Highlights from the Draft West Area Plan
What’s in the Plan?

Plan Chapter Organization

Introduction
• Community Engagement
• Plan Vision
• Recommendations
  Overview
• West Area History
• Planning for Equity
• Executive Summary

Plan Topics
• Quality of Life (health, parks, environmental quality, water)
• Mobility
• Land Use and Built Form
• Economy and Housing

Transformative Projects

Neighborhoods

Implementation
Typical Framework for Neighborhood Plans

- Introduction
- Land Use and Built Form
- Economy and Housing
- Mobility
- Quality of Life
- Neighborhoods
- Implementation
West Area Plan – Centering Quality of Life Lens
Overall: Recommendation Summaries

Summaries developed for introduction, and beginning of each chapter, for easier viewing, and in neighborhoods.
1.3 West Area History

Understanding a neighborhood’s history, particularly how past public policy and infrastructure decisions have affected community, can provide insight to the conditions that affect the day-to-day lives of residents today. For West Area neighborhoods, Quality of Life today is impacted not only by the area’s topography, but by the many historic transportation investments, land use zoning and development patterns and urban planning practices over the last century, many of which have left a disproportionate impact on West Area residents.

Past policies and investment decisions continue to have a lasting impact on the West Area today, and new issues present additional challenges for area neighborhoods. The policies and strategies outlined in the West Area Plan address these historic inequities, improve community Quality of Life, Mobility, Land Use and Built Form and Economy and Housing, and ensure that future policy decisions and investments reflect the communities’ priorities and vision for the future.

The following timeline highlights significant events that have shaped the West Area over the last century or more and inform the recommendations in the West Area Plan.

Topography
The land to the west of the South Platte River features a steeper topographical rise than land to the east in what today is Downtown Denver. This difference in topography and the meandering nature of the South Platte River influenced early settler decisions to establish the City east of the South Platte River, leaving the majority of the west side
Introduction: Section on Historic Injustice

When planning for an equitable West, it is important to reflect on and understand the neighborhood histories, particularly how past public policy decisions have affected these communities and how those decisions continue to affect the everyday lives of residents today. Throughout the last century, there have been a series of discriminatory policies and practices in West that have left a disproportionate impact on its residents.

In 1862, Denver adopted its first zoning code. This code designated large portions of Valverde and Sun Valley for industrial use, while these neighborhoods were home to many working-class people. These neighborhoods have been designated as historic since the 1930s, when the federal government’s Home Owners Loan Corporation created maps for most urban areas, including Denver, which separated neighborhoods based on race. These maps were used to deny home loans to residents of neighborhoods that were predominately made up of diverse ethnic populations. In West, Villa Park, Sun Valley, Barnum, and Valverde were deemed “hazardous” and West today “definitely declining,” meaning that these neighborhoods posed the greatest risk for lenders, thereby restricting access to homes loans in the area. racially restrictive covenants were also used in wealthier, whiter neighborhoods to prohibit the sale or rental of properties to certain ethnic groups. These mechanisms restricted the places where people of color could live.

In addition to zoning and redlining, major highway developments of I-25 and 6th Avenue in the 1960s and 1980s have physically divided and isolated the West neighborhoods from one another. Locations such as High Five, adjacent to the neighborhoods, created major changes to the pedestrian safety and public health. This also accelerated the industrialization of Valverde. The Flood of 1965 on the South Platte River revealed and exacerbated the consequences of discriminatory housing practices and environmental racism in West. The flood resulted in 2,300 families, 30 homes, and 16 people being killed in Valverde. In Sun Valley, entire blocks of homes were swept away, leaving vacant land that was later redeveloped by Denver Housing Authority as Sun Valley Homes, a public housing complex.

Past policies and planning decisions continue to have a lasting impact on West today, and new issues present additional challenges for the neighborhoods. The charts on the right illustrate how the policies and strategies outlined in the next area plan aim to address many of these issues and ensure that going forward and future investment in the neighborhoods reflect the community’s priorities and vision for West.
Introduction: Guiding Principles

- EQUITY
- INTEGRITY
- RECIPROCITY
- LIBERTY

Equitable, Affordable and Inclusive
Strong and Authentic Neighborhoods
Connected, safe and Accessible Places
Economically Diverse and Vibrant
Environmentally Resilient
Healthy and Active
Quality of Life: Section on Water

Section: 2.1.3

Devoted to the Role of Water in the West Area
Mobility: Mobility Matrix to Summarize & Streamline Recommendations for Major Streets

### 2.2 Mobility

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Land Use: 

Incorporated Climate Action into Land Use Section

LAND USE AND BUILT FORM + CLIMATE ACTION

Denver’s Department of Climate Action, Sustainability & Resiliency (CASR) is working on a number of initiatives aimed at reducing the greenhouse gas emissions of existing and new buildings and increasing buildings’ sustainability and resiliency. Some key initiatives include:

New Buildings and Homes:
To create a climate-safe future, we must move all new construction toward resiliency, sustainability and net zero energy. CASR’s goal is that, by 2030, the city’s building code will require all new construction of buildings and homes to achieve net zero energy. CASR works in partnership with Community Planning and Development (CPD) for this phased process. CASR is supporting the community in this transition with resources, incentives and education.

Existing Homes (Single Family Residential):
Existing homes are responsible for 15% of Denver’s greenhouse gas emissions. In 2022, CASR will scale emission reduction solutions for existing homes with outreach and education, and by offering incentives for homeowners to electrify, adopt solar and install electric vehicle chargers.

Existing Buildings (Commercial and Multifamily Residential):
Existing commercial and multifamily buildings are responsible for 49% of Denver’s greenhouse gas emissions. CASR is co-creating equitable resources for under-resourced buildings (URBs). URBs are typically located in underserved areas and/or serve frontline communities (ex. affordable housing or human service providers).

Green Building Ordinance:
All commercial buildings in Denver 25,000 square feet or larger are required to comply with the Green Building Ordinance. One option allows developers or owners to pay a fee in lieu to comply. Those fees go into the Green Building Fund which is managed by CASR. As of December 31, 2021, the fund had nearly $600,000 available. These funds can be used to create and improve green space, green infrastructure, green roofs, our urban forest, and advance solar and energy efficiency projects for low-income households.

Renewable Denver Community Solar:
Through the Renewable Denver Community Solar initiative, the city will build, own and operate community solar projects hosted on municipal rooftops, parking lots and vacant land. At least 30% of the power generated through these projects will provide financial relief to income-qualified households, create workforce training opportunities, and conduct educational programs with Denver Public Schools.

Denver Solar Co-op:
Gives homeowners a discount on solar installation through group purchasing. It’s free to join, with no obligation to install, and the Climez Protection Fund provides additional rebates to income-qualified households.

Renewables and Resilience Incentive Program:
Offers financial incentives to nonprofit organizations dedicated to providing human services, such as shelters and day cares. Non-profits are encouraged to adopt solar, battery storage, and electric vehicle charging equipment to reduce their greenhouse gas emissions by at least 20%.

Solar Outdoor Learning Incentive Program:
Allowing students to learn about clean energy through curriculum, lessons and career exploration.
Land Use:
Revised Blueprint Denver Future Places Mapping
Neighborhoods:

Created Recommendation Summary Maps for each Neighborhood
## Implementation: Detailed Matrix

### 2.1 Quality of Life

**Implementation Recommendations**

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<th>Recommendation Type</th>
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<td>Quality of Life - 1</td>
<td>Prioritize health equity by developing trainings and programs that support integration of best practices. Ensure all health equity initiatives within West intentionally support citywide policies, deliver public services within West, and allocate resources to eliminate institutional biases and barriers within the system.</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
<td>Regulatory</td>
<td>All Agencies</td>
<td>All Action Partners</td>
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<td>Quality of Life - 2</td>
<td>Increase systems, policies, and practices that promote racial and social equity in support of citywide efforts throughout all West Denver neighborhoods.</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
<td>Regulatory &amp; Infrastructure</td>
<td>All Agencies</td>
<td>All Action Partners</td>
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<td>Quality of Life - 3</td>
<td>Address the noise and air pollution impacts to health for developments adjacent to major roadway corridors such as 6th Avenue, Alameda Avenue, Sheridan Boulevard, and Interstate 25 (I-25).</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
<td>Infrastructure</td>
<td>CPD, DOTI, CASR, DPR</td>
<td>CDOT, RTD</td>
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<td>Quality of Life - 4</td>
<td>Utilize the policies and recommendations in the Denver Climate Action Plan and similar plans to improve environmental performance and climate resilience within West Denver neighborhoods.</td>
<td>Long-Term</td>
<td>Regulatory</td>
<td>CPD, DOTI, CASR, DPR</td>
<td>Mile High Flood District, The Greenway Foundation, Colorado Conservation Board, Metro Wastewater Reclamation District</td>
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<td>Quality of Life - 5</td>
<td>Protect, preserve, and expand the urban forest tree canopy in all redevelopment efforts, and increase tree canopy coverage within public rights-of-way through community tree planting programs and initiatives.</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
<td>Regulatory</td>
<td>CPD, DOTI, CASR, DPR</td>
<td>River Sister Circle Partnership, Denver Urban Gardens, Denver Public Schools</td>
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