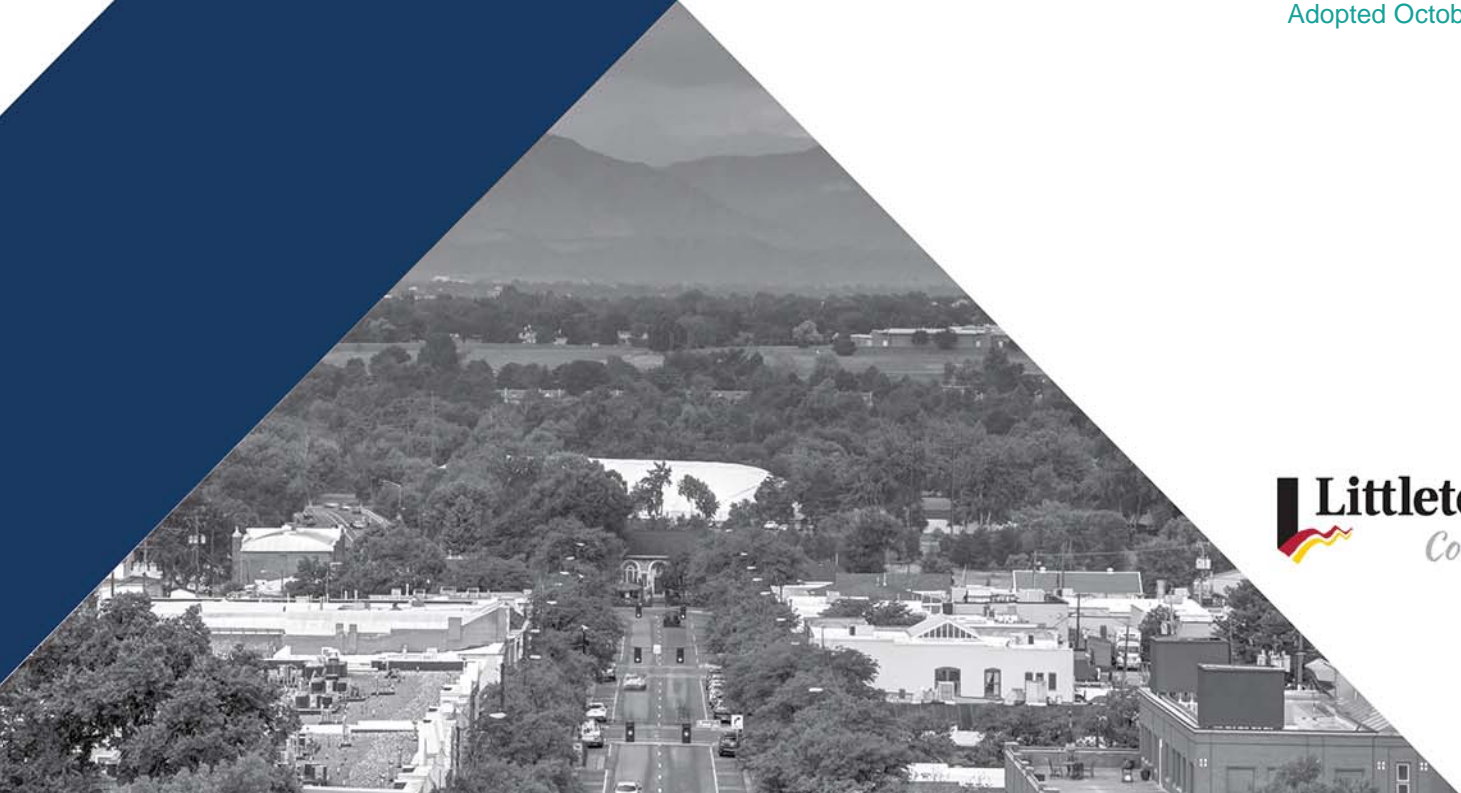




# COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

## FUTURE CITY

Adopted October 15, 2019





---

# ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

## CITY COUNCIL

Debbie Brinkman	Mayor, District IV
Peggy Cole	At Large
Patrick Driscoll	District I
Karina Elrod	At Large
Carol Fey	District III
Kyle Schlachter	At Large
Jerry Valdes	Mayor Pro Tem, District II

## PLANNING COMMISSION

Sherri Almond	
David Bolt	
Craig Coronato	
Dan Miller	
Jason Reynolds	
Mark Rudnicki	Chair
Bruce Stahlman	
Robin Swartzbacker	Chair Pro Tem

## COMMUNITY COORDINATING COMMITTEE (CCC)

Carol Borthwick	At Large Community
Pat Cronenberger	South Metro Housing Options Board
Kate Eckel	Fine Arts Board
Carol Fey	City Council
Pam Grove	Historical Preservation Board
Rob Hanna	South Suburban Park and Recreation District
Joe Haynes	Museum Board
Bill Hopping	LIFT
Randy Houchen	Building Board of Appeals
Geoff Lawton	At Large Business Community
Lisa Matye-Edwards	Arapahoe Community College
Mary McGlone	Littleton Public Schools Foundation
Frank Melara	At Large Business Community
Rich Meredith	At Large Business Community
Grace Perry	At Large Youth
Mike Price	Historical Preservation Board
Louise Richey	Library Board
Mark Rudnicki	Planning Commission
Tammy Whitney	At Large Community

## CITY MANAGEMENT AND STAFF

Mark Relph	City Manager
Randy Young	Deputy City Manager
Samma Fox	Assistant to the City Manager
Kathleen Osher	Innovation and Performance Excellence Manager (Project Manager)
Wendy Heffner	City Clerk
Reid Betzing	City Attorney
Jennifer Henninger	Community Development Director
Mike Sutherland	Community Development Deputy Director

Elizabeth Kay Marchetti	Senior Planner
Andrea Mimnaugh	Senior Planner
Karl Onsager	Planner I
Ryan Thompson	Mediation Program Coordinator
Denise Ciernia	Community Development Executive Assistant
Denise Stephens	Economic Development Director
Eric Ervin	Senior Economic Development Specialist
Colton Harguth	Economic Development Specialist
Keith Reester	Public Works Director
Brent Thompson	City Engineer
Aaron Heumann	Traffic Engineering Manager
Carolyn Roan	Water Resources Manager
Anastasia Urban	Development Services Manager
Shane Roberts	Transportation Planner
Tiffany Hooten	Finance Director
Kelli Narde	Director of Communications
Doug Stephens	Police Chief

## CONSULTANT TEAM

### Kendig Keast Collaborative

Bret Keast, AICP	CEO   Owner
Gary Mitchell, AICP	President (Project Manager)
Meredith Dang, AICP	Practice Leader - Community Planning
Janis Burall, AICP	Senior Associate
Sharon Cadena	Communication Design Associate

### TischlerBise

L. Carson Bise II, AICP	President
Julie Herlands	Vice President
Emily Oliver	Fiscal/Economic Analyst

## THANKS ALSO TO ...

**Individual residents, business owners, property owners, and others who contributed their energy, insights, and ideas to Envision Littleton.**

Littleton Museum and Arapahoe Community College for hosting events in the **Envision Littleton Speaker Series**, and all who attended to hear from:

**Chris Akers** – State Demography Office, Colorado Department of Local Affairs (February 27, 2019)  
*Transitions – Population and Economic Trends*

**Darin A. Atteberry** – City Manager of Fort Collins, Colorado (April 19, 2019)  
*Bigger Community Vision*

**Bret C. Keast, AICP** – CEO of Kendig Keast Collaborative (May 22, 2019)  
*Zoning for Community Character*

**Peter Kageyama** – Author and Consultant (September 12, 2019)  
*For the Love of Cities*

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>INTRODUCTION</b>	1
Plan Purpose	1
Use of the Plan	1
City Authority to Prepare and Adopt Plan	2
Plan Content Overview	2
Pathways to Action	3
Community Location and Features	4
Population Growth Projections	4
Alternative Growth Scenarios	4
<i>Figure 1: Littleton Population Projection Scenarios, 2017-2040</i>	6
<b>EXISTING CITY</b>	7
Issues Linked to Data and Input	7
From Input and Vision to Plan and Action	7
Regional Factors and Considerations	9
<i>Table 1: Metro Vision and Envision Littleton Links</i>	9
<b>FUTURE CITY</b>	
<b>UNIFYING VISION AND GUIDING PRINCIPLES</b>	11
Vision 2040	11
Values	12
Guiding Principles	13
<b>LAND USE AND COMMUNITY CHARACTER</b>	14
Future Land Use and Character	15
<i>Future Land Use Map versus Zoning Map</i>	15
Land Use Planning Versus Zoning	16
Land Use Planning With Character	16
<i>Community Character Primer</i>	16
<i>Map 1: Future Land Use and Character in Littleton CO</i>	after 18
Land Use Quantities on Map	40
<i>Table 2: Future Land Use and Character Allocation</i>	40
Legacy of Past Planning	41

Key Issues and Considerations .....	41
Framework for Action .....	41
Goals .....	41
Policies .....	41
Actions .....	42
Potential Partners .....	43
<b>HOUSING AND NEIGHBORHOODS .....</b>	<b>44</b>
Legacy of Past Planning .....	45
Key Issues and Considerations .....	45
Framework for Action .....	45
Goals .....	45
Policies .....	46
Actions .....	46
Potential Partners .....	47
<b>TRANSPORTATION .....</b>	<b>50</b>
Legacy of Past Planning .....	51
Key Issues and Considerations .....	52
Transportation Master Plan Mission Statement .....	52
Framework for Action .....	52
Goals .....	52
Policies .....	53
Actions .....	54
<b>INFRASTRUCTURE AND SERVICES .....</b>	<b>56</b>
Legacy of Past Planning .....	57
Key Issues and Considerations .....	57
Framework for Action .....	57
Goals .....	57
Policies .....	58
Actions .....	58
Potential Partners .....	59
<b>ECONOMY AND TAX BASE .....</b>	<b>60</b>
Legacy of Past Planning .....	61

Key Issues and Considerations .....	61
Framework for Action .....	61
Goals .....	61
Policies .....	61
Actions .....	62
Potential Partners .....	63
<b>HERITAGE, ARTS, RECREATION, AND TOURISM .....</b>	<b>64</b>
Legacy of Past Planning .....	65
Key Issues and Considerations .....	65
Framework for Action .....	65
Goals .....	65
Policies .....	66
Actions .....	66
Potential Partners .....	67
<i>Arts and Culture</i> .....	69
<b>ENVIRONMENT .....</b>	<b>70</b>
Legacy of Past Planning .....	71
Key Issues and Considerations .....	71
Framework for Action .....	71
Goals .....	71
Policies .....	72
Actions .....	72
Potential Partners .....	73
<b>SPECIAL AREAS AND DESIGN .....</b>	<b>74</b>
Legacy of Past Planning .....	75
<i>South Platte River Corridor</i> .....	76
Key Issues and Considerations .....	78
Framework for Action .....	78
Goals .....	78
Policies .....	78
Actions .....	79



**IMPLEMENTATION** ..... 82

Plan Administration ..... 83

    Leadership Alignment ..... 83

    Definition of Roles ..... 83

    Action Agenda ..... 86

    Envision Littleton Amendment Process ..... 86

**APPENDICES** ..... 89

APPENDIX 1: Glossary

APPENDIX 2: Envision Littleton 2040 Report (adopted by City Council on December 18, 2018)

APPENDIX 3: Existing City Data Book

*Map of Existing Land Use and Character in Littleton CO (as of Summer 2018)*

*Map of Borrowed Space in Littleton CO (as of Summer 2018)*

APPENDIX 4: Community Engagement Process and Summary Results

APPENDIX 5: Fiscal Impact Analysis Report



# INTRODUCTION

The Envision Littleton Comprehensive Plan (the Plan) will guide future development, redevelopment, and community enhancement efforts over the next 20 years through 2040. It serves as a framework for thoughtful community discussion on the real and perceived challenges currently facing Littleton, and opportunities that will shape its future. Through long-range planning efforts, the community can accommodate its projected growth and revitalization in a manner that preserves its history, culture, and overall quality of life for current and future residents.

The Plan resulted from an 18-month planning and community engagement process. The process began with the Envision Littleton Vision Report, adopted unanimously by City Council on December 18, 2018. The Vision Report established a unifying vision and identified Littleton's core values, guiding principles, shared priorities, and concerns. The Plan's findings and recommendations focus on the physical and economic aspects of the community's projected growth and development in the coming years. It provides goals, policies, and actions that will help City officials, appointees, and staff in determining the location, financing, and sequencing of public improvements; administering development regulations; and guiding reinvestment efforts. The Plan also provides a basis for coordinating the actions of many different functions and interests within and outside of municipal government.

## PLAN PURPOSE

A comprehensive plan is the most important policy document a municipal government prepares and maintains. This is because the Plan:

- Lays out a long-range vision regarding the growth and enhancement of the community;
- Considers at once the city's regional context, and the entire geographic area of the community, including areas where new development and redevelopment may occur;
- Assesses near- and longer-term needs and desires across a variety of inter-related topics that represent the key "building blocks" of a community (e.g., land use, transportation, urban design, economic development, housing, neighborhoods, parks and recreation, heritage and tourism, arts and culture, utility infrastructure, public facilities and services, cultural facilities, etc.); and
- Serves as a guideline for measuring success, and is amended from time to time to remain a "living document" that is able to address changing circumstances.

Through a comprehensive plan, a community determines how best to accommodate and manage its projected growth, and the revitalization of older neighborhoods and commercial areas. The Plan aims to ensure that ongoing development will proceed in an orderly, well-planned manner so that public facilities and services can keep pace with development, and so that residents' quality of life will be enhanced.

Significantly, by clarifying and stating the City's intentions regarding the area's physical development and infrastructure investment, the Plan also creates a greater level of predictability for residents, land owners, developers, potential investors, and partner agencies and organizations.

## USE OF THE PLAN

This Plan will take our community to a new level in terms of livability and tangible accomplishments. The Plan is ultimately a guidance document for City officials and staff, who must make decisions on a daily basis that will determine the future direction, financial health, and "look and feel" of the community. These decisions are carried out through:

- Targeted programs and expenditures prioritized through the City's annual budget process, including routine essential functions such as code compliance.
- Major public improvements and land acquisitions financed through the City's budgeting efforts.
- New and amended City ordinances and regulations that implement Plan objectives.
- Departmental work plans and resources in key areas.
- Support for ongoing planning and studies that will further clarify needs, costs, benefits, and strategies.

- Pursuit of external grant funding to supplement local budgets and/or expedite certain planning and infrastructure projects.
- Initiatives pursued in conjunction with other public and private partners to leverage resources and achieve successes neither could accomplish on their own.

Despite these many avenues for action, the Plan should not be considered the solution for every tough problem Littleton faces. The Plan focuses primarily on the responsibilities of City government in the physical planning arena, where municipalities have a more direct and extensive role than in other areas that residents value such as education and social services. Of necessity, long-range plans, as vision and policy documents, also must remain relatively general.

The resulting Plan may not touch on every challenge before the community, but it is meant to set a tone and motivate concerted efforts to move the community forward in coming years.

## CITY AUTHORITY TO PREPARE AND ADOPT PLAN

Through Title 31, Government – Municipal Powers and Functions of Cities and Town, of the Colorado Revised Statutes, the State of Colorado puts community planning among the core duties of a local planning commission. As stated in C.R.S. 31-23-206: “It is the duty of the commission to make and adopt a master plan for the physical development of the municipality, including any areas outside its boundaries, subject to the approval of the governmental body having jurisdiction thereof, which in the commission’s judgment bear relation to the planning of such municipality.”

As in most states, the State of Colorado also identifies a municipality’s comprehensive plan as a key source of guidance for local development regulations. As stated in C.R.S. 31-23-206, elements in the plan may include recreation and tourism (required by the state statute), transportation, land use, housing, economic development, parks and open space, capital improvements, and water supply, among others.

Along with state statutes, the City of Littleton operates under an adopted City Charter and City Code. Title 2, Boards and Commissions, Chapter 9 of the adopted City Code establishes the Planning Commission. Among the duties itemized, the Charter requires that the Commission “shall recommend to the city council comprehensive plans to guide future growth and development within the city which includes, for example, land use, streets and transportation, parks and open space, pedestrian circulation, and urban design.”

Littleton’s longstanding commitment to planning and community dialogue is exemplified by the many past plans and studies cited within this Plan. As the newest adopted statement of a unifying community vision and associated guiding principles, goals, and policies, this Plan replaces any and all Comprehensive Plans previously adopted by the City. As warranted, City Council may direct the Planning Commission to deliberate and provide recommendations in cases where any identified or perceived discrepancies between the Plan and previous special area or special purpose plans are especially pertinent to upcoming decisions involving City policies, priorities, and actions.

## PLAN CONTENT OVERVIEW

While the Existing City Data Book provides background and insights about Littleton as it is today, the Plan focuses on Littleton as it intends to be in the years ahead. These aspirations are presented in topic areas central to Littleton’s physical growth and development. Each Plan section contains several common components:

- **Legacy of Past Planning.** Plans and studies previously developed for Littleton and vicinity offer insights from the time they were prepared, and provide an essential foundation for this Plan.
- **Key Issues and Considerations.** These reflect input and discussions from varied Envision Littleton community engagement activities, workshops with City Council and Planning Commission, and interaction with other City boards/commissions, City departments, and partner agencies and organizations.
- **Framework for Action.** The framework is organized in three tiers: (1) Goals, (2) Policies, and (3) Actions.

### Comprehensive Plan Topic Areas

- Land Use and Community Character (L&C)
- Housing and Neighborhoods (H&N)
- Transportation (TMP)
- Infrastructure and Services (I&S)
- Economy and Tax Base (E&T)
- Heritage, Arts, Recreation, and Tourism (HART)
- Environment (ENV)
- Special Areas and Design (S&D)

- A **Goal** is a statement of a desired outcome (“end”) toward which efforts are directed as expressed by more specific objectives and action steps (“means”).
- A **Policy** expresses a basic value or operating philosophy that will apply regardless of the course of action ultimately chosen.
- A strategic **Action** priority is aimed at seizing a special opportunity or addressing a particular challenge one faces, given limited resources, financial and otherwise – and recognizing that a broader agenda of new or ongoing activities will also be pursued in the meantime.

The actions in each section convey tangible steps that will lead to achievement of the goals in line with the stated policies. A final section with considerations and procedures for implementation and periodic updates rounds out the Plan.

## PATHWAYS TO ACTION

The actions under each plan topic are presented in five categories that represent the major ways that Plan goals and initiatives are typically advanced and accomplished:

### Capital Investments

Littleton uses a multi-year Capital Improvement Program, or “CIP,” to identify and budget for “big ticket” projects, especially those that must be phased and/or coordinated with other initiatives. This may include street infrastructure; water, sanitary sewer, and storm drainage improvements; parks, trails, and recreation facility construction and upgrades; construction and renovation of public buildings; and purchase of land, vehicles, or major equipment. With a typical five-year outlook, a CIP provides predictability regarding the City’s capital investment plans and priorities for the benefit and awareness of private interests and residents. Anticipating and adequately budgeting for major capital projects will be essential to implementing the Plan. Likewise, decisions regarding the prioritization of proposed capital improvements should reflect the direction and priorities of the Plan.

### Programs and Initiatives

Programs involve the routine activities of City departments and staff, and special projects and initiatives they may undertake. As part of Plan implementation, this method may include initiating new, or adjusting existing, City programs and activities; expanding community outreach efforts; or providing specialized training to accomplish a priority objective more promptly and effectively.

### Regulations and Standards

Because private investment decisions account for a vast majority of the City’s physical form, land development regulations and engineering standards are fundamental for Plan implementation. Zoning, subdivision regulations, and associated development criteria and technical engineering standards are key to ensuring that the form, character, and quality of development reflect the City’s planning objectives. These codes should

## PLAN ASSUMPTIONS

The Future City portion of the Plan was prepared assuming the following, as discussed with City Council and Planning Commission:

### Jurisdiction

- The city limits will not change or expand significantly over the Plan horizon through 2040 (through annexation or interaction with adjacent cities).

### Population

- Littleton’s population *could* increase from almost 48,000 in 2017 to the 60,000 range by 2040, as projected by the Plan consultant (Kendig Keast Collaborative) based on newest available U.S. Census Bureau estimates and recent trend data.

### Metro Position

- Littleton will be even less of a Denver Metro Area “edge city” with Sterling Ranch emerging as a next major growth area south of Highlands Ranch.

### Asset Management

- The City will likely devote more attention and capital investment to maintaining and upgrading aging municipal infrastructure and facilities in the years ahead.

### Municipal Services

- As now, the City will not have direct operational responsibility for some typical municipal activities:

- Water supply and treatment (Denver Water)
- Fire service (South Metro Fire Rescue)
- Parks and trails (South Suburban Park and Recreation District)

As a lead partner along with the City of Englewood, Littleton will continue to operate a regional wastewater treatment plant that serves various other jurisdictions through South Platte Water Renewal Partners.

### Water Supply and Conservation

- Long-term water supply and efficient use/re-use will be a core focus for the entire metro area through 2040 and beyond.

advance the community's desire for quality development outcomes while recognizing economic and community character factors. They should not delay or interfere unnecessarily with development deemed consistent with Plan principles and directives.

## Partnerships and Coordination

Some community initiatives identified in the Plan cannot be accomplished by City government alone. They may require direct coordination, intergovernmental agreements, or funding support from other public entities or levels of government. Additionally, the unique role of potential private and non-profit partners to advance the community's action agenda should not be underestimated. This may occur through cooperative efforts, volunteer activities, and in-kind services (which can count toward the local match requirements for various grant opportunities), and from public/private financing of community improvements.

## More Targeted Planning / Study

Various areas of City governance require more detailed study and planning, especially as required to qualify for external funding opportunities. These studies involve targeted planning work at a "finer grain" level of detail than is appropriate for comprehensive planning purposes (e.g., utility master plans, roadway alignment studies, etc.). As such, some parts of the Plan will be implemented only after additional planning or special studies that clarify next steps and associated costs and considerations, including clarification of roles and potential cost-sharing when partnering is involved.

# COMMUNITY LOCATION AND FEATURES

The City of Littleton is located in central Colorado, within the Front Range of the Southern Rocky Mountains. The South Platte River flows from south to north through Littleton, with additional tributaries also running through the city.

Littleton is the county seat of Arapahoe County, with the majority of the city located within Arapahoe County and small portions located in Douglas and Jefferson counties. Littleton is part of the greater Denver metropolitan region and is approximately nine miles south of Downtown Denver.

Littleton is accessible via two Regional Transportation District (RTD) light rail stations, Downtown and at Mineral Avenue, and is home to the main campus of Arapahoe Community College. The city limits encompass a total area of approximately 13.8 square miles. According to the U.S. Census Bureau, Littleton had a 2010 population of 41,737 and an estimated 2017 population of 47,734.

Littleton lies 5,351 feet above sea level and has an average temperature range of 35-64 degrees, an average rainfall of 16.3 inches per year, and an average of 65.7 inches of snowfall per year. Given its location along the South Platte River and extensive open space, parks, and trails, Littleton is home to a range of recreation activities. Littleton also retains its original and historic downtown. The recreational and historical aspects of the community continue to attract tourists to Littleton.

# POPULATION GROWTH PROJECTIONS

Population projections are an important component of a long-range planning process. They help determine and quantify the demands that will be placed on public facilities and services based on the potential pace and scale of the community's physical growth. Projections reflect local, regional, national, and international trends and offer a basis to prepare for the future. However, forecasting population changes can be challenging, particularly for the long term, because it is often difficult to account for all circumstances that may arise. Therefore, it will be important for the City to monitor population and economic growth continually to account for both short- and longer-term shifts that can influence development activity and trends in the community and larger region.

# ALTERNATIVE GROWTH SCENARIOS

Demographers caution that population projections become trickier as the geographic area gets smaller, making city-level population the most difficult to forecast. This is because local population change is strongly influenced by less predictable factors such as housing prices, availability of vacant land to develop, and annexation of additional territory, which may already have existing residents and results in an instant increase in the citywide total.

Given this context, this section provides a comparison of several potential scenarios for future population change in Littleton. The projections build on the latest U.S. Census estimate of 47,734 for 2017 and identify potential population levels in five-year increments out to 2040. The four projection alternatives displayed in **Figure 1**, below, reflect:

- If Littleton continued to experience an increase in population at a **Steady Growth Rate** of 1.9 percent per year as has occurred most recently in the years from 2010 through 2017. Similar to how interest compounds in a savings account, this is an “exponential growth” scenario because the numerical change gets larger each year as the same rate of increase – 1.9 percent in this case – is applied to an expanding total population.
- If Littleton maintained its respective 2010 shares of the total populations in Arapahoe and Jefferson counties (Douglas County was not included as Littleton is such a tiny share of the Douglas total). The portion of Littleton within Arapahoe County accounted for 7.3 percent of the countywide population in 2010, and the Jefferson County portion of Littleton was 7.8 percent of the Jefferson total population. This is known as the **Fixed County Step Down** scenario.
- If Littleton’s respective 2010 shares of the total populations in Arapahoe and Jefferson counties decreased over time rather than remain constant as above. This is known as the **Trending County Step Down** scenario and assumes that, by 2040, Littleton’s share of the Arapahoe County population would decrease from 7.3 to 6.3 percent. Likewise, Littleton’s share of the Jefferson County population would drop from 7.8 to 6.5 percent.
- If Littleton continued to experience an increase in population involving **Steady Numeric Growth** of 8,567 persons per decade through the current decade and then also in the 2020s and 2030s. In contrast to the exponential growth scenario above, this is a “linear growth” scenario as the numeric growth remains fixed rather than the growth rate. The assumption of fixed numeric growth means that the 1.9 percent annual growth rate experienced recently from 2010 through 2017 would drop to 1.6 percent during the 2020s, then to 1.4 percent during the 2030s.

## Bottom Line

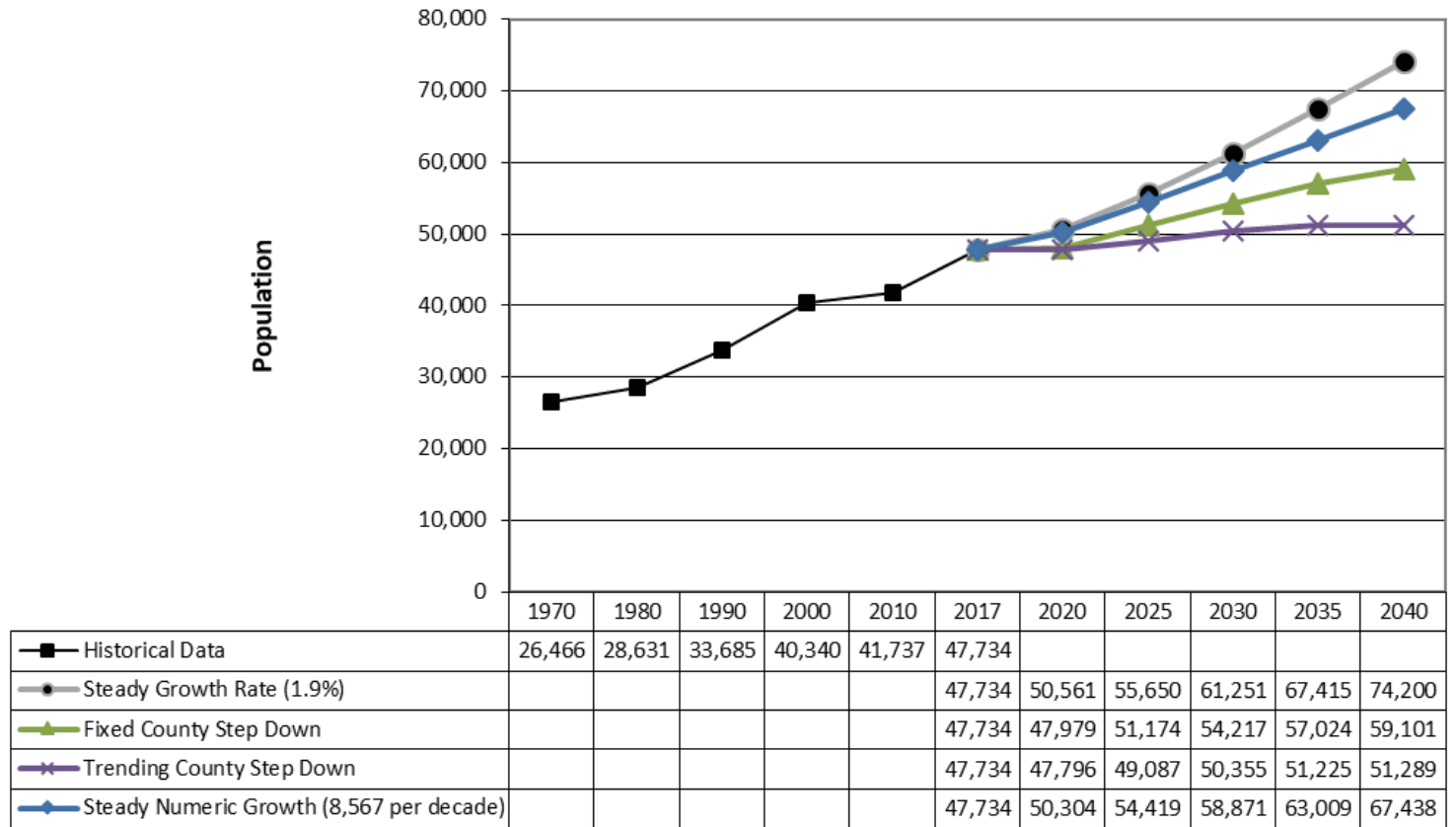
Littleton should consider a range of potential growth rather than an absolute number given the uncertainty of any small-area forecast that extends beyond a few years. **It is assumed for this Plan that Littleton’s 2040 population will fall within a forecast range of 51,289 to 74,200 persons, which yields a midpoint of 62,745 residents.**

The midpoint of a potential growth range to assume for this Plan would mean **nearly 15,000 additional residents over 20 years**. This suggests that Littleton could add the equivalent of 31 percent of its 2017 base-year population by 2040. For perspective, Census 2010 reported an average household size in Littleton of 2.29 persons, meaning that **6,550 additional housing units would be needed to accommodate 15,000 added residents**.

An **essential caveat** is that the scenarios above are projections of what *could* occur in Littleton over the next several decades based on recent trends and/or specified assumptions. Because Littleton is largely built out, to what extent the potential growth can be absorbed – or absorbed at some lesser level or not at all – will depend on the City’s zoning framework and other municipal policy decisions going forward (e.g., regarding housing strategies, open space preservation, economic development, etc.). Throughout Envision Littleton, City officials stated their intent to proceed directly into a comprehensive evaluation and update of Littleton’s zoning and development codes. The outcomes of that next phase will determine the type and nature of new development that can occur on remaining vacant land, along with parameters for redevelopment and infill activity in existing developed areas.



**FIGURE 1: Littleton Population Projection Scenarios, 2017-2040**



Source: Kendig Keast Collaborative based on U.S. Census Bureau historical data and 2017 estimates.

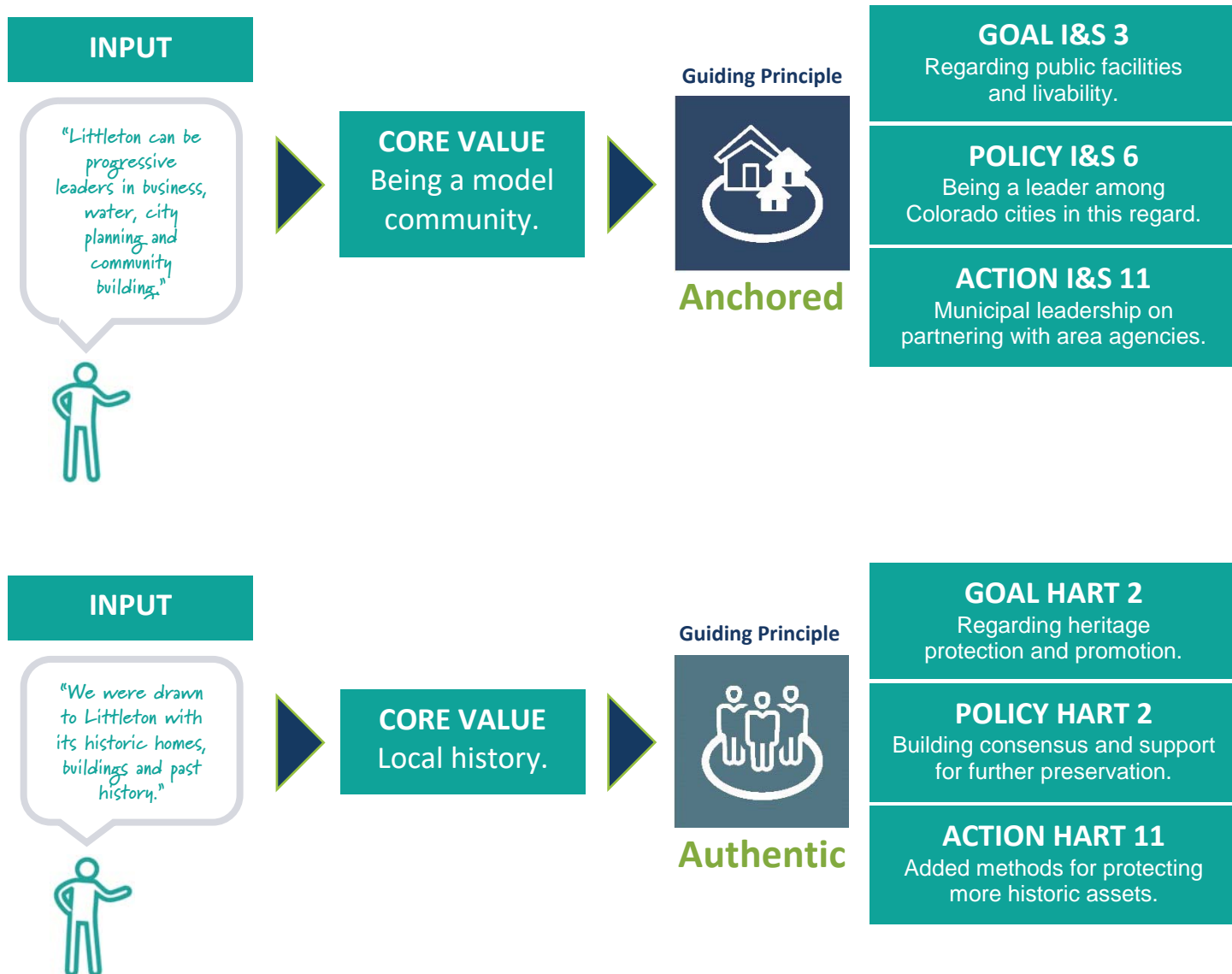
## EXISTING CITY

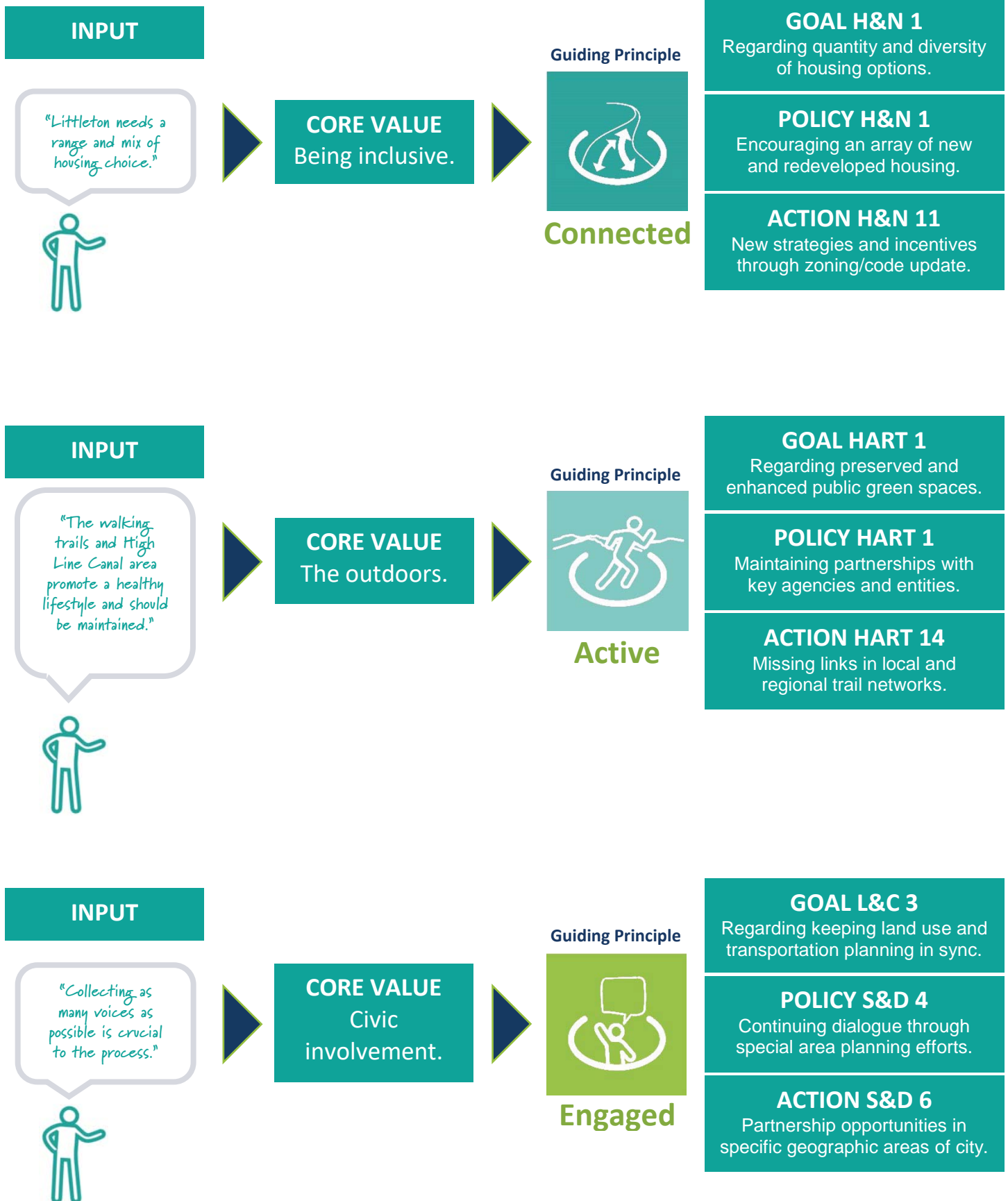
### ISSUES LINKED TO DATA AND INPUT

The Existing City Data Book, included as an appendix to the Plan, highlights key indicators and background information about Littleton as it is today. Compiling this data was step one in the 2019 Envision Littleton efforts to prepare a new Comprehensive Plan and create a first-ever Transportation Master Plan (TMP).

The Data Book content for the Comprehensive Plan was based on initial background studies by the City's community planning consultant, Kendig Keast Collaborative. The intent was to avoid duplication of available, more extensive profiles of Littleton. Instead, the booklet focuses on selected data points that speak to community values and priorities expressed by residents and other stakeholders as input to the Vision Report adopted by City Council in December 2018. Narrative within each section notes how a data point further validates aspects of the Vision Report and/or highlights essential planning considerations for the years ahead. The examples below show how input and data ultimately shaped this Plan.

### FROM INPUT AND VISION TO PLAN AND ACTION







## REGIONAL FACTORS AND CONSIDERATIONS

Littleton is part of the Denver Regional Council of Governments (DRCOG) planning area that covers the greater Denver region (including Adams, Arapahoe, Boulder, Clear Creek, Douglas, Gilpin, and Jefferson counties; the City and County of Denver; the City and County of Broomfield; and southwest Weld County). Metro Vision is the regional plan for the DRCOG region. As the 2017 plan version states, “the Metro Vision plan does not replace the vision of any individual community; rather it is a tool to promote regional cooperation on issues that extend beyond jurisdictional boundaries.”

The Metro Vision Outcomes listed below are shared regionwide aspirations. Each jurisdiction contributes toward achieving these outcomes in a manner appropriate to its local circumstances and priorities. Highlighted below in **Table 1, Metro Vision and Envision Littleton Links**, are areas where the Metro Vision Outcomes and Envision Littleton are aligned.

**TABLE 1: Metro Vision and Envision Littleton Links**

METRO VISION OUTCOME	ENVISION LITTLETON
THE REGION IS COMPRISED OF DIVERSE, LIVABLE COMMUNITIES.	Goals L&C 1, 3 Policies L&C 4, 6 Actions L&C 1, 5, 6 Goal H&N 1 Policies H&N 1, 4 Actions H&N 2, 11 Goals HART 2, 4 Policies HART 2, 8 Actions HART 6, 11, 24, 25
THROUGH A COORDINATED EFFORT BETWEEN DRCOG AND LOCAL COMMUNITIES, NEW URBAN DEVELOPMENT OCCURS IN AN ORDERLY AND COMPACT PATTERN WITHIN REGIONALLY DESIGNATED GROWTH AREAS.	Goal L&C 3 Action E&T 9 Policy S&D 7 Action S&D 3
CONNECTED URBAN CENTERS AND MULTIMODAL CORRIDORS THROUGHOUT THE REGION ACCOMMODATE A GROWING SHARE OF THE REGION'S HOUSING AND EMPLOYMENT.	Policies TMP 6, 28 Goals S&D 2, 4 Policy S&D 5 Actions S&D 5, 7
THE REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM IS WELL-CONNECTED AND SERVES ALL MODES OF TRAVEL.	Goals TMP 1, 3 Policies TMP 6, 14, 24, 25, 26, 29, 30
THE TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM IS SAFE, RELIABLE AND WELL-MAINTAINED.	Goal TMP 2 Policies TMP 1, 4, 5, 7, 27
THE REGION HAS CLEAN WATER AND AIR, AND LOWER GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSIONS.	Goals ENV 1, 2, 3, 4 Policies ENV 1, 2, 3, 8 Actions ENV 2, 3, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12
THE REGION VALUES, PROTECTS AND CONNECTS PEOPLE TO ITS DIVERSE NATURAL RESOURCE AREAS, OPEN SPACE, PARKS AND TRAILS.	Policy L&C 5 Policy H&N 8 Goals HART 1, 3 Policies HART 1, 3, 4 Actions HART 1, 2, 3, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 22
THE REGION'S WORKING AGRICULTURAL LANDS AND ACTIVITIES CONTRIBUTE TO A STRONG REGIONAL FOOD SYSTEM.	Goal ENV 1
THE RISKS AND EFFECTS OF NATURAL AND HUMAN-CREATED HAZARDS ARE REDUCED.	Policy I&S 4 Actions I&S 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 15, 16

METRO VISION OUTCOME	ENVISION LITTLETON
THE BUILT AND NATURAL ENVIRONMENT SUPPORTS HEALTHY AND ACTIVE CHOICES.	Goal HART 3 Actions HART 13, 14
THE REGION'S RESIDENTS HAVE EXPANDED CONNECTIONS TO HEALTH SERVICES.	Policy H&N 4 Action E&T 13 Goal HART 3 Actions HART 13, 14
DIVERSE HOUSING OPTIONS MEET THE NEEDS OF RESIDENTS OF ALL AGES, INCOMES AND ABILITIES.	Policy L&C 3 Action L&C 5 Goals H&N 1, 2 Policies H&N 1, 2, 3, 5 Actions H&N 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 10, 11, 12, 15, 16
ALL RESIDENTS HAVE ACCESS TO A RANGE OF TRANSPORTATION, EMPLOYMENT, COMMERCE, HOUSING, EDUCATIONAL, CULTURAL AND RECREATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES.	Policy L&C 3 Action L&C 5 Goal TMP 3 Policy TMP 25 Goals H&N 1, 2 Policies H&N 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 Actions H&N 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 10, 11, 12, 15, 16 Goal E&T 5 Policy E&T 10 Actions E&T 13, 16 Actions HART 6, 13, 14, 16
INVESTMENTS IN INFRASTRUCTURE AND AMENITIES ALLOW PEOPLE AND BUSINESSES TO THRIVE AND PROSPER.	Goal H&N 5 Goals I&S 1, 3 Policies I&S 1, 2, 3, 6 Actions I&S 1, 2, 11, 12, 13, 17 Goal E&T 4 Actions E&T 1, 6, 7, 16 Policy HART 6

# UNIFYING VISION AND GUIDING PRINCIPLES

## VISION 2040

### From What We Treasure Today ...

Littleton will continue to be a hometown community that is widely known and envied as a city with “strong bones.” Among the features that earn Littleton this reputation are its historic and vibrant downtown, its light rail transit link to the Denver region, and its distinguishing yet often unseen natural asset, the South Platte River. Along with the highly utilized greenway, trails, and preserves that frame the Platte, residents and visitors also prize the High Line Canal Trail that weaves through the city.

Littleton will especially be held up as the “real thing” when it comes to maintaining a sense of community among its residents and managing the essential physical traits that define community character, neighborhood by distinct neighborhood.

It will remain a place where nature and city living intersect, can both be enjoyed, and are guarded with a fierce sense of stewardship.

### ... To What We Strive For Going Forward

We recognize that our vision for Littleton’s future is framed differently than many communities as we are a largely built-out city. As we focus on managing change amid this reality, we envision a Littleton in 2040 that has:

- Maintained the integrity of its established neighborhoods and historic areas.
- Protected its cherished natural setting in harmony with new development and redevelopment.
- Ensured that reinvestment in the community, whether in Littleton’s legacy housing stock or along its commercial corridors, has met local expectations for quality and compatibility with its surroundings.
- Made itself even safer and more accessible for all the ways that people navigate through and within Littleton.
- Achieved a higher standard for cleanliness and burnished its appeal as a place with strikingly beautiful vistas.
- Secured the long-term sustainability of city finances to continue providing its citizens the best in public services.

A **Vision** is a broad statement of what a community hopes and intends to be in the future. With words and images, it offers a picture of that future to provide inspiration, motivation, and a framework for more detailed planning and decision-making.

## VALUES

In listening to stories and memories about Littleton, along with residents' desires and concerns for its future, the following values came through consistently. The bulleted items under each are examples of how those expressing such values related them to their own experience of or pride in Littleton. Many communities share common values, issues, and priorities (e.g., to be a safe place). **Littleton's core values include a passion for and/or commitment to:**

**Values** identify what matters most to the community and how it wishes to be viewed by others. Our shared values inform the vision.

### Local History

- Preserve and celebrate it
- Highlight and tie it to our identity and events
- Origin as own town, rural and later suburban heritage
- Build on accomplishments of past eras and leaders

### The Outdoors

- Health and fitness focus
- Front Range proximity
- Stewardship of river and open space assets

### Being Inclusive

- Age, race, income, and faith diversity
- Housing options
- Neighbors knowing neighbors
- Caring for those in need
- Welcoming to families, newcomers, and visitors

### Being a Model Community

- Leader among metro and Colorado cities
- High in livability, family-friendly, and other rankings
- Partnerships with other public agencies

### Civic Involvement

- Being informed citizens
- Having a voice in city government
- Volunteer service

### Integrity

- Of community and neighborhood character
- Of natural resources and open space endowment
- Of architectural heritage and landmarks
- Of governance and open, inclusive processes

### Quality

- Schools
- Built environment
- Air and water
- Open space
- Public services

### Safety

- Pedestrian/cyclist/driver safety
- Security from crime
- Child protection

## GUIDING PRINCIPLES



**Even in the face of potentially significant demographic change ahead, Littleton will remain ANCHORED by a firm belief among its residents and leaders of what makes this a truly special place.** These features include Littleton's traditional downtown, established neighborhoods, and the literal "river that runs through it" in the South Platte. Littleton also has a longstanding reputation as a community of choice for quality schools and is home to the Arapahoe Community College main campus. Serving as the Arapahoe County seat, a destination for health care, and a hub for cultural and lifestyle amenities also keeps a consistent conception of Littleton in the minds of residents and visitors. Although stable in these various ways today, Littleton will approach its future with a sense of dynamism, looking to draw upon a culture of innovation and boldness inherited from earlier generations.



**Littleton will continue to be AUTHENTIC and comfortable for both residents and guests.** The often-cited "small town feel" and sense of community dates to our origin as a "Little Town" separate and apart from Denver. Littleton will continue to stand out in the region for its distinctive identity. Its genuine sense of place will always be contrasted with the look and feel of cities that came along much later or were master planned from scratch. The essential threads that will continue to sustain this community fabric include Littleton's historic character and architectural heritage, its varied neighborhoods and residential options, a robust and service-oriented faith community, and an inviting and safe atmosphere.



**Littleton will be an increasingly CONNECTED and accessible place.** From a physical and mobility standpoint, it will continue to have regional ties via highways and arterials, transit services, long-distance trails, and the Mary Carter Greenway. Evolving technology and network speeds will link it even more to the nation and world. It will be an inclusive and neighborly community that provides opportunities for youth, seniors, and residents in need to thrive, including through more mobility options. Littleton will also remain a fun and eventful locale throughout the year, bringing residents together for leisure and volunteer activities, and drawing visitors from near and far.



**Littleton will always be a community of ACTIVE people who make the most of their city's cultural and natural resource abundance.** It will support its residents' efforts to be fit and maintain a healthy lifestyle. It will embrace their desire to gather for live performances and other local happenings. And it will appreciate and build on the value of a lively downtown. Littleton will always seek to elevate its position as a dream community for

outdoor recreation and nature enthusiasts – and a destination for visitors wishing to share in these local amenities.

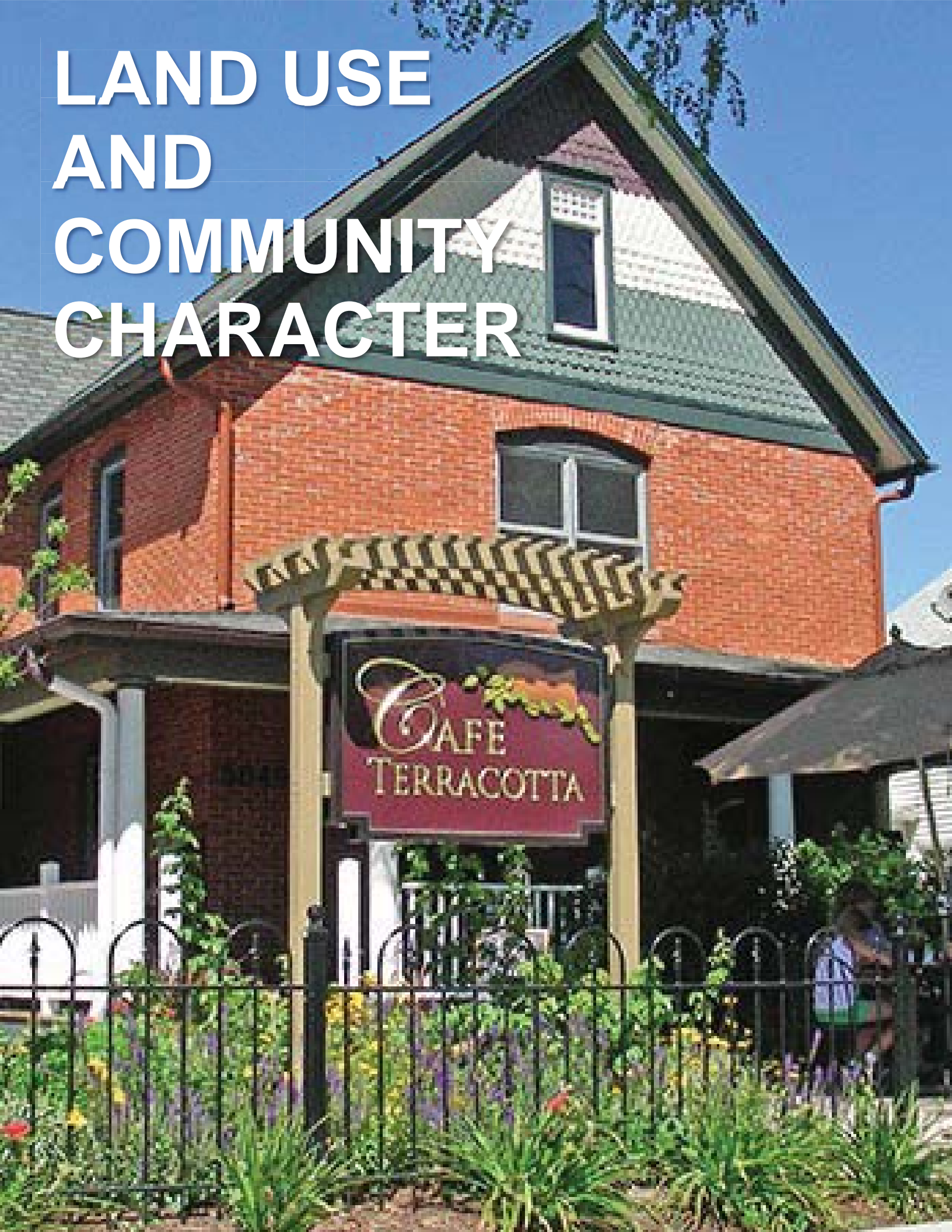


**Littleton will remain ENGAGED and civic-minded in all matters affecting the direction and priorities of city government and the community.** Stakeholders will participate in transparent processes and take responsibility for maintaining a respectful and productive dialogue. Meaningful interactions must involve committed elected officials, informed residents, and other partner organizations and agencies interested in Littleton as it is

today and will be tomorrow.

**Guiding Principles** describe the values identified by the community and serve as the foundation for the Vision. The Guiding Principles provide a reference point for Littleton to consider when making decisions. The guiding principles reflect major themes, or areas of focus, for achieving the desired vision that emerged based on analysis of input by stakeholders.

# LAND USE AND COMMUNITY CHARACTER





## LAND USE AND COMMUNITY CHARACTER

The City of Littleton must plan effectively for future development and redevelopment, and for ongoing stewardship of areas intended to remain much as they are. Sound land use planning is essential to ensuring that the City is prepared to serve anticipated public infrastructure and service needs, and also to create and maintain desired community character.

Land use considerations are integrated with all other Plan components. For instance, the transportation network provides access to land, which, along with real estate market factors, influences the type and intensity of development that may occur. The capacity and condition of public utilities can dictate the location, amount, and timing of development, as can economic development efforts by the City and other partners. Similarly, proximity to parks and public facilities promotes public health and safety and affects the development potential of an area. Development character and site design shape community aesthetics and the perceptions held by area residents, tourists, and those considering investment in Littleton.

## FUTURE LAND USE AND CHARACTER

Shown on **Map 1, Future Land Use and Character**, is the general pattern of uses anticipated and/or desired in the years ahead, and the character contexts in which uses occur. The map, along with the text descriptions in this section, indicate the use that is expected to predominate in areas where land is undeveloped or, in previously developed areas, based on what is already on the ground and will likely remain or possibly evolve. Such transitions in use can occur through redevelopment of previously built sites, “infill” construction on a vacant parcel amid existing built sites, or repurposing of an existing structure for another use without significant site changes.

Along with the predominant use types, other complementary uses will also remain or may emerge in particular areas of the city (e.g., small-scale, neighborhood-oriented retail and service uses near the edges of largely residential areas). Certain uses can be located amid other predominant use types, such as public facilities and places of worship within predominantly residential areas. Mixing uses on sites is common in downtowns (e.g., upper floor office or residential above ground-floor retail) and may occur elsewhere in a community as the market accommodates and zoning allows.

Some uses are highly market-driven, with their timing and particular location dictated by the extent and pace of other types of development. This includes the typical pattern of retail uses locating near new residential “rooftops” and often at key roadway intersections. The location and extent of various forms of residential development can also be difficult to predict amid broader housing market cycles and regional needs, combined with developer areas of expertise and interest in bringing single-family or multi-family products to market.

### Future Land Use Map versus Zoning Map

Aspect	Future Land Use Map	Zoning Map
PURPOSE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Outlook for future use of land and character of particular areas of the community.</li> <li>Macro level, showing generalized development patterns.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Basis for applying different land use regulations and development standards in different areas of the community (“zones”).</li> <li>Micro level, with an area- and site-specific focus.</li> </ul>
USE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Guidance for City’s zoning map and related decisions (zone change requests, variance applications, etc.)</li> <li>Baseline for monitoring consistency of actions and decisions with the Comprehensive Plan.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Regulating development as it is proposed, or as sites are positioned for the future with appropriate zoning (by the property owner or the City).</li> </ul>
INPUTS AND CONSIDERATIONS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Existing land use in the city.</li> <li>The locational aspects of community planning priorities involving housing, economic development, infrastructure, parks and recreation, public facilities, etc.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Comprehensive Plan and future land use map for general guidance.</li> <li>Zoning decisions that differ substantially from the general development pattern depicted on the future land use map will indicate the need for some map adjustments during the next plan update.</li> </ul>

## LAND USE PLANNING VERSUS ZONING

The side-by-side comparison on the previous page highlights the distinct purposes and uses of a future land use map relative to a zoning map. The City's development regulations are among the primary tools for implementing the Plan. The zoning and subdivision regulations, in particular, can play a significant role in establishing and protecting the physical character of the community. These regulations delineate land use districts and the uses permitted within them, together with standards for buildings and site improvements. As a result, the zoning and subdivision regulations largely direct development outcomes. Although the Plan and future land use map provide only general planning guidance, they become the basis for updates of the zoning and subdivision regulations and the Zoning Map.

## LAND USE PLANNING WITH CHARACTER

Map 1 shows areas within Littleton designated in 16 categories that address both use and character:

- Estate Residential
- Suburban Residential
- Suburban Residential Attached
- Suburban Residential Multi-Family
- Auto-Oriented Residential
- Auto-Oriented Residential Attached
- Auto-Oriented Residential Multi-Family
- Residential Mix
- Mixed Character Core Neighborhood
- Suburban Commercial
- Suburban Business Park
- Auto-Oriented Commercial
- Corridor Mixed Use
- Urban Downtown Transition
- Urban Downtown Mixed Use
- Urban Downtown Main Street

## COMMUNITY CHARACTER PRIMER

The **community character** approach to evaluating and planning for land use emphasizes the variation in physical conditions experienced along a spectrum from natural and rural landscapes at the edges of a community to its most urbanized environments. Looking beyond land use alone, a character-based approach focuses on development intensity, which encompasses:

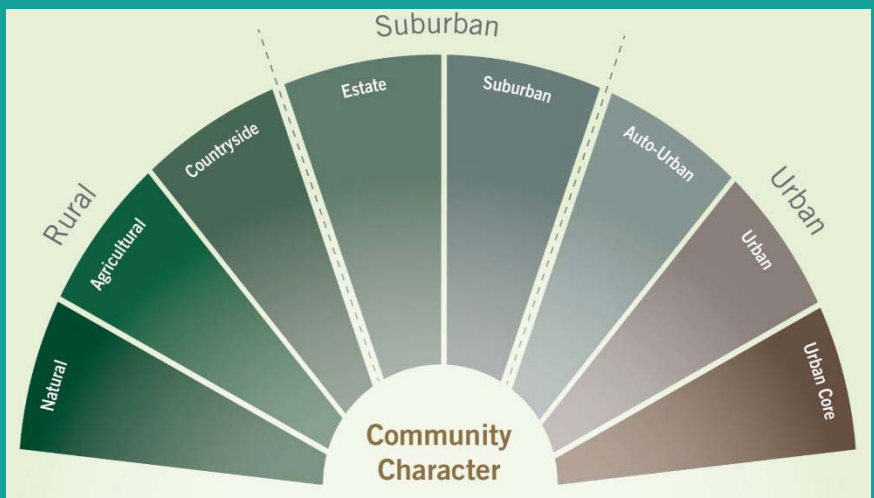
- The density and layout of residential development;
- The scale and form of non-residential development; and
- The building and pavement coverage relative to the extent of open space and natural vegetation or landscaping.

How the automobile is accommodated is a key factor in distinguishing character types including how public streets are designed, how parking is provided, and how buildings and paved areas are arranged on sites.

Among the three major character classes:

- **Rural** character areas have wide open spaces where structures and paved surfaces occupy only a minimal portion of the landscape.
- **Suburban** character areas have noticeably less intensive use of land, with open and green spaces balancing – or, in Estate areas, exceeding – the extent of land covered by structures and paved surfaces.
- **Urban** character areas exhibit the greatest pedestrian orientation, through a more compact scale and “architectural enclosure” of streets by buildings situated close to front property lines and sidewalks.

Within the Urban class, **Auto Urban** character areas are a particular planning challenge as they are designed mainly to accommodate automobile circulation and parking. Land cover by buildings and paved surfaces is similar to **Urban** areas, but without the walkability emphasis.





For context, the map also shows locations of preserved open space, public parkland, and private recreation sites (e.g., swimming pools, tennis courts, playgrounds, and other amenities maintained by homeowner associations). The Open Space category includes the community's lone cemetery, along Prince Street north of Ridge Road, which is another physical feature that distinguishes Littleton from other area cities – and the historic nature of which could qualify it for listing on the National Register of Historic Places.

The following descriptions indicate the anticipated principal uses in each category, plus the intended character of the areas in which the land uses occur, abut, or mix. Public and institutional uses commonly occur in all of these areas and should match the character. Specific standards for land development based on these designations are articulated through the City's implementing regulations (zoning and subdivision) as they currently exist and may be further amended over time based on this planning guidance.

## ESTATE RESIDENTIAL

This designation is for areas that should have limited development activity other than large-lot residential. Such areas provide a transition between a city's rural fringe and more urbanized in-city development patterns and intensities. Lots in this category ideally should be one acre or larger, which provides substantial openness and separation between individual dwellings, and can incorporate agricultural uses.



*Estate character area along and south of Rangeview Drive in south Littleton.*

Source: Google Earth (all aerial views in this section).

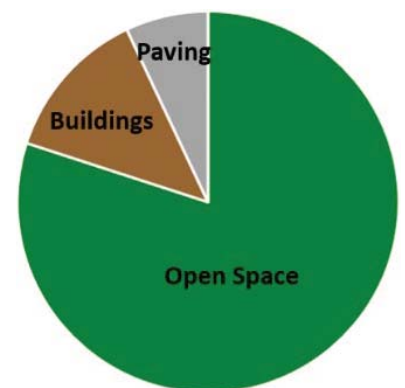
### Primary Land Use Types

- Detached residential dwellings.

### Characteristics

- Transition from the Rural portion of the character spectrum where the landscape is visually dominant over structures to Estate areas where most of the land surface is still in unbuilt open space (green on the accompanying pie chart) but with more land now occupied by buildings (brown) and paved surfaces (gray).
- In the Suburban range of the character spectrum but with larger lots (typically one acre or larger), especially where required by public health regulations to allow for both individual water wells and on-site septic systems on properties where centralized water and/or wastewater service may not be available or feasible.
- One-acre lots are usually adequate in wooded areas to achieve visual screening of homes from streets and adjacent dwellings. Three-to five-acre lots may be needed to achieve and maintain true Estate character in more open areas with less vegetation and/or topographic changes.

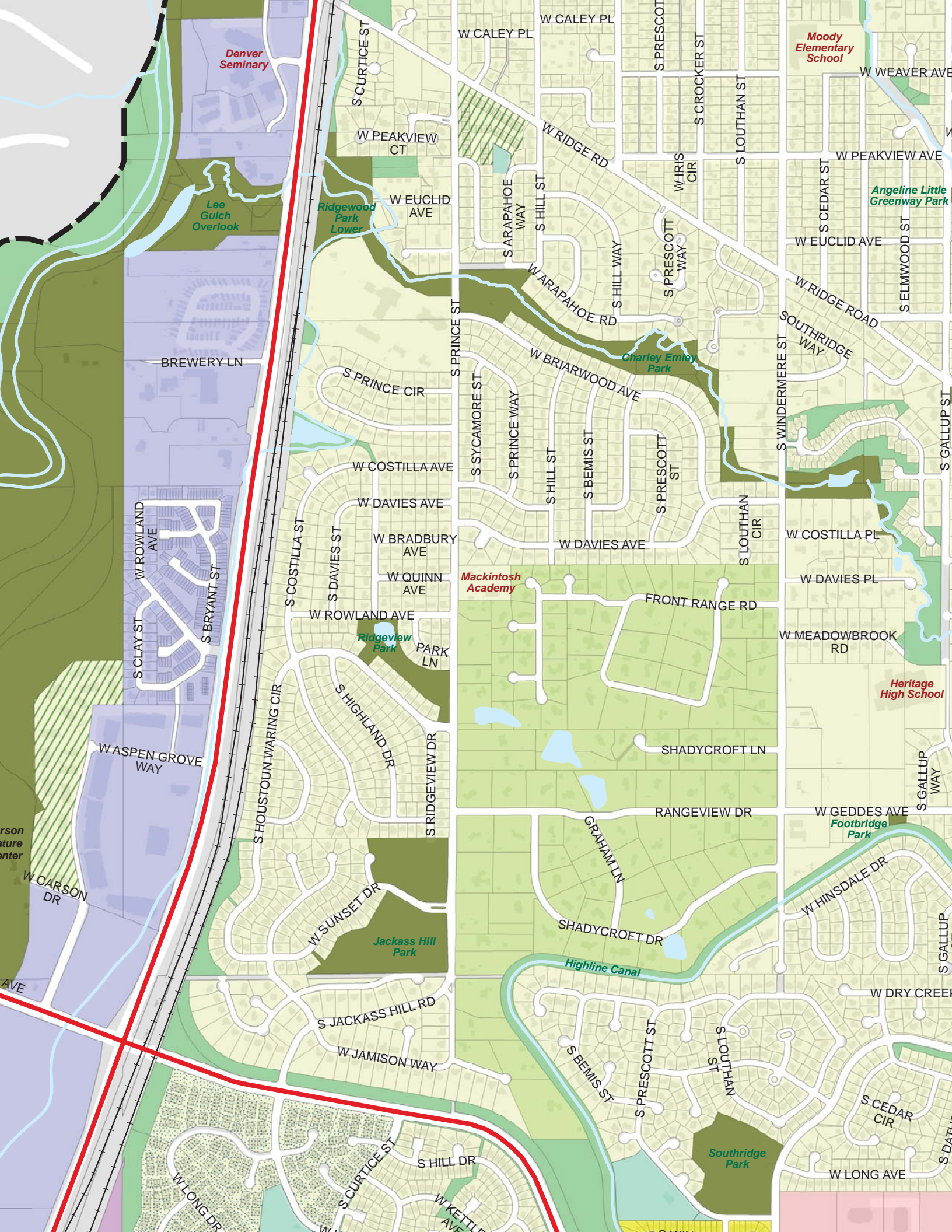
**Example Proportions  
of Estate Character  
Elements**



### Where on Map

- Estate Residential is shown in south Littleton near Heritage High School, and also near the western city limits in the vicinity of Mineral Avenue.









## SUBURBAN RESIDENTIAL

This designation is for residential areas where Suburban character is established and preserved by achieving a balance between buildings and other site improvements relative to the degree of open space maintained within the neighborhood. The openness may be found in relatively large yard areas on individual lots and between homes and/or in common green spaces or water features. This distinguishes Suburban character areas from more auto-oriented residential areas where site coverage in the form of dwellings, driveways and other paved surfaces predominates relative to undeveloped space.



*Suburban Residential character area around S. Coventry Lane in west Littleton.*

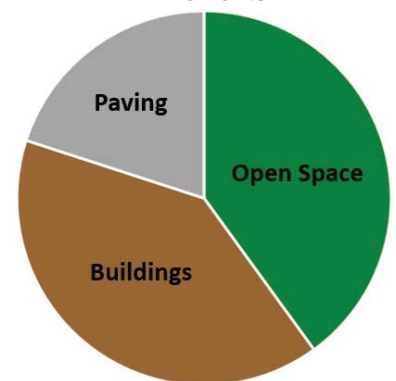
### Primary Land Use Types

- Detached residential dwellings.
- Planned developments that may integrate other housing types (e.g., attached residential such as patio homes or townhomes), with increased open space to preserve an overall Suburban character.

### Characteristics

- Less noticeable accommodation of the automobile compared to more intensive auto-oriented areas, especially where residential driveways are on the side of homes rather than occupying a portion of the front yard space and where garages are situated to the side or rear of the dwelling.
- A larger baseline minimum lot size in a Suburban Residential zoning district allows for deeper front yards and building setbacks and greater side separation between homes. Character-based zoning and development standards can also discourage overly standardized subdivision designs and promote conservation design by allowing for varied lot sizes and establishing a link between lot size and preserved open space. Then any lots smaller than the baseline require an even higher level of open space set-aside on the overall site. This approach enables some viable

**Example Proportions  
of Suburban Character  
Elements**



use of sites partially constrained by topography or other factors. It also provides flexibility for additional housing forms that blend with the area's Suburban Residential character through additional on-site open space and perimeter buffering where differing housing types and densities are adjacent.



NOTE: Graphics for illustrative purposes only.

Source: Kendig Keast Collaborative.

- Preservation of mature trees or other natural site features, along with generous landscaping, can offset auto-oriented design elements that detract from Suburban character.
- More opportunity for natural and/or swale drainage (and storm water retention/absorption) relative to concentrated storm water conveyance in Auto Urban character areas.

**Where on Map**

- Suburban Residential is shown in large swaths across the city, especially south of Littleton Boulevard to the Mineral Avenue vicinity, and west of Santa Fe Drive.



## SUBURBAN RESIDENTIAL ATTACHED

This designation is a subset of Suburban Residential above, for areas and properties that offer various forms of attached housing (e.g., duplexes, townhomes, attached patio homes, etc.). Through careful land planning, the additional residential density within such developments is offset by green and open areas that yield a Suburban character. This designation sometimes provides a transition between residential areas entirely comprised of single-family detached dwellings and properties with larger-scale multi-family residential development. As needed, some of the planned open space and/or preserved vegetation should be along site boundaries to provide buffering between other character types or land use intensities.



*Suburban Residential character of attached housing along Ridge Road at Elati Street.*

### Primary Land Use Types

- Duplexes (two-family dwellings).
- Townhomes.
- Patio homes or other small-lot housing types with common walls.
- Detached residential dwellings.
- Planned developments that may integrate a mix of detached and attached housing types, with sufficient open space to preserve an overall Suburban character.

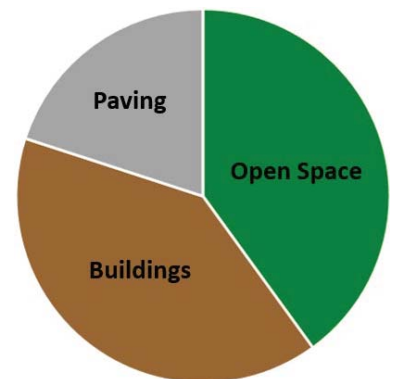
### Characteristics

As a subset of the Suburban Residential category, Suburban Residential Attached has the same characteristics.

### Where on Map

- Suburban Residential Attached is shown in multiple locations, most prominently in the Riverwalk area northwest of Downtown and in the SouthPark and Peninsula areas in south Littleton (plus the unique Highline Crossing cohousing community), along with several small areas north and south of Littleton Boulevard and an area of attached housing within Trailmark.

**Example Proportions  
of Suburban Character  
Elements**





## SUBURBAN RESIDENTIAL MULTI-FAMILY

This designation is also a subset of Suburban Residential above, for areas and properties where multi-family residential development achieves – and blends in with – a Suburban character. Some such developments may strive for this character outcome on their own or due to the terrain and pre-existing vegetation in the vicinity and on-site. To ensure this outcome for multi-family residential uses, development standards and associated buffering requirements should be set appropriately within the context of nearby residential and/or nonresidential uses that also reflect Suburban character.



*Suburban Residential character of multi-family housing on north side of Berry Avenue (west of Federal Boulevard). The development's relatively deep setbacks and extent of trees and landscaping along Irving Street boosts its compatibility with the Suburban Residential single-family homes across Irving Street. The internalized parking areas on the multi-family site also contrasts with the Auto Urban character of the school property across Berry Street from the single-family homes.*

### Primary Land Use Types

- Multi-unit residential buildings in concentrated development, whether for rent (apartments) or ownership (condominiums).
- Other attached residential forms (e.g., duplexes, townhomes, patio homes, etc.) as permitted in zoning districts intended primarily for multi-family residential uses.
- Planned developments that may integrate a mix of detached, attached and multi-family housing types, with sufficient open space to preserve an overall Suburban character.

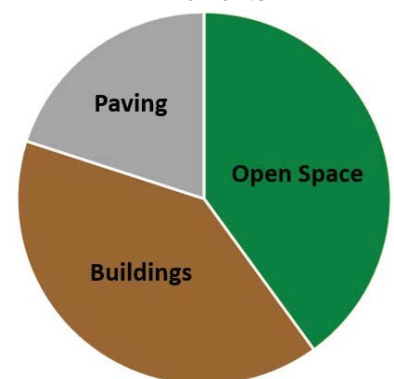
### Characteristics

As a subset of the Suburban Residential category, Suburban Residential Multi-Family has the same characteristics.

### Where on Map

- Suburban Residential Multi-Family is shown in multiple locations including scattered within the widespread Suburban Residential areas south of Littleton Boulevard to Mineral, in the vicinities of Federal and Lowell boulevards west of Downtown, at the north end of the city adjacent to the South Platte River, and adjacent to Aspen Grove.

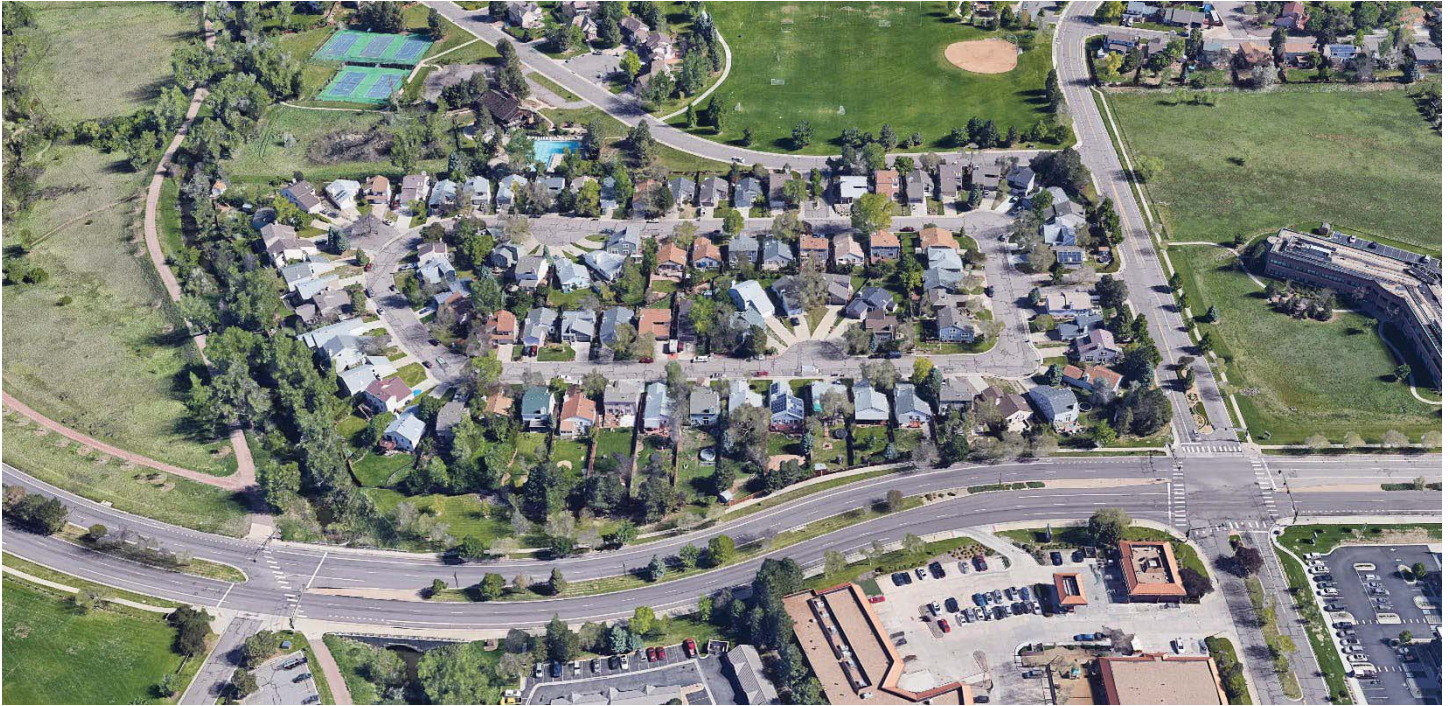
**Example Proportions  
of Suburban Character  
Elements**





## AUTO-ORIENTED RESIDENTIAL

This designation covers areas of single-family detached residential use where accommodation of the automobile is more visually dominant relative to more prominent green space in Suburban Residential character areas, typically due to relatively smaller and narrower lots, and often with limited open space set-asides or amenities for residents.



*Auto-Oriented Residential character area north of Mineral Avenue.*

### Primary Land Use Types

- Detached residential dwellings.

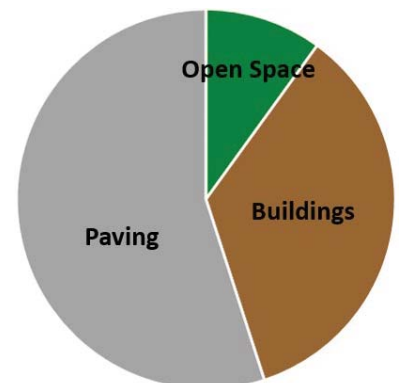
### Characteristics

- Residential neighborhoods with less openness and separation between dwellings compared to Suburban Residential areas.
- Auto Urban character, especially where driveways and front-loading garages dominate the front yards and front facades of homes. This can be offset by landscaping, “anti-monotony” architectural standards, and limitations on “cookie cutter” subdivision layouts characterized by straight streets and uniform lot sizes and arrangement.

### Where on Map

- Auto-Oriented Residential is shown in two locations, the neighborhood around Windermere Circle in south Littleton, and the Kensington Ridge neighborhood at the southeast corner of the city.

**Example Proportions  
of Auto Urban Character  
Elements**



## AUTO-ORIENTED RESIDENTIAL ATTACHED

This designation is a subset of Auto-Oriented Residential above, for areas and properties with this character that offer various forms of attached housing (e.g., duplexes, townhomes, attached patio homes, etc.). This designation sometimes provides a transition between residential areas entirely comprised of single-family detached dwellings and properties with larger-scale multi-family residential development.

### Primary Land Use Types

- Duplexes (two-family dwellings).
- Townhomes.
- Patio homes or other small-lot housing types with common walls.
- Detached residential dwellings.
- Planned developments that may integrate a mix of detached and attached housing types, but with insufficient green and open space to achieve an overall Suburban character.

### Characteristics

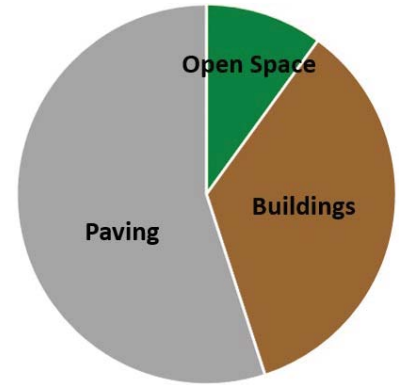
As a subset of the Auto-Oriented Residential category, Auto-Oriented Residential Attached has the same characteristics.

### Where on Map

- Auto-Oriented Residential Attached is shown in just one location, the Jamison Villas development just west of Broadway on Jamison Avenue.

*[No aerial image available as the only example in Littleton, along Jamison Avenue just west of Broadway, was under construction at the time of this Plan.]*

Example Proportions  
of Auto Urban Character  
Elements





## AUTO-ORIENTED RESIDENTIAL MULTI-FAMILY

This designation is also a subset of Auto-Oriented Residential. Areas and properties with this character are devoted primarily to structures with multiple residential units, at a greater intensity (i.e., units per building or acre) than typically found in developments with other attached residential housing types. The auto-oriented character is usually due to the extent of off-street parking needed. The auto-oriented appearance can be softened by perimeter and on-site landscaping, minimum spacing between buildings, site coverage limits, and on-site recreation or open space criteria. This designation can also provide a transition from primarily residential to mainly nonresidential areas. Multi-family uses designed primarily for senior and disabled residents are especially appropriate near medical facilities, parks, public services, shopping, and transit stops, and all demographics benefit when apartments are near such amenities.



*Auto-Oriented Residential character of multi-family housing along Bellevue Avenue.*

### Primary Land Use Types

- Multi-unit residential buildings in concentrated development, whether for rent (apartments) or ownership (condominiums).
- Other attached residential forms (e.g., duplexes, townhomes, patio homes, etc.) as permitted in zoning districts intended primarily for multi-family residential uses.
- Planned developments that may integrate a mix of detached, attached and multi-family housing types, but with insufficient green and open space to achieve an overall Suburban character.

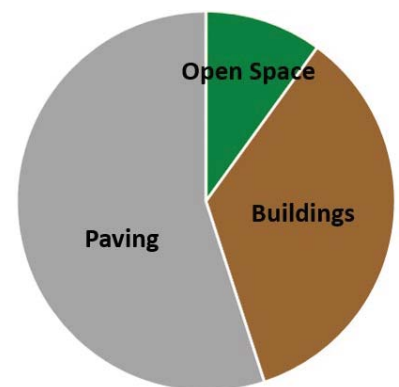
### Characteristics

As a subset of the Auto-Oriented Residential category, Auto-Oriented Residential Multi-Family has the same characteristics.

### Where on Map

- Auto-Oriented Residential Multi-Family is shown in multiple locations including along County Line Road just east of Santa Fe Drive, at the west end of the city near Mineral Avenue, and at the north end along Bellevue Avenue near Progress Park.

**Example Proportions  
of Auto Urban Character  
Elements**





## RESIDENTIAL MIX

This designation encompasses areas of north Littleton near Littleton Boulevard and Broadway. Northeast Littleton has long had a mix of housing types in close proximity, from single-family detached to duplexes, other attached housing types, and multi-family apartment buildings. To live up to its core value of remaining an inclusive community, Littleton needs more areas with varied attainable housing for people at or below the median income range. Maintaining this area with residential variety meshes well with a revitalized and more walkable Littleton Boulevard corridor, and with the potential for future mixed-use redevelopment and Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) service on the Broadway corridor.



*Residential Mix area of varied housing types and character in northeast Littleton, in the vicinity of Berry Avenue.*

### Primary Land Use Types

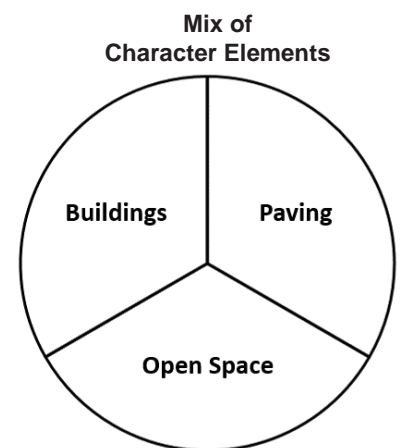
- Detached residential dwellings.
- Duplexes (two-family dwellings).
- Townhomes.
- Patio homes or other small-lot housing types with common walls.
- Multi-unit residential buildings in concentrated development, whether for rent (apartments) or ownership (condominiums).
- Planned developments that may integrate a mix of detached, attached and multi-family housing types.

### Characteristics

- As with the diversity of housing types, character also varies across the area and may tend toward Auto Urban character where surface parking is especially needed (i.e., multi-family housing).

### Where on Map

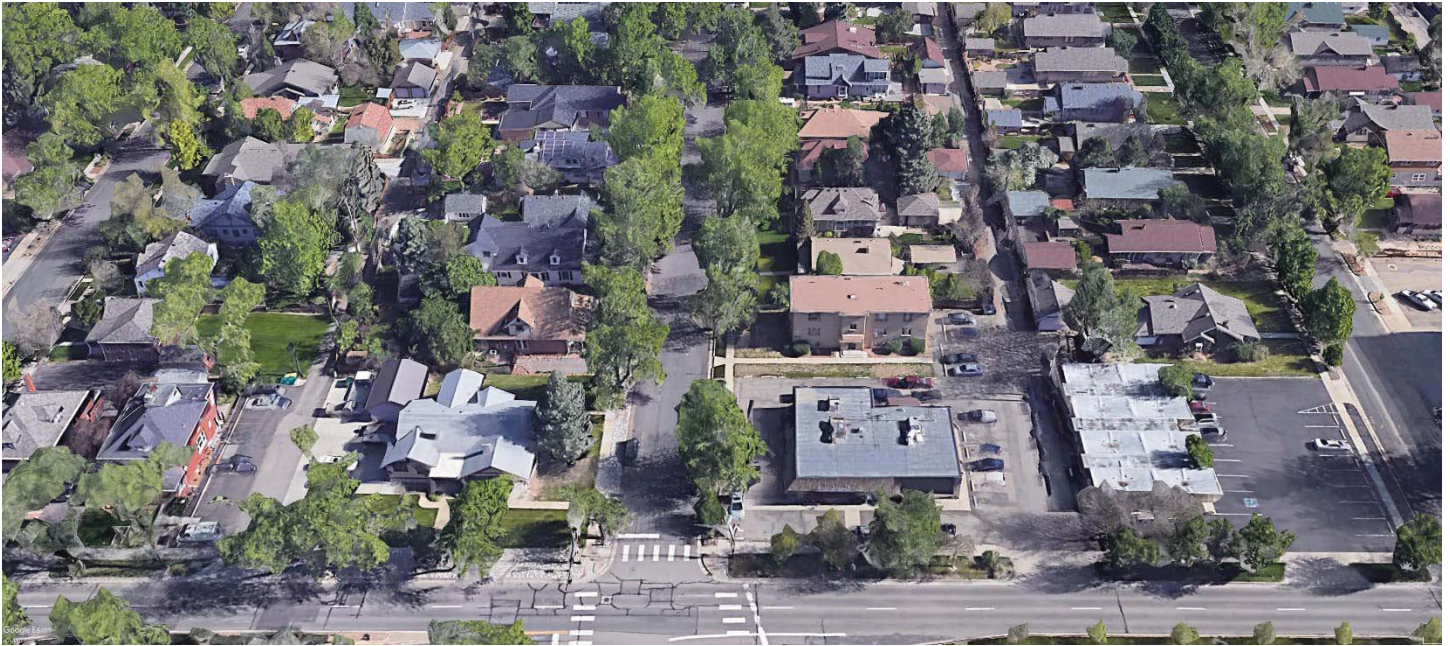
- Residential Mix is shown primarily north of Littleton Boulevard, plus a few pockets to the south.





## MIXED CHARACTER CORE NEIGHBORHOOD

This designation is for residential areas relatively close to Downtown and Littleton Boulevard. Of all areas in Littleton, these neighborhoods – with sidewalk and bike lane improvements in some areas – could be the most conducive for pedestrian, bicycle, and wheelchair circulation within the neighborhood and to nearby shopping, parks, schools, and other destinations. Most of these blocks also have rear alley access to properties, at least decreasing the possibility of an Auto Urban street scene where rear garages or parking are still widely used versus front driveways. These are also some of Littleton's oldest neighborhoods, including the locally designated Louthan Heights Historic District.



*Mixed Character Core Neighborhood area just north of Littleton Boulevard, east of Downtown.*

### Primary Land Use Types

- Detached residential dwellings.
- Other attached residential forms as permitted by zoning.

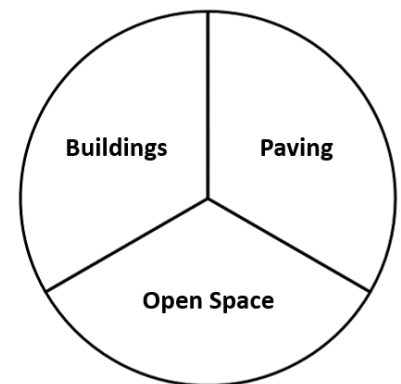
### Characteristics

- A more Urban residential character prevails where lots with relatively shallow front yards bring single-family detached homes closer to the street, and especially where no front driveways or garages are visible due to property access from rear alleys. However, a transition toward Auto Urban character can occur on blocks where front driveways are introduced over time, especially on lots where new homes are built after removal of older dwellings.

### Where on Map

- Mixed Character Core Neighborhood is shown for various residential areas north and south of Littleton Boulevard, to the east of Downtown and the railroad corridor.

### Mix of Character Elements





## SUBURBAN COMMERCIAL

This designation involves commercial developments, whether at a neighborhood-focused or larger scale, that stand apart from most auto-oriented contemporary development. The Suburban character is achieved through lesser coverage of the site with buildings and especially paved areas. Preservation of trees or other natural site features, along with generous landscaping, can also move a site into the Suburban range of the community character spectrum relative to sites where “gray” spaces predominate over “green” and open spaces.



*Nursery business use with Suburban Commercial character adjacent to a Suburban Residential area along East County Line Road in south Littleton.*

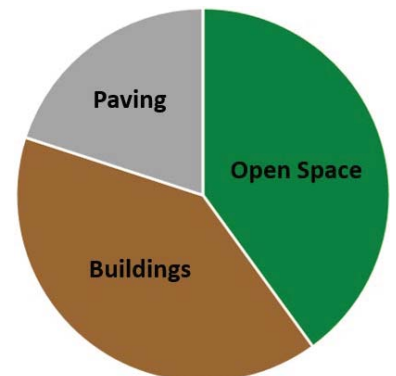
### Primary Land Use Types

- Commercial retail and service uses, at varying scales and development intensities depending on the site.
- Office (involving large and/or multi-story buildings or small-scale office uses depending on the site), which may involve a medical or technology/research focus.
- Planned development to accommodate custom site designs or mixing of uses in a Suburban character setting.

### Characteristics

- Suburban character primarily from reduced site coverage relative to most auto-oriented commercial development.
- Encouraged at key community entries and along high-profile roadway corridors, may also involve other criteria to yield less intensive and more attractive development outcomes relative to auto-oriented areas, including higher standards for landscaping (along street frontages and within parking areas), signs, and building design.
- May exclude some auto-oriented uses that cannot achieve a Suburban character (e.g., car washes).
- Near residential properties and areas, the permitted scale and intensity of nonresidential uses should be limited to ensure compatibility (including adequate buffering/screening, criteria for placement and orientation of buildings and parking areas, height limits, and residential-in-appearance architectural standards).
- More opportunity for natural and/or swale drainage (and storm water retention/absorption) versus concentrated storm water conveyance in auto-oriented areas.

**Example Proportions  
of Suburban Character  
Elements**



### Where on Map

- Suburban Commercial is shown in multiple areas, most prominently near Lowell and Federal boulevards in northwest Littleton, a few western locations along South Platte Canyon Road, along Mineral Avenue and Broadway in southeast Littleton, in the hotel and commercial area along County Line Road near Santa Fe Drive, and several properties in Trailmark along or near Wadsworth Boulevard.



## SUBURBAN BUSINESS PARK

This designation is often a subset of Suburban Commercial in communities that aim to promote high-quality office development as an economic development magnet or as part of overall efforts to set a high bar for nonresidential development. Some cities also aim for master-planned, campus-style office developments through a Business Park zoning district.



*Section of SouthPark business park in south Littleton, with office uses and parking areas nestled amid generous landscaping and buffers, and with the High Line Canal Trail adding to the Suburban character.*

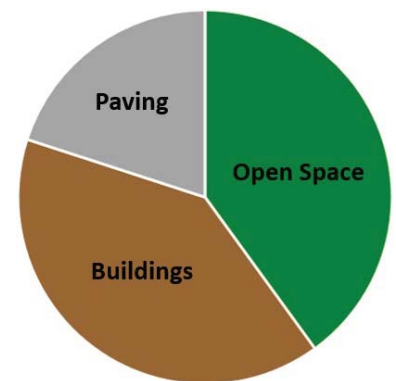
### Primary Land Use Types

- Primarily office uses.
- Light industrial uses (including warehousing/distribution), well screened and in buildings with enhanced architectural design.
- Research and technology.
- Commercial retail and service uses secondary to the primary office focus, to serve local workers and visitors.

### Characteristics

- Suburban character, typically in a campus-style setting featuring reduced site coverage and increased open space, together with enhanced building design.
- Typically a minimum open space ratio of 30 percent, which allows for a sizable cumulative building footprint since most such developments involve large sites.
- Extensive landscaping of the business park perimeter, and special streetscaping and design treatments at entries, key intersections, and internal focal points.
- Development outcomes often controlled by private covenants and restrictions that exceed City ordinances and development standards.
- Intended to create a highly attractive business investment environment.

**Example Proportions  
of Suburban Character  
Elements**





**Where on Map**

- Suburban Business Park is shown for the extensive SouthPark business park area in south Littleton, along with the Southpark Circle area just east of Santa Fe Drive.

## AUTO-ORIENTED COMMERCIAL

This designation is for properties in commercial retail, office and service uses, primarily along portions of major roadway corridors within the community for high visibility and accessibility, but also in other locations to accommodate smaller-scale and neighborhood-focused businesses.



*Auto-Oriented Commercial character area along Broadway near Mineral Drive (looking west) in southeast Littleton.*

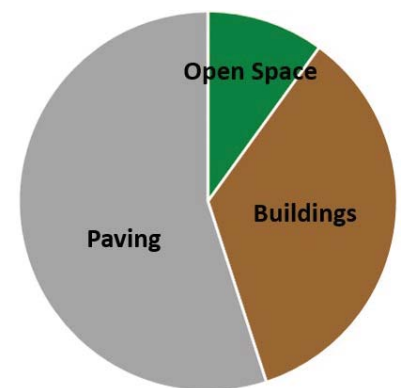
### Primary Land Use Types

- “Strip” commercial centers along major roadways, with a range of uses including those on high-profile “pad” sites along the roadway frontage.
- “Big-box” commercial stores (e.g., grocery, appliances, clothing, etc.).
- Restaurant chains including various “fast food” and casual dining establishments.
- Automobile service related enterprises (e.g., gas stations, automobile service/repair, car washes).
- Offices.
- Hotels and motels.
- Mixed-use developments.

### Characteristics

- Commercial areas with significant portions of development sites devoted to vehicular access drives, circulation routes, surface parking, and loading/delivery areas, making pavement the most prominent visual feature. This can be offset by reduced site coverage and enhanced landscaping, building design, and well-designed signage.
- Buildings typically set back toward rear of site to accommodate expansive parking areas in front, closest to passing traffic, resulting in less emphasis on architectural design in many cases.
- Development desire to maximize signage (number, size) to capitalize on site visibility to passing traffic.
- Often not conducive for access or on-site circulation by pedestrians or cyclists.

**Example Proportions  
of Auto Urban Character  
Elements**



### Where on Map

- Auto-Oriented Commercial is shown primarily at the north end of the city centered around Belleview Avenue and the railroad corridor, also along Broadway in southeast Littleton, plus several auto dealership properties near County Line Road.



## CORRIDOR MIXED USE

This designation is for properties in commercial retail, office, and service uses along and near a high-profile roadway corridor where mixed-use development outcomes are desired and encouraged. The mix of uses includes residential, especially to provide additional housing options and price points within the community. Major public and/or institutional facilities may also serve as development anchors within the area.

Not all properties within this designation will be viable for or result in mixed-use outcomes given their size, location, and/or market position. Therefore, a range of typical stand-alone uses is anticipated as in the Suburban Commercial and Auto-Oriented Commercial designations that are also shown along portions of Littleton's major roadway network. Relative to these other designations, however, Corridor Mixed Use is particularly intended to recognize fundamental paradigm shifts occurring in the development models for residential, retail, office, and hospitality uses, leading to even greater focus on "destination" developments that creatively mix uses, integrate amenities, and emphasize quality design. Whatever the approach for a particular property in Corridor Mixed Use, the design of the site and its use(s) should be compatible with the Suburban or Urban mixed-use character established or emerging in its vicinity, avoid proliferating Auto Urban character in areas intended to transition toward other character types, and provide adequate protections and buffering at points of transition between differing character types.



*Segment of Littleton Boulevard, east of Windemere Street, with existing use variety and the potential for better integrated, more pedestrian- and bike-oriented mixed-use outcomes through redevelopment.*

### Primary Land Use Types

- Commercial retail and service uses, at varying scales and development intensities depending on the physical characteristics of the particular corridor, and of a specific site and its adjacent uses.
- Offices (involving large and/or multi-story buildings or small-scale office uses depending on the physical characteristics of the particular corridor, and of a specific site and its adjacent uses).
- Live/work units.
- Multi-unit attached residential, whether for rent (apartments) or ownership (condominiums, townhomes, row houses, etc.), and whether permitted by zoning as a stand-alone use or only as a component of mixed-use development.
- Pre-existing areas of single-family detached homes and manufactured home developments.
- Planned development to accommodate custom site designs and/or mixing of uses.

### Characteristics

As elaborated on further in the Special Areas and Design section (where the Special Corridor Planning Areas on the map are also discussed), the nature of Corridor Mixed Use will vary across the different roadway environments where it appears on the Future Land Use and Character Map (Map 1). Along Littleton Boulevard, an atmosphere more amenable

to walking and biking may emerge through ongoing redevelopment and transition in uses, placing the corridor in a character range from Auto-Oriented (its existing status along most blocks) to Urban in some segments. However, the potential scale of new or reconfigured uses would be tempered by the relatively smaller, shallower properties along this corridor. Additionally, Littleton Boulevard is framed by residential neighborhoods and also requires sensitivity to its unique collection of post-World War II buildings designed in a Mid Century Commercial Modernism style. Along Santa Fe Drive, Broadway and Belleview Avenue, various sites are of adequate size to be conducive for master-planned, mixed-use development that also strives for a relatively Urban character by de-emphasizing large-scale surface parking and designing more for walkability. The core area of Littleton Village is a contemporary example of this approach.

However, in any of these corridor settings where most business patrons, employees, and visitors will still reach their destinations by private vehicle, it will be difficult to avoid an Auto Urban character outcome where significant surface parking must be provided. The potential for future Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) service on Broadway, linking south into Highlands Ranch and north into Denver, could change the equation and lead to less auto-oriented development at least in some locations along and near this corridor. Yet some stretches of Broadway today have existing low-intensity commercial activity fronting on this busy roadway. These small and shallow properties will continue to be a challenge to redevelopment and may result in the current uses continuing indefinitely.

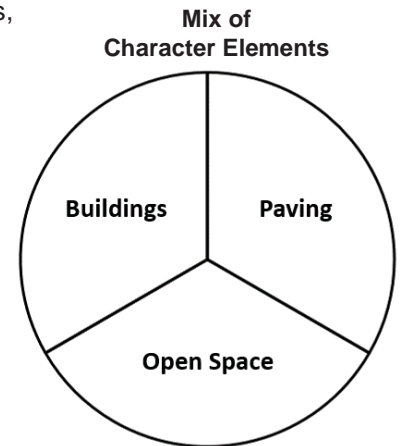
Where a site's immediate vicinity has a greener Suburban character – for example, near Suburban Residential neighborhoods or abutting Mary Carter Greenway and the river corridor – site design and development criteria can minimize auto-oriented development outcomes (e.g., site coverage limits, more intensive landscaping and buffering, etc.). Littleton especially has opportunities for more river- and trail-oriented development, where new or redeveloped sites are carefully designed to embrace rather than turn their back on the South Platte and greenway corridors, particularly if the future of Santa Fe Drive is even greater restriction of direct vehicular access to properties from that busy roadway.

The zoning parameters set for each distinct area in the Corridor Mixed Use designation can address differing character, use, and design considerations. With regard to uses, this may include giving greater preference to residential in certain areas while locations considered best suited for revenue-generating nonresidential uses may have limits on the amount of stand-alone residential use.

Finally, consensus on potential land uses and intensities in the vicinity of the Santa Fe/Mineral Avenue intersection has been so elusive precisely because so many character considerations come into play at this premier location. Extensive undeveloped land and surface parking near a busy light rail station offers obvious opportunity for transit-oriented development with a more Urban character. Yet proximity to the river/greenway corridor typically points to site designs with Suburban character in mind. At the same time, Santa Fe's vehicular volumes and the high-profile nature of this busiest of Littleton intersections introduces auto-oriented development pressures. The Corridor Mixed Use designation provides the flexibility to weigh all of these character factors when designing and vetting specific development concepts in such a unique location.

### Where on Map

- Corridor Mixed Use is shown along portions of multiple key roadway corridors in Littleton including along Belleview Avenue west of the railroad, along Littleton Boulevard, along Broadway as far south as Littleton Village, and along Santa Fe Drive from Hudson Gardens south, and an area between Santa Fe and the railroad north of Downtown.





## URBAN DOWNTOWN TRANSITION

This designation is for areas near an Urban downtown core that still accommodate a mix of uses but at a lesser intensity than in the core area. The mixed-use area typically provides a transition from the downtown core to other nearby neighborhoods and roadway corridors that are more uniform as areas primarily for single-family detached residential uses and commercial uses, respectively. The transition area is often supportive of the downtown core by accommodating complementary uses (e.g., professional offices, restaurants, art galleries and other cultural venues, varied residential options, etc.) and by retaining a walkability exemplified in Urban character areas more often than auto-oriented areas. The vicinity around a core downtown usually also contains some of the community's most historic sites and districts, with historic homes still in residential use and others converted to shops, cafes, offices, and other uses.

### Primary Land Use Types

- Mixed uses, on single sites and within individual structures.
- Commercial retail and services.
- Offices.
- Live/work units.
- Attached residential types (e.g., townhomes, brownstones).
- Detached residential, often on relatively small and/or narrow lots in older neighborhood settings.

### Characteristics

- Where a more Urban and walkable character is desired, may require development and design standards to avoid encroachment of uses designed with an auto-oriented character more suited to other areas of the community. While relatively small areas of parking may be permitted in front and to the side of buildings, the intent is usually to limit any sizable surface parking areas along property frontages while also avoiding deep building setbacks.
- Often a focus area for infill and redevelopment activity within the community, which may require customized development and design standards to ensure compatibility with the established area character. This may include controlling the scale of development where larger sites have been created through assembly of smaller parcels.

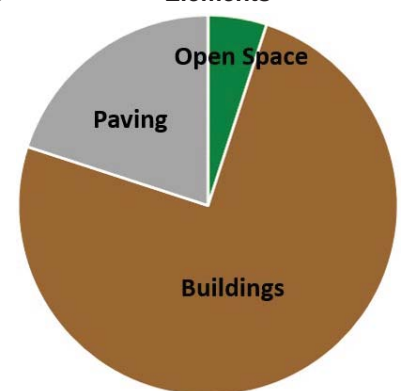
### Where on Map

- Urban Downtown Transition is shown in all directions around the fringes of Downtown including on the west side of Santa Fe Drive from Hudson Gardens north to Bowles Avenue, the neighborhood on the north side of Downtown (including Littleton Center), several blocks east of the railroad along Littleton Boulevard (including the historic Courthouse, Buck Recreation Center and Vita development), and the Arapahoe Community College campus south of downtown.



*Urban Downtown Transition area encompassing several blocks along Littleton Boulevard (looking west toward Downtown from Crocker Street).*

**Example Proportions of Urban Character Elements**





## URBAN DOWNTOWN MIXED USE

This designation involves the most intensively developed area of a community in terms of the greatest coverage of sites with building footprints and the least amount of private development area devoted to off-street surface parking and landscaped open space. Instead, most parking is accommodated on-street and/or within public parking areas or structures. This enables most streets and other public spaces to be framed by buildings with zero or minimal front setbacks, creating “architectural enclosure” versus the progressively more open feel in other character areas (Auto Urban, Suburban, etc.). These elements, along with a predominance of mixed uses, make the Urban downtown area the most conducive for pedestrian activity and interaction. Public plazas and pocket parks provide green space amid the Urban environment and a place to gather and host community events, along with periodic street closures. Adding to the appeal of Downtown Littleton are two historic district designations (national and local) and numerous designated sites, including Town Hall and the recently designated Post Office on the National Register of Historic Places. City-adopted design standards also influence development outcomes and building renovations in the area.



*Primarily Urban character in Downtown Littleton (looking southwest), along with pockets of surface parking.*

### Primary Land Use Types

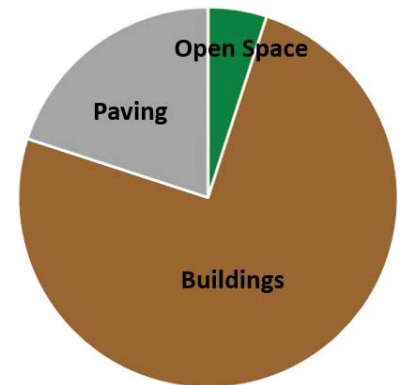
- Mixed uses, on single sites and within individual buildings.
- Residential space above commercial or office uses.
- Detached residential dwellings on relatively small lots.
- Attached residential types (e.g., townhomes, brownstones, apartments, condos, etc.).
- Live/work units.
- Commercial retail and services.
- Offices.
- Entertainment (e.g., restaurants, pubs, live music venues, theater, cinema, etc.).
- Parking structures and limited public or commercial surface parking areas.



## Characteristics

- Multi-story structures encouraged (or required) to bolster Urban character, encourage vertical mixed use, promote retail viability, support transit ridership, etc.
- Mostly on-street parking and minimal off-street surface parking (until transition areas around the downtown core give way to auto-oriented site design).
- Streetscape enhancements in public ways given limited area for private on-site landscaping relative to other character areas.
- May exclude some auto-oriented uses that cannot achieve an Urban character (e.g., gas stations, auto repair, drive-in and drive-through uses, etc.).
- Public/institutional uses designed to match the Urban character.
- Alleys and rear-access garages can reinforce Urban character on blocks with attached or detached residential dwellings.
- Often the only place in a community where multi-level parking structures may make sense and be financially viable.

Example Proportions  
of Urban Character  
Elements



## Where on Map

- Urban Downtown Mixed Use encompasses the main area of Downtown Littleton, between Santa Fe Drive and the railroad, and from Church Avenue on the south to the vicinities of Powers and Berry avenues on the north.

## URBAN DOWNTOWN MAIN STREET

This designation is a subset of Urban Downtown Mixed Use above, focused on the Main Street core area of Downtown. Nearly all buildings have zero front setbacks and abut the public sidewalk, and multi-story buildings frame the street on most blocks. The walkable street scene is “activated” by varied retail storefronts, restaurants and pubs, cultural venues (e.g., Town Hall Arts Center), historic architecture and properties, coffee and confections, open-air sidewalk seating areas for dining, and streetscape and design treatments in the public realm. City-adopted design standards also influence development outcomes and building renovations in the area.

### Primary Land Use Types

Same use range as Urban Downtown Mixed Use above, but with a principal commercial focus and residential uses more likely to occur on upper floors of mixed-used buildings rather than as stand-alone uses.

### Characteristics

As a subset of the Urban Downtown Mixed Use category, Urban Downtown Main Street has the same characteristics.

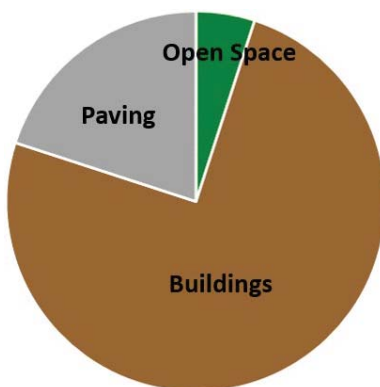
### Where on Map

- Urban Downtown Main Street is shown primarily for the frontage properties along Main Street, from Santa Fe Drive to the Sycamore Street and Bega Park vicinity.



*Urban Downtown Main Street area (looking west).*

**Example Proportions  
of Urban Character  
Elements**



## LAND USE QUANTITIES ON MAP

Tallied in **Table 2, *Future Land Use and Character Allocation***, are the estimated acres within each designation shown on the Future Land Use and Character Map (Map 1). In more general terms, the map reflects this approximate use split:

- Residential: 45.8%
- Commercial: 11.0%
- Mixed Use: 12.7%
- Park / Open Space / Private Recreation: 30.5%

Then, in terms of major character classes, the split is:

- Estate: 4.7%
- Suburban: 63.5%
- Auto Oriented: 9.3%
- Urban: 3.2%
- Mixed Character: 19.3%

**TABLE 2: Future Land Use and Character Allocation**

CATEGORY	ACRES	SHARE OF TOTAL
ESTATE RESIDENTIAL	247.0	3.4%
SUBURBAN RESIDENTIAL	2,474.5	33.7%
SUBURBAN RESIDENTIAL ATTACHED	158.7	2.2%
SUBURBAN RESIDENTIAL MULTI-FAMILY	151.3	2.1%
AUTO-ORIENTED RESIDENTIAL	22.2	0.3%
AUTO-ORIENTED RESIDENTIAL ATTACHED	3.0	0.0%
AUTO-ORIENTED RESIDENTIAL MULTI-FAMILY	61.0	0.8%
RESIDENTIAL MIX	120.7	1.6%
MIXED CHARACTER CORE NEIGHBORHOOD	121.1	1.6%
SUBURBAN COMMERCIAL	232.9	3.2%
SUBURBAN BUSINESS PARK	298.3	4.1%
AUTO-ORIENTED COMMERCIAL	276.5	3.8%
CORRIDOR MIXED USE	767.0	10.4%
URBAN DOWNTOWN TRANSITION	110.9	1.5%
URBAN DOWNTOWN MIXED USE	46.9	0.6%
URBAN DOWNTOWN MAIN STREET	9.2	0.1%
PARK	1,527.1	20.8%
OPEN SPACE	684.1	9.3%
PRIVATE RECREATION	28.0	0.4%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>7,340.4</b>	<b>100%</b>

## LEGACY OF PAST PLANNING

- Citywide Plan, 2014
- Three Mile Plan, 2015

## KEY ISSUES AND CONSIDERATIONS

- Housing needs (options, cost relative to buyer/renter financial capacity, at different life-cycle stages, age of housing stock, and needed upgrades).
- Ongoing parks/trails/open space stewardship.
- Land, water, and air quality implications of land use and development choices.
- Transportation network overloads from a largely vehicle-dependent land use pattern.
- Importance of a quality school system to Littleton's success as a community.
- Long-term fiscal outlook for Littleton City government and its link to land use.
- How ongoing change in Littleton may affect the character of neighborhoods, commercial areas, Downtown, high-profile corridors, and parks and open space areas, especially as it relates to a desire to maintain Littleton's "small town" feel.
- Prospects for Littleton's few remaining areas of undeveloped land, and areas prime for redevelopment.
- Littleton's image and beautification needs, and concern for loss of mountain views.
- Residents' interest in, and the need to promote, healthy lifestyles.
- Littleton's heritage focus and the need to protect historical and cultural assets.
- Opportunities to support arts and culture within Littleton as part of the private and public land use pattern and mix.

## FRAMEWORK FOR ACTION

### GOALS

- GOAL L&C 1:** A land use allocation and pattern that supports and promotes Littleton's pride in, and reputation for, quality neighborhoods and an abundance of parks and preserved open space.
- GOAL L&C 2:** A sustained focus on the long-term fiscal sustainability of Littleton City government while recognizing the direct connection to the community's land use mix, especially for sales tax revenue needs.
- GOAL L&C 3:** Ongoing and effective collaboration between land use and transportation planning to ensure compatibility among decisions and actions taken with respect to each.
- GOAL L&C 4:** A more attractive community, based on quality design and character of both private development and the public realm.

### POLICIES

In making decisions that involve public resource allocation, regulatory matters, and physical improvements, among others, Littleton will:

- Policy L&C 1:** Emphasize compatible intensities and character when evaluating applications involving more intensive and/or nonresidential development near homes and neighborhoods.
- Policy L&C 2:** Plan for and take actions to maintain the established character of its residential neighborhoods.
- Policy L&C 3:** Create a regulatory framework that encourages development of diverse and attainable housing options in Littleton in terms of type, size, and cost to buyers and renters.

**Policy L&C 4:** Create a regulatory framework that signals the City's interest in attracting target business sectors, needed and compatible revenue-generating uses, and lifestyle and leisure uses that support Littleton's livability and residents' quality of life.

**Policy L&C 5:** Manage land use patterns near Littleton's many parks, trails, greenways, and open spaces to: protect their ecological functions; prevent physical and other impactful encroachments; maintain public access; and preserve their overall quality and value – especially where public green spaces contribute to neighborhood character and enhance business park and other commercial settings.

**Policy L&C 6:** Recognize and promote land use and development decisions that further community objectives for reduced traffic congestion, more pedestrian- and cyclist-friendly design, and expanded and viable public transit options.

**Policy L&C 7:** Promote Littleton's aesthetic appeal through the quality expectations set within the City's Code for landscaping, signage, lighting, and similar design elements.

## ACTIONS

### Capital Investments

**Action L&C 1:** Add criteria to the City's capital improvements planning process to ensure that potential interaction between public investments and land use outcomes or evolution is considered when identifying and prioritizing candidate capital projects.

**Action L&C 2:** Explore opportunities to link the design and construction of specific capital projects to community beautification objectives.

### Programs and Initiatives

**Action L&C 3:** Maintain fiscal impact analysis tools, customized to Littleton, for evaluating the potential net benefits to City government of specific land use scenarios and as an essential input to related decision-making.

### Regulations and Standards

**Action L&C 4:** Complete an all-encompassing and thorough review and update of the City's zoning and related development regulations and standards, particularly to consider ways to address key issues and gaps illuminated by Plan discussions.

**Action L&C 5:** As part of the City's zoning and code update initiative:

- Add new or amend current provisions that are directly linked to actions in other plan sections related to housing attainability, neighborhood conservation, business retention and attraction, leisure and lifestyle related land uses, transit support, a more pedestrian- and cycling-friendly community, and park and open space protection – and consider incentive-based techniques for guiding development applicants toward desired outcomes.
- Pursue a character-based zoning approach, which factors into the stated purposes and design of zoning districts along with various specific regulating elements (e.g., residential densities and nonresidential intensities; minimum lot and site areas; building setback, placement and orientation on sites and associated front/side/rear yard depths; building heights, including in relation to adjacent buildings and uses; lot and site coverage by buildings and other physical improvements; off-street parking quantities, design and screening; etc.).
- Incorporate more effective provisions for buffering between differing character types and land use intensities, and integrate such provisions with overall landscaping, screening, and site and building design standards.
- Consider alternative methods and provisions for promoting and achieving creative land development and redevelopment approaches other than through the traditional "Planned Development" mechanism, which can be excessively time-consuming, costly and unpredictable for the City, development applicants, and neighbors and interested residents.
- Incorporate provisions to promote quality site and building design that enhances community aesthetics.

## Partnerships and Coordination

**Action L&C 6:** Elevate Littleton's leadership and active participation in regional growth and land use planning, through the Denver Regional Council of Governments (DRCOG) and other public/private forums, especially as it relates to the priorities and direction of this Plan and the Transportation Master Plan.

**Action L&C 7:** Continue close coordination with Littleton Public Schools as one of the City's essential partners for community building and maintaining school campuses as neighborhood anchors.

## More Targeted Planning / Study

**Action L&C 8:** Coordinate concurrent updates of the Comprehensive and Transportation Master plans to ensure ongoing integration of land use and transportation analysis and decision-making.

**Action L&C 9:** Continue to pursue special area and neighborhood planning within the framework of this Plan.

## POTENTIAL PARTNERS

Partners for implementation of plan priorities related to Land Use and Community Character include:

- Neighboring jurisdictions and Arapahoe, Douglas, and Jefferson Counties
- Area real estate and development community
- Denver Regional Council of Governments
- High Line Canal Conservancy
- Historic Littleton, Inc.
- Homeowner Associations
- Regional Transportation District
- South Metro Housing Options
- SouthPark Owners Association
- South Platte Working Group
- South Suburban Park and Recreation District
- Tri-County Health Department



# HOUSING AND NEIGHBORHOODS





## HOUSING AND NEIGHBORHOODS

Housing needs, gaps, and challenges in Littleton are central to this Plan. A key component of a city's livability is whether its residents can find suitable and economical housing options at all stages of life to remain in the community they love. Littleton also must offer quality and sustainable neighborhoods, the elements of which – safe streets, great schools, nearby shopping, and parks and trails, among others – cut across all parts of this Plan.

While the development of new residences and the rehabilitation of older housing occurs primarily through the private sector, municipal government and other public and non-profit partners have essential roles to play. The City and other partners protect residential investments over time, and strong neighborhoods support the local economy and tax base. Having a diverse stock of housing – new and old, big and small, ownership and rental – is crucial for offering choice and providing for the individual needs of all households, regardless of economic conditions.

## LEGACY OF PAST PLANNING

- City of Littleton Neighborhood and Corridor Plans, 2016
- Downtown Neighborhood Plan, 2011
- Littleton Housing Overview, 2013
- City of Littleton Housing Study, 2017
- South Metro Housing Options (SMHO) Annual Public Housing Agency (PHA) Plan, 2017

## KEY ISSUES AND CONSIDERATIONS

- Affordability challenges for existing and potential new residents with rising home values and rents relative to income within Littleton and across the Denver region.
- Difficulty of aging in place due to the cost of staying in an existing residence, dispersed support systems, or inability to find other available, viable housing options to transition into within Littleton, especially for those with assisted living or special care needs.
- Age of housing stock and opportunities for its revitalization, but also challenges for those who cannot afford to maintain or upgrade their homes.
- Concerns over residential density and effects on area character as neighborhoods evolve with new or more intensive housing forms.
- Concern for a potential loss of demographic diversity (by age, race/ethnicity, income level, etc.) driven by unattainable housing choices and/or neighborhood gentrification in Littleton.
- Needed strategies and partnering approaches to prevent and reduce homelessness in Littleton and surrounding communities, recognizing its complex nature as more than just a housing issue.
- Need for ongoing code compliance in older areas of Littleton.

## FRAMEWORK FOR ACTION

### GOALS

- GOAL H&N 1:** A quantity and diversity of housing options that makes living in Littleton attainable for a wide range of age groups and income levels.
- GOAL H&N 2:** Appealing housing choices for families drawn by Littleton's educational, recreational, and other amenities.
- GOAL H&N 3:** Neighborhoods that are safe and comfortable for all residents.
- GOAL H&N 4:** Neighborhoods that maintain their character or are carefully managed when headed toward transition.

**GOAL H&N 5:** Housing that supports choice in mobility and investments in transportation infrastructure.

## POLICIES

In making decisions that involve public resource allocation, regulatory matters, and physical improvements, among others, Littleton will:

**Policy H&N 1:** Encourage an array of residential options within the city – through new development, redevelopment, and maintenance of existing housing stock – to respond to the need for varied housing types, sizes, and price points that are attainable for prospective owners and renters at all levels of income.

**Policy H&N 2:** In cooperation with public and private partners, consider the entire spectrum of tools for assisting people in attaining their ownership or rental goals, and methods for spurring and guiding the supply side of the market to pursue projects that will address local needs.

**Policy H&N 3:** Assess and update local development regulations and standards, and related permitting processes, to avoid limiting desired and compatible housing construction, renovation, and preservation within the city.

**Policy H&N 4:** Encourage mixed-use development proposals that include a residential component, especially where this will support retail viability and transit ridership, place residents near education and local employment options, and provide living options for seniors and others close to transit, parks, and shopping, medical, and other services.

**Policy H&N 5:** Support development of assisted living and higher-level care facilities and other residential options intended specifically for those hoping to age in place rather than leave Littleton during life transitions.

**Policy H&N 6:** Adopt and apply development regulations and standards to ensure that new and redeveloped residential properties are compatible with the character of their surrounding area.

**Policy H&N 7:** Support the ongoing appeal of Littleton's neighborhoods through effective code compliance and by using public investments in streets, sidewalks, infrastructure, parks and trails, and pedestrian/bicycle safety measures, along with routine maintenance practices for all of the above.

**Policy H&N 8:** Promote design of residential developments near parks, trails, and preserved open spaces that capitalizes on this proximity.

## ACTIONS

### Capital Investments

**Action H&N 1:** Add criteria to the City's capital improvements planning process to include consideration of neighborhood needs and enhancement opportunities when identifying and prioritizing candidate capital projects.

### Programs and Initiatives

**Action H&N 2:** Convene a Housing Advisory Committee, comprised of residents, real estate and development professionals, and South Metro Housing Options (SMHO) representatives, to focus on the details and logistics of implementing the 2017 Housing Study recommendations, focusing first on the 1-2 year action steps recommended in the study and incorporating the City's anticipated Economic Impact Model in 2020.

**Action H&N 3:** Continue support of Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funding and examine the potential for leveraging additional financial resources for preservation and development of affordable/mixed-income housing.

**Action H&N 4:** Maintain an inventory of vacant residential parcels and assess the potential for specific housing types that further Plan goals and Housing Study recommendations.

**Action H&N 5:** Examine the potential for acquiring vacant land for future affordable/mixed-income housing, utilizing a land banking model, in areas designated for such use by this Plan and the Zoning Map.

**Action H&N 6:** Explore the potential for developing a rental rehabilitation program to help maintain rental unit affordability and sound physical conditions.

**Action H&N 7:** In coordination with SMHO, conduct public engagement to improve understanding of Low-Income Housing Tax Credit developments.

**Action H&N 8:** Place greater focus on home ownership resources and on advertising home ownership programs with information about available resources and loan programs for first-time home buyers.

**Action H&N 9:** Continue active code compliance efforts with a focus on measurable results, including producing an annual report on the status of substandard buildings through the Building Board of Appeals.

- Produce educational materials detailing maintenance responsibilities of home owners, and identify resources for those who need assistance in meeting their responsibilities.
- Ensure home owners, tenants and landlords are aware of resources available through various state and federal programs, such as weatherization programs to improve energy efficiency.

**Action H&N 10:** Pursue opportunities to advance Littleton as a lifelong community, including Age-Friendly certification from the American Association of Retired Persons (AARP).

## Regulations and Standards

**Action H&N 11:** As part of the City's zoning and code update initiative:

- Incorporate a "housing palette" that promotes more diverse housing forms, particularly housing types identified in the 2017 Housing Study as needed in Littleton (e.g., affordable rental units, starter homes, and dwelling types/sizes attractive to seniors and people with disabilities).
- Develop character-based zoning districts and provisions to accommodate more diverse housing forms that are compatible within Suburban Residential and other character areas.
- Incorporate incentives for affordable/mixed-income housing development.
- Include neighborhood design guidance in the subdivision regulations and elsewhere to promote quality residential developments.
- Evaluate best practices for regulating accessory dwelling units and short-term rentals, and parameters to prevent adverse neighborhood effects.
- Explore best practices for guiding the design and management of transit-oriented developments with a housing component.
- Add floodplain areas to the Zoning Map to increase awareness of building restrictions and risk.

**Action H&N 12:** Seek input periodically from SMHO and real estate/development representatives on ways the City's development regulations, standards, and review processes help to promote or may work against Littleton's housing objectives.

## Partnerships and Coordination

**Action H&N 13:** Continue active dialogue and coordination with SMHO, particularly as the agency adjusts its housing portfolio within Littleton.

**Action H&N 14:** Maintain ongoing outreach to and communication with homeowner associations (HOAs), and also to areas without HOAs or other organized means for neighborhood-level interaction with City officials and staff.

**Action H&N 15:** Maintain relationships with local and regional real estate/development representatives, and with economic development entities that recognize housing attainability as critical to community success, public school system viability, and the fiscal sustainability of local government.

**Action H&N 16:** Work with local and regional not-for-profit groups, such as Habitat for Humanity Metro Denver, to increase the supply of affordable housing.

## POTENTIAL PARTNERS

Partners for implementation of plan priorities related to Housing and Neighborhoods include:

- Neighboring jurisdictions and Arapahoe, Douglas, and Jefferson Counties
- Area real estate and development community
- Colorado Center for the Blind
- Denver Regional Council of Governments
- Habitat for Humanity Metro Denver
- High Line Canal Conservancy
- Littleton Public Schools
- Regional Transportation District
- South Metro Denver Realtors Association
- South Metro Housing Options
- South Platte Working Group
- South Suburban Park and Recreation District
- Tri-County Health Department



## More Targeted Planning / Study

**Action H&N 17:** Periodically update the 2017 Housing Study, particularly to incorporate newer data on demographic and housing market trends, locally and across the region, and to revisit recommended strategies and their relative priority and timing.





**TRANSPORTATION**



# TRANSPORTATION

Envision Littleton involved concurrent preparation of a new Comprehensive Plan and the City's first-ever Transportation Master Plan (TMP). The two plans were synchronized through joint community and leadership engagement processes involving City Council, Planning Commission, other City boards/commissions, a Project Management Team with City staff and consultant representatives for both plans, and extensive interaction with residents and other stakeholders across the city. During each Envision Littleton phase, inputs to the Comprehensive Plan and the Transportation Master Plan were coordinated to ensure an integrated set of policies and priorities, along with ongoing discussion of the Future Land Use and Character map. The Framework for Action presented below is intended as the outline for the TMP and should be revisited upon each update of the TMP to ensure consistency. In addition to goals, the TMP process resulted in a transportation Mission, as well as policies, which are summarized herein.

## LEGACY OF PAST PLANNING

- Littleton Plans and Studies
  - Citywide Plan (2014)
  - Bellevue Avenue Corridor Vision (2018)
  - Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan (2011)
  - Broadway Corridor Study (2009)
  - Downtown Neighborhood Plan (2011)
  - Littleton Downtown Design Standards (2006)
  - Mineral Station Area Framework (2018)
  - Neighborhood Plans and Corridor Plans (2016)
  - Three Mile Plan (2015)
  - Amended Columbine Square Urban Renewal Plan, City of Littleton (2015)
  - Arapaho Hills Historic Preservation Guidelines, City of Littleton (2016)
  - Resident and Business Surveys (2018)
  - City of Littleton Parks, Recreation, and Trails Master Plan (2016)
  - Downtown Littleton Historic Preservation Guidelines (2011)
  - Landscape Design Criteria Manual (1992)
  - Louthan Heights Historic District Design Guidelines (2017)
  - South Platte River Corridor Development Design Guidelines (2000)
  - Mineral Station ULI Advisory Services Report (2006)
  - Mineral Avenue TAP Final (2014)
  - Littleton Housing Report (2017)
  - Neighborhood Traffic Management Program (not dated)
  - Storm Drainage Design and Technical Criteria Manual (2018)
- Relevant Regional Plans and Studies
  - South Platte River Corridor Vision, Arapahoe County (2013)
  - South Suburban Parks and Recreation Master Plan (2017)
  - Arapahoe County Bicycle/Pedestrian Master Plan (2017)
  - High Line Canal Conservancy Vision Plan (2017)
  - RTD (Regional Transportation District) 2015-2020 Strategic Plan (2015)
  - RTD Regional BRT Feasibility Study (2018)
  - RTD Quality of Life Study (2017)
  - RTD TOD Strategic Plan (2010) and Status Report (2013)

- DRCOG (Denver Regional Council of Governments) Metro Vision 2035 (2017)
- DRCOG Active Transportation Plan (Draft) (2018)
- DRCOG Regional Transportation Plan 2040 (2017)
- Arapahoe County 2035 Transportation Plan (2010)
- Jefferson County Bicycle and Pedestrian Plans (2012)
- Jefferson County Countywide Transportation Plan (1998)
- Douglas County 2030 Transportation Plan (2009)

## KEY ISSUES AND CONSIDERATIONS

- Make Littleton pedestrian friendly by extending pedestrian network, adding pedestrian bridges, extending sidewalks, and improving existing sidewalks.
- Improve connections between downtown/river corridor/parks/trails.
- Complete network of streets in the city that provides connections, choice, calming, and capacity where appropriate.
- Improve traffic flow on arterials.
- Improve bike facilities.
- Decrease cut-through traffic in residential areas.
- Improve multimodal connections between commercial locations/residential developments.
- Improve trail network for transportation around and out of city.
- Improve intersection crossings.
- Improve connections to light rail.
- Improve road connections to key destinations but not through natural areas/build fewer cul-de-sacs/promote grid street network.
- Improve parking downtown, implement parking structures, consider parking restrictions.
- Implement traffic calming strategies in neighborhoods.

## TRANSPORTATION MASTER PLAN MISSION STATEMENT

Littleton will enable connection and accessibility for all through regional leadership and responsible stewardship of the city's transportation systems, policies, programs, and services.

## FRAMEWORK FOR ACTION

### GOALS

- GOAL TMP 1:** Connect people conveniently to the community, resources, and opportunities.
- GOAL TMP 2:** Promote safety and support efforts to maintain a healthy and active lifestyle.
- GOAL TMP 3:** Allocate services and facilities so that all people have transportation options that are best suited for their needs and lifestyle.
- GOAL TMP 4:** Contribute to our economic prosperity while maintaining and enhancing our community's character.
- GOAL TMP 5:** Build and operate a financially and environmentally sustainable transportation system.

## POLICIES

In making decisions that involve public resource allocation, regulatory matters, and physical improvements, among others, Littleton will:

**Policy TMP 1:** Focus on enhancing safety on auto and freight networks.

**Policy TMP 2:** Advance regional partnerships to build consensus and leverage funding toward significant transportation projects.

**Policy TMP 3:** Provide automobile Level of Service (LOS) E or better on Suburban Connectors and Commercial Corridors and LOS D or better on all other streets.

**Policy TMP 4:** Enhance auto and freight network projects that lead to operational and safety improvements.

**Policy TMP 5:** Enhance the safety of vulnerable user groups on streets and trails.

**Policy TMP 6:** Support connections to employment, retail, and entertainment/recreation land uses given the opportunity.

**Policy TMP 7:** Develop street design and construction standards that prioritize safety and mobility over speed.

**Policy TMP 8:** Develop a Transportation Demand Management Plan as a tool to help reduce congestion.

**Policy TMP 9:** Periodically update the truck route map.

**Policy TMP 10:** Develop a Complete Networks Plan.

**Policy TMP 11:** Implement a comprehensive bicycle and pedestrian count program similar to the vehicle count program. Consider installation of permanent continuous counters in key locations and as part of upcoming projects.

**Policy TMP 12:** Consider installing an all ages and abilities bicycle facility for every new bicycle project. All ages and abilities bicycle facilities are low-stress for all potential users, including children and seniors.

**Policy TMP 13:** Update City Code to address burgeoning micromobility industry. Include operating rules such as number of permits, speed limits, whether users should use sidewalks, bike lanes, or general purpose lanes depending on speeds, and establish restricted areas.

**Policy TMP 14:** Consider including bicycle and pedestrian facility upgrades as part of every infrastructure project, including resurfacing projects. Develop a resurfacing checklist that considers bicycle facilities:

[http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/environment/bicycle\\_pedestrian/publications/resurfacing/](http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/environment/bicycle_pedestrian/publications/resurfacing/)

**Policy TMP 15:** Consider bicycle and pedestrian detection for signal actuation in every new traffic signal installation.

**Policy TMP 16:** Maintain a fleet of smaller snow removal vehicles to plow trails, shared use paths, and protected bike lanes.

**Policy TMP 17:** Update City Code to require residents/businesses to clear sidewalks within 24 hours; existing code states, "within a reasonable time after every snowfall".

**Policy TMP 18:** Evaluate existing sidewalk policy/code.

**Policy TMP 19:** In development proposals, limit curb cuts along proposed planned bicycle and pedestrian routes.

**Policy TMP 20:** Require maintaining clear sidewalks or bicycle lanes during building or street construction or provide a detour: <http://www2.oaklandnet.com/oakca1/groups/pwa/documents/memorandum/oak061424.pdf>

**Policy TMP 21:** Encourage new developments to provide secure indoor parking and other end-of-trip facilities for bicyclists.

**Policy TMP 22:** Encourage development to utilize grid street networks and limit the use of cul-de-sacs.

**Policy TMP 23:** Advocate for maintenance and enhancement of existing RTD bus and rail service in Littleton.

**Policy TMP 24:** Improve ADA connections and trip-planning services connecting to fixed-route transit network.

**Policy TMP 25:** Develop mobility hubs at key stops and stations to promote mode choice and technological integration.

**Policy TMP 26:** Pursue regional public and private partnerships with neighboring municipalities to fund high-capacity transit improvements (including light rail and BRT).

**Policy TMP 27:** Prioritize the safety of vulnerable user groups on trains, buses, and at stations and stops.

**Policy TMP 28:** Demand and support connections to employment, retail, and entertainment/recreation opportunities.

**Policy TMP 29:** Coordinate traffic management center systems and operations with adjacent municipalities and CDOT.

**Policy TMP 30:** Partner with neighboring municipalities and the private sector as needed to manage the introduction of new technologies to Littleton.

**Policy TMP 31:** Transition government fleets to electric and other zero-emission vehicles.

**Policy TMP 32:** Be transparent about prioritization and implementation of capital improvements.

## ACTIONS

The TMP applies an approach to planning that focuses on providing a transportation system that works for all users. In the context of the City of Littleton and the concurrent update to the Comprehensive Plan, this means the plan maps out a complete network of streets that finds the balance where streets are vibrant, safe, and promote a sense of place while providing multimodal choices for users of all ages and ability. This systematic approach emphasizes the following major themes:

- **Community:** No plan or project can truly be successful without engaging the community. This is about returning streets to the community and improving a community's quality of life.
- **Choices:** The healthiest and most vibrant communities understand that bicycling, walking, and transit are critical components of the transportation system. A complete system not only addresses safety and mobility concerns, but also provides encouragement of active living, ultimately improving community health.
- **Capacity:** Although a multimodal approach can increase the overall person capacity of a roadway corridor, the impact on auto capacity is often a concern that must be addressed. A toolbox of analysis techniques and operations strategies to manage roadway capacity has been identified to help balance mobility needs across modes.
- **Calming:** Plans and designs should create context-appropriate streets that consider the needs of all potential users, encourage appropriate driving behaviors and speed, and provide welcoming environments for non-motorized users.
- **Connections:** We know that providing connections between sites, neighborhoods, modes, and jurisdictions is crucial to maintaining healthy transportation systems and communities. A systematic approach to providing a complete network can facilitate key connections within the community.

The action plan can be found in the TMP. It includes over \$700 million in potential transportation projects, both locally and regionally significant, in addition to a full list of additional plans, strategies, and partnerships to pursue.





# INFRASTRUCTURE AND SERVICES



## INFRASTRUCTURE AND SERVICES

Littleton must prepare for, and have the capacity to meet, the service demands of current residents plus future new development and redevelopment. As with other mature cities, Littleton has a full slate of aging infrastructure and public facility needs to address. Infrastructure and services are essential to secure investor interest and assurance to undertake private projects in Littleton. Likewise, the City depends on an adequate tax base from business activity and private property improvements to fund essential capital projects and ongoing maintenance.

Capital investments in public infrastructure such as utilities and streets can signal desired locations for growth, help maintain a high quality of life for residents, and create a framework for desired land development and revitalization. Meanwhile, local development regulations govern subdivision and re-platting activity, provide for the appropriate use of land through zoning, and set minimum standards for the nature and quality of development. The City can employ financing and special district mechanisms that advance the community's economic development and growth management objectives while supporting beneficial private development and reinvestment. Finally, effective oversight and management of ongoing growth and revitalization depends on solid partnerships with other key public agencies, including County government, Littleton Public Schools, South Suburban Park and Recreation District, South Platte Water Renewal Partners, and South Metro Fire Rescue, among others.

## LEGACY OF PAST PLANNING

- Arapahoe County, CO Multi-Hazard Mitigation Plan 2015-2022
- Various Floodplain Hazard Area Delineation Studies (Mile High Flood District, formerly known as Urban Drainage and Flood Control District, and City of Littleton), various years.
- Federal Emergency Management Agency Flood Insurance Studies and Flood Insurance Maps, various dates
- Collections Division Tactical Action Plan (Brown and Caldwell), 2016

## KEY ISSUES AND CONSIDERATIONS

- Capacity of City government to maintain levels of service and support needed for economic development and revitalization.
- Financial implications for the City given its streets, utility infrastructure, and City-owned public facilities that are in need of repair and ongoing maintenance.
- Water pressure in older areas of the city.
- Extent of existing homes and businesses located within floodplains (as many areas of Littleton were developed prior to federal floodplain mapping), which can complicate redevelopment and building upgrades.
- Ensuring effective partnerships with other entities that provide public services essential to Littleton's livability and resident satisfaction (e.g., schools, parks/trails, recreation programming and facilities, fire, etc.).
- Crime trends and adequate levels of community policing.

## FRAMEWORK FOR ACTION

### GOALS

- GOAL I&S 1:** Well-maintained water, wastewater, and storm drainage infrastructure that serves the needs of Littleton residents and businesses while minimizing adverse impacts on the environment.
- GOAL I&S 2:** Consistent budget and community support of a well-staffed, trained, and equipped police force to ensure a safe and secure city.
- GOAL I&S 3:** A continuing commitment to periodic assessment, and ongoing maintenance, of public facilities that are essential to Littleton's livability and accommodation of visitors.

## POLICIES

In making decisions that involve public resource allocation, regulatory matters, and physical improvements, among others, Littleton will:

**Policy I&S 1:** Commit to a robust yearly program of capital improvements, as its financial means allow, while avoiding a deferred maintenance approach when resources are limited that causes unmet needs to accumulate and become more costly.

**Policy I&S 2:** Remain an active and reliable partner in interlocal and interagency approaches to operation and oversight of essential infrastructure, and public facilities and services, including with South Platte Water Renewal Partners, Denver Water, the Mile High Flood District, and South Metro Fire Rescue, among others.

**Policy I&S 3:** Link capital improvements planning and project prioritization to the City's economic development agenda and tax base needs, especially where public infrastructure investments will leverage complementary private investment in support of this Plan and other adopted City plans.

**Policy I&S 4:** Be a prepared and resilient community with City infrastructure and services that can recover quickly from the effects of severe weather and natural hazards, and which manages growth and development to reduce risks.

**Policy I&S 5:** Pursue multi-objective drainage design solutions, where appropriate, that integrate open space, recreational, and aesthetic considerations while maintaining public safety.

**Policy I&S 6:** Be a leader among Colorado cities in managing and maintaining public infrastructure and facilities, and in learning about and adopting best practices, green infrastructure, and new technologies.

## ACTIONS

### Capital Investments

**Action I&S 1:** Continue ongoing infrastructure maintenance, rehabilitation efforts, and upgrades through the City's capital projects planning and budgeting process.

**Action I&S 2:** Utilize the results of recent asset management planning efforts and the Impact Fee Update study to refine facility maintenance and improvement priorities, determine funding needs, and identify potential sources of funding.

### Programs and Initiatives

**Action I&S 3:** Continue adequate funding to maintain high-quality police services in line with continued population growth and development and other indicators of policing coverage, response time, and service level.

**Action I&S 4:** Continue the City's participation in the Community Rating System under the National Flood Insurance Program, particularly for the potential benefits for resident and business insurance premium costs.

**Action I&S 5:** Expand outreach to owners of residential and commercial properties regarding their property's floodplain mapping status and flooding risk, their flood insurance options, and how changes in the built environment can exacerbate flooding risk posed by proximity to streams and water bodies.

**Action I&S 6:** Raise awareness and provide educational resources regarding how a property's flood zone classification can limit renovation and improvements to existing structures, and after a damaging storm, could restrict reconstruction of structures deemed substantially damaged or otherwise limit redevelopment. Target initial outreach in some of the city's oldest and currently most affordable neighborhoods (e.g., northeast Littleton), where property improvements and public or private redevelopment efforts could be hindered.

### Regulations and Standards

**Action I&S 7:** As part of the City's zoning and code update initiative, evaluate the potential for integrating any new or adjusted hazard mitigation considerations related to wildfire, flooding, drought, and other hazards.



## Partnerships and Coordination

**Action I&S 8:** Continue the collaborative process for emergency responders to review plans, new or updated regulations, and significant development proposals for any impacts to emergency response.

**Action I&S 9:** Continue partnership with Mile High Flood District (formerly known as Urban Drainage and Flood Control District) to leverage funds for major drainageway improvements and maintenance.

**Action I&S 10:** Participate in and support High Line Canal Conservancy efforts to convert the canal to storm water infrastructure.

**Action I&S 11:** Continue to demonstrate municipal leadership in partnerships with South Platte Water Renewal Partners, Denver Water, and South Metro Fire Rescue, among others.

## More Targeted Planning / Study

**Action I&S 12:** Continue asset management planning on all components of City infrastructure.

**Action I&S 13:** Prepare and regularly update master plans for City infrastructure systems, the findings and recommendations of which are an essential input to capital improvements planning and any related grant pursuits to leverage local dollars.

**Action I&S 14:** Study the storm and sewer fee structure to determine if any changes are needed to support infrastructure investment.

**Action I&S 15:** Assess potential priority areas for purchasing flood-prone properties as opportunities arise, and the estimated costs for such acquisitions whether considered by the City, another public agency, a non-profit entity, or other partners.

**Action I&S 16:** Continue to participate in updates to the county-level Multi-Hazard Mitigation Plans.

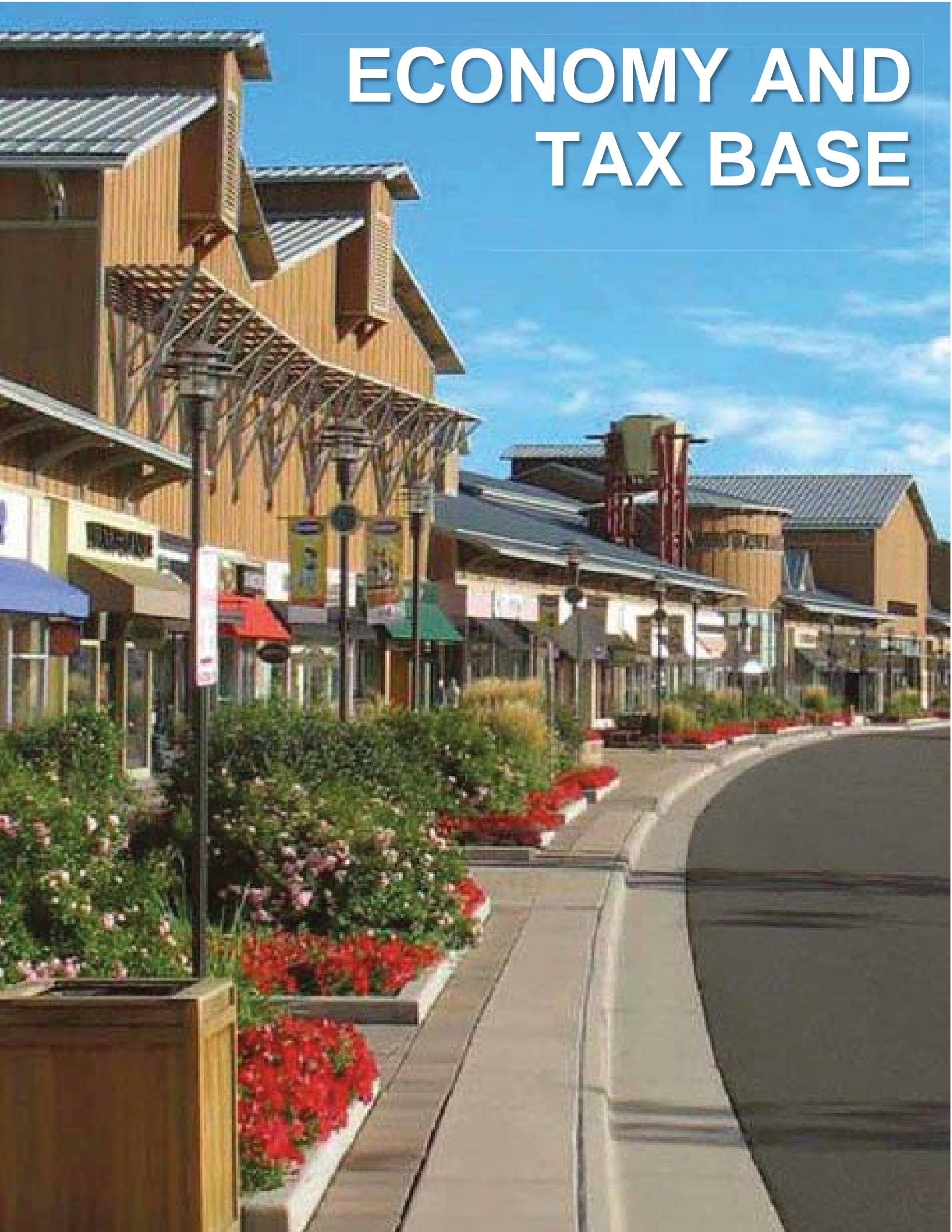
**Action I&S 17:** Create updated master plans for Bemis Library and Littleton Museum collaboratively with the Library Advisory and Museum Boards, to include both physical and programming considerations.

## POTENTIAL PARTNERS

Partners for implementation of plan priorities related to Infrastructure and Services include:

- Neighboring jurisdictions and Arapahoe, Douglas, and Jefferson Counties
- Denver Water
- Mile High Flood District (formerly known as Urban Drainage and Flood Control District)
- Southeast Metro Stormwater Authority
- South Metro Fire Rescue
- South Platte Water Renewal Partners
- Urban Drainage and Flood Control District
- Xcel Energy
- Area faith community.

# ECONOMY AND TAX BASE



## ECONOMY AND TAX BASE

Continued economic opportunity and prosperity in Littleton will bolster the community's tax base to support quality public services and amenities. The City's development strategies and implementation tools must be nimble and flexible enough to respond to a dynamic economic climate at the local, regional, and national levels. Successful economic development also requires a focus on quality of place, capitalizing on Littleton's special character and unique identity to attract and retain businesses and draw visitors seeking shopping, services, entertainment, recreation, arts and culture, and heritage tourism.

## LEGACY OF PAST PLANNING

- City of Littleton Economic Plan, 2013
- City of Littleton Annual Economic Development Report, 2018

## KEY ISSUES AND CONSIDERATIONS

- The long-term fiscal sustainability of the City of Littleton.
- The tax base implications from conversion of existing commercial properties to residential use.
- Increased cost of living and tax implications for residents, and return on residential and business investments in Littleton.
- Vacant and inadequately maintained retail centers and spaces and the adverse effect on Littleton's image and investor interest.
- Concern about loss of small, independent businesses.
- Challenges to redevelopment in Littleton, especially involving older vacant and underutilized commercial sites.
- Whether Littleton is positioned for and can attract significant "Class A" (high quality) office development, which is a minimal share of its current land use pattern.
- Desire for additional visitor lodging options.

## FRAMEWORK FOR ACTION

### GOALS

- GOAL E&T 1:** A focus on the revenue needs of Littleton City government to continue meeting the public service expectations of its residents, businesses, and institutions.
- GOAL E&T 2:** Continued nurturing of key employment sectors, target industries, and small businesses that expand local job opportunities and contribute to better incomes for those who live and/or work in Littleton.
- GOAL E&T 3:** Revitalized commercial centers and areas that alleviate obsolete conditions and vacant sites and that meet the contemporary shopping and service needs of Littleton residents and visitors.
- GOAL E&T 4:** Provision of resources, services, and a conducive regulatory environment to help businesses of all sizes develop and grow.
- GOAL E&T 5:** A commitment to education at all levels that meets the workforce needs of area businesses and ensures lifelong learning and skills acquisition opportunities for residents and visitors.

### POLICIES

In making decisions that involve public resource allocation, regulatory matters, and physical improvements, among others, Littleton will:

- Policy E&T 1:** Maintain City official and public awareness of the financial challenges the City faces in meeting the high, and increasingly costly, public service expectations of a largely residential community.

**Policy E&T 2:** Seek opportunities to enhance the City's tax base and diversify revenue sources in ways that are compatible and consistent with Littleton's unique character (e.g., extensive Suburban residential character, rich architectural heritage, South Platte River and abundant green space, etc.) while also providing relief from the tax burden residents bear.

**Policy E&T 3:** Assess the fiscal implications, property by property, when existing nonresidential sites are proposed for residential use, especially in cases where commercial use and/or zoning is considered no longer viable.

**Policy E&T 4:** Support and complete planning to better understand Littleton's economic position in the Denver region (as both city and region evolve).

**Policy E&T 5:** Continue to promote, and work to retain, its existing and distinctive local businesses, including those challenged by a changing retail industry.

**Policy E&T 6:** Evaluate public sector tools and options for spurring private sector interest and reinvestment in vacant and underutilized commercial properties.

**Policy E&T 7:** Periodically re-assess the array of economic development tools, techniques, and financing methods available through federal agencies and State of Colorado legislation and programs, including to determine those most appropriate for Littleton.

**Policy E&T 8:** Evaluate and consider adjustments to City processes and policies that may impede desired business attraction and investment.

**Policy E&T 9:** Determine whether development proposals are consistent with adopted City policies and regulations and can be accommodated with adequate public infrastructure and services.

**Policy E&T 10:** Support a "community of learning," in coordination with education partners, in which quality primary and secondary education, vocational and higher education, lifelong continuing education, and other educational resources are valued and accessible to Littleton residents and visitors.

## ACTIONS

### Capital Investments

**Action E&T 1:** Continue funding for the revitalization incentive grant program.

### Programs and Initiatives

**Action E&T 2:** Continue successful business resource services provided by the Economic Development and Business Services Department including support for entrepreneurs, start-ups, and small businesses considering locating in Littleton.

**Action E&T 3:** Pursue ways to diversify City revenue sources to decrease reliance on sales tax revenue.

**Action E&T 4:** Monitor the changing retail environment, and support the revitalization of underperforming retail centers to meet market demands and address City revenue needs.

**Action E&T 5:** Explore further ways to promote the creative economy and innovation within Littleton.

**Action E&T 6:** Examine potential adoption of incentives for business investments that would advance community goals expressed in the Plan and other adopted City plans (e.g., tax increment financing, sales tax sharing, permit fee abatement, etc.).

**Action E&T 7:** Continue to pursue fiber/broadband technology investments and upgrades with public and private partners.

**Action E&T 8:** Continue to monitor state legislation affecting economic development best practices and tools for Colorado municipalities.

### Regulations and Standards

**Action E&T 9:** As part of the City's zoning and code update initiative, create a new zoning district and associated standards for accommodating mixed-use development.



**Action E&T 10:** Assist small businesses to navigate code requirements and other potential challenges to locating in and renovating spaces within older and/or historic structures.

## Partnerships and Coordination

**Action E&T 11:** Continue active participation in regional economic development organizations to advance Littleton's interests.

**Action E&T 12:** Continue to foster relationships with and support local economic development organizations including the recently established Littleton Business Chamber.

**Action E&T 13:** Continue to strengthen and grow partnerships with education and workforce training providers, including Littleton Public Schools, Arapahoe Community College, medical institutions and others.

**Action E&T 14:** Continue to engage property owners and developers, keeping abreast of their plans and desires for their property.

**Action E&T 15:** Utilize the City's newly established Next Generation Advisory Committee as a sounding board for economic development priorities and potential strategies amid Littleton's evolving demographic and economic environment.

## More Targeted Planning / Study

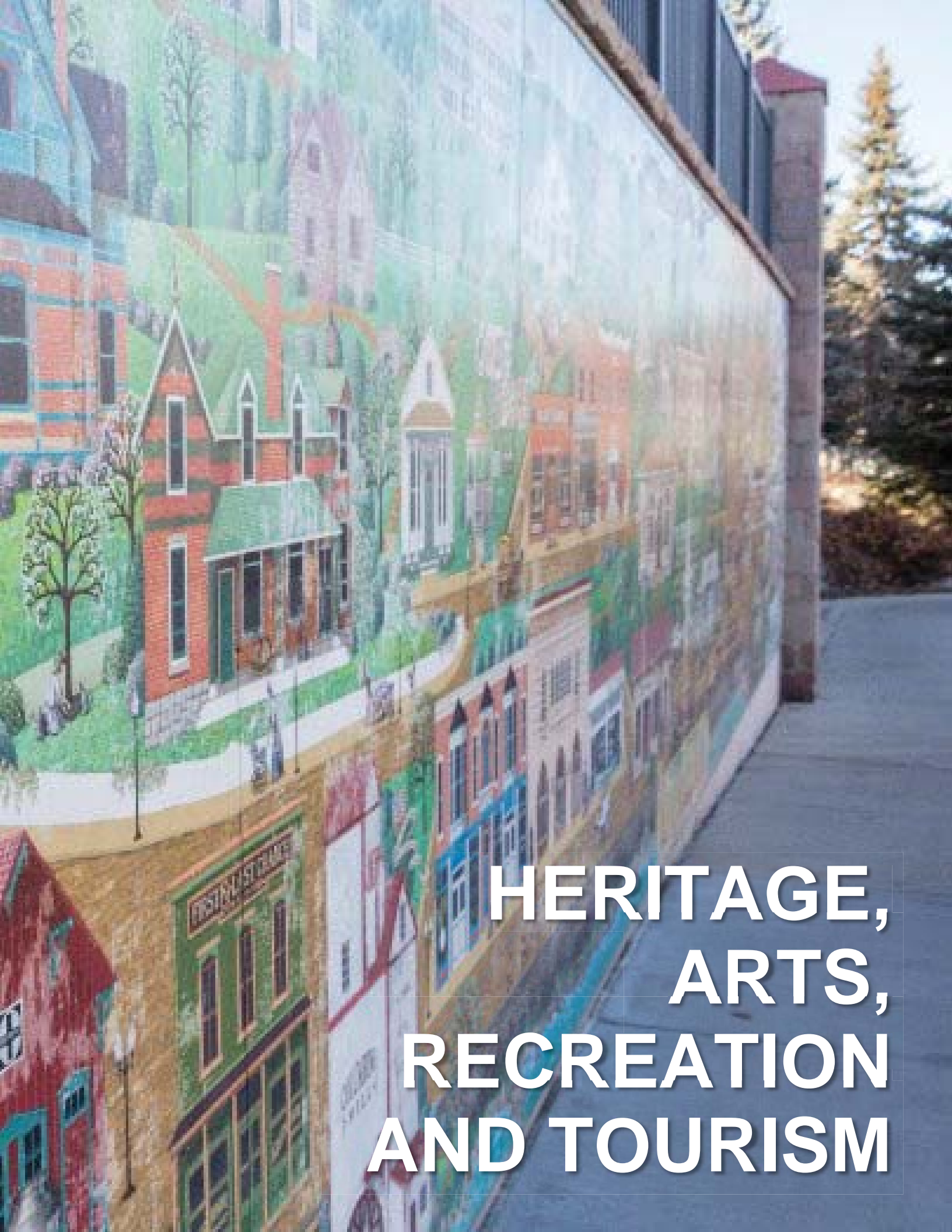
**Action E&T 16:** Prepare a full Economic Development Plan, building upon the 2013 Economic Plan, to identify tools and strategies that will capitalize on Littleton's strengths to attract, retain, and grow businesses and target industries. The plan can examine gaps in retail and other business sectors and assess leakage in retail sales and revenue. The plan can also help guide the development of vacant land, infill development and redevelopment, and revitalization of key roadway corridors. The plan should also include links to planning for arts and culture, historic preservation, and tourism promotion in the Heritage, Arts, Recreation, and Tourism section of this Plan.

**Action E&T 17:** Using input from existing local businesses, pursue a strategic marketing plan based on identified assets, advantages, and services that can help attract targeted new businesses and retail customers to Littleton.

## POTENTIAL PARTNERS

Partners for implementation of plan priorities related to Economy and Tax Base include:

- Neighboring jurisdictions and Arapahoe, Douglas, and Jefferson Counties
- Arapahoe Community College
- Arapahoe/Douglas WORKS!
- Aspen Grove
- Area real estate and development community
- Denver Regional Council of Governments
- Denver South Economic Development Partnership
- Historic Downtown Littleton Merchants Association
- Littleton Business Chamber
- Local entrepreneurs and home-based businesses
- Littleton Optimists Club
- Littleton Public Schools
- Littleton Rotary Club
- Area faith community
- Metro Denver Economic Development Corporation
- Regional Transportation District
- South Metro Denver Chamber of Commerce
- SouthPark Owners Association



# HERITAGE, ARTS, RECREATION AND TOURISM

## HERITAGE, ARTS, RECREATION, AND TOURISM

With its unique history and architectural heritage, active arts scene, widespread recreation options, abundant green and open spaces, and many community events year-round, Littleton offers an array of amenities that appeal to residents and visitors. All aspects of the Plan shape the livability of Littleton, but this section especially reinforces the quality of life its residents enjoy.

### LEGACY OF PAST PLANNING

- Commercial Modernism in the Greater West Littleton Boulevard Corridor 1950-1980, 2018
- Littleton Museum Strategic Institutional Plan 2010-2020, 2017
- Town Hall Arts Center 2025 Vision Plan, 2015
- City of Littleton Parks, Recreation, and Trails Master Plan, 2016
- South Platte Park Management Plan, 2017
- South Platte River Corridor Vision, Arapahoe County, 2013
- South Suburban Park and Recreation Master Plan, 2017
- High Line Canal Vision Plan, 2017
- High Line Canal Framework Plan, 2019

### KEY ISSUES AND CONSIDERATIONS

- Threats to Littleton's historic legacy and architectural heritage.
- Concern over development encroachment, both physical and visual, on Littleton's preserved green and open spaces, and desire for greater emphasis on the continuity and potential enlargement of linear greenway segments within the community.
- The need for more effective collaboration with partner entities that have responsibility for managing and enhancing elements of Littleton's park and open space inventory (e.g., South Suburban Park and Recreation District, High Line Canal Conservancy, etc.).
- The desire to support well-established cultural and entertainment destinations, and events and festivals that fill the calendar year-round in Littleton.
- Convenient and safe public access to parks, trails, and greenways within the city, especially where potential users are separated from these resources by major roadways and other physical barriers.
- Ongoing appreciation and promotion of Littleton Museum and Bemis Library as special public assets.
- Active arts and cultural programs and organizations that offer opportunities to experience and enjoy the arts in Littleton while contributing to the city's economic vitality.
- Littleton's tourism appeal and its approach to accommodating visitors for leisure and business.

### FRAMEWORK FOR ACTION

#### GOALS

- GOAL HART 1:** Preserved and enhanced public green spaces that provide access to nature, widespread opportunities for recreation and play close to home, and continuous greenway connections within and through the city.
- GOAL HART 2:** Continued protection and promotion of Littleton's heritage, especially where it is tangibly visible in historic architecture, designated districts and landmarks, and distinctive neighborhoods and buildings.

**GOAL HART 3:** A healthy community with convenient access to recreational facilities and programming and outdoor fitness activities.

**GOAL HART 4:** A vibrant city for both residents and visitors, enlivened by an active downtown, an array of arts, cultural, and entertainment options both indoor and outdoor, extensive heritage tourism opportunities, and popular community events and festivals throughout the year.

**GOAL HART 5:** A community that thrives on and leverages the economic and social power of the arts to enhance its fiscal strength, regional reputation, social connectivity, and overall quality of life for residents of all ages.

## POLICIES

In making decisions that involve public resource allocation, regulatory matters, and physical improvements, among others, Littleton will:

**Policy HART 1:** Maintain close and mutually beneficial relationships with the South Suburban Park and Recreation District, South Platte Working Group, High Line Canal Conservancy, Hudson Gardens, and other key partners that enable Littleton residents and visitors to enjoy a large quantity of high quality recreational assets and public open space.

**Policy HART 2:** Strive to build consensus and support on how best the City can preserve more areas and structures with historic significance, and protect designated and potential new historic districts and landmarks.

**Policy HART 3:** Prioritize public safety, including safe access to and from parks and other public spaces, and personal security while enjoying parks, trails, and community facilities and events.

**Policy HART 4:** Incorporate guidance and incentives into the City's zoning and subdivision regulations so that green and open spaces are aligned and integrated across private development sites and adjacent public lands.

**Policy HART 5:** Incorporate guidance and incentives into the City's zoning and subdivision regulation to promote sensitive design approaches on sites with, or adjacent to, historic structures and areas.

**Policy HART 6:** Continue to plan for, and budget, adequate resources to maintain and enhance Bemis Library and Littleton Museum as premier public facilities with targeted programming for all ages.

**Policy HART 7:** Regularly evaluate the appropriate and most effective methods the City can use for devoting resources and support to cultural arts and community events programming.

**Policy HART 8:** Be aware of the diverse perspective and needs of visitors to Littleton, along with those of residents.

## ACTIONS

### Capital Investments

**Action HART 1:** Utilize the project funding prioritization methodology recommended by the Open Space and Parks Task Force to maximize the leveraging of available funding and advance park, trail, and open space projects that address objectives of the City and its multiple partners.

### Programs and Initiatives

**Action HART 2:** Develop an organizational structure within the City for handling park-related issues, collaboration, public inquiries, and funding pursuits as detailed in the 2016 Parks, Recreation and Trails Master Plan. Include the Fine Arts Board as many public art sculptures are located in parks.

**Action HART 3:** Improve access to parks and recreation information and increase City communication (website, social media, etc.) to promote awareness of plans, policies, facilities and programming at recreational sites, including those of the South Suburban Park and Recreation District, Hudson Gardens, and others.

**Action HART 4:** Research and report on the various ways visitors travel to and move about the community; how they experience popular locations and events; what they tell others about their experience; and what factors determine how much time and money they spend locally.



**Action HART 5:** Coordinate with partners to track visitor utilization of recreation facilities, sites, and other types of Littleton amenities, and monitor changing local, state, and national tourism trends.

**Action HART 6:** Continue to promote awareness and appreciation of the full range of Littleton's arts, cultural, and historic assets through ongoing activities, special events, and partnerships.

**Action HART 7:** Evaluate opportunities and partnerships for incorporating art amenities into public projects such as buildings and infrastructure improvements.

**Action HART 8:** Continue the Main Street Historic District Grant Program and support the promotion and continued use of historic tax credits.

**Action HART 9:** Consider a Littleton application for Creative District Certification through the State of Colorado.

***Action 9 Link:***

The Creative Districts Certification Process is established by the State's Creative Industries Division. Colorado now has 23 Creative Districts across the state. Greeley's Creative District "blends the historic Downtown Development and University Districts in a continuum of dynamic and complementary uses."



**COLORADO CREATIVE DISTRICTS**

## Regulations and Standards

**Action HART 10:** Evaluate the potential for dedicated park and recreation funding through impact fees versus other options, such as land contributions or other fees, as detailed in the 2016 Parks, Recreation and Trails Master Plan.

**Action HART 11:** Through the Historic Preservation Board and other forums, continue to build consensus on measures the City should consider and implement – regulatory and/or otherwise – for preserving more areas and structures with distinctive historic value and character, along with ongoing protection of previously designated places and identification of potential new historic districts and landmarks.

## Partnerships and Coordination

**Action HART 12:** Continue and enhance collaboration, communication, and partnerships with the many agencies, organizations and non-profits that provide and/or advocate for heritage, arts, cultural, recreation, and open space amenities in Littleton.

**Action HART 13:** Promote the wellness of residents by collaborating with partner agencies and organizations, and market Littleton's many parks and recreation offerings as essential elements of an active lifestyle.

**Action HART 14:** Pursue ways to close gaps in the existing local and regional trail systems to improve access and connectivity to jobs, education, fresh food, and health care, among others.

**Action HART 15:** Work with partners to promote multi-use trail etiquette, safety, and education.

**Action HART 16:** Engage volunteers and leverage their involvement to increase awareness, education, and use of park and recreation amenities, Littleton Museum, and Bemis Library.

**Action HART 17:** Improve coordination of signage and wayfinding at parks, recreation sites, trails, and open space areas, and also within residential neighborhoods and commercial areas.

**Action HART 18:** Continue to emphasize regional collaboration as the best means for enhancing the South Platte River corridor as both an environmental and community amenity.

**Action HART 19:** Investigate with area utility providers the potential to integrate art on utility facilities, such as utility cabinets in public view.

**Action HART 20:** Encourage incorporation of art in private developments.

***Action 14 Link:***

Improving High Line Canal Trail connections at Broadway is identified as one of seven transformation projects in the High Line Canal Conservancy Framework Plan.

## More Targeted Planning / Study

**Action HART 21:** Build on planning efforts for the South Platte River Corridor to clarify and integrate goals for this key community asset involving economics, aesthetics, recreation, and the environment.

**Action HART 22:** Complete regular updates to the Parks, Recreation and Trails Master Plan, highlight implementation progress and successes – especially through partnership efforts, and continue to communicate Littleton’s park, recreation, trail, and open space priorities to funding partners.

**Action HART 23:** Lay the groundwork for preparing a holistic historic preservation plan and strategy for ongoing preservation efforts in Littleton, involving broad community engagement to gauge resident, property owner and stakeholder sentiment on the methods and extent to which the City should utilize available preservation tools.

**Action HART 24:** Use the City’s initiatives to update its zoning and development regulations and pursue further downtown-focused planning as precursors to a historic preservation plan.

**Action HART 25:** Coordinate with partner organizations to prepare for development of a holistic Arts and Culture Plan for Littleton. The plan can include identification of new and sustaining funding sources, and explore a potential advisory committee to coordinate across all aspects of programming, promotion, and development.

## POTENTIAL PARTNERS

Partners for implementation of plan priorities related to Heritage, Arts, Recreation, and Tourism include:

- Neighboring jurisdictions and Arapahoe, Douglas, and Jefferson Counties
- Aspen Grove
- Colorado Tourism Office
- Denver Regional Council of Governments
- High Line Canal Conservancy
- Historic Littleton, Inc.
- Hudson Gardens
- Littleton Public Schools
- Scientific and Cultural Facilities District
- South Platte Working Group
- South Suburban Park and Recreation District
- Tri-County Health Department
- Trust for Public Land

## ARTS AND CULTURE

Littleton is home to a remarkable range of arts and cultural events, activities, galleries, performances, and studios. The City operates the Littleton Museum, the first museum in Colorado to be recognized as an Affiliate of the Smithsonian Institution.



The appointed Fine Arts Board advises City officials and staff in developing a fine arts collection, and assists in selecting and purchasing public art for installation in public buildings, parks, and open spaces. The Board also arranges periodic art shows, selects art and sculpture for the Littleton Center, and reviews all art donations to the City. The Board's collection now numbers 32 public art installations, plus some smaller pieces that are exhibited periodically inside the Littleton Museum.

Littleton is also home to the Hudson Gardens and Event Center, the Depot Art Gallery run by the Littleton Fine Arts Guild, the Littleton Chorale, and the Town Hall Arts Center. All of these entities serve to enhance not only the quality of life within Littleton, but are also important engines of economic development.

### POTENTIAL PARTNERS AND FUNDING SOURCES

- Colorado Business Committee for the Arts
- Scientific and Cultural Facilities District
- Cultural Councils of Arapahoe, Douglas, and Jefferson Counties
- The Fine Arts Foundation
- Western States Art Federation (WESTAF)
- Colorado Creative Industries – a division of the State of Colorado Office of Economic Development and International Trade
- National Endowment for the Arts
- Institute of Museum and Library Services

The Americans for the Arts' 2018 Public Opinion Poll found that 90 percent of people agree that arts institutions are important to quality of life and 86 percent agree that arts institutions are important to local businesses and the economy.

## Littleton *ROCKS!*

The City of Littleton's Littleton Rocks! website is devoted to publicizing art and cultural events as well as other activities offered in Littleton.

**Colorado Aperture Show**  
 @ Depot Art Gallery  
 Sep 17 all-day

August 27 - September 28  
 RECEPTION September 6 5 - 8 pm  
 AWARDS 6:30  
 DEPOT ART GALLERY 1300 WEST POWERS  
 CLOSER 17-18-19-21 6:00-7:00 PM

August 27 – September 29, 2019, hours vary by day. The Littleton Fine Arts Guild and the Depot Art Gallery presents its second fine art photography exhibit, Colorado Aperture 2019. This juried show was open[...]

• ARTS & CRAFTS • GALLERY / ARTIST

**A Tour of Italy @**  
 Colorado Gallery of the Arts  
 Sep 17 @ 9:00 am – 5:00 pm

View Works featured by Drawing, Interior Design, Journalism, Painting & Photography study abroad students. August 12 through September 18 Hours: Monday – Friday, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.

• ARTS & CRAFTS

**Cabaret @ Town Hall**  
 Arts Center  
 Sep 19 all-day

CABARET

**Farmers' Markets at**  
 Aspen Grove @ Aspen Grove Shopping Center  
 Sep 18 @ 10:00 am – 2:00 pm

FARMERS' MARKET every WEDNESDAY  
 JUNE 12 to SEPT 25  
 10 AM - 2 PM  
 ASPEN GROVE

According to the Colorado Business Committee for the Arts' 2018 Economic Activity Study of Metro Denver Culture, nonprofit arts, cultural and scientific organizations in the seven-county metro region generated \$1.9 billion in economic activity as well as 11,820 jobs and 4.3 million education opportunities for children.



# ENVIRONMENT





## ENVIRONMENT

The quality of land, water, and air resources is essential to the character and livability of a community, especially within a highly populated, and relatively intensively developed, metropolitan area. Individuals, groups, and governments have a responsibility to appreciate and assess their respective contributions, both positive and negative, to a shared natural environment. To be responsible stewards they must determine how best to integrate such considerations into their planning and decision-making processes.

All the other Plan elements tie to the environment including topics such as: land management through municipal planning and development regulation; design of housing and neighborhoods; availability of travel options; provision of water, sanitary sewer, waste disposal, storm drainage, and other public services; and planning for recreation and enjoyment of the outdoors. Consideration of prudent resource conservation practices requires a holistic view of the community and how it interacts with, benefits from, and manages the integrity of its natural “infrastructure.”

## LEGACY OF PAST PLANNING

- City of Littleton Renewal Municipal Separate Storm Sewer (MS4) State of Colorado Permit #090055 Program Description Document (PDD), 2018
- Water Quality Report, Denver Water, 2018
- Denver Regional Council of Governments (DRCOG) CO and PM10 Conformity Determination, 2017 Amendments
- DRCOG Denver Southern Subarea 8-Hour Ozone Conformity Determination, 2017 Amendments

## KEY ISSUES AND CONSIDERATIONS

- Long-term sustainability of land, water, and air resources.
- Concern for water quantity and quality within the South Platte River and other local waterbodies and waterways.
- Challenges to maintaining the look and feel of the High Line Canal corridor given changes in area water management, loss of trees along the canal, and other adverse factors.
- Accommodating wildlife within a city of Littleton’s size and human footprint on the landscape.
- Maintaining and enhancing Littleton’s mature tree canopy over time, on both public and private lands.
- Concern over loss of open and green spaces that have preserved a semi-rural atmosphere, maintained mountain views, and contributed to a Suburban character across portions of the community.
- More noticeable noise levels, and concern over excessive outdoor lighting in developed areas.
- Desire for an improved and integrated approach to solid waste management and waste reduction, including enhanced recycling and composting.

## FRAMEWORK FOR ACTION

### GOALS

- GOAL ENV 1:** Careful monitoring and increased awareness of land, air, and water quality within Littleton’s jurisdiction.
- GOAL ENV 2:** Commitment to Littleton’s leadership role in contributing to clean water and healthy air across the Denver metropolitan region.
- GOAL ENV 3:** Efficient use and conservation of water resources.
- GOAL ENV 4:** Reduced energy consumption and solid waste generation by residents, businesses, and the City.
- GOAL ENV 5:** City facilities, vehicle fleet, and public infrastructure that promote Littleton’s environmental resilience and minimize adverse impacts.

## POLICIES

In making decisions that involve public resource allocation, regulatory matters, and physical improvements, among others, Littleton will:

**Policy ENV 1:** Provide regional leadership to protect and enhance the South Platte River, including its water quality, associated greenways and trails, nearby development, and well-managed access for public enjoyment.

**Policy ENV 2:** Be a committed partner, with state and regional agencies, organizations, and other area cities, in planning and executing programs and public education that will improve regional air quality and satisfy Clean Air Act targets and requirements.

**Policy ENV 3:** Continue to be a leader in promoting and incentivizing wise water use, water-saving measures, and water conservation and re-use.

**Policy ENV 4:** Apply its stewardship ethic enthusiastically, in collaboration with other public agencies, private interests, and the non-profit sector, to ensure that the city's extensive public and private open space remains a defining and well-managed facet of Littleton.

**Policy ENV 5:** Include habitat protection among its community planning considerations, recognizing that wildlife presence and movement within the city is a continuing reality and part of a healthy natural environment.

**Policy ENV 6:** Reduce excessive noise and outdoor lighting levels.

**Policy ENV 7:** Continue to explore viable and cost-effective ways to assist Littleton residents and businesses in reducing their solid waste generation, and to offer expanded recycling options.

**Policy ENV 8:** Encourage energy efficiency and other "green" building practices, including adaptive reuse whenever possible.

## ACTIONS

### Capital Investments

**Action ENV 1:** Budget funds for land acquisition and other open space preservation opportunities that will help maintain floodplains and drainage ways, as recommended by the Open Space and Parks Task Force.

### Programs and Initiatives

**Action ENV 2:** Utilize best management practices for City-maintained open spaces and facilities, such as efficient mowing, xeriscape (i.e., low-water, low-maintenance, and native plantings), reduced pesticide use, energy and water conservation, and measures to promote ride-sharing, use of alternative commuting options, and use of alternative energy vehicles.

**Action ENV 3:** Keep abreast of water conservation best management practices and promote wise water use throughout the community, including through related grant opportunities.

**Action ENV 4:** Evaluate the potential to expand recycling and composting availability for Littleton residents, businesses and institutions.

**Action ENV 5:** Leverage the South Platte Volunteer program to advance environmental stewardship education.

**Action ENV 6:** Monitor Colorado's long-term water outlook together with the entire Denver metropolitan area.

**Action ENV 7:** Evaluate opportunities to manage storm water through green infrastructure methods on all City-owned properties, in coordination with partners, and to demonstrate effective methods for use on private properties.

**Action 7 Link:**  
The High Line Canal Conservancy's "Canal Stormwater Transformation and Enhancement Project" seeks to manage storm water naturally, providing multiple benefits.

## Regulations and Standards

**Action ENV 8:** Update the City's municipal code, zoning, subdivision regulations, and engineering standards to ensure that storm water management, grading and erosion control, and post-construction pollution prevention measures reflect best management practices.

**Action ENV 9:** Update the City's zoning and subdivision regulations so that landscaping requirements reflect best management practices for plant and tree selection, xeriscaping, irrigation design, water use, and maintenance.

**Action ENV 10:** As part of the City's zoning and code update initiative, evaluate the potential for:

- Promoting – and potentially incentivizing – Low Impact Development (LID) strategies, tools, and techniques.
- Upgrading standards for buffering of natural resource and open space areas.
- Developing tree canopy protection provisions and updated landscaping standards, including consideration of code changes necessary to accommodate potential graywater re-use for landscape irrigation (which would also require a City program that meets State of Colorado requirements).
- Promoting – and potentially incentivizing – alternative energy sources in new development and redevelopment, installation of electric vehicle charging stations at offices and commercial sites, and other environmental stewardship actions.
- Incorporating “dark skies” standards to reduce glare and spillover from outdoor lighting, including on residential properties and at public facilities.

## Partnerships and Coordination

**Action ENV 11:** Continue and enhance partnerships with local and regional organizations advancing air quality objectives and actions.

**Action ENV 12:** Collaborate with the South Suburban Park and Recreation District and other partners to continue to prioritize active habitat, vegetation, wildlife, water resource, and visitor management measures for South Platte Park as detailed in the South Platte Park Management Plan.

**Action ENV 13:** Evaluate the potential for water conservation measures in Littleton's parks, in coordination with the South Suburban Park and Recreation District, including possible use of synthetic turf on sports fields in some instances.

## More Targeted Planning / Study

**Action ENV 14:** As recommended in the 2013 South Platte River Corridor Vision, work with partners to pursue the following studies:

- South Platte corridor water quality opportunities study.
- South Platte corridor-wide habitat study.
- South Platte fishing management plan.

## POTENTIAL PARTNERS

Partners for implementation of plan priorities related to the Environment include:

- Neighboring jurisdictions and Arapahoe, Douglas, and Jefferson Counties
- Chatfield Watershed Authority
- Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment
- Colorado Open Lands
- Colorado Parks and Wildlife
- Colorado Preservation, Inc.
- Colorado Stormwater Council
- Colorado Water Conservation Board
- Denver Regional Air Quality Council
- Denver Regional Council of Governments
- Denver Water
- High Line Canal Conservancy
- Hudson Gardens
- Littleton Public Schools
- Mile High Flood District (formerly known as Urban Drainage and Flood Control District)
- South Metro Land Conservancy
- South Platte River Metro Roundtable
- South Platte Working Group
- South Suburban Park and Recreation District
- State Historic Preservation Office
- Tri-County Health Department
- US Army Corps of Engineers (USACE)



# SPECIAL AREAS AND DESIGN





## SPECIAL AREAS AND DESIGN

Through the initial 2018 vision phase of Envision Littleton, specific areas of the city were confirmed as highly valued by both residents and visitors. In particular, these include Downtown and the South Platte River corridor and its associated greenways. Other areas have received special attention for many years, especially Littleton Boulevard because of its emergence as a community gathering place during a period when Downtown was less of a draw. The Boulevard's collection of post-World War II buildings designed in a Mid Century Commercial Modernism style also sets Littleton apart among Front Range cities (with Colorado Preservation, Inc., adding the 1949-1967 Mid-Century Buildings of Littleton Boulevard to its Most Endangered Places list in 2014, citing potential threats from development and demolition, and stating, "These buildings are integral to interpreting the automobile movement of the 1950s in Littleton.").

Additionally, this Plan and the concurrent Transportation Master Plan have placed significant focus on other major roadway corridors that help to define Littleton's physical layout. These corridors are crucial to future land use and traffic circulation within the community, and to its economic development and housing needs. These key corridors are delineated on Map 1, Future Land Use and Character, and include Belleview Avenue, Santa Fe Drive, Broadway, and Mineral Avenue.

This section builds on issues, goals, policies, and actions in earlier Plan sections that are relevant to the areas mentioned above, while adding further specifics within this section. As illustrated by the Legacy of Past Planning listing below, Littleton has other areas that have also merited special planning attention over the years, involving considerations such as historic preservation, transit-oriented development potential, commercial area and corridor revitalization, urban design, and neighborhood-focused planning, among others.

## LEGACY OF PAST PLANNING

- Belleview Avenue Corridor Vision, 2018
- Neighborhood and Corridor Plans, 2016
- Broadway Corridor Study, 1998
- Littleton Boulevard Corridor Study, 2002
- Commercial Modernism in the Greater West Littleton Boulevard Corridor 1950-1980, 2018
- Historic Context of Littleton, Colorado 1949-1967, 2008
- Historic Buildings Survey, 1999 and 2001
- Mineral Station Framework, 2018
- Mineral Station Area Urban Land Institute Technical Advisory Final, 2014
- Mineral Station Urban Land Institute Advisory Services Report, 2006
- Arapaho Hills National Historic District – Voluntary Design Guidelines, 2016
- Downtown Littleton Design Standards, 2018
- Downtown Littleton Historic Preservation Design Guidelines, 2011
- Louthan Heights Historic District Design Guidelines, 2017
- South Platte River Corridor Development Design Guidelines, 2000
- South Platte River Corridor Vision Plan, 1999

This Plan was developed, in part, by reviewing previous plans and studies prepared by the City. As the newest adopted statement of a unifying community vision and associated guiding principles, goals, and policies, this Plan replaces any and all Comprehensive Plans previously adopted by the City.

## SOUTH PLATTE RIVER CORRIDOR

Both the Comprehensive Plan and the City's first-ever Transportation Master Plan have focused especially on key corridors within and through Littleton. Along with traffic conditions along Santa Fe Drive, the community's cherished river corridor was the one touched on in most every planning conversation.

### ISSUES AND PRIORITIES

Both the river and Santa Fe corridors are where so many essential issues and priorities for Littleton's future converge, including:

- Environmental protection
- Downtown enhancement
- River and greenway accessibility
- Park and trail enhancement
- Open space and view preservation
- Traffic management and bicycle/pedestrian circulation
- Last remaining large pieces of undeveloped land in city
- Housing needs and opportunities
- Potential for river- and trail-oriented development in an era of "destination retail"
- City's tax base and long-term financial sustainability
- Community image and aesthetics
- Diverse needs and wants in a city with transitioning demographics
- How upgraded zoning and development standards could enhance corridor management

As a legacy of past planning, the river and Santa Fe corridors have had their share of both "successes" and "fails" over recent decades. One observer summed up the outlook for the area in this way: "The corridor is composed of multiple [public and private] property owners with differing expectations."

"South Platte Park is a national precedent-setting park. It is a highly valued recreational amenity, and also one of the best wildlife habitats in the Denver metro area. With more development around the park, we are seeing more varied users and more usage."

*Resource agency representative*

"The number 1, 2 and 3 most important issues facing Littleton are the Santa Fe corridor. But don't mess with the river – pay attention to the river. A lot of development has ignored the river and is disjointed up and down the corridor. We need cohesion with what is left. We could have dynamic development that is a sub-regional draw for shopping, entertainment and living."

*City advisory board member*

"Will land uses and transportation conditions in the area become prohibitive to [my business] continuing here?"

*Santa Fe Drive business owner*





## ANCHORED



The river corridor, along with the present-day BNSF railroad, are defining physical elements around which Littleton has developed. The Platte River, in particular, is a central component of what makes Littleton a special place and is a draw for both residents and visitors.

## AUTHENTIC



The natural habitat setting of the stretch of South Platte River that runs through Littleton, and the substantial preserved acreage within South Platte Park, are a result of Littleton's forethinking past civic leaders after the floods of the 1960s.



## CONNECTED



Santa Fe Drive, which runs parallel to the river, can be a barrier to accessing and enjoying the river corridor. Improving and maintaining connections between Downtown and the river is a priority.

## ACTIVE



The Mary Carter Greenway Trail, South Platte Park, the Carson Nature Center, and Hudson Gardens are among the features that attract outdoor recreation enthusiasts, bicycle commuters, and nature lovers to the river corridor.

## ENGAGED



Feedback and dialogue throughout the Envision process reaffirmed the importance of the river corridor to Littleton residents.

## KEY ISSUES AND CONSIDERATIONS

- What is next for a renewed and active Downtown Littleton given real and perceived challenges involving parking, housing turnover and affordability, retail mix and viability, and concerns about the scale and intensity of some recent redevelopment activity.
- Opportunity for a more vibrant and walkable Littleton Boulevard corridor without sacrificing its “hometown” appeal and historic assets.
- Desire to move beyond multiple South Platte River planning initiatives of the past, with limited implementation results, to establish a consensus vision that leads to tangible actions involving both resource protection and future river-oriented development.
- The urgent need to document community preferences and expectations for the future function, design and appearance of Santa Fe Drive as an essential framework for pending Colorado Department of Transportation studies that will delve into these very roadway corridor considerations.
- Spurring revitalization at and around the former Columbine Square retail site.
- The land use/transportation outlook for Broadway, especially if it continues to advance as a priority corridor in the Regional Transportation District's Regional Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) Feasibility Study.
- The importance of Mineral Avenue (east of Santa Fe Drive) as a gateway to the distinctive SouthPark area, which is both a leading economic asset and a location for varied, attractive housing options – all within a Suburban character setting, and near rail transit.

## FRAMEWORK FOR ACTION

### GOALS

- GOAL S&D 1:** A downtown that continues to serve the entire community as a civic, historic, cultural, and economic focal point.
- GOAL S&D 2:** A future Littleton Boulevard that accommodates local businesses and nearby attainable housing options amid a more walkable setting of authentic neighborhoods and historic architecture.
- GOAL S&D 3:** An ecologically sound and exceptionally attractive South Platte River corridor, framed by sensitively planned land uses, that continues to anchor the trail and open space networks.
- GOAL S&D 4:** Roadway corridors that fulfill their primary transportation functions for drivers, pedestrians, cyclists, and public transit while advancing the community's economic development, housing, and aesthetic interests.

### POLICIES

In making decisions that involve public resource allocation, regulatory matters, and physical improvements, among others, Littleton will:

- Policy S&D 1:** Amid the many competing priorities of municipal government, pursue new special area planning efforts only where there is commitment, including committed funding and other resources, to follow through on the resulting action agenda.
- Policy S&D 2:** Evaluate investment and revitalization opportunities in special planning areas always with an eye toward Littleton's guiding principles of being Anchored, Authentic, Connected, Active, and Engaged, and the community character framework established in the Land Use and Community Character section.
- Policy S&D 3:** Emphasize quality urban design and cultivation of Littleton's image in all special area investments involving both the public and private realms.
- Policy S&D 4:** Facilitate further dialogue when special area planning efforts reveal that community desires for land use and development design differ from market-driven considerations of property owners/developers.



**Policy S&D 5:** Promote development plans near transit stations that prioritize the pedestrian and are compatible with local tolerance for transit-supporting uses and design (e.g., as expressed in the Mineral Station Framework).

**Policy S&D 6:** Seek opportunities to engage public, private and non-profit partners in special area planning and implementation efforts, as appropriate, to leverage local funds with other resources and to explore ways to advance shared interests and multiple objectives through joint initiatives.

**Policy S&D 7:** Stay active in regional planning processes and decision-making forums with implications for special planning areas identified within Littleton.

## ACTIONS

### Capital Investments

**Action S&D 1:** Add criteria to the City's capital improvements planning process to prioritize capital projects that will respond to and capitalize on unique opportunities in a targeted special planning area but will also result in much broader community benefits.

**Action S&D 2:** Continue to expand wayfinding and community identity/branding investments in more areas of the city.

### Programs and Initiatives

**Action S&D 3:** Adapt the City's fiscal impact analysis tools and methods for use in evaluating potential policies or actions in particular sub-areas of the community.

**Action S&D 4:** Explore the potential for a more formal and systematic program for expanding and prioritizing Littleton's public art installations, utilizing creative funding methods.

### Regulations and Standards

**Action S&D 5:** As part of the City's zoning and code update initiative, evaluate the potential for:

- Creating additional zoning districts and/or provisions customized for specific areas of the city, especially for maintaining or achieving certain community character conditions and to address other plan priorities (e.g., open space protection, historic preservation, etc.).
- Creating a new zoning district and associated standards specifically for mixed-use development proposals, with built-in parameters and flexibility to accommodate the varied settings encompassed by the Corridor Mixed Use designation on the Future Land Use and Character Map (i.e., Belleview Avenue, Broadway, Littleton Boulevard and Santa Fe Drive).
- Adjusting the zoning districts and/or strategy for Downtown Littleton, where multiple districts currently apply and where this may allow for character discrepancies (e.g., the current "CA" Central Area Multiple Use District allowing auto-oriented uses in Downtown).
- Especially for Downtown, revisiting the overall zoning approach to parking management to support desired character, and given the many changes in this area of planning practice in recent years.

### Partnerships and Coordination

**Action S&D 6:** Draw upon the many potential public, private and non-profit partners itemized in earlier plan sections, as appropriate to a particular geographic area of focus within the city.

### More Targeted Planning / Study

**Action S&D 7:** As first and second priorities for further special area planning following adoption of the Plan:

- Pursue a corridor planning effort focused on both Santa Fe Drive and the parallel South Platte River corridor, especially to get ahead of the Planning and Environmental Linkages (PEL) study to be initiated soon by the Colorado Department of Transportation as a first step toward any future substantial design changes to Santa Fe.

- Pursue a Downtown Master Plan, especially to explore potential funding and administrative mechanisms for capitalizing on opportunities and overcoming challenges in an active, successful downtown setting (e.g., parking, traffic management, heritage protection, additional public space, aesthetic enhancements, security, ongoing programming and event management, etc.).





**IMPLEMENTATION**



## IMPLEMENTATION

With Envision Littleton (the Plan), the City of Littleton and other partner agencies and organizations have an essential new document that should be frequently referred to for guidance in community decision-making. The Plan should be a “living document” that responds to change. Its key planning considerations, goals, policies, and action strategies must be revisited periodically to ensure that the Plan is providing clear and reliable direction on a range of matters, including land development issues and public investments in infrastructure and services.

Implementation is not just a list of action items. It is a challenging process that requires the commitment of the City’s elected and appointed officials, staff, residents, business owners, major institutions, other levels of government, and other organizations and individuals who will serve as champions of the Plan and its particular direction and strategies. Among its purposes, this final Plan section highlights specific roles, responsibilities and methods of implementation to execute plan recommendations. Equally important are formalized procedures for the ongoing monitoring and reporting of successes achieved, difficulties encountered, and new opportunities and challenges that emerge after Plan adoption. This is in addition to any other change in circumstances, which may require rethinking of plan priorities. Scheduled plan evaluations and updates, as described later in this section, will help maintain its relevance and credibility as the policy and action guide for the City.

## PLAN ADMINISTRATION

During the development of this Plan, representatives of government, business, community groups, and others came together to inform the visioning and planning processes. These community leaders – and new ones that will emerge over the horizon of this Plan – must maintain their commitment to the ongoing implementation and updating of the plan’s goals, policies and action strategies.

## LEADERSHIP ALIGNMENT

While long-range plans such as Envision Littleton are relatively general they are still complex policy documents that attempt to balance various policy objectives. Engaging decision-makers and administrators about plan implementation is an important first step after plan adoption. As the principal groups that will implement the Plan, City management and department heads, the City Council, and Planning Commission should all be in agreement with regard to priorities, responsibilities, and interpretations.

Consequently, City management should arrange to convene those listed above immediately after Plan adoption, to include:

- A discussion of the respective roles and responsibilities of the Council, Planning Commission (and other City advisory Boards/Commissions), and City departments and staff;
- A thorough overview of the entire Envision Littleton Plan, with emphasis on the parts of the Plan that relate to each group;
- Implementation tasking and priority setting, which should establish a one-year and three-year implementation agenda; and
- An in-depth question and answer session, with support from the City Attorney and other key staff.

## DEFINITION OF ROLES

As the community’s elected officials, the City Council should assume the lead role in implementing the Plan. The key responsibilities of the City Council are to decide and establish priorities, set timeframes by which actions will be initiated and completed, and determine the budget to be made available for implementation efforts. Based on this City Council direction, the City Manager and staff must help to ensure effective coordination among the groups that are responsible for carrying out the plan’s action strategies.

### City Council

The City Council should take the lead in the following general areas:

- Adopting and amending the Plan, when necessary and appropriate, after recommendation by the Planning Commission (and with input from other City Boards/Commissions depending on the subject of a proposed amendment).
- Acting as a champion of the Plan.
- Establishing the overall implementation priorities and timeframes by which action strategies in the Plan will be initiated and completed.
- Considering and approving necessary funding commitments.
- Directing staff to draft new or amended zoning and subdivision regulations.
- Adopting the new or amended zoning and subdivision regulations.
- Approving intergovernmental and development agreements that implement the Plan.
- Approving projects, activities, and budgets that are consistent with the Plan, during the City's annual budget process.
- Providing policy direction to the Planning Commission, other appointed City boards and commissions, and City staff.

## **Planning Commission**

The Planning Commission should take the lead in the following general areas:

- Ensuring that recommendations forwarded to the City Council are reflective of Plan goals, policies and priority action strategies.
- After holding one or more public hearings to discuss new or evolving community issues and needs, making recommendations to the City Council regarding plan updates and plan amendments.

## **City Staff**

City staff should take the lead in the following general areas:

- Managing day-to-day implementation of the Plan, including coordination through an interdepartmental plan implementation committee.
- Supporting and carrying out capital improvement planning efforts.
- Managing the drafting of new or amended zoning and subdivision regulations.
- Conducting studies and developing additional special-purpose and/or special area plans.
- Reviewing land development applications for consistency with Envision Littleton.
- Providing an economic analysis for any proposed rezoning.
- Negotiating the specifics of intergovernmental and development agreements.
- Administering collaborative programs and ensuring open channels of communication with various private, public, and non-profit partners.
- Maintaining an inventory of potential plan amendments, as suggested by City staff and others, for consideration during annual and periodic plan review and update processes.
- Generating and presenting an annual report to the Planning Commission and City Council concerning progress toward implementation of Envision Littleton.
- Periodically obtaining public input to keep the Plan up to date, using a variety of community outreach methods.

## Roles and Responsibilities



### City Council

As the leader of plan implementation, the key responsibilities of the City Council are to decide and establish priorities, set timeframes by which each action strategy will be initiated and completed, and determine the budget to be made available for implementation efforts. In conjunction with the City Manager, the City Council must also ensure effective coordination among the various groups that are responsible for carrying out the plan's action strategies.

### Planning Commission

The Planning Commission makes recommendations to the City Council based on plan principles. The Commission should prepare an Annual Progress Report to ensure plan relevance.



### City Management and Staff

City staff manage the day-to-day implementation of the plan. In particular, City staff are responsible for supporting the City Council, Planning Commission and other City boards/commissions.



## ACTION AGENDA

The Plan goals will ultimately be attained through a multitude of actions as itemized in each Plan section. The action strategies are categorized as to whether they involve: (1) capital investments, (2) programs and initiatives, (3) regulations and standards, (4) partnerships and coordination, or (5) more targeted planning/study. These actions must be prioritized by the City to establish a shorter “to do” list of strategic priorities, their potential timing, and who initiates, administers, and participates in the implementation process.

Determining a near-term action agenda relative to longer-term tasks is an important first step toward Plan implementation. This is done through direction set by City Council in alignment with the Priority Based Budgeting Process. Action priorities are also set during Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) preparation and through departmental work planning. Once the necessary funding is committed and roles are defined, a lead City staff member should initiate a first-year work program in conjunction with City management, other departments, and other public and private implementation partners.

The near-term action priorities should be revisited by City officials and staff annually to recognize accomplishments, highlight areas where further attention and effort are needed, and determine whether items have moved up or down on the priority list given emerging needs and changing circumstances, including funding and resources. It should be kept in mind that early implementation of certain items, while perhaps not the uppermost Plan priorities, may be expedited by the availability of related grant funds, by a state or federal mandate, or by the eagerness of one or more partners to pursue an initiative with the City. At the same time, some high-priority items may prove difficult to tackle in the near term due to budget constraints, the lack of a lead entity or individual to carry the initiative forward, or by the community’s hesitation to take on a potentially controversial new program.

Progress on the near-term items should be the focus of the first annual review and report a year after adoption of the Plan, as described later in this section. Then, similar to multi-year capital improvements programming, the entire near-term action agenda – and all other action strategies dispersed throughout the Plan sections – should be revisited annually to decide if any additional items are ready to move into the next near-term action timeframe, and what the priority should be.

## ENVISION LITTLETON AMENDMENT PROCESS

Envision Littleton is a flexible document allowing for adjustment to changing conditions. Shifts in political, economic, physical, technological, and social conditions, and other unforeseen circumstances, may influence and change the priorities and fiscal outlook of the community. As Littleton evolves, new issues will emerge while others will no longer be as relevant. Some action items will be found impractical or outdated while other plausible solutions will arise. To ensure that it continues to reflect the overall goals of the community and remains relevant over time, the Plan must be revisited regularly.

Revisions to Envision Littleton are two-fold, with *minor plan amendments* occurring at least every other year and *more significant updates and modifications* occurring every five years. As an example, a minor amendment could include revisions to certain elements of the Plan as a result of the adoption of another specialized plan. Major updates will involve: reviewing the community’s base conditions and anticipated population trends; re-evaluating the plan findings and formulating new ones as necessary; and adding, revising, or removing action strategies in the Plan based on implementation progress.

### Annual Progress Report

City staff should prepare an annual progress report for presentation to the Planning Commission, Mayor, and City Council. This ensures that the Plan is consistently reviewed and that any needed modifications or clarifications are identified for the biennial minor plan amendment process. Ongoing monitoring of consistency between the Plan and the City’s regulations should be an essential part of this effort.

The Annual Progress Report should include and highlight:

- Significant actions and accomplishments during the last year, including the implementation status of each programmed task.
- Obstacles or problems in implementing the Plan.
- Proposed content amendments that have come forward during the year.



- Recommendations for needed actions, programs, and procedures to be developed and implemented in the coming year.
- Priority coordination needs with public and private implementation partners.

## Biennial Amendment Process

Plan amendments should occur on at least a biennial basis (every two years), allowing for proposed changes to be considered concurrently so the cumulative effects may be understood. Factors that should be considered in deciding on a proposed plan amendment include:

- Consistency with the goals, policies, and action strategies in the Plan.
- Potential effects on infrastructure provision including water, wastewater, storm water drainage, and the transportation network.
- Potential effects on the City's ability to provide, fund, and maintain services.
- Potential effects on environmentally sensitive and natural areas.
- Whether the proposed amendment contributes to the overall direction and character of the community as captured in the Plan vision and goals, and reflected in public input.

## Five-Year Update / Evaluation and Appraisal Report

An evaluation and appraisal report to City Council should be prepared every five years. This report should be prepared by City staff with input from City departments, the Planning Commission, and other boards and commissions. The report process involves evaluating the existing Plan and assessing how successful it has been in achieving the community's goals. The report identifies the successes and shortcomings of the Plan, looks at what has changed over the last five years, and makes recommendations on how the Plan should be modified.

The report should review baseline conditions and assumptions about trends and growth indicators. It should also evaluate implementation potential and/or obstacles related to any unaddressed major action strategies. The evaluation report and process should result in a strategy to amend the Plan, including identification of new or revised information that may lead to updated goals and action strategies.

The report should identify and evaluate:

1. Summary of major actions and interim plan amendments undertaken over the last five years.
2. Current significant issues in the community and how these issues have changed.
3. Changes in the assumptions, trends, and base data in the Existing City Data Book, including:
  - The rate at which growth and development is occurring relative to the projections put forward in the Plan.
  - Shifts in demographics and other growth trends.
  - City-wide attitudes, and whether apparent shifts, if significant, necessitate amendments to the stated goals or action strategies of the Plan.
  - Other changes in political, social, economic, technological, or environmental conditions that indicate a need for Plan amendments.
4. Ability of the Plan to continue to support progress toward achieving the community's goals. The following should be evaluated and revised as needed:
  - Individual sections and statements within the Plan must be reviewed and revised, as necessary, to ensure that the Plan provides sufficient information and direction to achieve the intended outcome.
  - Conflicts between goals and action strategies that have been discovered in the implementation and administration of the Plan must be pointed out and resolved.

- The list of priority actions must be reviewed and major accomplishments highlighted. Those not completed by the specified timeframe should be re-evaluated to ensure their continued relevance and/or to revise them appropriately.
- Lessons learned by the City in the case of mistakes, missed opportunities, or other barriers to achieving goals should be discussed.
- As conditions change, the timeframes for implementing major actions in the Plan should be re-evaluated where necessary. Some actions may emerge as a higher priority given new or changed circumstances while others may become less important to achieving the goals and development objectives of the community.
- Based upon organizational and procedural factors, and the status of assigned tasks, the implementation of task assignments must be reviewed and altered, as needed, to ensure timely accomplishment of the Plan's action strategies.
- Changes in laws, procedures and missions may affect the community's ability to achieve its goals. The Plan review must assess these changes and their impacts on the success of implementation, leading to any suggested revisions in strategies or priorities.

## Ongoing Community Outreach and Engagement

All review processes and updates related to the Plan should emphasize and incorporate ongoing public input. The annual and continual plan evaluation and reporting processes should also incorporate specific performance measures and quantitative indicators that can be compiled and communicated both internally and to elected officials and residents in a "report card" fashion.

Examples might include:

- Acres of new development and redevelopment (plus number of residential units by type and square footage of nonresidential space) approved and constructed in conformance with the Plan and Littleton's development regulations.
- Measures of service capacity added to the City's utility infrastructure systems – and the number of dollars allocated to fund the capital projects.
- New and expanded businesses, added jobs, and associated tax revenue gains through economic development initiatives.
- Lane miles of new or rehabilitated road, plus bike, pedestrian, transit, and other improvements added to Littleton's transportation system that increase mobility options.
- Dollar value of park and recreation improvement projects, and miles of trail developed or improved.
- Quantitative measures of historic preservation activity (e.g., landmarked structures, properties within historic districts, etc.).
- Indicators of the benefits from redeveloped sites and structures (appraised value, increased property and/or sales tax revenue, new residential units, retail and office spaces in mixed-use settings, etc.).
- The numbers of residents and other stakeholders engaged through City-sponsored education and outreach events related to Envision Littleton implementation and periodic review and updating, as outlined in this section.