

# 3.7 CONGRESS PARK

## 3.7.1 PLAN ON A PAGE

### KEY OPPORTUNITIES

**National Jewish Health** – Work with the hospital to ensure future growth is compatible with the neighborhood while allowing the hospital to thrive. See Policy COP-E1.

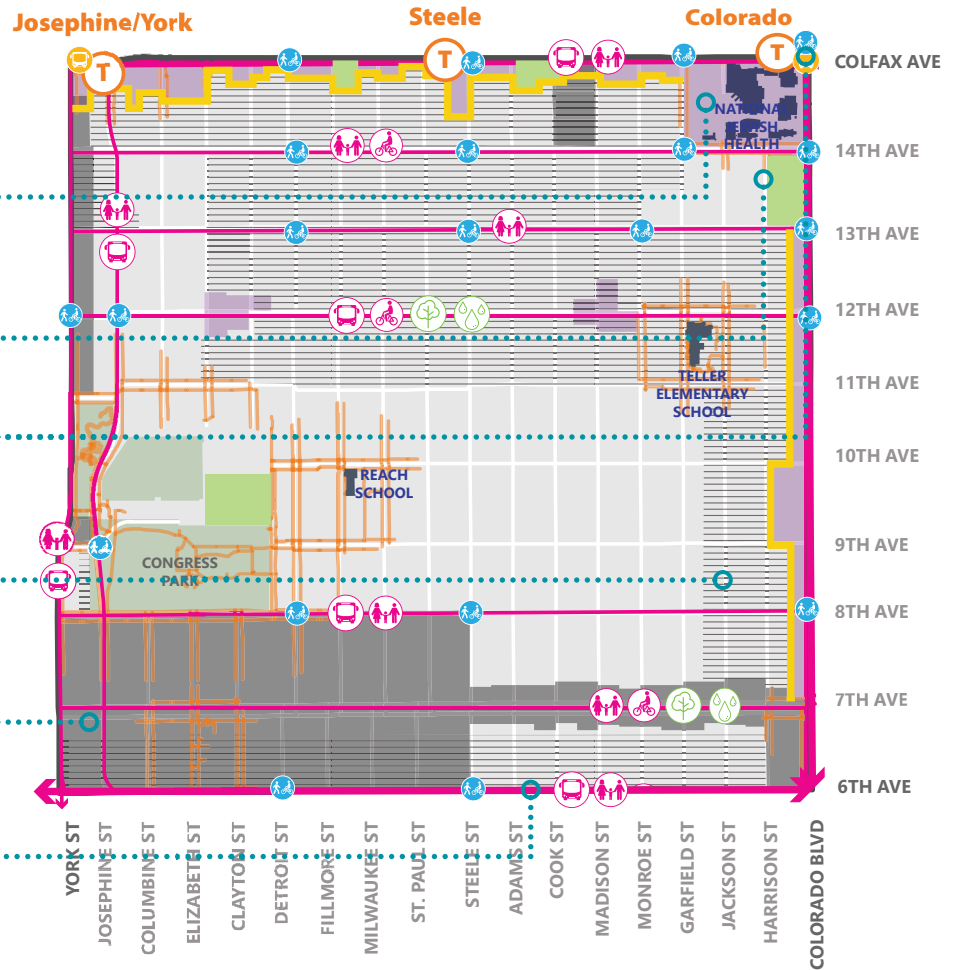
**Neighborhood Park** – Create a new neighborhood park with a community garden to meet park access goals. See Policy COP-Q2.

**Colfax Avenue and Colorado Boulevard** – Provide enhanced transit facilities and improved crossings at the junction of two future transit lines. See Policy COP-M7 and Policy COP-M8.

**Character Preservation** – Incentivize preservation of existing houses while sensitively integrating new units to achieve affordability goals. See Policy COP-L1 and Policy COP-E5.

**Josephine and York Streets** – Transform the streets to provide safer crossings and access to the park and gardens while improving transit. See Policy COP-M1.

**7th Avenue** – Preserve the historic character of the parkway while making walking and biking easier and safer. See Policy COP-M1.



**LEGEND**

- Centers and Corridors Design Overlay Design Standards and Guidelines
- Historic Preservation Incentive Area (see policy L-30)
- Character Home Preservation Area
- Open Space
- Proposed Open Space
- School / Institution
- Intersection Safety Treatment
- Pedestrian Priority
- Transit Priority
- Bicycle Priority
- Green Street
- Water Quality Street
- Mobility Hub
- BRT Transit Station
- Transformative Street
- Neighborhood Transition
- Neighborhood Traffic Calming
- Existing Landmark Structure/District

## 3.7.2 OVERVIEW

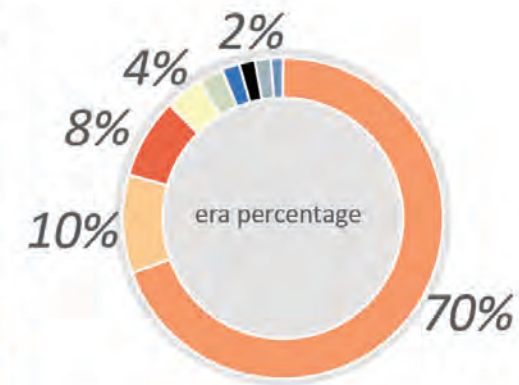
### NEIGHBORHOOD VITALS

**Era of construction** - The most uniform neighborhood in East Central, 88% of all buildings were built before 1945, and 70% were built between 1926 - 1945. Most of the new construction has occurred on the edges of the neighborhood, along Colfax Ave and Colorado Blvd.

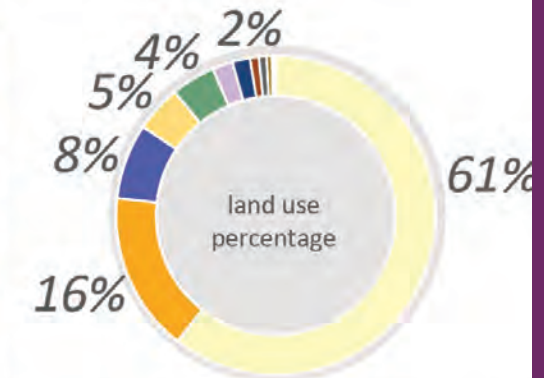
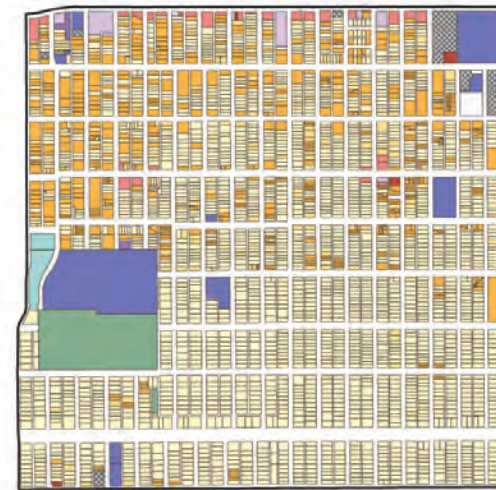
**Land use** - The neighborhood is predominately made up of residential uses, 82% when combined, and 61% is single-unit use exclusively. The remainder of the neighborhood consists of quasi-public uses, institutional, open space, and commercial/retail.

**Zoning** - Most of the neighborhood (84%) is zoned residential (SU at 46%, TU at 15%, or RH at 23%) with only 6% being zoned for Mixed-Use (MX and MS). With the exception of the commercial nodes at 12th & Madison and 12th & Clayton, most of the mixed-use zoning is concentrated along Colfax Ave. and Colorado Blvd.

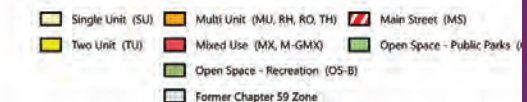
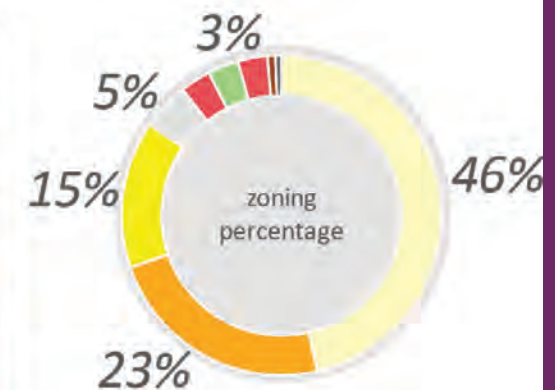
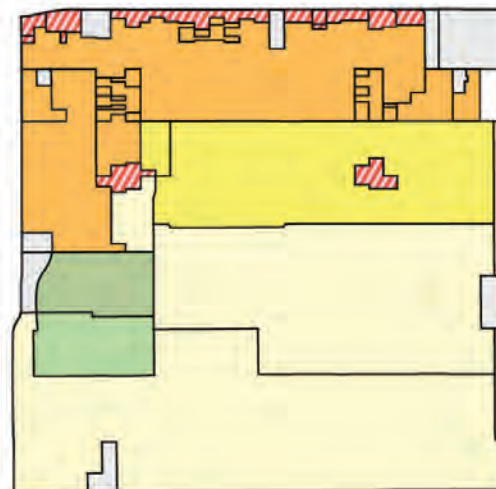
ERA



LAND-USE



ZONING





## 3.7.3 PRESERVING & ENHANCING NEIGHBORHOOD CHARACTER

### STREET PATTERN

Because of Congress Park/Reservoir, Botanic Gardens/Cheesman Park, 7th Ave Parkway medians, and shifts in the street grid, only Colfax, 14th Ave., 13th Ave. 8th Ave., and 6th Ave continue east-west beyond the neighborhood. Similarly, the only north-south streets that continue far beyond the neighborhood are its bounding streets of Colorado Blvd., and Josephine St. This leaves a large number of quiet, generally discontinuous streets.

### PARKS/OPEN SPACE

The neighborhood has one park: Congress Park - a well-proportioned flexible space with a set of distinctive stone steps providing bleacher seating. It is adjoined by the covered reservoir which provides open space to the neighborhood, but dogs are not allowed. Teller Elementary School provides a children's play area.

### OVERLAYS AND SPECIAL DISTRICTS

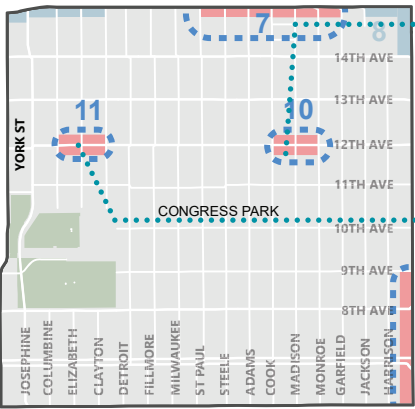
North and west portions of the neighborhood are included in UO-3 (Historic Structure Use Overlay) which allows some commercial uses within landmarked structures. Historic districts include East 7th Avenue and Frank S. Snell Subdivision along Colfax A and B Places. The core of the neighborhood is identified as an "Area of Interest" and should be studied further for historic significance.

### VISUAL LANDMARKS

Congress Park radio tower, National Jewish Health, Lowenstein Theater.



### 3.7.4 COMMUNITY FEEDBACK & URBAN QUALITY TOOL



**12TH & MADISON** - Located at a four-way stop, this neighborhood scale intersection is one of the highest scoring nodes in East Central at 8/10. People enjoy the small-scale corner shops, but the parking lot on the corner could use a facelift of landscaping and screening.

**12TH & ELIZABETH** - Traffic speeding down 12th Ave. is the biggest issue with this node, scoring a less pedestrian friendly range, due to difficult intersection crossings. Overall this node scores well, at 7/10.

#### URBAN QUALITY TOOL RESULTS

The 12th Ave. nodes are well-loved by the neighborhood. Yet, a lack of plaza space, public art, or truly unique urban design elements limit the nodes sense of character and gathering spaces, averaging 5/10 in bustling with activity. The buildings do have distinctive architecture, which should be prioritized, so visitors are more likely to be reminded of their experiences and return to the area. The 12th Ave. nodes average a 7/10 in memorable environments. Traffic speeding and some surface parking between the sidewalk and building entrances make the nodes less pedestrian friendly, averaging a 7/10 in pedestrian comfort.

#### 12TH & MADISON TOP IMPROVEMENTS

- Bustling with activity
  - Provide places to sit and eat outside
  - Replace vacant/parking lots with new buildings

- Memorable
  - Prioritize building edges and memorable buildings
  - Add/keep iconic elements with local flavor

- Pedestrian comfort
  - Add benches and greenery along the sidewalk
  - Slow down vehicular traffic

#### 12TH & ELIZABETH TOP IMPROVEMENTS

- Bustling with activity
  - Provide places to sit and eat outside
  - Keep existing and support new local businesses

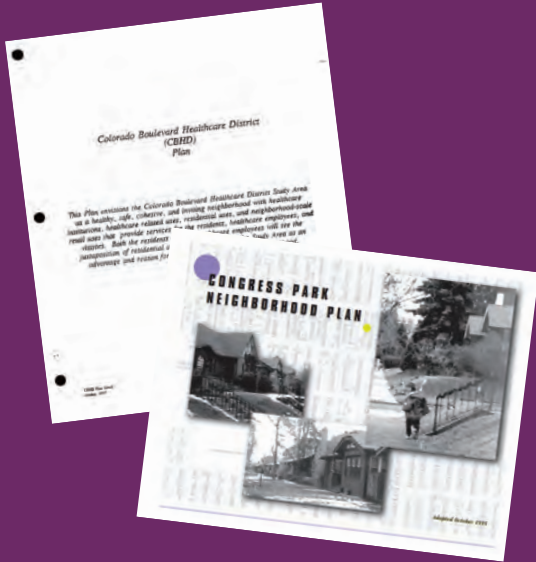
- Memorable
  - Provide more trees and shade
  - Add/keep iconic elements with local flavor

- Pedestrian comfort
  - Add benches and greenery along the sidewalk
  - Make crossing the street easier

### PREVIOUS PLANS

The *Congress Park Neighborhood Plan* from 1995 covers the Congress Park neighborhood. The plan recommended maintaining the historic character and tree coverage, supporting a diverse community, encouraging safe multi-modal mobility, and managing the transitions between commercial and residential areas. These recommendations continue to be relevant and are consistent with the policies in this East Central Area Plan.

The *Colorado Boulevard Healthcare District Plan* from 2007 covers the National Jewish Hospital campus and the block between Colorado Boulevard and Harrison Street and 9th Avenue and 10th Avenue. The plan recommends supporting the continued success of the hospitals while minimizing impacts on surrounding neighborhoods, improving bike and pedestrian safety, and enhancing urban design. These recommendations continue to be advanced in this East Central Area Plan.







## CONGRESS PARK RECOMMENDATIONS

LAND USE

COP-L1

### POLICY

**Prioritize land use policies that aim to maintain character in Congress Park.**

### BACKGROUND

*Congress Park includes significant architecture that should be protected. Multiple tools should be considered to ensure additions and new development is compatible and the neighborhood character is retained.*

- A.** Update regulations in residential zone districts to remove barriers to additions and renovations (see Policy L4).
- B.** Modify zoning regulations to create an incentive for preserving existing houses by allowing an additional unit if the existing house is preserved (see Policy L5).
- C.** Preserve existing multi-unit and mixed-use buildings that contribute to neighborhood character and ensure new buildings are designed to be compatible (see Policy L6).
- D.** Manage the scale and improve design quality of new construction in Low Residential Places (see Policy L7).
- E.** Update transition standards for Protected Districts (see Policy L8).
- F.** Consider Landmark designations where appropriate (see Policy L9).

# CONGRESS PARK RECOMMENDATIONS

## ECONOMY

POLICY

COP-E1

**See POLICY E1: Bolster the healthcare and wellness sector as the foundation for economic growth in the East Central Area.**

BACKGROUND

*Congress Park is the home to National Jewish Hospital, along with several other providers of medical and related services. The continued strength of the medical sector provides an opportunity to support the growth and prosperity of the entire East Central area while limiting the detrimental impacts on surrounding residential areas.*

- A.** Work with National Jewish Health on their long-term plans for their remaining undeveloped properties in and adjacent to East Central (on both sides of Colorado Boulevard) to ensure development integrates well with the community and advances the vision for the area.

COP-E3

POLICY

**See POLICY E9: Preserve existing affordability and housing quality.**

BACKGROUND

*Sixty-one percent of Congress Park's housing units are in attached or multi-unit structures. Some of the smaller, aging multi-unit buildings provide an opportunity for conversion to income-restricted housing or ownership.*

*See a complete list of strategies in Section 2.2 Economy and Housing*

COP-E2

**See POLICY E8: Stabilize residents at risk of involuntary displacement.**

*In Congress Park, 40% of renter households and 23% of owner households are cost-burdened, meaning they are paying more than 30% of their income towards housing costs. According to Blueprint Denver's Vulnerability to Displacement measure, the northwest portion of Congress Park is considered vulnerable to displacement due to the high percentage of renters and median income below Denver's median.*

*See a complete list of strategies in Section 2.2 Economy and Housing*







# CONGRESS PARK RECOMMENDATIONS

ECONOMY

COP-E4

**POLICY**

**See POLICY E10: Create new affordable housing with access to transit and amenities.**

**BACKGROUND**

*Congress Park currently has approximately 269 income-restricted units. Increasing the number of affordable housing units in the neighborhood provides the opportunity to give residents easy access to transit, services, and amenities. In addition, the presence of National Jewish Hospital offers an opportunity to provide workforce housing that would be beneficial for both the hospitals and neighborhood residents.*

*See a complete list of strategies in Section 2.2 Economy and Housing*

- A.** Partner with area hospitals, Denver Public Schools, and other major employers to create and/or fund affordable, workforce housing.

COP-E5

**See POLICY E11: Expand diversity of housing types and affordability to support households of different sizes, ages, and incomes throughout East Central.**

*The southern part of Congress Park, which is predominantly single-unit residential, is considered unaffordable according to the Housing + Transportation Index. In this area, the housing and transportation costs for a typical household in the region would exceed 45% of its income. Integrating new, compatible housing types would help to provide more attainable options in the neighborhood. During neighborhood workshops, Congress Park participants identified encouraging more ADUs and housing for a variety of household types as their top housing priority. ADUs, secondary detached single-family homes, and live-work units were the top housing types that participants would like to see. Consistent with Blueprint Denver, this Plan aims to provide housing choice by diversifying housing options in all neighborhoods.*

*See a complete list of strategies in Section 2.2 Economy and Housing*

- A.** Integrate missing middle housing types and accessory dwelling units in Low and Low-Medium Residential Places.
- B.** Partner with area hospitals, Denver Public Schools, and other major employers to create and/or fund affordable, workforce housing.

# CONGRESS PARK RECOMMENDATIONS

POLICY  
BACKGROUND

COP-M1

**See POLICY M1: Create bold changes to the mobility system by repurposing street space along key corridors to prioritize safe and accessible walking, biking, rolling, and transit.**

*Congress Park contains many wide, high-speed roads that residents called out as difficult to cross, including Colfax Ave, 6th, 8th, 13th Ave, 14th Ave, and York/Josephine St. Repurposing space for people traveling without a car helps to provide more options and a safer environment for all. An average of 68% of commuters in Cheesman Park drive alone to work, representing one of the city's better opportunities to further the City's Mobility Action Plan goal of 50% or less SOV trips citywide by 2030.*

*Priority Locations for Congress Park (see a complete list of strategies in Section 2.3 Mobility):*

- A.** Colfax Avenue – Transit and Pedestrian Priority *Also see Colfax Ave chapter.*
- B.** Colorado Boulevard – Transit and Pedestrian Priority *Also see Quality of Life Infrastructure improvements*
- C.** Josephine Street – Transit and Pedestrian Priority
- D.** York Street – Transit and Pedestrian Priority
- E.** 6th Avenue – Transit and Pedestrian Priority
- F.** 7th Avenue Parkway between Colorado Boulevard and Williams Street – Bicycle and Pedestrian Priority *Also see Quality of Life Infrastructure improvements*
- G.** 8th Avenue – Transit and Pedestrian Priority
- H.** 12th Avenue – Transit and Bicycle Priority *Also see Quality of Life Infrastructure improvements*
- I.** 13th Avenue – Pedestrian Priority
- J.** 14th Avenue – Bicycle and Pedestrian Priority

COP-M2

**See POLICY M2: Implement and upgrade planned Denver Moves: Bikeways.**

*About 60% of Congress Park survey respondents noted the area as being very easy or fairly easy for biking. Bike crashes are concentrated in Congress Park near Colfax Ave, Colorado Boulevard, and 12th Ave approaching an entrance to Cheesman Park. Prioritizing space and designing safer intersections for cyclists helps improve safety for all modes while allowing people of all ages and abilities to bike.*

*Priority Locations for Congress Park (see a complete list of strategies in Section 2.3 Mobility):*

- A.** Upgrade Denver Moves: Bikes recommendation of a buffered bike lane to a protected bike lane on 7th Ave. Parkway between Williams St and Colorado Boulevard.
- B.** Reroute planned St Paul St. neighborhood bikeway to Steele St., due to signal at Colfax Ave. and Steele St., and extend Steele St. neighborhood bikeway between 6th and 17th Avenues
- C.** Install planned Garfield St. Neighborhood Bikeway connecting City Park to the Cherry Creek Trail.

COP-M3

**See POLICY M3: Install new bikeways not previously identified in Denver Moves: Bikes.**

*Priority Locations for Congress Park (see a complete list of strategies in Section 2.3 Mobility):*

- A.** Conduct corridor study that includes 11th Avenue and 12th Avenue to determine community preference and best placement for transit and bicycle improvements. *Also see Quality-of-Life Infrastructure improvements*
- B.** Study the feasibility of adding a high comfort bikeway on 9th between Broadway and Colorado Blvd. *Also see Quality-of-Life Infrastructure improvements*
- C.** Study feasibility of adding a protected bike lane on 14th between Broadway and Colorado
- D.** Study the feasibility of adding a neighborhood bikeway on Detroit between 6th and 17th



# CONGRESS PARK RECOMMENDATIONS

COP-M4

BACKGROUND POLICY

## See POLICY M4: Install new sidewalks

Several areas of sidewalk are substandard width (less than 4ft) in Congress Park, and some sections are missing entirely, largely around Congress Park.

Priority Locations for Congress Park (see a complete list of strategies in Section 2.3 Mobility):

- A. Install new sidewalks where they are missing in the Congress Park neighborhood.
- B. Bring sidewalks up to standard in the Congress Park neighborhood.

COP-M5

## See POLICY M5: Install safety and accessibility improvements at existing pedestrian and bicycle crossings

While the majority of Capitol Hill survey respondents felt the neighborhood was very easy or fairly easy to walk in, a concentration of crashes involving pedestrians occur in the area, specifically near Colfax and Broadway/Lincoln, and 13th Ave.

Priority Locations for Congress Park (see a complete list of strategies in Section 2.3 Mobility):

- A. Colfax Avenue at York Street, Steele Street, Garfield Street, and Colorado Boulevard
- B. Colorado Boulevard at 8th, 9th, 12th, 13th, 14th, and Colfax Avenues Also see Quality of Life Infrastructure improvements

- C. 12th Avenue at York and Josephine Streets
- D. Garfield Street at 14th Avenue

COP-M6

BACKGROUND POLICY

## See POLICY M6: Install new safe, comfortable, and accessible pedestrian and bicycle crossings

Several segments of streets in the Congress Park neighborhood - including 13th Ave, 14th Ave, Josephine St, Colorado Blvd, and 8th Ave - have distances greater than 1/4 mile between signalized crossings. This can encourage unsafe crossing behavior. Community input also called for improved crossings along Josephine St to connect to Congress Park and the soon-to-be renovated pool.

Priority Locations for Congress Park (see a complete list of strategies in Section 2.3 Mobility):

- A. Colfax Avenue at Detroit Street
- B. 6th Avenue at Detroit and Steele Streets
- C. 8th Avenue at Detroit and Steele Streets
- D. 9th Avenue at York and Josephine Streets to connect to new congress park pool
- E. 13th Avenue between Garfield and Josephine (bike and pedestrian crossing priority)
  1. Priority intersections: Detroit Street. Steele

- F. 14th Avenue between High St. and Colorado Blvd. (Alley) (short term: pedestrian crossing priority, long term: bike crossing priority)
  1. Priority intersections: Detroit Street. Steele Street. Jackson St. due to pedestrian traffic to and from National Jewish.

# CONGRESS PARK RECOMMENDATIONS

## MOBILITY

POLICY

BACKGROUND

COP-M7

**See POLICY M7: Prioritize implementing transit along corridors in East Central**

*The Congress Park neighborhood has a medium transit score and medium transit propensity – in other words, investing in transit frequency and infrastructure in this area would likely yield significant increases in ridership. Significant portions of sidewalks in the neighborhood are below 4 feet in width, and sidewalks are missing on the periphery of Congress Park, as well as along sections of 7th Ave. This creates difficulties in making connections between transportation options.*

*Priority Locations for Congress Park (see a complete list of strategies in Section 2.3 Mobility):*

- A.** Implement high capacity transit (full BRT to rail)
  1. Colfax Avenue
  2. Colorado Boulevard *Also see Quality of Life Infrastructure improvements*
- B.** Implement medium capacity transit (rapid bus to full BRT)
  1. York Street (within the University Corridor in Denver Moves: Transit)
  2. Josephine Street
- C.** Implement speed and reliability transit (enhanced bus)
  1. 6th Avenue
  2. 8th Avenue

COP-M8

**See POLICY M8: Install rider amenities at transit stops and better connect transportation modes via mobility hubs**

*Priority Locations for Congress Park (see a complete list of strategies in Section 2.3 Mobility):*

- A.** Install customer amenities are priority locations
  1. Colfax Avenue at York Street, Josephine Street, and Colorado Boulevard







# CONGRESS PARK RECOMMENDATIONS

MOBILITY

COP-M9

BACKGROUND POLICY

## See POLICY M9: Study measures to slow traffic along neighborhood streets directly surrounding schools, parks, hospitals, libraries, commercial nodes and recreation centers

*Vehicular crashes in Cheesman park are concentrated along the periphery of the neighborhood, near High Injury Network streets. Crashes involving pedestrians and bikes are similarly grouped along the northern and eastern borders, though some occur along wide, higher speed corridors including 13th and 14th Avenues. Colfax Ave and Colorado Boulevard are by far the busiest streets in the neighborhood, with 32,000 and 55,000 average daily trips, respectively. Other east/west collector and arterial streets average at or slightly about 15,000 average daily trips. The Congress Park Safe Streets Committee conducted a neighborhood traffic study with recommendations that have been incorporated into this plan.*

Priority Locations for Congress Park (see a complete list of strategies in Section 2.3 Mobility):

- A.** Commercial Nodes
  1. Colfax Avenue
  2. Colorado Boulevard from 6th to 9th Ave and 14th to 17th Ave
  3. 12th Avenue from Columbine to Clayton Streets and Cook to Monroe Streets
- B.** Schools
  1. Teller Elementary
  2. REACH Charter School
  3. St. John School
- C.** Health Facilities
  1. National Jewish Health
- D.** Parks
  1. Congress Park

COP-M10

BACKGROUND POLICY

## Improve curbside management strategies in Congress Park

*An average of 9% of households in Congress Park do not have a vehicle, just under the citywide average of 11%. Residents prioritize efficiently using curb space to meet various needs, including on-street parking.*

- A.** See Policy M10: Manage and more efficiently use curbside resources
- B.** See Policy M11: Strengthen parking management tools that reflect the City's strategic parking goals

COP-M11

## See POLICY M12: Adopt TDM strategies and policies to shift people's travel behavior and meet City goals

*Because there is easy access to transit, bike routes, and sidewalks in the Congress Park neighborhood, transportation demand management strategies are likely to succeed in increasing the number of people using transit, biking, or walking as their primary mode of travel.*

See a complete list of strategies in Section 2.3 Mobility.

# CONGRESS PARK RECOMMENDATIONS

QUALITY  
OF LIFE

BACKGROUND POLICY

COP-Q1

**Increase recreational programming for all ages and interests, particularly children and youth, in Congress Park.**

*Residents enjoy the parks and amenities but would like to see better maintenance of existing facilities, additional amenities, and activation of underused park spaces.*

*See Section 2.4 Quality of Life*

POLICY

BACKGROUND

COP-Q2

**See POLICY Q2: Develop new Contemporary Parkways that connect the community to open space, parks and recreational assets, as well as serve multiple community functions.**

*Several corridors in Congress Park, including 12th Avenue, are opportunities to implement the Contemporary Parkway concept.*





### 3.7.5 TRANSFORMATIVE PROJECT: COMMUNITY GARDENS & NEIGHBORHOOD PARK

Create new community open space, parks and recreation facilities.

Increase tree canopy coverage in the public right-of-way.



Support more widespread food growing production and innovative community food access projects with new development.

Increase impervious surface coverage



# TRANSFORMATIVE PROJECT: COLFAX AVE & COLORADO BLVD



Promote development of small office space.

Implement a height incentive program that allows additional height in specific areas in exchange for community benefit.

Increase tree canopy.

Create new affordable housing with access to transit and amenities.

Support creation of small businesses.

Proposed Colfax BRT and center stations.

Improved public space at transit stops.

High capacity transit service on Colorado Blvd.

Improved public space at transit stops.

Bolster the healthcare and wellness sector as the foundation for economic growth.



# 4 COLFAX CORRIDOR

## IN THIS SECTION:

4.1 INTRODUCTION (P. 246)

4.2 CHARACTER ANALYSIS (P. 246)

4.3 TOD ANALYSIS (P. 248)

4.4 RECOMMENDATIONS (P. 251)

## 4.1 INTRODUCTION

Colfax Avenue touches all six neighborhoods in East Central, both uniting and dividing them. The corridor has its own unique history and character and is constantly evolving. Additional change is coming with the advent of Bus Rapid Transit and significant public investments in the streetscape. Given all this, the Colfax corridor requires special attention. This chapter will analyze the character development potential of the corridor and give specific recommendations for achieving the community's vision across all topics on Colfax.

## 4.2 CHARACTER ANALYSIS

Character is hard to define on a street that has been defined by change. Due to this, “Colfax character” takes on many forms. From its beginning, Colfax has served as a path to opportunity – carrying hopeful people westward on horseback in the late 1800s during the Gold Rush. Remnants of its turn-of-the-century days as a residential corridor can still be found in East Central, some hiding behind added-on storefronts from when the corridor transitioned from residential to commercial uses following the age of the streetcar. After the automobile was invented and Denver's streetcar system came to a halt, the corridor once again transformed, taking out tree lawns and wide sidewalks to make way for a wider road and parking.

Colfax Avenue has long been a key east-west transportation route for Downtown Denver, Auraria Campus, Anschutz Medical Campus and nearly 50 schools — it is also a thriving community, with retail, nightlife and residential development creating a “Main Street” feel along one of the area's oldest, most historic streets. With population and business growth in the area expected to increase significantly in the next 20 years, it is time to re-imagine how Colfax functions, looks and feels while accommodating an increasing need for enhanced mobility and safety along the corridor through Colfax Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) implementation.

This rich history provides a backdrop to the “stage” of Colfax. Although the places may continue to change and evolve, the storyline shall not be lost.

### DEVELOPMENT PATTERNS AND PUBLIC SPACE

The layout of blocks is quite consistent. Most blocks along Colfax include 275 feet of frontage with a 15-20 foot alley dividing the block in half. Therefore, most properties fronting onto Colfax have about 125–130 feet of frontage. However, lot depths are less consistent. Some, albeit extreme cases, are as little as 25 feet deep whereas others go back a half block and can be around 300 feet deep. Most lots are between 100-125 feet deep.

The right-of-way along Colfax also varies. Closer to downtown, there is about 80 feet, which, with four travel lanes, a turn lane and occasional on-street parking, leaves very narrow sidewalks. Further east, some areas are 100 feet wide and sidewalks are asymmetrical – with more space on the north side than south. Streetscape amenities are few – due to the lack of space and ability to maintain them. In the past few years, the Business Improvement Districts have stepped up to help beautify the sidewalks by adding amenities like colorful banners, pedestrian lights, custom bike racks and trash cans. General obligation bonds passed in 2017 will contribute to upgrades in intersection safety improvements, streetscaping in certain locations, and construction of the BRT system.

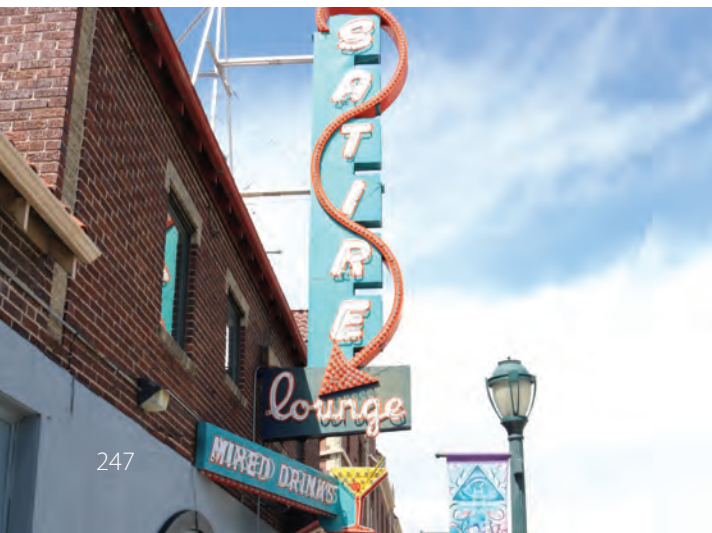
## PREVIOUS PLANS

The East Colfax Plan from 2004 covers the blocks north and south of Colfax Avenue between Sherman Street and Colorado Boulevard. The plan recommended commercial and residential development and multi-modal transportation along Colfax Avenue with high-quality urban design that complements the surrounding neighborhoods. These recommendations continue to be relevant and are consistent with the policies in this East Central Area Plan.

## BUS RAPID TRANSIT

After more than seven years of studying East Colfax Avenue and gathering significant community input, the City and County of Denver is looking to implement center-running bus rapid transit (BRT) along the corridor, with a dedicated transit lane in each direction from Broadway to Yosemite. Rolling out BRT along one of Denver's busiest corridors to move more people, more efficiently, is a key component of Denver's Mobility Action Plan.





## WHAT SHOULD BE SAVED?

Throughout the plan process, the community agreed that the character on Colfax should be maintained, to the extent feasible. Generally speaking, there are two types of character: architectural and cultural.

- **ARCHITECTURAL CHARACTER** – this is portrayed through the physical form of prominent buildings. There are generally two types of architecture that contribute to the character of Colfax:
  - » **Landmarked and historic or contributing buildings.** These buildings have architectural integrity that have already been identified and protected (historic landmark or district).
  - » **Potentially historic, character-contributing and storefront buildings.** These buildings contribute to the character of Colfax. Many of these buildings may be applicable for historic status, which should be explored. Many of them are home to iconic businesses while others provide affordable rents for small businesses. These buildings are desired to remain and be reused to the extent feasible.
- **CULTURAL CHARACTER** – this is portrayed through people and events. Colfax has a rich cultural history, from the edgy adult nightclubs of the 60s and 70s to today's abundant LGBTQ businesses and pride. Colfax has its own marathon and is the epicenter for the Pridefest parade. It boasts local businesses and has a reputation for attracting and welcoming all walks of life. These cultural aspects are less tangible – cannot be “mapped” – but are desired to remain.

Another factor to consider when looking at which areas may redevelop, and which ones might remain for the next 20 years is taking into account **buildings of substantial size that are fairly new.** Examples include the Carla Madison Recreation Center, Sprouts, The Tattered Cover, and the Renaissance Uptown Lofts at Pearl and Colfax.

These properties are highlighted on the map below. More research is necessary to define historic or contributing status.

## HISTORIC, ADAPTIVE REUSE AND NEW BUILDINGS



Top: Bluebird Theater, City Park. Middle: Pete's Kitchen, Cheesman Park. Bottom: Satire Lounge, Congress Park.



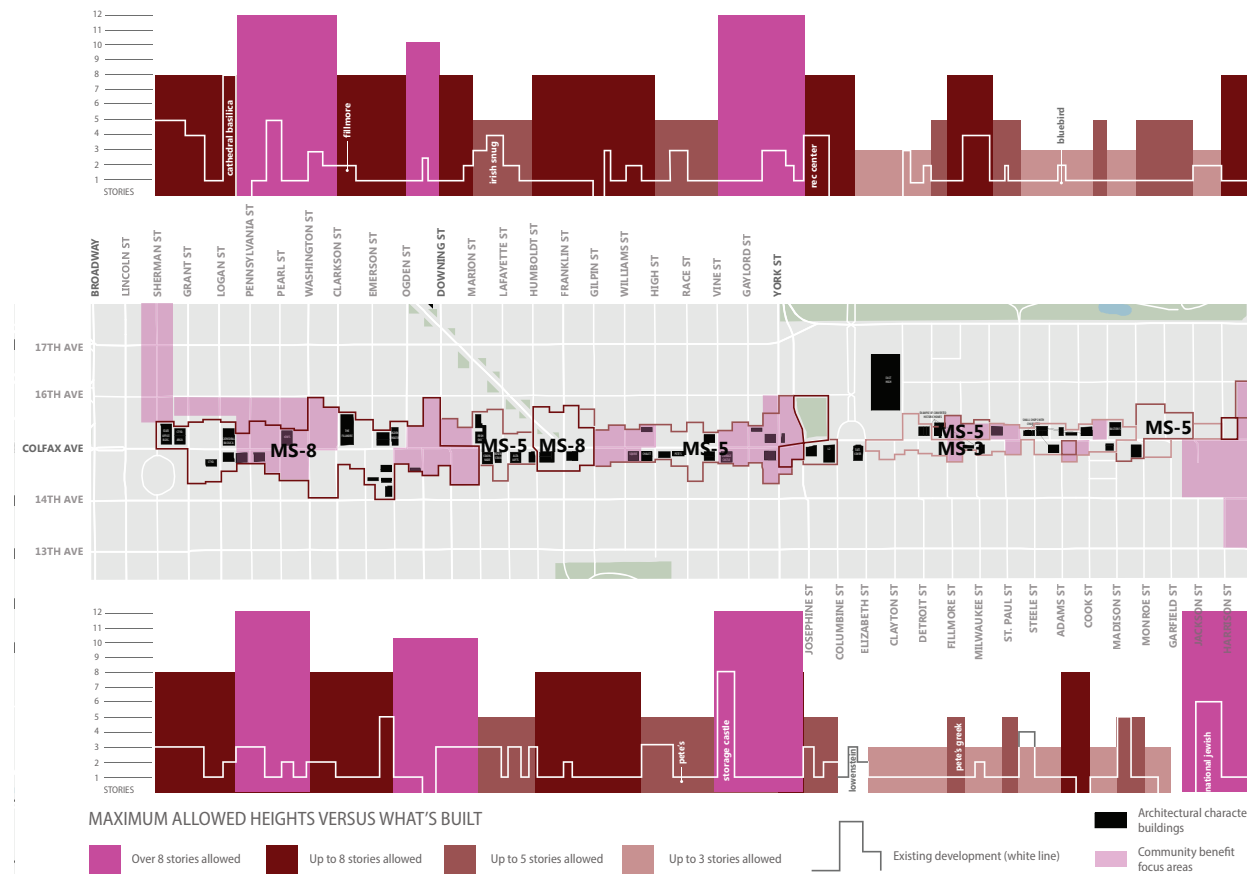
# 4.3 TOD ANALYSIS

In the East Central area, within the “community corridor” designation (or MS-zoned properties) for Colfax Avenue, the next 20 years could see up to 2,200 additional households and 3,300 more jobs based on city forecasts. This translates to approximately 2 million square feet of potential new development. The vision calls for concentrating this growth in appropriate areas around BRT stations in what is known as transit-oriented development (TOD).

In preparing for TOD and expected growth around BRT, it is important to first understand what the existing entitlements and compare that with the growth projections. The map below shows the allowed maximum heights (colored bars) versus the scale of on-the-ground buildings in 2019 (white line). This shows graphically that there appears to be quite a bit of available space to grow up.

However, recent examples of redevelopment are not maximizing available space. Instead, many new developments have been one-story commercial chains (7-11, Starbucks, McDonald’s, Chic-Fil-A).

## MAXIMUM ALLOWED HEIGHTS VERSUS WHAT IS BUILT



## BARRIERS TO DEVELOPMENT

There are multiple barriers to vertical development on Colfax today. High priority issues are listed below:

### ADAPTIVE REUSE CHALLENGES

As identified in the character analysis, a lot of the buildings along the corridor contribute to the unique character of Colfax and are desired to remain. However, the process of reusing a building – specifically when changing the use from how the building functions today – is very challenging. This “change in use” qualifier triggers a slew of necessary upgrades – both inside the building and on the property. Additionally, required parking is often hard to meet for the new uses. The costs associated with bringing these elements up to current standards can be prohibitive.

### SMALL AND NARROW LOT CHALLENGES

What the maximum allowed heights map does not show is the unique challenges of narrow and small lots that can make vertical development challenging. Therefore, lot sizes and depths were examined for their potential to redevelop. There are a few depth dimensions that are critical to be able to accommodate vertical development:

- **75’ depth.** This depth is critical for rear parking with a building fronting Colfax. It provides a five foot buffer in the rear (required when adjacent to a residential zone without an alley, which is very common) and then 40 feet for a drive aisle and 90-degree parking on one side, leaving 30 feet for ground floor uses. Upper floors can be built over the parking creating more space above. With existing parking rules, on a standard width lot of 100-125 feet, this type of lot would likely result in a 2-story building.
- **100’ depth.** This allows the same construction as 75’ lot depth but adds an additional bay of parking. This could result in a 3-4 story building on a standard width lot.
- **125’-150’ depth.** This is critical for buildings to go taller than 5 stories when adjacent to a protected district. This only applies to a couple

properties currently zoned for 8 stories but should be considered for any rezoning assumptions. This dimension is also critical for getting any type of above-grade structure for parking taller buildings. Going underground is preferred, but on smaller individual lots will not be likely.

Other challenges for small lots are primarily concerned with parking requirements and return on investment. There is an existing parking exemption for lots that are 6,250 square feet or less that helps feasibility, but sometimes is still not enough, as it does not take into consideration the lot depth challenges. The other factor is the cost of construction. While there is entitlement to go taller on many lots, the challenges of doing so on small lots make it unlikely. Therefore, some of the smaller lots are over-zoned and could be overvaluing their land and development potential.

By eliminating lots with = historic, potentially historic and character contributing structures, and structures of substantial size and recent construction, the following parcels are left as “developable”. Small and narrow

lots (yellow) have more challenges to redeveloping. Realistically, these lots would probably be assembled to create larger parcels. The orange and blue lots are most developable. Through detailed zoning analysis and conceptual lot testing, realistic floor area ratios (FARs), i.e. the amount of square footage of development on a given lot size, were assigned based on existing zoning rules to all of these lots. It was determined through this analysis that at their maximum development potential under existing zoning, these lots can handle approximately 7 million square feet of development. That is more than 3 times the expected growth for Colfax in the East Central area.

Given this analysis, yet knowing the common challenges to developing on Colfax in addition with much-desired community benefits (affordable housing, open space, preservation of existing buildings, preserving existing businesses) it was determined that a targeted, incentive-based approach to upzoning would be the best way to achieve multiple goals for the corridor and adjacent neighborhoods.

## DEVELOPABLE PARCELS AND DEGREE OF DIFFICULTY



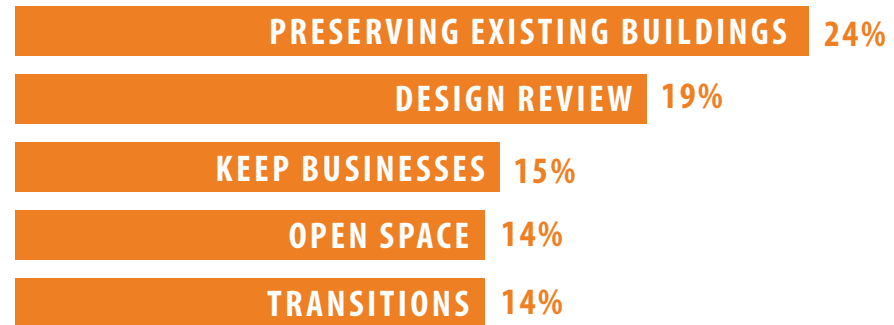


# COMMUNITY FEEDBACK

Throughout the planning process, the community has emphasized the importance of character preservation and quality development along Colfax Avenue.

The Urban Quality Tool (UQT) diagnostic results and community feedback for three of the Colfax Avenue nodes are as follows:

## “What are the priorities for new development on Colfax?”



Percent of Responses (227)  
Source: February 2018 Community Workshops

### NODE 2 COLFAX FROM PEARL TO OGDEN

- When surveyed, it scored a 3/10 in “Bustling with Activity” and 4/10 in “Pedestrian Comfort” and “Memorable Environment”

#### NODE 2 TOP IMPROVEMENTS

<p style="font-size: 8px; color: #8e44ad; text-align: center; margin: 0;">Bustling</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Replace vacant/parking lots with new buildings</li> <li>• Keep existing and support new local business</li> <li>• Encourage a variety of retail, business, and housing</li> </ul>	<p style="font-size: 8px; color: #3498db; text-align: center; margin: 0;">Memorable</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Add/keep iconic elements with local flavor</li> <li>• Provide more trees and shade</li> <li>• Promote windows and ground floor visibility</li> </ul>	<p style="font-size: 8px; color: #f39c12; text-align: center; margin: 0;">Pedestrian</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Make crossing the street easier</li> <li>• Slow down vehicular traffic</li> </ul>
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### NODE 3 COLFAX FROM LAFAYETTE TO GILPIN

- When surveyed, it scored a 3/10 in “Bustling with Activity” and 3.5/10 in “Pedestrian Comfort” and 4/10 in “Memorable Environment”

#### NODE 3 TOP IMPROVEMENTS

<p style="font-size: 8px; color: #8e44ad; text-align: center; margin: 0;">Bustling</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Replace vacant/parking lots with new buildings</li> <li>• Keep existing and support new local business</li> </ul>	<p style="font-size: 8px; color: #3498db; text-align: center; margin: 0;">Memorable</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Add/keep iconic elements with local flavor</li> <li>• Provide more trees and shade</li> </ul>	<p style="font-size: 8px; color: #f39c12; text-align: center; margin: 0;">Pedestrian</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Make crossing the street easier</li> <li>• Widen sidewalks and reduce driveways</li> </ul>
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### NODE 6 COLFAX AROUND YORK AND JOSEPHINE

- When surveyed, it scored a 3.5/10 in “Bustling with Activity” and 4.5/10 in “Pedestrian Comfort” and 4/10 in “Memorable Environment”

#### NODE 6 TOP IMPROVEMENTS

<p style="font-size: 8px; color: #8e44ad; text-align: center; margin: 0;">Bustling</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Keep existing and support new local business</li> <li>• Replace vacant/parking lots with new buildings</li> <li>• Provide places to sit and eat outside</li> </ul>	<p style="font-size: 8px; color: #3498db; text-align: center; margin: 0;">Memorable</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Add/keep iconic elements with local flavor</li> <li>• Provide more trees and shade</li> </ul>	<p style="font-size: 8px; color: #f39c12; text-align: center; margin: 0;">Pedestrian</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Add benches and greenery along the sidewalk</li> <li>• Make crossing the street easier</li> </ul>
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## 4.4 RECOMMENDATIONS

C-L1

POLICY

**Reduce regulatory barriers to make it easier to reuse existing buildings that contribute to the character of Colfax and offer a higher level of protection for more significant buildings.**

BACKGROUND

*The community's vision emphasizes incorporate existing buildings as new development occurs on the corridor. However, as described above, current requirements can make reusing an existing structure difficult. The community also values recognizing the history of Colfax beyond preserving buildings. Creating a historic district, which was also recommended in previous Colfax plans, would offer a higher level of protection for some of the more significant buildings on the corridor and ensure that new development responds to and reflects the unique history.*

STRATEGIES

- A.** Establish an Adaptive Reuse Ordinance that reduces barriers to reusing structures. Explore the following:
  - 1. Modify standards for public right-of-way improvements to be proportional to the cost of improvements while ensuring new projects meet the vision and goals of this plan. Consider the following:
    - a. Eliminating the land dedication requirement for Colfax right-of-way when it would result in a lot being less than 75-feet deep.
    - b. Allow existing alleys to be used to access to properties. See Policy C-L3.
    - c. If a property redevelops in an area that will receive streetscape upgrades from the initial Colfax BRT or other bond-initiated project, either allow these public funds to be used by and implemented by the developer or eliminate this requirement.
  - 2. Eliminate parking requirements for structures more than 50 years old.
  - 3. Evaluate health and fire code standards to make development more feasible while maintaining safety.
  - 4. Adopt and abide by the International Existing Building Code (IEBC). Adjust definition of buildings of historic value in the IEBC to address Colfax-specific situations and ease changes in use.
- B.** Create a Local Historic or Cultural District.
  - 1. Initiate a study to determine eligible properties.
  - 2. Consider application of a Transfer of Development Rights (TDR) program as an incentive to encourage property owners to participate in a historic district.
  - 3. Work with Historic Denver, Landmark Preservation staff and the Business Improvement Districts to establish criteria and goals, as well as operational aspects of the TDR program.
  - 4. Establish design standards and guidelines so that new development responds appropriately to the history and character. See Policy L8.



# COLFAX CORRIDOR RECOMMENDATIONS

## LAND USE

### C-L2

#### BACKGROUND POLICY

**Encourage new development to provide community benefits adjacent to transit stations. Create a program that links potential increases in building heights or flexibility in zoning in specified areas in exchange for public benefits.**

*Affordable housing is overwhelmingly desired and needed in the East Central neighborhoods and it was expressed by the community that Colfax, with future BRT, is a preferred location for adding affordable units. Many tools will be needed to meet affordable housing goals. Incentive programs offer one way to contribute to affordable housing goals, as well as other desired community benefits.*

#### STRATEGIES

- A.** Refer to Land Use and Built Form chapter for height and community benefit recommendations and also consider the following Colfax-specific community benefits refinements:
1. Affordable housing targets will be a prerequisite for the program. Other Colfax-specific community benefits that this program could help implement include:
    - a. Providing publicly accessible open space around transit stations, such as small plazas, that provide places to sit outside and socialize. These areas should have a high degree of programming to activate them as well as be surrounded by active ground floor uses and lighting to provide eyes on the spaces and keep them safe.
    - b. Linking the TDR program to the incentive program by encouraging a developer to purchase additional development rights from an existing property that is desired to remain or to incorporate existing buildings in new development.
    - c. Offering in-lieu fees to go toward a small business retention fund to help existing small businesses remain in a changing corridor and economy or incorporate existing small business space into new development.
- B.** Modify building form and transition standards to take into account the challenging size of lots on Colfax and to encourage better outcomes. This zoning flexibility could be offered through design guidelines and/or by modifying base zoning standards. Consider the following:
1. Reducing the front step-back of 20' after 5-stories to be a lesser dimension and for only a portion of the façade.
  2. Allow increased setbacks on the ground floor when they contribute to a desired goal, such as café seating along the sidewalk or small open spaces such as courtyards and pedestrian passages.
  3. Modify required rear step-backs to achieve specific goals. For example, on the north side of the street where shading of neighbors is a concern, allow modifications of the required step backs so long as a sun study can determine an equal or greater amount of sun access. On the south side, consider relaxing step-back requirements while still considering privacy of neighboring properties (i.e. limit placement of balconies and upper level outdoor space).
  4. Require the side street ground floor setbacks adjacent to neighboring properties to match the rest of that street's front setbacks for a percentage of the side street frontage.
  5. Modify building forms and standards so that ground floor residential in areas not directly adjacent to BRT stations is more feasible. Adding "General" or "Apartment" forms with modified build-to and transparency requirements could help.



# CITY PARK TRANSITION

*Increase upper story rear step-backs above 51-feet to help with concerns about mass and scale, privacy and sun access.*

*Decrease upper story front step-backs on Colfax to achieve the intent of establishing a pedestrian-scaled street but allow for upper stories to come closer to the street.*



*Existing historic or protected district*

*Establish side street setback rule next to historic and protected districts where new development matches the neighboring property's setback for a portion of the facade.*

*Modify build-to requirements to facilitate cafe seating.*



# COLFAX CORRIDOR RECOMMENDATIONS

## LAND USE

### C-L3

#### BACKGROUND POLICY

#### Encourage redevelopment along and activation of alleys.

*Alleys are underutilized public spaces that have the potential to be improved as shared or pedestrian-only spaces and can function as much-needed public open space. They can be activated by adjacent buildings with windows, doors, lighting, benches, café seating and public art. If opened up, they may provide more affordable “back door” commercial spaces for new small businesses.*

#### STRATEGIES

- A.** Work with Business Improvement Districts and Arts and Venues to create an “Activate Alleys” program that provides financial or technical assistance to property owners for public art and public realm enhancements.
  1. Find a willing property owner to pilot an alley activation project for a summer.
  2. Provide financial assistance to property owners who wish to relocate utilities.
  3. Allow building over the alley on upper floors and creating enhanced alleys with utility easements. Modify standards so that improvements over utility easements for amenities like seating, lighting, and public art are not prohibited.
- B.** Where redevelopment occurs along an alley, encourage enhanced design solutions and small commercial spaces to help activate these spaces and make them feel safer.
  1. Include design guidelines for alleys in the guidelines for centers and corridors. See Policy L8.





# COLFAX CORRIDOR RECOMMENDATIONS

LAND USE

C-L4

POLICY

**Amend sign regulations to allow creative solutions to signs that fit the character of Colfax.**

BACKGROUND

*Signage along Colfax is part of its history. Allowing more flexibility for signs can help preserve the corridor's character while also benefiting its businesses.*

STRATEGIES

- A.** Allow neon and chasing neon light signs and encourage the preservation of existing signs of this nature.
- B.** Allow creative and artistic signs, such as signs fused with art and signs integrated with iconic distinctive features, that reflect the history or character of Colfax
- C.** Allow blade signs.
- D.** Amend square footage rules to encourage more creativity and artistic expression.
- E.** Allow roof signs.
- F.** Revise rules about murals and the amount that can contribute to advertising/allowable sign square footage.

C-L5

**Discourage low utilization of land and auto-oriented uses along Colfax.**

*Drive-thrus and other small buildings with large parking lots are incompatible with this plan's vision for a vibrant and walkable Colfax corridor. Restricting these types of development will encourage more efficient use of land, ensuring more residents, employees, and business patrons can enjoy the area.*

- A.** Consider modifications to regulations to discourage drive-thrus and encourage multi-story, mixed-use development, such as:
  1. Updating limitations on the drive through building form to include the Colfax corridor.
  2. Changing the current minimum height in MS-5 or higher from 24 feet to two stories.



# COLFAX CORRIDOR RECOMMENDATIONS

## ECONOMY

### C-E1

**See POLICY E2: Strengthen the professional services market by promoting the development of small office space.**

*As Colfax Avenue transitions from an auto-dominated corridor to a transit-rich multimodal corridor, and with changes in the role of retail space in the larger economy, there may be areas where retail is less viable and alternative uses would be appropriate. While it is important to retain retail uses around the stations of the future BRT, office uses are a way to bring people to the corridor and generate street activity in between stations.*

- A.** Coordinate with BIDs on work plans to provide services that help property owners to better utilize existing real estate along Colfax for small professional services.
- B.** Where retail or restaurants might be difficult to accommodate and/or in areas outside of anticipated retail nodes near BRT stations, encourage and allow ground floor activation (beyond retail and restaurant uses) with office uses, services, or innovation/flex spaces.

### C-E2

**Provide additional support to community-serving retail businesses and improve the development environment along Colfax.**

*Colfax is the primary retail corridor in East Central, with 51% of the area's retail businesses located along the street. While the corridor currently performs fairly well, with just 4.5% of storefronts vacant, rising rents threaten to displace existing businesses cherished by the community, while the barriers to development described above make it difficult to add new space or adaptively reuse existing spaces for retail.*

- A.** See Policy E4: Improve the regulatory process to provide additional support for existing and new small businesses in the area.
- B.** See Policy E5: Work in tandem with Business Improvement Districts (BIDs) to provide technical assistance to existing small independent businesses to help them succeed and prevent involuntary displacement.
- C.** See Policy E6: Broaden the range of financial incentives for small independent businesses and landlords to strengthen the area's tenant mix and help prevent displacement.
- D.** See Policy E7: Support and develop new community-minded ownership models that have a goal of maintaining East Central's variety of small, local businesses.

BACKGROUND

POLICY

STRATEGIES





# COLFAX CORRIDOR RECOMMENDATIONS

ECONOMY

C-E3

POLICY

**Create a multi-faceted BRT construction mitigation program for small businesses along the Colfax corridor to help them thrive during the period of construction.**

BACKGROUND

*While the BRT will create an improved Colfax corridor, it will require significant construction that will potentially disrupt businesses near future stops. A range of strategies are recommended to help mitigate this disruption and ensure businesses have an opportunity to thrive once BRT is complete.*

STRATEGIES

- A.** For the BRT construction period, dedicate a City staff position that assists small business owners within the BRT impact area to carry out the mitigation initiatives listed as strategies B-H below.
- B.** Expand and adapt the pilot Business Impact Opportunity (BIO) Fund to the Colfax corridor, using city general funds and a portion of the BRT project budget.
  1. Offer grants to small businesses to make up portions of a documented revenue gap experienced during construction months. (See profile of Los Angeles’s Business Interruption Fund.)
  2. Make funds available for extra marketing and special events during periods of construction.
  3. Pursue additional funding opportunities, such as federal grants, to bolster resources for BRT small business mitigation.
- C.** Encourage station-by-station construction patterns that minimize the disruption to businesses around individual BRT station areas. Coordinate construction scheduling to account for seasonality, time of day, loading/unloading, and other concerns, acknowledging that this may differ by station area depending on the makeup of businesses.
- D.** Create temporary wayfinding and signage on key routes, including 13th, 14th, 17th, and 18th Avenues to account for reduced visibility and access to Colfax businesses during construction.
- E.** Evaluate and implement innovative ways to maintain pedestrian connectivity and access (across Colfax and crossing streets) during road closures.
- F.** Require the BRT construction contractors to hire local subcontractors, use local services from within East Central during the planning and construction periods, and encourage construction employees to patronize Colfax businesses.
- G.** Leverage Transportation Management Association’s (TMA) in the area to offer transit passes for corridor employees (Eco-Passes) to help mitigate BRT construction impacts and free up parking spaces for customers (see Policy C-E4).
- H.** Ensure the public art projects required by the Denver Public Art program enhance the pedestrian environment and contribute to the unique character of Colfax.



# COLFAX CORRIDOR RECOMMENDATIONS

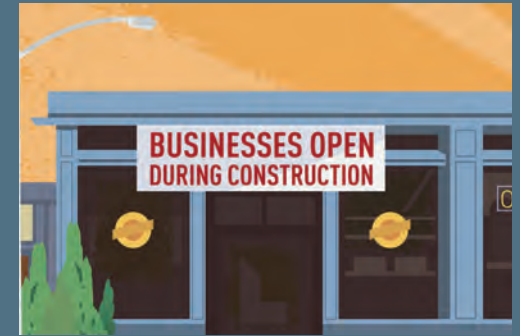
## ECONOMY

C-E4

### Help businesses prepare for a future BRT multi-modal retail environment that is more neighborhood oriented and pedestrian friendly.

With the introduction of BRT, the Colfax corridor will evolve from an auto-oriented thoroughfare into a neighborhood-serving, multimodal main street. Businesses prepared for this improvement will reap the benefits of a more appealing retail environment and an expanded customer base.

- A.** Evaluate the best option for the Colfax corridor to join an existing regional Transportation Management Association (TMA) to encourage a variety of transportation modes in the East Central Area. The TMA will help implement strategies B-F below (see Policy M12).
- B.** Work with BIDs and TMAs to offer Transportation Demand Management (TDM) services and training that help businesses and could include:
  1. Online ordering and delivery services
  2. Online sales via business websites
  3. Large-item delivery services, for goods such as home décor and gardening supplies
- C.** Work with BIDs and TMAs to find solutions for parking and loading challenges.
  1. Encourage shared parking arrangements for neighboring businesses. Greatest opportunities may exist for businesses with different hours and ones with large existing lots such as grocery stores.
  2. Ensure residential parking permit programs consider the impacts to neighborhood businesses.
  3. Formally allow use of alleys for business loading/unloading.
  4. Work with businesses to schedule merchandise deliveries during off-peak hours.
- D.** Ensure pedestrian safety enhancements are incorporated into BRT implementation. Priority improvements should include:
  1. Enhanced crosswalks at lighted intersections
  2. Pedestrian crossings at median gaps
  3. Pedestrian-scale lighting
  4. Improved sidewalks, landscaping, and street furniture
  5. Street trees and stormwater planters
- E.** Conduct outreach to large employers to promote employee carpool, rideshare, and teleworking programs.
- F.** Offer transit passes for corridor employees (Eco-Passes) to help kickstart BRT, support citywide TDM goals, and free up parking spaces for customers.
- G.** Provide technical assistance for small independent businesses to attract more customers from the surrounding neighborhoods through marketing and other tools.



### Case Study:

#### Los Angeles Metro's Business Interruption Fund

Since 2014, LA Metro – the region's transportation authority – has operated a Business Interruption Fund (BIF) that provides financial assistance to small “mom and pop” businesses located along transit rail corridors that are impacted by major construction. Grants are offered to cover certain fixed operating expenses. Metro has designated \$10 million annually to be used for implementation of the BIF. Qualifying small businesses are eligible to receive a grant of up to \$50,000 annually based on demonstrated revenue loss. The BIF grant can be used to cover fixed operating expenses such as rent/mortgage, utilities, insurance, and payroll. LA Metro operates the BIF in collaboration with a local Small Business Development Center (SBDC). In total, the BIF has awarded more than \$19 million to 340 businesses.

Photo Source: LA Metro



# COLFAX CORRIDOR RECOMMENDATIONS

ECONOMY

C-E5

POLICY

**Create new affordable housing along Colfax Avenue, providing residents access to transit and amenities.**

BACKGROUND

*With access to great transit service and the planned BRT improvements, Colfax Avenue provides a significant opportunity for new affordable housing development. Locating housing along the corridor will give residents convenient access to jobs, education, services, and amenities.*

*See complete list of strategies in Section 2.2 Economy and Housing.*

STRATEGIES

- A.** Ensure that the value of increased development potential is shared with the community through the provision of affordable housing or other community benefits (See Policy E10 and C-L2).
- B.** Support acquisition of land by the City and/or its partners, such as Denver Housing Authority and community land trust entities, for future affordable housing.
- C.** Promote the use and expansion of tools, such as Low Income Housing Tax Credits, Tax Increment Financing, and the Affordable Housing Fund, to fund development of affordable housing development.
- D.** Ensure new affordable housing is
  1. Affordable to households earning very low, low, and moderate incomes, consistent with adopted city policy.
  2. Sized to accommodate a range of households, including families.
  3. Dedicated as affordable for a period of time consistent with or greater than adopted city policy.
  4. Of similar types to market-rate housing built within the plan area.
- E.** Work with affordable housing developers and managers on transportation demand strategies that help ensure residents have access to multimodal transportation options (Also see Policy C-M9).



# COLFAX CORRIDOR RECOMMENDATIONS

## MOBILITY

### C-M1

#### POLICY

**See POLICY M1: Create bold changes to the mobility system by repurposing street space along key corridors to prioritize safe and accessible walking, biking, rolling, and transit.**

#### BACKGROUND

*Transformative streets identified in the East Central Plan represent the best opportunities to dramatically increase safety and transportation options within Denver. Colfax Ave has the highest number of pedestrian and bicycle related crashes in East Central and currently runs RTD's highest ridership bus route (15, 15L). Public Works' 2017 Pedestrian Crash Analysis found that 14% of all crashes between pedestrians and motorists occurred on Colfax Avenue. The BRT project presents an opportunity to provide a wholesale safety improvement along the Colfax Ave corridor and help meet the City's Vision Zero goals of no traffic deaths or serious injuries.*

*\$55 million in funding for Colfax BRT is included in the Elevate Denver Bond Program approved by voters in 2017. Given that preliminary cost estimates for the full vision for East Colfax BRT are greater than \$55M, the City's path forward is to leverage the bond funding – and additional dollars from other sources – as match dollars for upcoming grant opportunities. Denver is currently developing a detailed project description to determine what local, regional, state and federal grant opportunities would be the best fit for the project.*

#### STRATEGIES

- A.** Colfax Avenue - Transit and Pedestrian Priority
  1. Interim
    - a. Improve intersections and crossings at high crash and high community priority intersections along Colfax through the Vision Zero Program to improve pedestrian safety and comfort.
  2. Short-Term
    - a. Conduct next phase of study and design to advance the vision of center-running bus rapid transit (BRT) and a high-quality pedestrian environment from Colfax Corridor Connections 10% design project.
    - b. Identify funding opportunities to build full center-running BRT vision for corridor.
    - c. Implement locally preferred alternative for Colfax corridor, including center-running bus rapid transit (BRT), improved pedestrian, cyclist, and driver safety at intersections and transit stations, and a beautified corridor featuring a high-quality pedestrian space and placemaking opportunities.





## COLFAX CORRIDOR RECOMMENDATIONS

MOBILITY

C-M2

POLICY  
BACKGROUND  
STRATEGIES

**See POLICY M4: Install new sidewalks.**

*Colfax Avenue has the highest number of crashes involving pedestrians and bicyclists in the city. Bus rapid transit improvements to more efficiently accommodate more people traveling in the corridor furthers City goals of decreasing single occupancy vehicle trips to 50% of all trips by 2030 and creates a safer environment for all, especially through providing safe crossings for people walking, rolling, or biking.*

*Priority locations for Colfax are listed below. For all strategies, see Section 2.3 Mobility.*

- A.** Bring sidewalks up to standard along the Colfax corridor.

C-M3

**See POLICY M5: Install safety and accessibility improvements at existing pedestrian and bicycle crossings**

*Colfax Avenue has the highest number of crashes involving pedestrians and bicyclists in the city. Bus rapid transit improvements to more efficiently accommodate more people traveling in the corridor furthers City goals of decreasing single occupancy vehicle trips to 50% of all trips by 2030 and creates a safer environment for all, especially through providing safe crossings for people walking, rolling, or biking.*

*Priority locations for Colfax are listed below. For all strategies, see Section 2.3 Mobility.*

- A.** Colfax Avenue at Broadway, Lincoln, Pennsylvania, Downing, York, Steele, and Garfield Streets and Colorado Boulevard

C-M4

POLICY  
BACKGROUND  
STRATEGIES

**See POLICY M6: Install new safe, comfortable, and accessible pedestrian and bicycle crossings**

*Colfax Avenue has the highest number of crashes involving pedestrians and bicyclists in the city. New crossings are prioritized in areas with high volumes of pedestrians and cyclists.*

*Priority locations for Colfax are listed below. For all strategies, see Section 2.3 Mobility.*

- A.** Colfax Avenue at Detroit Street

C-M5

**See POLICY M7: Prioritize implementing transit along corridors in East Central**

*Colfax Avenue currently supports the region's highest bus ridership routes (15, 15L) with over 22,000 average daily riders. Providing transit infrastructure improvements that increase transit reliability and frequency can help to improve the transit experience.*

*Priority locations for Colfax are listed below. For all strategies, see Section 2.3 Mobility.*

- A.** Implement high capacity transit (full BRT to rail).
  1. Colfax Avenue



# COLFAX CORRIDOR RECOMMENDATIONS

## MOBILITY

C-M6

POLICY

**See POLICY M8: Install rider amenities at transit stops and better connect transportation modes via mobility hubs**

BACKGROUND

*Colfax Avenue is the highest ridership corridor in the region and has high ridership stops. Creating hubs of access to key mobility connections and alternate modes along the corridor can help to improve mode shift and the overall transit experience.*

STRATEGIES

*Priority locations for Colfax are listed below. For all strategies, see Section 2.3 Mobility.*

- A.** Install customer amenities are priority locations.
  1. Colfax Avenue at Broadway, Downing Street, Park Ave, York Street, Josephine Street, and Colorado Boulevard.

C-M8

POLICY

**Improve curbside management on Colfax Ave.**

BACKGROUND

*Colfax Avenue has a wide variety of demands on curbside space, ranging from parking to passenger and freight loading to placemaking opportunities.*

STRATEGIES

- A.** See Policy M10: Manage and more efficiently use curbside resources
- B.** See Policy M11: Strengthen parking management tools that reflect the city’s strategic parking goals.

C-M7

**See POLICY M9: Study measures to slow traffic along neighborhood streets directly surrounding schools, parks, hospitals, libraries, commercial nodes, and recreation centers**

*Most transit trips begin with walking, and the high ridership transit corridor on Colfax generates significant pedestrian trips. Calming traffic around commercial nodes and destinations on Colfax can help to create a safe, comfortable, and accessible street for everyone.*

*Priority locations for Colfax are listed below. For all strategies, see Section 2.3 Mobility.*

**A.** Commercial Nodes

1. Colfax Avenue from Broadway to Colorado
2. Washington Street from Colfax to 14th Ave
3. Clarkson Street from Colfax to 16th Ave
4. Ogden Street from Colfax to 14th Ave
5. Humboldt Street from Colfax to 16th
6. Park Avenue from Humboldt to Colfax
7. York Street from 17th Ave to Colfax

8. Josephine Street from Colfax to 17th Ave
9. Colorado Boulevard from 14th to 17th Ave

**B.** Recreation Centers

1. Carla Madison Recreation Center

**C.** Schools

1. East High School

**D.** Grocery Stores

1. Sprouts

**E.** Health Facilities

1. National Jewish Health

C-M9

**See POLICY M12: Adopt TDM strategies and policies to shift people’s travel behavior and meet City goals.**

*Because there is easy access to transit, bike routes, sidewalks, and businesses along the Colfax corridor, transportation demand management strategies are likely to succeed in increasing the number of people using transit, biking, or walking as their primary mode of travel.*

*See a complete list of strategies in Section 2.3 Mobility.*



# COLFAX CORRIDOR RECOMMENDATIONS

QUALITY  
OF LIFE

## C-Q1

**POLICY**

**See POLICY Q1: Examine the potential for Historic Park Avenue to connect existing open space, parks and recreational assets.**

**BACKGROUND**

*Members of the community suggested that the parkway, which intersects with Colfax Avenue, could play a key role in connecting people to open space, parks, and recreational assets.*

**STRATEGIES**

*See Section 2.4 Quality of Life*

## C-Q2

**See POLICY Q4: Create new community open space, parks, and recreation facilities.**

*New development along Colfax Avenue provides an opportunity to add open space to the corridor.*

*See Section 2.4 Quality of Life*

## C-Q3

**POLICY**

**See POLICY Q17: Incorporate design elements that activate public spaces and improve safety, particularly in areas that have historically seen higher rates of crime.**

**BACKGROUND**

*Members of the community cited crime and feeling unsafe as barriers to enjoying Colfax Avenue. Additionally, there is a higher concentration of violent crime along the corridor compared to the rest of East Central.*

**STRATEGIES**

*See Section 2.4 Quality of Life*



# COLFAX CORRIDOR RECOMMENDATIONS

QUALITY  
OF LIFE

C-Q4

POLICY

**Strengthen the existing tree canopy and increase tree canopy coverage within the public right-of-way.**

BACKGROUND

*Tree canopy coverage is notably missing along Colfax Avenue where the development pattern includes larger building footprints and more surface parking lots. The community values a robust tree canopy along Colfax Avenue and, as improvements along Colfax Avenue begin to take place, tree canopy coverage will continue to be a critical green asset.*

STRATEGIES

- A.** Coordinate with the City and County of Denver Office of the City Forester to continue to support removal and replacement of deficient existing trees within the public right-of-way to ensure a healthy and sustainable tree canopy and unique community asset.
- B.** Increase coverage of the tree canopy through a city-sponsored community replacement program utilizing Denver-appropriate trees.
- C.** Prioritize preservation of tree canopy in right-of-way design and other city projects.
- D.** Develop educational programming and partnerships within the community to increase understanding around maintenance and care of the tree canopy.
- E.** Support the development of an Urban Forest Plan to meet citywide canopy goals for preservation, maintenance, implementation and funding.

C-Q5

**Increase the pervious surface coverage through the design and implementation of green infrastructure systems to increase environmental performance (infiltration, evaporation, evapotranspiration, carbon sequestration, shade, and urban heat).**

*High impervious surface coverage along Colfax Avenue results from historical development patterns in which permeable surfaces were replaced with parking lots, sidewalks, and rooftops.*

- A.** Explore opportunities to convert existing impervious surface within public right-of-way to pervious surface through the addition of street trees, tree lawn or bulb-outs, trails, parkland or native vegetation.
  1. Coordinate with the design of future contemporary parkways (see Policy Q2).
  2. Integrate with BRT design along Colfax Avenue and the redesign of public right-of way streetscape and remnant parcels to improve infiltration and reduce runoff.
- B.** Develop design guidelines for a contemporary tree lawn.
  1. Remove and replace impervious areas between the sidewalk and street with 4"-6" depressed lawn or streetscape that improves infiltration and reduces runoff.
  2. Coordinate implementation through city roadway, stormwater and sanitary projects within the right-of-way.
  3. Increase the requirements for pervious acreage, water conservation in landscaping and inclusion of natural vegetation for redevelopment and new development.
  4. Work with private property owners, Business Improvement Districts and other neighborhood organizations to transition underutilized paved lots to pervious surfaces.



# 5 IMPLEMENTATION

**IN THIS SECTION:**

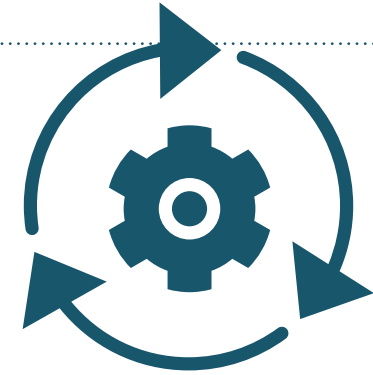
**5.1 IMPLEMENTATION** *(P. 266)*

ARLA MADISON  
CREATION CENTER  
E. COLFAX



## 5.1 IMPLEMENTATION

The East Central Area Plan sets forth the community's vision for the area and includes many recommendations for achieving that vision. To make that vision reality, the plan recommendations must be implemented. This section will describe the types of implementation tools available, identify the recommendations that are priorities for implementation, and explain how implementation efforts will be monitored and tracked. Successfully implementing this plan will require the combined efforts of the city, external organizations, and the community.



### 5.1.1 TYPES OF IMPLEMENTATION

Implementation activities generally fall into three categories: regulatory changes, public infrastructure, and partnerships. Each fills a different role, but all are necessary to successfully achieve the vision.

#### REGULATORY

Most community development comes from private investment. The city can ensure private investment advances city goals by adopting or amending appropriate regulations. These regulations may include rules, requirements, procedures, fees, or laws. Typical examples include Denver Zoning Code text and map amendments, Public Works requirements for infrastructure improvements associated with development projects, and Parks and Recreation requirements regarding the provision of publicly accessible parks and open space. Developing these regulations based on the guidance of this plan will involve additional community engagement. Regulatory and policy implementation priorities for East Central include the following:

- Strategies for incentivizing historic preservation (see Policies L5, L6, & L9).
- Creating an adaptive reuse ordinance (see Policies L4 & C-L1).
- New standards for quality design (see Policies L6, L7, & L8).
- Targeted financial and technical assistance to small businesses along Colfax (see Policies C-E3 & C-E4) in preparation of BRT.

#### PUBLIC INFRASTRUCTURE

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

- Building high quality sidewalks and safe crossings on Colfax (see Policy M1-A).
- Making 13th (see Policy M1-L), 14th (see Policy M1-M), 16th (see Policy M1-N), and 17th (see Policy M1-O) streets much safer to cross and travel down.

#### PARTNERSHIPS

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

- Enhanced social services to residents experiencing homelessness (see Policies E12, E13, & E14).
- Permanently preserving current affordable housing and units with expiring income restrictions (see Policy E9).
- Targeted areas to focus tree planting efforts (see Policy Q5).

## 5.1.2 PRIORITIES

Over the 20-year life of this plan, the city will evolve, recommendations will be implemented, and circumstances will change. All of these will impact which recommendations are the highest priorities for the city to focus on. An appendix will identify the current top priorities and will be updated regularly to reflect the changing situation.

## 5.1.3 SUMMARY OF UPDATES TO BLUEPRINT DENVER

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

- Neighborhood Context (Section 2.1.2)
- Future Places (Section 2.1.3)
- Growth Strategy (Section 2.1.4)
- Street Types (Section 2.3.1)
- Transformative Streets (Modal Priority) (Section 2.3.3)



## 5.1.4 PROGRESS METRICS

Each topic within the Area Wide Recommendations section has associated performance measures to evaluate whether this plan is having the desired impact in achieving the community's vision. However, in addition to measuring the outcomes from the plan, it is also important to track how the recommendations of this plan are implemented. To determine how much progress the city is making in implementing this plan, the number of individual projects the plan calls for under each topic that have been completed will be tracked. See the numbers to the right for the implementation targets.

**18**

**LAND USE & BUILT FORM  
PROJECTS**

**35**

**ECONOMY & HOUSING  
PROJECTS**

**142**

**MOBILITY PROJECTS**

**9**

**QUALITY-OF-LIFE  
INFRASTRUCTURE  
PROJECTS**





**EAST**  
**CENTRAL**  
neighborhood  
PLANNING INITIATIVE



**DENVER**  
COMMUNITY PLANNING  
& DEVELOPMENT