The most commonly found zoning in the West Plan area is single unit residential occupying the majority of the Barnum, Barnum West, and Villa Park neighborhoods. North of Lakewood Gulch, the majority of the West Colfax neighborhood is zoned as multi-unit residential.

Mixed-use zoning is concentrated along arterials, such as Federal Boulevard and Alameda Avenue. The parcels along West Colfax Avenue between Sheridan Boulevard and Hooker Street are zoned Main Street. The southeastern region that runs west of the South Platte River is zoned for various levels of industrial uses, including light, general, and mixed.
Overlay districts are additional regulations that coincide with the zoning code. Overlays can modify the allowances or requirements for uses and/or site and building design. There are four overlays in the West area:

- The UO-1 overlay is from Former Chapter 59 zoning and requires residential uses in certain buildings, as well as design standards.
- The UO-2 use overlay allows billboards.
- The UO-3 use overlay allows expanded commercial uses in landmarked structures in residential zones.
- The DO-5 overlay is the South Sloan’s Lake Design Overlay, which establishes additional building height limitations that create a transition down in height from new higher-intensity development to surrounding lower-intensity residential neighborhoods.
LAND USE

Land use in the West area is comprised primarily of single-unit residential, right of way/road, and industrial.

Single-unit is most common in the Villa Park, Barnum, Barnum West, and Valverde neighborhoods.

Industrial is most common in the Sun Valley and Valverde neighborhoods, specifically along the South Platte River. The most common residential use in Sun Valley is multi-unit. The West Colfax and Villa Park neighborhoods contain concentrations of multi-unit residential.
Land use along the river corridor, on both sides of the river is comprised primarily of large industrial parcels. Other sporadic uses along the river include office, multi-unit residential and entertainment. The transportation system that serves those industrial uses includes major highways like I-25 and railroad tracks.
ERA OF CONSTRUCTION

Much of the West Area was built before 1925, with the highest concentration of more historic buildings in the center of the plan area. The average building on the western edge of the study area was constructed between 1926-1945. The buildings on the eastern edge of the plan area tend to be built after 1956. Most of the newer development is concentrated in the northern region of the West Colfax neighborhood.
RESIDENTIAL PARCEL SIZE

Over half (58 percent) of the residential parcels in the West area range between 6,001 and 9,000 square feet. A concentration of parcels sized between 4,501 and 6,000 square feet exists in the center of plan area, where the Villa Park, Barnum, and Barnum West neighborhoods meet. About 12 percent of parcels in the West area are less than 3,000 square-feet, and these parcels tend to be in the West Colfax neighborhood. The largest parcels tend to be publicly-owned parcels, such as city parks.
INDUSTRIAL PARCEL SIZE

Parcels with industrial uses tend to be located in the Sun Valley and Valverde neighborhoods, just west of the South Platte River. Most of the land in the densest industrial area is divided into parcels sized greater than 24,000 square-feet. There is a concentration of smaller industrial parcels just north of Alameda Avenue.
INDUSTRIAL PARCEL TYPES

The industrial uses in the West area are diverse. The most prevalent industrial use type is warehouse. The warehouses in the West area tend to be located on large parcels. Other industrial types within the industrial areas of Sun Valley and Valverde include factories, meat packing, food processing, and office buildings. The industrial parcels that are located outside of dense industrial area tend to be dedicated to auto services and are located along major arterials, like Federal Boulevard and Colfax Avenue.
**BUILDING HEIGHTS**

Most buildings within the West area are less than 35 feet in height. Taller buildings are generally located in the West Colfax and Sun Valley neighborhoods and near popular community amenities such as Sloan’s Lake park, South Platte River, Lakewood Gulch, and RTD’s W Line.
The map shows the assessed property value of the property. Larger industrial parcels along the South Platte River represent a large concentration of high property values.

In terms of finer grain residential properties, property values from $300,000 to more than $500,000 can be seen north and west of Lakewood Gulch in the West Colfax neighborhood and the western portion of Villa Park.

The neighborhoods south of 6th Avenue have property values closer to the $100,000-$300,000 range.
COMMUNITY AMENITIES

Many of the community amenities in the West area are concentrated along a few main streets in the plan area, including West Colfax Avenue, Federal Boulevard, and Sheridan Boulevard. The community amenities map includes publicly-owned parcels, which tend to be public parks or recreation facilities. Other amenities are fire stations, libraries, schools, restaurants, medical facilities, and entertainment.
The West Colfax Business Improvement District (BID) is the only special district in the West area, which was formed in 2006. The West Colfax BID sought to promote the adoption of Main Street Zoning along West Colfax Avenue, which was formally adopted in April, 2007.
CULTURAL DISTRICTS

PLACEHOLDER TO BE DEVELOPED
Historic Landmarks

HISTORIC LANDMARKS

The West area contains seven historic landmarks. Five landmarks are homes located in the West Colfax neighborhood, just south of West Colfax Avenue. Other historic landmarks include Lake Middle School in the West Colfax neighborhood and 7th Avenue Congregational United Church of Christ in the Villa Park neighborhood.
View planes are regulations that limit building height to preserve certain views, typically of the mountains or downtown, from public places. There are two view planes located within the West area and three view planes located just outside of the plan area.

- The Sloan Lake Park view plane covers portions of the West Colfax and a small portion of the Sun Valley neighborhood.
- The Old City Hall view plan covers portions of Sun Valley.
NEIGHBORHOOD CONTEXTS

Neighborhood context provides a general description of the future look and feel in areas around west area.

The neighborhoods of Barnum, Barnum West, Villa Park, and part of Valverde are all classified as Urban Edge. Portions of Valverde and Sun Valley are Special Districts. North of 10th Ave, the neighborhoods become more urban. West Colfax includes Urban, General Urban, and Urban Center areas. Most of Sun Valley is envisioned as Urban Center.
Future places describe the various scales and types of development that are envisioned in Denver in 2040. The west area is anticipated to feature a wide-range of future places, from bustling regional centers to low-density residential neighborhoods.

Value manufacturing lies near the South Platte River and the existing railroad lines. Much of this area is light industrial today. Sun Valley and the Stadium District is anticipated to experience significant change as it transitions to community and regional center.

Along the West light rail corridor, residential land use is more intense than the interior of the Barnum, Barnum West, and Villa Park neighborhoods.

West Colfax is identified primarily as a local corridor. Other major corridors in the west area, Alameda Ave, Federal Blvd, and Sheridan Blvd are envisioned as community corridors.
Blueprint Denver established a growth strategy that represents the aspiration for distributing growth in Denver based on the future places types. The strategy recommends a specific percentage of new jobs and households per future place type (see below).

The west area includes a combination of regional centers, community centers and corridors, high & high-med residential areas, and districts where future growth is expected to be accommodated.
WEST AREA PLAN

EXISTING CONDITIONS

ECONOMY

November 2019
ACCESS TO OPPORTUNITY (BLUEPRINT DENVER)

Improving access to opportunity is the first of three equity concepts from Blueprint Denver that look at the city through the lens of equity.

Access to opportunity reflects the goal for all neighborhoods to be complete with access to a high quality of life. This measurement uses as a base the equity index developed by Denver’s Department of Public Health and Environment which measures educational attainment, income level, access to parks, full service grocery stores, first trimester health care, and childhood obesity and life expectancy. In addition, the measure of access to opportunity also looks at proximity to high-capacity and frequent transit, and access to centers and corridors from the future places map.

The darkest areas represent those with the least access to opportunity. In these areas it is important to guide change in ways that will improve access.
VULNERABILITY TO DISPLACEMENT (BLUEPRINT DENVER)

Reducing vulnerability to displacement is the second of three equity concepts from Blueprint Denver that look at the city through the lens of equity.

Mitigating involuntary displacement means deliberate action to keep current residents and business in place and providing equitable access to the benefits of economic growth for all residents and business. In order to understand the areas with greater need for deliberate action Blueprint Denver maps vulnerability to displacement by combining median household income, percent of renters, and percent of population with a college degree. The darker the area the higher the vulnerability to displacement.

Most of the neighborhoods within the west area are within the most vulnerable areas to displacement citywide. However, the neighborhoods of Barnum, Barnum West and Parts of Villa Park are slightly less vulnerable.
Expanding housing diversity and jobs is the third and final equity concept from Blueprint Denver that look at the city through the lens of equity.

A diverse range of housing options - including different prices, sizes, types, and a mix of rental and for sale - is key to encouraging complete neighborhoods where families and households of all types and incomes can choose to live.

Housing diversity is measured by combining the following six measurements:

- Percent with middle-density housing (2-19 units)
- Home size diversity
- Ownership vs. rental
- Housing Costs
- Amount of affordable (income restricted) units

Housing diversity is greater on the eastern portion of the west area and decreases as it moves west. One exception is the west part of the Villa Park neighborhood.
Job diversity is part of the third and final equity concept from Blueprint Denver that looks at the city through the lens of equity. This measure looks at the mix of jobs and the density of jobs. The west area has many areas with less than 100 jobs. Towards the east it is predominantly manufacturing with areas near Colfax Avenue, Alameda Avenue and Sheridan Boulevard with retail jobs. The northeast part of Barnum has predominantly Innovation jobs.
There are 42,170 residents living in the West Area. The area has added 6,800 residents since 2010, growth of 19%. This overall growth is on par with the City’s 22% population growth over that time.

The growth has not occurred equally across the area – nearly 62% of the West Area Growth occurred within the West Colfax Neighborhood, where the population increased by 44% from 2010 to 2019, with the neighborhood adding almost 4,300 residents. Sun Valley experienced the least growth, adding less than 100 residents over this time.

Population density varies across the West Area, from a low of 3.7 persons/acre in Sun Valley to a high of 21.8 persons/acre in West Colfax. Population density across Denver averages 7.4 persons/acre; only Sun Valley and Valverde (7.0 persons/acre) are less dense than the Citywide average. All other neighborhoods have a population density of between 12.8 (West Barnum) and 21.8 (West Colfax).
Percentage Population Growth, 2010 - 2019

- Valverde: 9.2%
- Barnum: 10.5%
- Barnum West: 10.3%
- Sun Valley: 6.4%
- West Colfax: 43.9%
- Villa Park: 9.9%
- Denver: 21.7%

Source: ESRI; Economic & Planning Systems
There are 13,880 households in the West Area, an increase of 2,240 since 2010. This represents an overall increase of 19% (2% annual growth) across the West Area, similar to Denver's overall growth of 20% (2.1% annually). The most significant growth was in West Colfax, which saw a 45% increase in households (growth of 1,660 households). Within the neighborhood, this growth was more significant in the western area, which grew by 54% (938 households) over this time. Sun Valley saw the lowest growth, adding 18 households (4% total growth).

All of the West Area neighborhoods have larger household sizes than the City overall (2.25 persons per household). Average household size ranges from 2.61 persons per household in West Colfax to 3.52 in Barnum. Every neighborhood in the plan area has a higher average household size than the City overall, which averages 2.25 persons per household.
Across the West Area 64% of households are ‘family households’, much higher than the Citywide average of 47%. Within the West Area, this ranges from 53% ‘family households’ in West Colfax to 85% in Sun Valley.

West Area neighborhoods have seen fewer recent arrivals than the City overall, with 53% of households across the West Area having moved into their home since 2010 (compared to 58% of all households in Denver). This percentage varies across the West Area, from 36% of households in Barnum West (where 11% of households moved prior to 1980) to 66% of households in West Colfax having moved since 2010. Villa Park (52%) and Sun Valley (57%) are the only two other neighborhoods where over half of households have moved since 2010.
AGE AND EDUCATION

The West Area is younger than the City – 33% of residents are under the age of 20, compared to 23% across Denver. Age varies across neighborhoods, from 30% of West Colfax under the age of 20 to 56% of the population of Sun Valley. Alongside its younger population, the West Area has a smaller share of older residents than the City, with 10 percent of the population over age 65, compared to 13% Citywide.

Across the West Area 21% of residents age 25 and older have a Bachelor’s degree or higher education, compared to 50% of residents in Denver. This ranges from 3% of residents in Sun Valley to 30% of residents in West Colfax. Concerning high school diplomas, 32% of the West Area population has less than a high school education, compared to 12% Citywide.
Population (25 and older) with a Bachelor's Degree or Higher

Source: ESRI, Economic & Planning Systems
Median household income in West Area neighborhoods ranges from $12,980 in Sun Valley to $60,640 in Barnum West. Median income across West Area neighborhoods averages 60% of the Citywide median of $68,770.

Per capita income in the West Area is also lower than the City. West Colfax has the highest per capita income in the plan area, at $24,700 (56% of the City’s $44,000), while Sun Valley has the lowest at $5,000 (11% of the City).

Across the West Area, 29% of households are below the poverty level. This is much higher than the Citywide poverty rate of 14%. This rate varies across neighborhoods, from a low of 17% in Barnum West to a high of 75% in Sun Valley. This rate varies within neighborhoods as well. In Villa Park, the western part of the neighborhood has a much higher poverty rate (36%), than the eastern part of the neighborhood, at 14%. In West Colfax, the western part of the neighborhood has a lower poverty rate (29%) than the eastern area of the neighborhood (40%).
Per Capita Income, 2019

- Valverde: $14,762
- Barnum: $16,584
- Barnum West: $21,964
- Sun Valley: $4,968
- West Colfax: $24,702
- Villa Park: $17,256
- Denver: $44,011

Source: ESRI, Economic & Planning Systems

Poverty Rate (Households), 2017

- Valverde: 19%
- Barnum: 27%
- Barnum West: 17%
- Sun Valley: 76%
- West Colfax: 34%
- Villa Park: 27%
- Denver: 14%

Source: ESRI, Economic & Planning Systems
HOUSING GROWTH

The West Area has a total of 14,800 housing units, an increase of 2,200 units since 2010. This is an overall increase of 17.8%, or 1.8% annual growth. This is on par with Denver’s growth, as the City increased its housing inventory by 18.1% (1.9% annual growth) over this time.

While the West Area overall has seen similar growth trends to the City, nearly all of this growth (81%) took place in West Colfax, with the majority (1,150 units) in the western portion of the neighborhood. While West Colfax saw an average of 200 new units per year, growing by 45% over this time, all other neighborhoods in the West Area saw less than 20 new housing units annually, growing by 6% or less.

Housing density in the West Area ranges from a low of 1.2 units/acre in Sun Valley to a high of 9.1 units/acre in West Colfax. The western part of West Colfax is the most dense, at 10.3 units per acre. Sun Valley and Valverde (2.1 units/acre) are the only West Area neighborhoods with lower housing density than the City, which averages 3.4 units/acre.
Annual Housing Growth, 2010 - 2019

- Sun Valley: 4.0%
- Denver: 3.5%
- Lincoln Park: 3.0%
- 9th Ave.: 2.5%
- P.Back: 2.0%
- 6th Ave.: 1.5%
- 0.6%
- 0.5%
- 0.5%
- 0.5%
- 0.5%
- 0.4%
- 0.0%

Source: ESRl & Economic & Planning Systems

Housing Density (units/acre) 2019

- City and County Boundary
- Parks and Open Space
- Lake or Pond
- Stream, Creek or River

- Less than 1.0
- 1.0 - 3.0
- More than 10.0
- 3.1 - 5.0
- 5.1 - 10.0
55% of households in the West Area rent their home, while 45% of households own their home. This is a similar split to the City overall, where 51% of households rent and 49% own their homes. This tenure split varies across neighborhoods. In Sun Valley, 96% of households rent their homes, while in Barnum West only 32% of households are renters. This also varies within neighborhoods – in Villa Park overall 58% of households rent their homes; however, this is much higher in the western part of the neighborhood where 70% of households are renters.

Across the West Area, 55% of housing units are single family detached homes. This is higher than the City, where 46% of units are single family detached homes. Housing type varies across neighborhoods, from Sun Valley, where 10% of units are single family detached and 52% are multifamily (5 units or more), to Barnum West where 88% of homes are single family detached.
The West Area also has fewer studio and 1-bedroom units than the City overall. The exception to this is West Colfax, where 34% of housing units are studios or 1-bedrooms, compared to 28% of units across the City. In the western area of Villa Park, 25% of housing units are studios or 1-bedrooms, while these units only make up 6% of the housing stock in the eastern part of the neighborhood.

Valverde (26%) and Barnum West (24%) have a much higher proportion of housing with 4 or more bedrooms than the City overall (17%).
HOUSING CHARACTERISTICS

Overcrowded housing is defined as housing with greater than 1.0 occupants per room. In Denver, 3% of housing units are considered overcrowded. Across the West Area 7% of housing units are overcrowded, ranging from 6% of units in Barnum West and West Colfax to 12% in Sun Valley.

28% of all homeowners in the West Area do not have a mortgage, a slightly higher proportion than Denver overall, where 25% homeowners do not have a mortgage. Across the West Area this ranges from a low of 19% in Valverde and the western area of West Colfax to a high of 46% in the eastern area of West Colfax.

A household is considered “cost burdened” if over 30% of income is spent on housing costs. In the West Area, 42% of households are cost burdened. This is highest in Valverde, where 53% of households are cost burdened, and lowest in Sun Valley at 35%. Sun Valley is the only neighborhood with a lower proportion of cost burdened households than the City overall (36%). (Note that a vast majority of Sun Valley Housing units are located within a Denver Housing Authority public housing project which, by definition, charges less than 30 percent of income on housing.)
Households without a Mortgage, 2017

- Valverde: 19%
- Barnum: 34%
- Barnum West: 23%
- West Colfax: 33%
- Villa Park: 26%
- Denver: 25%

Cost Burdened Households, 2017

- Valverde: 53%
- Barnum: 42%
- Barnum West: 36%
- Sun Valley: 35%
- West Colfax: 41%
- Villa Park: 42%
- Denver: 30%

Source: US Census ACS 5 Year Estimates, Economic & Planning Systems
West Area neighborhoods have varying unemployment rates, from 2.8% in Valverde to 32.8% in Sun Valley. Excluding Sun Valley, unemployment across the West Area neighborhoods averages 4.7%, only slightly higher than the Citywide unemployment rate of 4.2%.

The top sectors for West Area resident employment are:
- Construction (17%)
- Accommodation and Food Services (14%)
- Retail (10%)
- Administrative/Support/Waste Management/Remediation Services (9%)
- Health Care and Social Assistance (8%)
- Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services (8%)
JOBS IN THE WEST AREA

There are a total of 12,300 jobs in the West Area – 2.5% of Denver’s 495,300 jobs. Over 10,000 of these jobs, or 82% of all jobs in the West Area, are located in two neighborhoods - Valverde (6,750 jobs) and Sun Valley (3,300 jobs).

Top employment sectors in the West Area are:
Construction (17% of jobs)
Manufacturing (13%)
Administrative/Support/Waste Management/Remediation Services (11%)
Wholesale Trade (10%)
Health Care and Social Assistance (8%)
Accommodation and Food Services (8%)

The average wage for jobs in the West Area is $48,300. This is approximately 72% of the Citywide average wage of $67,500. Wages vary across neighborhoods, from an average of $26,800 for a job in Barnum West to $52,500 for a job in Valverde.
WEST AREA PLAN
EXISTING CONDITIONS
MOBILITY

November 2019
OVERVIEW
CONNECTIVITY
Arterial streets bound many of the neighborhoods within the West Plan area. Federal Boulevard and Sheridan Boulevard carry the majority of north/south traffic through the study area with Average Daily Traffic (ADT) volumes ranging from 34,000 trips along these corridors north of 6th Avenue, and roughly 53,000 trips south of 6th Avenue.

The east/west traffic volumes are highest along 6th Avenue with 150,000 ADT. Alameda Avenue and Colfax Avenue carry traffic volumes as high as 50,000 ADT east of Federal to roughly 20,000 ADT approaching Sheridan.

Neighborhood collector streets play an important role in local circulation through the neighborhoods, providing key crossings of major arterials. Perry Street and Knox Court run continuously north-south from Alameda Avenue to Colfax Avenue providing connections to 6th Avenue, West Rail stations and other destinations along Colfax. These streets generally carry about 5,000 ADT the length of the West Plan area. East-west collectors 17th Avenue and 10th Avenue play an important role as alternatives to 6th Avenue and Colfax Avenue with volumes on 10th Avenue steady at 5,000 ADT and volumes along 17th Avenue heavier at 10,000 ADT.
FUTURE STREET TYPES

Blueprint Denver identifies future street types for all of Denver Streets. The Future Street Types establish a framework for describing streets and linking their design and operation to the character and land use around them.

The Future Street Types within the west area include residential (collector and arterial), industrial (collector and arterial), mixed-use (collector and arterial) and main street (arterial). Blueprint Denver describes Colfax Avenue west of Federal Blvd as a future Main Street and Federal Blvd from Alameda Avenue to 19th Avenue as a future Mixed-Use arterial. Roadways within Sun Valley are designated future Mixed-use collectors or Industrial collectors south of 8th Avenue. The majority of other arterials and collectors in the West Plan area remain consistent with today’s use.
VEHICLE OWNERSHIP

83% of households within the west area own a car. Denver’s average is 89%.

South of 6th Avenue in the neighborhoods of Barnum West, Barnum and Valverde, the majority of households owning a car range from 88%-98%.

North of 6th Avenue these number change significantly with vehicle ownership falling below 60% in some areas. In West Colfax 73% of households own a car, yet that number is for the overall neighborhood. In some areas north of Lakewood Gulch that number falls below 60%. In the Sun Valley neighborhood only 57% of the households own a car.
TRANSPORTATION MODE

The majority of residents in the West Plan area commute to work by car, with those numbers ranging from 80%-60% south of 6th Avenue and roughly 60%-75% north of 6th Avenue and only 15%-60% north of Lakewood Gulch.

Mode surveys of how residents travel to work indicate the following:

- 26% residents of Sun Valley, 15% of the residents of West Colfax, and 9% of residents of Barnum use public transit to travel to work.
- 5% of West Colfax residents use a bicycle to travel to work, representing the highest bicycle commute within the study area.
- 7% of Sun Valley residents walk to work, representing the highest percentage of residents that walk to work within the study area.
HOW RESIDENTS TRAVEL TO WORK

Date Source: 2017 American Community Survey, 5-Year Estimates
TRANSIT

There are 15 bus routes and one Light Rail Line that connect the West Plan area to the rest of the city.

Most of the bus routes run along the arterial corridors of Federal Boulevard, Sheridan Boulevard, Colfax Avenue and Alameda Avenue with service frequency from 15-30 minutes resulting in consistent east/west and north/south connectivity. However service in these corridors occurs mostly at the edges of the neighborhoods. Other inner neighborhood transit corridors include 1st Avenue/Knox Court, 10th Avenue and 17th Avenue where transit frequency is 30 minutes.

The highest transit frequency corridors and routes include the West Line and Colfax Avenue (route 15L and 16). These corridors act as the transit spine for the area. Both of these transit corridors provide east/west connectivity, in the northern portion of the study area. There is significantly less east-west route coverage south of 6th Avenue, making north-south connecting routes critical.

A flex route connects the industrial area in Valverde with the industrial area in Baker, west of the South Platte River.
TRANSIT STOP ACCESS

Map Tile
- City and County Boundary
- Parks and Open Space
- Lake or Pond
- Stream, Creek or River
The distance to a transit stop is one of the most important factors when deciding whether to use transit. With the majority of fixed route transit service along the major arterials, the distance from a residence to arterial service can be long. Routes such as Route 1 carry ridership from the core of the neighborhood to arterial service north of 6th Avenue.

The Decatur Federal West Rail Station is the busiest bus stop and transfer location in the West Plan, followed by the intersection of Federal Boulevard with Alameda Avenue, Federal Boulevard and 10th Avenue as well as the intersection of Colfax Avenue and Sheridan.
The Regional Transportation District (RTD) Prioritizes shelter at stops with the highest number of average daily boardings. The minimum required for the placement of a shelter is 40 boardings per day.

There are very few shelters within the West Plan area. Those that exist are typically located north of 6th Avenue at stops such as Decatur-Federal Station, the intersection of Federal Boulevard with Alameda Avenue and Federal Boulevard and 10th Avenue. Other shelters in the area can be found along Colfax Avenue, Federal Boulevard, and 17th Street.
**TRANSIT SCORE**

Transit Score is a measure of how well a location is served by public transit on a scale from 0-100.

Transit Score calculates the usefulness of transit routes which is defined as the distance to the nearest stop on the route, the frequency of the route and the type of route.

The neighborhoods north of 6th Avenue score higher than the neighborhoods to the south. The neighborhoods on the north have in close proximity the two transit corridors (West Line and Colfax Avenue) with the highest frequency service. In addition, those same neighborhoods have the highest number of residents that commute to work by public transit. The neighborhood with the lowest transit score is Barnum West.
DENVER MOVES TRANSIT

Denver Moves Transit established Transit Capital Investment Corridors and a Frequent Transit Network Vision. Some corridors belong to both frameworks.

Within the west area, Sheridan Boulevard, Colfax Avenue, Federal Boulevard, Alameda Avenue, and 8th Avenue belong to both, Capital Investment Corridors and the Frequent Transit Network Vision. Bryant Street and Tejon Street belong to the Frequent Transit Network Vision only.
The West Plan area has very few dedicated on-street bicycle facilities. Knox Court bicycle lane acts as the primary north/south corridor. The buffered bike lane along 1st Avenue coupled with the bike lane on 2nd Avenue provide east/west connectivity. The area north of 6th Avenue has only the bike lane on 17th Avenue, and some streets selected as shared roadways (10th Avenue, Knox Court, Wolff Street and Mile High Stadium Way).

Wier Gulch Trail and the Dry Gulch/Lakewood Gulch Trail act as the primary bicycle facilities serving the area. These trails run southwest to northeast and eventually connect to the South Platte River trail.

Denver Moves and the Community Network Planning team have highlighted some recommended facilities to complete the bicycle network in the area. Bicycle facilities are recommended along Perry Street, 8th Avenue, Hazel Court, Knox Court, and Julian Street.
BIKE SCORE

Bike Score is a measure of whether a location is good for biking on a scale from 0 - 100 based on four equally weighted components:

- Bike Lanes
- Hills
- Destinations and road connectivity
- Bike Commuting mode share

Most of the neighborhoods within the West Plan area rank moderately with the exception of West Colfax and Sun Valley. Topography in the area, coupled with arterials and other crossing barriers, impact bike score rankings.
PEDESTRIAN FACILITIES ATTACHED AND DETACHED

This map looks at sidewalks in terms of attached or detached, and where sidewalks are missing.

The majority of the West Plan area has existing sidewalks with a few locations where sidewalks are missing. Many of the existing sidewalks are attached 3’ wide walks with rollover curb, providing inadequate travel width for many users.

There is an area of detached sidewalk west of federal that runs north/south within the West Colfax, Villa Park and Barnum neighborhoods.
WalkScope is a mobile crowdsourcing application developed by WalkDenver and PlaceMatters in 2014 that allows anyone and everyone to map the quality of the pedestrian environment. Since its development, most of the sidewalks within the West Area Plan have been ranked by community members and volunteers based on their quality, going from 5 (highest/green) to 1 (lowest/red).

Most of the sidewalks south of 6th Avenue are ranked as a neutral 3, mostly around the residential areas of the neighborhoods. In the neighborhoods north of 6th Avenue, there is a more diverse ranking of pedestrian environments. However, most of the area falls within the lower end of the quality spectrum with only a few pockets of high quality pedestrian environments.
Walk Score is a measure of how walkable a particular area is, in a scale of 1-100. Walk Score analyzes the walking routes and distance to nearby amenities. In addition, Walk Score also measures pedestrian friendliness by analyzing population density, block length, and intersection density. The higher the score on a scale of 100, the better for walkability.

The neighborhoods within the West Area Plan fall within the two lowest tiers. They are categorized as a “somewhat walkable areas”
The City and County of Denver Public Works Department developed an index to look at areas where the need for public transit is the highest from an equity perspective.

The Transit Equity Index combines the following indicators:
- Traffic Safety
- Key Destinations and Children
- Health
- Older Adults
- No Vehicle Ownership
- Disabled Population
- Percentage Minority Population
- Education
- Female Head of Household
- Language Challenged Population

The areas in the red denote the highest need for public transit from an equity perspective, with orange and yellow colored areas just behind. The West Plan area consists entirely of areas with a high equity index ranking.
VEHICULAR TRAFFIC COLLISIONS

There were 9,500 traffic accidents within the West Plan area in the last five years. Roughly 35 of those traffic related accidents resulted in a fatal accident.

The corridors with the highest concentration of accidents include Federal Boulevard, 6th Avenue and Colfax Avenue.

The intersection with the highest concentration of accidents is 6th Avenue/I-25. Other intersections with high concentrations include I-25/Colfax, I-25/Alameda, Federal Boulevard/6th Ave, Federal Boulevard/Alameda Ave, and Federal Boulevard/Colfax Avenue.
BICYCLE AND PEDESTRIAN CRASHES

The Denver Vision Zero Action Plan identified a High Injury Network (HIN) that represents the corridors with the highest number of fatal and injury crashes. Collectively the HIN accounts for five percent of streets in Denver but 50 percent of traffic deaths.

The six neighborhoods within the West Area are bordered or intersected by corridors within the HIN (Colfax Avenue, Sheridan Boulevard, Federal Boulevard, and Alameda Avenue). These corridors represent the higher concentration of bicycle and pedestrian crashes. Other corridors where bicycle and pedestrian crashes occur include 17th Avenue, 14th Avenue, 10th Avenue, 1st Avenue, Perry Street and Knox Court.

There have been 11 pedestrian/bicycle traffic related fatalities in the study area within the last five years, 10 of which occurred along HIN corridors: 5 pedestrians died along Federal Boulevard, 2 along Colfax Avenue, and 3 along Alameda Ave. Additionally, one bicycle traffic related death occurred along Tejon Street.
WEST AREA PLAN
EXISTING CONDITIONS
QUALITY OF LIFE

November 2019
The public parks and recreation system in the West neighborhoods is defined by the unique stream gulches that cut across the study area from west to east as they flow toward the South Platte River. The Dry & Lakewood Gulches, along with Paco Sanchez and Rude Parks form a continuous greenway in the northern half of the West Plan area. These parks include a wide array and diversity of amenities and Paco Sanchez Park has been recently redesigned to be one of the most unique play feature parks in the city. The trails along these gulches also connect to the heavily-used South Platte River Trail.

The gulches provide a unique recreational asset not found in many other parts of Denver and while there is a fairly robust trail network associated with the gulches, there are also many opportunities for improvement and better connections. The Dry and Lakewood Gulches provide continuous trail access through the West Plan area, however Weir Gulch is discontinuous through the Barnum and Barnum West neighborhoods, forcing users onto adjacent streets to connect to the trail.

Barnum, Barnum East and M.L. Sandos Parks provide a large central recreation hub for the study area, including a variety of passive and active recreation, a public swimming pool and recreation center. These parks are connected by a new pedestrian and bicycle bridge over US 6, just west of Federal, that links neighborhoods to the north and south, but the trail continuity is broken by the barrier of Federal Blvd. before continuing to the South Platte River.

Overall there is a large mix of park and recreational amenities of various ages and conditions. The majority of parks in the West Plan area host some form of recreational opportunity and there are a large number of athletic fields in the West neighborhoods. Valverde has several small neighborhood parks, a feature lacking in other neighborhoods of the study area. Several neighborhood parks and Sloan’s Lake Park are located just outside the study area and are most certainly used by West area residents.
Park access is measured as a half mile (approximately a ten minute walk) from a park. This distance is called the walkshed, or the area within a ten-minute walk.

A large portion of the West Plan area falls within a ten minute walk of an existing park. Gaps exist in the northwest portion of Barnum West and the southeast portion of Barnum and southwest corner of Valverde, near Federal Blvd. and Alameda Ave. The gap in eastern Valverde is heavily industrial.

Despite most of the study area falling within a ten-minute walk of an existing park, park access is impeded by wide roadways, unsafe crossings and incomplete sidewalk and trail networks throughout the area.
ELEVATION & TOPOGRAPHY

The South Platte River, as well as the smaller stream gulches, create the most visible lowland topographic features throughout the West neighborhoods. An elevation change of nearly 200 feet occurs from east to west with the lowest points along the eastern side of the study area at the riverbank and the highest points in the southwest corner in Barnum West. A series of four high points between these gulch features give the topography of the study area a unique rolling character from north to south.

The various streams that flow west-to-east across the neighborhoods also help form the current drainage catchment basins for the City’s stormwater infrastructure.
Impervious surfaces make up a large percentage of the land area within any city. Building rooftops, paved areas (streets, driveways and parking lots) and sidewalks and trails are all examples of impervious surfaces. These surfaces both absorb the sun’s heat and raise air temperatures, and contribute to surface runoff during rain events. Increased surface runoff contributes to urban flooding and increased water pollution.

The impervious surface area within the West neighborhoods is 52%, compared to an overall city average of 44%. Industrial uses along the South Platte River and the stadium area north of Colfax and west of Federal contribute significantly to the overall percentage.
% OF IMPERVIOUS SURFACE
BY NEIGHBORHOOD

Data Source: 2016 DRCOG Planimeterics; Denver Open Data
Urban tree canopy cover is important to the quality of life experienced by residents in neighborhoods for various reasons. Trees provide shade which helps keep urban environments cool, mitigating the added heat caused by many paved surfaces. Trees reduce air and water pollution by capturing and holding carbon dioxide in the air and stabilizing soils to better manage stormwater runoff.

American Forests estimates that Denver’s urban tree canopy saves residents $6.7 million in cooling costs annually and removes 290 pounds of air pollution every year. In addition, Denver’s urban forest is an important part of the city’s cultural and aesthetic identity.

Tree canopy coverage in the West neighborhoods is 9%, compared with 19% citywide. The existing tree canopy is fairly evenly dispersed in the study area within the residential neighborhoods. There is a notable loss of any tree canopy east of Federal Blvd within the stadium area, industrial area and along the South Platte River.
% TREE CANOPY BY NEIGHBORHOOD

- Sun Valley: 3%
- Valverde: 6%
- West Colfax: 11%
- Barnum West: 13%
- Barnum: 12%
- Villa Park: 12%
- NPI West Area: 9%

Data Source: Denver Open Data
The urban heat island effect is caused by high amounts of impervious surface and decreased vegetation and tree canopy.

Materials such as asphalt and concrete retain heat and result in warmer temperatures, especially at night. Increasing temperatures also reduce air quality and require more energy for cooling buildings.

Areas of significantly warmer temperatures are clustered on the eastern edge of the West Plan area, along the South Platte River within the industrial use area.
Flood hazard areas, or flood zones, as defined by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) are areas that have a 1% chance of experiencing a 100-year flood event in any given year. These areas are commonly referred to as the regulatory floodplain.

Several large areas of land within the West neighborhoods fall into the FEMA 100 year regulatory floodplain. These include public and private land areas along the Weir, Lakewood and Dry Gulches, as well as very large swaths of Valverde and Sun Valley along the South Platte River and most of the parking lot areas around Empower Field at Mile High. West 16th Avenue from the stadium to Sloan’s Lake is also within the 100 year regulatory floodplain.
STORMWATER SYSTEM

The existing stormwater collection system in the West neighborhoods utilizes the street network, the stream gulches and underground pipe infrastructure to carry stormwater toward the South Platte River. In topographical low points, stormwater collects and the stormwater collection system is inadequate to handle runoff amounts and localized flooding occurs.
Street lights improve both real safety and the perception of safety in the city at night. Street lights are important for reducing crime and encouraging people to walk and bike during nighttime hours, thereby reducing individual automobile use and improving physical activity.

The West neighborhoods are adequately covered by city street lights, however there may be opportunities for diversifying the types of lighting for unique effects. Special pedestrian lighting may make sense in commercial corridors and in and around parks and greenways. Long-range city and Xcel plans should include the conversion to LED light sources for all lights in the plan area. The type and power of individual luminaires may also vary which can impact how much light is emitted and create unintended dark spots between light poles. The areas with the largest gaps in street lighting are concentrated along the South Platte River in the industrial zones of Valverde and Sun Valley.