



# THE WESTWOOD NEIGHBORHOOD PLAN

-2016-

ADOPTED BY DENVER CITY COUNCIL

7/18/2016



# ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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Special thanks to the dedicated  
volunteer committee of residents,  
business owners, property owners, and  
advocates.



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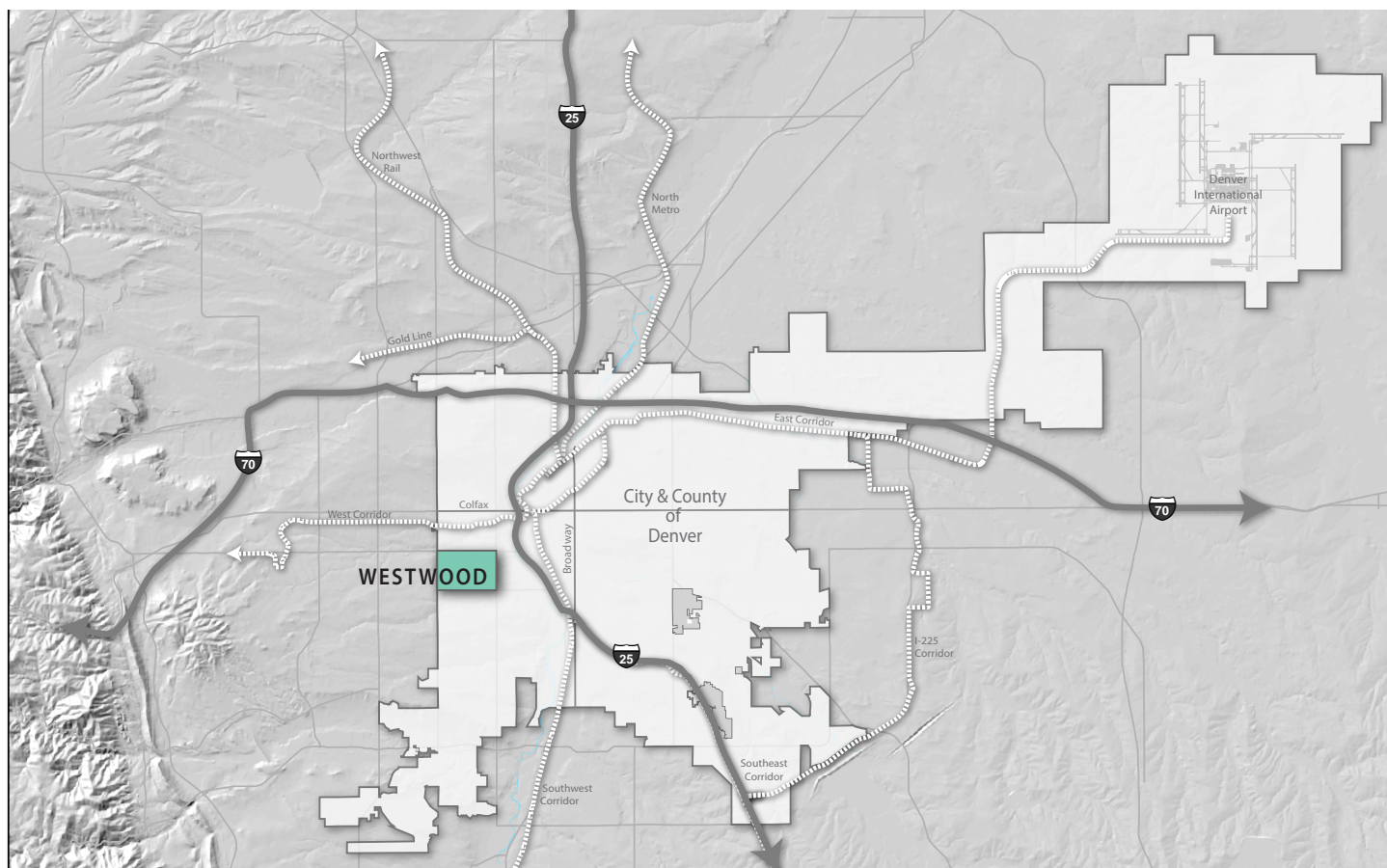


# introduction

The Westwood neighborhood, one of the most culturally vibrant neighborhoods in the Denver Metro Area, is on the verge of dynamic change and reinvestment, benefiting current and future residents and employees, while not resulting in displacement. The neighborhood is located in southwest Denver, bounded by Sheridan Boulevard on the west, Federal Boulevard on the east, Alameda Avenue on the north and Mississippi Avenue on the South with Morrison Road diagonally bisecting the neighborhood. The Westwood community has a culturally rich population that has proven to be resilient despite its many challenges including a lack of neighborhood amenities, unsafe pedestrian environment, and a higher rate of poverty and crime than Denver as a whole. Through the impressive grassroots efforts of the community coupled with significant amount of investment by the City and other partners, Westwood has entered into a phase of cultural celebration and reinvestment.

Westwood is predominantly comprised of lower scale single and multi-family housing. Due to the history of the neighborhood's development, it lacks a consistent urban pattern, resulting in poor connectivity and unsafe intersections. Morrison Road serves as the predominant commercial corridor for the neighborhood, however with a dominance of auto-oriented uses, the street has struggled to become the attractive people-focused main street that serves as a destination and connection for neighborhood residents and employees.

Strong community cohesion, a unique mix of cultures, and civic pride bolster the neighborhood even when presented with challenges. As residents and stakeholders anticipate neighborhood improvements, there is a common hope and desire that progress will not result in displacement, and that affordable housing and employment opportunities will continue to be within reach in the future. Many important changes are on the horizon for the neighborhood and this plan represents a road map for investment and preservation for the bright and colorful future of Westwood.



# PLANNING AREA OVERVIEW

## 1. MORRISON ROAD

Morrison Road is the primary commercial corridor in the neighborhood which is planned to be a cultural and economic hub of the west Denver.

## 2. CUATRO VIENTOS/FOUR WINDS PARK

Opened in 2014 with help from the Trust for Public Land, this park provides vibrant community open space complete with playground, water play feature, two turf fields, a walking loop, and native plantings.

## 3. DENVER HEALTH: WESTWOOD FAMILY HEALTH CENTER-

Located in the neighborhood since 1972, this health clinic provides a range of services including pharmacy, laboratory, family medicine providers, family planning, and health insurance enrollment specialists.

## 4. KNAPP ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

Opened in 1956, the student body consists of students from Early Childhood Education (ECE) through fifth grade. Nearly 95% of the student population is Latino, with 96% of the population receiving free or reduced lunch.

## 5. WESTWOOD FOOD COOPERATIVE

Through the leadership of Westwood based non-profit Revision, the co-op will be a multi-stakeholder food hub where consumers, producers, and employees all own a share. The property will house Denver's first full service grocery store run by a community living in a food desert.

## 6. LITTLE SAIGON BUSINESS DISTRICT

Located along Federal Boulevard from Alameda Ave to Mississippi Ave, the primarily Vietnamese cultural and commerce district is an important first step in organizing the business community to create a thriving destination.

## 7. MUNROE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

The school's student body consists of students in ECE through fifth grade. Nearly 98% of students are eligible for free or reduced lunch and 98.3% are minority students.

## 8. WEIR GULCH

The gulch is an urban waterway and flood control infrastructure, winding through many narrow corridors into the adjacent neighborhood. A multi-use path runs along much of the gulch, though it is under used for a variety of reasons. These conditions create an unsafe feeling and promotes opportunity for graffiti.

## 9. OWEN BOYS AND GIRLS CLUB

Owen Boys & Girls Club was the first Denver-area Boys & Girls Club built specifically for that purpose. The Club is home to a large multi-purpose field, used for sports programs for all metro area Boys & Girls Clubs, along with a Teen Center

## 10. DENVER INDIAN CENTER

The Center serves a diverse group of tribes, the majority of which represent the Southwest and the Northern Plains. Programming offered includes courses in economic stability, education and security. The Center is a location for the community to gather for powwows and other activities.

## 11. WESTWOOD PARK

This neighborhood park offers amenities such as a playground, basketball court, and ball field. However, the park is hidden behind private property, creating an environment for negative activities. Plans are underway to enhance the park and transform it into a neighborhood asset.

## 12. CASTRO ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

Opened in 1993, the school's student body consists of 612 students. in which is 94% Latino, with 96% of students eligible for free or reduced lunch.

## 13. WESTWOOD HOMES

This Denver Housing Authority owned and operated housing development is home to 184 public housing units. Also located on the property is an Opportunity Center providing services to residents such as a computer lab, job prep classes, and child activities.

## 14. KEPNER MIDDLE SCHOOL

Serving approximately 1,000 students throughout southwest Denver, the school has suffered from poor performance as of late. Nearly 100% of the student body qualify for free or reduced lunch and 95% are either black or Latino.

## 15. SOUTHWEST IMPROVEMENT COUNCIL (SWIC)

Founded in 1987, the council is dedicated to helping the residents of southwest Denver through a range of programs including housing counseling, meals for seniors, fitness programs, disease-prevention programs, after school programs, evening recreation, gang-diversion programs, and 19 units of affordable multi-family housing.

## 16. WESTWOOD BRANCH LIBRARY

A branch of the Denver Library System located at the Westwood Community Center. In addition to full library services, the branch also has computers and other technological resources.

## 17. PASCUAL LEDOUX ACADEMY

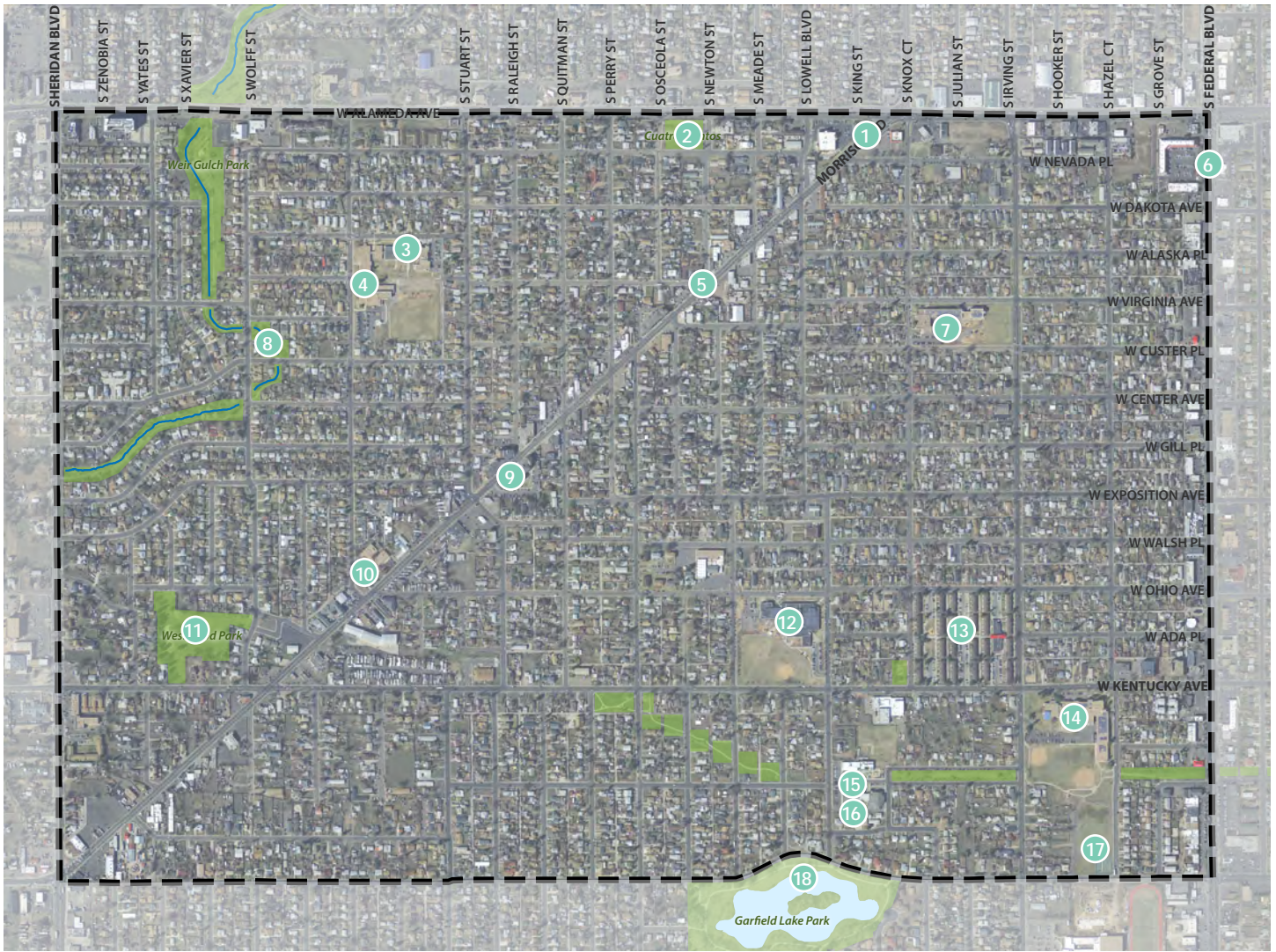
The first DPS Center for Early Education in southwest Denver. The academy was created to expand public access to early childhood education and to relieve overcrowding in southwest Denver elementary schools.

## 18. GARFIELD LAKE PARK

A Denver Parks and Recreation owned and maintained park, it features a range of amenities including a lake, outdoor pool, a walking path, ball fields, basketball and Futsal courts, and restrooms.



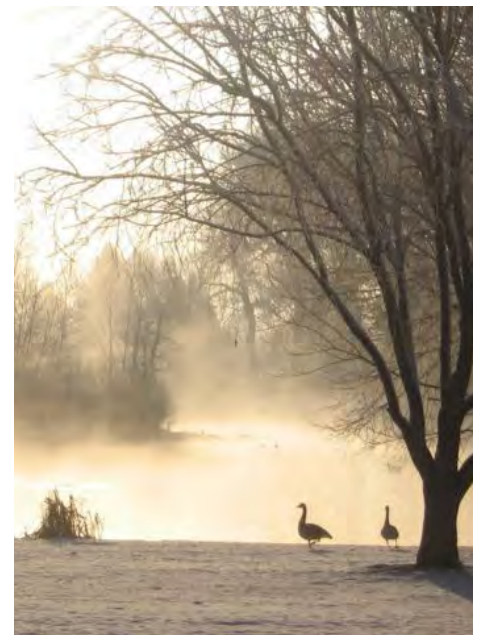




4. Westwood Food Cooperative



1. Cuatro Vientos (Four Winds) Park



18. Garfield Lake Park

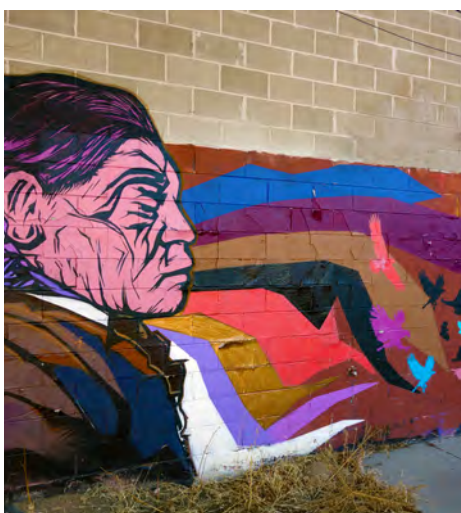




# ACCOMPLISHMENTS, CHALLENGES, OPPORTUNITIES



*Sugar Mountain Candy Company- Westwood*



*Morrison Road Mural- Westwood*



*Munroe "Friendship" Alley- Westwood*

## ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- Cuatro Vientos/Four Winds Park, located in the northern area of the neighborhood, opened in 2013
- With the support of a \$1 million dollar grant from Colorado Health Foundation in 2012, Healthy Places Westwood has connected and engaged the community, especially hard to reach populations, through the help of community connectors
- Residents and stakeholders successfully advocated for the reinstatement of RTD Route 4 in 2014, providing bus service along Morrison Road and west toward the Alameda Light Rail Station
- The addition of a traffic signal at the intersection Morrison Road and Perry Street in 2015, providing a safe place for all modes to cross Morrison Road
- The future construction of intersection improvements (bulb-outs and medians) enhances pedestrian safety along Morrison Road (planned for 2016)
- District 3 Arts, established in 2013, serves as a liaison between artists and businesses, has been established, resulting in many new murals throughout the community
- Improvements are planned to Westwood Park including new playground equipment and other enhancements to improve visibility and increase usage
- The City has acquired land at Kentucky and Irving for a new pocket park
- Community partners have successfully worked together to improve the alley adjacent to Munroe Elementary School to provide a safe and welcoming means to walk or bike to school
- The Thriftway building was purchased and razed in 2014, removing a blighted property from the Morrison Road corridor, positioning the land to be transformed into community amenity
- Continued public/private partnerships have enabled for a variety of new low-income affordable housing developments along Morrison Road and Alameda Avenue
- A multitude of committed community organizations continue to make significant impacts on a daily basis
- With the help of community leaders, the business community along Federal Boulevard has organized to create the Little Saigon Business District, laying the foundation for more investment and organization of this vibrant community
- The use of community connectors/promotoras, residents who work to reach "hard-to-reach" populations, has made it possible to increase the community participation
- La Casita Community House, a community and recreation space, opened on Morrison Road in early 2016
- Elementary schools in the neighborhood have the highest percentage of local residents as students making the neighborhood prime for implementing "safe routes to school" programs

## CHALLENGES

- Westwood is under served for parks, recreation facilities, and outdoor space, falling far short of the City's per-capita standards both for parkland and for recreational facilities.
- There are limited places for residents to gather and celebrate cultural events
- Weir Gulch, which runs through Westwood, has a large amount of pollutants such as sediment, heavy metals and litter



- The neighborhood's transportation network is challenging for pedestrians and bicyclists to use safely due to high traffic speeds, missing or inadequate sidewalks, lack of bicycle infrastructure, lack of pedestrian/bicycle scaled lighting, and unsafe intersection crossings
- Residents observe that there is poor compliance with traffic laws, particularly posted speed limits and stop signs
- Households are often multi-generational and larger than the City average household size which can result in overcrowding and unsafe housing conditions
- Built primarily in the 1940s and 1950s, the quality of housing stock is generally poor which can lead to unsafe living conditions and high energy bills
- The Westwood area lacks a local full service grocery store to serve the residents with affordable opportunities for healthy and fresh food
- A significant portion of Westwood residents are monolingual Spanish-speaking, creating a language barrier resulting in difficulties accessing City services creating the need for clear actions and resources to connect residents to neighborhood and public services.
- A significant amount of auto-oriented and light industrial uses still remain on Morrison Road, preventing the rebirth of the road into a people-focused main street for the neighborhood
- Westwood consistently ranks among some of the lowest of Denver's neighborhoods for health indicators such as access to healthy foods, preventative care, and obesity
- 
- A significant portion of the neighborhood falls within a priority basin for the City for water quality improvements due to the high amount of impervious surfaces and pollutants in the area
- Westwood lacks positive after-school and summer programming for youth, despite having one of the largest concentrations of youth in the City
- Cost of living (housing+transportation costs) continue to rise for neighborhood residents, increasing the risk of displacement from the neighborhood
- The neighborhood has an increased amount of loose and feral dogs, negatively impacting pedestrian safety

## OPPORTUNITIES

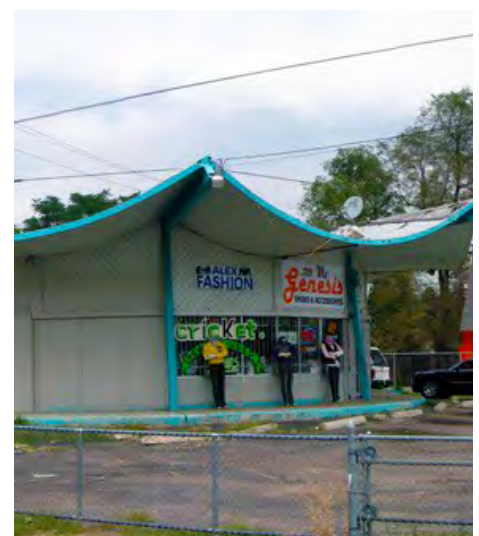
- The neighborhood is predominately comprised of first and second generation Mexican-American immigrants who care deeply for their community and are committed to preserving and celebrating their culture
- The Morrison Road community continues to organize around a shared vision of a unique cultural and retail destination for the neighborhood and region
- The Urban Waterways Restoration Study will provide the opportunity to transform the Weir Gulch into a place that can be used for recreation, connectivity, place making while increasing the flood safety and environmental health of the waterway
- Westwood is home to many cultures including Mexican, Vietnamese, and Native American, contributing to the rich cultural landscape and identity
- Westwood is home to many dynamic community organizations and non-profits that are committed to reinvestment and successful growth of the neighborhood
- Morrison Road is a Denver Enterprise Zone, which provides qualifying businesses with up to nine special state tax credit incentives
- With the help of the City, and Tax Credit programs, Westwood continues to be a focus location for new affordable housing development
- The neighborhood is a focus area of the West Denver Renaissance, a collaboration of partners working to facilitate the revitalization of West Denver in an equitable fashion
- The neighborhood is a focus area of the West Denver Renaissance Collaborative



*Morrison Road- Westwood*



*Entry feature- Westwood*



*Former Big Top Store- Westwood*



# PLANNING PROCESS



## PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT PROCESS

This plan is based on an extensive public process that engaged residents, business owners, property owners, government agencies, area employees, non-profits, real estate development experts and members of the general public. The public process kicked off in early 2015 with a public “listening session” and the convening of a Plan Steering Committee that helped guide the Plan process and content. The planning team set a goal of using creative approaches to public engagement in order to hear from members of the community who are typically “hard-to-reach” in planning processes, often due to language, technological barriers, and cultural barriers. Language is one of many barriers that has traditionally prevented participation in the neighborhood. At community meetings appropriate language interpretation was provided and written materials were translated. In addition pictures and graphics were relied on to convey information to further limit the language barrier. The year-long planning process offered approximately 50 stakeholder meetings, events, and/or opportunities to participate in this planning effort. The total number of people reached by the process is approximated at 1,000.

### Plan Steering Committee

Members of the Steering Committee were nominated by Councilperson Paul López to help guide the planning process. Participants represented key Plan stakeholders and organizations. The Steering Committee helped craft the Plan goals, provided invaluable information regarding issues and opportunities, and gave advice regarding Plan process. Steering Committee members were also critical for the success of the plan’s community outreach by helping inform the process and spread the word about the plan. A total of five steering committee meetings were held over the course of the planning process.

### Westwood Youth

Nearly half of Westwood’s population is under the age of 18. In addition, Westwood has one of the highest concentrations in Denver of elementary students who attend their local school. Over 2,000 students attend school within a mile of their homes in the neighborhood. Since they are the future of Westwood, the planning team reached out to the youth to engage them in the process. The planning team included various neighborhood plan specific activities for children at all community workshops, empowered the children to present their ideas for the community at public meetings and held two youth specific workshops with the Bridge Project at Westwood Homes reaching approximately 50 youth, grades 4-12.

### Westwood Stakeholders Meetings

Planning Team members were regularly invited and attended meetings held by neighborhood stakeholders to give updates on the Plan and planning process, along with answer any questions or concerns from the community. Examples of these meetings include the SWIC Neighborhood Council, Denver Police Department District 4 Open Houses, Westwood Homes Leadership Council, and Westwood Unidos Quarterly meetings.

### Community Workshops

**Community Workshop #1 Listening Session** - At the first community meeting, participants were introduced to the neighborhood planning process, reviewed the draft guiding principles for the process, and engaged in small group discussions about the Westwood neighborhood. The primary purpose of the meeting was to introduce the neighborhood plan, collect feedback on the guiding principles, and listen to participants discuss their neighborhood. Roughly 45 community stakeholders were in attendance. Questions asked to community included:



- What do you love about your community? What businesses, services and jobs do you want in your community?
- How do you want to get around? And where do you want to go?
- How hard or easy is it to be healthy in your community?

**Community Workshop #2 Neighborhood Vision-** At the second community workshop, participants were reminded of the neighborhood planning process, reviewed the plan goals, and engaged in a small group activity of crafting their own individual visions for their neighborhood, tying together transportation, land use, and community amenities. The primary purpose of the community workshop was to gain consensus on the plan goals, along with starting the neighborhood visioning phase of the planning process. The entire community was invited to the meeting and roughly 60 community members were in attendance, including 20 children.

**Community Workshop #3 Creating Places -** At the third community workshop, participants were reminded of the neighborhood planning process, reviewed the plan framework, and engaged in keypad polling to answer questions in real time about some of the draft plan concepts and strategies. The primary purpose of the community workshop was to gauge support for some of the big ideas in the draft plan addressing the vision for the neighborhood and provide guidance to the planning team for drafting the plan. The entire community was invited to the meeting and roughly 30 community members were in attendance.

#### **Community Workshop #4 A Brighter Future**

At the fourth and final community workshop the draft plan was presented and summarized, highlighting the major recommendations, vision elements, and transformative projects. Attendees were then invited to review the plan concepts in an open house format and provide comments on the draft in a number of different ways, including surveys, comment cards, and in one on one interviews with the planning and technical team.

#### **Meeting in a Box**

The planning team created a “do-it-yourself” meeting kit in English, Spanish, and Vietnamese available to stakeholders who wished to hold their own meetings about the neighborhood plan with friends and family. The kit included facilitation instructions along with discussion questions and group activities. Once completed, the host sent the kit back to the planning team with the results and participants were encouraged to stay engaged in the process. Throughout the process, 24 responses were received.

#### **Surveys**

Several surveys were created as a means to increase participation of individuals who could not attend specific community workshops. Surveys were posted on the Plan website and included all information presented at each of the community meetings. Feedback from the online surveys was then combined with the feedback received at the community workshops. The surveys were translated into both Spanish and Vietnamese. Throughout the process, 70 survey responses were received.

#### **Focus Groups**

Two meetings were held with special focus on major corridors in the neighborhood, Morrison Road and Federal Boulevard. Outreach was done to business owners and property owners in these areas to get specific input, as the majority of attendees at other community workshops were residents. The topics covered during the focus groups were the vision for each corridor’s roadway, pedestrian realm, and private realm. Vietnamese and Spanish interpretation was available for both meetings. There were 40 attendees between the two meetings.

#### **Organizations Invited to Plan Steering Committee**

- Affordable Housing Providers
- Artist Community
- BuCu West
- Denver City Council (District 3)
- Denver Housing Authority
- Denver Indian Center
- Denver Public Health
- Denver Public Schools
- Denver Police Department
- Healthy Places
- Little Saigon Business District
- LiveWell Westwood
- Local Businesses
- Mi Casa Resource Center
- Re:Vision
- Southwest Improvement Council
- Urban Land Conservancy
- Westwood Residents
- Westwood Residents Association
- Westwood Youth
- Westwood Unidos



### **Plan Website and Social Media**

A Plan website was frequently updated throughout the planning process. The website was updated with community workshop announcements, materials presented at all workshops, along with links to online surveys. The website saw approximately 1,500 page views during the planning process. Social media was used to advertise upcoming meetings and spread the word about the planning process.

### **Health Impact Assessment**

As part of the Westwood neighborhood planning process, a Health Impact Assessment (HIA) was conducted. HIA is a process that uses data, research and community engagement to make evidence-based recommendations to improve the health outcomes of a plan, project or policy before it is finalized. HIA also provides a framework for collaboration among interdisciplinary partners to better understand how environmental, physical, economic, or social conditions determine health in order to inform public policy and decision making.

Denver Environmental Health conducted this HIA throughout 2015-16 in partnership with Denver Community Planning and Development, Westwood community members and almost a dozen public and private local organizations. Westwood community members identified four top concerns for the Westwood Neighborhood Plan to address to improve health, which are the focus of the HIA:

- Safe multi-modal transportation
- Parks, recreation and open space
- Community safety
- Access to essential resources

The recommendations in the HIA inform and strengthen the recommendations of the Westwood Neighborhood Plan by adding community health as a consideration for the future vision, design, and development of the neighborhoods.

### **Plan Goals**

Together with the community, a series of plan goals were drafted to help guide the planning process and along with serve as the starting point for the neighborhood vision, plan recommendations, strategies, and transformative project. The plan goals for the Westwood neighborhood are:

1. Create a neighborhood where it is easy for residents, workers and visitors to be healthy through increased access to recreation and food.
2. Enhance local and regional connectivity for pedestrians, cyclists, transit users and automobiles.
3. Improve and maintain the neighborhood's well being by promoting social, economic and environmental justice.
4. Foster a cross cultural experience through the celebration of Westwood's beautiful and unique qualities.
5. Provide opportunities for the neighborhood to grow and thrive into the future.







*Community Workshop #1 "Listening Session"*



*Community Workshop #2 "Neighborhood Vision"*



*Federal Boulevard Road Focus Group*



*Public Meeting #3 - "Creating Places"*



# PLANNING CONTEXT

## EXISTING PLANS AND STUDIES

This Plan represents the land use, urban form, transportation and economic development vision for the Westwood Neighborhood. Adoption of this Plan by Denver City Council updates the Denver Comprehensive Plan and Blueprint Denver recommendations for this part of the City. This Plan incorporates or refines recommendations of previous Plans and studies for the Westwood neighborhood. This small area plan supersedes the previously adopted Westwood Neighborhood Plan (1986). Any updates to the following Plans should incorporate and refine recommendations for Westwood based on this Plan:

Federal Boulevard Corridor Plan (1995)  
Denver Comprehensive Plan (2000)  
Blueprint Denver (2002)  
Denver Parks and Recreation Game Plan (2003)  
Pedestrian Master Plan (2004)  
Strategic Transportation Plan (2008)  
Gulch Master Plan (2009)  
Sanitary Sewer Master Plan (2009)  
Strategic Parking Plan (2010)  
Denver Moves (2011)  
Denver Complete Streets Policy (2011)  
West Side Transit Enhancement Study (2012)  
Storm Drainage Master Plan (2014)  
Imagine 2020- Denver's Cultural Plan (2014)  
Climate Adaptation Plan (2014)  
Denver Living Streets (2014)

## CONCURRENT PLANNING EFFORTS AND STUDIES

Several studies and planning efforts are kicking off in 2016 that overlap geographically with Westwood. The Westwood Neighborhood planning team coordinated with each of these efforts to ensure the most efficient use of resources and to help ensure consistency among Plan recommendations. The Westwood Neighborhood Plan will coordinate with and inform:

Urban Waterways Restoration Feasibility Study-Weir Gulch  
Federal Boulevard Corridor Study  
Denver Moves: Transit  
Denver Moves: Pedestrians and Trails  
Parks Game Plan Update  
Blueprint Denver Update  
Water Quality Scorecard and Implementation Strategy  
Morrison Road Streetscape Master Plan





# HOW TO USE THIS PLAN

The Westwood Neighborhood Plan outlines the vision, recommendations, and implementation strategies for evolution and enhancement of the community. It builds on the area's rich and storied past while setting the course for an even brighter future. This plan proposes bold new transformative projects, as well as a number of smaller, "tactical" projects, which when implemented will also prove to be transformational for the neighborhood. The plan sets forth a comprehensive, holistic approach, weaving together a nuanced set of strategies that collectively will continue to elevate Westwood into a connected, celebrated, resilient, and healthy neighborhood.

Importantly, it will take a concerted and collaborative alignment of resources for the neighborhood to attain its vision. The City and County of Denver, relevant local and State government agencies, non-profit stakeholders, residents, business and property owners, and other key parties must all be strong partners in moving the neighborhood forward.

The Plan provides a sound policy basis for a thriving neighborhood. The recommendations identified in the Plan provide direction to guide day-to-day decision making related to land use, public investment, private development, and partnerships. The Plan is intended to give the latitude needed to pursue unforeseen opportunities that will arise and to respond to new challenges over the coming years.

The Plan is divided into five sections in addition to this introduction:

- The first three chapters outline the Plan's guiding principals and the recommendations to achieve a **CONNECTED**, **CELEBRATED**, and **RESILIENT** neighborhood
- Each section also highlights how plan recommendations can improve neighborhood **HEALTH** and provide ways that public or private investment can contribute to the overall health of the neighborhood
- A list of six **transformative projects** which are identified as being essential to achieving the Plan vision over the next 10 to 20 years
- The final section describes **moving forward** in terms of the types of implementation and priorities for the short and long term to ensure the success of the Plan.



# PLAN OVERVIEW

The plan overview presents the broad, foundational components for Westwood’s continued evolution into a **CONNECTED**, **CELEBRATED**, **RESILIENT** and **HEALTHY** Westwood. The neighborhood already has numerous assets – a number of existing natural areas and open spaces, unique cultural destinations, multiple schools and early education centers, and a relatively connected street network. The strategies detailed in the neighborhood plan build upon these unique features to create a fully interconnected, vibrant and well-designed urban fabric with multiple opportunities for community enhancement and investment.

Key elements of the plan include:



**Green Streets**



**Neighborhood Greenway**

These designated streets will integrate green-infrastructure with bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure to enhance Westwood’s natural environment, while providing safe and celebrated connections to neighborhood destinations and to the region (see pages 27- 29).

Through design and implementation of enhanced alleys, green streets, and enhanced green spaces, a connected greenway can be created that links key destinations and fosters a unique sense of identity for the neighborhood (see pages 64-67)



**Enhanced Alleys**

## Land Use Areas



Federal/Alameda Corridors



Morrison Road Corridor

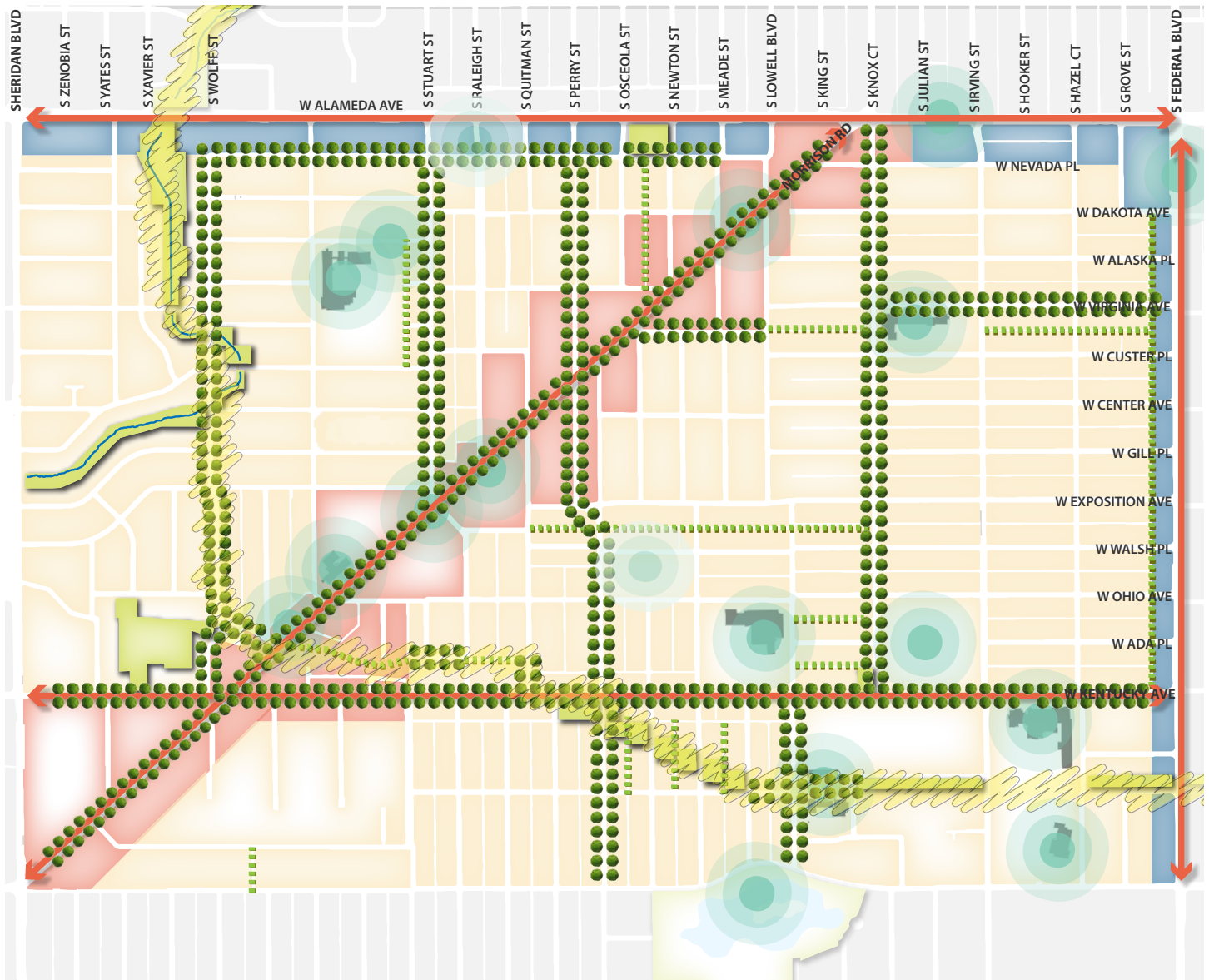


Residential Neighborhoods

The transformation of typically utilitarian spaces into opportunities for enhanced connectivity, recreation, placemaking, and green infrastructure will enhance safe mobility along with have a positive impact on the health of the neighborhood (see pages 26- 29).

The Westwood neighborhood is primarily residential, however there are a number of mixed-use corridors surrounding, and within the neighborhood that provide opportunities for unique neighborhood serving retail destinations and mixed use redevelopment (see pages 48-52).





**Neighborhood  
Destinations**



**Key Streets**



**Open Spaces**

Safe, multi modal mobility will connect Westwood's cultural, recreational, economic, and educational destinations. These existing and planned destinations all contribute to a celebrated neighborhood (see page 37).

While currently carrying high amounts of vehicular and transit of traffic, these streets can be transformed into safe, multi modal corridors, connecting neighborhood serving retail, cultural and educational institutions, and mixed use development (see pages 30- 33).

Existing open spaces will be enhanced and better connected to provide opportunities for active and passive recreation, community celebrations, and a connection to nature (see pages 26-29).



# THE VISION FOR WESTWOOD

The Vision for Westwood reflects community input collected throughout the planning process, as well as previous plans and existing policies that help shape the neighborhood and its surrounding context. Guided by this vision, the remainder of the Westwood Neighborhood Plan articulates a range of strategies and concepts.

This “plan on a page” illustrates the key building blocks of the Westwood Neighborhood Plan that will bolster Westwood as a vital, healthy neighborhood and bring about tangible change:

- **Vision Elements:** The three Vision Elements – **CONNECTED**, **CELEBRATED**, and **RESILIENT** – build on the existing character of Westwood while setting a course for a dynamic, interconnected mosaic of people, places and culture. Each of the elements work together to form a cohesive, long-term vision for the neighborhood.
- **Recommendations:** An array of recommendations, ranging from short-term “quick win” improvements to mid- and long-term investments, is outlined in the categories under each Vision Element. Each recommendation includes multiple detailed strategies.
- **HIA:** The recommendations in the HIA inform and strengthen the recommendations by adding community health as a consideration for the future vision, design, and development of the neighborhood.

VISION ELEMENTS

RECOMMENDATIONS

HIA

## A. A CONNECTED/ CONECTADO WESTWOOD



### A.1 Ensure Safe, Multi-Modal Access

:

### A.2 Create Green Connections

:

### A.3 Enhance Key Streets

:

How a **CONNECTED** Westwood Improves Health

## TRANSFORMATIVE PROJECTS

Six projects are identified as the most critical steps to positively transform the neighborhood.

Multi-layered and long-term in nature, these projects will take a concerted effort by both public and private sectors. Available energy and resources should be harnessed toward making these a reality. Only through executing these projects can Westwood truly transform and achieve the vision of a **CONNECTED**, **CELEBRATED**, and **RESILIENT** neighborhood.



### 1. TRANSFORM MORRISON ROAD



### 2. RE-IMAGINE WEIR GULCH





## B. A CELEBRATED/CELEBRADO WESTWOOD



### B.1 Enhance Neighborhood Culture

:

### B.2 Celebrate Public Space

:

### B.3 Promote Unity in Diversity

:

How a **CELEBRATED** Westwood Improves Health

## C. A RESILIENT/FUERTE WESTWOOD



### C.1 Promote Responsible Development

:

### C.2 Enhance the Local Economy

:

### C.3 Promote Community Ownership

:

How a **RESILIENT** Westwood Improves Health

### 3. CREATE A NEIGHBORHOOD GREENWAY



### 4. STRENGTHEN COMMUNITY RESOURCES AND SPACES



### 5. IMPROVE HEALTHY FOOD ACCESS



### 6. CONNECT THE REGION TO WESTWOOD







# a. a connected Westwood

**Westwood's prosperity and health is intimately linked to creating a walk-able, bike-able, transit rich neighborhood with premier open spaces**

A well connected neighborhood has many direct and convenient routes leading into, through, and out of the community. These connections come in many different varieties: pedestrian friendly streets, intuitive and convenient transit routes, bike trails and protected lanes, parks, greenways, and green infrastructure. Neighborhoods with many high quality connections to other places present a wide array of advantages for residents and business alike. Connected places offer people the choice to safely and easily walk, bike, ride transit, or drive to where they need to go. Research shows that the benefits of increased neighborhood connectivity include better physical fitness, increased private investment, less crime, and lower greenhouse gas emissions.

Westwood's mobility network is robust, yet lacks critical safety and multi-modal elements. Narrow sidewalks, low night-time lighting, dangerous intersections, and high traffic speeds create an unsafe environment for all users of the neighborhood's transportation network. Additionally, existing neighborhood open spaces are underutilized and poorly connected. With a focus on safely, efficiently and conveniently linking people to neighborhood destinations by a variety of travel modes, several strategies are recommended to create a truly connected Westwood.

## **A.1 Ensure Safe, Multi-Modal Access**

## **A.2 Create Green Connections**

## **A.3 Enhance Key Streets**



## goal

*Increase transit, walking, and bicycling mobility and safety within and beyond the Westwood neighborhood*



*Pedestrian-scaled Lighting- St. Louis, MO*



*Decorative crosswalk- Denver, CO*



*Boyle Heights Transit Stop- Los Angeles, CA*

### A.1.A. CREATE A WALKABLE WESTWOOD

Walking is the most basic yet important transportation mode, however over the past century we have engineered walking out of our daily lifestyle, creating a multitude of social and environmental problems, ranging from depression and diabetes, to increasing greenhouse gases and social isolation. It is critical to enhance pedestrian safety in Westwood to better connect important neighborhood destinations including schools, retail corridors, and open-spaces.

#### Repair and Enhance Sidewalks

Repair and enhance the existing sidewalk network and amenity zones in the neighborhood. Amenity zones are the area between the roadway and the building face and may include items such as benches, cafe seating, and tree lawns. These enhancements may occur in conjunction with redevelopment projects, capital bond projects, utility upgrades, or other shared-cost opportunities. If additional funding mechanisms become available, the *Proposed Pedestrian Network map* (p. 23) prioritizes improvements based on existing sidewalk condition, proximity to schools and other neighborhood destinations, and existing utilization.

#### Prioritize Intersection Improvements

Implement priority intersection Improvements identified on the *Pedestrian Network Map*. These are highly utilized crossing locations for pedestrians, cyclists and school children and therefore should be designed with the safety and comfort of these groups in mind. Beyond being Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) compliant, these priority intersections should consider a “toolbox” of improvements including:

- **Decorative pedestrian crosswalks-** should be considered for placemaking at intersections with high pedestrian traffic and in locations where pedestrians connect to major destinations. Features may include colored and stamped concrete, additional painting, texture changes and additional signage
- **Traffic Calming Improvements-** such as curb extensions, chicanes, and traffic circles should be added on any street with heavy pedestrian traffic to narrow the roadway to slow traffic and minimize the crossing distance for pedestrians
- **Pedestrian-oriented lighting-** designed for pedestrians is important in areas where people will walk after dark, addressing actual safety concerns and increasing the perception of safety
- **Stop control-** provide all way stop control at all priority intersections where it can be installed per current Denver Public Works policy and procedures
- **Safe Routes to School Improvements-** ensure that routes heavily trafficked by children walking to school are safe and well designed

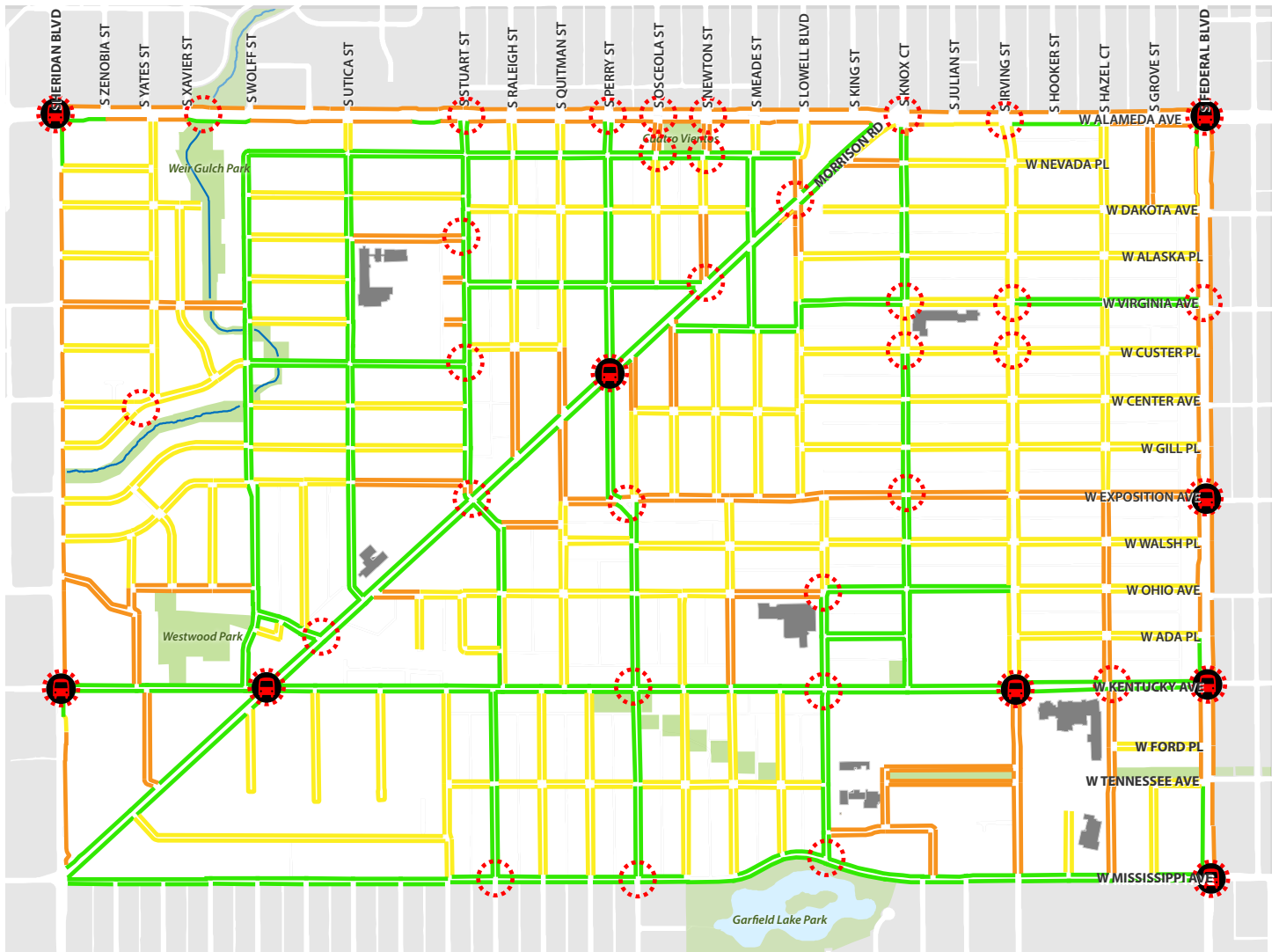
### A.1.B. CREATE A TRANSIT-RICH WESTWOOD

#### Ensure Safe and Convenient Transit

Ensure that transit service is consistent, accessible and affordable, making it a more convenient mode of choice for people living and working in the neighborhood. Every transit trip begins and ends with a walking trip, therefore it is imperative that first and last mile connections are safe and intuitive, especially the neighborhood’s sidewalk and bicycle connections.

Since transit service is increased as a result of demand, it is important that residents and employees continue to support existing transit service in and around the neighborhood. New developments, along with neighborhood employers should explore providing transit pass benefits to residents to help lower the cost of transit.





#### Sidewalk Improvement Priority

— High — Medium — Low

Priority Intersection

Priority Bus Stop

#### PROPOSED PEDESTRIAN NETWORK

#### Enhance Placemaking Opportunities of Transit

Transit is about more than moving people. Transit can have positive impacts on economic development and contribute to a sense of place. Pursue opportunities for partnerships with neighborhood groups, RTD and the City to provide enhanced bus stop amenities such as shelters, seating, real time displays, public art, and lighting at designated stops.

#### Support Transit through Emerging Mobility Options

New forms of mobility service providers can help fill the gaps in RTD's service and increase mobility options for the neighborhood. Residents and employees should embrace these emerging forms of shared transportation and encourage new providers to locate service in the neighborhood. Some examples of these emerging mobility service providers include;

- Carsharing: a membership-based service that is primarily designed for shorter time and distance trips as an extension of the transportation network
- Bikesharing: a service in which bicycles are made available for shared use to individuals on a very short term basis
- Pop-up transit: demand responsive transit with bus routings that can be dynamically changed using a range of data sources
- Real-time ridesharing: a service that arranges one-time, short notice shared rides
- Urban Circulator: closed loop service- usually 3 miles or shorter- connecting urban destinations implemented by transit agencies and non-traditional partners







Neighborhood Bikeway diverter - Vancouver, BC



Bike Box- Portland, OR



Intersection Crossing Markings- Ottawa, CA

## A.1.C. CREATE A BIKEABLE WESTWOOD

### Complete the Bicycle Network

Bicycling can offer an alternative to driving that is more economical than driving, along with improving the neighborhood's overall health. An integrated system of bicycle infrastructure within the neighborhood should link intuitively to the citywide bicycle network, transit routes, destinations and regional trails. The network should include a variety of improvements *Proposed Bicycle Facility Network map (p. 25)*, that encourage new bicycle trips for a wide-range of novice and experienced cyclists.

A neighborhood bikeway is a bicycle facility on a low-speed, local street which has been optimized for bicycle traffic, while discouraging cut-through motor-vehicle traffic. They are a low-cost option to create a connected network of streets with good cyclist comfort and safety.

Update the citywide bicycle network to include neighborhood bikeways on the following streets in Westwood:

- Wolff Street (Nevada Pl to Kentucky Ave)
- Perry Street
- Nevada Place (Wolff St to Meade St)
- Mississippi Avenue (Sheridan Blvd to Stuart St)

### Improve Intersections

Most bicycle crashes occur at intersections, thus extra attention needs to be placed on the design of bicycle facilities as they cross intersections, particularly important at arterial streets. Design treatments such as bicycle signal timing, bike boxes, intersection crossing markings, two-stage turn queue boxes, and median refuge islands should be considered at all higher traffic intersections.

Additionally, an integrated system of bicycle infrastructure should include end of trip amenities such as secure bicycle parking racks and repair stands at destinations. These additions to the citywide bicycle network plan will better connect neighborhood destinations, and connect Westwood to the citywide bicycle network.

### Remove Barriers to Biking

Infrastructure is only one component of a bike-able Westwood. In addition to the improvement of the bicycle network, additional education, encouragement, and enforcement programs are critical to increasing the amount and safety of cycling in the neighborhood. Mechanisms to help lower the barriers to biking may include:

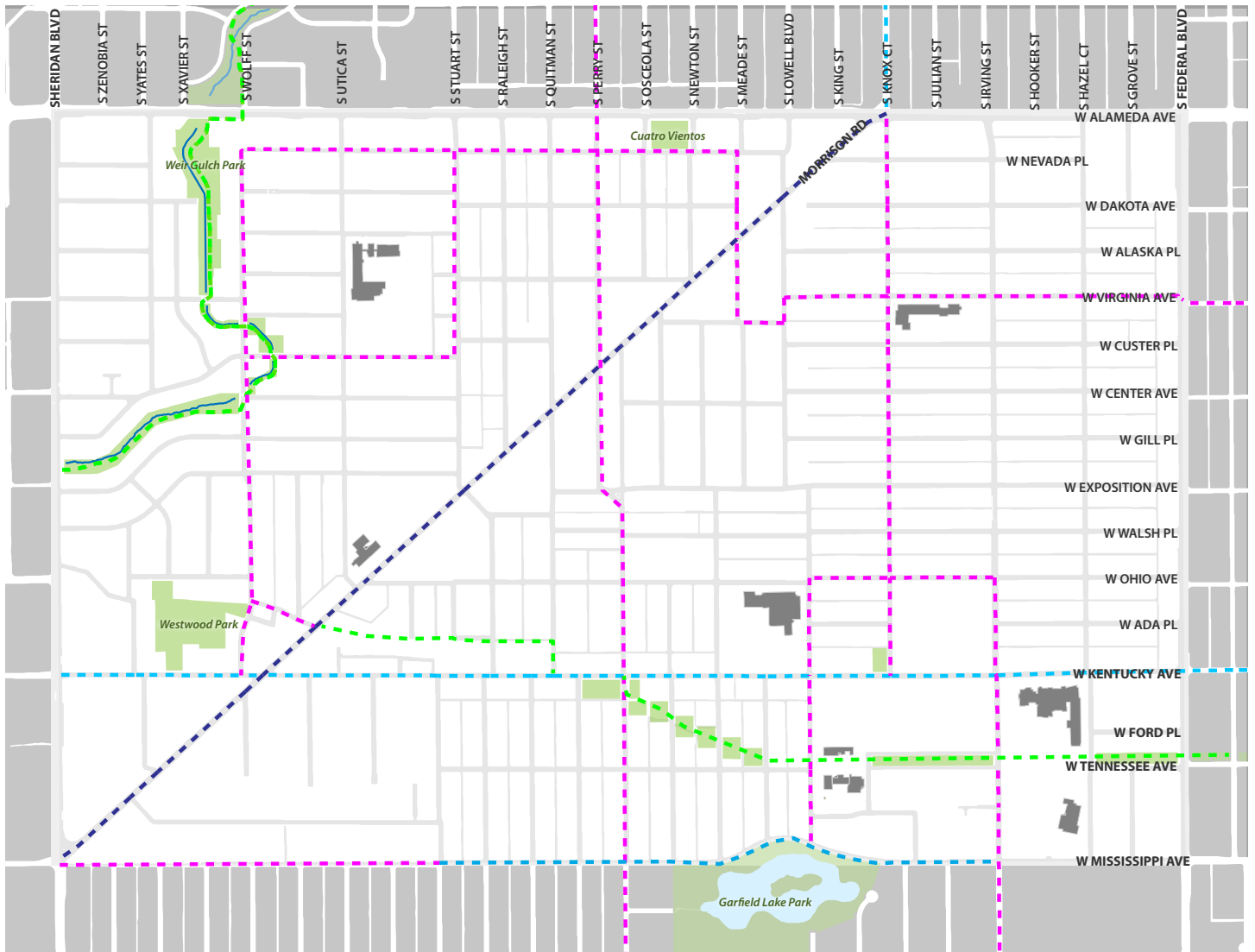
- **Education-** Work with advocacy groups to provide bicycle skills workshops for children in neighborhood schools, host bicycle workshops for adults at neighborhood meetings, promote the "share the road" message to neighborhood motorists, provide bicycle education materials in multiple languages
- **Encouragement-** Encourage neighborhood businesses to participate in bike to work day, temporary street closure for events centered around biking (Ciclovias), create multilingual neighborhood bike map, partner with organizations to increase availability of bikes for neighborhood children
- **Enforcement-** Increase number of bicycle police in Westwood, increase enforcement of all traffic laws for drivers and bicyclists.

### Increase Bicycle Ownership

The cost of purchasing a bicycle and associated equipment can often be a major obstacle to cycling. Partnerships with affordable housing providers, neighborhood non-profits, and local and regional governments can be created with the mission of providing bicycles and bike safety training to neighborhood residents, employees, and school children. Bike sharing models, such as Denver Bicycle Share, are also effective tools in growing bicycle ownership and bicycle access for the neighborhood.







## PROPOSED BICYCLE FACILITY NETWORK

- Neighborhood Bikeway ————
- Bike Lanes ————
- Enhanced Bikeway ————
- Off-Street Trail ————



Neighborhood bikeway street markings



Neighborhood bikeway traffic circle



Neighborhood bikeway signage



## goal

*Create a system of green connections and spaces throughout the neighborhood by leveraging and enhancing existing assets, creating new spaces, and connecting these spaces with safe, green pathways.*



Enhanced Alley- Los Angeles, CA



Enhanced Alley- Easton, PA



Bioswale- Aspen, CO

### A.2.A. CREATE NETWORK OF ENHANCED ALLEYS

Alleys can be transformed beyond what are typically under-utilized, utilitarian spaces into engaging and safe routes of travel for all residents. This network of enhanced alleys will increase connectivity and create more recreation, placemaking, and green infrastructure opportunities throughout the neighborhood

#### Improve Unimproved Alleys

All publicly owned alleys in the neighborhood are paved, however some privately owned alleys remain unpaved. Coordinate with property owners to request the improvement of the remaining unpaved alleys. The City should continue this paving program while expanding the criteria for undedicated alleys.

Right of way exists that is currently not used as alleys, but can serve as important safe connections to schools, open space, and other destinations. These alleys should be improved to so the city standard and be a functioning and complimentary component of the neighborhood's transportation network.

Alleys should also have safe lighting. Street and alley lighting is maintained by Xcel Energy. Installation of missing lights, along with the repair of existing lights can be requested through Xcel Energy. Residents should work with neighborhood groups and local police precinct to inventory the condition of all alley lights, and work with the City and Xcel Energy to increase standard frequency to more than one light per alley or block along with explore increasing the wattage of the lights.

#### Create Enhanced Alleys

Alleys can be transformed into signature space for the neighborhood. Enhanced alleys in Westwood should achieve one or more of the following goals:

- **Recreation-** Alleys can be areas for both active and passive recreation, with design elements such as seating areas and play features to increase the recreation opportunities throughout the neighborhood.
- **Active Transportation-** Alleys can offer additional connectivity for bicycles and pedestrians by further expanding the street grid network and providing more route options. Special design elements such as wayfinding and lighting should be considered for the alleys identified as enhanced connections
- **Placemaking-** Alleys can become special, unique places for the neighborhood through the addition of amenities such as public art, murals, signage, interpretive elements and unique street furniture
- **Green Infrastructure-** A green alley can provide water quality treatment of runoff from the alley or adjoining development though the use of permeable pavement

#### Prioritize Enhanced Alleys

Each alley enhancement is unique and will need further study and a unique design. Extra priority should be given to alleys near schools, open-space and other neighborhood destinations. Alley improvements should occur in conjunction with redevelopment projects, capital bond projects, utility upgrades, or other shared-cost opportunities. The locations of potential enhanced alleys in the neighborhood is recommended based on access to open space, neighborhood connectivity, water quality potential, and surrounding land uses. Locations and priorities for each type of alley is identified in the *Open-space System map* (p. 29).





## A.2.B. UTILIZE CREATIVE, MULTI-PURPOSE GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE

Westwood is partially located in two of the City's highest need basins for improved stormwater quality, presenting opportunities for strategic and innovative approaches to green infrastructure. On a large-scale, green infrastructure refers to a network of parks, open spaces, drainage ways, and floodplains which help mitigate the water quality impacts caused by impervious surfaces. Site-scale green infrastructure refers to smaller built systems designed to mimic the functions of larger green infrastructure systems and can occur within the existing street and alley network. Benefits of increasing green infrastructure in Westwood include improved water and air quality, reduced flooding risks, urban heat island effect mitigation, reduced energy demands, and enhanced community livability.

### New Development

Encourage sustainable development practices and low impact design throughout the neighborhood including water quality facilities that are of superior quality, functional, protect environmental health, serve as a public amenity, and support public safety.

Current city policy requires that private water quality facilities should be, safe, aesthetically pleasing and maintained by an entity other than the City.

Encourage development to incorporate consolidated water detention and water quality features. Consolidating stormwater features may reduce development costs and promote affordability by achieving economies of scale and facilitating more compact development patterns.

### Green Streets

This Plan presents a concept for a network of Green Streets. These unique streets act as critical bicycle and pedestrian links between neighborhood destinations and include a range of different green infrastructure opportunities integrated into the right-of-way illustrated below including:

- A** Green Gutters
- B** Tree Trenches
- C** Street-side Stormwater Planters
- D** Bump-out Stormwater Planters
- E** Green Alleys

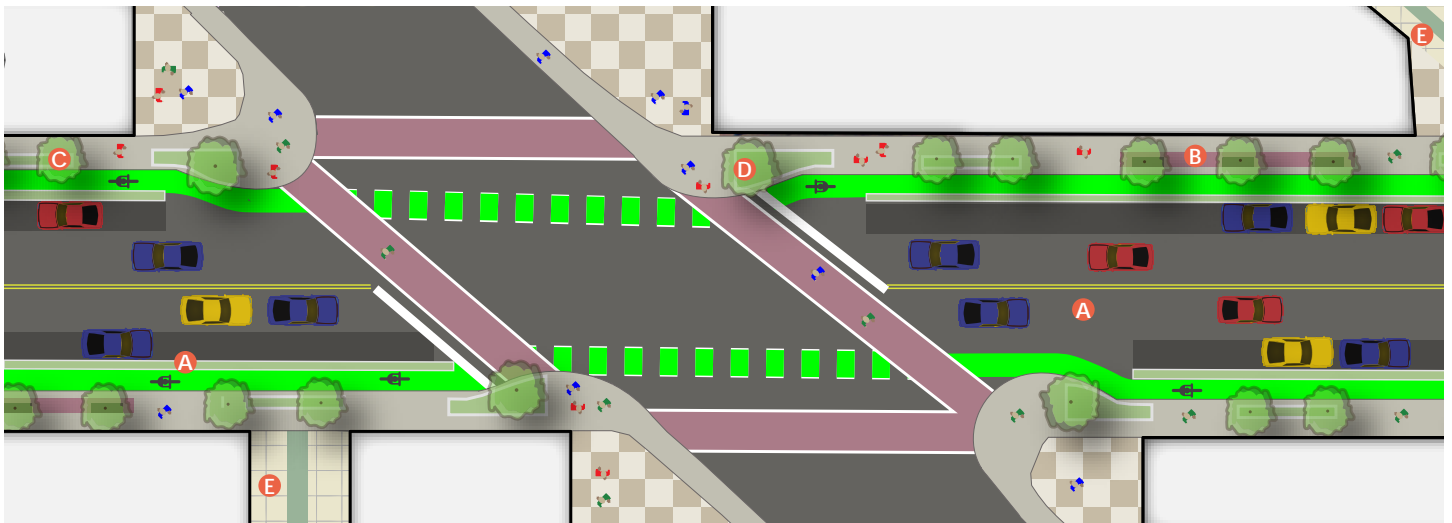
Funding opportunities to implement the features of green streets should be identified particularly as the city-wide bicycle, pedestrian, and parks plans are implemented within the neighborhood. Many of the treatments found on neighborhood bikeways can incorporate green infrastructure features listed above.



*Streetside Stormwater Planter*



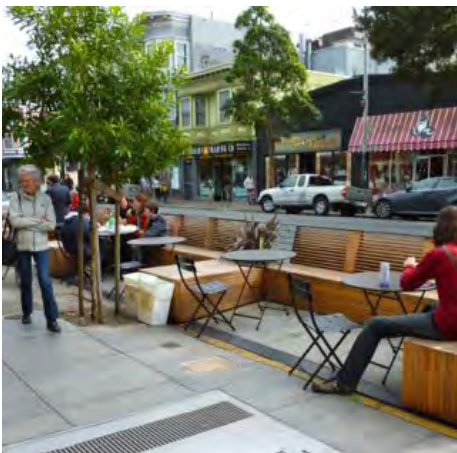
*Bump-out Stormwater Planter*



**PROPOSED GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE**



Park Life- (Photo by James Rojas)



Parklet- San Francisco, CA



Greenway- Birmingham, GA

*\*Additional recommendations for these areas are located in the Re-Imagine Weir Gulch (p. 62) and Create a Neighborhood Greenway (p. 64)) Transformative Projects*

## A.2.C. REFINE NEIGHBORHOOD GREEN SPACES

The neighborhood has a number of existing green spaces that are under-utilized by residents. Below is a inventory of existing neighborhood spaces and potential enhancements for each variety of open space:

### Westwood Park

This park is the largest in Westwood, however it is under-used by residents primarily because it is hidden behind private property and does not have sufficient amenities for all ages of residents. Improvements to the park should include:

- Enhancement of existing play features
- Active and passive recreation opportunities for all ages including a walking path
- Enhanced entry elements and wayfinding to better connect the park to Morrison Road
- Neighborhood gathering spaces such as plaza spaces
- Additional park programming and amenities such as water fountains, restrooms, shade structures, and seating
- Potential private property acquisition to increase viability of the park

### Weir Gulch\*

The greenway can become a true open space asset for the neighborhood, going beyond its primary function of storm water infrastructure. Its current concrete channel design is under-utilized and viewed as a detriment to the neighborhood. Improvements to the gulch should include:

- A continuous, safe and comfortable off street bike/pedestrian path
- Ample wildlife habitat
- Wayfinding and entry elements at all road crossings
- A safe and intuitive crossing of Alameda Avenue
- Opportunities to incorporate community gardens, seating, shade structures, and other active recreation facilities

### Pocket Parks/Plazas

These smaller spaces provide opportunities for both active and passive recreation and serve as community meeting spaces. Only one such park exists in the neighborhood at Kentucky Avenue and Knox Court, with another planned at Kentucky Ave and Irving Street. Future and existing pocket parks should include:

- Additional parks programming/events
- Opportunities for active recreation (Futsal court, playground)
- Amenities designed for all ages
- Community gardens
- Public art and murals
- A variety of hardscape and ground plane materials

### Other Greenways\*

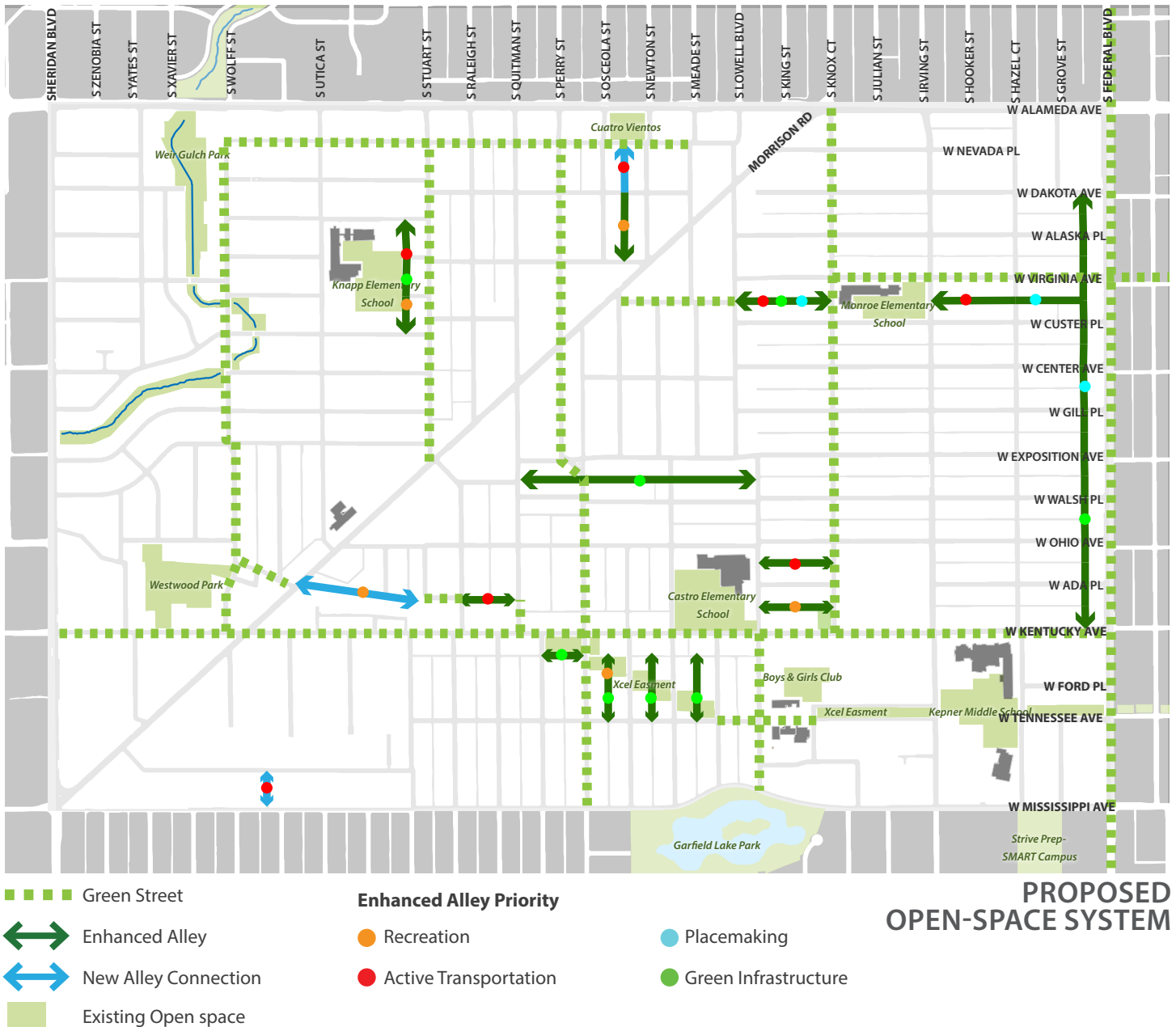
Transform the Xcel power line easement providing an opportunity to connect neighborhood destinations in a safe and comfortable way, while increasing recreation and placemaking opportunities. Partner with Xcel and neighborhood residents to design and enhance this greenway to bolster neighborhood recreation and connectivity. Underground overhead transmission lines when opportunities when funding becomes available.

### Quasi-Public Open-space

If opened to the neighborhood these spaces, mostly owned and maintained by Denver Public Schools, could dramatically increase the total acreage of neighborhood open-space. Steps should be taken to improve and simplify community use policies, making these spaces more accessible to neighborhood residents.







### A.2.D. INCREASE NEIGHBORHOOD GREEN SPACES

While refining and enhancing existing open spaces is the priority, the neighborhood would benefit from increasing the total acreage of open-space and tree canopy. Opportunities to increase the neighborhood's open space primarily exist through the creation of smaller sites. The City should continue to pursue opportunities to acquire additional open-space in the neighborhood through land acquisition and public-private partnerships. New development is encouraged to provide publicly accessible private open-spaces and plazas, particularly along Morrison Road. Additional recommendations to increase neighborhood green spaces include:

- Foster the development of small, intimate spaces throughout Westwood that are privately owned and/or maintained, specifically along the neighborhood's key streets (Recommendation A.3, (p. 30))
- Incorporate "parklets", which transform parking spaces into mini parks along key streets
- Ensure that all future spaces are environments in which all users feel comfortable, welcome, and safe



## RECOMMENDATION A.3

## ENHANCE KEY STREETS

### goal

*Enhance and celebrate the key streets of the neighborhood to accommodate all travel modes, beautify the streets, and bolster economic vitality.*



Traffic Circle- Vancouver, CA



Orange Line Station Art- Los Angeles, CA



Enhanced Intersection

*\*Additional recommendations for this corridor are located in the Morrison Road Transformative project (p. 58)*

### A.3.A. TRANSFORM MORRISON ROAD\*

Morrison Road is envisioned to become the cultural, economic, and physical focus of Westwood that connects, rather than divides the neighborhood. While recent and planned improvements will improve mobility on the corridor, additional steps should be taken to improve the safety of all modes. Street enhancements should support a pedestrian focused Linear Mercado and cultural hub of the neighborhood and region.

#### Roadway Recommendations

- Improve/reconfigure dangerous intersections to enhance safety of all users
- As bicycle ridership increases, study converting existing bicycle lanes into year-long, maintainable protected bike lanes
- Add enhanced crosswalks, bulb outs, pedestrian refuge islands, and signalized mid block crossings, where appropriate, to improve pedestrian safety and to facilitate safe crossing of the street for all ages and abilities, especially at priority intersections identified in Recommendation A.1 (p. 22).
- Study benefits and impacts of reclassifying the road to a collector

#### Pedestrian Realm Recommendations

- Provide wide, comfortable sidewalks with ample amenity zones for street furniture, trees, planters, and green infrastructure where appropriate and allowable within the existing right-of-way
- Enhance pedestrian scaled lighting to enable safe travel at all hours
- Explore creative uses of the right-of-way to expand public-space such as parklets and privately owned plazas
- Create culturally influenced street furniture, lighting, and signage to promote and enhance the Linear Mercado
- Embrace the placemaking opportunities of transit stops through culturally appropriate enhanced transit infrastructure
- Close appropriate curb cuts as redevelopment occurs on the corridor

#### Private Realm Recommendations

- Encourage active commercial uses along ground story of buildings (*see pg. 49*)
- Provide adequate height transitions to the neighborhood from Morrison Road (*see pg. 48*)
- Enhance the identity of the district through urban design (*see pg. 51*)
- Encourage new development to provide publicly accessible private open space

### A.3.B. ENHANCE KENTUCKY AVENUE

This primarily residential corridor is an important transit and bicycle link for the neighborhood, while carrying less traffic than the other Key Streets. Many neighborhood destinations and schools are located along the corridor and improvements should increase neighborhood access and safety for all users.

#### Roadway Recommendations

- Enhance pedestrian crossings at key stop controlled intersections with curb extensions, enhanced crosswalks, and pedestrian scaled lighting
- Enhance bicycle infrastructure, particularly at busy intersections

#### Pedestrian Realm Recommendations

- Incorporate green infrastructure into the pedestrian amenity zone
- As redevelopment occurs, provide a buffer between sidewalk and roadway with either a pervious strip, or ideally, street trees

#### Private Realm Recommendations

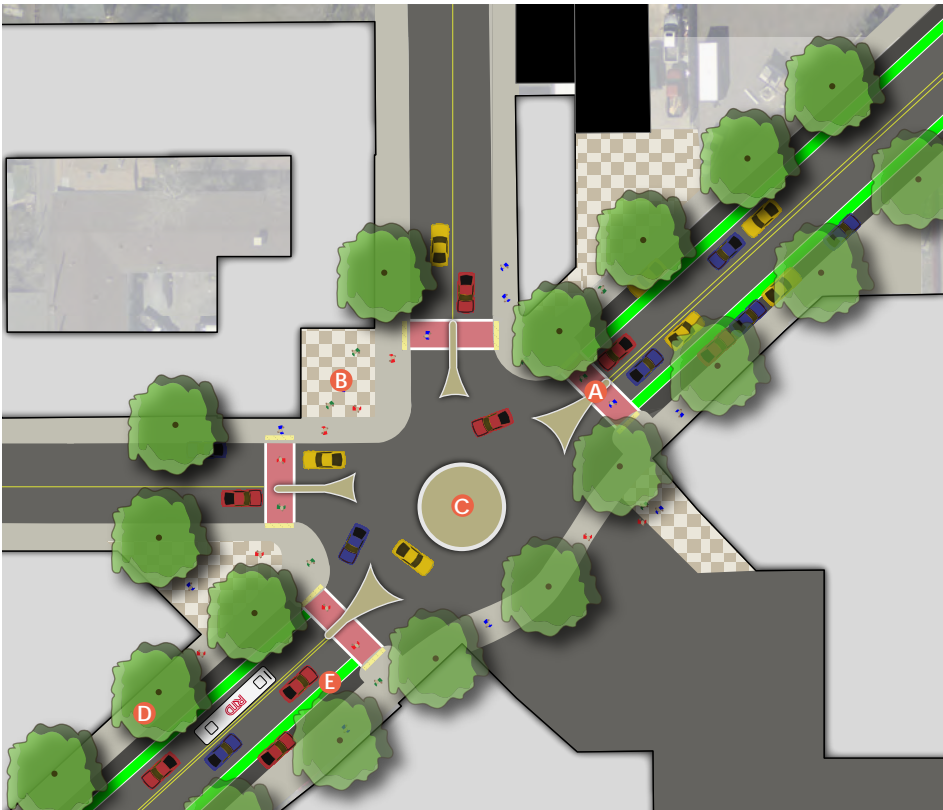
- Residential uses should address the street, with entry ways oriented to sidewalk
- Promote limited neighborhood-serving commercial uses, primarily at priority intersections





## Potential improvements along Morrison Road Include\*:

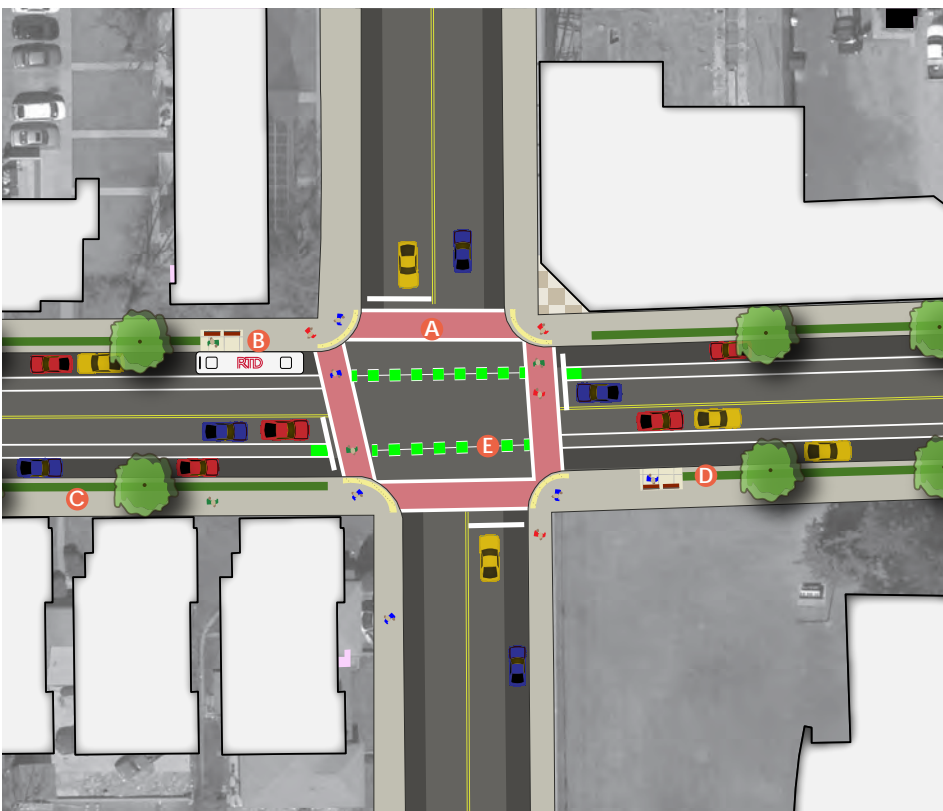
- A** Pedestrian refuge islands to improve safety for those crossing the corridor
- B** Increased open space through plazas and pocket parks
- C** Creative roadway improvements, such as traffic circles at troublesome intersections to improve safety for all users and calm traffic
- D** Enhanced sidewalk with amenities including street furniture, tree lawn, consistent ADA accessible sidewalk, and green infrastructure where appropriate
- E** Improved bicycle facility as demand for cycling rises in the neighborhood



MORRISON RD

## Potential improvements along Kentucky Avenue include\*:

- A** Enhanced crosswalks at stop controlled intersections
- B** Increased transit amenities at higher ridership bus stops
- C** Buffered detached sidewalks with street trees
- D** Green infrastructure incorporated into the right of way
- E** Enhanced bicycle infrastructure, specifically at intersections



KENTUCKY AVE

*\*Diagrams are for illustrative purposes to show the stated goals and potential improvements*







*Transit priority lane- New York, NY*



*Enhanced Bus Transit- Quito, Ecuador*



*Enhanced crosswalk*

### A.3.C. FEDERAL BOULEVARD

Federal Boulevard is a key transportation corridor for west Denver. It is also the home of the Little Saigon business district, which represents over 100 businesses and can continue to strengthen its role as a regional destination. Improvements should be made to improve the safety and increase the person trip capacity of the corridor, while enhancing its cultural identity and create a pedestrian corridor.

#### Roadway Recommendations

- Provide a study of transit lane and priority transit signals along the corridor to enable higher transit speed and capacity
- Study reducing lane widths to improve street safety and add amenity space, without impacting traffic operations
- Improve intersections with enhanced crosswalks, bulb-outs, and pedestrian refuge islands where appropriate to improve pedestrian safety

#### Pedestrian Realm Recommendations

- Provide a continuous, wide, ADA accessible sidewalk along the corridor and, where possible, provide a tree lawn buffer between the sidewalk and traffic to increase pedestrian safety and improve the natural environment
- Create cultural influenced street furniture, lighting, and signage to promote and enhance the Little Saigon Business District
- Enhance transit stops to include amenities such as shelters, furniture, off-bus ticketing, and digital displays
- Enhanced pedestrian crossings at key cross streets connecting to activity zones and pedestrian destination

#### Private Realm Recommendations

- Encourage mixed use redevelopment that enhances the pedestrian environment by placing the buildings closer to the street, to create a consistent street wall with pedestrian entrances oriented to the sidewalk
- Balance parking needs of the corridor with a pedestrian friendly streetscape
- Enhance district identity through architecture and facade improvements
- Encourage redevelopment to incorporate gateway elements into building designs at the intersections of Alameda Avenue and Mississippi Avenue

### A.3.D. ALAMEDA AVENUE

Alameda Avenue is a key east-west transportation corridor for Denver, serving as a critical automobile and transit link. The corridor is also both a vibrant commercial corridor and a residential street in areas. Improvements can be made to enhance pedestrian safety, while improving the person trip capacity of the corridor.

#### Roadway Recommendations

- Reduce lane widths to improve street safety without impacting traffic operations
- Enhance crossings of key multi-modal routes at Knox, Perry and Weir Gulch
- Provide bicycle-specific traffic signals where bicycle routes cross the corridor
- Improve the natural and visual environment of the corridor through increased plantings and street trees

#### Pedestrian Realm Recommendations

- Provide transit amenities (shelter, seating, lighting, etc.) at high ridership stops
- Ensure sidewalks are the appropriate width and all crossings are ADA accessible

#### Private Realm Recommendations

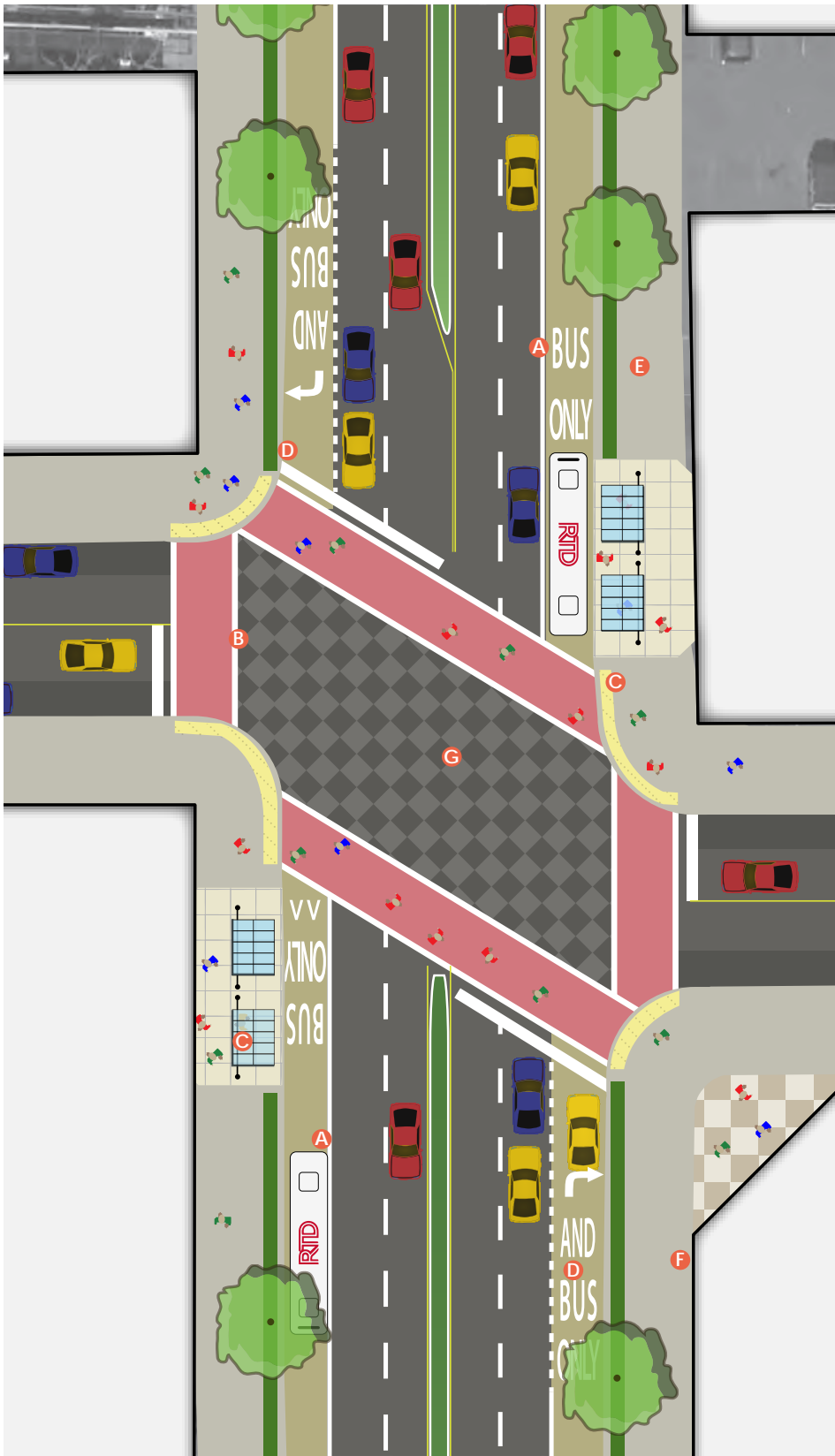
- In mixed use zones, encourage redevelopment to orient to the street to enhance the pedestrian environment





## Potential improvements along Federal Boulevard include\*:

- A** Enhanced transit capacity, potentially including transit lanes and transit signals /signal priority
- B** Improved, high visibility intersections to increase safety of all users
- C** Enhanced transit stops including amenities such as shelter, seating, off-bus ticketing, and digital displays
- D** Consistent wide sidewalk with ADA accessible crossings and an ample tree lined buffer between traffic
- E** Culturally unique and influenced street furniture including public art, seating, and way finding
- F** Active, pedestrian oriented, mixed-use private development
- G** Study feasibility of realigning intersections as redevelopment occurs



**FEDERAL BOULEVARD**

*\*Diagrams are for illustrative purposes to show the stated goals and potential improvements*



## HOW A CONNECTED WESTWOOD CAN IMPROVE HEALTH:

Reconnecting streets, building and repairing sidewalks, improving bicycle infrastructure, and creating connections to transit stations and other destinations can promote physical activity and a safe pedestrian environment. Strengthening the connections to parks, open-space, and trails, and the safety of those places can offer more opportunities for physical activity. Enhanced street lighting, increased crime reporting, and roadway intersection improvements to reduce the frequency of injury crashes can improve actual and perceived safety.

## HIA RECOMMENDATIONS

**A.1** *Build multi-modal infrastructure as prioritized in the Westwood Neighborhood Plan including sidewalks, bike infrastructure, intersection improvements and transit stop amenities to improve safety and connectivity to key local and regional destinations.*

### Plan strategies addressing HIA Recommendation:

- A.1.A. Create A Walkable Westwood
- A.1.B. Create A Transit-Rich Westwood
- A.1.C. Create A Bikeable Westwood
- A.3. Enhance Key Streets

### Why are these recommendations important for health?

Providing safe and enjoyable opportunities to walk and bike within the neighborhood leads to an increase in physical activity, significantly reducing the risk of chronic disease, including obesity, and a reduction in vehicular injuries. Safe multi-modal transportation infrastructure has been shown to both increase resident's physical activity and reduce injuries or perception of unsafe conditions, two of the most critical health issues in Westwood.

**A.2** *Prioritize areas around neighborhood schools for infrastructure improvements to create Safe Routes to School for the neighborhood with the most children in Denver.*

### Plan strategies addressing HIA Recommendation:

- A.1.A. Create A Walkable Westwood
- A.1.C. Create A Bikeable Westwood
- A.2.A. Create Network of Enhanced Alleys

### Why are these recommendations important for health?

Westwood has the highest concentration of elementary school students in the City who live within a mile of their school. The ability for these students and family members to walk or bike to school can be significantly increased by prioritizing infrastructure improvements to ensure safe routes to school and providing secure on-site bicycle parking facilities. This can provide a significant opportunity for students and families to increase their physical activity by walking or biking to school in a safe environment. This has been shown to increase academic performance and mental well-being for students.

**A.3** *Facilitate the development of other transportation options in the neighborhood including bicycle-share, car-share or discounted transit passes.*

### Plan strategy addressing HIA Recommendation:

- A.1.B. Create A Transit-Rich Westwood





**Why are these recommendations important for health?**

- Providing convenient and affordable transportation options can increase physical activity, decrease single-occupant-trips, decrease air pollution, and result in positive economic impacts.

*A.5 Prioritize 'green alleyway' construction for pedestrian and bicycle connectivity, improved storm drainage, water quality, recreation and placemaking.*

**Plan strategies addressing HIA Recommendation:**

- A.2.A. Create Network of Enhanced Alleys
- A.2.B. Utilize Creative, Multi-purpose Green Infrastructure

**Why are these recommendations important for health?**

Traditionally, alleys have been used for vehicular access, delivery services and at times illegal dumping which can contribute to unsafe conditions and negative health effects on the neighborhood. Enhanced alleys provide safe off-street connections to parks, open space and key destinations throughout the neighborhood. They can transform underutilized and neglected alleys into safe, attractive and functional social spaces that can foster community health. Enhanced alleys can also be used for recreational activities which increases the neighborhood's land availability for recreation. Additionally, alleys with green infrastructure improvements can positively impact the health of the environment by reducing the urban heat island effect and reduce pollutant run-off.

*B.1 Increase the number and acreage of parks (including pocket parks and plazas) and open space through available means such as property acquisition, public or private easements, and joint use agreements.*

**Plan strategies addressing HIA Recommendation:**

- A.2.C. Refine Neighborhood Green Spaces
- A.2.D. Increase Neighborhood Green Spaces

**Why are these recommendations important for health?**

- Increasing the number and acreage of parks has a direct correlation to increasing physical activity which significantly reduces the risk of chronic disease, including obesity.

*B.2 Increase connectivity between parks and open space corridors and to key destinations through available means such as property acquisition, public or private easements, and shared use agreements.*

**Plan strategies addressing HIA Recommendation:**

- A.1.A. Create A Walkable Westwood
- A.1.C. Create A Bikeable Westwood
- A.2.A. Create Network of Enhanced Alleys
- A.2.B. Utilize Creative, Multi-purpose Green Infrastructure
- A.3. Enhance Key Streets

**Why are these recommendations important for health?**

The development of a connected parks and open space system enhances opportunities for recreation to occur as users travel by foot or bike to these destinations.









## b. a celebrated Westwood

### Celebrating and honoring the cultures of the neighborhood

Westwood is a neighborhood unlike any other in Denver. The combination of its vibrant community, neighborhood assets, rich cultural landscape including Mexican, Vietnamese, and Native American cultures, serves as the foundation of a celebrated Westwood. The neighborhood is predominately Latino, most of which are first or second generation Mexican immigrants. Much of the Mexican-American business and culture is concentrated along Morrison Road and should be celebrated as Westwood becomes the local and regional destination for this authentic cultural experience. Additionally, the Federal Boulevard corridor in Westwood is the center of the Vietnamese business community for the Denver region; creating a home for Vietnamese businesses and an attraction for visitors and nearby residents. The concentration of these cultural groups, along with Westwood's unique history are true assets for the neighborhood that will be strengthened, preserved, and celebrated to create a unique neighborhood for the future.

Throughout the planning process, the community expressed pride in both the predominately Latino culture along with the unique diversity of the neighborhood. Residents and stakeholders seek to have their culture be expressed through architectural styles, colors, textures, and thoughtfully designed public spaces. This plan aims to not only maintain the authentic components of Westwood, but to celebrate and preserve these elements of the neighborhood through art, urban design and unique economic opportunities, ensuring Westwood evolves without losing what makes it unique. Westwood is a destination where history, home, business, Spanish language, and Latino culture merge into a unique Denver neighborhood. Change and reinvestment should enhance the unique assets of Westwood while also anticipating and meeting the future needs of existing residents.

### B.1 Enhance Neighborhood Culture

### B.2 Celebrate Public Space

### B.3 Promote Unity in Diversity





## goal

Create a neighborhood that preserves its unique culture and assets while embracing new opportunities for arts and innovation.



Community Plaza Space (Photo by James Rojas)



Interactive Art- Querétaro, MX



Fresh Fruit Mobile Food Vendor

### B.1.A. CELEBRATE LOCAL CULTURE

Continued collaboration with civic, business, and community leaders is critical to expand, celebrate, and promote Westwood's history in a way that embraces all of the cultures of the neighborhood. Westwood is full of arts, culture and creativity that can enhance the quality of life for residents, create unique experience for visitors, and provide job opportunities to strengthen the community.

#### Support Existing Cultural Resources

The unique Mexican culture, among others, can be celebrated and memorialized through the creation of a formal cultural district. Continue to support existing cultural spaces (shown on the *Culture Map*) and programing and look for new opportunities, such as the creation of a culture district in Westwood. The creation of an Arts and Culture District will ensure that Westwood becomes a local and regional draw for people of all cultures to access authentic art, culture and food. Unifying the goals of those art, cultural, business and community supporters will be critical to ensure the formalization of a district, its growth and sustainability. Arts and Culture Districts should be considered for both the Morrison Road/Linear Mercado Corridor and the Federal Boulevard/Little Saigon Corridor, potentially focusing on the celebration of the existing Mexican culture and the Vietnamese cultures respectively.

#### Support and Enhance Morrison Road and Little Saigon Business District

The development of an arts and culture district will allow the following opportunities:

- Ability to apply for grants, external funding, and technical assistance as a cohesive organization
- Position for the formation of a Business Improvement District (BID)
- Set up the opportunity to become a State designated Arts and Culture District

### B.1.B. PROMOTE THE "POP UP" ECONOMY

Push-cart peddlers and other forms of mobile vending are prevalent in Westwood and contribute to the neighborhood's authenticity. These vendors contribute to the unique culture of the neighborhood. Recommendations to help preserve and enhance this important aspect of the neighborhood culture include:

- Cultivate opportunities for mobile vending, food trucks, public markets and residential food sales
- Streamline permitting of events, vendor, and cottage food sale permits to improve accessibility and ease of process- Permits should be administered within the neighborhood at an accessible location, with simple paper work provided in a variety of languages
- Explore mechanisms to address barriers to mobile vending at the state and local legislative level
- Explore programs to use mobile vending to help expand culturally relevant healthy food options in the neighborhood





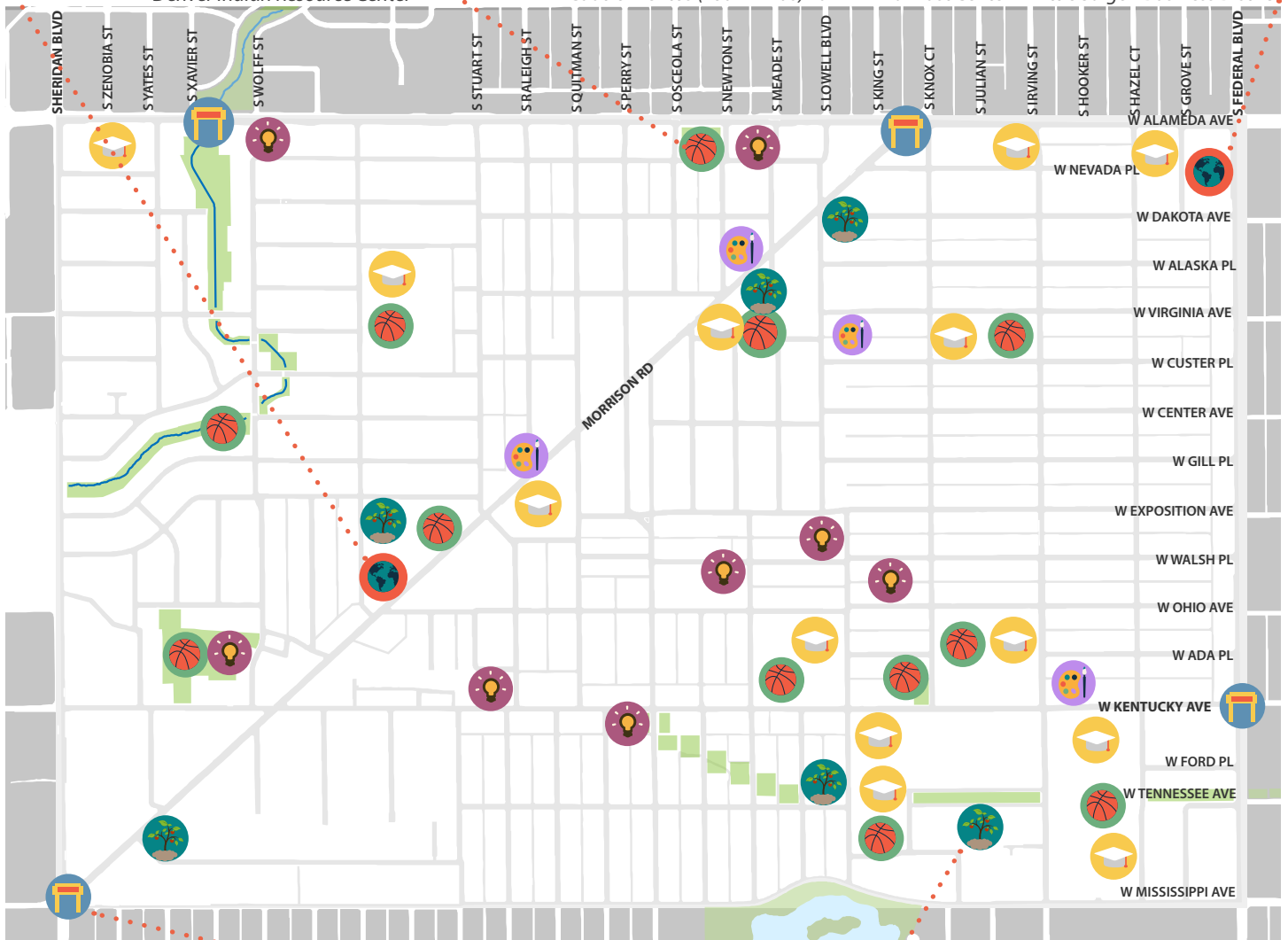
Denver Indian Resource Center










Cuatro Vientos (Four Winds) Park



Far East Center in Little Saigon Business District



## CULTURE MAP

-  Education/Training
-  Cultural Asset
-  Food System
-  Recreation
-  Public Art
-  Neighborhood Gateway
-  Opportunity Sites



Morrison Road Public Art Gateway



Somali Bantu Urban Farm

### B.1.C. SUPPORT PUBLIC ART

Inspired by Denver's cultural plan, increasing and maintaining public art throughout Westwood will reinforce its rich cultural landscape and create welcoming spaces in civic buildings, plazas, transportation corridors, parks and trails. A wide range of media and styles should be represented, from murals and sculptures to interactive or kinetic artworks that inspire engagement and dialogue between people of all ages and cultures. Recommendations to increase public art in the neighborhood include:

- Art should continue to be embedded in the neighborhood; public art in parks, streetscape elements, and gateway intersections. The integration of public art into daily life should enhance neighborhood placemaking and beautification
- Ensure that art and cultural institutions are inclusive and accessible to all residents and visitors of Westwood
- Develop partnerships with local artists and the community to increase job opportunities, community ownership, visibility, and retain authenticity
- Explore partnerships and grant opportunities with Denver Arts & Venues, the philanthropic community, Denver Housing Authority, and other relevant funding sources.
- Integrate arts programs into schools and after-school programs to engage the children and youth of Westwood. Continue to support Denver Public Schools' arts education strategic plan.
- Coordinate and increase art related programming offered by Denver Parks and Recreation
- Provide opportunities to celebrate the history, heritage, and culture of Westwood residents through current and emerging art forms
- Integrate cultural activities into businesses by encouraging development space for artists, art exhibits, cultural events, and performances.
- Foster pop-up tactical urbanism and culturally diverse events.
- Encourage homeowners to think of their properties as arts canvases and arts spaces
- Support the goals and strategies of Denver's cultural plan
- Strategic use of Denver's 1% art program in Westwood
- Explore limitations placed on Murals in the Denver Zoning Code







## PUBLIC ART OF WESTWOOD





## goal

Create public spaces in the neighborhood which serve as an extension of the community. These unique spaces relate to and nurture the Westwood community and bring the public together.



Plaza- Guadalajara, Mexico

### B.2.A. CREATE COMMUNITY GATHERING PLACES

Culturally relevant spaces with diverse uses, activities, services and gathering areas help to draw people together and create desirable destinations in the community. Opportunities for these places include Morrison Road, Federal Boulevard, Alameda Avenue and Kentucky Avenue.

#### Activate Public Spaces

Public spaces and neighborhood open-spaces should be versatile, accessible and adaptable to appeal to a broad range of cultural groups and interests. Spaces should include culturally appropriate amenities for celebrations and family gatherings.

#### Promote Flexible Public Spaces

Ensure that public spaces are available for businesses, organizations and residents for temporary transformations. Reservation of spaces should be straightforward and simple, even to those who do not speak English, with one entity that coordinates multiple community spaces.

Consider amenities to enhance community gathering places and plazas in Westwood including:

- A Walls for temporary art, murals, and sculptures
- B Architectural and landscaping elements, street furniture and shade trees
- C Spaces for temporary vendor booths, food carts, and music performances
- D Conveniences such as power supply and canopies to allow for transformation of visuals, lighting, sounds and other sensory experiences
- E Multi-generational amenities such as playground areas, seating, interactive play features for all ages, including games, water features, and performance space
- F Technological amenities such as wireless Internet and power sources to enable for outdoor workspaces
- G Active Building Frontages facing Plazas

### PLAZA EXAMPLE





## B.2.B. CELEBRATE CULTURE THROUGH URBAN DESIGN

Neighborhood culture and identity can be defined and expressed visually through forms, colors, textures and symbology. Recommendations to celebrate culture through urban design include:

- Engage the neighborhood to document desired architectural forms, design elements, art motifs and landscaping features
- Share preferred neighborhood design elements and cultural identity with developers for consideration and voluntary application into private development projects
- Explore design opportunities to express culture and enhance the public realm with wayfinding signage, interactive displays, unique benches, bus stops, or billboards along existing public streets and public buildings

## B.2.C. CULTIVATE OPPORTUNITIES FOR PUBLIC LIFE

Consider new opportunities for public life to safely occur in streets, alleyways, parks and residential yards to contribute to a vibrant and celebrated Westwood.

### Street Life Recommendations

Explore opportunities to support and expand opportunities for street festivals such as Chile Festival. Events can bring the community together and establish the neighborhood as a cultural center for the Denver region. Work with the Office of Special Events and other relevant agencies to streamline the permitting process, ensure affordability of fees, and provide simple to understand bilingual applications and resources.

### Alley Life Recommendations

Opportunities to transform alleys into places for public life to occur and thrive in a way that is culturally relevant. Enhanced alleys are opportunities for improved placemaking, connectivity, recreation, and environmental quality for the neighborhood. (See pg. 26)

### Park Life Recommendations

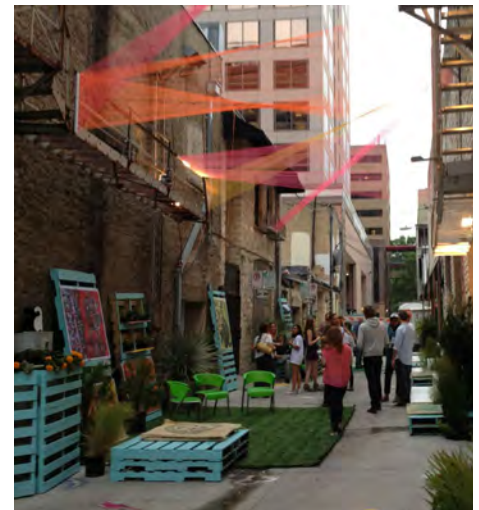
Design to support events such as birthday celebrations, wedding receptions, quinceañera receptions, and other culturally relevant celebrations to occur within neighborhood parks and open spaces such as Westwood Park. The design of parks should go beyond recreation and promote the opportunities for family gatherings, celebrations and events. Design elements that support public life include gazebos, picnic shelters, plazas, fountains, and grills. Parks and Recreation should evaluate permitting process and park restrictions to allow for culturally relevant uses such as piñatas and temporary child play areas.

### Residential Life Recommendations

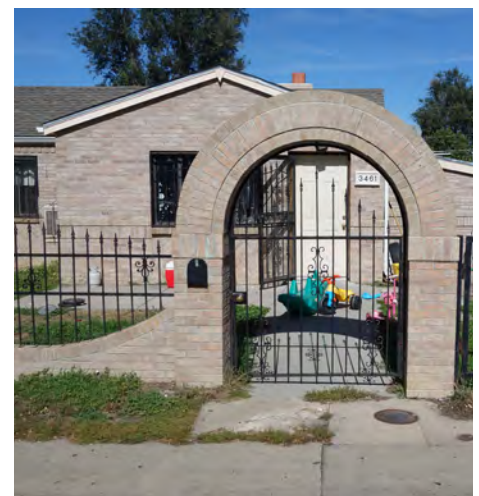
In Latino culture, the enclosure of the front yard with fences and gates transforms the space into a private plaza that enables residents to expand private life into the public realm increasing resident interaction and cohesion. Maintain opportunities for residential properties to create an enclosure of the front yard with gates and entry features. Rod Iron and Brick fencing is very typical in the neighborhood and should be allowed with proper permitting. The city should evaluate the policy of fence heights as it comes to rod iron and brick fences.



Street Life- Chicago, IL



Alley Life- Austin, TX



Residential Life- Westwood, Denver





## goal

*A Neighborhood where all ages, cultures, and income groups are welcome and have opportunities to thrive.*



### B.3.A ENCOURAGE DIVERSITY

Unity in diversity means having a united neighborhood without uniformity and diverse neighborhood without fragmentation. This ideal shifts the focus from neighborhood unity based on only the tolerance of physical, cultural, linguistic, social, religious, political, ideological and psychological differences towards a more complex neighborhood unity based on an understanding that differences enrich human interactions and the human environment.

#### Encourage a Diversity of Housing

Investments in housing should strive to include a diverse range of housing types creating a seamless integration of low income, workforce and market rate housing options throughout the neighborhood. Ensure a full range of housing choices, including sizes and prices, accommodating various family structures. Continue to support the programs detailed in the City's strategic plan for affordable housing. Additionally, housing diversity will serve as a safeguard against economic segregation and helps ensure equity in access to services and opportunities. This Plan's land use recommendations (C.1.B) encourage a diversity of housing types in the neighborhood.

- Establish a neighborhood character and identity while preserving and promoting characteristics currently found throughout the neighborhood, like wrought iron and brick fencing.

#### Cultivate a Diverse Economy

Attract a diversity of businesses to the area that serve the shopping, entertainment, services, programs, and employment needs of Westwood. Maintain the mix of locally-owned and culturally relevant businesses, particularly along Morrison Road and Federal Boulevard. Both the City and neighborhood business organizations should continue to monitor Westwood's business and retail environment to evaluate the variety and diversity of all business types.

### B.3.B. CREATE A UNIFIED VOICE

#### Strengthen Inter-agency Coordination

Strengthen and formalize the coordination between nonprofit organizations, government agencies, and community and religious organizations. An example could be the formation of a plan implementation steering committee to oversee and advocate for the implementation of the neighborhood plan. Additionally, a neighborhood resource guide could be reviewed and distributed by active local organizations.

#### Increase Neighborhood Capacity Building

Encourage a unified and accessible platform for knowledge-sharing and capacity building. This unified platform will help to raise awareness of neighborhood issues, outreach efforts, assets and resources that could be leveraged, and avoid redundancies including excessive and uncoordinated neighborhood outreach efforts. A unified platform would bring Westwood residents together and represent all cultures and ages to increase neighborhood cohesion. The creation of a coordinated platform can provide a clear understanding of neighborhood priorities to the City, RTD, DPD, and other agencies and is opportunity to help to create consensus among stakeholders.

In addition, a unified voice should support safety watch programs, communication with police departments, community clean-up days, property improvements and other programs that build upon the neighborhood's assets and strengthen its unique identity.



### HOW A CELEBRATED WESTWOOD CAN IMPROVE HEALTH:

Promoting culturally relevant retail goods and services can increase walking, decrease driving, boost the local economy, and increase social interaction. Providing a variety of gathering places that are filled with public art encourage outdoor play, social gatherings, community building, and recreation opportunities; all of which contribute to a sense of well-being.

Positive impacts from engaging in arts and culture exist on a variety of levels for the individual and community. Direct involvement with arts and culture provide the following benefits:

- Builds the community identity and pride
- Increases opportunities for self-expression and enjoyment
- Reduces delinquency in high-risk youth
- Relieves stress
- Improves the sense of belonging and attachment to the community
- Builds social capital by providing spaces for people who might not come into contact with each other
- Improves job and school performance
- Promotes neighborhood cultural diversity
- Reduces crime and delinquency

### HIA RECOMMENDATIONS

*B.1 Increase number and acreage of parks (including pocket parks and plazas) and open space corridors through available means such as property acquisition, public or private easements, joint use agreements, etc.*

#### Plan Recommendation addressing HIA Recommendations:

- B.2.A. Create Community Gathering Places
- B.2.C. Cultivate Opportunities for Public Life

#### Why are these recommendations important for health?

Providing safe and convenient access to a variety of pocket parks and plazas encourages a diversity of users to gather together and develop community cohesion. These spaces also offer alternative forms of recreation and physical activity which aids in the reduction of chronic diseases.











## c. a resilient Westwood

Creating the framework for Westwood to grow and thrive for many years to come

A resilient community has the ability to grow and adapt to changing conditions and continue to be a quality place for people to live, work and play. A resilient community provides quality of life through a well organized layout and variety of housing, employment and retail uses. These land uses should be joined together by a multi-modal transportation network to provides safe and easy access to parks, open spaces and public gathering spaces. A resilient community provides an anchor for conducting successful business, and a place to enjoy every-day life for residents with diverse needs and income levels. Additionally, a resilient community should ensure that the built environment works with the natural environment to preserve and enhance ecological health and resiliency.

A core value of resiliency for Westwood is ensuring existing residents and businesses have opportunities to thrive in the neighborhood. In addition, a resilient neighborhood is an open and welcoming place to new residents and businesses. As Westwood draws additional residents, investments and businesses, it is important to continue to offer a range of housing opportunities, including ample affordable housing, to ensure that the Westwood neighborhood continues to be a community where all can thrive and feel welcome. A range of employment and retail options, reflective of the unique makeup of the neighborhood, is needed to support new and existing residents. This plan provides a framework for a resilient future for the entire Westwood community.

### C.1 Promote Responsible Development

### C.2 Enhance the Local Economy

### C.3 Promote Community Ownership



## goal

*Development in Westwood should evolve to embrace new opportunities that will benefit the community while retaining the character of the existing neighborhood*



*Single Family w/ADU*



*Single Family/Duplex*



*Urban Residential*

## C.1.A. GUIDE FUTURE CHANGE

Blueprint Denver, the City's integrated land use and transportation plan, designates Areas of Change and Areas of Stability to guide decisions on where growth should be targeted within the City of Denver. The Vision for Westwood includes enhancements to that plan.

### Areas of Change

Areas of Change are where the greatest opportunities exist for increased density and mix of uses. In Westwood, the Areas of Change are generally along Key Streets, including Alameda Avenue, Federal Boulevard, and Morrison Road. These areas should have a greater mix of neighborhood scaled commercial uses, but also have the greatest potential to locate higher density, mixed-income housing. While the overall character of the neighborhood will be respected, redevelopment in the Areas of Change will generally see a larger shift in development character than stable areas.

### Morrison Road Influence Area

This is a specialized district within the Area of Change. The diagonal geography of Morrison Road results in unique parcel configurations that can be challenging for assembling redevelopment sites. In order to provide flexibility and promote redevelopment along the corridor while respecting the low density residential character of the immediately adjacent properties, this sub-area requires additional guidance and study.

Future zoning should support high quality development that respects the surrounding residential uses. Future regulatory tools should enable flexibility of uses and building forms along Morrison Road.

Development that fronts Morrison Road should have:

- Pedestrian oriented, street-level, active commercial uses
- A mix of uses
- Pedestrian entries onto the primary street
- Increased street-level transparency

Corridor development along Residential Edges should respect the residential transition by:

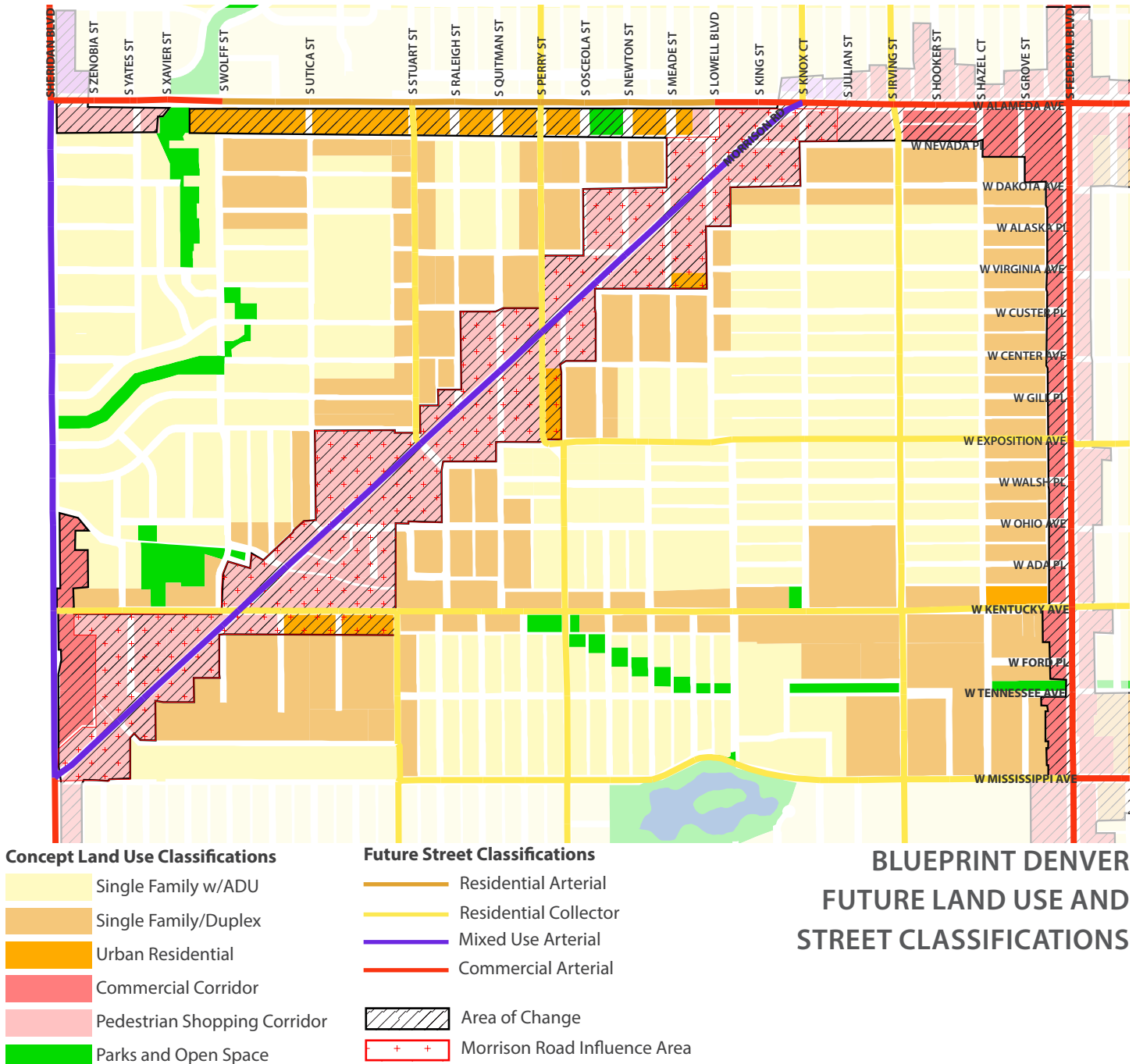
- Providing mid-density residential development such as town homes, with unit entrances facing the street
- Not "turning its back" on the low-density residential with blank walls, service areas or other inappropriate commercial functions
- Creating a transition area that is Urban Residential in character between development fronting on Morrison Road and low-density residential opposite the Influence Area.

### Areas of Stability

Areas of Stability in Westwood are areas where the current character should be maintained yet reinvestment should be encouraged. New development should match the existing scale and character of the neighborhood. Increased density can be achieved in areas while still preserving the character by methods such as Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs) within single family areas.

In the Areas of Stability, there are large sites that currently have civic and community uses associated with them. In the occasion that any of these uses relocates, it may be appropriate to locate slightly higher intensity uses than would typically be seen in these stable areas, such as a community event center or low scale multi-family housing. In those instances, regulatory tools should be explored that will allow for these community assets but still protect the existing character of the neighborhood.





### C.1.B. ENCOURAGE NEIGHBORHOOD-SCALED DEVELOPMENT

Blueprint Denver establishes land use categories that describe the particular character and scale that is desired in the future. This Plan uses these categories as the foundation for its recommended conceptual land uses. Additional detail has been added to reflect land use strategies that are specific to Westwood as well as the addition of ADUs to the Single Family Residential designation. The *Blueprint Denver* map will be amended to reflect the changes recommended in this Plan. Each land use shown in the above map is defined in the pages that follow.







*Pedestrian Shopping Corridor*



*Commercial Corridor*



*Parks & Open Space*



*Active, Human Scaled shopping district*

### **Single Family Residential with Accessory Dwelling Unit (ADU)**

Single family homes are the predominant residential type in these areas. An Accessory dwelling unit is an additional residential unit that is accessory to and located on the same lot as a single family home. An ADU can be used for extended family member or the unit can be rented. ADUs provide a homeowner an opportunity to invest and expand the capacity of their property. Accessory Dwelling Units enable aging in place, multi-generational houses, and additional rental income but do not affect the low-density character of residential areas. These units may be within the main house (e.g. basement apartment) or within a separate structure.

### **Single Family/Duplex**

Single family duplex residential areas are moderately dense areas that have a mixture of housing types, including single-family houses, duplexes, tandem houses and ADUs. Tandem houses are particularly applicable for the narrow and deep lots in Westwood. Even though these areas are denser, they maintain the character of the single family with ADU district. Low-scale neighborhood serving commercial uses may be appropriate along collector or arterial streets, specifically at intersections. Opportunities for neighborhood serving fresh-food growing and retail opportunities are especially relevant to serve the needs of the residential areas.

### **Urban Residential**

Urban residential areas in Westwood are mid to higher intensity uses (2-5 stories) that transition commercial areas to the lower density (1-2 stories), single family with ADU and single family duplex areas. These areas commonly back up to higher intensity commercial districts and front Single Family Duplex areas, for this reason each residential unit should have a primary pedestrian entrance fronting the primary street. In some cases, small scale neighborhood serving commercial uses may be appropriate. Small apartment building forms may be appropriate when fronting Alameda Avenue.

### **Pedestrian Shopping Corridor**

Pedestrian Shopping Corridors serve many of the everyday needs of the residents within Westwood and the surrounding neighborhoods. A vertical and horizontal mix of land uses should include commercial, residential, employment opportunities, and community serving organizations. Occasionally, pedestrian shopping corridors contain small neighborhood serving retail or public gathering spaces that can act as a regional draw. These corridors are scaled to be compatible with surrounding residential neighborhoods.

### **Commercial Corridor**

Commercial corridors are linear business districts primarily oriented to heavily used arterial streets. They share similarities with pedestrian shopping corridors but are larger and accommodate more auto traffic. Many corridors accommodate major bus transit routes and have significant numbers of transit users. Even though these corridors are more auto-oriented, uses should address the street and be pedestrian friendly. These corridors are large enough to attract regional-serving retail, though smaller, neighborhood serving retail may also be located along these corridors.

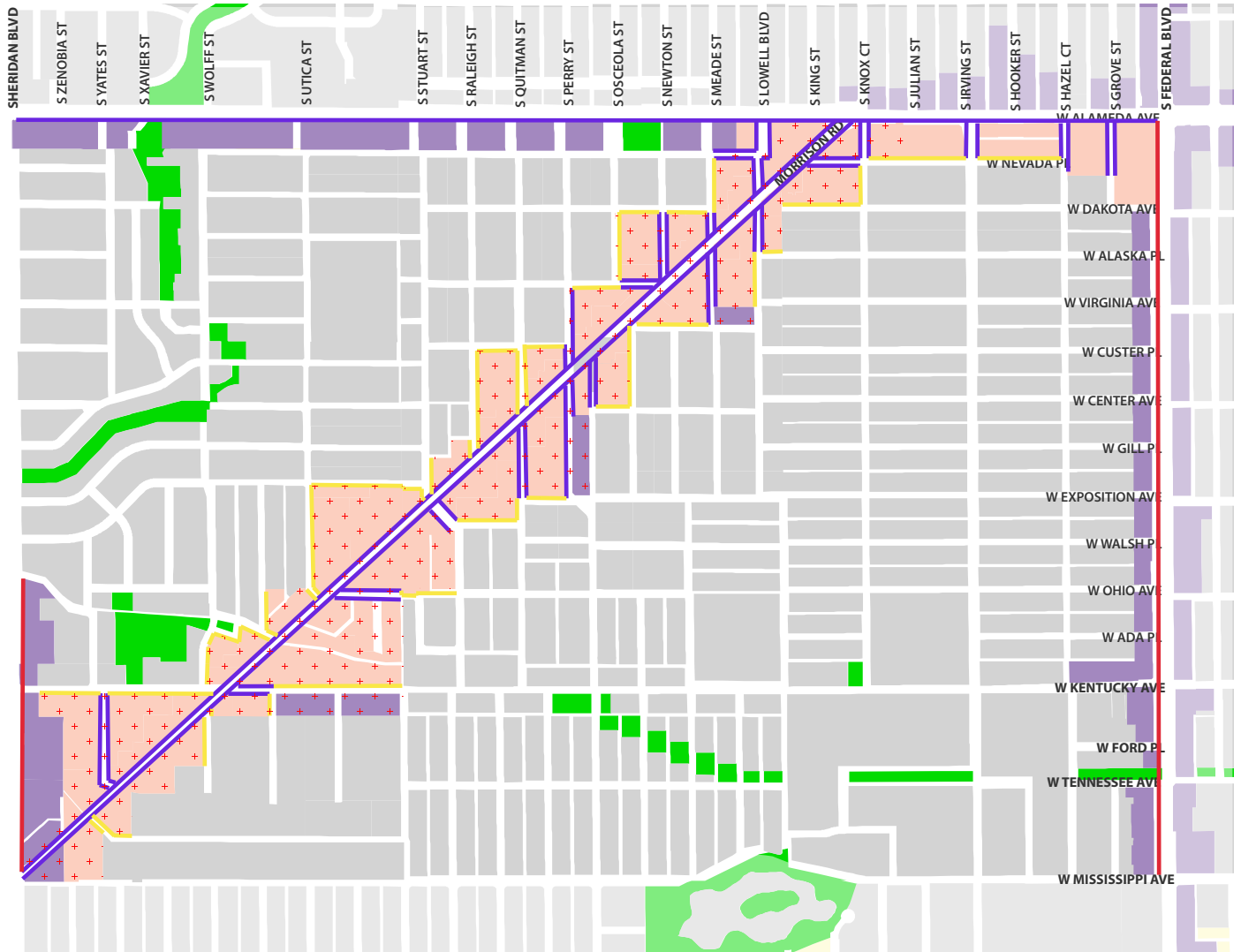
### **Parks and Open Space**

Parks and open space in Westwood range from pocket parks and greenways to larger, neighborhood serving parks. They can be programmed with recreation equipment or more natural and intended for passive recreation. Linear parks or greenways provide an option for off-street multi-modal connections.

### **STREET CLASSIFICATIONS**

Update the Future Street Classifications in Blueprint Denver to be consistent with the street classifications recommended on the *Blueprint Denver Map* on page 49. The





#### Maximum Building Heights



#### Active Edges



### BUILDING HEIGHTS AND ACTIVE EDGES

hierarchy of the proposed transportation network balances mobility with access so that Westwood streets are well-equipped to move people, on foot, bicycle, bus and car. Blueprint Denver street classifications are best used to describe not only the function of streets, but how their function relates to adjacent land uses.

### C.1.C. FACILITATE HIGH QUALITY URBAN DESIGN

New development should utilize the following urban design principles to maximize the quality of development and pedestrian amenities within the neighborhood.

#### Human Scaled Corridors

Create visually interesting and human scaled facades, particularly along the Morrison Road corridor. Utilize doors, windows and articulation to establish scale, variation and patterns on building facades that provide visual interest and reflect uses within the buildings. Orient buildings to create a consistent street frontage along corridors such as Morrison Road and Federal Boulevard.



### Maximum Building Heights

Establish maximum building heights consistent with the *Building Heights and Active Edges* map to preserve the low-rise building character of the Single Family Residential and Single Family/Duplex areas and provide appropriate transitions to the higher heights of the commercial and mixed-use areas. Respect maximum recommended building heights but encourage a mix of heights and variation in building forms.

Within the Morrison Road Influence Area, a maximum height of 5 stories is identified to create intensity nodes. However, discretion regarding building height should be used when directly adjacent to low-scale residential. Specifically, for properties recommended at 5 stores that have a Residential Active Edge, greater care should be given to ensure appropriate height transition to the low-scale residential.

### Active Edges

Well designed streets and street-building interfaces are key for successful placemaking. Together, they create a sense of community and neighborhood, as well as contribute to safety and comfort. Since the unique configuration of Morrison Road creates some difficulty in predicting parcel assemblage for redevelopment, designating certain streets as active edges will help to inform appropriate zoning and design choices to provide transitions to the neighboring districts. Westwood contains three types of Active Edges highlighted on the *Building Heights and Active Edges map* (p. 51).

#### Residential Active Edges

These are streets where the transition from higher density, mixed use to lower density, single family occurs. When a higher density residential or mixed use development fronts low density residential across the street, it is important that development provides high quality design along these edges with:

- Street facing entries on residential units
- High transparency and active uses on street-level commercial
- Limit blank walls or visible service/loading areas

#### Mixed-Use Active Edges

These areas should prioritize pedestrians and encourage multi-modal access. Buildings should address the street through a consistent urban edge that allows for open space and plazas in strategic locations.

#### Commercial Active Edges

While more auto oriented than mixed-use edges, these interfaces should still address the street by orienting building fronts to the street and provide pedestrian scaled design. Build-to ranges may be slightly more than would be seen along mixed-use active edges.





## RECOMMENDATION C.2 ENHANCE THE LOCAL ECONOMY

### C.2.A. SUPPORT SMALL BUSINESSES

Westwood is home to a number of small businesses, but it has the potential to be a thriving and unique business district. The Office of Economic Development currently provides programs to help neighborhood business owners. There are also many other organizations that are potential partners for supporting small businesses and entrepreneurs such as micro-business organizations, foundations, and neighborhood business support offices. The City and other Westwood stakeholders should be supportive of businesses through a variety of strategies such as development of a Westwood Neighborhood Economic Development Strategy; building local capacity to achieve economic development outcomes by providing training and technical assistance workshops, increased visibility of commercial districts through marketing support; development of a “buy Westwood” campaign; and implementation of community wealth building concepts and techniques.

#### Attract New Businesses

Explore the possibility of either a City or private-led small business incubation/shared work space enterprise center within the neighborhood. Business incubators can be focused on specific industries, such as food production.

#### Enhance Existing Businesses

Encourage existing neighborhood-serving businesses to stay and grow in Westwood by increasing business outreach and improving access to technical and capital resources. Work with businesses to attract and train a high quality workforce.

### C.2.B. ENHANCE ACCESS TO EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES

Work with the Denver Office of Economic Development and non-profit partners to expand job training through workforce center training, language training, job incubator centers, and to coordinate existing job training programs. Promote improvements that enhance multi modal access for residents to these opportunities within the neighborhood.

### C.2.C. ENHANCE ACCESS TO NEIGHBORHOOD SERVICES

Encourage continued coordination between non-profit service organizations that focus on the neighborhood, and government agencies to identify gaps in service needs. Identify partnerships to promote more affordable and culturally relevant retail, as well as access to basic daily necessities such as pharmacy, food market, banking and other desired services. Promote infrastructure improvements (walkable alleys, improved sidewalk connections, etc.) that enhance physical access for residents to these neighborhood services.

### C.2.D. LEVERAGE EXISTING BUSINESS IMPROVEMENT PROGRAMS

There are many programs offered through both the City’s Office of Economic Development and outside agencies that provide small business loans or other types of assistance to businesses. There may be barriers to access these programs such as lack of information, language barriers and geographic access. The City should remove as many barriers as possible, making these programs more accessible, and target outreach to potential businesses with appropriate resources in Westwood.

To support small businesses and business services, the City should continue to support the Business Development Association in the neighborhood.

## goal

*Create a neighborhood that is attractive and convenient for new and existing neighborhood-serving businesses, promoting a thriving economy that increases employment opportunities and job training*



## goal

*Provide business owners and residents opportunities for larger personal and financial stakes in their community.*



*BID Placemaking- Washington DC*



*DURA Single Family Home Rehab Program  
Before and After*

*\*Additional recommendations for Arts and Cultures Districts can be found in C.3.A. Explore benefits of Special Districts*

### C.3.A. EXPLORE BENEFITS OF SPECIAL DISTRICTS

Special districts are a form of governance that can provide services and facilities within a defined boundary. Limited public funds and competing demands for existing taxes make it hard for cities and counties to provide all the services their citizens desire in certain areas. When residents or business owners want new focused services or higher levels of existing services, they can form a district to pay for them. Special districts localize the costs and benefits of public services. There are a variety of different types of special districts, each with their own benefits. Two areas of Westwood which could benefit from the creation of a special district include the Morrison Road Linear Mercado and the Little Saigon district.

#### **Morrison Road Linear Mercado\***

Along Morrison Road there is currently a Local Maintenance District (LMD) that extends the length of the retail corridor. A LMD can provide valuable services, but it does not have the full benefits that a Business Improvement District (BID) would provide. A BID can provide tax revenue to fund district specific improvements such as enhanced placemaking efforts. A BID can help to advance retail density and increase commercial capacity to support the creation of a linear Mercado and cultural arts district. A BID is an opportunity to provide a cohesive sense of place through coordinated efforts of business owners. Build off of the existing business support office to create a Morrison Road BID, which would assist in creating a thriving district.

#### **Little Saigon\***

The recently created Little Saigon Business District is an important first step to the formalization of a special district for this unique cultural and retail destination for the Denver region. The district would benefit from increased organization and coordination that a more formalized district would offer, such as a arts & culture district or a BID. Additionally, the fund-raising abilities of special districts could help fund placemaking enhancements and marketing for the corridor.

### C.3.B. MAINTAIN HOUSING AFFORDABILITY

#### **Promote Home Ownership**

Programs exist to help neighborhood residents with the purchase of a home and with investment in repairs. These programs should be increasingly publicized in the neighborhood, and any barriers to their use, such as language of geographic barriers, should be removed. If gaps exist in the programming, the City should explore new programs that would benefit Westwood residents and create additional tools.

#### **Increase Housing Affordability**

While the development of new affordable and workforce housing should be a priority, other strategies presented in the plan will also contribute to affordability in Westwood. Expanding the Single Family/Duplex areas and allowing ADU's increases the diversity of housing choices, which contributes to affordability. Exploring partnerships with different organizations to provide improvements that increase energy efficiency can help to bring household costs down. Overall, a neighborhood based strategy for preserving and creating long term housing affordability in Westwood should be developed with community residents and leaders.

#### **Improve Housing Stock**

A majority of Westwood's aging residential housing stock is currently in need of critical structural and energy efficiency updates. Since much of Westwood's housing stock was first constructed in the same time period, there is an opportunity to create a large scale home retrofit program focused on energy efficiency. The City along with regional and federal partners should explore partnerships to help address Westwood's aging housing stock.



**HOW A RESILIENT WESTWOOD CAN IMPROVE HEALTH:**

Adding neighborhood retail goods and services can increase walking, decrease driving, boost the local economy, and increase social interaction with more “eyes on the street.” Addressing environmental and physical challenges in the neighborhood can lead to reductions in the chronic stress that residents now experience from existing conditions and improve overall mental and physical wellbeing.

**HIA Recommendation D.3**

*Recommend land use designations to support a range of essential services including healthy food outlets such as full-service grocery stores, backyard and community gardens and farmers’ markets, as well as health care and other critical services. Ensure multimodal connectivity to these destinations.*

**Plan recommendation addressing HIA Recommendation D.3:**

- C.1.A. Guide Future Change

**Why are these recommendations important for health?**

Ensuring that residents have safe and convenient access to necessary resources and especially healthy food is critical to improve the health of Westwood as it is currently struggles with food security and access.

**HIA Recommendation D.1 & D.2**

**D.1** *Ensure that a diversity of housing types are available throughout the neighborhood to accommodate all ages, households and incomes including single-family, multi-family, accessory dwelling units, or other.*

**D.2** *Ensure development and reinvestment in an adequate housing supply, including affordability, quality and energy efficiency, through City programs and other resources.*

**Plan Recommendation addressing HIA Recommendations:**

- C.1.A. Guide Future Change
- C.3.B. Maintain Housing Affordability

**Why are these recommendations important for health?**

Housing diversity provides economic stability, accommodates for the aging population and sustains a variety of family types. Diverse and high-quality affordable and workforce housing are important to the health and well-being of children and families. When housing needs are appropriately met, children are more likely to be healthy and perform well in school, and parents are more likely to be productive members of a strong workforce.









# transformative projects

## Multi-layered and long-term- the most critical steps

Six projects are identified as the most critical steps to positively transform the neighborhood. It is anticipated that each of these projects, if implemented, would have a catalytic and transformative effect on the neighborhood. Partnerships and resources should be harnessed toward making these a reality. Multi-layered and long-term in nature, these projects will take a concerted effort by the City, community, and key stakeholders. These signature projects embody bold ideas that implement more than one plan recommendation and will have great impact on Westwood in the coming years. Only through executing these projects can Westwood be enhanced and achieve the vision of a connected, celebrated, resilient and healthy part of Denver.

### 1. Transform Morrison Road

### 2. Re-Imagine Weir Gulch

### 3. Create a Neighborhood Greenway

### 4. Strengthen Community Resources and Spaces

### 5. Improve Healthy Food Access

### 6. Connect the Region to Westwood

## How does Morrison Road contribute to **CONNECTED**?

- Realizing the vision of a vibrant commercial corridor will better connect and unite the neighborhood by enhancing mobility and safety of all users of the corridor

## How does Morrison Road contribute to **CELEBRATED**?

- There are many unique cultural assets along the corridor, that if better connected and enhanced can better serve the neighborhood

## How does Morrison Road contribute to **RESILIENT**?

- The vision of the corridor includes mixed income housing along with vibrant retail destinations, all contributing to a more affordable and resilient Westwood.

## How does Morrison Road contribute to **HEALTH**?

- Improving the corridor to better unite the neighborhood will encourage more active transportation, thus improving the physical health of residents. Additionally more neighborhood destinations promote local jobs, support small businesses, build social cohesion and promote community safety.

## WHAT IS IT?

Morrison Road has the ability to become the cultural and economic hub of the Southwest Denver that unites the neighborhood. The commercial activity along the corridor is primarily comprised of small business such as salons, small restaurants, auto mechanics, and specialty stores. Additionally, there are a number of cultural assets along the corridor such as the Denver Indian Center, the Paloma Villas community, La Casaita Community House, BuCu Kitchen Network and the Westwood Food Co-op. Morrison Road's diagonal configuration creates oddly shaped parcels and challenging intersections for all users. Through the improvement of mobility of all users, the promotion of neighborhood-serving redevelopment, and the creation of a unique neighborhood commercial district, or Linear Mercado, Morrison Road has the potential to become both a neighborhood and regional destination that celebrates the unique culture and history of the Westwood neighborhood. These recommendations will transform Morrison Road as a "place to be" rather than continuing to let it serve as a shortcut for those who live outside the community.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

### Improve mobility for all users

Safe mobility is critical for Morrison Road to realize its vision as the cultural and economic focus of the neighborhood. The current configuration of the corridor serves as an unsafe divider of the neighborhood. Improvements have been recently constructed and more are planned for the near term. To achieve the vision for Morrison Road a comprehensive corridor plan is necessary to address the safety of all road users, especially at intersections. Recommendations to improve the mobility of the corridor include:

- Improve intersections along Morrison Road to ensure the safety of all users crossing the corridor
- Implement recommendations from "A.3.A. Transform Morrison Road\*" on page 30) to ensure the corridor is safe to cross for all ages and abilities
- Study narrowing vehicular lane widths
- Study the demand for improved bicycle facilities and safe connections and crossings as cycling becomes more common in the neighborhood
- Implement design changes to help reinforce the speed limit of the road
- Enhance the pedestrian realm by providing wider sidewalks and an ample buffer between the sidewalk and roadway
- Implement uniquely designed and consistent pedestrian scaled lighting along the corridor
- Explore opportunities to implement green infrastructure, both within the right-of-way and with new development







## Potential Improvements for the Morrison Road Corridor:

### Roadway

1. Year-round maintainable enhanced bike-way
2. Creative use of right of way (Parklets, bike parking)

### Pedestrian Realm

3. Consistent street trees
4. Integrated water quality features
5. Wide, consistent, decorative sidewalk
6. Consistent street furniture

### Private Realm

7. Active ground story uses and pedestrian oriented design
8. Creative branding and signage
9. Unique placemaking features

## MORRISON ROAD: EXISTING CONDITION



## MORRISON ROAD: POTENTIAL IMPROVEMENTS







The Mission District- San Francisco, CA



Little Villita Gateway - Chicago, IL



Placemaking Potential- Ybor City, FL

### Promote neighborhood serving redevelopment

Morrison Road creates a multitude of challenges for redevelopment due to its diagonal alignment through the neighborhood. Small, irregular shaped parcels primarily front the road which are challenging to redevelop as mixed-use developments. For reinvestment along Morrison Road to achieve the corridor vision as a mixed-use pedestrian shopping corridor, extra flexibility in development regulations needs to be enabled to address the small, irregular shaped parcels and the diagonal alignment of the roadway. Additionally, considerations to the adjacent residential neighborhoods must occur to ensure new development does not turn its back on the established neighborhoods on either side of the corridor. Ideally, new development will enhance the urban design and character of these areas. Recommendations to promote neighborhood serving redevelopment include:

- Expand boundaries of “Area of Change” and future land use classifications to increase the flexibility of irregular shaped parcels along Morrison Road
- Due to uniqueness of the corridor, explore a variety of regulatory tools to help implement the vision
- Encourage development to creatively incorporate public spaces and plazas in the spaces left over due to irregularly shaped parcels
- Encourage pedestrian oriented design and active uses along the street

### Create a unique neighborhood commercial and cultural district

Morrison Road is currently the primary retail destination for the neighborhood, though it lacks many daily services such as a grocery store or pharmacy. The corridor features many unique and local food establishments, as well as many auto-oriented uses. To create a truly unique destination for the neighborhood and region, it is critical to strengthen the existing assets of the corridor, while attracting new contributing uses to this burgeoning pedestrian oriented retail destination. During the planning process, the concept of linear Mercado along Morrison Road was brought up as a potential unique feature of this neighborhood commercial district. Recommendations to create a unique neighborhood commercial and cultural district include:

- Support the creation of a special district to help fund improvement projects , enhanced maintenance, extra enforcement, cultural events, and marketing for the corridor
- Cultivate a unique and robust retail mix that is reflective of the neighborhood needs, along with the unique Mexican culture of the area
- Incorporate and encourage street art and murals to enliven the street celebrate culture
- Promote cultural district specific street signage to enhance cultural fabric, walkability, and visual interest of corridor
- Use intersections as opportunities to make places for art, murals, music, and performances
- Utilize transit infrastructure, streetscaping, pavement materials, and building facades to reinforce the unique identity of the corridor
- Establish community gateways into Westwood at Alameda Avenue in the north and Mississippi Avenue in the south using entry monuments, larger-scale plantings, vertical elements, and design features that express community identity





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## How does Weir Gulch contribute to CONNECTED?

- A continuous and safe path along the greenway will enhance regional and neighborhood connectivity

## How does Weir Gulch contribute to CELEBRATED?

- The improved greenway could be the home to increased public art and community gardens for the neighborhood

## How does Weir Gulch contribute to RESILIENT?

- An improved greenway will provide increased flood protection for neighboring properties

## How does Weir Gulch contribute to HEALTH?

- The construction of a safe and consistent multi-use path will encourage active mobility contributing to an increase in physical health
- Improving the greenway will greatly enhance the environmental health of the neighborhood and provide passive recreation opportunities

## WHAT IS IT?

Weir Gulch is an urban waterway that provides flood control infrastructure and flows through the north-west part of Westwood. The gulch flows through Westwood, Barnum, Barnum West, Villa Park and Sun Valley neighborhoods, eventually connecting to the South Platte River. In some locations it is an open and natural channel, while in other locations it is a concrete trough or underground in pipes.

In its current condition, the greenway is not viewed as an open space asset to the neighborhood. Additionally, sections of the gulch do not have the intended capacity to prevent flooding to adjacent homes. Though a multi-use path that runs along most of the greenway, it is not well integrated into the larger multi-modal mobility network. Additionally, it is an attractive place for undesirable activity, since the path and surrounding open-space is hidden, poorly lit, and lacking in overall use.

There is tremendous opportunity and momentum to transform this troublesome greenway into a true neighborhood amenity. There are a number of larger ongoing studies identifying restorative improvements to the entire waterway to address flood risk, ecosystem health, and recreational opportunities. Weir Gulch can be transformed to provide the greatest benefit to the Westwood neighborhood community through the implementation of a continuous, well connected multi-use trail, enhanced open-space amenities, and thriving natural ecosystem, all while reducing the flood risk to surrounding properties.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

### Create an intuitive and safe multi-use trail

Weir Gulch has the potential to enhance regional and neighborhood connectivity by providing a consistent and safe multi-use trail connecting the neighborhood to the regional South Platte River Trail. Recommendations for the multi-use trail include:

- Construct a grade-separated crossing of Alameda
- Add wayfinding and signage to better identify trail and destinations along the route
- Provide a safe and visible connection to the Gulch from the neighborhood's bicycle network
- Add appropriate lighting along the trail, especially at road crossings

### Provide additional open-space amenities

A number of amenities, identified by residents, should be included in the reconstruction effort of the greenway to improve the perception of the gulch and increase its use. These improvements will help transform the greenway into a valued asset of the neighborhood's network of parks and open-space. These amenities include public art, shade structures, seating, small playgrounds, community gardens and bilingual interpretive signage to accompany any ecosystem enhancements. It is critical that these amenities are included in the reconstruction of the greenway to ensure that it becomes a community asset.

### Create a thriving natural ecosystem and reduce flood-risk

Great places for people can also be thriving natural environments. Improving the natural ecosystem of the neighborhood will enhance Westwood's resiliency and create a more beautiful and diverse environment.

Additionally, it is imperative that the gulch is designed to reduce flood-risk for the neighborhood during large storm events. The gulch can operate as a critical floodway, while being designed in an aesthetically pleasing manner that provides additional amenities for the neighborhood.



*Bottière-Chênaie ecodistrict, Nantes, France*





The reconstruction of Weir Gulch should meet the following flood control and natural ecosystem goals:

- Design the gulch to maximize property flooding protection for neighborhood properties
- Implement gulch improvements to create a healthy waterway
- Reduce soil erosion and damage to private property, public infrastructure and parks during storm events
- Reduce the reliance on concrete channels and pipes to convey storm runoff and explore open, natural channel opportunities that enhance environmental quality



**WEIR GULCH: EXISTING CONDITION**



**WEIR GULCH: POTENTIAL IMPROVEMENTS**

- |                              |  |
|------------------------------|--|
| ① Continuous Multi-use Path  | ④ Opportunities to interact with the natural ecosystem |
| ② Restored natural ecosystem | ⑤ Interpretive signage                                 |
| ③ Public Art                 | ⑥ Shade Structure                                      |



How does the Neighborhood Greenway contribute to **CONNECTED**?

- This Green Network will create greater access and connectivity which promotes the use of more multi-modal transportation options and will increase neighborhood connectivity

How does the Neighborhood Greenway contribute to **CELEBRATED**?

- Increased connections provide a platform for interactivity and gathering spaces. Additionally, the enhancement of alleys provides the opportunity for culturally relevant public art.

How does the Neighborhood Greenway contribute to **RESILIENT**?

- The creation and enhancement of green infrastructure improves stormwater quality and promotes natural habitat restoration.

How does the Neighborhood Greenway contribute to **HEALTHY**?

- Improving access and multi-modal opportunities in the area encourages an environment for a more active lifestyle, transportation choices and critical connections to essential goods and services.

## WHAT IS IT?

There are many recreation opportunities throughout Westwood, however, many of these places are perceived to be unsafe, under maintained, lacking amenities, disconnected or inaccessible. In order to improve the usage and visibility of these spaces they must be attractive and convenient to use by all. A connected network of green spaces will be created by better connecting existing open spaces to each other and to neighborhood destinations. Linking existing recreational assets with additional open spaces, greenways, green streets, neighborhood bikeways and enhanced alleys will provide Westwood with a safe, engaging and convenient recreation opportunity.

The proposed Neighborhood Greenway builds on existing opportunities such as the Xcel power line easement, Weir Gulch, Westwood Park, and existing alley right-of-way. These spaces will link together with new green streets, neighborhood bikeways, enhanced alleys, and other right of way enhancements to create a connected network.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

### Create an intuitive and memorable network

The goal of the Neighborhood Greenway is to create an intuitive alternative network to enhance mobility and recreation throughout the Westwood neighborhood and beyond. Unique placemaking strategies should be explored to make the greenway an attractive and memorable space that residents will be proud of. Placemaking improvements that will contribute to the activation of the greenway throughout the neighborhood may include:

- Unique gateway features at key locations
- Comprehensive and Westwood specific bilingual wayfinding signage
- Interactive public art
- Enhanced artistic crosswalks
- Pedestrian scaled, greenway specific lighting

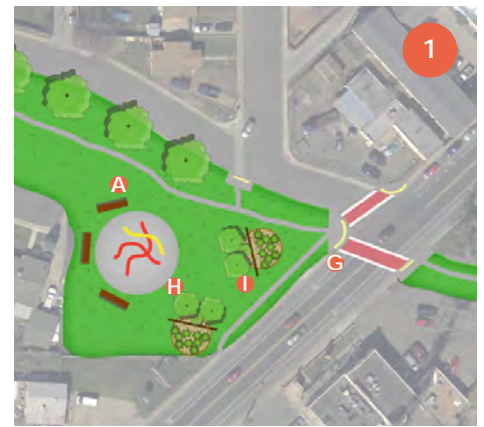
### Enhance the utility easement

The overhead power lines that run through the southern end of the neighborhood limit development opportunities and can therefore be better utilized and become an amenity for the neighborhood. The location of this easement provides a strong connection between Weir Gulch at the northwest part of Westwood and the school's (Kepner Middle School and Pascal LeDoux Academy) open spaces near Federal at the southeast part of Westwood. Steps to transform these existing open spaces into amenities for the neighborhood include:

- Increase landscaping and natural habitat along the easement
- Add amenities such as a consistent multi-modal path, benches, water fountains, wayfinding, interpretive signage, and pedestrian scaled lighting
- Create distinguished crossing areas where the greenway interacts with streets through the use of unique pavement treatments and clear signage
- Increase awareness about safety of the power lines











Wayfinding signage example

### Create new connections between West Ada Place and Morrison Road

This segment can be converted to be a connection for bicyclist and pedestrians that will serve as a key off street route, linking the two main segments of the Neighborhood Greenway. This connection should be created to serve multiple functions including:

- Increased green stormwater infrastructure
- A pedestrian-friendly environment through the use of appropriately scaled lighting and public art
- Consistent and unique wayfinding
- Gateway elements at Morrison Road
- Explore acquisition to bring Westwood Park to Morrison Road

### Encourage shared use agreement with Denver Public Schools

Properties associated with Denver Public Schools have the potential to dramatically increase the amount of publicly accessible open space in the neighborhood, while also adding a connection point for the proposed green network. The open space at Kepner Middle School and Pascal LeDoux Academy would serve as a gateway to the Neighborhood Greenway on the southeast side of the neighborhood from Federal Boulevard. Many school yards are already open to the community after school and on weekend, however better outreach and education is needed to make sure this amenity is known throughout the neighborhood.

### Enhance Weir Gulch\*

The enhancement of Weir Gulch is a key component of the Neighborhood Greenway network. It will create a gateway into the greenway on the northwest side of the neighborhood from Alameda and will be a significant north-south, off street route for pedestrians and bicyclists. The gulch is also a critical location for increased open space amenities such as shade structures, seating, and public art.

*\*Additional recommendations for this area are located in the Re-Imagine Weir Gulch transformative project*

### Create Green Streets

The majority of the proposed Neighborhood Greenway will be an off-street amenity, but there are some locations where connections are needed but it is not feasible to be completely off-street. The creation of designated Green Streets (Recommendation A.2.B) will provide multi-modal and multi-functional on-street connections. Green Streets still function for vehicles, but also serve as key components of a multi-modal network.



Enhanced crosswalk



Dequindre Cut Greenway, Detroit





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### How does Community Resources contribute to **CONNECTED**?

- Creating community space throughout the neighborhood ensures that everyone has access. Enhancing existing spaces will distribute opportunities throughout the neighborhood as opposed to residents having to travel to a central location.

### How does Community Resources contribute to **CELEBRATED**?

- Creating places for people to gather provides a platform for cultural celebrations.

### How does Community Resources contribute to **RESILIENT**?

- Providing amenities makes Westwood a desirable place to live and work, which strengthens the community.

### How does Community Resources contribute to **HEALTH**?

- Making recreation spaces more attractive and accessible encourages people of all ages and abilities to be active, contributing to physical health.



Mexica Danzante, Grupo Tlaloc

## WHAT IS IT?

Westwood is home to many cultures, ages, and incomes levels. The neighborhood also has one of the highest rates of obesity and one of the largest concentration of youth under the age of 18 in the City. There is a strong desire for increased gathering places to celebrate this diversity and bring people together. There is currently no community or recreation center to house programming or recreation facilities. . Ultimately, a Denver recreation center is needed to serve the Westwood community. In the meantime, there are steps that can be taken to enhance current community assets and potentially open some up for wider neighborhood use. This series of smaller investments are a way to provide short term solutions for the lack of community space in the neighborhood. The ultimate goal is to locate a new recreation center in Westwood but these recommended enhancements are incremental steps to improve community space in the neighborhood in the short term.

Community resources should be spaces that are accessible and welcoming to all ages and cultures. They should have areas for recreation as well as provide spaces for community gatherings, events, meetings or classes.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

### Identify and support existing resource enhancement opportunities

Existing community assets in Westwood are unique and will continue to evolve over time. Additionally, new assets may locate in the neighborhood in the future. This plan identifies gaps and potential enhancements by resource. This list serves as a guide and may not be a full list of potential enhancements. Neighborhood advocates and partners should continue to seek funding opportunities to make enhancements to the existing spaces. Examples of these sources may include grants, city funding, or private development contributions. Goals for enhanced community assets include:

- **Recreation-** Expand and update existing equipment and facilities. Re-purpose underutilized buildings to allow for recreation. Spaces should also have areas and technology for group exercise classes. Implementing incremental community spaces dispersed throughout the neighborhood is a short term solution to meet the needs and desires of the neighborhood. Long-term, a recreation center should be built in Westwood to serve the unmet need.
- **Education and Training-** Create and modernize classrooms. Vocational training spaces should also be available for hands on, technical education
- **Culture-** Provide publicly accessible space for large scale festivals and celebrations. Increase awareness of culture-specific services and ensure they are accessible to the entire community
- **Supportive Services-** Raise awareness of services provided in Westwood and the surrounding area. Ensure services are relevant to the Westwood community and align with the needs of the growing and changing population, along with the business community
- **Youth Enrichment-** Update and expand facilities to accommodate best practices in youth education and enrichment. Ensure locations are accessible and safe, particularly for a large young population. Ensure that these services continue to meet the needs of the youth population as it grows and ages
- **Health and Food-** Update facilities to ensure compliance with all applicable health and safety regulations. Provide hands-on training space for food safety and preparation classes





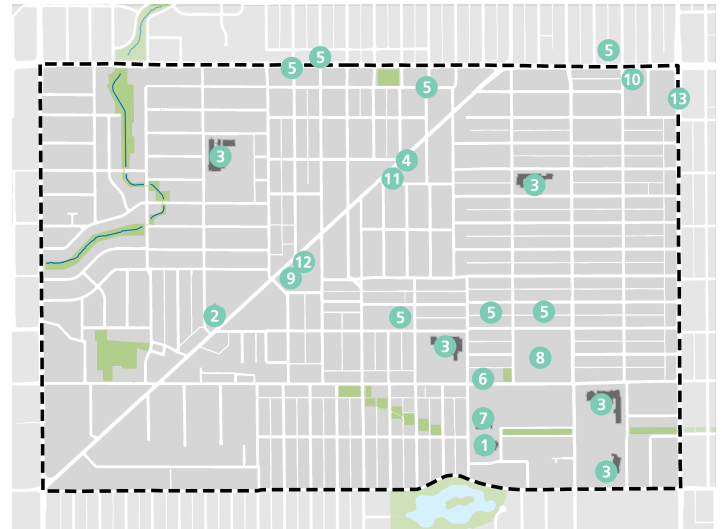
## Open publicly owned assets to the entire community

Open spaces in the neighborhood owned and maintained by Denver Public Schools do not technically serve as neighborhood parks. While some do have limited public use agreements in place, there is little use of the spaces by the community for a number of reasons. Recommendations to open these open space assets up to the community include:

- Pursue open community use agreements for public use of the outdoor recreation space at neighborhood schools during non-school hours
- Publicize use agreement terms and regulations to Maximize awareness and use of these existing facilities
- Design new and existing recreation spaces for the entire Westwood Community

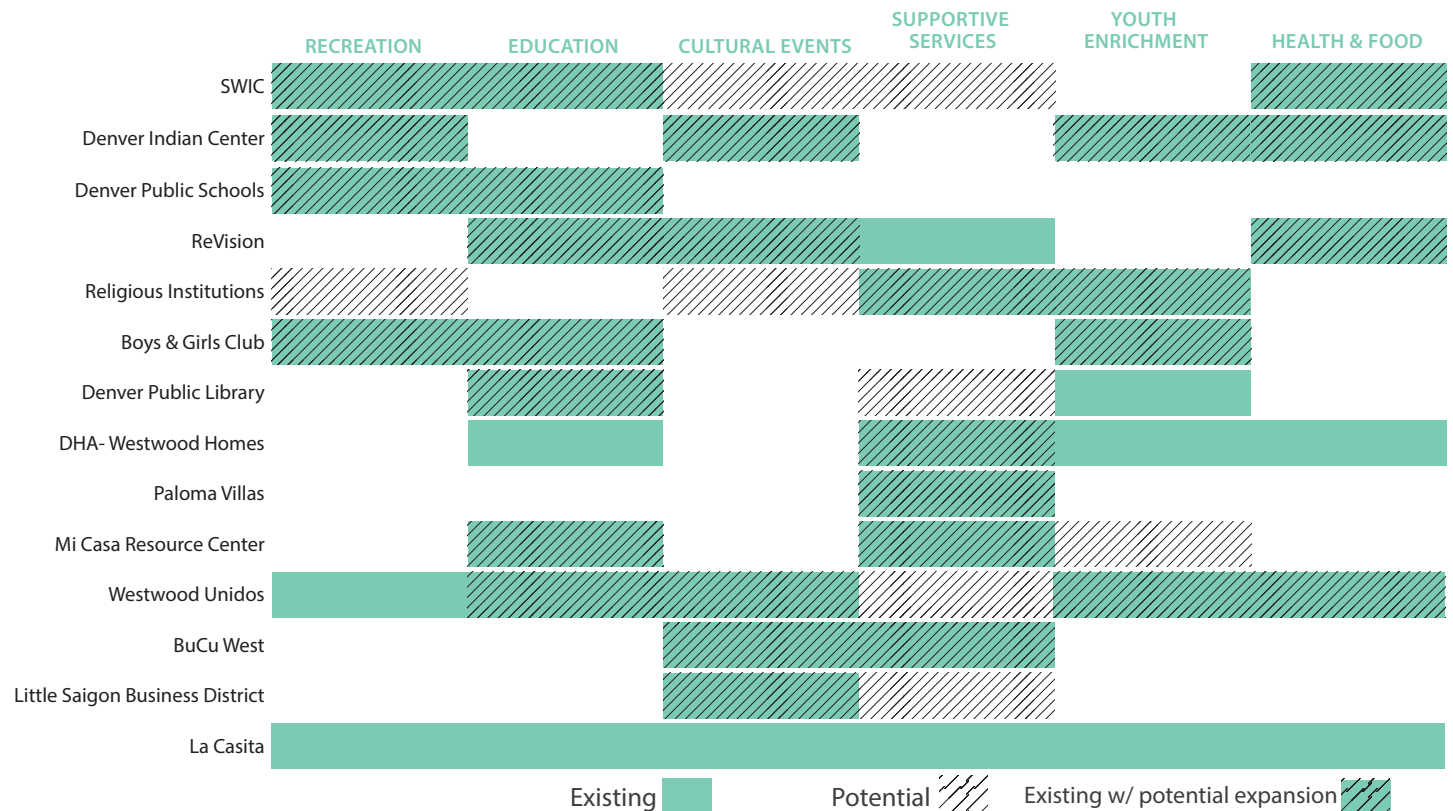
## Build a West Denver recreation center

The construction of a new recreation or community center in Westwood is the ultimate goal. A Denver recreation center would not only provide opportunities for healthy living and positive after-school and summer activities for youth, but it would also serve as a much-needed community gathering space. While challenges include land acquisition and capital construction costs, residents and stakeholders and the City should continue to advocate and work for a new recreation and community center in the Westwood neighborhood.



1. SWIC
2. Denver Indian Center
3. DPS
4. ReVision
5. Religious Institutions
6. Boys a& Girls Club
7. Denver Library
8. DHA
9. Paloma Villa
10. Mi Casa Resource Center
11. La Casita
12. BuCu West / Morrison Road
13. Little Saigon Business District

## COMMUNITY RESOURCES





**How does a Healthy Food System contribute to **CONNECTED**?**

- Connecting people to their food through strong multi-modal connections and providing opportunities for food production addresses the challenges of food deserts

**How a Healthy Food System contribute to **CELEBRATED**?**

- By celebrating the culturally diverse foods, the components of the neighborhood that make Westwood authentic will be retained.

**How does a Healthy Food System contribute to **RESILIENT**?**

- A healthy food system will contribute to a self-sustaining and strong Westwood and offer increased economic opportunities for residents and business owners

**How does a Healthy Food System contribute to **HEALTH**?**

- Developing a healthy food system will increase residents' access to healthy, affordable foods and in turn reduce chronic diseases that are related to nutrition, such as diabetes, high blood pressure and obesity
- Individual and community health can be improved by expanding access to and enriching the local supply of healthy food.
- Creating a healthy food system will increase opportunities for residents to enjoy similar diets to those found in their home country, including less processed foods.

**WHAT IS IT?**

The Westwood community has made significant progress in the pursuit of healthy food access for all residents and the development of an economically robust food system. The food system is comprised of producers, processors, distributors, retailers and consumers; all are sectors that Westwood can support to create a resilient healthy food system. In addition, access to culturally relevant food is also critical to the food system of multi-ethnic neighborhoods like Westwood. The development of Westwood's local food system will create economic opportunities, increase health equity, strengthen the community, and respects the culture and history of Westwood.

**RECOMMENDATIONS****Expand opportunities for food production**

Community led food production by the community and for the community can remove the barriers to healthy and affordable food and promote community ownership. Recommendations to expand opportunities for food production include:

- Support the development and growth of small scale gardens to expand and thrive in Westwood
- Consider using residential properties, utility easements, public parks, vacant land, and new developments for food production
- Develop strategic partnerships with land owners and non-profits to ensure the long term success of gardens
- Enable for year-round food production to occur throughout the neighborhood

**Provide opportunities for food processing**

Providing affordable and updated spaces for safe food processing will ensure food safety while keeping the food system local to Westwood. These processing spaces offer residents with additional economic opportunities. Recommendations to increase opportunities for food processing in the neighborhood include:

- Provide affordable, publicly accessible commercial kitchen spaces within the neighborhood for the safe preparation of locally produced and prepared foods, such as canning, baking, and fermenting
- Create space for mobile food vendors to safely prepare food for sale
- Encourage these spaces offer food safety training classes
- Promote opportunities for production through the Cottage Foods Act

**Increase food accessibility and distribution**

The development of an efficient and easily accessible transportation system for all modes will promote environmental and community health along with enhancing the local food system. Recommendations to increase food accessibility in Westwood include:

- Consider using bicycles, electric vehicles, or other low impact means of transportation to transport food within the neighborhood
- Increase multi-modal connections within the neighborhood to ensure the safe and efficient distribution of food in Westwood and throughout the region
- Increase transit offerings and ensure safe pedestrian connections to food retailers and producers





## Diversify Retail Options

The Westwood community is under-served by healthy food retail options and does not have a full scale grocery store. While Westwood may not be able to provide the sufficient consumer demand to support a full scale grocery store, additional food retail options should be perused. Recommendations to diversify retail options in Westwood include:

- Support opportunities for community owned grocery stores, farmers markets, garden stands, and healthy corner-stores to exist and thrive within Westwood. Additional incentives to promote the establishment and retention of neighborhood grocery stores in Westwood should be developed.
- Promote the small-scale preparation and sales of food products as a home occupation allowed by the Colorado Cottage Foods Act while awareness of this opportunity
- Streamline the permitting process and increase accessibility for applicants seeking to operate a healthy food based businesses in Westwood
- Provide business support and training to ensure the success and growth of food-focused community serving businesses
- Improve access to culturally relevant markets

## Develop neighborhood scaled pilot projects

Pilot projects are a means of testing new programs through a temporary, low-risk approaches. By engaging the residents in the program and measuring the success, the project is able to be refined and adjusted prior to the implementation of the final program or design.

Larger household sizes common in Westwood result in higher amounts of household trash. To aid in the reduction of waste, and specifically food waste, a neighborhood scaled composting program would alleviate the waste challenges and provide sustainable fertilizer to the neighborhood gardens.

Additionally, a majority of Westwood children attend their neighborhood school and participate in the free and reduced school lunch program. This provides a significant opportunity to improve nutrition service programs and provide hands on education opportunities.

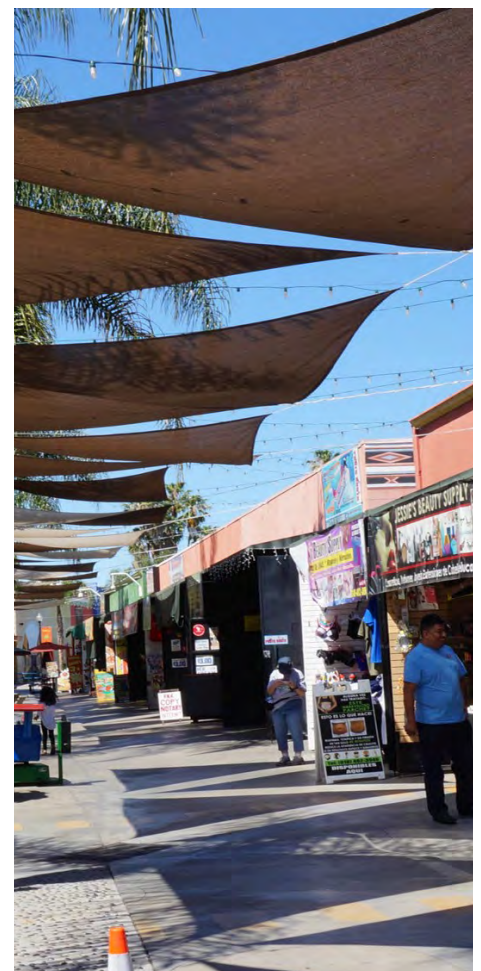
Lastly, Mobile Food Vendors are also prevalent in the neighborhood, however they often do not offer many fresh and healthy food options. These vendors provide an opportunity to expand the availability of healthy food through out the neighborhood.

Recommendations for neighborhood scaled pilot projects in Westwood include:

- Develop a pilot program for Westwood that enables for food waste to become compost for the community and backyard gardens and explore legislative and regulatory barriers to different methods of neighborhood scaled composting
- Construct and maintain school gardens that serve as learning opportunities for youth to learn about growing healthy food
- Build partnerships with the schools and food producers to develop garden-to-cafeteria programs for all of the Westwood schools
- Partner with local non-profits that provide educational programs on how to purchase and prepare affordable and healthy food
- Support piloting a mobile food cart ordinance to increase the availability and reduce the cost of healthy food in the neighborhood.



*Morrison Road, Chile Festival*



*Open Air Linier Mercado  
(photo by James Rojas)*



How does Connect the Region to Westwood contribute to **CONNECTED**?

- Greater access and connectivity promote the use of more active transportation options

How does Connect the Region to Westwood contribute to **CELEBRATED**?

- Creating a gateway to the community strengthens the neighborhood's identity and celebrates its rich history

How does Connect the Region to Westwood contribute to **RESILIENT**?

- Connections will improve access to jobs, education, retail and services located outside of the neighborhood

How does Connect the Region to Westwood contribute to **HEALTHY**?

- Improving access and multi-modal opportunities in the area make critical services such as jobs, schools, child care and health care more attainable

## WHAT IS IT?

Regional mobility contributes to the quality of life and economic health of Westwood and the greater region. Building upon existing and planned connections within Westwood, regional connections provide access to services and amenities located outside of the neighborhood. Increasing connections to Westwood will attract visitors looking to enjoy the neighborhood's cultural and artistic destinations, along with further incentives for employers to locate within the neighborhood. These improvements will also connect Westwood residents with jobs, education, retail, health services, and opportunities for recreation.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

### Ensure multi-modal access to key destinations

Many destinations such as regional health centers, full scale grocery stores, job training and education facilities, regional job centers (Denver Tech Center, DIA, Federal Center), and rail transit connections are located outside of the neighborhood as they serve a larger regional population beyond Westwood. Connecting to this assets is critical for the quality of life of Westwood residents and employees. Recommendations to ensure multi-modal access include:

- Ensure safe multi-modal access to rail transit stations, specifically the Federal, Knox, Perry and Sheridan stations on the West Rail Line and the Alameda Station on the Central Corridor
- Ensure multi-modal access to regional health centers, specifically the newly constructed Southwest Family Health Center and Urgent Care Facility
- Ensure multi-modal access to parks and recreation opportunities, specifically the Harvey Park Recreation Center, Paco Sanchez Park, Sloan's Lake Park, Athmar Recreation Center, Barnum Recreation Center, Athmar Park, Garfield Lake Park, Barnum Park, and the Lakewood Link Recreation Center
- Ensure multi-modal access to public libraries, especially those that offer additional continuing education programs and other services tailored to meet the needs of immigrant and refugee populations
- Ensure multi-modal access to major healthy food retailers, full service grocery stores, and culturally relevant markets

### Improve regional trail system connections

The Denver trail system is a critical component of the city's multi-modal transportation system along with a prized recreational asset. While these trail systems can serve as destinations and parks, it is important to highlight their value as safe and enjoyable connections to the region. Recommendations to improve connections to regional trails include:

- Construct a grade-separated crossing at Alameda Avenue for the multi-use trail, ensuring a safe trail system along Weir Gulch providing a connection to the Regional South Platte River Trail
- Ensure a safe crossing at Federal Boulevard and West Tennessee Avenue providing the continuation of the Westwood Neighborhood Greenway into the Athmar Park neighborhood
- Provide additional north/south bike connections to the Sanderson Gulch Trail
- Study the need of a grade separated crossing at Sheridan Blvd







### Create bicycle and pedestrian connections

Safe and intuitive bicycle routes provide critical transportation options for shorter trips. Alternative transportation modes such as bicycling on a regional scale can provide impressive positive impacts to the community's environmental health. Additionally, pedestrian improvements are critical, ensuring that first and last mile connections are safe and accessible for those using transit. Recommendations to create safe bicycle and pedestrian connections include:

- Prioritize the completion of bike improvements identified in the citywide bicycle plan to ensure safe and continuous bicycle connections to the rail transit stations and surrounding parks
- Since most bicycle/pedestrian vs automobile crashes occur at intersections, prioritize intersection improvements along major roadways bounding Westwood
- Provide creative wayfinding to direct users to Morrison Road and other neighborhood amenities

### Promote transit enhancements

Connecting the transit system to other modes of transportation is crucial. Close attention should be given to the details of these connections. Safe, comfortable, intuitive and inviting connections between transit and destinations along with the frequency of the transit service are critical to the success of transit in the neighborhood. Recommendations to promote transit enhancements include:

- Ensure the continued service of the RTD bus route that provides transit service along Morrison Road and east to the Alameda Light Rail Station
- Ensure transit connectivity to the Central Corridor and the W Rail Line
- Provide enhancements to major transit corridors to improve efficiency and capacity such as transit priority signals and lanes
- Prioritize pedestrian enhancements along major transit corridors such as Federal Boulevard and Alameda Avenue to provide safe and convenient access between different modes of transportation

### Support the development of emerging mobility options

New options for transportation are continually coming to the market such as car-sharing, bike-sharing and alternative taxi services. However, as many of these services are focused in the downtown core, it is important to explore and advocate for similar alternatives that can succeed in Westwood. Recommendations to support emerging mobility options in Westwood include:

- Explore opportunities to expand the service areas of existing providers through incentives or subsidies
- Seek opportunities to create new programs, such as bicycle sharing, that are specifically designed to meet the needs of west Denver

### Promote vehicular safety

By encouraging and enhancing other modes of transportation in the neighborhood, vehicular safety will ultimately increase. Recommendations to promote vehicular safety include:

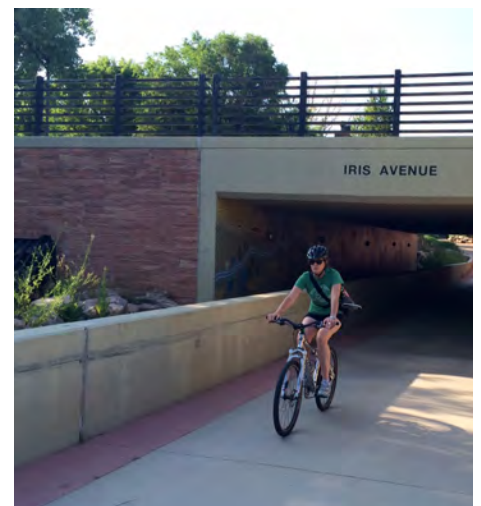
- Enhance arterial intersections to ensure a safe condition for all modes
- Promote roadway improvement projects that address safety and neighborhood appropriate vehicle speeds through the physical design



South Platte River Trail- Denver, CO



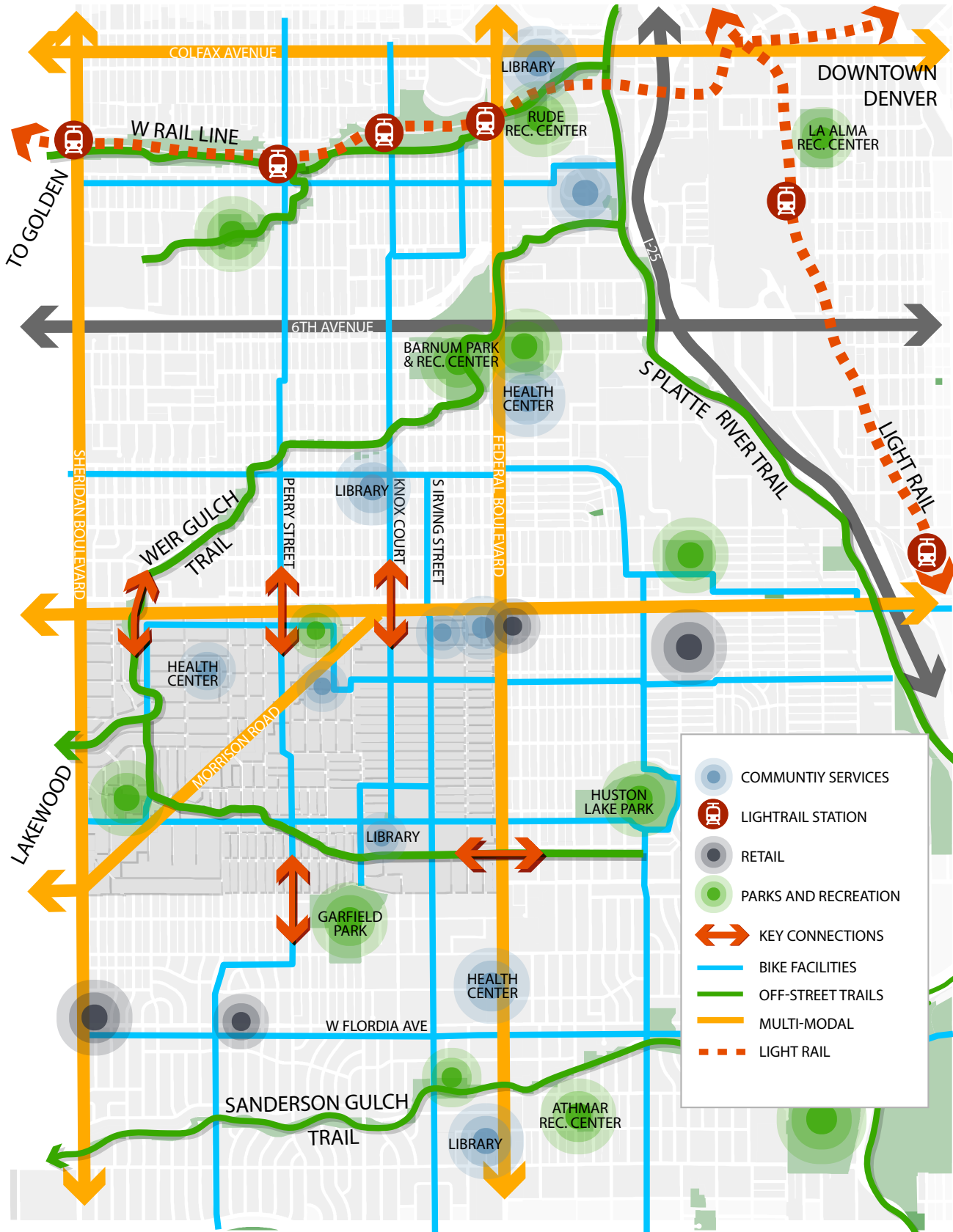
Southwest Family Health Center- Denver, CO



Bicycle/Pedestrian Underpass- Boulder, CO



## REGIONAL CONNECTIONS





# moving forward

## realizing the vision for Westwood

Implementation of the Westwood Neighborhood Plan will occur incrementally over many years through the efforts of residents, the City, nonprofit organizations, business owners, and area property owners. The Plan provides a vision for the future – what the Westwood community wants the neighborhood to become. The question of “how we get there” will be answered over time. It will largely depend on market readiness, strength of leadership, and availability of City resources.

The “Moving Forward” section provides guidance on getting started with the implementation of the Neighborhood Plan. It is organized by the three main approaches to plan implementation, as identified and described in Blueprint Denver:

- 1. Regulatory and Policy Strategies** These strategies result in changes to City codes, regulations, and processes to affect desired outcomes. Common examples include map or text changes to the Denver Zoning Code.
- 2. Partnerships** - Partnerships represent the most diverse approach to implementation and can take on many forms. The City will rely on other public, non-profit and private partners to help implement many recommendations in this Plan.
- 3. Investment Strategies**– The new infrastructure called for in this Plan will require creative “financial engineering”. A variety of public and private sources of funding and financing may be appropriate for the Westwood area.

## WESTWOOD IMPLEMENTATION GOALS

Several goals have been identified to guide implementation of this Plan:

1. Work toward the vision of a connected, celebrated, and resilient Westwood as defined in this Plan.
2. Take strategic steps that help attract private sector and non-governmental (NGO) investment into Westwood.
3. Maintain collaboration between the city, property owners, developers, residents and businesses, community organizations and other area stakeholders.
4. Public and private investments should include site and contextual evaluation to understand opportunities to contribute to a connected, celebrated, resilient and healthy Westwood.





Mechanisms for implementation of Westwood's vision include regulatory or policy strategies that result in changes to city codes, regulations, processes or design guidelines to affect desired outcomes. Typical examples include Denver Zoning Code amendments, Public Works requirements for infrastructure improvements associated with development projects, and Parks and Recreation requirements regarding open space and landscaping.

## BLUEPRINT DENVER

Blueprint Denver, the City's integrated land use and transportation plan adopted in 2002, identifies Areas of Change and Areas of Stability throughout the City with the goal of directing new development toward places in the city that have a high degree of multi-modal transportation access. Much of Westwood was considered an Area of Stability in 2002, with the mixed use corridors of Federal Boulevard, Alameda Avenue, and Morrison Road designated as Areas of Change. This Plan updates the Areas of Change to more accurately reflect redevelopment opportunities and provide greater flexibility for the Morrison Road corridor.

Blueprint Denver established land use types that describe a particular character and scale desired in the future. This Plan uses Blueprint Denver as the basis of its recommended future land uses. This Plan serves to update the 2002 Blueprint Denver land use recommendations, based on a more recent analysis of existing conditions and the shared vision for Westwood as reflected in this Plan's recommendations.

An update of Blueprint Denver will kick-off in 2016 and the recommendations provided in this plan should guide area-specific recommendations.

## ZONING

Zoning is the primary legal tool by which the development of private property can be directed towards the implementation of the Plan. Denver's Zoning Code, adopted in 2010, provides many tools for implementing this Plan's recommendations regarding land use and urban form. The Denver Zoning Code is organized by Neighborhood Contexts that are used to describe existing and desired characteristics for the purposes of zoning. This context-based regulatory approach provides a range of Zone Districts and building form standards that pave the way for compatible development to implement adopted city plans.

This Plan's recommendations align with the Urban Edge Neighborhood Context, with a variety of Zone Districts that apply to a specific areas. In order to move forward with implementing the Plan recommendations through regulatory means, a series of amendments to the Zoning Code Map or text will be necessary, as described below.

Zone map amendments may be initiated by property owners or their authorized agents, Denver City Council or the Manager of Community Planning and Development (CPD). Map amendment applications are reviewed by the CPD Manager and Denver Planning Board before going to Denver City Council.

Zoning code text amendments are initiated by the Manager of Community Planning and Development. Text amendments are reviewed by the CPD Manager and Denver Planning Board before going to Denver City Council for final action.

Below is a summary of regulatory implementation considerations for each conceptual land use recommended in the Plan:

### **Pedestrian Shopping Corridor**

**Plan vision-** Pedestrian Shopping Corridors serve many of the everyday needs of the residents within Westwood and the surrounding neighborhoods. A mix of land uses should include commercial, employment opportunities, and community serving





organizations. Occasionally, neighborhood centers contain boutique shopping or public gathering spaces that act as a regional draw. These corridors are scaled to be compatible with surrounding residential neighborhoods.

**Zoning Analysis-** In Westwood, Pedestrian Shopping Corridor areas are currently zoned E-MX-3 and E-TU-C, with a limited amount of properties zoned Planned Unit Development (PUD) or Former Chapter 59 B-4. The uses and building forms within E-MX-3 generally help implement the vision of the corridor. There is a conflict however with the planned maximum building heights for corridor and the current zoning. The E-TU-C zoning does not allow for commercial uses, nor the desired building forms to implement the vision of the corridor. The B-4 and PUD zoning along the corridor may implement the desired uses and building heights, however fail to regulate the desired building forms for the corridor.

**Implementation Strategy-** As redevelopment occurs explore map amendments to align zoning with the conceptual land use, building heights and building forms of the corridor. Additionally, explore opportunities to rezone properties currently zoned with districts that pre-date the Denver Zoning Code.

### **Commercial Corridor**

**Plan vision-** Commercial corridors are linear business districts primarily oriented to heavily traveled arterial streets and are located along Federal Boulevard and segments of Alameda Avenue and Sheridan Boulevard. They share similarities with pedestrian shopping corridors but their roadways are larger and accommodate more auto traffic. All three of these corridors accommodate major bus transit routes and have significant numbers of transit users. The vision for these corridors include a safe and consistent pedestrian realm with street trees, wide sidewalks, safe crossings and attractive bus stops, and, as a result, exhibit a fair amount of pedestrian activity.

**Zoning Analysis-** These corridors are for the most part zoned E-MX-3 which implements the plan vision. However, there are portions of the Alameda and Federal corridors for which this plan recommends a maximum building height of 5 stories, rather than the 3 stories permitted by the current zoning. Additional policies outside of zoning should be considered to ensure that the pedestrian realm is improved.

**Implementation Strategy-** As redevelopment occurs explore map amendments to align zoning with the conceptual land use and building heights of the corridor. Additionally, explore opportunities to rezone properties currently zoned with districts that pre-date the Denver Zoning Code.

### **Urban Residential**

**Plan vision-** Urban residential areas in Westwood are mid to higher density that transition commercial areas into the lower density, residential areas, primarily abutting the Pedestrian Shopping Corridor areas of Morrison Road and Alameda Avenue. These areas commonly back up to higher intensity commercial districts and front Single Family Duplex areas. For this reason, each residential unit should have a primary pedestrian entrance, fronting the primary street. In some cases, especially along Alameda Avenue, small scale neighborhood serving commercial uses may be appropriate.

**Zoning Analysis-** The areas planned for Urban Residential are primarily zoned E-TU-C. Some higher density building forms desired in Urban Residential areas, such as town homes and garden court apartments, are not allowed in E-TU-C areas. Additionally, the vision for a small amount of neighborhood serving commercial uses in these areas would not be allowed under the current zoning.

**Implementation Strategy-** As redevelopment occurs explore map amendments to align zoning with the conceptual land use and building heights of the corridor.



## Single Family/Duplex

**Plan Vision-** Single family/duplex residential areas in Westwood are moderately dense areas that have a mixture of housing types, including single-family houses, duplexes, tandem houses and accessory dwelling units (ADU). These areas are typically located along residential collector streets (Kentucky and Irving), or act as transitions areas from the neighborhood's commercial corridors (Morrison Road, Federal Boulevard, and Alameda Avenue). Even though these areas are denser, they maintain the character of the primarily residential areas of the neighborhood. Small scale neighborhood serving commercial uses may be appropriate along collector or arterial streets at intersections, especially along Kentucky Avenue.

**Zoning Analysis-** Much of the neighborhood planned for Single Family Duplex is currently zoned E-TU-C which implements the plan vision. However, some areas that share the same vision (generally along Stuart Street, Kentucky Avenue and Hazel Court) are currently zoned for single-family residential.

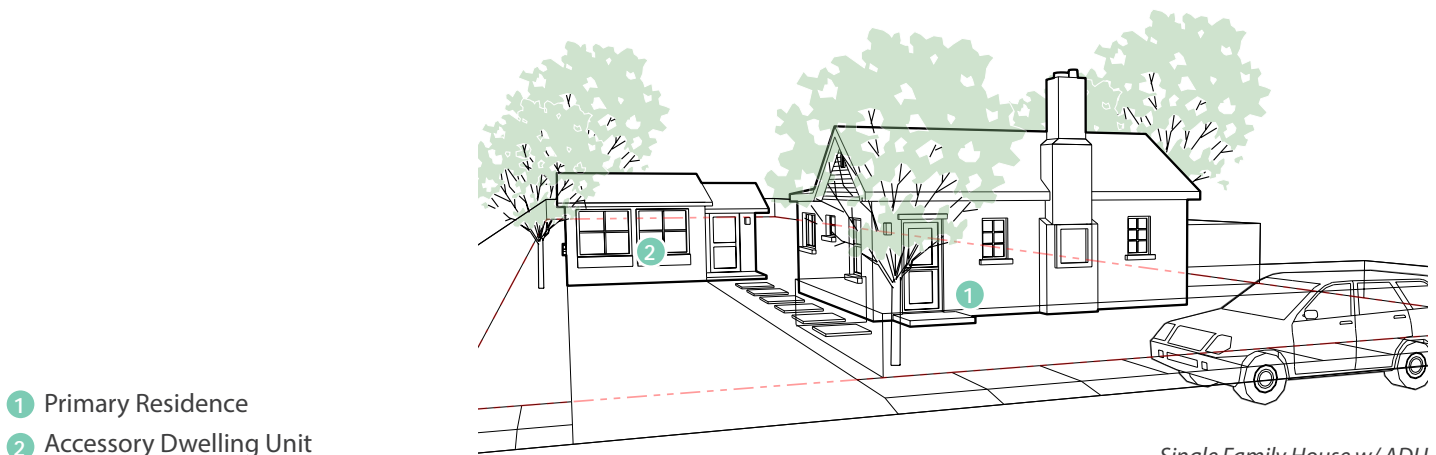
**Implementation Strategy-** Single unit zoning does not implement the vision for the areas identified above. There are regulations in the Denver Zoning Code limiting the rezoning of single properties within a single unit zone district. Map amendments should be either explored as redevelopment occurs, or more proactive by either City Council or City initiated rezoning.

## Single Family with Accessory Dwelling Units (ADU)

**Plan vision-**Single family homes are the predominant residential type in these areas. Residents these areas are also permitted to construct an ADU. An ADU is an additional residential unit that is accessory to the single family home, but does not affect the low density residential character. Accessory Dwelling Units enable aging in place, multi-generational houses, additional rental income, and promote an affordable Westwood. Some parts of this vision, such as the character-defining entry features, recommended in this Plan may require Zoning Code text amendments to allow for implementation.

**Zoning Analysis-** All of the neighborhood planned for Single Family with ADU is currently zoned a variety of single unit zone districts including E-SU-B, E-SU-D, E-SU-D1X, and E-SU-G. Of those districts, the construction of a new ADU is only permitted in the E-SU-D1X district.

**Implementation Strategy-** There are regulations in the Denver Zoning Code limiting the rezoning of single properties within a single unit zone district. In order to realize the plan vision for these areas, explore proactive City Council or City initiated rezoning for these areas.







## MORRISON ROAD INFLUENCE AREA

There are a number of regulatory tools that can help implement the vision for the Morrison Road Corridor. This boundaries are defined by the Morrison Road Overlay Area on the Blueprint Denver map (p. 49).

**Plan Vision-** The vision of the Morrison Road corridor is for it to evolve into the cultural and economic hub of the neighborhood, while transforming into a regional destination which celebrates the unique culture and history of the neighborhood. The diagonal geography of Morrison Road results in unique parcel configurations along the corridor that can provide challenges when assembling potential development sites. In order to provide flexibility in promoting redevelopment along the corridor, while respecting the low density residential character of the immediately adjacent properties, this corridor needs additional guidance and flexibility for development.

To realize the vision for Morrison Road, it is important that future zoning supports high quality development while respecting the surrounding residential areas. Additionally, setback requirements should be explored to provide an expanded pedestrian realm. Future regulatory tools need to enable for flexibility of uses and building forms along Morrison Road. For parcel assemblages that span the depth of a block, development facing low-density residential uses should respect the existing character and provide an appropriate transition. It is not appropriate for the “back-side” of commercial developments to directly face the low density residential areas. Pedestrian oriented commercial activities should be focused along Morrison Road. It is appropriate to encourage pedestrian entries and transparency along the designated active edges to contribute to the safety and activation of the streets.

**Implementation Strategy-** A number of tools may be appropriate to implement the vision of this unique corridor. Zone map amendments, Zoning Code text amendments, design overlays, and urban design standards and guidelines are all possible regulatory and policy strategies which could implement the vision for the corridor. Further study is necessary to evaluate all of these tools and identify those most appropriate to achieve the vision.

## GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE POLICIES

Several corridors within Westwood are identified as green streets on the Open-space System map (p. 29), including Kentucky Avenue, Perry Street, and Wolfe Street. In addition, a number of alleys have been identified for their potential to be transformed into green alleys. Designating green streets is a priority of this Plan, but too often the idea is used without real understanding or specific criteria. This Plan aims to encourage policy changes that will help ensure green street designations in Denver and are unified throughout all City departments and have clear expectations and specific intent for the particular streets selected. The Plan’s goals for green streets should be implemented by policy guidelines that will ensure the development of green streets into unique roadways that are distinct from standard streets, taking advantage of best practices and the latest innovations in green infrastructure, sustainable energy use, stormwater management, and green street design, among other key ideas.





*Mobile City Hall Truck- Boston, MA*

## PUBLIC REALM POLICIES

The City should evaluate and revise policies, rules, and regulations that relate to the public realm and public art in order to allow and promote investment and enhancement in public spaces. It is critical that the City continue to identify opportunities for private partners, including business owners, property developers, cultural institutions, and future special districts, to fund and maintain public spaces including plazas, parklets, and public art.

Public Works and Parks and Recreation Rules and Regulations should be updated, as needed, to enable the transformation of many of the neighborhoods streets, alleys, public places, and open-spaces in many of the Plan's recommendations. Land dedications may be necessary to implement City standards for pedestrian friendly corridors.

To implement the vision of Morrison Road, land dedications as redevelopment occurs will need to be perused to ensure a consistent pedestrian realm, consistent with the functional classification of the road. Waivers can also be applied for on a case by case basis for properties unable to meet those standards.

Policies that encourage or require the incorporation of public art into developments, streetscapes, and park improvements should be examined to assure they promote public art to the greatest extent possible in the neighborhood. Public art should be integrated into both public and private development, ensuring the unique culture and history of Westwood remains the central focus.

## CITY PERMITTING AND LICENSING

There are a number of city permitting and licensing requirements that are prohibitive to residents and business owners for a multitude of reasons. These barriers range from travel challenges to and from municipal offices, citizenship requirements, language barriers, and economic challenges. Steps should be taken to reduce the barriers to city permits and licenses for impacted members of the Westwood community.

### Implementation Strategy-

Consider a "Mobile City Hall" concept which can temporarily locate in Westwood to help lower the geographic barriers to permitting and licensing in Westwood. This program could potentially provide over-the-counter permits such as park event permits, peddler licenses and zoning quick permits. Westwood is one of the furthest neighborhoods from Municipal offices, and many of the residents and employees in the neighborhood do not have regular access to a personal automobile, making some trips time consuming and cost prohibitive. Ensure that the Mobile City Hall is staffed with bilingual employees, trained to assist Westwood's diverse population. Additionally, explore utilizing the City's website in lieu of in person applications and permits.

Streamline existing public event, block party, and temporary street closure regulations and permitting to encourage arts and culture programming and activities on streets and in the public right-of-way.

Ensure all materials pertaining to licensing and permitting is readily available in multiple languages, including Spanish and Vietnamese. Additionally, the city should ensure that there are bilingual employees on staff to serve the Westwood community.



Successful plans are the product of extensive feedback and input from a variety of groups working toward a collective vision. Partnerships formed during the planning process play key roles in accomplishing and implementing particular plan goals, and in some cases may be best way to implement a policy or recommendation. New partnerships identified in this plan will be critical to implementation of the Plan vision. These partners typically include neighborhood organizations, property owners, special districts, council members, developers and non-profits.

This Plan encourages the strengthening of existing partnerships that contributed to its creation. There are many active non-profits and community stakeholders that have participated in the planning process. These entities, along with the City, have the primary responsibility for the implementation of this Plan. An effective partnership among major property owners and continued collaboration with community stakeholders are critical to the success of Westwood. More formal partnerships among residents, business owners, small property owners and advocacy groups will be necessary as well to ensure that all stakeholder perspectives are considered as implementation of this plan moves forward.

Continued involvement of one or more stakeholder committees, such as the one formed to guide this planning process, will benefit the Westwood neighborhood.

### STAKEHOLDER ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Primary roles for Stakeholder Committees in the implementation of a neighborhood plan include keeping everyone informed and advocating for the community's needs. Stakeholder coalitions can be informal or more formally created as a non-profit organization. As the Plan's implementation progresses, stakeholder coalitions will be important to ensure that all community and business members stay informed of changes in the neighborhood and that stakeholder perspectives are actively considered.

A priority task for the Committee would be to explore potential organizational structures that could help to implement key plan recommendations in the future. This organization will play an essential role in advocating for public improvements including pedestrian lighting, street and streetscape improvements, and public art. The group should also form interest specific sub-committees to carry out focused implementation efforts. These may include, but not limited to, Safety, the Built Environment, and Health and Recreation sub-committees.

### PROJECT CHAMPIONS

Once a plan is adopted as a supplement to the Comprehensive Plan, the City has the authority to begin implementing the plan. Given the number of adopted plans, competing interests in the City, and the budget limitations at all levels of government, little plan implementation is undertaken without champions for certain actions and advocates for the neighborhood. Typically registered neighborhood organizations work with the Mayor and their City Council representatives to promote certain actions and outcomes. Membership organizations such as merchant associations, business partnerships, and nonprofits do the same for business areas. Since these groups often have their own areas of focus, they are ideal candidates to spearhead neighborhood projects related to their interests and continue to advocate for them to the City. The creation of Arts and Culture districts is another example of a recommendation that a project champion can spearhead for the benefit of the greater Westwood community.





## PARTNERS

The City and Westwood community will rely on partnerships with many public, nonprofit and private entities to ensure the successful implementation of the Plan. Key partners will include, but are not limited to:

- Boys and Girls Club of Denver
- BuCu West
- Colorado Department of Transportation (CDOT)
- Colorado Health Foundation
- Denver Housing Authority (DHA)
- Denver Office of Economic Development
- Denver Department of Public Works
- Denver Arts and Venues
- Denver Parks and Recreation
- Office of Excise and License
- Denver Environmental Health
- Denver Police Department
- Denver Public Library
- Denver Public Health
- Denver Public Schools
- Extreme Community Makeover
- Livewell Colorado
- Mayor's Sustainable Food Policy Council
- Registered Neighborhood Organizations (RNO's)
- Urban Land Conservancy
- Urban Drainage and Flood Control District
- Regional Transit District (RTD)
- Re: Vision
- Trust for Public Land
- The Denver Indian Center
- Southwest Improvement Council
- Mi Casa Resource Center
- West Denver Renaissance Collaborative (WDRC)
- Westwood Unidos
- Westwood Residents Association
- 9to5 Colorado

## WEST DENVER RENAISSANCE

The West Denver Renaissance initiative is a collaborative of public agencies, nonprofits, foundations and community members working to facilitate the revitalization of West Denver in an equitable fashion, improve the livelihood of existing residents, and preserve/amplify the rich multicultural character. The West Denver 'footprint' includes the neighborhoods of: Sun Valley, Auraria, Lincoln Park, West Colfax, Villa Park, Barnum, Barnum West, Valverde, Westwood and Athmar Park. WDRC will work with existing local leaders and agency partners to integrate, advocate, measure and identify opportunities to advance community priorities and needs. WDRC will provide strategy direction for West Denver, facilitate dialogue amongst existing partners, and will work to identify investment opportunities and projects that are: community based, driven by local leaders, and/or have positive impact on the sustainability and regeneration of West Denver. WDRC work is in the early stages of coalescing community, agency and other partners on the top West Denver and neighborhood priorities and possibilities with broad and lasting impact.

## PARTNERSHIP IMPLEMENTATION PRIORITIES

The Plan outlines a number of partnership priorities focused on the implementation of the recommendations and transformative projects. Since many of the recommendations detailed in this plan are outside the control of the City, it is critical that neighborhood stakeholders, non-profits, residents, and business owners work together to implement the plan. Partnership implementation priorities include:

- Encourage the formation of a unified forum for capacity building to continue resident and stakeholder engagement, and focus on building neighborhood unity, identity and establishing neighborhood priorities
- Work with non-profit housing developers, the City, and other entities to explore opportunities for new affordable, workforce and mixed income housing units in the neighborhoods as well as reinvestment into the current housing stock
- Encourage the formation of an Arts and Culture district that will advocate for and promote arts within Westwood. The formal organization of a district will facilitate applying for grant funding from the City and the State.
- Encourage the enhancement of the public realm by private partners. Many of the Plan's recommendations for enhanced and unique public spaces, including new public plazas and pocket parks, will require private partners for implementation. Entities such as business owners, developers, cultural institutions and special districts will be the best actors to implement and maintain quality public spaces over time.

## OTHER PARTNERSHIP OPPORTUNITIES

### Home Investment Partnerships

A number of Potential local and federal partnerships can be created to address focus areas such as large scale energy efficiency retrofits and technical/financial assistance for the construction of ADUs.

### Community Land Trusts

A community land trust is a nonprofit corporation that develops and stewards affordable housing, community gardens, civic buildings, commercial spaces and other community assets on behalf of a community. These trusts balance the needs of individuals to access land and maintain security of tenure with a community's need to maintain affordability, economic diversity and local access to essential services. They can be a invaluable tool in helping to preserve the affordability of a neighborhood.



## PUBLIC INVESTMENT STRATEGIES

Realizing the vision for Westwood will require considerable public and private investment. While many of the Plan's recommendations are likely to be implemented through a public/private partnership, the City should take early action on projects that will significantly improve livability, multi-modal connectivity and catalyze additional investment in Westwood.

Public Investment Strategies are those involving public funding of public infrastructure. Examples include public investment in street reconstruction, bike lane installation, neighborhood lighting, new transit service, or new and expanded parks. The City takes the lead in designing, constructing, and funding these projects and may use a variety of public funding sources such as the annual Capital Improvements Program, bond funds, or state or federal grant programs.

### **Bike and Pedestrian Network**

Specific long-term public investment strategies are needed to achieve the goals of the plan that are best addressed on a network level. These strategies are closely related to corridor-level investment strategies, but are broader in scope and are often citywide network projects that have segments within Westwood. One key network-level investment includes the citywide goal of completing the bicycle network plan, as identified in the Denver Moves: Bicycle Plan. Completing segments of the bicycle network that are within Westwood aligns with the goals of the Neighborhood Plan, which seeks to increase trips and encourage new trips for bicyclists. For this plan, bicycle network-level investment affects improvements called for on Knox, Perry, Wolf, Virginia, Kentucky and Morrison Road.

Next Steps:

- Leverage investment strategies and funding sources identified by the Denver Moves: Bicycle Plan to fund improvements to complete the bicycle network on streets within Westwood.
- Identify funding for the construction of “first and last mile” connections to and from enhanced transit stops and nearby light rail stations.

### **Green Streets, Alleys and the Neighborhood Greenway**

Significant public investment strategies are needed to achieve the goals of the Plan related to key corridors in Westwood. The Plan seeks to leverage public investment to create a specially-designed system of green connections and spaces throughout the neighborhood by leveraging and enhancing existing assets, creating new spaces, and connecting these spaces with safe, green pathways.

Next Steps:

- Implement the Neighborhood Greenway concept as a neighborhood connection for recreation, stormwater infrastructure, safe connections and neighborhood placemaking (see Neighborhood Greenway transformative project)
- Leverage opportunities for quasi-public and non-profit organizations to kick-start alley revitalization as part of the neighborhood greenway project
- Coordinate with all Green Streets policies to assure the Neighborhood Greenway aligns with and is designed to Green Streets standards



### **Morrison Road**

Morrison Road is also targeted for significant public investment to achieve the goals of the Plan, specifically those that apply to the Key Streets (p. 30). Placemaking opportunities and sustainable infrastructure that is safe for all modes should all be enhanced along Morrison Road. Moving forward, a corridor study should be developed for Morrison Road. The study should address the urban forms and uses along Morrison; the streetscape design; and roadway configuration with special attention given to intersections and will recommend a specific implementation tool such as an overlay district or design guidelines.

#### **Next Steps:**

- Implement traffic calming and control measures to safely manage traffic impacts.
- Reclaim and promote the use of underutilized portions of land adjacent to Morrison Road that will foster place-making, art, open space and economic development opportunities
- Provide new bicycle and pedestrian capacity along Morrison Road to support access to destinations along Morrison Road and the neighborhood
- Seek City, regional, state, and federal funding for brown field development and streetscape/roadway improvements

### **Key Streets**

The vision for Key Streets (p. 30) includes investments that will enhance the current roadway configuration by introducing new streetscapes, safety features, and mobility improvements. These investments should seek to ensure the removal of perceived and real physical barriers of Federal Boulevard, Alameda and Morrison Road. The plan recommends rebuilding the current intersections as attractive, well-marked mobility hubs for all modes of travel.

## **PUBLIC FUNDING SOURCES**

Public Funding Sources available to public and private entities are continually evolving based on economic, political, legal and neighborhood objectives. Though the names and purposes of specific funding sources can change over time, the following list represents potential funding opportunities:

- Tax Base Support
- Annual Budget
- General Obligation Bonds
- Tax Increment Finance
- New Market Tax Credit programs
- Grants (City, Regional, State, Federal)
- Special Districts
- Social Impact Investments









Love This Place.