



AGENDA

Aurora Downtown Development Authority

Friday, August 14, 2026

11:00 a.m. – 1:00 pm

The People's Building

9995 E. Colfax Ave

Aurora, CO 80010

Executive Staff: Laura Perry, Deputy City Manager

Legal Staff: Rachel Allen

Watch or Listen Virtually

Dial Access Number: 1-720-388-8447

Phone Conference: 353 533 272#

Click to [Join the Meeting](#)

Passcode: yr3aZ2PM

-
- 1. Call to Order**
 - 1.a Oath of Office**
 - 1.b Introductions**
 - 2. Approval of Minutes**
 - 3. Public Comment**
 - 4. General Business**
 - 1.a Aurora Downtown Development Authority Orientation**
 - 1.b DDA Board Operations and Rules**
 - 1.c Discuss Plan of Development**
 - 1.d Meeting Schedule Discussion**
 - 5. Next Steps**
 - 6. Adjournment**

Translation: Spanish interpretation will be available at the meeting.

Accessibility: For accommodation, please visit <http://www.auroragov.org/Accessibility>

Aurora Downtown Development Authority Meeting

August 14, 2026

Location: The People's
Building (9995 E Colfax Ave,
Aurora, CO)

Time: 11:00-1:00

Agenda

1. Call to Order
 - a. Oath of Office
 - b. Introductions
2. Approval of Minutes
 - a. None
3. Public Comment
4. General Business
 - a. Aurora Downtown Development Authority Orientation
 - b. DDA Board Operations and Rules
 - c. Discuss Plan of Development
 - d. Meeting Schedule Discussion
5. Next Steps
6. Adjournment



Meeting Logistics

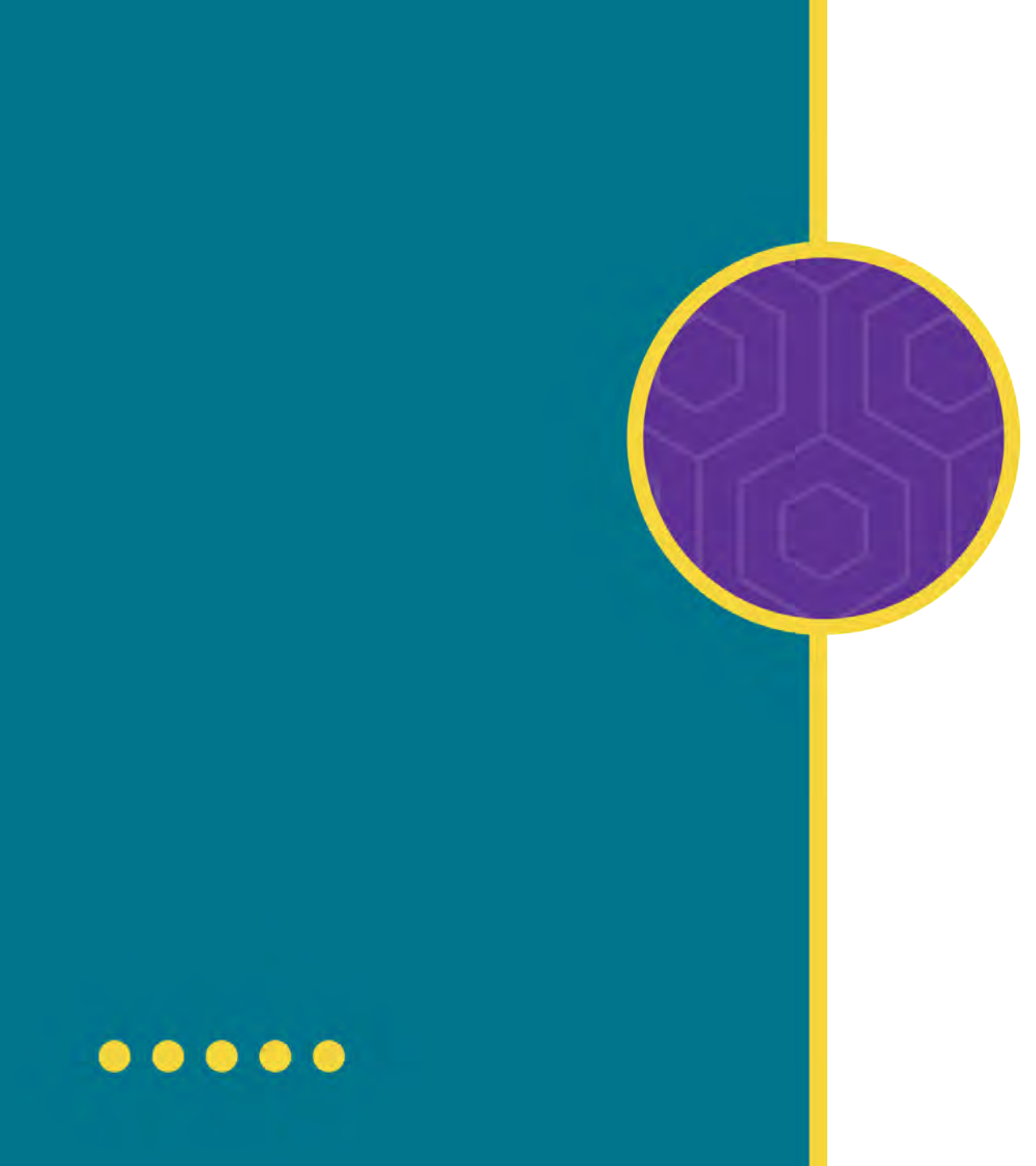


- ADDA board meeting agendas, packets, minutes, and “Notice of Quorum” will be posted at http://www.auroragov.org/city_hall/authorities/aurora_downtown_development_authority
- All ADDA board meetings will be recorded and posted on the City’s ADDA website
- Questions from the public can be sent to DDA@auroragov.org

Oath of Office



"Do you, having been duly appointed by the City Council as a board member of the Aurora Downtown Development Authority of the City of Aurora, Colorado, solemnly swear or affirm that you will faithfully and impartially administer the affairs of such office in accordance with the Constitution of the United States of America, the State of Colorado, and the ordinances of the City of Aurora, to the best of your judgment and ability, so help you God."



Introductions





Approval of Minutes



Public Comment



- ▶ Each person will have 3 minutes to make their public comment.
- ▶ This section will be limited to 30 minutes today
- ▶ Please complete the form before speaking



Aurora
Downtown
Development
Authority
Orientation



Progressive Urban
Management Associates
(P.U.M.A.)





AURORA DDA ESSENTIALS

DDA Board of Directors Orientation – August 14, 2026

Presented By City Staff and Progressive Urban Management Associates (P.U.M.A.)

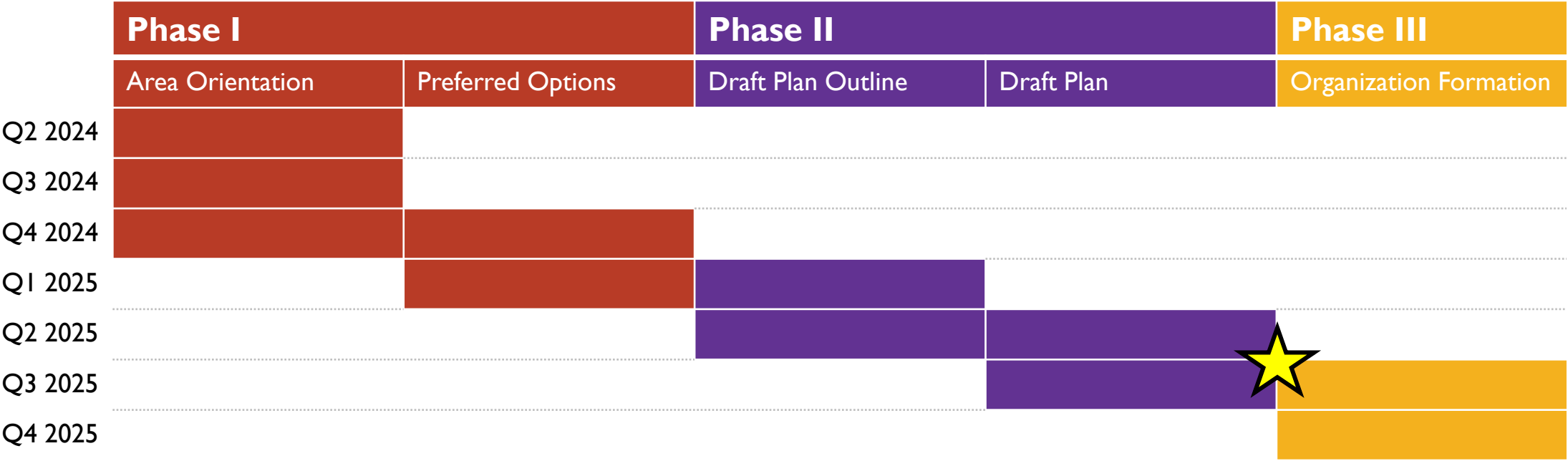


DDA BACKGROUND

- 1) Project Overview
- 2) DDA 101
- 3) Action Plan Overview



TIMELINE



- | | | | | |
|------------------------------|--|---|--------------------------------------|--|
| ✓ Site tours | ✓ Tour comparable districts | ✓ Broad outreach | ✓ Governance structure | • Legal work to advance org(s) formation |
| ✓ Key stakeholder interviews | ✓ Outreach & survey | ✓ Finalize boundaries | ✓ Evaluate revenue options | • Property database |
| ✓ Data analysis | ➤ Recommended options to explore in Phase II | ✓ Refine priorities and create draft plan outline | ✓ I st draft of full plan | • Educational materials |
| ✓ Educational materials | | | | • Graphic summary of plan |
| ✓ Form working group | | | | |

SUMMARY - OUTREACH

- **Working Group** representing property owners, small businesses, residents, non-profits, City Council, the arts, and faith community
- **Over 1,200 inputs** from community and City across interviews, roundtables, community events, and surveys
- **Project webpage** with 2,400+ visits
- **Language access:** project materials, businesses canvassing, and public meetings in English/Spanish (additional languages as-needed)



Ward I Town Hall, 1-25-25



Draft Plan Open House, 6-18-25

DDA 101

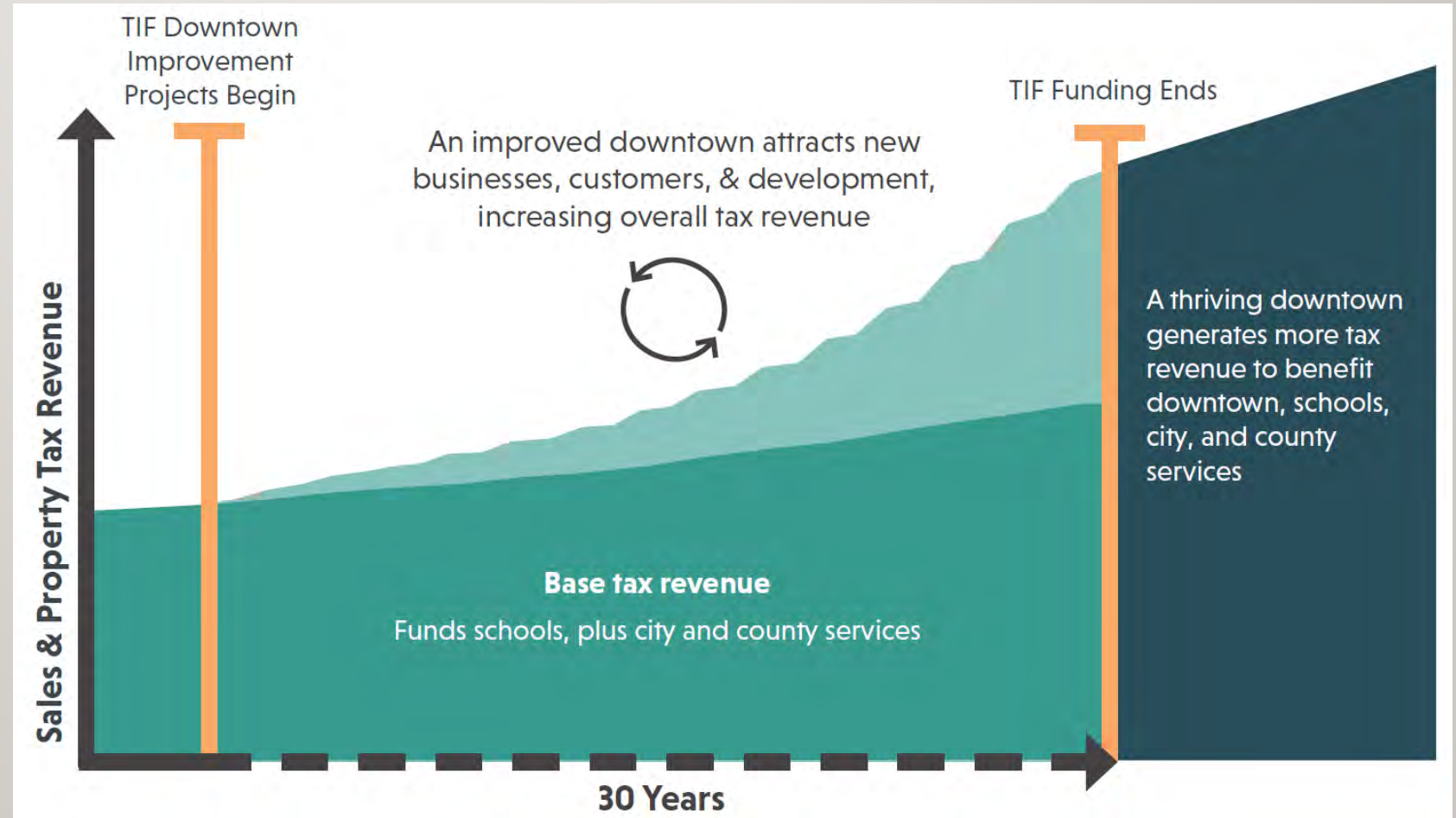
DOWNTOWN DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY (DDA)

- Governed by state statute
- Includes commercial and residential property
- Owners, residents, and tenants within district vote to create
- Led by Council-appointed board of 5 to 11 members
- Mainly funded by Tax Increment Financing (TIF) which allows district to keep future increases in sales/property taxes
- Optional added mill levy for operations
- Focus: re/development, infrastructure, economic vitality – implements Plan of Development



DDA FINANCING (TIF)

- **NOT** a new tax
- Redirects where some revenue goes **after** it is collected
- Form of **revenue reinvestment** – the more area prospers, the more it can invest



WHAT OTHER COMMUNITIES HAVE DDAs?



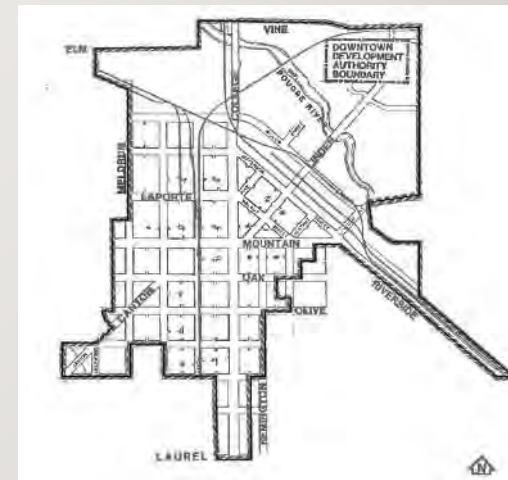
CASTLE ROCK



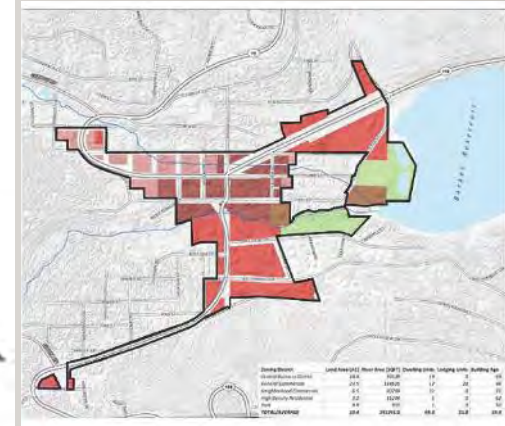
COLORADO SPRINGS



LONGMONT



FORT COLLINS



NEDERLAND



LITTLETON



ENGLEWOOD



GOLDEN



GRAND JUNCTION



GLENWOOD SPRINGS

COMMON DDA PROJECTS

9 Colorado DDAs; 169 projects

Average projects list = 18-19

33

CONNECTIVITY

Bike/Ped Improvements
Intersection Improvements
Sidewalks & Alleys
Bridges

29

DEVELOPMENT, REUSE, & ACTIVATION

Fill vacant storefronts
Overcome site barriers
Housing

27

SIGNAGE, GATEWAYS, PUBLIC ART

Wayfinding
Gateways
Banners

24

STREETSCAPE & BEAUTIFICATION

Landscaping & Trees
Furnishings
Lighting

23

MARKETING, BUSINESS SERVICES, & EVENTS

11

PARKING

17

PARKS & OPEN SPACE

5

UTILITIES & SAFETY

DRAFT
COLFAX COMMUNITY VISION &
ACTION PLAN

PLAN PURPOSE

- **High-level roadmap** to revitalize East Colfax & surrounding area over next 10-20 years.
- Serves as legally required “Plan of Development” for a new **Downtown Development Authority (DDA)**. Describes structure, governance, financing, and boundaries.
- Supports forming a **Community Development Corporation (CDC)** to work in partnership with DDA on issues that affect entire area but fall outside DDA boundaries.
- Suggests **practical steps** for achieving community goals to inform DDA and CDC annual workplans and budgets.
- Second draft plan completed in Fall 2025.

SIX GOAL AREAS



KEY IDEAS...

- **Public Safety and Security**

- Help make CPTED upgrades to public and private property.
- Coordinate with APD & hire safety ambassadors to respond to non-emergency safety issues.

- **Business Support and Access to Goods and Services**

- Create marketing and promotion campaigns to highlight small businesses.
- Activate vacant storefronts and attract community-desired businesses.
- Support business property ownership, grants, and access to technical assistance.

- **Housing and Neighborhood Stability**

- Preserve and improve the quality of existing housing.
- Add a variety of new housing.
- Promote wealth-building through homeownership, financial tools, and access to jobs.

KEY IDEAS...

- **Cleaning and Maintenance**

- Plant and maintain trees, flowers, and other landscaping.
- Provide extra cleaning and trash services along Colfax.

- **Advancing Arts, Culture, and a Creative Economy**

- Work with the Creative District on branding, promotions, and new public art.
- Provide affordable artist housing and spaces to help arts businesses grow.

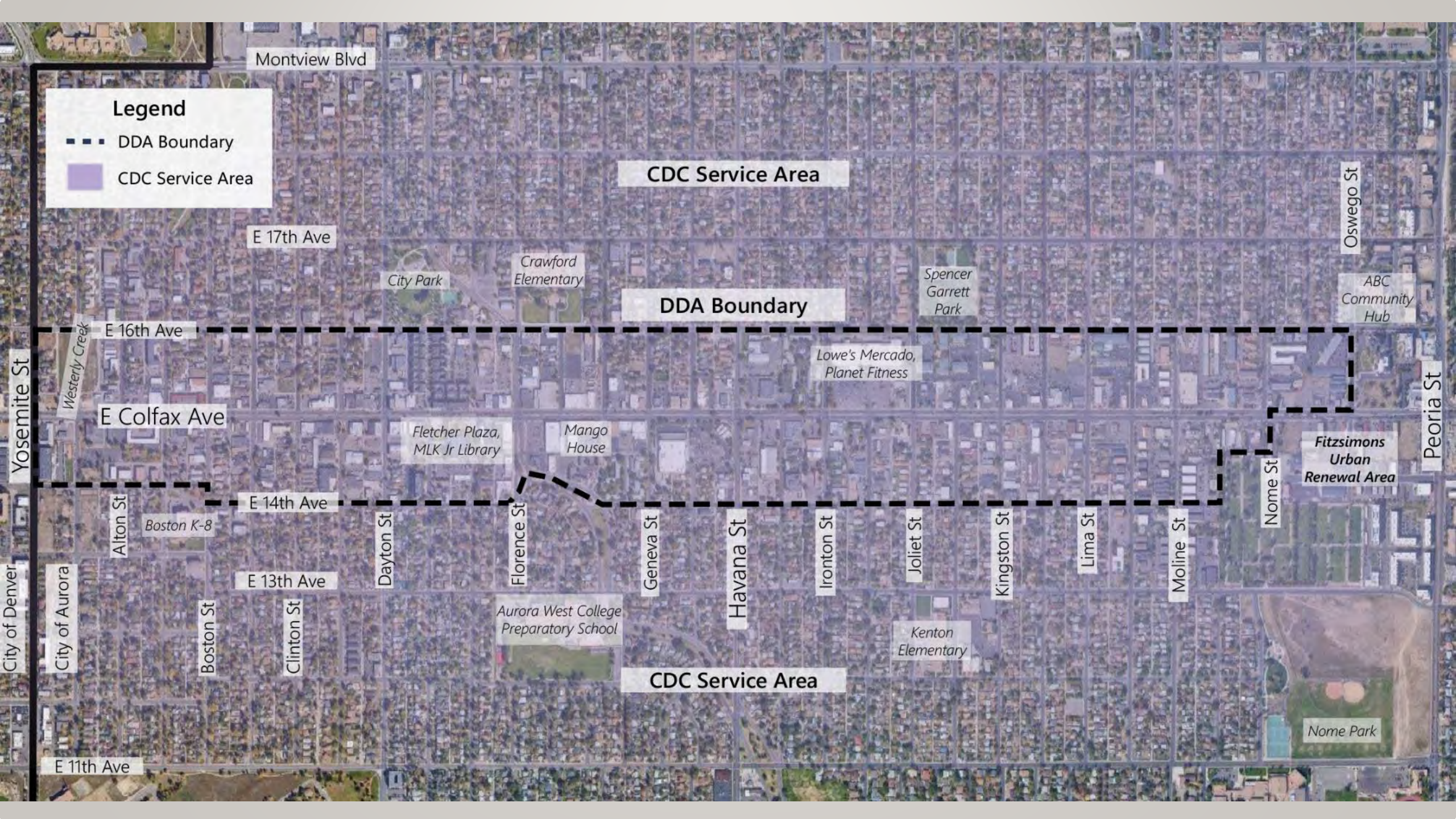
- **Public Space Improvements**

- Redesign and activate parks and plazas (like Fletcher Plaza) with events, festivals, and markets.
- Improve alleys, signage, and outdoor amenities like patio seating.

DDA & CDC: FOCUS AND RELATIONSHIP

DOWNTOWN DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY	COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION
A special district focused on supporting the East Colfax core. • Focus: safety, infrastructure, small business support, housing, and economic development in the district. • Funded primarily through Tax Increment Financing (TIF). TIF is <i>not</i> a new tax.	A partner that can diversify funding and operate beyond the DDA boundaries. • Focus: housing, economic development, and coordination around area-wide issues. • Funded through grants, philanthropy, and a self-sustaining real estate strategy.

What happens in the greater area affects the success of the DDA, and vice versa.
(especially topics such as safety, mobility, employment, etc.)



Legend

- DDA Boundary
- CDC Service Area

CDC Service Area

DDA Boundary

CDC Service Area

Montview Blvd

E 17th Ave

E 16th Ave

E Colfax Ave

E 14th Ave

E 13th Ave

E 11th Ave

City Park

Crawford Elementary

Spencer Garrett Park

Oswego St

ABC Community Hub

Lowe's Mercado, Planet Fitness

Fletcher Plaza, MLK Jr Library

Mango House

Fitzsimons Urban Renewal Area

Peoria St

Nome St

Moline St

Lima St

Kingston St

Joliet St

Ironton St

Havana St

Geneva St

Florence St

Dayton St

Clinton St

Boston St

Alton St

City of Aurora

City of Denver

Boston K-8

Aurora West College Preparatory School

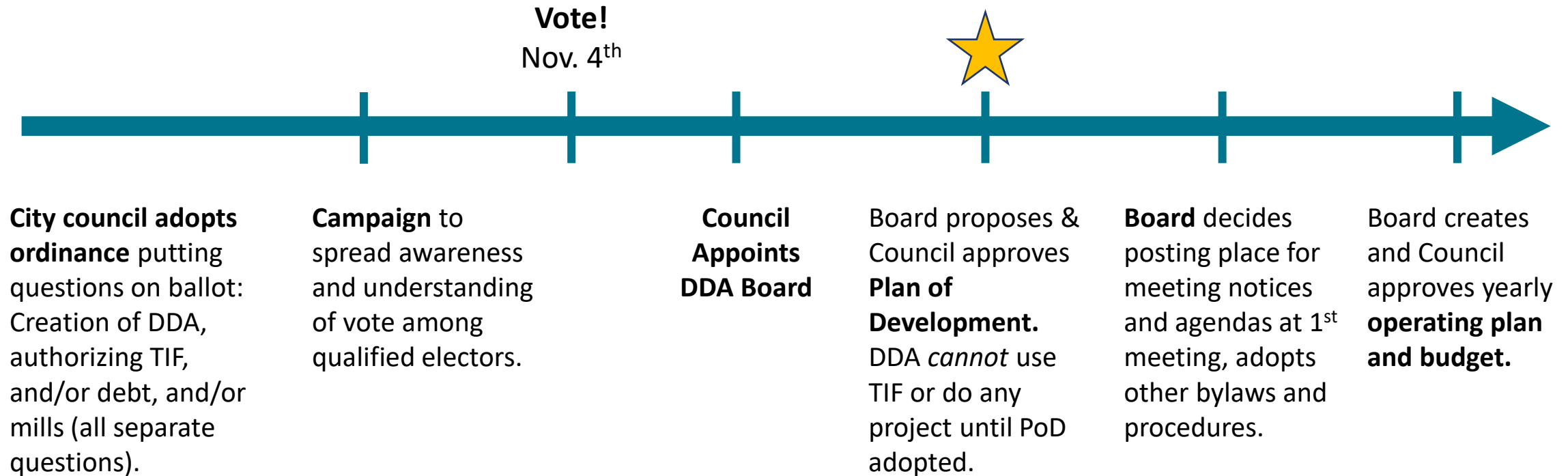
Kenton Elementary

Nome Park

DDA BOARD -- LEGAL REQUIREMENTS

- **5-to-11-member board**
- Must be a **business, resident, or property owner** within the DDA
 - A **manager, agent, or employee** of a business in the DDA is also eligible.
- The **majority** of board members must either **live** or **own property** within the DDA
- One member of the board must be a **City Councilmember**
 - No other city employee or elected official is allowed
- **Appointed by city council**, usually from slate of recommendations

Timeline: DDA Formation and Startup



ADDA Board Members and Terms



Members	Full Name	Term Begins	Term Ends
1	Blaurock, Amanda	6/22/2026	6/30/2027
2	Montoya, Priscilla	6/22/2026	6/30/2027
3	Eshete, Alemayehu	6/22/2026	6/30/2028
4	Goldman, Katie	6/22/2026	6/30/2028
5	Horne, Matthew	6/22/2026	6/30/2029
6	Moreno-Romero, Cynthia	6/22/2026	6/30/2029
7	Nguyen, Thoa	6/22/2026	6/30/2029
8	Sztevanovity, Natasha	6/22/2026	6/30/2030
9	Watson, Johnny	6/22/2026	6/30/2030
10	Jackson, Alli (City Council Rep)	6/22/2026	11/2029
11	Vacant		

DDA Board Operations and Rules



**HP
WC** Hoffmann
Parker
Wilson &
Carberry | P.C.

Hilary M. Graham

720-376-6530

hmg@hpwclaw.com



Topics



- 1. Board Member duties and responsibilities**
- 2. What does the Board do?**
- 3. Open Meetings Law**
- 4. Open Records Law**
- 5. Conflict of Interest**

Board Member Duties and Responsibilities



- ▶ **Fiduciary duty to the DDA (act in best interests of the DDA). No duty to individual people/entities.**
 - ▶ As a fiduciary, each Board Member has the duty to exercise the utmost good faith, business sense, and astuteness on behalf of the DDA. A Board Member is prohibited from taking personal advantage of a situation to benefit themselves or prejudice the DDA.
- ▶ **Duty to the Public Trust (including conduct)**
 - ▶ Board Members must carry out their duties for the benefit of the people, not for their own self-interest.
- ▶ Board Members cannot be compensated but can be reimbursed for expenses.

What does the Board do?



- ▶ Has “all powers customarily vested in the board of directors of a corporation”
- ▶ **Implements the Plan of Development**
- ▶ **Establishes the bylaws, rules, regulations, programs and policies of DDA/Board**
- ▶ Can only act with quorum (majority) at a lawfully called open meeting
- ▶ Hires and manages staff, or enters into agreements for these services
- ▶ Makes plans/studies and evaluates results
- ▶ Approve contracts and expenditures, including annual budget
 - ▶ Can delegate some powers to Executive Director

Leaving the Board



From most common to least:

- ▶ Term expires (4-year terms per formation ordinance – after initial stagger)
- ▶ Resignation
- ▶ Loss of qualification – *e.g.*, sell property, end employment, or move out of DDA
 - ▶ Each appointed member (except member from Council) shall reside, be a business lessee, or own real property in the DDA.
 - ▶ A manager, an agent, or an employee of an entity having its place of business in the DDA shall be eligible for appointment to the Board.
- ▶ Removal for “cause” (after notice and hearing)

Open Meetings Law



- ▶ Meetings must be open to public if three or more Board Members are present and purpose is to discuss DDA business.
 - ▶ Includes study/work sessions
 - ▶ Doesn't include social gatherings, chance run-ins when discussion of public business is not the central purpose of the gathering
- ▶ 24-hour posting of agenda
- ▶ Executive Session - can close meeting if dealing with certain matters such land acquisition or sales, personnel matters, or legal matters.
 - ▶ *No formal action* can be taken
- ▶ Emails can become meetings; no “reply all”
 - ▶ Exception for scheduling and availability

Open Records Law



- ▶ **Assume all records you receive or make for DDA business are open to public inspection**
- ▶ Subject matter; not device or email address used
- ▶ Certain exceptions
- ▶ Response process

Conflicts of Interest



DDA Statute C.R.S. § 31-25-819:

- ▶ *“No board member nor any employee of the board shall vote or otherwise participate in any matter in which he has a specific financial interest, defined as a matter in which the member or employee would receive a benefit or incur a cost substantially greater than other property owners within the district.*
- ▶ *When such interest appears, it is the duty of the board member or employee to make such interest known, and he shall thenceforth refrain from voting on or otherwise participating in the particular transaction involving such interest.*
- ▶ *Willful violation of the provisions of this section constitutes malfeasance on the part of a member of the board and is grounds for instant dismissal of any employee. The governing body may by ordinance provide for automatic forfeiture of office by a board member for violation of this section.”*

Conflicts of Interest



- ▶ Must disqualify from voting in advance *unless* conflict is disclosed AND necessary to obtain a quorum.
- ▶ Must refrain from attempting to influence the decisions of other members; physically leave.
- ▶ **Failure to disclose is a misdemeanor and may void action.**
- ▶ A potential conflict of interest exists when the Board Member is an executive officer or owns or controls, directly or indirectly, a substantial interest in any nongovernmental entity participating in the transaction.

Conflicts of Interest



A DDA Board member (as a local government official - elected or appointed), or a DDA employee (*i.e.* Executive Director), ***shall not***:

1. Disclose or use confidential information acquired in the course of their official duties in order to further their personal financial interests.
2. Accept gifts of substantial value or of substantial economic benefit which would tend to improperly influence a “reasonable person” in their public position to depart from the faithful and impartial discharge of their public duties OR is primarily for the purpose of rewarding them for official action.
3. Engage in a substantial financial transaction for their private business purposes with a person whom he inspects, regulates, or supervises in the course of their official duties.

Conflicts of Interest



A DDA Board member (as a local government official - elected or appointed), or a DDA employee (*i.e.* Executive Director), ***shall not***:

4. Perform an official act directly and substantially benefitting a business or other undertaking in which they either have a substantial financial interest or are engaged as counsel, consultant, representative or agent.
5. Be interested in any contract made in their official capacity or by any body, agency, or Board of which they are a member or employee.
6. Be a purchaser at any sale or vendor at any purchase made by them in their official capacity.

Conflicts of Interest



- ▶ Other considerations:
 - ▶ Appearance of impropriety
 - ▶ Official acts that would directly & substantially negatively affect a competitor
 - ▶ Benefits to members of immediate family.
- ▶ If in doubt, ask legal counsel
- ▶ DDA legal counsel is legal counsel to the entity (embodied by the Board), not to individual Board Members or individual staff members

Meeting Schedule Discussion

The DDA must decide on a time and location for the monthly recurring meeting. Below are potential meeting options for discussion:

*Avoiding Mondays due to City Council meetings

1. First, Second, or Third Tuesdays
 1. 11:00-1:00
 2. 4:00-6:00
2. First, Second, or Third Wednesdays
 1. 11:00-1:00
 2. 4:00-6:00
3. First, Second, or Third Thursdays
 1. 11:00-1:00



Commissioner Comments and Questions



This is an opportunity for Commissioners to ask questions , provide suggestions for a future business item, or provide comments on items not covered during the Business section.



Next Steps

- Staff suggests these business items for the September Meeting:

1. Hold elections for Chair and Vice Chair
2. Review Plan of Development before September meeting
3. Discuss and/or Adopt Plan of Development
4. Discuss and/or Adopt Bylaws



Next Steps

- Necessary Actions for Fall 2026:
 1. Adopt ADDA Budget
 2. Hire an Executive Director?
 3. Adopt a Work Plan
 4. Approve an Intergovernmental Agreement between ADDA and City of Aurora
 5. Approve an Intergovernmental Agreement between ADDA and AURA
 6. Adopt Open Records Act and Open Meetings Act



Adjournment



COLFAX COMMUNITY VISION & ACTION PLAN



and

DDA PLAN OF DEVELOPMENT

SECOND

DRAFT 10/20/25

NOTE

This is the second full draft of the Colfax Community Vision & Action Plan. This draft incorporates community input received from June 18 through August 8, 2025.

If a Downtown Development Authority is approved by voters in November, 2025, the plan will be finalized, approved by City Council at a public hearing, and adopted by the DDA Board as its formal Plan of Development. Per state law, a DDA is not allowed to collect TIF revenue or work on any project until it has an approved Plan of Development.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

What this Plan Does

The **Colfax Community Vision & Action Plan** is a long-term roadmap for revitalizing East Colfax and the surrounding areas of Northwest Aurora. This plan lays out a **shared vision** for the next 10 to 20 years and suggests **practical steps** to achieve that vision. The goals in the plan are grounded in community input and aim to **tackle long-time challenges** while **building on the area's many strengths**.

This plan also sets the stage for creating two new organizations: a **Downtown Development Authority (DDA)** and a **Community Development Corporation (CDC)**. Together, these organizations would help create public improvements, support local businesses, improve quality of life for residents, and protect the area's character while promoting economic prosperity that benefits everyone.

How the Draft Plan Was Created

Launched by the City of Aurora in 2024, the planning process took place in three phases: (1) learning about community priorities, (2) developing goals and strategies, and (3) helping create the DDA and CDC (expected in late 2025). A **working group** made up of local residents, small business owners, property owners, and civic leaders helped guide the process.

This plan grew out of extensive community engagement, including:

- **100+ conversations and informal interviews** with residents, business owners, property owners, community leaders, and city departments.
- **Roundtables with key constituencies and organizations**, including arts, service providers, and small businesses.
- **24 community events with 870+ attendees**, including attending events hosted by partner groups and meetings planned exclusively for the project.
- **Online engagement**, including a survey available in five languages that received **278 responses**, a project webpage with **over 1,800 unique visits**, and a newsletter with **over 310 subscribers**.

Feedback on the first draft of the plan was gathered from June through August 2025 through multiple in-person events and an online questionnaire. Participants were invited to give detailed feedback on the plan and share their priorities by ranking the importance of the six

goal areas. This input was used to refine strategies in the Action Plan, clarify concepts and plan structure, and more strongly align the Implementation section with community priorities.

Key Findings

- **Public safety and perceptions of crime** are key concerns impacting quality of life and business stability.
- **Retail vacancies and high turnover** disrupt access to goods and services.
- **Rising housing costs, poor housing quality, and limited options** threaten long-term community stability.
- **Arts, cultural, and small business assets** are widely celebrated but vulnerable to economic pressures.
- **Community voices** overwhelmingly desire improvements, but in a way that retains the neighborhood's affordability and welcoming character.

The word cloud to the right shows the most common words survey respondents gave when asked for three words that represented their vision for Colfax. The larger the word, the more frequently it was given. The top six words were: **safety, clean, community, affordable, thriving, and businesses.**



Strategic Goal Areas

The plan organizes strategies into six goal areas, each with suggested actions. Below are the six areas and some of their key ideas:

1. Public Safety and Security

- Improve safety by making upgrades to lighting, crosswalks, and bus stops.
- Help businesses and property owners add security measures.
- Hire safety ambassadors who respond to non-emergency safety issues.

2. Business Support and Access to Goods and Services

- Promote small businesses and help local entrepreneurs start new businesses.
- Activate vacant storefronts and attract community-desired businesses (e.g., full-service grocery, pharmacy).
- Support business stability through property ownership and technical assistance.

3. Housing and Neighborhood Stability

- Preserve existing affordable housing and improve housing quality.
- Promote wealth-building through homeownership and financial tools.
- Support youth programs, job training, and community leadership.

4. Cleaning and Maintenance

- Take care of trees, flowers, and other landscaping.
- Provide extra cleaning and trash services for public spaces.

5. Advancing Arts, Culture, and a Creative Economy

- Support public art that celebrates the area's history and many cultures.
- Provide affordable artist spaces and help arts businesses grow.
- Coordinate branding and promotions with the Creative District.

6. Public Space Improvements

- Redesign and activate parks and plazas (like Fletcher Plaza).
- Plant trees, flowers, and other landscaping.
- Improve alleys, signage, and outdoor amenities.
- Help fix up older buildings.
- Hold more events, festivals, and markets.

How the DDA and CDC Would Work

The plan proposes the creation of two organizations to drive work on the Action Plan:

Downtown Development Authority (DDA):

A special district focused on the East Colfax core. It would be funded primarily through Tax Increment Financing (TIF)* and would address safety, infrastructure, small business support, housing, and economic development in the district. People who live, rent, or own property in the DDA boundaries would vote to create it and would make up its board of directors. *TIF is **not** a new tax.

Community Development Corporation (CDC):

A nonprofit partner that could operate beyond the DDA boundaries. The CDC would focus on housing, economic development, advocacy, and coordination around area-wide issues. It would be governed by a community-based board and funded through grants, philanthropy, and a self-sustaining real estate strategy.

These two organizations would **share resources, align annual work plans, and collaborate** to maximize their impact. They would also work closely with the **city, local organizations, businesses, and community members.**

Implementation

Over the next six months, work will continue to **form the DDA and CDC**. This will include refining this plan, the vote to form the DDA (November 2025), CDC incorporation, staffing, and fundraising.

Near-Term Priorities

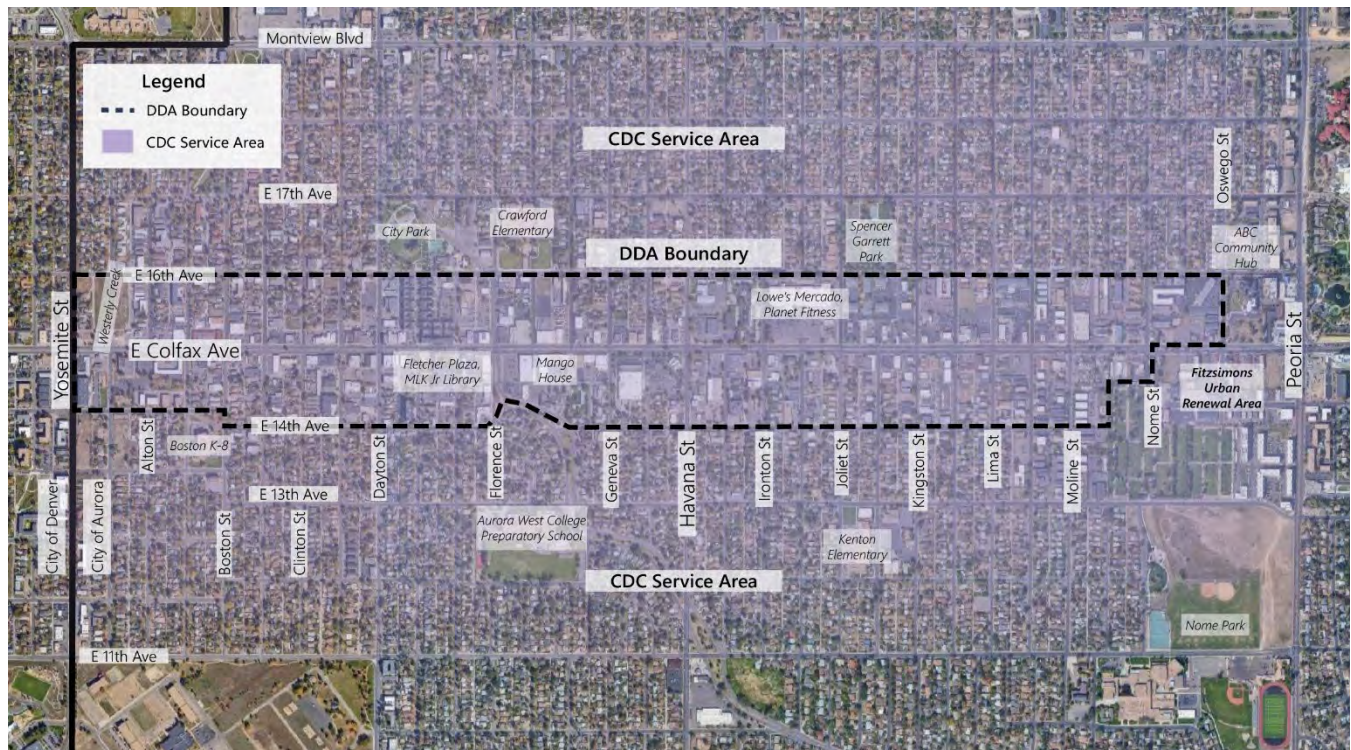
Once formed, the DDA and CDC would **create annual work plans and budgets**. In their first few years, the DDA and CDC would focus on addressing the **most pressing community priorities** and laying a foundation for future success. This would include:

- Launching **safety** and **business support** efforts.
- Establishing **cleaning** and **beautification** services.
- Stabilizing naturally occurring **affordable housing**.
- Promoting **cultural events** and **economic opportunities**.

Mid- and Long-Term Goals

Over time, as the DDA and CDC grow and get more resources, they would **tackle bigger, more complex projects**:

- Invest in **major infrastructure** and **public space upgrades** (e.g., parks, sidewalks).
- Buy/develop **community-serving real estate** (affordable housing/commercial space).
- **Expand grants** and **programs** to meet evolving community needs.



1. INTRODUCTION

Plan Purpose

This plan shares a long-term community vision for the future of East Colfax and the nearby areas in Northwest Aurora. It is meant to provide **high-level guidance** for community projects and decisions in this area over the next 10 to 20 years. Long-term plans are important because they help ensure short-term actions build towards bigger goals, promoting consistency, accountability, and meaningful progress toward a community's desired future.

This plan also acts as an official “**Plan of Development**” for a future **Aurora Downtown Development Authority (DDA)**—a document required by the state of Colorado in order for a DDA to operate. This plan also guides the creation of a **Community Development Corporation (CDC)** which could work closely with the DDA to achieve community goals. Unlike a DDA, a CDC is not legally required to have a plan. However, the intention is that the CDC would use this plan to direct its mission and strategies.

Details about how the CDC and DDA would be structured and how they would work together on this plan can be found in Chapter 4 (see Page 34).

Key Objectives

This document is meant to:

- Define the **mission, values, and priority areas** of the DDA and CDC.
- Describe how these entities will be **organized** and how they would **work together**.
- Suggest **strategies and actions** to help achieve goals over the next 10-20 years.

How the Plan Will be Used

As the DDA, CDC, and their partners make decisions, they will look to this plan to **ensure they are working towards the community's priorities and vision**. Below are a few specific examples of how the plan could be used:

1. Each year, the DDA and CDC can draw from the strategies and ideas in this document as they create their **annual budgets and work plans**.
2. At the end of the year, these organizations can **evaluate and report** on how effectively they worked towards the plan's goals.
3. The DDA and CDC can create additional **strategic plans or studies** to address specific priority areas.

4. The DDA and CDC can look to the plan to adopt **rules and bylaws** that guide how they operate.
5. This plan can be shared with **other organizations and entities** working in the area to advocate for actions that align with the community's vision.

This plan is meant to be **evaluated and updated periodically** through a robust, community-led process to make sure it stays relevant and aligned with community goals.



Long-term vision & mission

Colfax Vision and Action Plan

High-level guide for decision-making over the next 10 to 20 years. Ensures short-term actions build towards bigger goals that are consistent with the community's vision.

DDA and CDC are created.

Community-led organizations dedicated to working on this plan.



Yearly work plans & budgets

Each year, the DDA and CDC boards look at the priorities & suggestions in the plan to make their **annual work plans and budgets**. They...

- 1 Evaluate what resources they have.
- 2 Choose strategies to focus on.
- 3 Build out a detailed work plan and budget for that year.

The DDA and CDC can also use the Vision and Action Plan to...

- » Shape their bylaws and policies.
- » Track and report on progress.
- » Advocate for things the community wants.

Project Background and Process

Project Overview: Northwest Aurora is the cultural heart of the city and East Colfax is Aurora's original downtown. In 2024, the City of Aurora launched a planning process to gather community priorities for the Colfax area to create an action plan for achieving them. At the same time, the project evaluated three different models for a community-led organization that could help fund and work towards these priorities: a Business Improvement District (BID), a Downtown Development Authority (DDA), and Community Development Authority (CDC).

Project Phasing:

Phase I: Project Orientation, Priority Setting, and District Feasibility (Fall 2024-March 2025). Phase I included:

- o Project kickoff and Working Group formation.
- o Research, market analysis, and review of past plans (a full Market Snapshot and Past Plans Summary appears in the Appendix).
- o Interviews with city agencies, industry experts, community leaders, and supporting organizations.
- o Broad community engagement to identify emerging priorities (a full Community Engagement Report is in the Appendix).
- o Phase I concluded with identifying the most promising organizations to look into further in Phase II (a DDA and CDC).

Phase II: Vision and Action Plan (March 2025-June 2025). Phase II included:

- o Synthesizing Phase I engagement and research to create a full draft of the Vision & Action Plan.
- o Drafting organizational structures to lay out how the DDA and CDC would work.
- o Community review of the draft plan and organizational structures.
- o Phase II will conclude with determining overall support and deciding whether to move forward with forming the DDA and/or CDC.

Phase III: Legal Process to Form Selected Organization(s) (July 2025-November 2025):

Phase III will conduct the legal steps needed to form the new organization(s), including a November vote for the DDA. This includes finalizing the recommended structures and work plans for the DDA and CDC.

Project Working Group: A project working group was formed to provide creative input and guidance throughout the project. Participants were selected to represent a variety of local interests and perspectives, including residents, organizational leaders, property owners, and businesses. The Working Group includes the following individuals:

- Council Member Curtis Gardner, Aurora City Council
- Council Member Crystal Murillo, Aurora City Council
- Mateos Álvarez, We Are Aurora/Somos Aurora
- Sean Buchan, Cerebral Brewing
- Maisha Fields, Dayton Street Opportunity Center
- Le'Toya Garland, School of Breaking
- Katie Goldman, La Victoria Healing Kitchen
- Hiemi Haines, Property Owner
- Pastor Reid Hettich, Northwest Aurora Community Coalition
- Alli Jackson, Resident
- Esther Turcios, Resident
- Caitlin Matthews, Food Justice NW Aurora
- Thoa Nguyen, Banh and Butter
- Fabian Osorio, Phoenix Auto Detailing
- Heather Adams, Vanishing West Ciders
- Brendan Greene, East Colfax Community Collective
- Josh Pred, Property Owner
- Krista Robinson, formerly of Downtown Aurora Visual Arts (DAVA)
- Betty Sanchez, Property Owner
- Morgan Schreiber, Creative Alliance for Downtown Aurora (CADA)
- Johnny Watson, Aurora Urban Renewal Authority (AURA)

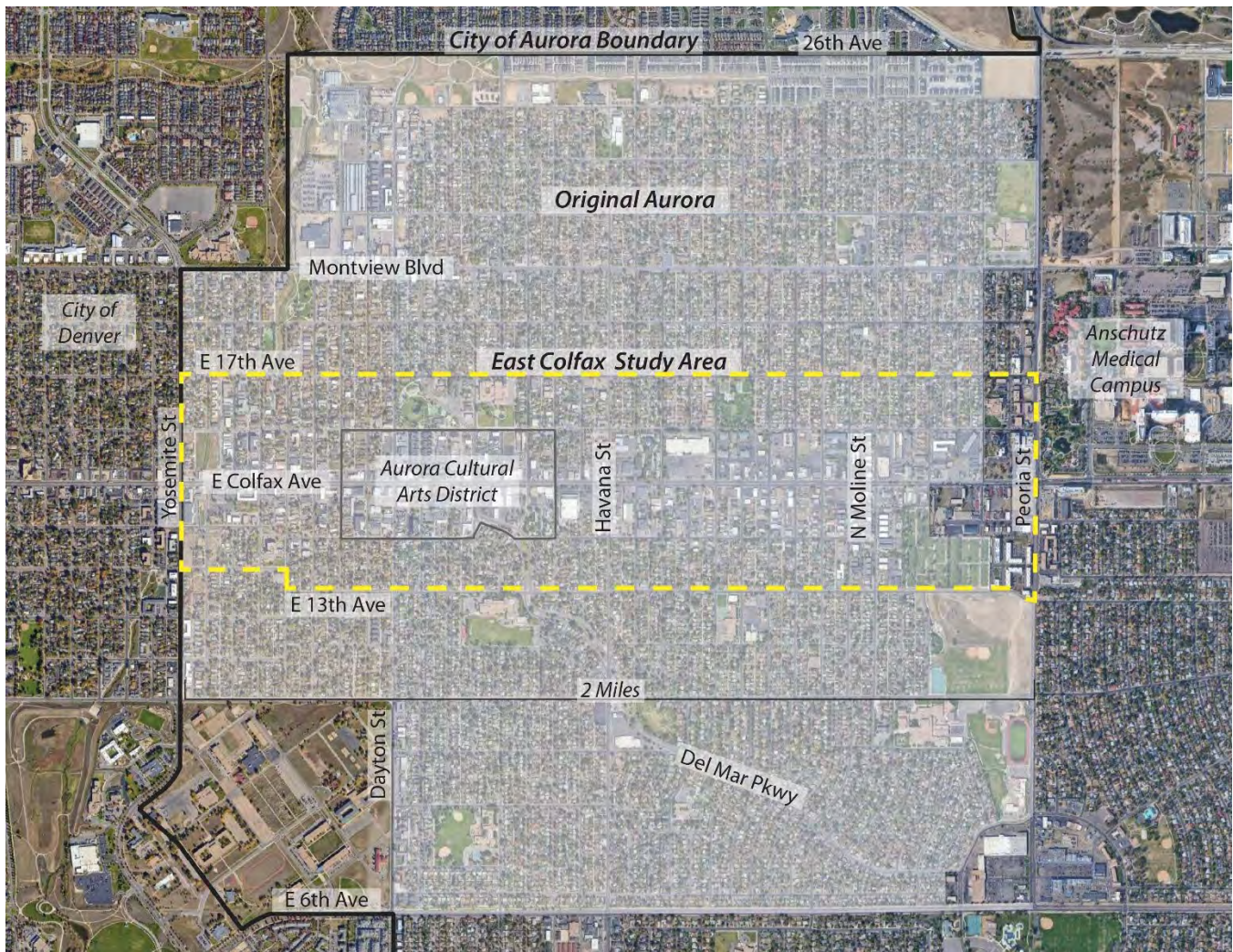
Consultant Team: The City of Aurora hired Denver-based *Progressive Urban Management Associates (P.U.M.A.)* to lead the planning process. P.U.M.A.'s team included *Spencer Fane* (legal counsel), *Studio Seed* (urban and graphic design), and *Public Alignment* (community engagement support).

City Staff:

- Laura Perry, Deputy City Manager
- Jeanine Rustad, Director of Planning and Business Development
- Andrea Amonick, Business Development and Redevelopment Manager (AURA)
- Daniel Krzyzanowski, Planning Supervisor

Study Area:

The project focused on the area inside the dashed yellow line shown on the map below. This includes E. Colfax Ave. between Yosemite St. and Peoria St., and between E. 13th Ave and E. 17th Ave.



2. EXISTING CONDITIONS AND KEY FINDINGS

Community Context

The community around East Colfax Avenue in Northwest Aurora, once known as the town of Fletcher, is the oldest part of the city. This “Original Aurora” began as one of Denver’s earliest streetcar suburbs and grew significantly after World War II. Before Interstate 70 was built in the 1950s, Colfax Avenue was the primary east-west route through the region and was known as the “Gateway to the Rockies.” It was home to a thriving economy supported by local businesses, motels, and diners that served both residents and visitors traveling to Denver and the Rocky Mountains.

However, by the 1970s, economic activity began shifting south due to the construction of I-70 and the eventual closure of key job centers, including Lowry Air Force Base (1994), Stapleton Airport (1995), and Fitzsimons Army Garrison (1999). These changes led to a long period of economic decline for the neighborhood. The expansion of new neighborhoods in other areas of the city also drew investment away from central communities like Original Aurora.

Despite these setbacks, the area has seen renewed investment. The opening of the Anschutz Medical Campus in 2006 and the designation of the Colfax corridor as a state-certified creative district in 2021 have helped spark new activity in the neighborhood.

A Diverse and Resilient Community

Northwest Aurora is incredibly unique: over the past 50 years, the area has become Colorado’s most ethnically diverse community, welcoming immigrants from Latin America, Asia, Africa, and beyond.

While the community continues to face challenges such as underinvestment, food insecurity, and public safety concerns, residents are deeply proud of their neighborhood’s history, resilience, and cultural richness. This excellence is illustrated by Northwest Aurora’s numerous entrepreneurs and small businesses, widely-celebrated destinations for global cuisine, arts and culture, and active, tight-knit community organizations and schools.

Recent Investments and Planning Efforts

In recent years, interest in revitalizing Northwest Aurora and the East Colfax corridor has grown among residents, city leaders, and private investors. Notable efforts include:

- **Fletcher Urban Renewal Area (URA):** A designated area between Dayton St. and Florence St. using tax-increment financing (TIF) to support improvements in downtown Aurora. This URA could be replaced by a Downtown Development Authority (DDA).
- **New Businesses and Improvements:** Storefront upgrades and new restaurants have been supported through city programs like the Restaurant Incentive Program.
- **The People's Building and Fox Theater:** The former is a renovated space on Colfax that now serves as a hub for arts, events, and community gatherings; the latter is a historic theater that hosts performances and movies.
- **Recent Plans:** Various planning efforts that impact all or parts of the study area include the 13th Avenue Multimodal Corridor Study (2023), the Havana Street Corridor Study (2023), the City of Aurora Housing Strategy (2020), the Aurora Cultural Arts District 2020-2023 Strategic Plan, Original Aurora Rezone (2018), and the Aurora Places Comprehensive Plan (2018).

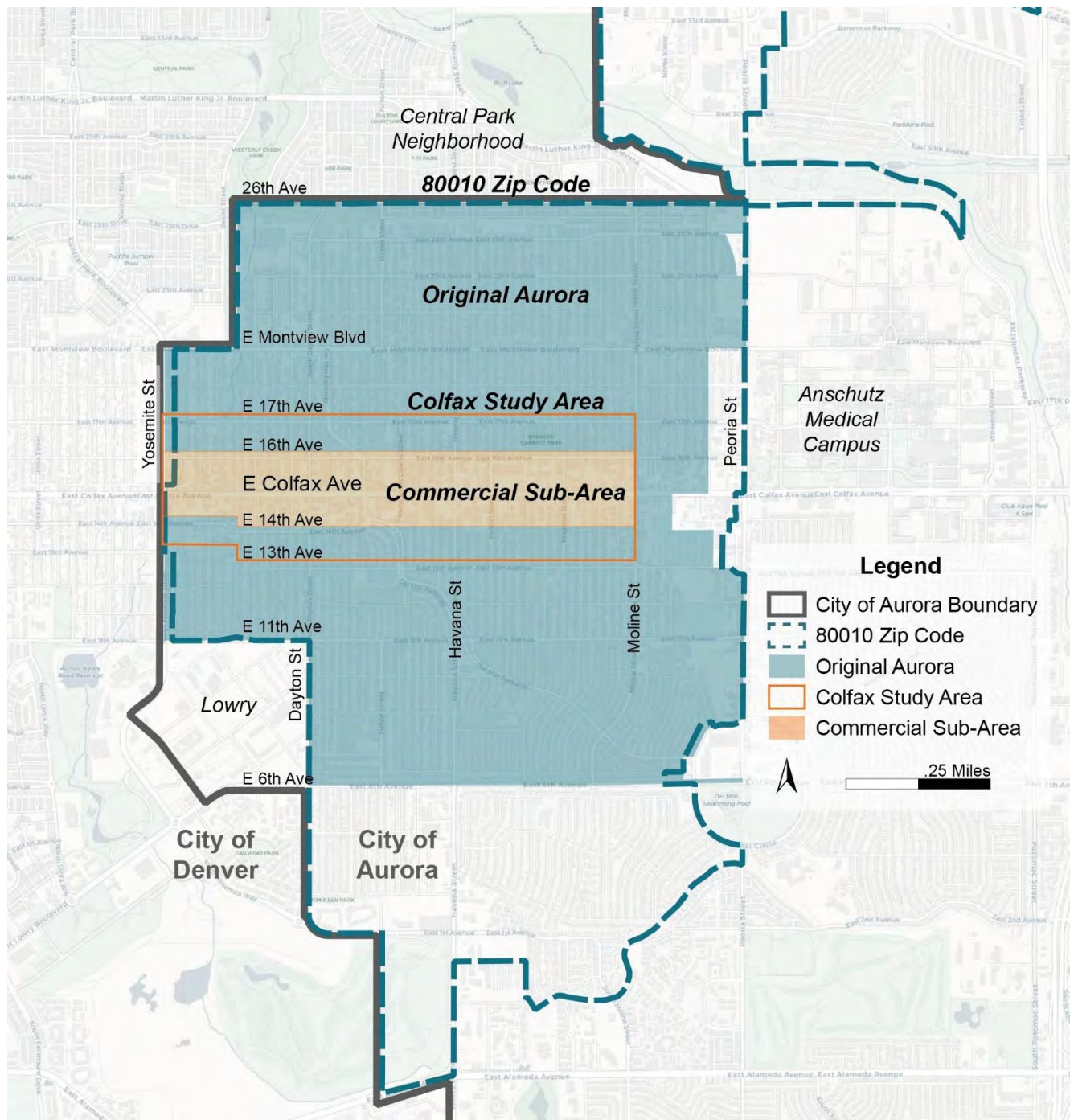
Nearby projects, such as Stanley Marketplace and the CU Anschutz Medical Campus, are also influencing the area's development. While these bring jobs and services, they have also raised worries about investments contributing to increased housing costs that put pressure on longtime residents.

Looking Ahead: Positive Change Rooted in the Community

As growth continues, many community members are concerned about losing the character of the area. Residents fear being priced out, as well as losing valued businesses and institutions that make the community so rich and unique for locals and visitors alike. There is broad sentiment that this plan, and the organizations that emerge from it, must take a community-focused approach to ensure changes uplift existing residents and businesses and that investments in the area reflect the values, history, and diversity of Northwest Aurora.

Market Snapshot – Key Findings

This section summarizes important themes from market research. The full market analysis and data sources can be found in the Appendix. This data includes analysis from several context areas, including Original Aurora, the 80010 zip code, and the planning study area. These locations and their relationship to each other are shown on the map below.



The People: Diversity as a Strength to be Celebrated

- **Northwest Aurora is one of the most diverse communities in Colorado.**
 - o Original Aurora's population has grown and diversified over the past decade, adding more than 2,800 new residents. Many of the community's newcomers are foreign-born: roughly one-third of the population was born outside of the United States, with Latin America representing the largest region of origin (68%).
 - o More than half (54%) of Northwest Aurora residents identify as Hispanic, and over a quarter (28%) of Original Aurora residents identify with "Some Other Race." An additional 18% identify with two or more races; 14% identify as Black, 7% as Asian, and 2.5% as American Indian.
 - o In the 80010-zip code, more than half of households speak a language other than English at home.

Housing and Cost of Living Strain the Community

- **Northwest Aurora faces intersecting challenges of limited affordable housing, high housing costs, and comparatively low household incomes**—conditions that raise concerns about long-term community stability.
 - o Like the rest of the Denver metro area, housing prices in Northwest Aurora have risen dramatically—especially since the COVID-19 pandemic. As of January 2025, there were no homes for sale in Original Aurora that a family with an average area income could afford. Original Aurora's median household income in 2024 was just over \$59,000, much lower than the citywide median of \$83,500.
- **New apartments are being built** – but most are market-rate units near Stanley Marketplace.
 - o Since 2010, 1,579 new apartment units have been added to Original Aurora. Most of these (80%) have been built since 2020.
 - o North Aurora, Fitzsimons, and Jewell Heights-Hoffman Heights are all in the top ten most expensive neighborhoods to rent in Aurora.

Education & Employment – Anschutz and Schools as Key Drivers

- **Education:** 21% of Original Aurora residents have received a Bachelor's degree or higher, compared to 36.6% citywide.
- **Public schools lead employment:** Top employers in Original Aurora include Aurora Public Schools, Aurora Central High School, Peoria Elementary, and Stanley Marketplace. 22% of jobs in Original Aurora are in Educational Services (compared to 9% citywide)
- **Gender divide:** Women comprise two thirds of the workforce in Original Aurora, and nearly 75% in the larger Yosemite-to-I25 area.

- **96% of employed residents commute** out of Original Aurora for work, although the majority (65%) are commuting less than 10 miles away.
- **Limited office space:** Original Aurora has much more retail than office real estate.

Economy is Retail-Heavy and Vulnerable

- **Retail—particularly small, independent businesses—is a key segment of the Original Aurora economy.**
 - o Original Aurora comprises 2% of Aurora’s total land area but nearly 8% of the city’s retail square footage.
- **Retail threats:**
 - o Retail vacancy is higher in Original Aurora and the Colfax sub-area than in the rest of the city compared to pre-Covid levels. Vacancy rates have been increasing since 2022, whereas they are falling in the rest of the city.
 - o Crime (both real and perceived) has driven high turnover and the loss of anchor retail institutions such as Walmart and Walgreens.
- **Gaps in goods and services**
 - o The closure of the Walmart on Havana and Colfax, in addition to the closure of the adjacent Walgreens and nearby dollar stores, exacerbates the already high rates of food insecurity in the area. Cost of food is the most common barrier to accessing adequate nutritious food, and now residents must travel outside the neighborhood to find affordable options.

Dining, Arts & Cultural Assets Poised to Grow

- **Cultural assets and venues:** Downtown Aurora is home to many well-known cultural assets including city-owned facilities like the MLK Jr. Library, Fox Theater, People’s Building, and community arts institutions like Downtown Aurora Visual Arts and Vintage Theater.
- **Arts scene:** The arts district’s strengths include a high concentration of art organizations and programming, a large presence of artists living and working in the community, a supportive art community, public art, and city investment.
- **Visitation as a key economic driver, with room to grow:** Foot traffic along the Colfax corridor has recovered to pre-pandemic levels. Saturdays draw the most visitors – presumably due to restaurants and arts and cultural activities.

Community Perspectives: Strengths, Challenges, and Priorities

Overview

Broad community outreach was central to creating the first draft of the plan. Over the course of nine months, the project team spoke with people who live and work in Northwest Aurora to understand what they loved about the area, challenges they wanted to see addressed, and their ideas and priorities. A full report on of engagement activities and methodology is in the Appendix.

Highlights of community outreach include:

- **100+ conversations and informal interviews** with individual businesses, property owners, community leaders, and city departments.
- **Roundtables with key constituencies and organizations**, including arts, service providers, and small business owners.
- **22 community events with 740+ attendees**, including attending events hosted by partner groups and meetings planned exclusively for this project.
- **Online engagement**, including an online survey available in five languages that received 278 responses, a project webpage with over 1,250 unique visits, and a newsletter with over 260 subscribers.

Strengths and Challenges

The following summarizes the most common themes that emerged from these conversations.

STRENGTHS

- Small businesses and entrepreneurs
- Culturally diverse and welcoming
- Assets like People's Building, Fox Theater, parks, and Library
- Arts and culture
- Centrally located, easy to get to
- Lots of active organizations
- Walkable
- Historic buildings
- Passionate, tight-knit community
- Youth and families
- Schools

CHALLENGES

- Crime and public safety
- Feel neglect and disconnected from City
- Empty or underutilized lots and buildings
- Poor maintenance and cleanliness
- Cost of living increasing, putting pressure on residents and businesses
- High business turnover
- Negative reputation and media attention
- Lack of coordination among area organizations
- Dangerous traffic
- Unsafe/unsanitary housing conditions

Survey Summary

A multilingual online survey was launched to dive deeper into these initial feedback themes. The survey was hosted on the project webpage, promoted in project newsletters and at in-person events (including paper copies), and shared with area organizations and partners to distribute via their networks. A total of **278 people** completed the survey. The English language version received 264 responses while the Spanish language version received 14. It was also made available in Burmese, Vietnamese, and Amharic. However, none were completed for those languages.

The following is a high-level summary of the combined English and Spanish results (full survey results can be found in Appendix III).

Respondent Characteristics

- **37% of survey respondents live in the study area**, 35% work in the area, 18% own property in the area, and 13% own or operate a business or non-profit in the area.
- **Nearly half of all respondents reported visiting the area daily.** Aside from living in the area, the top reasons for visiting were: restaurants, cafes, and bars (59%), arts and culture (45%), and work (39%).
- **Respondents aged 35-to-44 represented the largest respondent group (30%),** followed by 25-to-34-year-olds (23%).
- **The majority of respondents identified as White or Caucasian (58%).** The next most common demographic groups represented were Hispanic or Latino (14%), Black or African American (8%), Multiracial or Biracial (6%), and Asian or Pacific Islander (5%).

Vision for the Future

Respondents were asked to share three words that represented their vision for the future of Colfax. The word cloud to the right shows the most common words provided, with the font size relating to frequency. The top six words were: **safety, clean, community, affordable, thriving, and businesses.**



Priorities for Programs and Services

When asked which one program or service will be most important to achieve their vision for Colfax, **improving safety and security** emerged as a clear priority (40%). This was followed by **preventing the displacement of residents** (18%) and supporting the identity of Colfax as a place **welcoming to people of all cultures and backgrounds** (11%).

Priorities for Physical Improvements

When asked which one physical improvement will be most important to achieve their vision for Colfax, most respondents chose **improving buildings and filling vacant storefronts** (26%). Making Colfax **more pedestrian-friendly** (15%) and **increasing housing options** (13%) were the next most frequently chosen priorities.

In-Person Priority Exercises

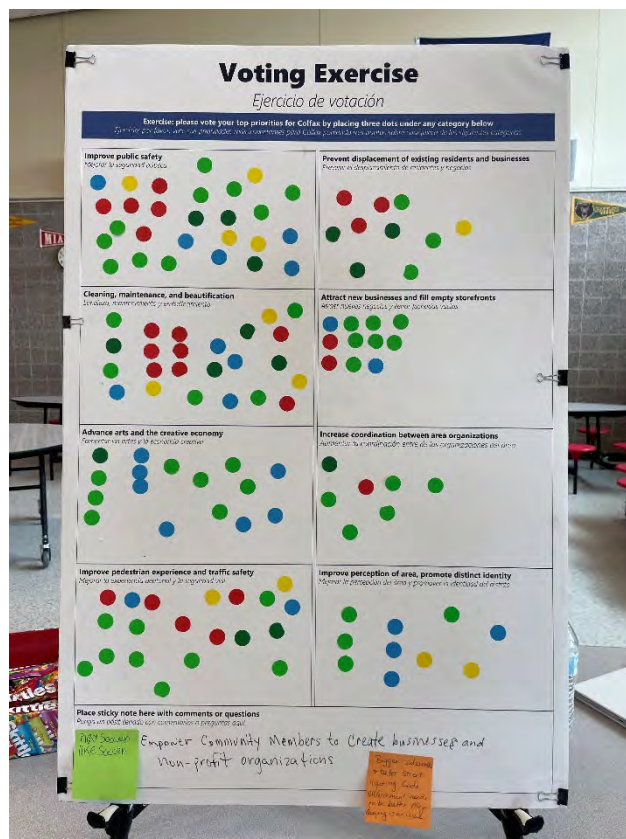
In addition to the online survey, the project team offered a variety of prioritization exercises across eight in-person events, including a voting activity where attendees could place three dots on their top priority categories. Below are the top priorities that emerged from these voting exercises. The results of these exercises reinforced the findings of the survey:

1. Improve public safety
2. Prevent the displacement of businesses and residents
3. Attract new businesses and fill empty storefronts

Cleaning, maintenance, and beautification along with **improving pedestrian safety** were the next most frequently chosen priorities. The remaining options presented on the boards were: advance arts and the creative economy, improve the perception of the area, and increase coordination between area organizations.

First Draft Plan Feedback

Once the first draft of the plan was released, the project team conducted both in-person and online engagement to receive specific feedback on recommended strategies and actions and understand the community's top priorities for the Implementation section. The team attended or hosted 4 events with over 180 participants, set up an online questionnaire, received direct feedback from working group members, and continued meeting one-on-one with community members. The community's top three priorities from the voting exercise available at events and online were (in order) **Public Safety & Security, Housing and Neighborhood Stability, and Business Support and Access to Goods & Services.**



Results of the priority voting exercise at the Aurora West Cultural Fair pop-up.

Key Takeaways

The following section combines research and community input into key takeaways for the most effective actions and approach to revitalizing Colfax.

Ensure residents and businesses can stay in the neighborhood to enjoy future improvements.

Stakeholders emphasized the resiliency, creativity, and passion of its families, entrepreneurs, and organizations that have invested in the area for decades in spite of very real challenges. This community drives its cultural institutions, schools, and small businesses, and makes the area a widely-celebrated destination for global cuisine, culture, and art. It is critical that future improvements build up and protect these assets rather than coming at their expense.

Improving public safety is key.

Stakeholders from all walks of life expressed discomfort walking to businesses and services. In turn, businesses struggle to attract customers, retain staff, and address recurring crime. Community-wide concerns include dangerous traffic, experiences with or perceptions of violent crime, aggressive behaviors, open drug use, and prostitution. These issues extend into the neighborhood, including parks and playgrounds. An effective approach will be grounded in strong partnerships that address the root causes of crime and balance police and non-police solutions to addressing safety issues.

Stabilize businesses and fill empty storefronts.

Northwest Aurora is recognized for its excellent restaurants and multicultural local businesses. However, the area sees frequent business closures and has many empty storefronts—some staying vacant for years. In addition to supporting existing businesses, it is important to attract new businesses to enliven the street, bring local jobs, and offer needed goods and services. Area residents strongly desire a new full-service grocery store, pharmacy, home goods/supplies store, and destinations for children and families, such as an indoor play center.

Beautify and maintain public spaces.

While stakeholder opinions varied on the importance of cleaning and maintenance, most agree that raising the standards in these areas is key to making the Colfax corridor feel safer and more welcoming. This includes more frequent trash pickup, regular upkeep of buildings and sidewalks, and overall improvements to public spaces. New landscaping, cleaner and more active public plazas, and a more unified look throughout the area could also help improve the perception of the area and strengthen the identity of downtown Aurora.

Address housing security and quality.

Residents emphasized the critical need for better quality housing that is well-maintained, affordable, and available in different types to fit a variety of needs. Specific concerns included rising rents and mortgages, needing help with landlord issues or lease negotiations, support for buying a home, and helping older neighbors take care of their homes so they can continue living in the community safely and comfortably.

Art and culture will drive economic growth.

Colfax is the cultural heart of Aurora and the creative energy of its residents and entrepreneurs substantiates the area as a vibrant, multicultural arts district and economic engine. Art and culture are central to the community's vision for the future, and from a market perspective, are a key market differentiator in a competitive region. However, economies centered on arts and culture are highly vulnerable to rising costs as they rely on access to affordable creative spaces and housing. A forward-thinking, comprehensive approach will be essential to ensure artists, entrepreneurs, and cultural institutions are able to succeed here in the long run.

Promote a unified, positive identity....

While the Colfax area faces very real challenges, stakeholders expressed frustration at the negative image of the neighborhood. They mentioned the desire for unified marketing and communications to celebrate its many unique assets and improve its perception.

...and a unified approach towards common goals.

In addition to numerous small businesses, there are many entities working to provide services, programs, and advocacy in the community. Their impact could be multiplied by coordinating, sharing resources, and working together towards common goals. Involving all community members by using culturally-inclusive and language-accessible methods will be essential.

To achieve these priorities, the right organization will need to:

- Be a champion for the Colfax area and Northwest Aurora, helping East Colfax realize its full potential as a downtown and community center offering a safe, vibrant experience for visitors and community members alike.
- Bring investment in a way that supports current residents and businesses and allows them to thrive in the neighborhood for the long-term.
- Emphasize community leadership and be transparent, accessible, and inclusive to people of all backgrounds and languages.
- Generate reliable funding without adding significant new costs (taxes).
- Build partnerships with existing and future organizations – and the City of Aurora.
- Treat the neighborhood as an interconnected whole.

3. ACTION PLAN

This chapter outlines the main goal areas of the Colfax Community Vision & Action Plan and includes recommended strategies to help support those goals. These goal areas are interrelated—addressing one can often help address others. Likewise, strategies can be designed to work towards multiple goals at once.

The strategies and actions in this plan are a starting point. They include ideas that have come directly from the community as well as strategies that have been successful in other places. Many great ideas can and will continue to emerge.

How will the DDA and CDC choose what to work on?

Each year, the DDA and CDC can pull from these strategies to create their annual work plans and budgets. In choosing what to work on, they will need to consider community priorities and needs in the context of the resources and opportunities available that year. See **Chapter 5: Implementation** for suggestions of what the DDA and CDC should focus on in their first few years and how it can be scaled up as they grow over time.

The six goal areas:



Public Safety & Security

Safety—including crime and traffic safety—is one of the most pressing issues in Northwest Aurora. Safety impacts quality of life for residents and businesses as well as overall investment in the area. Solving safety challenges will take a broad, coordinated approach that addresses the root causes of crime while also mitigating immediate safety issues. Work on these strategies should focus on leveraging partnerships with existing programs and initiatives.

Possible Strategies and Actions:

A. Improve safety through environmental changes.

1. Work with City agencies on CPTED (Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design) strategies. This approach uses physical changes to buildings and public spaces to help prevent crime. These updates are often low-cost but make a significant difference in how safe an area feels. Examples include:
 - Installing better lighting along streets, sidewalks, alleys, and parking lots.
 - Partnering with RTD to make bus stops clean, safe, and welcoming.

B. Hire safety ambassadors who coordinate with the Aurora Police Department (APD) and the Aurora Mobile Response Team.

1. Hire trained safety ambassadors who can walk the area and assist with non-emergency situations. These ambassadors would focus on helping people experiencing homelessness, mental health struggles, or addiction get connected to services. Safety ambassadors would work closely with the **Aurora Mobile Response Team** (see below).
 - **CASE STUDY: Aurora Mobile Response Team (Aurora, Colorado).** The City of Aurora launched a mobile response program in 2024 to address the growing number of instances of individuals experiencing behavioral health crises. The program pairs mental health clinicians with paramedics to provide trauma-informed services, which improves care outcomes while reducing the need for police officers to respond to non-emergency situations.
[Auroragov.org/residents/neighborhood_resources/aurora_mobile_response_team](https://auroragov.org/residents/neighborhood_resources/aurora_mobile_response_team)
2. Support the Aurora Police Department's (APD) community policing efforts to have more officers on foot and riding bikes along East Colfax, focusing on building trust between officers, residents, and businesses.
3. Place a police storefront along East Colfax to improve visibility and response times.

C. Help businesses and property owners make safety improvements.

1. Provide CPTED evaluations and grants.

2. Help property owners and tenants pay for new or improved security measures like outdoor lighting and security systems.
3. Increase awareness of non-police response options for help with safety concerns.

D. Make streets safer for pedestrians and cyclists.

1. Work with the community, the City, and other agencies such as CDOT to identify priority areas and work on strategies to reduce traffic speeds and make sidewalks and crosswalks safer, like installing raised crossings and wider sidewalks.

► **CASE STUDY: Englewood DDA Pedestrian Upgrades (Englewood Colorado).**

Since its inception in 2021, the Englewood DDA has made strategic investments in sidewalks, streetscaping, and road crossings that have contributed to a safer and more activated downtown. Through partnerships with CDOT and the City of Englewood, the DDA oversaw the installation of ADA-compliant curb ramps, development of a 10-foot-wide multi-use path parallel to Old Hampden Avenue, and new pedestrian lighting and traffic calming features to reduce traffic speeds. Pedestrian improvement projects have incorporated creative design, such as colorful crosswalk patterns to make the crossings even more visible.

[Englewoodco.gov/our-city/downtown-development-authority/projects/placemaking](https://englewoodco.gov/our-city/downtown-development-authority/projects/placemaking)

2. Play advocate/liaison role among the many different local, county, state, and regional transportation entities.
3. Create safe, clearly marked bike lanes that connect residential and commercial areas.

E. Build a comprehensive safety strategy by working with preventative community-based programs that address the root causes of crime.

1. Coordinate closely with organizations already working on addressing safety by providing intervention and support services in the area.
2. Work with youth-serving organizations, schools, students, and families to identify and address safety needs unique to youth and support youth violence prevention efforts.

Supporting Small Businesses & Access to Goods and Services

Helping current businesses succeed—and attracting new businesses the community desires—is key to keeping Colfax a strong and thriving neighborhood center. The primary goal is to support small, local, and culturally diverse businesses and neighborhood entrepreneurship. Work on these strategies should focus on leveraging partnerships with existing programs and initiatives.

Possible Strategies and Actions:

A. Promote and market local businesses.

1. Work with local business-serving organizations and the Creative Alliance of Downtown Aurora (CADA) to create a marketing plan that improves the area's image and highlights its wide range of businesses.
2. Organize local discounts and promotions to make shopping more affordable for local residents and workers.
 - ▶ **CASE STUDY: Pueblo Downtown Association (Pueblo, Colorado).** Pueblo's downtown organization created a Downtown Association Discount Card that offers members deals at participating businesses. The organization also distributes "Downtown Dollars" which are certificates for shoppers to use at participating retail stores and restaurants (at no cost to businesses to participate). *Pueblodowntown.com*
3. Launch creative marketing campaigns to highlight and drive traffic to local businesses.
 - ▶ **CASE STUDY: Longmont DDA Video Promotions (Longmont, Colorado).** In 2023, the Longmont DDA launched a partnership with students at the St. Vrain Valley Schools Innovation Center to produce short videos highlighting area businesses. In exchange for promotional videos to market through LDDA social media channels, students gain valuable skills and real-world experience. The media campaign is called "Downtown Longmont is Everyone's Neighborhood." *Downtownlongmont.com*

B. Creatively fill vacant storefronts.

1. Work with property owners to activate empty storefronts with temporary uses like pop-up shops, art galleries, or window displays.
2. Work with City departments to preserve and fix up historic buildings while also making it easier to reuse them for new purposes.
3. Work with the City to help business and property owners through the permitting process.

C. Recruit and support a variety of needed businesses.

1. Develop a coordinated plan to attract new businesses, prioritizing a diverse mix of small, local, culturally-diverse businesses.
2. Work with the City and real estate partners to recruit essential businesses that reflect the desires, needs, and cultural identity of the community, including: full-service grocery, hardware or home improvement, essential hygiene and household products, and pharmacy.

3. Create a “start-up kit” to help new business owners with hiring local workers and contractors, understanding city rules, and becoming part of the community.
4. Ensure multiple options for fresh and staple foods at affordable prices in proximity to neighborhoods through attracting and supporting the longevity of large grocery stores, small markets, and farmers markets.

D. Help small businesses build long-term stability.

1. Make sure small businesses can stay in the neighborhood for the long-term by helping them buy real estate.
 - ▶ **CASE STUDY: Colorado Springs DDA Loan Program for Tenant Ownership (Colorado Springs, CO).** This program assists business owners located within the DDA buy their existing location or another property Downtown by providing low interest loans for up to 40% of the purchase price.
Downtowncs.com/do-business/grants-and-tif
2. Support “right of first refusal”: when a commercial property goes up for sale, current tenants have the first opportunity to make an offer on the building.
3. Help businesses that have had to leave the area return through proactive outreach, assistance finding space, and other technical support.
4. Explore community-owned commercial real estate models.
 - ▶ **CASE STUDY: Kensington Corridor Trust (Philadelphia, PA).** Started in 2019, KCT uses a neighborhood trust model where the organization acquires commercial and mixed-uses properties along the commercial corridor to ensure community control and affordability. The Trust uses the revenue from these investments to fund community priorities related to cleanliness, safety, business support, community services, and job training. *Kctphilly.org*

E. Provide financial support and connect businesses to existing resources.

1. Enhance awareness and access to resources through clear communication, language access, and liaison outreach in partnership with trusted community organizations.
2. Offer funding for improvements like renovations, signage, building upgrades, code compliance, and emergency repairs.
3. Form strong partnerships with area organizations offering business support, including the Small Business Development Center (SBDC), to offer workshops, technical assistance, legal clinics, and other trainings.
4. Help offset the impact of future construction on businesses and the neighborhood, e.g., Colfax Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) and other infrastructure projects.

F. Strengthen business-to-business networks and track impacts.

1. Connect and coordinate efforts with other local organizations working on economic development and business incubation.

2. Organize business meetups and other ways for business owners and entrepreneurs to connect with and support each other.
3. Create and monitor a database of active businesses and their key characteristics in order to assess and measure business longevity and impacts over time.

G. Support entrepreneurship and access to jobs.

1. Work with community partners on creative ways to connect local talent to employment opportunities, including job fairs and youth career development.
2. Support existing business incubators and create new ones as-needed to help local entrepreneurs start and grow their businesses.
3. Coordinate with community partners to provide a “one stop shop” for business startup support such as grants for build-out and operations, arranging a lease, technical assistance, permitting and marketing.
4. Help local entrepreneurs and new organizations find affordable space. This could be combined with opportunities to activate vacant spaces.
 - **CASE STUDY: Englewood DDA’s CitySpark initiative (Englewood, Colorado).** Englewood’s recently formed DDA launched an award-winning initiative that works with property owners to offer highly discounted rent in underutilized spaces to local artists, entrepreneurs, and non-profits. This collaborative initiative has transformed 11,400 once-empty square feet in CityCenter into an active, vibrant destination while the area goes through redevelopment planning.
Englewoodco.gov/our-city/downtown-development-authority/cityspark

Housing & Neighborhood Stability

Northwest Aurora’s residents and cultural diversity are the foundation of its vitality. Proposed developments and improvements should consider community impact to make sure they are beneficial to current residents and do not harm their ability to stay in the neighborhood. Investment in the area should be leveraged for greater community wellbeing and contribute to residents’ stability and continued sense of belonging in their homes and neighborhood. Work on these strategies should focus on leveraging partnerships with existing programs and initiatives.

Possible Strategies and Actions:

A. Add new housing in a way that matches the character of the neighborhood and meets the needs of different types of residents.

1. Ensure a wide variety of housing options, including a mix of for-sale and rental units for households of all sizes and income levels.
2. Prioritize new affordable and workforce housing projects that match the income needs of area residents.

3. Support mixed-use development on appropriate sites—particularly vacant lots—to provide new housing options and commercial spaces.
4. Look for ways to fill housing needs for people who are experiencing homelessness or at risk of losing stable housing. Work closely with the City of Aurora and other local partners to coordinate services and strategy.
5. Explore how the upcoming city zoning changes to allow accessory dwelling units can support multi-generational households, wealth-building, and add housing options.

B. Support homeownership and wealth-building.

1. Promote home ownership by working with existing trusted organizations that provide downpayment assistance and guidance for homebuying
2. Help combat predatory real estate practices (such as “fix and flip” wholesalers that target struggling and older homeowners) by connecting homeowners to free counseling about their options and the value of their properties.
3. Support access to financial literacy programs and banking.
4. Increase access to mortgage/rent assistance and housing counseling services.
5. Encourage community-owned real estate models, including strengthening partnerships with and between existing land trusts, to create more opportunities for long-term affordable homeownership and land stewardship.
 - ▶ **CASE STUDY: NYC Community Land Initiative (New York City, NY).** NYCCLI is an organization representing a coalition of community land trusts (CLTs) located in New York City. They support CLTs by advocating for local and state policies, conducting research, and providing technical support. A similar model could coordinate and amplify the efforts of organizations working in Northwest Aurora. Nyccli.org
6. Support programs that help renters build long-term wealth and stability, such as shared-equity housing and mixed income neighborhood trusts (MINTs).

C. Improve the quality of existing housing while ensuring it remains affordable.

1. Increase multilingual education about housing standards, the code enforcement process, and options for resolving issues with building safety and quality.
2. Work with the City to increase the frequency of building inspections and enforce compliance for housing code violations.
3. Provide funding to rehabilitate and maintain existing naturally occurring affordable housing, such as homeowner improvement grants and low interest loans.
4. Connect property owners to programs that assist with energy efficiency or needed code upgrades in older buildings.
 - ▶ **CASE STUDY: Loveland Downtown Development Authority (DDA) (Loveland, CO).** The LDDA works with the City of Loveland to offer a fire suppression grant

program to bring buildings over 50 years old in the Loveland Downtown District up to current fire codes. The LDDA also collaborates with Efficiency Works, a regional utility entity providing rebates and energy savings programs.
Downtownloveland.org/dda

5. Work with partner organizations, residents, and owners to develop a strategy for preservation, improvement, and uses of area motels.

D. Help ensure new development in the area benefits existing residents.

1. Track development interest in the area and proactively reach out to make developers aware of community goals and desires.
2. Work with developers to ensure clear community-benefit as part of new development.
3. Identify City-owned properties that could be redeveloped or repurposed and work with the City of Aurora and the community to plan for their use.
4. Track baseline demographic and real estate data to understand the impacts of changes and investment in the area and tailor effective strategies.

E. Support existing programs and resources that enhance quality of life and provide basic services.

1. Create and manage a user-friendly, multilingual website that provides a one-stop-shop for finding available support services—such as job training, food assistance, mental health counseling, and more.
2. Support and coordinate with existing service providers to use resources more efficiently and reduce overlap for organizations doing similar work.

F. Foster an inclusive environment that elevates community leadership.

1. Ensure residents are represented in leadership positions to influence the decisions and activities affecting the area.
2. Use collaborative, community-centered design processes for future projects, plans, and improvements. Examples include forums for community members to identify issues and offer ideas and solutions.
3. Ensure language access for meetings, resources, and information.
4. Build strong relationships with schools, faith communities, and other community groups.
5. Work with and build off the efforts of the Aurora Office of International and Immigrant Affairs such as the Resource Guide for Immigrants and Refugees and the Immigration Integration Plan.

G. Invest in the next generation.

1. Work collaboratively with youth-serving organizations and schools and ensure youth voices are represented in decision-making.

2. Increase access to daycare, afterschool, and summer youth activity programs.
3. Provide new indoor recreational amenities on or near Colfax.
4. Create job training and career exploration opportunities for area youth, particularly with local businesses. Consider offering paid internships and leadership positions for youth.

H. Create pathways for connecting residents to local job opportunities and workforce development initiatives. (See “Supporting Small Businesses & Access to Goods and Services” goal area for more ideas.)

1. Partner with local organizations providing workforce development.
2. Collaborate with organizational partners to host job fairs with local businesses.
3. Encourage the hiring of area residents, contractors, and entrepreneurs.

I. Promote improved transit service.

1. Work with RTD to ensure reliable, high-quality transit service for visitors, residents, and workers.
2. Coordinate with RTD on Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) improvements.

J. Preserve and enhance the area’s historic assets and defining characteristics.

1. Work with the City and community to document the area’s history and identify potential historic buildings and sites.
2. Create design standards for new construction.

Cleaning & Maintenance

Consistent stewardship of Colfax’s right-of-way and public spaces through regular cleaning, maintenance, and landscaping is critical for a healthy and thriving downtown neighborhood.

Possible Strategies and Actions:

A. Establish standards of cleanliness and maintenance for public spaces.

1. Define shared expectations and specific roles and responsibilities for public entities, the DDA, and property owners. Agree on standards and schedules for:
 - o Regular cleaning and maintenance along sidewalks, curbs, and streets
 - o Servicing public trash bins and responding quickly to overflowing bins
 - o Street sweeping
 - o Ensuring parks and plazas are clean and well-maintained

B. Based on the needs identified above, contract with a private cleaning and maintenance provider to deliver enhanced services to the DDA district. This could also include:

1. Responding to requests for spot-cleaning buildings, public spaces, and rights-of-way.

2. Snow and ice removal.
3. Pressure washing walkways, particularly in high traffic areas.
4. Upkeep of public seating and bus stops, including trash and graffiti removal – in coordination with the City and RTD.

C. Maintain area landscaping.

1. Maintain new and existing trees, landscaping, and planter boxes. Quickly remove and replace dead trees and plants.

D. Empower community members in cleaning and beautifying efforts.

1. Connect volunteers to help neighbors who may have difficulty maintaining their properties. Aurora's "Snow Busters" program is an existing example.
2. Support monthly neighborhood clean-up days.

E. Improve and manage district parking to meet demand.

1. As future parking needs evolve, develop a parking management strategy.
2. Help clean and maintain parking areas and improve connections to businesses.
3. Improve parking lot access, signage, and landscaping.

Advancing Arts, Culture, and a Creative Economy

A thriving arts district will provide opportunities for artists and creative entrepreneurs living in the area and will further celebrate the diverse cultures that makes the area unique within the Denver region. Work on these goals should be done in close partnership with the Creative Alliance of Downtown Aurora (CADA) and other local arts and cultural organizations.

Possible Strategies and Actions:

A. Develop a distinct, authentic brand identity for the area that represents and resonates with the community, its history, and its core values.

1. Cultivate a sense of place to denote the Creative District that is used across promotional materials, digital media, and urban design.
2. Establish cohesive wayfinding signage and other public design elements.
 - **CASE STUDY: 40 West Arts Artline (Lakewood, CO).** The 40 West Artline is a four-mile trail and outdoor art gallery that connects the W Line light rail to destinations on and around West Colfax Ave. 40 West Arts works with the Lakewood-West Colfax BID to install creative wayfinding elements to help users navigate the neighborhood along the Artline. 40westartline.org
3. Consider embracing the historic characteristics of Colfax in public art installations (such as neon signage).

B. Coordinate with CADA and other entities on area-wide events and cross promotion with local businesses.

1. Coordinate “Dinner and a Show” packages, or specials at local restaurants/bars, to encourage visitors to linger in the area.
2. Create districtwide programs such as First Fridays, film festivals, etc. that encourage activity throughout the neighborhood.

C. Ensure multicultural representation in public art.

1. Promote and invest in existing and new murals and public art that tell community stories.
2. Make sure commission opportunities for public art are shared broadly and that decision-makers include people from a variety of backgrounds.

D. Ensure local residents can participate in arts and culture offerings.

1. Support a wide variety of opportunities to experience arts and culture, including classes and events that are accessible, affordable, welcoming, and reflective of the community’s interests and diverse cultures.
 - ▶ **CASE STUDY: Fenway CDC (Boston, Massachusetts).** The Fenway Community Development Corporation offers a free membership program to residents for deals at local businesses and cultural institutions. Residents who present their Fenway CDC membership card can access discount tickets to the Huntington Theater, 10% off memberships at the local YMCA, and reduced-price tickets to Red Sox games. Fenwaycdc.org/become-a-member
2. Connect current residents and youth to resources for careers in the creative economy.
3. Provide technical assistance to local cultural organizations holding events and celebrations, such as help with permitting.

E. Provide and facilitate direct support of artists and emerging entrepreneurs.

1. Offer local artists opportunities when commissioning public art.
2. Connect local artists with area businesses in need of graphic design, decorative services, and other creative projects.
3. Facilitate opportunities for artists and arts businesses to tap into local lending networks and other small business resources.
4. Provide affordable spaces for artists to work and live.
 - ▶ **CASE STUDY: Colorado Springs DDA (Colorado Springs, Colorado).** The Colorado Springs DDA has used TIF to help fund affordable housing development. A recent example is the ArtSpace project that created 50 one- and two-bedroom live-work units for artists making 60% or lower Area Median Income (AMI). While TIF was a major project subsidy, the project required dozens of other financial sources

including the Colorado Department of Local Affairs (DOLA), Colorado Housing & Finance Authority (CHFA), and countless other local community foundations and philanthropic donations. [Artspace.org/colorado-springs](https://artspace.org/colorado-springs)

5. Help artists and arts organizations lease space in the district, facilitate permitting and consider offering incentives or subsidies to make doing business more affordable.
6. Support the MLK Jr. Library makerspace and other spaces that help kick-start creative entrepreneurs.
 - **Localworks Clear Creek Makerspace (Wheat Ridge, CO).** Opened in 2024, the Clear Creek Makerspace provides access to advanced equipment, event space, and classes at an affordable and sliding scale price to help nourish local entrepreneurs, develop a skilled workforce, and bring together the creative community. Since launching, the makerspace has had almost 16,000 visitors and helped jump start three small businesses. [Clearcreekmakerspace.com/facilities](https://clearcreekmakerspace.com/facilities)

Public Space Improvements

While maintenance is critical, the Colfax corridor also needs refreshed and redesigned public spaces and transformative projects. This includes improving parks and green space and revamping the existing streetscape. The City of Aurora is a key partner to implement these strategies in collaboration with the community.

Possible Strategies and Actions:

A. Redesign and improve current parks, plazas, and green spaces to better align with community desires and needs.

1. Improve outdoor spaces to accommodate events and street vendors and create a safe, family-friendly environment. Refreshing and activating Fletcher Plaza is a priority.
2. Work with the community to design new parks and green space with desired amenities, such as dog parks and unique play areas.
3. Promote access to water fountains and restrooms. Careful consideration should be given to where public restrooms will be located and how they will be cleaned and regularly monitored.
4. Create shaded spaces where people can gather, rest, and find relief from heat.

B. Create active, safe alleyways.

1. Launch a coordinated capital improvement initiative to activate alleyways and rear building entrances.
 - **CASE STUDY: Longmont DDA's Alleyscape and Breezeway Project (Longmont, Colorado).** In partnership with the City of Longmont, the Longmont DDA helped to design and fund a downtown-wide, coordinated alleyway

beautification project. The three-year project involved capital improvements like undergrounding overhead utility lines, installing permeable pavers to improve drainage, and installing new lighting. To improve the visual appeal and cohesion of the alleyways, a series of murals and public art installations were added. Businesses were offered grants to reimburse a certain portion of costs associated with improving rear building entrances. [Downtownlongmont.com/initiatives/development-projects/alleyscape-development-project](https://downtownlongmont.com/initiatives/development-projects/alleyscape-development-project)

C. Offer grants and technical assistance for property owners to improve building exteriors.

1. Provide grants for façade improvements.
 - **CASE STUDY: Longmont DDA's Downtown Improvement Program (Longmont, Colorado).** The DDA offers reimbursement of up to 25% of the project costs for commercial and mixed-use building façade renovation projects. To receive the grant, applicants meet with the LDDA staff and demonstrate how their improvement plans contribute to the downtown vision in the Plan of Development. [Downtownlongmont.com/work/incentive-programs](https://downtownlongmont.com/work/incentive-programs)
2. Provide grants and technical assistance to encourage outdoor seating.
3. Establish design standards for patio seating, business signage, etc., while ensuring access to assistance to offset associated costs.

D. Ensure safe and clean outdoor spaces for community gardens and urban farms.

1. Preserve existing community gardens.
2. Work with residents to design new community gardens and other food production spaces on vacant and underutilized land, including as a secondary land use to schools, parks, churches, etc.

E. Activate public spaces through ongoing community programming and events.

1. Host regular events and pop-ups in Fletcher Plaza, parks, and other spaces.

F. Install functional and festive lighting

1. Make sure entire area is well-lit, especially public spaces like sidewalks and parks.
2. Install year-round, decorative lighting as well as festive seasonal lighting.

G. Plant trees and sustainable landscaping to beautify the area and provide relief from high summer temperatures.

1. Improve tree cover throughout the area. Plant hardy street trees with appropriate conditions, watering, and maintenance to ensure they thrive.
2. Plant and maintain a combination of permanent, water-wise landscaping and decorative, annual flower boxes and pots.

4. DDA OVERVIEW

The following section lays out the vision, guiding principles, boundaries, and structure of a future Aurora Downtown Development Authority (DDA). Eligible voters in the proposed district must approve the creation of the DDA and its funding.

What is a DDA?

A Downtown Development Authority (DDA) is a quasi-public organization, meaning it has a few of the powers—and rules—of a government entity. A DDA can provide leadership and financing dedicated to supporting downtown improvements. Colorado is one of a handful of states that allow DDAs, and the rules for how to create and operate a DDA are governed by state statute. Roughly two dozen communities across Colorado have established a DDA, including **Englewood, Littleton, Denver, Greeley, Lafayette, and Colorado Springs.**

Key Features:

- DDAs focus on promoting and investing in re/development, infrastructure, and economic vitality of the central business district (downtown) of a municipality. However, what a DDA works on is highly customizable to its community.
- Only one DDA is allowed in each municipality in its traditional central business district.
- DDAs are mainly funded by Tax Increment Financing (TIF). **This is not a new tax.** TIF captures future increases in sales and property tax revenue to reinvest back into the district (see next page for more detail).
- A DDA can include both commercial and residential properties.
- Property owners, residents, and tenants within the proposed district boundaries vote to create a DDA and approve its funding.
- DDAs are led by Council-appointed boards of 5 to 11 members.
- While TIF is the primary funding source, there is also an optional mill levy (property tax) that can be added to help run the DDA. This cannot exceed five mills.

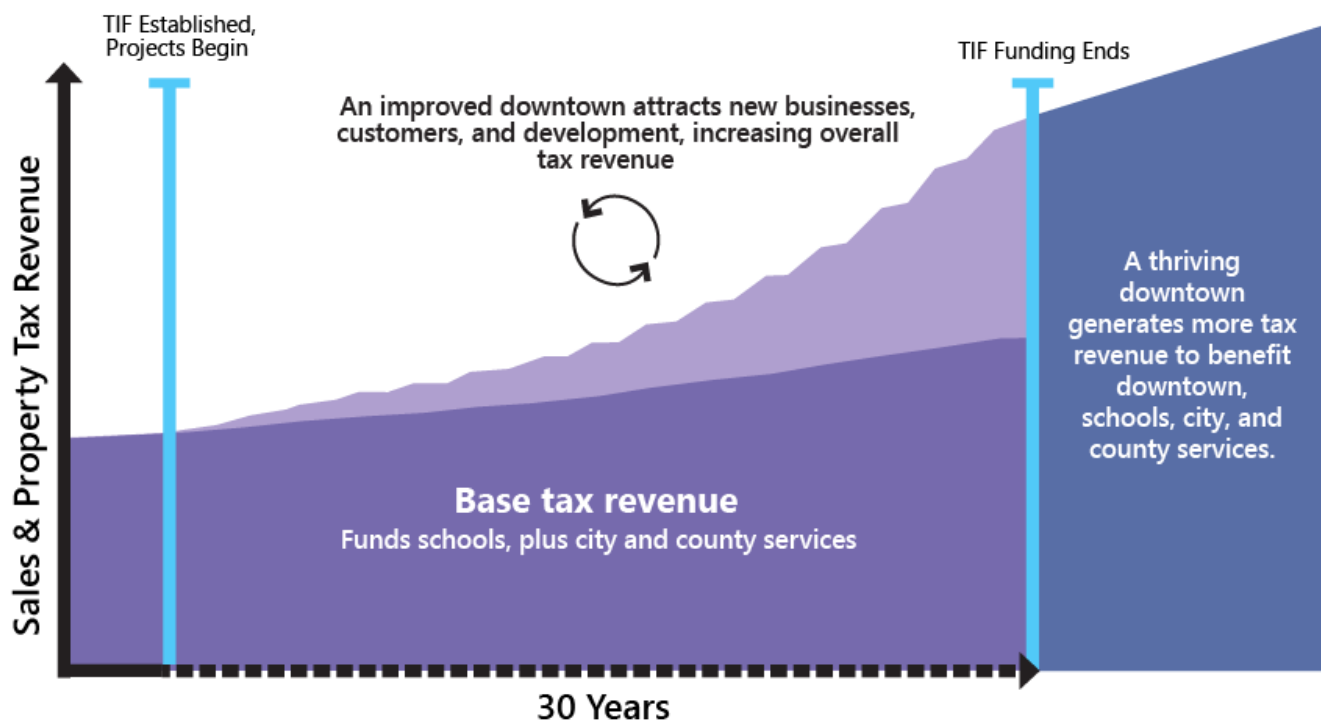
Common DDA Projects:

- Development, reuse, and activation (i.e. helping to fill vacant storefronts, overcome site barriers to desired development such as housing).
- Connectivity and infrastructure (i.e. bike and pedestrian improvements, intersection upgrades, sidewalks, and alley improvements).
- Public art, signage, gateways (i.e. wayfinding, banners, art).
- Streetscape and beautification (i.e. trees, landscaping, benches, lighting).

- Marketing and business support (i.e. promotions, events).
- Parks and open space (i.e. create or improve parks, trails, and plazas).
- Parking management.

Tax Increment Financing

A DDA is mainly funded by Tax Increment Financing (TIF). **TIF is not a new tax.** Once TIF is established, future growth in sales and property tax revenues (the “increment”) is kept by the DDA to be reinvested back into the district. The more the area improves, the more sales and property tax grows, and the more money the DDA has to work on projects and programs. Meanwhile, the city, county, schools, and other taxing entities still get the base amount of tax revenue they were collecting before TIF (adjusted for inflation and appreciation).



In a DDA, a TIF arrangement can last for up to 30 years. After that point, the DDA can ask for a TIF renewal, but the base tax revenue will be reset to current values. Also, the DDA will have to share a greater percentage of future increment with the other taxing entities like schools and the counties.

Proposed Boundary

DDA Map

By state law, a DDA must be located in the traditional central business district of a community. Given this requirement, the proposed DDA Boundaries below are based on a variety of factors, including zoning, concentration of businesses, existing TIF-collecting districts, location of community-identified priorities, and historic development patterns (these maps and analysis can be found in the Appendix). The boundaries include both commercial and residential properties.

The boundaries are: Yosemite St. to the west, E. 16th Ave. to the north, the Fitzsimons Urban Renewal Area to the east, and E. 14th Ave. to the south.



Future Expansion

DDAs can grow over time. Owners of property adjacent to the district can opt in at any time through a petition process. During the planning process, the Working Group discussed the idea of a “flagpole” up Dayton Street (along public right of way) to connect Colfax to nearby commercial centers and improve the corridor. This idea should be revisited in the future.

Vision & Guiding Principles for the Aurora DDA

Vision

The DDA is a **connector**, **collaborator**, and **champion**, rooted in advancing the economic resiliency and wellbeing of East Colfax and the surrounding community *from within*.

Key Ideas:

1. **Create a supported district** where people can thrive and invest in their futures, building long-term economic stability and opportunity.
2. **Create a vibrant district** that is renowned as a hub for arts and culture.
3. **Create a safe district** that encourages walking and biking and offers a variety of activities, public spaces, and events that bring people together.
4. **Create an inclusive district** that is welcoming and supportive of people from all backgrounds and cultures.
5. **Create a nurtured district** that attract jobs and new investment without losing its uniqueness and sense of community.

Guiding Principles

In all its actions, the DDA should...

1. Look to, support, and partner with existing organizations and programs already doing work in alignment with the Plan of Development.
2. Prioritize opportunities for local individuals, businesses, and organizations.
3. Ensure all activities, resources, and information, including public meetings, are widely accessible to people of all languages, cultures, ages, and abilities.
4. Foster leadership from within the community and center collaborative, community-based design in future planning processes and decision-making.

DDA Management

Annual Work Plan & Budget

Once created, the DDA board will draft an annual work plan and budget. The creation of the work plan and budget is a public process and the final plan and budget must be approved by City Council at a public hearing.

Board Composition

Colorado DDA law requires a DDA Board of Directors made of at least 5 and up to 11 individuals. To be eligible to serve on the board, someone must own property, own a business,

or live within the boundaries of the district. The majority of board members must either own property or live in the district. The Aurora DDA Board should include:

- One representative from City Council (required).
- A wide cross-section of the community including property owners, businesses and their employees, artists/arts organizations (including CADA), resident renters and homeowners, schools, and other organizations from within the DDA boundaries.
- CDC representation: once the CDC is formed, two eligible CDC board members should also serve on the DDA board. This will allow greater collaboration and accountability between the two organizations.
- The DDA should aim to reduce barriers to participation to ensure broad community representation on the board. Opportunities to serve on the board should be promoted broadly. Per state statute, board members cannot be paid. However, they can be reimbursed for expenses necessary to serve on the board. This could include childcare, transportation, or translation needs.

Meetings

As required by state law, DDA Board meetings will be posted and open to the public. It is recommended that the DDA provide multilingual communications, materials, and interpretation services to ensure accessibility.

Advisory Committees

Committees can help broaden participation in DDA governance and administration of specific programs and initiatives. By state law, the chair of a committee must be eligible to serve on the Board (e.g., be a resident, tenant, or property owner within DDA boundaries). The DDA Board should consider the following committee focus areas:

- Small Businesses
- Residents/Housing
- Marketing and Events
- Public Space and Design

Staffing

There are a variety of approaches to hiring staff to manage a DDA. Seeking staff who are connected or deeply familiar with the community, and/or with bi- or multi-lingual skills, is strongly advised.

The following staffing options are recommended for the Aurora DDA.

1. **Hire staff directly.** Start by hiring an Executive Director and Project Manager positions, with opportunities to expand staffing as DDA funding increases, and/or;

2. **Contract with an existing organization or service provider.** This is common for DDA operations (i.e., cleaning and safety services), but is also an option for administrative positions.

Plan Updates

The Plan of Development should be reviewed and updated every 5-10 years through a collaborative, community-based process.

Financing Tools

The DDA is authorized to use the following funding sources:

- Tax Increment Financing (TIF) for property and sales tax.

Partnership with the City of Aurora

Successful DDAs have strong partnerships with City leaders and departments. The following tactics are encouraged:

- The City should provide seed funding to help the DDA operate effectively in its first several years. This is a best practice to support DDAs before significant TIF revenue is generated.
- The Fletcher Urban Renewal Area should be dissolved and its remaining funds should be transferred to the DDA.
- The City should evaluate city-owned assets (buildings and underutilized lots) for potential transfer to the DDA.
- The DDA and City should establish a framework for regular and reliable communication, coordination, and collaboration.

Relationship Between DDA and CDC

This plan recommends the creation of a CDC to collaborate with the DDA towards the goals in the Action Plan. This section describes how the CDC could be structured and how the two organizations could work together.

What is a CDC?

A Community Development Corporation (CDC) is a type of nonprofit that supports and revitalizes communities. These organizations are common across the country and in Colorado. CDCs typically focus on a particular neighborhood or region, but, unlike a DDA, they do not have legal boundaries.

Key Features

- CDC governance is community-based, with a board of directors that typically includes residents, businesses, community leaders, and experts in different helpful fields such as finance or development.
- Funding relies on grants and donations.
- CDCs can buy, own, and develop real estate and create community-owned assets.
- CDCs are fully independent from but often work closely with the city.

Common CDC Services

- Business support and job training.
- Affordable housing and resident stabilization.
- Community vitality, healthcare, and educational programs.

Examples of CDCs and How they Work with Special Districts

There are many local organizations that operate as CDCs. One of the longest-standing examples is NEWSED, a CDC that has served the area around the La Alma Lincoln Park neighborhood in Denver since 1973. Its services include small business incubation, affordable housing and commercial development, homeownership programs, financial coaching, and cultural events. NEWSED helped establish the Santa Fe Business Improvement District (BID) and works closely with the BID and the Arts District on Santa Fe, including having overlapping board representation on the BID.

Other types of nonprofit partnerships with special districts:

Sometimes, a nonprofit acts as an umbrella organization to unify multiple entities working in a downtown, including improvement and creative/art districts and other nonprofits. Examples include the Downtown Denver Partnership, Downtown Partnership of Colorado Springs, and the Downtown Loveland Partnership. While this model is not being proposed in Aurora, it illustrates how a nonprofit model can help amplify the impact of a special district by providing coordination within a larger geographic area and diversifying funding sources.

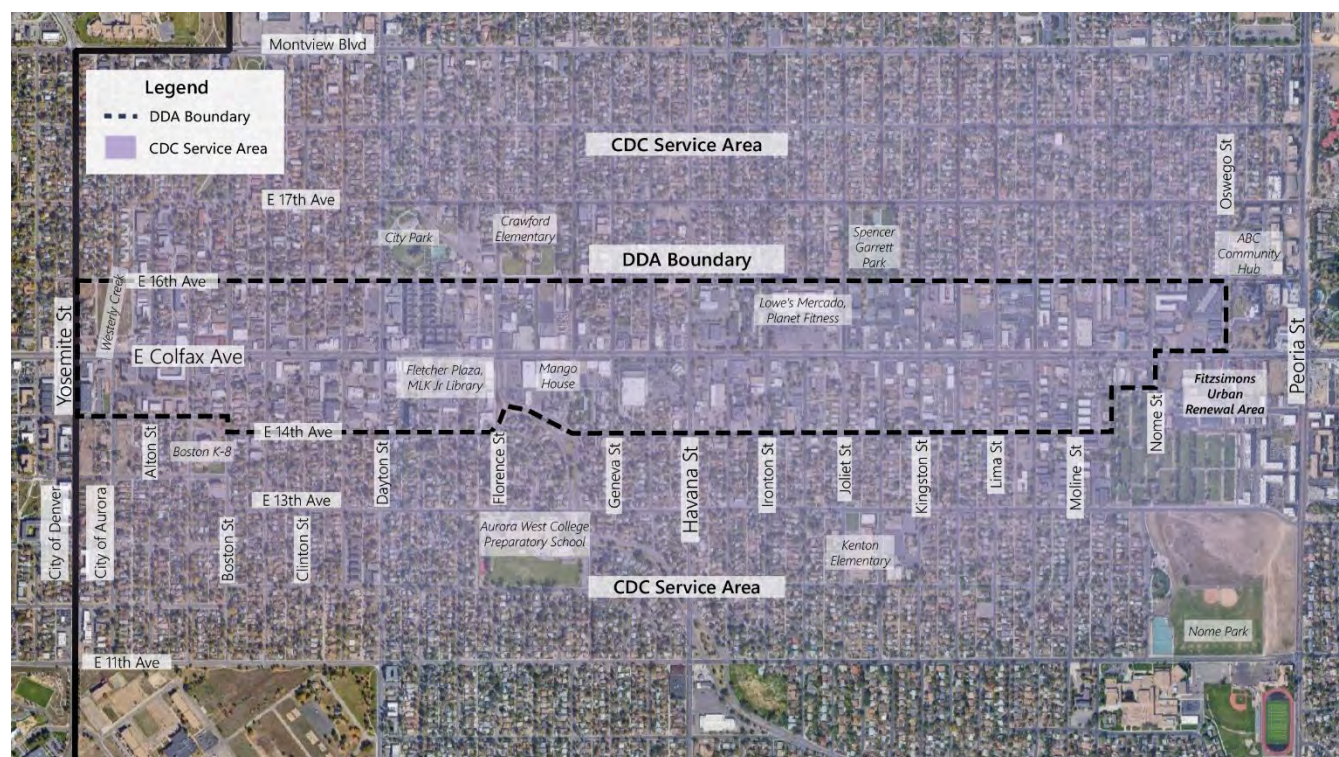
CDC Mission and Areas of Focus

The CDC will focus on achieving goals in the Action Plan that impact Colfax and support the DDA, but are not necessarily inside the district (see map on next page). This approach is critical because, while state law limits a DDA to working inside its boundaries, issues such as public safety, transportation, and community stability require broad and collaborative strategies. The CDC operates from the principle that what happens within the DDA affects the surrounding neighborhood, and what happens in the neighborhood affects the success of the DDA.

In addition, as a 501c3, a CDC can access funding sources and other resources that a DDA cannot. These resources may be critical to achieving the goals of the plan.

Key Areas of Focus for the CDC:

- **Housing Quality and Resident Stability:** Addressing the quality, construction, and preservation of housing outside of the DDA boundaries.
- **Business Support and Economic Development:** Supporting job access, small business development, and business retention/stability outside of the DDA boundaries.
- **Real Estate:** Developing and acquiring real estate for community benefit, such as workforce housing or affordable commercial space, outside of the DDA boundaries.
- **Coordination and Advocacy:** Organizing and coordinating with community members and organizations across Northwest Aurora (plus the DDA and the City) to align work towards the Action Plan.
- **Fundraising and Resource Gathering:** Identification of grants and other funding sources or programs that do not yet have a presence in Northwest Aurora.
- **Research:** Partnerships with CU Anschutz and other academic institutions to gather data to inform decision-making and analyze outcomes of work towards the Action Plan.
- **Policy Development:** Research, writing, and advocacy for policies, regulations, and programs that support the Action Plan goals (at the local and state level).



Map of relationship between DDA boundaries and service area of CDC.

CDC Governance

Board of Directors

The CDC Board should reflect the interests of the neighborhood and ensure broad community engagement and accountability.

- A board of 9 to 15 individuals is recommended
- Representation should include:
 - o At least 2-3 residents (a mix of renters and homeowners)
 - o Representation from north and south of Colfax
 - o Representatives from local nonprofits, faith institutions, and schools
 - o Individuals from the area with expertise in real estate, community development, finance, law, and business operations
 - o Small business and commercial property owners
 - o 2 DDA board members

CDCs are not subject to open meeting laws. However, it is strongly advised the CDC adopt policies around transparency and inclusivity.

Staffing

The following staffing structure is recommended:

- Executive Director
- Administrative Support
- Community Connectors/Liaisons: individuals from the community, ideally multi-lingual, who build connections between the CDC and the community. These can be full-time, part-time, or contractor positions.
- Real Estate/Development Manager: to oversee development of a real estate strategy and portfolio.

Funding

The CDC will pursue funding from a variety of public, private, and philanthropic sources, including:

- **Federal grants**, including Housing & Urban Development (HUD), Community Development Block Grants (CDBG), HOME Investment Partnerships Program, and others.
- **State and local programs**, including the Colorado Office of Economic Development and International Trade (OEDIT) and Department of Local Affairs (DOLA).
- **Philanthropic contributions from aligned local and state foundations**, including the Colorado Health Foundation.

- **A self-sustaining business plan**, such as a real estate portfolio, that can provide revenue to be reinvested into programs and services.
- **Partnerships with the City of Aurora and the DDA** will also play a key role in CDC projects, as well as joint ventures with private sector entities. In particular, the city should evaluate city-owned assets that could be leveraged in the first 1-2 years to launch the CDC's activities.

CDC/DDA Coordination

CDC and DDA should combine forces whenever possible to promote common goals and maximize efficiency. This could include:

- Sharing office space and staff resources
- Coordinated public meetings and outreach efforts
- Periodic joint board meetings and leadership retreats
- Coordination of annual budgets and work plan development
- Joint advocacy for policies and programs benefiting the area
- Regular meetings and communications

5. IMPLEMENTATION

The following section suggests an implementation strategy for the DDA and CDC. This strategy reflects community priorities, projected funding, and organizational needs.

Immediate

Summer to fall 2025 will focus on the forming the DDA and CDC. Steps include:

- Forming community-led steering committees for DDA and CDC formation
- Campaign leading to election for DDA (November 4th, 2025)
- Drafting bylaws for CDC
- Identifying seed funding sources for the CDC and drafting business plan
- Identifying seed funding for the DDA (to fund initial work before meaningful TIF revenue is generated)
- Refining the Plan of Development based on community input

Near-Term

After being formed, the DDA and CDC will need to establish their staffing and structure, create work plans, build relationships, and focus on addressing the most pressing community priorities. The organizations will likely be working with modest budgets for the first several years, meaning the most effective strategies will be through partnerships, advocacy, and amplifying access to existing resources.

Steps to organize the DDA include...

- Form and convene Board of Directors
- Finalize and adopt Plan of Development
- Establish yearly budget creation and adoption process
- Establish digital presence and communications channels (website, social media)
- Form and convene committees
- Hire or contract staff:
 - Executive Director (full time)
 - Support position, such as administration, marketing/liaison role (part time)
- Create and have Council approve annual budget and work plan

Similarly, steps to organize the CDC include...

- Secure initial funding sources and other startup resources
- Form and convene Board of Directors

- Adopt bylaws
- Incorporate as 501c3
- Establish digital presence and communications channels (website, social media)
- Hire or contract staff
 - Executive Director (full time)
 - Support position, such as administration, marketing/liaison role (part time)
- Create and adopt annual budget and work plan

Priority Work Areas

Below are suggested near-term actions for the DDA and CDC in each goal area based on community priorities and projected resources. Actual work plans and budgets will be drafted by the DDA and CDC Boards through a process that should include community input.

Top Priorities

The following three goal areas should be the DDA's and CDC's top priorities.

Safety

Improving safety is the most consistent number one priority heard through the planning process. Actions that could be done quickly with a modest budget include:

- **Strategy A1:** Working with the City and RTD to implement Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) strategies. (DDA)
- **Strategies B1-B2:** Coordinate with the Aurora Mobile Response Team and APD. (DDA)
- **Strategies C1-C3:** Connect property owners and tenants to help with safety upgrades and options for assistance with safety issues. (DDA)
- **Strategies E1-E2:** Start working with area organizations and schools to build out a comprehensive safety strategy. (DDA/CDC)

Housing and Neighborhood Stability

Preventing the displacement of existing residents is another critical community priority. Near-term work should center on strategies to preserve naturally occurring affordable housing and improve housing quality. Actions that could be done quickly with a modest budget include:

- **Strategies B1-B6:** Promote homeowner and tenant access to resources; build relationships with land trusts and similar organizations. (DDA/CDC)

Ranked Community Priorities from Draft Plan Voting Activity:

1. Public Safety & Security
2. Housing & Neighborhood Stability
3. Business Support and Access to Goods & Services
4. Cleaning & Maintenance
5. Advancing Arts, Culture, and a Creative Economy
6. Public Space Improvements

See Appendix for full summary.

- **Strategies C1, C2, and C4:** Housing quality: coordinate with the City on code enforcement, support tenant education, and connect property owners to help with upgrades. (DDA/CDC)
- **Strategies D1-D4:** Begin baseline data gathering; study city-owned properties. (DDA/CDC)
- **Strategies F1-F5, G1:** Build connections with residents and local organizations to refine a stabilization strategy and embed community leadership in decision-making. (DDA/CDC)
- **Strategy I2:** Coordinate with RTD to minimize BRT construction impacts on residents. (DDA)
- **Strategy J1:** Work with the City to document area's history and historic buildings. (DDA/CDC)

Business Support and Access to Goods and Services

Preventing the displacement of existing businesses is another of the community's top three priorities. Near-term work should focus on strategies to stabilize and support businesses—particularly in advance of BRT construction—and fill gaps in essential goods and services. Actions that could be done quickly with a modest budget include:

- **Strategies A1 and A3:** Launch a marketing campaign and help promote existing businesses. (DDA)
- **Strategy B1:** Pilot pop-ups to activate empty storefronts. (DDA)
- **Strategy C2:** Recruit essential businesses such as grocery and pharmacy. (DDA)
- **Strategies E1 and E3:** Connect existing businesses to resources. (DDA/CDC)
- **Strategy E4:** Identify resources and create a communications/advocacy plan for BRT construction. (DDA)
- **Strategies F1-F3:** Business organizing and outreach activities. (DDA/CDC)

Other Priorities

Community members ranked the following three goal areas as important but less critical than the three above. Example actions that could be done in the first few years and with a modest budget include:

Cleaning and Maintenance

- **Strategies A1, B1-B4:** Contract with a cleaning/maintenance service provider. (DDA)
- **Strategy D2:** Support a neighborhood clean-up day. (DDA/CDC)

Advancing Arts, Culture, and a Creative Economy

- **Strategy B1:** Establish collaborative framework with CADA and cross-promote businesses and events. (DDA)

- Work with CADA on **Business Support B1** strategy (storefront activation). (DDA)

Public Space Improvements

- **Strategy E1:** Sponsor/support a new or expanded community event. (DDA/CDC)
- **Strategies G1-G2:** Begin work to add trees and landscaping by studying available infrastructure, gaps/needs, and estimating costs. (DDA)

Mid-term

After the first several years, the DDA and CDC will likely be working with increased budgets and have established strong partnerships. Work should remain focused on the top priorities identified in this plan (addressing safety and supporting the stability of existing residents and businesses) while expanding to address additional goal areas as resources allow.

New activities could include:

- Hire more staff. (DDA/CDC)
- Directly fund improvements for housing and commercial spaces. (DDA/CDC)
- Invest in festive lighting, art, and signage. (DDA)
- Increase cleaning, maintenance, and tree/flower planting. (DDA)
- Support buying real estate for community benefit (i.e. affordable commercial or residential buildings). (DDA/CDC)
- Engage in capital improvement planning processes (intersections, Fletcher Plaza, etc.). (DDA)
- Host/cohost more events. (DDA/CDC)
- Work with the community to update the Plan of Development and understand what progress has been made towards the goal areas. (DDA)

Long-term

After years 10-15, the DDA in particular may have access to a substantial budget from TIF. Activities can expand to funding major projects and increasing the number of grants and programs offered.

New activities could include:

- Build capital improvements (intersections, Fletcher Plaza, etc.). (DDA)
- Buy and develop real estate. (DDA/CDC)
- Expand grants and programs. (DDA/CDC)
- Work with the community to update the Plan of Development and understand what progress has been made towards the goal areas. (DDA)

Appendix I: Community Engagement Summary

Overview

The community engagement process for the Colfax Community Vision & Action Plan took place over three stages of outreach: Stage I - Establishing a Vision, Stage II - Prioritization, and Stage III - Draft Plan Feedback. To hear from as many voices as possible, the project team hosted both online and in-person events and activities, provided language interpretation and childcare services, and translated key materials into common languages spoken in Northwest Aurora. Below is a summary of engagement followed by a description of methodology and activities during each stage:

- **100+ conversations and informal interviews** with residents, business owners, property owners, community leaders, and city departments.
- **Roundtables with key constituencies and organizations**, including the arts, service providers, and small businesses.
- **24 community events with 870+ attendees**, including attending events hosted by partner groups and meetings planned exclusively for the project.
- **Online engagement:**
 - o A project webpage with **over 1,800 visitors** featuring a Q&A comment box, an online mapping exercise (also available at in-person events), and a draft plan questionnaire.
 - o A newsletter with **over 310 subscribers**.
 - o A survey available in English, Spanish, Amharic, Burmese, and Vietnamese that received **278 responses**.
- **9 Working Group meetings** made up of business owners, service providers, residents, property owners, and other community leaders.

A summary of key themes that came out of the engagement process can be found in Chapter 2 of the plan.

Stage I: Establishing a Vision

The first stage (August 2024 to March 2025) laid the ground work and established the vision for what would eventually become the plan. The goals were:

- To gain an understanding of the strengths and challenges of the area.
- Identify community priorities and ideas.



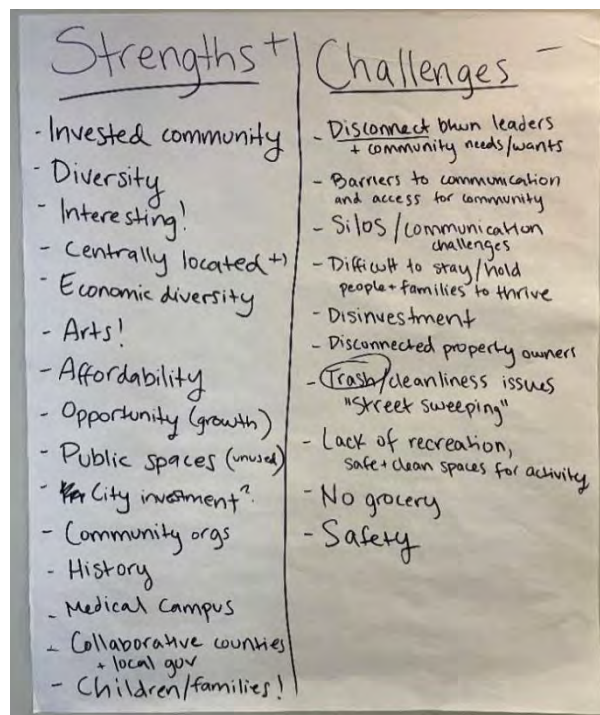
Strengths, Challenges, Ideas, and Priorities facilitation at the Ward I Town Hall.

- Create a plan framework outlining proposed work areas for one or more future organizations (i.e., DDA, BID, CDC).
- Identify which organization(s) would be best suited to implement the strategies and actions laid out in these work areas.

Stage I Engagement began with one-on-one conversations and roundtable meetings with dozens of community members over the course of several months. The project team convened a working group and launched an online survey and website. During events and meetings, the team learned about community members' experiences and vision for the area through a facilitated strengths, challenges, ideas, and priorities (SCIP) exercise.

Engagement activities included:

- Conversations and informal interviews with *over 50 residents*, property owners, service providers, arts organizations, faith leaders, businesses, and key city departments.
- Door-to-door business canvassing along East Colfax to spread awareness of the planning process and understand the perspectives of business owners. – *Around 50 businesses reached during two different days of outreach with Spanish language liaisons.*
- Forming a working group made up of a diverse group of community leaders to provide input on recommendations and help guide the planning process.
- Launching a project website with informational materials, an online survey, and an open-ended comment box. – *Over 680 people visited the website during this stage.*
- Attending meetings and events to conduct SCIP, share information, and learn:



Results from facilitation at an Original Aurora Neighbors meeting.



Arts-focused roundtable at DAVA.

- o Five monthly meetings hosted by Original Aurora Neighbors (OAN) – *40-50 participants at each meeting.*
- o Ward I Town Hall (January 23)– *35 participants.*
- o East Colfax Community Collective's (EC3) Grassroots Leadership Council (GLC) meeting (February 10) – *30 participants.*
- o Montview Elementary Quarterly Community Meeting (February 27), shared information/update only – *30 attendees.*
- Pop-up booth at MLK Jr. Library to answer questions and spread awareness of the online survey and planning process (February 21) – *12 participants.*
- Roundtables with several stakeholder groups:
 - o February: Two arts roundtables, one virtual and one in-person – *14 participants.*
 - o March: Business and property owner roundtable – *20 participants.*

How engagement was used: The project team used ideas and feedback collected during this stage of outreach to help guide the plan framework, including initial focus areas and evaluating potential organization(s) (i.e., BID, DDA, CDC) to carry out the work. The focus areas were meant to organize the community's vision and priorities around top themes. These were:

- Improve public safety
- Prevent displacement of existing residents and businesses
- Cleaning, maintenance, and beautification
- Attract new businesses and fill empty storefronts
- Advance arts and the creative economy
- Increase coordination between area organizations
- Improve pedestrian experience and traffic safety
- Improve perception of area, promote distinct identity

Stage II: Prioritization

The second stage of engagement began in March 2025 with a public Working Group Meeting and Open House which presented the priority categories listed above and recommended a CDC and DDA as the new organizations to look further into. Phase II ended in June 2025 with the release of the draft plan. The goals of this stage of engagement were:



March 18 Working Group meeting and Open House.

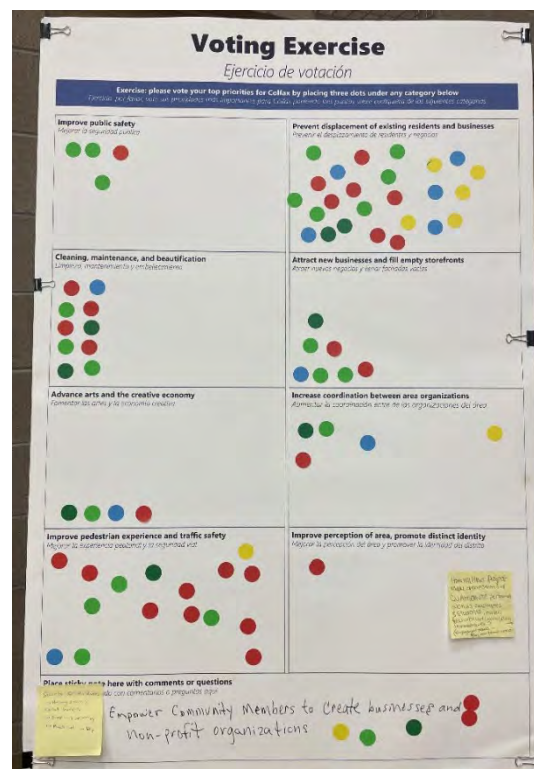
- To receive feedback on proposed focus areas and prioritize which ones the community thought were most important.

- Refine the DDA and CDC concepts, including proposed DDA boundaries and CDC service area.
- Continue gathering community ideas to build out more detailed actions and strategies.

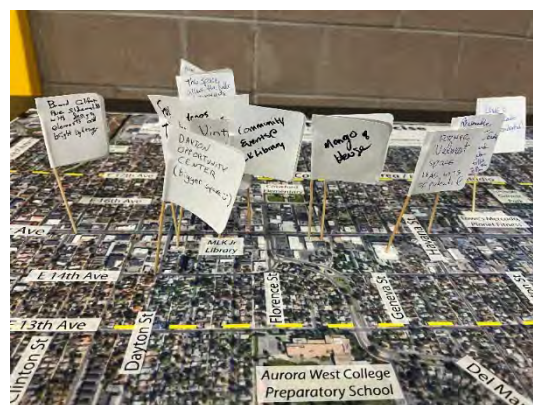
Stage II Engagement: During this stage, the team sought broad engagement to ensure as many community members as possible could provide feedback on the recommended focus areas. Two new engagement activities were introduced to provide more interactive feedback: (1) A voting exercise used at events asked participants to prioritize with three votes which focus areas were most important to them. (2) A mapping exercise, available both online and at in-person events, invited participants to give feedback about the places in Northwest Aurora they loved, would like to see improved, or had specific ideas for.

Engagement activities included:

- Hosting large community events:
 - o Public Working Group Meeting and Open House at North Middle School (March 18): This event marked the transition into more broad engagement and was the first time the team presented recommendations and initial findings to the community. Feedback was collected through a priority voting exercise and open public comment. – *125 attendees*
 - o YAASPA Open House at ABC Community Collective (April 11): Continued receiving feedback on the proposed focus areas of a future organization and introduced a mapping exercise. – *50 attendees*
- Attending meetings and events to gather input:
 - o Aurora West Cultural Fair (May 19) – *50 participants.*
 - o Crawford Parents in Action meeting (April 17) – *15 participants.*
 - o Second small business roundtable at Cerebral Brewing (May 6) – *20 participants.*
 - o NANO meeting at Moorehead Recreation Center (May 8) – *22 participants.*
 - o Second GLC meeting at ABC Community Collective (May 22) – *50 participants.*



Priority voting exercise at the YAASPA Open House.



Mapping exercise at YAASPA Open House.

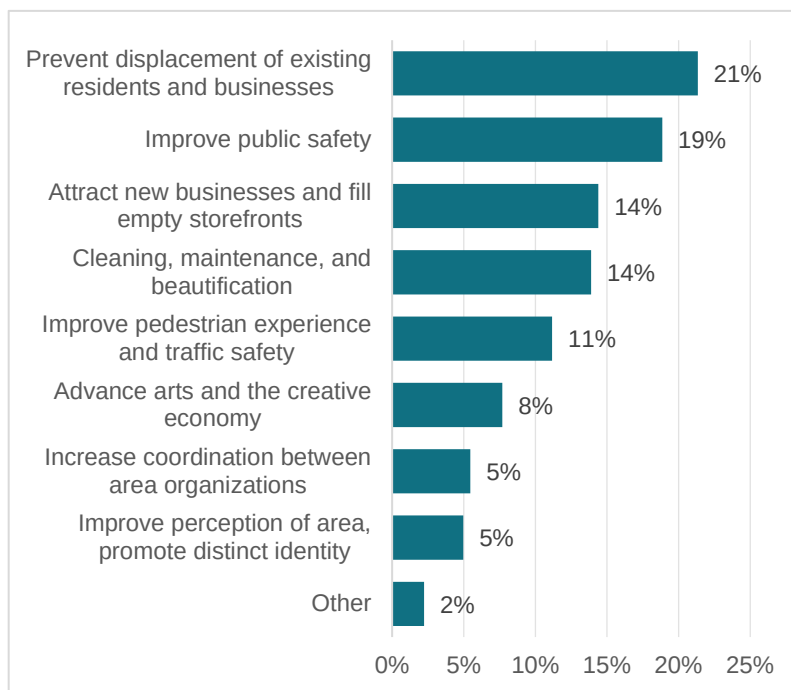
- A third round of bilingual business canvassing – **Around 20 businesses reached.**
- Monthly Working Group meetings.
- Continued informal conversations and interviews.
- Website:
 - o Introduced a regular newsletter to provide project updates, which eventually reached over 310 subscribers.
 - o Provided regular updates on upcoming events and new information.
 - o Posted a virtual version of the in-person mapping exercise described above.
 - o The online survey from Stage I continued to be available through May in English, Spanish, Burmese, Vietnamese, and Amharic.



Engaging with families during the Aurora West Cultural Fair.

How engagement was used: Stage II feedback was used to help refine and prioritize the original eight focus areas. What emerged were six strategic goal areas that provide structure for the current version of the Colfax Community Vision & Action Plan. These are:

- Public Safety and Security
- Business Support and Access to Goods and Services
- Housing and Neighborhood Stability
- Cleaning and Maintenance
- Advancing Arts, Culture, and a Creative Economy
- Public Space Improvements



Combined results from the priority voting exercise on the initial eight focus areas.

Stage III: Draft Plan Feedback

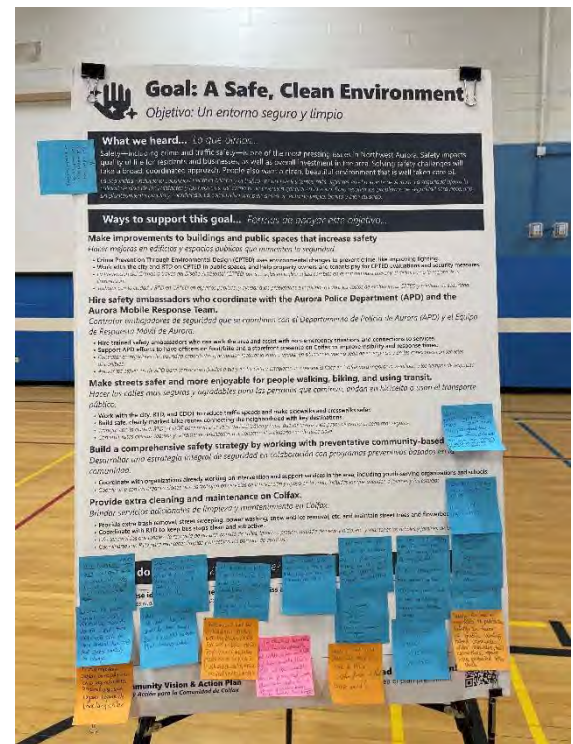
The third stage of the planning process focused on feedback on the first draft of the plan, which kicked off with a Community Open House on June 18. The goals for Stage III were:

- To receive specific feedback on recommended strategies and actions in the plan.
- Further community prioritization of the most important goal areas.
- Continue to educate the community on the different functions of the DDA and CDC and receive feedback on their structure.

Stage III Engagement: The project team used both in-person and online engagement strategies to gather general impressions and specific comments on the draft plan. The full draft plan was made available in English and Spanish, while the executive summary was also available in French, Farsi, and Burmese. An updated voting exercise asked community members to prioritize the plan's six strategic goal areas. In total, 125 people participated in voting.

Engagement activities included:

- Fine-tuning the draft plan with input from working group.
- Draft Plan Open House at Crawford Elementary (June 18). This event included a mapping exercise, priority voting exercise with updated strategic goal areas, and opportunities to provide detailed feedback on goal area boards. – *85 attendees*
- Second small business roundtable at La Victoria Healing Kitchen (July 9) – *10 attendees.*

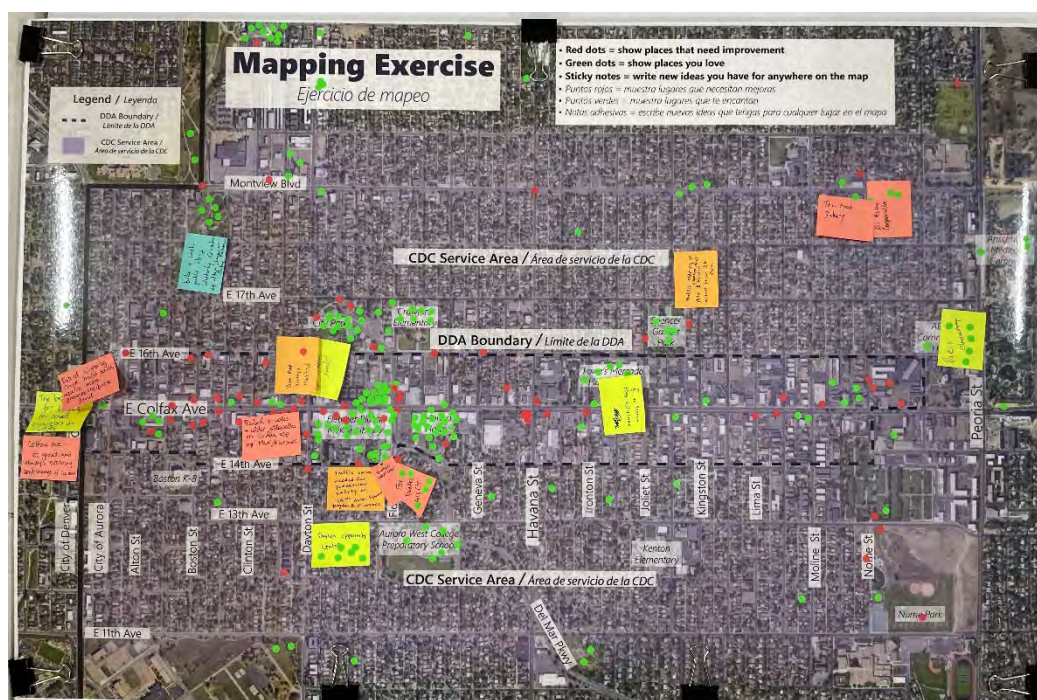


Detailed feedback from June 18 Open House attendees.

- Attending GLC Community Forum. GLC led community members through activities to provide feedback on plan strategies and actions (July 15) – *30 participants*.
- Attending Foundation for Sustainable Urban Communities Community Forum (July 16) – *10 participants*.
- National Night Out was the last major event for feedback on the first draft of the plan. Activities included mapping and priority voting exercises (August 1). – *60 participants*
- Over the course of engagement, *458 comments* were collected for the mapping exercise online and in-person events.



Booth at August 1 National Night Out



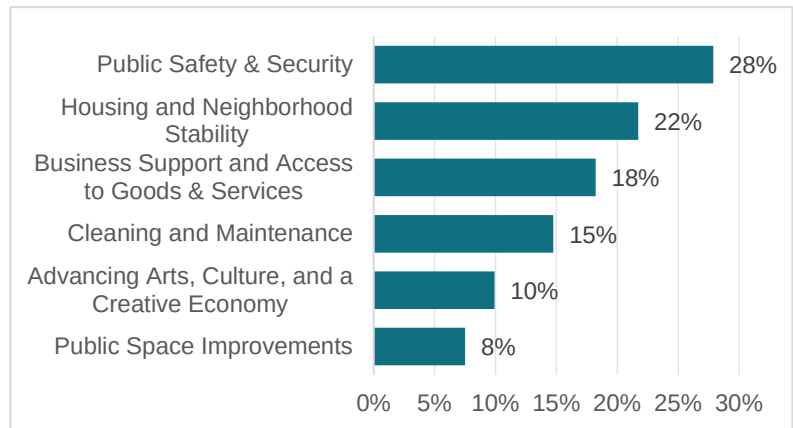
Mapping exercise at June 18 Open House

- In addition to in-person engagement, an online questionnaire was available on the website for individuals to comment on the draft plan. Open-ended comments generally emphasized support for plan actions and strategies, especially improving safety, and recommendations on how to achieve the plan's goals. This received *13 total responses*.
- Ongoing one-on-one meetings.

How engagement was used: Stage III feedback was used to further refine strategies and actions on the first draft of the plan, as well as provide a more detailed implementation strategy based on community priorities.

Edits to the first draft of the plan included:

- Rewording to simplify language and clarify concepts.
- Formatting changes to increase readability and consistency throughout plan.
- Updating description of plan process to reflect Stage III engagement.
- Creation of reference system (Letter – Number) for goal area strategies to help with navigation.
- Changes throughout Implementation section to emphasize how approach relates to community priorities and to implement reference system.
- Clearer emphasis on how the DDA and CDC were intended to work in partnership with existing area programs and initiatives.

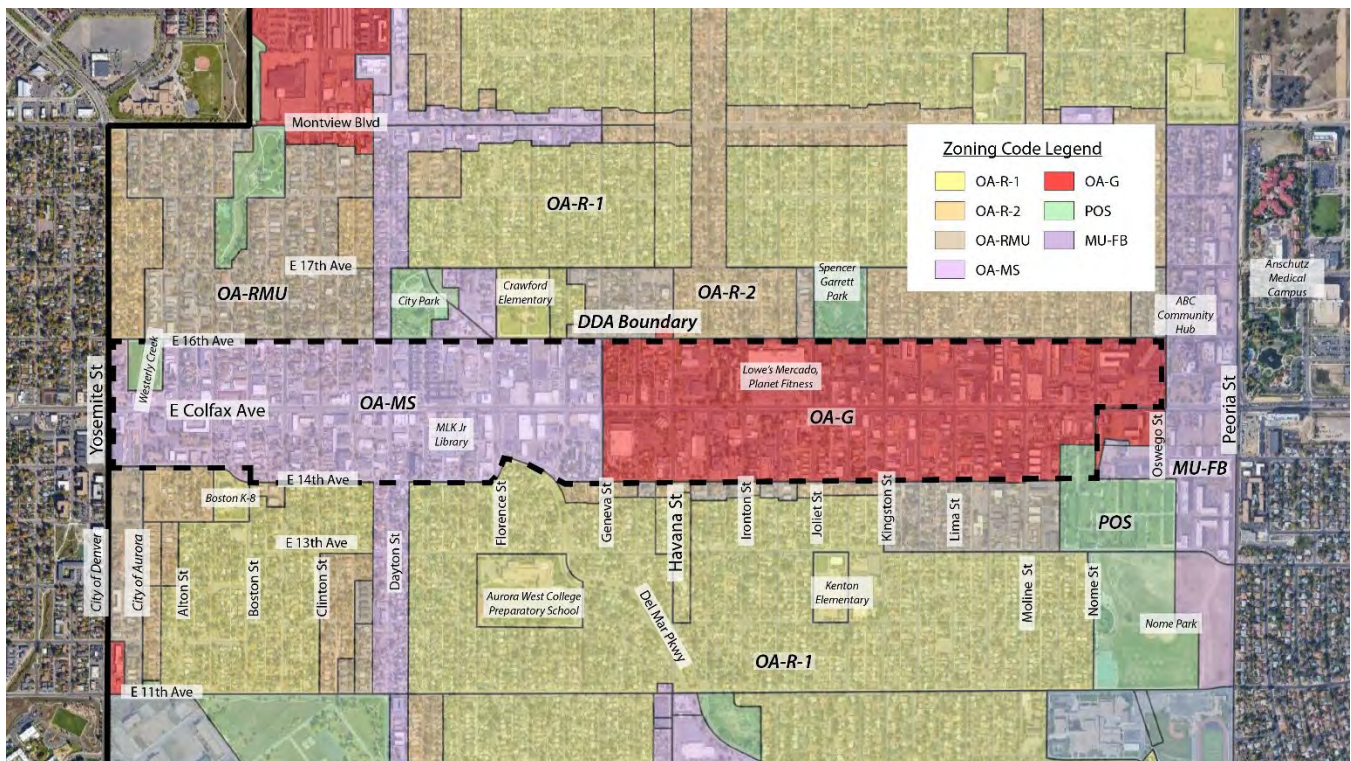


Combined results from the priority voting exercise on the six strategic goal areas.

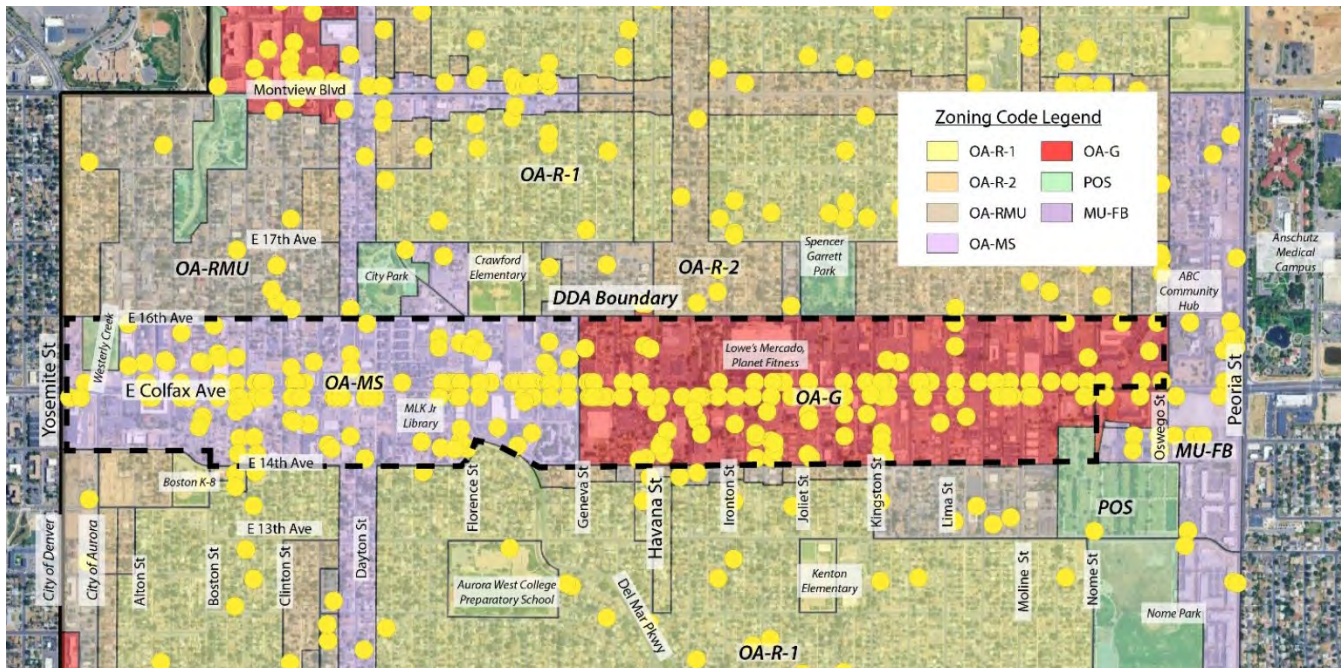
Appendix II: Maps & DDA Boundary Analysis

According to state statute, a DDA must be located in the traditional “central business district” of a municipality. The statute mentions zoning, land use, and concentration of business activity, among other data, as key to identifying these boundaries. Below are maps of the Colfax area that helped inform the proposed Aurora DDA boundaries.

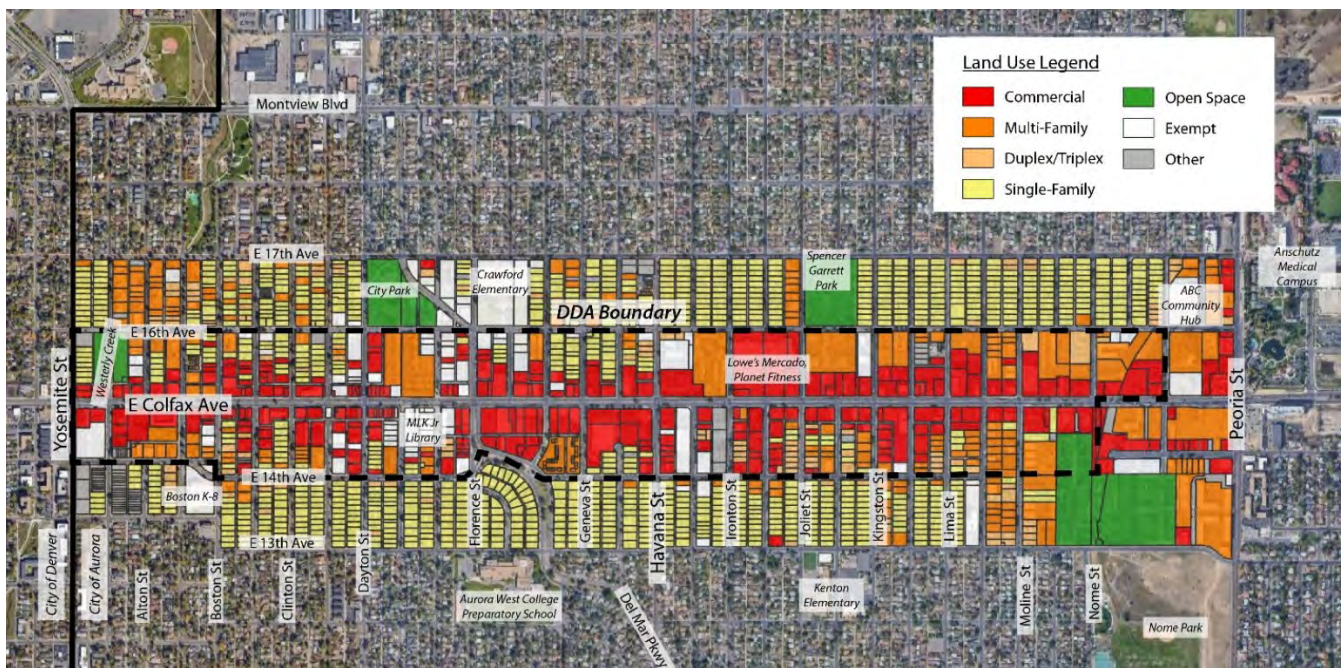
Map A, Zoning: The DDA boundaries follow the Original Aurora “Main Street” and “General” zone districts (OA-MS and OA-G), centered on Colfax Ave. These two zone districts are meant to define key commercial corridors unique to Original Aurora.



Map B, Business Licenses: This map shows the location of businesses licenses in the area. The highest concentration of businesses is along Colfax Ave. between 14th Ave. and 16th Ave.



Map C, Land Use: Map C shows if properties are being used for commercial, residential, or other purposes. It is also broken out by different residential types (multi-family vs. single family, etc.). According to this map, most commercial uses can be found along Colfax Ave. between 14th Ave. and 16th Ave. Above and below this area most properties are single-family residential.



Map D, Final Proposed Boundaries: The proposed DDA boundaries are based on analysis of the previous data and end at the Fitzsimons Urban Renewal Area (URA) to the east. The DDA should not overlap with an active URA, as this area is already collecting TIF.

