Envision LITTLETON

Our Community. Our Future.

# COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

## FUTURE CITY

DRAFT ◆ October 2, 2019

Littleton Colorado

# ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

## CITY COUNCIL

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**Chris Akers** – State Demography Office, Colorado Department of Local Affairs (February 27, 2019)
*Transitions – Population and Economic Trends*

**Darin A. Atteberry** – City Manager of Fort Collins, Colorado (April 19, 2019)
*Bigger Community Vision*

**Bret C. Keast, AICP** – CEO of Kendig Keast Collaborative (May 22, 2019)
*Zoning for Community Character*

**Peter Kageyama** – Author and Consultant (September 12, 2019)
*For the Love of Cities*

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# INTRODUCTION

The Envision Littleton Comprehensive Plan (the Plan) will guide future development, redevelopment, and community enhancement efforts over the next 20 years through 2040. It serves as a framework for thoughtful community discussion on the real and perceived challenges currently facing Littleton, and opportunities that will shape its future. Through long-range planning efforts, the community can accommodate its projected growth and revitalization in a manner that preserves its history, culture, and overall quality of life for current and future residents.

The Plan resulted from an 18-month planning and community engagement process. The process began with the Envision Littleton Vision Report, adopted unanimously by City Council on December 18, 2018. The Vision Report established a unifying vision and identified Littleton's core values, guiding principles, shared priorities, and concerns. The Plan's findings and recommendations focus on the physical and economic aspects of the community's projected growth and development in the coming years. It provides goals, policies, and actions that will help City officials, appointees, and staff in determining the location, financing, and sequencing of public improvements; administering development regulations; and guiding reinvestment efforts. The Plan also provides a basis for coordinating the actions of many different functions and interests within and outside of municipal government.

## PLAN PURPOSE

A comprehensive plan is the most important policy document a municipal government prepares and maintains. This is because the Plan:

- Lays out a long-range vision regarding the growth and enhancement of the community;
- Considers at once the city's regional context, and the entire geographic area of the community, including areas where new development and redevelopment may occur;
- Assesses near- and longer-term needs and desires across a variety of inter-related topics that represent the key "building blocks" of a community (e.g., land use, transportation, urban design, economic development, housing, neighborhoods, parks and recreation, heritage and tourism, arts and culture, utility infrastructure, public facilities and services, cultural facilities, etc.); and
- Serves as a guideline for measuring success, and is amended from time to time to remain a "living document" that is able to address changing circumstances.

Through a comprehensive plan, a community determines how best to accommodate and manage its projected growth, and the revitalization of older neighborhoods and commercial areas. The Plan aims to ensure that ongoing development will proceed in an orderly, well-planned manner so that public facilities and services can keep pace with development, and so that residents' quality of life will be enhanced.

Significantly, by clarifying and stating the City's intentions regarding the area's physical development and infrastructure investment, the Plan also creates a greater level of predictability for residents, land owners, developers, potential investors, and partner agencies and organizations.

## USE OF THE PLAN

This Plan will take our community to a new level in terms of livability and tangible accomplishments. The Plan is ultimately a guidance document for City officials and staff, who must make decisions on a daily basis that will determine the future direction, financial health, and "look and feel" of the community. These decisions are carried out through:

- Targeted programs and expenditures prioritized through the City's annual budget process, including routine essential functions such as code compliance.
- Major public improvements and land acquisitions financed through the City's budgeting efforts.
- New and amended City ordinances and regulations that implement Plan objectives.
- Departmental work plans and resources in key areas.
- Support for ongoing planning and studies that will further clarify needs, costs, benefits, and strategies.

- Pursuit of external grant funding to supplement local budgets and/or expedite certain planning and infrastructure projects.
- Initiatives pursued in conjunction with other public and private partners to leverage resources and achieve successes neither could accomplish on their own.

Despite these many avenues for action, the Plan should not be considered the solution for every tough problem Littleton faces. The Plan focuses primarily on the responsibilities of City government in the physical planning arena, where municipalities have a more direct and extensive role than in other areas that residents value such as education and social services. Of necessity, long-range plans, as vision and policy documents, also must remain relatively general.

The resulting Plan may not touch on every challenge before the community, but it is meant to set a tone and motivate concerted efforts to move the community forward in coming years.

# CITY AUTHORITY TO PREPARE AND ADOPT PLAN

Through Title 31, Government – Municipal Powers and Functions of Cities and Town, of the Colorado Revised Statutes, the State of Colorado puts community planning among the core duties of a local planning commission. As stated in C.R.S. 31-23-206: "It is the duty of the commission to make and adopt a master plan for the physical development of the municipality, including any areas outside its boundaries, subject to the approval of the governmental body having jurisdiction thereof, which in the commission's judgment bear relation to the planning of such municipality."

As in most states, the State of Colorado also identifies a municipality's comprehensive plan as a key source of guidance for local development regulations. As stated in C.R.S. 31-23-206, elements in the plan may include recreation and tourism (required by the state statute), transportation, land use, housing, economic development, parks and open space, capital improvements, and water supply, among others.

Along with state statutes, the City of Littleton operates under an adopted City Charter and City Code. Title 2, Boards and Commissions, Chapter 9 of the adopted City Code establishes the Planning Commission. Among the duties itemized, the Charter requires that the Commission "shall recommend to the city council comprehensive plans to guide future growth and development within the city which includes, for example, land use, streets and transportation, parks and open space, pedestrian circulation, and urban design."

Littleton's longstanding commitment to planning and community dialogue is exemplified by the many past plans and studies cited within this Plan. As the newest adopted statement of a unifying community vision and associated guiding principles, goals, and policies, this Plan replaces any and all Comprehensive Plans previously adopted by the City. As warranted, City Council may direct the Planning Commission to deliberate and provide recommendations in cases where any identified or perceived discrepancies between the Plan and previous special area or special purpose plans are especially pertinent to upcoming decisions involving City policies, priorities, and actions.

# PLAN CONTENT OVERVIEW

While the Existing City Data Book provides background and insights about Littleton as it is today, the Plan focuses on Littleton as it intends to be in the years ahead. These aspirations are presented in topic areas central to Littleton's physical growth and development. Each Plan section contains several common components:

- **Legacy of Past Planning.** Plans and studies previously developed for Littleton and vicinity offer insights from the time they were prepared, and provide an essential foundation for this Plan.
- **Key Issues and Considerations.** These reflect input and discussions from varied Envision Littleton community engagement activities, workshops with City Council and Planning Commission, and interaction with other City boards/commissions, City departments, and partner agencies and organizations.
- **Framework for Action.** The framework is organized in three tiers: (1) Goals, (2) Policies, and (3) Actions.

**Comprehensive Plan Topic Areas**

- Land Use and Community Character (L&C)
- Housing and Neighborhoods (H&N)
- Transportation (TMP)
- Infrastructure and Services (I&S)
- Economy and Tax Base (E&T)
- Heritage, Arts, Recreation, and Tourism (HART)
- Environment (ENV)
- Special Areas and Design (S&D)

- A **Goal** is a statement of a desired outcome ("end") toward which efforts are directed as expressed by more specific objectives and action steps ("means").
- A **Policy** expresses a basic value or operating philosophy that will apply regardless of the course of action ultimately chosen.
- A strategic **Action** priority is aimed at seizing a special opportunity or addressing a particular challenge one faces, given limited resources, financial and otherwise – and recognizing that a broader agenda of new or ongoing activities will also be pursued in the meantime.

The actions in each section convey tangible steps that will lead to achievement of the goals in line with the stated policies. A final section with considerations and procedures for implementation and periodic updates rounds out the Plan.

# PATHWAYS TO ACTION

The actions under each plan topic are presented in five categories that represent the major ways that Plan goals and initiatives are typically advanced and accomplished:

## Capital Investments

Littleton uses a multi-year Capital Improvement Program, or "CIP," to identify and budget for "big ticket" projects, especially those that must be phased and/or coordinated with other initiatives. This may include street infrastructure; water, sanitary sewer, and storm drainage improvements; parks, trails, and recreation facility construction and upgrades; construction and renovation of public buildings; and purchase of land, vehicles, or major equipment. With a typical five-year outlook, a CIP provides predictability regarding the City's capital investment plans and priorities for the benefit and awareness of private interests and residents. Anticipating and adequately budgeting for major capital projects will be essential to implementing the Plan. Likewise, decisions regarding the prioritization of proposed capital improvements should reflect the direction and priorities of the Plan.

## Programs and Initiatives

Programs involve the routine activities of City departments and staff, and special projects and initiatives they may undertake. As part of Plan implementation, this method may include initiating new, or adjusting existing, City programs and activities; expanding community outreach efforts; or providing specialized training to accomplish a priority objective more promptly and effectively.

## Regulations and Standards

Because private investment decisions account for a vast majority of the City's physical form, land development regulations and engineering standards are fundamental for Plan implementation. Zoning, subdivision regulations, and associated development criteria and technical engineering standards are key to ensuring that the form, character, and quality of development reflect the City's planning objectives. These codes should

# PLAN ASSUMPTIONS

The Future City portion of the Plan was prepared assuming the following, as discussed with City Council and Planning Commission:

**Jurisdiction**

- The city limits will not change or expand significantly over the Plan horizon through 2040 (through annexation or interaction with adjacent cities).

**Population**

- Littleton's population *could* increase from almost 48,000 in 2017 to the 60,000 range by 2040, as projected by the Plan consultant (Kendig Keast Collaborative) based on newest available U.S. Census Bureau estimates and recent trend data.

**Metro Position**

- Littleton will be even less of a Denver Metro Area "edge city" with Sterling Ranch emerging as a next major growth area south of Highlands Ranch.

**Asset Management**

- The City will likely devote more attention and capital investment to maintaining and upgrading aging municipal infrastructure and facilities in the years ahead.

**Municipal Services**

- As now, the City will not have direct operational responsibility for some typical municipal activities:
  - Water supply and treatment (Denver Water)
  - Fire service (South Metro Fire Rescue)
  - Parks and trails (South Suburban Park and Recreation District)

  As a lead partner along with the City of Englewood, Littleton will continue to operate a regional wastewater treatment plant that serves various other jurisdictions through South Platte Water Renewal Partners.

**Water Supply and Conservation**

- Long-term water supply and efficient use/re-use will be a core focus for the entire metro area through 2040 and beyond.

advance the community's desire for quality development outcomes while recognizing economic and community character factors. They should not delay or interfere unnecessarily with development deemed consistent with Plan principles and directives.

### Partnerships and Coordination

Some community initiatives identified in the Plan cannot be accomplished by City government alone. They may require direct coordination, intergovernmental agreements, or funding support from other public entities or levels of government. Additionally, the unique role of potential private and non-profit partners to advance the community's action agenda should not be underestimated. This may occur through cooperative efforts, volunteer activities, and in-kind services (which can count toward the local match requirements for various grant opportunities), and from public/private financing of community improvements.

### More Targeted Planning / Study

Various areas of City governance require more detailed study and planning, especially as required to qualify for external funding opportunities. These studies involve targeted planning work at a "finer grain" level of detail than is appropriate for comprehensive planning purposes (e.g., utility master plans, roadway alignment studies, etc.). As such, some parts of the Plan will be implemented only after additional planning or special studies that clarify next steps and associated costs and considerations, including clarification of roles and potential cost-sharing when partnering is involved.

## COMMUNITY LOCATION AND FEATURES

The City of Littleton is located in central Colorado, within the Front Range of the Southern Rocky Mountains. The South Platte River flows from south to north through Littleton, with additional tributaries also running through the city.

Littleton is the county seat of Arapahoe County, with the majority of the city located within Arapahoe County and small portions located in Douglas and Jefferson counties. Littleton is part of the greater Denver metropolitan region and is approximately nine miles south of Downtown Denver.

Littleton is accessible via two Regional Transportation District (RTD) light rail stations, Downtown and at Mineral Avenue, and is home to the main campus of Arapahoe Community College. The city limits encompass a total area of approximately 13.8 square miles. According to the U.S. Census Bureau, Littleton had a 2010 population of 41,737 and an estimated 2017 population of 47,734.

Littleton lies 5,351 feet above sea level and has an average temperature range of 35-64 degrees, an average rainfall of 16.3 inches per year, and an average of 65.7 inches of snowfall per year. Given its location along the South Platte River and extensive open space, parks, and trails, Littleton is home to a range of recreation activities. Littleton also retains its original and historic downtown. The recreational and historical aspects of the community continue to attract tourists to Littleton.

## POPULATION GROWTH PROJECTIONS

Population projections are an important component of a long-range planning process. They help determine and quantify the demands that will be placed on public facilities and services based on the potential pace and scale of the community's physical growth. Projections reflect local, regional, national, and international trends and offer a basis to prepare for the future. However, forecasting population changes can be challenging, particularly for the long term, because it is often difficult to account for all circumstances that may arise. Therefore, it will be important for the City to monitor population and economic growth continually to account for both short- and longer-term shifts that can influence development activity and trends in the community and larger region.

## ALTERNATIVE GROWTH SCENARIOS

Demographers caution that population projections become trickier as the geographic area gets smaller, making city-level population the most difficult to forecast. This is because local population change is strongly influenced by less predictable factors such as housing prices, availability of vacant land to develop, and annexation of additional territory, which may already have existing residents and results in an instant increase in the citywide total.

Given this context, this section provides a comparison of several potential scenarios for future population change in Littleton. The projections build on the latest U.S. Census estimate of 47,734 for 2017 and identify potential population levels in five-year increments out to 2040. The four projection alternatives displayed in **Figure 1**, below, reflect:

- If Littleton continued to experience an increase in population at a **Steady Growth Rate** of 1.9 percent per year as has occurred most recently in the years from 2010 through 2017. Similar to how interest compounds in a savings account, this is an "exponential growth" scenario because the numerical change gets larger each year as the same rate of increase – 1.9 percent in this case – is applied to an expanding total population.
- If Littleton maintained its respective 2010 shares of the total populations in Arapahoe and Jefferson counties (Douglas County was not included as Littleton is such a tiny share of the Douglas total). The portion of Littleton within Arapahoe County accounted for 7.3 percent of the countywide population in 2010, and the Jefferson County portion of Littleton was 7.8 percent of the Jefferson total population. This is known as the **Fixed County Step Down** scenario.
- If Littleton's respective 2010 shares of the total populations in Arapahoe and Jefferson counties decreased over time rather than remain constant as above. This is known as the **Trending County Step Down** scenario and assumes that, by 2040, Littleton's share of the Arapahoe County population would decrease from 7.3 to 6.3 percent. Likewise, Littleton's share of the Jefferson County population would drop from 7.8 to 6.5 percent.
- If Littleton continued to experience an increase in population involving **Steady Numeric Growth** of 8,567 persons per decade through the current decade and then also in the 2020s and 2030s. In contrast to the exponential growth scenario above, this is a "linear growth" scenario as the numeric growth remains fixed rather than the growth rate. The assumption of fixed numeric growth means that the 1.9 percent annual growth rate experienced recently from 2010 through 2017 would drop to 1.6 percent during the 2020s, then to 1.4 percent during the 2030s.

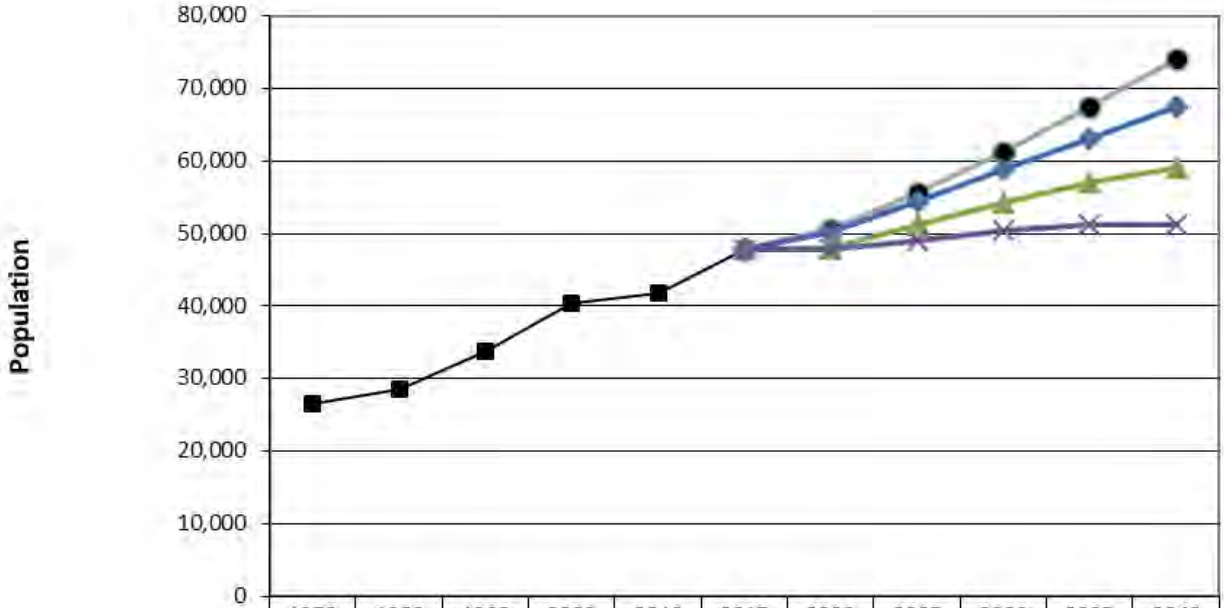
## Bottom Line

Littleton should consider a range of potential growth rather than an absolute number given the uncertainty of any small-area forecast that extends beyond a few years. **It is assumed for this Plan that Littleton's 2040 population will fall within a forecast range of 51,289 to 74,200 persons, which yields a midpoint of 62,745 residents**.

The midpoint of a potential growth range to assume for this Plan would mean **nearly 15,000 additional residents over 20 years.** This suggests that Littleton could add the equivalent of 31 percent of its 2017 base-year population by 2040. For perspective, Census 2010 reported an average household size in Littleton of 2.29 persons, meaning that **6,550 additional housing units would be needed to accommodate 15,000 added residents**.

An **essential caveat** is that the scenarios above are projections of what *could* occur in Littleton over the next several decades based on recent trends and/or specified assumptions. Because Littleton is largely built out, to what extent the potential growth can be absorbed – or absorbed at some lesser level or not at all – will depend on the City's zoning framework and other municipal policy decisions going forward (e.g., regarding housing strategies, open space preservation, economic development, etc.). Throughout Envision Littleton, City officials stated their intent to proceed directly into a comprehensive evaluation and update of Littleton's zoning and development codes. The outcomes of that next phase will determine the type and nature of new development that can occur on remaining vacant land, along with parameters for redevelopment and infill activity in existing developed areas.

**FIGURE 1: Littleton Population Projection Scenarios, 2017-2040**




| | 1970 | 1980 | 1990 | 2000 | 2010 | 2017 | 2020 | 2025 | 2030 | 2035 | 2040 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Historical Data | 26,466 | 28,631 | 33,685 | 40,340 | 41,737 | 47,734 | | | | | |
| Steady Growth Rate (1.9%) | | | | | | 47,734 | 50,561 | 55,650 | 61,251 | 67,415 | 74,200 |
| Fixed County Step Down | | | | | | 47,734 | 47,979 | 51,174 | 54,217 | 57,024 | 59,101 |
| Trending County Step Down | | | | | | 47,734 | 47,796 | 49,087 | 50,355 | 51,225 | 51,289 |
| Steady Numeric Growth (8,567 per decade) | | | | | | 47,734 | 50,304 | 54,419 | 58,871 | 63,009 | 67,438 |

Source: Kendig Keast Collaborative based on U.S. Census Bureau historical data and 2017 estimates.

# EXISTING CITY

## ISSUES LINKED TO DATA AND INPUT

The Existing City Data Book, included as an appendix to the Plan, highlights key indicators and background information about Littleton as it is today. Compiling this data was step one in the 2019 Envision Littleton efforts to prepare a new Comprehensive Plan and create a first-ever Transportation Master Plan (TMP).

The Data Book content for the Comprehensive Plan was based on initial background studies by the City's community planning consultant, Kendig Keast Collaborative. The intent was to avoid duplication of available, more extensive profiles of Littleton. Instead, the booklet focuses on selected data points that speak to community values and priorities expressed by residents and other stakeholders as input to the Vision Report adopted by City Council in December 2018. Narrative within each section notes how a data point further validates aspects of the Vision Report and/or highlights essential planning considerations for the years ahead. The examples below show how input and data ultimately shaped this Plan.

## FROM INPUT AND VISION TO PLAN AND ACTION

**INPUT**

"Littleton can be progressive leaders in business, water, city planning and community building."

**CORE VALUE**
Being a model community.

**Guiding Principle**

**Anchored**

**GOAL I&S 3**
Regarding public facilities and livability.

**POLICY I&S 6**
Being a leader among Colorado cities in this regard.

**ACTION I&S 11**
Municipal leadership on partnering with area agencies.

**INPUT**

"We were drawn to Littleton with its historic homes, buildings and past history."

**CORE VALUE**
Local history.

**Guiding Principle**

**Authentic**

**GOAL HART 2**
Regarding heritage protection and promotion.

**POLICY HART 2**
Building consensus and support for further preservation.

**ACTION HART 11**
Added methods for protecting more historic assets.

**INPUT**

"Littleton needs a range and mix of housing choice."

**CORE VALUE**
Being inclusive.

Guiding Principle

**Connected**

**GOAL H&N 1**
Regarding quantity and diversity of housing options.

**POLICY H&N 1**
Encouraging an array of new and redeveloped housing.

**ACTION H&N 11**
New strategies and incentives through zoning/code update.

**INPUT**

"The walking trails and High Line Canal area promote a healthy lifestyle and should be maintained."

**CORE VALUE**
The outdoors.

Guiding Principle

**Active**

**GOAL HART 1**
Regarding preserved and enhanced public green spaces.

**POLICY HART 1**
Maintaining partnerships with key agencies and entities.

**ACTION HART 14**
Missing links in local and regional trail networks.

**INPUT**

"Collecting as many voices as possible is crucial to the process."

**CORE VALUE**
Civic involvement.

Guiding Principle

**Engaged**

**GOAL L&C 3**
Regarding keeping land use and transportation planning in sync.

**POLICY S&D 4**
Continuing dialogue through special area planning efforts.

**ACTION S&D 6**
Partnership opportunities in specific geographic areas of city.

# REGIONAL FACTORS AND CONSIDERATIONS

Littleton is part of the Denver Regional Council of Governments (DRCOG) planning area that covers the greater Denver region (including Adams, Arapahoe, Boulder, Clear Creek, Douglas, Gilpin, and Jefferson counties; the City and County of Denver; the City and County of Broomfield; and southwest Weld County). Metro Vision is the regional plan for the DRCOG region. As the 2017 plan version states, "the Metro Vision plan does not replace the vision of any individual community; rather it is a tool to promote regional cooperation on issues that extend beyond jurisdictional boundaries."

The Metro Vision Outcomes listed below are shared regionwide aspirations. Each jurisdiction contributes toward achieving these outcomes in a manner appropriate to its local circumstances and priorities. Highlighted below in **Table 1, Metro Vision and Envision Littleton Links**, are areas where the Metro Vision Outcomes and Envision Littleton are aligned.

**TABLE 1: Metro Vision and Envision Littleton Links**

| METRO VISION OUTCOME | ENVISION LITTLETON |
|---|---|
| THE REGION IS COMPRISED OF DIVERSE, LIVABLE COMMUNITIES. | Goals L&C 1, 3<br>Policies L&C 4, 6<br>Actions L&C 1, 5, 6<br>Goal H&N 1<br>Policies H&N 1, 4<br>Actions H&N 2, 11<br>Goals HART 2, 4<br>Policies HART 2, 8<br>Actions HART 6, 11, 24, 25 |
| THROUGH A COORDINATED EFFORT BETWEEN DRCOG AND LOCAL COMMUNITIES, NEW URBAN DEVELOPMENT OCCURS IN AN ORDERLY AND COMPACT PATTERN WITHIN REGIONALLY DESIGNATED GROWTH AREAS. | Goal L&C 3<br>Action E&T 9<br>Policy S&D 7<br>Action S&D 3 |
| CONNECTED URBAN CENTERS AND MULTIMODAL CORRIDORS THROUGHOUT THE REGION ACCOMMODATE A GROWING SHARE OF THE REGION'S HOUSING AND EMPLOYMENT. | Policies TMP 6, 28<br>Goals S&D 2, 4<br>Policy S&D 5<br>Actions S&D 5, 7 |
| THE REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM IS WELL-CONNECTED AND SERVES ALL MODES OF TRAVEL. | Goals TMP 1, 3<br>Policies TMP 6, 14, 24, 25, 26, 29, 30 |
| THE TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM IS SAFE, RELIABLE AND WELL-MAINTAINED. | Goal TMP 2<br>Policies TMP 1, 4, 5, 7, 27 |
| THE REGION HAS CLEAN WATER AND AIR, AND LOWER GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSIONS. | Goals ENV 1, 2, 3, 4<br>Policies ENV 1, 2, 3, 8<br>Actions ENV 2, 3, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12 |
| THE REGION VALUES, PROTECTS AND CONNECTS PEOPLE TO ITS DIVERSE NATURAL RESOURCE AREAS, OPEN SPACE, PARKS AND TRAILS. | Policy L&C 5<br>Policy H&N 8<br>Goals HART 1, 3<br>Policies HART 1, 3, 4<br>Actions HART 1, 2, 3, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 22 |
| THE REGION'S WORKING AGRICULTURAL LANDS AND ACTIVITIES CONTRIBUTE TO A STRONG REGIONAL FOOD SYSTEM. | Goal ENV 1 |
| THE RISKS AND EFFECTS OF NATURAL AND HUMAN-CREATED HAZARDS ARE REDUCED. | Policy I&S 4<br>Actions I&S 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 15, 16 |

| METRO VISION OUTCOME | ENVISION LITTLETON |
|---|---|
| THE BUILT AND NATURAL ENVIRONMENT SUPPORTS HEALTHY AND ACTIVE CHOICES. | Goal HART 3<br>Actions HART 13, 14 |
| THE REGION'S RESIDENTS HAVE EXPANDED CONNECTIONS TO HEALTH SERVICES. | Policy H&N 4<br>Action E&T 13<br>Goal HART 3<br>Actions HART 13, 14 |
| DIVERSE HOUSING OPTIONS MEET THE NEEDS OF RESIDENTS OF ALL AGES, INCOMES AND ABILITIES. | Policy L&C 3<br>Action L&C 5<br>Goals H&N 1, 2<br>Policies H&N 1, 2, 3, 5<br>Actions H&N 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 10, 11, 12, 15, 16 |
| ALL RESIDENTS HAVE ACCESS TO A RANGE OF TRANSPORTATION, EMPLOYMENT, COMMERCE, HOUSING, EDUCATIONAL, CULTURAL AND RECREATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES. | Policy L&C 3<br>Action L&C 5<br>Goal TMP 3<br>Policy TMP 25<br>Goals H&N 1, 2<br>Policies H&N 1, 2, 3, 4, 5<br>Actions H&N 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 10, 11, 12, 15, 16<br>Goal E&T 5<br>Policy E&T 10<br>Actions E&T 13, 16<br>Actions HART 6, 13, 14, 16 |
| INVESTMENTS IN INFRASTRUCTURE AND AMENITIES ALLOW PEOPLE AND BUSINESSES TO THRIVE AND PROSPER. | Goal H&N 5<br>Goals I&S 1, 3<br>Policies I&S 1, 2, 3, 6<br>Actions I&S 1, 2, 11, 12, 13, 17<br>Goal E&T 4<br>Actions E&T 1, 6, 7, 16<br>Policy HART 6 |

# UNIFYING VISION AND GUIDING PRINCIPLES

## VISION 2040

A **Vision** is a broad statement of what a community hopes and intends to be in the future. With words and images, it offers a picture of that future to provide inspiration, motivation, and a framework for more detailed planning and decision-making.

**From What We Treasure Today ...**

Littleton will continue to be a hometown community that is widely known and envied as a city with "strong bones." Among the features that earn Littleton this reputation are its historic and vibrant downtown, its light rail transit link to the Denver region, and its distinguishing yet often unseen natural asset, the South Platte River. Along with the highly utilized greenway, trails, and preserves that frame the Platte, residents and visitors also prize the High Line Canal Trail that weaves through the city.

Littleton will especially be held up as the "real thing" when it comes to maintaining a sense of community among its residents and managing the essential physical traits that define community character, neighborhood by distinct neighborhood.

It will remain a place where nature and city living intersect, can both be enjoyed, and are guarded with a fierce sense of stewardship.

**… To What We Strive For Going Forward**

We recognize that our vision for Littleton's future is framed differently than many communities as we are a largely built-out city. As we focus on managing change amid this reality, we envision a Littleton in 2040 that has:

- Maintained the integrity of its established neighborhoods and historic areas.
- Protected its cherished natural setting in harmony with new development and redevelopment.
- Ensured that reinvestment in the community, whether in Littleton's legacy housing stock or along its commercial corridors, has met local expectations for quality and compatibility with its surroundings.
- Made itself even safer and more accessible for all the ways that people navigate through and within Littleton.
- Achieved a higher standard for cleanliness and burnished its appeal as a place with strikingly beautiful vistas.
- Secured the long-term sustainability of city finances to continue providing its citizens the best in public services.

## VALUES

**Values** identify what matters most to the community and how it wishes to be viewed by others. Our shared values inform the vision.

In listening to stories and memories about Littleton, along with residents' desires and concerns for its future, the following values came through consistently. The bulleted items under each are examples of how those expressing such values related them to their own experience of or pride in Littleton. Many communities share common values, issues, and priorities (e.g., to be a safe place). **Littleton's core values include a passion for and/or commitment to:**

### Local History

- Preserve and celebrate it
- Highlight and tie it to our identity and events
- Origin as own town, rural and later suburban heritage
- Build on accomplishments of past eras and leaders

### The Outdoors

- Health and fitness focus
- Front Range proximity
- Stewardship of river and open space assets

### Being Inclusive

- Age, race, income, and faith diversity
- Housing options
- Neighbors knowing neighbors
- Caring for those in need
- Welcoming to families, newcomers, and visitors

### Being a Model Community

- Leader among metro and Colorado cities
- High in livability, family-friendly, and other rankings
- Partnerships with other public agencies

### Civic Involvement

- Being informed citizens
- Having a voice in city government
- Volunteer service

### Integrity

- Of community and neighborhood character
- Of natural resources and open space endowment
- Of architectural heritage and landmarks
- Of governance and open, inclusive processes

### Quality

- Schools
- Built environment
- Air and water
- Open space
- Public services

### Safety

- Pedestrian/cyclist/driver safety
- Security from crime
- Child protection

## GUIDING PRINCIPLES

**Even in the face of potentially significant demographic change ahead, Littleton will remain ANCHORED by a firm belief among its residents and leaders of what makes this a truly special place.** These features include Littleton's traditional downtown, established neighborhoods, and the literal "river that runs through it" in the South Platte. Littleton also has a longstanding reputation as a community of choice for quality schools and is home to the Arapahoe Community College main campus. Serving as the Arapahoe County seat, a destination for health care, and a hub for cultural and lifestyle amenities also keeps a consistent conception of Littleton in the minds of residents and visitors. Although stable in these various ways today, Littleton will approach its future with a sense of dynamism, looking to draw upon a culture of innovation and boldness inherited from earlier generations.

**Littleton will continue to be AUTHENTIC and comfortable for both residents and guests.** The often-cited "small town feel" and sense of community dates to our origin as a "Little Town" separate and apart from Denver. Littleton will continue to stand out in the region for its distinctive identity. Its genuine sense of place will always be contrasted with the look and feel of cities that came along much later or were master planned from scratch. The essential threads that will continue to sustain this community fabric include Littleton's historic character and architectural heritage, its varied neighborhoods and residential options, a robust and service-oriented faith community, and an inviting and safe atmosphere.

**Littleton will be an increasingly CONNECTED and accessible place.** From a physical and mobility standpoint, it will continue to have regional ties via highways and arterials, transit services, long-distance trails, and the Mary Carter Greenway. Evolving technology and network speeds will link it even more to the nation and world. It will be an inclusive and neighborly community that provides opportunities for youth, seniors, and residents in need to thrive, including through more mobility options. Littleton will also remain a fun and eventful locale throughout the year, bringing residents together for leisure and volunteer activities, and drawing visitors from near and far.

**Littleton will always be a community of ACTIVE people who make the most of their city's cultural and natural resource abundance.** It will support its residents' efforts to be fit and maintain a healthy lifestyle. It will embrace their desire to gather for live performances and other local happenings. And it will appreciate and build on the value of a lively downtown. Littleton will always seek to elevate its position as a dream community for outdoor recreation and nature enthusiasts – and a destination for visitors wishing to share in these local amenities.

**Littleton will remain ENGAGED and civic-minded in all matters affecting the direction and priorities of city government and the community.** Stakeholders will participate in transparent processes and take responsibility for maintaining a respectful and productive dialogue. Meaningful interactions must involve committed elected officials, informed residents, and other partner organizations and agencies interested in Littleton as it is today and will be tomorrow.

**Guiding Principles** describe the values identified by the community and serve as the foundation for the Vision. The Guiding Principles provide a reference point for Littleton to consider when making decisions. The guiding principles reflect major themes, or areas of focus, for achieving the desired vision that emerged based on analysis of input by stakeholders.

# LAND USE AND COMMUNITY CHARACTER

# LAND USE AND COMMUNITY CHARACTER

The City of Littleton must plan effectively for future development and redevelopment, and for ongoing stewardship of areas intended to remain much as they are. Sound land use planning is essential to ensuring that the City is prepared to serve anticipated public infrastructure and service needs, and also to create and maintain desired community character.

Land use considerations are integrated with all other Plan components. For instance, the transportation network provides access to land, which, along with real estate market factors, influences the type and intensity of development that may occur. The capacity and condition of public utilities can dictate the location, amount, and timing of development, as can economic development efforts by the City and other partners. Similarly, proximity to parks and public facilities promotes public health and safety and affects the development potential of an area. Development character and site design shape community aesthetics and the perceptions held by area residents, tourists, and those considering investment in Littleton.

## FUTURE LAND USE AND CHARACTER

Shown on **Map 1, Future Land Use and Character**, is the general pattern of uses anticipated and/or desired in the years ahead, and the character contexts in which uses occur. The map, along with the text descriptions in this section, indicate the use that is expected to predominate in areas where land is undeveloped or, in previously developed areas, based on what is already on the ground and will likely remain or possibly evolve. Such transitions in use can occur through redevelopment of previously built sites, “infill” construction on a vacant parcel amid existing built sites, or repurposing of an existing structure for another use without significant site changes.

Along with the predominant use types, other complementary uses will also remain or may emerge in particular areas of the city (e.g., small-scale, neighborhood-oriented retail and service uses near the edges of largely residential areas). Certain uses can be located amid other predominant use types, such as public facilities and places of worship within predominantly residential areas. Mixing uses on sites is common in downtowns (e.g., upper floor office or residential above ground-floor retail) and may occur elsewhere in a community as the market accommodates and zoning allows.

Some uses are highly market-driven, with their timing and particular location dictated by the extent and pace of other types of development. This includes the typical pattern of retail uses locating near new residential “rooftops” and often at key roadway intersections. The location and extent of various forms of residential development can also be difficult to predict amid broader housing market cycles and regional needs, combined with developer areas of expertise and interest in bringing single-family or multi-family products to market.

### Future Land Use Map versus Zoning Map

| Aspect | Future Land Use Map | Zoning Map |
|---|---|---|
| PURPOSE | ▪ Outlook for future use of land and character of particular areas of the community.<br>▪ Macro level, showing generalized development patterns. | ▪ Basis for applying different land use regulations and development standards in different areas of the community (“zones”).<br>▪ Micro level, with an area- and site-specific focus. |
| USE | ▪ Guidance for City’s zoning map and related decisions (zone change requests, variance applications, etc.)<br>▪ Baseline for monitoring consistency of actions and decisions with the Comprehensive Plan. | ▪ Regulating development as it is proposed, or as sites are positioned for the future with appropriate zoning (by the property owner or the City). |
| INPUTS AND CONSIDERATIONS | ▪ Existing land use in the city.<br>▪ The locational aspects of community planning priorities involving housing, economic development, infrastructure, parks and recreation, public facilities, etc. | ▪ Comprehensive Plan and future land use map for general guidance.<br>▪ Zoning decisions that differ substantially from the general development pattern depicted on the future land use map will indicate the need for some map adjustments during the next plan update. |

## LAND USE PLANNING VERSUS ZONING

The side-by-side comparison on the previous page highlights the distinct purposes and uses of a future land use map relative to a zoning map. The City's development regulations are among the primary tools for implementing the Plan. The zoning and subdivision regulations, in particular, can play a significant role in establishing and protecting the physical character of the community. These regulations delineate land use districts and the uses permitted within them, together with standards for buildings and site improvements. As a result, the zoning and subdivision regulations largely direct development outcomes. Although the Plan and future land use map provide only general planning guidance, they become the basis for updates of the zoning and subdivision regulations and the Zoning Map.

## LAND USE PLANNING WITH CHARACTER

Map 1 shows areas within Littleton designated in 16 categories that address both use and character:

- Estate Residential
- Suburban Residential
- Suburban Residential Attached
- Suburban Residential Multi-Family
- Auto-Oriented Residential
- Auto-Oriented Residential Attached
- Auto-Oriented Residential Multi-Family
- Residential Mix
- Mixed Character Core Neighborhood
- Suburban Commercial
- Suburban Business Park
- Auto-Oriented Commercial
- Corridor Mixed Use
- Urban Downtown Transition
- Urban Downtown Mixed Use
- Urban Downtown Main Street

## COMMUNITY CHARACTER PRIMER

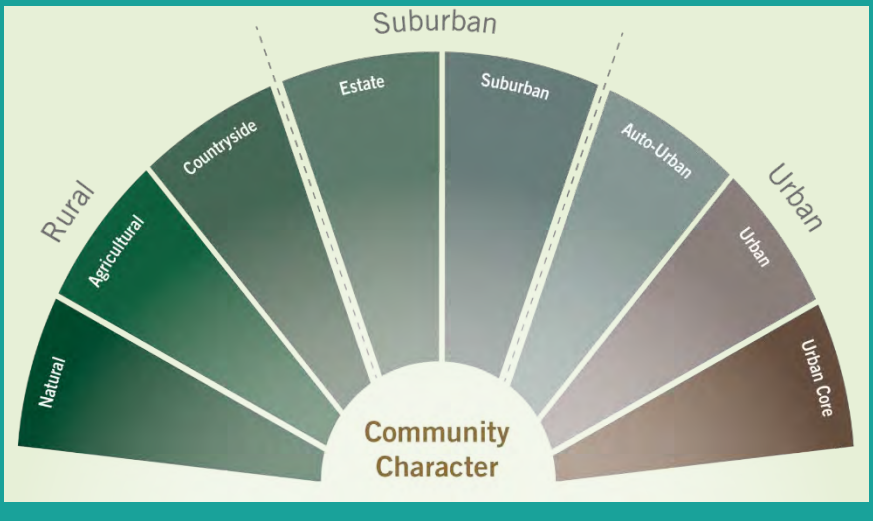
The **community character** approach to evaluating and planning for land use emphasizes the variation in physical conditions experienced along a spectrum from natural and rural landscapes at the edges of a community to its most urbanized environments. Looking beyond land use alone, a character-based approach focuses on development intensity, which encompasses:

- The density and layout of residential development;
- The scale and form of non-residential development; and
- The building and pavement coverage relative to the extent of open space and natural vegetation or landscaping.

How the automobile is accommodated is a key factor in distinguishing character types including how public streets are designed, how parking is provided, and how buildings and paved areas are arranged on sites. Among the three major character classes:

- **Rural** character areas have wide open spaces where structures and paved surfaces occupy only a minimal portion of the landscape.
- **Suburban** character areas have noticeably less intensive use of land, with open and green spaces balancing – or, in Estate areas, exceeding – the extent of land covered by structures and paved surfaces.
- **Urban** character areas exhibit the greatest pedestrian orientation, through a more compact scale and "architectural enclosure" of streets by buildings situated close to front property lines and sidewalks.

Within the Urban class, **Auto Urban** character areas are a particular planning challenge as they are designed mainly to accommodate automobile circulation and parking. Land cover by buildings and paved surfaces is similar to **Urban** areas, but without the walkability emphasis.

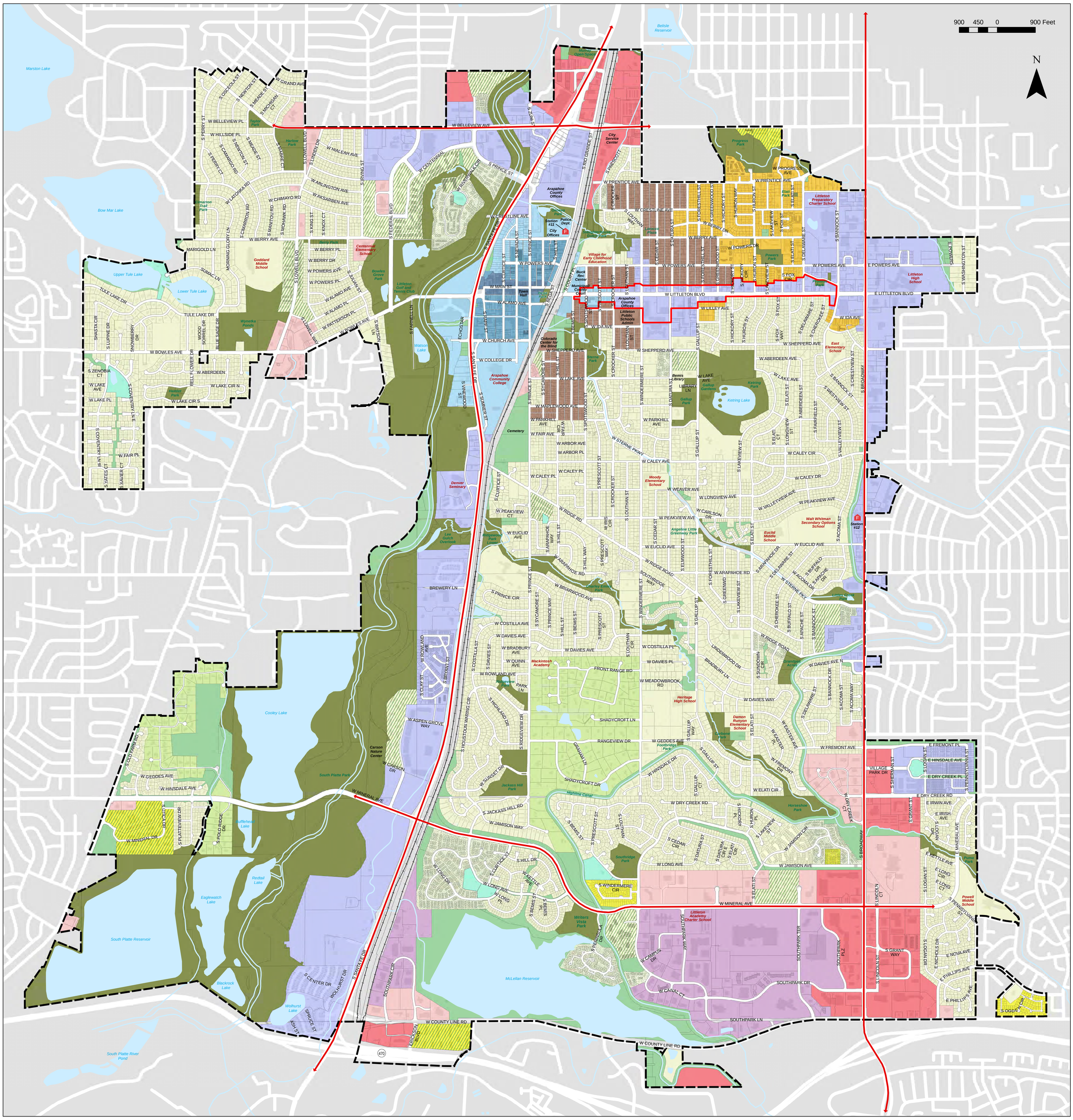


For context, the map also shows locations of preserved open space, public parkland, and private recreation sites (e.g., swimming pools, tennis courts, playgrounds, and other amenities maintained by homeowner associations). The Open Space category includes the community's lone cemetery, along Prince Street north of Ridge Road, which is another physical feature that distinguishes Littleton from other area cities – and the historic nature of which could qualify it for listing on the National Register of Historic Places.

The following descriptions indicate the anticipated principal uses in each category, plus the intended character of the areas in which the land uses occur, abut, or mix. Public and institutional uses commonly occur in all of these areas and should match the character. Specific standards for land development based on these designations are articulated through the City's implementing regulations (zoning and subdivision) as they currently exist and may be further amended over time based on this planning guidance.

# MAP 1: Future Land Use and Character in Littleton, CO

## (DRAFT October 2, 2019)



## Legend

### Future Land Use and Character

- Estate Residential
- Suburban Residential
- Suburban Residential Attached
- Suburban Residential Multi-Family
- Auto-Oriented Residential
- Auto-Oriented Residential Attached
- Auto-Oriented Residential Multi-Family
- Residential Mix
- *RENAMED* Mixed Character Core Neighborhood
- Suburban Commercial
- Suburban Business Park
- Auto-Oriented Commercial
- Corridor Mixed Use
- Urban Downtown Transition
- Urban Downtown Mixed Use
- *NEW* Urban Downtown Main Street
- Open Space
- Park
- Private Recreation
- *NEW* Special Corridor Planning Areas

- City Limits
- Parcel Boundary
- South Metro Fire Rescue Station

## ESTATE RESIDENTIAL

This designation is for areas that should have limited development activity other than large-lot residential. Such areas provide a transition between a city's rural fringe and more urbanized in-city development patterns and intensities. Lots in this category ideally should be one acre or larger, which provides substantial openness and separation between individual dwellings, and can incorporate agricultural uses.

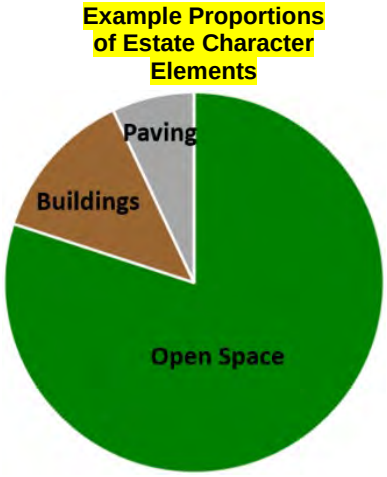
*Estate character area along and south of Rangeview Drive in south Littleton.*

Source: Google Earth (all aerial views in this section).

### Primary Land Use Types

- Detached residential dwellings.

### Characteristics




- Transition from the Rural portion of the character spectrum where the landscape is visually dominant over structures to Estate areas where most of the land surface is still in unbuilt open space (green on the accompanying pie chart) but with more land now occupied by buildings (brown) and paved surfaces (gray).
- In the Suburban range of the character spectrum but with larger lots (typically one acre or larger), especially where required by public health regulations to allow for both individual water wells and on-site septic systems on properties where centralized water and/or wastewater service may not be available or feasible.
- One-acre lots are usually adequate in wooded areas to achieve visual screening of homes from streets and adjacent dwellings. Three-to five-acre lots may be needed to achieve and maintain true Estate character in more open areas with less vegetation and/or topographic changes.

### Where on Map

- Estate Residential is shown in south Littleton near Heritage High School, and also near the western city limits in the vicinity of Mineral Avenue.

## SUBURBAN RESIDENTIAL

This designation is for residential areas where Suburban character is established and preserved by achieving a balance between buildings and other site improvements relative to the degree of open space maintained within the neighborhood. The openness may be found in relatively large yard areas on individual lots and between homes and/or in common green spaces or water features. This distinguishes Suburban character areas from more auto-oriented residential areas where site coverage in the form of dwellings, driveways and other paved surfaces predominates relative to undeveloped space.

*Suburban Residential character area around S. Coventry Lane in west Littleton.*

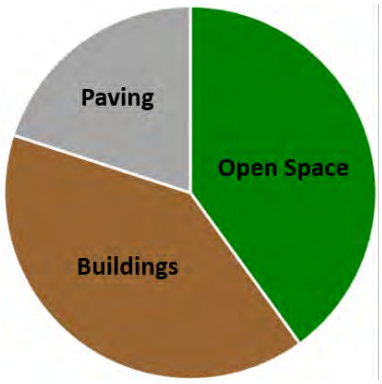
**Primary Land Use Types**

- Detached residential dwellings.
- Planned developments that may integrate other housing types (e.g., attached residential such as patio homes or townhomes), with increased open space to preserve an overall Suburban character.

**Characteristics**

- Less noticeable accommodation of the automobile compared to more intensive auto-oriented areas, especially where residential driveways are on the side of homes rather than occupying a portion of the front yard space and where garages are situated to the side or rear of the dwelling.
- A larger baseline minimum lot size in a Suburban Residential zoning district allows for deeper front yards and building setbacks and greater side separation between homes. Character-based zoning and development standards can also discourage overly standardized subdivision designs and promote conservation design by allowing for varied lot sizes and establishing a link between lot size and preserved open space. Then any lots smaller than the baseline require an even higher level of open space set-aside on the overall site. This approach enables some viable use of sites partially constrained by topography or other factors. It also provides flexibility for additional housing forms that blend with the area's Suburban Residential character through additional on-site open space and perimeter buffering where differing housing types and densities are adjacent.

**Example Proportions of Suburban Character Elements**



- Preservation of mature trees or other natural site features, along with generous landscaping, can offset auto-oriented design elements that detract from Suburban character.
- More opportunity for natural and/or swale drainage (and storm water retention/absorption) relative to concentrated storm water conveyance in Auto Urban character areas.

**Where on Map**

- Suburban Residential is shown in large swaths across the city, especially south of Littleton Boulevard to the Mineral Avenue vicinity, and west of Santa Fe Drive.

## SUBURBAN RESIDENTIAL ATTACHED

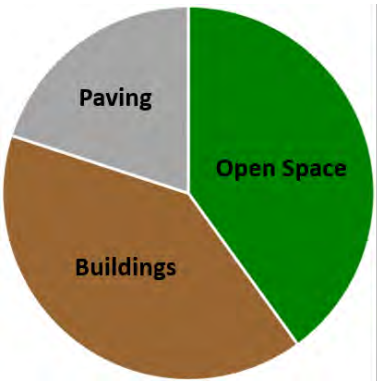
This designation is a subset of Suburban Residential above, for areas and properties that offer various forms of attached housing (e.g., duplexes, townhomes, attached patio homes, etc.). Through careful land planning, the additional residential density within such developments is offset by green and open areas that yield a Suburban character. This designation sometimes provides a transition between residential areas entirely comprised of single-family detached dwellings and properties with larger-scale multi-family residential development. As needed, some of the planned open space and/or preserved vegetation should be along site boundaries to provide buffering between other character types or land use intensities.

*Suburban Residential character of attached housing along Ridge Road at Elati Street.*

**Primary Land Use Types**

- Duplexes (two-family dwellings).
- Townhomes.
- Patio homes or other small-lot housing types with common walls.
- Detached residential dwellings.
- Planned developments that may integrate a mix of detached and attached housing types, with sufficient open space to preserve an overall Suburban character.

**Example Proportions of Suburban Character Elements**




**Characteristics**

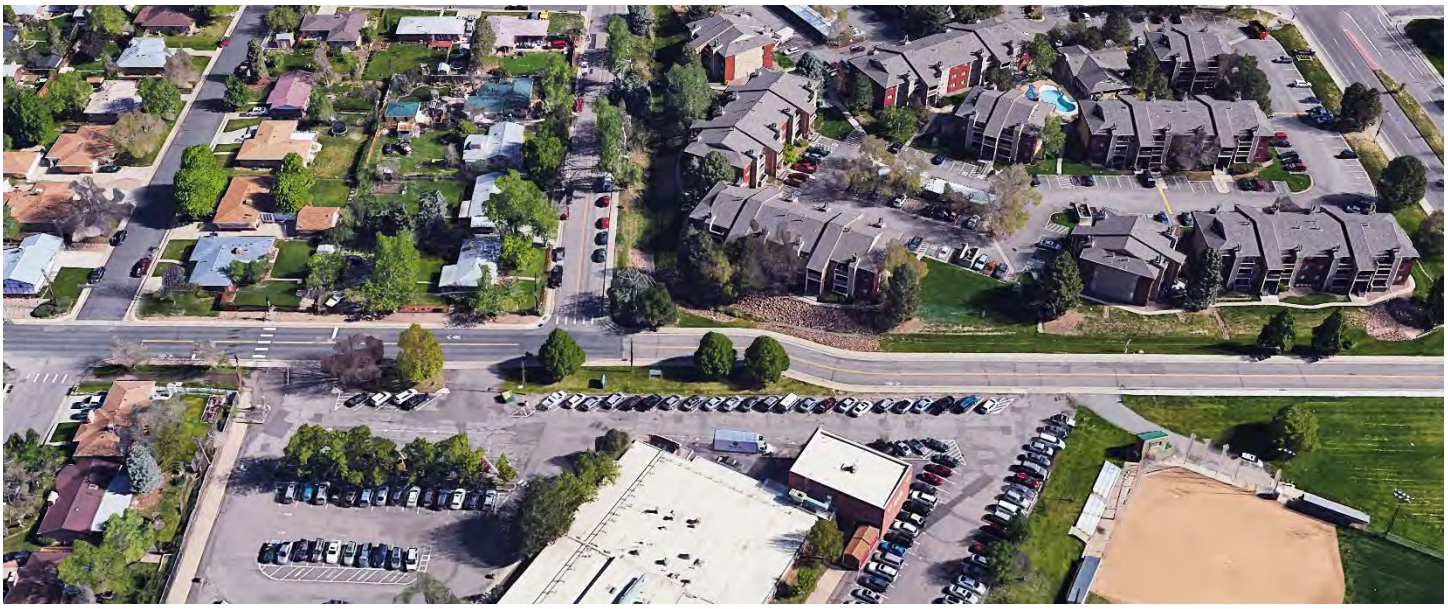
As a subset of the Suburban Residential category, Suburban Residential Attached has the same characteristics.

**Where on Map**

- Suburban Residential Attached is shown in multiple locations, most prominently in the Riverwalk area northwest of Downtown and in the SouthPark and Peninsula areas in south Littleton (plus the unique Highline Crossing cohousing community), along with several small areas north and south of Littleton Boulevard and an area of attached housing within Trailmark.

## SUBURBAN RESIDENTIAL MULTI-FAMILY

This designation is also a subset of Suburban Residential above, for areas and properties where multi-family residential development achieves – and blends in with – a Suburban character. Some such developments may strive for this character outcome on their own or due to the terrain and pre-existing vegetation in the vicinity and on-site. To ensure this outcome for multi-family residential uses, development standards and associated buffering requirements should be set appropriately within the context of nearby residential and/or nonresidential uses that also reflect Suburban character.

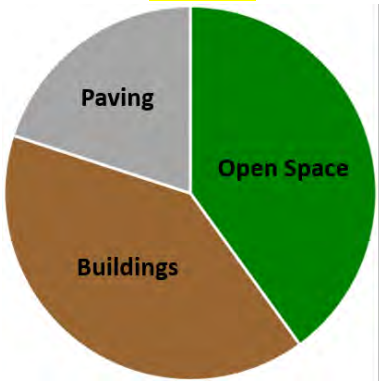


*Suburban Residential character of multi-family housing on north side of Berry Avenue (west of Federal Boulevard). The development's relatively deep setbacks and extent of trees and landscaping along Irving Street boosts its compatibility with the Suburban Residential single-family homes across Irving Street. The internalized parking areas on the multi-family site also contrasts with the Auto Urban character of the school property across Berry Street from the single-family homes.*

**Primary Land Use Types**

- Multi-unit residential buildings in concentrated development, whether for rent (apartments) or ownership (condominiums).
- Other attached residential forms (e.g., duplexes, townhomes, patio homes, etc.) as permitted in zoning districts intended primarily for multi-family residential uses.
- Planned developments that may integrate a mix of detached, attached and multi-family housing types, with sufficient open space to preserve an overall Suburban character.

**Example Proportions of Suburban Character Elements**




**Characteristics**

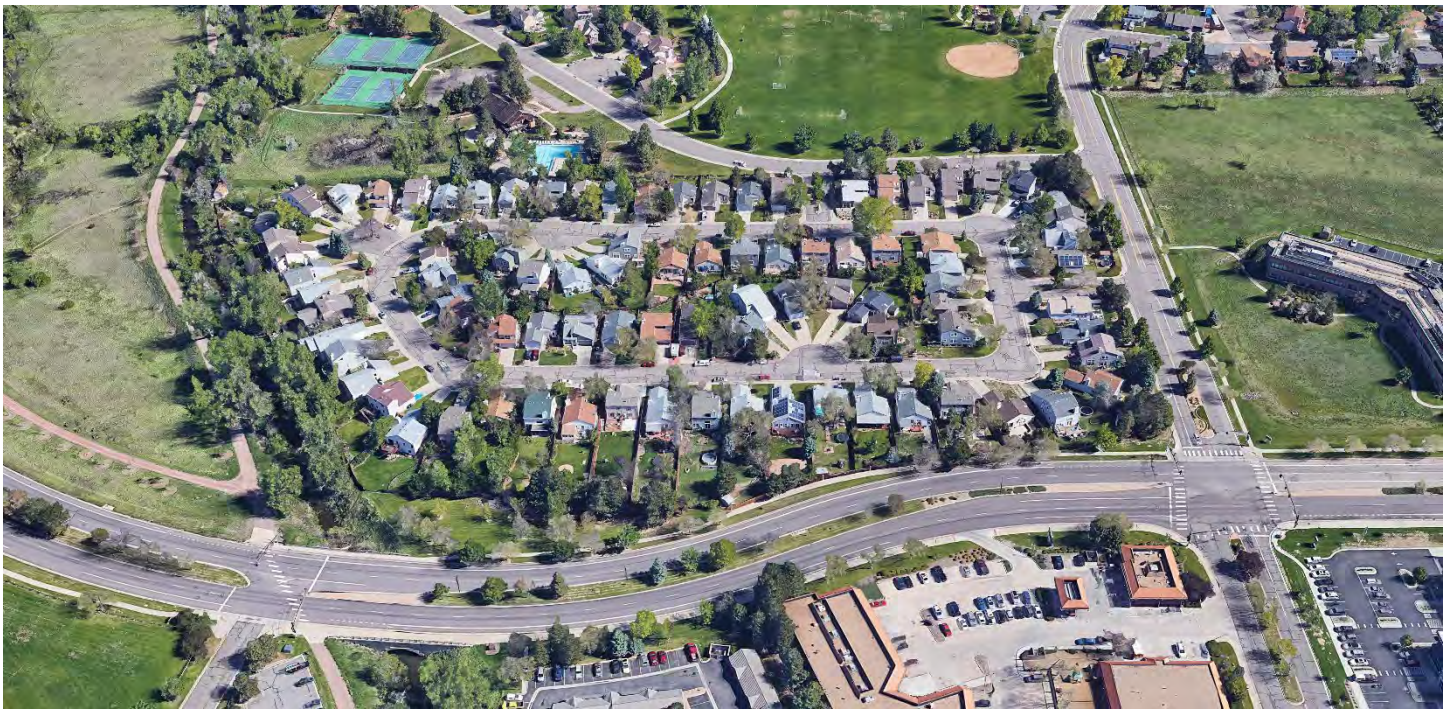
As a subset of the Suburban Residential category, Suburban Residential Multi-Family has the same characteristics.

**Where on Map**

- Suburban Residential Multi-Family is shown in multiple locations including scattered within the widespread Suburban Residential areas south of Littleton Boulevard to Mineral, in the vicinities of Federal and Lowell boulevards west of Downtown, at the north end of the city adjacent to the South Platte River, and adjacent to Aspen Grove.

## AUTO-ORIENTED RESIDENTIAL

This designation covers areas of single-family detached residential use where accommodation of the automobile is more visually dominant relative to more prominent green space in Suburban Residential character areas, typically due to relatively smaller and narrower lots, and often with limited open space set-asides or amenities for residents.



*Auto-Oriented Residential character area north of Mineral Avenue.*

**Primary Land Use Types**

- Detached residential dwellings.

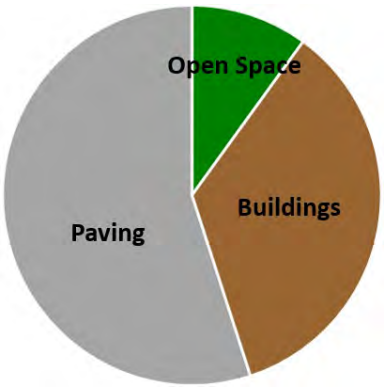
**Characteristics**

- Residential neighborhoods with less openness and separation between dwellings compared to Suburban Residential areas.
- Auto Urban character, especially where driveways and front-loading garages dominate the front yards and front facades of homes. This can be offset by landscaping, “anti-monotony” architectural standards, and limitations on “cookie cutter” subdivision layouts characterized by straight streets and uniform lot sizes and arrangement.

**Where on Map**

- Auto-Oriented Residential is shown in two locations, the neighborhood around Windermere Circle in south Littleton, and the Kensington Ridge neighborhood at the southeast corner of the city.

**Example Proportions of Auto Urban Character Elements**



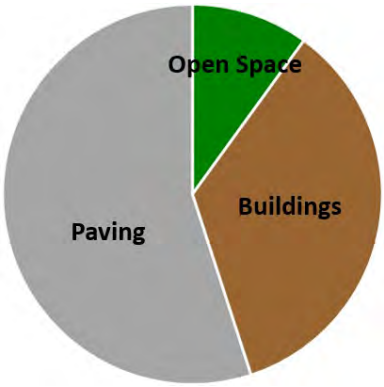
## AUTO-ORIENTED RESIDENTIAL ATTACHED

This designation is a subset of Auto-Oriented Residential above, for areas and properties with this character that offer various forms of attached housing (e.g., duplexes, townhomes, attached patio homes, etc.). This designation sometimes provides a transition between residential areas entirely comprised of single-family detached dwellings and properties with larger-scale multi-family residential development.

**Primary Land Use Types**

- Duplexes (two-family dwellings).
- Townhomes.
- Patio homes or other small-lot housing types with common walls.
- Detached residential dwellings.
- Planned developments that may integrate a mix of detached and attached housing types, but with insufficient green and open space to achieve an overall Suburban character.

**Example Proportions of Auto Urban Character Elements**




**Characteristics**

As a subset of the Auto-Oriented Residential category, Auto-Oriented Residential Attached has the same characteristics.

**Where on Map**

- Auto-Oriented Residential Attached is shown in just one location, the Jamison Villas development just west of Broadway on Jamison Avenue.

[*No aerial image available as the only example in Littleton, along Jamison Avenue just west of Broadway, was under construction at the time of this Plan.*]

## AUTO-ORIENTED RESIDENTIAL MULTI-FAMILY

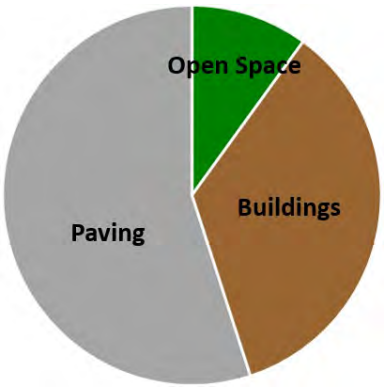
This designation is also a subset of Auto-Oriented Residential. Areas and properties with this character are devoted primarily to structures with multiple residential units, at a greater intensity (i.e., units per building or acre) than typically found in developments with other attached residential housing types. The auto-oriented character is usually due to the extent of off-street parking needed. The auto-oriented appearance can be softened by perimeter and on-site landscaping, minimum spacing between buildings, site coverage limits, and on-site recreation or open space criteria. This designation can also provide a transition from primarily residential to mainly nonresidential areas. Multi-family uses designed primarily for senior and disabled residents are especially appropriate near medical facilities, parks, public services, shopping, and transit stops, and all demographics benefit when apartments are near such amenities.

*Auto-Oriented Residential character of multi-family housing along Belleview Avenue.*

**Primary Land Use Types**

- Multi-unit residential buildings in concentrated development, whether for rent (apartments) or ownership (condominiums).
- Other attached residential forms (e.g., duplexes, townhomes, patio homes, etc.) as permitted in zoning districts intended primarily for multi-family residential uses.
- Planned developments that may integrate a mix of detached, attached and multi-family housing types, but with insufficient green and open space to achieve an overall Suburban character.

**Example Proportions of Auto Urban Character Elements**




**Characteristics**

As a subset of the Auto-Oriented Residential category, Auto-Oriented Residential Multi-Family has the same characteristics.

**Where on Map**

- Auto-Oriented Residential Multi-Family is shown in multiple locations including along County Line Road just east of Santa Fe Drive, at the west end of the city near Mineral Avenue, and at the north end along Belleview Avenue near Progress Park.

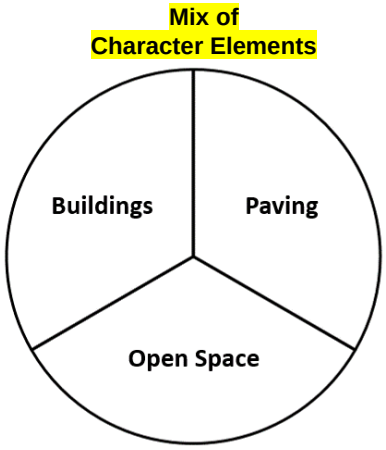
## RESIDENTIAL MIX

This designation encompasses areas of north Littleton near Littleton Boulevard and Broadway. Northeast Littleton has long had a mix of housing types in close proximity, from single-family detached to duplexes, other attached housing types, and multi-family apartment buildings. To live up to its core value of remaining an inclusive community, Littleton needs more areas with varied attainable housing for people at or below the median income range. Maintaining this area with residential variety meshes well with a revitalized and more walkable Littleton Boulevard corridor, and with the potential for future mixed-use redevelopment and Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) service on the Broadway corridor.

*Residential Mix area of varied housing types and character in northeast Littleton, in the vicinity of Berry Avenue.*

**Primary Land Use Types**

- Detached residential dwellings.
- Duplexes (two-family dwellings).
- Townhomes.
- Patio homes or other small-lot housing types with common walls.
- Multi-unit residential buildings in concentrated development, whether for rent (apartments) or ownership (condominiums).
- Planned developments that may integrate a mix of detached, attached and multi-family housing types.




**Characteristics**

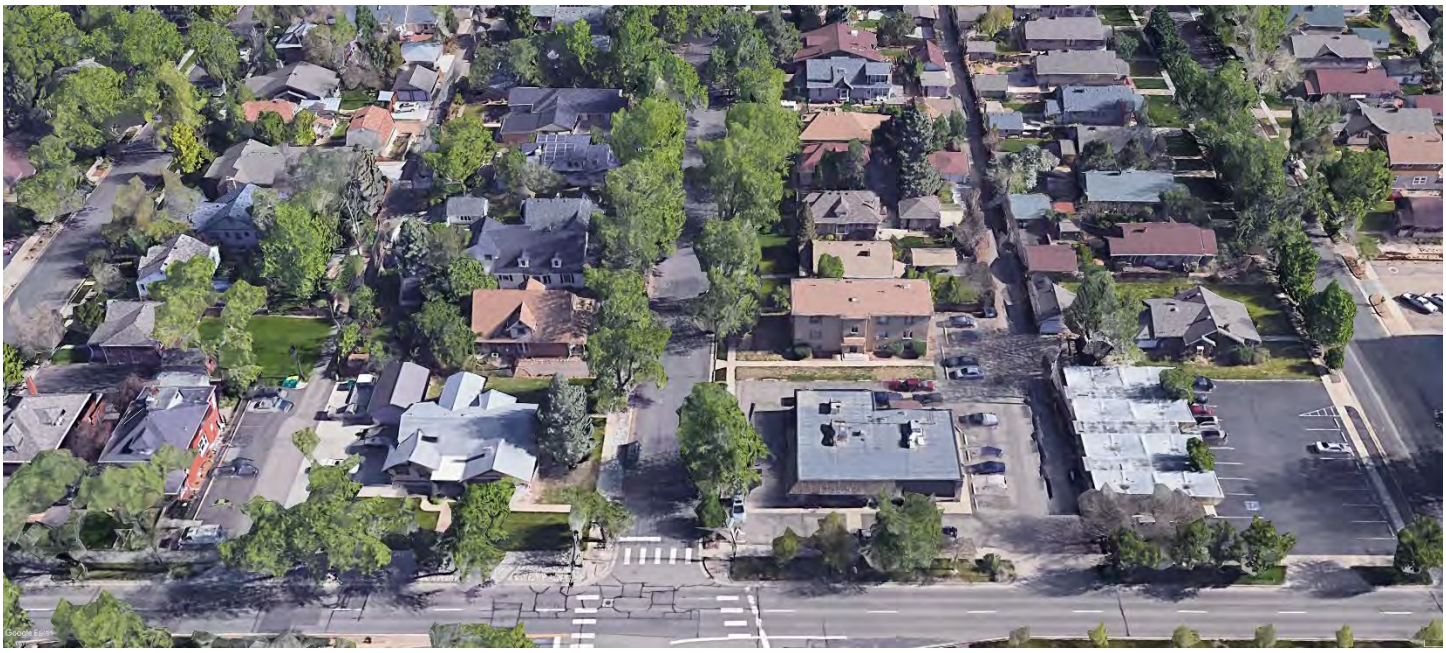
- As with the diversity of housing types, character also varies across the area and may tend toward Auto Urban character where surface parking is especially needed (i.e., multi-family housing).

**Where on Map**

- Residential Mix is shown primarily north of Littleton Boulevard, plus a few pockets to the south.

## MIXED CHARACTER CORE NEIGHBORHOOD

This designation is for residential areas relatively close to Downtown and Littleton Boulevard. Of all areas in Littleton, these neighborhoods – with sidewalk and bike lane improvements in some areas – could be the most conducive for pedestrian, bicycle, and wheelchair circulation within the neighborhood and to nearby shopping, parks, schools, and other destinations. Most of these blocks also have rear alley access to properties, at least decreasing the possibility of an Auto Urban street scene where rear garages or parking are still widely used versus front driveways. These are also some of Littleton's oldest neighborhoods, including the locally designated Louthan Heights Historic District.

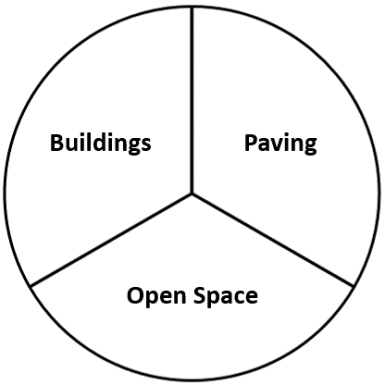


*Mixed Character Core Neighborhood area just north of Littleton Boulevard, east of Downtown.*

**Primary Land Use Types**

- Detached residential dwellings.
- Other attached residential forms as permitted by zoning.

**Mix of Character Elements**




**Characteristics**

- A more Urban residential character prevails where lots with relatively shallow front yards bring single-family detached homes closer to the street, and especially where no front driveways or garages are visible due to property access from rear alleys. However, a transition toward Auto Urban character can occur on blocks where front driveways are introduced over time, especially on lots where new homes are built after removal of older dwellings.

**Where on Map**

- Mixed Character Core Neighborhood is shown for various residential areas north and south of Littleton Boulevard, to the east of Downtown and the railroad corridor.

## SUBURBAN COMMERCIAL

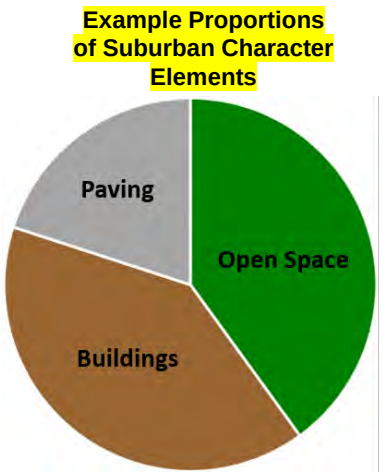
This designation involves commercial developments, whether at a neighborhood-focused or larger scale, that stand apart from most auto-oriented contemporary development. The Suburban character is achieved through lesser coverage of the site with buildings and especially paved areas. Preservation of trees or other natural site features, along with generous landscaping, can also move a site into the Suburban range of the community character spectrum relative to sites where “gray” spaces predominate over “green” and open spaces.

*Nursery business use with Suburban Commercial character adjacent to a Suburban Residential area along East County Line Road in south Littleton.*

### Primary Land Use Types

- Commercial retail and service uses, at varying scales and development intensities depending on the site.
- Office (involving large and/or multi-story buildings or small-scale office uses depending on the site), which may involve a medical or technology/research focus.
- Planned development to accommodate custom site designs or mixing of uses in a Suburban character setting.

### Characteristics




- Suburban character primarily from reduced site coverage relative to most auto-oriented commercial development.
- Encouraged at key community entries and along high-profile roadway corridors, may also involve other criteria to yield less intensive and more attractive development outcomes relative to auto-oriented areas, including higher standards for landscaping (along street frontages and within parking areas), signs, and building design.
- May exclude some auto-oriented uses that cannot achieve a Suburban character (e.g., car washes).
- Near residential properties and areas, the permitted scale and intensity of nonresidential uses should be limited to ensure compatibility (including adequate buffering/screening, criteria for placement and orientation of buildings and parking areas, height limits, and residential-in-appearance architectural standards).
- More opportunity for natural and/or swale drainage (and storm water retention/absorption) versus concentrated storm water conveyance in auto-oriented areas.

**Where on Map**

- Suburban Commercial is shown in multiple areas, most prominently near Lowell and Federal boulevards in northwest Littleton, a few western locations along South Platte Canyon Road, along Mineral Avenue and Broadway in southeast Littleton, in the hotel and commercial area along County Line Road near Santa Fe Drive, and several properties in Trailmark along or near Wadsworth Boulevard.

## SUBURBAN BUSINESS PARK

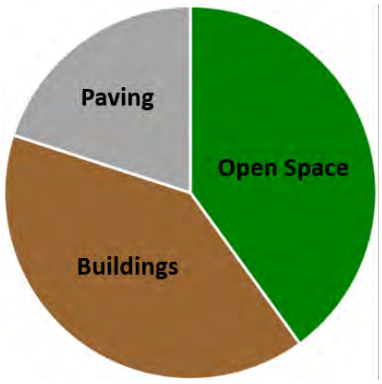
This designation is often a subset of Suburban Commercial in communities that aim to promote high-quality office development as an economic development magnet or as part of overall efforts to set a high bar for nonresidential development. Some cities also aim for master-planned, campus-style office developments through a Business Park zoning district.

*Section of SouthPark business park in south Littleton, with office uses and parking areas nestled amid generous landscaping and buffers, and with the High Line Canal Trail adding to the Suburban character.*

### Primary Land Use Types

- Primarily office uses.
- Light industrial uses (including warehousing/distribution), well screened and in buildings with enhanced architectural design.
- Research and technology.
- Commercial retail and service uses secondary to the primary office focus, to serve local workers and visitors.

**Example Proportions of Suburban Character Elements**




### Characteristics

- Suburban character, typically in a campus-style setting featuring reduced site coverage and increased open space, together with enhanced building design.
- Typically a minimum open space ratio of 30 percent, which allows for a sizable cumulative building footprint since most such developments involve large sites.
- Extensive landscaping of the business park perimeter, and special streetscaping and design treatments at entries, key intersections, and internal focal points.
- Development outcomes often controlled by private covenants and restrictions that exceed City ordinances and development standards.
- Intended to create a highly attractive business investment environment.

**Where on Map**

- Suburban Business Park is shown for the extensive SouthPark business park area in south Littleton, along with the Southpark Circle area just east of Santa Fe Drive.

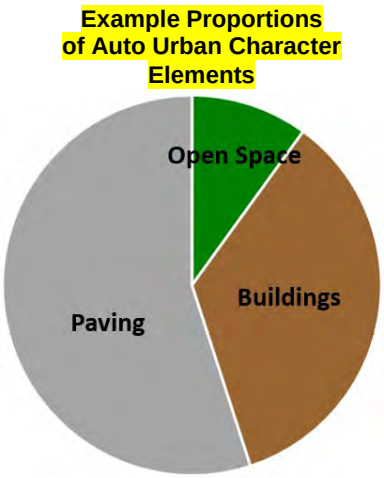
## AUTO-ORIENTED COMMERCIAL

This designation is for properties in commercial retail, office and service uses, primarily along portions of major roadway corridors within the community for high visibility and accessibility, but also in other locations to accommodate smaller-scale and neighborhood-focused businesses.

*Auto-Oriented Commercial character area along Broadway near Mineral Drive (looking west) in southeast Littleton.*

**Primary Land Use Types**

- "Strip" commercial centers along major roadways, with a range of uses including those on high-profile "pad" sites along the roadway frontage.
- "Big-box" commercial stores (e.g., grocery, appliances, clothing, etc.).
- Restaurant chains including various "fast food" and casual dining establishments.
- Automobile service related enterprises (e.g., gas stations, automobile service/repair, car washes).
- Offices.
- Hotels and motels.
- Mixed-use developments.




**Characteristics**

- Commercial areas with significant portions of development sites devoted to vehicular access drives, circulation routes, surface parking, and loading/delivery areas, making pavement the most prominent visual feature. This can be offset by reduced site coverage and enhanced landscaping, building design, and well-designed signage.
- Buildings typically set back toward rear of site to accommodate expansive parking areas in front, closest to passing traffic, resulting in less emphasis on architectural design in many cases.
- Development desire to maximize signage (number, size) to capitalize on site visibility to passing traffic.
- Often not conducive for access or on-site circulation by pedestrians or cyclists.

**Where on Map**

- Auto-Oriented Commercial is shown primarily at the north end of the city centered around Belleview Avenue and the railroad corridor, also along Broadway in southeast Littleton, plus several auto dealership properties near County Line Road.

## CORRIDOR MIXED USE

This designation is for properties in commercial retail, office, and service uses along and near a high-profile roadway corridor where mixed-use development outcomes are desired and encouraged. The mix of uses includes residential, especially to provide additional housing options and price points within the community. Major public and/or institutional facilities may also serve as development anchors within the area.

Not all properties within this designation will be viable for or result in mixed-use outcomes given their size, location, and/or market position. Therefore, a range of typical stand-alone uses is anticipated as in the Suburban Commercial and Auto-Oriented Commercial designations that are also shown along portions of Littleton's major roadway network. Relative to these other designations, however, Corridor Mixed Use is particularly intended to recognize fundamental paradigm shifts occurring in the development models for residential, retail, office, and hospitality uses, leading to even greater focus on "destination" developments that creatively mix uses, integrate amenities, and emphasize quality design. Whatever the approach for a particular property in Corridor Mixed Use, the design of the site and its use(s) should be compatible with the Suburban or Urban mixed-use character established or emerging in its vicinity, avoid proliferating Auto Urban character in areas intended to transition toward other character types, and provide adequate protections and buffering at points of transition between differing character types.

*Segment of Littleton Boulevard, east of Windemere Street, with existing use variety and the potential for better integrated, more pedestrian- and bike-oriented mixed-use outcomes through redevelopment.*

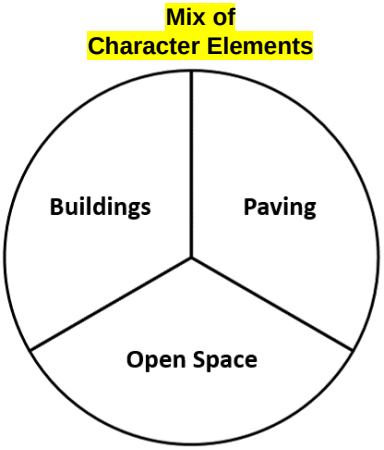
### Primary Land Use Types

- Commercial retail and service uses, at varying scales and development intensities depending on the physical characteristics of the particular corridor, and of a specific site and its adjacent uses.
- Offices (involving large and/or multi-story buildings or small-scale office uses depending on the physical characteristics of the particular corridor, and of a specific site and its adjacent uses).
- Live/work units.
- Multi-unit attached residential, whether for rent (apartments) or ownership (condominiums, townhomes, row houses, etc.), and whether permitted by zoning as a stand-alone use or only as a component of mixed-use development.
- Pre-existing areas of single-family detached homes and manufactured home developments.
- Planned development to accommodate custom site designs and/or mixing of uses.

### Characteristics

As elaborated on further in the Special Areas and Design section (where the Special Corridor Planning Areas on the map are also discussed), the nature of Corridor Mixed Use will vary across the different roadway environments where it appears on the Future Land Use and Character Map (Map 1). Along Littleton Boulevard, an atmosphere more amenable

to walking and biking may emerge through ongoing redevelopment and transition in uses, placing the corridor in a character range from Auto-Oriented (its existing status along most blocks) to Urban in some segments. However, the potential scale of new or reconfigured uses would be tempered by the relatively smaller, shallower properties along this corridor. Additionally, Littleton Boulevard is framed by residential neighborhoods and also requires sensitivity to its unique collection of post-World War II buildings designed in a Mid Century Commercial Modernism style. Along Santa Fe Drive, Broadway and Belleview Avenue, various sites are of adequate size to be conducive for master-planned, mixed-use development that also strives for a relatively Urban character by de-emphasizing large-scale surface parking and designing more for walkability. The core area of Littleton Village is a contemporary example of this approach.




However, in any of these corridor settings where most business patrons, employees, and visitors will still reach their destinations by private vehicle, it will be difficult to avoid an Auto Urban character outcome where significant surface parking must be provided. The potential for future Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) service on Broadway, linking south into Highlands Ranch and north into Denver, could change the equation and lead to less auto-oriented development at least in some locations along and near this corridor. Yet some stretches of Broadway today have existing low-intensity commercial activity fronting on this busy roadway. These small and shallow properties will continue to be a challenge to redevelopment and may result in the current uses continuing indefinitely.

Where a site's immediate vicinity has a greener Suburban character – for example, near Suburban Residential neighborhoods or abutting Mary Carter Greenway and the river corridor – site design and development criteria can minimize auto-oriented development outcomes (e.g., site coverage limits, more intensive landscaping and buffering, etc.). Littleton especially has opportunities for more river- and trail-oriented development, where new or redeveloped sites are carefully designed to embrace rather than turn their back on the South Platte and greenway corridors, particularly if the future of Santa Fe Drive is even greater restriction of direct vehicular access to properties from that busy roadway.

The zoning parameters set for each distinct area in the Corridor Mixed Use designation can address differing character, use, and design considerations. With regard to uses, this may include giving greater preference to residential in certain areas while locations considered best suited for revenue-generating nonresidential uses may have limits on the amount of stand-alone residential use.

Finally, consensus on potential land uses and intensities in the vicinity of the Santa Fe/Mineral Avenue intersection has been so elusive precisely because so many character considerations come into play at this premier location. Extensive undeveloped land and surface parking near a busy light rail station offers obvious opportunity for transit-oriented development with a more Urban character. Yet proximity to the river/greenway corridor typically points to site designs with Suburban character in mind. At the same time, Santa Fe's vehicular volumes and the high-profile nature of this busiest of Littleton intersections introduces auto-oriented development pressures. The Corridor Mixed Use designation provides the flexibility to weigh all of these character factors when designing and vetting specific development concepts in such a unique location.

**Where on Map**

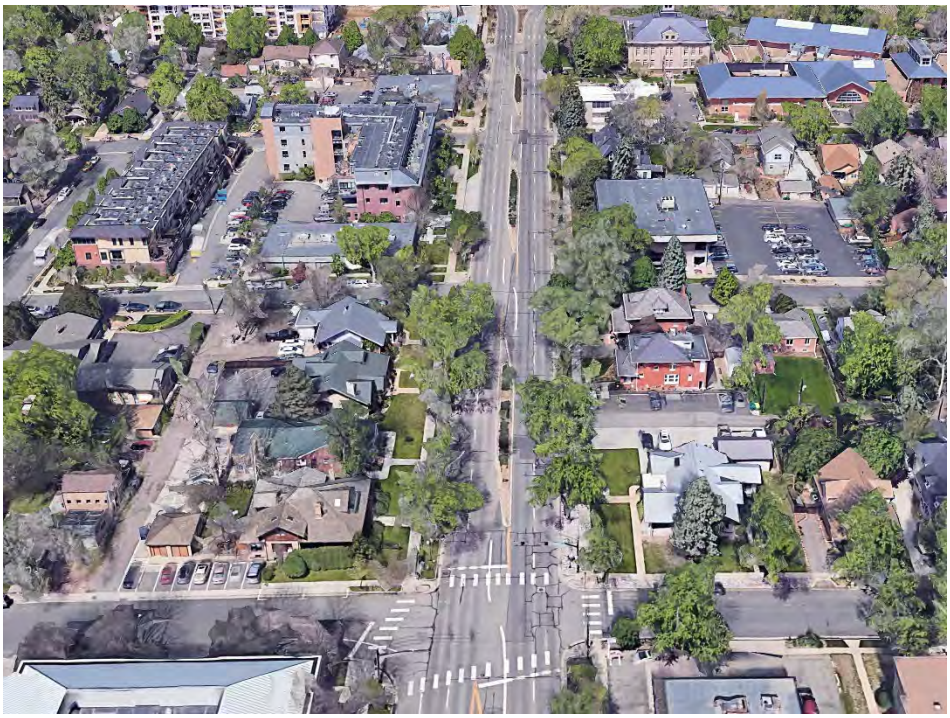
- Corridor Mixed Use is shown along portions of multiple key roadway corridors in Littleton including along Belleview Avenue west of the railroad, along Littleton Boulevard, along Broadway as far south as Littleton Village, and along Santa Fe Drive from Hudson Gardens south, and an area between Santa Fe and the railroad north of Downtown.

## URBAN DOWNTOWN TRANSITION

This designation is for areas near an Urban downtown core that still accommodate a mix of uses but at a lesser intensity than in the core area. The mixed-use area typically provides a transition from the downtown core to other nearby neighborhoods and roadway corridors that are more uniform as areas primarily for single-family detached residential uses and commercial uses, respectively. The transition area is often supportive of the downtown core by accommodating complementary uses (e.g., professional offices, restaurants, art galleries and other cultural venues, varied residential options, etc.) and by retaining a walkability exemplified in Urban character areas more often than auto-oriented areas. The vicinity around a core downtown usually also contains some of the community's most historic sites and districts, with historic homes still in residential use and others converted to shops, cafes, offices, and other uses.

**Primary Land Use Types**

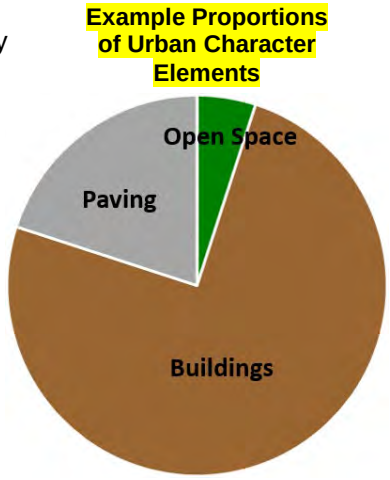
- Mixed uses, on single sites and within individual structures.
- Commercial retail and services.
- Offices.
- Live/work units.
- Attached residential types (e.g., townhomes, brownstones).
- Detached residential, often on relatively small and/or narrow lots in older neighborhood settings.



*Urban Downtown Transition area encompassing several blocks along Littleton Boulevard (looking west toward Downtown from Crocker Street).*

**Characteristics**

- Where a more Urban and walkable character is desired, may require development and design standards to avoid encroachment of uses designed with an auto-oriented character more suited to other areas of the community. While relatively small areas of parking may be permitted in front and to the side of buildings, the intent is usually to limit any sizable surface parking areas along property frontages while also avoiding deep building setbacks.
- Often a focus area for infill and redevelopment activity within the community, which may require customized development and design standards to ensure compatibility with the established area character. This may include controlling the scale of development where larger sites have been created through assembly of smaller parcels.




**Where on Map**

- Urban Downtown Transition is shown in all directions around the fringes of Downtown including on the west side of Santa Fe Drive from Hudson Gardens north to Bowles Avenue, the neighborhood on the north side of Downtown (including Littleton Center), several blocks east of the railroad along Littleton Boulevard (including the historic Courthouse, Buck Recreation Center and Vita development), and the Arapahoe Community College campus south of downtown.

## URBAN DOWNTOWN MIXED USE

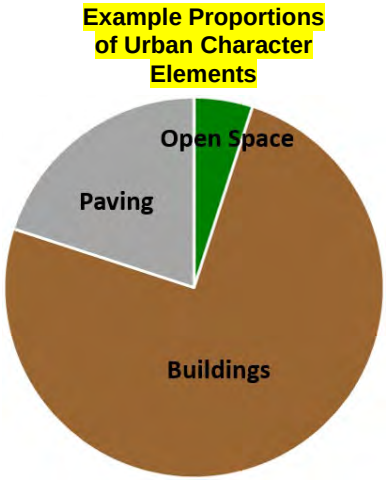
This designation involves the most intensively developed area of a community in terms of the greatest coverage of sites with building footprints and the least amount of private development area devoted to off-street surface parking and landscaped open space. Instead, most parking is accommodated on-street and/or within public parking areas or structures. This enables most streets and other public spaces to be framed by buildings with zero or minimal front setbacks, creating “architectural enclosure” versus the progressively more open feel in other character areas (Auto Urban, Suburban, etc.). These elements, along with a predominance of mixed uses, make the Urban downtown area the most conducive for pedestrian activity and interaction. Public plazas and pocket parks provide green space amid the Urban environment and a place to gather and host community events, along with periodic street closures. Adding to the appeal of Downtown Littleton are two historic district designations (national and local) and numerous designated sites, including Town Hall and the recently designated Post Office on the National Register of Historic Places. City-adopted design standards also influence development outcomes and building renovations in the area.

*Primarily Urban character in Downtown Littleton (looking southwest), along with pockets of surface parking.*

**Primary Land Use Types**

- Mixed uses, on single sites and within individual buildings.
- Residential space above commercial or office uses.
- Detached residential dwellings on relatively small lots.
- Attached residential types (e.g., townhomes, brownstones, apartments, condos, etc.).
- Live/work units.
- Commercial retail and services.
- Offices.
- Entertainment (e.g., restaurants, pubs, live music venues, theater, cinema, etc.).
- Parking structures and limited public or commercial surface parking areas.

**Characteristics**




- Multi-story structures encouraged (or required) to bolster Urban character, encourage vertical mixed use, promote retail viability, support transit ridership, etc.
- Mostly on-street parking and minimal off-street surface parking (until transition areas around the downtown core give way to auto-oriented site design).
- Streetscape enhancements in public ways given limited area for private on-site landscaping relative to other character areas.
- May exclude some auto-oriented uses that cannot achieve an Urban character (e.g., gas stations, auto repair, drive-in and drive-through uses, etc.).
- Public/institutional uses designed to match the Urban character.
- Alleys and rear-access garages can reinforce Urban character on blocks with attached or detached residential dwellings.
- Often the only place in a community where multi-level parking structures may make sense and be financially viable.

**Where on Map**

- Urban Downtown Mixed Use encompasses the main area of Downtown Littleton, between Santa Fe Drive and the railroad, and from Church Avenue on the south to the vicinities of Powers and Berry avenues on the north.

## URBAN DOWNTOWN MAIN STREET

This designation is a subset of Urban Downtown Mixed Use above, focused on the Main Street core area of Downtown. Nearly all buildings have zero front setbacks and abut the public sidewalk, and multi-story buildings frame the street on most blocks. The walkable street scene is "activated" by varied retail storefronts, restaurants and pubs, cultural venues (e.g., Town Hall Arts Center), historic architecture and properties, coffee and confections, open-air sidewalk seating areas for dining, and streetscape and design treatments in the public realm. City-adopted design standards also influence development outcomes and building renovations in the area.

### Primary Land Use Types

Same use range as Urban Downtown Mixed Use above, but with a principal commercial focus and residential uses more likely to occur on upper floors of mixed-used buildings rather than as stand-alone uses.

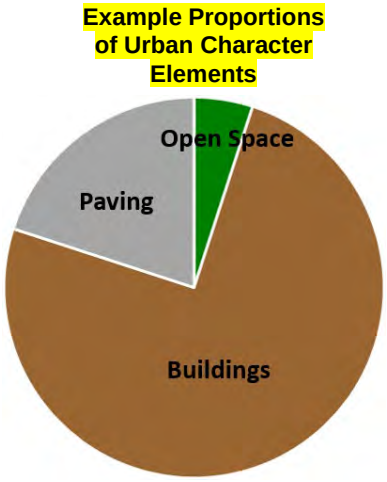
### Characteristics

As a subset of the Urban Downtown Mixed Use category, Urban Downtown Main Street has the same characteristics.

### Where on Map

- Urban Downtown Main Street is shown primarily for the frontage properties along Main Street, from Santa Fe Drive to the Sycamore Street and Bega Park vicinity.

*Urban Downtown Main Street area (looking west).*



# LAND USE QUANTITIES ON MAP

Tallied in **Table 2, *Future Land Use and Character Allocation***, are the estimated acres within each designation shown on the Future Land Use and Character Map (Map 1). In more general terms, the map reflects this approximate use split:

- Residential: 45.8%
- Commercial: 11.0%
- Mixed Use: 12.7%
- Park / Open Space / Private Recreation: 30.5%

Then, in terms of major character classes, the split is:

- Estate: 4.7%
- Suburban: 63.5%
- Auto Oriented: 9.3%
- Urban: 3.2%
- Mixed Character: 19.3%

**TABLE 2: Future Land Use and Character Allocation**

| CATEGORY | ACRES | SHARE OF TOTAL |
|---|---|---|
| ESTATE RESIDENTIAL | 247.0 | 3.4% |
| SUBURBAN RESIDENTIAL | 2,474.5 | 33.7% |
| SUBURBAN RESIDENTIAL ATTACHED | 158.7 | 2.2% |
| SUBURBAN RESIDENTIAL MULTI-FAMILY | 151.3 | 2.1% |
| AUTO-ORIENTED RESIDENTIAL | 22.2 | 0.3% |
| AUTO-ORIENTED RESIDENTIAL ATTACHED | 3.0 | 0.0% |
| AUTO-ORIENTED RESIDENTIAL MULTI-FAMILY | 61.0 | 0.8% |
| RESIDENTIAL MIX | 120.7 | 1.6% |
| MIXED CHARACTER CORE NEIGHBORHOOD | 121.1 | 1.6% |
| SUBURBAN COMMERCIAL | 232.9 | 3.2% |
| SUBURBAN BUSINESS PARK | 298.3 | 4.1% |
| AUTO-ORIENTED COMMERCIAL | 276.5 | 3.8% |
| CORRIDOR MIXED USE | 767.0 | 10.4% |
| URBAN DOWNTOWN TRANSITION | 110.9 | 1.5% |
| URBAN DOWNTOWN MIXED USE | 46.9 | 0.6% |
| URBAN DOWNTOWN MAIN STREET | 9.2 | 0.1% |
| PARK | 1,527.1 | 20.8% |
| OPEN SPACE | 684.1 | 9.3% |
| PRIVATE RECREATION | 28.0 | 0.4% |
| TOTAL | 7,340.4 | 100% |

# LEGACY OF PAST PLANNING

- Citywide Plan, 2014
- Three Mile Plan, 2015

# KEY ISSUES AND CONSIDERATIONS

- Housing needs (options, cost relative to buyer/renter financial capacity, at different life-cycle stages, age of housing stock, and needed upgrades).
- Ongoing parks/trails/open space stewardship.
- Land, water, and air quality implications of land use and development choices.
- Transportation network overloads from a largely vehicle-dependent land use pattern.
- Importance of a quality school system to Littleton's success as a community.
- Long-term fiscal outlook for Littleton City government and its link to land use.
- How ongoing change in Littleton may affect the character of neighborhoods, commercial areas, Downtown, high-profile corridors, and parks and open space areas, especially as it relates to a desire to maintain Littleton's "small town" feel.
- Prospects for Littleton's few remaining areas of undeveloped land, and areas prime for redevelopment.
- Littleton's image and beautification needs, and concern for loss of mountain views.
- Residents' interest in, and the need to promote, healthy lifestyles.
- Littleton's heritage focus and the need to protect historical and cultural assets.
- Opportunities to support arts and culture within Littleton as part of the private and public land use pattern and mix.

# FRAMEWORK FOR ACTION

## GOALS

**GOAL L&C 1:** A land use allocation and pattern that supports and promotes Littleton's pride in, and reputation for, quality neighborhoods and an abundance of parks and preserved open space.

**GOAL L&C 2:** A sustained focus on the long-term fiscal sustainability of Littleton City government while recognizing the direct connection to the community's land use mix, especially for sales tax revenue needs.

**GOAL L&C 3:** Ongoing and effective collaboration between land use and transportation planning to ensure compatibility among decisions and actions taken with respect to each.

**GOAL L&C 4:** A more attractive community, based on quality design and character of both private development and the public realm.

## POLICIES

In making decisions that involve public resource allocation, regulatory matters, and physical improvements, among others, Littleton will:

**Policy L&C 1:** Emphasize compatible intensities and character when evaluating applications involving more intensive and/or nonresidential development near homes and neighborhoods.

**Policy L&C 2:** Plan for and take actions to maintain the established character of its residential neighborhoods.

**Policy L&C 3:** Create a regulatory framework that encourages development of diverse and attainable housing options in Littleton in terms of type, size, and cost to buyers and renters.

**Policy L&C 4:** Create a regulatory framework that signals the City's interest in attracting target business sectors, needed and compatible revenue-generating uses, and lifestyle and leisure uses that support Littleton's livability and residents' quality of life.

**Policy L&C 5:** Manage land use patterns near Littleton's many parks, trails, greenways, and open spaces to: protect their ecological functions; prevent physical and other impactful encroachments; maintain public access; and preserve their overall quality and value – especially where public green spaces contribute to neighborhood character and enhance business park and other commercial settings.

**Policy L&C 6:** Recognize and promote land use and development decisions that further community objectives for reduced traffic congestion, more pedestrian- and cyclist-friendly design, and expanded and viable public transit options.

**Policy L&C 7:** Promote Littleton's aesthetic appeal through the quality expectations set within the City's Code for landscaping, signage, lighting, and similar design elements.

# ACTIONS

## Capital Investments

**Action L&C 1:** Add criteria to the City's capital improvements planning process to ensure that potential interaction between public investments and land use outcomes or evolution is considered when identifying and prioritizing candidate capital projects.

**Action L&C 2:** Explore opportunities to link the design and construction of specific capital projects to community beautification objectives.

## Programs and Initiatives

**Action L&C 3:** Maintain fiscal impact analysis tools, customized to Littleton, for evaluating the potential net benefits to City government of specific land use scenarios and as an essential input to related decision-making.

## Regulations and Standards

**Action L&C 4:** Complete an all-encompassing and thorough review and update of the City's zoning and related development regulations and standards, particularly to consider ways to address key issues and gaps illuminated by Plan discussions.

**Action L&C 5:** As part of the City's zoning and code update initiative:

- Add new or amend current provisions that are directly linked to actions in other plan sections related to housing attainability, neighborhood conservation, business retention and attraction, leisure and lifestyle related land uses, transit support, a more pedestrian- and cycling-friendly community, and park and open space protection – and consider incentive-based techniques for guiding development applicants toward desired outcomes.
- Pursue a character-based zoning approach, which factors into the stated purposes and design of zoning districts along with various specific regulating elements (e.g., residential densities and nonresidential intensities; minimum lot and site areas; building setback, placement and orientation on sites and associated front/side/rear yard depths; building heights, including in relation to adjacent buildings and uses; lot and site coverage by buildings and other physical improvements; off-street parking quantities, design and screening; etc.).
- Incorporate more effective provisions for buffering between differing character types and land use intensities, and integrate such provisions with overall landscaping, screening, and site and building design standards.
- Consider alternative methods and provisions for promoting and achieving creative land development and redevelopment approaches other than through the traditional "Planned Development" mechanism, which can be excessively time-consuming, costly and unpredictable for the City, development applicants, and neighbors and interested residents.
- Incorporate provisions to promote quality site and building design that enhances community aesthetics.

## Partnerships and Coordination

**Action L&C 6:** Elevate Littleton's leadership and active participation in regional growth and land use planning, through the Denver Regional Council of Governments (DRCOG) and other public/private forums, especially as it relates to the priorities and direction of this Plan and the Transportation Master Plan.

**Action L&C 7:** Continue close coordination with Littleton Public Schools as one of the City's essential partners for community building and maintaining school campuses as neighborhood anchors.

## More Targeted Planning / Study

**Action L&C 8:** Coordinate concurrent updates of the Comprehensive and Transportation Master plans to ensure ongoing integration of land use and transportation analysis and decision-making.

**Action L&C 9:** Continue to pursue special area and neighborhood planning within the framework of this Plan.

## POTENTIAL PARTNERS

Partners for implementation of plan priorities related to Land Use and Community Character include:

- Neighboring jurisdictions and Arapahoe, Douglas, and Jefferson Counties
- Area real estate and development community
- Denver Regional Council of Governments
- High Line Canal Conservancy
- Historic Littleton, Inc.
- Homeowner Associations
- Regional Transportation District
- South Metro Housing Options
- SouthPark Owners Association
- South Platte Working Group
- South Suburban Park and Recreation District
- Tri-County Health Department

# HOUSING AND NEIGHBORHOODS

# HOUSING AND NEIGHBORHOODS

Housing needs, gaps, and challenges in Littleton are central to this Plan. A key component of a city's livability is whether its residents can find suitable and economical housing options at all stages of life to remain in the community they love. Littleton also must offer quality and sustainable neighborhoods, the elements of which – safe streets, great schools, nearby shopping, and parks and trails, among others – cut across all parts of this Plan.

While the development of new residences and the rehabilitation of older housing occurs primarily through the private sector, municipal government and other public and non-profit partners have essential roles to play. The City and other partners protect residential investments over time, and strong neighborhoods support the local economy and tax base. Having a diverse stock of housing – new and old, big and small, ownership and rental – is crucial for offering choice and providing for the individual needs of all households, regardless of economic conditions.

## LEGACY OF PAST PLANNING

- City of Littleton Neighborhood and Corridor Plans, 2016
- Downtown Neighborhood Plan, 2011
- Littleton Housing Overview, 2013
- City of Littleton Housing Study, 2017
- South Metro Housing Options (SMHO) Annual Public Housing Agency (PHA) Plan, 2017

## KEY ISSUES AND CONSIDERATIONS

- Affordability challenges for existing and potential new residents with rising home values and rents relative to income within Littleton and across the Denver region.
- Difficulty of aging in place due to the cost of staying in an existing residence, dispersed support systems, or inability to find other available, viable housing options to transition into within Littleton, especially for those with assisted living or special care needs.
- Age of housing stock and opportunities for its revitalization, but also challenges for those who cannot afford to maintain or upgrade their homes.
- Concerns over residential density and effects on area character as neighborhoods evolve with new or more intensive housing forms.
- Concern for a potential loss of demographic diversity (by age, race/ethnicity, income level, etc.) driven by unattainable housing choices and/or neighborhood gentrification in Littleton.
- Needed strategies and partnering approaches to prevent and reduce homelessness in Littleton and surrounding communities, recognizing its complex nature as more than just a housing issue.
- Need for ongoing code compliance in older areas of Littleton.

## FRAMEWORK FOR ACTION

## GOALS

**GOAL H&N 1:** A quantity and diversity of housing options that makes living in Littleton attainable for a wide range of age groups and income levels.

**GOAL H&N 2:** Appealing housing choices for families drawn by Littleton's educational, recreational, and other amenities.

**GOAL H&N 3:** Neighborhoods that are safe and comfortable for all residents.

**GOAL H&N 4:** Neighborhoods that maintain their character or are carefully managed when headed toward transition.

**GOAL H&N 5:** Housing that supports choice in mobility and investments in transportation infrastructure.

# POLICIES

In making decisions that involve public resource allocation, regulatory matters, and physical improvements, among others, Littleton will:

**Policy H&N 1:** Encourage an array of residential options within the city – through new development, redevelopment, and maintenance of existing housing stock – to respond to the need for varied housing types, sizes, and price points that are attainable for prospective owners and renters at all levels of income.

**Policy H&N 2:** In cooperation with public and private partners, consider the entire spectrum of tools for assisting people in attaining their ownership or rental goals, and methods for spurring and guiding the supply side of the market to pursue projects that will address local needs.

**Policy H&N 3:** Assess and update local development regulations and standards, and related permitting processes, to avoid limiting desired and compatible housing construction, renovation, and preservation within the city.

**Policy H&N 4:** Encourage mixed-use development proposals that include a residential component, especially where this will support retail viability and transit ridership, place residents near education and local employment options, and provide living options for seniors and others close to transit, parks, and shopping, medical, and other services.

**Policy H&N 5:** Support development of assisted living and higher-level care facilities and other residential options intended specifically for those hoping to age in place rather than leave Littleton during life transitions.

**Policy H&N 6:** Adopt and apply development regulations and standards to ensure that new and redeveloped residential properties are compatible with the character of their surrounding area.

**Policy H&N 7:** Support the ongoing appeal of Littleton's neighborhoods through effective code compliance and by using public investments in streets, sidewalks, infrastructure, parks and trails, and pedestrian/bicycle safety measures, along with routine maintenance practices for all of the above.

**Policy H&N 8:** Promote design of residential developments near parks, trails, and preserved open spaces that capitalizes on this proximity.

# ACTIONS

## Capital Investments

**Action H&N 1:** Add criteria to the City's capital improvements planning process to include consideration of neighborhood needs and enhancement opportunities when identifying and prioritizing candidate capital projects.

## Programs and Initiatives

**Action H&N 2:** Convene a Housing Advisory Committee, comprised of residents, real estate and development professionals, and South Metro Housing Options (SMHO) representatives, to focus on the details and logistics of implementing the 2017 Housing Study recommendations, focusing first on the 1-2 year action steps recommended in the study and incorporating the City's anticipated Economic Impact Model in 2020.

**Action H&N 3:** Continue support of Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funding and examine the potential for leveraging additional financial resources for preservation and development of affordable/mixed-income housing.

**Action H&N 4:** Maintain an inventory of vacant residential parcels and assess the potential for specific housing types that further Plan goals and Housing Study recommendations.

**Action H&N 5:** Examine the potential for acquiring vacant land for future affordable/mixed-income housing, utilizing a land banking model, in areas designated for such use by this Plan and the Zoning Map.

**Action H&N 6:** Explore the potential for developing a rental rehabilitation program to help maintain rental unit affordability and sound physical conditions.

**Action H&N 7:** In coordination with SMHO, conduct public engagement to improve understanding of Low-Income Housing Tax Credit developments.

**Action H&N 8:** Place greater focus on home ownership resources and on advertising home ownership programs with information about available resources and loan programs for first-time home buyers.

**Action H&N 9:** Continue active code compliance efforts with a focus on measurable results, including producing an annual report on the status of substandard buildings through the Building Board of Appeals.

- Produce educational materials detailing maintenance responsibilities of home owners, and identify resources for those who need assistance in meeting their responsibilities.
- Ensure home owners, tenants and landlords are aware of resources available through various state and federal programs, such as weatherization programs to improve energy efficiency.

**Action H&N 10:** Pursue opportunities to advance Littleton as a lifelong community, including Age-Friendly certification from the American Association of Retired Persons (AARP).

## Regulations and Standards

**Action H&N 11:** As part of the City's zoning and code update initiative:

- Incorporate a "housing palette" that promotes more diverse housing forms, particularly housing types identified in the 2017 Housing Study as needed in Littleton (e.g., affordable rental units, starter homes, and dwelling types/sizes attractive to seniors and people with disabilities).
- Develop character-based zoning districts and provisions to accommodate more diverse housing forms that are compatible within Suburban Residential and other character areas.
- Incorporate incentives for affordable/mixed-income housing development.
- Include neighborhood design guidance in the subdivision regulations and elsewhere to promote quality residential developments.
- Evaluate best practices for regulating accessory dwelling units and short-term rentals, and parameters to prevent adverse neighborhood effects.
- Explore best practices for guiding the design and management of transit-oriented developments with a housing component.
- Add floodplain areas to the Zoning Map to increase awareness of building restrictions and risk.

**Action H&N 12:** Seek input periodically from SMHO and real estate/development representatives on ways the City's development regulations, standards, and review processes help to promote or may work against Littleton's housing objectives.

## POTENTIAL PARTNERS

Partners for implementation of plan priorities related to Housing and Neighborhoods include:

- Neighboring jurisdictions and Arapahoe, Douglas, and Jefferson Counties
- Area real estate and development community
- Colorado Center for the Blind
- Denver Regional Council of Governments
- Habitat for Humanity Metro Denver
- High Line Canal Conservancy
- Littleton Public Schools
- Regional Transportation District
- South Metro Denver Realtors Association
- South Metro Housing Options
- South Platte Working Group
- South Suburban Park and Recreation District
- Tri-County Health Department

## Partnerships and Coordination

**Action H&N 13:** Continue active dialogue and coordination with SMHO, particularly as the agency adjusts its housing portfolio within Littleton.

**Action H&N 14:** Maintain ongoing outreach to and communication with homeowner associations (HOAs), and also to areas without HOAs or other organized means for neighborhood-level interaction with City officials and staff.

**Action H&N 15:** Maintain relationships with local and regional real estate/development representatives, and with economic development entities that recognize housing attainability as critical to community success, public school system viability, and the fiscal sustainability of local government.

**Action H&N 16:** Work with local and regional not-for-profit groups, such as Habitat for Humanity Metro Denver, to increase the supply of affordable housing.

## More Targeted Planning / Study

**Action H&N 17:** Periodically update the 2017 Housing Study, particularly to incorporate newer data on demographic and housing market trends, locally and across the region, and to revisit recommended strategies and their relative priority and timing.

# TRANSPORTATION

# TRANSPORTATION

Envision Littleton involved concurrent preparation of a new Comprehensive Plan and the City's first-ever Transportation Master Plan (TMP). The two plans were synchronized through joint community and leadership engagement processes involving City Council, Planning Commission, other City boards/commissions, a Project Management Team with City staff and consultant representatives for both plans, and extensive interaction with residents and other stakeholders across the city. During each Envision Littleton phase, inputs to the Comprehensive Plan and the Transportation Master Plan were coordinated to ensure an integrated set of policies and priorities, along with ongoing discussion of the Future Land Use and Character map. The Framework for Action presented below is intended as the outline for the TMP and should be revisited upon each update of the TMP to ensure consistency. In addition to goals, the TMP process resulted in a transportation Mission, as well as policies, which are summarized herein.

## LEGACY OF PAST PLANNING

- Littleton Plans and Studies
  - Citywide Plan (2014)
  - Belleview Avenue Corridor Vision (2018)
  - Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan (2011)
  - Broadway Corridor Study (2009)
  - Downtown Neighborhood Plan (2011)
  - Littleton Downtown Design Standards (2006)
  - Mineral Station Area Framework (2018)
  - Neighborhood Plans and Corridor Plans (2016)
  - Three Mile Plan (2015)
  - Amended Columbine Square Urban Renewal Plan, City of Littleton (2015)
  - Arapaho Hills Historic Preservation Guidelines, City of Littleton (2016)
  - Resident and Business Surveys (2018)
  - City of Littleton Parks, Recreation, and Trails Master Plan (2016)
  - Downtown Littleton Historic Preservation Guidelines (2011)
  - Landscape Design Criteria Manual (1992)
  - Louthan Heights Historic District Design Guidelines (2017)
  - South Platte River Corridor Development Design Guidelines (2000)
  - Mineral Station ULI Advisory Services Report (2006)
  - Mineral Avenue TAP Final (2014)
  - Littleton Housing Report (2017)
  - Neighborhood Traffic Management Program (not dated)
  - Storm Drainage Design and Technical Criteria Manual (2018)
- Relevant Regional Plans and Studies
  - South Platte River Corridor Vision, Arapahoe County (2013)
  - South Suburban Parks and Recreation Master Plan (2017)
  - Arapahoe County Bicycle/Pedestrian Master Plan (2017)
  - High Line Canal Conservancy Vision Plan (2017)
  - RTD (Regional Transportation District) 2015-2020 Strategic Plan (2015)
  - RTD Regional BRT Feasibility Study (2018)
  - RTD Quality of Life Study (2017)
  - RTD TOD Strategic Plan (2010) and Status Report (2013)

- DRCOG (Denver Regional Council of Governments) Metro Vision 2035 (2017)
- DRCOG Active Transportation Plan (Draft) (2018)
- DRCOG Regional Transportation Plan 2040 (2017)
- Arapahoe County 2035 Transportation Plan (2010)
- Jefferson County Bicycle and Pedestrian Plans (2012)
- Jefferson County Countywide Transportation Plan (1998)
- Douglas County 2030 Transportation Plan (2009)

# KEY ISSUES AND CONSIDERATIONS

- Make Littleton pedestrian friendly by extending pedestrian network, adding pedestrian bridges, extending sidewalks, and improving existing sidewalks.
- Improve connections between downtown/river corridor/parks/trails.
- Complete network of streets in the city that provides connections, choice, calming, and capacity where appropriate.
- Improve traffic flow on arterials.
- Improve bike facilities.
- Decrease cut-through traffic in residential areas.
- Improve multimodal connections between commercial locations/residential developments.
- Improve trail network for transportation around and out of city.
- Improve intersection crossings.
- Improve connections to light rail.
- Improve road connections to key destinations but not through natural areas/build fewer cul-de-sacs/promote grid street network.
- Improve parking downtown, implement parking structures, consider parking restrictions.
- Implement traffic calming strategies in neighborhoods.

# TRANSPORTATION MASTER PLAN MISSION STATEMENT

Littleton will enable connection and accessibility for all through regional leadership and responsible stewardship of the city's transportation systems, policies, programs, and services.

# FRAMEWORK FOR ACTION

## GOALS

**GOAL TMP 1:** Connect people conveniently to the community, resources, and opportunities.

**GOAL TMP 2:** Promote safety and support efforts to maintain a healthy and active lifestyle.

**GOAL TMP 3:** Allocate services and facilities so that all people have transportation options that are best suited for their needs and lifestyle.

**GOAL TMP 4:** Contribute to our economic prosperity while maintaining and enhancing our community's character.

**GOAL TMP 5:** Build and operate a financially and environmentally sustainable transportation system.

# POLICIES

In making decisions that involve public resource allocation, regulatory matters, and physical improvements, among others, Littleton will:

**Policy TMP 1:** Focus on enhancing safety on auto and freight networks.

**Policy TMP 2:** Advance regional partnerships to build consensus and leverage funding toward significant transportation projects.

**Policy TMP 3**: Provide automobile Level of Service (LOS) E or better on Suburban Connectors and Commercial Corridors and LOS D or better on all other streets.

**Policy TMP 4:** Enhance auto and freight network projects that lead to operational and safety improvements.

**Policy TMP 5:** Enhance the safety of vulnerable user groups on streets and trails.

**Policy TMP 6:** Support connections to employment, retail, and entertainment/recreation land uses given the opportunity.

**Policy TMP 7:** Develop street design and construction standards that prioritize safety and mobility over speed.

**Policy TMP 8:** Develop a Transportation Demand Management Plan as a tool to help reduce congestion.

**Policy TMP 9:** Periodically update the truck route map.

**Policy TMP 10:** Develop a Complete Networks Plan.

**Policy TMP 11:** Implement a comprehensive bicycle and pedestrian count program similar to the vehicle count program. Consider installation of permanent continuous counters in key locations and as part of upcoming projects.

**Policy TMP 12:** Consider installing an all ages and abilities bicycle facility for every new bicycle project. All ages and abilities bicycle facilities are low-stress for all potential users, including children and seniors.

**Policy TMP 13:** Update City Code to address burgeoning micromobility industry. Include operating rules such as number of permits, speed limits, whether users should use sidewalks, bike lanes, or general purpose lanes depending on speeds, and establish restricted areas.

**Policy TMP 14:** Consider including bicycle and pedestrian facility upgrades as part of every infrastructure project, including resurfacing projects. Develop a resurfacing checklist that considers bicycle facilities: http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/environment/bicycle_pedestrian/publications/resurfacing/

**Policy TMP 15:** Consider bicycle and pedestrian detection for signal actuation in every new traffic signal installation.

**Policy TMP 16:** Maintain a fleet of smaller snow removal vehicles to plow trails, shared use paths, and protected bike lanes.

**Policy TMP 17:** Update City Code to require residents/businesses to clear sidewalks within 24 hours; existing code states, “within a reasonable time after every snowfall”.

**Policy TMP 18:** Evaluate existing sidewalk policy/code.

**Policy TMP 19:** In development proposals, limit curb cuts along proposed planned bicycle and pedestrian routes.

**Policy TMP 20:** Require maintaining clear sidewalks or bicycle lanes during building or street construction or provide a detour: http://www2.oaklandnet.com/oakca1/groups/pwa/documents/memorandum/oak061424.pdf

**Policy TMP 21:** Encourage new developments to provide secure indoor parking and other end-of-trip facilities for bicyclists.

**Policy TMP 22:** Encourage development to utilize grid street networks and limit the use of cul-de-sacs.

**Policy TMP 23:** Advocate for maintenance and enhancement of existing RTD bus and rail service in Littleton.

**Policy TMP 24:** Improve ADA connections and trip-planning services connecting to fixed-route transit network.

**Policy TMP 25:** Develop mobility hubs at key stops and stations to promote mode choice and technological integration.

**Policy TMP 26:** Pursue regional public and private partnerships with neighboring municipalities to fund high-capacity transit improvements (including light rail and BRT).

**Policy TMP 27:** Prioritize the safety of vulnerable user groups on trains, buses, and at stations and stops.

**Policy TMP 28:** Demand and support connections to employment, retail, and entertainment/recreation opportunities.

**Policy TMP 29:** Coordinate traffic management center systems and operations with adjacent municipalities and CDOT.

**Policy TMP 30:** Partner with neighboring municipalities and the private sector as needed to manage the introduction of new technologies to Littleton.

**Policy TMP 31:** Transition government fleets to electric and other zero-emission vehicles.

**Policy TMP 32:** Be transparent about prioritization and implementation of capital improvements.

# ACTIONS

The TMP applies an approach to planning that focuses on providing a transportation system that works for all users. In the context of the City of Littleton and the concurrent update to the Comprehensive Plan, this means the plan maps out a complete network of streets that finds the balance where streets are vibrant, safe, and promote a sense of place while providing multimodal choices for users of all ages and ability. This systematic approach emphasizes the following major themes:

- **Community**: No plan or project can truly be successful without engaging the community. This is about returning streets to the community and improving a community's quality of life.
- **Choices**: The healthiest and most vibrant communities understand that bicycling, walking, and transit are critical components of the transportation system. A complete system not only addresses safety and mobility concerns, but also provides encouragement of active living, ultimately improving community health.
- **Capacity**: Although a multimodal approach can increase the overall person capacity of a roadway corridor, the impact on auto capacity is often a concern that must be addressed. A toolbox of analysis techniques and operations strategies to manage roadway capacity has been identified to help balance mobility needs across modes.
- **Calming**: Plans and designs should create context-appropriate streets that consider the needs of all potential users, encourage appropriate driving behaviors and speed, and provide welcoming environments for non-motorized users.
- **Connections**: We know that providing connections between sites, neighborhoods, modes, and jurisdictions is crucial to maintaining healthy transportation systems and communities. A systematic approach to providing a complete network can facilitate key connections within the community.

The action plan can be found in the TMP. It includes over $700 million in potential transportation projects, both locally and regionally significant, in addition to a full list of additional plans, strategies, and partnerships to pursue.

# INFRASTRUCTURE AND SERVICES

# INFRASTRUCTURE AND SERVICES

Littleton must prepare for, and have the capacity to meet, the service demands of current residents plus future new development and redevelopment. As with other mature cities, Littleton has a full slate of aging infrastructure and public facility needs to address. Infrastructure and services are essential to secure investor interest and assurance to undertake private projects in Littleton. Likewise, the City depends on an adequate tax base from business activity and private property improvements to fund essential capital projects and ongoing maintenance.

Capital investments in public infrastructure such as utilities and streets can signal desired locations for growth, help maintain a high quality of life for residents, and create a framework for desired land development and revitalization. Meanwhile, local development regulations govern subdivision and re-platting activity, provide for the appropriate use of land through zoning, and set minimum standards for the nature and quality of development. The City can employ financing and special district mechanisms that advance the community's economic development and growth management objectives while supporting beneficial private development and reinvestment. Finally, effective oversight and management of ongoing growth and revitalization depends on solid partnerships with other key public agencies, including County government, Littleton Public Schools, South Suburban Park and Recreation District, South Platte Water Renewal Partners, and South Metro Fire Rescue, among others.

## LEGACY OF PAST PLANNING

- Arapahoe County, CO Multi-Hazard Mitigation Plan 2015-2022
- Various Floodplain Hazard Area Delineation Studies (Mile High Flood District, formerly known as Urban Drainage and Flood Control District, and City of Littleton), various years.
- Federal Emergency Management Agency Flood Insurance Studies and Flood Insurance Maps, various dates
- Collections Division Tactical Action Plan (Brown and Caldwell), 2016

## KEY ISSUES AND CONSIDERATIONS

- Capacity of City government to maintain levels of service and support needed for economic development and revitalization.
- Financial implications for the City given its streets, utility infrastructure, and City-owned public facilities that are in need of repair and ongoing maintenance.
- Water pressure in older areas of the city.
- Extent of existing homes and businesses located within floodplains (as many areas of Littleton were developed prior to federal floodplain mapping), which can complicate redevelopment and building upgrades.
- Ensuring effective partnerships with other entities that provide public services essential to Littleton's livability and resident satisfaction (e.g., schools, parks/trails, recreation programming and facilities, fire, etc.).
- Crime trends and adequate levels of community policing.

## FRAMEWORK FOR ACTION

## GOALS

**GOAL I&S 1:** Well-maintained water, wastewater, and storm drainage infrastructure that serves the needs of Littleton residents and businesses while minimizing adverse impacts on the environment.

**GOAL I&S 2:** Consistent budget and community support of a well-staffed, trained, and equipped police force to ensure a safe and secure city.

**GOAL I&S 3:** A continuing commitment to periodic assessment, and ongoing maintenance, of public facilities that are essential to Littleton's livability and accommodation of visitors.

# POLICIES

In making decisions that involve public resource allocation, regulatory matters, and physical improvements, among others, Littleton will:

**Policy I&S 1:** Commit to a robust yearly program of capital improvements, as its financial means allow, while avoiding a deferred maintenance approach when resources are limited that causes unmet needs to accumulate and become more costly.

**Policy I&S 2:** Remain an active and reliable partner in interlocal and interagency approaches to operation and oversight of essential infrastructure, and public facilities and services, including with South Platte Water Renewal Partners, Denver Water, the Mile High Flood District, and South Metro Fire Rescue, among others.

**Policy I&S 3:** Link capital improvements planning and project prioritization to the City's economic development agenda and tax base needs, especially where public infrastructure investments will leverage complementary private investment in support of this Plan and other adopted City plans.

**Policy I&S 4:** Be a prepared and resilient community with City infrastructure and services that can recover quickly from the effects of severe weather and natural hazards, and which manages growth and development to reduce risks.

**Policy I&S 5:** Pursue multi-objective drainage design solutions, where appropriate, that integrate open space, recreational, and aesthetic considerations while maintaining public safety.

**Policy I&S 6:** Be a leader among Colorado cities in managing and maintaining public infrastructure and facilities, and in learning about and adopting best practices, green infrastructure, and new technologies.

# ACTIONS

## Capital Investments

**Action I&S 1:** Continue ongoing infrastructure maintenance, rehabilitation efforts, and upgrades through the City's capital projects planning and budgeting process.

**Action I&S 2:** Utilize the results of recent asset management planning efforts and the Impact Fee Update study to refine facility maintenance and improvement priorities, determine funding needs, and identify potential sources of funding.

## Programs and Initiatives

**Action I&S 3:** Continue adequate funding to maintain high-quality police services in line with continued population growth and development and other indicators of policing coverage, response time, and service level.

**Action I&S 4:** Continue the City's participation in the Community Rating System under the National Flood Insurance Program, particularly for the potential benefits for resident and business insurance premium costs.

**Action I&S 5:** Expand outreach to owners of residential and commercial properties regarding their property's floodplain mapping status and flooding risk, their flood insurance options, and how changes in the built environment can exacerbate flooding risk posed by proximity to streams and water bodies.

**Action I&S 6:** Raise awareness and provide educational resources regarding how a property's flood zone classification can limit renovation and improvements to existing structures, and after a damaging storm, could restrict reconstruction of structures deemed substantially damaged or otherwise limit redevelopment. Target initial outreach in some of the city's oldest and currently most affordable neighborhoods (e.g., northeast Littleton), where property improvements and public or private redevelopment efforts could be hindered.

## Regulations and Standards

**Action I&S 7:** As part of the City's zoning and code update initiative, evaluate the potential for integrating any new or adjusted hazard mitigation considerations related to wildfire, flooding, drought, and other hazards.

## Partnerships and Coordination

**Action I&S 8:** Continue the collaborative process for emergency responders to review plans, new or updated regulations, and significant development proposals for any impacts to emergency response.

**Action I&S 9:** Continue partnership with Mile High Flood District (formerly known as Urban Drainage and Flood Control District) to leverage funds for major drainageway improvements and maintenance.

**Action I&S 10:** Participate in and support High Line Canal Conservancy efforts to convert the canal to storm water infrastructure.

**Action I&S 11:** Continue to demonstrate municipal leadership in partnerships with South Platte Water Renewal Partners, Denver Water, and South Metro Fire Rescue, among others.

## POTENTIAL PARTNERS

Partners for implementation of plan priorities related to Infrastructure and Services include:

- Neighboring jurisdictions and Arapahoe, Douglas, and Jefferson Counties
- Denver Water
- Mile High Flood District (formerly known as Urban Drainage and Flood Control District)
- Southeast Metro Stormwater Authority
- South Metro Fire Rescue
- South Platte Water Renewal Partners
- Urban Drainage and Flood Control District
- Xcel Energy
- Area faith community.

## More Targeted Planning / Study

**Action I&S 12:** Continue asset management planning on all components of City infrastructure.

**Action I&S 13:** Prepare and regularly update master plans for City infrastructure systems, the findings and recommendations of which are an essential input to capital improvements planning and any related grant pursuits to leverage local dollars.

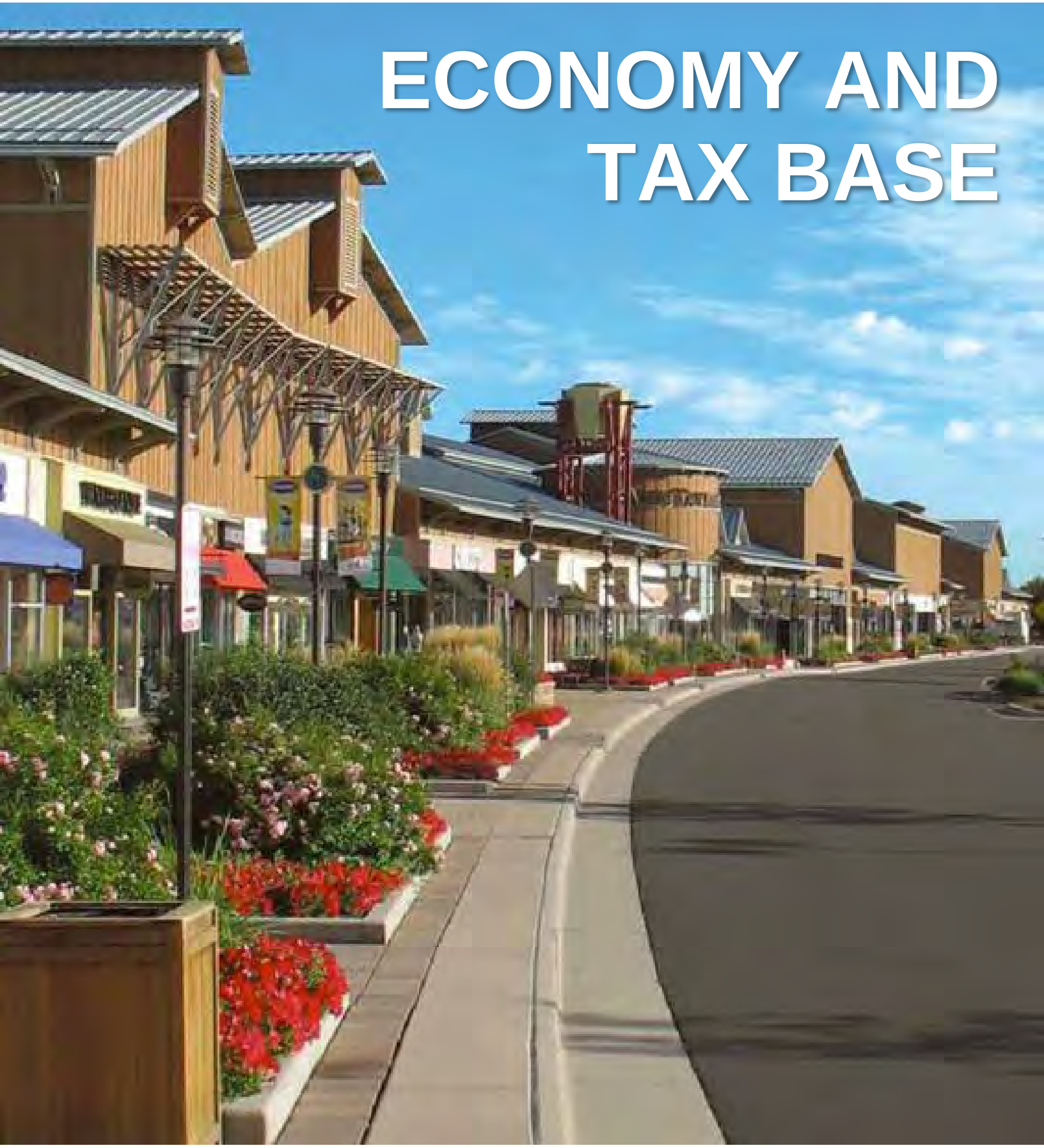
**Action I&S 14:** Study the storm and sewer fee structure to determine if any changes are needed to support infrastructure investment.

**Action I&S 15:** Assess potential priority areas for purchasing flood-prone properties as opportunities arise, and the estimated costs for such acquisitions whether considered by the City, another public agency, a non-profit entity, or other partners.

**Action I&S 16:** Continue to participate in updates to the county-level Multi-Hazard Mitigation Plans.

**Action I&S 17:** Create updated master plans for Bemis Library and Littleton Museum collaboratively with the Library Advisory and Museum Boards, to include both physical and programming considerations.

# ECONOMY AND TAX BASE



# ECONOMY AND TAX BASE

Continued economic opportunity and prosperity in Littleton will bolster the community's tax base to support quality public services and amenities. The City's development strategies and implementation tools must be nimble and flexible enough to respond to a dynamic economic climate at the local, regional, and national levels. Successful economic development also requires a focus on quality of place, capitalizing on Littleton's special character and unique identity to attract and retain businesses and draw visitors seeking shopping, services, entertainment, recreation, arts and culture, and heritage tourism.

## LEGACY OF PAST PLANNING

- City of Littleton Economic Plan, 2013
- City of Littleton Annual Economic Development Report, 2018

## KEY ISSUES AND CONSIDERATIONS

- The long-term fiscal sustainability of the City of Littleton.
- The tax base implications from conversion of existing commercial properties to residential use.
- Increased cost of living and tax implications for residents, and return on residential and business investments in Littleton.
- Vacant and inadequately maintained retail centers and spaces and the adverse effect on Littleton's image and investor interest.
- Concern about loss of small, independent businesses.
- Challenges to redevelopment in Littleton, especially involving older vacant and underutilized commercial sites.
- Whether Littleton is positioned for and can attract significant "Class A" (high quality) office development, which is a minimal share of its current land use pattern.
- Desire for additional visitor lodging options.

## FRAMEWORK FOR ACTION

## GOALS

**GOAL E&T 1:** A focus on the revenue needs of Littleton City government to continue meeting the public service expectations of its residents, businesses, and institutions.

**GOAL E&T 2:** Continued nurturing of key employment sectors, target industries, and small businesses that expand local job opportunities and contribute to better incomes for those who live and/or work in Littleton.

**GOAL E&T 3:** Revitalized commercial centers and areas that alleviate obsolete conditions and vacant sites and that meet the contemporary shopping and service needs of Littleton residents and visitors.

**GOAL E&T 4:** Provision of resources, services, and a conducive regulatory environment to help businesses of all sizes develop and grow.

**GOAL E&T 5:** A commitment to education at all levels that meets the workforce needs of area businesses and ensures lifelong learning and skills acquisition opportunities for residents and visitors.

## POLICIES

In making decisions that involve public resource allocation, regulatory matters, and physical improvements, among others, Littleton will:

**Policy E&T 1:** Maintain City official and public awareness of the financial challenges the City faces in meeting the high, and increasingly costly, public service expectations of a largely residential community.

**Policy E&T 2:** Seek opportunities to enhance the City's tax base and diversify revenue sources in ways that are compatible and consistent with Littleton's unique character (e.g., extensive Suburban residential character, rich architectural heritage, South Platte River and abundant green space, etc.) while also providing relief from the tax burden residents bear.

**Policy E&T 3:** Assess the fiscal implications, property by property, when existing nonresidential sites are proposed for residential use, especially in cases where commercial use and/or zoning is considered no longer viable.

**Policy E&T 4:** Support and complete planning to better understand Littleton's economic position in the Denver region (as both city and region evolve).

**Policy E&T 5:** Continue to promote, and work to retain, its existing and distinctive local businesses, including those challenged by a changing retail industry.

**Policy E&T 6:** Evaluate public sector tools and options for spurring private sector interest and reinvestment in vacant and underutilized commercial properties.

**Policy E&T 7:** Periodically re-assess the array of economic development tools, techniques, and financing methods available through federal agencies and State of Colorado legislation and programs, including to determine those most appropriate for Littleton.

**Policy E&T 8:** Evaluate and consider adjustments to City processes and policies that may impede desired business attraction and investment.

**Policy E&T 9:** Determine whether development proposals are consistent with adopted City policies and regulations and can be accommodated with adequate public infrastructure and services.

**Policy E&T 10:** Support a "community of learning," in coordination with education partners, in which quality primary and secondary education, vocational and higher education, lifelong continuing education, and other educational resources are valued and accessible to Littleton residents and visitors.

# ACTIONS

## Capital Investments

**Action E&T 1:** Continue funding for the revitalization incentive grant program.

## Programs and Initiatives

**Action E&T 2:** Continue successful business resource services provided by the Economic Development and Business Services Department including support for entrepreneurs, start-ups, and small businesses considering locating in Littleton.

**Action E&T 3:** Pursue ways to diversify City revenue sources to decrease reliance on sales tax revenue.

**Action E&T 4:** Monitor the changing retail environment, and support the revitalization of underperforming retail centers to meet market demands and address City revenue needs.

**Action E&T 5:** Explore further ways to promote the creative economy and innovation within Littleton.

**Action E&T 6:** Examine potential adoption of incentives for business investments that would advance community goals expressed in the Plan and other adopted City plans (e.g., tax increment financing, sales tax sharing, permit fee abatement, etc.).

**Action E&T 7:** Continue to pursue fiber/broadband technology investments and upgrades with public and private partners.

**Action E&T 8:** Continue to monitor state legislation affecting economic development best practices and tools for Colorado municipalities.

## Regulations and Standards

**Action E&T 9:** As part of the City's zoning and code update initiative, create a new zoning district and associated standards for accommodating mixed-use development.

**Action E&T 10:** Assist small businesses to navigate code requirements and other potential challenges to locating in and renovating spaces within older and/or historic structures.

## Partnerships and Coordination

**Action E&T 11:** Continue active participation in regional economic development organizations to advance Littleton's interests.

**Action E&T 12:** Continue to foster relationships with and support local economic development organizations including the recently established Littleton Business Chamber.

**Action E&T 13:** Continue to strengthen and grow partnerships with education and workforce training providers, including Littleton Public Schools, Arapahoe Community College, medical institutions and others.

**Action E&T 14:** Continue to engage property owners and developers, keeping abreast of their plans and desires for their property.

**Action E&T 15:** Utilize the City's newly established Next Generation Advisory Committee as a sounding board for economic development priorities and potential strategies amid Littleton's evolving demographic and economic environment.

## More Targeted Planning / Study

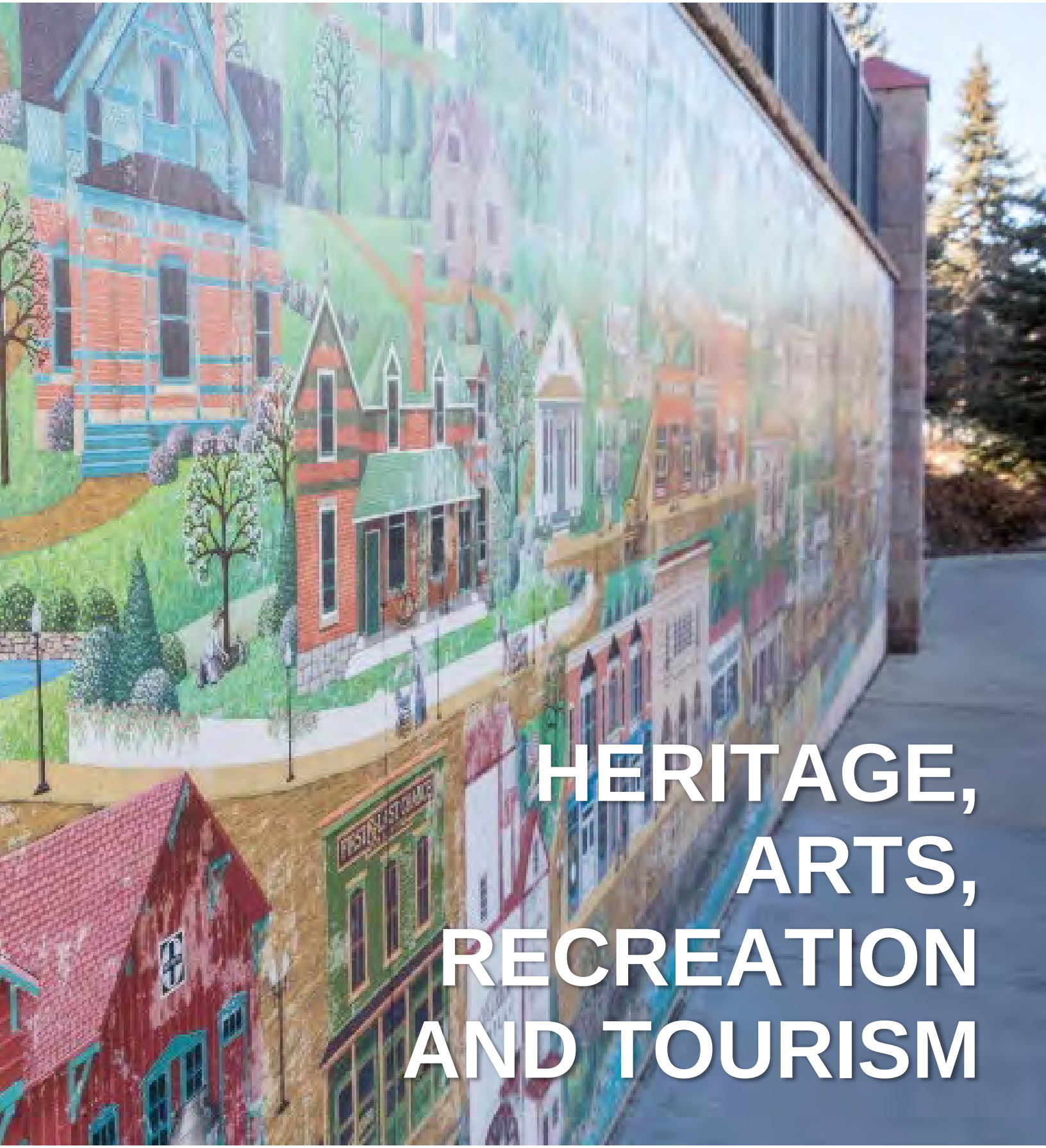
**Action E&T 16:** Prepare a full Economic Development Plan, building upon the 2013 Economic Plan, to identify tools and strategies that will capitalize on Littleton's strengths to attract, retain, and grow businesses and target industries. The plan can examine gaps in retail and other business sectors and assess leakage in retail sales and revenue. The plan can also help guide the development of vacant land, infill development and redevelopment, and revitalization of key roadway corridors. The plan should also include links to planning for arts and culture, historic preservation, and tourism promotion in the Heritage, Arts, Recreation, and Tourism section of this Plan.

**Action E&T 17:** Using input from existing local businesses, pursue a strategic marketing plan based on identified assets, advantages, and services that can help attract targeted new businesses and retail customers to Littleton.

## POTENTIAL PARTNERS

Partners for implementation of plan priorities related to Economy and Tax Base include:

- Neighboring jurisdictions and Arapahoe, Douglas, and Jefferson Counties
- Arapahoe Community College
- Arapahoe/Douglas WORKS!
- Aspen Grove
- Area real estate and development community
- Denver Regional Council of Governments
- Denver South Economic Development Partnership
- Historic Downtown Littleton Merchants Association
- Littleton Business Chamber
- Local entrepreneurs and home-based businesses
- Littleton Optimists Club
- Littleton Public Schools
- Littleton Rotary Club
- Area faith community
- Metro Denver Economic Development Corporation
- Regional Transportation District
- South Metro Denver Chamber of Commerce
- SouthPark Owners Association



# HERITAGE, ARTS, RECREATION AND TOURISM

# HERITAGE, ARTS, RECREATION, AND TOURISM

With its unique history and architectural heritage, active arts scene, widespread recreation options, abundant green and open spaces, and many community events year-round, Littleton offers an array of amenities that appeal to residents and visitors. All aspects of the Plan shape the livability of Littleton, but this section especially reinforces the quality of life its residents enjoy.

## LEGACY OF PAST PLANNING

- Commercial Modernism in the Greater West Littleton Boulevard Corridor 1950-1980, 2018
- Littleton Museum Strategic Institutional Plan 2010-2020, 2017
- Town Hall Arts Center 2025 Vision Plan, 2015
- City of Littleton Parks, Recreation, and Trails Master Plan, 2016
- South Platte Park Management Plan, 2017
- South Platte River Corridor Vision, Arapahoe County, 2013
- South Suburban Park and Recreation Master Plan, 2017
- High Line Canal Vision Plan, 2017
- High Line Canal Framework Plan, 2019

## KEY ISSUES AND CONSIDERATIONS

- Threats to Littleton's historic legacy and architectural heritage.
- Concern over development encroachment, both physical and visual, on Littleton's preserved green and open spaces, and desire for greater emphasis on the continuity and potential enlargement of linear greenway segments within the community.
- The need for more effective collaboration with partner entities that have responsibility for managing and enhancing elements of Littleton's park and open space inventory (e.g., South Suburban Park and Recreation District, High Line Canal Conservancy, etc.).
- The desire to support well-established cultural and entertainment destinations, and events and festivals that fill the calendar year-round in Littleton.
- Convenient and safe public access to parks, trails, and greenways within the city, especially where potential users are separated from these resources by major roadways and other physical barriers.
- Ongoing appreciation and promotion of Littleton Museum and Bemis Library as special public assets.
- Active arts and cultural programs and organizations that offer opportunities to experience and enjoy the arts in Littleton while contributing to the city's economic vitality.
- Littleton's tourism appeal and its approach to accommodating visitors for leisure and business.

## FRAMEWORK FOR ACTION

### GOALS

**GOAL HART 1:** Preserved and enhanced public green spaces that provide access to nature, widespread opportunities for recreation and play close to home, and continuous greenway connections within and through the city.

**GOAL HART 2:** Continued protection and promotion of Littleton's heritage, especially where it is tangibly visible in historic architecture, designated districts and landmarks, and distinctive neighborhoods and buildings.

**GOAL HART 3:** A healthy community with convenient access to recreational facilities and programming and outdoor fitness activities.

**GOAL HART 4:** A vibrant city for both residents and visitors, enlivened by an active downtown, an array of arts, cultural, and entertainment options both indoor and outdoor, extensive heritage tourism opportunities, and popular community events and festivals throughout the year.

**GOAL HART 5:** A community that thrives on and leverages the economic and social power of the arts to enhance its fiscal strength, regional reputation, social connectivity, and overall quality of life for residents of all ages.

# POLICIES

In making decisions that involve public resource allocation, regulatory matters, and physical improvements, among others, Littleton will:

**Policy HART 1:** Maintain close and mutually beneficial relationships with the South Suburban Park and Recreation District, South Platte Working Group, High Line Canal Conservancy, Hudson Gardens, and other key partners that enable Littleton residents and visitors to enjoy a large quantity of high quality recreational assets and public open space.

**Policy HART 2:** Strive to build consensus and support on how best the City can preserve more areas and structures with historic significance, and protect designated and potential new historic districts and landmarks.

**Policy HART 3:** Prioritize public safety, including safe access to and from parks and other public spaces, and personal security while enjoying parks, trails, and community facilities and events.

**Policy HART 4:** Incorporate guidance and incentives into the City's zoning and subdivision regulations so that green and open spaces are aligned and integrated across private development sites and adjacent public lands.

**Policy HART 5:** Incorporate guidance and incentives into the City's zoning and subdivision regulation to promote sensitive design approaches on sites with, or adjacent to, historic structures and areas.

**Policy HART 6:** Continue to plan for, and budget, adequate resources to maintain and enhance Bemis Library and Littleton Museum as premier public facilities with targeted programming for all ages.

**Policy HART 7:** Regularly evaluate the appropriate and most effective methods the City can use for devoting resources and support to cultural arts and community events programming.

**Policy HART 8:** Be aware of the diverse perspective and needs of visitors to Littleton, along with those of residents.

# ACTIONS

## Capital Investments

**Action HART 1:** Utilize the project funding prioritization methodology recommended by the Open Space and Parks Task Force to maximize the leveraging of available funding and advance park, trail, and open space projects that address objectives of the City and its multiple partners.

## Programs and Initiatives

**Action HART 2:** Develop an organizational structure within the City for handling park-related issues, collaboration, public inquiries, and funding pursuits as detailed in the 2016 Parks, Recreation and Trails Master Plan. Include the Fine Arts Board as many public art sculptures are located in parks.

**Action HART 3:** Improve access to parks and recreation information and increase City communication (website, social media, etc.) to promote awareness of plans, policies, facilities and programming at recreational sites, including those of the South Suburban Park and Recreation District, Hudson Gardens, and others.

**Action HART 4:** Research and report on the various ways visitors travel to and move about the community; how they experience popular locations and events; what they tell others about their experience; and what factors determine how much time and money they spend locally.

**Action HART 5:** Coordinate with partners to track visitor utilization of recreation facilities, sites, and other types of Littleton amenities, and monitor changing local, state, and national tourism trends.

**Action HART 6:** Continue to promote awareness and appreciation of the full range of Littleton's arts, cultural, and historic assets through ongoing activities, special events, and partnerships.

**Action HART 7:** Evaluate opportunities and partnerships for incorporating art amenities into public projects such as buildings and infrastructure improvements.

**Action HART 8:** Continue the Main Street Historic District Grant Program and support the promotion and continued use of historic tax credits.

**Action HART 9:** Consider a Littleton application for Creative District Certification through the State of Colorado.

***Action 9 Link:***
The Creative Districts Certification Process is established by the State's Creative Industries Division. Colorado now has 23 Creative Districts across the state. Greeley's Creative District "blends the historic Downtown Development and University Districts in a continuum of dynamic and complementary uses."

COLORADO CREATIVE DISTRICTS

## Regulations and Standards

**Action HART 10:** Evaluate the potential for dedicated park and recreation funding through impact fees versus other options, such as land contributions or other fees, as detailed in the 2016 Parks, Recreation and Trails Master Plan.

**Action HART 11:** Through the Historic Preservation Board and other forums, continue to build consensus on measures the City should consider and implement – regulatory and/or otherwise – for preserving more areas and structures with distinctive historic value and character, along with ongoing protection of previously designated places and identification of potential new historic districts and landmarks.

## Partnerships and Coordination

**Action HART 12:** Continue and enhance collaboration, communication, and partnerships with the many agencies, organizations and non-profits that provide and/or advocate for heritage, arts, cultural, recreation, and open space amenities in Littleton.

**Action HART 13:** Promote the wellness of residents by collaborating with partner agencies and organizations, and market Littleton's many parks and recreation offerings as essential elements of an active lifestyle.

**Action HART 14:** Pursue ways to close gaps in the existing local and regional trail systems to improve access and connectivity to jobs, education, fresh food, and health care, among others.

**Action HART 15:** Work with partners to promote multi-use trail etiquette, safety, and education.

**Action HART 16:** Engage volunteers and leverage their involvement to increase awareness, education, and use of park and recreation amenities, Littleton Museum, and Bemis Library.

***Action 14 Link:***
Improving High Line Canal Trail connections at Broadway is identified as one of seven transformation projects in the High Line Canal Conservancy Framework Plan.

**Action HART 17:** Improve coordination of signage and wayfinding at parks, recreation sites, trails, and open space areas, and also within residential neighborhoods and commercial areas.

**Action HART 18:** Continue to emphasize regional collaboration as the best means for enhancing the South Platte River corridor as both an environmental and community amenity.

**Action HART 19:** Investigate with area utility providers the potential to integrate art on utility facilities, such as utility cabinets in public view.

**Action HART 20:** Encourage incorporation of art in private developments.

## More Targeted Planning / Study

**Action HART 21:** Build on planning efforts for the South Platte River Corridor to clarify and integrate goals for this key community asset involving economics, aesthetics, recreation, and the environment.

**Action HART 22:** Complete regular updates to the Parks, Recreation and Trails Master Plan, highlight implementation progress and successes – especially through partnership efforts, and continue to communicate Littleton's park, recreation, trail, and open space priorities to funding partners.

**Action HART 23:** Lay the groundwork for preparing a holistic historic preservation plan and strategy for ongoing preservation efforts in Littleton, involving broad community engagement to gauge resident, property owner and stakeholder sentiment on the methods and extent to which the City should utilize available preservation tools.

**Action HART 24:** Use the City's initiatives to update its zoning and development regulations and pursue further downtown-focused planning as precursors to a historic preservation plan.

**Action HART 25:** Coordinate with partner organizations to prepare for development of a holistic Arts and Culture Plan for Littleton. The plan can include identification of new and sustaining funding sources, and explore a potential advisory committee to coordinate across all aspects of programming, promotion, and development.

## POTENTIAL PARTNERS

Partners for implementation of plan priorities related to Heritage, Arts, Recreation, and Tourism include:

- Neighboring jurisdictions and Arapahoe, Douglas, and Jefferson Counties
- Aspen Grove
- Colorado Tourism Office
- Denver Regional Council of Governments
- High Line Canal Conservancy
- Historic Littleton, Inc.
- Hudson Gardens
- Littleton Public Schools
- Scientific and Cultural Facilities District
- South Platte Working Group
- South Suburban Park and Recreation District
- Tri-County Health Department
- Trust for Public Land

# ARTS AND CULTURE

Littleton is home to a remarkable range of arts and cultural events, activities, galleries, performances, and studios. The City operates the Littleton Museum, the first museum in Colorado to be recognized as an Affiliate of the Smithsonian Institution.

The appointed Fine Arts Board advises City officials and staff in developing a fine arts collection, and assists in selecting and purchasing public art for installation in public buildings, parks, and open spaces. The Board also arranges periodic art shows, selects art and sculpture for the Littleton Center, and reviews all art donations to the City. The Board's collection now numbers 32 public art installations, plus some smaller pieces that are exhibited periodically inside the Littleton Museum.

Littleton is also home to the Hudson Gardens and Event Center, the Depot Art Gallery run by the Littleton Fine Arts Guild, the Littleton Chorale, and the Town Hall Arts Center. All of these entities serve to enhance not only the quality of life within Littleton, but are also important engines of economic development.

## POTENTIAL PARTNERS AND FUNDING SOURCES

- Colorado Business Committee for the Arts
- Scientific and Cultural Facilities District
- Cultural Councils of Arapahoe, Douglas, and Jefferson Counties
- The Fine Arts Foundation
- Western States Art Federation (WESTAF)
- Colorado Creative Industries – a division of the State of Colorado Office of Economic Development and International Trade
- National Endowment for the Arts
- Institute of Museum and Library Services

Littleton ROCKS!

The City of Littleton's Littleton Rocks! website is devoted to publicizing art and cultural events as well as other activities offered in Littleton.

According to the Colorado Business Committee for the Arts' 2018 Economic Activity Study of Metro Denver Culture, nonprofit arts, cultural and scientific organizations in the seven-county metro region generated $1.9 billion in economic activity as well as 11,820 jobs and 4.3 million education opportunities for children.

The Americans for the Arts' 2018 Public Opinion Poll found that 90 percent of people agree that arts institutions are important to quality of life and 86 percent agree that arts institutions are important to local businesses and the economy.

# ENVIRONMENT

# ENVIRONMENT

The quality of land, water, and air resources is essential to the character and livability of a community, especially within a highly populated, and relatively intensively developed, metropolitan area. Individuals, groups, and governments have a responsibility to appreciate and assess their respective contributions, both positive and negative, to a shared natural environment. To be responsible stewards they must determine how best to integrate such considerations into their planning and decision-making processes.

All the other Plan elements tie to the environment including topics such as: land management through municipal planning and development regulation; design of housing and neighborhoods; availability of travel options; provision of water, sanitary sewer, waste disposal, storm drainage, and other public services; and planning for recreation and enjoyment of the outdoors. Consideration of prudent resource conservation practices requires a holistic view of the community and how it interacts with, benefits from, and manages the integrity of its natural "infrastructure."

## LEGACY OF PAST PLANNING

- City of Littleton Renewal Municipal Separate Storm Sewer (MS4) State of Colorado Permit #090055 Program Description Document (PDD), 2018
- Water Quality Report, Denver Water, 2018
- Denver Regional Council of Governments (DRCOG) CO and PM10 Conformity Determination, 2017 Amendments
- DRCOG Denver Southern Subarea 8-Hour Ozone Conformity Determination, 2017 Amendments

## KEY ISSUES AND CONSIDERATIONS

- Long-term sustainability of land, water, and air resources.
- Concern for water quantity and quality within the South Platte River and other local waterbodies and waterways.
- Challenges to maintaining the look and feel of the High Line Canal corridor given changes in area water management, loss of trees along the canal, and other adverse factors.
- Accommodating wildlife within a city of Littleton's size and human footprint on the landscape.
- Maintaining and enhancing Littleton's mature tree canopy over time, on both public and private lands.
- Concern over loss of open and green spaces that have preserved a semi-rural atmosphere, maintained mountain views, and contributed to a Suburban character across portions of the community.
- More noticeable noise levels, and concern over excessive outdoor lighting in developed areas.
- Desire for an improved and integrated approach to solid waste management and waste reduction, including enhanced recycling and composting.

## FRAMEWORK FOR ACTION

## GOALS

**GOAL ENV 1:** Careful monitoring and increased awareness of land, air, and water quality within Littleton's jurisdiction.

**GOAL ENV 2:** Commitment to Littleton's leadership role in contributing to clean water and healthy air across the Denver metropolitan region.

**GOAL ENV 3:** Efficient use and conservation of water resources.

**GOAL ENV 4:** Reduced energy consumption and solid waste generation by residents, businesses, and the City.

**GOAL ENV 5:** City facilities, vehicle fleet, and public infrastructure that promote Littleton's environmental resilience and minimize adverse impacts.

# POLICIES

In making decisions that involve public resource allocation, regulatory matters, and physical improvements, among others, Littleton will:

**Policy ENV 1:** Provide regional leadership to protect and enhance the South Platte River, including its water quality, associated greenways and trails, nearby development, and well-managed access for public enjoyment.

**Policy ENV 2:** Be a committed partner, with state and regional agencies, organizations, and other area cities, in planning and executing programs and public education that will improve regional air quality and satisfy Clean Air Act targets and requirements.

**Policy ENV 3:** Continue to be a leader in promoting and incentivizing wise water use, water-saving measures, and water conservation and re-use.

**Policy ENV 4:** Apply its stewardship ethic enthusiastically, in collaboration with other public agencies, private interests, and the non-profit sector, to ensure that the city's extensive public and private open space remains a defining and well-managed facet of Littleton.

**Policy ENV 5:** Include habitat protection among its community planning considerations, recognizing that wildlife presence and movement within the city is a continuing reality and part of a healthy natural environment.

**Policy ENV 6:** Reduce excessive noise and outdoor lighting levels.

**Policy ENV 7:** Continue to explore viable and cost-effective ways to assist Littleton residents and businesses in reducing their solid waste generation, and to offer expanded recycling options.

**Policy ENV 8:** Encourage energy efficiency and other "green" building practices, including adaptive reuse whenever possible.

# ACTIONS

## Capital Investments

**Action ENV 1:** Budget funds for land acquisition and other open space preservation opportunities that will help maintain floodplains and drainage ways, as recommended by the Open Space and Parks Task Force.

## Programs and Initiatives

**Action ENV 2:** Utilize best management practices for City-maintained open spaces and facilities, such as efficient mowing, xeriscape (i.e., low-water, low-maintenance, and native plantings), reduced pesticide use, energy and water conservation, and measures to promote ride-sharing, use of alternative commuting options, and use of alternative energy vehicles.

**Action ENV 3:** Keep abreast of water conservation best management practices and promote wise water use throughout the community, including through related grant opportunities.

**Action ENV 4:** Evaluate the potential to expand recycling and composting availability for Littleton residents, businesses and institutions.

**Action ENV 5:** Leverage the South Platte Volunteer program to advance environmental stewardship education.

**Action ENV 6:** Monitor Colorado's long-term water outlook together with the entire Denver metropolitan area.

**Action ENV 7:** Evaluate opportunities to manage storm water through green infrastructure methods on all City-owned properties, in coordination with partners, and to demonstrate effective methods for use on private properties.

***Action 7 Link:***
The High Line Canal Conservancy's "Canal Stormwater Transformation and Enhancement Project" seeks to manage storm water naturally, providing multiple benefits.

## Regulations and Standards

**Action ENV 8:** Update the City's municipal code, zoning, subdivision regulations, and engineering standards to ensure that storm water management, grading and erosion control, and post-construction pollution prevention measures reflect best management practices.

**Action ENV 9:** Update the City's zoning and subdivision regulations so that landscaping requirements reflect best management practices for plant and tree selection, xeriscaping, irrigation design, water use, and maintenance.

**Action ENV 10:** As part of the City's zoning and code update initiative, evaluate the potential for:

- Promoting – and potentially incentivizing – Low Impact Development (LID) strategies, tools, and techniques.
- Upgrading standards for buffering of natural resource and open space areas.
- Developing tree canopy protection provisions and updated landscaping standards, including consideration of code changes necessary to accommodate potential graywater re-use for landscape irrigation (which would also require a City program that meets State of Colorado requirements).
- Promoting – and potentially incentivizing – alternative energy sources in new development and redevelopment, installation of electric vehicle charging stations at offices and commercial sites, and other environmental stewardship actions.
- Incorporating "dark skies" standards to reduce glare and spillover from outdoor lighting, including on residential properties and at public facilities.

## POTENTIAL PARTNERS

Partners for implementation of plan priorities related to the Environment include:

- Neighboring jurisdictions and Arapahoe, Douglas, and Jefferson Counties
- Chatfield Watershed Authority
- Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment
- Colorado Open Lands
- Colorado Parks and Wildlife
- Colorado Preservation, Inc.
- Colorado Stormwater Council
- Colorado Water Conservation Board
- Denver Regional Air Quality Council
- Denver Regional Council of Governments
- Denver Water
- High Line Canal Conservancy
- Hudson Gardens
- Littleton Public Schools
- Mile High Flood District (formerly known as Urban Drainage and Flood Control District)
- South Metro Land Conservancy
- South Platte River Metro Roundtable
- South Platte Working Group
- South Suburban Park and Recreation District
- State Historic Preservation Office
- Tri-County Health Department
- US Army Corps of Engineers (USACE)

## Partnerships and Coordination

**Action ENV 11:** Continue and enhance partnerships with local and regional organizations advancing air quality objectives and actions.

**Action ENV 12:** Collaborate with the South Suburban Park and Recreation District and other partners to continue to prioritize active habitat, vegetation, wildlife, water resource, and visitor management measures for South Platte Park as detailed in the South Platte Park Management Plan.

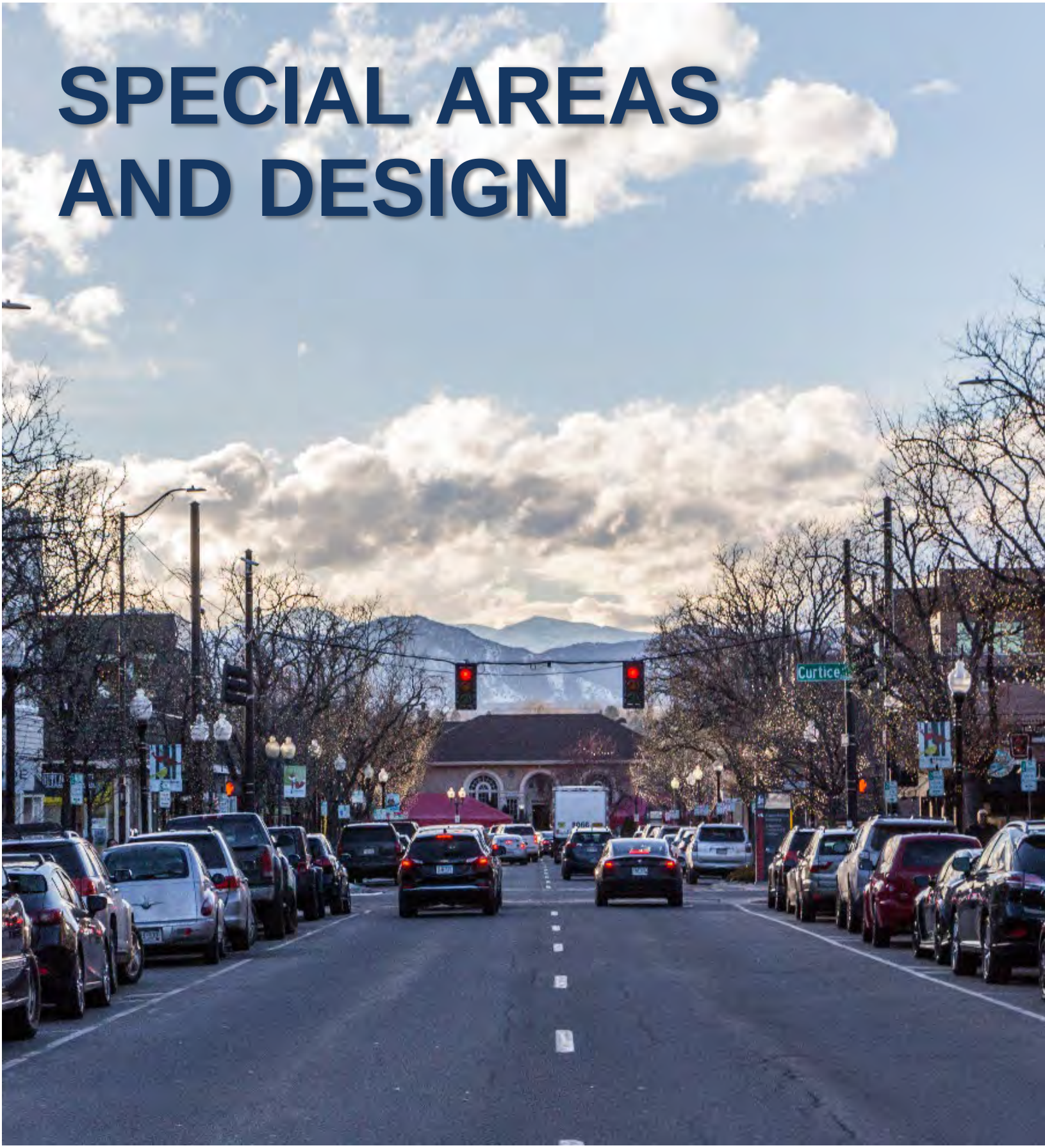
**Action ENV 13:** Evaluate the potential for water conservation measures in Littleton's parks, in coordination with the South Suburban Park and Recreation District, including possible use of synthetic turf on sports fields in some instances.

## More Targeted Planning / Study

**Action ENV 14:** As recommended in the 2013 South Platte River Corridor Vision, work with partners to pursue the following studies:

- South Platte corridor water quality opportunities study.
- South Platte corridor-wide habitat study.
- South Platte fishing management plan.

# SPECIAL AREAS AND DESIGN



# SPECIAL AREAS AND DESIGN

Through the initial 2018 vision phase of Envision Littleton, specific areas of the city were confirmed as highly valued by both residents and visitors. In particular, these include Downtown and the South Platte River corridor and its associated greenways. Other areas have received special attention for many years, especially Littleton Boulevard because of its emergence as a community gathering place during a period when Downtown was less of a draw. The Boulevard's collection of post-World War II buildings designed in a Mid Century Commercial Modernism style also sets Littleton apart among Front Range cities (with Colorado Preservation, Inc., adding the 1949-1967 Mid-Century Buildings of Littleton Boulevard to its Most Endangered Places list in 2014, citing potential threats from development and demolition, and stating, "These buildings are integral to interpreting the automobile movement of the 1950s in Littleton.").

Additionally, this Plan and the concurrent Transportation Master Plan have placed significant focus on other major roadway corridors that help to define Littleton's physical layout. These corridors are crucial to future land use and traffic circulation within the community, and to its economic development and housing needs. These key corridors are delineated on Map 1, Future Land Use and Character, and include Belleview Avenue, Santa Fe Drive, Broadway, and Mineral Avenue.

This section builds on issues, goals, policies, and actions in earlier Plan sections that are relevant to the areas mentioned above, while adding further specifics within this section. As illustrated by the Legacy of Past Planning listing below, Littleton has other areas that have also merited special planning attention over the years, involving considerations such as historic preservation, transit-oriented development potential, commercial area and corridor revitalization, urban design, and neighborhood-focused planning, among others.

## LEGACY OF PAST PLANNING

- Belleview Avenue Corridor Vision, 2018
- Neighborhood and Corridor Plans, 2016
- Broadway Corridor Study, 1998
- Littleton Boulevard Corridor Study, 2002
- Commercial Modernism in the Greater West Littleton Boulevard Corridor 1950-1980, 2018
- Historic Context of Littleton, Colorado 1949-1967, 2008
- Historic Buildings Survey, 1999 and 2001
- Mineral Station Framework, 2018
- Mineral Station Area Urban Land Institute Technical Advisory Final, 2014
- Mineral Station Urban Land Institute Advisory Services Report, 2006
- Arapaho Hills National Historic District – Voluntary Design Guidelines, 2016
- Downtown Littleton Design Standards, 2018
- Downtown Littleton Historic Preservation Design Guidelines, 2011
- Louthan Heights Historic District Design Guidelines, 2017
- South Platte River Corridor Development Design Guidelines, 2000
- South Platte River Corridor Vision Plan, 1999

This Plan was developed, in part, by reviewing previous plans and studies prepared by the City. As the newest adopted statement of a unifying community vision and associated guiding principles, goals, and policies, this Plan replaces any and all Comprehensive Plans previously adopted by the City.

# SOUTH PLATTE RIVER CORRIDOR

Both the Comprehensive Plan and the City's first-ever Transportation Master Plan have focused especially on key corridors within and through Littleton. Along with traffic conditions along Santa Fe Drive, the community's cherished river corridor was the one touched on in most every planning conversation.

## ISSUES AND PRIORITIES

Both the river and Santa Fe corridors are where so many essential issues and priorities for Littleton's future converge, including:

- Environmental protection
- Downtown enhancement
- River and greenway accessibility
- Park and trail enhancement
- Open space and view preservation
- Traffic management and bicycle/pedestrian circulation
- Last remaining large pieces of undeveloped land in city
- Housing needs and opportunities
- Potential for river- and trail-oriented development in an era of "destination retail"
- City's tax base and long-term financial sustainability
- Community image and aesthetics
- Diverse needs and wants in a city with transitioning demographics
- How upgraded zoning and development standards could enhance corridor management

As a legacy of past planning, the river and Santa Fe corridors have had their share of both "successes" and "fails" over recent decades. One observer summed up the outlook for the area in this way: "The corridor is composed of multiple [public and private] property owners with differing expectations."

"South Platte Park is a national precedent-setting park. It is a highly valued recreational amenity, and also one of the best wildlife habitats in the Denver metro area. With more development around the park, we are seeing more varied users and more usage."

***Resource agency representative***

"The number 1, 2 and 3 most important issues facing Littleton are the Santa Fe corridor. But don't mess with the river – pay attention to the river. A lot of development has ignored the river and is disjointed up and down the corridor. We need cohesion with what is left. We could have dynamic development that is a sub-regional draw for shopping, entertainment and living."

***City advisory board member***

"Will land uses and transportation conditions in the area become prohibitive to [my business] continuing here?"

***Santa Fe Drive business owner***

## ANCHORED

The river corridor, along with the present-day BNSF railroad, are defining physical elements around which Littleton has developed. The Platte River, in particular, is a central component of what makes Littleton a special place and is a draw for both residents and visitors.

## AUTHENTIC

The natural habitat setting of the stretch of South Platte River that runs through Littleton, and the substantial preserved acreage within South Platte Park, are a result of Littleton's forethinking past civic leaders after the floods of the 1960s.

## CONNECTED

Santa Fe Drive, which runs parallel to the river, can be a barrier to accessing and enjoying the river corridor. Improving and maintaining connections between Downtown and the river is a priority.

## ACTIVE

The Mary Carter Greenway Trail, South Platte Park, the Carson Nature Center, and Hudson Gardens are among the features that attract outdoor recreation enthusiasts, bicycle commuters, and nature lovers to the river corridor.

## ENGAGED

Feedback and dialogue throughout the Envision process reaffirmed the importance of the river corridor to Littleton residents.

# KEY ISSUES AND CONSIDERATIONS

- What is next for a renewed and active Downtown Littleton given real and perceived challenges involving parking, housing turnover and affordability, retail mix and viability, and concerns about the scale and intensity of some recent redevelopment activity.
- Opportunity for a more vibrant and walkable Littleton Boulevard corridor without sacrificing its “hometown” appeal and historic assets.
- Desire to move beyond multiple South Platte River planning initiatives of the past, with limited implementation results, to establish a consensus vision that leads to tangible actions involving both resource protection and future river-oriented development.
- The urgent need to document community preferences and expectations for the future function, design and appearance of Santa Fe Drive as an essential framework for pending Colorado Department of Transportation studies that will delve into these very roadway corridor considerations.
- Spurring revitalization at and around the former Columbine Square retail site.
- The land use/transportation outlook for Broadway, especially if it continues to advance as a priority corridor in the Regional Transportation District’s Regional Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) Feasibility Study.
- The importance of Mineral Avenue (east of Santa Fe Drive) as a gateway to the distinctive SouthPark area, which is both a leading economic asset and a location for varied, attractive housing options – all within a Suburban character setting, and near rail transit.

# FRAMEWORK FOR ACTION

## GOALS

**GOAL S&D 1:** A downtown that continues to serve the entire community as a civic, historic, cultural, and economic focal point.

**GOAL S&D 2:** A future Littleton Boulevard that accommodates local businesses and nearby attainable housing options amid a more walkable setting of authentic neighborhoods and historic architecture.

**GOAL S&D 3:** An ecologically sound and exceptionally attractive South Platte River corridor, framed by sensitively planned land uses, that continues to anchor the trail and open space networks.

**GOAL S&D 4:** Roadway corridors that fulfill their primary transportation functions for drivers, pedestrians, cyclists, and public transit while advancing the community’s economic development, housing, and aesthetic interests.

## POLICIES

In making decisions that involve public resource allocation, regulatory matters, and physical improvements, among others, Littleton will:

**Policy S&D 1:** Amid the many competing priorities of municipal government, pursue new special area planning efforts only where there is commitment, including committed funding and other resources, to follow through on the resulting action agenda.

**Policy S&D 2:** Evaluate investment and revitalization opportunities in special planning areas always with an eye toward Littleton’s guiding principles of being Anchored, Authentic, Connected, Active, and Engaged, and the community character framework established in the Land Use and Community Character section.

**Policy S&D 3:** Emphasize quality urban design and cultivation of Littleton’s image in all special area investments involving both the public and private realms.

**Policy S&D 4:** Facilitate further dialogue when special area planning efforts reveal that community desires for land use and development design differ from market-driven considerations of property owners/developers.

**Policy S&D 5:** Promote development plans near transit stations that prioritize the pedestrian and are compatible with local tolerance for transit-supporting uses and design (e.g., as expressed in the Mineral Station Framework).

**Policy S&D 6:** Seek opportunities to engage public, private and non-profit partners in special area planning and implementation efforts, as appropriate, to leverage local funds with other resources and to explore ways to advance shared interests and multiple objectives through joint initiatives.

**Policy S&D 7:** Stay active in regional planning processes and decision-making forums with implications for special planning areas identified within Littleton.

# ACTIONS

## Capital Investments

**Action S&D 1:** Add criteria to the City's capital improvements planning process to prioritize capital projects that will respond to and capitalize on unique opportunities in a targeted special planning area but will also result in much broader community benefits.

**Action S&D 2:** Continue to expand wayfinding and community identity/branding investments in more areas of the city.

## Programs and Initiatives

**Action S&D 3:** Adapt the City's fiscal impact analysis tools and methods for use in evaluating potential policies or actions in particular sub-areas of the community.

**Action S&D 4:** Explore the potential for a more formal and systematic program for expanding and prioritizing Littleton's public art installations, utilizing creative funding methods.

## Regulations and Standards

**Action S&D 5:** As part of the City's zoning and code update initiative, evaluate the potential for:

- Creating additional zoning districts and/or provisions customized for specific areas of the city, especially for maintaining or achieving certain community character conditions and to address other plan priorities (e.g., open space protection, historic preservation, etc.).
- Creating a new zoning district and associated standards specifically for mixed-use development proposals, with built-in parameters and flexibility to accommodate the varied settings encompassed by the Corridor Mixed Use designation on the Future Land Use and Character Map (i.e., Belleview Avenue, Broadway, Littleton Boulevard and Santa Fe Drive).
- Adjusting the zoning districts and/or strategy for Downtown Littleton, where multiple districts currently apply and where this may allow for character discrepancies (e.g., the current "CA" Central Area Multiple Use District allowing auto-oriented uses in Downtown).
- Especially for Downtown, revisiting the overall zoning approach to parking management to support desired character, and given the many changes in this area of planning practice in recent years.

## Partnerships and Coordination

**Action S&D 6:** Draw upon the many potential public, private and non-profit partners itemized in earlier plan sections, as appropriate to a particular geographic area of focus within the city.

## More Targeted Planning / Study

**Action S&D 7:** As first and second priorities for further special area planning following adoption of the Plan:

- Pursue a corridor planning effort focused on both Santa Fe Drive and the parallel South Platte River corridor, especially to get ahead of the Planning and Environmental Linkages (PEL) study to be initiated soon by the Colorado Department of Transportation as a first step toward any future substantial design changes to Santa Fe.

- Pursue a Downtown Master Plan, especially to explore potential funding and administrative mechanisms for capitalizing on opportunities and overcoming challenges in an active, successful downtown setting (e.g., parking, traffic management, heritage protection, additional public space, aesthetic enhancements, security, ongoing programming and event management, etc.).

# IMPLEMENTATION

# IMPLEMENTATION

With Envision Littleton (the Plan), the City of Littleton and other partner agencies and organizations have an essential new document that should be frequently referred to for guidance in community decision-making. The Plan should be a "living document" that responds to change. Its key planning considerations, goals, policies, and action strategies must be revisited periodically to ensure that the Plan is providing clear and reliable direction on a range of matters, including land development issues and public investments in infrastructure and services.

Implementation is not just a list of action items. It is a challenging process that requires the commitment of the City's elected and appointed officials, staff, residents, business owners, major institutions, other levels of government, and other organizations and individuals who will serve as champions of the Plan and its particular direction and strategies. Among its purposes, this final Plan section highlights specific roles, responsibilities and methods of implementation to execute plan recommendations. Equally important are formalized procedures for the ongoing monitoring and reporting of successes achieved, difficulties encountered, and new opportunities and challenges that emerge after Plan adoption. This is in addition to any other change in circumstances, which may require rethinking of plan priorities. Scheduled plan evaluations and updates, as described later in this section, will help maintain its relevance and credibility as the policy and action guide for the City.

## PLAN ADMINISTRATION

During the development of this Plan, representatives of government, business, community groups, and others came together to inform the visioning and planning processes. These community leaders – and new ones that will emerge over the horizon of this Plan – must maintain their commitment to the ongoing implementation and updating of the plan's goals, policies and action strategies.

## LEADERSHIP ALIGNMENT

While long-range plans such as Envision Littleton are relatively general they are still complex policy documents that attempt to balance various policy objectives. Engaging decision-makers and administrators about plan implementation is an important first step after plan adoption. As the principal groups that will implement the Plan, City management and department heads, the City Council, and Planning Commission should all be in agreement with regard to priorities, responsibilities, and interpretations.

Consequently, City management should arrange to convene those listed above immediately after Plan adoption, to include:

- A discussion of the respective roles and responsibilities of the Council, Planning Commission (and other City advisory Boards/Commissions), and City departments and staff;
- A thorough overview of the entire Envision Littleton Plan, with emphasis on the parts of the Plan that relate to each group;
- Implementation tasking and priority setting, which should establish a one-year and three-year implementation agenda; and
- An in-depth question and answer session, with support from the City Attorney and other key staff.

## DEFINITION OF ROLES

As the community's elected officials, the City Council should assume the lead role in implementing the Plan. The key responsibilities of the City Council are to decide and establish priorities, set timeframes by which actions will be initiated and completed, and determine the budget to be made available for implementation efforts. Based on this City Council direction, the City Manager and staff must help to ensure effective coordination among the groups that are responsible for carrying out the plan's action strategies.

### City Council

The City Council should take the lead in the following general areas:

- Adopting and amending the Plan, when necessary and appropriate, after recommendation by the Planning Commission (and with input from other City Boards/Commissions depending on the subject of a proposed amendment).
- Acting as a champion of the Plan.
- Establishing the overall implementation priorities and timeframes by which action strategies in the Plan will be initiated and completed.
- Considering and approving necessary funding commitments.
- Directing staff to draft new or amended zoning and subdivision regulations.
- Adopting the new or amended zoning and subdivision regulations.
- Approving intergovernmental and development agreements that implement the Plan.
- Approving projects, activities, and budgets that are consistent with the Plan, during the City's annual budget process.
- Providing policy direction to the Planning Commission, other appointed City boards and commissions, and City staff.

## Planning Commission

The Planning Commission should take the lead in the following general areas:

- Ensuring that recommendations forwarded to the City Council are reflective of Plan goals, policies and priority action strategies.
- After holding one or more public hearings to discuss new or evolving community issues and needs, making recommendations to the City Council regarding plan updates and plan amendments.

## City Staff

City staff should take the lead in the following general areas:

- Managing day-to-day implementation of the Plan, including coordination through an interdepartmental plan implementation committee.
- Supporting and carrying out capital improvement planning efforts.
- Managing the drafting of new or amended zoning and subdivision regulations.
- Conducting studies and developing additional special-purpose and/or special area plans.
- Reviewing land development applications for consistency with Envision Littleton.
- Providing an economic analysis for any proposed rezoning.
- Negotiating the specifics of intergovernmental and development agreements.
- Administering collaborative programs and ensuring open channels of communication with various private, public, and non-profit partners.
- Maintaining an inventory of potential plan amendments, as suggested by City staff and others, for consideration during annual and periodic plan review and update processes.
- Generating and presenting an annual report to the Planning Commission and City Council concerning progress toward implementation of Envision Littleton.
- Periodically obtaining public input to keep the Plan up to date, using a variety of community outreach methods.

# Roles and Responsibilities

## City Council

As the leader of plan implementation, the key responsibilities of the City Council are to decide and establish priorities, set timeframes by which each action strategy will be initiated and completed, and determine the budget to be made available for implementation efforts. In conjunction with the City Manager, the City Council must also ensure effective coordination among the various groups that are responsible for carrying out the plan's action strategies.

## Planning Commission

The Planning Commission makes recommendations to the City Council based on plan principles. The Commission should prepare an Annual Progress Report to ensure plan relevance.

## City Management and Staff

City staff manage the day-to-day implementation of the plan. In particular, City staff are responsible for supporting the City Council, Planning Commission and other City boards/commissions.

# ACTION AGENDA

The Plan goals will ultimately be attained through a multitude of actions as itemized in each Plan section. The action strategies are categorized as to whether they involve: (1) capital investments, (2) programs and initiatives, (3) regulations and standards, (4) partnerships and coordination, or (5) more targeted planning/study. These actions must be prioritized by the City to establish a shorter "to do" list of strategic priorities, their potential timing, and who initiates, administers, and participates in the implementation process.

Determining a near-term action agenda relative to longer-term tasks is an important first step toward Plan implementation. This is done through direction set by City Council in alignment with the Priority Based Budgeting Process. Action priorities are also set during Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) preparation and through departmental work planning. Once the necessary funding is committed and roles are defined, a lead City staff member should initiate a first-year work program in conjunction with City management, other departments, and other public and private implementation partners.

The near-term action priorities should be revisited by City officials and staff annually to recognize accomplishments, highlight areas where further attention and effort are needed, and determine whether items have moved up or down on the priority list given emerging needs and changing circumstances, including funding and resources. It should be kept in mind that early implementation of certain items, while perhaps not the uppermost Plan priorities, may be expedited by the availability of related grant funds, by a state or federal mandate, or by the eagerness of one or more partners to pursue an initiative with the City. At the same time, some high-priority items may prove difficult to tackle in the near term due to budget constraints, the lack of a lead entity or individual to carry the initiative forward, or by the community's hesitation to take on a potentially controversial new program.

Progress on the near-term items should be the focus of the first annual review and report a year after adoption of the Plan, as described later in this section. Then, similar to multi-year capital improvements programming, the entire near-term action agenda – and all other action strategies dispersed throughout the Plan sections – should be revisited annually to decide if any additional items are ready to move into the next near-term action timeframe, and what the priority should be.

# ENVISION LITTLETON AMENDMENT PROCESS

Envision Littleton is a flexible document allowing for adjustment to changing conditions. Shifts in political, economic, physical, technological, and social conditions, and other unforeseen circumstances, may influence and change the priorities and fiscal outlook of the community. As Littleton evolves, new issues will emerge while others will no longer be as relevant. Some action items will be found impractical or outdated while other plausible solutions will arise. To ensure that it continues to reflect the overall goals of the community and remains relevant over time, the Plan must be revisited regularly.

Revisions to Envision Littleton are two-fold, with *minor plan amendments* occurring at least every other year and *more significant updates and modifications* occurring every five years. As an example, a minor amendment could include revisions to certain elements of the Plan as a result of the adoption of another specialized plan. Major updates will involve: reviewing the community's base conditions and anticipated population trends; re-evaluating the plan findings and formulating new ones as necessary; and adding, revising, or removing action strategies in the Plan based on implementation progress.

## Annual Progress Report

City staff should prepare an annual progress report for presentation to the Planning Commission, Mayor, and City Council. This ensures that the Plan is consistently reviewed and that any needed modifications or clarifications are identified for the biennial minor plan amendment process. Ongoing monitoring of consistency between the Plan and the City's regulations should be an essential part of this effort.

The Annual Progress Report should include and highlight:

- Significant actions and accomplishments during the last year, including the implementation status of each programmed task.
- Obstacles or problems in implementing the Plan.
- Proposed content amendments that have come forward during the year.

- Recommendations for needed actions, programs, and procedures to be developed and implemented in the coming year.
- Priority coordination needs with public and private implementation partners.

## Biennial Amendment Process

Plan amendments should occur on at least a biennial basis (every two years), allowing for proposed changes to be considered concurrently so the cumulative effects may be understood. Factors that should be considered in deciding on a proposed plan amendment include:

- Consistency with the goals, policies, and action strategies in the Plan.
- Potential effects on infrastructure provision including water, wastewater, storm water drainage, and the transportation network.
- Potential effects on the City's ability to provide, fund, and maintain services.
- Potential effects on environmentally sensitive and natural areas.
- Whether the proposed amendment contributes to the overall direction and character of the community as captured in the Plan vision and goals, and reflected in public input.

## Five-Year Update / Evaluation and Appraisal Report

An evaluation and appraisal report to City Council should be prepared every five years. This report should be prepared by City staff with input from City departments, the Planning Commission, and other boards and commissions. The report process involves evaluating the existing Plan and assessing how successful it has been in achieving the community's goals. The report identifies the successes and shortcomings of the Plan, looks at what has changed over the last five years, and makes recommendations on how the Plan should be modified.

The report should review baseline conditions and assumptions about trends and growth indicators. It should also evaluate implementation potential and/or obstacles related to any unaddressed major action strategies. The evaluation report and process should result in a strategy to amend the Plan, including identification of new or revised information that may lead to updated goals and action strategies.

The report should identify and evaluate:

1. Summary of major actions and interim plan amendments undertaken over the last five years.
2. Current significant issues in the community and how these issues have changed.
3. Changes in the assumptions, trends, and base data in the Existing City Data Book, including:

- The rate at which growth and development is occurring relative to the projections put forward in the Plan.
- Shifts in demographics and other growth trends.
- City-wide attitudes, and whether apparent shifts, if significant, necessitate amendments to the stated goals or action strategies of the Plan.
- Other changes in political, social, economic, technological, or environmental conditions that indicate a need for Plan amendments.

4. Ability of the Plan to continue to support progress toward achieving the community's goals. The following should be evaluated and revised as needed:

- Individual sections and statements within the Plan must be reviewed and revised, as necessary, to ensure that the Plan provides sufficient information and direction to achieve the intended outcome.
- Conflicts between goals and action strategies that have been discovered in the implementation and administration of the Plan must be pointed out and resolved.

- The list of priority actions must be reviewed and major accomplishments highlighted. Those not completed by the specified timeframe should be re-evaluated to ensure their continued relevance and/or to revise them appropriately.
- Lessons learned by the City in the case of mistakes, missed opportunities, or other barriers to achieving goals should be discussed.
- As conditions change, the timeframes for implementing major actions in the Plan should be re-evaluated where necessary. Some actions may emerge as a higher priority given new or changed circumstances while others may become less important to achieving the goals and development objectives of the community.
- Based upon organizational and procedural factors, and the status of assigned tasks, the implementation of task assignments must be reviewed and altered, as needed, to ensure timely accomplishment of the Plan's action strategies.
- Changes in laws, procedures and missions may affect the community's ability to achieve its goals. The Plan review must assess these changes and their impacts on the success of implementation, leading to any suggested revisions in strategies or priorities.

## Ongoing Community Outreach and Engagement

All review processes and updates related to the Plan should emphasize and incorporate ongoing public input. The annual and continual plan evaluation and reporting processes should also incorporate specific performance measures and quantitative indicators that can be compiled and communicated both internally and to elected officials and residents in a "report card" fashion.

Examples might include:

- Acres of new development and redevelopment (plus number of residential units by type and square footage of nonresidential space) approved and constructed in conformance with the Plan and Littleton's development regulations.
- Measures of service capacity added to the City's utility infrastructure systems – and the number of dollars allocated to fund the capital projects.
- New and expanded businesses, added jobs, and associated tax revenue gains through economic development initiatives.
- Lane miles of new or rehabilitated road, plus bike, pedestrian, transit, and other improvements added to Littleton's transportation system that increase mobility options.
- Dollar value of park and recreation improvement projects, and miles of trail developed or improved.
- Quantitative measures of historic preservation activity (e.g., landmarked structures, properties within historic districts, etc.).
- Indicators of the benefits from redeveloped sites and structures (appraised value, increased property and/or sales tax revenue, new residential units, retail and office spaces in mixed-use settings, etc.).
- The numbers of residents and other stakeholders engaged through City-sponsored education and outreach events related to Envision Littleton implementation and periodic review and updating, as outlined in this section.

# APPENDIX 1: GLOSSARY

# GLOSSARY

Below are definitions for certain unusual or technical terms, as used in the Comprehensive Plan.

**Adaptive reuse** – Rehabilitation or renovation of an existing building or structure for any use(s) other than the present use(s).

**Aging in place** – The ability to remain in one's own home or community as one ages.

**Beautification –** The process of making visual improvements to an area, including but not limited to landscaping, lighting, or pavement improvements, signage standards, litter or graffiti removal, or installation of public art.

**Best management practices** (BMPs) – Products, techniques, or methods that have been shown to be the most reliable and effective way to meet an objective or carry out an initiative (e.g., to minimize adverse impacts on natural resources through storm water management BMPs).

**Bus Rapid Transit (BRT)** – A bus-based public transit system combining the quality of rail transit and the flexibility and economics of a traditional bus system. BRT systems are usually constructed on designated multimodal corridors.

**Clean Air Act** – A federal law, first passed in 1970, the purpose of which is to regulate air pollution in the United States.

**Community Development Block Grant (CDBG)** – A grant program administered by the U.S.

Department of Housing and Urban Development that allots money to cities and counties for housing rehabilitation and community development, including public facilities and economic development.

**Fiscal impact analysis** – A projection of the direct public costs and revenues resulting from population, employment, and/or land use change to the local jurisdiction(s) in which the change is taking place. The analysis enables local governments to evaluate relative fiscal merits of general plans, specific plans, or projects.

**Fiscal sustainability** – The ability of a government to sustain its spending, tax, and other policies in the long run without threatening government solvency or defaulting on its liabilities or promised expenditures.

**Green infrastructure** – Natural areas that provide habitat and contribute to reduced flood risk, cleaner air, and/or cleaner water.

**Housing stock** – The total dwelling units, of all types, in an area.

**Impact fee** – A fee charged by local governments to developers as a total or partial reimbursement for the cost of providing additional public facilities or services needed as a direct result of new development.

**Infill construction** – Development within the boundaries of an already-developed area. (Littleton Citywide Plan 2014)

**Intergovernmental agreements** – A contractual agreement between a jurisdiction and another governmental entity.

**Land bank –** A governmental or nongovernmental nonprofit entity established, at least in part, to assemble, temporarily manage, and dispose of vacant land for the purpose of stabilizing neighborhoods and encouraging re-use or redevelopment of property.

**Lifelong community** – A place that is a great place to live for people of all ages, throughout their life span.

**Low-impact development (LID)** – An alternative comprehensive approach to storm water management, as part of land planning and engineering design, that emphasizes conservation and use of on-site natural features to protect water quality and associated aquatic habitat.

**Low-Income Housing Tax Credits** – Created by the Tax Reform Act of 1986, a federal program that issues tax credits for the acquisition, rehabilitation, or new construction of rental housing targeted to lower-income households.

**Mixed-use development** – A tract of land or building(s) developed for two or more different uses such as, but not limited to, residential, office, manufacturing, retail, public, or entertainment. "Horizontal mixed use" involves arrangement of multiple uses side by side, especially in single-story buildings. "Vertical mixed use" involves multiple uses combined within a multi-story building (e.g., upper-floor office and/or residential use above ground-floor retail).

**Multi-use trail** – Also referred to as shared-use paths, facilities separated from motorized vehicular traffic and used by pedestrians, skaters, wheelchair users, bicyclist, joggers, and other non-motorized users.

**Planned Development** – A zone district granted for a parcel of land originally owned by a single owner or entity involving a unified site design for all elements of the development including, but not limited to: residential, commercial, industrial and mixed uses; public and private open spaces; and transportation patterns. (Littleton Zoning code)

**Redevelopment** – Any new construction on a site that has pre-existing uses. (Littleton Citywide Plan 2014)

**Revitalization** – Public and/or private sector efforts and investments to spur renewed economic and community life in an area at risk of decline (e.g., a district, corridor, neighborhood, etc.). Sometimes involves a balancing of considerations to avoid loss of original building/housing stock, historic assets, and potential displacement of existing residents, businesses, institutions, etc.

**Streetscape** – The area within a street right-of-way that contains sidewalks, street furniture, landscaping and/or street trees, and other design enhancements (e.g., pavers, water features, enhanced esplanades, branding and wayfinding signage, etc.).

**Subdivision regulations** – The regulations that govern a jurisdiction's review and approval of plats for subdividing land and installing infrastructure and other required site improvements, with standards for subdivision design and improvements.

**Tree canopy** – Area of the tree above ground including the trunk and branches.

**View protection** – Measures to protect the view of a specified feature or vista from particular points, usually through regulation of building placement and limits on building height and size.

**Walkability** – A measure of how friendly an area is to walking. Influencing factors include the presence and quality of footpaths, sidewalks, or other pedestrian rights-of-way, traffic and road conditions, land-use patterns, building accessibility, and safety. (Littleton Citywide Plan 2014)

**Wayfinding** – Encompasses all of the ways in which people orient themselves in physical space and navigate from place to place. (Littleton Citywide Plan 2014)

**Xeriscape** – Landscaping which is specifically intended to achieve water conservation. (Littleton Zoning code)

**Zoning** – The regulation of land uses, the location of those uses, site configurations, and size of structures. (Littleton Citywide Plan 2014)

# APPENDIX 2: ENVISION LITTLETON 2040 REPORT

ADOPTED

# Envision Report

December 18, 2018

Envision
LITTLETON
*Our Community. Our Future.*

# 2040

# VISION 2040

### FROM WHAT WE TREASURE TODAY ...

Littleton will continue to be a hometown community that is widely known and envied as a city with "strong bones." Among the features that earn Littleton this reputation are its historic and vibrant downtown, its light rail transit link to the Denver region, and its distinguishing yet often unseen natural asset, the South Platte River. Along with the highly utilized greenway, trails, and preserves that frame the Platte, residents and visitors also prize the High Line Canal Trail that weaves through the city.

Littleton will especially be held up as the "real thing" when it comes to maintaining a sense of community among its residents and managing the essential physical traits that define community character, neighborhood by distinct neighborhood.

It will remain a place where nature and city living intersect, can both be enjoyed, and are guarded with a fierce sense of stewardship.

### ... TO WHAT WE STRIVE FOR GOING FORWARD

We recognize that our vision for Littleton's future is framed differently than many communities as we are a largely built-out city. As we focus on managing change amid this reality, we envision a Littleton in 2040 that has:

- Maintained the integrity of its established neighborhoods and historic areas.
- Protected its cherished natural setting in harmony with new development and redevelopment.
- Ensured that reinvestment in the community, whether in Littleton's legacy housing stock or along its commercial corridors, has met local expectations for quality and compatibility with its surroundings.
- Made itself even safer and more accessible for all the ways that people navigate through and within Littleton.
- Achieved a higher standard for cleanliness and burnished its appeal as a place with strikingly beautiful vistas.
- Secured the long-term sustainability of city finances to continue providing its citizens the best in public services.

# VALUES

In listening to stories and memories about Littleton, along with residents' desires and concerns for its future, the following values came through consistently. The bulleted items under each are examples of how those expressing such values related them to their own experience of or pride in Littleton. Many communities share common values, issues, and priorities (e.g., to be a safe place). **Littleton's core values include a passion for and/or commitment to:**

### LOCAL HISTORY
- Preserve and celebrate it
- Highlight and tie it to our identity and events
- Origin as own town, rural and later suburban heritage
- Build on accomplishments of past eras and leaders

### THE OUTDOORS
- Health and fitness focus
- Front Range proximity
- Stewardship of river and open space assets

### BEING INCLUSIVE
- Age, race, income, and faith diversity
- Housing options
- Neighbors knowing neighbors
- Caring for those in need
- Welcoming to families, newcomers, and visitors

### BEING A MODEL COMMUNITY
- Leader among metro and Colorado cities
- High in livability, family-friendly, and other rankings
- Partnerships with other public agencies

### CIVIC INVOLVEMENT
- Being informed citizens
- Having a voice in city government
- Volunteer service

### INTEGRITY
- Of community and neighborhood character
- Of natural resources and open space endowment
- Of architectural heritage and landmarks
- Of governance and open, inclusive processes

### QUALITY
- Schools
- Built environment
- Air and water
- Open space
- Public services

### SAFETY
- Pedestrian/cyclist/driver safety
- Security from crime
- Child protection

ADOPTED Envision Report December 18, 2018

# GUIDING PRINCIPLES

**Even in the face of potentially significant demographic change ahead, Littleton will remain ANCHORED by a firm belief among its residents and leaders of what makes this a truly special place.** These features include Littleton's traditional downtown, established neighborhoods, and the literal "river that runs through it" in the South Platte. Littleton also has a longstanding reputation as a community of choice for quality schools and is home to the Arapahoe Community College main campus. Serving as the Arapahoe County seat, a destination for health care, and a hub for cultural and lifestyle amenities also keeps a consistent conception of Littleton in the minds of residents and visitors. Although stable in these various ways today, Littleton will approach its future with a sense of dynamism, looking to draw upon a culture of innovation and boldness inherited from earlier generations.

**Littleton will continue to be AUTHENTIC and comfortable for both residents and guests.** The often-cited "small town feel" and sense of community dates to our origin as a "Little Town" separate and apart from Denver. Littleton will continue to stand out in the region for its distinctive identity. Its genuine sense of place will always be contrasted with the look and feel of cities that came along much later or were master planned from scratch. The essential threads that will continue to sustain this community fabric include Littleton's historic character and architectural heritage, its varied neighborhoods and residential options, a robust and service-oriented faith community, and an inviting and safe atmosphere.

**Littleton will be an increasingly CONNECTED and accessible place.** From a physical and mobility standpoint, it will continue to have regional ties via highways and arterials, transit services, long-distance trails, and the Mary Carter Greenway. Evolving technology and network speeds will link it even more to the nation and world. It will be an inclusive and neighborly community that provides opportunities for youth, seniors, and residents in need to thrive, including through more mobility options. Littleton will also remain a fun and eventful locale throughout the year, bringing residents together for leisure and volunteer activities, and drawing visitors from near and far.

**Littleton will always be a community of ACTIVE people who make the most of their city's cultural and natural resource abundance.** It will support its residents' efforts to be fit and maintain a healthy lifestyle. It will embrace their desire to gather for live performances and other local happenings. And it will appreciate and build on the value of a lively downtown. Littleton will always seek to elevate its position as a dream community for outdoor recreation and nature enthusiasts – and a destination for visitors wishing to share in these local amenities.

**Littleton will remain ENGAGED and civic-minded in all matters affecting the direction and priorities of city government and the community.** Stakeholders will participate in transparent processes and take responsibility for maintaining a respectful and productive dialogue. Meaningful interactions must involve committed elected officials, informed residents, and other partner organizations and agencies interested in Littleton as it is today and will be tomorrow.

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# COMMON GROUND – SHARED PRIORITIES AND CONCERNS

The Envision Littleton survey asked residents what they value most about living in Littleton as well as concerns they have for the future of Littleton. In addition to the survey, the Envision team held over 100 events and had almost 3,000 in-person conversations. These helped to validate the survey results and enabled more "drill down" questions and interaction. Analysis of this input revealed that while there are various features and considerations about Littleton that people do not always agree on, many people share basic values that are reflected in the vision and guiding principles. Related to the lists below of most frequently cited priorities and concerns, examples of such underlying values include emphasis on fitness and healthy living, appreciation of natural assets and the outdoors, and interest in having a safe, inclusive, neighborly, and visually attractive community.

## SHARED PRIORITIES

The following elements consistently came up as being valued in Littleton (sometimes to register concern about how an element might change or be threatened):

- Parks, trails, and open space (along the South Platte River, canals, and creeks and within neighborhoods)
- Small town feel and community
- Downtown Littleton
- Littleton Public Schools
- Safety
- Accessibility (having a variety of ways to get around Littleton as well as connect to Denver and other parts of the region)
- Amenities (such as Bemis Library and the Littleton Museum) and events (such as Western Welcome Week)

## SHARED CONCERNS

The following elements consistently came up as being concerns about the future of Littleton, although in many instances there was significant variation as to why people were concerned about an issue:

- Traffic
- Growth impacts
- Compatibility of redevelopment
- Downtown parking
- Crime and safety
- Affordability
- Contentious local politics

**"The traffic, as is, is unsustainable, in 20 years it will be worse. It has to be addressed."**

**"Crime seems to be going up."**

"Littleton is a great city to live in. It has a nice small-town feel and great amenities, including parks and local shops."

"I have two sons, one currently of school age, and Littleton schools are some of the best around. Additionally my family and I have enjoyed, even prior to living here, the Downtown Littleton area, trails, Chatfield, basically all that Littleton has to offer. It's the whole enchilada."

**"Affordability - home prices are making it tough to attract new residents, especially younger working professionals."**

"I could think of no other city I would wish to live."

"Littleton is a special place in the greater Denver Metro area. It has maintained its history in terms of community that is reflected in parks, common areas, buildings, walkability, friendliness, etc."

Quotes from Envision survey respondents.

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# SMALL TOWN FEEL AND COMMUNITY – WHAT DOES IT MEAN?

Over 150 survey responses cited “Small Town Feel” when asked to list words that represent what they value about Littleton. In addition, more than 100 survey responses mentioned "Community" or "Community Feel," and similar comments were made repeatedly during in-person discussions. This was not surprising to the planning consultants on the Envision team as they hear these sentiments in most every city they work with, from small burgs of several thousand residents to cities with populations into the hundreds of thousands. The challenge is that "small town feel" and "a sense of community" can mean different things to different people, and they remain abstract concepts unless clarified. Based on lengthier survey comments, focus groups, community coffee chats, and in-depth discussions at community events, the highly valued "small town feel" and "community feel" that exists in Littleton stems from the following:

## Stable Population

Many Littleton residents grew up in Littleton, stayed for a lifetime after moving here, or have family that also live in Littleton.

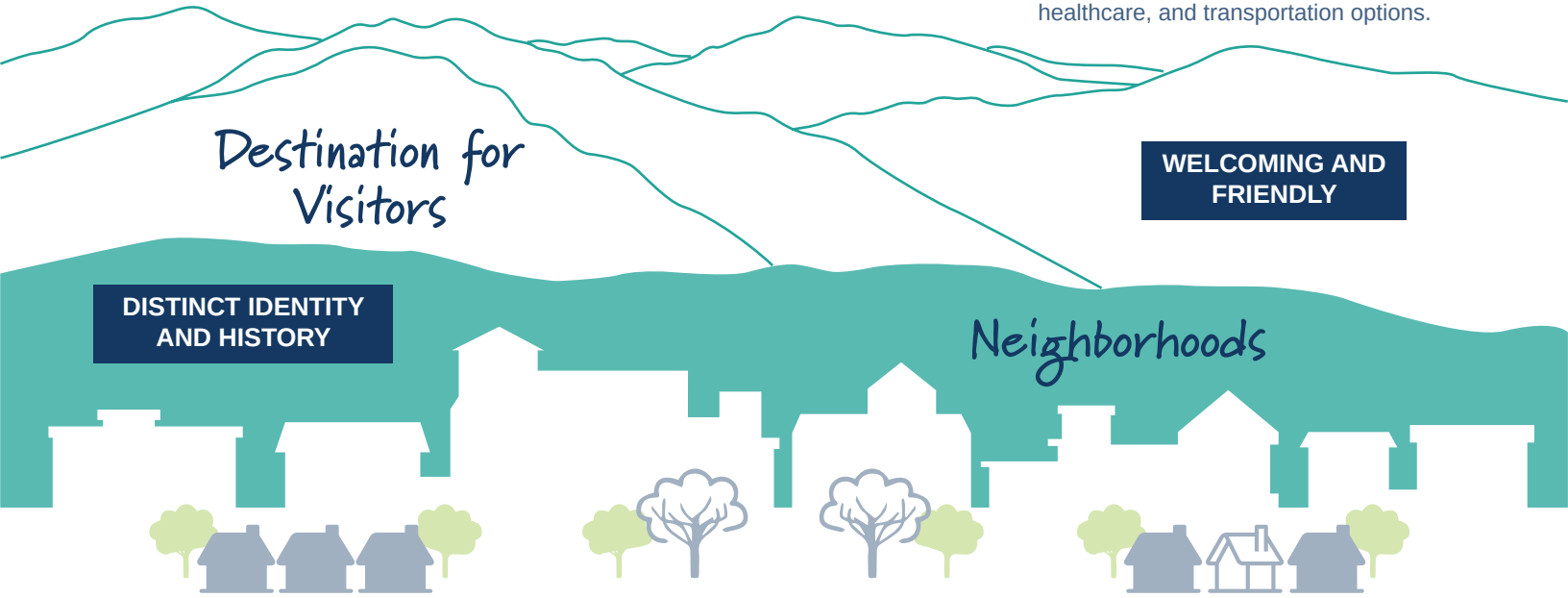
## Active in Daytime

Littleton is an active daytime city versus a sleepy “bedroom community."

**SAFE**

## Complete Community

Littleton has many more pieces in place than others in aiming to be a complete community with homes, businesses, schools, diverse places of worship, outdoor recreation and health and fitness amenities, entertainment, healthcare, and transportation options.



## Destination for Visitors

**WELCOMING AND FRIENDLY**

**DISTINCT IDENTITY AND HISTORY**

## Neighborhoods

## Gathering Places

Littleton has community gathering places - including Downtown Littleton, local businesses, Hudson Gardens, the Aspen Grove lifestyle center, Littleton parks, Bemis Library, and the Littleton Museum.

**FAMILY AND SENIOR FRIENDLY**

**ENGAGED AND PROUD CITIZENS**

## Community Events

## Quality Schools

**SUPERIOR PUBLIC SERVICES**

**ACCESSIBLE CITY OFFICIALS**

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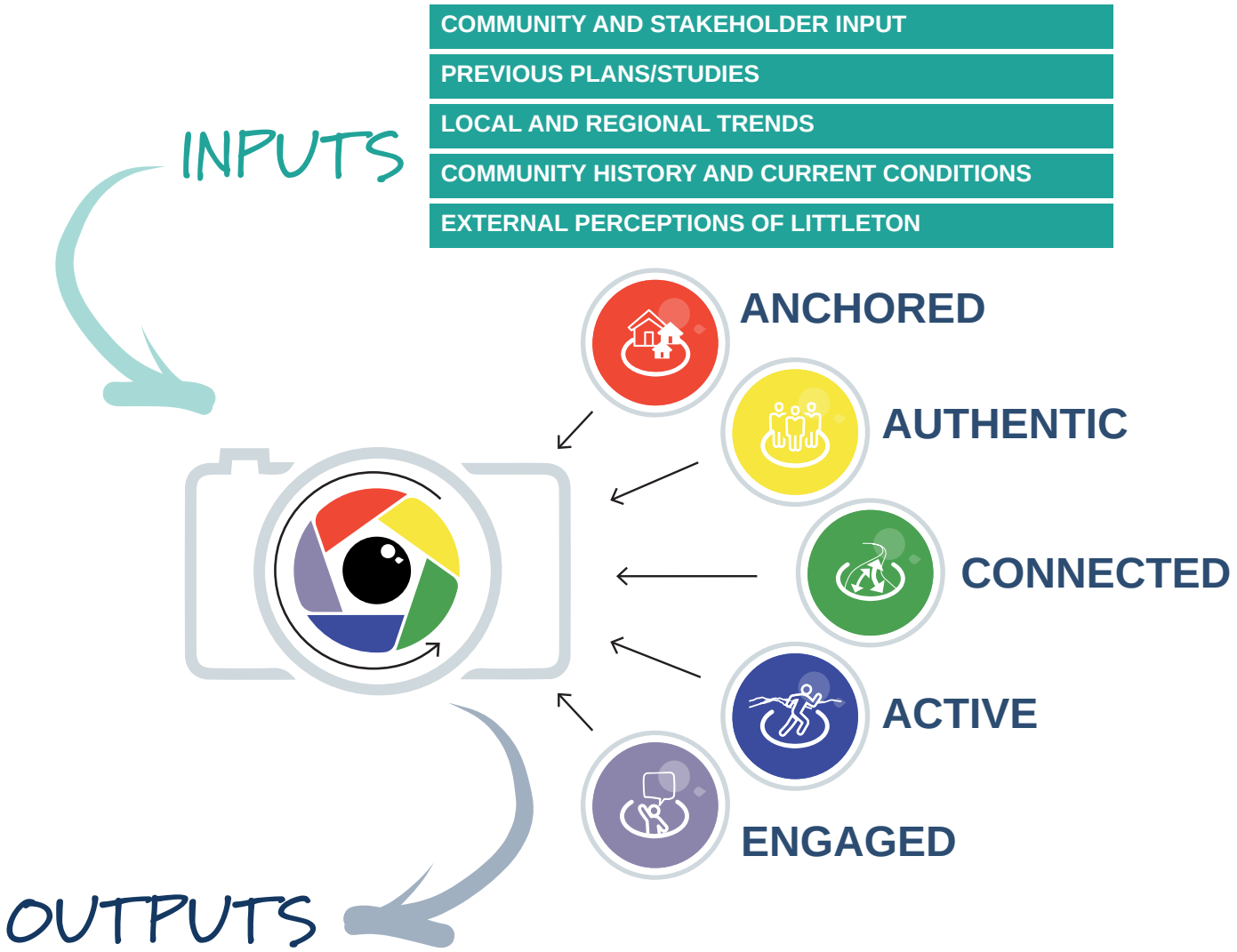
# WHY UNDERTAKE A VISIONING PROCESS AND HOW WILL IT BE USED?

**Littleton has always been a great place and we want it to stay that way!** Without a vision to define shared community values, decisions that impact those shared values will be made without a solid foundation. The vision will provide a guide to help the city and others make decisions, inform policy, and ensure our community never loses its heart and soul—**what makes Littleton, Littleton**—as it continues to grow and thrive. Envision Littleton has involved a filtering process of sorts. The Envision Team sifted through many essential yet disparate inputs, including expressed hopes and concerns and stated priorities of both community leaders and residents, to work toward more focused outputs. This is similar to how light and images are filtered through a camera as illustrated below:




### VALUES-BASED DECISION MAKING

- Vision Statement
- Guiding Principles

### DIRECTION FOR COMPREHENSIVE PLAN PHASE

- Data / information needs
- Ongoing engagement priorities

### FOUNDATION FOR ACTIONS ALREADY IN MOTION

- Comprehensive Plan
- Transportation Master Plan
- Special Area Plans
- Ongoing updates to zoning code and standards
- New and renewed partnerships

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# WHY NOW?

### VISION BEFORE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

Littleton will develop a new Comprehensive Plan in 2019. The Comprehensive Plan goals, and its more fine-grained policies and objectives, will be based on the **Values, Guiding Principles, and Vision** identified through Envision Littleton. The first phase allowed the Envision Team to develop new relationships in the community with residents, organizations, and businesses, to build upon during the Comprehensive Plan process. Envision Littleton also exposed data gaps and areas and topics of contention or disagreement to focus on during the Comprehensive Plan phase.

### BUILDING ON RECENT AND EARLIER EFFORTS IN LITTLETON

Envision Littleton builds upon the extensive existing planning work undertaken by the city as well as regional and local organizations. These existing, and in some cases ongoing planning efforts provide a baseline of data and ideas that will inform both this Vision Report and the 2019 Comprehensive Plan.

- **Recent City of Littleton Plans (LittletonPlans.org)**
  - 2014 “Citywide Plan”
  - Belleview Avenue Corridor Vision
  - Mineral Station Area Framework
  - Littleton Downtown Design Standards
- **Earlier Comprehensive Plans, Corridor Plans, and other Special Area Plans, both adopted and unadopted**
- **City of Littleton Resident and Business Surveys (2012, 2014, 2016, 2018)**
- **Littleton Housing Study**
- **Recent publications on Littleton's history and architectural heritage**
- **Regional and Local Partner Plans**
  - South Platte River Corridor Vision
  - High Line Canal Conservancy Vision
  - South Suburban Parks and Recreation Master Plan
  - RTD (Regional Transportation District) 2015-2020 Strategic Plan
  - DRCOG (Denver Regional Council of Governments) Metro Vision

# KEY TERMS
## USED IN VISION REPORT

*Envision Littleton*—Envision Littleton is a community-driven process to develop a vision for Littleton that will directly inform the city’s plans for the next 10-20 years. Envision Littleton imagines the future of the community. We listened to what you value, why you love Littleton, and your ideas about the future. This vision is the initial step in a larger process to update the city's Comprehensive Plan and prepare a first-ever Transportation Master Plan.

*Vision*—A broad statement of what a community hopes and intends to be in the future. With words and images, it offers a picture of that future to provide inspiration, motivation, and a framework for more detailed planning and decision-making.

*Guiding Principles*—Describe the values identified by the community and serve as the foundation for the Vision. The Guiding Principles provide a reference point for Littleton to consider when making decisions. The guiding principles reflect major themes, or areas of focus, for achieving the desired vision that emerged based on analysis of input by stakeholders.

*Values*—Identify what matters most to the community and how it wishes to be viewed by others. Our shared values inform the vision.

# PROCESS OVERVIEW

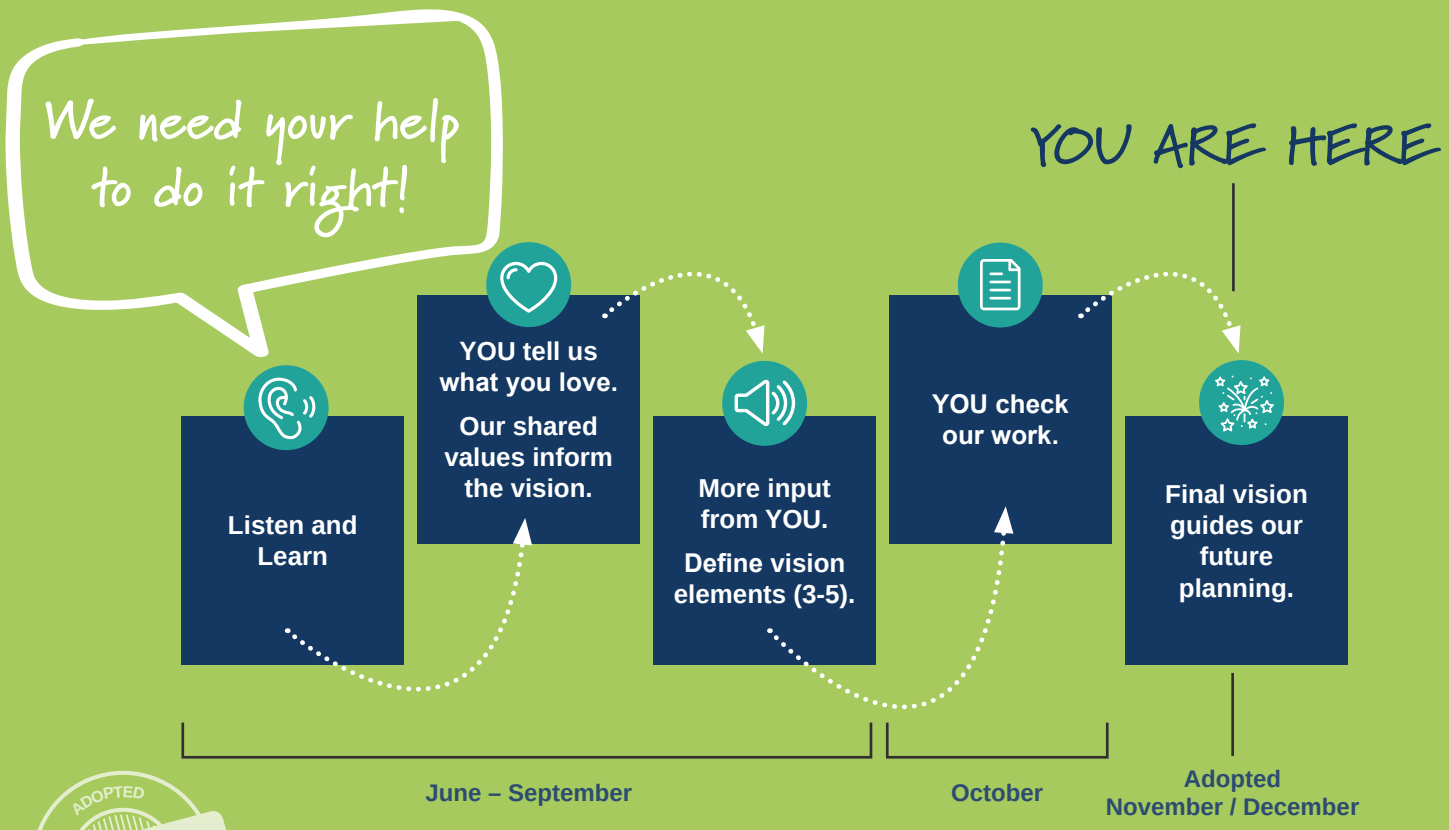
The goals of the Envision Littleton community engagement were to tailor the engagement to each group, go to the community where they were already gathering, and build long-term relationships, awareness, and engagement throughout all phases of Envision Littleton.

During both the first visioning phase and the second comprehensive plan phase we are guided by the following principles:

- We are working in partnership with our residents, businesses, and visitors.
- We are transparent.
- We strive to involve everyone including residents, employers, employees, and visitors.
- We tailor our interactions to bring out the wisdom of our participants.
- We are systematic in how we compare and analyze what we hear.
- We are building long-term relationships for all city efforts.
- We show participants how their input is used throughout the process.
- We build upon existing efforts, activities, and resources.
- We maintain flexibility to maximize opportunities and input.

### VISION REPORT ENGAGEMENT TIMELINE

The stages of Envision Littleton include:

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**Postcards Sent**
25,253

**Facebook Posts**
15

**Presentations**
9

**Online Survey Responses**
852

**Conversations**
2,959

**Littleton Report Articles**
2

**New Subscribers to Project Email List**
160

**National Nite Out Parties**
12

**Video Views**
1,167

**Envision Events**
108

**Listening Sessions**
15

**Living Room Sessions**
2

**Nextdoor Posts**
3

**Twitter Posts**
13

**Pop-Up Events**
35

**Instagram Posts**
5

**Weeks of Events**
12

**Bookmarks**
10,000

**Community Dinners / Socials**
3

**Channel 8 Video**

**Reach through Partner Newsletters**
51,941

**Envision Beach Balls, Bubbles, and Fans**
1,250

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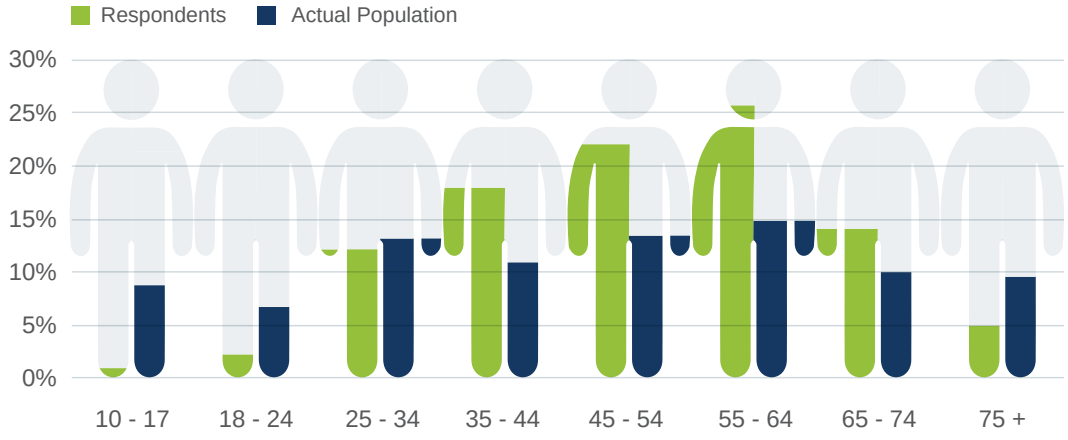
# ENVISION LITTLETON SURVEY

As part of the Envision Littleton engagement, an online survey was created as one of many opportunities to voice values, concerns, and priorities about Littleton's future. The Envision Littleton survey was open from June 12 to September 4, 2018. The survey was highly publicized through a variety of communication methods and a paper survey was also available. The survey was open to anyone and is not a scientific sample of residents. As such, the results represent the opinions of those who took the survey and are not representative of all voices and opinions. The survey results provide insight into values and priorities that, when combined with results from other engagement methods for Envision Littleton, establish the basis for the vision and guiding principles.

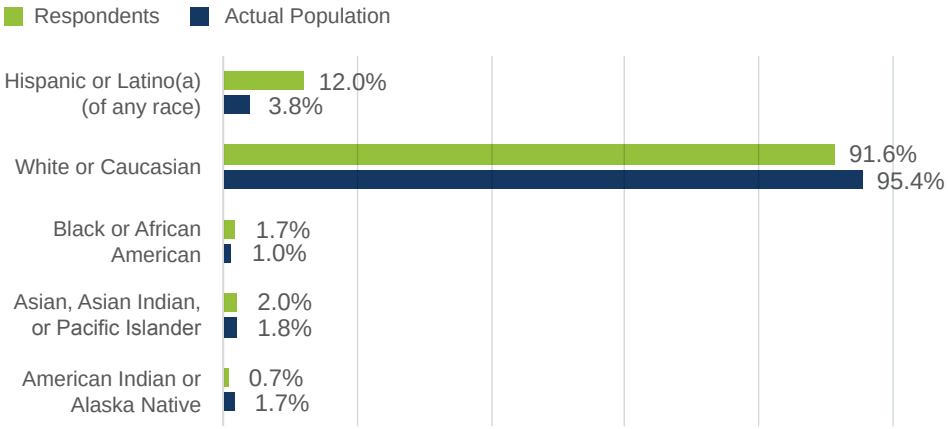
## SURVEY RESPONDENT DEMOGRAPHICS

- Total Surveys Completed: 870 (852 online)
- Total Resident Surveys (address within Littleton city limits): 635

## AGE DISTRIBUTION




## RACE / ETHNICITY

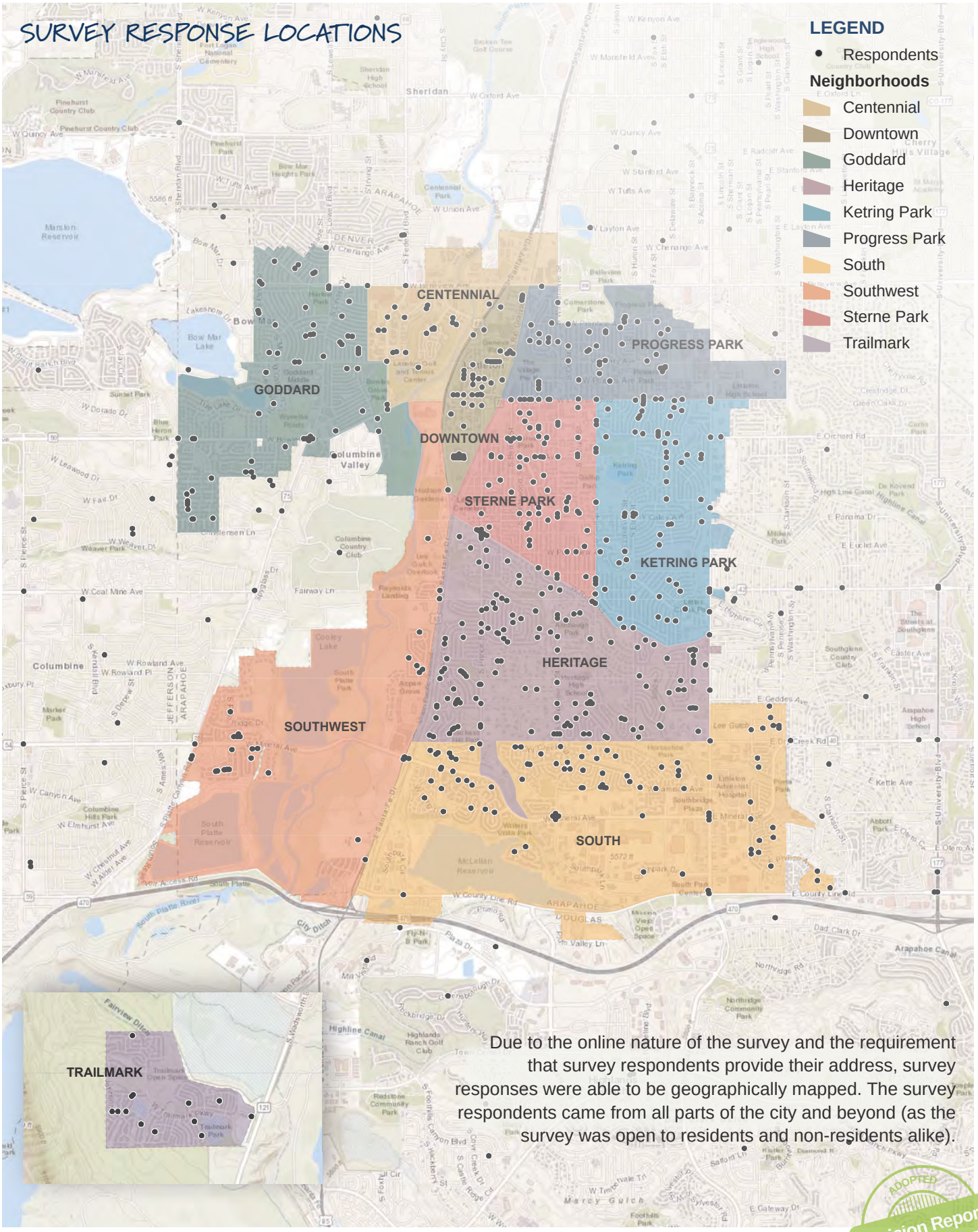



## Year first moved to, began working in, or visiting Littleton

| | % of Responses |
|---|---|
| Before 1970 | 9% |
| 1970 to 1979 | 10% |
| 1980 to 1989 | 12% |
| 1990 to 1999 | 18% |
| 2000 to 2009 | 20% |
| 2010 to 2014 | 15% |
| 2015 to now | 15% |
| No Response or Unsure | 1% |

The demographics of respondents represent only the survey portion of the outreach and do not represent the full demographics of those reached through Envision Littleton. Of the approximately 3,000 community conversations held through September, it is estimated that 1/4 (750 people) were in the 0-24 age range.

# SURVEY RESPONSE LOCATIONS



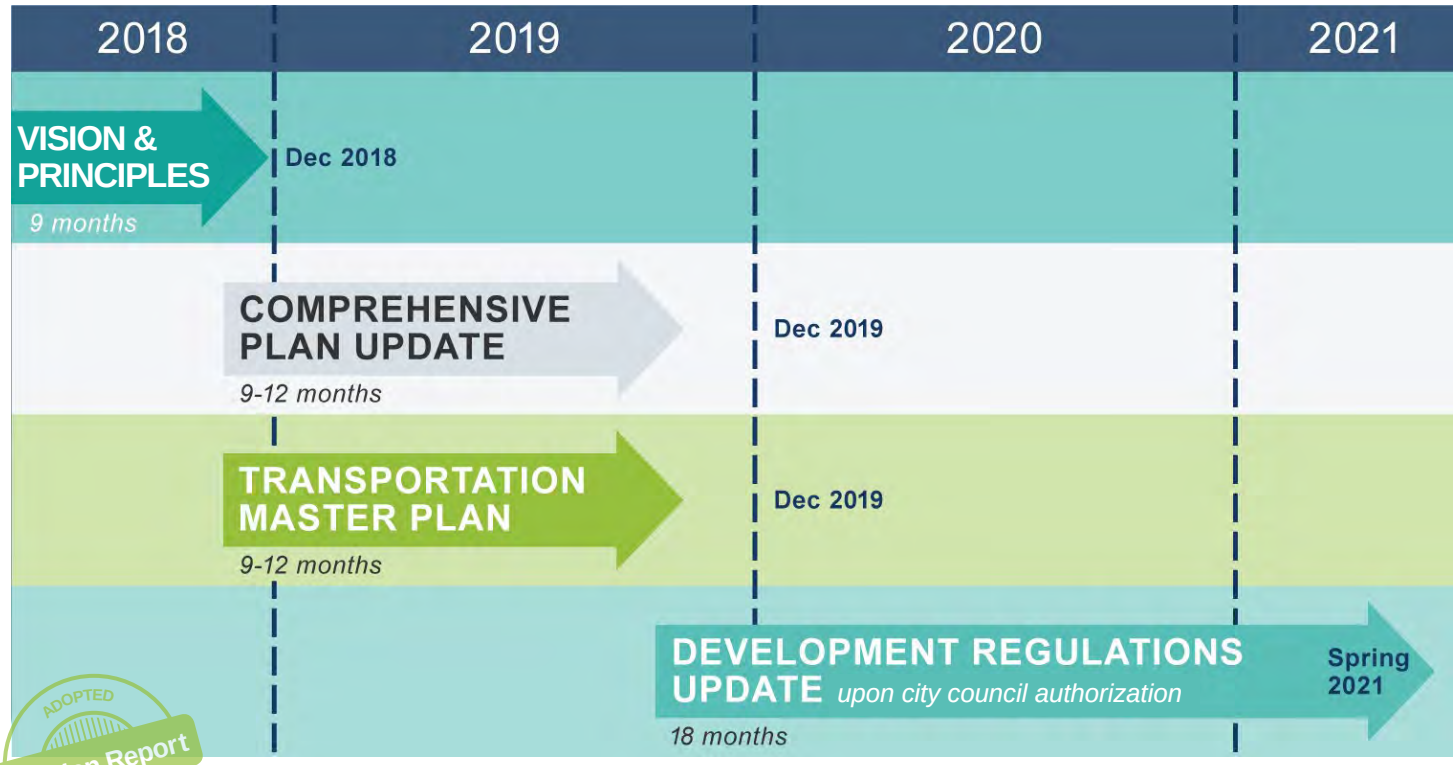

Due to the online nature of the survey and the requirement that survey respondents provide their address, survey responses were able to be geographically mapped. The survey respondents came from all parts of the city and beyond (as the survey was open to residents and non-residents alike).

# WE ARE HELD TO A HIGHER STANDARD

Littleton will always build on the shoulders of its founders and past civic leaders who were the innovators and community champions of their day. They established expectations and standards for Littleton that enabled the community to prosper and navigate through periods of both incremental and phenomenal change. Among the core values ingrained many decades ago that still endure are civic involvement, outstanding public schools, preserving and celebrating local history, and being a model community and leading voice among other cities in the region and state. The proud residents and leaders of today, likewise, must pass on this community spirit and shared legacy that now reflects their influence.

# WHAT'S NEXT?

As shown in the timeline below, the Envision Littleton process was launched in the spring of 2018 as a prelude to initiating an update of the city's Comprehensive Plan. Concurrently, a first-ever Transportation Master Plan for Littleton will also be developed in 2019. Envision Littleton's initial phase will provide a firm foundation for these more in-depth planning efforts and a basis for ensuring both plans are well-aligned. The considerations, concepts and direction from earlier special area plans and studies will also be factored into the community-wide plans. The goals, policies and other specifics in the Comprehensive Plan will provide further context for the vision and guiding principles.

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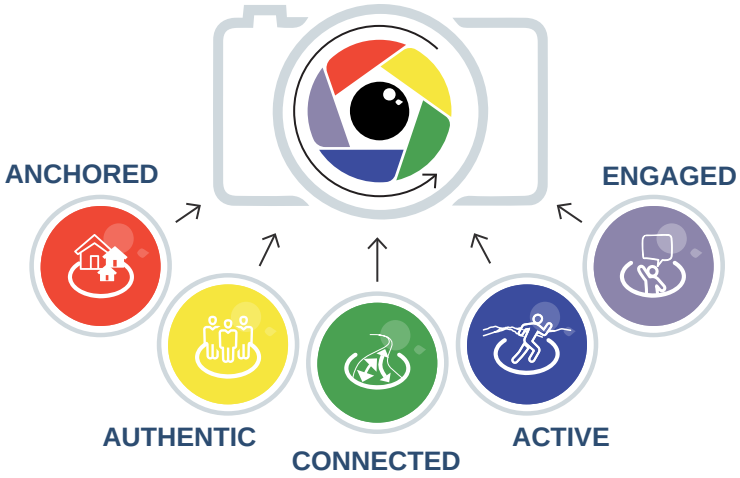
# APPLYING OUR VISION AND PRINCIPLES

Following city council adoption of a finalized Vision Report in December, the city will immediately incorporate the vision and guiding principles into its strategic planning and routine operations to ensure values-based and priorities-driven decision-making. Just as Envision Littleton has involved an initial filtering effort to evaluate an array of inputs, the City of Littleton will apply the resulting new vision and principles when weighing various choices. Examples include budgeting, capital project priorities, department programs and staffing, grant pursuits, new or expanded partnerships, and zoning and land development proposals, among others.




# CHECK OUR WORK ENGAGEMENT

During the "Check Our Work" stage, Envision staff solicited input on the draft Envision Report both at in-person events and online. From October 6 to November 2, 2018, an estimated 2,500 people engaged with Envision staff at community events. In addition to providing feedback on the draft Envision Report, participants were reminded that planning for the future will not be easy and were asked what they believe is **the most important way to treat each other**. There was a fairly even response among the options, which included **Listen, Be Neighborly, Empathize, Be Open Minded, and Be Compassionate**.

**Posts on Facebook, Twitter, and Next Door**
5

**Open House Displays at Events**
7

**Presentations**
6

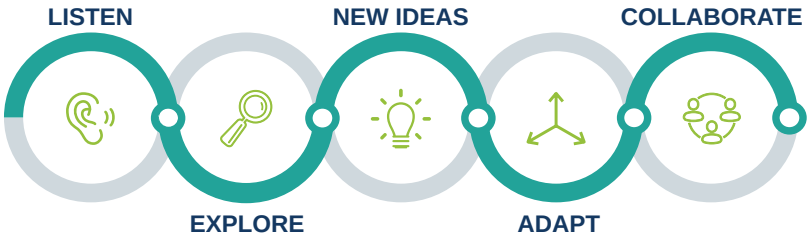
**Littleton Report Articles**
2

**Listening Sessions**
5

**Interviews**
4

# WE ARE STILL LISTENING

Going forward, the city will continue to listen, learn, and adapt so that the desired future we are all seeking for Littleton will remain in focus. Effective communities evaluate their choices and revisit their vision and principles regularly. They must remain on target, be clearly understood, and encompass the range of likely issues that will arise. All who have contributed so far to Envision Littleton must remain stewards of the vision our community has put forward. This will ensure that Littleton is among the places where visions and values endure across decades and generations.

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Littleton Colorado

envisionlittleton.org

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December 18, 2018

## LOOKING AHEAD TO 2019

With the initial vision phase concluding in December, Envision Littleton will turn next to a fully updated **Comprehensive Plan**, to be drafted concurrently and closely integrated with a first-ever **Transportation Master Plan** for the city. Along with mobility, a Comprehensive Plan addresses many other "building blocks" of a community. Future land use and transportation planning, in particular, give physical shape and form to a community's long-range vision.

The Comprehensive Plan will be centered on the concept of **"community character"** as a way to enhance Littleton's approach to land use planning, neighborhood conservation, and open space preservation. Various land uses can occur in a range of settings within a community, from the most rural and suburban to the most urban, provided they are designed to match the character of the area. Community character accounts for the physical traits one can see in a neighborhood, on a roadway corridor, or along a greenway trail which contribute to its "look and feel" relative to areas with much different character.

Looking beyond land use alone, a character-based approach focuses on development intensity, which encompasses the density and layout of residential development; the scale and form of non-residential development; and the amount of building and pavement coverage relative to the extent of open space and natural vegetation or landscaping. How the automobile is accommodated is a key factor in distinguishing character types including how public streets are designed, how parking is provided, and how buildings and paved areas are arranged on sites. It is this combination of land use and the characteristics and context of the use that determines the real compatibility and quality of development, as well as the ongoing integrity of open space areas intended for minimal or no development.

Maintaining and enhancing desired character is a central aim – and challenge – of implementing community plans amid constant change.

# APPENDIX 3: EXISTING CITY DATA BOOK

Envision LITTLETON

Our Community. Our Future.

# COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

# EXISTING CITY DATA BOOK

October 15, 2019

Littleton Colorado

# INTRODUCTION

## PURPOSE OF EXISTING CONDITIONS DATA

This Existing City data book highlights key indicators and background information about Littleton as it is today. Preparing this booklet was step one in the 2019 Envision Littleton efforts to prepare a new Comprehensive Plan and create a first-ever Transportation Master Plan (TMP).

The content of this data book is based on initial background studies to date by the City's community planning consultant, Kendig Keast Collaborative. The intent is to avoid duplication of available, more extensive profiles of Littleton. Instead, the booklet focuses on selected data points that speak to community values and priorities expressed by residents and other stakeholders as input to the Envision Report adopted by City Council in December 2018. Narrative within each section notes how a data point further validates aspects of the Envision Report and/or highlights essential planning considerations for the years ahead.

## DATA BOOK CONTENT AND ORGANIZATION

The information in this data book is presented in topic areas relevant to the City's Comprehensive Plan for guiding Littleton's ongoing physical evolution and enhancement as listed to the right. While transportation and mobility are key influences in describing the existing conditions in Littleton, the data relative to transportation and mobility is included in a separate TMP data book and will be incorporated into all of the future phases of Envision Littleton.

The U.S. Census Bureau is the primary source of Existing City data except where otherwise noted in this data book.

Along with the data book focus, another essential activity in the Existing City phase was to complete an inventory of the current land use and development pattern in Littleton. The resulting inventory map and findings, along with the philosophy behind a character-based approach to land use planning, are contained in a separate report, *Community Character Framework for Land Use*.

### DATA BOOK ELEMENTS

- Historical Timeline and Growth of Littleton
- Littleton Recognitions and Overall Satisfaction
- People
- Housing
- Heritage
- Environment
- Recreation and Tourism
- Jobs, Employers, and Tax Base
- Utilities and Public Facilities
- APPENDIX: Existing Land Use and Character

## WHAT COMES NEXT

After considering current conditions, comprehensive plans are primarily future-oriented and prescribe goals, policies, and objectives that are intended to advance a set of preferred conditions. Community needs and desires in Littleton for the next 20 years, through 2040, will be pursued through the upcoming Future City phase of the planning process and include a community-driven engagement process.

# HISTORICAL TIMELINE

**1862** Richard Little files for a homestead and makes land claims; Dozens of farms and ranches established along the South Platte Valley.

**1864** A school is established in Richard Little's cabin, the precursor of School District No. 6.

**1869** The first post office opens.

**1872** Richard Little subdivides property and files a plat for the village of Littleton.

**1876** Colorado becomes the 36th state in the Union during the nation's centennial.

**1879** Construction begins on the Highline Canal to supply water to Littleton.

**1888** Littleton Independent is founded.

**1890** Town of Littleton incorporated.

**1904** Littleton becomes the Arapahoe County seat.

**1920** Town Hall built on Main Street.

**1938** U.S. Highway 85 is rerouted west of Downtown.

**1959** Home Rule Charter/City Manager Plan accepted by voters. South Suburban Parks and Recreation District created.

**1965** Voters approve college district formation. Great South Platte River flood occurs.

**1970** Littleton Historical Museum opens.

**1972** Chatfield Dam reservoir begins collecting water.

**1990** Littleton marks its centennial.

**1991** Trailmark is annexed into the City of Littleton.

**2000** Regional Transportation District (RTD) opens the Southwest Corridor Light Rail Line.

**2008** Littleton celebrated the 100th birthday of the restored Araphoe County Courthouse.

**2011** More than $1 million in improvements to South Platte Park completed.

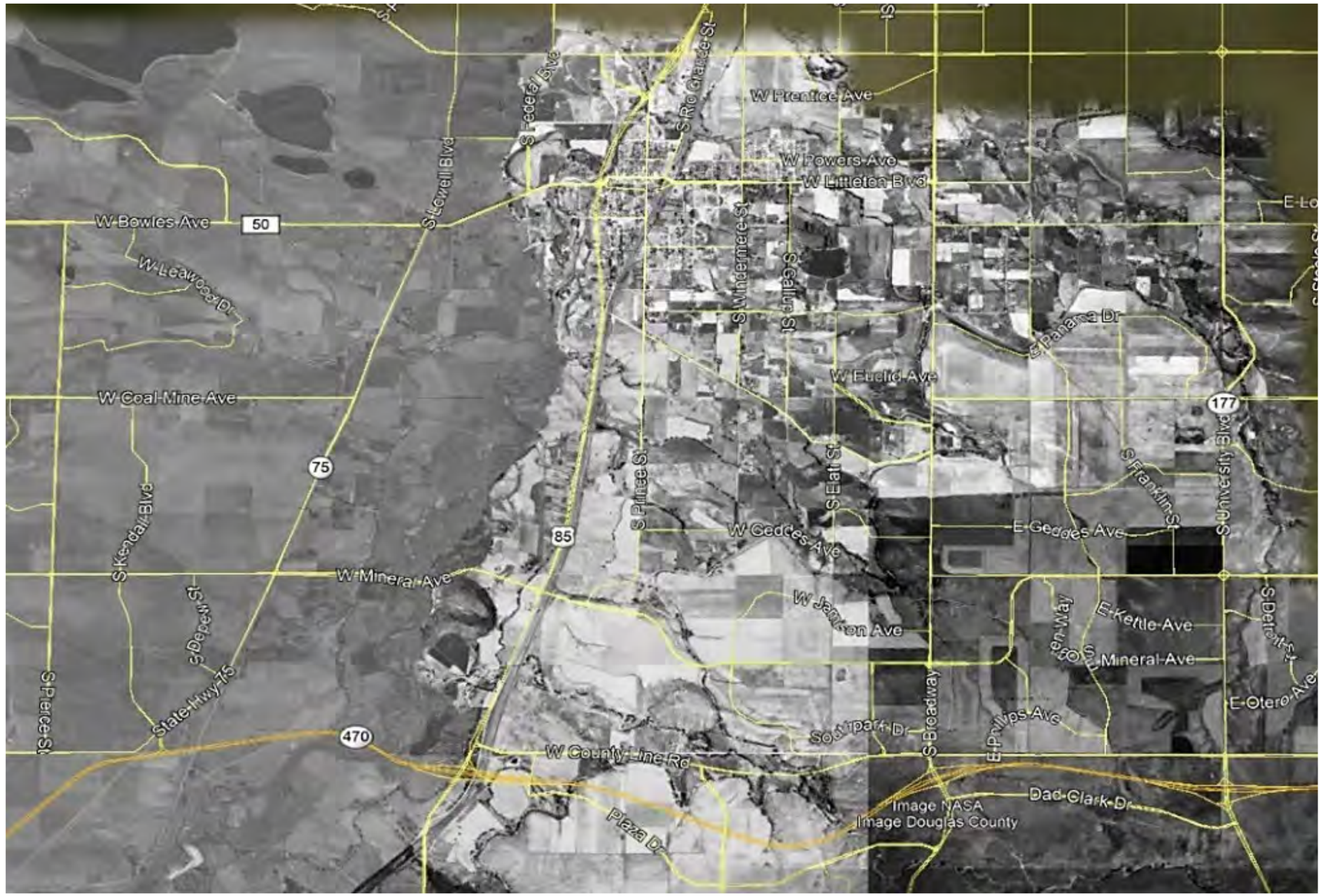
**2015** Littleton celebrated the 125th anniversary of its founding.

**2018** Envision Littleton Vision Plan is adopted.

# GROWTH OF LITTLETON

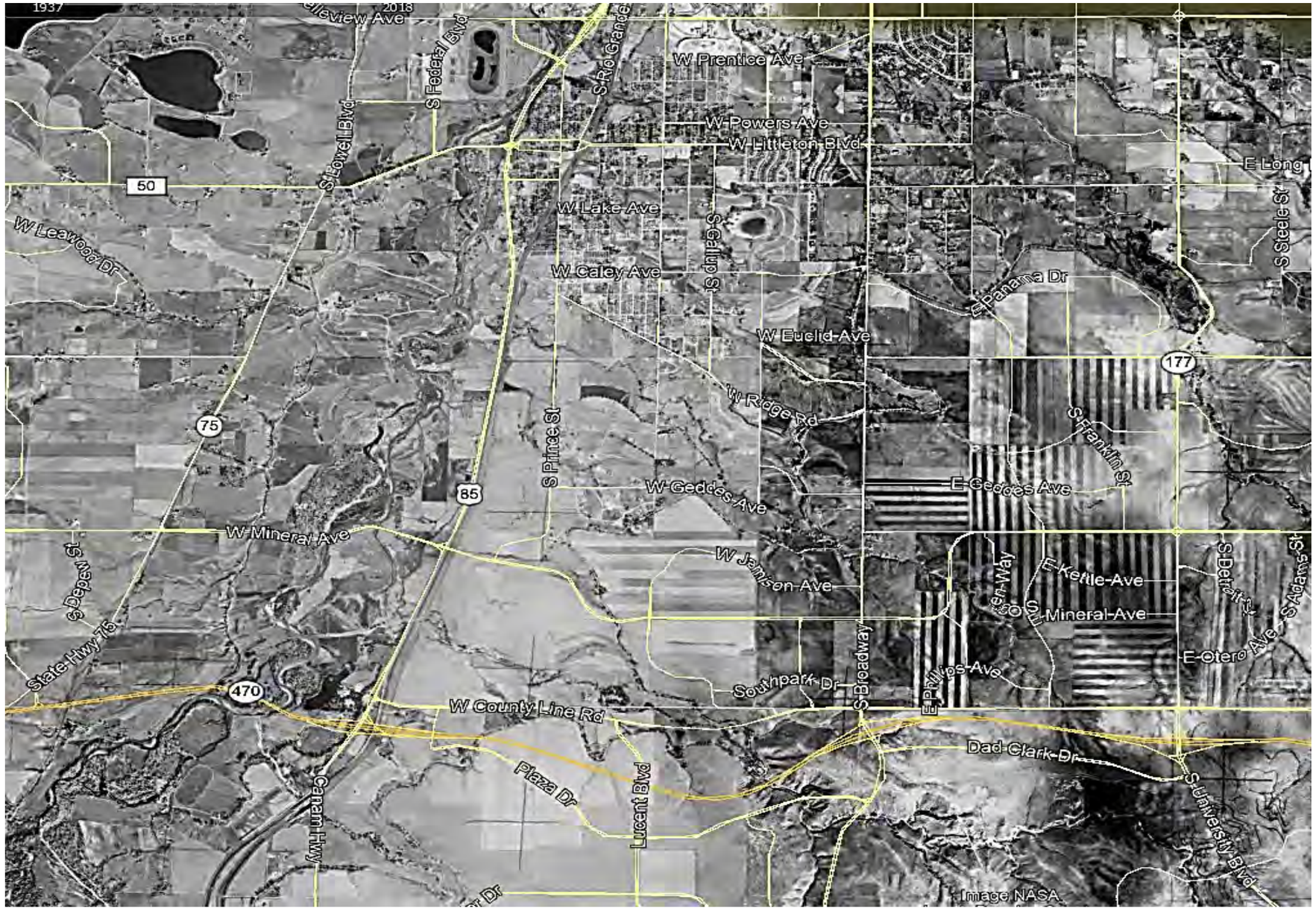
As can be seen in the series of Google Earth aerials, dating back to the earliest available from 1937, Littleton has evolved from primarily open and agricultural land with a small downtown area to a nearly built-out city today. Over each image is the present-day street network, providing scale and context for the extent of change seen in the area over eight decades.

## 1937



By the 1950s, nearly all significant land development activity in Littleton still had occurred only east of the South Platte River. Improved streets and associated residential subdivisions are now visible in the vicinity of Broadway and as far south as Ridge Road, near Gallup Street. The present-day street pattern is also beginning to emerge around the eventual Ketring Park.

## 1955

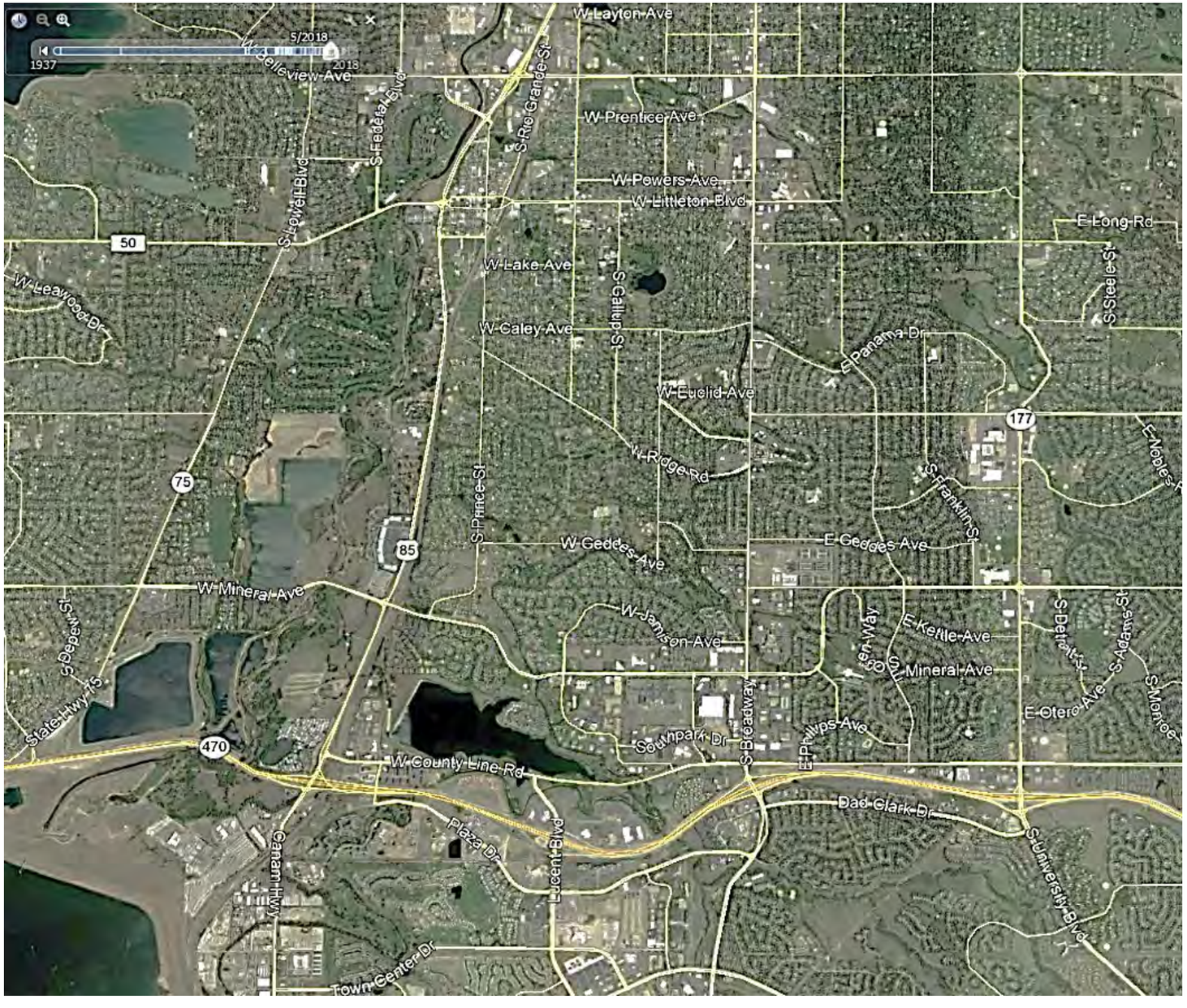


By the early 1990s, the citywide development pattern of today was nearly established, with residential subdivisions and other land uses visible in almost all portions of the present-day city limits. A significant amount of the Southpark commercial area is yet to be developed, along with other open areas near Mineral Avenue, County Line Road and Santa Fe Drive. Initial phases of Highlands Ranch, south of C-470 and east of Broadway, are also in place.

## 1993

The newest available aerial view, from May 2018, shows Littleton nestled within a broader South Metro suburban development pattern. Yet Littleton from the air is distinctive for the extent of greenway space around the South Platte River, multiple sizable lakes and reservoirs, and the winding route of the Highline Canal and Trail. Nonresidential development is most prominent from the downtown area north to Belleview Avenue, along Santa Fe Drive and Broadway, and in the Southpark area.

## 2018



# LITTLETON RECOGNITIONS AND OVERALL SATISFACTION

Recognitions and high ratings Littleton routinely receives – for its general livability, small town charm, and appeal for visitors – underscore the community values and features that provided the foundation for a new unifying vision in 2018.

## RECENT CITY AWARDS AND RANKINGS

**2018**

- Ranked #8 in Best Small Cities in America by wallethub.com
- Ranked 7th Most Visited City in Colorado by the Denver Business Journal
- Recognized as the second Greenest City in Colorado by Insurify
- Ranked #42 in the Top 100 Best Places to Live in the U.S. by livability.com
- Named one of the Top 15 Safest Cities in Colorado by the National Council for Home Safety and Security

**2017**

- Named #1 Small Town in Colorado and 10th Best Small City in America by wallethub.com
- Named one of the Top 10 Hottest Housing Markets in the U.S. by CBS Money Watch
- Ranked #8 in the 2017 Best Places to Retire by Livability
- Ranked 9th Best City in Colorado for Families by SmartAsset

**93%**

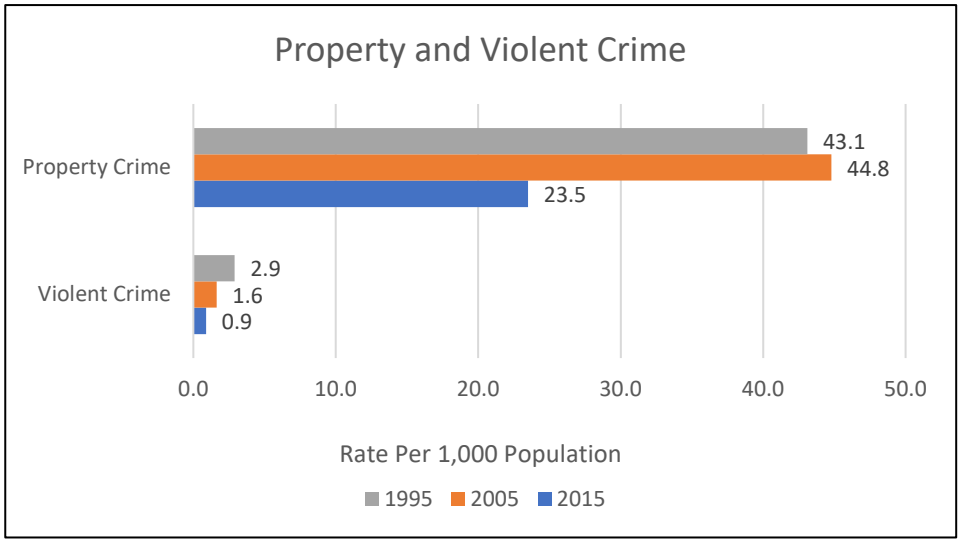
**Percent of residents rating the overall quality of life in Littleton excellent or good in the 2018 Resident Survey.**

The biannual Resident Survey responses have consistently shown a very high percentage of respondents rating the overall quality of life in Littleton as excellent or good (2012-2018). In addition, in the 2018 Resident Survey, 96 percent of respondents strongly or somewhat agreed with the statement that Littleton is a safe community.

**67.4%**

**Percent reduction in violent crime from 1995 to 2015.**

Mirroring national trends in crime reduction, both the rates of violent crime and property crime – which were already low in Littleton – dropped significantly in Littleton in the 20-year period from 1995 to 2015. Property crime experienced a 45.4 percent reduction during this time period. As Littleton's population has increased it has not seen an increase in crime. **Residents routinely express their satisfaction with local policing and wish it to remain a core focus of City government.**




Source: FBI Uniform Crime Report.

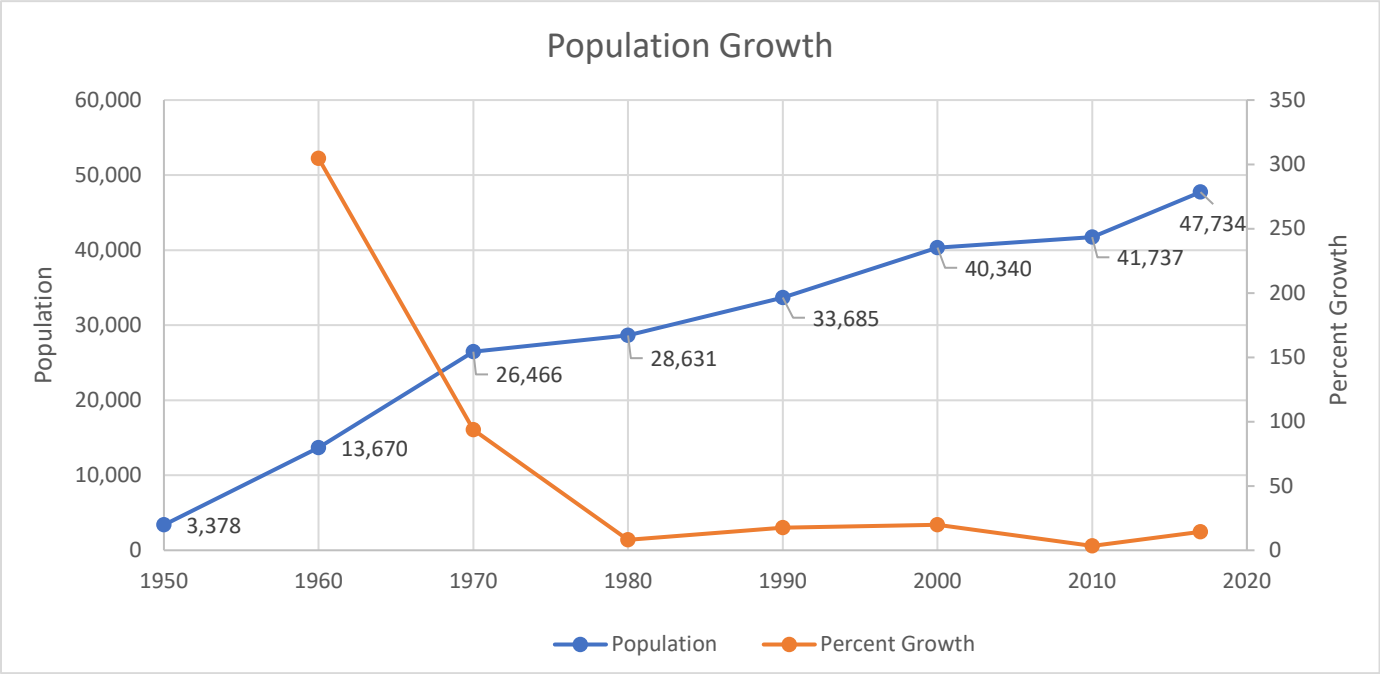
# PEOPLE

So much of the input that went into the 2018 Envision Report revolved around people issues in Littleton – how best to house them, keep them safe, healthy and active, and support those in need whether due to aging, job status, or other challenges. **The nation's upcoming Census 2020 will be a next crucial step for monitoring local demographic changes.**

## 14.3%

**Increase in population experienced so far this decade, through 2017, which could return Littleton to the growth pace seen from 1980 to 2000, before population growth dropped off from 2000 to 2010.**

After a much smaller Littleton grew by 304 percent during the 1950s, from nearly 3,400 residents to almost 13,700, the rate of population growth has decreased significantly in the decades since. The lowest rate was seen from 2000 to 2010 when the city grew by only 3.4 percent. However, a relatively steady growth path has brought Littleton to the point of being nearly built out. **As a result, the Comprehensive Plan must consider Littleton's long-term financial sustainability and the implications of both redevelopment possibilities and how remaining vacant land may ultimately be used.**

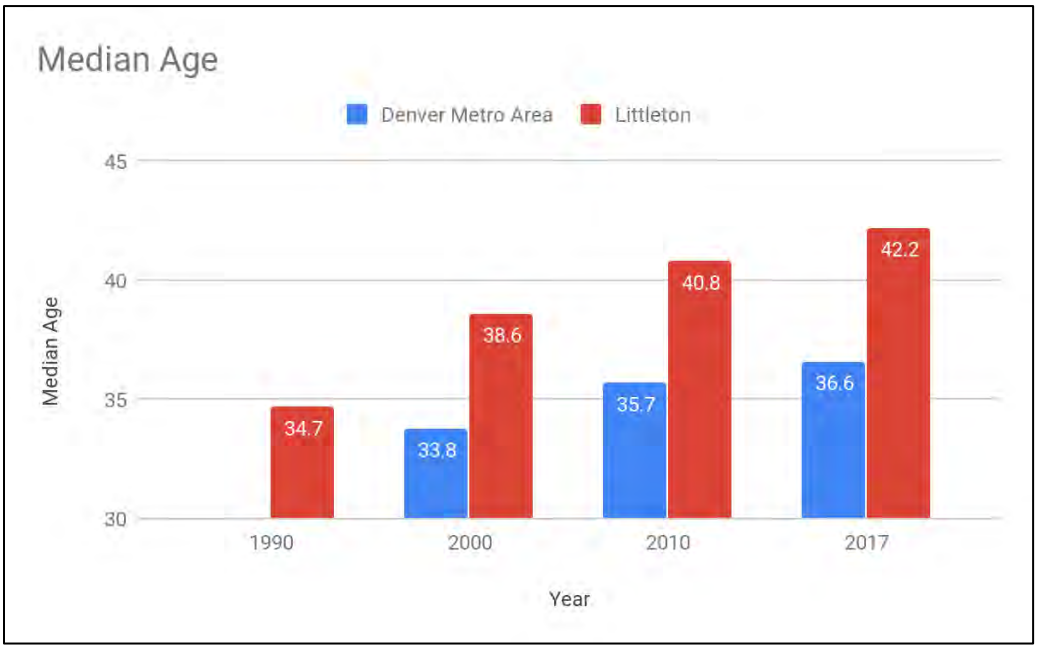



Source: U.S. Census Bureau.

## 42.2

**Median age in Littleton in 2017.**

The median age in Littleton is substantially higher than in the Denver Metro Area (36.6 years) and has been increasing each recent decade, from 34.7 in 1990 to 42.2 in 2017. **Potential shifts in Littleton's age composition in coming decades warrant attention as this could have implications across all aspects of the Comprehensive Plan and Transportation Master Plan, from housing and mobility needs to recreational programming and retail spending patterns**. As of 2017, just under 11 percent of Littleton residents who were not living in institutional housing had some form of disability, with about half of these age 65 or older.

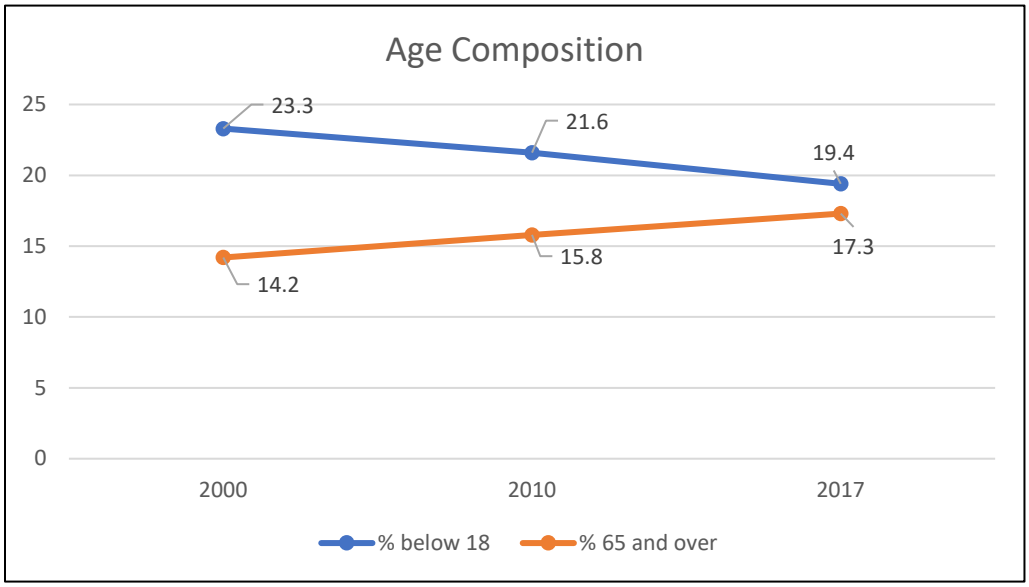



Source: U.S. Census Bureau.

**17.4%**

**Percent of the population age 65 or older in 2017.**

The percentage of Littleton's population over age 65 has been increasing since 2000 while the share of population under age 18 has been decreasing. As of 2017 the population age 65 or older had increased to 17.3 percent while the proportion under age 18 had dropped to 19.4 percent. **Those providing input to Envision Littleton often share their pride in being a great community for aging in place. They also recognize its lasting reputation for quality public schools and wish for Littleton to remain welcoming and affordable for younger families**. In 2017, approximately 25 percent of Littleton's households had one or more children under age 18.




Source: U.S. Census Bureau.

# 2.29

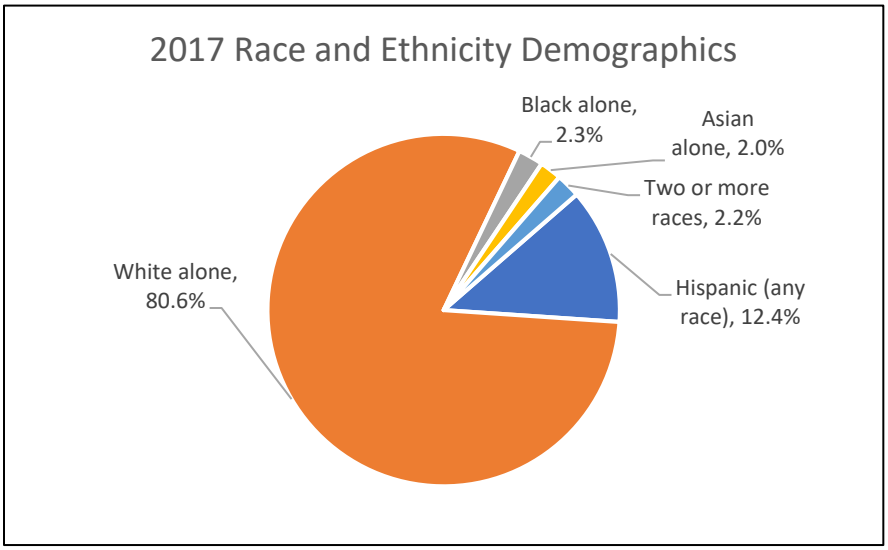
**Average household size in 2017.**

Littleton had 2.47 persons per household on average in owner-occupied homes compared to 2.02 in rental housing in 2017. The average household size, overall, was also 2.29 in 2000. The average household size in Littleton is lower than in the Denver Metro Area which had an average household size of 2.57 in 2017. **Variations in this indicator are crucial for anticipating future housing needs in Littleton. Such variations must also be evaluated carefully as an upward trend could indicate more families choosing – and able – to live in Littleton.**

# 19.4%

**Percent of population identifying as a race/ethnicity other than "white alone" in 2017.**

The share of Littleton's population identifying as "white alone" dropped from 86.8 percent in 2000 to 80.6 percent in 2017. **Variations should continue to be tracked over time as this indicator is tied to the desire expressed in Envision Littleton for an inclusive community.**




Source: U.S. Census Bureau

## HOUSING

Being an inclusive community is among the core values identified in the 2018 Envision Report, with housing options and affordability cited as a fundamental aspect. The Future City phase will consider policies and strategies for ensuring that Littleton continues to offer residential options for people at various life stages and income levels. This section also provides the newest available U.S. Census Bureau estimates for Littleton relative to the data presented in the 2017 BBC Housing Study, which included data through 2015.

# 20,691

**Total housing units in 2017.**

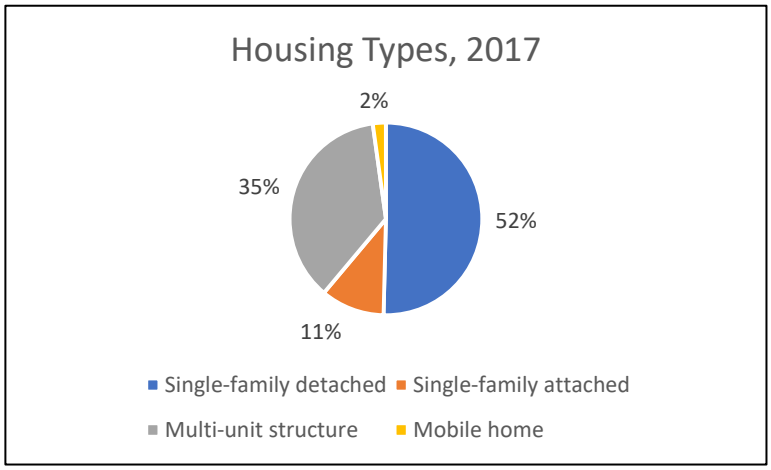
This was an increase of 1,257 housing units since 2010 when Littleton had 19,434 housing units and an increase of 2,607 housing units from the 18,084 units Littleton had in 2000. As a result, total housing units have increased by 14.4 percent since 2000 relative to 18.3 percent growth in population over the same period.

# 60.6%

**Percent of owner-occupied housing units in 2017.**

The remaining 39.4 percent of Littleton's estimated 20,691 total housing units in 2017 were occupied by renters. Among the owner-occupied units, 29.4 percent of the homeowners did not have a mortgage.

The housing stock in Littleton is fairly diverse, with just over half composed of single-family detached units in 2017. Aside from the 2.3 percent in mobile homes, the remaining 46 percent was in various forms of attached housing (20 percent in structures with 2-9 units, and 26 percent in structures with 10 or more units). **Despite this array of alternatives to single-family detached homes, the 2017 BBC Housing Study identified needs that remain, including "starter-level" single-family homes, housing for residents with disabilities, affordable rental units (especially near transit), and housing options attractive to aging seniors and others at all income levels.**

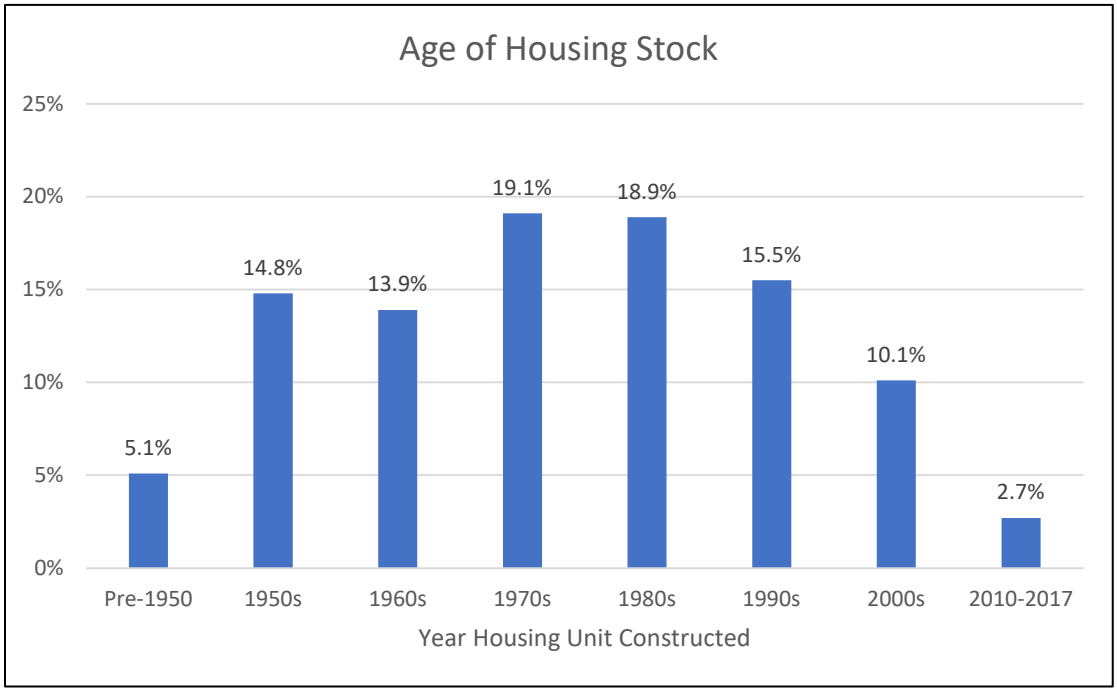



Source: U.S. Census Bureau.

# 71.7%

**Percent of Littleton's housing stock that is at least 30 years old.**

As Littleton is approaching buildout of its remaining incorporated territory, the majority of its housing stock was built during the high-growth decades in which much of the land was originally developed. **As these homes continue to age, Littleton may experience increasing amounts of tear-downs and re-builds, additional new units through higher-density construction, or concerted efforts to preserve and maintain older housing stock through renovations and/or add-ons**.




Source: U.S. Census Bureau.

# $338,900

**Median home value of owner-occupied housing units in 2017.**

Nearly two-thirds (65.3 percent) of such homes were valued in a range from $200,000 to $499,999 and only 14.6 valued at under $200,000. Median home value in 2010 was $269,500 and $192,200 in 1999. The median home value has increased by 25.7 percent in the period from 2010 to 2017 and 76.3 percent in the period from 1999 to 2017. **The combination of trends in home values and buyer income (below) will determine the general affordability of housing in Littleton, as the BBC Housing Study calculated in greater detail (also below)**.

# $71,315

**Median household income in 2017.**

Littleton's median household income of $71,315 was almost identical to the median household income of the Denver Metro Area ($71,884 in 2017). **While the local median has increased by 41 percent (from $50,583) since 2000, part of the affordability challenge is that the median home value has increased by nearly twice as much – 76.3 percent – since 1999**.

# 15%

**Percent of homes sold in Littleton in 2016 that the average Denver Metro worker earning $60,215 annually could have afforded, 96 percent of which were attached.**

The 2017 BBC Housing Study also found that the average worker could have afforded 80 percent of rental units available in Littleton.

# 7.5%

**Percent of Littleton's residents below the federally-defined poverty level in 2017.**

This included 7.3 percent of those age 65 years and older and 5.8 percent of families with children under 18 years that were related to the householder. Among all Littleton households, 6.4 percent (1,272 households) had received Food Stamp/Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program benefits in the last 12 months. Of the noninstitutionalized civilian population, 7.8 percent (3,551 persons) had no health insurance coverage in 2017. **In the 2018 Envision Report, "caring for those in need" was another part of being an inclusive community**.

# HERITAGE

Among the five guiding principles in the 2018 Envision Report, the Authentic principle includes reference to Littleton's historic character and architectural heritage as being among the essential threads that will continue to sustain its community fabric.

## 6 National Register Properties and Districts in Littleton, comprised of four properties and two districts.

**Arapaho Hills District**,
listed August 28, 2012.

**Geneva Home**,
listed January 21, 1999.

**Knight-Wood House,**
listed October 6, 2004.

**Littleton Town Hall**,
listed September 4, 1980.

**Littleton Post Office**,
listed April 26, 2019.

**Littleton Main Street District ***,
listed April 8, 1998.

*NOTE: The boundaries of the locally designated and nationally designated Main Street Historic District differ. The map below shows the locally designated boundary.

Source: City of Littleton.

# 27

**Locally designated historic landmarks in the City of Littleton.**

The landmarks have been designated over a period of years, with the earliest designations occurring in 1973 (for the Denver/Rio Grande Depot, the Santa Fe Depot, the Carnegie Library, and Town Hall), and the most recent in 2016 (for the Quinney Residence). The locally designated historic landmarks range from historic homes (such as the Saar Residence, Kuehn Residence, and Bertolett Residence, among others) to commercial buildings (such as First National Bank and the Batschelet Building, among others), public buildings (such as the Arapahoe County Courthouse), churches (First Presbyterian Church), and rail depots.

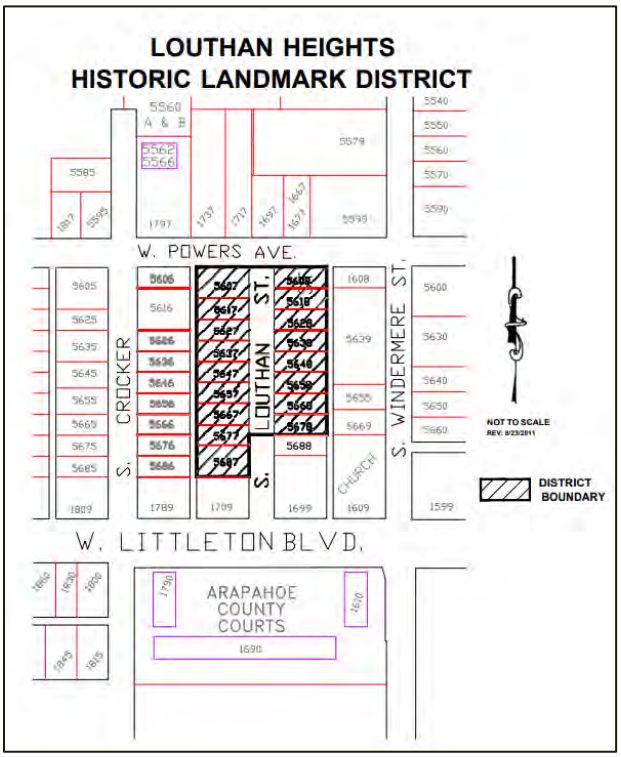
Source: City of Littleton.

# 17

**Homes in the Louthan Heights Historical Landmark District.**

In 2002 the City of Littleton established the city's first local historic landmark district in the 5600 block of South Louthan Street to honor the work of master builder and former mayor Charles Louthan. The district contains architecturally distinctive homes in the Craftsman style.

Source: City of Littleton.




## ENVIRONMENT

Air and water quality, and the integrity of natural resources and Littleton's open space endowment, are called out as community values in the 2018 Envision Report. However, during the vision phase, the consultant team was surprised that environmental issues were not touched on more often by residents. Perhaps protection of natural resources is assumed to be a basic and ongoing priority, but it will be important to gauge the relative urgency of environmental matters through the Comprehensive Plan process.

# Safe Water

**Conclusion of the newest annual Drinking Water Quality Report (May 2018) from Denver Water, the source of Littleton's drinking water.**

Based on exhaustive testing, no regulated contaminants exceed limits established by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment when the water leaves the treatment plant, is in the water distribution system, or reaches the customer's tap.

# 52

## Ozone Alert Days in 2018 for the greater Denver region.

Air quality planning and regulation under the federal Clean Air Act involves complex concepts and terminology. Bottom line, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) is proposing to reclassify the region as “serious nonattainment” in the near future for the ozone standard. (The nine-county greater Denver region is currently designated as “moderate non-attainment” for the 2008 eight-hour ozone standard of 75 parts per billion. The 2015 standard has a stricter standard of 70 parts per billion of ozone pollution in the air.) According to the EPA, “Breathing ozone can trigger a variety of health problems including chest pain, coughing, throat irritation, and airway inflammation. It also can reduce lung function and harm lung tissue. Ozone can worsen bronchitis, emphysema, and asthma, leading to increased medical care.”

Meanwhile, the region is in better shape with two other key pollutants, carbon monoxide (CO) and particulate matter. The region has had no violation of the CO standard since 1995, and the particulate matter standard was last exceeded on three days in 1993. **All aspects of air pollution are significant to Littleton’s land use and transportation planning given how development and travel patterns contribute to air quality and livability.**

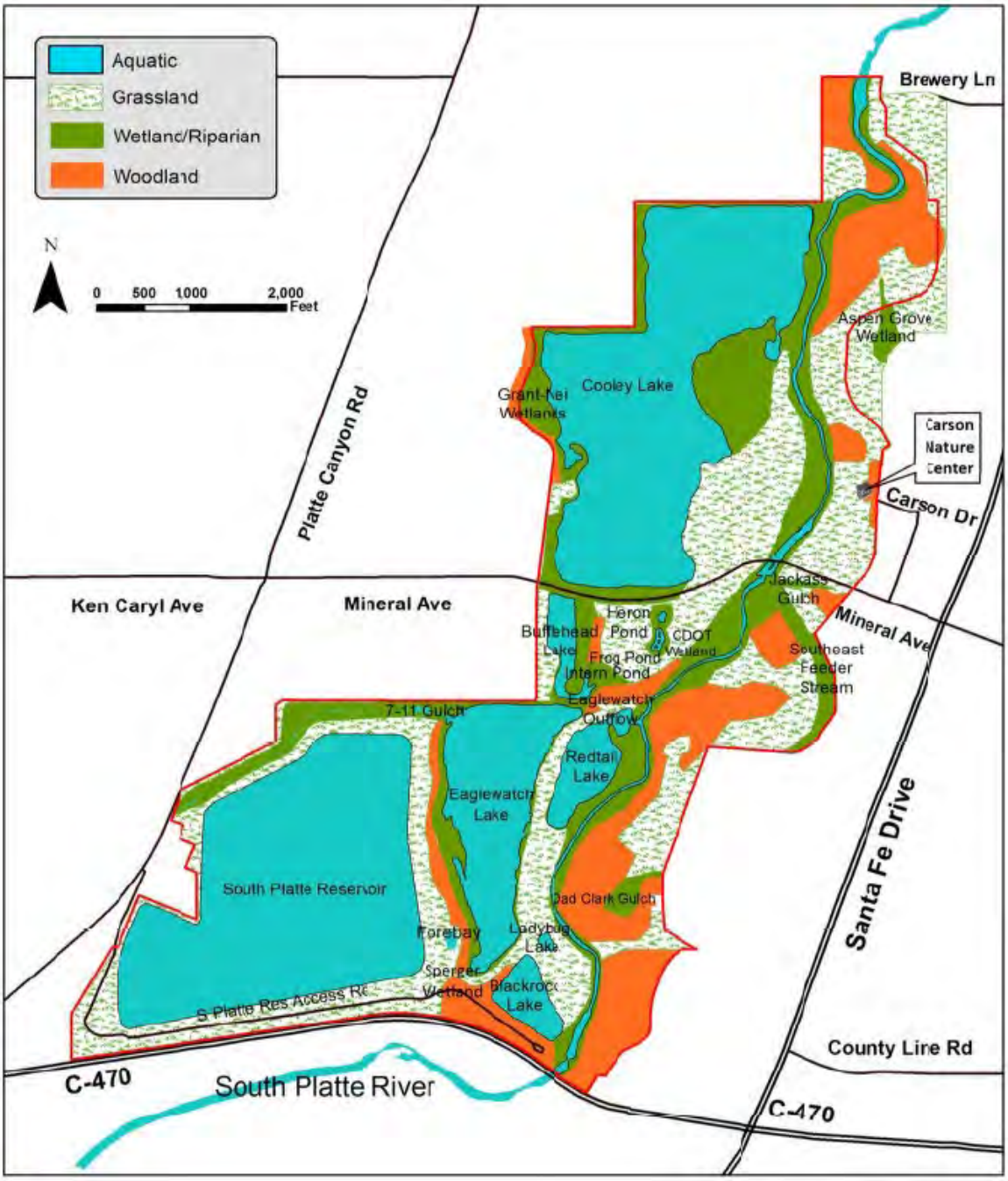
Source: Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment, Regional Air Quality Council.

# 927

## Acres of parkland in South Platte Park, comprising four major ecological communities.

South Platte Park is Littleton’s premier natural resource and includes 375 acres of aquatic resources (43 percent of the park’s acreage), 216 acres of upland grassland (24 percent), 165 acres of wetland and riparian area (19 percent), and 124 acres of upland woodland (14 percent). **Based on the extensive community engagement completed during 2018, the adopted Vision 2040 states that Littleton “will remain a place where nature and city living intersect, can both be enjoyed, and are guarded with a fierce sense of stewardship.” The Comprehensive Plan process will consider objectives and strategies for continuing to advance this core community sentiment.**

Source: South Platte Park Management Plan, South Suburban Park and Recreation District, 2017.




Map Source: *South Platte Park Management Plan*, South Suburban Park and Recreation District (2017).

# RECREATION AND TOURISM

One of the five guiding principles in the 2018 Envision Report – Active – is devoted entirely to the notion of enabling Littleton residents to “make the most of their city’s cultural and natural resource abundance.” The same principle emphasizes that Littleton will always seek to elevate its position as a “dream community” for outdoor recreation and nature enthusiasts, and as a destination for visitors also wanting to enjoy the city’s many and varied amenities.

# 165%

**Percent growth in visitors to South Platte Park from 1994 to 2015.**

As noted in the 2017 *South Platte Park Management Plan*, the 1994 visitor estimate of 219,168 visitors was for the entire park while the 2015 estimate of 580,000 visitors was for trail use alone, not including fishing, river use, or program participation. Therefore, the actual 2015 total park visitor number is assuredly even higher. In 2016, trail counters recorded 530 visitors in one hour using the Mary Carter Greenway Trail. As the *Management Plan* further details, increased visitation is due to numerous factors, including the opening of the Greenway Trail, the RTD Mineral Light Rail Station, the Aspen Grove Lifestyle Center, residential development in the area, and the Breckenridge Brewery.

**Visitor management has been a major focus to prevent irreparable damage to the park's natural character, including loss of vegetation cover and wildlife diversity. Policies and strategies in the City's Comprehensive Plan might further reinforce this emphasis, building on the community value of protecting the integrity of natural resources and Littleton's open space endowment**.

# 30.9

**Park acres per 1,000 population in Littleton.**

The 2016 Parks and Recreation Master Plan documented a total of 1,477 acres of parks and open space within the City of Littleton, across a variety of park types. This quantity translated to 30.9 acres of parks space per 1,000 population. This exemplifies why Littleton stands out among communities on this point as the national median for cities with a population between 20,000 and 49,999 is 9.6 acres per 1,000 residents as reported by the National Recreation and Parks Association (NRPA) in its 2018 *Agency Performance Review Park Metrics*. The Colorado median is roughly the same at 9.2 acres per 1,000 population. Even setting aside the 927 acres within South Platte Park, Littleton would still exceed the U.S. and Colorado medians at 11.5 acres per 1,000 residents (based on 550 total acres).

All parks within Littleton are managed by the South Suburban Park and Recreation District. **The Comprehensive Plan can help clarify and reinforce the role and commitment of the City of Littleton relative to the District and other public agencies and non-profit partners involved with parkland acquisition, enhancement, and ongoing management**.

Source: 2016 Parks and Recreation Master Plan and NRPA.

# $66 million

**Estimated total spent locally by 270,000 visitors who stayed in Littleton hotels during 2017.**

Based on Colorado tourism and economic impact statistics, 139 local jobs in lodging support 115 jobs in other industries.

Although Littleton is only a small portion of Arapahoe County, the State of Colorado Tourism Office tracks the economic impacts of tourism at the county level and reported an increase in travel spending dollars in Arapahoe County from $606 million in 2002 to $1.03 billion in 2017. This illustrates the tourism potential already in the vicinity of Littleton.

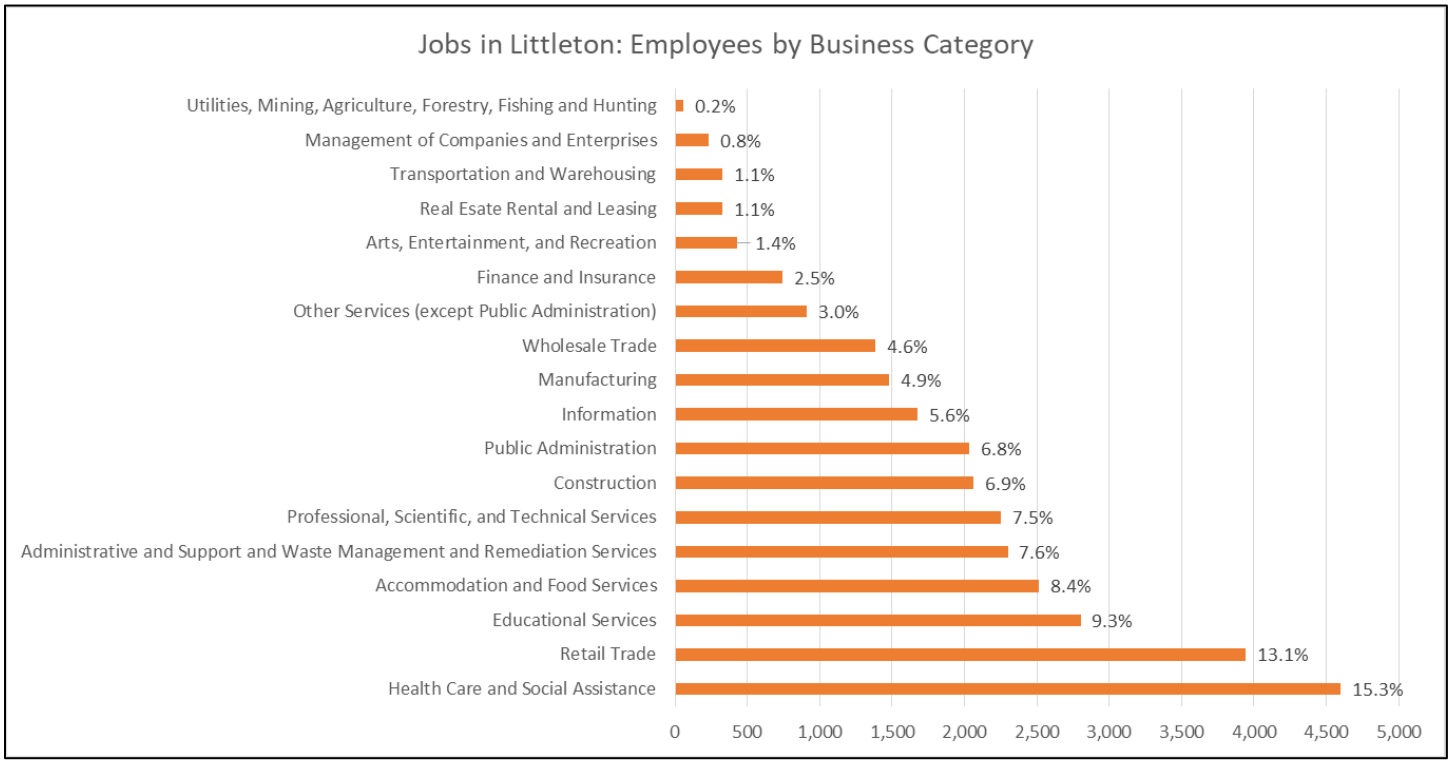
Source: Arapahoe/Douglas Works (estimates extrapolated from statewide data) and State of Colorado Tourism Office.

# JOBS, EMPLOYERS, AND TAX BASE

Commuting data evaluated in more detail for the Transportation Master Plan shows that most working residents of Littleton travel outside of the city for their employment. Local businesses and institutions also provide varied job opportunities for both city and metro area residents. Understanding these economic patterns and flows of people is important for both land use and transportation planning. Tax-generating activity within the city is also crucial to monitor consistent with the adopted Vision 2040, which states that Littleton must secure the long-term sustainability of its municipal finances to continue providing its citizens the best in public services.

**15.3%** **Percent of jobs in Littleton in the Health Care and Social Assistance category, which provides the largest share of local jobs after Retail Trade at 13.1 percent and Educational Services at 9.3 percent.**

The table below shows that the top employers within Littleton include several large telecommunication companies. As Littleton is the county seat for Arapahoe County as well as City government, this explains why Public Administration is also among the top 10 categories generating employment in Littleton, accounting for 6.3 percent of all jobs.



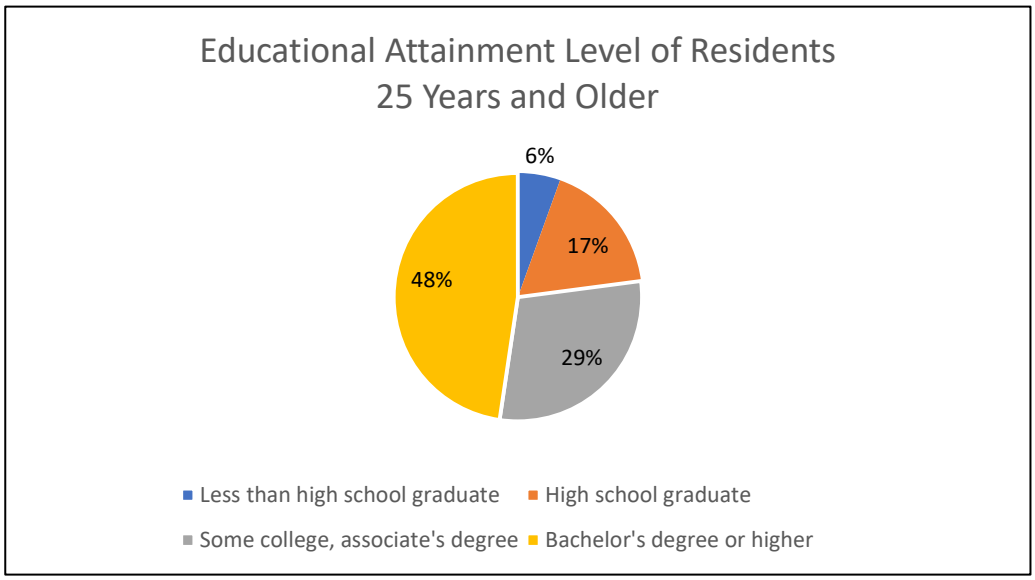

Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages (QCEW) for 2nd quarter 2018.

## Top 10 Largest Employers in Littleton (February 2019)

| Employer | Activity | Total Employees |
|---|---|---|
| CenturyLink | Telecommunication | 1,663 |
| Dish Network | Satellite company; call center | 1,543 |
| Littleton Adventist Hospital | Hospital | 1,242 |
| Littleton Public Schools District #6 | School | 830 |
| Arapahoe Community College | Arapahoe Community College | 706 |
| Arapahoe County | Administration for Arapahoe County | 522 |
| Republic National Distributing Co | Liquor, wholesale | 425 |
| McDonald Automotive Grp Volkswagen/Audi | Auto Sales and repair | 360 |
| City of Littleton | City of Littleton offices | 330 |
| Center Point | Arapahoe/Douglas Mental Health Network facility providing art, wellness, technology, vocational skills training | 320 |

Source: City of Littleton Economic Development & Business Services Department.

**77%** **Percent of residents, aged 25 years or older, with at least some level of college education in 2017.**




This compared with 70.3 percent in the Denver Metro Area in 2017. In 2017, 5.5 percent of residents aged 25 years or older did not have a high school level education and 17.4 percent had high school or equivalency as their highest level of educational attainment. **These statistics underscore that Littleton has a substantial share of adult residents who are likely suited for a variety of skilled employment, whether these positions are available locally or elsewhere in the Denver Metro Area. At the same time, Littleton has nearly a quarter of its population that may need a boost to achieve greater economic security through continuing education or job training resources**.

# 52%

**Percent of the City's 2018 general fund revenue from sales and use taxes.**

The 2019 adopted budget projects that sales and use taxes will increase to 71 percent of the City's general fund revenue. In dollar terms, this revenue is expected to increase only slightly in 2019. However, this revenue will account for a much higher percentage of the City's total 2019 revenue, which will be down due to the discontinuation of the fire partner contract reimbursements.

**Given the reliance of Colorado cities on sales tax revenue, the City of Littleton must monitor multiple trends that could move future revenue both up and down and, therefore, have implications for managing its future land use mix.** This includes a nationwide shift away from stand-alone retail toward more "experiential" commercial development mixed with residential and other uses (as validated locally by redevelopment scenarios considered in the 2018 Belleview Avenue Corridor Vision study). Concurrently, online sales remain a relatively small but growing share of all U.S. retail spending. However, Colorado like other states may eventually enable the sales tax from online sales to be captured locally by requiring tax payment based on the destination address.

Property taxes are the second largest revenue source, estimated at 12 percent of revenue in the 2019 budget. A significant change in the City's 2020 budgeting relates to the South Metro Fire Rescue (SMFR) inclusion approved by voters in 2018 which goes into effect January 1, 2020. This change results in decreased revenues and expenses for the City. In particular, the property tax mill levy will be reduced to 2.0 mills from the previous rate of 6.662 mills per $1,000 of assessed value which had not changed since 1991. As a result, in the proposed 2020 budget property taxes drop to the third largest revenue source, decreasing eight points from 2019 to four percent

Source: City of Littleton Annual Budget, 2019, and proposed Annual Budget, 2020.

# 18

**Shopping centers (not including downtown) that were built 30 or more years ago.**

This number is a subset of 25 main shopping centers identified within the city (see map on next page). Some of these centers are underperforming or no longer exist, such as the former Columbine Square center along Belleview Avenue. Through its review of proposed new development and redevelopment, the City's Planning Commission has observed both opportunities for and challenges to commercial projects in the city:

**Littleton's Commercial Positives**

- A robust, historic downtown.
- Redevelopment in areas surrounding downtown.
- Continuing new development on South Santa Fe Drive, Broadway, and Littleton Boulevard.
- High quality of South Park commercial and areas around County Line Road and West Mineral Avenue.
- Large, undeveloped properties on South Santa Fe well positioned for new development.
- Small, disjointed commercial properties along South Santa Fe primed for redevelopment.
- Some "big box" retail (e.g., home improvements).
- Relatively healthy retail on West Belleview Avenue.

**Littleton's Commercial Challenges**

- Aging, underperforming shopping centers.
- Aging office and retail structures.
- Gaps in needed retail.
- Fast changing nature of retail.
- Commercial encroaching into residential neighborhoods.
- Commercial zoned parcels too small to allow for newer development.
- Commercial properties with outdated or inappropriate zoning.
- Commercial properties with outdated and inappropriate uses by right.
- Limited raw land for future development.

Source: City of Littleton

*Views of the Broadway Estates center in east Littleton (top) and more recent commercial development in the SouthPark area along Mineral Avenue (bottom).*

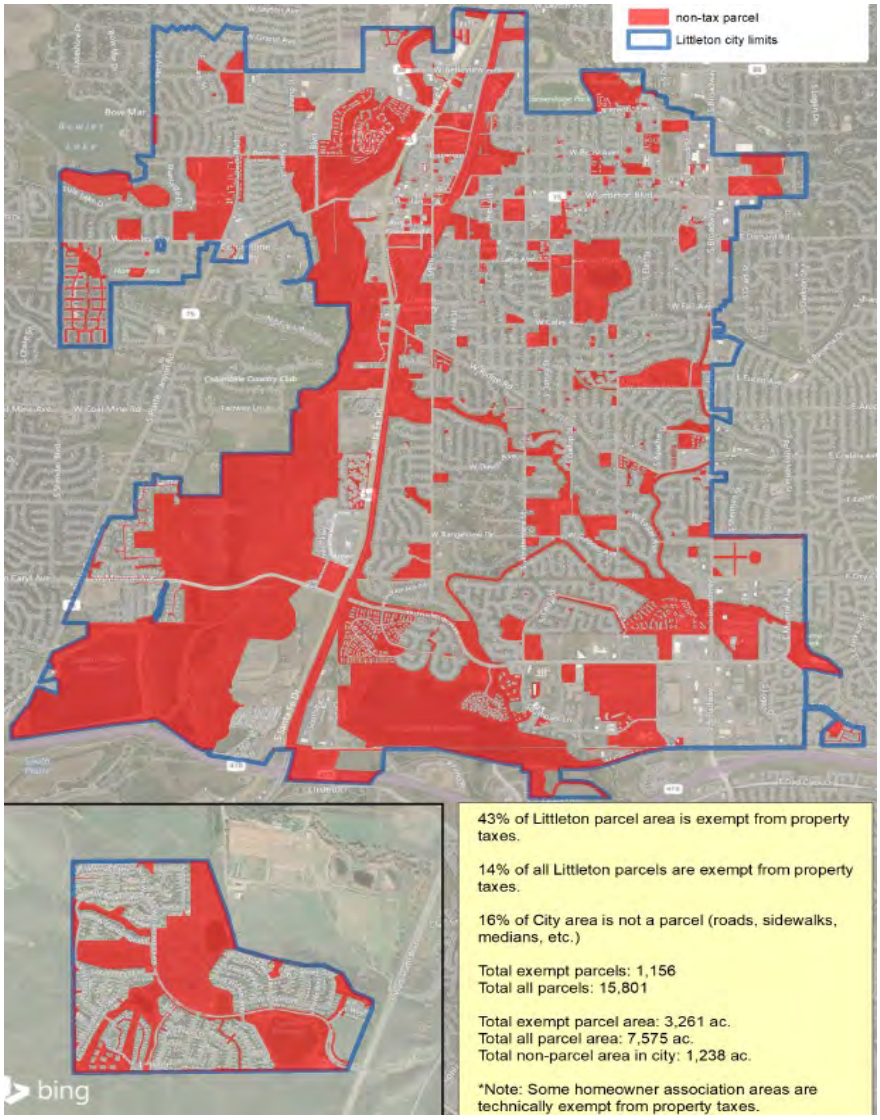
Source: Google Maps

# 43%

**Percent of Littleton's parcel area exempt from property tax.**

Out of 7,575 total acres within parcels in the city, 3,261 acres are exempt from property tax. Approximately 16 percent of the area within Littleton's city limits is not within a parcel, including roads, sidewalks, medians, etc. Parcels exempt from property tax include City-owned properties, park space, and some homeowner association areas, among others.

Source: City of Littleton.



# UTILITIES AND PUBLIC FACILITIES

While the City of Littleton does not directly maintain the parkland and trails within its jurisdiction, and it recently ended its direct operation of municipal fire services, the City still must devote significant resources to public infrastructure and facilities to serve its residents and visitors to the community.

**23+ million**

**Gallons of wastewater treated each day at the regional wastewater facility co-owned by the cities of Littleton and Englewood.**

The facility is operated through the entity South Platte Water Renewal Partners (SPWRP), in which the City of Littleton is a lead partner along with the City of Englewood. **Partnerships are among the City's short list of Strategic Imperatives, and the Comprehensive Plan will reinforce all such opportunities that promote cost and operational efficiencies through economies of scale**.

The daily treatment volume statistic cited above reflects that, in terms of its size and sophistication, the SPWRP facility is the third largest water renewal facility in Colorado. It serves an area with approximately 300,000 residents in both cities plus 19 other connecting districts that maintain their own wastewater collection systems. Wastewater enters the facility through an interceptor pipe from Littleton (66 inches in diameter) and one from Englewood (60 inches in diameter). The SPWRP plant is located within Englewood, northwest of the intersection of Santa Fe Drive and Dartmouth Avenue, along the east bank of the South Platte River, which is the ultimate destination for its treated effluent.

Renewed water makes up a large part of the South Platte River flow most of the year. Plant effluent actually exceeds normal river flow during certain times of the year. In this situation, wastewater effluent, storm water runoff, and irrigation return flows have a major impact on river water quality.

The SPWRP facility operates in compliance with a Colorado Discharge Permit System (CDPS) permit which must be renewed approximately every five years through the Water Quality Control Division of the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment. The permit includes stringent numeric limits for a wide range of pollutants to ensure the protection of downstream water quality, even when river flows are very low. The facility removes approximately 99 percent of total suspended solids and organic matter. SPWRP is preparing to meet more stringent limits for nutrients and temperature to further benefit downstream aquatic life.

The Colorado Water Quality Control Commission establishes overall regulations and numeric standards specific to individual water bodies and stream segments (the SPWRP facility discharges to Segment 14 in the Middle South Platte River Basin). As part of overall water quality protection, such standards are also intended to ensure protection of water uses downstream from wastewater treatment facilities, including water supply, recreation, aquatic life, and agriculture. **As the 2018 vision process reconfirmed the Platte River as among the "crown jewels" of Littleton in the eyes of its residents and officials, the long-term integrity of the river corridor is expected to be a core focus of the Comprehensive Plan**.

Source: South Platte Waste Renewal Partners.

# 75%

**Percent of water users in Littleton that are efficient with their water use.**

All water accounts in Littleton are supplied by Denver Water through a total service relationship, which is unusual for suburban cities in the region, most of which get water from multiple water districts. Denver Water defines efficient water use as less than 12 gallons per square feet of irrigated space per year. **Long-term water prospects for both Littleton and the entire Denver Metro Area are expected to be highlighted within the Comprehensive Plan**.

Source: Denver Water.

# 298,513

**Total square feet of buildings owned and maintained by the City of Littleton.**

The buildings range in age from 142 years old to six years old and range in square footage from 72,000 square feet to 49 square feet. The City's buildings include the Bemis Public Library, the Belleview Service Center, City Center, the Museum, and the Municipal Courthouse, among others. **Community facility needs is a traditional component of local comprehensive plans, especially to the extent that critical maintenance issues or renovation/replacement needs may create greater competition for limited public resources**.

Source: City of Littleton.

# $8-10 Million

**Projected cost to renovate and maintain Littleton Center (versus $300,000 past annual capital spending).**

Currently the City lacks asset management assessments to determine asset condition, life expectancy, and replacement schedule to factor into the City's capital planning and budgeting. The Public Works Department is currently completing asset reviews and developing plans for the City's fleet, facilities, infrastructure (e.g., transportation, sanitary sewer, storm water, etc.), information technology, and public safety assets. **This is perfect timing for highlighting "big picture" issues and needs within the Comprehensive Plan and prioritizing ongoing asset management among other essential municipal activities**.

Source: City of Littleton.

# APPENDIX: EXISTING LAND USE AND CHARACTER

An essential activity in the Existing City phase was to complete an inventory of the current land use and development pattern in Littleton. The large map titled **Existing Land Use and Character in Littleton (As of Summer 2018)** displays the inventory results. Please see the Land Use and Community Character section in the Future City portion of the Comprehensive Plan for more background on and description of the "community character" terminology used on this map and on the Future Land Use and Character map (e.g., Rural, Estate, Suburban, Auto Urban – or Auto Oriented, Urban, and Mixed Character).

## LAND USE QUANTITIES ON MAP

Tallied in **Table 1, *Existing Land Use and Character Allocation***, are the estimated acres within each designation shown on the Existing Land Use and Character Map. In more general terms, the map reflects this approximate use split:

- Residential: 44.9%
- Commercial: 13.7%
- Mixed Use: 0.4%
- Park / Open Space / Private Recreation: 30.9%

Then, in terms of major character classes, the split is:

- Rural: 2.0%
- Estate: 3.0%
- Suburban: 24.5%
- Auto Urban: 33.5%
- Urban: 1.3%
- Mixed Character: 2.0%

**TABLE 1: Existing Land Use and Character Allocation**

| CATEGORY | ACRES | SHARE OF TOTAL |
|---|---|---|
| OPEN SPACE | 707.3 | 9.6% |
| PARK | 1,527.3 | 20.8% |
| PRIVATE RECREATION *(e.g., homeowner association pools)* | 39.3 | 0.5% |
| RURAL | 136.2 | 1.8% |
| ESTATE RESIDENTIAL | 222.0 | 3.0% |
| SUBURBAN RESIDENTIAL SINGLE-FAMILY DETACHED | 1,036.3 | 14.1% |
| SUBURBAN RESIDENTIAL SINGLE-FAMILY ATTACHED | 155.1 | 2.1% |
| SUBURBAN RESIDENTIAL MULTI-FAMILY | 91.5 | 1.2% |
| AUTO URBAN RESIDENTIAL SINGLE-FAMILY DETACHED | 1,330.3 | 18.1% |
| AUTO URBAN RESIDENTIAL SINGLE-FAMILY ATTACHED | 47.5 | 0.6% |
| AUTO URBAN RESIDENTIAL MULTI-FAMILY | 178.8 | 2.4% |
| AUTO URBAN MANUFACTURED HOMES | 75.6 | 1.0% |
| URBAN RESIDENTIAL SINGLE-FAMILY DETACHED | 43.1 | 0.5% |
| URBAN RESIDENTIAL SINGLE-FAMILY ATTACHED | 12.6 | 0.1% |
| URBAN RESIDENTIAL MULTI-FAMILY | 24.4 | 0.3% |
| MIXED CHARACTER RESIDENTIAL SINGLE-FAMILY DETACHED | 77.9 | 1.0% |
| MIXED CHARACTER RESIDENTIAL SINGLE-FAMILY ATTACHED | 0.5 | 0.01% |
| MIXED CHARACTER RESIDENTIAL MULTI-FAMILY | 2.0 | 0.03% |
| RURAL COMMERCIAL | 12.8 | 0.1% |
| SUBURBAN COMMERCIAL | 34.2 | 0.4% |
| SUBURBAN BUSINESS PARK | 275.7 | 3.7% |
| SUBURBAN INSTITUTIONAL | 207.9 | 2.8% |
| AUTO URBAN COMMERCIAL | 649.7 | 8.8% |
| AUTO URBAN INSTITUTIONAL | 183.0 | 2.4% |
| URBAN COMMERCIAL | 5.8 | 0.08% |
| URBAN INSTITUTIONAL | 7.2 | 0.1% |
| URBAN MIXED USE | 9.2 | 0.1% |
| MIXED CHARACTER COMMERCIAL | 4.6 | 0.06% |
| MIXED CHARACTER INSTITUTIONAL | 42.6 | 0.5% |
| MIXED CHARACTER MIXED USE | 22.5 | 0.3% |
| INDUSTRIAL | 25.6 | 0.3% |
| PARKING *(no other use of the property)* | 29.5 | 0.4% |
| UTILITY | 6.1 | 0.08% |
| UNDEVELOPED | 119.6 | 1.6% |
| TOTAL | 7,340.4 | 100% |

# OBSERVATIONS FROM INVENTORY

The following observations will be elaborated on through workshop discussions and further use of visuals, especially as the focus turns to future land use planning during the Future City phase. In the meantime, all of these findings have implications for how Littleton may adjust its approach to regulating and setting standards for land development and redevelopment going forward to place more emphasis on desired character outcomes.

1. **Entire Character Spectrum.** Nearly all elements of the community character spectrum may be found in Littleton, which is part of what makes it a much more interesting experience than many suburban communities.

2. **More Auto Urban Out There Than You Might Expect.** As in many U.S. cities that developed largely in the post-World War II era of automobile-oriented metropolitan growth, various areas in Littleton have an Anytown USA "suburbia" look and feel, including entire blocks and large retail centers dominated by pavement with minimal green space. That is because these areas were planned, zoned, and built mainly with an emphasis on basic compatibility of land uses and residential densities rather than with consistency of character in mind.

*The large block in this view, to the west of Broadway (bottom) and north of Powers Avenue (left), exhibits a classic Auto Urban character, with substantial areas of surface parking and other paved areas and with minimal landscaping along street frontages or within the interior of the large parking areas. The individual site designs are very much about accommodation of the automobile rather than a pedestrian orientation as seen in Urban character areas.*

Character is established much more by the elements of site design plus auto-centric street design. This starts with designing around natural site features (e.g., topography, water features, existing trees/vegetation, etc.) and then aspects such as building placement and orientation, location and visibility of surface parking, extent and nature of preserved open space, and the extent of perimeter and internal screening and buffering, among others. Sometimes shortcomings in site design are overcome by investment in the public realm (e.g., landscaped roadway corridors and other "streetscape" features such as use of decorative pavers at intersections and in crosswalks, unique street lighting standards, signage controls and/or consistent design, etc.). Such is the case along portions of Mineral Avenue, as one example.

3. **Muddled Character in Many Cases.** Also as in many U.S. cities, the character of existing development is often difficult to classify as it includes aspects of multiple character categories. For example, in many of Littleton's residential neighborhoods that had the potential for Suburban character, homes were built with garages as part of the front façade, which also means that a portion of the front yard is devoted to driveway. As a result, the first visual impression of a residential street can be the extent of cars in driveways, which sets an Auto Urban tone. In some older established neighborhoods, homes were also built closer to the street, so more vehicles are parked along the curb in an era of multi-car households. This factor also pulls many residential areas in Littleton toward the Auto Urban portion of the character spectrum. In other areas, the extent of mature tree cover that took hold

over time has helped to soften the Auto Urban environment and pull the neighborhood more toward the Suburban range of the character spectrum.

*Auto Urban residential character somewhat softened by mature yard trees along Jamison Avenue in southwest Littleton.*

Abundant park, trail, and open space assets within Littleton also help to reinforce or move certain areas toward a Suburban character. Some developments that on their own would almost immediately be classified as Auto Urban benefit from proximity to open space or significant water features (e.g., areas in south Littleton adjacent to McLellan Reservoir and South Platte Park). This involves the character concept of “borrowed space” as elaborated on below.

*This view of Downtown, looking east, shows Urban character along Main Street (right) and a portion of Prince Street (bottom), where building fronts are at the sidewalk. However, a substantial share of the overall block is allocated to very visible surface parking, which introduces Auto Urban character, as does the area along Rio Grande Street devoted to parking for light rail patrons. Along Sycamore Street, in between Rio Grande and Prince streets, is an eclectic mix of not only uses but also character, with some structures well away from the sidewalk with parking in front, some at the sidewalk and reliant on rear and/or on-street parking, and others in between, even with front and side yard lawn space.*

*A relatively recent local development, Littleton Village, includes a mix of housing types, but also a juxtaposition of varying character types. In this view looking west, one side of Pennsylvania Street has multi-story attached homes with an Urban Character, relatively close to the street and with resident parking accommodated at the rear via an alley, along with dedicated curb space for on-street parking. Directly across the street and also fronting along Pennsylvania are single-story detached homes, set back from the street and with definite Auto Urban character due to garages in the front façade of each home and driveways that take up half or more of each front yard.*

4. **Not Only on Private Property.** Public and institutional sites in Littleton also exhibit a wide range of characters, with Auto Urban situations often related to the amount of public visitation they receive, which results in large areas of surface parking (e.g., the Arapahoe Community College campus near Littleton's urban downtown, sizable parking areas required for Littleton Adventist Hospital and larger places of worship, and even a portion of the Heritage High School site amid a largely Suburban residential character area in south Littleton).

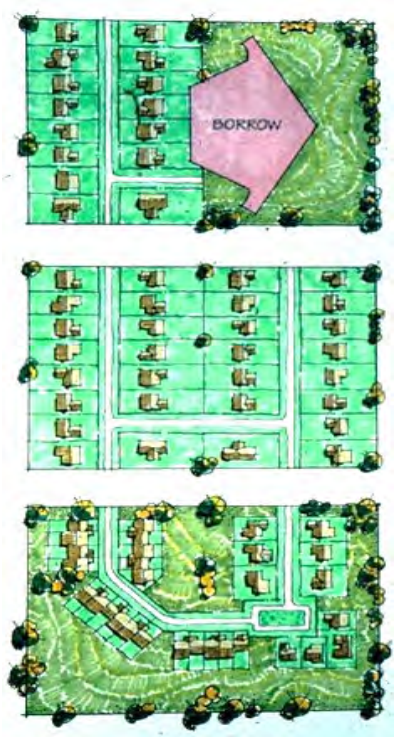
*St. Mary's Catholic Church and School, between Santa Fe Drive and Prince Street, is one of many examples illustrating the amount of surface parking required for active institutional uses, bringing an Auto Urban look and feel into otherwise green and less intensively developed areas of Littleton.*

# BORROWED SPACE

The concept of **borrowed space** refers to the idea that open space on certain properties can be "borrowed" by residents or occupants of adjoining properties, thereby expanding their view of open space from their own property. Borrowed space can involve open areas on both public and private properties, including lakes, reservoirs, rivers, creeks, and ponds.

While neighbors and visitors may have access, even in the case of some adjoining private property, it is visual versus physical access to open space that is borrowed. Such borrowing of visual openness continues literally forever in the case of public parks, trails, greenways, and other land in public ownership or otherwise dedicated to ongoing public use.

Public borrowed space can add to the greater sense of openness that is already found in Rural, Estate, and Suburban character areas. In areas with Auto Urban and Urban character, the ability to borrow the open space provided by public parks and areas of water is especially valuable. The Mary Carter Greenway and South Platte Park are classic examples of public borrowed space amid developed areas of Littleton.




Private borrowed space may also involve land that is intended to be preserved as open space for the long term, with minimal or no land development activity. More often, however, it is temporary borrowed space involving vacant land that will eventually be developed. The accompanying graphic, in the top view, illustrates how residents of an area enjoy the benefit of undeveloped private land on an adjacent property. They may experience a sense of loss as the adjacent property also changes to further residential development, as shown in the middle view. Depending on the nature of the developments, the character of the broader area may transition given the overall decline in quantity and visibility of open space. The bottom view illustrates how a cluster development approach maintains some amount of permanent open space for all to enjoy, both on the subject and adjacent properties.

The accompanying **map of Borrowed Space in Littleton** shows the many and varied locations from which residents and others can visually borrow open space. This is primarily public open space given the extent of parks, trails, greenways, and water features found in the community. As Littleton is nearly a built-out city, only a small proportion is borrowed space from privately-owned properties.

The community vision and guiding principles adopted by Littleton City Council in December 2018 emphasize stewardship of assets and the need to protect the community's "cherished natural setting in harmony with new development and redevelopment." The Envision Report also cites core values in Littleton, which include a passion for and/or a commitment to:

- Stewardship of river and open space assets;
- The integrity of natural resources and Littleton's open space endowment; and
- The quality of both open space and the built environment.

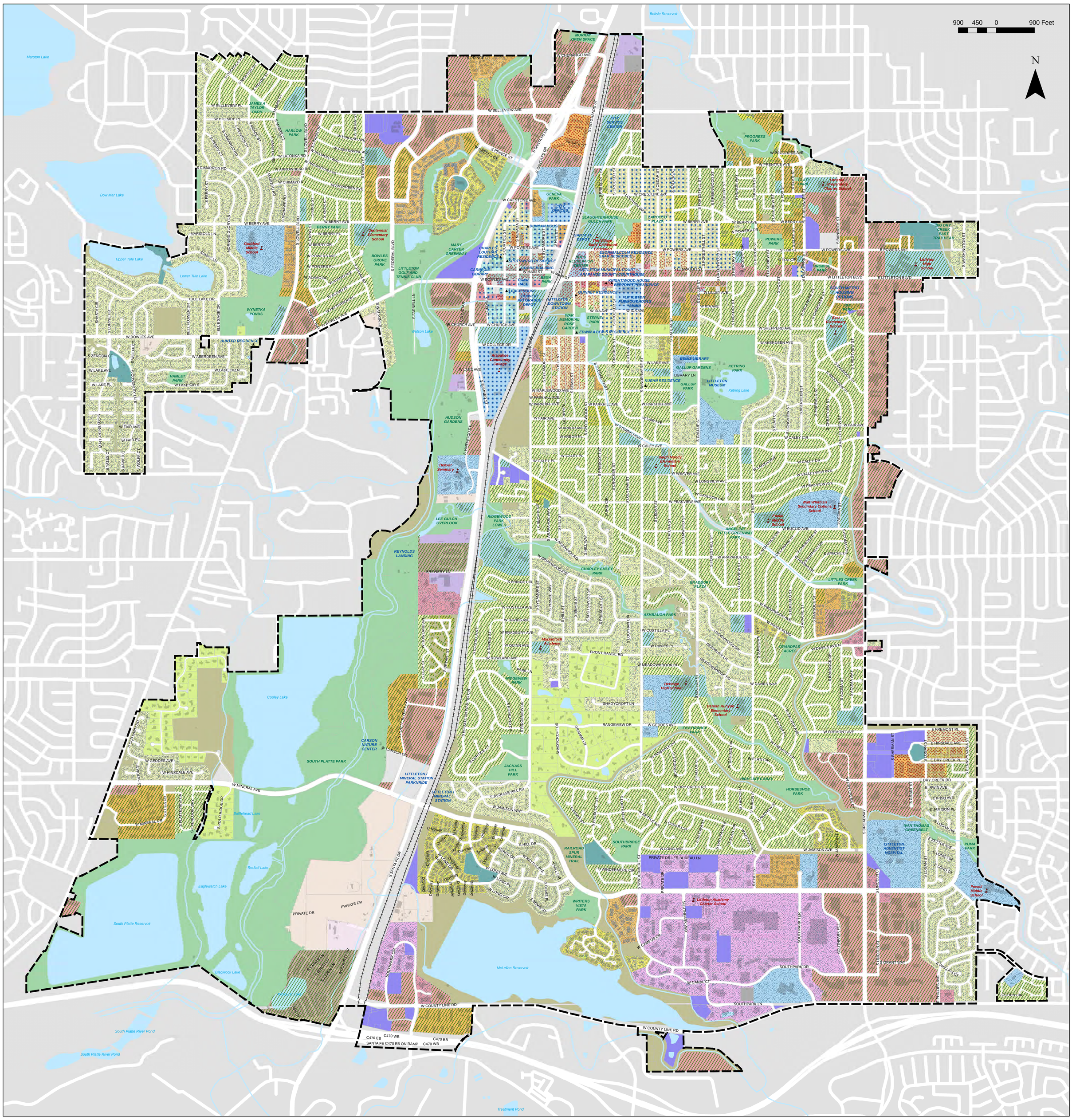
Goals and policies in the City's new Comprehensive Plan will build on and reinforce Littleton's overall vision and guiding principles. Given the values and priorities cited above, the concept of borrowed space and its contribution to community character will be an important consideration during future land use planning discussions for Envision Littleton.

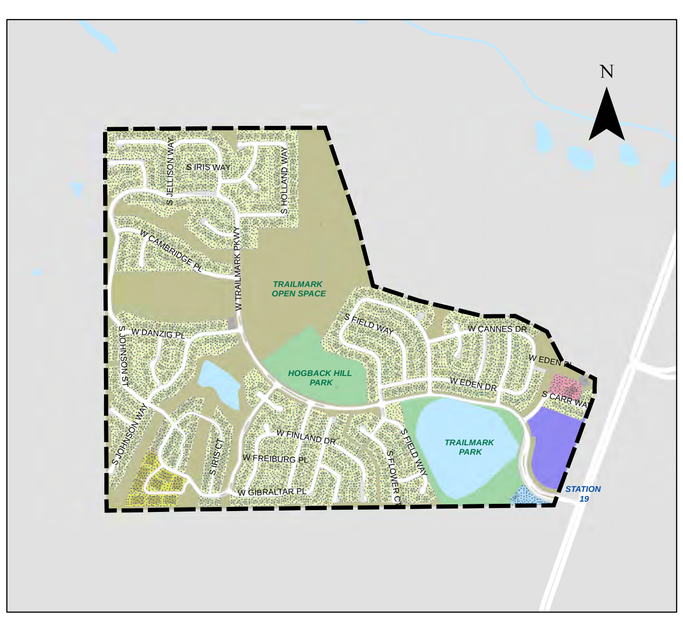
*To the left, public open space at Ketring Park that is borrowed by residents of adjacent homes. To the right, private open space on undeveloped, commercially zoned property just north of Mineral Avenue that is borrowed for the time being by nearby residents.*

DRAFT

# Existing Land Use and Character in Littleton, CO

## (As of Summer 2018)




## Legend

City Limits

**Character Class**

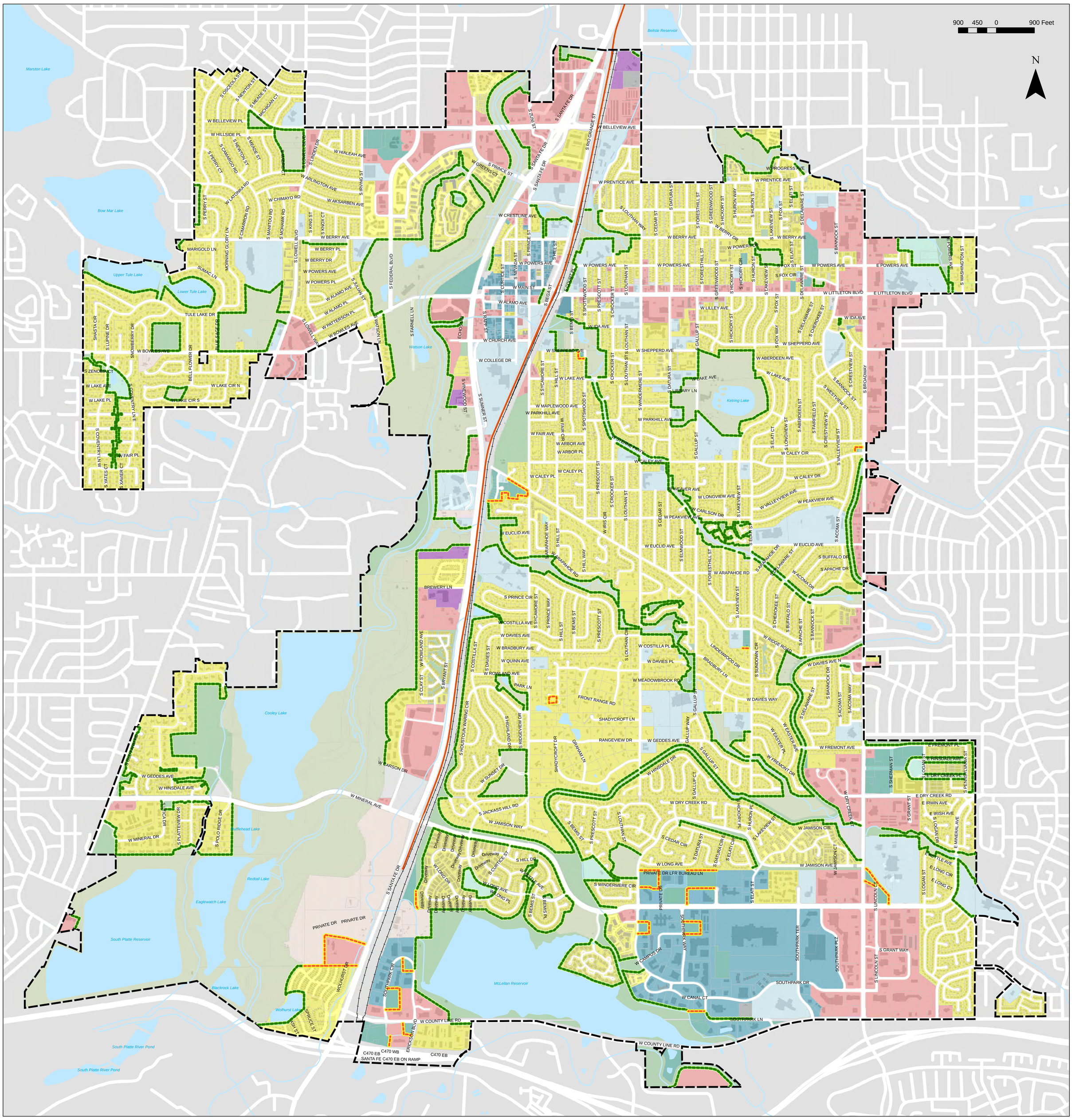
- Suburban
- Auto Urban
- Urban
- Mixed Character

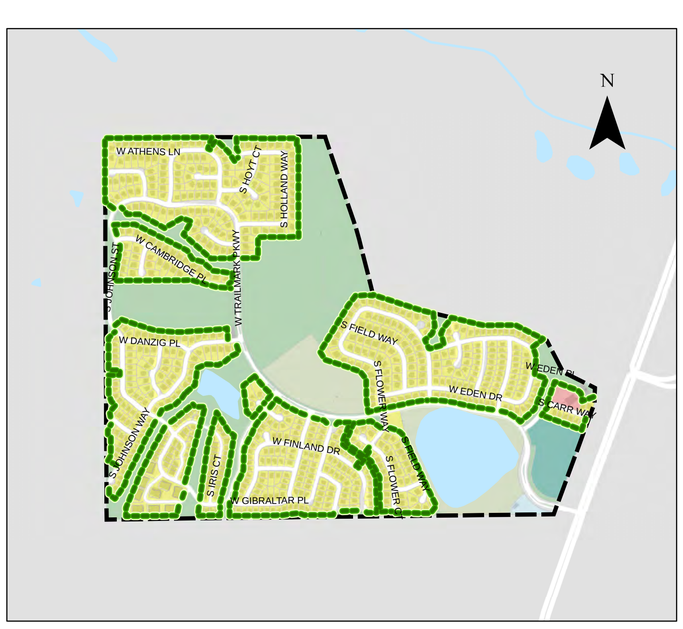
**Land Use Class**

- Open Space
- Park
- Private Recreation
- Rural
- Estate Residential
- Residential Single-Family Detached
- Residential Single-Family Attached
- Residential Multi-Family
- Manufactured Homes
- Rural Commercial
- Commercial
- Business Park
- Institutional
- Mixed Use
- Industrial
- Parking
- Utility
- Undeveloped

DRAFT

# Borrowed Space in Littleton, CO
## (As of Summer 2018)




## Legend

**Borrowed Space Boundary**
- Private
- Public

**Land Use Class**
- Open Space
- Park
- Private Recreation
- Rural
- Residential
- Commercial
- Institutional
- Mixed Use
- Industrial
- Parking
- Utility
- Undeveloped

**City Limits**

# APPENDIX 4: COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT PROCESS AND SUMMARY RESULTS

Envision LITTLETON
Our Community. Our Future.

# Engagement Appendix

# OVERVIEW

In response to the guidance provided by City Council during their March 2018 retreat, Envision Littleton focused intensely on public involvement and engagement. The City Council called for a community driven process to determine a unifying vision and the proactive inputs to move decision making towards being more values-based and data-driven.

Based on this direction, Envision Littleton began as a partnership between the community, the City, and our consultants in April 2018. To begin, the Envision Littleton Team gathered community input through small group listening sessions, neighborhood living room sessions, and the City's civically engaged leaders serving on Boards, Commissions, and volunteer groups.

The Envision Team maintained this community dialogue throughout 2018-19, with targeted outreach to gather broad community input from residents, businesses owners, employees, visitors, and various stakeholders in Littleton. The Team's goal was to leverage community input from existing community events, City communication outlets, and community groups, while creating new opportunities and relationships for lasting City engagement.

Envision Littleton created two community engagement plans; one designed to gather community input for the vision plan and establish long term relationships with community members in 2018 and the second to expand the community conversation about the look and feel of Littleton through the Comprehensive Plan update and Transportation Master Plan creation in 2019.

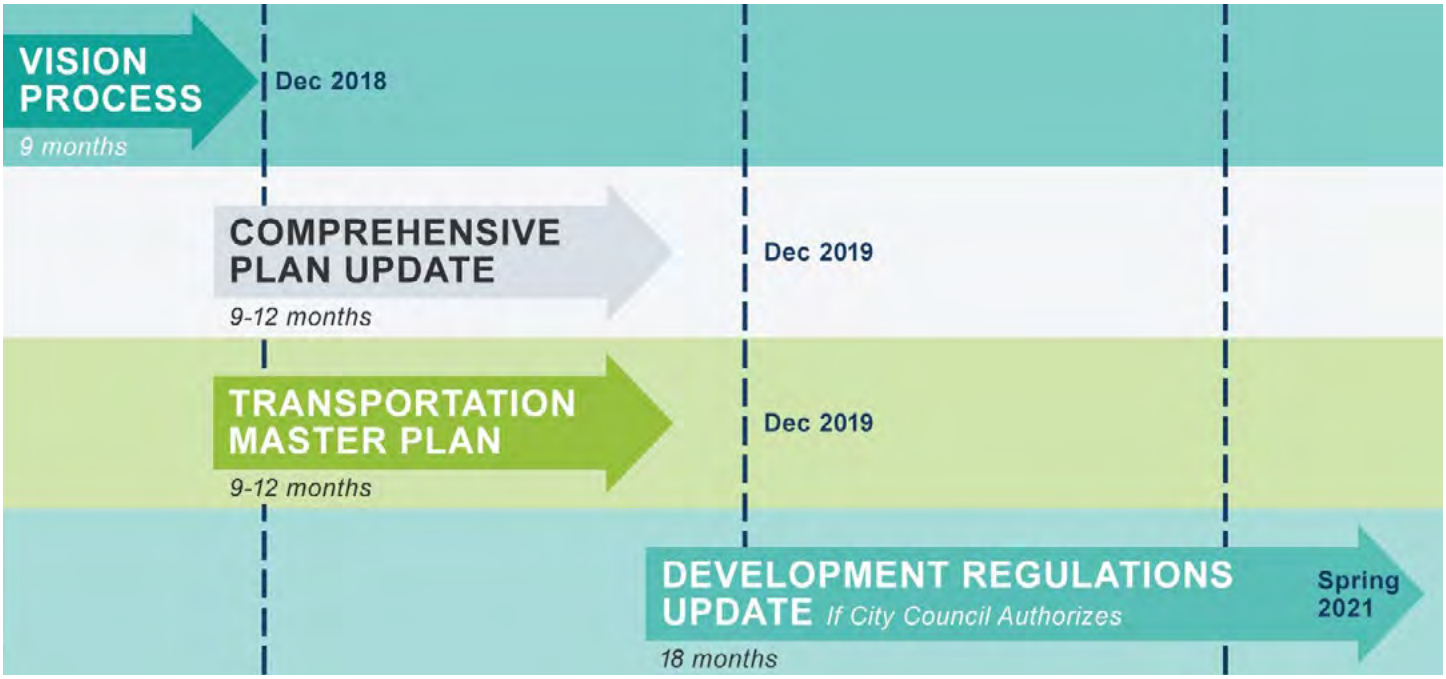
## WHY START WITH VISION?

One of the most unique elements of the Envision Littleton project was spending over eight months gathering input from the community about the unifying vision for 2040. Spending the majority of 2018 focused on collecting input for a unifying vision and set of guiding principles is unusual. Defining a community's vision for the future is normally an effort combined with planning for the future, but Littleton chose to isolate this step and allow the community to truly focus on their shared values, priorities, and concerns.The only other metro region community to produce a stand-alone vision document is Castle Rock 2020 developed in 2000.

The unifying vision captured what the community treasures today and what it collectively strives for going forward. The opportunity to have a broad and inclusive community process allowed the Envision Team to capture not only the hopes and dreams of the community, but also the extensive list of shared core values. The passion and commitment to the identified shared core values allowed the Team to develop the five guiding principles of ANCHORED, AUTHENTIC, CONNECTED, ACTIVE, and ENGAGED.

Once the City of Littleton tackled the creation of a unifying vision and set of five guiding principles, the Team was positioned to begin the more detailed community conversation about future development, redevelopment, transportation investments, and community enhancement efforts over the next 20 years.

In many ways, this project set out to understand the connection our residents, businesses, and visitors have with Littleton, attempting to understand the experiences and impressions of those that live, work, do business in, and visit our City. The focus of our conversation was to elevate the unifying values and vision and begin the proactive dialogue about the next 20 years. Last year in a **unanimous** vote, the Littleton City Council adopted the first-ever unifying vision for the city on December 18, 2018.




## WORKING TOGETHER

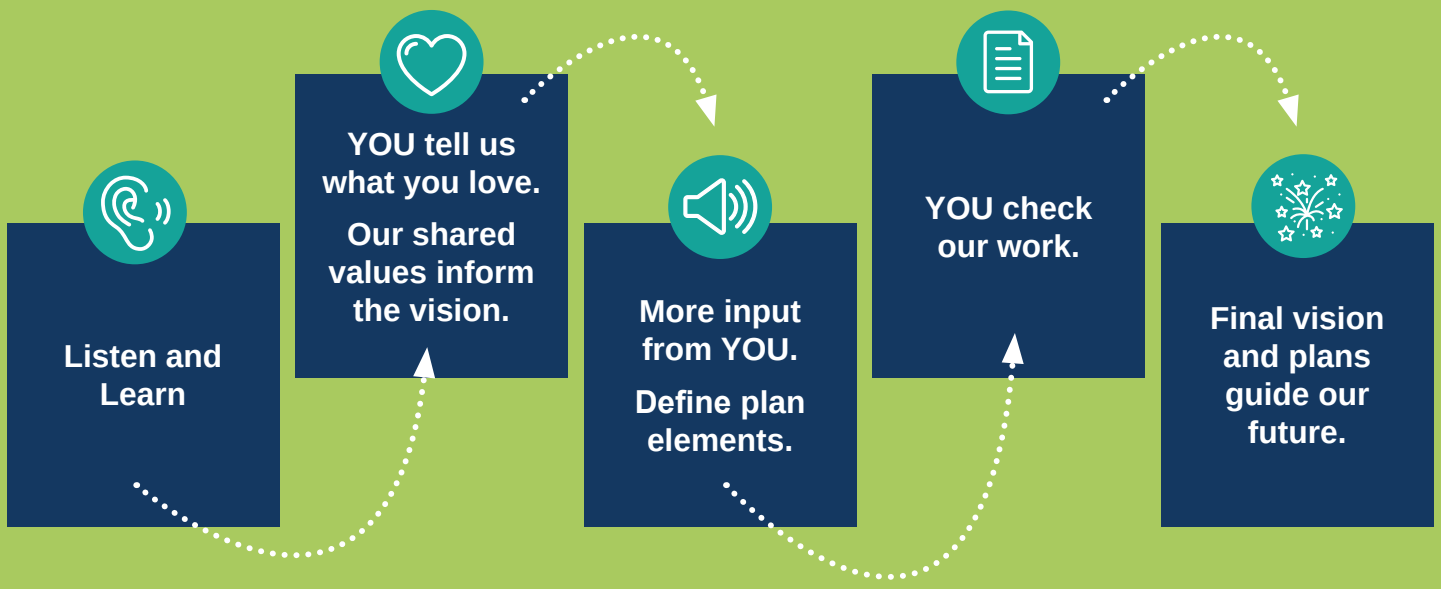
Envision Littleton imagines the future of our city over the next 20 years. We listened to what our community valued, why they love Littleton, their concerns, and their ideas for the future.

Innovation and new partnerships have remained at the heart of Envision Littleton. We were constantly looking for new, exciting ways to tell our collective story as a community. We worked diligently throughout 2018-19 to form new partnerships, build new relationships and lay a foundation for our shared future vision. We continue to seek creative ideas about how we can support engagement and meaningful interactions that honor Littleton as it is today and will be tomorrow.

Envision Littleton viewed community engagement as both a process and an outcome. The project drew from the expertise of our community. The focus was on listening and learning from the community so that the final plans reflected our shared values by identifying goals, policies, and actions to deliver the unifying vision. We remained invested in making the phases of planning clear, easy to understand, and easy to follow.

Littleton's vision plan reflects our basic local values, identifies what matters most to the community, and creates a picture of how we as a community wish to be viewed by others. The unifying vision became the foundation to inform the update to the City's Comprehensive Plan and creation of a first-ever Transportation Master Plan.

# We needed the whole community to do it right!




## WHAT WE LEARNED AND WILL CONTINUE

Envision Littleton imagines the future of our city over the next 20 years. We listened to what our community valued, why they love Littleton, their concerns, and their ideas for the future.

Innovation and new partnerships have remained at the heart of Envision Littleton. We were constantly looking for new, exciting ways to tell our collective story as a community. We worked diligently throughout 2018-19 to form new partnerships, build new relationships and lay a foundation for our shared future vision. We continue to seek creative ideas about how we can support engagement and meaningful interactions that honor Littleton as it is today and will be tomorrow.

Even beyond the Envision Littleton project, we pledge to:

- **Strive to involve everyone including residents, employers, employees, and visitors**
- **Work in partnership with our residents, businesses, and visitors**
- **Tailor our interactions to bring out the wisdom of our participants**
- **Be systematic in how we compare and analyze what we hear**
- **Build long-term relationships for all city efforts**
- **Show participants how their input is used throughout the process**
- **Build upon existing efforts, activities, and resources**
- **Maintain flexibility to maximize opportunities and input**
- **Be transparent**

The city is working daily to incorporate the vision and guiding principles into its strategic planning and routine operations to ensure values-based and data-driven decision making. All who have contributed so far to Envision Littleton must remain stewards of the vision our community has put forward. This will ensure that Littleton is among the places where visions and values endure across decades and generations.

Throughout the Envision Littleton project, the City of Littleton took this opportunity to get back to basics and invest the time and resources to go out into the community and have a genuine conversation about the future with as many residents, visitors, employers, and employees as possible. During this process, the city was reminded that the people of Littleton are incredibly generous with their time and passion for the city.

In listening to stories and memories about Littleton, along with residents' desires and concerns for its future, the core values of the community came through consistently. Those values included a passion for and/or commitment to local history, the outdoors, being inclusive, being a model community, civic involvement, integrity, quality, and safety. The response heard most often was that people like the "small town feel" of Littleton so it was imperative that Envision Littleton provide as much detail about what "small town feel" actually means.

# Small Town Feel and Community—

## What does it mean?

In 2018, over 150 survey responses cited “Small Town Feel” when asked to list words that represent what they value about Littleton. In addition, more than 100 survey responses mentioned "Community" or "Community Feel," and similar comments were made repeatedly during in-person discussions. This was not surprising to the planning consultants on the Envision team as they hear these sentiments in most every city they work with, from small burgs of several thousand residents to cities with populations into the hundreds of thousands. The challenge is that Small Town Feel and Community can mean different things to different people, and they remain abstract concepts unless clarified. Based on lengthier survey comments, focus groups, community coffee chats, and in-depth discussions at community events, the Small Town Feel and Community Feel that exists in Littleton and is highly valued stems from the following:

### Stable Population

Many Littleton residents grew up in Littleton, stayed for a lifetime after moving here, or have family that also live in Littleton.

**SAFE**

### Active in Daytime

Littleton is an active daytime city versus a sleepy “bedroom community."

### Complete Community

Littleton has many more pieces in place than others in aiming to be a complete community with homes, businesses, schools, diverse places of worship, outdoor recreation and health and fitness amenities, entertainment, healthcare, and transportation options.

### Destination for Visitors

**WELCOMING AND FRIENDLY**

**DISTINCT IDENTITY AND HISTORY**

### Neighborhoods

### Gathering Places

Littleton has community gathering places - including Downtown Littleton, local businesses, Hudson Gardens, the Aspen Grove lifestyle center, Littleton Parks, Bemis Library, and Littleton Museum.

**FAMILY AND SENIOR FRIENDLY**

**ENGAGED AND PROUD CITIZENS**

### Community Events

### Quality Schools

**SUPERIOR PUBLIC SERVICES**

**ACCESSIBLE CITY OFFICIALS**

# COMMUNITY-DRIVEN PROCESS AND PARTNERS

Throughout the process of defining the unifying vision for the City of Littleton in 2018, the community shared stories and memories about Littleton, along with their desires and concerns for its future. This input has been the basis of beginning the work of the Comprehensive Plan and Transportation Master Plan in 2019. Hearing directly from our community was the most important input that we received throughout the process. We listened to the community needs and studied the existing conditions in our city. Then we compared what we learned and created next steps. The continuous community involvement was critical in each phase to learning about the city and sharing experiences so that the next steps were easy to identify.

## When will we make decisions?

**PHASE 1**
Review existing data and overview of the City of Littleton

**PHASE 2**
Analyze what we learned and create next steps

**PHASE 3**
Develop future scenarios based on the needs of you and the city

**PHASE 4**
You help us decide what is possible and together we prioritize scenarios

**PHASE 5**
City Council and Planning Commission review and adopt the final plan

November 2018 - July 2019 | August 2019 | October 2019

Envision Littleton was guided by the Joint Leadership of City Council and the Planning Commission. Each of the four beginning phases of Envision Littleton required the joint leadership to determine possible scenarios, incorporate the input of the community, and determine the next steps for the plan. City council members, as the elected representatives of the city, offered their combined experience with policy on a myriad of issues, understanding of the city budget, and the input they receive from the community at-large as well as local and regional stakeholders. Planning commission members offered their shared expertise for reviewing and making recommendations on major land-use recommendations for adoption by city council.

Both the community and Joint Leadership were supported by the project management and technical team. This team consisted of City of Littleton staff and the consultant teams of Kendig Keast Collaborative and HDR.

The roles and responsibilities of the team included:

- Analyzing and summarizing relevant data
- Coordinating with internal departments and external partners for technical analysis, meeting presentations, etc.
- Incorporating planning concepts into the public involvement process
- Engaging and receiving input from the community and other stakeholders
- Organizing education and engagement opportunities
- Regularly updating the project website
- Preparing draft and final project documents for review by Joint Leadership through each phase

The Envision Littleton Community Coordination Committee (CCC) was appointed by Mayor Brinkman in 2019 to assist the project management and technical team with developing meaningful engagement activities and tools to help make Envision Littleton more accessible to the community at large. The CCC met five times during 2019 and provided significant feedback to help guide the plans towards greater community input by serving as communication liaisons for the project to residents, businesses, and key stakeholders in the City of Littleton.

The unifying vision and guiding principles provided by the community are now being incorporated into every department at the City. The unifying vision sets the foundation for how joint leadership will approach and develop the comprehensive and transportation master plans. In many ways these combined plans will evolve the way we do business as a city and ultimately define our aspirations for the future. We will work closely with each department in the city to re-imagine their goals, deliverables, and collaborations. Each of the city departments represent a unique perspective and collaboration so we don't want to move forward without including their input during each phase.

## Supporting Community Partners

**Arapahoe Community College**
**artSPARK**
**Aspen Grove**
**Bemis Library**
**Breckenridge Brewery**
**Buck Recreation Center**
**City of Littleton Boards & Commissions**
**Colorado Center for the Blind**
**Community Housing Development Association**
**DIRT Coffee**
**Doctor's Care**
**First Presbyterian Church of Littleton**
**Friends of the Museum & Library**
**Globus & Cosmos**
**Graceful Community Café**
**Highline Crossing Co-Housing**
**Historic Downtown Littleton Merchants**
**Hudson Gardens**
**Littleton Adventist Hospital**
**Littleton Business Chamber**
**Littleton Independent**
**Littleton Leadership Academy**
**Littleton Museum**
**Littleton Optimists**
**Littleton Police Citizen's Academy Alumni**
**Littleton Public Schools (LPS)**
**Littleton Rotary**
**Littleton United Methodist Church**
**Littleton YMCA**
**LPS Foundation**
**National Night Out Hosts**
**South Metro Chamber of Commerce**
**South Metro Denver REALTORS Association**
**South Metro Housing Options**
**South Suburban Parks & Recreation**
**St James Presbyterian Church**
**St. Mary's Catholic Parish**
**Sunshine Community Group**
**Town Hall Arts Center**
**Tri-County Health**
**Vida Apartments**
**Western Welcome Week**

# COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT RESULTS

**Postcards Sent** 50,506

**Facebook Posts** 47

**Presentations** 55

**Online Survey Responses** 870

**Average Envision Email Open Rate** 47.5%

**Conversations** 8,315

**Littleton Report Articles** 5

**Reach through Envision Update Emails** 17,244

**National Nite Out Parties** 12

**Video Views** 1,167

**Envision Events** 261

**Listening Sessions** 59

**Interviews** 89

**Nextdoor Posts** 11

**YouTube Videos** 7

**Twitter Posts** 43

**Pop-Up Events** 54

**Instagram Posts** 13

**Envision Banner Flying Over Mainstreet** 10

**Weeks of Events** 34

**Bookmarks** 10,000

**Community Dinners / Socials** 3

**Channel 8 Videos**

**Reach through Partner Newsletters** 51,941

**Envision Beach Ball, Bubbles, Fans, and Smiling Dudes** 2,250

**Partner Emails** 31

**Street Fair** 1

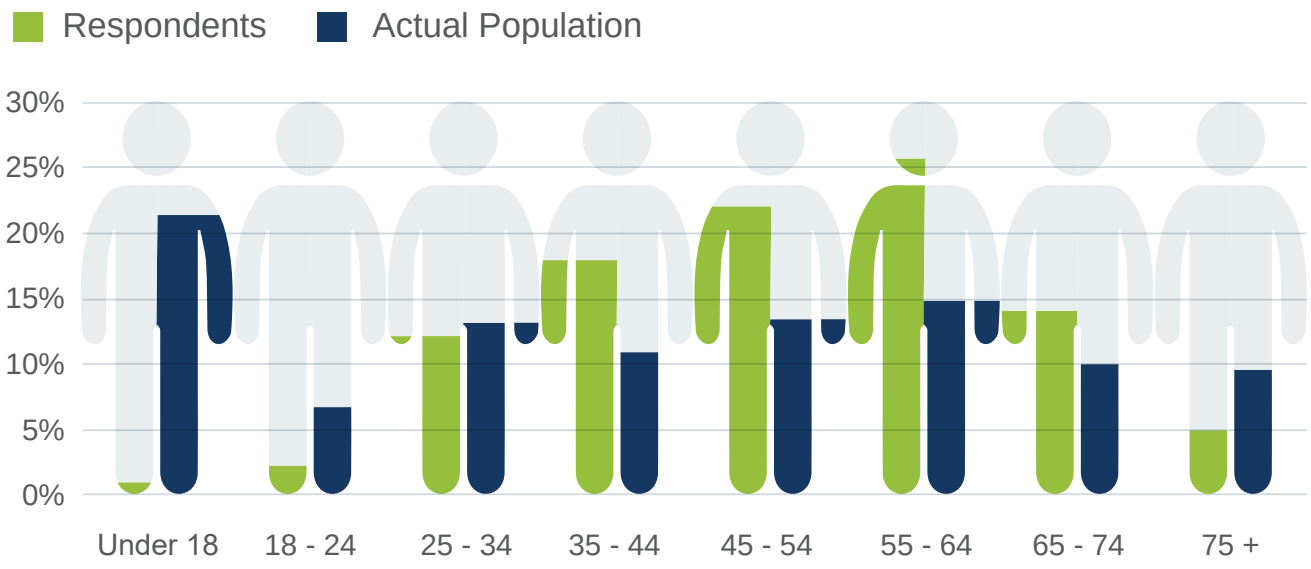
**On-Line Followers** 33,064

# ENVISION LITTLETON SURVEY

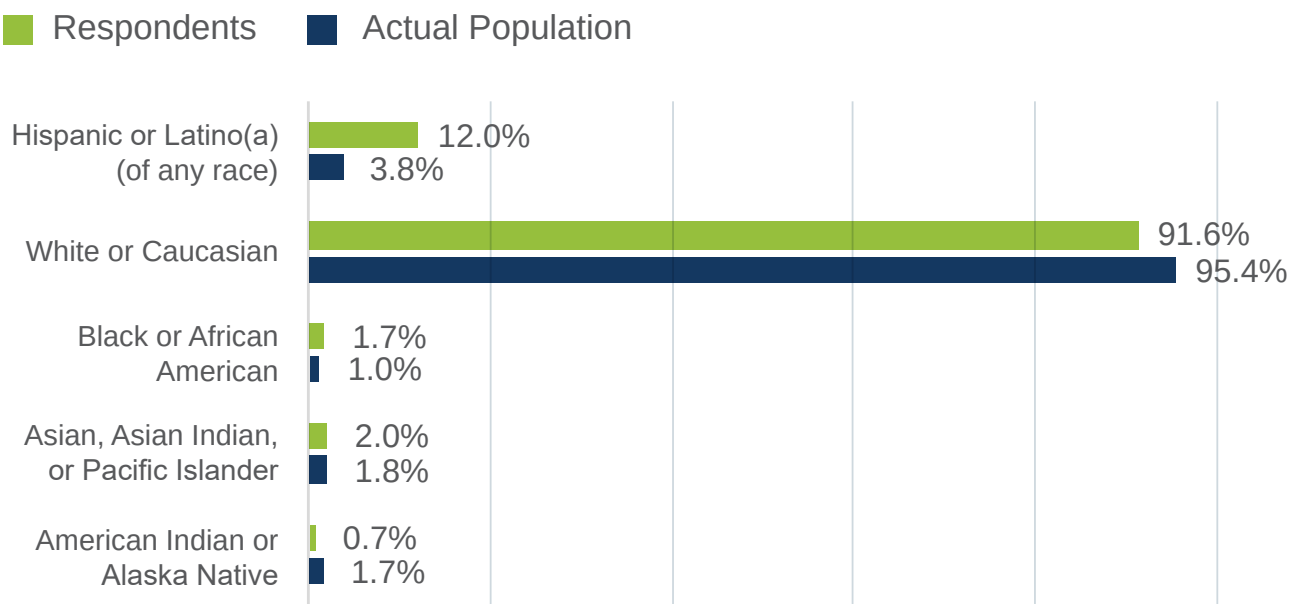
### SURVEY RESPONDENT DEMOGRAPHICS

- Total Surveys Completed: 870 (852 online)
- Total Resident Surveys (address within City of Littleton city limits): 635

## AGE DISTRIBUTION




## RACE / ETHNICITY

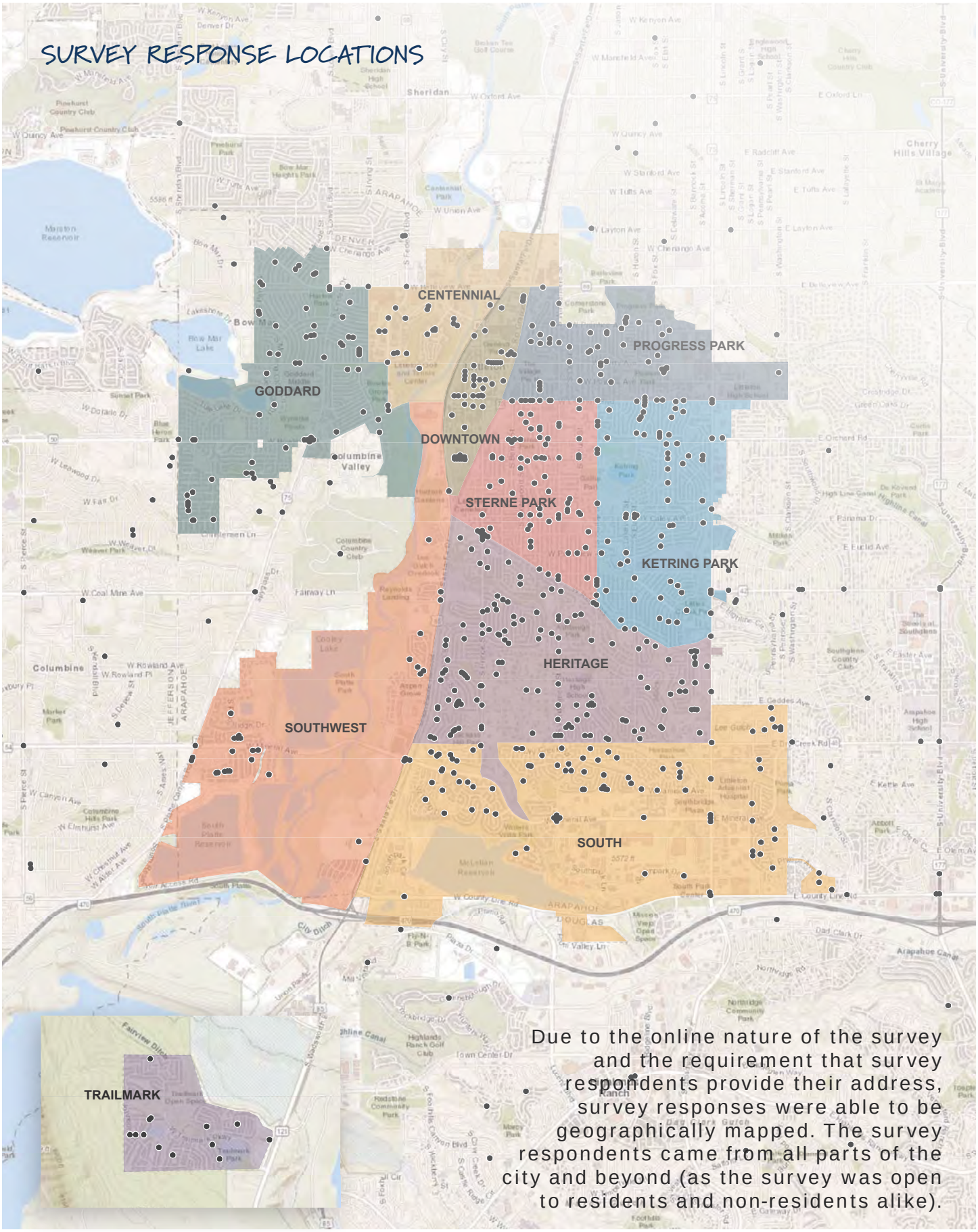


# YEAR FIRST MOVED TO, BEGAN WORKING IN, OR VISITING LITTLETON

| | % of Responses |
|---|---|
| **Before 1970** | 9% |
| **1970 to 1979** | 10% |
| **1980 to 1989** | 12% |
| **1990 to 1999** | 18% |
| **2000 to 2009** | 20% |
| **2010 to 2014** | 15% |
| **2015 to now** | 15% |
| **No Response or Unsure** | 1% |

The above demographics of respondents represents only the survey portion of the outreach and does not represent the full demographics of those reached through Envision Littleton. Of the approximately 5,500 community conversations in September 2018, it is estimated that 1/4 (750 people) were in the 0-24 age range.

# SURVEY RESPONSE LOCATIONS



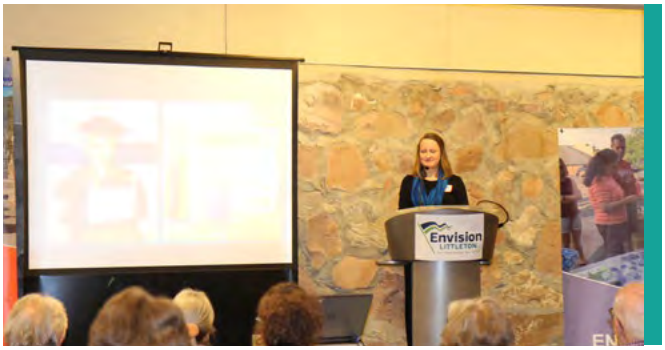

Due to the online nature of the survey and the requirement that survey respondents provide their address, survey responses were able to be geographically mapped. The survey respondents came from all parts of the city and beyond (as the survey was open to residents and non-residents alike).

# ENVISION LITTLETON FOUR-PART SPEAKER SERIES

On Wednesday, February 27 at 6:30PM, the city hosted the first in a four-part speaker series to kick-off Envision Littleton efforts in 2019. Attended by more than 80 community members the speaker series was designed to complement the robust community engagement that citizens have come to expect with Envision Littleton.

**Speaker Series #1** was a chance to compare and contrast key data points for the city with the greater region and state with expert Chris Akers, Economist for the State Demography Office. The most heartwarming moment of the night was a guest storyteller. Aubrey Weaver is a sophomore at Heritage High School and has spent "all 15 years of her life here in Littleton." Aubrey's story was accompanied by photos and memories from some of the most iconic Littleton events and gatherings. Weaver's story was broadcast on Facebook Live and continues to be posted on the city's Facebook page.

Aubrey closed her remarks by adding, "I know where ever college or life may take me that Littleton will always be here with the same energy and good people that have always been here when I come back. I wouldn't trade my memories of life here in Littleton for anything in the world."




Attendees also tested their knowledge of Littleton with a short quiz about key data that describes the people, environment, jobs, and transportation in Littleton. Kathleen Osher, Envision Littleton project manager administered the quiz and asked participants to vote using colored cards. This same trivia continued to be featured as part of Envision's social media engagement over the next few months so that more people will had the chance to test their knowledge of the latest trends in the city.

It is a standard best practice to start long-range planning with an overview of the community based on demographic, household, and employment information. This helps a city see the past and present to understand the changes taking place. And understand if there are any trends. In covering the big picture, Akers said that "if you think about it, Littleton is right in the heart of the growth we've seen in Colorado."

This background information and forecasts for the future helped lay the groundwork for analyzing other information discovered through community engagement, expert analysis by our consultant teams, and work in partnership with our local and regional partners.

In April, Littleton hosted **Speaker Series #2**, featuring visiting expert Darin Atteberry, City Manager for the City of Fort Collins. Over 60 members of the community were in attendance.

Fort Collins, Colorado is one of only three municipalities in the United States to receive the Malcolm Baldrige presidential award for performance excellence. It was this performance excellence that was the focus of Mr. Atteberry's presentation.

Atteberry's first challenge to the crowd was to answer the question of what happens with your plans? He asked the attendees to consider if Littleton is the type of city that has a plan and builds that plan; has a plan and puts it on the shelf and doesn't build it; OR doesn't plan and just builds. He added, "One of the things that I want to make sure you leave with this morning is that Fort Collins deeply and fundamentally believes in planning; if you aren't visioning and aligning resources and being very intentional and deliberate then you are going to get what you get; and we would say you are going to get average."

The Fort Collins City Manager went on to explain how the City delivers on world-class municipal services. Key to their success has been recognizing all of the amazing leadership that has existed throughout the history of the city. He describes the process as co-creating and collaboration. This requires Fort Collins to continually engage the community in the planning process, benchmarking results, and honoring the shared values and vision of the city. He added, "we needed to move away from trust us to let me show you (through data) that we are spending the appropriate amount on municipal services."

In the end, one of the most important lessons for the City of Littleton was that "vision clarity is critical; without a vision, everything becomes a priority and in turn, nothing becomes a priority."

**Speaker Series #3** was held on May 22 and welcomed Bret Keast to further uncover the unique methodology of community character offered by the city's national consulting team, Kendig Keast Collaborative. This method of combining land-use and design elements will be central to how the city will continue to balance ushering in the future with honoring the legacy of Littleton's leadership role in the Metro Region.

Bret C. Keast, AICP is the Owner and CEO of Kendig Keast Collaborative (KKC). During the presentation, Bret's passion came through about how KKC applies the core values of promoting good land stewardship, conserving resources, preserving and enhancing community character, safeguarding neighborhood integrity, and ensuring fiscal responsibility.

**Speaker Series #4** hosted national thought leader and motivational speaker Peter Kageyama on Thursday, September 12. 160 registered for the free event and were challenged to begin a new love affair with the City of Littleton.

Peter Kageyama is the author of For the Love of Cities: The Love Affair Between People and Their Places and the follow up, Love Where You Live: Creating Emotionally Engaging Places. He is the former President of Creative Tampa Bay, a grassroots community change organization and the co-founder of the Creative Cities Summit, an interdisciplinary conference that brings citizens and practitioners together around the big idea of 'the city.'

The focus of the evening was a series of bottom-up community initiatives that introduced fun and increased the love that people feel for their places. Kageyama encouraged participants to create a loveable city; "the kind that grabs you by the heart and refuses to let go."

The evening featured stories from across the country about co-creators that helped introduce more lively, fun, and loveable ideas into the life of their cities. Examples included, Peregrine Church, who at the age of 20, developed Rainworks to feature pieces of street art that only become visible when it rains in Seattle, WA. Kageyama also featured co-creators from Littleton such as Reinke brothers and Heather Greenwood of Graceful Community Café.

# ENVISION LITTLETON STREET FAIR

The Envision Team hosted the “Envision Littleton Street Fair” on August 3, 2019 from 3:30-6:30pm. This unique event brought the community together to learn more about the project, gather meaningful input, and provide hands-on project demonstrations of both the Comprehensive and Transportation Master Plans.

The street fair took place during the 6th Annual Littleton Twilight Criterium that brings over 10,000 residents and visitors to Littleton’s Historic Downtown. The bicycle race circuit runs through the streets of downtown Littleton with races starting at 3:15 p.m. and ends with Pro and Elite racing under the lights.  A beer garden, live music and kid zone create a festival atmosphere between races.

In coordination with the Criterium, the street fair took over about 1 block of South Prince Street during the afternoon of the race. In addition to talking to the team, attendees also had the chance to take part in hands-on demonstrations and get a sneak peek of the City’s Comprehensive and Transportation Master Plans before they were released for public comment on August 8.

Activities included the future land use map, funding scenarios for future transportation projects, a protected bike lane demonstration, and testing new mobility options, like e-Bikes and scooters. The team also encouraged challenges with Giant Jenga and corn hole to keep the event dynamic and inclusive of residents of all ages.

# ENVISION LITTLETON ENGAGEMENT & FEEDBACK

## COMMUNITY DINNERS & COFFEE CHATS

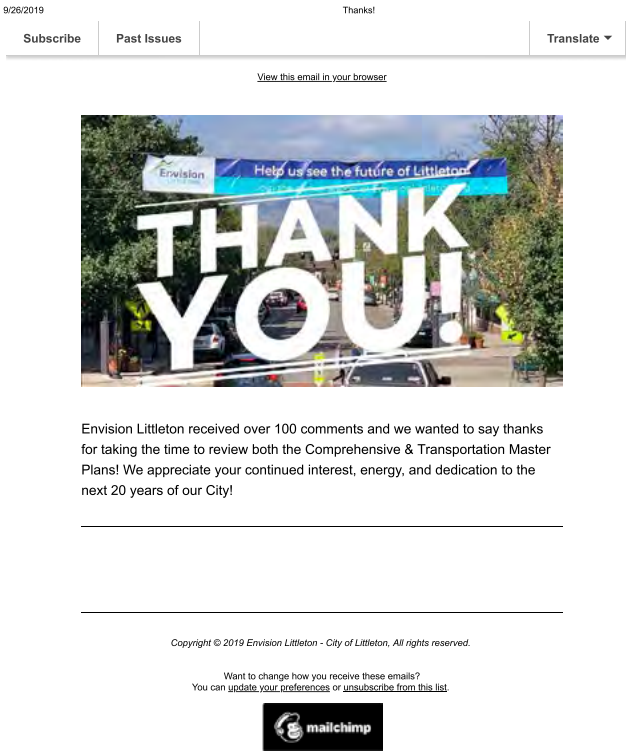
During the 2018 efforts, the Envision team hosted 2 community coffee chats at local coffee shops, DIRT and Graceful Community Café and 3 community dinners. The team provided coffee or dinner and took advantage of visiting with residents, business owners, area employees, and visitors about their impressions of Littleton and their ideas for the next 20 years in an informal setting.

The events included 147 participants, but in many cases were an opportunity to find new voices in Littleton and capture critical input from members of the community that were unable to complete an online survey. This informal conversation also enriched the experience of the team to best understand the core values and unifying vision over the next 20 years.

## EMAIL UPDATES

2018 efforts to update the community on the project by email were aided in large part with the help of partners throughout the community. Organizations like the Hospital, Aspen Grove, and Community College represented audiences of over 12,000 subscribers. The City's Economic Development department was also a key avenue to the business community by sharing Envision updates with their 1300 subscribers.

In 2019, the Envision team grew the number of dedicated email subscribers by 68 percent and updates were now traveling to an additional 1,300 subscribers with an average open rate of 47.5 percent. The email updates helped track the progress of the project during its five phases as well as promote events and opportunities to visit with the Envision Littleton team.


9/26/2019 Thanks!

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View this email in your browser



Envision Littleton received over 100 comments and we wanted to say thanks for taking the time to review both the Comprehensive & Transportation Master Plans! We appreciate your continued interest, energy, and dedication to the next 20 years of our City!

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## MEET, GREET, AND EATS

During Envision Littleton, the City hosted seven Meet, Greet, and Eats. Each took place in outdoor Littleton locations and included the opportunity for residents to gather and ask questions from a variety of departments and partners in the city. Every event included displays about Envision Littleton and team members were available to answer questions. While the free pizza, water, and ice cream were big draws for neighbors to visit and kids to play, the conversations were integral to staying in tune with the desires and concerns of residents throughout the city.

## POP-UP EVENTS

During the Envision Littleton process, the team hosted 54 pop-up tables at scheduled events taking place in the City throughout the summer. This demonstrated presence spread awareness of the project and facilitated meaningful conversations with a variety of different audiences reflecting the priorities of the City's residents.

**Little Jam 1** took place Saturday, June 1st in Bega Park as part of the City's summer concert series, with over 200 attendees. The Envision Littleton Team was set-up for two hours prior to the show. They presented the future land use map and answered general project questions for approximately 50 members of the general public.

The **Farmer's Market at Aspen Grove** in Littleton took place every Wednesday during the summer. Envision Littleton hosted a table on Wednesday, July 10th from 10 a.m. - 2 p.m. The Envision Littleton team presented the future land use map to the 200 event attendees with 30 public interactions.

The **Western Week Pancake Breakfast** event took place at Arapahoe Community College in both 2018 & 2019. With over 500 event attendees each year, the Envision Littleton team presented project updates, promoted the online survey, future maps of transportation projects and land use to the public, facilitating over 150 conversations.

**The Breckenridge Brewery 5K** race was held on Sunday, August 18th. The future land use map was presented, and the event DJ gave periodic shout outs, heard by the 175 event attendees. There were approximately 15 public interactions.

## 2019 PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD FOR DRAFT COMPREHENSIVE & TRANSPORTATION MASTER PLANS

Once Envision Littleton reached the milestone of concluding Future City Phase 3, the DRAFT Comprehensive and Transportation Master Plans were released to the community on August 8. The drafts were available for public comment until 5PM on Monday, September 16. Comments were submitted using an on-line comment form, completing an online survey, or emailing directly to the City's project manager.

The invitation to the community was to again check the work of the project team. The drafts developed were the result of listening to the community through thousands of conversations, hundreds of events, the Envision Littleton Team taking notes furiously, and then putting those notes together to create a first draft.

We received over 103 submissions from residents and businesses that translated into hundreds of comments. We also heard in mid-August that the large documents seemed overwhelming so the team created an additional survey to guide residents and businesses through each plan chapter by chapter. The survey asked for the overall reaction to each section with referenced page numbers and then invited additional comments before moving to the next chapter. Both the results of

the survey and the general comments were delivered to the Joint Leadership and City Council during their October 8 study session.

## ENVISION LITTLETON TELEPHONE TOWN HALL

On August 28, 2019, Envision Littleton hosted a telephone town hall to increase the opportunities for public comment during the open comment period for the draft Comprehensive and Transportation Master Plans. The Envision Telephone Town Hall merged listening and asking questions over the phone with several other ways to watch and participate in the event:

- **In person** — citizens were welcome to attend the meeting in the Council Chamber at the Littleton Center and submit written questions;
- **Website** — questions were submitted online at www.littletontownhall.org during the meeting (closed-captioning was available on that website);
- **Facebook & YouTube** — The meeting was live streamed on the city's Facebook and YouTube channels;
- **Cable TV** — Littleton's Xfinity and CenturyLink DirectTV customers could watch the meeting on Channel 8.

The event was moderated by Kelli Narde, Littleton's Communications Director. Kelli was joined by a panel of experts including:

- Mark Relph, City Manager
- Jennifer Henninger, Director of Community Development
- Kathleen Osher, Manager of Innovation & Performance Excellence
- Keith Reester, Director of Public Works

The Town Hall is like a radio call-in show because it allows participants to interact with a speaker from the comfort of their homes or offices.

The day before the event participants receive an **automated pre-call** recorded by Kelli Narde announcing the event and the day of the event, invitees receive another recorded message that welcomes them to the event and asks them to simply stay on the line to join.

By calling out to participants, the Telephone Town Hall increases participation and there is no need to remember to dial into the event. Utilizing this technology, we brought 365 people together on the call in a matter of seconds.

Once on the Telephone Town Hall, participants engage with the event by using their phone's keypad to respond to poll questions, request the chance to get in line to ask a question live on the air. Questions are also offered via social media and in-person by submitting a written question. These combined provide valuable data and feedback.

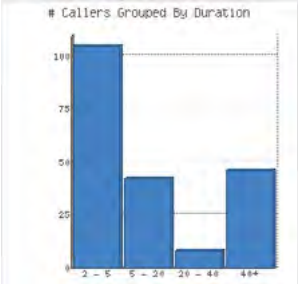
In addition to questions, the Envision Littleton Telephone Town Hall included poll questions regarding key facts and data discovered during the 18-month Envision process. Then, following the event, we were provided with a summary included here.

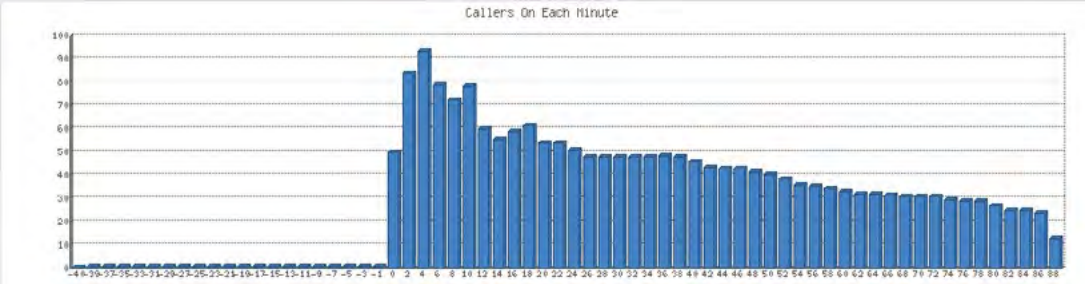
### TELEPHONE TOWN HALL RESULTS

| 373 Attendees | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Attendees** | **Peak Attendees** | **Entered Queue** | **Screened** | **Contributed** | **Went Live** | **Voicemails** |
| 355 (Outbound)<br>10 (Inbound)<br>6 Hosts<br>2 Screeners | 120 | 6 | 4 | 0 | 5 | 0 |

| Minutes and Totals | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Access Live Length** | **Type** | **Total Minutes** | **Avg Minutes** |
| 89 minutes | Direct Connect | 5,107 (1,001 Inbound) | 23 |

| Video Minutes and Totals | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Total Video Users** | **Total Video Minutes** | **Avg Minutes** | **Total Video Viewer Questions** |
| 71 | 2,479 | 34.92 | 22 |




# WE ARE STILL LISTENING

Littleton will always be building on the shoulders of its original founders and past civic leaders who were the determined innovators and community champions of their day. They established certain expectations and standards for Littleton that enabled the community to prosper and navigate through periods of both incremental and phenomenal change. Among the core values ingrained many decades ago that still endure are civic involvement, outstanding public schools, preserving and celebrating local history, and being a model community and leading voice among other cities in the region and state. The proud residents and leaders of today, likewise, must pass on this community spirit and shared legacy that also now reflects their influence.

Going forward, the City will also continue to listen, learn, and adapt so that the desired future we are all seeking for Littleton will remain in focus. Effective communities evaluate their choices made and revisit their vision and principles regularly. They must remain on target, be clearly understood, and encompass the range of likely issues that will arise. All who have contributed so far to Envision Littleton must remain stewards of the vision our community has put forward. This will ensure that Littleton is among the places where visions and values endure across the decades and generations.

Littleton
Colorado

envisionlittleton.org

# APPENDIX 5: FISCAL IMPACT ANALYSIS REPORT

# Fiscal Impact Analysis of the City of Littleton Comprehensive Plan Alternative Land Use Scenarios

City of Littleton, Colorado

*Prepared for:*
The City of Littleton

September 17th, 2019

TischlerBise
FISCAL | ECONOMIC | PLANNING

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# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The purpose of this Fiscal Impact Analysis ("FIA") is to provide information to the City of Littleton related to the fiscal impact of distinct land use scenarios in order to identify how best to accommodate future growth while minimizing costs. An FIA determines whether revenues generated by development are sufficient to cover the costs resulting from that development—specifically, those costs associated with maintaining current levels of service given the additional service and facility demands that growth places on a jurisdiction.

TischlerBise is part of a consultant team headed by Kendig Keast Collaborative ("KKC") working with the City of Littleton to develop a Comprehensive Plan for the municipality, the *Envision Littleton Comprehensive Plan*. TischlerBise's role is to identify and analyze fiscal impacts of distinct land use scenarios in the city.

This report presents our findings, discusses their significance, and details our approach and methodology.

## BACKGROUND

An FIA shows direct revenues and costs from new development; development scenarios are represented by numerical projections of population, housing units, employment, and nonresidential building area. We received three land use scenarios from KKC which were developed in coordination with City of Littleton staff. The scenarios represent several "what if" situations, with varying levels of residential and nonresidential development occurring over the course of the 20-year planning period.

Once scenarios have been identified, the next major step in the FIA process is to determine current service levels and capacities and associated revenues and costs. The service level, revenue, and cost assumptions utilized in this analysis are based on on-site interviews and follow-up discussions with City staff, an analysis of the City of Littleton's Fiscal Year 2019 ("FY2019") Budget; the 2018 Comprehensive Annual Financial Report; the Littleton Museum Strategic Plan; the Parks, Recreation, and Trail Master Plan; the 2019 Facilities Assessment; the 2017 Littleton Housing Study; and other relevant documents.

Using the results of this level of service/capacity analysis, we developed a fiscal impact model customized for the City of Littleton. We then utilized this model to evaluate the fiscal impact of the three distinct land use scenarios provided by KKC.

# SUMMARY OF SCENARIOS

In designing the land use scenarios utilized in this FIA, the planning team considered the amount of developable land remaining within the city limits, current demographic and market trends, and the goals identified throughout the Comprehensive Planning process, including fiscal sustainability.

Each scenario is described below.

**Scenario 1: Trend (Residential Emphasis)**. This scenario bases its projections primarily on current demographic and market trends. The city's population is expected to reach the mid-point of the growth range projected in the Comprehensive Plan, and the majority of developable land is used for residential development in order to accommodate that growth. *Broadly speaking, Scenario 1 represents a "business-as-usual" approach to development review and the City's economic development policy decisions.*

**Scenario 2: Larger Nonresidential Share**. This scenario incorporates more nonresidential development than Scenario 1. With more vacant land utilized for commercial development, less land is available for new housing; this scenario therefore generates less population growth than the trend scenario. Nonresidential development is expected to generally align with the character of the current built environment. *Scenario 2 diverges from historical development trends by attracting more commercial development. Thus, achieving full build-out under this scenario may require a shift in the City's approach towards attracting commercial development.*

**Scenario 3: Largest Nonresidential Share**. Scenario 3 assumes the same level and type of residential growth as Scenario 2, but it calls for additional commercial development. Achieving this level of commercial growth requires more densification than Scenario 2, especially through more intensive mixed-use, master-planned "destination" development and/or some level of transit-oriented development. *Like Scenario 2, achieving these projected levels of development may require changes to the City's development-related policies and economic development programs, such as more targeted market interventions, a more streamlined development review process, or the implementation of other incentive programs.*

The amount of development for each scenario for the projection period is provided below in Figure 1. Broadly speaking, these land use scenarios were designed to test how residential development compares to nonresidential development in terms of its impact on the City's fiscal sustainability.

FIGURE 1. SCENARIO COMPARISONS: 20-YEAR NET INCREASES

| DEMAND FACTOR | Base Year | Scenario 1: Residential | Scenario 2: Larger Nonresidential | Scenario 3: Largest Nonresidential |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| SINGLE FAMILY UNITS | 10,531 | 1,927 | 580 | 580 |
| ATTACHED UNITS | 10,531 | 3,751 | 2,260 | 2,260 |
| MOBILE HOMES | 457 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| **TOTAL UNITS** | **21,519** | **5,678** | **2,840** | **2,840** |
| *Growth from Base Year* | | *26%* | *13%* | *13%* |
| **POPULATION** | **49,643** | **13,116** | **6,560** | **6,560** |
| *Growth from Base Year* | | *26%* | *13%* | *13%* |
| RETAIL SF | 2,411,675 | 1,057,587 | 1,840,679 | 2,991,103 |
| OFFICE/INSTITUTONAL SF | 2,483,842 | 440,661 | 766,950 | 1,150,424 |
| INDUSTRIAL | 2,719,867 | 176,265 | 306,780 | 230,085 |
| LODGING SF | 252,856 | 88,132 | 153,390 | 230,085 |
| **TOTAL NONRESIDENTIAL SF** | **7,868,239** | **1,762,645** | **3,067,799** | **4,371,612** |
| *Growth from Base Year* | | *22%* | *39%* | *56%* |
| **JOBS** | **30,221** | **4,173** | **7,263** | **11,060** |
| *Growth from Base Year* | | *14%* | *24%* | *37%* |

## APPROACH AND MAJOR ASSUMPTIONS

TischlerBise's FIA methodology incorporates the case study-marginal cost approach wherever possible. The **case study-marginal methodology** is the most realistic method for evaluating fiscal impacts. This methodology takes site or *geographic-specific* information into consideration. It therefore accounts for any unique demographic or locational characteristics of new development, as well as the extent to which a particular infrastructure or service operates under, over, or close to *capacity*. Available facility capacity determines the need for additional capital facilities and associated operating costs.

Certain costs are impacted by general growth, regardless of location; these are projected using a **marginal/average cost hybrid methodology** that incorporates capacity and thresholds for staffing, but projects non-salary operating costs using an average cost approach.

Some costs and revenues are not expected to be impacted by demographic changes and are therefore considered **fixed** in this analysis. In contrast, services and infrastructure that are impacted by growth are termed **variable** in that they change—or vary—over time as a result of growth-related demand factors.

Other general items to note are as follows:

- We generally projected operating costs on an average basis with demand factors specific to the service being modeled. Personnel costs are modeled to reflect the fact that some types of positions (e.g., department directors) are fixed and would not increase regardless of growth.
- Under the marginal cost approach, growth triggers facilities and other infrastructure needs that are built, acquired, or improved once a capacity threshold is reached, resulting in "lumpier" fiscal impact results. The following exception should be noted:
  - The transportation capital costs projected in this analysis align with the Transportation Master Plan component of the *Envision Littleton Comprehensive Plan*; it is assumed that transportation infrastructure investments will be driven by growth in population and jobs. Because population and jobs are projected to grow at a consistent rate, transportation capital costs follow this same linear pattern.
- It is assumed that capital improvements projected to serve growth are financed on a **pay-go basis**, meaning they are cash-funded at the time the infrastructure is developed or acquired.

## LEVELS OF SERVICE

Cost projections are based on the "snapshot approach" in which it is assumed the current level of service, as funded in the City's FY2019 budget, will continue through the projection period. Current demand base data was used to calculate unit costs and service level thresholds. Examples of demand base data include population, dwelling units, employment by industry type, and jobs. Note that the "snapshot" approach does not attempt to speculate about how levels of service, costs, revenues, and other factors will change over the planning period. Instead, it evaluates the fiscal impact to the City as it currently conducts business under the present budget.

## REVENUE FUND STRUCTURE

Revenues are projected assuming that the City's current revenue fund structure as defined by the FY2019 budget will not change.

## INFLATION RATE

The rate of inflation is assumed to be zero throughout the projection period, and cost and revenue projections are in constant 2019 dollars. This assumption is in accord with current budget data and avoids the difficulty of forecasting as well as interpreting results expressed in inflated dollars. In general, including inflation is complicated and unpredictable. This is particularly the case given that some costs, such as salaries, increase at different rates than other operating and capital costs such as contractual and building construction costs. These costs, in turn, almost always increase in variation to the appreciation of real estate. Using constant 2019 dollars reinforces the snapshot approach and avoids these problems.

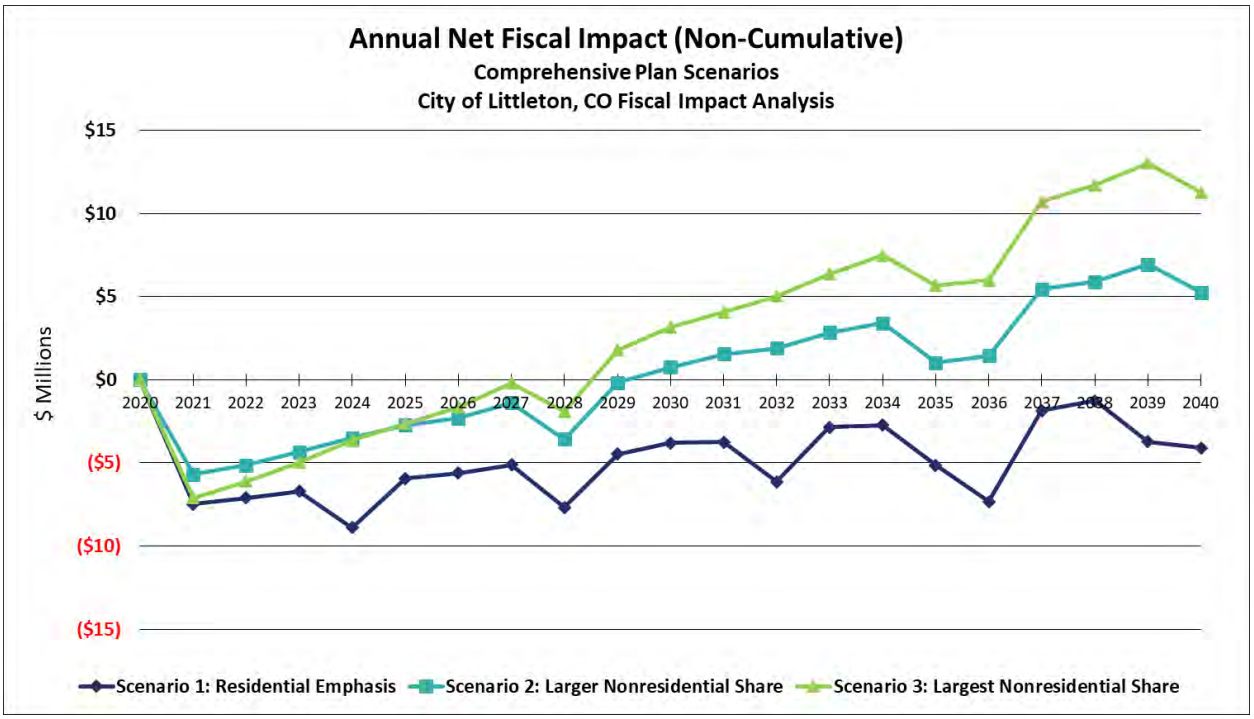
# FISCAL IMPACT ANALYSIS RESULTS

The results of this FIA are presented in terms of annual net fiscal impact and cumulative fiscal impact below.

## ANNUAL NET FISCAL IMPACT

Figure 2 below shows the annual net fiscal results to the City for the three scenarios over the 20-year planning period. Annual net fiscal results are **revenues minus costs in each year**, including both operating and capital costs. By showing annual results, the magnitude, rate of change, and timeline of deficits and revenues can be observed over time. The "bumpy" nature of the annual results during particular years represents the opening of capital facilities and/or major operating costs being incurred.

FIGURE 2. ANNUAL NET FISCAL RESULTS –GROWTH SCENARIOS




All scenarios produce annual net deficits within the early years, but Scenarios 2 and 3 start consistently producing revenues in 2029. In contrast, Scenario 1 produces annual net deficits through 2040.

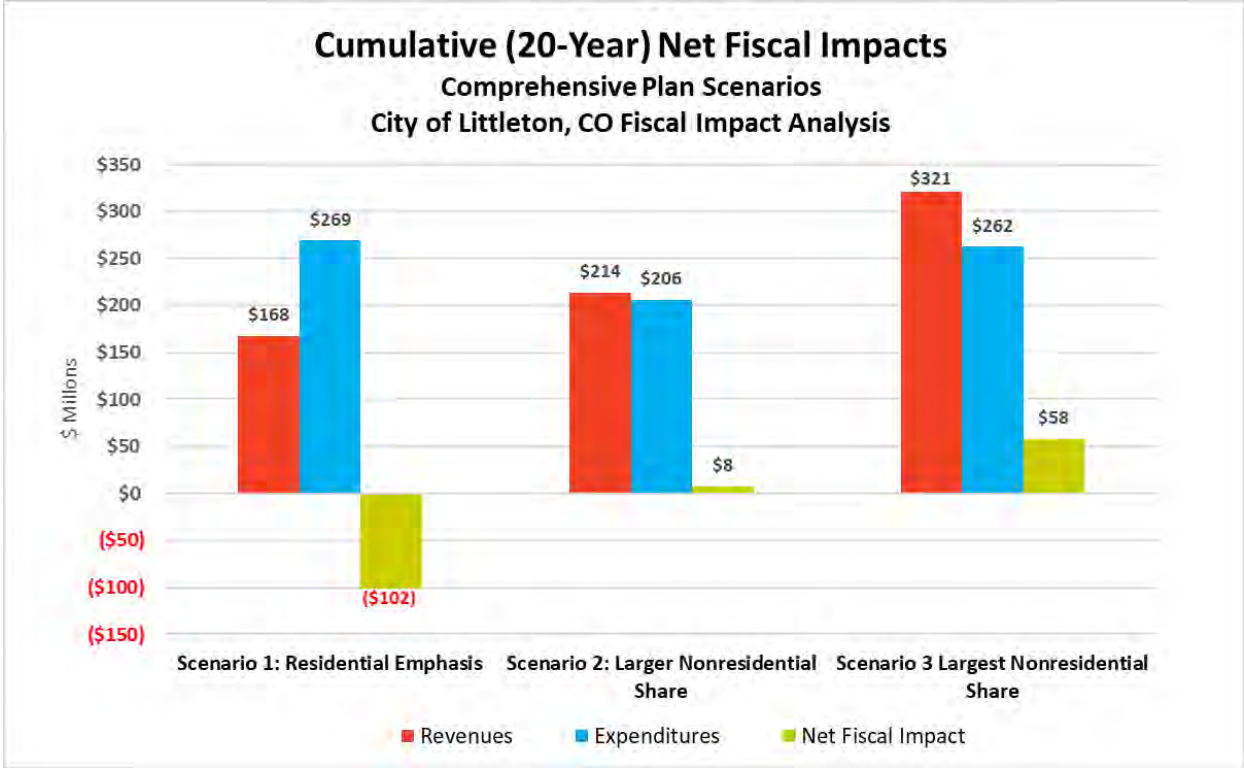
Scenario 1 assumes that residential development will produce enough housing units to support population growth as projected based on current trends, per the Comprehensive Plan's demographic analysis. The projected annual net deficits associated with this scenario reflect the relative lack of revenue generated by residential development. The analysis also reveals that residential development results in greater demand for City services and facilities than nonresidential development.

Because residential development generates less revenue and greater costs than nonresidential development, a substantial difference in annual fiscal impacts is observed between Scenario 1 and the other two scenarios.

## CUMULATIVE FISCAL IMPACT

***Cumulative*** figures reflect total revenues generated minus operating and capital expenditures over the 20-year development timeframe. Cumulative revenues, expenditures, and net results are shown in Figure 3.

FIGURE 3: CUMULATIVE NET FISCAL IMPACT RESULTS




## Further Detail on Operating and Capital Results

Analyzing operating and capital results separately for all scenarios reveals net surpluses on the operating side and net deficits for capital. Cumulative revenues and expenditures for operating and capital are shown below in Figure 4. The primary sources of capital revenue are from the City's Building Use Tax and Impact Fees. The Arapahoe Open Space Tax and the Highway Users Tax also contribute to capital revenues, but under the growth scenarios utilized in this analysis, these dedicated revenue streams produce significantly less revenue than Building Use Taxes and Impact Fees, which are directly generated by new development.

As shown in Figure 4, the projected revenues for capital needs are insufficient to cover the projected level of infrastructure needs.

FIGURE 4: CUMULATIVE NET FISCAL RESULTS – OPERATING AND CAPITAL DETAIL

| 20-Year Total Net Fiscal Impact - Scenario Comparisons<br>City of Littleton Fiscal Impact Model | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | SCENARIO | | |
| Category | Scenario 1: Residential | Scenario 2: Larger Nonresidential | Scenario 3 Largest Nonresidential |
| *Operating* | | | |
| **Operating Revenues** | $116,045,793 | $178,094,073 | $277,103,063 |
| **Operating Expenditures** | $38,994,503 | $29,921,408 | $40,037,170 |
| **OPERATING NET FISCAL IMPACT** | **$77,051,290** | **$148,172,665** | **$237,065,893** |
| *Capital* | | | |
| **Capital Revenues** | $51,871,290 | $35,825,954 | $43,430,445 |
| **Capital Expenditures** | $230,503,836 | $176,403,591 | $222,349,449 |
| **CAPITAL NET FISCAL IMPACT** | **($178,632,546)** | **($140,577,637)** | **($178,919,004)** |
| **GRAND TOTAL NET FISCAL IMPACT** | **($101,581,256)** | **$7,595,028** | **$58,146,889** |
| **AVERAGE ANNUAL FISCAL IMPACT** | **($5,079,063)** | **$379,751** | **$2,907,344** |

## KEY FINDINGS & CONCLUSIONS

The following conclusions can be drawn from the FIA results presented in this report:

- The type of growth makes a difference:
  - Although all three development scenarios initially produce deficits, the relatively large share of nonresidential development projected in Scenarios 2 and 3 expands the City's Sales Tax base significantly, so that as build-out occurs, the revenues generated by growth exceed the costs associated with supporting that growth.
- The amount of growth makes a difference:
  - Scenario 2 and Scenario 3 assume the same amount of residential development, as well as the same mix of housing typologies. But Scenario 3 projects more overall development than does Scenario 2 by assuming a densification/intensification of nonresidential development relative to current zoning and land use regulations. As a result, Scenario 3 produces approximately 1.5 times the cumulative revenue that Scenario 2 produces.
- Continuing the same development patterns produces the worst fiscal results:
  - Scenario 1, which is closest to a continuation of current population and development trends, produces the worst fiscal results of the three scenarios with a projected average annual net deficit due to growth of approximately $5.08 million. This is primarily due to property tax revenue being insufficient to cover the infrastructure costs and related operating costs associated with population growth.
  - This finding suggests that the City may want to consider a shift in its approach to land use and development decisions in order to facilitate more nonresidential development.
- Transportation capital costs reflect the majority of projected capital costs:
  - Analyzing operating and capital results separately for all scenarios reveals net surpluses on the operating side and net deficits for capital. Transportation infrastructure accounts for the majority of capital costs (87 to 93 percent of total projected capital costs).
- The City of Littleton's impact fee methodology should be revisited to ensure transportation impact fees can support transportation infrastructure needs, as well as other infrastructure categories:
  - The City's current impact fee structure does not account for differences in land use beyond residential / nonresidential categories; however, distinct housing typologies (i.e., Attached vs. Single Family Detached) and different commercial land uses (i.e., Retail vs. Office) place varying degrees of demand on transportation and other infrastructure. This presents the potential for the City to explore more comprehensive impact fee pricing in order to ensure that funding for capital improvements keeps pace with development.

# BACKGROUND

TischlerBise is part of a consultant team headed by Kendig Keast Collaborative ("KKC") working with the City of Littleton to develop a Comprehensive Plan for the municipality, the *Envision Littleton Comprehensive Plan.* TischlerBise's role is to identify and analyze fiscal impacts of distinct land use scenarios in the city. The Fiscal Impact Analysis ("FIA") presented in this report includes the City of Littleton's General Fund activities, all Special Revenue Fund activities, and an analysis of the Capital Projects Fund.

An FIA determines whether revenues generated by new development are sufficient to cover the costs resulting from that development—specifically, those costs associated with maintaining current levels of service given the additional service and facility demands that growth places on a jurisdiction. Existing levels of service reflect public services and infrastructure as currently funded and are typically expressed as a *cost per demand unit*. For example, maintenance of parks would be expressed as a cost per acre of parks to maintain.

A fiscal impact evaluation is intended to help guide policy decisions regarding land use alternatives, levels of service, and revenue enhancements. **It should not be viewed as a budget-forecasting document.** Unlike the annual budget process where a budget is balanced with the resources available, a fiscal analysis looks at revenues and expenditures separately. An FIA shows direct revenues and costs from new development only and does not include revenues or costs generated from existing development. Development scenarios are represented by numerical projections of population, housing units, employment, and nonresidential building area.

TischlerBise received three land use scenarios from KKC which were developed in coordination with City of Littleton staff. The scenarios represent several "what if" situations, with varying levels of residential and nonresidential development occurring over the course of the 20-year planning period.

Once scenarios have been identified, the next major step in the analysis process is to determine current service levels and capacities and associated revenues and costs. For the purposes of this FIA, we identified current levels of service and capacities through on-site interviews and follow-up discussions with City staff, collaboration with the other members of the consulting team, an analysis of the City of Littleton's Fiscal Year 2019 ("FY2019") Budget; the 2018 Comprehensive Annual Financial Report; the Littleton Museum Strategic Plan; the Parks, Recreation, and Trail Master Plan; the 2019 Facilities Assessment; the 2017 Littleton Housing Study; and other relevant documents. Using the results of this level of service/capacity analysis, we developed a fiscal impact model customized for the City of Littleton. We then utilized this model to evaluate the fiscal impact of the three distinct land use scenarios provided by KKC.

This report presents our findings, discusses their significance, and details our approach and methodology. Note that the costs projected in this analysis reflect the costs to serve new growth, regardless of whether the resources are available to cover the costs. The City will continue to balance its budget each year, considering financial guidelines and policies, applicable operating impacts, and available resources—**the purpose of this report is to provide information to the City of Littleton related to the fiscal impact of distinct land use scenarios in order to identify how best to accommodate future growth while minimizing costs to the City.**

# LAND USE SCENARIOS

Aside from some scattered small vacant parcels, Littleton has 10 properties that stand out as the most significant remaining undeveloped properties in this largely built-out city. These 10 properties total approximately 210 acres, with the largest just over 120 acres at the southwest corner of Mineral Avenue and Santa Fe Drive.

In designing the land use scenarios utilized in this Fiscal Impact Analysis ("FIA"), Kendig Keast Collaborative ("KKC") and the City of Littleton considered the amount of developable land remaining within the city limits, current demographic and market trends, and the goals identified throughout the Comprehensive Planning process, including fiscal sustainability.

The three land used scenarios identified share the following baseline assumptions:

- The City of Littleton will have more jobs and households in 2040 than in 2020
- Average household size—defined in this report as Persons per Housing Unit ("PPHU")—will remain constant at 2.31 PPHU. Thus, there is a direct and proportionate relationship between residential development and population growth.

Each scenario is described below:

**Scenario 1: Trend (Residential Emphasis)**. This scenario bases its projections primarily on current demographic and market trends. The city's population is expected to reach the mid-point of the growth range projected in the Comprehensive Plan, and most developable land is used for residential development in order to accommodate that growth. Consistent with recent trends, Attached dwelling units are expected to comprise the majority (66 percent) of the new units added during the planning period. In this residential emphasis scenario, the majority of developable land is used for housing, although some commercial development—primarily within the Retail and Office land use sectors—is expected to occur. This generally reflects the City's current development patterns**.** *Broadly speaking, Scenario 1 represents a "business-as-usual" approach to development review and the City's economic development policy decisions.*

**Scenario 2: Larger Nonresidential Share**. This scenario incorporates more nonresidential development than Scenario 1. With more vacant land utilized for commercial development, less land is available for new housing. Because average PPHU is assumed to remain constant during the planning period, this scenario generates less population growth than the trend scenario. Nonresidential development is expected to generally align with the character of the current built environment, with the average Floor Area Ratio ("FAR") of approximately 0.33 increasing just slightly to 0.35. A larger share of residential units is Attached (80 percent), as opposed to Single Family Detached, and some of the nonresidential development (20 percent) will occur on existing commercial sites by increasing building area. *Scenario 2 diverges from historical development trends by attracting more Retail development. Thus, achieving full build-out under this scenario may require a shift in the City's approach towards managing and attracting commercial development.*

**Scenario 3: Largest Nonresidential Share**. Scenario 3 assumes the same level and type of residential growth as Scenario 2, but it calls for additional commercial development. Achieving this level of commercial growth requires more densification than Scenario 2, with a handful of key sites achieving an FAR of 1.0, especially through more intensive mixed-use, master-planned "destination" development and/or some level of transit-oriented development near the Mineral Ave. station. *Like Scenario 2, achieving these projected levels of development may require changes to the City's development related policies and economic development programs, such as more targeted market interventions, a more streamlined development review process, or the implementation of other incentive programs.*

For all scenarios, KKC and/or the City of Littleton provided housing unit, population, and employment data for the base year (2019) and final projection year (2040). TischlerBise interpolated between the base year and 2040

It should be noted that the "policy options" referenced above are not modeled in this phase of the fiscal analysis. This analysis and the report reflect maintaining levels of service for operations and facilities and how different land use assumptions affect fiscal conditions. **It could be argued that without implementing policies and programs targeted towards attracting commercial development, Scenarios 2 and 3 will not likely come to fruition.**

## SUMMARY OF PROJECTED GROWTH BY SCENARIO

The amount of development for each scenario for the projection period is provided below in Figure 5. Data is shown for the base year and *projected net increases* in housing units, population, jobs, and nonresidential square footage for each scenario. These demand bases are fundamental to projecting costs and revenues in each scenario.

In Scenario 1, population growth of approximately 13,100 results in a total 2040 population of 62,745 which aligns with the mid-point population projection identified in the Comprehensive Plan's demographic analysis. The average PPHU in the City of Littleton is 2.31; as discussed previously, this analysis assumes PPHU remains constant over the planning period. Approximately, 5,680 new housing units will therefore need to be developed to accommodate population growth in Scenario 1. With an emphasis on nonresidential development, both Scenarios 2 and 3 assume that residential growth and population growth will equal half that projected in Scenario 1.

Nonresidential development varies between scenarios, with average annual growth rates of 1.15 percent, 1.95 percent, and 2.78 percent in Scenario 1, Scenario 2, and Scenario 3, respectively. Across all three scenarios, the majority of nonresidential development is expected to be Retail (60 percent of total nonresidential floor area in Scenarios 1 and Scenario 2 and 65 percent in Scenario 3).

FIGURE 5. SCENARIO COMPARISONS: 20-YEAR NET INCREASES

| DEMAND FACTOR | Base Year | Scenario 1: Residential | Scenario 2: Larger Nonresidential | Scenario 3: Largest Nonresidential |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| SINGLE FAMILY UNITS | 10,531 | 1,927 | 580 | 580 |
| ATTACHED UNITS | 10,531 | 3,751 | 2,260 | 2,260 |
| MOBILE HOMES | 457 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| **TOTAL UNITS** | **21,519** | **5,678** | **2,840** | **2,840** |
| *Growth from Base Year* | | *26%* | *13%* | *13%* |
| **POPULATION** | **49,643** | **13,116** | **6,560** | **6,560** |
| *Growth from Base Year* | | *26%* | *13%* | *13%* |
| RETAIL SF | 2,411,675 | 1,057,587 | 1,840,679 | 2,991,103 |
| OFFICE/INSTITUTONAL SF | 2,483,842 | 440,661 | 766,950 | 1,150,424 |
| INDUSTRIAL | 2,719,867 | 176,265 | 306,780 | 230,085 |
| LODGING SF | 252,856 | 88,132 | 153,390 | 230,085 |
| **TOTAL NONRESIDENTIAL SF** | **7,868,239** | **1,762,645** | **3,067,799** | **4,371,612** |
| *Growth from Base Year* | | *22%* | *39%* | *56%* |
| **JOBS** | **30,221** | **4,173** | **7,263** | **11,060** |
| *Growth from Base Year* | | *14%* | *24%* | *37%* |

## DISCUSSON OF LAND USE SCENARIOS

Broadly speaking, these land use scenarios were designed to test how residential development compares to nonresidential development in terms of its impact on the City's fiscal sustainability. The City of Littleton is largely built-out, with just over 200 acres of developable vacant land remaining. A central component of the City's Comprehensive Planning process is therefore to establish a vision for how that vacant land will be utilized. **The Comprehensive Plan will inform the City's amended Zoning Ordinance and Subdivision Regulations, as well as policies and programs responsible for guiding and incentivizing development (e.g., Economic Development incentive programs, the development review process, et cetera).**

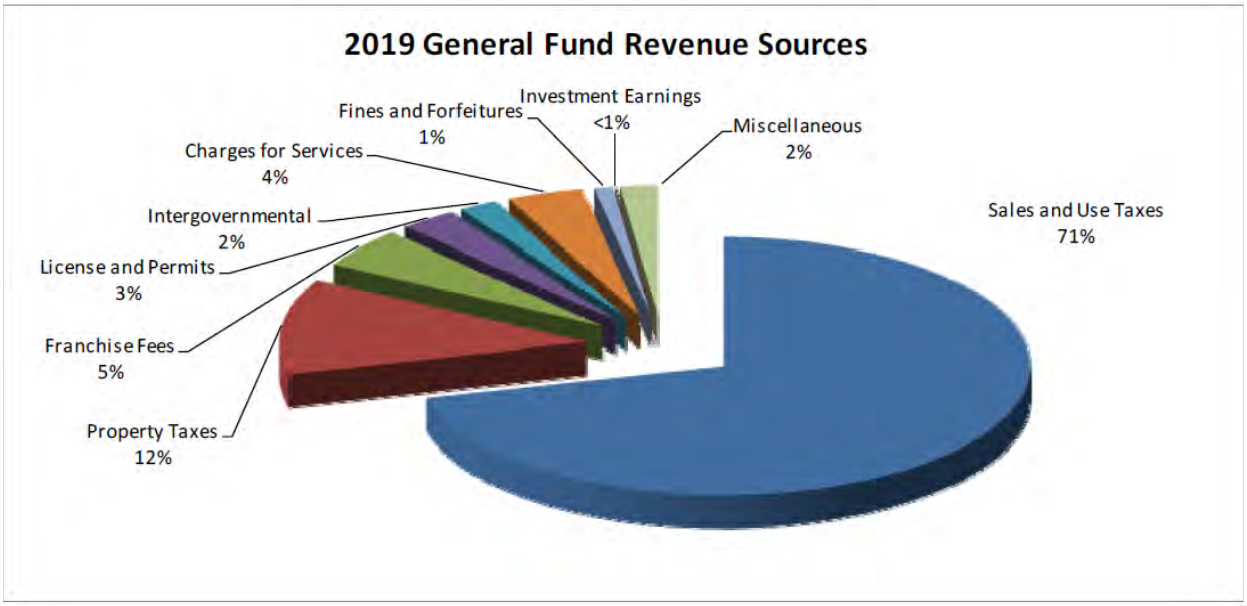
The City's most recent budget projections indicate that current resources are insufficient to cover the costs required to maintain current levels of service for certain infrastructure and services—most notably, transportation infrastructure.[1] Although an FIA does not reflect the costs associated with *improving* current levels of service or *correcting service deficiencies*, the City's internal projections demonstrate the need to carefully consider the potential costs—and revenues—associated with different land use regulations and development-related policy decisions.

A review of the City's FY2019 budget reveals that like many municipalities in the State of Colorado, the City of Littleton relies heavily on Sales and Use Taxes.

Per Figure 6 below, Sales and Use Taxes account for 71 percent of the municipality's General Fund revenue. In contrast, Property Taxes account for only 12 percent; although the City recently outsourced Fire services which will allow it to transfer General Fund Revenue to the Capital Projects Fund, this policy decision also requires a decrease in the Property Tax mill levy from 6.662 to 2.00—future Property Tax revenues are therefore projected to decline, further increasing the City's reliance on Sales and Use Taxes.

[1]From page 6 of City of Littleton FY2019 budget: "For 2019, resources are adequate to cover basic capital replacements and minimum street improvements; however, the ongoing revenue sources for [the Capital Projects Fund] are less than the estimated expenditures and a dedicated revenue source for this fund will be needed for future capital replacement, including growing street infrastructure costs…public works capital needs far exceed available funds."

FIGURE 6: PERCENT SHARE OF CITY OF LITTLETON'S GENERAL FUND REVENUE BY SOURCE




Source: The City of Littleton FY2019 Budget.

The City of Littleton has six specific categories of Sales and Use Taxes, five of which fund the General Fund, and are specified in Figure 7 below. As noted in Figure 7, the majority (86.4 percent) of the General Fund's Sales and Use Tax revenue is generated by Retail Sales, further indicating the potential significance of land use decisions on the City's finances.

FIGURE 7: GENERAL FUND SALES AND USE TAX REVENUES

| SALES AND USE TAX TYPE | FY2019 Revenue | % |
|---|---|---|
| Retail Sales | $29,813,560 | 86.4% |
| General Use | $2,000,000 | 5.8% |
| Sales Tax Motor Vehicles | $2,100,000 | 6.1% |
| General Cigarette Tax | $207,000 | 0.6% |
| Specific Ownership Tax | $401,490 | 1.2% |
| **TOTAL** | **$34,522,050** | **100%** |

Source: City of Littleton FY2019 Budget; TischlerBise

Note that in FY2019, Property Tax revenues amounted to approximately $5.7 million. Given the City's historical reliance on Retail Sales Taxes, it was posited that generally, nonresidential development would correspond with a positive net fiscal impact relative to residential development.

This analysis tests this hypothesis by examining both the cost and revenue factors associated with land use scenarios characterized by varying shares of residential and nonresidential development. It also reveals the extent to which distinct land use scenarios differ in their fiscal impact and the specific variable revenues and costs that account for such differences.

# APPROACH AND MAJOR ASSUMPTIONS

A Fiscal Impact Analysis ("FIA") determines whether revenues generated by new growth are sufficient to cover the resulting costs for service and facility demands placed on the community. It is based on cost and revenue assumptions that reflect a community's current level of service. For the City of Littleton, we analyzed the fiscal impacts of three land use scenarios based on current citywide levels of service and any additional known infrastructure or service needs. A projection timeline of 20 years is used to show long-term trends and to align with the Comprehensive Plan's timeframe.

## GENERAL APPROACH

TischlerBise's FIA methodology incorporates the case study-marginal cost approach wherever possible. The **case study-marginal methodology** is the most realistic method for evaluating fiscal impacts. This methodology takes site or *geographic-specific* information into consideration. It therefore accounts for any unique demographic or locational characteristics of new development, as well as the extent to which a particular infrastructure or service operates under, over, or close to *capacity*. Available facility capacity determines the need for additional capital facilities and associated operating costs.

Certain costs are impacted by general growth, *regardless of location*; these are projected using a **marginal/average cost hybrid methodology** that incorporates capacity and thresholds for staffing, but projects non-salary operating costs using an average cost approach.

Some costs and revenues are not expected to be impacted by demographic changes and are therefore considered **fixed** in this analysis. For example, this is true for some functions included in the City Council budget. To determine those costs and revenues that should be considered fixed, we reviewed the FY2019 Budget and available supporting documentation as well as interviewed staff.

For reference, services and infrastructure that are impacted by growth are termed **variable**, as opposed to fixed, in that they change—or vary—over time as a result of growth-related demand factors (e.g., population, jobs, vehicle trips, facility square footage, employment, police calls for service, etc.).

For this analysis, only costs to serve new growth are included. Both operating and capital costs are modeled.

Other general items to note are as follows:

- Operating costs are generally projected on an average basis with demand factors specific to the service being modeled. Personnel costs are modeled to reflect the fact that some types of positions (e.g., department directors) are fixed and would not increase regardless of growth.

- Under the marginal cost approach, growth triggers facilities and other infrastructure needs that are built, acquired, or improved once a capacity threshold is reached, resulting in "lumpier" fiscal impact results. The following exception should be noted:
  - The transportation capital costs projected in this analysis align with the Transportation Master Plan component of the *Envision Littleton Comprehensive Plan*; it is assumed that transportation infrastructure investments will be driven by growth in population and jobs. Because population and jobs are projected to grow at a consistent rate, transportation capital costs follow this same linear pattern.
- The analysis assumes that capital improvements will be financed on a **pay-go basis**, meaning they are cash-funded at the time the infrastructure is developed or acquired. We chose to model capital investments in this way due to the City's emphasis on fiscal sustainability (debt financing is more expensive than cash-financing). Moreover, in contrast to debt-financing which spreads the cost of infrastructure investments out over time—potentially beyond the 20-year planning period—the pay-go assumption allows our analysis to capture and present the full cost of all needed capital improvements within the 20-year planning period.

We utilized these assumptions along with the previously described land use scenarios to calculate the fiscal impact of distinct development patterns on the City over the 20-year projection period. We performed these calculations using a customized fiscal impact model designed specifically for the City of Littleton. [2]

[2] A general note on rounding: Calculations throughout this report are based on an analysis conducted using Excel software. Results are discussed in the report using one-and two-digit places (in most cases), which represent rounded figures. However, in some cases the analysis itself uses figures carried to their ultimate decimal places; therefore the sums and products generated in the analysis may not equal the sum or product if the reader replicates the calculation with the factors shown in the report (due to rounding).

# LEVELS OF SERVICE

Cost projections are based on the "snapshot approach" in which it is assumed the current level of service, as funded in the City's FY2019 budget, will continue through the projection period. Current demand base data was used to calculate unit costs and service level thresholds. Examples of demand base data include population, dwelling units, employment by industry type, and jobs. Note that the "snapshot" approach does not attempt to speculate about how levels of service, costs, revenues, and other factors will change over 20 years. Instead, it evaluates the fiscal impact to the City as it currently conducts business under the present budget.

The service level, revenue, and cost assumptions utilized in this analysis are based on on-site interviews and follow-up discussions with City staff; an analysis of the City of Littleton's Fiscal Year 2019 ("FY2019") Budget; the 2018 Comprehensive Annual Financial Report; the Littleton Museum Strategic Plan; the Parks, Recreation, and Trail Master Plan; the 2019 Facilities Assessment; the Littleton Housing Study; and other relevant documents. Additionally, our assumptions were informed by our fiscal experience conducting over 800 FIAs. We also coordinated with the other members of the consultant team.

General items to note are as follows:

- City property tax is modeled based on the cumulative assessed value of projected development. We projected property tax revenue using the future mill levy 2.000 mills per $1,000 of assessed value, rather than FY2019 mill levy of 6.662.
- Impact fee revenue is modeled based on projected development under the land use scenarios defined previously in this report.
- We utilized population and jobs as the demand bases when calculating levels of service for transportation infrastructure. Because the transportation capital costs identified in the Transportation Master Plan ("TMP") are necessary to attract and support the growth projected in the Comprehensive Plan they align with Scenario 1: Trend (Residential Emphasis). Note that Scenarios 2 and 3 differ from the trend scenario in their population and employment projections; thus, the transportation capital costs projected in Scenario 2 and Scenario 3 differ from the cost number identified in the TMP.

Specific assumptions pertaining to any unique treatment of any other revenue and cost factors are discussed where relevant throughout the body of this report.

## REVENUE FUND STRUCTURE

Revenues are projected assuming that the City's current revenue fund structure as defined by the FY2019 budget will not change.

Of particular note is the following:

- All General Fund activities are included in this analysis.
- All active Special Revenue are included in this analysis.
- The Town uses Enterprise Funds/TABOR Enterprise Funds for Sewer Utilities and Stormwater and Flood Management—because these funds are supported by user charges, any increase in cost due to growth is offset by increases in rates. These and the other Enterprise Funds are therefore not included in this FIA, since a growth-related increase in expenditures would be offset by a proportionate increase in dedicated revenues.
- We did not include Internal Service Funds as distinct revenue funds in the analysis; rather, any growth-related activities associated with these funds are accounted for elsewhere in the model. For instance, variable Property and Liability Insurance Fund ("PLIF") revenues are included as departmental expenditures (e.g. General Operations transferred $600,000 to the PLIF in FY2019).

## INFLATION RATE

The rate of inflation is assumed to be zero throughout the projection period, and cost and revenue projections are in constant 2019 dollars. This assumption is in accord with current budget data and avoids the difficulty of forecasting as well as interpreting results expressed in inflated dollars. In general, including inflation is complicated and unpredictable. This is particularly the case given that some costs, such as salaries, increase at different rates than other operating and capital costs such as contractual and building construction costs. These costs, in turn, almost always increase in variation to the appreciation of real estate. Using constant 2019 dollars reinforces the snapshot approach and avoids these problems.

## NON-FISCAL EVALUATIONS

It should be noted that while a fiscal impact analysis is an important consideration in planning decisions, it is only one of several issues that should be considered. Environmental and social issues, for example, should also be considered when making planning and policy decisions. In addition, economic development goals such as the ability to provide suitable locations for future employment growth should be taken into consideration when making land use decisions. The above notwithstanding, this analysis will enable interested parties to understand the fiscal implications of future development.

# FISCAL IMPACT ANALYSIS RESULTS

This section of the report discusses the Fiscal Impact Analysis ("FIA") results for the three scenarios analyzed for the *Envision Littleton Comprehensive Plan*. Our results are summarized in several ways:

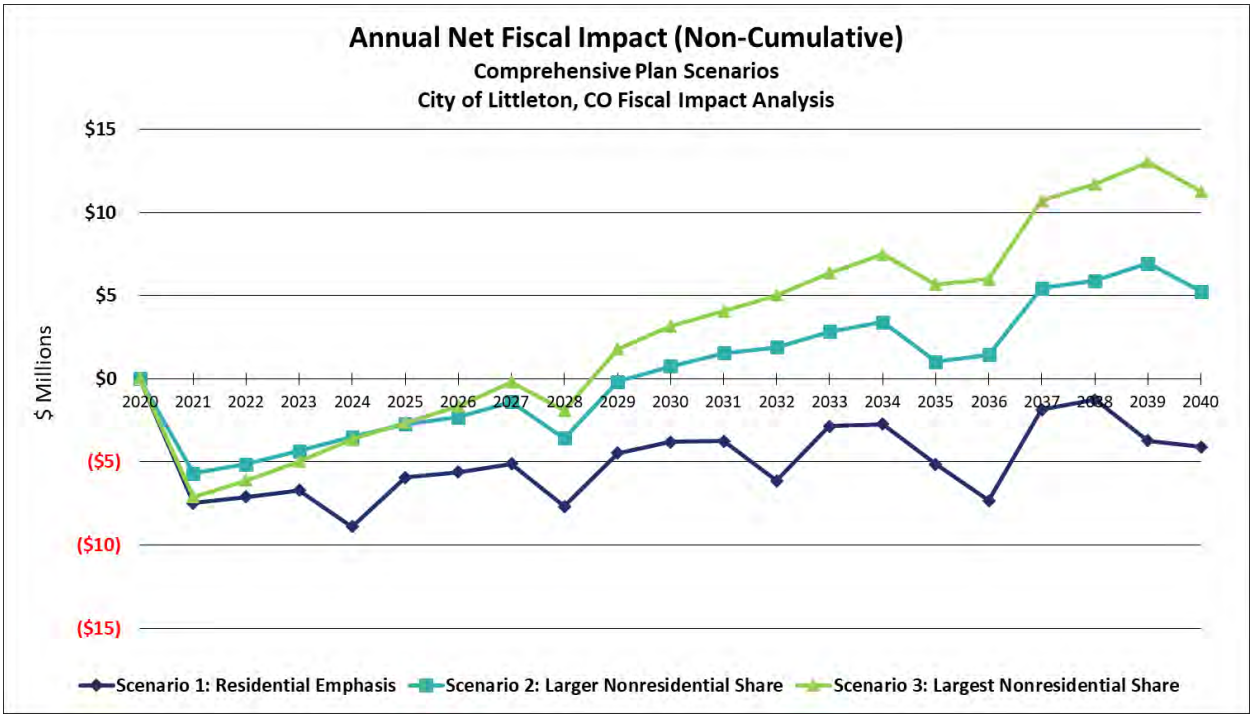
- **Annual** net fiscal results are shown first; these include all revenues and costs in the funds included in the analysis in each year. Two types of charts are provided:
  - Combined operating and capital from future growth/development.
  - Revenue compared to operating and capital impacts.
- Results are then shown in a series of bar charts depicting **cumulative net fiscal impact results**:
  - Cumulative net fiscal impact results convey the projected grand total revenues minus grand total expenditures over the 20-year period from future growth/development.
- The third section provides **average annual** fiscal impact results:
  - The average annual net result conveys the average annual impact of each scenario.

## ANNUAL NET FISCAL IMPACTS

Figure 8 below shows the annual net fiscal results to the City for the three scenarios over the 20-year development period. Annual net fiscal results are **revenues minus costs in each year**, including both operating and capital costs. By showing annual results, the magnitude, rate of change, and timeline of deficits and revenues can be observed over time. The "bumpy" nature of the annual results during particular years represents the opening of capital facilities and/or major operating costs being incurred.

Note that data points above the $0 line represent annual surpluses; points below the $0 line represent annual deficits. Surpluses in any one year are not carried forward to the next year.

FIGURE 8. ANNUAL NET FISCAL RESULTS –GROWTH SCENARIOS




- All scenarios produce annual net deficits within the early years, but Scenarios 2 and 3 start consistently producing revenues in 2029. In contrast, Scenario 1 produces annual net deficits through 2040.
- For Scenarios 2 and 3 costs for capital improvements and related services are incurred, but revenue generated from the projected development (primarily Sales Tax from Retail) is sufficient to cover the resulting costs.
- As noted elsewhere, this analysis does not include expenditures for backlog infrastructure projects but does include capital improvements to support the growth projected. Assuming that all capital projects are pay-go reveals when capital improvements and related operating expenditures occur.

Scenario 1 assumes that residential development will produce enough housing units to support population growth as projected based on current trends, per the Comprehensive Plan's demographic analysis. The projected annual net deficits associated with this scenario reflect the relative lack of revenue generated by residential development. The analysis also reveals that residential development—by growing the City's population—results in greater demand for City services and facilities than nonresidential development. **The fact that residential development generates less revenue but greater costs than nonresidential development is responsible for the substantial difference in annual net revenue observed between Scenario 1 and the other two scenarios.**

## ANNUAL OPERATING AND CAPITAL EXPENDITURES COMPARED TO REVENUES

Further detail on annual results is provided in Figures 9 through 11, depicting annual expenditures delineated between operating and capital along with annual revenues. As shown below, in all three scenarios, revenues are sufficient to cover operating costs through the duration of the study period but are not sufficient to cover capital costs in Scenario 1 and are not sufficient to cover capital costs until Year 9 in Scenarios 2 and 3.

Note that some operating expenditures are tied directly to the opening of capital facilities. That is, when a new capital facility is "built" by the model, annual operating expenditures for that facility are triggered.

FIGURE 9: ANNUAL OPERATING & CAPITAL EXPENDITURES COMPARED TO REVENUES: SCENARIO 1

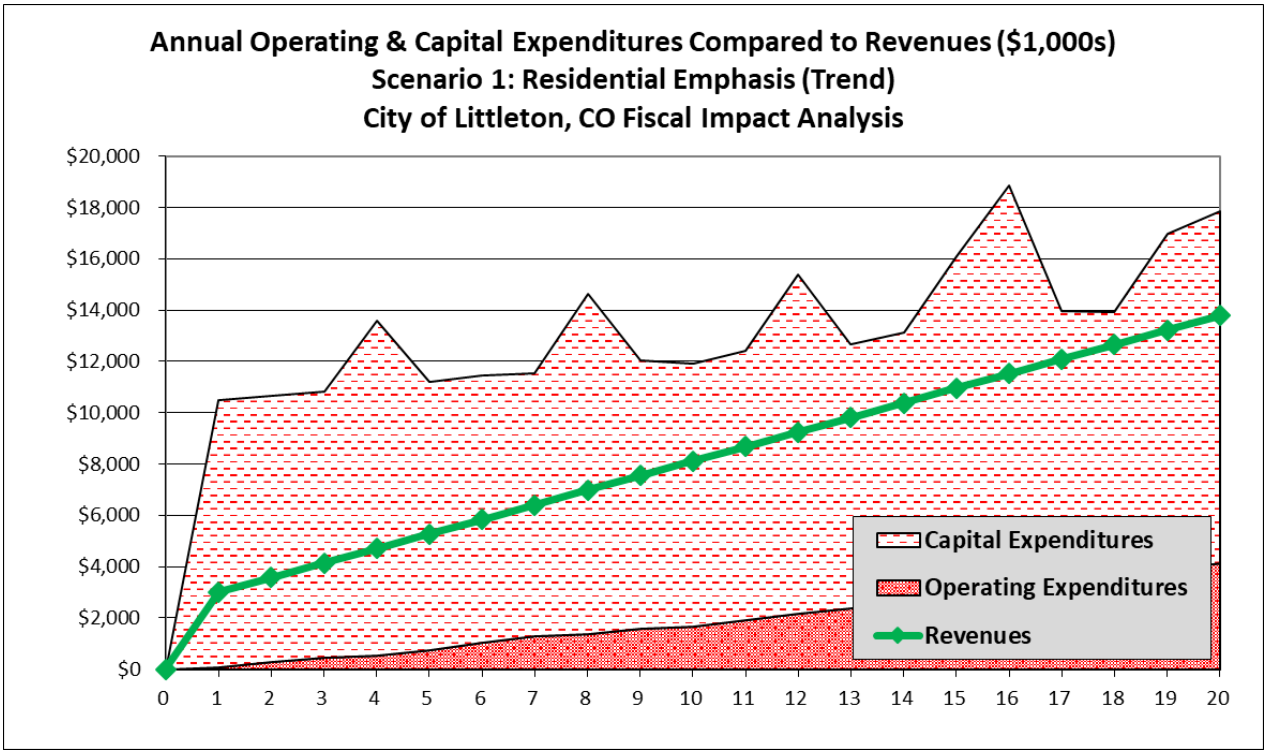


FIGURE 10: ANNUAL OPERATING & CAPITAL EXPENDITURES COMPARED TO REVENUES: SCENARIO 2

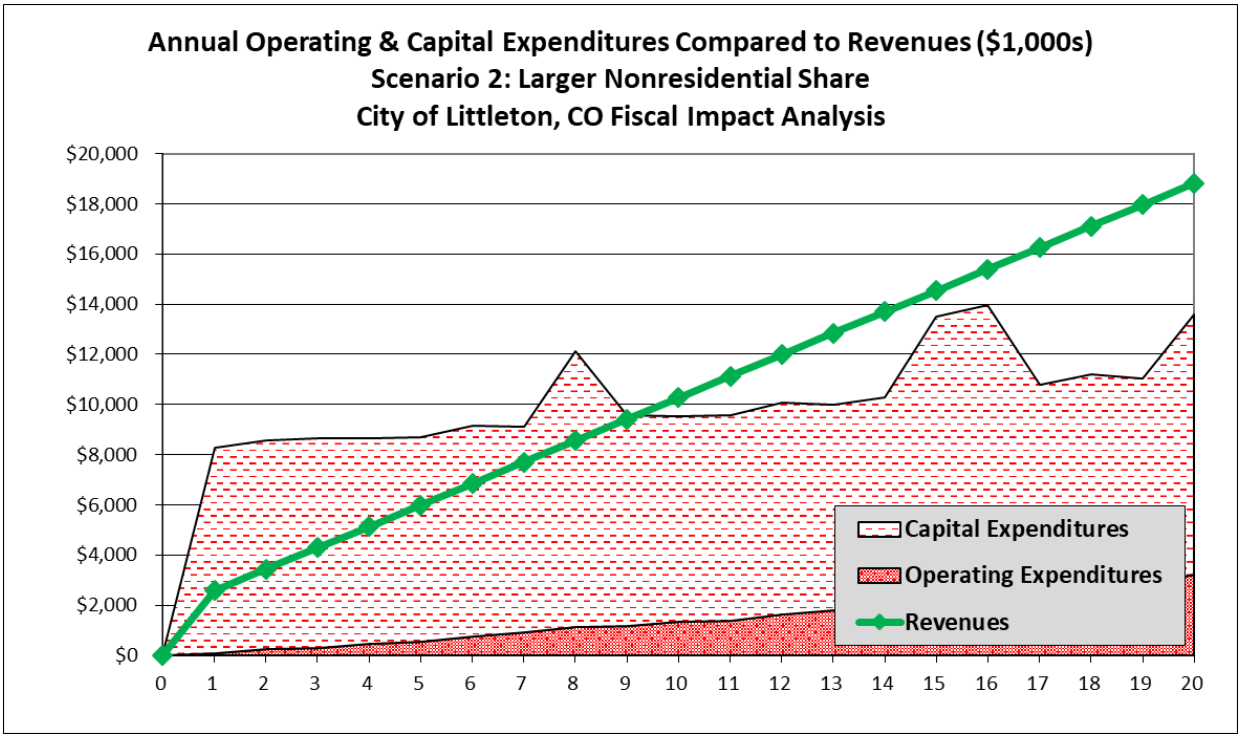
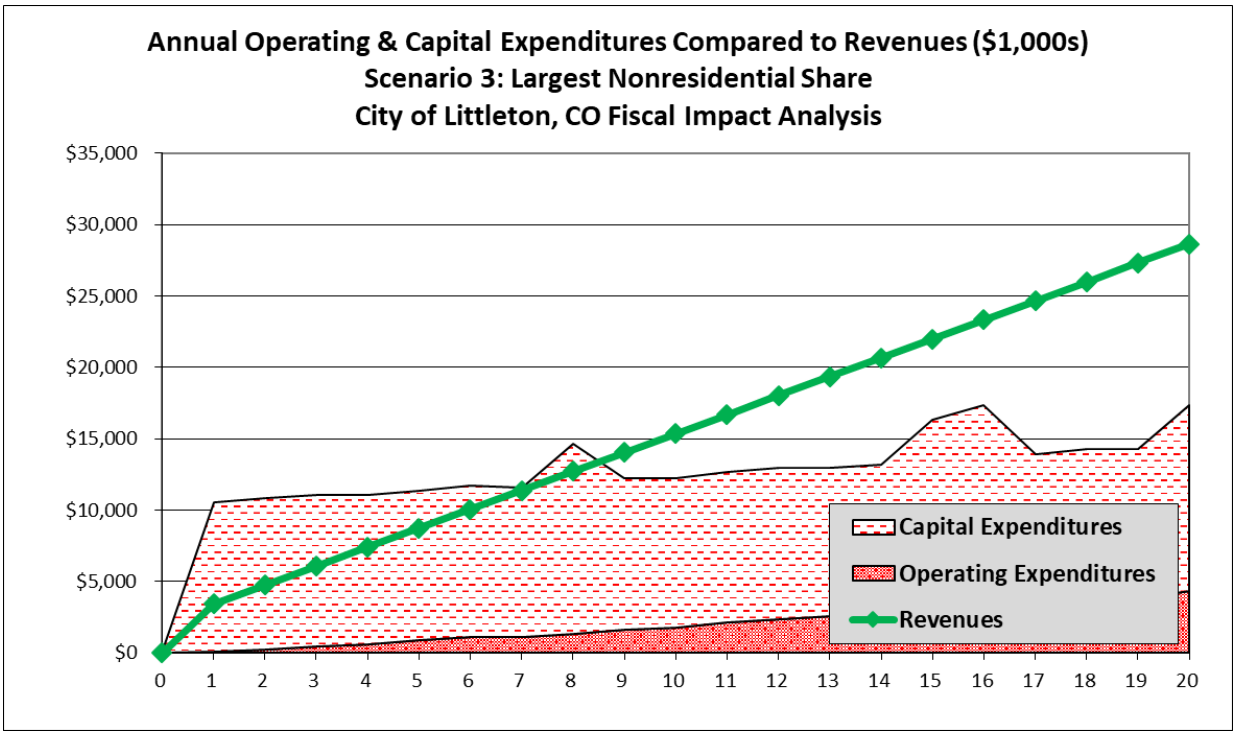


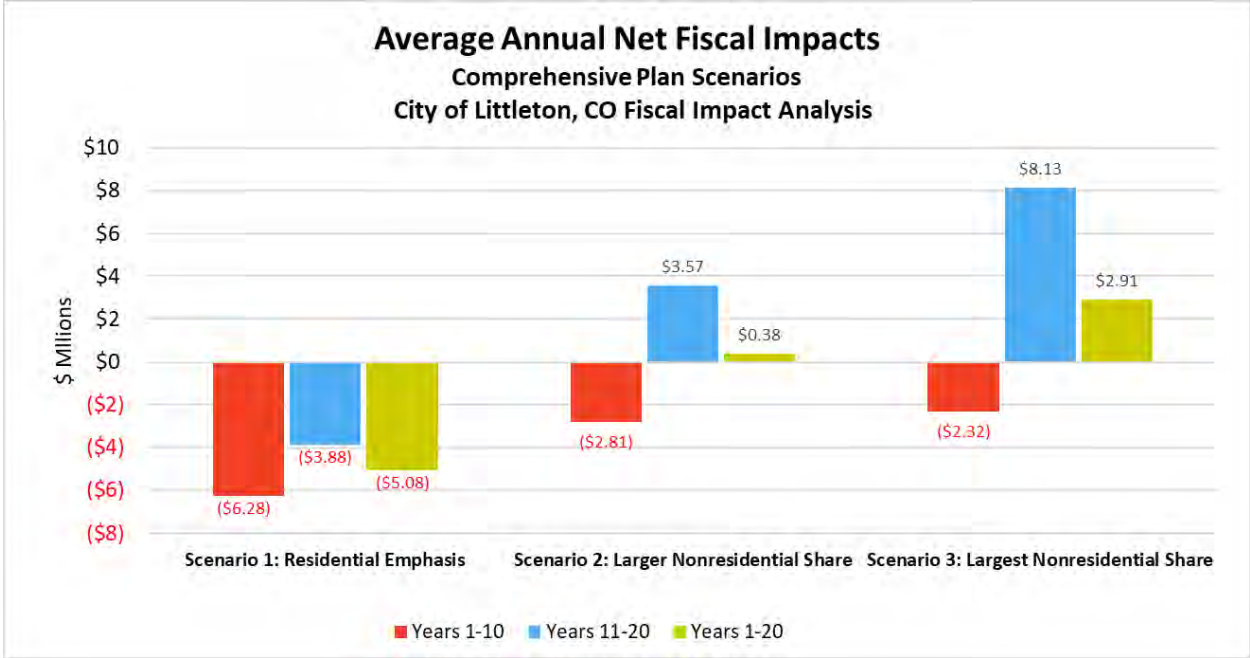

FIGURE 11. ANNUAL OPERATING & CAPITAL EXPENDITURES COMPARED TO REVENUES: SCENARIO 3



## AVERAGE ANNUAL NET FISCAL IMPACTS

For further information, results are also presented on an average annual basis in three time-period increments: first ten years, second ten years, and over the total projection period, Years 1-20. As depicted in Figure 12, Scenario 1 produces average annual net deficits over the projection period. Scenarios 2 and 3 generate net deficits in the first 10 years and then average annual net surpluses in the second 10 years.

FIGURE 12. AVERAGE ANNUAL NET FISCAL IMPACT RESULTS




Scenario 1 produces the worst fiscal results of the three scenarios with a projected average annual net deficit of approximately $5.08 million. As depicted in the previous subsection of this chapter, this is primarily due to infrastructure costs. This scenario includes population and employment growth of approximately 26 percent and 14 percent, respectively, above the base year (1.32 percent and 0.69 percent annually), reflecting development patterns for the most part as they have occurred in the past.

This contrasts with Scenarios 2 and 3, where employment increases at a greater rate than population. In both Scenarios 2 and 3, the city's population is projected to grow by 13 percent, or at an average annual rate of 0.66 percent; this is half of the growth rate assumed in Scenario 1. Scenario 2 projects a 26 percent increase in employment (1.20 percent annually), and Scenario 3 projects a 37 percent increase in employment (1.83 percent annually).

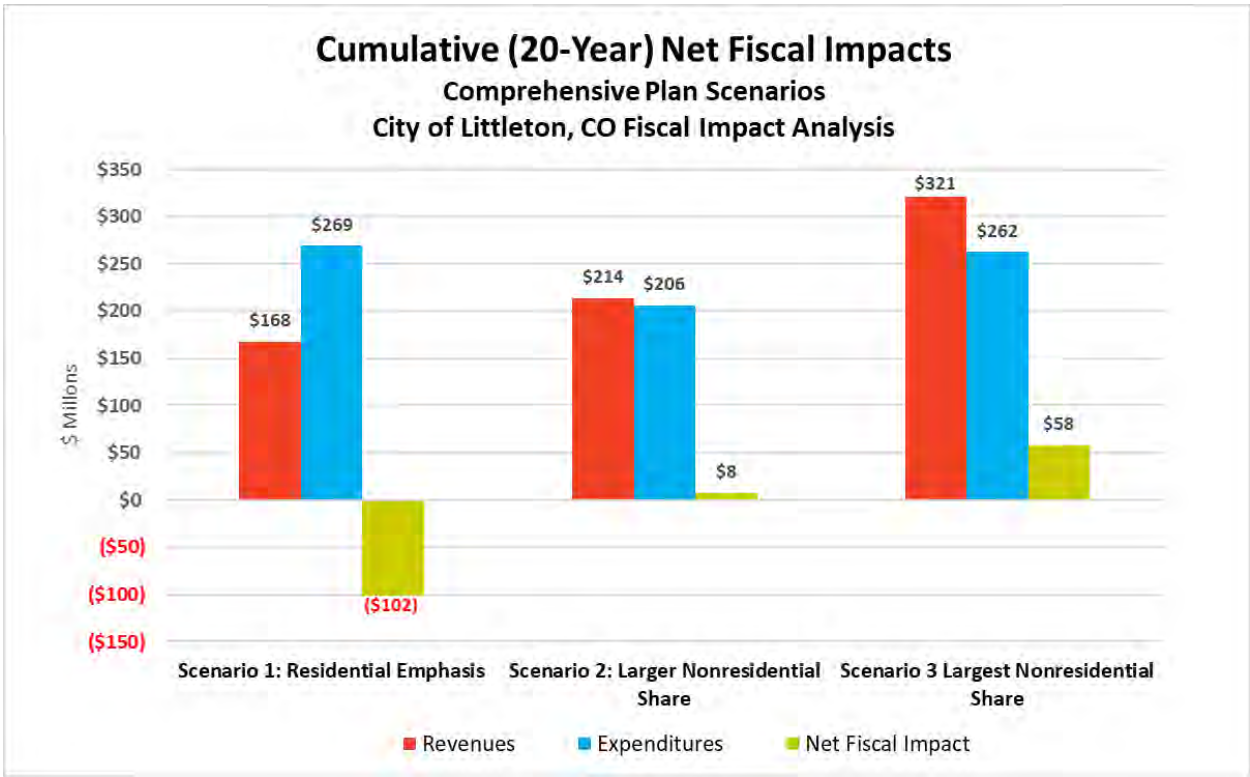
Comparing nonresidential growth in Scenarios 2 and 3 to Scenario 1, Scenario 2 assumes approximately 1.75 times the nonresidential growth projected in Scenario 1. Scenario 3 assumes approximately 2.5 times more nonresidential growth than the trend scenario.

**Although all three development scenarios initially produce deficits, the relatively large share of nonresidential development projected in Scenarios 2 and 3 expands the City's Sales Tax base significantly, so that as build-out occurs, the revenues generated by growth begin to exceed the costs associated with supporting that growth.**

## CUMULATIVE NET FISCAL IMPACTS

***Cumulative*** figures reflect total revenues generated minus operating and capital expenditures over the 20-year development timeframe. Cumulative revenues, expenditures and net results are shown in Figure 13.

FIGURE 13: CUMULATIVE NET FISCAL IMPACT RESULTS




- Under the trend scenario **(Scenario 1: Residential Emphasis)** $168 million in revenues is projected compared to $269 million in expenditures over the 20-year projection period. This generates a net deficit of $84 million – a negative net fiscal impact. As discussed previously the fundamental distinction between Scenario 1 and the other two scenarios is its relatively large share of residential development, which yields less revenue than sales tax-producing (i.e., nonresidential) land uses and generally places more demand on City services and infrastructure than nonresidential development. It is also important to note that in Scenario 1, 34 percent of residential growth is attributed to Detached housing units, whereas Detached units account for just 20 percent of the residential development in the other two scenarios. Single Family Detached homes generally generate the most demand of any residential typology on the transportation system, thereby pushing up transportation-related costs, which comprise a significant growth-related expense.

- **Scenario 2 (Larger Nonresidential Share)** generates $214 million in revenue compared to $206 million in expenditures over the 20-year projection period. This generates an $8 million net surplus. As discussed, both Scenario 2 and Scenario 3 generate positive results in contrast to Scenario 1, because both scenarios assume substantially less population growth (half of that assumed in Scenario 1), while projecting a significant increase in nonresidential development. As a result, the growth projected in both scenarios places less overall demand on City services and related infrastructure, while simultaneously producing more revenue. Although Property Taxes account for a relatively small share of General Fund revenue, it is also worth noting that because of their different tax assessment rates, commercial property generates more Property Tax revenue than residential development. (Per State law, taxable value of residential property is 7.2 percent of its appraised value, compared to an assessment rate of 29 percent for commercial property).
- **Scenario 3 (Largest Nonresidential Share)** creates $321 million in revenue compared to $262 million in expenditures over the 20-year projection period. This generates a $58 million net surplus. Scenario 3 yields the greatest revenue to the City because it calls for more development by assuming an increase in the allowable Floor Area Ration ("FAR") in certain locations. In doing so, Scenario 3 generates significantly more Sales Tax revenue than both Scenario 1 and Scenario 2. Although nonresidential development does place some significant demand on certain operating and capital costs (public safety, for instance), it is generally less costly to the City in that it places less demand on transportation, recreation, and governmental facility infrastructure than does residential development. This is reflected by the fact that although Scenario 3 calls for the most development out of the three scenarios, it generates less net cumulative expenditures than Scenario 1.

## FURTHER DETAIL ON OPERATING AND CAPITAL RESULTS

Analyzing operating and capital results separately for all scenarios reveals net surpluses on the operating side and net deficits for capital. Cumulative revenues and expenditures for operating and capital are shown below in Figure 14.

The primary sources of capital revenues are from the City's Building Use Tax and Impact Fees. The Arapahoe Open Space Tax and the Highway Users Tax also contribute to capital revenues, but under the growth scenarios utilized in this analysis these dedicated revenue streams produce significantly less revenue than Building Use Taxes and Impact Fees, which are generated by new development.

As shown, the projected revenues for capital needs are insufficient to cover the projected level of infrastructure needs. This points to the potential for the City to revisit its impact fee methodology to provide adequate funding for growth-related infrastructure.

FIGURE 14. CUMULATIVE NET FISCAL RESULTS – OPERATING AND CAPITAL DETAIL

| **20-Year Total Net Fiscal Impact - Scenario Comparisons**<br>**City of Littleton Fiscal Impact Model** | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | **SCENARIO** | | |
| **Category** | **Scenario 1: Residential** | **Scenario 2: Larger Nonresidential** | **Scenario 3 Largest Nonresidential** |
| ***Operating*** | | | |
| **Operating Revenues** | $116,045,793 | $178,094,073 | $277,103,063 |
| **Operating Expenditures** | $38,994,503 | $29,921,408 | $40,037,170 |
| **OPERATING NET FISCAL IMPACT** | **$77,051,290** | **$148,172,665** | **$237,065,893** |
| ***Capital*** | | | |
| **Capital Revenues** | $51,871,290 | $35,825,954 | $43,430,445 |
| **Capital Expenditures** | $230,503,836 | $176,403,591 | $222,349,449 |
| **CAPITAL NET FISCAL IMPACT** | **($178,632,546)** | **($140,577,637)** | **($178,919,004)** |
| **GRAND TOTAL NET FISCAL IMPACT** | **($101,581,256)** | **$7,595,028** | **$58,146,889** |
| **AVERAGE ANNUAL FISCAL IMPACT** | **($5,079,063)** | **$379,751** | **$2,907,344** |

# KEY FINDINGS & CONCLUSIONS

The results of this Fiscal Impact Analysis demonstrate the following:

- The type of growth makes a difference:
  - Although all three development scenarios initially produce deficits, the relatively large share of nonresidential development projected in Scenarios 2 and 3 expands the City's Sales Tax base significantly, so that as build-out occurs, the revenues generated by growth begin to exceed the costs associated with supporting that growth.
- The amount of growth makes a difference:
  - Scenario 2 and Scenario 3 assume the same amount of residential development, as well as the same mix of housing typologies. But Scenario 3 projects more nonresidential development than does Scenario 2 and thus more development overall. As a result, Scenario 3 produces approximately 1.5 times the cumulative revenue that Scenario 2 produces.
- Continuing the same development patterns produces the worst fiscal results:
  - Scenario 1, which is closest to a continuation of present population and development trends, produces the worst fiscal results of the three scenarios with a projected average annual net deficit due to growth of approximately $5.08 million. This is primarily due to property tax revenue being insufficient to cover the infrastructure costs and related operating costs associated with population growth.
  - This suggests that the City may want to consider a shift in its approach to land use and development decisions in order to facilitate more nonresidential development.
- Transportation capital costs reflect the majority of projected capital costs:
  - Analyzing operating and capital results separately for all scenarios reveals net surpluses on the operating side and net deficits for capital. Projected revenues for capital needs are insufficient to cover the projected level of infrastructure needs, and transportation infrastructure accounts for the majority of capital costs (87 to 93 percent of total projected capital costs).

- The City of Littleton's impact fee methodology should be revisited to ensure transportation impact fees can support transportation infrastructure needs, as well as other infrastructure categories:
  - The City's current impact fee structure does not account for differences in land use beyond residential / nonresidential categories; however, distinct housing typologies (i.e., Attached vs. Single Family Detached) and different commercial land uses (i.e. Retail vs. Office) place varying degrees of demand transportation infrastructure. This presents the potential for the City to explore more comprehensive impact fee pricing in order to ensure that funding for capital improvements keeps pace with development.

Additionally, it should be noted that an FIA, while projecting specific capital facilities, is different from a facility plan. Particularly, the results presented in this report reflect needs due to *new growth only* and are projected based on current levels of service. This may be different from a facility plan where needs may be due to existing deficiencies, different policies, demographic shifts, technological changes, etc.

It is also important to acknowledge that fiscal issues are only one aspect in evaluating development and growth trends. Environmental, land use, housing, jobs/housing balance, transportation, and other issues should also be taken into consideration when determining what is best for the City.

# APPENDIX A: REVENUE AND COST DETAIL

A summary of projected revenues and costs from future growth/development in the city is provided below. These figures are based on the development projections and the revenue and cost factors described elsewhere in this report.

## REVENUES

### REVENUE PROJECTION METHODOLOGIES

City General Fund revenues are projected from future growth. A summary of projection methodologies is shown in Figure 15.

Other items to note regarding revenue projections are:

- Property taxes are projected based on average market values per housing typology and nonresidential land use category. Market values are then adjusted to assessed values based on statutory assessment rates. The following estimated market values are used in the analysis:

FIGURE 15: MARKET VALUE ASSUMPTIONS FOR NEW DEVELOPMENT

| Land Use | Average Market Value |
|---|---|
| Retail | $150 per Sq. Ft. |
| Office/Institutional | $150 per Sq. Ft. |
| Industrial | $115 per Sq. Ft. |
| Lodging | $130 per Sq. Ft. |
| | |
| Single Family Detached | $518,800 per Unit |
| Attached | $240,750 per Unit |

Source: Analysis of Arapahoe and Jefferson County appraised and assessed values, current listings, the 2017 Littleton Housing Report, national averages, and local trends.

- The majority of other revenues from future development are projected on a per capita or per job basis. Some revenues are projected based on a customized demand unit we modeled for this particular analysis.
- Some revenues are not affected by growth and are considered "fixed" in this analysis as shown in Figure 16.

## FIGURE 16: REVENUE PROJECTION METHODOLOGIES

| | | | | ALLOCATION APPROACH | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| ***Revenue Category*** | ***Revenue Name*** | ***FY2019 Budget*** | ***% of Total*** | **RESIDENTIAL (Per Capita)** | **NONRESIDENTIAL (Per Job)** | **CUSTOM** | **FIXED** |
| **Property Taxes** | Property Tax | $5,735,510 | 12% | | | X | |
| | Property Tax Delinquent | $0 | 0% | | | | |
| **Sales and Use Taxes** | Retail Sales | $29,813,560 | 62% | | | X | |
| | General Use | $2,000,000 | 4% | X | X | | |
| | Sales Tax Motor Vehicles | $2,100,000 | 4% | X | | | |
| | General Cigarette Tax | $207,000 | 0% | | | | X |
| | Specific Ownership Tax | $401,490 | 1% | | | X | |
| **Franchise Fees** | Cable | $662,030 | 1% | | | | X |
| | Electric | $1,130,570 | 2% | | | | X |
| | Gas | $364,530 | 1% | | | | X |
| | Telephone | $92,000 | 0% | | | | X |
| **License and Permits** | Building Permits | $1,200,000 | 2% | X | X | | |
| | Liquor and MMJ Licenses | $137,200 | 0% | X | X | | |
| | Contractor License Fees | $87,000 | 0% | X | X | | |
| | Other Licenses and Permits | $21,670 | 0% | X | X | | |
| **Intergovernmental Revenue** | Littleton Public School PO | $413,880 | 1% | | | | X |
| | County Road and Bridge | $255,000 | 1% | | | X | |
| | Motor Vehicle Registration | $165,000 | 0% | X | | | |
| | Highway Maint. Grant | $45,240 | 0% | | | | X |
| | Arapahoe Co. IGA - Vendor | $6,000 | 0% | | | | X |
| | RTD (Reg. Transp. District) | $31,500 | 0% | | | | X |
| **Charges for Services** | Engineering Review Fees | $440,000 | 1% | | | | X |
| | Plans Checking | $600,000 | 1% | | | | X |
| | Zoning & Subdivision | $302,000 | 1% | | | | X |
| | Street/Sidewalk/Curb | $60,000 | 0% | | | | X |
| | Collection Fees (EMS) | $100,000 | 0% | X | | | |
| | Court Costs | $79,000 | 0% | X | | | |
| | SMHO Vehicle Maintenance | $6,000 | 0% | | | | X |
| | Events | $31,000 | 0% | | | | X |
| | Open Records Request | $250 | 0% | | | | X |
| | Public Defender | $20,000 | 0% | | | | X |
| | Processing Fee | $2,500 | 0% | | | | X |
| | E-Ticketing Surcharge | $55,000 | 0% | | | | X |
| | Police Reports | $8,800 | 0% | | | | X |
| | Police Name Check | $100 | 0% | | | | X |
| | Fingerprints | $10,000 | 0% | | | | X |
| | Crime Lab CD/DVD | $500 | 0% | | | | X |
| | Comm Center Audio | $400 | 0% | | | | X |
| | Sex Offender - Initial Registration | $1,500 | 0% | | | | X |
| | Sex Offender - Subsequent Registration | $3,000 | 0% | | | | X |
| | Extra Duty Admin | $1,400 | 0% | | | | X |
| | Re.inspection Fees | $1,500 | 0% | | | X | |
| | Elevator Cert | $35,000 | 0% | | | | X |
| | Library Computer Fees | $6,000 | 0% | | | | X |
| | Library Public Leased Copi | $7,000 | 0% | | | | X |
| | LIRC | $38,000 | 0% | | | | X |
| | Museum Fees | $17,000 | 0% | | | | X |
| | Reimbursed Personnel Costs | $10,200 | 0% | | | | X |
| **Fines and Forfeitures** | Court Fines | $710,000 | 1% | X | | | |
| | Library Fines | $27,000 | 0% | X | | | |
| **Investment Earnings** | Interest Earnings | $178,450 | 0% | | | | X |
| **Miscellaneous** | Reimbursements from Other Funds | $541,000 | 1% | | | | X |
| | Rebates | $70,000 | 0% | | | | X |
| | Overtime Reimbursements | $65,000 | 0% | | | | X |
| | Rent Light Rail Station | $4,800 | 0% | | | | X |
| | Rent 5890 S. Bemis | $240 | 0% | | | | X |
| | Misc. Contribution/Donation | $1,800 | 0% | | | | X |
| | Restitution/City | $600 | 0% | | | | X |
| | NSF Fees | $1,000 | 0% | | | | X |
| | Tree Sales | $9,000 | 0% | | | | X |
| | Other Misc. Revenues | $22,150 | 0% | | | | X |
| | Sponsorships | $15,000 | 0% | | | | X |
| | Omnibus Program | $7,000 | 0% | | | | X |
| | Contributions - Riders | $5,000 | 0% | | | | X |
| | Advertising Revenue | $1,000 | 0% | | | | X |
| | Community Gardens | $4,200 | 0% | | | | X |
| | Museum Facility Rent | $2,000 | 0% | | | | X |
| | Museum Donations | $11,000 | 0% | | | | X |
| | Museum Store Sales | $37,000 | 0% | | | | X |
| | **TOTAL** | **$48,418,570** | 100% | | | | |

## REVENUE PROJECTIONS

Cumulative revenues to the City generated by future growth/development are shown for a 20-year cumulative period. The revenues shown in Figure 17 reflect all revenues (for operating and capital) projected from growth.

FIGURE 17: CUMULATIVE CITY REVENUES (YEARS 1-20)

| 20-Year Cumulative Revenues - Scenario Comparisons<br>City of Littleton Fiscal Impact Model | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | SCENARIO | | | | | |
| Category | Scenario 1: Residential | % | Scenario 2: Larger Nonresidential | % | Scenario 3 Largest Nonresidential | |
| ***General Fund Revenues*** | | | | | | |
| Property Taxes | $4,438,875 | 4% | $3,996,000 | 2% | $5,404,222 | 2% |
| Sales and Use Taxes | $100,373,520 | 90% | $167,233,651 | 95% | $263,901,180 | 96% |
| Franchise Fees | $0 | 0% | $0 | 0% | $0 | 0% |
| License and Permits | $3,237,328 | 3% | $2,588,378 | 1% | $3,299,258 | 1% |
| Intergovernmental Revenue | $1,173,807 | 1% | $868,613 | 0% | $1,090,971 | 0% |
| Charges for Services | $502,193 | 0% | $251,759 | 0% | $251,759 | 0% |
| Fines and Forfeitures | $2,044,590 | 2% | $1,022,655 | 1% | $1,022,655 | 0% |
| Investment Earnings | $0 | 0% | $0 | 0% | $0 | 0% |
| Miscellaneous | $0 | 0% | $0 | 0% | $0 | 0% |
| **Subtotal General Fund Revenues** | **$111,770,312** | **100%** | **$175,961,056** | **100%** | **$274,970,045** | **100%** |
| **Subtotal Special Revenue Fund Revenues** | **$4,275,481** | | **$2,133,018** | | **$2,133,018** | |
| **Subtotal Capital Revenues** | **$51,871,290** | | **$35,825,954** | | **$43,430,445** | |
| **GRAND TOTAL CUMULATIVE REVENUES** | **$167,917,083** | | **$213,920,027** | | **$320,533,508** | |

# EXPENDITURES

## EXPENDITURE PROJECTION METHODOLOGIES

Figure 18 presents the methodologies used to project operating expenditures from the future growth/development. Items to note regarding expenditure projections are:

- Police expenditures are projected based on a projection of police calls for service from new development.
- Major capital expenditures are projected separately (see the following section of Appendix A). The Conservation Trust Fund and the Open Space Funds are included here because they provide revenue for both operating and capital projects.
- If "Fixed" is marked along with another column, a portion of departmental expenditure is assumed to not be affected by development. This is typically with Personnel costs.

FIGURE 18: EXPENDITURE PROJECTION METHODOLOGIES

| Expenditure Category | Department | Population | Jobs | Custom Analysis | Fixed |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **General Fund** | | | | | |
| General Government | City Council | | | | X |
| | City Attorney's Office | X | X | | X |
| | City Manager's Office | X | | | X |
| | City Clerk'S Office | X | X | | X |
| | Communication & Outreach | X | | | X |
| | General Operations | X | X | X | X |
| Community Development | Administration | X | X | | X |
| | Development Services | X | X | X | X |
| | Planning | X | X | | X |
| Economic Development | Economic Development | X | X | | X |
| Finance | Finance | X | X | | X |
| Museum | Admin/Facilities | X | | | X |
| | Collections | X | | | X |
| | Interpretations | X | | | X |
| | Farm Sites & Exhibits | X | | | X |
| Library | Administration | X | | | X |
| | Programming | X | | | X |
| | Immigrant Services | X | | | X |
| | Circulations | X | | | X |
| | Library Services | X | | | X |
| | Information Services | X | | | X |
| Human Resources | Human Resources | | | X | X |
| Public Safety | Police - Support Services | | | X | X |
| | Police - Patrol | | | X | X |
| | Police - Investigation | | | X | X |
| | Fire - Administration | X | X | | X |
| Information Technology | Information Technology | | | X | X |
| Public Works | Administration | | | | X |
| | Engineering | | | X | X |
| | Street Maintenance | X | X | | X |
| | Grounds Maintenance | X | X | X | X |
| | Facilities Maintenance | X | X | | X |
| | Transportation Engineering | X | X | | X |
| | Fleet Maintenance | | | X | X |
| **Special Revenue Funds** | | | | | |
| Conservation Trust Fund | Conservation Trust Fund | | | X | X |
| Open Space Fund | Open Space Fund | | | X | X |

## EXPENDITURE PROJECTIONS

Cumulative City expenditures generated by future growth/development are shown cumulatively for Years 1-20 in the figures below. Operating expenditures are shown in Figure 19; capital expenditures are shown in Figure 20.

## FIGURE 19: CUMULATIVE CITY OPERATING EXPENDITURES

**20-Year Total Operating Expenditures - Scenario Comparisons**
**City of Littleton Fiscal Impact Model**

| Category | SCENARIO | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Scenario 1: Residential | | Scenario 2: Larger Nonresidential | | Scenario 3 Largest Nonresidential | |
| City Council | $0 | 0% | $0 | 0% | $0 | 0% |
| Communications & Marketing | $1,564,666 | 4% | $782,608 | 3% | $782,608 | 2% |
| City Attorney | $508,603 | 1% | $406,649 | 1% | $518,332 | 1% |
| City Manager | $743,903 | 2% | $372,083 | 1% | $372,083 | 1% |
| General Operations | $1,225,952 | 3% | $775,789 | 3% | $953,701 | 2% |
| Economic Development | $272,351 | 1% | $474,014 | 2% | $721,788 | 2% |
| Finance | $417,929 | 1% | $334,152 | 1% | $425,924 | 1% |
| Library | $2,615,937 | 7% | $970,136 | 3% | $970,136 | 2% |
| Museum | $460,953 | 1% | $97,270 | 0% | $97,270 | 0% |
| Human Resources | $1,213,661 | 3% | $842,479 | 3% | $1,240,753 | 3% |
| IT | $558,230 | 1% | $289,277 | 1% | $479,211 | 1% |
| Public Safety | $22,625,189 | 59% | $19,925,953 | 67% | $26,987,086 | 68% |
| Community Development | $1,959,765 | 5% | $1,404,321 | 5% | $2,536,451 | 6% |
| Public Works | $3,939,659 | 10% | $2,887,367 | 10% | $3,592,516 | 9% |
| **SUBTOTAL GENERAL FUND EXPS** | **$38,106,799** | **100%** | **$29,562,100** | **100%** | **$39,677,861** | **100%** |
| **SUBTOTAL SPECIAL REVENUE FUND EXPS** | **$887,704** | | **$359,309** | | **$359,309** | |
| **GRAND TOTAL OPERATING EXPS** | **$38,994,503** | | **$29,921,408** | | **$40,037,170** | |

## FIGURE 20: CUMULATIVE CITY CAPITAL EXPENDITURES

**20-Year Total Capital Expenditures - Scenario Comparisons**
**City of Littleton Fiscal Impact Model**

| Category | SCENARIO | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Scenario 1: Residential | % | Scenario 2: Larger Nonresidential | % | Scenario 3 Largest Nonresidential | % |
| General Government / Facilities | $3,501,613 | 2% | $2,341,432 | 1% | $2,670,911 | 1% |
| Parks and Recreation | $16,457,650 | 7% | $6,755,692 | 4% | $6,755,692 | 3% |
| Police Department | $1,504,871 | 1% | $1,405,037 | 1% | $2,024,423 | 1% |
| Library | $1,914,702 | 1% | $957,351 | 1% | $957,351 | 0% |
| Museum | $2,210,000 | 1% | $1,106,000 | 1% | $1,106,000 | 0% |
| Transportation | $204,915,000 | 89% | $163,838,079 | 93% | $208,835,073 | 94% |
| **TOTAL** | **$230,503,836** | **100%** | **$176,403,591** | **100%** | **$222,349,449** | **100%** |

# APPENDIX B: DEMOGRAPHIC & DATA ASSUMPTIONS

This appendix describes our base year demographic and data assumptions.

## BASE YEAR DATA

The table below summarizes estimates of the base year population, housing units, employment, nonresidential space, and facility factors. These estimated values serve as the basis for the Fiscal Impact Analysis ("FIA") and are used to determine the cost and revenue factors used in the analysis.

## FIGURE 21: BASE YEAR INPUT DATA

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| ***Population [1]*** | | ARCO POP | 46,300 |
| | | JEFFCO POP | 2,743 |
| | | DOUGCO POP | 600 |
| | | POPULATION | 49,643 |
| | | JOBS | 30,221 |
| | | POP AND JOBS | 79,864 |
| ***Housing Units by Type [1]*** | | SFD UNITS | 10,531 |
| | | ATTACHED UNITS | 10,531 |
| | | MOBILE HOMES | 457 |
| | | TOTAL UNITS | 21,519 |
| ***Jobs by Type [2]*** | | RETAIL JOBS | 6,376 |
| | | OFFICE/INSTITUTIONAL JOBS | 16,262 |
| | | INDUSTRIAL JOBS | 7,436 |
| | | LODGING JOBS | 147 |
| | | TOTAL JOBS | 30,221 |
| ***Nonresidential Floor Area [1]*** | | RETAIL SF | 2,411,675 |
| | | OFFICE/INSTITUTIONAL SF | 2,483,842 |
| | | INDUSTRIAL SF | 2,719,867 |
| | | LODGING SF | 252,856 |
| | | TOTAL NR SF | 7,868,239 |
| ***Vehicle Trips [3]*** | | RESIDENTIAL TRIPS | 103,050 |
| | | NONRES TRIPS | 57,214 |
| | | VEHICLE TRIPS | 160,264 |
| ***Facility Factors*** | | SSPRD ACRES | 330 |
| | [5] | GROUNDS MAINTAINED ACRES | 75 |
| | [4] | PARK ACRES | 405 |
| | [4] | OPEN SPACE & GREENBELT | 919 |
| | [13] | TRAILS | 51 |
| | [6] | LANE MILES | 352 |
| | [7] | FACILITY SF | 282,113 |
| | [10] | FLEET VEHICLES | 271 |
| ***Public Safety Factors*** | [6] | PATROL OFFICERS | 34 |
| | [8] | TOTAL POLICE CALLS | 52,000 |
| | [10] | POLICE VEHICLES | 71 |
| ***Public Welfare Factors*** | [12] | OMNIBUS TRIPS | 11,900 |
| | [12] | SHOPPING CART RIDERS | 7,900 |
| ***Fiscal Factors*** | [11] | CUMUL AV | $848,758,867 |
| | [14] | TOTAL VEHICLES | 35,398 |
| | [9] | CITY FTES | 278 |
| | [11[ | RETAIL SALES | $993,168,267 |

[1] Kendig Keast; City of Littleton; TischlerBise
[2] City of Littleton; TischlerBise
[3] ITE; TischlerBise
[4] 2016 Parks and Recreation Master Plan
[5] City of Littleton Public Works Staff - email.
[6] City of Littleton FY2019 Budget; Public Works Department Staff interview
[7] City of Littlenton Facility Assessment and Capital Plan, January 2019.
[8] City of Littleton Police Department - email
[9] City of Littleton HR Department; FY2019 Budget
[10] City of Littleton Equipment Master List By Department
[11] 2018 CAFR, pg. 111
[12] City of Littleton FY2019 Budget
[13] Transportation Existing Data Book (HDR)
[14] U.S. Census Bureau, 2013-2017 ACS 5-Yr Estimates

## VEHICLE TRIPS

Vehicle trips are used to project some operating and capital expenditures in the FIA. Average Weekday Vehicle Trip Ends by type of development (or trip generation rates) are from the reference book, *Trip Generation, 10TH Edition*, published by the Institute of Transportation Engineers ("ITE") in 2017. A "trip end" represents a vehicle either entering or exiting a development (as if a traffic counter were placed across a driveway). Trip rates have been adjusted to avoid overestimating the number of actual trips because one vehicle trip is counted in the trip rates of both the origination and destination points. A simple factor of 50 percent has been applied to Residential and the Office and Industrial categories. The Retail category has a trip factor of less than 50 percent because retail development attracts vehicles as they pass-by on arterial and collector roads. For example, when someone stops at a convenience store on their way home from work, the convenience store is not their primary destination.

Trip rates and adjustment factors are shown in Figure 22.

FIGURE 22: VEHICLE TRIPS

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| **Residential Vehicle Trips on an Average Weekday** | | |
| *Residential Units* | *Assumptions* | |
| SFD UNITS | 10,988 | |
| ATTACHED UNITS | 10,531 | |
| | | |
| *Average Weekday Vehicles Trip Ends Per Unit [1]* | | *Trip Factor* |
| SFD UNITS | 9.44 | 64% |
| ATTACHED UNITS | 5.44 | 64% |
| | | |
| *Residential Vehicle Trip Ends on an Average Weekday* | | |
| SFD UNITS | 66,385 | |
| ATTACHED UNITS | 36,665 | |
| | | |
| ***TOTAL RESIDENTIAL TRIPS*** | ***103,050*** | *64%* |
| | | |
| **Nonresidential Vehicle Trips on an Average Weekday** | | |
| *Nonresidential Gross Floor Area (1,000 sq. ft.) [2]* | *Assumptions* | |
| Office/Institutional | 2,484 | |
| Industrial | 2,720 | |
| Lodging | 253 | |
| | | |
| *Average Weekday Vehicle Trip Ends per 1,000 Sq. Ft. [1]* | | *Trip Factors* |
| Retail | 37.75 | 38% |
| Office/Institutional | 12.44 | 50% |
| Industrial | 4.96 | 50% |
| Lodging | 3.35 | 50% |
| | | |
| *Nonresidential Vehicle Trips on an Average Weekday* | | |
| Retail | 34,595 | |
| Office/Institutional | 15,449 | |
| Industrial | 6,745 | |
| Lodging | 424 | |
| | | |
| ***TOTAL NONRESIDENTIAL TRIPS*** | ***57,214*** | *36%* |
| | | |
| **TOTAL TRIPS** | **160,264** | *100%* |

Source: Trip rates are from the Institute of Transportation Engineers (ITE) Trip Generation Manual, 2017.

## PUBLIC SAFETY COST ALLOCATION APPROACH

Public safety costs are allocated to residential and nonresidential development using a proportionate share methodology.

### Proportionate Share Calculation

A proportionate share calculation allocates demand from residential and nonresidential development based on characteristics of population, labor force, and jobs in the City. Based on this analysis and shown in Figure 23, 65 percent of demand is from residential development and 35 percent from nonresidential development.

FIGURE 23: PROPORTIONATE SHARE FACTORS

City of Littleton
**Proportionate Share**

| | Demand Units in 2015 | | | | Demand Hours/Day | Person Hours | Proportionate Share |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Residential** | | | | | | | |
| Estimated Residents in City of Littlet | | 44,553 | | | | | |
| Residents Not Working | 48% | | 21,592 | | 20 | 431,840 | |
| Workers Living in City of Littleton [2] | 52% | | 22,961 | | | | |
| Residents Working in City of Littleton [2] | | 12% | | 2,726 | 14 | 38,164 | |
| Residents Working outside of City of Littleton | | | | 20,235 | 14 | 283,290 | |
| | | | | Residential Subtotal | | 753,294 | **65%** |
| **Nonresidential** | | | | | | | |
| Non-Working Residents | | | 21,592 | | 4 | 86,368 | |
| Jobs Located in City of Littleton [2] | | | 32,227 | | | | |
| Residents Working in City of Littleton | | | | 2,726 | 10 | 27,260 | |
| Non-Resident Workers City of Littleton | | | | 29,501 | 10 | 295,010 | |
| | | | | Nonresidential Subtotal | | 408,638 | **35%** |
| | | | | | TOTAL | 1,161,932 | **100%** |

[1] Source: U.S. Census Bureau 2011-2015 American Community Survey 5-Yr Estimates
[2] Source: US Census, OnTheMap Application

## POLICE CALLS FOR SERVICE

Using the above proportionate share methodology, Police calls for service per capita and per nonresidential trip are derived. To project future calls-for service from new development, the data are used to determine a call per person and call per nonresidential trip.

These factors are then applied to projected housing and nonresidential development to project demand for Police services using calls for service (e.g., for every new person in the city, it is estimated that 0.6791 calls for service are generated).

FIGURE 24: POLICE CALLS FOR SERVICE

| | ***City of Littleton*** |
|---|---|
| **TOTAL CALLS FOR SERVICE** | **52,000** |
| | |
| **Total Residential Calls** | **33,712** |
| Population | 49,643 |
| Call per person | 0.6791 |
| | |
| **Total Nonresidential Calls** | **18,288** |
| Total Nonresidential Trips | 57,214 |
| Call per nonresidential trip | 0.31964 |