 and for cross-city traffic.

Stronger connections will be essential to making Auraria a vital part of Downtown, starting with Speer Boulevard. The heavily trafficked roadway is difficult for pedestrians to cross; buildings are set back and oriented away from the street, and distances are great across the right-of-way. The bike and pedestrian path along Cherry Creek is a green respite along this major corridor, but its below-grade location hinders its attractiveness, visibility, and perception of safety. A comprehensive design study and plan for Speer Boulevard is needed to reassert the historical importance of the street, demonstrate connection, and foster pedestrian safety.

This renewal must occur in conjunction with new development along the



In the future Auraria will seamlessly connect to the Downtown core along Larimer Street at Speer Boulevard via multiples modes, including potential streetcar transit.



corridor and the creation of a more urbanized Auraria Campus, particularly at its northeast corner. Inspiring and attractive higher density mixed-use development, potentially in part through public/private partnerships, will bring the campus physically closer to the edge of Speer Boulevard. This will help reduce the perception of excessive space between the Downtown core and Auraria's edge and make the campus more appealing to Downtown users.

The redevelopment of Speer must also take into account the impact of the Historic Urban Edge District guidelines on the LoDo side of Speer. This will densify Speer Boulevard and help link Downtown and Auraria. These improvements can combine to make Speer Boulevard a true "grand boulevard" and urban gateway for Downtown, as well as a showcase for sustainable design and green building.



This 3-D model highlights existing development (dark green) and potential future development (light green) in Auraria.

## KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

Transform Speer Boulevard into a Grand Boulevard.

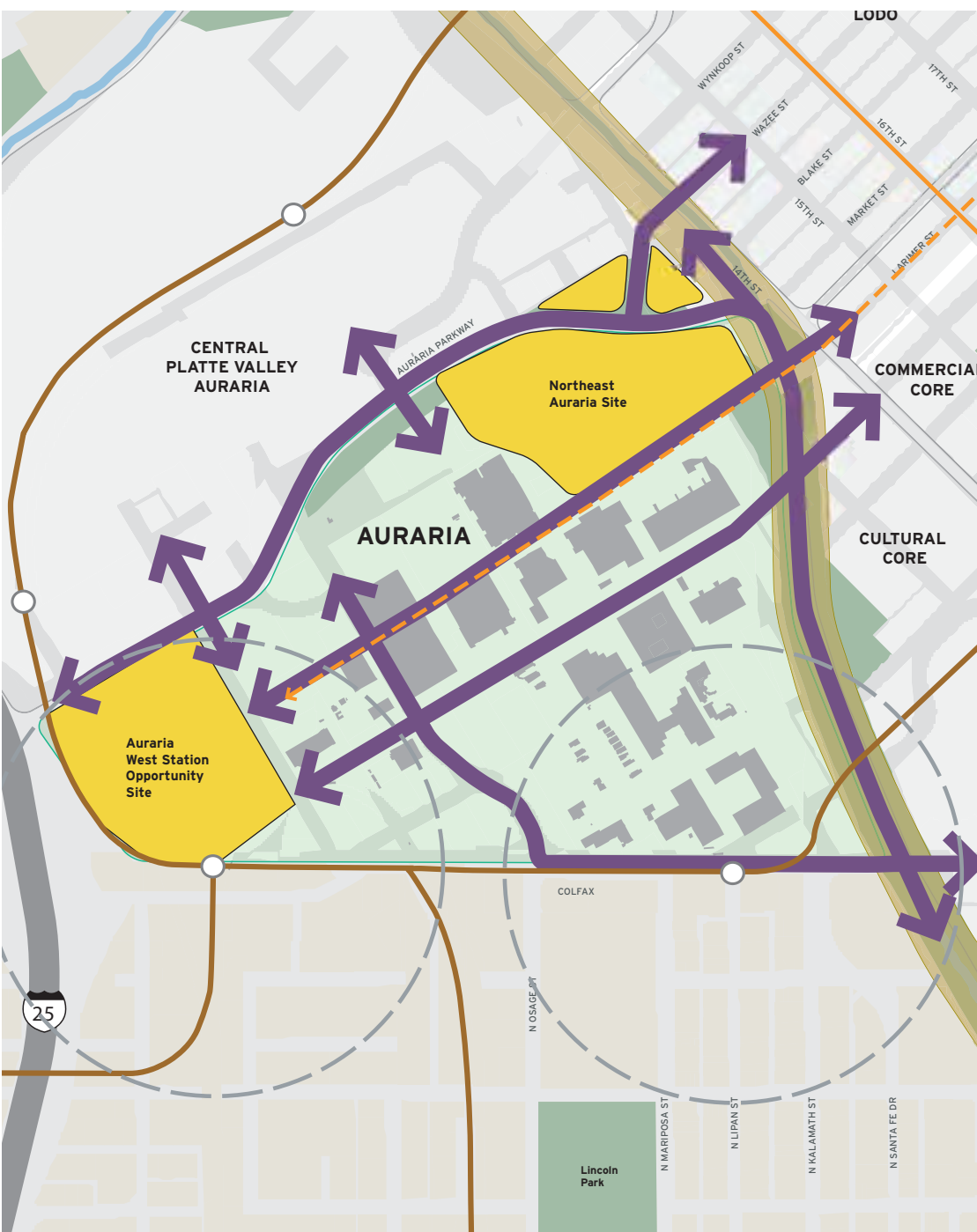
Intensify campus development, particularly at its northeast corner as recommended in the recently completed Auraria Master Plan.

Link Auraria to Downtown via a streetcar-style transit system along Larimer/Lawrence streets.

Implement priority pedestrian improvements along Speer Boulevard and Auraria Parkway; specifically, develop an improved crossing at Speer and Larimer.










The Auraria Master Plan (2007) calls for a more urban campus with strong connections to other Downtown districts.



### Auraria Strategy

#### Legend

-  LRT Stop
-  LRT Line
-  Proposed FasTracks Rail Line
-  Intra-Downtown Transit
-  Opportunity Site
-  Grand Boulevard
-  Special District
-  Priority Pedestrian Connection
-  1/4-mile Radius Around Key Node/Transit Hub
-  Neighborhood-Serving Retail



## lower downtown (lodo)



**Related overall plan strategies and transformative projects include:**

**A1. The Downtown of the Rocky Mountain Region**

**A3. A Comprehensive Retail Strategy**

**B2. Building On Transit**

Lower Downtown is an **urban renaissance success story** that continues to thrive as an **historic mixed-use hub of housing, retail, office and entertainment**. Characterized by its historic buildings and the Historic District enacted to protect them, LoDo's turn of the century architecture consists of two to six story buildings with commercial uses (retail, restaurants, bars) on the first level and office or residential uses above. The district, once filled with industrial and wholesale uses, is now home to hundreds of loft dwellers in converted historic buildings and mid-rise new construction. Surface parking lots periodically interrupt the urban streetscape.

LoDo is completely surrounded by other Downtown districts and for the most part is distinguished by its character rather than its boundaries. Since designation of Lower Downtown as a Denver Landmark District, the area has gained a vital mix of uses including neighborhood-serving and boutique retail and additional office and housing. Many of the once prevalent surface parking lots have been replaced with compatible new construction.

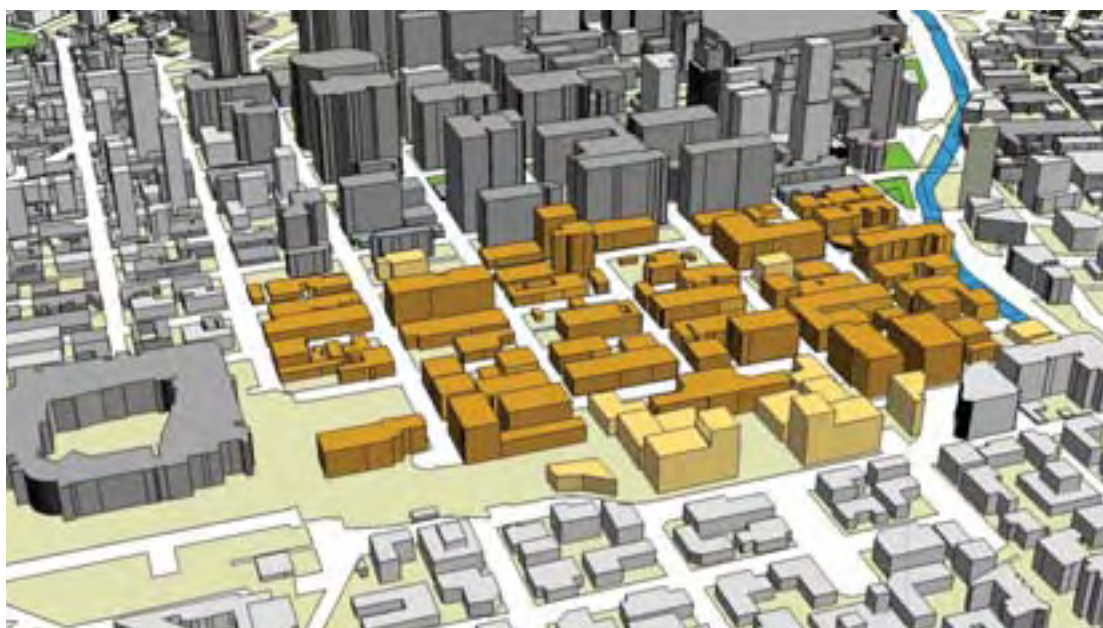
The boundary between LoDo and the Central Platte Valley consists of Denver Union Station, vacant land and rail infrastructure. The two districts will be connected with the Denver

Union Station transportation and development investments.

The district's distinct character is set on its named streets - Market, Blake, Wazee, and Wynkoop. The historic buildings typically face these named streets (the long side of the block), resulting in a more interesting streetscape than provided by the larger buildings facing numbered streets characteristic of other districts. Market and Blake streets funnel traffic into and out of Lower Downtown from I-25 and Auraria Parkway. However, once in the district, it becomes more pedestrian-oriented. Wazee Street offers an eclectic mix of galleries, restaurants, lofts, and offices in renovated brick buildings on Wynkoop. The row of large warehouse buildings opposite Union Station provide a unique urban street experience.

Larimer Street, Denver's first and much beloved historic district, provides a transition between the Commercial Core and Lower Downtown. Larimer Square has attributes much like Lower Downtown.

Denver Union Station, at LoDo's western edge, is poised to once again become the active multi-modal transportation hub of the region and gateway to Downtown. This redevelopment will have profound



This 3-D model highlights existing and proposed development (dark yellow) and potential future development (light yellow) in LoDo.

impacts on development, pedestrian connections to Central Platte Valley on 16th, 17th, and 18th streets, and transportation patterns in the district and throughout Downtown. Wynkoop Plaza on the east side of Denver Union Station will be a new open space for Lower Downtown.

Lower Downtown must continue to evolve and grow as one of the country's best urban historic districts. Maintaining the historic character - the hallmark of LoDo's success - while integrating new mixed-use infill housing development and neighborhood-serving retail will be crucial.

## KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

Assure that restoration of Denver Union Station and development of the site as a transit hub becomes a significant benefit to LoDo with improved pedestrian connections into and through the site on 16th, 17th and 18th streets and the Wynkoop Plaza open space.

Preserve the historic character of the buildings and district through established design review and demolition protection.

Connect Denver Union Station to Downtown via the 18th and 19th Street Circulator.

Redevelopment of Market Street Station and the Office Depot site will together enhance the visual link between Lower Downtown and the Commercial Core on 16th Street.

Continue to implement the street design and circulation recommendations of the Lower Downtown Neighborhood Plan (2000) including converting 18th Street for two-way traffic.

Implement the Historic Urban Edge Design Review District to enhance LoDo's relationship to Cherry Creek and Speer Boulevard.



Restaurants and retailers have signage and space design that respect the historic heritage of LoDo and contribute to its character.







The Denver Union Station Master Plan includes a pedestrian promenade along 17th Street.



## Lower Downtown (LoDo) Strategy

### Legend

-  LRT Stop
-  LRT Line
-  Proposed FasTracks Rail Line
-  Intra-Downtown Transit
-  Opportunity Site
-  Grand Boulevard
-  Special District
-  Priority Pedestrian Connection
-  1/4-mile Radius Around Key Node/Transit Hub
-  Neighborhood-Serving Retail



## central platte valley (cpv)



**Related overall plan strategies and transformative projects include:**

**B2. Building On Transit**

**B3. Bicycle City**

**C2. A Family-Friendly Place**

**E1. An Outdoor Downtown**

Situated at Downtown’s western boundary, the Central Platte Valley is a dynamic, livable **urban neighborhood with connections to open spaces and natural areas**. The Central Platte Valley has undergone massive redevelopment since the late 1980s. The area was once dedicated to rail yards, warehouses and viaducts, and is now comprised of open space, cultural and entertainment facilities, and mixed-use housing and retail.

The Central Platte Valley is divided into three sub-districts: Prospect, Commons and Auraria. The Commons sub-district is bounded by Wewatta, Cherry Creek, the South Platte River, and 20th Street. The Consolidated Main Line (CML) bisects the district. Public land uses in the Commons include the Denver Skate Park, Commons Park, Confluence Park, and bikeways along the South Platte River and Cherry Creek. While considerable land remains to be developed, the Commons now has a mix of low- to high-rise residential development and

some commercial. The Millennium Bridge is a dramatic pedestrian bridge that connects Commons with Lower Downtown; its sophisticated architecture reflects the character of the district. It is one of three bridges that connect Downtown with the Highland neighborhood to the northwest.

To the north, the Prospect sub-district is a compact area bounded by 20th Street, Park Avenue, Coors Field, and the CML. It is a mixed-use area with residential, restaurant, office, industrial and some new retail.

The southern part of the district (Auraria) abuts the Auraria Campus and contains large entertainment uses, including Elitch Gardens and the Pepsi Center; the Downtown Aquarium (formerly Colorado Ocean Journey), Children’s Museum and REI are across the river. Large parking lots serve these facilities and characterize the area. Future opportunities to densify these areas are beginning to emerge as transit use increases and parking demand decreases.



This 3-D model highlights existing development (dark purple) and potential future development (light purple) in the Central Platte Valley.

Speer Boulevard and 20th Street Viaduct are major roads that act as barriers for pedestrians within the district. To the west, Interstate 25 divides the Central Platte Valley from the Highland and Jefferson Park neighborhoods, however new pedestrian bridges extend the 16th Street connection from Civic Center Park to Northwest Denver.

The Central Platte Valley will continue to attract mixed-use development in the coming years. With its open

spaces and park amenities, family-oriented housing could be a major opportunity. Denver Union Station is one of the most significant opportunities for this district. It will connect Lower Downtown and the Central Platte Valley as never before on both 17th and 18th streets. 17th Street will become a promenade that is the central spine of a transit district between 16th and 18th streets. It will be the epitome of integrated land use, urban design and transportation.



Vancouver, BC, is an example of a downtown that incorporates the urban environment with a recreational waterfront.

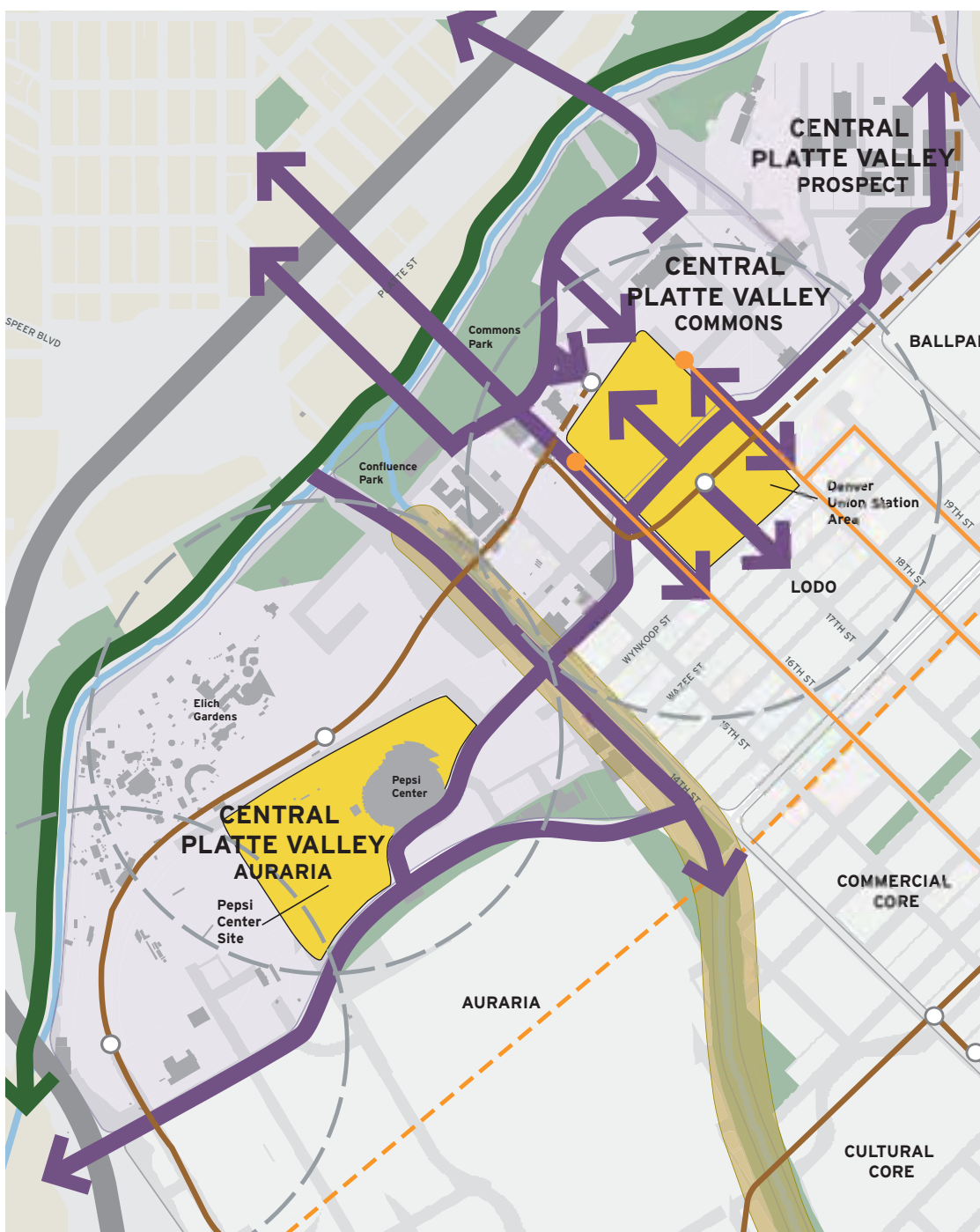
## KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

Attract family-oriented development.

Provide additional amenities such as schools and daycare centers.

Improve pedestrian and bicycle access to open spaces along the South Platte River and Cherry Creek.

Create high quality multimodal connections between the light rail station and Denver Union Station on 16th, 17th, 18th and Wewatta streets. 17th Street Promenade will be the spine of the transit district and provide a high quality connection across the district.



Central Platte Valley (CPV) Strategy

### Legend

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-  Neighborhood-Serving Retail



## ballpark



**Related overall plan strategies and transformative projects include:**

### D1. District Evolution

Ballpark is a lively historic district that is emerging as a fully **mixed-use hub of entertainment and living**. The Ballpark Historic District extends north past Park Avenue. The combination of historic storefront and factory/warehouse buildings has provided a dynamic environment for new residential and business uses.

Coors Field, home of the Colorado Rockies and special events, is the centerpiece of Ballpark. Its construction in 1995 sparked significant reinvestment in the area, much of it in restaurant, bars and other entertainment-related uses, as well as rental and for-sale housing. Since the early 2000s the area has experienced a range of mixed-use development. The area's historic structures have been protected by the Ballpark Historic District status and converted into housing, retail and office space. Blake Street contains many warehouses that are now used as residential lofts. Ballpark's streets also are home to new, infill loft development and some restaurants and bars close to Coors Field.

The portion of Larimer Street in Ballpark is the historic retail district of this old Denver neighborhood, with many buildings dating back to the turn of the 20th century. The street is lined with storefront buildings that contain retail below and residential above. The district's eastern blocks contain a mix of commercial buildings and surface parking lots.

Ballpark has direct pedestrian links to Lower Downtown but is largely cut off from the Central Platte Valley by Coors Field and 20th Street. A lack of strong urban fabric - marked by one-way streets and vacant lots - also creates a disconnect between Ballpark, the Commercial Core and Arapahoe Square. The district transitions well toward the historic structures and renovated warehouses north of Park Avenue.

Ballpark is evolving into a round-the-clock urban district. Lofts and urban style housing animate the area with commerce and activity outside of game days or nightlife hours. New development or redevelopment



Along 21st Street (above) the viewshed, narrow street width, and multiple surface parking lots offer the opportunity to create a bustling urban district. Pedestrian improvements, mid-density development, and a mix of uses (rendered below) can leverage the baseball stadium and transform the district.



should broaden the variety of residential options, densities and amenities, while respecting and maintaining the historic qualities of the area.

Extending east from Coors Field, 21st Street is a slow-traffic roadway with pedestrian-scale width that affords the opportunity to develop a true neighborhood street. Larimer Street, running perpendicular to 21st Street,

contains many commercial spaces that can serve the neighborhood.

Better connections to the Downtown core, as well as a transit link down Larimer Street to the Auraria Campus, are needed to strengthen Ballpark and fully integrate the district with the rest of the city center.

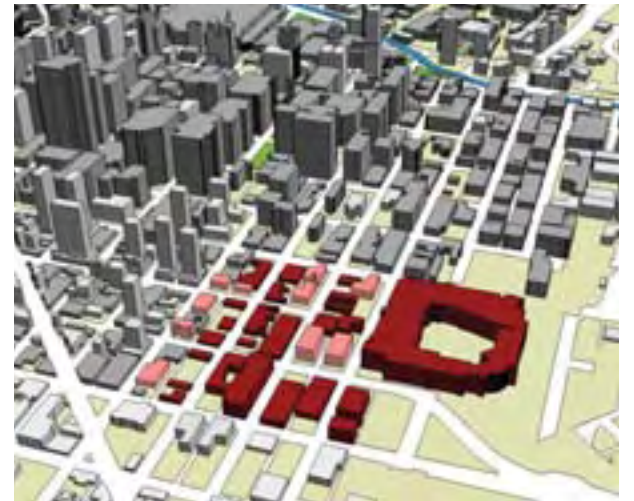
### KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

Update plan and create design guidelines to integrate new residential and mixed use development options.

Preserve the historic character of the buildings and district through established design review and demolition protection.

Connect to Auraria via streetcar-style transit service along Larimer.

Implement pedestrian improvements throughout the district with emphasis on Larimer, 21st Street and Park Avenue.



This 3-D model highlights existing development (dark red) and potential future development (light red) in Ballpark.





The South of Market district around San Francisco, CA's baseball park has transformed into a dense, vibrant, mixed-use district. Denver's Ballpark District has the same potential.



### Ballpark Strategy

#### Legend

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## arapahoe square



**Related overall plan strategies and transformative projects include:**

**A4. Clean and Safe**

**B5. Grand Boulevards**

**D3. Downtown's New Neighborhood: Arapahoe Square**

Located southeast of Ballpark and just north of the Commercial Core, Arapahoe Square is probably the most underutilized area of Downtown. In turn, it perhaps has the **most potential for redevelopment and revitalization in the coming years.**

Arapahoe Square is situated between the high-rise development of the Commercial Core and the lower-density neighborhoods of Curtis Park and Five Points. The southwestern edge of the district is 20th Street, which is heavily traveled by automobiles going towards I-25 and Coors Field. The northern edge of the district is Park Avenue. It transitions to Ballpark to the west and East Village and Uptown to the south. Broadway bisects the district creating the triangular building sites where the two grids intersect.

In the 1970s and 80s, much of Arapahoe Square was cleared to serve as a parking reservoir for the Commercial Core, specifically

between Park Avenue, Welton Street and Broadway. It is still dominated by surface parking lots and some vacant parcels. The remaining buildings are both economically and architecturally diverse, combining urban lofts and low-rise neighborhood commercial with warehouses, transportation facilities and light industry. Many social service providers are located in Arapahoe Square.

The Clements Historic District, Ebert Elementary School, and East Village reconstruction are key features just outside the district. Light rail transit along Welton Street is attracting new residential development and provides connections between the Downtown core as well as Five Points and Curtis Park. FasTracks improvements include extending this line north along Downing and converting it to streetcar. The light rail station at 20th and Welton has begun to attract some higher-end housing than previously existed.



Vancouver, BC offers many models for developing Arapahoe Square. Pedestrian-scale town houses line the street while higher towers are developed in the block interiors (left). Historic buildings are preserved alongside new housing and connected via pedestrian-friendly streets (right).

Arapahoe Square holds vast unrealized potential. Its proximity to other Downtown districts and the historic neighborhoods to the north-east makes it an ideal location for a greater range and greater density of uses. However, challenges persist in

its re-invigoration - particularly on surface parking lots - and the concentration of homeless shelters and other social services. The perceptions and realities regarding social service issues must be addressed.



This 3-D model highlights existing (dark green) and potential future development (light green) in Arapahoe Square.

## KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

Prepare a small area plan.

Implement Denver's Road Home program.

Encourage appropriate redevelopment of surface parking lots and other underutilized properties.

Identify redevelopment opportunities adjacent to the Welton Street Light Rail Transit line.

Implement pedestrian improvements on Broadway, Park Avenue, 21st and Curtis streets.

Restore landscaped tree lawns and consider converting selected streets to two-way.





The Pearl District in Portland, OR, is a former industrial site that is now one of the country's most livable urban neighborhoods. Arapahoe Square shares similar possibilities.



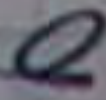
## Arapahoe Square Strategy

### Legend

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## v. moving forward

**The 2007 Denver Downtown Area Plan provides a Vision, Strategy Framework and Action Plan to guide the evolution of Downtown over the next 20 years. Moving forward, a combination of market forces and public policies will shape investment and development patterns in the city center.**

First, **immediate action must be taken toward realizing the seven transformative projects.** Simultaneously, other strategies and actions, large and small, must be undertaken.

The steps outlined in the plan are intended to be carried out by a range of entities, both public and private. Some are relatively easy to undertake, others are more complex and time consuming. But they are all realistic and achievable if the right forces are brought to bear. It will take concerted, sustained partnership among all stakeholders to tackle these initiatives and set the course for success.

Just as the planning process is a joint effort of the City and County of Denver and the Downtown Denver Partnership, these partners must share the responsibility of plan implementation. To facilitate the coordinated effort and sustained commitment, it is critical that the two entities form a standing Downtown Area Plan committee. The committee should have the following attributes:

- Include leaders and key staff from the City, the Partnership and other key downtown organizations;
- Remain a workable size (eight to 10 members);
- Conduct regular meetings;
- Establish measurable goals, priorities and time frames for implementation of plan items;
- Invite public participation and comment;
- Review the Area Plan annually to define success and prepare work programs; and
- Celebrate and publicize accomplishments.

Committee members should be knowledgeable about the plan and its recommendations and be able to steer the implementation actions through the political and technical challenges that will emerge. Members should be drawn from City Council, the DDP Board, managers of key City agencies, the Downtown BID, and City and Partnership staff. Membership can change as needed, and specific people may be added to facilitate certain plan actions.





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