2.4 AREA WIDE RECOMMENDATIONS: QUALITY-OF-LIFE INFRASTRUCTURE

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2.4.1 INTRODUCTION

Quality-of-life infrastructure refers to the places, amenities, trees, plants, parks and outdoor spaces that contribute to health, needs, comfort, environmental resilience and social connectedness. These elements of a complete neighborhood support the need for individuals to connect with nature, access healthy food, feel safe, and enjoy a clean environment. Extensive research demonstrates that the way we design and build our neighborhoods impacts how we live, work, learn, and play. Our surroundings shape how physically active we are, how we eat, and whether we have access to schools, jobs, transportation, health care, and opportunities to prosper. Well-designed neighborhoods can improve health, while environments that lack amenities and services to support healthy lifestyles can contribute to chronic diseases such as diabetes, heart disease and obesity.

Similarly, conditions in the natural environment impact residents’ health and comfort. Air and water quality, as well as other climate impacts such as increases in flooding and surface temperature, can have lasting social, political and economic consequences. One method many communities have been adopting to help address environmental resiliency in complete neighborhoods is green infrastructure. Green infrastructure can provide environmental, economic and quality of life benefits, as well as help improve water and air quality, reduce flood risks and heat island effects, absorb local carbon emissions, increase physical activity, improve mental wellbeing, reduce stress, lower traffic speeds, and improve property values.

The community developed a vision for what environmentally resilient and what healthy and active mean for East Central. The following statements capture the community’s values and aspirations when it comes to these topics.

LONG TERM VISION FOR ENVIRONMENTAL RESILIENCY

In 2040, East Central has a thriving and healthy natural ecosystem. A robust tree canopy complements the lush, low water-use landscaping found along the area’s major corridors and within neighborhood destinations. Multi-purpose green infrastructure landscaping that provides storm water management, beautification, and improved water quality has been seamlessly integrated into neighborhood streets and open spaces. East Central has experienced a significant reduction in impervious surfaces, which has helped cool neighborhoods on hot summer evenings and further improved flood control both within and outside of the area. Many of the neighborhoods use composting and recycling services that are part of a cycle of reuse that minimizes the amount of waste going to landfills. Energy-efficient construction and advanced renewable energy technologies are abundant, which has lowered costs for residents and businesses and helped lower Denver’s carbon pollution that causes climate change.

LONG TERM VISION FOR HEALTH

In 2040, indicators like obesity rates and life expectancy have greatly improved and residents enjoy a healthy lifestyle and strong sense of community. The area is a place with low crime where residents and business owners know their local police officer and all residents can safely and easily walk to a connected network of open spaces that link outstanding parks. All households have convenient access to affordable, healthy, and culturally relevant food, including diverse grocery and restaurant options, farmers’ markets and community gardens. Storefronts, streets, sidewalks, and parks are clean, and there is minimal air, water, soil, and noise pollution. East Central has a wide range of accessible healthcare, including small clinics, supportive services such as addiction treatment and mental health care, emergency care, and pharmacies. Those most in need receive help to avoid becoming homeless or to be safely rehoused with comprehensive support that improves the health of the individual and the community.

RELEVANT PLANS

Game Plan for a Healthy City is a citywide and long-range parks and recreation plan to help the city respond to challenges including growth, limited water resources, and changes in our climate. The plan proclaims easy access to parks and open space as a basic right for all residents, and it establishes our city’s parks, facilities and recreational programs as essential for a healthy environment, healthy residents, and a high quality of life for everyone.

Green Infrastructure Implementation Strategy defines Denver’s urban watershed and the water quality impairments that exist within each water quality basin. The focus of the Strategy is to identify green infrastructure projects that target multiple pollutants while also providing additional city benefits such as increased open space, climate resiliency, improved air quality, urban heat island mitigation, better connectivity, and enhanced community livability.

Denver Food Vision is Denver’s first long term strategic plan for food. It is a policy document intended to guide the way food makes Denver a more inclusive, healthy, vibrant and resilient place. It sets forth an ambitious, comprehensive approach to further develop Denver’s food system.

City Park Master Plan was updated by Denver Parks and Recreation in 2018, and it provides a vision to guide the preservation and improvement of City Park. The plan identifies repair and improvement to facilities, access, circulation, and infrastructure in balance with the continuity of park character. It addresses recreational and facility needs, and provides policy and implementation strategies to address short- and long-term priorities.
Chessman Park Master Plan not noted.

Reply by Elizabeta on 03/11/2020 at 6:30pm - Link
Type: Suggestion
Agree: 2, Disagree: 0
That's true. I was under the impression that there was a Cheeseman MP in which through auto traffic was restricted. That would be a meaningful improvement to the quality of the open space currently available to the neighborhood, and relatively easy to accomplish.
MOBILITY AND QUALITY OF LIFE INFRASTRUCTURE

This chapter will discuss the importance of physical access to elements of a complete neighborhood that support health such as parks, grocery options, recreational opportunities, and healthcare. While providing these amenities and services is essential, the ability to access them without a car is also critical. Additionally, the quality of transportation infrastructure impacts physical activity, which is a key factor in maintaining good health. Providing a complete, safe, and comfortable transportation network improves connections to key amenities, increases physical activity, and improves safety. The design and function of streets also can provide green infrastructure, including trees and water quality improvement. The transportation network is a key factor in a community’s access to health and green infrastructure, and recommendations specific to transportation are in Section 2.3: Mobility.

MEASURABLE GOALS

To determine whether the Environmentally Resilient and Healthy and Active visions are being achieved, the city will track certain performance measures. The following metrics are intended to evaluate current conditions and set future targets that relate to the Environmentally Resilient and Healthy and Active vision for this area.

ENVIRONMENTALLY RESILIENT

Impervious Surface

Throughout Denver’s development history, the city’s permeable surfaces have been replaced with impervious surfaces. Impervious surfaces, often asphalt or concrete, can have many negative effects including the absorption of the sun’s energy and increases in the surface temperature. High concentrations of impervious surfaces prohibit stormwater from percolating into the ground, resulting in more stormwater runoff and, in some cases, increased flooding throughout urban neighborhoods. Much of this runoff contains harmful pollutants and chemicals which discharge directly into our urban waterways, significantly reducing the water quality throughout the city.

East Central today has a 68 percent impervious surface, higher than Denver’s average of 44 percent. The goal and target of this metric is to improve this percentage to the level of the best scoring neighborhood in the city.

Tree Canopy

Tree canopy is a critical green asset within East Central and the community values a robust and diverse tree canopy. The environmental and health benefits of a strong tree canopy are profound as a healthy tree canopy produces oxygen, prevents soil erosion, and reduces the overall concentration of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere. In addition, the contribution of these ecosystem services, trees provide other health, social, economic and aesthetic benefits as well. Access to trees, green spaces, and parks promotes greater physical activity and social interaction, and reduces stress, while improving the quality of life in our urban areas. The citywide goal for this metric is for each Denver neighborhood to have a tree canopy coverage of at least 20%.

The East Central area has an 18% tree canopy coverage, which is consistent with the Denver average of 19% tree canopy coverage. The goal and target of this metric is to improve this percentage to the level of the best scoring neighborhood in the city.

HEALTHY AND ACTIVE

Access to Care

Many factors impact whether people can see a doctor when they need medical attention, including cost, time, and physical proximity. One indicator to represent whether residents have access to the care they need is the percent of women receiving prenatal care during the first trimester of pregnancy. The target for this metric is to have at least 82% of women who are pregnant receiving prenatal care during the first trimester, which was the rate for the neighborhood receiving the highest rate of care as of the adoption of Comprehensive Plan 2040.

Children at a Healthy Weight

Children and youth can be greatly influenced by their physical environment because they are generally less mobile than adults and often spend more time at home, school, and in nearby parks. These local surroundings can have a positive impact on early lifestyle behaviors when they include access to parks, adequate sidewalks, bicycle infrastructure, healthy food, clean air, and a social network. Neighborhoods lacking these amenities contribute to childhood obesity, and obese children can experience early onset adult obesity complications such as Type 2 Diabetes. The target for children at a healthy weight is to meet the Comprehensive Plan 2040 target of at least 86% of children at a healthy weight in every neighborhood.
#1056

Posted by Lisa Steffen on 02/04/2020 at 6:57pm - Link
Type: Suggestion
Agree: 0, Disagree: 0
I'd like more guidance and support from the city of good and bad trees, or just details on how to recognize different trees, their stages of life, and their quality.

#1057

Posted by Morgan Lynch on 12/27/2019 at 4:25pm - Link
Type: Suggestion
Agree: 0, Disagree: 0
Seems to be in conflict with the change in setbacks and allowable building changes. Would like to see an actual measurable goal, like a number...

#1058

Posted by Susan on 02/05/2020 at 10:00pm - Link
Agree: 0, Disagree: 0
This is why more density is an issue with East Central. It will increase the urban heat island effect with the decrease in tree canopy and increase in impervious surfaces that comes with added density. Congress Park and Capitol Hill are already some of the most dense neighborhoods. This will also increase the risk of flooding to these areas.

#1059

Posted by zach on 03/10/2020 at 4:25pm - Link
Agree: 1, Disagree: 0
Very happy to see this is a priority.

#1060

Posted by Brian on 01/29/2020 at 4:21pm - Link
Type: Suggestion
Some places use permeable concrete for sidewalks.

Reply by Brian on 01/29/2020 at 4:28pm - Link
Type: Suggestion
Agree: 2, Disagree: 0
Permeable concrete would be especially valuable on south-side sidewalks where ice can build up, since the meltwater will just drain through.

Reply by Joseph on 02/05/2020 at 5:38pm - Link
Type: Suggestion
Agree: 0, Disagree: 0
This is a great strategy! Similarly, permeable sidewalks can be included in applicable areas at our parks/public spaces.

Reply by Jane on 02/05/2020 at 7:53pm - Link
Type: Suggestion
Agree: 0, Disagree: 0
Concrete still is one of the largest carbon producers. I like permeable but can we use new technology like carbon-capture concrete?

#1061

Posted by Temple on 01/07/2020 at 1:12am - Link
Type: Suggestion
Agree: 5, Disagree: -2
Please don't try to make Cap Hill into Aurora single family houses with supposed lower "imperviousness". Aurora might have lower impervious area, but it destroyed a lot of natural environment, and is actually a less green way to house people. Impervious area for housing is good, impervious area for cars and car storage is bad.

#1062

Posted by John Riecke on 12/31/2019 at 1:10am - Link
Type: Suggestion
Agree: 7, Disagree: -3
Fewer parking lanes, wider sidewalks, more green space. Our car fetish is the problem.

#1063

Posted by Elizabeta on 03/11/2020 at 7:16pm - Link
Type: Suggestion
Agree: 2, Disagree: 0

We also need to relax some of the set-back requirements from light posts, curb cuts, street corners, canopies, underground and above ground utility and other elements that conspire to limit the number of trees that are even permitted to be planted. We need to error on the side of more trees. Denver will become incredibly hot in the coming years and planting trees to prevent the sun rays from reaching the asphalt and concrete in our streets will be a huge help.

I realize this is an interdisciplinary and interagency nightmare to resolve, but Public Works needs strong and visionary leadership to take the issue of barren Denver streets to heart. Perhaps some authority over this should be given to another agency?

#1064

Posted by Rob Carnachan on 02/05/2020 at 12:21am - Link
Type: Suggestion
Agree: 1, Disagree: -2

This is another reason that adding ADUs is a bad idea. They will either eat up pervious surface area or increase home/garage heights, neither of which is desirable.

#1065

Posted by Elizabeta on 03/11/2020 at 6:57pm - Link
Type: Suggestion
Agree: 2, Disagree: 0

I would like to see more coordination between the goals and recommendations for the street design in the mobility section, and the recommendations for open space and tree canopy goals. They are necessarily connected, but it seems (because this is often the case) that the mobility elements are going to supersede our open space and climate resilience needs. I suggest that there be a minimum green area and tree canopy cover assigned to the right-of-way. Say, the ROW in residential areas should have a minimum 70% tree cover, while commercial ROWs could have 50%. Anyway, we need to be more granular about getting to our tree cover goal. The ROWs represent a significant area under city control
and we should aim to maximize their utility.

#1066

Posted by Elizabeta Stacishin on 02/04/2020 at 9:13pm - Link
Type: Suggestion
Agree: 0, Disagree: 0
This metric seems low for the East Central Area, perhaps the goals should be specifically catered to each Area. There are challenges given our Ash trees are on the way out, but we need to be more ambitious here, we can be more ambitious here.

#1067

Posted by Elizabeta Stacishin on 02/04/2020 at 9:16pm - Link
Type: Suggestion
Agree: 1, Disagree: 0
Get rid of the arterials crossing the neighborhood - that would help in safety, air and noise pollution.
NEIGHBORHOODS MEETING THE TARGET

Access to Food

‘Healthy food access’ is having sufficient resources, both economic and physical, to obtain appropriate foods for a nutritious diet. Living closer to healthy food is associated with better eating habits, and healthy eating is associated with lower rates of Type 2 diabetes, high blood pressure, heart disease, certain cancers, and obesity. Food insecurity, which is defined as lacking consistent access to enough food for an active, healthy life, affects households in the East Central area.

Living within walking distance of affordable, healthy, culturally-relevant food can impact overall health by providing convenient, safe, and comfortable access to healthy grocery options. This plan measures food access by the percent of households within a half mile (approximately a ten-minute walk) of a grocery store. The target for this metric is to reinforce the Denver Food Vision goal to have at least 76% of residents in each neighborhood within a 10-minute walk of a grocery store.

Access to Parks

Living within walking or biking distance of outdoor recreation opportunities can impact overall health by encouraging physical activity, time in nature, and a place to interact with neighbors. This plan measures park access by the percent of households within a half mile (approximately a ten-minute walk) of a park according to a Community Planning and Development walkshed analysis. The target for this metric is to reinforce the Game Plan for a Healthy City goal of 100% of residents within a 10-minute walk of a park.

Life Expectancy

Opportunities to lead a long and healthy life can vary dramatically by neighborhood. For example, life expectancy ranges from 70 years in North Capitol Hill to 79 years in some areas. Access to healthy foods, proximity to highways, access to doctors and hospitals, access to public transit, and residential segregation can all impact life expectancy.

The target for this metric is 79 years, which was the average for the neighborhood with the highest life expectancy as of the adoption of Comprehensive Plan 2040.
#1068

Posted by Elizabeta on 03/12/2020 at 3:09pm - Link
Type: Suggestion
Agree: 1, Disagree: 0
It's too dangerous to bike anywhere in this city. Streets without bike lanes are assumed by drivers to be for cars only. For this reason I suggest adding sharow (sp?) stamps on all streets where bikes are allowed, particularly near the parks. If the city is unwilling to do this, then there needs to be some other means of communicating that the streets belong to bikes too. Drivers don't get this and become aggressive and dangerous in areas where bikers' rights less than obvious.

#1069

Posted by Denise on 01/28/2020 at 9:46pm - Link
Type: Suggestion
Agree: 2, Disagree: 0
There should be some incentive to have a Trader Joe, Whole Food or Natural Grocers in City Park West. There is nothing close by that has Natural foods.

Reply by Joseph on 02/05/2020 at 5:40pm - Link
Type: Question
Agree: 1, Disagree: 0
Is there a way for the City of Denver to incentivize the creation of food co-ops within the City Park West area?

#1070

Posted by Elizabeta Stacishin on 02/04/2020 at 9:17pm - Link
Agree: 0, Disagree: 0
is this a typo? 2014?

#1071

Posted by Ally M. on 02/03/2020 at 8:39pm - Link
Type: Suggestion
Agree: 0, Disagree: 0
City needs to partner with existing organizations to help this issue. Fresh Food Connect & Denver Food Rescue are two great ones. These organizations deliver fresh food by bike to food-desert neighborhoods. They set up mini "grocery stops" at schools or churches which are convenient for residents to access.

#1072

Posted by Lou and Kate Kintz on 01/14/2020 at 5:14pm - Link
Agree: 1, Disagree: 0
It is important to have quality, fresh food in walking distance. However, adequate parking at the grocery store and near your home are also important, so people can buy enough to last a week or so. Few working people have the free time to walk to the store and back every day or two, and buses, bikes and scooters don't make it possible to carry a lot of cargo.

#1073

Posted by John Michael Watkins on 01/21/2020 at 1:06pm - Link
Type: Suggestion
Agree: 3, Disagree: 0
Access to grocery stores is so important, especially for people without cars. Parts of Cheeseman and West City park neighborhoods are straight-up food deserts, with no grocery stores within even a full mile walking distance. The metric goal should honestly be 100% for this.

Reply by Ally M. on 02/03/2020 at 8:40pm - Link
Type: Suggestion
Agree: 1, Disagree: 0
City needs to partner with existing organizations to help this issue. Fresh Food Connect & Denver Food Rescue are two great ones. These organizations deliver fresh food by bike to food-desert neighborhoods. They set up mini "grocery stops" at schools or churches which are convenient for residents to access.

#1074

Posted by Azar on 12/22/2019 at 1:52am - Link
Type: Suggestion
Agree: 3, Disagree: 0
Being able to walk to the grocery store is definitely important for young people with kids (and also, ofc, everyone else).
COMMUNITY FEEDBACK

Community members consistently expressed their interest in parks, open space and recreation amenities through online surveys, community workshops and outreach events.

Residents enjoy the parks and amenities but would like to see better maintenance of existing facilities, additional amenities, and activation of underused spaces such as Governors Park, the parks along Park Avenue, and Quality Hill Park. To better connect to existing park spaces, the majority of participants wanted to explore:

- Re-thinking Historic as well as new, contemporary parkways to provide safe and convenient pedestrian/bike connections and accomplish Game Plan’s goal of making sure all residents are within a 10-minute walk of a park, while retaining their historic character
- Re-thinking street right-of-way for parks/open space/vegetation
- Converting existing vacant lots or underutilized parking lots into future park space.

When asked if the City should explore the possibility of closing Park Avenue from Colfax Avenue to Humboldt Street to allow for a pedestrian plaza along Colfax, attendees were divided. Some noted the need for the vehicular connection to Park Avenue, and others noted the need for a dedicated pedestrian environment not only at Colfax but the length of Park Avenue toward Downtown.

"The top three things I like most about East Central are..."

1. PARKS & GREEN SPACE 16%
2. MIX OF SHOPS 15%
3. WALKABILITY 14%

Source: 2017 East Central Kick-Off Survey

"The amenities most important to me are..."

1. DINING 68%
2. GROCERY SHOPPING 67%
3. RECREATIONAL ACTIVITIES 40%
4. CULTURAL AMENITIES
5. OTHER RETAIL/ENTERTAINMENT

Source: 2017 East Central Kick-Off Survey
Yes! more parks please.

This is a fabulous idea. We should close streets wherever we have the opportunity, at the very least as a pilot project to test the idea for other locations. A goal for the East Central should be to identify a few locations for street closures, in combination with adding greenery and cafe seating etc. Streets are where most of our publicly held urban lands are. If we want more open space we have to be able to convert some of the streets into green spaces.

If we close one street then we have winners and losers - the winner being the street that is beautified but think about all of the streets nearby and your neighbors where the cars would then divert and travel through. Closing streets seems good on the surface level but then someone is going to get stuck with the traffic going by them instead creating more fast moving arterial streets.

The East Area needs another recreation center or an expansion of the existing one. Carla Madison is extremely busy all day long, there is clearly huge demand for facilities like that.
We definitely need more grocery stores in the area.

#1079

I support closing Park Ave from Colfax to Humboldt as described. The city simply needs more green open space devoted to pedestrians.

#1080

There is some low hanging fruit here. Cheesman and City Parks both have too much asphalt, too much of these parks is dedicated to cars. Eliminating through traffic in Cheesman should be a high priority and easily attainable. There is no reason we should be making it possible for commuters to cut through the park at the expense of quality open space for our neighborhood.
The East Central area has some of the largest, most iconic parks within the City of Denver, including City Park, Cheesman Park, Congress Park, and Governors Park. City Park and Cheesman Park are large and have extensive passive green space. This includes a mix of natural areas, which is one of the open space goals articulated by the City Park Master Plan Update (September 2018). Some parks, such as Congress Park, are fully programmed with specific uses and recreational amenities.

Approximately 86% of the households within the study area are within a 10-minute walk of a park. Because East Central has lower need for additional park space than many parts of Denver, the community’s primary focus is ensuring safe and comfortable access to existing parks. The existing sidewalk network is essentially complete; however, the pedestrian environment along many neighborhood or collector streets can be uncomfortable due to vehicle speeds, congestion, parking and sidewalk widths. Pedestrian access to existing parks is impeded by the lack of improved pedestrian crossings of 13th Avenue, 14th Avenue, Colfax Avenue, 17th Avenue, York St., Colorado Blvd., and Park Avenue. Improving the connections to existing parks is discussed in the Mobility section.

Park Avenue is a key Historic Parkway in the study area, linking the Colfax corridor and surrounding neighborhoods to Downtown. Denver’s Parkways contribute to a framework of interconnected park-like streets that knit the city into a cohesive whole, linking neighborhoods, parks and civic spaces while providing an enriching experience. Today this parkway is auto-centric with minimal dedicated pedestrian environment or usable park space.

Recreation centers complement parks and open spaces by providing year-round recreation activities and community space in an indoor environment. The newly opened Carla Madison Recreation Center is located within the East Central area. While the recreation center provides good recreation coverage to the community, it is a fee-based recreation space, which could be a financial barrier for some community members.
#1081

Posted by Elizabeta on 03/12/2020 at 3:38pm - Link

Type: Suggestion
Agree: 2, Disagree: 0

Parkways are unfortunately underutilized from a recreation point of view. I think we could do better by consolidating the open space on one side of the street and the roadway lanes on the other. It is very uncomfortable to walk, run or bike when you have auto traffic on both sides of the greenway. It looks like the mobily street sections in the prior chapter are still pushing this ineffective street layout.

#1082

Posted by BJWilson10 on 01/17/2020 at 3:24pm - Link

Type: Suggestion
Agree: 2, Disagree: -2

North-East Corner of the City Park area would be a good location for an Off-Leash Dog Area. 

#1083

Posted by S.Kenneth on 12/13/2019 at 7:24pm - Link

Type: Suggestion
Agree: 0, Disagree: 0

Congress Park and Cheesman Park are WAY under-programmed and desperate need more amenities like better playgrounds, skate parks, and usable basketball courts.

#1084

Posted by S.Kenneth on 12/13/2019 at 7:26pm - Link

Type: Suggestion
Agree: 3, Disagree: -4

Congress Park and Cheesman Park are WAY under-programmed. We need amenities like better playgrounds, skate parks, and (usable!) basketball courts.
Reply by Michelle on 01/09/2020 at 11:29pm - Link
Type: Suggestion
Agree: 1, Disagree: -3
We second the idea for a skate/non-electric scooter park in one of the neighborhood parks. We often drive to the suburbs to do this (e.g. Arvada by the Apex Center) and they're very well-utilized especially by young and middle aged kids.

Reply by Ally M. on 02/03/2020 at 8:44pm - Link
Type: Suggestion
Agree: 2, Disagree: -3
I agree- My vote is for Tennis Courts at Cheeseman!

Reply by Elizabeta Stacishin on 02/04/2020 at 9:40pm - Link
Type: Suggestion
Agree: 2, Disagree: 0
Cheesman serves a large population, it works because the space is flexible, unprogrammed, and it should remain so.

Reply by Rob Carnachan on 02/05/2020 at 12:23am - Link
Type: Suggestion
Agree: 3, Disagree: 0
And the Congress Park pool should be open from May 1- October 1, not just the few weeks that it currently is.

#1085

Posted by Will on 02/04/2020 at 11:26pm - Link
Type: Suggestion
Agree: 3, Disagree: 0
The Botanic Gardens should not be shown as if it is the same as Cheeseman. You have to pay to get in, which limits access. Making it look like just another open park is misleading.

#1086

Posted by BJWilson10 on 01/17/2020 at 3:23pm - Link
Type: Suggestion

Reply by **Joseph** on **02/05/2020** at **5:42pm** - [Link]
Type: Suggestion
Agree: 0, Disagree: -2
I believe a proposed dog park in the northeast corner would be a better idea given it's tucked away from the chaos of main vehicular arteries. Another option could be along the west perimeter with the rolling terrain just north of the playground area.

#1087

Posted by **Morgan Lynch** on **12/27/2019** at **4:27pm** - [Link]
Type: Suggestion
Agree: 1, Disagree: 0
Focus of tree canopy goal in parks? Would recommend keeping passive use.
RECOMMENDATIONS

Examine the potential for Historic Park Avenue to connect existing open space, parks and recreational assets.

Historic Park Avenue provides a direct connection from Colfax Avenue to neighborhoods to the northwest and Interstate 25. Past road expansions resulted in a Park Avenue that is predominantly auto-centric and does not easily accommodate other modes of travel due to vehicle speeds, congestion, and lane and sidewalk widths. Members of the community suggested that the parkway could also play a key role in connecting people to open space, parks, and recreational assets. Community input was divided on a preferred outcome: some noted a desire to maintain the existing vehicle connections while others noted a desire for a dedicated, improved pedestrian environment, not only at the intersection of Colfax but along the length of Park Avenue towards Downtown.

A. Strengthen the pedestrian environment at the intersection of Park Avenue and Colfax Avenue.
   1. Address the pedestrian safety concerns at the intersection of Colfax Avenue and Park Avenue, including adding treatments such as crosswalks and crossing signals as well as reassigning space to pedestrian infrastructure with wider sidewalks.
   2. Consider the future implementation of a dedicated pedestrian plaza in coordination with future Bus Rapid Transit along Colfax Avenue.

B. Study the opportunities to improve the pedestrian environment and park experience along the length of Park Avenue, from Colfax Avenue to 20th Avenue.
   1. Link the existing triangle parks through a more significant linear park within the street right-of-way to re-establish a more significant tree-lined pedestrian facility along Park Avenue.
   2. Provide adequate transit capacity in future designs of Park Avenue to reflect the road's designation as a High Capacity Transit corridor in Blueprint Denver and Denver Moves: Transit.
   3. Coordinate with the Vision Zero Park Avenue improvements from 20th Avenue to Lawrence Street, which include repaving, restriping, and the installation of pedestrian refuge islands.

C. Update the Design Guidelines for Denver’s Historic Parkways and Boulevards and the Park Avenue Ordinance as needed, pending study of pedestrian mobility options.
   1. Continue coordination with Denver Public Works, Denver Landmarks, Historic Denver, and Denver Parks and Recreation to identify elements of current regulations that are inconsistent with community input and the vision for parkways and identify next steps to implement necessary changes.
#1088

Posted by Oliver Gaskell on 11/12/2019 at 2:50pm - Link
Agree: 6, Disagree: 0
Yes! This would be great. Combine with multimodal transportation options along Park!

#1089

Posted by Craig Vanderlan on 02/05/2020 at 4:30pm - Link
Type: Suggestion
Agree: 0, Disagree: -1
I live directly adjacent to this proposed design concept and see the implications of the existing poor design almost every day. The requirements for traffic studies are obvious for both current flow of auto, bicycle, scooter and pedestrians along with all the additional flow generated by new, yet to be completed construction. This area also is home to one of the busiest Fire stations in the city on Park Ave. There is so much work yet to be done before a potential design concept would be viable. I appreciate the concept but many of the proposed design elements are likely unrealistic and unsustainable (closing current residential streets with dead ends, for example, with no proposed access routes for bicycles and pedestrians, not to mention closing several residential streets which would limit access from the Fire Station).

Reply by Elizabeta on 03/12/2020 at 4:10pm - Link
Type: Suggestion
Agree: 2, Disagree: 0
This is a vision, and a good one, not a plan. It's a sketch. The goal of leveraging the existing open space along Park Ave by investing and dedicating a little more open space to make the connections work is good. So what if things would have to change a bit, on balance it seems to be for the better. We have so much of our streets dedicated to the fast movement of car traffic. Let's take this opportunity here to give the pedestrian a little something for once.

#1090

Posted by David Engelken on 02/05/2020 at 6:46pm - Link
Agree: 1, Disagree: 0
Would be quite helpful to note here that the key divisive issue is the need for a data-based traffic study and plan to
transfer auto-to-mass-transit and to keep heavy north and south traffic from shifting onto Lafayette, Humboldt and Franklin (with its automobile-shared bike lanes) Streets.

#1091

Posted by Elizabeta on 03/12/2020 at 4:31pm - Link
Type: Suggestion
Agree: 1, Disagree: 0

I like the concept of leveraging the existing open space along Park Ave by investing and dedicating more open space to make the connections work. But I think we should take this opportunity to dedicate more of the closed blocks to green space, and to get more tree canopy cover in those ROWs. There can still be local auto access, bike and pedestrian trails/sidewalks through the blocks’ ROW, but the dominant element on these ROWs should be green space. Also, there should be a concerted effort to zone for ground-level business, cafes and restaurants along these blocks, if that’s not already the case. This would create exciting destinations for dining outdoors along a peaceful oasis- something we don't have much of here in Denver.

#1092

Posted by David Engelken on 02/05/2020 at 7:23pm - Link
Agree: 2, Disagree: 0

p. 127  B. 2. Yes, needed for Park Avenue. Also crucial: the same data-based study and plan must provide related "adequate transit capacity" for 17th and 18th Avenues as well as needed alternative capacity for northbound and southbound transit between Colfax and 18th Avenue in order to prevent shunting major auto traffic up and down Humboldt and Franklin Streets. Failure to coordinate those changes will degrade the historic character of those streets, their current street-level peacefulness and auto-shared bicycle lanes, their quality of neighborhood life, and the pedestrian-friendly environments they provide in support of their neighboring business corridors.

#1093

Posted by Philip on 03/12/2020 at 3:45pm - Link
Agree: 0, Disagree: 0

I strongly support the greening of Park Ave through expanding park space and tree canopy. The street is extremely wide and has potential to be an attractive boulevard. I'd like to see additional pedestrian crossings as well.
These drawings present beautiful images of a very desirable street environment (compliments to the artist). But their presentation here is too small and difficult to discern in detail. Also they lack accompanying detailed explanatory language for a clear understanding of the proposed changes and their positive intents, as well as measures needed to prevent unintended neighborhood consequences.
Q2

Develop new Contemporary Parkways that serve multiple community functions, including connecting the community to open space, parks and recreational assets.

Game Plan for a Healthy City identifies a goal of ensuring that all residents are within a 10-minute walk of a park. In a developed neighborhood with minimal vacant land, new Contemporary Parkways could provide a park-like amenity that also connects bicyclists and pedestrians to the existing parks. While the existing historic parkways are already a community asset, Game Plan for a Healthy City recommends considering contemporary standards for parkways that more effectively leverage our parkway assets. Elements of contemporary standards include the integration of stormwater infrastructure, native or drought-tolerant landscaping, high-efficiency lighting, varied paving systems, and bicycle and transit connections. Additionally, providing other park amenities enable these spaces to serve as an extension of the park and open space network.

A. Leverage transportation network improvements (see Mobility section) to create Contemporary Parkways that connect the existing and future elements of the park system with increased mobility options and park-like conditions.

1. Where feasible given recommended mobility improvements, reassign portions of the public right-of-way to the function of bike, pedestrian or transit mobility, diverse green infrastructure including tree canopy, native vegetation and stormwater management, improved lighting, and other amenities on Contemporary Parkways.

2. Develop design standards that enable bicycle and pedestrian movement, stormwater management and infiltration and the showcase of native vegetation and that also provide flexibility for Contemporary Parkways to range in size and role within the transportation and park and open space networks. Projects can range from a multi-faceted redesign of existing arterial right-of-way to the reallocation of right-of-way for tree-lined, shared local streets.

3. Consider the following roadways for further study as Contemporary Parkways:
   a. 11th Avenue/12th Avenue (Downtown to Westerly Creek Trail and Park: 11th Avenue from Downtown to Cheesman Park and 12th Avenue from Cheesman Park east beyond Colorado Boulevard)
   b. 16th Avenue (Downtown to Colorado Boulevard: connection east of Colorado Boulevard is along 17th Avenue)

B. Consider Contemporary Parkway standards in the retrofit of historic parkways, where allowable.
#1095

Posted by Ally M. on 02/03/2020 at 8:46pm - [Link](#)
Type: Suggestion
Agree: 0, Disagree: 0
This looks so inviting and practical - would love this in Denver!

#1096

Posted by Laurel S on 02/05/2020 at 8:55pm - [Link](#)
Type: Question
Agree: 0, Disagree: 0
Very interested in what this would mean for 12th Avenue in Congress Park, particularly in connecting the old trolley stops near Clayton and Madison Streets. How does one find out more about such a study?

#1097

Posted by Elizabeta on 03/12/2020 at 4:49pm - [Link](#)
Type: Suggestion
Agree: 2, Disagree: 0
Excellent recommendations. But I think we have the opportunity to go further; we should aim to consolidate auto traffic (as two way traffic) on one side of the parkway and dedicate the road on the other to pedestrians, rollerbladers, cyclists, kids playing. This would practically double the amount of usable open space within the area, with very little investment. It would also make using the open space, formerly in the middle, more appealing. Having traffic on both sides of the open space generally makes it a bit unnerving to use.

#1098

Posted by John on 02/05/2020 at 4:18pm - [Link](#)
Agree: 0, Disagree: 0
It's not clear what changing 16th Ave. to a parkway would involve.
RECOMMENDATIONS

Enhance existing community open space, parks and recreation facilities

The East Central area hosts some of the largest and most visited parks within the City of Denver, including Cheesman Park, Congress Park, and City Park. Some parks are fully programmed with specific uses and recreational amenities, while others include extensive passive green space. Community members would like to see activation of underused parks and some of the passive green spaces as well as better maintenance and additional amenities for existing facilities.

A. Strengthen partnerships with private property owners and develop shared-use agreements (SUAs) (similar to the agreements already established with the Denver Botanic Gardens, the Denver Zoo, and the Denver Museum of Nature and Science) with schools, institutions and hospitals to create shared open spaces within the community. Potential locations include the following:
   1. Uptown Health Care District (Uptown Hospitals)
   2. Morey Middle School
   3. Dora Moore School
   4. East High School
   5. DC 21 School
   6. F1106 School
   7. Teller Elementary School
   8. National Jewish Health

B. Increase recreational programming for all ages and interests, particularly children and youth, at parks, open spaces, school, community centers and recreation centers, including:
   1. City Park
   2. Cheesman Park
   3. Congress Park
   4. Governor’s Park
   5. Park Avenue Parks

C. Continue to advertise the Parks & Recreation Looking to Assist You (PLAY) program, which offers affordable memberships and programming rates to low income Denver residents, prioritizing areas with high health disparities.
the Cheesman Park Master Plan will define the unique passive use purpose of Cheesman Park and why programming recreational sports is very inappropriate for this unique park. Cheesman is open to all residents in a dense neighborhood for their own use preferences. Warren Village uses this park daily. It is a respite from the noise of the city. It is a heavily utilized park without “programming”. People live directly on the edge of the park. Surrounding neighborhoods as far away as Cherry Creek use this park for walking and bicycle riding. Central socializing has been the purpose of the park as most users have smaller living environments, so they entertain guests in the park. The idea of shared facilities is already in use at the nearby Dora Moore school which is being used for the purpose of “programmed sports”. The facilities there are more conducive to the wear and tear of that type of sport. Many summer evenings and weekends find the park fully used without room for other types of use. Please refer to the overall mission of the park in my opening statements.

Community Volunteers help DPR with caring for the rose gardens. This is organized by a community group that oversees the park - Cheesman Park Advocacy Group. This task was started because there isn’t enough staff to keep a historic park maintained adequately.

I think Cheesman park gets an incredible diversity of uses- it is a huge success! Good job! The more it's programed, the more we'll be limiting what's possible in the park. A park is also about enjoying nature and greenery. The more courts and skate parks you add, the less permeable area and greenery we'll be enjoying. Please resist this urge- it seems to be trying to solve a problem that does not exist. If need be, perhaps programming some of the already impermeable areas in chessman and City parks, such as the existing roads might be compromise - but not my preference. We need to expand our green infrastructure, not
continually find new ways of eroding it.

#1102

Posted by Leslie James on 03/10/2020 at 4:16pm - Link
Type: Suggestion
Agree: 0, Disagree: 0
YES! Make the large field on SE corner usable for all and less of just a space for looking at the large hospital.

#1103

Posted by Jane on 02/05/2020 at 8:03pm - Link
Type: Suggestion
Agree: 0, Disagree: 0
But be considerate that these are not spaces for dogs. Dog owners in the neighborhood recently violated rules at Teller causing major damage to the new multi-thousand dollar investment in turf. They left dog feces for our kids in the morning and the dogs claws tore-up the turf damaging some of it and costing us loss.

#1104

Posted by Temple on 01/07/2020 at 1:14am - Link
Type: Suggestion
Agree: 2, Disagree: 0
Yes on Morey Middle School and Dora Moore! Cap Hill could use more small parks open to the public outside of school hours!

#1105

Posted by John on 02/05/2020 at 4:20pm - Link
Type: Suggestion
Agree: 1, Disagree: 0
Shared use agreements with private organizations should be minimized. Parks should not be turned into venues for profit for private or "nonprofit" entities. Their best use is simply open, unprogrammed green space.

Reply by Elizabeta on 03/30/2020 at 2:59pm - Link
I like the idea of providing park goers a few amenities, but in this country we seem incapable of controlling the impact business have in the public realm. It often involves generators' fumes and noise, huge loads of disposable single-use everything. If we were able to address these issues and other related issues head-on I wouldn't have a problem with it.

#1106

Posted by Brad Shy on 11/11/2019 at 1:41am - Link

YES! REACH has a beautiful outdoor space and playground. It is literally chained-up for 80% of all daylight hours and all hours that school is not in session. This should be opened up to the city of Denver.

Similar policy improvements should occur at Teller Elementary.
RECOMMENDATIONS

Q4

Create new community open space, parks, and recreation facilities

Community members prioritized “shared green spaces” as a step toward resilience. By evaluating public right-of-way and existing land use, there may be opportunities to increase the amount of open and shared spaces in the East Central area. The community also supported converting vacant or underutilized properties into future park space.

A. Prioritize future locations that align with the City’s Game Plan for a Healthy City priority areas for new parks and areas prone to flooding according to the City’s Storm Drainage Master Plan or the best available data. Additional future locations include the District 6 Police Station redevelopment.

B. Incentivize and/or require publicly-accessible outdoor spaces, particularly in centers and corridors, as part of high-quality design. These publicly-accessible amenities can be a community benefit in exchange for taller heights, particularly along major corridors and near Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) stations. Establish standards and guidelines that ensure public accessibility, design, and features that respond to the community context. See Policies L3, L10, and C-L2.
When will a new playground within the park be addressed? Since CHUN shut down the Loop project several years ago, this has been a missed opportunity for improving public space and encouraging physical fitness in young people.
#1108

Posted by Sarah on 11/09/2019 at 11:02pm - Link
Type: Typo
Agree: 0, Disagree: -1
This hatch doesn't have a key.

#1109

Posted by Brad Shy on 11/11/2019 at 1:43am - Link
Type: Suggestion
Agree: 3, Disagree: 0
Converting this space should be a high-priority.

#1110

Posted by S.Kenneth on 12/13/2019 at 7:33pm - Link
Type: Suggestion
Agree: 0, Disagree: -3
Congress Park could be enhanced substantially. Allowing the East High boosters to hijack the proposed citing of the Central Denver Rec Center in Congress Park in favor of buying land on Colfax for the (eventual) construction of a CM rec center robbed our neighborhood of much needed improved recreation opportunities.

#1111

Posted by Will on 02/04/2020 at 11:27pm - Link
Type: Suggestion
Agree: 2, Disagree: 0
This is not shared open space, this is a private garden.

#1112

Posted by Joseph on 02/05/2020 at 5:47pm - Link
Type: Suggestion
There is already a picnic area along the east perimeter of Cheeseman. Why not refresh/revamp this area to include more picnic tables and provide an actual restroom system as opposed to portable toilets? Also, include the opinion and expertise of a landscape designer whom specializes in city parks in order to really play with the landscape. Look into DHM Design!!! They do amazing work!

#1113

Posted by Leslie James on 03/10/2020 at 4:19pm - Link
Type: Suggestion
Agree: 0, Disagree: 0
Yes! More nearby green space is needed!

#1114

Posted by Ally M. on 02/03/2020 at 8:49pm - Link
Type: Suggestion
Agree: 2, Disagree: 0
YES to a contemporary parkway on 12th!! Great idea. especially since it leads to/goes through Cheeseman.

#1115

Posted by Denise on 01/28/2020 at 9:56pm - Link
Agree: 3, Disagree: 0
Love the idea of a contemporary parkway on 22nd avenue!

Reply by Leslie James on 03/10/2020 at 4:18pm - Link
Type: Question
Agree: 0, Disagree: 0
But what does the arrow mean? Is it unidirectional? Our family relies on two way biking on that route daily.
OPEN SPACE AND CONNECTIONS CONCEPTS

ENHANCED PARK AVENUE

Members of the community suggested that Park Avenue could play a key role in connecting people to open space, parks, and recreational assets. Suggestions included strengthening the pedestrian environment at the intersection of Park Avenue and Colfax Avenue as well as up Park Avenue to connect the triangle parks along the existing corridor. See Policy Q1.

(Photo: Historic parkway in Montclair, Denver).

CONTEMPORARY PARKWAYS

A system of contemporary parkways can complement the transportation network and the existing park network. Rethinking the right-of-way in certain streets can improve bicycle and pedestrian connections while also providing integrated stormwater infrastructure, drought-tolerant landscaping, high-efficiency lighting, and varied paving systems. See Policy Q2.

SHARED OPEN SPACE

Green or open space owned by an institution or organization such as a school or a hospital, that is open to the surrounding community for their use. Institutions like schools can open their schoolyards to the surrounding community during the evenings, weekends, and summers and increase the availability of open spaces within the neighborhood. See Policy Q3.

(Photo: San Francisco Schoolyard Project)

NEW COMMUNITY OPEN SPACE

Public green space supports social interaction, physical activity, and connection to nature. Additionally, urban spaces, even small ones, can lead to improved mental and physical health outcomes. Game Plan for a Healthy City categorized which areas are priorities for new parks based on a list of criteria. East Central contains both Second and Lower Priority locations for new parks. See Policy Q4.

(Photo: community park in Stapleton, Denver).

ENHANCED OPEN SPACE

Increased activation of existing parks through new amenities and improved maintenance can make these assets more useful to the community. See Policy Q3.
Constructing "amenities" should not take away from existing green space. Moreover, unless present funding for ongoing maintenance is identified and set aside, the construction shouldn't proceed. To many existing structures have been allowed to fall into disrepair.

We are lucky to have Cheesman and City Parks in our neighborhoods, but we should ensure that we have adequate green infrastructure for the mental and physical of our residents. At a minimum we should meet the World Health Organization's recommendation, "the availability of a minimum of 9 m2 of green space per individual with an ideal UGS value of 50 m2 per capita."

Great idea! Good place to plant more trees, add enhanced pedestrian crossings and bike lanes.
Climate resilience refers to the ability of a community to respond, adapt, and recover in a sustainable way in response to the impacts of climate change. There are two main categories of these challenges: shocks and stresses. Shocks are sudden risks or events that threaten the community such as extreme heat, drought, severe storms, and urban flooding. Stresses are the daily or chronic challenges that weaken natural, built, and human systems, such as urban heat island effect, impervious surface coverage, lack of tree canopy or vegetation, aging infrastructure, poor air and water quality, water availability, and social and economic vulnerabilities. Some of the stresses of East Central are a result of the high coverage of impervious surfaces and the lack of green infrastructure systems. The environmental quality and climate resilience of East Central neighborhoods can profoundly impact the quality of life of its residents and is a key consideration in planning for a safe and healthy future.

## ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY AND CLIMATE RESILIENCE IN EAST CENTRAL

### Tree Canopy

Tree canopy coverage in East Central is concentrated within and around the parks and parkways, as well as along residential streets, especially in the southeast portion of the study area. Tree canopy is notably missing along major transportation and commercial corridors such as Colorado Boulevard and Colfax Avenue and residential streets within Capitol Hill and North Capitol Hill. These areas with minimal tree canopy coverage are areas where the development pattern includes larger building footprints and more surface parking lots, more closely resembling downtown.

The North Capitol Hill neighborhood is one of the neighborhoods with lower tree canopy coverage and a high level of redevelopment. Property redevelopment, coupled with street right-of-way improvements, present a great opportunity to increase tree canopy in older communities. Conversely, property and right-of-way redevelopment may also negatively impact this area in that current city codes and practices may allow for the removal of significant existing, mature canopy.

### Impervious Cover

Development patterns have increased both the quantity and intensity of stormwater runoff and the amount of impervious surface in East Central. High concentrations of impervious surface can be seen on the west side of the study area within the Capitol Hill and North Capitol Hill neighborhoods where the development pattern consists of larger building footprints and surface parking lots. Other areas with high concentrations of impervious surface include Colfax Avenue and the medical campuses within the City Park West neighborhood.

### Parks and Open Space

Parks and open spaces provide many environmental and climate resiliency benefits to a community in addition to the well-known recreational health and social benefits. Parks and open space include some of the natural elements that contribute to a comprehensive green infrastructure system. The pervious surfaces, vegetation, roots, and soils that compose these spaces help manage, capture, and infiltrate stormwater, which will also improve water quality and air quality and help reduce air temperature through shade and evapotranspiration.

The East Central area contains significant park and open space coverage with City Park, Cheesman Park, and Congress Park.

For a more detailed look at the parks and open space from a recreational perspective see Section 2.4.2 above.

### IMPERVIOUS COVER

- **East Central**: 68%
- **City of Denver**: 48%

vs.

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112319
You may want to reference Seattle's Green Factor, it's a score-based code requirement for new development that assigns value to existing trees and proposed new trees, focusing on tree canopy size.

Incentives and perhaps subsidies should also be given to Soil Cell Structures (i.e. Silva Cells) particularly along the Colfax corridor and other more urban corridors in the neighborhood. It is extremely hard to get healthy and long living trees in urban environments. Unfortunately this is somewhat expensive but it's necessary, as it's evident by the terrible shape our downtown trees are in.
Water Quality

The study of water quality refers to the understanding of the pollutants within a drainage basin that can be collected, conveyed, and discharged into urban waterways. By quantifying the pollutants within each basin and evaluating the levels of each pollutant, strategies for green infrastructure can be evaluated and implemented that can treat the water before it reaches urban waterways. The *Green Infrastructure Implementation Strategy* from the City and County of Denver identified thirty-one water quality basins, including eleven priority basins, based on several criteria. Primary criteria focused on stormwater concerns, like water quality and flooding, and secondary concerns included criteria like park density, urban heat islands, and equity.

Portions of four water quality basins fall within the East Central area: the Central Platte Valley Water Quality Basin, the City Park/Park Hill Water Quality Basin, the Cherry Creek Mall Water Quality Basin, and the Five Points/Capitol Hill Water Quality Basin.

Recently, Denver has completed a handful of green infrastructure projects within or near East Central, including both small and large-scale examples. A large-scale example is the redesign of City Park Golf Course which includes a detention pond, sediment forebay, and constructed wetland that captures and treats stormwater runoff during rain events. The streetside stormwater planters on Josephine Street outside of the Carla Madison Recreation Center are an example of a site-scale system and treat street runoff from Josephine Street.
what does High - red mean? Is High good or bad?
Surface Temperature

Surface temperature is directly correlated to the amount of impervious surface and the lack of tree canopy. Areas with high concentrations of impervious surfaces and a lack of tree canopy result in areas with higher surface temperatures. A 2014 study by Climate Central, based on data from 2004-2013, indicated that Denver has the third most intense heat island effect in the United States, with a 4.9-degree Fahrenheit increase in average urban temperatures.

The heat released from the warmer impervious surfaces prevents air from cooling as rapidly as it normally would when day transitions into night. The cumulative effect is an increase in temperatures that create discomfort, increased energy and water consumption for cooling and irrigation, and decreased overall air quality due to emissions. Trees and landscape can help reduce these impacts by creating cooling effects through shading of impervious roads and buildings and reducing absorption and reflection of heat.

Areas with warm surface temperatures within East Central are concentrated in North Capitol Hill, Capitol Hill along Colfax Avenue, City Park West near the medical campus, eastern Cheesman Park neighborhood, and scattered areas within the neighborhoods.

Existing Stormwater Infrastructure

The existing stormwater pipe system within East Central consists of pipes mostly 30 inches in width or smaller. Larger pipe systems within the area run along Grant Street, Park Avenue, and parts of City Park West. The largest pipe system that flows to the northwest runs along parts of the Congress Park and City Park neighborhoods along Jackson Street and through City Park. However, many pipes within the system are undersized and reach their capacity quickly during water events resulting in flooding in specific areas of the study area.
More priority should be given to shade trees and large planting strips in the ROW. There are too many elements competing for space under and on the sidewalks, and they all seem to take precedence over planting trees—this needs to be stopped and reversed. Also, at a minimum, make the entire sidewalk amenity zone permeable—either occupied by tree lawns or by permeable paving surfaces, such as crushed rock or unit pavers. This should be the norm on commercial streets as well, such as Colfax.

More stormwater detention and trees, fewer streets built like car sewers.
Community members are increasingly more conscious of the climate resilience challenges and the relationship between their quality-of-life and the quality of the environmental factors within their communities. Community members continuously expressed their interests, concerns, and ideas through online surveys, community workshops, and outreach events.

Flood Prone Areas

Flood Prone Areas are a result of the natural terrain, undersized stormwater infrastructure system, increased impervious surface affecting stormwater runoff, and duration and intensity of a rain event. Potential inundation areas are the location where stormwater runoff can accumulate in depths greater than what the streets are designed to handle during a major flood event. Such an event is usually referred to as a 100-year event or an event that has a 1% chance of occurring in any year.

East Central has a few low-lying areas where stormwater can accumulate during rain events and cause flooding. Some potential inundation areas are found in the North Capitol Hill and City Park West neighborhoods with depths greater than 12 inches flowing from southeast to northwest. However, portions of City Park and Congress Park are most prone to flooding in East Central. The northeast corner of Congress Park and the center of City Park show flood depths ranging from 1.5 feet to greater than 6 feet, with waters flowing from southeast to northwest. These low-lying areas represent the bed of the historic Montclair Creek that ran from Montclair and Hale to the South Platte River flowing from southeast to northwest.

Trees/landscaping comprised 47% of the comments in the East Central area and was the most common subtopic under the Environmentally Resilient category in the 2017 Kick-Off Survey.

The top priorities to make the East Central area more resilient include:

- Tree canopy and tree lawn
- Native vegetation
- Shared green spaces

The majority of participants wanted to explore street right-of-way, existing vacant land, and parking lots for parks and open space.

Community members expressed their interest in incentivizing flood prone areas to better accommodate flood waters and the implementation of green infrastructure systems, such as permeable pavers, bulb-outs, and bioswales.

Source: February 2018 Community Workshops
RECOMMENDATIONS

**Q5**

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

Trees and landscaping comprised 47% of the comments and was the most common subtopic under the Environmentally Resilient category in the 2017 Kick-Off Survey, and the increase in/expansion of tree canopy and tree lawn was the community's top priority for making East Central more resilient. There are opportunities to increase the resiliency and coverage of the existing tree canopy through efforts such as educational programming, property redevelopment, and street right-of-way improvements.

A. Coordinate with the City and County of Denver Office of the City Forester to continue to support removal and replacement of deficient existing trees within the public right-of-way to ensure a healthy and sustainable tree canopy and unique community asset.

B. Increase coverage of the tree canopy through a City-sponsored community replacement program utilizing Denver-appropriate trees.

C. Prioritize preservation of tree canopy in right-of-way design and other city projects.

D. Develop educational programming and partnerships within the community to increase understanding of maintenance and care of the tree canopy.

E. Support the development of an Urban Forest Plan to meet city-wide canopy goals for preservation, maintenance, implementation and funding.

**Q6**

**Protect and preserve the existing tree canopy in all redevelopment efforts.**

Property redevelopment may impact the tree canopy coverage in the East Central area. Many of the neighborhoods in the East Central area have a lower tree canopy and have also witnessed a high level of redevelopment. Current codes and practices may need to be revised to protect existing tree assets.

A. Strengthen development standards to protect existing tree assets and increase requirements to mitigate tree loss in redevelopment or new plans.

1. Seek opportunities to preserve the tree canopy in large-scale residential developments, redevelopment along the Colfax Avenue and the expansion of institutions or hospital campuses.

2. Provide incentives or code changes that encourage retention of existing, mature canopy, and the planting of new trees beyond code minimums.
#1124

Posted by Elizabeta on 03/30/2020 at 4:38pm - Link
Type: Suggestion
Agree: 0, Disagree: 0

The City should try to tap into the neighborhood for donations (money and labor) to help expedite the planting of street trees in our neighborhood. There is an untapped enthusiasm and energy here; we're a young urban population who are looking for opportunities to engage with nature and our with neighbors. I realize there're city-wide volunteer tree planting programs. I suggest that we have something that is more neighborhood based so we can see, live and be proud of the results inner own backyard.

#1125

Posted by Phillip B Danielson on 11/19/2019 at 7:46pm - Link
Type: Suggestion
Agree: 5, Disagree: 0

Great Idea. More trees means a better quality of life.

#1126

Posted by Elyse on 02/02/2020 at 3:39pm - Link
Type: Suggestion
Agree: 2, Disagree: 0

Increase tree-box/grate size standards to enable the growth of healthier trees--especially along colic and other areas where trees aren't within typical tree lawns.

#1127

Posted by Will on 02/04/2020 at 11:33pm - Link
Type: Suggestion
Agree: 0, Disagree: 0

Currently the biggest hindrance to an urban forest is the City's Public Works department. Trees are an expendable aesthetic object, nothing more. Until trees are seen as essential infrastructure, this effort will be one step forward, two steps back.
#1128

Posted by Oliver Gaskell on 11/12/2019 at 2:52pm - Link
Agree: 4, Disagree: 0
Yes!

#1129

Posted by Nancy Stephenson and Georganne Bley on 02/04/2020 at 10:46pm - Link
Agree: 4, Disagree: 0
More trees please! Yes!

#1130

Posted by Cindy sestrich on 02/05/2020 at 11:29pm - Link
Agree: 2, Disagree: 0
Cheesman Park is experiencing a greater loss of old growth and new trees due to the grey water watering, mild winters, disease and pest control problems. DPR needs to act much more quickly towards a solution before we lose more of our infrastructure of tree canopy which is vital to our neighborhood. The salt content in grey water is detrimental to a lot of the types of trees.
-Suggested tree types for tree lawn parking to weather the climate change would be a great, along with your suggested education on maintenance. Xeriscape gardening doesn’t mean ignoring watering trees adequately.
-This is a very costly infrastructure problem.
RECOMMENDATIONS

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

East Central’s impervious surface coverage is higher than the City’s average. High impervious surface coverage results from historical development patterns in which permeable surfaces are replaced with roads, parking lots, sidewalks, and rooftops. These patterns have impacted the quality of life for East Central community members by increasing stormwater runoff, reducing rainfall absorption, and increasing air temperature. Native vegetation was the community’s second highest priority for making East Central more resilient, and 20% of the comments under the Environmentally Resilient category were related to the increase and presence of impervious surfaces in the 2017 Kick-Off Survey.

A. Explore opportunities to convert existing impervious surface within public right-of-way to pervious surface through the addition of green infrastructure, planters, street trees, tree lawn or bulb-outs, permeable pavers, trails, parkland or native vegetation.
   1. Coordinate with the design of future Contemporary Parkways (see Policy Q2).
   2. Integrate with BRT design along Colfax Avenue and redesign of public right-of-way streetscape and remnant parcels to improve infiltration and reduce runoff.

B. Develop design guidelines for a contemporary tree lawn.
   1. Remove and replace impervious areas between the sidewalk and street with 4”-6” depressed lawn or streetscape that improves infiltration and reduces runoff.
   2. Coordinate implementation through roadway, stormwater and sanitary projects within the right-of-way.

C. Increase the requirements for pervious acreage, water conservation in landscaping and inclusion of natural vegetation for redevelopment and new development.

D. Work with private property owners, business improvement districts and other neighborhood organizations to transition underutilized paved lots to pervious surfaces.

ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY AND CLIMATE RESILIENCE
This image illustrates the challenge we have in increasing permeable zones. The amount of concrete surfaces shown here actually dwarf the area available for infiltration. There are huge swaths of paving on both sides of this puny narrow planting area. More permeable areas need to be required within the ROW. The "splash stripp" on the left side of the planter should not have to be concrete, for example.

Why is there no discussion around the importance of Solar Access as related to 'quality of life' and its relationship to public space, pedestrian circulation, snow melt, PV integration, residential / community gardens and vegetation? Preservation of the Tree Canopy should not be ignored but neither should these other QOL elements.

Green infrastructure such as right-of-way bioswales will not be installed until developers are required to do so. They are more expensive then typical street planting beds, and developers will always take the cheap option given the chance. If the City is serious about green infrastructure, it must be mandatory. The health of the City over developer MAX profits.
GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE IN STREETS AND ALLEYS FOR WATER QUALITY CAPTURE

[Diagram of urban area with green infrastructure pathways and water quality capture basins.]
The alley ways are a great opportunity for increasing green space.

Would love to see opportunity for more Green infrastructure or Green Alley ways in Congress Park. Due to Garage use, alleys could be bisected in North\South fashion for a "Block Park" or Garden while keeping garage access for those in need.

Affordable housing is a must. We must also ensure that historical character is included in the design of new builds.
RECOMMENDATIONS

Q8 Create a system of green streets and alleys to complement the network of existing Historic Parkways and new Contemporary Parkways and encourage sustainable water management practices including stormwater management, flood protection, water quality, runoff reduction, and water use.

Green infrastructure is a critical tool that supports several East Central community goals, such as enhanced community livability and improved resiliency. The community expressed interest in exploring allocating street right-of-way to various forms of greening as well as incentivizing flood prone areas to better accommodate flood waters and the implementation of green infrastructure systems, such as permeable pavers, bulb-outs, and bioswales. Green infrastructure can be employed to develop green streets and alleys in the area to increase pervious surfaces, improve air quality, increase access to green and open space, and reduce human health hazards related to poor water quality and flooding.

A. Implement a system of green streets and green alleys to improve water quality and reduce nuisance flooding, prioritizing streets based on the City’s Green Infrastructure Implementation Strategy (see map on the following page).

B. Prioritize the implementation of green streets that coincide with priority bicycle corridors and connections to key neighborhood destinations like parks, religious institutions, schools, and other institutions and centers.
This is a great example to pull from! Alley ways should be integral components in combating stormwater runoff, as well as perfect grounds for implementing permeable paver systems.

This might be the wrong section for this but I'd love to see the building codes updated to allow for green roofs on detached garages. Many lots in Congress Park will not elect to put on an ADU (either by choice or due to lot size). Current building codes don't allow these structures to be 'usable' (e.g., safety railings or staircases) to create a green roof (garden vegetation etc) which would help to reduce the 'heat island effect' of the impenetrable surfaces.

Love this.
ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY & CLIMATE RESILIENCY OPPORTUNITIES
#1140

Posted by **Leslie James** on **03/10/2020** at **4:22pm** - [Link]

Type: **Question**

Agree: 0, Disagree: 0

Why are green streets not planned in CPW or congress park?

#1141

Posted by **Nancy Stephenson and Georganne Bley** on **01/25/2020** at **5:07pm** - [Link]

Type: **Suggestion**

Agree: 2, Disagree: 0

Again, let's keep any refurbishment/remodeling in line with the historic characteristics of the neighborhoods.
ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY & CLIMATE RESILIENCY CONCEPTS

GREEN STREETS
Roadways that integrate stormwater management and water quality treatments. Elements include engineered systems such as stormwater planters and permeable paving, as well as natural tree lawns and tree canopy. Green streets can work in conjunction with streets that prioritize multimodal mobility by providing a more comfortable environment. Brighton Boulevard is a local example of a green street working in conjunction with a bicycle facility. Priority areas include those identified by the Green Infrastructure Implementation Strategy. See Policy Q8. (Photo: Brighton Boulevard in Denver).

GREEN ALLEYS
Alleys with increased pervious surface coverage and vegetation to aid in infiltration and water quality treatment. As a result of the increased vegetation and pervious surfaces, these alleys become comfortable places for pedestrians to walk and function as key multimodal mobility corridors. A local example is the Westwood Via Verde which includes enhanced alleys and green infrastructure as part of its network that will connect existing and potential new spaces. Priority areas include alleys within 50 feet of a storm drain. See Policy Q8. (Photo: Green Alley in Detroit).

GREEN ROOFS
Building roofs that are covered or contain vegetation. Green roofs serve several purposes, such as absorbing stormwater, providing insulation, creating habitat and reducing urban heat island effect by reducing the coverage of surfaces like concrete which absorb sunlight and therefore increase surface temperatures. Priority areas include buildings 25,000 square feet or larger as specified in the Green Buildings Ordinance within the following Places: Civic, Campus, Community Center, Regional Center, Community Corridor, and High Residential Areas. See Policy Q7. (Photo: Community College of Denver building green roof. Source: Green Roofs of Colorado).

PRIVATE PROPERTY PRACTICES
Small interventions in private property by themselves will not have a significant impact in reducing the stormwater flooding in the area. However, the cumulative effects of small interventions such as rain gardens, rain barrels, and permeable pavers in areas like driveways, can improve infiltration and water quality treatment of stormwater and provide multiple benefits to the community. Priority areas include within Low and Low-Medium Residential Places. See Policy Q7.

STORMWATER DETENTION/PARKS
Parks provide important stormwater management benefits. If properly designed, open space can be used to capture stormwater during intense rain events while providing recreational and social uses during dry times.

Woodbriar Park in Greeley Colorado (shown in photo) is another example of a neighborhood park redesigned to allow for stormwater detention during intense rain events. Priority areas include all flood prone areas. See Policy Q7.
Are there resources or suggestions for residents to create their own water retention prior to draining into alley?

Reply by Joseph on 02/05/2020 at 5:50pm - Link
Consult an environmental engineer with a specialty in landscape design/architecture.

Please keep in mind that trash and recycle receptacles need to be placed in alleys for pickup. Most alleys in Congress Park already have very few spaces between fences and garages to put these receptacles, especially spaced the distance apart the garbage trucks need them to be. Any cosmetic additions that further reduce those few spaces will make life harder for the residents.

Reply by BJWilson10 on 11/16/2019 at 1:14pm - Link
Grass block pavers—also known as turf block pavers or grow-through pavers—are an alternative to asphalt, concrete, and traditional pavers. They're made of concrete or recycled plastic with open cells that allow grass to grow through them. They're a porous, eco-friendly option for driveways and parking areas. So, these would just replace existing concrete. You wouldn't lose the space for Trash/recycling/compost bins, AND water can move into the soil. Win/win

Recycling and city composting program already use main street for pickup. Trash pick up could also be moved to
main street rather than alley to allow for additional alley uses.

Reply by Jane on 02/05/2020 at 8:14pm - Link
Type: Answer
Agree: 1, Disagree: 0
Trash pick-up is necessary in the alley for those of us who live on a hill to the street - we would not be able to move our trash to the street where I live.

#1144

Posted by Lisa P on 01/27/2020 at 8:31pm - Link
Type: Suggestion
Agree: 2, Disagree: -1
What about for detached garages in Congress Park too? The surface area is smaller but still valuable to create a garden!

Reply by Laurel S on 02/05/2020 at 9:15pm - Link
Agree: 0, Disagree: 0
Allowing green roofs on garage spaces is an excellent idea!

#1145

Posted by Nancy Stephenson and Georganne Bley on 02/04/2020 at 10:49pm - Link
Type: Suggestion
Agree: 1, Disagree: 0
Love the green alleys!

#1146

Posted by BJWilson10 on 01/17/2020 at 4:02pm - Link
Type: Question
Agree: 1, Disagree: 0
Are there resources somewhere to allow residents to get educated on different options they could use on their lots?
- Replace Concrete Garage Aprons with...
- Suggested plants along alley...
- Suggested plants growing on fence or side of garage or building...
Reply by Joseph on 02/05/2020 at 5:49pm - Link
Agree: 1, Disagree: 0
Look into Denver Urban Gardens.
2.4.4 ACCESS TO HEALTHY FOOD

The 2017 Denver Food Vision envisions a city where every neighborhood is a complete food environment, where residents have access to a full range of food amenities and supporting infrastructure. A complete food environment is inclusive of the cultural, commercial, and agricultural aspects of food and community.

According to the 2016 Denver Food System Baseline Report, one in five children and one in six adults in Denver suffer from food insecurity, which means they lack consistent access to enough food for an active, healthy life. Unequal access to healthy, affordable foods has been shown to contribute to nutritional inequalities, a risk factor for diet related health outcomes such as cardiovascular disease, diabetes and obesity. This means that communities of color, immigrants, seniors, single parent households and rural communities are more likely to experience diet-related health problems. These same communities also experience more chronic stress due to poverty, systemic racism and lack of health care resources, which among many inequitable outcomes, include lower life expectancies.

Healthy food access can vary considerably by location. For example, full-service grocery stores are less likely to locate in lower income areas due to perceptions of low profitability. In some communities, corner or convenience stores may be the only points of food access. Many smaller stores face challenges in stocking fresh food inventory due to issues such as minimum order requirements by distributors or limited refrigeration.

While food access depends on physical proximity, another key factor is the ability to afford food and the availability of food that is culturally relevant. Food access also depends on the physical capacity and knowledge to prepare and eat healthy food.

Cost is often the main barrier to accessing healthy food for families with limited food budgets. Typically, high processed foods are less expensive, meaning that families can acquire more food with less money when they purchase processed foods.

COMMUNITY FEEDBACK

Through public meetings and online engagement, East Central stakeholders provided feedback on what was needed to make the East Central area a complete food environment.

During the public meetings, participants were asked to vote on the three most important elements needed for a complete food environment in the East Central area. The top responses were:

- **HEALTHIER CORNER AND CONVENIENCE STORES**
- **IMPROVED BIKE, PEDESTRIAN AND TRANSIT ACCESS**
- **FOOD GROWN IN PUBLIC SPACES**

Additionally, participants expressed a desire for more specialty markets, farmers markets and fresh food stands, and healthier meal options.

Results of a public online survey with over 1,000 responses conducted between 2018 and 2019, were generally consistent with the public meeting feedback. When asked what neighborhood amenities are important (either that already exist or that they would like to see in the future), the top responses from East Central participants were dining and grocery shopping.

**HEALTHY FOOD IN EAST CENTRAL**

Fewer than 60% of East Central households reside within a half mile (roughly a ten-minute walk) of a full-service grocery store according to a CPD weighted analysis. Healthy food access can vary considerably by location. For example, full-service grocery stores are less likely to locate in lower income areas due to perceptions of low profitability. In some communities, corner or convenience stores may be the only points of food access. Many smaller stores face challenges in stocking fresh food inventory due to issues such as minimum order requirements by distributors or limited refrigeration.

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#1147

Posted by Ally M. on 02/03/2020 at 9:02pm - Link

Type: Suggestion

Agree: 0, Disagree: 0

City partnership with Denver Food Rescue and/or Fresh Food Connect would help. Denver Food Rescue brings free produce from grocery stores to food-desert neighborhoods, via bike!

#1148

Posted by Denise on 01/28/2020 at 10:07pm - Link

Type: Suggestion

Agree: 0, Disagree: 0

City Park East definitely needs a healthy grocery store. It would be nice if the Safeway on 17th street was replaced with a nicer store or at the very least remodeled. It is a hangout for many undesirables.

#1149

Posted by Nancy Stephenson and Georganne Bley on 02/04/2020 at 10:51pm - Link

Type: Suggestion

Agree: 1, Disagree: 0

Yes, support the healthy small stores like 12th Avenue Market.
RECOMMENDATIONS

Improve and maintain healthy options at existing East Central food retailers.

Introducing more healthy and affordable foods in corner and convenience stores, which the most people rated as a top priority for a complete food environment in community meetings, can create additional healthy food retail locations within East Central. Rising commercial rents may necessitate assistance to help preserve existing food retailers.

A. Encourage and incentivize more corner and convenience stores in East Central to sell a greater variety of healthy food items.
   1. Continue to engage with East Central convenience stores through Denver’s Healthy Corner Store Initiative or similar program to provide incentives, financial support, and technical assistance.
   2. Remove barriers faced by smaller stores to carry fresh produce, such as working to launch or fund value chain coordination and small-scale distribution projects and social enterprises that connect agricultural producers and other healthy food suppliers to retailers.
   3. Support the expansion of nutrition incentive programs such as Double Up Food Bucks or create a new city-wide incentive program that reaches people unable to access Double Up Food Bucks.

B. Retain existing grocery stores and small food retail businesses, particularly those already selling healthy food, in areas where commercial rents or property costs have become burdensome (See Economy & Housing Section 2.2.3).
   1. Prioritize support for businesses in low food access areas (City Park West, and portions of Cheesman Park, Congress Park, and North Capitol Hill) that demonstrate financial assistance needs.
   2. Connect food retail businesses with financial support from city or statewide programs such as the Colorado Fresh Food Financing Fund (CO4F).

BACKGROUND POLICY STRATEGIES

Improve the physical connections to grocery stores and other locations with healthy food options.

East Central area stakeholders identified improved bike, pedestrian, and transit access to grocery stores as one of their top priorities. Providing pedestrian, bike, and transit routes to grocery stores that are universally accessible, well-marked, safe, comfortable, and convenient is an important component to food access.

A. Install missing sidewalks and make crosswalk safety upgrades near food providers, prioritizing improvements near major grocery stores (See Policy M9).

B. Support build-out of a complete transportation network that provides adequate bicycle infrastructure (See Policies M2 & M3), transit access (See Policies M7 & M8), and traffic calming (See Policy M9) to provide safe, comfortable access to grocery stores, food pantries, and community gardens.
I am a bit unsure on this recommendation. On the one hand, I understand the motivation is to ensure access to fresh food for everyone, even those not driving. On the other hand, (specifically) large food retailers like Safeway, King Soopers, and Whole Foods are giant corporations that don't really need public money to maintain their stores' sidewalks for them. Jeff Bezos probably doesn't need taxpayer subsidized sidewalk build-out and maintenance money to fix a sidewalk in front of one of his Amazon delivery/food delivery markets. He just needs to get a notice in the mail that he's got 45 days to fix it, followed up by enforcement, just like an individual property owner. We could then use those subsidies to fix sidewalks in neighborhoods and in front of small food retailers that would actually struggle to foot the bill for sidewalk repair.
RECOMMENDATIONS

**Q11**

Support food growing and production in East Central neighborhoods.

East Central stakeholders identified food grown in public spaces as an important priority to promote healthy food access.

**A.** Work with Denver Urban Gardens to provide funding and identify locations to develop new community gardens, such as at existing community centers with available open space including parks, schools, hospitals, and religious institutions.

1. Assess community support for new gardens in the existing parks and open spaces in East Central.

**B.** Analyze the barriers and constraints to food growing on public and private properties in East Central, including land use, zoning, permitting, maintenance, or building regulations.

**Q12**

Expand healthy meal options available in East Central.

On average, households spend approximately half of their food budget on prepared foods, and East Central stakeholders expressed the desire for additional healthy, fast casual restaurant options. In an online survey with over 1,000 respondents, dining was listed as the most important neighborhood amenity. Access to healthy prepared foods is an important part of a complete food environment.

**A.** Recruit healthy, fast-casual restaurants to Colfax.

1. Coordinate with BIDs on recruitment efforts to attract new healthy, fast casual restaurants.

**B.** Incentivize existing restaurants to offer healthier options.

1. Work with local organizations like the BIDs to incentivize restaurants to offer healthier options. Consider expanding on the work done by the Rethink Your Drink project lead by Denver Department of Public Health and Environment and the American Heart Association and Colorado Smart Meal Program to pilot an incentive program that could include free publicity, consultations with trained dietitians and chefs, and free nutrition analysis of menu items. (See profile of Somerville, Massachusetts’ Shape Up program).

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**Case Study:**

Healthy Restaurant Incentives: Shape Up Somerville, Massachusetts

Shape Up Somerville recognizes and promotes healthy restaurants throughout the city. Shape Up “approved” meals at participating restaurants are considered healthy because they contain lean proteins, heart-healthy fats, whole grains, and items that are not deep fried. Participating restaurants receive free publicity, and often are preferred caterers for city events/meetings. Approved meals are reviewed by a certified nutritionist. The program periodically does a promotion highlighting immigrant-run restaurants.
#1151

Posted by TAD on 12/06/2019 at 10:04am - Link
Type: Suggestion
Agree: 4, Disagree: 0
I agree that there should be incentives for restaurants with healthy food, which are totally lacking in Congress Park and surrounding neighborhoods. It would also be good for the community if a real farmers’ market were established (not like the Cherry Creek market which is mostly prepared food and packaged food).

#1152

Posted by Temple on 01/07/2020 at 1:20am - Link
Type: Suggestion
Agree: 3, Disagree: 0
Allow new zoning for small restaurants, corner bistros and delis, without parking minimums by right in residential areas, and you would address healthy meal options, develop local small business, and reduce car trips all at the same time.

#1153

Posted by Denise on 01/28/2020 at 10:10pm - Link
Type: Suggestion
Agree: 1, Disagree: 0
Hold Farmer’s Markets in City Park during the summer.

#1154

Posted by Cindy sestrich on 02/05/2020 at 11:29pm - Link
Agree: 0, Disagree: 0
See note in zoning which is conflicting with this value of supporting food growing. Shadowing food growth with total lot infill is detrimental to this value.
RECOMMENDATIONS

Recruit new small- to mid-sized grocery retailers and specialty stores.

East Central stakeholders expressed a desire for smaller grocery outlets and specialty food stores that carry healthy products. In an online survey of over 1,000 respondents, grocery options were listed as the second most important neighborhood amenity. These smaller stores provide an opportunity to access a variety of healthy food, even in areas where there may not be market demand for a full-service grocery store.

**A.** Attract small- or medium-sized grocery outlets and specialty stores to serve low food access areas, such as City Park West, portions of Cheesman Park, Congress Park, and North Capitol Hill.

1. Utilize existing financial resources, such as the Colorado Fresh Food Financing Fund (CO4F), and other public-private partnerships to offer financial incentives.
2. Provide fast-track permitting, increased translation/interpretation services and fee/fine waivers for grocery stores, small markets, mobile markets, and other fresh food retailers that choose to locate in or serve under-served areas with East Central.
3. Work with BIDs to identify and recruit niche specialty food businesses, such as butcher or bakery shops.
Yes, sounds great! Small, local, healthy! This not only is practical in improving food access, but it also adds walkability and social connections to these neighborhoods - walking to the store down the block to pickup some ingredients for dinner, seeing your neighbors there and getting a chance to chat. (much better feel than people driving 20min to shop at Walmart with a herd of strangers)

Give more support to locally owned/non-chain food stores like 12th Avenue Market. They've worked hard and tried to provide a deli and fresh produce. However, they cannon compete with places like Whole Paycheck, Sprouts, and Traitor Joe’s who charge high prices and don't necessarily all focus on organic products (misspelling is intentional).

Allow new zoning for small restaurants, grocers, corner bistros and delis, without parking minimums by right in residential areas, and you would address healthy meal options, develop local small business, and reduce car trips all at the same time.

I’m not sure you need to incentivize it, when you could first start with just allowing it.
I question the availability of quality food stores in the Cheesman Park areas, as we have Natural Grocers, King Soopers and a new Whole Foods concept store coming on line soon, within walking distance.

#1159

Posted by John Riecke on 12/31/2019 at 1:18am - Link

Type: Suggestion
Agree: 1, Disagree: 0

East Central has lots of grocery store options. I don’t mind having more but I’m not sure they need to be incentivized.
Case Study:
Affordable Grocery on Wheels: Any Street Grocery, Denver

Any Street Grocery is a bus-turned-market that sells healthy, affordable food basics in some of Denver’s under-served neighborhoods. The non-profit enterprise initially launched in 2018 with a limited schedule, making weekly stops at community facilities like recreation centers. To cover costs, Any Street Grocery also visits citywide events like Taste of Colorado where they can charge a higher premium for products. To make an affordable, mobile grocery operational and successful, substantial grant funding and community partnerships are crucial.

Case Study:
Aria Denver’s “Agrihood”, Denver

Aria Denver is a recently developed mixed income community at Federal Boulevard and 52nd Avenue that prominently features food production and wellness. The community has a one-acre farm, designated residential plots, and an 1,800 square foot greenhouse. These amenities provide food growing spaces for all residents, while also encouraging intergenerational social interaction and physical activity. Through a partnership with nearby Regis University, Aria Denver is able to offer gardening and nutrition classes for residents, and job-training for low-income youth.

Support innovative community food access projects.

Non-traditional models can increase access to fresh, healthy foods, particularly for populations that may not otherwise have access to fresh food. Additionally, affordable housing developers and institutions like schools and hospitals are increasingly incorporating amenities related to food access.

A. Work with developers and community-driven investors to incorporate food access in new developments.
   1. Consider incentives such as density bonuses or subsidies for housing developments that incorporate food growing, production, or other food access amenities. (See profile on Aria Denver’s “Agrihood”).
   2. Leverage funds such as CHFA’s Healthy Housing Loan Program and/or Denver Housing Authority’s Healthy Living Initiative to incorporate food access and programming (e.g. pop-up food pantries; nutrition or cooking classes) into affordable housing developments.
   3. Prioritize funding or incentives for projects that offer additional community benefits, such as community ownership structures or local hiring opportunities.

B. Through the proposed Hospital Working Group (see Policy E1), encourage hospital campuses to dedicate portions of their properties to community food gardens.

C. Support innovative grocery models, like grocery on wheels (see profile on Any Street Grocery), particularly in areas of limited healthy food access.
   1. Provide business assistance, including increased translation/interpretation services, streamlined permitting, and connections to resources and grant funding.
Along with meat and dairy, fresh produce is one of the more difficult items for food banks to supply consistently. Metro Caring, a prominent food bank in City Park West, recently received a donated train car from neighboring Saint Joseph Hospital to pilot an innovative indoor food growing system. The retrofitted 40-foot long freight train car sits in the organization’s parking lot, where it can grow up to 600 plants every week. Food grown in this self-sustaining, soil-free, controlled environment will help supplement fresh produce available for food bank clients.

Case Study:
Metro Caring’s “Freight-Train” Garden,
Denver

Along with meat and dairy, fresh produce is one of the more difficult items for food banks to supply consistently. Metro Caring, a prominent food bank in City Park West, recently received a donated train car from neighboring Saint Joseph Hospital to pilot an innovative indoor food growing system. The retrofitted 40-foot long freight train car sits in the organization’s parking lot, where it can grow up to 600 plants every week. Food grown in this self-sustaining, soil-free, controlled environment will help supplement fresh produce available for food bank clients.
#1160

Posted by Kevin on 01/12/2020 at 12:53pm - Link
Type: Question
Agree: 1, Disagree: 0
I don't understand this map? Why are "community gardens" considered for everywhere but Congress Park?

#1161

Posted by Joseph on 02/05/2020 at 5:52pm - Link
Type: Suggestion
Agree: 0, Disagree: -2
Is it possible to establish a community garden at Cheeseman park? There are several locations that are capable of holding 20 to 30 plots.

#1162

Posted by Leslie James on 03/10/2020 at 4:27pm - Link
Type: Question
Agree: 0, Disagree: 0
If CPW is one of the areas most lacking in affordable quality food options, why aren't community gardens considered therein?

Reply by Leslie James on 03/10/2020 at 4:28pm - Link
Type: Question
Agree: 0, Disagree: 0
Discussing private industry to support public green space, how about a large community garden on the SE corner of the St Joe's campus?
HEALTHY FOOD CONCEPTS

COMMUNITY GARDEN

Public or private land can be used by community members to grow and cultivate fruit and vegetables. Gardens can be shared plots on private or public land, or they can be auxiliary uses for organizations like schools and religious institutions. Stakeholders have identified “growing more food on public and private land” as a top priority. Priority areas for community gardens include what the Land Use & Built Form section maps as a Center, Corridor, Civic, Campus, Park or select residential places (High, High-medium, or Low-medium Residential) that are not within a quarter mile of an existing community garden. See Policy Q11.

(Photo: New Freedom Park Community Center, Denver).

HEALTHY RESTAURANTS

Fast-casual restaurants or grab-and-go vendors can specialize in meals that are both quick and healthy. Some models also provide affordable fast-casual meals to communities with limited food access. Priority areas for healthy restaurants include what the Land Use & Built Form section maps as a Community Corridor, Local Corridor, Regional Center, Community Center, Local Center, Civic, or Campus places. See Policy Q12.

(Photo: Superfruit Republic, Stapleton, Denver).

SMALL- TO MID-SIZED GROCERY RETAILERS AND SPECIALTY STORES

A smaller footprint retail establishment can sell healthy food ingredients such as fresh fruits and vegetables, dry groceries, or meat/poultry/seafood, or it can specialize in one type of food product (such as a butcher). This model can help meet the food access needs of neighborhoods that don’t need a full grocery store but that still have a significant number of residents who can’t walk to a grocery store. Priority areas for limited scale grocery stores include what the Land Use & Built Form section maps as a Community Corridor, Local Corridor, or Local Center that is also within a limited food access area. See Policy Q13.

(Photo: Choice Market, Broadway, Denver).
Access to health care, including preventative and mental health care, is one of several factors that impacts health. One calculation estimates that clinical care influences about 15 percent of a person’s health.14 While physical access to health facilities impacts access, another critical factor is the ability to pay for medical care. (See Section 2.2.5 for more information on social services.)

HEALTH CARE IN EAST CENTRAL

East Central contains several large-scale medical campus facilities, including Presbyterian/St. Luke’s Medical Center, Rocky Mountain Hospital for Children, Kaiser Permanente, Saint Joseph Hospital, and National Jewish Health.

However, income and other factors also impact whether residents have access to medical care. For example, while City Park West has the highest concentration of medical facilities in East Central—nearly all households within a 10-minute walk of a hospital—the neighborhood has a higher percentage of residents who have needed medical care but have been unable to see a medical professional due to cost than the other neighborhoods in East Central. Almost a quarter of pregnant women in North Capitol Hill, Capitol Hill, and City Park West do not receive prenatal care during their first trimester.

Similarly, limited access to preventative care can result in increased use of emergency services. Rates of youth emergency department utilization for asthma are more than 50 visits per 1,000 residents in both City Park West and North Capitol Hill, compared to an average of approximately 18 visits per 1,000 residents in Denver.
RECOMMENDATIONS

Increase access to low-cost healthcare in East Central.

Physical and financial access to medical resources, including mental health care, are both critical to ensuring that communities have adequate access to health care.

A. Partner with Denver Health to deploy more free or reduced cost mobile clinics to East Central area neighborhoods with higher rates of Delayed Medical Care Due to Cost, including City Park West, North Capitol Hill, Capitol Hill, and Congress Park.

B. Increase awareness and utilization of new and existing public health resources by East Central residents, particularly preventative care and mental health services.
   1. Work with Denver Department of Public Health & Environment (DDPHE), social service providers, and other medical providers to promote free or reduced cost healthcare programs.

C. Integrate preventative health care with other services and programs, such as housing and food access initiatives. For example, pursue partnerships with East Central hospitals to offer basic healthcare services at food retail locations.
   1. Facilitate a pilot project with area hospitals, farmers markets, and healthy corner stores to create “one-stop-shops” for health that integrate healthy eating with preventative health care. Elements of the pilot could include: healthy food prescription programs, free health screenings, and nutrition or cooking classes all offered within the store. (See profile on the Lankenau Medical Center and the Food Trust partnership in Philadelphia).

BACKGROUND POLICY STRATEGIES

ACCESS TO HEALTH CARE

In Philadelphia, the Food Trust (a food-access advocacy organization) and a local hospital network teamed together to bring healthy food and preventative healthcare to the community.

The hospital started a program that encouraged doctors to “prescribe” nutritious food to patients. Eligible participants received “Philly Food Bucks” that were redeemable to buy fruits and vegetables at farmers markets and participating food stores. In addition to their healthy food prescription, patients received nutrition education, as well as information on other community resources. Health screenings at the farmer’s market helped connect vulnerable populations to resources and follow-up care.

The “one stop shop” approach brought a new level of convenience, trust, and accessibility to healthcare.


Case Study:
Lankenau Medical Center and the Food Trust – West Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

Photo Source: The Food Trust
2.4.6 COMMUNITY SAFETY AND WELL-BEING

The built environment can have a significant impact on safety, the perception of safety, and mental well-being. The World Health Organization defines well-being as being achieved when “every individual realizes his or her own potential, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively and fruitfully, and is able to make a contribution to his or her community.”

Neighborhoods that are walkable and have active public spaces tend to provide environments where people feel safe and socially connected. Proximity to parks and trees has been linked to improved mental and physical well-being. In contrast, areas that are perceived to be unsafe have been shown to reduce residents’ likelihood to participate in outdoor activities, which diminishes opportunities for social interaction and physical activities that promote well-being. Additionally, external stressors such as poverty and displacement can have a negative impact on well-being. While this section focuses on recommendations to improve safety and well-being through the built environment, recommendations in the Economy & Housing section that address poverty and displacement are critical to mental well-being.

SAFETY IN EAST CENTRAL

Improving safety and reducing crime was a priority for many residents in East Central. While the average violent crime rate in East Central is comparable to the citywide average, a concentration of incidents along Colfax Avenue on the west side of the study area result in crime rates that are slightly higher than the Denver average in North Capitol Hill, Capitol Hill, and City Park West. Non-violent crimes, which include drug and alcohol offenses as well as public disorder offenses such as disturbing the peace, loitering, and prostitution, are also more prevalent along this stretch of Colfax Avenue.

One impact of higher crime rates can be mental distress, which the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment defines as experiencing health conditions such as stress, depression, and problems with emotions. In a survey measuring mental distress, the northern portion of City Park West had a slightly higher rate of adults experiencing frequent mental distress compared to the Denver average.

At neighborhood meetings in February 2019, participants were asked, “what would make you feel safer and more comfortable in East Central?” The top priorities based on 3 votes per participant were:

- **MORE ACTIVITY ON THE STREET**
- **PUBLIC ART**
- **MORE SERVICES FOR VULNERABLE POPULATIONS**

Better lighting and public restrooms were also among the top priorities.

Source: February 2018 Community Workshops

“Rarely” 6% “Always” 17% “Usually” 77%

“I feel safe in the East Central area...”

Source: 2017 East Central Kick-Off Survey
With increased crowding brought on by increased population density, mental illness may increase. In addition to mental health facilities, the community will need additional police. We will also need proportionally more firefighters than current building density requires.
Incorporate design elements that activate public spaces and improve safety, particularly in areas that have historically seen higher rates of crime.

Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) is a multi-disciplinary approach for reducing crime through urban and environmental design and the management and use of built environments. CPTED elements include street lighting, maintenance, public art, and street level activation. Participants in public workshops listed activity on the street and public art as their top two priorities in the area. Many law enforcement agencies, including the Denver Police Department, have embraced CPTED as a method to improve both safety and the perception of safety. Several CPTED elements can also foster social interaction and improve a sense of community and well-being, including public art. Reclaiming public space for these uses supports healthier community behaviors, particularly when residents help design a place that is reflective of community culture and pride.

A. Provide adequate street lighting, including pedestrian-scale lighting, prioritizing areas designated as Pedestrian Enhanced areas in Blueprint Denver, and High Injury Network (HIN) designated in Denver’s Vision Zero Action Plan, and in areas that have the most reports of crime.

1. Prioritize installation and upgrades to pedestrian and street-pedestrian combination light fixtures. These upgrades should be in coordination with other mobility improvements, including those recommended by this plan, including in alleys (See Mobility Section 2.3). (See the City and County of Denver Street Lighting Design Guidelines)

B. Implement targeted litter removal, sidewalk, and property clean-up along Colfax Avenue.

1. Work with local BIDs to identify funding for and areas in need of increased routine services including power-washing, trash removal, and improved streetscaping maintenance.

2. Encourage and fund maintenance or clean-up of derelict private and public properties.

3. Work with the BIDs and the Harm Reduction Action Center to identify areas where safe needle deposit boxes are needed and supported.

C. Encourage public art.

1. Coordinate with local BIDs, Registered Neighborhood Organizations, and other community groups to:

   a. Increase awareness of existing arts-specific funding opportunities, such as the “P.S. You Are Here” grant, which can be used to beautify elements of infrastructure such as utility boxes, bus stops, and dumpsters.

   b. Engage community members in public art projects and gather feedback for priority areas, such as intersections or underutilized lots.

D. Encourage street level activation.

1. Review zoning and building code regulations to ensure street level activation in new developments, including street-facing windows, balconies, and porches, and updated regulations as needed (see Policy L8).

2. Coordinate with local BIDs to identify funding and incentives to:

   a. Encourage façade improvements and outdoor seating for existing buildings and businesses.

   b. Install benches, informational signage, and trash receptacles.

Case Study: Juxtaposition Arts in Minneapolis

Juxtaposition Arts is a nonprofit that empowers historically marginalized populations by creating pathways for youth interested in the creative workforce. The organization has been hired to produce art around Minneapolis to transform places from bland and unsafe to colorful, safe, and functional. Juxtaposition is known for its colorful murals and tactical urbanism projects that renovate community spaces with creative lighting, seating, and glow-in-the-dark materials.
#1164

Posted by zach on 03/10/2020 at 4:36pm - Link
Type: Suggestion
Agree: 0, Disagree: 0
It looks like the shop in this photo has reclaimed the car storage in front of their business and is using it to seat people. This is great and should be encouraged!

#1165

Posted by John Riecke on 12/31/2019 at 1:23am - Link
Type: Suggestion
Agree: 4, Disagree: 0
Cafe seating without fences please. Fences take up too much sidewalk and encourage businesses to occupy sidewalks that they aren't using in winter. No fences means seating can go along buildings, more space for walking, tables & chairs can be removed come winter.

#1166

Posted by Will McClain on 01/12/2020 at 1:34pm - Link
Type: Suggestion
Agree: 4, Disagree: 0
Street lighting is abysmal in City Park West. More lighting is needed in streets and avenues close to Colfax.

#1167

Posted by zach on 03/10/2020 at 4:38pm - Link
Agree: 1, Disagree: 0
100% yes. It's disheartening to see so many new apartment buildings going up and instead of the ground floor being useful amenities to the neighborhood, they are empty gyms and leasing offices.

#1168

Posted by Cindy sestrich on 02/05/2020 at 11:32pm - Link
Agree: 1, Disagree: 0
General note about Franchise Utility companies – additional lighting in the right of way tree lawns should not come through from the alley between houses. This creates a safety issue and poor wiring techniques. They should be strung along streets.

Another issue that hasn’t been mentioned in your document is that Century Link, more so, strings another wire when there’s a line issue and doesn’t take down the old inactive wires. Some alleys have low hanging and multiple wires making it difficult to trim trees and increase the chances of large vehicles catching the lines, passing through the alleys. Also, both Xcel and Century Link do not maintain their poles consistently. There should be better monitoring and proactive action by Denver Public Works/Transportation Dept.

#1169

Posted by John Riecke on 12/31/2019 at 1:21am - Link
Type: Suggestion
Agree: 3, Disagree: 0
No more hostile architecture. It keeps away people with choices and leaves only the people without choices. The only way to fix the problem is to add people, not remove them.

#1170

Posted by Laurel S on 02/05/2020 at 9:24pm - Link
Agree: 1, Disagree: 0
The newish tall street lights are too high off the street, and shine into homes instead of being lower to the ground and lighting the way for drivers, cyclists and pedestrians.

#1171

Posted by Temple on 01/07/2020 at 1:26am - Link
Type: Suggestion
Agree: 2, Disagree: 0
Bulk planes, height limits, and setbacks are often so oppressive that they eliminate design features such as porches, balconies, dormer windows, oriel windows, and other design elements that would encourage more eyes on the street. These design elements were common in architecture designed before "zoning".
There have been several incidents of crime on the low lite streets close to Colfax. Street lights should be installed on the side streets close to Colfax.
STREET ACTIVATION THROUGH DESIGN OPPORTUNITIES
#1173

Posted by Temple on 01/07/2020 at 1:34am - Link
Type: Suggestion
Agree: 1, Disagree: 0

With adequate street calming, allow restaurants to set up tables and seating in the parking lane and in the street? Could start on festival days, or 1 day a week, and increase with popularity? Last thing we need is another big, polluting, busy road.
PEDESTRIAN LIGHTING

Adequate street lighting, including pedestrian-scale lighting, can help address two of the community’s top concerns: pedestrian safety and crime prevention. Improvements should be prioritized in areas designated as Pedestrian Enhanced areas in Blueprint Denver, along the High Injury Network (HIN) designated in Denver’s Vision Zero Action Plan, and in areas that have the most reports of crime. See Policy Q17.

Photo: Creative lighting in Stapleton, Denver.

STREET LEVEL ACTIVATION AND PUBLIC ART PRIORITY AREAS

Street-level improvements such as public art and street level activation through building design can foster social activity and a sense of safety. Areas prioritized for these improvements include areas along primary commercial corridors within walking distance to transit hubs, particularly in areas where more activity is needed to increase community safety. See Policy Q17.

Photo: Westword
Support community-building initiatives in East Central neighborhoods.

Social interaction and a sense of community belonging have been shown to improve individual well-being. Ongoing changes in the neighborhood can erode knowledge of the area’s history and sense of place. The physical and social fabric of East Central neighborhoods should lend themselves to a culture of neighborliness, engagement, and social interaction. To the extent possible, the City should support civic organizations and informal networks that make people feel connected to their neighbors and to the history of their neighborhood.

A. Provide and advertise meeting and event space within City facilities, such as libraries or recreation centers, including at reduced or no cost for community organizations with limited resources.

B. Encourage RNOs and other community organizations to offer programming that connects residents including:

1. Developing and distributing materials such as Neighborhood Guides that include information about local organizations, existing and ongoing city plans and initiatives, and the neighborhood’s history and culture.

2. Develop a guidebook with community-building ideas such as neighborhood walks, gatherings, grant funding opportunities, social media competitions, and neighborhood pop-up events.

3. Promote existing programs such as Denver Days and the Denver Public Works Community Streets Program.
QUALITY OF LIFE CITATIONS

1. VCU Center on Society and Health
3. The Trust for Public Land, NRPA, and ULI, 10minutewalk.org, https://www.10minutewalk.org
4. Design Guidelines: Denver’s Designated Parkways and Boulevards, City and County of Denver, November 2005, page 8
6. https://www.denvergov.org/content/dam/denvergov/Portals/690/Healthy%20Food/COD_2016_Food_Baseline.pdf
7. https://hungerandhealth.feedingamerica.org/understand-food-insecurity/
9. The City of Denver’s “low food access” indicator quantifies a residential block’s proximity to a full-service grocery store, average household incomes, and percentage of households without a vehicle
10. Strengthening Denver’s Food Rescue Ecosystem (October 2018). Brock, Adam & Reuben Gregory. Commissioned by the Natural Resources Defense Council
11. Human Services Gap Map, SNAP Enrollment Rate 2016. Gapmap.org
13. Human Services Gap Map, SNAP Enrollment Rate 2016. Gapmap.org
17. High housing costs make it harder for families to invest in other important areas such as healthcare, healthy foods, childcare, and transportation, leading to chronic stress. Matsuoka, Martha and Jennifer Lucky. Power, Place, and Public Health: A Review of the Literature on the Health Impacts of Displacement & Promise of Inclusive Community Development. The California Endowment, 2017
19. Mental Health: % of Adults with Frequent Mental Distress (2014-2017 Estimates), Colorado Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System Data, Colorado Department of Public Health & Environment
21. City of Denver Police Department District 6, Citizen Advisory Board meeting, March 21, 2019
22. Strong social connections are vital for mental health: “We need each other to survive and to thrive. Where we live, work, learn, and play determines how we connect with our families, coworkers, friends, and neighbors…” CPDHE’s Equity Action Guide, 2018