

EFFECTIVE | SEPTEMBER 27, 2022

Comprehensive Plan



ADVANCING **ADAMS**
PLANNING FOR A SHARED FUTURE



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CHAPTER 1

Introduction to Advancing Adams



ADAMS COUNTY GENERAL INFO

Adams County encompasses approximately 1,184 square miles and is located in the northeast part of the Denver-Metro area. The county is a nexus in the region’s transportation network with I-25, I-70, I-76, I-270, and E-470, along with other state highways and local arterials, intersecting in the county and serving freight, commuting, and other transportation needs. The county also hosts diverse housing, commercial, and industrial uses.

The county contains, either partially or in whole, ten incorporated municipalities: Arvada, Aurora, Bennett, Brighton, Commerce City, Federal Heights, Lochbuie, Northglenn, Thornton, and Westminster. Adams County also includes the unincorporated communities of Strasburg, Henderson, and Watkins. Adams County is bordered by Jefferson, Broomfield, Weld, Morgan, Washington, Arapahoe, and Denver Counties.

Adams County is projected to grow into the third largest county in the Denver Council of Regional Governments (DRCOG) area with

population increasing to 722,807 by 2040 (See Figure 1-1). The unincorporated portion of the county is expected to increase by up to 40,000 new persons by 2040 from about 99,000 in 2020 (See Figure 1-2).¹

An existing conditions report was conducted at the outset of the Advancing Adams comprehensive planning process and published in April 2021. It is important to note that the 2020 decennial census data was published between the existing conditions report and the comprehensive plan draft. The 2020 census provides raw population counts with some demographic classifications. The 2019 American Community Survey (ACS) includes more extensive and specific demographic categories available in the data set. As such, the comprehensive plan utilizes available and applicable information from both data sets, along with other primary sources to provide a complete picture. Some discrepancies will occur as a result.

¹ As a note, references to the “county” denote the county as a collective, while references to the “County” signify the County as an entity, represented by the Board of County Commissioners and the Adams County government)

Population Forecast - DRCOG Region
2010-2050

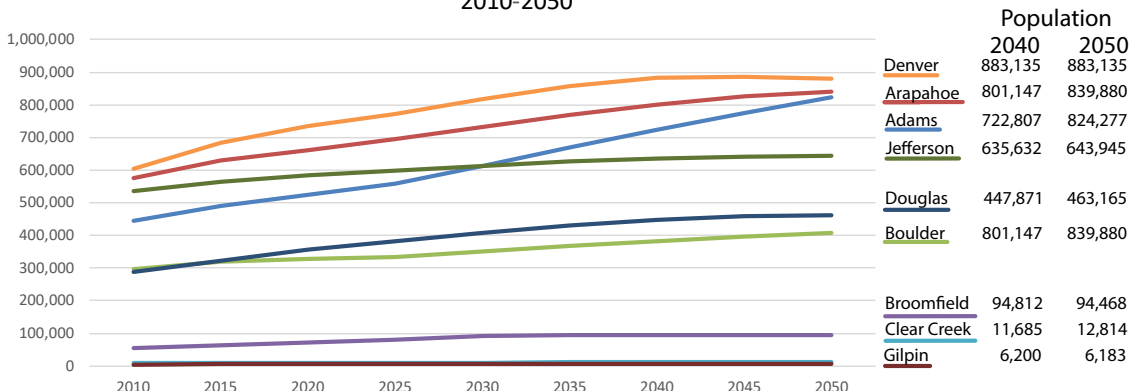


Figure 1-1: Population forecast

PLAN PURPOSE

The Advancing Adams initiative establishes a renewed vision for the county’s future. The Plan updates three fundamental long-range planning documents to accommodate the future growth, transportation, and livability needs of the county through the Comprehensive Plan (Comp Plan), Transportation Master Plan (TMP), and Parks, Open Space, and Trails (POST) Plan. This coordinated planning effort recognizes the intersections between land use, transportation, and an integrated parks and trails system to support a livable and thriving community.

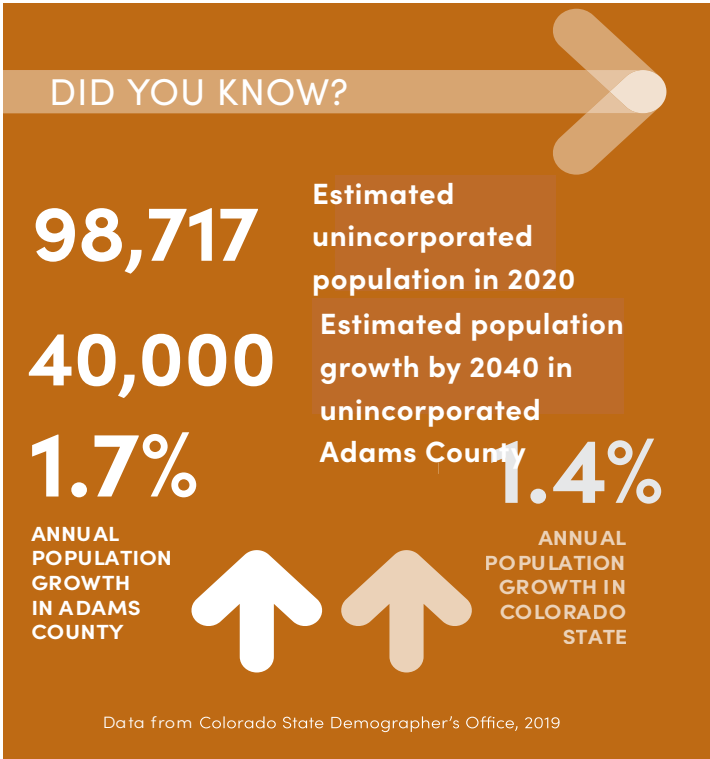
The 2012 Imagine Adams Comprehensive Plan, 2012 Transportation Plan, and 2012 Open Space, Parks, and Trails Master Plans provided a foundation for policies, priorities, and investments in the county.

- The 2022 Advancing Adams Comp Plan update builds upon those

foundations by updating policies, further refining and clarifying land use categories, and coordinating land uses with the 20-minute community planning concept, integrated with the 2022 TMP and 2022 POST plans.

- The 2022 TMP refreshes its policies, emphasizes a need to consider all modes of transportation, and recognizes parks and trails as a key component to an integrated transportation network.
- The 2022 POST plan builds upon the Parks Open Space & Cultural Arts Department’s ability to ensure parks, open space, and trails remain a prominent community asset and cornerstone to the character and heritage of Adams County.

Advancing Adams is intended to be general in nature and serve as a guide for County actions and investments through the next 20 years.



- Key Takeaways from the Existing Conditions Report:**
1. Population is expected to grow.
 2. Housing is not on pace to meet demand.
 3. Rising housing prices threaten attainability and displacement.
 4. Conflicts and environmental issues exist between land uses and residents.
 5. Opportunities to strengthen economic resiliency and employment exist.
 6. Agriculture continues to be a regional asset and cultural keystone but is threatened by development expansion.
 7. Availability of water, utilities, and services constrain future development and growth.
 8. Diversity and inclusion are assets and values in the county.

Figure 1-2: Adams County projected growth

WHAT IS A COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

WHAT IS A COMPREHENSIVE PLAN?

The Advancing Adams 2022 Comp Plan is an overarching plan that addresses the community's vision for future land uses, housing and population growth, the natural and built environments, economic development, cultural heritage, and corridors and subareas. The plan builds upon the issues and opportunities identified in the Phase 1 Existing Conditions and Opportunities Report (included as Appendix A) to establish policies and strategies to achieve this vision. The *Comp Plan* is intended to be a visionary policy document. The Plan broadly serves to inform elected officials' decisions, staff analysis and recommendations, and provide

guidance for strategic planning to implement the vision, set development expectations, and guide public and private investments in the county.

Based on the State of Colorado's land use law, Comprehensive Plans are developed for the general purpose of "...guiding and accomplishing a coordinated and harmonious development of the relevant territory, which, in accordance with present and future needs and resources, will best promote the general welfare of the inhabitants." (§ 30-28-107) The foundation for the Comp Plan is in the Colorado Revised Statutes which informs counties on the specific scope and authority of comprehensive plans. The statute assigns the Adams County Planning Commission the duty to adopt a comprehensive plan for the physical development of the unincorporated portions of the county. The Advancing Adams *Comp Plan*, *TMP*, and *POST* plans replace the Imagine Adams 2012 Comprehensive Plan, Transportation Plan, and POST Plan. The trio of plans in Advancing Adams provide a policy foundation and a framework for future countywide updates.



Farm in Adams County

WHAT IS A PARKS, OPEN SPACE AND TRAILS PLAN?

The *POST* Plan provides an inventory of existing and proposed parks, trails, and open spaces owned and operated by the County or its partners. The plan aids decision-makers in making financial decisions by outlining in detail near-term and future priorities for improvements, land acquisitions and capital improvements. The purpose of this master plan is to chart the course for the next 10 years of operations. The *POST* plan defines opportunities for conservation, closes gaps in the county's recreation

network, and sets priorities to ensure long-term sustainability of the Parks, Open Space & Cultural Arts Department and its assets to meet the needs and vision of the community.



Native vegetation along the Big Dry Creek Trail

WHAT IS A TRANSPORTATION MASTER PLAN?

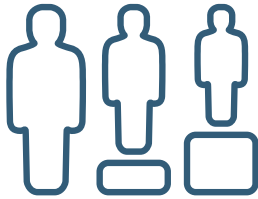
The Advancing Adams *TMP* serves as the guiding document for changes to the mobility network in the county through 2040. The *TMP* represents a year-long effort to assess existing conditions of the transportation network, engage key local, regional, and state officials to understand the future mobility needs of Adams County, and to understand how community members seek to connect with key destinations around Adams County and the Front Range. The *TMP* identifies a long-term vision for transportation looking into the future, including a roadmap of short-term investments to accomplish this goal. These investments include infrastructure, as well as policies and programs that will ensure an efficient and connected transportation network that accommodates the population and employment growth. This plan makes recommendations that will improve the experience for people walking, biking, taking transit, and driving in the near term and as Adams County grows.

CRAFTING THE PLANS

Each of the three Advancing Adams plans was drafted with the following core value lenses to evaluate existing conditions, community feedback, policies, and strategies to guide the County to realize its vision of being the “the most innovative and inclusive county in America for all families and businesses.”

- 1. Equity:** The vibrance and strength of a community emerges from diversity and equity. Equity can be measured through distribution of resources, affordability and access to services and experiences, as well as balancing land uses with environmental justice. Adams County will celebrate and leverage a diverse community through equitable land planning as the region continues to grow in population and various ethnicities and identities.
- 2. Sustainability:** The County is committed to build smarter and retrofit existing development to include new technologies and efficiencies, all while embracing a holistic and metrics-based approach. Sustainability will be part of Adams County’s identity.
- 3. Livability:** Adams County has numerous multimodal and walkable districts that support a human-scaled, comfortable, and engaging experience. The Advancing Adams plans help to further enhance livability through the thoughtful integration of artful placemaking strategies and urban design best practices that celebrate the culture of Adams County.

These values:



Equity: Just and fair inclusion into a society in which all can participate, prosper, and reach their full potential.

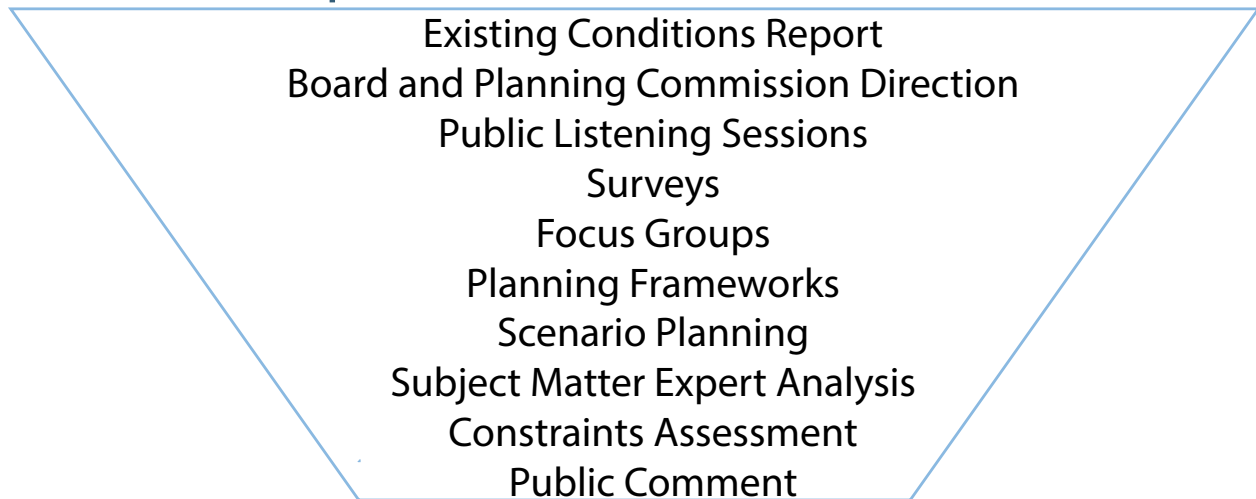


Sustainability: The practice of creating and maintaining conditions to meet the needs of the present without compromising the ability to meet the same needs elsewhere or in the future.



Livability: sum of the factors that add up to a community's quality of life—including the built and natural environments, economic prosperity, social stability and equity, educational opportunity, and cultural, entertainment and recreation possibilities.

Drove these processes:



To guide these plans:



ADVANCING **ADAMS**
 COMPREHENSIVE PLAN



ADVANCING **ADAMS**
 PARKS, OPEN SPACE & TRAILS



ADVANCING **ADAMS**
 TRANSPORTATION

Figure 1-3: Crafting the plan

CRAFTING THE PLANS

EXISTING CONDITIONS

A key component of the planning process is the evaluation of existing conditions. The Existing Conditions Report performed at the outset of Advancing Adams is a snapshot of where the county stands today in population, housing, environmental, and economic circumstances. The report also assessed trends, reported



results from public feedback, and explored potential frameworks to inform the planning process and provide recommendations detailed in the Comp Plan. The complete Existing Conditions Report is incorporated by reference as Appendix A.

BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS AND PLANNING COMMISSION DIRECTION

The scope, process, and framework were set broadly by the Board of County Commissioners (BoCC) and Planning Commission (PC). Both BoCC and PC have been integral partners for confirming direction, policies and goals of the Advancing Adams plans. The BoCC and PC are ultimately responsible for the adoption and ratification of the Advancing Adams plans.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION IN THE PLANNING PROCESS

Advancing Adams has used a robust public engagement process to ensure the voice of the community is heard and reflects a common vision. The process and input is detailed in the Outreach and Engagement Summary included as Appendix B.

PLANNING FRAMEWORKS

Two primary frameworks were incorporated into the planning process to develop scenarios, focus analysis, and guide policy recommendations. The 20-Minute Community Framework

connects housing and population with amenities, services, transportation, and parks to support livability. The Transect Framework was utilized when considering adjacent land uses and buffering between land use intensities and transitions. More detail on the frameworks can be found in Chapter 2.

2022. The pandemic influenced analysis perspectives, outreach and engagement efforts, and coordination as the pandemic impacted the planning process and future considerations for response and recovery.

SCENARIO PLANNING

The county developed three planning scenarios, full analysis of which is included in Appendix C, to further refine and coordinate parks, trails, and open space with transportation, land use, and policy to achieve the preferred scenario outcomes.

SUBJECT MATTER EXPERT ANALYSIS

County staff, in coordination with professional consultants, applied their expertise to the data analysis, public feedback, and best practices to craft the goals, policies, and recommendations for the plans.

CONSTRAINTS

Any plan faces constraints that influence its final direction of the plan. While the plan is visionary and aspirational, it is grounded by capacity, fiscal considerations, conceptual feasibility, scope limits of a comprehensive plan, and statutory authority, amongst other considerations. It is worth acknowledging that this plan was drafted during the COVID pandemic between 2020 and



HOW TO USE THESE PLANS

HOW TO USE THESE PLANS:

The Comp Plan, TMP, and POST plan follow the same general outline by detailing Key Issues from the Existing Conditions Report, subject matter expert analysis, along with feedback from surveys, focus groups, and listening sessions. Key Issues summarize the over-arching themes and Goals offer a broad vision to address those issues. Policies and Strategies provide the direction and recommendations to achieve the goals of the County.

A list of re-adopted plans is included below as Figure 1-4.

Four appendices are referenced but are not formally adopted. The appendices provide the foundation for the vision, goals, policies, and strategies in the plan.

Appendix A: Existing Conditions Report

Appendix B: Engagement and Outreach Summary

Appendix C: Scenario Planning Exhibit

Appendix D: Technical Memorandum: Supporting Data And Analysis For Economic Development Chapter Of 2022 Advancing Adams Comprehensive Plan

Plan Name	Original Adoption Year	Advancing Adams is Re-Adopting Plan Policy	Advancing Adams is Re-Adopting Plan Future Land Use Map	If conflicting policy, plan supersedes
Balanced Housing Plan	2018	Yes	N/A	Comprehensive Plan
Berkeley Neighborhood Plan	2008	Yes	No	Subarea Plan
Clear Creek Valley Transit Oriented Development Plan	2009	Yes	No	Comprehensive Plan
Colorado Air & Space Port Subarea Plan	2021	Yes	Yes	Subarea Plan
District Plan (Splendid Valley)	2016	Yes	Yes	Subarea Plan
Federal Blvd. Framework Plan	2014	Yes	No	Subarea Plan
Imagine Adams Comprehensive Plan	2012	No	No	Comprehensive Plan
Mineral Extraction Plan	2005	Yes	N/A	Comprehensive Plan
Riverdale Road Corridor Plan	2005	Yes	No	Subarea Plan
Southwest Area Framework Plan	2005	Yes	N/A	Comprehensive Plan
Square Lake Plan	2022	Yes	Yes	Subarea Plan
Strasburg Plan	2002	Yes	No	Comprehensive Plan
Welby Subarea Plan	2014	Yes	Yes	Subarea Plan

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Chapter 2



FUTURE LAND USE

FUTURE LAND USE

The future land use plan establishes the framework for how the county can sustain its existing population, infrastructure, and assets while accommodating the future growth and needs in the unincorporated portions of the county. The Future Land Use Map (FLUM) depicts the future land use categories in this chapter and designates their place in the county. The future land uses were determined after extensive analysis of the 2012 Imagine Adams FLUM, current zoning and development entitlements, projected infrastructure capacity, public investments and transit assets, and extensive public feedback. The map is also informed by the 20-Minute Community model, further described in Chapter 5, and proximity of supporting services, and the transect model to promote transitions and buffering between development patterns and intensities.

The FLUM presents a guiding vision for the county, while the *Adams County Development Standards and Regulations* determines the regulatory zoning, uses, and development standards. In some cases, the future land use matches the existing zoning and land uses in an area. In other instances, the county’s vision for development or uses may not align with current zoning. In this case, the FLUM sets an expectation for future conditions, while the regulatory requirements set by the zoning remain. There may be times when existing conditions, including but not limited to landfills or properties within a flammable gas or natural resource conservation overlay, may undermine the Plan’s stated development goal, and in those instances existing and future development will need to accommodate these existing conditions. The vision for the community is realized incrementally when the zoning and FLUM align, generally by property owners rezoning their property to match the future land use designation. Goals, policies, and strategies to guide investment, development, growth, and preservation to further realize the county’s vision are in subsequent chapters.

FUTURE LAND USE BY THE NUMBERS

Figure 2-1 to the right depicts the FLUM land area between 2012 Imagine Adams and 2022 Advancing Adms plans. Areas designated as “Agriculture” make up the vast area in the county and are projected to remain as such. The 2012 plan indicated that “Residential Urban” allowed for properties up to one acre. The increased percentage in the “Residential Low” category is partly because larger lot properties with applicable zoning have been re-categorized as “Residential Low”.

FLUM Category as Percentage of Total Land Area		
General FLUM Category	2012 Percent	2022 Percent
Agriculture	81.9%	81.3%
Commercial	0.2%	0.2%
Industrial	0.8%	0.8%
Mixed Use	0.2%	0.5%
Mixed Use Commercial	4.1%	5.1%
Parks Open Space	5.6%	6.6%
Public	0.6%	0.8%
Residential Low	3.4%	3.6%
Residential Medium/High	1.6%	1.1%

Figure 2-1

The decrease of “Residential Medium” and “Residential High” categories as a percentage of total land is partly because of the re-allocation of large lots and certain zones to “Residential Low”. Annexations also account for some decrease in these categories. Other areas designated “Residential Urban” in the 2012 plan were changed to “Mixed Use” which is where residential growth is also anticipated

FUTURE LAND USE CATEGORIES

Generalized Zoning to FLUM Percentage

General FLUM Category	2022 FLUM	Current Zoning
Agriculture	81.3%	91.4%
Commercial	0.2%	0.03%
Industrial	0.8%	0.9%
Mixed Use *	0.5%	0%
Mixed Use Commercial	5.1%	0.3%
Parks Open Space	6.6%	0%
Public	0.8%	0.1%
Residential Low	3.6%	3.0%
Residential Medium/High	1.1%	0.8%
Misc. (AV, DIA, PUD)**		3.5%

* This zone district was created in 2021, however, no properties have rezoned been rezoned prior to adoption of the comprehensive plan.
 ** It is difficult to allocate these zone districts to a complementary FLUM category, however, most is either Agriculture or Mixed Use Commercial
Figure 2-2

Current Zoning and Uses Compared to FLUM Category

Future Land Use	Total Acres	Percent of Zoned Area
Agriculture Large (A -3)	592,609	90.9%
Agriculture Small (A -2)	3,356	0.5%
Commercial (C -0, C-1, C-2, C-3)	220	0.0%
Industrial Low (I -1 [50%], I-2)	1,870	0.3%
Industrial Medium (I -2 [75%], I-3)	3,701	0.6%
Institutional (PL)	346	0.1%
Misc. (AV, DIA, PUD)	23,316	3.6%
Mixed Use Commercial (C -4, C-5, I-1 [50%])	1,763	0.3%
R-1-C, R-2, MH (Residential Medium)	192	0.0%
Residential High (R -3, R-4)	275	0.0%
Residential Low (A -1, RE)	19,507	3.0%
Residential Medium (R -1, R-2, MH)	5,024	0.8%
Total Acres	652,177	100.0%

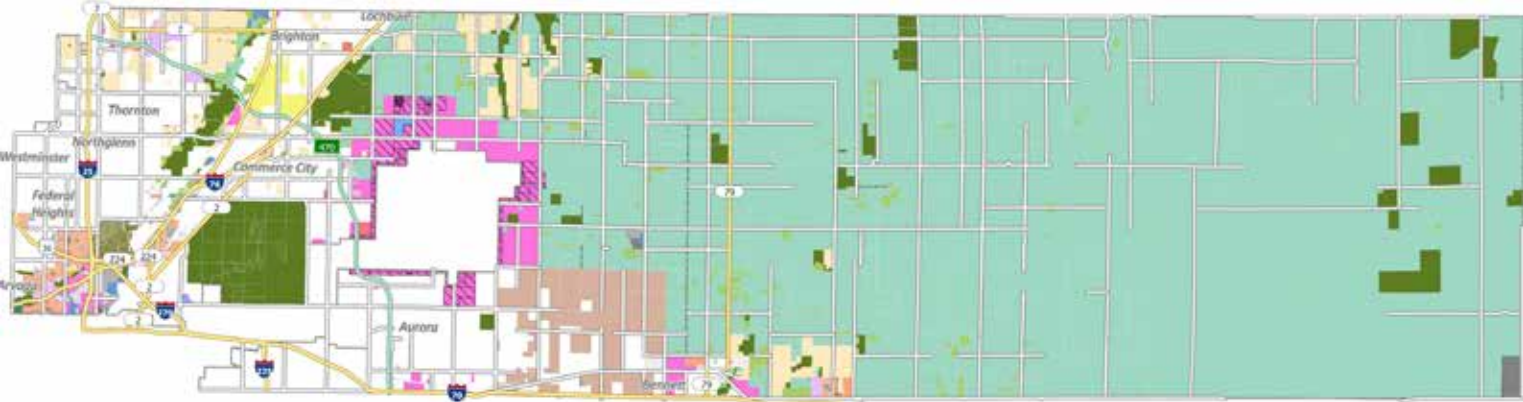
Figure 2-3

Figure 2-2 to the right depicts the generalized FLUM categories (eg. Industrial rather than Industrial High, Medium and Low) to correlated current zone district land area. Figure 2-3 depicts the land area to current zoning and uses as a quantity and percentage. Note, some zones coordinate specifically with a FLUM category while others, I-1 for instance, may apply to several categories (Industrial Low and Mixed-Use Commercial). Some properties zoned I-3 were allocated into the Industrial Medium category for purposes of calculation based on operations and uses more consistent with the Industrial Medium character, and likewise with I-2 into the Industrial Low category. Note, the table is illustrative and not intended to conflict with Future Land Use Categories listed below.

As noted, the plan vision is realized incrementally through rezonings and public and private investments. The snap-shot of current zoning serves as a benchmark to guide direction of the plan.


Typical Zone Districts depicted in the future land use categories is intended to illustrate zone districts conventionally found in a category and not an exclusive list of potentially appropriate zone districts and may be evaluated along with additional criteria.


FUTURE LAND USE MAP




For the latest Future Land Use Map visit www.adcogov.org


FUTURE LAND USE CATEGORIES

Agriculture Small Scale (AS)	Standards	
 <p>This land use category is included for smaller agricultural operations that balance housing and agricultural production on the site. Examples can be found in the Welby and Splendid Valley District Plan areas. This category is not intended for properties where residential is the only use.</p>	Typical Zone Districts	A-1, A-2
	Dwelling Units per Acre	<1
	Ideal Mobility	Moderate capacity road corridors. Separated bicycle infrastructure, sidewalks, connected street pattern (collectors, arterials)
	Land Use Adjacencies	Integrated with: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Residential Low • Parks & Open Space • Agriculture Large Scale
	2012 Land Use Category	Agricultural


Agriculture Large Scale (AL)	Standards	
 <p>This land use category features large-lot agriculture and may have corporate agricultural operations on the property, primarily occurring on the eastern portion of Adams County. Farming or ranching should be considered the primary use of the property and supplementary housing considered secondary.</p>	Typical Zone Districts	A-3
	Dwelling Units per Acre	<1
	Ideal Mobility	Trails, limited street network (collectors, arterials, highways)
	Land Use Adjacencies	Integrated with: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parks & Open Space • Agriculture Small Scale
	2012 Land Use Category	Agricultural


FUTURE LAND USE CATEGORIES

Residential Low (RL)	Standards	
 <p>This land use category is most appropriate for suburban and exurban areas in Adams County as it primarily consists of single-family housing. The Estate Residential designation from 2012 is included in this category.</p>	Typical Zone Districts	A-1 (<2.5 acres), Residential Estate, R-1-C
	Dwelling Units per Acre	Up to 6
	Ideal Mobility	Frequent transit, protected, separated, or shared bicycle infrastructure, sidewalks with limited curb cuts, connected street pattern (local streets, collectors and limited on arterials).
	Land Use Adjacencies	Integrated with: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agricultural Small Scale • Parks and Open Space • Residential Low
	2012 Land Use Category	Estate Residential


Residential Medium (RM)	Standards	
 <p>The Residential Medium land use category functions as a transitional category between higher and lower density. Although some single-family housing may be located in this district, it is primarily reserved for lower density multifamily housing such as fourplexes, cottage courts, and small townhome complexes.</p>	Typical Zone Districts	R-1-C, R-2, R-3
	Dwelling Units per Acre	6-20
	Ideal Mobility	Frequent transit, protected, separated, or shared bicycle infrastructure, sidewalks with limited curb cuts, connected street pattern (local streets, collectors and limited on arterials).
	Land Use Adjacencies	Integrated with: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Commercial • Institutional • Mixed Use • Mixed Use Commercial (limited) • Parks and Open Space • Residential High • Residential Low
	2012 Land Use Category	Urban Residential


FUTURE LAND USE CATEGORIES


Residential High (RH)	Standards	
 <p>This land use category is reserved for the highest residential density in Adams County. Multifamily residential buildings are most appropriate for this category. An example of the types of multifamily residential buildings includes apartments, multi-plex and townhouses.</p>	Typical Zone Districts	R-3, R-4
	Dwelling Units per Acre	14-35+
	Ideal Mobility	High capacity transit, protected or separated bicycle infrastructure, sidewalks with limited curb cuts, supported street pattern (collectors and arterials).
	Land Use Adjacencies	Integrated with: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Commercial · Institutional · Mixed Use · Mixed Use Commercial (limited) · Parks and Open Space · Residential Medium
	2012 Land Use Category	Urban Residential

Mixed Use (MU)	Standards	
 <p>The mixed-use land use category includes commercial, office, multifamily residential, and institutional. Mixed-use is expected to develop into horizontal mixed-use for a district or corridor mixing of uses, or single-property development of mixed use in vertical development.</p>	Typical Zone Districts	C-0, C-1, C-2, R-3, R-4, MU, TOD
	Dwelling Units per Acre	N/A
	Ideal Mobility	High capacity transit, separated or shared bicycle infrastructure, sidewalks, connected street pattern (collectors and arterials)
	Land Use Adjacencies	Integrated with: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Commercial · Institutional · Mixed Use Commercial · Parks and Open Space · Residential High · Residential Medium
	2012 Land Use Category	Activity Center


FUTURE LAND USE CATEGORIES


Commercial (C)	Standards	
 <p>The commercial land use category is intended for a broad range of commercial areas including smaller scale and neighborhood commercial that could include corner stores and/or small commercial strips and larger commercial centers.</p>	Typical Zone Districts	C-0, C-1, C-2, C-3, C-4, C-5
	Dwelling Units per Acre	N/A
	Ideal Mobility	Separated or shared bicycle infrastructure, sidewalks, connected street pattern (arterials, collectors, and local streets)
	Land Use Adjacencies	Integrated with: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Industrial Medium (limited) · Industrial Low · Institutional · Mixed Use · Mixed Use Commercial · Parks and Open Space · Residential High · Residential Medium
2012 Land Use Category	Commercial	

Mixed Use Commercial (MUC)	Standards	
 <p>Serves as a land use for areas transitioning to industrial or heavy commercial developments where activities and operations are contained within buildings. Mixed Use Commercial areas often have environmental considerations or are adjacent to more intense industrial uses that do not necessarily support residential uses. Limited residential uses may be acceptable in a vertical mixed-use setting if all environmental conditions and concerns have been remediated and land-use adjacencies are mitigated.*</p>	Typical Zone Districts	C-3, C-4, C-5, I-1
	Dwelling Units per Acre	N/A
	Ideal Mobility	High capacity transit, separated or shared bicycle infrastructure, sidewalks, connected street pattern (collectors and arterials)
	Land Use Adjacencies	Integrated with: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Commercial · Institutional · Industrial Low · Industrial Medium · Mixed Use · Residential High (Limited)
2012 Land Use Category	Mixed Use Employment	


*  Area formerly in Imagine Adams DIA Reserve category or substantially in noise contour and not suitable for FAA sensitive uses such as residential uses or schools.


FUTURE LAND USE CATEGORIES

Industrial Low (INL)	Standards	
 <p>This land use category includes low impact industrial uses that primarily operate in buildings. This category may be adjacent to residential use if nuisances or pollution are minimal and sufficiently mitigated.</p>	Typical Zone Districts	C-5, I-1
	Dwelling Units per Acre	N/A
	Ideal Mobility	Moderate capacity road corridors. Separated bicycle infrastructure, sidewalks, connected street pattern (collectors, arterials)
	Land Use Adjacencies	Integrated with: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Commercial • Industrial Medium • Mixed Use (limited) • Mixed Use Commercial • Residential (limited)
	2012 Land Use Category	Industrial


Industrial Medium (INM)	Standards	
 <p>This land use category includes moderate impact industrial uses that can operate in buildings or openly on a site. Operations may include some nuisances or pollution, therefore, adjacency to residential uses should be avoided.</p>	Typical Zone Districts	I-1, I-2
	Dwelling Units per Acre	N/A
	Ideal Mobility	High capacity road and freight network (collectors, arterials, highway access). Multi-modal infrastructure in coordination with truck and freight (collectors, arterials).
	Land Use Adjacencies	Integrated with: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Commercial (limited) • Industrial High • Industrial Low • Mixed Use Commercial
	2012 Land Use Category	Industrial


FUTURE LAND USE CATEGORIES

Industrial High (INH)	Standards	
 <p>This land use category includes industrial uses that have some component of nuisance or pollution and should not be adjacent to or nearby any residential uses. This future land-use category is reserved for the most intense uses that would prohibit the viability of any future uses other than heavy industrial. Uses generally have State or Federal regulatory oversight. Examples include oil-refineries, land-fills, toxic waste processing, etc.</p>	Typical Zone Districts	I-3 or higher
	Dwelling Units per Acre	N/A
	Ideal Mobility	High capacity road and freight network (collectors, arterials, highway access). Multi-modal infrastructure in coordination with truck and freight (collectors, arterials).
	Land Use Adjacencies	Integrated with: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Industrial Low • Industrial Medium • Mixed Use Commercial (limited)
2012 Land Use Category	N/A	

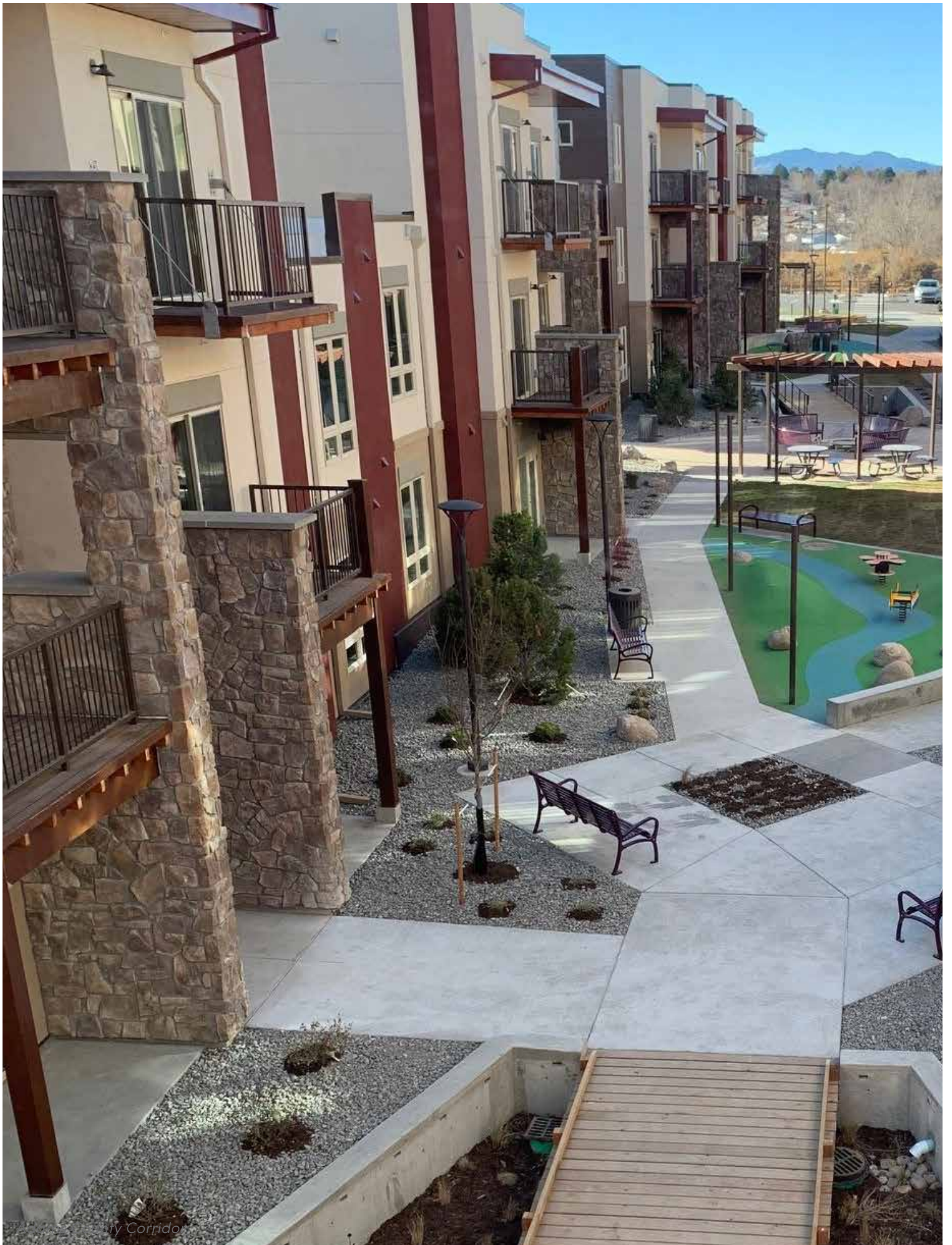
Public (P)	Standards	
 <p>This land use category is intended for public infrastructure such as utilities, utility corridors, water and waste-water treatment sites, railroad corridors, etc. where the infrastructure is not expected to change. Schools or institutional residential uses would not be allowed in this category.</p>	Typical Zone Districts	N/A
	Dwelling Units per Acre	N/A
	Ideal Mobility	N/A
	Land Use Adjacencies	N/A
	2012 Land Use Category	None

FUTURE LAND USE CATEGORIES

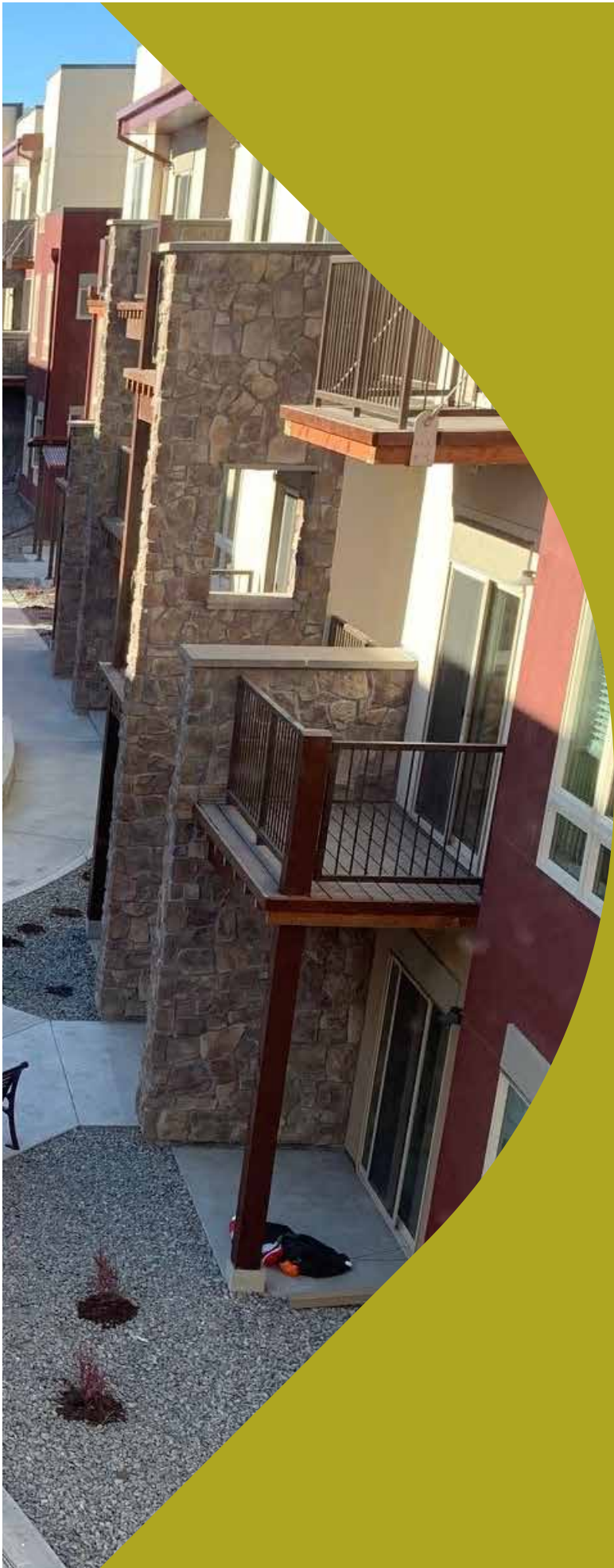
Institutional (INS)	Standards	
 <p>The institutional land use category is reserved for education facilities, government facilities, hospitals, public buildings, fire stations, etc. Institutional land uses can be found in almost any zone district depending on the nature of the use and services it provides.</p>	Typical Zone Districts	N/A
	Dwelling Units per Acre	N/A
	Ideal Mobility	Separated or shared bicycle infrastructure, sidewalks, connected street pattern (arterials and local streets)
	Land Use Adjacencies	Integrated with: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Commercial • Industrial (Limited) • Mixed Use • Mixed Use Commercial • Parks and Open Space • Residential High • Residential Medium • Residential Low
	2012 Land Use Category	Public

Parks & Open Space (P/OS)	Standards	
 <p>This land use category includes a variety of parks and open space typologies including regional parks, community parks and neighborhood parks.</p>	Typical Zone Districts	Parks and Open Space zones when rezoned otherwise N/A
	Dwelling Units per Acre	N/A
	Ideal Mobility	Accessed from shared mobility trails, separated bicycle infrastructure, sidewalks, supported street pattern
	Land Use Adjacencies	Integrated with: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agricultural Large Scale • Agricultural Small Scale • Commercial • Industrial (limited) • Institutional • Mixed Use • Mixed Use Commercial • Parks and Open Space • Residential (all)
	2012 Land Use Category	Parks and Open Space

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CHAPTER 3



Community and Housing

OVERVIEW

Adams County endeavors to provide housing that works for people on all paths of life. A central topic raised throughout the community engagement process was access to housing for all residents. Adams County residents expressed a need to support a broad spectrum of opportunities beyond the current predominantly single-family detached homes including manufactured housing, apartments, and townhomes. Residents also expressed needs for more homeownership opportunities. Responses indicated a need for housing that meets the needs of people at different stages in their life including housing that meets the needs of seniors and those with disabilities. Encouraging a diversity of housing options for a variety of

income levels and life stages supports the goal of offering everyone the opportunity to live, work, and play in Adams County.

This chapter provides a high-level framework of housing goals and strategies that influence land use policies and integrates principles of equity, sustainability, and livability. It establishes a vision for healthy, balanced neighborhoods that serve residents' needs by providing choices in housing type, opportunities for both rental and homeownership, and ease of access for all ages and ability levels. There is also an underlying foundation of sensitivity to availability of resources, such as water and infrastructure, and fiscal impacts of residential development.

Housing markets operate at a regional level while also being strongly influenced by national markets and economic policies. Housing is also inextricably linked to local land use regulations and development standards because those factors drive housing densities, construction costs, and, ultimately, price points in home sales and rents. This chapter seeks to provide a current picture of housing needs across the county, identify policy areas to update and align with best industry practices that promote a fair housing environment, and land use strategies that encourage responsive, sustainable, and equitable housing growth to meet the needs of Adams County residents into the future.



ROLE OF THE COUNTY

Adams County Government oversees the land use regulations and permitting for housing in unincorporated areas of the county; however, it is also the administrator of federal housing funds allocated to serve residents across the county more broadly. County staff, therefore, work regularly in partnership with the municipalities and three public housing authorities to develop programs and fund projects that serve low- and moderate-income populations.

As a statutory county under Colorado law, Adams County plays a limited role in the direct development of housing. Instead, the public housing authority for Adams County, Maiker Housing Partners, leads many of the development initiatives to meet the County’s goals. The housing authorities for the Cities of Brighton and Commerce City are also key partners. Additionally, the County may apply federal entitlement funds in the form of Community Development Block Grants (CDBG) and HOME Investment Partnerships (HOME) program dollars to private development projects that provide affordable housing and community benefits. As a federal entitlement community, there are supportive plans, reports, and studies that complement this chapter and provide extensive background information on Adams County and its residents. The County is approaching a five-year

update to the Balanced Housing Plan and accompanying Housing Needs Assessment.

In matters of market-rate private housing development, the County seeks to promote diversity of housing types, a variety of neighborhood scales, accessibility for a range of ages and abilities, and proximity to amenities and services. This is done through zoning, design standards, and attention to federal and state laws governing accessibility. Following adoption of this Plan, the County will undertake a comprehensive overhaul of the existing Adams County Development Standards and Regulations to reflect current needs and values of the community.

Supplemental documents:

- *2020 Analysis of Impediments to Fair Housing Choice in Adams County*
- *2020-2024 Consolidated Plan,*
- *2018 Balanced Housing Plan*
- *2017 Housing Needs Assessment*



ADAMS COUNTY PROFILE

Since 2000, the Denver metropolitan region has experienced significant population growth and, more recently, rapidly rising housing costs as a result of that growth. Housing construction has not kept pace with increases in population while wages have stagnated. Adams County has consistently been one of the fastest growing counties on an annual basis, due in large part to affordability pressures in Denver and availability of developable land.

Based on 2019 Census data, there were 36,430 total housing units in unincorporated areas of Adams County. Of those, an estimated 26,323 (72%) were owner-occupied, while approximately 8,748 (24%) were renter-occupied. This represents a higher percentage of owner-occupied housing than in the incorporated areas (61.3%).

The age of housing stock is relatively consistent across the county, with

the median year of construction for unincorporated areas being 1978, compared to 1980 for incorporated areas. Older construction is less likely to be designed to accommodate accessibility needs and to allow aging in place; it is also less likely to be energy efficient. The table below outlines the age of housing stock in Adams County as a whole and unincorporated areas.

As captured from 2018 American Community Survey data, the great majority of households across Adams County are family households (71%). Approximately one quarter (24%) are married with children, while a nearly equal number (26%) are married without children. Households headed by single mothers represent 8%, and 29% of households are categorized as non-family – roommates, unrelated people living together, and single people living alone.

More than 52,000 individuals in Adams County have at least one disability, which is equivalent to roughly 10% of the total population.

Estimated number of housing units built by decade

Year Built	Adams Co. (all)	Adams Co. (all)	Unincorporated	Unincorporated
2000 - 2019	12,084	7%	3,306	9%
1990 - 1999	38,824	23%	9,613	27%
1980 - 1989	28,459	17%	4,724	13%
1970 - 1979	22,069	13%	2,660	7%
1960 - 1969	29,342	17%	5,603	16%
1950 - 1959	17,026	10%	3,685	10%
1940 - 1949	19,373	11%	5,488	15%
1939 or earlier	2,830	2%	480	1%
Total	170,007		35,559	

Source: U.S. Census Bureau www.census.gov

Figure 3-1: Estimated number of housing units built by decade

Disabilities are more prevalent among older populations, and approximately one quarter (25.2%) of the 65 to 74-year-old cohort report having at least one disability. That rises to more than half (51.2%) of the population age 75 years and older. The highest numbers of disabilities are ambulatory (more common in older adults) and cognitive (more prevalent in youth). Residents with disabilities are relatively evenly distributed throughout the county.

Adams County has some of the most racially, ethnically, and economically diverse neighborhoods in the Denver metro region and is now a “majority-minority” community. The largest single racial or ethnic group is residents of Hispanic descent, representing approximately 40% of the county’s population. From 2000 to 2018, the size of this population effectively doubled in the county and accounted for more than half (56%) of countywide population growth. The cities and the county have very few African American/Black residents, and there has been little change since 2000. As covered in the 2020 Analysis of Impediments to Fair Housing Choice in Adams County, African Americans

are more likely than other groups to experience housing challenges.

When examining the unincorporated areas of Adams County, there are very few concentrations of minority racial or ethnic groups. A geographic concentration is defined as a Census tract with 150% of the county proportion of that demographic group. There are four Census blocks with concentrations of Hispanic residents (greater than 59.5%) in unincorporated Adams County. However, there are no Census blocks with concentrations of African American/Black, Asian, or Native American populations.

Currently, 69% of homes in Adams County are single-family dwellings. To support future population growth, both increases in diversity of unit types and densities, including missing-middle, multi-family, and mixed-use developments, in some areas will be important. A substantial amount of housing growth may be anticipated to occur within incorporated areas of the county. The estimates provided in the table below represent projections for the whole of Adams County, including both incorporated and unincorporated areas.

Adams County Projected Housing Needs

	POPULATION EST.	HOUSING UNITS NEEDED	TOTAL UNITS NEEDED AFTER 2020	ANNUAL PRODUCTION NEEDED
2025	580,775	193,592	15,075	3,015
2030	637,554	212,518	34,001	3,400
2035	694,085	231,362	52,845	3,523
2040	748,318	249,439	70,922	3,546

Source: Colorado State Demographer's Office

Figure 3-2: Projected housing needs

KEY ISSUES

Information in this section is taken directly from the 2020 Analysis of Impediments to Fair Housing Choice in Adams County prepared for Adams County by Root Policy Research. The data also aligns with anecdotal information collected through community outreach activities done specifically for the Advancing Adams campaign, including focused outreach with the Spanish language community.

- It is estimated one in five Adams County residents struggle to pay their rent or mortgage, and renters are more likely than homeowners to struggle (43% compared to 12%). Additionally, large families, children under the age of 18, persons with disabilities, and those of Hispanic or Native American backgrounds are more likely than average Adams County residents to struggle with housing costs.
- Overall, 30% of Adams County residents rate the condition of their home as “fair” or “poor” condition.
- 78% of surveyed households that include a family member with a disability have accessibility needs, but 28% of those households live in a home that does not meet their accessibility needs.
- While 95% of households with incomes above \$75,000 have an internet subscription, 85% of households earning between \$20,000 and \$75,000, and 68% of households earning below \$20,000 have internet service.
- Twenty tracts in the county are identified as food deserts, and one in four USDA food deserts in the county are in Census tracts with a concentration of African American residents. 35% are Census tracts with a concentration of Hispanic residents.

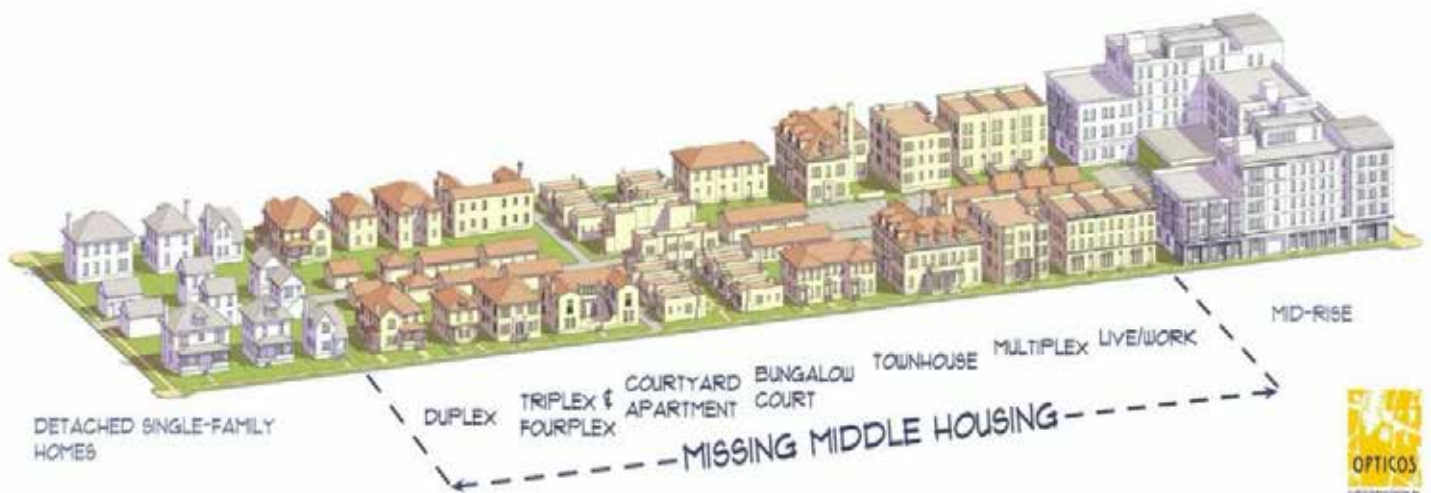


Figure 3-3: Missing middle housing

GOALS, POLICIES, AND STRATEGIES

Community and Housing (COH)

Goal 1: Support sustainable and responsible land use planning for residential growth and development.

Policy COH 1.1: *Adams County's policy is to promote smart growth that concentrates higher residential densities in areas served by transit and with access to employment, education, and amenities, while limiting residential growth in areas of significant agricultural value or with environmental sensitivity. This policy was a primary focus in the 2012 Imagine Adams Comprehensive Plan, and those policies and strategies continue to be relevant into the future.*

- **Strategy COH 1.1.01:** Encourage greater density in defined growth areas, such as Mixed Use areas, particularly those with access to transit and services.
- **Strategy COH 1.1.02:** Work cooperatively within the region on housing issues that transcend jurisdictional boundaries and with Adams County municipalities on development in their urban growth boundaries.
- **Strategy COH 1.1.03:** Analyze and evaluate fiscal and other impacts to the County when extending residential development into previously undeveloped or agricultural areas.

- **Strategy COH 1.1.04:** Conduct a nexus study to evaluate impacts on housing of new development and explore options for mitigating those impacts.
- **Strategy COH 1.1.05:** Preserve existing productive agricultural lands, open space, designated view corridors, wildlife habitat, and sensitive environmental areas.
- **Strategy COH 1.1.06:** Avoid new residential development in areas impacted by airport-related development or within aviation easements.

Goal COH 2: Increase housing opportunities throughout Adams County by taking a proactive role in addressing housing affordability, diversity, and supply through land use regulations.

Policy COH 2.1: *Adams County's policy is to support a diverse and inclusive community. This is achieved by offering a range of housing options that include opportunities for homeownership and rental, a variety of housing types and price ranges, and housing that is designed to meet the needs of all ages and ability levels.*

- **Strategy COH 2.1.01:** Support diversity of housing types through updates to the Adams County Development Standards & Regulations and by aligning zoning with future land uses.
- **Strategy COH 2.1.02:** Encourage a variety of housing types in locations proximate to job centers and transit access.

GOALS, POLICIES, AND STRATEGIES

- **Strategy COH 2.1.03:** Support programs, partners, and development projects that increase housing choices including affordable housing and missing-middle housing, as further detailed in the 2018 Balanced Housing Plan and subsequent updates.
- **Strategy COH 2.1.04:** Continue to implement residential unit classifications, zone districts, and site design requirements for alternative housing types.
- **Strategy COH 2.1.05:** Inventory public property and other resources that may contribute to attracting or constructing affordable housing.

Goal COH 3: Preserve, stabilize, and improve upon existing housing stock and neighborhoods.

Policy COH 3.1: *Adams County's policy is to preserve the character and quality of existing housing and neighborhoods through programs and partnerships. This is achieved by minimizing displacement pressures and taking an active role in redevelopment activities.*

- **Strategy COH 3.1.01:** Strengthen neighborhood identity, place-making, and civic pride by supporting updates to and the development of additional corridor, neighborhood, and subarea plans.



Crossing Pointe in Thornton

- **Strategy COH 3.1.02:** Support updates in the Adams County Development Standards & Regulations that increase opportunities for infill housing, which expands housing options and property investments through alternative dwelling types like accessory dwelling units (ADUs).
- **Strategy COH 3.1.03:** Collaborate with regional partners to develop resources for financial literacy and down payment assistance that address barriers to home ownership.
- **Strategy COH 3.1.04:** Encourage long-term affordability of housing and neighborhoods through various tools, such as land trusts. This will be further developed in an update to the 2018 Balanced Housing Plan and subsequent updates.
- **Strategy COH 3.1.05:** Promote access to financial resources designed to preserve and stabilize existing housing stock, such as the Minor Home Repair (MHR) Program through the County's Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funds.

Goal COH 4: Leverage partnerships and financial assistance opportunities to invest in housing development that serves vulnerable populations.

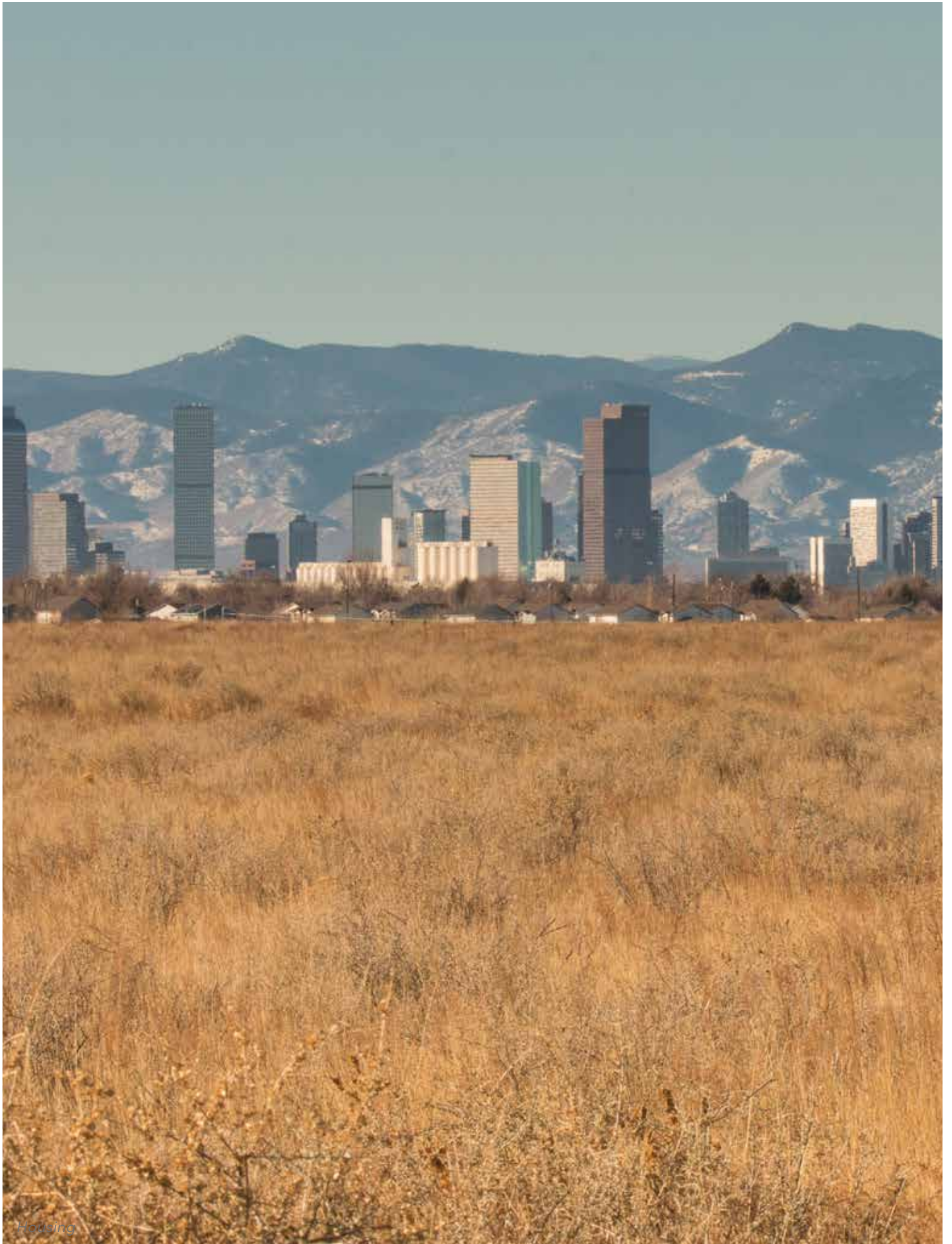
Policy COH 4.1: *Adams County's policy is to collaborate with other jurisdictions, state and local agencies, nonprofit organizations, and service providers to respond to needs of vulnerable populations, including youth, seniors, and the disabled.*

- **Strategy COH 4.1.01:** Assess updates needed in the Adams County Development Standards & Regulations to respond to fair housing findings identified in the 2020 Analysis of Impediments to Fair Housing Choice in Adams County. This includes topics such as group homes, processes for reasonable accommodations, and exclusionary language.
- **Strategy COH 4.1.02:** Explore various funding opportunities with housing partners to plan for and develop housing that meets targeted needs such as permanent supportive housing, transitional housing, youth aging out of foster care, and other identified special populations.
- **Strategy COH 4.1.03:** Promote access to resources designed to address poor housing conditions, such as the MHR Program available for income-qualified households through the County's CDBG funds.
- **Strategy COH 4.1.04:** Expand community engagement and outreach efforts in corridor, neighborhood, and subarea planning to ensure representation of vulnerable populations.

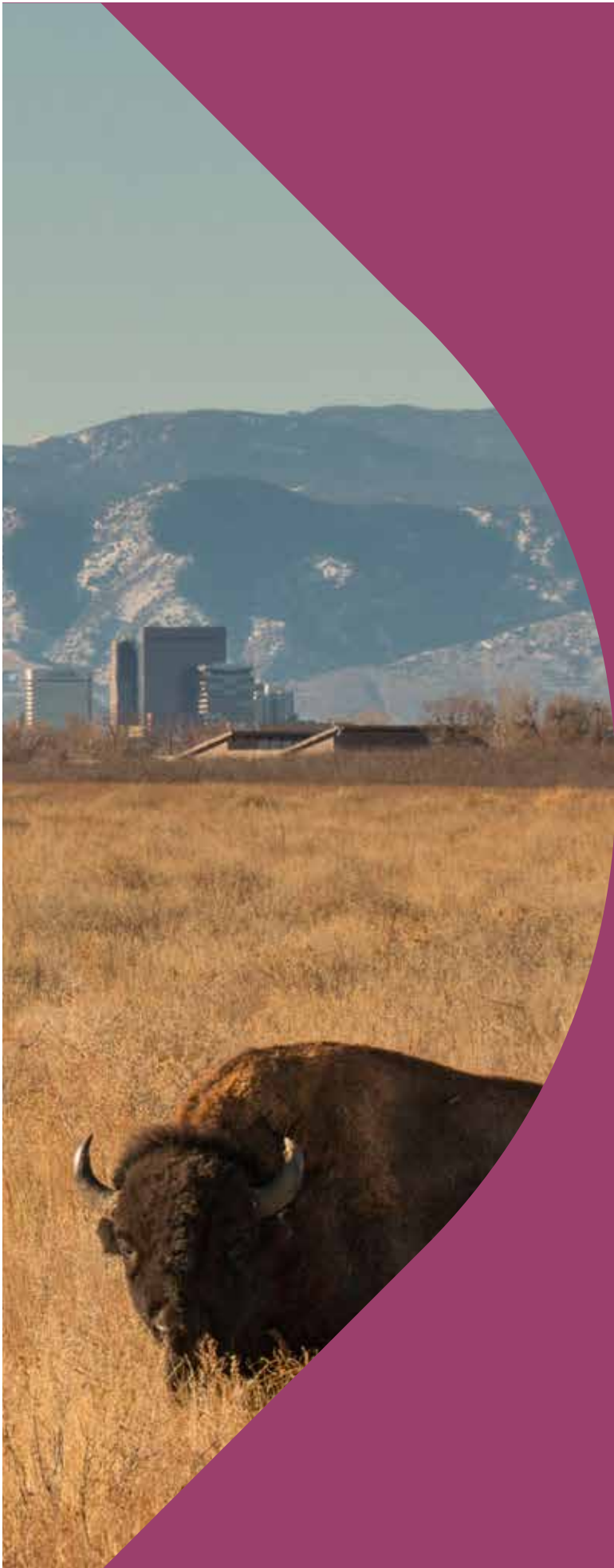
GOALS, POLICIES, AND STRATEGIES

- **Strategy COH 4.1.05:** Coordinate statewide policy, regional partnership efforts, and funding opportunities to focus on communities vulnerable to displacement, and more specifically mobile home park residents facing displacement and predatory property management practices.
 - **Strategy COH 4.1.06:** Explore opportunities to expand affordable housing and work-force housing to meet the needs of current and future residents and the County's economic development goals.
- Goal COH 5: Establish and sustain safe, secure, and livable neighborhoods that meet the everyday needs of residents.**
- Policy COH 5.1:** *Adams County's policy is to actively work to improve safety and security in neighborhoods through emergency planning and capital investments. The County also addresses issues of access to essential goods and services to promote equity and improved quality of life.*
- **Strategy COH 5.1.01:** Establish transitions in land use between residential and industrial areas to reduce exposure to air and noise pollutants.
 - **Strategy COH 5.1.02:** Approach neighborhood planning efforts in a comprehensive manner that includes capital improvement projects (streets, sidewalks, lighting), neighborhood economic development strategies (NEDS), and design standards.
 - **Strategy COH 5.1.03:** Assess barriers and infrastructure needs to expand high-speed internet access in the county, specifically for low-income households and neighborhoods.
 - **Strategy COH 5.1.04:** Continue to support programs and initiatives that address emergency planning and resiliency, including the 2020 Adams County Hazard Mitigation Plan (and subsequent updates) and zoning overlay districts within the Adams County Design Standards & Regulations.
 - **Strategy COH 5.1.05:** Address food deserts through targeted economic development efforts to attract grocers and retailers providing healthy food options, as further developed in a forthcoming Economic Development Strategy & Implementation Plan.

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CHAPTER 4



**Natural Resources &
Environment**

OVERVIEW

The Natural Resources & Environment in Adams County include active and passive open space, agricultural lands, surface and groundwater sources, ecological resources, wildlife habitat, energy, and mineral resources. Conservation and preservation of resources are seen as one of the most important means of reducing our impact on the natural environment. Through a variety of strategies, the county aims to protect habitat, manage water resources and air quality, reduce impacts on the environment by ensuring responsible development and resource extraction, and promote climate resiliency.

Some of the most significant natural areas in the region are located within Adams County. Barr Lake State Park is a 2,715-acre wildlife preserve

located southeast of the City of Brighton. Riverdale Regional Park is the only regional park in the county that is not state or federally operated and serves as an ecological asset, recreational location, and destination for environmental education. Formerly a chemical weapons manufacturing center, Rocky Mountain Arsenal is now a wildlife refuge comprised of almost 16,000 acres and home to a variety of birds and a bison herd. Several large rivers and creeks run through Adams County, creating wildlife corridors and unique habitats for a diverse assortment of flora and fauna. Clear Creek runs from the Continental Divide, carrying snow melt year-round, to its confluence with the South Platte River, which also originates in the mountains. The South Platte River is the principal source of water for eastern Colorado.

Human activities in Adams County have impacted the natural environment in a variety of ways. With a history that includes agricultural land uses in the eastern portion, intensive industrial uses in the western portion, and residential development throughout - there has been a wide range of environmental impacts across the county. Industrial activities, coupled with growth and development, have led to increased impairment of aquatic resources such as streams and wetlands, exacerbated air quality issues through increased ozone precursor emissions, and produced brownfield sites from historical land uses. This has led



Riverdale Regional Park Bridge

to a subsequent reduction in the diversity, acreage, and connectivity of natural habitats. Some of the natural environment has been well preserved, whether as dedicated natural resource areas such as parks, open space, and trail corridors or through regulations on how growth can occur.

Adverse impacts of development on the environment and natural resources may continue to expand unless strategies are implemented to direct and manage anticipated growth. Along with that growth, additional stressors related to global climate change in the form of increased temperatures, greater variability and magnitude in storms, drier conditions, and changing precipitation patterns pose an increased risk of harm to the natural resources and residents of Adams County. As identified in the Adams County Hazard Mitigation

Plan (“HMP”, 2020), these factors will combine to increase the prevalence of drought conditions, especially hotter and drier summers, which may lead to increased wildfire risk (see Figure 4-1), additional air quality impairment, and alterations in ecosystem species composition. According to the HMP, there may also be an increased likelihood of floods (see Figure 4-2) and severe winter storm events. Note, the maps represent a snapshot, and the HMP should be referred to for the latest data and images.

Anticipating these changes to our natural environment proffers an opportunity to build resiliency and adaptability into planned development and employ effective strategies to mitigate impacts to the county’s natural resources. Knowing that Adams

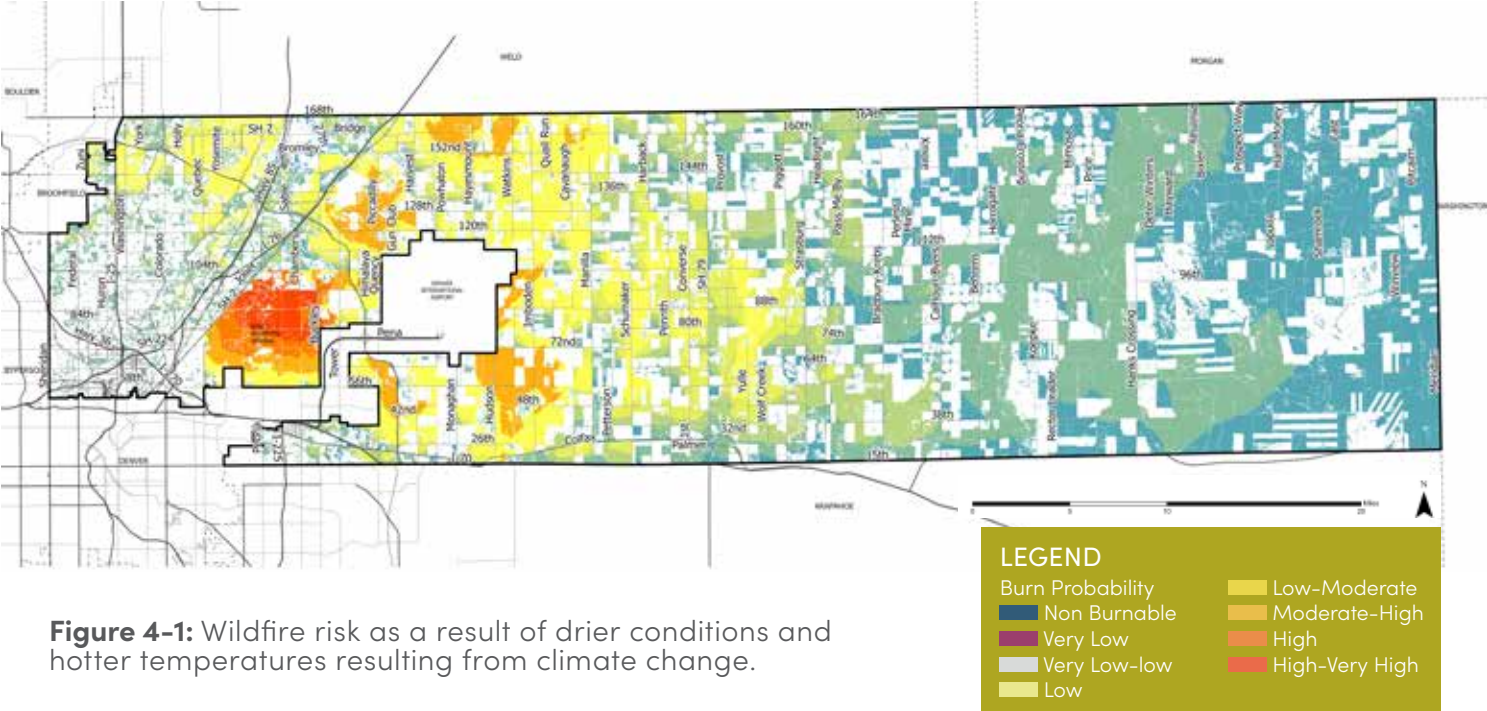


Figure 4-1: Wildfire risk as a result of drier conditions and hotter temperatures resulting from climate change.

KEY ISSUES

County will get hotter and drier with shifting precipitation patterns as the most likely scenario allows for ongoing succession planning for everything from agricultural species to street trees and entire ecosystems. Providing clear guidance to decision-makers on what to expect and how to plan for it can result in greater benefits for future generations.

Critical partners in this effort include the Community & Economic Development Department (CEDD), Office of Emergency Management (OEM), Public Works Department, and Parks, Open Space & Cultural Arts Department.

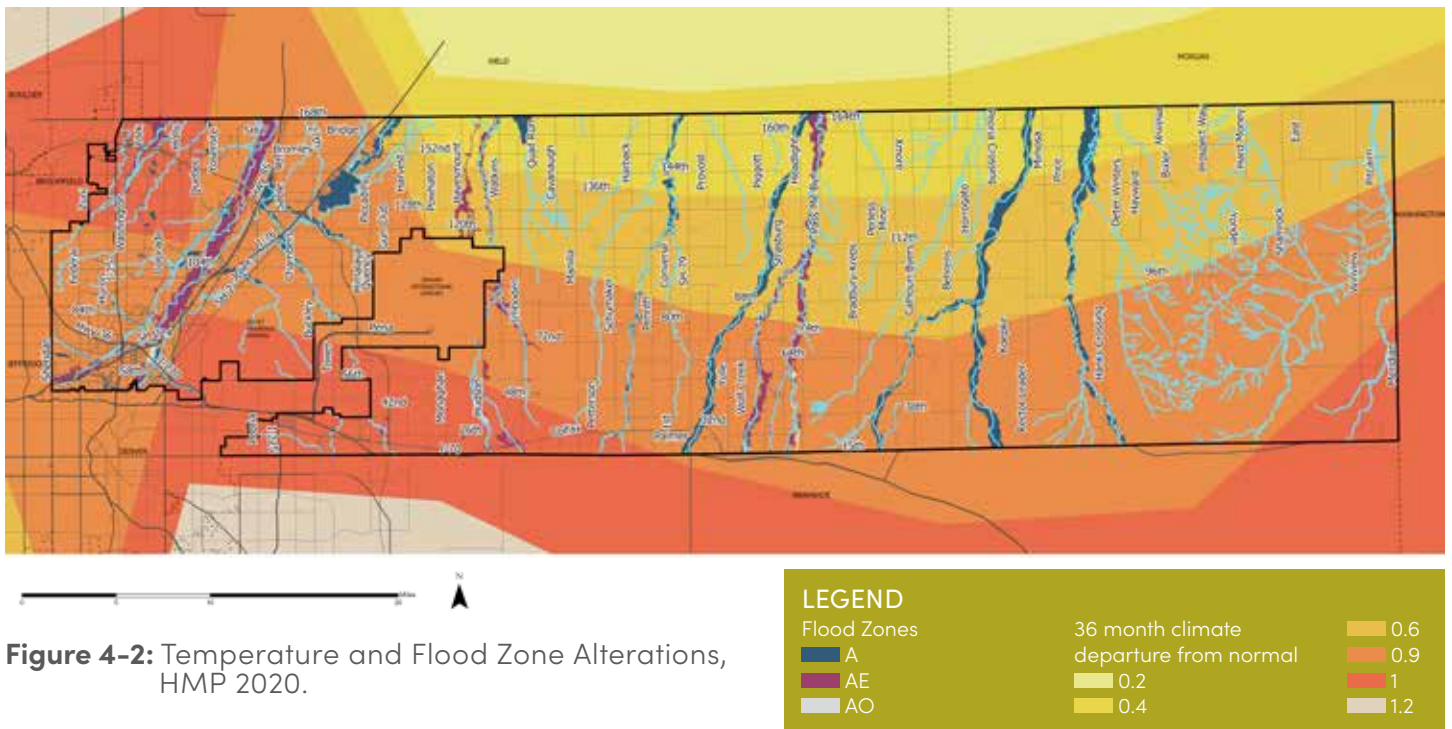


Figure 4-2: Temperature and Flood Zone Alterations, HMP 2020.

KEY ISSUES

Ecological Resources: Preserve, link, and layer existing undeveloped and underdeveloped prairie in the County through greater parks, open space, and trail corridor connectivity. This can help create resiliency in ecological resources as climate change impacts will be felt through increased temperatures, extreme droughts, and more frequent storm events.

Water Resources: With limited water resources, it is important to understand the supply and demand outlook as well as critical ecosystem services provided by riparian corridors, wetlands, and other aquatic ecosystems in order to implement effective conservation methods that will, in turn, improve the county's climate adaptability and resiliency.

Climate Change: Oil and gas resources are readily available

around much of the county, which has resulted in their extraction near residential areas and important natural resources. Impacts to air quality and greenhouse gas emissions

from the full cycle of oil and gas production and use are significant concerns on both the local and regional level.

The county has significant potential to utilize natural, renewable energy resources such as solar, wind, and geothermal.

Natural Hazards: Wildfires within the Wildland Urban Intermix, as defined in the 2020 HMP, hailstorms, and floods in the urbanized parts of the county are both concerns addressed in the HMP and will need to inform development planning and construction.



Autumn on the Platte River

GOALS, POLICIES, AND STRATEGIES

Goal NRE 1: Facilitate the protection and restoration of natural areas and ecosystems to improve habitat connectivity, sensitive lands, and natural habitats while enhancing the quality of life and shaping urban areas.

Policy NRE 1.1: *Adams County is committed to sustainability and livability and values its natural resources and habitat as assets that need to be preserved and protected for future generations.*

- **Strategy NRE 1.1.01:** Continue to implement the Adams County Parks, Open Space, and Trails (POST) Master Plan, Riverdale Regional Park Master Plan, the Clear Creek Corridor Master Plan, and the South Platte River Heritage Corridor Plan. Greenways, parks, and natural corridors along rivers and streams should be prioritized for preservation and made available for the public to enjoy.



- **Strategy NRE 1.1.02:** Encourage new development in a manner compatible with the preservation of open space. Promote development strategies, such as clustering, that mitigate impacts to important natural areas including wildlife and riparian habitat.
- **Strategy NRE 1.1.03:** Evaluate and update the County's Transfer of Development Rights program.
- **Strategy NRE 1.1.04:** Expand Natural Resource Conservation Overlay (NRCO) to encompass additional areas that provide habitat corridor connections and open space and strengthen protections for habitat, especially proximate to water bodies.
- **Strategy NRE 1.1.05:** Consider habitat restoration efforts that provide multiple ecosystem services such as flood mitigation, water quality, aesthetics, shading, carbon sequestration, and air quality benefits.
- **Strategy NRE 1.1.06:** Enhance landscape connectivity between existing Parks and Open Space land to provide for habitat corridors and species movement throughout the county (POST Goal NE 4.0).
- **Strategy NRE 1.1.07:** Encourage conservation easements on private land to encourage the preservation of open space, water, and wildlife habitat. Continue to implement the Public Land Dedication (PLD) Fee and update the data used to calculate the fee on a regular basis to ensure equitable dedication (SP2030 Goal 10).

- **Strategy NRE 1.1.08:** Encourage the preservation of greenfields by promoting infill and brownfield redevelopment opportunities through education, development regulations, and federal or state grant programs.

Goal NRE 2: Preserve and enhance surface and groundwater quality and ensure the long-term viability of groundwater supplies.

Policy NRE 2.1: *Adams County has a limited supply of water, which can impact both existing residents and future development; it is critical for the economic and environmental health of the county that a special focus is placed on water quality and quantity, its conservation, and protection.*

- **Strategy NRE 2.1.01:** Develop a County Water Analysis that identifies the water supply resources, current and future demand, and methods for conservation.
- **Strategy NRE 2.1.02:** Preserve the groundwater aquifers by continuing to limit subdivisions of land east of Denver International Airport (DEN) and north of the Colorado Air & Spaceport (CASP) subarea.
- **Strategy NRE 2.1.03:** Consider the inclusion of water conservation in building and development codes, specifically within sustainable development menu options for new projects. Promote water use efficiency for new and redeveloped residential and commercial properties in unincorporated Adams County (SP2030 Goal 9).
- **Strategy NRE 2.1.04:** Update the County's landscaping regulations to include incentives for xeriscaping and low-water plants. Consider different regulations for the eastern and western portions of the county, which have considerably different water resources and availability.
- **Strategy NRE 2.1.05:** Minimize volume of untreated surface runoff by incorporating low-impact development practices that utilize native vegetation and xeriscaping. Encourage green infrastructure techniques, such as grass-lined drainage swales and reductions in impervious area.
- **Strategy NRE 2.1.06:** Restrict development of permanent structures within designated floodplain areas and preserve associated aquatic ecosystems and the services they provide. Expanding flood protection areas will help to maintain good ecosystem health.



GOALS, POLICIES, AND STRATEGIES

Goal NRE 3: Proactively plan to adapt to climate change while mitigating its extent. Reduce vulnerability to, and protect people, property, and the environment from natural hazards.

Policy NRE 3.1: Adams County recognizes the need to plan for the future with the changing climate in mind.

- **Strategy NRE 3.1.01:** Expand, create, and advocate for equitable clean energy opportunities (SP2030 Goal 3). This includes supporting the development of large-acreage solar energy facilities and their associated infrastructure.
- **Strategy NRE 3.1.02:** Proactively prepare for natural hazards and disasters by implementing the recommendations in the 2020 Hazard Mitigation Plan.



Winter on the Platte River

- **Strategy NRE 3.1.03:** Use sustainable infrastructure to mitigate impacts of natural hazards (SP2030 Goal 11).
 - Implement the recommendations of the Mile High Flood Control District as set forth in its plans to preserve the current capacities of drainage basins and corridors located within Adams County. Work cooperatively with municipalities to coordinate the implementation of regional drainage plans.
 - Achieve a FEMA Community Rating Score of 7 or better.
 - Increase number and quality of flood control/detention facilities to mitigate flood risk.
- **Strategy NRE 3.1.04:** Promote the use of sustainable building and site design techniques that encourage the use of renewable energy, support energy and water conservation, and provide other benefits to the environment and community.
- **Strategy NRE 3.1.05:** Expand protections of and establish development restrictions within the Wildland Urban Interface, as delineated in the 2020 Hazard Mitigation Plan (HMP Figure 4-50). Reduce noxious weeds and heavy infestations of non-native weed species that contribute to wildfire fuel, water consumption, and decreased wildlife habitat.
- **Strategy NRE 3.1.06:** Encourage and foster best practices in agriculture, such as regenerative agriculture, to strengthen the health and quality of soil.

Goal NRE 4: Foster responsible resource use, from cradle to grave, including extraction, production, recycling, adaptive reuse, and disposal.

Policy NRE 4.1: *Adams County has a long history of mining and landfill uses that have created a visible impact on the landscape. Ensuring the county's resources are conserved, recycled, and used responsibly will allow for future generations to enjoy the land, water, and air as we do today.*

Strategy NRE 4.1.01: Complete a Waste Management Plan to determine strategies needed for reducing waste generation and increasing recycling and re-use (i.e. composting). This plan will also help determine the landfilling capacity needed for future Adams County generations.

- **Strategy NRE 4.1.02:** Support and promote recycling opportunities for both residents and businesses.
- **Strategy NRE 4.1.03:** Require waste haulers in the County to report amounts landfilled, recycled, or diverted so that a baseline can be established, and goals can be developed for improvement.
- **Strategy NRE 4.1.04:** Review and update the County's Mineral Extraction Plan (2005) to reflect new extraction technologies and methodologies and maps delineating areas of commercially viable sand and gravel deposits.
- **Strategy NRE 4.1.05:** Encourage post-reclamation uses to be compatible with the County's long range plans.



Rocky Mountain Arsenal



GOALS, POLICIES, AND STRATEGIES

- **Strategy NRE 4.1.06:** Continually review and update the County’s oil and gas development regulations to ensure they reflect current health studies, environmental protection measures, and take into account new extraction technology.
- **Strategy NRE 4.1.07:** Work with state agencies on policies and legislation that further the County’s goals on resource conservation, extraction, and reuse.



The Platte River



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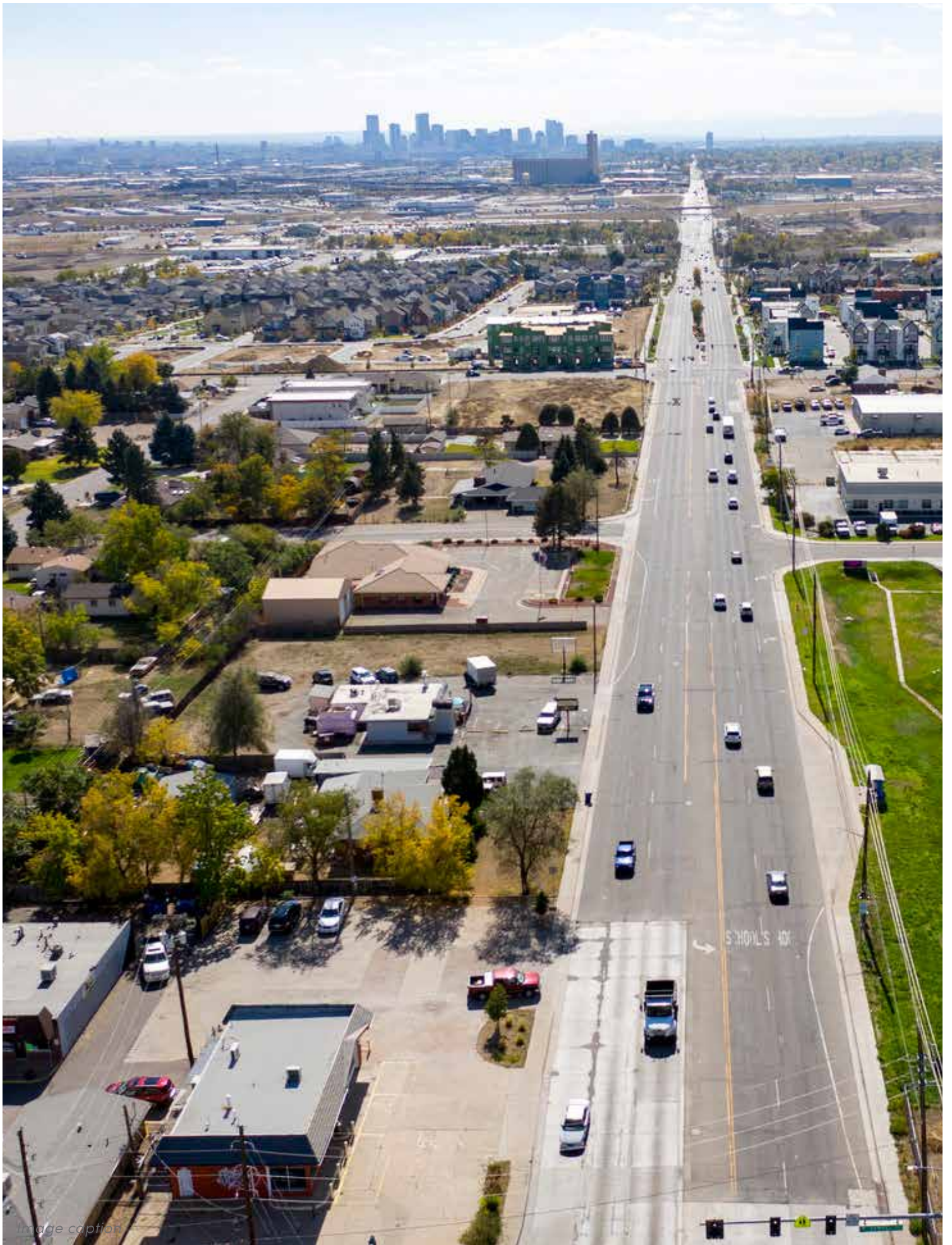


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CHAPTER 5



**Built Environment and
Connections**

OVERVIEW

The built environment is characterized as the human-constructed, physical aspects we interact with on a regular basis. The road and transportation network, street design, buildings and development patterns, landscaping, utility infrastructure, and even human-made parks constitute the built environment. The components of the built environment, especially when aligned, contribute to a sustainable and livable community.

Community can be characterized as the interaction of people supported by destinations, places to gather, and chance interactions and is a cornerstone of livability. People are drawn to areas where they can socialize, recreate, shop, find work, eat, and learn; centers are intrinsic to our idea of community. These land use characters detailed in Chapter 2 establish the development expectations and populations necessary to attract and sustain the housing choice, services, employment, and business for a complete community. People must have comfortable, direct, and safe ways to get to necessary daily locations such as work, services, retail, and schools. The transportation system should be multi-modal and work within the context of the surrounding land uses to support a full spectrum of transportation needs, from the facilitation of freight to the enhancement of a safe and accessible trail network.

The county provides services for roads, code enforcement, and

development review. Water and utilities, on the other hand, are administered by municipalities or special districts. Coordinating the provision of utilities with existing infrastructure is crucial for future sustainable development, redevelopment, and infill.

The built environment must be planned in a way that considers functionality and livability. Careful placement of development advances the County toward meeting its aspirations for the future. This includes ensuring infrastructure like utilities and broadband are easily accessible to development and do not require excessive expenditures to extend. Economic development strategies can address workforce development in a localized sense. Place-based strategies include ensuring homes and jobs are connected by reliable and safe transportation networks, protecting against low-to-moderate income job holders being priced outward and, therefore, bearing the burden of high transportation costs, and ensuring the workforce is not displaced by high housing costs.

It is important that new development be located out of areas with high risk for flood and wildfire and that lands that have historically been used for environmentally hazardous industries are appropriately remediated or mitigated for new development. Expansion to undeveloped portions of the county should be carefully considered and limited. Instead, strategies should explore enhancing

and adaptively reusing existing properties to support responsible development patterns. New developments should prioritize energy efficiency, the use of renewable energy, and innovative technologies to mitigate greenhouse gas emissions.

The built environment significantly impacts the sense of urban, suburban, and rural characters found throughout the county. While the Comprehensive Plan applies to the unincorporated parts of the county, it is important to recognize the interconnections between incorporated and

unincorporated parts of the county and plan for transitions accordingly. This chapter further applies the 20-Minute Community framework. The framework seeks to integrate connections between transportation and parks from the TMP and POST plans by guiding services and supportive development to reinforce established communities in the county. Finally, the built environment has significant influence on sustainability, human-made and natural hazards, and the opportunities to live a fulfilled and healthy life.



20-MINUTE COMMUNITY: KEY COMPONENTS

The 20-minute community is a planning model that seeks to cluster community resources and amenities, such as education, healthcare, healthy food access, neighborhood commerce, local employment, public parks, and public gathering areas so they are accessible in an easy 20-minute walk, bicycle ride, or transit ride. The goal of the 20-minute community is to establish more resilient neighborhoods that can access essential services without sole reliance on automobile trips.

KEY ISSUES:

- a. Transit and trails, along with roads, are important for connecting people to places.
- b. Essential services, amenities, and infrastructure are distributed more toward the western part of the county.
- c. New development can and should better utilize the existing transit, bike/pedestrian paths, and trail network.
- d. Development patterns can better support a safe and effective transportation network.
- e. The built environment should be designed to be resilient toward climate change and subsequent hazards and support the sustainability goals of the county.



20-MINUTE COMMUNITY

The 20-minute community composite map (See Figure 5-1) shows a spectrum of concentrations of essential services and amenities, primarily located on the western portion of the county.

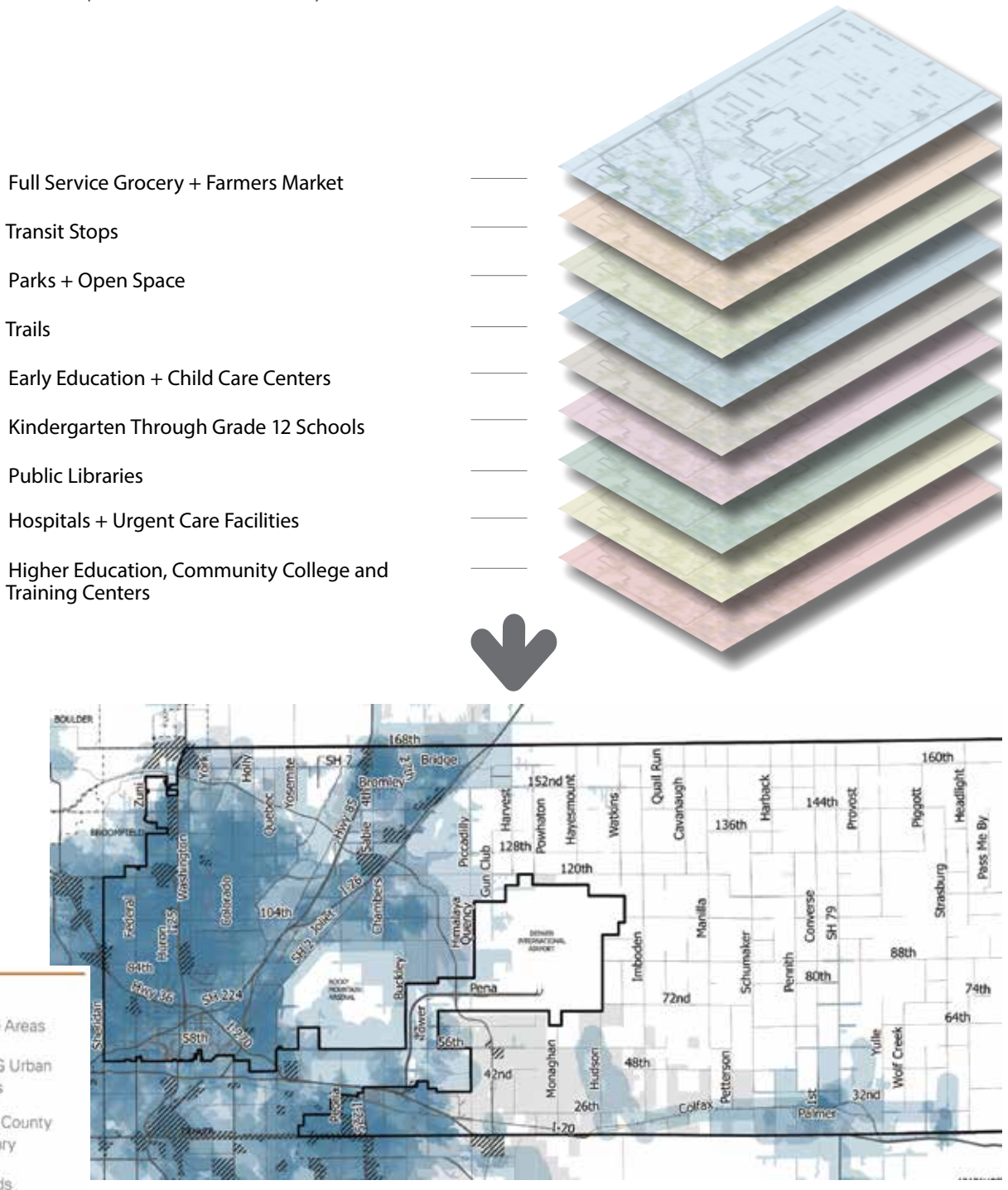


Figure 5-1: 20-minute community

GOALS, POLICIES, AND STRATEGIES

Goal BEC 1: Support existing communities and accommodate growth and development that coordinates with local plans, is fiscally and environmentally responsible, and enhances the overall well-being of the community.

Policy BEC 1.1: *Adams County's policy is to cooperate and coordinate with incorporated communities within the county on planning and land use decisions within Municipal Growth Areas (MGAs).*

- **Strategy BEC 1.1.01:** Review and maintain Inter-Governmental Agreements (IGAs) with incorporated communities. IGAs should stipulate the commitment to follow plans, establish procedures for referral and review of land use applications, and potentially processes for prioritizing and coordinating annexations and de-annexations within an MGA.
- **Strategy BEC 1.1.02:** Review and update subarea plans. Collaborate with incorporated communities when plan area overlaps jurisdictional boundaries.
- **Strategy BEC 1.1.03:** The county should work with municipalities to realize efficiencies and deliver coordinated services to enclaves within the county. Discourage redundant or duplicative services and consolidate services where possible. Whenever possible, the county shall encourage enclaves to annex into the surrounding municipality.
- **Strategy BEC 1.1.04:** Areas with municipal water and sewer services are strongly encouraged to annex.
- **Strategy BEC 1.1.05:** Coordinate with local jurisdictions to share and update information and data, especially related to comprehensive plans, maps, annexations, and zoning changes that may influence or impact planning in the MGAs in the county.
- **Strategy BEC 1.1.06:** Continue to coordinate with local municipalities, special districts, and regional organizations to identify, plan, and collaborate on multi-jurisdiction CIP projects. Work with jurisdictional partners to pursue funding for transportation, capital improvements, and planning efforts when feasible.
- **Strategy BEC 1.1.07:** Explore planning and potential modifications to development standards to promote compatible transitions of land uses, transportation networks, and urban design between incorporated and unincorporated areas in the county. Evaluate opportunities to enhance visual aesthetics and reduce visual impacts at key community gateways.

Policy BEC 1.2: *Adams County's policy is to expect development to be fiscally and environmentally responsible.*

- **Strategy BEC 1.2.01:** New development, including new special districts, should mitigate impacts and improve livability in the county by contributing appropriate impact and land-dedication fees, including but not limited to traffic, fire districts, school districts, and parks and open space.
- **Strategy BEC 1.2.02:** The County should coordinate with internal departments and jurisdictional partners to assess needs and resources and to review and revise associated impact and land-dedication fees as necessary.
- **Strategy BEC 1.2.03:** Encourage a diverse and compatible mix of land uses that support the housing, commercial, and industrial needs of the county that promotes a resilient economy and opportunities for a more livable community. Identify potential receiving areas for industrial uses that may undermine the return on public investments around existing locations. Explore criteria for siting new industrial uses to mitigate the social and environmental impacts and avoid worsening historical inequities.
- **Strategy BEC 1.2.04:** Consider mapping private development plans, traffic studies, drainage reports, and other relevant development documents with existing and planned public improvements to support the CIP planning process. Consider establishing a CIP overlay to coordinate public and

private improvements to realize opportunities for efficiencies and avoid redundant outcomes when feasible.

- **Strategy BEC 1.2.05:** Explore creative solutions to congestion and degrading levels of service. For instance, consider working with property owners and users to form a “Transportation Improvement District” when individual development and users contribute to a degrading level of service in which on-going conditions threaten future development rights.
- **Strategy BEC 1.2.06:** Continue to enforce provisions that require groundwater resources be demonstrated for 300 years to ensure long-term viability of groundwater for development. Consider the development of a County Water Analysis to understand the capacity of existing water sources and sanitary resources (See also NRE 2.1.01).
- **Strategy BEC 1.2.07:** Review and evaluate urban design and landscaping criteria in the development standards and update as necessary to support best practices, water conscious landscape selections and design, biodiversity and native plants, and pollinator friendly habitats.
- **Strategy BEC 1.2.08:** Review the development standards to support adaptive re-use and investment in existing buildings to reduce carbon footprint of new construction.

GOALS, POLICIES, AND STRATEGIES

Goal BEC 2: An inclusive community that provides opportunities for people to live, work, and achieve their highest level of health and well-being.

Policy BEC 2.1: *The county's policy is to be the most innovative and inclusive county in America for all families and businesses, and the built environment and planning processes should reflect that.*

- **Strategy BEC 2.1.01:** Explore using census data, CDPHE models, and other data sources to identify traditionally under-represented, under-served, under-invested, or vulnerable communities when considering new investments, programs, or land use decisions and evaluate mitigating impacts to public health, displacement, and other factors.

- **Strategy BEC 2.1.02:** Evaluate approval criteria for equitable and livable outcomes.
- **Strategy BEC 2.1.03:** Consider methods to ensure a creative and robust engagement process to include diverse stakeholder groups for equitable planning projects and outcomes.

Policy BEC 2.2: *Adams County's policy is to expand access to safe and reliable housing, transportation, service destinations, recreation, and commuting choices in the county.*

- **Strategy BEC 2.2.01:** Direct growth to areas that are supported by multimodal connectivity, meets expectations for services, and can utilize existing infrastructure.
- **Strategy BEC 2.2.02:** Encourage subdivisions to provide internal connectivity to enhance walkability. Encourage public and private connections to public trails when adjacent to the subdivision or neighborhood.
- **Strategy BEC 2.2.03:** Support public health needs by seeking opportunities to enhance access to community resources, such as healthy food, healthcare, childcare, safe neighborhoods, and places for physical activity.

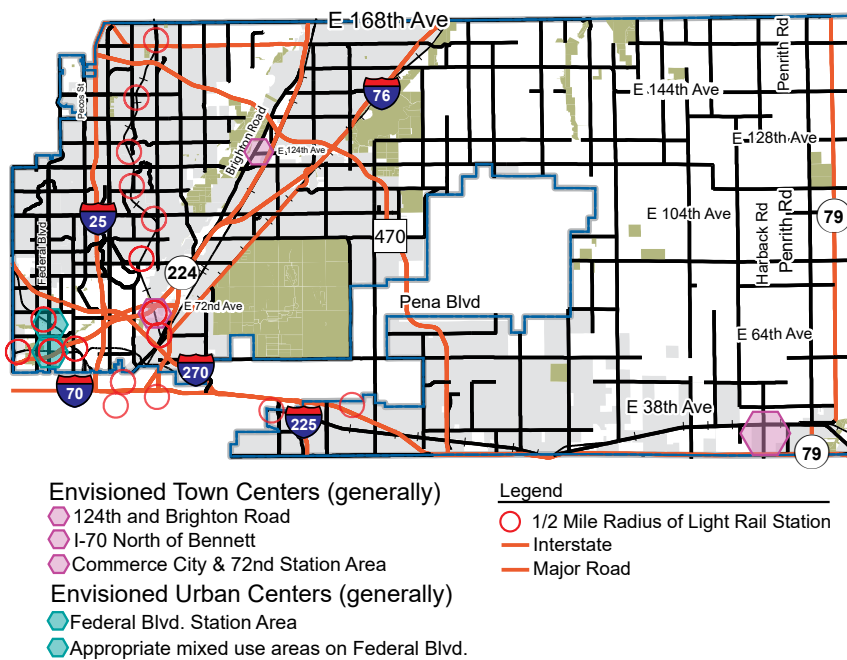


Figure 5-2: Envisioned town centers

- **Strategy BEC 2.2.04:** Support development that reduces “Vehicle Miles Traveled.” Emphasize the 20-minute community in established neighborhoods and identified town centers and urban centers by encouraging service and commercial supportive densities and development patterns. Review development standards to realize the 20-minute community model while discouraging major developments that are disconnected from existing communities, result in overly burdensome commutes or travel to community resources, do not support or attract community resources, and strain the County’s ability to provide adequate services.
- **Strategy BEC 2.2.05:** Promote mixed use, multi-modal, pedestrian-oriented development patterns in urban centers, town centers, around transit hubs, and in mixed-use zones.
- **Strategy BEC 2.2.06:** Support expanding access to high-speed internet in the county with a particular emphasis on rural or under-served or vulnerable populations. Consider coordinating on regional capital improvements that include opportunities to expand broadband and fiber.
- **Strategy BEC 2.2.07:** Encourage development with supportive design, uses, and intensities that promote connection to the bicycle and trail networks, especially in service of the first and last mile connections to transit.
- **Strategy BEC 2.2.08:** Promote opportunities that align the future land use and zoning to build both horizontal and vertical mixed-use development. Consider additional housing units, compatible mixing of uses, height, walkable design, and reduced setbacks when proposed mixed-use development is connected to high-capacity transit.
- **Strategy BEC 2.2.09:** Review County operations, such as plowing and street service, and revise to avoid creating unintended barriers to walking and biking, especially around key transit and trail connections. For instance, plowing that blocks pedestrian access points to sidewalks or transit stations or street operations that undermine bike routes without providing alternatives.
- **Strategy BEC 2.2.10:** Reinforce access to transit with improved connections, pathways, and transit supporting uses and densities around transit stations.

Goal BEC 3: A built environment that meets the needs of the community while mitigating adverse impacts, recognizes known and unknown hazardous conditions, and responds to the increasing resource constraints going forward.

GOALS, POLICIES, AND STRATEGIES

Policy BEC 3.1: *Adams County’s policy is to support development that is cognizant of existing hazards and responds to the growing risks posed by climate change and continued encroachment into the natural interface.*

- **Strategy BEC 3.1.01:** Growth should be focused in a way that minimizes adverse impacts on the natural environment, provides for energy efficiency and green building techniques, and protects residents from hazardous areas.
- **Strategy BEC 3.1.02:** Discourage new developments located within the FEMA flood plain. Continue participation in the National Flood Insurance Program Community Rating System and maintain any related and applicable community certifications or designations.
- **Strategy BEC 3.1.03:** Encourage private landowners to grant maintenance and flowage easements to entities such as the Mile High Flood District or Public Works to allow for proper management of floodplain areas.
- **Strategy BEC 3.1.04:** Discourage new residential developments located within proximity to air quality contaminants, such as heavy industrial areas, railyards, and high-polluting roadways. Reduce indoor and outdoor air quality impacts on disproportionately impacted communities through advocacy and mitigation practices. Explore alternatives for existing residences, including possible relocation, when severe air-quality impacts cannot be mitigated.
- **Strategy BEC 3.1.05:** Support preparedness strategies for areas at highest risk for a variety of manmade and natural disasters, such as wildfire, chemical spills, and flooding.
- **Strategy BEC 3.1.06:** Review building code and development standards for storm shelter requirements, specifically in related to tornadoes for use in new commercial and industrial buildings. Consider the number, spacing, and access during an event in larger buildings and “tilt-up” style construction. Consider updating relevant codes when appropriate.
- **Strategy BEC 3.1.07:** Evaluate mitigation, building, and maintenance tactics when hazardous conditions may potentially exist and coordinate with property owners to lower that risk, including through education.
- **Strategy BEC 3.1.08:** Support remediation efforts on brownfield and contaminated sites and encourage viable uses that further county goals and community benefits. There may be times when existing conditions, including but not limited to landfills or properties within a flammable gas or natural resource conservation overlay, may undermine the Plan’s stated development goal, and in those instances existing and future development will need to accommodate these existing conditions.

- **Strategy BEC 3.1.09:** Coordinate with applicable health department and agencies to monitor environmental conditions and public health outcomes when appropriate.
- **Strategy BEC 3.1.10:** Prioritize and plan for green infrastructure and sustainable infrastructure in public and private projects. Explore activating and utilizing infrastructure for community benefit and connectivity beyond the primary purpose of stormwater management, and hazard mitigation. For example, consider activating drainage basins to become parks and trails assets. Consider planning and leveraging viaducts as trail connections as well as flood ways.
- **Strategy BEC 3.1.11:** Plan for a climate that is hotter, more prone to drought, and produces more extreme weather events. Support community amenities that consider refuge from heat events, such as cooling stations, water pads, and shade. Evaluate building and development codes to strengthen resilient and sustainable building design, energy efficiency, and environmental standards.
- **Strategy BEC 3.1.12:** Review development regulations with local FAA staff to ensure regulations are current and consistent.





Image caption

CHAPTER 6



Economic Development

OVERVIEW

The vision for Adams County to be the most innovative and inclusive county in America for all families and businesses is the central tenet for the framework of economic development activities, which serve to build economic health and sustainable opportunities for its resident, business, and development communities. A strong and vibrant economy provides for the creation of jobs and business investments by building a strong tax base that supports public safety, education, parks and open space, services, and other recreational and cultural amenities.

In recent years, economic development has become an essential function of local government with greater attention to issues of social and economic equity and the removal of barriers to opportunity for all community members. Local government also serves as the

administrator of local incentives to attract and support primary employers, small businesses, and development that meets strategic objectives. While still focused primarily on economic growth and opportunity, successful economic development activities look to the community's needs, workforce development, and market influences.

Partnerships with state and local organizations are critical in the promotion of long-term economic health and vitality. This is particularly true for the relationship between a county and its incorporated municipalities, who have their own economic development teams and activities. Through collaborative efforts, it is possible to more effectively leverage resources and work toward a common vision that benefits both the cities and the unincorporated areas of the county.



ROLE OF THE COUNTY

Adams County has a combined Department of Community & Economic Development; the primary purpose of this structure is to better integrate various steps in the development of projects in unincorporated Adams County and to facilitate improved communication and coordination across the organization, as well as in the community and with other agencies. Economic development staff lead the attraction of new primary employers and support existing businesses in their operations and expansions. The Economic Development Division also monitors economic data and trends in the county and provides policy guidance to the Board of County Commissioners and other County leadership as needed.

As a statutory county under Colorado law, Adams County is empowered to negotiate and provide incentives at the countywide level. The Board of County Commissioners exercises discretion in these decisions and follows adopted policy in making financial incentive agreements. Economic Development staff work in partnership with their counterparts in the municipalities to leverage additional resources and incentives in pursuit of building wealth across the county in the form of jobs, property investment, and building target industries, as well as developments that provide a public benefit.

In alignment with the County’s vision, economic development activities include efforts at the neighborhood level to remove barriers for minority- and women-owned businesses, entrepreneurs, and small business owners. Neighborhood Economic Development Strategies (NEDS) are local plans designed in conjunction with community stakeholders to bring needed services and desired options for people to live, work, play, and recreate in the neighborhood they choose. Adams County has prioritized a focus on “neighborhood up” approaches and community-based economic development, and this will be a central theme in the forthcoming Economic Development Strategy & Implementation Plan.

- 10 Largest Employers in Adams County**
1. *University of Colorado Health*
 2. *Children’s Hospital Colorado*
 3. *Amazon*
 4. *United Parcel Service*
 5. *FedEx*
 6. *Sturgeon Electric*
 7. *Gaylord Rockies Resort & Convention Center*
 8. *Maxar Technologies*
 9. *Steven Roberts Original Desserts*
 10. *HealthONE: North Suburban*



ADAMS COUNTY PROFILE

As part of the Denver Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA), Adams County benefits from a larger regional economy that attracts global and national headquarters and highly skilled workforce talent. It benefits from proximity to world-class universities and federal laboratories. Adams County is home to top-ranked hospitals and a leader in the life sciences market. It is also included in one of the top housing markets in the country.

Adams County is a transportation nexus not only for the region, but for the State of Colorado and the Inter-Mountain West. The county surrounds Denver International Airport, one of the busiest airports in the United States with hub status for three major airlines: United, Southwest, and Frontier/Spirit. Adams County is also the owner and operator of the Colorado Air and Space Port, one of only 12 licensed spaceports in the country by the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) in 2022. In addition to air transportation services, Adams County has a robust surface transportation system. The County includes the intersection of all four interstate highways in Colorado (I-25, I-70, I-270, I-76), as well as major state highways. Class I and Class III rail lines for Burlington Northern Santa Fe (BNSF) and Union Pacific (UP) provide rail services to and from national destinations. Combined,

the local intermodal opportunity of air, rail, and truck transportation infrastructure make Adams County a regional and national destination for trade, transportation, and distribution investments and employment.

Adams County is also a strong partner for the Fitzsimmons Innovation Community and Anschutz Medical Campus and supports investments that have attracted over 70 life sciences firms and over 25,000 workers to the area. Additionally, the campus is home to world-class medical facilities, including University of Colorado School of Medicine, Children's Hospital Colorado, and the recently completed Rocky Mountain Regional Veterans Administration Medical Center.

For the last decade, Adams County has identified and engaged target industries for business attraction and expansion efforts. The County has seen growth in all of these sectors as measured by employment and number of firms, including both small and large companies:

- Aviation/Aerospace
- Energy
- Logistics
- Wholesale Trade
- Manufacturing
- Healthcare/Life Science

To continue economic growth and remain competitive over the next decade, a new analysis and

augmented set of target industries will be conducted through the creation of a separate Economic Development Strategy & Implementation Plan for the county by the Adams County Economic Development Division. Industry sector targets will be identified for the 1) County's comparative advantage, 2) growth potential for the individual sector, 3) resiliency of the individual sector to potential future economic shocks, and 4) integration into the larger county vision. As a part of economic development strategic planning, Adams County will continue working with key public, private, and non-profit sector partners in strategy development and implementation.

Partnerships and collaborative relationships are a critical component in the success of long-term economic health and stability for the County and its residents. The goals, policies, and strategies outlined later in this chapter are based on the interdependent nature of economic development. It is essential public, private, and nonprofit sectors remain engaged and aligned toward a vision that benefits the whole and not just the few.

In support of this chapter, a technical memorandum on employment and industry trends from 2000 to 2020 was prepared and is included in Appendix D. It includes an analysis of Adams County's employment patterns and growth, industry concentration, and wage characteristics. This level of detailed analysis is essential to understanding the past and future

trends in Adams County. Highlights are included here as context and background to inform goals, policies, and strategies.

EMPLOYMENT

Since the Great Recession ended in 2010, Adams County has seen steady "covered employment" growth rising from 147,987 to 220,788 workers in 2020 (an increase of 49.2%). Covered employment is waged or salaried employment and does not include the self-employed. These values come from a quarterly count of employment and direct wages reported by the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics as collected from employers. Total employment growth and growth by major industry sector are provided in the technical memorandum found in Appendix D.

The largest three employment sectors in Adams County are the Trade, Transportation, and Utilities sector, followed by Professional and Business Services, and Construction. It is worth noting in terms of employment growth, the State Government sector increased five-fold from 2010 to 2020, likely as a direct result of the investment in and build-out of the Fitzsimmons/Anschutz Campus. While the employment growth is captured under State Government for statistical purposes, this significant growth has a direct and indirect positive impact on private industrial sectors, such as healthcare in both job opportunity and wage impacts.

WAGES AND PAY

Wages are an important economic indicator that contribute to an understanding of the community’s standard of living. Annual average pay varies over time and across industries. Annual average pay growth, adjusted for inflation, is shown in Figure 6-1 for both the county and the state.

The average annual pay and wage growth for workers in Adams County is lower than the state as a whole. In addition, real annual growth in pay was only two-tenths of one percent (0.2%) annually from 2000 to 2005, and slightly negative from 2005 to 2010 as a result of economic losses associated with the 2008 Great Recession. Since 2010, annual wage growth has averaged just under 2% annually.

Annual average pay is shown by sector and compared to the state in Figure 6-2:

PROJECTED JOB GROWTH

As previously mentioned, “covered employment” does not represent all jobs because self-employment and some seasonal employment numbers are not included. Covered employment data is often used for analysis because it is reportedly quarterly with wage information and is compiled by the Federal government. “Total jobs” estimates come from non-Census statistics and estimate the number of self-employed and some seasonal agricultural workers. However, the data is only available annually, does not include industry level detail, and does not include wage data.

Annual Growth in Average Pay in Constant 2020 Dollars 2000 to 2020* State of Colorado and Adams County, Colorado				
Year	State	AGR	County	AGR
2000	\$56,084	-	\$50,495	-
2005	\$55,275	-0.29%	\$50,994	0.20%
2010	\$56,952	0.60%	\$50,178	-0.32%
2015	\$59,198	0.78%	\$54,745	1.76%
2020	\$66,646	2.40%	\$60,263	1.94%

*Based on covered employment.

Source: Colorado Department of Labor, Colorado Demographer’s Office, Adams County Community & Economic Development Department, January 2022.

Figure 6-1: Annual Growth 2000–2020



Covered employment represented an average of 80.8% of all Adams County jobs over the past 20 years. Because forecasts of “total jobs” are available at the county level, those estimates may also be used to project covered employment growth as a percent of total jobs for Adams County for the period 2025 through 2050. These projections and estimates are shown in the Figure 6-3:

As shown, total covered employment and total jobs are expected to reach approximately 300,000 and 350,000 respectively by 2050.



2020 Annual Average Pay by Industry Sector*
State of Colorado and Adams County, Colorado

Industry	State	County	County as % of State
10 Total, all industries	\$ 66,649	\$ 60,263	90.4%
Federal Government	\$ 87,291	\$ 98,152	112.4%
State Government	\$ 69,688	\$ 97,034	139.2%
Local Government	\$ 54,355	\$ 57,214	105.3%
10 Total, all <i>private</i> industries	\$ 67,431	\$ 55,638	82.5%
101 Goods-producing	\$ 74,557	\$ 66,241	88.8%
1011 Natural resources and mining	\$ 91,879	\$ 61,002	66.4%
1012 Construction	\$ 68,209	\$ 69,064	101.3%
1013 Manufacturing	\$ 77,207	\$ 62,397	80.8%
102 Service-providing	\$ 66,010	\$ 52,561	79.6%
1021 Trade, transportation, and utilities	\$ 55,719	\$ 52,043	93.4%
1022 Information	\$ 123,495	\$ 115,169	93.3%
1023 Financial activities	\$ 97,276	\$ 66,686	68.6%
1024 Professional and business services	\$ 90,744	\$ 63,453	69.9%
1025 Education and health services	\$ 55,198	\$ 56,179	101.8%
1026 Leisure and hospitality	\$ 28,424	\$ 24,269	85.4%
1027 Other services	\$ 45,642	\$ 46,485	101.8%
1029 Unclassified	\$ 87,352	\$ 42,818	49.0%

*Based on covered employment.

Source: Colorado Department of Labor, Colorado Demographer's Office, U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages (QCEW), Adams County Community and Economic Development Department, January 2022.

Figure 6-2: Annual Average Pay

Projected Covered Employment and Total Jobs 2025 to 2050
Adams County, Colorado

Year	Covered Employment	Total Jobs
2025	248,722	307,825
2030	260,987	323,004
2035	273,264	338,199
2040	281,487	348,376
2045	290,777	359,873
2050	297,764	368,520

Source: Colorado Department of Labor, Colorado Demographer's Office, U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages (QCEW), U.S. Bureau of Census Non-Employer Statistics, Denver Regional Council of Government (DRCOG), Adams County Community and Economic Development Department, January 2022.

Figure 6-3: Projected Employment 2025 to 2050

ADAMS COUNTY PROFILE



KEY ISSUES

Adams County has a rich history in agriculture and a well-established transportation network. These two key factors have shaped many of the land use patterns across the county over time and influence positioning for future economic development. Additionally, as one of the fastest growing counties in the state and part of a rapidly growing metropolitan region, there is pressure for higher wages and affordable housing that present challenges which must be addressed to ensure equity and continued opportunities.

- Wages and housing supply have not kept pace with the cost of living, and the average annual wage in Adams County is below the state average.
 - Clear development processes and business support services are areas for improvement as the County works to implement its vision, mission, and values.
 - Growth in residential development increases land use conflicts with more impactful industrial uses that have historically provided much of the county's economic base.
 - There is a need to plan infrastructure investments in strategic locations to support economic growth and diversification in alignment with the county's vision.
- Long-term impacts from the COVID-19 pandemic, climate change, and socioeconomic factors continue to influence the economy changing the labor market, business operations, and technologies.
 - Adams County is part of a strong regional economy, and success is built on relationships between the County and its municipalities, neighboring counties, other regulatory agencies, business and development communities, and residents.



GOALS, POLICIES, AND STRATEGIES

Goal ED 1: Encourage a “people first” philosophy in economic development that is committed to innovation, exceptional service, and transparency.

Policy ED 1.1: *Adams County’s policy is to prioritize responsiveness and customer service, leading with an innovative approach, and managing resources for long-term sustainability.*

- **Strategy ED 1.1.01:** Strengthen communication between the County, educational and training partners, businesses, employees, and residents to meet the community’s educational, job-training, and job search needs.
- **Strategy ED 1.1.02:** Evaluate and continuously improve the County’s development standards and permitting processes to ensure they are equitable, cost-effective, timely, and meet community needs and goals.
- **Strategy ED 1.1.03:** Work with the business community, major employers, economic development organizations, and residents to maintain a healthy and supportive business climate.
- **Strategy ED 1.1.04:** Provide technical assistance and development review process coordination to help developers and businesses navigate land-use and permit applications with clarity and in a timely manner.

- **Strategy ED 1.1.05:** Encourage innovation in service delivery, utilizing new technologies and communication tools to disseminate information in user-friendly platforms that make it readily accessible for the public.

Goal ED 2: Foster fair and equitable economic development throughout the county.

Policy ED 2.1: *Adams County’s policy is to support all people and businesses to grow and flourish educationally and economically. This is achieved through the creation and retention of sustainable jobs that provide a livable wage and reduce income disparities, as well as by developing a well-educated and qualified labor force that is competitive and responsive to the changing needs of the market and workplace.*

- **Strategy ED 2.1.01:** Understand the needs of target industries and primary employers and develop programs that address and support, such as those that elevate workforce training and advancement, provide access to education, and those that foster research opportunities.
- **Strategy ED 2.1.02:** Focus community economic development programs and activities in neighborhoods that may require additional resources or services and facilitate access to funding and technical support.

- **Strategy ED 2.1.03:** Encourage neighborhood revitalization through understanding neighborhood needs and supporting catalytic projects that address local small businesses and start-ups, workforce housing, and needed community services and amenities, such as access to fresh food, daycare, and healthcare.
- **Strategy ED 2.1.04:** Pursue the recruitment and retention of businesses that offer full-time and high-paying jobs with competitive benefits that are commensurate with the cost of living in the area.
- **Strategy ED 2.1.05:** Promote cross-departmental coordination when implementing infrastructure improvements through Capital Improvement projects to promote equity and access at neighborhood scale.
- **Strategy ED 3.1.02:** Support a mix of land uses that bring positive impact to neighborhoods, including employment, retail, community services, and residential activity into shared locations that stimulate economic activity and reinforce multimodal transportation connections.
- **Strategy ED 3.1.03:** Focus more intensive industrial uses in strategic locations that are served by supporting infrastructure and removed from residential areas.
- **Strategy ED 3.1.04:** Discourage new development on agricultural lands that are productive or in cultivation.

Goal ED 4: Build and sustain a resilient and diverse economy.

Policy ED 4.1: *Adams County's policy is to pursue the attraction of target industries, while also promoting the retention and expansion of existing businesses, to provide a range of resilient employment opportunities and support living wages.*

Goal ED 3: Guide growth and development to targeted areas and provide compatible transitions between land uses.

Policy ED 3.1: *Adams County's policy is to direct businesses and development to appropriate locations based on available public facilities and infrastructure, land capacity, adjacent uses, and environmental impact.*

- **Strategy ED 3.1.01:** Encourage redevelopment of brownfields and infill parcels to encourage revitalization of neighborhoods and utilize existing infrastructure.
- **Strategy ED 4.1.01:** Stimulate economic growth by focusing on business attraction, retention, and expansion to ensure Adams County stays at the forefront of business development in identified target industries.
- **Strategy ED 4.1.02:** Support efforts that advance innovation in business practices and technology and provide resources to entrepreneurs and startup industries, as well as established small businesses, to grow and scale as needed.

GOALS, POLICIES, AND STRATEGIES

- **Strategy ED 4.1.03:** Promote emerging green industries and advanced technologies that provide transitions from heavy industry and those with negative environmental impacts.
- **Strategy ED 4.1.04:** Align incentives that support the County's broader strategic goals and economic development activities that provides positive community impact and a return on investment.
- **Strategy ED 4.1.05:** Support the establishment of proactive resiliency plans and post-disaster economic recovery plans, with a focus on stronger communication between the County and the business community.

- **Strategy ED 4.1.06:** Coordinate infrastructure investments in targeted areas to promote redevelopment.

Goal ED 5: Promote the character and potential of the area through strong partnerships and effective collaboration with key stakeholders.

Policy ED 5.1: Adams County's policy is to work with its municipalities, state and local agencies, and community partners to market and support development consistent with the shared vision for the county's future.

- **Strategy ED 5.1.01:** Work with incorporated jurisdictions in the county to leverage resources that support the attraction, retention, and expansion of target industries.

- **Strategy ED 5.1.02:** Support regional economic development organizations in their efforts to reinforce and strengthen the regional economy through marketing and attraction campaigns.
- **Strategy ED 5.1.03:** Expand internal efforts to market the vision of Adams County more broadly and to targeted audiences to establish new partnerships and potential opportunities for economic growth.
- **Strategy ED 5.1.04:** Collaborate with public and private sector partners on redevelopment tools such as Opportunity Zones, State Enterprise Zones, and Urban Renewal Areas to maximize investment dollars.



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Image caption

CHAPTER 7



Cultural Heritage

OVERVIEW

The diversity of the people who have called Adams County home is as distinct as the landscapes within its borders. What makes this vast land so unique is not only the geography of the county – urban to suburban to urban fringe to rural – but the population’s desires and subsequent lifestyles that thrive within these environments. Adams County continues to grow and to draw people from all over the globe to put down their roots. As we look to the future, celebrating the history, people, and places of Adams County will take an innovative approach, one that has the potential to offer a dynamic

expression of our very unique cultural diversity.

As Adams County continues to grow, the unincorporated portion of the county is becoming more diverse. An estimated 31% of the population speaks a language other than English at home (ACS 2019 – 5 Yr Table S1601), which is the highest percentage in the region. Nearly 47% of the population identifies as Latino or Hispanic, which is expected to increase in the next 20 years. This diversity should continue to be celebrated, and policies to support all residents must be encouraged.



ROLE OF THE COUNTY

The Colorado Revised Statutes state, “a master plan shall contain a recreational and tourism uses element pursuant to which the County shall indicate how it intends to provide for the recreational and tourism needs of residents of the county and visitors to the county...” Adams County is varied in its geographies and, thus, how the population recreates and promotes tourism. Much of the population recreates within a vast amount of open space, trails, parks, and facilities owned and maintained by the County, such as the County Fairgrounds at Riverdale Regional Park.

Additionally, Adams County strives to implement the Artfully Adams Master Plan, created in 2018, by committing to invest in cultural arts through an allocated percentage of county revenue, and to expand on arts programming. This occurs in parks through visual and performing art mechanisms, such as the Dragon Boat Festival at Riverdale Regional Park. It is also found in open space and trail corridors with visual arts as a means of wayfinding and placemaking, such as the Murals for Hope program.



AGRICULTURE AS CULTURAL HERITAGE

Agricultural land uses are the cultural heritage backbone of Adams County. A large percentage of the overall county, though mostly clustered in the eastern portion, is committed to an agricultural lifestyle. According to the USDA 2017 Census of Agriculture, 93% of the county land area (705,289 acres) is classified as “land in farm operations” with a ranking of 10th out of 64 Colorado counties in market value of agricultural products sold. While the number of farms increased from 2012 to 2017, the overall average farm size decreased by 5%, with 45% of farms in the county being 10–49 acres in size. As a result, it is important to identify land uses that may accommodate growth

while preserving and highlighting agriculture as a cultural asset.

The District Plan was created through an intergovernmental agreement (IGA) with the City of Brighton. The plan was adopted in 2016 as the District Plan (now marketed/branded as “Historic Splendid Valley”) for a study area of 5,000 acres with two-thirds of the area located within unincorporated Adams County. The District Plan seeks to “create a community-based regional vision for guiding the development of, among other things, local food production, agritourism, conservation, and future land use planning in the area to the south of Brighton,” as well as to “recognize that the Adams County Open Space, Parks, and Trails Master Plan and Comprehensive Plan identify an opportunity to create a Local Food



Figure 7-1: Agricultural zoning

AGRICULTURE AS CULTURAL HERITAGE

Production District south of Brighton.” The area includes historic farms with vegetable growers, nurseries, U-pick farmstands, and community-supported agricultural farms. As of 2021, 445 acres of this 5,000-acre study have been preserved through a series of open space acquisitions and conservation easements.

The 2017 Colorado Blueprint of Agriculture and Food reinforces the District Plan and wishes to create, retain, and recruit agricultural firms, develop workforce and youth to support agriculture, promote the Colorado brand, enhance agricultural innovation, improve access to resources and capital for agriculture, and integrate agriculture and food with healthy, vibrant communities. Several efforts demonstrate Adams County’s continued support of agriculture as cultural heritage including the District Plan partnership, efforts from the I-70 Regional Economic Advancement Partnership (REAP) to promote agritourism, and support for linkages to the National Western Center’s anticipated food system work and expansions. The agriculture as cultural heritage theme is also highlighted by the County’s continued work at Riverdale Regional Park as a regional hub for hosting agricultural programming with the Colorado State University (CSU) Extension Service, 4-H programs, and the Adams County Fair.



ART AS CULTURAL HERITAGE

Strengthening cultural values and preserving heritage and history through art creates “community character and sense of place, enhances community engagement and participation, and enhances economic vitality” (American Planning Association). As such, the Cultural Arts in Adams County continue to be a focus for residents and businesses in community surveys.

The Adams County Cultural Council, established in 1987, makes recommendations on the distribution of the Scientific and Cultural Facilities District (SCFD) funds within the whole of the county (incorporated and unincorporated). SCFD currently distributes over \$66 million to more than 300 organizations, with nearly \$2 million going to directly support

organizations serving Adams County residents.

The County’s Visual Arts Commission is currently in a Tier III status with 14% receipt of funds from the SCFD. Riverdale Regional Park aims to elevate Adams County’s Tier III status to Tier II status (or a 22% provision for grant distribution). The 2018 Riverdale Regional Master Plan envisioned greater flexibility for cultural uses at the park and is facilitated through a package of code amendments to the Parks and Open Space zone district adopted in 2021.

The Adams County Visual Arts Commission (established in 2009) acts as an advisory board to the County’s arts and culture initiative to place public art in county facilities. In 2016, the Board of County Commissioners voted to allocate 0.5% of every county capital facilities project for public art, entitled the “Adams County Percentage for the Arts Program.” In 2021, the Board increased the number to 2% for all eligible capital projects (not just facilities) at or exceeding \$250,000. The 2% allocation begins on January 1, 2023.

The Adams County Arts, Culture and Venue Task Force (2014) was established to “identify and recommend steps to define Adams County’s role to support and develop scientific and cultural opportunities for all citizens.”

In 2018, County staff, along with the Adams County Arts, Culture and Venue



HISTORIC ASSETS AS CULTURAL HERITAGE

Task Force, created *Artfully Adams: Adams County Arts & Culture Master Plan* to develop the vision of Adams County as “an inclusive community where everyone has the opportunity to enjoy a rich diversity of art and culture experiences.”

The Adams County Fair has grown into the largest county fair in the state and attracts over 100,000 people annually. The event is held the first week of August and highlights the partnership with the CSU Extension and 4-H programs in the county. The fair represents a uniquely Adams County experience and exhibits the culture and heritage to residents and visitors.

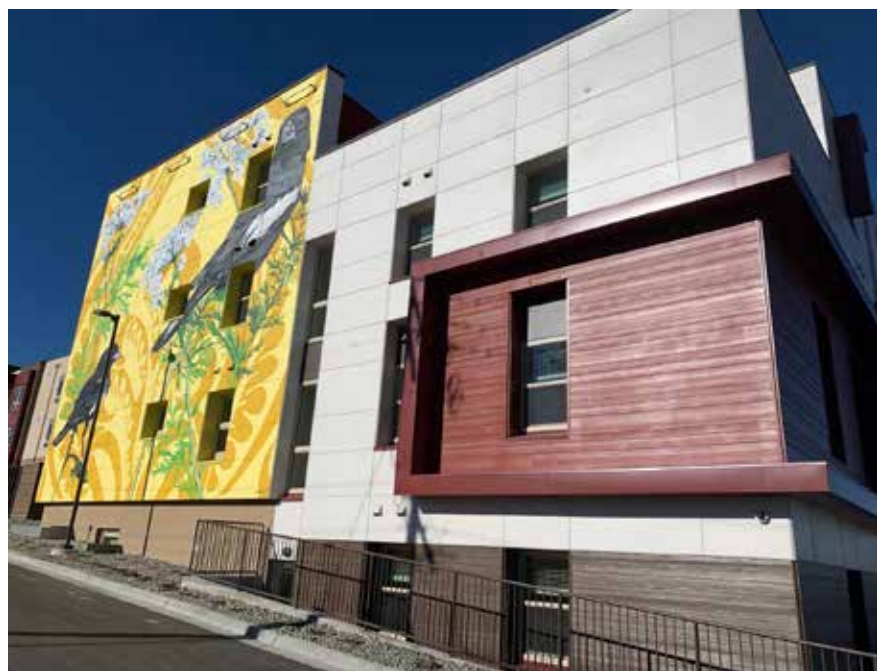
Enhancing, creating place, and telling stories through performance and visual arts provides a mechanism for all Adams County residents and businesses to actively participate in their community or to passively explore where they live and reside.

HISTORIC ASSETS AS CULTURAL HERITAGE

Historical assets are found throughout the county, including State Historic Register designated properties such as the Brannan Sand and Gravel Pit #8, Lake Sangraco and Boat Complex (2011), and historic state roads and highways. The County does not have an established historic preservation program, nor has it sought designation as a Certified Local Government (CLG) by the state. Several of the incorporated areas do have such programs in place.

The current desire is to expand the County’s relationships with local and regional experts and organizations on preservation and to continue our support to our jurisdictions in this effort.

As Adams County continues to conserve farms and lands through open space preservation and build out or enhance current assets in the form of former government buildings and facilities, the history and stories from these acquisitions are unearthed. Many of the County’s master and subarea plans have captured the history behind the geography, acreage, and structures; for instance, the 2018 Riverdale Regional Park Master Plan provides the history of the Adams County Fair dating back to October 1904, the acquisition of the 1860s John Henderson Ranch/Poor Farm in 1960, and the Adams County Board of County Commissioners in 1965 voting to move the fairgrounds

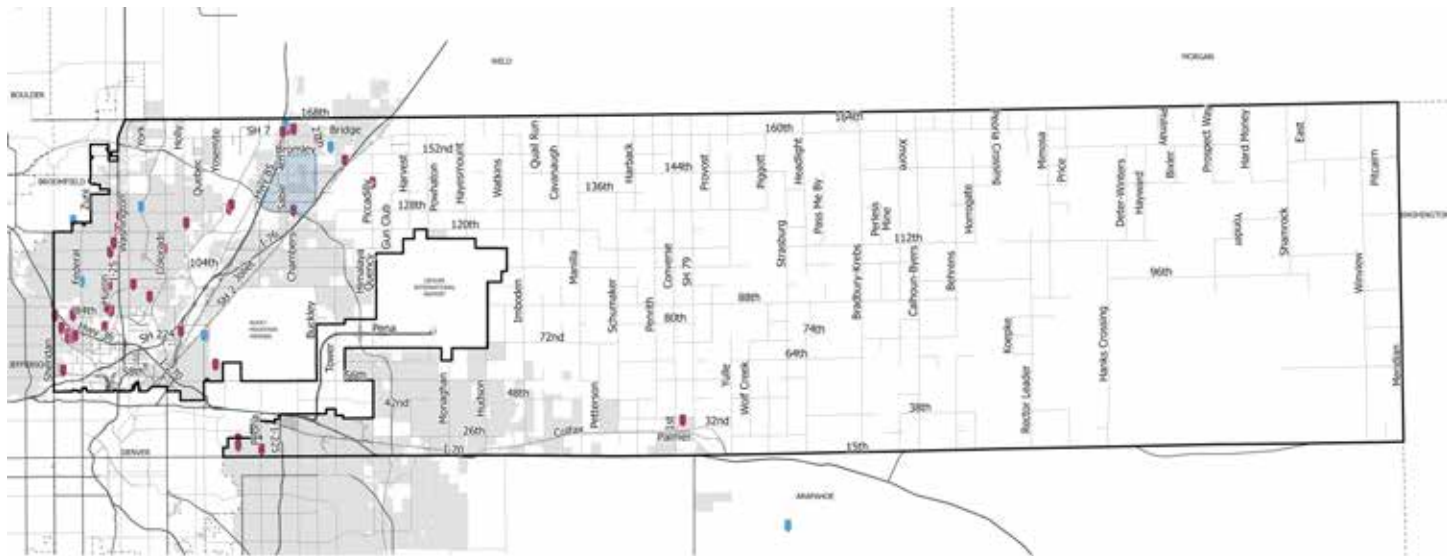


HISTORIAL ASSETS AS CULTURAL HERITAGE

from their original location in Brighton to the current park location.

The county also has a rich inventory of roadways that have historic value – some designated and some noted for future status in previous documents, such as the Riverdale Road Corridor Plan (2005). Rail corridors and former industrial mining sites may also have distinctive characteristics the County wishes to capture through visual and written storytelling, as sites in these areas are mitigated and/or adaptively reused.

The land use pattern noted in the Future Land Use Map (see Chapter 2) can ensure that compatibility and preservation go hand in hand as the county grows.



1 | Cultural and Historic Places

Legend

49th Fest	Adams County MAP Exhibit	Anythink Park Mack	Arts on Parade	Brighton Music Choir and Orchestra, Inc.	Colorado Sanitary Canning Factory	Denver Club Fest	Fall Festival Racecar	Harris Park School	Metzger Farm	Palmetto Art Club	South Westminster Arts Group	Thomson Arts and Culture Division	Union High School
A Child's Song	Adams County Regional Park	Anythink Wright Farms	Arts Festival	Brighton Office of Arts and Culture	Commerce City Culture Council	Deliver Trenches Streetcar #04	Festival of Lights Parade	Harvest Fest	Mid-Winter Bhangra Festival	Performance Arts Complex at Penrose Charter School	St. Stephen's Lutheran Church	Thomson Arts, Sciences, and Humanities Council (TASHCC)	Westminster Historical Society
Air River Gallery	Adams County Visual Arts Commission	Anythink York Street	Best of Spring Bazaar	Bronxley Farm / Kitzuma-Hillman Farm	Concept Colorado	Dick's Sporting Goods Park	First Presbyterian Church (Brighton)	Holiday Bazaar	Music in the Park Concert Series	Penrose Charter School	Summitfest	Thomson Community Band	Westminster University (Bellevue College)
Adams County Courthouse	Adams County Visual Arts Commission (ACVAC)	Art Stop on the Go	Best of Rockies	Broderick House	County Christmas Bazaar	E.B. Rains Jr. Memorial Park	Fitzsimons General Hospital	Village Arts and Crafts Fair	NAMF Events	Presko Fest	TASHCO Events	Thomson Community Band	William J. Oregon House
Adams County Fair	Anythink Brighton Library	Art from the Heart	Brighter Community Orchestra Festival Concert	Carpenter Park Fields	Creative U	Estabke Farmers Co-Operative Elevator Company	Food Truck Carnival	Homespin	North Metro Arts Alliance	Platte Valley Players	The Armory	Thomson Community Orchestra, Inc.	Wilson House (Confidential Project)
Adams County Historical Society and Museum	Anythink Hunn Street	Art in the Park	Brighton Cultural Arts Commission	City Strings in Adams County	Cultural Strategic Plan for the Brighton Cultural Influence Area	Eco-Fair	Fourth of July in Thornton	July Fourth Festival	Northglenn Arts & Humanities Foundation	Riviera Cemetery	The Art Academy	Thomson Harvest Fest	Winterfest
	Anythink Library	Arts and Culture Symposium	Brighton High School	Colorado Educational Theatre	DL Parsons Theatre	Eye to Art Program	Granville Fuller House	M.J. Lantz Hubstout Home	Savory Savorly Mushroom Farm Water Tower	Robo Market Community Arts Center	The hART of Brighton	Thomson Arts & Culture Center	Thomson Fest
								Man Street Creatives (MSC)	Northglenn Youth Theatre	Savory Savorly Mushroom Farm Water Tower	Thomson Arts & Culture Center	Thomson Fest	SpendidValley
								Math! Math! Media					

Figure 7-2: Cultural & historic places

GOALS, POLICIES, AND STRATEGIES

Goal CH 1: Ensure agriculture is supported with adequate allocation of area for future land uses and zoning, preservation practices, economic development, access and distribution, and technological innovations.

Policy CH 1.1: Support the preservation of historic agricultural land uses.

- **Strategy CH 1.1.01:** Support higher density development to infill areas and those within urban service boundaries, along with areas serviced by water and sewer to reduce development pressure on agricultural lands.

- **Strategy CH 1.1.02:** Support an agritourism economy and elevate it as a cultural asset.
- **Strategy CH 1.1.03:** Work to preserve existing agricultural land, farms, and facilities that grow food for the local community and support the expansion of productive agricultural lands, farms, and facilities.

Policy CH 1.2: Explore and encourage innovative agricultural practices.

- **Strategy CH 1.2.01:** Continue strengthening relationships with sustainable agricultural associations and organizations to ensure Adams County is at the forefront of innovative techniques in agriculture.



GOALS, POLICIES & STRATEGIES

- **Strategy CH 1.2.02:** Provide educational opportunities through regional partnerships to learn about best practices in sustainable agriculture to address a dwindling water supply.
- **Strategy CH 1.2.03:** Encourage regenerative agriculture practices.
- **Strategy CH 1.2.04:** Explore agrivoltaics and other renewable energy techniques applied to farms.
- **Strategy CH 1.2.05:** Support innovation in year-round, sustainable, local food production.

Policy CH 1.3: *Assess food deserts and gaps in fresh, healthy foods throughout the County (See COH 5.1.05).*



- **Strategy CH 1.3.01:** Continue strengthening Adams County's regional public health and nonprofit partnerships to promote healthy eating and active living (HEAL).
- **Strategy CH 1.3.02:** Evaluate, report, and encourage economic development strategies to tackle food desert concerns throughout the County (See COH 5.1.05).
- **Strategy CH 1.3.03:** Encourage strengthening of local food distribution channels and promote innovations in the industry to do so.

Goal CH 2: Enrich the cultural arts in Adams County that bolster livability and support the county as a vibrant destination.

Policy CH 2.1: *Create culture nodes and artful opportunities in Adams County.*

- **Strategy CH 2.1.01:** Support public art and wayfinding elements as a placemaking and cultural celebration tool in all plans (neighborhood, subarea, master, transportation, parks, sustainability, etc.).
- **Strategy CH 2.1.02:** Encourage new and adaptive reuse projects to incorporate art within their building design and surroundings.

- **Strategy CH 2.1.03:** Explore existing County assets for cultural art facilities and artist needs.
- **Strategy CH 2.1.04:** Support creative industries and employment by encouraging businesses, venues, and arts organizations to establish in Adams County.
- **Strategy CH 2.1.05:** Support efforts within communities to collaborate on positioning cultural arts as a destination.
- **Strategy CH 2.1.06:** Support food-based businesses and events to celebrate and support diverse cultures and our farming resources.
- **Strategy CH 2.1.07:** Ensure the continuation of abundant cultural arts and education programs at Riverdale Regional Park. Continue to support the Adams County Fair as a meaningful experience for residents and visitors.
- **Strategy CH 2.1.08:** Use Adams County’s parks, open spaces, and interconnected trail system for public art collections, community installations and events, and artisan-crafted spaces.

Goal CH 3: Maintain representative history and cultural assets that support a sense of identity in Adams County.

- **Policy CH 3.1:** *Conserve, support, and celebrate historic resources in Adams County.*

- **Strategy CH 3.1.01:** Encourage and strengthen relationships with historic preservation agencies, jurisdictions, and nonprofits, such as Colorado’s State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO).
- **Strategy CH 3.1.02:** Explore identifying and surveying historic structures and encourage reinvestment and/or adaptive reuse of historic structures.
- **Strategy CH 3.1.03:** Evaluate parks, open space, trails, and associated structures within the unincorporated county that may qualify for historic preservation status.



GOALS, POLICIES & STRATEGIES

- **Strategy CH 3.1.04:** Support inclusion of historically marginalized communities in the recognition and preservation of Adams County's historic and cultural resources.
- **Strategy CH 3.1.05:** Explore the possibility to establish a historic preservation program with a focus on historic assets on County properties and potentially other areas in the county.

Policy CH 3.2: *Preserve the historic character of Adams County's along designated roads and highways.*

- **Strategy CH 3.2.01:** Evaluate and potentially update existing studies like the Riverdale Road Corridor Study and align future land uses along Riverdale Road that are compatible with Riverdale Regional Park activities and applicable plans.

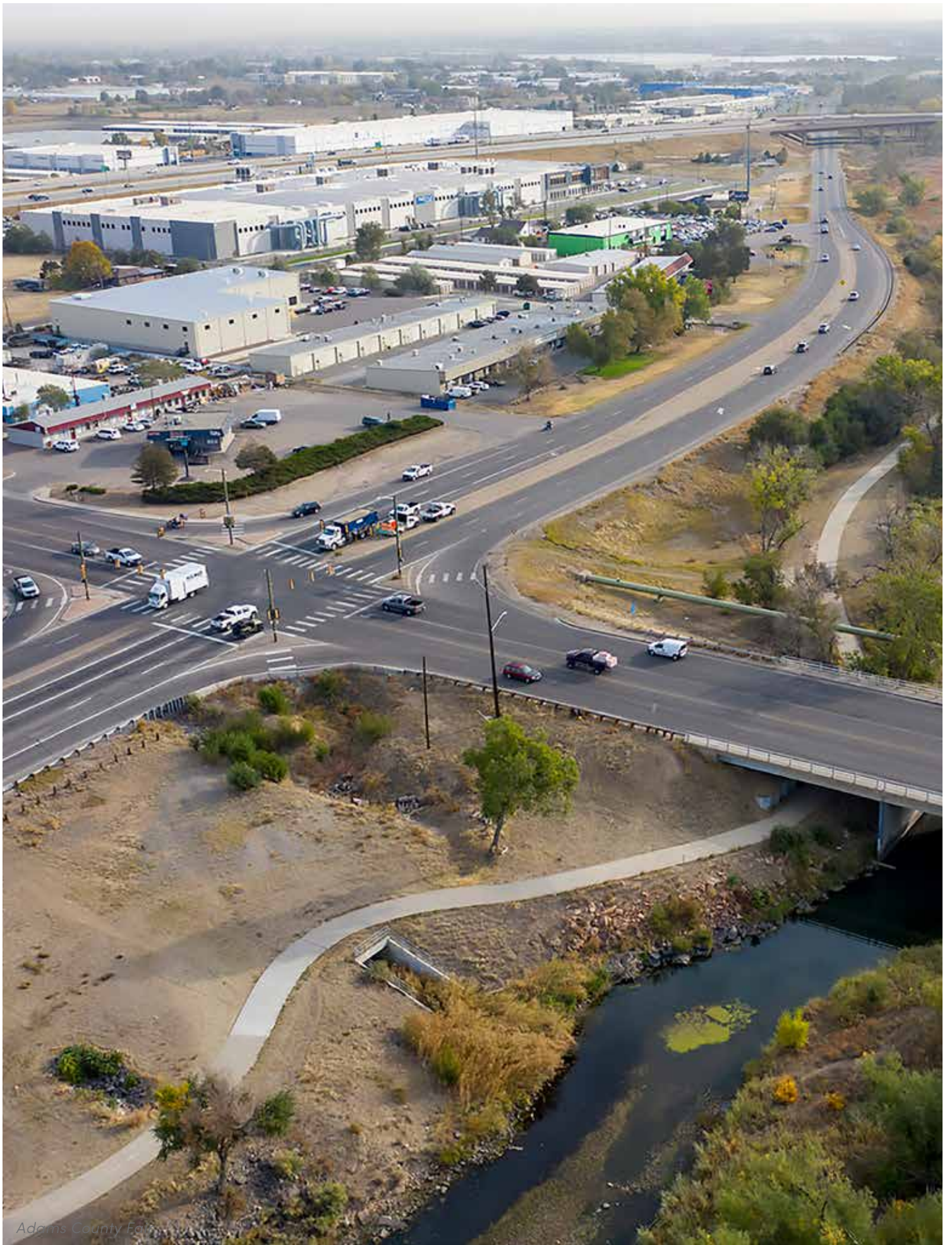
- **Strategy CH 3.2.02:** Explore opportunities to preserve historical character along designated roads in coordination with the Transportation Master Plan and Parks, Open Space, and Trails Plan.
- **Strategy CH 3.2.03:** Explore enhancements through economic investment, visual arts, and urban design along designated corridors or districts.

Policy CH 3.3: *Encourage community and neighborhood plans to explore and account for their cultural heritage when master planning.*

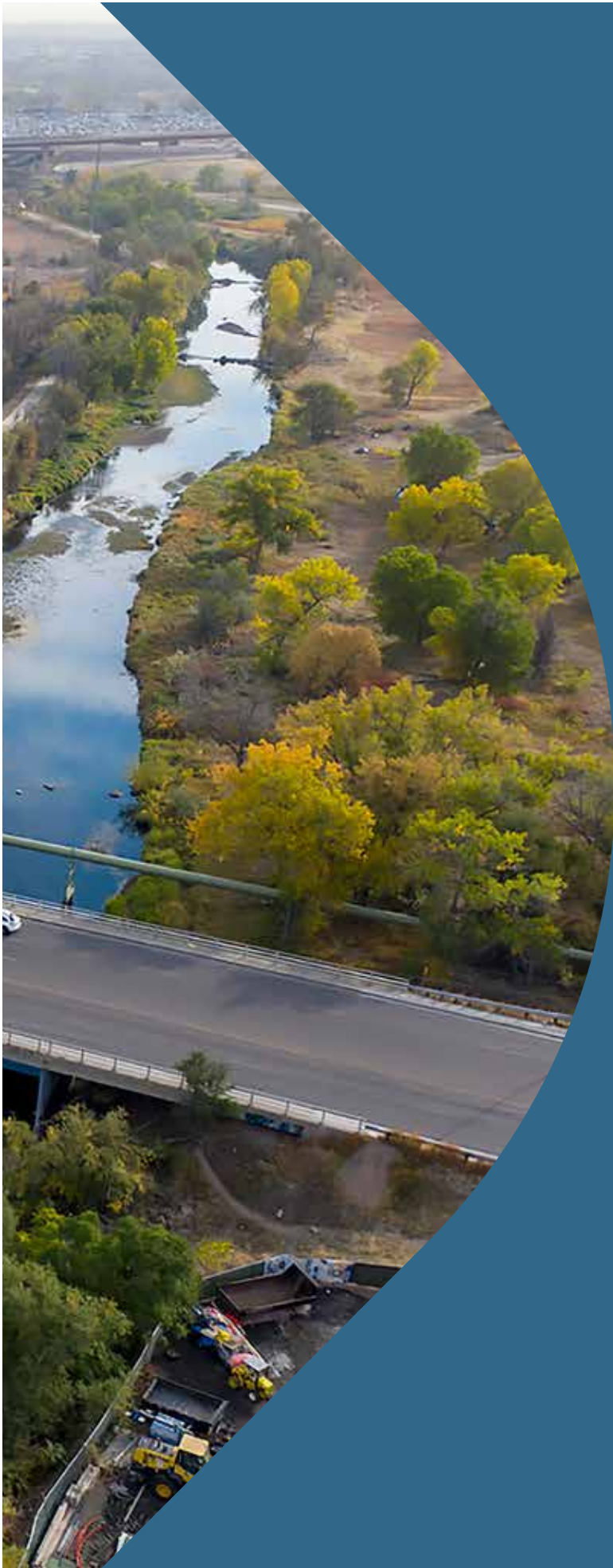
- **Strategy CH 3.3.01:** Ensure the history of place within Adams County's neighborhood and parks planning is documented at the time of subarea, master planning, or amending an existing plan.
- **Strategy CH 3.3.02:** Explore various techniques such as wayfinding signage, public art, and other programming elements to identify and recognize Organized Neighborhood Groups and/or census tracts within the unincorporated county.



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CHAPTER 8



Five Strategic Corridors & Subareas

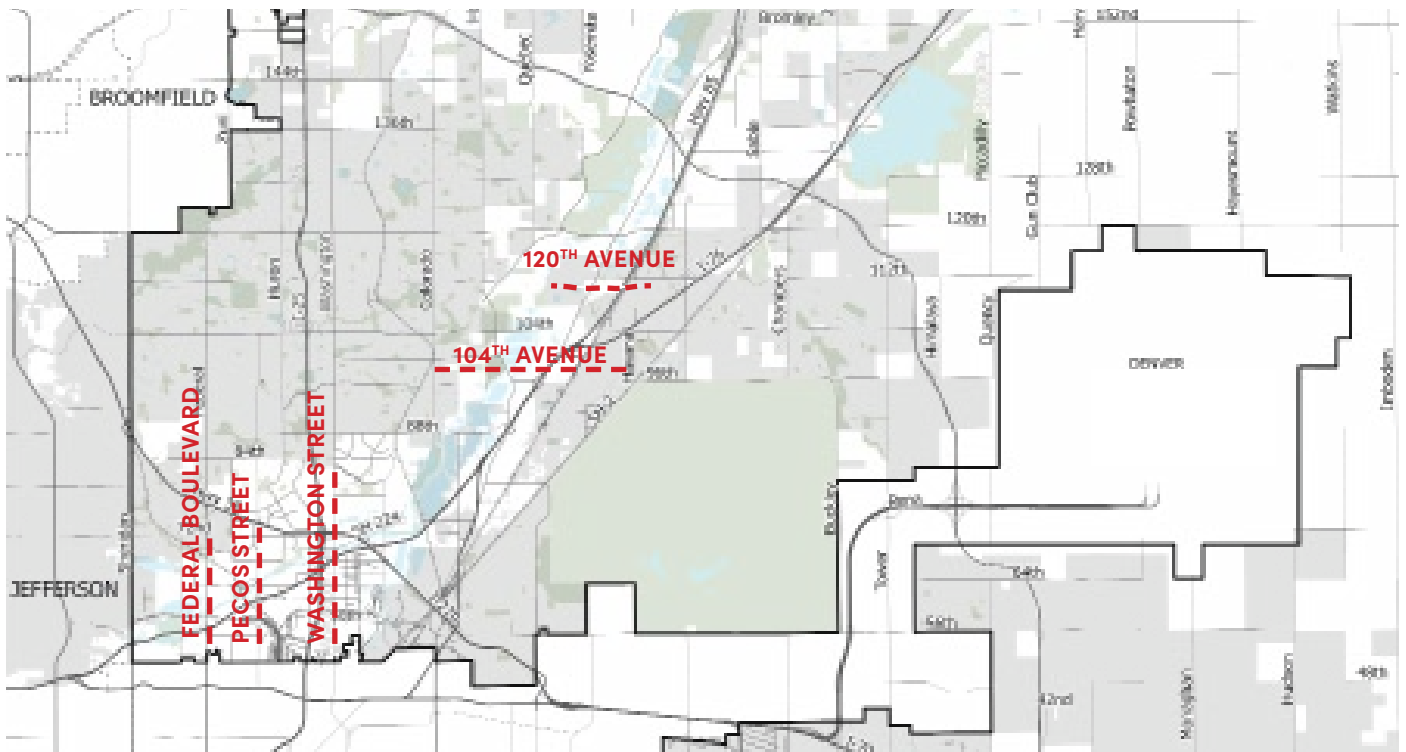
OVERVIEW

Adams County has a broad and diverse geography, which varies from urban and transit oriented areas to rural areas with large agricultural development. Adams County’s population growth is expected to grow largely in the southwestern portion but with increases in the eastern areas of Bennett and Strasburg. The County has identified these areas of future growth as Strategic Corridors and Subareas and will plan for specific planning efforts.

To highlight specific opportunities for focused improvements in key geographic areas, Advancing Adams

selected five strategic corridors that were analyzed in greater detail as a part of the planning process—Federal Boulevard, Washington Street, Pecos Street, 104th Avenue, and 120th Avenue. The Advancing Adams Existing Conditions and Opportunities Report profiled the current state of the corridors and provided opportunities for future land uses along the corridors.

Each corridor has been subject to a number of considerations and planning efforts since the 2012 Imagine Adams Plan. Those Key Considerations are described in detail for each corridor and show



Data Source: Adams County, DRCOG, Design Workshop

LEGEND

- - - Corridor Locations
- Parks and Open Space
- Adams County Boundary
- Roads
- Municipal Area
- Lakes and Streams
- Railroads

NOT TO SCALE

Figure 8-1: Corridor Overview Map

the importance of improving the strategic corridors to achieve the County's planning goals. The corridors were analyzed based upon past planning efforts, current zoning and future land-uses, transitions, urban development patterns, and environmental justice outcomes and equity considerations. Once the analysis of the corridor's existing conditions was complete, existing development patterns were identified. This chapter highlights the relevant aspects of past plans, reaffirms the vision for each corridor, updates and coordinates the policy with the TMP and POST plans, and details next steps for future planning and

implementation efforts. Each corridor has been subject to a number of considerations and planning efforts since the 2012 Imagine Adams Plan. Those Key Considerations are described in detail for each corridor and show the importance of improving the strategic corridors to achieve the County's planning goals.



COMMON CORRIDOR GOAL

Goal CSP 1: Enhance five strategic corridors in cooperation with multiple jurisdictions to provide improved connectivity that considers multiple modes and integrates with the parks and trails networks, orderly transitions across jurisdictional boundaries, infrastructure and uses, and corridors that provide opportunities for safe travel and vibrant communities.

The following are strategies that apply broadly to the strategic corridors:

Strategy CSP 1.1: Enhance transit furnishings and amenities when possible along the corridor, especially at higher frequency bus stops or commuter hubs.

Strategy CSP 1.2: Foster partnerships with local jurisdictions and stakeholders to better understand travel patterns and needs, utilize opportunities, monitor health and performance, and reduce undesired outcomes.

Strategy CSP 1.3: Coordinate with jurisdictions and property owners to establish consistent design elements to contribute to a more cohesive physical character along a corridor. Elements may include, but are not limited to:

- Consistent public lighting at the traffic and pedestrian scale.
- Contiguous sidewalks with uniform curb ramps that meet ADA requirements.
- Building and parking placement.
- Curb-cuts and site access point spacing.
- Outdoor storage and retail displays.
- Landscaping in relation to the pedestrian realm.
- Site furnishings like benches and transit shelters.
- Way-finding and public signage to reinforce a unified district or distinctive place.

Strategy CSP 1.4: Monitor goals, policies, and strategies within the Advancing Adams plans and evaluate them when considering updates and implementation.

Strategy CSP 1.5: Continuously review implementation of planned improvements outlined in the Advancing Adams plans and develop and coordinate additional investment in the corridors.

FEDERAL BOULEVARD

Applicable Subarea Plans: Southwest Area Framework Plan (2005), Clear Creek Valley TOD Plan (2009), Federal Boulevard Framework Plan (2014), Making Connections (2016)

DESCRIPTION OF THE CORRIDOR:

The Federal Boulevard corridor extends from 52nd Avenue to the Little Dry Creek Trail and overpass over the RTD (Regional Transportation District) B-Line commuter rail tracks. The corridor serves as a gateway to unincorporated Adams County from Denver to the south and Westminster to the north. There is a mix of commercial, industrial, and residential uses along the corridor. The predominant pattern, however, is auto-oriented commercial properties. Frequent curb-cuts, disconnected sidewalks, and parking primarily between the building and the street detract from the comfort and safety of pedestrians. High vehicle speeds and volumes makes the corridor less suitable for bicyclists. Westminster, Federal Heights, and Adams County completed a Multi-Modal Transportation Study in December 2021 to evaluate investments in infrastructure and safety along the corridor in advance of additional CDOT (Colorado Department of Transportation) planning and construction on Federal.

Federal has transportation options including the Clear Creek Federal Station (G Line), the Westminster Station (B Line), and the higher

frequency 31 bus that traverses from Denver to Adams County. The corridor connects to two regional trails, the Clear Creek Trail in the middle section and Little Dry Creek Trail on the northern portion of the corridor. Both trails provide access to the RTD transit stations, as well as, other strategic corridors and regional destinations.

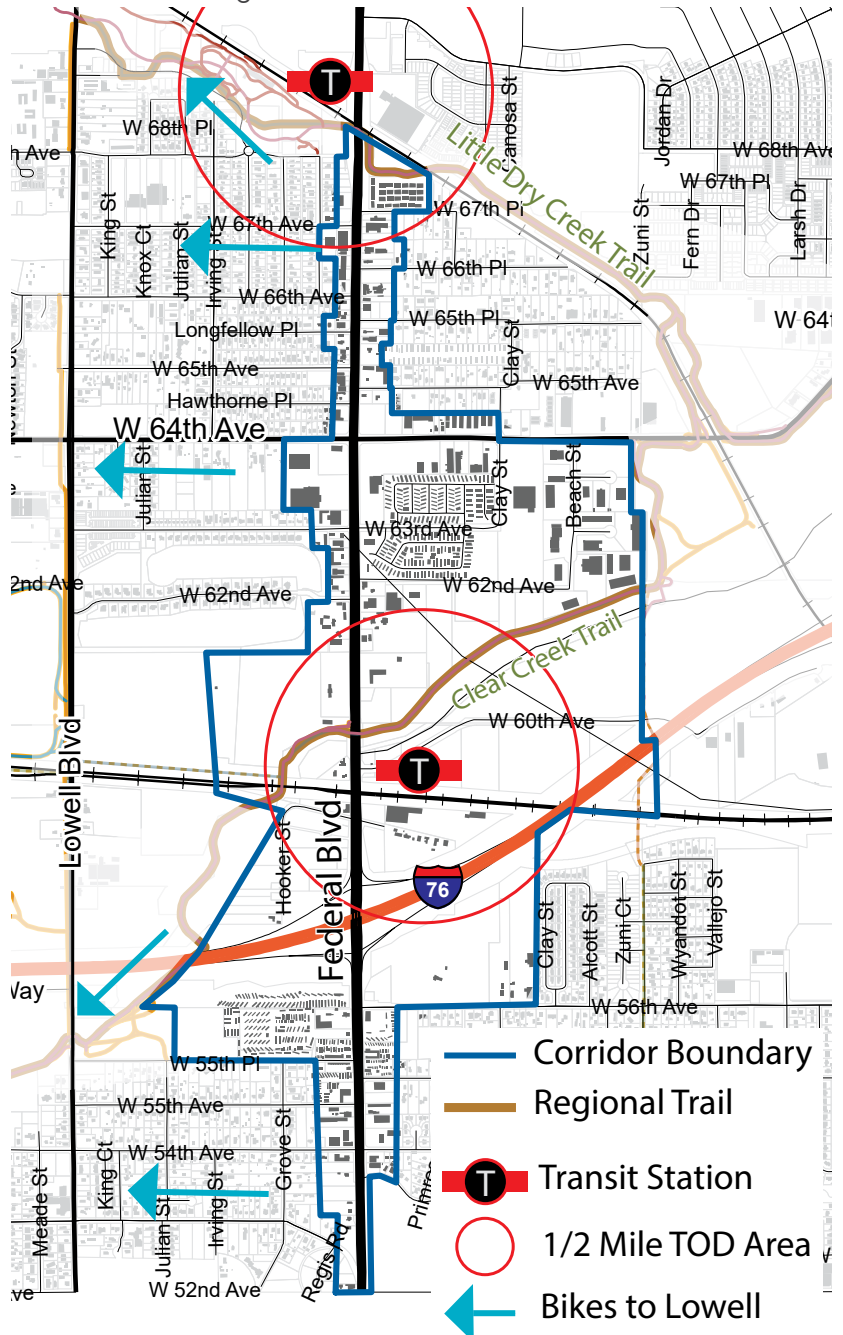


Figure 8-2: Federal Boulevard

FEDERAL BOULEVARD

While past planning envisioned transit-oriented development with higher residential densities around the Federal Station, the vision has not been realized. New construction has been limited by environmental contamination on 'brownfield sites' from past and current uses, and also floodplain and floodway considerations. The strengthening the corridor's transportation connections and safety along with promoting a diverse mix of uses can transform Federal into a central business hub for Adams County.

KEY CONSIDERATIONS SINCE 2012 IMAGINE ADAMS PLAN:

1. Adoption of the Transit Oriented Development (TOD) zone district applicable to properties within ½ mile of the Federal Station (2013). However, only one application for TOD is currently pending.
2. Adoption of the Federal Blvd. Framework Plan (2014).
3. Completion of the Westminster Station at 70th Ave. and Federal (2016). Westminster has completed a Station Area Master Plan and annexation of the station area.
4. Adams County adopts the Southwest Adams County Making Connections plan (2018) which establishes a vision for the corridor and projects for implementing the vision.
5. Adoption of the Mixed Use (MU) zone district (2021). However, no

properties have rezoned to MU to date.

6. The Federal Blvd. Multimodal Transportation Study (2021) was completed to guide infrastructure and corridor amenities when CDOT repaves the corridor. The study establishes next steps for environmental studies and construction for further capital improvements.

FEDERAL BOULEVARD CORRIDOR VISION:

A corridor that supports a strong pedestrian environment, bicycle movement connected to the corridor, and design that enables a mixed use community that includes retail, employment, entertainment, and housing with safe and comfortable access to the light rail station, bus stops, and trails.

Strategy CSP 2.1 Work with applicable property owners (within 1/2 mile radius of station area or those with eligible future-land uses) to inform of opportunities to rezone and develop or redevelop under the TOD and MU zone districts.

Strategy CSP 2.2 Encourage, educate, and coordinate with property owners and stakeholders to on remediation process for contaminated brownfield sites to expand development potential to realize county goals. Continue the ongoing work to understand and address brownfields along this corridor to ensure developers have a full picture of the mitigation measures needed to build on a brownfield, particularly historic landfills.

Strategy CSP 2.3: Maintain existing residential uses and provide improved bike/ped and transit connections as articulated in the Transportation Master Plan and preserve diverse housing types, such as mobile home parks, along the corridor where beneficial to those residents.

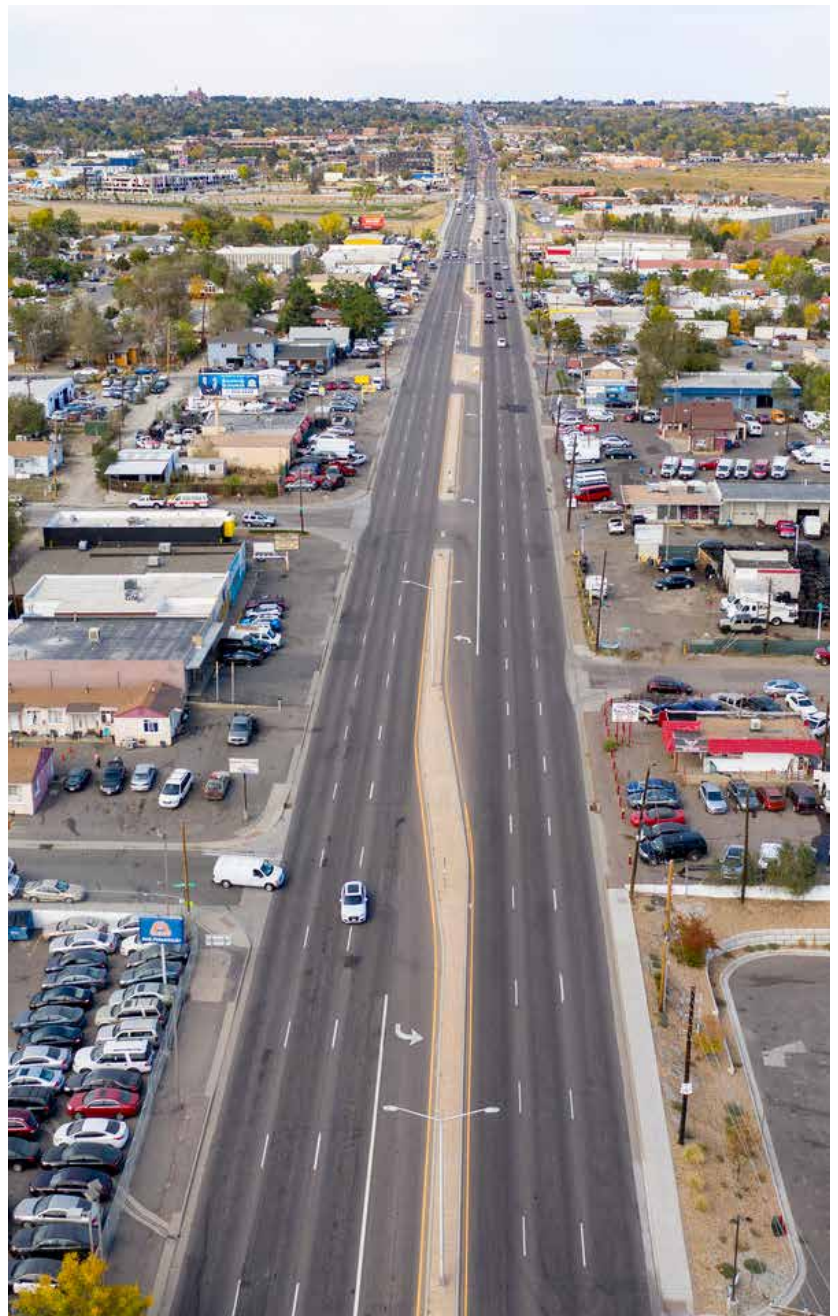
Strategy CSP 2.4: Evaluate commercial development standards, including potential overlays, to improve the visual appearance and quality of development along this and other major corridors in the southwest area and evaluate regulations addressing landscaping, streetscape requirements, sign controls, and access management standards.

Strategy CSP 2.5: Encourage clean, light, and employee based industrial uses on industrial zoned properties to reduce environmental impacts and ensure compatibility with future development of the station area.

Strategy CSP 2.6: Explore alternative financing mechanisms as a means of funding recommended improvements, including Tax Increment Financing (TIFs), local improvement districts, etc.

Strategy CSP 2.7: Continue to collaborate with Mile High Flood Control District regarding channelization and modification of the Clear Creek floodway.

Strategy CSP 2.8: Continue community and stakeholder engagement in future planning processes as outlined in the Federal Blvd. Multimodal Transportation Study (2021).



PECOS STREET

Applicable Subarea Plans: Southwest Area Framework Plan (2005), Clear Creek Valley TOD Plan (2009), Making Connections (2016)

DESCRIPTION OF THE CORRIDOR:

The Pecos Street corridor extends from the southern border with Denver at 52nd Ave. to Highway 36 to the north. The corridor can be divided into three character areas: The Southern Gateway (52nd Ave. to 56th Ave.),

Pecos Junction Influence Area (56th Ave. to 64th Ave.), and the Northern Mixed-Use Connection (64th Ave. to Highway 36). The corridor hosts a mix of uses ranging from commercial, industrial, and residential which poses both opportunity and conflict for abutting properties and the transportation network.

KEY CONSIDERATIONS SINCE 2012 IMAGINE ADAMS PLAN:

1. Adoption of the Transit Oriented Development (TOD) zone district applicable to properties within ½ mile of the Pecos Station (2013). However, no properties have rezoned to TOD to date.
2. Adams County adopts the Southwest Adams County Making Connections plan (2018) which reiterates the vision established by the Clear Creek TOD Plan Vision and projects to implement corridor improvements to Pecos St.
3. Catalytic industrial developments such as Pecos Logistics Park that utilize the industrial character and zoning and strengthen the employment base in the area.
4. Development of the Midtown master planned community establishes a pattern of mixed use, walkable design.

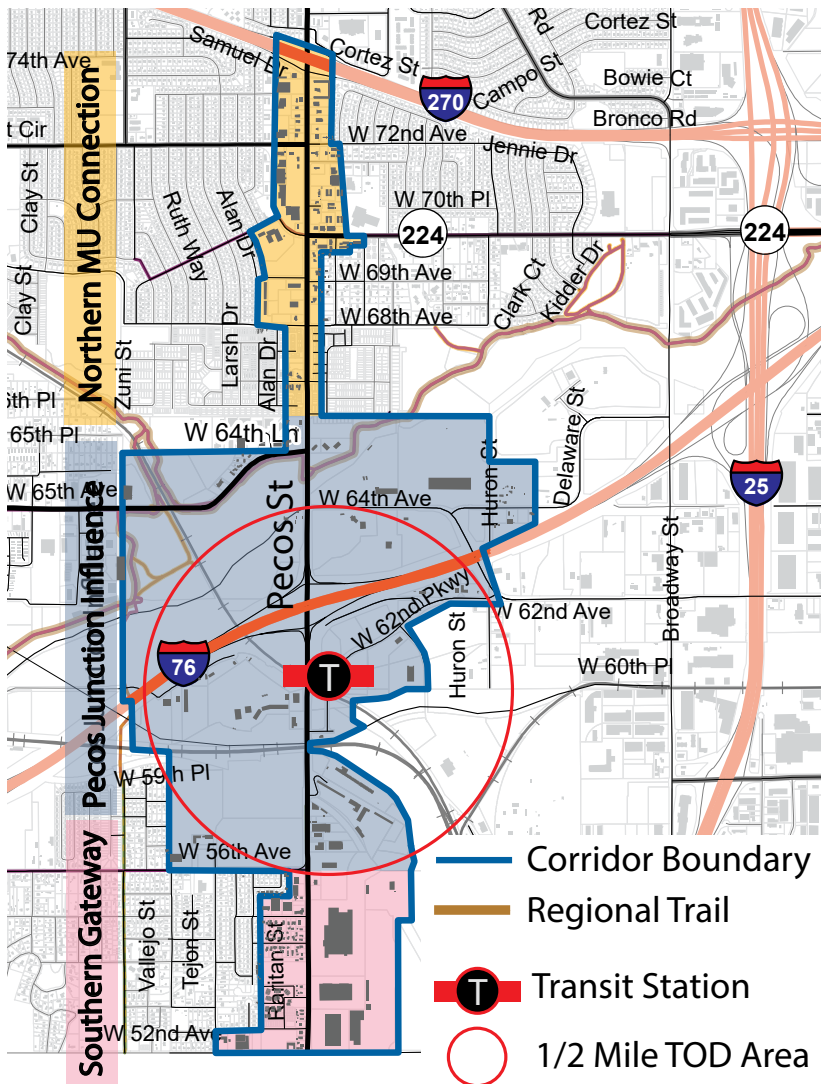


Figure 8-3: Pecos Street

PECOS STREET CORRIDOR VISION:

A gateway corridor into Adams County that utilizes the investments in transit, transportation, and mobility to reinforce employment opportunities, transit-supportive commercial and industrial development, environmental stewardship, and urban design while serving the distinct industrial, mixed-use, and residential characters along the corridor.

Strategy CSP 3.1: Consider initiating a more detailed planning evaluation of the corridor to refine the vision and strategies that address the different character areas.

Strategy CSP 3.2: Improve transitions between industrial, commercial, and residential land use adjacencies through updated performance standards, land-use buffers, and coordinating with property owners on operations and plans.

Strategy CSP 3.3: Coordinate with property owners on the corridor to identify opportunities to rezone to mixed-use or TOD to align development with the Future Land-Use map.

Strategy CSP 3.4: Continue the ongoing work to evaluate and address brownfields along this corridor to ensure developers have a full understanding of the mitigation measures needed to build on a brownfield, particularly historic landfills.

Strategy CSP 3.5: Improve connections, as articulated in the Transportation Master Plan and POST Plan, especially ones that connect to Pecos Junction along 64th Ave., the 62nd Ave. overpass and 62nd Ave, and connections from Pecos St.

Strategy CSP 3.6: Expand public art for this district at key locations, such as at transit stops, and as part of property redevelopment to enhance placemaking.

Strategy CSP 3.7: Coordinate capital improvements and corridor planning on Pecos St. with potential subarea planning for Perl Mack and Utah Junction areas (as identified in the Southwest Adams County Framework Plan).

Strategy CSP 3.8: Evaluate commercial opportunities which provide community benefit but can also align with in higher industrial areas.



WASHINGTON STREET

DESCRIPTION OF THE CORRIDOR:

Washington St. is the longest corridor under consideration extending from 52nd Ave. to the south and 88th Ave. to the north. Washington is a principal arterial that is intersected by I-76, I-270, and Highway 224 and runs parallel with access to I-25. Similar to Pecos St., the corridor has a range of uses including industrial, commercial, and residential. The corridor can be divided into four character areas: Industrial Transition (52nd Ave. to the rail-road crossing between 58th Ave. and 62nd Ave.), Industrial Core (from the railroad crossing between 58th Ave. and 62nd Ave. to I-76), the South Welby Area (portions of the Welby Subarea Plan from I-76 to 78th Ave.), and the Thornton Transition Area (78th Ave. to 88th Ave.). Clean, indoor industrial uses are encouraged in the South Welby Area while discouraging residential. Mixed-use development along with higher density residential is encouraged in the northern section of the Welby area along the corridor while discouraging or prohibiting industrial uses. The transportation network is suited to better accommodate the various user needs with freight and commercial users to the south and a greater multi-modal focus through the Welby section into Thornton. The corridor also intersects with key trail connections with Clear Creek Trail and Niver Creek Trail along Coronado Parkway. The trails

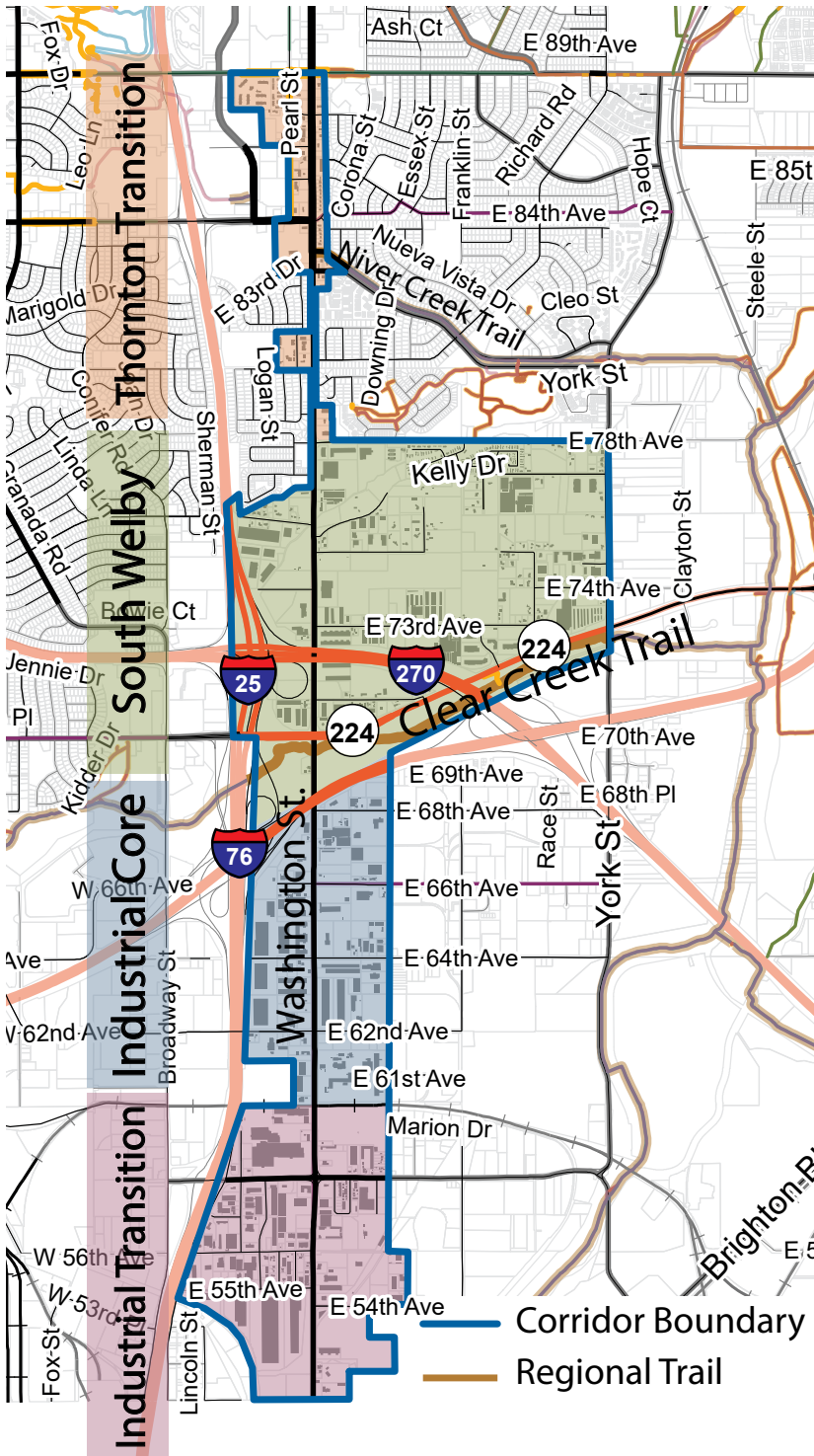


Figure 8-4: Washington Street

provide access to local park and neighborhood assets as well as regional destinations.

KEY CONSIDERATIONS SINCE 2012 IMAGINE ADAMS PLAN:

1. Thornton adopted the South Thornton Urban Renewal Area (URA) plan (2012) which includes properties south of 88th Ave. on Washington St.
2. Adams County adopted the Welby plan (2014) which considers potential mixed-use neighborhood development along Washington St.
3. Since adoption of the Welby plan, several properties have rezoned from agriculture to industrial in the southern area of Welby which has expanded employment opportunities while also adding some stress to the local road network.
4. Adoption of the Mixed Use (MU) zone district (2021). However, no properties have rezoned to MU to date.

WASHINGTON STREET CORRIDOR VISION:

A corridor that maintains opportunities for employment, industry, and mobility with planned transitions and connections that serve the character and needs of those living, working, and traveling through the corridor.

Strategy CSP 4.1: Maintain opportunities for industrial uses along the corridor where appropriate, especially in the Industrial Transition, Industrial Core, and South Welby areas.

Strategy CSP 4.2: Coordinate roadway infrastructure enhancements, such as lane modifications for a 'road-diet' between 73rd Ave. and 78th Ave. depicted in the TMP, with broader placemaking efforts in the Welby area and north along the corridor.



WASHINGTON STREET

Strategy CSP 4.3: Continue to review the FLUM, zoning, and vision established by sub-area plans to evaluate new proposed residential uses and other uses that conflict with and may be negatively impacted by permitted industrial operations that align with their future land-use designation.

Strategy CSP 4.4: Encourage assemblage of smaller lots in the area to increase opportunities for new development over time.

Strategy CSP 4.5: Explore opportunities to enhance access to food access and services, creative industries, and supporting uses along the Welby area of the corridor.

Strategy CSP 4.6: Coordinate with property owners on the corridor to identify opportunities to rezone to

mixed-use to align development with the Future Land-Use map.

Strategy CSP 4.7: Enhance trail connections along the corridor.

Strategy CSP 4.8: Explore additional planning opportunities for the Industrial Transition and Industrial Core parts of the corridor (identified as North Washington Industrial area in the Southwest Adams County Framework Plan).

Strategy CSP 4.9: Continue to discourage industrial uses in the North Welby and Thornton Transition area along the corridor from 78th to 88th Ave.

EAST 104TH AVENUE

EAST 104TH AVE. CORRIDOR VISION:

A coordinated corridor that better meets the needs of people linking with and traveling through the 104th Ave. with collaboration between jurisdictions, connected infrastructure, and compatible design.

Strategy CSP 5.1: Seek to build upon the corridor's rural and park-like character as redevelopment and roadway improvements occur over time, with the safety and comfort of pedestrians and bicyclists considered a high priority.

Strategy CSP 5.2: Foster partnerships with adjacent municipalities on a land use vision for this corridor.

Strategy CSP 5.3: Coordinate with County departments to develop a variety of progressive stormwater facilities and restoration projects in this area, including a nature playground concept at the intersection of the South Platte River.



EAST 120TH AVENUE

Strategy CSP 6.1: Improve at-grade multi-use trail crossings across railroad tracks.

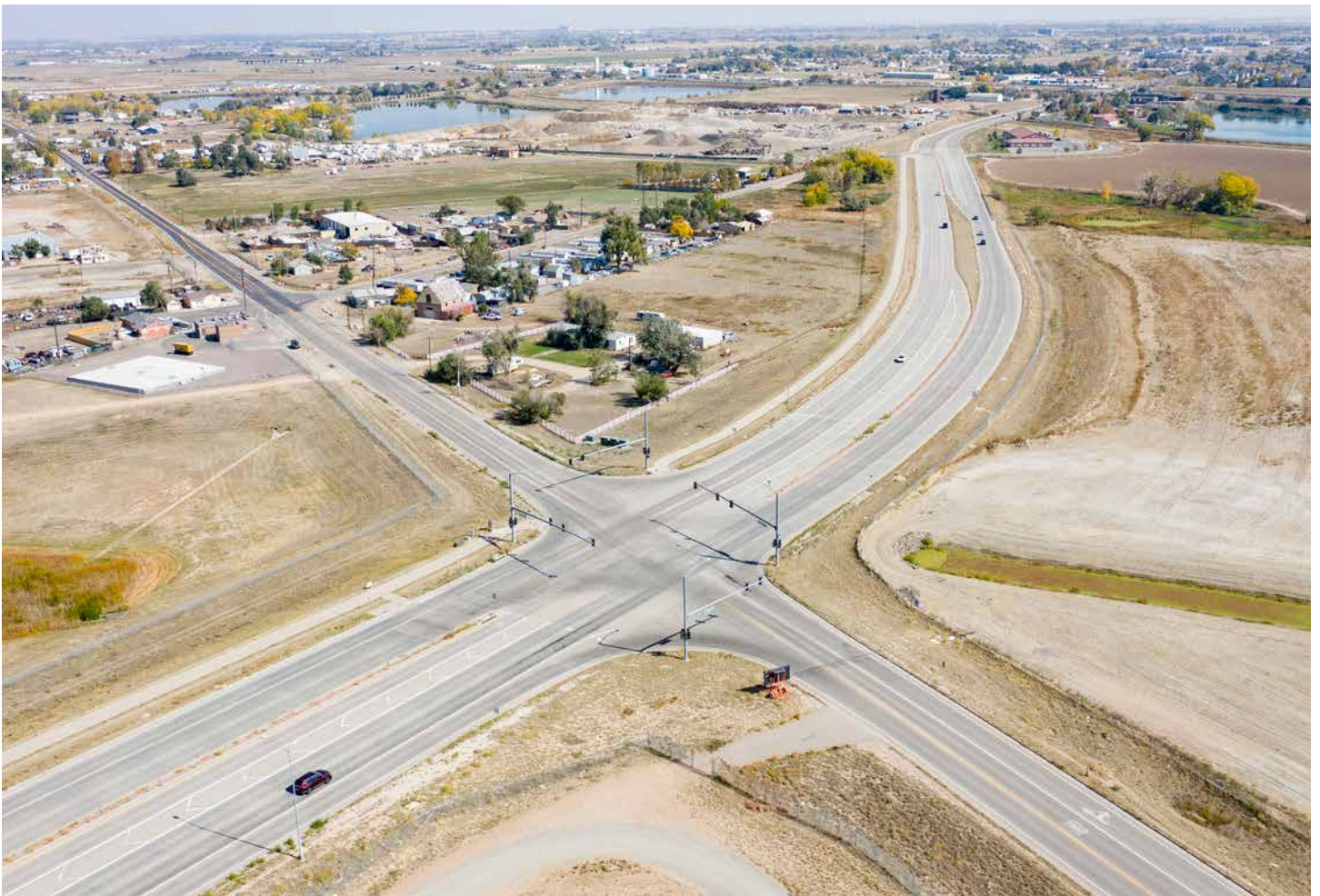
Strategy CSP 6.2: Emphasize Riverdale Regional Park as a destination from local and regional trails.

Strategy CSP 6.3: Foster partnerships with adjacent municipalities to determine a unified vision for the roadway.

Strategy CSP 6.4: Develop a loop trail to be a connector portal for access to a variety of regional trail systems and destinations.

Strategy CSP 6.5: Build resilience into the ecosystem through stormwater BMPs and restoration projects, which can be introduced at the crossing of the Platte River.

Strategy CSP 6.6: Continue to review supportive land-uses around the Riverdale Regional Park and corridor improvements to maintain the desired character for the corridor and park.



SUBAREAS WITH PLANS

There have been several county-wide and subarea plans adopted prior to and after the Imagine Adams 2012 comprehensive plan. Some plans were recently adopted and are well aligned with this comprehensive plan, such as the Colorado Air and Space Port (CASP) subarea plan in 2021 and Square Lake subarea plan in 2022, while other older plans, such as the 2002 Strasburg Plan and 2008 Berkley Neighborhood Plan have not been updated. Some plans adopted since 2012 need updates to align with Advancing Adams and the pace of change facing those areas (2014 Welby Subarea Plan and the 2014 Federal Blvd. Framework Plan). The following seeks to summarize the various plans, address and update certain policies in those plans, and establish next steps for additional strategic plans for a well-planned county.

PLAN NAME: STRASBURG PLAN

KEY TAKEAWAYS FROM PLAN:

The Strasburg Plan was developed by Adams County and Arapahoe County to help preserve the small town and agricultural identity of the Strasburg area. The emphasis within the plan lies on properly regulating growth, limiting sprawl, and designing a new activity center that will bring jobs and services to residents.

POLICY AND STRATEGIES TO ALIGN PLAN WITH ADVANCING ADAMS:

1. Evaluate existing population and households and encourage appropriate measures to attract and sustain services and employment opportunities while maintaining the small town and agricultural character.
2. Evaluate and promote connections to enhance walking and biking, especially when connecting to open space and trails.
3. Consider designating an urban growth boundary to limit sprawl to reinforce the 20-minute community in Strasburg.
4. Evaluate uses and opportunities to reinforce a vibrant 'Main Street' character where appropriate.

NEXT STEPS:

Coordinate with Arapahoe County to initiate a plan update. Consider expanding the scope and focus to plan for other communities in eastern Adams County and Arapahoe County.

PLAN NAME: BERKELEY NEIGHBORHOOD PLAN

KEY TAKEAWAYS FROM PLAN:

The Berkeley Neighborhood Plan is a mixed-use neighborhood located in the southwest corner of Adams County. During the planning process, concerns were raised regarding older housing stock, decreased home ownership, changing demographics, a

SUBAREAS WITH PLANS

small selection of students from Regis Jesuit University negatively impacting the neighborhood, and the unkempt appearance of certain parts of the neighborhood. The plan sought to address housing, land-uses, safety and enforcement, and neighborhood conditions.

POLICY AND STRATEGIES TO ALIGN PLAN WITH ADVANCING ADAMS:

1. Evaluate and improve transit and multi-modal connections in the neighborhood.
2. Review opportunities for cultural and social interaction between Berkeley residents and Regis University.
3. Evaluate public safety and foster prospects relationships between the community and safety agencies.

NEXT STEPS:

Re-evaluate the Berkeley Neighborhood Plan in coordination with other corridor and planning efforts, engage with stakeholders, and update the plan when appropriate.

PLAN NAME: WELBY SUBAREA PLAN

KEY TAKEAWAYS FROM PLAN:

The plan seeks to create a livable neighborhood and supportive corridors through seven strategic goals, economic development; environment; history and culture; infrastructure; public

safety; recreation, open space, and agriculture; and vibrant neighborhoods.

The plan established three focus areas: North Welby, East Welby, and South Welby. North Welby focused on the residential nature of the area and improving the sense of community. South Welby addressed the mixing of agricultural heritage, industrial uses, and residential areas. South Welby focused on the continued transition to industrial uses and supporting employment opportunities with an industrial base. East Welby is comprised of primarily agricultural and some industrial zoned properties and lacks street connectivity with the west side of Welby. There is great potential here for future development, especially with two future commuter rail station areas (E. 72nd & E. 88th Avenues) on the North Metro commuter rail line about a ½ mile away. In addition, two important water bodies, Clear Creek and the South Platte River, make up its southern and eastern borders, respectively.

POLICY AND STRATEGIES TO ALIGN PLAN WITH ADVANCING ADAMS:

1. Continue to coordinate with neighborhood groups, stakeholders, and commercial and industrial users on the Welby character and uses.
2. Encourage property owners to explore mixed-use development opportunities to align “Mixed

Use Neighborhood” character identified in the Welby Plan with the newly available Mixed-Use zone district.

3. Explore additional opportunities to reinforce a Welby identity for neighborhood cohesion and economic development.
4. Coordinate with the POST Plan and Welby Plan to enhance recreational amenities and trail connections in the neighborhood.
5. Evaluate additional planning, transit-oriented development, and connections to the Thornton 88th light rail station.
6. Continue to monitor land-uses and transportation pressures in the plan area.
7. Evaluate strategies to reinforce the cultural heritage as highlighted in the Welby Plan, especially through incorporating local art.

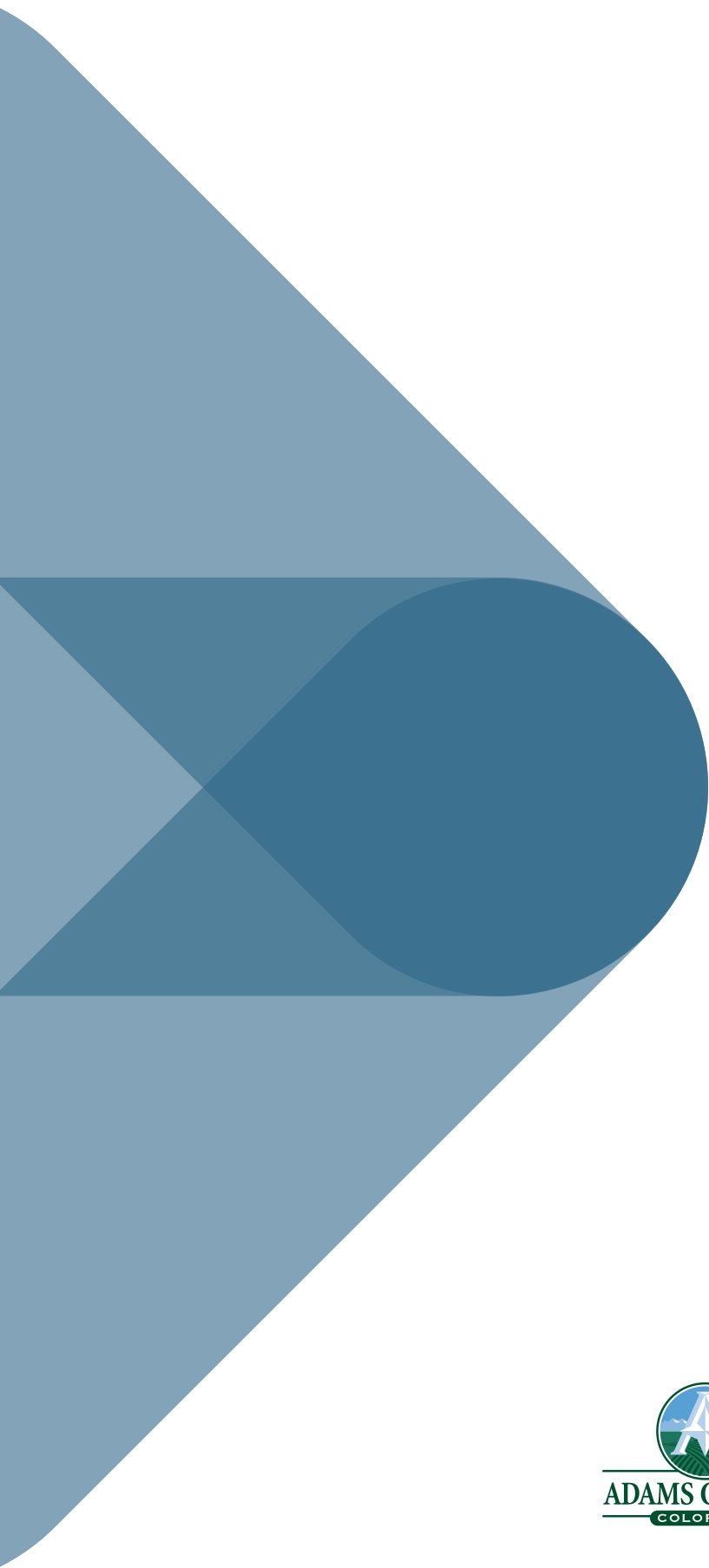
NEXT STEPS:

Engage with stakeholders regarding updating the Welby Plan and update the plan when appropriate.

ADDITIONAL AREAS OF FOCUS

The county may consider additional planning efforts for existing plans and areas in the county without more specific subarea plans. Potential areas of focus may include, but are not limited to:

- The Airport Environs (1990) plan.
- Station areas within ½ mile of a RTD station, not including Federal Station and Pecos Junction Station.
- Lowell Blvd./Westminster area
- Perl Mack and Utah Junction



ADVANCING **ADAMS**
PLANNING FOR A SHARED FUTURE

