

# commerce city station

**area master plan**  
east 72nd avenue and  
colorado boulevard



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October 2013



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October 2013

Prepared by



In association with

EPS

Fox Tuttle Transportation

Roscoe Engineering



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# Acknowledgements

## CITY OF COMMERCE CITY COUNCIL

Mayor Sean Ford

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Councilman Jim Benson, Ward II

Councilwoman Jadie Carson, Ward III

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Sonia Montano, Alternate

Robby Robertson

Harvest Thomas, Alternate

## STAFF WORKING GROUP

Chandra Beznak, Administrative Specialist

Chris Cramer, A.I.C.P., Community Development Director

Maria D'Andrea, P.E., Public Works Director

Glenn Ellis, P.E., Projects Manager

Traci Ferguson, Parks Planner

James Hayes, A.I.C.P., Deputy City Manager

Michelle Halstead, Communications Manager

Michelle Hill, Senior Economic Development Specialist

Tracy Jones, Housing Coordinator

Sean Lehocky, P.E., Civil Engineer

Daren Sterling, P.E., City Engineer

Steve Timms, A.I.C.P., Planning Division Manager

Roger Tinklenberg, Finance Director



---

## TECHNICAL WORKING GROUP

Kirk Allen, Colorado Department of Transportation

Brad Calvert, Denver Regional Council of Governments

Ben Frei, Albert Frei & Sons

Ron Lapenna, South Adams County Fire Department

Molly Lockart, Farmers Reservoir and Irrigation Company

Sheila Lynch, Tri-County Health Department

Sandy Mutchler, Adams School District 14

Pat Sanchez, Adams School District 14

Tom Schupman, Farmers Reservoir and Irrigation Company

Bradley Sheehan, Colorado Department of Transportation

Jeanne Shreve, Adams County

Karen Stuart, Smart Commute

Kristin Sullivan, Adams County

Maria VanderKolk, Adams School District 14

Steve Voehringer, South Adams County Water and Sanitation District

## CONSULTANT TEAM

### MIG

Mukul Malhotra, Principal In Charge

Jeff Winston, Consulting Principal

J.J. Folsom, Project Manager/Urban Design

Chase Mullen, Urban Design and Visualization

Jill Eulate, Planner

### EPS

Andrew Knudtsen, Principal

### FOX TUTTLE TRANSPORTATION

Bill Fox, Principal

Steve Tuttle, Transportation Planning

### ROSCOE ENGINEERING

Bruce Roscoe, Principal

Marc Dolezal, P.E.



# CHAPTER 1

Introduction



# Introduction

**W**ith the introduction of the North Metro Corridor commuter rail line and the E. 72nd Avenue Commuter Rail Station, **the Commerce City neighborhoods of Adams City and Adams Heights have a pivotal opportunity to create real change** that will benefit current residents, cultivate a thriving multimodal center, and strengthen their standing in the greater metropolitan region.

In 2004, voters approved the Regional Transportation District’s (RTD) FasTracks Program, the largest comprehensive transit expansion program in the nation. The FasTracks program will create better neighborhood access for station area residents and broadening transit options with rail service, expanded bus service, convenient parking, improved roadways, and more walkable streets. The completed expansion will result in a vast network of rail service and bus rapid transit that dramatically improves connectivity throughout the region.

In November 2013, RTD selected a team for the design and construction of the entire North Metro Corridor commuter rail line which includes the E. 72nd Avenue Commuter Rail Station in Commerce City. Neighborhood improvements around completed FasTracks rail stations are beginning to take shape with new commercial development, diversified housing, infrastructure improvements, and neighborhood amenities. Surrounding communities have capitalized on these traditional transit oriented development (TOD) investment as a

means of advancing character-defining neighborhood improvements and innovative projects such as live-work manufacturing and artist spaces, mixed-use and entertainment centers, neighborhood commercial infill, a variety of residential projects, and a range of open space and trail connections.

The arrival of Commerce City’s commuter rail station brings well-deserved and critically-needed focus to the neighborhoods of Adams City and Adams Heights. For many years, residents in these areas coped with substandard conditions such as a lack of safe connectivity, damaged or incomplete sidewalks, few crosswalks, fast-moving traffic, lack of bike lanes, few neighborhood parks, and limited neighborhood-serving uses. The Commerce City Station Area Master Plan (STAMP) is the culmination of efforts by a wide range of community stakeholders to identify improvements to existing neighborhoods, leverage the area’s assets and opportunities, and envision a preferred future for the area.

This STAMP explores transit-oriented and transit adjacent development—one that emphasizes strengthening existing residential neighborhoods and corridors while allowing opportunities for new development. The end result has the potential to enhance connectivity and transit use; strengthen existing building stock; boost economic development opportunities; attract diversified housing, employment and neighborhood-serving uses; and contribute to a strong sense of place for both existing and future residents and business owners.



## STATION AREA MASTER PLAN BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE

The Commerce City Station Area Master Plan (STAMP) is a strategic short- and long-range urban design and implementation plan that, over the next 20 years, aims to guide public and private investment in and around the new 72nd Avenue Commuter Rail Station located at E. 72nd Avenue and Colorado Boulevard.

The project area encompasses approximately one-half mile around the commuter rail station and is roughly bounded by E. 74th Avenue on the north, the South Platte River on the west, and Brighton Boulevard on the east. East 67th Place and the southern edge of the Adams Heights neighborhood roughly delineate the southern boundary of the project area.

The plan addresses land use, transportation, and infrastructure needs. It proposes financing strategies and implementation measures to support the preferred future of the Adams City and Adams Heights neighborhoods surrounding the new station. The area is predominantly built out; however, there are a number of underutilized and/or vacant parcels that could potentially support new neighborhood-serving transit-oriented development and/or redevelopment. While smaller, more tangible projects such as streetscape and façade improvements may be realized in the near term, larger development projects will need to occur incrementally. In some instances, proposed projects rely on future land acquisition, the sale of private property, or financing that is currently unavailable.

Over the course of the planning process, residents and stakeholders voiced numerous forward-thinking suggestions and wide-ranging ideas. Many suggestions were evaluated and were incorporated into this document. However, not every suggestion could be addressed through the STAMP process. This was because some ideas were not feasible or did not align with current market demand. The plan is intended as a living document that can evolve over time and adjust as the market shifts. Plan strategies and implementation actions should be evaluated periodically by Commerce City and amended to address new issues and opportunities in the context of the current economic climate.

Commerce City has a comprehensive plan, but this STAMP, when adopted will served as a more specific sub-area plan for the neighborhood and the land use vision referenced within will become the future land use guide for this area, in effect, trumping the existing future land use map that was approved via the comprehensive plan in 2010.

## STAMP STUDY AREA



### Legend

-  Study Area
-  Proposed Commuter Rail Station
-  Park-N-Ride
-  Proposed Commuter Rail Corridor
-  Railroad
-  Water
-  Parks

## PREVIOUS PLANNING EFFORTS

Several planning documents already exist to strengthen the community's identity and create a vibrant, walkable, mixed-use environment. The STAMP aligns with the following documents' goals, and details specific initiatives to further advance desired change in the area:

- Commerce City Station Opportunities Analysis (January 2010)
- City of Commerce City C3 Vision Comprehensive Plan (May 2010)
- Walk.Bike.Fit, Commerce City: A Multi-Modal Active Transportation Plan (March 2012)
- RTD-FasTracks North Metro Corridor Final Environmental Impact Statement (January 2010)
- Economic Development Strategic Plan (March 2010)
- Commerce City Housing Authority Strategic Plan (October 2011)
- City of Commerce City C3 Transportation Plan (July 2010)
- Public Art Master Plan (January 2013)
- Welby Subarea Plan (current planning effort)



## PLANNING PROCESS

The City of Commerce City launched the city STAMP in September of 2012. The project team collaborated with many City and Adams County departments, as well as the Housing Authority.

The project team conducted an extensive outreach and community collaboration process to ensure that the community's vision for the station was reflected in the final plan. More than a dozen focus groups and interviews were conducted with the following 12 stakeholders:

- City Council
- Planning Commission
- Adams 14 School District
- Commerce City Housing Authority
- Adjacent area land and business owners
- Community Enterprise
- Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment
- Adams County
- Former and current residents that attended all three schools in the study area
- Former City Council member and neighborhood residents
- Derby Review Board
- Adams City High School students that attended Alsup Elementary and Adams City Middle schools

Valuable input gathered during these meetings allowed the project team to gain an in-depth understanding of the needs and perceptions of area stakeholders. It also provided the basis for community workshop discussion topics and materials.

The planning process also incorporated regular meetings with a Technical Working Group (TWG), comprised of city and county staff; the Regional Transportation District; Colorado Department of Transportation; Adams 14 School District, Denver Regional Council of Governments; and the South Adams County Fire Protection District.

During two community workshops, more than 140 community members discussed their aspirations for the station area and the local neighborhoods (see Appendix B: Community Workshop Summary). Participants conveyed a vision, challenges, and opportunities related to land use, urban design,



*Community participants discussing their vision for the station*



*Summer outreach to garner input from a range of participants*

circulation and transportation, walkability, economic development, livability, and safety. Engaging map-based exercises provided participants with a canvas for exploring areas of importance, areas of concern, and sites for potential new development. Two summer outreach efforts involved surveys and information booths where approximately 400 people stopped by to learn about the STAMP planning efforts. One hundred and thirty-six surveys were returned from the two events. Over fifty percent of the respondents said that a mix of commercial, employment, and residential uses should occur in the station area. Sixty-eight percent of respondents said they were generally supportive of the phasing of improvements and development.

Input from the community workshops, summer outreach, and surveys informed the outcomes presented in this plan. A final open house provided an opportunity to share the draft plan with the community and solicit feedback to finalize the plan in preparation for approval by the Planning Commission and City Council. Additional detail on the community outreach is described in the appendix.

## DOCUMENT OVERVIEW

The Commerce City Station Area Master Plan outlines an approach for stimulating development around the future commuter rail station. This approach involves identification of strategic opportunities, a preferred station area vision, a planning framework and urban design concept, and implementation actions.

The document is organized into the following main sections:

**Chapter 1: Introduction**— Explains the plan’s background and purpose, identifies related planning efforts and documents, provides an overview of the overall project process, and outlines the organization of the plan document;

**Chapter 2: Existing Conditions**— Describes the area’s local and regional context and identifies the key assets, challenges, and opportunities related to realizing the area’s potential;

**Chapter 3: Vision**— Conveys a community-based preferred future for the station area;

**Chapter 4: Planning Framework**— Outlines six overarching planning strategies that will guide the area’s urban design and development;

**Chapter 5: Urban Design Concept**— Describes the overall urban design framework for the project area that will guide the character of the private and public realms; and

**Chapter 6: Implementation**— Presents phased implementation strategies to help advance key opportunities outlined in this plan.



# CHAPTER 2

## Existing Conditions



# Existing Conditions

**F**uture planning in the Adams City and Adams Heights neighborhoods should **leverage the area’s assets, maximize promising opportunities, and work to counter challenges.**

This chapter describes the area’s regional and local context, identifies recent and planned projects, and **highlights existing assets, challenges, and opportunities.**

## STATION AREA OVERVIEW

The STAMP project area is located in the southwest portion of Commerce City, approximately 10 miles northeast of Downtown Denver. Commerce City offers convenient access to railroads and seven major transportation corridors including Interstates 70, 270 and 76; Highways 85 and 2; E-470; and Peña Boulevard. The station will be located west of Colorado Boulevard and E. 72nd Avenue just west of the O’Brian Canal as illustrated on the following page.

The approximately 50-block project area is predominantly composed of residential, industrial and civic uses. Two major arterial streets connect the area to the surrounding freeway system: E. 74th Avenue roughly defines the area’s northern edge and Brighton Boulevard along the area’s eastern perimeter. Colorado Boulevard is a major north-south arterial spine bifurcating the station from neighborhoods to the east. The future commuter rail corridor runs through the Albert Frei & Sons’ property in the northwest corner of the area, and then traces the O’Brian Canal at the

neighborhood’s western edge. The project area west of the future commuter rail station is comprised largely of Frei’s gravel and asphalt distribution center, ponds, and the South Platte River multi-use trail system.

The site of the future 72nd Avenue Station anchors the west side of the Adams City and Adams Heights neighborhoods at the intersection of E. 72nd Avenue and Colorado Boulevard.

The Adams City and Adams Heights neighborhoods are primarily mixed residential and industrial communities situated between the O’Brian Canal and Brighton Boulevard. The neighborhood fabric is a patchwork of city parcels and pockets of unincorporated Adams County with low-density, single-family homes, schools and civic buildings,



*Adams County sheriff facility on 72nd Avenue.*



*Existing well kept homes in the Adams City neighborhood*



## EXISTING LAND USES



### Legend

 Study Area	 Commercial
 Proposed Commuter Rail Station	 Planned Unit Development
 Park-N-Ride	 Mobile Home Park
 Proposed Commuter Rail Corridor	 Residential
 Railroad	 School, Institutional Use, County Facility
 Water	 Industrial
 Parks	 Open Space

industrial and minor commercial uses, along with many underutilized vacant parcels. Adams County offices provide a major civic presence at E. 72nd Avenue and Colorado Boulevard.

Light industrial and manufacturing uses are concentrated around the edges of the neighborhood, primarily east of Dahlia Street closest to the Union Pacific Railroad, north of E. 74th Avenue, and in the pie-shaped wedge between the O'Brian Canal and Colorado Boulevard. Types of uses in these areas include logistics and distribution companies and supporting businesses, and other warehouse and industrial facilities with large-scale buildings, large-format staging, and parking areas.

Nominal commercial development is clustered in four primary areas: near Brighton Boulevard at Old Adams City High School, just north of Adams Heights Park, along the west side of Colorado Boulevard (between E. 66th and E. 70th Avenues), and on both sides of E. 74th Avenue (between Colorado and Brighton Boulevards). Neighborhood-serving commercial development includes one small restaurant, a new 7-Eleven convenience market, and some small office spaces.

There are two small city parks located in the neighborhoods: Adams Heights Park and Rose Hill Grange Park. The north-east running South Platte River provides publicly accessible riverfront open space along the western edge of the neighborhood and station area. The Fernald Trailhead, just south of the

future commuter rail station, is the jumping off point to riverfront open space and the South Platte River Trail that provides connections to over 100 miles of regional trails.



*One of the few existing office buildings on E. 74th Avenue*



*Rose Hill Grange Park is a small park in Adams Heights*



*Adams County Human Services on 72nd Avenue and Colorado*



## REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION STATUS

The 72nd Avenue Station is one of eight electric commuter rail stations planned for the FasTracks North Metro Rail Line and is the second station north of Denver’s Union Station. This station forms the hub of the Commerce City Station Area, and has the potential to serve both local and regional rail access as the North Metro Line evolves.

Unlike the current RTD rail system, the North Metro Rail Line will be an electric multiple unit (EMU) commuter rail rather than light rail. The adjacent chart highlights the differences between electric commuter rail and light rail.

The roadway network that serves the Commerce City station area is a mix of local and regional facilities that evolved over many years within the surrounding community. Regional access is provided by a good network of existing arterial roadways and highways, including a partial interchange at Interstate 76 and E. 74th Avenue and regional arterials such as Brighton Boulevard, Vasquez Boulevard (Highway 85), and E. 74th Avenue, which provides east-west connectivity to the Welby Neighborhood. Local arterials and collectors such as Colorado Boulevard, E. 72nd Avenue, and Dahlia Street provide neighborhood access to the regional system.



Example of an electric multiple unit commuter rail vehicle

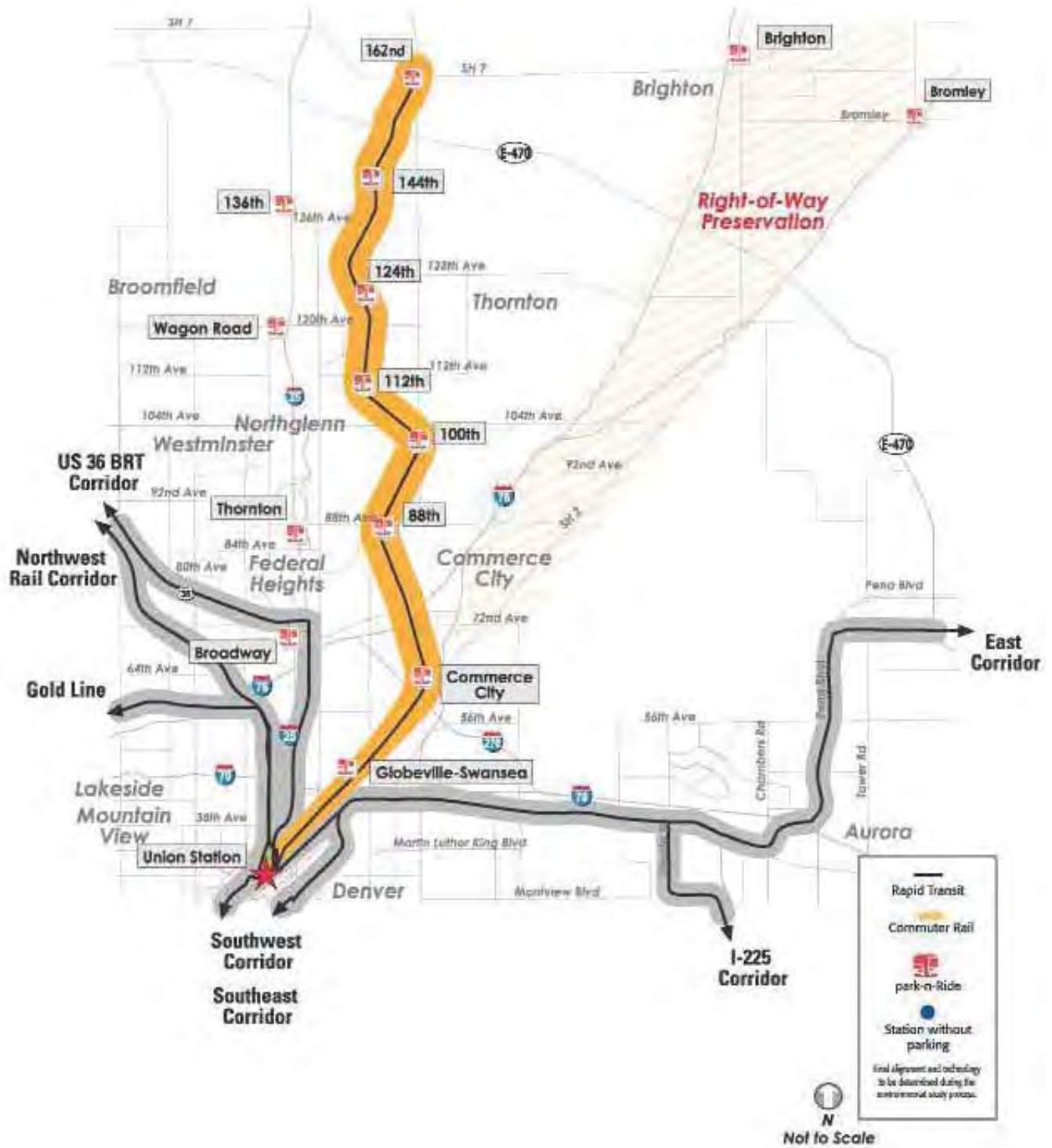
The station area has access to regional bicycle and pedestrian trails, but suffers from a disconnected, incomplete, or deteriorating network of local pedestrian and bicycle facilities.

The Regional Transit District provides two local and one regional bus transit routes in the study area - routes 48, 72, and 85. There is a significantly underutilized park-n-Ride at E. 72nd Avenue and Highway 85, but there is room for local improvement as the station area evolves.

### Vehicle Technology Comparison

EMU	Light Rail
Powered by 25kV alternating current overhead electrical system	Powered by 750 V direct current by overhead electrical system
Typically serves longer lines longer lines with fewer stations	Can operate along crowded, narrow streets
Can operate up to 79mph	Can accelerate and decelerate quickly; top speed is 55mph
Capacity of 90 seats, 142 total standing capacity	Capacity of 64 seats, 121 total standing capacity

## APPROVED NORTH METRO COMMUTER RAIL ALIGNMENT



## RECENT AND PLANNED PROJECTS

A number of recently developed, or planned, projects in the vicinity of the station area have the potential to generate growth and employment.

The Mile High Greyhound Park is a mixed-use redevelopment project planned at a former greyhound dog-racing track less than one mile from the project area, east of Highway 85 and south of E. 64th Avenue. The 65-acre site proposes multi-family homes and townhomes; offices; a vocational center; a hotel; and retail uses including shops, restaurants, and potentially entertainment uses. The nearby 72nd Avenue Station will provide a convenient transit

option for residents and visitors to the redevelopment. Conversely, mixed-use development around the station may benefit from visitors and the energy from the Mile High Greyhound Park.

New business development resources also inject promise for positive change in the area with a new Small Business Development Center in the nearby Derby neighborhood, and a professional development center proposed at the former Adams City High School site. These centers will provide job and business training opportunities for local residents.



Approved professional development center on the former Adams City high school site



## ASSETS

The Adams City and Adams Heights neighborhoods and surrounding area offer a number of strategic assets. The following positive attributes should be leveraged in future development of the area.

### ESTABLISHED NEIGHBORHOODS

The project area is largely composed of well-established, single-family residential neighborhoods, home to many families who have lived in the area for generations. Home ownership rates are high and owner-occupied homes are typically well maintained. The predominantly Hispanic community contributes a unique cultural and ethnic neighborhood character. Affordable living is a major draw to the neighborhood, with reasonably priced small- to modest-sized homes conveniently accessible to surrounding employment centers and Downtown Denver.



*There are many existing well-kept single family homes*

### CONVENIENT REGIONAL ACCESS

The project area is located within a mile of almost all interstate freeways in the state of Colorado - 76, 270, 70 and 25. The area is easily accessed by State Highways 85 (Vasquez Boulevard) 2 (Colorado Boulevard), 36, and major arterials including E. 74th Avenue and Brighton Boulevard. All of the surrounding Denver suburbs can be reached within a half-hour drive of the station area neighborhoods. Proximity to Downtown Denver, Denver International Airport, two freight railroad corridors, regional highways, and surrounding communities makes the project area a strategic location for attracting new jobs, businesses, and residents. The new North Metro



*The STAMP site has convenient regional freeway access*



*Alsup Elementary School*



*Existing U.S. Post Office that serves the neighborhoods*



*Well-established existing businesses along Brighton Boulevard*

commuter rail service will further strengthen its regional connections with a quick 10-minute train ride to Downtown Denver and access via commuter or light rail to the Denver-metropolitan area.

### MAJOR CIVIC PRESENCE

There are several important civic uses in the station area. Adams County offices are concentrated at E. 74th Avenue along Colorado Boulevard, including the Sheriff’s Office Substation, Human Services Department, Housing Authority, and Tri-County Health Department. Adams County School District 14 has two schools that serve the area— Adams City Middle School and Alsup Elementary School. A U.S. Post Office is located just north of Adams Heights Park, and South Adams County Fire Station One is located at E. 69th Avenue and Brighton Boulevard.

### STABLE EMPLOYMENT BASE

Commerce City boasts a powerful and diverse business base in advanced manufacturing, logistics, business and professional services, retail and leisure, and Denver International Airport (DIA) technology industries. Within the project area, industrial and manufacturing businesses help create a stable economic base with good job opportunities. The Adams County School District 14 and other county services located in the neighborhood are major employers and offer potential for job growth. Tri-County Health Department is the largest local health department in Colorado, serving residents of Adams,



Arapahoe, and Douglas counties. Future commuter rail and associated stations can help attract talent and new residents from an even broader pool to support the area's economic stability.

## TRAILS AND OPEN SPACE CONNECTIONS

The station area's Fernald Trailhead is the primary gateway to the South Platte riverfront and major trail network that connects Commerce City to surrounding suburbs, Downtown Denver, and beyond to the Denver-Metropolitan Region. The South Platte River Trail is a well-used segment of the network, providing a paved multi-use trail that follows the South Platte River for over 50 miles and intersects with other regional multi-use trails such as the Clear Creek and Sand Creek greenways. The 30-mile Clear Creek Greenway connects to downtown Golden. The 14-mile Sand Creek Regional Greenway runs through northeast Denver and the new Stapleton community, and eastward to Aurora where it connects to the 71-mile High Line Canal Trail. In addition to riverfront open space, the Adams City and Adams Heights neighborhoods have two small city pocket parks and are within five miles to expansive natural open space east at the Rocky Mountain Arsenal National Wildlife Refuge.



*Fernald Trailhead at 70th Avenue connects to the South Platte River trail*



*South Platte River as viewed from the station site*



*Fernald Trail bridge connection to the South Platte River Trail*

## CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

There are a number of challenges to be addressed in preparing for commuter rail access and beginning to spur neighborhood transformation. There are also significant opportunities to leverage rail investment and implement improvements that will enhance conditions for existing neighborhoods and support the needs of transit riders, future residents, and business owners.

### LAND USE

There is currently a lack of “destination” places in the station area. Traditionally, the Adams City High School had been the anchor of this neighborhood, but since its relocation, the area does not have an anchor. The area has very little commercial development and its few neighborhood-serving uses are geographically dispersed, making access a challenge by foot or bicycle. There are no recreational facilities or cultural amenities in the immediate area, with the exception of the South Platte River Trailhead. Two small city parks are located at the southern end of the project area, more than a mile away for some residents. While the community enjoys proximity to the South Platte River,

Clear Creek and Sand Creek multi-use trails there is only one public access point to these outstanding resources.

The implementation of the commuter rail station will provide an additional convenient connection to downtown Denver and the metropolitan region. Due to fact the station is surrounded by many underutilized or vacant parcels, there is tremendous opportunity for infill development that may provide benefits to existing residents and potentially revitalize the neighborhoods. The project area contains over 125 acres of potential developable land, with significant portions surrounding the future commuter rail station than may offer opportunities to develop retail, offices, and housing in a transit-oriented, walkable format.



*One of many vacant or underutilized properties near the station area*



*There is only one small retail center in the entire neighborhood*

## PEDESTRIAN / BICYCLE CONNECTIVITY

Pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure in the broader neighborhood is generally poor with no bike lanes, few crosswalks, lack of sidewalks or disconnected sidewalks, lack of stormwater infrastructure, and limited landscaping. Few crossing points and inconsistent sidewalk coverage, particularly along Colorado Boulevard and E. 72nd and E. 74th Avenues, complicates neighborhood access to the station. An important priority is to foster a more walkable and bicycle-friendly environment throughout the area, particularly along the key corridors of Colorado Boulevard; E. 70th, 72nd and 74th Avenues; and Dahlia Street. Intersection and streetscape improvements along these roadways could include bike lanes, ADA-compliant sidewalk improvements, new curb and gutter, crosswalk improvements, enhanced mid-block pedestrian crossings, street trees, landscaping, lighting, and other pedestrian amenities. School access improvements, such as traffic calming, sidewalks and crosswalks, are critically needed.

Pedestrian and bicycle connectivity is a challenge within the neighborhood and also between the neighborhood and the future rail station. Pedestrian and bicycle access is difficult across Colorado Boulevard, between the station and neighborhoods to the east. Safe and attractive connections to the future commuter rail station and across Colorado Boulevard are needed.

There are opportunities to enhance trails and improve connections from the neighborhood to the South Platte River and existing network of trails west of the

neighborhood. The O'Brian Canal should be improved as a community amenity with trail and bridge connections to the larger river trail network.



*There is a lack of sidewalks and safe crossings on many of the streets in the neighborhoods*



## SAFETY AND SECURITY

Many streets in the neighborhood do not have street lighting, or have lights that no longer function and are in need of maintenance. Dimly-lit streets contribute to a sense of discomfort for pedestrians after dusk, particularly around school grounds. Busy intersections, with limited pedestrian crossing points, lack of connectivity of sidewalks, and inconsistent universal design access, also present safety issues.

Initiating streetscape improvements along key corridors to include lighting, sidewalk, and intersection improvements will create a safer and more comfortable pedestrian environment. New transit-oriented development around the station also presents opportunities to enhance safety. Increasing density with active uses and upper-story housing will encourage “eyes on the street” and improve security in the neighborhood.



*Pedestrian safety must be addressed at 72nd Avenue and Brighton Boulevard*

## WAYFINDING

Throughout the area there is a need for improved wayfinding and pedestrian-level signage. Gateway installations near the station and at key intersections – such as public art, signage, archways, and lighting – will clarify visitor orientation and provide opportunities for Adams City and Adams Heights to convey a distinct image.

## VEHICULAR AND TRUCK CIRCULATION

Access to Interstate 76 is inefficient and there is a lack of continuity from east to west on E. 72nd Avenue. However, the high traffic flow on E. 72nd Avenue is a market advantage and there are opportunities to improve access and circulation through the area over the long term.

Industrial uses are embedded within the area and the neighborhoods’ perimeter corridors typically carry heavy truck traffic. Connecting Interstate 76 and Highway 85, E. 74th Avenue is a five-lane arterial with heavy truck traffic that runs through a predominantly residential neighborhood just north of Adams City Middle School. Dahlia Street carries north-south truck traffic along the eastern edge of the neighborhood, as well as commuter traffic from the north. Intersection improvements are critically needed to enhance pedestrian safety in these areas.

## STATION AREA ACCESS

Primary access routes to the station will be on Colorado Boulevard; E. 70th, 72nd and 74th Avenues; and Dahlia Street. Each of these streets will need to be carefully planned to minimize neighborhood impacts while providing safe and efficient multi-modal access to the rail station and surrounding area.

The station must accommodate two access points to and from Colorado Boulevard with the primary access at E. 70th Avenue.



*74th Avenue will carry much of the traffic to the station*



*Existing RTD route 72 on Colorado Boulevard*

## UTILITIES

A number of key infrastructure and utility improvements are needed prior to construction of the North Metro Commuter Rail Corridor and the E. 72nd Avenue Station. It is important for Commerce City to work closely and collaborate with the South Adams County Water and Sanitation District. The following assumptions and recommendations for existing utilities are based on current conditions and the proposed development plan. Infrastructure needs may change depending on the timing and type of actual development that occurs.

Because the area west of the future station is part of a construction debris dump with debris infill, a preliminary geotechnical report will need to be conducted to evaluate suitability of the site for building construction.

According to South Adams County Water and Sanitation District, the sanitary sewer system is currently working well, but it is aging. Initially, the existing sanitary sewer system and lift stations at Birch Street and E. 72nd Avenue have capacity for the future commuter rail station development. A lift station will be necessary to provide a sewer connection to development on the west side of the O'Brian Canal. Development east of the ditch can connect to existing sanitary sewer. Improvements to the sanitary sewer system and lift station will be needed in the future, the extent of which will depend on the actual type and amount of development that occurs.

The existing water supply system is adequate to serve the initial stages of the future development.



The redevelopment of the area will require new water mains to serve the areas not currently next to water mains, and will provide opportunities for an additional water main looping to help improve pressure and flow in the area. The local water district will require a water study, as development progresses, to determine the extent of improvements that will be needed. Based on the age of the water system and the proposed land use changes, some improvements most likely will be required.

The storm sewer in the area is aging, and some of it is in poor condition. Storm sewer improvements will depend on what is actually built and the amount of impervious area created. New development will require storm water detention.

There are opportunities to tie in gas, electric, phone, and cable lines on Colorado Boulevard and E. 72nd Avenue. Initially, the gas, electric, phone, and cable utilities are adequate for the future station. As development occurs, gas, electric, phone, and cable utility companies will need to re-evaluate their systems based on current conditions, and determine what improvements are necessary to their respective utilities.



*There are many storm drainage issues in the neighborhood*

## CITY-COUNTY SPLIT JURISDICTION

There are a number of unincorporated parcels within the Adams City and Adams Heights neighborhoods, particularly north of the former Adams City High School site where much of the land is under the County's jurisdiction. The City-County split jurisdiction is a result of development that occurred prior to the incorporation of Commerce City. This is the case in neighborhoods such as Adams City and Adams Heights. In current times, there is a greater delineation of services between cities and counties, with cities primarily responsible for urban development and neighborhood service delivery including planning and approving development, and providing neighborhood services and infrastructure. County responsibilities are typically focused on public safety, justice, health, and social services. As such, counties sometimes lack the capacity to address important aspects of the urban environment such as street light installation; street surfacing, repair and sweeping; sidewalk installation; traffic calming; park development; and recreation programs. Further, the city-county interface typically leads to inconsistency in the application of design and development standards, which has occurred in the project area.

In order to take advantage of funding for the type of improvements proposed with this plan, unincorporated parcels within the project area eventually should be annexed into Commerce City. These parcels could be targeted for annexation as the adjacent parcels develop within the project area.

Annexation provides opportunities for all areas of the neighborhood to benefit from station area improvements, allow for a more unified neighborhood character, and ensure access to the City’s wide range of neighborhood services and programs.

There are several properties in the neighborhoods, particularly rental income properties that suffer

from deferred maintenance and reflect poorly on neighborhood character. If the ideas in this STAMP are implemented, the neighborhood’s image will greatly improve. With this goal in mind, new buildings should be designed with high quality architecture and materials as discussed and illustrated in chapters four and five.

### EXISTING CITY AND COUNTY SPLIT JURISDICTION





# CHAPTER 3

Vision







# Vision

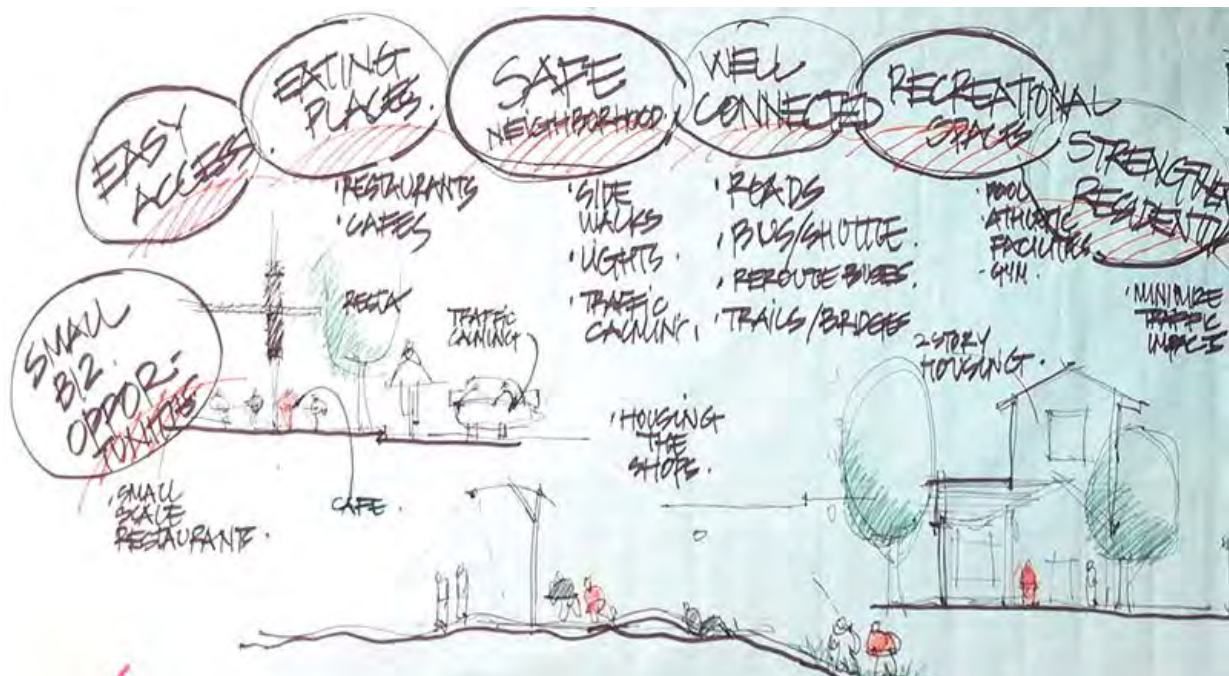
The following Vision describes an ideal snapshot of how the station area might evolve in the future. **Community input gathered during the planning process provided the basis for the following station area vision.**

## WELL-CONNECTED AND WALKABLE

Adams City and Adams Heights are envisioned as **well-connected, walkable neighborhoods with a distinct identity that provide a range of neighborhood-serving retail, employment opportunities, and housing options with safe, comfortable access to daily goods and services**, while maintaining the existing housing and businesses in the neighborhood. Unlike many other STAMP's in the metropolitan region, the basis of this plan is to strengthen the existing neighborhoods and to develop only in select key areas.

## STATION AREA AS THE FOCUS

The area immediately surrounding the E. 72nd Avenue Station could become a thriving focal point that draws residents, visitors and transit riders. Retail, small offices and a range of housing types may infuse life into the area. Infill housing, office, and retail uses have the potential to enhance safety with additional “eyes on the street.” Recreational spaces and child-friendly community facilities should be woven into the neighborhood fabric, both around the station and dotted throughout the neighborhood. Over the long term, existing Adams City and Adams Heights residential neighborhoods could be enhanced by strengthening existing building stock and adding a variety of infill housing types with a range of price points.



Summary of the community input to create the station area vision

## VIBRANT MIX OF USES

East 72nd Avenue should transform into a vibrant mixed-use multimodal corridor, that provides a link between the commuter rail station and key destinations such as neighborhood schools, Adams County School District 14, the Derby neighborhood retail and restaurants, the Civic Center, and Dick’s Sporting Goods Park. Drawing on the growing energy of the Derby neighborhood commercial district to the east, E. 72nd Avenue could gradually develop a more urban “main street” character with a mix of active ground-floor uses, attractive façades, and streetscape improvements. The

community envisions neighborhood services such as “mom and pop” retail; housing or offices above ground-floor retail; a neighborhood-scale grocery market; a carneceria; cafes; and a range of small-scale, affordable, and family-friendly restaurants. The neighborhood’s industrial and manufacturing uses also may be strengthened with the addition of synergistic light industrial and/or innovative manufacturing uses.



*A vibrant mix of uses should surround the station*



## GATEWAYS AND WAYFINDING

Welcoming gateway installations and pedestrian-level signage at key intersections could improve visitor orientation and convey a distinct identity. Attractive street and intersection improvements should knit together both sides of Colorado Boulevard, creating safe and pedestrian-friendly connections between the rail station and surrounding neighborhoods. Additional streetscape improvements and traffic calming installations could strengthen safe connectivity throughout the neighborhood. Frequent bus service and enhanced trail connections would further support walking, bike riding, and transit use in the community.



*Provide wayfinding signage at key locations*



*Well lit commercial gateways should provide identity for the neighborhood and station area*



# CHAPTER 4

## Planning Framework







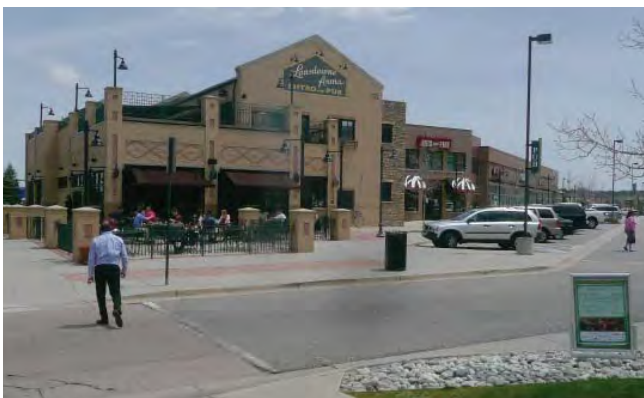
# Planning Framework

A framework of planning strategies was designed to guide urban design and development in the project area. **These are strategic, broad directions that together will transform the future of the area.** They build upon the community’s preferred vision for the area, and will inform critical decision-making to help achieve the preferred vision for the future of Adams City and Adams Heights neighborhoods.

- **Enhance Community Livability and Safety**– Increase lighting, police visibility, and overall “eyes on the street” by providing infill residential development. Improve the neighborhood’s aesthetic appeal and ambiance with new development and rehabilitation of older buildings, attractive building design, public art, and gateways. Enhance safe routes and walkability throughout the neighborhood.
- **Create Destinations**– Create retail, cultural, educational, open space, and recreational destinations in the neighborhood. Attract locally-serving uses to transform the station area and E. 72nd Avenue into a vibrant, walkable corridor with

a neighborhood-scale grocery store, a carnerceria, and affordable, family-friendly restaurants. Develop pocket parks, construct the O’Brian Canal Trail, and provide additional access points to the South Platte River.

- **Connect the Neighborhood**– Create safe connections for pedestrians and bicyclists between residential areas and key destinations such as transit, schools, civic uses, and neighborhood commercial areas. Improve and enhance sidewalks throughout the neighborhood and initiate attractive streetscape, intersection, and pedestrian improvements with lighting, street trees, and landscaping.
- **Emphasize Safe Pedestrian Access** – Foster creation of a walkable environment along E. 72nd Avenue and around the station through active ground-floor uses, building entrances at sidewalk edges, and parking set back from public walkways. Cluster high-density, mixed-use development with neighborhood-serving retail within walking distance of the station.



*Create interesting neighborhood destinations*



*Safely connect the neighborhood to open spaces and destinations*

- Maximize Transit-Oriented Development Potential**– Identify underutilized parcels and pursue catalytic opportunities for new two- to six-story mixed-use commercial and residential development or redevelopment near the E. 72nd Avenue Station. Broaden housing options to include apartments, townhomes, condominiums, and senior housing at a range of price points. Provide new office and transit-supported retail.



*Encourage pedestrian friendly ground floor uses on Colorado Boulevard and 72nd Avenue*

- Stimulate Economic Development** – Prioritize completion of streetscape and public realm improvements along E. 72nd Avenue, as a means of stimulating private interest and investment in the area. Collaborate with property owners to advance mutually beneficial transit-oriented projects, and pursue adaptive reuse projects where feasible. Encourage retail incubators and support job training opportunities for area residents through the professional development center proposed at the old Adams City High School site.



*Provide higher density housing west of the station*



*Provide mixed use buildings up to 6 stories near the station*

# CHAPTER 5

## Urban Design Concept





# Urban Design Concept

The urban design concept for the future station area **emphasizes enhanced circulation patterns and open space networks, new residential and mixed-use land uses, and improvements to the public realm.** Illustrated on the corresponding “Station Area Master Plan Buildout” the maps depict priority improvements that are proposed for implementation over near-term (0 – 10 year), mid-term (10 – 20), and long-term (20+) timeframes.

## PUBLIC REALM

The term, “public realm” refers to open spaces, vehicular circulation and transit, bicycle and pedestrian circulation, and wayfinding elements. The public realm in the station area should support a strong and vibrant community life by providing gathering opportunities, amenities for residents and transit users, and improved access to the transit station and other major destinations.

## OPEN SPACE

The urban design concept for Adams City and Adams Heights features a lattice of open spaces woven into the existing neighborhood fabric, with well-distributed neighborhood parks and new pocket parks connected by walkable streets and multi-use trails.

Neighborhood parks can serve as significant community gathering spaces and major amenities for residents of Adams City and Adams Heights. New neighborhood parks are proposed in the northern



*Provide new neighborhood parks*



*Provide children's play areas*



portion of the project area to complement existing parks to the south. The two proposed major mixed-use developments flanking E. 72nd Avenue, just east of the station, should include neighborhood parks that provide opportunities for respite and informal play. These parks could include sitting areas, gathering space, children’s play areas, community gardens, and picnic areas. At the south end of the proposed mixed-use development between E. 70th Avenue and Alsup Elementary School, vacant city-owned land could become a linear pocket park with amenities such as landscaping, seating areas, a tot lot, and/or gardens. The park should provide residents with a safe and comfortable walking and biking connection south to E. 70th Avenue with direct access to a new school, the Fernald Trailhead, and the nearby transit plaza.

A large, passive community park could frame the proposed high-density residential development west of the station and act as a floodplain buffer between new development and the river to the west. A publicly-accessible park should be nested within this residential development and could feature amenities

such as a playground, picnic areas, and flexible gathering space. Adjacent to the 72nd Avenue Station, and along-side the tracks, the transit plaza at the end of E. 72nd Avenue should provide amenities such as commercial uses, seating, shade shelters, and trees that enhance the transit experience.

There may be additional opportunities to gradually integrate open space and more formalized park space into the neighborhood over the long term by transforming vacant or underutilized parcels into small green spaces, or by incorporating quasi-public open space plazas and pocket parks in new developments that could be built and maintained by a home owners association.

Improved on-street and multi-use trail connections are proposed to allow residents to safely and more easily access surrounding open space resources such as Fairfax Park to the east, and the South Platte River and existing network of trails to the west.



*Create improvements to the South Platte River frontage*

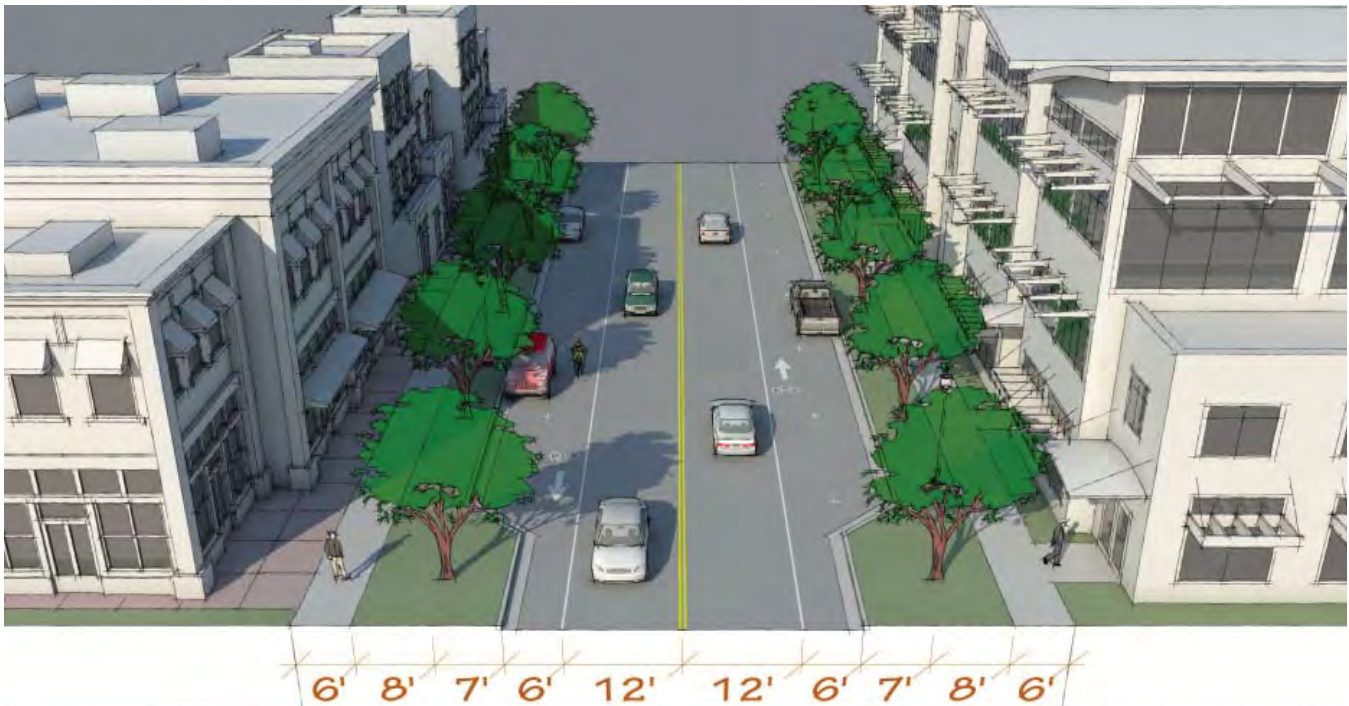


*Create a large passive community park west of the station surrounded by residential uses*

## PEDESTRIAN AND BICYCLE CIRCULATION

The urban design concept includes a system of pedestrian- and bicycle-friendly streets that complements the strong existing street network. The proposed improvements will strengthen safe connectivity throughout the Adams City and Adams Heights neighborhoods. Streetscape enhancements, such as parks, schools, and civic and commercial uses, are proposed to link residential areas to key neighborhood destinations and to the future station and transit plaza. The concept identifies the primary pedestrian and bicycle connector streets in the area utilizing the strong existing street network of E. 68th, 70th, 72nd and 74th Avenues; Colorado Boulevard and Dahlia Street. These

connector streets should be the focus of significant improvements to enhance walkability and character with sidewalks, lighting, street trees, traffic calming installations, bike lanes and/or painted bicycle share the road symbols known as sharrows. Primary intersection improvements are proposed along E. 74th Avenue at the O'Brian Canal Trail, Colorado Boulevard, and Birch Street. Due to heavy truck traffic, intersection improvements to enhance pedestrian safety also should be implemented along E. 74th Avenue and Cherry Street, and along Brighton Boulevard/Highway 85 at the major intersections of E. 69th and E. 72nd Avenues. In addition, E. 68th and E. 70th Avenues should receive pedestrian and bicycle improvements.

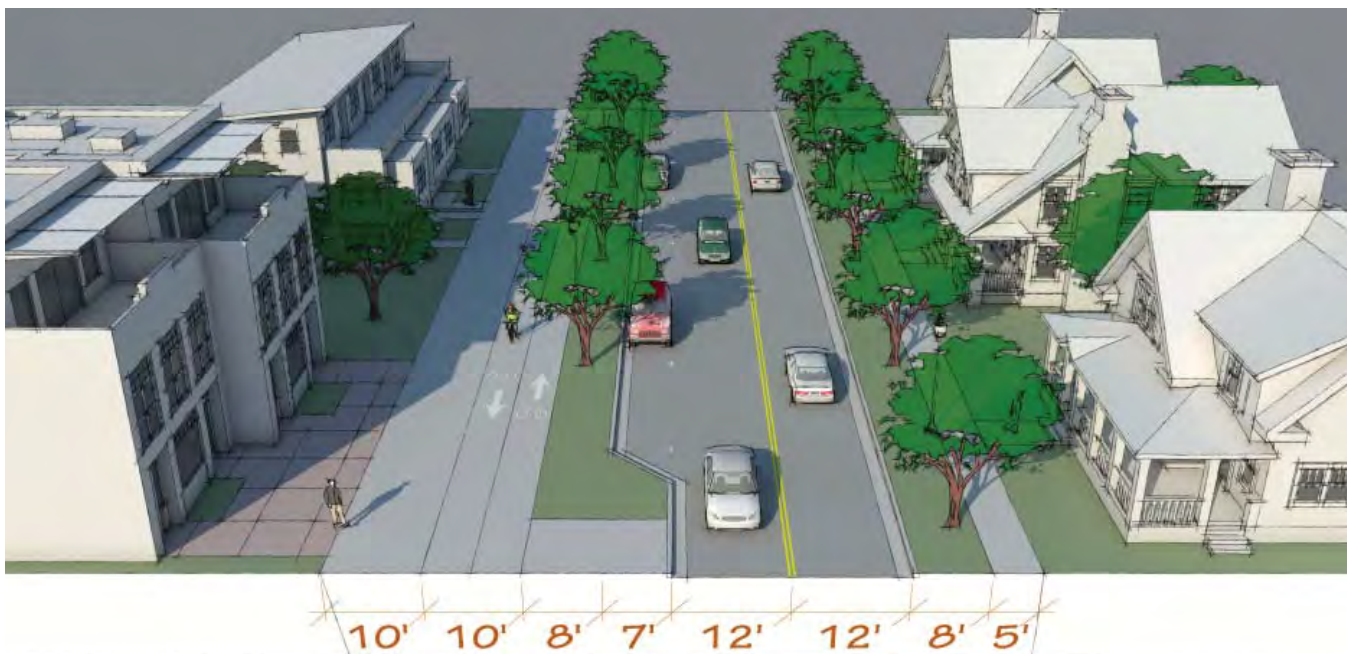


*Proposed 72nd Avenue improvements between Clermont and Colorado looking west with on-street bike lanes, on-street parking, and detached sidewalks*



East 72nd Avenue is the main corridor connecting existing neighborhoods and the station area with uses to the east, including the stable Derby retail and restaurants, as well as the Civic Center. Attractive streetscape elements, along with targeted mixed-use development and façade improvements, are proposed to help transform E. 72nd Avenue into a vibrant walkable “main street” corridor. Streetscape elements could include sidewalks, benches, street trees, lighting, trash receptacles, bicycle parking (particularly close to the station), public art, and decorative paving. A range of public realm improvements on E. 72nd Avenue should energize the neighborhood and station area and build momentum for additional retail and destination uses.

Attractive streetscape and intersection improvements should knit together both sides of Colorado Boulevard, creating safe and pedestrian-friendly connections from eastern neighborhoods across Colorado Boulevard to the rail station and community resources to the west, including the Fernald Trailhead, the South Platte River, and network of greenway trails. Streetscape improvements proposed along Colorado Boulevard include sidewalks, improved lighting, street trees, and landscaping, in addition to delineated crosswalks and intersection enhancements at E. 70th, 72nd, and 74th Avenues. In addition, a new 71st Avenue Station access is proposed west of Colorado Boulevard. The design to support greater bicycle mobility along Colorado Boulevard include an off-street, bi-directional, multi-use path on the



*Proposed Colorado Boulevard section looking north at 71st Street with off-street bike lanes on the west side, on-street parking on the west side, and detached sidewalks on both sides*

west side of the street, closest to the station and the existing and proposed greenway trails. This will greatly enhance north-south neighborhood access and station access.

New pedestrian and bicycle connections are proposed between existing neighborhoods and the station via two pedestrian/bicycle bridges across the O'Brian Canal. The O'Brian Canal could become a community amenity as a greenway, with a loop trail and a new bridge across the South Platte River near Interstate 270. A multi-use trail connection west of E. 74th Avenue is envisioned to link the O'Brian Canal Trail to the South Platte River Trail, with additional new Fernald Trail segments to the north. Multi-use trail extensions are proposed at both ends of E. 68th Avenue, to create a continuous east-west connection through the neighborhood. The west end of E. 68th Avenue at Colorado Boulevard would tie into a multi-use trail connecting through the industrial area west to the O'Brian Canal. At the east end of E. 68th Avenue, a new pedestrian underpass beneath Highway 85 would create a safe link to Fairfax Park and the Mile High Greyhound Park development to the east.



*Improve the streetscape, sidewalks and crossings throughout the neighborhood*



*The O'Brian Canal trail should become a community amenity and new connection to the Sand Creek Greenway*

## VEHICULAR AND TRANSIT CIRCULATION

The urban design concept adds a new loop street at the western ends of E. 70th and E. 72nd Avenues to improve vehicular access to the station and provide access to new neighborhood amenities west of the station including parks, and commercial and residential uses. The new street alignment begins at the west end of E. 70th Avenue, spans a new vehicular bridge across the O’Brian Canal at the Fernald Trailhead, wraps through the proposed residential development and alongside the transit plaza and park-n-Ride Station, then crosses back over the O’Brian Canal onto E. 72nd Avenue. Both intersections of Colorado Boulevard and E. 70th and E. 72nd Avenues would become signalized. This alignment would complete the circulation for the park-n-Ride and provide a critical emergency access route. As the main east-west thoroughfare through the neighborhood, providing access from the station through to the E. 72nd Avenue corridor is an efficient and strategic

means of connecting residents, employees, and transit riders with destinations inside and beyond the station area to points farther east.

New improved access points off Interstate 76 could potentially create a market for new office uses and employment near the station, along with neighborhood-serving and transit-supported retail. Long-term vehicular improvements involve extending Colorado Boulevard north of E. 74th Avenue up to a new on-ramp onto Interstate 76, and providing a southbound off-ramp from Interstate 76 to E. 74th Avenue utilizing the existing frontage road. This should reduce vehicular traffic impacts on E. 74th Avenue and provide better connectivity to and from the commuter rail station and the neighborhoods. Implementation of these projects would complete the Interstate 76/E. 74th Avenue interchange and provide significant local and regional traffic and mobility enhancements.



Proposed circulation improvements on and off I-76 at 74th Avenue will provide greater access to the station and future development



Increased Regional Transportation District bus service in the area will benefit residents with more frequent stops and routes through the area. Bus routes will follow E. 72nd and E. 70th Avenues and Colorado Boulevard, with E. 72nd Avenue serving as the primary access to the rail station and park-n-Ride station at E. 72nd Avenue and Highway 85. A future commuter ride station at this location establishes the 72nd Avenue station as a major transit hub with multiple bus lines that run through the western portion of Commerce City, converging at the transfer center. The transit plaza that directly links the rail station with the bus center streamlines multi-modal transit connections, encouraging alternative means of accessing the rail station

In addition to improvements on the existing streets, new local streets in the redeveloped school sites should tie into the existing street network and follow the existing grid pattern.

The plan calls for traffic mitigation for the potential increase in traffic in the neighborhoods with specific commitment by Commerce City and Adams County to enforce traffic speeds. This could include additional stop signs, signals, and weight limits.

## WAYFINDING AND GATEWAYS

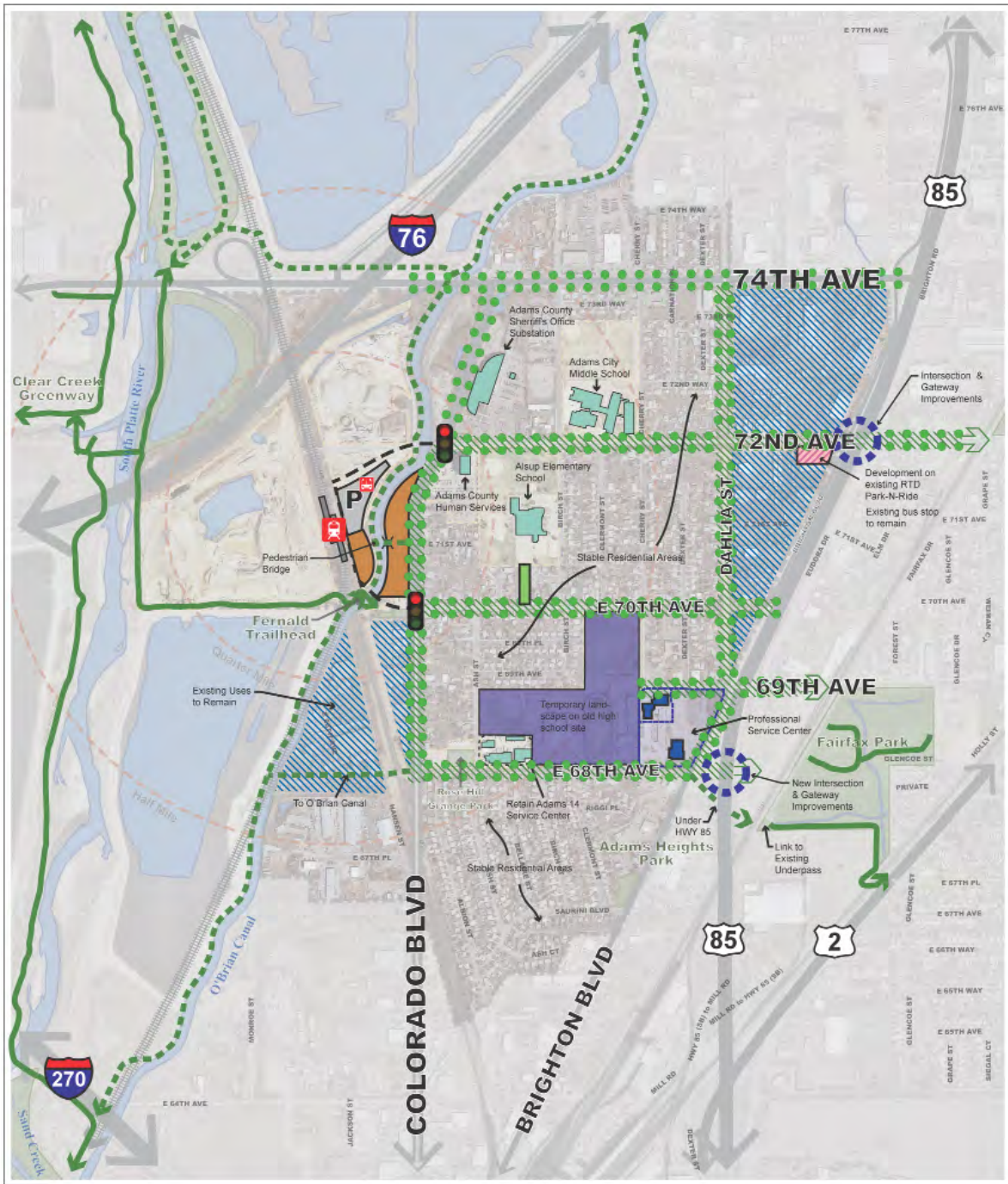
Signature gateway features at major entry points could better define the neighborhood and help orient visitors and transit riders. From the north, gateway improvements and signage are proposed along new freeway on-ramps/off-ramps at the intersection of E. 74th Avenue and the O'Brian Canal, and at the intersection of Brighton Boulevard and E. 72nd Avenue. From the south, the main gateway is at Brighton Boulevard and E. 69th Avenue. These are strategic locations to feature art elements and signage to identify the Adams City and Adams Heights neighborhoods, the 72nd Avenue station, and the area's burgeoning E. 72nd Avenue commercial district. At the neighborhood scale, public art installations, pedestrian-level signage, and lighting along key corridors could help the neighborhood convey a distinct image.

## URBAN DESIGN, LAND USE, AND TRANSPORTATION RECOMMENDATIONS

The following three pages illustrate the recommendations for the future station area that emphasize enhanced multimodal circulation and open space networks, new residential and mixed-use land uses, and improvements to the public realm. The maps depict priority improvements that are proposed for implementation over near-term (0 – 10 year), mid-term (10 – 20), and long-term (20+) timeframes.



STATION AREA MASTER PLAN IN YEARS 0-10



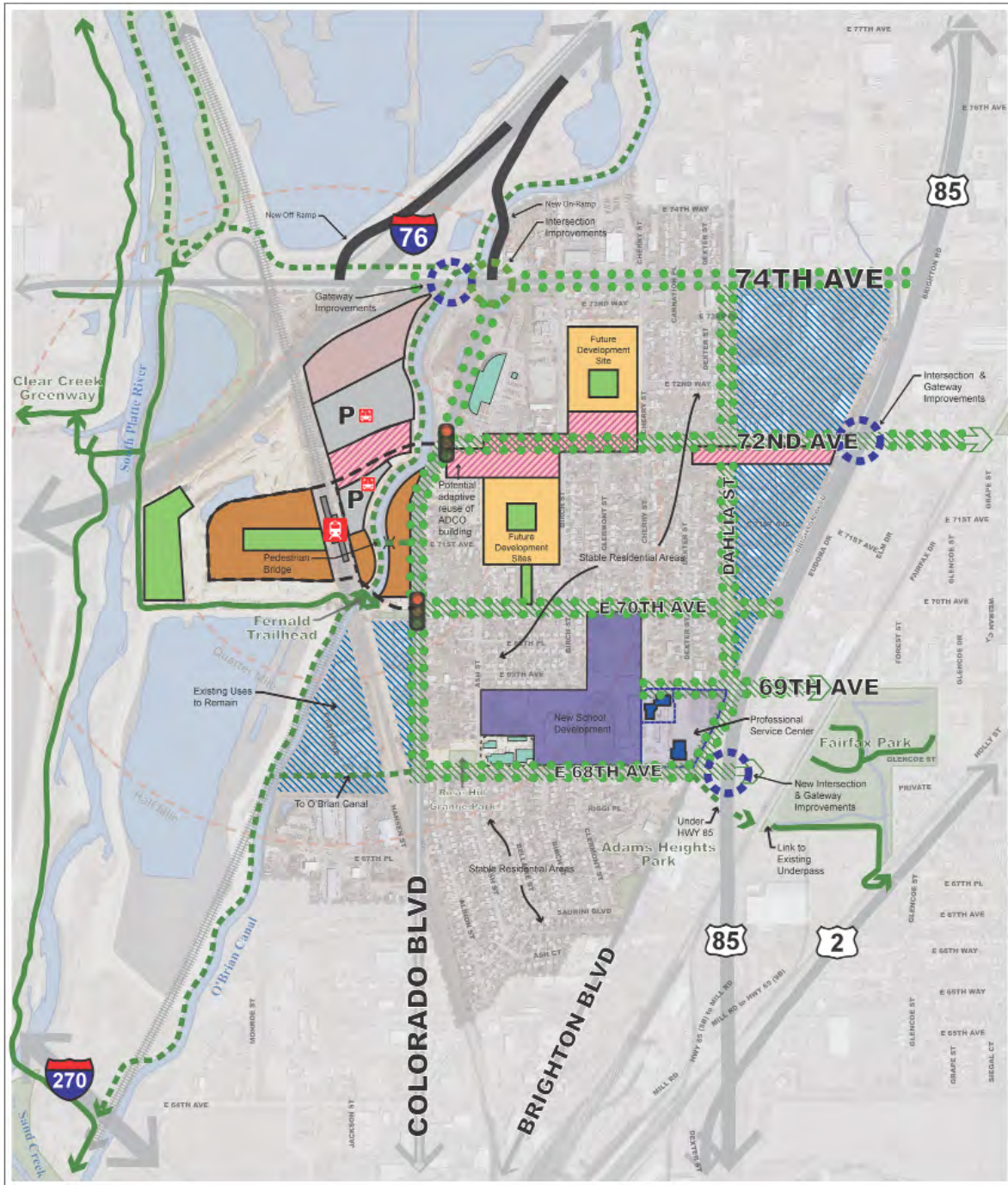
Legend

- Study Area
- Proposed Commuter Rail Station
- Park-N-Ride
- Proposed Commuter Rail Corridor
- Railroad
- Water
- Parks
- Multi-Use Trail
- Civic Uses

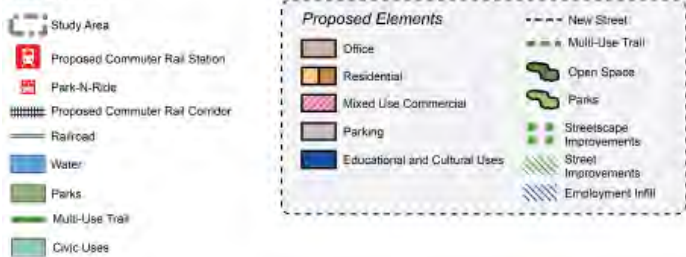
Proposed Elements	



STATION AREA MASTER PLAN IN YEARS 10-20

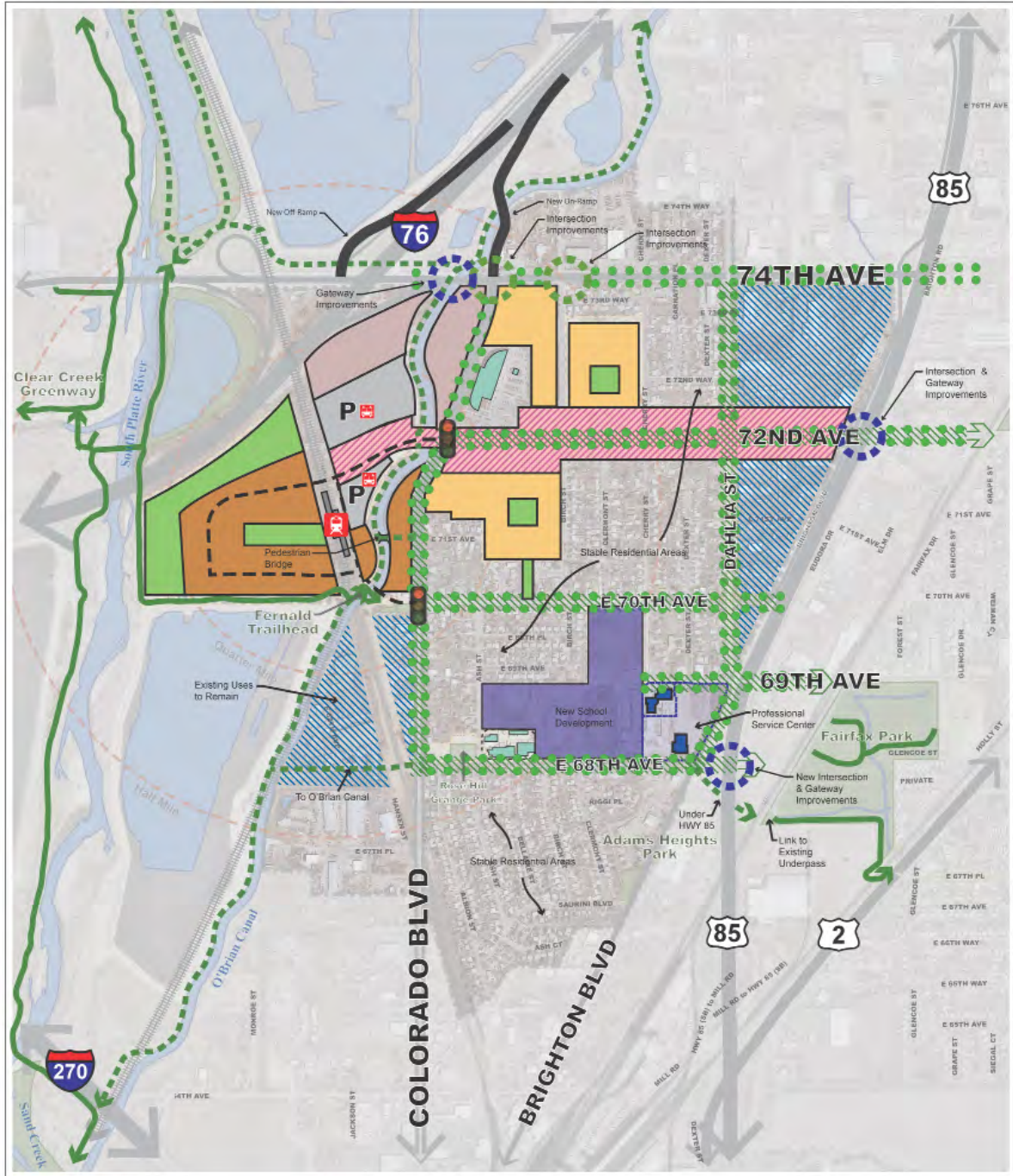


Legend





STATION AREA MASTER PLAN AT BUILDOUT IN 20+ YEARS



**Legend**

- Study Area
- Proposed Commuter Rail Station
- Park-N-Ride
- Proposed Commuter Rail Corridor
- Railroad
- Water
- Parks
- Multi-Use Trail
- Civic Uses

- Proposed Elements**
- Office
  - Residential
  - Mixed Use Commercial
  - Parking
  - Educational and Cultural Uses
  - New Street
  - Multi-Use Trail
  - Open Space
  - Parks
  - Streetscape Improvements
  - Street Improvements
  - Employment Infill



## PRIVATE REALM

The term “private realm” refers to buildings, structures and private or quasi-public open spaces. The private realm in the 72nd Avenue station area should support transit use and community life, and complement adjacent uses and development patterns. Creating destination places and concentrating density around the station and along E. 72nd Avenue will maximize rail station synergy and create a strong sense of place for the neighborhood. Proposed for these areas are new two- to six-story mixed-use development that includes residential, office, and retail uses in a transit-oriented, walkable format with convenient access to open space and recreational or cultural amenities. Commercial uses, such as cafés, flower shops, cleaners, and fast-casual restaurants, would be ideally suited near the transit station to support the needs of transit patrons and residents.

Three major opportunity sites in the vicinity could potentially support new transit-oriented development in the near term—the 14-acre Alsup Elementary School site the 13.5-acre Adams Middle School site, and the Adams County Human Services Building. The strategic relocation of these older, existing schools to

the Old Adams City High School site could allow for a modernized school facility at the high school site, and provide aggregated land near the station that could support an efficient redevelopment program. The Old Adams City High School site also affords space for new community and cultural destinations, such as the proposed professional development center, and potentially a small library or art museum. On the Adams County site, elementary- and middle-school sites, mixed-use commercial and residential development, up to four stories is proposed to provide a sense of enclosure along E. 72nd Avenue, with active ground-floor retail uses and upper-story office uses, apartments, and condominiums. The human service offices could be located in the redeveloped site. Transitioning away from the E. 72nd Avenue corridor, housing types should include two- to three-story townhomes and small-lot, single-family homes compatible with existing single-family neighborhoods.

Vacant land west of the station provides a strategic opportunity to build on the energy of the E. 72nd Avenue Station with three- to six-story residential development and a publicly-accessible park. Increased



*Potential for waterfront development on the O'Brien Canal and the South Platte River*



*Potential housing types on redeveloped school sites*



*Higher density housing opportunity west of the station*



*Opportunity for senior housing surrounding the station*



*Compatible light industrial uses adjacent to housing*

activity in the vicinity could grow demand for additional commercial uses, and cultivate a more vibrant neighborhood and robust transit hub over the long term.

Through a range of building prototypes, the mixed-income character of the Adams City and Adams Heights neighborhoods can be preserved. A wide variety of residential buildings at a range of price points, including row houses, townhomes, condominiums, senior housing, and apartments, are proposed to provide home ownership opportunities for individuals at a range of income levels. This diverse mix of housing options not only respects and responds to the economic conditions of the area, but also could support a varied and interesting built environment. New, high-quality residential development should benefit stable residential areas with attractive architectural design that will enhance overall neighborhood character.

The design concept builds on the strength of existing industrial and manufacturing sectors, and incorporates new synergistic uses. Innovative light-industrial and manufacturing uses such as craft brewing, furniture making, information technology, research and development, or other compatible uses, could be explored. Retail and commercial spaces along a transformed E. 72nd Avenue and at other neighborhood nodes, may provide small business opportunities and economic vitality for the surrounding neighborhood. Over the long term, new office uses near the station also could provide



job opportunities for residents and draw employees from other parts of the region. Due to ease of access and high visibility, 3-6 story office development is most appropriate north of the station, just south of Interstate 76 and the E. 74th Avenue intersection.

The building prototypes that are most appropriate closest to the station area would contribute to the public realm and support community life. By alley-loading residential units and locating parking and service entries to the rear of developments, the majority of the building facades along streets and open spaces could be pedestrian-friendly and provide a strong building edge. Front-yard setbacks could provide privacy and opportunities for private expression by residents. Rich building articulation, such as front porches, stoops, and fenestration, could enhance the pedestrian experience, provide “eyes on the street,” and add variety and interest to the streetscape. New parking structures could be “wrapped” with pedestrian-friendly, ground-floor uses to minimize the presence of blank façades. The massing, height, and intensity of development



*Opportunity for innovative light industrial and manufacturing spaces*



*Parking structures with active ground floor uses help support a high density neighborhood*



*Potential for commercial uses on E. 72nd Avenue*



should be a function of the proximity to the transit station and the scale of adjacent development.

High-density, mixed-use development with neighborhood-serving retail should be clustered within walking distance of the station and focus on the west and north sides of the station. Commercial uses along E. 72nd Avenue and around the station could foster a pleasant, walkable environment with active ground-floor uses, building entrances at sidewalk edges, and parking set back from public walkways. Façade improvements, installation of public art, and repurposing of existing buildings, where appropriate, could improve neighborhood character. An enhanced sense of place along with increased activity provided by proposed housing, offices, restaurants, and retail, may lead to economic development and expanded local employment opportunities while also animating the station area.



*Walkable medium density mixed use development opportunity on 72nd Avenue*

# CHAPTER 6

## Implementation







# Implementation

**The implementation strategies outlined in this STAMP are intended to stimulate development and redevelopment activity across the station area and spur transformation of Adams City and Adams Heights into thriving, transit-oriented neighborhoods over the long term.**

A central element within any station area master plan is its ability to bring new economic development opportunities to a given area. Based on examples of station areas that have been developed in other communities, economic development opportunities emerge based on the additional expenditure potential brought by new residents, commuters, and day-time employees working in the vicinity. The additional activity gravitates to a STAMP, because the transit stop and new amenities constructed in the area provide a value proposition that finds traction in the market.

The challenge for the Commerce City STAMP is to define elements that can differentiate the market opportunities from existing conditions and from other competitive locations. To the extent these elements can be integrated to create a cohesive experience in the station area and immediate neighborhood, the market will follow.



*New 7-11 convenience store on Brighton Boulevard*

## EXISTING CONDITIONS OVERVIEW

The current Commerce City market and STAMP context have a limited value proposition for new commercial or residential development, although there are some existing assets. Accordingly, the consultant team focused on these existing strengths, with the goal of leveraging them to create area-wide assets.

## ECONOMIC STRENGTHS

The area's strengths from an economic perspective include the following:

**Commercial Corridors**— The existing E. 72nd Avenue corridor east of the study area is strong, with numerous eating and drinking establishments and other retail activity. The aggregate number of existing shops has become a retail destination within the Commerce City subarea, attracting surrounding residents who support the businesses on the corridor. Moreover, its concentration of eating and drinking uses creates a sufficiently large base to attract some customers from outside Commerce City. The daytime employment population within 5 miles of the study area is over 130,000.

**Office Activity**— The former Adams County administrative offices still house some county staff at the intersection of E. 72nd Avenue and Colorado Boulevard. In addition, there is day-time activity located in the Adams County Sheriff's facility located immediately north of the administrative offices, as well as offices associated with the industrial uses in the study area.

**Visibility from Interstate 76**– The success of office, certain residential types, and retail development is highly correlated to high visibility and ease of access. The interstate traffic will help attract office users, although ease of access should be improved given limited interstate ingress and egress, and lack of connectivity from east to west throughout the area.

**Growth**– Commerce City is currently Colorado’s fourth-fastest growing city, experiencing a 118 percent population increase since 2000, and significantly contributes to metro-Denver’s economy.

## ECONOMIC WEAKNESSES

The area’s weaknesses from an economic perspective include the following.

**Imbedded Sites**– While there are reasonably significant development sites, including some with interstate visibility, all are embedded in the neighborhood, which require circuitous routes in and out of the neighborhood.

**Traffic Flow**– While high-traffic volume is an advantage, the lack of continuity from east to west on E. 72nd and E. 74th Avenues is inefficient.

**Market Condition**– New construction requires higher rents or mortgages compared to older, existing buildings. Given the lack of new construction in the area, the marginal increase in cost must be supported by a higher market pressure than exists today.

## PLAN ELEMENTS

Given the market strengths and weaknesses, the MIG team built the redevelopment program for the STAMP using a highly tailored economic development strategy. The key driver is the continuation of the strength of the E. 72nd Avenue corridor. The existing commercial activity and market recognition of the corridor provides a core element that serves as a framework for the plan. An additional consideration is that new commercial development within the STAMP cannot be supported exclusively by new rooftops and thus, must tap into the expenditure potentially represented by drive-by traffic. There can be a symbiotic relationship between the E. 72nd Avenue corridor and the proposed TOD. Both can benefit from each other, as the existing commercial activity can be extended near the TOD, and the additional rooftops generated by the TOD will support the E. 72nd Avenue commercial district.

The team identified E. 72nd Avenue, between Colorado Boulevard and Birch Street, as the STAMP focus area for economic development. Because this section has



*Potential neighborhood commercial uses*

the best potential to draw from the existing strength of traffic volume, while still maintaining proximity to the new commuter rail station. Most conventional TOD's originate the development patterns around the station platform, believing that the station activity is sufficient to transform the market. In this case, however, the commercial hub has been located to draw from the assets of both.

This geographic location alone will not support new development, and the community must provide improvements to the context to create an interest with future residents and businesses. Generally, a significant portion of residential markets (ownership and rental) seek urban locations that are highly walkable, with close proximity to eating and drinking and specialty retail. Reasonable commuting solutions and access to good jobs are fundamental drivers for success in any market, and continue to be a major factor today. Accordingly, a high-quality walking experience to the transit stop, and the corresponding short commute to downtown Denver or to other regional employment centers served by rail transit, will be major factors in driving residential demand. As mentioned in chapter four of this document, the plan calls for a number of pedestrian walkways, complete streets, and higher connectivity from the transit station to the existing neighborhood to the east, and the proposed residential area to the west.

Commercial/retail demand consists of local-serving retail and restaurant uses, as well as office uses that have a regional draw. Mixed-use potential exists for

the blocks with local-serving retail. To the extent urban design elements and strong streetscape improvements can be introduced, the city can begin the effort to integrate market opportunities with the sense of place needed for a successful TOD implementation.

Large-scale, multi-family residential development is proposed for the western area of the STAMP. The combination of good interstate exposure and direct access to transit will appeal to future residents. The access, however, is not very direct. The optimal solution will be new ramps directly onto Interstate with clearer wayfinding from interstate exits, through the existing neighborhood, to the site. This limits commercial/office potential and lends itself to residential uses. It will be important to create a clean gateway, enabling future apartment residents to feel welcome and safe.

A rare development opportunity that is in close proximity to the station will be the small-lot, single-family and townhome developments slated for the two school redevelopment sites. The benefit of a



*Potential for small lot single family housing on school sites*



partnership between Commerce City and Adams County School District 14 will enable the city to help direct redevelopment efforts in alignment with the vision shown in this plan. The redevelopment will not occur until the school district has completed the planning and financing for new facilities. The sites offer potential for new parks, walking paths, and home sites that provide the density appropriate for a TOD, while offering a single-family product. Based on other examples from the Denver-metro area, market demand is expected to be strong.

## EXISTING RESIDENTS AND BUSINESSES

An important consideration in the vision for redevelopment is the need to recognize existing residents and preserve their continued interest and investment in the neighborhood. Often, transit service brings with it market pressures that displace existing residents. TOD's in locations like these must strive to balance the need to stimulate market interest, while at the same time preserve opportunities for the current local residents. Greater interest in equity within TOD's is growing, and communities are seeking tools to increase the income ranges represented. Commerce City will tap state and federal resources and use these to help reduce the displacement of residents and businesses by:

- Supporting and assisting with funding small neighborhood businesses, using, by way of example, programs administered by CHFA;
- Providing programs to assist renters to become homeowners;

- Increasing workforce development programs in the area;
- Increasing the supply of workforce housing in the area by building relationships with Denver-metro organizations that are focused on (and can bring resources to) affordable housing within transit oriented development;
- Implementing anti-displacement programs; and
- Increasing educational and medical opportunities in the neighborhood.
- Work cooperatively with the Frei Family to relocate the current operation to another feasible location in Adams County in order to facilitate long-term redevelopment of the station area site.

Three specific tools can be employed by the city to achieve goals relating to displacement. First, land use standards could be adopted to require an affordable set-aside within any new project. Residential units would be required from developers and dedicated to serve households earning a specific percentage of the Area Median Income (AMI) (for example, 60



*Affordable housing opportunities throughout the neighborhoods*

percent of AMI). Second, allocation of Low Income Housing Tax Credits from the Colorado Housing and Finance Authority should be sought out to provide needed capital for a development that is targeted to households earning 30 to 60 percent of the AMI. Third, the city should partner with the Urban Land Conservancy (ULC) to preserve workforce opportunities in areas near transit that are facing gentrification pressure. It is important to note that the 72nd Avenue STAMP presents a rare opportunity to bridge interests and include households across the income spectrum. A set-aside target, coupled with sufficient public investments, is a solution that could help achieve this goal.

## IMPLEMENTATION ACTIONS

The following strategies and implementing actions are related to policy changes, safety and security, urban design, transportation, development, financing, and income diversity. These strategies will help advance key opportunities outlined in this plan.

### ZONING AND POLICY CHANGES

The city can take the lead on many of the key elements that will lead to successful implementation measures. Some of these programs include minimum density requirements, minimum FARs, requirements related to building form and setbacks, and streetscape standards. As an option, the city could consider adopting form-based code standards; however, many of the concepts addressed here could be accomplished with simpler modifications to the zoning

code. In addition to the physical form of the future development, the city could establish housing set-aside standards, seek partnerships with regional entities committed to preventing displacement, and provide resources for low-income housing development, rent-to-own programs, and local business development support. To the extent the city can be more efficient and effective with direction from consulting firms, it should prioritize the issues, budget for these projects, and complete them sequentially. Area resources are available for the city, and at no cost, staff can tap into these resources that include CHFA, the Division of Housing, Mile High Connects, and the Urban Land Conservancy, all of which are gaining interest in preserving lower-income housing opportunities within new TOD areas.

### SAFETY AND SECURITY

This category is narrowly focused relative to the others, but is called out separately given the growing need for attention. Market research shows that actual and perceived crime issues at transit station areas impact not only transit ridership but also on area real estate values. It is therefore of paramount importance to the city that the station area roadway, bike, and pedestrian connections are well designed, lighted, and patrolled on a routine basis.

### MULTIMODAL TRANSPORTATION

The multimodal actions include projects of a larger magnitude, such as new ramps onto Interstate 76, which will require coordination with the city and DRCOG, specifically as it relates to DRCOG’s Transportation Improvement Plan (TIP) and linking these investment dollars to established urban centers, transit stations, and TOD development areas. The scale of the improvements are substantial, thus requiring a portion of federal and/or state funding to be viable, in addition to any local match required from Commerce City. It should be recognized that federal and state funds are subject to availability and a competitive bid process.

### ACTION STEPS | FUNDING OPTIONS

In the tables that follow, a series of actions and corresponding funding sources are listed. Each of the actions listed in the matrices on the following pages indicate an associated lead agency and identify funding sources. Following the tables is a more detailed description of the potential funding sources related to major strategy areas.

Urban Design Strategy	Action	Funding	Lead	Timing
Complete E. 72nd Avenue and Colorado Boulevard streetscape improvements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Implement sidewalks, bike lanes, street trees, pedestrian amenities</li> </ul>	TIF Assessment District Non-Contig. Metro Dist. DRCOG TIP Enhancement Funds, CDBG funds	C3	0–5 years
Improve E. 72nd Avenue as a “main street”	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop the following “next step” plans: corridor redevelopment plans, street design standards/manuals</li> </ul>	City DRCOG	C3	0–5 years
Existing home improvements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Facade and property improvements</li> </ul>	Grants or low interest loans	C3	0–5 years
Improve E. 72nd Avenue as a “main street”	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop comprehensive wayfinding plans and strategies</li> <li>Develop subarea plans for gateways</li> </ul>	City DRCOG TIP	C3	0-10 years



Vehicular, Transit, Pedestrian and Bicycle Strategy	Action	Funding	Lead	Timing
Direct traffic flow to E. 72nd Avenue close to the 72nd Avenue Station	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Establish a plan that addresses east-west traffic flow and increases average daily traffic (ADT) nearest to the station area</li> </ul>	TIF Assessment District Non-Contig. Metro dist. DRCOG TIP Enhancement Funds	C3	0–5 years
Improve vehicular access, parking and public transit connections in the station area	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Extend Colorado Boulevard north of E. 74th Avenue up to a new on-ramp onto Interstate 76</li> <li>Construct new vehicular bridge at the Fernald Trailhead at the western edge of E. 70th Avenue</li> <li>Establish a plan that addresses east-west traffic flow and increases ADT nearest to the STAMP</li> <li>Develop the following “next step” plans/ studies: traffic circulation studies (including traffic simulation model development), access management plans, first/last-mile mobility implementation, financing and partnership studies, transit circulator feasibility, transportation demand management studies and implementation activities, and parking management studies</li> </ul>	City DRCOG	CDOT RTD C3	0–5 years
Enhance the quality of the walking and biking experiences in the station area	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Construct two new pedestrian bridges over the O’Brian Canal east of the station</li> <li>Construct the O’Brian Canal Trail</li> </ul>	City DRCOG TIP	C3	0-10 years

New Transit-Oriented Development Strategy	Action	Funding	Lead	Timing
Create a development incentive package to help implement development projects slated for the two school redevelopment sites (Adams City Middle School and Alsup Elementary School)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop urban design and development guidelines and design studies for multi-modal infrastructure projects</li> <li>• Identify possible public funding mechanisms/partners</li> </ul>	City ED funds TIF P3s	C3	0–10 years

Zoning Strategy	Action	Funding	Lead	Timing
Sponsor zone changes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Adopt land use standards with minimum Floor Area Ratio (FAR) and density targets</li> <li>• Establish minimum densities around the station area and along E. 72nd Avenue between Colorado Boulevard and Birch Street</li> <li>• Work closely with prospective development partners to facilitate zoning and other development approval requests that are consistent with STAMP recommendations</li> </ul>	City Planning	C3	0–10 years

Safety and Security Strategy	Action	Funding	Lead	Timing
Enhance safety and security	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide additional street lighting and sidewalks throughout the neighborhood</li> </ul>	TIF Assessment District Non-Contig. Metro Dist. DRCOG TIP	C3	0–20 years

Income Diversity Strategy	Action	Funding	Lead	Timing
Create and retain affordable housing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Update the Adams County Housing Study and seek to increase diversity of housing; consider both lower- and upper-income residents as important segments of the Commercial City community</li> <li>• Establish a set-aside standard and dedicate a specific percentage of new housing to households earning less than the Area Median Income (AMI)</li> <li>• Seek partnerships with regional entities focused on displacement solutions for TOD areas.</li> <li>• Advocate for an allocation of 9% Low Income Housing Tax Credits from the Colorado Housing and Finance Authority (CHFA) to provide the needed capital for a development targeted to households earning 30 – 60% of the AMI</li> <li>• Establish a partnership with an experienced tax credit developer to work collaboratively to raise the interest from CHFA in a site with direct access to transit that preserves diversity</li> </ul>	City and County Comp Plan  CDBG  LIHTC	Commerce City Housing Authority, Adams County Housing Authority	0-10 years
Support anti-displacement initiatives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increase workforce development programs in the area</li> <li>• Support and funding of small neighborhood businesses</li> <li>• Programs to help renters become homeowners</li> <li>• Increase educational and medical opportunities</li> <li>• Programs to combat gentrification</li> </ul>	ED  CDBG	Commerce City	0–20 years



Utilities	Action	Funding	Lead	Timing
Infrastructure and Utility improvements	• Preliminary geotechnical report for station area	TIF	South Adams County	0–10 yrs
	• Lift station at Birch St. and E 72nd Ave for sewer	Assessment District	Water and Sanitation District,	10–20 yrs
	• New water mains for future development	Non-Contig. Metro Dist.	C3	10–20 yrs
	• Improved storm sewer	Private Developers		10–20 yrs

## FINANCING STRATEGIES

Most of the improvements identified in this chapter are related to actions that would be taken in the immediate area. Generally, these types of projects lend themselves to local funding sources, such as Tax Increment Financing (TIF), Assessment Districts (AD), or a progressive approach that calls for newly developed properties to join a non-contiguous Title 32 Metropolitan District (MD). Each of these are locally formed, with revenues generated from the local property owners. Each fall entirely within the purview of Commerce City and could, hypothetically, be implemented without participation from other agencies on a state or regional level.

### ***Urban Renewal-Tax Increment Financing***

The most likely avenue to establish a TIF for the area would be an Urban Renewal District. Following a conditions survey, the City Council could establish the district. Local input from area property owners, businesses, and residents is critical to an effective process, although there is no election requirement from area property owners. Once established, the district would receive the incremental tax revenue associated with new development. The district can use this revenue to fund area-wide improvements (such as streetscape or pedestrian linkages), or may choose to partner with a developer and invest the proceeds

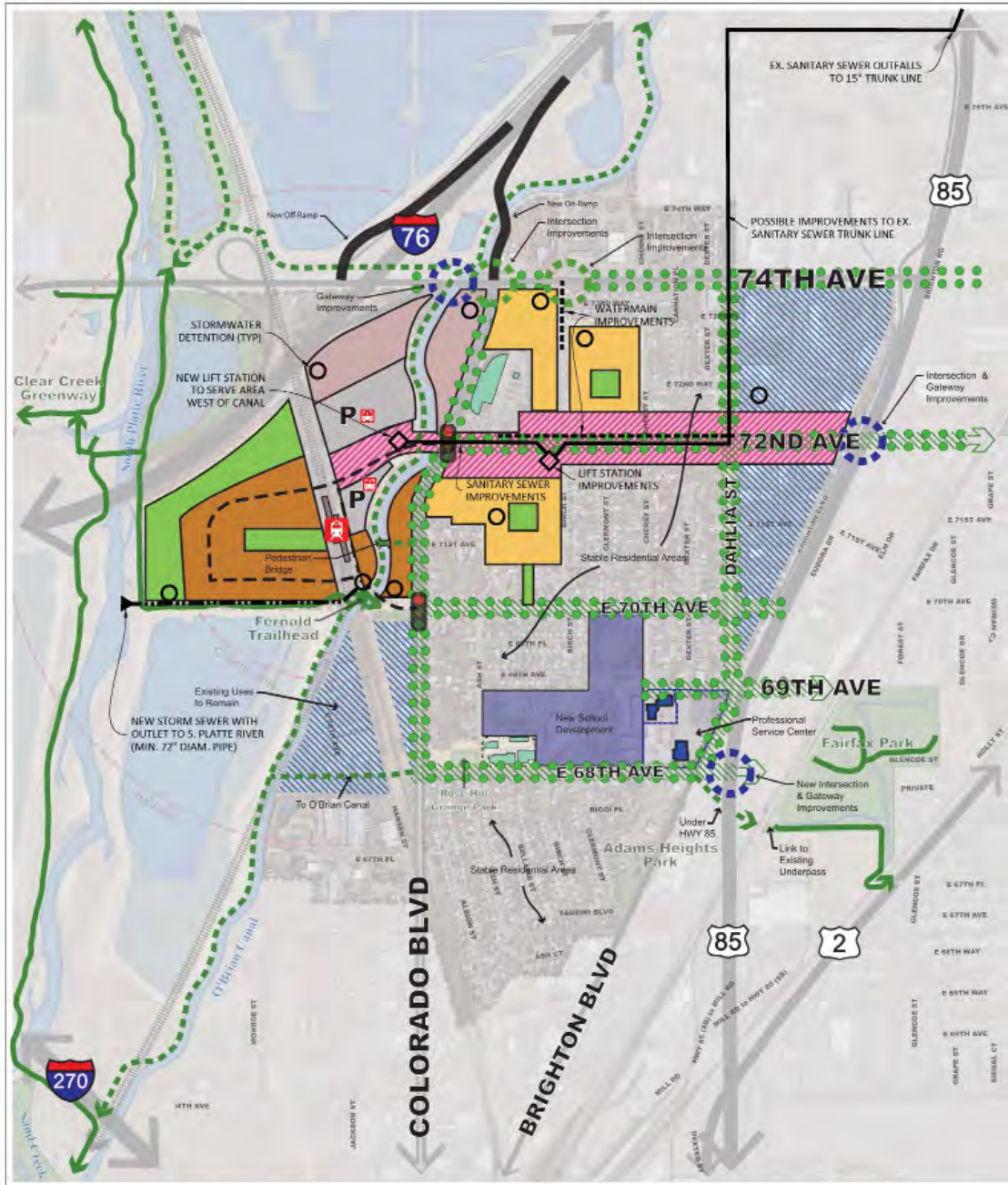
back into the development in order to make the project feasible.

The advantages of this tool include the city’s ability to redirect existing tax revenues to more specific uses within the TOD. For proposed projects within an urban renewal authority district, many will need gap financing. This tool can provide these funds. Moreover, the incremental revenues can be used to cover costs associated with area-wide improvements that will start to transform the character of the areas. Disadvantages include a requirement for a conditions analysis, in which the city must use a range of factors to establish the area, one of which may be ‘blight.’

### ***Assessment Districts***

Assessment Districts are a tool that allocates the costs for area-wide projects to adjacent and nearby property owners based the proportion of benefits received. The assessments, unlike ad valorem taxes, must be weighted such that certain properties pay higher assessment rates to reflect greater benefit. For example, the district could be structured such that properties closer to the transit station (with greater

PROPOSED INFRASTRUCTURE AND UTILITY IMPROVEMENTS



Legend

- Study Area
- Proposed Commuter Rail Station
- Park-N-Ride
- Proposed Commuter Rail Corridor
- Railroad
- Water
- Parks
- Multi-Use Trail
- Civic Uses

**Proposed Elements**

Office	New Street
Residential	Multi-Use Trail
Mixed Use Commercial	Open Space
Parking	Parks
Educational and Cultural Uses	Streetscape Improvements
	Street Improvements
	Employment Infill

**INFRASTRUCTURE IMPROVEMENTS LEGEND:**

	SANITARY SEWER IMPROVEMENTS
	STORM SEWER IMPROVEMENTS
	WATERMAIN IMPROVEMENTS
	LIFT STATION IMPROVEMENTS
	POTENTIAL STORMWATER DETENTION AREAS

400 200 0 400 800 1,200 Feet  
1 inch = 400 feet



exposure and market support) would pay a higher rate than those located farther away. Assessment Districts can be formed with an election involving property owners within the proposed district. A simple majority is required.

Advantages of Assessment Districts primarily manifest themselves in the revenues and corresponding new projects. Assessment Districts can be structured to increase (or reduce) the assessment factor based on the degree of benefit. Disadvantages include requirement that the district be formed with an election of property owners. The election process can be challenging and some cities have not found it to be productive.

### ***Noncontiguous Title 32 Metropolitan District***

While the city has employed conventional Title 32 Metropolitan Districts frequently in the past, a variation that is recommended for the TOD area is to establish a service plan that calls for a non-contiguous district. This provides a tool that enables the city to align the timing of entitlements with inclusion of a development within the district. Thus, as developers complete projects and assessed valuation rises, the city will benefit as the mill levy will generate proceeds from the onset and will direct them to the city to fund improvements (or services) within the TOD to generate revenue for area-wide improvements and/or targeted services. Typically, metro districts are formed at time of development to generate debt service for bonds issued to cover public infrastructure costs. Most are master planned communities or other large-scale

developments. In this case, however, the city could require each new development proposal to join into a non-contiguous district, with the associated revenue stream dedicated to fund streetscape or other STAMP goals. Most likely, it would operate as a pay-as-you-go district and would not have an adequate base to warrant a bond issuance. Regardless, this tool remains an effective method to achieve value capture and ensure that future development (and the premiums available to that by way of the transit station) contributes to local community needs.

The advantages of this approach includes an effective way to capture the value of new development and provide a revenue stream to the city that grows commensurately with the magnitude of investment by the private sector. The benefit of allowing a non-contiguous approach enables the city to include new development and work around sites that remain in their current condition. The disadvantages include an additional mill levy that may make feasibility of future commercial projects more difficult to achieve.



## SUMMARY

The implementation steps delineated in this chapter cover a broad range of activities. They have been grouped into Urban Design, Multi-modal Transportation, Zoning and Policy, and Safety and Security. Within each of these categories there are activities that can be completed in-house by city staff and those that require consulting expertise. It is recommended that the city prioritize activities affecting the STAMP economics focusing on ways to structure funding mechanisms for future improvements. Specifically, working with DRCOG to fund STAMP improvements through its TIP should be a major focus by staff. Additionally, creating a local public financing tool, such as a TIF, would be an excellent point of departure following STAMP approval. Finally, the success of long-term implementation is correlated to the ability of future developers to enter this market niche with low basis. Accordingly, deferring activities that increase land value (i.e., up zoning), which have a direct impact on basis, will enable the private sector to work with more latitude in terms of land aggregation and progressive design solutions.

## CONCLUSION

This document outlined six major strategies to help Commerce City guide urban design and development in the project area:

- Enhance Community Livability and Safety
- Create Destinations
- Connect the Neighborhood
- Emphasize Safe Pedestrian Access
- Maximize TOD Potential
- Stimulate Economic Development

If implemented, these strategic broad directions will positively transform the neighborhood and station area. The strategies build upon the community's preferred vision for the area, and will inform critical decision-making to help achieve the preferred vision for the future of Adams City and Adams Heights neighborhoods.

The steps outlined in the plan are intended to be carried out by a range of entities, both public and private. Some are relatively easy to undertake, others are more complex and time consuming. But they are all realistic and achievable if the right forces are brought to bear. It will take concerted, sustained partnership among all stakeholders to tackle these recommendations and set the course for success.

## AMENDMENTS

Over time, various sections of the STAMP may need to be revised as economic conditions or city needs dictate. The concepts presented in the STAMP contain some degree of flexibility, but any plan amendments must be judged by relatively fixed criteria.

Amendments to this STAMP may be initiated by any individual property owner with property located or effected by this plan, or by the City, in accordance with any terms and conditions imposed during the original approval or in accordance with any terms and conditions pertaining to the Commerce City's Land Development Code.

Proposals to amend the STAMP must be accompanied by detailed information to document the change required. This information should include revised STAMP text (or excerpt thereof) and revised land use diagram or map amendment, where relevant, depicting the amendment requested.

## CITY STAFF ANALYSIS

The Community Development Director shall determine whether the STAMP amendment is significant or insignificant. If the amendment is determined to be significant, the application shall be reviewed and considered in the manner prescribed by the city's Land Development Code. If the amendment is determined to be insignificant, the Director may approve or deny the application. Any decision of the Director may be appealed to the Planning Commission and City Council.

## NECESSARY FINDINGS

The consideration of any proposed amendment to the STAMP shall include the determination of the following findings:

- Changes have occurred in the community or immediate surroundings since the approval of the original STAMP which warrant approving the proposed amendment.
- The proposed amendment is consistent with the Comprehensive Plan for Commerce City.
- The proposed amendment will not result in any unmitigated impact to adjacent properties.
- The proposed amendment will enable the delivery of services and public facilities to the neighborhoods in the STAMP study area.

For significant amendments, the Director will review all of the above submitted material and provide a staff report for presentation to the Planning Commission and City Council. The Director may also request further clarification of the above studies, if necessary. The staff report will analyze whether the need to amend the STAMP can be supported by the conclusions of the supplemental studies.

## PUBLIC HEARINGS

If the amendment is considered significant, both the Planning Commission and the City Council must hold Public Hearings on the STAMP amendment.

# APPENDIX



## FOCUS GROUPS AND STAKEHOLDERS

Several focus group and stakeholder meetings were held in November 2012 with the following organizations and individuals:

Cristie Jophlin, Community Enterprise/Live Well

Derby Review Board

Jessica Osborne, Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment

Kristin Sullivan and Stacey Nerger, Adams County Planning

Pat Sanchez and Sandy Mutchler, Adams County School District 14

Tracy Jones, Commerce City Housing Authority

Maria Gonzalez, former neighborhood resident

Maria Borrego, former neighborhood resident and attendee of all three schools

Scott Jaquith, former City Council member and current neighborhood resident

Three Current Adams City High School Students

A summary of these meetings is provided on the following pages.

## FOCUS GROUPS AND STAKEHOLDER MEETING SUMMARIES

### COMMUTER RAIL STATION AREA ISSUES & OPPORTUNITIES

- A major land owner does not think the Miller Lakes can be an amenity as they are reservoirs for drinking water (can be a visual amenity but they will probably always have a chain link fence around them).
- A major land owner thinks the best use of the gravel pit west of the tracks is park and recreation or a sports complex with the proximity to the bike trails and the S. Platte River.
- The sand and asphalt operation (owned by Brannan Sand & Gravel) north of 72nd is leased. It is unincorporated and an allowed use in perpetuity. He does not have any intention of relocating this operation. The gravel originates in Idaho Springs at Hwy 6 and I-70. There are only two stoplights between the origin and this site so the access is critical – all freeway access. There is daily truck delivery most of the year – some slowdown in the winter - There are no plans for expansion of any of these existing businesses.
- The gravel pit west of the tracks and station could move to one of the Frei family's other properties – they are willing to sell this property as they own and operate this site.
- A major land owner is open to annexation of the property west of Colorado Blvd and south of 72nd.
- A major land owner thinks the access to the site is very good – as long as the primary access moves to 70th so there are not conflicts with truck traffic to the sand and asphalt operation.
- A major land owner feels strongly that access to the commuter rail station should be off of 70th where the Fernald Trail connection is today.
- The rail station will benefit other businesses in the neighborhood and may attract more businesses.
- Adams County Human Services will not be moving anytime soon - it has been discussed but there is not space at the new ADCO facility - it would be a second phase of the new building which is not currently funded - also it does not make sense to move social services to a location not served by transit.
- The Sheriff facility is new and will not be moving anywhere.
- Mid to high rise housing near the train station would be great. The views to the west are great, 10 minute train ride to LoDo.
- Lot of potential for jobs to expand on - Sheriff Dept. Human Services, School teachers and admin, Tri-County health - these are potential users of the commuter rail - can attract talent from a broader pool of people.
- There is some fear that the commuter rail will bring bad people from Denver to the neighborhood and potentially transients.

## DEVELOPMENT ISSUES AND OPPORTUNITIES

- How can the neighborhood be ‘branded’ to attract people and businesses from outside Commerce City?
- In most cases there is no buffer between industrial uses and homes - lot of dust, noise and truck traffic.
- There is nothing in the neighborhood for teenagers.
- The 20 year plan should be thinking about this as a ‘bed and breakfast’ community - meaning people live here and commute by train to Denver for work.
- Look at how housing can be more compatible with the existing industry - better buffers - more open space between the two uses.
- Many homes in the neighborhood are in disrepair.
- Homes are generally affordable - range from \$80,000 - \$120,000, most are between 700-900 sq. ft. - many have added on rooms to the back to increase the sq. ft.

### ***Commercial uses***

### ***Housing***

- Thinks there is an opportunity to provide affordable housing adjacent to the station due to the direct connection to jobs in Downtown Denver. Transportation costs are a huge issue for residents.
- Neighborhood needs more diverse and dense housing – apartments, condos, townhomes, single family.
- The existing neighborhood is a mix of owned and rental – most rentals are owned by individual owners, not a lot of big property owners in the neighborhood.
- The 2009 housing plan identified that the housing gaps in CC are in the low and high end.
- Also need housing that can accommodate extended families - many households have multiple generations.
- The neighborhood lacks amenities for employees and residents, many uses were mentioned as needed: grocery store/food market, coffee shop, restaurants, retail, liquor, cleaners, craft store, pet services, etc.
- Big need for a mid-size grocery store that people can walk to – everyone currently has to drive to King Soopers or Wal-Mart at 60th and Vasquez (small Wal-Mart like 80th and Washington could work here).
- This station area could become an entertainment area like in Brighton – restaurants, Movie Theater, etc.
- The City must provide support to local business owners and to attract new business.
- Lunch establishments are needed.
- Maintaining jobs is very important - keep the industrial jobs here.
- A Mexican meat shop would do well here - There was a Rancho Liborio but their prices were too high - could not compete with Wal-Mart.



- There used to be a Mile High Thrift Store in the neighborhood (moved to 112th in Northglenn because their space was too small - a use like this would do great - Good Will, Arc, etc.
- The High School site should include commercial uses and high density housing - great opportunity and access from Brighton Blvd at 69th.
- The industrial uses between 64th and 68th west of Colorado Blvd has infill opportunity , most of this is just truck and junk storage - could be a future office park, live work opportunity.
- There may be a market for a private gym in the future (i.e. 24hr fitness).
- The grass at the schools could be much nicer.
- Need for dog park, skate park, soccer fields, indoor soccer stadium.
- No need for a recreation center as there is an existing one a mile to the east.
- South Platte River corridor is a big priority for Adams County - Park Dept. has a Parks Master Plan completed by Design Workshop.
- O'Brian Ditch is a private irrigation ditch owned by the Burlington Ditch Company - potential trail connection along the ditch to Sand Creek Greenway.

### ***Schools/Civic Uses***

- The neighborhood needs better schools.
- Need evening activities/businesses to liven up the neighborhood – it is dead after 5pm.
- Must get the school board in alignment with this project (the school district is hard to work with for parents) Is there an opportunity for a charter school in the neighborhood?
- Boys and Girls club.
- Neighborhood is missing a church presence.
- The existing Hope Resource Center in the high school basement would be a great use in this neighborhood.
- Parks and Open Space Issues and Opportunities.
- There are not adequate parks in the neighborhood - the existing parks are very small.

## TRANSPORTATION, ACCESS, AND CONNECTIVITY

- Accessibility is major issue – lack of sidewalks, narrow sidewalks need to be widened and improved.
- Dahlia is a very important connection to the north – it is a direct route to the Thornton suburbs, used as a short cut from 88th to I-76 or Brighton Blvd.
- RR crossing at Fernald Trail is unsafe for bikes.
- Motorists need to be educated on bicycle commuter safety.
- Alsup Elementary School pick-up and drop-off is very bad, also a problem at Adams City Middle School.
- Elderly Issues - access, mobility, poor infrastructure.
- The train station must be well lit - it must feel safe to go there at night.
- Access to the station is very important for the Adams County Human Services across the street from the rail station.
- Must make connections to the station to ADCO west of the S. Platte river - should make a diagram that shows these connections.
- West of the station (west of S. Platte River) needs access to this station - Thornton and unincorporated ADCO.
- This is a 'closed community' with very little access - only 72nd and 69th Ave. cross Hwy 85/ Brighton Blvd. There are pros and cons to this - there is very little traffic due to this and only one

east-west street (74th) passes through the entire neighborhood - this is the neighborhood biggest 'gift and problem'.

### ***RTD Bus Issues and Opportunities***

- Need reliable and frequent bus and rail transportation – RTD is too infrequent, one misses a bus they have to wait 30-60 min for the next bus – many of her clients rely on RTD as they cannot get a driver's license.
- RTD service is not frequent enough - residents need education on how to use the bus and the future train - schedules must be bilingual.

### ***72nd Avenue***

- Walking across 72nd is difficult – lot of truck traffic. 72nd is lacking sidewalks, especially in front of Adams City Middle School.
- 72nd is critical – all the civic institutions are on 72nd – this needs to be a complete street – direct connection to new high school (their office is at 72nd and Magnolia so they ride on 72nd – more direct rather than the existing route and bike/ ped underpass next to Fairfax Park at 67th This is often flooded) and the trail ends at busy Hwy 2.
- 72nd has bad lane shifts at Hwy 2 intersection and RR crossings are unsafe for bikes.
- Major need for sidewalks on 72nd Ave, in front of Adams City Middle School.
- The Commuter Rail station will be a great anchor to make 72nd and Co. Blvd a destination – great

access to downtown Denver but there must be a good bus connection at the station to people can get to where they need to go. The existing bus connections to downtown Denver are poor.

- There are not enough bus stops near the businesses on 72nd and the frequency is too low.
- The study should look at how this neighborhood can complement Derby - study 72nd Ave connections and make this a better street for pedestrians.
- 72nd Ave needs a higher frequency bus service - the rail station will need a circulator to get people to where they need to go ('The Last Mile').

#### **74th Avenue**

- 74th and CO Blvd. could use a better southbound turn lane (currently a free right but not wide enough for the big dump trucks).
- High truck volumes on 74th are a concern on Vasquez and Brighton Blvd/ Hwy 6/85.
- 69th and Hwy 85 are very unsafe for pedestrians and bikes – the crossing distance is much too far for the amount of time given by the walk signals.
- Access from I-76 and I-25 is very good - traffic volumes on I-76 are low, never backed up.
- Dahlia is a major cut through for people heading to Denver from Thornton - the cut off at 88th to avoid going to Hwy 85/6, I-76.

#### **Vasquez and Brighton Blvd/ Hwy 6/85**

- 69th and Hwy 85 are very unsafe for pedestrians and bikes – the crossing distance is much too far for the amount of time given by the walk signals
- Access from I-76 and I-25 is very good - traffic volumes on I-76 are low, never backed up.
- Dahlia is a major cut through for people heading to Denver from Thornton - the cut off at 88th to avoid going to Hwy 85/6, I-76.



## STORM DRAINAGE ISSUES AND OPPORTUNITIES

- A major land owner does not think there are any obvious storm drainage or flooding problems at the station area site – the entire property is alluvial and drains to the river.
- 72nd West of the Hwy 85 has drainage issues.
- The County is interested in economic development in unincorporated areas.
- People currently go to Northfield in Stapleton because it is new and it feels safe.

## UTILITY ISSUES AND OPPORTUNITIES

- The signals at the pedestrian crossings are too short (even for young in-shape teenagers).
- The streets are very dark at night - need more street and pedestrian lighting.
- The plan should highlight the great proximity to Derby, Northfield Stapleton, Rocky Mtn. Wildlife Refuge, Dick's Sporting Goods Park.
- So much of the study area is in the County, residents to not know who to call when they have issues.

## YOUTH ISSUES

- No recreation center, parks are small - nothing for kids to do
- Must educate the parents on the benefits of public transportation so they can teach their kids to use it – must feel safe using it and it must be frequent.
- There is a large immigrant refugee population in the neighborhood that we must build trust with.
- The neighborhood needs some definition (i.e. branding) there is a lack of identification and planning – particularly near the industrial area with a mix of single family houses and industrial uses across the street.
- This neighborhood is more need based - need food, need mentors for kids, mostly immigrant Mexican.

## GENERAL ISSUES AND OPPORTUNITIES

- The biggest concerns of the three students is safety in the neighborhood - they are afraid to go outside at night because of illicit activity and 'scary' people on the streets at night - particularly on the school grounds and in the old high school site - they have heard drive by shootings and there are several homes where drug deals often take place.
- Annexation of the entire unincorporated land should happen so the city can provide needed services that the county is not - ADCO would support annexation of the station area and all of the unincorporated area.
- This is not an art oriented community - not a lot of disposable income.
- There are a lot of 4th and 5th generation of people in the neighborhood like him but there is a big gap between empty nesters and today's kids - not many college aged/young professionals in the neighborhood.
- Must be thinking about the synergy between this neighborhood and the Wembly Park Redevelopment (former dog track).

- There is a lot of community pride in this neighborhood.
- Emphasis on needs of seniors - there are many in the neighborhood that have lived here their entire lives.
- There is a lack of police patrol in the neighborhood.
- The mental facility next to the middle school is scary - one student said someone from this facility walked into her friend's living room one day!
- One student said the presence of the trucking industries make the neighborhood feel safer because they provide activity.

## SUMMER 2013 STAMP OUTREACH SURVEY RESULTS

### **Summary:**

There were over 100 surveys returned to staff. Of these, 11 did not respond to the questions on the back side of the survey. Some respondents marked more than one response to the questions asked, while others did not answer all questions. All percentages were calculated based on the total number of respondents for each question, except for Question 5, which was based on the number of respondents to the back page of the survey.

Overall, most (63%) of the respondents live in the Northern Range area of the city, north of E. 96th Avenue, although residents of the South Commerce City area comprised a sizable minority, representing 31% of respondents. Of those who reported a work location, 60% do not work in Commerce City, while 20% work in South Commerce City. The majority (84%) of all respondents stated that they have or would use the light rail to get around the Denver metro area.

Concerning the preferred type of future development, 65% of respondents stated that a mix of commercial, employment, and residential development should occur, and 25% listed mostly commercial development as their preference. When asked what would make the station area a better place to live, work, and visit, the top two choices were: more retail and commercial services (46%); and More high-paying jobs in the immediate area (39%). Three other choices tied for third place, each with 27% of respondents selecting them: More convenient health care facilities nearby;

Improved image along the major streets in the area; and Sidewalk and/or bike lane improvements and connections. See below for more detailed results for each question.

### **Survey Results:**

- 1) Where do you live and/or work? (Total respondents: Live: 52, Work: 20)
  - a. South Commerce City:
    - i. Live: 16 (31%)
    - ii. Work: 4 (20%)
  - b. Central Commerce City:
    - i. Live: 4 (8%)
    - ii. Work: 2 (10%)
  - c. Northern Range:
    - i. Live: 33 (63%)
    - ii. Work: 2 (10%)
  - d. Not in Commerce City:
    - i. Live: 2 (4%)
    - ii. Work: 12 (60%)
- 2) Have you or would you take light rail/commuter rail to get around the Denver metro area? (Total respondents: 51)
  - a. Yes: 43 (84%)
  - b. No: 8 (16%)



- 3) What type of development should occur in close proximity to the new station at E. 72nd Avenue and Colorado Boulevard? (Total respondents: 51)
- a. Mostly employment: 6 (12%)
  - b. Mostly commercial: 13 (25%)
  - c. Mostly lower density residential: 3 (6%)
  - d. Mostly higher density residential: 0 (0%)
  - e. A mix of commercial, employment, and residential: 33 (65%)
  - f. Additional Comments:
    - i. Need light rail into N. Commerce City
    - ii. This would be great to have [referring to Option E]
    - iii. Shops would be better when commuting
    - iv. No resident
    - v. No residential
    - vi. Get us a Starbucks
    - vii. Hurry if you need funding- get the billionaire
    - viii. Can't wait for light rail
    - ix. Should have station north of 96th
- 4) What would make the station area of Commerce City (near Colorado Blvd. and E. 72nd Ave.) a better place in which to live, work, or visit? (Total respondents on back page: 41)
- a. More high-paying jobs in the immediate area: 16 (39%)
  - b. Increasing workforce development programs in the area: 5 (12%)
  - c. More retail and commercial services: 19 (46%)
  - d. Support and funding for small neighborhood businesses: 10 (24%)
  - e. More affordable rental housing: 8 (20%)
  - f. More market rate housing: 5 (12%)
  - g. More high-end housing: 0 (0%)
  - h. Programs to help renters become home owners: 5 (12%)
    - i. Programs to combat gentrification (anti-displacement programs): 2 (5%)
    - j. Additional parks and open space: 8 (20%)
    - k. More convenient health care facilities nearby: 11 (27%)
      - l. More educational opportunities for children: 6 (15%)
      - m. More educational opportunities for adults: 6 (15%)

- n. Additional police patrol and safety: 4 (10%)
- o. Improved image along the major streets in the area: 11 (27%)
- p. Additional art, history, and cultural programs: 3 (7%)
- q. Street and traffic improvements: 8 (20%)
- r. Sidewalk and/or bike lane improvements and connections: 11 (27%)
- s. Increased code enforcement and property maintenance: 2 (5%)
- t. Other:
  - i. Bus route adjoining
- u. Additional Comments:
  - i. Education if old Adams City H.S. site is well developed

5) Are you generally supportive of the phasing of improvements and developments in the area, based on the concept maps? If not, what would you change? (Total respondents on back page: 41)

a. Yes: 27 (66%)

b. Comments:

- i. Mass transit sooner!
- ii. Town center in 104th & Tower area

- iii. Important to develop retail/service commercial outlets for residents, employees, & visitors
- iv. Don't know
- v. Live east of area

## Neighborhood Outreach, August 2013

### STAMP Survey Results

#### 1) *Where do you live and/or work?*

Location	Live	Work
South CC	42 53%	9 11%
Central CC	22 28%	3 4%
Northern Range	9 11%	3 4%
Not in CC	5 6%	12 15%
No response	2 3%	53 66%
<b>Total Surveys</b>	<b>80 100%</b>	<b>80 100%</b>

#### 2) *Have you or would you use light rail / commuter rail?*

Yes	69 86%
No	11 14%
<b>Total</b>	<b>80 100%</b>

#### 3) *What type of development should occur in the station area?*

A. Mostly employment	17 21%
B. Mostly commercial	9 11%
C. Mostly lower density residential	8 10%



D. Mostly higher density residential	4	5%
E. A mix of commercial, employment, and residential	45	56%
<b>Total responses</b>	<b>83</b>	<b>1.04 per survey</b>
<b>Total Surveys</b>	<b>80</b>	<b>100%</b>

**4) What would make the station area a better place to live, work, or visit? (top 5 responses)**

A. More high paying jobs	24	39%
E. More affordable rental housing	18	29%
C. More retail and commercial	15	24%
D. Support for small neighborhood businesses	15	24%
B. Increasing workforce development programs	14	23%
<b>Total Surveys</b>	<b>62</b>	<b>100%</b>

**5) Are you generally supportive of the phasing of improvements?**

Yes	25	68%
Other	12	32%
<b>Total Responses</b>	<b>37</b>	<b>100%</b>





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# commerce city station

## area master plan

east 72nd avenue and  
colorado boulevard



October 2013

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**W**ith the introduction of the North Metro Corridor commuter rail line and the E. 72nd Avenue Commuter Rail Station, **the Commerce City neighborhoods of Adams City and Adams Heights have a pivotal opportunity to create real change** that will benefit current residents, cultivate a thriving multimodal center, and strengthen their standing in the greater metropolitan region.

In 2004, voters approved the Regional Transportation District’s (RTD) FasTracks Program, the largest comprehensive transit expansion program in the nation. The FasTracks program will create better neighborhood access for station area residents and broadening transit options with rail service, expanded bus service, convenient parking, improved roadways, and more walkable streets. The completed expansion will result in a vast network of rail service and bus rapid transit that dramatically improves connectivity throughout the region.

In November 2013, RTD selected a team for the design and construction of the entire North Metro Corridor commuter rail line which includes the E. 72nd Avenue Commuter Rail Station in Commerce City. Neighborhood improvements around completed FasTracks rail stations are beginning to take shape with new commercial development, diversified housing, infrastructure improvements, and neighborhood amenities. Surrounding communities have capitalized on these traditional transit oriented development (TOD) investment as a

means of advancing character-defining neighborhood improvements and innovative projects such as live-work manufacturing and artist spaces, mixed-use and entertainment centers, neighborhood commercial infill, a variety of residential projects, and a range of open space and trail connections.

The arrival of Commerce City’s commuter rail station brings well-deserved and critically-needed focus to the neighborhoods of Adams City and Adams Heights. For many years, residents in these areas coped with substandard conditions such as a lack of safe connectivity, damaged or incomplete sidewalks, few crosswalks, fast-moving traffic, lack of bike lanes, few neighborhood parks, and limited neighborhood-serving uses. The Commerce City Station Area Master Plan (STAMP) is the culmination of efforts by a wide range of community stakeholders to identify improvements to existing neighborhoods, leverage the area’s assets and opportunities, and envision a preferred future for the area.

This STAMP explores transit-oriented and transit adjacent development—one that emphasizes strengthening existing residential neighborhoods and corridors while allowing opportunities for new development. The end result has the potential to enhance connectivity and transit use; strengthen existing building stock; boost economic development opportunities; attract diversified housing, employment and neighborhood-serving uses; and contribute to a strong sense of place for both existing and future residents and business owners.



# Existing Conditions

**F**uture planning in the Adams City and Adams Heights neighborhoods should **leverage the area’s assets, maximize promising opportunities, and work to counter challenges.**

This chapter describes the area’s regional and local context, identifies recent and planned projects, and **highlights existing assets, challenges, and opportunities.**

## STATION AREA OVERVIEW

The STAMP project area is located in the southwest portion of Commerce City, approximately 10 miles northeast of Downtown Denver. Commerce City offers convenient access to railroads and seven major transportation corridors including Interstates 70, 270 and 76; Highways 85 and 2; E-470; and Peña Boulevard. The station will be located west of Colorado Boulevard and E. 72nd Avenue just west of the O’Brian Canal as illustrated on the following page.

The approximately 50-block project area is predominantly composed of residential, industrial and civic uses. Two major arterial streets connect the area to the surrounding freeway system: E. 74th Avenue roughly defines the area’s northern edge and Brighton Boulevard along the area’s eastern perimeter. Colorado Boulevard is a major north-south arterial spine bifurcating the station from neighborhoods to the east. The future commuter rail corridor runs through the Albert Frei & Sons’ property in the northwest corner of the area, and then traces the O’Brian Canal at the

neighborhood’s western edge. The project area west of the future commuter rail station is comprised largely of Frei’s gravel and asphalt distribution center, ponds, and the South Platte River multi-use trail system.

The site of the future 72nd Avenue Station anchors the west side of the Adams City and Adams Heights neighborhoods at the intersection of E. 72nd Avenue and Colorado Boulevard.

The Adams City and Adams Heights neighborhoods are primarily mixed residential and industrial communities situated between the O’Brian Canal and Brighton Boulevard. The neighborhood fabric is a patchwork of city parcels and pockets of unincorporated Adams County with low-density, single-family homes, schools and civic buildings,



*Adams County sheriff facility on 72nd Avenue.*



*Existing well kept homes in the Adams City neighborhood*

# Vision

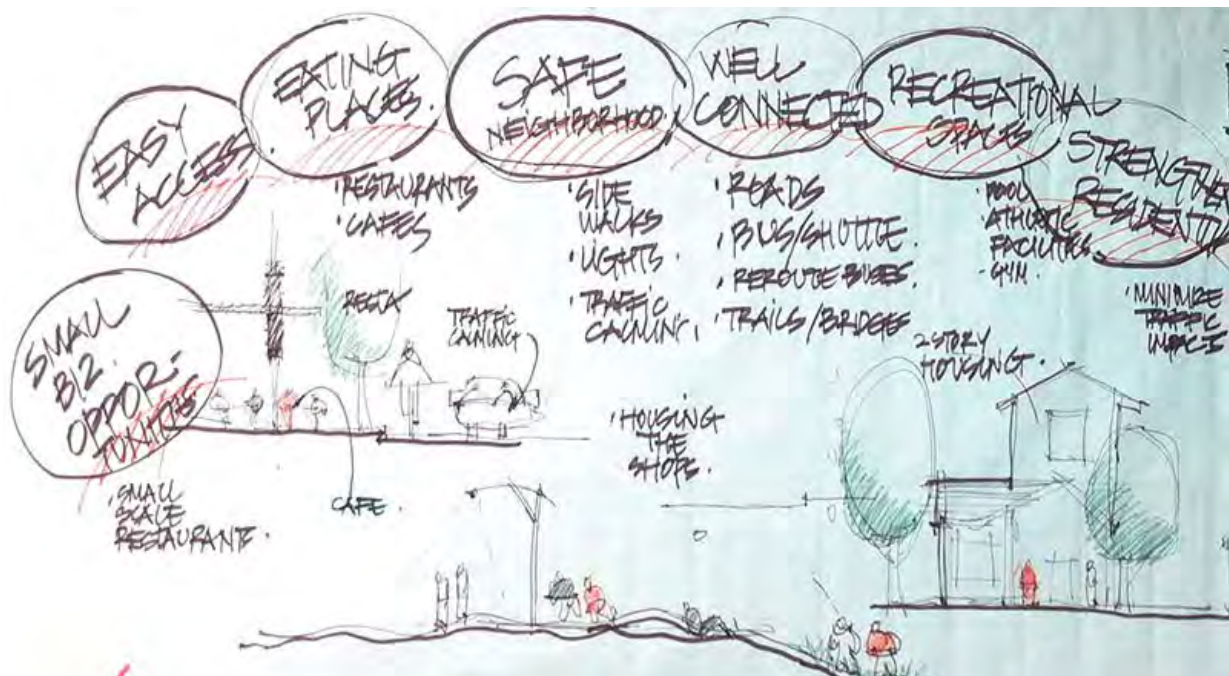
The following Vision describes an ideal snapshot of how the station area might evolve in the future. **Community input gathered during the planning process provided the basis for the following station area vision.**

## WELL-CONNECTED AND WALKABLE

Adams City and Adams Heights are envisioned as **well-connected, walkable neighborhoods with a distinct identity that provide a range of neighborhood-serving retail, employment opportunities, and housing options with safe, comfortable access to daily goods and services**, while maintaining the existing housing and businesses in the neighborhood. Unlike many other STAMP's in the metropolitan region, the basis of this plan is to strengthen the existing neighborhoods and to develop only in select key areas.

## STATION AREA AS THE FOCUS

The area immediately surrounding the E. 72nd Avenue Station could become a thriving focal point that draws residents, visitors and transit riders. Retail, small offices and a range of housing types may infuse life into the area. Infill housing, office, and retail uses have the potential to enhance safety with additional “eyes on the street.” Recreational spaces and child-friendly community facilities should be woven into the neighborhood fabric, both around the station and dotted throughout the neighborhood. Over the long term, existing Adams City and Adams Heights residential neighborhoods could be enhanced by strengthening existing building stock and adding a variety of infill housing types with a range of price points.

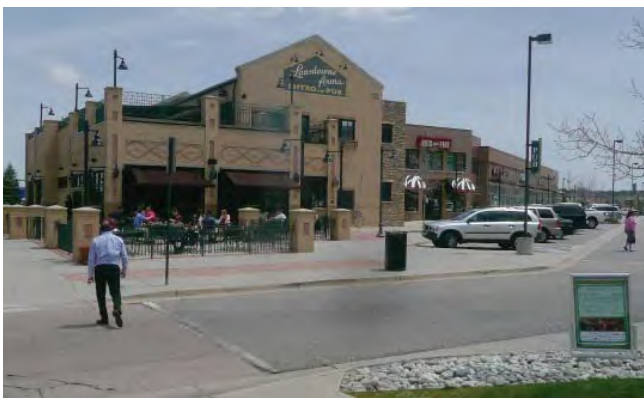


Summary of the community input to create the station area vision

# Planning Framework

A framework of planning strategies was designed to guide urban design and development in the project area. **These are strategic, broad directions that together will transform the future of the area.** They build upon the community’s preferred vision for the area, and will inform critical decision-making to help achieve the preferred vision for the future of Adams City and Adams Heights neighborhoods.

- **Enhance Community Livability and Safety**– Increase lighting, police visibility, and overall “eyes on the street” by providing infill residential development. Improve the neighborhood’s aesthetic appeal and ambiance with new development and rehabilitation of older buildings, attractive building design, public art, and gateways. Enhance safe routes and walkability throughout the neighborhood.
- **Create Destinations**– Create retail, cultural, educational, open space, and recreational destinations in the neighborhood. Attract locally-serving uses to transform the station area and E. 72nd Avenue into a vibrant, walkable corridor with



*Create interesting neighborhood destinations*

a neighborhood-scale grocery store, a carnerceria, and affordable, family-friendly restaurants. Develop pocket parks, construct the O’Brian Canal Trail, and provide additional access points to the South Platte River.

- **Connect the Neighborhood**– Create safe connections for pedestrians and bicyclists between residential areas and key destinations such as transit, schools, civic uses, and neighborhood commercial areas. Improve and enhance sidewalks throughout the neighborhood and initiate attractive streetscape, intersection, and pedestrian improvements with lighting, street trees, and landscaping.
- **Emphasize Safe Pedestrian Access** – Foster creation of a walkable environment along E. 72nd Avenue and around the station through active ground-floor uses, building entrances at sidewalk edges, and parking set back from public walkways. Cluster high-density, mixed-use development with neighborhood-serving retail within walking distance of the station.



*Safely connect the neighborhood to open spaces and destinations*



# Urban Design Concept

The urban design concept for the future station area **emphasizes enhanced circulation patterns and open space networks, new residential and mixed-use land uses, and improvements to the public realm.** Illustrated on the corresponding “Station Area Master Plan Buildout” the maps depict priority improvements that are proposed for implementation over near-term (0 – 10 year), mid-term (10 – 20), and long-term (20+) timeframes.

## PUBLIC REALM

The term, “public realm” refers to open spaces, vehicular circulation and transit, bicycle and pedestrian circulation, and wayfinding elements. The public realm in the station area should support a strong and vibrant community life by providing gathering opportunities, amenities for residents and transit users, and improved access to the transit station and other major destinations.

## OPEN SPACE

The urban design concept for Adams City and Adams Heights features a lattice of open spaces woven into the existing neighborhood fabric, with well-distributed neighborhood parks and new pocket parks connected by walkable streets and multi-use trails.

Neighborhood parks can serve as significant community gathering spaces and major amenities for residents of Adams City and Adams Heights. New neighborhood parks are proposed in the northern



*Provide new neighborhood parks*



*Provide children's play areas*



# Implementation

**The implementation strategies outlined in this STAMP are intended to stimulate development and redevelopment activity across the station area and spur transformation of Adams City and Adams Heights into thriving, transit-oriented neighborhoods over the long term.**

A central element within any station area master plan is its ability to bring new economic development opportunities to a given area. Based on examples of station areas that have been developed in other communities, economic development opportunities emerge based on the additional expenditure potential brought by new residents, commuters, and day-time employees working in the vicinity. The additional activity gravitates to a STAMP, because the transit stop and new amenities constructed in the area provide a value proposition that finds traction in the market.

The challenge for the Commerce City STAMP is to define elements that can differentiate the market opportunities from existing conditions and from other competitive locations. To the extent these elements can be integrated to create a cohesive experience in the station area and immediate neighborhood, the market will follow.



*New 7-11 convenience store on Brighton Boulevard*

## EXISTING CONDITIONS OVERVIEW

The current Commerce City market and STAMP context have a limited value proposition for new commercial or residential development, although there are some existing assets. Accordingly, the consultant team focused on these existing strengths, with the goal of leveraging them to create area-wide assets.

## ECONOMIC STRENGTHS

The area's strengths from an economic perspective include the following:

**Commercial Corridors**– The existing E. 72nd Avenue corridor east of the study area is strong, with numerous eating and drinking establishments and other retail activity. The aggregate number of existing shops has become a retail destination within the Commerce City subarea, attracting surrounding residents who support the businesses on the corridor. Moreover, its concentration of eating and drinking uses creates a sufficiently large base to attract some customers from outside Commerce City. The daytime employment population within 5 miles of the study area is over 130,000.

**Office Activity**– The former Adams County administrative offices still house some county staff at the intersection of E. 72nd Avenue and Colorado Boulevard. In addition, there is day-time activity located in the Adams County Sheriff's facility located immediately north of the administrative offices, as well as offices associated with the industrial uses in the study area.

### MULTIMODAL TRANSPORTATION

The multimodal actions include projects of a larger magnitude, such as new ramps onto Interstate 76, which will require coordination with the city and DRCOG, specifically as it relates to DRCOG’s Transportation Improvement Plan (TIP) and linking these investment dollars to established urban centers, transit stations, and TOD development areas. The scale of the improvements are substantial, thus requiring a portion of federal and/or state funding to be viable, in addition to any local match required from Commerce City. It should be recognized that federal and state funds are subject to availability and a competitive bid process.

### ACTION STEPS | FUNDING OPTIONS

In the tables that follow, a series of actions and corresponding funding sources are listed. Each of the actions listed in the matrices on the following pages indicate an associated lead agency and identify funding sources. Following the tables is a more detailed description of the potential funding sources related to major strategy areas.

Urban Design Strategy	Action	Funding	Lead	Timing
Complete E. 72nd Avenue and Colorado Boulevard streetscape improvements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Implement sidewalks, bike lanes, street trees, pedestrian amenities</li> </ul>	TIF Assessment District Non-Contig. Metro Dist. DRCOG TIP Enhancement Funds, CDBG funds	C3	0–5 years
Improve E. 72nd Avenue as a “main street”	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop the following “next step” plans: corridor redevelopment plans, street design standards/manuals</li> </ul>	City DRCOG	C3	0–5 years
Existing home improvements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Facade and property improvements</li> </ul>	Grants or low interest loans	C3	0–5 years
Improve E. 72nd Avenue as a “main street”	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop comprehensive wayfinding plans and strategies</li> <li>Develop subarea plans for gateways</li> </ul>	City DRCOG TIP	C3	0-10 years

Vehicular, Transit, Pedestrian and Bicycle Strategy	Action	Funding	Lead	Timing
Direct traffic flow to E. 72nd Avenue close to the 72nd Avenue Station	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Establish a plan that addresses east-west traffic flow and increases average daily traffic (ADT) nearest to the station area</li> </ul>	TIF Assessment District Non-Contig. Metro dist. DRCOG TIP Enhancement Funds	C3	0–5 years
Improve vehicular access, parking and public transit connections in the station area	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Extend Colorado Boulevard north of E. 74th Avenue up to a new on-ramp onto Interstate 76</li> <li>Construct new vehicular bridge at the Fernald Trailhead at the western edge of E. 70th Avenue</li> <li>Establish a plan that addresses east-west traffic flow and increases ADT nearest to the STAMP</li> <li>Develop the following “next step” plans/ studies: traffic circulation studies (including traffic simulation model development), access management plans, first/last-mile mobility implementation, financing and partnership studies, transit circulator feasibility, transportation demand management studies and implementation activities, and parking management studies</li> </ul>	City DRCOG	CDOT RTD C3	0–5 years
Enhance the quality of the walking and biking experiences in the station area	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Construct two new pedestrian bridges over the O’Brian Canal east of the station</li> <li>Construct the O’Brian Canal Trail</li> </ul>	City DRCOG TIP	C3	0-10 years

New Transit-Oriented Development Strategy	Action	Funding	Lead	Timing
Create a development incentive package to help implement development projects slated for the two school redevelopment sites (Adams City Middle School and Alsup Elementary School)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop urban design and development guidelines and design studies for multi-modal infrastructure projects</li> <li>Identify possible public funding mechanisms/partners</li> </ul>	City ED funds TIF P3s	C3	0–10 years

Zoning Strategy	Action	Funding	Lead	Timing
Sponsor zone changes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Adopt land use standards with minimum Floor Area Ratio (FAR) and density targets</li> <li>Establish minimum densities around the station area and along E. 72nd Avenue between Colorado Boulevard and Birch Street</li> <li>Work closely with prospective development partners to facilitate zoning and other development approval requests that are consistent with STAMP recommendations</li> </ul>	City Planning	C3	0–10 years

Safety and Security Strategy	Action	Funding	Lead	Timing
Enhance safety and security	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provide additional street lighting and sidewalks throughout the neighborhood</li> </ul>	TIF Assessment District Non-Contig. Metro Dist. DRCOG TIP	C3	0–20 years



Income Diversity Strategy	Action	Funding	Lead	Timing
Create and retain affordable housing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Update the Adams County Housing Study and seek to increase diversity of housing; consider both lower- and upper-income residents as important segments of the Commercial City community</li> <li>Establish a set-aside standard and dedicate a specific percentage of new housing to households earning less than the Area Median Income (AMI)</li> <li>Seek partnerships with regional entities focused on displacement solutions for TOD areas.</li> <li>Advocate for an allocation of 9% Low Income Housing Tax Credits from the Colorado Housing and Finance Authority (CHFA) to provide the needed capital for a development targeted to households earning 30 – 60% of the AMI</li> <li>Establish a partnership with an experienced tax credit developer to work collaboratively to raise the interest from CHFA in a site with direct access to transit that preserves diversity</li> </ul>	City and County Comp Plan  CDBG  LIHTC	Commerce City Housing Authority, Adams County Housing Authority	0-10 years
Support anti-displacement initiatives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Increase workforce development programs in the area</li> <li>Support and funding of small neighborhood businesses</li> <li>Programs to help renters become homeowners</li> <li>Increase educational and medical opportunities</li> <li>Programs to combat gentrification</li> </ul>	ED  CDBG	Commerce City	0–20 years

Utilities	Action	Funding	Lead	Timing
Infrastructure and Utility improvements	• Preliminary geotechnical report for station area	TIF	South Adams County	0–10 yrs
	• Lift station at Birch St. and E 72nd Ave for sewer	Assessment District	Water and Sanitation District, C3	10–20 yrs
	• New water mains for future development	Non-Contig. Metro Dist.		10–20 yrs
	• Improved storm sewer	Private Developers		10–20 yrs

## FINANCING STRATEGIES

Most of the improvements identified in this chapter are related to actions that would be taken in the immediate area. Generally, these types of projects lend themselves to local funding sources, such as Tax Increment Financing (TIF), Assessment Districts (AD), or a progressive approach that calls for newly developed properties to join a non-contiguous Title 32 Metropolitan District (MD). Each of these are locally formed, with revenues generated from the local property owners. Each fall entirely within the purview of Commerce City and could, hypothetically, be implemented without participation from other agencies on a state or regional level.

### ***Urban Renewal-Tax Increment Financing***

The most likely avenue to establish a TIF for the area would be an Urban Renewal District. Following a conditions survey, the City Council could establish the district. Local input from area property owners, businesses, and residents is critical to an effective process, although there is no election requirement from area property owners. Once established, the district would receive the incremental tax revenue associated with new development. The district can use this revenue to fund area-wide improvements (such as streetscape or pedestrian linkages), or may choose to partner with a developer and invest the proceeds

back into the development in order to make the project feasible.

The advantages of this tool include the city’s ability to redirect existing tax revenues to more specific uses within the TOD. For proposed projects within an urban renewal authority district, many will need gap financing. This tool can provide these funds. Moreover, the incremental revenues can be used to cover costs associated with area-wide improvements that will start to transform the character of the areas. Disadvantages include a requirement for a conditions analysis, in which the city must use a range of factors to establish the area, one of which may be ‘blight.’

### ***Assessment Districts***

Assessment Districts are a tool that allocates the costs for area-wide projects to adjacent and nearby property owners based the proportion of benefits received. The assessments, unlike ad valorem taxes, must be weighted such that certain properties pay higher assessment rates to reflect greater benefit. For example, the district could be structured such that properties closer to the transit station (with greater



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**F**uture planning in the Adams City and Adams Heights neighborhoods should **leverage the area’s assets, maximize promising opportunities, and work to counter challenges.**

This chapter describes the area’s regional and local context, identifies recent and planned projects, and **highlights existing assets, challenges, and opportunities.**

## STATION AREA OVERVIEW

The STAMP project area is located in the southwest portion of Commerce City, approximately 10 miles northeast of Downtown Denver. Commerce City offers convenient access to railroads and seven major transportation corridors including Interstates 70, 270 and 76; Highways 85 and 2; E-470; and Peña Boulevard. The station will be located west of Colorado Boulevard and E. 72nd Avenue just west of the O’Brian Canal as illustrated on the following page.

The approximately 50-block project area is predominantly composed of residential, industrial and civic uses. Two major arterial streets connect the area to the surrounding freeway system: E. 74th Avenue roughly defines the area’s northern edge and Brighton Boulevard along the area’s eastern perimeter. Colorado Boulevard is a major north-south arterial spine bifurcating the station from neighborhoods to the east. The future commuter rail corridor runs through the Albert Frei & Sons’ property in the northwest corner of the area, and then traces the O’Brian Canal at the

neighborhood’s western edge. The project area west of the future commuter rail station is comprised largely of Frei’s gravel and asphalt distribution center, ponds, and the South Platte River multi-use trail system.

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*Adams County sheriff facility on 72nd Avenue.*



*Existing well kept homes in the Adams City neighborhood*

# Vision

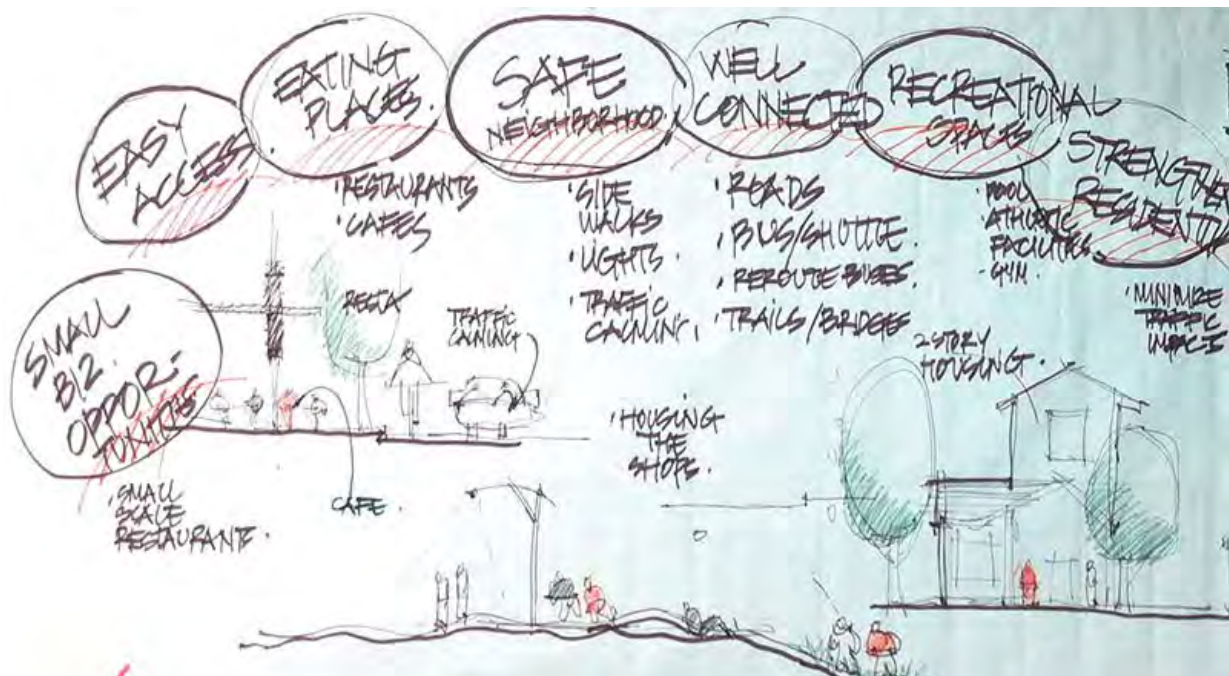
The following Vision describes an ideal snapshot of how the station area might evolve in the future. **Community input gathered during the planning process provided the basis for the following station area vision.**

## WELL-CONNECTED AND WALKABLE

Adams City and Adams Heights are envisioned as **well-connected, walkable neighborhoods with a distinct identity that provide a range of neighborhood-serving retail, employment opportunities, and housing options with safe, comfortable access to daily goods and services**, while maintaining the existing housing and businesses in the neighborhood. Unlike many other STAMP's in the metropolitan region, the basis of this plan is to strengthen the existing neighborhoods and to develop only in select key areas.

## STATION AREA AS THE FOCUS

The area immediately surrounding the E. 72nd Avenue Station could become a thriving focal point that draws residents, visitors and transit riders. Retail, small offices and a range of housing types may infuse life into the area. Infill housing, office, and retail uses have the potential to enhance safety with additional “eyes on the street.” Recreational spaces and child-friendly community facilities should be woven into the neighborhood fabric, both around the station and dotted throughout the neighborhood. Over the long term, existing Adams City and Adams Heights residential neighborhoods could be enhanced by strengthening existing building stock and adding a variety of infill housing types with a range of price points.

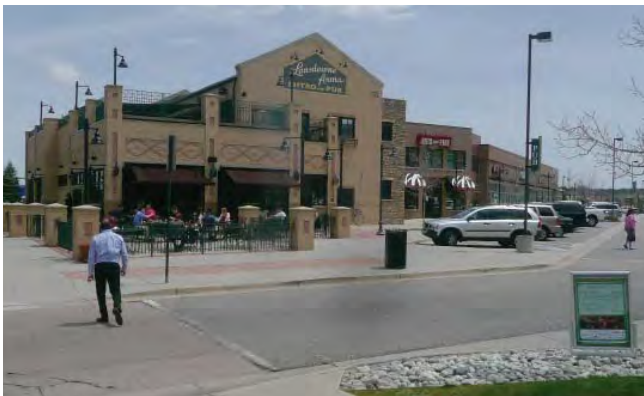


Summary of the community input to create the station area vision

# Planning Framework

A framework of planning strategies was designed to guide urban design and development in the project area. **These are strategic, broad directions that together will transform the future of the area.** They build upon the community’s preferred vision for the area, and will inform critical decision-making to help achieve the preferred vision for the future of Adams City and Adams Heights neighborhoods.

- **Enhance Community Livability and Safety**– Increase lighting, police visibility, and overall “eyes on the street” by providing infill residential development. Improve the neighborhood’s aesthetic appeal and ambiance with new development and rehabilitation of older buildings, attractive building design, public art, and gateways. Enhance safe routes and walkability throughout the neighborhood.
- **Create Destinations**– Create retail, cultural, educational, open space, and recreational destinations in the neighborhood. Attract locally-serving uses to transform the station area and E. 72nd Avenue into a vibrant, walkable corridor with



*Create interesting neighborhood destinations*

a neighborhood-scale grocery store, a carnerceria, and affordable, family-friendly restaurants. Develop pocket parks, construct the O’Brian Canal Trail, and provide additional access points to the South Platte River.

- **Connect the Neighborhood**– Create safe connections for pedestrians and bicyclists between residential areas and key destinations such as transit, schools, civic uses, and neighborhood commercial areas. Improve and enhance sidewalks throughout the neighborhood and initiate attractive streetscape, intersection, and pedestrian improvements with lighting, street trees, and landscaping.
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*Safely connect the neighborhood to open spaces and destinations*



# Urban Design Concept

The urban design concept for the future station area **emphasizes enhanced circulation patterns and open space networks, new residential and mixed-use land uses, and improvements to the public realm.** Illustrated on the corresponding “Station Area Master Plan Buildout” the maps depict priority improvements that are proposed for implementation over near-term (0 – 10 year), mid-term (10 – 20), and long-term (20+) timeframes.

## PUBLIC REALM

The term, “public realm” refers to open spaces, vehicular circulation and transit, bicycle and pedestrian circulation, and wayfinding elements. The public realm in the station area should support a strong and vibrant community life by providing gathering opportunities, amenities for residents and transit users, and improved access to the transit station and other major destinations.

## OPEN SPACE

The urban design concept for Adams City and Adams Heights features a lattice of open spaces woven into the existing neighborhood fabric, with well-distributed neighborhood parks and new pocket parks connected by walkable streets and multi-use trails.

Neighborhood parks can serve as significant community gathering spaces and major amenities for residents of Adams City and Adams Heights. New neighborhood parks are proposed in the northern



*Provide new neighborhood parks*



*Provide children's play areas*



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**The implementation strategies outlined in this STAMP are intended to stimulate development and redevelopment activity across the station area and spur transformation of Adams City and Adams Heights into thriving, transit-oriented neighborhoods over the long term.**

A central element within any station area master plan is its ability to bring new economic development opportunities to a given area. Based on examples of station areas that have been developed in other communities, economic development opportunities emerge based on the additional expenditure potential brought by new residents, commuters, and day-time employees working in the vicinity. The additional activity gravitates to a STAMP, because the transit stop and new amenities constructed in the area provide a value proposition that finds traction in the market.

The challenge for the Commerce City STAMP is to define elements that can differentiate the market opportunities from existing conditions and from other competitive locations. To the extent these elements can be integrated to create a cohesive experience in the station area and immediate neighborhood, the market will follow.



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The current Commerce City market and STAMP context have a limited value proposition for new commercial or residential development, although there are some existing assets. Accordingly, the consultant team focused on these existing strengths, with the goal of leveraging them to create area-wide assets.

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The area's strengths from an economic perspective include the following:

**Commercial Corridors**— The existing E. 72nd Avenue corridor east of the study area is strong, with numerous eating and drinking establishments and other retail activity. The aggregate number of existing shops has become a retail destination within the Commerce City subarea, attracting surrounding residents who support the businesses on the corridor. Moreover, its concentration of eating and drinking uses creates a sufficiently large base to attract some customers from outside Commerce City. The daytime employment population within 5 miles of the study area is over 130,000.

**Office Activity**— The former Adams County administrative offices still house some county staff at the intersection of E. 72nd Avenue and Colorado Boulevard. In addition, there is day-time activity located in the Adams County Sheriff's facility located immediately north of the administrative offices, as well as offices associated with the industrial uses in the study area.

### MULTIMODAL TRANSPORTATION

The multimodal actions include projects of a larger magnitude, such as new ramps onto Interstate 76, which will require coordination with the city and DRCOG, specifically as it relates to DRCOG’s Transportation Improvement Plan (TIP) and linking these investment dollars to established urban centers, transit stations, and TOD development areas. The scale of the improvements are substantial, thus requiring a portion of federal and/or state funding to be viable, in addition to any local match required from Commerce City. It should be recognized that federal and state funds are subject to availability and a competitive bid process.

### ACTION STEPS | FUNDING OPTIONS

In the tables that follow, a series of actions and corresponding funding sources are listed. Each of the actions listed in the matrices on the following pages indicate an associated lead agency and identify funding sources. Following the tables is a more detailed description of the potential funding sources related to major strategy areas.

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Complete E. 72nd Avenue and Colorado Boulevard streetscape improvements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Implement sidewalks, bike lanes, street trees, pedestrian amenities</li> </ul>	TIF Assessment District Non-Contig. Metro Dist. DRCOG TIP Enhancement Funds, CDBG funds	C3	0–5 years
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Existing home improvements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Facade and property improvements</li> </ul>	Grants or low interest loans	C3	0–5 years
Improve E. 72nd Avenue as a “main street”	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop comprehensive wayfinding plans and strategies</li> <li>Develop subarea plans for gateways</li> </ul>	City DRCOG TIP	C3	0-10 years

Vehicular, Transit, Pedestrian and Bicycle Strategy	Action	Funding	Lead	Timing
Direct traffic flow to E. 72nd Avenue close to the 72nd Avenue Station	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Establish a plan that addresses east-west traffic flow and increases average daily traffic (ADT) nearest to the station area</li> </ul>	TIF Assessment District Non-Contig. Metro dist. DRCOG TIP Enhancement Funds	C3	0–5 years
Improve vehicular access, parking and public transit connections in the station area	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Extend Colorado Boulevard north of E. 74th Avenue up to a new on-ramp onto Interstate 76</li> <li>Construct new vehicular bridge at the Fernald Trailhead at the western edge of E. 70th Avenue</li> <li>Establish a plan that addresses east-west traffic flow and increases ADT nearest to the STAMP</li> <li>Develop the following “next step” plans/ studies: traffic circulation studies (including traffic simulation model development), access management plans, first/last-mile mobility implementation, financing and partnership studies, transit circulator feasibility, transportation demand management studies and implementation activities, and parking management studies</li> </ul>	City DRCOG	CDOT RTD C3	0–5 years
Enhance the quality of the walking and biking experiences in the station area	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Construct two new pedestrian bridges over the O’Brian Canal east of the station</li> <li>Construct the O’Brian Canal Trail</li> </ul>	City DRCOG TIP	C3	0-10 years

New Transit-Oriented Development Strategy	Action	Funding	Lead	Timing
Create a development incentive package to help implement development projects slated for the two school redevelopment sites (Adams City Middle School and Alsup Elementary School)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop urban design and development guidelines and design studies for multi-modal infrastructure projects</li> <li>Identify possible public funding mechanisms/partners</li> </ul>	City ED funds TIF P3s	C3	0–10 years

Zoning Strategy	Action	Funding	Lead	Timing
Sponsor zone changes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Adopt land use standards with minimum Floor Area Ratio (FAR) and density targets</li> <li>Establish minimum densities around the station area and along E. 72nd Avenue between Colorado Boulevard and Birch Street</li> <li>Work closely with prospective development partners to facilitate zoning and other development approval requests that are consistent with STAMP recommendations</li> </ul>	City Planning	C3	0–10 years

Safety and Security Strategy	Action	Funding	Lead	Timing
Enhance safety and security	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provide additional street lighting and sidewalks throughout the neighborhood</li> </ul>	TIF Assessment District Non-Contig. Metro Dist. DRCOG TIP	C3	0–20 years



Income Diversity Strategy	Action	Funding	Lead	Timing
Create and retain affordable housing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Update the Adams County Housing Study and seek to increase diversity of housing; consider both lower- and upper-income residents as important segments of the Commercial City community</li> <li>Establish a set-aside standard and dedicate a specific percentage of new housing to households earning less than the Area Median Income (AMI)</li> <li>Seek partnerships with regional entities focused on displacement solutions for TOD areas.</li> <li>Advocate for an allocation of 9% Low Income Housing Tax Credits from the Colorado Housing and Finance Authority (CHFA) to provide the needed capital for a development targeted to households earning 30 – 60% of the AMI</li> <li>Establish a partnership with an experienced tax credit developer to work collaboratively to raise the interest from CHFA in a site with direct access to transit that preserves diversity</li> </ul>	City and County Comp Plan  CDBG  LIHTC	Commerce City Housing Authority, Adams County Housing Authority	0-10 years
Support anti-displacement initiatives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Increase workforce development programs in the area</li> <li>Support and funding of small neighborhood businesses</li> <li>Programs to help renters become homeowners</li> <li>Increase educational and medical opportunities</li> <li>Programs to combat gentrification</li> </ul>	ED  CDBG	Commerce City	0–20 years

Utilities	Action	Funding	Lead	Timing
Infrastructure and Utility improvements	• Preliminary geotechnical report for station area	TIF	South Adams County	0–10 yrs
	• Lift station at Birch St. and E 72nd Ave for sewer	Assessment District	Water and Sanitation District, C3	10–20 yrs
	• New water mains for future development	Non-Contig. Metro Dist.		10–20 yrs
	• Improved storm sewer	Private Developers		10–20 yrs

## FINANCING STRATEGIES

Most of the improvements identified in this chapter are related to actions that would be taken in the immediate area. Generally, these types of projects lend themselves to local funding sources, such as Tax Increment Financing (TIF), Assessment Districts (AD), or a progressive approach that calls for newly developed properties to join a non-contiguous Title 32 Metropolitan District (MD). Each of these are locally formed, with revenues generated from the local property owners. Each fall entirely within the purview of Commerce City and could, hypothetically, be implemented without participation from other agencies on a state or regional level.

### ***Urban Renewal-Tax Increment Financing***

The most likely avenue to establish a TIF for the area would be an Urban Renewal District. Following a conditions survey, the City Council could establish the district. Local input from area property owners, businesses, and residents is critical to an effective process, although there is no election requirement from area property owners. Once established, the district would receive the incremental tax revenue associated with new development. The district can use this revenue to fund area-wide improvements (such as streetscape or pedestrian linkages), or may choose to partner with a developer and invest the proceeds

back into the development in order to make the project feasible.

The advantages of this tool include the city’s ability to redirect existing tax revenues to more specific uses within the TOD. For proposed projects within an urban renewal authority district, many will need gap financing. This tool can provide these funds. Moreover, the incremental revenues can be used to cover costs associated with area-wide improvements that will start to transform the character of the areas. Disadvantages include a requirement for a conditions analysis, in which the city must use a range of factors to establish the area, one of which may be ‘blight.’

### ***Assessment Districts***

Assessment Districts are a tool that allocates the costs for area-wide projects to adjacent and nearby property owners based the proportion of benefits received. The assessments, unlike ad valorem taxes, must be weighted such that certain properties pay higher assessment rates to reflect greater benefit. For example, the district could be structured such that properties closer to the transit station (with greater



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# commerce city station

## area master plan

east 72nd avenue and  
colorado boulevard



October 2013

Prepared by



In association with  
EPS

Fox Tuttle Transportation  
Roscoe Engineering



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# Acknowledgements

## CITY OF COMMERCE CITY COUNCIL

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Joe Deiling, Vice Chair

L. Warren Jones

J.E. "Mac" McFarlin, Chair

Sonia Montano, Alternate

Robby Robertson

Harvest Thomas, Alternate

## STAFF WORKING GROUP

Chandra Beznak, Administrative Specialist

Chris Cramer, A.I.C.P., Community Development Director

Maria D'Andrea, P.E., Public Works Director

Glenn Ellis, P.E., Projects Manager

Traci Ferguson, Parks Planner

James Hayes, A.I.C.P., Deputy City Manager

Michelle Halstead, Communications Manager

Michelle Hill, Senior Economic Development Specialist

Tracy Jones, Housing Coordinator

Sean Lehocky, P.E., Civil Engineer

Daren Sterling, P.E., City Engineer

Steve Timms, A.I.C.P., Planning Division Manager

Roger Tinklenberg, Finance Director

# Introduction

**W**ith the introduction of the North Metro Corridor commuter rail line and the E. 72nd Avenue Commuter Rail Station, **the Commerce City neighborhoods of Adams City and Adams Heights have a pivotal opportunity to create real change** that will benefit current residents, cultivate a thriving multimodal center, and strengthen their standing in the greater metropolitan region.

In 2004, voters approved the Regional Transportation District’s (RTD) FasTracks Program, the largest comprehensive transit expansion program in the nation. The FasTracks program will create better neighborhood access for station area residents and broadening transit options with rail service, expanded bus service, convenient parking, improved roadways, and more walkable streets. The completed expansion will result in a vast network of rail service and bus rapid transit that dramatically improves connectivity throughout the region.

In November 2013, RTD selected a team for the design and construction of the entire North Metro Corridor commuter rail line which includes the E. 72nd Avenue Commuter Rail Station in Commerce City. Neighborhood improvements around completed FasTracks rail stations are beginning to take shape with new commercial development, diversified housing, infrastructure improvements, and neighborhood amenities. Surrounding communities have capitalized on these traditional transit oriented development (TOD) investment as a

means of advancing character-defining neighborhood improvements and innovative projects such as live-work manufacturing and artist spaces, mixed-use and entertainment centers, neighborhood commercial infill, a variety of residential projects, and a range of open space and trail connections.

The arrival of Commerce City’s commuter rail station brings well-deserved and critically-needed focus to the neighborhoods of Adams City and Adams Heights. For many years, residents in these areas coped with substandard conditions such as a lack of safe connectivity, damaged or incomplete sidewalks, few crosswalks, fast-moving traffic, lack of bike lanes, few neighborhood parks, and limited neighborhood-serving uses. The Commerce City Station Area Master Plan (STAMP) is the culmination of efforts by a wide range of community stakeholders to identify improvements to existing neighborhoods, leverage the area’s assets and opportunities, and envision a preferred future for the area.

This STAMP explores transit-oriented and transit adjacent development—one that emphasizes strengthening existing residential neighborhoods and corridors while allowing opportunities for new development. The end result has the potential to enhance connectivity and transit use; strengthen existing building stock; boost economic development opportunities; attract diversified housing, employment and neighborhood-serving uses; and contribute to a strong sense of place for both existing and future residents and business owners.

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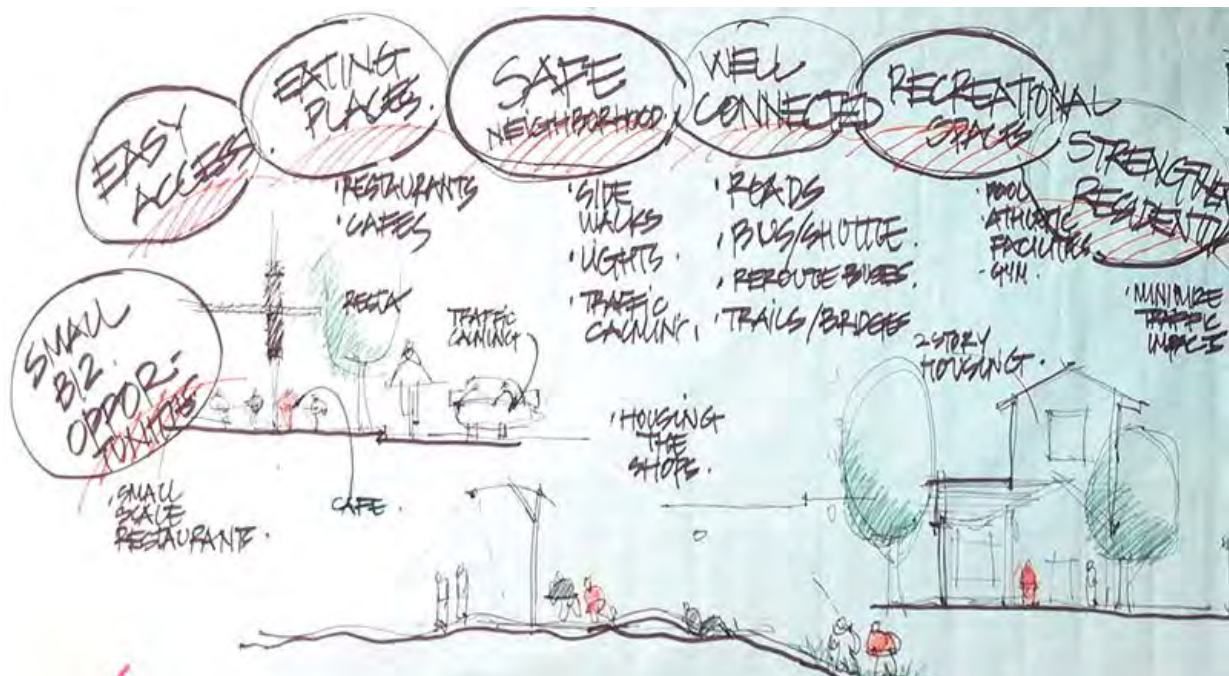
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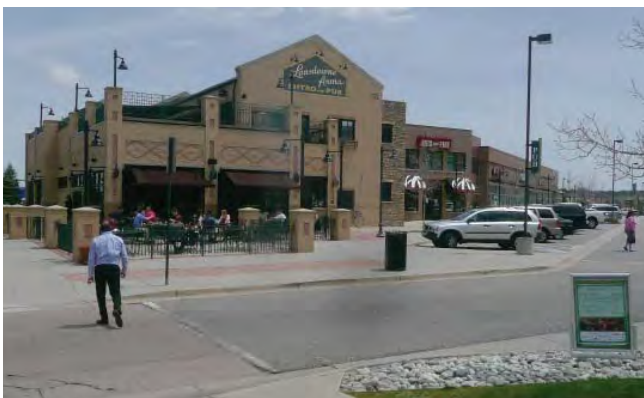
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Improve E. 72nd Avenue as a “main street”	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop comprehensive wayfinding plans and strategies</li> <li>Develop subarea plans for gateways</li> </ul>	City DRCOG TIP	C3	0-10 years

Vehicular, Transit, Pedestrian and Bicycle Strategy	Action	Funding	Lead	Timing
Direct traffic flow to E. 72nd Avenue close to the 72nd Avenue Station	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Establish a plan that addresses east-west traffic flow and increases average daily traffic (ADT) nearest to the station area</li> </ul>	TIF Assessment District Non-Contig. Metro dist. DRCOG TIP Enhancement Funds	C3	0–5 years
Improve vehicular access, parking and public transit connections in the station area	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Extend Colorado Boulevard north of E. 74th Avenue up to a new on-ramp onto Interstate 76</li> <li>Construct new vehicular bridge at the Fernald Trailhead at the western edge of E. 70th Avenue</li> <li>Establish a plan that addresses east-west traffic flow and increases ADT nearest to the STAMP</li> <li>Develop the following “next step” plans/ studies: traffic circulation studies (including traffic simulation model development), access management plans, first/last-mile mobility implementation, financing and partnership studies, transit circulator feasibility, transportation demand management studies and implementation activities, and parking management studies</li> </ul>	City DRCOG	CDOT RTD C3	0–5 years
Enhance the quality of the walking and biking experiences in the station area	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Construct two new pedestrian bridges over the O’Brian Canal east of the station</li> <li>Construct the O’Brian Canal Trail</li> </ul>	City DRCOG TIP	C3	0-10 years

New Transit-Oriented Development Strategy	Action	Funding	Lead	Timing
Create a development incentive package to help implement development projects slated for the two school redevelopment sites (Adams City Middle School and Alsup Elementary School)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop urban design and development guidelines and design studies for multi-modal infrastructure projects</li> <li>• Identify possible public funding mechanisms/partners</li> </ul>	City ED funds TIF P3s	C3	0–10 years

Zoning Strategy	Action	Funding	Lead	Timing
Sponsor zone changes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Adopt land use standards with minimum Floor Area Ratio (FAR) and density targets</li> <li>• Establish minimum densities around the station area and along E. 72nd Avenue between Colorado Boulevard and Birch Street</li> <li>• Work closely with prospective development partners to facilitate zoning and other development approval requests that are consistent with STAMP recommendations</li> </ul>	City Planning	C3	0–10 years

Safety and Security Strategy	Action	Funding	Lead	Timing
Enhance safety and security	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide additional street lighting and sidewalks throughout the neighborhood</li> </ul>	TIF Assessment District Non-Contig. Metro Dist. DRCOG TIP	C3	0–20 years

Income Diversity Strategy	Action	Funding	Lead	Timing
Create and retain affordable housing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Update the Adams County Housing Study and seek to increase diversity of housing; consider both lower- and upper-income residents as important segments of the Commercial City community</li> <li>Establish a set-aside standard and dedicate a specific percentage of new housing to households earning less than the Area Median Income (AMI)</li> <li>Seek partnerships with regional entities focused on displacement solutions for TOD areas.</li> <li>Advocate for an allocation of 9% Low Income Housing Tax Credits from the Colorado Housing and Finance Authority (CHFA) to provide the needed capital for a development targeted to households earning 30 – 60% of the AMI</li> <li>Establish a partnership with an experienced tax credit developer to work collaboratively to raise the interest from CHFA in a site with direct access to transit that preserves diversity</li> </ul>	City and County Comp Plan  CDBG  LIHTC	Commerce City Housing Authority, Adams County Housing Authority	0-10 years
Support anti-displacement initiatives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Increase workforce development programs in the area</li> <li>Support and funding of small neighborhood businesses</li> <li>Programs to help renters become homeowners</li> <li>Increase educational and medical opportunities</li> <li>Programs to combat gentrification</li> </ul>	ED  CDBG	Commerce City	0–20 years



Utilities	Action	Funding	Lead	Timing
Infrastructure and Utility improvements	• Preliminary geotechnical report for station area	TIF	South Adams County	0–10 yrs
	• Lift station at Birch St. and E 72nd Ave for sewer	Assessment District	Water and Sanitation District, C3	10–20 yrs
	• New water mains for future development	Non-Contig. Metro Dist.		10–20 yrs
	• Improved storm sewer	Private Developers		10–20 yrs

## FINANCING STRATEGIES

Most of the improvements identified in this chapter are related to actions that would be taken in the immediate area. Generally, these types of projects lend themselves to local funding sources, such as Tax Increment Financing (TIF), Assessment Districts (AD), or a progressive approach that calls for newly developed properties to join a non-contiguous Title 32 Metropolitan District (MD). Each of these are locally formed, with revenues generated from the local property owners. Each fall entirely within the purview of Commerce City and could, hypothetically, be implemented without participation from other agencies on a state or regional level.

### ***Urban Renewal-Tax Increment Financing***

The most likely avenue to establish a TIF for the area would be an Urban Renewal District. Following a conditions survey, the City Council could establish the district. Local input from area property owners, businesses, and residents is critical to an effective process, although there is no election requirement from area property owners. Once established, the district would receive the incremental tax revenue associated with new development. The district can use this revenue to fund area-wide improvements (such as streetscape or pedestrian linkages), or may choose to partner with a developer and invest the proceeds

back into the development in order to make the project feasible.

The advantages of this tool include the city’s ability to redirect existing tax revenues to more specific uses within the TOD. For proposed projects within an urban renewal authority district, many will need gap financing. This tool can provide these funds. Moreover, the incremental revenues can be used to cover costs associated with area-wide improvements that will start to transform the character of the areas. Disadvantages include a requirement for a conditions analysis, in which the city must use a range of factors to establish the area, one of which may be ‘blight.’

### ***Assessment Districts***

Assessment Districts are a tool that allocates the costs for area-wide projects to adjacent and nearby property owners based the proportion of benefits received. The assessments, unlike ad valorem taxes, must be weighted such that certain properties pay higher assessment rates to reflect greater benefit. For example, the district could be structured such that properties closer to the transit station (with greater



4696 BROADWAY ST | BOULDER, CO 80304

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