AURORA PLACES

planning tomorrow's city

The Comprehensive Plan
for the City of Aurora, Colorado
Adopted by Ordinance 2018-37
Effective October 27, 2018

Acknowledgments

Aurora Places would not have been possible without generous participation from the Aurora community. The unprecedented diversity of community stakeholders were integral to developing the city's vision and planning for its future. Additional information about public input into Aurora Places can be found in Chapter 3.

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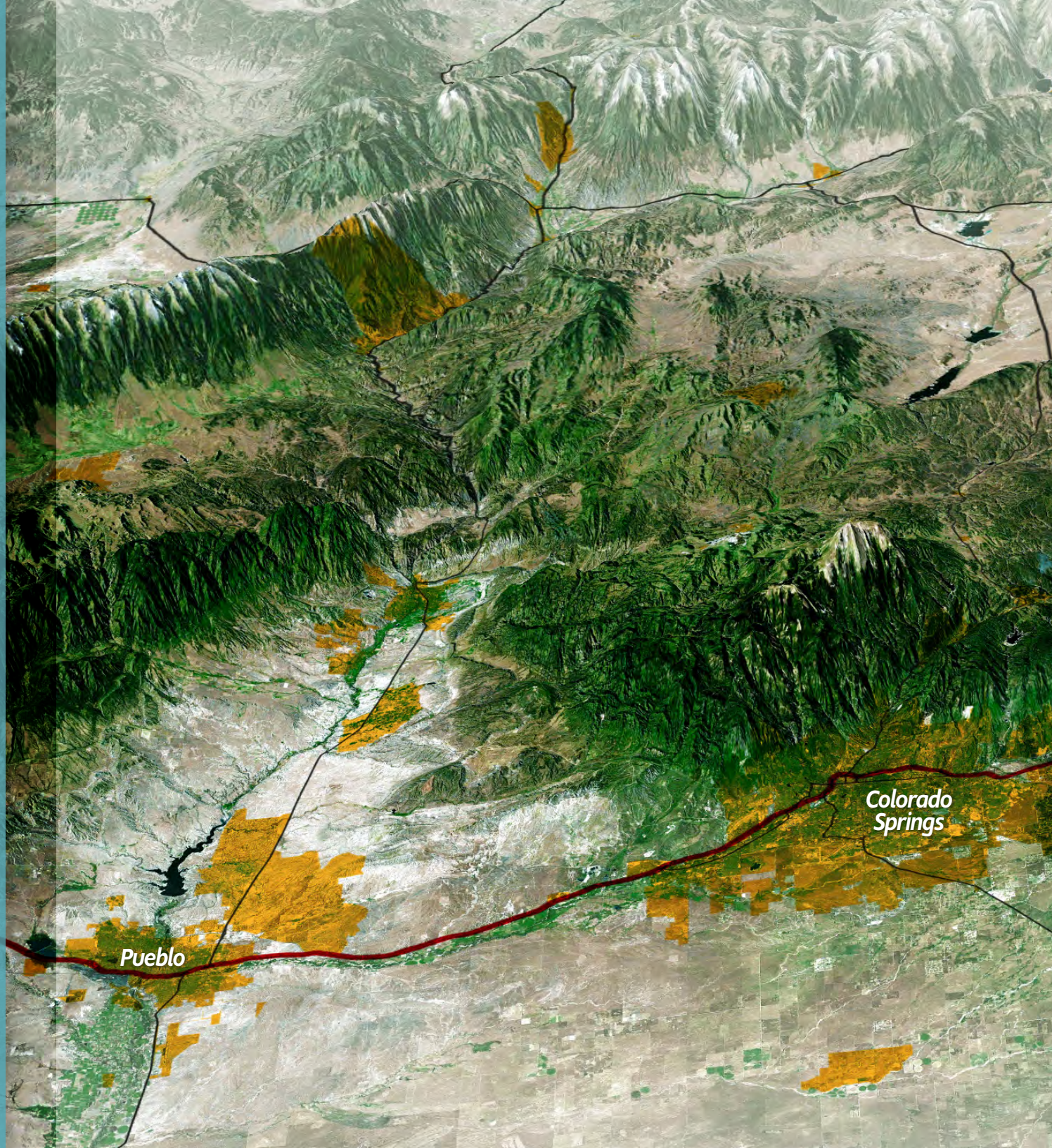
Aurora Places in the Region and Nation

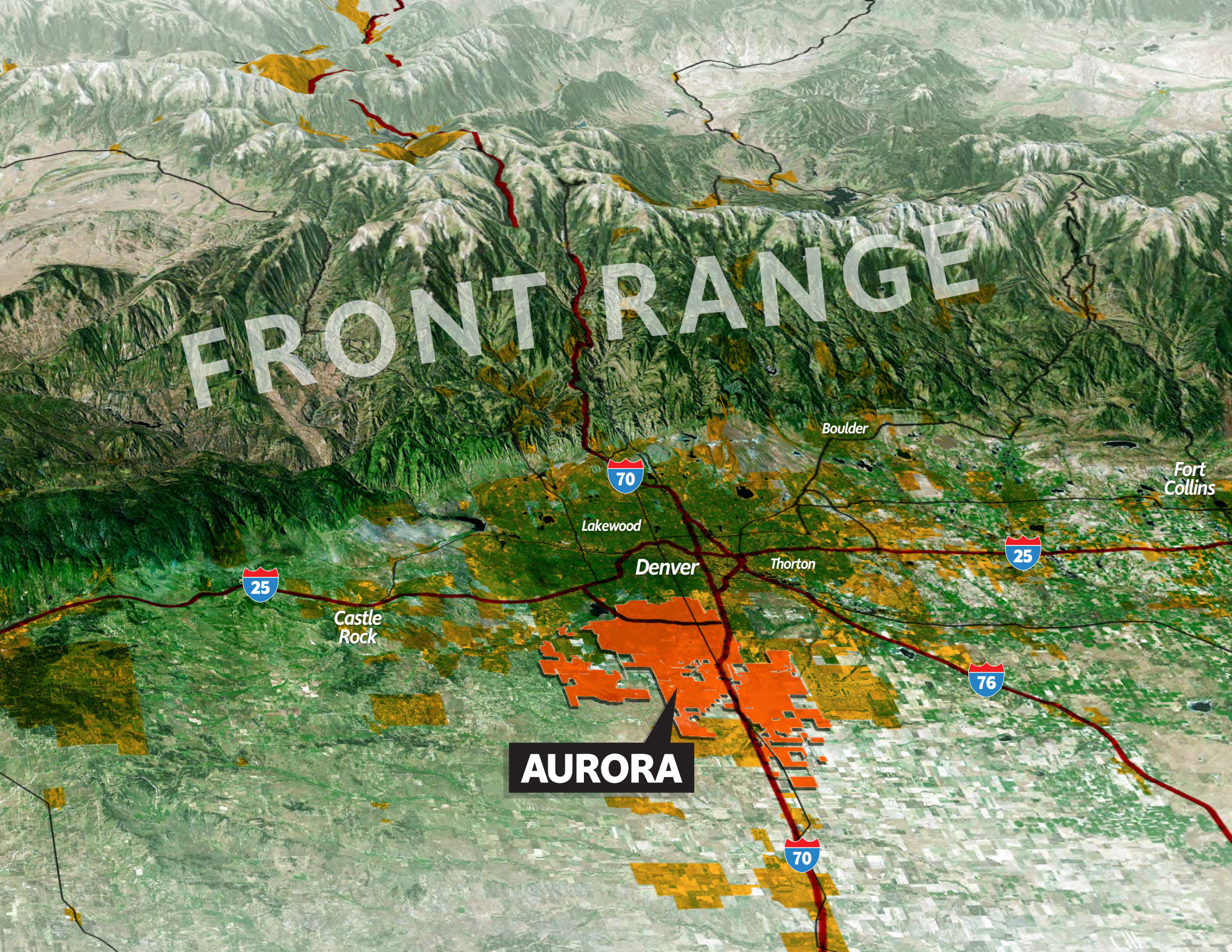
Aurora Details

- 374,154 residents (2018)
- Third most populous city in Colorado
- 54th most populous city in the U.S.
- Part of the Denver-Aurora-Lakewood Metropolitan Statistical Area (19th largest in the U.S.)
- Approximately 160 square miles and only partially built out

Highly Accessible to Regional Transportation Corridors

- Interstate 70 (east to west through northern Aurora)
- Interstate 225 (north to south through central Aurora)
- E-470 (north to south through central Aurora)
- Denver International Airport (DEN) and the Colorado Space Port (adjacent to Aurora's northeastern boundary)
- Regional Transportation District (RTD) Aurora Line (R Line) with 10 stations in Aurora
- RTD University of Colorado A Line, connecting to Denver International Airport and downtown Denver, with service through Aurora's Peoria Station and 40th / Airport - Gateway Park Station




FRONT RANGE
Boulder
Fort Collins
70
Lakewood
Denver
Thorton
25
25
Castle Rock
76
AURORA
70

THE RIGHT PLAN AT THE RIGHT TIME

Much has happened in Aurora since the city's last comprehensive plan was adopted in 2009. The population has grown by 15 percent or 47,384 people, and the city has become even more diverse, with thousands of residents hailing from over 50 different countries. The Anschutz Medical Campus experienced recent exponential growth, becoming the most prominent academic health center in the Rocky Mountain region. The Regional Transportation District (RTD) opened the R Line light rail–our Aurora Line–adding seven new stations in Aurora, increasing mobility in the city and connecting the region to Aurora. Stanley Marketplace, Stapleton Aurora, the Gaylord Rockies Resort and Convention Center, the Hyatt Regency Aurora-Denver Conference Center, and numerous new projects at rail stations and on the eastern plains have been completed or are underway.

Together, these changes–and many yet to come–offer opportunities and challenges as Aurora rapidly evolves from a mid-size, suburban community to a large city. Aurora Places will provide the foundation for these efforts by describing a general path forward and identifying and addressing trends, needs and opportunities broadly and comprehensively. Aurora Places includes the following:

Chapter 1. The Right Place at the Right Time

What is Aurora Places and how is it used? It is a foundation for decision-making and focuses on planning and connecting places.

Chapter 2. A City in Transition

How is Aurora changing, and what are some of the key issues that need to be addressed? It describes challenges associated with the economy, housing, population and natural resources.

Chapter 3. A Community Conversation

What did we hear from the community? Aurora Places engaged residents, businesses, officials and city staff in an extended conversation concerning important matters in the city and ways to successfully move forward. The conversation provided ideas concerning a strong economy, population diversity, housing variety, health, the environment, improved mobility, and an improved and authentic reputation.

Chapter 4. Placetypes

What types of places need to be planned and developed or improved in Aurora? Aurora Places describes types of places and principles to be employed in planning and developing these places. It includes a map showing the proposed general locations for these placetypes.

Chapter 5. Connecting Places

How does the city connect the different places? This chapter describes concepts for city form, transportation, water, parks and open space, cultural resources, strategic areas and other means for providing connection and choice in the community.

Chapter 6. Goals and Policies

What are the detailed goals and recommended practices for Aurora? Both were formulated based on an understanding of issues facing the city, what we heard during the community conversation and a grasp of placetypes and connections.

Chapter 7. Action Strategies

What are the immediate action steps that should be taken to implement the goals and policies in the plan? It describes some of the tools that can be used immediately, along with specific strategies and measurements for success.

What is AURORA PLACES?

Aurora Places is the plan for our city's future.

It is designed to serve as a foundation for decision-making related to growth and development in Aurora. It presents a vision for the future, with long-range goals and recommended actions for a variety of public activities. The vision identified in Aurora Places is based on a public engagement and outreach process more extensive than that of any previous planning initiative. The information that residents, business owners, subject matter experts, city officials, staff and other stakeholders provided was critical to understanding the community's concerns, aspirations and priorities.

The plan emphasizes the importance of creating and improving the variety and types of places throughout the city. These placetypes include urban districts, neighborhoods, commercial and industrial areas and areas for innovation. Aurora Places also describes the systems that connect places citywide, including transportation, water and parks and open space.

Public outreach and engagement was key to the creation of Aurora Places. The information and feedback collected from residents, business owners, subject-matter experts and community stakeholders was critical in both understanding the community's concerns, aspirations and priorities and responding effectively to the city's needs. In addition, the city and its consultants conducted extensive inventory, analysis, research and assessment to fully understand the impact of the various conditions that influence planning and the context of the city as it exists today. This extensive inventory, outreach and engagement program also provided the feedback necessary to identify and establish a community vision and community principles.

COMMUNITY PRINCIPLES

A Strong Economy Principle: A strong economy with active urban places is essential for the wellbeing of residents, businesses and the community.

A Diverse and Equitable City Principle: Diversity and equity are assets to be nurtured and promoted by the city.

Housing for All Principle: High-quality housing options enable people across all socioeconomic levels, cultural practices and stages of life to establish and manage households.

A Healthy Community Principle: Eating healthy food, walking and exercising, living in a clean and safe environment and having access to medical care improves the lives of all Aurorans.

A Thriving Environment Principle: Stewardship of water, energy and natural open spaces is essential to the well-being and success of residents and the community.

Easy Mobility and Active Transportation Principle: An easy-to-use transportation network with multiple choices for travel supports a strong economy, healthy community and flourishing environment.

An Authentic Aurora Principle: The creation of great places, the preservation of traditionally unique places, and effective marketing and promotion are essential to improving Aurora's image.

A COMMUNITY VISION

Aurora is a welcoming and safe community and a city of opportunities where people of all backgrounds can prosper. Aurora is known for its unique places, strong economy, community involvement, quality and attainable housing, integrated and healthy neighborhoods, smart ways to get around and a thriving natural and cultural environment.

How to Use AURORA PLACES

Aurora Places is general in nature–it cannot tackle every issue in sufficient detail to determine every type of necessary action. The plan's intent is to identify key areas of focus, define a vision for future growth and development, and provide guidance for city actions and investments over the next 10 to 20 years. In areas where more detailed information and recommendations are needed, the plan may identify additional steps or actions to address those needs. The plan serves the following key functions:

Telling Aurora's Story and Sharing Its Vision

At its core, the plan should serve as a powerful statement of the community's vision for how it grows and changes in the coming years. The plan identifies the city's priorities and charts a path for the city's long-term growth.

Evaluate and Inform Development Proposals

The plan should guide and assist in the evaluation of public and private development proposals and help ensure that proposed developments support the city's long-term objectives.

Regulatory Framework

The plan should serve as a foundation for zoning regulations, subdivision regulations, the official zoning map, water planning and policy, flood hazard regulations, annexation decisions and other decisions guided by these regulations. Amendments to these regulations should be made as needed to support the long-term objectives of the plan.

Coordinate Local and Regional Initiatives

The plan should inform and coordinate local and regional planning initiatives at the city, county and regional levels. The plan may aid and inform efforts related to housing, transportation, transit, trails, water and natural resources, economic development, annexation, conservation and more.

CIP and Budgeting

The plan should inform the development of the city's capital improvement program and budgeting process and help establish priority expenditures and the sequence of capital improvement programming.

Identify Future Studies

The plan establishes a path forward, but cannot address every issue in sufficient detail. It should help identify additional studies and future action steps to address specific needs.

Inform and Educate

The plan is a valuable source of information for policy makers, local boards and commissions, organizations, businesses and residents. This broad spectrum of interests should use the plan to inform members and stakeholders and provide important information that can assist with future initiatives.

A CITY IN TRANSITION

Situated on prairie grasslands, rolling hills and the Black Forest's northern tip, Aurora, Colorado started as a small collection of subdivisions that incorporated initially as the town of Fletcher in 1891. In 1907, the town was renamed Aurora and was officially incorporated as the City of Aurora in 1928. The city grew steadily throughout the 20th century as the largest city adjacent to Denver's eastern border. Today, with more than 361,000 people, Aurora is among the nation's largest cities–bigger than more well-known cities like St. Louis, Pittsburgh and Cincinnati.

Aurora welcomes and celebrates the growing diversity of its population. As an emerging economic leader within the Colorado Front Range, it is a city that supports and promotes the entrepreneurial spirit of its residents. Aurora forms the eastern edge of the metropolitan area, is conveniently located next to Denver International Airport and serves as a major transportation hub. Its residents enjoy a comfortable way of life and a wealth of opportunity, with access to quality education, family friendly neighborhoods and a strong job market. Aurora has the potential to become a global destination for residents and businesses because of its diversity, location and economic opportunity.

It is a critical time for Aurora–a time that calls for bold planning and strategic thinking.

The city's history as a suburb has resulted in obstacles that must be overcome. The city generally lacks urban places that will attract 21st-century jobs and the people who want to work in them. Housing options are not as diverse as other large cities and transportation options are increasing but need to expand citywide. Water is a critical resource that requires a strategy of planning, acquisition and conservation in order to meet future demands. The plan's name, Aurora Places, captures the essence of what Aurora needs most in its future-more options, high-quality public spaces and new urban places.

Building on a community conversation that engaged thousands of Aurorans, Aurora Places describes strategies for overcoming obstacles and forging a clear path to reach the city's full potential. This comprehensive plan will serve as a guide for decision making as the city navigates through this transitional period.

Economy

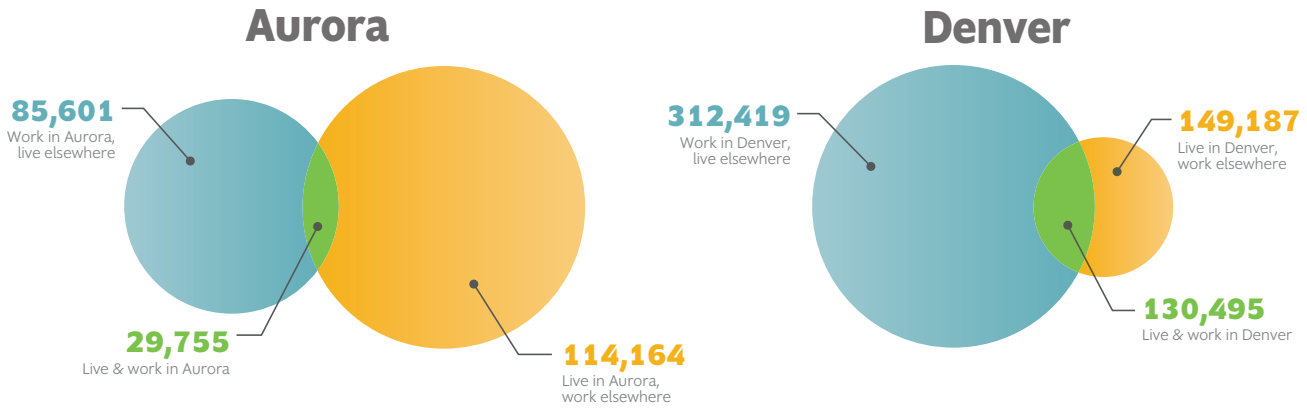
Our city needs new types of urban places and a greater variety of neighborhood experiences to attract employers and support new, higher-paid jobs and to draw the most talented workforce to fill those jobs.

For much of its history, the public viewed Aurora as a bedroom community and a suburb of Denver. But with the ever-growing prominence of key economic assets like the Anschutz Medical Campus, Buckley Air Force Base and related aerospace industries and recent additions such as Stanley Marketplace, the Amazon fulfillment center, and the Gaylord Rockies Resort and Conference Center, the city continues to be attractive to businesses and investment. Still, the majority of workers who live in our city commute to other communities to work.

Also, a majority (74 percent) of those who work in Aurora do not live in the city. Aurora is heavily dependent on its retail sales tax for revenues to support city services. In general, attracting more of its workers to live in Aurora will increase city revenues and boost the local economy.

Inflow / Outflow

Most workers who live in Aurora work elsewhere, likewise, most people who work in Denver live elsewhere.



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Center for Economic Studies

Household Income and Annual Wage

Median Household Income and Average Annual Wage (2016)

$55,303
Aurora Median Household Income

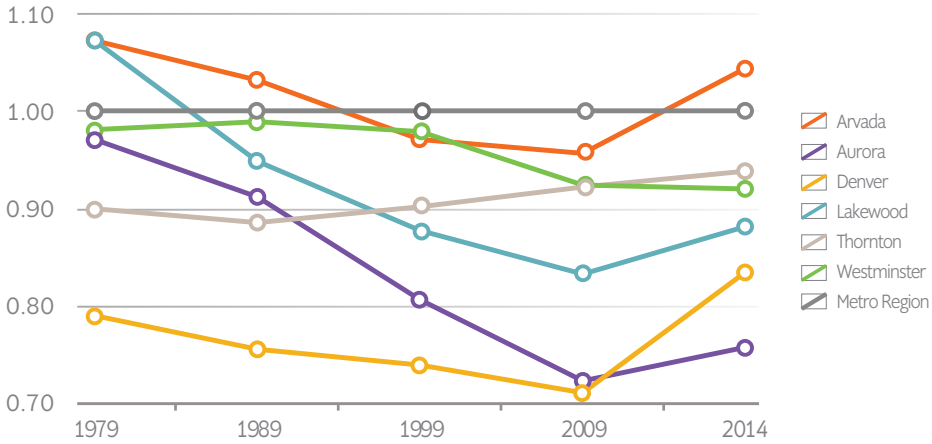
$68,173
Metro Area Median Household Income

$53,243
Average Annual Wage of Aurora-based Jobs

Source: American Community Survey (ACS), Colorado Department of Labor and Employment

Relative Median Income

In comparison with the metropolitan area, Aurora's incomes have been low.



Source: Colorado Department of Labor and Employment

It is projected that the healthcare industry will continue to provide the greatest number of jobs in Aurora, followed by education services, retail trade and professional services. All together, these sectors account for over half the jobs in the city. While these sectors do offer some above-average and high-wage jobs–like doctors, researchers and professors–a large portion of the jobs in these fields tend to pay less. Average household and family incomes in our city are relatively low compared to neighboring communities. Families are sometimes challenged to meet their basic needs–including housing and transportation–leaving little extra spending money, which reduces the city's sales tax revenues. Since the city of Aurora is primarily dependent on sales tax revenues to support basic services such as public safety and street maintenance, increasing average family incomes is critically important.

Aurora is home to many talented and hard-working residents, but to stay competitive in the regional and national employment markets, it is essential that Aurora's workforce be equipped with the education, training and credentials needed in tomorrow's economy. The quality and readiness of Aurora's workforce can be a significant advantage in attracting and retaining growing businesses to the community.

Increasingly, the quality of life and authentic, unique places in a community dictate where both employers and employees choose to locate. Our city needs new types of urban places and a greater variety of neighborhood experiences to attract employers and support new, higher-paid jobs and to draw the most talented workforce to fill those jobs. In addition, Aurora must continue to attract primary employers and higher-income jobs to complement the current workforce and grow Aurora's economic base.

38,017

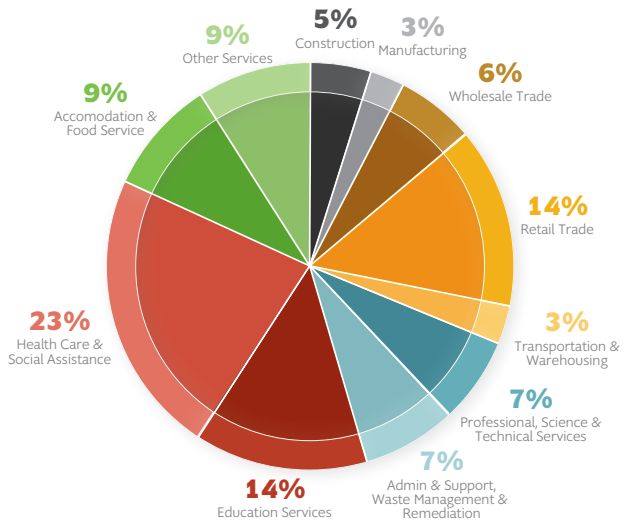
Projected Total Job Growth

(2015-2025)

Source: Center for Economic Studies

Industry Percentage

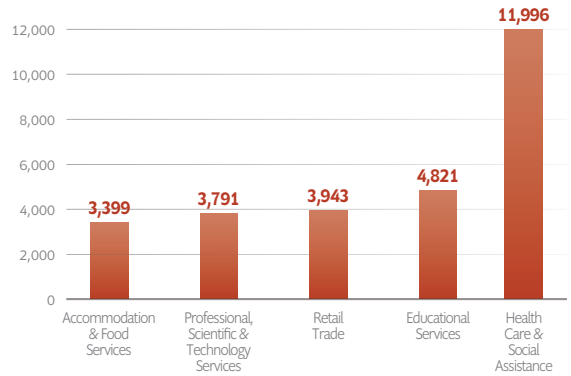
The majority of working Aurorans are employed in healthcare, education, retail trade, or accommodation and food services.



Source: U.S. Census Bureau

Projected Increase in Employment

Employment will grow in Aurora and a large portion of that growth will be in healthcare.



Source: Colorado Department of Labor and Employment

Population

The increasingly diverse population offers the opportunity for our city to grow its economy by developing a unique identity and culture within the metropolitan area.

While the city has seen a steady increase in population throughout its history, a long period of rapid growth began in 1950. Establishment of Aurora's own water utility in 1949 significantly expanded the water supply available to serve the community, allowing for substantial growth in the following decades. Aurora experienced its most dramatic population growth in the 1970s and 1980s when it added almost 150,000 people–tripling the population of the city. Although the population growth rate has slowed in recent decades, our city continues to add an average of 5,000 people each year–or roughly 50,000 people per decade–bringing the current population to over 360,000.

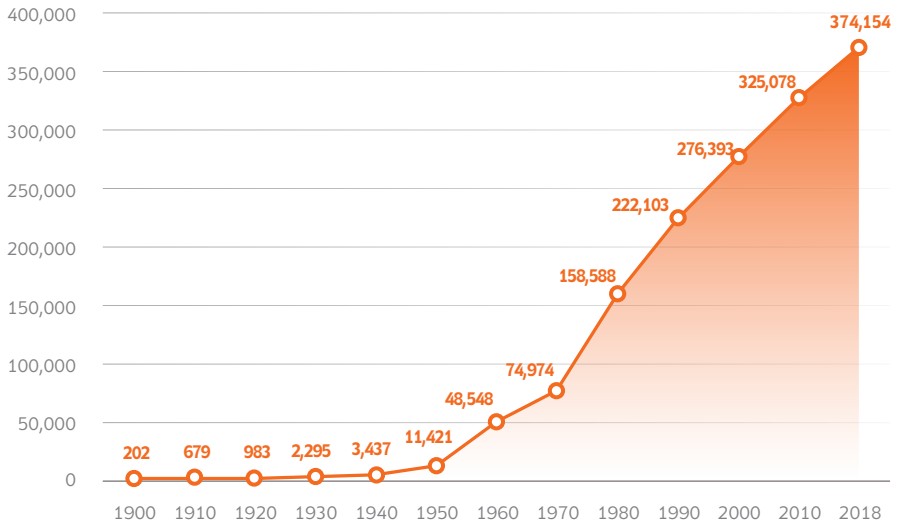
Aurora has become more culturally diverse and has become a majority-minority community. A fifth of Aurora's population was born in a foreign country, a number that has grown substantially over the past couple of decades. But Aurora isn't just known for being a place of many cultures. The city is also recognized for its racially and culturally integrated neighborhoods. Brown University research cited Aurora as the 9th most diverse at the neighborhood level and the 10th most integrated community among the 100 most populous cities in the United States.

Like other communities in the nation, Aurora is aging with a growing population of seniors. This life stage can usher in changes to housing and transportation needs, shopping habits, recreation and entertainment preferences, and health care and social service needs. New types of places will allow more residents to, "age in place" as their needs and preferences change, and continue to call Aurora their home.

Diversity extends beyond age, race or ethnicity, however. Aurora is home to households with very diverse incomes, employment, sizes and compositions. Single-person households, extended families, educational attainment, income levels and other unique personal situations can significantly affect a household's needs for housing, transportation, and other aspects.

Population

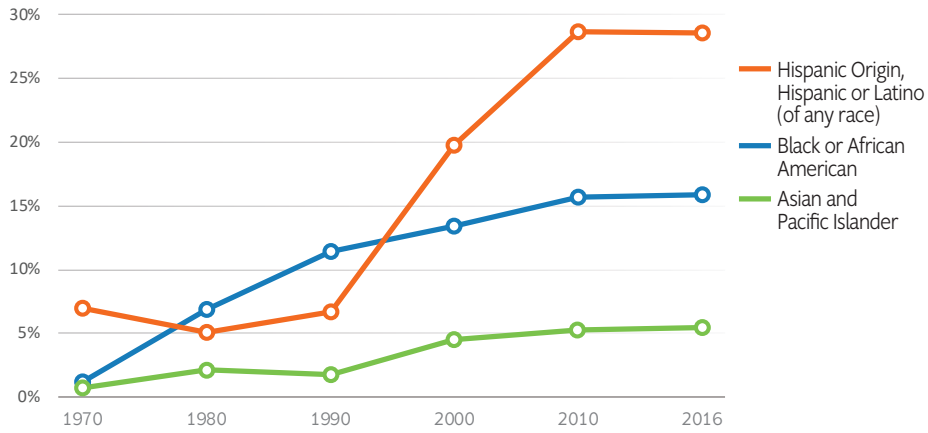
The population of Aurora has grown steadily with more recent periods of rapid growth.



Source: American Community Survey (ACS), City of Aurora

Race / Ethnicity

The Hispanic, African American and Asian ethnic populations have been growing at a relatively rapid rate.



Source: Who is Aurora Report

Being home to a diverse and inclusive community has broadened the city's cultural understanding, educational offerings and community life. As the city continues to welcome newcomers and adapt to meet the changing needs of long-time residents, it is challenged with ensuring that they can all enjoy everything that Aurora offers. That includes access to quality jobs and a local economy that rewards entrepreneurship and supports small-business success, safe neighborhoods, access to quality schools and ample opportunity to be active in civic life. The increasingly diverse population offers the opportunity for our city to develop a unique identity and culture within the metropolitan area, grow its economy and meet the changing needs of its residents.

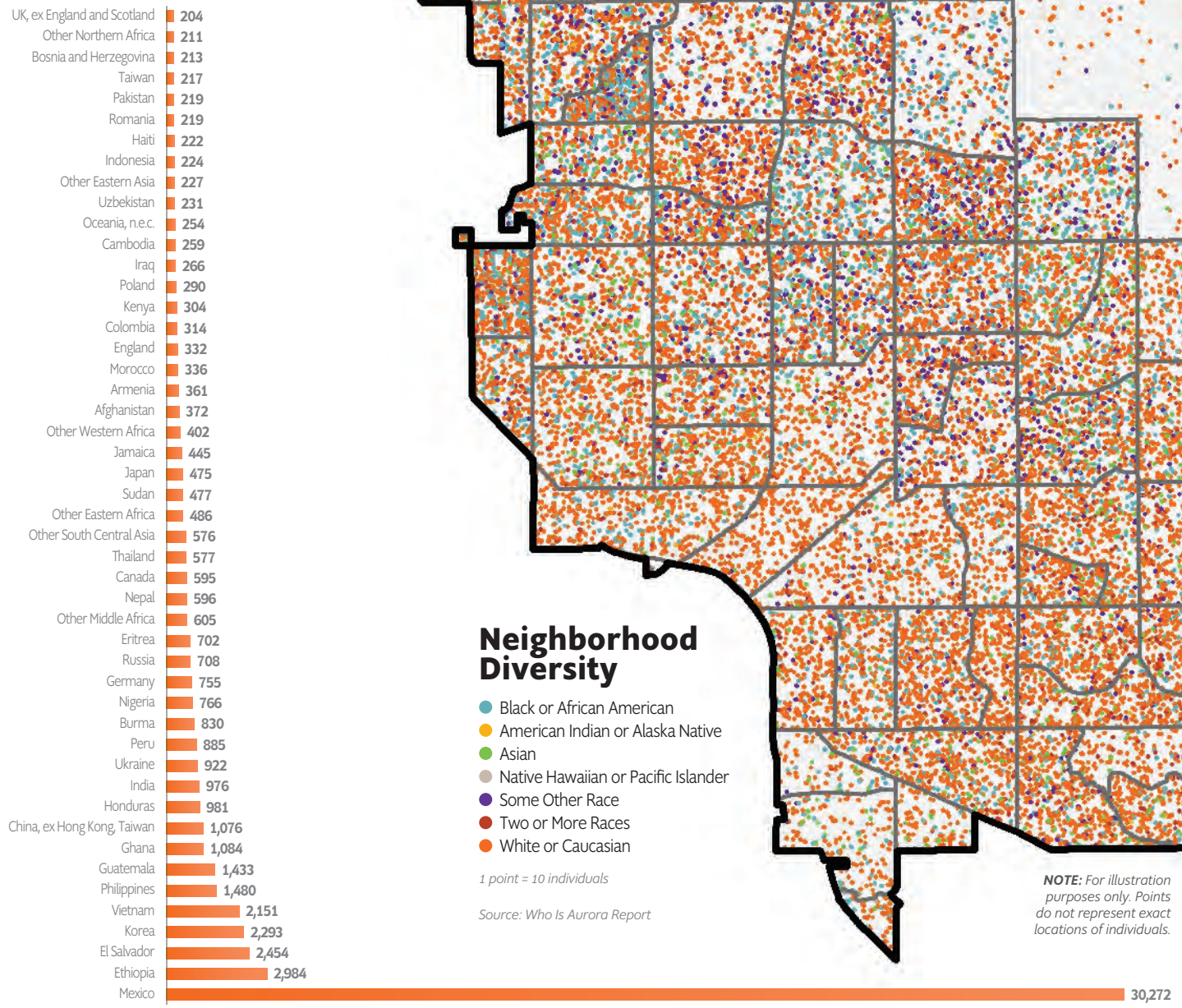
160

Over 160 languages spoken in the Aurora public school system

Source: Who Is Aurora Report

Foreign-Born

Large number of Aurora's residents were born in many different countries.



Source: Who is Aurora Report

Neighborhood Diversity

- Black or African American
- American Indian or Alaska Native
- Asian
- Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander
- Some Other Race
- Two or More Races
- White or Caucasian

1 point = 10 individuals

Source: Who Is Aurora Report

***NOTE:** For illustration purposes only. Points do not represent exact locations of individuals.*

Housing

By expanding the types of housing and neighborhoods that Aurora offers, the city can better meet the diverse preferences and needs of residents across the income spectrum.

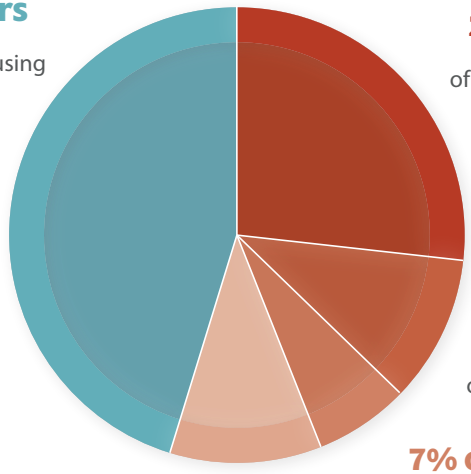
Moderately priced, single-family homes and smaller-scale apartment buildings have dominated housing construction in Aurora. Aurora now needs a much broader range of housing options. While our city contains a variety of housing products at various prices (both for-sale and rental), there is a supply-and-demand gap at many price levels. This discrepancy between supply and demand is strongest for both the lowest-and highest-income households.

Although Aurora's single-family housing values are increasing at a rate similar to that of the metropolitan area, Aurora remains one of the most affordable communities in the region. According to Zillow, Aurora has one of the lowest median sale prices in the region, even though the median price is higher than the country's median. However, for-sale housing is less affordable than in the past. Additionally, there is minimal higher-end, luxury housing in Aurora.

Aurora's median rent is similar to the metropolitan area's, yet, the city has fewer rentals below $1,000 and more above $1,000 than the region. Comparatively, in 2000 almost 60 percent of rentals in Aurora were priced lower than $750 per month. Many renters in our city are being pushed out, becoming cost burdened, or are being forced to house together to afford to stay in their homes.

The Percentage of Renter Households

The majority of renters in Aurora are burdened by high housing costs.



45% of Renters
Spend under 30%
of their income on housing

27% of Renters
Spend 50%+
of their income on housing

NOTE: *Cost burdened is defined as spending more than 30% of annual income on housing costs*

10% of Renters
Spend 40-49.9%
of their income on housing

7% of Renters
Spend 35-39.9%
of their income on housing

11% of Renters
Spend 30-34.9%
of their income on housing

Source: American Community Survey (ACS)

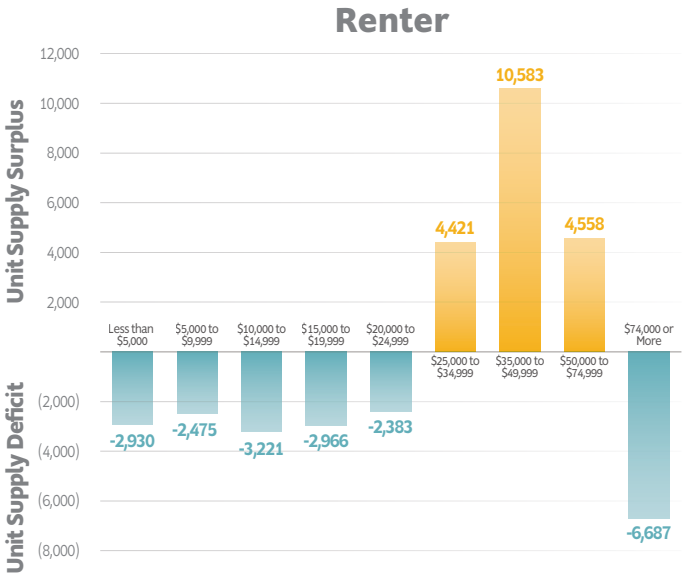
Renter/Owner Unit Supply Discrepancy

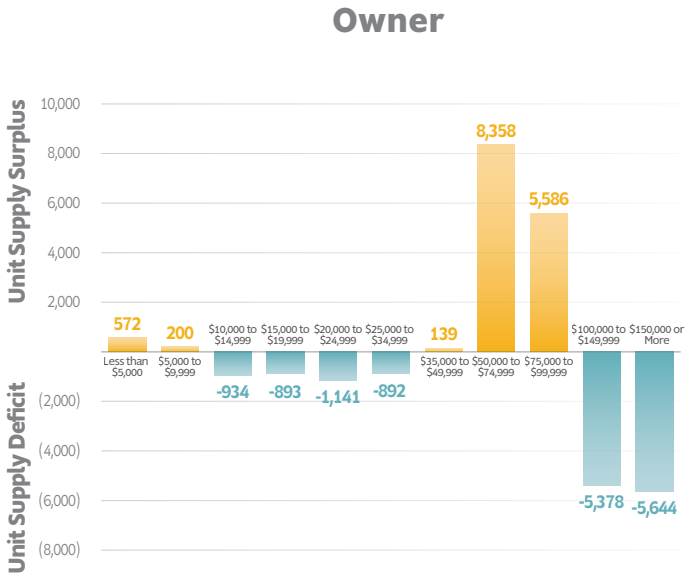
Housing is available to meet the needs of moderate income households but is not adequately available for lower and higher income households.

Housing for low-income households in demand in Aurora. Currently, Aurora has an insufficient number of rental properties that low-income households can afford without experiencing a cost burden or spending more than 30 percent of annual income on housing. This forces potential disposable income to instead be spent on housing.

At the other end of the housing market, our city lacks sufficient higher-value units to meet the needs of higher-income households looking to live in Aurora. As the number of higher-income professional jobs increases, upper-end housing will be needed to accommodate these households within the city.

Expanding both affordable and higher-value housing will prevent the need for workers to look for a home in a neighboring community.





**This chart measures the discrepancy between available supply of renter-occupied housing units and the households that earn incomes that can afford them comfortably, as measured by spending less than 30 percent of total annual income.*

Source: American Community Survey (ACS)

Natural Resources

Careful stewardship of water, energy and natural resources not only represents a commitment to protecting the natural environment, but is also essential to our city's ability to meet the growing needs of its residents and businesses as the city develops.

Aurora's natural environment contributes to the city's high quality of life by providing recreational opportunities, transportation and neighborhood connections, a unique identity, ecosystem preservation, and highly cost effective solutions for stormwater runoff and water conservation. As Aurora continues to grow, it will need to expand its outdoor and recreational opportunities and to conserve its valuable natural resources in order to balance future community needs.

With an incorporated land area of 164 square miles, Aurora is located in the rolling hills and high plains grasslands of Colorado, just to the east of the Rocky Mountain foothills.

WATER-WISE LANDSCAPING

Water-wise landscaping (also known as xeriscaping) is sustainable and drought tolerant due to the low-water plants and specific techniques used to maximize water efficiency. When compared to grass, which requires about 28 inches of supplemental water annually, water-wise landscaping can thrive on 15 inches or less and weathers longer periods without water. Additionally, this type of landscape often requires less maintenance. The city operates a number of programs to promote the use of these techniques, including design assistance, plant suggestions, rebates, educational resources and a recognition program.

Aurora is more than a mile high at its lowest point of 5,285 feet above sea level. But then the city's elevation increases to more than 6,200 feet above sea level at its highest point in the southeast. Surface water in Aurora flows into several streams that eventually adjoin the South Platte River. Aurora enjoys a mild, semi-arid climate with an average annual precipitation of only 15 inches and an average of 300 sunny days per year. Its sweeping views of the Front Range mountains and its mild climate make it a pleasant place to live. The well-developed park and trail systems, coupled with large open space areas like the Plains Conservation Center and Aurora Reservoir, provide significant outdoor places for the community.

Water supply is critical to Aurora's future. Currently, our city's water supply comes from the Colorado River Basin, Arkansas River Basin, and Upper South Platte Basin. According to the 2016 Integrated Water Master Plan, the city's water demand is projected to more than double by 2070. In accordance, the city plans to obtain additional water supply and expand storage capacity.

The city's strong conservation program is crucial in addressing its water-supply challenges such as limiting outdoor watering to three days a week, water-wise landscaping rebates, and other programs. Conservation, water efficiency and demand management practices are incorporated into Aurora's land use planning and development standards. These programs have saved 528 million gallons of water between 2014 and 2016.

Aurora has undertaken several energy conservation efforts. The city has worked with partners to create the country's largest solar-technology test facility. The 74-acre Solar Technology Acceleration Center (SolarTAC) is located at the Aurora Campus for Renewable Energy (ACRE).

XCEL Energy operates six acres of community solar gardens that allow Aurora customers to buy renewable energy credits for their homes and businesses. The city also has photovoltaic systems at three of its public facilities. Aurora has sponsored several educational and outreach programs for schools and businesses to help them improve their energy efficiency. These initiatives provide an opportunity to integrate energy efficiency and economic development.

Careful stewardship of water, energy and natural resources represents a commitment to protecting the natural environment. The integration of water and land use planning will enable our city to conserve its resources and make strategic, cost-effective infrastructure with the highest level of reliability. As Aurora continues to evolve into a major city, stewardship of these natural assets becomes increasingly important to maintain Aurora's quality of life and provide both functional and environmental benefits.

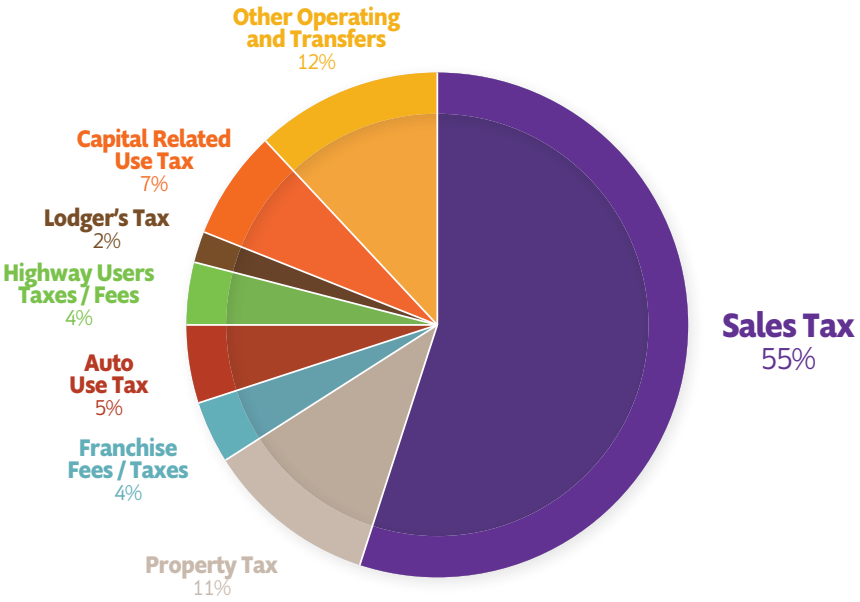
Fiscal Health

The city's long-term fiscal health is strongly tied to how the city chooses to grow. All types of development and redevelopment have associated positive or negative fiscal impacts. It is critical to understand these implications when weighing growth decisions. Revenue is driven largely by consumer demographics and the type and intensity of development constructed in the city. The spending power of Aurora households or outside visitors who shop in the city drives sales tax revenues while the type of development drives both property tax revenue and required city services. Many of the city's largest budget appropriations are directly related to the growth and development of the city, such as transportation improvements, water and wastewater utilities, police and fire services, and parks and recreation.

Aurora is deeply dependent on local sales tax to support its budget. In the 2018 Adopted Budget, sales tax revenue is the largest operating source of revenue, contributing 55 percent of General Fund sources. This source of revenue is largely driven by population demographics the availability of disposable income of Aurora households. Consumer spending by daytime Aurora-based employees and spending by visitors to the city are other sales tax contributors. Aurora residents shopping outside the city, or "retail leakage"; growing popularity of online shopping; and a shifting proportion of spending on taxable goods toward non-taxable services can have a negative effect.

Adopted General Fund

Sales provides the majority of revenues in the city of Aurora.



Source: City of Aurora 2018 Adopted Budget

Overall consumer spending is often cyclical, in large part based on regional or national economic trends; however, the city can take actions to capture its fair share–or more–of sales tax revenue in both strong and challenging economic times. One strategy is to create unique places that draw shoppers to Aurora and keep resident spending in the city is one strategy. These Aurora places can offer desirable experiences and retail and restaurant options that respond to changing consumer preferences.

The second largest revenue source is local property taxes, which comprises 11 percent of the General Fund revenue. The property tax revenue from new development will vary based on the type, quality and density of housing, and value of non-residential development. In large part, these factors are established when a new development is planned and built.

Furthermore, the city will continue to work within state legislative constraints, such as the TABOR (Tax Payer's Bill of Rights) and Gallagher Amendments, as they affect the growth and balance of commercial and residential property-tax revenues.

The 2006 Study of Revenues report found that the city will face budget challenges under various scenarios of growth and expenditure. This is described as the "structural gap" between ongoing service needs and the city's revenue capacity. Periods of strong revenue growth delay or reduce the size of the gap, while recessions cause the gap to grow.

In response to the study, the city has taken steps toward reducing the structural gap, such as judiciously funding service level needs with ongoing revenue, using one-time funds for one-time needs, and indexing service fees annually. The long-term General Fund financial outlook scenarios confirm a gap remains a risk. Closing the gap will likely require measures that address both expenditures and revenue.

Aurora Places aims to address the role of development and economic development in the city's overall health. The fundamental goal of the plan is to create a strong and stable city that meets the needs and desires of residents and continues to be attractive to investors and employers. Placemaking plays a unifying role in creating great destinations to live, work, invest, shop and play. This is an essential part of the community's future economic and fiscal success.

COMMUNITY CONVERSATION

Aurora Places is the community's plan.

The Aurora Places team engaged in in-depth conversations with the community to create a plan based on the aspirations of the people who live and work in Aurora. Aurora's diverse population made it even more essential to listen to the community's broad range of perspectives, including:

- Aurora City Council
- Residents and neighborhood organizations
- Business owners and major employers
- Local school districts and higher education providers
- Local advocacy organizations
- City boards and commissions
- City administration and staff

Community Vision Statement

Aurora is a welcoming and safe community and a city of opportunities where people of all backgrounds can prosper. Aurora is known for its unique places, strong economy, community involvement, quality and attainable housing, integrated and healthy neighborhoods, smart ways to get around and a thriving natural and cultural environment.

COMMUNITY CONVERSATION

Aurora Places is built on a foundation of community input resulting from an ambitious outreach campaign.

The community and planning team collaborated in person and online, at events, in small groups, and community-wide workshops. In 2016 and 2017, the planning team interviewed individuals, held focus groups and community workshops, conducted online surveys, hosted the sMap interactive mapping tool, and distributed do-it-yourself (DIY) workshop kits to local outreach teams. To ensure that the city's non-English-speaking community had an opportunity to participate, the Aurora Places team conducted outreach in six languages.

In January 2017, local experts, representing a variety of community topics, participated in focus group discussions. In spring 2017, the Aurora Places team hosted community workshops focused on creating a vision for Aurora's future. The issues, opportunities and desired actions expressed in this chapter reflect the opinions and feedback from community residents and stakeholders. The discussions and comments from these groups were used to inform the planning process and develop insights into the key issues facing the Aurora community.

3,200+

Aurora Places team has engaged more than 3,200 residents, businesses and city staff in the making of this plan.

800
RESPONSES

The online surveys generated almost 800 responses.

500
MAP POINTS

The community mapped more than 500 assets, issues and concerns using sMap; a web-based application developed by Houseal Lavigne Associates.

6
LANGUAGES

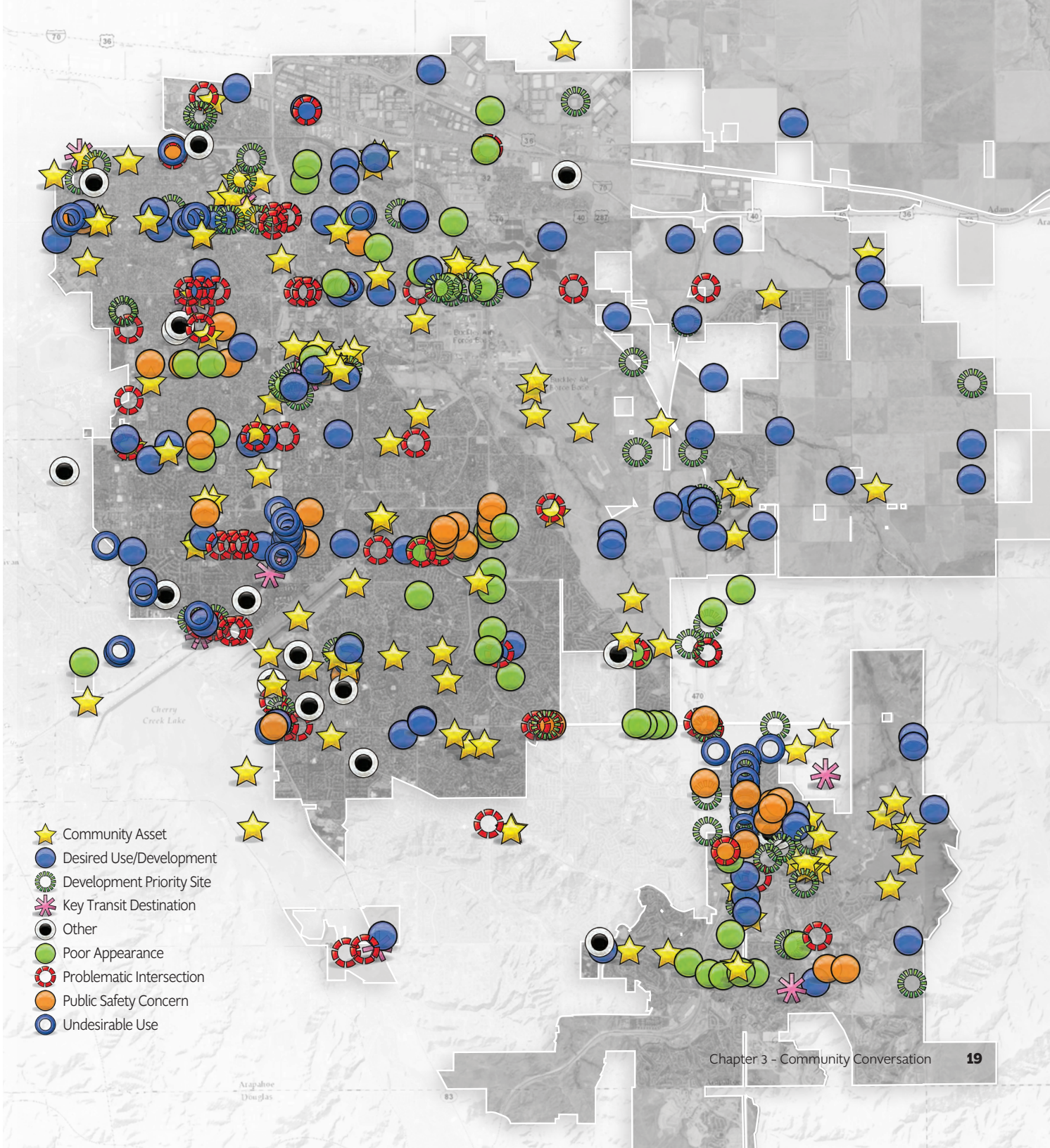
Outreach was conducted in English, Spanish, Korean, Amheric, Somali and Burmese.

55
DIY + LOT

Do-it-Yourself (DIY) workshop kits distributed to local outreach teams (LOT) resulted input from 1,000+ residents.

SMAP

As part of the planning process, sMap, a web-based outreach and engagement platform, was used by residents across Aurora to gather input on issues, concerns, opportunities and aspirations. In a later round of community outreach, sMap was used to prioritize the most important components related to community health, diversity, mobility, sense of place, local economy, housing and sustainability. Input provided helped to shape the vision, core principles and goals included in Aurora Places.



WHAT WE **HEARD...**

COMMUNITY PRINCIPLES

Community members identified many issues and actions to make Aurora better. They described what they considered to be Aurora's most important assets and voiced concerns that will help determine how to best plan for our city's continued development. Through the community conversation, the Aurora Places team assisted the community in identifying and defining seven topic areas as priorities for Aurorans. These seven community principles served as the foundation for the development of the Aurora Places.

A Strong Economy

The participants in the community conversation stressed the importance of economic growth for Aurora. The city has several community assets that provide a foundation for growing the local economy, including a major research center at the Anschutz Medical Campus, the Buckley Air Force Base and a new light rail line. According to participants, job creation and access to workforce training resources are very important. There is a strong desire to improve support for small and local businesses. There is also a need for unique urban places for employment, together with housing, daycare and locally grown businesses. Multiple modes of transportation should connect these urban places. Partnerships with institutions and the private sector will be critical for the economy, especially in relation to training and education.

A Diverse and Equitable City

The population of Aurora is diverse in every way. Aurorans wanted to celebrate this diversity and make sure that services are provided to the people of Aurora, regardless of background, age, income or ability. Diverse populations should enjoy all of the opportunities and amenities that Aurora offers. Improved intercultural communication is needed, along with enhanced services for immigrants, people with disabilities, seniors and low-income families. Displacement of people from their homes and neighborhoods as development occurs around them is a critical issue to address. Participants also called for the city to continue to engage diverse communities and provide information and services in multiple languages.

Housing for All

Participants described the need for more high-quality housing in a range of types and prices, including affordable housing. The lack of affordable housing options for low-income families, particularly for renters, must be addressed. Participants emphasized the need to end homelessness. There is a need for more housing choices and options, and existing affordable housing should be preserved and direct assistance should be provided to low-income families. Development regulations and processes should be improved to make housing development more efficient and less costly. Affordable housing should be located at accessible places such as at transit stations and close to job centers.

Healthy Community

Participants identified the need for additional recreational opportunities and better access to healthy food. Participants also expressed desire for improved public safety and mental health resources. They also expressed interest in smoking cessation programs. There was strong support for community gardens, urban agriculture, and fresh and healthy food options available in every neighborhood. Our city should support health promotion events, inventory sidewalks and crossings and invest in street improvements to allow residents to walk and bike safely in their neighborhoods and across the city.

Thriving Environment

Participants described the need for more water and energy conservation and improved recycling options and opportunities. They expressed concern for improving air quality to protect health and the environment, and preserving, enhancing and connecting open spaces, trails and waterways. They understood that planning for growth and water supply are inextricably connected and emphasized the need for water conservation education, the use of native vegetation, water-wise landscaping and green infrastructure. The city should promote construction of energy-efficient buildings, and educate the public about energy-efficient practices.

Improved Mobility and Active Transportation

Aurora has significantly improved the mobility of Aurorans by providing new travel options for cyclists, pedestrians, drivers and public-transit users. Participants wanted to continue to increase and improve all types of travel connections. Aurorans are concerned about traffic congestion, safety, road maintenance and the need for additional bike routes. Improved walkability, public transit and transportation technology are needed. Participants expressed strong concerns for meeting the travel needs of the disabled, the elderly and families.

Authentic Aurora

Participants frequently stated that Aurora's reputation does not reflect its actual high quality of life. In addition, participants wanted to make improvements to the city that will reflect well on it, particularly through the creation of new downtown areas as locations for jobs, entertainment and the arts.

Aurorans want to improve the community's image and perception. Part of that improvement will involve the creation of unique urban places where people can come together to work and enjoy entertainment, art and community events. Our city needs an improved image, reputation and appearance, along with more distinctive destinations for both residents and visitors. They were also concerned with eastward growth and its impact on city services and fiscal health.

PLACETYPES

From the Havana District to Colfax Avenue to southeast Aurora and the northeast plains, Aurora is a city of individual places joined into a unified community. Like most large cities, Aurora has places with different histories and characters, separated by significant distances. Aurora currently has fewer types of places compared to cities of similar size. For instance, Aurora lacks an established central business district or downtown. If the city wants to build on its diversity and continue balancing growth and success, it is critical that it creates these and other places throughout Aurora.

In vibrant cities, great places most often take the form of unique neighborhoods and active mixed-use districts, designed around parks, plazas and main streets, with distinctive architecture and a diverse mix of activities. Such places allow people to meet, conduct business, exchange ideas and interact with one another. During the 20th century, most American city plans placed a focus on individual land uses, such as single-family homes, apartments, shopping centers and industry, without fully recognizing the dependency each of the uses had on the others. The most successful, sustainable and vibrant cities have recognized and organized their uses to create holistic places.

Great cities are composed of great places.

PLACE-BASED APPROACH

Placetypes help define Aurora by creating unique places with their own characteristics.

This plan describes future development and land use in terms of "placetypes." Placetypes characterize specific areas based on defining character, scale, form and function. Aurora's ten placetypes establish well-defined, unique and desirable places. Creating these placetypes will involve the maintenance or improvement of existing places and the development of entirely new places. The placetypes are created and strengthened through community involvement, neighborhood planning, land-use regulation, public investment and public-private partnerships. A significant portion of investment will come from property owners, investors, and businesses working to stimulate real estate market forces.

The placetypes provide a great deal of flexibility and potential for innovation. This place-based approach promotes the full potential of vacant and undeveloped properties by allowing them to draw on different types of land uses. The creation of places not only depends on the land uses but also on their specific design, functionality and access to infrastructure. The use of placetypes provides more inclusive, accessible and economically successful places and implements the seven community priorities described in Chapter 3.

UNIQUE AURORA PLACES

While placetypes generally share defining features, each individual place is encouraged to take on its own unique character and specific mix of uses to meet local needs and desires. For example, while the Anschutz Campus, City Center area and Southlands Town Center are all designated as Urban Districts, based on the vision as walkable mixed-use urban environments, each place can have its own character and deliver a distinct experience to residents and visitors. Diversity is a strength of Aurora and that idea extends to diversity of places.

The following section outlines the 10 placetypes for the city of Aurora including a description of what they look like, the land uses that are compatible within them and the best practices to create them. The placetypes define Aurora by creating individual places with their own unique characteristics.

A cohesive community is created when placetypes appropriately connect to each other. Areas where placetypes adjoin create a transition area that integrates the each's character. Adjacent uses should be compatible or appropriately buffered.

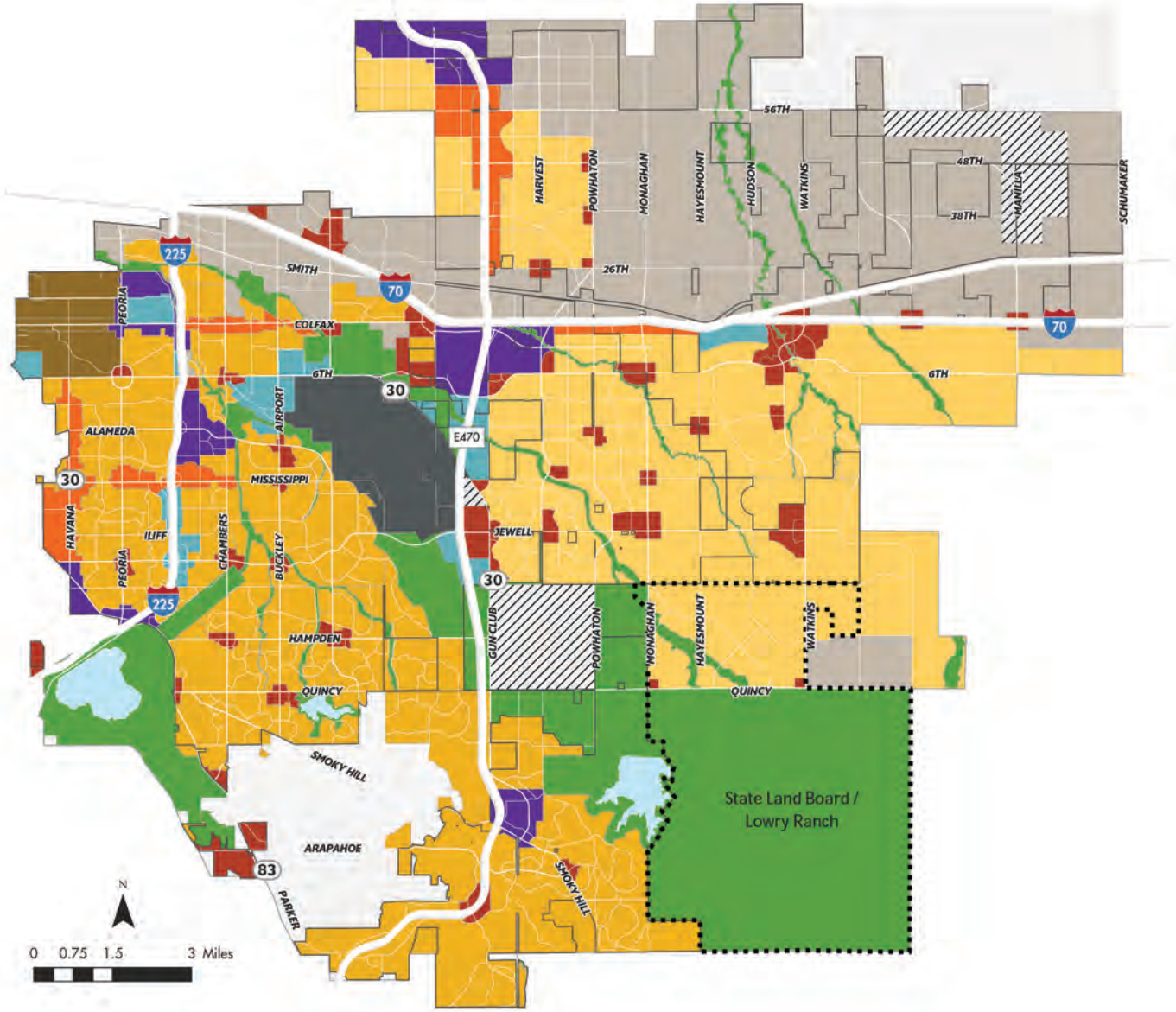
PLACETYPE PLAN

There are 10 placetypes throughout the city that address common land uses, including residential, commercial, open space, and community facilities. This placetype map is intended to depict general locations of each placetype and not necessarily the land-use designation of specific parcels. Information is available in the Planning and Development Services Department concerning how placetypes might best correspond to individual districts in the Zoning Code.

Areas designated as Special Use possess a unique land use or mix of uses, function, design or character. A significant change of land use or annexation into the city of these properties may necessitate amendment of the comprehensive plan.

PLACETYPES

- Urban District
- Innovation District
- Industry Hub
- Buckley Air Force Base
- Urban Green Space
- City Corridor
- Established Neighborhood
- Emerging Neighborhood
- Original Aurora
- Commercial Hub
- Special Use
- State Land Boundary



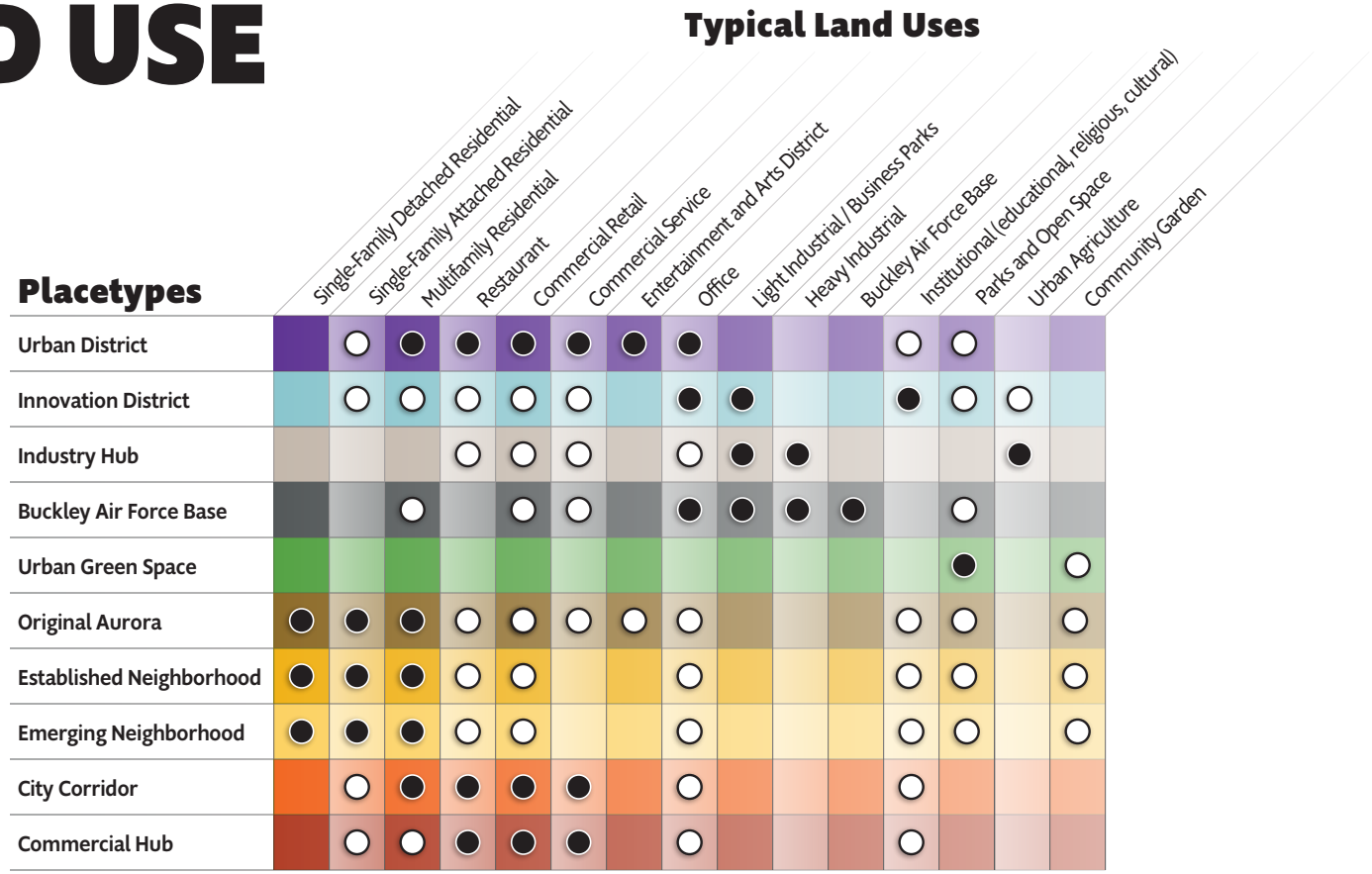
This map identifies placetype designations for all areas within the city of Aurora's adopted planning and annexation boundaries. See page 51 for additional information about these boundaries.

Placetype designations for areas outside of the city limits are for long-range planning purposes only. These properties are subject to rules and regulations of their appropriate jurisdiction(s). The city of Aurora does not enforce zoning, subdivision or development standards in unincorporated areas.

PLACETYPES AND LAND USE

The 10 placetypes consist of several typical land uses. Primary land uses are prominent and play a pivotal role in characterizing the placetype. Supporting land uses are less prevalent and strengthen the primary land uses. For example, an Established Neighborhood primarily consists of a mix of residential housing types, like single-family homes; however, the neighborhood also contains supporting uses such as schools and parks. The following pages include a list of typical land uses, their descriptions and how each land use fits into each placetype as a primary or supporting use.

Placetypes generally describe the overall character of a place. It includes a typical land uses mix, key urban design features, the mobility network, and other physical and functional elements that define each type of neighborhood or mixed-use district. Zoning is a regulatory tool used to implement the vision described by the placetypes. The Aurora Zoning Code provides detailed land use definitions, regulations, and development standards for all properties within the city.



● *Primary Land Uses are more prominent and play a pivotal role in characterizing that placetype.*

○ *Supporting Land Uses are less prevalent and serve to support the primary land use.*

TYPICAL LAND USES

Single-Family Detached Residential

Single-family detached residential areas consist primarily of homes on lots subdivided in an organized and planned manner. Single-family detached homes are the most prevalent residential building type in the city.

Single-Family Attached Residential

Single-family attached structures include townhomes and row-houses. Single-family attached structures contain multiple units divided by common or shared walls, with each unit having their own direct access to outside.

Multifamily Residential

Multifamily residential structures contain multiple housing units and are usually stacked vertically and attached horizontally, with each unit having its entrance on a common hallway or lobby. Examples of multifamily residential developments include apartments, condominiums, student housing, and senior housing.

Commercial Services and Retail

All these areas permit "commercial" uses and include places where people shop, eat, work and receive professional and personal services. The uses can be low-intensity and small in scale, such as those found within a neighborhood. They also can be large and intense, like those found in regional shopping areas, or part of mixed-use environments such as a downtown.

Light Industrial/ Business Parks

Light Industrial, Business Parks, and office space cover a wide range of uses that include storage, warehouse, research, light processing or assembly, office parks and others.

Heavy Industrial

Heavy Industrial uses consist of large-scale industrial uses, including manufacturing, construction, waste and recycling services, and intense automobile repair and salvage services.

Religious Institutions

Religious Institutions include churches, synagogues, mosques, other houses of worship and their related facilities. These institutions can be a key component of quality of life and tend to stabilize and help define individual neighborhoods.

Parks and Schools

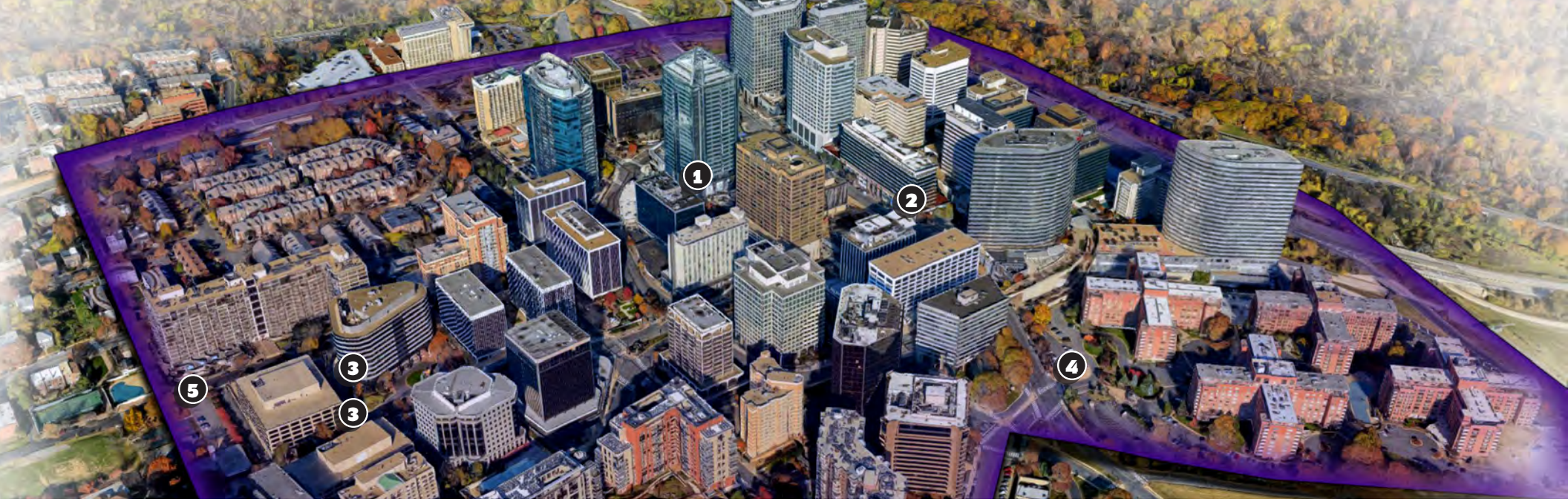
Parks and schools are located throughout the city and contribute significantly to the community's overall quality of life. Parks can include small neighborhood parks with playgrounds, as well as larger community-wide parks with ball fields and recreation programs.

Urban Agriculture/ Community Gardens

These two land uses are related, but represent varying levels of intensity and compatibility. Urban agriculture is more intense and can include agricultural activities intended for the commercial-level production of crops and produce.

Civic and Cultural

These land uses are publicly accessible places utilized by community members on a daily basis either directly or indirectly. They include necessary services such as utilities, police and fire as well as desired amenities like libraries and other municipal services.



Aurora Placetypes
Urban District

Urban Districts are Aurora's signature destinations that offer a unique, vibrant urban experience.

Urban Districts will be critical to the economic and fiscal health of the city because they will be the centers of employment, culture and activity. The Urban District is the city's most intensely developed area with mixed-use, entertainment, institutional, retail, restaurant and multifamily residential as defining uses. In the absence of a single "Downtown Aurora," this placetype creates a unique mix of uses in a relatively dense urban fabric, that provides a pedestrian-friendly environment and a place to live, work, shop, dine, recreate and more. It is distinguished from other placetypes by density, scale and the prioritization of multimodal transportation. Multifamily housing and employment opportunities abound, making Urban Districts the center of activity for Aurora.

Predominantly mixed-use developments accompanied by a small amount of stand-alone commercial and multifamily uses characterize the Urban District. Public facilities and institutions may be strategically located within the Urban District to anchor or support these diverse and active places. Urban parks provide green space for residents and workers and serve as locations for community activities. This mix and intensity of uses is intended to provide around-the-clock activity. Transit, pedestrian and bike connections are essential to its development and success.

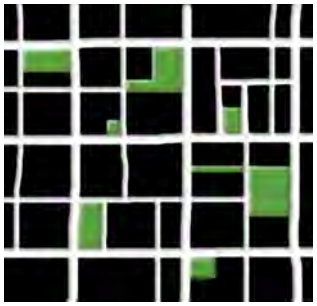
Primary Land Use

- Multifamily Residential
- Restaurant
- Commercial Retail
- Commercial Service
- Entertainment and Arts District
- Office

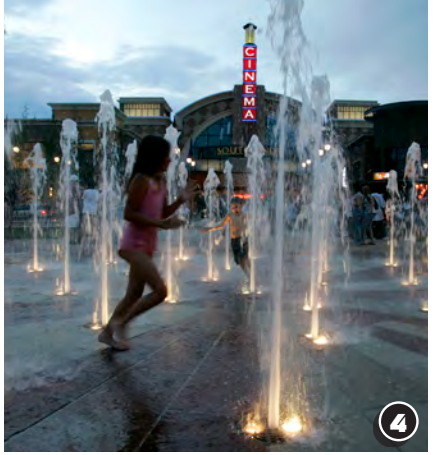
Supporting Land Use

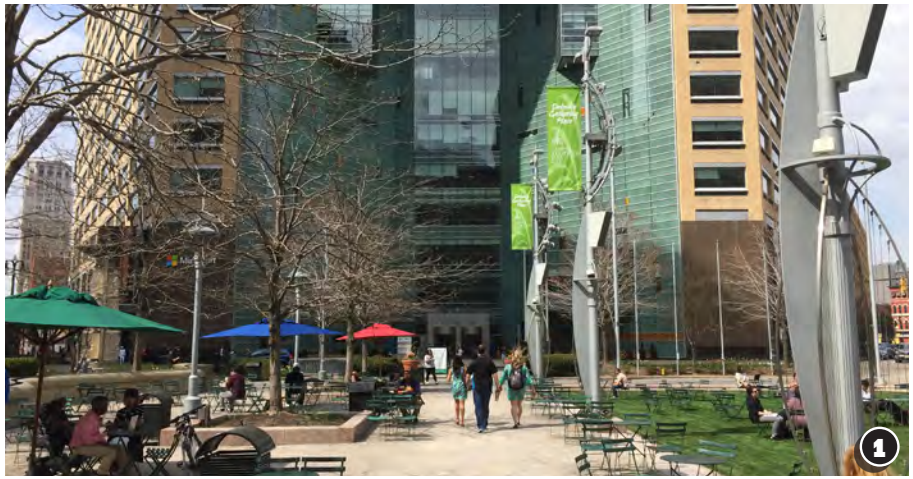
- Single-Family Attached Residential
- Institutional
- Parks and Open Space

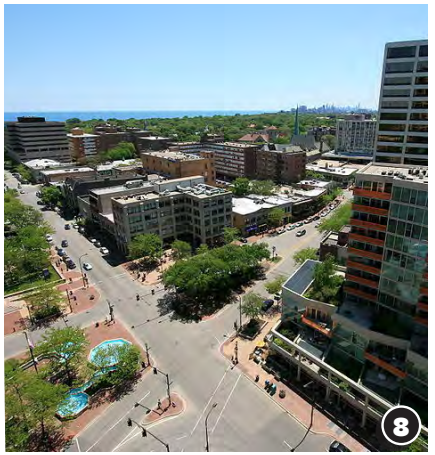
Street and Open Space Network



Develop Urban Districts with a complete grid of streets creating relatively small urban blocks. Provide easy, short pedestrian and bicycle connections to surrounding districts and neighborhoods.







Defining Features

1. Use Urban Districts as an opportunity to define Aurora's image and aesthetic through high-quality design and architecture supporting active places and distinctive destinations.
2. Prioritize mixed-use buildings with ground-floor commercial and multistory residential housing above to bolster commercial and social activity.
3. Use attractive, connected and well-designed urban streetscapes throughout the district. Place buildings at or near the sidewalk to maintain a traditional streetwall effect.
4. Utilize civic plazas, courtyards, and parks and open space as gathering places for residents, employees and visitors.
5. Provide easy, short pedestrian and bicycle connections to surrounding districts and neighborhoods.
6. Integrate "water-wise" practices including water-efficient fixtures, native landscaping, water efficient streetscapes and medians and low-impact development BMPs.
7. Incorporate an accessible, well-connected transit hub to connect Urban Districts to the rest of the city and region.
8. Develop urban districts with a complete grid of streets creating relatively small urban blocks.

Aurora Placetypes

Innovation District

Innovation Districts foster new ideas and enterprises by bringing together people, companies and institutions.

The Innovation District is where leading-edge anchor institutions and businesses connect with start-ups and business incubators and accelerators. This placetype fosters new ideas and enterprises by bringing together different people, companies and institutions and are key to increasing employment within the city. Light industrial and business park uses are joined with educational and medical institutions to foster sought-after creativity. These primary uses interact horizontally to promote integration across the various industries that fill this placetype.

A high-quality, tech-centric space is critical to this placetype's success, including unique meeting spaces that encourage people and organizations to come together, learn from one another and exchange ideas. High-quality office space and jobs colocated with housing are necessary to keep Aurora's innovative and creative thinkers close to home, such as students and professors that live on campus. Urban agriculture and community gardens serve as secondary uses, particularly to various biological sectors that utilize them for research. Transit, pedestrian, and bicycle accessibility to and through the Innovation District is also critical.

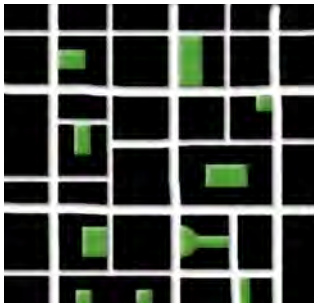
Primary Land Use

- Office
- Light Industrial
- Institutional

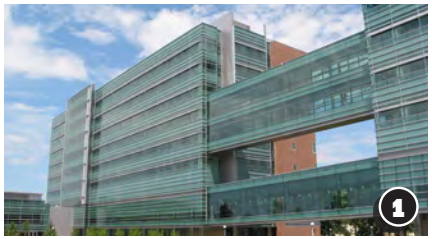
Supporting Land Use

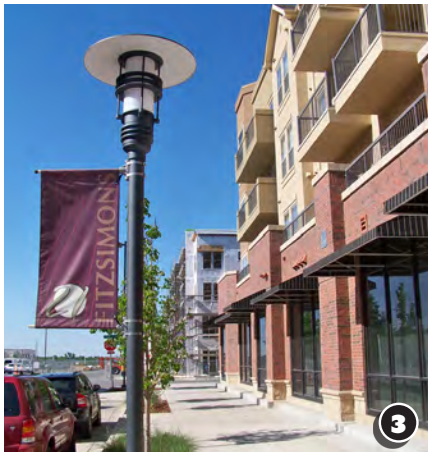
- Single-Family Attached Residential
- Multifamily Residential
- Restaurant
- Commercial Retail
- Commercial Service
- Parks and Open Space
- Urban Agriculture

Street and Open Space Network



Connect the district through a highly-connected and walkable network of streets. Cluster buildings around gathering places or within a campus layout.





Defining Features

1. Demonstrate highly innovative approaches to design and development through architecture, lighting, infrastructure, and innovative spaces.
2. Cluster or connect buildings around gathering places or within a campus layout to promote idea sharing and business collaboration.
3. Integrate affordable single-family attached and multifamily residential to support students, faculty and other employees.
4. Develop a fully connected network of sidewalks and bike paths to provide safe and efficient pedestrian access from nearby neighborhoods and adjacent placetypes.
5. Construct gateway treatments and wayfinding signs at key entrances to better direct residents, workers, and visitors to the numerous cultural and educational facilities.
6. Include uses such as coffee shops, restaurants, bars, plazas, libraries, conference centers and shared working spaces to facilitate bringing people together to exchange ideas.
7. Integrate "water-wise" practices including water-efficient fixtures, native landscaping, water efficient streets-capes and medians and low-impact development BMPs.
8. Identify opportunities for joint nonpotable cooling water reuse.

Aurora Placetypes

Industry Hub

Industry Hubs are primarily dedicated to a mix of commercial and industrial uses and can be a significant employment center.

The Industry Hub includes areas typically dedicated to manufacturing, warehousing, distribution, fulfillment centers, freight operations and renewable energy enterprises. This placetype plays an important role in the city's employment base and economy, but can sometimes create outdoor activity and should be appropriately buffered from residential and commercial areas. It can generate high volumes of traffic from both its employees and associated truck traffic. Adjoining roadways should accommodate traffic without negatively impacting quieter placetypes or traffic on local streets serving residential areas.

Large-scale alternative energy facilities are another use that may fit this placetype. Uses permitted only in Industry Hubs are manufacturing plants, factories, large open-air operations and heavy-equipment storage.

Primary Land Use

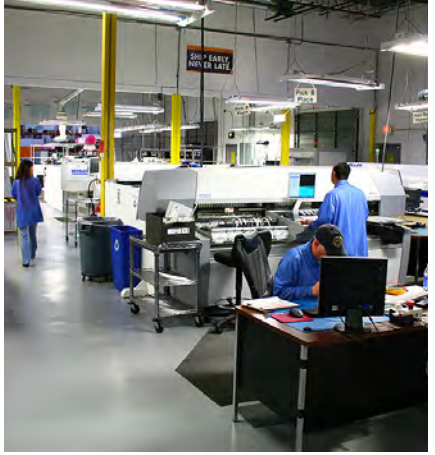
- Light Industrial
- Heavy Industrial
- Urban Agriculture

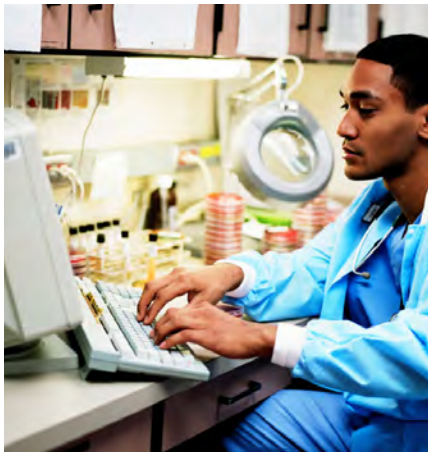
Supporting Land Use

- Restaurant
- Commercial Retail
- Commercial Service
- Office

Street and Open Space Network

Locate Industrial Hubs near major highways. Configure a street grid sufficient to accommodate large industrial facilities and truck traffic.





Defining Features

1. Configure a street grid and roadway design of a width and layout sufficient to accommodate the safe and efficient circulation and access of a high volume of large-truck traffic.
2. Develop sites to accommodate large storage buildings and large paved areas required to facilitate the on-site maneuvering and loading of tractor trailers.
3. Utilize sustainable best practices to mitigate negative environmental impacts.
4. Locate Industrial Hubs near major highways and commercial rail lines to provide fast and convenient freight access. Avoid mixing industrial traffic with quieter neighborhood placetypes.
5. Integrate "water-wise" practices including water-efficient fixtures, native landscaping, water efficient streetscapes and medians and low-impact development BMPs.
6. Identify opportunities for joint nonpotable cooling water reuse.
7. Use attractive and durable architecture and landscape to help maintain the value of industry hubs over time.

Aurora Placetypes

Buckley Air Force Base

The continued success and viability of Buckley Air Force Base is a critical priority to Aurora.

Buckley Air Force Base (AFB), host unit of the 460th Space Wing, includes all areas directly involved in base operations. Buckley AFB is an Air Force Space Command base that serves more than 92,000 active-duty, National Guard, Reserve, retired military personnel, contractors, and other related tenants throughout Colorado's Front Range. Buckley AFB has air operations, space-based missile warning capabilities, space surveillance, communications operations, and support functions.

Buckley AFB is the most unique placetype as it essentially functions like a municipality with residential uses and all necessary commercial uses, including restaurants, retail and services, in addition to its core military functions. Residential uses are prohibited in key adjoining areas, and a range of uses are prohibited below flight paths. Noise mitigation measures are required for new buildings in a large area around the base. The city continues to partner with Buckley AFB to maintain a compatible use buffer adjacent to the base through open space protection and development restrictions.

Primary Land Use

- Office
- Light Industrial
- Heavy Industrial
- Buckley Air Force Base

Supporting Land Use

- Multifamily Residential
- Commercial Retail
- Commercial Service
- Parks and Open Space

Street and Open Space Network

Open space acquisitions protect the base from urban encroachment and buffer surrounding neighborhoods.

Defining Features

1. Encourage development of commercial or supporting services near the base to serve people that work or live on the base.
2. Work with Buckley AFB to mitigate its impacts on the surrounding neighborhoods, including noise pollution, air quality and visual appearance.
3. Upgrade public transportation routes to improve access to the base.
4. Support or collaborate on water conservation measures in partnership with Buckley AFB.
5. Continue to collaborate with Buckley AFB to buffer the base from urban encroachment.

Aurora Placetypes

Urban Green Space

Regionally significant areas of natural environment and developed parks define the Urban Green Space placetype.

Various forms of green space are integrated into all placetypes as supporting elements. What defines the Urban Green Space placetype is the regional importance, connectivity and scale of these signature parks, trails and open space assets. Aurora's Urban Green Spaces include large areas, such as the Plains Conservation Center and Aurora Reservoir, and smaller ones, such as Quincy Reservoir and the undeveloped land adjoining Aurora's major creeks and drainage ways. They include undeveloped areas with significant ecological value as well as programmed parks accommodating passive and active recreation, both of which may also function as stormwater-management facilities.

The Urban Green Space placetype is largely defined by three land uses: parks, trails and open space. These uses may be of many types, from developed and programmed parks, to protected natural areas. Recreational facilities, services and programming of green spaces activate these public gathering places.

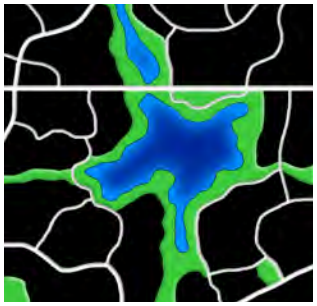
Primary Land Use

- ● Parks and Open Space

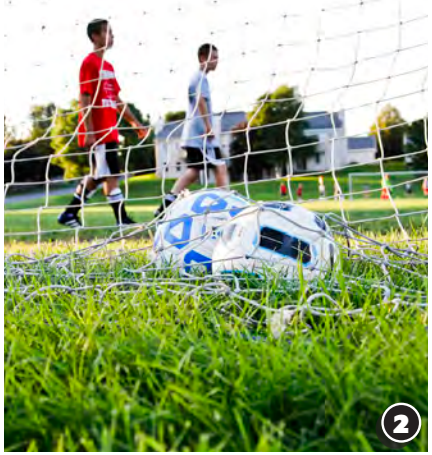
Supporting Land Use

- ○ Community Garden

Street and Open Space Network



Connect parks and open spaces through a network of trails, sidewalks, bicycle routes and linear parks. Locate streets on the edge of green spaces to create public views and access.



Defining Features

1. Locate Urban Green Spaces within walkable distances of all neighborhoods to provide opportunities for all of Aurora's residents.
2. Provide Aurora's residents with recreation opportunities throughout the city by providing access to playgrounds, sports fields and large open spaces.
3. Preserve significant wooded areas, grasslands, and waterbodies to help mitigate negative environmental impacts and to the enhance Aurora's natural beauty.
4. Consider the impact of non-local traffic in adjacent neighborhoods when building parking lots and access points for community parks.
5. Connect Aurora's residents with parks and open spaces through a comprehensive network of trails, linear parks, bicycle routes and sidewalks. Where appropriate, locate streets on the edge of green spaces to create public views and access.
6. Buffer creek and drainage corridors to protect private property from flood or erosion hazards, as well as to preserve opportunities for trails and recreation.
7. Activate Urban Green Spaces as important community gathering places through high-quality facilities and engaging programming.
8. Use water-wise practices, including limiting turf to active recreation uses, xeriscaping and identify opportunities for nonpotable water supply.

Aurora Placetypes

Original Aurora

Original Aurora is a traditional city neighborhood that retains its character, diversity and form, even as the neighborhood continues to evolve.

Original Aurora is the city's first neighborhood, characterized by a street grid, commercial corridors, established residential areas and an active arts district. As a placetype, it represents traditional neighborhood development, and includes East Colfax Avenue, a major commercial and transit corridor connecting the Anschutz campus to central Denver, and the emerging Westerly Creek area, anchored by the Stanley Marketplace.

The city seeks to maintain and strengthen the traditional character of Original Aurora, while accommodating targeted reinvestment through infill, redevelopment and adaptive reuse. The Colfax, Dayton, and Montview corridors offer a growing mix of restaurants, retail, entertainment and services.

The predominantly residential portions of the neighborhood offer an opportunity to provide a balanced mix of housing options and include convenient, neighborhood-scaled services for residents.

Arts venues, civic buildings and dining and entertainment options are featured in the Arts District and reinforce the area's tradition as a gathering place for the community and visitors. Mixed-use development along key corridors can help support the neighborhood, adding a new dimension of vitality to the area, and stimulating entrepreneurial growth and jobs. A walkable network of streets and ample transit service offer mobility options throughout the placetype.

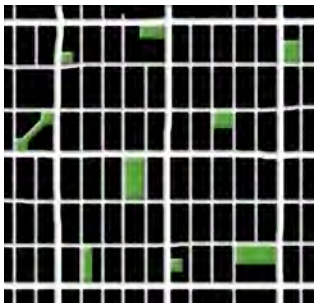
Primary Land Use

- Single-Family Detached Residential
- Single-Family Attached Residential
- Multifamily Residential

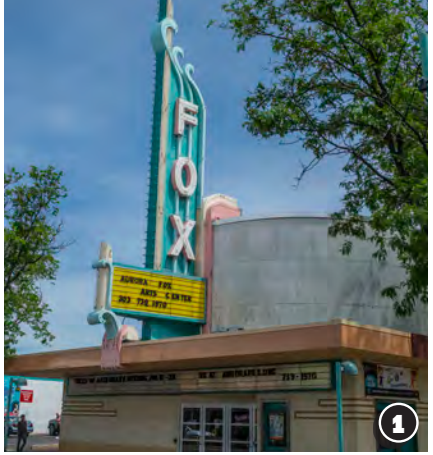
Supporting Land Use

- Restaurant
- Commercial Retail
- Commercial Service
- Entertainment and Arts District
- Office
- Institutional
- Parks and Open Space
- Community Garden

Street and Open Space Network



Maintain or re-establish the traditional street grid network to maximize connectivity throughout the neighborhood.



Defining Features

1. Blend new residential and mixed-use developments with the mid-20th-century commercial storefronts and residential areas.
2. Preserve, improve and augment existing housing stock retaining community character while encouraging investment and upgrading homes to meet current household and homebuyer preferences.
3. Support a thriving nightlife and restaurant scene by augmenting gathering places, like the Stanley Marketplace and Arts District, and developing places that serve area residents, Anschutz campus employees, arts patrons and visitors.
4. Use street trees and landscaping to outline Original Aurora's grid system to improve the appearance, air quality and general health of the placetype.
5. Strengthen MLK Jr. Library and Fletcher Plaza as a center of community events and gathering, public services and Aurora pride. Actively program events at the library and plaza to supplement activity in the Arts District and entertainment corridor.
6. Improve walking and bicycling connections throughout the neighborhood, including widening sidewalks and upgrading street crossings.
7. Protect and highlight Aurora's unique historic resources within the neighborhood.
8. Incorporate low-impact development and water quality practices and use appropriate systems to direct rainwater onto green spaces.

Aurora Placetypes

Established Neighborhood

Established Neighborhoods are predominantly residential, but supported by retail, services, multifamily and office uses along perimeter streets and intersections.

The Established Neighborhood placetype is characterized by predominantly residential areas with a variety of unit types, including single-family detached and attached, and multifamily, typically constructed between 1950 and 1990. This placetype often deviates from the traditional grid pattern of streets and contains a more curvilinear pattern. Although primarily a residential area, this placetype may also support limited retail, service and office uses located at intersections or along major perimeter streets.

Established Neighborhood primary land uses include: single-family detached and attached and multifamily residential of various densities, along with schools, parks and religious institutions. Supporting uses can include appropriately-scaled and located restaurants, retail, commercial services, community gardens and other neighborhood-serving gathering places.

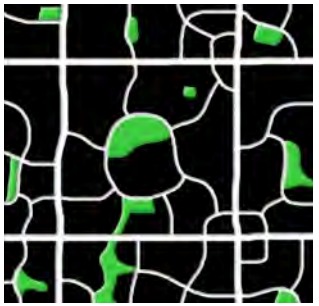
Primary Land Use

- Single-Family Detached Residential
- Single-Family Attached Residential
- Multifamily Residential

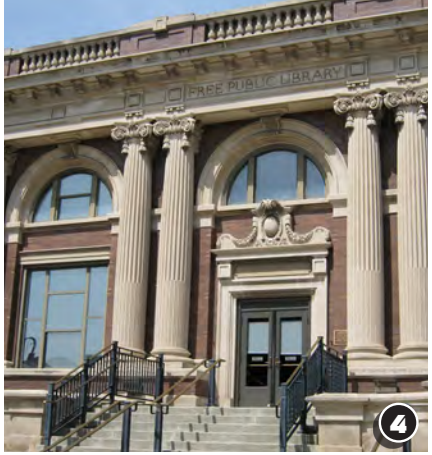
Supporting Land Use

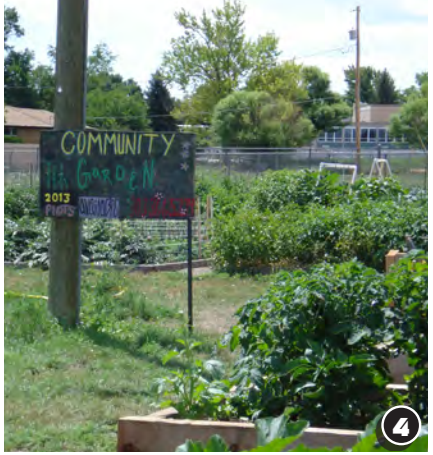
- Restaurant
- Commercial Retail
- Office
- Institutional
- Parks and Open Space
- Community Garden

Street and Open Space Network



These neighborhoods typically feature a complex curvilinear pattern of streets. Established Neighborhoods should feature short, safe and protected bicycle and pedestrian routes throughout the neighborhood and connecting to adjacent placetypes.





Defining Features

1. Connect Established Neighborhoods to surrounding neighborhoods and commercial or mixed-use placetypes with short, safe, highly protected and attractive bicycle and pedestrian routes.
2. Use single-family detached and attached housing to establish the character of this placetype. Multifamily housing is another accepted housing type in Established Neighborhoods but is not as prominent and is often located along main streets or the edge of neighborhods.
3. Locate full-service grocery stores and personal services in areas that are conveniently accessible from Established Neighborhoods to provide access to healthy foods and daily needs. Enhance pedestrian, bicycle and transit access to these important services.
4. In Established Neighborhoods, support inclusion in neighborhood gathering places, such as schools, parks, recreation centers and religious institutions, as many community events are centered around their activities.
5. Integrate "water-wise" practices including water-efficient fixtures, native landscaping, water efficient streetscapes and medians and low-impact development BMPs.

Aurora Placetypes

Emerging Neighborhood

Emerging Neighborhoods offer an opportunity for Aurora to redefine itself through highly-desirable, connected, and complete neighborhoods.

An Emerging Neighborhood placetype is a newer largely residential neighborhood in previously undeveloped areas. They are neighborhoods that have typically been built in the past 25 years and represent an opportunity to further diversify neighborhood choices. This placetype is more than just an isolated residential subdivision, but is instead a complete neighborhood with mixed residential housing types and pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure. This makes it walkable and well-connected throughout the neighborhood and to adjacent placetypes, with highly accessible parks and open space integrated into the neighborhood.

This placetype is similar to Established Neighborhoods with some important differences. These neighborhoods should offer a mix of housing types at various densities within the neighborhood fabric. Restaurants, retail and commercial services are supporting uses in this placetype and should be conveniently connected and accessible to residents of the neighborhood. Supporting uses also include a variety of neighborhood institutions and gathering places. Commercial uses should be located along main or perimeter streets rather than within primary residential areas.

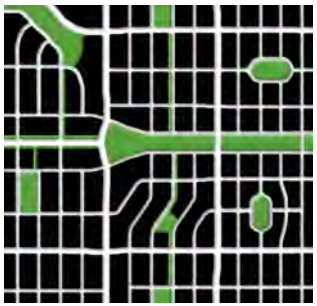
Primary Land Use

- Single-Family Detached Residential
- Single-Family Attached Residential
- Multifamily Residential

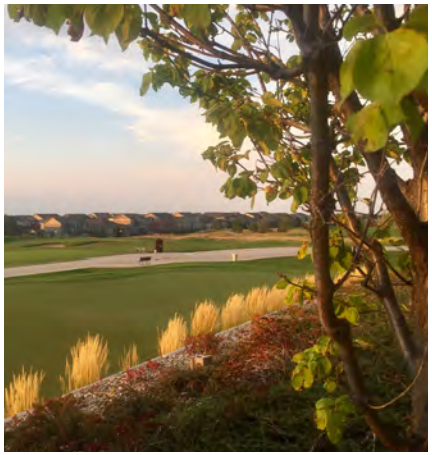
Supporting Land Use

- Restaurant
- Commercial Retail
- Office
- Institutional
- Parks and Open Space
- Community Garden

Street and Open Space Network



The street pattern should balance vehicle, bicycle and pedestrian connectivity. Design new neighborhoods around a central organizing feature, such as a park or other gathering place.



Defining Features

1. Place supporting retail, restaurants, commercial services and small office uses along main streets or the perimeter of the neighborhood. These supporting uses should be directly accessible from the residential areas of the neighborhood by drivers, pedestrians, bicyclists and transit riders.
2. Intersperse a variety of housing types, sizes and prices throughout the neighborhood. Higher-density multifamily should be located on main streets or along the neighborhood's edge, yet still be integrated into the neighborhood street pattern.
3. Design new neighborhoods around a central organizing feature, such as a park, natural feature, school, or other neighborhood gathering place.
4. Build ADA-compliant sidewalks, crosswalks, and lighting, that help residents safely traverse their community.
5. Design a street pattern that balances traffic flow with pedestrian and bicycle connectivity, convenience and safety. Limit cul-de-sacs and dead ends and provide multiple connections to main streets and adjacent placetypes.
6. Integrate water-wise practices including water-efficient fixtures, native landscaping, water-efficient streetscapes and medians and low-impact development BMPs.
7. Limit turf to active recreation areas.
8. Encourage incorporation of nonpotable water systems in new development where appropriate and feasible.

Aurora Placetypes

City Corridor

The focus of the City Corridor is commercial activity along the main street, with connected mixed residential types supporting this vibrant district.

City Corridors are another placetype that will contribute to the economic and fiscal success of the city. Corridors are centered along the city's major roadways, home to a wide range of uses, including commercial, retail, institutional, service and some residential. This placetype is generally auto-oriented, but should also accommodate pedestrians, bicyclists and transit service. City Corridors should include amenities such as sidewalks, crosswalks, benches, pedestrian-scale lighting and landscaping that make it easy for pedestrians to safely and comfortably navigate the area.

Green space is typically limited within this placetype, but outdoor gathering areas–like pocket parks, common greens and plazas–are appropriate to enhance the experience. Integration of these amenities varies among the City Corridors throughout Aurora making each one unique. The focus of the City Corridor placetype is commercial activity, and as such, its primary uses are restaurants, retail, office and commercial services. Multifamily residential and institutional uses are secondary uses and allow for the development of mixed-use projects. Single-family attached residential is another potential secondary use, appropriate in areas not prioritized for commercial development.

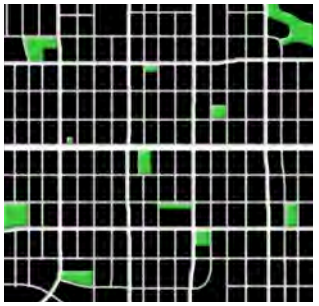
Primary Land Use

- Multifamily Residential
- Restaurant
- Commercial Retail
- Commercial Service

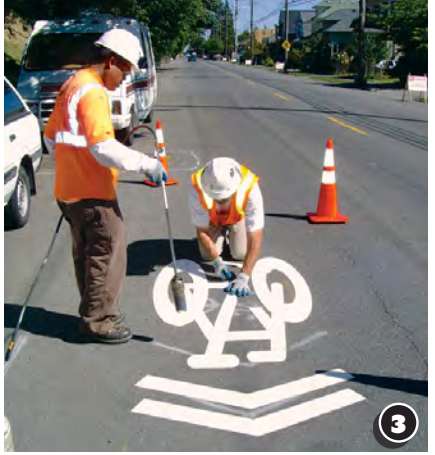
Supporting Land Use

- Single-Family Attached Residential
- Office
- Institutional

Street and Open Space Network



Design a street network along the primary commercial corridor to provide access for area residents and visitors to the area. Provide safe and convenient access to businesses by drivers, pedestrians, bicyclists and transit users.



Defining Features

1. Wherever possible, front commercial buildings along primary streets to ensure visibility and accessibility. Avoid street frontages dominated by parking lots or buildings set back large distances from the street.
2. Use single-family attached units where the City Corridor abuts a residential placetype to promote an appropriate transition between the two placetypes.
3. Develop a road network along the City Corridor to provide quick and easy access to businesses for drivers, cyclists, transit riders and pedestrians.
4. Reposition or redevelop aging or obsolete shopping centers to more effectively compete in current and future retail markets, and deliver goods and services to the local community.
5. Design centers around a central organizing feature or gathering space, like a common green or plaza, promenade, natural feature, or other shared space. Programmed common spaces surrounded by active uses and buildings attract or retain customers and convey a sense of community.
6. Incorporate drainage swales, rain gardens, xeriscaping and water-efficient streetscapes and medians.
7. Size primary parking lots for typical and reasonable demand and provide for peak parking in overflow areas away from primary street frontages. Promote shared parking opportunities.

Aurora Placetypes

Commercial Hub

Commercial Hubs are centers of activity supporting adjacent neighborhoods with shopping, services, entertainment and community life.

Commercial hubs are especially critical to the future economic and fiscal health of Aurora. This placetype primarily contains uses that provide goods and services to nearby Established and Emerging Neighborhoods but can also serve other placetypes in the area. This placetype is characterized by shopping centers and areas that provide a cluster of compatible businesses. It may be located along the city's corridors, often at the intersection of two arterial streets. Although varying in size and intensity, this placetype is more than just a small neighborhood-scaled commercial use. Improvements to these centers should better connect them to surrounding neighborhoods and provide a broader array of services and experiences.

The Commercial Hub's primary uses are retail, commercial service and restaurant. Smaller community parks, trails, plazas, common greens and shared outdoor areas provide social gathering spaces as well. The Commercial Hub is intended to serve the needs of multiple nearby neighborhoods. Transit, pedestrian and bicycle connections should safely and conveniently link the Commercial Hub to other placetypes.

Primary Land Use

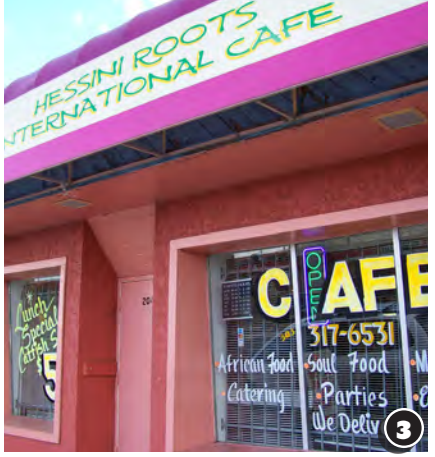
- Restaurant
- Commercial Retail
- Commercial Service

Supporting Land Use

- Single-Family Attached Residential
- Multifamily Residential
- Office
- Institutional

Street and Open Space Network

Connect Commercial Hubs to surrounding neighborhoods with safe and convenient pedestrian and bicycle connections. Improve street crossings to enhance walkability.



Defining Features

1. Include medium- or high-density housing to expand the local customer base. Use mixed-use buildings to create an active and diverse experience.
2. Provide a wide range of neighborhood-serving retail uses, such as a pharmacy, grocery store, home goods, personal services and restaurants, among others.
3. Celebrate and promote local businesses owned by diverse populations from adjacent residential neighborhoods in the Commercial Hub.
4. Locate Commercial Hubs at the intersection of two arterial streets to be more accessible to the neighborhoods they serve, particularly by public transit.
5. Incorporate drainage swales, rain gardens, xeriscaping, water-efficient streetscapes and medians and nonpotable water systems in new development.
6. Connect Commercial Hubs to surrounding neighborhoods with safe and convenient pedestrian and bicycle connections. Improve street crossings to enhance walkability.
7. Design centers around a central organizing feature or gathering space, like a common green, plaza, promenade, natural feature or other shared space. Programmed common spaces surrounded by active uses and buildings attract or retain customers and convey a sense of community.

CONNECTING PLACES

Chapter 4 describes the placetypes that serve as the building blocks for Aurora, but the city is more than just a collection of individual locations. Aurora is a connected community of people and places working together to create a cohesive and connected community.

This chapter identifies the policies, infrastructure and external organizations that help shape and define the varied places that make up the city. These are key components or building blocks of how the city grows, the quality and experience of different placetypes and how different parts of the city are integrated and connected to each other.

Aurora is a connected community of people and places working together to create a cohesive and connected community.

Places are physically connected by the streets, sidewalks, open space, waterways, rail, trails and utilities that serve them. Residents and visitors rely on a safe and convenient way to move throughout the community–from home, work and school to shopping, services and entertainment. Likewise, businesses need an effective mobility network to move both people and goods. Cost-effective, efficient and reliable utilities are essential to all activity in Aurora. The community is also connected through a network of city services, including parks, public safety, recreation facilities, transit and libraries. Shared assets, highlighted by public art, distinct neighborhoods, historic places and cultural events, also work together to create a cohesive community.

The local economy links all parts of Aurora, and joins the city with the rest of the region. Private-sector investment is often based on factors beyond municipal boundaries or individual properties. Employers consider many factors in locating their operations, including the availability of skilled local workforce, convenient access to the region's transportation network, desirable neighborhoods for their employees and vibrant mixed-use districts to locate their facilities. No single placetype can meet all of these needs, but the network of places Aurora offers can. A strong local economy is defined by the network of people and places within a community.

CITY FORM

Each neighborhood has its own unique population and needs.

Aurora was founded in 1891 as the town of Fletcher on four square miles of prairie bounded by Yosemite and Peoria Streets and Sixth and 26th Avenues. The beginnings of a water system and 14 new brick homes made up its earliest neighborhood. Much of Aurora is located on prairie grasslands with few topographic or natural obstacles to development. As a result, the city has expanded substantially to the east and southeast over the last few decades.

Over the decades, Aurora has grown to encompass 163.5 square miles although significant areas are still undeveloped. The city provides adequate and sustainable public services and infrastructure to these areas of future development, most of which are on the city's eastern edge. The city's future revenue, cost to provide services and long-term maintenance, among other impacts, is greatly affected by how the areas are developed. Planning for this development is vital for balancing the costs of providing these essential services with the continuation of the city's and region's projected growth.

Neighborhoods

Aurora's neighborhoods have diverse forms, from the traditional urban blocks in Original Aurora and the winding streets of central Aurora's more suburban neighborhoods, to the golf courses and hilltop views of the city's southeastern neighborhoods. As Aurora continues to develop, new neighborhoods and urban mixed-use districts will further diversify the options available to current and future Aurora residents. There is a great opportunity for each neighborhood to take on its own image and identity.

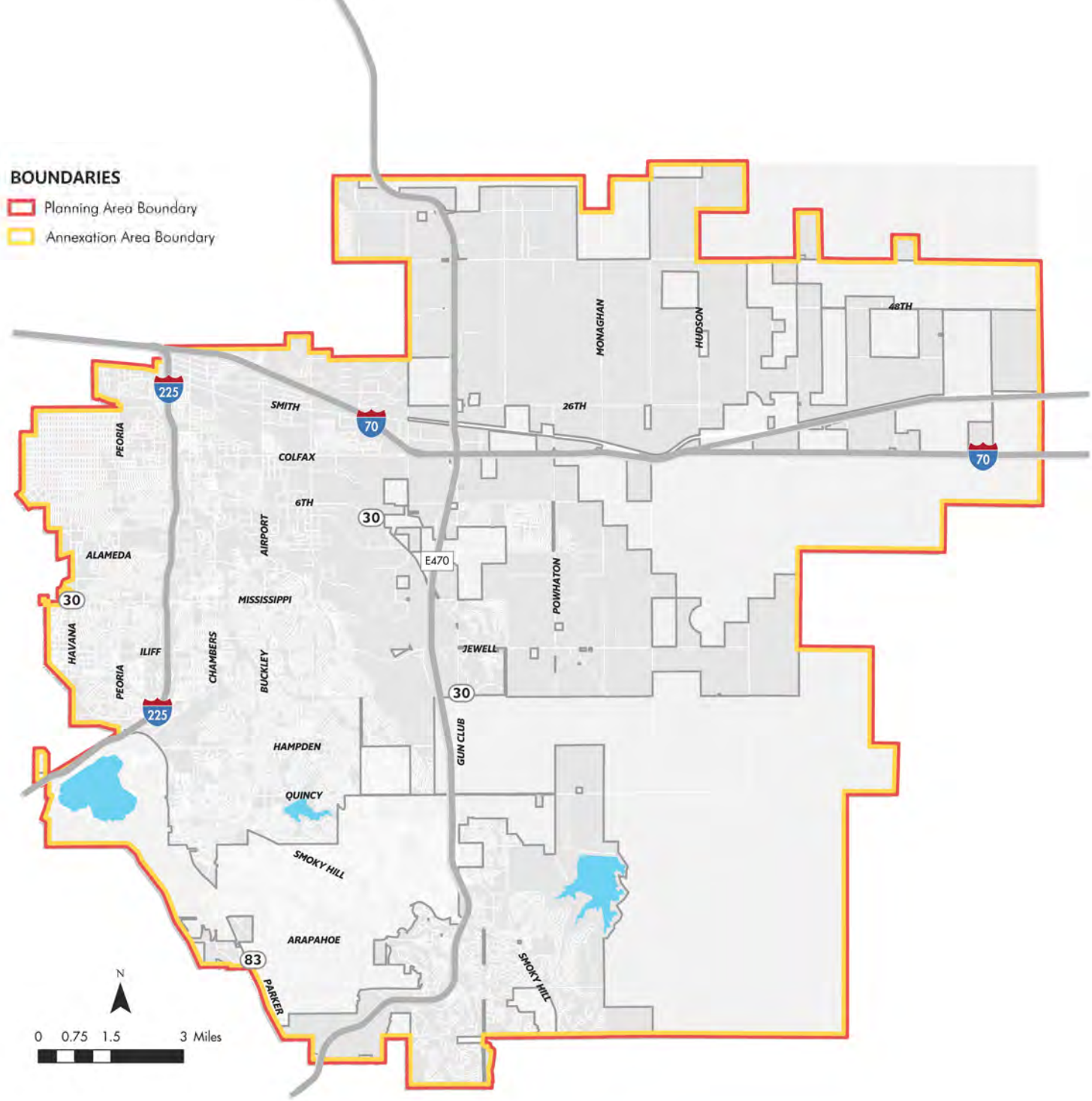
Each neighborhood has its own unique population and needs. Neighborhood-level planning can help address the service and development needs of its residents by engaging them in the development process and creating conversation to determine their vision and priorities.

Planning and Annexation Boundaries

The city has traditionally built its Comprehensive Plan around a geographic area referred to as the "Planning Area." It comprises the area within the city's municipal boundaries along with some adjacent land outside city limits. The reason for the Planning Area being multi-jurisdictional is two-fold:

- Aurora's boundaries, particularly on the east and southeast, are not contiguous and substantial acreage lies between city boundaries.
- Development impacts that occur in the same geographic area transcend jurisdictional boundaries. Given this, the city has always been concerned about land use and infrastructure planning in areas adjacent to its boundaries.

Since 2018, the city's "Annexation Area," a boundary within which the city will consider annexation requests during the life of the current comprehensive plan, largely coincides with the Planning Area boundary. City Council will consider whether to adopt such annexation requests based on its established procedures and policies.



REGIONAL GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT

Aurora will play an instrumental role in achieving regional goals and participating in regional benefits.

The Denver-Aurora-Lakewood metropolitan region has a long history of cooperation and coordination regarding regional growth and development and has experienced unprecedented change in recent years. The region has been among the nation's fastest growing, with the population increasing from 2.1 million in 2000 to 2.7 million in 2016. This expansion has brought opportunities and challenges to its metro-area communities.

While rapid population growth can strain local services, transportation infrastructure and housing, it also presents opportunities for cities to offer a greater diversity of jobs, neighborhoods and experiences to both current and future residents. Rapid growth presents both challenges and opportunities for regional coordination.

Aurora is the region's second largest city (374,154 people), home to 133,595 jobs spanning 163.5 square miles. The city recognizes that many future challenges must be addressed through regional cooperation. Aurora will play an instrumental role in achieving regional goals and participate in regional benefits, which can have significant positive impact on the quality of life within Aurora and the metro region.

DRCOG Mile High Compact and Metro Vision

Aurora is a signatory of the Mile High Compact, an intergovernmental agreement to manage and coordinate metro-area growth in accordance with the regional Metro Vision plan. This includes the most recent Metro Vision 2040 plan that the Denver Regional Council of Governments (DRCOG) adopted in 2017. The city reaffirms its support of the Mile High Compact and adopted Metro Vision plan and will continue to serve in influential and leadership roles within DRCOG to provide a leading voice on important regional issues.

The Metro Vision plan describes the future extent of urban development and regional support for efficient use of available land and existing and planned infrastructure, especially on the edges of the metro area. The city will continue to develop ongoing population and employment forecasts to support capital planning and funding programs and use these forecasts to assess the city's appropriate share of regional growth under Metro Vision.

Urban Growth Area

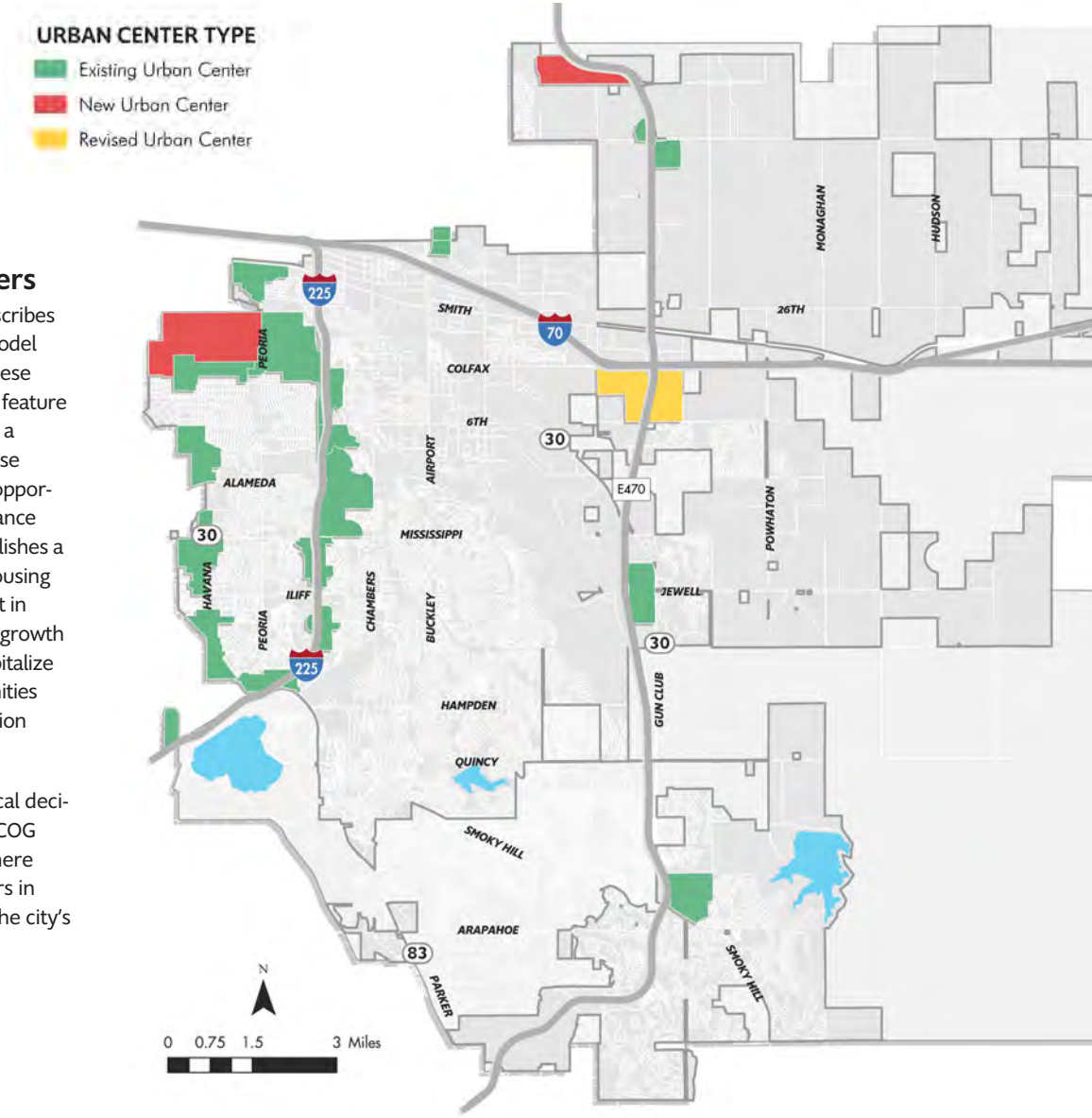
To implement this regional growth policy, DRCOG developed the Urban Growth Boundary/Area (UGB/A) program which periodically allocates growth area to all municipalities and counties in the region. Local jurisdictions designate and manage the specific location of their allocations.

Aurora's undeveloped area is vast, including thousands of acres stretching from Denver International Airport and the Colorado Air and Space Port (formerly Front Range Airport) to Douglas County. The sequence and timing of development of this area is unpredictable, so Aurora has chosen to identify areas of future growth and designate portions of the city's allocation of development under the UGB/A program. In Aurora, this allocation is distributed among nine subareas and is used by property owners on a first-come, first-served basis. The urban growth allocation in the UGA is only considered to have been used when land is subdivided or new construction has occurred.

Designated Urban Centers

DRCOG's Metro Vision plan also describes the "urban centers" concept as a model for healthy, livable communities. These designated centers are intended to feature a multimodal travel network within a mixed-use, urban district with diverse housing, employment and service opportunities accessible without sole reliance on automobiles. Metro Vision establishes a goal of having 25 percent of new housing and 50 percent of new employment in urban centers by 2040. By focusing growth into strategic areas, the city can capitalize on valuable development opportunities and build upon existing transportation networks and infrastructure.

Urban centers are identified by local decision-makers and submitted to DRCOG for formal review and approval. There are currently 18 designated centers in Aurora. The adjacent map shows the city's designated urban centers.

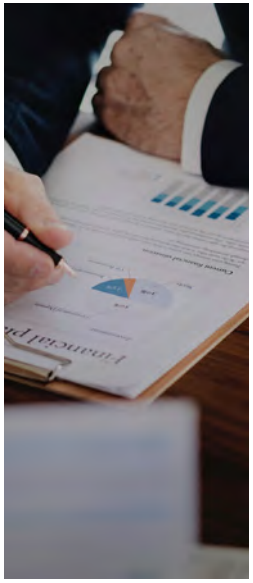


City Connections

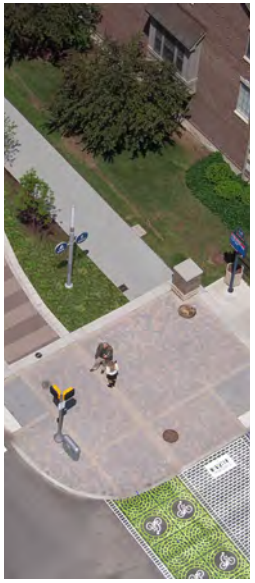
To create great places in Aurora, it is critical that these systems be well planned and developed.

Chapter 4 identifies the different placetypes that define the development pattern of Aurora. Public systems and networks, including multimodal transportation, parks and open space and water utilities (water, wastewater and stormwater), connect these placetypes. Cultural resources, including libraries, public art and art venues, connect the community through shared culture and pride. To create great places in Aurora, it is critical that these systems be well planned and developed.

PUBLIC SYSTEMS



Economic Development System (page 56)



Transportation and Mobility System (page 66)

Water, Wastewater and Stormwater Systems (page 78)

Parks, Trails, Recreation, and Open Space System (page 82)

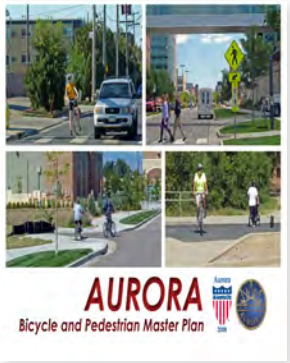
Arts and Cultural Resources System (page 84)

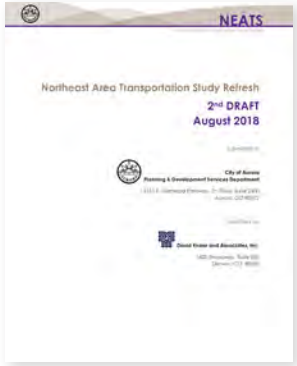
PREVIOUSLY ADOPTED OR COMPLETED PLANS AND STUDIES

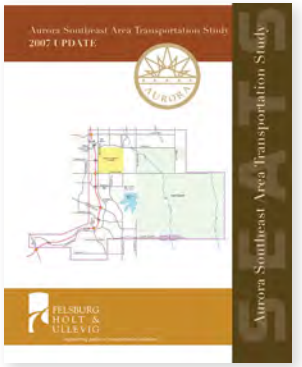
Over the past 20 years, the city has commissioned a number of studies and plans that support city goals and objectives. When projects are proposed, these documents should be referenced alongside this plan when relevant and appropriate.

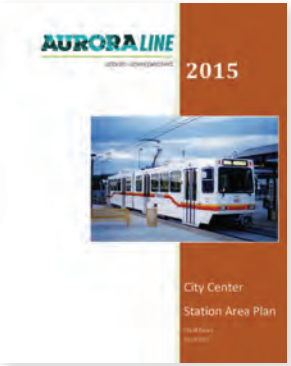
The following plans are adopted by reference in the Aurora Places Plan.

- Station Area Plans
- Urban Renewal Plans
- Westerly Creek Village Community Plan, 2003
- Public Art Master Plan, A Vision for the Future, 2009
- Northeast Area Transportation Study (NEATS) Refresh, 2018
- Southeast Area Transportation Study (SEATS), 2007
- Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan, to be updated in 2019









Economic Development System

Building a vibrant, successful local economy is a shared effort and economic development embodies this pursuit.

Economic growth is spurred by all businesses, residents and organizations that bring money into the city of Aurora. Any and all contributors to the economy share resources both intentionally and unintentionally to prosper individually and holistically as a city. As such, they all must work together to create a fully functional economic development system.

Partners and Partnerships

Building a vibrant, successful local economy is a shared effort and economic development embodies this pursuit. More jobs and more investment within a community means more opportunities and increased choices. Economic development practices are growing more comprehensive. It is not only about attracting corporate headquarters, but addressing the growth and expansion needs of existing businesses, engaging with firms across the globe, encouraging entrepreneurship and small business development, supporting the surrounding community as a place for employees and companies to call home, and aligning education and training to meet current and future workforce trends.

Partners with important roles to play in Aurora's economic growth and success include:

- Adams County Economic Development (ACED)
- Adams County Workforce and Business Center
- Arapahoe/Douglas Works! Workforce Development Center
- Aurora Chamber of Commerce
- Aurora Economic Development Council (AEDC)
- Aurora Public Schools
- Aurora-South Metro Small Business Development Center (SBDC)
- Aurora Urban Renewal Authority (AURA)
- City of Aurora
- Colorado Office of Economic Development and International Trade (OEDIT)
- Community College of Aurora and other higher education providers
- Major local employers and institutions, including Buckley AFB and Anschutz Medical Campus
- Public School Districts
- U.S. Small Business Administration
- Visit Aurora

Small Business Development and Entrepreneurship

The SBDC's mission is to help existing and new businesses grow and prosper.

The Aurora Municipal Center is home to the Aurora-South Metro Small Business Development Center (SBDC). The center is one of 14 SBDCs statewide, and serves not only Aurora, but also all of Arapahoe County, portions of Douglas County and southern parts of Jefferson and Adams counties.

The SBDC's mission is to help existing and new businesses grow and prosper. The center offers high-quality, confidential and no-cost, one-on-one consulting with business experts, niche programs and free or low-cost business workshops. The city of Aurora serves as host to the SBDC, offering services five days a week during regular business hours. Additionally, several programs are offered either during the evening or on weekends. In addition to the main office at the Aurora Municipal Center, the Aurora-South Metro SBDC has satellite offices at Innovation Pavilion in Centennial and the Englewood Civic Center.

The SBDC systematically tracks its quality of service through a variety of methods, including citizen evaluations after each consulting session and workshop and evaluating economic impact in terms of jobs created, jobs retained and business starts. Capital formation, contracts awarded, and the involvement with cluster industries like retail, restaurant, energy and bioscience also provide measurement metrics for SBDC.

Aurora uses the resources provided by the SBDC to leverage small business development and expansion and foster vitality in the development of all placetypes.

Redevelopment and Reinvestment

Like many communities that developed substantially since the mid-20th century, Aurora's aging neighborhoods and commercial centers face a growing need for revitalization. Housing, commercial buildings, infrastructure and public facilities are aging and in need of repair or replacement to return those areas to a place of vibrancy and desirability. While most of this reinvestment will come from the private sector, the city has an active role to play in planning, initiating and supporting reinvestment in key areas and projects.

Urban Renewal

This tool is intended to help guide public and private investment toward catalytic development projects.

Urban Renewal is one tool that has been used to address blighted areas by initiating and supporting private reinvestment and redevelopment of aging and obsolete properties and returning them to an active, revenue-generating space. The City of Aurora established the Aurora Urban Renewal Authority to pursue and facilitate redevelopment of blighted and strategically located properties within the city. The authority serves as a governmental entity under state law separate from the city of Aurora. While being a legal entity separate from the city, the authority's board of directors is primarily comprised of the mayor and city council members. Three additional members representing the school districts, county governments and other property taxing entities will likely join the board in the near future to bring it into compliance with current state law.

The authority's mission is to plan for, recruit, promote and support development and redevelopment projects that revitalize blighted, strategic and economically challenged areas, and provide technical assistance and financial resources to make projects viable. Each area has a plan that offers a vision and framework for future development and includes mechanisms by which the Authority will achieve high priority goals, including:

- Pursuit of higher density development and redevelopment within designated TOD areas and urban centers
- Pursuit of redevelopment and revitalization projects within the oldest sections of Aurora
- Enhancement of funding capabilities to better assist small-site, infill development and neighborhood supporting businesses in economically challenged neighborhoods

The authority's primary means of meeting these goals is through the creation of urban renewal and tax increment areas that generate tax increments resulting from increased property tax, sales tax and other local taxes generated from redevelopment activity. As a result of tax increment revenue generation, significant funding can be made available to provide needed public improvements and to help make projects financially viable to the public sector by helping close financial gaps.

Urban renewal areas have been identified and prioritized, with plans to address land use, transportation, infrastructure, recreational facilities and urban design. They are intended to help guide public and private investment toward catalytic development projects. New areas may be established as needs and opportunities arise.

Federally Designed Investment Zones

Aurora is home to a number of federally-designed investment zones under the Enterprise Zone, Foreign Trade Zone, and Opportunity Zones programs. While these are federal programs, the benefits are intended to support local communities, like Aurora. The purpose of these zones is to encourage private investment and job creation.

While the specific function and benefits from these zones are unique to each program, generally these zones aim to attract private investment into targeted areas by offering some type of tax incentive. The zones offer tax credits, deferrals or other benefits to private investors who commit to funding employment growth, real estate projects or infrastructure improvements.

Employment

A skilled and educated workforce is critical to economic growth.

The majority of Aurora's eligible workers leave the city every day to work in another community. Community outreach and research determined that Aurora companies, as well as those outside the city, note that the local skilled workforce does not fully match their evolving business needs. A skilled and educated workforce is critical to economic growth, necessary to attract large-scale, well-paying employers and imperative to diversifying our economy. Significant efforts must be made to expand the city's workforce and retain at least a portion of its existing workers by leveraging its existing businesses, strong industries and other assets.

Targeted Industries

The city and its partners work to attract and expand key industries in order to broaden and deepen the diverse local economy. These businesses may be growth industries with a strong long-term outlook, complementary or support industries to existing job sectors, or emerging industries in which Aurora offers a competitive advantage. However, Aurora's employment is diverse, and opportunities in other sectors will be pursued as well. Targeted industries include:

- Advanced manufacturing
- Aerospace and defense
- Bioscience
- Creative industries
- Healthcare
- Hospitality
- Energy
- Transportation and logistics

Retail Strategy

A robust local retail economy is especially important in a community like Aurora, which receives over half of its revenue from sales and use taxes. Changing consumer preferences, competition from adjacent communities, and continued growth in online shopping will continue to reshape the local retail environment. Identifying growth sectors, marketing the city to the retail community, keeping up with industry trends and encouraging reinvestment in aging retail destinations are part of the city's retail strategy and need to be supported.

The retail sector is constantly evolving. The continued growth of online commerce is reshaping how people shop, with direct impacts on brick-and-mortar stores and the city's tax revenue. Retailers are rethinking the role of their physical stores and in many cases decreasing their footprints and seamlessly connecting their stores with their online services.

As an approach, placemaking adds value to the retail environment. Increasingly, consumers are seeking diverse experiences as part of their shopping preferences, not simply a one-store-and-done trip. Aurora can offer places with unique identity and at various scales–from a bustling "downtown" experience to a neighborhood center that serves as a true gathering place for area residents. Mixing shopping with housing, entertainment, dining, recreation, services, events and employment in a comfortable, safe and conveniently accessible place is a strategy that will draw and keep customers in Aurora.

Education and Workforce Development

An educated and talented workforce is a critical asset to Aurora and essential to a growing local economy.

This talent can either be acquired by attracting educated and trained residents to relocate to Aurora, or it can be "home-grown" by equipping local residents with the skills and certifications needed to compete for stable and well-paying jobs. Aurora's strategy is to pursue both opportunities.

A strong local workforce provides two-fold benefits to the community. A stable and well-paying job is foundational to a family's ability to provide for itself. Many positions in the competitive and changing economy over the next two decades will require both a solid educational foundation and job-specific skills, training or certifications. If residents are able to access appropriate education and training locally, they will be well-equipped to meet the needs of the local job market, and in turn, meet the needs of their own family to rent or purchase a home, purchase everyday goods and services, and provide a stable and comfortable lifestyle.

Secondly, employers need qualified and skilled employees to fill jobs. The strength and stability of the local economy is in large part built upon a company's ability to acquire and retain talented employees to succeed and grow in their industry. Additionally, firms seeking to relocate or expand their operations will weigh their location decisions based in large part on the availability and readiness of the workforce pool available to them in a community.

Education

A strong education system, from K-12 through higher education and career training, is essential to creating a steady and continuous pipeline of talent to local employers and providing opportunities for Aurora residents to earn and maintain stable and well-paying jobs.

Aurora is served with a continuum of education and training providers. The majority of Aurora is served by Aurora Public Schools and Cherry Creek School District, while small portions of the city fall within the Brighton, Bennett and Douglas County school districts. The Aurora and Cherry Creek districts operate K-12 schools, as well as preschool, charter, magnet, vocational, gifted and talented schools and other support programs. The districts emphasize career and college readiness through concurrent credit courses with the Community College of Aurora and other local colleges, career and technical education opportunities and college preparation resources.

Aurora is also well-served by a variety of higher education institutions. The University of Colorado Anschutz Medical Campus, Pima Medical Institute and Concorde Career College offer a spectrum of medical education and health care training programs. The Community College of Aurora offers a diversity of degree programs at two campuses and online. Pickens Technical College provides classes in variety of fields, including engineering and technology, health, transportation, business technologies and human services. Both CCA and Pickens have associations with Aurora's school districts to provide concurrent education and joint programs.

Aurora is also home to Platt College, Colorado Technical University South Denver Campus and the Ecotech Institute, the first college entirely focused on preparing graduates for careers in the fields of renewable energy and energy efficiency, and other educational institutions.

Workforce Development

Aurora is served by the Arapahoe/Douglas Works! workforce center and the Adams County Workforce and Business Center. Both offer a variety of free services to individual job seekers, including those looking for training or retraining, new employment and employment counseling. Youth programs offer assistance with obtaining a high school diploma or GED, training and support services through the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act. The centers also provide services for employers seeking skilled and trained employees through hiring events, job listings, and connecting employees with training and certification programs.

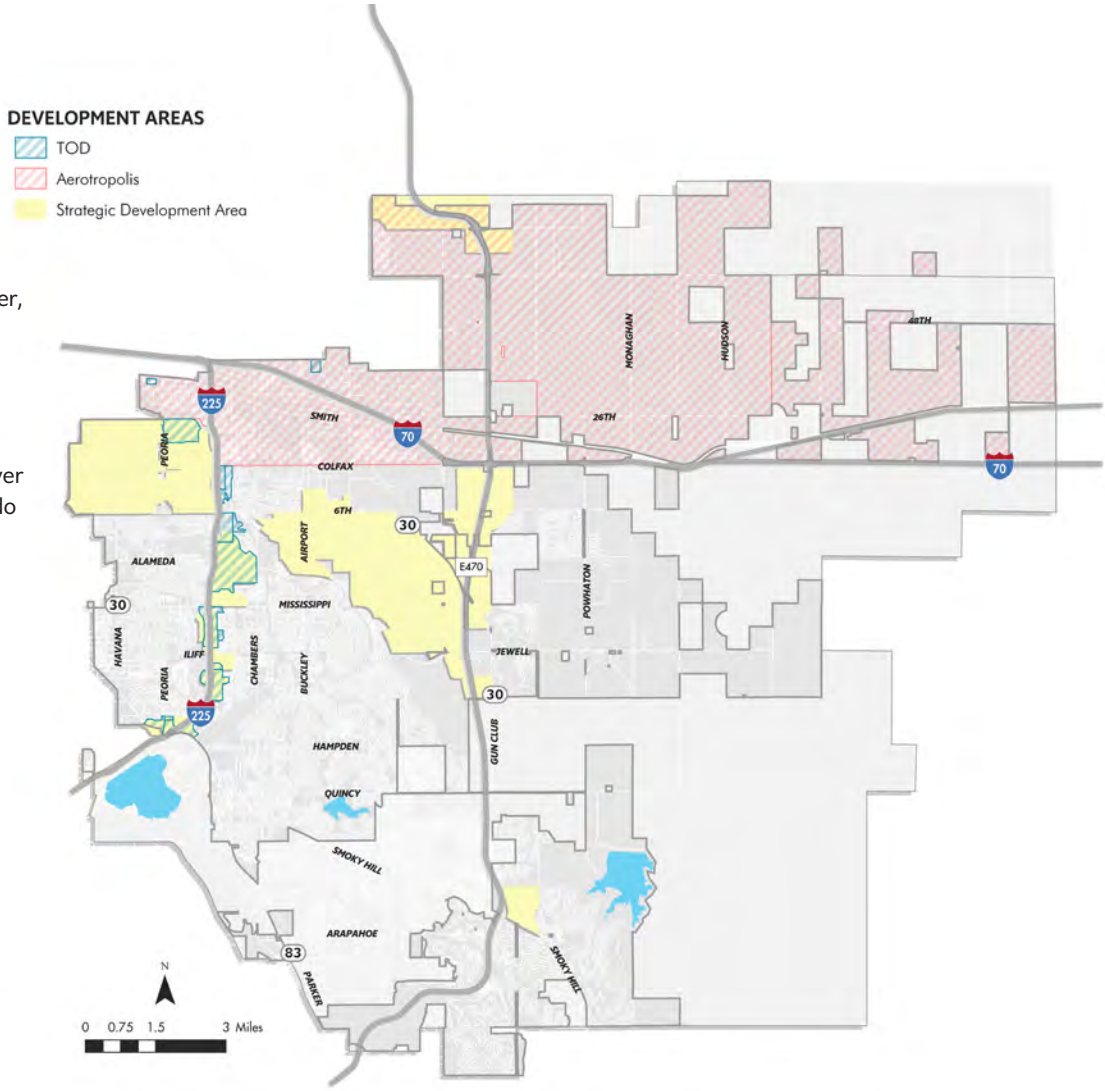
The city cooperates on programs with all these agencies and supports cooperative efforts that improve the economic well-being of Aurora and its residents.

STRATEGIC DEVELOPMENT AREAS

While the city provides services and encourages investment and job creation across the community, Aurora Places identifies locations within Aurora that have been identified as particularly suitable for significant investment or needing ongoing focus and intervention. Each has its own unique conditions, opportunities and challenges to be addressed through a set of strategies specific to the area. Strategic areas include:

- Urban Districts placetypes (City Center, Anschutz/Fitzsimons, I-225/Parker/Havana, Southlands, I-70/E-470, and Gaylord/Far North E-470)
- Innovation Districts placetypes
- Aerotropolis area supported by Denver International Airport and the Colorado Air and Space Port (formerly Front Range Airport)
- Station area transit-oriented development
- Original Aurora, including the Arts District and Colfax Avenue corridor
- Buckley Air Force Base and nearby employment areas

These strategic areas often have additional plans, including station area, neighborhood, transportation or urban renewal plans that outline strategies specific to that area.



Conceptual Rendering of the Space Port
Courtesy HDR in association with Luis Vidal + Architects

AEROTROPOLIS

Aurora's close proximity to the Denver International Airport (DEN), one of the busiest and fastest growing airports in the country, and several main transportation corridors in Colorado, positions it to take advantage of a key opportunity in the region. Furthermore, the future Colorado Air and Space Port (formerly Front Range Airport) offers even more opportunities for transportation, research and development. An aerotropolis, which includes thousands of acres of land on and around DEN in multiple jurisdictions, including Aurora, will demonstrate how collaborative, responsible development enhances Aurora's ability to compete for world-class companies who will create jobs, invest in the community and strengthen the economy.

An aerotropolis is a dynamic, urban place in which the layout, infrastructure, and economy center around the airports. An aerotropolis is more than any single development, it is largely characterized by a collection of transportation-linked businesses and supporting industrial and commercial development. However, appropriately-located residential, retail and restaurants will also be included.

Airport-centered development seeks to take advantage of the connectivity and synergy created by the people and industries in the area. Within its boundaries, it will deliver the opportunity for innovation to flourish, drive a forward-looking strategy for important planning, like infrastructure and transportation, and bring together the public and private sectors to grow existing and new industries.

Best Practices

- Develop cooperative partnerships between the public and private sectors, ensuring strategic planning and development.
- Focus on prioritized infrastructure and transportation opportunities that will benefit the area's development..
- Leverage key anchor assets within the aerotropolis' influence areas that are already spurring activity and prioritize catalytic projects that will do the same.
- Continue to support efforts related to the Colorado Air and Space Port. Explore transportation, employment and development opportunities related to the establishment of this unique facility.
- Balance job creation with residential, commercial services and entertainment uses in the area.

Photographs provided courtesy of Denver International Airport.

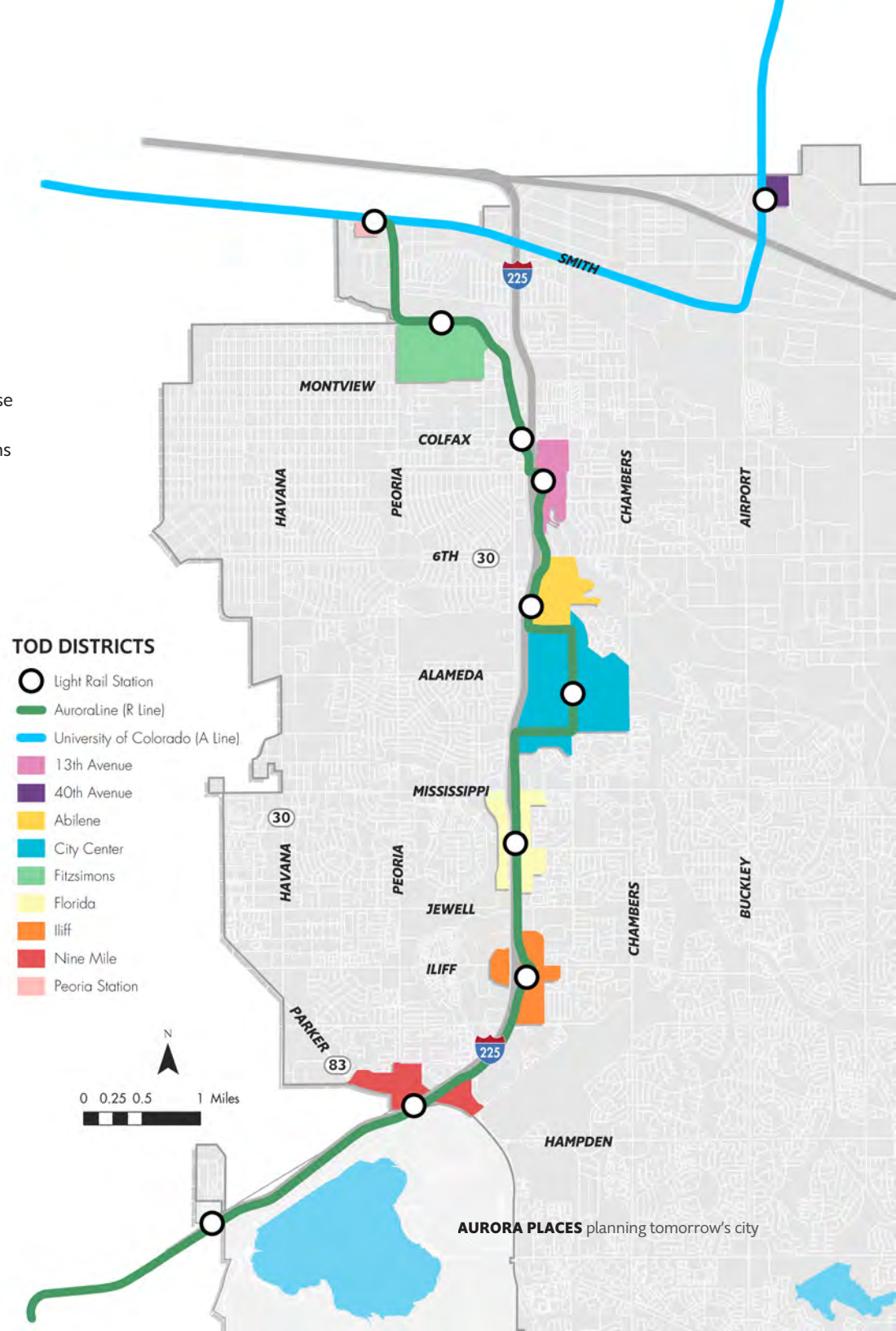
TRANSIT-ORIENTED DEVELOPMENT (TOD)

The Aurora Line, RTD's R Line, opened service in early 2017, connecting nine stations from Nine Mile Station in the southwest to Peoria Station in the northwest. Two stations on the University of Colorado A Line are located in Aurora, connecting to Downtown Denver and Denver International Airport. These station areas represent a unique and valuable opportunity for significant investment surrounding transit.

Beginning in 2006, the city initiated planning for the light rail stations in anticipation of transit service and interest from the private sector. These plans are intended to promote TOD by identifying opportunities for compact, mixed-use development that is transit-supportive and to develop public-private strategies to implement a shared vision.

While the plans offer a vision and land use framework that is powerful yet flexible, these plans may be updated as conditions change or opportunities materialize. Adopted station area plans include:

- Nine Mile Station Area Plan
- Iliff Station Area Plan
- Florida Station Area Plan
- Fitzsimons Station Area Plan
- City Center Station Area Plan
- Abilene Station Area Plan
- 40th Avenue and Airport Boulevard Gateway Station Area Plan
- 13th Avenue and Fitzsimons-Colfax Station Area Plan
- Peoria Station Area Plan



This mixed-use, pedestrian-oriented development type is a compact, walkable and bikeable area positioned around a transit station. They focus on providing visibility and accessibility to transit users and connecting them to developments near the transit center. Although varying in size and intensity, this overlay contains higher residential densities; niche retail, dining, and entertainment opportunities; office spaces and service uses; and gathering spaces. Although the mix, intensity, and makeup of uses in this overlay may vary, the intent is to create a condensed mixed-use area that provides a place for urban living, employment and necessary and convenient access to transit, all in a pedestrian-friendly environment.

Transit-Oriented Development (TOD) best practices include:

- Include areas that are within reasonable walking distance (within ½ mile) of transit stations that also include high-quality cyclist connections.
- Provide density and intensity of development that promotes high levels of activity and transit ridership and is appropriate in relation to Aurora's evolving real estate market.
- Integrate public art and creative architecture so that transit-oriented developments have a unique characters.
- Ensure an appropriate mix of housing, employment, entertainment and services focused around gathering places, such as a central plaza or main street.
- Confirm development in TOD areas to the adopted station area plans.

Transportation and Mobility System

TRANSPORTATION FRAMEWORK PLAN

An efficient, safe and multimodal transportation system is essential for the livability and success of the city.

The transportation and mobility system made up of roadways, transitways, and bicycle and pedestrian facilities and programs, is a critical and highly visible infrastructure element that shapes and connects Aurora's places. It determines how we move back and forth from home to our daily activities and how particular areas or districts are experienced. An efficient, safe and multimodal transportation system is essential for the livability and success of the city.

The city actively plans maintenance and improvements to Aurora's growing mobility network. These plans are updated periodically and new plans are created to address specific needs.

The city of Aurora has adopted, accepted or completed the following transportation and mobility plans and studies. Please refer to these resources for additional system detail beyond which is represented in this section.

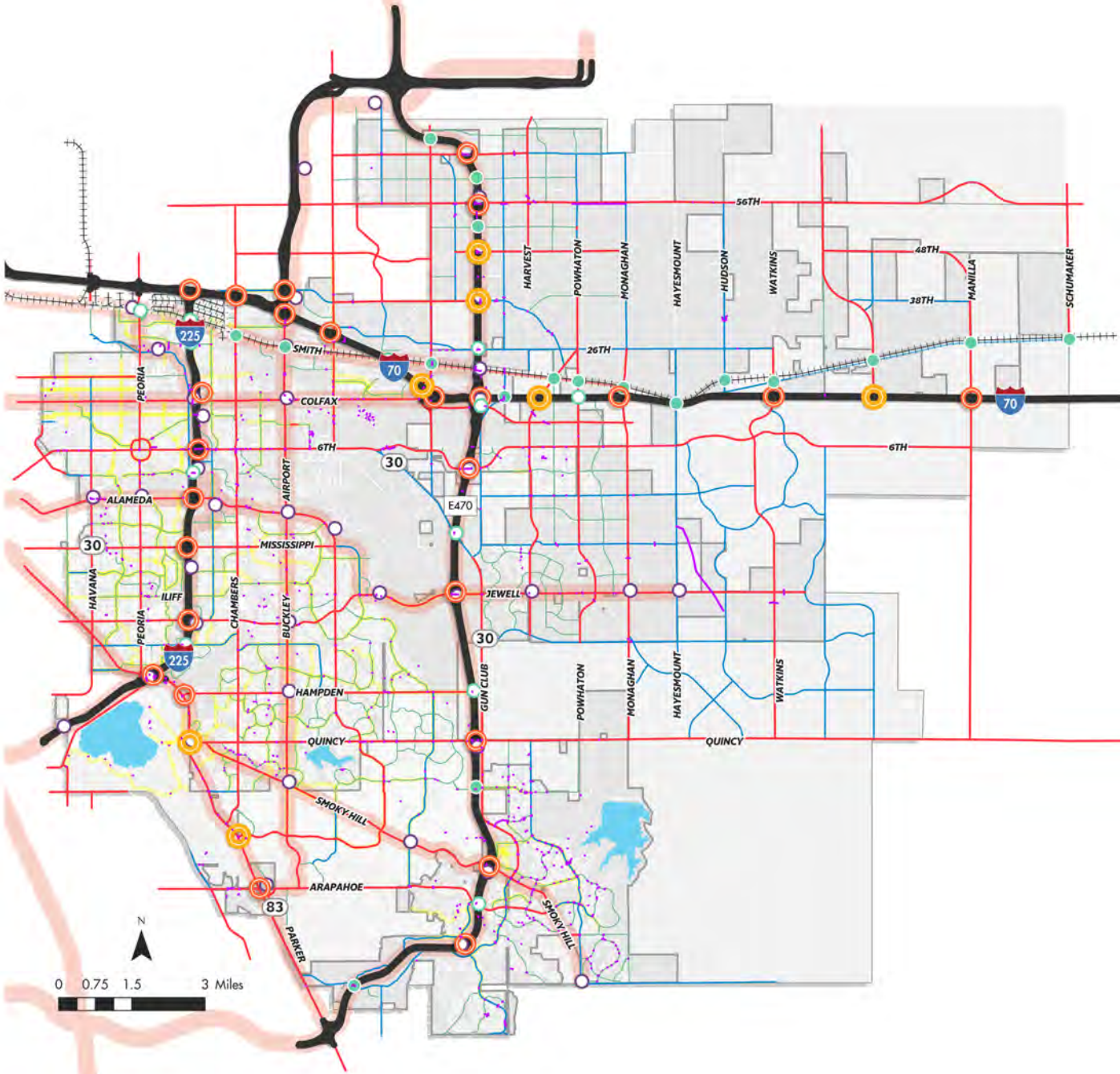
- Northeast Area Transportation Study (NEATS), updated 2018
- Southeast Area Transportation Study (SEATS), 2007
- Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan, 2012
- Northwest Aurora Mobility Study, 2018
- Fitzsimons Area Wide Multi-Modal Transportation Study
- 2009 Parker Road Corridor Study
- South Aurora Regional Improvement Authority (SARIA) Plan and Program, 2018
- Street Construction Priority Program
- Aerotropolis Regional Transportation Authority, 2018
- Aurora Regional Transportation Authority Plan, 2018

The city also collaborates with outside agencies, like CDOT, RTD, DRCOG and surrounding municipalities, on various planning and infrastructure projects. The resulting plans and policies have not been formally adopted by the city, but do have value as reference resources.

Freight System

Aurora has designated truck routes for large delivery trucks going through the city to local destinations or landfills, as well as through-haul traffic. With the potential for a significant increase in freight traffic due to the increasing ecommerce activities, including major fulfillment centers and home/business delivery services, appropriate measures and controls should be undertaken for freight transportation. Areas within the Aerotropolis overlay or Industry Hub placetype should prioritize a safe, efficient freight system.

TRANSPORTATION FRAMEWORK



ROADWAY HIERARCHY & INTERCHANGES

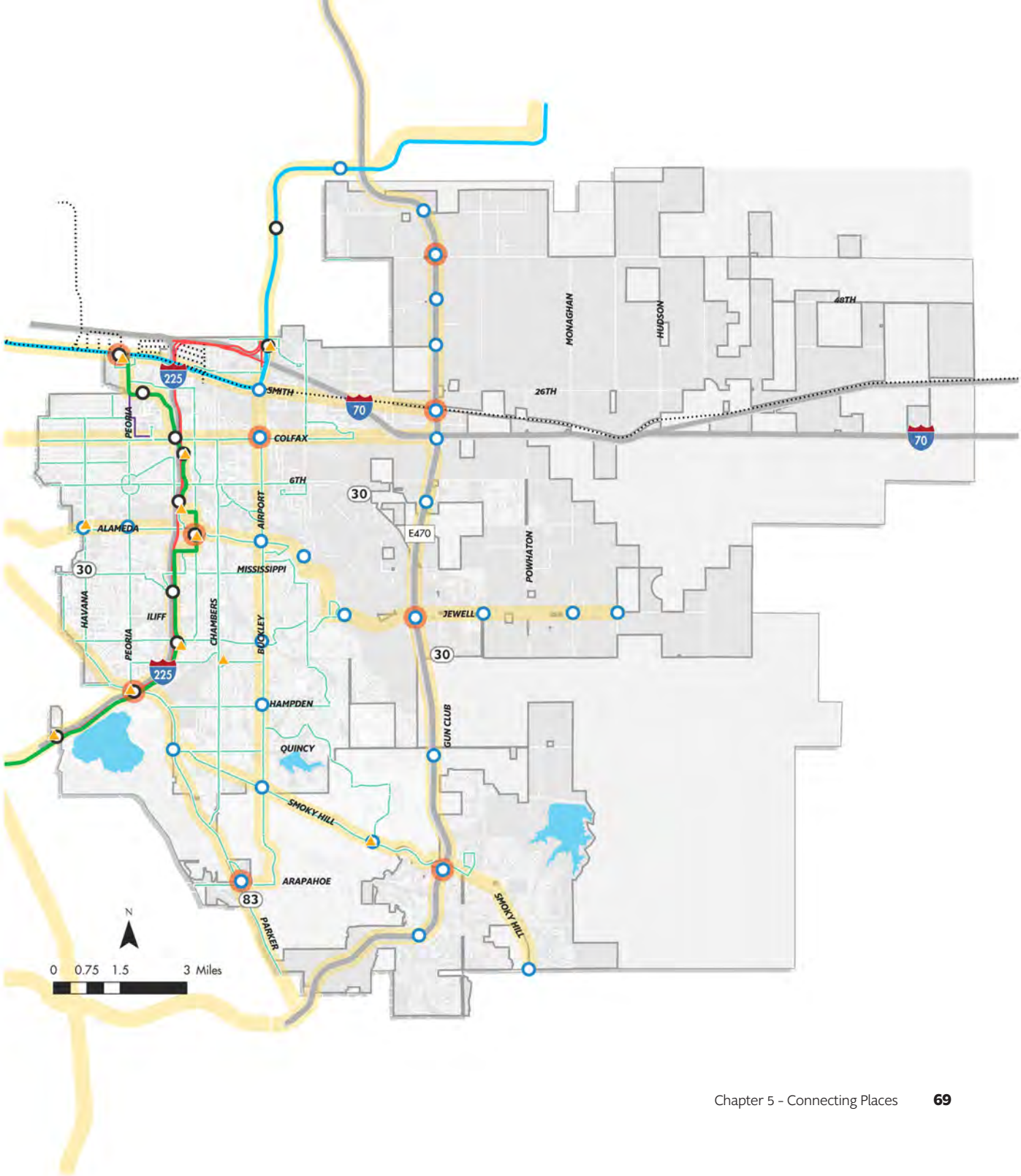
- Existing Grade Separation
- Future Grade Separation
- Existing Interchange
- Future Interchange
- Transit Stations
- Highway
- Major Arterial
- Minor Arterial
- Collector
- Primary Bike Routes
- Grade Separated Bike Crossing
- Existing/Future High Frequency Transit Corridors
- Railroads

TRANSIT SYSTEM

The Regional Transportation District (RTD) is the public agency that provides public transportation services and delivers transit infrastructure to the region. The University of Colorado A Line offers commuter rail transit service between Denver International Airport and Denver Union Station, connecting via two stations in Aurora. The Aurora Line, or R Line, offers light rail transit service between Peoria Station and Dayton Station within Aurora, with continuing service to Lincoln Station in Lone Tree. The existing H Line between downtown Denver and Nine Mile Station was also extended to Florida Station in Aurora.

With the opening of these lines, Aurora has achieved significant improvements in transit mobility, accessibility and regional connectivity. In addition, RTD has developed a comprehensive transit service plan to realign many existing bus routes and add new ones that will enhance access and connections to the rail stations. These bus service improvements will maximize travel benefits provided by the rail transit services. The city will continue to work with RTD to identify various transit improvements for bus services along the Colfax Avenue corridor and with other stakeholders on other significant transit corridors.

TRANSIT SYSTEM



First and Last Mile Solutions

The city will work with its partners to improve access within areas surrounding transit stations. These "first and last mile" solutions may include enhanced bicycle or pedestrian connections, park-and-ride facilities, circulator shuttles, bikeshare and rideshare, and new technologies, like autonomous or connected vehicles.

Transit service to neighborhoods may be provided through use of neighborhood shuttles or smaller community vehicles to reduce walking distance to stations and high-frequency transit corridors. Local transit services may transition from fixed routes to flexible, on-demand routes using autonomous vehicles or ride-hailing services. Partnership arrangements or the private sector may provide such services.

Priority Tranist Corridors and Mobility Hubs

Priority transit corridors will be serviced by a high frequency transit (HFT) network. This network will consist of multiple features that may include fixed guideway, dedicated right-of-way, frequent all-day or extended hours service, enhanced station amenities and convenient payment options.

HFT lines will provide efficient service at a relatively affordable cost, serve developable land and encourage transit-oriented development. These corridors should connect Urban Districts, Innovation Districts and other placetypes. The city should acquire rights-of-way in new developments as applications for development plans are reviewed and approved by the city. HFT corridors have been identified to serve current and future neighborhoods and employment centers, to connect to regional networks and to reduce travel time.

To support multimodal travel, reduce dependence on the automobile, and to create successful places, mobility hubs will be identified throughout the city located in high intensity, vibrant, mixed-use transit-oriented developments. These hubs will have higher densities, multiple transit lines, ridesharing, bike sharing, secured bike parking and enhanced pedestrian facilities. These locations should be integrated into Urban Districts, Innovation Districts and the most urban examples of TOD. The specific locations of individual mobility hubs will be further refined and identified in the sub-area planning and development processes.

COMPLETE STREETS

Complete streets enhance Aurora's quality of life over the long-term with a well-balanced and connected transportation system

While all placetypes benefit from a safe, walkable and connected street network, complete streets are a defining and critical feature in Urban Districts, Transit-Oriented Development areas, and other placetypes. Complete streets are designed and operated to enable safe access for all users, including pedestrians, bicyclists, motorists and transit riders of all ages and abilities. These complete streets should be designed according to the city's adopted urban street standards and other context-sensitive designs. These standards provide safe, accessible, livable and complete street spaces for all users, with a primary focus on pedestrians.

A "complete streets" approach helps to create exceptional places, enhance residents' quality of life, create better economic value for the city and provide safe and accessible streets for all users. Complete streets enhance Aurora's quality of life over the long-term with a well-balanced and connected transportation system that creates better economic value and connected, mixed-use development patterns. It also improves public health and safety, equity and excellence in urban design and community characters. Complete streets are especially critical within Urban Districts, Innovation Districts, TOD areas and other mixed-use districts that promote the highest mix of uses and mobility options.

BICYCLE AND PEDESTRIAN SYSTEM

Priority areas for pedestrians and bicyclists include Urban Districts or other mixed-use placetypes, as well as areas surrounding and within one-half mile of transit stations.

Aurora developed a new Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan in 2012. The focus of the plan is to accommodate and encourage bicycling and walking as viable and desirable transportation modes in the city. The plan seeks to complement and extend the reach of the city's extensive and well-used off-street trail network by further establishing a network of on-street bicycle facilities. The plan's primary goal is to create a community in which residents safely and conveniently bike throughout the city for recreation, shopping and commuting.

Bicycle and Pedestrian Network

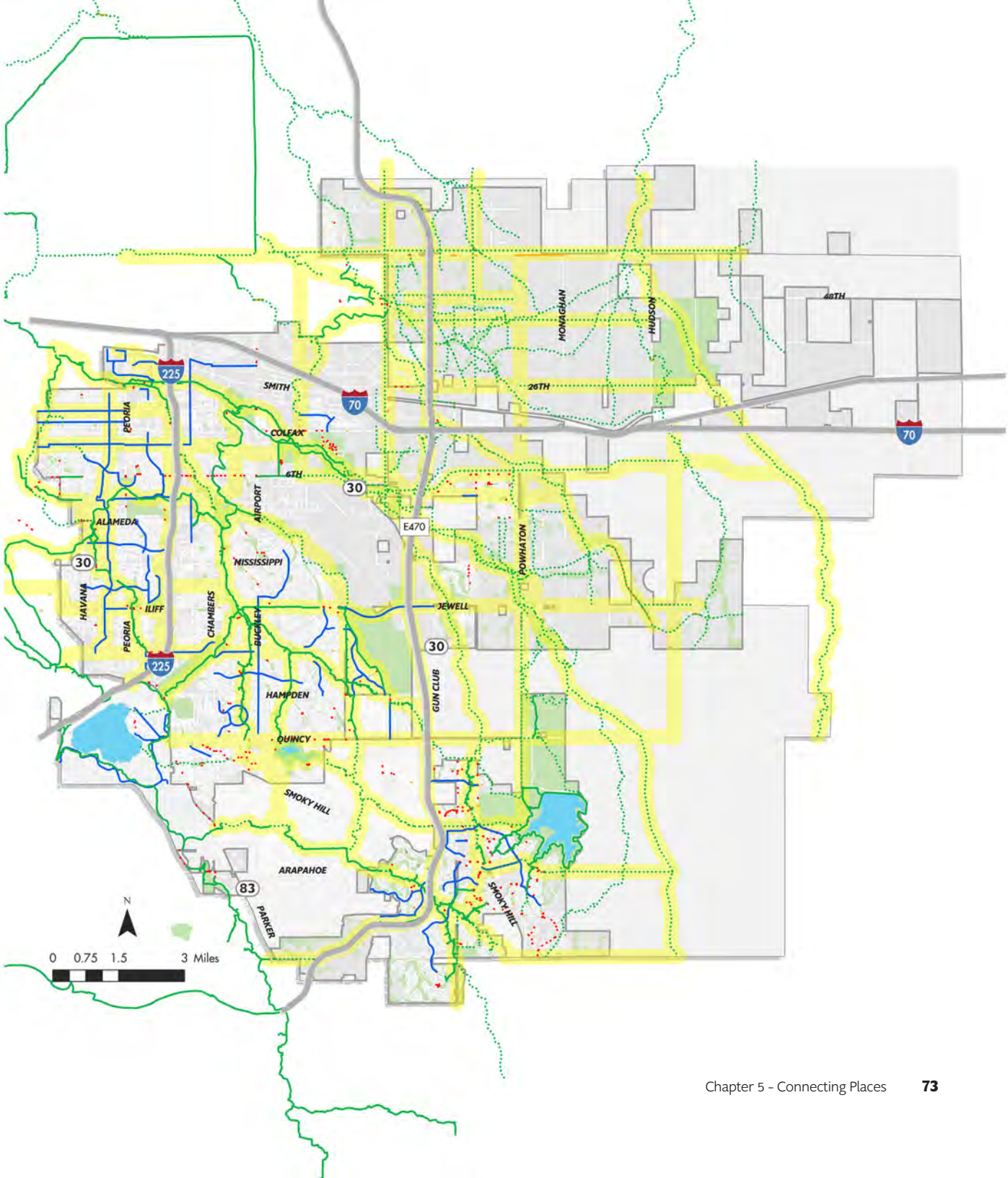
A long-distance, low-stress, high-comfort bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure network separates users from motor vehicles. This may include but is not limited to separated bike lanes, off-street trails and neighborhood boulevards that prioritize bike and pedestrian travel. The city works closely with its partners to ensure the local network connects with regional bicycle and trail routes and facilities.

Pedestrian Priority Areas

Areas with the highest level of pedestrian traffic should be identified and designed with this purpose in mind. Priority areas for pedestrian may include Urban Districts or other mixed-use placetypes, as well as areas surrounding and within one-half mile of transit stations. Commercial centers and other activity centers should be designed pedestrian friendly as well.

The city has adopted special street standards for urban districts and transit-oriented development. These areas typically feature narrow travel lanes for automobile traffic, engineered for low maximum and turning speeds. Wide sidewalks are featured, including a frontage zone, through zone, street furniture zone and enhancement/buffer zone. Pedestrian crossing locations should feature designs that make them as short and comfortable as possible. Vehicle loading and access to off-street parking should be located elsewhere to limit interference with street frontage pedestrian areas.

BICYCLE AND PEDESTRIAN SYSTEM



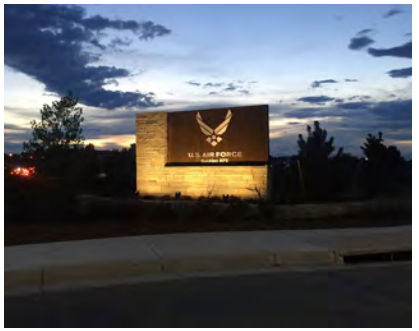
AIRPORT INFLUENCE DISTRICTS

Growth and development in Aurora is significantly shaped by the location and operation of four airports.

These include Denver International Airport, Buckley Air Force Base and the two general aviation facilities, the Colorado Air and Space Port (formerly Front Range Airport) and Centennial Airport. Each airport has an Airport Influence District that reflects operations specific to that airport and which may prohibit or limit certain types of development. Planning and zoning tools are implemented to assure that development proposed around airports is compatible with airport operations and reduces environmental impacts.

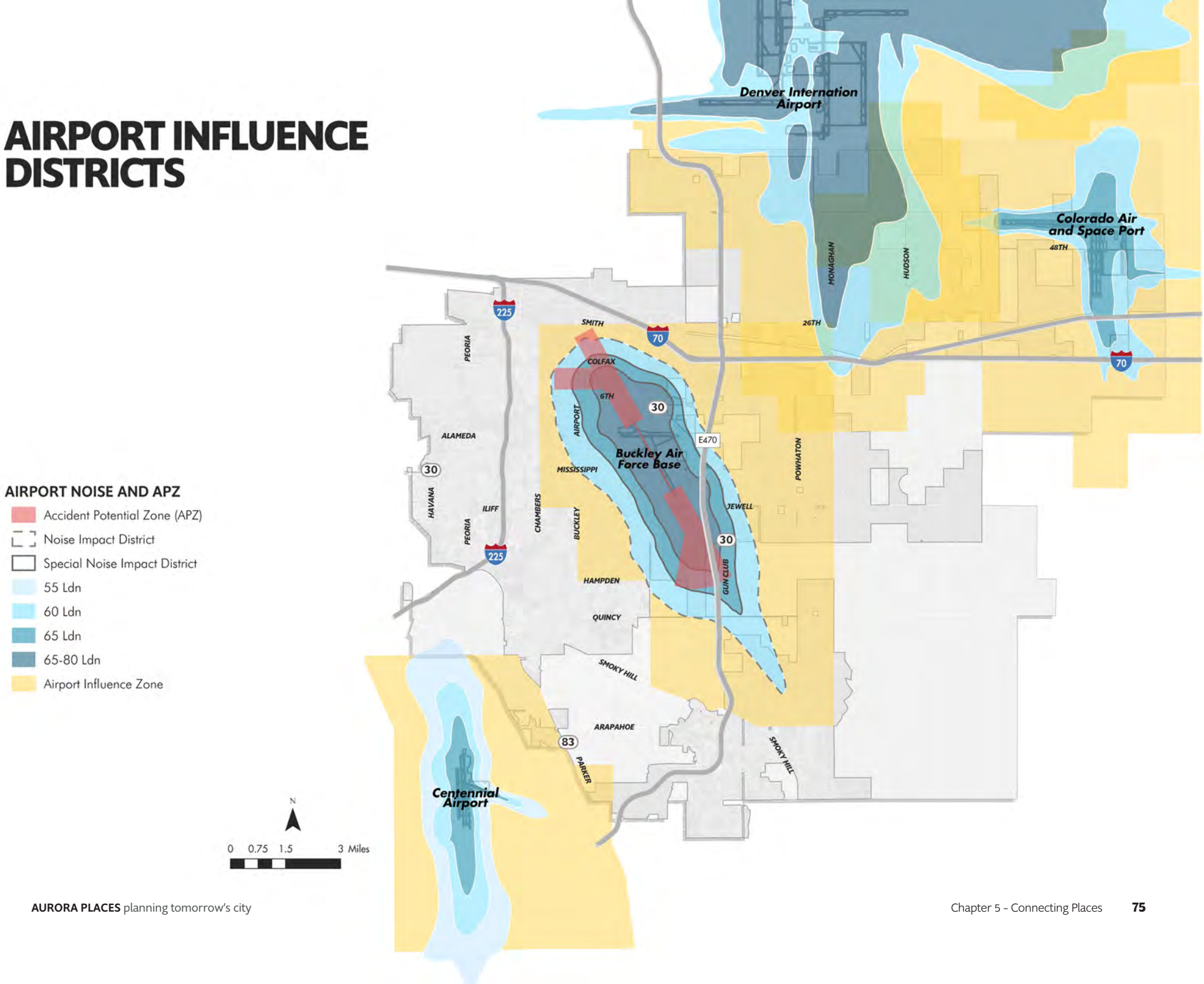
The city has taken a proactive approach to reduce impacts from aircraft noise by implementing zoning restrictions that are more protective than federal standards. Although federal standards specify that residential uses are compatible with the 60 day-night average sound level (DNL) for Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) airports and the 65 DNL noise contour for Department of Defense airports, Aurora requires that compatible residential uses only be constructed with noise mitigation in the 55 DNL contour. In addition, the city continues to work closely with Buckley Air Force Base to ensure proposed land uses are compatible with the Accident Potential Zone.

The zoning ordinance defines various areas subject to development restrictions because of their proximity to airport noise corridors. The following map illustrates airport noise contours for the airports located in and around Aurora, as well as the Accident Potential Zones near Buckley Air Force Base.



Bottom photograph provided courtesy of Denver International Airport.

AIRPORT INFLUENCE DISTRICTS



INNOVATIONS AND EMERGING TRENDS AND TECHNOLOGIES

Aurora should prepare for an entirely new era in transportation.

Artificial intelligence and recent innovations in information and communication technologies will significantly impact transportation and travel infrastructure. Aurora should prepare for an entirely new era in transportation. The city should be a regional and national leader in exploring partnership opportunities for potential pilot projects involving autonomous and connected vehicles, data sharing, and other related applied-technology initiatives.

Growth of Shared Mobility

Shared mobility is a collection of transportation services that are shared among users, including public transit, taxis and limos, bike sharing, ridesharing, ride-sourcing companies like Uber and Lyft, shuttle services and commercial delivery services. These services provide flexible transportation options on demand. Recent advancements in electronic and wireless technologies have made mobility easier and more efficient. These new services could transform Aurora's transportation environment by providing new travel options, offering a broader array of mobility choices and providing better access to transit stations and hubs.

Travel Demand Management

Due to limited financial resources and environmental constraints, it is more difficult and takes longer to add new infrastructure to meet the significant growth in passenger and freight travel demand. Therefore, strategies to manage travel demand are more critical to transportation operations than strategies to increase capacity.

With the advancement of technologies, managing demand should use more comprehensive approaches, beyond merely encouraging single-occupancy vehicle commuters to use carpool, vanpool or public transit for their commute. The focus of contemporary travel demand management (TDM) is to optimize the transportation system performance by providing real-time information on incidents, congestion and weather conditions to all travelers to help them make smart decisions about location, route, travel time and mode.

Impact of Delivery Services and Growth of E-commerce

As more people shop online, e-commerce and its associated delivery services will have a significant impact on the transportation system and land usage. Like other American cities, Aurora is experiencing a growth in warehouses and fulfilment centers. Such fulfilment centers have different transportation needs and trip patterns. Changing shopping habits will likely create a mismatch between retail and industrial space as fewer stores and more storage facilities are needed.

Furthermore, freight transport will increase, resulting in more dispersed transport patterns as home delivery becomes more widespread. There is also a potential conflict between consumer pressure for fast home deliveries of goods bought online and current approaches to addressing problems associated with freight vehicles and traffic.

Connected and Autonomous Vehicles

Connected vehicles and self-driven, autonomous vehicles will greatly influence how people travel, how Aurora's transportation system evolves and how land develops. Traffic signals, street signs and even lane striping may take very different forms due to the real-time communication capabilities among vehicles and between vehicles and roadway infrastructure.

Autonomous vehicles will likely be smaller and capable of traveling in closer proximity to one another. As a result, less roadway may be needed to accomodate more vehicles; therefore, some roadways may be reconfigured to better accommodate pedestrians and cyclists. Pedestrians and bicyclists will need to be accommodated in a street network dominated by free-flowing autonomous motor vehicles, especially at intersections and drop-off and pick-up points.

New development should be designed to accommodate decreases to on-site parking demand in response to new mobility technologies and options. In some cases, there may be an increased demand for drop-off and pick-up points at destinations, such as bus stations, train stations, airports and retail, office and entertainments sites. Curbside management will become an increasingly important function to consider in designing and operating businesses and other facilities.

Transportation Infrastructure and Fiscal Challenges

As Aurora's population and employment levels grow, traffic congestion will increase. At the same time, transportation infrastructure begins to age or becomes obsolete and the need for repair or replacement intensifies. Keeping up with necessary transportation projects have and will stretch the city's capital and operating budgets.

As the city continues to expand its boundaries for future growth, the obligations for new capital projects and ongoing maintenance escalates. Costs to build and service new development, whether at the city's edge or in established areas, must be taken into account when considering approval of new development projects.

Title 32 Metropolitan Districts, or "Metro Districts," are a financing tool for the provision of infrastructure that remains important to sustaining growth and development within the city. These districts have been used extensively to finance needed transportation improvements. However, the city should continue to explore additional finance tools and funding sources to meet a growing need. Balancing the city's desire to grow despite the fiscal impacts of this growth is a challenge that decision-makers will continue to face in the future.

Water, Wastewater and Stormwater Systems

WATER SUPPLY

Water supply is paramount to the continued prosperity and future growth of Aurora.

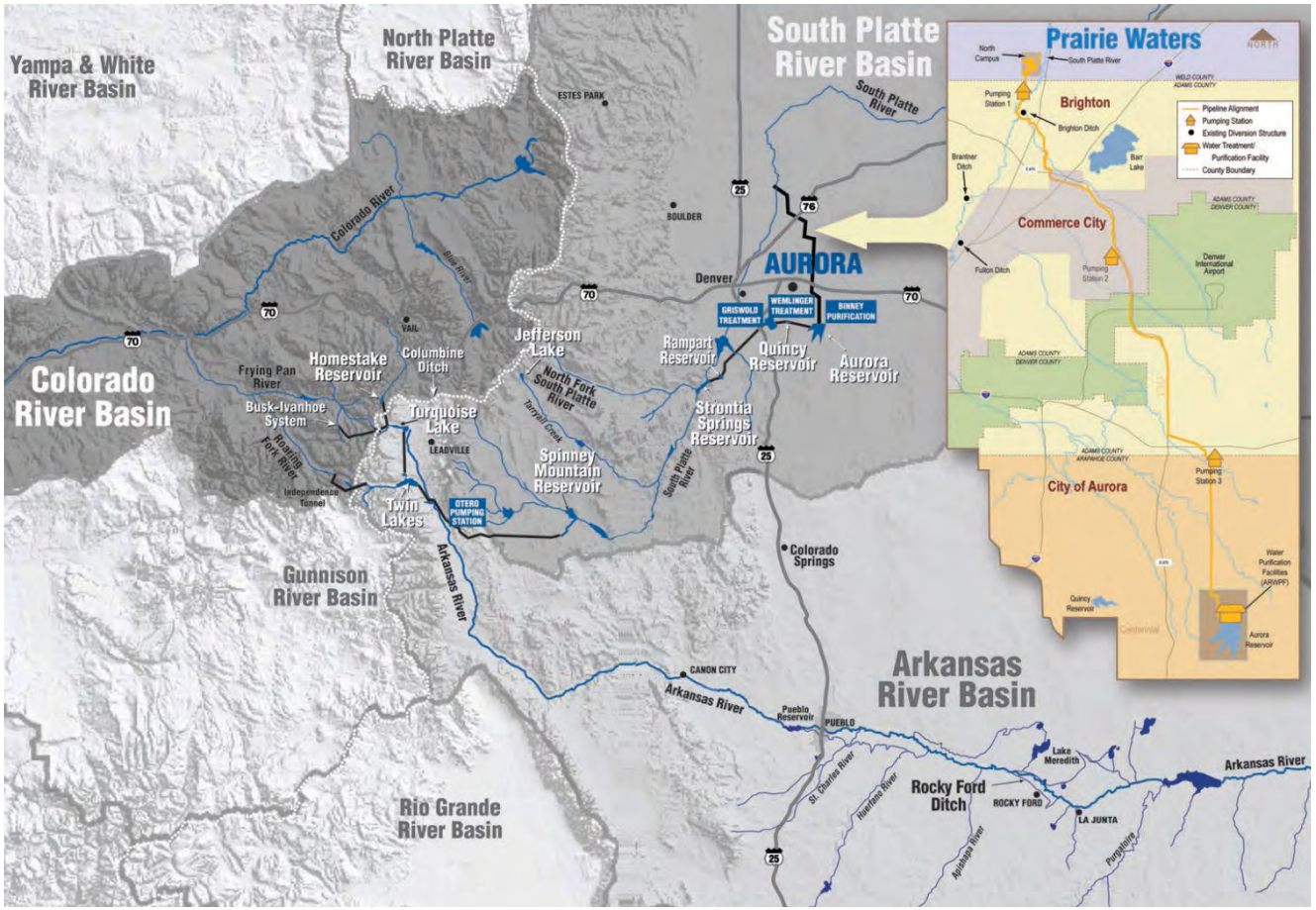
Safe, convenient and affordable water and wastewater services are a core public utility for homeowners, businesses, visitors and others in the community. The city's capacity for continued growth and development is tied to its ability to continue to provide high-quality water service, through a strategy of acquisition, reuse and conservation, as well as wastewater and stormwater management services.

Aurora Water provides full-service water, wastewater and stormwater utility services to the community. The water utility department relies largely on renewable surface water sources to meet needs and continues to identify and acquire new water resources to meet growing demand. The scale of cost and complexity of managing such a system requires planning, budgeting and thoughtful coordination with regional partners. As the city continues to evolve through easterly growth and new urban infill development and redevelopment, Aurora Water is challenged to continue to meet rising demands, retain regionally competitive utility rates and remain a leader in the development of water policy in Colorado.

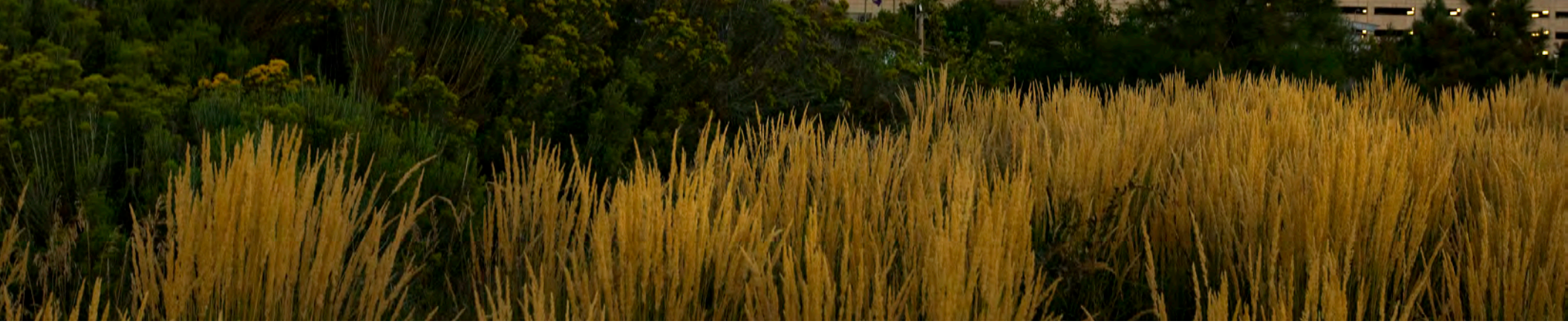
AURORA'S WATER AND WASTEWATER SYSTEMS

Aurora's water is supplied largely by snowmelt and transported through an extensive system to the city and storage facilities. The city's raw water is collected and stored in 12 reservoirs, including the Aurora Reservoir, Quincy Reservoir and others outside of Aurora, which when filled to capacity can store more than 156,000-acre feet of water.

Aurora Water operates a distribution system that includes over 1,600 miles of pipe and 12 potable water pump stations. Three drinking water treatment facilities have a capacity of 210 million gallons per day. The Sand Creek Water Reuse Facility has received national awards and can process five million gallons per day while the new and innovative Prairie Waters facility has extended Aurora's water supply. There are 1,050 miles of wastewater pipeline in Aurora. The city's stormwater system includes 384 miles of pipe, 76.4 miles of open channel, 98 city-owned ponds and three stormwater pump stations.



Source: Illustration from the Aurora Water (2040 Water Plan)



INFRASTRUCTURE AND SERVICE PLANNING

Aurora Water has adopted a strong water conservation ethic for local water use.

Water and Wastewater Master Plans

To prepare for future growth, Aurora maintains an Integrated Water Master Plan (IWMP) which projects the future city water demands and identifies near-term and long-term water supply, treatment and transmission pipeline capital projects. The IWMP planning horizon is 2070, and the plan is updated every five years.

Like water planning, Aurora maintains a citywide Wastewater Master Plan to project future wastewater loading, identify undersized pipes and locate and define pipeline diameters for future growth. Because wastewater conveyance is predominantly a gravity-based system, it is important to plan on a drainage basin level and coordinate across multiple developments.

Stormwater Master Plan

The city also maintains a comprehensive Stormwater Master Plan that combines the results of over 20 master drainage plans and outfall system plans. These plans are typically completed with assistance from the Urban Drainage and Flood Control District (UDFCD). They identify projects that alleviate or reduce flooding risk and enhance water quality throughout the city.

The city's preferred approach is to maintain open drainage systems serving multiple public purposes, including flood protection, stormwater management, recreation, open space, habitat, parks and trails. However, where the development placetype or challenging physical conditions warrant a more mixed approach, other techniques and technologies may be used. Aurora Water maintains a digital stormwater master plan that combines all the projects identified in various basin master plans and prioritizes them based on criteria for incorporation into the 20-year capital improvement program.

Urban Drainage and Flood Control District

The city coordinates with the UDFCD to plan for future growth in the stormwater system. The district manages basin-wide master plans (which often cross multiple jurisdictions), maintains criteria manuals for design and water quality, manages some stormwater construction and design projects and works directly with state and federal agencies on behalf of its members. The city, in conjunction with UDFCD, has studied the Aurora stormwater basins to identify future floodplains and related detention and water quality needs.

Colorado Water Plan

In 2015, the state completed the Colorado Water Plan, a statewide strategy that sets forth measurable goals, objectives and actions to address projected water needs. The plan's objectives include reducing the municipal and industrial water supply-demand gap, initiating conservation measures to supplement supply, supporting local efforts to incorporate water-saving actions into land use planning, adding storage capacity, protecting watersheds, and securing financial resources to support these actions. Collaboration between the state and local jurisdictions is critical to achieving these goals.

The Role of Water Conservation

As the costs and complexity of acquiring new water sources continues to grow, stretching existing supply becomes more essential to meeting Aurora's growing demand. Conservation efforts can mitigate the public costs of water and infrastructure, as well as provide homeowners and businesses savings on their water bills.

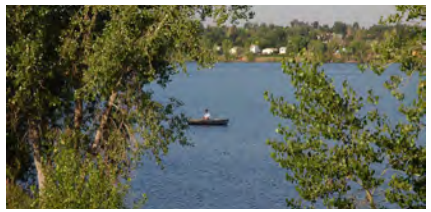
Aurora Water has adopted a strong water conservation ethic for local water use, which they have supported through a range of planning, programs, and innovative projects. Programs include conservation education and outreach, water-wise demonstration gardens, water budgets and conservation pricing, financial rebates and incentives and collaboration and coordination with peer agencies. The Long Range Conservation Plan provides guidance for future water conservation programs so that as water supply planning progresses, decision-makers can determine the best programs for the community.

Parks, Trails, Recreation and Open Space System

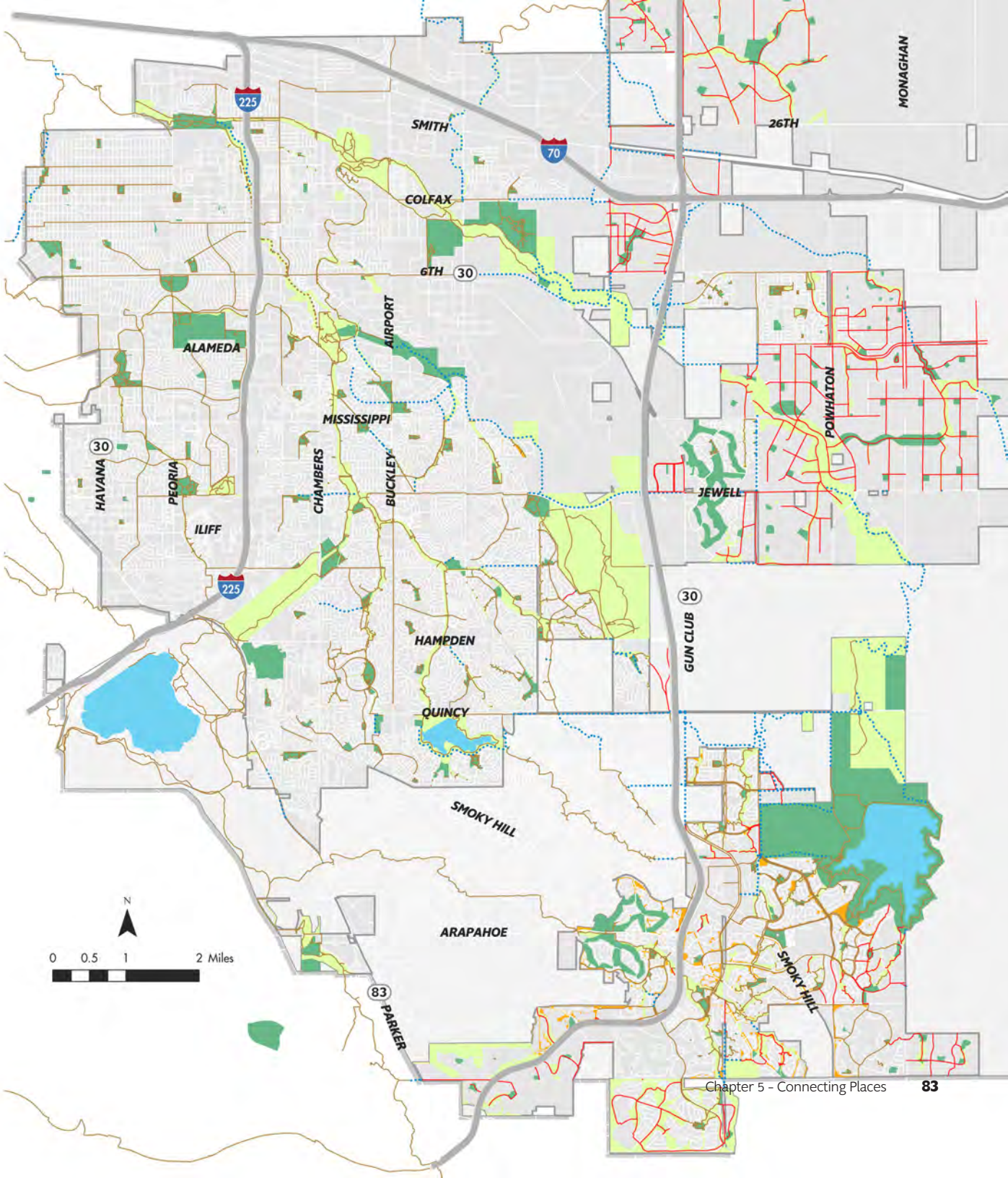
Parks and recreation facilities can serve as centers of neighborhood activity.

There are few physical features more essential to quality of life and the appearance of a community than parks, trails, open spaces and the recreation system. Parks and recreation facilities can serve as centers of neighborhood activity and as places for sports, exercise, community events and gathering places. Protected open spaces support healthy living by connecting residents and visitors to Aurora's natural amenities, while a robust and interconnected network of trails and bicycle ways serve commuters and recreational users alike.

The city of Aurora maintains 97 developed parks and over 5,000 acres of open space. The system includes a broad range of facilities including parks, recreation centers, golf courses, dog parks, park shelters, playgrounds, sports fields, nature centers, swimming pools and a variety of outdoor activities at Quincy and Aurora reservoirs. The city provides over 90 miles of local and regional trails across Aurora, many of which connect to the larger regional network and provide access connecting neighborhoods, mixed-use districts and other destinations. The city also supports those with mobility disabilities by enabling use of assistive technologies and services in its parks, trails and open space system.



PARKS, TRAILS, RECREATION AND OPEN SPACE



PARKS AND TRAILS

- Existing Park Trail
- Programmed Park Trail
- Proposed Park Trail
- Planned Park Trail
- Common Land
- Parks
- Open Space

Arts and Cultural Resources System

A sense of community is defined by the connections among people and shaped by shared culture, experiences and history.

The city's urban history began in Original Aurora, in the city's far northwest, with a small town that has since grown to become the state's third largest city. Aurora's recent history is in many ways defined by a growing diversity of people, cultures and experiences. The city's art, historic places and cultural resources are one way this rich history is expressed and experienced. Arts and cultural facilities are important elements of the fabric of a vibrant city and can anchor community activity and support economic activity and development.

Libraries and Museums

The Aurora Public Library system offers an opportunity to serve as a center of neighborhood or community life, a place for all ages to gather and interact. The city operates six library locations, including the large main library and satellite libraries, and offers computer lab and pick-up/drop-off services at other facilities around the city. The Aurora History Museum collects and exhibits artifacts and documents pertaining to the history of Aurora and Colorado. It provides in-house research and educational programs and oversees the city's historic preservation program. The libraries and museum also collaborate with other agencies and organizations, including local school districts, to provide access to a growing number of educational resources and develop exhibits of interest to the community.

Historic Resources and Preservation

The city recognizes that preservation of its historic and cultural resources is important to the community at large, and that the city should play an active role in the protection and preservation of Aurora's heritage through education, advocacy, training and partnerships. The Historic Preservation Ordinance, first adopted in 1985, creates a process for establishing historic landmarks, both historical and archeological.

Historic preservation is achieved through a partnership among the City Council, the Historic Preservation Commission, various city departments, the Aurora History Museum, the Aurora Historical Society, private property owners and others in the community. These partnerships provide shared cultural and economic benefits to the Aurora community.

Many of the city's designated historic resources can be found in Original Aurora and contribute to that neighborhood's unique character and local interest. The city values protection of these resources, even as revitalization or redevelopment occurs in the area. However, historic sites and landmarks are located throughout the city. These include DeLaney Farm and Round Barn adjacent to the Aurora Municipal Center, the Smoky Hill Trail landmark and Melvin School in south Aurora, and Centennial House and Lowry Building 880 in northwest Aurora.

Arts in Aurora

The Arts District draws talented artists and visitors to the area and contributes to the overall vitality of Original Aurora.

The Aurora Cultural Arts District is located in Original Aurora along Colfax Avenue and is home to visual and performing arts facilities and festivals. The city has invested in programming, facilities and attracting visitors to the area. The district's goals are to support arts and creative businesses, create a vibrant arts destination, and embrace the urban context of Original Aurora. The Aurora Fox Theater and recently renovated People's Building are among the city-owned arts venues in the area. Theater, dance, visual arts and other creative endeavors can be found in the district.

The Arts District draws talented artists and visitors to the area, which in itself is a source of community pride and an economic asset; however, the district also contributes to the overall vitality of the greater Colfax Avenue corridor and Original Aurora neighborhood. Fletcher Plaza offers a public venue for community events, interaction and recreation, and potential for even more. The adjacent Martin Luther King Jr. Library and Municipal Services Center is an important community asset for learning and services for diverse nearby neighborhoods. Public and private development of new housing in the area has grown the area, while growing choices of new restaurants, shopping and entertainment options complement the arts scene.

However, the arts in Aurora extend well beyond the Arts District. The city's Art in Public Places program has selected, funded and installed art throughout the city in parks, commercial centers and public facilities. The Art in Public Places Commission governs the program and a robust public participation process supports it. The city's zoning code requires dedication of construction project fees for projects in Metro Districts. The city's transit stations feature a variety of amazing works by diverse artists.

SUMMARY

Different types of networks connect people and places across the city of Aurora. From transportation to arts and entertainment to strategic economic opportunities to water, every person is connected to one another and every neighborhood both directly and indirectly. To achieve sustainable growth and continued success the city must support these systems through targeted planning efforts and supplemental support of private and nonprofit stakeholders. Ensuring that all three sectors work together is the key to connecting places in Aurora.

GOALS, POLICIES AND PRACTICES

Goals, Policies and Practices incorporate the main ideas and recurring themes discussed throughout the planning process. They are centered on the seven Core Principles identified through the community engagement activities. Each principle sets forth a standard for Aurora within its specific topic area. The goals are statements of the community's aspirations and the recommended practices are the means to realize those goals. The practices should be used by city staff, the business community and the public on a daily basis to guide the implementation of Aurora Places.

A Strong Economy

Principle: A strong economy with active urban places is essential for the wellbeing of residents, businesses and the community.

A Diverse and Equitable City

Principle: Diversity and equity are assets to be nurtured and promoted by the city.

Housing for All

Principle: High-quality housing options enable people across all socioeconomic levels, cultural identities and stages of life to establish and manage households.

A Healthy Community

Principle: Eating healthy food, walking and exercising, living in a clean and safe environment and having access to medical care improves the lives of all Aurorans and contributes to a stable community.

A Thriving Environment

Principle: A thriving natural environment – including stewardship of water, energy and natural resources – is essential to the physical and mental wellbeing of residents and the city's ability to support future growth.

Easy Mobility and Active Transportation

Principle: An easy-to-use transportation network with multiple travel choices supports a strong economy, healthy community and flourishing environment.

An Authentic Aurora

Principle: The creation of great places, the preservation of traditionally unique places and effective marketing and promotion are essential to improving Aurora's image.

A **STRONG** ECONOMY

Principle: A strong economy with active urban places is essential for the wellbeing of residents, businesses and the community.

GOALS:

1. **Support a growing availability of job opportunities for people with a variety of skill levels and experience.**
2. **Achieve greater balance between the number of residents and jobs in Aurora.**
3. **Continue to support the growth of primary employment to bolster the local economy.**
4. **Create new and unique retail areas that match changing trends.**
5. **Create partnerships with major institutions and businesses to encourage economic growth.**
6. **Support locally grown businesses along with business startups and expansions.**
7. **Continue to provide high-quality and reliable city and utility services throughout the city.**

RECOMMENDED PRACTICES:

Placetypes

- Create highly active urban districts as locations for knowledge-based businesses, desired retail, unique entertainment and local entrepreneurs and for people who desire convenient urban areas to live and work. Create these areas as intensely developed, mixed-use places to attract talented workers and higher-paying jobs.
- Work with the development community to encourage construction of high-quality office space in urban districts, innovation districts and other placetypes.
- Partner with institutions, such as the Fitzsimons Redevelopment Authority and the Community College of Aurora to create innovation districts where new ideas and enterprises can flourish, leading to economic innovation and growth.
- Identify and reserve ideal locations for significant and strategic commercial and employment uses in Urban District, Innovation District, City Corridor, Commercial Hub and Industry Hub placetypes.
- Continue to use zoning designations to locate industry hubs, particularly along the I-70 corridor and in the Aerotropolis area, in large land areas well-suited for industrial and distribution operations.
- Continue to support Buckley Air Force Base's success as a major employer in Aurora.
- Develop and redevelop city corridors and commercial hubs as places for retail, services, offices and entertainment.
- Create transit-oriented development (TOD) to provide better access to employment centers, particularly for residents that do not have easy access to a personal vehicle.
- Support quality urban design through capital improvement projects and special districts to create stronger and more attractive business environments.
- Strengthen city zoning and development standards to improve the quality of commercial and office development for redeveloping and reinvesting in targeted locations while also providing appropriate flexibility.

Connecting Places

- Provide complete car, transit, pedestrian and bicycle connections between and within urban districts, as well as to residential neighborhoods, including gridded urban blocks, to promote better access to business and employment for both employers and employees.

Partnerships

- Work with community partners to promote Aurora as a creative, efficient and productive international business hub.
- Coordinate efforts among potential public, private and nonprofit partners based on shared priorities and strategies.
- Share data and information within the city's partnership network to help inform decisions based on a shared understanding of the current and projected economy.
- Support the use of business improvement districts (BIDs) and similar development tools to engage the community.

Economic Growth and Sustainability

- Adaptively reuse underutilized properties and strive to retain low-cost commercial properties to provide affordable space for local businesses and maintain community character.
- Continue to nurture a culture of customer service to represent Aurora as one of the best cities in which to conduct business.
- Support Aurora's multicultural and global influences to strengthen and expand the city's economy.
- Serve as a resource for up-to-date and relevant demographic, real estate and economic data to support public- and private-sector decision-makers.
- Evaluate comprehensive economic indicators to identify economic strengths and challenges and measure the city's progress toward economic development goals.
- Support political, legal and legislative efforts to provide and protect important revitalization tools and funding sources.
- Integrate land use and water planning and policies in order to meet the needs of future growth and development.

Business Attraction, Retention and Expansion

- Attract businesses that connect Aurora to the global marketplace with an emphasis on science, technology, research and healthcare.
- Encourage and support growth and expansion of existing businesses, including major employers and institutions, smaller businesses and other employers.
- Take advantage of Aurora's proximity to Denver International Airport for new economic opportunities. Focus on job creation and industrial development opportunities in those areas.
- Work with existing and potential businesses to support a vibrant local economy with increasing numbers and a diversity of high-quality, high-paying jobs at all skill levels, particularly at employment centers.

Small Business and Entrepreneurship

- Encourage targeted, systematic financing approaches for startup enterprises.
- Continue to provide assistance and incentives for the creation of local and small businesses and support of existing ones.
- Promote affordable and appropriate work and meeting spaces to encourage startup enterprises.
- Promote and support the success of immigrant- and refugee-owned businesses. Actively connect these diverse communities with small business and entrepreneurship resources.
- Support the creation of local job opportunities within businesses owned or led by people of historically marginalized or disadvantaged groups.

Workforce Development

- Collaborate with the private sector on job creation and training, including training and jobs for Aurora residents who are underemployed, with an emphasis on technology and job readiness in industries with high-growth potential.
- Connect immigrant and diverse ethnic communities to education, training resources and accepted credentials to integrate their skills and ambitions into the local workforce.
- Identify opportunities for seniors or recently retired individuals to contribute to the local business environment, including as mentors, leaders, volunteers or other roles that capitalize on their skills and experience.

Development and Redevelopment

- Continue to use urban renewal for infill and redevelopment in targeted areas. Explore additional funding mechanisms for development and supporting infrastructure improvements.
- Proactively attract developers who will provide innovative, urban, infill development at key sites.
- Effectively use a capital improvement program (CIP) to strategically provide appropriate infrastructure to major employment centers and redevelopment areas.
- Create comprehensive redevelopment plans that consider and mitigate impacts on housing supply.

A **DIVERSE** AND **EQUITABLE** CITY

Principle: Diversity and equity are assets to be nurtured and promoted by the city.

GOALS:

1. City services should be available and accessible to all residents.
2. Create safe and welcoming public spaces throughout the city that are designed to increase communication and understanding and reduce conflict among cultures.
3. Embrace and promote multiculturalism in education, communication, celebration, and commerce.
4. Further strengthen Aurora's reputation as an international city that recognizes the value and contributions of immigrants and refugees and supports opportunities for these communities to thrive.

RECOMMENDED PRACTICES:

Placetypes

- Locate libraries, recreation centers and other public facilities in urban districts to act as anchors and to ensure that such facilities are well connected to neighborhoods for all residents to use.
- Provide public spaces in urban districts and other placetypes for celebration and to bring people of different backgrounds and cultures together. Design and program these spaces to increase interaction between people and encourage the creation of new ideas by them.

Connecting Places

- Serve neighborhoods with public transit, bicycle and pedestrian routes.
- Develop transportation programs for those who are non-able-bodied, aging or who do not have easy access to cars.

Government Services

- Monitor changing socioeconomic trends to understand population and economic changes of the city to adjust programs to effectively adapt to those trends.
- Use equity measures to evaluate city programs' availability and effectiveness in serving residents in diverse communities across the city.
- Engage residents, neighborhood organizations, and diverse communities in planning and development efforts and decision-making.
- Promote educational opportunities designed to address cross-cultural communication, discrimination, language learning, history, citizenship and job training to promote cultural understanding.
- Evaluate the extent to which new development, redevelopment and capital projects result in the displacement of current residents and develop and refine a set of proactive strategies to mitigate such impacts.
- Communicate planning, development and city services matters in multiple languages and manners to promote accessibility by all Aurorans.
- Strengthen trust between the city and diverse communities by promoting inclusion and the celebration of cultural differences.
- The city will continue to expand its efforts focused on immigrant and refugee integration into the Aurora community.

Aging Population

- Provide recreation services and facilities for active adults throughout the city.
- Work with community partners, including the Anschutz Medical Campus, to provide services for seniors.
- Encourage "Meals on Wheels" type programs, county programs and other types of programs for seniors.
- Improve the communication and timeliness of information to seniors regarding programs and services.
- Work with educational institutions to provide opportunities for continuous learning among seniors.
- Provide or encourage volunteer and service opportunities for seniors.
- Encourage service providers that aid senior immigrants and refugees to operate in Aurora.

HOUSING FOR ALL

Principle: High-quality housing options enable people across all socioeconomic levels, cultural practices and stages of life to establish and manage households.

GOALS:

1. Increase high-quality housing options of all types and at all price levels throughout the city through ongoing collaboration with the development community.
2. Work with partners to better understand specific needs for affordable housing and to develop new, creative housing options.
3. Locate affordable and senior housing throughout the city and at locations with a variety of transportation options.
4. Address barriers to the development of diverse housing variety and neighborhood choices across the city.
5. Decrease barriers to homeownership.

RECOMMENDED PRACTICES:

Placetypes

- Provide appropriate locations for multiple housing types in urban districts, including both affordable and luxury options, because the concentration of services, retail, entertainment and employment and the multiple transportation choices are desired by households of all incomes.
- Integrate housing of varying types and prices into placetypes throughout the city to create lively and diverse neighborhoods.
- Create vibrant and highly desirable neighborhoods through superior housing design and neighborhood layout, with varied design along streets and quality landscaping and architecture throughout.
- Focus primarily residential placetypes around neighborhood gathering places, such as parks, trails, neighborhood-serving commercial centers or other spaces.
- Apply planning processes in individual neighborhoods to invite resident involvement and address neighborhood needs.
- Encourage and support renovation or rehabilitation of existing housing stock to meet minimum standards and appeal to changing household needs and preferences.

Diverse Housing

- Enforce fair housing policies and practices and code compliance.
- Work with partners to identify demand and development opportunities for affordable housing throughout Aurora.
- Provide homeless and low-income housing programs to address housing security.
- Preserve and improve existing housing to retain community character and meet housing demand.
- Proactively attract developers to provide innovative neighborhood designs that feature diverse housing options.
- Allow accessory dwellings to accommodate extended family arrangements or generate income to accommodate rising housing prices.
- Consider all household costs, including acquisition or move-in costs and ongoing costs, such as utilities and home maintenance, when evaluating affordable housing needs.
- Continue to assess zoning and development regulations and processes to reduce ineffective regulations or unnecessary barriers to quality development.
- Create comprehensive redevelopment plans that consider and mitigate impact on housing supply.

Connecting Places

- Ensure that neighborhoods are effectively connected to safe, attractive pedestrian, bicycle and public transit routes, especially those with affordable and senior housing.

Aging Population

- Work with the Aurora Housing Authority, the private sector and others to ensure that sufficient, affordable housing is available for seniors throughout the city.
- Use CDBG and other funding to improve existing housing for use by seniors and work with partners to develop programs to support home maintenance.
- Encourage the construction or rehabilitation of homes for downsizing households, including single-story, shared housing, multigenerational and other senior-friendly housing types.
- Encourage local organizations to support seniors living in mobile homes, including maintenance assistance, legal rights and relocation.
- Use neighborhood and area plans to support the construction or rehabilitation of senior housing throughout Aurora.
- Promote and support the inclusion of senior housing options in urban districts, transit-oriented developments and other walkable neighborhoods.

A **HEALTHY** COMMUNITY

Principle: Eating healthy food, walking and exercising, living in a clean and safe environment and having access to medical care improves the lives of all Aurorans.

GOALS:

1. Make active transportation, such as walking and biking, a viable alternative to driving.
2. Maintain, improve and expand parks, open space, trails and recreation facilities throughout Aurora.
3. Neighborhoods should have safe and convenient access to retail outlets that offer healthy and/or fresh food choices.
4. Support the expansion of healthcare facilities to locations that conveniently serve neighborhoods throughout the city.
5. Ensure that Aurora is a safe environment for all community members.
6. Provide safe, effective and high-quality water, wastewater and stormwater services.

RECOMMENDED PRACTICES:

Placetypes

- Support the establishment of retail outlets that provide healthy and/or fresh foods that are conveniently accessible to neighborhoods across the city.
- Provide sufficient parks, open space and recreation facilities safely and conveniently accessible to neighborhoods.
- Retrofit existing neighborhoods with parks, trail connections and access to public and private recreation facilities.

Connecting Places

- Ensure that neighborhoods are well connected by enjoyable pedestrian and bicycle routes to urban districts, commercial hubs and other placetypes.

Community Health

- Enhance Aurora's quality of life by increasing access to natural areas and incorporating vegetation and natural features in streetscapes and buildings.
- Encourage grocery stores and healthcare facilities to locate at easily accessible locations and provide goods and services to meet local needs and preferences.
- Support programs that improve access to healthy food systems and food security such as HEAL Cities and LiveWell Colorado.
- Increase opportunities for neighborhood gardening and urban agriculture.
- Partner with medical institutions and related organizations to provide better access to healthcare and education concerning healthy lifestyles and better health outcomes.
- Work with partners to identify and address public health problems.
- Partner with healthcare providers, including those at the Anschutz Campus, to promote health and fitness.
- Support community events and activities that foster community building and enhance the quality of life for Aurorans.

Public Safety

- Continue to support public safety through responsive police, fire and code enforcement services.
- Improve safety through neighborhood planning, resident involvement and enforcement of city codes and ordinances.
- Consider public safety and health when designing public spaces, facilities or other community gathering places.
- Maintain a high level of community resilience by planning and preparing for natural and manmade disasters or events.

A **THRIVING** ENVIRONMENT

Principle: A thriving natural environment – including stewardship of water, energy and natural area resources – is essential to the physical and mental wellbeing of residents and the city's ability to support future growth.

GOALS:

1. **Implement water supply and storage projects, as well as conserve and protect existing water resources.**
2. **Conserve and efficiently use energy resources.**
3. **Protect valuable open space and natural areas.**
4. **Require that new development or redevelopment provides and maintains attractive, healthy and water-efficient landscaping.**
5. **Implement water-wise land use practices in all new development.**

RECOMMENDED PRACTICES:

Placetypes

- Pursue opportunities to use district-wide approaches to water and energy conservation in all placetypes.
- Encourage transit-oriented development to provide alternatives to auto traffic and improve air quality.

Connecting Places

- Concentrate development and provide walking, bicycling and transit choices to reduce distances between destinations and mitigate automobile traffic.
- Preserve, enhance and connect open space corridors to increase green space, connect habitats, enhance the trail system and improve drainage.
- Use trails and linear parks to connect placetypes.

Environmental Improvement

- Improve the community's understanding and acknowledgment of the role a healthy environment plays in creating a successful community.
- Protect sensitive lands, wildlife habitats, and unique natural areas, such as Black Forest in southeast Aurora.
- Use neighborhood- or district-wide approaches for energy, water, and resource conservation.
- Promote resource-efficient development by incorporating energy and water conservation and renewable energy.
- Utilize innovative environmental practices to reduce the amount of water used for landscaping while providing quality landscaping and shade trees.
- Use green stormwater infrastructure to slow and clean stormwater while providing the benefit of green drainage facilities and corridors.
- Encourage net-zero approaches to development. In net-zero development, the energy used after development does not exceed the energy used before development.
- Incentivize renewable energy generation, storage and efficiency in new buildings, neighborhoods and development. The city can lead by example by integrating these best practices into public facilities.
- Plant water-wise shade trees to provide shade to people and property.

EASY **MOBILITY** AND **ACTIVE** TRANSPORTATION

Principle: An easy-to-use transportation network with multiple choices for travel supports a strong economy, healthy community and flourishing environment.

GOALS:

1. **Establish and maintain an integrated, multimodal transportation system.**
2. **Concentrate development in urban districts to connect them to neighborhoods and other nearby placetypes by public transit, bicycling and walking.**
3. **Provide new street connections and alleviate the most critical points of congestion in developed areas.**
4. **Provide completely connected street networks in developing areas to avoid excessive traffic congestion and maximize mobility choices.**
5. **Develop and extend the local transit network, connecting concentrations of activity.**
6. **Provide comfortable and safe walking and biking routes connected to key locations.**
7. **Provide sidewalks and walking routes that meet the needs of senior and mobility challenged individuals and promote good access to a variety of transit services.**

RECOMMENDED PRACTICES:

Placetypes

- Strategically focus transportation investments in urban districts, transit-oriented development areas, and other walkable districts.
- Promote TOD and prioritize intense development at those locations to encourage transit ridership.
- Ensure that TOD conforms with adopted station area plans.
- Locate industry hubs near major highways, rail lines and street networks that can accommodate trailer trucks for quick and easy shipping that does not disrupt noncommercial traffic.
- Locate industry hubs in the Aerotropolis area to capitalize on immediate access to the airports.
- Discourage or disallow parking lots along major street frontages, particularly in city corridors, commercial hubs and urban districts.

Connecting Places

- Connect urban districts to neighborhoods and other placetypes using transit and safe and comfortable pedestrian and bicycle routes.
- Connect transit stations to surrounding placetypes with a complete street grid and other nonmotorized transportation modes.
- Provide easy walking, bicycle and transit connections both between and within Aurora neighborhoods.
- Develop street grids with blocks small enough to encourage walking and to maximize the potential for development, particularly in urban districts and TOD areas.
- Design street networks to separate industrial traffic from local traffic.
- Incorporate vehicle, pedestrian and bicycle connections to connect between adjacent placetypes. Provide alternative routes for local traffic than through major roads and intersections.

Transportation and Development

- Provide regularly located, safe and comfortable crossings on major streets.
- Install new sidewalks and widen existing sidewalks as part of redevelopment or capital improvement projects. Pursue grant funding to support these improvements.
- Add bike lanes to appropriate streets, separated from automobiles, to create a fully connected bicycle system.
- Utilize parking best practices, such as shared parking, lot sizing and peak parking overflow areas to conserve valuable land and reduce development costs.

- Require that parking lots are attractive and efficient by including walkways, landscaping and appropriate lighting.
- Support the installation of enhanced public lighting and technologies in select commercial or mixed-use districts, especially urban districts and TOD areas.
- Integrate traffic calming design improvements into new development or redevelopment as part of its original construction to mitigate the needs for expensive or challenging post-development installation.
- Consider impacts of private and/or limited-access streets on overall street connectivity goals.

An Integrated Transportation System

- Develop citywide transportation plans that include analytical approaches to identifying the most critical investments that can be made to improve the function of the overall transportation system.
- Identify and adopt dependable revenue sources for transportation maintenance and improvements.
- Promote transportation improvements that benefit diverse users, including families, the non-able bodied and the elderly.
- Research and prepare for technological advances in transportation, including autonomous vehicles and intelligent transportation systems.
- Require that new development provides complete street connections with frequent connections to major streets.
- Continue to maintain strong partnerships with the Regional Transportation District (RTD) and the Colorado Department of Transportation (CDOT).
- Provide a range of economically viable transit and shuttle services, such as those with flexible routes and schedules, for high-activity areas.
- Advocate for affordable fares, refined transit connection timings, adequate bus shelters, and other transit improvements.
- Work with RTD to expand various forms of transit to unserved or undeserved areas of Aurora.
- Update and adopt transportation plans, including the bicycle plan, area plans, corridor plans and transit plans.
- Proactively design and update transportation improvements for technological advances in transportation, including autonomous vehicles and intelligent transportation systems.
- Support improvements to create safe routes to schools.

Aging Population

- Develop incremental programs for the improvement of deficient sidewalks. Ensure that sidewalks can accommodate wheelchairs and walkers.
- Identify street crossings that are difficult for seniors and prioritize improving signal timing and crossing design.
- Provide improved pedestrian access to transit stations and bus stops that meet the needs of seniors with appropriate seats and shelter.

AN **AUTHENTIC** AURORA

Principle: The creation of great places, the preservation of traditionally unique places and effective marketing and promotion are essential to improving Aurora's image.

GOALS:

1. **Create distinctive destinations that attract people from around the region and the world.**
2. **Protect the character and quality of established neighborhoods and districts throughout Aurora. Proactively prevent decay, decline or disinvestment within the community.**
3. **Use high-quality community design to create vibrant and active places where people choose to live and work.**
4. **Promote Aurora's welcoming, diverse neighborhoods and parks and open space system as key reasons to live in or visit Aurora.**
5. **Use Aurora's heritage and historic resources as a basis for community events, urban design and community pride.**
6. **Use diverse cultural resources and the arts in urban districts and other placetypes to create destinations.**

RECOMMENDED PRACTICES:

Placetypes

- Create intensively developed urban districts with a mix of residential and commercial uses focused around great public spaces where people can live, work and come together.
- In urban districts, innovation districts, commercial hubs and city corridors, use coffee shops, restaurants, outdoor spaces, recreation centers, shared work spaces and community gathering places to promote natural interaction between people.
- In urban districts, commercial hubs and other placetypes create outdoor spaces that are appropriately sized and surrounded by active uses to create around-the-clock places.
- In urban districts, innovation districts and other placetypes, create design themes based on diverse culture, art or other themes in order to create recognizable identity.
- Program community events and entertainment in public spaces.
- Emphasize the unique character of neighborhoods with community spaces, neighborhood commercial centers, art and design.
- Treat TOD areas as key entry points to the city with quality urban design, public art and innovative businesses.
- Use high-quality and innovative architecture and design to create interesting and valuable places.
- Create active destinations and districts in Aurora for arts, high-quality entertainment and nightlife. Pursue opportunities to attract or enhance regionally recognized public or private venues for arts, culture, recreation and entertainment.
- Support and celebrate Aurora's strong international and cultural restaurants and shopping districts. Protect and leverage these unique resources to support reinvestment and development within Urban Districts, Commercial Hubs and City Corridors.
- Protect and highlight Aurora's cultural and historic resources and places.
- Continue to support the inclusion of public art throughout the community. Incorporate distinctive art and design as a defining feature of community gathering places.

Connecting Places

- Enact standards that require streets that are safe, comfortable and attractive by including quality landscaping and pedestrian design.
- Continue to limit the numbers of signs on major streets to avoid a cluttered appearance and continue to require quality design for sign structures.
- Locate buildings close to streets and public spaces to create high levels of pedestrian activity.

The Image of the City

- Build upon the city's successful marketing campaign touting Aurora's superior quality of life to attract businesses, new residents, professionals, developers and investors.
- Promote the parks and open space system as a great reason to live, work and play in Aurora.
- Attract major regional sports, entertainment or tourism destinations to Aurora.
- Promote and encourage local and independent businesses that reflect Aurora's unique community identity.
- Support and partner with Aurora's school districts, institutions of higher education and other education providers to assist with the provision of high-quality education.
- Survey, evaluate, preserve and enhance historical resources to add special character to urban districts, neighborhoods and other districts.
- Encourage high-quality public events throughout the city.

ACTION STRATEGIES

It is not sufficient to simply prepare and adopt a new plan for our city. Actions and procedures need to be established to ensure that the plan's recommendations are carried out and the community's the vision is realized. An actions program should be created and trends should be measured over time to ensure that it achieves the desired results.

City staff within appropriate departments should provide regular reports to city management, the Planning and Zoning Commission, City Council and the community describing trends and program results. Based on these reports the Commission and City Council may direct changes in policies and programs.

Our city continues to change as it grows and develops. Plans, recommendations and strategies will need to be adjusted over time. City staff will accept the responsibility to undertake the recommended actions and policies, evaluate results and recommend adjustments to strategies. This chapter describes tools that can be used to implement the recommendations of Aurora Places and a specific program of actions to be undertaken immediately.

TOOLS

Aurora Places is the policy guidebook for growth and development throughout the city for the next 20 years. Chapter 6 outlines recommended policies and practices to achieve the goals outlined in the plan. This chapter lays out a framework that can be used as a first step in implementing the policies.

This chapter also defines tools the city and its partners can use to implement the plan and realize the community's vision for Aurora.

Capital Improvements Planning

To ensure that the city is planning ahead for its infrastructure and facility needs, it is common practice for cities to maintain a five-year capital improvement plan (CIP). The CIP provides the basis for capital expenditures in the current budget. The plan should be reviewed and updated annually to assess changing conditions, priorities and how the identified projects address the vision and goals of the comprehensive plan. According to the Aurora City Charter, the Planning and Zoning Commissions should review and provide recommendations regarding the CIP to ensure it supports the goals and recommendations of the comprehensive plan.

In Aurora, the Capital Projects Fund (CPF) provides support for general government capital projects. Additionally, an enterprise fund for water, wastewater and stormwater funds some utility infrastructure projects.

Partnerships

There are limits to what the city can afford to finance. At the same time, there are often special costs associated with the types of development that the city needs to attract. Targeting a variety of new types of development to provide job growth, revenue-generating retail, affordable housing, renewable energy and transportation improvements will help create urban places. The special costs associated with these beneficial projects can include transportation improvements, land acquisition, building rehabilitation, environmental work or special aesthetic enhancement. The city can more effectively meet its goals by leveraging capital improvement funding, urban renewal financing, grants and other sources with private funding. The city should pursue and maintain special partnerships with property owners, developers, businesses, nonprofit organizations, government agencies, large institutions and other parties.

Neighborhood and Area Planning

Aurora continues to plan for smaller areas of the city, including neighborhoods, urban centers and mixed-use districts, strategic urban renewal areas and transit station areas. By creating neighborhood and area plans, the city can address more specific or local issues associated with particular neighborhoods and areas. Using this method, goals and programs can address the needs of specific areas.

Neighborhood and area planning will include more methods to involve residents and businesses of all cultures and backgrounds in planning for their locations. This involvement may be through workshops, local events or the establishment of local committees. Such methods can support continued citizen involvement in development processes and in programs for the areas. The city should continue to initiate plans in areas that do not currently have a plan and regularly review and update existing plans.

Land Use Regulation

Like other cities, Aurora regulates the use and development of land. The city's zoning code includes the zoning designations that describe which uses of land are allowed in different portions of the city. The code also includes standards governing various aspects of development, including building heights and spacing, street construction, the design of public spaces, and overall site or neighborhood layout. Additional codes and regulations also govern the construction of buildings or integrate water or energy best practices with land use planning and development review.

The ordinance should be used to implement the goals and policies described in the Aurora Places plan, including the availability of urban places for job creation, increasingly diverse housing options, resource conservation, improved transportation, an attractive appearance and an improved image. Building regulations require that structures are safe, durable and energy efficient.

Technology and Data Solutions

The city will leverage data and technology solutions to achieve goals and efficiently meet policy objectives. Aurora is a "smart city" that uses data strategically to inform decisions, understand challenges, and effectively identify solutions in the areas of transportation, engineering, communication, public services and economic development. Advanced technology offers new opportunities for managing the city's key functions, delivering services to the community and connecting with residents.

Infrastructure Planning

The city is responsible for providing adequate streets, water and sewer facilities, parks and open space and other public facilities. In many cases, this responsibility is assigned by land use regulations to new developments. Aurora can use the provision of infrastructure to support the goals and policies in this plan.

Urban Renewal

Aurora creates urban renewal areas in the city to eliminate blight and plan to prevent its reoccurrence in identified locations throughout the city. Urban renewal plans are created for each area describing how blight conditions will be alleviated and creating a neighborhood vision to guide future development. The Aurora Urban Renewal Authority, primarily composed of the mayor and Aurora City Council members, governs urban renewal efforts in Aurora. Three additional members representing the school districts, county governments and other property taxing entities are expected to be added in the near future to bring the board into compliance with current state law.

An urban renewal project is a public/private partnership intended to stimulate a development project that would not otherwise happen without public support. The private sector funds the majority of the investments required to redevelop urban renewal areas. Funding for public investment comes from tax increment financing (TIF) revenue, which is the increased amount of property tax or municipal sales tax revenue collected within the Urban Renewal Area resulting from redevelopment projects. This public financing is used to address particular needs associated with redevelopment such as infrastructure improvements, public spaces and parking.

Aurora Places Report and Review

The Planning and Development Services Department will regularly prepare a report for the Planning and Zoning Commission, city management and the Aurora City Council outlining progress toward the goals and aspirations of the plan. The report should include the following:

- Information on key community trends and changing conditions.
- A progress report on each of the key actions below, including improvements in the related measurements.
- Identification of new actions to be undertaken.
- Recommendations on amendments to the Aurora Places Plan.

Measurements

To effectively meet the goals, the city will need to monitor various performance measurements concerning the state of the city and adjust its policies and programs in accordance with changing conditions and trends. These measurements should be employed to determine whether the actions recommended are effective in achieving the goals of the city. It will be increasingly critical to measure trends, including average incomes, job growth, development, the composition of the population, energy and water use, traffic safety and congestion. Each project employed to achieve the goals of this plan should include recommended measurements.

IMPLEMENTATION ACTION MATRIX

The following Implementation Action Matrix suggests actions and projects that may be taken in the near term to implement Aurora Places recommendations. The matrix recommends specific actions and projects to be undertaken in the next several years. This matrix should be reviewed, updated and revised periodically as a part of the annual Aurora Places report. Most of the actions described will be multi-departmental.

Priorities identified during the planning process are focused around key topics:

- Strong Economy
- Diverse and Equitable City
- Housing for All
- Healthy Community
- Thriving Environment
- Improved Mobility and Active Transportation
- Authentic Aurora

Principle	Action Title	Action Description
All	**Aurora Indicators**	Develop and monitor a system of community indicators concerning changes in demographics, the economy, health, transportation, the environment and other issues described in Aurora Places. Use the indicators, to measure overall success and to refine strategies when necessary. Include this information in the annual Aurora Places report.
All	**Area Planning Program**	Enhance Area Planning Programs. Develop studies, analysis and plans for neighborhoods, urban districts, commercial corridors, employment centers and other subareas of the city where plans do not currently exist. Existing area plans should be updated to account for changes in conditions and opportunities. Each program will identify and prioritize target areas for future planning and development based on agreed upon criteria.
All	**Smart City Initiative**	Launch a Smart City Aurora initiative to embrace technology and data-supported decision-making to address the city's challenges and achieve its goals. Technology offers new ways to connect with the public, manage traffic and transportation systems, monitor and maximize the efficiency water and utilities, partner with local businesses and provide quality city services to the community.
All	**Neighborhood Wellness Action Plans**	Establish a Neighborhood Wellness Action Plan program for neighborhoods across the city. Identify and address opportunities provided to residents and city departments to ensure a comprehensive and effective response to neighborhoods through coordination of a variety of neighborhood-based city services, recognizing each neighborhood's special and unique needs and respective responses by city staff. Work with residents, businesses and property owners in the neighborhoods to develop the plans.
All	**Zoning Code Update**	Complete and implement the city's updated zoning code to ensure quality development throughout the city and guide development to realize Aurora's newly defined placetypes.
Strong Economy	**Economic Development Strategic Plan**	Work with economic development partners to develop a strategic plan to further refine the city's economic development policies and practices and to pursue the goals of the Aurora Places plan. The plan may incorporate market analyses; assessment of development capacity; available sites and targeted areas and economic sectors; retail strategies; best practices in coordinated or cooperative partnerships; incentives tools and policies; and other critical considerations.
Strong Economy	**Fiscal Impact Analysis Modeling Tool**	Update the city's tools for providing fiscal impact analyses for use by City Council to evaluate requests for annexation, zoning changes, development incentives or other development proposals. Evaluate inclusion of a housing impact element as part of the analysis.
Strong Economy	**Citywide Capital Improvements Plan**	Develop a Capital Improvements Plan to define priority capital projects and to leverage financial resources more efficiently.
Healthy Community	**Public Safety Facilities Plan**	Develop a public safety capital improvement plan to support budgeting for future police and fire facilities as part of the capital improvement plan process. Evaluate options for placing such facilities in shared-use and consolidated city facilities. Define general locations for these facilities.
Healthy Community	**Parks, Recreation and Open Space Strategic Plan**	Develop a strategic plan that, among other objectives, evaluates land dedication standards and policies, land management policies and practices, inventory and benchmark analyses and programming recommendations. An implementation strategy should address the study's findings and support key principles and recommendations of the comprehensive plan.
Housing for All; Strong Economy	**Housing Strategic Plan**	Develop a comprehensive set of recommendations and strategies to address the short- and long-term housing needs of the community, including, but not limited to: homelessness, displacement, transitional housing, workforce housing, mobile or manufactured housing, condominium development, executive housing and other homeownership opportunities. Integrate opportunities in future neighborhood or area plans.
Authentic Aurora	**Public Art in Design and Development**	Identify opportunities to further integrate public art into the city's design and planning structure and processes to help support the development of high quality urban design and great places that utilize Aurora's rich and diverse cultural resources.

NOTE: *Items listed above are recommended actions. Prioritization, funding, and initiation of these activities are subject to future direction by City Council or city management.*

Principle	Action Title	Action Description
Improved Mobility and Active Transportation	**AuroraLine (R Line) Transportation Management Association**	Work with DRCOG, RTD and major businesses along the Aurora Line (R Line) to evaluate the establishment of a corridor-wide Transportation Management Association (TMA). Focus on promoting the R Line, including marketing the service, reducing congestion, fine tuning service and connection times, increasing transit ridership and providing first-mile, last-mile mobility options such as bike sharing and car sharing to various stations along the line.
Improved Mobility and Active Transportation	**Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan**	Update the citywide Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan, focusing on identifying a functional classification of the bicycle network that includes primary and secondary bicycle routes, appropriate facility design standards and street crossing treatments.
Improved Mobility and Active Transportation	**Complete Streets Policy and Guidelines**	Develop policies and guidelines that foster mobility improvements to create a safe and inviting transportation network for all users including bicyclists, motorists, transit operators and users, and pedestrians of all ages and abilities.
Improved Mobility and Active Transportation	**Northeast Area Mobility and Accessibility Program**	Identify and pursue funding sources for improving mobility and accessibility in the northeast area, with a specific focus on connectivity. Construction of the I-70/Picadilly interchange to support the economic activities of e-commerce, fulfillment centers, warehousing and logistic industries in the area.
Authentic Aurora; Diverse and Equitable	**Arts and Arts-Supportive Facilities**	Complete a comprehensive evaluation of the needs and opportunities for arts and cultural venues, and supporting facilities, in the Arts District and throughout the city.
Thriving Environment	**Urban Drainage**	Review and revise standards for protecting and restoring the city's floodplains and floodways with a goal for making these system maintenance eligible by the region's Urban Drainage and Flood Control District.
Thriving Environment	**Irrigation Water Conservation**	Undertake an effort to reduce water used for irrigation while maintaining a well-vegetated and natural city. This should be a multi-department effort which addresses multiple objectives including water conservation, city appearance, air and water quality and attractive and effective site development.
Thriving Environment; Healthy Community	**Low Impact Development Standards**	Further develop guidelines and standards to encourage use of low impact development or green infrastructure techniques which reduce stormwater runoff, foster water conservation, protect or enhance water quality and provide landscape and urban amenities. Evaluate adoption of Aurora Water's Low Impact Development guidelines as development standards. Pursue opportunities for grants, partnerships or other funding options for implementation of regional drainage and water quality improvements.
Thriving Environment	**Energy Efficiency and Innovation**	Identify and pursue potential strategies, programs and partnerships to improve energy efficiency and to leverage city resources for innovative energy sources. Review energy efficiency standards and practices related to the construction and maintenance of city facilities.
All	**Aurora Places Review and Report**	Prepare a report for the Planning and Zoning Commission, city management and the Aurora City Council outlining progress in plan implementation. The report should include the following: information on key community trends and changing conditions; a progress report on each of the key actions in Chapter 6, including improvements in the related measurements; identification of new actions to be undertaken and recommendations on amendments to the Aurora Places Plan.

NOTE: *Items listed above are recommended actions. Prioritization, funding, and initiation of these activities are subject to future direction by City Council or city management.*

APPENDIX

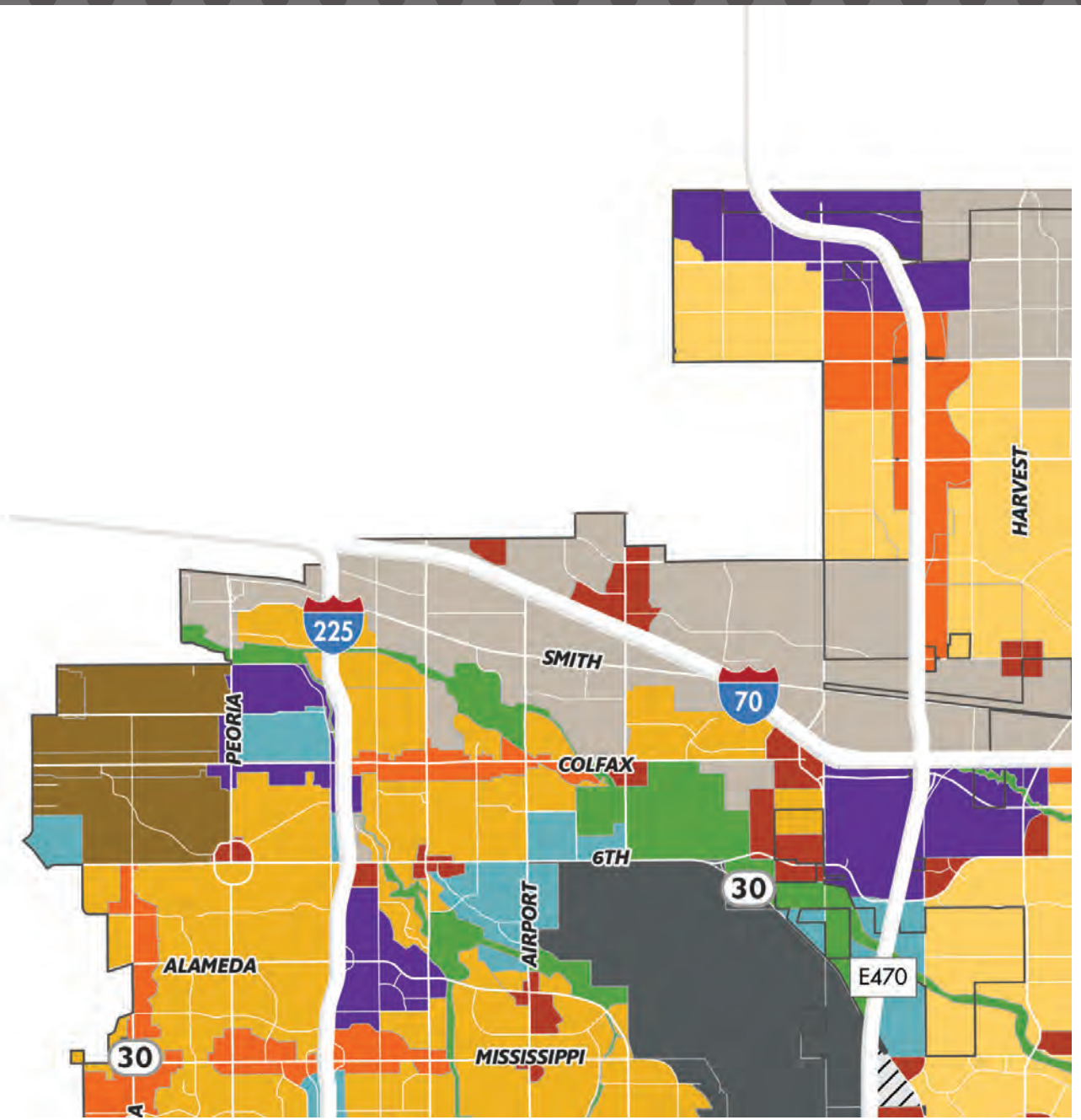
PLACETYPE PLAN

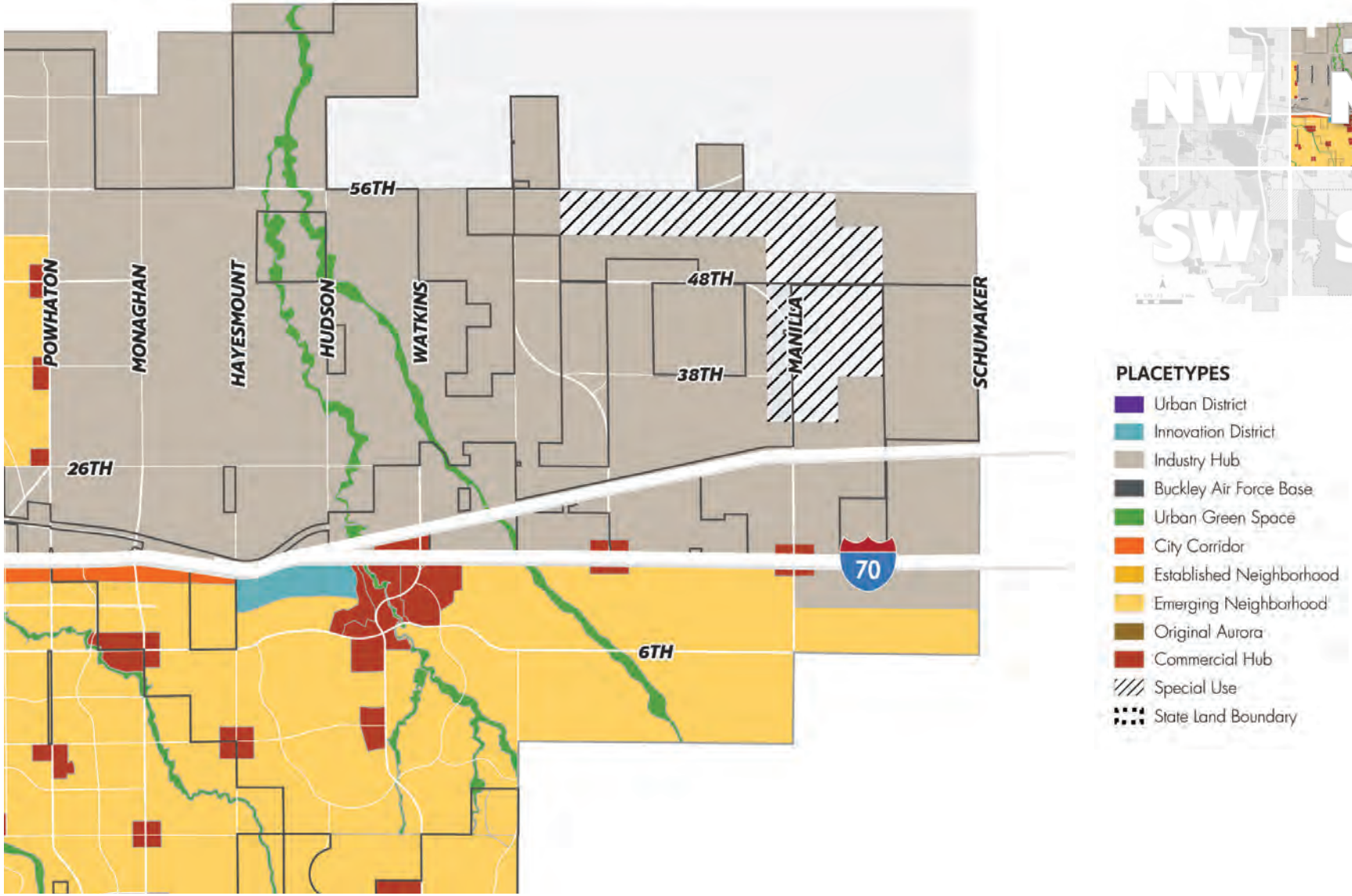
PLACETYPES

- Urban District
- Innovation District
- Industry Hub
- Buckley Air Force Base
- Urban Green Space
- City Corridor
- Established Neighborhood
- Emerging Neighborhood
- Original Aurora
- Commercial Hub
- Special Use
- State Land Boundary

This map identifies placetype designations for all areas within the city of Aurora's adopted planning and annexation boundaries. See page 51 for additional information about these boundaries.

Placetype designations for areas outside of the city limits are for long-range planning purposes only. These properties are subject to rules and regulations of their appropriate jurisdiction(s). The city of Aurora does not enforce zoning, subdivision or development standards in unincorporated areas.

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PLACETYPES
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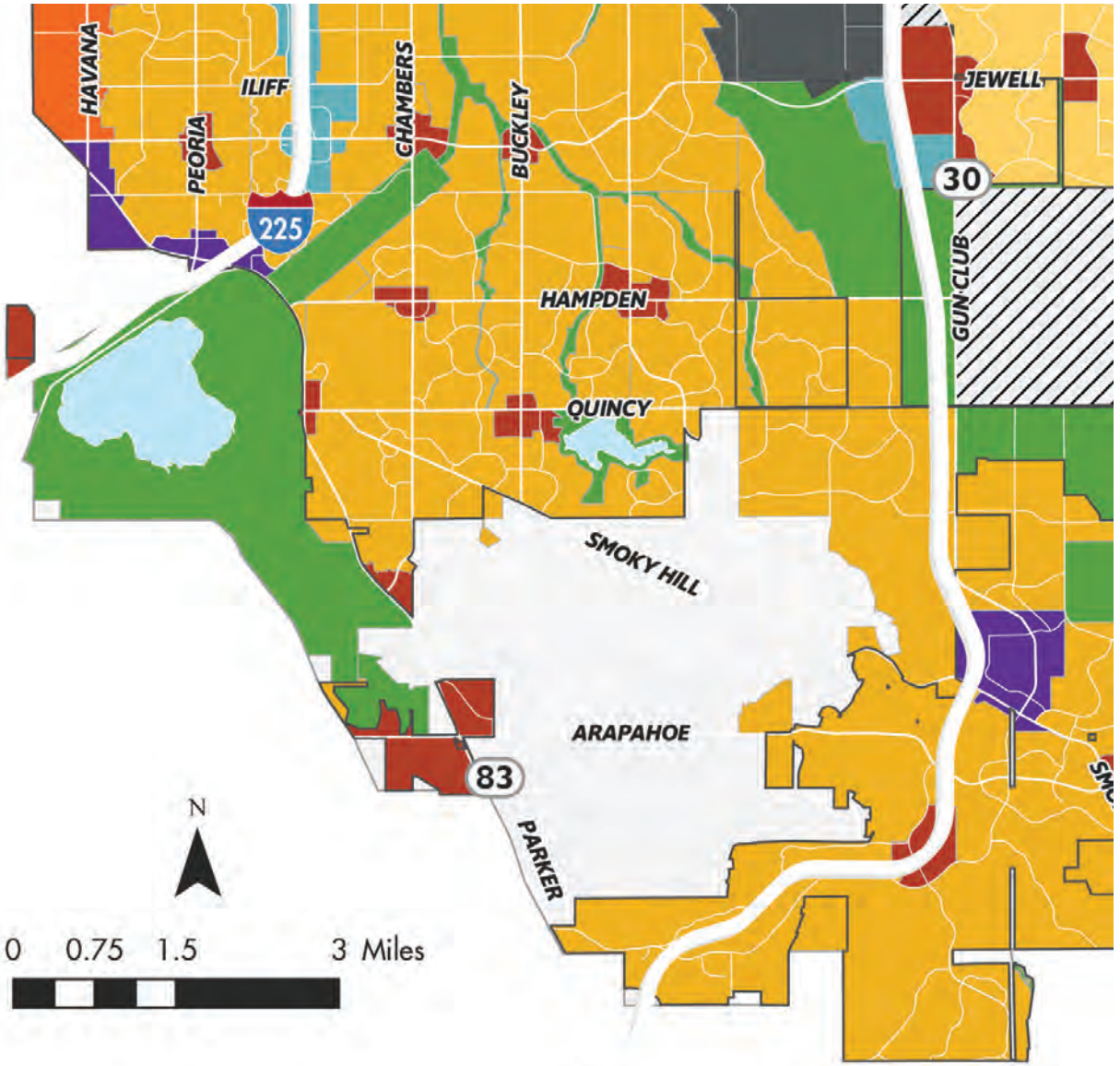

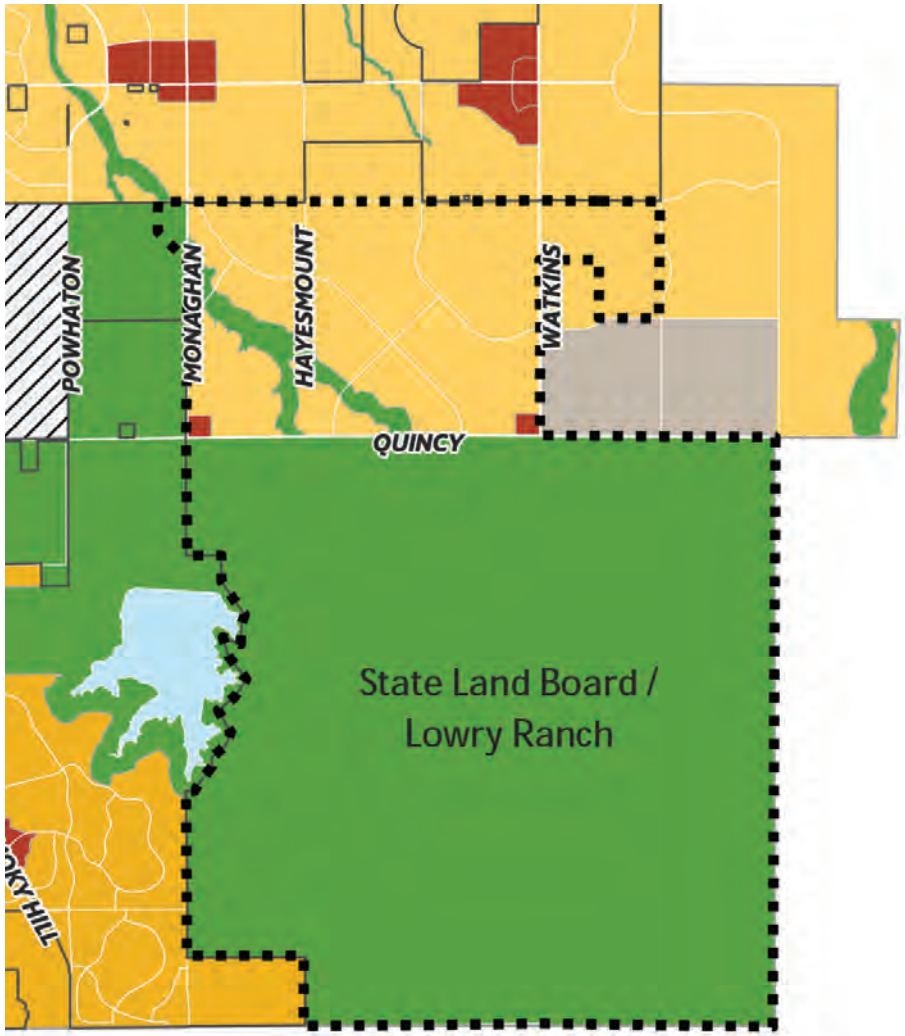

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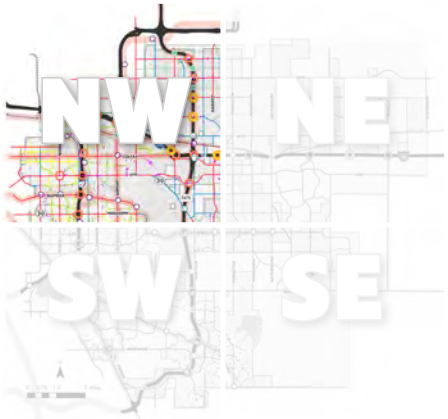
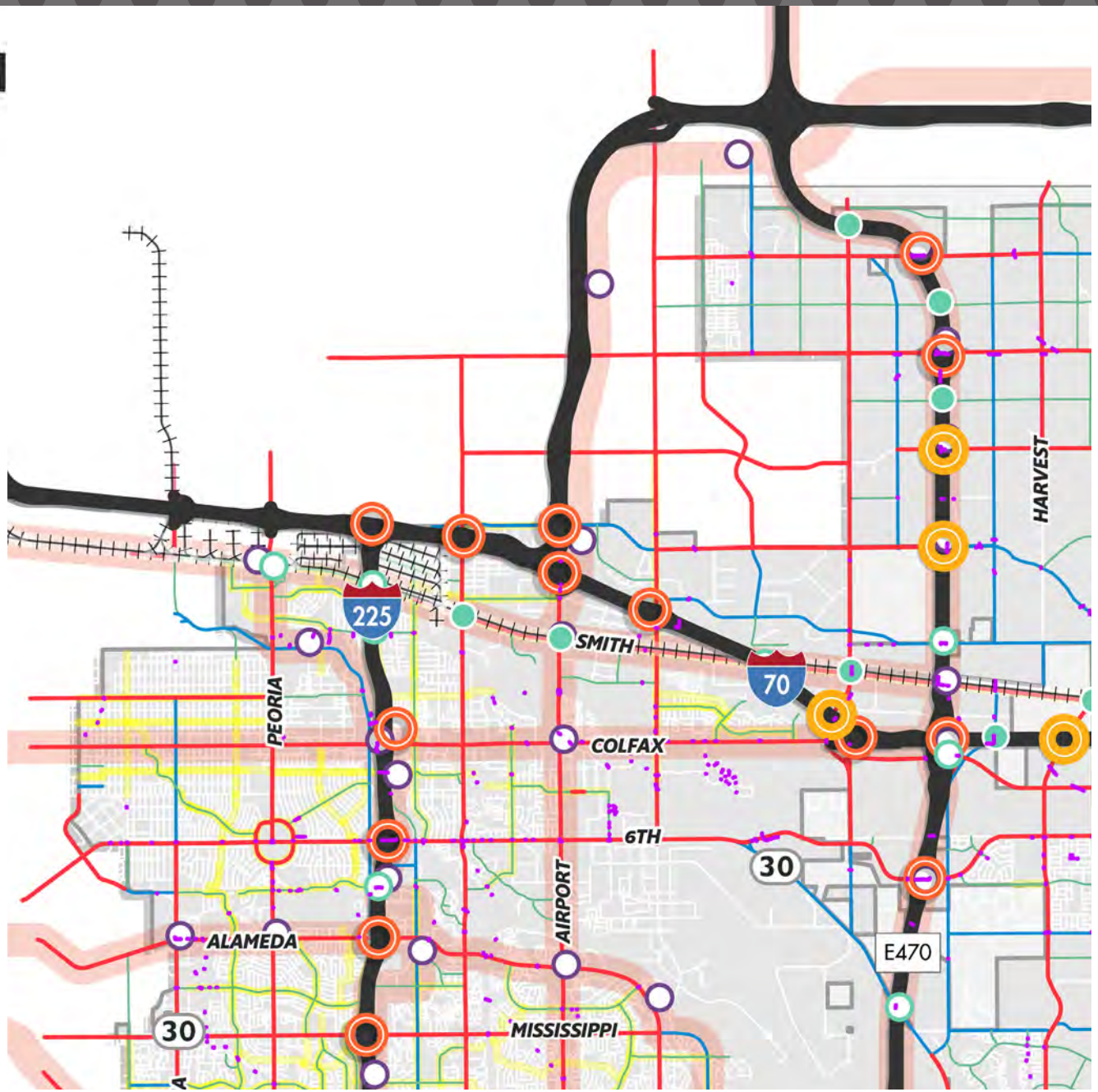
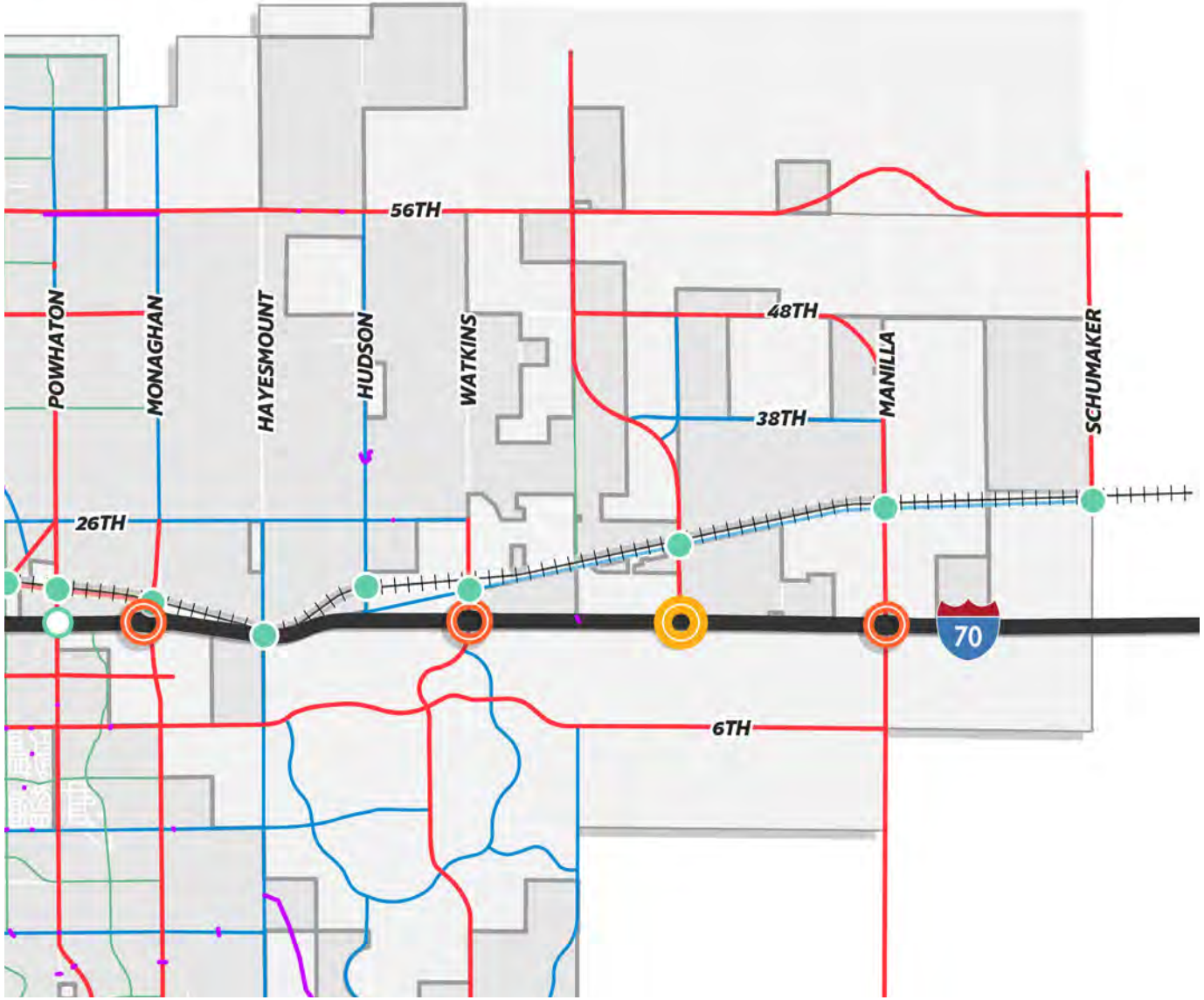
TRANSPORTATION FRAMEWORK



ROADWAY HIERARCHY & INTERCHANGES

- Existing Grade Separation
- Future Grade Separation
- Existing Interchange
- Future Interchange
- Transit Stations
- Highway
- Major Arterial
- Minor Arterial
- Collector
- Primary Bike Routes
- Grade Separated Bike Crossing
- Existing/Future High Frequency Transit Corridors
- Railroads





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TRANSPORTATION FRAMEWORK

ROADWAY HIERARCHY & INTERCHANGES

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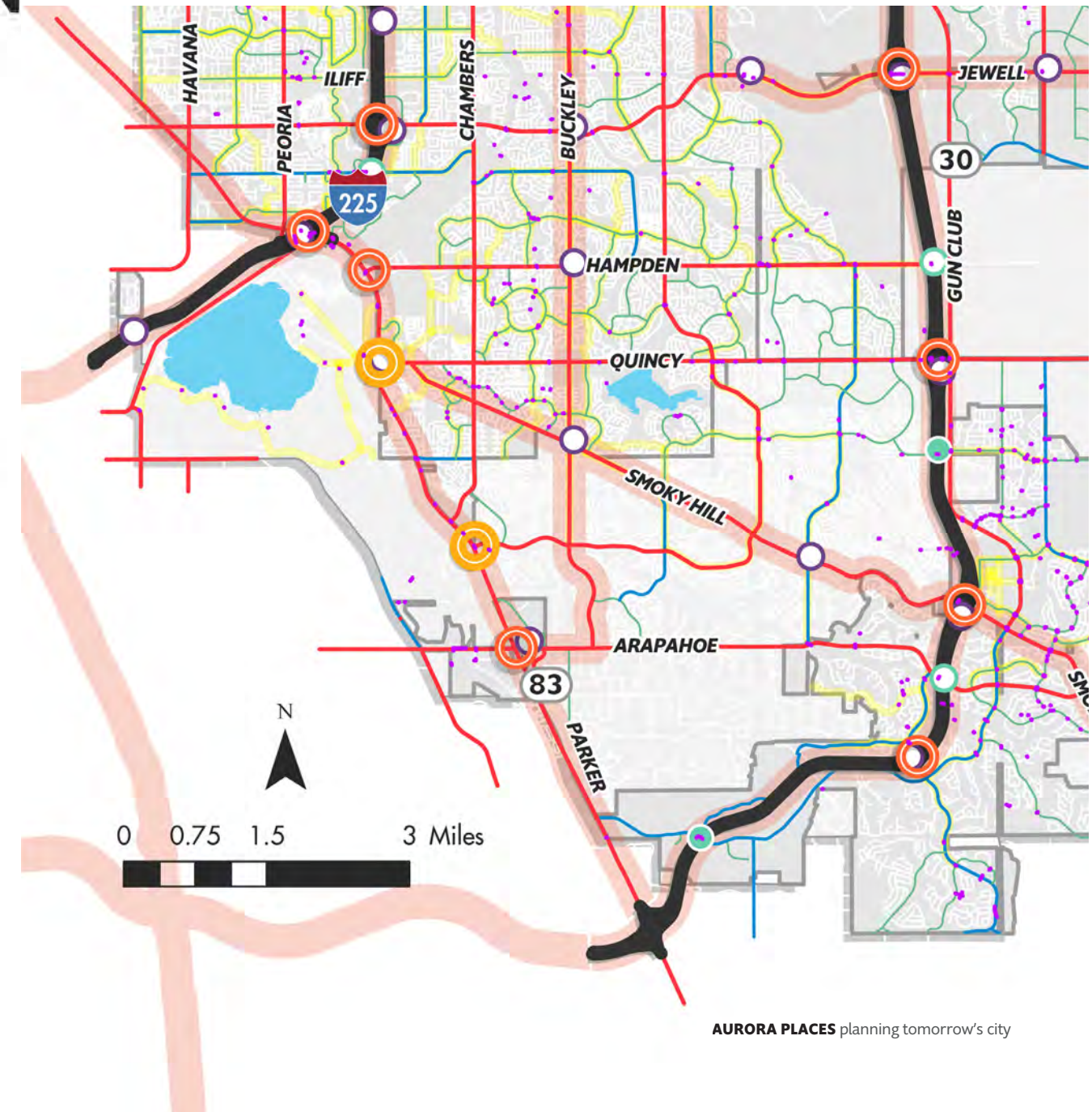

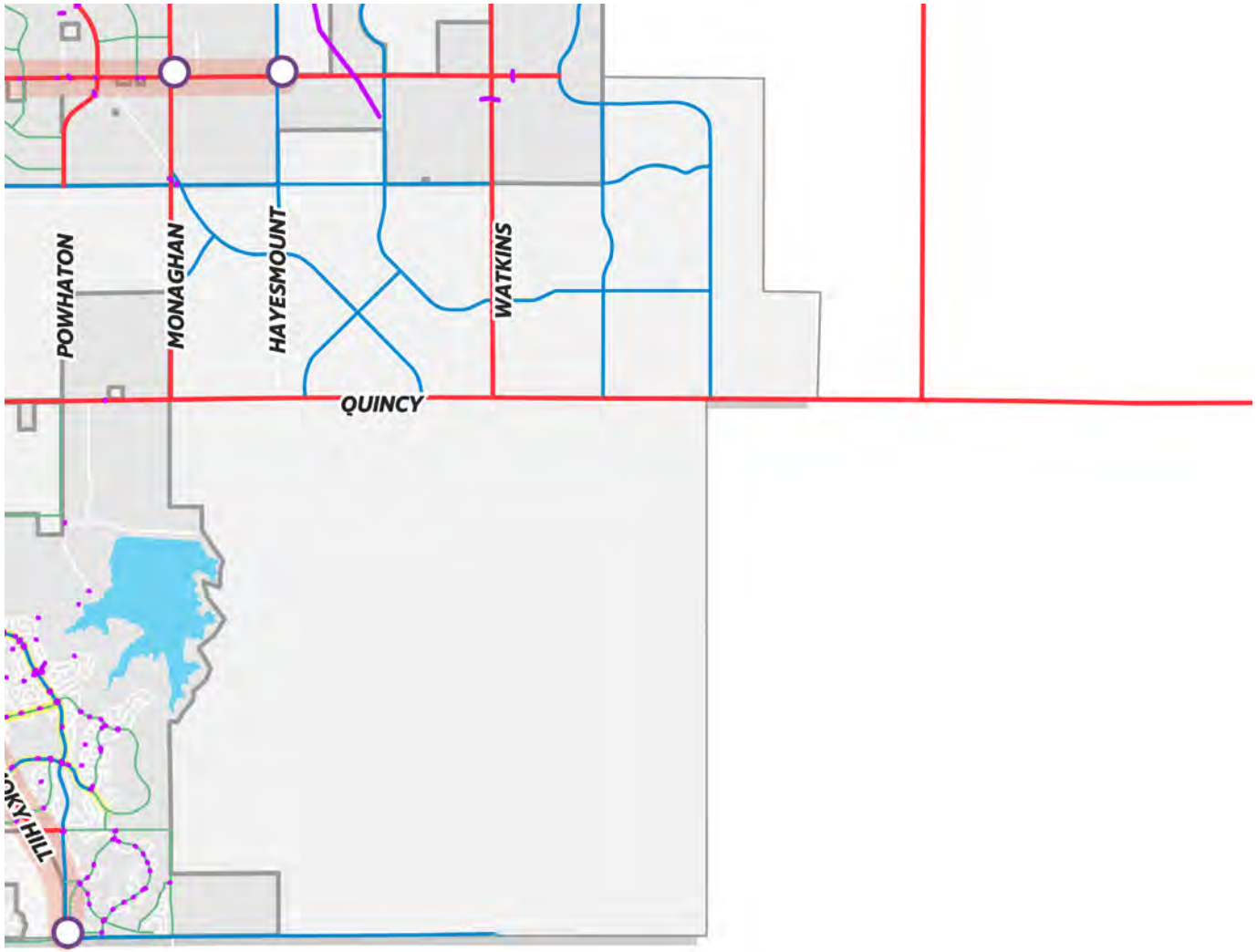
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MONAGHAN
HAYESMOUNT
WATKINS
QUINCY
NW
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SW
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ROADWAY HIERARCHY & INTERCHANGES
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Future Grade Separation
Existing Interchange
Future Interchange
Transit Stations
Highway
Major Arterial
Minor Arterial
Collector
Primary Bike Routes
Grade Separated Bike Crossing
Existing/Future High Frequency Transit Corridors
Railroads

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